

Question in Project:

European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) (English Version)

Question Topic:

Job and career/ Job situation & professional activity

Construct:

Time between working days

General Information:

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

Cognitive Interviews

Introduction:

English version: The following question is about the amount of time available to you between working days.

German version: In der nächsten Frage geht es um die Zeit, die Ihnen zwischen den Arbeitstagen zur Verfügung steht.

Question Text:

English version: In the last month, has it happened at least once that you had less than 11 hours between the end of one working day and the start of the next working day?

German version: Ist es im letzten Monat bei Ihnen mindestens einmal vorgekommen, dass weniger als 11 Stunden zwischen dem Ende eines Arbeitstages und dem Start des nächsten Arbeitstages lagen?

Answer Categories:

English version:

Yes

No

Don't know/no opinion

Refusal

German version:

Ja

Nein

Weiß nicht/Keine Meinung

Verweigert

Cognitive Techniques:

Category Selection Probing, Specific Probing.

Findings for Question:

The law requires that workers have at least 11 hours off between working days. Therefore, anyone answering "yes" should be self-employed or in multi-activity. In Germany, seven respondents answer this question with "yes". Of these, four are self-employed (DE02, DE03, DE09, DE10). Of the respondents in employment who answered yes, only one is in multi-activity (DE16); however, this respondent was referring this question only to her main paid job. In Poland, five respondents answered the question with "yes", of which only one was self-employed (PL13).

None of the respondents was unable to provide an answer.

Respondents answering "yes" often refer to work-related activities outside of typical working hours, or stressful phases due to deadlines.

- "When I eat out with clients, for instance, that goes late in the evening, and then I have to be at work again at 8 the next morning, then that happens" (DE04, "yes")
- "What I'm thinking about is when I work really late and then start at the same time as always the next morning. So actually, it's really simple. No, wait, now that I think about it [...] But when I, for instance, write an abstract for a conference or so late at night, does that count? It relates to my work, and I do it to keep my job, but it's not really my main task [...] Then again, business trips also count. So the answer is yes" (DE16, "yes").
- "September is a very difficult month at school. The school needs to be started [...] tables which needs to be prepared for accountancy" (PL04, "yes")

Generally, respondents quickly find an answer to this question. However, probing reveals two issues that can potentially cause problems.

The **first issue** is when respondents have work-related activities of which they are uncertain whether to include them in their answer. In the pretest, this does not cause problems, because respondents were already confronted with it in previous question 46, and use the same strategy they decided on before. In the actual survey, this would be different, as Q46 comes after Q38.

The activities named that respondents did not include in their calculation are the same as in Q46. Socializing events and self-led learning are the two main topics in both countries:

- "Going out to dinner" (DE04)
- "Going to dinner with people who are business colleagues and friends alike, that is difficult to distinguish at times" (PL07)
- "When I read about work-related topics, so that I know more about them" (DE05)
- "Anything that has to do with improving my competences. I treat this as a hobby, i.e. learning more, reading professional literature, watching films on the topic. All these elements improve my qualifications but this is not a job for me at all. Anyway, no one pays me for doing in" (PL12)

The **second issue** is that respondents in multi-activity differ as to whether they include all of their jobs or only their main paid job. Across both countries, about an equal number of respondents referred to only their main paid job only (DE01, DE11, PL11, PL12, PL15) or to all of their jobs (DE02, DE05, DE16, PL03, PL07). In one case, it remained unclear from the answer (DE14). One respondent directly asks whether the question refers to all of his jobs:

- "I understand we do not mean the main job here but all the jobs I do?" (PL03)

To avoid different interpretations, this should be clearly stated in the question text. The **reference period** of the last month works well, several respondents refer to it when they name their retrieval strategy. This is another indicator that this reference period can and should be used across questions.

Recommendations:

Question: For respondents in multi-activity, the question text should clearly state whether this question relates to all paid jobs or only the main paid job.

Answer categories: No changes recommended.