

Abstract of advisory report:

## **The many aspects of combining jobs, 2018/02**

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In this report, the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER) has analysed the current situation with regard to combining jobs. Using the collective name "combination jobs" we focused on all types of employment involving the simultaneous combination of jobs: multiple jobs in paid employment, in self-employment or in a combination of paid employment and self-employment.

### **Summary**

#### *What did the Minister ask the SER to do?*

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment asked the SER to investigate the phenomenon of "combination jobs" and asked whether the SER would provide an appreciation of the combining of jobs. The Minister's request involved studying and evaluating the situation with regard to combination jobs: how many people combine jobs, what are the consequences and what are the practical obstacles for employers and workers and what do the social partners think of it? Detailed information on the questions is provided in Section 1.

#### *What are combination jobs?*

The term "combination jobs" is used to describe the phenomenon whereby people combine two jobs. This can be two jobs in paid employment, a combination of a job in paid employment and a job in self-employment or a combination of two jobs in self-employment.

The phenomenon is known by different names, such as moonlighting, multi-jobbing and hybrid jobs. The term "combination jobs" is used in this study to cover all the forms. Section 2 deals in more detail with definitions and extent of the phenomenon.

#### *How many people combine jobs?*

In the Netherlands, about nine percent of all working people combine jobs. These are the most recent data from the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) and date from 2014. The number of people combining jobs has gradually increased in recent decades. Twenty years ago, about four percent of the working population combined jobs, while about ten years ago the figure was around six percent. Data from Statistics Netherlands for last year pointed to a decrease in growth. About 350,000 people combine two jobs in paid employment whereas some 250,000 people combine a job in paid employment with self-employment.

Most of the growth in recent decades can be explained by the increase in the number of people combining two jobs in self-employment.

#### *Which groups in the labour market combine jobs?*

The groups of people who combine jobs are very varied:

- Women combine relatively more often than men.
- People with a higher level of education combine more often than people with a lower level of education.
- A relatively large number of young people combine jobs.

- Employees on a flexible contract are about twice as likely to have a secondary job as employees on a permanent contract.
- People who work in the hospitality sector, business services, education and healthcare combine jobs more often. A job in paid employment and self-employment are more often combined in the ICT and recreation sector.
- Of those people who combined jobs in a specific year, about two thirds also did so the year after and about one third no longer combined jobs. During the year after that, again about one in three combiners switched to one job.
- Considering different types of households, we found that single people, single-parent families and families with and without children combined jobs at about the same frequency.
- Households in which someone combined jobs were more likely to have an income around the minimum than households in which people had one job. Households with someone who only worked as self-employed were the most likely to have an income around the minimum.
- People who combined jobs to vary their work were more likely to have a higher income. One in three combiners had primarily financial reasons for combining as this group generally had a somewhat lower income on average.
- People who combined two jobs in paid employment had on average a lower income than people who combined a job in paid employment with a job in self-employment.
- The second job was on average about ten hours per week. People who worked four or more days or less than one and a half days per week in their main job had a smaller second job of seven to eight hours per week. People who worked three to four days per week in their main job had a bigger second job at about 12.5 hours per week.

*What do working people think of combining jobs?*

Most people who combine jobs stated that they were satisfied, but they also reported problems.

- About two out of three job combiners wanted to continue to combine, about one in six would have preferred one job in paid employment and about one in six one self-employed job.
- People who wanted to work more hours combined in order to make ends meet or were seeking income security and had a stronger preference for having one permanent job.
- People combining jobs to vary their work wanted to continue combining jobs.
- More highly skilled people wanted to continue combining more often than low-skilled people.
- People who combined jobs in paid employment reported fewer health problems than people who did not combine or people who combined paid employment with self-employment.
- People who combined jobs in paid employment had fewer problems with combining work and family life than people with one job. People who combined paid employment and self-employment found it difficult to combine working with caring for children; their work-life balance suffered as a result.
- People who combined jobs and advanced primarily financial reasons for this tended to experience adverse effects from combining more frequently than people with other reasons.
- Sometimes, combining jobs presents people with all kinds of practical problems:
  - people are faced with two sets of employment terms or collective agreement and dual loyalty.
  - a non-solicitation clause can be difficult with two jobs in the same sector.
  - it is more complicated to sort out social security, pensions and fiscal matters.

Section 3 deals in detail with the reasons given by workers and employers for combining jobs.

*What do employers/business owners think?*

Hardly any systematic research has been conducted, if at all, into the wishes and findings of employers/business owners with regard to combining jobs. The only thing that provides some information is the data on people who combine two jobs as self-employed workers as outlined above and the findings of employers from a number of independent projects in specific industries or sectors.

*What do collective agreements say about combining jobs?*

Three quarters of the collective agreements studied contain provisions that affect the combining of jobs, e.g. provisions concerning a reporting obligation, a consent requirement and side jobs. Some of the provisions are designed to enable employers to avoid any cumulative health and safety risks when employees combine jobs. Section 4 provides an overview of these provisions of collective agreements and also discusses what has been laid down in legislation and regulations with regard to combining jobs.

*What do legislation and regulations say about combining jobs?*

Although there are agreements about aspects of combining jobs in various places, they are not always easy to enforce. For example, in the Netherlands there is a clear Working Hours Act, but combining jobs makes it difficult for employers to see whether employees are exceeding their permitted working hours.

Any request to extend working hours can be submitted in accordance with the Flexible Working Hours Act and on the basis of good employment practices.

In general, good employment practices form the basis for settling issues relating to combining jobs.

*What have we learned from projects concerning the combining of jobs?*

A wide variety of projects have been conducted in respect of the combining of jobs.

Detailed information on a number of projects is provided in Section 3.

In the agricultural sector, many farmers combine work in their own business with work for other businesses. Representatives of the sector have entered into an agreement with the Dutch tax authorities in order to regulate all kinds of tax-related matters.

The "hybrid teachers" project is underway in the education sector. In this project, teachers combine their teaching activities with working for a company or running their own business.

In the Apeldoorn region, the municipality, the Employee Insurance Agency and small businesses work together in the "Stapelbanen" [multi-jobbing] project to help people on benefits regain work experience by combining jobs.

PostNL and transport company Veolia joined forces in 2014. PostNL had a lot of small jobs because less and less mail was being sent. Veolia had a lot of work at peak hours. However, combining jobs in these two firms gave rise to all kinds of practical problems and the project was therefore discontinued in 2015.

In France, there is a project involving the grouping together of multiple job appointments by collaborating employers. The division of responsibilities appears complicated.

*What have we learned from scientific and international research?*

We have learned that the Netherlands has a relatively large number of job combiners compared with other European countries. Only in the Scandinavian countries do people combine jobs more frequently. However, not much background research has been done into the combining of jobs. There are different sources that provide information on the phenomenon of combination jobs: statistics from Statistics Netherlands, surveys by the Netherlands Institute of Industrial Technology (TNO) and practical experience gained from projects.

Only a very limited amount of international research has been conducted into the combining of jobs. On this subject, see Section 2. Most of the research into combination jobs has been conducted in the USA. This shows that the number of people combining jobs is fairly stable and does not depend on economic growth or contraction. Research

among European countries indicates that the number of job combiners in these countries does change with the economy, there being more job combiners when economic conditions worsen. Research also shows that the level of people combining jobs is related to the degree of flexibility in the labour market: the more part-time and flexible contracts there are, the greater the number of job combiners.

#### *Initial appreciation*

Some people are very happy to combine jobs. In these cases, the ability to combine jobs adds economic and social value for the workers themselves, for their employers or clients and for the operation of the labour market. The SER is in favour (see Section 5) of removing obstructions to the combining of jobs for this group of employees and employers.

Other people find it difficult to combine jobs and perceive it as a necessity, in particular people who are dependent on lower-paid work or work that is available via small part-time jobs. The SER draws attention to these people and welcomes initiatives in this area, such as the Dienstpact [Service Pact] in the facilities sector. It is desirable to make it easier for them to turn the combining of jobs into a single full or part-time job. The SER believes that initiatives in this area deserve support and, to this end, obstacles for employers and problems for employees should be removed. It will offer these workers the prospect of long-term participation in the labour market and achieving economic independence.