



A Toolkit for Gender Equality in Practice - Initiative

BDA-ZDH-bvöd-DGB (joint initiatives)

Family friendly policies: Tripartite “Charter for Family-friendly working hours”, “Success factor family”, ESF Programm “Equality of women in business” and other initiatives

Summary of the initiative

This fiche presents a summary of a selection of initiatives jointly submitted by BDA (Confederation of German Employers' Associations), ZDH (German Confederation of Skilled Crafts), bvöd (Federal association of public services) and DGB (Confederation of German Trade Unions) with a focus on 2 priorities of the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality.

Priority 3: Supporting work-life balance

The German Social Partners have developed a long standing commitment to support a better work-life-balance at company or sectoral level and are engaged in several initiatives partly tripartite partly bilateral or unilateral.

German Social Partners agree that work-life balance continues to be the most important component for gender equality. This relates not only to childcare but also to care of other family members.

The challenge in collective agreements, company-level agreements and in corporate culture consists in enabling employees to have the necessary flexibility whilst not losing sight of the requirements of businesses.

The main features of this engagement can be summarised as follows:

Tripartite

Since 2006 in the context of the business platform “Success factor family”, the German Federal Family Ministry, the leading business federations (BDI, BDA, DIHK, ZDH) and DGB have been striving to make family-friendliness a distinguishing feature of the German economy. This platform offers comprehensive information on family-friendly enterprise policies, e.g. best practices, studies, numerous guides on work-life balance. It is co-financed by the ESF, bundles other activities on work-life balance, including an enterprise network, an enterprise competition, a family-friendly work initiative and a financial support programme to promote enterprise engagement in childcare.

In February 2011, the Presidents of BDA, ZDH and DIHK (Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry) jointly with DGB and German Federal Family Minister signed the “Charter for family-friendly working hours”, in which the signatories pledge to have a broader variety of working time models aimed at improving work-life balance. It is seen as an important contribution to retain well-qualified employees and enhance employer attractiveness. At a family summit in March 2013, the charter was evaluated for the first time.

Unilateral initiatives and/or in cooperation with government /Employer’s initiatives



As a follow-up to the charter, ZDH and the German Federal Family Ministry jointly held an event in Berlin in November 2012 on “Family-friendliness – a success factor for craft businesses”, at which best practices were presented and approaches for family-friendly working conditions elaborated. In the context of the evaluation of the joint Charter, BDA published a brochure on “Collective bargaining policy for family-friendly working time” with the networking bureau “Erfolgsfaktor Familie” (‘success factor family’, see above). In this publication BDA seeks to clarify measures and progress of employer federations and companies in implementing family-friendly working hours. Using examples, the brochure shows how social partners can contribute to a flexible structuring of working time.

Furthermore, ZDH published an empirical study by the Ludwig-Fröhler-Institut on “Family-friendliness of craft businesses”. In addition, many craft organisations are engaged in local initiatives to promote work-life balance. For instance, the Chamber of Crafts in Cologne is a member of the Cologne alliance for families and also a project partner of “Family-friendly commercial businesses in Cologne”. The aim of this alliance is to inform and support companies on all issues linked to the reconciliation of profession, family and/or care. At the end of the two-year project, the alliance will make an award “Familienfreundliches Kölner Gewerbegebiet”. Lastly, the Brunswick-Lüneburg-Stade Chamber of Crafts offers guidance and publications for implementation of family-friendly structures (e.g. working hours or childcare) and for reconciliation of profession and care. It publishes portraits of family-friendly craft businesses and issues a seal of approval for family-friendly businesses (“FaMi-Siegel”).

Trade union initiatives / and in cooperation with government

a) DGB has since 2003 been running the consultancy project “Zwischen Beruf und Familie passt kein oder”, (No room for “or” between profession and family), which is financed by the Foundation ‘BAG Stiftung Walter Hesselbach’.

The project’s steering group is composed of trade union representatives responsible for women’s and equality policy in the DGB and their member organisations IG BAU, IG BCE, EVG, IGM, NGG and ver.di. The purpose of the approach is to develop customised solutions locally in order to change working conditions enabling a better work-life balance. Starting point of the process initiated at company level is a survey based assessment of the employees’ needs for better working conditions which serves as a basis for discussions in several workshops. The success of the project is based on the fact that strategies are initiated which are coordinated jointly with the relevant actors at company level. Topics and available good practices include “Strengthening promotion of health at work”, “Better organisation of childcare”, “Using the work-life balance as a locational advantage”, “Enshrining the work-life balance in the sector”, “Supporting works councils” as well as “Enabling care of relatives”, “Work organisation and corporate culture”, “Family-friendly structuring of working time”.

b) The project “Organising a good work-life balance” by DGB and the German Federal Family Ministry is in its fourth phase with the focus on working hours tailored to life phases.

The project content is closely linked to national current trade union projects and campaigns in this area and provides further support to, e.g. the chemical workers’ union (IG BCE) campaign “Family-friendly personnel policy. Coordinating work and family”, the family policy activities of IG Metall in the framework of their campaign “Work: secure and fair!” and the working time initiative by public service union ver.di “Take your time”. The aim of the project is to promote flexible and family-friendly working time models, as well as to widen and coordinate existing approaches. To this end, cooperation arrangements with trade unions as well as the relevant qualification and networking of works councils and personnel committees will be extended. Deliverables include effective awareness-raising seminars, workshops, specialised conferences, discussions about the future thematic priorities, and the publication of practical brochures.



Priority 1: Addressing gender roles

Tripartite

As mentioned in the 2009 final evaluation report on the Framework of Actions on Gender Equality, the German Social Partners continue to engage in the federal programme for “Equality of women in business” (Bundesinitiative GLEICHSTELLEN) run by the German Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS). The programme with financial support by the ESF aims at further improving professional opportunities for women and supporting women in recognising and tapping their employment potential. BDA, ZDH, DGB and BMAS will draft new social partner guidelines for managing demographic change for the new ESF funding period (2014-2020), which has as a priority the promotion of equality between women and men in professional life.

Unilateral

The skilled craft sector is strongly engaged in attracting more women into the various craft trades. Numerous craft businesses belonging to the Münster Chamber of Crafts are involved in the “FAM2TEC” project, which is designed to enthuse young women for technology. Furthermore, in 2011 and 2012 the Freiburg Chamber of Crafts’ Academy offered young women in technical craft training action days to help them find their way better in the everyday working world of technically oriented professions.

Priorities

Addressing gender roles, Supporting work-life balance

Type

Social Partners

Country

Germany

Model of social partnership

Tripartite, Unilateral (Employer/Trade union) and/or in cooperation with government

Launch date

n/a

References

Work-life balance:

<http://www.bmfsfj.de> – “Family friendly Charter”;

<http://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de> – “Success factor family”

<http://www.frauen.dgb.de> – “No room for ‘or’ between profession and family” (Zwischen Beruf und Familie passt kein oder) and <http://www.familienernaehrerin.de>

<http://www.arbeitgeber.de> – “Collective bargaining policy for family-friendly working time” (Tarifpolitik für familienbewusste Arbeitszeiten)

Addressing gender roles:

<http://www.bundesinitiative-gleichstellen.de> – “Equal Opportunities for women in business” (Gleichstellung von Frauen in der Wirtschaft)

<http://www.fam2tec.de>

