

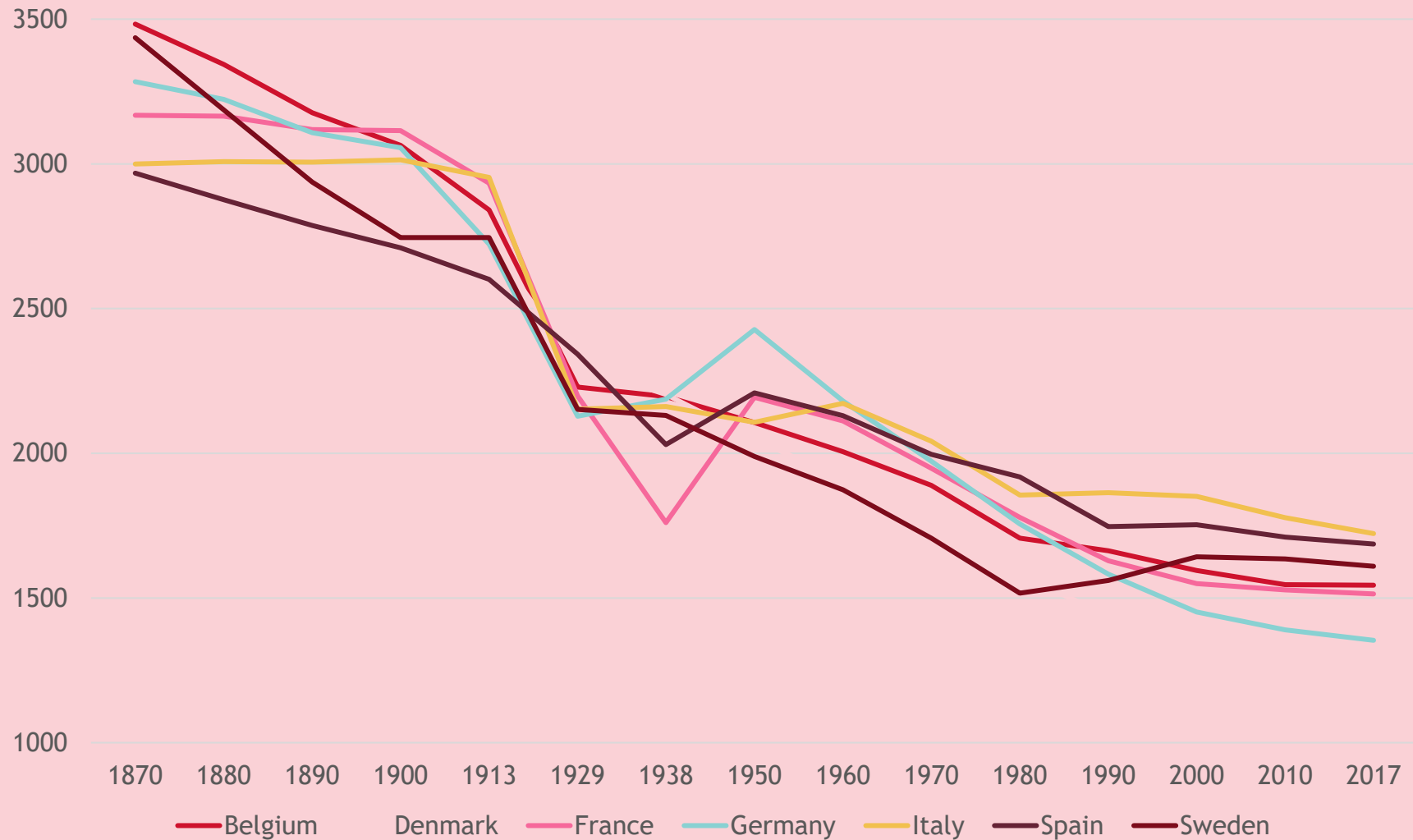
# Shaping working time: economic and social considerations



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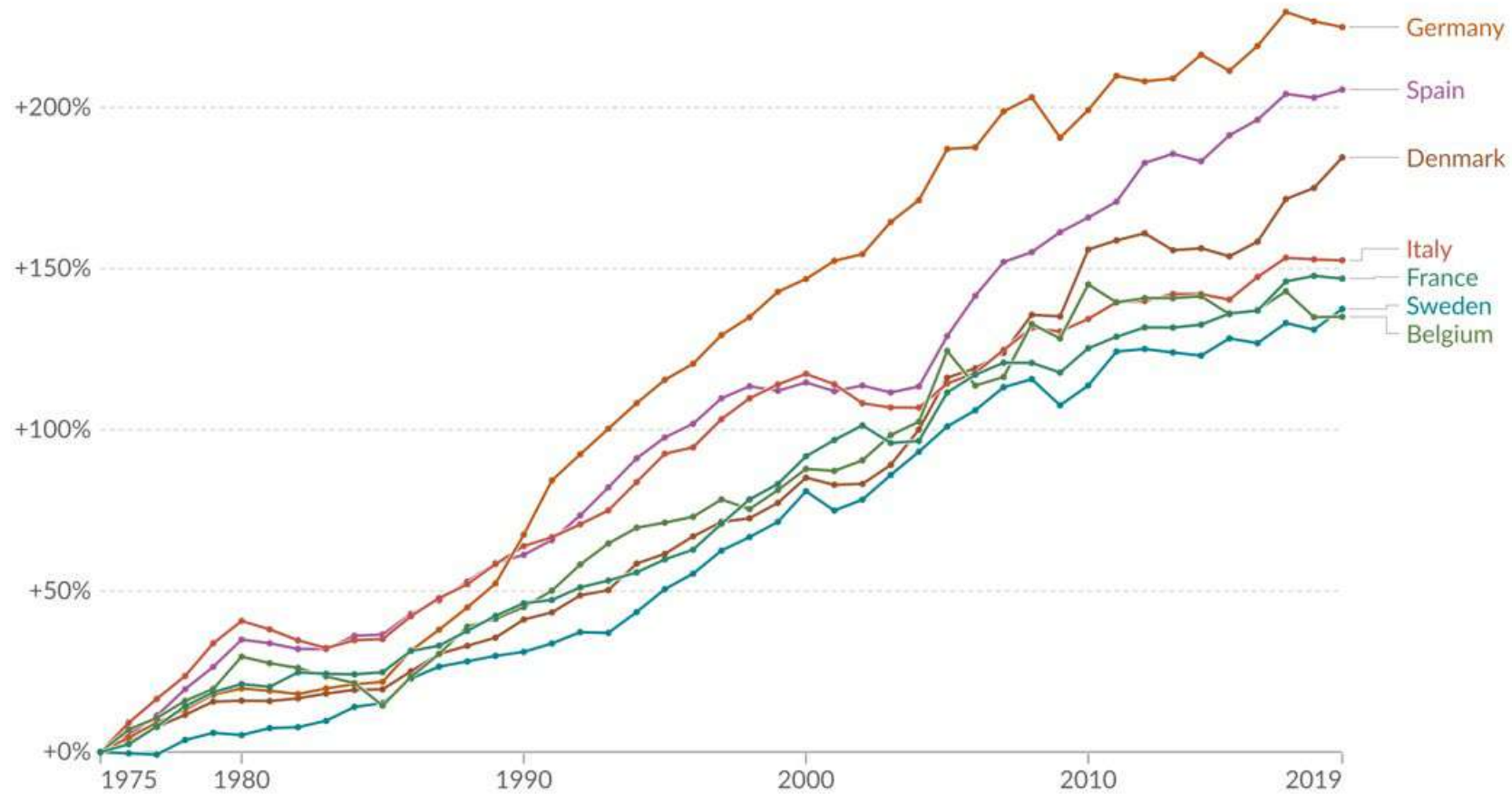
## Annual working hours per worker 1870-2017

Source: Huberman & Minns (2007) and PWT 9.1 (2019)



## Productivity: output per hour worked

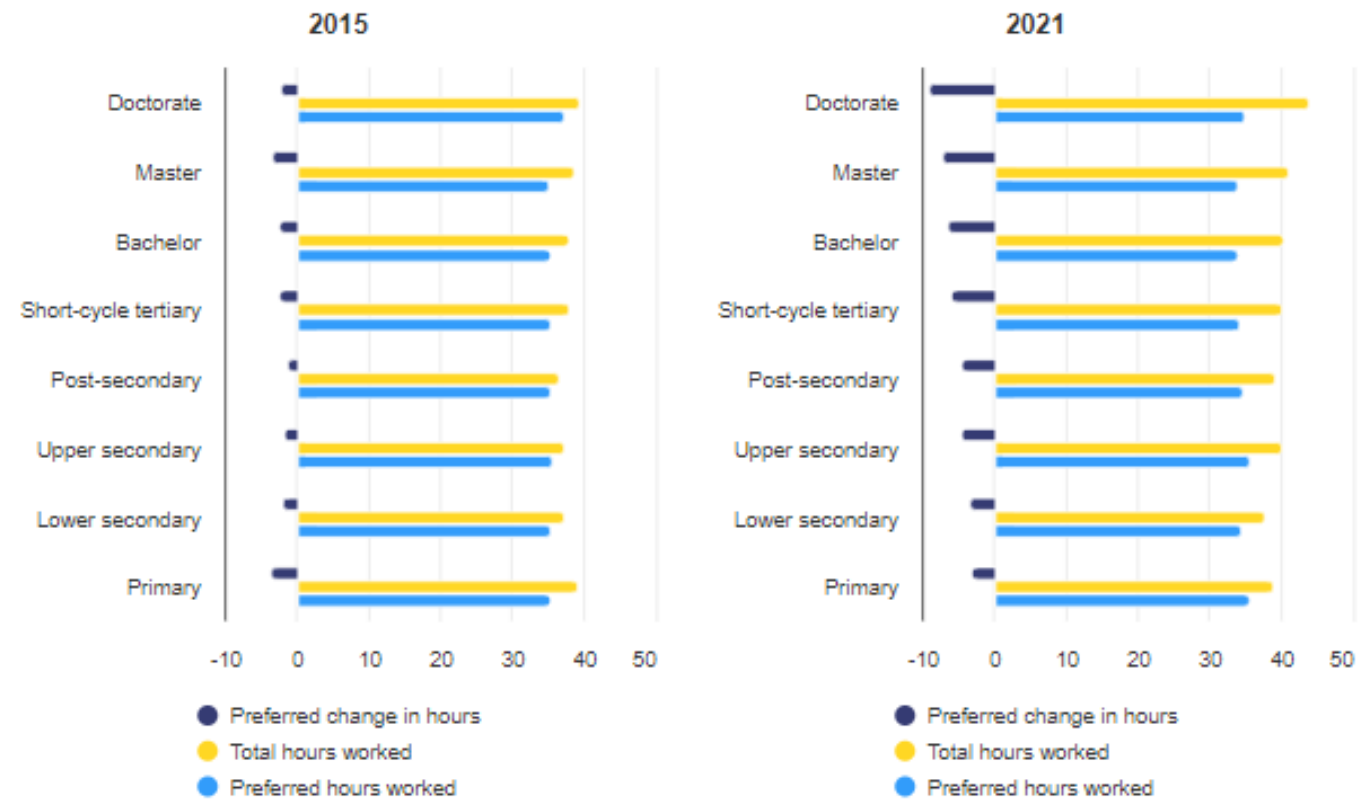
Productivity is measured as gross domestic product (GDP) per hour of work. This data is adjusted for inflation and differences in the cost of living between countries.



Data source: Feenstra et al. (2015), Penn World Table (2021)

Note: This data is expressed in international-\$<sup>1</sup> at 2017 prices per hour.

## Preferred decrease in working hours by education level



Source | Eurofound, European Working Conditions Survey 2015 and European Working Conditions Telephone Survey 2021.

## Positive effects of working time reduction



**Improved well-being:** Less stress, burnout, and better work-life balance



**Higher productivity:** Studies consistently show gains in morale and performance



**Increased job satisfaction:** More time for family and personal activities



**Better health outcomes:** Research overviews report long-term health benefits



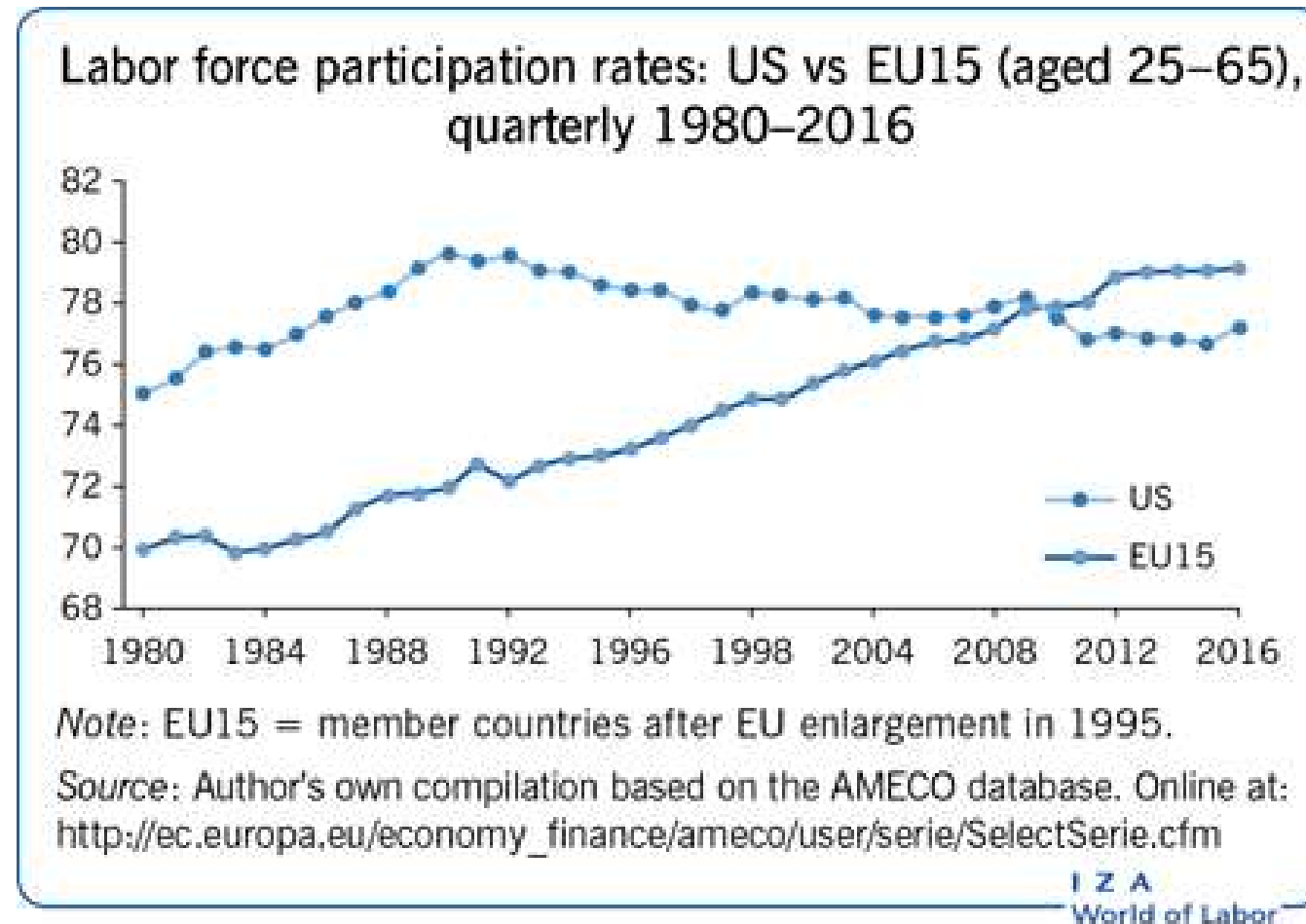
**Improved gender equality:** Reduces gender disparities and supports a dual breadwinner model



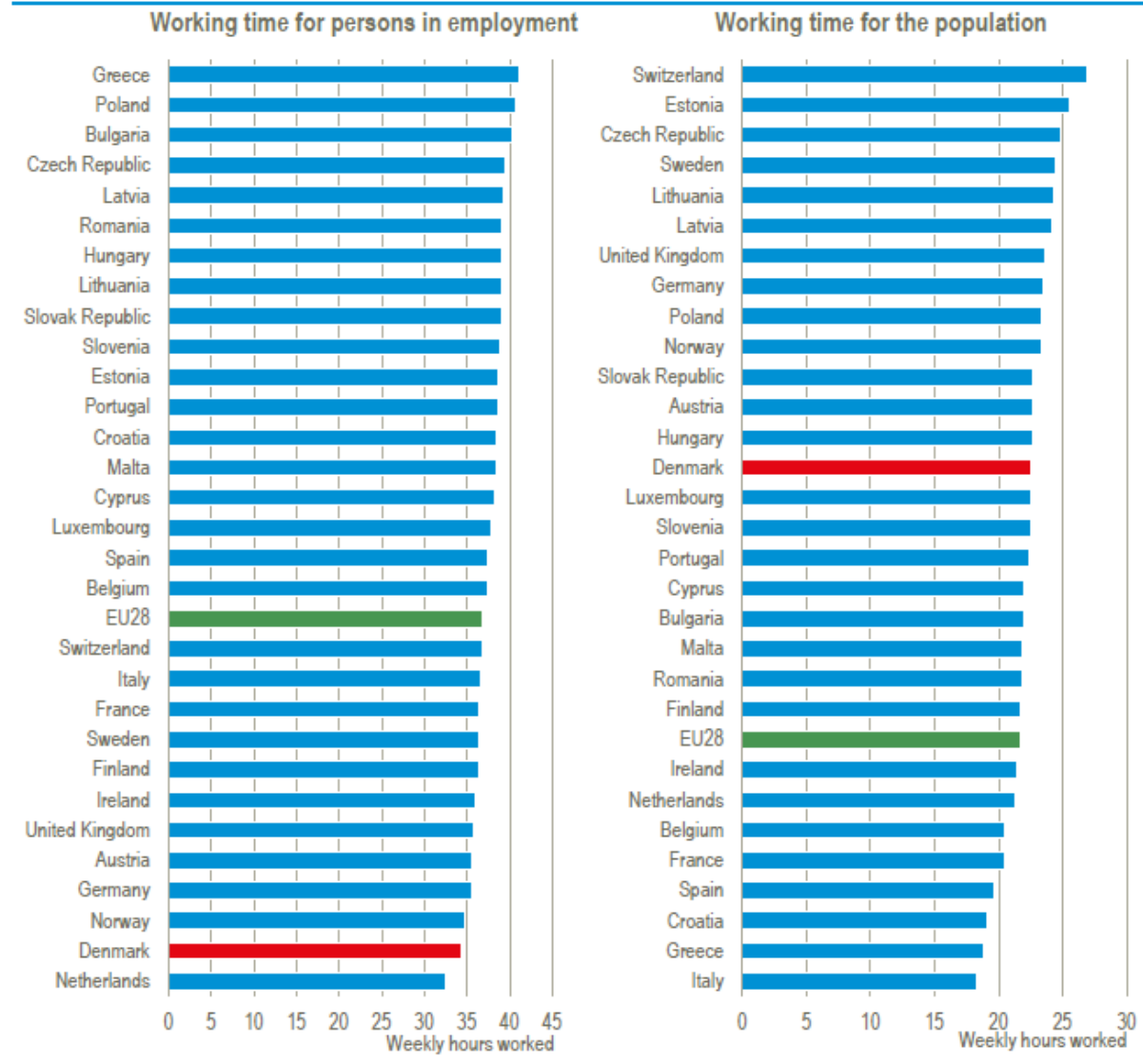
**Reduced absenteeism:** Employers report fewer sick days and greater engagement at work

Sources: European Commission (2023); Lorentzon (2017); De Spiegelaere & Piasna (2017); Andersson (2024); Burchell et al. (2024); Åkerstedt et al. (2007); Schiller et al. (2017); Voglino et al. (2022)

## Modern labour market demands a modernised working time



**Figure 1** Average weekly working time per person in employment and per person in the population. 15 to 74 years. 2016



Source: Eurostat and own calculations.

## Is it possible?

### Common Concerns

- Critics claim societal wealth is directly tied to maximum working time, predicting shorter hours would lower living standards.
- Concerns include GDP and tax revenue losses, based on simplistic models that ignore productivity gains and workplace reorganisation.

### Real-World Outcomes

- Multiple studies (Batut et al., 2022; Lopes & Tondini, 2020; Asai et al., 2024; Cette et al., 2023, among others) show productivity gains of 50% to over 100%, often making reductions self-financing.
- No country has seen the economic decline predicted by opponents after reducing working hours.

