

Employee engagement, satisfaction and motivation measurement

There is a general agreement that employee engagement, satisfaction, and motivation directly impact organisations' performance and results, making their management and promotion a key priority.

Gallup research, for instance, shows that productivity among highly engaged teams is 14% higher than that of teams with the lowest engagement. More engaged employees show 81% lower absenteeism, and turnover rates decrease by 18% in high-turnover organisations and 43% in low-turnover organisations.

Source: [Increase Productivity at the Lowest Possible Cost](#); [What Is Employee Engagement and How Do You Improve It?](#)

Information on employees' engagement, satisfaction and motivation levels is provided by measurement processes and the most common are employee surveys. Nowadays, employers may complement surveys data with new methodologies based on digital and AI technology.

People analytics field offers employers further options for assessing staff engagement. New machine-learning algorithms analyse big data and measure employee engagement through natural language processing, email response times, networking outside of core teams, time spent in impromptu meetings and initiatives versus regular meetings, work done outside working hours, or CV update frequency, among other measures.

However, employee surveys continue to be broadly used as they:

- Provide employees with an opportunity to be heard, to express concerns and to offer honest and insightful feedback, mainly if anonymity is ensured;
- Are an effective means of communication, showing openness and willingness to involve employees in the organisation's development;
- Stand out as a useful diagnostic tool to determine organisations' strengths and weaknesses.

The overall advantage that surveys have over new methodologies is that they are conducted in a transparent, open and voluntary way.



Employee surveys results also serve as a barometer of staff satisfaction, motivation (or engagement), and respective drivers, thus enabling organisations to identify areas and factors that need improvement, allowing for more data-driven and individualised HRM.

Main findings

Research results show that the use of employee surveys is a trend in EU MS.

- **Only in 4 of the 27 MS** there is no evidence of the use of these surveys.
- **16 MS and the EC** conduct employees' surveys throughout central/federal government level.
- **2 MS** seem to apply these surveys only at ministry level and three only at an organisational level.

- **12 MS and the EC** conduct them through several levels (e.g. Central/Federal, Ministry and organisational level).
- The surveys' **frequencies** differ. They can be carried out yearly, biennially, triennially, more seldom, or even be ad-hoc.

Seven MS have issued general implementation guidelines. These range from legal acts or internal regulations to online booklets or even only previous surveys. The guidelines focus on the structure, topics and questions, and the advisable survey frequency.

The surveys are carried out by or with the support of centralised services in at least 11 MS. These range from central/federal administration services or agencies, public service observatories or councils to national or central statistical offices.

Member States and the EC report a wide variety of topics covered by such surveys. However, motivation appears to be one of the most frequently addressed, showing MS interest on it.

Figure 1 | Employee surveys' topics in EUPAN MS and EC



Source: 2020 EUPAN survey; OECD 2016, MS National surveys.

Employee satisfaction/motivation surveys provide a snapshot of each workplace based on the variables covered by each one, such as leadership, working conditions, opportunities for advancement, or fairness (and effectiveness) of performance appraisal systems, among others.

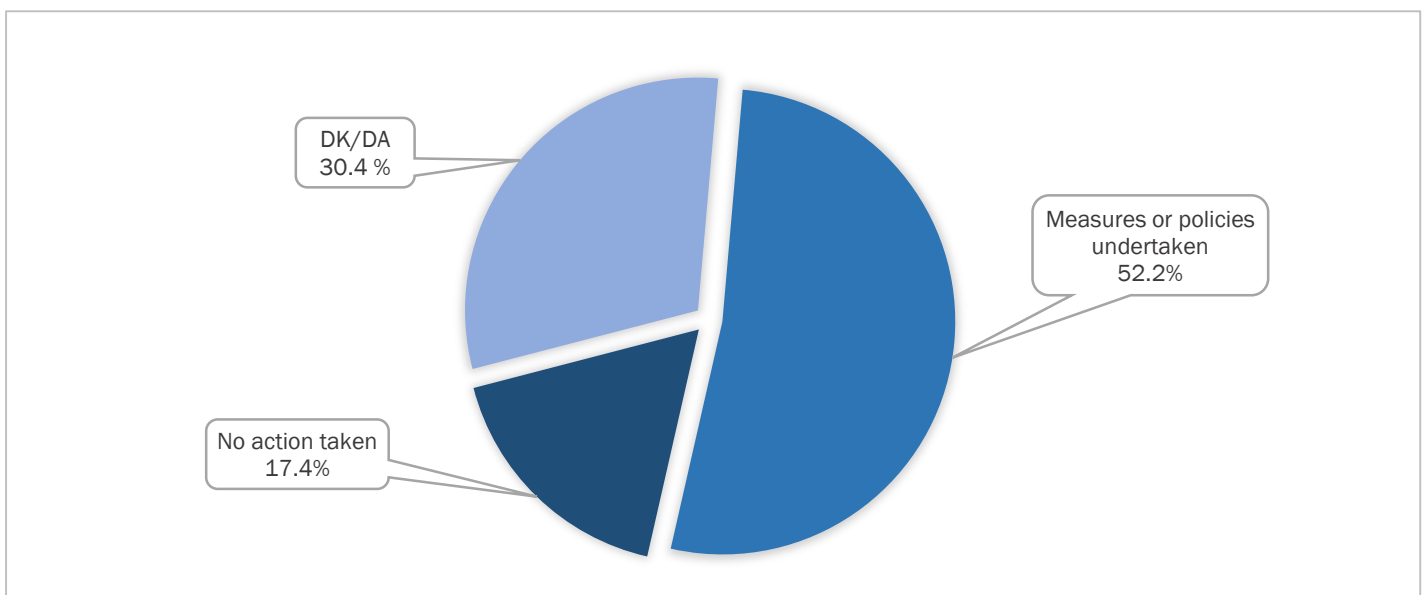
Survey results provide rich and useful information, being an indicator of how specific determinants have been managed. However, they should be seen primarily as the starting point for improvement, guiding public employers in designing evidence-driven measures and HR policies.

Figure 2 | Employee engagement, satisfaction or motivation assessment cycle



Most MS have taken measures based on surveys' results. These range from specific measures taken at organisational level to action plans designed at ministry one. Information from employee surveys is, in some cases, also communicated to the political level, which may be used by governments as evidence for designing HR measures or policies.

Figure 3 | Measures or policies undertaken based on surveys' results (% EUPAN MS)



Source: 2020 EUPAN survey; OECD 2016, MS National surveys.

Methodological note

This Survey Brief consists on a summary of employee engagement, satisfaction and motivation measurements being carried out in public sector by EUPAN Member States, as well as on the results of the EUPAN survey on employees' motivation in central/federal PA, in addition to desk research, covering both literature and EUPAN countries' websites.