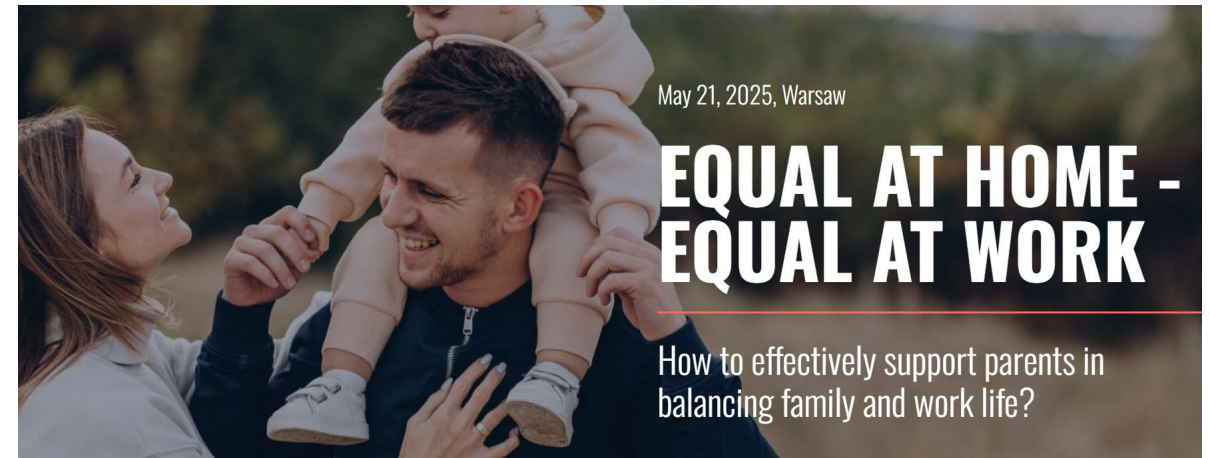


Values and policies:

What the EU Agenda means for Employers, Policymakers, and Families



- Elizabeth Gosme, Director, COFACE Families Europe
- Warsaw, 21st May 2025

Core challenge: work-life imbalances

An estimated 708 million women worldwide are outside the labour force due to unpaid care responsibilities ([ILO, 2024](#))

Unpaid care takes place mostly at home or in a family context, a context where values are taught and where resilience is built.

Family resilience centres on managing work-life transitions. ([rEUsilience](#))

Core challenge: work-life imbalances

COFACE Families Europe advocates daily in Brussels and across Europe to ensure that the European Union agenda not only acknowledges this work-life dilemma for families..

..but that this EU agenda also actively empowers families through strong policies particularly during key life transitions..

..such as the birth of one or more children, a major change in employment status of one or both parents, children's transitions through the school system, transitions of family members to old age.

Role of employers: a new social contract

For employers, the EU agenda offers both challenge and opportunity. The push for green, digital, and inclusive transformation demands adaptation.

The European social partners negotiate in a number of fields, including parental leave, childcare, gender equality.
When will they take position on family supportive workplaces?

Employers must be recognised not just as economic actors but as partners in shaping social progress.

Role of employers: a new social contract

This is why we are here today: to discuss the role of public policy but also to listen to employers, understand their challenges and highlight good practices in the workplace.

Workplace flexibility, family-supportive policies, and lifelong learning are no longer optional, they are essential strategies for economic and social resilience.

We expect employers to see family-friendliness and parental equality not as a burden but as a strategic advantage. **Family-friendly policies can unlock Europe's hidden talent pool.**

What kind of society do we want to build together?



Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) states that the Union “shall combat social exclusion and discrimination and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child.”

Article 153 (1) TFEU provides that the European Union shall “support and complement the activities of the Member States, in the field of equality between women and men with regard to labour market opportunities and treatment at work.”

Article 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union :
"To reconcile family and professional life, everyone shall have the right to protection from dismissal for a reason connected with maternity and the right to paid maternity leave and to parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child."

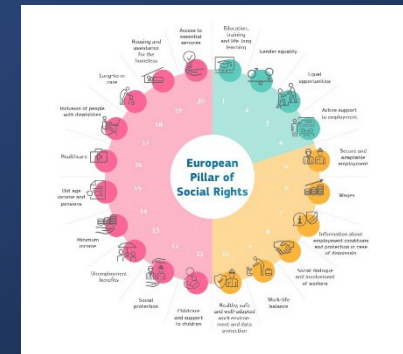
Families in EU initiatives

Policy frameworks with benchmarking and strategic guidelines to consolidate support and care services for families. Pillar of Social Rights, European Care Strategy, European Child Guarantee, Gender Equality strategy.

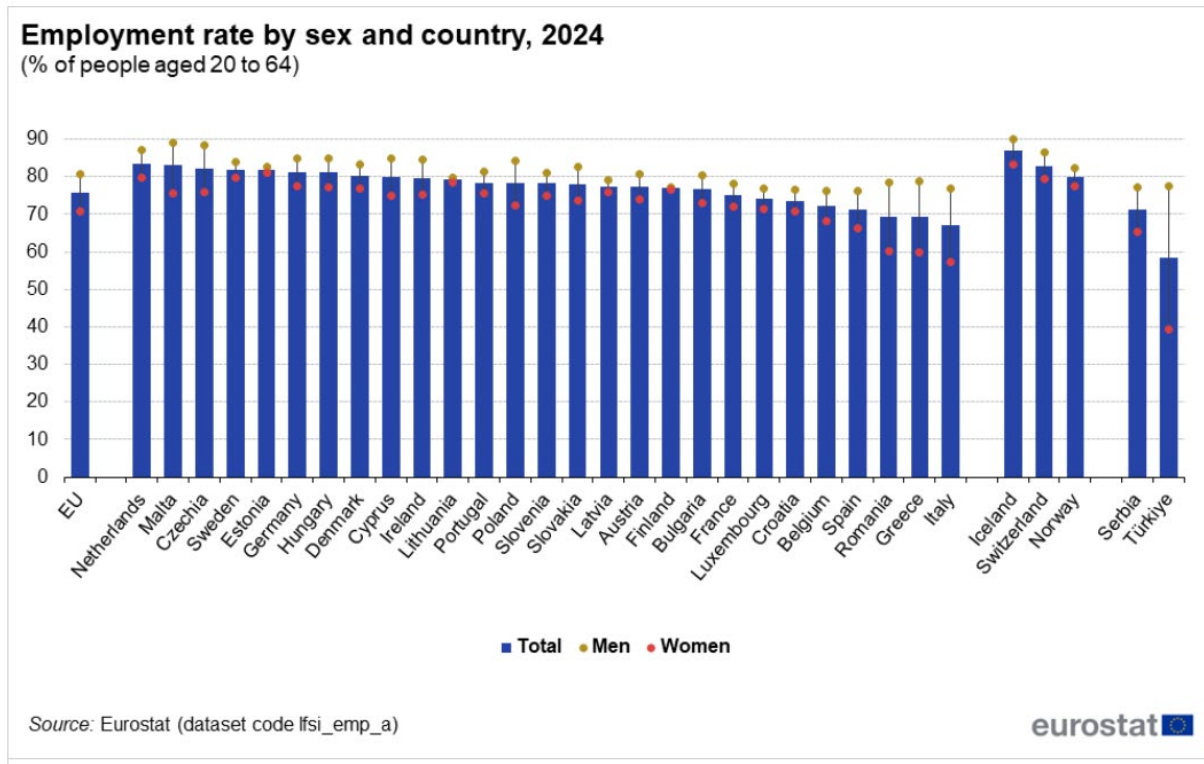
Laws which provide European minimum standards on working conditions, family-related leaves and flexible work arrangements, such as the 1992 pregnant workers directive, the 2019 work-life balance directive.

European funding streams which provide direct subsidies for service provision and training of professionals to support families and children. European Social Fund + invests in family centres, work-life balance measures and more.

European Pillar of Social Rights



2030 EU target to at least halve the gender employment gap by 2030 compared to 2019
 = aim for decrease from 11.7 pps in 2019 to 5.8 pps in 2030.



EU Work-life balance directive

The WLB directive is the first deliverable of the European Pillar of Social Rights, proposed in 2017 and adopted in 2019.

Recommendations by all [27 Ministers of social affairs](#) in December 2024 on ensuring work-life balance and gender equality for all generations in the context of demographic challenges.

However, there are still some gaps in transposition of the WLB Directive. New legislative proposal in 2027?

Funding streams: European Social Fund +

Support parents in balancing work and family responsibilities, such as childcare facilities, parental support programmes and family centres.

Opportunities for enhancing education for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as inclusive education for children with disabilities.

The negotiations are currently underway for the next 7-year budget from 2028-2035, which requires **a strong social fund moving forward.**

The path ahead: Equal at home-Equal at work

Employers

See family-friendliness not as a burden but as a strategic advantage.

Policy-makers

Full transposition of the EU work-life balance directive beyond minimum standards.

Families

Share the care and parental equality – family is teamwork, transfer to new generations.

Practitioners

Service quality close to communities, inclusive of all types of families.

Research

Knowledge base to help drive policy reform and develop strong service models.



Dziękuję

COFACE Families Europe

Email: lgosme@coface-eu.org

Website: www.coface-eu.org

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