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## The dynamics of dependent employment and unemployment: A comparison of different data sources

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**discussion paper**

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**The Dynamics of Dependent Employment  
and Unemployment – A Comparison  
of Different Data Sources**

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**This paper is the product of research done partially in collaboration with the Labour Market Policy Team and the KILM Team of the Employment Strategy Department of the ILO in Geneva and with the data support from EUROSTAT, Luxembourg.**

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## Abstract

The dynamics of dependent employment and unemployment can only be adequately analysed using individual flow data. The degree of influence of the data set and the methodology used is shown by analysing 11 member states of the European Union on the basis of data from the European Labour Force Survey (ELFS) and the European Community Household Panel (ECHP). In addition to the analysis of flows and their counterflows, new labour market indicators are introduced: the *dependent employment (growth) indicator*, the *general mobility rate*, the *(re)integration indicator* and the *(un)employment mobility rate*.

## Zusammenfassung

Die Dynamik von abhängiger Beschäftigung und Arbeitslosigkeit kann nur mit individuellen Stromdaten ausreichend analysiert werden. Welchen Einfluß dabei der gewählte Datensatz und die gewählte Methodologie haben, wird durch eine vergleichende Analyse von 11 Mitgliedsstaaten der Europäischen Union mit Daten der Europäische Arbeitskräftestichprobe (ELFS) und Daten des Europäischen Haushaltspanels herausgearbeitet. Neben der Analyse einzelner Ströme und ihrer Gegenströme werden neue Arbeitsmarktindikatoren vorgestellt: der *Beschäftigungs-(Wachstums-)Indikator*, die *Generelle Mobilitätsrate*, der *(Re-)Integrationsindikator* und die *Arbeits-(losigkeits-)Mobilitätsrate*.



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## 1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the flows into and out of waged or salaried ("dependent") employment - out of and into all other possible labour force statuses (LFS) – with emphasis on the transition between employment and unemployment. This study will concentrate primarily on the number of transitions which occur over a specific time period. Thus, the dynamic perspective here consists in the analysis of aggregated flow values based on a multiplicity of individual mobility processes. Although descriptions of labour market situations (employment rate, unemployment rate, etc.) are required in order to point out the priority areas for policy action, it is time to take a step beyond such static analyses of stock values. This is one aim of this paper, which discusses dynamic flows on the basis of data from the User Database (UDB) of the European Community Household Panel (ECHP). The results will also be compared with findings from a former research project on the same topic, but based on the European Labour Force Survey (ELFS)<sup>1</sup> to show the importance of the use of longitudinal calendar rather than cross-sectional information. The main objective of this analysis is to show that both the various ways of calculating transitions and the data set used have a strong impact on the results. Further interpretations will be the object of a future project, where the results obtained here will be linked to their socio-economic and institutional context.

The analysis of the ELFS uses the information provided on the main activity status in 1995 and the information given on the 'labour force status one year earlier' in response to the same survey. In the longitudinal part of the analysis, based on the ECHP UDB, comparable calculations can be made by using the information on the main activity status in the first two waves (1994 / 1995). In both cases, this compares a status at a point of time (t) with the status one year previously (t-1), with an information gap between (t) and (t-1). In a second step, the number of transitions within one year are estimated by using the calendar information on the labour force status, taking into account any transition which occurs between January 1994 as starting point and the following 12 months until January 1995. At the least, the calendar information is used to estimate the transitions between the month the interview for the second wave took place (1995 or 1996) and the previous 12 months as a 'moving time window'. Due to the strong deviation of the date of interview, the time observed thus starts

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<sup>1</sup> Klaus Schömann, Thomas Kruppe, Heidi Oschmiansky: Beschäftigungsdynamik und Arbeitslosigkeit in der Europäischen Union, Discussion Paper FS I 98 – 203, Social Science Research Center Berlin, 1998.



between January 1994 (if the interview took place in January 1995) and December 1994 (because of the right-censored information, December 1995 is the last month for which calendar information is available). In order to have access to as much comparable data as possible for all steps of this analysis, the ECHP UDB was given a longitudinal design, which includes only individuals taking part in all three waves.

## 2. The dynamics of dependent employment

In the following tables of Section 1 and Section 2, all transitions into and out of dependent employment for 1994/1995 are balanced as a percentage of all dependent employed persons in that country in 1995. Column 1 indicates the sum of the flows into employment (from unemployment, self-employment, inactivity and education/training, but also from unknown previous labour force status). Column 2 lists the respective counterflows. Column 3 indicates the net difference between all inflows and outflows (Column 1 minus Column 2), which can be interpreted as a **dependent employment (growth) indicator**. A positive value means that more people have been integrated into the (dependent) employment system than have left it, while a negative figure indicates a decline in dependent employment.

**Tabelle 2.1:** Change in Main Activity Status  
(1995 and one year earlier)

|     | Flows into and out of dependent employment |         |             |
|-----|--|---------|-------------|
|     | INFLOW                                     | OUTFLOW | DIFF.       |
| B   | 5.8  | 6.8     | <b>-1.0</b> |
| DK* | 12.8                                       | 9.8     | <b>3.0</b>  |
| D   | 8.5  | 7.8     | <b>0.7</b>  |
| EL  | 8.3  | 10.3    | <b>-2.0</b> |
| E   | 17.0                                       | 12.2    | <b>4.8</b>  |
| F   | 11.0                                       | 9.2     | <b>1.8</b>  |
| IRL | 13.0                                       | 7.5     | <b>5.5</b>  |
| I   | 13.0                                       | 10.6    | <b>2.4</b>  |
| L   | 5.7  | 5.1     | <b>0.6</b>  |
| NL  | 9.5  | 9.2     | <b>0.3</b>  |
| P   | 8.3  | 8.7     | <b>-0.4</b> |
| UK  | 10.9                                       | 8.8     | <b>2.1</b>  |

\* DK without flows into and out of self-employment

Source: European Labour Force Survey 1995, authors' calculations

Cited from: Schömann/Kruppe/Oschmiansky 1998

**Table 2.1** is estimated by using the **European Labour Force Survey 1995 (t)**. Due to the cross-sectional design and the resulting use of the '**LFS one year earlier**' question (**t-1**), a maximum of one transition per person can be captured. This leads to an under-estimation of flows in any case where multiple transition have occurred, especially if a person has returned to the same LFS he/she had the year before (which statistically appears here as no transition).

In most countries the net employment trend in 1994/1995 was positive. Only in Belgium, Greece and Portugal was the difference of all flows into and out of employment in 1995 negative. Ireland, Spain, Denmark, Italy and the United Kingdom reveal a substantial dependent employment surplus of more than 2%.

The net sum of Column 1 and Column 2 (cf. Table 2.5) could be seen as the general mobility rate for each country. The extent of mobility between the various labour market statuses is not, as widely believed, highest in the United Kingdom of all the EU Member States: Spain in 1995 had significantly higher employment turnover rates.

**Table 2.2:** Change in Main Activity Status  
(between 1994 and 1995)

|     | Flows into and out of dependent employment |         |             |
|-----|--|---------|-------------|
|     | INFLOW                                     | OUTFLOW | DIFF.       |
| B   | 6.4  | 9.3     | <b>-3.0</b> |
| DK  | 9.1  | 9.6     | <b>-0.5</b> |
| D   | 8.3  | 7.8     | <b>0.5</b>  |
| EL  | 15.8                                       | 14.0    | <b>1.8</b>  |
| E   | 18.4                                       | 13.8    | <b>4.7</b>  |
| F   | 7.9  | 4.4     | <b>3.6</b>  |
| IRL | 13.9                                       | 11.7    | <b>2.1</b>  |
| I   | 10.7                                       | 11.7    | <b>-0.9</b> |
| L   | 4.0  | 4.9     | <b>-0.9</b> |
| NL  | 15.4                                       | 7.1     | <b>8.3</b>  |
| P   | 11.9                                       | 8.8     | <b>3.1</b>  |
| UK  | 10.6                                       | 10.4    | <b>0.2</b>  |

Source: ECHP UDB (Main Activity Status), authors' calculations

**Table 2.2** is calculated from the **User Database** of the **European Community Household Panel**. Utilising the longitudinal design,<sup>2</sup> the **labour force status** each individual stated in **1995 (t)** is compared with the one stated in **1994 (t-1)** in order to have the most comparable results possible with Table 2.1 based on ELFS data.

<sup>2</sup> Basis: only persons who take part in all three waves.

Besides the fact that the period between the two interviews (wave one and wave two) of the individual can deviate considerably from exactly one year, this kind of calculation is subject to the same risk of under-estimation as stated for Table 2.1 (as a result of the comparison between two points in time with a one-year information gap).

Nevertheless, comparing Table 2.1 and Table 2.2, we can find strong differences in country patterns. On the one hand, Denmark, France, Italy and Luxembourg now show a significantly lower ( $> -1\%$ ), Greece, Spain, the Netherlands and Portugal a significantly higher ( $> 1\%$ ) inflow into dependent employment. On the other hand, outflow out of dependent employment appears to be significantly lower in France and the Netherlands, but significantly higher in Belgium, Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom. This also leads to changes in the net employment trend (Table 2.2, Column 3). While mainly Belgium, but to a smaller extent also Italy, Ireland and Denmark, has more flows out of than into dependent employment, all other countries have a positive net result, with Portugal, France, Spain and, particularly, the Netherlands standing out. Again, a comparison with Table 2.1 indicates differences between  $-3.5$  (Denmark) and  $8.0$  (the Netherlands) percentage points. The results of both data sets are similar in all three columns only for Germany.

**Table 2.3**, also calculated on the basis of the **User Database** of the **European Community Household Panel**, takes advantage of the longitudinal design by using the **calendar information** on the labour force status of the individual for **each month**. In contrast to Table 2.1 and Table 2.2, here we count any transition and, therefore, have much more accurate information about labour market flows. Nevertheless, an under-estimation is probable for those transitions that have a duration in that status shorter than one month. These are most likely to appear in these flows into and out of dependent employment. To maintain as much comparability as possible with the former analysis, a period of twelve possible transitions with **January 1994** as starting status and **January 1995** as end status is selected. Unfortunately, there is no calendar information available for the Netherlands.

**Table 2.3:** Flows between Labour Force Status  
(January 1994 to January 1995)

|     | Flows into and out of<br>dependent employment |         |             |
|-----|---|---------|-------------|
|     | INFLOW  | OUTFLOW | DIFF.       |
| B   | 16.4  | 17.7    | <b>-1.3</b> |
| DK  | 21.1  | 23.3    | <b>-2.1</b> |
| D   | 11.5  | 18.8    | <b>-7.2</b> |
| EL  | 30.3  | 29.9    | <b>0.4</b>  |
| E   | 39.7  | 38.6    | <b>1.1</b>  |
| F   | 23.7  | 19.8    | <b>3.9</b>  |
| IRL | 26.2  | 25.3    | <b>0.9</b>  |
| I   | 18.6  | 21.2    | <b>-2.5</b> |
| L   | 9.7   | 13.1    | <b>-3.4</b> |
| NL  | ..  | ..      | <b>..</b>   |
| P   | 18.2  | 17.4    | <b>0.8</b>  |
| UK  | 18.7  | 18.9    | <b>-0.2</b> |

NL: No calendar information available

Source: ECHP UDB (Calendar Information), authors' calculations

The first result that catches the eye is the much higher turnover rate in all countries. In comparison to Table 2.2, the inflow into dependent employment is between 3.2 (Germany) and 21.3 (Spain) percentage points higher, the outflow between 8.2 (Luxembourg) and 24.8 (Spain) percentage points higher. In other words, the general mobility rate (as the net sum of inflow and outflow) now varies from 22.8 (Luxembourg) to 78.3 percent (Spain) of all dependent employees in that country. The ranking of the countries shows only minor changes, with the exception of Greece, which is in a middle position as per ELFS with 18.6 percent, and on the upper end behind Spain as per ECHP (calendar information) with 60.2 percent, and Italy the other way round, which is on the upper end behind Spain as per ELFS with 23.6 percent and in a middle position as per ECHP (calendar information) with 39.8 percent. The much more accurate measurement of the flows on the labour market by utilising the calendar information from the ECHP UDB instead of the comparison of two points in time is clearly indicated by the estimation of the general mobility rate at two to three times higher.

A closer look at the dependent employment indicator (Column 3) does not show a coherent pattern. In France, which now shows the highest integration into the dependent employment system, the difference between flow and counterflow increases only slightly. In the United Kingdom, the difference between the two flows changed from positive to negative, but also marginally (0.4 %). We can observe a decrease for Greece, Spain and Ireland with a still positive and for Belgium with a still negative balance. In Denmark, Italy and Luxembourg, the negative balance has increased. In Germany, the formerly

positive difference (0.5 %) now shows the highest negative balance (-7.5 %), which means a much higher outflow from dependent employment than into it.

**Table 2.4:** Flows between Labour Force Status  
(Last 12 Months before Date of Interview)

|     | Flows into and out of dependent employment |         |             |
|-----|--|---------|-------------|
|     | INFLOW                                     | OUTFLOW | DIFF.       |
| B   | 15.8                                       | 15.3    | <b>0.5</b>  |
| DK  | 19.8                                       | 18.7    | <b>1.1</b>  |
| D   | ..   | ..      | ..          |
| EL  | 20.7                                       | 20.9    | <b>-0.3</b> |
| E   | 38.0                                       | 36.3    | <b>1.7</b>  |
| F   | 18.6                                       | 15.8    | <b>2.8</b>  |
| IRL | 25.7                                       | 21.1    | <b>4.6</b>  |
| I   | 17.2                                       | 18.8    | <b>-1.5</b> |
| L   | 10.4                                       | 10.6    | <b>-0.2</b> |
| NL  | ..   | ..      | ..          |
| P   | 16.5                                       | 16.6    | <b>-0.1</b> |
| UK  | 17.5                                       | 18.7    | <b>-1.2</b> |

D: No date of interview available

NL: No calendar information available

Source: ECHP UDB (Calendar Information), authors' calculations

**Table 2.4** is also calculated on the basis of the **User Database** of the **European Community Household Panel**, using the **calendar information** on the labour force status of the individual for **each month**. The difference to Table 2.3 is that the period of twelve months **depends on the date of the interview of the second wave**: if the respondents were interviewed in January 1995, there is no difference to the calculation in Table 2.3. If the interview took place in any other month of that year, the window in time shifts to cover the last twelve months before that date. Even if the interview was carried out in 1996, the observation period ends in December 1995, the last month calendar information was available (recorded in wave three). While in France the calendar information was asked generally in this way by the interviewer, for all other countries the period covered should be the respective calendar year.

In comparison to Table 2.3, all inflows and outflows decrease (except inflow Luxembourg), especially in Greece and France, with a lower decrease in the out- than in the inflows in Greece, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom and a higher decrease in all other countries analysed. The cause of this effect is not quite clear yet, but could be a result of general changes in the economic cycle between 1994 and 1995, which play a part in this estimation, combined with some effects of memory gaps, which lead to an accumulation of events in the data set for some months with respect to the date of interview. In any case,

the interpretation of this table on a by country basis is more difficult because the overall coverage of the time period analysed now exceeds one year and can have a duration of up to 23 months within one country (January 1994 to December 1995).

**Table 2.5:** General Mobility Rate

|     | Sum of Flows into and out of dependent employment |         |          |           |
|-----|---|---------|----------|-----------|
|     | ELFS (y)*   | ECHP(y) | ECHP (m) | ECHP (mm) |
| B   | 12.6  | 15.7    | 34.1     | 31.1      |
| DK  | 22.6  | 18.7    | 44.4     | 38.5      |
| D   | 16.3  | 16.2    | 30.3     | ..        |
| EL  | 18.6  | 29.7    | 60.2     | 41.6      |
| E   | 29.2  | 32.2    | 78.3     | 74.4      |
| F   | 20.2  | 12.3    | 43.6     | 34.3      |
| IRL | 20.5  | 25.6    | 51.5     | 46.8      |
| I   | 23.6  | 22.4    | 39.8     | 36.0      |
| L   | 10.8  | 8.9     | 22.8     | 20.9      |
| NL  | 18.7  | 22.5    | ..       | ..        |
| P   | 17.0  | 20.8    | 35.6     | 33.1      |
| UK  | 19.7  | 21.0    | 37.5     | 36.2      |

\* DK without self-employed

Source:

ELFS (y): European Labour Force Survey 1995, authors' calculations

Cited from: Schömann/Kruppe/Oschmiansky 1998

ECHP (y): UDB (Main Activity Status, self-defined), authors' calculations

ECHP (m): UDB (Calendar Information), authors' calculations

ECHP (mm): UDB, (Calendar Information by date of interview), own calculations

**Table 2.5** provides an overview of the **general mobility rate**, which is calculated as the **net sum of all flows** into and out of dependent employment (Column 1 and Column 2) from all previous tables (2.1 to 2.4) in this section. This mobility rate reveals an important aspect of the functioning of the labour markets. Nevertheless, the measure of mobility depends on economic and labour market conditions as well as on institutional settings. However, the figures can only be counted as one part of an evaluation of the employment system.

This becomes quite clear in the case of Spain, which has the highest general mobility rate, independent of data source and model of estimation. The figure of up to 78.3 percent of all dependent employees (Column 3) does not mean a real rotation of more than three quarters of job holders, but is an effect of the high segmentation of the labour market, which still had a highly protected part for insiders in 1995 and another part for short-term, fixed-term contract workers and, therefore, a high number of transitions. Further evidence for this

hypothesis is the strong difference between the estimations of the changes on a yearly basis (Columns 1 and 2) and the estimations of the transitions on a monthly basis.

While the 'relative ranking positions' of Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Greece vary substantially by data source and/or estimation model, Spain and Ireland are always at the top of Table 2.5, the United Kingdom in the middle field and Portugal, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg always at the bottom.

### 3. The dynamics between dependent employment and unemployment

**Table 3.1:** Change in Main Activity Status  
(1995 and one year earlier)

|     | Flows between dependent employment and unemployment |         |             |
|-----|---|---------|-------------|
|     | UN->EMP   | EMP->UN | DIFF.       |
| B   | 2.9   | 2.6     | <b>0.3</b>  |
| DK* | 3.8   | 3.0     | <b>0.8</b>  |
| D   | 3.2   | 3.0     | <b>0.2</b>  |
| EL  | 4.6   | 4.7     | <b>-0.1</b> |
| E   | 11.6  | 7.0     | <b>4.6</b>  |
| F   | 5.1   | 4.4     | <b>0.7</b>  |
| IRL | 4.4   | 3.5     | <b>0.9</b>  |
| I   | 5.9   | 2.4     | <b>3.5</b>  |
| L   | 1.5   | 1.3     | <b>0.2</b>  |
| NL  | 2.9   | 2.5     | <b>0.4</b>  |
| P   | 3.4   | 3.3     | <b>0.1</b>  |
| UK  | 3.8   | 3.0     | <b>0.8</b>  |

\* DK without flows into and out of self-employment

Source: European Labour Force Survey 1995, authors' calculations  
Cited from: Schömann/Kruppe/Oschmiansky 1998

Another important aspect of country-specific mobility flows is revealed by a more detailed analysis of the flows between unemployment and employment. The following tables are estimated in a similar way to the tables in Section 1, starting with **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2** as the comparison of the changes in **main activity status** based on either **ELFS data** or **ECHP UDB data**.

Comparing Table 3.1 with Table 3.2 only for Greece (-1.6 %), Spain (3.8 %) and Italy (1.6 %), the inflows and for France the outflow (2.5 %) differ by more than one percentage point. Nevertheless, these (mainly smaller) changes are enough to change the balance of the flows between dependent employment and unemployment in Belgium, Germany and Luxembourg from positive to negative and in Greece from negative to positive.

**Table 3.2:** Change in Main Activity Status  
(between 1994 and 1995)

|     | Flows between dependent employment and unemployment |         |             |
|-----|---|---------|-------------|
|     | UN->EMP   | EMP->UN | DIFF.       |
| B   | 2.6   | 3.2     | <b>-0.6</b> |
| DK  | 4.5   | 3.4     | <b>1.2</b>  |
| D   | 2.5   | 3.0     | <b>-0.5</b> |
| EL  | 6.2   | 4.7     | <b>1.5</b>  |
| E   | 7.8   | 7.3     | <b>0.5</b>  |
| F   | 4.2   | 1.9     | <b>2.3</b>  |
| IRL | 4.2   | 3.9     | <b>0.3</b>  |
| I   | 4.3   | 3.1     | <b>1.2</b>  |
| L   | 1.4   | 1.5     | <b>-0.1</b> |
| NL  | 3.1   | 2.3     | <b>0.8</b>  |
| P   | 4.2   | 3.6     | <b>0.5</b>  |
| UK  | 3.4   | 2.4     | <b>1.0</b>  |

Source: ECHP UDB (Main Activity Status), authors' calculations

To return to the arguments developed in Section 1, the much more precise measurement is an analysis based on the **calendar information** of the **ECHP UDB** as shown in **Table 3.3**. The difference between flow and counterflow (Column 3) can be interpreted as an **(re)integration indicator**, analogous to the employment indicator introduced in Section 1. A positive value indicates that more people have been (re)integrated from unemployment into dependent employment than have become unemployed; a negative figure, on the other hand, indicates a higher flow out of dependent employment into unemployment than have been (re)integrated into dependent employment from unemployment.

The negative balance for Germany appears to be relatively small, taking into consideration the general high reduction in dependent employment of 7.2 percent (cf. Table 2.3, Column 3). Independently of the level of their general mobility rate and also of a positive or negative sign for the respective employment indicator (cf. Table 2.3, Column 3), all other countries show a positive (re)integration indicator (cf. Table 3.3, Column 3).

Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom exemplify the significant role played by labour market policy: it appears, temporarily at



least, to have successfully reversed, for those who are (or even become) unemployed, the more general trend towards negative employment growth by concentrating policy efforts on the unemployed and/or on a reduction of labour supply (i.e. early retirement) to give better prospects to the unemployed.

**Table 3.3:** Flows between Labour Force Status  
(January 1994 to January 1995)

|     | Flows between dependent employment and unemployment |         |             |
|-----|---|---------|-------------|
|     | UN->EMP   | EMP->UN | DIFF.       |
| B   | 7.9   | 6.7     | <b>1.2</b>  |
| DK  | 13.6  | 11.1    | <b>2.5</b>  |
| D   | 5.4   | 5.8     | <b>-0.4</b> |
| EL  | 17.8  | 16.1    | <b>1.7</b>  |
| E   | 26.8  | 25.6    | <b>1.2</b>  |
| F   | 10.7  | 9.9     | <b>0.7</b>  |
| IRL | 10.8  | 9.7     | <b>1.1</b>  |
| I   | 9.4   | 8.3     | <b>1.0</b>  |
| L   | 2.9   | 2.6     | <b>0.3</b>  |
| NL  | ..  | ..      | ..          |
| P   | 9.8   | 9.4     | <b>0.4</b>  |
| UK  | 7.1   | 6.2     | <b>0.9</b>  |

NL: No calendar information available

Source: ECHP UDB (Calendar Information), authors' calculations

**Moving the time analysed on the basis of the date of interview,** Column 3 of **Table 3.4** shows a reversed picture of Table 3.3. Portugal is the only country with higher flows from unemployment to dependent employment than vice versa. As already mentioned above, this calculation method takes a different time period into account, which could lead to the in general lower flows as well as the difference in the (re)integration indicator. At least in part, the more prosperous economy is due to the changes in the relative size of the two complementary flows. However, there was no decline in long-term unemployment in the spring/summer of 1995, despite the various labour market policy initiatives targeted at this particular group (European Commission 1995, OECD 1996).

**Table 3.4:** Flows between Labour Force Status  
(Last 12 Months before Date of Interview)

|     | Flows between dependent employment and unemployment |         |             |
|-----|---|---------|-------------|
|     | UN->EMP   | EMP->UN | DIFF.       |
| B   | 6.4   | 6.9     | <b>-0.5</b> |
| DK  | 9.1   | 9.4     | <b>-0.3</b> |
| D   | ..  | ..      | ..          |
| EL  | 12.9  | 13.7    | <b>-0.8</b> |
| E   | 21.6  | 23.4    | <b>-1.9</b> |
| F   | 8.9   | 9.7     | <b>-0.8</b> |
| IRL | 7.9   | 9.7     | <b>-1.8</b> |
| I   | 7.6   | 8.3     | <b>-0.6</b> |
| L   | 2.1   | 2.5     | <b>-0.4</b> |
| NL  | ..  | ..      | ..          |
| P   | 8.3   | 7.6     | <b>0.8</b>  |
| UK  | 5.5   | 6.3     | <b>-0.8</b> |

D: No date of interview available

NL: No calendar information available

Source: ECHP UDB (Calendar Information), authors' calculations

Nevertheless, it would be possible that we have a more accurate estimation because of the better memory of events in the recent past than such a long time ago. We should also remember that the calculation of changes in main activity at two points in time depend on the date of interview, producing some bias in the period observed.

**Table 3.5** gives an overview of the **(un)employment mobility rate**, which is the **sum of the flow from unemployment to dependent employment and its counterflow**. It indicates the overall rotation between two segments of the labour market, which is rather low in Luxembourg and rather high in Spain, independently of data set or calculation method. Besides this, in Column 1, calculated from ELFS data in Table 2.1, the main group (the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Denmark, United Kingdom) shows a pattern of 5 to 7 percent, while Ireland, Italy, Greece and France, with 7.9 to 9.5 percent, are also close in the (un)employment mobility rate. While we find significant differences in the pure numbers, the impact of the data set and calculation method used in the 'relative ranking position' of the countries on the (un-)employment mobility rate is of minor importance. Only for France do the data source and estimation used matter.

**Table 3.5:** (Un-)Employment Mobility Rate

|     | Sum of flows between dependent employment and unemployment |         |          |           |
|-----|--|---------|----------|-----------|
|     | ELFS (y) *   | ECHP(y) | ECHP (m) | ECHP (mm) |
| B   | 5.5  | 5.9     | 14.7     | 13.3      |
| DK  | 6.8  | 7.9     | 24.8     | 18.5      |
| D   | 6.2  | 5.4     | 11.2     | ..        |
| EL  | 9.3  | 10.9    | 33.9     | 26.6      |
| E   | 18.6   | 15.1    | 52.4     | 45.0      |
| F   | 9.5  | 6.1     | 20.6     | 18.5      |
| IRL | 7.9  | 8.2     | 20.5     | 17.6      |
| I   | 8.3  | 7.5     | 17.7     | 15.9      |
| L   | 2.8  | 2.9     | 5.6      | 4.6       |
| NL  | 5.4  | 5.4     | ..       | ..        |
| P   | 6.7  | 7.8     | 19.1     | 15.9      |
| UK  | 6.8  | 5.8     | 13.3     | 11.9      |

\* DK without self-employed

Source:

ELFS (y) European Labour Force Survey 1995, authors' calculations

Cited from: Schömann/Kruppe/Oschmiansky 1998

ECHP (y): UDB (Main Activity Status, self-defined), authors' calculations

ECHP (m): UDB (Calendar Information), authors' calculations

ECHP (mm): UDB, (Calendar Information by date of interview), own calculations

#### 4. The relevance of unemployment as part of the employment system

So far, Section 1 gave an overview of the overall flows into and out of dependent employment, while Section 2 analysed the sub-flows between unemployment and dependent employment. Bringing together the two parts, the relevance of unemployment in the national employment systems can be shown. In **Table 4.1**, this is calculated as the **share of the sub-flow from unemployment** in the overall flows **into dependent employment** (Column 1 of Tables 3.1 to 3.4 as a percentage of Column 1 of Tables 2.1 to 2.4).

The Spanish labour market, with 50 to nearly 70 percent of all individuals entering dependent employment from unemployment, is highly segmented into one part with only a small amount of fluctuation and another part rotating significantly between unemployment and dependent employment. For the time observed here, this was due to the huge number of fixed-term contracts and strict employment protection regulations, both of which situations have undergone several changes since then (cf. Schoemann / Rogowski / Kruppe

1998). This finding is reproduced by both data sets and all calculation methods by a 'relative ranking position' which always varies under the top three.

Greece, with nearly 40 to over 60 percent (ranking position 1 to 6), reveals a pattern similar to Spain, but given the lower general mobility rate (Table 2.5), the situation seems less precarious.

Belgium has a proportion of 40 to 50 percent, which, in the case of the ELFS data (Column 1), is the third highest share, but only rank seven out of ten using an estimation based on the ECHP calendar data referring to the date of interview (Column 4). Also in France, nearly 45 to 53 percent enter dependent employment from unemployment. With a ranking position between one and eight, France shows the highest variation due to the different calculation based on the ECHP User Data Base.

The opposite is the case for Italy (40 to 50 percent), which changes its ranking position only from five to six.

In Portugal the share of former unemployed among all persons entering dependent employment is 34 to 54 percent. With a high variation in both the general mobility and the (re)integration rate, the ranking position changes from seven to three.

In the United Kingdom the range caused by the different data sets and estimation methods is relatively small (31 to 38 percent). With an overall low fluctuation between unemployment and dependent employment (Table 3.5), but at the same time with an average general mobility rate (in comparison to the other countries), the unemployed are of minor importance in filling vacancies in the United Kingdom in comparison to all the other countries analysed here due to the relative low unemployment rate. Nevertheless, a flow out of unemployment of this size constitutes a good basis for a cut in unemployment in the future.

**Table 4.1:** Share of Flow from Unemployment in all Inflows into Dependent Employment

|     | ELFS (y) <sup>*</sup> | ECHP(y) | ECHP (m) | ECHP (mm) |
|-----|-----------------------|---------|----------|-----------|
| B   | 50.0                  | 41.3    | 48.5     | 40.7      |
| DK  | 29.7                  | 49.9    | 64.6     | 46.1      |
| D   | 37.6                  | 29.5    | 46.8     | ..        |
| EL  | 55.4                  | 39.4    | 58.6     | 62.4      |
| E   | 68.2                  | 42.4    | 67.4     | 56.7      |
| F   | 46.4                  | 52.9    | 44.9     | 47.8      |
| IRL | 33.8                  | 30.6    | 41.3     | 30.7      |
| I   | 45.4                  | 40.5    | 50.2     | 44.3      |
| L   | 26.3                  | 34.1    | 30.2     | 20.0      |
| NL  | 30.5                  | 20.3    | ..       | ..        |
| P   | 41.0                  | 34.8    | 53.6     | 50.5      |
| UK  | 34.9                  | 32.1    | 38.2     | 31.7      |

\* DK without self-employed

Source:

ELFS (y): European Labour Force Survey 1995, authors' calculations

Cited from: Schömann/Kruppe/Oschmiansky 1998

ECHP (y): UDB (Main Activity Status, self-defined), authors' calculations

ECHP (m): UDB (Calendar Information), authors' calculations

ECHP (mm): UDB, (Calendar Information by date of interview), own calculations

In Ireland, which has a high general mobility rate (cf. Table 2.5), only 31 to 41 percent of newly dependent employed persons were formerly unemployed. With a high number of youngsters entering the labour market from education, the integration of these is at the expense of the unemployed.

Denmark, with nearly 30 to 65 percent, shows the highest variations depending on data source and estimation model. This could not be explained by the missing self-employed in Column 1 (ELFS data). While Denmark shows the second lowest share of unemployed persons among all transitions into dependent employment using the ELFS, estimations based on ECHP calendar data result in the highest share. This again has to be seen as a clear advantage of using transition data on monthly intervals instead of comparing the status at two points in time with a gap of more or less one year.

Luxembourg has the lowest share (20 to 34 percent) entering dependent employment from unemployment. With the lowest general mobility rate, the lowest (re)integration rate and the lowest unemployment rate, this is boosted by vacancies being filled by cross-border workers.

Germany, with 29 to 47 percent transitions from unemployment into dependent employment, has an average to below-average share. In connection with its low general mobility rate, the effort to reintegrate unemployed persons has to be strengthened if the unemployment rate is to be cut substantially.

The Netherlands are only partially comparable due to the missing calendar information. Taking into account the average general mobility rate (Table 3.5), it is obvious from the low share of flow from unemployment into dependent employment (Table 4.1) that groups with other labour force status are mainly used to fill vacancies, namely inactive persons changing into part-time jobs, who afterwards again enter inactivity. This may be one reason for the high share of long-term unemployed in the Netherlands.

## **5. Conclusions**

In summary, it can be concluded that the dynamic perspective of labour market flows and mobility between different labour market statuses provides a rather vivid illustration of the dynamics of employment and unemployment in terms of the surpluses in the various balances. This analysis provides information about the coverage of transitions in the ELFS and ECHP UDB as a first step. A linkage of these results on employment dynamics to socio-economic characteristics must follow in order to identify 'good' and 'bad' transitions in the sense of transitional labour markets (Schmid 1998)

The European Labour Force Survey, which contains some - albeit rather rudimentary - retrospective information, is a good but not adequate information system. The European Community Household Panel with its monthly calendar information is better equipped to enable this reporting system to be developed into an 'early warning system' for the labour market. What is clear is that if the publication of the ECHP findings could be much closer to the year of the survey than it is today, this source of data could be developed into an extremely informative monitoring system which indicates trends inside the employment system at an early stage and which could, therefore, enable labour market policy-makers to take timely corrective action (on this cf. Auer & Kruppe 1996).

The aim of such a monitoring system would be to permit more detailed and informative analyses and cover, in addition to the flows discussed here, target- or function-group-specific flows such as the flows into and out of long-term unemployment, self-employment, and branch and occupation-specific transitions. Last but not least, the wide coverage of the survey ought to be used to obtain information on the impact of labour market policy measures on the various transitions.

The data set provides indications of gender-related difference in the composition of the flows, so an extension along this dimension is also possible with little additional effort. Unfortunately, other extensions cannot be realised given the small number of cases and still small number of waves. In order to

identify cultural and institutional differences between national employment systems, the employment flows considered here need to be further linked to the structure of participation in active labour market policy measures. Even very crude comparisons between these employment balances and labour market policy participation balances (OECD 1996) show that in the Scandinavian countries, but also in Ireland and France, one of the reasons for the relatively high level of employment transitions are the substantial inflows into labour market policy measures. At a later stage, with more waves of the ECHP available, a controlling on the effects of active labour market policy measures seems to be possible.

Overall, the ECHP provides more detailed information on transition at comparably less cost than the ELFS, which has some more accurate data due to the high number of cases surveyed.

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