

Wages in utilities compared

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To mark the start position of wages in the utilities sector for the WISUTIL project, we have traced and analyzed wages in this sector for eight countries: Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom (UK). Based on data from the voluntary *WageIndicator* web-survey for 2008 and 2009, we calculated the median gross hourly wages in these countries and in these years for five groups of workers: for all workers (the national median hourly wages); for the workers in utilities divided in workers in electricity and those in gas, water and sewerage, and for the workers in manufacturing and the public sector at large. We only included groups of workers if at least 50 respondents per group/country had mentioned their wages (As a consequence, we did not include gas, water and sewerage for Hungary as the group of respondents in that country was too small).

The graph at the end of this brief paper gives a picture of the outcomes of our calculations; we now capture the outcomes in a table.

Table Gross median hourly wages by sector, eight countries, 2008-2009, national median = 100

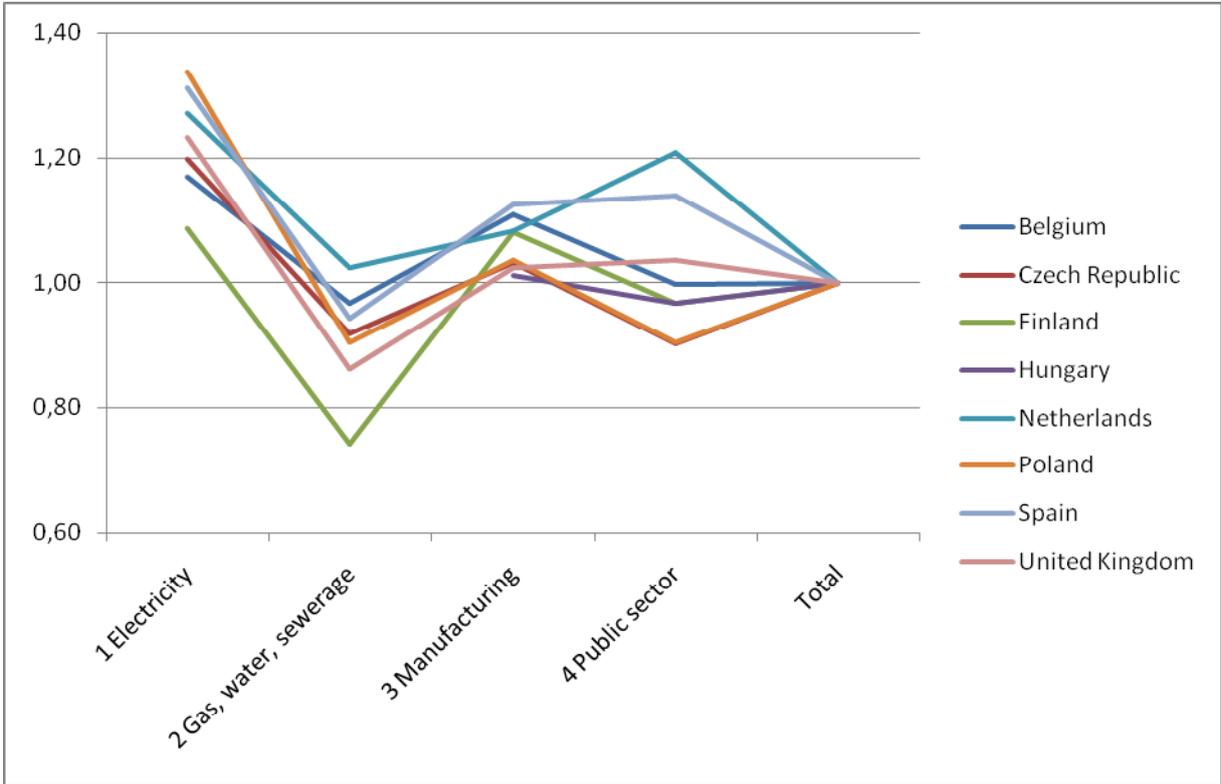
	BE	CZ	FI	HU	NL	PL	SP	UK
Electricity	117	120	109	103	127	134	131	123
Gas, water, sewerage	97	92	74	-	102	90	94	86
Manufacturing	111	103	108	101	108	104	113	102
Public sector	100	90	97	97	121	90	114	104
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Unweighted WageIndicator data, selection employees in eight countries, January 2008 -December 2009

The electricity sector, as a sector with relatively high-skilled staff, in each country showed the highest median wages, varying from slightly over the national median hourly wage (indexed 103) in Hungary till about one-third higher than the national figure in Poland (134) and Spain (131). According to the *WageIndicator* outcomes for 2008-09, the median wages in gas, water and sewerage were much lower. Only in the Netherlands (102), they were (a little bit) higher than the national median, but in particular in Finland (74) wages in gas, water and sewerage were quite low.

Also in the Netherlands, the median hourly wages in the public sector were, with 21% over the national median, relatively high. A role may play the fact that in that country quite a number of low-paid activities has already been outsourced to outside the public sector. In four countries, the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary and Poland, wages in the public sector show up below the national median wage. In all countries, wages in the manufacturing industry are above the national median, and situated somewhere between wages in the two parts of the utilities sector: lower than those in electricity, higher than those in gas, water and sewerage.

Graph Gross median hourly wages by sector, eight countries, 2008-2009, national median = 1.00



Source: Unweighted WageIndicator data, selection employees in eight countries, January 2008 -December 2009