

Identified as eige's good practice at european level

In 2014 the European Institute for Gender Equality has implemented a study to identify and assess good practices on reconciliation of work, family and private life, in EU Member States. The Family Audit certification was identified as EIGE good practice, in the area of benchmarking. The study has developed a methodological approach to identify good practices on reconciliation and has assessed 13 good practices, from 9 Member States (AT, DK, EE, DE, IT, MT, PL, SI, UK), in the area of self-regulation, benchmarking and awareness-raising.

The consultation meeting «From Practices with Potential to Good Practices on reconciliation» was organised within the framework of EIGE's programme on good practices on gender mainstreaming. It took place in Vilnius (Lithuania) on 22-23 May 2014.

The event represents a key step in EIGE's approach to the assessment of good practices in gender mainstreaming, and the involvement of relevant stakeholders is a pillar of such an approach.

The aim of the consultations is to assess practices with potential collected in EU28 and then to identify good practices. This meeting primarily targeted stakeholders and experts from the EU Member States, involved in the development and implementation of policies and practices to promote economic independence and access to better jobs and working conditions.

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality.



Further information:
<http://eige.europa.eu/>

Family Audit and Gender Mainstreaming

Increased wellbeing and productivity

The Family Audit initiative has a number of innovative aspects: it introduces family-friendly measures in line with the needs and expectations of employees and thus represents a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach; the work-life balance plan and its continuous monitoring stimulate quick changes within organisations; and a common information platform makes the data available in open-source format.

The main successes of the measure are that Family Audit certification benefits employees –both men and women –as well as organisations. The two most notable benefits are better employee wellbeing and increased productivity. Family audit certification also benefits companies by opening up access to tenders for public contracts, and is a tool for organisational improvement.

The Family Audit initiative is transferable because of its adaptability to different regional contexts. The Italian example demonstrates good governance and knowledge of the local environment and a broad cooperation network. It shows that a competent certification body plays a crucial role in its success. Despite this cultural resistance is still present within some organisations and represents one of the main challenges.



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Well-being Policy

in the European Community

Since 2000 the question of reconciling workplace commitments and care of the family has represented one of the priority areas in which the European Union has invited member states to take action, to support the common strategy for full employment, through the removal of any barriers hampering in particular the employment of women.

in Italy

In Italy, instruments allowing employers to pay closer attention to the family needs of employees have been shown to be particularly useful in promoting the reconciliation of workplace commitments and care of the family, as demonstrated by the results of implementing article 9 of the law of 8 March 2000 "Measures to support parenting, the right to care and training and the coordination of schedules in cities."

in the Autonomous Province of Trento

The Autonomous Province of Trento is an autonomous local authority that has extensive legislative and administrative powers in almost all fields of economic and social life in its area. In particular its jurisdiction includes education (from nursery schools to the university) economic development (from subsidies for businesses to social security measures), the geographical area (from town-planning to infrastructures) and welfare (from health to social policy). In 2011 the Agency for the Family, Parenting and Youth Policy was set up, responsible for family wellbeing policy and more general area policy.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Trentino is a frontier province that lies in the heart of the Alps, midway between two of the most highly developed areas in Europe: the Po valley in Italy and Bavaria in southern Germany. The province includes about half a million inhabitants, less than 1 % of the Italian population.



Family Districts and Family Mainstreaming

Family Districts have a particularly important role in the Agency's programme of activities. The "Family District" is an economic and cultural circuit at local level, within which players in different fields of activity and with different objectives operate with the common objective of promoting and enhancing family wellbeing. Family Districts represent a concrete example of an area network seeing the involvement and collaboration of families and different players with a joint objective: people's wellbeing. Local alliances allow families to carry out their fundamental role with due awareness and to create family wellbeing, cohesion and social capital. These alliances reinforce partnerships between the participating profit-making and non-profit organisations and families and make it possible to best interpret the concept of family mainstreaming.

About the Family Audit

The Family Audit standard is an instrument allowing public and private sector organisations to carry out internal surveys into their own workplace organisation. It is a managerial instrument adopted on a voluntary basis by organisations intending to certify their constant commitment to creating a balance between working and personal/family life.

Characteristics

The Family Audit standard helps organisations to ensure an effective balance between the interests of the organisation and those of workers. It can be adopted by any public or private sector organisation, whether small, medium or large, and provides for careful investigation within the organisation. In this way it is possible to identify objectives and initiatives that can improve reconciliation between the workplace commitments and home life of employees. The participation of those working in the organisation is fundamental when establishing needs in terms of reconciling commitments and proposing solutions to problems.

Effects on Gender Policy

The effects of the Family Audit on Gender Policy are important, particularly for women workers, because they lead to:

- safeguarding of maternity rights;
- promotion of employment for women;
- recognition of the value of women at work;
- equal career opportunities for men and women.

Family Audit Certification

The Process

An organisation using the Family Audit sparks off a virtuous cycle of improvement over time, introducing innovative organisational solutions internally, mainly related to workplace flexibility and a culture of reconciling commitments.

The process of applying the Family Audit takes place over a period of three and a half years: 6 months for auditing/planning/evaluation, leading to the preparation of the Activity Plan; 3 years to implement the action contained in the company plan. It is then possible to repeat the experience for a further three-year period. The whole process is monitored by two accredited professionals from outside the organisation: a consultant who supports the organisation in the analytical work and an evaluator, who checks that the process complies with the Family Audit standard. Organisations obtaining the Family Audit brand are included in a special register. The Family Audit brand is registered and the property of the Autonomous province of Trento.

The Benefits

Through the Family Audit, the organisation can achieve a wide range of results, including:

- a decrease in psychological and physical stress for its employees;
- a reduction in inequality between men and women and those with different family commitments;
- the creation of positive effects on the organisational climate, motivation and employee satisfaction;
- an increase in the quantity/quality of employee performance and hence in productivity, with a reduction in the level of absenteeism and the turnover rate;
- an improvement in employee loyalty, conservation of company know-how and an increase in the ability to attract talent;
- an increase in the attractiveness of the organisation on the labour market;- an improvement in financial performance and the value generated for stakeholders;
- a growth in management paying attention and sensitive to the life of workers.

Recognition by the Presidency of Councils of Ministers

In the light of the positive results obtained at provincial level, in 2012 the Presidency of Councils of Ministers identified the Family Audit standard as an interesting instrument for disseminating a culture promoting the reconciliation of family life and workplace commitments at national level. Through the Department for Family Policy, initial experimentation was started up at national level, which will conclude in 2016.

In 2015 a second call for proposals is anticipated, with the involvement of a further 50 organisations throughout Italy.