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Commission

Gender equality aspects of work and care in the context of COVID-19

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Care work and Work-life-balance in the context of COVID-19

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Justice

OUTLINE

- I. Tensions & increasing difficulties to achieve WLB due to COVID-19
- II. The transposition of the WLB Directive must proceed swiftly, but other measures are also necessary...
- III. An opportunity to boost WLB 2.0
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I- Tensions & increasing difficulties to achieve WLB due to COVID-19

- Lockdowns, school closure and teleworking have pushed society into a new reality in the family, working and social spheres of life.
- Difficulties for parents to balance work, parenting, care and schooling.
- Increase of tensions due to several factors.
- The unpaid workload gap is likely to further increase during the COVID-19 crisis due to a raise of care tasks.

II- The transposition of the WLB Directive must proceed swiftly, but other measures are also necessary...

- Direct help to families is urgently needed through universally designed measures.
- This should include a mix of **resources, flexible work arrangements, and services**, with extraordinary measures to prevent unnecessary suffering and ensure a **smooth transition towards life after the pandemic**.
- The transposition of the EU Work-Life Balance Directive must proceed swiftly ensuring **adequate payment of leaves**, regardless of the type of leave (paternity, parental, carers).
- Work-life balance is not only to be achieved through family leaves: **Employment rights + flexible working arrangements** are essential too.

- Transposition of the WLB + global experiment in distance working = opportunity for a total rethinking of workplace dynamics.
- Promotion of policies for a better Work-Life Balance reconciliation: a win-win situation for employers and employees, especially women.
- Moreover, men should be encouraged to take up more leaves in order to rebalance the disparity and trigger a positive change.

III- An opportunity to boost WLB 2.0

- Families need adequately paid leaves but they also rely on care services every day. Transposition of the Directive must be an opportunity to further develop early childhood education and care.
- These services are crucial for people to reconcile the different aspects of their lives such as family, work, health, care, leisure, or education.
- All these rights should be well promoted and boosted because people often do not properly know their rights. At COFACE, we launched a call on 8th of March on “learning, using and sharing your rights”.

IV- Solutions by national governments

- Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures to boost investment in social and healthcare services.
- Some governments have already passed measures with **extraordinary leaves, care vouchers, flexible work solutions, reflecting a mix of measures based on resources, services and flexible working.**
- Many other social and employment policy responses are emerging, as recently highlighted in an OECD brief on COVID-19.

Thank you!
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