

News Release



Date: 16 February 2006
No. : 24/2006
Time of release: 11.00 hrs

Theme:
**Population and Social
Conditions**

Compiled by:

Labour Market Unit
e-mail: labourmarket.nso@gov.mt
Tel: 25997669

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Labour Market

Reconciliation between work and family life

This news release provides an overview of the working arrangements for women and men reconciling between work and family life and the equal sharing of family responsibilities. The data contained in this release presents LFS data from the ad-hoc module on reconciliation between work and family life. For the ad hoc module a sub sample from LFS was extracted. The methodological notes on the end pages of this release should be consulted for further details on the LFS. All data contained within this release refers to persons aged between 15 years and 64 years.

Reconciliation between work and family life establishes how far persons participate in the labour force as they would wish and where they are unable to do so, whether the reasons are connected with a lack of suitable care services for children and dependent persons. The second aim of this release is to analyse the degree of flexibility offered at work in terms of reconciliation with family life.

Table 1 shows that the mean household size for households with children is 4.1, where children are defined to be 14 years or less. Additionally, out of all households with persons aged between 15 to 64 years, 43.2 per cent had children.

In households, where at least one person is elderly or disabled the mean household size was estimated to be 3.1. Out of all households where at least one person is between 15 to 64 years, 16.9 per cent had disabled or elderly residents.

Table 3 shows the age distribution of persons taking care of persons with disability or elderly who do not necessarily live in the same residence. A total of 24,167 persons were estimated to be taking care of elderly or disabled. The table shows that 34.3 per cent were males, whilst the remainder 65.7 per cent were females. The majority of persons taking care of elderly or disabled or 46.1 per cent were between 45 to 54 years old. Furthermore, from the total number of persons with caring responsibilities 57.3 per cent were inactive, followed by 41.1 per cent that were employed.

Out of all persons aged between 15 to 64 years, 5,923 persons took regular care of other children apart from those residing in their house. 43.4 per cent were between 55 to 64 years old. Additionally, of all persons with child care responsibilities 67.1 per cent were inactive, followed by 31.8 per cent that were employed. These figures show that family and care responsibilities are the first reason for inactivity of women aged between 45-64 years.

On taking a closer look at the inactive and unemployed persons, one notes that 8,070 persons or 6.7 per cent would like to change their life pattern in order to have less time for the care of children, elderly or disabled persons. The main reason which prevents these persons from having a job is related to other reasons not linked to the lack of care facilities as Table 8 illustrates.

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National Statistics Office
Library & Information Unit
Lascaris, Valletta CMR 02, Malta
Tel: (+356) 25997219
Fax: (+356) 25997205
e-mail: nso@gov.mt
<http://www.nso.gov.mt>

Childcare arrangements amongst the 59,353 persons with children between 0 to 14 years, varied from in house arrangements to the use of child care centres. As table 9 illustrates 31,636 persons or 53.3 per cent of those with child caring responsibilities left their children with the husband / wife / partner whilst one of the parents was at work. A further 18,753 or 31.6 per cent did not use any child care at all despite the fact that they worked. In this respect, a good proportion of persons who did not use any type of childcare worked on a part time basis. Child care centres or paid child minding services were the least common method used employed persons with children below 14 years.

Table 10 illustrates the working arrangements that parents make when their children are on holiday or when the childcare usually used is not available. As estimated 12 per cent of the employed population with child caring responsibilities said that they had to make use of their vacation leave, or have a specific working arrangement when their children were on holidays or when the childcare used was not available.

Table 12 shows the number of employed persons taking time off from work due to family sickness or emergencies. In most of the cases persons had to resort to their vacation leave to make up for such emergencies. An estimated 8.9 per cent or 13,076 persons used their vacation leave for such cases. Whilst a further 3,681 persons or 2.5 per cent used special leave for this reason.

On taking a closer look at the employed persons, one notes that 2,911 persons or 2.0 per cent would like to change their life pattern in order to have more time for the care of children, elderly or disabled persons. Additionally, a further 0.7 per cent would like to increase their working hours to spend less time taking care of others.

The second aim of this release was to analyse the degree of flexibility offered at work in terms of reconciliation between work and family life. Table 14 gives an indication of the possibility to change the start or end of the working day by at least an hour due to family reasons. Of the total employed aged between 15 and 64 years, the majority or 43.5 per cent said that it was not possible to do such work arrangements. A further 31 per cent stated that the permission is granted to alter their working schedule due to family responsibilities.

Table 15 presents the possibility that employed persons may use in order to organise their working time in such a way that they would work extra hours during a particular day in order to take whole days off during other days for family reasons. The majority or 53.9 per cent said that it was not possible to do such a work arrangement. Only 21 per cent stated that it was not a problem to have such working conditions. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that there is no difference between men and women on such working flexibility ■

Table 1. Mean household size

Households	Mean household size
Households with Children	4.1
Households with Elderly or Disabled	3.1

Table 2. Percentage of households out of all households with at least one person aged between 15 to 64 years

Households	%
Households with Children	43.2
Households with Elderly or Disabled	16.9

Table 3. Labour Status of persons aged between 15-64 taking care of elderly/ disabled or persons 15 years or over who need care on regular basis

Labour Status	Persons				Total	
	Persons providing care		Persons not providing care			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Employed	9,939	41.1	137,200	54.8	147,139	53.6
Unemployed	387 ^u	1.6	12,077	4.8	12,464	4.5
Inactive	13,841	57.3	101,279	40.4	115,120	41.9
Total	24,167	100.0	250,556	100.0	274,723	100.0

^u under-represented

Table 4. Age distribution of persons aged between 15-64 taking care of elderly/ disabled or persons 15 years or over who need care on regular basis

Age group	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
15-24	221 ^u	2.7	146 ^u	0.9	367 ^u	1.5
25-34	264 ^u	3.2	1,176 ^u	7.4	1,440 ^u	6.0
35-44	2,436	29.3	3,991	25.2	6,427	26.6
45-54	3,740	45.1	7,407	46.7	11,147	46.1
55-64	1,636 ^u	19.7	3,150	19.8	4,786	19.8
Total	8,297	100.0	15,870	100.0	24,167	100.0

^u under-represented

Table 5. Labour status of persons aged between 15-64 taking regular care of other children apart from their children residing in the house

Labour Status	Persons				Total	
	Persons providing care		Persons not providing care			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Employed	1,883	31.8	145,256	54.0	147,139	53.6
Unemployed	65 ^U	1.1	12,399	4.6	12,464	4.5
Inactive	3,975	67.1	111,145	41.4	115,120	41.9
Total	5,923	100.0	268,800	100.0	274,723	100.0

^U under-represented

Table 6. Age distribution of persons aged between 15-64 taking regular care of other children apart from their children residing in the house

Age group	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
15-24	-	-	74 ^U	1.8	74 ^U	1.2
25-34	180 ^U	10.0	73 ^U	1.8	253 ^U	4.3
35-44	261 ^U	14.4	732 ^U	17.8	993 ^U	16.8
45-54	474 ^U	26.2	1,561 ^U	37.9	2,035	34.4
55-64	894 ^U	49.4	1,674 ^U	40.7	2,568	43.4
Total	1,809	100.0	4,114	100.0	5,923	100.0

^U Under-represented

Table 7. Unemployed or inactive persons that would like to change the working life pattern in order to have less time for caring of others

	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
I would like a job & reduce caring responsibility	1,378 ^U	3.8	6,692	7.4	8,070	6.3
I don't want to change anything	35,169	96.2	84,345	92.6	119,514	93.7
Total	36,547	100.0	91,037	100.0	127,584	100.0

^U under-represented

Table 8. Main Reasons (related to caring responsibilities) which prevents persons from having a job

Main Reasons	Total	
	No	%
Lack of care services during the day (7am-7pm)	865 ^U	10.7
Lack of care services at special times	223 ^U	2.8
Lack of care services during the day	56 ^U	0.7
Care services are too expensive	206 ^U	2.6
Other reason not linked to the lack of care facilities	6,720	83.3
Total	8,070	100.0

Table 9. Main type of childcare used for person's children up to 14 years while person is working

Type of Childcare	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
Use a childcare center/childminder	643 ^u	0.6	530 ^u	1.2	1,173 ^u	0.8
Wife/husband/partner living in same house	28,613	28.3	3,023	6.6	31,636	21.5
Relatives/friends who are not paid	3,508	3.5	4,283	9.3	7,791	5.3
No type of childcare used despite the fact that person works	10,773	10.6	7,980	17.3	18,753	12.7
Sub Total	43,537	43.0	15,816	34.4	59,353	40.3
Person who do not have children who are 14 years or less	57,599	57.0	30,187	65.6	87,786	59.7
Total	101,136	100.0	46,003	100.0	147,139	100.0

^u under-represented

Table 10. Use of vacation leave whilst children are on holidays or when childcare usually used is not available

	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
Use of vacation leave or special working arrangement	4,099	9.4	3,035	19.2	7,134	12.0
No use of vacation leave or special working arrangement	39,438	90.6	12,781	80.8	52,219	88.0
Total	43,537	100.0	15,816	100.0	59,353	100.0

Table 11. Main reasons for employed persons taking vacation leave or making other working arrangements whilst children were on holiday

Main Reasons	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
No one to care for children during day	2,636	64.3	2,061	67.9	4,697	65.8
No one to care for children at special times	492 ^u	12.0	353	11.6	845 ^u	11.9
Childcare services are too expensive	82 ^u	2.0	66 ^u	2.2	148 ^u	2.1
Childcare services not of sufficient quality	104 ^u	2.5	77 ^u	2.5	181 ^u	2.5
Other reason	785 ^u	19.2	478 ^u	15.8	1,263 ^u	17.7
Total	4,099	100.0	3,035	100.0	7,134	100.0

^u under-represented

Table 12. Employed persons taking time off from work between April 2005 and June 2005 for family sickness or emergencies (without using holidays)

	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females		No	%
	No	%	No	%		
No use of family/special leave or vacation leave	91,285	90.2	39,097	85.0	130,382	88.6
Use of family/special leave	2,384	2.4	1,297 ^u	2.8	3,681	2.5
Use of vacation leave	7,467	7.4	5,609	12.2	13,076	8.9
Total	101,136	100.0	46,003	100.0	147,139	100.0

^u under-represented

Table 13. Employed persons that would like to change the working life pattern in order to have more/less time for caring of others by type of employment

Type of Childcare	Type of Job				Total	
	Full-time		Part-time			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Persons not wanting to change the working life pattern	54,860	40.9	5,171	39.7	60,031	40.8
Persons who would like to work more and reduce caring responsibilities	981 ^u	0.7	53 ^u	0.4	1,034 ^u	0.7
Persons who would like to work less and increase caring responsibilities	2,605	2.0	306 ^u	2.4	2,911	2.0
Persons no using any care services	75,675	56.4	7,488	57.5	83,163	56.5
Total	134,121	100.0	13,018	100.0	147,139	100.0

^u under-represented

Table 14. Possibility to vary the start and/or end of the working day for family reasons by at least one hour

	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
It is generally not a problem	33,510	33.1	12,109	26.3	45,619	31.0
It is rarely possible	26,384	26.1	11,201	24.4	37,585	25.5
It is never possible	41,242	40.8	22,693	49.3	63,935	43.5
Total	101,136	100.0	46,003	100.0	147,139	100.0

Table 15. Possibility to organise the working time in such a way working extra hours during particular days to take days off during other day for family reasons

	Sex				Total	
	Males		Females			
	No	%	No	%	No	%
It is generally not a problem	22,149	21.9	8,674	18.9	30,823	21.0
It is rarely possible	25,832	25.5	11,138	24.2	36,970	25.1
It is never possible	53,155	52.6	26,191	56.9	79,346	53.9
Total	101,136	100.0	46,003	100.0	147,139	100.0

Methodological Notes

The Labour Force Survey is an enquiry which is carried out on using a random sample of 2,500 private households. The criteria used for this survey match international methodologies used by ILO as outlined underneath. The Labour Force Survey is carried out on an ongoing basis. The objective is to have a continuous assessment of labour market trends given that the reference weeks are evenly spread throughout the 13 weeks of the quarter.

The LFS is designed to satisfy the concepts and definitions as outlined by Eurostat, which is the EU Statistical Agency. This allows the comparability of the results with other EU member states and countries following ILO definitions of employment and unemployment. Occupations are classified according to the ISCO classification (International Standard Classification of Occupations) whilst the economic activity is classified according to the NACE classification (Nomenclature générale des activités économiques dans les Communautés européennes).

Revision to Population Estimates

As from 2005, the weighting procedures are based on 2004 population estimates. All data contained within this release refers to persons aged between 15 and 64 years

Under represented figures are indicated for each table and should be treated with caution .

Absolute changes between one survey and another must be treated with caution since minor changes (ie, less than 1,800 persons) might be the result of sampling error.

REFERENCE WEEK - The week to which the collected data relate.

EMPLOYEE: The distinction between employees and self-employed is based on the respondent's own judgement as stated during the interview.

EMPLOYMENT: This comprises all persons above 15 years of age who, during the reference week, were in one of the following categories:

paid employment includes those who during the reference week worked for at least one hour for a wage or salary, in cash or in kind.

were employees but were not at work and were: on paid or sick leave, did not work due to bad weather, were undergoing training or education, did not work due to a labour dispute, were absent from work for a period of less than 3 months, were absent from work for a period of more than 3 months and were still receiving some type of payment whilst being absent from work

self-employed: a person who runs a trade or business, rather than working as an employee for someone else. A person is self-employed if s/he is a sole proprietor or a partner working in a business.

unpaid family workers: refers to people who worked without pay in a family business or farm. Excluded from this definition are housewives.

INACTIVE PERSONS All persons who are not classified as employed or unemployed are defined as inactive.

LABOUR FORCE This comprises persons in employment and unemployed persons.

UNEMPLOYMENT: This comprises all persons above 15 years of age who, during the reference week, satisfied the following criteria:

without work

actively seeking work during the previous 4 weeks, e.g. includes contacting the ETC, applied directly with an employer, contacting a private employment agency, inserting or answering to an advert in a newspaper.

currently available for work – available to start work within 2 weeks of the reference week

Included with the unemployed are persons who were without work and were not actively seeking work since they had found a job which would start later.

Sampling Variability: The data in this release are based on statistical samples, and as such, estimates carry a sampling error.