

Question in Project:

European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) (English Version)

Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

Construct:

Employment contract

General Information:

Note: The item was tested both in English and German.

Online Probing & Cognitive Interviews

Question Text:

English version: What kind of employment contract do you have in your main job?

German version: Was für einen Arbeitsvertrag haben Sie für den Beruf, den Sie hauptsächlich ausüben?

Answer Categories:

English version:

Contract of unlimited duration

Contract of limited duration

A temporary employment agency contract

An apprenticeship or other training scheme

No contract

Other

Don't know/no opinion

Refusal

German version:

Einen zeitlich unbefristeten Vertrag

Einen zeitlich befristeten Vertrag

Einen Vertrag mit einer Zeitarbeitsfirma

Einen Ausbildungs-/Traineevertrag oder eine Fort- oder Weiterbildungsvereinbarung
Keinen Vertrag
Sonstiges
Weiß nicht
Verweigert

Cognitive Techniques:

Specific Probing, Difficulty Probing. (CI)

Findings for Question:

Online Probing:

Question 11 was not actively tested in online probing, but served as a background variable in order to be able to distinguish respondents within the group of employees. The majority of employees have a permanent contract in their main paid job. Between 10% in the UK and 32% in Poland say they have a fixed-term contract or a temporary employment agency contract. In both the UK and Germany, 5% of respondents select the response option "no contract".

Cognitive Interviews:

The question about the type of work contract was only asked to employees. In both countries, most respondents chose one of the first to answer categories, so a contract of unlimited or limited duration. In Germany, this applies to all respondents, in Poland, one respondent had no contract and one chose the "other" category.

This question was probed to discover how respondents in multi-activity come to their answer. In Germany, two respondents had two jobs as employees. Both of them referred this question to their main paid job without hesitation (DE14, DE16). Another two respondents were mainly employed, but additionally self-employed (DE01, DE05). Both of these respondents also referred the question to their main paid job without hesitation. In Poland, the two respondents with two employed activities both correctly refer to their main paid job as per Q7 without hesitation (PL03, PL11).

In Germany, all respondents considered this question easy to answer. There were no signs that categories were missing. In Poland, both the respondent who chose the other category and the respondent who answered "no contract" explained that their category – in both cases "order contract" was missing:

- "Order contract. I do not have a contract of limited duration. This is an order contract. There is nothing like that here" (PL02, "other")
- "There is no right answer option here. The only answer I could accept to mark here is 'contract of limited duration'. This is an order contract which should be done

in pre-defined time [...] This is a form of temporary contract [...] So the right answer here [...] is 'no contract' (PL12, "no contract")

However, at this point it must be noted that one respondent (PL11) chose the category "contract of limited duration", and explains in the probe that he is referring to his "order contract". That respondents with the same contract type choose different answers is a problem that must be resolved in the Polish questionnaire. Several other Polish respondents also mention that this category is missing (PL05, PL15, PL16), also citing related concepts such as "contract for specific work" and "civil law contract". This clearly indicates that these terms should either be explicitly included in the Polish answer categories or receive their own answer category. Alternatively, respondents working with order contracts should be categorized as self-employed in Q7 already.

Recommendations:

Question: No changes recommended.

Answer categories: In Poland, the answer categories and their wording should be revised to mirror the most common contract types in Poland. We recommend adding a category "order contract or contract for specific work". This change should of course only be implemented, should respondents working on order contracts are counted as employees as per Q7.