

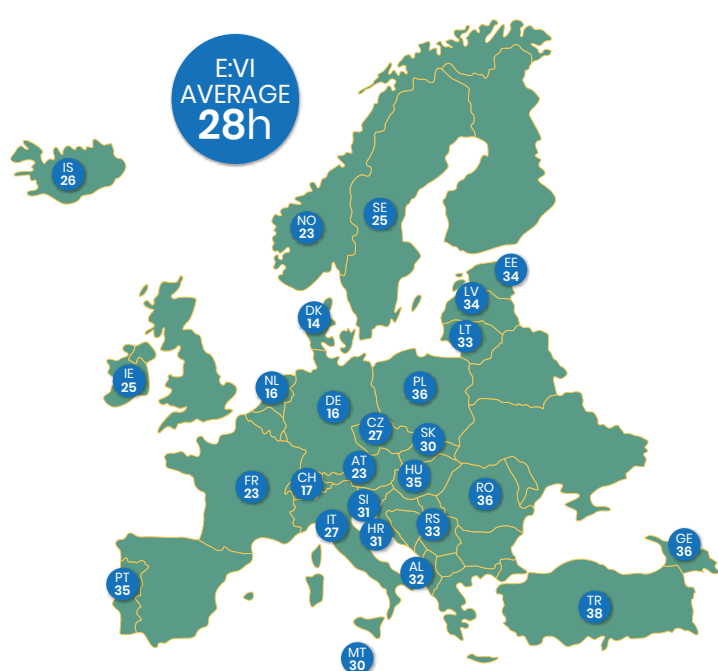
# HOW TO MAKE IT WORK WHEN YOU WORK A LOT? 1

INTELLIGENCE BRIEF 4/2019

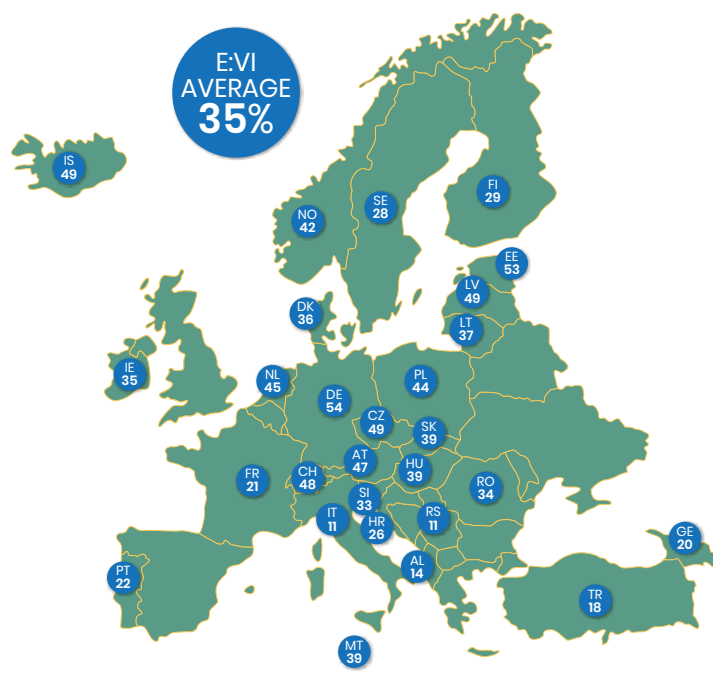
This short overview - mainly focused on countries in which students in higher education regularly work more than 20 hours per week during term time - reveals that there is great variation in EUROSTUDENT VI (E:VI) countries in the extent of students' paid work during the lecture period. National experts briefly comment on the different countries' patterns.

Working in a paid job while studying has become a widespread phenomenon among EUROSTUDENT countries: the average hours students spend on their jobs are higher than 20h/week. In only a few countries do students with regular jobs, on average, tend to work less than 20 hours per week, namely in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland (Figure 1). There is great variation in E:VI countries in terms of the share of students who work during the entire lecture period (Figure 2).

**Figure 1. Students' weekly time spent on a paid job (mean hours): students working the whole lecture period**



**Figure 2. Students in a paid job during term-time: share of students who work during the whole lecture period**



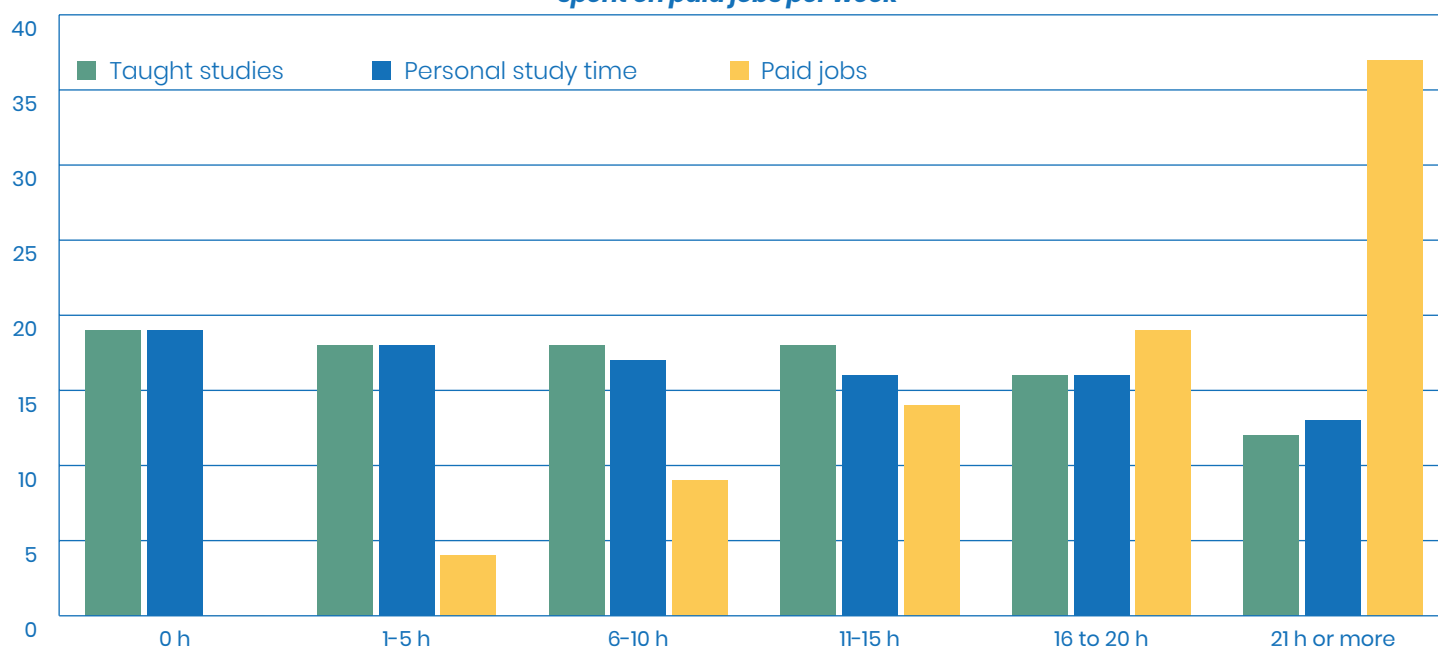
Data source: EUROSTUDENT VI, Source: Masevičiūtė et al., 2018

## HOW DO STUDENTS WHO REGULARLY WORK MORE THAN 20 HOURS PER WEEK DISTRIBUTE THEIR TIME TO MAINTAIN BOTH STUDIES AND PAID JOB(S)?

Observing the distribution of time budget<sup>2</sup> among working students in all E:VI countries, it should be noted that the overall time budget expands when students start working. On average, if a student does not work, their overall time budget is 38 hours/ week. For students working up to 10 hours, the overall time budget amounts to an average 44 hours per week, if a student works up to 20 hours, the overall time budget is 51 hours per week. For students working 21 hours/week or more, the overall average time budget per week amounts to 62 hours. Another general trend from working students' time budget data shows that increasing time for a paid job is related to decreasing time spent on study-related activities. When the time

dedicated to paid job is only a few hours a week, the time spent on study related activities stays (nearly) the same. But when students start to work more than 11 hours/ week, the time spent on studies starts decreasing more sharply. A particularly obvious decline in number of hours dedicated to study time is observed when students start to dedicate more than 20 hours per week to their paid jobs.<sup>3</sup> Despite existing differences at the cross-national level, six main patterns of different ways of students from various countries managing their time budgets while maintaining a paid job of more than 20 hours per week could be identified (Table 1).

**Figure 3. Students' time budget by type of activity as (unweighted) cross-country average by the number of hours spent on paid jobs per week**



Data source: EUROSTUDENT VI. Source: Masevičiūtė et al., 2018

**Table 1: Weekly time budget management patterns for study-related activities for students working more than 20 hours/week**

		Share of working students among all students		
		More than 40 % of students work	Between 20 % and 40% of students work	Less than 20 % of students work
Reduction of study time (in hours)	Type 1. Taught studies -5 personal studies -5	EE	GE, FR, LT	AL, TR
	Type 2. Taught studies -5 personal studies -10	PL, LV		
	Type 3. Taught studies -10 personal studies -5		RO, SK	
	Type 4. Taught studies -10 personal studies -10	CZ, IS, NO, AT	PT, HU, HR, SE, IE, SI	RS
	Type 5. Taught studies -10 personal studies -15		MT	
	Type 6. Taught studies -15 personal studies -10			IT

Data source: EUROSTUDENT VI. Source: Masevičiūtė et al., 2018

<sup>2</sup> Time budget in a typical week: Reports of the time spent on study related and employment related activities throughout the course of a typical week (including weekend), reflecting the student's routine during the study term/ semester as closely as possible (Masevičiūtė, Šaukeckienė, Ozolinčiūtė, 2018, p. 63)  
<sup>3</sup> It should be taken to account that more intensively working students, who work more than 20 hours, is a very broad category and might include full-time employees who study alongside working. However, it seems that this group is more affected by the challenge of balancing their time between a paid job and studies.

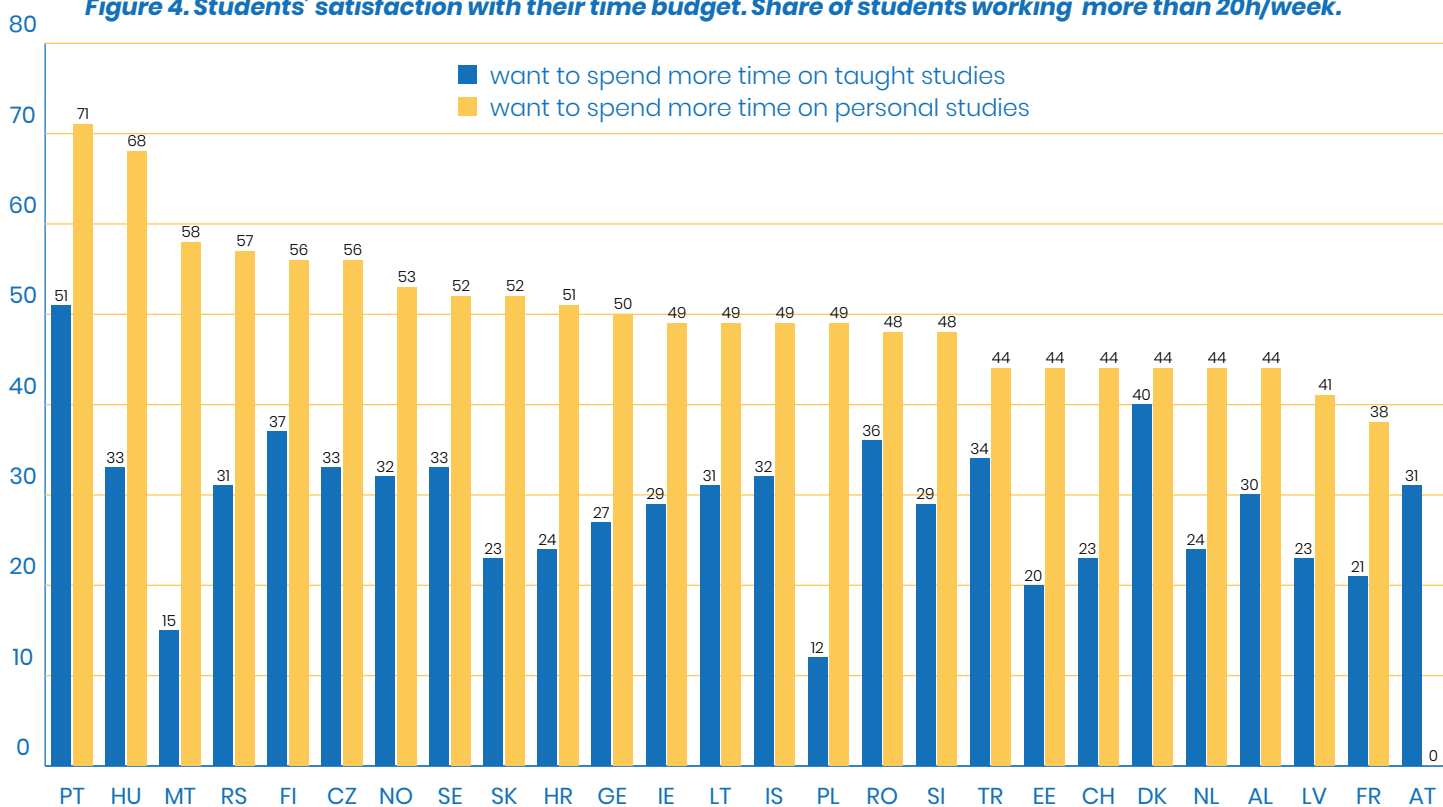
## MOST COMMON STRATEGY: REDUCING PERSONAL STUDIES (PS) AND TAUGHT STUDIES (TS) BY UP TO 10 HOURS

EUROSTUDENT VI data reveals that the time budget of students working more than 20 hours/week is usually managed by reducing the time dedicated to both taught and personal studies by up to 10 hours each. Such a way of managing the study time is common for the majority of EUROSTUDENT VI countries where students tend to work regularly more than 20 hours per week. Students who manage their study time in the above-mentioned ways can be found in Poland, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Iceland, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Hungary, Croatia, Sweden, Ireland, Slovenia, and Serbia (pattern types no. 2, 3, 4). What is common to all of these countries is the fact that students who work more than 20h/week tend to want more time for their personal studies (Figure 4).

Students in some countries reduce study time only slightly. In some cases, namely, Estonia, Georgia, France, Lithuania, Albania, and Turkey, only a slight reduction in TS and PS can be observed (up to 5 hours in PS and TS, pattern type 1 in Table 1). These cases could be considered as positive cases in which students work and study a lot and still manage to balance both roles without diminishing their study time in a very obvious manner. It is to be noticed that students in these countries seem to be relatively satisfied with their time spent on studies – below-average shares of intensively working students in most of these countries indicate wanting to spend more time on TS and PS (Figure 4).

However, national researchers claim that such a way of time management might also indicate some differences existing in the higher education systems.

**Figure 4. Students' satisfaction with their time budget. Share of students working more than 20h/week.**



Data source: EUROSTUDENT VI. Source: Masevičiūtė et al., 2018

*“The literature from international studies has drawn attention to the fact that term-time employment tends to have serious consequences for academic progress. Somewhat surprisingly, it was found some years ago (Beerkens et al. 2011) that employment has only a marginal effect on academic progress in Estonia, even though a considerable proportion of students work full-time. The results seem to indicate a structural problem, i.e. with a low time investment Estonian students can progress academically and eventually graduate (Beerkens et al 2011; Mägi et al 2013).” (Eve Mägi, PRAXIS, Estonia)*

But it is also possible that in such education systems, there is a greater possibility to combine studies and work experience. If students work in study-related positions, they might be able to use that experience in their studies. Hours spent on these study-related jobs may therefore serve a dual purpose and contribute to students' studies as well as finances.

## SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION OF STUDY HOURS

Special attention should be paid to the countries where a significant reduction in TS/PS and even sharper reduction in TS/PS is observed, such as Italy (pattern type 6 in Table 1) and Malta (pattern type 5 in Table 1). In Malta, a large part of students (58% vs. average 50%) indicates wanting to dedicate more time to their PS (Figure 4).

In Malta, more intensively working students tend to reduce their time spent on personal studies by up to 15 hours, compared to their non-working peers. They also attend up to 10 hours less of taught studies than their non-working counterparts. A EUROSTUDENT researcher from Malta notes that even when there is a clear trend for those who work more hours to be part-time students, the flexibility of study programmes needs to be reviewed due to the existing significant loss of time dedication to other areas of life.

*“It appears that those working full-time alongside studies are mainly enrolled in part-time studies, while students working part-time alongside studies try to do so in full-time programmes. Bearing in mind that those spending more than 20 hours per week in paid jobs have an average total weekly workload of 63.4 hours/week, of which 24.5h/week are dedicated to their studies, their weekly workload dedicated to studies and work already indicates a possible concern with regards to time available for other aspects in their life. The*

*wish expressed to have more time available to dedicate to studies seems to suggest that studies might be demanding more time or allow for limited flexibility. This suggests that the flexibility of part-time study programmes needs to be reviewed to better address these concerns” (National Commission for Further and Higher Education, Malta).*

In Italy students who work more than 20 hours per week tend to spend up to 15 hours less on taught studies and up to 10 hours less on personal studies compared to their non-working counterparts. Researchers from Italy stress the need for a national definition of ‘working’ students in order to help them have more flexible ways of building their career track while studying – something that is currently up to the individual institutions’ initiatives and strategies to attract more students:

*“Working students may agree on a reduced number of 30 or 40 ECTS per year, which means prolonging the standard duration of studies. This may, however, only be accepted at some universities. It depends on the policies the institutions carry out in order to attract students.<> If a set, national definition of what it is to be a working student could be established, employed students could have easier living conditions.” (CIMEA – NARIC, Italy).*

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## PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS OF WORKING 20+H DURING STUDIES

Work experience could be beneficial for students’ future career because of gained study-related and transversal skills, especially if their jobs are related to their field of study. Study-related work could be regarded as complimentary to the study process and it could positively affect students’ labour-market outlook.<sup>6</sup> However, EUROSTUDENT VI data reveals that generally, working more than 20 hours per week alongside studies can potentially become problematic in

various aspects. Students who work more than 20 hours per week identify the loss of a paid job as the main obstacle for student mobility. Furthermore, having a paid job might become a risk factor with regard to study progress: EUROSTUDENT VI data indicate that 24% of students who have interrupted their studies name work-related issues as a contributing factor.

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## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Paid work may play an essential role in creating and maintaining inequalities between students. If paid work makes up a large part of students’ time budget, it might be a risk factor for study success. It should be taken into account that not all students see themselves primarily as students and might not be able to pursue their studies in a typical full-time manner.

Student groups who work 20+h/week may be most challenged in finding enough time to fully pursue their studies. Such ‘time poverty’, by some authors, has been related to unequal educational outcomes (Burston, 2016). This, in turn, may affect study patterns (incl. engaging in mobility), prolong study time, and increase the risk of interruptions or dropping out from higher education. Paid work alongside studies (especially a large number of hours)

has been found to be related to dropout (Hovdhaugen, 2013), time to graduate (Aina, Baici, & Casalone, 2011; Theune, 2015) and academic achievement (Body et al., 2014).

National-level policies establishing flexible study options can support students in creating a higher education pathway that is adaptable to their personal situation. Part-time courses, modular courses rather than entire degree programmes, evening courses, as well as online courses and materials could be considered as ways to make higher education more accessible and compatible with the circumstances of students. Flexibility could also be created and revised with regard to the need for personal study time at certain points in time, e.g. offering multiple points in time when exams can be taken, or papers written.

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<sup>6</sup> More in Masevičiūtė, K., Šaukeckienė, V., Ozolinčiūtė, E. (2018). Combining studies and paid jobs: Thematic Review, p. 54–60

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- Semi-structured interviews/open questionnaires for country case studies from experts—special thanks to researchers from Estonia, Italy and Malta (unpublished data).

## ABOUT EUROSTUDENT

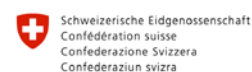
The EUROSTUDENT project collates comparable student survey data on the social dimension of European higher education, collecting data on a wide range of topics, e.g. the socio-economic background, living conditions, and temporary international mobility of students. The project strives to provide reliable and insightful cross-country comparisons. The data presented here stem from the sixth round of the EUROSTUDENT project (2016–2018).

The comparative report [“Social and Economic Conditions of Student Life in Europe”](#) (2018) provides insight into many other questions related to students’ characteristics as well as other aspects of student life in Europe. Furthermore, the [EUROSTUDENT database](#) allows users to explore country data by topic area and in comparison between countries. Also visit [www.eurostudent.eu](http://www.eurostudent.eu) for more information and results.

### Country abbreviations

AT = Austria	FR = France	LT = Lithuania	RO = Romania
CH = Switzerland	GE = Georgia	LV = Latvia	RS = Serbia
CZ = the Czech Republic	HR = Croatia	MT = Malta	SE = Sweden
DE = Germany	HU = Hungary	NL = the Netherlands	SI = Slovenia
DK = Denmark	IE = Ireland	NO = Norway	SK = Slovakia
EE = Estonia	IS = Iceland	PL = Poland	TR = Turkey
FI = Finland	IT = Italy	PT = Portugal	

EUROSTUDENT Consortium members:



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