



GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE

IN RECONCILING FAMILY AND WORK FOR WORKERS,
EMPLOYERS AND POLICY MAKERS



For more information on the project please visit:
www.dadcomehome.org

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INTRODUCTION

In whole of the Europe over the last two decades **important demographic and social changes** have occurred:

- Women began to enter the labour market in large numbers.
- Birth rates across Europe declined.
- The number of single parents (especially mothers) and the rate of divorces have increased.

At the same time, **important social and economic challenges** are growing throughout the EU:

First, technological developments nearly rule out stable long-term employment in the manufacturing sector. Meanwhile, the demand for skilled short term (project oriented) work has increased. All this especially endangers long-term job security of semi-skilled and unskilled working parents, putting precessional people who are single and without children into the most competitive position.

Second, intensified economic competition brought on by globalization is creating unprecedented labour market volatility and an unprecedented mobility of workers. More irregular working hours as well as increasing worker migration both create much bigger tensions in workers' social relationships, especially with dependant family/partnership members such as children.

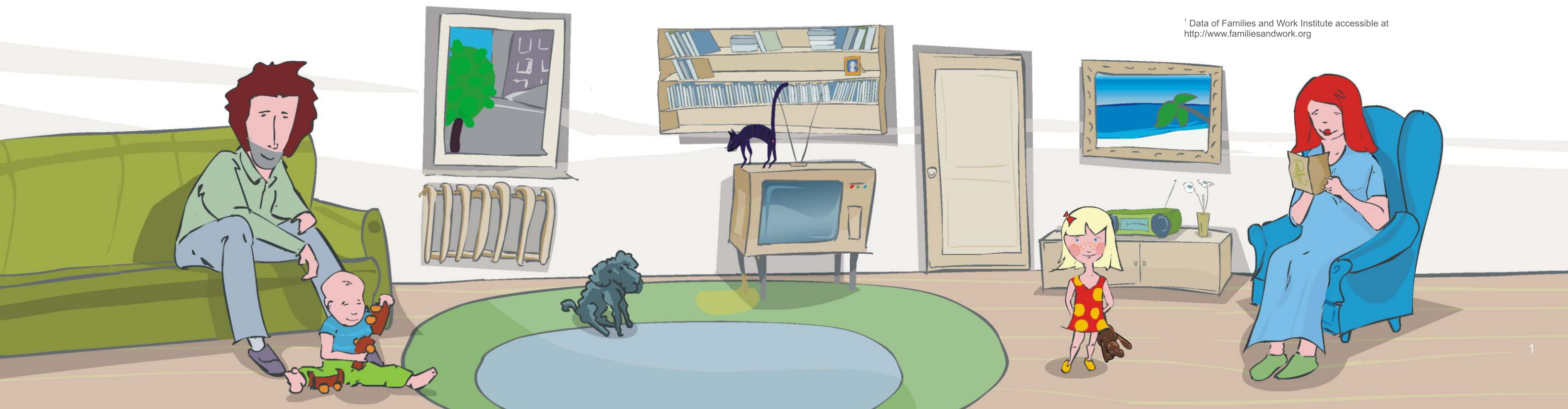
Third, as more women have succeeded in gaining greater advancement in education and employment, the unwaged care for children as well as domestic chores that traditionally are ascribed solely for women without involving men puts unnecessary strain on the families and labour markets. This raises the question anew about equal sharing between genders of labour / family obligations and puts a new focus for gender equality policy with the creation of a dual earner/dual career family model that certainly corresponds more adequately to the new social and economic risks.

In the face of these changes and challenges, an increasing number of EU citizens¹ that are parents and have paid work would like to exchange certain benefits and compensations at work for flexibility of working time and other possibilities to reach a more satisfactory **balance between work and family demands**.

Meanwhile, responsible central EU institutions, social partners, national governments of member states and broad number of multinational and national companies are more and more concerned about policies of and tools for **reconciliation of work and family life** (RWF) of working mothers and fathers.

These guidelines are a tool developed by "Modern Men in Enlarged Europe II" project team that will help policy decision-makers, employers, trade unions, NGO activists and individual workers that are parents or are planning to be parents to understand and develop their own **work and family reconciliation strategies** in their particular surroundings and according to their particular needs.

¹ Data of Families and Work Institute accessible at
<http://www.familiesandwork.org>



GENDER INEQUALITY AND RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY

Despite extensive efforts to create and implement family-friendly employment policies throughout Europe, most people involved in making decisions – whether politicians or employers – often overlook the fact that **throughout the EU there is clear gender inequality** that remains as regards access to employment, in incomes, in accessibility and quality of services, and in the capacity of women to form an independent household at an equivalent standard of living accessible to men. Work-life balance tensions, combined with stereotypes and gender-biased pay and evaluation systems, continue to hold women

GENDER INEQUALITY CONTINUES IN THE EU:

- Women in the EU earn 15% less than men and progress has been slow in closing gender gaps with men.
- Women's employment rate, at 55.7%, is 15% lower than men's.
- Women who do work are often confined to a limited number of sectors - more than 40% work in education, health or public administration, compared to less than 20% of men.
- Part time work accounts for over 32% of women's jobs, but just over 7% for men.
- Women earn 15% less than men partly because they are concentrated in lower paid professions.
- Women still fill relatively few top posts: they account for just 32% of managers; only 10% of members of the boards and 3% of CEOs of larger EU enterprises are women.
- From 15 to 30 percent of working mothers are not coming back to work after maternity leave.

back in the job market, which is shown by the latest European Commission Report on gender equality in the EU².

According to the European Commission, “extensive data show that participation in the labour market and the number of hours worked is linked to parenthood, but that the effect is negative for women whilst it is positive for men” and hence “the lack of work-life balance is often cited as a factor explaining the persistence of gender gaps in the labour market.”³ On the other hand, there is a wide and persistent misunderstanding regarding RWF policies and provisions as being only of interest to working mothers or mothers willing to re-enter the labour force. In this case, the role of working fathers and their relationship to their children, as well as the need to share domestic chores, are ignored.

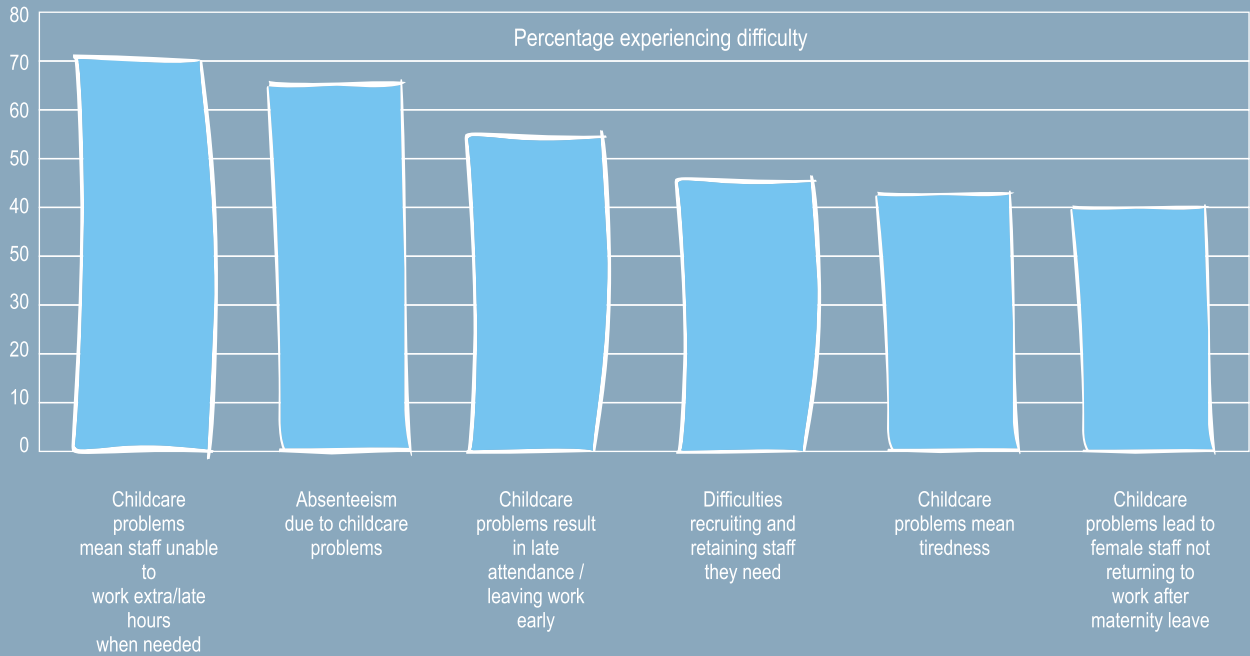
If this misunderstanding is not cleared up, the effect of any RWF project – be it a policy or a set of provisions applied at particular work place – will be lessened, and working mothers will be strained by the double load of doing domestic chores/caring for young children and working, while involvement of concerned fathers will not be anyhow addressed and as a result not encouraged. This inequality supporting misunderstanding will only prevent working mothers from effective participation in workforce or/and hamper their plans to become mothers again.

1. WHAT KIND OF RWF CHANGES FOR EMPLOYERS?

Throughout Europe, an increasing number of workplaces are becoming “family friendly”, meaning that they respect and accommodate their employees’ obligations for their dependent family members, be it children, elderly, or persons with disabilities. These companies and organizations not only ensure accessibility of obligatory RWF provisions like parental leave, but provide a set of voluntary measures of reconciliation of work and family in order to ensure greater productivity and commitment from their workers – possible or actual parents or careers for elderly/disabled persons.

A recent study of problems that employers face in such business-friendly countries like the UK. in regard to employees with dependent children showed that around nine out of ten big employers believe family friendly employment policies will become more important over the next five years.

Typical problems that unmet family obligations of working parents can create for employees in the UK



From Her Majesty's Treasury (2003): "Balancing work and family life: enhancing choice and support for parents", HMSO Licensing Division, Norwich.

If we take into account the widely obvious **ability of women to outperform men** in gaining academic qualifications suggests that we can surely forecast that they may also outperform men in the workplace if given equal possibilities to fully participate in labour market. In this regard, if women bear the main responsibility for the domestic chores and care of children, or face discrimination in the workplace – then the **performance benefits from having better-educated female employees would be lost** for employers.

Hence, there are several **avoidable costs** that are dealt with when introducing RWF measures in a company or organization:

1. Recruitment costs of new workers to replace mothers that are not coming back after maternity leave. The costs of recruiting in that case can be certainly avoided by providing mothers of young

children with options to reasonably balance work and family obligations and by encouraging fathers to share in those obligations and options.

2. Absenteeism costs of working mothers and fathers due to sudden needs of their young children or other dependable persons like illness or the need for attention/care.

3. Supervision costs of unnecessary management working hours involved with family-related absenteeism.

4. Indirect costs of lower customer satisfaction and poorer product/service quality that are significant, when working parents lose their work-morale because of conflicting work and family obligations.

² European Commission (2006): "Report on equality between women and men, 2006", Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Luxembourg (accessible through http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/2006/keaj06001_en.pdf)

³ European Commission (2006): *ibid.* p. 14.

RWF measures, when introduced in companies, **always had a positive effect** in regard to at least one indicator of organizational performance: about **97 percent** of highly family-friendly workplaces had **above average financial performance**, compared to only 59 per cent of workplaces with typical characteristics, and 55 per cent of those with no family-friendly policies.

(Gray, H. (2002): "Family-Friendly Working: What a Performance! / An Analysis of the Relationship Between the Availability of Family-Friendly Policies and Establishment Performance". Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science, London.)



By applying various RWF provisions, many companies across the EU point out these immediate and long-lasting positive outcomes:

- Skilled staff is easier to recruit and retain, and better returns are gained from training.
- Staff turnover decreases.
- Staff morale, self-confidence and, hence, productivity / customer satisfaction improves, while absenteeism decreases.
- Staff becomes more adjustable / resistant to changing market conditions.
- Company gains a long-term positive and investment-attracting reputation of social responsibility.

2. HOW CAN EMPLOYERS MAKE RWF MEASURES REALLY WORK IN COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS?

The RWF measures in any company and organization must be a **common benefit** to employers and employees and in effect provide options to raise staff performance based on satisfaction of their particular recurring family-needs, not individual psychological traits.

Employers throughout the EU can provide voluntary support for their staff that allows for effectively balancing work and family life:

1. Non-obligatory family leave:

- Non-obligatory maternity, paternity and adoption pay/leave;
- Unpaid career breaks;
- Non-obligatory emergency leave to deal with an illness of a child / dependant person or problems with the care of children / dependant persons.

2. Family-friendly work arrangements:

- Reduced working hours (part-time working, work hours adjusted to school/childcare service schedule, voluntary reduction of hours, job share);
- Changed working hours (flexi-time, compressed working week, annualized hours, staggered working hours, shift working, time off in lieu);
- Provision of domestic chore services at workplace (ironing, laundry and alike);
- Alternative work location (home / tele-working).

3. Childcare support for working parents:

- Childcare vouchers;
- Workplace nurseries;
- Other financial support with the costs of care.

4. Training and information:

- Information on statutory and extra-statutory maternity, paternity and adoption leave;
- Information on tax credits;
- Information on local childcare providers;
- Re-training for parents preparing to re-enter work.

THINGS TO AVOID WHEN PLANNING MEASURES OF RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY

The application of RWF measures in a company or organization **should not mean that:**

- RWF arrangements in a company/organisation will be open to abuse by workers.
- While introducing RWF arrangements, serious additional demands will be put on supervisory/managerial staff.
- RWF arrangements introduced in a company/organisation will disadvantage workers without families / dependant persons.
- Application of RWF provisions will mean systematic or indefinite unavailability/invisibility of needed skilled workers.
- RWF arrangements in a company/organisation will be only of interest to the female workforce.

RWF measures **need not to be applied in bulk** in a company or organization, but rather, they must be negotiated with workers and adjusted to particular needs of employers. To ensure greater effectiveness of the introduction of RWF provisions into the daily life of any company or organization:

1. Employers and workers should discuss thoroughly all apparent needs and find a mutually agreeable local solution, then plan it thoroughly and fix clear rules for use of those arrangements as to avoid abuse.
2. The involvement of social partners such as employers' associations and trade unions can be of great help in terms of clarity and appropriateness in negotiating the RWF scheme that serves the interests of both sides the best.
3. The options for working fathers taking time for the needs of their children or other dependants should be separately discussed since fathers usually are afraid to openly consider their family-related involvement with their managers.

As examples of implementing RWF provisions are numerous, we will discuss some of them in a separate chapter.

3. EXAMPLES OF RWF USE IN DIFFERENT COMPANIES THROUGHOUT EUROPE

As many companies and organizations throughout the EU are introducing and applying RWF provisions, we can name a few best practice examples that show **what actual companies are doing** in this respect. A recent Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) analysis⁴ shows that relatively few firms have a wide range of different types of family-friendly arrangements in place.

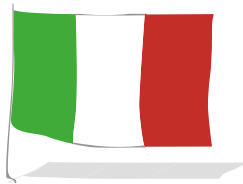
A high proportion of firms in many European countries, headed by Austria and Germany, appear to provide non-obligatory family leave benefits, such as sick child leave, extra maternity and paternity leaves. Arrangements for non-obligatory provisions are least common in countries where the legislation is strongest (the Nordic countries). They are most common in some countries where there is a medium level of support (like Denmark, Austria and Germany) and quite uncommon in countries that have less support like Italy, France, or new member states like Lithuania, Estonia and others.

Below are some particular examples from Italy, Denmark and Lithuania.

ITALY

AMA,⁵ an international instruments manufacturer company in Italy, has:

1. Commissioned Doxa, a prominent research institute, to carry out a specific **survey on the problems** workers faced in regard to working shifts that was part of a wider project on work and family life reconciliation. This project also involved trade union representatives as well as local and regional administrations.



2. Compiled a “**working hours project**” that applies to those workers who have clearly demonstrated that they have problems in reconciling work and family life, and exempted them from working during standard hours or shifts.

3. Offered **telework options** to workers who are returning to work after maternal/paternal leave in all its branch offices. Telework may be carried out in offices that are closest to their homes (there is an AMA office in every quarter). This allowed the utility company to solve the difficulty it had in obliging workers to work at home, and at the same time meeting their demands to avoid long commutes to work.

Negri Bossi,⁶ an international machinery design and manufacturing company in Italy, has:

1. Divided the leave days of its staff in quarter-hour fractions, thus allowing employees to modulate leave with an ample margin of flexibility, without losing full leave days for problems that can be solved in less time.

2. Offered one-hour entry flexibility, allowing workers to make up for the time they lost at entry at the end of the working day.

3. Offered a contribution of € 250 for each child to go to a summer camp.

Milan's Transportation Company ATM⁷ has:

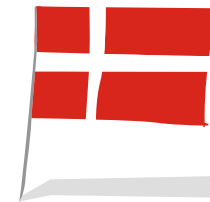
1. Created **nurseries** in its tram and bus depots where employees start and end their shifts. The nurseries were opened with the funds that the Milan city administration had set aside. There are three levels of fees depending on wages and family size, while the company covers 50% of the costs. Childcare material is provided allowing workers to save approximately € 100 for items such as nappies, towels and baby bottles. Nurseries are open from Mondays to Saturdays and close on festivities and in August, when, however, the company sustains workers by offering holiday camps for their children.

2. Established **financial help** for working mothers during maternity, which increases salaries by 30% so that workers can earn at least 60% of their usual wage

3. Established **medical assistance** for employees' children and family members. This kind of service is one of the most frequently sought.

4. Taken the decision to implement the “**ATM social department**” for its employees. This department's task is to offer social services and networking for ATM employees. The personnel at the department includes a director (social assistant), two psychologists, a food expert and an administrator. In this light, help is thus provided in the active management of different roles (worker, parent, individual, etc.) with a view of achieving constant human resources empowerment.

DENMARK



Some Danish municipalities organize:

1. **Dad's playgroup.** Dad's playgroup is an initiative, where men on parental leave can come and be together with other fathers and their children. The playgroup is only for the men with their children. In this way the men can get their identity as father and men on leave legitimately confirmed by other fathers. It started as a private initiative but is now under a public institution and has spread to different areas in Denmark.

2. **Advertising of statutory paternity leave provisions.** The largest municipality of Denmark – Copenhagen – has recently started encouraging employed new fathers to use the possibility of taking 10 weeks of paternity leave. There is no economical support attached to the encouragement.

3. **Role model.** A Head of Department in the second largest municipality – Aarhus – has paid special attention to parent's problems in order for them to leave their job at a time that will make it possible for them to collect their children at the day-care center. Therefore she often herself leaves early to collect her own children, and by doing this she shows the employees that it is acceptable to prioritise their family responsibilities while having young children.

TDC,⁸ a telephone and communication company, has:

1. Made a package called “Dad's hug” giving fathers **10 weeks of parental** leave with full salary including a baby start-kit containing a changing bag, a bib and a thermo feeding bottle in order to encourage their male employees to take parental leave.

⁸ <http://tdc.com>

⁹ <http://www.vaeksthuset.dk>

¹⁰ More on Kraft Foods International social responsibility programmes: http://www.kraft.com/contactus/template.aspx?m=contact_us&cat1=326.

2. Employed office staff that have the right to **stay at home as long as their children are sick**. They are expected to catch up with their work when they return, which is their own responsibility.

“Væksthuset”,⁹ a small private project-based company, has:

1. Organized most of the work within groups of a minimum of four **interchangeable workers**. This means that if anyone has to leave the workplace due to family responsibilities or staying home with a sick child, the others will take over most of the work during the absence. It is also an important part of the work culture in that it is not a problem for anyone to say that they are behind schedule with their work and need help from the others.

LITHUANIA



“Kraft Foods”, an international food-processing company, has established a family friendly “Kraftflex”¹⁰ programme:

1. **Company culture** conditions informing rather than asking for permission in case of emergency (child sickness, etc).

2. Depending on family needs an employee can define and agree with the manager upon **flex working hours**: agreeing on the start and end of the working day but maintaining an 8 hr working day.

3. Upon the possibility (specifics of the work to be performed) an employee can choose a **remote workplace** (home) via modern technological solutions (e-mail, telecom, etc). This is mostly applicable in cases of family member illness, etc.

4. **Financial support** to an employee upon the birth of a child equal to 12 minimum living wages (MLW) and annual one-time per year financial support to large families (3 and more children and one of the parents is a company employee) equal to 6 MLW. Annual one-time per year financial support of 12 MLW to an employee's disabled child till he/she reaches the age of 16. Additional paid holiday on Sep 1st for parents to take children to school.

5. No less than a 30 min **break for breast-feeding** mothers at intervals of no less than 3 hrs. At the request of the mother the “breast-feeding breaks” can be accumulated (shorter working day). **Additional breaks for pregnant women** and other employees who have medical recommendations regarding special work-rest balance.

6. **Sports facilities** for employees with family members paid by the company.

⁴ OECD (2001): “Firms' contribution to the reconciliation between work and family life”, Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers n° 48, OECD Publications Service, Paris

⁵ Mainly Germany based company, http://www.ama-sys.de/01_ama_english.htm

⁶ <http://www.negribossi.it>

⁷ <http://www.atm-mi.it/ATM/eng>

Examples of actual reconciliation measures applied in European companies prove that the best arrangements are diverse, but not over-loaded sets of family and work reconciliation options for working parents, that are supported by negotiated mutual interest of employers and employees and facilitated by social dialogue.

3. HOW CAN WORKERS BENEFIT FROM RWF MEASURES?

While many people throughout the EU consider paid work to be an unpleasant activity that must suffer through in order to earn money, global research data¹¹ indicate that a **majority of people at least expect to, if not already do, obtain pleasure from their jobs**. Paid work activities can provide not only enjoyable activities, but also structure for the day, social contact, a means of achieving respect, and a source of engagement, challenge, and meaning.

Even so, for working parents of both sexes and especially for mothers, recent research¹² suggests that throughout the EU more than the half of working parents claim that at least sometimes they **experience clear conflict between their family and work obligations** and around 13-14 percent of them experience it acutely.

The effects of this conflict in regard to employment and career opportunities are usually **more severe for working mothers than fathers**. The latter mostly claim that they were forced to seek other job options after a work-family conflict, while mothers complain much more about increased physical and mental stress at work, and reduced promotion options; limited work-time (part-time working and hence limited pay).

Hence we can conclude that while **RWF arrangements are not the exclusive way** to strengthen workers motivation and productivity, they are certainly a **necessary element for professional progress of working parents** and careers of dependable persons. Leading organizational psychologists have maintained for a decade already that the well-being of workers results in committed organizational citizenship, greater customer satisfaction and even greater productivity.³

Since the well being of working parents depends on a minimal level of conflict between their family and work obligations, the need to introduce voluntary (non-obligatory) RWF arrangements in European companies and organisations seems obvious. We can summarize the **best outcomes for working parents/carers** of introducing RWF to workplaces throughout the EU as:

- Greater engagement in their work assignments, better control of work-time.
- Greater personal efforts to strengthen/expand professional skills.
- Less negative transfer of stress from job to home and vice versa.
- Better interpersonal relationships with management/clients and hence greater career opportunities.
- Higher levels of job satisfaction. Better relationships with family partner/spouse as well as children and/or dependant persons.
- Better mental/physical health.
- Stronger intentions to remain with their companies/organisations.

These known long term effects of using RWF at workplace are convincing enough for any working parent to engage into negotiations with their employers on appropriate RWF schemes in their companies / organisations.

DANGERS OF FLEXIBLE AND TELEWORKING

One danger of existing RWF options in Europe must be also kept in mind: present research suggests that too great an engagement in flexi-work and tele-work (work from home) can create **additional problems**:

- Working parents can again infringe on the needs on their children or other dependants by working even longer hours at home than they do at the workplace.
- They may be much less accessible to their management and/or clients.

In both cases this creates an effect of systemic family-work conflict and unnecessary stress. These situations can again be avoided by mutual negotiations between working family members as well as employers and careful planning of particular RWF provisions to be introduced and applied in a company / organization.

4. WHY AND HOW SHOULD POLICY-MAKERS DEVELOP RWF POLICIES?

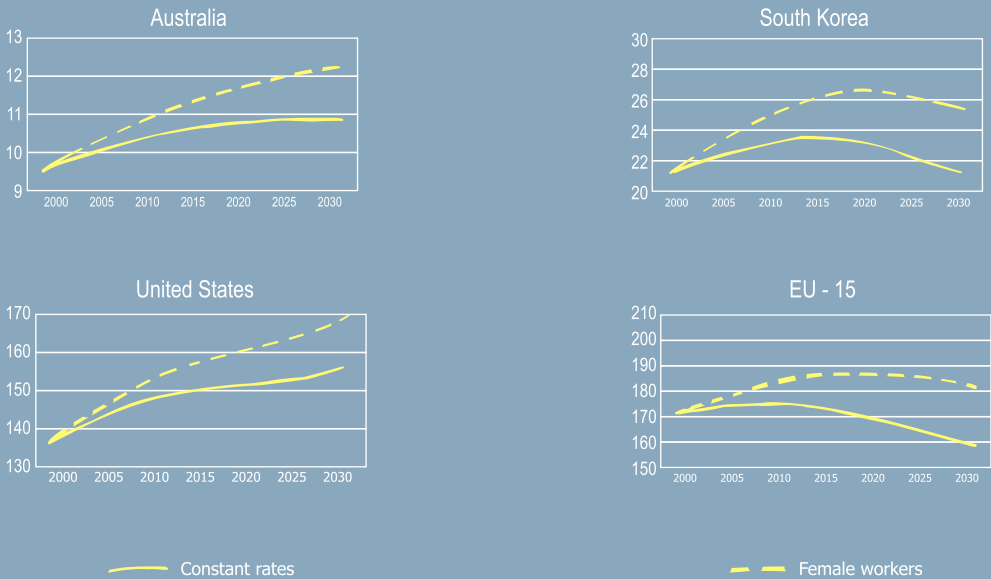
The main reason why RWF provisions and projects matter nationally for EU member states and the EU as a whole is **universally declining fertility** throughout the developed world and the **need to draft more skilled workforce**.

The natural way for such a policy challenge to be met is by **strengthening the participation of women** in labour markets and **empowering them** to effectively **balance their family and professional needs**.

This will then not only **significantly increase the EU labour force** through forthcoming decades, but also **alleviate poverty**.

Promoting female employment can alleviate future labour supply concerns

As it is shown in these OECD produced tables of the total labour force from 1980 to 2000, and projections from 2005 to 2030 (in thousands) in some leading world economies:



¹¹ Diener, E. and Seligman, M. (2004): "beyond money toward an economy of well-being" in "Psychological Science in the Public Interest" American Psychological Society, Volume 5 – Number 1, accessible at <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/pdf/pspi/>.

¹² Final report of EC funded project "Modern Men in Enlarged Europe: Family Friendly Policies".

¹³ In Diener and Seligman (2004 – cited above): Kohn and Schooler (1982) found that the nature of the work predicted worker depression over time, Staw et al. (1994) found that positive affect predicted higher pay and better supervisors' ratings at a later time, Judge (1991) found that job satisfaction predicted lower rates of absenteeism, shirking, and tardiness, Wright and Bonett (1997) found that emotional exhaustion on the job predicted work performance.

Female employment is a key to reducing the poverty risk throughout the world

As this comparative table of poverty thresholds at 50% of average income for the entire population (divided by type of gender division of labour in family) shows:



The **main tool** for achieving a sustainable increase in female employment is **development and implementation of RWF policies** that allow a broad menu of RWF provisions to be used in any particular company/organisation operating on national or international scales in the EU. Hence promoting public policies that endorse strengthening and expanding the creation and use of RWF provisions is **a clear priority** both for the EU and for national policymakers in member-states.

However the main ailment of present developments of RWF policy throughout the EU is of an occasional and **fragmentary character** and **also marked by “gender neutrality”**. This means that most RWF policy projects are either:

- Unsystematic, serving some other macro-economic policy goals and hence have no real effect.
- Deliberately ignorant about the remaining gender inequality in sharing family and work obligations, as well as in pay levels and

general employment and do not address the role of working men in reducing this inequality of their female co-workers or partners/spouses.

- Focused around employment of mothers without addressing the needs and responsibilities of working fathers and working men as partners or care-givers to be involved in creation of dual earner/dual career family model that is, as many experts maintain, the key factor in gaining a sustainable increase in female employment.

Keeping this in mind and using EU-wide research and analysis we can suggest the following **general recommendations to various groups of relevant policymakers**, namely national governments/political parties, trade unions and NGOs and active citizen groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS / POLITICAL PARTIES:

1. The EU and governments should finally engage in systematic, gender balanced and cross-cutting RWF policy formation and monitoring.
2. Governments should not only continue to promote RWF policies as a means of retaining/drafting women in the labour market, but also promote the involvement of men and to improve care arrangements for the elderly and people with disabilities.
3. Family-friendly policy actions should aim to allow people to choose from a broad range of RWF provisions, taking into account the different needs of emerging types.
4. The EU and governments should incorporate considerations of job design, working conditions and health and safety into policies that promote RWF.
5. National and international health and safety agencies and the social partners should actively monitor the working conditions of working parents/ care-givers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DESIGNING RWF-RELATED POLICIES:

1. Employment policies should recognize that well - targeted and focused RWF provisions can improve employability through skills development and professional growth, with increased autonomy, productivity, and self-management capabilities.
2. Employment policies should aim to assess and raise awareness among the social partners and business organizations about the costs and benefits of implementing RWF arrangements based on best practice dissemination at the EU-level.
3. Regular action should be taken to raise awareness among workers of the benefits and problems of balancing different types of work and family obligations, of their rights and the scope for personal initiative and professional growth.
4. Employment policies in relation to RWF should be gender proofed .

5. Training and education policies at the EU and national levels should address the development, maintenance and upgrading of the organizational, technical and self-management skills required for effective implementation of RWF.

6. Training and education policy should target the training needs of non-employed partners of workers (primarily women and mothers of young children) to avoid degrading their professional skills and status.

7. National governments should promote the development and accessibility of good quality child and elderly care services.

8. The potential to support implementation of RWF policies through fiscal instruments (as tax relief) should be explored.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EU-LEVEL AND NATIONAL TRADE UNIONS:

1. Trade unions should actively participate in the introduction of RWF arrangements; systematically promote/advertise measures to prevent gender or status discrimination and loss of protection and to promote worker-centred RWF needs.

2. Trade unions should increase efforts to promote education and training measures addressing new skills of working parents / care-givers needed for greater work and family balance efficiency.

Themes such as life-long learning and the development of personal time and interpersonal communication control capabilities are a priority.

3. Trade Unions should support studies to explore issues such as the gender-unequal sharing of responsibilities in family and work obligations, sharing in partnerships and families, gaps in professional and personal skills among work-age women and men and on the implications of RWF to labour market, and also raise awareness of workers on general and specific implications of RWF provisions to their employment, career and human capital development.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NGOs AND ACTIVE CITIZENS:

1. NGOs / citizens should focus lobbying efforts on promoting family-friendly policies on:

- adaptation of employment policies sensitive to the different types of needs of men and women;
- promoting worker-centred flexibility;
- implementation measures which improve both employability and quality of balance between work and family/care obligations;
- education and training meeting the new skills requirements posed by work and life balance goal.

2. NGOs / citizens should promote social networking of working parents and care-givers; encourage dialogue and the sharing of Information and experiences between interested parties – especially trade unions – at the local, national and EU level, aiming to achieve a better understanding of RWF and its social, economic and political impacts.

3. NGOs / citizens should gather and disseminate information on the short and long-term effects of RWF on the quality of working life, career, and family life. They should also be active in legitimizing RWF. A change in culture is needed to make “non-traditional”, non-obligatory family friendly work arrangements more socially accepted.

4. NGOs / citizens should participate in the development of user-friendly work arrangements and services strengthening work and life balance, taking into account the particular needs of working parents/care-givers.

5. NGOs / citizens should lobby policy makers to create conditions for the affordability of services necessary for RWF, such as childcare and elderly/disable care as well as publicly accessible legal, educational, professional, and counseling information sources.



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Centre for Equality Advancement (Lithuania), www.gap.lt

ESTEP - European Social, Legal and Economic Projects (Lithuania), www.estep.lt

Social Research Centre of Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania), www.vdu.lt/sociologija

IRES - Institute of Economic and Social Research (Italy), www.ires.it

CeLi – Danish Research Centre on Gender Equality (Denmark), www.celi.dk

Centre for Gender Equality (Iceland), www.jafnretti.is

