

## INDICATORS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF QUALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

*Florina BRAN<sup>a</sup>, Dumitru Alexandru BODISLAV<sup>b</sup>, Sorin Petrică ANGHELUȚĂ<sup>c\*</sup>*

<sup>a</sup> Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, florina.bran@eam.ase.ro

<sup>b</sup> Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, dumitru.bodislav@economie.ase.ro

<sup>c</sup> Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Romania, sorin.angheluta@amp.ase.ro

---

### ABSTRACT

*The multiple facets of the quality of employment can be assessed using a set of indicators. Thus, for the countries of the European Union, the article presents an analysis of the weekly working time and the work done during the weekend. The facilities related to the flexibility of working conditions can lead to increased labour productivity. Therefore, the article analyses the aspects regarding the possibility of working at home, but also those regarding the transfer time necessary for moving to and from the workplace. Measures such as reduced working time, flexible work schedules and distance work opportunities can all contribute to increasing the quality of employment. Thus, progress can be made in diversifying economic activities and improving the standard of living.*

**KEYWORDS:** *employment, European Union, work-life balance, working time*

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It is considered that fostering economic growth and participation in the labour market can be achieved by applying an appropriate balance between work and personal life (European Parliament, 2018). The increased productivity of employees has positive effects on the activity of a company. Increasing the performance of an employee can also be based on a balance between work and family life (Faggianelli et al., 2018). Work-life balance also takes into account the age of the employees. Young employees may want to build a career, while after a certain age there is a tendency for employees to move on to a second career and to devote more time to family life.

One of the dimensions that has to do with the balance between professional and private life is working time (Jianu et al., 2019). This aspect mainly refers to the work schedule, the type of contract, the number of hours worked over the program (Costache et al., 2015). Thus, the existence of a flexible program can be an advantage for the employees.

It has been shown that between job satisfaction and job satisfaction there is a positive relationship (Faggianelli et al., 2018). Also, the activities that involve innovation consider the submission of a larger quantity and quality of work (Jensen et al., 2017). Due to changes in the economy, work organization has changed a lot in recent years (Profiroiu et al., 2019). Thus, the organization of working hours and their alternation with rest hours influence the lifestyle (Albertsen et al., 2008).

For a good balance between work and private life, there is a need for boundaries between work tasks and family life duties (Burlacu, 2009, 2010a,b). It seems that a well-being is given by a combination of work tasks and family life duties. Conducting activities at the workplace that do not take into account the hours of rest can lead to the damage to health but also to the professional life (Bran et al., 2018). The dimensions regarding the flexibility of time and place of work take into account the work-life balance. It has been found that measures to make working time and working time more flexible

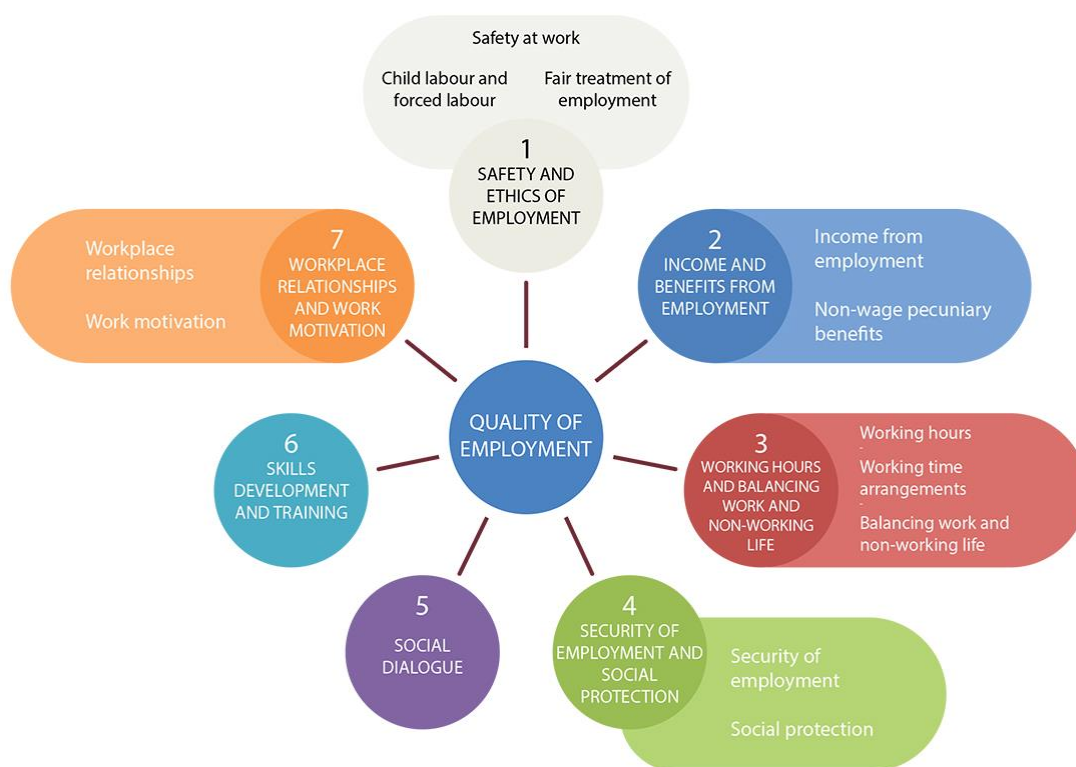
---

\* Corresponding author. E-mail address: sorin.angheluta@amp.ase.ro

allow a work-life balance to be achieved (Anttila et al., 2015). Employee overloading may also occur as a result of extended working hours (Ioniță et al., 2009). Making a match between working hours and private life is indicated by most employees (Eurofound, 2012). Conducting work activities during overtime or on weekends creates discomfort in terms of family, private life. Also, the frequent change of the work program makes it difficult to organize daily personal activities (Brauner et al., 2019). An extended work schedule and an inflexible organization of working time does not allow for a balance between professional and personal life. Thus, employees and their families, as well as employers, may be affected by certain imbalances in the relationship between professional and private life (Rădulescu et al., 2018a, b). The balance between work and private life is one of the political priorities of the European Union. However, there are differences regarding the characteristics of working conditions in the member countries of the European Union (Matilla-Santander et al., 2019).

## 2. WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The modalities of employment have diversified. Employers are increasingly interested in the working conditions of employees. For a neutral and comprehensive assessment of the quality of employment, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has developed a framework for analysis. Thus, from the perspective of the employed person, in order to approach the quality of employment 68 indicators were identified on seven dimensions. The seven dimensions used are presented in the following Figure (European Commission, 2019).



**Figure 1. The seven dimensions**

*Source:* adapted from European Commission (2019)

Thus, the seven dimensions are as follows:

1. Safety and ethics of employment
2. Income and benefits from employment
3. Working hours and balancing non-working life

4. Security of employment and social protection
5. Social dialogue
6. Skills development and training
7. Workplace relationships and work motivation

Of the 68 indicators used, the article analyzes five indicators that are related to work-life balance. With regard to work-life balance, European directives and the EU *acquis* on the right to work promote better safety and health at work, as well as the principle of equal opportunities and treatment. Also, part-time work and parental leave for both parents are considered, as well as the participation of men in childcare.

A first indicator analyzed is the average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job. Thus, in Table 1, the average values of this indicator are presented for the employed persons, for all NACE activities, for the period 2009-2018 (hours).

**Table 1. The average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job, 2009-2018 (hours)**

Countries	2009	2012	2015	2018
European Union	37,7	37,3	37,1	37,1
Austria	38,0	37,5	36,6	36,5
Belgium	36,8	36,9	37,1	37,2
Bulgaria	41,4	40,7	40,8	40,7
Croatia	40,4	40,0	39,5	39,6
Cyprus	40,3	39,8	39,5	39,3
Czechia	41,5	40,9	40,5	40,1
Denmark	33,7	33,6	33,5	33,2
Estonia	38,7	38,8	38,6	38,2
Finland	37,3	37,1	36,8	36,8
France	38,0	37,9	37,2	37,3
Germany	35,7	35,5	35,2	34,9
Greece	42,4	42,0	42,2	42,0
Hungary	39,8	39,4	39,8	39,6
Ireland	35,2	35,1	35,9	36,5
Italy	38,0	37,1	37,0	37,2
Latvia	39,4	38,7	39,0	38,9
Lithuania	38,6	38,0	38,3	38,6
Luxembourg	37,2	37,2	37,4	37,6
Malta	38,9	38,7	38,5	38,9
Netherlands	30,9	30,4	30,1	30,4
Poland	40,7	40,7	40,7	40,4
Portugal	38,9	39,1	39,4	39,5
Romania	40,4	40,1	39,8	39,6
Slovakia	40,8	40,8	40,2	40,0
Slovenia	39,8	39,8	39,3	39,2
Spain	38,8	38,2	37,8	37,7
Sweden	36,3	36,4	36,3	36,4
United Kingdom	36,6	36,3	36,7	36,5

*Source:* processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019

From the data presented, it can be seen that in 2018, compared to 2009, the average weekly working time decreased by more than one hour in: Austria (-1,5 hours), Czechia (-1,4 hours), Spain (-1,1 hours), Cyprus (-1,0 hours). The average weekly working time increased by more than one hour in Ireland (+1,3 hours). Also, in 2018, the average weekly working time was over 40 hours in: Greece

(42,0 hours), Bulgaria (40,7 hours), Poland (40,4 hours), Czechia (40,1 hours), Slovakia (40,0 hours). At the same time, in 2018, the average weekly working time was below 35 hours in: Netherlands (30,4 hours), Denmark (33,2 hours), Germany (34,9 hours). For 2018, the average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job for the main NACE activities is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. The average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job for the main NACE activities, 2018 (hours)**

Main activities	The average number of usual weekly hours of work	The minimum value of the average number of usual weekly hours of work	The maximum value of the average number of usual weekly hours of work
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	41,5	Portugal (31,7)	Luxembourg (52,7)
Mining and quarrying	41,6	Sweden (37,7)	United Kingdom (48,3)
Manufacturing	39,3	Netherlands (35,3)	Greece (42,1)
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	39,4	Denmark (35,8)	United Kingdom (41,4)
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	39,1	Denmark (35,3)	United Kingdom (42,0)
Construction	40,6	Denmark (37,8)	Czechia (43,5), Slovakia (43,5)
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	36,7	Netherlands (28,1)	Greece (43,5)
Transportation and storage	39,7	Netherlands (33,4)	Greece (48,4)
Accommodation and food service activities	35,7	Netherlands (24,6)	Greece (46,1)
Information and communication	38,7	Denmark (34,7)	Czechia (41,1), Portugal (41,1)
Financial and insurance activities	38,6	Denmark (35,3)	Portugal (41,7)
Real estate activities	36,5	Netherlands (32,2)	Greece (47,9)
Professional, scientific and technical activities	38,2	Netherlands (33,8)	Greece (43,1)
Administrative and support service activities	33,9	Netherlands (28,7)	Greece (40,8)
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	37,5	Netherlands (33,8)	Cyprus (41,5)
Education	33,4	Italy (27,8)	Bulgaria (39,4)
Human health and social work activities	34,2	Netherlands (26,4)	Croatia (42,3)
Arts, entertainment and recreation	33	Denmark (25,7)	Romania (39,7)

Source: processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019

It is noted that, at European level, the average weekly working time is over 40 hours in the fields of: Construction (40,6 hours), Agriculture, forestry and fishing (41,5 hours), Mining and quarrying (41,6 hours). The average weekly working time is less than 35 hours for the following activities: Arts, entertainment and recreation (33,0 hours), Education (33,4 hours), Administrative and support service activities (33,9 hours), Human health and social work activities (34,2 hours).

From the data available on the EUROSTAT website, it appears that in a number of 7 Member States of the European Union, in the field of Agriculture, forestry and fishing, the average weekly working time is over 45 hours: Luxembourg (52,7 hours), Belgium (51,5 hours), Ireland (50,2 hours), France (47,1 hours), United Kingdom (46,8 hours), Greece (46,0 hours). Over 45 hours is the average weekly working time in Greece for: Transportation and storage (48,4 hours), Real estate activities (47,9 hours), Accommodation and food service activities (46,1 hours).

**Table 3. The indicators**

<b>Countries</b>	<b>Long working hours in main job (2018) (%)</b>	<b>Work on weekends (2018) (%)</b>	<b>Percentage of employed adults working at home (2018) (%)</b>	<b>Mean duration of commuting time one-way between work and home (2015) (minute)</b>
European Union	9,2	26,4	14,9	41,9
Austria	11,0	28,7	21,7	39,6
Belgium	9,3	22,3	22,8	48,2
Bulgaria	1,3	17,9	0,9	33,4
Croatia	6,2	14,0	6,7	37,9
Cyprus	10,7	31,3	2,2	22,4
Czechia	11,4	16,9	9,4	35,7
Denmark	4,6	17,2	29,1	48,3
Estonia	3,7	21,8	20,2	42,2
Finland	7,5	25,7	29,7	48,5
France	11,9	30,6	20,8	44,9
Germany	7,2	25,6	11,6	45,3
Greece	17,2	42,5	5,1	32,6
Hungary	3,2	8,8	6,0	43,5
Ireland	9,8	34,0	19,0	48,4
Italy	10,5	36,1	4,8	28,0
Latvia	2,3	19,2	4,8	48,9
Lithuania	0,7	17,0	4,6	34,4
Luxembourg	4,1	17,2	28,7	45,2
Malta	8,3	27,0	9,7	43,4
Netherlands	4,6	31,7	38,4	45,1
Poland	11,0	12,4	14,0	35,7
Portugal	10,4	10,5	14,7	25,4
Romania	2,0	26,9	0,7	40,3
Slovakia	9,0	20,9	9,1	34,1
Slovenia	7,2	19,4	18,3	39,9
Spain	8,0	30,8	7,5	36,8
Sweden	4,0	14,9	33,1	50,0
United Kingdom	13,7	29,7	23,9	52,5

*Source: processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019*

Also, in the United Kingdom, the average weekly working time for Mining and quarrying is 48,3 hours, and in Portugal the average weekly working time for Accommodation and food service activities is 45,0 hours. The lowest values of the average weekly working time are recorded in the field of Arts, entertainment and recreation (Denmark - 25,7 hours; Netherlands - 27,2 hours; Sweden - 29,6 hours; Finland - 30 hours), respectively in the field of Education (Italy - 27,8 hours; Netherlands - 29,0 hours; Greece - 29,3 hours). In the Netherlands, low values are also recorded in the fields of: Accommodation and food service activities (24,6 hours), Human health and social work activities (26,4 hours), Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (28,1 hours), Administrative and support service activities (28,7 hours).

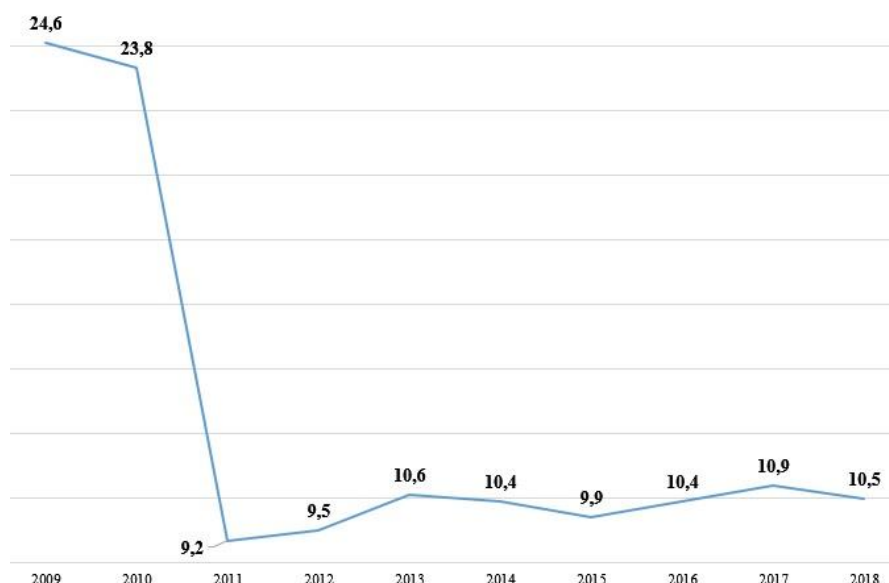
Also in Table 2 are presented the extreme values of the average weekly working time for the main economic activities. It is noted that the largest difference is in the field of Accommodation and food service activities (21,5 hours) and the smallest in the field of Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (5,6 hours).

Regarding the duration of working hours, it is found that the existence of extended working hours and the overtime hours lead to the overloading of employees (Brauner et al., 2019).

In Table 3, on the second column, is presented the situation of long working hours in main job, for the year 2018, for persons employed in the age group 15-64 years (%). Thus, the highest share of employees between the ages of 15 and 64 who had long working hours in main job were registered in: Greece (17,2%) and United Kingdom (13,7%), and a number of 7 other states had values of over 10%. The lowest values were recorded in: Lithuania (0,7%), Bulgaria (1,3%) and Romania (2,0%). The European average is 9,2%.

In the third column is presented the situation regarding the work carried out in weekends, for the year 2018, for the persons employed in the age group 15-64 years (%). At European level, 26.4% of employees between the ages of 15 and 64 work on weekends. Values over 30% are registered in: Greece (42,5%), Italy (36,1%), Ireland (34,0%), Holland (31,7%), Cyprus (31,3%), Spain (30,8%), France (30,6%). Values below 15% have the following countries: Hungary (8,8%), Portugal (10,5%), Poland (12,4%), Croatia (14,0%), Sweden (14,9%).

For Portugal, the values dropped sharply in 2011 compared to 2010, thanks to the approval of the new Labor Code in 2009. It introduced flexibility in terms of contract forms, work organization and liability schemes, as well as changes in the complexity of enforcement mechanisms (ILO, 2018). This evolution is highlighted in the Figure 2.



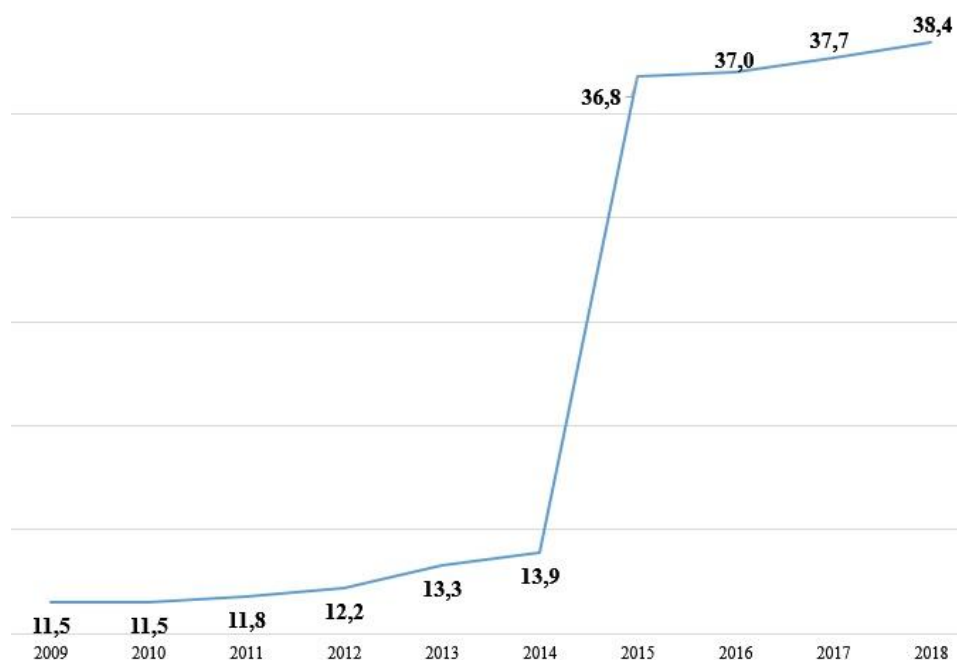
**Figure 2. The Work on Weekends evolution, Portugal, 15-64 years, 2009-2018 (%)**

*Source: processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019*

Thus, it can be observed that starting with 2011 the share of employed persons, between the ages of 15 and 64 who work weekends, has decreased markedly, from 23,8% to 9,2%.

For 2018, the share of adult employees between the ages of 15 and 64, who have worked at home, is presented in the fourth column.

At the European Union level, 14,9% of employees aged 15-64 were able to work from home. The countries with the highest weights are: Netherlands (38,4%), Sweden (33,1%), Finland (29,7%), Denmark (29,1%), Luxembourg (28,7%). The lowest values are registered in: Romania (0,7%), Bulgaria (0,9%), Cyprus (2,2%), Lithuania (4,6%), Latvia (4,8%), Italy (4,8%). For the Netherlands, the evolution of the share of employees between the ages of 15 and 64 who work weekends is shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. The evolution of the share of employees who work weekends, Netherlands, 15-64 years, 2009-2018 (%)**

*Source: processing according to data published by Eurostat, 2019*

Evolution is continuously increasing. The jump from 2015 is due to the application in the Netherlands of a new law on work and safety at work. This has brought about changes in labour market flexibility in the Netherlands (Eurofound, 2014).

In the fifth column is presented, for 2015, the average length of time needed to travel between work and home and vice versa, for employees between the ages of 15 and 64. Thus, in the European Union, the mean duration of commuting time one-way between work and home was 41,9 minutes. Countries with values greater than 45 minutes are: United Kingdom (52,5 minutes), Sweden (50,0 minutes), Latvia (48,9 minutes), Finland (48,5 minutes), Ireland (48,4 minutes), Denmark (48,3 minutes), Belgium (48,2 minutes), Germany (45,3 minutes), Luxembourg (45,2 minutes), Holland (45,1 minutes). Below 35 minutes is the transfer time to: Lithuania (34,4 minutes), Slovakia (34,1 minutes), Bulgaria (33,4 minutes), Greece (32,6 minutes), Italy (28,0 minutes), Portugal (25,4 minutes), Cyprus (22,4 minutes). Also, the countries where in 2015, compared to 2005, the transfer time decreased by at least 10 minutes are: Romania (-16,2 minutes), Poland (-13,6 minutes), Cyprus (-11,3 minutes), Slovakia (-10,7 minutes).

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

From the analyzes, it is found that the average weekly number of hours for the main jobs decreased. Also, for some economic activities the number of hours is over 40 hours, and for others under 35 hours, even under 30 hours. In nine countries, over 10% of employees have extended programs. With regard to weekend work, we find different weights for EU member countries. The possibility of working from home is high in some countries (Holland – 38,4%), and the average length of time needed to travel between work and home is 41,9 minutes.

Thus, achieving a balance between professional and private life can be achieved through flexible work schedules and the ability to work remotely. Also, an improvement of the work-life balance can be achieved through a specific organization of working time (Eurofound, 2012).

In order to prevent certain imbalances in the relationship between professional and private life, employers can apply organizational measures that will lead to the creation of an optimal working environment. The optimization of personal responsibilities with those related to the career leads to a balance between work and personal life.

The time that people spend with family and friends, respectively the time they spend on personal development and rest, can help achieve the reconciliation of professional life with private and family life (European Parliament, 2018).

## REFERENCES

- Albertsen, K., Rafnsdóttir, G.L., Grimsmo, A., Tómasson, K. & Kauppinen, K. (2008). Workhours and worklife balance. *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health Supplements*, 5: 14–21.
- Anttila, T., Oinas, T., Tammelin, M. & Nätti, J. (2015). Working-Time Regimes and Work-Life Balance in Europe. *European Sociological Review*, 31(6): 713–724.
- Bran, F., Alpopi, C. & Burlacu, S. (2018). Territorial development-disparities between the developed and the least developed areas of Romania. *LUMEN Proceedings*, 6(1): 146-155.
- Brauner, C., Wohrmann, A.M., Frank, K. & Michel, A. (2019). Health and work-life balance across types of work schedules: A latent class analysis. *Applied Ergonomics*, 81.
- Burlacu, S. (2009). Pre-training human resources in Romanian public administration in the new knowledge-based economy using electronic communication. In *Proceedings of the International Conference Public Institutions' Capacity to Implement the Administrative Reform Process*, Bucharest, June (pp. 23-24).
- Burlacu, S. (2010a). Evaluation of training process by fuzzy techniques. *Administrație și Management Public*, 15: 162.
- Burlacu, S. (2010b). Role of training in the knowledge society. In *Proceedings of Administration and Public Management International Conference* (Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 203-208). Research Centre in Public Administration and Public Services, Bucharest, Romania.
- Costache, G., Marinas, C.V., Igrat, R. & Burlacu, S. (2015). Internship in the HR department—organizational and individual perspectives. In *Proceedings of the international management conference* (Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 359-370). Faculty of Management, Academy of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Romania.
- Eurofound. (2012). *Working time and work-life balance in a life course perspective*, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/report/2013/working-conditions/working-time-and-work-life-balance-in-a-life-course-perspective>, (accessed October 23, 2019).
- Eurofound. (2014). *Netherlands: New Act on work and security*, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/article/2014/netherlands-new-act-on-work-and-security>. (accessed October 23, 2019).
- European Commission. (2019). *Quality of Employment*, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/labour-market/quality-of-employment>. (accessed October 7, 2019).



- European Parliament (2018), *Creating labour market conditions favorable for work-life balance*, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0253\\_EN.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-8-2016-0253_EN.html). (accessed October 9, 2019).
- Eurostat. (2019). *Employed persons working from home as a percentage of the total employment, by sex, age and professional status (%)*. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>. (accessed October 9, 2019).
- Faggianelli, D., Burlacu, S. & Carra, C. (2018). Victimization of health professionals in Bucharest service relations and social work relationships. *Administrație și Management Public*, 30: 109-126.
- Jensen, K.W., Liu, Y. & Schøtt, T. (2017). Entrepreneurs innovation bringing job satisfaction, work-family balance, and life satisfaction: In China and around the world. *International Journal of Innovation Studies*, 1(4): 193-206.
- Jianu, I., Dobre, I., Bodislav, D. A., Radulescu, C. V. & Burlacu, S. (2019). The implications of institutional specificities on the income inequalities drivers in European Union. *Economic Computation and Economic Cybernetics Studies and Research*, 53(2): 59-76.
- Matilla-Santander, N., Lidón-Moyano, C., González-Marrón, A., Bunch, K., Martín-Sánchez, J.C. & Martínez-Sánchez, J.M. (2019). Attitudes toward working conditions: are European Union workers satisfied with their working hours and work-life balance?. *Gaceta Sanitaria*, 33(2): 162–168.
- Profiroiu, A., Burlacu, S. & Sabie, O. (2019). Reform of the pension system in Romania. *Calitatea*, 20(S2): 521-524.
- Rădulescu, C. V., Bodislav, D. A. & Burlacu, S. (2018a). Demographic explosion and IT governance in public institutions. *Managerial Challenges of the Contemporary Society*. 11(1): 18.
- Rădulescu, C. V., Dobre, R. C. & Burlacu, S. (2018b). *The business management of distress situations*. The 12th International Management Conference “Management Perspectives in the Digital Era” November 1st-2nd, 2018, Bucharest, Romania, 1: 741-747.