

Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries ^[1]

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Full report PDF ^[2]

Introduction

The increasing labour market participation of women, changing family forms and the demographic pressure from an ageing population have made the reconciliation of work and family one of the major topics on the European social agenda. Yet countries differ in their policy responses, sometimes stressing the need for more flexible working hours, sometimes encouraging the supply of public and private services and sometimes focusing on a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work. This report contains an overview of policies targeted towards the reconciliation agenda of the 25 EU Member States. In addition, information is provided for three EEA countries, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein, and two Candidate countries, Bulgaria and Romania. Reconciliation policies can be defined as policies that directly support the combination of professional, family and private life. In effect, this means that this report will contain an update of policies with regard to childcare services, leave facilities, flexible working arrangements and other reconciliation policies such as financial allowances for working parents. An innovative element of this study – besides the scope – is that the focus is not only on national, public strategies. If possible, complementary provisions emerging at sector or company level are included as organisations may either supplement or substitute public provisions. In fact, it is at the organisational level where the details of the reconciliation of work and family life are worked out.

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