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WORKING PAPER

No. 25, February 2012

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and Thia Hennessy

The Institutional Framework of the Labour Market

ABSTRACT

Following the identification of relevant labour market characteristics in Deliverable 9.1 (Factor Markets Working Paper No. 25), a survey was designed and implemented across the participant countries in the Factor Markets project. These survey results are detailed in this paper, Deliverable 9.3. The focus is of the survey, which was completed with the assistance of project partner teams, included, employment market, labour legislation, wage-setting mechanisms, unions, taxation and social benefits, education and training, labour mobility and general features of agriculture. Based on the questions posed and the responses received in the survey, in broad terms the agricultural labour market characteristics in the countries under study are not as heterogeneous as one might anticipate. Some of the differences, such as minimum rates of pay, are common to sectors other than agriculture also. There is a notable lack of a regional pattern to the labour market characteristics, i.e. no strong evidence of a north/south or east/west divide. Moreover, the labour market characteristics of one country are not necessarily a good indicator of the labour market characteristics of neighbouring countries.

FACTOR MARKETS Working Papers present work being conducted within the FACTOR MARKETS research project, which analyses and compares the functioning of factor markets for agriculture in the member states, candidate countries and the EU as a whole, with a view to stimulating reactions from other experts in the field. See the back cover for more information on the project. Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed are attributable only to the authors in a personal capacity and not to any institution with which they are associated.

Available for free downloading from the Factor Markets (www.factormarkets.eu)
and CEPS (www.ceps.eu) websites

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The Institutional Framework of the Labour Market

Trevor Donnellan, Kevin Hanrahan and Thia Hennessy*

Factor Markets Working Paper No. 25/February 2012

Background

As part of Workpackage 9 (WP9) of the Factor Markets project, a survey was developed and implemented by Teagasc (the Irish partner in the project), the University of Kent (the UK partner in the project) and was implemented with the assistance of the other project partners. This survey attempted to gather data to characterise the institutional framework of the labour market in selected countries in the EU27 and in Croatia and Macedonia.

This paper represents Deliverable 9.3 which is a summary of the labour market characteristics of the countries examined based on the survey.

Country Coverage

The survey was distributed to partners in June 2011 and responses were mainly completed in the following two months. In general the response produced by each project partner related to their own country. In the EU27 the countries covered were, Belgium (BE), Finland (FI), France (FR), Germany (DE), United Kingdom (GB), Greece (GR), Ireland (IR), Italy (IT), Netherlands (NE), Poland (PL), Sweden (SE) and Slovakia (SK). The Slovene partner also provided survey responses concerning Croatia (HR) and Macedonia (MK). In general the quality of the response received to the questions asked in the survey was quite high.

Structure of the Survey

The survey requested basic data on the structure of the employment market, labour legislation, wage setting mechanisms, unions, taxation and social benefits, education and training, labour mobility and general features of agriculture. Respondents were also free to submit data, or links to data, from national sources and additional information relating to any of the questions asked.

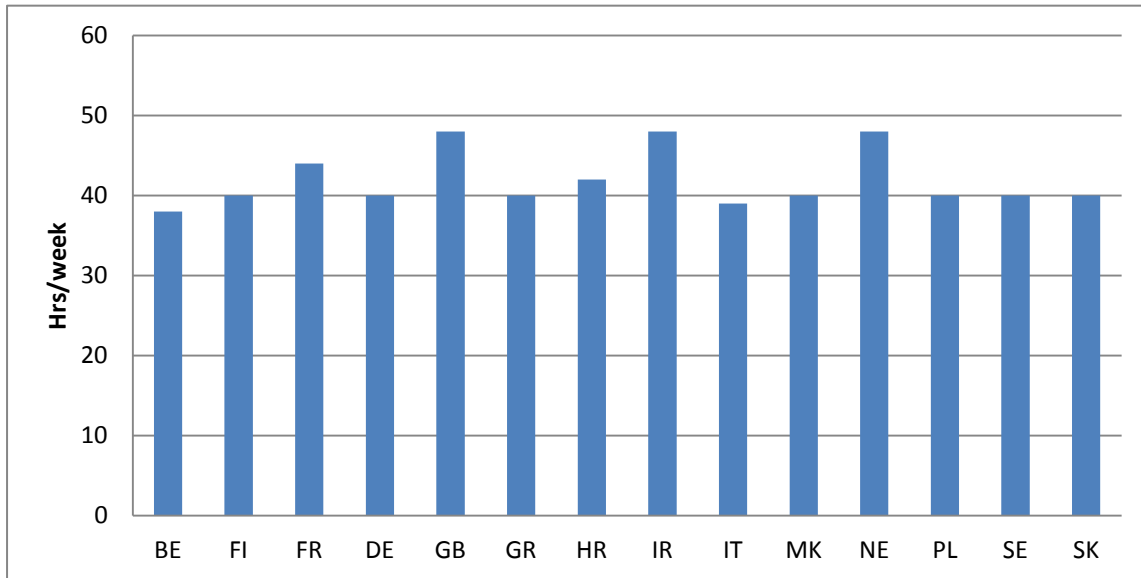
Hiring and Firing Process

Respondents were asked to consider the hiring and firing process in the countries under study and indicate the ease or difficulty employers faced in respect of the hiring and firing of employees. This question was asked in respect of the wider economy and also specifically in the context of the agriculture sector (Table 1 and Table 2).

Hours of Work Legislation

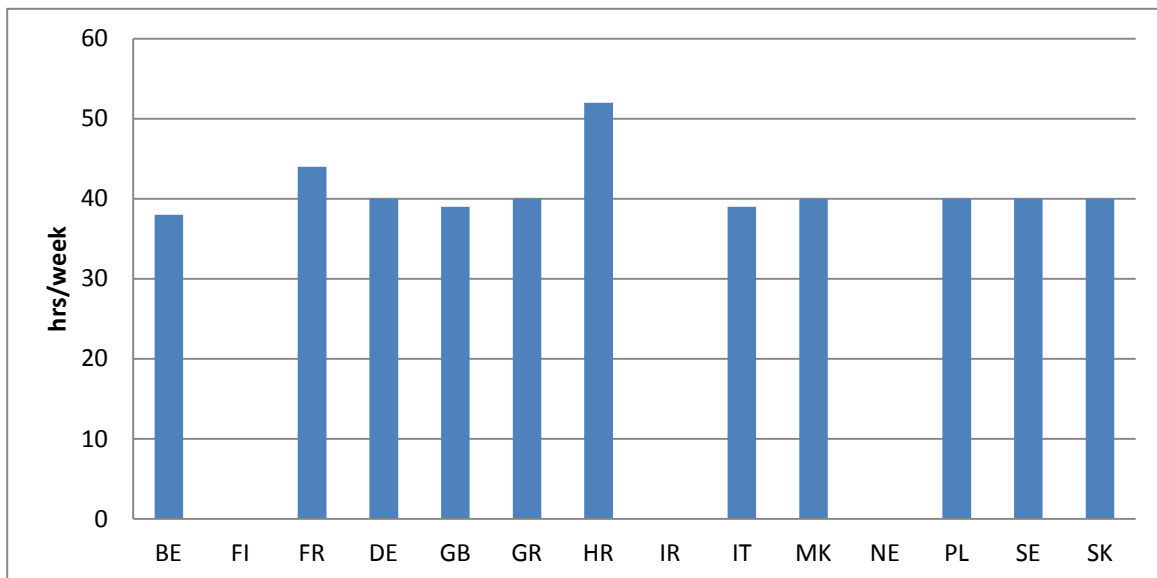
The survey found that the maximum hours of work legislation exists in all of the countries examined. There is some variation in the maximum hours of work across the countries surveyed. The limit tends to be 40 hours per week, but the survey results indicate that the limit is higher in the GB, IRL and NE. The lowest limit in terms of working hours was found in BE.

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Figure 1. Maximum hours of work per week in general economy

Note: See also Table 4.

The same question was asked in respect of the agriculture sector. While it was not possible to achieve a complete response, in general it was found that the maximum hours of work legislation did apply to the agriculture sector (Table 5) and where a maximum number of hours existed it was broadly similar to the maximum in operation in the rest of the economy

Figure 2. Maximum hours of work per week in agriculture sector

Note: See also Table 6.

1. Wage Setting

Survey respondents were asked to detail the existence of minimum wage legislation throughout the wider economy. It was found that minimum wage legislation is relatively widespread across the survey countries. However, respondents indicated that FI, DE, IT, MK and SE do not have minimum wage legislation throughout the wider economy (Table 7).

It was also found that the agriculture sector is less likely to have a minimum wage regulation in comparison with the rest of the economy, with agriculture not covered by minimum wage legislation in some instances (Table 9).

Respondents were also asked to indicate the level of the minimum wage in the wider economy (Table 8) and specifically in agriculture (Table 10).

Unions: Respondents were asked to indicate whether farmer unions exist in the surveyed countries. It was found that farmers unions are very widespread with HR and SK appearing to be exceptions in this regard. (Table 12)

Precise figures on the level of membership of farm unions among farm operators were not easy to come by and in some cases guesstimates were provided. In general, among farm operators union membership ranged from a low of about 50 percent in Belgium to a high of 99 percent in Finland. Typically for most of the countries examined, the level of union membership among farm operators was indicated to be in a range of 70 to 90 percent. It was not possible to get answers to this question for some countries.

Details on the level of union membership among farm employees is quite limited, with no information available in several countries. (Table 12) In general it was indicated that union membership among farm employees is less common than among farm operators. Farm employees are not generally union members in BE, DE, IR, NE or SK with the level of farm employee unionisation being not well known elsewhere.

2. Taxation and Social Benefits

The survey sought information on the design of the unemployment benefit system in the countries under study. It was found that the duration of unemployment payments is generally 1 year, although there are exceptions where the duration of payments was indicated as indefinite – in BE and IR for example (Table 13). There may have been an issue here with the interpretation of the question and the precise terminology that is used to describe different forms of payments that can be received when an individual is out of work. In any event the survey indicated that in general farm operators are not entitled to unemployment payments.

3. Education and Training

The survey sought details on the system of agricultural training qualifications that exist in the countries under study. The results indicated that most countries appear to have a system of agricultural qualifications in place (Table 14). A further question sought information on whether it was now mandatory for farmers to acquire such qualifications, but it was indicated that this was not the case in the countries under study.

Respondents were asked for information on the typical level of education among farm operators. While the response indicated that there is some variation in education level of farmers across the countries examined, there is no regional pattern to this. GB and PL were notable outliers from the remaining countries. In GB the survey indicated that the level of educational attainment among farm operators is likely to be higher than the average for the wider population, while by contrast in PL it was indicated that the level of educational attainment among farm operators is likely to be lower than the average for the wider population. For the remaining countries it was held that there was no discernible difference in the education level of farm operators and the wider population (Table 15).

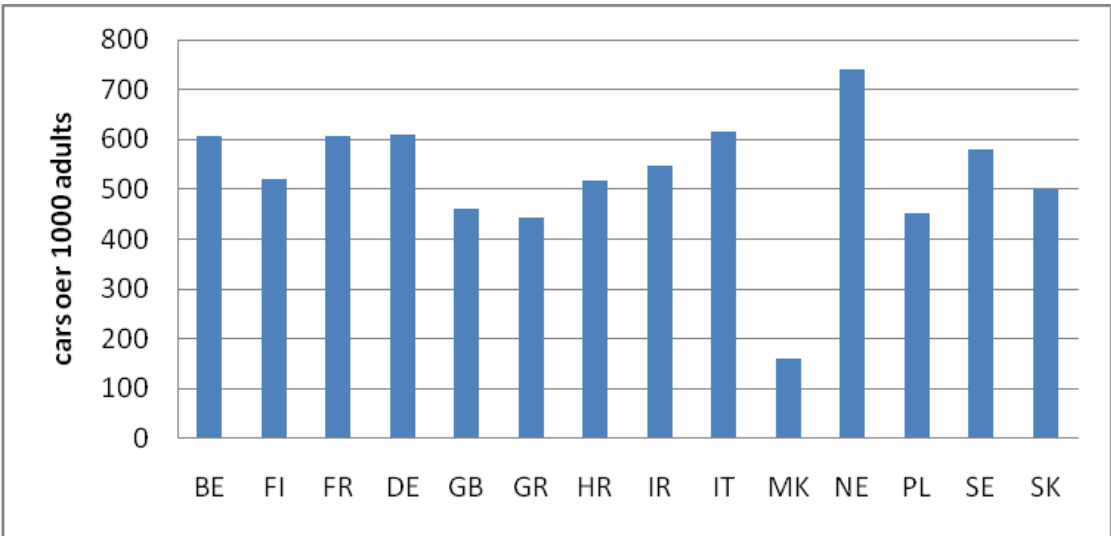
Similarly in the case of agricultural employees it was found that their education level would be above average in GB. By contrast the education level of farm employees in MK and SK was considered to be below the average of the wider population. For most of the remaining countries it was indicated that the education level of farm employees was broadly similar to that of the wider population (Table 16).

4. Labour Mobility

Respondents were asked to indicate whether labour market measures exist for farm operators. It was found that this is generally not the case in most of the countries under study, the exceptions being GR, IT, MK, PL and SE (Table 18). By contrast active labour market measures are quite widely available for farm employees, with BE, DE, IR and SK as notable exceptions (Table 19).

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of car ownership per adult as a measure of mobility. It is recognised that this variable is limited in the sense that countries have different population densities and different levels of public transport provision. There was quite a wide spread in the level of car ownership across the surveyed countries. One might expect this to be strongly correlated to the level of DGP per capita, and by and large this was the case. However, there were some outliers, with some GB and FI reporting lower levels of car ownership than some less affluent EU member states (Table 20).

Figure 3. Cars per 1,000 members of the adult population

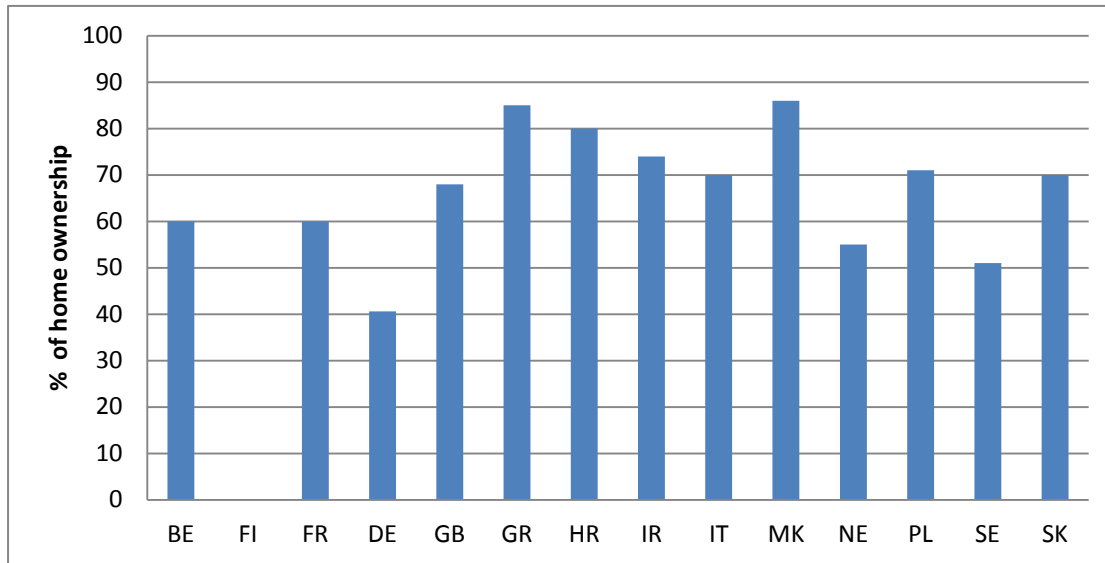


Note: See also Table 20.

5. Home ownership

Respondents were asked to provide information on the level of home ownership in the countries under study. The level of home ownership could be seen as an indicator of labour mobility, with higher levels of home ownership seen as a limiting factor in terms of the mobility of labour.

Figure 4. Percentage of home ownership in the countries under study



6. Employment of foreign workers in agriculture

Questions were also asked about the extent to which foreign workers were present in the agriculture sectors of the economies under study, in comparison with other low skilled sectors in these countries. In general it was found that foreign workers either from within other EU MS (Table 22) or outside of the EU (Table 23) remain relatively uncommon (exceptions being the labour market in BE, IR and NE). However, it was indicated that the prevalence of such workers is generally on the increase, with FR and MK notable as exceptions to this trend (Table 24).

7. Description of the farm holding

Respondents were asked to describe the most common farm type in the countries under study. It was indicated that small family owned and operated farm tend to dominate in FI, GR, IR, IT, MK, PL and SE (Table 25). Large family owned and run farms are most common farm type in NE. In FR it was indicated that small rented farms are the dominant farm type while in SK small farm which were previously part of a collectivist structure tend to be the most prevalent. For DE it was indicated that the typical farm type exhibits strong regional variation.

The survey sought information on the specifics of farm inheritance in the countries under study. In more common form of inheritance is by gift, with a requirement to pay for the farm using a mortgage or similar type of loan a feature in BE and the Nordic countries (Table 26).

Respondent were asked to provide details on the extent of part time farming in the countries under study. Unsurprisingly, it was indicated that part time farming is a feature of agriculture in all the countries under study. The highest rates of part-time farming were found in GR and HR, while some of the lowest rates were found in countries such as the NE and IT. The low level of part time farming observed in IT might be seen as contrary to expectations. This may reflect a lack of off farm labour opportunities.

8. Conclusion

Overall, this survey has not found differences between the labour market characteristics across the EU, but these differences are not particularly extreme when looked upon in the aggregate. Some of the differences, such as minimum rates of pay, are common to sectors other than agriculture also. There is a notable lack of a regional pattern to the labour market characteristics i.e. no strong evidence of a north/south or east/west divide. Moreover, the labour market characteristics of one country are not necessarily a good indicator of the labour market characteristics of neighbouring countries.

The next step will be to convert the observed variables into a labour market rigidity index, to provide an aggregate measure of the features of the labour market in each country.

Table 4. LABOUR LEGISLATION: Please state the maximum number of hours that can be worked by employees in your country?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
No of hours per wk	38	40	44	40	48	40	42	48	39	40	48	40	40	NR	40

Table 5. LABOUR LEGISLATION: Does the legislation governing the maximum number of hours worked apply to employees in the agricultural sector?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
YES	NR	.
NO															

Table 6. LABOUR LEGISLATION: Please state the maximum number of hours that can be worked in agriculture in your country?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
No of hours per wk	38	NR	44	40	39	40	52	NA	39	40	SS	40	40	NR	40

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

WAGE SETTING*Table 7. WAGE SETTING: Please indicate whether there is a general economy wide minimum wage for employees in your country ?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
YES		NR	.
NO			

Table 8. WAGE SETTING: YES, please indicate the level of the wage in your national currency

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Currency	€	€	€	€	£	€	HRK	€	€	MKD	€	PLN	SEK	€	SKK
Amt per hr	NR	NR	SS	NR	5.93	SS	2814	8.65	NR	NR	SS	1386	NR	NR	317*

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

*Per month

Table 9. WAGE SETTING: Please indicate whether there is a specific agricultural minimum wage for agricultural employees in your country?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
YES		NR	SS			NR	NR
NO					

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 10. WAGE SETTING: Please indicate the level of the wage in agriculture in your national currency

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Currency	€	€	€	€	£	€	HRK	€	€	MKD	€	PLN	SEK	€	SKK
Amt per hr	NR	7.72	SS	NR	SS	NR	NR	9.33	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 11. WAGE SETTING: Form of Wage determination in Agriculture

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Uncentralised			
Centralised											.			NR	
Mix of both		

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

UNIONS*Table 12. UNIONS: Approximately what percentage of farmers are Union members?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Percentage	50	99	75	80	80	80	NR	50	90	NR	67	NR	90	NR	NR

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

TAXATION AND SOCIAL BENEFITS*Table 13. TAXATION AND SOCIAL BENEFITS: Thinking about the economy in general in your country, can you indicate the duration of unemployment payments?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
1 year or less		•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	NR	•
Between 1 to 2 years							•								
Between 2 and 3 years															
>3 years	•							•							

EDUCATION AND TRAINING*Table 14. EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Is there is a system of specific agricultural qualifications for farmers or farm employees in your country?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
YES			NR	NR
NO	.	.				.									

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 15. EDUCATION AND TRAINING: What is typically the highest level of educational attainment for farm operators in your country?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
<10 school yrs															
10 to 14 school years	.		NR	.		.		.	.		.	.	.	NR	NR
>14 school years						

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 16. EDUCATION AND TRAINING: What is typically the highest level of educational attainment for farm employees in your country?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
<10 school yrs												.			
10 to 14 school years	NR	NR
>14 school years					.										

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 17. EDUCATION AND TRAINING: Thinking about the skills/education level of employees in agriculture and employees in low to medium skilled employment (factory work, transport, lower skilled construction work), how would you describe the skill and education level of agricultural employees?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Lower			NR				.			.					
Same	NR	NR
Higher					.										

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

LABOUR MOBILITY*Table 18. LABOUR MOBILITY: Do active labour market type measures exist to provide farm operators with skills they can use in non-agricultural employment?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
			NR												
YES						NR	
NO

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 19. LABOUR MOBILITY: Do active labour market measures exist to provide employees with the skills to work in agriculture?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
YES		NR	
NO

Table 20. LABOUR MOBILITY: Indicate the level of car ownership in your country (e.g. cars per 1,000 head of adult population)

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
cars per 1,000 adults	608	519	608	611	462	443	516	548	615	162	742	451	579	NR	500

Table 21. LABOUR MOBILITY: Indicate the level of home ownership in your country

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Percentage of Home Ownership	60	NR	60	40.6	68	85	80	74	70	86	55	71	51	NR	70

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 22. *LABOUR MOBILITY: What is the extent of employment of employees from other EU Member States in the agricultural sector in your country?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Very Uncommon		.	NR							.		.	NR	NR	
Relatively Uncommon				
Similar				.					.						
Widespread	.										.				
Very Widespread								.							

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 23. *LABOUR MOBILITY: What is the extent of employment of employees from outside the EU in the agricultural sector in your country?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Very Uncommon			NR	.	.		.			.	.			NR	
Relatively Uncommon
Similar								.							
Widespread		.				.			.						
Very Widespread															

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 24. *LABOUR MOBILITY: In your opinion is the share of foreign employees employed in the agricultural sector in your country increasing, unchanged or decreasing over the last decade?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Increasing	NR	
Unchanged				.											.
Decreasing			.							.					

GENERAL FEATURES OF AGRICULTURE*Table 25. GENERAL FEATURES OF AGRICULTURE: How would you describe the dominant farm structure in your country?*

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Small family operated farms owned by operator	NR	.		.		.	.	.	.	.		.	.	NR	
Large family operated farms owned by operator					.						.				
Small family operated farms rented by operator			.												
Large family operated farms rented by operator				.											
Small farm previously part of large collectivist farm															.
Large farm, formerly part of a large collectivist farm				.											

NR = No Response

SS= See survey for details

Table 26. GENERAL FEATURES OF AGRICULTURE: Which of the options below best describes how farms are typically inherited by heirs in your country?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Mortgage	NR	
No Mortgage

Table 27. GENERAL FEATURES OF AGRICULTURE: Is part-time farming (where the farm operator also has an off-farm job outside of the agricultural sector) a feature of agriculture in your country?

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
YES	NR	.
NO															

Table 28. GENERAL FEATURES OF AGRICULTURE: If part time farming exists please indicate what percentage of farms are part-time

	BE	FI	FR	DE	GB	GR	HR	IR	IT	MK	NE	PL	SE	SI	SK
Percentage of farms part-time	45	50	32	55	43	91.5	80	40	11	NR	20	39	70	NR	10

NR = No Response

SS=

See

survey

for

details



Comparative Analysis of Factor Markets for Agriculture across the Member States

245123-FP7-KBBE-2009-3

The Factor Markets in a nutshell

Title	Comparative Analysis of Factor Markets for Agriculture across the Member States
Funding scheme	Collaborative Project (CP) / Small or medium scale focused research project
Coordinator	CEPS, Prof. Johan F.M. Swinnen
Duration	01/09/2010 – 31/08/2013 (36 months)
Short description	<p>Well functioning factor markets are a crucial condition for the competitiveness and growth of agriculture and for rural development. At the same time, the functioning of the factor markets themselves are influenced by changes in agriculture and the rural economy, and in EU policies. Member state regulations and institutions affecting land, labour, and capital markets may cause important heterogeneity in the factor markets, which may have important effects on the functioning of the factor markets and on the interactions between factor markets and EU policies.</p> <p>The general objective of the FACTOR MARKETS project is to analyse the functioning of factor markets for agriculture in the EU-27, including the Candidate Countries. The FACTOR MARKETS project will compare the different markets, their institutional framework and their impact on agricultural development and structural change, as well as their impact on rural economies, for the Member States, Candidate Countries and the EU as a whole. The FACTOR MARKETS project will focus on capital, labour and land markets. The results of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the fundamental economic factors affecting EU agriculture, thus allowing better targeting of policies to improve the competitiveness of the sector.</p>
Contact e-mail	info@factormarkets.eu
Website	www.factormarkets.eu
Partners	17 (13 countries)
EU funding	1,979,023 €
EC Scientific officer	Dr. Hans-Jörg Lutzeyer