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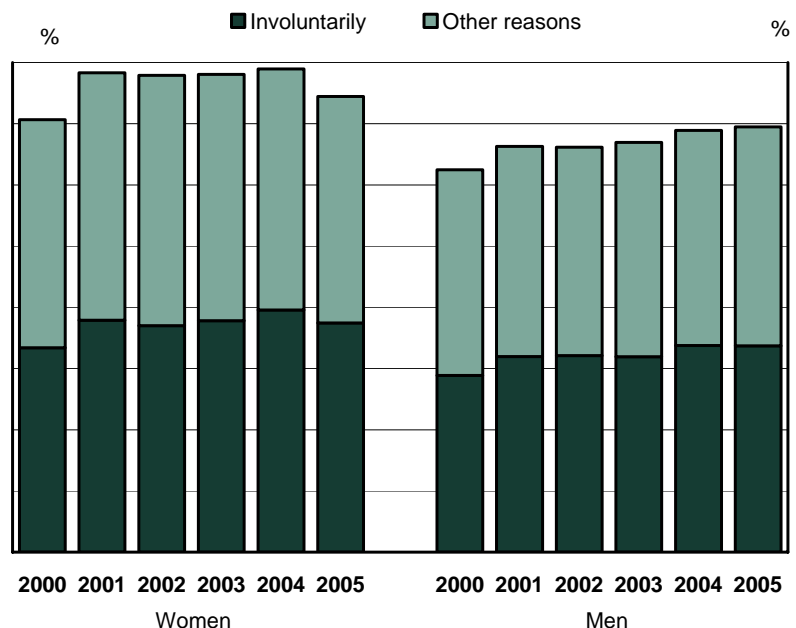
Men and women employed on fixed-term contracts involuntarily

Almost 15% of women employees and around 14% of men were employed in jobs with fixed-term contracts in the EU-25 in 2005. A significant proportion of these worked in fixed-term jobs because they could not find a permanent job – i.e. involuntarily rather than from choice. The focus here is on the women and men concerned, on their relative numbers, their age, the activities and occupations in which they are employed and the typical duration of their contracts of employment.

The main findings are:

- 7.5% of all women employees and 6.7% of men in 2005 were employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily
- the share of both women and men employed in fixed-terms jobs and those employed in such jobs involuntarily increased between 2000 and 2005 (Figure 1)
- almost a third of women and men employees aged under 30 had fixed-term contracts in 2005 and around 40% of these were employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily
- the largest shares of involuntary fixed-term employees are in agriculture and among those employed in private households
- a much larger share of employees in elementary occupations are employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily than those employed as managers, professionals and technicians
- some 43% of women and 48% of men employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily have contracts of less than 6 months.

Figure 1: Men and women employed on fixed-term contracts involuntarily and other fixed-term contracts in the EU-25, 2000 to 2005 (% women/men employees)



Women more likely than men to be in fixed-term jobs in most countries

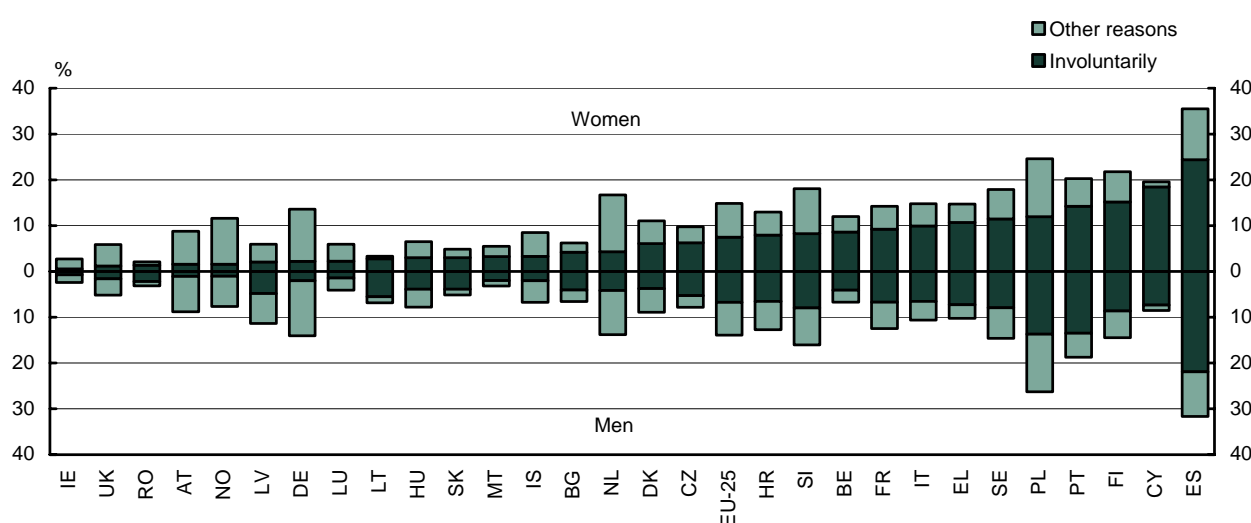
The proportion of men and women employed on fixed-term contracts varies markedly across the EU. In 2005, women employed on such contracts in Spain amounted to over 35% of all female employees, while for men, the proportion was almost as high, at just under 32% (Figure 2). In Poland, the share of both female and male employees on fixed-term contracts was around 25%, while in Portugal and Finland, the share for women was over 20% and, in both cases, higher than for men (in Finland, the figure for men was under 15%).

At the other extreme, the proportion of female as well as

male employees on fixed-term contracts was below 6% in Malta, Slovakia and the UK and under 4% in Ireland and Romania (the proportions are equally small in Estonia and Malta but because of the sample size, the exact percentages are uncertain.)

In Lithuania, the share of men employed on fixed-term contracts was over twice that of women. This, however, was one of only 4 countries in the EU where the share of men employed in fixed-term jobs was larger than for women in 2005 (the others being Latvia, Hungary and Poland).

Figure 2: Proportion of men and women employed on fixed-term contracts by reason, 2005 (% women/men employees)



EE: figures too small to be published; CH: data not available

Source: EU Labour Force Survey

Many men and women in fixed-term jobs involuntarily

Men and women employed on a fixed-term basis tend to be in a more uncertain and precarious position than those with more standard types of contract. There are a number of reasons why they have fixed-term contracts. In particular, the contracts might cover training or probationary periods or the person concerned might not want a permanent job. In these cases, although such contracts seem less favourable than permanent ones, they nevertheless offer a means of acquiring new skills or the prospect of a permanent job in the future or they are in line with personal preferences (perhaps because they carry a higher wage). Such compensations for being employed on a fixed-term contract do not apply, or at least seem to apply less, to those working on fixed-term contracts 'involuntarily', in the sense that they were unable to find permanent employment. The women and men concerned, therefore, would seem to be in an unfavourable situation.

An indication of the number of employees who are in this position is given by the EU Labour Force Survey, which includes the inability of finding a permanent job as one of the reasons for people having a fixed-term contract of employment. In the EU as a whole, men and women with

fixed-term contracts because they could not find a permanent job amounted to around half of all those with such contracts in 2005. Accordingly, women working in fixed-term jobs involuntarily represented 7.5% of all women employees in this year, while for men the proportion was 6.7% (Table 1). As in the case of all those with fixed-term contracts, there are, however, major differences between countries.

In particular in Spain, more than 24% of women employees and 22% of men were employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily in 2005. The figure for women was just under 19% in Cyprus and just over 15% in Finland, in both cases substantially more than for men (7% and just under 9%, respectively), while it was around 14% in Portugal, in this case, only slightly higher than the figure for men.

On the other hand the proportion of women employees in fixed-term jobs involuntarily was only around 2% or less in Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Austria, Romania and the UK, as well as in Norway. The figure for men was very similar in all these countries except Latvia, where it was significantly more than for women at almost 5%.

The share of male employees in fixed-term jobs involuntarily was also over twice that of women in Lithuania. Elsewhere, however, the only countries in which the share of men was larger than that of women were Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. In most of the

other Member States, the reverse was the case. This was especially so in Belgium, Greece, Italy and Sweden, in all of which the proportion of women in fixed-term jobs because they could not find permanent ones was over 3 percentage points larger than for men.

Men and women in fixed-term jobs increased between 2000 and 2005

Over the five years 2000 to 2005, the relative number of women and men employed in fixed-term jobs in the EU increased – for women from 14.1% of employees to 14.9%, for men, from 12.5% to 13.9%. This increase, however, was by no means common to all Member States (Table 1). The share of women and men employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily also increased in the EU as a whole, by slightly more than for all those with fixed-term contracts. Moreover, the increase was more widespread among Member States than for the total of fixed-term jobs. Nevertheless, there were marked differences in experience between countries.

The share of female employees working involuntarily in fixed-term jobs increased in the majority of Member States between these two years, as well as in Norway.

The share of men employed on fixed-term contracts involuntarily also increased in all of the countries in which the share of women rose (except Bulgaria), which suggests common underlying factors. The increase was especially large for both men and women (over 2 percentage points) in the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia. By contrast, the share of women in fixed-term job involuntarily declined in 8 Member States – Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Latvia, Austria, Romania and the UK, but the decline was over 1 percentage point only in Ireland, Spain and Latvia. In 6 of the countries in which the share of women declined (all but France and Romania), the share of men working involuntarily in fixed-term jobs also declined, markedly so in Greece and Latvia.

Table 1: Involuntarily fixed-term contracts of employment and total fixed-term contracts, 2000 and 2005 (% of women/men employees)

	Involuntarily fixed-term contracts				Total fixed-term contracts			
	women		men		women		men	
	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005
BE	8.6	8.6	4.6	4.1	12.1	12.0	6.6	6.7
BG	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.0	6.5	6.2	7.1	6.6
CZ	3.7	6.3	2.9	5.3	9.4	9.7	7.0	7.8
DK	5.5	6.1	2.9	3.7	11.7	11.0	8.8	8.9
DE	2.2	2.2	1.8	2.0	14.5	13.6	13.9	14.0
EE	.	.	(2.4)	.	.	(2.5)	(3.1)	(4.1)
IE	1.7	(0.6)	1.2	0.8	6.6	2.7	4.3	2.4
EL	12.4	10.7	9.3	7.3	17.3	14.7	13.3	10.2
ES	25.4	24.4	22.5	21.9	34.6	35.5	30.8	31.6
FR	9.5	9.2	6.4	6.7	14.1	14.2	11.4	12.5
IT	9.3	9.9	5.6	6.5	15.3	14.8	10.5	10.6
CY	11.3	18.5	5.4	7.3	14.3	19.6	7.6	8.5
LV	3.7	2.1	6.6	4.8	4.6	6.0	8.9	11.4
LT	2.0	(2.8)	3.4	5.5	2.6	(3.3)	4.9	6.9
LU	.	2.2	.	(1.4)	4.6	6.0	2.6	4.1
HU	2.5	3.0	3.7	3.9	6.4	6.5	7.3	7.8
MT	.	.	.	(2.0)	(5.3)	(5.5)	(3.5)	(3.2)
NL	4.3	4.3	3.3	4.2	17.2	16.7	11.5	13.8
AT	2.2	1.6	1.3	1.1	11.3	8.8	11.6	8.8
PL	5.5	12.0	6.4	13.7	11.4	24.6	12.4	26.3
PT	8.8	14.2	7.0	13.5	22.2	20.3	18.0	18.7
RO	1.7	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.9	2.1	3.0	3.1
SI	6.0	8.2	5.3	8.0	13.5	18.1	12.4	16.0
SK	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.9	4.3	4.9	3.8	5.1
FI	13.1	15.2	7.8	8.6	20.9	21.8	14.5	14.4
SE	9.5	11.5	6.2	8.0	16.9	17.9	12.3	14.6
UK	2.0	1.2	2.2	1.6	7.7	5.9	5.9	5.2
HR	:	8.0	:	6.5	:	13.0	:	12.7
IS	.	3.3	.	2.0	5.9	8.5	4.9	6.7
NO	0.8	1.6	0.6	1.1	11.8	11.6	7.8	7.6
CH	:	:	:	:	12.8	13.1	10.5	12.5
EU-25	6.6	7.5	5.7	6.7	14.1	14.9	12.5	13.9

Figures in brackets: reduced reliability due to sampling size
 " ": data can not be published; "": No data

Source: EU Labour Force Survey

Many men and women in fixed-term jobs are aged under 30

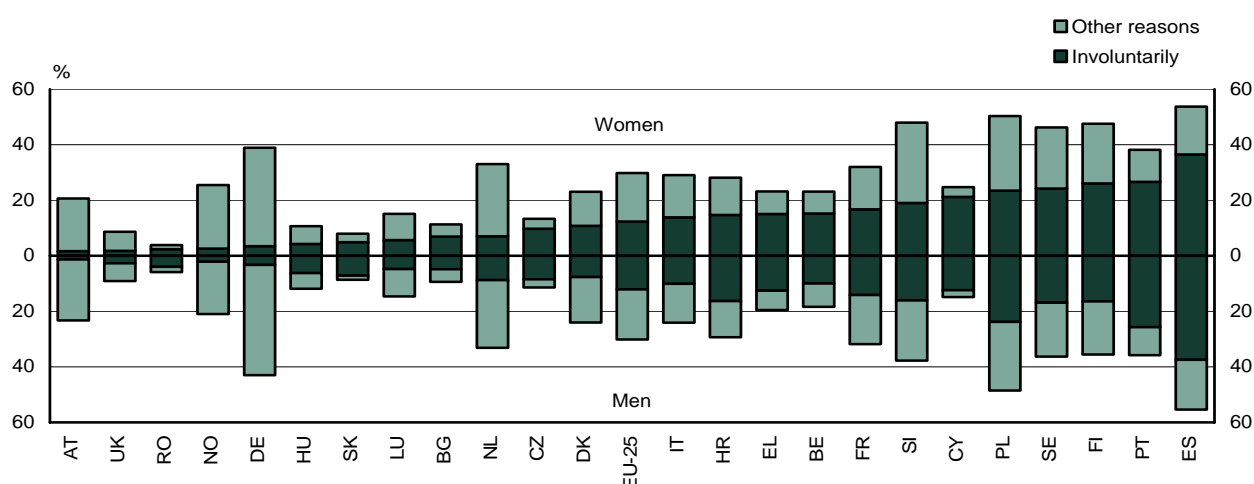
A disproportionate number of young men and women under 30 work in jobs with fixed-term contracts of employment. Around 31% of both male and female employees under 30 in the EU-25 were employed on fixed-term contracts in 2005. This is over double the proportion of employees of all ages employed on such contracts. Although, as might be expected, more young people under 30 than those older are employed on temporary training or probationary contracts, a significant number are employed on fixed-term contracts involuntarily.

In 2005, some 12-13% of men and women employees under 30 in the EU-25 worked in fixed-term jobs involuntarily, almost double the proportion of those of all ages in this situation (Figure 3). As in the case of all employees, this proportion was particularly high for both

young women and men in Spain (around 37% for both), as well as in Poland and Portugal (23-24% and 26-27%, respectively). The share was also high for young women in Cyprus, Finland and Sweden (well over 20% in each), and in all three of these countries, much higher than for men (over 7 percentage points higher). Again, as for employees of all ages, the proportion of women under 30 employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily was especially low in Austria and the UK, at under 2%. This was also the case for men.

In Slovakia, the share of men under 30 employed on fixed-term contracts involuntarily was over 2 percentage points higher than that of women. In all other countries, the share of women on such contracts was either similar to that of men or larger.

Figure 3: Proportion of women and men under 30 employed on fixed-term contracts by reason, 2005 (% women/men employees under 30)



EE, IE, LV, LT, MT, IS: data too small to be published; CH: data not available
Source: EU Labour Force Survey

Women more likely to be in fixed-term jobs involuntarily in most activities

The proportion of both men and women employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily is larger in agriculture than in other industries, amounting to 20% of women employees in 2005 and almost 16% of men in the EU-25 (Table 2). Relatively few women and men, however, work as employees in this activity (most being self-employed). The proportion of women in employment in private households (domestic service in particular) who were employed on fixed-term contract involuntarily was only slightly smaller at 19%. For men, however, it was much less, at only 9%. The proportion for both women and men was also relatively high in hotels and restaurants (over 11% for women and over 9% for men), which like agriculture and domestic service tends to involve relatively low skilled jobs. At the other

extreme, the proportion was only 2-3% in financial intermediation.

In most economic activities, the share of women employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily was larger than for men, the only exceptions being industry and other community services. Between 2000 and 2005, the proportion of men and women working in fixed-term jobs involuntarily increased in nearly all activities. In most activities, the share of women in such a situation increased by more than that of men. The main exceptions were industry and other community services. The gap between men and women in this respect, therefore, widened over this period in most broad groups of economic activity.

Table 2: Women and men employed involuntarily in fixed-term jobs by sector of activity in the EU-25, 2000 and 2005 (% of women/men employees in each sector)

Economic activities	Women		Men	
	2000	2005	2000	2005
Agriculture (A+B)	15.3	20.0	12.5	15.8
Industry (C-F)	4.7	6.1	5.7	7.3
Wholesale+retail trade (G)	5.1	6.2	4.0	4.6
Hotels+restaurants (H)	8.7	11.1	8.7	9.4
Transport+communications (I)	4.9	5.1	3.6	4.2
Financial intermediation (J)	2.4	3.1	1.6	2.1
Business activities (K)	5.9	6.7	4.5	5.9
Public administration (L)	5.6	6.7	3.7	4.3
Education (M)	6.8	8.6	5.8	8.1
Health+social work (N)	5.3	6.1	5.4	5.9
Other community services (O)	7.8	8.3	6.5	9.2
Private households (P)	14.9	19.0	10.5	8.9
Extra-territorial organisations (Q)	(7.8)	(8.8)	(5.2)	(4.7)

EU-25 excluding AT for which data by economic activity are not available. Letters in brackets denote the NACE Rev.1 sections. Industry includes Construction
Figures in brackets: reduced reliability due to sampling size

Source: EU Labour Force Survey

Over 30% of women employed involuntarily in fixed-term jobs were in education and health, compared with under 10% of men (Table 3). On the other hand, only around 14% of women in this situation were employed in manufacturing, which was responsible for 46% of men working fixed-term involuntarily, even though a comparatively small proportion of the men employed in this activity were in this situation. Conversely, the sectors of activity in which a relatively large share of

employees worked under fixed-term contracts involuntarily – agriculture, hotels and restaurants and private households – accounted for a only a small proportion of all such jobs.

Table 3: Division of women and men employed involuntarily in fixed-term jobs between sectors of activity in the EU-25, 2005 (% of women/men employed fixed-term involuntarily)

Economic activities	Women	Men
	2005	
Agriculture (A+B)	3.3	6.3
Industry (C-F)	13.6	45.9
Wholesale+retail trade (G)	13.1	8.7
Hotels+restaurants (H)	7.2	4.2
Transport+communications (I)	2.8	5.7
Financial intermediation (J)	1.6	0.9
Business activities (K)	8.2	7.4
Public administration (L)	7.8	6.0
Education (M)	15.2	5.6
Health+social work (N)	15.3	3.7
Other community services (O)	5.8	5.3
Private households (P)	6.0	0.4
Extra-territorial organisations (Q)	(0.1)	(0.1)
Total	100.0	100.0

EU-25 excluding AT for which data by economic activity are not available. Letters in brackets denote the NACE Rev. 1 sections. Industry includes Construction.
Figures in brackets: reduced reliability due to sampling size.

Source: EU Labour Force Survey

More involuntary employment in fixed-term jobs in elementary occupations

Men and women in elementary occupations, as well as agricultural workers, are more likely to be employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily. In both groups the proportion of men and women in this position was over 13% of employees in 2005 (Table 4). The proportion was also relatively high among those employed as craft or trades workers or as machine operators as well as among sales and service workers. By contrast, only around 1% of men and women employed as managers worked under fixed-term contracts involuntarily.

In all broad occupational groups, apart from elementary occupations, the share of women employed on fixed-term contracts involuntarily was larger than that of men. In all occupational groups, the share of men and women in such a position increased between 2000 and 2005, in most cases, either by a similar amount or more for women than for men. The latter was particularly the case for men and women in elementary occupations, for whom the difference in shares consequently narrowed over this period.

Table 4: Women and men employed involuntarily in fixed-term jobs by occupation in the EU-25, 2000 and 2005 (% of women/men employees in each occupation)

Occupational groups	Women		Men	
	2000	2005	2000	2005
Managers (1)	1.1	1.3	0.7	0.8
Professionals (2)	6.2	6.6	3.7	4.4
Technicians (3)	4.1	4.8	3.0	3.8
Clerks (4)	5.1	5.3	3.8	4.9
Sales+service workers (5)	5.7	8.6	4.8	6.6
Skilled agricultural workers (6)	17.9	17.0	12.0	13.2
Craft+trades workers (7)	6.4	7.8	6.2	7.6
Plant+machine operators (8)	8.2	8.1	5.6	6.2
Elementary occupations (9)	10.9	13.5	14.7	15.3

Figures in brackets in the first column denote the ISCO-88 occupational groups

Source: EU Labour Force Survey

As in the case of the division between sectors of activity, the division between occupations of women employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily also differed markedly from that of men, again reflecting the overall difference between women and men in the distribution of employment. Around 25% of women employed on fixed-term contracts involuntarily in 2005 worked in sales and services jobs as against only 8% of men, while only 4% of women in such jobs were employed as craft and trade workers as opposed to 27% of men (Table 5). Despite the relatively large shares of women and men working in elementary occupations and as skilled agricultural workers who were employed under fixed-term contracts involuntarily, these two occupational groups accounted for only around a quarter of all women and men in fixed-term jobs involuntarily.

Table 5: Division of women and men employed involuntarily in fixed-term jobs between occupations in the EU-25, 2005
(% of women/men employed fixed-term involuntarily)

Occupational groups	Women	Men
	Armed Forces (0)	0.3
Managers (1)	0.7	0.9
Professionals (2)	13.5	8.7
Technicians (3)	13.4	8.3
Clerks (4)	14.2	5.4
Sales+service workers (5)	25.4	8.3
Skilled agricultural workers (6)	1.4	3.0
Craft+trades workers (7)	4.0	27.0
Plant+machine operators (8)	4.6	14.3
Elementary occupations (9)	22.5	23.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Figures in brackets in the first column denote the ISCO-88 occupational groups.

Source: EU Labour Force Survey

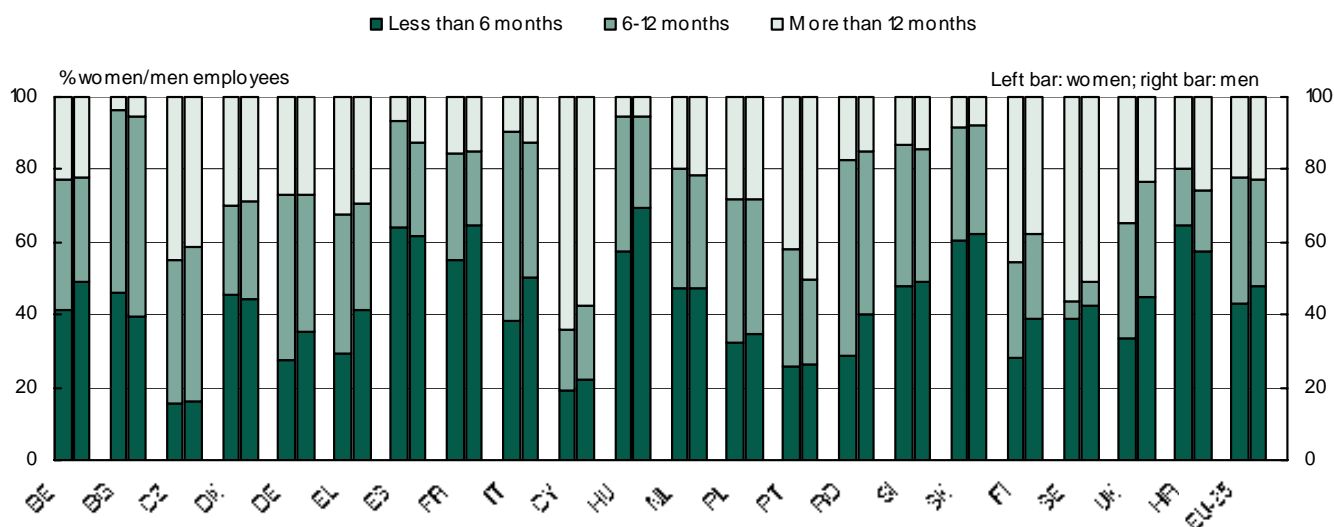
Most people in fixed-term jobs involuntarily have short contracts

A large number of men and women working in fixed-term jobs involuntarily have very short contracts of employment. In 2005, 43% of women in this position in the EU-25 had contracts of less than 6 months, while the proportion of men was slightly larger at 48% (Figure 4). Another 35% or so of women in fixed-term jobs involuntarily and around 29% of men had contracts of over 6 months but less than 12 months. Accordingly, 77-78% of both men and women in such positions had contracts of less than one year.

Once again, the proportion of people employed on very short-term contracts varies markedly across the EU-25.

In Spain, where the proportion on fixed-term contracts is larger than anywhere else in the Union, 64% of women employed in such jobs involuntarily in 2005 had contracts of less than 6 months, while the proportion of men was only slightly smaller (62%). A further 29% of women had longer contracts but still ones of less than a year, so that overall only 7% of women in this position had contracts of a year or more. The latter figure was slightly larger for men, but only just over 12% of those working in fixed-term jobs involuntarily had contracts of a year or longer.

Figure 4: Women and men involuntarily on fixed-term contracts by contract duration, 2005



AT, CH: no data; EE, IE, LV, LT, LU, MT, IS, NO: data too small to be published

Source: EU Labour Force Survey

On the other hand, less than 30% of women employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily had contracts of under 6 months in the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Cyprus, Portugal, Finland and Romania. In all these countries, this was smaller than the proportion of men with such contracts, especially in Greece and Finland, where the figure for men was around 40%. At the same time, however, in three of these countries – Germany, Greece and Romania – a relatively large number of women and men had contracts of over 6 months but

less than 12 months. In these three Member States, the proportion with contracts of less than one year was, therefore, relatively similar to the EU average. In the other four countries (Czech Republic, Cyprus, Portugal and Finland), the proportion of women and men employed in fixed-term jobs involuntarily who had contracts of less than one year was much smaller than the EU average and, accordingly, the proportion with contracts of one year or more was well above the average.

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The analysis presented in this publication is based on the EU Labour Force Survey. The 2005 European Union Labour Force Survey (EU LFS) was conducted in the then 25 Member States of the European Union and 3 countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Three Candidate countries also participated. The EU-LFS is a relatively large household sample survey providing annual and quarterly results on the employment circumstances of people aged 15 and over, with the sampling rates varying between 0.3% and 3.3%. Those undertaking compulsory military service are not included.

The totals for the EU-25 referred to in the text and included in the figures and tables exclude Bulgaria and Romania since the data relate to a period before these two joined the EU.

Basic concepts and definitions

Employees are defined as any persons who did any work during the reference week, even for as little as one hour, or who had a job from which they were temporarily absent during the reference week.

Employees with fixed-term contracts are those in temporary jobs where the duration is limited to a specified period. The data for both 2000 and 2005 relate to the second quarter of the year. It should be noted that in some countries seasonal work is relatively important and the choice of the second quarter might, therefore, understate the scale of temporary employment in these cases.

Data for employees with fixed-term contracts in 2000 are not available for France, Malta, Poland, Bulgaria and Croatia. For Malta and Poland, data for 2001 are used and for France, data for 2003. These data are included in the EU-25 totals for 2000. A full set of data for employees with fixed-term contracts in 2005, including in particular, the reasons for working in such jobs, are not available for Spain and Austria. In both cases, the breakdown by reason for 2004 is applied to the 2005 data for the total employed on fixed-term contracts.


The comparison of the data for 2000 with those for 2005 takes account of the breaks in the LFS series for a number of countries between these two years, due either to the transition to a quarterly continuous survey, census revisions or changes in the methods for defining the sample surveyed. The 2000 data have therefore been adjusted for Germany, Greece, Italy and Austria to make them more comparable with the 2005 data (specifically by estimating the change between the two years to include only the changes between years for which the data are comparable). For the small countries especially, it should be emphasised that because of the small sample size, the data may not be fully reliable and therefore may not be fully comparable between years.

Further information:


Data: [EUROSTAT Website/Home page/Population and social conditions/Data](#)

Population and social conditions

 Population

 Health

 Education and training

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 **Employment and unemployment (Labour Force Survey)**

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