



# PROMOTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR PREGNANT EMPLOYEES AND WORKING PARENTS

## A GUIDE TO COLLECTING GOOD PRACTICES



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The functions, titles and ranks used in this publication refer to people of any sex or gender identity.

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# INTRODUCTION

**This guide wants to provide Equality Bodies with ideas and insights on how to engage employers and how to collect good practices. It therefore provides Equality Bodies with user-friendly and hands-on information on the process of collecting good practices on work-life balance. The guide contains more than forty good practices collected in three different countries – Belgium, Estonia and Portugal – in the context of the European project Parents@Work. It includes a description of the methodology used, information on the dissemination of the practices, a short summary of the collected good practices, and finally the collected practices themselves.**

Achieving a good balance between work and private life is a challenge for all workers. For parents and carers, it is an even greater challenge. At any given time, any worker can be in the position of becoming a parent or having to take care of other family members or persons in need. This personal situation can be planned; however, it can also happen overnight. Whatever the situation, one must find ways to accomplish work, while at the same time juggling family or care obligations: helping out a partner that has just given birth, picking up children from school, finding care solutions for a child that falls ill, or taking care of aging parents or other persons in need of care.

Workers try to find individual solutions for their personal situation. However, this is not always easy, especially not when working in an organisation that is not prepared for these events and does not allow any form of flexibility. All too often, workers are confronted with negative reactions and see their rights being denied. This particularly disadvantages women who continue to take up most of the caring responsibilities. When they are faced with the impossibility of combining work and care, they reduce their work time or even leave the labour market. This not only negatively impacts women's career, income, and pension, but also the labour market which is losing valuable labour force and competent workers.

One of the solutions to more equality on the labour market, is to involve more men in caring roles. Many men, particularly the younger generations, want to be more involved, especially when it comes to the upbringing of their children. However, they too are confronted with negative reactions as our societies and labour markets not always welcome men's uptake of paternity, parental or carer's leave.

In response to this reality, the European Parliament passed the Directive on Work-Life Balance for parents and carers in April 2019. This directive specifically aims to support work-life balance for parents and

carers by improving employees' access to parental, paternity and carer's leave, and flexible work arrangements. The initiative complements prior legal initiatives to improve the reconciliation of work, private and family life for working parents and promote the equality of women and men with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work (Directive 2006/54/EU and Consideration 8, Directive 2010/18/EU). These legal initiatives include the Working Time Directive (2003/88/EC), the Pregnant Workers Directive (92/85/EEC), the Self-Employed Directive (2010/41/EU) and the Parental Leave Directive (2010/18/EU).

Additionally, employers are encouraged to implement more structural measures within their companies to improve their employees' work-life balance. These measures should protect the rights of pregnant workers, parents and carers. Overall, many employers are motivated to implement the necessary measures to support their employees.

Employers, as research demonstrates, also have much to gain by paying attention to their employees' work-life balance and by creating a family-friendly work environment. The well-being of workers improves, which increases productivity and motivation, resulting in better decision-making and business results. Furthermore, adopting work-life balance policies and protecting the rights of parents and carers significantly strengthens the image of the company. This in turn makes it attractive for new and potential employees while at the same time ensuring that trained, experienced and motivated talents are retained within the company. The company's positive image will also attract more customers or users, increasing sales or services provided. Guaranteeing a good work-life balance is thus a win-win operation for both employers and employees. However, not all employers know where or how to start: What measures can be taken, what could work within their company's context and how should this be implemented?

The Parents@Work project aims to address this issue and contribute to the enhancement of the work-life balance of pregnant employees and parent workers. The project is financed under the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) of the European Union, and is carried out by four European Equality Bodies: the Institute for the equality of women and men (Belgium), the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (Bulgaria), the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner (Estonia), and the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (Portugal). The project's general aim is to improve the protection of and combat discrimination against pregnant workers, mothers, and fathers in the workplace.

Specifically, the Parents@Work project wants to help employers by collecting concrete good practices regarding work-life balance and the protection of parents and carers. By making this information available to employers, it aims to inspire and encourage employers to start implementing their own good practices.

Moreover, the project, which is executed by Equality Bodies, equally wants to inform Equality Bodies on ways to engage (with) employers. Equality Bodies are mandated to combat gender discrimination in the labour market, collecting good practices and disseminating this information is a way of raising awareness among employers and encouraging them to develop better work-life balance policies.

This guide, which is produced under the project, is primarily aimed at Equality Bodies or organisations wanting to collect good practices on work-life balance or gender equality in the workplace. It is based on the experience gained in the context of the Parents@Work project and foremost focuses on the process of collecting good practices. The guide starts with an overview of the methodology used to collect good practices - What *defines* a good practice? How to *identify* them? And how to *categorise* them? Subsequently, it discusses the dissemination of the good practices: how to ensure that the information collected reaches the target audience and meets its goal of inspiring and encouraging employers to improve their work-life balance policies? Finally, the guide includes a summary of the collected good practices and lists the most common challenges and success factors – as reported by employers – in implementing these in the workplace.

In the Annex, all the good practices collected for the Parents@Work project can be consulted.



**METHODOLOGY:  
COLLECTING GOOD  
PRACTICES  
STEP BY STEP**

Each Equality Body within the Parents@Work project collected good practices in their own respective country. To ensure a harmonised and qualitative approach, each phase of the collection process was carefully considered at the outset of the project. A common *modus operandi* was developed to identify and select good practices.

This first section presents the three phases in a concise manner: defining, identifying, and categorising good practices. It gives an overview of the methodology used to collect the practices and the questions that had to be tackled.

The agreed-upon approach foremost served as a guideline and directive to the collection process. Successfully collecting good practices requires taking into account national contexts and legislative particularities while still maintaining a certain level of flexibility and adaptation.

## A. DEFINING GOOD PRACTICES

The first question to which attention must be paid, is: **what, exactly, is understood by a 'good' practice?** It is essential to determine a clear and common understanding of what a good practice entails at the start of the collection process. This is done by jointly identifying a core set of criteria.

Based on a consultation round and brainstorm session with all the partners, it was decided that a 'good' practice should:

### 1. Go beyond the law

The practice should not be a mere implementation of the law but should be ambitious and forward-looking by doing more than the minimum requirements set forth by the national legislation.

### 2. Have proven to be effective

It can be demonstrated that the practice has/is advancing equal treatment and participation of women and men on the labour market. An important question in this regard, among others, is whether the practice is efficiently communicated and well-known amongst the employees.

### 3. Be sustainable

While one-off practices can prove valuable, the focus lies on practices that are continuous and the result(s) of which prove permanent. Attention is thus paid to practices that are well-integrated and anchored into the organisation's policies and/or labour contracts and structures.

### 4. Result in combating gender discrimination in the workplace

This criterium is specifically linked to the project's aim and entails that practices should specifically target pregnant and parent workers and advance gender equality in the workplace through the promotion of work-life balance measures. This implies that the initial aim of the practice does not necessarily have to be to combat gender discrimination; of importance is whether the practice results in doing so. Evidently, the practice itself cannot be discriminatory in any way.

### 5. Be evidence-based

Information on the practice's implementation and application as well as evidence of its (positive) effects is available (e.g. testimonies, process of monitoring and/or evaluation, dissemination of information of the practice, events).

### 6. Abide to general ethical standards

These six criteria typify a good practice in this guide. Overall, these criteria are standard for the collection of good practices; they do not differ substantially from criteria used in other good practice collections (e.g. EIGE).

It is essential however, to discuss these at the start of the project and to reach an agreement on (1) the *core* criteria – what is regarded as essential? – versus optional or additional criteria, (2) the precise interpretation and understanding of each criterium – what, for example, does it entail to be sustainable? – and (3) to agree on a way to assess whether these criteria are met or not. This helps avoiding misunderstandings later in the process. Moreover, a serious consideration of these criteria helps to define the scope of the project. Is the goal to collect practices that are foremost cheap to implement? Is it to find practices that are easily transferable across a whole range of sectors? Should



these practices foremost promote gender equality in the labour market in general, or is the focus primarily to stimulate men's uptake of different leave schemes? Or, equally legitimate, is the goal to identify practices

that can be translated into effective policies? These questions arise during the identification of core and additional criteria and help in aligning the goal of the project and in giving direction to the collection process.

## CHALLENGES

The selected criteria might seem straightforward, however, not all practices presented in this guide check all the boxes. Most evidently – as can be noted from the 'Results' section of each good practice – providing 'evidence' or demonstrating the effectiveness of the practice appears challenging. Most participating companies have not carried out an in-depth evaluation of the practice. To some extent, participation rates (e.g. number of children cared for in childcare) or the take-up of paternity or parental leave was measured. Generally, however, many of the companies focus on a broader evaluation of the well-being and work-life balance of their employees on a yearly basis, without measuring the specific impact of individual initiatives. This makes a quantitative assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of the practice in achieving its goal and, more broadly, in contributing to combating gender-based discrimination, challenging. Nevertheless, informal feedback, employee satisfaction polls or, for example, feedback received during annual career development discussions, are indicative of the impact and effectiveness of the practice.

Attention must also be paid to the criterium to combat gender discrimination and the fact that the practice should not, under any circumstance, be discriminatory itself. This can be tricky: sometimes employers, in their willingness to offer extra-legal advantages such as a prolongation of a specific leave, can unconsciously instore a discriminatory measure. One company, for example, wanted to grant parents additional paid leave. It therefore wanted to grant new mothers one week fully paid maternity leave on top of the existing leave, while fully paying the first four weeks of the fathers or co-parents' parental leave. While well-meant, this would constitute direct gender discrimination against the mothers as they cannot claim the benefit because they have given birth to the child. That is, mothers, fathers and co-parents can claim parental leave. However, the additional benefit granted by the company here is only granted to men and some women. Women who have given birth do not receive this benefit although they are equally entitled to parental leave.

In addition to the above core criteria, two others were identified. These do not constitute required criteria of a good practice in this guide, but they were considered a plus.

### 1. Transferability

It is not essential – most important is that it is effective in its own company context – but it is a plus if a practice can be replicated elsewhere. Practices can be very specific to a company, sector or country, but in general, most practices will be of interest to others and at least provide inspiration, regardless of the fact that a good practice is always custom work and needs to be tailored to the company's work culture.

### 2. Directed at fathers

Practices that specifically focus on the engagement of fathers to use work-life balance measures, are extremely valuable. Generally, and despite public policies, there is still a significant imbalance between the time spent on unpaid work by women and by men. This is largely due to the persistence of structural stereotypes and traditional gender roles according to which unpaid work, including domestic and care work, is mainly a woman's duty. Consequently, mothers' take up of parental leave and other reconciliation mechanisms is higher than that of men. As such, these powerful stereotypes hinder equality between women and men and the full participation of women in the labour market. Therefore,

good practices which specifically target men (f.e. by encouraging them to take on (child)caring duties) are considered a plus.

While the identification of the criteria was a collective effort, it was the responsibility of each of the partners to assess whether the practices they collected met these criteria and should subsequently be selected. Several partners collected more than 15 good practices but retained the 15 most relevant for this publication.

### B. IDENTIFYING GOOD PRACTICES

The second step following the definition of *what* good practices are, is to establish the scope of the field in which good practices will be collected and to identify good practices.

The practices in this guide cover different kinds of sectors. Yet, based on the respective national contexts and the aim to combat gender inequality, it was decided to:

1. prioritise small to medium enterprises (SME's);
2. pay attention to sectors generally known for their gender imbalance, i.e. sectors that are traditionally seen as typically 'masculine' or typically 'feminine'.

The rationale for focusing on SME's was twofold. Firstly, it stemmed from the economic realities of the project partners in which SME's dominate the economy. Secondly, in contrast to larger companies, SME's might find it more challenging to implement good practices due to a lack of human and financial resources. Moreover, they cannot fall back on international parent

companies which usually have relevant knowledge in the matter through shared experiences from their basis. By including good practices from SME's, this guide wants to inspire SME's to implement good practices and also demonstrate that low-cost measures can be just as effective.

The focus on typically 'male' sectors is relevant in the sense that traditionally, male dominated sectors have not felt the urge to pay attention to work-life balance measures or family-friendly policies. Employers in this sector can feel less familiar with this type of measures and be confronted with more (subtle) resistance based on traditional gender stereotypes. If a certain 'macho culture' is present, this might prevent fathers, for example, to feel comfortable taking up paternity or parental leave. Moreover, it might help those companies which aim to attract more women, to be more accommodating to them. Alternatively, for female-dominated sectors, promoting measures that allow women to combine a career with family life, can encourage women to remain in the labour market and stimulate them to further pursue their careers.

Having established (1) what kind of good practices are sought for and (2) the field in which to collect them, the more challenging part concerns (3) *how* to find them? How do you locate good practices? How do you reach out to companies and engage them to share their good practice?

There are several approaches that can be taken. The table below lists the approaches that were considered as possibly effective prior to the collection process.

### APPROACHES TO FINDING GOOD PRACTICES

Very successful	Labels/awards
Successful	Personal networks ('little black book')
	Civil society organisations
	Attend (award) events and networking sessions
	Company networks
Limited success	Employer organizations
	Social media (linked-in & hr-magazines)
Not successful	Chamber of commerce
	Trade unions
Not used	Non-governmental organizations
	Academia

The most successful approach to finding good practices, was to contact companies selected for awards or companies that are applying for labels. These do not necessarily need to be awards or labels that promote gender equality but can also include, for example, 'best employer of the year'-awards or awards that celebrate inclusive workplaces. Employer organisations, the chamber of commerce or also company networks were considered valuable as these would allow tapping into a broad, existing network. Social media, on the other hand, enables a combination of one's own personal network and already existing networks. Yet, as indicated, not all these approaches were used, nor did those that were used always prove to be successful.

Not unsurprisingly, contacting companies that received a label or won an award for a measure or practice that promotes gender equality, proved most successful. Making use of personal networks or the networks of companies can also be fruitful. Some partners also obtained information through anti-discrimination seminars during which participants would provide examples of good practices.

### C. CATEGORISING GOOD PRACTICES

The third step in the collection process entails the analysis of the good practices and finding a way to present or categorise them.

Several options were considered – categorisation per sector, per country, per size of the company, etc. However, given the aim of the collection process, i.e. to inspire employers through offering them a variety of good practices, it was decided to organise the good practices by theme, according to the following four categories:

1. flexible working arrangements;
2. leave and remuneration;
3. family support services;
4. information and training.

#### 1. Flexible working arrangements

Flexible working arrangements entail a range of possibilities for employees to schedule their working hours in a flexible way. Providing this flexibility to an employee can enhance her/his reconciliation of work and private life. An oft-chosen arrangement in this regard is part-

time work. For employers, this is not always easy to facilitate and organise, in which case it might be useful to introduce **duo or trio jobs**. In the case of a duo job, two part-time employees take up one full-time job and share the responsibilities.

Other options include the ability to **work from home** (for one or several days a week), to **work within flexible hours** (a working arrangement in which employees may flexibly choose their own start and end time of the working day. This usually does not fit the standard 9-to-5 pattern), **a 4-day workweek**, **decentral working** (working from a different place than the office or home), or also **self-rostering** (employees can determine their own planning by consultation and mutual agreement).

These arrangements are becoming increasingly popular – they account for one third of the collected good practices in this guide. The current COVID-19 crisis might contribute further to its normalisation, especially with regards to home-working arrangements. However, flexible work does not automatically mean better work-life balance. As shown during the recent COVID-19 crisis in which working remotely became the norm for many employees, flexible working can also further penetrate work into personal life spheres and, equally troubling, reinforce gender imbalances.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore crucial that the measures are evaluated in a timely and regular manner. Crucial when applying such arrangements, is that attention is paid to employees' right to **disconnect** (to completely 'unplug' and detach from work, and to not be available).

For example:

*Milcobel Kallo (BELGIUM):* 'self-rostering': Employees can plan their monthly work schedule according to their individual work-life balance and considering the department's occupancy requirement.

#### 2. Leave and remuneration

An equally popular measure concerns **expanding the number of leave days** beyond what is legally available to new parents. This can include additional days of maternity, paternity or parental leave.

The granting of extra leave days, especially to male employees, is a powerful mechanism to encourage an active caregiving role for fathers and, as such, to decon-

1. See, for example, UN WOMEN (2020), From insights to action: Gender equality in the wake of COVID-19, & ILO (2020), ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Fifth edition Updated estimates and analysis.

struct gender stereotypes both at home as in the workplace. Moreover, as research demonstrates, extending paternity leave or promoting parental leave among male employees has a profound and long-lasting impact on several aspects of men's family and work life, including a lift of family's relationship and finances to strengthening and securing father's affective bond to their children.<sup>2</sup> This can particularly be witnessed in Portugal's good practices in this category and the positive results with regards to fathers' increased uptake of parental or paternity leave.

In addition to expanding the number of leave days, employers can also opt to **pay the employee their full wage** during their maternity, paternity and parental leave (and/or the additional leave days that are granted).

Some companies offer the option of a '**flexible benefit plan**' or '**flex income plan**' which entails that a part of the employee's salary is filled in differently and personally. The employee can, for example, opt to receive extra benefits (extra leave days, financial support for childcare or other domestic services). The part of the wage that is filled in flexibly and personally can, for example, be part of the gross wage, bonuses or the end-of-year bonus.

For example:

*Gebalis (PORTUGAL)*: The organisation gives fifteen days of fully paid leave to male workers during the first month of the child's life. These days add to the days of the father's exclusive parental leave provided for in Article No. 43 of the Labour Code.

### 3. Family support services

Combining a job, especially a full-time job, with a family is no easy task. The burden of housework and care sometimes prevents employees from spending their private time as quality time for themselves or with their loved ones. Outsourcing care or household tasks can ease the pressure on workers. These services, however, are not always accessible to everyone. To enhance employees' reconciliation of work and private life, employers can therefore set up different options to help with **childcare or domestic services**. This can include the provision of childcare in the company itself, the setting up of a cooperation between an employer and neighboring childcare facilities or providing ironing services.

For example:

*Novadelta (PORTUGAL)*: Provision of an educational centre for the company workers' children  
The company set up an educational centre for the children of the workers, which also serves the children of the local community. The educational centre provides two types of services: kindergarten for children between 3 and 6 years old and an after-school recreation centre (ATL) for children from 6 to 12 years old. The centre has longer opening hours - from 8 am to 7:30 pm - than the company does.

### 4. Information and training

Measures concerning information and training include ways of **informing new parents** on how to set up a good work-life balance or informing employees on the legal measures against discrimination of parents in the workplace. The employer can give information to the employees, but employees themselves can also inform each other and set up (in)formal networks.

These measures can further include **professional counselling sessions** for employees returning from parental leave, which aim **to facilitate their professional reintegration**. These sessions also provide information on parental rights and equality between women and men.

Companies also think about ways to keep **including employees on maternity, paternity or parental leave in the development of the company**, for example by inviting them to attend (if desired) professional trainings and events at the workplace, by continuing access to internal communication channels, and so on.

For example:

*DPD Eesti AS (ESTONIA)*: Employees on parental leave are invited to attend (if desired) all trainings and events held in the company. They retain full access to the internal communication environment 'guavaHR', through which they can obtain all the information of the company. Moreover, employees who return from parental leave are included in a re-familiarization programme.

2. McKinsey, A fresh look at paternity leave: Why the benefits extend beyond the personal, 5 March 2021.



# **DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICES**

**It is essential to reflect on the different possibilities to disseminate good practices in order to reach as many employers as possible and to allow a fruitful exchange of experiences and knowledge. An effective dissemination, moreover, offers opportunities for Equality Bodies to connect to employers and employer organisations and to reinforce their role as promoters of gender equality in the labour market.**

Good practices are often disseminated or made available to the public in two ways: either in publications such as this one, or they are made available online (often in the form of a database). While certainly effective, maintaining a database up to date is time-consuming and requires resources that Equality Bodies often do not have.

Another way to make the collected good practices known is by organizing a national conference for employers and employer organisations during which (some of) the good practices can be presented by the employers themselves. Simultaneously, a press release can be made to reach a wider audience and to attract more participants to the event.

One particularly successful way to disseminate good practices is through the organization of network sessions. Network sessions are generally organized on a regular basis (for example, once every six months). As such, they guarantee that the dissemination happens in a sustainable way and is more than a one-off event. Moreover, they also offer the possibility to stay close to

topical interests and current events as a way to attract employers' interest. The format of these sessions, in which employers themselves present their good practice, encourages peer-to-peer learning which is often the most effective way to inspire employers. Overall, employers experience network sessions as very positive because, just as conferences, they:

1. offer the possibility to learn from other companies by sharing experiences (including successes and challenges);
2. demonstrate the potential for an increase of productivity and decrease of absenteeism (having statistics or anecdotal evidence about the economic benefits from another company can be a strong and effective motivator for other companies to implement good practices!);
3. improve the contact between companies and Equality Bodies;
4. enable participants and the organising Equality Body to expand the network of contacts; and
5. provide an opportunity for free and positive publicity for the companies (through validation by an Equality Body and public recognition).



# **GOOD PRACTICES**

## A. A SUMMARY

Before proceeding to a detailed overview of each of the forty-five good practices, this section provides a summary of the characteristics of the collected practices (see Table 1). The aim of this summary is not to draw conclusions – the diverse legal and economic contexts as well as the limited number of good practices per country do not allow for general statements to be made –, but foremost to demonstrate the extent to which examples of good practices to support employees in combining paid work with personal and family life can be found throughout the labour market. Additionally, this section serves to enhance the usability of this guide, and to provide the reader with an immediate idea of the kind of practices collected.

Overall, the good practices cover a broad variety of companies, ranging from SME's to larger companies, from the private to the public sector, and includes both international as well as national or local companies.

There is a strong domination from the private sector (more than 80%) and a clear majority of the companies represented are national companies (more than 60%). Five sectors are represented (industry, construction, trade and catering, transport and services, quaternary sector) of which the industry and the quaternary sector stand out (respectively 33% and 26% of the good practices).

Furthermore, all types of practices are well-represented. Most popular are the **flexible working arrangements**; measures which are often considered as the most budget-friendly and fastest to implement to improve work-life balance.

Second most popular were the practices related to leave and remuneration. Multiple companies made it possible for employees to take up extra leave when having a child and provided additional pay.

In sum, good practices or measures to support employees' work-life balance can be set up in all sorts of companies; many employers are eager to support working mothers, fathers, and carers in a creative manner.



TABLE 1: TYPE OF MEASURES PER COUNTRY

	BELGIUM	ESTONIA	PORTUGAL
<b>Flexible working arrangements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work-life balance for parents (Athlon)</li> <li>• Flexibility to support sustainable deployment (DSM Genk)</li> <li>• Individually negotiated solutions (Emmaüs vzw)</li> <li>• Time- and place independent working (Everon Lighting Technologies)</li> <li>• New work-life balance: organizing your own work time (FPS Finances)</li> <li>• Disconnect (Lidl Belgium &amp; Luxembourg)</li> <li>• Self-rostering (Milcobel)</li> <li>• Flexible planning (Sprint Transport)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling flexible working hours (i.e. part-time and shifting start and end times) and teleworking (ABB AS)</li> <li>• Flexible organisation of work (AS Express Post)</li> <li>• Own work schedule (start and end times) for production workers (Estanc AS)</li> <li>• Flexible working time arrangements by position (Käo Tugikeskus)</li> <li>• Wider implementation of flexible working time and better informing of the teams by the leaders (Swedbank AS)</li> <li>• Flexible work environment in terms of working time, place and way of working (Tartu Kutsehariduskeskus)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible timetables to accommodate medical appointments and the possibility of teleworking in case of a family member with a very demanding illness requiring care (Baía do Tejo)</li> </ul>
<b>Leave and remuneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Parent Policy (AXA)</li> <li>• Happiness@work (Elan Languages)</li> <li>• Flexible benefit plan (ManpowerGroup)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Battery charging day' and agreements considering personal specifics (MDC Max Daetwyler Eesti)</li> <li>• Child and family related benefits for employees (Scania Eesti AS)</li> <li>• Day off at the employer's expense and backpack support to a child entering the first grade (Tammer OÜ)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two days of paid leave per month for workers during the child's first year of life (Altice)</li> <li>• Fifteen days fully paid leave for male workers during the first month of the child's life (Gebalis)</li> <li>• Two months of leave to workers with new-born children (IKEA)</li> <li>• Two-day leave fully paid to male workers for each thirty days of parental leave taken exclusively (Infraestruturas de Portugal)</li> <li>• Ten days of paid parental leave to male workers, only to those who do not share initial parental leave (Porto dos Açores)</li> <li>• Incentive for male workers to take optional parental leave (Xerox)</li> <li>• Supplement in the parental allowance received by the workers during the period of parental leave (Xerox)</li> </ul>
<b>Family support services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family support services: internal ironing service and discount for childcare (Lidl Belgium &amp; Luxembourg)</li> <li>• Kennedy-kids (childcare) (Voka West-Vlaanderen)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The children's corner and a place for the smaller children to take a nap (Iglu OÜ)</li> <li>• The children's room (Lennuliiklusteeninduse AS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of pre-schools for the company workers' children (Auchan)</li> <li>• Nursing / breastfeeding room (Nestlé)</li> <li>• Provision of an educational centre for the company workers' children (Novadelta)</li> <li>• Greater logistic facility for pregnant workers and attribution of a vehicle during pregnancy (Randstad)</li> </ul>
<b>Information and training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness, informing and encouraging (Domocura)</li> <li>• Actively promoting paternity leave (ManpowerGroup)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation of employees' families to company events (Boardic Eesti OÜ)</li> <li>• Employees on parental leave can attend all trainings and events (DPD Eesti AS)</li> <li>• Keeping a balance between work and family life, minimising time conflict and work stress (Eesti Filharmonia SA)</li> <li>• Keeping children's guardians involved and informed (Swedbank AS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compilation and distribution of an informative guidebook on parental rights, available for consultation by all workers (Dianova)</li> <li>• Offer of two professional counselling sessions to workers upon returning from parental leave (Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN))</li> <li>• Promotion and dissemination of an in-house video on equality between women and men with the participation of male and female workers (Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN))</li> </ul>

## B. CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Developing and implementing good practices is not always an easy process. Good practices are often the result of ‘trial-and-error’, of challenges faced and adjustments made in order to accommodate the needs of employees. These challenges, as well as the solutions offered, are particular to the initiative, the company culture, the national context and so on. Nevertheless, there are also commonalities. Gaining insights into challenges and facilitating factors is useful both for the Equality Bodies and for employers.

Equality Bodies can take the challenges and facilitating factors into account when informing and inspiring employers to implement work-life balance measures. Moreover, they can discuss what, if any, can be their own role in helping overcome some of these challenges (for example in terms of policy recommendations).

For employers, on the other hand, gaining insights into potential challenges and success factors upfront, can help them to better prepare the development and implementation of their good practice. By learning from other’s experiences, they can avoid pitfalls, save time and resources, and develop more effective initiatives. This section lists a few of the more common challenges and solutions.

### 1. Financial resources

Companies might initially be hesitant to invest in work-life balance measures because they assume it requires substantial additional financial resources. As the good practices presented here demonstrate, a small budget can already suffice to implement effective measures. Some measures, such as planning meetings within family-friendly hours do not require any budget at all. Others, mostly family support measures, such as organizing childcare or providing preschools, demand a certain financial input.

Some companies handle this by carefully studying the potential costs in advance and/or by contacting other organizations or institutions which can provide more detailed information or can even provide financial support (f.e. financial support from governmental agencies).

Overall, however, many employers point out that these investments are worth it, because they are recuperated in the long run through, amongst others, less ab-

senteism and turnover rates, higher productivity and less time spent to attract new employees.

### 2. Communication

Communication, employers indicate, is key in successfully implementing a good practice. Foremost, it is essential that, throughout every phase of the measure’s implementation (preparation, implementation, evaluation and adjustment) employers provide effective communication channels for employees to voice not only their difficulties to balance work and private life and to use the measure, but also to present and discuss potentially interesting ideas to solve them. Specifically, during the implementation phase, employees need to stay informed about the conditions and possibilities to use the measure and should be able to raise any concern about potential (individual) bottlenecks. Effective communication also helps to keep the measure attractive and guarantee needed updates. Some employers notice that, if the measure is in place for a longer period, it loses its attractiveness and newness. To ensure that measures continue to be used, companies must keep communicating about them and remain open to feedback and evaluation.

While this seems evident, practice shows that this is not always easy, especially in larger companies that have different branches. Additionally, problems can arise when there is a change in staff, for example in the HR department or within the top management, and communication is no longer monitored or comes to a halt. Companies should therefore pay particular attention to smooth communication flows and a continuous circulation of information to all (current and new) employees. This can be done, amongst others, by informing (new) employees during the onboarding process, or via the companies’ intranet or monthly meetings.

### 3. Support from the (top) hierarchy

It is essential that work-life balance measures are fully supported by the (top) hierarchy. Without ‘sponsorship’ from the absolute top of the company, measures will often remain one-off, ‘nice to have’, depending on the coincidental enthusiasm of a few staff at a particular time, or for example on a budget surplus. Mere toleration is thus not enough. If executives make clear commitments themselves, measures will prove more sustainable and effective and contribute more to changing the work culture. If everyone in the company’s hierarchy supports the measure (and makes use of it), this

will bring about the necessary ‘buy-in’ from across the organization.

To enhance and communicate this support, an ‘ambassador’ within the (top) management can be designated. Additionally, extra attention can be given to team managers. These play a crucial role in making the implementation of a good practice successful. They are directly in contact with the employee and are therefore best placed to see the employee’s challenges. However, measures to improve work-life balance often have an influence on work planning (due to, for example, additional leave or individual work schemes), or can require new ways of supervising (for example coaching remotely) which directly effects supervisors or team managers). Some companies have therefore noticed a certain resistance from supervisors to support work-life balance measures. Consequently, supporting team managers through training programs or coaching sessions will not only avoid resistance to the measure but will also allow team managers to become staunch supporters.

#### **4. Include the employees in setting up the measures**

Almost all companies, in some way or another, include employees in setting up the measures. They do this in different ways:

- › By setting up a survey or informally asking about the employees’ specific needs in order to improve their work-life balance.
- › By asking some employees to volunteer in working groups to set up the measures.
- › By allowing a few employees to take up a role in implementing the measures.
- › By regularly evaluating the measures and asking the employees if their needs have changed and if the measures are still fitting to these needs.

Involving employees contributes to broad support for the measures and facilitates their implementation as employees will be more informed about the measures. This, in turn, will contribute to the popularity and satisfaction of the measures.

#### **5. Dare to evaluate and adjust**

Regularly monitoring identified target figures or participation rates and reviewing whether the implemented good practices are being used effectively, is strongly recommended. Additionally, companies can evaluate improvements (or hindrances) at the level of the employees themselves, such as well-being and satisfaction with the measure.

If there is a visible improvement, companies can clearly communicate this, both internally and externally; there is no better advertisement for attracting new talent. However, if no positive results have been achieved, companies should be enterprising and dare to adjust the measure.

#### **6. Start with the right mindset and incorporate work-life balance in the company culture**

Most employers indicate that committing to and attaching importance to a good work-life balance is something that should be integrated in the work culture of the company. A certain ‘mindset’ should be present in which paying attention to work-life balance is regarded as logical, where there is space for employees to ask for flexible working arrangements or ways to improve work-life balance, and where listening and attending (to the extent possible) to the different individual situations of the employees is a given. This work culture requires and stimulates a certain trust between employers and employees.



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# **FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**



## BELGIUM

### ATHLON – WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR PARENTS

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

ATHLON

#### SECTOR

International provider of operational leasing and mobility solutions

Transport and services

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Athlon Belgium has been committed for several years to a culture of gender equality and trust. The central tenets of this are feeling good in yourself, empowerment, and people management. An optimum work-life balance is also a priority. Where the latter is concerned, employees with children are a particular focus.

Among the actions taken are:

- › Most departments operate a system of **flexible hours**. There is no time recording and employees are free to start later or leave earlier. Employees are personally responsible for planning their work.
- › **Special types of leave** such as paternity and parental leave are encouraged, with a special focus on men.
- › The **start and end times of meetings** are kept within certain limits as much as possible; ideally, meetings are only planned between 9.30 am and 4 pm. If possible, international meetings are not organised during school exam periods.
- › A separate **Intranet page** has been created for **parents and parents-to-be**, bringing together all the relevant information. Employees can find all the latest administrative information on this page, from pregnancy and birth, to retuning to work. This includes information such as: how to notify your employer of your pregnancy, what about child benefits, as well as information about all the relevant types of leave and an overview of initiatives which Athlon deploys to enable its employees to achieve the best balance between work and a young/prospective family.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Although many of the initiatives come from management, employees also put forward ideas, often prompted by their own experiences, and run these past management.

Initiatives are usually a case of trial and error. The proposer elaborates upon the idea or brings together a few employees in a working group. An empirical approach is taken to the initiatives, learning as we go.

Since the initiatives are unofficial, actions can be transient, but this also means we can respond flexibly to business requirements.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

A budget has to be set aside for certain initiatives. However, we try to do most of the work internally, and limit the cost of external consultants. All actions are also publicised via our own online channels.

After introducing flexible hours, three groups quickly emerged: employees who made use of the flexibility in order to find a good work-life balance, employees who did overtime, and employees who exploited the system. To stop this escalating, we relied on visual management: each week, everyone gets together and runs through the tasks for the week and the schedule. This ensures that the whole team is responsible for achieving a balanced workload for team members.

#### RESULTS

Since making optimum work-life balance a priority, we have seen an increase in both men and women taking up various types of leave (such as parental leave and paternity leave) and time credit.

On the other hand, short-term absenteeism has fallen from 4% in 2013 to 2.19% in 2019.

New employees are also attracted by Athlon's commitment to gender quality and work-life balance. This has reduced the spend on campaigns or headhunters to attract new employees.

#### CONTACT

<https://www.athlon.com/be/bedrijf>

## DSM GENK – FLEXIBILITY TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE DEPLOYMENT

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**DSM GENK**

### SECTOR

Producer of high-quality plastic granules. These plastics have applications in electronics and electrical devices, the food industry and the automotive and construction industry.

Industry

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

DSM Genk wants to guarantee the sustainable deployment of its employees and believes this is the joint responsibility of employer and employee. To this end, the employer provides support for the employee's physical and mental fitness.

To support the mental aspect, various measures are taken involving flexible working, training and teamwork. The measures to improve work-life balance include:

- › Job sharing: employees can opt for job sharing with one or two other employees, whereby one would take the morning shift and the other the night shift. This is mutually agreed and is discussed with the shift manager.
- › Flexible hours and homeworking: Employees can always choose to work from home or to work flexible hours in consultation with the shift manager. The latter measure is an option for both white-collar and blue-collar workers, who can decide, for instance, to always take Wednesday morning off, or to take a break from doing night shifts.
- › No restriction on types of leave, time credit or other requests: Every request for time credit, parental leave or another type of leave is approved. The employer arranges cover for the absence.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

In 2018, a working group was formed within the company to explore and document the specifics of sustainable deployment measures and actions. This initiative was prompted by the need for employees to be able to stay

in work longer, the disappearance of bridging pensions, and mounting work pressure.

The working group consists of employees who participate voluntarily, the management team and the social partners. Inspiration for the measures and actions was obtained from DSM's international group, and from the External Occupational Health Service.

In 2019, the new collective bargaining agreement for more sustainable deployment was approved by all parties involved and subsequently rolled out. More related actions will follow over the next few years.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

The new measures were communicated to employees internally during open sessions. These were organised four times per department and one for white-collar workers. To ensure everyone's presence, attendance at these sessions was paid as overtime.

The related measures require a budget, but DSM Genk is convinced that all these measures will, ultimately, be budget neutral. In the long term, these costs will be recouped when employees are able to remain in work for longer and stay healthy.

Open and constructive communication with the social partners was crucial to the success of the working group and the approval of the collective bargaining agreement.

### RESULTS

Uptake of the various measures (job sharing, flexible hours etc.) at DSM Genk is high. This is supported by colleagues at the workplace, the shift managers, and the social partners. Currently, 11 out of 180 male employees are taking parental leave.

Feedback is positive. Furthermore, employees now make their own suggestions, such as adjusting the start and end day of the night shift (starting on Sunday evening instead of Monday evening). These proposals are put to an internal vote and, if approved, introduced.

### CONTACT

<https://www.dsm.com/markets/engineering-materials/en.html>



## EMMAÜS VZW – INDIVIDUALLY NEGOTIATED SOLUTIONS

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Emmaüs vzw

### SECTOR

Healthcare and well-being network in the province of Antwerp, active in 5 sectors: general hospitals, mental healthcare, elderly care, support for people with disabilities, and childcare/family support/youth support.

Quaternary sector (public administration, education, social services etc.)

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Emmaüs' approach to work-life balance questions is 'individually negotiated solutions', which seek to reconcile the expectations of the employee, the team's capacity, and the organisation's policy. This is just as likely to involve requests by young parents as by employees aged 55+ or other groups of staff.

The service provided to customers (patients, clients, residents) and the budgetary constraints determine the framework within which negotiated solutions are sought.

A request by an employee in the paediatric department who wants to take Wednesday afternoons off, for example, would be addressed through dialogue. As Wednesday afternoon is a busy time for consultations in the paediatric department, the availability of a position in another department will be investigated to enable the young mother/father to carry on working but take Wednesday afternoons off.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Bespoke working hours to suit employees and customers have always been in Emmaüs' DNA. 'Looking out for each other' is one of the organisation's fundamental values.

Since 2017, this approach has been enshrined in the vision statement 'workable work at Emmaüs'. This vision statement was drawn up by a working group involving the chairman, the HR coordinator, HR staff, and trade

unions. Based on the findings of a survey, a framework was developed which was ultimately approved by the Board of Directors.

The vision statement was publicised at several levels, from works councils to staff magazine. Each facility applies the new way of working at its own pace, depending on the capabilities of its HR department. Consultation meetings between HR employees at the various facilities therefore include the sharing of good practices and local HR plans.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Emmaüs no longer thinks 'inside the box'. While one employee aged 55-plus might request less night work, another might ask for more. One young parent may want to be at home on Wednesday afternoons, while another has a grandparent who can step in, and chooses a different day. Abandoning a one-size-fits all approach and precedents, or taking a looser approach to acquired rights, provides far more options to make the puzzle fit together without jeopardising the service provided.

There is a strong reliance on leadership training, such as "situational leadership" and "how your personal style impacts on your team". The manager is seen as crucial to applying the principle "individually negotiated solutions".

However, managers must not be left shouldering all the pressure; the importance of shared responsibility must also be emphasised. Employees are always asked to come up with their own ideas about a specific arrangement, based on their request.

### RESULTS

Emmaüs has been reporting HR indicators for the whole organisation since 2015. This monitoring highlights trends and areas in need of attention and serves as input/support for HR activities at the facilities. The aspects covered include the ratio of males to females, absenteeism and work arrangements.

The figures reveal a rise in the number of men working part-time. However, this remains just a fraction of the number of female part-time employees. As the system is still in its infancy, the results for other indicators, such as absenteeism, are not yet apparent.

Qualitative results are obtained from conversations with HR employees in the field. They mention that having the vision statement as a framework helps them find solutions to employees' requests. Moreover, employees themselves say they are pleased with the obvious willing-

ness to look for solutions and the flexibility to review the existing arrangements.

#### CONTACT

<https://www.emmaus.be/>

## EVERON LIGHTING TECHNOLOGIES – TIME- AND PLACE INDEPENDENT WORKING

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Everon Lighting Technologies**

### SECTOR

Consulting and production company that develops high-quality lighting tailored to professional clients (industry, wholesale, office complexes, etc.).

Industry

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

1-10 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

At the start of their contract, every employee can choose their own percentage of employment. The vacancies normally require a minimum employment of 70%, but the employee can increase this to 80, 90 or 100%. The remaining percentage can always be filled with parental leave, a scheme that is proactively offered to all employees, both male and female.

The work schedules of these part-time contracts can be filled in flexibly. An employee on a 90% contract, for instance, can choose to stop working a few hours earlier on Tuesday and Thursday. This arrangement can always be reconsidered if the needs or the family situation changes. Furthermore, employees can fill in their own working hours flexibly and always have the option of working from home.

At the request of employees, a collective day of leave is taken on 1 September to enable (grand)parents to be at home for their (grand)children.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Flexibility and gender equality are inherent in Everon Lighting Technologies business practices. Rather than being an employer who keeps a tight rein on hours worked, Everon Lighting Technologies wants to focus on result-oriented working.

The measures and actions are explained during recruitment interviews. The monthly team meeting is an opportunity to discuss what is practicable and desirable for the company and its employees.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Not every employee copes equally well with a high degree of flexibility, and the system is sometimes abused. The managers respond to such situations by focusing on results and sustained commitment. The regular 1-on-1 conversations between managers and employees proves useful in this regard.

For Everon Lighting Technologies, introducing these measures is foremost a matter of having the right mindset. The company's motto is: trust, freedom, and responsibility.

### RESULTS

Working flexible hours is not mandatory; employees can also choose to work '9 to 5'. Nonetheless, all employees choose to work flexible hours.

The flexibility at the company is often cited as a reason for joining Everon Lighting Technologies.

### CONTACT

<https://www.everon-lighting.eu/nl>

## FPS FINANCE – NEW WORK-LIFE BALANCE: ORGANIZING YOUR OWN WORK TIME

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**FPS Finance**

### SECTOR

Federal government (management and distribution of resources, collection of taxes, duties and levies)

Quarternary sector (public administration, education, social services etc.)

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

The flexitime system enables every employee subject to the general scheme to alter their working hours to suit public transport timetables, specific family commitments and their personal needs. This new flexible option has paved the way for other initiatives and other projects (such as teleworking and sports at work). However, this must always be consistent with the needs and goals of the team and be agreed with the team leader.

Employees can choose one of two systems in the flexitime approach offered by FPS Finance:

- System 1 (with clocking-in) involves recording time, with partially fixed hours and the structured option of taking compensation leave (if overtime is worked). Core hours and variable hours are observed (with mandatory presence between 9.30 and 11.45 and between 14.00 and 15.30).
- System 2 (without clocking-in) does not involve recording time and there are no core hours (although there is still a requirement to start work before 11.45 and to finish no earlier than 14.00). There is no compensation leave system, but employees can request full or half-days of absence. These absences are granted according to the achievement of objectives or sufficient progress.

The system without clocking-in encourages employees to adapt working hours to their personal needs, to enable them to achieve a work-life balance. What matters is the target to be met, not the hours worked.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees who perform job roles and tasks which allow flexibility.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Thanks to technological advances, it is often possible to work anywhere, at different times. Although you must, of course, be present for contact with colleagues, managers and members of the public, much of the work can, in many cases, be done away from the office. The new flexitime system is a key pillar of FPS Finance's HR policy.

The project began in 2014, on the initiative of the management, as part of the TAW project (Travailler Autrement - Anders Werken (Working Differently)).

In the future, and to the extent possible, FPS Finance wants to have a single working hours system for as many employees as possible, without core hours.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

The flexitime system, with and without clocking-in, is currently under review. Some improvements will be made during 2021, including for absences in order to meet targets in system 2. Virtual clocking-in is also planned for employees who want or who must clock-in.

One of the keys factors for success concerns the communication with and the provision of information to all managers. This was a major change for managers, with potential repercussions for the way work is organised and for their specific role in it. More than before, they now have to be their team's coach, and they increasingly need to draw on their organisational skills. Efforts made in the area of leadership (training programmes, study days, contact points, e-learning etc.) actively support managers in this area.

### RESULTS

An initial evaluation in 2016 (2 years after its introduction) found that 62% of employees had already opted for the system without clocking-in. 84.2% of employees said they were satisfied with the flexibility of their work.

Flexitime has lowered short-term absenteeism (due to a rise in teleworking) and satisfaction surveys indicate higher productivity.

### CONTACT

<https://finances.belgium.be/fr>

## LIDL BELGIUM & LUXEMBOURG – DISCONNECT

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Lidl Belgium & Luxembourg

### SECTOR

Food discounter

Trade and catering

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Lidl goes to great lengths to ensure that its staff enjoy work-life balance. The executive committee sees unplugging from work as crucial to this.

Therefore, in 2018 the executive committee and HR introduced an embargo on emails: emails sent between Lidl email addresses after 6pm were not delivered to the recipient's mailbox until 7am the following day.

Due to COVID-19, the work situation has changed, and our economy has evolved into an environment in which flexible working is becoming ever more commonplace. Employees have the right to unplug completely during their leisure time, but they also want to decide themselves when to carry on or stop working. Because of this, the mail embargo has been lifted, and replaced with a framework in which expectations regarding unplugging are clear and employees bear greater responsibility for planning their own work.

Specifically, in the new framework employees have the freedom to flexibly plan their working day, adhering to core hours. If they wish, they can work after 6pm. However, there is no expectation that employees will be available after 6pm (unless, in exceptional cases, this is a necessary part of their job and is documented accordingly).

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees at head office

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The New Way of Working project, which was launched in 2016, was a key milestone in early efforts to promote work-life balance. Offices were converted and open spaces were introduced, along with new meeting

rooms and so on. In some offices, flexitime was introduced, and work behaviour was reviewed. This identified emails as a particular area of concern, prompting a number of email-related initiatives.

Gradually, over four years, a variety of measures were introduced to optimise work-life balance for employees.

Ideas for measures emanate from various channels, such as the executive committee, HR, and employees themselves. These are submitted to the executive committee for approval, after which a concept is prepared. Once this concept has been approved, it is referred to a project board comprising between 10 and 15 managers from different departments who give feedback based on their own role and the interests of their department. Once the feedback has been taken on board, the roll-out of the project begins, focussing heavily on communication about the project.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Whilst we always strive for a collective approach for all Lidl employees, we are aware of the need to allow scope for individual needs and preferences. With regard to unplugging, for instance, we found that the email embargo did not work perfectly for everyone. Initially, the system was introduced by the executive committee and HR but, by listening to employees, pain points were identified, and the framework was adjusted.

At such a large company, communication is vital. An evaluation identified a need to step up communication for various reasons, such as ensuring that all the communications reach the various branches. This led to the creation of the TeamLidl app, on which employees have direct access to communication and information from Lidl.

### RESULTS

Lidl goes to great lengths to ensure that its staff enjoy work-life balance. Generally, the work-life balance policy has positive results. 75% of employees work part-time, including 57% of male employees, and more than three quarters of them are on permanent contracts.

### CONTACT

<https://www.werkenbijlidl.be/nl/1973.htm>

## MILCOBEL – SELF-ROSTERING

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Milcobel – Kallo branch

### SECTOR

Production of powdered milk for the food and chocolate industry.

Industry

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Employees can plan their monthly work schedule to fit their work-life balance, with due consideration for the department's staffing requirements. There are 3 stages to the self-rostering process:

1. The preference stage: Employees individually complete the hours they want to work for the month in question, using the planning tool which indicates staffing requirements and the time rules laid down in social legislation.
2. The adjustment stage: By mutual agreement, employees adjust their roster to the staffing requirements. The changes are registered so that it is subsequently apparent who has adjusted their hours. This is also done by the employee, without the manager's involvement.
3. The finalisation stage: The planner resolves the remaining sticking points and finalises the roster, as per the arrangements made during the social dialogue process. The principle of equal treatment applies here: everyone has the right to do certain shifts (night, early, late, 2 weekends per month etc.). Account is taken of how frequently the person concerned demonstrated flexibility during the second stage, as well as their time balance, i.e. whether this is negative (not enough hours worked) or positive (too many hours worked). For example, somebody who has already worked several night shifts is more likely to be removed from the night shift than somebody who has a negative or zero balance for the night shift.

Self-rostering makes it far easier to flexibly plan part-time working or parental leave. In a fixed shift system, this was harder and could only be done on a weekly basis; now, a regular Wednesday off can be entered in

the system (as long as staffing requirements are met). Moreover, colleagues who want to attend additional training, for instance, can indicate that they want to keep certain hours free and attend the training without having to use up leave in order to do so.

Self-rostering increases flexibility; the employee is better able to balance work and family and schedules are more predictable (there are fewer last-minute changes and very little overtime is worked).

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Employees who work in continuous production

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Social dialogue was crucial when devising the system. All the ins and outs and the framework were hammered out with the employer. Employees decide who works, when (as a team and individually).

An external agency that specialises in planning processes was hired to explain the self-rostering system to all employees. They also provided the planning tool. In an initial referendum of employees, 71% agreed with trialling the system for 1 year. After one year, another referendum was held, in which 97% said they wanted to continue with self-rostering.

Training sessions were then organised, software purchased, and a planner recruited. In addition, several company rules were drawn up, specifically applying to the operation of the system at Milcobel, which employees are required to follow. These cover aspects such as the influence of weekend days when taking leave, and the option of setting "veto" days and S days (spare days).

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

When it was first implemented, self-rostering was not widely used in Belgium, and had never been used in the food sector. Milcobel had to work everything out from the ground up, which was time-consuming and a big financial investment. They also had to find creative solutions to issues encountered. The changing rules during the start-up stage also hindered acceptance of the system among employees.

Self-rostering is, in fact, a misleading term: 'team rostering' is more accurate. Employees often have overly high expectations of being able to pick their own working hours entirely to suit them. Yet it is not just a case of responding to individual needs; it's also about coordinating hours as part of a team. Employees still need to consider each other. Good communication among employees remains essential.

## RESULTS

Two months after the system was introduced, round-table discussions were held with employees to review it. The planning period was shortened. It was adjusted again following new round-table discussions in 2019. In this way, we keep track of employees' experiences of the system and their needs.

Results are evident in requests for parental leave, because greater flexibility (1 day per week) is possible for employees who wish to make use of it.

In the first few years, absenteeism was monitored separately for the departments in Kallo with self-rostering, and departments which were using the conventional roster. Absenteeism was lower in the departments that introduced self-rostering.

After five years and regular satisfaction surveys, the system is still in place at the company. The positives still outweigh the negatives. Dissatisfaction is identified quickly and discussed with employees.

## CONTACT

<https://milcobel.com/>

## SPRINT TRANSPORT – FLEXIBLE PLANNING

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Sprint Transport**

### SECTOR

Goods transport for third parties (distribution, transport of hazardous substances and express transport, sale of waybills)

Transport and services

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

11-50 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Consideration of everyone's family situation at the planning stage can make working in a dynamic sector such as transport more 'workable'.

The ideal schedule is worked out for every individual, based on the information the employee provides. Ways of (temporarily) adjusting the planning are discussed with the employee to enable flexible working or resolve the issue of childcare for families with children. This might involve moving working hours from the day to the evening or night, allocating time in lieu on days when there is no childcare, or another solution such as working part-time, flexible hours, or parental leave.

Employees often agree flexible hours among themselves, enabling one of them to start earlier and get home quicker, while another does later shifts. Alternatively, they might swap shifts.

The 38-hour week is always strictly observed. Overtime is immediately compensated with time off in lieu the following week.

Employees with school-age children are given priority when planning holidays. They can indicate their preferences as early as January.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Flexible planning was adopted when Spirit Transport first began operating. The first question for the manager is always "Would I want to work for myself?"

Open communication is the key success factor in Sprint Transport's modus operandi. The manager always communicates openly about both successes and challenges within the company. This is clearly appreciated by employees and it encourages them, in turn, to equally communicate openly. As a result, they are more likely to come up with solutions to problems.

Applicants are told at the recruitment interview that they can say, and ask, anything. New employees are also assigned a mentor for a minimum of 1 week, to familiarise them with the workings of the company and to provide them with a safety net.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

Currently, communication is often informal, e.g. over a cup of coffee or a telephone call after work. Although open communication will remain a basic pillar at the company, a more formal structure will be necessary as the company continues to grow.

The law allows a lot of flexibility in the transport sector. Whilst this can make planning complex, Sprint Transport is very much in favour if it means keeping hold of good people. The company is always open to requests for changes to job content or hours worked.

#### **RESULTS**

Employees are clearly happy working at Sprint Transport. The line of communication with the manager is very short, and problems with work-life balance can quickly be shared.

There is very low turnover and low absenteeism. Unlike other companies in the transport sector, Sprint Transport has few issues with staffing shortages. Thanks in part to the focus on work-life balance, flexible planning and the vision that everyone deserves a chance, Sprint Transport is seen as an attractive employer.

#### **CONTACT**

<https://www.sprinttransport.be/>





## ESTONIA

### ABB AS – ENABLING FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS AND TELEWORKING

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**ABB AS**

#### SECTOR

Processing industry

Private sector

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

Currently nearly 1,400 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Enabling flexible working hours (i.e. part-time and shifting starting and ending times) and teleworking.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees where the nature of the work allows it.

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The initiative came primarily from the employees themselves, who wanted to work part-time and remotely. In most cases, the target group involved mothers returning from parental leave and increasingly also fathers. The company makes every effort to encourage fathers to take parental leave and announce their plans in good time.

The implementation of the new practices took a bit of time for the whole team at the beginning, as the department meetings started to largely take place in virtual form (involving teleworkers). For part-time work, in most cases it is necessary to think more thoroughly about substitution and the performance of tasks for those periods when the part-time employee is away.

To a small extent, based on past needs, flexible solutions are allowed. However, since 2020 working extensively in the form of telework has become the new standard in all teams with office units.

No specific budget has been established for the implementation of this measure. With regards to the home office and flexible working hours, many expenses will increase, but at the same time we will save on recruiting expenses from hiring new employees with suitable competencies, therefore, the increase in expenses will not be significant.

The measure created is sustainable.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

In the past, most meeting took place in-person. We have now moved our stand-up meetings to virtual environments (we have implemented the format of Tier Meetings, Huddle-Boards, Scrum Meetings), meaning that we have moved notes/graphs visuals/trend graphs, lists of goals and short-term agreements to virtual environments. We have widely introduced the MS Teams tool, the functionality of which properly covers technical solutions.

#### RESULTS

The target group received the expected benefits, meaning that while working in a flexible manner, they have been able to continue their self-realisation more successfully both at home and at work. Labour turnover has slowed down.

#### CONTACT

<https://new.abb.com/ee>



## AS EXPRESS POST – FLEXIBLE ORGANISATION OF WORK

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**AS Express Post**

### SECTOR

Transportation and storage, media publications home delivery

Private sector

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

250-500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Flexible organisation of work – the objective is to ensure flexible organisation of work for all employees, as far as the specifics of the job allow. Interim breaks during working days and their length can be adjusted to perform private duties within a working day. There are also options to work from home in case of milder symptoms or a child's illness. Family obligations are considered when planning trainings, meetings, and other events.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Decisions about the measures involved all line managers. Detailed discussions were held about the condi-

tions under which decisions can be taken and activities can be implemented.

There was no separate budget. Additional expenses were needed to fix computers and provide remote work licenses.

The COVID-19 crisis furthered the implementation of the measures.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Part-time work that was offered to paper carriers, allowing them to work in the mornings. This requires a greater degree of planning and more work for regional managers. All activities were nicely resolved from the office side.

The adoption of measures primarily affected office workers. Everyone was provided with good options for remote work. Overall, the entire company's approach changed and all employees gained from this.

### RESULTS

The employees are satisfied with the implemented changes and feel that they are more involved.

### CONTACT

<https://www.expresspost.ee/>

## ESTANC AS – A PERSONAL WORK SCHEDULE FOR PRODUCTION WORKERS

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Estanc AS**

### SECTOR

Processing industry, metal industry

Private sector

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

The main goal is to harmonise office and production staff and to develop the same conditions, benefits, flexi-

bility and management quality in production as is found in the office. Production workers are able to agree on their own work schedule (start and end times) and work accordingly. Since production is project-based and does not depend on the line, employees' break times are not so strictly enforced, and employees can take them a little bit sooner or later on their own.

There is a day within the company where production workers can bring their families to work, to introduce them to working at Estanc.

All employees are informed that they are free to invite their child's school or nursery school to Estanc for an

excursion. The personnel manager must be informed in advance about the event and will help to coordinate it.

**TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)**

All employees.

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

The personnel manager is primarily responsible for implementation in cooperation with the heads of departments.

There is no specific budget but providing people with more than the law requires will see costs being incurred.

Flexible working-time arrangements are described in the work organisation rules and personnel management principles. It is certainly a sustainable measure, as it helps to increase employee satisfaction and job engagement, thereby increasing productivity and reducing employee turnover, all of which are very impor-

tant indicators in terms of a company's financial sustainability.

**SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

It is important to know one's employees and build a family-friendly organisation pursuant to the cultural and/or demographic nature of the organisation. It is not worth spending resources on activities or systems that the employee does not address or understand.

**RESULTS**

Job engagement and satisfaction rates remain very high. The company has an event package directed at all employees, a common diverse package of benefits, and the level of involvement of production employees has increased.

**CONTACT**

<https://estanc.ee/>

**KÄO TUGIKESKUS – FLEXIBLE WORKING TIME ARRANGEMENTS BY POSITION**

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION**

**Käo Tugikeskus** (Käo Support Centre)

**SECTOR**

Social work

Public sector

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

251–500 employees

**DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

Flexible working time arrangements by position.

An employee has the right to be absent from work for one day in connection with the graduation ceremonies of children or grandchildren's educational institutions (kindergarten, primary school, basic school, upper secondary school, university), a child's 1st grade ceremony or own graduation from school, as well as a close person's wedding or a close person's funeral. On these days, the employee's remuneration is maintained. Relevant amendments have been made to the work organisation rules, which have been introduced at staff and team meetings.

**TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)**

All employees

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

The work organisation rules and staff policies define flexible working time arrangements, and employees have been informed of this possibility at staff meetings. Employees have the opportunity to participate in briefings/seminars/good practice days, where open discussions take place on topics related to the protection of the interests of employees.

Performance reviews are carried out – everyone has the opportunity to talk about their progress, how they feel in the organisation, how they perceive teamwork, and whether anything is missing.

Also, feedback is annually collected from the groups. Internal news channels cover topics related to family and employee friendliness at least once a quarter.

**SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

Due to the specific nature of the support centre's work, the implementation of flexible working hours required a

separate analysis and a clear breakdown by position.

### RESULTS

Employee satisfaction over a year, where comparisons can be made between different periods. Satisfaction is assessed on various topics on an ongoing basis.

Important topics are addressed during good practice days (internal evaluation), quality team meetings, as well as team collaboration evaluation meetings.

The most effective and individual way to ask for employee feedback is at the end of the probationary period, at the end of the induction programme and during the performance review, where it is possible to make individual and person-centred agreements for the future.

The number of overtime hours (%) has decreased; the employees are satisfied (expressed in the satisfaction survey through the respective indicator).

### CONTACT

<http://www.kaokeskus.ee/>

## SWEDBANK AS – WIDER IMPLEMENTATION OF FLEXIBLE WORKING TIME AND BETTER INFORMING OF THE TEAMS BY THE LEADERS

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Swedbank AS

### SECTOR

Finance and insurance

Private sector

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Wider implementation of flexible working time and using the remote work option, and better informing of the teams by the leaders.

The employer allows the employees to use their working time to handle their personal obligations. This time is considered as a part of the working time. If possible, breaks in work should be planned for the beginning or end of the working day, so they would disrupt the organisation of work as little as possible.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The initiative came from the human resources department. The heads of departments and management were included.

There was no need for a specific budget. However, there was a need to agree on principles and communicate

them to the leaders and change the way of thinking.

To combine work and family life, the principles and good practices of flexible working time have been agreed upon. These have been communicated to all heads of departments and employees; these are also available in the intranet. An article was published in the employee newsletter.

In units where the employee communicates directly with the customer and where the organisation of work is linked to specific opening times, the employee worked with the manager to map the options for implementing the principle of flexible working time

In positions where the work allows it, employees can also work from home.

Working remotely is gaining popularity – people work from offices in other towns. The popularity of this way of working has been supported by the project 'expanding into regions', within the framework of which we have created 70 new jobs (back office) in different towns across Estonia within the last year and a half. Therefore, no one in Tallinn has lost their job; instead, we have opened the opportunity to apply for jobs in different towns. By doing so, employees have been given the opportunity to move back to their hometown or occasionally work from home.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Employees whose job position require being in the office (working with client data) or units associated with

customer service, which are open at certain times, were at first slightly frustrated. It was explained to them that flexibility cannot be implemented there in such a way as elsewhere, due to the characteristics of the job. Nevertheless, some options were proposed and communicated with them from the perspective of their job position.

### RESULTS

Based on our assessment, introducing flexible working time has made us more efficient as an organisa-

tion and more attractive as an employer. Flexibility is very important to people. Flexible working time is one of the most valued motivators among our employees, immediately after good collegial atmosphere. Thanks to implementing this measure, we were ready to immediately switch to remote work when the emergency situation was announced in 2020 and we were able to continue our work without any major failures.

### CONTACT

<https://www.swedbank.ee/>

## TARTU KUTSEHARIDUSKESKUS – FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENT IN TERMS OF WORKING TIME, PLACE AND WAY OF WORKING

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Tartu Kutsehariduskeskus** (Tartu Vocational Education Centre)

### SECTOR

Education

Public sector

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

251–500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Flexible work environment in terms of working time, place, and way of working, and the provision of longer annual holiday than required by law.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The initiative came from the HR chief specialist, when teleworking was fixed in the rules of work organisation. All managers were involved in the decision-making process.

The implementation depends on the nature of the work: office workers for example can be rather flexible, while employees with a schedule can have a say in the scheduling process and, if necessary and agreed, they are entitled to free time during the working day (e.g. the superior will substitute T if T has to go to the doctor). Teachers follow the timetable, but there is quite a lot of

flexibility in the use of time outside the timetable. Longer annual holiday applies to employees who are legally entitled to 28 days of annual holiday leave. They will receive 35 days of annual holiday.

The proposal to allow longer annual holiday than legally required came from the employees; the management and HR chief specialist made the corresponding decision.

All the measures created are sustainable.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

There was a problem with an employee who was dissatisfied due to the fact that there was an obligation to record activities of teleworking (in general). Today, this is likely no longer an issue, as teleworking is more favoured and often also mandatory (e.g. if a person is required to stay in isolation), and it seems to have increased trust.

Due to granting longer annual holiday, it has been more difficult to plan holiday periods, but the situations have been solved – communication was key in this.

### RESULTS

The benefits of these specific measures have not been examined, but it can be concluded that as the results of the annual employee satisfaction survey have improved year by year, these measures play a crucial role in this.

### CONTACT

<https://khk.ee/>



## PORTUGAL

### BAÍA DO TEJO – FLEXIBLE TIMETABLES TO ACCOMMODATE MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TELEWORKING IN CASE OF A FAMILY MEMBER WITH A VERY DEMANDING ILLNESS REQUIRING CARE

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Baía do Tejo, SA.

#### SECTOR

Land management and business parks

Entrepreneurial Public Sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: Public administration activities – European Code NACE O84.1.1

The sector managing the business parks is traditionally composed of more male employees although this company tends towards a balance, employing both sexes.

#### NUMBER OF WORKERS

65 employees

34 men (52%) and 31 women (48%)

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: flexible timetables to accommodate doctors' appointments and the possibility of working remotely from home (in telework) in the event that a member of the family has a demanding illness that requires constant caring.

Conditions:

- › The measure makes allowances for doctor's appointments for the worker him/herself, his/her spouse/partner and 1<sup>st</sup> degree ascendants and descendants;
- › Justifiable proof is not needed when accompanying a member of the family to the doctor, given the fact that time off from work is not registered as an undue absence;
- › It is expected that time off from work to go to the doctor is made up for in a suitable alternative timetable that is decided upon by the worker/beneficiary who has informed his/her respective superior and been given the go-ahead;
- › In the event of illness that requires constant caring where proof has to be presented, the worker may ask to work remotely from home so as to give assistance to the family member for as long as is needed.

Goals:

- › Set up a measure that promotes a work-family balance and that recognises the worker's wish or need to be at home in certain more demanding family situations;
- › Ensure that people are more focussed and concentrated on their jobs, which impacts positively on their respective productivity;
- › Establish a relationship based on confidence and partnership between the worker and the company, mutually recognising reciprocal needs and support.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers of both sexes

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

##### Framework

- › The company was founded in 2009 when two enterprises (*SNESGES – Administração e Gestão de Imóveis e Prestação de Serviços, S.A.*, and *URBINDÚSTRIA – Sociedade de Urbanização e Infraestruturação de Imóveis, S.A.*) merged and were incorporated in Quimiparque. In honouring its commitment to promoting equality between men and women, the company was one of the pioneers of *iGen - Forum of Organisations for Equality* when it started in 2013. In 2014, the company implemented its first Equality Plan. In 2019, when the Plan was drawn up, a group of indicated workers participated actively in its development. From the moment it was made (2014), the Plan underwent up-dating and recently, it laid down the aim to review it on an annual basis and include new legal dictates in it. The company's current Equality Plan has 18 benefits arranged in seven areas of action, one of which concerns the Balance in family, personal and professional life, as well as Protecting Parenting with six and three measures respectively.

##### Implementation

The measure had already been applied in a different format in the enterprises that lay at the origin of Baía do Tejo: it allowed the workers to take off a few hours during the course of the year in which they could attend

doctor's appointments although in those days, there was no working remotely from home in telework. When Baía do Tejo was founded, the measure was carried over but adjusted: the possibility of working remotely from home was added and limiting the hours taken off from work was done away with. Today, the worker may take time off to keep family medical appointments provided that the hours are compensated for, and s/he can work remotely from home if continuous care has to be provided. Recently, in the sphere of work-family balance, the company also started granting up to 3 days leave without any loss in salary to workers who had children under the age of 12, provided the reason involved a sick child or the school having closed.

After it has been renewed, the Equality Plan is disseminated among the workers in periodical e-mails.

#### **Budget and Resources**

There are no specific costs attached to this measure owing to the fact that taking time off from work is always compensated for at a later date.

#### **Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice**

Drawing up the Equality Plan paved the way to its formal registration and the consolidation of already existing measures that were not monitored as this present version is. It also led to other measures being set up. The Plan is reviewed annually whereby measures may be reshaped or cancelled if they are not being used.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

- › Company leadership has shown itself to be receptive to awarding this benefit.
- › The company said that the challenge is transversal, affecting the way the entire benefits policy works: ensuring that the workers take advantage of the benefits in a disciplined responsible way, and that they make the best use of them when they are granted.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **Results**

There is no record, however, of the number of workers who have already benefitted from this measure.

##### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

The team heading the Equality Plan is busy working on organisational questionnaires in order to analyse to what extent the measures have been used and the workers' satisfaction. This explains why no account has been made of the results yet.

##### **Adjustments planned**

The measure was included in the Equality Plan with the aim of consolidating its attribution to the workers and monitoring its application to ensure its sustainability.

#### **CONTACT**

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**<http://www.baiadotejo.pt/pt>**



# LEAVE AND REMUNERATION



## BELGIUM

### AXA – GLOBAL PARENT POLICY

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

AXA

#### SECTOR

Insurance activities and asset management

Transport and services

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Every AXA employee is entitled to 16 weeks of maternity leave on full pay. The co-parent (father, joint mother) is eligible for 4 weeks of co-parental leave on full pay, which must be taken within the 1st year after the child's birth.

A similar scheme has been created for adoptive parents. Every employee who becomes an adoptive parent is entitled to 16 weeks of adoption leave, retaining full pay. In case both parents work for AXA, one parent is entitled to 16 weeks while the other has right to 4 weeks of parental leave, retaining full pay. This division is mutually agreed upon by the adoptive parents themselves.

For Belgian employees, AXA's Global Parent Policy goes beyond the statutory maternity, birth and adoption leave allowances, and improves the financial situation of new parents. What is unique is that the same scheme is available for adoptive parents.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees who become parents.

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

AXA prioritises the well-being and flexibility of its employees. The NWoW (New Way of Working) is a modern work environment which encourages trust, autonomy and individual responsibility. Employees can telework for up to two days per week, have flexible hours and have 7 weeks of holiday, which can be taken whenever they wish. These elements are key drivers for results.

Moreover, the AXA Group is fully committed to promoting Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) by creating a work environment in which all employees are treated with dignity and respect and where individual differences are recognised, respected and valued. Therefore, all of AXA's units have adopted the target of having 50% of management positions occupied by women by 2023.

The actions for Belgium are conceived and developed by the D&I Manager and a D&I Council, whose members are from different departments and grades. The Global Parent Policy was agreed internationally, and a budget was set aside for it. The policy took effect on 1 January 2017.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

A passion for Diversity and Inclusion is a key aspect. The employees responsible (D&I Manager and Council) are driven and are committed to always give it their best.

When violations occur, or the policy is abused, an internal communication campaign is launched to focus attention on the positive aspects of the measures. Testimonies are often used to support this. The annual D&I week also provides an opportunity to discuss what is going well and what can be improved.

#### RESULTS

95% of new fathers took paternity leave in 2019.

AXA regularly runs surveys of employee well-being. In the last survey, a score of 4 out of 5 was ascertained for mental well-being. 80% of employees indicated that the flexible working opportunities help them to achieve a better work-life balance.

#### CONTACT

<https://www.axa.be/ab/NL/jobs/Pages/5-reasons-to-switch.aspx>

<https://www.axa.com/en/magazine/parent-policy-time-for-parents>



## ELAN LANGUAGES – HAPPINESS@WORK

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Elan Languages

### SECTOR

Specialised translations, customised language coaching and interpretation

Transport and services

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

11-50 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

The aim at Elan Languages is to create the best possible work situation in order to maximise employees' happiness. Therefore, as a company and as employees, Elan Languages strives to cope with the major changes happening in society and the sector by being mindful of a good work-life balance.

Flexible working is standard procedure, in terms of hours worked, leave, and remuneration.

- › On 1 September, the first day of the new school year, employees can choose to start work later, or finish work early.
- › Time recording is not used; employees bear sole responsibility for scheduling their work.
- › The company operates on a 39-hour week; employees thus have 6 extra days of leave per year.
- › All leave can be flexibly chosen; there are no set days on which the company is closed. Therefore, employees do not lose leave on 'mandatory' days.
- › The year-end bonus system is also flexible (Flex Income Plan), and the bonus can be exchanged for extra leave, repayment of pension savings, and hospitalisation insurance.
- › Employees who move abroad in order to reunify the family can work from their new home country.
- › There is the option of carrying over up to 3 days of unused leave to the following year.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The company has pursued a gender-friendly policy from the start. In the past, however, the actions were not necessarily taken consciously and were more fragmented. Now actions are better enshrined in an established well-being policy.

Ideas for new initiatives are always considered from the perspective of the employee: "What would I, as an employee, like?" New ideas are collected via social media or the company's own network and their feasibility and affordability are always assessed. Everything is done in consultation with, and with the close involvement of, the management of each department.

The initiatives are then trialed and evaluated on a limited scale.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

In recent years, Elan Languages has focused more on communicating all the actions and measures to the employees. Previously, whilst there were plenty of measures in place, employees were not always aware of them.

All the measures taken require a budget; this is closely scrutinised beforehand. Whilst this is often an investment, the trade-off is a reduction in staff turnover.

The introduction of such a large number of flexible working options can reduce the focus on the customer. However, the customer must always come first, and this is communicated to the employees at a regular interval.

### RESULTS

We have seen a significant fall in absenteeism due to illness: 23% lower in 2019 than in 2018.

There is broad awareness of all the options. Everything is now clear to employees and, so far, no misunderstandings have arisen. Moreover, take-up of all the initiatives is high.

### CONTACT

<https://www.elanlanguages.com/nl-BE>

## MANPOWERGROUP – FLEXIBLE BENEFIT PLAN

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**ManpowerGroup**

### SECTOR

Manpower creates and delivers innovative workforce solutions and services, including temporary agency work and talent management.

Transport and services

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

251-500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Since 2018, Manpower has been formally committed to improving work-life balance and has adopted a work-life balance charter. Whereas financial capital was once paramount at a company, nowadays the employees are the key asset. This must be reflected in an HR policy that prioritises employees in all their dimensions, including their private lives.

Manpower seeks to strike a balance between the legal requirements and internal projects that support its vision.

The introduction of a flexible benefit plan is one of the initiatives. Under this plan, employees can 'buy' extra leave by converting cash bonuses. In this way, they can acquire up to 5 extra days of leave per year.

The work-life balance charter also provides for other flexible working initiatives, such as flexible hours, working from home, and satellite working.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Initiatives are developed by the HR department, then approved by the executive committee.

They are communicated to employees via a number of channels.

Various HR employees

- › Information sessions or a conference call for all employees
- › Publishing new initiatives on the Intranet
- › Mention at various meetings
- › For new employees, they are listed in the welcome pack

A monthly progress meeting is held, as well as performance and development interviews at which employees discuss their expectations and wishes with regard to work-life balance. This makes it possible to respond individually to specific needs.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

A commitment to the optimum work-life balance is important to attracting and developing talent. It also retains talent within the organisation.

Although a large company such as Manpower undoubtedly needs a fixed structure for the approval and implementation of initiatives, there is still plenty of scope for flexibility. Should problems or new needs arise, decisions can be made quickly thanks to the short link between HR and the executive committee.

### RESULTS

Thus far, 131 employees have bought extra leave under the flexible benefit plan; 27 of them were men.

Manpower has a lot of employees who choose to work part-time. In 2019, nearly 20% of the workforce was part-time, due to parental leave, time credit, or a part-time contract.

An annual survey is conducted on various HR matters, including work-life balance. Feedback on the available measures is very positive.

### CONTACT

<https://manpower.be/node/45>



## ESTONIA

### MDC MAX DAETWYLER EESTI AS – ‘BATTERY CHARGING DAY’ AND AGREEMENTS CONSIDERING PERSONAL SPECIFICS

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**MDC Max Daetwyler Eesti AS**

#### SECTOR

Processing industry, manufacture of specialised machinery

Private sector

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Changes in work organisation:

- › increased number of paid days off (including ‘battery charging day’);
- › possibility to work remotely;
- › shortening of night shifts
- › agreements considering personal specifics.

Employees can take a day off for charging their batteries, for health or other reasons once each year. The day is paid for by the employer. In addition to the battery charging day, paid days are for when a child graduates from nursery school, basic school and upper secondary school.

Agreements always take personal specifics into account: the company is flexible and employees’ various needs are accommodated as much as possible with regards to, for example, working hours, holidays, teleworking (most workers are production workers).

The work of parents who receive the parental benefit is adjusted in such a way as to avoid the parental benefit to decrease (i.e. the parental benefit limit is taken into account).

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The initiative came from the human resources department. A small group of employees, heads of departments and the head of the company were involved in the decision-making. Overall, human resources department took on the main role in the development and implementation of the measures, the initiative of the employees remained low.

Activities that require more investment were budgeted, but there is no separate budget for all activities. Most measures are sustainable, some have changed or been adapted slightly over time.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

According to employee feedback, the activities rates highest are battery charging day and the possibility of teleworking (computer workplaces).

#### RESULTS

The measures have been highly beneficial. Employees are more involved, the amount of information has increased and the flow of information is better and more emphasis is placed on health-promoting activities. It is also possible to support the development of employees to a greater extent. Furthermore, flexibility has significantly increased, the possibilities to telework and to employ the Teams environment have been used more extensively.

Studies show that the involvement of the employees in the company has increased and the image of the company has improved. Labour turnover and the number of sick leave has decreased.

#### CONTACT

<https://industries.daetwyler.com/et>

## SCANIA EESTI AS – CHILD AND FAMILY RELATED BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Scania Eesti AS

### SECTOR

Sale and maintenance of vehicles

Private sector

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Child and family related benefits for employees:

- › Exercise facilities for the whole family: an employee can visit the pool and gym, together with her/his children and spouse/partner, at the employer's cost. Family time spent together is supported.
- › Exercise is good for the body and the mind – sometimes employees do not want or feel like doing it alone and would be more interested if they could bring their family along. This results in well-rested, active, healthy employees; the family can exercise together more affordably while also spending time together.
- › Childbirth allowance: 1 week of paid leave is given which is paid in addition to the salary, if a child is born into the family. A parent can have an extra week of leave at the expense of the company immediately before/after the birth of a child in addition to national holidays.
- › A gift and paid benefit when a child is born.
- › Permitting part-time working if a parent is on a parental leave and would like to continue working part-

time. This is very popular, especially among men. Many fathers have already taken advantage of this opportunity.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Employees with children or elderly parents they need to take care of.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The initiatives came from the human resources manager and management, and partially also from the employees.

The measures fit well and there are plans to continue and develop them.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

No problems faced. A specific budget is required for some measures, but not all measures need financing. The measures are sustainable and highly valued in the company and among the employees.

### RESULTS

The aim of the measures is to combine work and family, to enable more flexible employment relationships and have better motivated employees.

Employees are regularly asked for feedback and it is clear that the company has benefitted from these measures.

### CONTACT

<https://www.scania.com/ee>

## TAMMER OÜ – DAY OFF AT THE EMPLOYER'S EXPENSE AND BACKPACK SUPPORT TO A CHILD ENTERING THE FIRST GRADE

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Tammer OÜ

### SECTOR

Processing industry, production of steel profile and flush metal doors and windows

Private sector

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Parents of a child attending grades 1-4 or a child heading to nursery school for the first time may have a day off at the employer's expense on 1 September.

The company also pays allowance so called 'backpack support' to a child entering the first grade.

The company has a children's play area. During the year, many different events are held for the team, including events designed for the whole family.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Employees with children

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Tammer is a family business. Since its establishment, the owners and management have set an objective to be family friendly.

The package is updated at the end of each year, according to the needs and expectations of the coming year.

Between 2017 and 2020, a number of studies have been conducted over a long period of time, as a result of which the respective heads of departments examined the problems in their area of responsibility, trying to solve them as soon as possible.

#### RESULTS

Based on the satisfaction survey, Tammer's value has been written down. The value for 2020 is DETERMINATION, for 2021 it is FLEXIBILITY. Depending on the value of the year, they organise team events, trainings, plan gifts, etc.

#### CONTACT

<http://www.tammer.ee/>



## PORTUGAL

### ALTICE PORTUGAL – TWO DAYS OF PAID LEAVE PER MONTH FOR WORKERS DURING THE CHILD'S FIRST YEAR OF LIFE

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Altice Portugal**

#### SECTOR

Telecommunications and Multimedia

Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: Telecommunications – European Code NACE J61

Traditionally masculine sector with an under-representation of the feminine labour force.

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

7,700 total employees

4,820 men (62.6%) and 2,880 women (37.4%)

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: 2 days a month off work for workers of both sexes during the child's first year of life, without loss of rights, including remuneration. These days are added to the parental leave as laid down in the Labour Code, Article 39.

Conditions:

- › Parental benefits are granted workers of both sexes;
- › Making use of the benefit does not entail any forfeiture by the employee;
- › Days off receive full pay;
- › Requesting time off work does not require the employee to present a reason although any reason should be handed in the five preceding days, or as soon as possible in the event of unforeseen circumstances;
- › The measure has been written into the Instruments of Collective Labour Regulation in its chapter on Parenting – Collective Bargaining Agreement (Ch. IV, Clause 12, No. 2d).

Goals:

- Establishing a measure promoting the provision of childcare;

- Enabling support to workers of both sexes during the adaptation stage of coping with family life;
- › Deconstructing gender stereotypes and promoting the image of a male child-carer.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers of both sexes with children/ new-born infants. Implementation process

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

##### Framework

In 2015, the companies operating under PT Portugal, S.A., were incorporated as an integral subsidiary of the Altice Group. In the transition, the leadership chose to continue collective bargaining between the workers and the trade union duly representing PT Portugal workers, while also proposing that new material be introduced, namely in terms of finding a balance in work-family relations. Some measures benefitting the workers were therefore established that went beyond the conditions written into the law. The process began by gathering all points on the workers' demands agenda, raised during the bargaining process with the unions.

##### Implementation

The measure was implemented in the Company Agreement of PT Comunicações, S.A., and in 2013, the measure was inserted into the Collective Bargaining Agreement, extending the application of the measure to the other companies working under the PT Portugal umbrella. However, when the enterprise was incorporated into Altice in 2015, a strategic plan was drawn up together with the trade unions to promote measures aimed at protecting parenthood and a work-family balance, mainly by improving the system of providing assistance to children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A fundamental step in the process entailed an improvement in in-house communication by means of disseminating the benefits in force offered by the enterprise. The fact that some measures were not taken advantage of was due to the fact that the workers did not

know enough about them. Therefore, a training course in e-learning was given, targeting the entire Altice Portugal labour force, and a Guide to *Parenting* was produced and made available on the intranet; it contained information about the laws and conventions on Parenting, the Social Security allowances awarded in this sphere, and a *Guide to Good Practices leading to Work-Family Balance*. The Human Resources management considers that publicising this information had a direct impact on the absorption of these values in the company's culture and many more workers have taken advantage of the measures.

#### Budget and resources

The budget reserved for implementing the measure consists of the median cost, calculated on the basis of the general sum of remunerations paid by the company, owing to the fact that it is not possible to predict who will be receiving this benefit. The Human Resources management considers that, apart from the importance of evaluating the respective financial outlay, money questions are not decisive for upholding the measure.

#### Consolidation and sustainability of this good practice

The measure is written into the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) in force in the company. Following the long-time tradition of dealing with its social partners, favouring bargaining and rulings in the CBA, the document has been widely diffused in the organisation and has become the means through which the company's new systems are laid down and disseminated. At the same time, the company has sought to continuously improve the rights of its workers thereby helping to make its policy around work-family balance more robust. It regards it to be of utmost importance that such a policy issues from the CBA, strengthening its commitment to bargaining and dialoguing with its social partners and improving its policy leading to a work-family balance which, so it believes, helps towards embodying the principles of equality and non-discrimination between men and women in the company.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

› The company's top management, as well as its middle management, showed themselves to be open to granting this benefit;

› Consolidating respect for a work-family balance in the company's culture has shown that it is a decisive factor in making the measure successful.

## RESULTS

### Ratios based on use

Days off – ratio between the use that workers of both sexes make of the measure

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Women	25.9%	26.8%	18.1%	23.1%	20.1%	10.8%	22.4%
Men	74.1%	73.2%	81.9%	76.9%	79.9%	89.2%	77.6%
Days	552	665	502	632	701	139	3191

Among the five measures laid down in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, this measure is the one that is most often used. According to the data, mostly men, with an average of 77.6%, have taken days off. Where the group of people covered by this measure are concerned, it may be seen that there is a parity of 30% between men and women who have had children in the last 12 months.

Ratio of workers who have had days off among those who have had children

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Women	23.7%	29.2%	32.0%	39.7%	36.5%	11.4%	29.7%
Men	23.7%	28.2%	28.4%	33.3%	45.5%	19.8%	30.0%

### Assessment of satisfaction with the measure

Surveys measuring the workers' satisfaction are applied regularly. These contain a section related to the work-family balance. These measures usually receive positive feedback.

### Adjustments planned

Human Resources management considers that the measure need not undergo any further change.

## CONTACT

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**<https://www.telecom.pt/pt-pt>**



## GEBALIS – FIFTEEN DAYS FULLY PAID LEAVE FOR MALE WORKERS DURING THE FIRST MONTH OF THE CHILD'S LIFE

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Gebalis**

### SECTOR

Managing the Leasing of Municipal Housing in Lisbon

Entrepreneurial Public Sector (Continental Portugal)  
Branch of activity: Real Estate - National Economic Activity Code (CAE): 68321 (Property management mediation) - European Code NACE L68.3.

Real Estate is a sector that traditionally relied more on the masculine labour force, but this municipal enterprise that manages municipal leasing reveals that is under-represented by the masculine labour force. Nevertheless, in-house engineering and inspection sectors are under-represented by women.

### NUMBER OF WORKERS

222 employees

85 men (38.7 %) and 137 women (61.3 %)

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: 15 days fully paid leave for male workers during the first month of the child's life. These days are added to the days exclusively allowed to a father's parental leave as laid down in the Labour Code, Article 43. The benefit is also laid down in the Company Agreement No. 342/2017, Clause 82, No. 1.

Conditions:

- › Benefit granted exclusively to male workers;
- › Days off work allowed for parental leave are fully paid by the company;

Goals:

- › Providing a measure that will promote childcare and encourage the active role of fathers in caring for and educating their children;
- › Encouraging family life together and strengthening affective bonds;
- › Deconstructing gender stereotypes and promoting the masculine image of a child-carer;
- › Provide a wider policy covering benefits while being mindful of the company's financial limitations, and at the same time, providing its workers with greater

satisfaction. The benefit was activated on the basis of the workers' profile in the company which, at the time, comprised many young adult males.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Male workers with children / new-born infants.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

The company was founded in 1995 by the Lisbon Municipal Council but underwent changes in 2007/2008 that almost resulted in its extinction. In the process of rehabilitating the company, one of the key points causing instability was the company's discrepancy in salaries between the younger and the older employees. Given the fact that it was not possible to review salary scales, the Board of Directors proposed that some measures be put in place to mitigate the effects of salary restrictions. These measures were to provide the company's workers with more benefits. At the time, most of the company's workers were young men of about 30 years. One of the measures was the 15 days fully paid leave for male employees, which simultaneously helped to materialise other commitments made by the firm such as promoting equality between men and women. The measure is included in the company's Equality Plan.

#### Implementation

When the measure was implemented in 2007, it had a sundry nature: whenever a worker became a father, this and other measures connected with parenting were carried over by vote for higher approval. In 2007, the Labour System Regulation also came into effect that included this measure as well as other measures and benefits for all workers, later resulting in a better structured 'Policy to Balance Professional, Personal and Family Life' that is now in force in the company.

When the system managing a work-family balance was applied and the certification under the Portuguese "Standard NP 4552:2016 – Work, family and personal life balance management system" subsequently obtained, the company's intranet system launched its own file ("Work-Life Balance Management") which is constantly being updated. The file includes all the



measures and may be consulted by the workers. Furthermore, a note is sent to each worker with her/his monthly salary statement, reminding her/him of the measures in the relevant file.

In terms of the measure awarding fathers 15 days parental leave besides what is stipulated in the law, whenever a company employer informs the Human Resources Office that he is going to be a father, the measure is activated.

### **Budget and Resources**

The resources allotted to putting the measure into practice come from funds normally reserved for paying remunerations and the sums are included in the human resources budget.

The company does not temporarily replace employees on parental leave because it considers the reorganisation of work during such absences feasible.

### **Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice**

The measure comes within the Company Agreement No. 342/2017 (Clause 82, No. 1.). The company is working towards establishing new agreements and obtaining new certifications. In February 2020, it obtained the Certification under the Portuguese “Standard NP 4552:2016 – Work, family and personal life balance management system”.

## **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

- › Lacking receptiveness on the part of some middle management heads during the initial stage of implementation was one of the main challenges. Over time, the measure was gradually accepted. The Chairman of the Board of Directors considers that passing it was only possible owing to the large number of women holding senior posts; it was also due to advances made in the Portuguese government’s policies dealing with a work-family balance and protecting parenthood.
- › The representation of women holding senior positions in the company has helped towards deconstructing gender stereotypes and changing mentalities, making it possible for male workers to enjoy paternity leave, and this is seen as increasingly more natural.

- › A certain amount of passive resistance owing to gender stereotypes could have existed initially among older male workers and some workers in the more traditional sectors of the company. Some workers might not have immediately understood the benefits of the measure, but this situation has generally been solved.

## **RESULTS**

### **Ratios based on use**

Ever since the measure was implemented, all 37 male workers have enjoyed the benefit. In other words, the level of approval has been 100% since the measure came into effect.

### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

With regard to the Company’s application for the Certification under the Portuguese Standard NP 4552:2016, several surveys were distributed among the workers that had a response rate of 64%. When looking at the outcomes, it may be seen that 70% of the workers agreed about the importance of measures to balance work-life.

One of the surveys was aimed at the workers’ families and showed that 73% of respondents were satisfied with the balance of time available to her/his family member to pursue personal / family life. Nevertheless, 61% considered that her/his family member’s working life at GEBALIS eroded the quality of time spent with the family.

### **Adjustments planned**

The measure was the object of bargaining and subject to regulations which led to its inclusion in the Company Agreement.

The company foresees future adjustments because it considers that a benefits policy requires constant adaptation to the realities and needs of the workers.

## **CONTACT**

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**<http://www.gebalis.pt/>**

## IKEA – TWO MONTHS OF LEAVE TO WORKERS WITH NEW-BORN CHILDREN

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

IKEA

### SECTOR

Furniture and home decoration retail

Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: Retail sale of household equipment  
– European Code NACE G47.5

Sector showing a balance between a labour force comprising both sexes.

### NUMBER OF WORKERS

2,696 employees

1,242 men (46.1 %) and 1,454 women (53.9 %)

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: awarding two months leave to the mothers/fathers of new-born infants. These days are in addition to the days of initial parental leave laid down in the Labour Code, Article 40, Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

Conditions:

- › Taking advantage of this benefit is optional;
- › The benefit should be used immediately following initial parental leave;
- › The beneficiary is able to choose when she/he wants to take one or two-months' leave;
- › The company offers beneficiaries a monthly subsistence allowance where its value is proportional to the number of hours the beneficiary has worked. The reference value based on a full working month is 360.60€;
- › For couples working in the company, the policy is the same and they can choose to take parental leave together or separately over a total of four months (taken exclusively).

Goals:

- › Help the worker during a demanding stage of her/his life;
- › Acknowledge the company's role in enhancing parenthood within families and socially;
- › Promote equal right between fathers and mothers in the support going to the family;
- › Encourage child birth;

- › Show its workers that the company considers a balance in personal, family and professional life and time spent with the family, to be important;
- › Provide supplementary support to public policies in this field.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers with children/ new-born infants.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

The measure is included in the commitment to promote and protect parenting which is a national aim and independent of other IKEA shops around the world. The measure was defined according to Portuguese demographic profiles and the low birth rate in evidence, which led the company to promote equality between men and women. The measure has an impact owing to the fact that the workers' age group is young and that between 2017 and 2020, there was an average of 84 births a year.

#### Implementation

The measure was applied in 2004, the year in which IKEA started operating in Portugal. It is still in its original form which shows that even at the beginning, it was a benefit attributed equally to both men and women. The company received the award Equality is Quality ((2008/2009 – 8th edition). All new-comers to the company are informed about the measure and it is disseminated on the company's intranet. Moreover, the worker who is in the process of requesting parental leave is asked whether or not she/he wishes to take advantage of the benefit.

#### Budget and Resources

Resources funding the measure are used in contracting a person on a temporary basis to fill in for the worker/beneficiary. However, the temporary replacement contract does not apply to all workers/absentees covered by this measure: decision-making depends upon the nature of the work done by the person and whether it is possible to share it out among the team members.

#### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The measure is fully in place and is considered to be an integral part of the company's benefits. In the event of the measure needing revising, this happens when

possible proposals for improving it are tabled, and never with its abolition in mind. The measure is based on enhancing a work-family balance and is inscribed into the company's cultural policy.

There were no reports of cases, whether coming from the management or from the workers, where the measure was met with resistance that could jeopardise its application.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

- › Company's managerial staff has given the benefit its full endorsement and is committed to upholding it.
- › Long-term challenges are how to continue keeping the measure attractive to workers and how to ensure a periodical adjustment of the amount of the allowance to help defray the beneficiary's costs.

### RESULTS

Study of the workers' profile taking advantage of the measure

Total births (per year and according to men and women)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Women	53.9%	56.7%	56.1%	54.4%	55.4%
Men	46.1%	43.3%	43.9%	45.6%	44.6%
Total	<b>89</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>336</b>

In relative terms, there is a slight increase of women over men among the workers who have had children since 2017.

When analysing the gender of workers who have taken advantage of this benefit during the last four years, women are in the large majority – 82.5% of the total.

Number of beneficiaries of the measure according to sex

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Women	87.3%	82.1%	77.8%	81.6%	82.5%
Men	12.7%	17.9%	22.2%	18.4%	17.6%
Total	<b>55</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>194</b>

Percentage of women and men resorting to the measure (% of eligible women and men)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Women	100.0%	83.6%	76.1%	83.8%	86.0%
Men	17.1%	23.8%	27.8%	22.6%	22.7%

In the table immediately above, it may be seen that 86% of all the female workers who were eligible to receive the benefit took advantage of it; where the men were concerned, only 27% took advantage of it in the previous four years. Therefore, despite the measure including both men and women, and the company achieving parity among male and female workers in offering this benefit, as well as in the number of births, parental leave is mostly taken by female workers.

Workers who have enjoyed receiving this benefit have given positive feedback and in particular have stressed their appreciation about being able to spend more time at home, which makes it easier to integrate the child in a crèche. During this transition stage, the baby is a little older and the father or the mother has more time available to follow up the child's adaptation from home rather than if she/he had gone back to work.

In the company, the number of children per family has risen in the last few years. Attributing this benefit is considered to be an indirect incentive as the company is seen to be pro-maternity and pro-paternity.

### Assessment of satisfaction with the measure

The company has resorted to handing out several questionnaires but has not drawn up any statistical data about its workers' satisfaction in terms of the benefit. Its positive perception of the benefit derives from the way newly hired company workers view it with satisfaction, and the way the measure is referred to as a differentiating factor by male and female workers.

### Adjustments planned

The measure is presently undergoing adjustment for the first time and focuses on three main points: reviewing the monetary value of the allowance – this proposal is made upon the company's initiative in recognition of the importance of offering more monetary help, taking into account that the measure has been the same for the last 16 years;

1. studying the possibility of the beneficiary taking the amount of parental leave s/he wishes although it has to be in the first year of the baby's life (at pres-

- ent, leave has to be taken immediately after parental leave has been granted);
2. exploring the likelihood of a more pro-active approach when dealing with male workers-fathers and encourage them to take advantage of this benefit aimed at all male and female workers;
  3. Moreover, there is a third point raised in the questionnaires although it is less often used, and that is taking two months off in interpolated sequences.

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## INFRAESTRUTURAS DE PORTUGAL, SA (IP, SA) – TWO-DAY LEAVE FULLY PAID TO MALE WORKERS FOR EACH THIRTY DAYS OF PARENTAL LEAVE TAKEN EXCLUSIVELY

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION****Infraestruturas de Portugal, SA (IP, SA)****SECTOR**

Management of Portuguese road and railway infrastructures

Entrepreneurial Public Sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: National Economic Activity Code (CAE): 52211 – Management of land transport infrastructures

Traditionally masculine sector with an under-representation of the feminine labour force.

**NUMBER OF WORKERS**

3,588 employees

2,722 men (75.9%) and 866 women (26.1%)

**DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

Description: two fully paid days leave allowed male workers for each 30 days of initial parental leave taken exclusively. These days are added to the initial parental leave as laid down in the Labour Code, Article 40, Nos. 1, 2 and 3.

Conditions:

- Benefit applied exclusively to male workers;
- The worker has to take off a minimum of 30 consecutive days exclusively in terms of initial parental leave, in addition to the father's compulsory exclusive parental leave (Labour Code, Article 43);

- Two days leave for each period of 30 days as described above herein, with a maximum compensation of up to 4 days bonus;
- Days off until the child's first birthday may be previously agreed upon with the worker's superiors;

Goals:

- Encourage sharing parental responsibilities between father and mother;
- Establish a measure to encourage newly-born child-caring and strengthen the father's role in the family, urging the active role of fathers in caring for and educating their children;
- Encourage family life together and strengthen affective bonds;
- Deconstruct gender stereotypes and promote the image of a male child-carer.

**TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)**

Male workers with children /new-born infants.

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS****Framework**

The company came into being in 2015 after the amalgamation of two distinct enterprises (*Estradas de Portugal* - Roads of Portugal and *Rede Ferroviária Nacional* – National Railways Network). The company is a member of iGen - a Forum of Organisations for Equality, and has a Working Group for Equality to promote gender equality, protect parenting and obtain a balance in professional, family and personal life. Apart from this, the company also has an Equality Plan in force.

### Implementation

The measure had previously existed in the *Estradas de Portugal* enterprise and the leadership of *Infraestruturas de Portugal* decided to keep it because it considered that it fitted in with the company's values, mainly concerning its responsibility in encouraging a balance in professional, family and personal life. Since the amalgamation (2015), there has been a large increase in the number of workers applying for this benefit. This was due as much from having more workers employed in the company, as from a greater investment being made to disseminate the measure throughout the company's internal communication network as well as on the official commemorative days.

### Budget and Resources

Working Group for Equality considers that the funding going towards materialising the measure is not high enough to warrant the need to adapt or eventually suspend the measure. Days off are paid as if they are holidays (100% full pay, discounting the food allowance). The average age of the workers is 51 so that the number of potential beneficiaries of the measure is low.

The company does not temporarily replace workers who are absent on parental leave because it considers that it is possible to reorganise work from within.

### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The benefit is included in the company's Equality Plan and has been consistently upheld in its annual reviews owing to the fact that the measure is well accepted, widely used and its cost does not weigh on the company's budget.

There were no reports about any resistance that could jeopardise the measure whether on the part of the leadership - mainly because management believes that it is possible to intermesh the timing of the leave within a one-year period, or whether on the part of the workers.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

- Company leadership showed itself to be receptive to granting this benefit.
- The effort made to consistently promote the use of the measure is considered to be a challenge; the target is set at 100% usage.

### RESULTS

#### Ratios based on use

2016: 55 paternity cases (62% adherence);  
 2017: 43 paternity cases (77% adherence);  
 2018: 28 paternity cases (75% adherence);  
 2019: 42 paternity cases (81% adherence).

The growing level of adherence to the measure shows that its goal has been reached in a satisfactory way, thereby encouraging fathers to become more involved in their relations with and care of their children.

#### Assessment of satisfaction with the measure

The company has not undertaken any surveys or specific soundings of opinions, but receives the workers' feedback through informal channels and what it hears is highly positive. In 2020, when the company applied for the certification under the Portuguese "Standard NP 4552:2016 – Work, family and personal life balance management system", questionnaires were given out to the workers and it was possible to confirm their satisfaction regarding the measure.

#### Adjustments planned

The Working Group for Equality considers that the measure is well-designed and therefore does not warrant any changes. It only wishes to step up its dissemination with the aim of encouraging the target group's greater adherence.

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## PORTOS DOS AÇORES, S.A. (PA) – TEN DAYS OF PAID PARENTAL LEAVE TO MALE WORKERS, ONLY TO THOSE WHO DO NOT SHARE INITIAL PARENTAL LEAVE

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Portos dos Açores, S.A. (PA)

### SECTOR

Port Management and Administration

Entrepreneurial Public Sector (Autonomous Region of the Azores)

Branch of activity: Water Transports and services - European Code NACE H50

Traditionally seen as a masculine sector with an under-representation of the feminine labour force.

### NUMBER OF WORKERS

275 employees

235 men (85.5%) and 40 women (14.5%)

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: grants ten days paid parental leave to male workers. These days are added to the exclusive parental leave allowed fathers as laid down in the Labour Code, Article 43, Point c), Nos. 1, 4 and 5.

Conditions:

- › This leave should be taken immediately following the exclusive parental leave allowed fathers.
- › It may only be taken when the worker does not share the initial parental leave as laid down in the law.
- › Exclusively targeting male workers.

Goals:

- › set up positive measures seeking to promote caring for new-born infants and strengthening the father's role in family life, encouraging the sharing of parental duties and the active role of fathers in caring for and educating their children;
- › encourage family life together and strengthen affective bonds;
- › deconstruct gender stereotypes in a traditionally male sphere, challenge traditionally male concepts and promote the masculine image of a child-carer. In this case, as the company is a relatively small community, which is fairly close-knit, this goal also has in mind the deconstruction of stereotypes in the surrounding environment.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Male workers with children /new-born infants

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

This good practice comes within a wider commitment that seeks to promote equality between men and women. The company is now a member of *iGen* - a Forum of Organisations for Equality, and as such, has drawn up a "Manual of Good Practices leading to Equality and Work-life Balance". Considering that the company is mostly composed of male workers who very often have lower educational qualifications and mostly hold traditional values about gender, the head of the company's Human Resources Department suggested a measure that would encourage paternity and male members of the family to take a greater share in family life. The measure was interpreted as an important company innovation when it was introduced in 2016. No similar measure had ever been adopted before.

#### Implementation

Bearing in mind that the measure was aimed at nurturing equality between men and women in the company, protecting parenthood involving both men and women and the right to a work-family balance, the way of achieving such aims has been through measures enhancing responsibility and awareness. When it is known that a worker is about to become a father, he and his superiors are given information about parental rights and the work-family balance as per the Law, as well as about this benefit attributed by the company. In 2019, a training project was launched that included all the workers with the goal of reinforcing the above-mentioned values.

#### Budget and Resources

The Human Resources Department undertook a cost-study where provisional costs were calculated according to the unpredictable advent of fatherhood each year and the beneficiary's voluntary adherence to the scheme. The financial impact is minimum so that in the view of the company's management, it has become an attractive practice. The effective cost of the measure weighing on the company's annual budget has been extremely low.



The company does not temporarily replace workers who are absent from work while enjoying this benefit because it considers that it is able to reorganise work while the worker is absent.

#### **Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice**

The benefit is included in the company's Equality Plan.

There were no reports about any resistance that could jeopardise the measure. Any cases found would have been solved.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

Company leadership has shown itself to be receptive to granting this benefit.

Within this setting, it should be clear that the company is not merely giving time off, but rather allowing for closer affective bonds and more child-caring, which are very important for father-children relationships.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **Ratios based on use**

2016: 2 paternity cases (100% adhesion);

2017: 2 paternity cases (0% adhesion);

2018: 1 paternity case (0% adhesion);

2019: 4 paternity cases (25% adhesion);

2020: 4 paternity cases (0% adhesion).

Reasons given to explain why the benefit was not taken advantage of, are that these men/fathers chose shared parental leave. The lower level of adhesion shows that

the measure's goal has been achieved satisfactorily, having encouraged the greater involvement of fathers in their relations with and care of their children.

#### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

The company has not carried out any surveys or in-house enquiries. There is only the workers' informal feedback, which has been positive. As a result, the company believes that the measure has enhanced the social atmosphere within.

On an informal level, some women in the company have contested the exclusive nature of the benefit because they think that they likewise deserve this time with the family.

#### **Adjustments planned**

As from 2021, two updates of the measure are planned: offering the benefit regardless of the type of parental leave chosen by the father; extending the benefit to the women in the shape of a bonus awarded in situations where maternity and paternity arises. The only condition that will be applied, is that the benefit comes into effect immediately after the spouse/partner's leave terminates.

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## **XEROX PORTUGAL, LDA. – INCENTIVE FOR MALE WORKERS TO TAKE OPTIONAL PARENTAL LEAVE**

#### **NAME OF THE ORGANISATION**

**Xerox Portugal, Lda.**

#### **SECTOR**

Retail trade of office services and equipment

Private profit-making sector (Portugal)

Branch of activity: Retail trade of office equipment – European Code NACE G47.4

Traditionally seen as a masculine sector with an under-representation of the feminine labour force.

#### **NUMBER OF WORKERS**

110 employees

72 men (65.5%) and 38 women (34.5%)

#### **DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

Description: the company encourages male workers to take optional parental leave following the compulsory parental leave (leave laid down in Labour Code, Articles 40 and 43 respectively), by offering measures to enhance awareness and authorising time off work (hours-off bank) for a total period of six hours, thereby encouraging its use.

Conditions:

- › The measure is aimed at male workers.
- › The possibility of authorised time off allows the worker to take time off from work up to a total of six hours during the first year of the child's life.
- › The worker is not obliged to give any valid reason to take these hours off, and may use them as he wishes.
- › The number of authorised hours off is always equivalent to six hours, regardless of how long extended parental leave is.

Goals:

- › put in place a pro-active measure to promote equality between men and women and make men more aware of their rights and duties towards their respective families, and in the domain of parenthood in particular;
- › promote child-care and encourage fathers to share parental duties, taking on an active father role in caring for / educating his children;
- › encourage family life together and strengthen affective bonds;
- › deconstruct gender stereotypes in a traditionally masculine domain, and promote the image of a male child-carer.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Male workers with children /new-born infants

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

The practice consists of a set of measures based on the company's benefits policy; they are situated in a wider commitment, which seeks to promote equality between men and women. Given this panorama, a study was carried out on the company's parental leave and it discovered that: i) no male worker had ever taken optional parental leave, but only the compulsory leave; ii) in a disproportionally male working environment, the main reason for not doing so lay in cultural prejudices that went against the image of male child-minders.

The measure is included in a set of measures aimed at the company's workers, among which are the nine measures based on support going to parenting. Furthermore, the measure is connected to another one that allows workers the possibility of taking their annual holiday immediately after parental leave; since the measure was implemented, it has had an adhesion of 100%.

- › The company was awarded the 2005/2006 – 6th edition of the Equality is Quality Prize. In 2013, the company received the prize for the “Best company to work for” (awarded by the IT magazine Exame) in the Sales and Retail sector. In 2018, it once again received 1st prize for the “Best company to work for” in the Information and Communication Technology sector.

#### Implementation

The proposal leading to the measure's implementation came from the Human Resources Manager and became effective in 2015. The process was only made possible upon the support given by the General Manager and a strenuous effort to communicate with the company's leadership. A suggestion was made to encourage workers' acceptance of the measure that was based on hours off. Since the measure was implemented, it has been widely taken up and today the male workers themselves put in requests for it. The measure is publicised annually together with the company's entire benefits policy in force, and it is also available in the in-house communication network.

#### Budget and Resources

The measure's implementation was not subject to budgeting approval or contracting outside services. The resources financing the measure are connected with the cost attributed to the worker's absence.

The company does not temporarily replace the workers absent on parental leave because it believes it is possible to reorganise work during the worker's absence.

#### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The Human Resources Department reviews its benefits policy annually and thinks that the measure will be upheld so long as it receives the workers' positive assessment.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

- › Company leadership has shown itself to be receptive to awarding this benefit.
- › Initially, middle management was unreceptive to the measure. It was suggested to observe a few cases as examples, particularly in the Sales sector, as a way forward. The cases went well and the outcome was the measure's final implementation.



**RESULTS****Ratios based on use**

2015: 5 paternity cases (100% adhesion);

2017: 2 paternity cases (100% adhesion);

2019: 1 paternity case (100% adhesion).

In 2019, the benefit gained prominence in the company when, for the first time, a male worker took full initial parental leave replacing the mother. The worker in question was publicly commended by the company.

Together with several other heads of department, the Human Resources Department is aware that an increase in motivation impacting on productivity arises when male workers take optional parental leave. However, this factor has not yet been measured.

**Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

The rate of the workers' satisfaction with the company's benefits policy is scrutinised by regularly distributing in-house questionnaires. The questionnaires include a section about measures protecting parenthood and obtaining a work-life balance.

In 2018, the company received 1<sup>st</sup> prize for the "Best company to work for" (awarded by the IT magazine *Ex-ame*) where the selection is made on the basis of the workers' information. Owing to the fact that the workers' participation in the process was 90%, the Human Resources Department considers that this example shows that the company has been working in the right direction.

**Adjustments planned**

The measure is reviewed annually, and no adjustments are planned.

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## XEROX PORTUGAL LDA – SUPPLEMENT IN THE PARENTAL ALLOWANCE RECEIVED BY THE WORKERS DURING THE PERIOD OF PARENTAL LEAVE

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION**

**Xerox Portugal, Lda**

**SECTOR**

Retail trade of office services and equipment

Private profit-making sector (Portugal)

Branch of activity: Retail trade of office equipment – European Code NACE G47.4

Traditionally seen as a masculine sector with an under-representation of the feminine labour force.

**NUMBER OF WORKERS**

110 employees

72 men (65.5%) and 38 women (34.5%)

**DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

Description: the Company adds to the parental allowance attributed to its workers of both sexes during their parental leave, until the total value of their gross salary reaches 90%.

Conditions:

- › The measure is awarded to workers of both sexes;
- › The benefit covers the same length of time as the parental leave and it always corresponds to the time the worker is absent from work.
- › The benefit is awarded in cases where shared parental leave lasts a total of 180 days (150+30) and the Social Security parental allowance amounts to 83% of the referenced remuneration.
- › The benefit lasts until the 6<sup>th</sup> month of parental leave.
- › In specific cases, the company awards extra money to reach 100% of the gross salary. In order to receive this extra payment, proof of the worker's vulnerable financial situation has to be presented for the Human Resources Department's evaluation and eventual approval.

Goals:

- › provide direct financial help to the worker, no matter what sex, at an important demanding stage in her/his life;

- › offer a measure that will help to increase the Social Security system's assistance in order to complement the parental leave allowance being received.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers of both sexes taking parental leave.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

- › This good practice is included in a wider commitment that seeks to promote equality between men and women and a work-life balance. The measure is part of a set of nine benefits in the field of parental assistance attributed to the company workers.
- › The Human Resources Department undertakes to review the benefits policy on an annual basis by analysing the success rate of the measures and of the workers' perception of them.
- › The company was awarded the 2005/2006 – 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Equality is Quality Prize. In 2013 it received the prize for the “Best company to work for” (awarded by the IT magazine *Exame*) in the Sales and Retail sector. In 2018, it once again received 1<sup>st</sup> prize for the “Best company to work for” in the Information and Communication Technology sector.

#### Implementation

At a time when a work-life balance and the protection of parenting were still little-known and relatively unexplored subjects not only among enterprises but also in society as a whole, Xerox Portugal was one of the trend-setters in having offered this measure for more than 15 years as a result of a proposal put forward by its top management. Information of the measure is disseminated annually together with all the company's benefits in force; it is also diffused on the in-house communication network.

#### Budget and Resources

Because the measure is solidly entrenched, the budget awarded to its implementation has been well-defined for a long time. According to the head of the Human Resources Department, no hurdles or queries about it have been raised.

The company does not temporarily replace the workers absent on parental leave because it believes it is possible to reorganise work within during their absence.

#### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The measure is already a fixture in the system of company benefits and is considered to be an acquired right.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

- › Company leadership has shown itself to be receptive to promoting this measure.
- › The fact that the benefit is attributed to the workers without any strings attached has helped towards its wide acceptance and consolidation.

### RESULTS

#### Ratios based on use

Since its implementation, the benefit has been granted to 100% of the workers who were either fathers or mothers, owing to the fact that it is awarded in all different circumstances involving parental leave – including the compulsory use of it.

Number of workers of both sexes benefitting from the measure after child birth / adoption

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Women	2	1	-	-	-	1	4
Men	2	-	2	-	1	-	5
Total	4	1	2	0	1	1	9

#### Assessment of satisfaction with the measure

The rate of workers' satisfaction with the company's benefits policy is evaluated by regularly distributing in-house questionnaires. The questionnaires include a section about measures protecting parenthood and work-life balance. These subjects have been assessed positively.

In 2018, it once again received the prize for the “Best company to work for” (awarded by the IT magazine *Exame*). The award selects the recipient based on the workers' information. Owing to the fact that the workers' participation in the process was 90%, the Human Resources Department considers that this example shows that the company has been working in the right direction.

#### Adjustments planned

The measure was adjusted to include the possibility of extending it to specific cases. At the moment, no further extensions are considered necessary.

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# **FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**



## BELGIUM

### LIDL BELGIUM & LUXEMBOURG – FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES: INTERNAL IRONING SERVICE AND DISCOUNT FOR CHILDCARE

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Lidl Belgium & Luxembourg

#### SECTOR

Food discounter

Trade and catering

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Lidl goes to great lengths to ensure that its staff enjoy work-life balance. Providing support with domestic services is one example.

##### Internal ironing service

An internal ironing service is made available to employees of the head office. Employees pay for this service themselves with service vouchers, but Lidl deals with the practicalities of organising the service. Employees can leave their basket of ironing at the reception desk on Tuesday or Thursday and collect it from there a few days later.

##### Discount for childcare

Additionally, employees are entitled to a discount of EUR 3 per day/per child (limited to EUR 600 per year) on childcare facilities recognised by the Kind en Gezin (Child and Family) agency.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees at head office

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Within the company, a high outflow of female employees was observed from a certain hierarchic level on. Career advancement and intake were stalling at these levels. Whilst 65% of employees are female, this percentage drops sharply higher up the hierarchy, with 46% of branch managers being female, 27% of district managers, and 17% of the executive committee.

Following an analysis and survey, we found that the main reason for this was work-life balance. More senior positions come with greater responsibility, and it is harder to combine the job with a family. Therefore, we asked

female employees what they needed in order to facilitate this. A number of specific things were mentioned, such as an ironing service and teleworking. Gradually, over four years, a variety of measures were introduced to optimise work-life balance for employees.

Ideas for measures emanate from various channels, such as the executive committee, HR, as well as from employees themselves. These are submitted to the executive committee for approval, after which a concept is prepared. Once this concept has been approved, it is referred to a project board comprising between 10 and 15 managers from different departments, who give feedback based on their own role and the interests of their department. Once the feedback has been taken on board, the roll-out of the project begins, focussing heavily on communication about the project. The ironing service, childcare discount, and other measures are covered during the orientation day for new employees.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

At such a large company, communication is vital. An evaluation identified a need to step up communication for various reasons, such as ensuring that all the communications reach the various branches. This led to the creation of the TeamLidl app, on which employees have direct access to communication and information from Lidl.

The initiatives must be integrated into the HR strategy, so that they are embraced by the upper echelons of the company. In a hierarchical company such as Lidl, it is very important for the executive levels to be on board. Having an ambassador on the executive committee speeds things up greatly and ensures proper support for projects.

#### RESULTS

Lidl goes to great lengths to ensure that its staff enjoy work-life balance. Generally, the work-life balance policy has positive results. 75% of employees work part-time, including 57% of male employees, and more than three quarters of them are on permanent contracts.

#### CONTACT

<https://www.werkenbijlidl.be/nl/1973.htm>

## VOKA WEST-VLAANDEREN VZW – KENNEDY KIDS (CHILDCARE)

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Voka Kamer-van-Koophandel  
West-Vlaanderen vzw**

### SECTOR

One of the six regional Chambers of Commerce in Flanders, which revolves around on three pillars: net-working, lobbying, and knowledge and advice

Quaternary sector (services to support the business community and the self-employed)

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Working for a network organisation, a certain level of flexibility is expected from employees. To ease the strain on employees who need childcare during school holidays, the “bijspelen” initiative was set up. For this, Voka West-Vlaanderen partnered with Cokido, and joined forces with local organisation Intercommunale Leiedal.

The initiative provides childcare for employees at the workplace, during school holidays. Employees themselves, including the children’s parents, spend half a day caring for the children. The initiative started during the 2020 February spring break and was dubbed Kennedy kids, after the street and the nearby business park where both the participating organisations are based.

Employees who help with childcare do not have to request holiday; they are given half a day off per holiday week, on full pay. Moreover, the parent does not have to pay a contribution for the childcare on that day. However, they do pay a small contribution towards the organisation and coordination of the project.

Employees’ families and acquaintances, such as grandparents or older children of employees, can also be involved. They give their time on a voluntary, unpaid basis.

“Bijspelen” is organised during each school holiday (for a few days/weeks), depending on actual demand from and concrete needs of employees.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees with children aged between 2.5 and 12 years.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

At the end of 2018, an employee satisfaction survey was conducted on subjects including culture, working conditions, work-life balance and flexibility. The management and executive team devised an action plan based on the survey’s results.

The idea for the play scheme and Cokido was put forward at one of the informal breakfast meetings with the general manager, at which colleagues can share issues relating to working at Voka West-Vlaanderen. This provided a tangible outlet for the action plan.

All employees were informed about the project at the monthly meeting. External members are equally informed about the initiative and, internally, photos and stories are shared via WhatsApp groups.

A few weeks before the school holiday, employees indicate whether they require childcare, or intend to look after their children themselves. This is then registered in an app. Toyboxes containing equipment can also be purchased from Cokido.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Voka West-Vlaanderen was able to participate in a subsidy project with VLAIO and HIVA and shares the costs with partner organisation Intercommunale Leiedal. The investment is certainly worthwhile when the initiative can be run every school holiday, with enough children.

However, the first time the initiative was organised (during the 2020 February spring break), it was very time-consuming for both organisations, particularly for the people in charge of the planning. Since the 2020 summer holiday, Cokido has provided an app that can be used to draw up, and quickly check, the schedule. This app is necessary to ease the administrative burden on the organisation. Moreover, too many colleagues were involved in setting up and planning childcare for the first session. It works better when just a few employees are given final responsibility.

### RESULTS

Out of a total of 42 eligible children, 20 were able to attend “bijspelen” during the 2020 February spring break. During the first week of July, there were just 10, because of the temporary absence of partner Intercommunale Leiedal (due to working from home during the COVID-19 crisis).

Parents are very positive about the opportunity to be present while their children are being cared for and having colleagues who look after their children.

It also makes the atmosphere in the office particularly

pleasant: seeing children play, sharing photos, and the nice atmosphere foster a greater sense of togetherness among colleagues.

Plus, the children love it. This is partly because a lot of young colleagues are helping to provide childcare, drawing on their own experience of youth organisations.

**CONTACT**

<https://www.voka.be/west-vlaanderen>

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION**



## ESTONIA

### IGLU OÜ – THE CHILDREN’S CORNER AND A PLACE FOR THE SMALLER CHILDREN TO TAKE A NAP

#### Iglu OÜ

#### SECTOR

Info and communication, software development  
Private sector

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

11-50 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Partners and/or children are always welcome to attend different events; they are even encouraged to bring their partner and/or children. Usually, a description is provided about the event: for whom the event is suitable for, how children can participate in the event, etc. For example, partners and children have participated in a canoe trip, bike ride, disc golf event, learning to slackline, and even in a quiz (on that occasion, the children were off on their own). Once a year, a family day is organised for the families. When compiling the event schedule, it is planned in a way that is mainly interesting to the children.

The children have their own corner in both cities (Tallinn and Tartu) with appropriate furniture and entertainment (computer for bigger children, cartoons, books, puzzles, board games, drawing tools, colouring books, Lego blocks, dolls, cars, etc.) as well as a place for doing homework. In addition, a workstation for a parent has been set up right next to this corner.

Both offices also have a place for the smaller children to take a nap.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The measures were agreed in a working group consisting of both employee and management representatives. Most of the measures are proposed by the HR manager; the children’s corner was strongly put forth by the staff.

Furnishing the children’s corner requires a budget (although many tools are brought in by the employees themselves or consists of things used by the Iglu – for example computers for cartoons). There is also a separate budget for the family day event. However, the measures outlined certainly need to be kept under review to ensure that they are up-to-date and adaptable to the overall situation.

Information to employees is given in blog posts, information exchanges, and team meetings. The employees are encouraged to ask for information about their options.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Keeping employees informed about the various opportunities needs the most attention.

#### RESULTS

Events that are also for partners and children have more participants. The participation of Family Day has been about 90%. The children’s corner actively finds users.

The families of the employees know one another better.

#### CONTACT

<https://www.iglu.ee>

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

## LENNULIIKLUSTEENINDUSE AS – THE CHILDREN'S ROOM

### Lennuliiklusteeninduse AS

#### SECTOR

Transportation and storage

Public Limited Company operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of the Republic of Estonia

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Creation of the Event Management Team (EMT) and events organised that must be open to employees throughout the company. Quite a few of these activities see families participate. Some examples: a joint visit to the zoo at night, tea and coffee trainings, a lantern trip with canoes, quizzes and photo hunts.

#### Creating and furnishing the children's room

There is a glass wall between the children's room and the workplace, allowing the parent to constantly monitor the child while working with ergonomic tools. The company also has dormitories with regularly changed bed linen. These rooms can be used for rest (mainly by the operating staff) but also by the children of the staff who still need a nap during daytime and are at work with their parents.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees  
Employees with children

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Previously, most of the company's events have been organised and initiated by the human resources department. As the company has people with different interests, the Event Management Team (EMT) was created. The EMT consists of employees from different departments, approx. eight people. Each year, they are allocated certain funding for planning activities. The measure is sustainable and participation in activities remains high. When people can initiate and implement their own ideas, they take on more responsibility, and the activities are more interesting and inclusive as a larger target group is involved in the organisation and planning.

The staff was involved in furnishing the children's room. The company created the conditions (the room and inventory, also contributing through the ordering of books and the like, for example, making sure that everything needed was available), but the employees were involved so that they could offer and bring proper toys and items favouring children's development that were no longer needed at home. The tidiness of the children's room is the responsibility of the parent whose child is currently playing there. From time to time, employees have taken the initiative and conducted major cleaning (sorting of puzzles, etc.) and brought necessary things to the room.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

The coronavirus crisis temporarily became an obstacle for the implementation of the measures. At some point, various online initiatives (quiz, photo competition, etc.) were organized.

#### RESULTS

- › In the case of the EMT, the performance indicator is the relatively large number of participants and interested parties, currently for approx. two years.
- › As for the children's room, it worked very well before the coronavirus crisis, with people bringing their children to work.

#### CONTACT

<http://www.eans.ee/>

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION





## PORTUGAL

### AUCHAN RETAIL PORTUGAL, S.A. – PROVISION OF PRE-SCHOOLS FOR THE COMPANY WORKERS' CHILDREN

#### Auchan Retail Portugal, S.A.

#### SECTOR

Food industry and retail

Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: Manufacture and retail sales of food stuffs and other products - European Code NACE C10 and G47.2

A traditionally feminine sector with an under-representation of the masculine labour force

#### NUMBER OF WORKERS

9,000 employees

3,240 men (36%) and 5,760 women (64%)

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: two preschools (*Colégios Rik&Rok*) which opened in Amadora in 2010 and in Alfragide in 2012 are open to the workers' children. The schools also enrol the children of workers at the Mulliez Family Association to which Auchan Retail Portugal belongs, as well as the children of workers employed in other companies or living in the communities in which the Colégios operate.

Description of the *Rik&Rok* pre-schools:

- › Open from 7.00 am to 00.30 am every day, including weekends and holidays;
- › They are located in close vicinity to the large Auchan supermarkets in Greater Lisbon;
- › The maximum stay of each child at school is set at: 11 hours per day, 5 days a week, 11 months a year;
- › Maximum number of children; 156 in Alfragide and 149 children in Amadora;
- › Age of the children enrolled at the schools vary between three months and six years old.

The schools' administrative conditions and educational approach:

- › The *High Scope* educational approach to learning is geared towards promoting the child's autonomy and freedom apart from involving an active learning process mainly achieved through experimentation;
- › Each Rik&Rok school is aided by an Educational Psy-

chologist who follows up and counsels the children, their fathers/mothers and the teachers;

- › About one third of the available places are reserved for children coming from the local community or children referred by the Social Security services;
- › Monthly fees are calculated according to the per capita income of the respective family and may vary between 18€ and 340€ (current maximum);
- › The preschools are run by the Pão de Açúcar-Auchan Foundation and are self-supporting.

Goals:

- › A balance in the workers' professional life, family life and personal life by providing preschools at accessible prices in localities close to the Auchan supermarkets, and with adaptable timetables;
- › Encourage workers working in the Auchan network to have more children;
- › Provide the community with high-quality specialised education.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers with children up to the age of six.

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

##### Framework

In Portugal, the company originally belonged to the Brazilian Group Pão de Açúcar, until it was bought out by the workers themselves in 1992 and later sold to the Auchan network in 1996. During the transition period, part of the money received by upper management was set aside to found the Pão de Açúcar-Auchan Foundation (FPA-A) set up by the managerial staff with the aim of helping those who most needed it. The FPA-A is managed on a voluntary basis by company workers.

After Auchan Portugal had bought out the company, it started providing the FPA-A with financial support by means of an annual donation (a % of the total net earnings of its workers). The Foundation was aimed exclusively at the Social sector – equipped with a technical team comprising psychologists, sociologists, and social assistants so as to ensure following up the workers with social, economic and health needs. The Pão de Açúcar-Auchan Foundation awards worker's children bene-

fits such as: scholarships and school prizes, help in purchasing school material, holiday camps and the payment of university fees.

### Implementation

The idea of opening the preschools came from the workers themselves who complained of difficulties in balancing the support they gave their children with their professional lives. They expressed the desire to enrol their children in preschools near their work places where the schools offered the same timetables as the Auchan supermarket working hours. The Human Resources management started receiving indications from the workers in the sense that these limitations sometimes had a negative impact on the family's decision to have more children.

In order to respond to the workers' requests, in 2005, the FPA-A decided to set up a new sector – the preschools and in doing so, take advantage of the PARES Programme. With this in mind, the Human Resources Manager successfully obtained funding from the Social Security for materialising the FPA-A's proposals – which originally foresaw the opening of five preschools – three in Greater Lisbon and two in Greater Oporto. The first part of the project was built in 2010 in Amadora. The school was situated in the largest Shopping Centre in the Iberian Peninsula, in grounds conceded by Auchan and involved dismantling one of the Auchan supermarket warehouses and building the Rik&Rok preschool in its place; the second preschool situated next to the Alegro Shopping Centre in Alfragide was inaugurated in 2012 and received the support of the Oeiras Municipal Council which conceded land adjoining the shopping centre.

### Budget and Resources

The schools were built from their foundations up, using funding coming from the FPA-A and from the Social Security. The average building cost of each of the schools was 1.3 million euros, overtaking by almost 50% the initial planned outlay of the project. This meant that FPA-A funding originally earmarked for 5 schools, was depleted after having built these two schools owing, so it was reported, to legal requirements that had come into force in the meantime.

The schools are run by the FPA-A and have been self-sufficient since 2018. Social Security support was obtained for running the crèche when the school opened, but it was only in 2018 that the Ministry of Education started to subsidise the preschool /kindergarten section.

### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The measure has been consolidated and the agreements about the use of the land stipulated an average duration of 30 years – with the possibility of renewal if the project is still ongoing.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

- › Funding received from the Portuguese State was decisive in building the schools;
- › The schools are not running at full capacity although there are long waiting lists. This situation is due to current laws based on the traditional model of education that demands a lower number of enrolments than what had initially been planned.

### RESULTS

#### Results

30% of the total number of children enrolled in the *Rik&Rok* preschools are children whose parent/s is/are employed by the Auchan supermarkets and the Mulliez Group.

#### Assessment of satisfaction with the measure

Concerning the FPA-A's management, a survey is circulated among the workers in order to measure their degree of satisfaction with the services supplied by the FPA-A. Feedback has been positive – and there has been additional, informal feedback from the workers to the effect that more preschools need to be built.

#### Adjustments planned

The FPA-A plans to open new Rik&Rok Schools and is presently looking for existent buildings that can be adapted. It is likely that the next school will be inaugurated in Oporto.

### CONTACT

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<https://www.auchan.pt/>

## NESTLÉ PORTUGAL UNIPessoal, LDA – NURSING / BREASTFEEDING ROOM

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Nestlé Portugal Unipessoal, Lda

### SECTOR

Food stuffs industry

Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal and Archipelagos)

Branch of activity: Manufacturing and distributing food-stuffs and drinks – European Code NACE C10

The sector has a balanced labour force of both sexes

### NUMBER OF WORKERS

2,339 employees

1,183 men (51%) and 1,156 women (49%)

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: making available a nursing / breastfeeding room that may also be used to attend to babies.

Conditions:

- › The room is designed to offer a peaceful, private atmosphere; its decoration is in pastel colours and free from publicity advertising the company's products.
- › The room is equipped with sofas, a refrigerator, breast pumps and nappy-changing rack.
- › Both male and female workers who are responsible for either breast or bottle feeding the baby and giving child-care, are allowed to use the room.
- › The room is mainly used by female workers in order to extract their milk that can be stored in the refrigerator. For their part, when male workers bring their child to work, they can use the room to attend to their babies.
- › There is no need for the worker to book the room nor ask for permission to nurse the baby, as laid down in the labour Code, Article 47.

Goals:

- › promote breastfeeding and allowing workers who have returned from parental leave to continue feeding their babies in the way they think suitable;
- › provide the workers with comfortable, suitable conditions in which they may care for their infants;
- › help towards healthy child nutrition.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers of both sexes who wish to have facilities in which to nurse their babies after returning from parental leave, or workers with children/ babies.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

One of the company's missions is to help towards healthy child nutrition. Given this aim, it promotes breastfeeding as the healthiest alternative for babies – despite the fact that the company sells products replacing maternal milk. This validation, together with its policy to achieve a work-family balance and the protection of parenting, led the company to set up a nursing and baby-care room. Within the framework of this policy, it is foreseen that by 2022, nursing rooms on the company's premises will be built throughout the country provided there are more than 50 workers employed in each plant.

In 2015, the company launched a policy to protect parenting that focused on maternity; it was reviewed in 2019 after taking into consideration the contribution made by iGen - Forum of Organisations for Equality. Taking this fact into account, the policy was adapted to cater to both the first carer and the second carer. The parental support benefits package included the offer of products during the child's first year of life given upon a doctor's indication and prescription, amenities adapted to children in the event that they needed their mother/father's attention at the work place when this is located in the main plant (in Greater Lisbon), and the possibility of extending paid parental leave from 14 to 18 weeks.

#### Implementation

The nursing room was inaugurated in 2013 in the company's main plant where about 1,000 workers are presently employed. It was the outcome of the Nestlé Group's worldwide movement aimed at promoting parenting and stressing the importance of maternal milk. The Child Nutrition sector was responsible for launching the initiative and received the backing of the Human Resources department and the Corporate Communication Department. It took about two months to complete building the room where the project was overseen jointly by the Child Nutrition's Medical Scientific Affairs officer and the person in charge of the company's infrastructures. When decorating the room, care was taken to see that it was

safe and comfortable and duly equipped to attend to the needs of the babies, and their mothers and fathers.

At the beginning of 2021, the company will have built two more nursing rooms, one in the Avanca plant (which has about 400 workers) and the other in the Oporto plant (which has about 200 workers).

The company was one of the first enterprises in the country to offer its workers this benefit; later, it was invited to give its account of the measure on television programmes and in hospitals.

An in-house platform is used to disseminate the package of benefits and when the nursing room was opened, a publicity campaign was launched about it. When the next rooms are inaugurated, publicity campaigns will also be launched to inform the workers about this benefit.

#### **Budget and Resources**

A budget of about 2,000 euros was reserved for building and equipping the nursing room. The company was also able to receive a discount when buying furniture and equipment, owing to the large amount of goods it normally acquires.

#### **Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice**

In the context of the sustainability of the company's measures in effect for a work-family balance, the measure will be extended to cover more nursing rooms in other plants in the country.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

The company's leadership was very receptive and the engagement of the sectors taking part in the scheme was a guarantee of the company's support of and commitment to the measure.

Adapting the work area so that female workers who wish to continue nursing their babies after they return to work, ensures that maternity and nursing are not professionally prejudicial to women but rather lead to more equal working conditions between men and women;

No resistance against the measure on the part of the workers' superiors has been registered when women employees wanted to use the nursing room, and according to the Employee Relations Manager, common sense prevails in the company when it comes to respecting the right to breastfeed as its importance is acknowledged.

No challenges were reported upon implementing the room, but the Employee Relations Manager considers

that the challenge and the serious concern about drawing up benefit policies that seek to promote equality between men and women and to encourage male workers to become more involved are felt throughout the company.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **Ratios based on use**

The average use of the room is one person a day. The Employee Relations Manager considers the company's policy of flexible timetables makes it so that the room is not used by all the people who are eligible to do so.

##### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

The company distributes a questionnaire annually to the workers to check their level of satisfaction with the benefits policy in effect in the company. The nursing room has been given a positive assessment in the questionnaires mainly because it allows female-workers returning to work after a period of parental leave to continue breastfeeding their babies.

##### **Adjustments planned**

The building is currently undergoing remodelling and, in this sphere, the room will be located near the medical centre. No changes will be made to its design, but it is planned to use materials that are easier to clean, therefore making the room more hygienic. The main adjustment planned is to extend the measure by building rooms in other plants belonging to the company located elsewhere.

#### **CONTACT**

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## NOVADELTA - GRUPO NABEIRO – PROVISION OF AN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE COMPANY WORKERS' CHILDREN

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Novadelta - Grupo Nabeiro**

### SECTOR

Roasting coffee and substitutes

Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: Processing and wholesale of tea and coffee – European Code NACE C10.8.3 and G46.3.7

Traditionally masculine sector with some under-representation of female workers in the labour force.

### NUMBER OF WORKERS

523 employees

298 men (57%) and 225 women (43%)

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: operates the Alice Nabeiro Education Centre (CEAN) for the children of company workers, as well as being open to children in the local community.

Description of the Education Centre (CEAN):

- › The CEAN provides two services: two pre-school rooms and a Leisure Time Activities Centre (CATL).
- › The ages of the children attending the pre-school CEAN section vary between three and six, while children at the CATL centre are between six and twelve years old.
- › The CEAN works to a wider timetable than the company, and is open from 8.00 am to 7.30 pm.
- › The CATL and the Pre-school centre both have workshops – artwork, a library, experimental sciences, drama training, learning English, computer science, robotics, fine arts, Portuguese literature, tennis, physical and motor-response training and music that the children can take for three months. At the end of this period, each child undertakes to make a project of his/her own choice so as to encourage the child's entrepreneurial skills. The aim is to promote the children's values and skills in areas to do with citizenship, voluntary work, project work, solidarity and environmental education in club activities.
- › Until November 2020, the CEAN was working with 180 children.

The education centre's administrative conditions:

- › The CEAN follows an education approach called

“Having ideas to change the world” that seeks to promote creativeness, resilience and entrepreneurial skills.

- › Enrolment criteria at the CEAN are: firstly, children of least 3 years of age, and secondly, the date of enrolment in chronological order.
- › The CEAN is managed by the *Associação Coração Delta* (Delta Heart Association), a Private Social Solidarity Institution belonging to the Nabeiro Group and is open to children in the community: only 4% of the children enrolled in the Centre do not have mothers or fathers working for the company.
- › A cooperation agreement with the Social Security means that 67% of the total capacity of the CEAN is subsidised.
- › Monthly fees are set according to the per capital income of each of the families, and are divided into nine scales. The average monthly fee is 30 euros.
- › The monthly fees cover the cost of all the available services including the children's transport and light meals at tea-times.

Goals:

- › promote the workers' work-family balance by offering them the services of an education centre at affordable prices which can be attended by their children during their mother/father's working day;
- › provide a specialised high-quality system of education to the local population, bearing in mind the profiles and challenges of the municipality in which the company operates: a municipality (Campo Maior) located in inland Portugal with a very young population and few educational alternatives – there is only the government school network available;
- › enable the children in diverse areas of learning, encouraging innovative, proactive and entrepreneurial skills.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers with children up to age of 12.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

The company has offered its workers and the community measures and benefits enhancing social responsibility since the 1960s; ever since then, it has consolidated the application of different measures in this sphere. The

company considers itself to be a family business owing to the family always having taken part in its organisational make-up. The company was invited to integrate in the first group competing for the Work-Life Balance Pact, one of the axes in the 3 em Linha - Programme for a balance between Professional, Personal and Family Life, under the Portuguese Standard NP 4552:2016 – Work, family and personal life balance management system certificate, and became the first certified company in Portugal. The certification process led the company to organise all the measures it had in force, in order to receive formal recognition from a competent certification body.

The Novadelta company, which is integrated into the Nabeiro Group, is composed of 22 enterprises employing about 4,000 workers. Its measures to promote a work-life balance are applicable throughout the companies comprising the Group, although it is worth stressing that only Novadelta has the Portuguese Standard NP 4552:2016 certificate.

The company has close links with the local community, which led the Nabeiro Group to set up a Private Social Solidarity Institution: the *Associação Coração Delta* was founded in 2005 with the aim of addressing the community's social needs. The Association's managing body is run by the Nabeiro Group workers on a voluntary basis. The Association offers the workers transport, meals and access to health and education facilities that are lacking in the community. The town has a high birth rate and the CEAN, which is managed by the *Associação Coração Delta*, was also developed owing to the need to promote the socio-educational development of these children.

#### Implementation

The CEAN was first planned in 2004 and the centre was inaugurated in 2007 thanks to the interest shown by *Comendador* Rui Nabeiro of the Nabeiro Group and the need to provide an amenity in which children could receive care and training while their parents were working. The teachers at the CEAN devise their own work tools in the approach called "Having ideas to change the world", which, today, has been recognised by the EU and the ODCE. The CEAN does not only offer the children a spot in which they are temporarily entertained, but one in which their culture, citizenship and social responsibility is nurtured.

#### Budget and Resources

The CEAN has its own installations, built from the foundations upon the Nabeiro Group's financial resources. The Nabeiro Group makes an annual investment in the form of a donation to the CEAN (no data are available about the size of the donation) owing to the fact that the amount received from monthly fees together with the percentage covered by the cooperation agreement with the Social Security, are insufficient to cover all the annual costs of running the CEAN.

#### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The measure has been consolidated. Constant strategic concern has been voiced about innovation: teachers are given training courses in the field of neuro-education taking into account child development and the aim of stimulating physical and psycho-motor activities. In terms of methodological approaches, information was given about the concern to up-date pedagogical models and guidelines as well as improve the children's skills /competences.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

- › Top management's endorsement was said to be essential in developing this measure;
- › The main challenge today was said to involve adapting the work done at the CEAN to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has demanded that workers are trained to handle the tools needed in this adaptation.

#### RESULTS

##### Results

Since 2007, the CEAN has had a total of 2,145 children enrolled in it, 650 pre-school children and 1,495 in the leisure centre - CATL.

##### Assessment of satisfaction with the measure

Considering the 13 years of the CEAN's existence, evaluation studies of its impact are being drawn up where the socio-educational ability level of the children who were at the facility from the age of three until they were twelve years old will be analysed. These children are now terminating their upper-secondary schooling. The Association also regularly applies surveys in order to test the satisfaction of the workers whose children attend the CEARN, and so far, the results have been positive.



**Adjustments planned**

The CEARN has already undergone expansion and adaptation which has allowed it to increase its area of activity. It was first inaugurated as a leisure time centre (CATL) and in less than a year, owing to the local community's insufficient pre-school offer, two rooms were set aside for this purpose. The capacity of the centre therefore doubled, going from 70 to 140 children. Later on, a pavilion reserved for workshop activities was built, catering to 25 more children from 4.00 pm to 7.30 pm.

The reason why educational services are not offered children over the age of 12 has to do with the regular school timetables for adolescents, which do not allow for extracurricular activities of this size.

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## RANDSTAD – GREATER LOGISTIC FACILITY FOR PREGNANT WORKERS AND ATTRIBUTION OF A VEHICLE DURING PREGNANCY

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION****Randstad****SECTOR**

Human Resources Consultancy

Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal and Archipelagos)

Branch of activity: Human Resources Consultancy – European Code NACE N78

Sector traditionally typified as feminine with an under-representation of male workers in the labour force

**NUMBER OF WORKERS**

400 employees

100 men (25%) and 300 women (75%)

**DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

Description: greater logistic facility for pregnant workers (in clinically delicate situations) by attributing them free parking space or a motor car during their pregnancy.

Conditions:

- › The measure is offered to women with a high-risk pregnancy or on a doctor's recommendation, in order to adjust to their circumstances;
- › Receiving the benefit requires presenting a doctor's certificate;
- › The measure is more relevant in larger cities where there are parking difficulties in public car parks, mainly in cities like Lisbon and Oporto;
- › The measure does not make an official part of the company's benefits policy.

Goals:

- › seek to ensure that pregnancy does not jeopardise a woman's career trajectory or her visibility in the company;
- › protect the health of pregnant workers;
- › provide a family support system, protecting parenthood while promoting a balance in professional, family and personal life.

**TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)**

Pregnant workers

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

### Framework

When it joined iGen - Forum of Organisations for Equality, the company established a wide range of commitments by promoting a balance and equality between men and women. Together with this process, a benefits policy was drawn up to include measures guided by these subjects. Among the main measures, we may single out are: i) granting financial support to the sum of 2,500 euros to be used in infertility / in vitro fertility treatment – whether to do with the worker's own or her/his partner's infertility; ii) awarding a 250 euros bonus to recent fathers/mothers among the company's workers; iii) making an advance payment of the Social Security allowance in the event that a female worker has taken sick leave due to a high-risk pregnancy or when she is on maternity leave; and iv) allowing for the possibility of working away from the office for one day a week. The company's membership in iGen - Forum of Organisations for Equality was said to be an advantage for the company in terms of its workers' benefits policy because it makes it possible to exchange experiences and discuss what has been learned.

### Implementation

The measure was implemented in 2017 upon the joint initiative of the Human Resources team and the Legal team. The measure is not included in the company's official benefits policy, and is applied as each case arises where pregnant workers are known to experience difficulty in travelling to work. Information obtained revealed that dialogue is encouraged so that people feel comfortable about requesting support when it is needed.

The benefits policy is disseminated on the company's intranet although the measure in question still needs publicity. The most sought-after measure in the benefits policy is the bonus granted when a baby is born.

### Budget and Resources

No feedback is available about the cost of this measure because it is managed in-house on already available resources.

### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The company's benefits policy is reviewed on a regular basis, updating it when required, depending upon workers' suggestions and/or the dialogue held within

the iGen Forum sphere. The next review to be held will examine the feasibility of including the measure in the company's present benefits policy.

## SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

- › Company leadership has shown itself to be receptive to awarding this benefit.
- › The fact that the company has a fleet of motor cars ensures the possibility of loaning a vehicle to pregnant workers in need;
- › Where promoting measures protecting pregnant workers are concerned, it was said that a challenge lies in drawing up measures that will not be open to the interpretation that the company treats pregnancy as a limitation or an incapacitation;
- › Despite the fact that the measure is directed at women with high-risk pregnancies, it is flexible / adaptable (see Results).
- › The most important challenge is in terms of widening the measure's use. This measure clearly offers much more potential than what the present results obtained up to now show. The company is willing to integrate the measure into its benefits policy and offer it to all pregnant workers who need it, above all because it does not want the measure to be viewed in a distorted way. It does not want Randstad to be indirectly seen as putting pressure on pregnant workers, obliging them to work as long as possible on the pretext of offering them this benefit.

## RESULTS

### Ratios based on use (2017-2020)

The results fall short of the effective potentiality of this good practice, which the company would like to review (as described).

The number of people benefiting from having a free parking space reserved for them: 1 pregnant worker in Lisbon. The number of people benefiting from having the use of a motor car: 1 male worker in Lisbon.

The low ratio based on the pregnant workers' use of this measure may be put down to the measure being connected with women with high-risk pregnancies who are still able to work. The measure is therefore viewed as one granted to special cases only, as since it was first offered in 2017, 36 female workers have fallen pregnant.



The case of the male worker who benefitted from the loan of a motor car, and therefore did not fall under the protection of pregnant workers, is an interesting example of how the measure may be adapted and integrated into the values promoting equality between men and women and encouraging a balance between work-family in the company's culture. The male-worker, who had recently had a baby, broke his leg and was temporarily prevented from driving his own car. His manager exchanged his own car for the worker's, as the former's car was adapted to the temporary needs of the injured employee.

#### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

The company gives the workers a questionnaire on a very regular basis - during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, there have been weekly surveys. Despite the fact that the surveys are made on a worldwide scale in the countries where the transnational network operates, the data are processed in Portugal. The benefits policy receives overall positive feedback. The Human Resources Manager analyses individual cases where the assessment has been negative.

#### **Adjustments planned**

It was said that in 2020, Randstad did not feel that it had to hurry and make the measure official because the pandemic has obliged workers to work remotely from home (in telework). Indirectly, this fact has acted to the benefit of pregnant workers. The possibility is being studied of absorbing the measure in the company's benefits policy as from 2021. In spite of the fact that the measure is not expected to have a wide impact, it is nevertheless a benefit available to all those who need it. The company is therefore willing to give its use added impetus.

#### **CONTACT**

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# INFORMATION AND TRAINING



## DOMOCURA – RAISING AWARENESS, INFORMING AND ENCOURAGING

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Domocura

### SECTOR

Professional domestic help with service vouchers and an ironing service

Transport and services

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

51-250 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Domocura wants to offer employees a framework within which they can achieve the best possible work-life balance. In a fast-changing sector and society, Domocura believes it is important to encourage its employees' self-reliance by informing both men and women about the various legal options available for improving work-life balance. Achieving this balance is not always easy for employees who, because of certain hurdles (speaking a different language, alcohol or drug problem, vulnerable target group), are already in a weaker position in society.

Employees who wish to take leave in order to provide care are informed about the different leave systems, such as time credit, parental leave, and so on.

In the same vein, Domocura wants to combat stereotypes by also entering into dialogue and encouraging domestic workers to make use of support and to not always provide care themselves.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Information about statutory leave systems is provided by the professional federation Federgon. All the information is contained in the welcome brochure, which underscores that questions or concerns can be addressed at any time to the office managers or HR.

All office managers are kept up to date and communicate the measures and options to the domestic workers.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Providing information about, and staying abreast of the statutory leave systems is time-consuming. It is a very wide-ranging administrative task.

Initially, all the required forms were completed by HR. To encourage self-reliance, employees are now asked to complete these themselves; HR still provides support.

A strength can also become a weakness. Employees tend to rely on one or the other system of leave to provide a solution to their needs. They can be incredulous when they realise that the complete leave period of a leave system has been used. Because of this, employees are given plenty of advance warning.

### RESULTS

Staff turnover is very high (around 50%) across the domestic help sector. At Domocura, this figure is 20 to 30%. Moreover, many employees return to Domocura after a while. The main reason for this is the better work-life balance at Domocura.

### CONTACT

<https://www.domocura.be/>

## MANPOWERGROUP – ACTIVELY PROMOTING PATERNITY LEAVE

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**ManpowerGroup**

### SECTOR

Manpower creates and delivers innovative workforce solutions and services, including temporary agency work and talent management.

Transport and services

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

251-500 employees

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Since 2018, Manpower has been formally committed to improving work-life balance and has adopted a work-life balance charter. Whereas financial capital was once paramount at a company, nowadays the employees are the key asset. This must be reflected in an HR policy that prioritises employees in all their dimensions, including their private lives.

Manpower seeks to strike a balance between the legal requirements and internal projects that support its vision.

One of the initiatives is the automatic awarding of paternity leave. As soon as an employee informs that they are to become a father, the 10 days of paternity leave to which they are entitled are added to the online leave system. This serves as an active reminder that the days are available to be taken and encourages fathers to take advantage of them.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All employees who are entitled to paternity leave

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Initiatives are developed by the HR department, then approved by the executive committee.

They are communicated to employees via a number of channels.

- › Various HR employees
- › Information sessions or a conference call for all employees
- › Publishing new initiatives on the Intranet
- › Mention at various meetings
- › For new employees, they are listed in the welcome pack.

A monthly progress meeting is held, as well as performance and development interviews at which employees discuss their expectations and wishes with regard to work-life balance. This makes it possible to respond individually to specific needs.

### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Admittedly, these initiatives have a cost for the company. However, a commitment to the optimum work-life balance is important to attracting and developing talent. It also retains talent within the organisation.

Although a large company such as Manpower undoubtedly needs a fixed structure for the approval and implementation of initiatives, there is still plenty of scope for flexibility. Should problems or new needs arise, decisions can be made quickly thanks to the short link between HR and the executive committee.

### RESULTS

Manpower has a lot of employees who choose to work part-time. In 2019, nearly 20% of the workforce was part-time, due to parental leave, time credit, or a part-time contract.

An annual survey is conducted on various HR matters, including work-life balance. Feedback on the available measures is very positive.

### CONTACT

<https://manpower.be/node/45>



## ESTONIA

## BOARDIC EESTI OÜ – INVITATION OF EMPLOYEES' FAMILIES TO COMPANY EVENTS

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION**

Boardic Eesti OÜ

**SECTOR**

Processing industry, timber industry

Private sector

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

11-50 employees

**DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

The company involves the families of its employees in the company's events (summer party, winter party).

Recognition - the company started a tradition where, at the end of each year at a winter party, humorous indicators are found based on which various outstanding employees are rewarded. For example, 'the biggest sleeper' (the employee who arrived most often 'last minute' at work), Timber King (the employee who cut the most wood), etc.

**TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)**

All employees.

The biggest benefit was perhaps for the factory workers who would feel more involved in the company's activities.

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

The initiative came from the management. All parties were involved in the decisionmaking process. Initial plans were set by the management and were later discussed with key personnel.

**SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

There were no problems with implementation.

**RESULTS**

Employees are more satisfied, employees' families are more up to date with the company's activities and employees are ill less often. It is beneficial in every way.

**CONTACT**

<https://www.boardic.com/et/>

## DPD EESTI AS – TRAINING AND ATTENDANCE OF EVENTS FOR EMPLOYEES ON PARENTAL LEAVE

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION**

DPD Eesti AS

**SECTOR**

Transportation and storage, parcel delivery services

Private sector

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

51-250 employees

**DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

Employees on parental leave are invited to attend (according to their wish, not obligatory) all trainings and

events held in the company. They retain access to the internal communication environment "guavaHR", through which they can be in touch with the information of the company.

Employees who return from parental leave are provided a re-familiarisation programme, which is less detailed as the onboarding programme for new employees but covers reintroducing the work of all units.

**TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)**

Employees with children

**IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS**

Most measures have been valid for more than five years.

As a rule, the initiatives come from the employees: before 2020, an annual spring meeting for employees was held, one part of which was reviewing current benefits, making amendment proposals, and assessing and implementing them after the meeting. As such, the employees receive real-time feedback regarding proposals which cannot be implemented.

The company calculates the budgets of the proposals and plans if and when the initiatives can be implemented. Thus, not all proposals are implemented immediately. The employees are told in which way and how the renewed measures shall become valid.

New measures have so far been accepted well and if the general meeting does not vote against them, they remain in place.

**SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

When implementing measures associated with parents, there were no issues;

**RESULTS**

A part of annual interviews – twice a year – is the employee's assessment of the balance between work and family life and discussion about what the employer could do about this.

During the annual satisfaction survey, employees' satisfaction with their work and family life is measured; in recent years, on a five-start scale this has scored 3.94-3.99.

A broader benefit lies in an increase in unity, safety and well-being for all employees. All of us know that the employer is interested in the organization of our private lives and needs, and we know that a discussion is always possible, and that the employer can meet us halfway in finding a solution on how to combine the needs of both the employee and the employer. This is not only about employees with children but also about people who study, train for competitions, move to another city, etc.

**CONTACT**

[www.dpd.ee](http://www.dpd.ee)

## EESTI FILHARMOONIA KAMMERKOOR SA – KEEPING A BALANCE BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY LIFE, MINIMISING TIME CONFLICT AND WORK STRESS

**NAME OF THE ORGANISATION**

**Eesti Filharmoonia Kammerkoor SA (Foundation Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir (EPCC))**

**SECTOR**

Culture, public sector

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES**

11-50 employees

**DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)**

The objective of EPCC's 'work and family life combining'-measures is to keep a balance between people's work and family life and to minimise time conflict and work stress. As a person is a whole, then it is important that all members of the organisation would feel the joy of work. Therefore, relationships with family, children, and other close people should not suffer because of work.

It is important to keep staff close, also when they are away from work because of health or other conditions (e.g. parental leave). Staff's mental and physical health should be maintained because, due to the peculiarities of choral singing, concert performances can only happen if all members of the choir are able to participate and each individual's contribution plays a major role.

Depending on the projects, the children of the employees have also been involved in work (for example: concert tour in Italy or the Aix-en-Provence festival, where the employer paid for the accommodation of the whole family, as staying abroad for a longer term was required. Often, the children have been listeners in the choir's rehearsals and accompanied the employees in the office, if there has been no option to take the child to childcare) Non-traditional working times (for regular singers 10:00-14:30 and sometimes evening concerts or more intense

rehearsal periods and business days off as a result) allow the parents to spend time with their children during daytime when the child is usually home alone.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

These measures have a direct impact on everyone who has been temporarily off-duty, but mainly on parents who are on parental leave.

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

Due to the specifics of the EPCC, all decisions about the organisation of work have been made organically, as a result of joint discussions. New measures are discussed with the representatives of different parties within the organisation, including the choir's trustee, to be up to speed with the attitudes of the staff and understand their presets in the case of new decisions.

There has no need for a separate budget for the measures, although some increased and additional costs need to be considered.

These measures are very sustainable for our organisation.

#### SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS

Finding replacement singers for male voices has been somewhat complicated because of little mobility of labour in the vocal music sector. This has also been impacted by the recent amendment to parental leave legislation, which gave fathers more options to stay home with the child.

#### RESULTS

So far, the measures have worked very well and have fit into the organisation's working rhythm.

The individual/employee, their closest people (family, children) as well as the organisation and the artistic collective win from measures that combine family and work, i.e. when the rhythm of work has been disrupted as little as possible. The result is EPCCs sustainable concert activity, and throughout our history, about 20 female employees have gradually returned to work from maternity leave, and not withdrawn from the choir.

#### CONTACT

<https://www.epcc.ee/>

## SWEDBANK AS – KEEPING CHILDREN'S GUARDIANS INVOLVED AND INFORMED

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Swedbank AS

#### SECTOR

Finance and insurance

Private sector

#### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

> 500 employees

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Keeping children's guardians involved and informing them.

The following information is shared with employees on parental leave:

- > a monthly employee newsletter
- > a weekly career letter
- > The leaders conduct annual interviews

Moreover,

- > The salary of children's guardians is reviewed with other employees during the annual salary review process.
- > Children's guardians are involved in events.
- > Career seminars are organized for children's guardians
- > In Tallinn, a childcare service is provided in the childcare of the main office (for children between 18 and 36 months of age).
- > In larger offices, play and study rooms for children are provided

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Employees on parental leave

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The initiative to keep employees who are on parental leave involved and up to date with work related news, came from the human resources department. The news

was forwarded to people who had given us their personal contacts and wanted to be kept up to date.

When Swedbank's employees gained access to all LinkedIn Learning trainings, the option was also extended to children's guardians, so they could learn and develop their competencies if they wanted.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

As the information needs to be sent to private e-mails, those employees who do not share their e-mail addresses are left out.

In many cases, they do give their contact details later to be informed.

#### **RESULTS**

The company finds that keeping children's guardians involved is an important process because it helps them to adjust better when they return to work. The percentage of employees returning from parental leave is very high.

#### **CONTACT**

<https://www.swedbank.ee/>





## PORTUGAL

### DIANOVA – COMPILATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF AN INFORMATIVE GUIDEBOOK ON PARENTAL RIGHTS, AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION BY ALL WORKERS

#### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

**Associação Dianova Portugal**

#### SECTOR

Substance-abuse Rehabilitation and Social Development  
Non-profit-making private sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: Substance-abuse treatment-rehabilitation, socio-professional reintegration and social inclusion – European Code NACE Q87.2

The care service sector in the field of health and substance abuse traditionally relies on women's labour power. However, this organisation tends towards a balance, employing both men and women.

#### NUMBER OF WORKERS

20 employees

9 men (45%) and 11 women (55%)

#### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: compiling and distributing an information Guidebook about parental rights available to the workers for consultation. It is called "The Good Practices Guide for promoting a Personal, Family and Professional Life Balance at Dianova".

Conditions:

- The Guidebook contains 51 good practices in force in the Association.
- For each measure introduced, there is its description, its area of application, the date on which it was introduced, and a contact for queries.
- In terms of the Time and Space Flexibility axis, six good practices are given that concern flexible timetables at work.
- The Family Support axis has seven measures which include discounts on health service contracts, a social bundle going to workers who are facing proven hardship, and the right to days off in order to attend to 1st degree family relatives and accompany her/his children on their first day at school.
- The booklet is given to all workers starting work at the Association.

Goals:

- inform the workers about all the benefits the Association has activated;
- ensure that the workers are well-informed and feel comfortable about taking advantage of the benefits available to them.

#### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers of both sexes

#### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

##### Framework

The good practice is linked to the Association's commitment to promote equality between men and women. An Equality and Work-Life Balance Plan is in place and is reviewed periodically. The idea of the Plan arose with the commitment to devise activities aimed at eliminating all kinds of inequality and discrimination. Among its main goals is a concerted effort to attract more male representation in the labour force, and break down barriers holding up the professional integration of women. The Association has received two Honourable Mentions in the "Equality is Quality" Prize, one in its 11th edition in 2014, and the other in its 12th edition in 2016/2017; it was also made a certified Family-Responsible Enterprise between 2012 and 2016.

##### Implementation

"The Good Practices Guide for promoting a Personal, Family and Professional Life balance at Dianova" was implemented in 2012 upon the initiative of the Committee for Equality and Work-Life Balance formed by the Chairperson of the Board and the Head of Personnel Management. The main reason for compiling the Guidebook was to inform the workers about the benefits policy in effect. After a survey was made about the in-house environment and degree of satisfaction, it became clear that a significant number of workers did not know about the benefits available to them.

The Guidebook contains 20 pages and describes 51 measures grouped in the following way:

- Quality at Work Axis: preventing harassment and encouraging anti-mobbing (2), financial help (1), support

in the event of losing a contract (3), available social benefits (7), extra income (2), culture and leisure (2), discounts and advantages (3), employment stability (2), flexicurity (2), health and well-being (4);

- › Time and Space Flexibility Axis: efficiency (2), and flexible work timetables (4);
- › Family assistance: 7 measures – among which the possibility to take time off from work at any time to provide assistance to 1st degree family members where it is enough to inform a superior;
- › Personal and Professional Development: 3 measures;
- › Equal Opportunities: 2 measures;
- › Leadership and managerial styles: 4 measures;
- › Gender issues: 1 measure – the Association follows the principle of equality in all its management procedures and activities so as to ensure non-discrimination and stimulate diversity. It further proposes to interview all male applicants in order to obtain a balance in the male composition in a sector that traditionally relies more heavily on female workers.

#### **Budget and Resources**

There were no costs involved in compiling and implementing the Guidebook.

#### **Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice**

The Guidebook is a fixture and is up-dated according to the revision of the benefits policy that is already in place.

There have not been any reports about any resistance that could jeopardise the measure. Any cases found would have been solved.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

- › The Association's leadership has shown itself to be receptive to awarding this benefit.
- › The challenges faced are due to a shortage of financial resources that can be channelled to awarding these benefits to the workers.

## **RESULTS**

### **Ratios based on use**

In 2019, everyone took advantage of at least one of the measures relating to equality and work-life balance that are in effect in the Association.

It is important to bear in mind that out of the nine male workers, only one of them is a father (11% of the total male workers) while out of the eleven female workers, three are mothers of minor children representing 27% of the women employees.

### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

The Association distributes an annual survey to get feedback on the in-house environment and degree of satisfaction. Information taken from the 2019 survey shows that there is a satisfaction rate of 85% in the field of Equality and Work-Life Balance – which means an increase of 14% compared to the rate of satisfaction in the 2018 survey. Moreover, 80% of the workers acknowledged the Association's concern about the balance between family life and professional life (62% in 2018); 84% of the respondents said that they knew about the measures in place (75% in 2018), and 87% answered that Equality and a Work-Life Balance was part of the Association's strategy (68% in 2018). This would seem to indicate that the Guidebook has achieved its aim of informing workers and encouraging them to take advantage of the benefits.

### **Adjustments planned**

The benefits policy is subject to annual review. If a measure has not been used for three consecutive years, it is taken out of the Guidebook. The workers are directly informed via e-mail by the Head of Personnel Management about any eventual adjustments in the benefits policy.

## **CONTACT**

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## REDES ENERGÉTICAS NACIONAIS (REN) – OFFER OF TWO PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING SESSIONS TO WORKERS UPON RETURNING FROM PARENTAL LEAVE

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN), S.A.

### SECTOR

Electric Power and Natural Gas transmission

Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal)

Branch of activity: Electric power transmission and Natural gas distribution - European Code NACE D35.1.2 and D35.2.2

Traditionally seen as a masculine sector with an under-representation of the feminine labour force.

### NUMBER OF WORKERS

684 employees

518 men (75.7%) and 166 women (24.3%)

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: two professional counselling or 'coaching' sessions are offered to all workers when they return from parental leave.

It is an initiative that seeks to ease back into active working life all those workers who have interrupted their careers for family reasons.

Conditions:

- The measure is offered in the field of a partnership established with an enterprise that supplies coaching.
- A qualified psychologist-coach give the counselling.
- Joining in the initiative is entirely voluntary and anonymous.
- The sessions are private and the topic is free, based on the individual needs of the workers; the sessions usually end up by proposing an action plan to overcome difficulties raised.
- The company offers two sessions free of charge, and in the event of the worker wanting to pursue counselling with more sessions through an agreement with the partner enterprise, they may do so with a discount made on their price.
- The company offers its amenities in which to hold the coaching sessions if need be and if the worker so wishes.

Goals:

- facilitates the transition between the end of parental leave and returning to work;
- seeks to promote a measure protecting the worker's mental health;
- provides the worker with a support system when s/he adapts to new schedules, facilitating a balance in professional, family and personal life.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

Workers of both sexes who have come back from parental leave.

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

When it joined *iGen* - a Forum of Organisations for Equality, the company established a wide range of commitments by promoting a balance and equality between men and women. Together with this process, the programme called NÓS (meaning "US") was set up with the aim of bringing all the measures offered by the company in this field into a single programme. The Programme rests upon three main axes: Balance, Equality and Inclusion. The topic based on a work-family balance falls along the Balance axis and includes four sub-axes: citizenship, work-life balance, family and health.

#### Implementation

The measure is placed along the Balance axis, and follows the sub-axis in the company's proposal to promote a balance in professional, family and personal life. It was implemented in 2014 under the name *Maternity Coaching* aimed exclusively at women employees. It acknowledges the fact that, in the same way as what happens in the world around, women in the company are absent from work for longer periods than their male colleagues who are fathers. In order to facilitate their return to work and pick up the reins of their professional activity where they face new challenges in handling their time and responsibilities, the Human Resources Management thought that it would be advantageous to set up a measure giving an individualised focus able to help in this situation if so wished. When the measure was implemented, it had an innovative nature owing to the fact that the *iGen* Forum did not have any other company offering the same benefit. The measure was jointly developed with the coaching company that supplied the

service. In 2016, upon the workers' suggestion to extend the benefit to the male employees, the measure was re-named *Parental Coaching* and now includes workers of both sexes. The company received the Equality is Quality prize (2016/2017 – 12th edition) with an Honourable Mention in Exemplary Policies in the field of Equality between Men and Women and a Work-Family Balance in the private sector.

The NÓS Programme is broadcast on the company's intranet and the Human Resources Management sends a personalised e-mail to all the female workers upon their return to work after their parental leave, which details the measure and the contacts with the partner service. The e-mail is sent to women employees because they mostly spent longer periods of time absent on parental leave than male employees.

#### **Budget and Resources**

No costs arose when the measure was implemented and the budget reserved for it refers only to paying for the coaching sessions – the annual payment is variable according to the number of people who wish to enrol in it. Funding the measure is included in the resources paying for the NÓS Programme and costs about 1% of the entire Programme. Despite the benefit being extended to the men, the women are the main users. The number of potential beneficiaries is low as women are under-represented in the company work force and their average age group is 44. This fact accounts for the lower impact on the cost of the measure.

#### **Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice**

The benefit is a fixture in the company's Equality Plan and has been consistently upheld in the annual reviews made of it due to the fact that it has been well-accepted and costs the company very little. The partnership with the coaching enterprise is stable: the business has been the same for several years and the psychologist-coach responsible for counselling has likewise remained the same.

#### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

- Company leadership has shown itself to be receptive to awarding this benefit.
- The low numbers of male workers taking advantage of the measure has shown itself to be the biggest challenge as a result of the difficulty in encouraging the interest and the emotional acceptance of the workers of both sexes. Nevertheless, this outcome is under-

standable as the female workers are the ones to take the longest leave of absence away from the work place.

- There have been no reports about the management's resistance to the benefit, owing to the fact that it deals with personal affairs and does not interfere with the work timetable.

#### **RESULTS**

##### **Ratios based on use**

Number of beneficiaries: 13 female workers and 0 males. Female beneficiaries correspond to 28% of the women employees who have become mothers since the measure was implanted in 2014.

It was seen that workers of both sexes are more disposed to taking advantage of this measure when the first baby is born in comparison with children arriving thereafter.

##### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

The measure is assessed through questionnaires and has received approval. Owing to the sensitive nature of the topic, the questionnaire is in general terms and only aims at evaluating the level of satisfaction and the use of the measure, as well as receiving suggestions on how to improve it. The Human Resources Management considers that a positive assessment is the most relevant criterion in deciding to continue offering the measure.

##### **Adjustments planned**

The Human Resources Management considers that the measure is adequate in its present state: its aim is not to have an extensive impact but rather, it is a benefit available to those who think it will be useful. The workers' suggestion that is most frequently made, is that the company should offer more sessions. The company is also studying the possibility of pursuing a more pro-active approach targeting male workers who return to their professional duties after interruptions due to family matters.

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## REDES ENERGÉTICAS NACIONAIS (REN) – PROMOTION AND DISSEMINATION OF AN IN-HOUSE VIDEO ON EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS

### NAME OF THE ORGANISATION

Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN), S.A.

### SECTOR

Electric Power and Natural Gas transmission  
Private profit-making sector (Continental Portugal)  
Branch of activity: Electric power transmission and Natural gas distribution– European Code NACE D35.1.2 e D35.2.2  
Traditionally seen as a masculine sector with an under-representation of the feminine labour force.

### NUMBER OF WORKERS

684 employees  
518 men (75.7%) and 166 women (24.3%)

### DESCRIPTION AND GOAL OF ACTION(S)

Description: promotion and dissemination of an in-house video about equality between men and women with the workers taking part in the film.

#### Conditions:

The video, which lasts four minutes and six seconds (4'06"), is divided into four parts dealing with equality between men and women:

1. the NÓS Programme framework and the topic focusing on Equality made by the Manager of Human Resources;
2. women doing jobs traditionally done by men: from the perspective of a woman who is a Building Project Manager;
3. feminine leadership: a male worker's perspective of having a woman superior;
4. shared parenting: from the perspectives of a male and a female worker about the importance of sharing parental leave – video showing the family environment.

#### Goals:

- encourage workers of both sexes to reflect upon equality between men and women;
- publicise the perspective of the workers themselves so that their partners may also feel more inclined to take shared initial parental leave.

### TARGET AUDIENCE OF ACTION(S)

All the company's workers

### IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Framework

When it joined *iGen* - a Forum of Organisations for Equality, the company established a wide range of commitments by promoting a balance and equality between men and women. Together with this process, the programme called NÓS (meaning "US") was set up with the aim of bringing all the measures offered by the company in this field into a single programme. The Programme rests upon three main axes: Balance, Equality and Inclusion. The topic based on a work-family balance falls along the Balance axis and includes four sub-axes: citizenship, work-life balance, family and health.

#### Implementation

The video is the outcome of activity falling within the NÓS Programme and has the aim of promoting the subject of equality between men and women. It was decided to air the opinions of both the company's male and female workers in order to make the viewing public more aware of the topic of shared parenthood. The idea of making the video came from the Human Resources Management and was filmed as one of the in-house initiatives seeking to promote the subject of Gender Equality. The video was launched 2015 and shown on the company's own television sets. At present, it is only available on the company's internal communication network.

#### Budget and Resources

No costs arose when the measure was implemented; the budget reserved for it was included in the resources paying for the NÓS Programme and cost about 15% of the entire Programme budget.

#### Consolidation and sustainability of the good practice

The video was given prime-time on the company's internal TV channels for about one month. It is available for viewing on the company's internal communication network.

### **SUCCESS FACTORS, CHALLENGES AND FACILITATING FACTORS**

- › Company leadership has shown itself to be receptive to promoting this measure.
- › Low cost of producing the video.
- › The possibility of workers of both sexes identifying with their partners. The Human Resources Management believes that in this way, it is possible to obtain a greater impact on the workers' awareness leading them to share parenting.

### **RESULTS**

#### **Results – Number of times seen:**

Number of times the video has been seen on the company's internal communication network: 91

### **Assessment of satisfaction with the measure**

Relying on informal feedback, the video was assessed positively. The Human Resources Management believes that its success is linked to its visibility owing to the fact that the workers themselves speak about their own experiences in the video.

### **Adjustments planned**

The Human Resources Management does not foresee any adjustment to this measure.

### **CONTACT**

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