

Reconciling work and family obligations continued to be very difficult for more than one out of four people in work in 2020

The proportion of employed people working from home increased by 5 percentage points compared to the same period of 2019

27.7% of employed people resident in the Basque Country expressed having great difficulty balancing work with looking after minor children, and 28.7% with looking after their dependents, according to Eustat data. This high degree of difficulty is also perceived by 24.9% of working people when it involves balancing work with personal activities. From a gender perspective, it is worth pointing out that the percentage of people in work who claimed to have a lot of difficulty combining work with other aspects of life was slightly higher among women than men.

With regards to the amount of time spent per day on looking after children and dependent persons, differences were found between men and women. Women who work outside the home and have children under the age of 15 dedicated on average 1.2 hours more per day to their care than working men (4.6 and 3.4 hours, respectively). Furthermore, while just over half of women (51.1%) dedicated 5 hours or more per day to looking after their children, in the case of men this percentage stood at 27%, with the majority (42.7%) dedicating 2 hours or less to the care of their children.

Furthermore, regarding the time dedicated by people in work to looking after dependent persons, women spent, on average, almost three quarters of an hour more per day on this activity than men (2.3 and 1.6 hours, respectively). The proportion of people in work who regularly look after dependents was approximately 12%, very similar to the value from 2019. This proportion was higher among the 55 and over age group, reaching 22.7%.

The distribution of domestic tasks amongst working men and working women in the Basque Country was also imbalanced: almost nine out of ten men, 84.8%, dedicated 2 hours or less to those tasks, whilst almost three out of ten women, 29.9%, dedicated 3 hours or more.

The data show that the difference between the amount of time men and women spent on care and household chores has been diminishing over time. While in 2010 the difference was 1 hour for household chores, 1.9 hours for caring for children and 2.4 hours for caring for dependents, in 2020 these differences fell to 0.6 hours, 1.2 hours and 0.7 hours, respectively.

This uneven distribution of functions means that 15.1% of working women were very unsatisfied with the collaboration offered by their spouse or partner in carrying out domestic tasks. In contrast, a high number of working men were very satisfied with the participation of their partner (69.6%). Despite this, or precisely because of it, the percentage of men declaring themselves to be very satisfied with the time they spend on household tasks (46.5%) is similar to that for women (45.2%).

It is worth mentioning that working women expressed a greater satisfaction from looking after their children; 64.1% indicated a high satisfaction; and their dependents; 45.4%; for working men, these percentages dropped to 53.8% and 48.9%, respectively.

As regards general job satisfaction, the overall rating was 7.3 (out of 10), with some differences according to specific aspects. Satisfaction with promotion in the workplace was rated at 4.5, flexibility of working hours was rated at 6.5 and holidays and leave was given a score of 7.3.

23.5% of working people habitually prolonged their working day

23.5% of the working population had to habitually dedicate more hours to their job than those established or foreseen, and another 18.4% did so sometimes. Although the prolongation of the working day had always affected men more than women, in 2020 women were more affected. This was because, while 18.8% of men and a similar percentage of women (18%) sometimes prolonged their working day, 24.4% of women did so habitually compared to 22.5% of men.

An increase was observed, in respect of 2010, in the percentage of people who had to prolong their working day. When the prolongation was habitual the increase was 4.7 points, but when the prolongation was sporadic the percentage stayed the same.

On the other hand, 14.6% of working men believed that requesting paternity leave would be highly detrimental to them. Notwithstanding, just 7.3% of men believed that paternity could affect them slightly compared to 20% of working women, who believed that maternity could create promotion inequalities. The fear that requesting leave or reduced hours for family reasons would affect career options was slightly greater amongst women than amongst men (30.5% and 26.5%, respectively).

The percentage of people who enjoyed flexible working hours fell and the percentage of people who worked from home increased

Amongst the various methods that might facilitate the reconciliation of work, family and personal life, short-term leave is within reach of the majority of the working population, followed by the possibility of requesting leave in the form of unpaid days off. Furthermore, almost half the working population stated that they experienced little difficulty in obtaining extended leaves of absence or a reduction in working hours.

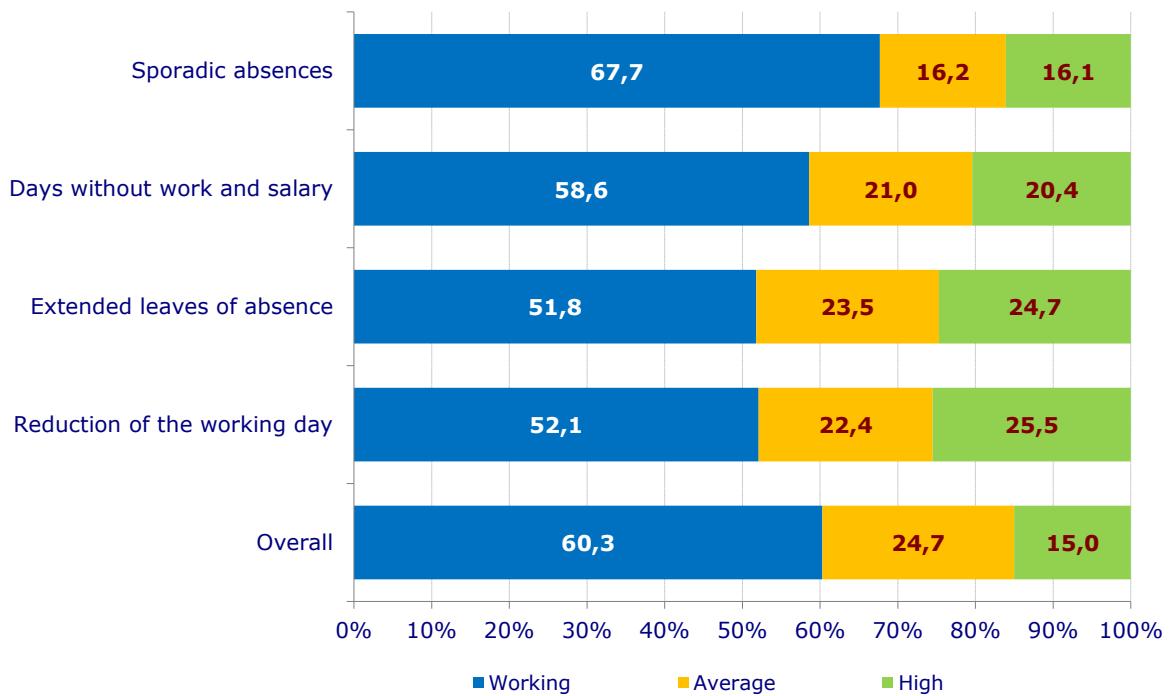
A flexible timetable for finishing work, another solution for improving reconciliation, was enjoyed by three out of ten workers (32.6%). From the gender perspective, men benefited the most, as 35.6% enjoyed a flexible timetable compared to 29.3% of women.

Compared to the previous year, a decrease of 10.1 points was observed in the percentage of people who enjoyed flexible working hours: while in 2019, 42.7% benefited from this measure for a better work-life balance, in 2020 the percentage fell to 32.6%.

As for working from home, differences were also found compared to the previous year: while in 2019 the percentage of people who worked from home on at least half of the days stood at 5.5%, in 2020 this percentage rose to 10.8%, although it is true that the large majority (81.9%) did not work from home at all.

With respect to the different types of working day, a steady decrease was seen in the percentage of people who had a split working day. While in 2010, 41.5% of people worked only morning and afternoon shifts, in 2020 it was 32.5%, hence there was an increase in the percentage of people who had a continuous working day (51.1% in 2010 to 55.7% in 2020) or a mixed working day (from 7.4% in 2010 to 11.8% in 2020).

Population in work in the Basque Country by difficulty of requesting permissions (%). 2020



Source: Eustat. Survey on the reconciliation of work, family and personal life

On only 3% of occasions was it the father who sporadically took care of young children during the working day

In households where both partners worked, looking after children during the working hours of the parents corresponded to schools in 90.4% of cases, on 4.4% of occasions to both working parents and in 2.8% of cases to family members or other unpaid people.

In these same households, the sporadic care of children when, during working hours, they have to be taken to the doctor, are ill or do not have school, was provided in most cases by both parents (68%), and less frequently by the mother (15%), by family members or unpaid people (12.1%) or the father (3%).

Finally, in relation to work preferences, the working population opted for the condition of salaried worker (85.6%) against that of self-employed worker (14.4%) and for working in the public sector (64.7%) as opposed to the private sector (35.3%), while this preference is more balanced between large companies (56.2%) and small companies (43.8%).

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