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“CESARE BATTISTI”



PROGETTO ERASMUS PLUS KA229  
"WAW\_WOMEN AND WELFARE "  
CODICE PROGETTO 2019-1-IT02-KA229-063282\_1  
AZIONE SCHOOL EXCHANGE PARTNERSHIP



Project Erasmus+ KA229

**WAW - WOMEN AND WELFARE**

Project Code 2019-1-IT02-KA229-063282\_1

Action school Exchange Partnership



Thanks to

partner schools:

Agrupamento de Escolas de Vilela, Portugal

Siyavuspasa Mesleki ve Teknik Anadolu Lisesi, Turkey

Carmen de Burgos in Almeria, Spain

Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Bohaterów Powstania Styczniowego w

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Forssan yhteislyseo, Finland

and

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2019-2022



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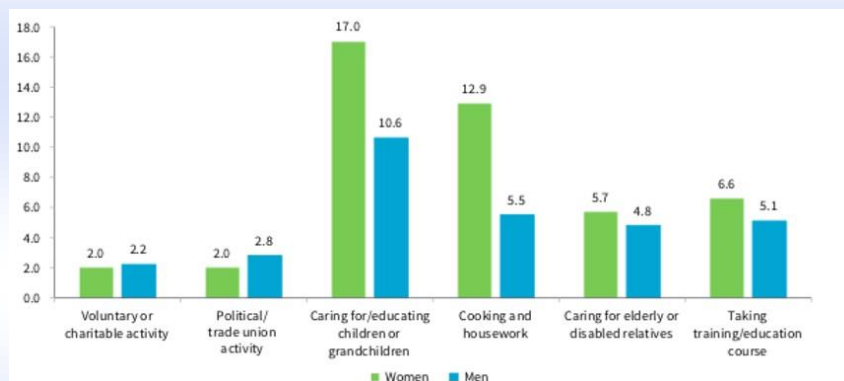
## Introduction

Choosing partners and the theme of the project

*“Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence in order to fulfill their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way”.*

When Europe's 20 Pillars of Social Rights were proclaimed in 2017, work-life balance was enshrined as a fundamental social right. This initiative was designed to take into account the developments in society over the past decade and to enable parents and other figures with care responsibilities to find a better balance between family life and work as well as to encourage better sharing of responsibilities within the family between men and women. In this perspective, in recent years, work-life balance policies have become more and more central to European and national policies, aiming not only at breaking down barriers to women's access to work, but also at making the time invested in care and daily domestic activities more equally distributed between men and women. However, despite these efforts, the gender gap in work-life balance is still significant, rather precarious and unbalanced to the detriment of the female component, partly as a result of the persistence of gender stereotypes.

This is confirmed by the graph on "Average hours per week for care activities (by gender)" \_source Eurofound Database.



Considering the relevance of the issue in 2019 the IISS "Cesare Battisti" has presented a KA2 Key Action project with the theme "Women and Welfare", in order to investigate the reconciliation policies in the countries involved. The partnership countries have been chosen in order to identify representative states of Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western Europe and their welfare policies, with the aim of reflecting upon the services to support equal gender opportunities and care (for children, elderly and disabled people).



## Our starting point



FINLAND OFFERS A VERY LONG PARENTAL LEAVE TO ITS EMPLOYEES AND AS OF 2021, BOTH PARENTS ARE ENTITLED TO TAKE A PARENTAL LEAVE OF 164 DAYS EACH. PARENTS WILL BE ALLOWED TO TRANSFER 69 DAYS FROM THEIR SHARE TO THE OTHER PARENT. THE PARENTAL ALLOWANCE WILL BE PAID UP TO THE CHILD'S 13 WEEKS



THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN POLAND IS THE TRADITIONAL MODEL OF FAMILY. WOMEN MUST TAKE CARE OF THE HOUSE AND LOOK AFTER CHILDREN, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THEY SHOULD ALSO GET THE CHANCE TO IMPROVE THEIR CAREER.



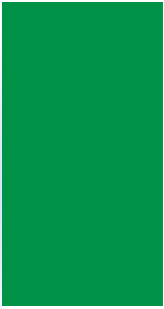
IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, THE SITUATION OF WOMAN HAS IMPROVED IN SOME AREAS SUCH AS WORK OR HOUSEWORK. NONETHELESS, THERE IS STILL TOO MUCH TO DO IN ALMOST EVERY ASPECT. IF WE WORK TOGETHER, IN A FEW YEARS WE WILL BE ABLE TO TOTALLY ACHIEVE EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.



PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S LIVES AND PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN PORTUGAL. PORTUGAL HAS ALREADY MADE A LOT OF PROGRESS IN TERMS OF GENDER EQUALITY, PLACING ITSELF, IN THE MOST REPRESENTATIVE VALUES, ALREADY WITHIN THE EUROPEAN AVERAGE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE STILL AREAS THAT NEED TO BE IMPROVED, SO THAT MENTAL AND CULTURAL VALUES ARE WITHIN THE DESIRABLE FOR GENDER EQUALITY.



TURKISH LEGISLATION GUARANTEES A TOTAL OF SIXTEEN (16) WEEKS OF PAID MATERNITY LEAVE; EIGHT WEEKS (8) TO BE TAKEN BEFORE AND EIGHT (8) TO FOLLOW THE BIRTH (ARTICLE 74, TURKISH LABOUR CODE NO). IF MULTIPLE PREGNANCIES (TWINS OR MORE) OCCUR, MATERNITY LEAVE IS EXTENDED TO A TOTAL OF EIGHTEEN (18) WEEKS.



IN ITALY, MATERNITY LEAVE IS COMPULSORY AND WOMEN ARE ALLOWED TO TAKE TIME OFF WORK UP TO A MAXIMUM OF TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE EXPECTED DATE OF BIRTH AND THREE MONTHS AFTER THE BIRTH OF THE CHILD. IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES, WOMEN MAY ASK THEIR EMPLOYERS FOR EXTRA TIME OFF BEFORE THE DATE OF THE BABY'S BIRTH WHERE A PREGNANCY IS CONSIDERED TO BE AT RISK AND WHERE THE JOB WOULD PUT HER OR THE BABY'S HEALTH AT RISK.

## Work organisation

The project execution started with a launching meeting where each partner school was informed about the project activities and details and tasks were equally distributed. Further meetings focused on the knowledge of welfare laws and policies, differences and changes in the various European contexts, from the north to the south. The focus of the analysis on women's condition has been the data collected from the survey carried out through a questionnaire. A crucial and challenging moment was selecting the questions that had to be representative for the subsequent data processing.

## Difficulties encountered during the pandemic period

Covid-19 pandemic has had a great impact on many activities conducted or planned within the project. The mobility in Poland was cancelled in March 2020, but in spite of this, all the schools involved in the project showed flexibility and pragmatism; for about a year, video calls followed each other in order to better organise the activities and help the students to achieve the desired results, as well as to continue the project by proposing distance study methods through the use of digital tools. During this time, the questionnaire has been developed and its administration has been implemented, with all the challenges related to the pandemic situation. The project gained a 12-month extension. As soon as the Covid situation improved, mobility operations were resumed.



## Chapter 1 – *Legislation*

- Women, families and the State of Welfare in Europe: legislation

In this chapter we will examine in detail the regulations in force in each of the countries participating in the project.

We felt it important to start our research from the study of legislation because this has allowed us to understand how much the problem is perceived in each country, the way it has been dealt with, the tools used to solve it as well as the differences between the various legislations. The study and in-depth analysis of legislation has also allowed us to better coordinate and address "bottom-up proposals" that are the subject of the final part of our work.

In particular, our study focused on:

Women's participation in the workforce: in all countries, unfortunately, a lower percentage of women with children working than men has been found, as opposed to an often higher level of schooling. We have also noticed that the phenomenon - of which we speak so much today - where women are paid less than men for equal work is unfortunately still widespread; however, there is awareness of the problem in all countries and the need to intervene is increasingly widespread.

Pregnancy protection: all countries have legislation that tends to protect pregnant workers, providing for periods of compulsory and optional abstention and preservation of employment upon return.

Maternity and parental leave: most legislations foresee the possibility for both parents to request parental leave after the child's birth, in the belief that both mothers and fathers are important for the child

Tax benefits: all countries provide - for various reasons - tax breaks and benefits at the time of the birth of a child or subsequently in support of families with children. The benefits provided are represented by: sums of money paid at the moment of birth; monthly family allowances; bonuses for nursery schools.

Let's now get to the heart of the matter and discover how each country has addressed "female welfare" and the protection of working women



Situation in Poland:

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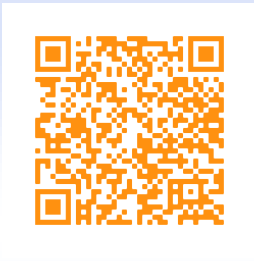
Situation in Italy:

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Situation in Portugal:

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Situation in Turkey:

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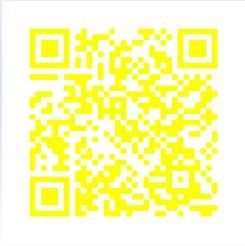






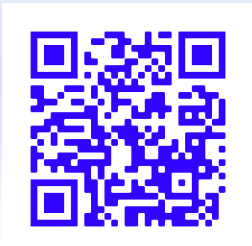
Situation in Spain:

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Situation in Finland:

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## **Chapter 2 - Report on the well-being of women in Finland, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Italy, Poland**

- The survey, the sample and the questionnaire: criteria for choosing questions and methods of administration

### *The survey*

The very topical theme of the survey, both at national and European level, is the work-life balance. The aim of the research was to acquire data on the condition of women in order to obtain useful elements not only for discussions and analyzes relating to the various situations but also for the elaboration of proposals.

The questionnaire was addressed to women in the active and full phase, of greater autonomy and responsibility including the formation of the couple and the family, children, important choices in the workplace.

The survey was carried out by students from the various countries involved in the Erasmus project; the women interviewed are mostly teachers and family members; due to the pandemic situation it was not possible to interview other people.

### *The sample and the questionnaire*

The survey was developed in several phases.

First of all, the questionnaire-interview was prepared, and the sample of interviewees was defined (all women grouped in three age brackets 18-30, 31-45, >45 considered crucial both for the needs of reconciliation, on the one hand, and for the prospects of personal fulfilment, on the other).

The questionnaire consists of a general part made up of classic ascriptive data (age, educational qualification, profession,...), the family nucleus composition, the employment position and work status, the family workloads and the care of children or relatives (e.g. elderly and/or non-self-sufficient parents), the knowledge and use of services and tools aimed at the reconciliation of work time and domestic care time (regulatory part), the proposals about actions to improve the management of time by women.

Afterwards, the questionnaire was administered personally by our students, in the form of an interview



### *Criteria for choosing questions and methods of administration*

The construction process of the questionnaire was quite complex. Once the objective of observation and the purposes of the survey had been defined at a general level, it was necessary to break it down into areas or sub-areas of investigation in order to narrow the field and focus attention on the elements with regard to which it had been decided to provide for the gathering and processing of information.

Next problem was the type of questions to be asked. Depending on their technical form, closed questions were chosen, i.e., questions that provide a range of answers defined in advance. Depending on the content, basic questions were chosen, i.e., questions relating personal details, occupation, etc. of the interviewee, structural questions, i.e., questions concerning fundamental attributes of the interviewee in relation to the research, and behaviour questions, i.e., questions concerning facts and the interviewee's experiences.

To provide a relaxed atmosphere to facilitate the flow of information, it was decided to write an introductory sentence to the research questionnaire. The survey was administered over a period of about 30 days from mid-December 2020 to about 1500 users.

The number of interviewed people, although lower than hoped for, proved adequate to identify a diverse sample in terms of gender, age, and profession.

The questionnaire was handed out on paper and via email, and a simple and clear style was chosen for the questions.

Both expedients allowed:

1. an immediate compilation (rare were the cases of users who preferred to fill it at home);
2. to provide any clarification required;
3. to also obtain the attendance of people who do not use the Internet or, in general, computer tools.

In addition, anonymity was guaranteed so as to make the answers more authentic.

In the later phase, the survey questionnaires were viewed one by one, and the data obtained, in the paper version manually inserted into a Forms file.

- Results of the survey in the countries that joined the project: Finland, Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Italy, Poland

### Survey\_QR



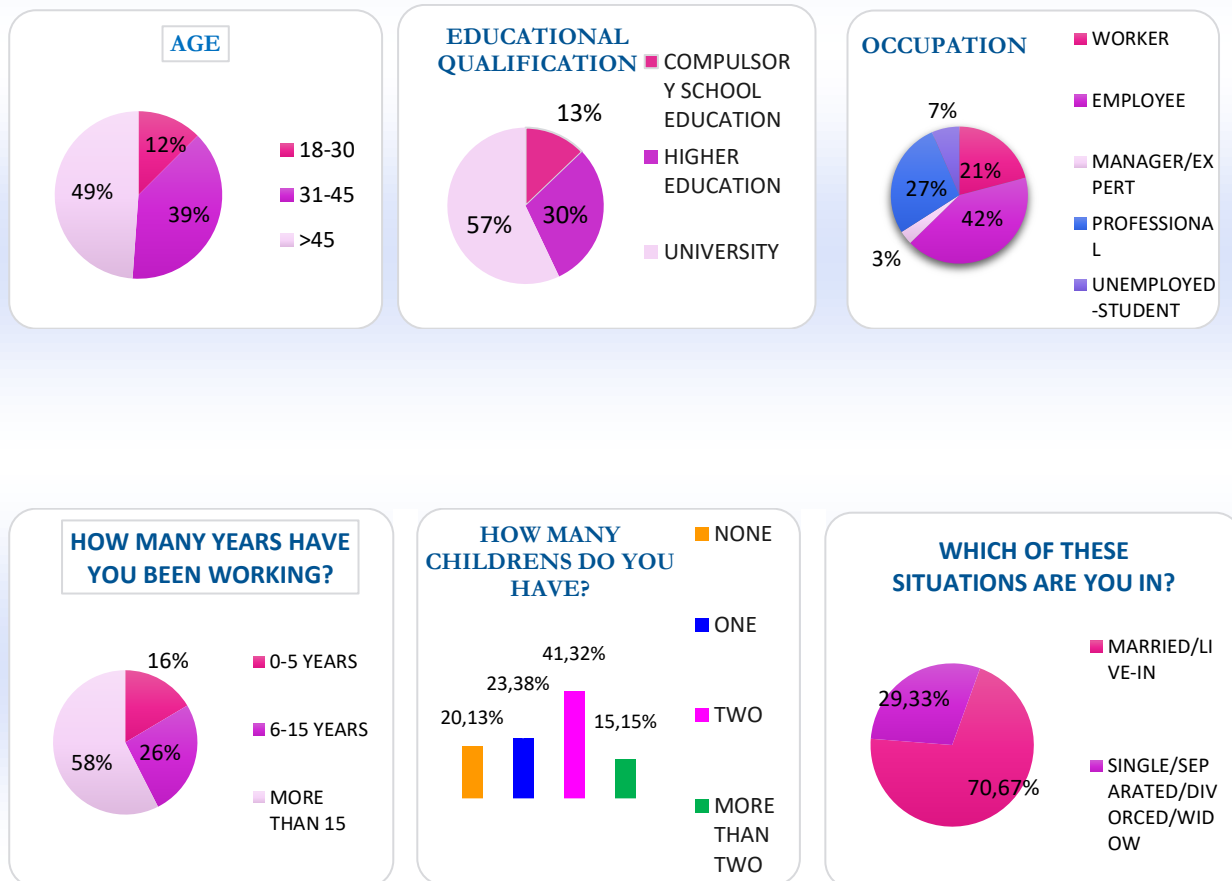


- Summary of the results

*Main part*

The first section of the questionnaire highlights some general characteristics of the respondents. Its sample size is 1500 women.

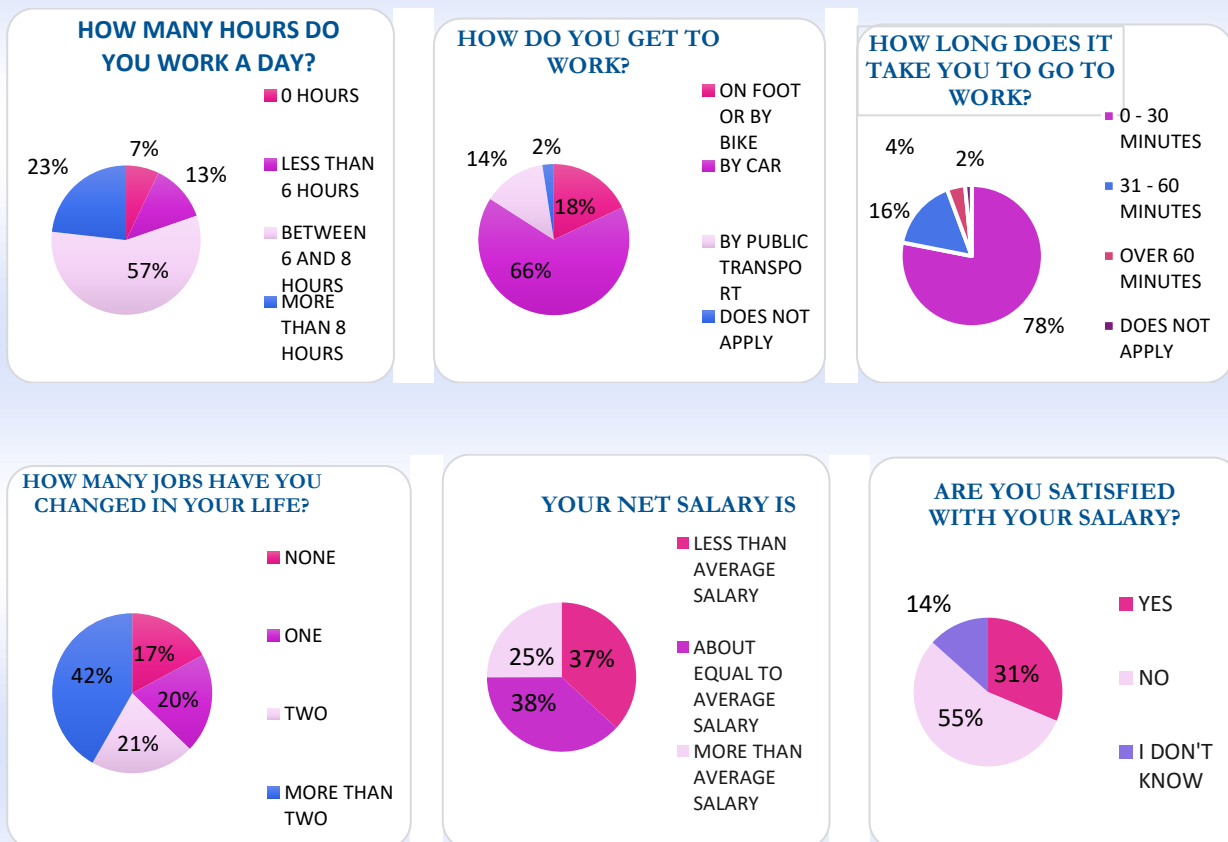
Who are the women interviewed? The interviewees involved in the project are over 30 years old (87.51%). Most of them are married or cohabiting (71%), with marginal shares of separated, divorced and single women. The educational qualifications of those interviewed are substantially medium-high (51% university graduates, 30% high school graduates, only the remaining 13% have a vocational school certificate); as a result, the professional profile, which, as is known, depends primarily on the educational qualification, is almost entirely distributed between professional, manager and employee categories, with prevalence of the latter level. In the survey 56.47% have more than two children while 20.13% have no children





## Employment situation

The following questions regarding the work situation show that 57.1% of the respondents work between 6 and 8 hours and 23.20% work more than 8 hours. The workplace is reached by only 32% using either public transports or by bike and walking. 78% reach their workstation in less than 30 minutes. 42% have changed more than two jobs and only 25% have a net salary above average. 55% of respondents are not satisfied with their salary/earnings and only 14% are.

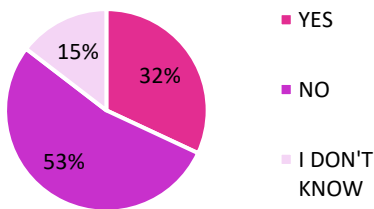


*Legal Part*

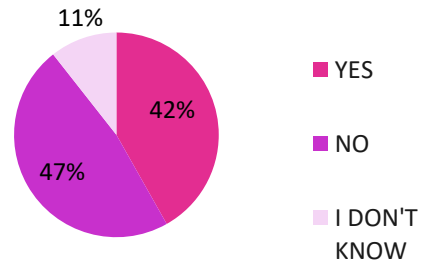
53% of the interviews believe that the law does not protect working women enough and 47% believe maternity leave is not appropriate even though 60% are able to benefit from the right to take maternity leave. To the question of whether pregnancy has affected their career, 41% answered in the affirmative. This last result highlights a widespread perception that maternity and career are not compatible. After maternity leave, returning to work does not (sometimes) correspond with returning to the position that was previously occupied. In many workplaces, maternity management is controversial and poorly protected. For many, going through several months of forced maternity leave could mean the end of their professional lives.

In fact, since there is no accessible network of aid (just think that nurseries can accept only 25% of children), a large proportion of Italian women are forced to leave work upon birth of their first child or to apply for part-time maternity leave.

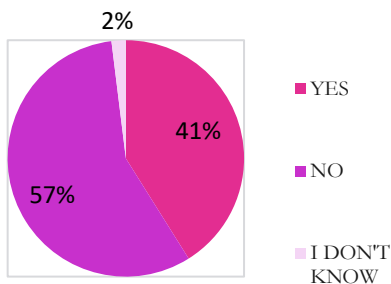
**DO YOU THINK THE LAW PROTECTS WOMEN WOKERS ENOUGH?**



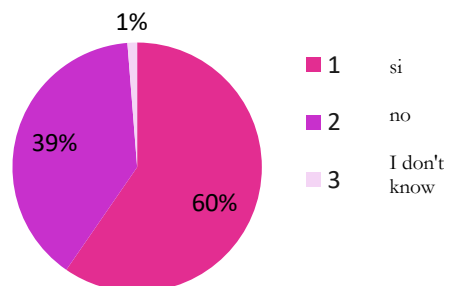
**DO YOU THINK THAT MATERNITY LEAVE IS APPROPRIATE TO THE NEEDS OF THE WORKER?**



**HAS YOUR CAREER BEEN INFLUENCED BY PREGNANCY?**



**WERE YOU ABLE TO BENEFIT FROM THE RIGHT TO PAID MATERNITY LEAVE?**



### State and corporate welfare

In a social context characterized by increasingly complex and heterogeneous needs, state and company welfare represents a concrete response to the renewed needs of workers, so much so that its diffusion within Italian companies is becoming a decisive factor, especially for women, who find in welfare an important integration of state interventions on maternity, family support, reconciliation and even for the reduction of gender discrimination.

According to our study, only 65% of respondents manage to carve out time for themselves (less than three hours).

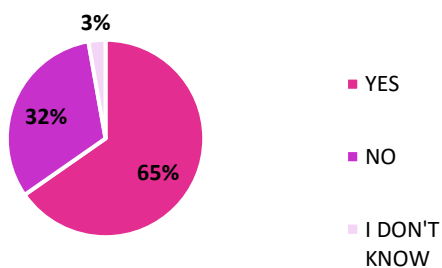
Forty per cent of childcare during work is entrusted to family members.

On the whole, therefore, we can find a very clear prevalence of the use of a parental network for the management of children, which succeeds in combining the cheapness of the solution (it is not necessary to 'pay' one's own relatives for the activity of care or support of one's own children) with greater serenity (I trust my parents more than a babysitter).

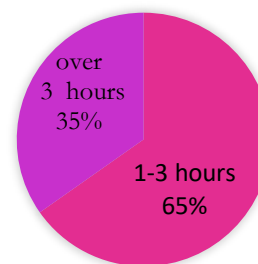
In addition to the difficulty of reconciling school schedules with work schedules (for example, the limited number of pre-school and kindergarten hours), both of which are rigid and binding, there are often further conflicts between work schedules and the schedules of children's extracurricular activities (gym, basketball ...). Also in this case, and certainly to a greater extent since the nursery school and kindergarten manage to 'cover' a larger part of the working day, the champion women ask for help to their family network.

The care of the non-self-sufficient person during working hours is entrusted to caregivers or family members by 37%.

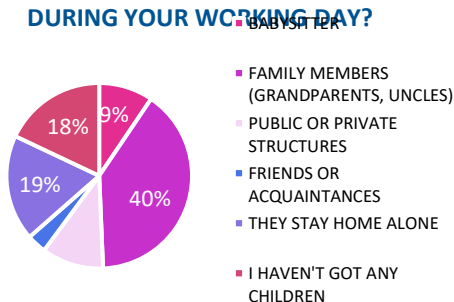
#### AFTER WORK, DO YOU HAVE TIME FOR YOUR FAMILY, FOR YOURSELF, FOR YOUR HOBBIES?



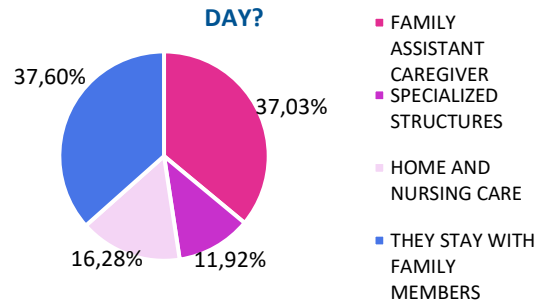
#### IF YES, HOW MUCH?



#### WHO TAKES CARE OF THE CHILDREN OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS, DURING YOUR WORKING DAY?



#### WHO TAKES CARE OF NOT SUFFICIENT FAMILY MEMBER DURING WORKING DAY?





The questionnaire results particularly highlighted that care loads for women continue to represent a penalizing factor; moreover, "the spread "of reconciliation tools and support for female employment and services is still limited and inconsistent.

## Similarities and differences between countries

A research has been made to figure out, with the use of simpler graphics, the differences about many aspects of the work life of women of all the countries involved in the project. We covered topics like the allowances a woman gets when she's either pregnant or just given birth to her child. We also addressed the rate of women workers, their salaries and the female workers involved in world politics.

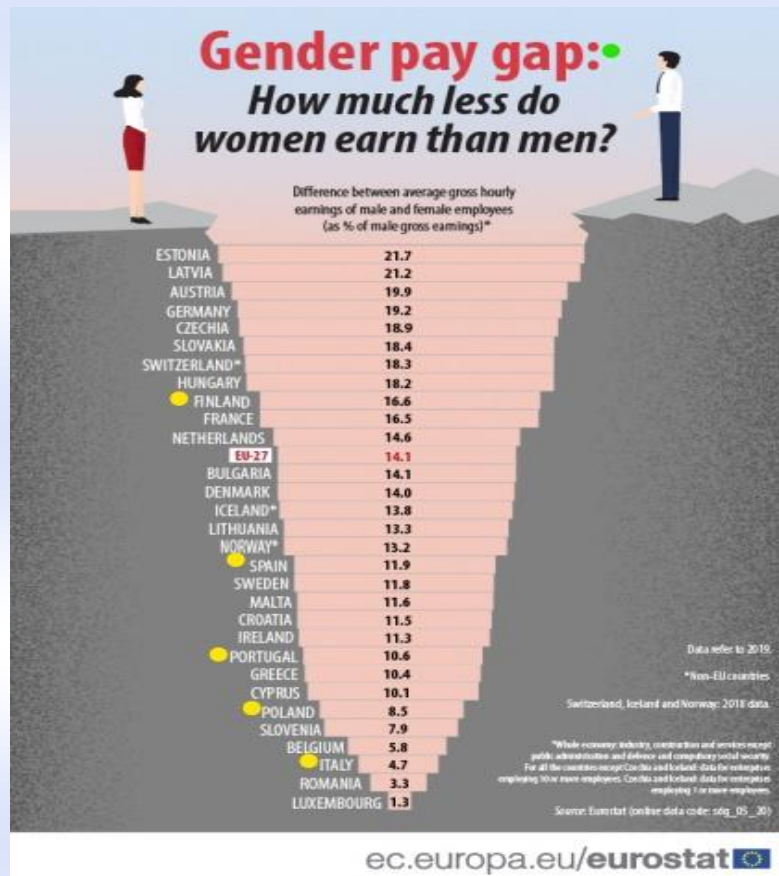
### MATERNITY LEAVE

Country	Maternity	Maternity Pay
Spain	16 weeks	100% of their salary
Portugal	6 Months	80% of their salary
Finland	164 days	Allowance based on annual income
Turkey	16 weeks	66% of their salary
Italy	5 Months	80% of their salary
Poland	20 weeks	100% of their salary

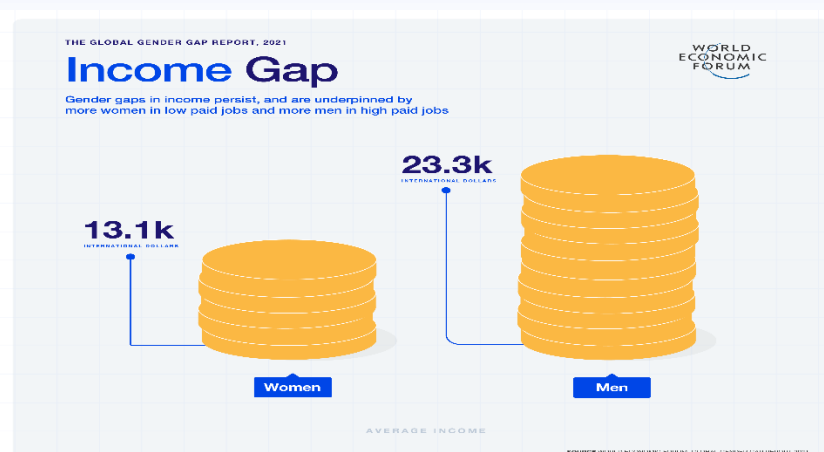




## PAY GAP PERCENTAGE



● Turkey data not available



According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021 another generation of women will have to wait for gender parity. As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be felt, closing the global gender gap has increased by a generation from 99.5 years to 135.6 years



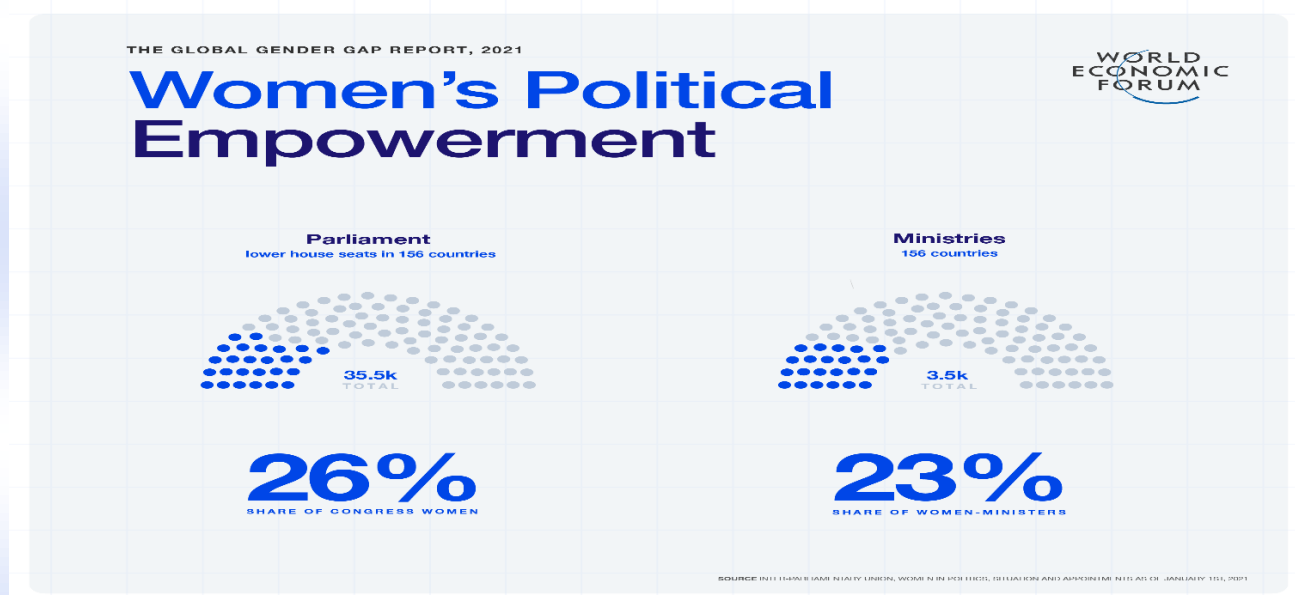
## FEMALE POLITICIANS

### Women in Ministerial position 2020

Country	Women	Total Ministerial	%
Poland	4	23	17,4
Spain	10	15	66,7
Finland	11	18	61,1
Portugal	8	19	42,1
Turkey	2	17	11,8
Italy	7	21	33,3

### Women in national parliament January 2022

Country	Women	Total Parliament	%
Poland	130	460	28,3
Spain	150	349	43,0
Finland	91	200	45,5
Portugal	92	230	40,0
Turkey	101	582	17,4
Italy	228	629	36,3





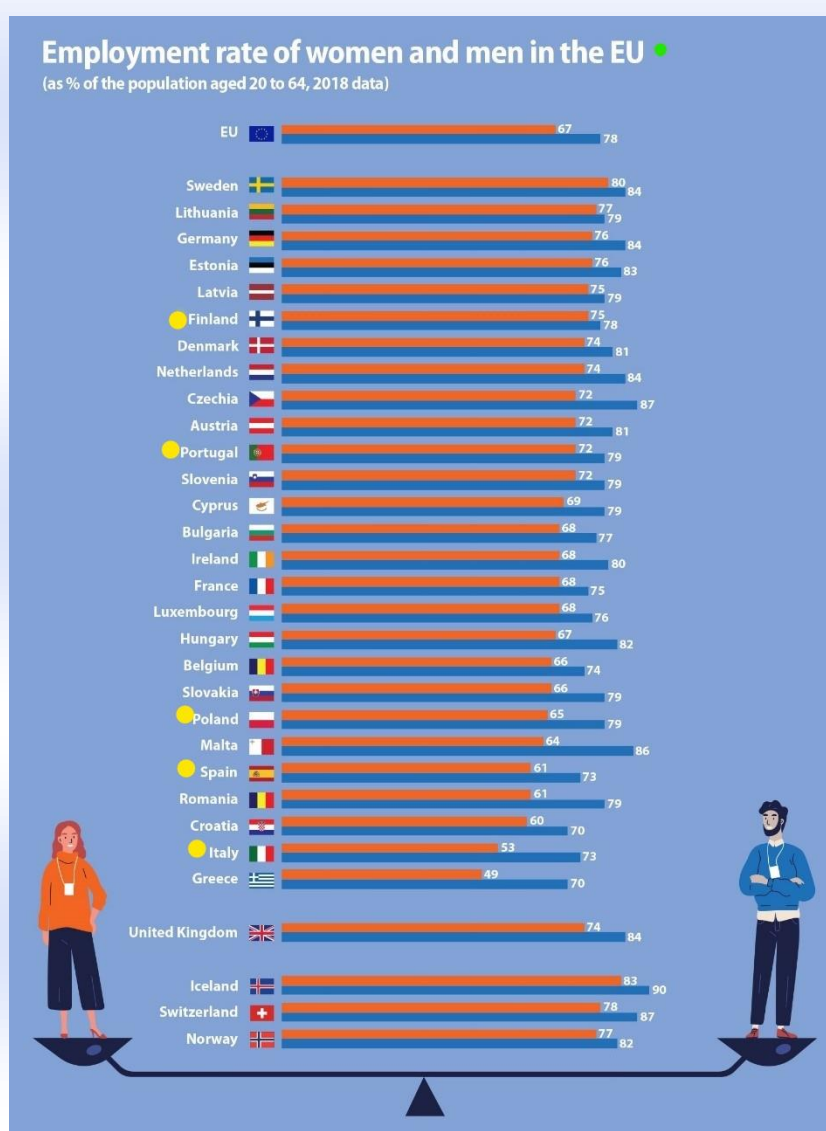
## EMPLOYEMENT RATE

### Women's employment rate increasing, but remains lower than men's

In 2018, the employment rate for women (aged between 20-64) in the European Union (EU) stood at 67%, one percentage-point (pp) increase from the previous year. However, the employment rate for women was still 12 pp (\*) less than the corresponding rate for men of the same age.

Among EU Member States Finland had employment rate for women at 75%, where Italy (53%) reported the lowest rates.

Across all Member States, the employment rate for men was higher than that of women



[ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

● Turkey data not available



## Bottom-up proposal

During this project the students noticed that even though Europe provides landmark legislation on welfare (Work-life balance, 2017), each individual member state presents a different approach to the issue. During the various work sessions, we noticed such differences. Here we decided to focus our attention on four significant topics: women's position on working life, maternity, care of the elderly, and freetime.

Therefore, following our meetings, which have seen us engaged in work phases such as research of the starting situation, data collection through a questionnaire, analysis and synthesis of data, brainstorming, each of the partner countries has defined its own proposals from the bottom up.

### Partnership country proposals

#### Poland

##### *Women position on working life*

Equal salaries for women and men performing the same job and enabling women to hold executive positions.

##### *Maternity*

More than 2 days of child care until he/she is 18. Sometimes many kind of issues can arise at any time when children are very young, so women must focus on their health and can't go to work.

##### *Care of the elderly*

Creating more state-run nursing homes for elderly where they can get professional care. It can be a solution for the problem of loneliness.

##### *Freetime*

Creating more facilities for children. It can help women find some time to develop their hobbies and do something for themselves.



## Spain

### *Women position on working life*

There are times when women can't get to high level job positions just because of their gender. We propose that when submitting your CV you don't need to specify your gender neither your age.

### *Maternity*

When a woman gets pregnant, they are usually allowed to get some time to take care of their baby, but that time it's not enough. We think they should get more time or have their working hours reduced.

### *Care of the elderly*

Taking care of the elderly is not cheap nor easy. We propose that the government provides caregivers to the families as well as bonus in order to buy the necessary goods.

### *Freetime*

Women are seen as the ones who have to take care of their children and their house. We reckon that such activities should be split up between all the family members.

## Finland

### *Women position on working life*

Issue: Employers may sometimes discriminate young women when hiring new employees because they fear they can get pregnant or have babies at home they need to care about and look after.

Proposal: Anonymous recruiting.

### *Maternity*

Issue: It is difficult to reconcile working life with family life.

Proposal: More flexible working hours and afternoon care for children.

### *Care of the elderly*

Issue: Luckily, this is not a big issue in Finland.

### *Freetime*

Issue: Finnish women are fairly contented with their freetime. Equal share of housework between women and men could be more balance



## Portugal

### *Women position on working life*

In Portugal women are not in a good position concerning their working life. Women need to be and feel much more equal to men when it comes to houseworks and family care; which still are women's most responsibility.

### *Maternity*

In Portugal, maternity leave is very short and feared, mainly due to the fact that women are afraid of getting fired and so ruin their future.

### *Care of the elderly*

Taking care of the elderly is still something very difficult for many people who don't want to cut their time off from their job and dedicate to their family and relatives in need, still because they are too much afraid they might lose their job.

### *Freetime*

To conclude, Portuguese women still need so much more time for themselves and for social life in order to achieve gender equality.

## Turkey

### *Women position on working life*

Women should be provided with mobbing departments where they can be given at least a psychologist and a lawyer to support and mainly prevent them from being bullied at work. In addition many people still consider some jobs, to be suitable only for men, totally excluding women.

### *Maternity*

Maternity leave should be recognized equally for men as well. Moreover, workplaces should provide more kindergartens to their employees.

### *Care of the elderly*

Actually, taking care of the elderly in Turkey is not such a big problem because people think it's okay to take care of their old ones at home and give them any kind of support. It would be a good thing anyway if the government could provide more structures for the elderly.

### *Freetime*

Educating men about gender equality e.g. teaching houseworks, child caring and give them a certification that must be compulsory. When maternity leave ends, parenting hours should also be organised and thought out considering the free amount of time women need



## **Italy**

### Women position on working life

Employers may sometimes discriminate young women when hiring new employees because they fear they can get pregnant or have babies at home they need to care about and look after. Proposal: eliminating discriminatory thinking

### Maternity

More attention to women and their families from public service and private companies.

Additional/extra paid leave.

Connections of several companies in local area providing shared services such as summer camps, after-school, sports activities...

### Care of the elderly

Serious removal of architectural barriers and buses/shuttles suitable for the independent movement of disable people.

Encourage the creation throughout the national territory of elderly centres that collaborate with territorial civic associations, so that the elderly centres don't become just a place to abandon old people, but a good place where they can still make their own community aid.

Implement home assistance.

### Freetime

Spaces and activities designed for children and parents, as for example the Helsinki

National Library;

Create cinema and theatre's nursery.

To conclude, it is possible to say that each member country has different needs, since it has a different management of welfare in its own country, sometimes very distant from the Community indications, but we can also see that some issues are widespread and therefore we can define a common proposal to the attention of the European Parliament, in the hope that it can be useful not only to the implementation of welfare policies, but also to a greater cultural unity of the European Community.



### Shared proposals

1. Flexible competitive maternity leave.
2. Increase incentives for companies offering services to facilitate the working day. Increase facilities and services of childcare and elderly care (crèches, company nursery, retirement homes, etc.). Providing free home care to low-income families.
3. Increase of tools that reduce or differently organise the working time (flexibility, smart working, etc.).
4. Anonymous recruiting.
5. Mandatory paternity leave of at least 5 months after the first months of the baby's birth, in order to stimulate the male culture of child care. This would create more balanced conditions between the two new parents from a work perspective, reducing discrimination against young women, potential mothers or new mothers. But above all, it would improve the culture of sharing the burden of care within couples.
6. Total contribution relief, in favour of the employer during the months in which the worker is on maternity leave.
7. Promote at the local level activities to raise awareness of the sharing of the work of caring for and raising children.

.. in this video some of the students' reflections.



We, as student, wish with all our hearts to be able to live our lives more peacefully in the future, without feeling deprived of our rights.





## CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative and quantitative results of this research confirm, on the whole, that the burden of having to reconcile study, work and family commitments falls mainly on women, who make the most of the tools available (such as leaving, part-time work, and so forth). They also show that it is possible to "combine" family and work, but this comes with difficulties and sacrifices that often cost those who make them expensive, in economic terms (salary, and later pension), in terms of career or health and in terms of time to devote to themselves. This is a situation that disadvantages women and thus goes against the principles of equal gender opportunity. However, they show an inconvenience that could be solved through adequate political and governmental measures to increase resources, improving existing laws and standardising them at the European level in order to create a social and civil environment in which women can fully realise their potential.



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