

SIREN SURVEY REVEALS A DIVERSE PICTURE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGE AND RECEPTIVENESS TO RIGHT-WING POPULISM

The results of a representative survey carried out in eight European countries are about to be published.

The survey follows on from the findings of the in-depth qualitative research phase of the project "Socio-Economic Change, Individual Reactions and the Appeal of the Extreme Right" (SIREN). It investigated subjective perceptions of changes in working life and affinity to the extreme right. The synthesis report on the survey analysis is to be published shortly.

5,800 interviews in 8 European countries

A total representative sample of 5,800 men and women of the working population was selected for for the survey. Coordinated by the Applied Psychology Lab at the Catholic University of Milan, local survey institutes of the EURO-QUEST network carried out 900 telephone interviews in Switzerland and 700 each in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary and Italy between mid-May and early July 2003.

A comprehensive questionnaire

The survey interviews were based on a questionnaire developed by the Applied Psychology Lab and HIVA, K. U. Leuven, in cooperation with the SIREN consortium. It was comprised of 71 questions translated into the national languages of

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Changes in working life and the appeal of right-wing populism in Europe

17-18 June 2004

Vienna, Austria

To mark the end of three successful project years, SIREN is holding an international conference in Vienna on June 17-18, 2004. Entitled "Changes in working life and the appeal of right-wing populism in Europe", the conference aims to confront research findings from the project with other empirical research and views from leading experts in the areas of both working life and analyses of right-wing populism and extremism as well as policy oriented experts.

>> more on Page 3

SIREN workshop series

Between March and May, 4 workshops will be carried out within the framework of the SIREN project to discuss the results of the investigation and possible policy recommendations at a national as well as the European level.

>> more on Page 4

the countries involved. In addition to general background characteristics and socio-economic variables, the survey investigated:

- Subjective perceptions of socio-economic change
- Social identification processes

- Perceived injustice
- Attitudinal affinity with right-wing extremism
- Political orientation

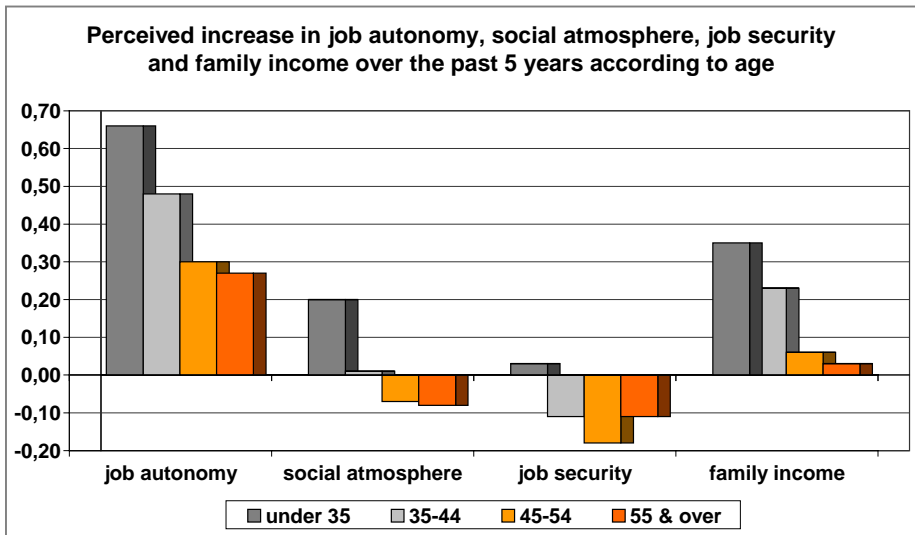
>> First results on Page 2

The impact of socio-economic change

Older workers most affected

Results of the SIREN survey investigating perceptions of socio-economic change show, amongst

general indicate a stronger decrease in job security than the younger categories. Still, a remarkable thing is that it is not necessarily the 'over 55's who report the strongest decrease in job security, but, interestingly, mostly the 45-54 category.



others, that age seems to play a decisive role in the negative perception of recent changes in working life.

Increase in autonomy

Thus, it is predominantly older people who report a significantly lower increase in job autonomy than young people. Although job autonomy has risen slightly for all age groups over the last five years, this increase is considerably higher for the younger.

Deterioration of social atmosphere

At the same time, people aged 45 and over feel most affected by perceived changes for the worse in the social atmosphere in the workplace. Except for Germany, the under-35-year-olds nowhere report a decrease in social atmosphere whereas the 'over 55'-group does so everywhere but in Hungary.

Job security

In particular with regard to job security, age seems to be the most relevant variable in the relationship with perceived changes in job security. Under-35-year-olds, on the whole, report no clear decrease in job security. Older working people in

Changes in family income

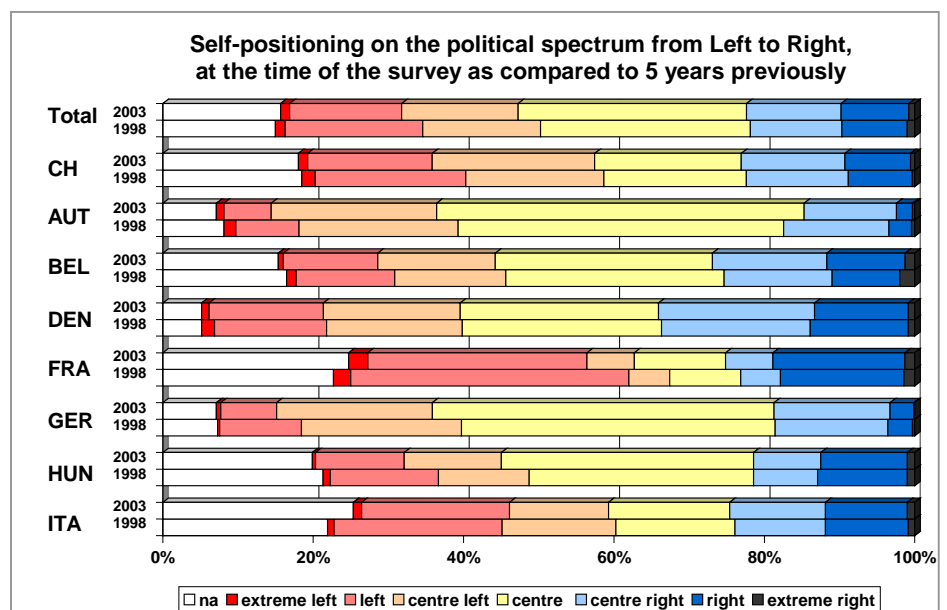
Age again has an impact on the perception of change in the financial situation at household level. Older people are much more likely to report a decrease in family income over the past 5 years than do younger people. The relationship, generally speaking, is linear: the younger, the more chance of perceived improvement over the last five years.

Changes in political orientation

In addition to using extreme right affinity scales and surveying voting intentions for its investigation of political orientation, the SIREN survey also asked respondents to position themselves on the political spectrum, on a scale ranging from "extreme left" to "extreme right", both at the time of the survey and five years previously.

The picture that seems to emerge here is rather similar throughout the countries under investigation. Thus, while people who regard themselves as belonging to the "extreme right" end of the political spectrum appears to have slightly declined in most countries (and even dropped by a fourth in Flanders), political orientation in general seems to have moved away from the Left and towards the Centre and the Right. Thus, the self-declared electorate for the "extreme left, left and centre left" has declined by 3.75% overall, with a decrease of as much 6.7% and 4.39% in France and Italy respectively.

The full results, including an in-depth analysis of the connection between socio-economic change and the affinity to the extreme right wing will be published in March. ■



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:

CHANGES IN WORKING LIFE AND THE APPEAL OF RIGHT-WING POPULISM IN EUROPE

17-18 June 2004, Vienna

An international conference on the individual perception of socio-economic change and political orientations

Working life in Europe has been subject to radical change in recent years: Structural shifts including the emergence of new sectors, large-scale privatisation and restructuring measures at national and company level, growing insecurity in the workplace and the erosion of the standard employment relationship have all reshaped working conditions in Europe, not only affecting people's economic and social status but also the personal and social identities of individuals. At the same time many European countries have seen a growth in support for right-wing populist and extremist parties and movements. And although a connection between these two phenomena is often assumed in the literature, working life research and analyses of right-wing populism rarely engage in collaborative efforts to jointly analyse such developments.

The conference aims to fill this gap by addressing the following questions:

- **How do people cope with the impact of the transformation of work and employment?**
- **What strategies do they develop to come to terms with the growing insecurity in working life?**
- **What are the political reverberations of recent transformations of the labour market?**
- **What are the implications for European social and employment policies?**

In answer to these questions, the conference will present the findings from the extensive qualitative research and the quantitative survey

Speakers include:

Caspar Einem, Member of the Austrian Parliament

Peter Fleissner, Vienna University of Technology

Michaela Köttig, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Jackie Morin, European Commission, GD Employment and Social Affairs (invited)

Cas Mudde, Universiteit Antwerpen

Agnès Parent-Thirion, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (invited)

Franz Schultheis, Université de Genève

Guy Standing, ILO, Geneva

Asbjørn Wahl, For velferdsstaten, Norway

John Wrench, European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia

Hans-Georg Zilian, Büro für Sozialforschung, Graz

Speakers from the SIREN consortium:

Gabrielle Balazs and **Jean-Pierre Faguer**, Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi (CEE), Noisy le Grand

Patrizia Catellani and **Patrizia Milesi**, Catholic University of Milan

Hans de Witte and **Yves de Weerd**, University of Leuven/HIVA

Jörg Flecker, Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt (FORBA), Vienna

Gudrun Hentges and **Malte Meyer**, Universität zu Köln

Francesca Poglià and **Fabrice Plomb**, Université de Neuchâtel

Eva Thoft and **Edvin Grinderslev**, Center for Alternativ Samfundsanalyse (CASA), Copenhagen

Andras Toth, Institute of Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest

of the SIREN project, investigating the impact of recent transformations of work and employment on the appeal of right-wing populism. These findings will be confronted with other empirical research and with views from leading experts in the areas of both working life and analyses of right-wing populism and extremism as well as policy oriented experts.

Organised by Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt (FORBA), in association with the European Commission, Renner Institut Wien, Science Centre Vienna/WZW Wien and the SIREN consortium.

For further information and registration, please contact office@forba.at or the SIREN website, at <http://www.siren.at>

SIREN WORKSHOPS SERIES TO BE HELD IN 4 COUNTRIES

A number of workshops to discuss the policy implications of the SIREN findings on a national as well as EU level will take place this spring. The workshops aim at bringing together

the findings of the SIREN survey and their potential implications for the social, employment, anti-discrimination and education policies in European- Union countries.

The workshops are mainly targeted at policy makers, representatives from trade unions and NGOs as well as researchers.

SIREN POLICY-ORIENTED WORKSHOPS:

- **19 MARCH 2004, PARIS**
“RECONVERSIONS ECONOMIQUES ET CONVERSIONS POLITIQUES”
Organised by the Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi (CEE), the first workshop in the series focuses on the impact of socio-economic transformations on political conversion.
- **16-17 APRIL 2004, RECKLINGHAUSEN, GERMANY**
“FLEXIBLE ARBEIT, PREKARISIERUNG, AUSGRENZUNG – NÄHRBODEN FÜR RECHTSPOPULISTISCHE ORIENTIERUNGEN?”
This workshop is organised by Forschungsinstitut Arbeit, Bildung, Partizipation (FIAB) of Ruhr-University Bochum and the Institute of Political Science at the University of Cologne and deals with flexible and precarious work and exclusion as possible breeding grounds for right-wing populist orientations.
- **27 APRIL 2004, BUDAPEST**
“OLD GHOSTS AND NEW CHALLENGES: SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND POLITICAL RADICALISM”
Organised by the Institute of Political Science of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, this workshop will predominantly focus on transformation economies and the problems experienced by these countries.
- **24 MAY 2004, BRUSSELS**
“CONSEQUENCES FOR LABOUR MARKET AND SOCIAL POLICIES”
With a special emphasis on the implications of the findings of the SIREN project on the social and employment policies of European countries and the European Union, this workshop is predominantly targeted at national and EU level policy making organisations.

For further information on these workshops, please contact: office@forba.at.



OUT NOW!

RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST ATTITUDES IN GERMANY IMPLICATIONS OF NEOLIBERALISM AND COMPETITIVE NATIONALISM

Country report on qualitative findings in Germany

Gudrun Hentges and Malte Meyer, Seminar für Sozialwissenschaften,
Abteilung für Politikwissenschaft, Universität zu Köln, Germany

USB Publishing, Cologne 2003

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