

LMF4: Employment profiles over the life-course

Definitions and methodology

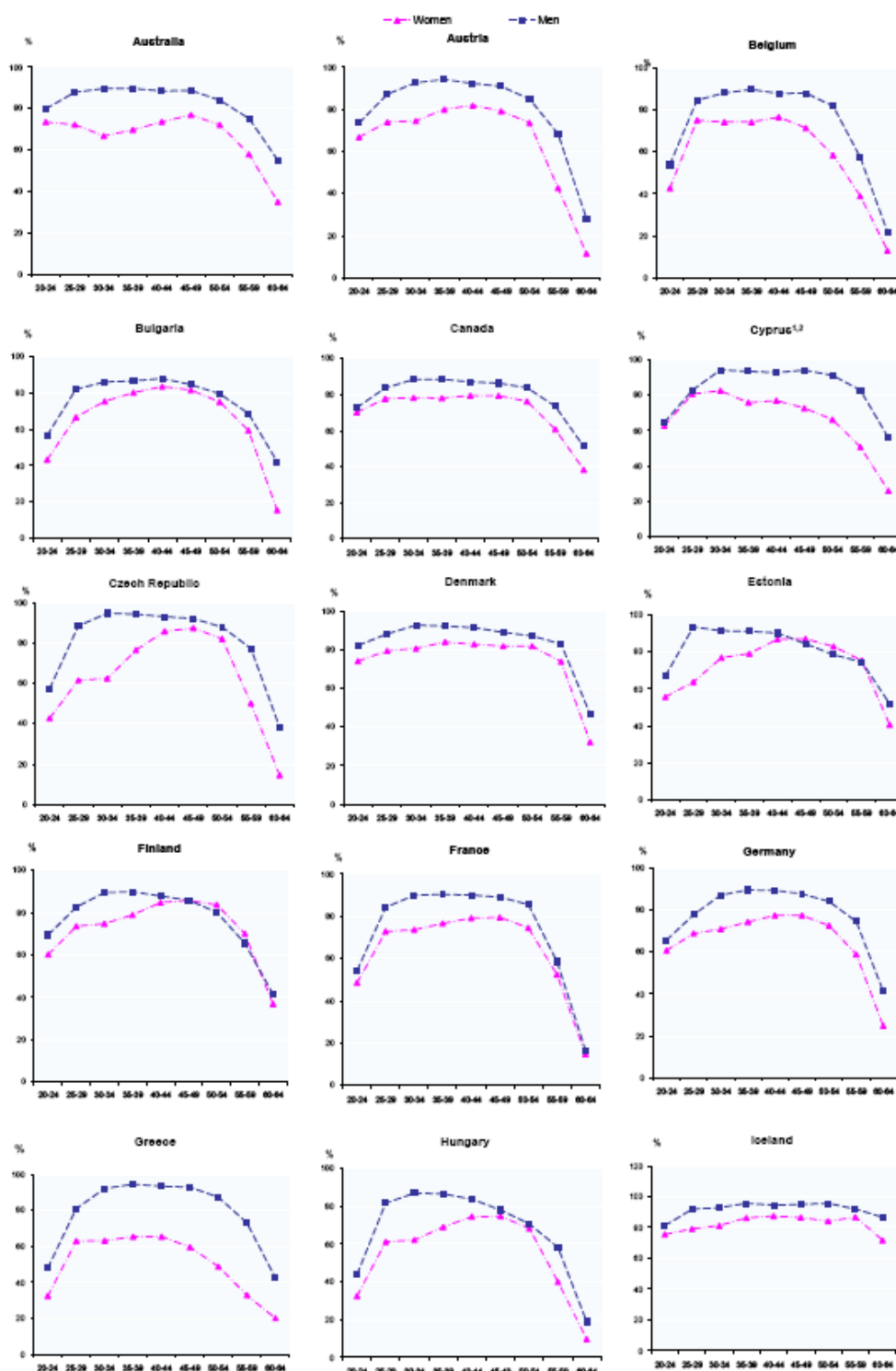
This indicator presents employment-profiles for the age group 20 up to and including 64, based on employment-population ratios for the underlying 5-year age groups 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, etc (see LMF2 for the definition of paid employment). Chart LMF4.1 shows these constructed age-employment profiles for men and women.

These “employment profiles” cast light on the patterns of entry to and withdrawal from the labour market over the life course. For women such an employment profile often looked like an “M” curve since female employment rates traditionally declined noticeably during the prime years of family formation, around the age-cohort 25 to 35, to increase again as children grow up. The magnitude of this so-called “M-curve effect” differs across countries: in many countries the employment profile over the life course, has flattened with changes in female labour market behaviour, but the traditional “dip” in female employment around childbearing years remains prominent in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Japan and Korea. In some countries, like Greece, Italy, Ireland or Spain, female employment rates continue to steadily decrease over the life course: women more frequently withdraw from the labour market when having children without returning back to paid employment.

In all OECD countries, women on maternity leave are counted as employed, as are most parents on parental leave with duration of few months (see LMF3). Parental leaves of prolonged duration are however treated differently across countries. For example, many parents on parental leave in Austria (up to 2 years) are counted as employed. By contrast, many of the parents in Finland on home-care leave (which is often taken when the child is 1 to 3 years of age) are often not included in the employment statistics (LMF2 and PF7).

Other relevant indicators: LMF2: Maternal employment; LMF3: Maternal employment by family status; LMF5: Gender pay gaps for full and part-time workers; LMF6: Gender differences in employment outcomes; LMF7: The distribution of working hours among men and women by broad Hour's groups and LMF8: Family-friendly workplace practices.

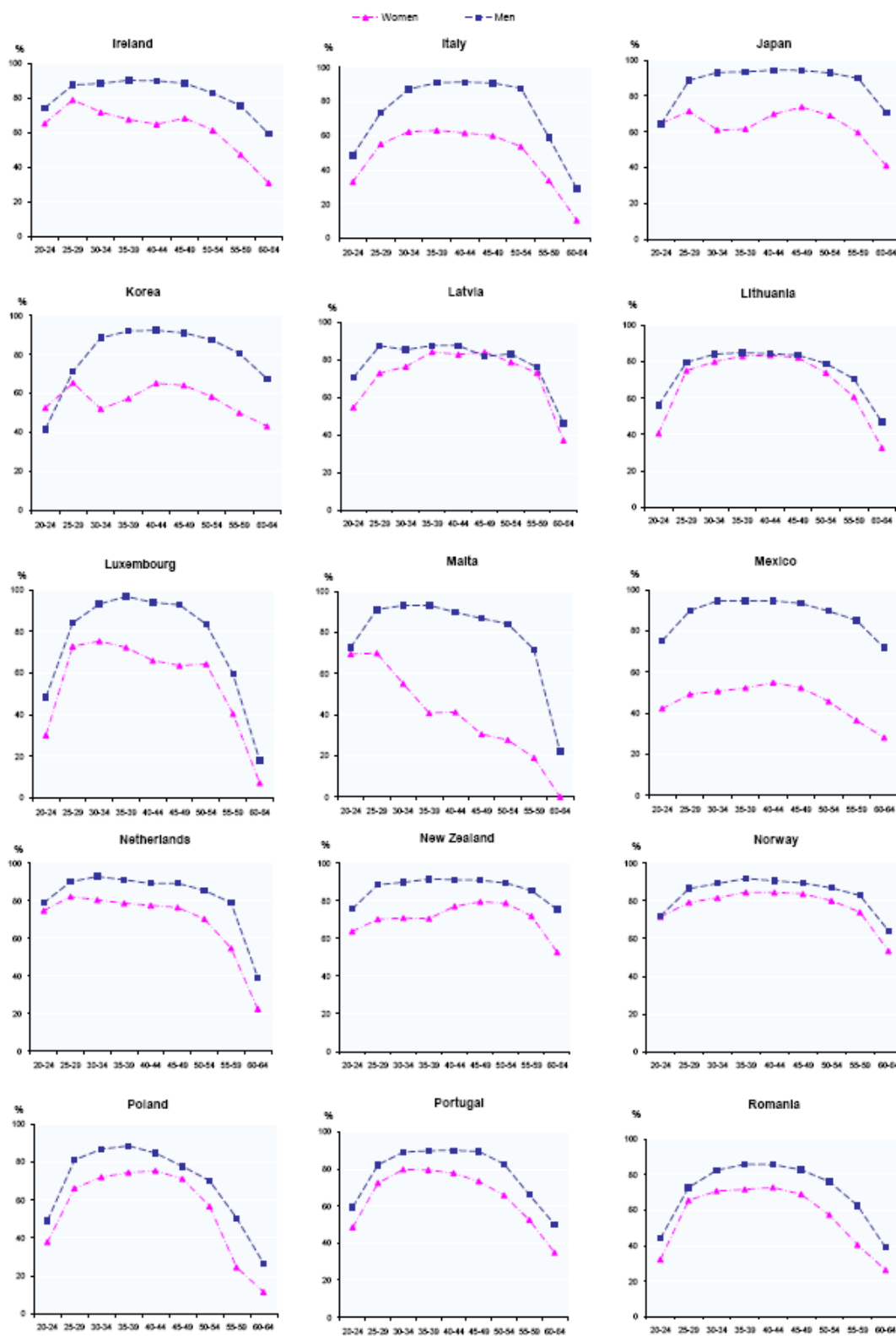
Chart LMF4.1: Age-employment profiles by gender, 2007/08



1) Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the « Cyprus issue ».

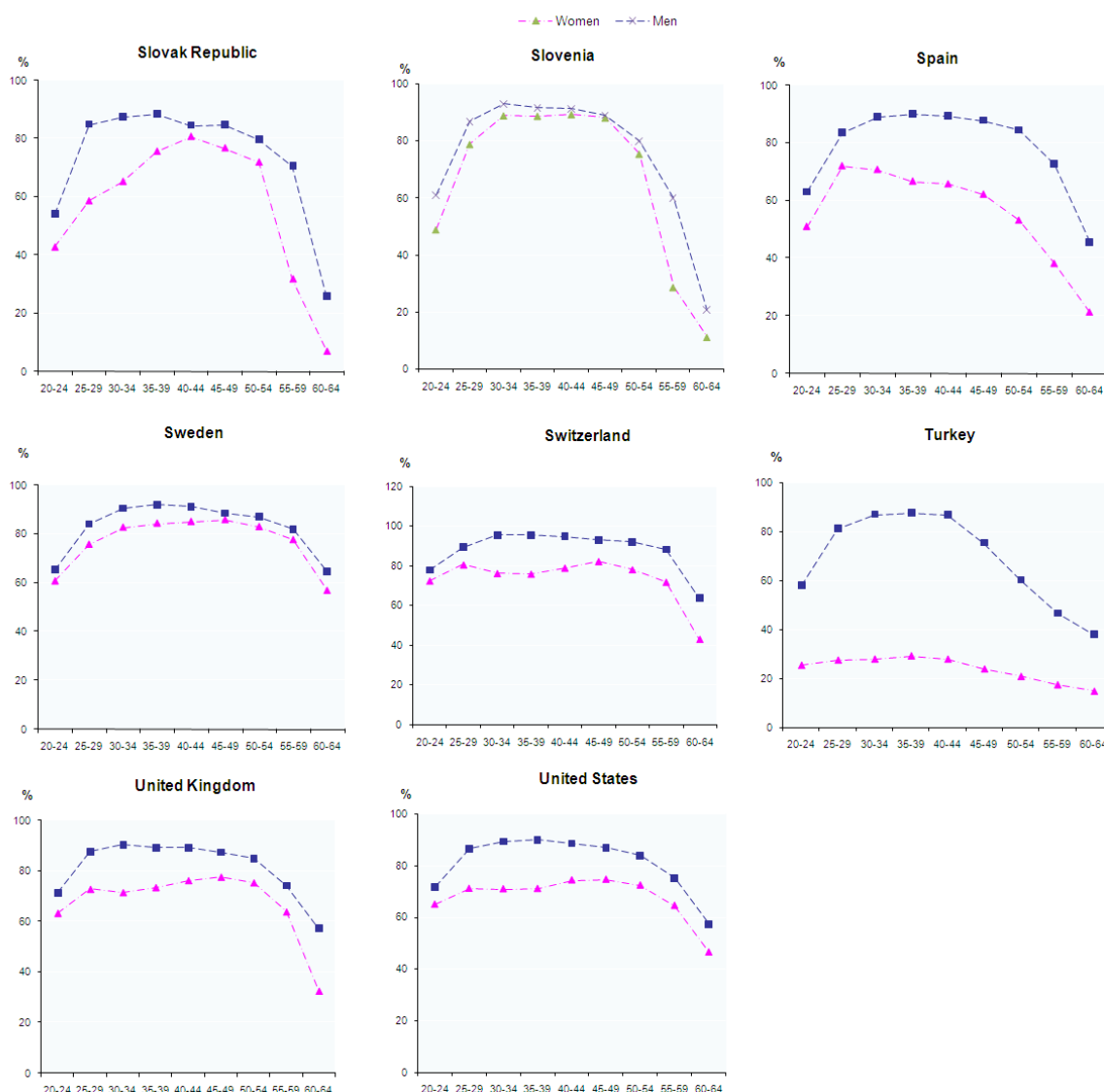
2) Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Chart LMF4.1: Age-employment profiles by gender, 2007/08 (cont.)



Source: ELFS and OECD Labour Force Statistics Database

Chart LMF4.1: Age-employment profiles by gender, 2007/08 (cont.)



Comparability and data issues

The OECD Labour Force Statistics are a well-established time series and there are few comparability issues relating to these databases. However, employment ratios are based on head counts and do not account for work intensity (e.g. different weekly working hours, see indicator LMF7). People who are not in-work but actively looking for a job are not considered here. As discussed above, cross-national differences in treatment of parents on parental leave can affect the employment profile of women of childbearing age.

Sources and further reading: *OECD on-line Labour Force Statistics database*; EU Labour Force Survey database, User Guide, http://circa.europa.eu/irc/dsis/employment/info/data/eu_lfs/index.htm; Employment Outlook (2008).