



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

Time for the Family. Family Time Policy as an Opportunity for Sustainable Family Policy

Eighth Family Report

- **Statement by the Federal Government**
- **Summary
of the report drafted by the committee of
experts on the Eighth Family Report**

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Part A: Statement by the Federal Government

I.

Purpose of the Report

In its resolution of 23 June 1965 (Drucksache IV/3474), the German Bundestag commissioned the Federal Government to submit Family Reports. This resolution was augmented and amended by the resolution of 18 June 1970 (Drucksache VI/834), by the decision of 9 December 1982 (Drucksache 9/1286), and by the decision of 11 November 1993 (Drucksache 12/5811). The Federal Government is called upon therein to constitute a committee of experts during every second legislative period in order to submit a report on the situation of families in Germany, along with a statement by the Federal Government to the German Bundestag. Whereby (at least) every third report should depict the situation of the families as comprehensively as possible, other reports can be dedicated to special topics. The reports should also provide information regarding the success of the measures that have already been adopted in relation to the goals they sought to achieve. In its resolution of 11 November 1993, the German Bundestag requested that future Family and Youth Reports be augmented by a description of the situation in relation to children.

The First, Third, Fifth, and Seventh Family Reports comprehensively described the situation of families. The Second, Fourth and Sixth Family Reports dealt with specific topics. The Eighth Family Report, submitted here under the title “Time for the Family. Family Time Policy as an Opportunity for Sustainable Family Policy”, is, in turn, a special report.

The Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth appointed an interdisciplinary committee consisting of eight academic experts on 4 July 2010 and commissioned them to draft the Eighth Family Report. The committee was instructed to draft a report on the topic of “Time for (Responsibility in) the Family” by mid-2011.

Families need time to develop a successful family life, one that is characterised by the assumption of responsibility and reciprocal care between the generations, and is now also increasingly connected with gainful employment. The reliable and flexible schedules that families require are determined in every day life and – to various degrees – in life cycles by external institutions and pace-setters. Against the background of changing social time structures, in which mothers, fathers, children and older member of the family are entwined, the goal of the report was to focus on the time requirements and typical time conflicts of families, and to develop options for social time policy. The committee’s task, in this conjunction, was to relate general developments in the modern service and knowledge society through an internationally comparative perspective and the critical examination of developments in time policy in comparable countries.

In its report, the committee illustrated the importance of time policy for the family. Families are dependent upon framework conditions that promote the decision for children and life with children and mutual care and also ensure this between the younger and the older generation in the future. Families are sustained equally by economic and time resources. Families need a sufficient and reliable amount of time in order to experience relationships, develop bonds, and provide mutual care within the family, and in order to fulfil the necessary tasks that they perform for society.

The Federal Government agrees with the committee that modern family policy makes it possible for families to make sovereign decisions on how they use their time. For the Federal Government, as well as for the committee, being able to choose how to live life is an important goal of family policy activities. Equal opportunities and participation for men and women of every age, opportunities for the positive development of children and securing long-term family care for older people and people in need of help are all essential targets on which family time policy is oriented.

In its report, the committee developed cornerstones of innovative, sustainable, and effective family time policy from which it, in turn, derived recommendations for taking action in the realm of social policy. The recommendations are directed towards the various parties that play a role in time policy; some of them can be implemented in the short term, others in the long-term.

In order to draft the report, the committee of experts engaged in active dialogue with the advisory council, which was especially established for this purpose and consisted of representatives of family policy initiatives, welfare federations, the churches, the unions, and federations of business and industry. The committee also played an important role in various events related to such policies and conducted specific discussions with experts.

The Federal Government thanks the committee for their dedicated work and their report, which has a solid scientific basis and sets new precedents in terms of social policy.

II.

Family time policy as an independent field of policy within the context of effective family policy

The report underlines the importance of time policy for families. It must be established as an independent field of effective family policy, aimed at material security for families, the reconciliation of family, working life, careers, and appropriate support for the development of children. Time is – as the report and previous studies show – an important factor for family satisfaction. The Federal Government sees the course it has set for family policy confirmed by the report: in addition to the new orientation of financial benefits and the focus on the expansion of the childcare infrastructure, the triad that is called for in family policy must be filled out by concepts for taking action on family-friendly time policy.

One of the major achievements of this report is that it places the many changes in the time-related framework conditions for families and in families within the context of comprehensive social, economic, and demographic development processes and necessary developments.

The Federal Government shares the opinion of the committee of experts in viewing time policy as a part of general social policy. The welfare of a society today cannot only be measured in figures for the Gross Domestic Product. A new way of measuring welfare encompasses not only material wealth, but also the dimensions of health, education, access to resources, and participation. The access to the **resource of time** is becoming an indicator of **wealth** in modern society and in the **quality of life of families**.

In Germany, the wealth of time is relatively high, because there is *per se* no lack of time. As the committee of experts explains in view of increasing life expectancies and the reduction in average weekly and yearly working hours, in international comparison, there is no general lack of time in Germany.

However, when people decide to have a child and, to an even greater degree, in lives together as a family, new challenges emerge through new roles for women and men and new schedules dictated by framework conditions that set the pace. A lack of time and time conflicts are decisive for families, especially in certain phases of life and family constellations. Hence families differ greatly in relation to the abundance of the time they have, and this has considerable influence both on their **quality of life** as well as a family's **satisfaction**.

The Federal Government agrees with the report, which claims that, due to the increasing gainful employment of mothers, the organisation of time-related framework conditions has become a central challenge for mothers and fathers. The report shows – also in summarising significant empirical data (second chapter) – time conflicts that manifest themselves in insuf-

ficient time, a lack of quality time, in insufficient control over time as well as in poorly coordinated schedules in relation to how families really live. The greater burden of managing the reconciliation of domestic tasks and time falls, as a rule, on the mothers.

The Federal Government agrees with the committee that family time conflicts have considerable consequences for society and the economy as a whole. Hence, the solution of these time conflicts is a task for which society on the whole is responsible. The report does not analyse specific time conflicts encountered by different family forms and family constellations and the possible changes therein during the life cycle. Especially the time situation in families in which mothers, with or without partners, provide the essential contribution to household income is barely mentioned. The situation of migrant families was not taken into consideration. It will be necessary to take greater consideration of the existing diversity and the possibility of changing family constellations in the life-cycle perspective in formulating time policy.

The committee – as it was commissioned to do – chose a life cycle perspective on families. Important questions thereby came into focus: what time-related framework conditions do parents with children need depending on their age, which time resources do older people have for providing care, which time resources are needed, on the other hand, for the support and long-term care of older people in families. This perspective is essential for developing tailor-made framework conditions so that families will be able to provide various forms of care. The Federal Government considers it especially commendable that the committee also investigated the question as to the influence of time as a factor in the decision to have children. It chose an innovative methodology in designing a survey that provides answers to questions regarding the subjectively perceived pressure of time and time conflicts as well as the influence of time-related factors on fertility. The results derived from this survey show that time is an important aspect for couples without children in making a decision in favour or against having children. The subjective perception of time-related stress and time conflicts are more important in this context than the objectively available time budget. The report also clarifies the considerable, persistent difference between women and men both in their ideas regarding what children mean for their own schedules as well as in relation to the selection of possible options for a solution. It is mainly women who interrupt and/or reduce their gainful employment, which often results in a return to traditional role models, as was also shown in the First Equality Report.

The Federal Government agrees with the committee's conclusion that time, and especially the subjective perception to time, plays an important role in deciding to have children. The commission illustrates that flexibility in the use of time and flexible working hours are of particular importance in deciding to have children. The Federal Government sees this as a confirmation of the fact that its efforts, especially in creating framework conditions for a better reconciliation of family and working life to support the decision to have children, are worthwhile.

The Federal Government agrees with the committee that it is primarily just a question of *more* time. The increase in the time sovereignty for families, a better synchronisation of the schedules of all of the relevant institutions, the redistribution of time during the life cycle, between genders and generations, the use of services outside of the family, and improved time competence (of families) are the central fields of action and goals of family time policy identified by the committee; they will guide the activities of the Federal Government.

The Federal Government would like to ensure that families have a greater **abundance of time** and more **time sovereignty** and to contribute to the **better synchronisation** of the timing of various institutions. In this conjunction, the distribution of responsibilities and time between the genders must also be examined. Even though old role models are increasingly dissipating, it is still mainly women who assume responsibility for managing the reconciliation of domestic tasks and time by altering their participation in gainful employment, by initially interrupting their gainful employment and then beginning to work again to a more limited extent. Men are focused more on their professional careers, which are important for the family, while women choose to take time for their families, which, as a rule, leads to the long-term interruption of their professional careers. Time policy must make alternatives possible in this context.

III.

Time sovereignty for families through monetary benefits and infrastructural services

More time sovereignty through the parental allowance

The parental allowance creates a protected sphere for mothers and fathers after the birth of a child and has become an essential source of support for young families. It has thus become an important pillar of modern family policy. The report refers, with good reason, to the fact that the parental allowance gives mothers an incentive to avoid interrupting their gainful employment for longer phases and thus promotes their return to working life. This corresponds with the wishes of the majority of mothers and contributes to their being able to better utilise their potential for gainful employment. The parental allowance increases the integration of fathers in family work and thereby promotes the modern distribution of tasks and role model responsibilities within the family, which are desired by the majority. The positive development in the participation of fathers, shown in the report, continues to make progress. Currently, the participation of fathers has already reached 25.4 percent (Federal Statistical Office, Elterngeld für im 2. Quartal 2010 geborene Kinder). The parental allowance thus improves the options for caring for a child in a partnership.

More time sovereignty through good and flexible education and care for children until they reach school age

The expansion of childcare commensurate with demand, by providing differentiated options for affordable, highly diverse childcare, with flexible hours, for children under three years of age, is a pressing goal for the Federal Government and one of the central demographic requirements. Good quality childcare commensurate with demand makes a decisive contribution to improving the living conditions of families. It is an important basis for being able to reliably plan time and a prerequisite for parents' being able to reconcile family and working life.

Against this background, the Federal Government sees the expansion of adequate childcare in order to ensure the legal right to childcare as of August 2012 for children between the first and third birthdays as a responsibility of society on the whole and is contributing four billion euros to finance the expansion in support of the Länder and municipal governments. With the 2007 agreement between the Federal Government and the Länder to provide childcare for 750,000 children nation-wide by 2013, it will be possible to provide care for nearly all of the 39 percent of children under three, i. e. the national average quota of children requiring care determined by a survey of parents in 2009 and 2010 and documented in the Interim Report for the Evaluation of the Child Day-Care Promotion Act (second report on the Child Day-Care Promotion Act). In the current phase of expansion, with a childcare quote of roughly 25 per-

cent nationally by 1 March 2011, it is understandable that many parents find the childcare options currently available to be quantitatively insufficient. In addition, this still insufficient capacity is mainly used by the children of gainfully employed parents and thus predominantly children from better educated and materially more secure families. In order to provide access to childcare for disadvantaged children, both with and without migrant backgrounds with the intention of improving their chances in relation to education, the Federal Government sees the need to steadfastly continue the expansion of childcare that has begun.

An expansion of childcare commensurate with the demand must be based on knowledge of the requirements of parents and children, which must be specifically surveyed on a local level in order to facilitate tailor-made solutions. The survey of parents for the second report on the Child Day-Care Promotion Act illustrates those childcare solutions that are flexible in terms of time ultimately have priority over the provision of all-day childcare. The focus of the demand for childcare in the age group under 3 is for 15 to 25 hours per week (40 percent of those surveyed). 24 percent of the parents sought childcare for up to 35 hours, and only 11 percent for longer than 35 hours a week. Hence, the conclusion drawn in the report, according to which a real choice for parents would only exist when all-day childcare was available for all children in this age group, is not shared.

At the same time, the Federal Government recognises the need to provide parents with a choice in relation to the most suitable childcare option for their child in individual cases. In addition to the expansion of capacity in childcare facilities, it supports the creation of child day care structures and the recruitment and training of childminders through the Aktionsprogramm Kindertagespflege (Action Programme for Child Day Care, 2009–2014). This form of childcare, which is very similar to the family, is an alternative that conforms with both the needs of very young children as well as the parents' desire for more flexible hours for childcare options.

Parents need to be certain that their children are not only being cared and provided for, but, more importantly, that they are learning and that good behaviour is being fostered. The mandate of the Child Day-Care Expansion Act already expanded childcare to the triad of fostering development, education and care. The Federal Government confirms the assertions made in the Family Report, namely that the quality of options for early intervention, in particular, are an answer to the negative effects of childcare described in some studies, especially for very young children. Therefore, the Federal Government is not only investing in the quantitative expansion of childcare, but also, to a considerable extent, in the further development of the quality of care. This includes the qualification of people for day care within the context of the *Aktionsprogramme Kindertagespflege* (Action Programme for Child Day-Care, 2009–2014), the *Weiterbildungsinitiative Frühpädagogische Fachkräfte* (Ger. Abbr. = WIFF, Further Training Initiative for Early Learning Specialists, 2008–2014), the campaign to recruit trained personnel *Profis für die Kitas* (Profis for Day Care Facilities, 2011–2013) and the *Anschwung für Frühe Chancen* (Push for Early Opportunities, 2011–2014) programmes. The Federal Government goes a step further in focusing on the further development of education in teaching languages, especially for children under three years of age. Within the context of the *Offensive Frühe Chancen: Schwerpunkt-Kitas Sprache & Integration* (Offensive for Early Opportunities: Child-care Facilities Focusing on Language & Integration, 2011–2014) programme, 4,000 childcare

facilities in socially disadvantaged areas and/or with a large percentage of children in need of remedial language programmes, with or without migrant backgrounds, are to be converted into childcare facilities focusing on language and integration; the knowledge gained from the programme in the individual Länder is to be formulated as universal cornerstones for quality standards and framework conditions for intervention.

In this context, the Federal Government supports and welcomes the initiatives in the Länder to further develop childcare facilities into family centres as well as the recommendation in the Family Report to transform childcare facilities into social-context-specific family service or multi-generation centres. The services they offer, which are embedded in the comprehensive network of the social context, offer expanded infrastructural framework conditions for the diverse forms of support needed by parents and children. They make it easier to approach disadvantaged families and, especially, families with little experience with the educational system, and to recruit them as users of programmes to support the development of young children in order to improve their educational prospects. The Federal Government will therefore assess the options for developing a *Familien-Kita* (Family Daycare Facilities) module in socially disadvantaged areas within the context of the Offensive for Early Opportunities.

The Federal Government agrees with the committee of experts that providing for more all-day schools offering children additional educational and developmental opportunities, beyond the usual realm of school, improves the reconciliation of family and working life, promotes the gainful employment of the parents, especially the mothers, and that education and care in all-day schools could have a positive effect on family life. This is also reflected in recent findings from the study funded by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research, and Technology (BMBF), *Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagschulen – StEG* (Study on the Development of All-day Schools, 2005–2011). Childcare in all-day schools thus supports both the extension of the time available for gainful employment as well as (re-)entry into the workforce. Families with few resources feel a particular need for all-day schools as an option for providing them with relief – and this has a positive effect on the family climate.

The report rightly emphasises the dynamic expansion of all-day schools in this connection. Good reconciliation between family and working life must also continue to be possible once the children enter school by ensuring the continuity of child day care after they enter school. Half-day schools pose tremendous problems for the parents in terms of time, because there is often a gap in the afternoon when the children have no childcare. The use of all-day options is closely related to employment status. The reliable and high-quality education and care for school children in the form of school lunch programmes and high-quality education options outside of classes and the usual realm of school are, therefore essential tasks. The Federal Government agrees with the committee of experts that the expansion of all-day schools with childcare commensurate with demand and high-quality educational options through links to the local infrastructure would make it possible for parents to better reconcile family and working life and increase their time sovereignty. The considerable regional differences in the extent of this expansion, especially between East and West Germany, must be gradually overcome.

The Federal Government and the Länder have, in recent years, strongly promoted the establishment of all-day programmes in the schools. Within the context of an investment programme, *Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung* (IZBB), over 8,000 all-day schools were subsidised. In their educational policy, the Länder have focused on the quantitative and qualitative expansion of all-day schools through their own programmes and have thereby set ambitious goals for the coming years. In the meantime, nearly half of the schools providing general education in the primary and secondary sectors nationwide offer all-day programmes. They will continue to be expanded.

Decisive for the effectiveness of educational options beyond the usual school realm is their quality; this has often been shown by research. The Federal Government and the Länder support the development of the quality of all-day schools through support provided by the *Full-time Education in All-day Schools!* programme initiated by the Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung, which includes regional service agencies in the Länder as well as an accompanying study.

High-quality all-day educational and childcare programmes for schoolchildren and adolescents not only correspond with the wishes of most parents, they also have verifiable economic effects. According to estimates by the Institute for the Study of Labour (IZA, 2011), sufficient after-school care for school children could enable nearly half a million mothers, who previously had no childcare or no suitable form of childcare, to begin working. At the same time, as many as a million mothers would be able to increase their working hours. This increase in the availability of labour is in keeping with the mothers' desire to work and can counteract the threatened lack of highly trained personnel. Higher participation in the working world by women would also help to reduce the Gender Pension Gap, i. e., the gender-specific gap in individual income to provide security in old age and improve the perspectives of women having a source of income in old age. The fact that better childcare options help to ensure that enough highly trained personnel is available is also illustrated by the *Grundschulcheck 2011* (Primary School Check) conducted by the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The interest of business and industry in highly trained personnel has led to a focus on reliable and high-quality after-school care for school children.

Holidays exacerbate the problem of reconciling work and family, particularly when school holidays last many weeks. The Federal Government sees, as does the committee of experts, a positive development in the growing number and the diversity of options for childcare during the holiday period, some of which are offered within the context of all-day schools. The expansion of all-day schools must be flanked by additional reliable childcare options. In addition to the improvement of childcare during school holidays, especially for fringe times, before and after the regular school hours, care in emergency situations is also important, since these are situations generally not covered by the childcare hours in an all-day school. Childcare in fringe times is especially important in improving options for gainful employment and increasing the time sovereignty of those parents who work shifts or are employed in the service sector with its long opening hours.

The Federal Government addressed this topic in mid-2010 within the context of its strategy to improve the reconciliation of family and working life for parents with schoolchildren, and it initiated the developmental partnership *Unterstützungsnetzwerke für Eltern mit Schulkindern* (Support Networks for Parents with Schoolchildren) along with Local Initiatives for the Family in early 2011. The extent of the need for action is illustrated by the fact that already over 120 Local Initiatives for the Family are participating in this developmental partnership. All of the relevant parties on a local level cooperate in the Local Initiatives for the Family. They not only include schools, municipal governments and organisations that provide childcare options, but also such parties as the Jobcenters and businesses. In this developmental partnership, strategies and possible solutions for the establishment and expansion of linked systems of reliable and high-quality day care for school children that provide consistency, both in terms of the time and location, are drafted. What is learned in this context regarding activities and solutions will be made available to a broad audience in a handbook, where it will be augmented by concrete approaches to projects. The distribution of the handbook, at as many locations as possible, will be supported by the Local Initiatives for the Family.

In addition, the multi-generation houses, supported by the Federal Government within the context of an eponymous programme of action, offer a broad spectrum of reliable and flexible childcare options – especially in cases of emergency and fringe time care – that have positive effects in terms of relief for families.

The Federal Government shares the opinion of the committee of experts, namely that new forms of planning, management, and coordination are needed in order to be able to identify the needs of families and to offer childcare commensurate with demand and high-quality educational options locally. Municipal hubs, such as multi-generation houses, which offer a broad spectrum of options, can also serve to reduce the time pressure on families as well as providing such options as school holiday childcare – and cooperation with all-day schools in some cases. In this conjunction, the cooperation of the educational institutions with the parents and families must be intensified. The knowledge gained through the developmental partnership with the local alliances shows that the very different needs of families, in terms of time and coordination, can best be satisfied by a diverse, coordinated, and reliable spectrum of options that can also be provided through cooperation between various parties. The Federal Government will continue this developmental partnership and focus both on the integration of the most important pace-setters for families as well as the analysis of the coordination at interfaces between programmes and pace-setters.

Children and adolescents, however, also require time that they can use at their own discretion. This is necessary for personal development and the formation of an individual identity. They therefore need different informal spaces for communication and withdrawal – according to their age and gender within the contexts of all-day schools. This is indicated by research in studies accompanying such projects as *Familie, Peers und Ganztagschule* (Family, Peers and All-day Schools), which was funded by the BMBF, as well as the *Studie zu Bewegung, Spiel und Sport in der Ganztagschule – StUBSS* (Study on Exercise, Play and Sports in All-day Schools). According to the available research on all-day schools, all-day options do not have a negative effect of the participation of children and adolescents in educational programmes outside of school, such as sports clubs and music schools. The effect of possible limitations on available

free time during the afternoon – e. g., as a result of attending an all-day programme or an 8-year upper level school – should nevertheless continue to be monitored in the future.

Support for the family through household-related services

The Federal Government agrees with the committee of experts' assessment of the role of household-related services in supporting the family in order to provide greater time sovereignty through the redistribution of tasks. The background for the demand for household-related services to support the family is the desire to gain time and relief in the family's everyday life, both for young families with children as well as for families with older members and members who require help or long-term care. Comparative international analyses also show that the use of such services contributes primarily to relief for mothers, who not only carry the greatest burden in terms of providing care, but also in terms of housework, by contributing to an equal division of work within the family. The Federal Government underlines the necessity of enhancing household-related services for families and differentiating between legal and illegal employment in private households.

The Federal Government is currently in the process of drafting a concept for improving the use of household-related, family-supporting services, which focuses both on the supply and demand sides. There is not only a need for optimisation in the configuration of public subsidies. Market transparency must also be improved and access to household-related services must also be simplified. In order to make it easier for families to take advantage of such services, the transparency of the options for family-supporting services should be increased, and reservations and barriers overcome through persuasion and information – as the report correctly determines. A possible solution could be to consign these tasks to regional service centres responsible for household-related and family-supporting services throughout the country. Through this centralisation, which would make it possible to approach a partner responsible in a supervisory capacity, service could be improved for everyone involved, while using pre-existing administrative structures and ensuring cost neutrality. On the local level, multigeneration houses, comparable facilities, and, for example, clearing centres for long-term care counselling, as well as outpatient and inpatient long-term care facilities located in rural areas, can serve as important building blocks in this service infrastructure. They can ensure the necessary transparency in a local context and, thus, bring supply and demand closer together. It can be assumed that the need for employees in this sector will increase in the future. Training is essential in order to ensure the availability of the required personnel.

In this context, the report considers a tax deduction for **childcare costs** particularly important. The Federal Government assumes, as does the committee, that this would provide an additional positive financial incentive for mothers to engage in gainful employment. From 2006 to 2011, it was possible to deduct two-thirds of all childcare costs up to 4,000 euros per child per year from one's total income as a business expenditure, a business expense, or as a special expenditure (Art. 9c of the Income Tax Act – Ger. Abbr. = EStG). After a change in the law at the beginning of 2012, it is still possible to deduct the same amount for childcare costs, but now regardless of the parents' employment situation and as a uniform special expenditure (Art. 10, para. 1, no. 5 EStG in the Tax Simplification Act version of 2011). The introduction of a central

norm for deducting childcare costs, regardless of the context from which they result, now also relieves parents who have, up until now, not been able to deduct childcare costs from their income at all; this also has great potential for simplifying the legal situation and reducing bureaucracy. Thus, it is possible to deduct childcare costs in addition to the uniform tax deduction of 2,160 euros (in 2009) or 2,640 euros (as of 2010) per child, which only takes the cost of raising a child, education, or vocational training into consideration for all parents across the board. Within the context of an overall evaluation of benefits related to marriage and family, the Federal government is considering which additional measures are possible in order to more effectively achieve the goals of fostering children's early development, better reconciliation of family and working life, and the realisation of many mothers' desire to engage in gainful employment.

IV.

Time sovereignty in the working world: more flexibility and better reconciliation of family and working life

The Federal Government agrees with the committee's finding that gainful employment is the most important external factor in setting the pace in the way families organise their time and is thus of particular importance for successful family life, i. e., the coordination of working hours and family life according to the wishes of mothers and fathers. Hence, the Federal Government welcomes the suggestion in the report that management and labour work together to provide employees with family responsibilities more time sovereignty and to create family-friendly company cultures. Gainfully employed parents and/or parents who desire to engage in gainful employment need flexible working hours, programmes to help them maintain contact with their employers, further training programmes during parental leave, aid in re-entering the labour market, and alternative career paths, so that both genders can engage in qualified work that can be reconciled with family obligations on all levels of existing hierarchies. This makes it possible to create and ensure real choice in relation to how people organise their lives. Aid in reentering the labour market should also be provided for parents who interrupt their gainful employment for family reasons for periods of more than three years. In cases where there is a special need for support, the "Perspektive Wiedereinstieg" (Perspective Re-entry) programme provides help for people reentering the labour market (www.perspektive-wiedereinstieg.de).

The Federal Government sees the committee of experts' analysis as a confirmation of its efforts to create a family-friendly working world. Through the company programme, Success Factor Family, the Federal Government has been promoting family-conscious personnel policy in business and industry, in cooperation with business and industrial federations and the unions, for several years now. The company programme includes the eponymous company network organised by the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce; it has grown to nearly 4,000 members in the meantime. This network of companies has established itself as the central platform for employers and influencers interested in family-conscious personnel policy or those already active in support of this cause. In addition, the Federal Government has been supporting the career and family audit since 2004, an initiative launched by the Hertie Foundation, as a seal of quality for family-friendly personnel policy. In view of the demographic transition, it will only be possible to counteract the threatened lack of highly trained personnel through flexible working hours that take family responsibilities into consideration and balance the diverse interests within a company, especially by integrating more highly trained mothers into the labour market while, at the same time, making it possible for families to rely on having time together.

The findings of the report, which indicated that parents' desired and actual participation in the labour market often diverge greatly, corresponds with the findings of the Federal Government. Since mothers who are employed part-time have a tendency to want to work more and men who are employed full-time have a tendency to want to work less, there is, on the whole, a great demand for nearly full-time jobs with working hours of between 25 and 35 hours per week. Against this background, the Federal Government expanded the company programme by launching the Family-conscious Working Hours initiative in October of 2010. It serves to motivate employers, and thus supports more flexible working hour models that provide mothers with wider career opportunities and fathers with more free time. Nearly full-time, part-time models thereby play a very important role. They facilitate better financial security and combat poverty in old age. It also promotes the reconciliation of management responsibilities and responsibility for the family.

By signing the Charter for Family-conscious Working Hours during a high-level meeting between the Federal Chancellor and high-ranking representatives of business and industry under the motto *At the Right Place at the Right Time* on 8 February 2011, policymakers as well as business and industry committed to joint efforts to promote family-conscious working hours. In the wake of the implementation of the charter, the Federal government is conducting Dialogues on Working Hour Culture focusing on specific topics and sectors during which selected companies will cooperate in drafting modern concepts on how to organise working hours that are suited for implementation in actual practice. The results will be included in the interim balance in February 2012 and will be made available to other companies within the context of recommendations for action. A final balance of the activities will be drawn together with the partners from business and industry and the unions in the spring of 2013. The Federal Government will continue to intensively promote family-conscious working hours and further expand the focus on cooperation with management and the unions within the context of the company programme Success Factor Family.

The Federal Government expressly shares the opinion that management and labour have a special responsibility for determining working conditions. There is great potential in the process of reaching agreements on legally binding framework conditions by collective bargaining partners, the representatives of business and industry and labour, which must be better exploited. It is their responsibility to introduce flexible working hour models that appropriately take both the interests of the companies and those of the employees into consideration and contribute to better reconciliation of family and working life. In the meantime, many collective bargaining agreements and company agreements from various sectors contain regulations that promote the reconciliation of family obligations and working life. The Federal Government very much welcomes this development. If the leeway is used intelligently, a real win-win situation for the employees and employers will result. In a cooperative partnership, it is possible to find flexible solutions that not only keep the interests of the employer in mind, but also the employee's need to plan reliably. Conditions such as the size of the company, the structures of the workforce, as well as special sectorial and regional characteristics can also be taken into consideration individually. Management and labour are therefore important partners for the Federal Government in creating a family-friendly working world. The Federal Government will continue to count on proven forms of cooperation in order to make all parties more aware of the advantages of family-friendly working hours and to enable them to develop well-targeted solutions that correspond with the actual need.

The report points out that lawmakers have, in recent years, already created legal framework conditions that specifically take the needs of the family into consideration. However, the committee determines that the “structural blindness” of labour law in relation to the family, in particular, makes the reconciliation of family and working life more difficult. The Federal Government does not share this opinion. National and European lawmakers have continually introduced numerous provisions in labour law explicitly intended to protect employees with family obligations and promote the reconciliation of family and working life. In addition, additional important general provisions in labour law protect (even without expressly mentioning the family) the interests of employees with family obligations. Ultimately, employers must take special consideration of family obligations in making discretionary decisions, especially with regard to working hours. The decisions handed down by labour courts also demonstrate the high priority of the family obligations in labour law.

Hence, lawmakers have created the legal framework conditions to support the reconciliation of family and working life and, at the same time, to preserve the essential principles in labour law: freedom of contract and autonomy in collective bargaining. Nevertheless, there may be a need to adjust the legal framework conditions in response to changes in real-life conditions. The focus of the Federal Government thereby lies on the targeted further development of the Federal Parental Allowance and Parental Leave Act (Ger. abbr. = BEEG). The concrete changes recommended to increase the time sovereignty of employees with family obligations during parental leave will therefore be examined thoroughly.

Flexibilisation of Parental Leave

The report developed various recommendations for making parental leave taken according to Art. 15 ff. BEEG more flexible in order to increase the time sovereignty of parents in the working world.

The Federal Government shares the committee’s opinion that not only the parental allowance makes an important contribution to the parents’ time sovereignty during the child’s first year of life, but that parental leave of up to three years also considerably expands the families’ leeway in terms of time. The currently applicable regulations regarding parental leave make it possible for employers to take a leave from work in order to dedicate themselves to the care of their children or to continue working part-time during this period. Parental leave thus provides parents with more leeway in order to better reconcile family and working life.

One of the recommendations of the committee for the flexibilisation of parental leave taken according to Art. 15, para. 2, clause 4 of the BEEG is to make it possible to carry over parental leave more flexibly. According to the currently valid regulations, people who are entitled to parental leave can carry over as much as twelve months of their three-year parental leave with the consent of their employer within a period ending with the child’s eighth birthday. Lawmakers wanted to make it possible for parents to be able to provide support for their child during the first year of school.

The commission correctly points out that, in special cases, there may be a need for more intensive care by the parents at a later time, such as during the transition to an upper level school, which is also a time at which other options for care no longer come into question. Especially in view of Art. 10, para. 1, no. 5 EStG, according to which childcare costs can only be deducted from income for tax purposes up until the child's fourteenth birthday, the Federal Government considers an extension of the period during which these costs can be claimed worth considering. Completely suspending the time limit would lead to an additional bureaucratic burden for employers and is currently not considered advisable in view of small and mid-sized businesses.

The recommendation that parents be allowed to carry over as much as 24 months of parental leave for future use, instead of just 12 months, will be examined by the Federal Government. The Federal Government shares the committee's opinion that such an extension would favour the earlier re-entry of those entitled to parental leave into the labour market and thus contribute to sustainable family policy.

The report also recommends the expansion of the circle of those who are entitled to take **grandparents' leave**. Grandparents are already entitled to take parental leave to care for their grandchildren according to Art. 15, para. 1a of the BEEG subject to strict requirements. The Federal Government introduced this right in 2009, especially in order to support minors and parents who were still in vocational training. The recommendation of the committee to further develop grandparents' leave pursues goals similar to measures introduced by the Federal Government to promote the social engagement and participation of older people. The Federal Government will examine the committee's recommendations to the extent that they are in harmony with the goal of increasing the participation of older people in gainful employment.

In examining the implementation of the previously mentioned recommendations, the Federal Government is of the opinion that the effects on social insurance regulations and claims, in particular, as well as additional burdens that may result for the employer, must be considered, and that additional burdens for the employers must be limited.

Enhancement and expansion of the claim to part-time employment during parental leave

The report also contains recommendations for changing the rights to part-time employment during parental leave according to Art. 15, para. 7 of the BEEG. The right to part-time employment during parental leave makes it possible for parents to work as much as thirty hours a week during parental leave. This allows employees to create free space for the family during the first three years after the birth of a child and, at the same time, maintain contact to their employers and keep their qualifications up to date or even advance them. Currently, it is only possible to enforce this right through legal action. The committee of experts sees a need to improve the enforceability of the right to part-time work during parental leave.

In addition, the committee also suggests making it easier for employees to participate in further training measures during parental leave, even when they exceed the time limit of 30 hours per week stipulated in Art. 15, para. 4 clause 1.

The recommendations to enhance and expand the right to part-time employment and exceptions for further training measures during parental leave are welcomed by the Federal Government. They can contribute to parents' being able to better realise their desire to participate in the labour market. In assessing these changes, interfaces with other areas of law must be taken into consideration.

More flexibility and better reconciliation of long-term care and working life through long-term care leave and the Family Care Leave Act

Up until now, the topic of the reconciliation of family and working life has been discussed mainly in light of childcare. However, against the background of increasing life expectancy and the demographic transition, the long-term care of relatives dependent upon help has come into greater focus as a reconciliation problem: more and more people now live longer. With increasing age, the risk of requiring long-term care also increases. Hence, it is expected that the number of people permanently dependent on help will double by 2050.

Many people in need of long-term care prefer to be cared for by trusted relatives in a familiar environment. The long-term care of someone who is sick or old poses unique challenges for the person providing care. While, for example, children become more and more self-sufficient as time goes by, the exact opposite is generally true of people in need of long-term care. People who are both gainfully employed and have a family of their own to care for soon reach the limit of their ability to cope. The double and triple burden also has consequences on working life and can lead to a lack of concentration, a loss of effectiveness and resilience. Due to a fear of losing their job, and because long-term care is generally viewed as a private matter, many employees attempt to solve the problem of reconciling these burdens on their own, and this places them under even more pressure.

The Family Care Act (in force since 1 July 2008) has already led to an improvement in the framework conditions for the reconciliation of working life and long-term family care in terms of labour law. In the unexpected event of a situation in which long-term care is required, employees have the right to take short-term leave in order to ensure the immediate care of a close relative (short-term inability to work). For a longer period of long-term care in the domestic environment, employed relatives of a person in need of long-term care can adjust the extent of their gainful employment to the given need for long-term care by taking full or partial leave from their jobs for up to six months (long-term care leave). The right to long-term care leave, in combination with the employee's right to return to work under the same working conditions after the long-term care period, protects employees who are willing to assume responsibility and provide long-term care for relatives from being forced to terminate their employment. Thus, an employee can ensure the care for a close relative both in an acute long-term care situation, as well as for a longer phase of long-term care, without suffering disadvantages in their working situation.

In addition, the Act on the Reconciliation of Long-term Care and Working Life (in force since 1 January 2012) also introduced family care leave in order to support relatives who provide long-term care. It provides employees with an option to work part-time, for up to 24 months, with a state subsidy, to compensate for the lost income. Employers, who provide their employees with an advance on their pay during the phase of long-term care that is equal to half of the lost income resulting from the long-term care, can refinance this through an interest-free loan from the Federal Government. The advance is to be repaid when the employee returns to work. It is repaid by the employee's returning to their previous workplace at an initially reduced rate of remuneration. This instrument can serve to markedly reduce the risk of a permanent reduction of working hours or even a complete departure from working life for employees who care for relatives in need of long-term care.

V.

Family within the generational structure: redistributing time between the generations

The Federal Government is of the same opinion as the committee of experts, namely that time can be won for families by redistributing it between the generations. In the explanations accompanying the committee's recommendations to increase the opportunities for grandparents' leave, the use of the time potential of older family members for families and for society is emphasised.

Promoting voluntary activity by the older generation

The Federal Government also sees important potential in voluntary activities to support families in various situations, whether this means caring for children or caring for older people or, under certain circumstances, people in need of help or long-term care, and including people outside of a person's own families. The quota of older people from 60 to 69 years of age engaged in voluntary activities was already 37 percent in 2009; among those over 70 years of age, the figure was 25 percent. The opportunities presented by a longer life expectancy will only be utilised when even more older people contribute the knowledge they have gained through experience to intergenerational projects.

Through the Federal Voluntary Service programme, which was launched on 1 July 2011, voluntary engagement by older people in Germany was provided with an even broader basis. One in five of the over 35,000 people active in Federal Voluntary Service has already been recruited from this target group. Federal Voluntary Service can be absolved in social and ecological projects for the common good as well as in other areas, for example sports, integration, culture and education. Here, older people have the opportunity to pass on their extensive professional and life experience to others, while engaging in voluntary work for over 20 hours a week after retirement or a family phase.

Freiwilligendienste aller Generationen (Voluntary Service of all Generations) also creates a more extensive and suitable framework for recruiting new target groups and promoting voluntary engagement to provide services of general interest in a local context through clearly defined areas of responsibility. A broad spectrum of deployment can be found in a local context: in day care centres, schools, and in the fields of environmental protection, sports, support for disabled people, the integration of people with migrant backgrounds, work with older people, accompanying and supporting older people or neighbourhood help. Companies can also make it easier for their employees to transition into retirement by establishing a connection to voluntary service; this also allows them to maintain the ties between their former employees and the

company. The programme *Aktion zusammen wachsen* (Action on Growing Together) serves as an example; in this context, older people, children, and adolescents with and without migrant backgrounds make their time and the knowledge they have gained through experience available to one another.

The Federal Government is also very interested in channelling the wide-ranging experience and knowledge in the field of voluntary activities gained during the European Year 2011 into the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012 and integrating it into the implementation process. Hence, a focal point in the German working programme for the European Year 2012 will be on the promotion of the potential of older people for civil society (social engagement and participation by older people) as well as the enhancement of solidarity between the generations. A number of activities will be conducted during the European year in order to realise this goal.

Multi-generation houses as coordination platforms

The Federal Government, like the committee of experts, sees the need for municipal platforms to promote and coordinate engagement in civil society. One example of this – in addition to local long-term care counselling centres, where they exist – are multi-generation houses (MGH), which are supported by the Federal Government. Hence, the action programme Multi-generation House II was launched in January of 2012. MGH very successfully provide a modern reflection of the principle of the traditional multi-generational family: give and take between people of different ages is activated as a matter of course in multi-generation houses. Here, young and old encounter each other – beyond the boundaries of individual families – in the public space of the neighbourhood and they benefit from their different skills, experience, and interests. The action programme to promote multi-generation houses has created a social infrastructure throughout Germany that makes a local contribution to social cohesion and opens up the possibility of social participation for and between all age groups, increases people's sense of personal responsibility for their direct environment, and motivates people to engage in voluntary activities. At the same time, they contribute to families' time sovereignty through diverse options for supporting the reconciliation of family, long-term care, and working life.

In late 2011, over 20,000 volunteers were active in multi-generation houses. In the future, the focus will continue to be on the activation of “younger” old people: people in the generation 50 or 60-plus who seek a basis for their social engagement in multi-generation houses. All of the multi-generation houses can employ volunteers from the Federal Voluntary Service. This is also the case for local long-term care facilities.

The long-term goal is to further develop the multi-generation houses into clearing centres for voluntary activities by people of every age group in the given region. Anyone who chooses to become involved in civil society can then be advised, supported, placed, or trained in multi-generation houses.

In the wake of the demographic transition, more and more older people will need help and long-term care. As the committee rightly points out, in the vast majority of cases it is provided by remarkably dedicated family members in the person's own living environment.

With a counselling service per telephone and a service for people with impaired hearing, the Federal Ministry of Health (Ger. Abbr. = BMG) offers all citizens a competent and independent clearing office for all questions related to the German health-care system. The citizens' telephone or the telephone connection to long-term care insurance is available to answer questions related to the legal situation regarding contributions and benefits within the context of long-term care insurance. In addition, there are also telephone numbers for questions pertaining to health insurance as well as preventive health-care. The citizens' telephones provide consolidated information on fundamental rights, explain claims that can be registered, accept feedback and provide contact information. In addition, the health insurance funds and the long-term care insurance funds, which are obliged to provide information and counselling, have also been legally obliged to provide individual counselling to people threatened or already in need of long-term care, along with their relatives, through long-term care counsellors since 2009; this includes comprehensive information and aid in order to help people come to terms with the situation.

The service telephone *Wege zur Pflege* (Paths to Long-term Care) introduced by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth (in December of 2011) is available for everyone involved in long-term care, especially relatives, with extensive information on the topic of long-term care and living situations. This makes it possible to address problems quickly and to provide support for relatives at short notice. This includes the adaptation to individual scheduling needs of those providing care. Hence, the information can also be viewed online on the accompanying Internet portal www.wege-zur-pflege.de.

Families also receive help in providing long-term care and support for older and very old people through multi-generation houses. From low-threshold options through to aid augmenting long-term care, the multi-generation houses provide or make referrals to sources of supplementary aid, information, and counselling for people in need of long-term care and the relatives caring for them.

Important cooperation partners of multi-generation houses in this area are, for example, the Deutsche Alzheimergesellschaft as well as regional Alzheimer societies, which provide a source of experience and know-how for the houses.

Supporting and caring for people suffering from dementia also costs families considerable energy and time. This is rightly pointed out by the committee of experts. 1.2 million people suffer from dementia according to current estimates, and the number will increase markedly – in combination with a corresponding need for care. Hence, viable long-term solutions as well as concepts commensurate with the needs of the various generations must be developed and implemented in order to provide appropriate long-term care to all citizens.

Therefore, the Federal Government will soon consolidate the available means with the pending reform through the planned Reorientation of Long-Term Care Act (Long-term Care Reorientation Law – Ger. Abbr. = PNG), especially in order to improve the care situation of people suffering from dementia as well as to stabilize the situation of relatives providing care, and to enhance support through voluntary engagement.

In the cornerstones ratified by the federal cabinet to implement the coalition agreement for the reform of long-term care in mid-November of 2011, various improvements in relation to benefits are planned. Hence, people suffering from dementia are to receive better benefits off short notice, with benefits for long-term care included in the right to benefits in kind, and more flexible benefits for long-term care. New residential arrangements are to be supported. A limited-term initiative programme for the promotion of outpatient residential groups will be launched for this purpose. In addition, special measures and programmes are to contribute to the relief of relatives and families providing long-term care. Professional caregivers will also benefit from the core elements for the new regulations, because they will help to make the profession more attractive. Furthermore, professional caregivers and relatives should have as much time as possible to care for the person in need of long-term care, hence, both the existing regulations and the planned new regulations will be strictly examined with an eye to reducing bureaucracy.

The Federal Government continues to pursue the goal of introducing a new concept of what it means to need long-term care. The special needs of people suffering from dementia cannot be appropriately assessed using the current tools for assessing the need for long-term care, since they are related to activities. From the perspective of the Federal Government, what is required is a concept of what it means to need long-term that reflects an understanding of who is considered to be in need of long-term care and what help people suffering from dementia, in particular, need. Before the introduction of the new concept, however, comprehensive questions of implementation must be clarified by an advisory council of experts parallel to the pending reform of long-term care. People suffering from dementia and their relatives should, however, not have to wait until all of the preparations for the shift to a new concept of care have been completed. Hence, they will receive better benefits in the domestic environment earlier, i. e., as of 1 January 2013.

Legal measures alone, however, are not enough when it is a question of the quality of life and relief for people providing long-term care for a relative in need. The committee recommends developing networks of aid in the living environment of the families that are affected, which can be coordinated and made known through central municipal platforms: these would be options for help in familiar surroundings that contribute in a subtle and matter-of-course manner so that people suffering from dementia are also able to remain at home for as long as possible.

One example is the *Wissens- und Hilfenetzwerk Demenz* (Network for Dementia Information and Aid), in which central measures of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youth are consolidated. They already contribute to providing relief in the everyday lives of those affected: the *Wegweiser Demenz* (Dementia Guide, www.wegweiser-demenz.de) offers comprehensive information that can also be understood by non-professionals, sup-

port in searching for appropriate local counselling, care, and help options, and advice forums moderated by experts that promote networking between people suffering from dementia, relatives, and experts as well as volunteers.

The MGH is also continually establishing and expanding options for helping people suffering from dementia as well as relevant counselling options for relatives. The establishment of counselling options for older people, people in need of long-term care, and people suffering from dementia and their relatives is, therefore, a focal point of the action programme Multi-generation Houses II. MGH also integrate volunteers in the performance of tasks that provide relief both to relatives providing long-term care as well as the professional caregivers. Since July of 2009, a cooperation project between the Alzheimer Gesellschaft and, initially, ten multi-generation houses has been receiving support within the context of the Action Programme Multi-generation Houses with the intention of providing options for contact and help specifically tailored to people suffering from dementia. The goal is to involve 50 houses and to produce a guideline that can be used by all MGH. In one of the next steps, Alliances for People Suffering from Dementia are to be established in the living environments of people suffering from dementia, these are to be local networks for providing aid in which all sectors of society will be integrated. In this way, targeted, pioneering service structures will be established locally in the sense of a “caring community”.

VI.

Local family time policy – synchronisation of local pace-setters that affect families

The Federal Government shares the opinion of the committee of experts that family time policy must, to a considerable extent, be shaped locally by the municipal governments, because many of the time conflicts faced by families result from the insufficient synchronisation of the different local pace-setters that affect families, to which families and each of their members have different connections. The time sovereignty of families is limited, because different schedules are not coordinated with each other, as is most obviously demonstrated in the case of working hours and the opening hours of childcare facilities.

The committee of experts correctly highlights the diversity of local family time policy and the challenges that result from it for the different local parties. The Federal Government considers the recommendation by the committee to establish “exchange platforms on family time policy” an interesting approach to implementing better time synchronisation on a local level based on systematic surveys of family need as well as those of the relevant pace-setters that affect families. The report confirms the Federal Government’s standpoint in this context, since it contributes to the development of stronger and more effective cooperation for the reconciliation of family and working life through the Local Initiatives for the Family. Local Initiatives for the Family bring the most important local parties together at one table in different projects and closely orient the development of concepts on the needs of the local families. They have entered into successful cooperation on concrete projects and have a broad range of experience in networking and dealing with the most important parties on the municipal level. Solutions for synchronising the most important routines in a family that are suited to parents, children, and companies have, for example, already been developed by the previously mentioned developmental partnership Support Networks for Parents with Schoolchildren.

Initiatives that emerged in the wake of activities by the Initiative, such as *Zeiten in der Stadt* (Time in the City) or the *Lokale Bündnis Hanau* (Local Initiative Hanau), which has implemented diverse projects in the realm of time policy under the title *Hanau – zeitbewusste Stadt* (Hanau – Time-conscious City), are already good examples of such time policy planning and networking activities. The Federal Government therefore already sees a suitable and well-established platform for successfully promoting cooperation in order to advance family policy on a municipal level in the Local Initiatives for the Family supported by the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Family and Youth (Ger. abbr. = BMFSFJ). Many other activities by the Local Initiatives for the Family, such as cooperation with employers, Jobcenters, and other parties to create childcare options during fringe times, holidays, or in emergency situations, are also an indication. The Local Initiatives for the Family help families to save time by establishing family centres and clearing centres that consolidate information and counselling

for families, create transparency regarding options for families, and providing advice to parents seeking childcare options that seamlessly mesh with each other in terms of time. The family centres and multi-generation houses that were especially highlighted in the report as local providers of support options for families are often integrated into the projects or are themselves involved in Local Initiatives for the Family. Local Initiatives for the Family also provided impetus for changes in the “pace” of public transportation or they organise transportation solutions themselves in order to reduce waiting time, connect options, and increase families’ mobility.

The topics addressed by the developmental partnerships *Vereinbarkeit für Alleinerziehende* (Reconciliation for Single Parents) and *Unterstützungsnetzwerke für Eltern mit Schulkindern* (Support Networks for Parents with Schoolchildren) and, especially in recent years, the newly recruited partners from business and industry, Jobcenters, and Federal Employment Agencies have led the Local Initiatives for the Family to take a closer look at the different time systems in the lives of many families. The Federal Government intends to enhance the potential of initiatives for local family policy.

The accompanying programme launched by the Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung Full-time Education in All-day Schools!, which is also funded by the BMBF, supports not only quality development but also the local integration of all-day schools through regional service agencies, *Ganztägig lernen* (All-day Schools), in the Länder.

VII.

Time competence in the family

The Federal Government believes, as does the committee of experts, that it is important for everyone to be able to autonomously structure their time so that they can realise their objectives and preferences as well as possible. This is necessary in a society that confronts everyone with numerous challenges, everyday, in relation to individually organising time, and thus requires families to coordinate the time they spend together.

Time competence represents a field of research for the Federal Government that requires an intensification of the cooperation of numerous parties.

Time competence – a definition of the term is not found in the report – can initially be understood as the ability to structure everyday life so that the time available is brought in line with individual wishes and the tasks that must be performed. One goal in this context can be to reach the highest possible level of life satisfaction and to avoid stress and unwanted inefficiencies. Training in time competence also teaches people to recognise the limits of their ability to influence their own environment in order not to overtax themselves. People have highly individual capabilities for dealing with time in a sovereign manner and to thereby experience themselves as autonomous in relation to their use of time. This also influences the competence of families. Additional stress factors in the everyday life of a family can also result from a lack of money, conflicts in the partnership, insecurity in relation to how to best raise children or in running a household, and interruptions in gainful employment, and these can also have negative influences on the way a family uses time.

Competence in using time as a resource is usually only developed during the life cycle and can be assessed differently depending on the phase in life. Hence, parents during the family formation phase recognise that new competence is required in relation to the coordination of gainful employment and care for others; and this has an effect on how they use their time. In the case of families with a number of children and older children, on the other hand, greater abilities are needed to bring the different requirements of the family members into harmony with each other and, for example, to organise family time as shared time for all family members.

The Federal Government agrees with the committee of experts that the development of time competence is mainly developed within the family, but is augmented by experiences in classic educational institutions such as schools and adult education. The distribution and use of time for certain activities is something that children experience and learn, beginning at young age, by observing how time is organised in the family. The way people organise their own time is essentially influenced by their parents and their habits. Parents teach their children how to

organise everyday. In addition, experiencing how time is structured in the every day life of the family, children also experience the way time is structured in childcare facilities or in school. In our society, children must learn to conform to a pace of time dictated by a third party when they are of school age, at the latest. The educational system is already a pace-setter for the use of time in society.

The Federal Government sees the support of families through family education options, especially in exceptional and sometimes problematic situations, as a suitable measure for enhancing the time competence of parents and children. By promoting the competence of the parents in raising children through counselling, families can be supported in using their time in a sovereign manner. The family education system is responsible (Art. 16, para. 2, number 1 of the SGB VIII) for supporting families in developing basic competence and skills, such as in organising family life, running a household, managing finances, raising children, the long-term care for relatives and reconciling family and working lives, through education.

The family education system also helps to support educational development by offering parents advice through the national programme Elternchance ist Kinderchance (The Parents' Opportunity Is the Child's Opportunity): "parental advisors" support families in questions of early intervention for children. More certainty in making educational decisions, the enhancement of parents' competence in raising children, and gaining time competence through time sovereignty in the every day life of the family are combined with each other.

VIII.

Conclusion

Family time policy will play a central role in family policy efforts in this legislative period and in the coming years. In this context, reciprocal effects with other fields of political activity cannot be left out of consideration. Overall, a balanced concept that takes account of all of the justified concerns of employees and employers is needed. It must also be based on a solid financial policy as reflected in the fundamental principle of the debt limit; this is a prerequisite for family policy to be sustainable in the long-term. The recommendations are therefore subject to the precondition that they can be financed.

The Federal Government would like to cooperate with the previously mentioned parties responsible for time policy within the proven context of Local Initiatives for the Family. Our joint goal must be to create schedules and time norms in our society according to which the decision to have children is experienced as a further option in shaping one's life, and where families have options to take action in order to shape their own everyday lives in a sovereign manner and the right to make decisions regarding their family time. The joint decision to form a family must therefore not result in a unilateral burden on one of the partners – usually the woman – thereby excluding other choices regarding working life and family.

More information is required for the development of family time policy. This is also a conclusion of the report that was submitted. Developments in the time needs of families and their members in different family constellations and family phases as well as the development of the pace-setters in our society and their schedules must be focused upon more stringently in research. Time policies in other comparable countries, their effects on families, and their possible application in Germany must be assessed more thoroughly than in the report. Family policy measures must be examined to determine the extent to which they improve or restrict the framework conditions for families and how they affect children as well as women and men of every age in different ways and are perceived by them in different manners. In the family policy triad of money, time, and infrastructure, the mutual dependency and effectiveness of measures related to finances, infrastructure, and time must be assessed more precisely and in a more differentiated manner.

Part B: Summary of the report drafted by the committee of experts on the Eighth Family Report

Preface

The Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, Dr Kristina Schröder, commissioned an independent interdisciplinary committee of experts to draft the Eighth Family Report on the topic of “Time for the Family” in July of 2010. The goal of the report was to determine the importance of the time available, within the existing framework conditions that determine time constraints, for successful family life and to develop strategies for action on family time policy. Families are not only sustained by economic resources, but also by the time they spend together. Family time policy as a new field of political action should provide families with a choice regarding how they want to lead their lives in keeping with their own preferences.

The committee of experts presented its report to the Federal Minister of Family Affairs on October 28, 2011. The Federal Government drafted an extensive statement in reaction to this report. The Eighth Family Report, which consists of the Federal Government’s statement and the report by the committee of experts, was ratified by the federal cabinet in March of 2012, sent to the German Bundestag and Bundesrat, and then published.

I.

The importance of family: requirements of family-related time policy

Families make an essential contribution to the common good and play an important role in our society. Families ensure quality of life, social cohesion, and economic wellbeing. What a family is and how it is lived emerges from everyday interaction between the members of a family, through the meaning that they bestow on the family, as well as through the influences that social institutions introduce into the family. At the same time, a family is a collective that both produces and consumes goods and services and apportions the time of the individual family members for education, gainful employment, family work, and leisure time.

Families are dependent upon protection and support by the state and society. This includes adequate social recognition of the tasks that families perform as well as appropriate consideration of the family's needs by subsystems within society, such as the economic and educational systems, without which the family has great difficulty in fulfilling the tasks expected of it. One of the essential aspects of providing for and supporting families, on which they depend, is the time required by the family. Parents and children need time in order to simply exist as a family and to experience what it means to be a family. The quality of the way a family lives together is inseparably tied to its resources in terms of time, time commitments, and its members experience with time. Families need time for emotional ties, trust, and in order for a mutual responsibility for caring for each other to develop and be maintained. The dependable availability of time is a necessary basis for the tasks performed by families and for generativity, i. e., the inclination to guide and care for future generations.

An abundance of time versus a lack of time

Surveys on the use of time in international comparison show that there is not a pronounced lack of time in the private sphere in Germany. Hence, in comparison to many other countries, work commands a smaller window of time in Germany. Instead, additional years of life have been gained by increases in life expectancy, while medical progress, technical progress, and a globalised division of labour have led to more time in everyday life. Nevertheless, many people and families feel as if they are always pressed for time. This reflects a time paradox that, despite all progress, makes it seem as if there is less and less time.

The report's initial assumption is that families do not just need "more" time. Time policy, in terms of the Federal Government's political agenda, should, however, contribute to improving the conditions under which time is available for successful family life and to establish a balance between the family and working life. In some phases of life, there is a high probability that time will be lacking, hence, the reconciliation between family and working life becomes even more difficult. Families need more relief and options for shaping their every day lives – the Seventh Family Report already addressed this topic.

Time abundance and time sovereignty are essential components of the quality of life, especially for families in modern societies. Formulating time policy as an element of sustainable family policy means developing measures and strategies that increase time abundance and time sovereignty for families. Modern time policy geared towards families must address two different dimensions: on the one hand, it is a question of improving the time resources and the organisation of time in the everyday lives of families (the synchronic dimension). This includes the synchronisation of opening, working, and vacation times. On the other hand, the continuing development of strategies to systematically mitigate the lack of time and time conflicts that typically occur in certain phases of life, such when the family is first established or when long-term care is provided within the family (the diachronic dimension), must also be promoted. Only when families are reliably ensured that they will have sufficient time – also in the sense of quality time – for providing care and for the development of family relationships, will they be able to successfully perform the tasks, in relation to recreation, reproduction and socialisation, that society expects them to fulfil. In this context, it is apparent that the quality of time and the use of time is determined differently in different cultures and subject to social change.

Goals of family policy and dimensions for taking action

Family policy can make it easier for young people to decide to have children and ensure the economic stability of families via various channels of activity. Family policy can also have an influence on the establishment of families and the birth rate through regulations on the time available for families, since more time sovereignty can contribute to the realisation of a desire to have children. Family time policy can make it easier for parents to come to terms with everyday life and thus improve the conditions for the development of children. The welfare of the child is, to a great extent, influenced by the parents' satisfaction with their own situations. The availability of time is important for family cohesion and the way in which children are raised. Family time policy can improve the framework conditions for caregivers and for the preferred form of care for people who are dependent upon care by others. Most of the care is provided in the domestic environment and in the family. Often, relatives – usually spouses or partners, daughters and daughters-in-law – assume the responsibility and this leads to situations in which they take on the tasks of a caregiver in addition to gainful employment and their responsibilities within the family.

Modern family policy, as can be seen in examples from Scandinavian countries, must include an actively pursued policy of gender equality that is geared towards aiding women in reconciling family and working life. Family time policy supports active equality policy by working towards mothers' and fathers' being able to participate in gainful employment to the extent that they desire, and by allowing mothers and fathers who decide to dedicate themselves to raising children' and family work to a greater extent to choose this option without being forced to accept disadvantages in terms of their careers.

These goals in relation to family time policy must be oriented on the goals of general activities in the field of family policy, which is primarily intended to ensure a freedom of choice in how people lead their lives. Policy dedicated to this goal must develop structures that enable people to shape their lives and especially their family lives in keeping with their ideas and preferences within the context of general social principles, such as the obligation on the part of parents to

care for and raise their children. At the same time, structures that hamper a freedom of choice must be changed. Taking this fundamental consideration into account, it is possible to identify four different dimensions of family time policy action:

- | **Increasing time sovereignty:** diverse schedules dictated by society often result in the lack of time, especially in families with children. Family related time policy does not seek to increase individual family members' time sovereignty regardless of the costs. Hence, the requirements of the employer in organising working hours must also be taken into consideration. However, where there are efficiency reserves in relation to the use of time, which can be used in a socially compatible manner, these should be illustrated and used.
- | **Improvement in the synchronisation of different schedules:** the lack of coordination between different schedules within a family is often a central problem in organising the family's everyday life. Hence, in many cases, the opening hours of childcare facilities do not completely coincide with the parents' working hours. The coordination of different schedules can, in most cases, best be undertaken on the municipal level. Local time policy is an integral component of family-related time policy.
- | **Redistribution of time:** the extent of people's time resources varies greatly in the various phases and situations in the life cycle. Hence, parents with children often suffer from a lack of time, while people who are retired have great reserves of time. To the extent that time resources can be redistributed in keeping with the preferences of all of the parties involved, a reallocation of time between genders, within life cycles, and between generations is fundamentally worth pursuing and supporting. This is the manner in which the involvement of civil society in the care of children and in long-term care should be supported.
- | **Enhancing time competence:** in many cases, a lack of skills in organising time prevents families from using their time resources optimally, whether in coming to terms with everyday life or in managing the parents' own biographies and those of their children. The goal of family-related time policy is to ensure that all people are provided with the competence to structure their time in an autonomous manner, so that their goals and their preferences can best be realised. The development of time competence can be promoted, above all, in classic educational institutions.

Pace-setters that affect family time are called upon to create and respect free time for family by taking action in these dimensions: this is, initially, a matter in which employers and social partners – cited here as representatives for other private parties – are responsible for taking action: they determine the working conditions and thus have an influence on the time available to members of the family. Municipal governments are also called upon, since they are perhaps the most important government party involved: they provide the infrastructure for raising families. Finally, lawmakers are also addressed: they create the framework conditions under which families live and act. In addition, those who are required to react to a given pace in relation to family time are also addressed, namely the family and its members. They can and should decide how they use their time.

II.

Organisation of a family's time in Germany

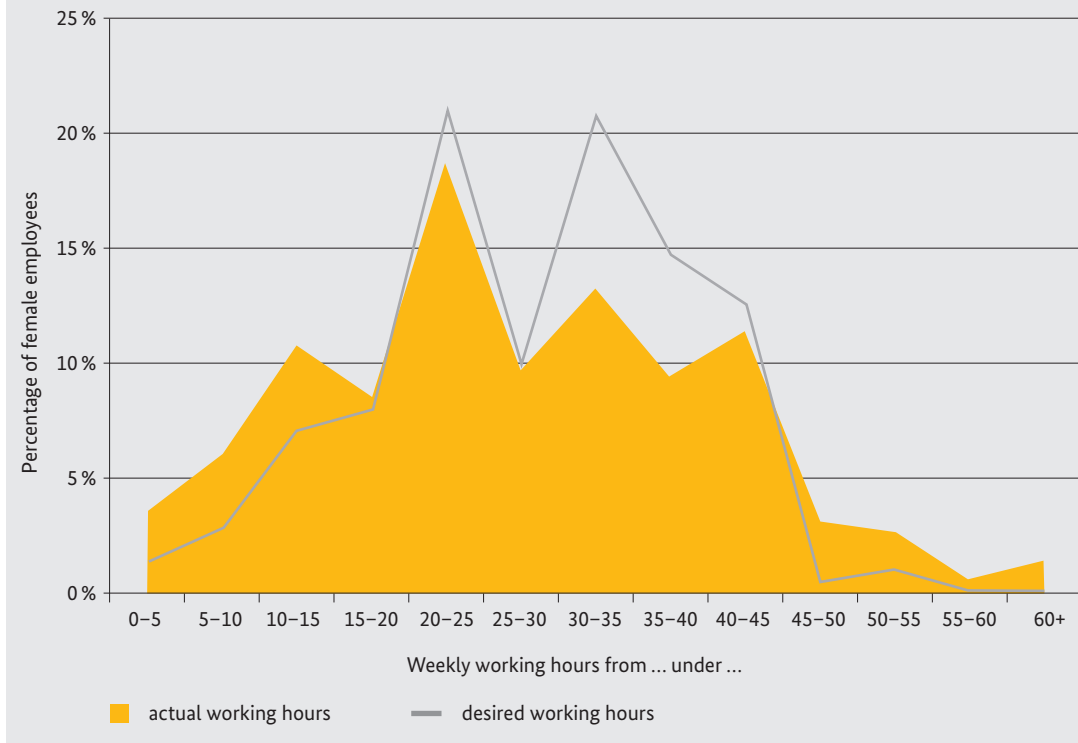
The individual and joint organisation of time in families changes with phases and situations in the life cycle. Notable transitions are the gaining of social and economic independence during and after the adolescent phase, the establishment of a family, beginning to work, and, finally, the transition into the phase of old age. Between family, raising children, working life, and the responsibility for caregiving, families often encounter a subjectively perceived and objectively verifiable lack of time. Two-thirds of the fathers and a third of the mothers have, according to their own assessments, too little time for their children. Children usually perceive this just as much as their parents. The situation, in terms of time, usually becomes somewhat less pressured with the transition into the third phase of life, which begins around the age of 60 or with the transition into the post-employment phase. Older people have a higher degree of time sovereignty. As long as they are healthy, they can choose what they want to do and how long they want to do it. This opens up opportunities to provide relief for families, if it is possible to recruit older people to help relatives or to provide help as neighbours or as volunteers.

Time and gainful employment

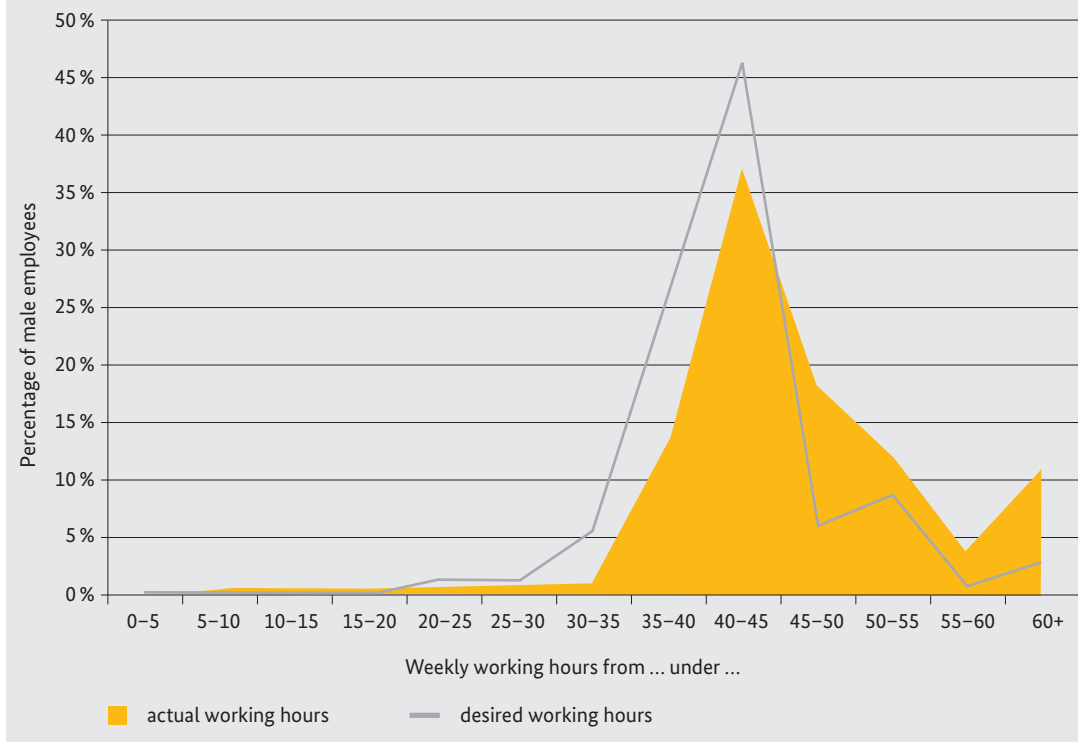
In most families, gainful employment is key in determining how time is organised. Often, a number of members of the family are involved in gainful employment, so that the coordination of a everyday life together in the family and the care of children or relatives in need of long-term care represents a tremendous challenge. This is the main reason why mothers, who assume the main responsibility for children or relatives in need of long-term care, often work part-time.

Both parents are not necessarily satisfied with the distribution of tasks between the household and working life. Surveys of actual and desired working hours always show the same tendency: fathers would like to reduce the time they spend working and mothers would like a working arrangement that makes it possible for them to work as nearly full-time part-time employees. Working weeks of over 40 hours seem to be particularly unattractive for men with children under six years of age (fig.1). For the most part, parents prefer flexible working hours. And while these are increasingly offered by companies, the question as to the extent that they really correspond with the needs of parents and increase their time sovereignty remains open.

**Fig. 1: Distribution of desired and actual working hours
Women with children under the age of six**



Men with children under the age of six



Source: SOEP 2009; according to calculations by the ifo Institute.

Relief for families

The organisation of time in everyday life can represent a challenge for families when, in addition to gainful employment, the on-going care of children or people in need of long-term care must be ensured. Families need time together that is free of tasks and obligations. A determining factor in relation to time for the family are the parents' working hours and the opening hours of childcare and educational facilities. The reconciliation of family, child-raising, working life, and the responsibility for long-term care, in terms of time, is still mainly a problem that affects women, although more and more institutions and people outside of the household assume responsibility for care, child-raising, and educational tasks.

With the expansion of state-run childcare, the average times in which children were cared for outside of the house has increased considerably in recent years. Although there are marked regional differences, the childcare situation in Germany is still generally not as good, on the whole, as in other European countries. To a considerable extent, parents are not able to find the childcare they want, particularly in relation to opening times. In addition, people in need of help or long-term care represent a tremendous challenge. Most people in need of long-term care prefer to be cared for at home. For gainfully employed relatives, this represents a tremendous burden in addition to their gainful employment.

III.

Time in the context of fertility decisions

Caring for and raising a child requires that parents budget a considerable amount of time for this purpose every day, time that is also not negotiable in terms of its scheduling within the daily routine. Hence, there is competition both in relation to budgeting time as well as scheduling time that results in time conflicts that should be anticipated in deciding whether to establish a family. Hence, the question arises as to the conditions under which the competition between time for potential children and other uses of time have a positive or negative influence on fertility decisions.

The time situation of couples during the family formation phase

The Eighth Family Report addressed the topic of the relevance and configuration of time-related variables when deciding to have children. In this conjunction, it is a question of how people in a potential family formation phase use their time, what influence do time-related variables have on fertility decisions, and which time-related strategies for taking action can benefit fertility decisions?

According to a time budget survey in 2001/2002, roughly half of the people in a potential family formation phase has a tendency to perceive a lack of time, which can, above all, be attributed to a subjective feeling of being overtaxed by the use of time for working life and education or training. The other half, on the other hand, exhibits a feeling of having time reserves that they could use in different manners. The data indicate that people in the family formation phase have no perceived time reserves that would be available for raising and caring for children without feeling heated competition from other uses of time.

This finding based on the assessment of the time budget survey, namely a subjective lack of time, pertained to at least some of the people in the family formation phase; it is also supported by the results of our own fieldwork. "Time", as a resource, is primarily associated with a lack thereof and stress. Even without children, women often have the feeling that more demands are placed on them in everyday life. A considerable share of those interviewed felt that too much time is devoted to gainful employment. This is especially true of people with academic training. In addition, over 40% of those interviewed believe that they have too little time. Finally, the partners of those surveyed also believed that they had no time reserves, in the sense of being able to identify areas in which the partner spent too much time, with the exception of working life/education or training. Especially those people who belonged to the age group in which establishing a family is a central topic felt that their time was restricted. The time for potential children stands in intense competition to the previous uses of time. This is especially true of women in view of an anticipated gender-related unequal distribution of the time that would have to be dedicated to caring for children.

The relevance of time-related variables for the establishment of a family

Time is not the only variable that might be able to comprehensively explain fertility decisions, but time is a relevant variable within the context of the decision to become a parent, and one that exerts influence through different channels. In this context, clear differences between the sexes are exhibited. This is not only true in relation to the decision process on whether or not to become a parent, which is more active in the case of women and more passive in the case of men, but also in relation to time-related consequences of parenthood. Women are more concerned with achieving a balance between working time and the child, men more on a balance between free time and the child. The topic of flexibility is considered to be extraordinarily important. The presumed flexibility in the case of parenthood is of decisive importance for being able to imagine whether it will be possible to manage time in the future. The more “rigid” the ideas about life with a child are, the greater the fear of being overwhelmed by future responsibilities is.

Alternative courses of action in relation to time for couples in the family formation phase

It became clear that potential parents have only a very limited idea regarding how time budgets are subject to shifts with a child and what concrete effect this would have on how they organise their lives. The necessity of rearranging the way one organises one’s time with a child is spontaneously linked to a reduction in working hours (mainly for women) or also their free time. An obvious supplement or alternative is to delegate tasks to childcare facilities, child-minders, and, possibly, to potential grandparents.

In general, four strategies for coming to terms with this can be identified:

- A **reduction** in working hours is seen as a matter of course for women in the first years of a child’s life and as desirable or an option for most men. Women see an equally distributed reduction in working hours among the partners as ideal, although doubts remain as to whether this can be realised.
- **Time compression** appears to be the most likely strategy in relation to basic activities (personal grooming, eating, travel time) or tasks in the household.
- **Delegation** is possible in two areas: childcare and household tasks. In order to ensure at least minimum of free time, the delegation of childcare to the partner, other parents, or to the potential grandparents is a primary solution. Women spend more time thinking about delegating tasks to others than men.
- More **flexible** working hours could make it possible to come to terms with everyday life with children. This means the possibility of working in a home office, taking the child along to work, or negotiating more flexible working hours. Women, in particular, have concrete ideas in this regard.

IV.

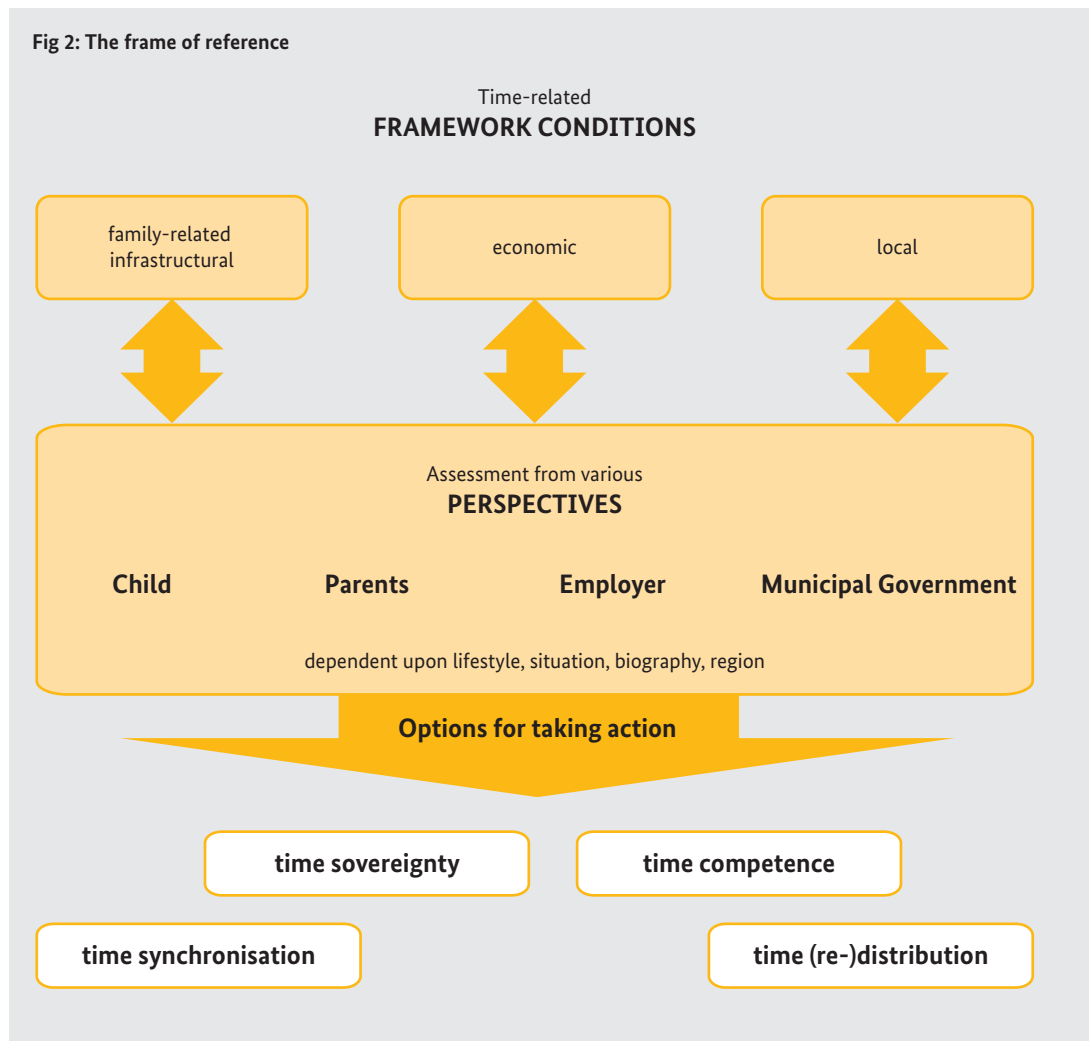
Time for families with children

Time plays an essential role in organising everyday life in the family. Living together in a family is markedly influenced by the time resources of the individual members. Without synchronisation and coordination a family cannot provide care and raise children and enable its members to assume mutual responsibility for each other. Family time must be reconciled with working hours and various institutions, such as schools, kindergartens, and clubs. The organisation of shared everyday life in the family thus requires synchronisation and coordination between the pace-setters in the environment around the family as well as the ability to mesh the individual schedules of the family members as a prerequisite for a harmonious family life.

A number of radical changes and alterations in the working world now make it even more difficult to coordinate family life. Especially families with two working parents, gainfully employed single parents, and families whose time is not structured proved to be particularly burdened in terms of time. Families with young and school-aged children are subject to different, sometimes contradictory schedules that influence the family more or less directly.

The Eighth Family Report illuminates the time-related conditions and challenges with which families with young and school-aged children are faced in relation to time-relevant family policy and infrastructural, as well as the economic and local, framework conditions and assesses them from the perspective of children, parents, employers and municipal governments.

Fig 2: The frame of reference



The children's and the parents' perspective

Children need to spend time with their parents in order to develop their own competence – competence that is required for cultural participation and the ability to maintain social contacts in society. In relation to their parents, children would like:

- actively used quality time within the family (games, discussions, outings),
- for parents to simply be present in the background (parents that can be reached when needed),
- time in which the parents take part in what the children experience,
- time in which the parents care for and accompany/support the children (e.g., meals or accompaniment in reaching destinations), as well as
- strictly parent-free time (unsupervised play, time alone).

Children in the forms one to four who were asked what they wanted said that they would prefer their parents to work fewer hours and that their working hours took consideration of family routines and rituals – thus also holidays on which they do not work and the possibility of being able to spontaneously react to unforeseen developments.

Parents have to coordinate family life in terms of time and see themselves confronted with new challenges in this context: they are held responsible for the success of their children in school and must also come to terms with the increasing demands of a flexible labour market. After the family itself, the working world is the most important reference point for mothers and fathers. The participation in gainful employment takes up a large part of the available time budget and requires a high degree of organisation within the family and coordination with the working world. Gainful employment not only ensures the family's material welfare, it also determines its participation in society, career chances, and security against major risks, for example in old age. Gainful employment provides meaning and, in the meantime, is also an important factor for most mothers' general satisfaction with life.

Despite an incipient change in the roles that mothers and fathers believe they are required to play, the majority of fathers still see themselves as the primary breadwinners in the family, although they also want to be involved in raising the children. Regardless of the extent to which each of the partners is gainfully employed, women spend more of their time caring for children and the household. The reconciliation of family and working life is still primarily the mother's problem. For single parents, the situation is even more difficult, because they alone assume responsibility for the intensive task of raising children and overseeing their education, while at the same time making a living for themselves and their children.

Time-relevant framework conditions for families

a) Parental allowance and parental leave

One of the essential framework conditions affecting the time available to families is the support and services provided under the Federal Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave (Ger. abbr. = BEEG).

Working parents are thus entitled to **parental leave** from their employers under the BEEG, making it possible for them to take a break from their professional obligations. **Parental allowance** is intended to promote the reconciliation of family and working life and allows parents the time they need to take care of their children. Parental allowance makes a contribution to ensuring the parents' time sovereignty by allowing parents to make decisions in keeping with their preferences and financial necessities. It also contributes to a redistribution of time between mothers and fathers in relation to family and working time.

b) Childcare options for children of all ages

Childcare makes an important contribution to the parents' time sovereignty and makes it easier for them to resume working earlier, thus effecting a distribution of time between the parents. It also fulfils the task of augmenting the family's contribution to educating and raising for all children.

Both the options for childcare in the first three years of life as well as care for school children in all-day schools or after-school facilities are currently in a process of dynamic expansion in Germany. There is an increasing number of options for care outside of the family particularly

for families with young children – although there are regional differences. However, the majority of mothers still consider the options for childcare insufficient, and this has consequences on their re-entry into the workforce: one in five mothers indicated that if optimal childcare had been available, they would have entered the workforce earlier.

Research on the effects of institutional childcare do not provide clear findings. The majority of studies indicates both positive effects of childcare for young children in relation to cognitive and linguistic abilities, and, at the same time, also possible negative effects in relation to social competence. The quality of childcare is considered to be of definitive importance. Options for educating, raising, and caring for small children outside of the family, especially in the second and third years of life, can serve as an important source of stimulation in addition to the family. The needs of the child, the parents, and the employer, in terms of time, must be coordinated in relation to the length and the location of the time spent in childcare. In cases where childcare is required during fringe times, (supplementary) care by a childminder is perhaps better suited for small children than expanding the opening hours of daycare facilities.

During the first four years of school, all-day schools are very important for the reconciliation of family and working life. Many parents succeed in remaining gainfully employed, becoming gainfully employed, or increasing their working hours when the framework conditions provided by these schools. As a rule, mothers benefit from this since they are usually the ones who forfeit their gainful employment or limit their working hours in order to care for children.

c) Time-relevant local framework conditions

The organisation of everyday life in the family encompasses much more than caring for children and the household. Visits to public authorities, errands, and shopping, as well as the pace dictated by public transportation, are an additional burden on the already tight time budgets of working parents and require that the time-related framework conditions be taken into consideration by the responsible parties at the corresponding destinations. Local time policy, which has come into focus in Germany since the mid-1990s, addresses this problem and aims to better coordinate local time structures. A differentiation must be made between approaches to time structure policy that are aimed at a harmonisation of public time schedules (for example opening times of childcare facilities, shops, public authorities, cultural institutions, sports facilities, and public transportation schedules) and approaches aimed at infrastructural policy intended to link and combine options and services in order to reduce unnecessary or repetitive trips to a destination along with the corresponding expenditure of time.

V. Time for care

The time available to individuals and to the family, the constraints on the use of time, and the tempo of everyday life change considerably during the life cycle. In the middle and late phases of life, when children are out of the house, people are relieved, for the most part, from family obligations and gain additional options for managing their time autonomously, especially when they are retired. Often, this situation is experienced as late freedom. This freedom is not experienced by everyone in the same manner and is often only of short duration. Good prerequisites for the realisation of one's own ideas and preferences in dealing with time are, above all, given when people are healthy and have financial resources and a social network. With increasing age, the risk of limitations due to health conditions and the need for care increases. In families, adult offspring and their partners or spouses, and sometimes also more distant relatives, are called upon to surrender part of their time budgets and some or all of their time sovereignty to providing support and long-term care.

Shared responsibility for life in old age

The Eighth Family Report therefore focuses on the older generation under the aspect of the use of time in families and addresses both the help received from the family as well as the option for providing help for the family. Many older people have energy and time resources that allow them to support other people, possibly with a positive effect on the willingness of other people to return the help that they have received.

The productive use of available time resources is also a social question. How can a contribution be made to the use of time resources for other people who are more affected by a lack of time and a lack of time sovereignty or are dependent on solidarity and support in a special way? It is conceivable that the promotion of this type of engagement in civil society on the part of older people can take two different directions:

- To provide impulses through **time accounts** (either actual or symbolical). People “pay” into a time account, when they have the resources and competence to help others, and they “take” from it when they require support from other people themselves.
- The creation of **municipal platforms** to promote and coordinate engagement in civil society so that the supply and demand for informal help are brought together, the possibility of engagement in civil society becomes made more familiar and the necessary skills are acquired.

Joint responsibility for the use of time budgets in cases of long-term care

Long-term care is, for the most part, a family matter. It is provided on the basis of family ties and usually on the basis of an internalised moral obligation. According to the statistics on long-term care collected by the Federal Statistical office, 1.62 of the 2.34 million people who require care in Germany are cared for within the context of the home, most of them (1.07 million) exclusively by close relatives and friends. Mobile nursing services care for roughly half a million people and are often supported by the family as well.

The involvement of the family is far more extensive than is reflected in the figures cited in the long-term care statistics. In addition to people who require considerable care, and are listed among the recipients of long-term care insurance, there are 1½ times as many people who mainly require help in the household, but receive no benefits from long-term care insurance, but also make use of minimal and sometimes even more extensive long-term care services.

The majority of people providing long-term care in Germany come to terms with their role, according to their own reports, and consider providing care at home a task that they enjoy doing, even if it involves an effort that drives many to the limits of their ability to cope. According to information provided by households, an average of 38 hours is required per week to provide care and other necessities for people in considerable need of long-term care. The proportion of employed persons who also provide long-term care has risen during the past twelve years from 16 percent to roughly 40 percent. Hence, questions regarding the reconciliation of working life and long-term care present themselves more often than in the past.

Potential support from a caring community

Long-term care insurance is designed as a subsidiary insurance benefit, which is meant to augment the help provided by family and neighbours as well as through personal financial contributions. The idea that relatives, professional caregivers, and people engaged in civil society combine to provide a mixture of care is the essence of the concept of a caring community. In view of the demographic transition, it will become increasingly important that this type of help is provided – despite the justified demand that the principle of providing vital services be preserved. Caring communities are not limited to the topic of long-term care. People who are retired and have time that they would like to use in a meaningful and acknowledged manner, can do this in a caring community, also with a view to the younger generation.

VI.

Family time policy as a guideline for legal framework conditions

The decision to have children, and the possibility of successfully combining family and children with gainful employment, is influenced considerably by legal framework conditions. They sometimes directly regulate how parents use their time, occasionally providing direct impulses to use their time in a certain way, or merely set standards that reflect values that can promote the positive development of social values overall.

Of the many legal framework conditions relevant to family time, the Family Report address three areas which serve as examples: in relation to direct regulations that create leeway for the use of time, the report focuses on labour laws, particularly with regard to working hours, and the right to parental leave, and in relation to legislation that provides direct impulses, the report focuses on legislation allowing childcare costs to be deducted from taxes. Working hours are the most important area in which third parties determine how people use their time, while taxes are often the most influential means the government has for exercising influence and providing impulses.

The structural blindness of working hour regulations in relation to the family

The family is not an essential category in working hour regulations. These regulations serve, primarily, to strike a balance between the interests and relative negotiating strength of employers and employees. There are almost no labour law regulations that include the family as a subject warranting protection. Family-related interests are only protected to the extent that they coincide with the interests of the employee. To the extent that norms codified in labour law protect the family, this is usually only the indirect consequence of norms intended to protect the employee.

In the recent past, the state has already reacted (partially) to the concerns of society on the whole to promote the reconciliation of working life and family and created legal framework conditions through the Federal Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave, which focuses on the interest of families. The Family Care Leave Act (Ger. abbr. = FamPflegeZG), which came into force on 1 January 2012, provides care-giving relatives the option of continuing to work for a reduced number of hours over a period of two years.

Specifically family-friendly working hour regulations can also have specific goals in terms of family policy, such as assisting families and children as well as supporting long-term care in the family, as well as increasing the integration of women into the labour market through regulations to reconcile family and working life. In addition, management and labour should also be held responsible for taking consideration of family-friendly working hours in labour

contracts and company agreements. The challenge in this context is finding a balance between the employers' interest in flexible working hours and the employees' interest in a greater degree of working-hour sovereignty.

Family responsibilities as a criterion for the need for protection

In the case of compulsory redundancy, i. e., when the employer no longer requires the services of all of his employees, the employer decides which employees to let go based on social criteria according to which those in need of more protection are allowed to remain. The social criteria, according to which the need for protection by comparable employees are measured, are the obligation to provide support, serious disabilities, the length of employment, and age. The obligation to take age into consideration has been subject to increasing criticism in recent years, especially in view of European law. Older workers are disproportionately favoured by these criteria, since they are also usually the employees who have more seniority. Older employees are generally already protected by their greater seniority. A law requiring that obligations to provide support are given greater consideration would provide more protection for younger employees during the family formation phase. That would contribute to the financial security of the family and could, under certain circumstances, make it easier to decide in favour of a family.

The mandatory consideration of obligations to provide support could have the same effect when applied to social plans intended to mitigate the disadvantages that arise from changes in the organization of a company, particularly redundancies.

Greater working-hour sovereignty for employees

The spectrum of legal regulations for reducing conflicts between working hours and time for family responsibilities, which give employees greater working-hour sovereignty, is broad. One may possibly be evident in the new orientation of Art. 8 of the Act on Part-time and Fixed-Term Employment (Ger. abbr. = TzBfG). It establishes norms for an employee's right to work part-time. According to the TzBfG, employees have this legal right, regardless of their motive for taking advantage of the law. Whether employees want to raise their children, provide long-term care for their parents, or have more free time, is of no consequence. Here, policy-makers could adopt an approach that limits this option to those who assume family obligations.

The Federal Act on Parental Allowance and Parental Leave also provides for an option to work part-time, albeit only during the parental leave period. Despite their synchronic goal, the basis for the right is, in part, inconsistently formulated with regard to the prerequisites and legal consequences. In this case, there is a need for harmonisation with regard to the different bases of this right aimed at the same goal. In the TzBfG, the reduction of working hours and their distribution according to the employee's needs is stipulated in cases where it is not possible to reach a verbal agreement regarding the wishes of the employee and the employer does not reject them in writing. A correspondingly far-reaching regulation of the legal consequences is lacking in relation to the right to part-time employment according to the BEEG.

The BEEG allows working parents to evoke their right to parental leave in relation to their employers. They are thus able to take time off from the obligations of their working lives in order to spend time with their children. To date, the law includes numerous limitations that hamper parents interested in taking parental leave and which should be made more lenient in the interest of a better reconciliation of family and working life. Options allowing individuals to take make use of parental leave in a more flexible manner should at least be examined with regard to their viability in actual practice. Up until now, those entitled to take parental leave have only been allowed to carry over 12 months of their three-year parental leave up until the child's eighth birthday, with the consent of their employer. There is no objective reason for a time limit on the amount of parental leave that can be carried over until the child's eighth birthday. The child may require more care at a later point in time, for example during the transition to an upper-level school.

Parents who work part-time during their parental leave should also have greater autonomy with regard to determining how they schedule their working hours. Up until now, the agreement of the employer is required for determining how working hours are scheduled.

The BEEG requires that parents inform their employers regarding when, during the following two-year period, they intend to take their parental leave seven weeks before their parental leave begins. This obligation to determine when parental leave is to be taken for the next two years prevents parents from using their parental leave flexibly. To what extent companies really require that parental leave is determined so far in advance in order to be able to plan reliably, must be examined and weighed against the parent's interest in flexible planning within the family and their working lives.

The decision to take advantage of parental leave should not jeopardise the parent's employment. If a parent withdraws from working life for a period of time within the context of parental leave, it is often difficult for an employee who has not participated in training measures during this period to return to their jobs. According to the rules of the BEEG, employees are not allowed to work more than 30 hours a week during parental leave. In this case, the strict limitation of the allowed number of working hours during parental leave to 30 hours per week can collide with need to participate in further training measures during parental leave, when a training measure requires more time than is allowed.

Substitution of family tasks: deduction of childcare costs

Substitute services can be found for some family tasks. Such forms of relief become more available to families when they are better promoted by tax benefits. A result of the new regulation of the option to deduct childcare costs from taxes is that childcare costs no longer need to be classified as professional or company expenses, but instead only as special expenditures when calculating the level of income subject to taxation. This leads to a disadvantage for those taxpayers whose childcare costs result partially from their gainful employment. From the perspective of family policy, there is a strong case for allowing the full deduction of childcare costs resulting from gainful employment, just as is the case with domestic services that are required due to gainful employment.

Substitution family tasks: involving the grandparent generation

Working grandparents have a legal right to take leave from work in order to take care of their grandchildren according to Art 15, para. 1a of the BEEG. In this context, the grandparents' leave can be extended to over three years, just like parental leave. The declared goal in introducing grandparents' leave was to help young people in difficult situations (teenagers in school or vocational training programmes). In an ageing society, grandparents' leave offers a far greater potential than simply supporting young parents in difficult situations. Correspondingly modified and given the same rights as parental leave, grandparents' leave could become a real advantage for families and society: children will be cared for by people with experience raising children, fewer crèches would be required, and working parents would be able to resume working earlier, if they choose to do so.

VII.

Recommendations

The family cannot become an impediment to participation in social, working, and cultural life. To this end, the idea that official family policy primarily and, under certain circumstances solely, functions by distributing financial resources requires further development. It must be augmented by an additional pillar of family policy, namely family time policy. The recommendations of the committee of experts outlines the contours of such time policy.

Infrastructure for more time sovereignty

The infrastructure for providing childcare is a central precondition of parents' time sovereignty. According to the committee, families must be supported by childcare, services, and educational facilities that are tailored to their needs. Although the institutional situation has already improved, additional efforts must be undertaken:

- High-quality childcare in kindergartens and in day-care must be expanded according to needs of children and parents and linked to a local infrastructure. Only when excellent quality all-day day-care is available for all children will parents have the option to choose. Flexible opening hours for childcare options should be oriented on the needs of the children and their parents.
- Expansion in keeping with the need for high-quality full-day schools that also offer children educational and developmental opportunities beyond the realm of the school and make it possible for parents to reconcile working life and family are also necessary.

Working hours to enhance time sovereignty

Parents' time sovereignty is enhanced when a legally regulated right to more time, in combination with the provision of financial support, creates room to manoeuvre. An example of this is parental leave, which is augmented by the parental allowance.

The commission provides impulses and recommendations for more family-conscious thinking and behaviour:

- Family-conscious working hours as an important factor for a successful family are the responsibility of companies, contract negotiating partners, and the state. Above all, management and labour are called upon to develop and implement substantial solutions in the sense of taking consideration of families in labour contracts, company agreements, and regulations in individual contracts.
- Flexible models for working hours should be more closely oriented on the interests and needs of families, if possible. The employees should be given a greater degree of freedom in relation to the scheduling, extent and distribution of their working hours; they can then make use of

this freedom as needed by the family. More sovereignty in organising working hours can also be promoted by mobile workplaces and alternately tele-commuting, as long as provisions are adopted to avoid overburdening.

- The equal distribution of weekly working hours between mothers and fathers should also be pursued, when this is desired. It can be attained especially through the promotion of nearly full-time part-time models, since many working mothers would like to extend their part-time hours and many fathers would often like to reduce their excessively long working hours.
- Of particular importance is a family-conscious company culture that also debunks the myth of the “indivisibility” of highly responsible and sophisticated tasks as well as the fundamental acceptance of career paths that also value dedication to the family.
- The so-called “rush hour” in career development could be decompressed if all age groups had access to career perspectives throughout their entire lifetime. This also includes the establishment of alternative career perspectives, e. g., project and/or expert careers that leave more space for private needs than simply climbing the career ladder in a classic manner.

Consideration of the family in labour law

Working hour regulations are obliged to contribute to the development of family time policy, an aspect that must be addressed and realised to a greater degree than has previously been the case. Individual recommendations by the commission include:

- Determining whether Art. 8 of the TzBfG can be revised to include the right to participate in decisions regarding the scheduling of the working hours in cases where there is a family-time conflict situation and no reasons related to the workplace represent an obstacle. In order to neutralise the burden of this legal reform on workplace organisation, and to ensure its economic success, the expansion of the employee rights in Art 8 of the TzBfG should be limited, in compensation, to family-related requests for alternate working hours.
- Regulations providing protection against unlawful dismissal should put more emphasis on elements of family policy. The committee suggests an examination of the possibility of putting more emphasis on the obligation to provide support, as one of the criteria that must be weighed in making redundancy selections, while considering the elimination of the criterion of age, which is closely tied to seniority.
- In a similar manner as is the case in selections based on social criteria, the family should also be more seriously taken into consideration in adopting social plans. The criteria and principles that must be taken into consideration according to the arbitration committee should also include the family situation of the employee.

Flexible organisation of family-related interruptions in gainful employment

A temporary departure from the labour market is considered especially desirable and often undertaken during the first months of a child’s life, but also during an intensive period of long-term care for a relative. Parental leave and the parental allowance, as well as the Family Care Leave Act, make it possible for people to temporarily take leave from their jobs with income replacement benefits or reduced income, while guaranteeing the right to return to their jobs and making an important contribution to parents’ time sovereignty.

In an international comparison, parental leave, which encompasses 36 months, is extensive but there are also limitations on when it can be taken that should be made more lenient in the interest of the better reconciliation of working life and family. The commission recommends making **parental leave more flexible**:

- Up until now only up to twelve months of the three-year parental leave could be carried over beyond the child's third birthday and then only until the child's eighth birthday, subject to the employers agreement. The regulation for carrying over should be made more lenient.
- In addition, it should be possible to extend the 12-month limit on the amount of parental leave that can be carried over to 24 months. It is also conceivable to completely do away with limitations on the time in which parental leave can be taken. Parents would then be able to take parental leave, regardless of the age of the child, up until the child's fourteenth birthday. Adverse effects for employers are, however, to be taken into consideration in conjunction with these reform steps, just as are the consequences for labour and social law. The extent to which society has a real need for this must also be determined.
- Up until now, parents had to inform their employers regarding when they would be taking parental leave two years in advance. Since young parents can hardly predict the development of their child, this represents a challenge. If there are no concerns related to the workplace that speak against it, this requirement should be shortened.

Flexible, family-related interruptions in gainful employment cannot simply be required by lawmakers, because they do have a tendency to reduce entrepreneurial flexibility. Optimal arrangements for such interruptions can only be reached through negotiation on the company level between the employer and the employee. Recommendations for action in relation to reentering the labour market after maternity or parental leave are directed towards the human resources department and managers, but also towards the representatives of the interest groups in the workplace.

Relief for families by redistributing time

Time is often not only too short, but also unequally distributed within the family. This unequal distribution affects mothers and fathers because tasks related to the household, raising children, and providing long-term care are mainly performed by women; fathers, on the other hand, are more involved in their working lives. However, it can also be the result of institutionalised requirements related to a personal life cycle or of an unequal distribution between the generations, another aspect related to personal life cycles.

- For the **lifelong working time account** represents an essential option for redistributing time during the course of their careers. The extent to which the proliferation of long-term accounts for family-related purposes (family time accounts) can be supported should be assessed. The purpose of long-term accounts – in the sense of a credit balance – is to make it possible to take leave from work or reduce the number of hours one is contractually obliged to work later on. Relaxing the legal requirements on maintaining and securing time credit accounts could promote their proliferation, if they can be used explicitly for family policy.
- **Grandparents' leave** offers a much greater potential for supporting young families than is envisaged under the current regulations. An assessment should also be made as to whether the right to take grandparents' leave can be granted to all working grandparents, regardless of whether the parents are minors or already adults, and also as to whether the grandparents

can also play a supporting role when their children have already completed their vocational training and have established themselves in working life. Grandparents' leave should be granted regardless of whether the grandchild lives in the same household as the grandparents or with its parents. The effects of such an expansion of the circle of entitled grandparents on the organisation of working hours must be examined.

- | The **Federal Volunteer Service** should play a greater role as an instrument for promoting the engagement of older people in civil society. The length and the extent of the obligations should be made more flexible. There should be an option for older people to serve more than once, if they choose to do so, and to volunteer for different activities. The maximum length of 24 months could optionally be divided up among a number of different activities pursued at different times. Perspectives for longer-term engagement should be offered and, after the end of the voluntary service, older people should be supported in searching for new areas of activity.
- | The potential of older people could be better implemented if the **option for extended employment** existed, provided the employee and employer are in agreement. On the other hand, an assessment should be made as to whether the option of retiring one or two years earlier should be provided for those who would like to become engaged in civil society during this period, whereby this engagement should at least correspond with the working hours of a half day job. In this case, the reductions in retirement benefits should be noticeably reduced in order to provide an impulse.
- | The commission recommends an **adaptation of the concept of the need for long-term care**, in order to depart from an activity-oriented view of long-term care and focus on independence, self-determination and participation. The support services that are provided by informal helpers and the time that is made available in this context should be recognised by providing benefits from long-term care insurance.
- | In defining the **services provided by long-term care insurance**, it should be taken into consideration that a mixture of the care provided by professional caregivers, family, and volunteer helpers promises to provide particularly effective care for those affected. Correspondingly, the options for making use of benefits in kind and monetary benefits should be made more flexible along with compensation for support services provided by informal volunteers.
- | A discourse on the meaning of the support services provided by older people for caring on the whole should be initiated both on the municipal level as well as in society and continually conducted. On the municipal level, **platforms for engagement in civil society** offer a good starting point.

Relieving the pressure of time on families can, however, also be achieved through **services to support the family**. Services that are, as a rule, provided within the family, are then provided by others in return for remuneration. Politicians and municipal governments can support the creation and expansion of service agencies and help to make them more attractive.

The committee of experts emphasises three recommendations through which services to support families can be enhanced:

- | An essential means of promoting the proliferation of services to support families is to increase transparency regarding corresponding local options.
- | It should be ensured that services that support families are affordable and, at the same time, that the providers can be sure of receiving appropriate remuneration. On the demand side, we recommend, among other things, a voucher model and the expansion of tax benefits.

On the supply side, the focus is on support for start-up businesses and the creation of an infrastructure based on private enterprises.

- If the service is childcare, then the treatment of the costs that are incurred in terms of taxes represents a particularly notable aspect. For people who are gainfully employed, childcare costs are, as a rule, the result of gainful employment. This is an argument that would favour treating them as business-related costs and thus taking them into full consideration as a tax deduction.

The distribution of time takes place when the burdens and obligations within the family are redistributed. The special burden on women still results from the fact that they are more likely than men to perform household tasks and tasks related to raising children, even when they are employed. A transformation of the way these roles are fulfilled, since role models are often more advanced, increases the productivity of time within the family and, at the same time, promotes gender equality. This is, for example, the purpose of the “father months” that can be taken under the system of providing parental allowance.

Time synchronisation through family-conscious schedules on the local level

As long as schedules are not coordinated with each other, it is difficult to organise everyday life in the family. A classic example of uncoordinated and thus incompatible schedules are working hours and the opening times of kindergartens and public authorities. Time conflicts due to structural causes occur especially often in family constellations that are already burdened by considerable time constraints and have nearly no buffer zone. Municipal decision-makers can play a decisive role in the family-conscious synchronisation of schedules. Whether and how a woman and/or a man will be able to live with the decision they make for their lives together and for children is decided on a local level. Decisive for the reconciliation of family and working life are, for example, childcare options located in close proximity to home or the workplace.

Local time policy represents a very complex plot line since the interests of extremely heterogeneous parties must be harmonised. The suggested courses of action are just as diverse as the parties involved:

- Initiatives to invite key pace-setters in a municipality (e.g. schools, childcare facilities, commerce, representatives of public and private service providers, employers and public transportation authorities) to a **platform to exchange ideas on family time policy** would be advantageous in order to examine the possibility of a higher level of time synchronisation. As a rule, the fragmented and disparate structures of existing options could be linked, collected under one roof, and, thus, better integrated.
- Facilities for providing day-care for children, education and services to families, or counselling on raising children should join together to form **new models of cooperation** with referral and qualification centres for child day-care, doctors, and others in the field of health that provide services as well as a broad spectrum of options for helping families and providing services to support families.
- **Family centres** should be enhanced as catalysers for the expansion of a family-friendly municipal infrastructure.
- Municipal governments should orient their thinking more on the idea of a **caring community**.

■ The establishment of **municipal platforms** to promote and coordinate engagement in civil society should be combined with the idea of time accounts, since this would make it possible to promote care and solidarity as well as reciprocity and to attract a greater number of older people to engage in civil society.

Enhancing competence in using time

The goal of the family-related time competence policy is to ensure that families and their members are competent in structuring their time autonomously, so that they can best realise their goals and desires. This can be started in the educational system, but must also be addressed in situations in life in which time problems occur.

Options for developing greater (family) time competence could be presented in direct connection with the (initial) use of time for family purposes – whether within the context of long-term care or within the context of raising children. This would not only make it easier to gain access to those who are really affected, thereby reducing the probability of addressing the wrong audience, it is also likely to increase the effectiveness of gaining this competence in view of the proximity of the need to allocate time in an altered manner.

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