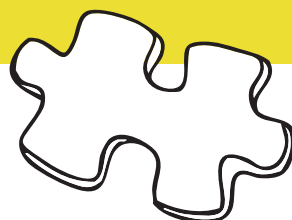


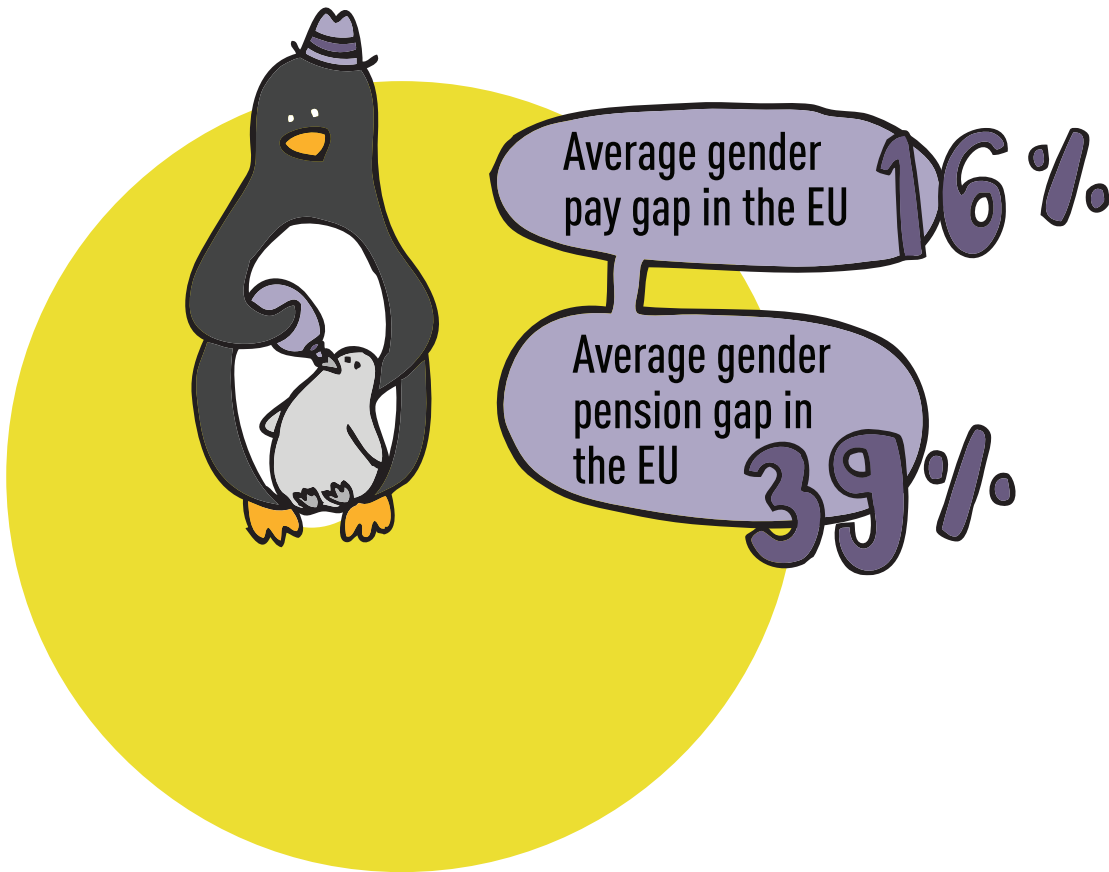
**2. WOMEN  
AT WORK**

# WOMEN AT WORK



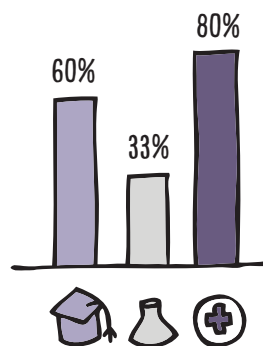
The Europe 2020 strategy sets the target of 75% of the 20-64 years olds to be employed by 2020. However, the EU overall employment rate in 2013 stood at 68.3% with a particularly low rate for women (62.5% against 74.2% for men aged 20-64 in 2013) and older workers, aged 55-64 (50.3%). Therefore, it is clear that to achieve this target, the involvement of women becomes pivotal and that a radical adjustment has to be made to the labour market, ensuring that it is accessible, able to retain and promote inclusion for women and men. Labour market strategies as well as employment policies and practices historically have been designed around the traditional family and societal structure of the male breadwinner model. Over time this dynamic has evolved, however, these changes in society and diversity of family forms have not been followed by modifications in the labour market legislation and policy. Reconciliation policies and practices are essential to implement this change and promote the employment of women and women with disability.

Women's employment is tightly linked to the distribution of work and family responsibilities between women and men. Surveys from Eurofound reveal that for the same amount of working hours, women are more likely to report problems with work-life balance than men, as they spend almost 12 more hours per week doing unpaid work than men. The unequal share of unpaid work in the family has a direct impact on gender segregation, because women still adjust their working arrangements considering their caring responsibilities especially when they have children or when they need to care for an elderly or disabled relative. Subsequently, women are more likely to take leaves, work part time or withdraw from the labour market. Indeed, because of a lack of or an insufficient number of childcare facilities and policies, across Europe 23% of women whose youngest child is under three and 18% of women whose youngest child is between 3 and mandatory school age, work part-time or do not work. Access and availability of childcare services will be discussed in chapter 4 – Childcare, Education and Parenting

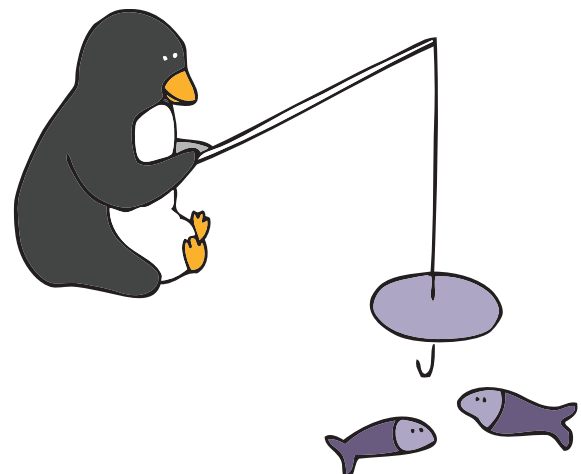


This chapter illustrates, in clear terms, why reconciliation policies are not, and must not, be considered as benefits for women only but a deeper change into employment policies and functioning of businesses, from which all employees, regardless of their gender and family status, and employers can benefit. Designing, developing,

promoting and implementing reconciliation measures is not, and must not be considered as a gesture for women or (young) working parents but a fundamental and profound change in the way we organize work, family, community and society.



Nearly 60% of EU university graduates are women, but they account for less than 33% of scientists and engineers across Europe, yet represent nearly 80% of the total workforce in the health, education and welfare sectors.



## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working condition.

Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood.

Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

Directive 2003/88/EC of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time.

Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.

Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast).

Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC.

Directive 2010/41/EU of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC.

Communication 2008/635 final: *A better work-life balance: stronger support for reconciling professional, private and family life.*

Communication 2010/0491 final: *Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015.*

Communication 2012/55 final: *An Agenda for Adequate, Safe and Sustainable Pensions.*

Commission Recommendation C(2013) 778 final: *Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage.*

## POLICY POINTERS

### GENDER PAY AND GENDER PENSION GAP

Women continue to be less included in the labour market in comparison to men, as they are more often in part-time employment, and the gender pay gap remains at 16% throughout Europe.<sup>1</sup> This disparity discourages an equal share of household work, deepening the segmentation between a male, white-collar dominated labour market and a female labour market with a wide use of part-time, short-term and/or precarious contracts in low-paid sectors with lower salaries. Women tend to have less access to in-work training which constrains their career opportunities and locks women into low-wage sectors and lower positions in companies' hierarchies. In the context of the recent crisis, female employment has actually even decreased in terms of the number of hours worked.

The EU Member States are tackling the economic crisis with austerity measures and drastic cuts in public spending, negatively affecting gender equality since women rely more on the public sector as employees and beneficiaries of public services.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that female employment is dependent on the average hours worked per week: in a cross-country comparison, the more work weeks are long, the less women will participate in the work force.

These disparities have an even greater effect on women's pensions, as discrimination cumulates at the end of the life course: the gender pension gap stands at 39%, more than double the gender pay gap.<sup>3</sup> Informal care (unpaid care provided by family or friends) represents 80% of total care for elderly and people with disabilities and women have a bigger share (61% on average). This work has to be recognised for its vital contribution to society in pension calculation as the need for care is increasing due to the ageing population.

Therefore, it is crucial today to recognise carer's leave for both women and men as an activity eligible as a pension contribution period, at least at the height of the minimum contribution. Where a pension system is building more on private savings or the amount of working years, rather than statutory pension rights, an appropriate replacement should be found to cover periods of carer's leave. Because of this, of

lower salaries and career opportunities, women on average are more likely than men to be at risk of poverty. Single female pensioners, together with lone mothers, face the highest risk of poverty today.<sup>2</sup> Over a quarter of women in the EU are poor (26%). 22% of older women are poor in comparison to 16% of older men and over one third of lone single parents – primarily women – are poor.<sup>4</sup>

The Commission's Expert Group on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion has pointed out that measures such as flexible retirement ages or part-time pensions can be relevant in reducing gender differences in income.<sup>3</sup>

1. European Commission, DG Justice, The Gender Gap in Pensions in the EU, 2013.

2. The European Women's Lobby, The price of austerity - The impact on women's rights and gender equality in Europe, 2012

3. Joint AGE-EWL Paper on Improving the situation of older women in the EU in the context of an ageing society and rapidly changing socio-economic environment. 2014.

4. EIGE, Gender equality index, 2013.

## WORKING CONDITIONS AND WORKING TIMES

Women are more likely to reduce working hours or interrupt their careers in order to care for family members than men. This has, on one hand, roots in the stereotypical division of roles within the family but also, on the other hand, on the economic convenience of reducing/losing the lower salary within the family (woman's) instead of the higher one (man's). Therefore, to counter balance this trend, is it important to put in place measures supporting women to access and stay in employment but also encouraging men in taking a higher share of the family and care responsibilities.

### Leave schemes

Leaves refer to time off from work for employed parents or other relatives to stay at home and look after a new-born, a baby, an older child, or a disabled or dependant family member. The generosity of leaves (length and level of payment during the leave) varies greatly across the European Union, and this variety has its roots in the history, culture, ideology and economics of the different countries, as well as the role and place of women and men in the society.

Leaves are still often ground for discrimination and despite existing legislation on the protection of pregnant workers, women continue to be discriminated on the grounds of childbirth. The perception of women as potential pregnant workers is one of the reasons why younger women, in comparison to younger men, find it harder to enter the labour-market or find a good job.

Carers coming out of unemployment face significant challenges in finding a job in line with their qualifications, given that the labour market tends to penalise non-work periods very quickly. Unemployment agencies and life-long learning facilities have to offer these women a tailor made path to work, including the possibility to follow a training with qualifications after long carer's leaves in order to allow women to reintegrate the labour market since in some countries, these facilities are only available for former unemployed workers, not for people reintegrating the labour market after a family break.

Leaves are still taken predominantly by women, because of economical and societal reasons. Men should be encouraged, by law, policy or practices at the workplace to take up more leaves in order to rebalance the disparity and trigger a positive change that will have a long-term impact on women's employment and the share of family and care responsibilities within the family.

### Flexible working arrangements

Establishing forms of flexible working time arrangements, may they be temporary or permanent, can be one solution to mitigate and invert the tendency of reduction of working hours or dropping out from employment for women.

Flexible working arrangement can take different forms (job sharing, tele-work, smart working, compressed working hours, possibility to swap shifts among employees...) and are proven to be beneficial for the employee and also for the company as it encourages employee loyalty, increases dedication and reduces turn-over. For example, allowing employees to take small blocks of leave over the course of the year or during school holidays, rather than prescribing that leave to be taken all at once, can be very attractive to employees without imposing onerous costs on the employer<sup>1</sup>.

The involvement of employees and their representatives is crucial to design the most appropriate measures that do not transform flexibility measures into full employee availability for the company. Participation in planning of measures is also key to avoid to hit further the most vulnerable workers (those non-unionised, on short-term and precarious contracts...).

Keeping women in employment and increase flexibility for men and women can have an impact on both an increased share of household work done by men (46% of men would like to have the possibility to work shorter hours<sup>2</sup>) and an increased share of women in quality jobs.

Finally, flexible working provides benefits for all: arrangements should not serve only working parents or workers with care responsibilities, but should be designed and made available to all workers, regardless of their gender or family status.

1. <http://www.onefamily.ie/wp-content/uploads/Toolkit-FINAL-FROM-LANGUAGE.pdf>  
 2. Eurofound, European Quality of Life Survey, 2012

## Part-time work

Part-time is by far the most widespread form of non-standard work, with nearly one in five workers working part-time in the EU-27 in 2009 (Eurostat), most part-timers being women. Studies have shown evidence of a part-time wage penalty for European women.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, career perspectives have also been proven to be reduced for part-time workers. However, it has to be noticed that the number of hours per week for full time employment varies among the different European countries and what can be considered part-time in one country can be full time in another one (for example: 35hours/week is part-time in Germany and full time in France)

Availability of care and support services for children or other dependent family members has a positive and significant effect on the probability of working full-time and a negative one on the probability of working part-time. In recent years, austerity policies have been translated into cuts and reduction of services (childcare, afterschool, day care for elderly and disabled...) that were mainly supporting women in balancing their work and family life. The gender pay gap widens when women have children and when they work part-time. In 2010, the employment rate for women with dependent children was only 64.7% compared with 89.7% for men with children. Part-time is not always a choice for women: it can be the only possibility left for women who wish to stay active in the labour market and families and couples that need and want to have both members earning an income.

Moreover, Eurofound<sup>2</sup> suggests that part-time jobs are on average of low quality, predominantly in traditionally female professions and do not support career progression. In particular, surveys included in the Eurofound report show that part-time workers are in general doing more basic and lower paid work than full-time workers, define themselves as working below their potential and are at a disadvantage in terms of access to training and development opportunities.

## TAPPING INTO THE POTENTIAL OF OLDER WOMEN OF WORKING AGE (50 YEARS AND MORE)

Labour market strategies for women have to take into account the particular situation of women from 50 years onwards. Women in this age category have often very low opportunities to find a job which is in equation with their qualifications and experience, because their career breaks due to unpaid family work are not recognised in the labour market. In 2013, the gap between male and female employment of people aged 55-64 was of 14.2%<sup>2</sup>. Instead of leaving older women longer in minimum income or unemployment schemes, there should be a real strategy for training and labour-market inclusion of older women.

In some countries, older women are not encouraged to start working after longer career breaks for family duties, because they will not have enough time to build up minimum pension rights. Women in this situation are discouraged from looking for work because their country's pension system does not reward carer's leave with adequate entitlements to pensions. A carer's leave directive could introduce these pension rights for carer's leave and have positive effects on the employment of older women.

1. <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef1086.htm>

2. Eurostat, Employment (main characteristics and rates) – annual averages, table lfsi\_emp\_a, 10/05/2014

## MAINSTREAMING INTO THE EUROPEAN POLICY MAKING

Mainstreaming is not an end in itself but a strategy, an approach, and a means to achieve the goal for gender equality. Mainstreaming involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities - policy development, research, advocacy/ dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.

A strong, continued commitment to gender mainstreaming is one of the most effective means to support the promotion of women at work, equality in all activities on the ground, and to ensure that women as well as men can influence, participate in and benefit from a meaningful and fair participation on the labour market. There is a continued need, however, to complement the mainstreaming strategies with tailored interventions to promote equality and women's empowerment, particularly where there are instances of persistent discrimination of women and inequality between women and men.

Gender equality is not specifically addressed in the five quantifiable targets of the EU 2020 Strategy, nor in any of the flagship initiatives, with the exception of the employment target - 75% for women and men. Currently women's employment rate (63%) is far below this target and without a specific gender equality objective it will be impossible to measure, evaluate and monitor the way in which the EU 2020 Strategy and the European semester are impacting on progress to achieve gender equality in the EU. In particular, without having disaggregated data per gender, it will not be possible to evaluate progress for the employment target and fully understand the role played by employment policies, evaluate them and, where necessary, (re)design them.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Empowerment

- Reconciliation policies are essential to implementing change and promoting employment of women. More awareness raising campaigns are needed to foster an understanding of what reconciliation of work and family life means in practice (a more equal way of sharing paid work and unpaid care and household work between men and women)

## Leaves

- To adopt a coherent legislative package on leaves, including maternity, paternity, parental and carers' leaves, to promote a more equal share of care responsibilities between women and men.
- Paternity leave measures should be adopted at EU Level. Provisions can be included in a revised Maternity Leave Directive, which should be approved rapidly.
- Concerning Parental leave, we call for the leave period to be distributed in 3 blocks, one allocated specifically to the mother, another to the father (or the mother's partner) and a third to be taken as the family chooses, by any or both of the parents.
- To support fathers in taking their leave period, the principle of "take it or lose it" must be applied. Employers must inform and support fathers taking up their paternity and parental leaves.
- Carers' Leave Directive for parents or family members (including grandparents) taking care of an ageing or disabled family member should be initiated as soon as possible. This should include measures for provision of trainings and certification for persons coming out of a longer career break because of caring for family members (see examples in chapter 1).

## Employment

- The EU and Member States should support the negotiations of flexible working arrangements, to be negotiated at national or company level, with workers themselves and their representatives, local or company-based "reconciliation plans" in order to attract and retain women in the labour market.
- The EU should support legislation and policy aiming at creating a proper environment for quality part-time employment and smart working, promoting a shift from the culture of presence at work towards an objective driven one.
- Member States should fully implement the Directive 2006/54 on equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast).
- The European Union and Member States should give more visibility and mainstream awareness campaigns on the gender pay gap and on the business case for diversity.

## EXAMPLES

### MALTA NISTA, SHARING WORK-LIFE RESPONSIBILITIES

NISTA, Sharing work-life responsibilities – Initiated by the Gender Unit at the National Employment and Training Organisation, embedded in national policy on gender equality. Financed through ESF.

NISTA is an awareness-raising media campaign (2010-2012) that aimed to promote women's participation in the labour market, which remains at a very low level in Malta. It was initiated by the Gender Unit at the National Employment and Training Organisation and was embedded in national policy on gender equality, with funding from the EU's European Social Fund. The campaign aims to challenge traditional stereotypes, reduce the care gap and promote men's active roles in the family, with a view to enhancing women's employment participation. This was carried out through pre- and post-campaign research, sharing of experiences from other countries, radio and TV slots, billboard poster campaign, a 13-week TV programme and an information booklet. The project was implemented in four phases i) awareness raising across society, ii) challenging traditional stereotypes, iii) promoting men's roles in the family, iv) employers for work-life balance (highlighting best practice employers and benefits of reconciliation). The campaign had a noticeable impact on women's employment participation and better awareness about childcare.



### GERMANY AGENCIES FOR WOMEN AND ECONOMY

The German Federal Land Lower Saxony currently promotes 23 so called "Koordinierungsstellen Frau und Wirtschaft" (co-ordination agencies "women and economy") Some of them provide extended services for women and their reintegration into the labour market after raising a family by providing information and advice. They also initiate trainings to obtain a qualification or certificate. In cooperation with local companies, the co-ordination agencies develop new ways for family-friendly working conditions in order to open up a skilled

workforce and thus an important potential for innovation in the labour market. One instrument of promotion of women at the workplace are so called "überbetriebliche Verbände" (inter-company collaborations) of small and medium enterprises. Co-ordination agencies link the needs of women in the company with the requirements of the enterprise to the women. This makes them an important regional link between the economy, the labour market, further education institutions and women.

### DENMARK "A HUG FROM DADDY"

The company TDC, which is the largest telephone, broadband, and television company in Denmark, has since 2002 had a generous leave policy for parents – but few fathers took up the leave. The company campaign "A hug from Daddy" aimed to raise awareness amongst fathers and has led to a large increase in fathers taking leave, from 13% to almost 100% in 10 years. Fathers get up to ten weeks of paid parental leave, in addition to two weeks leave after a child is born, brought home from hospital, or adopted. One of the aims when the campaign was launched was to show that taking leave would not interrupt career progression. Information was provided on a website and leaflets, new fathers received a package containing a bib, rucksack etc. and letter with information about the parental leave policy.



### GERMANY CHILD CARE PERIODS FOR PENSION

Article 249 SGB VI from the German social Code recognizes so called "Kindererziehungszeiten" for pension. That means that a parent who has stayed at home to take care of their children gains extra pension credits per child (3 for children who were born after 1992 and 2 for children who were born before 1992. These so called "care credits" influence directly the amount of statutory pension and will be paid even if the mother was working in the first three years of the child's life (up to a specified contribution assessment ceiling). It is possible to transfer the care credits to the father by a joint application of the mother and father.

## AUSTRIA PARENTAL PART-TIME

In 2004 a new law for parental part-time work was implemented in Austria. A parent is entitled to parental part-time work if he/she has been working for the company for at least three years and if the size of the company is more than 20 employees. Based on the parental part-time work regulation, a parent may reduce weekly working hours to any extent and he/she may change working hours (specific days or day times) until the child is seven years old or starts school. Evaluations have shown that 6% of all parents who were eligible made use of parental part-time work in 2007. 14% of parental part-time work users were men, which is rather high compared to male participation rates of other family policy measures, such as the parental leave regulation.



## SEVERAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FAMCOMPASS – FAMILY COMPETENCE PASSPORT

The FAMCOMPASS is a tool developed to assess and validate the competences men and women have obtained in family life, in their roles as educators, home makers and care takers. This tool has been used to coach the intake for relevant education and training programmes, to grant exemption from exams and facilitate shorter schooling careers, to allow the validation of these skills and competences on the labour market in the sectors of care, social care and childcare.



## IRELAND MATERNITY AND PARENTING TOOLKIT: IBEC- IRISH BUSINESS AND EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION

IBEC's toolkit has been produced to assist employers in proactively and positively managing their workforce during pregnancy, maternity leave and upon return from maternity leave. This toolkit aims to provide employers with a series of practices, templates and examples from which they can learn and that employers can adapt to their company in order to smooth the transition in these periods. It also focuses on the extra difficulties placed in the path of women during times of pregnancy, maternity or adoptive leave and return from leave, which may penalise their earnings and career progression, unless employers are aware of how to handle these changing circumstances appropriately.

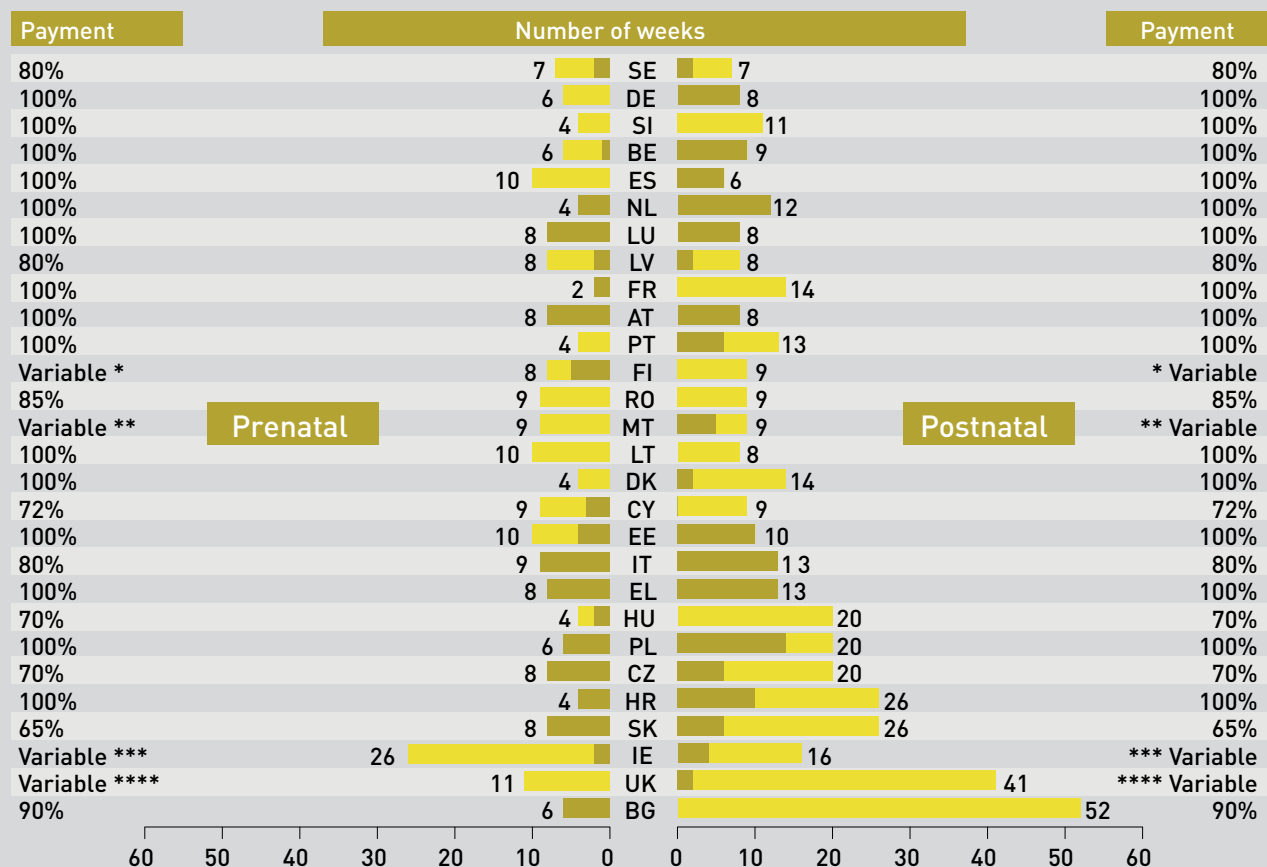


## PORTUGAL I-GEN: COMPANIES FOR EQUALITY FORUM

CITE - the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment initiates and facilitates, together with a task force of 7 companies, a forum of 21 companies across different economic sectors – held in 2013 - who committed to introduce 90 measures on gender equality, including parental rights, maternity, paternity and reconciling work and family life. This initiative aims to further progress company commitment to gender equality and to address obstacles to reconciliation. A number of innovative measures have been put in place, including support for reintegration after leave, encouraging fathers to take up parental leave etc. The Forum holds regular meetings, training and awareness raising tools, media etc.



## MATERNITY LEAVE IN THE EU



Mandatory  
 Non mandatory

**Current EU legislation**  
**14**  
 Weeks minimum of which 2 mandatory

**Commission proposal**  
**18**  
 Weeks minimum of which 6 mandatory after birth

**EP amendment**  
**20**  
 Weeks minimum of which 6 mandatory after birth

### Note on payment

- \* FI First 56 days, 90% of salary; remainder (49 days) 70%
- \*\* MT 100% of earnings (for 14 weeks) + 4 weeks flat rate
- \*\*\* IE Weekly rate (€230) paid for 26 weeks; the remaining 16 weeks unpaid
- \*\*\*\* UK First 6 weeks, 90%; next 33 weeks, flat-rate payments of either €138.18 [€170] or 90% of average gross weekly earnings (whichever is lower); the remaining 13 weeks are unpaid.