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Parental Working in Europe: Working Hours

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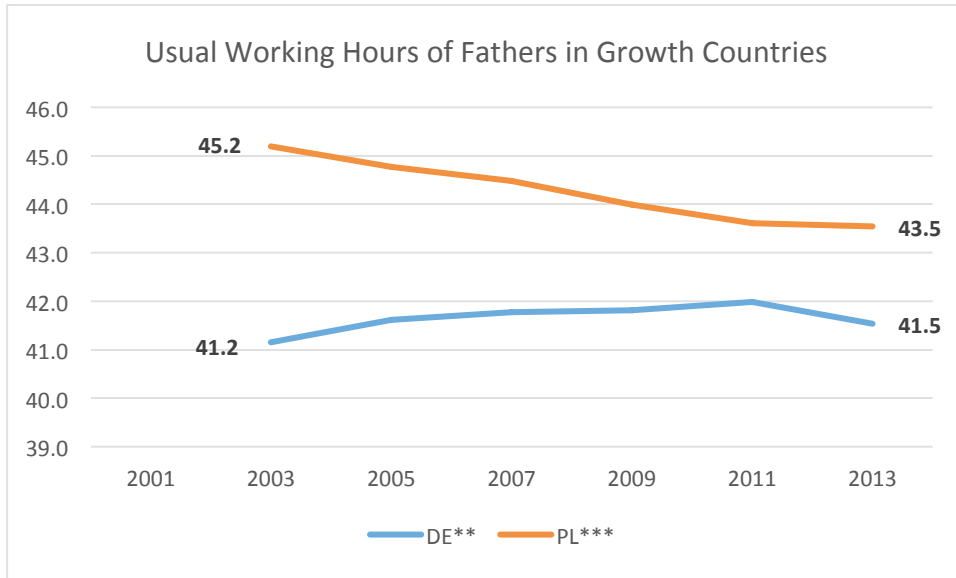
This **Research Note** investigates the changes in working hours of fathers and mothers in couple households across European countries. The first half of the report looks at the average usual working hours of parents, and the second half looks at the proportion of parents that work long hours (more than 48 hours or more than 60 hours a week). For more information on the definitions, country groupings, data and methods used, see the accompanying **Research Note [Parental Working in Europe: Methodology]**.

There are four main trends. Firstly, across 16 of the 17 countries we observe a decline or stability in the usual working hours of fathers (the exception being Germany which showed an increase from a comparatively low base). Secondly, by contrast there was considerable variation in the usual work hours of mothers: stability in *Growth* countries, rising in *Recession (Northern and Western)* countries, and a decline in Spain and Greece (*Severe Recession*) and *Recession (Eastern)* countries, the latter starting the decade with higher than usual weekly working hours. Thirdly, across 15 of the 17 countries, we observe a decline in fathers' work intensity (usually working more than 48 hours) except in Germany and Slovakia where we observed an increase; rarer intensive working, more than 60 hours weekly, either remained stable or significantly declined in *Recession (Eastern)* countries specifically Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania. Fourthly, intensive working (usually working more than 48 and 60 hours weekly) by mothers, considerably lower than amongst fathers, either remained stable or declined - notably in Poland and Romania.

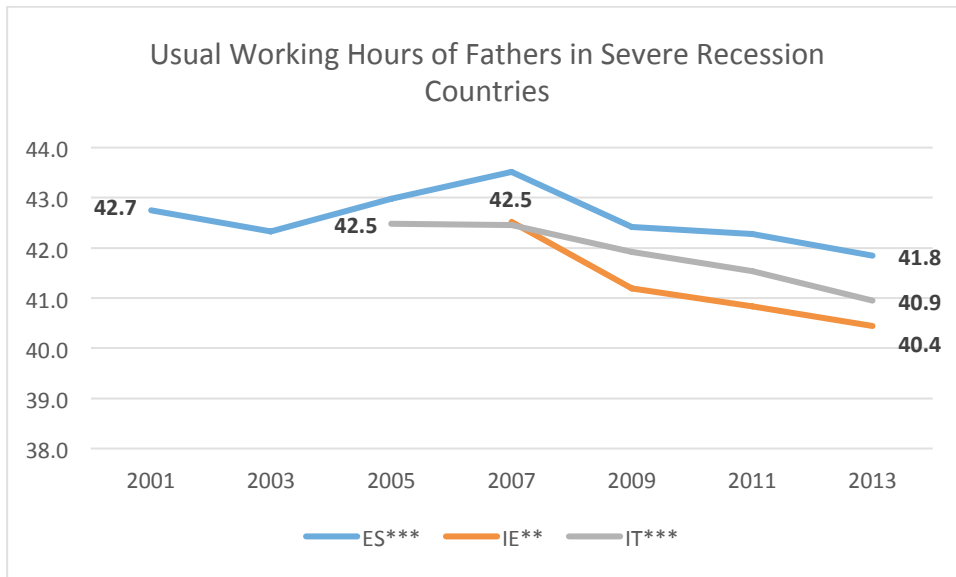
By the end of the decade, the highest average weekly working hours were found in Greece for both fathers and mothers working full-time. In terms of part-time workers the average was highest in Romania for fathers and in Belgium for mothers. (See Appendix).

Working Hours of Fathers

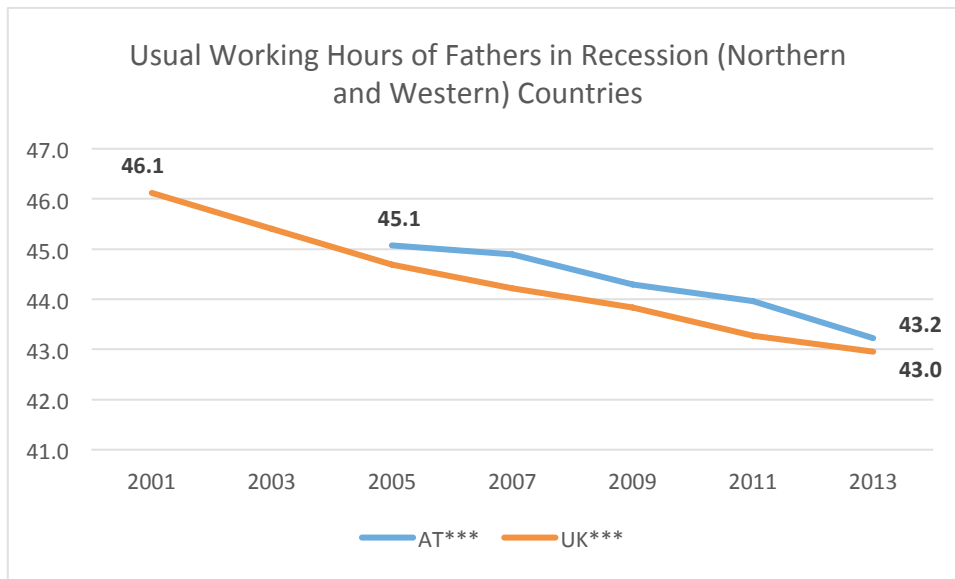
The average hours of fathers in Germany – a country that has experienced significant growth – have increased significantly since 2003. No other country experienced a significant increase in working hours for all fathers. The average hours of Polish fathers decreased significantly over the same period.



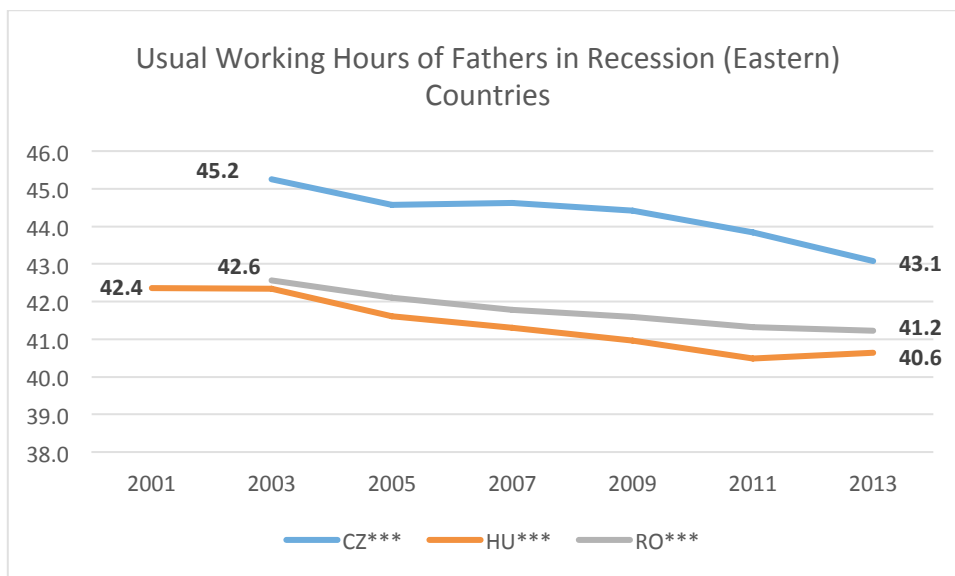
The working hours of fathers in Spain, Ireland and Italy have fallen significantly in the period leading up to 2013. There was no significant decrease in fathers' usual working hours in other *Severe Recession* countries.



Fathers in Austria and the United Kingdom also experienced a significant decline in their working hours. These were the only *Recession (Northern and Western)* countries to experience a significant change in usual working hours for fathers. The UK historically had the longest working hours of all EU countries, but the decline in working hours means that this is no longer the case.

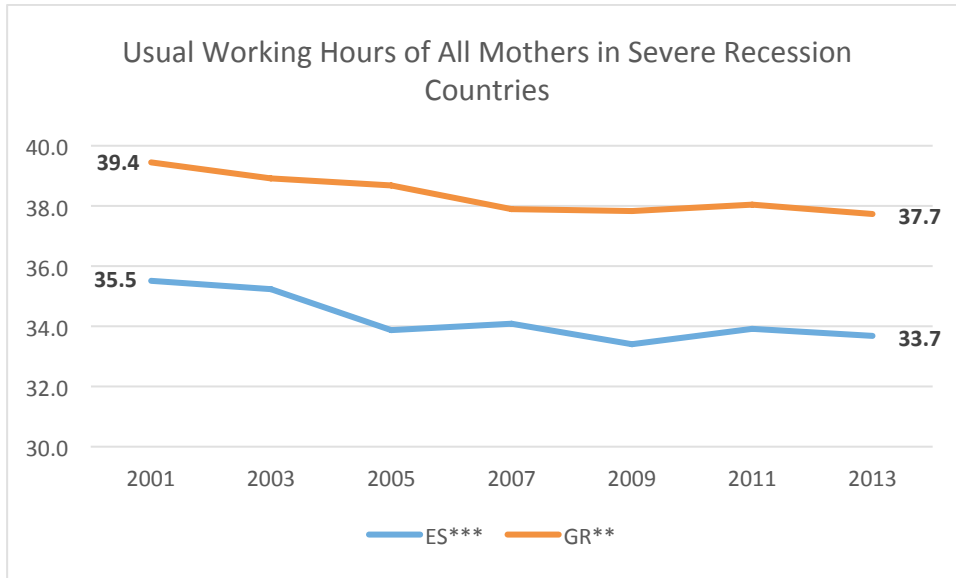


Finally, fathers in *Recession (Eastern)* countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania experienced a significant decline in their working hours.

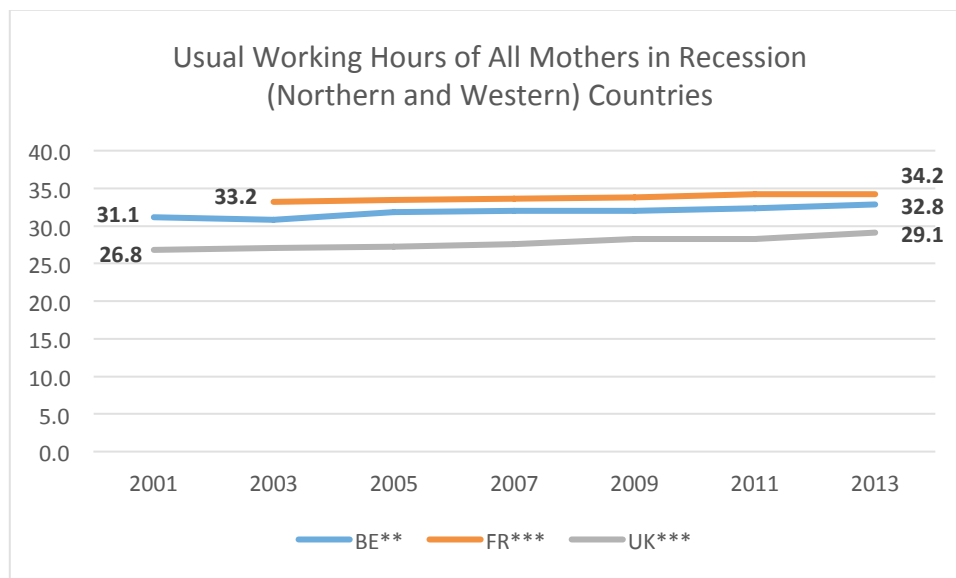


Working Hours of Mothers

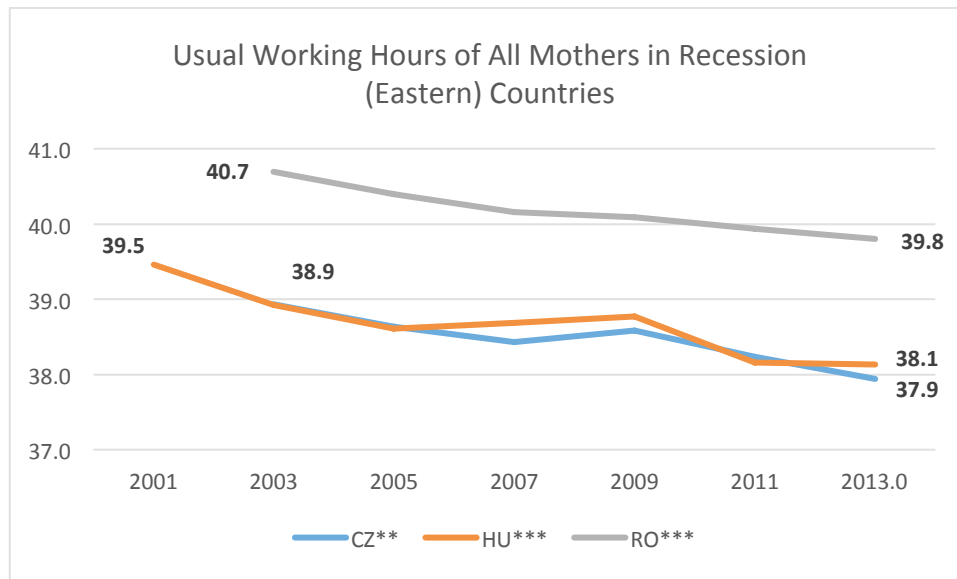
There were no significant changes in the usual hours of mothers in *Growth* Countries. However, the usual hours of mothers decreased significantly in Spain and Greece – two *Severe Recession* countries.



Conversely, the working hours of mothers in *Recession (Northern and Western)* countries increased significantly over the period, although generally from a shorter average working week when compared to *Severe Recession* and *Recession (Eastern)* countries. The countries in which these changes were significant are Belgium, France and the United Kingdom.



Finally, the usual working hours of mothers in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania decreased significantly over the period. These *Recession (Eastern)* countries had higher usual hours than *Recession (Northern and Western)* countries in their base years.



Long Working Hours

This is measured by the proportion of those working full-time who work 48 hours or more or 60 hours or more per week.

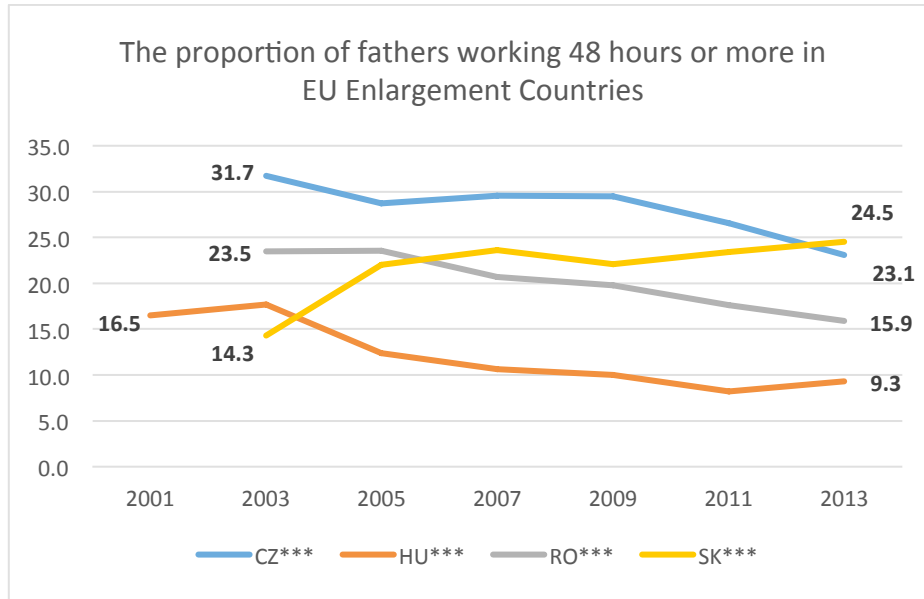
Fathers

48 hours or more per week

In Germany the proportion of fathers that work 48 hours or more each week has increased significantly from 16.2% to 18.8%. Poland has experienced a significant decrease in the proportion of fathers working 48 hours or more, down from 35.5% in 2003 to 27.2% in 2013.

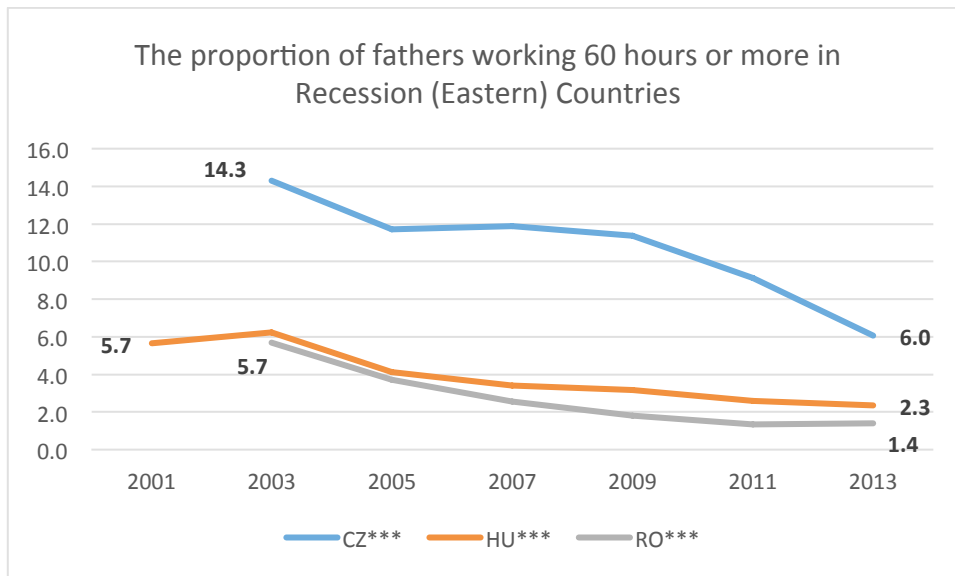
The only *Severe Recession* country to experience a significant change in the proportion of fathers working 48 hours or more was Italy, where the incidence of long hours fell from 23.9% in 2005 to 18.4% in 2013. Similarly, the only *Recession (Northern and Western)* country to experience significant change was the UK. In 2001, the UK had the highest proportion of fathers working 48 hours or more in Europe, 40.4%, however this had declined to 30.8% of fathers by 2013. The country with the highest incidence of fathers working 48 hours or more a week in 2013 was Greece (40.0%).

Slovakia is the only *Recession (Eastern)* country that experienced an increase in working intensity over the period, from 14.3% in 2003 to 24.5% in 2013). The only *Recession (Eastern)* country not to experience significant change was Bulgaria, whilst the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania all experienced significant decreases in working intensity.

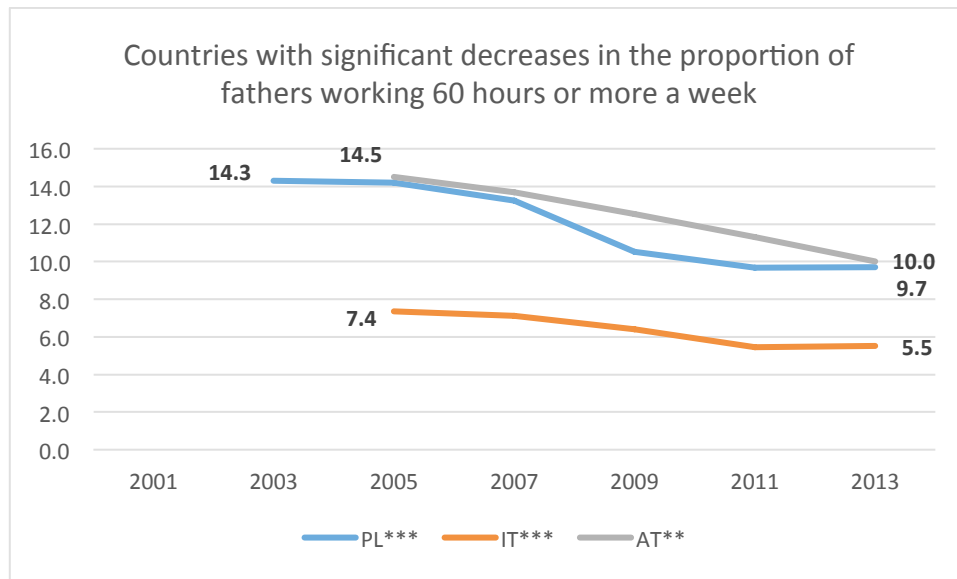


60 hours or more per week

Several countries within the *Recession (Eastern)* group experienced significant decreases in the proportion of fathers working 60 hours or more a week. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania all experienced significant decreases in the proportion of fathers working very long hours.



One country from each of the other three country groups also experienced significant decreases in the proportion of fathers working very long hours. These were Poland (*Growth* countries), Italy (*Severe Recession* countries) and Austria (*Recession (Northern and Western)* countries). The changes can be observed in the chart below.



There were no other significant changes in the incidence of long or very long working hours for fathers in any other European countries.

Mothers

There were only two countries where the proportion of mothers working 48 hours or more a week changed significantly. In Poland, the incidence of mothers working long hours decreased significantly from 17.2% in 2003 to 8.8% in 2013. Similarly in Romania the proportion of mothers working 48 hours or more a week fell significantly from 16.9% in 2003 to 8.7% in 2013.

The only significant change in the proportion of mothers working 60 hours or more a week also came in Romania. The proportion of mothers working these hours fell significantly from 2.3% in 2003 to 0.3% in 2013.

Appendix: Average working hours of parents

For context, the graphs below present the average working hours of all parents in couple households with dependent children working full-time and part-time in 2001 and 2013, ranked from highest to lowest (in 2013). In most countries, mean working hours for fathers working full-time have decreased over this time period, whilst working hours for mothers working full-time have remained stable or decreased. For parents working part-time, the picture across Europe is mixed, with some experiencing a rise and others a fall in hours.

Note that for some countries, the base year (the blue bar) is not 2001 for all countries, indicated in the graphs by the following notation:

- + 2003
- ++ 2005
- +++ 2007

