

## FEATURE

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# International comparisons of labour disputes in 2005

## SUMMARY

This article continues a regular series on international labour disputes and presents data on labour disputes in member countries of the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, between 1996 and 2005. Comparisons are made of overall strike rates between countries as well as strike rates by industry. The article also describes the differences in definitions and coverage of the statistics between countries and how they affect comparability.

This article continues a regular series of international labour dispute features and presents data on labour disputes in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU), between 1996 and 2005. In 2004, ten countries joined the EU, increasing membership to 25 countries; data have been presented for these countries where available. Statistics for international comparisons are always a little behind those available for the UK alone. More recent figures for the UK are presented in Tables 6.29 and 6.30 in the electronic tables section of *Economic & Labour Market Review*. A detailed analysis of labour disputes in the UK in 2006 is expected to appear in the June 2007 edition.

A number of countries have been unable to supply data on labour disputes for 2005 as yet. Belgium has not supplied data for the last four years; France and Japan do not have data available for 2005 and Cyprus has not supplied data. Thus, the OECD<sup>1</sup> comparisons for 2001 to 2005 are based on 23 countries, while those for the EU in 2005 are based on 19. Any further figures which become available will be posted on the National Statistics website.

The statistics presented in this article are useful for showing relative levels of working days lost through disputes in each country and how they have changed over time. However, an exact comparison between countries is not possible because there are important differences in the methods

used for compiling statistics on labour disputes in the individual countries. These differences in coverage are shown in the Technical Note, and are discussed in the second half of the article.

It should also be noted that, although these articles appear annually and cover ten-year periods, there are often revisions to previous years' figures in the current article. Generally, these revisions will only affect recent years, and will have arisen because either the data on working days lost, or that on employment, have been revised by the individual countries during the year. In some cases the revisions can be quite large, and particular care should be taken when making comparisons between articles. For 2004, revisions have been made to the OECD averages in all three tables. The OECD average has also been revised for 2001 and 2003 in **Table 1**. France, Turkey and Japan also have revisions in all three tables.

## Overall comparisons

Table 1 shows the number of working days lost through labour disputes per thousand employees (the strike rate) over the ten-year period 1996 to 2005<sup>2</sup> for each of the OECD and EU countries, where figures are available. This shows that the UK strike rate decreased by 82 per cent in 2005, ranking it 12th highest out of 27. In 2004, the UK ranked 22nd lowest out of 29. For comparison, on the same basis in 2005, the UK ranked fifteenth lowest out of the 27 countries where figures were available.

Table 1

**Labour disputes: working days not worked per 1,000 employees<sup>1</sup> in all industries and services**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average <sup>2</sup>			Percentage change 1996–2000 to 2001–05
											1996–2000	2001–05	1996–2005	
United Kingdom	55	10	11	10	20	20	51	19	34	6	21	26	23	24
Austria	0	6	0	0	1	0	3	398	0	0	1	80	41	7,900
Belgium	48	13	28	8	8	69 <sup>R</sup>	*	*	*	*	21	*	*	*
Denmark	32	42	1,317	38	51	24	79	23	31	21	296	36	165	-88
Finland	11	56	70	10	126	30	36	42	21	322	56	91	74	63
France	57	42	51	64	114	82	*	10 <sup>R</sup>	9 <sup>R</sup>	*	66	34	53	-48
Germany	3	2	1	2	0	1	10	5	2	1	2	4	3	100
Ireland	110	69	32	168	72	82	15	26	14	17	91	30	57	-67
Italy	137	84	40	62	59	67	311	124	44	56	76	120	99	58
Luxembourg	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	-100
Netherlands	1	2	5	11	1	6	35	2	9	6	4	12	8	200
Portugal	17	25	28	19	11	11	29	15	12	7	20	15	17	-25
Spain	165	182	121	132	296	152	379	59	306	62	182	189	186	4
Sweden	17	7	0	22	0	3	0	164	4	0	9	34	22	278
<b>EU14 average<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>53</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>43<sup>R</sup></b>	<b>109</b>	<b>44<sup>R</sup></b>	<b>49<sup>R</sup></b>	<b>25</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>10</b>
Cyprus					*	*	*	*	35	*	*	*	*	*
Estonia					*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*
Latvia					0	0	3	0	0	0	7	1	0	-86
Lithuania					7	2	0	0	0	1	*	*	*	*
Malta					*	*	*	*	11	0	*	*	9	*
Hungary					46	2	0	1	6	0	*	2	2	*
Poland					7	0	0	1	0	0	*	0	1	*
Slovakia					0	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*
<b>EU22 average<sup>3</sup></b>								<b>43<sup>R</sup></b>	<b>16</b>		*	*	*	*
Iceland	0	292	557	0	368	1,571	0	0	1,052	0	245	552	401	125
Norway	286	4	141	3	239	0	72	0	68	5	134	29	80	-78
Switzerland	2	0	7	1	1	6	6	2	11 <sup>R</sup>	0	2	5	4	150
Turkey	30	19	29	23	35	28	4	14	8 <sup>R</sup>	15	27	14	20	-48
Australia	131	77	72	89	61	51	33	54	45 <sup>R</sup>	28	85	42	62	-51
Canada	280	296	196	190	125	162	218	122	226	280	215	202	208	-6
Japan	1	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	0 <sup>R</sup>	*	1	0	1	-100
New Zealand	51	18	9	12	8	37	23	13	4	18	19	18	19	-5
United States	42	38	42	16	161	9	5	32	8	10	61	13	36	-79
<b>OECD average<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>51</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>27<sup>R</sup></b>	<b>47</b>	<b>33<sup>R</sup></b>	<b>31<sup>R</sup></b>	<b>29</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>-35</b>

1 Some employee figures have been estimated.

2 Annual averages for those years within each period for which data are available, weighted for employment.

3 Greece, the Czech Republic and Slovenia no longer collect data on labour disputes; the European Union average therefore excludes these countries.

4 From 2000 the OECD average includes Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

R Revised

\* No data available

Sources for working days not worked: ILO; Eurostat; national statistics offices

Sources for employees: OECD; national statistics offices

Over the OECD as a whole, 13 countries saw their strike rate fall in 2005 and eight showed a rise, the most significant of which was Finland, increasing from a rate of 21 in 2004 to 322 in 2005. The OECD average strike rate of 29 days in 2005 showed a decrease from 31 (revised) in 2004.

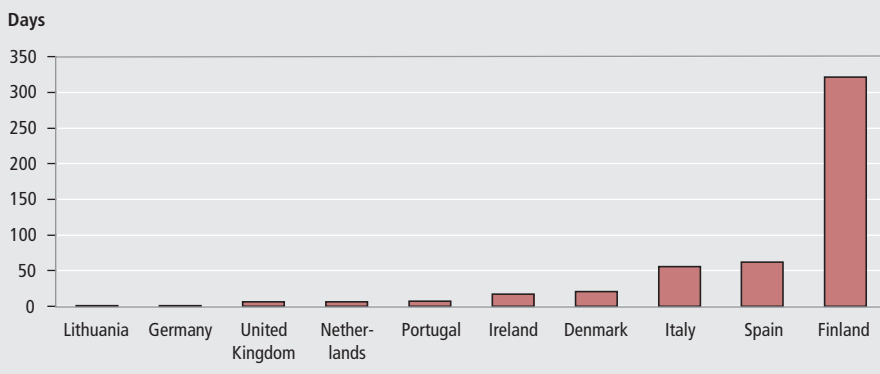
Figure 1 shows the strike rates in 2005 for the 19 EU countries that supplied data, with the UK having the eighth highest rate. Luxembourg, Austria, Sweden, Estonia,

Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland and Slovakia all had an average strike rate of zero for 2005. France, Belgium and Cyprus did not supply figures and so have been excluded. Figure 2 displays the UK strike rate against the EU average for each year from 1996 to 2005. The UK strike rate has been significantly below the EU average since 1996. Within the EU, Germany and Luxembourg have shown low strike rates over the latest ten-year period, while Spain

continues its trend of high strike rates, with an average of 62 in 2005, second only to Finland. Generally, it can be seen from the statistics, where available, that the strike rate in the new EU member countries is low.

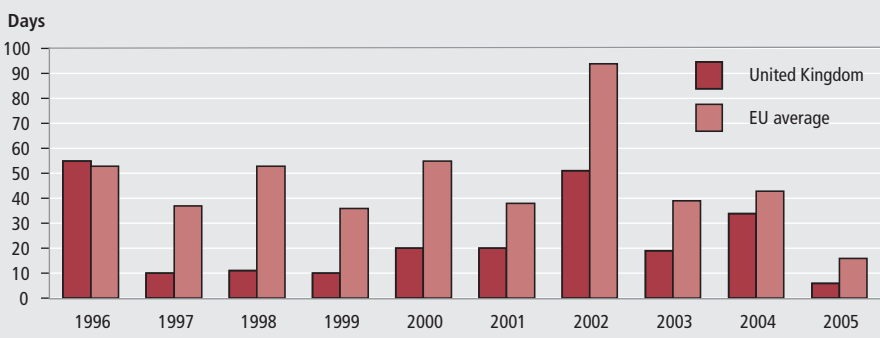
Labour disputes figures are erratic and year-on-year comparisons should be made with caution. Finland's high 2005 strike rate of 322 days is attributable to one stoppage in the manufacturing sector; 98 per cent of

**Figure 1**  
**EU<sup>1</sup> strike rate, 2005<sup>2</sup>**



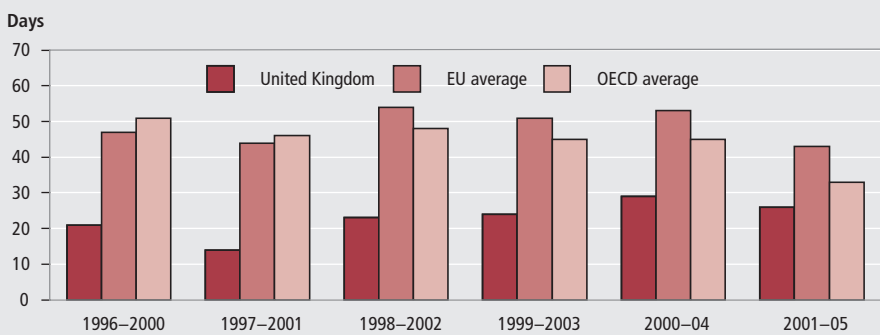
1 Excludes France, Belgium and Cyprus.  
2 Luxembourg, Austria, Sweden, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland and Slovakia have a strike rate of zero in 2005.

**Figure 2**  
**Annual strike rates**



**Note:**  
From 2004, ten new EU members were included.

**Figure 3**  
**Five-year strike rates**



**Note:**  
From 2000, OECD figures include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

working days lost were as a result of this strike. Similarly, 60 per cent of the working days lost in the UK for 1996 were as a result of one stoppage in the transport, storage and communication group. Other examples include the public sector strike in France in 1995, the large private sector strike in Denmark in 1998, the health sector strike in Ireland in 1999, the transport, storage and communication group strike in Finland in 2000 and the general strikes in Spain and Italy in 2002. The high level of industrial disputes in Austria in 2003 was in reaction to the government's plans to introduce a fundamental pension reform. Four EU countries have shown increased strike rates in 2005, nine have shown a decrease and five have shown no change.

In order to lessen the weight of a single year's data, comparisons can be made over a number of years. **Figure 3** shows average strike rates in the UK, the EU and the OECD over rolling five-year periods from 1996.<sup>3</sup> The OECD and EU strike rates have remained relatively stable over this period, although the OECD rate did peak in 2000. The UK strike rate is consistently below both the EU and OECD averages. The average rates for the periods 1996 to 2000 and 2001 to 2005 are also shown in Table 1. Over this period, excluding the ten new EU members for 2004, the average rolling five-year EU strike rate increased by 10 per cent. Across the OECD, the equivalent strike rate fell by 35 per cent for the same period. Twelve OECD countries have shown a decrease in their strike rates, the largest being Denmark with a decrease of 88 per cent, United States with a decrease of 79 per cent and Norway with a decrease of 78 per cent.

The five-year on five-year comparisons need to be interpreted carefully, as both rises and falls may be determined by one-year high values, for example, Denmark in 1998, the USA in 2000, Austria in 2003 and Finland in 2005. Also, percentage change comparisons for countries with very low strike rates (under five days) should be treated with caution. Between 2001 and 2005, the average number of working days lost per thousand employees in the UK was 26, an increase of 24 per cent over the 1996 to 2000 period. Both Iceland and Finland have shown sharp rises of 125 per cent and 63 per cent respectively. The increase of 7,900 per cent shown by Austria has been caused by the 2003 data, and the rise of 150 per cent shown by Switzerland is a large percentage increase, but only from an average rate of two days between 1996 and 2000 compared with a rate of five days between 2001 and 2005.

## Comparisons by industry

One particular characteristic of labour disputes is the variation between industries in the incidence of strikes. Some industries such as manufacturing and transport have consistently high strike rates, while others like agriculture have very low ones. The industrial composition of employment can vary quite significantly between countries and this can sometimes explain why one country has a particularly high

or low ranking compared with another. In addition, the different industrial classifications and groupings used by the separate countries when compiling statistics on labour disputes means that it is only possible to compare strike rates by industry at a broad level.

**Table 2** shows working days lost per thousand employees for the production and construction industries,<sup>4</sup> for each country where figures are available, for 1996 to 2005.

Nine countries saw a fall in their strike rates for the production and construction industries between 2004 and 2005 and ten countries saw a rise. Finland reported a large strike rate of 1,183 working days lost per thousand employees in this sector for 2005. **Table 3** shows the equivalent for the service industries.<sup>5</sup> Between 2004 and 2005, within the service industry group, 13 countries saw a fall in their strike rates and six saw a rise, with Canada again

Table 2

### Labour disputes: working days not worked per 1,000 employees<sup>1</sup> in the production and construction industries

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average <sup>2</sup>			Percentage change 1996–2000 to 2001–05
											1996–2000	2001–05	1996–2005	
United Kingdom	20	19	9	20	20	15	8	16	8	9	18	11	15	-39
Austria	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*
Belgium	135	48	26	20	28	157	*	*	*	*	51	*	*	*
Denmark	102	99	3,215	94	112	70	124	60	97	45	729	79	418	-89
Finland	21	48	37	20	280	16	107	88	43	1,183	84	283	185	237
France	58	52	43	79	82	30	*	*	24 <sup>R</sup>	*	63	*	*	*
Germany	7	3	1	6	0	2	27	15	5	1	3	10	7	233
Ireland	116	45	29	81	43	41	22	8	7	9	62	17	38	-73
Italy	308	164	62	116	62	126	83	80	48	118	142	91	116	-36
Luxembourg	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	*	*	*	*
Netherlands	4	7	2	15	2	6	152	1	7	11	6	36	21	500
Portugal	32	56	39	20	11	15	40	18	12	11	31	20	25	-35
Spain	320	349	253	135	534	363	60	101	174	71	321	150	224	-53
Sweden	0	2	2	2	0	9	1	26	17	0	1	11	6	1,000
<b>EU14 average<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>(89)</b>	<b>(69)</b>	<b>(97)</b>	<b>(48)</b>	<b>(84)</b>	<b>(69)</b>	<b>(47)</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>(40<sup>R</sup>)</b>	<b>(60)</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>-32</b>
Cyprus					*	*	*	*	123	*	*	*	*	*
Estonia					*	*	*	*	*	998	*	*	*	*
Latvia					*	*	*	*	0	0	*	*	*	*
Lithuania					*	*	*	*	0	0	*	*	*	*
Malta					*	*	*	*	0	3	*	*	*	*
Hungary					0	2	0	1	0	1	*	1	1	*
Poland					3	0	0	2	0	0	*	0	1	*
Slovakia					0	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*
<b>EU22 average<sup>3</sup></b>									<b>(34<sup>R</sup>)</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>
Iceland	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*
Norway	1,106	13	12	8	842	0	131	1	241	25	222	248	235	12
Switzerland	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	12	1	*	*	*	*
Turkey	57	39	31	53	55	62	6	31	21 <sup>R</sup>	35	36	34	35	-6
Australia	383	237	235	250	186	221	128	163	110	93	220	159	188	-28
Canada	349	319	336	272	182	220	192	228	230	177	251	209	229	-17
Japan	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0 <sup>R</sup>	*	1	*	*	*
New Zealand	54	42	7	7	27	70	16	56	5	12	22	33	28	50
United States	116	78	137	62	54	14	11	4	4	37	78	19	50	-76
<b>OECD average<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>(96)</b>	<b>(67)</b>	<b>(97)</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>(62)</b>	<b>(44)</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(29)</b>	<b>(28<sup>R</sup>)</b>	<b>(51)</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>-52</b>

1 Some employee figures have been estimated.

2 Annual averages for those years within each period for which data are available, weighted for employment.

3 Greece, the Czech Republic and Slovenia no longer collect data on labour disputes; the European Union average therefore excludes these countries.

4 From 2000 the OECD average includes Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

( ) Brackets indicate averages based on incomplete data.

\* No data available

Sources for working days not worked: ILO; Eurostat; national statistics offices

Sources for employees: OECD; national statistics offices

experiencing the most significant rise and the UK the most notable fall. In fact, the strike rate for the UK in this sector dropped from a rate of 40 working days lost per thousand employees in 2004 to six in 2005. Conversely, in the production and construction sector, the UK rate rose from eight working days lost per thousand employees in 2004 to nine in 2005.

Over the average ten-year period from 1996 to 2005, the EU14 strike rates in the production and construction industries

were more than double that of the service industries. The same can almost be said for the OECD countries, with 25 more working days lost per thousand extra in production than in services. Over the same period, the production and construction sector rate in the UK was 42 per cent lower than the service sector rate. Between 1996 and 2005, 13 of the 18 OECD countries, where figures were available, had a higher average rate in the production and construction industries than in the service industries.

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show, respectively, the UK strike rates in the two industry groups for each year from 1996 to 2005 and the equivalent figures for the OECD. In the UK, the strike rates in the production and construction industries have been fairly consistent but in the service sector there were two noticeable increases in 1996 and 2002; the figures for 2004 are also higher than average. In the production and construction sector, the UK rate has been substantially below the OECD average since

Table 3

**Labour disputes: working days not worked per 1,000 employees<sup>1</sup> in the service industries**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Average <sup>2</sup>			Percentage change 1996–2000 to 2001–05
											1996–2000	2001–05	1996–2005	
United Kingdom	66	7	12	7	20	22	62	20	40	6	22	30	26	36
Austria	0	9	0	0	1	0	*	*	0 <sup>R</sup>	0	2	*	*	*
Belgium	15	0	30	4	1	5	*	*	*	*	10	*	9	*
Denmark	3	20	494	5	14	5	9	3	6	4	107	5	55	-95
Finland	8	62	75	5	52	36	9	11	13	9	41	16	27	-61
France	58	35	54	68	128	102	*	*	4 <sup>R</sup>	*	70	36	56	-49
Germany	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	-100
Ireland	111	85	34	214	87	102	12	33	16	11	108	31	61	-71
Italy	32	33	22	33	57	35	43	37	43	25	36	36	36	0
Luxembourg	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Netherlands	0	1	6	11	1	7	4	2	0	1	4	3	3	-25
Portugal	8	8	20	10	11	9	20	13	13	5	11	12	12	9
Spain	99	116	39	61	197	37	50	25	49	61	105	45	70	-57
Sweden	24	9	0	29	0	1	0	208	0	0	12	42	28	250
<b>EU14 average<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>(37)</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(26)</b>	<b>(51)</b>	<b>(32)</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(20<sup>R</sup>)</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>(33)</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(28)</b>	<b>-30</b>
Cyprus					*	*	*	*	8	0	*	*	*	*
Estonia					*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*
Latvia					*	*	*	*	0	0	*	*	*	*
Lithuania					*	*	*	*	0	1	*	*	*	*
Malta					*	*	*	*	16	0	*	*	*	*
Hungary					78	3	0	1	9	0	*	3	15	*
Poland					10	1	0	0	0	0	*	*	2	*
Slovakia					0	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*
<b>EU22 average<sup>3</sup></b>									<b>(18<sup>R</sup>)</b>	<b>(10)</b>	*	*	*	*
Iceland	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	*	*	*	*
Norway	30	0	185	2	67	0	56	0	22	0	57	16	36	-72
Switzerland	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	11	0	*	*	*	*
Turkey	10	4	30	2	1	3	3	1	1 <sup>R</sup>	3	9	2	5	-78
Australia	61	32	28	47	28	8	9	27	31	8	39	17	27	-56
Canada	251	294	102	158	100	150	236	87	229	319	179	207	194	16
Japan	1	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	0 <sup>R</sup>	*	2	*	*	*
New Zealand	49	9	9	13	2	33	30	0	3	14	16	15	16	-6
United States	19	25	12	2	198	8	4	41	9	6	53	14	33	-74
<b>OECD average<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>(33)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(18)</b>	<b>(97)</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>(21<sup>R</sup>)</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>(42)</b>	<b>(22)</b>	<b>(31)</b>	<b>-48</b>

1 Some employee figures have been estimated.

2 Annual averages for those years within each period for which data are available, weighted for employment.

3 Greece, the Czech Republic and Slovenia no longer collect data on labour disputes; the European Union average therefore excludes these countries.

4 From 2000 the OECD average includes Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

( ) Brackets indicate averages based on incomplete data.

\* No data available

Sources for working days not worked: ILO; Eurostat; national statistics offices

Sources for employees: OECD; national statistics offices

1996. In the OECD, the strike rate in this sector has been higher than that for the service sector since 1996, with the exception of 2000, when the USA's high rate resulting from strike action in the renting, real estate and other business activities sector caused the service sector rate to be greater.

Table 2 and Table 3 also show average rates by industry for the five-year periods 1996 to 2000 and 2001 to 2005. Between these periods, the OECD saw a 52 per cent reduction in the production and construction sector rate and a 48 per cent reduction in the service sector rate. The equivalent figures for the EU14 were falls of 32 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. Over the same period, the UK saw a fall of 39 per cent in the production and construction sector and a rise of 36 per cent in the service sector. Sweden showed the greatest rise (1,000 per cent) in its production and construction sector rate over the period, while Denmark showed the biggest fall (89 per cent). Three countries other than the UK saw a rise in their service sector rates: Portugal, Sweden, and Canada.

### Coverage and comparability

Because of the differences in coverage and definitions, international comparisons of labour dispute statistics need to be made with care. In particular, differences in rates in Tables 1 to 3 may not be significant when coverage is taken into account. Most countries rely on voluntary notification of disputes to a national or local government department, backed up by media reports.

None of the 31 countries mentioned in this article aim to record the full effects of stoppages of work. For example, most countries do not measure working time lost at establishments whose employees are not involved in the dispute, but are unable to work because of shortages of materials supplied by establishments that are on strike. Similarly, other forms of industrial action, such as go-slows, work-to-rule and overtime bans are not generally reported.

There are significant differences between countries in the criteria that exist to determine whether a particular stoppage will be entered in the official records. Most countries exclude small stoppages from

the statistics, the threshold being defined in terms of workers involved, the length of the dispute, the number of working days lost, or a combination of all or some of these. These are summarised in the Technical Note. The UK, for example, excludes disputes involving fewer than ten workers or lasting less than one day, unless the aggregate number of days lost exceeds 100. Germany, for example, adopts the same criteria but has other exclusions that make direct comparisons with the UK difficult. A number of other countries' thresholds are similar, but any differences in thresholds affect the number of working days lost that are recorded.

There are two countries where the thresholds used are particularly high: the USA and Denmark. The USA includes only those disputes involving more than 1,000 workers. In Denmark, the threshold used is 100 working days lost. Hence, the strike rates for the USA and Denmark are clearly not directly comparable with those for the UK, Germany and other countries with similar thresholds.

There are a number of other important differences that may be significant when making international comparisons. Some countries exclude the effects of disputes in certain industrial sectors. For example, Portugal omits public sector strikes and general strikes and Japan excludes days lost in unofficial disputes. Political stoppages are not included for the UK, Turkey, Hungary, Cyprus, Malta and the USA. In the UK this is insignificant. The last identified political strike in the UK was in 1986 (resulting from a visit by an MP to the coal industry) and fewer than 1,000 working days were lost.

The inclusion or omission of those workers indirectly involved in a stoppage (those unable to work because others at their workplace are on strike) varies between countries. Almost half of the countries listed in the Technical Note, including the UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand and the USA, attempt to include them. Germany, Canada, Italy and Japan are among the countries that exclude them. This causes these countries to record a lower number of working days lost than countries that include indirectly affected workers in their statistics. Consequently, even though Germany, for example, has a similar threshold for inclusion of disputes to that used in the UK, comparisons between the two countries' records should be made with care. It is worth noting, however, that evidence from the UK suggests that few working days are lost by workers indirectly affected by strikes. From the total number

Figure 4  
Strike rates, United Kingdom

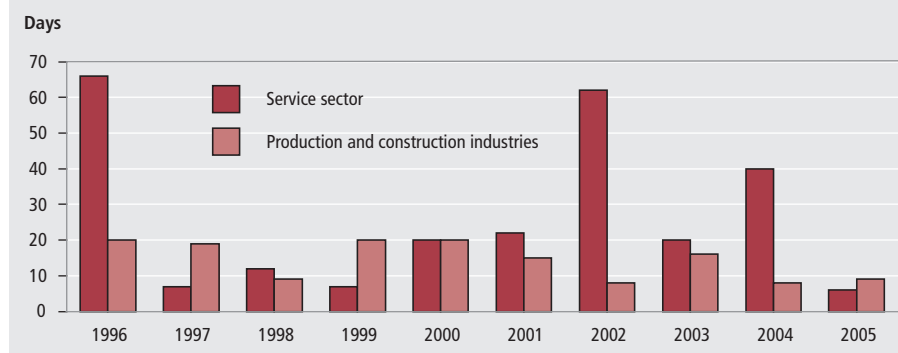
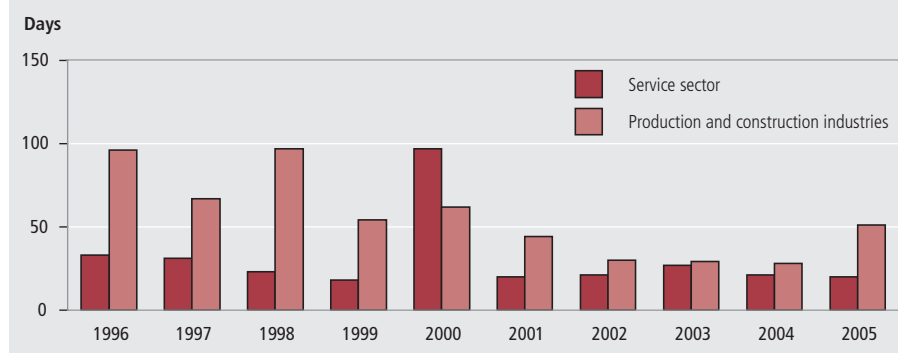


Figure 5  
Strike rates, OECD average



of working days lost in 2004, less than 1 per cent were lost by workers indirectly involved in strike action; in 2005 the equivalent figure was also less than 1 per cent.

### Notes

- 1 OECD averages include data (where available) only from member countries presented in the tables; statistics are not collected from Korea or Mexico.
- 2 Greece, the Czech Republic and Slovenia no longer collect data on labour disputes; the European Union averages for 2005 exclude these countries.
- 3 From 2000, OECD figures include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. EU figures from 2004 onwards include ten new EU members.
- 4 Production and construction industries include mining and quarrying, energy and water supply, manufacturing and construction.
- 5 Service industries include retail sales, wholesale, hotels and catering, transport, storage and communication, finance, business services, education, health, social services, and public administration.

### CONTACT

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## TECHNICAL NOTE

## Labour disputes; comparisons of coverage and methodology

	Minimum criteria for inclusion in statistics	Are political stoppages included?	Are indirectly affected workers included?	Sources and notes
United Kingdom	Ten workers involved and of one day duration unless 100 workdays not worked.	No	Yes	Office for National Statistics collects information initially from press reports, and then contacts employers and trade unions directly.
Australia	Ten workdays not worked.	Yes	Yes	Information gathered from Industrial Relations Department, employers, unions and press.
Austria	No restrictions on size.	Yes	No	Trade unions provide information.
Belgium	No restrictions on size. Excluding public sector stoppages.	Yes	No	Questionnaires to employers following police or media coverage.
Canada	Half a day duration plus 10 workdays not worked.	Yes	No	Reports from Canada Manpower Centres, provincial Labour Departments conciliation services and press.
Cyprus	Three quarters of a day duration.	No	Yes	Private sector; voluntary reports from employers, Industrial Relations mediators and trade unions. Public sector; compulsory report to the Department of Labour.
Denmark	100 workdays not worked.	Yes	Yes	Voluntary reports submitted annually by employers' organisations.
Estonia	Not known.	Not known	Not known	No information.
Finland	One hour duration.	Yes	Yes	Principally, returns from employers (+90%) some reports from employees and press.
France	One workday not worked. Excluding agriculture.	Yes	Yes	Labour inspectors' reports.
Germany	Ten workers involved and of one day duration unless 100 workdays not worked. Excluding public administration. From 1993 data cover the entire FRG; earlier data represented West Germany only.	Yes	No	Compulsory notification by employers to local employment offices.
Hungary	Ten workers involved.	No	No	Compulsory questionnaires to employers following media coverage.
Iceland	Restrictions on size.	Not known	No	No information.
Ireland	Ten workdays not worked or one day duration.	Yes	Yes	Reports from Department of Enterprise and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and press.
Italy	No restrictions on size.	Yes	No	No information.
Japan	Half a day duration. Excluding unofficial disputes.	Yes	No	Legal requirement to report to Labour Relations Commission.



	Minimum criteria for inclusion in statistics	Are political stoppages included?	Are indirectly affected workers included?	Sources and notes
Latvia	Not known.	Not known	Not known	No information.
Lithuania	Not known.	Not known	Not known	No information.
Luxembourg	No information.	Not known	Not known	No information.
Malta	No restrictions on size.	No	No	Questionnaires to employers following media coverage.
Netherlands	No restrictions on size.	Yes	Yes	Questionnaires to employers following a strike. National Dutch Press Bureau collects relevant news items on a contractual basis for Statistics Netherlands.
New Zealand	Ten workdays not worked. Prior to 1988 excluding public sector stoppages.	Yes	Yes	Information initially from press reports, employee and employer organisations, and labour inspectors, and subsequently from employer report forms.
Norway	One day duration.	Yes	No	Employers' reports to the Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, and press.
Poland	Duration of at least one hour.	Yes	Yes	Compulsory report from employers.
Portugal	Strikes only. No restriction on size. Excluding general strikes at the national level; excluding public administration.	Yes	No	Legal obligation on trade unions to notify Ministry of Labour and Social Security.
Slovakia	No restriction on size.	Yes	Yes	Compulsory report from employers.
Spain	Strikes only prior to 1990. One hour duration. Prior to 1989, excluding the civil service.	Yes	No	Legal obligation on party instigating strike to notify competent labour authority.
Sweden	Eight hours not worked.	Yes	No	Information gathered following press reports.
Switzerland	One day duration.	Yes	Yes	Federal Office for Industry, Crafts, Occupations and Employment requests returns from employers and unions following press reports.
Turkey	No restriction on size. Excluding energy services and most public services; excluding general strikes.	No	Yes	Legal obligation on the part of trade unions to notify Regional Directorates of Labour.
United States	One day or one shift duration and one thousand workers involved.	No	Yes	Reports from press, employers, unions and agencies.

Source: ILO sources and methods: *Labour Statistics, Vol 7. Strikes and lockouts (Geneva, 1993)* and ILO's Statistical web site: [LABORSTA.ilo.org](http://LABORSTA.ilo.org)