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BETTERWORK



WELL-BEING
AND HEALTH
AT WORK

N° 26 NEWS FROM THE
QUALITY OF WORK INDEX



LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT QUALITY IN LUXEMBOURG: NO IMPROVEMENT IN SIGHT

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This newsletter purports to show how the various dimensions of work and employment quality and well-being have evolved in Luxembourg over the past ten years.

It notes that some dimensions of the quality of work and employment, which experienced a constant downward trend until 2020, have stabilised at a low level in recent years. This applies in particular to the work quality dimensions of participation, feedback, autonomy and cooperation. However, the employment quality dimensions also remain at a low level overall. Training and promotion opportunities – which last increased in 2022 – are already showing a significant decline again in 2023. Overall, the *Quality of Work Index (QoW)* has risen slightly since 2020, but is still below the 2019 value (pre-corona virus period).

The well-being dimensions of job satisfaction, work motivation and general well-being show a steady decline

between 2017 and 2021, although these dimensions have stabilised somewhat since 2022. Burnout increased almost constantly between 2015 and 2021, but has also remained at a constant level since then. Health problems have risen almost constantly over time.

The two dimensions of work-life conflicts and psychological harassment show the strongest negative correlations with job satisfaction, work motivation and general well-being. This means that as work-life conflicts and/or psychological harassment are more prevalent, job satisfaction, motivation and general well-being falls.

Conclusion: The downward trend in many dimensions currently appears to have halted at a low level. Between 2022 and 2023, there were only major changes in two dimensions (training and promotion opportunities). Most working conditions continue to exhibit lower values in 2023 compared to the pre-corona virus period (2019).

1. Dimensions of the quality of work and employment

Quality of work describes all (psychosocial) working conditions that can influence the well-being of employees (e.g. work content, working environment). Employment quality, on the other hand, describes all aspects of a job that relate to the employment relationship – i.e. the working conditions (Steffgen et al., 2020). These include satisfaction with income, training and promotion opportunities, job security, difficulty in changing jobs and work-life conflicts.

The present newsletter analyses how the various dimensions of the quality of work and employment of Luxembourg

employees have developed over time, as well as the connection with various dimensions of well-being. Data from the *Quality of Work Survey (QoW; waves 2014-2023; Sischka & Steffgen, 2023)* – an annual representative survey of employees from Luxembourg – is used for this purpose (for details, see box: Method). The results of the QoW surveys from 2020 onwards must be interpreted against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a massive impact on the world of work (Beine et al., 2020; Béland et al., 2020; Eurofound, 2020; Sischka & Steffgen, 2021; Sischka et al., 2022).

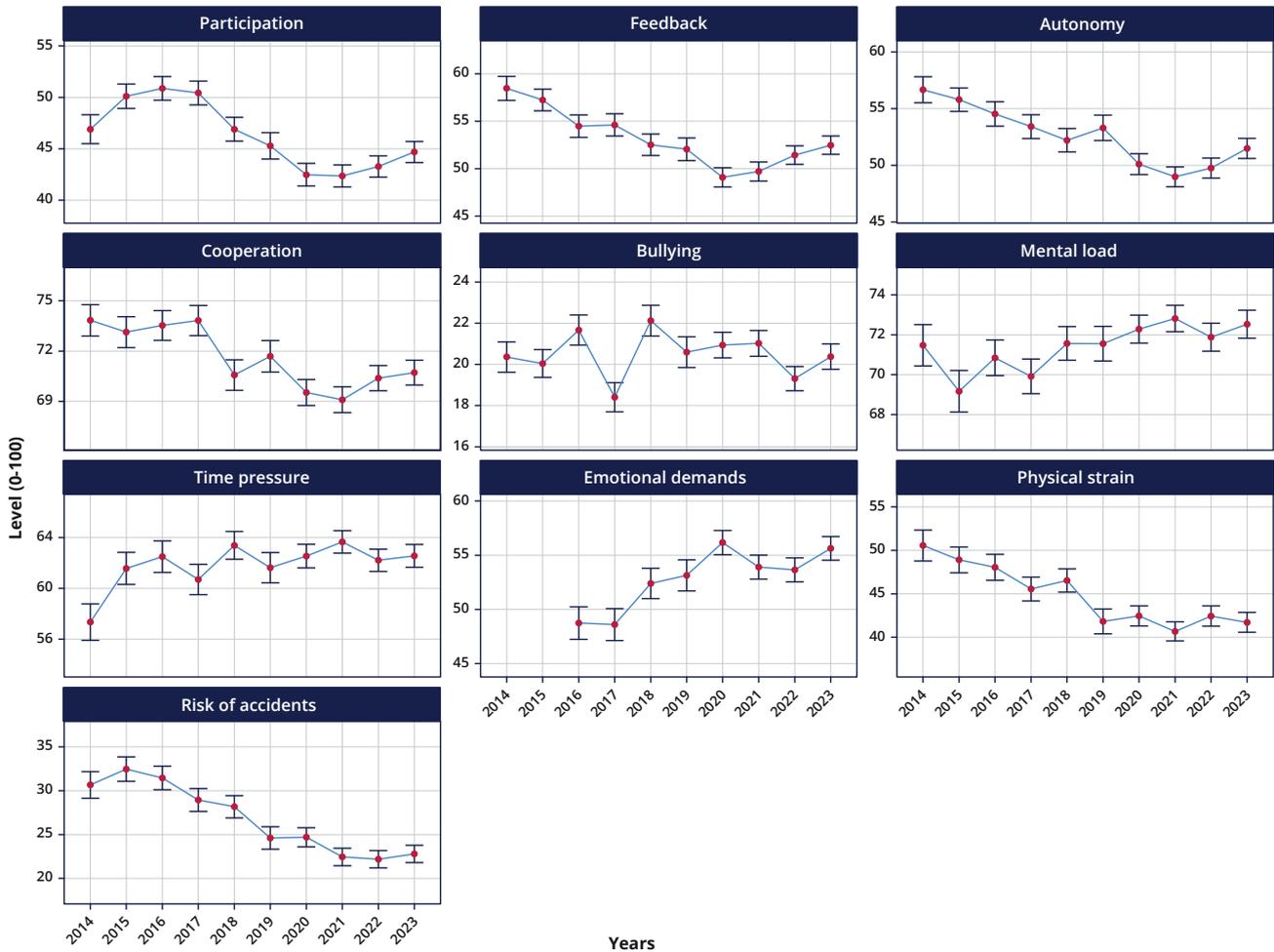
In this newsletter, only the masculine generic is used for the purpose of clarifying the text. It refers to any gender identity and thus includes both female and male persons, transgender persons as well as persons who do not feel they belong to either gender or persons who feel they belong to both genders.

2. Development of quality of work

Figure 1 shows the development of quality of work from 2014 to 2023. The dimensions of participation, feedback, autonomy and cooperation show an almost continuous downward trend between 2014 (or 2016) and 2020. From 2021, these dimensions stabilised somewhat and have since risen again slightly. Psychological harassment shows some fluctuations over time (especially between 2016 and 2018); however, the mean value in 2023 was almost back to the original level of 2014. Mental demands increased between 2017 and 2021 but have

remained relatively unchanged since then. Time pressure increased slightly between 2014 and 2015 but has remained at a relatively constant level since then – with certain fluctuations. Emotional demands also increased between 2017 and 2020, fell slightly in 2021 and 2022 and rose again slightly in 2023. The dimensions of physical strain and risk of accidents declined between 2014 and 2019 but have remained largely unchanged since then.

Figure 1 : Development of the quality of work



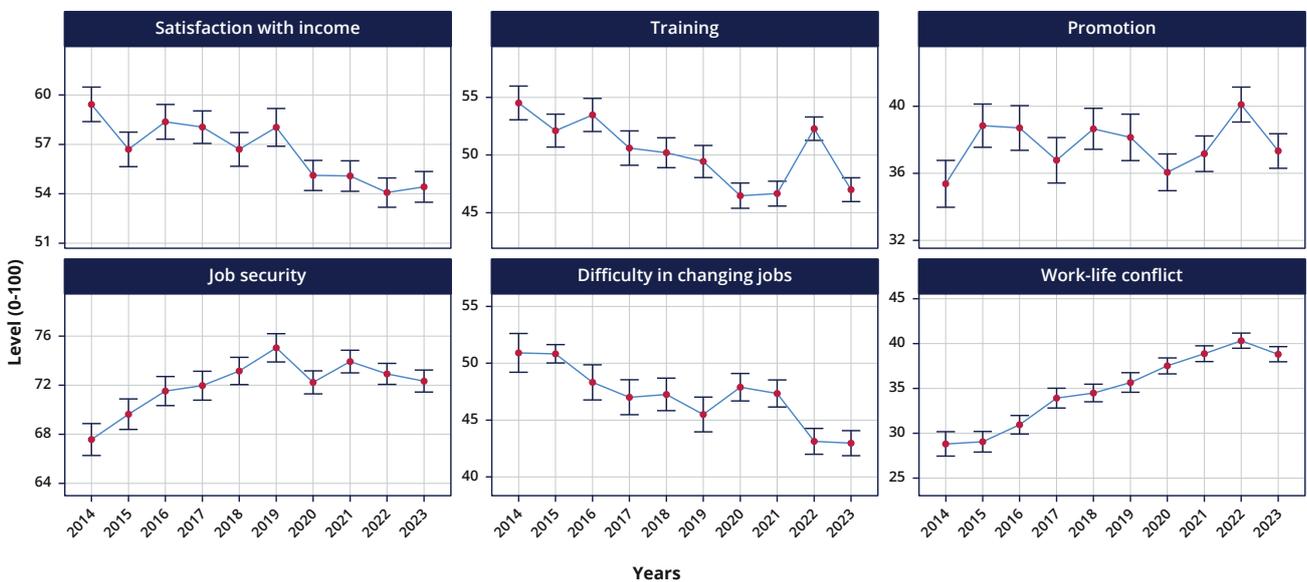
Note: Data from QoW 2014-2023; Mean value of the scale ranging from 0 to 100 with 95 % confidence interval.

3. Development of the quality of employment

Figure 2 shows the development of the quality of employment from 2014 to 2023. Satisfaction with income decreased in particular between 2019 and 2020 and has remained at a low level since. Perceived training opportunities show a downward trend between 2014 and 2021; however, following a sharp increase in 2022, the value fell again just as sharply in 2023. In terms of promotion opportunities, there were only slight fluctuations over time – however, there was also a slightly sharper

decline in 2023. Job security increased continuously between 2014 and 2019; however, this trend has been broken since 2020. The difficulty in changing jobs has decreased overall over time – with the exception of the coronavirus years 2020 and 2021. In contrast, work-life conflicts increased almost continuously between 2014 and 2022; however, there was a slight decrease in 2023.

Figure 2 : Development of the quality of employment



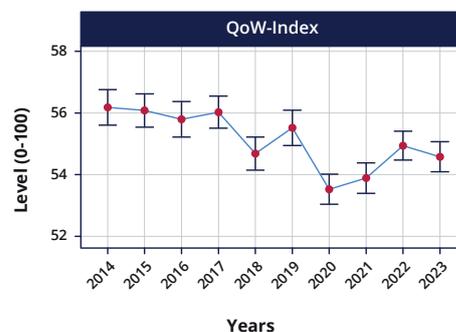
Note: Data from QoW 2014-2023; Mean value of the scale ranging from 0 to 100 with 95 % confidence interval.

4. Development of the QoW Index

Figure 3 shows the development of the QoW Index for employees in Luxembourg. There were only minor changes in the QoW Index between 2014 and 2019.

However, the index fell significantly between 2019 and 2020. Between 2020 and 2023, however, there is a slight upward trend again.

Figure 3 : Development of the QoW Index



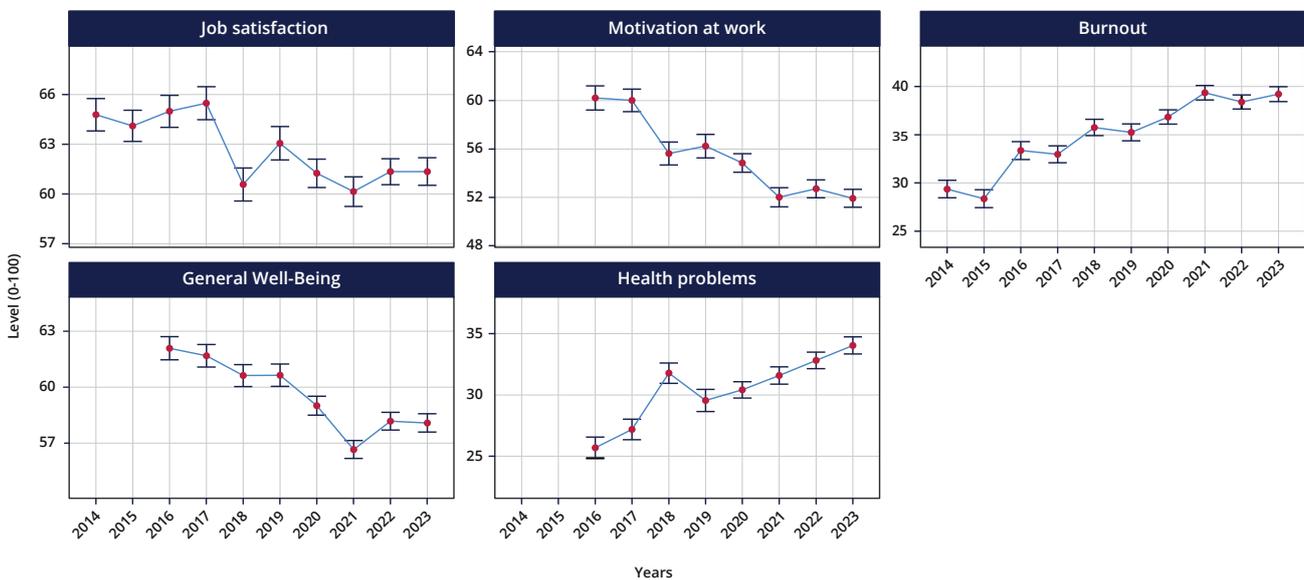
Note: Data from QoW 2014-2023; Mean value of the scale ranging from 0 to 100 with 95 % confidence interval.

5. Development of the well-being dimensions

Figure 4 shows the development of the various well-being dimensions for employees in Luxembourg from 2014 to 2023. Job satisfaction and motivation at work decreased significantly between 2017 and 2018 and have been at a much lower level since then. Motivation at work also showed a further decline between 2018 and 2023, while burnout

increased significantly overall between 2014 and 2023. General well-being decreased almost continuously between 2016 and 2021, with a slight increase from 2022 onwards. Health problems, on the other hand, increased significantly between 2016 and 2023.¹

Figure 4: Development of the well-being dimensions



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

6. The QoW Index 2023 by demographics, occupational and organisational characteristics

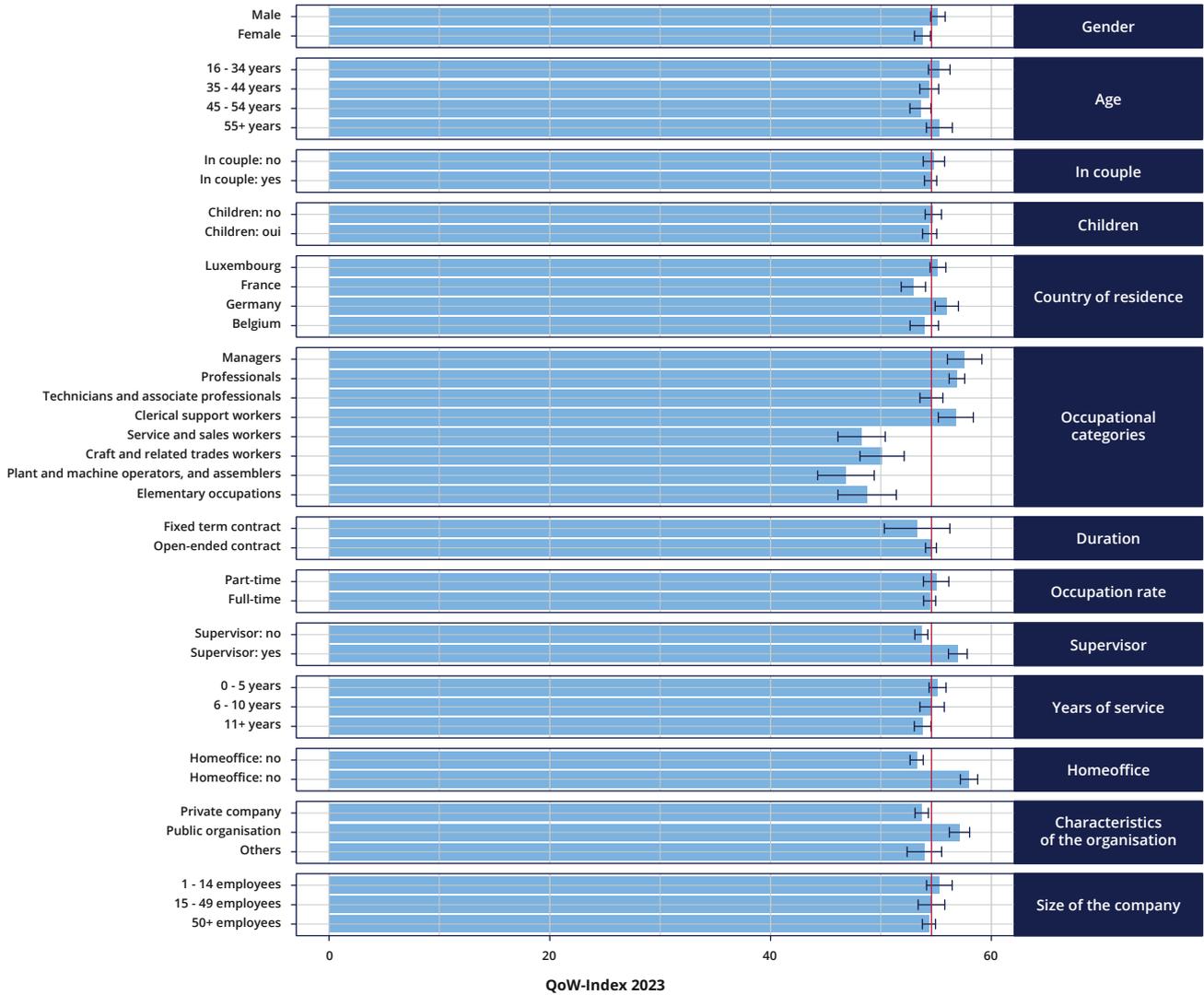
Figure 5 shows the QoW Index distinguished by various demographic characteristics (gender, age group, partner, children, country of residence), as well as by occupational (professional group, fixed term, scope of employment, supervisor position, years in operation, work at home) and organisational characteristics (type of organisation and size of operation). Male employees have a slightly higher QoW Index than female employees. Set off by country of residence, employees residing in France have the lowest QoW values, while employees residing in Germany and Luxembourg have the highest.

Broken down by occupational group, managers, employees in academic professions and office workers display above average values, while employees in service professions, skilled trades, plant operators and unskilled labour have below average values on the QoW Index.

Employees who work in state organisations have a higher QoW Index value than persons who work in private or other organisations. People who work from home at least several times a month have a higher QoW Index than employees who do not work from home.

¹ As the operationalisation system changed between 2015 and 2016, only values from 2016 are shown due to the limited comparability with previous years.

Figure 5 : The QoW Index 2023 differentiated by demographics



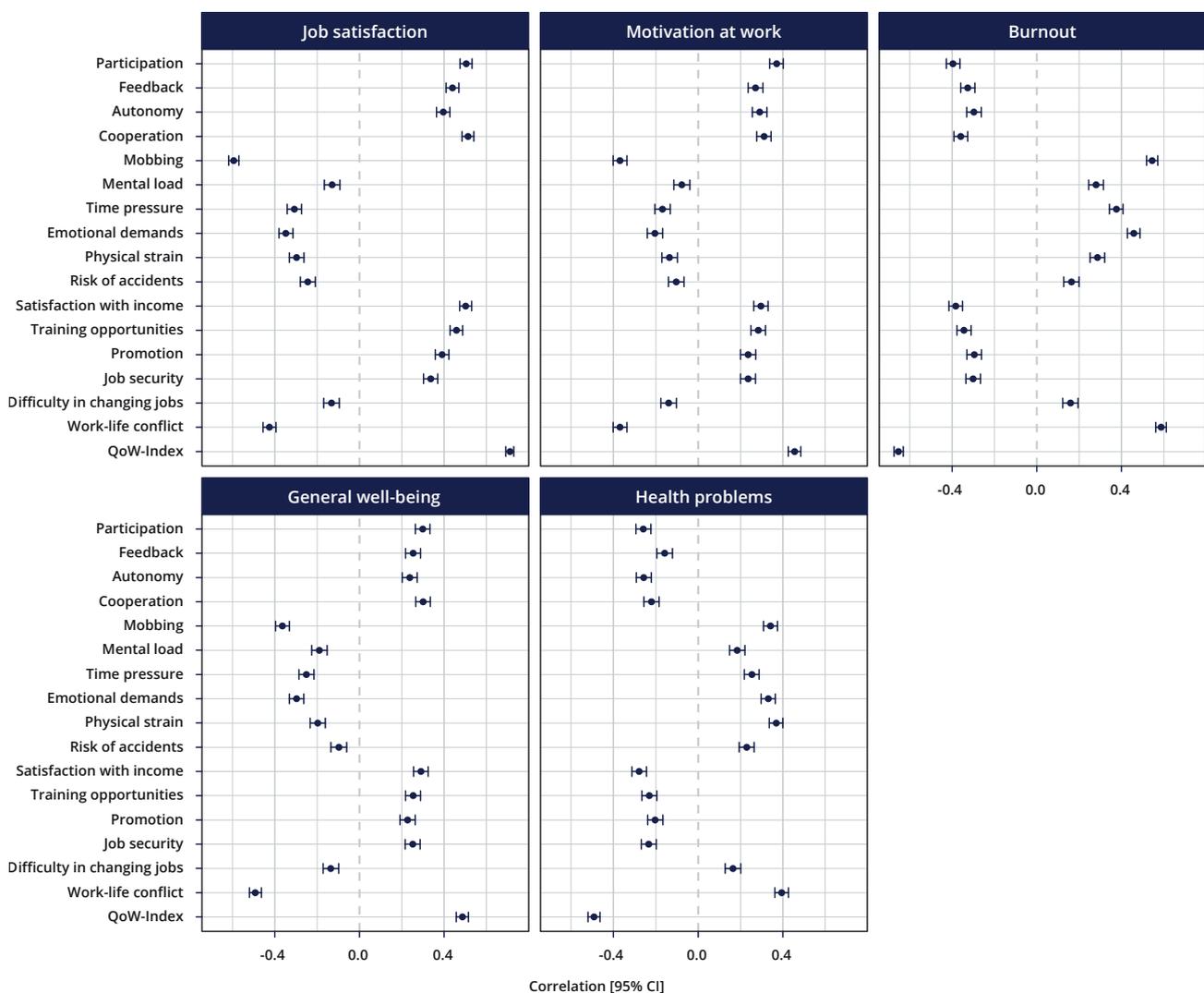
Note: QoW 2023 data; mean value of the scale ranging from 0 to 100 with 95 % confidence interval. The red line represents the mean value of the QoW Index 2023 across all employees.

7. Relationship between quality of work/employment and well-being

Figure 6 shows the correlation of the individual work and employment quality dimensions with the well-being dimensions. Participation, feedback, autonomy, cooperation, satisfaction with income, training and promotion opportunities, as well as Job security and the QoW Index are positively associated with job satisfaction, motivation at work and general well-being, and negatively associated with burnout and health problems. In contrast, psychological harassment, mental demands,

time pressure, emotional demands, physical strain, risk of accidents, difficulty in changing jobs and work-life conflicts are negatively associated with job satisfaction, motivation at work and general well-being, and positively associated with burnout and health problems. In addition to the QoW Index, psychological harassment and work-life conflicts in particular show the strongest correlations with the well-being dimensions.

Figure 6 : Relationship between quality of work and employment and well-being



Note: Data from QoW 2023; correlations (Pearson's r) with 95 % confidence interval.

8. Summary

The deterioration in psychosocial working conditions between 2014 and 2020 appears to have stabilised somewhat since 2021. Many downward trends appear to have at least been halted. Since then, the various dimensions have been at a lower level. Psychological harassment, mental demands, time pressure and emotional demands have decreased somewhat between 2021 and 2022 or at least have not deteriorated further and are back at the level of the pre-corona situation (2019). However, the continuous improvement in physical strain and the risk of accidents did not continue between 2021 and 2023.

With regard to the employment quality dimensions, it can be seen that satisfaction with income has decreased over time and has remained at a lower level since 2020. Perceived training opportunities, which increased significantly in 2022, show an equally sharp decline in 2023. Promotion opportunities also fell again in 2023. Job security – which rose continuously between 2014 and 2019 – has remained stable since the COVID-19 pandemic. The difficulty of changing jobs has decreased overall between 2014 and 2023. Work-life conflicts – on a continuous upward trend between 2014 and 2022 – fell slightly for the first time in 2023.

With regard to the well-being dimensions of job satisfaction, work motivation and general well-being, a decline can be observed over time. These dimensions have stabilised somewhat since 2022 but are still below the level of the pre-corona virus situation (2019). Burnout and health problems have also risen almost constantly over time.

The dimensions of work and employment quality are associated with various dimensions of well-being. In particular, a higher level of psychological harassment and work-life conflicts is associated with lower job satisfaction, lower work motivation and lower general well-being, as well as higher levels of burnout and more health problems.

Differences in the QoW Index are particularly evident when differentiating between occupational groups. For example, managers have the highest QoW Index values and plant operators the lowest. Employees who work from home at least occasionally also have higher QoW Index values on average compared to employees who do not work from home.

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Method

For the "Quality of Work Index" study, on the work situation and quality 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, 2021a).

Table 1 : Methodological background of the QoW survey

Objective of the survey	Investigating the work situation and quality of workers in Luxembourg					
Conception, implementation and analysis	University of Luxembourg: Department of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, Luxembourg Chambre des Salariés, since 2014 Infas Institute, previously TNS-ILRES					
Type of survey	Telephone survey (CATI) or online survey (CAWI; since 2018) in Luxembourgish, German, French, Portuguese or English					
Sample size	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					
Quality of work scales	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
Quality of employment scales	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
QoW Index	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 $(((\text{original scale value} - 1) / 4) * 100)$.					
Well-being scales	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			

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