

6 November 2020

Working from home – Labour Force Survey ad hoc module 3rd quarter of 2020

13.4% of the employed population worked remotely

In the 3rd quarter of 2020, 14.2% of the employed population reported having worked always or almost always from home in the reference week or in the three weeks before (681.9 thousand people), 37.7% (412.5 thousand) less than in the previous quarter. Of these, 539.6 thousand people (79.1%) indicated that the main reason for having worked at home was the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among those having worked always or almost always from home, 94.5% (644.4 thousand) used information and communication technologies (ICT). In other words, they have worked remotely. That estimate represented 13.4% of total employed population and has decreased by 37.9% (393.6 thousand) from the previous quarter.

As seen in the previous quarter, there was no big difference between the average number of hours weekly worked at home (37 hours) and those worked in another place (38 hours) (estimates that exclude the employed population absent from work).

Among the employed population who has not worked at home in the reference week or in the previous three, 236.7 thousand (6.3%) were absent from work during that period, 27.5% (65.0 thousand) of which due to the COVID-19 pandemic, down 86.8% (426.5 thousand) from the 2nd quarter of 2020.

1. Introduction

The results herein presented result from the Labour Force Survey module on “Working from home”, on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the labour market dynamics, namely on the evolution of working from home following the measures to contain the pandemic. Given this goal, the module is held each quarter, as long as it is deemed necessary to better characterise the labour market.

The target population of this module is the employed population, estimated at 4,799.9 thousand people.

The questions asked made it possible to meet three objectives:

1. Assess how many employed persons have

worked in the reference period always or almost always at home and if that occurred due to the pandemic.

2. Estimate how many, among the employed population who have always or almost always worked from home, have used information and communication technologies to carry out their work.
3. Find out how many employed persons absent from work in the four reference weeks did not work in the reference week due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the Excel tables attached are presented more detailed results, relating the questions of the module with several characterization variables (NUTS II region,

sex, age group, highest completed level of education, professional status, work duration regime, employment contract of employees, main activity (NACE-Rev.2), and occupation (ISCO-08)). This does not exhaust the richness of the module data when crossing with Labour Force Survey data. For a more in-depth exploration of the data collected, Statistics Portugal provides, upon request, tables with cross tabulation of variables, safeguarding the principle of statistical quality.

2. Main results

2.1. Working from home due to the pandemic

(Tables 1 to 3 of the attached file)

The employed population who has always or almost always worked at home in the reference week or in the three weeks before was estimated at 681.9 thousand people, representing 14.2% of the employed population, and having decreased by 37.7% (412.5 thousand) from the previous quarter.

As in the previous quarter, the *Área Metropolitana de Lisboa* was the region with the highest share of employed people who have worked always or almost always at home during the four reference weeks (26.6%), although a decrease of 9.4 percentage points (pp) in this share has been observed. The same pattern was observed among those with an education level corresponding to the tertiary education (33.0%, down 20.8 pp) and among those working in the services sector (17.5%, down 11.0 pp), while the economic activity of education remained the one with the highest share of workers stating to have worked always or

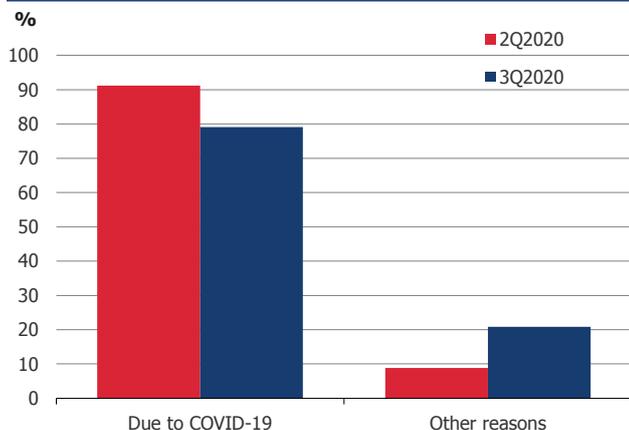
almost always from home in the reference period (26.5%, down 1.0 pp). Also the professionals occupation, which represented 22.5% of the employed population in the 3rd quarter, remained as the one in which more workers have worked either always or almost always at home (62.5%), having even reinforced that position (up 5.7 pp).

On the other hand, unlike in the 2nd quarter of 2020 where the share of the employed population working always or almost always from home in the four reference weeks was clearly higher among women than men, in the quarter under analysis there were no big differences among these two groups (14.3% and 14.1%, respectively). Also by professional status there were changes with self-employed workers (14.9%) now having a slightly higher share than employees (14.1%) unlike what was observed in the previous quarter (23.4% and 22.0%, respectively).

To the 681.9 thousand people who reported having worked always or almost always at home in the reference week or in the three weeks before it was asked if the main reason for having worked from home was the COVID-19 pandemic and 79.1% (539.6 thousand) responded positively, 12.1 pp less than in the previous quarter.

Among the latter, 52.6% were women, 54.8% lived in *Área Metropolitana de Lisboa*, 75.3% had a tertiary education degree, 92.8% were employees, 67.1% were professionals, and 28.6% of those working in the tertiary sector (87.6% of total) were working in the education activity.

Figure 1: Employed population who worked always or almost always at home in the reference period by reason for working from home



As in the previous quarter, it was for those aged 45 and over that it was observed a greater proportion of people who worked always or almost always at home for reasons other than the COVID-19 pandemic (24.6%). This share has increased by 13.6 pp.

In the 3rd quarter of 2020, the population who worked always or almost always from home has worked, on average, in the reference week, 30 hours per week, 1 hour less than the population who did not work from home or who has not always or almost always worked at home (31 hours on average).

Excluding from this analysis those who were absent from work in the reference week (due to annual or bank holidays, own illness, slack work for technical or economic reasons (includes layoff), and parental leave, among other reasons), it was also observed that the population who worked always or almost always at home in the reference period has worked, in average, 1 hour less per week than the those not working at home or not working always or almost always at home (37 and 38 hours, respectively).

2.2 Use of information and communication technologies for working from home

(Tables 4 to 6.1 of the attached file)

To the employed population who mentioned to have always or almost always worked at home in the reference week and in the three weeks before it was asked if, to work from home, they needed to use a computer and/or smartphone, and to those who used at least one of these devices, it was asked to indicate the type of connection or communication they used: virtual private network (VPN), email, remote connection to a computer in the company, videoconference, web applications, extranet, shared folders in the cloud or any other type of information and communication technology.

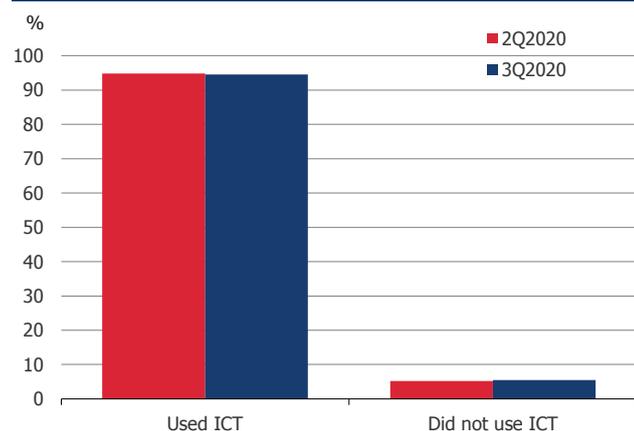
It was found that 644.4 thousand people have used information and communication technologies (ICT) to work from home in the 3rd quarter of 2020, 37.9% (393.6 thousand) less than in the previous quarter. In other words, they have worked remotely¹. That estimate represented 13.4% of the total employed population and 94.5% of those who have worked always or almost always at home in the reference period. Among those who worked at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 98.8% (532.9 thousand) used ICT.

The use of ICT by the employed population who has worked always or almost always at home was more intense among those who lived in the *Área*

¹ Telework corresponds to the remote work using information and communication technologies in producing and/or transferring the labour outputs, as in the concept approved by the Statistical Council (<https://smi.ine.pt/Conceito/Details/188>; only available in Portuguese).

Metropolitana de Lisboa (97.7%), among women (94.9%) and among those with a tertiary education degree (98.6%). The share of employees who used these technologies (98.1%) was above the one observed for self-employed workers (77.6%). The use of these technologies in the different economic activities wavered between 98.8% in education and 87.4% in transportation and storage. Finally, it was among service and sales workers that a smaller use of ICT was used to work from home (81.3%).

Figure 2: Employed population who has always or almost always at home by utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT)



2.3 Absence to work due to the pandemic

(Tables 7 and 8 of the attached file)

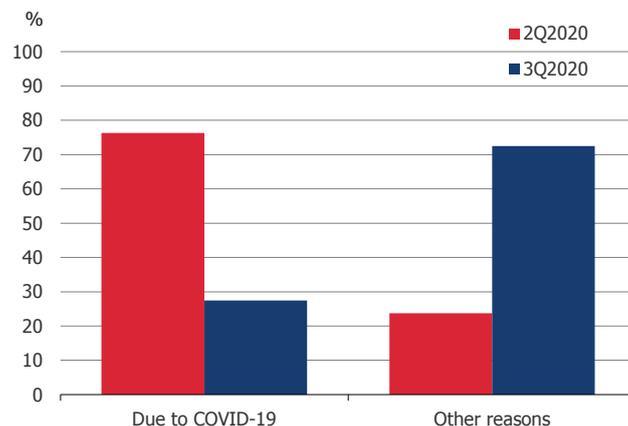
In the 3rd quarter of 2020, there were 3,779.7 employed persons who indicated to never having worked from home in the four reference weeks², 78.7% of employed population. That estimate has increased by 10.7% (364.6 thousand) from the previous quarter and has decreased by 10.3%

² This is a subgroup of those not working at home or who have not always or almost always worked at home.

(435.0 thousand) from the same quarter of the previous year.

Of these, 236.7 thousand people (6.3%) did not work in their main job during the four reference weeks (they were absent), 63.2% (407.1 thousand) less than in the previous quarter. To these it was asked if the main reason for not having worked was the COVID-19 pandemic and 27.5% (65.0 thousand) said yes, down 86.8% (426.5 thousand) from the 2nd quarter of 2020.

Figure 3: Employed population absent from work in the reference period ^(a) by reason of absence



^(a) Reference week and the previous three.

This percentage was highest in *Centro* region (30.0%), among those who have the (upper) secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (36.4%) and among self-employed workers (60.0%). Among the economic activities that constitute the services sector, the accommodation and food services activities were the most affected (76.0%). Similarly, so were service and sales workers (39.6%).

Employed population by work from home in the reference week and in the three weeks before Portugal - 3rd quarter 2020

	Total		Due to COVID-19	
	Thousands	%	Thousands	%
Employed population	4,799.9	100.0		
Has worked always or almost always from home	681.9	14.2	539.6	79.1
Has not worked from home or not always or almost always at home	4,117.9	85.8		
Equipment needed to work				
Computer and smartphone	470.1	68.9	383.8	71.1
Only computer	172.3	25.3	148.9	27.6
Use of ICT^(a)				
Used ICT ^(b)	644.4	94.5	532.9	98.8
Did not use ICT or does not know ^(c)	37.5	5.5	§	§
Type of connection or communication used^(d)				
Virtual private network (VPN)				
Yes	395.2	60.9	346.9	64.8
No	213.7	32.9	153.7	28.7
Do not know	40.2	6.2	34.7	6.5
Email				
Yes	635.4	97.9	524.2	97.9
No	8.3	1.3	§	§
Do not know	§	§	§	§
Remote connection to a computer in the company				
Yes	341.4	52.6	302.9	56.6
No	281.8	43.4	209.8	39.2
Do not know	25.9	4.0	22.7	4.2
Videoconference				
Yes	562.9	86.7	486.1	90.8
No	80.2	12.4	44.8	8.4
Do not know	§	§	§	§
Web applications, extranet				
Yes	369.6	56.9	308.5	57.6
No	234.6	36.1	186.2	34.8
Do not know	44.9	6.9	40.6	7.6
Shared folders in the cloud				
Yes	429.4	66.1	367.2	68.6
No	178.4	27.5	132.1	24.7
Do not know	41.4	6.4	36.1	6.7
Other type				
Yes	13.8	2.1	11.1	2.1
No	604.2	93.1	496.5	92.7
Do not know	31.2	4.8	27.7	5.2
Employed population absent from work^(e)	236.7	6.3	65.0	27.5

	Total	Due to COVID-19
	Average weekly hours ^(g)	
Employed population worked hours		
Has worked always or almost always from home ^(f)	30	31
Has not worked from home or not always or almost always at home ^(f)	31	

Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Force Survey ad hoc module "Working from home".

Conventional sign:

§ Extremely unreliable value

Notes:

(a) ICT - Information and communication technologies

(b) Corresponds to the employed population who has worked always or almost always from home in the reference period using computer and/or smartphone together with some type of information and communication technology: VPN, email, remote connection, videoconference, web applications, extranet, shared folders in the cloud or any other type of ICT.

(c) Corresponds to the employed population who has worked always or almost always from home in the reference period using computer and/or smartphone, but without using any type of ICT.

(d) Only asked to those who have used computer and/or smartphone.

(e) Employed population absent from work in the reference week and in the three weeks before.

(f) This variable reference period corresponds to the reference week and the three week before.

(g) The reference period of the average weekly hours actually worked corresponds to the reference week.

TECHNICAL NOTE

The main purpose of the Labour Force Survey is to characterise the population in terms of the labour market. It is a quarterly sample survey, addressed to families occupying the same dwelling in the national territory, which makes available quarterly and annual data.

Most of the characteristics observed in this survey report to the situation in one pre-defined week (from Monday to Sunday), known as *reference week*. The reference weeks are uniformly distributed throughout the quarters and years. The interviews usually take place in the week following the reference week.

The information is obtained directly, through computer-assisted interview, by using a mixed data collection mode: the initial interview is done face-to-face by an interviewer visiting the household and the other five interviews are done by telephone, if certain requirements are met.

The Labour Force Survey methodological document is available (only in Portuguese) at:

<http://smi.ine.pt/DocumentacaoMetodologica/Detalhes/1362>

Module “Working from home”

This module of Portuguese origin corresponds to a thematic survey, of small dimension, on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in the labour market dynamics, namely on the evolution of working from home following the measures to contain the pandemic. The questions of this survey are intended to supplement the information gathered from the core questionnaire of the Labour Force Survey and are meant primarily to obtain more detailed information on this specific topic that will be used to define and/or monitor specifically national and European policy initiatives. Given this goal, the module will be held each quarter, as long as it is deemed necessary and there is interest in the topic.

The module is performed together with Labour Force Survey and is directed to the resident population aged 15 and over throughout the national territory.

The extrapolation of the results, such as in the Labour Force Survey, is made from a regional weights system, determined from independent population estimates. These weights are a function of the following variables: NUTS II region by sex and five-year age groups and also NUTS III region (or aggregations) by sex or large age groups.

Employed concept: person aged 15 years old or over whom, during the reference period, was in one of the following situations:

- had worked for at least one hour for a wage or salary, in cash or in kind;
- had a formal attachment to his/her job but was temporarily not at work;
- had an enterprise but was temporarily not at work for any specific reason;
- was in early retirement but working in the reference period.

Published data were calibrated by using the population estimates calculated from the final results of Census 2011.

Due to rounding, the totals in tables do not always match the sum of parts.