

# BETTERWORK

N°2 MARCH 2024



WELL-BEING  
AND HEALTH  
AT WORK

## CONTINUING GENDER INEQUALITIES IN THE QUALITY OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT IN LUXEMBOURG

The aim of this newsletter is to present the evolution of the main differences between male and female employees in terms of the various dimensions of quality of work, quality of employment and well-being in Luxembourg over the last ten years.

The data shows that male employees generally have higher levels of co-determination, autonomy and accident risk, while female employees consistently report higher emotional demands.

The dimensions of job quality also differ: men have better promotion prospects and less difficulty finding a new job than women, while women report more conflicts between work and private life.

The general quality of work index (QoW-Index) shows a slight superiority of men over a decade. Female employees regularly exhibit higher burnout and health problems and lower general well-being, although job satisfaction and motivation are relatively comparable for both genders.

Over a period of ten years, the average weekly working hours have increased, mainly for women, due to an increase in full-time work and the number of hours worked by women on a part-time basis.

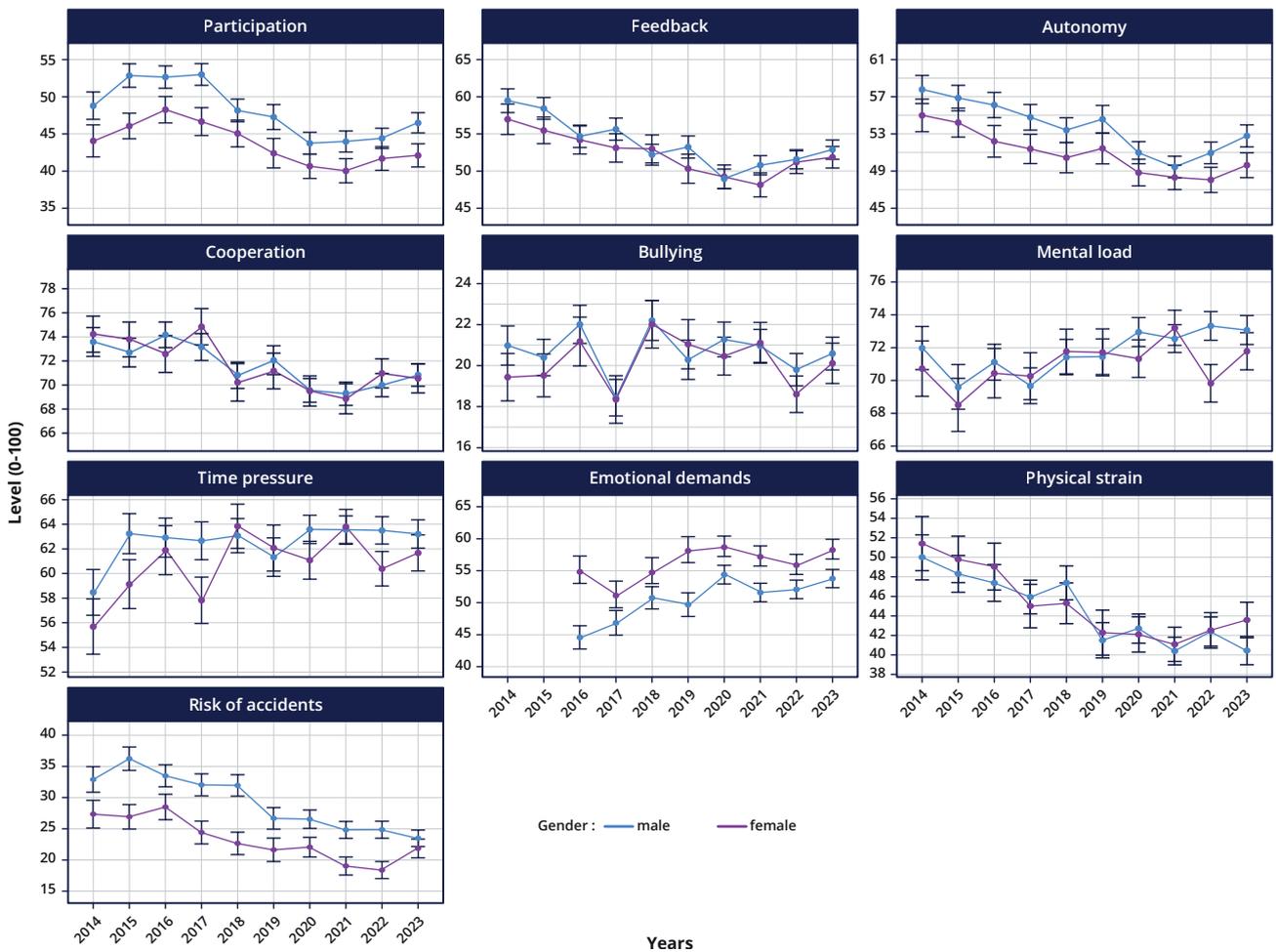
“Care” activities in life outside work, especially childcare and housework, are still more frequently carried out by women.

While a majority of employees would like to reduce their working hours, it is women who express this wish even more frequently than men. Furthermore, women are even more in favour of a general reduction in working hours with the same pay than men.

## 1. Development of the quality of work

Figure 1 shows the development of the various dimensions of work quality as a function of gender. Over the years, male employees have consistently shown higher values in the areas of co-determination (participation), autonomy and accident risk. Female employees, on the other hand, consistently report higher emotional demands at work.

Figure 1: Development of the quality of work



Note: Data from the QoW survey 2014-2023; mean value of the scale from 0 to 100 with a confidence interval of 95.

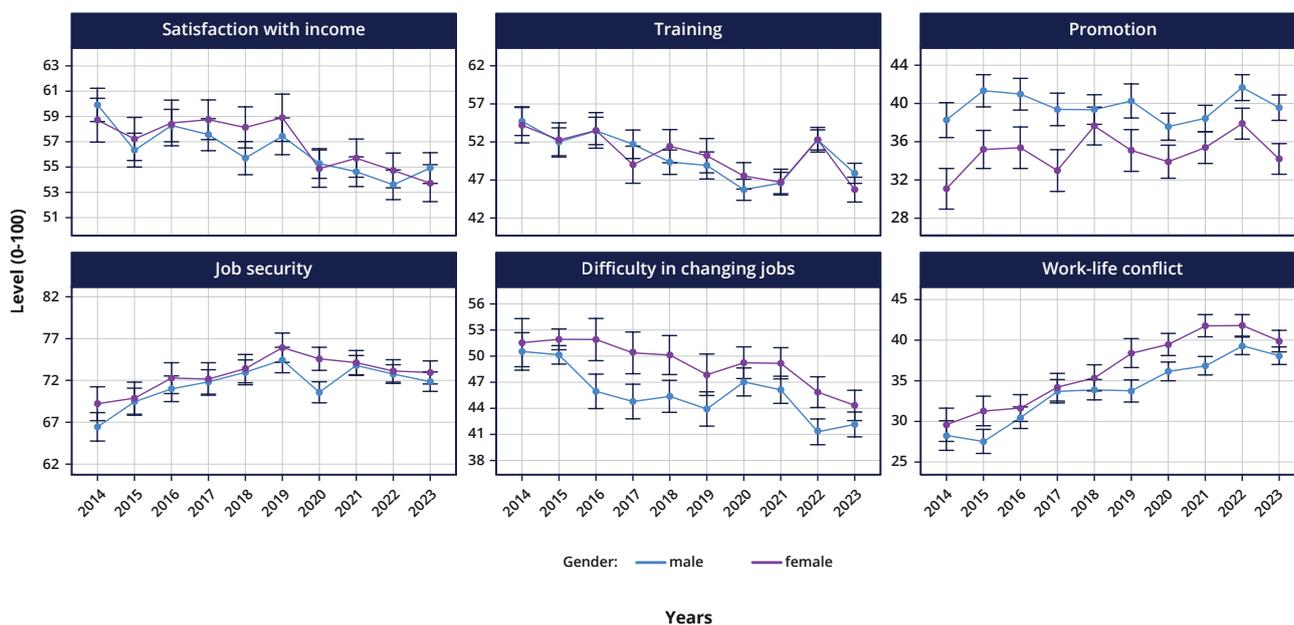
In this newsletter, only the masculine generic is used for the purpose of clarifying the text. It refers to any gender identity and thus includes both female and male persons, transgender persons as well as persons who do not feel they belong to either gender or persons who feel they belong to both genders.

## 2. Development of the quality of employment

Figure 2 shows the development of the various dimensions of employment quality broken down by gender. Over the years, male employees report relatively constant higher values for promotion opportunities and lower values for the dif-

ficulty of finding a new job compared to female employees. In contrast, female employees consistently report higher values for conflicts between work and private life compared to male employees.

Figure 2: Development of job quality

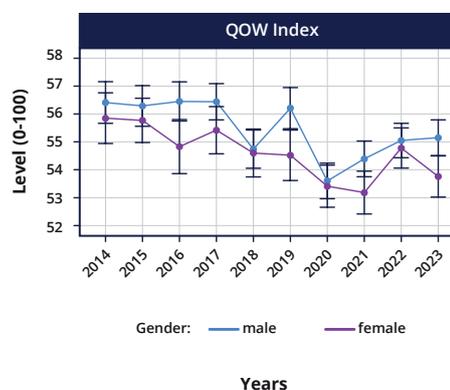


Note: Data from the QoW survey 2014-2023; mean value of the scale from 0 to 100 with a confidence interval of 95%.

## 3. Development of the QoW index

Figure 3 shows the development of the QoW Index, which is an overall index of workers' assessment of their quality of life at work, by women and men. Overall, the QoW index hardly changed between 2014 and 2019, but fell sharply between 2019 and 2020 at the time of the pandemic. For male employees, the QoW Index fell more significantly between 2019 and 2020 than for female employees, but then recovered more strongly than for female employees, for whom the QoW Index recovered only slowly. Overall, the QoW index for men is slightly higher than that of women over the ten-year period.

Figure 3: Development of the QoW index



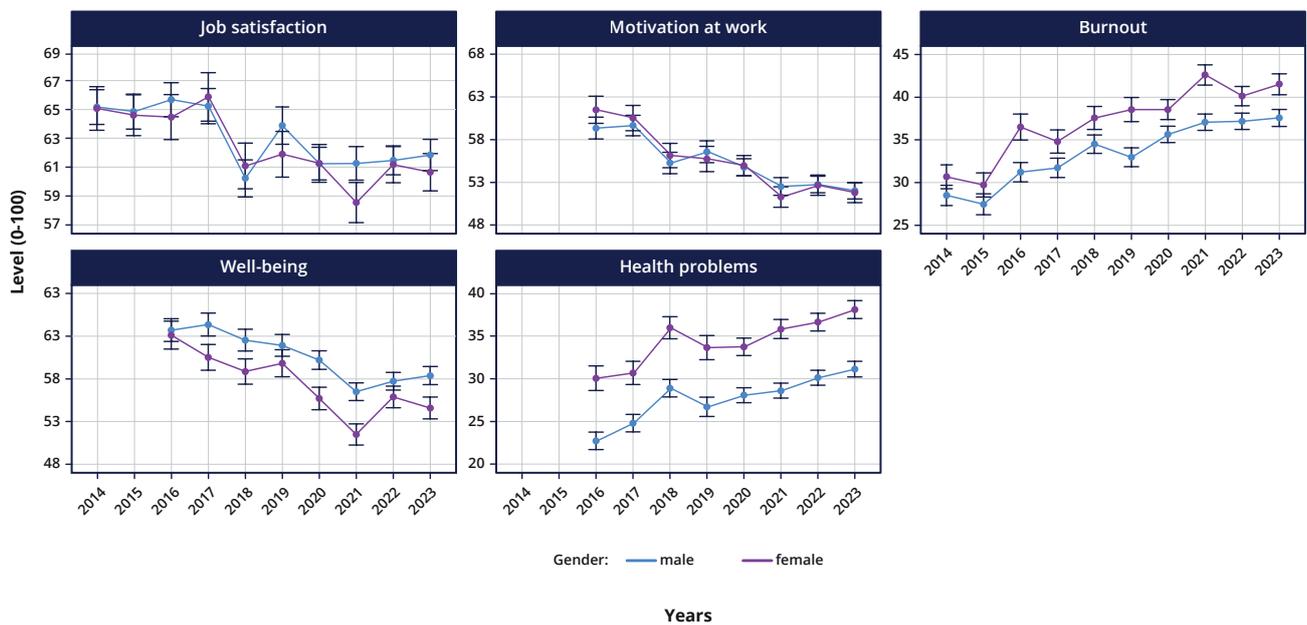
Note: Data from the QoW survey 2014-2023; mean value of the scale from 0 to 100 with a confidence interval of 95%.

## 4. Development of the dimensions of well-being

**Figure 4** shows the development of the various dimensions of well-being for both male and female employees. Over time, female employees show consistently higher values in relation to burnout and health problems, while they report a lower

level of general well-being. In contrast, there are only slight differences between the genders in terms of job satisfaction and work motivation over time.

**Figure 4: Development of the dimensions of well-being**



Note: Data from the QoW survey 2014-2023; mean value of the scale from 0 to 100 with a confidence interval of 95%.

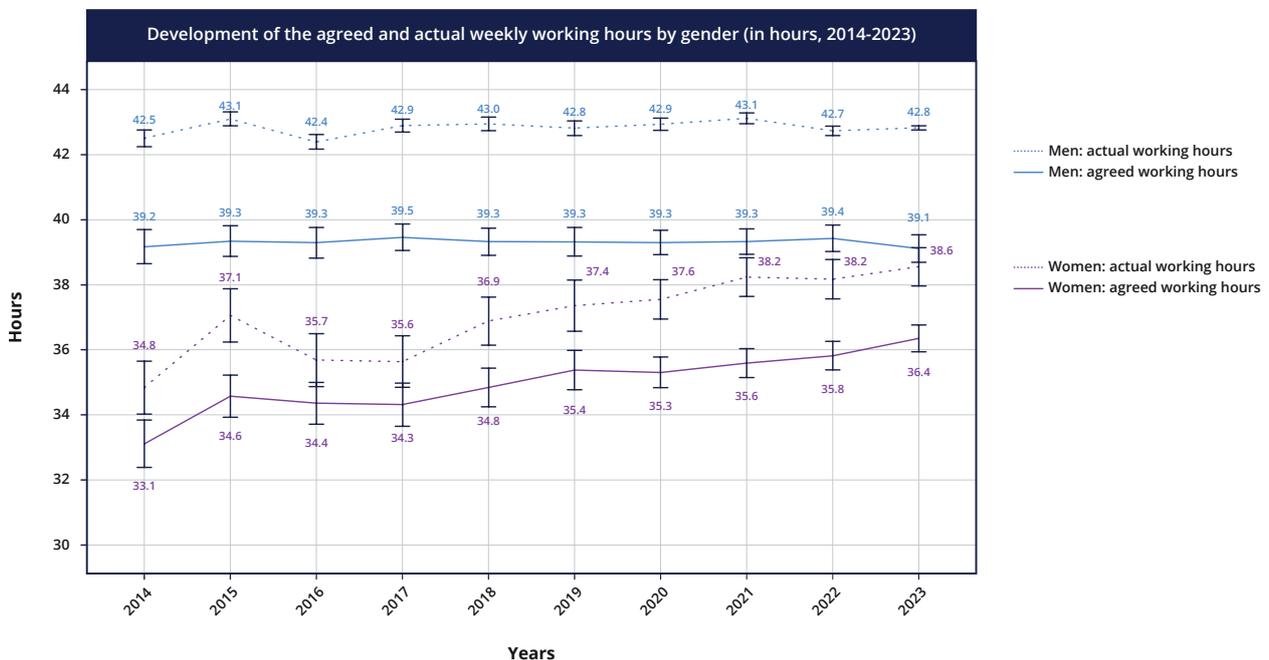
## 5. Time for work and time for "care" activities outside work

Overall, the average agreed weekly working hours have gradually increased since 2014, with an upward trend since 2018.

This increase is mainly attributable to women, as the contractually agreed working hours for men have remained stable over the years (between 39.1 and 39.5 hours), but have

increased from 33.1 hours to 36.4 hours for women. This effect can mainly be explained by the increase in the number of women working full-time and at the same time by the increase in the weekly working hours of women working part-time.

**Figure 5: Development of the agreed and actual weekly working hours by gender (in hours, 2014-2023)**



Note: Data from the QoW survey 2014-2023; graph: CSL.

Since the *Quality of Work Index* measurements began in 2014, the actual weekly working hours have always been higher than the contractually agreed weekly working hours. In 2023, this difference averages 3.3 hours, of which 3.8 hours for men and 2.6 hours for women.

For women in particular, the difference between the contractually agreed and actual working hours has increased over the years, from 1.3 hours overtime in 2017 to 2.6 hours in 2023.

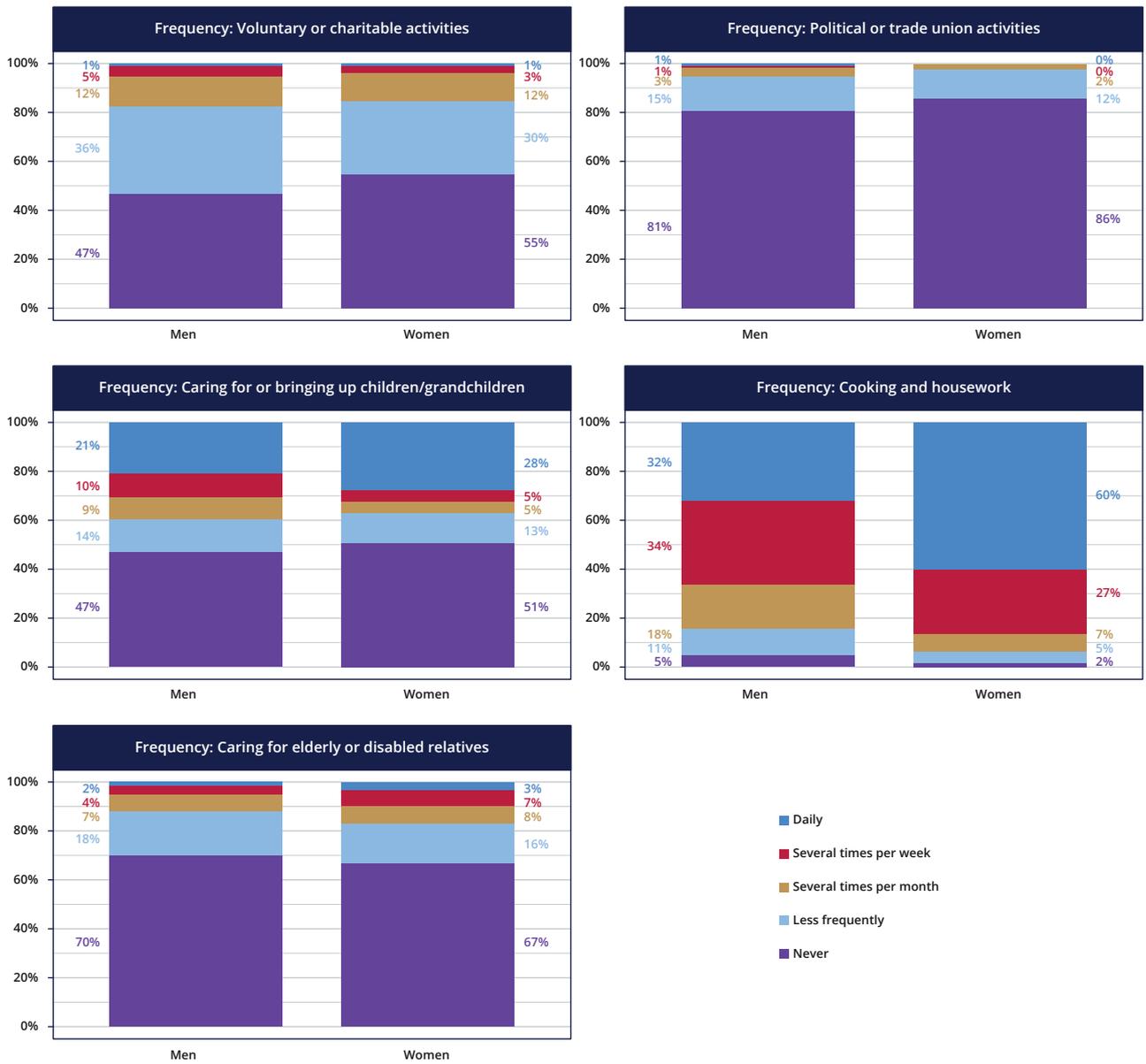
The time spent at work is in direct competition with the time left over for private activities such as "care" activities. "Care" activities refer to a range of activities related to the care and support of others, often in the context of interpersonal rela-

tionships. "Care" activities typically involve tasks and responsibilities that contribute to people's physical, emotional and social well-being.

Women are slightly less likely than men to be involved in voluntary, charitable, political or trade union work, but they are more likely to look after children on a daily basis (28% compared to 21%), while men are more likely to do this several times a week (10% compared to 5%) or a month (9% compared to 5%). When it comes to housework and preparing meals, far more women (60%) do this every day than men (32%), who are more likely to do it several times a week (34% vs. 27%) or a month (18% vs. 7%).



Figure 6: Frequency of “care” activities by gender (in percent)



Note: Data from the QoW survey 2014-2023; graph: CSL.

## 6. Desire for shorter working hours even more pronounced among women

If we compare the difference between the contractually agreed weekly working hours stated by the respondents and the weekly working hours they would like to work, the proportion of those who would like to work less than the contractually agreed working hours has increased since 2018. This means that 53% of employees now want to work fewer hours per week (compared to 33% in 2018), while 39% are satisfied with their contractually agreed working hours and 8% would like to work more.

A comparison of women and men in **figure 7** shows that the proportion of those who would like to reduce their working hours is higher among women (58%) than among men (50%).

When asked about their opinion on a general reduction in working hours with the same pay, women (87%) are also slightly more positive than men (80%).

**Figure 7: Desire to reduce the number of weekly working hours (in percent)**

Difference contractual and desired weekly working time (grouped)						
Total	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	33%	35%	40%	44%	51%	53%
Gender	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Women	38%	41%	43%	48%	53%	58%
Men	29%	31%	38%	41%	50%	50%

Note: Data from the QoW survey 2014-2023; graph: CSL.

## 7. Conclusions

The analysis emphasises the persistent gender gaps in the professional context in Luxembourg and highlights specific areas that require special attention in order to promote gender equality.

Thus, in terms of the dimensions of quality of work, female workers systematically report higher emotional demands at work, indicating the need to better understand and tackle the factors that contribute to these demands.

Career opportunities: The differences between women and men in promotion opportunities and difficulties in finding a new job suggest that recruitment, promotion and career planning practices need to be thoroughly overhauled to ensure equal opportunities.

Well-being and health at work: The higher levels of burnout and health problems among female employees emphasise the need for strategies to improve well-being at work, especially for women.

In addition, female employees regularly report higher levels of conflict between their work and personal lives, which may necessitate initiatives to facilitate this balance, such as measures that give women more influence over working hours and offer employees more flexibility.

Finally, the fact that women are more likely to express a desire to reduce their working hours suggests that there may be a need to rethink working time policies and practices.

## 8. References

Schütz, H.; Thiele, N. (2023). *Quality of Work Luxembourg 2023. Bericht*. Infas, Bonn.

Sischka, P. & Steffgen, G. (2023). *Quality of Work. Forschungsbericht zur Erhebungswelle 2023. Research Report*. Luxembourg: Universität Luxemburg.

## Method

For the “Quality of Work Index” study, on the work situation and quality of work of employees in Luxembourg, approx. 1,500-2,700 interviews (CATI; CAWI) have been conducted annually since 2013 by Infas (since 2014) on behalf of the Chambre des salariés Luxembourg and the University of Luxembourg (Table 1). The findings presented in this report refer to the surveys since 2014 (Sischka & Steffgen, 2023).

**Table 1: Methodological background of the QoW survey**

<b>Aim of the survey</b>	Study of the labour situation and quality of work of employees in Luxembourg					
<b>Conception, realisation, analysis</b>	University of Luxembourg: Department of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, Chambre des Salariés Luxembourg, since 2014 Infas Institute, previously TNS-ILRES					
<b>Type of survey</b>	Telephone survey (CATI) or online survey (CAWI; since 2018) in Luxembourgish, German, French, Portuguese or English					
<b>Taille de l'échantillon</b>	2014: 1,532; 2015: 1,526; 2016: 1,506; 2017: 1,522; 2018: 1,689; 2019: 1,495; 2020: 2,364; 2021: 2,594; 2022: 2,696; 2023: 2,732					
<b>Quality of work scales</b>	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
	Participation	2	0.72-0.80	Mental load	4	0.74-0.77
	Feedback	2	0.70-0.81	Time pressure	2	0.70-0.79
	Autonomy	4	0.74-0.79	Emotional demands	2	0.79-0.87
	Cooperation	4	0.79-0.84	Physical strain	2	0.68-0.76
	Bullying	5	0.72-0.78	Risk of accident	2	0.75-0.85
<b>Quality of employment scales</b>	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
	Income satisfaction	2	0.87-0.89	Job security	2	0.72-0.78
	Training	2	0.74-0.87	Difficulty in changing jobs	2	0.81-0.84
	Promotion	2	0.84-0.90	Work-life conflict	3	0.75-0.82
<b>QoW Index</b>	The QoW Index is formed by the unweighted average of all scales of the quality of work and employment. The scales are also calculated using the unweighted mean value of the corresponding individual indicators, which assume values between 1 (e.g. "never") and 5 (e.g. "almost always"). The scale values are then standardised to values between 0 and 100 $(((\text{original scale value} - 1) / 4) * 100)$ .					
<b>Well-being scales</b>	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Scale	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
	Job satisfaction	3	0.79-0.85	General well-being (WHO-5)	5	0.83-0.90
	Work motivation	3	0.65-0.76	Health problems	7	0.72-0.79
	Burnout	6	0.80-0.86			

<b>Contractual weekly working time</b>	How many hours are you contractually employed to work every week? (A06)
<b>Actual weekly working time</b>	With reference to the last 12 months, how many hours a week do you work on average? Please include any regular additional time or overtime.
<b>Desired weekly working time</b>	If you could decide freely how many hours you want to work, how many hours a week would you like to work at the moment? Please take into account that you must earn a living.

**Université du Luxembourg**  
Department of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences

Philipp.Sischka@uni.lu  
T +352 46 66 44 9782

Georges.Steffgen@uni.lu  
T +352 46 66 44 6644

**Chambre des salariés**

David.Buechel@csl.lu  
T +352 27 494 306

Sylvain.Hoffmann@csl.lu  
T +352 27 494 200