



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

Final Report

European Company Survey on Reconciliation of Work and Family Life



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Foreword

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The number of available skilled laborers in Germany has been falling for some years now. This situation is further compounded by demographic changes and represents an important challenge for Europe as a whole. In the years to come even young parents and people caring for needy dependents must be able to participate as much as possible in the workforce, so as not to let any potential workers go to waste.



The Robert Bosch Stiftung is promoting a number of initiatives to reconcile work and family life. For this purpose the Federal German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and the Robert Bosch Stiftung commissioned a study, the “European Company Survey on Reconciliation of Work and Family Life”, conducted by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research.

Over 5,000 companies in six European countries were asked about their family-friendly practices, providing a representative sample that can now be used for comparative purposes. Other countries besides Germany were included in the study, namely, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, so as to also learn from other European partners.

The results demonstrate that Germany has much to learn, mainly from Sweden and the United Kingdom. Both countries have introduced measures to increase workplace flexibility, such as job-sharing and telecommuting, which could be more widely adopted in Germany. But there are also practices in Germany that could be emulated. A number of companies help their employees in searching for, organizing and financing child care.

The goal is to create a win/win situation for both employers and employees. We will only succeed in creating family-friendly work environments when everyone involved works together – in the business, social and political areas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ingrid Hamm".

Dr. Ingrid Hamm

Executive Director of the Robert Bosch Stiftung

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Key findings: An overview

- I Family-friendliness is important.** According to the companies questioned in the survey, great importance is placed on reconciliation of work and family life. In each of the six countries, at least eight out of ten firms report that work-life balance is important or fairly important for the company itself and its employees. More Swedish and British enterprises regard family-friendliness as a significant issue than firms in the other four countries.
- I Many companies show a decidedly positive attitude towards reconciliation of work and family life.** A company can be classified as particularly family-friendly if management ensures that work and family life can be reconciled as a matter of course, offers staff with family care commitments the same development and promotion opportunities as staff without such commitments, and involves the employees or their representatives appropriately in information processes and decision-making on work-life balance policies. On this basis, roughly 38% of the establishments in Germany can be characterised as particularly family-friendly. This places German companies ahead of those in Great Britain (30%) and Poland (34%). First place goes to Sweden with 62%, followed by Italy (55%) and France (48%).
- I Family-friendly companies are highly committed to work-life balance.** Irrespective of the country concerned, companies characterised as particularly family-friendly have implemented more work-life balance policies than other establishments. They place the wishes, interests and development opportunities of their employees in the foreground. A family-friendly management approach has a positive effect on human resources policy measures. At the same time, the lack of a particularly family-friendly management policy does not necessarily mean that a company fails to adopt family-friendly measures.
- I The extent of work-life balance policies differs significantly between the countries.** Swedish and British companies have implemented more work-life balance policies than those in countries covered by the survey. German industry also demonstrates great commitment to improving work-life balance. By contrast, management attitudes in France, Italy and Poland are generally less positive than those in Germany.
- I Flexible working time arrangements are used to reconcile work and family life.** Working time arrangements and flexible modes of work organisation are the policies most commonly adopted to improve work-life balance. Part-time work, flexible daily and weekly working hours, and individually agreed working hours are the most common forms. In Sweden and the UK flexible working time arrangements are more widespread than in Germany, but they are less common in Italy and Poland. French establishments do not significantly differ from German ones.
- I Support for employees on parental leave is found in only three countries.** In all six countries, most employees return from parental leave to the same job they had before their extended break. However, only Swedish, British and German firms provide support for working parents before, during and after parental leave. In these countries, employees frequently have the opportunity to work during parental leave. German firms report that they give particular consideration to parents' needs when organising work processes or

scheduling appointments, meetings and so on. Many Swedish and British firms install contact programmes for employees on parental leave and frequently encourage male employees to take parental leave or to work part-time. Companies in France, Italy and Poland are more reserved when it comes to supporting employees before, during and after parental leave. And in these countries, the number of firms with only a few or no parental leave or parent promotion measures in place is extraordinarily high.

- I Support for employees caring for children and other dependants is moderate.** In all six countries, support for childcare and care of dependants is far less prevalent than flexible working arrangements and parental leave and promotion. If companies offer support, they do so largely by granting special leave beyond statutory requirements. This applies both when children are ill and when dependants require care. Company daycare provision occurs only in isolated cases. The majority of British firms offer at least two or more measures. In Germany, more than a third of companies (38%) offer two or more measures in this area; this is significantly more than in Italy, Sweden and Poland. French companies differ little from their German counterparts.
- I Family-focused services are more the exception than the rule.** The provision of services to support employees in their household and leisure activities, and to inform and advise them on legal matters plays hardly any role at all. This applies for all countries, although in Sweden at least one fifth of companies offer at least two forms of family support service.
- I Incentives for companies to introduce family-friendly measures are similar.** Germany is a special case. With the exception of Germany, complying with statutory or collective agreement requirements is the main reason why companies introduce family-friendly measures. In Germany, the key incentive is increasing job satisfaction, followed by the prospect of becoming a more attractive employer, both for existing and potential employees, and the hope of achieving higher productivity. These three incentives also play an important role in the other five countries covered by the survey. Compared with companies in the other five countries, relatively few German firms report that their employees expressly requested the introduction of family-friendly measures. Also, compared with their counterparts in other countries, German companies also go to greater lengths to accelerate reintegration of employees returning to work after parental leave.
- I Lack of demand for work-life balance policies and adequate statutory or collective agreement provisions harness company commitment.** Where there is no demand, there is no need to act. In all countries except Poland, this is one of the main reasons why companies refrain from taking action. In all six countries covered by the survey, companies frequently refrain from implementing work-life balance measures beyond statutory and collective agreement requirements because they regard these provisions as adequate. Plus, state intervention harbours a risk of dampening company initiative or that of the social partners. In all countries, companies complain that there is often too little state support for potential family-friendly initiatives.

I Regulatory basis for human resources policy measures differs from country to country.

For the majority of companies in all six countries, statutory provisions provide the basis for the family-friendly measures they offer. More companies in Great Britain, France and Poland have adopted such measures in response to statutory requirements than those in Germany. In France and Italy, sectoral and national collective agreements frequently provide the basis for family-friendly measures. In French and German companies, works agreements often govern measures implemented as part of family-friendly human resources policy. British and German firms often introduce such measures due to managers' personal conviction.

I Family-friendliness despite the economic crisis. Only in Italy have companies withdrawn or postponed family-friendly measures because of the economic crisis. In times of crisis, balancing employees' interest in better work-life balance with economic necessity and operational needs boosts the need for family-friendly human resources policy.

From late October to early December 2009, more than 5,000 company managers and human resources managers in six European countries (Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden and Great Britain) were surveyed by means of computer-aided telephone interviews. Respondents were chosen at random. However, to ensure a representative outcome, the results were extrapolated using a 3x2 matrix. Three workforce categories (5–49, 50–249, 250 and over) and two sectoral groups (producing industry and service providers) were used. For Germany, it was important to ensure comparability with the 2006 Company Survey on Reconciliation of Work and Family Life. For this reason, a larger number of companies (upwards of 1,300) were approached in Germany than in the other countries covered by the survey (a good 750 in each).

I.

Introduction

Demographic change requires an increase in labour force participation. This applies particularly to those groups which have had relatively low participation rates in the past and those with family obligations such as child rearing or care for the elderly. With many companies already reporting difficulties in recruiting or retaining qualified staff, policies which aim to reconcile work and family life more effectively have become more attractive. Implementing work-life balance¹ policies may therefore be considered a significant factor in the enhancement of corporate competitiveness and national prosperity. Governments together with the social partners at the national, sectoral and company levels must tackle the challenge of ensuring the competitiveness of companies while granting women and men equal participation in work and family life.

The European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life 2010 provides a detailed description and analysis of family-friendly policies implemented by the firms in six European countries – Germany (DE), the United Kingdom (UK), France (FR), Italy (IT), Sweden (SE) and Poland (PL). These six countries account for approximately 63% of the population and 68% of the GDP in the EU-27. Table 1 provides selected national indicators with respect to the reconciliation of work and family life.

Table 1: Selected national indicators on the reconciliation of work and family life

	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Female labour force participation rate in % ¹	66.2	65.0	60.1	46.4	70.2	52.8
Maternal employment ratio in % (child under 16) ²	68.1	67.9	72.8	55.6	82.5	67.9
Part-time work (in % of employees) ¹						
Females	44.8	41.7	29.7	27.9	40.5	10.9
Males	8.6	10.4	5.7	4.7	12.6	5.0
Total fertility rate ³	1.38	1.96	2.00 ⁴	1.41	1.91	1.39
Weighted paid parental leave (in weeks) ^{2,5}	40.7	6.0	33.0	8.9	51.2	20.1
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school ⁶						
< 3 years	13.6	39.7	42.9	28.6	45.3	8.6
3 to 5 years	89.4	90.5	100	99.4	85.5	41.0
Public spending on family benefits (in % of GDP) ⁷						
Cash	1.43	2.21	1.39	0.58	1.52	0.84
Services	0.74	0.99	1.62	0.73	1.83	0.29
Tax breaks for families	0.87	0.35	0.77	0.00	0.00	0.04

¹ 2009, ² 2007, ³ 2008, ⁴ projection, ⁵ weights: ratio between the full-time equivalent payment and the corresponding entitlement in number of weeks, ⁶ 2006, ⁷ 2005

Source: Eurostat LFS, OECD Family database, OECD LFS, Diekmann/Plünnecke 2009²

1 Although in the stricter sense 'work-life balance' refers to a wider range of HR concerns than 'family-friendliness', for the purposes of this report the two terms are regarded as synonymous.

2 Diekmann, Laura-Christin/Plünnecke, Axel, 2009, Familienfreundlichkeitsindex, IW-Analysen No. 56, Cologne, 57

In autumn 2009, senior executives and the heads of human resources departments in over 5,000 companies were interviewed about how important they consider the issue of family-friendliness and the policies they have offered in their firms. In addition, they reported on their main motives for, and the most significant obstacles to, the implementation of work-life balance measures. The European Company Survey also allows an assessment of the institutional basis, such as statutory provisions, collective and works agreements, on which the policies adopted are ultimately based. It should be borne in mind, however, that the results do not allow a thorough evaluation of specific governmental programmes. Finally, the survey focuses on the impact of the economic crisis on the willingness of companies in the six countries to implement or maintain family-friendly policies.

II.

The significance of family-friendliness

Family-friendliness is regarded as a significant issue in all six countries. The highest importance is accorded to family-friendliness in Sweden and the United Kingdom. More than 86% (SE) and 93% (UK) of the enterprises there regarded family-friendliness as important or fairly important. In the other countries about eight out of ten companies stated that family-friendliness was at least fairly important for the company itself (Table 2). Taking Germany as the benchmark country and controlling for other factors, such as company characteristics and the structure of the workforce, the importance of the issue in Sweden and the United Kingdom is significantly higher than in Germany, whereas it is lower in France and Poland. Italian enterprises do not differ noticeably from German ones in this regard.

Table 2: The importance of family-friendliness in the view of the companies interviewed

Proportion of companies in %

... for the company	DE	UK+++	FR--	IT	SE+++	PL--
Important	58.2	52.5	48.1	43.5	62.1	22.8
Fairly important	21.5	40.9	35.2	38.4	24.1	59.5
Fairly unimportant	15.1	5.1	10.7	14.7	9.6	14.0
Unimportant	5.2	1.6	6.1	3.4	4.3	3.7
... for the workforce	DE	UK+++	FR	IT	SE+++	PL--
Important	59.1	59.4	61.0	49.7	67.0	32.3
Fairly important	22.0	36.5	32.5	39.7	23.6	53.2
Fairly unimportant	13.3	3.3	3.9	9.8	6.7	12.2
Unimportant	5.7	0.8	2.5	0.8	2.7	2.2
... for staff in key operational positions (e.g. managers, experts)	DE	UK+++	FR+++	IT+++	SE+++	PL+++
Important	50.7	54.6	52.8	42.2	63.7	27.8
Fairly important	17.9	39.6	31.9	44.4	22.6	53.3
Fairly unimportant	21.4	4.3	10.3	10.7	11.0	16.3
Unimportant	9.9	1.4	4.9	2.7	2.7	2.6

Difference to Germany is significant at +++/-- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of an ordered logit regression using importance as the dependent variable and the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries

Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

The share of companies which regard the issue of family-friendliness as at least fairly important for their employees is even higher in all countries. However, the pattern of the country-ranking remains more or less the same: In Sweden and the United Kingdom the importance of family-friendliness is higher than in Germany, while it is lower in Poland and France.

From the perspective of the respondents, i. e. senior executives and personnel managers, family-friendliness is as important for persons in key operational positions, such as line managers and experts, as for the company as a whole in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Sweden and Poland. In Germany the proportion of companies where members of this employee group consider this issue important or fairly important is noticeably smaller (around 60%).



Attitude and activity – the two dimensions of family-friendliness

The companies were also asked to respond to five statements concerning different aspects of the issue of reconciliation of work and family life:

- | The company ensures that the ability to reconcile work and family life can be taken for granted by our staff.
- | Workers with family care commitments have the same development and promotion opportunities as employees without such commitments.
- | The management regularly interviews staff as to their requirements in relation to reconciling work and family life.
- | Employees are regularly informed by management about the work-life reconciliation policies offered by our company.
- | The staff and their representative bodies are continuously involved in devising the work-life reconciliation policies offered by our company.

These statements reveal how the issue of family-friendliness is incorporated into the firm's culture (statements 1 and 2) and how employees are involved in information processes and decisionmaking with respect to work-life balance measures (statements 3, 4 and 5) (see Table 3).

Family-friendliness can be characterised according to two different criteria:

1. The general attitude prevailing in the company's management towards the reconciliation of work and family life
2. The activity reflected in the type and number of policies that firms adopt

From the responses of the companies to the five statements which describe their attitude towards specific aspects of the reconciliation of work and family life it is possible to develop the concept of a 'decidedly family-friendly attitude'. An enterprise is thus deemed particularly family-friendly if two conditions obtain simultaneously:

- | Firstly, the respondents agree fully or to a fair degree with statements 1 and 2,
- | Secondly, they agree fully or to a fair degree with at least two of the statements 3 to 5.

Table 3: Attitude towards family-friendliness

Proportion of companies in %

The company ensures that the ability to reconcile work and family life can be taken for granted by our staff						
	DE	UK--	FR--	IT--	SE+++	PL--
Fully applies	51.8	22.8	39.6	28.6	81.7	37.8
Applies to a fair degree	37.0	35.6	40.3	49.2	13.2	43.4
Applies to a limited degree	8.5	14.9	6.2	12.9	2.8	12.4
Does not apply at all	2.7	26.8	13.9	9.3	2.3	6.4
Staff with family care commitments have the same development and promotion opportunities as staff without such commitments						
	DE	UK+++	FR+++	IT--	SE+++	PL+++
Fully applies	63.9	86.4	78.9	36.6	81.6	64.7
Applies to a fair degree	21.6	9.6	12.9	45.3	11.2	26.7
Applies to a limited degree	9.6	1.1	2.6	10.6	3.7	6.1
Does not apply at all	4.9	2.9	5.6	7.4	3.5	2.6
The management regularly interviews staff as to their requirements in relation to reconciling work and family life						
	DE	UK	FR	IT+++	SE+++	PL+++
Fully applies	20.3	22.6	25.8	21.4	36.8	17.2
Applies to a fair degree	24.4	27.3	25.3	44.6	24.2	28.8
Applies to a limited degree	25.8	23.0	10.1	17.5	16.3	30.0
Does not apply at all	29.5	27.0	38.8	16.5	22.7	24.0
Employees are regularly informed by management about the work-life reconciliation policies offered by our company						
	DE	UK+++	FR+++	IT+++	SE+++	PL
Fully applies	14.3	30.3	35.2	15.2	36.6	14.1
Applies to a fair degree	23.1	33.2	22.7	37.6	29.3	21.9
Applies to a limited degree	33.1	14.5	9.6	24.3	16.0	38.2
Does not apply at all	29.6	22.0	32.6	22.9	18.0	25.9
Staff and/or their representative bodies are continuously involved in devising the work-life reconciliation policies offered by our company						
	DE	UK--	FR+++	IT	SE+++	PL--
Fully applies	21.0	23.4	28.2	16.9	36.8	10.1
Applies to a fair degree	27.7	30.6	24.5	40.4	28.4	18.0
Applies to a limited degree	26.7	13.5	11.7	20.7	14.9	35.0
Does not apply at all	24.6	32.4	35.6	22.0	19.9	36.9

Difference to Germany is significant at +++/-- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10%

Results of ordered logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries

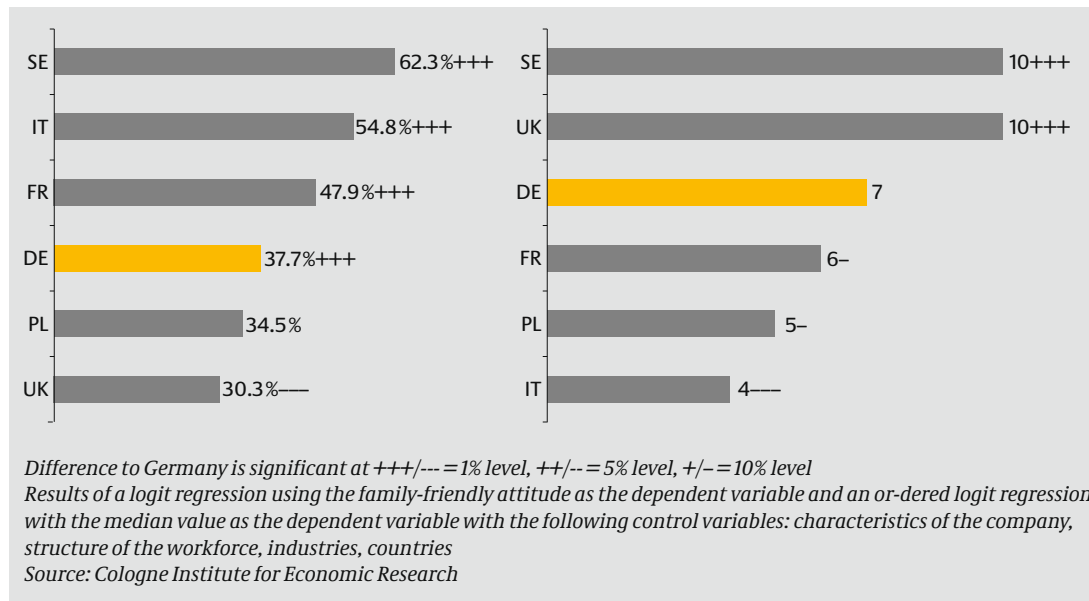
Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Figure 1 shows that more than 60% of the Swedish companies may be characterised as particularly family-friendly. The corresponding shares of companies in Italy (54.8%) and France (47.9%) are significantly larger than in Germany (37.7%). In the United Kingdom the share of family-friendly companies is noticeably lower (30.3%). Polish firms do not significantly differ from German ones.

Companies with a decidedly positive attitude to work-life reconciliation rank the importance of family-friendly policies significantly higher than other companies in every country.

Figure 1: Family-friendly companies

Share of companies with a decidedly positive attitude towards work-life balance issues in each country in % and the median number of family-friendly policies per company



Unsurprisingly, given the high proportion of companies that regard family-friendliness as important, only a very small minority of firms do not offer any measures at all. This applies to all the six countries surveyed (DE: 0.8%, UK: 0.8%, FR: 0.7%, IT: 4.6%, SE: 0.4%, PL: 1.2%). As a median value, British and Swedish establishments offer ten policies (Figure 1). On average, companies in Germany have implemented seven policies. This is significantly more than in France (six), Italy (five) and Poland (five). But it is noticeably less than in the UK or Sweden.

Further analyses show that family-friendly companies in all countries implement more policies than firms that could not be characterised as specifically family-friendly. This implies that attitude significantly influences actual activity. Figure 1, however, also shows that the existence of many companies with a family-friendly attitude does not result in a higher median number of policies adopted in every country and vice versa. Therefore family-friendliness needs to be characterised not only by a generally family-friendly attitude but also by family-friendly activity.

IV.

The prevalence of specific family-friendly policies

4.1 Flexible working time and work arrangements

Flexible working arrangements and flexible modes of work organisation can improve the reconciliation of work and family life if the staff can align their work with private obligations more effectively. Simultaneously, companies can benefit from flexible working arrangements by optimising work processes and reacting flexibly to fluctuating order books. Therefore, the wishes of the employees may be in line with the requirements of the company's work schedule.

Flexible daily or weekly working hours, individually agreed working hours and the opportunity to work part-time are the most common measures in all countries (Table 4). Nonetheless, significant differences exist between the six countries with respect to these human resources policies. The proportion of companies in the UK which offer part-time work and individually agreed working-hours is significantly larger than in Germany. Even though the proportion of firms offering part-time jobs in Sweden is smaller than in Germany, multi-variate analyses reveal that the likelihood of having implemented part-time jobs is higher in Swedish firms than in comparable German ones. On the other hand, the likelihood that working hours have been agreed individually between the firm and the individual worker is lower in Sweden than in Germany. The significance of these three measures is lower in France, Italy and Poland.

Table 4: Flexible working time and work arrangements

Share of companies which offer a specific policy, in %

	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Flexible daily or weekly working hours	70.2	72.7	57.0---	45.8---	64.5	49.1---
Flexible annual or lifetime working hours	28.3	47.5+++	45.7+++	23.0+++	58.5+++	26.1
No monitoring of working hours	46.2	40.4	40.7	32.2---	52.7	32.3---
Sabbaticals	16.1	35.0+++	27.0+++	9.6---	30.5+++	25.5
Individually agreed working hours	72.8	78.2+++	52.6---	45.1---	58.5---	53.8---
Telework	21.9	38.2+++	14.0---	5.3---	41.2+++	6.6---
Part-time work	79.2	85.7+++	68.7---	64.7---	71.9+++	75.2---
Job sharing	20.4	33.9+++	15.0--	19.3---	39.7+++	9.4--

Differences to Germany significant at +++/--- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries, family-friendly attitude

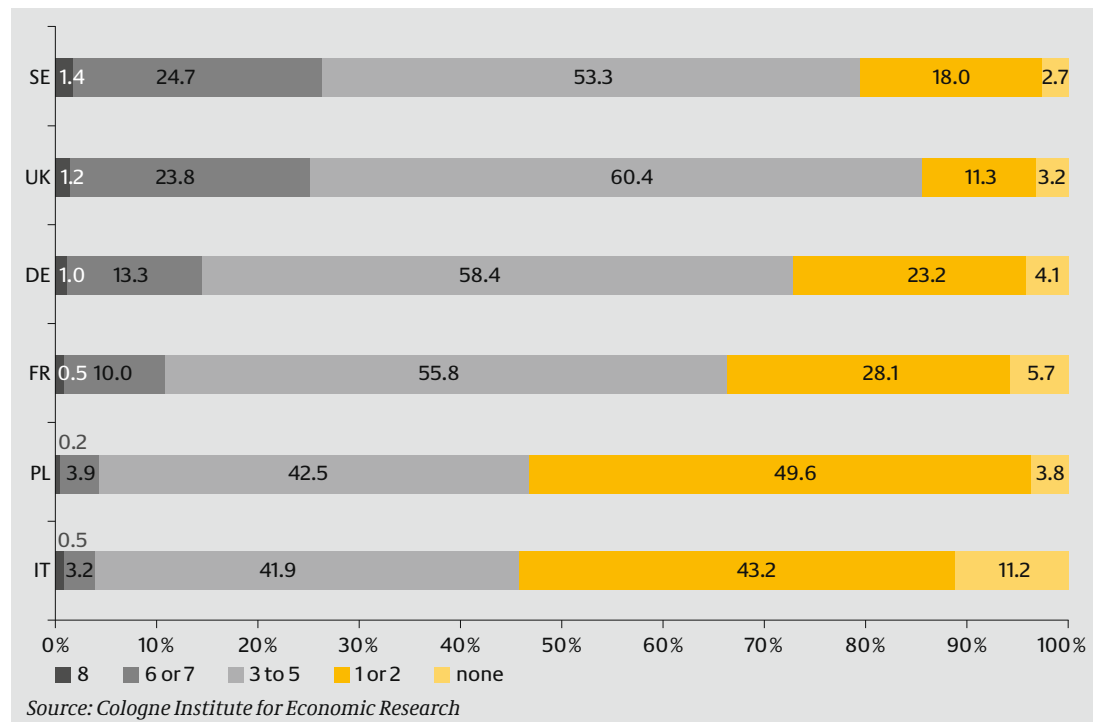
Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Summary

Companies in Sweden and the UK have implemented a larger number of family-friendly flexible working arrangements than German firms while establishments in Poland and Italy have been significantly less active in this respect (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Total number of flexible working time and work arrangements

Share of companies, in %



Special features:

A closer look at the relationship between a decidedly family-friendly attitude and the actual implementation of family-friendly policies reveals that the likelihood of implementing more policies is higher for firms with a positive attitude towards the work-life balance than for other companies. This also holds true for the likelihood of having implemented any specific type of flexibilisation of working time or work organisation except “no monitoring of working hours”. In addition, the differences between Germany and the other countries continue to obtain when the companies’ attitude is taken into consideration. This implies that country-specific institutional and cultural factors have a significant impact on how widespread flexible working arrangements aimed at reconciling work and family life become.

There is good reason to doubt, however, that flexible working time arrangements and other flexible modes of working always correspond to workers’ preferences. Therefore, the respondents were asked whether the allocation of hours actually worked in the company was dictated by operational imperatives or workers’ preferences:

- Two thirds of the German companies schedule their working hours mainly in line with operational requirements with only one third deferring predominantly to the wishes of the staff. In Italy (64.6%) and the United Kingdom (48.7%) the preferences of employees exert significantly more influence on the actual allocation of working hours. While French

companies (29.3%) do not significantly differ from German enterprises, Swedish (26.3%) and Polish (26.5%) firms are less inclined to organise working hours mainly to meet the wishes of the workers.

Surprisingly, only in Germany does a positive attitude towards the work-life balance on the part of the firm exert a significant impact on the likelihood that the wishes of the staff are the main factor in organising working hours. This suggests that even when operational reasons are the prime determinant of working hours, this does not necessarily conflict with workers' preferences. In many cases, both the company and its employees may benefit from a specific allocation of working hours.

Finally, firms in the private sector do not significantly differ from those in the public sector. Neither does the sex of the firm's chief executive exert any significant influence on the likelihood that a firm adopts more work-life balance policies. Both features apply to every country.

4.2 Parental leave and parental support

Parental leave constitutes a major policy component for improving the work-life balance. Though national regulations, endorsed by the EU Directive on parental leave, exist in every country, the details continue to differ substantially. This applies in particular to the extent of the leave entitlement and to the amount of pay received while on leave. On the other hand, employees on parental leave have a right to return to their previous or a comparable job in all countries surveyed. Statutory entitlements can be complemented by company policies that help parents to combine family and work before, during and after parental leave.

Particular consideration is given to the needs of parents when organising work processes in a very high proportion of German companies (80.1%), but also in the majority of firms in all other countries except Italy (Table 5). Nonetheless, even in Italian and Polish enterprises paying particular attention to parents' family obligations is still the most common form of support (37.3% and 33.2%, respectively).

Table 5: Support given to parents before, during and after parental leave

Share of companies which offer a specific policy, in %

	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Contact programmes	27.3	66.6+++	21.0---	23.0	51.8+++	15.4---
Further training	19.8	28.0+++	6.4---	16.2---	16.6	8.9---
Part-time work during parental leave	60.5	65.3+++	30.3---	28.6---	80.5+++	24.1---
Re-integration programmes	35.6	44.3+++	21.7---	20.9---	47.2++	16.0---
Particular consideration given to parents	80.1	66.3---	54.3---	37.3---	61.4---	33.2---
Encouraging fathers to take leave or work part-time	16.2	61.4+++	29.9+++	6.4---	55.1+++	10.6---
Financial benefits	12.6	39.9+++	6.2---	3.7---	21.5+++	7.2---

Differences to Germany significant at +++/--- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries, family-friendly attitude

Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

The opportunity to work part-time during parental leave is given in 80.5% of the Swedish firms, 65.3% of the British companies, and 60.5% of the German enterprises. Thus the risk of knowledge and skills being lost or becoming outdated during the career interruption can be substantially reduced in these countries. In France, Italy and Poland the opportunities for employees to work part-time during their parental leave are noticeably fewer.

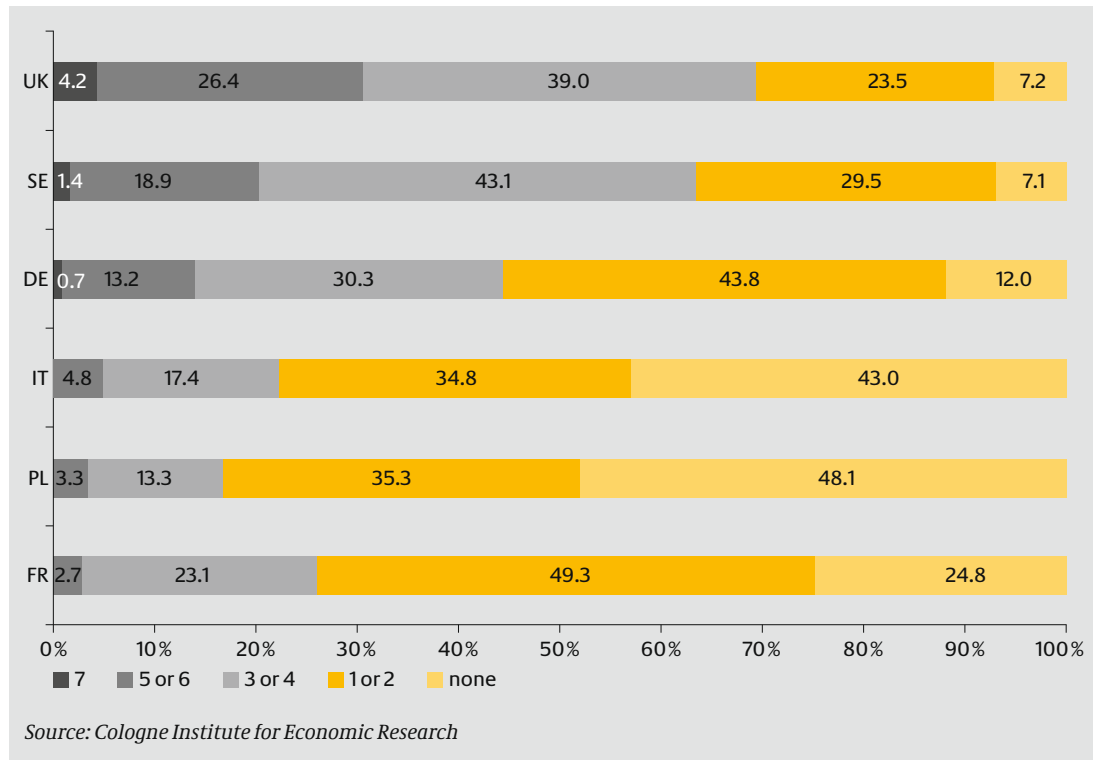
Some policies are aimed specifically at facilitating the re-integration of workers after their return from parental leave. Two thirds of the firms in the UK and more than half of those in Sweden have established specific contact programmes which keep employees on parental leave up to date. This is a less common practice in Germany and Italy and even rarer in France and Poland. In every country companies offer continuous training during parental leave less frequently than the three policies already mentioned. Indeed, only in the UK is it offered by a significant proportion of companies (28%). The training of workers on parental leave is particularly unusual in France (6.4%) and Poland (8.9%). Special re-integration programmes are relatively common in Sweden (47.2%), the UK (44.3%) and Germany (35.6%).

Only Sweden (55.1%) and the UK (61.4%) have notable proportions of companies that encourage male members of staff to take paternity leave or to work part-time. Though the corresponding share in France (29.9%) are a good deal lower, it is still significantly higher than in Germany (16.2%), Italy (6.4%) and Poland (10.6%), where fathers are seldom encouraged by their firms to take time off for their new offspring. With respect to Germany, it should be borne in mind that public policies, for example the so-called 'Parental Benefit' (Elterngeld), that prompt companies to especially encourage male employees have only been in effect since 2007. Finally, additional financial benefits during parental leave are most frequently granted by British companies (39.9%).

Summary

Figure 3: Total number of measures before, during and after parental leave

Share of companies, in %



The results show that policies supporting employees during and after their parental leave are regarded as less important than flexible working time and work arrangements. With respect to the total number of policies adopted, a similar pattern can be found. Companies in the UK and Sweden offer more different measures than comparable firms in Germany whereas enterprises in Italy, France and Poland are significantly less inclined to support their employees before, during and after parental leave (Figure 3).

Special features:

Companies with a family-friendly attitude have a higher probability of offering a certain policy than non-family-friendly companies. This also holds true for the likelihood of having implemented more measures. As with flexible working time and work arrangements the differences between the countries continue to hold even after controlling for the family-friendly attitude of the companies. Therefore, country-specific institutional or cultural features are likely to be affecting the extent to which companies offer family-friendly policies designed for employees during and after parental leave.

In addition, the companies were asked whether parents resume the same function upon their return to work, take on a different function in the company or do not return at all. Besides Germany, the majority of parents resume the same functions in more than 95% of the companies. But even in Germany, in eight out of ten firms new parents return to the jobs they performed before their parental leave, though this proportion is significantly lower than in the other five countries.

Finally, only in Sweden and the UK do public companies offer more policies than those in the private sector. The sex of the chief executive plays no significant role in any of the six countries.

4.3 Child care and care for dependants

The provision of child care facilities is generally regarded as another important pre-condition for reconciling work and family life. If the total capacity of child care facilities is not sufficient, those who want to work may be forced to stay at home. Therefore, when companies provide their own child care facilities or effectively support their employees in reconciling work and care responsibilities they considerably enhance the prospects of those workers remaining in their employ. This holds true particularly if the public child care infrastructure is seen as inadequate. Although child care is essential for working parents, only very few companies offer firm-specific child care places. As such facilities need to be relatively large to be run efficiently it is not surprising that the likelihood of child care places being offered is higher in large companies than in small ones. Since, however, large companies represent only a small minority of the total in every country, the proportion of firms offering child care is only between 1.1% and 3.8% (Table 6).

German (15.1%) and British (18.3%) enterprises at least support their employees in finding, organising or financing child care more often than the enterprises in the other four countries. Additional financial and organisational support for employees who have to care for elderly people (short-term nursing) is the exception in every country. It is by far the least widespread in France (1.9%) and Italy (3.2%).

If companies support their employees in the performance of care duties, they do so by offering special leave from work in excess of the statutory level. This applies to more than half of the companies in Germany if their employees' children are ill and to 34.6% if other family members need to be cared for. In the UK the proportion of enterprises is even higher in both cases (71.3% and 61.0% respectively) whereas it is smaller in Poland (29.9% and 22.5% respectively). French companies are more supportive than German firms in the case of sick children (69.7%). Italian firms are significantly more inclined than those in Germany to provide special leave in the case of other relatives in need of care (40.6%).

Table 6: Child care/Care for dependants**Share of companies offering a specific family-friendly policy, in %**

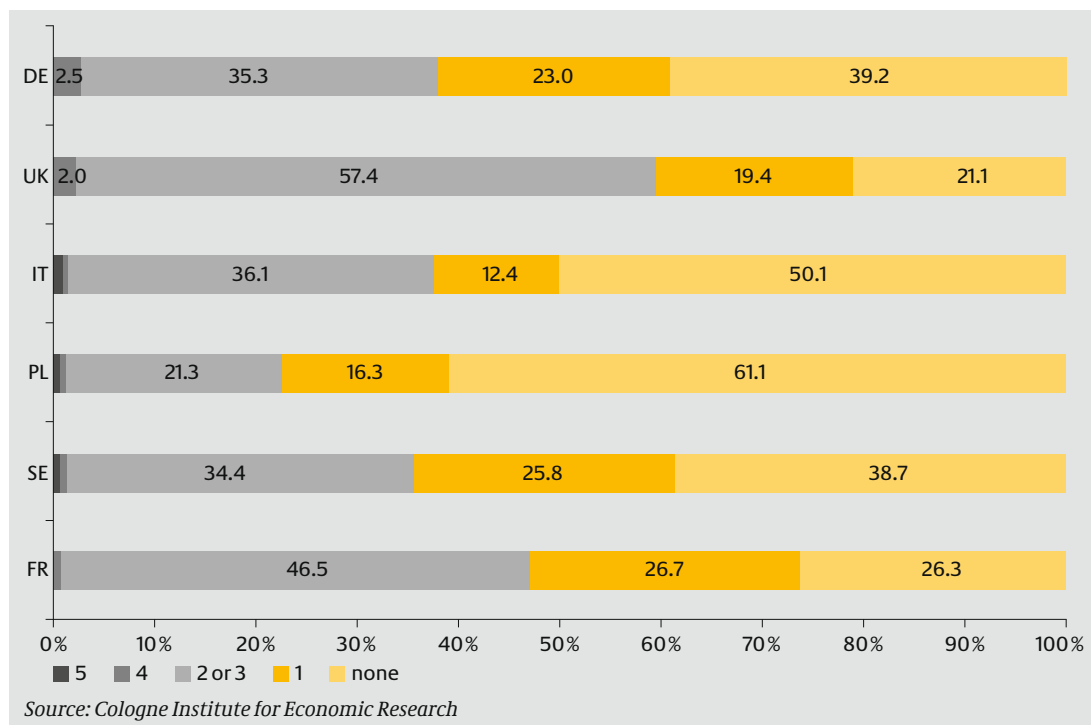
	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Employer-provided child care facilities	2.4	3.6	1.7--	1.1--	1.1---	3.8+++
Additional support for child care	15.1	18.3+++	2.6---	3.5---	2.0---	9.5
Support for short-term nursing	8.9	5.5	1.9---	3.2---	14.0	6.6
Leave of absence or special leave (child's sickness) ¹	52.2	71.3+++	69.7+++	46.9--	50.2---	29.9---
Leave of absence or special leave (relative's sickness) ¹	34.6	61.0+++	49.7	40.6+	46.8	22.5---

¹ Over and above statutory leave

Differences to Germany significant at +++/-- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of ordered logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries, family-friendly attitude

Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Summary**Figure 4: Total number of measures for child and elderly care****Share of companies, in %**

Support for employees caring for children and the elderly is less common than policies aimed at making working time and work organisation more flexible, or at supporting working parents before, during and after parental leave (Figure 4). Companies assist their workers mainly by providing special leave when sick children or relatives need care. Finally, it should be borne in mind that companies may refrain from providing their own care facilities or services if the public child care infrastructure is deemed sufficient to meet their employees' needs.

Special features:

Here again the likelihood of a certain policy as well as that of a larger number of policies being offered is generally higher in family-friendly companies than in those without a decidedly positive attitude towards work-life balance issues.

4.4 Family services, information and advisory services

Additional support can be given by the provision of household services, information about work-life balance issues, and legal advice.

In Sweden (5.1%) and Germany (4.9%) only a minority of companies offer special family or household services aimed at improving the reconciliation of work and family life (Table 7). In the other countries such services exist only in isolated cases.

Almost four out of ten Swedish firms allow employees' children to have meals in the company's canteen. This applies only to a small minority of firms in Germany and the UK, while admission of workers' children to the canteen is extremely rare in France, Italy and Poland. It should be noted, however, that children can only be admitted to a company canteen where one exists and the survey does not provide information about the prevalence of such facilities.

Leisure activities are quite often organised and subsidised by Swedish enterprises (35.0%). Though the proportion of companies in the UK and Poland that offer programmes for after-work activities is rather small, it is noticeably higher than in Germany (10.7%). The likelihood of companies supporting leisure activities is also higher in France (10.7%) than in Germany. Only in Italy (2%) do firms sponsor leisure activities less. The same pattern can be observed with respect to information services and legal advice.

Table 7: Family services/Legal advice

Share of companies offering a specific family-friendly policy, in %

	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Provision of professional help for household duties	4.9	1.9--	1.2	0.0---	5.1+	0.2---
Food in canteen for children	5.4	3.8---	0.6---	1.8---	36.9+++	0.1---
Leisure activities for families	10.7	14.6++	10.7+++	2.0---	35.0+++	13.0+++
Legal advice	11.2	27.4+++	19.4+++	11.4	21.0+++	13.7+++

Differences to Germany significant at +++/-- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries, family-friendly attitude

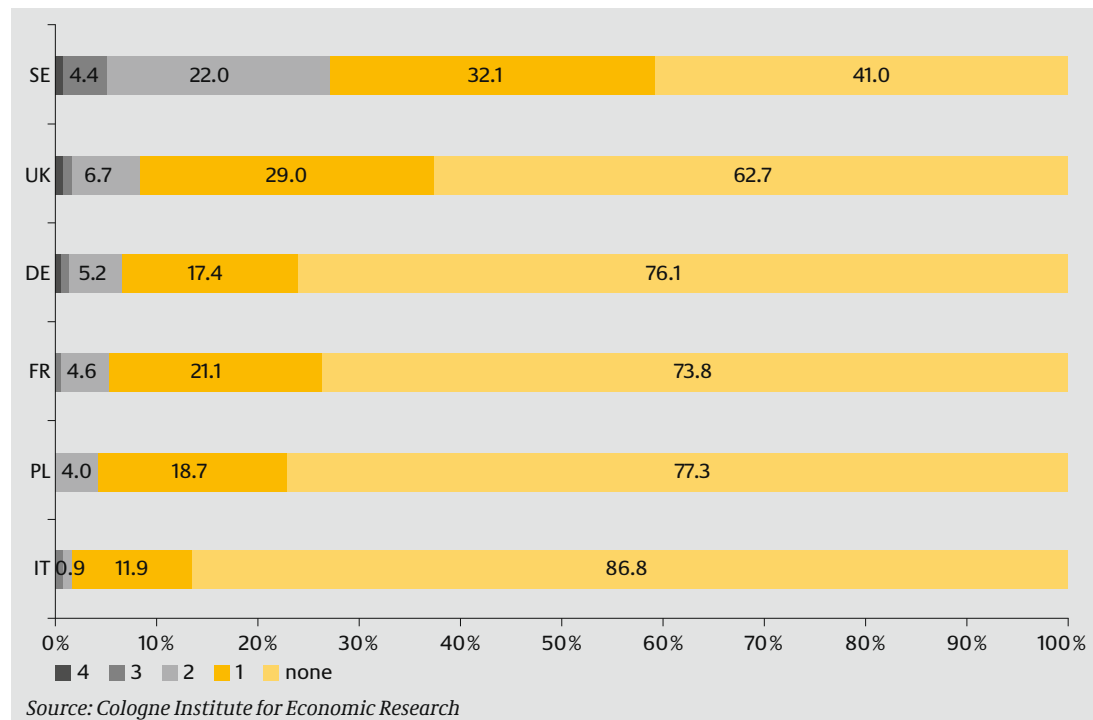
Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Summary:

Policies that give additional support to household or leisure activities are of minor significance except, to some extent, in Sweden (Figure 5). Nonetheless, a positive attitude towards the work-life balance increases the likelihood that a firm has implemented a specific programme and a larger number of measures.

Figure 5: Total number of measures for family, information and advisory services

Share of companies, in %

**Special features:**

Due to the low prevalence of family, information and advisory services there are no special features to report.

V.

The motives for implementing reconciliation policies

Various objectives can motivate firms to implement or continue family-friendly policies. The European Company Survey shows that family-friendly human resource policies mainly aim to increase the attractiveness of the company as an employer for both those already employed and new applicants.

Increasing job satisfaction is one of the most common motives in every country (Table 7). This applies to 93.1% of the firms in Germany and 93.7% of those in Sweden. In the other four countries the proportion of companies with this motive ranges from 66.5% (PL) to 87.9% (UK).

Compliance with the provisions of laws or collective agreements is the number one objective in all countries except Germany. Nonetheless, three out of four German companies stated that the implementation of at least one specific measure was prompted by regulations introduced by the state or collective agreements.

Wishes expressed by the employees are responsible for the introduction or continuation of reconciliation policies less frequently in Germany (46.8%) than in the other five countries. In British, French, Italian and Polish firms the wishes of the staff rank among the top four motives (UK: 78.8%, FR: 70.3%, IT: 78.9%, PL: 67.0%). Though Swedish managers most frequently reported that work-life balance policies were put in place to meet the wishes of the staff (84.5%), this reason only ranks fifth in Sweden.

Table 8: Motives for implementing or continuing work/family reconciliation policies

Share of companies which refer to a specific motive – in %

	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Increase staff job satisfaction	93.1	87.9--	79.8---	80.0---	93.7	66.5---
Statutory or collective agreement requirements	75.3	90.3+++	83.3	86.8+++	97.0+++	68.1--
Increase productivity	46.8	78.8+++	70.3+++	78.9+++	84.5+++	67.0+++
Wishes of staff	80.1	76.3	59.8---	71.6---	90.3+++	59.7---
Retain/recruit qualified staff	93.2	79.7---	72.6---	67.2---	84.2---	47.6---
Re-integrate parents more rapidly	72.1	77.6+++	48.3---	49.1---	87.2+++	26.4---
Reduce the amount of sick leave and staff turnover	77.4	64.1---	46.3---	45.2---	58.8---	21.1---
Reduce the amount of time off needed for dependant care	45.2	56.0+++	26.5---	41.9--	48.6+++	16.1---
Give staff more control over time allocation	66.4	68.6++	44.7---	55.4---	74.3+++	43.8---
Reduce paid overtime or increase flexibility in response to the order situation	62.9	49.4--	43.8---	42.9---	76.0	33.7---
Integral part of strategic personnel development	58.4	71.5+++	52.9---	60.9	75.7+++	22.2---

Multiple answers, top 4 motives

Differences to Germany significant at +++/-- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of ordered logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries, family-friendly attitude

Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Many firms in Germany (80.1%), Italy (71.6%), Sweden (90.3%) and Poland (59.7%) hope that work-life balance policies will result in productivity increases. In this respect, British companies do not noticeably differ from German firms but other reasons are more significant in the UK. Especially German, British and French firms aim to retain or attract qualified workers by the implementation of work-life balance policies. This applies to Swedish enterprises, too, though this reason is less frequently reported than other motives. While the rapid re-integration of employees returning from parental leave is one of the top four motives only in Germany, Swedish firms are unique in giving a similar priority to the reduction of sick leave and staff turnover.

Special features:

Unsurprisingly, almost all motives are more often cited by companies with a decidedly positive attitude towards the reconciliation of work and family life. The notable exception is 'compliance with statutory or collective agreement requirements'. In addition, a closer look reveals that the relevance of the remaining motives differs between the family-friendly and the other enterprises. In this respect, with the exception of 'compliance with statutory or collective agreement provisions' the various objectives can be grouped into two categories.

Some family-friendly policies primarily address efficiency issues. They are expected to reduce transaction costs, increase production or foster innovation and thus improve the competitiveness of the company. If efficiency issues drive the implementation of reconciliation policies, the respondent can be expected to cite the following motives:

- to reduce the amount of time off required by parents or employees with relatives in need of care

- | to retain and/or recruit qualified staff
- | to increase employees' productivity
- | to reduce the amount of sick leave and staff turnover
- | to reduce the amount of paid overtime worked, and to be more flexible in adapting the work according to the order books.

Other policies, however, focus primarily on the preferences and needs of the workers – though they may indirectly have an economic impact, too. In that case, firms can be expected to cite especially these five reasons:

- | to increase staff job satisfaction
- | to re-integrate employees returning to work after parental leave more rapidly
- | to give staff more control over the allocation of their time
- | to comply with the wishes expressed by the staff
- | the policies are an integral part of the company's strategic personnel development

Multivariate analysis reveals that if a company cites one of the reasons related more to the fulfilment of the preferences and needs of the employees, the likelihood increases that the firm's management has a decidedly positive attitude towards the work-life balance issue. If a respondent refers to motives that are primarily efficiency-driven, however, no significant correlation to their attitude towards this issue can be deduced.

The generally positive correlation between the relevance of staff-orientated motives and the firm's attitude is more or less confirmed in every country with one notable exception in the case of Germany. If a German management aims to increase job satisfaction, the likelihood of having a family-friendly attitude decreases. This striking phenomenon may be explained by the fact that the vast majority of German employees already consider their work-life balance satisfactory (85.5%, European Foundation, 2006). If these workers are employed mainly by family-friendly companies, increasing job satisfaction may be a minor priority when the management designs and introduces work-life balance policies.

VI.

Obstacles to the implementation of family-friendly policies

Despite the high prevalence of family-friendly policies, especially in the areas of flexible working arrangements and parental leave/support of parents, companies may be dissuaded from introducing or continuing family-friendly measures for various reasons.

Insufficient support from the state, such as subsidies or tax relief, and the adequacy of existing regulations provided by legislation or collective agreements are most frequently reported as limiting the willingness of companies to introduce work-life balance policies (Table 9). This applies generally to all countries. The lack of state support is, however, particularly emphasised by Italian (61.8%) and Polish managements (76.1%) whereas provisions made by the social partner organisations and by legislation are particularly frequently regarded by companies in the UK (75.8%), Sweden (67.8%) and Poland (73.4%) as obviating any other measures.

Table 9: Obstacles hindering the implementation of work-family reconciliation policies

Share of companies which quote a specific obstacle – in %

	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Collective agreements and/or statutory provisions are sufficient	58.7	75.8+++	60.2	65.1	67.8+++	73.4+++
State support is insufficient	49.8	49.7	48.9	61.8+++	41.9---	76.1+++
Employees have no need	59.8	45.8---	48.8	38.9---	49.3	62.5+++
The cost would be too high	36.5	54.2+++	49.5+++	57.8+++	35.5	56.4+++
Not a basic corporate responsibility	39.9	27.7---	26.8---	27.7---	18.8---	25.4---
Management considers them to be unnecessary	17.3	31.7+++	36.7+++	32.8+++	37.8+++	75.1+++
Unfavourable business situation	32.0	39.8	43.7+++	33.8--	36.4	75.9++
Potential tensions between staff with and without family commitments	18.8	32.8+++	36.0+++	17.7	18.5-	18.0
No benefits seen	31.6	22.5---	31.7	32.2	20.5---	41.4+++

Multiple answers, top 4 obstacles

Differences to Germany significant at +++/-- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of ordered logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries, family-friendly attitude

Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

In Germany, France, Sweden and Poland, managements which argue that collective agreements and statutory provisions are already sufficient to reconcile family life and work are more likely to believe that work-life balance policies do not fall within the firm's domain. But in Germany at least the proportion of companies denying that the work-life balance is

a basic corporate responsibility is relatively small (17.3%) albeit the share of family-friendly firms is rather small, too. Only in Poland do a majority of enterprises (75.1%) emphasise that balancing work and family life is not one of the basic corporate responsibilities and they thus see no reason to implement specific measures.

The majority of British establishments have refrained from introducing reconciliation policies due to rising costs. This holds for firms in Italy and Poland, too. French companies are also more frequently deterred by cost issues than German firms. Further analyses reveal that in all countries except the UK, companies which complain of the inadequacy of state support are more likely to cite cost issues as obstacles to the implementation of family-friendly policies.

Almost six out of ten German companies have refrained from introducing family-friendly policies because of the lack of demand for these measures from employees. This proportion is higher only in Poland, though an apparent lack of employee interest is also a major disincentive in the other four countries.

An unfavourable economic situation prevents a majority of companies from introducing family-friendly human resource policies only in Poland. This is in line with the high relevance of efficiency-related objectives in the other five countries.

Special feature:

Further investigation suggests that German enterprises refrain from work-life balance policies when the management regards such policies as unnecessary and simultaneously either cites a lack of demand on the part of the employees or denies that family-friendly measures bring any benefits.

VII.

Rules and regulations relating to work-family reconciliation policies

Family-friendly policies can be prompted by statutory provisions, collective agreements at the sectoral or national level, collective or works agreements at the company level or the initiative of the management. In some cases, provisions at the one level may substitute for, or crowd out, those at other levels. In other cases, they may complement each other or be mutually independent. In addition, the objectives of provisions set at higher levels may sometimes be counteracted by the reactions of the actors at lower levels.

In nearly 60% of the German firms one or more reconciliation policy has been implemented to fulfil statutory requirements (Table 10). In France, the UK and Poland the impact of national regulation is significantly greater, whereas it is lower in Italy.

Collective agreements are particularly relevant in France, Italy and Sweden. While in the UK and Poland the low significance of collective agreements may be due to their low coverage rate, unions and employers' association in Germany have only recently started to include work-life balance issues in a few sectoral negotiations.

Table 10: Regulation of work-family reconciliation policies

Share of companies which quote the respective rule or regulation – in %

	DE	UK	FR	IT	SE	PL
Statutory regulations	57.8	88.7+++	68.7+++	51.2--	54.6	91.8+++
Collective agreements at national or industry level	26.6	12.5---	79.2+++	70.3+++	56.9+++	2.9---
Works agreement or collective agreements at company level	42.3	33.7---	46.8+++	8.4---	27.8---	21.2---
Own initiative	68.6	81.3+++	59.7---	12.3---	58.9---	36.8---

Multiple answers

Differences to Germany significant at +++/-- = 1% level, ++/-- = 5% level, +/- = 10% level

Results of logit regressions with the following control variables: characteristics of the company, structure of the workforce, industries, countries, family-friendly attitude

Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Despite the fact that provisions at the firm level may be subordinate to statutory regulations or collective standards, the detailed elaboration of work-life balance policies occurs at the company level. In this respect, the efficacy and efficiency of policies adopted at a higher level are eventually determined by the standards set by the management or agreed between the management and the workforce or their representatives.

Works agreements or collective agreements at the company level are the result of a dialogue or negotiations between management and staff in which the needs of the firm and those of the employees are balanced. This arrangement is most commonly found in Germany and France, where the representation of interests is strongly institutionalised in the form of works councils (*Betriebsrat*: DE) and the *délégués de personnel* and the *comité d'entreprise* (FR). Since in Sweden and Italy unions often represent workers at the workplace, too, work-life balance issues can more frequently be dealt with in collective agreements at the sectoral or even national level.

Finally, the implementation of family-friendly measures may be a result of the company's own initiative. This applies particularly to British (81.3%), German (68.6%) and Swedish (58.9%) enterprises. In the two latter countries, voluntary initiatives are even more important than statutory provisions. That the companies' own initiative is such a minor factor in Italy (12.3%) is surprising in view of the relatively high proportion of firms with a family-friendly attitude.

Special features:

A closer look at the impact of legislation on the distribution of specific work-life balance policies suggests that statutory provisions might result in a crowding-out of companies' voluntarily engagement and negotiated agreements between the employee representatives and the firm or between the social partner organisations. This holds especially for Germany and, to a lesser extent, for Italy.

VIII.

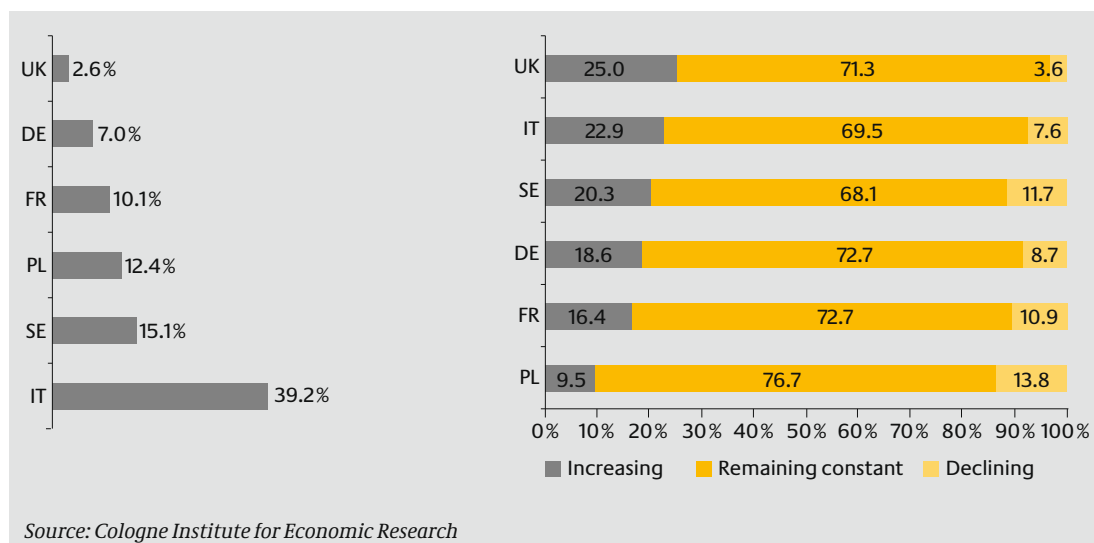
The impact of the economic crisis

When the survey was conducted, most companies were trying to overcome the impact of the most serious recession for several decades. Thus it was assumed that the unfavourable economic situation would adversely affect the willingness of firms to introduce or continue human resource policies that had been designed to improve the work-life balance.

However, the European Company Survey reveals that only in Italy have a significant proportion (around 40%) of the companies been forced to withdraw or postpone reconciliation policies (Figure 6). By contrast, a similar response was found in only 7% of the enterprises in Germany and fewer than 3% in the UK.

Figure 6: Withdrawal or postponement of work-life balance policies and expected significance of work-life balance policies in the next five years

Share of companies in %



Furthermore, this result implies that family-friendly human resources management is particularly influenced by a company's long-term planning goals, such as avoiding a skill shortage or cultivating industrial and employee relations. Moreover, the low proportion of companies in five of the six countries that have withdrawn or postponed reconciliation policies indicates a recognition that the economic requirements of the company must be balanced with the needs and preferences of workers. Under these circumstances the risk of family-friendly measures being cancelled in unfavourable business situations is significantly

reduced. Finally, policies that can simultaneously or at different times achieve the two principle objectives of compliance with workers' preferences and meeting the requirements of the firm are probably superior to other policies. This applies particularly to flexible working time and work arrangements.

In five of the six countries the proportion of companies assuming the significance of reconciliation of work and family life will increase in the next five years is noticeably higher than the share of enterprises expecting a decline. Only in Poland are the proportions reversed.

IX.

Conclusions

The European Company Survey suggests that there is no single national model providing the best policy recommendations for the promotion of work-life balance. However, two conclusions can be drawn for the design of governmental policies.

Firstly, the implementation of family-friendly human resource policies at the company level does not necessarily require a positive attitude towards the reconciliation of work and family life on the part of the management. Nonetheless, fostering a family-friendly attitude can increase the willingness of companies to introduce work-life balance policies. In this respect, governments should be aware that encouraging voluntary action by companies may be more effective than laying down specific regulations that run contrary to firms' requirements.

Secondly, a family-friendly personnel policy is only sustainable over the business cycle if a long-term win-win situation exists for both the company and its employees. Therefore, the wishes and preferences of the latter must be balanced against the operational requirements of the former.

Sample of the European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life

	Size class			Total
	5–49 workers	50–249 workers	250 + workers	
Germany				
Manufacturing	217	209	215	641
Services	236	208	234	678
Total	453	417	449	1,319
France				
Manufacturing	127	125	125	377
Services	124	125	125	374
Total	251	250	250	751
Italy				
Manufacturing	129	126	127	382
Services	122	128	126	376
Total	251	254	253	758
Poland				
Manufacturing	125	126	126	377
Services	126	127	124	377
Total	251	253	250	754
Sweden				
Manufacturing	129	130	115	374
Services	126	125	125	376
Total	255	255	240	750
UK				
Manufacturing	124	125	125	374
Services	124	125	130	379
Total	248	250	255	753

Source: Cologne Institute for Economic Research

Aggregation procedure: 2x3 aggregation-matrix (2 sectors, 3 size classes) – imputation of weights for representativity is based on Eurostat data and national company statistics

Method: Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) – questionnaires in local language based on an English master questionnaire

Field work: Interviews were conducted between 26 October and 10 December 2009.

X.

Fact sheets

Fact sheet – Germany

Selected national indicators

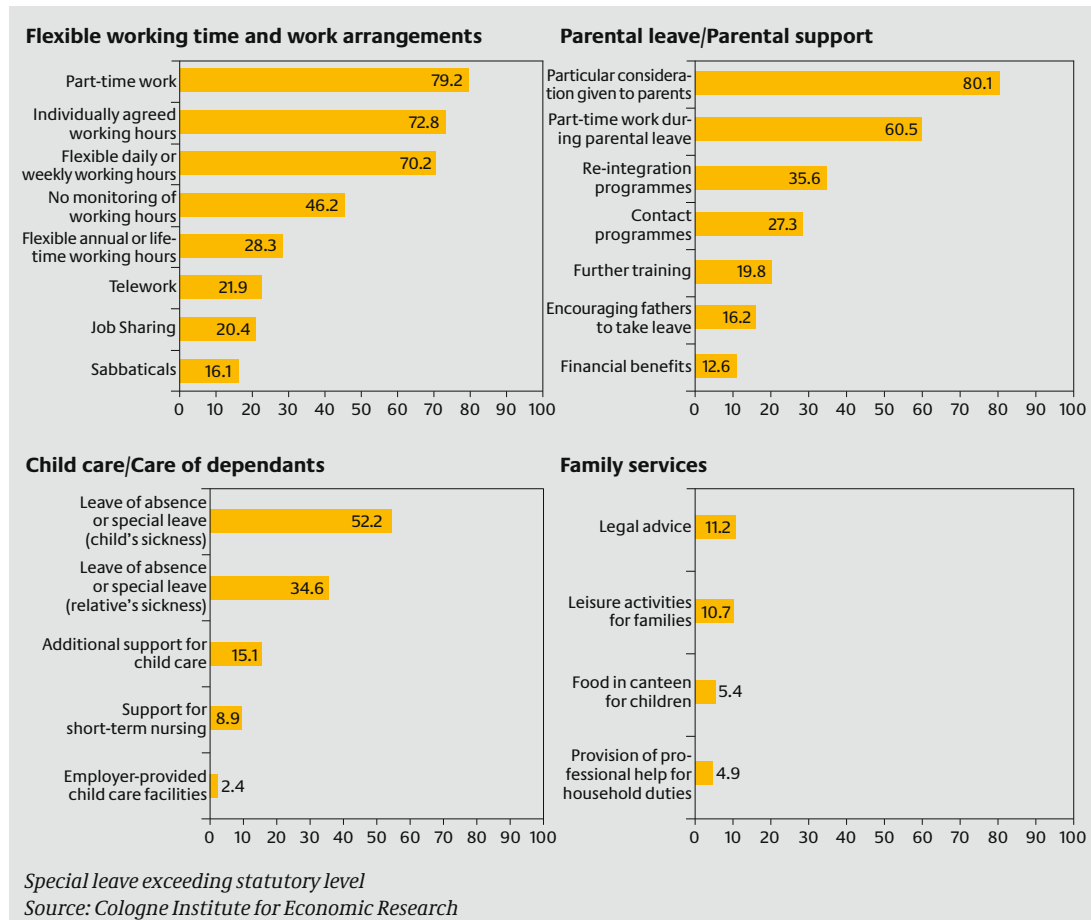
Female labour force participation rate ¹ in %	66.2
Maternal employment ratio in % (child under 16) ²	68.1
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	44.8
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	8.6
Total fertility rate ³	1.38
Weighted paid parental leave in weeks ^{2,4}	40.7
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: < 3 years) ⁵	13.6
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: 3 to 5 years) ⁵	89.4
Public spending on family benefits – cash (in % of GDP) ⁶	1.43
Public spending on family benefits – services (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.74
Public spending on family benefits – tax breaks towards family (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.87

¹ 2009, ² 2007, ³ 2008, ⁴ weights: ratio between the full-time equivalent payment and the corresponding entitlement in number of weeks, ⁵ 2006, ⁶ 2005

Source: Eurostat LFS, OECD Family database, OECD LFS, Diekmann/Plünnecke 2009

European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life:

Share of German companies offering a specific policy, in %



Family-friendly attitude:

A proportion of 37.7% of the German firms have a decidedly family-friendly attitude. That is considerably less than in Sweden, Italy and France.

Average number of family-friendly policies:

On average, German companies provide seven measures simultaneously. The mean and median number is significantly smaller than in Sweden or the UK.

Basis of regulation (multiple answers):

Statutory regulations are relevant for 57.8% of the enterprises. This is the lowest value among the six countries. In more than two thirds of the companies family-friendly policies have been introduced on the management's initiative. Works agreements or collective agreements at company level are relatively significant (42.4%), too.

Top 4 motives:

- retain or recruit qualified staff
- increase staff job satisfaction
- increase productivity
- re-integrate parents more rapidly

Only in Germany are ‘fulfilling the wishes of staff’ and ‘compliance with statutory or collective agreement provisions’ not among the top 4 reasons for introducing work-life balance policies.

Top 4 obstacles:

- | employees have no need
- | collective agreements and/or statutory provisions are sufficient
- | state support is insufficient
- | management considers them to be unnecessary

Special feature:

Multivariate analyses indicate that government intervention to encourage the reconciliation of work and family life might be crowding out more effective human resource policies introduced voluntarily by managements. In addition, further investigation suggests that German enterprises refrain from implementing work-life balance policies when the management regards such policies as unnecessary and simultaneously either cites a lack of demand on the part of the employees or denies that family-friendly measures bring any benefits.

Fact sheet – United Kingdom

Selected national indicators

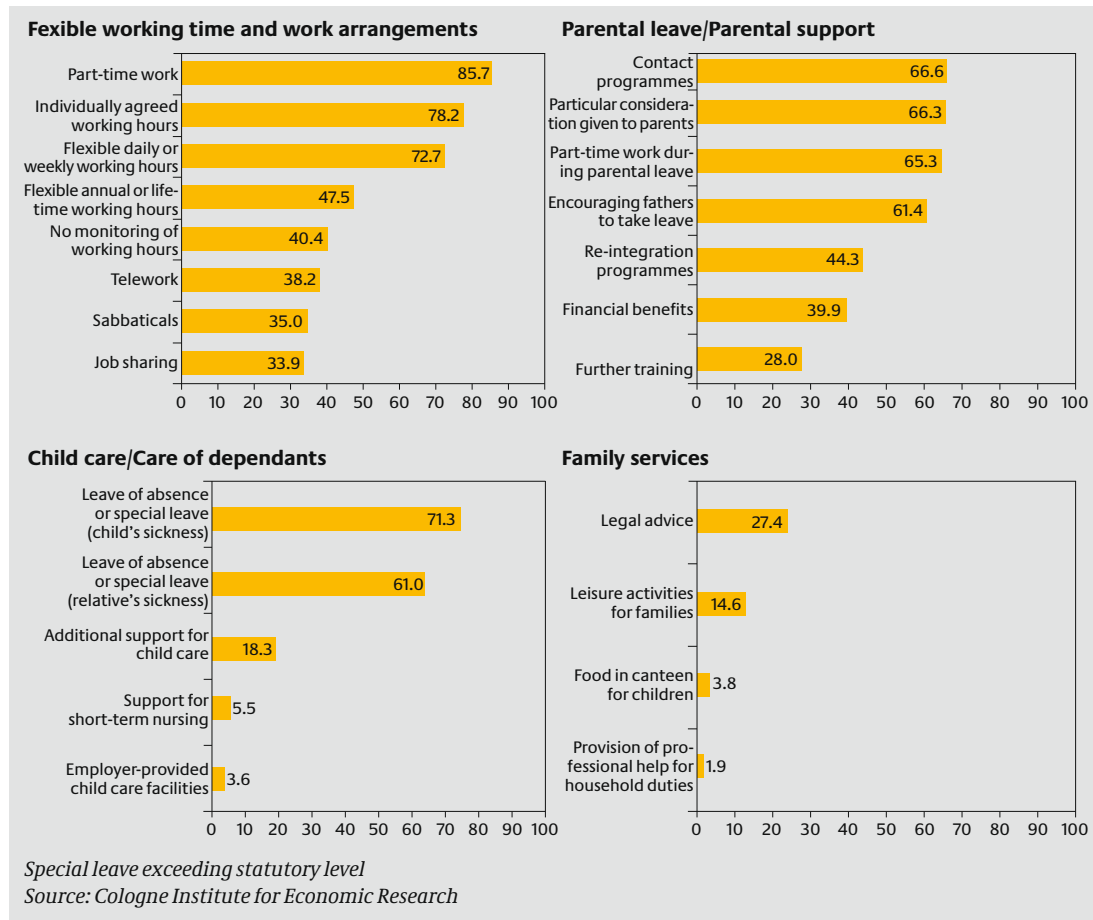
Female labour force participation rate ¹ in %	65.0
Maternal employment ratio in % (child under 16) ²	67.9
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	41.7
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	10.4
Total fertility rate ³	1.96
Weighted paid parental leave in weeks ^{2, 4}	6.0
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: < 3 years) ⁵	39.7
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: 3 to 5 years) ⁵	90.5
Public spending on family benefits – cash (in % of GDP) ⁶	2.21
Public spending on family benefits – services (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.99
Public spending on family benefits – tax breaks towards family (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.35

¹ 2009, ² 2007, ³ 2008, ⁴ weights: ratio between the full-time equivalent payment and the corresponding entitlement in number of weeks, ⁵ 2006, ⁶ 2005

Source: Eurostat LFS, OECD Family database, OECD LFS, Diekmann/Plünnecke 2009

European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life:

Share of British companies offering a specific policy, in %



Family-friendly attitude:

In the UK the proportion of companies with a decidedly family-friendly attitude is the lowest (30.3%).

Average number of family-friendly policies:

The average number of family-friendly human resource policies is joint highest (10) with Sweden.

Basis of regulation (multiple answers):

Statutory provisions (88.7%) and the management's own initiative (81.3%) are the main basis for family-friendly policies in British companies. National and sectoral collective agreements and works agreements play only a minor role.

Top 4 motives:

- I statutory or collective agreement requirements
- I increase staff job satisfaction
- I retain/recruit qualified staff
- I wishes of staff

Top 4 obstacles:

- | collective agreements and/or statutory provisions are sufficient
- | the cost would be too high
- | state support is insufficient
- | employees have no need

In contrast to all the other countries except France, a notable proportion of one third of the British companies stated that potential tensions between staff with and without family commitments prevented the introduction of work-life balance policies.

Special feature:

Though the proportion of firms with a decidedly positive attitude towards reconciliation policies is lower than in the other countries, the activity level is joint highest with that of Swedish firms.

Fact sheet – France

Selected national indicators

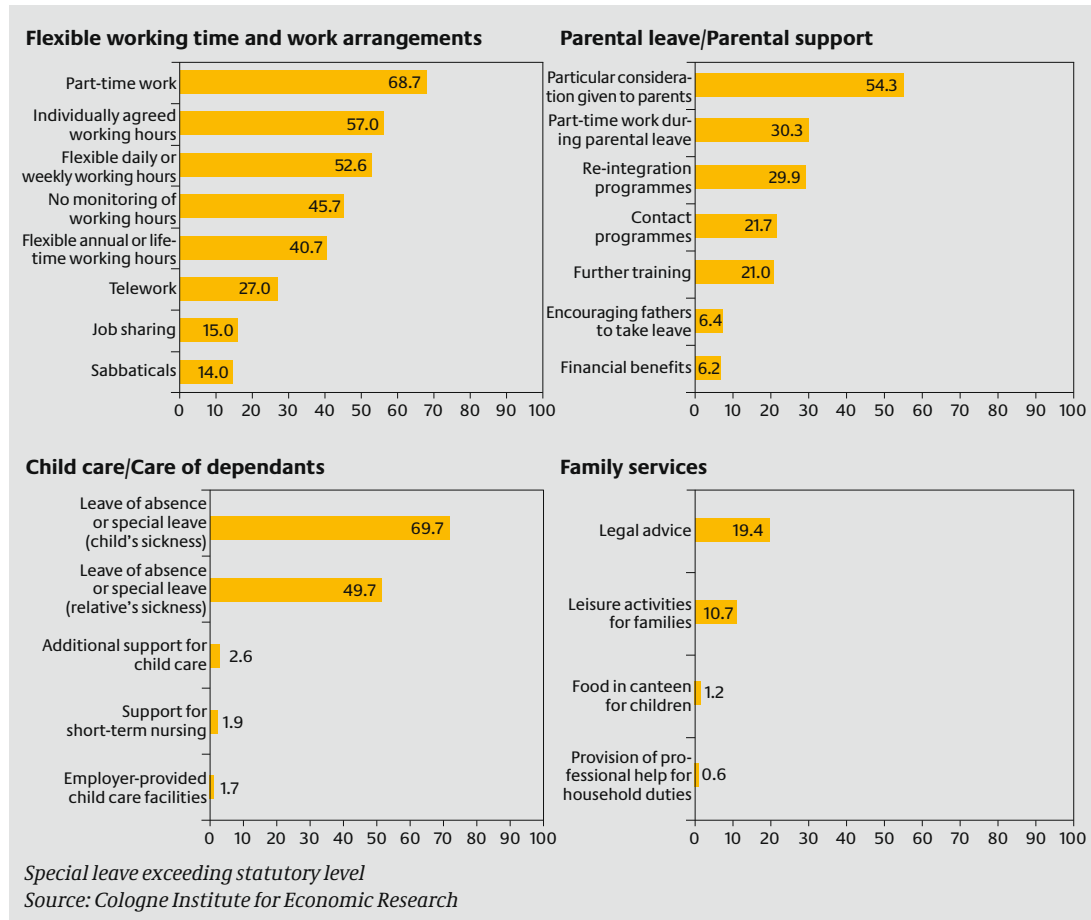
Female labour force participation rate ¹ in %	60.1
Maternal employment ratio in % (child under 16) ²	72.8
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	29.7
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	5.7
Total fertility rate ³	2.00 ⁴
Weighted paid parental leave in weeks ^{2,5}	33.0
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: < 3 years) ⁶	42.9
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: 3 to 5 years) ⁶	100
Public spending on family benefits – cash (in % of GDP) ⁷	1.39
Public spending on family benefits – services (in % of GDP) ⁷	1.62
Public spending on family benefits – tax breaks towards family (in % of GDP) ⁷	0.77

¹ 2009, ² 2007, ³ 2008, ⁴ projection, ⁵ weights: ratio between the full-time equivalent payment and the corresponding entitlement in number of weeks, ⁶ 2006, ⁷ 2005

Source: Eurostat LFS, OECD Family database, OECD LFS, Diekmann/Plünnecke 2009

European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life:

Share of French companies offering a specific policy, in %



Family-friendly attitude:

Almost half of the French companies (47.9%) can be characterised as having a decidedly family-friendly attitude. This is significantly more than in Germany.

Average number of family-friendly policies:

French companies simultaneously offer an average of six measures. This is significantly fewer policies than in Germany, the UK and Sweden.

Basis of regulation (multiple answers):

National or sectoral collective agreements in France determine firms' family-friendly policies more frequently than in the other countries (79.2%). Statutory provisions and works agreements are significantly more relevant than in Germany. Though the management's own initiative is less important than in Germany, the proportion of firms that voluntarily introduce work-life balance policies is considerable (59.7%).

Top 4 motives:

- | statutory or collective agreement requirements
- | increase staff job satisfaction
- | retain/recruit qualified staff
- | wishes of staff

Top 4 obstacles:

- | collective agreements and/or statutory provisions are sufficient
- | the cost would be too high
- | state support is insufficient
- | employees have no need

In contrast to all the other countries except the UK, a notable proportion of more than one third of the French companies stated that potential tensions between staff with and without family commitments prevented the introduction of work-life balance policies.

Special feature:

The differences between the proportions of companies which base their reconciliation policies on statutory provisions, multi-employer collective agreements, work agreements and their own initiative are relatively low in comparison with the other countries. This may indicate a widespread acceptance of work-life balance issues among the actors which is conducive to the promotion of family-friendly personnel policies. Nonetheless, the activity level in France does not match those in Sweden and the UK.

Fact sheet – Italy

Selected national indicators

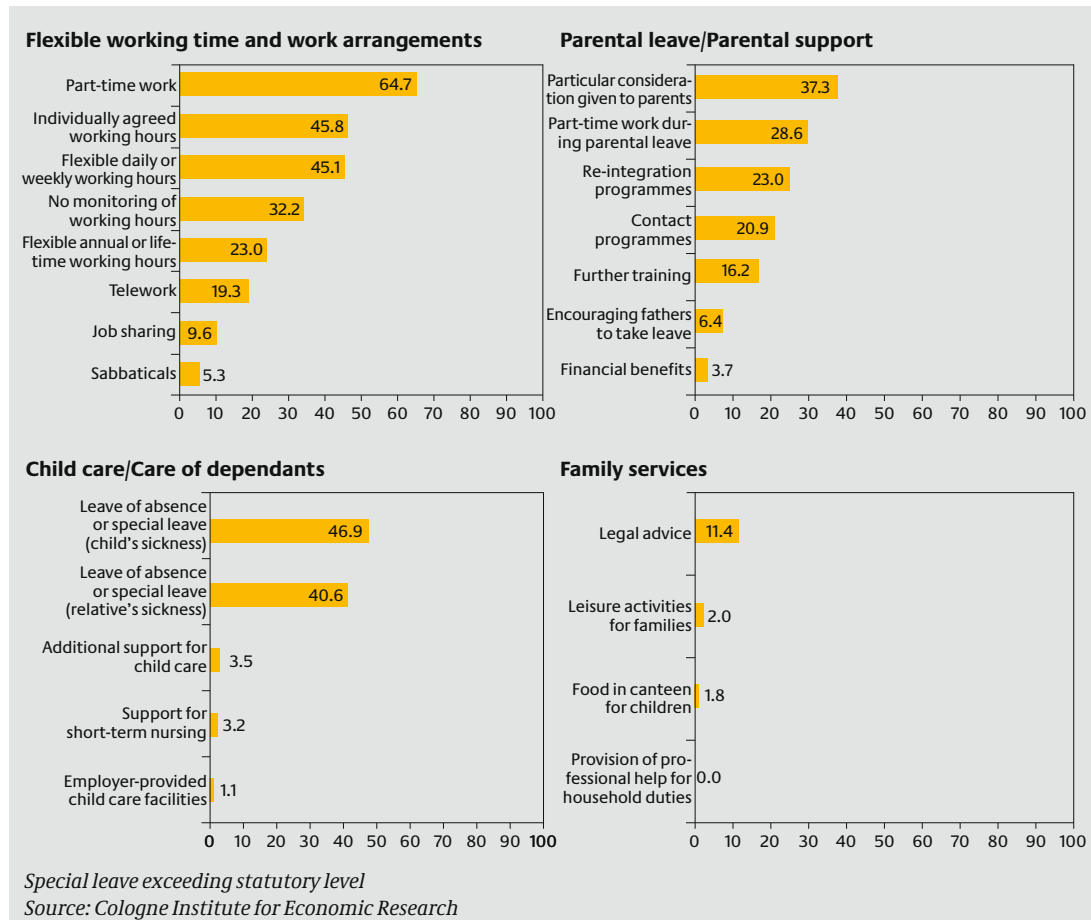
Female labour force participation rate ¹ in %	46.4
Maternal employment ratio in % (child under 16) ²	55.6
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	27.9
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	4.7
Total fertility rate ³	1.41
Weighted paid parental leave in weeks ^{2,4}	8.9
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: < 3 years) ⁵	28.6
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: 3 to 5 years) ⁵	99.4
Public spending on family benefits – cash (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.58
Public spending on family benefits – services (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.73
Public spending on family benefits – tax breaks towards family (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.00

¹ 2009, ² 2007, ³ 2008, ⁴ weights: ratio between the full-time equivalent payment and the corresponding entitlement in number of weeks, ⁵ 2006, ⁶ 2005

Source: Eurostat LFS, OECD Family database, OECD LFS, Diekmann/Plünnecke 2009

European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life:

Share of Italian companies offering a specific policy, in %



Family-friendly attitude:

The majority of Italian companies can be considered as having a decidedly family-friendly attitude (54.8%). This is the highest value after Sweden's.

Average number of family-friendly policies:

The prevalence of family-friendly policies in Italian companies is relatively low. The average number of simultaneously introduced measures is four. This compares with seven in France and Germany and as many as ten in Sweden and the UK.

Basis of regulation (multiple answers):

In Italy, as in France, collective agreements at the national or sectoral level determine work-life balance policies in a relatively large proportion of Italian firms (70.3%). Statutory provisions have an impact on the firm's behaviour in half of the companies. As in Germany, some evidence exists that the implementation of laws may crowd out the social partners' and the companies' own initiative. The proportion of companies introducing work-life balance policies on their own initiative is the lowest (12.3%).

Top 4 motives:

- | statutory or collective agreement requirements
- | increase staff job satisfaction
- | wishes of staff
- | increase productivity

Top 4 obstacles:

- | collective agreements and/or statutory provisions are sufficient
- | state support is insufficient
- | the cost would be too high
- | employees have no need

Special feature:

A striking contrast exists between the relatively large proportion of companies with a family-friendly attitude and the relatively low activity rate compared to most of the other countries. Moreover, a relatively large proportion of companies was forced by the crisis to withdraw or postpone the implementation of reconciliation policies.

Fact sheet – Sweden

Selected national indicators

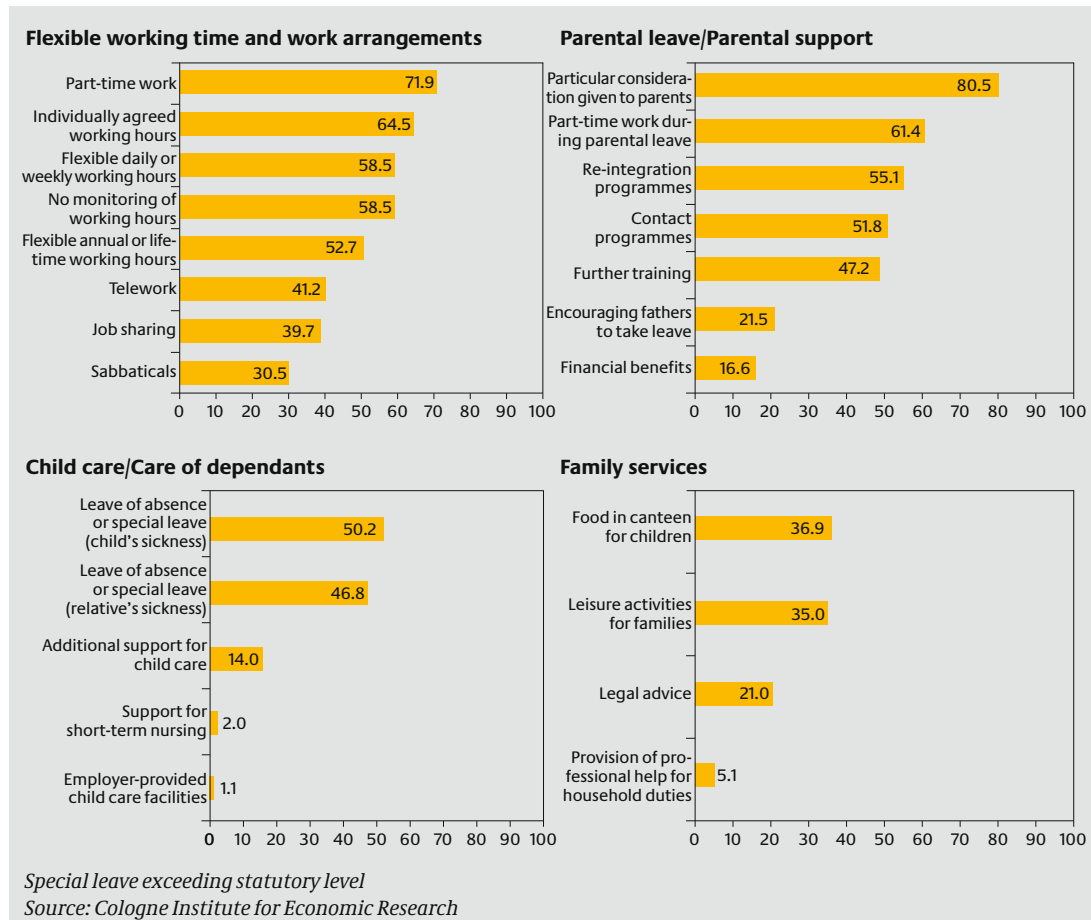
Female labour force participation rate ¹ in %	70.2
Maternal employment ratio in % (child under 16) ²	82.5
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	40.5
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	12.6
Total fertility rate ³	1.91
Weighted paid parental leave in weeks ^{2,4}	51.2
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: < 3 years) ⁵	45.3
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: 3 to 5 years) ⁵	85.5
Public spending on family benefits – cash (in % of GDP) ⁶	1.52
Public spending on family benefits – services (in % of GDP) ⁶	1.83
Public spending on family benefits – tax breaks towards family (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.00

¹ 2009, ² 2007, ³ 2008, ⁴ weights: ratio between the full-time equivalent payment and the corresponding entitlement in number of weeks, ⁵ 2006, ⁶ 2005

Source: Eurostat LFS, OECD Family database, OECD LFS, Diekmann/Plünnecke 2009

European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life:

Share of Swedish companies offering a specific policy, in %



Family-friendly attitude:

The proportion of companies characterised by a decidedly family-friendly attitude is the highest among the six countries (62.3%).

Average number of family-friendly policies:

As in the UK, on average Swedish firms simultaneously offer 10 measures. This is significantly more than in Germany, France, Italy and Poland.

Basis of regulation (multiple answers):

Statutory provisions have approximately as much (54.6%) influence on companies implementing work-life balance policies as national or sectoral agreements (56.9%) or their own initiative (58.9%). Only works agreements appear to be of minor importance.

Top 4 motives:

- I statutory or collective agreement requirements
- I increase staff job satisfaction
- I increase productivity
- I reduce the amount of sick leave and turnover

Top 4 obstacles:

- | collective agreements and/or statutory provisions are sufficient
- | employees have no need
- | state support is insufficient
- | not a basic corporate responsibility

Special feature:

State intervention, the social partners' involvement and the companies' activity are likely to reinforce each other so that a relatively high level of family-friendliness in the economy is reached. This holds for both culture and activity and may indicate an economy-wide awareness and understanding of the role an improved balance between work and family life can play for the well-being of individuals, the competitiveness of companies and the wealth of the nation as a whole.

Fact sheet – Poland

Selected national indicators

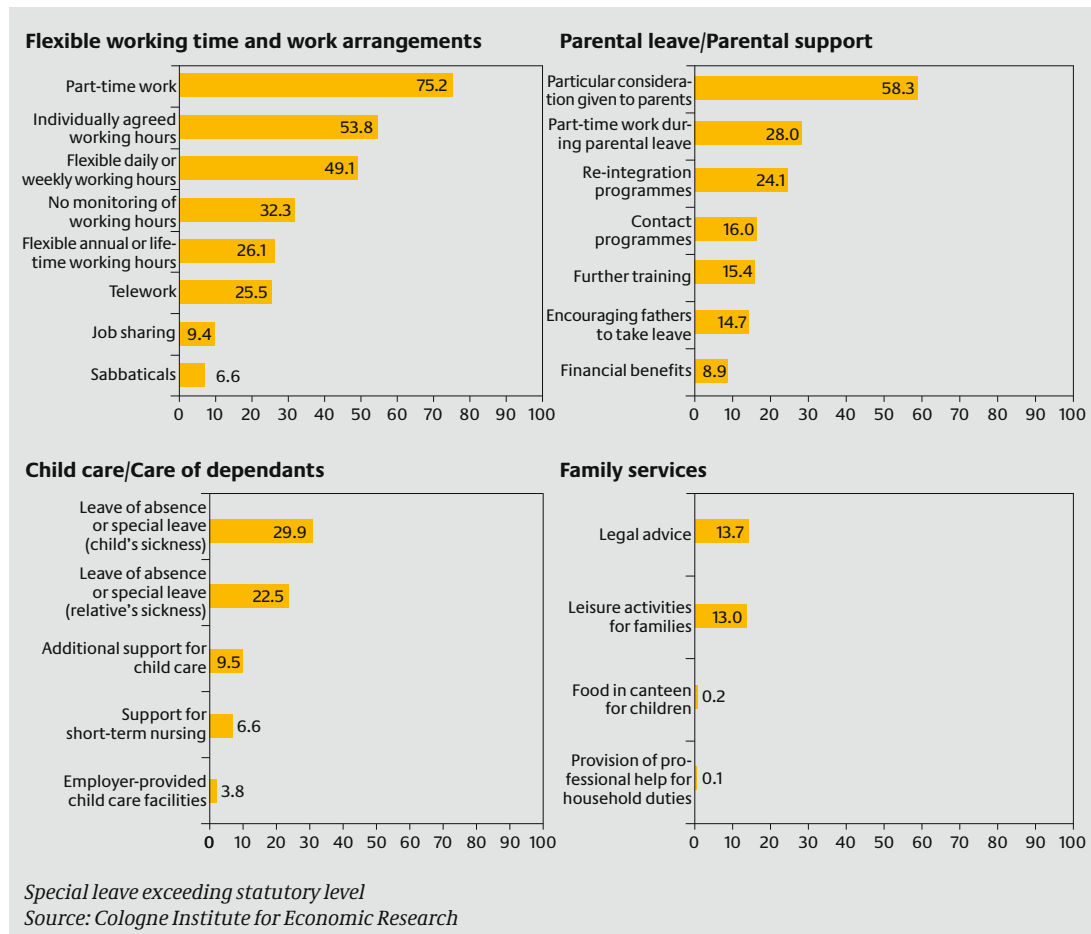
Female labour force participation rate ¹ in%	52.8
Maternal employment ratio in % (child under 16) ²	67.9
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	10.9
Female part-time workers in % of female employees ¹	5.0
Total fertility rate ³	1.39
Weighted paid parental leave in weeks ^{2,4}	20.1
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: < 3 years) ⁵	8.6
Enrolment rates in day-care and pre-school (children: 3 to 5 years) ⁵	41.0
Public spending on family benefits – cash (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.84
Public spending on family benefits – services (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.29
Public spending on family benefits – tax breaks towards family (in % of GDP) ⁶	0.04

¹ 2009, ² 2007, ³ 2008, ⁴ weights: ratio between the full-time equivalent payment and the corresponding entitlement in number of weeks, ⁵ 2006, ⁶ 2005

Source: Eurostat LFS, OECD Family database, OECD LFS, Diekmann/Plünnecke 2009

European Company Survey on the Reconciliation of Work and Family Life:

Share of Polish companies offering a specific policy, in %



Family-friendly attitude:

Around one third of the Polish enterprises can be characterised as having a family-friendly attitude. This is considerably fewer than in Sweden, Italy and France.

Average number of family-friendly policies:

Polish managements simultaneously offer only five measures on average. That is substantially fewer than in Germany, the UK and Sweden.

Basis of regulation (multiple answers):

Statutory regulations are the most important factor influencing work-life balance policies (91.8% of the firms). While collective agreements do not play a significant role at all, works agreements on work-life balance policies exist in one in five enterprises and a further one third of Polish managements act on their own initiative.

Top 4 motives:

- I statutory or collective agreement requirements
- I wishes of staff
- I increase staff job satisfaction
- I increase productivity

Top 4 obstacles:

- | state support is insufficient
- | not a basic corporate responsibility
- | unfavourable business situation
- | collective agreements and/or statutory provisions are sufficient

Polish managements refer more frequently to most of the obstacles listed than managers in the other five countries.

Special feature:

For the moment at least, neither the social partner organisations nor the companies themselves are focusing on the issue of the work-life balance. Government intervention has so far not had a large impact on the willingness of companies to introduce policies aimed at reconciling work and family life.



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