

# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

## Work-life Balance in the Public Sector



European Union  
European Social Fund  
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Evropská unie  
Evropský sociální fond  
Operační program Zaměstnanost



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## **WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

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Editor: Jana Kvasnicová

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## OVERVIEW OF AUTHORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

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Steinfeld Katrine: Equinet, Equality and Work-Life Balance for All

Urbániková Marína: Work-Life Balance at Czech Ministries: Selected Results of the Survey Conducted by the Public Defender of Rights

Maříková Hana: Challenges for the Civil Service in the Area of Work-Life Balance

Moozová Irena: Work-Life Balance of Parents and Carers

Polák Petr, Frantz Annalise: Maltese Experience with Work-Life Balance in the Civil Service

Frantz Annalise: Equality Beyond Gender Roles

Kastner Charlotte: The Gender Bias Check (gb-check) as a Review Tool

Uhereczky Agnes, Vadkerti Zoltáni: Work-Life Balance in the Public Sector: Positive Examples and Risk Factors

Bonus: Uhereczky Agnes, Vadkerti Zoltán: Guidelines to build the business case for work-life balance in public authorities

## OVERVIEW OF MATERIALS AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE

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All documents and presentations from the conference are available here:

<https://bit.ly/2KEjy92>

## FOREWORD

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Dear readers,

You are holding proceedings of an international conference where we debated work-life balance in the civil service.

People are very diverse, but most have jobs and families. Relationships with our loved ones are what provides us with long-term stability and gives our lives meaning.

Naturally, there are people who found their true calling in their families, enjoy parenting, are financially secure and, for many years, do not even think about returning to their careers. Other people may find that having an interesting job with the potential for professional growth and discovering new possibilities is the most important thing in their life. Such people are often so focused on their careers that they might forget about the world around them.

However, I dare say that the vast majority of people would like to combine having a happy family with an interesting job that supports them. And I do not mean just having children and being a parent. Even as adults, we are someone's children and we wish to give back to our parents at least part of the time and love they gave us when we were young.

I truly believe that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people should not be forced to choose one or the other.

I think that society suffers when people are forced, because of children or a serious illness in their family, to give up hope for a meaningful job or, on the other hand, work so hard that they worry about neglecting their families.

That is why this issue has been one of my priorities in the area of equal treatment (the Public Defender of Rights has dealt with this topic since 2009) ever since my appointment to the office in 2014.

In 2017 and 2018, during our eighteen-month project titled "Tailored Service", I mainly focused on fulfilment of the civil service's duty to provide conditions for work-life balance. The efforts follow up naturally on the conference held in October 2014.

The civil service has been required to pay special attention to work-life balance since 2015, and the Ministry of the Interior submits annual reports on the status of this field to the Government. I conducted my own survey

focused on the individual ministries as central governmental authorities, and I strived to use its results to supplement the relevant information, and get more insight and possibilities to collect and analyse data on work-life balance. The conference enriched our findings with the experience and recommendations from abroad, and informed us about the expectations of the European institutions as regards measures the Member States should introduce in the future. That is why I believe that this anthology will also serve as a source of information and inspiration for the civil service in general.

The contributions by Katrine Steinfeld, Marína Urbániková, Hana Maříková and Irena Moozová deal with the relationship between measures leading to optimum reconciliation of work and private life and equal treatment; selected results of the survey conducted at Czech ministries; challenges for further development of work-life balance in the civil service; and a summary of activities of the European Commission and draft new legislation, respectively. The general part is followed by a summary of concrete experience with measures and projects supporting gender equality (not only) in the civil service in Malta (Petr Polák and Annalise Frantz) and in Germany (Charlotte Kastner). The final contributions contain examples of both good and bad practices presented by Agnes Uherezky and Zoltán Vadkerti, who help employers to put the work-life balance measures into practice. The bonus contribution will then introduce specific recommendations as to how to proceed in the area of civil service.

I hope the following text will inspire you.

Anna Šabatová



# I.

## Equinet, Equality and Work-Life Balance for all

KATRINE STEINFELD

Adequate **work-life balance is a question of equal treatment** both in absolute terms as an important gender equality concern, as well as a question of equal treatment in equal access to such arrangements for all. Article 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights specifies that “to reconcile family and professional life, everyone shall have the right to protection from dismissal for a reason connected with maternity and the right to paid maternity leave and to parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child.” Protection from discrimination on such grounds is reiterated in the definition of discrimination, Article 2(2)(c) as “any less favourable treatment of a woman related to pregnancy or maternity”. The Gender (Recast) Directive 2006/54/EC and Article 4(1)(a) in the Gender Goods and Services Directive 2004/113/EC also specifies protection of pregnancy and maternity rights in and outside of the workplace.

Work-life balance measures are meant to ensure equality between the genders in access to family and /or private life; employment; promotion; equal pay; and decision-making. This includes the right of all persons with care responsibilities to combine their personal and professional lives, return to paid employment should they so wish, and be protected from discrimination. Equality bodies recognize that persons may have complex identities and may not be impacted the same way, leading to **intersectional discrimination** in some cases. For instance in the field of work-life balance, LGBTI parents may in some cases experience limitations in their access to statutory leave arrangements.<sup>1</sup> Equality bodies normally handle work-life balance issues under their gender equality mandates or on the grounds of family status.

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<sup>1</sup> EQUINET. *Equality Bodies Promoting a Better Work-Life Balance for All*. [online]. Brusel: Equinet, 2013. 20 s. [citováno 2018-01-19]. Dostupné z: [http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/wlb\\_for\\_website.pdf](http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/wlb_for_website.pdf)

Beyond the reactive approach where the emphasis is on the duty to abstain from discrimination, **positive action measures** are also provided for in the Charter of Fundamental Rights (article 23), in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (article 157(4)), and in Article 3 of the Gender Recast Directive. Positive measures are explained in the Directive's preamble: "In accordance with Article 141(4) of the Treaty, with a view to ensuring full equality in practice between men and women in working life, the principle of equal treatment does not prevent Member States from maintaining or adopting measures providing for specific advantages in order to make it easier for the under-represented sex to pursue a vocational activity or to prevent or compensate for disadvantages in professional careers. Given the current situation and bearing in mind Declaration No 28 to the Amsterdam Treaty, Member States should, in the first instance, aim at improving the situation of women in working life." The possibility of going beyond current statutory requirements and providing more extensive work-life balance measures is therefore foreseen in EU legislation. Proactive work-life balance measures are encouraged by equality bodies as a way to create more equal work-places and work-place cultures, as well as being a way to compensate for the unequal distribution of care responsibilities between women and men.<sup>2</sup>

## CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY EQUALITY BODIES

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The prevalence of **pregnancy and maternity discrimination** is noted among many equality bodies, and several Equinet members have conducted large scale research projects to uncover and raise awareness of the problem at national levels. In addition, equality bodies also note the prevalence of discrimination against both women and men in seeking to **access their statutory leave**, or when they try to take up **flexible working arrangements**.

Equality bodies repeatedly stress the damaging effect of **gender stereotypes**. Stereotypes are identified as underlying causes of gender segregation on the labor market, both in terms of horizontal segregation in the types of employment taken up by women and men respectively, as well as in the vertical segregation observed in more men occupying senior positions than women.

Equality bodies also stress the importance of **transparent procedures** for ensuring equality. This applies to equal pay,<sup>3</sup> but also to procedures for

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> EQUINET. How to Build a Case on Equal Pay. [online]. Brusel: Equinet, 2016. 41 s. [citováno 2018-01-19]. Dostupné z: [http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/handbook\\_on\\_equal\\_pay\\_-\\_electronic\\_version-2.pdf](http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/handbook_on_equal_pay_-_electronic_version-2.pdf)

hiring personnel and for providing promotions. Transparency should in the latter cases be combined with gender neutral procedures which take into consideration the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice, including appropriate considerations of what kind of criteria should be applied when establishing the value of any given work performed. When evaluating work, the jurisprudence states that it is the work performed that is of essence, rather than the person of the job holder, and that it is the nature of the work, the effort needed to perform it, the training/qualifications required, and the working conditions under which the work has to be performed.

## **LESSONS LEARNED FROM EQUALITY BODIES**

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In light of the complex interplay between discrimination and different gender roles in care, equality bodies highlight the need to combine **reactive approaches** where discrimination is handled once it has occurred, and a **preventive approach** where conditions are set up in advance to avoid the possibility of discrimination taking place. Equality bodies recognize that complaints received by victims of discrimination in the field of work-life balance can be drivers for action. And some equality bodies are already able to take a more proactive approach, particularly within their gender equality mandate. There is a general emphasis on the fact that **positive action measures** are provided for under EU Equal Treatment legislation.

Additionally, the continuous need to combat **gender stereotypes** as a precondition for ensuring substantive equality is also emphasized. Equality bodies underline the need to change **workplace cultures**, including opening up for greater flexibility and encouraging men to take up work-life balance arrangements. There is also a need to tackle **inequality in care responsibilities** more broadly, as women still undertake the bulk of domestic and care work in the EU, as evidenced by the European Institute for Gender Equality's most recent Gender Equality Index. An important part of ensuring equality in care provision is to secure affordable and quality **care infrastructure**.

Equality bodies consider work-life balance measures to be important tools in ensuring gender equality in practice, and are therefore active and involved in this field. Equinet as their network supports their efforts, as well as contributing the experience and expertise of the membership to the European Commission's new initiative on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?&catId=1311&langId=en>



# Work-Life Balance at Czech Ministries: Selected Results of the Survey Conducted by the Public Defender of Rights

MARÍNA URBÁNIKOVÁ

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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Reconciliation of work, family and private life (i.e. maintaining a work-life balance) is a task that almost all of us have had to undertake at some point. This topic is gaining more and more attention, and rightfully so: in both private and public sectors, various measures and programmes are being developed with the objective to save people from the difficult choice between taking care of family and spending time at work. The goal is for people to be able to combine these two important parts of their lives as needed and preferred. It is a topic important not only on an individual (private) level, but also for employers, as this area is closely related to the employee satisfaction and therefore their loyalty, performance and efficiency.

We are very glad to see that the public administration is not ignoring this issue. The Civil Service Act,<sup>5</sup> effective since January 2015, lays down the duty for the civil service to create conditions for work-life balance of civil servants. The most important measures<sup>6</sup> are, for example, flexible working hours, shorter working time, the possibility to work from another place (telework), establishing pre-school facilities and ensuring care for children in a children's group (as a form of daycare facility).

How are these measures being put in practice two years later? This question was tackled in the **survey conducted by the Public Defender of Rights**

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<sup>5</sup> Act No. 234/2014 Coll., on the civil service, as amended.

<sup>6</sup> Conditions for implementation of the individual measures are further specified by Service Regulation of the Deputy Minister of the Interior for the Civil Service No. 12/2015, on the conditions for promoting work-life balance and conditions for the performance of civil service from another place.

as part of the Tailored Service project,<sup>7</sup> its **goals** were to evaluate the status quo in work-life balance in the civil service at selected ministries (as institutions of the central government), identify possible room for improvement, describe examples of good practice, and prepare recommendations for further development in co-operation with the survey participants. Each year, the Ministry of the Interior publishes a report on promoting work-life balance in the civil service,<sup>8</sup> which summarises the statistical data on the use of individual measures and is a valuable source of information to get a basic overview of the situation. The survey conducted by the Public Defender of Rights supplements and broadens the Ministry's report, as it focused on the perspective of those whose task it is to promote work-life balance measures at the ministries, and in particular the perspective of the civil servants themselves. This contribution focuses on the latter part and summarises selected results of the survey of work-life balance conducted among ministry employees.

The main concept of the survey, i.e. **work-life balance**, or in other words, **reconciliation of work, family and private life**, can be defined as a state where the proportion of work and out-of-work life corresponds to the preferences, needs and intentions of individuals. In other words, it means having a certain degree of control over when, where and how the employee works (i.e. the employer does not make all decisions on the working time and the place of work).

The survey was based on a **combination of quantitative and qualitative methods**, where the collection and analysis of the data were performed for the Office of the Public Defender of Rights by ppm factum research, s.r.o., a polling agency. The survey was conducted from February to September 2017 in four phases:

1. An analysis of documents concerning gender equality and especially work-life balance of civil servants at the relevant ministries.
2. Focus groups with departmental gender focal points focused on obtaining information on their roles and activities at the individual ministries.
3. Online questionnaire survey among civil servants focused on their knowledge of and experience with various work-life balance measures. The questionnaire was available in electronic form, which enabled simple and fast completion and anonymous submission.

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<sup>7</sup> The "Tailored Service" project (CZ.03.1.51/0.0/0.0/15\_027/0005638) is co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) through the Operational Programme Employment.

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.mvcr.cz/sluzba/clanek/vyrocnizprava-ke-sladeni-osobniho-a-rodinneho-zivota-s-vykonem-statni-sluzby-za-rok-2016.aspx> and <http://www.mvcr.cz/sluzba/clanek/vyrocnizprava-o-vytvareni-podminek-pro-sladeni-rodinneho-a-osobniho-zivota-s-vykonem-statni-sluzby-sluzebnimi-urady-v-roce-2015.aspx>

4. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the State secretaries (heads of the civil service) at the relevant ministries, focusing on evaluation of status quo in the area of work-life balance and its potential further development at the particular ministries.

Eleven ministries (Table 1) participated in at least one of the phases; only the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the of the Ministry of Health did not participate at all. As already mentioned above, this contribution focuses on the findings of the third phase of the survey – the questionnaire survey for civil service employees, filled in by the employees of nine ministries.

**Table 1:** List of ministries participating in the survey

Ministry of Transport	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Ministry of Finance	Ministry of the Interior
Ministry for Regional Development (excluding employee survey)	Ministry of Justice
Ministry of Culture	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Defence	Ministry of the Environment
Ministry of Industry and Trade (excluding employee survey)	

## **2. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY AMONG EMPLOYEES OF THE SELECTED MINISTRIES.**

### **2.1 Characteristics of the respondents**

The questionnaire survey among civil servants conducted in July and August 2017 was a key part of the survey conducted by the Public Defender of Rights. Before summarising its main findings, we shall describe the main characteristics of the sample. The total of 3,149 respondents from nine ministries took part in the survey, and the response rate reached almost 40% (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Respondent group composition

	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Approx. response rate*</b>
Ministry of Justice	172	5.5	50.9
Ministry of the Environment	153	4.9	32.5
Ministry of Defence	151	4.8	11.6
Ministry of Culture	93	3.0	44.9
Ministry of Transport	234	7.4	68.6
Ministry of Agriculture	338	10.7	50.2
Ministry of the Interior	941	29.9	40.9
Ministry of Finance	730	23.2	50.1
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	337	10.7	39.6
Total	3149	100.0	39.7

\*) Response rate means the ratio of the number of submitted survey questionnaires to the total number of employees who received the questionnaire (in %).

Regarding the basic sociodemographic characteristics (Table 3), the share of women was significantly higher (65%) and most people were between 30 and 44 years of age (44%) and with a university degree (84%). The sample contained rank-and-file employees (84%) as well as heads of sections (12%) and head of departments (4%). Regarding the current life circumstances of the respondents, we can also conclude that a significant part of the employees are in need of work-life balance measures: almost a quarter of the respondents have children under 3 years of age, and about a fifth of them share household with a person with disabilities or a long-term sick person requiring regular assistance and care.

**Table 3:** Basic sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

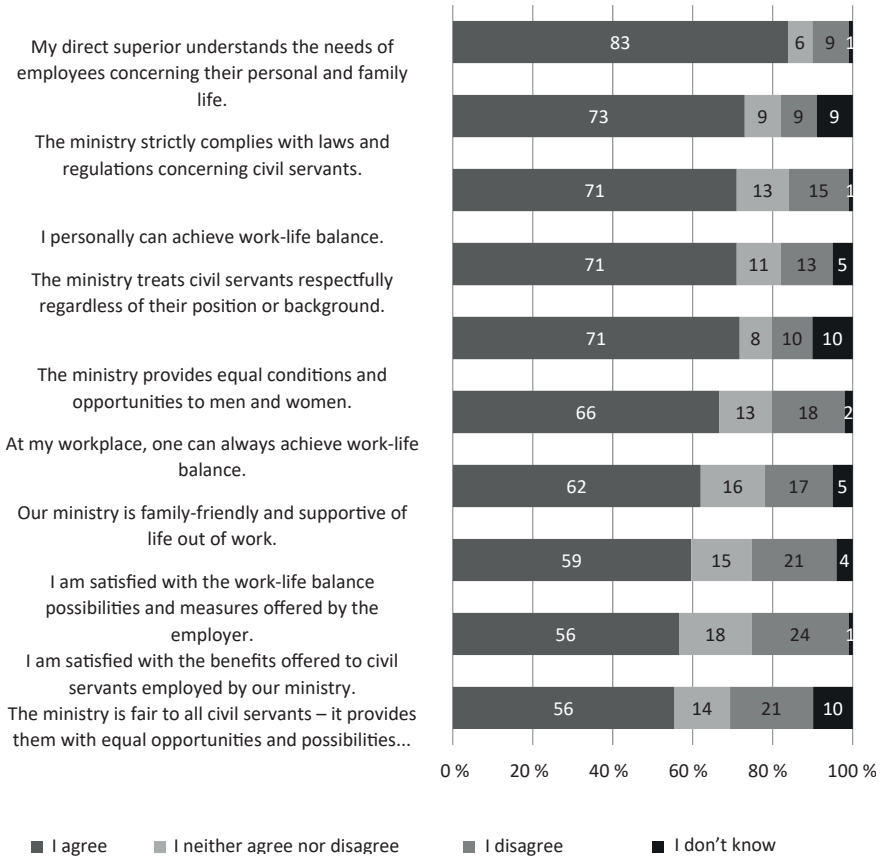
	Number	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Men	1106	35.1
Women	2043	64.9
<b>Age</b>		
Under 29 years	569	18.1
30-44 years	1373	43.6
45-59 years	891	28.3
60 years and older	316	10.0
<b>Education</b>		
Below university degree	494	15.7
University degree	2655	84.3
<b>Title</b>		
Rank-and-file employee	2651	84.2
Section/unit head	387	12.3
Department head and higher	111	3.5
<b>Family situation</b>		
There is a child under 3 years of age in the household	253	23.0
There is a child aged 3 to 6 years in the household	384	34.8
There is a child aged 7 to 15 years in the household	570	51.7
There is a person with a disability, a long-term sick person or a person requiring constant assistance and care in the household	230	20.9
The employee takes regular care of a person with a disability or a long-term sick person who is not living in the employee's household.	346	11.0
Employee is on maternal or parental leave	76	2.4
<b>Total</b>	3149	100.0



## **2.2 Satisfaction of civil service employees with equality and work-life balance**

In general, we can conclude that the employees tend to have a more or less positive approach to work-life balance, and are satisfied rather than not. As Chart 1 shows, the respondents appreciate that their direct superior understands the employees' needs regarding their personal lives, but also the level of compliance with the law and regulations regarding civil servants. Moreover, almost three quarters of them said that they managed to achieve work-life balance. On the other hand, they are the least satisfied with the benefits offered and provided (only 56% of respondents are satisfied with them) and in the area of equality – only 56% agreed with the statement that “The ministry is fair to all civil servants – it provides them with equal opportunities and possibilities for personal development.”

**Chart 1: Attitudes of employees towards work-life balance at the ministries**

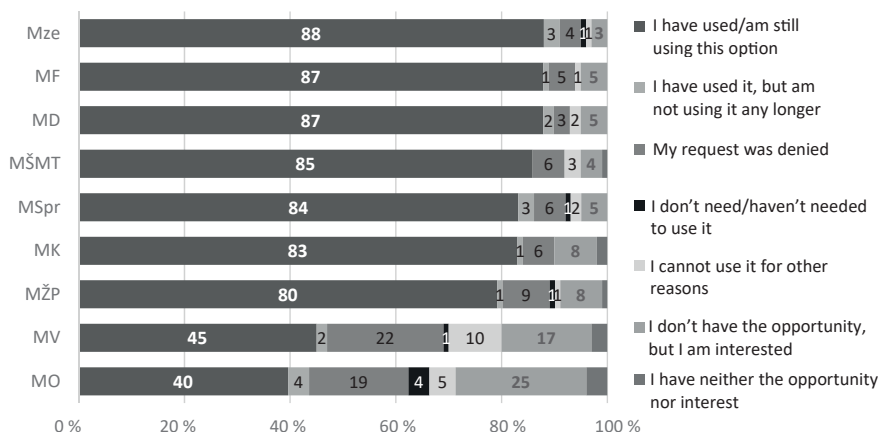


It is interesting that the answers were similar for men and women, except for two statements regarding equality and equal conditions. A total of 60% of men agreed with the statement “The ministry provides equal opportunities to all employees”, compared to 54% of women. Even bigger difference can be seen regarding the statement that “The ministry provides equal conditions and opportunities to men and women.” A total of 81% of men agree with the statement, compared to only 66% of women. It would therefore seem that mostly people who are not affected by violation of equality and equal conditions are convinced about them.

## 2.3 Use of and interest in flexible working hours

The most common measure implemented for the purpose of work-life balance are flexible working hours. Their utilisation has become a standard at most of the ministries. Out of all the ministries participating in the survey, only the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior use fixed working hours (flexible working hours are granted on the basis of an individual application). As is clear from Chart 2, this fact is also reflected in the lower number of employees using flexible working hours. At the same time, it means that the employees are much more interested in this measure. Furthermore, we can conclude that the employees use flexible working hours, more or less, to the same degree, regardless of their position or gender.

**Chart 2:** Use of and interest in flexible working hours

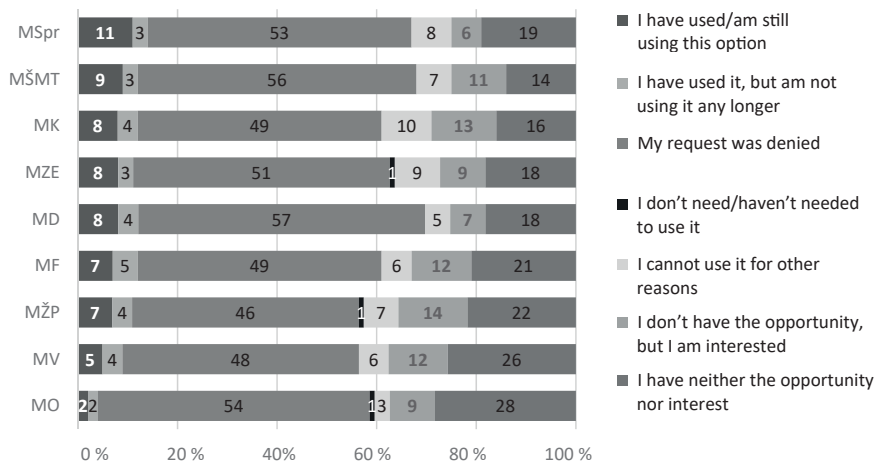


## 2.4 Use of and interest in reduced working hours

Significantly less used measure, compared to flexible working hours, are reduced working hours. At the participating ministries, reduced hours are only being used by about 7 or 8 percent of respondents, and about 10% are interested in the measure (Chart 3). Shorter working hours are more often used by parents of small children (even the ones who do not have the option under the law, i.e. parents not taking care of a child attending lower primary school or, in case of single parents, a child under 15 years of age, or

someone dependent on the help of another person) and, as expected, women (who use this measure three times more than men). On the other hand, senior employees are significantly less interested in shorter working hours. Even though shorter working hours are an effective measure, they might have a negative impact on the further career of women and their security in retirement, as they can delay or limit further career options.

**Chart 3: Use of and interest in reduced working hours**



## 2.5 Use of and interest in telework

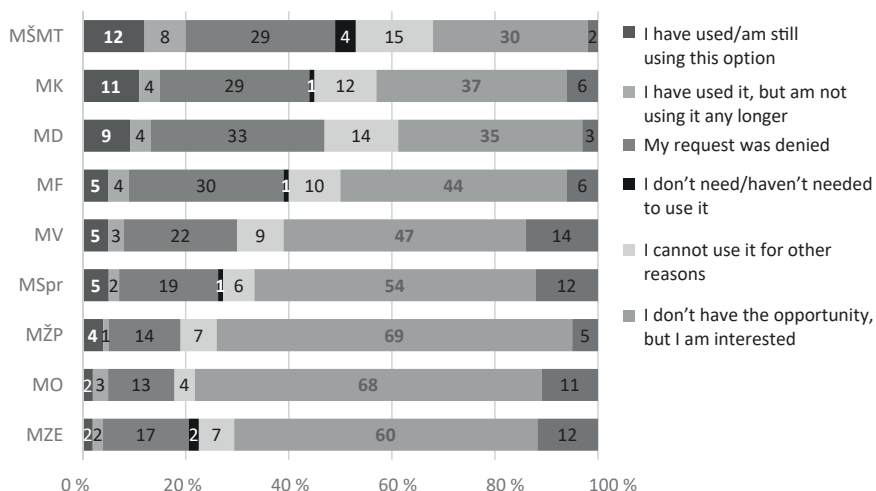
Even less used work-life balance measure is working out of office (commonly designated as “telework”). Approximately 25 employees per ministry (5 men and 15 women, on average) use the possibility of telework. It is clear from Chart 4 and from the data in the Annual Report on Promoting Work-Life Balance in Civil Service in 2016<sup>9</sup>, drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior, that the use of this measure differs greatly at the individual ministries: it is most often used at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, and the least often at the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.mvcr.cz/sluzba/clanek/vyrocnizprava-ke-sladeni-osobniho-a-rodinneho-zivota-s-vykonem-statni-sluzby-za-rok-2016.aspx>.

It is again true here that the less possible it is for the civil servants to use a certain measure, the more interested they are in it. Up to one half of the respondents would like to work from outside their office. Employees with children are more interested in this measure.

Moreover, the employees identified telework, or rather its unavailability, as one of the biggest issues in the area of work-life balance. In the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire, where respondents could provide their comments and suggestions, many of them highlighted the impossibility of working for the ministry from elsewhere, and unclear rules for approving telework.

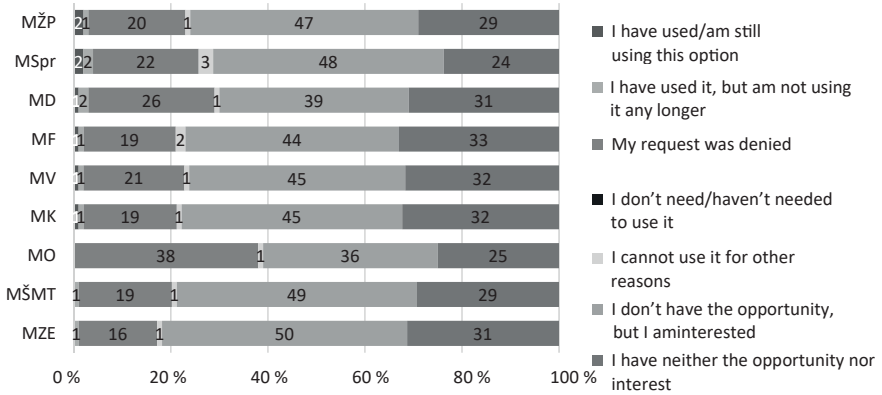
**Chart 4:** Use of and interest in telework



## 2.6 Use of and interest in long-term unpaid leave

Apart from telework, the respondents are, surprisingly, very interested in taking a long-term unpaid leave (Chart 5). Only a fraction of the respondents have used this measure, even though almost half of them would be interested in it. Again, this is more true of women (49%) than of men (39%)

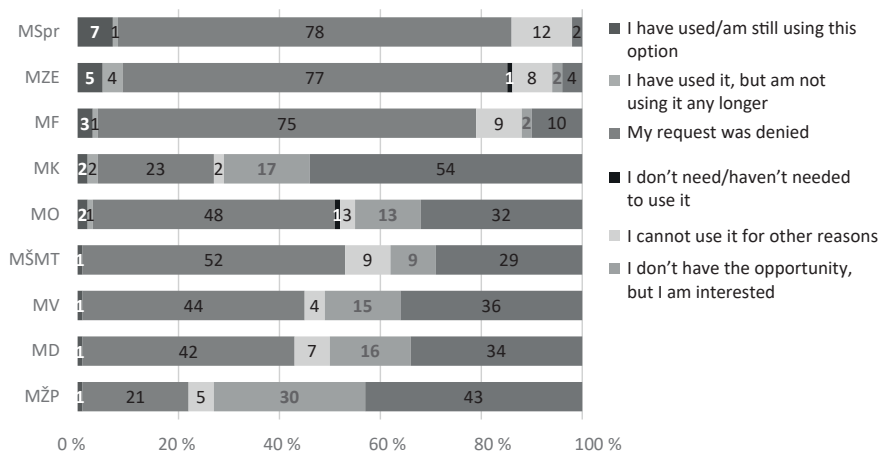
**Chart 5: Possibility of and interest in a long-term unpaid leave**



## 2.7 Use of and interest in utilising a children’s group (daycare)/ kindergarten and children’s play area

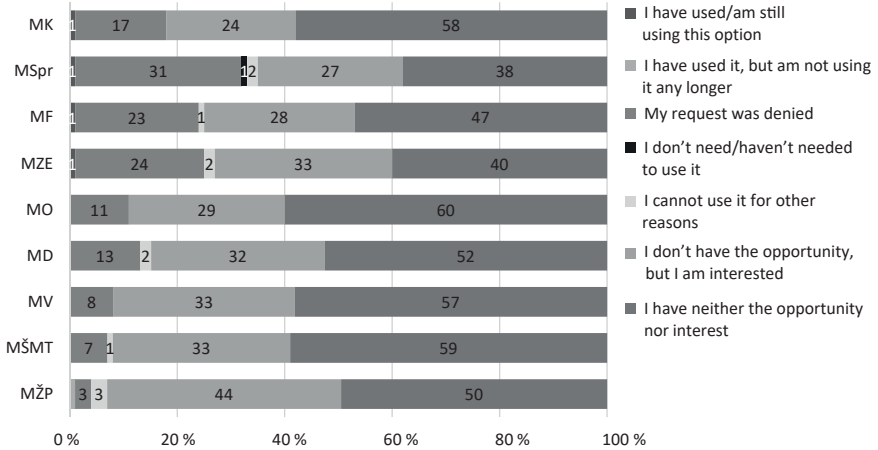
Another group of work-life balance measures is connected to child care. In this respect, it is commendable that most of the ministries have already established a children’s group (daycare) or a kindergarten, or use a children’s group (daycare) established at another ministry on the basis of a contract, or have entered into a kindergarten use contract with a city ward. Nevertheless, Chart 6 shows that the demand for establishing a children’s group (daycare facility) or kindergarten is still unsatisfied among the civil servants. However, it is necessary to note that the questionnaire survey was conducted in July and August 2017, and does not reflect the capacities at the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports newly established at the beginning of September 2017. It is currently planned to open a children’s group (daycare facility) at the Ministry of the Environment as well.

**Chart 6:** Use of and interest in utilising a children’s group (daycare facility)



Establishment of areas dedicated for short-term childcare at the office might also make it easier to reconcile the civil service with childcare. About a third of the respondents are interested in a children’s play area (Chart 7). Again, women are more interested in this option than men, and so are parents with children of 6 years or under, as expected.

**Chart 7: Use of and interest in areas dedicated for short-term childcare at the office**



### 3. SUMMARY

The results of the questionnaire survey among civil servants at selected ministries can be summarised in the following way:

- The civil servants expressed a decent level of satisfaction with the ministries' approach to promoting equality and work-life balance. In particular, they appreciate that their direct supervisor understands their needs concerning their personal and family life. On the other hand, the lowest level of satisfaction was registered in the area of benefits.
- There are **certain "standard" measures applied in the area of work-life balance at the ministries**; these measures enable to combine work and out-of-work duties of the employees more easily. However, there are **persisting differences** across the individual ministries (e.g. general introduction of flexible working hours or the possibility of telework), although the same legal framework regulating this area in the civil service should apply to all of the ministries.
- The ministries **often use only some of the flexible forms of work that are available**. Only **flexible scheduling of working time** is available everywhere; in contrast, **reduced working hours** or **telework** are only available to a few percent of civil servants, even though many more would be interested. A total of 10 percent of the respondents expressed interest in reduced



working hours and nearly 50 percent were interested in telework. At the same time, a great many respondents noted the unavailability of telework at their ministry and the ambiguous rules regarding its approval.

- Regarding the measures connected with childcare, we can conclude that the vast majority of ministries offer **places in children's groups (daycare) and kindergartens** for the children of civil servants, and the demand for this measure has almost been satisfied. On the other hand, there is still room for improvement in designating spaces for short-term childcare at the office (**children's play areas**): this option is used only by a fraction of the respondents, even though a third of them are interested.

### III.

## Challenges for the Civil Service in the Area of Work-life Balance

HANA MAŘÍKOVÁ

The issues related to work-life balance have been a subject of debate in the Czech Republic for decades. As evidenced by experience not only from the Czech Republic<sup>10</sup> but also from other European countries,<sup>11</sup> satisfaction in personal and professional life significantly affects the employees' overall life satisfaction.

Work-life balance represents the optimum possibilities for combining work with other, non-working areas of life, such as family, friends, free time, leisure activities, etc. At the same time, it is important to see how the individuals perceive the "balance" between the demands of paid work and private responsibilities.

The demands on combining work and private life, along with the actual possibilities of this combination, change over the course of an individual's life as a result of changes in needs, values, individual wishes and preferences. Although the degree of "harmony" or "conflict" between work and personal life manifests itself directly in everyday life, and is also evaluated at this level (and is "subjective" in this sense), it is significantly influenced by the cultural and structural influences, in particular measures of family policy, care policies and employment policies. In the field of work-life balance, employers can play an irreplaceable role and can be considered key actors in solving the issue of work-life balance. They are both the primary beneficiaries and the implementers of the State's policy in this area. It depends especially on the extent to which they allow their employees to achieve work-life balance, which is related to their ability to respect the responsibilities, commitments and needs of the employees outside work,

<sup>10</sup> Sobotková, I. – Reiterová, E. – Hurníková, K. 2011. Rozdíly mezi otci a matkami v pohledu na fungování rodiny, v životní spokojenosti a rovnováze mezi prací a rodinou (Different Views of Mothers and Fathers Regarding the Family, Life Satisfaction and Work-life Balance). *Československá psychologie*, 2011, Vol. 50, Iss. 2, pp. 139-151.

<sup>11</sup> Hobson, B. – Fahlén, S. – Takács, J., 2011: Agency and Capabilities to Achieve a Work-Life Balance: A Comparison of Sweden and Hungary. *Social Politics* 18, no. 2, pp. 168-198.

and the ability to balance the often conflicting demands and possibilities of both sides.

## WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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The issue of work-life balance, or rather the imbalance between work and private (most often family) responsibilities, ranks among “emerging” social risks of the late modern society.<sup>12</sup> These risks arise, in particular, as a result of changes in the labour market, the demographic behaviour of the population, patterns of family cohabitation, as well as the lack of (or insufficiency) of funds to cover the functioning of welfare state.

However, there is also a significant link with the gender imbalance of contemporary society. As early as in the 1980s, Ulrich Beck<sup>13</sup> pointed out the problem of the conflict between the functioning of the labour market and the private and family life, where the demands of these two areas clash in everyday life. Oftentimes, there persists the modern period’s concept where one of the partners/parents – the woman – will take care of the household free of charge, remaining economically dependent on the male partner as the breadwinner (if not throughout her whole adult life, then at least for its part); this, by its very nature, makes her vulnerable, dependent and therefore less powerful. In this arrangement, the man is the economically independent individual who meets the role model of an “ideal employee”,<sup>14</sup> i.e. a worker who is flexible (in terms of place and time), efficient and loyal to his employer.

The areas of work and family are therefore based on different values and principles. While the area of work mainly favours competition, rivalry, performance, the area of family mostly requires solidarity, co-operation, respect for the other, and subordination of one’s interests to the needs of the ones being cared for. The current gender imbalance in our society disadvantages women more than men, at least economically<sup>15</sup> (cf. Dudová, Hašková

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<sup>12</sup> New social risks pose social problems which our society, or the State, is not (yet) able to solve as it lacks effective mechanisms and solution tools (cf. Keller, J. 2011. *Nová sociální rizika a proč se jim nevyhneme* (Unavoidable Emerging Social Risks). Prague: SLON). To address these risks, it is necessary to modify both existing tools and create new ones.

<sup>13</sup> Beck, U. 2004 (1986). *Riziková společnost* (Risk Society). Praha: SLON.

<sup>14</sup> Williams, J. 1999. *Unbending Gender: Market Work and Family in the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Dudová, R., H. Hašková, H. Maříková. 2010. “Na čí “účet” se v naší společnosti odehrává reprodukce? (Who ‘Pays’ for Reproduction in Czechia?)” Pp. 400-418 in H. Maříková, T. Kostealecký, T. Lebeda, M. Škodová (eds.). *Jaká je naše společnost? (What is Our Society Like?)* Praha: SLON.

a Maříková 2010); however, it is necessary to add that men are not always the ones who clearly benefit from this arrangement. Indeed, men generally have to fully comply with the employer's demands because their priority is to provide for the family. "The culture of men is therefore both oppressing and oppressed."<sup>16</sup>

Although relationship issues regarding work-life balance are commonly perceived as private failures, they are in fact the result of structural incongruity. Therefore, tensions or crises arising from the need to combine work and private commitments and responsibilities cannot be resolved only from the inside, as a personal problem of each couple, but some external assistance is necessary: e.g. by public support for flexible working hours and other work-life balance measures, or in the form of adequate insurance as well as provision for day care for children and long-term care for other people directly dependent on the care of others. An important role in this process is played by the State as the policy-maker and guarantor of its implementation, as well as employers' organisations as key actors and implementers of the measures to help combine work with the private lives of employees.

## **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO PAY ATTENTION TO WORK-LIFE BALANCE?**

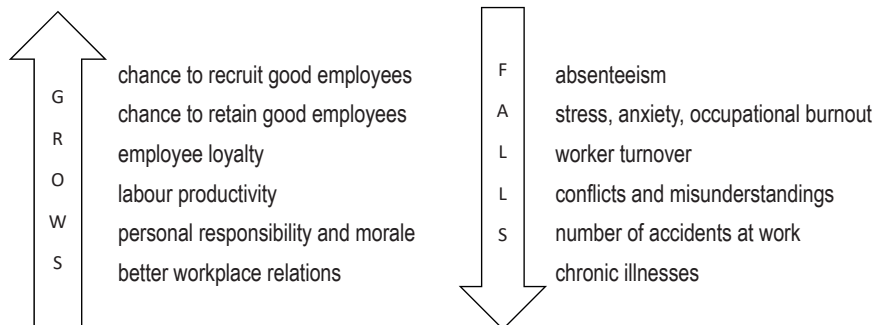
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Foreign and domestic research confirms the link between the "success" of the work-life balance and the (dis)satisfaction of the employees with life in general, on the one hand, and the benefits (or "loss") for employers, on the other. At the same time, however, it must be acknowledged that various work-life balance measures can have both positive and negative consequences for both employees and employers. It depends on the extent to which these measures meet the expectations and needs of both sides of the employment relationship, or rather on how they are mutually balanced.

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<sup>16</sup> Beck, U., E. Beck-Gernsheim. 1995. *The Normal Chaos of Love*. Cambridge: Polity Press (p. 152).

## Advantages of introducing flexible forms of work for the employer<sup>17</sup>



## Risks of introducing flexible forms of work for the employer

1. Introduction of flexible working arrangements (part time, flexible working hours, shared position) can lead to:
  - a. worsened communication between the company and the employees;
  - b. difficult co-ordination of team work;
  - c. decrease in direct knowledge sharing;
  - d. increased costs;
  - e. increase in the number of employees.
2. Introduction of flexible work location (e.g. telework) may lead to:
  - a. decrease in work discipline;
  - b. reduced possibility of continuous evaluation and checks;
  - c. decrease in the quality of work;
  - d. overall decrease in productivity;
  - e. possible misuse of internal materials via external access to the Intranet.
3. The impossibility to offer alternative arrangements or otherwise accommodate the needs of all employees on all positions leads to feelings of being discriminated.

<sup>17</sup> The chart originally appeared in *Diverzita v praxi: Metodika řízení diverzity a sladování pracovního a soukromého života na pracovišti (Diversity in Practice: a Methodology for Managing Diversity and Work-life Balance at a Workplace)* available at the MoLSA website at [http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/23609/Metodika\\_diverzita\\_v\\_praxi.pdf](http://www.mpsv.cz/files/clanky/23609/Metodika_diverzita_v_praxi.pdf) or IS AS CR at [http://diverzita.soc.cas.cz/sites/diverzita.soc.cas.cz/files/metodika\\_diverzita\\_v\\_praxi\\_0.pdf](http://diverzita.soc.cas.cz/sites/diverzita.soc.cas.cz/files/metodika_diverzita_v_praxi_0.pdf)

## **Advantages of flexible forms of work for the employees**

- a. staying in touch with the workplace/job;
- b. maintaining professional qualifications and contacts;
- c. possibility to learn something new;
- d. financial independence;
- e. solution to unavailability of childcare facilities, carers for adults, retirement homes etc.;
- f. stress reduction;

## **Risks of flexible forms of work for the employees**

- a. decrease in the status of the position;
- b. limited access to skills improvement;
- c. lower potential for further professional growth;
- d. limited access to employee benefits;
- e. higher risk of losing the job;
- f. same amount of work for a lower salary and unavailable benefits;
- g. unqualified work, professionally and financially inferior to the original position;
- h. difficult returning to a full-time work.

The following factors contribute the most to the conflict of roles in the area of work-life balance (i.e., the conflict between the role of a working person and a person with out-of-work responsibilities): long working hours; overtime work; business trips; shifts; but also ambiguous requirements from the management or insufficient control over the schedule of working time and family-unfriendly organisational culture. However, some circumstances in the families and private lives of the individuals may also contribute to the conflict between these roles, where family or personal problems can also significantly affect (un)happiness in life and work. Subsequently, this can be reflected in increased employee turnover, sickness and absences of the employees etc.<sup>18</sup> That is why it is important that the management care about their employees and communicate with them not only about the needs and conditions considering their work lives, but also about the needs and conditions of their lives outside work.

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Bruck et al. 2002 cit. in Gillernová et al. 2011, p. 208.

## CIVIL SERVICE AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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Although the area of civil service is covered by a single legislative framework for work-life balance (provided by the Labour Code together with the Civil Service Act and Regulation of the Government No. 135/2015 Coll.), research conducted in the Czech Republic in 2017 has revealed what the work-life balance “standards” and “exceptions” are at most of the ministries.

The “standard” means the availability of flexible working hours and child-care facilities (most often from 3 years of age). Other work-life balance measures do not seem to be used as often, and, most importantly, there are sometimes (often significant) differences in their use between the ministries. However, research has shown a relatively strong interest in some measures and other flexible forms of work (specifically telework, and sometimes also job sharing). However, it also confirmed that certain measures are being used mostly by women and that women are more interested in them (especially part-time work). On the other hand, few measures are being introduced (and perhaps internally supported) that are targeted at men (namely the uptake of parental leave by fathers, but also using modifications of their work that are still considered “to be meant for” mothers or other women who care for their close person).

The government could and should be a leader and a role model for other segments of the labour market, and create a more favourable environment for combining work and private life in various generations and various life situations of their employees, in particular to reduce the existing gender gaps in the involvement of men and women at work and in care of others.

So, what should be done in the area of work-life balance in the civil service? Although it is not possible to create a universal model for work-life balance for employees at the ministries, and it is not possible to create discriminatory conditions in the area of work-life balance (e.g. when some groups are *a priori* and unjustifiably excluded from using some of the applied measures), we can identify the main principles and areas to be addressed as well as be inspired by examples of good practice from those who are already implementing some of the measures successfully.

### **(a) What should we focus on in the area of work-life balance in the public sector?**

Following from the above and below, the following would be appropriate to implement **across all the ministries**:

- Create a unified systematisation of the position of gender focal point for all ministries, define its scope and integrate this position uniformly into

the structure of all ministries. The issue of work-life balance has a significant gender dimension and should therefore be a part of the work of a person in this position.

- Establish an interministerial platform (for co-operation) where the ministries would be represented by the gender focal points; there would also be representatives of the Gender Equality Department of the Government of the Czech Republic, the Gender Expert Chamber and the Government Committee for Work-life Balance, and other relevant institutions (e.g. from the non-profit sector and the academia). Its aim should be to deal with gender equality and work-life balance in the civil service (i.e. discuss relevant issues, share experience and information on good practice, set out long-term and short-term goals and so on, for example by organising workshops).
- Facilitate the development of existing flexible forms of work and other benefits (across ministries) in which the employees of the ministries are interested, develop potentially beneficial work-life balance measures, and thereby create a working environment friendly to family and personal life (see in particular telework, suitable part-time work, long-term unpaid leave and short-term paid leave for serious personal or family reasons, childcare facilities for young children, especially children under 3 years of age, etc.).
- Use the platform to co-operate and discuss relevant good practice of other ministries, as well as good practice from other areas in the Czech Republic and abroad, as appropriate, and to initiate new solutions to current issues.

Furthermore, the following would be appropriate **within individual ministries**:

- Establish clear rules for the use of certain measures, or have a manual where all the information about who is entitled to the measure, how it is granted, what the procedure for applying is, etc.
- Increase awareness of different measures and introduce new ones, e.g. to extend the possibility of providing occasional childcare in the form of “baby-sitting corners” (as is the case with the MLSA).
- Pay attention to the needs and expectations of different age groups, different living situations and their specific needs, where, in addition to working mothers (of small children), it is also necessary to think about other groups of workers:
  - a) Pay attention to men as parents. Create programmes supporting their involvement in childcare.



- b) Pay attention to people with other care duties (other than childcare), who provide for or actively take care of a close person. Create conditions suitable for both work and care. In the programmes, focus on the “sandwich generation”, i.e. people who care for their minor children and also have to take care of their old frail parents (or other close persons).
- c) Create conditions for suitable employment for people of 55 years of age or older, or even 50 and older, who belong to the most vulnerable groups on the Czech labour market. Create conditions for them to achieve work-life balance.
- d) Pay attention to people in pre-retirement age and set programmes for their gradual retirement (within age management).
- e) Pay attention to the physical and mental health of employees by creating suitable (healthier, not exhausting) working environment (i.e. pay attention to the ergonomics of the work environment and the quality of interpersonal relationships at the workplace).

## **(b) Examples of good practice**

### **Example 1: Caring for a close person dependent on care of others**

Ministries do not explicitly stipulate (for example, in their collective agreements and contracts) any measures that indicate that they pay sufficient attention to the care for a close person who needs it on account of his/her state of health or old-age frailty. Nevertheless, the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic acts “proactively” in this respect. It has declared that its HR Department is seeking to *expand the use of flexible working arrangements, especially by people who care for a close person, people with disabilities and people aged 50 and over*, in particular through the media coverage of these options on the department’s website or at educational events it organises.

The ministry also extended the possibility of *taking leave while taking care of a close person with the guarantee of return to the same position upon agreement with the senior employee*.

### **Example 2: Individual adjustment of the core working time**

At the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic, it is possible, for serious reasons, *to adjust the core working time or set individual fixed working hours according to the employee’s needs* at his/her own request, if this does not compromise work or operational tasks. The employer is obliged to comply with the application of a person taking care of a child under the age of 15, a pregnant woman, a person regularly taking care for a partially or completely helpless person.

### Example 3: Setting up telework as a universal rule

Many private companies, but also other public-sector employers, enable telework for a certain number of days in a month (e.g. 4), which the employees can use flexibly upon agreement with their supervisor (not necessarily on fixed days). Therefore, this measure is not used for the purpose of work-life balance solely by mothers caring for their children or senior employees.

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## CONCLUSION:

Although there is no simple or completely universal method to implement work-life balance measures at the employing organisation's level, there are a number of inspiring and applicable principles that increase the likelihood of successful attainment of work-life balance. The most important ones are:

- **interest** in addressing this issue;
- **willingness** to implement such measures that have the potential to increase employee satisfaction, and make combining work and care duties easier;
- **active search** for and creation of suitable solutions;
- **sharing experience** with other employers.

**There certainly are reasons to introduce work-life balance programmes** because:

- Good conditions for work-life balance increase the attractiveness of the employing organisations.
- A work environment enabling attainment of work-life balance **increases the employees' satisfaction and productivity.**
- **Dissatisfaction with work-life balance** is then negatively reflected in productivity, and, in this respect, also **negatively affects the employers.**

Civil service, as a part of the public sector, can and should be a leader in the area of work-life balance. **An organisation's strategy in the area of work-life balance** should be included in the concept of career growth, benefit scheme and training system, recruitment and dismissal, and performance review **because work-life balance measures benefit all involved.**

## IV.

# Work-Life Balance of Parents and Carers

IRENA MOOZOVÁ

On 26 April 2017, the European Commission adopted a draft directive aiming at improving the conditions for working parents and carers, enabling them to combine their careers with family life.

The draft introduces measures to adapt the legislative framework of the European Union *to the needs of the 21st century and the modern approach to personal life and work, as well as the approaches to women and men. There is no single “right” way to achieve balance. Ensuring that there is a choice is what is most important. The time has come to give people a chance to shape their lives, raise children, pursue careers or take care of the elderly family members.*

*Increased participation of women on the labour market is among the main goals of the directive, as it brings significant benefits in three areas. It is beneficial for working parents and carers, who will appreciate improved work-life balance; for companies, which will be able to attract and retain talented workers; and for the Member States, which lose € 370 billion per year due to persisting gender employment gap.*

The objective of the proposal is to increase women’s participation in the labour market, enhance the possibilities of working individuals in reconciling their professional and caregiving responsibilities through a modernised legal and political framework, and to bolster the Member States’ family policies to face demographic challenges. It contributes to dealing with insufficient capacity of care facilities and puts tax/economic incentives for the “second earner” (the other economically active partner) on the table.

*The aim of the new proposal is to strengthen the rights and to improve the conditions of working parents and carers, enabling them to harmonise work and family responsibilities. It will provide more flexibility and better protection to mothers, fathers and carers regardless of whether they want to take a time off work to care for children, make use of flexible working conditions, or return to work.*

The purpose of the proposed measures also is to provide men with more opportunities to assume parental and care responsibilities. This will benefit the children and contribute to increased involvement of women in the

labour market, thus reducing the gender employment gap, which was 11.6 percent in 2015, and even 30 percent in the case of families with children under 6 years of age. This is one of the elements that create inequality in remuneration of women and men – “pay gap” (16.3%) – and in the amount of their pensions – “pension gap” (40%).

Moreover, despite the fact that men spend more time working, women work on average 54 hours per week, which is 5 hours more than men – women spend on average 21 hours caring for children, relatives and household, whereas men only spend 9 hours performing these tasks.

The **work-life balance** proposal brings a multitude of new or qualitatively higher minimum standards for parental, paternity and carer leave.

The European Commission proposes a combination of legislative and non-legislative steps.

**Legislative action** concerns the area of time off work and flexible working conditions.

It includes the plan to give fathers an entitlement to at least 10 working days of paternity leave after their child’s birth. Under the proposal, it will also be possible to claim the current 4 months of parental leave until the child reaches the age of 12, in contrast to the currently recommended limit of 8 years of age. The entitlement to the parental leave will apply to both mothers and fathers and it will not be possible to transfer the entitlement to the other parent, which should motivate men to use their leave. For the first time, an entitlement to 5 days of leave to take care of a seriously ill direct relative will be introduced. Compensations at least at the sick pay level will apply to all the aforementioned family policy measures. The proposal also includes the right to request flexible working arrangements (such as reduced working hours, flexible working schedule or telework) for parents of children up to 12 years old and workers with caring responsibilities. The proposal takes into consideration the needs of small and medium-sized companies, ensuring that they will not be disproportionately affected.

The proposal also comprises support for **non-legislative action** such as dismissal protection and tax incentives. It also uses policy tools including monitoring and project funding – for example creating capacities for early pre-school care and care for other dependants – and sharing of experience between Member States.

The proposal newly and importantly mentions the need for targeted co-operation with national equality bodies (in the Czech Republic, this role is performed by the Office of the Public Defender of Rights).

For more information, see:

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, An Initiative to Support Work-Life Balance for Working Parents and Carers<sup>19</sup>

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> COM(2017) 252 final, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1526907677097&uri=CELEX:52017DC0252>

<sup>20</sup> COM(2017) 253 final, 2017/0085(COD), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52017PC0253&rid=6>

# V.

## Maltese Experience with Work-Life Balance in the Civil Service

**PETR POLÁK, BASED ON AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNALISE FRANTZ (NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROMOTION OF EQUALITY)**

### **GENERAL BACKGROUND**

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As an equality body, the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality deals with work-life balance either in the form of projects or in the form of education for civil servants.

Maltese law provides for maternity leave and parental leave. Maternity leave is paid by the employer at regular salary level for 3 months, and then the State provides a benefit at the level of minimum wage for one month. Men are only entitled to one day of paternal leave. That is not an ideal situation, especially when there are complications after the child's birth. Some fathers then decide to take up unpaid leave. The management of returns after a leave of absence is not provided for in detail, but the Maltese Commission supports gradual return (e.g. several hours of work a day in the office before the end of the maternity leave). Therefore, the work-life balance measures currently being prepared by the European Commission<sup>21</sup> would mean an extension of the applicable social rights in Malta.

Other work-life balance measures in Malta are included in the "*Public Service Management Code*". The code, lacking the authority of a law, goes beyond the above legal measures and does not affect the private sector. Thanks to the code, the civil service serves as an example for the private sector. Women sometimes decide to leave the private sector for the public sector (despite lower salaries), as it offers more possibilities in terms of work-life balance. Some private companies have now changed their approach and started to profile themselves as family-friendly employers.

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<sup>21</sup> Irena Moozová of the European Commission explained the details in her own contribution.

Based on the code, fathers in public sector are entitled to 5 days of paternity leave fully paid by their employer. Furthermore, the code provides for teleworking, shorter working time, condensed working week, and job sharing.

Maltese government was aware of the importance of work-life balance and introduced free childcare. Free childcare is available if both parents are employed (of course, a single parent is also considered eligible when employed). This measure significantly improved the position of working mothers who are usually the ones who take care of children. Furthermore, there are clubs in Malta for children aged 3 to 16 open in the afternoon (after kindergarten or school) which contribute to helping parents with full-time jobs achieve some measure of work-life balance. They are basically the equivalent of Czech after-school groups. There are also the “breakfast clubs”, open for children from 7 a.m., which are an innovative work-life balance measure. They are used by parents who start work early in the morning. Malta currently explores ways to enable parents working in shifts to also benefit from the free childcare system. One of the measures being discussed is extending the opening hours of the children’s centres until the evening.

The issue is much more complicated when it comes to people who take care of the elderly. In the past, the support system was targeted at parents of minor children, which resulted in the fact that there are no targeted measures for these employees.

## **DECISION-MAKING ON INTRODUCING WORK-LIFE BALANCE MEASURES**

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Any civil servant may apply for a work-life balance measure. Each application is reviewed individually. The application must contain the reasons, and does not necessarily have to regard family matters (typically care of a minor child). The reason for this procedure is the negative experience with abuse of the measures. If the authority does not grant the application (decisions are made by the head of the relevant authority), the employee may lodge an appeal.

## **TELEWORK**

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Regarding telework (also designated as remote work), it is not possible for a person in the Maltese civil service to work in this flexible way for 5 days

a week. A civil servant must work in the office for at least two days a week. The conditions are stipulated in an agreement concluded by the authority with the employees, valid for one year. The agreement also provides for accessibility and availability of the employees (at a certain time). Health and safety conditions regarding telework are similar to those in the Czech Republic – the authority bears the responsibility. In Malta, however, they have not yet dealt with a case of an employer refusing to take responsibility for an injury that occurred during telework. According to a representative of the Maltese Commission, the Maltese legislation should be clarified.

The Maltese Commission for the Promotion of Equality tries to emphasise the idea that employees need flexibility. Taking care of a child or an elderly person sometimes requires to interrupt work. That is why the Commission recommends to the employers (authorities) to be results-oriented rather than time-oriented. A degree of trust must exist between the authority and the civil servant.

## **SUPPORT FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND RAISING AWARENESS**

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The Maltese Commission organised several events for both employers and employees in the public sector regarding education and awareness raising.

It was found that in telework, it is important that the employees do not feel isolated from the team and that regular team meetings or events take place. Employees in the office should have clear information that their teleworking colleagues actually do their jobs and do not “rest” at home, for example. Good communication between senior and other employees should prevent conflicts and resentment at the workplace.

Separate meetings of civil servants and their supervisors are also important – workers are much more open when their supervisors are not present. That way, it is possible to come up with some recommendations to improve work-life balance.

Regarding complaints, many of them were addressed by the Commission not by means of investigation, but through mediation.

The Commission itself strives to set an example and to make use of the measures put forward by the code. Since the Commission is a relatively small team (10 to 12 people), the most important thing at the workplace is communication between its members. In one case, the opportunity to work from home for 5 days a week was used for a female worker living abroad.



This work-life balance measure paid off. Flexibility is expected from all employees.

## **RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CZECH CIVIL SERVICE**

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Support for care for pre-school and school aged children should be introduced in the public sector across Europe – increasing the potential of children’s groups (daycare facilities) in the Czech Republic is a matter that the Czech authorities should pay more attention to.

## VI.

# Equality Beyond Gender Roles

**ANNALISE FRANTZ**

Ms Annalise Frantz (Senior Projects Executive, National Commission for the Promotion of Equality Malta) described the measures available to public service and public sector employees with regards to family-friendly measures (FFMs) from application to evaluation to the agreement between employer and employee. Ms Frantz emphasised the importance for the workplace to have a policy in place for good governance and transparency for all employees. It was also explained how regular meetings between the employer and the employees as well as a yearly review of the agreement are an important part of the process. Ms Frantz spoke about the benefits of having a flexible work environment. When tackling the main reasons for not granting the FFM requested by the employee, a discussion ensued on issues such as occupational requirements. Ms Frantz pointed out that there needs to be a better understanding of the several types of FFMs as different measures may cater to diverse occupational requirements. As an equality body, it is important to disseminate information through training sessions, conferences and information uploaded on the website. NCPE also encourages such initiatives through the award of the Equality Mark to entities that adopt such policy and through project activities. The final remark highlighted the importance of being result-oriented rather than time-oriented to ensure not only the output of employees but also their wellbeing through finding a balance between their professional and private life.

Ms Frantz presented the NCPE's project activities of 'Equality Beyond Gender Roles', a project funded through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014 – 2020, which focuses on the role of men in gender equality, WLB and FFM. It was explained that the project came about as a result of the statistical data which showed that the uptake of FFMs was mainly by women, which negatively impacts their career progression and contributed to the gender pay and pension gap. Moreover, the project also highlighted the need to recognise that work-life balance is important for both women and men, and that men need to be more involved in family life rather than simply expected to be the breadwinner. This recognition

benefits men as well as women in terms of equal economic independence and work-life balance for both. The project's target groups were 3: the students, the employers and the general public. An interactive activity entitled 'Theatre in Education' targeted students aged 14-16 years old<sup>22</sup>. Through interactive performances students were encouraged to challenge stereotypical notions. Older students in post-secondary and tertiary education were targeted through an activity which involved having a roving van visiting various schools to obtain students' feedback on gender equality, equal economic independence, sharing of domestic responsibilities and work-life balance. The views of the students on the topic along with a photo were uploaded in real time on NCPE's Facebook page<sup>23</sup>. This ensured interaction on social media and the general public was being constantly updated through Facebook. The final activity for the students was a day-event at the University of Malta which included several debates, music and a photo exhibition with the aim of promoting the importance of work-life balance.

In order to increase awareness on work-life balance, a business breakfast was organized for employers. Panel discussions on FFMs and flexible working arrangements focused on their economic and financial impact, the employees' wellbeing, and the benefits and obstacles faced by both the employers and the employees. Subsequent to the business breakfast, 2 consultation sessions were organized for different sized companies. The innovative aspect of these sessions was that the companies, which hailed from various sectors, could discuss the benefits as well as the main challenges faced when providing FFMs. NCPE ensured that these issues were tackled through in-depth discussions and various examples of good practices and finally, NCPE also provided guidelines for drafting a work-life balance policy that was discussed during the last session<sup>24</sup>. An animated clip on FFMs was developed to highlight the importance of work-life balance<sup>25</sup>.

The activities targeting the general public were various. Firstly, there was an event in Valletta, Malta's capital city. This was open to all and the aim was to counteract stereotypes existing in the Maltese language through music, literature and drama. This event was promoted through various initiatives on TV namely PR activities by NCPE officers as well as a lapel pin campaign which centered on popular presenters wearing a lapel pin in support of

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<sup>22</sup> [http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects\\_and\\_Specific\\_Initiatives/Equality%20Beyond%20Gender%20Roles/Theatre%20in%20Education%20Sessions%20pics.pdf](http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Equality%20Beyond%20Gender%20Roles/Theatre%20in%20Education%20Sessions%20pics.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> [http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects\\_and\\_Specific\\_Initiatives/Equality%20Beyond%20Gender%20Roles/Roving%20Van%20Photos.pdf](http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Equality%20Beyond%20Gender%20Roles/Roving%20Van%20Photos.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects\\_and\\_Specific\\_Initiatives/Equality%20Beyond%20Gender%20Roles/Drafting%20a%20Policy.pdf](http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Documents/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Equality%20Beyond%20Gender%20Roles/Drafting%20a%20Policy.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <https://youtu.be/GBF-TOAAYm>

work-life balance. The final campaign of the project was the role model campaign. This campaign focused on 5 male role models who ensured their work-life balance by taking up some form of FFM. The stories of these role models were aired on TV and disseminated via NCPE's website and Facebook page<sup>26</sup>. All the activities mentioned may be viewed on NCPE's<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://youtu.be/dvAkpLt0kiE>

<sup>27</sup> website [http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Pages/Projects\\_and\\_Specific\\_Initiatives/Equality-Beyond-Gender-Roles.aspx](http://ncpe.gov.mt/en/Pages/Projects_and_Specific_Initiatives/Equality-Beyond-Gender-Roles.aspx)

## VII.

# The Gender Bias Check (gb-check) as a review tool

**CHARLOTTE KASTNER**

In order to assist with promoting equality, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA) in cooperation with the Harriet Taylor Mill Institute of the Berlin School of Economics and Law (HTMI of the Berlin SEL) carried out an EU-financed project entitled “Promoting the economic independence of women and men – using the Gender Bias Check (gb-check)”. The project started in January 2016 and ended on 31 August 2017.

The project objective was to provide private companies and public bodies with a scientifically supported set of analytical tools which they could use to systematically review the equal treatment of genders in various personnel policy action areas, beyond that of salary. This set of tools was scientifically developed by the academics Dr. Andrea-Hilla Carl, Dr. Andrea Jochmann-Döll and Dr. Karin Tondorf.

A set of tools was developed which would

- highlight any discrimination on the basis of gender in the personnel policy fields of job advertisements, personnel selection (recruitment and promotion), working and employment conditions, continuing vocational training, appraisal of performance, potential and skills and working hours,
- provide ideas and impetus for removing any discrimination found and for preventing measures to avoid unequal treatment, and
- promote equal opportunities for both genders at operating level.

The Gender Bias Check refers to the prohibitions of discrimination listed in European Directive 2006/54/EC which were implemented in German law through the General Equal Treatment Act (AGG) in 2006. The gb-check, which analyses working and employment conditions in more detail, supplements the Pay Equality Check (eg-check.de), which has already been developed and tested in practice and which is solely intended for determining gender pay differences. Both sets of tools have similar structures.

Equality between the genders is not only a legal requirement; it is also economically advantageous, for example, when it comes to attracting and retaining qualified staff or during times of structural change. For example, with the gb-check it is possible to

- design job advertisements in such a way that they appeal equally to both women and men,
- make personnel selection decisions more systematic and transparent,
- assess the performance, potential and skills of employees more fairly,
- support managers in managing their staff sensitively and without prejudice,
- make working and employment conditions more attractive for women and men,
- focus the company's continuing vocational training concept gender-appropriately,
- obtain ideas and impetuses for making working hours more family-friendly.

The gb-check is also useful in further developing a diversity concept or an equality plan and enhancing or consolidating the company's image as being equality-oriented.

## OVERVIEW OF REVIEW AREAS AND TOOLS

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The gb-check can be used to review six different areas of personnel policy with regard to gender equality. Three types of tools are available for this: Statistics, process analyses and pairwise comparisons.

**Statistics:** These are direct statistical comparisons of anonymised operating data relating to the review area in question that differ according to gender. These statistics create transparency and provide indications of possible discrimination.

**Process analyses:** These contain guiding questions about the relevant review area which examine any inequalities in company regulations and procedures and can highlight any potential discrimination and scope for greater equality opportunities. Every process analysis also contains at the end the headings "Summary" and "Conclusions", which are to be filled in.

**Pairwise comparisons:** By directly comparing, on an anonymous basis, a female and a male employee, discrimination at individual level can be highlighted.

The following provides an initial overview of the review areas and tools:

Review area	Statistics	Process analysis	Pairwise comparison
Job advertisements		✓	
Personnel selection	✓ Recruitment ✓ Promotion	✓	✓
Working and employment conditions	✓ Employment ✓ Health	✓	
Continuing vocational training	✓	✓	✓
Appraisals	✓	✓	✓
Working hours	✓	✓	

## IN PRACTICE: THE APPLICATION OF THE GB-CHECK

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Basically, any company or any administrative body can use the gb-check **on their own**. In the pilot phase, the review was accompanied and moderated by two scientific experts in each case. This **support** was consistently considered by the pilot companies to be sensible and useful, and it is therefore generally recommended that external support and advice are obtained when using the gb-check tools.

Whether implemented independently or with expert support, it is recommended that the company review is carried out in the following **six steps**:

### Step 1: Forming a company project group

- Task: Carrying out the review using the gb-check
- Working atmosphere: Open discussion of different viewpoints and self-critical analysis
- Composition: Personnel department, works or staff council, equality and/or diversity officer, other committed employees
- Constitution: Half-day introductory workshop to provide information about the gb-check, to appoint project manager, define responsibilities, deputising rules and other rules for collaboration

### Step 2: Choice of review areas and tools

- Done in the introductory workshop
- Review areas can be worked through selectively or consecutively at particular time intervals

- Selection criteria: Checking the effectiveness of equality policy measures already implemented or presumed need for action or checking planned personnel policy measures or company agreements

**Step 3:** Collecting and processing data and information

- For statistics: Personal data in relation to the selected review area
- For process analyses: Collective agreements, company or service agreements, guidelines, other internal documents
- For pairwise comparisons: Individual, anonymised data
- Time needed: Depending on operational data and information management

**Step 4:** Using the selected tools

- Done in analysis workshops: Analysis of statistics, processing of questions in the process analyses, evaluating pairwise comparisons
- Duration: Approx. one day per review area
- Chairing and documenting the discussion and results required

**Step 5:** Writing a results report

- By a member of the project group or the external support consultant
- Summary of findings from the analysis workshops
- Basis for planning and implementing measures and objectives
- Mainly for internal use, but also for PR work and as a requirement for a certificate from the FADA

**Step 6:** Developing measures beyond the review

- Done in concluding workshop
- Supplementing the measures proposed in the analysis workshops
- Concrete planning of implementation of measures
- Planning internal and external communication (publication, discussion)

The **resources** required to review equality with using the gb-check include, firstly, the staff and time required to carry out the work in the project group, the material and organisational preparation and the follow-up of the various workshops. Secondly, financial resources will be needed for any travel expenses, working materials and hosting the project group plus, if applicable, fees and travel expenses for external consultants.



## **FROM TEST TO PRACTICE: OPTIONS FOR TRANSFER AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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Ideas for promoting equal opportunities for women and men in companies or public administrative bodies are developed even in the analysis workshops; these are then documented and incorporated into the results report. These ideas are discussed again, evaluated and prioritised in the concluding workshop. In the time between the analysis workshops and the concluding workshop, new aspects may be determined or other additional proposals may be submitted. These may be presented by individual project group members or developed jointly by the project group.

After the project group has selected measures to promote the equality of women and men, specific steps must be agreed to implement these equality policy measures. These can basically involve three implementation levels:

### **INCLUDING OTHER PEOPLE AND FUNCTIONS**

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The people and functions in the company or administrative body that should be included in the implementation of equality measures depends partly on the decision-making competence that has been assigned to the project group. It is conceivable, for example, that decisions about individual equality measures must be made by particular hierarchical levels or functions in the company and administration, such as the Management Board or Board of Directors, responsible managers, committees or institutions. On the other hand, the group may also need to be expanded from the point of view of content. If the measures, for example, relate to the training of managers, the project results should be discussed with the people responsible for continuing training.

### **INFORMING OTHERS ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS AND THE PLANNED MEASURES**

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The way in which the review project, its results and the measures to be taken are communicated plays a major part in achieving a lasting positive effect. Internal and external communication should therefore be carefully planned.

If the review has shown that “everything is absolutely fine”, communication internally will pay tribute to the performance, in terms of equality

policy, of the people responsible; inwardly and outwardly, this information can help improve the company's image. If measures to improve the equal treatment of both genders have been developed and planned, internal and external communication about this shows that the company or administrative body is keep to improve equal opportunities or to prevent inequality.

## **PLANNING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES: WHO, WHAT, WHEN, HOW?**

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A specific implementation plan is required for the equality measures that have been adopted. With more extensive measures, it may be necessary to form separate project groups and to approach these measures using project management methods and techniques. In this way, it is also possible to initiate and specifically control a process of increasing the awareness of all employees of equality matters and developing an equality-focussed organisation.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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The complete gb-check toolbox is available in English as a free download on [www.gb-check.de/english](http://www.gb-check.de/english). Moreover you can find a brief report describing the development of the toolbox and explaining the tools in detail.

For any further questions you can contact the project coordinator Charlotte Kastner ([charlotte.kastner@ads.bund.de](mailto:charlotte.kastner@ads.bund.de))

## VIII.

# Work-Life Balance in the Public Sector: Positive Examples and Risk Factors

AGNES UHERECZKY, ZOLTÁN VADKERTI

## INTRODUCTION

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The Work-Life HUB, was set up in 2014. It carries out research, communication and consulting activities on work-life balance and work-life integration management. With its activities the Work-Life HUB aims to conceptualize the model of managing work-life balance. In align with its work the presentation focused on presenting good and bad work-life balance company level practices. A lot of the negative or harmful experiences happen to working parents because of the lack of structure, policies, transparency. Therefore, the presentation highlighted some inspiring practices and made note of the risks the speakers came across during their professional career.

## PRESENTATION CONTENT:

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- Give an insight into the bigger picture of work-life balance
- Highlight examples in different areas that worked for others
- Point to potential risk factors and pitfalls to avoid
- Help you get started or improve existing initiatives

## THE BUSINESS CASE FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

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The Business case for work-life balance was briefly presented following the below order:

1. Diagnosis, understanding challenges and pain points

- 1.1 The nature of the work
- 1.2 The culture of the organisation
- 1.3 The departments involved
2. Work-Life Advisory Group and Leadership buy-in
3. Success Factors
4. Designing Information collection
5. Calculate the Business Case
6. Communication

At the beginning of the presentation Zoltan Vadkerti spoke in detail about the document, Guidelines to build the business case for work-life balance in public authorities – Work-life Balance in the Public Sector, which was included in folder of the conference attendees. He introduced the paper and highlighted that it is a business tool used by the WorkLife HUB in working together with institutions, organisations and companies.

He went on to explain that, for example, in a recent EIGE project the business methodology case was used in building argumentation about the involvement of more women in the ICT sector. The business case concept was developed and conceptualized through consulting work and projects. The WorkLife HUB also holds a webinar around this subject. It was recommended for the conference attendees to check out the content of the webinar series<sup>28</sup> to deepen their understanding around this subject.

It was also underscored that the examples, selected to be highlighted in the presentation, refer back to the business case document and bring forward examples from different institutions. Wherever it was possible the speakers referred back to the Guidelines, and its main parts: the nature of the work, the culture of the organisation, the departments involved, and main problems that motivated the initiative.

It became obvious from the presented examples that in terms of work-life balance practices there is no “one-size-fits-all” solution. It was also highlighted that the two speakers knew some of the examples personally, and some through research, from many parts of the world. All the presented examples were different, had a slightly different angle to the same issue: work-life balance.

The presentation was organised around two objectives: to bring forward inspiring work-life balance practices (good and bad examples) and to refer those examples back to the business case document that was distributed to the attendees of the conference. Through the presentation of the examples the speakers highlighted challenges, pain points and main risk factors.

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<sup>28</sup> <http://worklifehub.com/webinars>

## **WHO IS IN THE DRIVER SEAT?**

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One of the foundation blocks of a solid business case is finding out who is in the driver seat of the work-life balance programs at organisations. It was underlined that the following departments would be considered in such role:

- HR in charge of gender equality, diversity, attracting and retaining talent, performance.
- Organisation health and safety: mental health, physical health, maternal health, prevention.
- IT: existing systems, current infrastructure, cloud, mobile.
- Legal: data privacy, anti-discrimination, transparency.
- Facilities: space as a multi-functional service, activity-based working.

## **IMPROVING THE TAKE-UP OF PARENTAL LEAVE**

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Example Berlin Charité hospital (attraction and retention of female talent): In view of the continuing perseverance of Equal Opportunity Commissioners as women's representative as well as missing networks for and from fathers, the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin has specially set up the post of fathers' representative. The father's officer acts as a point of contact for male employees who consider taking care of their child on parental leave. Here they can inform themselves about legal and contractual conditions, clarify open questions and seek moral support for the implementation of their project.

Gender mainstreaming – HR/wellbeing: an example from the Belgium: ministry of finance (poster campaign) was highlighted.

Potential risk factors in terms of parental leave: stigmatisation, demotion, termination. Involved departments: HR/wellbeing

## **THE WAY WE WORK (FLEXIBLE WORKING)**

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Potential for flexible working practices to be used in local government as a means of:

- reducing accommodation and facilities costs,
- improving corporate image, and
- increasing productivity levels.

In 2009 Hertfordshire County Council's three year programme, "The Way We Work", was completed. This programme involved reducing office accommodation from 51 offices to three main bases in key towns across the county, directly affecting 4,500 Hertfordshire County Council staff. "The Way We Work" was a self-funded programme, which 'improved motivation and morale, enhanced knowledge and information sharing, increased retention of staff and improved the skills of their staff.'

The objectives of "The Way We Work" were to maximise space and desk occupancy, improve document management, achieve coherent standards of ICT, solve maintenance back-log on offices, realise capital receipts and reduce revenue cost.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) does not adopt a highly prescriptive centralised process, but instead encourages managers and their teams to adopt solutions that work for their part of the business.

Impact of flexible working Hertfordshire County Council's approach to flexible working has led to:

- Improved retention and reduced recruitment costs
- Reduction in absenteeism
- Improved morale
- High take-up of flexible working
- Improved corporate image – the winning of employer awards in competition with the private sector has brought the organisation external recognition and HCC has received many invitations to speak about its flexible working programme. It has also raised its profile as an employer of choice – resulting in an increased level of applications to work at the local authority.

Risk factors: Overwork and unrealistic workload – presenteeism – long-hours culture; review of recruitment practices: almost all jobs were advertised as full time positions, although many roles were suitable for part-time staff. Involved departments: Facilities, HR, IT.

## **JOB-SHARING IN THE CIVIL SERVICE**

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Job-sharing is a real win-win situation for employer and employee: the employer has access to a full-time coverage, which in certain sectors like elder-care, health-care is important. The job-sharing partners have their part-time flexible job; agree among themselves for their schedules, their vacation, and when and how much each of them works. The movement is greatly facilitated by digital online, mobile or desktop solutions. Following the return from maternity

leave, women in leadership positions may not want to compromise their careers, but would like to reduce the hours. The main issue is the choice of the tandem-partner: it has to be a trust-relationship, to discuss working time, wages, benefits and sharing the responsibility for the work itself.

- UK<sup>29</sup>: The Civil Service job share finder site is an online job-share database which helps civil servants find and manage information so that they can make compatible job-share matches with other civil servants. This site is for existing civil servants only. Developed by Civil Service Resourcing. To date, 2000 civil servants have registered on the platform. Some of the interesting aspect comes from the demand by 55+ males – why? Because towards the end of their careers they would like to have a gradual transition to retirement, and work less, yet remain active. For them, requesting part-time work seemed demeaning, “woman’s job”, and they associated it with lower quality assignments. Job-sharing also allows for the intergenerational transmission of knowledge.
- Germany: in eldercare and care for disabled – where self-rostering really helps also patients, they can have be responsible for the same person, and job-share partners can cover “clients” at the same critical times (morning or evening, lunchtime...)

Potential risks: miscommunication, who is it for, what does it mean for the person, their career and service. Involved departments: HR, diversity, IT.

## **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCE GROUPS**

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Canada: The EAP program was established to help Manitoba Government<sup>30</sup> employees (including those in crown corporations and agencies) and their families deal with problems before they seriously affect their family and work life. The program offers a wide range of professional counselling services and other specialized services for personal, family, or work-related concerns and is supported by management and the union:

- Conflict Resolution & Workplace Intervention
- Consultations Support or coaching available for managers dealing with behavioural issues in the workplace such as depression, mental health and addictions.

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.civilservicejobshare.service.gov.uk/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.gov.mb.ca/csc/aboutcsc/efap/wellness.html#brochures>

- Mediation Services Available for workplace conflicts including employee / employee, employee / employer, and employee / manager conflicts.
- Workplace Assessments A diagnostic to enhance organizational wellness when indicators such as decreased cooperation, satisfaction or harmony are present.

Potential risk factors: reduced job performance, conflict resolution, workplace interventions, family counselling, and trauma management. Involved departments: HR, OHS

## **INNOVATIVE SERVICES**

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Generations united: A shared care centre for the elderly and children, Interaction between the generations is not as simple as putting a baby and toddlers' day care centre in a nursing home, however. It involves planned interactions between elders and college students, school children, or youngsters of other ages in a variety of settings.

Potential risk factors: "flavour of the month", overburdening employees with many initiatives, that don't seem to be connected or add up. Involved departments: HR, leadership, facilities.

## **TRANSPARENCY AND CULTURE**

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US: A best place to work is an online portal that provides and gives information about the different government agencies and civil service offices from the point of view of the employees.

The annual Best Places to Work in the Federal Government® rankings are produced by the nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service. The 2016 rankings include the views of more than 421,000 civil servants from 379 federal organizations on a wide range of workplace topics. Since the first rankings were released in 2003, they have provided a mechanism to hold agency leaders accountable for the health of their organizations; serve as an early warning sign for agencies in trouble; and offer a roadmap for improvement.



Employee survey, based on, and this is how they make the categories. This is why we stress the importance of data and available information.

Potential risk factors: Lack of transparency, undefined goals and objectives, high turnover, attraction problems. Involved departments: HR, OHS.

### **KEY TAKE-AWAYS:**

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- Don't let fear paralyse you! Start small, learn from your mistakes and roll-out.
- Whatever you are planning to do - there is a big chance it has been done before.
- Identify indicators early on, what are you going to measure and report.
- Continuous communication is mission critical!
- Avoiding incompatible services with the need of employees is mission critical.
- There is an inconsistent practice of using flexibility across the civil service.
- Loyalty and commitment to public service - condition of service has eroded, loyalty and commitment has eroded, in the long term public service will suffer.

# IX.

## Guidelines to build the business case for work-life balance in public authorities

AGNES UHERECZKY, ZOLTÁN VADKERTI

### 1. DIAGNOSIS – UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES AND PAIN POINTS

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The first thing to do is to identify what the lack of work-life balance means for the organisation in terms of costs. For instance, a pain point of an organisation can be lack of women in leadership positions, losing and difficulty in attracting diverse talent, high turnover or low employee engagement etc. Only by identifying these pain points can an organisation begin to turn work-life balance from a “nice-to-have” into a “must-have” and initiate sustainable change.

In order to initiate changes in your organisation to improve work-life balance for employees and civil servants, it is important to consider the following aspects:

#### 1.1 The nature of the work

Is your workforce composed primarily by employees working in an office, or do you also have a part that is providing service to clients, citizens, patients? How are you planning to roll-out work-life balance to the entire population of your organisation? What are the challenges? How have the differences been accommodated so far? Are there tensions, negotiations with the trade unions?

This is particularly important, as one of the keys to achieving work-life balance or work flexibility, is transforming management from presenteeism to managing by objectives. Line managers have a great responsibility here in defining the objectives of individuals and of teams, and establishing a fair reporting system to accompany it – this is what is key in enabling staff members to work any time any place – within the rules of engagement.

## **1.2 The culture of the organisation**

This may include everything from the transparency of the decision making process, accountability, gender equality and inclusiveness. You may identify certain bottlenecks such as the number of women returners, the ratio of men taking parental leave, the diversity of the employees. What is the aspirational culture of the organisation? What initiatives are already in place? Is there a learning culture?

Communication and the language used within the organisation is a key indicator about the culture, and also one aspect that needs to change to make everyone comfortable in using work-life balance options (flexible work, tele-work, leaves). If sarcastic comments are a feature of internal communication, that needs to change. Organisations that successfully introduced work-life balance also introduced new language, adapted to the employer brand, together with eliminating harmful, discriminatory language. Visual and verbal communication tools are incredibly helpful to culture transformation.

## **1.3 The departments involved**

Often work-life balance is considered to be at the sole responsibility of the HR department, however a number of other functions are also involved, and who need to understand their share of responsibility in making the desired changes and supporting the initiatives.

IT department: the informatics system and hardware can be either helpful or a bottleneck to working from home, or from satellite offices. Is your organisation working with a safe, cloud-based system? Can colleagues access information and files from anywhere? Are there security and data issues? What about the costs of internet access, phone bills and other expenses related to working from elsewhere? Do employees have laptops or phones, can they do at least part of their reporting and administrative work from home?

Facilities: The actual workplace has a huge influence on employee well-being, and also how people work and what they do. A certain level of design thinking needs to accompany flexibilisation of work, as the purpose of some of the workplaces will change, from individual to collaborative. There is a broad spectrum of 'types of places' that serve the different stages and aspects of work, from collaborative to calm spaces. In addition, facilities also have a role to play in ensuring breastfeeding rooms, parent-child offices, all the way to childcare facilities,...etc.

CSR: In many organisations some aspects of work-life balance falls under the responsibility of CSR – fair working hours, childcare in the community, ...etc. Worth checking to make sure efforts are not duplicated.

Health and Safety: There is great potential in the cooperation with OHS in finding a strong alliance partner for work-life balance, both for the physical work environment, but specially for the prevention of mental health issues, such as burnout, fatigue, anxiety... etc. OHS departments may even develop further and look at physical wellbeing of employees who are carers (skeleto-muscular conditions), effects of menopause, substance abuse, lack of sleep.

Line managers: Line managers or heads of units are absolutely mission critical in implementing work-life balance. They need to be empowered and also equipped with tools to manage a much more diverse and fluid workforce, who may be working from elsewhere.

## **2. SET-UP A WORK-LIFE ADVISORY GROUP AND SECURE LEADERSHIP BUY-IN**

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One dedicated HR manager or director cannot make this transformation alone. It really needs to be a team, and organisational effort. It is vital to identify champions from different levels in the organisation, and also from a diverse, representative background. On the one hand this will spread out the responsibility and the weight of the task, on the other; this will ensure transparency and accountability from the get-go. Only by communicating openly about this process, about the mistakes and early successes will the process be credible.

This Steering group, Advisory group, committee... whatever the name, can then bring the identified pain points, together with figures, to the senior leadership. If necessary, bring in outside thought-leaders, academics, to really make the point.

## **3. DETERMINE SUCCESS FACTORS**

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Without setting up objectives and desired outcomes, it will be difficult to sustain momentum and energy. Before it will get better, it will get difficult first – because in any change process, before the new becomes the norm, there is a period of confusion and ambiguity. Until the rules of engagement are clarified for everyone, and everyone adapts to the new work habits, there will be

a period of hesitation and many questions. This is why the goals must be very clear – to act as the Lighthouse for the re-organisation and culture change.

#### **4. DESIGNING INFORMATION COLLECTION AND SETTING UP A PROJECT PLAN, WHO DOES WHAT, WHEN, HOW ...**

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This is a very important feature of the entire organisation moving forward together. Everyone needs to be on board, engaged, understand the desired outcome, and also know the piece they are responsible for. Departments and units can use gamification to work out their own tele-work charter, flexible work charter for example.

To be held accountable, some data needs to be collected prior to the pilot phase and roll-out, to maintain institutional learning and allow for reporting, as well as celebrating success – short-term and longer-term. This can be about hard HR data and payroll, and also soft, perception indicators.

#### **5. CALCULATE THE REAL BUSINESS CASE – CALCULATING THE COST OF THE PROBLEM, THEN THE BENEFITS OF THE WORK-LIFE PROGRAMS**

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Cost does not always refer to up-front investment in cash. Not every organisation will invest in infrastructure like childcare, or up-grade their IT system; buy laptops – even though many of these investments make absolute sense during this change. The cost of the problem is more difficult to calculate for the public sector in monetary terms, but it can be measured in effectiveness, customer satisfaction, reputation, credibility. Identifying “business-like” objectives can be a very helpful exercise even in the public sector.

What will the organisation gain? This again can be monetized (reduced turnover, absenteeism, more returns, less burnout...), or not necessarily, like employee morale, employee engagement, improved working conditions, improved culture, improved service to customers and citizens.

## **6. COMMUNICATE THE FINDINGS – THE WRITING OF YOUR “WORK-LIFE ELEVATOR PITCH”**

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Every organisation that has successfully embraced work-life balance has developed strong messaging around it. Straplines and hashtags that can be repeated used in all communication, new terminology...etc, to reinforce the messaging, and influence the language the organisation is using the “talk about the way we work here”. Don’t hesitate to use verbal and visual communication tools, messages from top leadership, posters, and social media campaigns – any tool you want to reinforce the message, discourage stigmatization and create more champions.



## X.

# Lecturers

**Frantz Annalise** is a Senior Projects Executive at the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality in Malta. She has been working in Management of EU-funded projects since 2009, when previously employed as a Projects Manager on ESF-funded projects at the Maltese Managing Authority. Ms Frantz is now responsible for the EU funds department at NCPE where she applies for and implements EU-funded projects from various funds such as the European Social Fund, PROGRESS Funds and the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme. Annalise is a member of the Gender Equality Network at Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies. She has been invited by Equinet to deliver training on EU funds to other Equality Bodies. Annalise graduated with Honours in European Studies and holds a Masters Degree in Diplomatic Studies from the University of Malta.

**Kastner Charlotte** is working as desk officer within the research department of the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency (FADA) since 2015. She implemented the EU-financed FADA-project “Promoting the economic independence of women and men – using the Gender Bias Check (gb-check)”. She is holding a Master’s Degree in Migration Research and Intercultural Studies and a Bachelor’s Degree in Social and Cultural Anthropology and Arabic and Islamic studies.

**Kvasnicová Jana** graduated from the Faculty of Law (2009) and the Faculty of Social Studies (2013; gender studies and social anthropology) of Masaryk University in Brno. She has worked with the Office of the Public Defender of Rights since July 2009; she has been the deputy head of the department of equal treatment since its founding in December 2009. She participates in teaching of the *Legal Clinic on Discrimination and Equal Treatment* course at the Faculty of Law and the *Gender and Law* course at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University. She is one of the heads of the team of authors of the comments on the Anti-Discrimination Act for Wolters Kluwer, a.s.

**Maříková Hana** is a research fellow at the department of *Gender and Sociology* of the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, where she has been working since 1995. She deals with sociology of gender, especially gender inequalities in the private and public sectors. She specifically focuses on the subject of nursing and care, work-life balance, gender inequality in politics and management, family and social policy. She publishes in professional journals and has contributed to several publications dealing with gender issues, such as *Pracovní dráhy žen (Women's Careers)*, *Živitelé a živitelky (Male and Female Breadwinners)*, *Sólo pro soprán: O ženách v české politice (Solo for Soprano: On Women in the Czech Politics)* etc. Hana Maříková is a member of the Czech Sociological Association and the Gender Expert Chamber. She works in the editorial board of *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum (Gender, Equal Opportunities & Research)*. She applies her professional expertise as a member of the Working Group Men and Gender Equality and as a member of the Programme Partnership for the Implementation of Priority Axis 1, Investment Priority 1.2 of the Operational Programme "Employment". She has been involved in the creation of a Strategy for Gender Equality for 2014-2020.

**Moozová Irena** has worked in the European Commission since 2006. She is currently the director responsible for EU policies in the area of equality and EU citizenship. Until 2010, she worked as the head of the Representation of the European Commission in Prague; until 2017, she coordinated the work of all European Representations of European Commission.

She graduated from the Faculty of Law of Charles University in Prague and completed an annual postgraduate course at the Diplomatic Academy in Madrid. Since 1991, she has worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in various managerial positions, incl. director of the Department of Administration Department, deputy director of Department of Human Rights, and as a coordinator in the team arranging NATO summit in Prague (2002). She also served in diplomatic roles abroad, as Deputy Ambassador of the Czech Republic in Madrid, Deputy Ambassador of the Czech Republic at the OSCE in Vienna, and most recently as Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic at UNESCO in Paris (2004-2006).

**Polák Petr** graduated from the Faculty of Law (2007) and Faculty of Arts (2009) of Masaryk University in Brno. He started working with the Office of the Public Defender of Rights immediately after completing his studies. He has been the Head of the Department of Equal Treatment of the Office of the Public Defender of Rights since 1 May 2012. Since July 2012, he has



worked as an assistant of the Defender and served as a member of the Policy Formation and Administrative Board in Equinet. He participates in teaching of the Legal Clinic on Discrimination and Equal Treatment course taught at the Faculty of Law of Masaryk University. He specialises in the application of EU law in national practice, the effects of case law of transnational courts in the area of protection against discrimination and age discrimination, and the protection of rights of ethnic and sexual minorities.

**Steinfeld Katrine** is Equinet's Policy Officer coordinating the Equinet Working Group on Gender Equality since January 2016. She holds an MA from King's College London and was previously a Political Advisor with the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Budapest, responsible for political and human rights reporting in both Slovenia and Hungary.

**Uherezky Agnes** is an entrepreneur and change management consultant, with a particular focus on work-life balance. She co-founded the WorkLife HUB, which helps organisations change the way they work and also manages research projects exploring the future of work, as well as gender inequalities around work and care, among others. An economist, with a keen interest in behavioural economics, Agnes has made it her mission to make a great quality of life and work accessible to everyone. Agnes produces the weekly WorkLife podcast, is a regular contributor to HR related Blogs and platforms. Agnes serves on the advisory board of the Generations and Gender project by the Netherlands Institute of Demography. A regular speaker at international conferences, she also hosts the WorkLife podcast, with weekly episodes of researchers, HR directors, policy makers and activists advancing work-life balance. A former European Integration specialist, Agnes wrote the lead article for the Work-Family life balance section of to the UN Landmark publication that has been prepared in relation to the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family in the United Nations in 2014.

**Urbániková Marína** completed her doctoral studies of sociology at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno. She works as an assistant at the Faculty's Department of Media Studies and Journalism, where she mainly teaches courses focused on research methods and techniques as well as statistical data analysis. Her main research interests include the issue of professionalisation of journalists, journalist education and journalistic objectivity. She also works as a sociologist at the Office of the Public Defender of Rights, where she concentrates mainly on research relating to discrimination and the functioning of public administration.

**Vadkerti Zoltán** is a work-life expert, blogger and Consultancy Director at the WorkLife HUB. He studied economics in both the Netherlands and Hungary before he moved to Brussels to becoming a lobbyist on EU social and employment policies. That experience, and many others, led him to an interest in the organisation of work and specifically on the quality of work and work-life integration. Through his professional positions, he has always held out positions and jobs where he can be most influential and have the biggest impact. He has constantly maintained his core focus on the workplace, work, workers and working – and the improvement of these for others. At the WorkLife HUB he runs the consulting arm of the company conducting research projects, communication and sales campaigns. He also often attend and speaks at international conferences.