



New Insights into (Hidden) Discrimination Against Mothers and Fathers at Work and in Applying for Jobs

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 Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft



Supported by the Rights, Equality
and Citizenship Programme
of the European Union (2014-2020)



parents@work – Project Facts

■ Duration: May 2019 – September 2021

■ Project Consortium:



■ Gleichbehandlungsanwaltschaft

■ Supported by:

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parents@work – Aims and Milestones

- Raising awareness for the topic of discrimination at the workplace, giving employees information where they can get support for recourse, support for employers
- Milestones and Products:
 - interviews with employees who have experienced discrimination
 - survey of employers on their current practices regarding work/family reconciliation
 - material for awareness raising: YouTube clips, website, brochure, training materials

<https://parentsatwork.eu/>

parents@work

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Parents@Work: Changing Perceptions!

Parents are disadvantaged in workplaces because of their parenting or childcare responsibilities. This has been shown in research as well as through experience gained by counselling agencies such as state equality bodies.

Discrimination often begins in pregnancy and later women continue to do the majority of childcare tasks. Thus, they are much more negatively affected than men. If men take on family responsibilities they do not meet the “masculine” role perception and are then also discriminated against in the workplace. Discrimination may include pejorative remarks, deterioration in work atmospheres, designation to inferior tasks and even termination of employment.

Discrimination usually occurs due to prejudices: parents are seen as being less flexible, productive and professionally involved and causing organisational difficulties to the employers because of their parenting responsibilities. Changing attitudes of companies, parenting employees themselves and society in general is necessary. This would lead to more positive perception and reduce discrimination against parents in the workplace. This is precisely the goal of the parents @ work project.

News

Online EU Expert Meeting in the context of the project „Parents@work“: 1 st March 2021, 10:00 - 12:00 and 13:00 - 15:00 (CET) 23/02/2021

3rd Newsletter of the Project: Parents@Work: Changing Perceptions! 18/12/2020

Follow Parent@work on Social Media! 24/09/2020

2nd Newsletter of the project: “Parents@Work: Changing Perceptions!” 22/06/2020

Experiences of Discrimination at the Workplace Based on Parenthood. Summary of Case Studies conducted in Austria and Croatia: “Parents@Work - Changing Perceptions” 28/05/2020

Austrian Research and Findings

- Views of employees: extensive interviews with 18 former clients from the Ombud for Equal Treatment were carried out (prior to COVID-19: from June 2019 – January 2020)
- Views of employers: qualitative interviews with seven selected employers and an online survey, in which 45 company representatives participated (also experiences during COVID-19: from April – September 2020)

Austrian findings from employees' perspective

- Discrimination experienced:
 - demotion (financial and/or position)
 - (attempted) dismissal and/or dissuasion
 - mocking and bullying by employers

Two examples of typical workplace discrimination



Ms Dora:

- upon return to work Ms Dora was demoted to a position below her qualification level and was not permitted to choose her preferred working days, additionally she was often unjustly accused of inferior performance
- she sought assistance from the Ombud for Equal Treatment and the Chamber of Labour
- out-of-court financial settlement was received



Mr Oliver:

- upon his application for paternity leave/parental part time? he was forced against his will to leave his job (they offered him only a 2-hour work week as a „copy boy“ instead of his requested 30 hours and he was accused of being unwilling to work)
- he sought legal assistance but decided against recourse and therefore looked for a new job instead

Conclusions

- Ongoing gender-specific role stereotyping regarding division of paid and unpaid work
- Perpetuation that the 40-hour week is superior to part-time work (affecting remuneration, value, qualification, promotion)
- Biases and prejudices that parenting automatically has a negative effect on performance
- Lack of awareness, regulation, standardisation and practice concerning parenting and work exist in the companies
- Legal aspect: adequate recourse is hindered by inconvenient, complicated and lengthy processes (helplessness and frustration sometimes lead to giving up)