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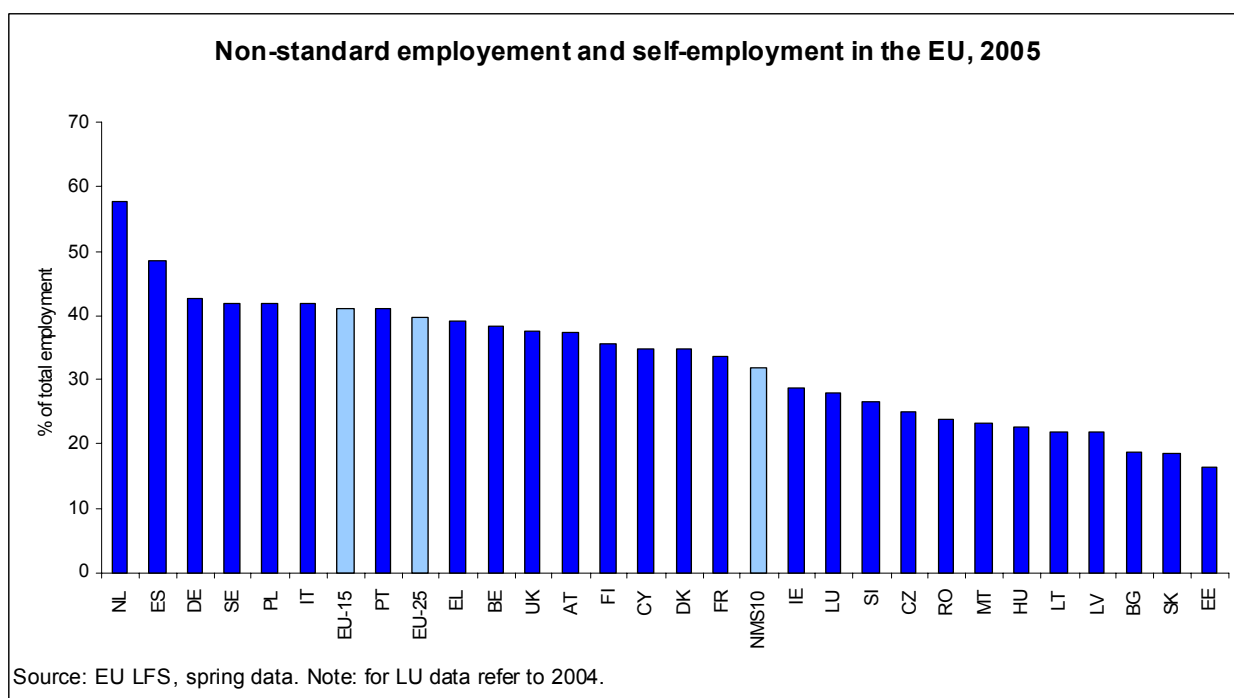
Green Paper on modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century

How many people work under non-standard contracts in the EU?

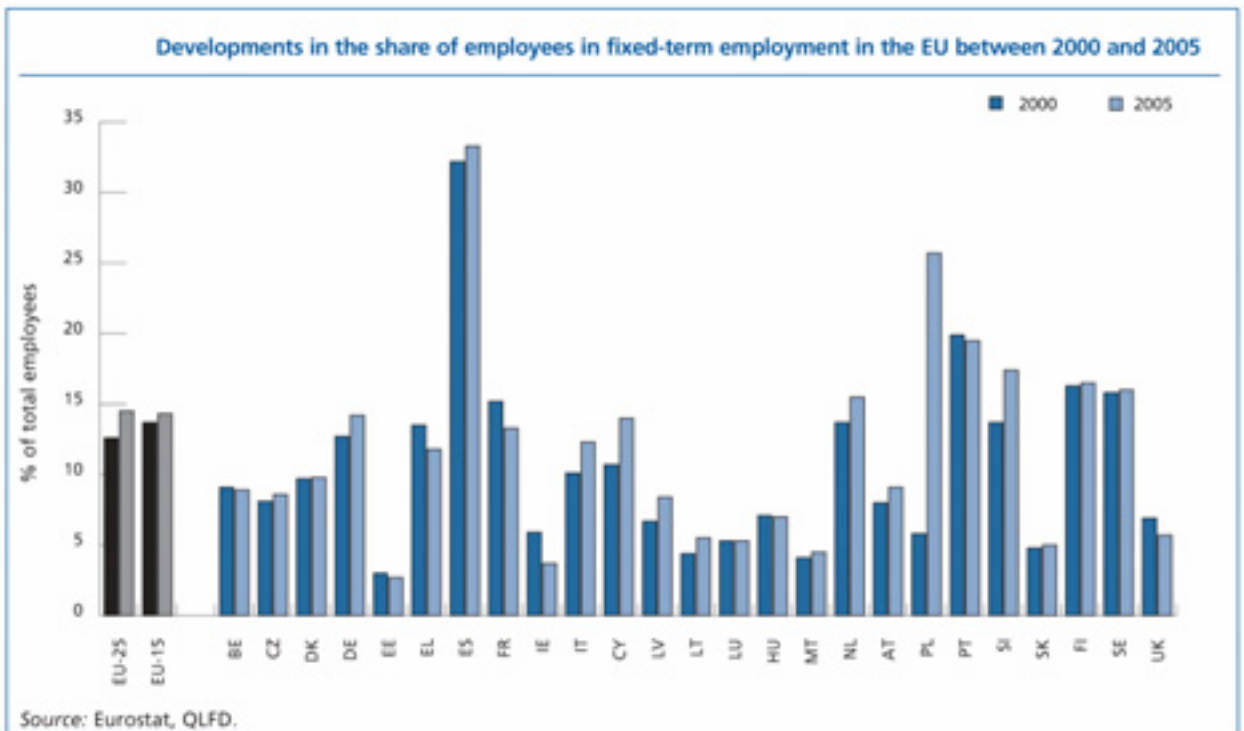
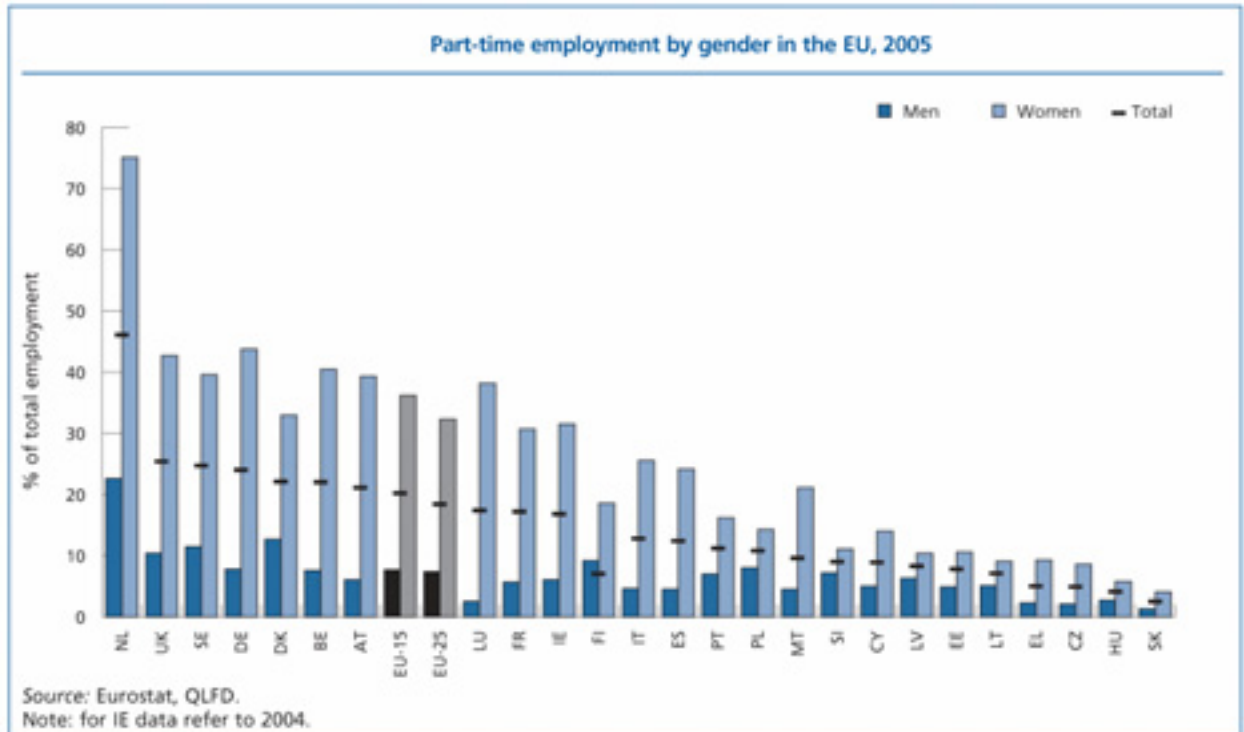
By combining figures for fixed term contracts, part-time work, on-call and zero-hour contracts, hiring through temporary employment agencies and freelance contracts, these types of contracts account for 25% of the workforce. In addition, approximately 15% of EU workers (over 31 million workers) are self-employed and those who are self-employed on their own account and without employees constitute 10% of all workers in the EU-25. Together these are classified as non-standard forms of work because they depart from the traditional model of the "permanent" or indeterminate employment relationship constructed around a full-time, continuous work week.

In 2001 the share of workers with non-standard contracts in EU10 was 28% - this has risen to 31.9% (2005). In the EU15 the corresponding figures were 38% (2001) with an increase to 41% (2005). At the same time, the number of workers with standard jobs (full-time, indefinite contracts, relatively high security) has fallen from 63 % (2001) to 60% (2005).

Part-time employment, as a percentage of total employment, has increased from 13 % of total employment to over 18 % in the last 15 years. It has accounted for a larger contribution (around 60 %) to employment creation after 2000 than full time standard employment. Employment under fixed term contracts has also increased, as a percentage of total employment in the EU-15, from over 11 % of total employment in 1994 to over 14 % in 2005.



The incidence of non-standard contracts varies from country to country. For example the part-time employment rate in the Netherlands is 46.1% and as low as 4.1% and 2.5% in Hungary and Slovakia respectively. Fixed-term contracts are most prevalent in Spain (33.3%) and least frequent in Ireland (3.7%) and Estonia (2.7%).



What are the next steps?

After the public consultation, the Commission plans to issue a follow-up Communication in 2007 taking into consideration the main policy issues and options identified in the responses.

This work will complement the broader range of initiatives on the topic of flexicurity that the Commission is developing in close cooperation with the Member States. A Commission Communication on flexicurity will be presented in June 2007, which will set out to develop the arguments in favour of the "flexicurity" approach and to outline a set of common principles by the end of 2007 to help Member States steer their respective reform efforts.

For how long is the public consultation open and how can I contribute?

The consultation will remain open for four months ending on 31st March 2007. The questionnaire is accessible online at the following address:

http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm.

Alternatively, send an email to empl-labour-law-green-paper@ec.europa.eu

The questionnaire is also available in print and can be sent to:

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