

Family policies, working time flexibility and social cohesion

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Main topics and disseminated projects

- Main sub themes:
 - (1) Social outcomes of family policies;
 - (2) Working time flexibility, social cohesion and work-care balance
- We disseminated research findings from the following projects
 - (1) WORKCARE (2006-2009), a project the social quality and changing relationships between work, care and welfare in Europe;
 - (2) HWF (2000-2003), a project on households, work and flexibility;
 - (3) IMISCOE (2004-2009), a project on international migration, integration and social cohesion;
 - Child poverty and child well-being in the European Union, 2009 (DG EMPL)
 - to highlight the role of maternal part-time work on the risk of poverty among children

Aim of the Hungarian team

To support the present policy debates in Hungary on the reform of family and employment policies to create incentives for increasing the extremely low labour market participation of mothers with young children by providing evidences

- (i) on how working time flexibility affects work-life balance and
- (ii) on how the benefits system and the institutional child care influence labour market participation, and thinking further
- (iii) how these policy tools can ease decisions on employment and fertility, as well as how can they promote social cohesion by enhancing labour market participation of social groups at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The Hungarian team

HU Team (P5): TÁRKI – Social Research Institute

Researchers: Prof. Endre Sik (project leader), András Gábos

Knowledge transfer person: Johanna Giczi (ELTE)

Communication: Ákos Bognár (Image Factory)

Advisory board: Katalin Keveházi (Jól-lét Foundation), Gyula Pulay
(Research Institute of the National Audit Office, Roundtable on
Population)

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Local dissemination events

1. NGO-focused dissemination event

- Date: 24 November 2010
- Participants: representatives of main NGO's, employee's organisations, governmental agencies (Research Institute of the National Audit Office, National Family and Social Policy Institute, National Employment Public Foundation, CSO, etc.), companies, researchers, undergraduates
- Dissemination materials:
 - DM1: Working time flexibility, work-family conflict and social cohesion (HU, EN)
 - DM2: Social outcomes of family policies (HU, EN)

Local dissemination events

2. Policy maker dissemination event

- Date: 27 October 2011
- Participants: MP (floor leader of the Christian Democrats – law on the protection of families), representatives of the two ministries (Ministry of National Resources, and Ministry of national Economy), governmental agencies (Research Institute of the National Audit Office, National Family and Social Policy Institute, National Employment Public Foundation, etc.), representatives of NGO's, researchers
- Dissemination material: Work-life balance, working time flexibility and social cohesion (HU)
- Focus on two policy tools: part-time work and institutional child care

Key results

- The Scandinavian model is seen as idealtyp
- Similar levels of family policy expenditure, but
 - low levels of maternal employment
 - low levels of fertility
- High share of cash benefits within all expenditure, extended parental leave system
- Low incomes in part-time employment
- Poor performance of part-time maternal employment in terms of child poverty reduction in a cross-European comparison
- High fix labour costs
- Poor availability of child care institutions in disadvantaged, mostly rural regions

Policy recommendations

- To consider the European best practices, but follow them carefully, after a detailed analysis of the national context
- To improve the system by making it as flexible as possible to be adaptable to individual situations at a large extent
- To shift resources from cash benefits to services
- To lower the fix costs of employment (e.g. travel)
- To increase the coverage of child care system to reach the disadvantaged as well by
 - encouraging alternative forms (like family creches)
 - extending the existing system
 - providing opportunities via the cafeteria system

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