



International
Labour
Organization



Benefits and risks of flexible working arrangements: Findings from international research

**Flexible working arrangements and parental responsibilities sharing:
New perspectives in Italy and Europe – Rome, 4-5 December 2017**

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This presentation



- Definition of telework/ICT-mobile work (T/ICTM), scope and methodology of the study
- Incidence and intensity of T/ICTM work
- The effects of T/ICTM on working time, work-life balance, health and well-being and performance
- Conclusions and policy implications



DEFINITION: Telework/ICT-mobile work (T/ICTM) includes all work performed by workers using Information and Communications Technologies outside the employer's premises

WORKER CATEGORIES: (i) regular home-based teleworkers; (ii) T/ICTM high-mobile workers; (iii) occasional T/ICTM workers; and (iv) workers always at employer's premises

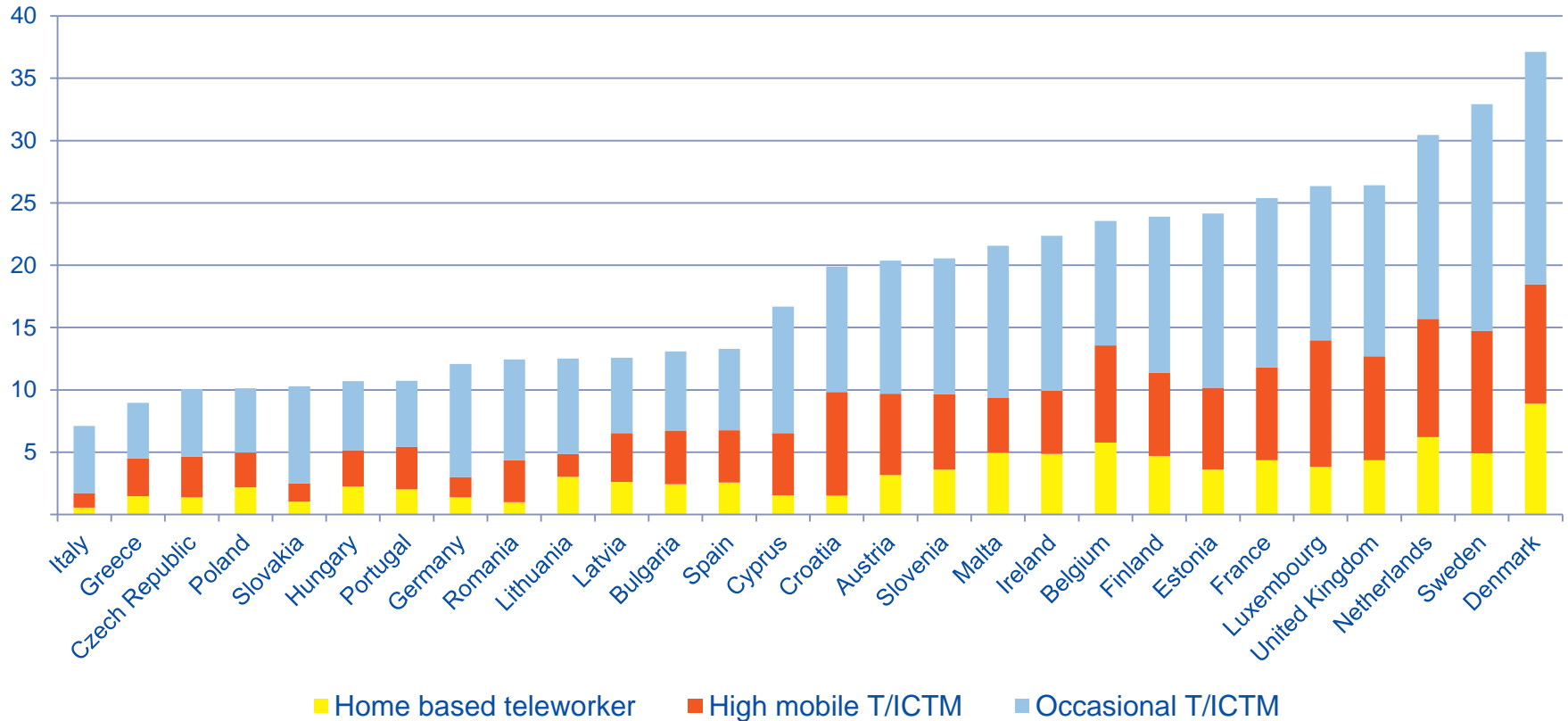
15 COUNTRIES: (i) Europe: Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom; and other Regions: Argentina, Brazil, India, Japan and the United States

METHODOLOGY: (i) joint ILO-EUROFOUND national questionnaires on incidence and effects of T/ICTM plus policy responses; and analysis of micro-data of European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS 2015)

Incidence of T/ICTM work (1)



Share of T/ICTM employees in 2015 (EU28)



Source: Elaboration data EWCS 2015

Incidence of T/ICTM Work (2)



- **Increase in T/ICTM in recent years**, particularly in places other than home
- T/ICTM **more common among professionals and managers**, but is also significant among clerical support and sales workers
- In general **men are more likely to perform T/ICTM than women**, although the latter carry out more regular home-based telework than the former.
- The **typical T/ICTM worker is employed full time, high-skilled and works more from home** than from other places



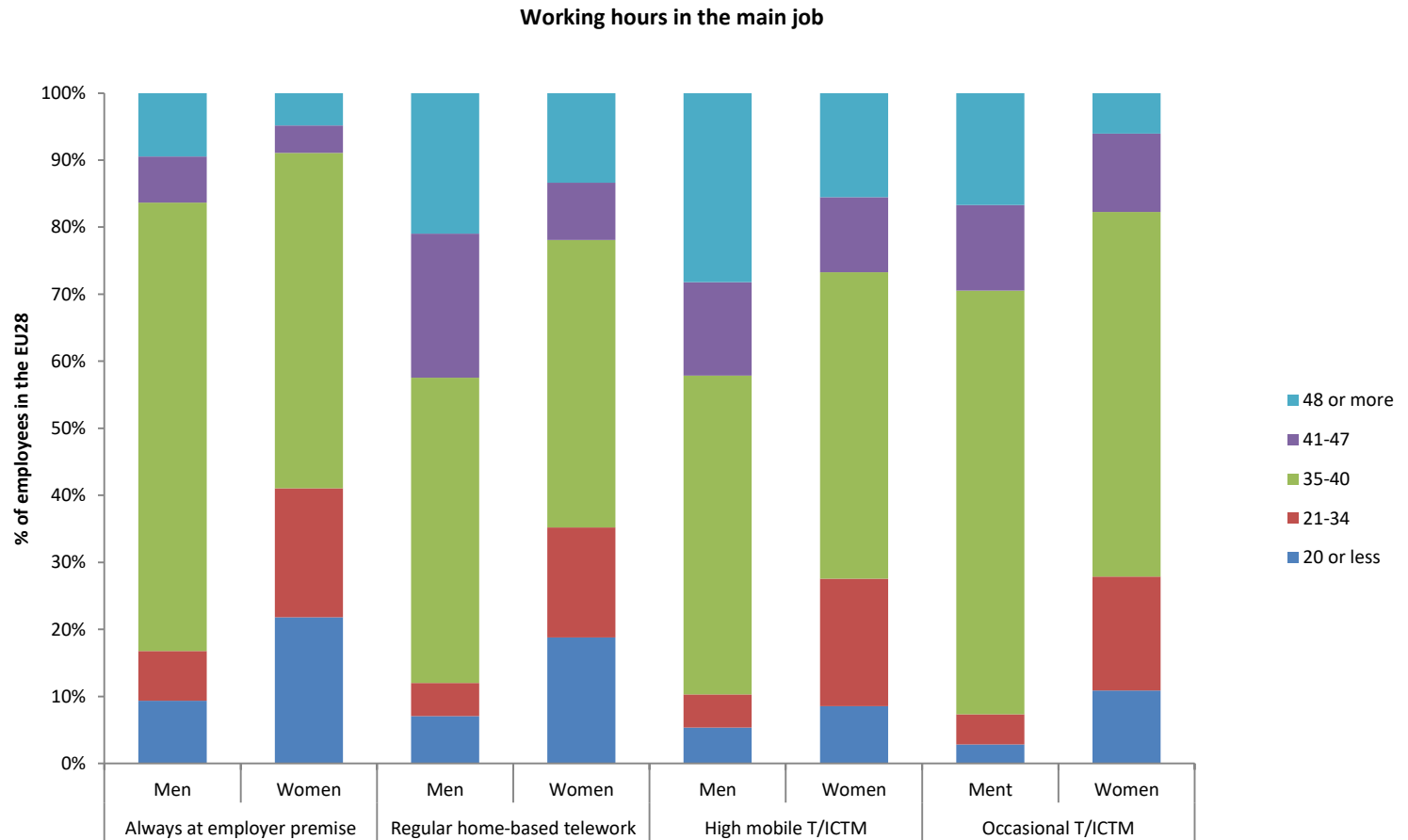
The main findings of the national studies are that T/ICTM workers:

- **Work longer hours** than average employees in the country
- **Experience more atypical work schedules** (e.g. evenings, weekends) but also perform personal tasks during normal working hours
- **Have greater working-time autonomy/”time sovereignty”**

Effects of T/ICTM: Working Time (2)



Percentage of employees by type of T/ICTM, gender and working hours, EU28



Source: Elaboration data EWCS 2015



Most of the national studies report:

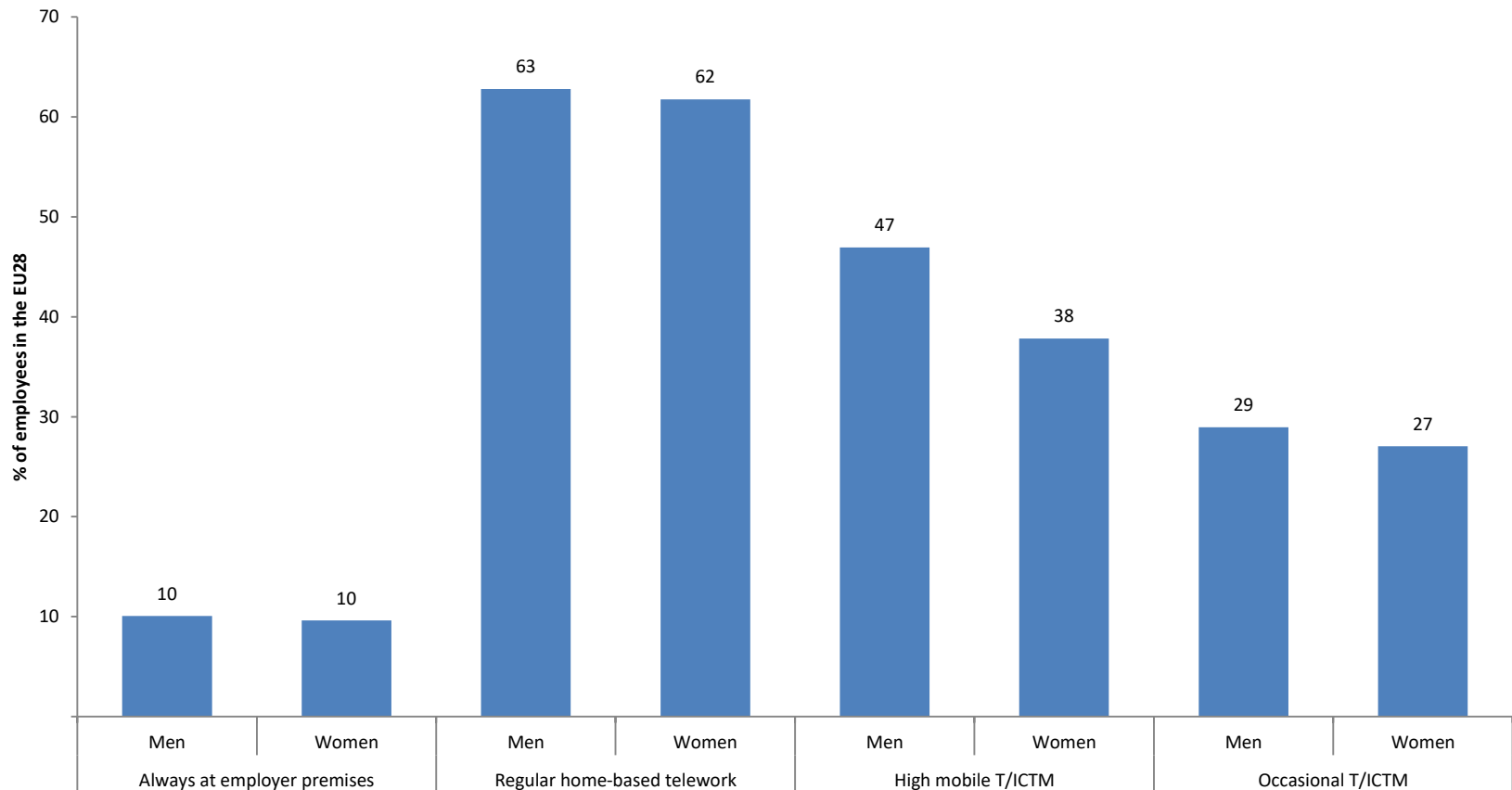
- An **overall positive effect** of T/ICTM work on work-life balance
- A “**blurring of the boundaries**” with more work-home and home-work interference
- A **better work–life balance for home-based teleworkers**, while the ‘**high-mobile**’ workers face **more negative outcomes**.
- A **more positive balance for partial and occasional** forms of T/ICTM than the higher frequency ones
- Shorter hours of work and a slightly **better work-life balance for women than men**

Effects of T/ICTM: Work-life balance (2)



Employees reporting working in their free time to meet work demands by type of T/ICTM and gender, EU28 (%)

Over the last 12 months, how often have you worked in your free time to meet work demands?
(at least several times a month)

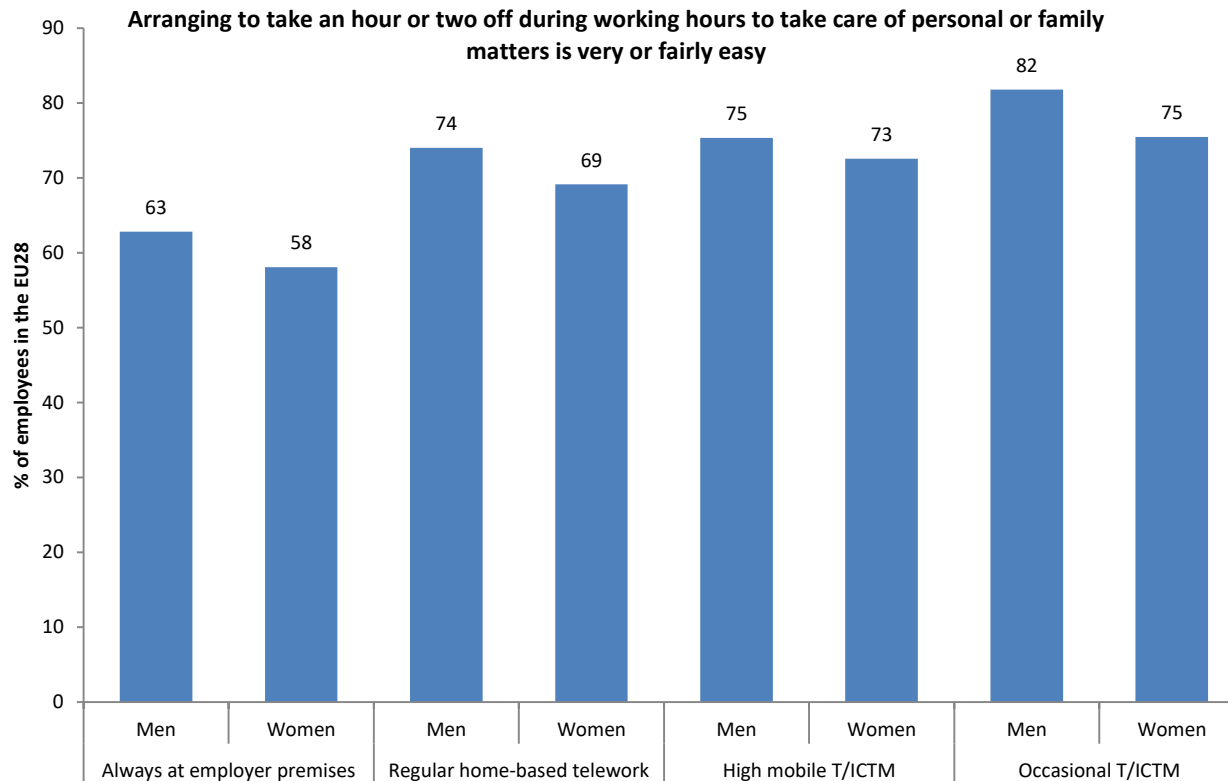


Source: Elaboration data EWCS 2015

Effects of T/ICTM: Work-life balance (3)



Employees reporting that it is very or fairly easy to take time off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters, by type of T/ICTM and gender, EU28 (%)



Source: Elaboration data EWCS 2015



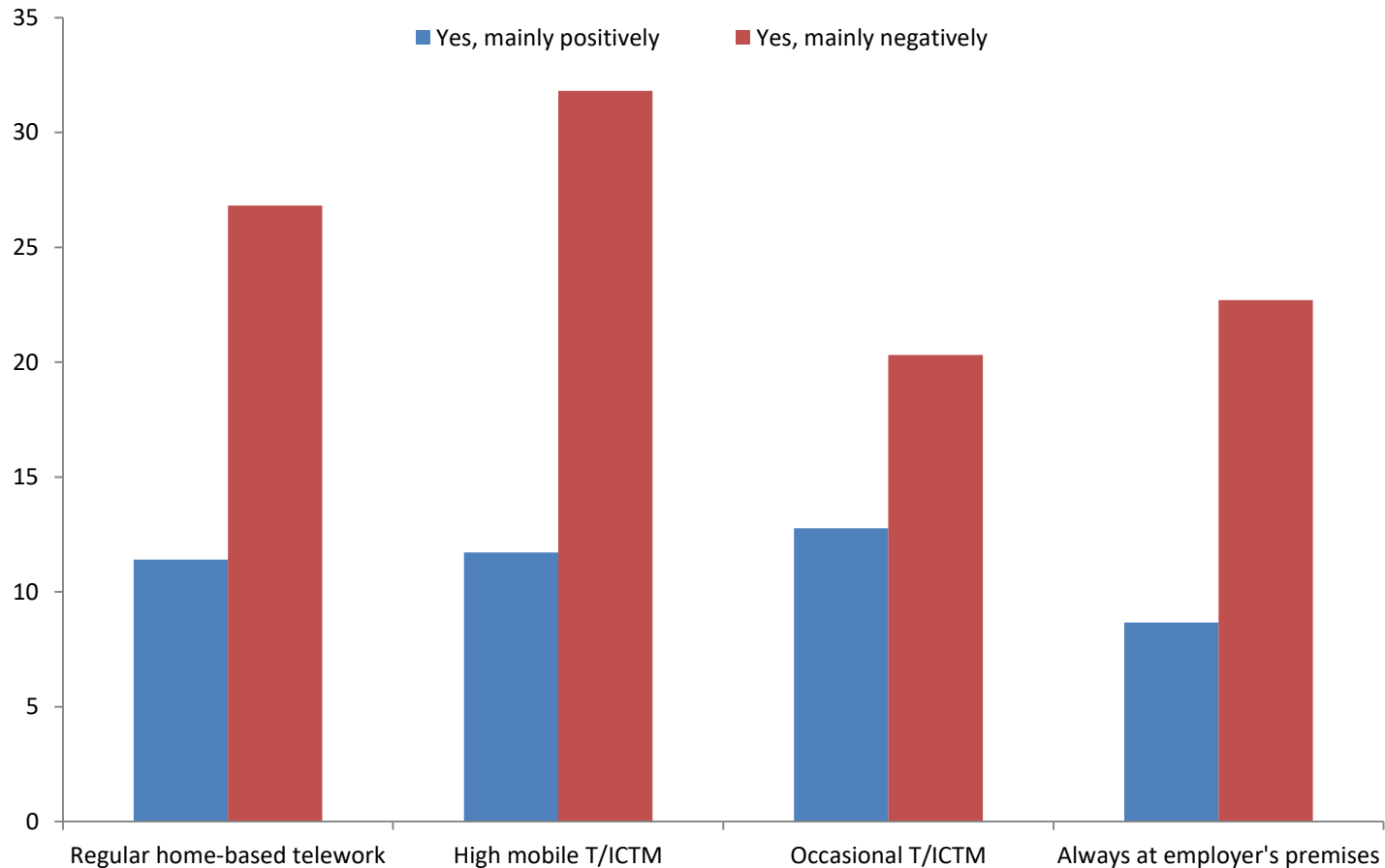
The national studies report:

- Increased **flexibility and autonomy**, as well as **work intensification and stress**
- **Blurring boundaries** and stress (in most EU national studies)
- **Commuting and related stress reduction** (Brazil, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, UK, USA)
- **Isolation** (Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Finland, Hungary, Japan, Netherlands, UK)
- Challenges relating to **ergonomics** (Finland, Spain, the Netherlands) – more research needed

Effects of T/ICTM: Health and well-being (2)



Percentage of employees reporting that work affects their health (positively or negatively) by T/ICTM group, EU28

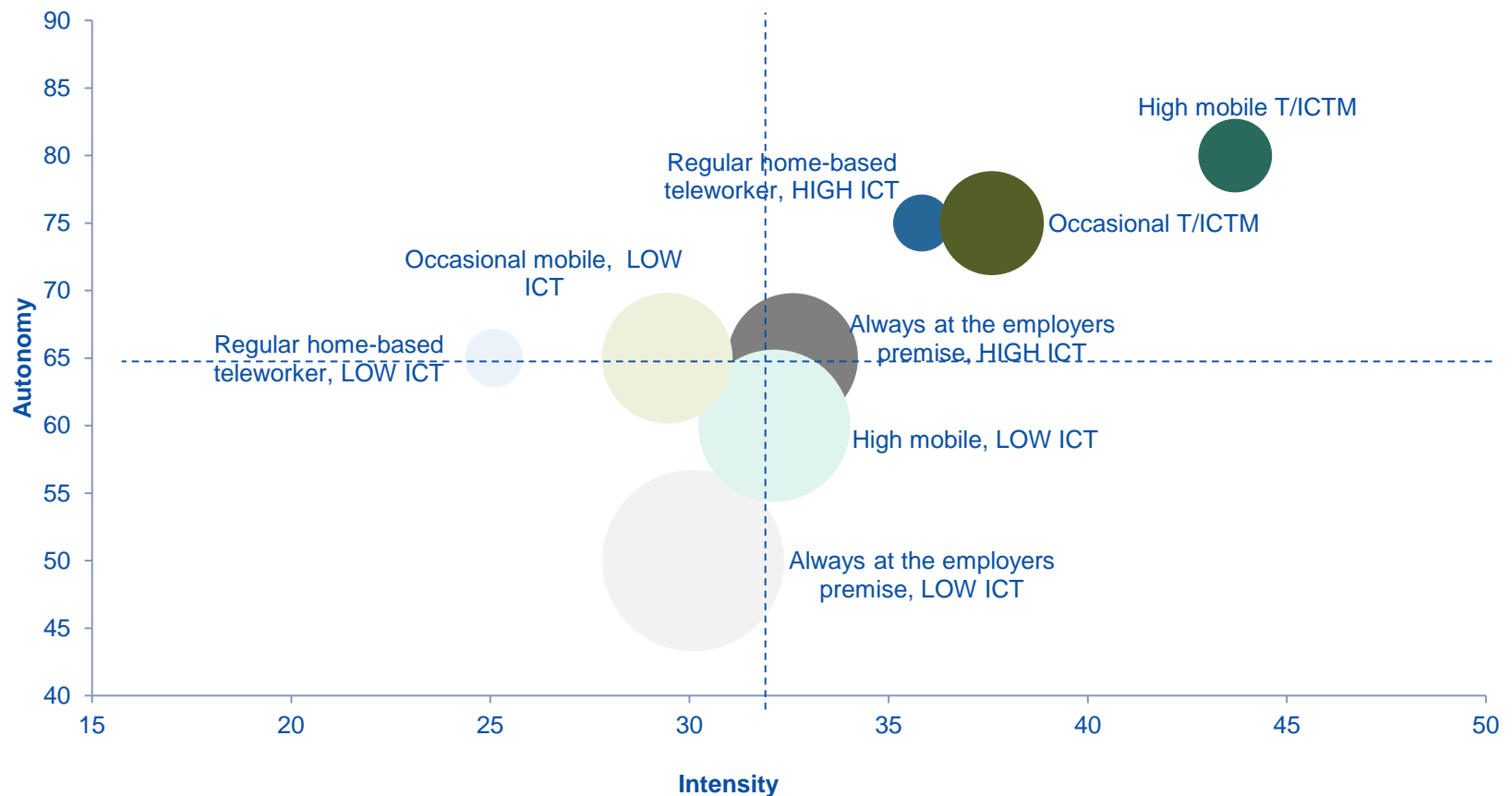


Source: Elaboration data EWCS 2015

Effects of T/ICTM: Health and well-being (3)



Indices of autonomy and intensity in relation to working outside the employer's premises and frequency of use of ICTs



Source: Elaboration data EWCS 2015



The national studies identified the following effects of T/ICTM on performance:

- A general positive effect also related to **productivity increases due to technological innovation**
- Positive impact due to **autonomy, work-life balance, motivation**
- **Some performance drawbacks** due to lack of ICT skills, managerial behaviour (especially “command and control”), lack of rest periods

Conclusions



- Growing incidence of T/ICTM work but substantial differences across countries, occupations, sectors and in terms of frequency for workers
- Men are more likely to perform T/ICTM than women, but women perform more regular home-based telework
- Longer, more “porous” working hours, including supplemental working hours, BUT reduced commuting time and more working time autonomy
- Overall, better work-life balance but more work-home and home-work interference due to blurring of work-life boundaries
- Women doing T/ICTM tend to work shorter hours than men and seem to achieve slightly better work–life balance
- Greater work intensity but more working time autonomy appears to offset the greater intensity, except for “high mobile” T/ICTM workers
- More stress for some T/ICTM workers, especially ICT-mobile workers
- Lack of attention to ergonomics and the potential for isolation
- Overall positive effects on individual performance/productivity
- Partial (part-time) telework and occasional ICT-mobile work seem to produce the most positive balance in relation to the effects of T/ICTM work

Some policy implications



- Strengthen positive effects of T/ICTM and reduce negative ones (e.g. promoting partial or part-time work, while restricting informal/supplemental work and long hours for high-mobile) through legislation and collective agreements
- Include T/ICTM work in policies for inclusive labour markets (e.g. older workers, workers with family and other responsibilities, persons with disabilities)
- Introduce policy measures to tackle the negative effects on working conditions for those engaged in different types of T/ICTM work
- Adjust working time regulations (e.g. address supplemental work and ensure respect of minimum rest periods)
- Address major challenge of OSH prevention and application of legislation to T/ICTM (e.g. training for both employees and managers on risks and effective use of ICTs for remote work)





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