

# STANDARD WORKING HOURS WORLDWIDE: MEASUREMENTS AND TRENDS

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# Concepts of working hours per week

- Usual hours – as reported in surveys
- Legal working hours – in labour laws
- Agreed hours – in collective labour agreement
- Contractual hours – in employment contracts
- Weekly hours – in minimum wage notifications
- Standard hours – ??

# What are standard work hours?

- **Definition of standard working hours per week**
  - The most common **contractual hours** in employment contracts of full-time workers
  - The most common **agreed hours** in collective agreements
  - The most common **hours in minimum wage notifications**
- **Why are standard working hours important?**
  - Provides the definitions of part-time hours and overtime hours
  - In economics used to compute hourly wages
  - Is a country-level standard, can vary across countries

# Data sources working hours per wk- 1

- **Usual hours**
  - ILO collects surveys for 189 countries since 2013
- **Legal hours**
  - World Bank for 202 cntrs since 2004
  - WageIndicator for 150+ cntrs since 2009
- **Agreed hours**
  - WageIndicator: 3300 collective agreements for 70+ cntrs
- **Contractual hours**
  - no worldwide data collection, only *Search*

# Data sources working hours per wk - 2

- **Weekly hours according to Minimum Wages**
  - MW notifications, some countries report weekly hrs
- **Standard hours**
  - no worldwide data collection exists
  - WageIndicator started its own data collection
  - by merging all sources with hours data
  - supplemented with *Search*
  - 193 countries, time series since 2014, annual updates

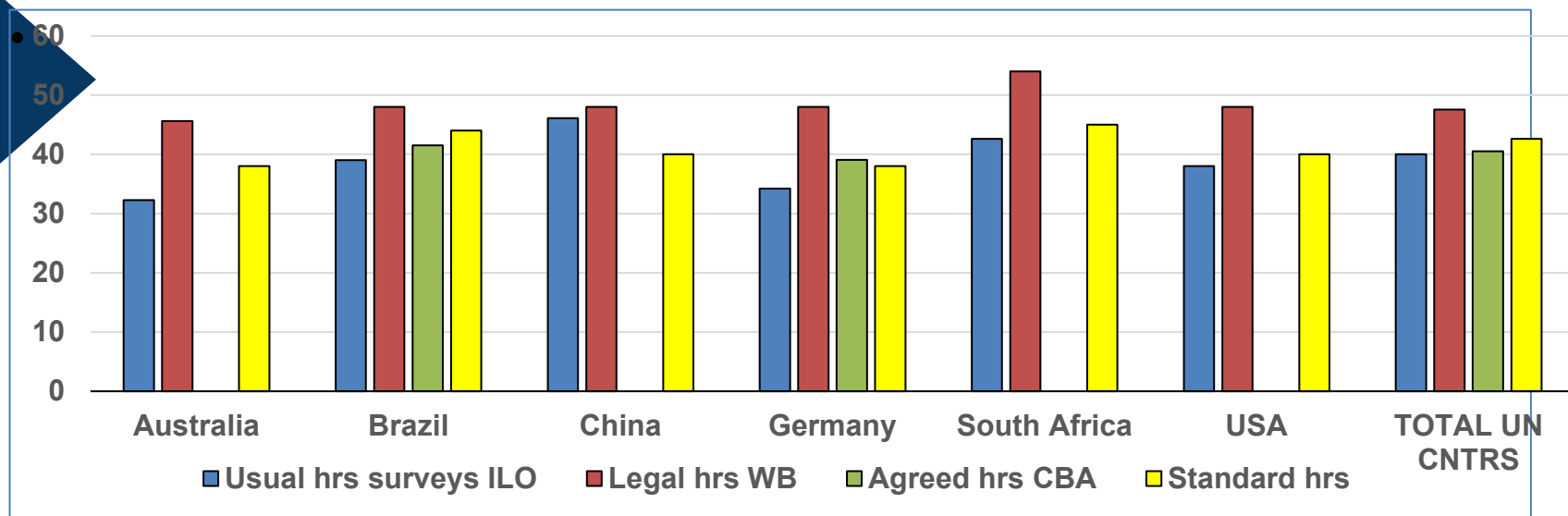
# Usual, legal, agreed, standard hrs '24

Filter: largest countries per continent + TOTAL 193 UN countries

Usual hours less than legal, agreed and standard hours >> parttime jobs,  
apart from China >> no parttime jobs

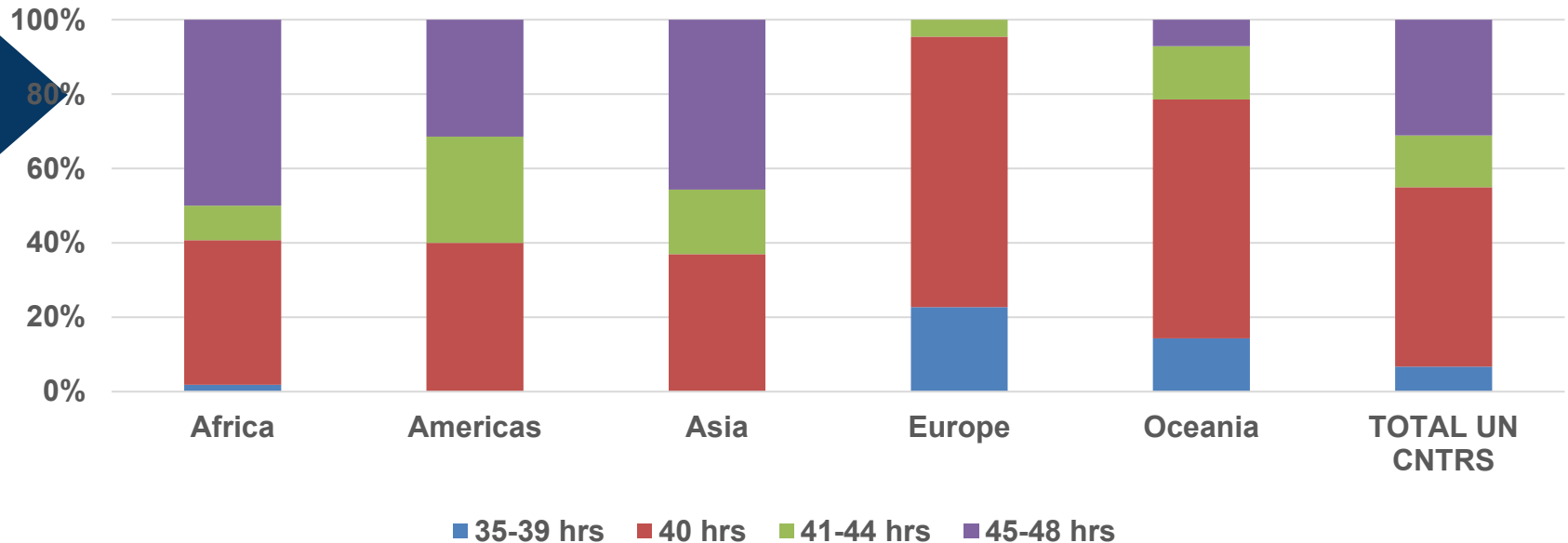
Legal working hours higher than usual, agreed hours in all countries

Standard hours lowest in Germany and UK (38 hrs) and highest in S Africa (45)



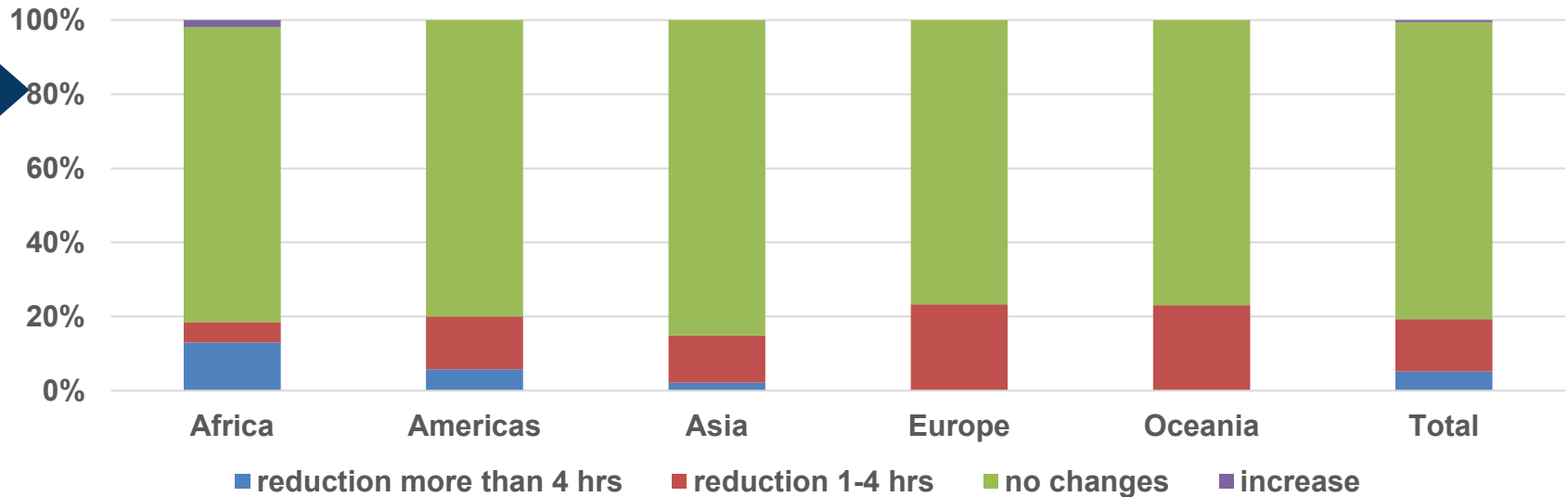
# Standard hours by continent 2025

- A standard working week of 40 hours is worldwide most common (48% of 193 countries)
- Standard hours are longest in Africa: half of the 54 countries work 45 - 48 hrs/w
- And shortest in Europe: more than a quarter work of 43 cnts less than 40 hrs/w



# Reduction in standard hours 2014-'25

- Since 2014 one in five countries reduced weekly working hours, if so mostly with more than 4 hours
- Reduction most frequent in European countries, least in Asia





# Next steps in research

- **Standard working hours per year?**
- **Currently available for OECD countries, expand to all countries**
- **Subtracting days for paid annual leave (legal and agreed leave)**
- **Subtracting days for paid holidays, not in weekends (legal and agreed leave)**
- **Standard working hours per year allow for an advanced comparison of working time across countries**

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# More information

- **Explanatory note on standard working hours -** <https://wageindicator.org/about/publications/2023/tijdens-k-g-2023-explanatory-note-on-the-wageindicator-working-hours-database-amsterdam-wageindicator-foundation>
- **Data availability -** <https://wageindicator.org/contact-info>
- **CBA database -** <https://wageindicator.org/labour-laws/collective-bargaining-agreements>
- **Labour Law database -** <https://wageindicator.org/labour-laws/labour-law-around-the-world>