
Text of the questionnaire – January 2016

1. Do you agree with the description of the issues in the attached consultation paper as correct and sufficient?

We believe that the description of the issues made in the consultation paper is correct. We particularly appreciate and share the gender perspective that applies to the whole document, and more in particular the connection with the issue of women participation to the workforce and gender equality applied to employment. CEC has a specific interest in this field: in 2013 – 2014 it has completed (in the framework of a EU-funded project) a study on how to improve the female participation to the managerial workforce in 5 selected European countries, which clearly revealed how

2. Do you consider that improvements should be made to EU legislation to improve work-life balance for parents and people with caring responsibilities in view of the issues raised in point 4 of the attached consultation paper, and if so what type of improvements?

We do believe that the ultimate goal of any legislative intervention in the domain of work-life balance should be setting a coherent approach to the different issues associated (equal pay, access to the labour market, availability of caring services, etc..) based on the enforcement of a real sharing of responsibilities between men and women. In this domain, the risk is high that measures adopted with the aim of supporting women do actually contribute to further stressing the situation of weakness in which they tend to find themselves (for instance, particularly long maternity leave periods that further worsen the underrepresentation of women in the workforce).

Concerning the individual issues raised in point 4 of the consultation paper, CEC believes that:

- a) Parental leave – legislation should mirror fully the acquired acknowledgement that childcare is a responsibility to be shared equally by both parents. This might include the provision of a “paternal leave” system, which should in any case provide for equal conditions (in terms of duration of the leave, % of the salary to be paid and arrangements concerning the reintegration in the job at the end of the leave period, for instance) for fathers and mothers.
- b) Maternity – a clear distinction must be made between the rights deriving from the activity of bearing children and those deriving from the necessity to provide care to them. Provisions concerning maternity leave must ensure the smoothest and quickest possible transition back to work for those mothers wishing to do so, while at the same time offering the widest protection against any unfair treatment (such as professional demotion) and/or dismissals.

- c) Carers' leave – as stated in the consultation document, the burden of providing care to the elderly and/or to those family members in need of help is mainly on women, with dramatic consequences on their professional perspectives. Again, legislation must be adopted to make sure that also in this domain, working men and women can share evenly such family responsibilities.
- d) Flexible work arrangements – managers more than other categories of workers have profited from the adoption of new communication technologies to their working arrangements, which now allow for more flexibility in working time. The diffusion of these new technologies is already modifying the way people work, with significant consequences in terms of job productivity, different forms of ensuring one's work-life balance. For this reason, we share this approach focusing on the diffusion of flexible working arrangements not only for employment-related issues, but also as a tool to facilitate the assumption of care responsibilities for workers, and we welcome any legislative initiative going in that direction.

3. Would you consider initiating a dialogue under Article 155 TFEU on any of the issues identified in point 4 of this consultation?

CEC European Managers is willing to start negotiations with the other European social partners on this issue, also based on the priorities and commitments set in the joint Working Programme for 2015 – 2017. In case negotiations should not prove successful, we would welcome the intervention of the European Commission, which should define a common framework, setting common goals for all EU countries, and leaving national governments or social partners via collective agreements decide about the details.