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**FROM THE BEGINNINGS
UP TO THE PRESENT DAY**

**SUMMARY OF THE WORKSHOP STUDIES
PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1996–2000**

**Special Issue of the Workshop Studies
of the Strategic Task Force for
European Integration –
Prime Minister's Office,
Hungary**

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ATYPICAL JOBS ON THE HUNGARIAN LABOUR MARKET

Teréz Laky – Szilvia Borbély – Beáta Nacsa – Mária Frey – Judit Lakatos – Magdolna Nádas – Ágnes Simonyi – Sándor Lindner – Ferencné Plank – Ilona Gere

Examining the Hungarian labour market in its Opinion on Hungary's Application for Membership of the EU, the European Commission noted, „overall, a comprehensive range of policies will be needed to ensure that inadequacies in the functioning of the labour market do not hamper Hungary's ability to withstand competition in the Single Market.” This volume of studies by Hungarian experts deals with the lack of regulation of the so-called atypical jobs – a characteristic feature of the Hungarian labour market – and the consequent problems of considering them. The aim was to survey the present situation, and identify a basis for harmonizing and regulating the outstanding questions of labour legislation, taxation, social insurance and social policy. This is likely to be a lengthy process.

The introductory study (by T. Laky) sums up the growth of atypical jobs in the European Union, compared with the employment-unemployment-economic inactivity indices shown in Hungary's statistics. This reveals Hungary's employment level as one of the lowest in Europe. However, the author doubts the reliability of the figures, arguing that the actual employment level is much higher. Lack of regulation in the field of most atypical jobs that makes them difficult to record. Other causes of under-recording include the new size structure of firms (97% of units employ less than 11 people) and the constant rise in the fiscal and quasi-fiscal load on employment.

The studies in the first part of the book deal with some problems of international practice. Sz. Borbély („The Hinterland of Atypical Jobs: the Flexible Labour Market in the EU”) sums up the efforts to make the European labour market more flexible, the resistance of the employees involved, and the strikes, bargains and agreements connected with rights lost when conventional employment ceases.

B. Nacsa („Regulation of Atypical Jobs in Certain Western European Countries”) looks at some of the legislative results so far in this field.

M. Frey („Attempts to Extend Employment: Creating Jobs outside the Mainstream of the Labour Market”) reviews efforts and European initiatives to extend employment opportunities (e.g. home-working), in the formal and informal economy.

The second part reports on experiences in Hungary. J. Lakatos and M. Nádas (The Spread of Atypical Employment Forms in Hungary – Based on Labour Force Survey Data) examine the numbers and proportions of employees with atypical jobs, calculating from statistical data. They point out some uncertainties of definition and calculation.

Á. Simonyi (Seasonal Employment – Seasonal Unemployment) reports on some comprehensive research into seasonal employment. Although the seasonal labour requirement is significant in several branches of the economy, its frequency and diversity, and the alternating summer-winter seasonal jobs, scarcely appear in the statistics. Then follow two case studies: S. Lindner on required atypical employment in a still state-owned enterprise, and M. Plank on middle managers in a medium-sized company, forced to accept self-employment. I. Gere (Demand for Atypical Labour, Based on Experience at Temporary Employment Agencies) presents the temporary and seasonal demand as experienced at temporary work agencies.

This survey of atypical employment, the first of its kind in Hungary, may serve as a catalyst for labour legislation that can bring Hungary into line with the EU's outline directives.