



2020

STATE OF THE ART report

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30-5-2020



STATE OF THE ART REGARDING HAPPY AND HEALTHY WORKING ATMOSPHERE.

ANALYSIS BASED ON ARTICLES, PAPERS,
REPORTS AND ACTIONS
RELATED TO POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE
WORKPLACE ATMOSPHERE



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ABOUT THE PROJECT

TIWA (The Ideal Working Atmosphere) aims at helping European companies, SME, entrepreneurs, leaders, managers and workers in general to generate a healthy working environment, creating a framework of fellowship and human relationships between the different levels of the company. This will enable productivity, health in the workplace with the reduction of illnesses and injuries and, then, of absenteeism. **TIWA** wants to teach employees to be better co-workers, but also wants to show managers the lines to follow in order to create the best atmosphere in their companies.

It is unavoidable for employees to eventually develop personal relationships among themselves in addition to their formal co-worker relationships. Working with people you like to spend your time has a strong influence for the wellness in the workplace, health, labor environment and, of course and in a mid-long term, productivity, which at the end reinforces the stability of jobs.

Relationships between employees and management are of substantial value in any workplace. Human relations are the process of training employees, addressing their needs, fostering a workplace culture and resolving conflicts between different employees or between employees and management. Understanding some of the ways that human relations can impact the costs, competitiveness and long-term economic sustainability of a business helps to underscore their importance.

The project consortium is composed of six organizations from five different EU countries (SL, BU, ES, IR and CZ) consisting of a solid group of training companies with long experience in the implementation of in company programs, some of them with a solid career in European projects (such as our coordinator, Ljudska Univerza Velenje, GrowthCoop, Impro Institute or Bulgaria Training) and some newcomers, such as I&F (which is building a recent but solid international career) or INDEPCIE, one of our Spanish partners which will have its first experience in Erasmus+ projects.



STATE OF THE ART REGARDING WORKING ATMOSPHERE

1. INTRODUCTION

The research was carried out to analyse the existing situation in five European countries, in the field of TIWA project. The research methodology in this activity based on analysis of the main problems connected to an ideal working atmosphere in each partner's country. With this research we obtained a list of the main problems connected to an ideal working atmosphere a national level in every partner country. Three thematic blocks have been established for the collection of information:

- ✓ Happiness and mood at work
- ✓ Health at work
- ✓ Conciliation measures

Report includes analysis of the possible alternatives available in the CE context in this topic and some good practices. The following aspects were taken into consideration when preparing the report:

1. HAPPINESS AND MOOD AT WORK

What are the most important issues impacting a degree of happiness (good mood) at work when trying to achieve an ideal work environment and what alternatives arise in your country?

2. HEALTH AT WORK

What social problems are associated with health in the work in your country? Which sector faces most absence of leave (most common disease)? What solutions or best practices can be found?

3. CONCILIATION MEASURES

What problems do we find when it comes to reconciling family life? What measures or subsidies does the state provide?



2. STATE OF THE ART PER COUNTRY

2.1 CZECH REPUBLIC

1. HAPPINESS AND MOOD AT WORK

The Czech approach is from the point of view of satisfaction and not happiness

In 2018, the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO) surveyed general satisfaction of Czechs about different parts of their lives. One of them was satisfaction with an occupation where Czechs scored 7.42 satisfaction points out of 10, with a slight increase since 2013 from 7.35

This data, however, are not specifically focused on the work environment and only measure general feeling about a person's job. No detailed data about satisfaction or happiness with a different aspect of work are analyzed by CZSO.

A research from 2016 realized by a private personal agency Grafton Recruitment finds out that almost 72% of Czechs are satisfied in their job. This may be caused by a low unemployment rate and a greater number of jobs offers than actual demand

Their satisfaction is closely connected with a feeling of security about the job, flexibility and increase in wages.

Almost 65% of employees consider low wages and stress as the most important factor to leave a job.

Although Czechs seem overall satisfied with their job, a 2019 survey from the same agency ***shows that 60% of Czechs complain about the quantity of their job and almost 2/3 feel stressed and exhausted.***

People who feel stress are more often women and/or achieve lower education.

Only 14% said they do not feel stress at all.

High-stress level negatively influences productivity and cause high fluctuance of people. It also affects physical, as well as psychical, health of an employee. Interestingly, ***17% of Czech find stress sometimes helpful in order to achieve better results as a form of adrenalin.***

According to a survey by the European Agency from 2016, only 16% of European companies use mindfulness programs and services of a psychologist for the wellbeing of their employees. Czech ranks below the European level, with only 7% of companies using such measures.

- Problem

- Uncertainty of the job
- Insufficient wage
- Insufficient flexibility
- Impossible to work part-time
- Impossible to have home-office
- Tedious job content, lack of variability
- Insufficient career development
- Job is not meaningful



- *Alternatives*

- Implementing benefits like home-office possibility in a company
- Establishing a person in a company who will be in charge of wellbeing of employees
- Using services of psychologist in order to prevent problems and unhappiness

- *Good Practices*

- ✓ Avast company which has a position of a “*Happiness Manager*”. The main goal of this person is to connect people in the company, to get to know each other better and to become a better team. The Happiness Manager organizes activities and events for employees and works with company culture. This position is getting more and more popular and can be found also in other companies in Czechia like Zoot, Robeeto, IRESOFT or Etnetera Group.
- ✓ (www.atmoskop.cz) offers people to search for job offers according to the qualities of companies. For example, one can prioritize if s/he wants to work for an employer who offers benefits like home-office, who is reliable in paying wages on time, whose work focus is meaningful and contributes to good causes, who offers calm and non-stressful working environment as well as many other filters. The job-search webpage also offers to evaluate companies and one can decide whether to take a job based on other employees’ evaluation

2. HEALTH AT WORK

In Czechia, the issues of employees’ health, their general well-being and their safety is primarily under the programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and partly falls under the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic

According to the Czech Social Security Administration (CSSA), in 2019 there were 1.8 million of closed cases of sick leaves, from which over **47.000 were due to psychological health problems**
Women represent almost 65% of these cases.

Stress is, unfortunately, not counted as a separate diagnosis for a sick leave but it could be found either in the psychological health sector or in “other” diseases, which count over 183.000 cases.

Most often (71%) a sick leave is from 1 to 30 days long.

Increase of psychic diseases in the last years

- *Problem*

- The good examples of companies which are awarded are not promoted enough
- Stress-related problems are not considered as a separate health issue for sick-leave.

- *Alternatives*

- Raising awareness about the health-issues at workplace
- Promotion of good practices examples



- Good Practices

- ✓ **The "Safe Company" program**, issued twice a year, aims, in particular, to increase the level of safety and health at the workplace (also including environmental protection) to achieve higher levels of work culture and well-being and to create conditions for implementing an integrated management system. In 2019, in total 16 Czech companies received the "Safe Company" certificate (e.g. HOLLANDIA Karlovy Vary, s.r.o., Poultry plant Klatovy a.s., Liberty Engineering Products Ostrava s.r.o., Počerady Power Plant, a.s., ČEZ, a.s.; Hyundai Motor Manufacturing Czech s.r.o.).
- ✓ The State Health Institute organizes an annual competition since 2005 for **"the Health Promotion Company"** for both SMEs and big corporations. In 2019, in total 23 companies were awarded (e.g. CzechPak Manufacturing, s.r.o., Holding Omnicom Media Group, SMO a.s., CCI Czech Republic s.r.o., Koyo Bearings Czech Republic s.r.o., Pražská teplárenská, a.s.). The title is held for 3 years.

3. CONCILIATION MEASURES

The system of maternal leave enables mothers to take up to **28 weeks of maternal leave, starting 8 weeks prenatal and 20 weeks postnatal leave**

They are entitled **to receive 70% of their salary during this period paid by the Czech Social Security Administration**

Since 2018, fathers can take 7-day paternal leave after the sixth week from the birth date, also being paid 70% of their salary.

Czechia introduced paternal leave as one of the last European countries.

-Problem

- Lack of support for fathers to take paternity leave
- Lack of support for mothers to enter back the labour market
- Lack of possibilities for mothers to work part-time

- Alternatives

- Increasing part-time job possibilities for people on parental leave
- Higher support of dads for paternity leave after a child's birth by a company

- Good Practices

- ✓ Among companies which apply some measures to support work-life balance, especially for women at parental leave, are, for instance, **Globus which offers flexible working hours; E.ON which give employees benefits for kindergartens or Schneider Electric which pays mother the additional 30% of salary to reach the total 100%.**
- ✓ There are several organizations in Czechia which focus on work-life balance in SMEs



and provide expert consultancy services. For instance, WLA Work Life Agency or Family and Job offers advisory services and consultancies in grant findings of projects of improving the working environment.

CZECH REPUBLIC CONCLUSIONS

As general considerations we must take into account:

- The statistics we have value happiness in a broad context and not specifically at work
- In the Czech Republic there is a high level of acceptance of work almost 72% of Czechs are satisfied in their job.
- Discontent and stress have a sexist component, with more cases in women than in men.
- Almost 65% of employees consider low wages and stress as the most important factor to leave a job
- According to a survey by the European Agency from 2016, only 16% of European companies use mindfulness programs and services of a psychologist for the wellbeing of their employees.
- Among the possible solutions that we found and that are repeated in this report for all countries, would be To establish a ***person in the company that will be in charge of the well-being of the employees***
- Czech ranks below the European level, with only 7% of companies using such measures.
- Conciliation measures in the case of men are almost non-existent.
- We must take into consideration Czechia introduced paternal leave as one of the last European countries.



2.2 BULGARIA

1. HAPPINESS AND MOOD AT WORK

Happiness is an important factor for every individual and has a direct impact on level of engagement and motivation. In terms of happiness at workplace a research from last year in Bulgaria among **797 employed** people shows that **41.2% are rather happy at work, 22.2% - neither happy, nor unhappy; 17.2% - very happy, 12.5% - rather unhappy and 5.6% - not happy at all.**

According to the same research factors that make people happy at work are people, or more precisely the presence of their emotional intelligence, competencies, clear and achievable goals, recognition of a job well done, attitude, support, communication and leaders in the company.

Alternatively, what makes people unhappy at work are people, or more precisely lack of trust, chaos, lack of communication, lack of results, lack of belonging and general direction, management abdication, promised but unfulfilled commitments.

Undoubtedly, stress is among the key factors preventing workers to feel happy at work. According to a study by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, about 52% of workers in Bulgaria believe that cases of workplace stress are common and very common. Only 7% say they are not stressed and 40% say that stress is rare. These figures are very close to the EU average.

About 50% of sick leave records for 2019 in Bulgaria are due to stress or so called burnout at workplace. As a result of this, business losses amount to over 140 million BGN. Another problem is social networks and their use in working hours because there is no clear regulation in Bulgaria. 87% of all internet users in Bulgaria have Facebook accounts.

The most common causes of stress according to Bulgarian respondents include: reorganization (job restructuring) or job insecurity - 57%, unacceptable workplace behavior (loading or harassment) - 44%, extended working hours and workload - 43% and lack of work of support from colleagues or managers in fulfilling their obligations - 38%.

Despite the high levels of stress in the workplace, only 9% of Bulgarian employees believe that solving stress problems is at a very good level. 32% consider solving stress problems rather good, and 49% think that stress problems are not resolved well at all.

Research from the Institute for Social and Trade Union Studies on Stress highlights among the factors that lead to stress also: the lack of an adequate link between work performed and work remuneration, the discrepancy between work and career outcomes, shift work and working over the weekends.

An important aspect of employee mental well-being at workplace is to have open, fair and anti-discriminative communication as well as relation with co-workers, team mates, subordinates, line managers, etc. There should be an equal and fair approach towards each employee, no matter their background and personal characteristics. The Bulgarian Anti-Discrimination Law protects equality and introduces positive measures for workers in their workplace. At European level, Bulgarian law deals with a wide variety of hypotheses (19) as to the reasons why one



person is discriminated against for another purpose. These 19 hypotheses are protected by law, by which one person is differentiated from another - gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, ancestry, religion or belief, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal or social status, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, financial status, union affiliation.

The law defines harassment on the basis of protected categories, sexual harassment, incitement to discrimination, harassment and racial segregation, as well as the creation and maintenance of an architectural environment that impedes access of persons with disabilities to public places for forms of discrimination. According to the law, "harassment" is any unwanted behavior, expressed physically, verbally or otherwise, that has the purpose or effect of harming the dignity of the person and creating a hostile, degrading, downgrading, abusive or threatening environment.

An employer who has received a complaint from an employee who is considered to have been harassed, including sexually abused, in the workplace is obliged to immediately carry out an inspection, take measures to end the harassment and to impose disciplinary liability if the harasser was performed by another employee. The employer, in cooperation with the trade unions, is obliged to take effective measures to prevent all forms of discrimination in the workplace, otherwise it is responsible.

- Problem

- Happiness and engagement levels in the workplace
- Stress, work overload and burnout at work
- Working together in the workplace / inter-colleague relation
- Lack of recognition in the workplace
- Psychological / mental health in the workplace

- Alternatives

- Implementing & adopting measures and tools to evaluate and increase level of engagement and happiness at work. An example is the framework of P.E.R.M.A. (Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievements)
- Improve organization of the workflow, prioritization of tasks, resource allocation and reporting lines among employees.
- Ensure clear and transparent communication, reporting line and structure to prevent uncertainties and anxiety among employees. Treat every employee equally to prevent discrimination and demotivation.
- Organize regularly different events outside of working premises to promote positive attitude and collaboration among employees and to increase team's spirit, i.e. outdoor activities, teambuildings, etc.
- Deploy a recognition system / bonus scheme to reward high-performing employees upon achieving exceptional results. This is a strong motivational tool even for the ones that are not rewarded as they will aim to be rewarded next time.



- Take care of employee mental well-being i.e. offer psychological support for employees who are experiencing some hard times personally or professionally; organize seminars, workshops, podcasts to provide info and advice on well-being and healthy lifestyle for employees

- Good Practices

- ✓ In the recent years, realizing the importance of happiness and motivation at work as well as practices to minimize stress, are emerging in Bulgaria. The process is in a rather early stage, but yet to be developed. An increasing number of companies, most of them international, are now starting to invest resources in trying to understand their employees better, recognize their work and reward them. For example, managers at Kaufland Bulgaria receive additional training on how to communicate with their subordinates and how to give them feedback. For one year, the company also has a dedicated employee who is fully engaged in Motivation. Part of his job is finding different strategies to motivate employees. This can be done by providing additional benefits - discounts in different partner organizations, lectures, team building activities, grill parties, etc.
- ✓ The company also introduced the position of trustee - these are employees who travel to stores across the country and talk to employees there to see whether they are satisfied and what they are missing, what bothers them. The feedback is collected anonymously, summarized and transmitted to the HR, and on the basis of this information a strategy for employee motivation is built.

2. HEALTH AT WORK

According to the Bulgarian National Social Security Institute (NSSI), Bulgarians are absent on average 8 days from work due to illness. Last year, over 2.7 million hospital leaves were issued, with around 2.2 million employees and BGN 549.2 million were paid for this.

Currently, the first three days of sick leave are paid by the employer at the rate of **70% of the insurance income, and then the National Social Security Institute starts paying 80% of the income from then on**. Governors now propose that the first day should not be paid by anyone and to be at the expense of the worker.

The experience of various employers in Bulgaria shows that the use of sick leaves increases right before or after the weekends and also due to seasonal work such as picking cherries, watermelons and more. Fewer people use sick leave to do other work in general. It is also common practice to use sick leave after notice of departure.

In terms of reasons to take sick leave, According to Bulgarian Labour Code, sick leave can be taken for the following reasons: General illness, Occupational disease, Accident, General Disease Study, Investigation, Occupational disease screening, Bacillus (parasite) carrier, Quarantine, Abortion, Pregnancy, Maternity, Employment - general illness, Accident at Work, Recovery treatment, Accompanying a child up to 3 years of age in a hospital, Accompanying and caring for a child up to the age of 18, Accompanying and caring for a patient over 18 years of age.

A recent research shows that from the economic sectors, *the largest number of sick leaves is*



taken by workers from the trade, construction, transport, and sewing sectors.

In order to minimize sick leaves due to physical health reason apart from ensuring healthy working conditions, increasing number of employers in Bulgaria are aiming to improve their employee's physical well-being through services in the form of social benefits.

According to Bulgarian law, the employer has the right to provide various social benefits for which he is not taxed. The tax exemption aims to encourage employers to improve their social workplace environment and to show care for their employees. The law defines three exemptions for which tax relief is obtained - the cost of contributions to supplementary voluntary insurance, to voluntary health insurance and to life insurance, the cost of using assets (sports cards) owned or leased by the company, transportation costs. ***The value to which the costs are not taxed is € 30, after which a tax of 10% is charged.***

In addition to that, among other measures and practices are: developing national legislation for prevention of health at work in line with the better regulation principles, the EU law and the international standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO); improving the quality and control of the activities of medicine services for workers and employees; improving the system of compulsory preliminary and regular health checks of workers and employees Improving the system for training of representatives in working conditions committees and groups in enterprises.

Among the challenges to the health of the nation are chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure (hypertension), etc. which should be the focus. The work has to be oriented more on prevention and promotion than on their treatment. Unfortunately, the diagnosis and early prevention of diseases is not happening at a high level and this problem will be addressed as a matter of priority by 2030. From both medical and financial point of view it is much more cost-effective when an illness is treated in the initial stages, which invariably leads to cost reductions and longer duration of life. It is of particular importance the development and promotion of a healthy culture among the population and the promotion of the idea that each person's health is also a personal responsibility and obligation.

- Problem

- Physical health in the workplace
- Lack of activity/ movement in the office
- Productivity in the workplace

- Alternatives

- Ensure excellent working conditions in the workplace as per the highest standards and requirements, always aim at improving premises and atmosphere. Provide additional health insurance for employees, program for prevention, etc.
- Encourage employees to make some physical activity throughout the day, i.e. taking short 10-15 mins breaks every 1-2 hrs; going outside for a walk in the lunch break, etc.
- A healthy, happy and satisfied worker is more productive and efficient. Use social benefit packages to ensure employee well-being and stimulate productivity at workplace. For example, multisport card giving access to employees to a network of sports centers or organizing team buildings



- Good Practices

- ✓ The health and safety at work are a goal but also an achievement for many enterprises in Bulgaria. The number of enterprises investing in safe technologies and working equipment is constantly rising. Many enterprises have in place developed and approved internal statutory instruments – regulations on internal working procedures, work safety rules and instructions, wage organization rules, etc. The range of enterprises having occupational health services for their workers has been extended. Despite the upward trend in the number of enterprises which do fulfil their obligations to ensure occupational safety and health for their workers, the economic and social changes give rise to new challenges for employers, as well as for the entire system of ensuring occupational safety and health. In this context, the focus in the next period should be on improving the work of prevention services which are the most direct contributors to the working conditions of every workplace. It is also necessary to change the existing system for medical surveillance of workers, taking into account the changes planned in the medical assessment and workability assessment system, as well as to envisage measures to enhance the capacity of the relevant bodies and services concerned by the problem.
- ✓ In Bulgaria, about 10 years ago, employee benefits were typically the trademark of multinational companies. In recent years, however, it is striking that more and more Bulgarian companies are starting to look in this direction. According to recent surveys, more than 70% of employees consider the employer responsible for their financial stability, including in adverse situations.
- ✓ About 50% of the companies offer Christmas bonus, 20% give Easter bonus but not in the amount of 13th salary, 35% provide city transport cards, 65% provide company car, but only in certain positions, life insurance 30%, work from home 80%, extra days annual leave 50%, free drinks and food 65% *

* From the companies Adecco Bulgaria works with.

3. CONCILIATION MEASURES

In regard to reconciling family life, a “hot topic” nowadays for both employer and employees is work-life balance, especially for those who have kids. At Union level, several directives in the areas of gender equality and working conditions already address certain issues that are relevant for work-life balance, in particular DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.

Work-life balance remains a considerable challenge for many parents and workers with caring responsibilities, in particular because of the increasing prevalence of extended working hours and changing work schedules, which has a negative impact on women's employment. A major factor contributing to the underrepresentation of women in the labour market is the difficulty of balancing work and family obligations. When they have children, women are likely to work fewer hours in paid employment and to spend more time fulfilling unpaid caring responsibilities. Having a sick or dependent relative has also been shown to have a negative impact on women's employment and results in some women dropping out of the labor market entirely.



Work-life balance policies should contribute to the achievement of gender equality by promoting the participation of women in the labour market, the equal sharing of caring responsibilities between men and women, and the closing of the gender gaps in earnings and pay. Such policies should take into account demographic changes including the effects of an ageing population.

A minimum period of four months of parental leave is guaranteed under this Directive to workers who are parents. Member States are encouraged to grant the right to parental leave to all workers who exercise parental responsibilities in accordance with national legal systems.

In order to address the needs of both workers and employers, it should be possible for Member States to limit the duration of flexible working arrangements, including any reduction in working hours or any remote working arrangements. While working part-time has been shown to be useful in allowing some women to remain in the labour market after having children or caring for relatives with care or support needs, long periods of reduced working hours can lead to lower social security contributions and thus reduced or non-existing pension entitlements.

In recent years in Bulgaria, according to statistics, we are experiencing a negative natural population growth, ie. the difference between low birth rates and high mortality rates. According to Prof. Ph.D. Penka Naydenova from the Center for Demographic Research and Training, the birth rate in Bulgaria is almost twice lower than the death rate, with data showing that about 115,000 Bulgarians die annually, and live births are about 62,000. Thus, every year the country's population has a negative balance and a decreasing natural trend with about 50 to 60 thousand people. Lately more and more women are postponing the moment of getting pregnant and raising a child, which has been specifically observed in the capital and big cities. According to the Bulgarian National Statistical Institute, in the capital of Bulgaria – Sofia, the average age of women who gave birth to their first child in 2019 was 30 years old.

At the same time, however, the state is providing generous measures and benefits to encourage the acceleration of the birth rate. According to the Bulgarian Labour Code and The Social Security Code insured persons for general illness and maternity are entitled to cash benefits instead of remuneration for periods of time due to temporary incapacity for work and employment, provided that they have at least 6 months of length of service as insured for this risk. The 6-month internship requirement applies to persons under 18 years of age.

In case of maternity leave in Bulgaria, the state social security provides the following benefits:

- **cash benefits in pregnancy and childbirth, which are paid for up to 410 days;**
- cash benefits in the amount of 50 per cent of the maternity and maternity benefits up to 410 days when maternity leave is not used;
- cash benefits for childbirth and adoption of a child up to 5 years of age for up to 15 days;
- cash benefits at childbirth after the age of 6 months for the remainder up to 410 days;
- cash benefits for raising a child up to the age of 2;
- cash benefits in the amount of 50 percent of the child-raising allowance until the child reaches the age of 2 when the child-raising leave is not used;
- cash benefits for the adoption of a child up to 5 years of age, which are paid to the adoptive parent / adoptive parent, up to 365 days from the date of delivery of the child for adoption, but no later than the age of 5;
- cash benefits for the adoption of a child up to 5 years after the expiration of 6 months from the day of delivery of the child for adoption for the remainder up to 365 days, but not later than



the age of 5, which are paid to the insured an adoptive parent when the spouse is with the adoptive parent;

- cash benefits in the amount of 50 percent of the adoption allowance for a child up to 5 years of age when the child adoption leave is not used. cash benefits at childbirth;
- for raising a child up to 2 years of age and for adopting a child up to 5 years of age in cases of serious illness of the mother / adoptive child or the death of the mother / adoptive parent and / or the father / adoptive parent of the child.

In Bulgaria, most mums remain in maternity over 1 year. Just under 7% return to work within the first year. Most mothers use full maternity for 2 years. More than 10% of mothers use even unpaid maternity leave for the third year.

The daily cash benefit for pregnancy and childbirth is set at 90 percent of the average daily gross wage or average daily income on which contributions or contributions are paid, and for self-insured persons - contributions for general sickness and maternity insurance. 24 calendar months preceding the month of onset of maternity leave.

The daily cash benefit may not be higher than the average daily net remuneration for the period from which the benefit was calculated and less than the minimum daily wage established for the country and shall be determined in accordance with Art. 41, para. 2 - 5 of the Social Security Code.

In the case of entitlement to cash benefit for pregnancy and childbirth for the next child during the period of payment of cash benefit for pregnancy and childbirth or for raising a child, the benefit is equal to the previous child, if this is more favorable to the person. Where a person is insured on more than one basis, the total amount of daily cash benefit may not be less than the minimum daily wage established for the country.

According to the Bulgarian Anti-Discrimination Law the employer shall not have the right to refuse to employ a candidate on the grounds of pregnancy, maternity or bringing up a child. When a mother who takes maternity or parental leave, or the second parent who uses a 15-day childbirth or parental leave, returns to work due to the expiry of the leave or to interruption of its use, she is entitled to take the same post or another equivalent to her, and take advantage of any improvement in working conditions to which she would be entitled if she were not on leave. Upon returning from maternity leave or raising a child in the presence of a technological change, the employee shall be provided with training to qualify for the changes.

- Problem

- Job Work-life balance
- Coming back to work after maternity
- Taking care of the kids / elderly relatives while at work
- losses in highly polluting productive sectors

- Alternatives

- Provide flexible working time, work from home/ remote working as an option
- Provide training / workshops on how to better balance personal and professional life
- Provide part-time shifts for the returning mums



- Offer psychological support/ counselling to returning mums to ease the transition /switch between roles and responsibilities and ensure smooth adaptation back to work
- Kindergarten at the office premises
- Pick-up services for children/ elderly relatives
- Support in accommodating the kids in the kindergartens/ schools

- Good Practices

In Bulgaria increasing number of companies are trying to incorporate different measures to accommodate returning mums, such as flexible working hours, working from home, etc. The state is also trying to implement certain measures, which, from one side, to encourage women to have more kids and accelerate birth rates, and from the other, to stimulate them to return to work sooner. A good example is an initiative from the Bulgarian Employment Agency which has started a new reception of applications under the Parents in Employment project until the financial resources are exhausted.

The program's aim is to ensure better reconciliation of the professional and private life of parents with children from 0 to 12 years of age and to provide employment to unemployed persons, by providing babysitting and childcare service. Among the activities in scope are: Requesting applications from parents of a child / children from 0 to 12 years old; Providing employment mediation to unemployed parents with child / children; Selection of unemployed / inactive persons to determine their employment opportunities related to the care of children from 0 to 12 years of age; Organizing meetings to approve unemployed / inactive persons from parents to care for their child / children; Provision of care for children from 0 to 5 years old, not visiting nurseries, institutions and pre-school groups, for employed and unemployed parents (care is allowed up to 8 hours a day); Provision of childcare for children / children from 0 to 12 years old, attending day nurseries, institutions, as well as school, for employed and unemployed parents of many children (including single) (care is allowed up to 4 hours a day); Methodological support for childcare (s); Information and communication.

The criteria that parents should meet in order to apply are:

- Parents of children 0- to 5-years-old, not registered in a day nursery / kindergarten, who have a secured work / employment position or are self-employed / self-insured but are currently caring for their children and have not taken care of returned to work;
- Large parents (with three or more children under the age of 12) of 0- to 12-year-olds who have returned to their jobs and children attend day nurseries / kindergartens as well as school.
- Unemployed persons registered with the Labor Office who are parents of children aged 0- 5 years, not registered in a day nursery / kindergarten, or large parents of children aged 0 to 12 years attending a day nursery / kindergarten as well as school.



For babysitters the criteria for applying are:

- Unemployed jobseekers - young people up to 29 years old; job seekers, unemployed and inactive persons over 30; disadvantaged people in the labor market.

BULGARIA CONCLUSION

As general considerations we must take into account:

- In terms of happiness at workplace a research from last year in Bulgaria among 797 employed people shows that 41.2% are rather happy at work, 22.2% - neither happy, nor unhappy; 17.2% - very happy, 12.5% - rather unhappy and 5.6% - not happy at all.
- Factors that make people happy at work are people, or more precisely the presence of their emotional intelligence, competencies, clear and achievable goals, recognition of a job well done, attitude, support, communication and leaders in the company.
- Undoubtedly, stress is among the key factors preventing workers to feel happy at work. According to a study by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, about 52% of workers in Bulgaria believe that cases of workplace stress are common and very common
- About 50% of sick leave records for 2019 in Bulgaria are due to stress or so called burnout at workplace.
- As for health and conciliation At Union level, several directives in the areas of gender equality and working conditions already address certain issues that are relevant for work-life balance, in particular DIRECTIVE (EU) 2019/1158 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.
- Among the good practices are the parents for employment program. The program's aim is to ensure better reconciliation of the professional and private life of parents with children from 0 to 12 years of age and to provide employment to unemployed persons, by providing babysitting and childcare service



2.3 SLOVENIA

1. HAPPINESS AND MOOD AT WORK

According to the data from national project POLET the most common psychosocial risk in Slovenia factors are:

- Workloads,
- Time pressure,
- Lack of support from management and colleagues,
- Generally poor mutual relations.

Because of these factors, employees experience additional stress, which is reflected in their well-being and mental health. The causes of a mental disorder are difficult to determine, and the exact cause is almost never one. Over the past few decades, experts have found that mental health disorders are on the rise even among the working population. According to the latest NIJZ data (Slovenian National institute of public health), the number of lost working days in the year 2018 shows that mental and behavioral disorders are the third most common reason for sick leave. Compared to previous years, we can speak of an increase, as they were fourth in 2017.

One of the pressing problems of the working population, which is increasingly talked about today, is burnout. According to some data, burnout is widespread in Slovenia, with 60% of respondents showing signs of burnout.

The reduction of psychosocial risk factors is imposed on employers by the Health and safety at work act, which provides implementation of Health promotion programs. One of the activities of the program is determination various risk factors, their elimination and reduction.

Expert's states that financial rewards are very weakly linked to life well-being and happiness at work. They claim that contentment at workplace is more depend on internal psychological dispositions of employee than on external rewards. Contentment at workplace is subjective according to social factors (predominating social perceiving of work and payment), personal characteristics (meticulousness, values, attitude to work) and standard of life.

- Problem

- Lack of communication
- Workloads
- Time pressure
- Lack of support from management and colleagues
- Poor mutual relationships
- Mobbing



- Alternatives

- Employees co-create working process
- Teamwork
- Positive feedback information – praises (from leaders to employees, among co-workers)
- Team buildings
- Chance for learning, personal and career growth at workplace

- Good Practices

- ✓ The purpose of the **NAPREJ** project is to develop a comprehensive business support program for the management and prevention of psychosocial risk factors, which will be a systematic and professionally based solution for maintaining and strengthening the mental health of employees.
- ✓ More than 11,000 employees and their immediate family members from seven participating pilot companies are offered additional professional assistance in the event of mental distress. Employees can contact counsellor electronically, by phone, or arrange a personal meeting

2. HEALTH AT WORK

In Slovenia the most common group of diseases that are reason for *sick leave at work are diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue*. The onset of musculoskeletal diseases is affected by certain characteristics of the work (e.g. use forces, unusual position of work, etc.), working environment (e.g. poor lighting, very low or high temperatures at work, etc.), organization of work (e.g. small impact on mode or pace work, too little support from leaders or colleagues, etc.) and health individual or his lifestyle. In 2018, due to absence from work, in Slovenia was lost almost **15 million working days, 20% of 15 million days due to diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective tissue**. Health and safety at work act claims that employers have to plan and implement promotion of health at workplace, provide financial means for implementation of activities.

One of the researches shows that more than half of companies dedicate in between 50 and 500 euros for the health of employees in addition to all legally stipulated measures. The prevailing activity to increase health at workplace are the use of ergonomic office furniture, providing health food at workplace and organization workshops of healthy life and techniques for realizing stress.

EU research shows that people in Slovenia more likely than in other countries EU go to work even though they are sick. This phenomenon is called presentism. According to EU research, **54,8% Slovenian employees answered that they went to work in past 12 months when they were sick, on the other side EU average is 42,4%**. In the same research **34,4% of interviewees responded that their job negatively effects their health, in comparison to EU average, which is 25%**. **The most of sick leaves are in industry, trade, educational sector and health and social care sector.**



In Slovenia training of employees in occupational safety and health is a statutory obligation of the employer prescribed by the Safety and Health at work Act. The aim of training for safe and healthy work is to acquire skills and habits for safe work and to prevent accidents at work. Training of work is carried out before employment, upon change of technological process or after a long absence from work, periodically every two years.

- Problem

- Using forces, unusual positions of work
- Poorly organized working environments
- **Precarious jobs**
- Presentism

- Alternatives

- **Ergonomic** furniture to reduce problems with pain in the spine
- Organising recreation, massages at workplace
- Smart programmes and mobile apps as reminders for exercise and motion during work

- Good Practices

- ✓ **POLET** - The purpose of the project is to achieve, through the development and implementation of an innovative comprehensive business model for employers for the active and healthy aging of employees, greater awareness and better information for employers and employees.
- ✓ Given the many challenges of active and healthy aging, companies are increasingly in need for systematic, comprehensive and long-term measures that maintain and improve the health and safety of all employees, as well as measures to adapt work to changes related to employee age.
- ✓ Within the framework of the project, each supported company (around 180 companies included in Slovenia) receive an individualized plan of measures for active and healthy aging of employees, continuous professional support and advice in the implementation of individual measures, training for representatives / management of the company in the fields of active and healthy aging, as well as practical tools.

3. CONCILIATION MEASURES

Opinion polls in Slovenia show that family is important in all stages of life and is ranked highest in the values of individuals. Slovenia (compared to the EU) is characterized by a high rate of full-time employment women and men with children, further exacerbating work-family conflict.

Increasing coordination pressures in working life is caused by demographic and socio-economic trends such as aging population, greater involvement of women in the labour market and greater role of men in family responsibilities. Conciliation between family and work is influenced by many factors at different levels – individual, family, state and work.



In the past, corporate social responsibility was considered only occasional financial donations to charities, but today we understand it as integrating principles sustainable development into all key business processes and functions within the company. This also includes facilitating the reconciliation of work and private life.

Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act is the basis for facilitating the reconciliation of parental and professional obligations and supports a more equal sharing of parental rights and obligations among women and men. ***In Slovenia are maternity, paternity and parental leave. Women are entitled to 105 days of maternity leave and 130 days of paternal leave, men are also entitled to 130 days of paternal leave, but they usually transfer their days to woman, so in majority are women absent due to maternity and parental leave 365 day or 1 year.*** Men are also entitled to 30 days of paternity leave. During maternity, paternity and paternal leave is 100% compensation of wages.

One of the measures of Slovenian state for conciliation of work and family life is flexible forms of work, including the right to part-time work. The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act stipulates that one parent caring for a child up to the age of three is entitled to part-time work.

Slovenia passed the Resolution on the ***Family Policy 2018–2028: “A Society Friendly to All Families”*** in 2018. The purpose of the resolution is to set the basic goals and measures in the field of family policy in the period 2018-2028, which will improve the quality of family life. Objectives of the resolution also include links and clashes between family life and policy of the labour market. In terms of reconciling work and family life, system of public childcare is very important, which is very well developed in Slovenia, more than 78% of all preschool children are included in system of public child care. The child can be enrolled in kindergarten when he is 11 months old, the program is co-funded by municipalities and the state.

- Problem

- Precarious job
- Unstable situation at the labour market
- Greater connectivity through technology and social media

- Alternatives

- Adaption the measures to the specific needs of employees and employers` characteristics of the industry, work environment and work processes.
- Two-way communication between employers and employees where employees can be themselves make proposals for action.

Good Practices

- ✓ *Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Ekvilib institute since 2007 give “Family-friendly company” certificate to companies which fulfil conditions.*



- ✓ **The Family-Friendly Certificate is a consulting and auditing process and has been developed as one of the tools for efficient and better-quality human resource management within companies and organizations, in the context of reconciling the professional and private life of *employees*.**
- ✓ *Family-friendly companies are committed to taking a set of measures that will make it easier for employees reconciling personal and professional life. Measures, which they adopt must be formalized by writing into corporate internal acts.*

SLOVENIA CONCLUSION

As general considerations we must take into account:

- According to the latest NIJZ data (Slovenian National institute of public health), the number of lost working days in the year 2018 shows that mental and behavioral disorders are the third most common reason for sick leave. Compared to previous years, we can speak of an increase, as they were fourth in 2017.
- One of the pressing problems of the working population, which is increasingly talked about today, is burnout. According to some data, burnout is widespread in Slovenia, with 60% of respondents showing signs of burnout.
- According to EU research, **54,8% Slovenian employees answered that they went to work in past 12 months when they were sick, on the other side EU average is 42,4%.** In the same research **34,4% of interviewees responded that their job negatively effects their health, in comparison to EU average, which is 25%. The most of sick leaves are in industry, trade, educational sector and health and social care sector.**
- *In Slovenia are maternity, paternity and parental leave. Women are entitled to 105 days of maternity leave and 130 days of paternal leave, men are also entitled to 130 days of paternal leave*
- *Among the good practices we find the interesting project POLET and a project developed by Ministry of La-bour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Ekvilib institute since 2007 give “Family-friendly company” certificate to companies which fulfil conditions*



2.4 IRELAND

1. HAPPINESS AND MOOD AT WORK

Nearly half of Ireland's workers 'pull a sickie' · Hangover a significant factor for absenteeism · **60% of workers resent colleagues who come to work when sick** · · Guilt: Although more than two thirds of respondents felt it was perfectly acceptable to 'pull a sickie', **69% of women and 53% of men felt guilty for doing so.**

- **Problem**

- Poor communication and issue solving methodology
- Low salaries
- Lack of Leadership
- Clashes between entrepreneur and employee
- Employee does not feel owner of the company
- **Lack of efficient hiring programmes and team building that promote diversity in the team**
- Poor training and mentoring in SMEs
- Lack of productivity and reward programmes

- **Alternatives**

- Establish communication protocols
- Regular meetings with open communication
- Constructive feedback
- Coaching – Problem solving approach
- Training – Invest in employees
- Communicate everyday everyway
- Effective communication
- Incentive on productivity. (if employee promotes more efficient working procedures he/she will be directly rewarded)
- If the company cannot reward economically, alternative reward methods must be put into place.
- **Conciliation between job, career and life purpose so that the company and the employees have a common goal**
- Culture based on values to promote identification with the company
- Establish a new working relationship in which employees are treated as “intrapreneurs” rather than “people that work for you”
- Sharing management information and day to day difficulties



- Profit sharing (maybe not the ownership of the company but the profits must be shared proportionally to the work done and risks assumed)
- It is very useful bring into the hiring process the views of employees who are the ones that know first-hand the skills needed for the job to be done.
- Creation of teams (management and employees) for the development of training programmes together.
- Productivity programmes that benefit the company, teams and the worker itself.
- If the worker contributes to reducing costs to improve procedures, they should be rewarded accordingly.

Good Practices

- ✓ Happy Workplaces 2020 is a one-day conference for leaders who are ready to embrace high-trust, high-autonomy & high-performance management. Key speakers share how they build and sustain happy workplace culture and practices – and how you can do the same. <https://www.happyworkplacesireland.com>
- ✓ Teamwork and social activities together. It is very common in Ireland to get involve in teamwork activities both within the company and also outside. It is very common going to restaurants and pubs to socialize what makes it easier working relationships in the office.

2. HEALTH AT WORK

Ireland Health and Safety Authority

Injuries reported by economic sector, 2015 (HSA) . Page 14 of the STUDY

https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Corporate/HSA_Statistics_Report_2014-2015.pdf

- Problem

- Work accidents (in and on the way to work)
- Obesity, sedentarism, posture problem
- Frustration, irritation, worry, nervousness, task dislike, disappointments.
- Obesity, unbalance eating, abuse of snacks and unhealthy food
- Psychological abuse (serious cases)

- Alternatives

- Prevention:
Accidents prevention plan
- Proactiveness:
Fitness Plan
- Proactiveness:
Emotional Management Programme
- Proactiveness:
Nutritional Health Plan
- In-house ‘enquire-Investigation procedures’.



Good Practices

In the reference section you will find an example of five examples of risk management in the area of ergonomics.

The process has 5 stages:

1. Problem identification (description of the task, risk reduction reason, evidence of risk factors)
2. Problem solving process (What to do, set up the objective, define risk assessment tools and problem solving activities)
3. Outcome (agreement on changes recommendations, define the main intervention, cost of intervention)
4. Results

Another good example of good practices is the act of Employment Equality Act that deals firmly with issue of sexual harassment at the work place and how to prevent it from happening.

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/21/enacted/en/html>

3. CONCILIATION MEASURES

- Problem

- Paternity and Maternity leave
- First time parents
- Mother's specific work shifts

- Alternatives

- Get rid of 9 to 5 rigid work:
- Intensive working hours 8 to 3.
- Working from home.
- Work based on targets / Achievements. It boosts personal search for excellence and productivity. (it depends of the nature of the business / companies can evaluate different degrees of flexibility)
- Working on shifts
- Introduction of shifts that match personal circumstances or responsibilities (children)
- Team events that bring the team together facilitating collaboration
- Support overstressed situations for first time parents
- To support children that can be educated by parents at home



Good Practices

✓ **Maternity Leave:**

All pregnant employees can take maternity leave for a basic period of 26 weeks. You should tell your employer as soon as possible that you are planning to take maternity leave.

You should do this by letting them know in writing at least 4 weeks before the start of your maternity leave.

You need to start your maternity leave at least 2 weeks before your estimated due date. You need to take at least 4 weeks maternity leave after the birth of your baby.

You and your partner can get benefits and supports when you are pregnant and after you have your baby.

✓ **Maternity Benefit:**

You may be entitled to maternity benefit, depending on your social insurance contributions. Read more about maternity benefit on the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection website.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/apply-for-maternity-benefit/?referrer=https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/MaternityBenefit.aspx>

✓ **Unpaid maternity leave**

You can take up to 16 weeks' extra maternity leave. This begins immediately after the end of maternity leave. This period is not covered by maternity benefit. Your employer is not obliged to make any payment during this period.

The workplace relations commission created a website where employees can learn about their rights and initiate complaints when necessary:

<https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/>

IRELAND CONCLUSIONS

As general considerations we must take into account:

- Nearly half of Ireland's workers 'pull a sickie' • Hangover a significant factor for absenteeism • 60% of workers resent colleagues who come to work when sick • • Guilt: Although more than two thirds of respondents felt it was perfectly acceptable to 'pull a sickie', 69% of women and 53% of men felt guilty for doing so.
- Among the measures to obtain a happier worker we find establish a new working relationship in which employees are treated as "intrapreneurs" rather than "people that work for you"
- Among the good practices we find the conference Happy Workplaces 2020 is a one day conference for leaders who are ready to embrace high-trust, high-autonomy & high-performance management. Key speakers share how they build and sustain happy workplace culture and practices – and how you can do the same.
<https://www.happyworkplacesireland.com>
- Regarding health at work, we find this document interesting Injuries reported by economic sector, 2015 (HSA) . Page 14 of the STUDY https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Corporate/HSA_Statistics_Report_2014-2015.pdf
- In Ireland all pregnant employees can take maternity leave for a basic period of 26 weeks.



2.5 SPAIN

INDEPCIE

1. HAPPINESS AND MOOD AT WORK

Before analyzing happiness or wellness at work in Spain, it is essential to take as departure point the situation generated in the country in the last decade from the recession period 2008-2015. In that moment, Spain led the EU in the destruction of jobs, losing 3.3 million in the crisis according to [EY Consultancy firm](#). Unemployment rates were multiplied by three (26.2% in 2013), the second worst figure in the European Union, creating a problematic social situation that was extended for years.

After years of economic recovery, which was in the way to stabilize the situation, this rate had decreased until 14% at the beginning of 2020. But the situation has been drastically affected with the crisis of COVID-19, which is seriously hitting Spain (the second most affected country, together with Italy). In March 2020 one million jobs were lost, and the [predictions of the International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#) advance that our country will suffer a contraction in the economy of 8% and the unemployment rate will grow to 21%. This new situation does not only provoke a social and economic crash, but also affects the level and quality of those jobs which survive the crisis.

One of the main and most recurrent topic is the low salary of Spanish workers. According to a [report of the Institute for National Statistics published in 2019](#), the average salary in 2017 was 23.646 euros per year, although the most frequent salary (for more of 550.000 workers) was 17.500 per year.

In the same line, the gap between the gross salary in Spain and the average in the EU has increased in the last years according to the *Monitor about salary: Spain in the European context by The Adecco Group Institute*. This report sets that the *Spanish gross salary in 2019 was 1.658 euros per month, while in the EU-28 it was 2.091 euros, a difference of 433 euros per month when in 2018 it was 361*. It means that the gap between both figures has gone from 18% in 2018 to 20.7% in 2019. This situation locates Spain in the middle of the table, under 12 countries and over 15 nations with lower salaries, but in this table Spain is only in a better situation than the Eastern countries and worse than the most developed economies of the EU (for instance, a Spanish worker needs 20 months to earn the salary of a German in one year).

In this general context, the [Medical Union National Confederation \(CEMS\)](#) explains that the causes of lack of wellness in the workplace comes from the fact that *“in these new working situations, there are jobs, but they are under very poor working conditions”, which generates*



“strong pressure and lack of motivation”. This used to happen among youngsters, but it is very similar for adults, “because every day they have to do more for less, with an uncertain future, few expectations, fear to lose their jobs and feeling little valued”. “A hostile working environment; higher, growing and unbalanced workloads, stress and even psychological abuse or an aggressive entrepreneurial culture” are some of the causes of a raising number of psychological pathologies, which according to CEMS is “still quite usual in Spain, and even more present in productive companies”.

In fact, and according to the Institute for National Statistics, [59% of workers feel some kind of stress at work](#), *due to the constant changes in the labour market, the increase of competence and the exigence in the organizations*. These situations *generate high level of pressure among workers, provoking pathologies such as stress, anxiety, insomnia, depression or addiction to work, where emotional or psychological factors play a key role*.

Stress is behind **30% of work absenteeism in Spain**, according to the report [Human and Healthy Companies \(2019\)](#), with a cost over 8.000 million euro, a figure that the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) *raises to 60% in the European Union. Even the World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that from 2020, stress and anxiety will be the first causes of absenteeism in the world*. Stress reduces in more of 60% the levels of performance and attention in workers, which cause at the end a higher number of mistakes and bad decisions. In a long term, this situation generates Burnout, a syndrome which according to the same sources affects to 20% of European workers.

The report considers that companies should implement programs of wellness among their workers, whose main benefits would be:

- Reduction of sick leaves.
- Reduction of work absenteeism
- Increase of commitment and reduction of turnover
- Retention and attraction of talent
- Promotion of the company

According to MIT, happy employees fall ill twice less, are 9 times more loyal and, 31% more productive and 55% more creative. Taking a look to these figures, the DKV Foundation developed the [Guide for Emotional Wellness in the Organizations](#), in order to raise awareness of the importance of this factor, because 4 of 10 employees consider that their companies do not manage stress in a right way.

If we talk specifically about happiness, a recent [report by Adecco](#) set the 9 more influent aspects that affect the state of mind of workers:

1. A schedule that allows family reconciliation. 8.22 points.
2. A good working environment. 8.21 points.
3. A good boss. 7.98 points.
4. A good salary. 7.94 points.
5. Self-realization. 7.87 points.



6. Development of personal skills. 7.81 points.
7. Alignment between training and tasks. 7.66 points.
8. Closeness to the workplace. 7.54 points.
9. Recognition. 7.38

In fact, happiness in the workplace is becoming a recurrent topic in business literature, and some companies are implementing specific departments to develop happiness and wellness among their employees, such as [San Miguel](#). The concept of emotional salary is also gaining ground and even there are some initiatives such as [Departamento de la Felicidad](#) which are focused in the development of happiness in company not as a goal itself, but as a way to increase productivity and profitability in the best possible atmosphere. “Companies that invest in happiness for their employees obtain a clear **ROI**, improve their results and increase their saves”, quotes this organization, concluding that “the future of people at work is linked to teams committed with the company, building happy organizations where people want to work and grow”. Here, and in line with the previous list of important aspects regarding with happiness in the workplace, this organization adds:

- Leadership
- Job stability
- Social benefits
- Resources
- Workplace
- Health and wellness
- Corporative culture

Anyway, and taking all these factors into account, the situation of happiness in the workplace in Spain is drastically decreasing in the last years. ***Depending on the sources, between 70% and 80% of respondents affirm that they are not happy at work.*** For instance, the report [Excellence and Values by IESE Business School](#) sets that 60% would not recommend their company to a friend, considering that people (89% men and 80% women) think that employees fall sick by stress in the workplace. The report suggests five elements to change this stat:

- A fair wage
- Motivation and opportunities for learning
- Generation of healthy and stress-free environments
- Foster the identification with the mission and vision of the company
- Contribution to society

Furthermore, the web portal *Acierto.com* established that [80% of Spanish workers are unhappy at work](#), a survey where the main reasons were lack of recognition, the feeling of being low paid and the impossibility to have family reconciliation. Anyway, 40% of respondents are willing to earn less money in exchange for more happiness in the workplace.



- Problem

- High unemployment rates
- Low quality of work
- Job instability
- Uncertainty
- Low salary
- Stress and anxiety
- Unhappiness at work

- Alternatives

- Emotional salary
- Raising awareness of happiness and wellness in the workplace
- Companies undertaking measures

Good Practices

✓ **Mutua Madrileña:**

Since 2017, assurance company Mutua Madrileña is considered the best Spanish organization to work ([according to the list by the magazine Actualidad Económica](#)) thanks to their universal measures for all employees, independently of the professional status.

They have an evaluation system for the individual performance of every employee in the company, whose result determines the wage increases with a variable and individual approach.

All employees have a life assurance of 500.000 euros, from the trainees to the general manager; 10% of the fix and variable salary goes to pension plan and average salaries are over the sector.

Training and upskilling is also a must in the company, with a budget in this area of 500.000 euros per year, including different programs such as female leadership. Mutua Madrileña is one of the few companies in Spain where gender gap salary does not exist.

✓ **Inditex:**

This Spanish company is very well known worldwide because it is the organization hidden behind Zara, the giant store, as well as other brands such as Zara Home, Stradivarius or **Pull&Bear**. Employees have direct access to an exclusive application called INET, which offers different advantages to users such as transport, social benefits, training, labour opportunities... Even, the internal program InTransit offers the option to switch location with any other worker in the staff of the company, with the chance to have an experience working in other place of the world.

✓ **Mercadona:**

The giant supermarket chain, with a 26% of the Spanish market, is a model for the relationship with their employees in aspects such as salary, conditions, gender equality and family reconciliation (maternity and paternity leave). Moreover, every year Mercadona shares benefits



(between 350 and 400 million euro) among their employees (around 85.000). The company prefers this policy instead of quoting in the stock exchange, sharing money among workers and not among shareholders.

Even, in the crisis of COVID 19, taking into account the extra workloads and pressure of their employees, the company decided to pay a plus of 20% thanking the effort and the hard work even in danger of infection.

✓ **Mahou:**

The brewery company was one of the first in Spain to create the Area of Happiness and the CHO (Chief Happiness Officer), included in the team of People&Organization. The company organizes workshops on mindfulness, the project HappyNet (focused on soft and interpersonal skills) and the internal survey DILO to test the working atmosphere and wellness. They organize individual and group actions (seminars, trainings) and the Personalized Happiness Plans

2. HEALTH AT WORK

Absenteeism related to injuries or health problems is one of the main problems for Spanish economy, joined immediately to the low levels of productivity in the workplace.

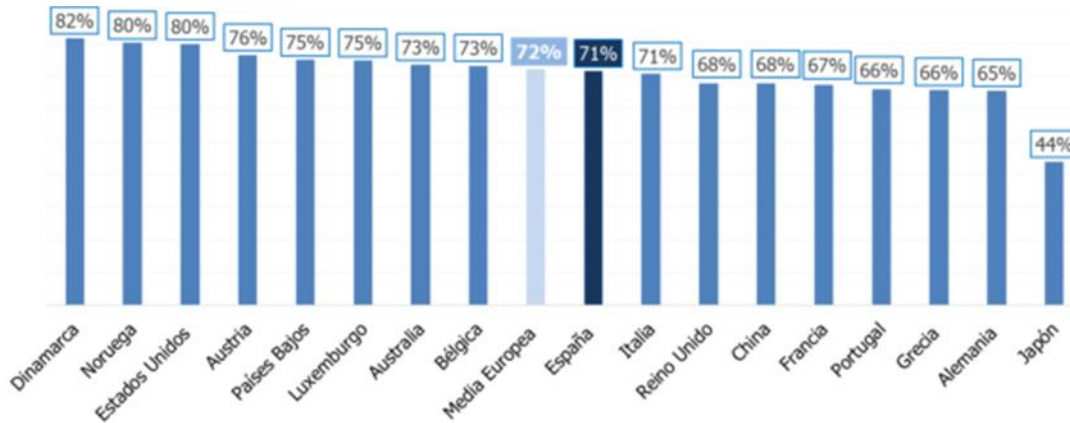
The last stats in this line, taken by the [Institute for National Statistics \(2019\)](#) sets that the rate of work absenteeism in Spain is 5.2%, a figure that implies:

- 450 million hours lost per trimester.
- [A cost of 14.400 million euro to the Social Security.](#)
- [70.000 million euros of cost opportunity.](#)
- Not justified absenteeism represented 1.4%.
- One million employees do not attend their workplace every day. 74% of them were off work with justification. 26% of them, not.

As we have seen previously, stress and anxiety are the main causes for work absenteeism related to health problems in the workplace, and this has much to do with the dissatisfaction and the lack of a motivational and inspirational environment.

According to an international survey carried out in 2019 by [Randstad](#), **71% of Spanish workers are not satisfied with their jobs, 3% less than 2018.**

The Randstad Workmonitor establishes that Spain is one point under the average, but over countries such as UK (69%), France (67%) and Germany (65%). On the top of the table, Denmark (82%), Norway (80%), Austria (76%), Netherlands and Luxembourg (75%) are the “happiest” workers in the EU. All the Southern countries are under the European average (between 66% -Portugal and Greece- and 71% -Italy-). High rates of unemployment and the economic recession are the main reasons for these levels of dissatisfaction.



In the case of Spain, the level of satisfaction has been regularly over 70%, with peaks of 74%. In 2019, one of the main points is that dissatisfaction among women was 70%, 6 points less in one year, while among men increased from 70% to 72%.

Lack of commitment, motivation and recognition are among the main reasons why workers do not feel happy at work. In this line, there are a few figures that we can extract from a report taken out by the blog on HR edenred.es about the benefits and effect of motivation at work:

- 86% of companies have developed incentives or recognition schemes for their employees.
- 89% of companies accept that employees leave the organization looking for a higher salary. However, only 12% of them earn more in their new job.
- 40% of employees do not feel recognized by their companies.
- 77% of workers admit that they would have more implication in their job if they felt more recognized.
- 56% of HR managers are concerned because their employees to leave the company.
- An incentive scheme or social benefits motivate 60% of employees to stay in the company.
- Retention of talent increases up to 85% the benefits of the company.
- 68% of customers would not be back if they have been treated poorly.
- Companies with a higher level of commitment in their employees are able to increase in 50% the level of loyalty of their customers.
- An incentive scheme increases up to 44% the productivity of employees.

In this line, there is an interesting article by Francisco Muro in his book *Gestión Eficaz de la Recompensa (Effective Management of the Compensation*. Ed. Empresa Activa, 2019) considering that employees are looking for a kind of compensation “more emotional, as a kind of recognition to a work well done”. In this line, the author says that there are two kinds of incentives: **economic** (a plus, a bonus or a gift); and non-economic or morale (flexible schedule, holidays or recognition). These are gaining ground, especially with the *Millennials* or Generation Z, who more than stability or a good salary, look for other factors such as life quality, professional development, challenging tasks or the sense of contribution. This new group of employees find much more attractive companies which do not necessarily prioritize economic incentives. On the other hand, they look for:



- Recognition. Both private and public.
- Flexible hours.
- Leisure time.
- Trips or activities.
- Training courses.

- Problem

- High levels of absenteeism
- Low recognition
- Low productivity
- Low satisfaction at work

- Alternatives

- New incentives schemes
- Working by objectives, not with fixed schedule

3. CONCILIATION MEASURES

Family reconciliation is a big challenge for the Spanish labour market, which according to the UNICEF report Analysis of the conciliation policies in the EU and the OECD is out of the top 10 of the countries with better conditions in this aspect.

The report says that Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Estonia and Portugal offer the best policies of support to the family (including paternity and maternity leave with full salary, care services and education for children aged 0-6) among the 31 richest countries, with Spain in the position 14.

Spain has 16 weeks of maternity leave with salary and 8 for fathers, both under the average. On the top, Estonia offers 85 weeks for mothers, followed by Hungary (72) and Bulgaria (61).

Even, according to last Eurobarometer (2018), 32% of Spanish declared that they were not satisfied with the conciliation between family and working life, the lowest rate in the EU whose average level of dissatisfaction is 18%. Spain is, together with Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, one of the countries where that level is over 30%.

In the same report, only 52% of Spanish employees answered to have access to flexible working hours. One of four considered that it is not easy to be beneficiary of those conditions, and 33% think that bosses or managers try to convince them to join a more flexible organization.

There are more structural problems. According to the Consultancy *Mente y Vida*, only 20% of Spanish companies provide family reconciliation measures, especially for SMEs. These represent 99% of Spanish companies and generate close to 65% of jobs, but they have more difficulties to promote new policies of conciliation, while big corporations offer more options. The report sets that 80% of SMEs are in favour of implementing those conciliation measures, while 15% think that it would be against their productivity.

Thus, and according to an Adecco report, 67% of respondents admit problems to conciliate family and work, a figure that goes to 81% in the case of women. The decisions made by the government in the last years have tended to fill this gap, but the country is still at the bottom of the conciliation policies in Europe, affecting especially women in their access to the labour



market, in their professional development and also in their chances to rejoin the market after maternity.

This situation, particularly for women, has a secondary effect: Spain is the second EU country with the lowest natality rate (1.3 children per woman, only over Malta, 1.26. Eurostat). The number of births has been decreasing in Spain for the last 10 years up to 29%, and this is generating a demographical crisis, losing 60.000 inhabitants in the last five years. The survey reveals that families are delaying more and more the moment to have children, and though 30% of women aged 18-55 would like to have two, the economic situation and the age of women are reducing that figure to one. According to Eurostat, Spanish women are the ones who have less children and also those among who have them later (average 30.9 years old, only after Italy, 31.1).

Though the general situation about family reconciliation is far from being ideal, there are some bright spots. The International Institute of Political Sciences published recently a report with the best Spanish companies to conciliate family and work, because it “generates more productivity and a higher optimization of time. The better the conciliation is, the higher is the responsibility and the calm of the worker facing his/her tasks”. Implication, commitment and personal relationships in the workplace grow with the fostering of conciliation measures, reducing levels of conflict, stress, absenteeism and improving the productivity and the time management.

“Conciliation is a powerful stimulus for the worker”, admits the report, so “it does not mean to work less, but in a different way, more efficient and more cost-effective for the company, giving an added value to the employee, because at the end of the day he/she knows that has done the job and has the time to enjoy and take care of the family”. On the other side, companies take the risk to lose a precious good: high qualified workers who generate high levels of productivity.

- Problem

- Bad general conditions for conciliation
- Short maternity/paternity leave
- General sense of dissatisfaction
- Low natality
- Demographical crisis
- Especial problems for SMEs

- Alternatives

- Flexible hours
- Longer maternity leave
- Economic help for children
- Teleworking



Good Practices

✓ **Repsol:**

The multinational corporation has flexible hours, teleworking, time management, free assistant benefits and creation of a Diversity and Conciliation Committee. They have set paid leave for maternity, paternity, breastfeed or passing of relatives over the ruling legislation.

Repsol has also instituted a reduction in working hours for children under 12, and has added an especial permission for caring a son/daughter which requires a long-term hospitalization.

✓ **Agbar:**

Barcelona's Water Company has set time flexibility for check in and check out, place and time flexibility, economic help for children with diversity, discounts in products and services, support to the maternity/paternity leave. Moreover, there is a plan of economic support for school-age sons/daughters (with a plus for handicapped ones) and a plus for university extension. Agbar also has salary benefits and extras as life assurance, bonuses for continuity in the company, low-interest loans, legal consulting and discounts in different products and services.

✓ **Iberdrola:**

The giant energy company can boast about having more of 70 measures in family reconciliation. It was the first company in the Ibex 35 (the 35 biggest companies in the Spanish Stock Exchange) implementing continuous working day from 7.15 to 16.35, with a flexible check in/check out of 1.45 hours and the option to leave at 14.00 on Fridays.

Iberdrola has also created the 'School for Parents', offering conferences and seminars for employees, but also with the option to share them with their sons/daughters in order to foster the relationships parents-children-company.

But probably the most striking point is that Iberdrola decided to extend these best practices in conciliation to their suppliers, taking into account that these also follow the same policies among their employees.

✓ **Mercadona:**

The giant supermarket chain is possibly the biggest example in good practices on family reconciliation from the first steps of the company in late 80's:

- Flexible times in order to foster the adaptation of employees to their specific personal circumstances
- Option to adapt reduced workday
- Closeness of the job in relation to the home
- Babysitting service in the workplace
- No opening on Sundays and bank holiday, no staff rotation
- Longer maternity/paternity leave than offered by law (up to 4 more weeks).

✓ **Leche Pascual:**

In 2008, the milk company obtained the certificate to 'Family Responsible Company' thanks to the actions undertaken in order to allow their employees to reconcile family and work. Moreover, Leche Pascual is one of the most recognized companies in Spain for their policies on gender



equality, with the seal of 'Equality in Business' granted by the Ministry of Equality and Social Services thanks to measures such as:

- Flexible times.
- Private medical insurance for all employees
- Right to a leave of up to two years for legal guardianship.
- Longer maternity/paternity leave than offered by law.

GROWTHCOOP

1. HAPPINESS AND MOOD AT WORK

And what exactly is happiness at work? It is achieving the well-being of the employees in your company through a good working environment, a comfortable work space, motivation, opportunity for professional development and recognition of work. You have to take into account that in many cases the salary is no longer a priority, but a factor, so you have to take care of the worker to attract and retain him/her

Various studies have shown that happiness at work is directly related to enjoying the work you do, feeling proud of the company, and working with people with whom there is a good relationship.

By investing in a happy company, we not only increase profits but also save costs.

Employees who are happy in their workplace are 12% more productive (Happiness and Productivity Study, University of Warwick)

Fred Luthans calculated the return on investment of happy employees, determining that the introduction of a conservative strategy to increase work motivation and entrepreneurial motivation of the workforce leads to an increase in ROI of 2% per year, which translates into *more than \$500 million in a typical mid-size company* (Fred Luthans, University of Nebraska)

People with higher rates of happiness in their work have a higher return: they spend 80% of their time on the tasks assigned, that is, 4 days of 5 a week. On the other hand, people with unhappiness at work devote up to 40% of their time to their tasks, i.e. 2 days a week, which represents an enormous cost for the organizations, since we would be talking about 100 days of work, or between 3 and 4 months for each dissatisfied employee (Iopener Institute Oxford)

- ✓ **Happy people are 86% more creative** (University of Berkeley)
- ✓ Those organizations where work happiness is higher obtain an average in sales between 80000 and 120000 dollars more per month (Gallup)
- ✓ **A happy company increases customer ratings by 10%** (Gallup)
- ✓ A happy company has 55% less turnover (Gallup)
- ✓ A happy company builds up 44% more employee loyalty (Gallup)
- ✓ A happy company has 41% less absenteeism (Gallup)



- ✓ A happy company has 58% fewer security problems (Gallup)
- ✓ A happy company has 40% less defective products (Gallup)
- ✓ A happy, motivated and satisfied worker achieves a 37% increase in sales, a 31% increase in productivity and a 19% increase in efficiency (Shawn Anchor)
- ✓ Unhappy employees average 15 days more sick leave than average (Shawn Anchor)
- ✓ **A happy employee is 300% more creative and innovative (HBR)**
- ✓ A happy employee has 125% less stress (HBR)
- ✓ **Happy people are 43% more productive (Hays Group)**
- ✓ The cost of replacing an employee is between 50% and 150% of the salary (Hays Group)
- ✓ The cost of the rotation is 6 to 9 months the salary of an employee (Society for Human Resource Management)
- ✓ **Happy employees are 20% more productive (Social Market Foundation)**
- ✓ **A happy company has 66% less sick leave (Forbes)**
- ✓ A happy company has 31% more productivity (Greenberg & Arawaka)

The return on investment (ROI) is 2.54 euros for every euro invested in welfare programmes.

People who surround themselves with happy people are 25% more likely to imitate this state of mind (Framingham Heart Study)

- Problem

- The employer has a low or no interest in knowing the personal circumstances of his employees
- Times of different workloads that generate anxiety and stress caused by poor planning
- Turnover and seasonality that allows the worker to feel happy in his working environment

- Alternatives

To strengthen the collective dynamics that allow an approach with the workers:

- Team games
- Joint activities
- Intra office competitions
- Meditation sessions
- Social events
- Make a good planning not only of the ordinary days but also of the possible overload of work
- Compensating for days of increased workload and stress with days free
- Promoting permanent employment



Good Practices

- ✓ The companies with the greatest representation in the Great Places To Work 2019 ranking are those with between 50 and 499 workers, with 50 companies recognized as Best Places to Work in Europe. Next come the large companies, those with more than 500 employees, with 30 award-winning companies; followed by multinational organizations operating in at least three countries, which add 25 companies to the ranking; and finally, 20 microenterprises with between 20 and 49 workers.
- ✓ 11 Spanish companies appear in the Best Workplaces in Europe ranking. For the fourth consecutive year, the United Kingdom is once again the country with the highest number of companies represented on the list, with 32 British companies recognized; it is followed by France with 26 companies; and Sweden, with 24 companies awarded. For its part, Spain is in ninth place with 11 companies represented in the Ranking of Best Companies to Work For in Europe. All these companies belong to the category of multinationals, with seven of them occupying the "Top 10" in Europe.
- ✓ **CHO or Chief Happiness Officer**

it is striking, for example, the birth of a new management position that is gaining ground in modern companies, the CHO or Chief Happiness Officer. *The CHO would be in charge of cohesion, promotion and monitoring of all plans and actions related to the happiness of a company's employees.* There are innovative companies that have already incorporated a CHO, which seems to me to be a very brave decision. However, I would like to make an aside with the figure of the CHO. It is still a person who works within the organisation and the longer he is integrated into the company, the less perspective and objectivity he will have of what the employees need. In addition, he may well be under pressure from the CEO and other senior managers, and he may be bowing to priorities that are difficult to reconcile with his true role. It is therefore advisable that the CHO relies on external companies to support its strategic plans for work happiness.

The CHO should not start giving mindfulness or leadership training to employees of his own company because he will never be seen as an external and impartial professional who really seeks the benefit of the employee (there will always be a reasonable doubt as to whether he is pursuing hidden objectives that have to do with the business objectives of the CEO), nor should he carry out coaching processes for his own colleagues, which goes against the principle of confidentiality and total trust that characterizes external coaching. *The true role of the CHO should be to promote and follow up on actions and plans to enhance the happiness of the employees, but actively seeking the support and external advice of specialized companies and experts in the different subjects and actions (work environment, coaching, mindfulness, health, flexibility, etc.*

- ✓ **Repsol**

This oil company, more than known, allows its employees to have a flexible schedule with total freedom to manage their time, promotes teleworking, gives free welfare benefits to its employees, and as if that were not enough, listens to its employees with the creation of a diversity and conciliation committee! A successful example of reconciling family and work life, making the employee happier

- ✓ **Agbar**

A company dedicated to the full water cycle works with flexible entry and exit times, allows for flexibility in place and time of work, subsidises economic aid for children with diversity, gives discounts on products and services and provides support for maternity or paternity leave. A round of applause for Agbar!



✓ *Vodafone*

The telephone company's measures to reconcile family and work include longer maternity or paternity leave than required by law, promoting care services for employees' families and working with overlapping contracts between two people! A good example of good measures that make workers happier

✓ *Mercadona*

Who doesn't know this food chain? Among its measures to reconcile family life and work, the proximity of work to home, day-care services at the workplace, the fact that the centre does not open on Sundays and holidays, and a longer maternity leave than required by law, stand out. In addition, employees also enjoy a stable working day and there is no turnover - many people value the option of working at Mercadona very highly!

✓ *L'oreal*

Cosmetics and beauty company, operates with flexible hours, assistance services for employees' relatives, a stable working day and paid leave for the care of relatives. A good way to help your employees to reconcile family life and work!

✓ *IBM*

Technology and consulting company that has among its measures to reconcile family and work, flexible entry and exit times, teleworking, care services for family members of employees and work by objective

2. HEALTH AT WORK

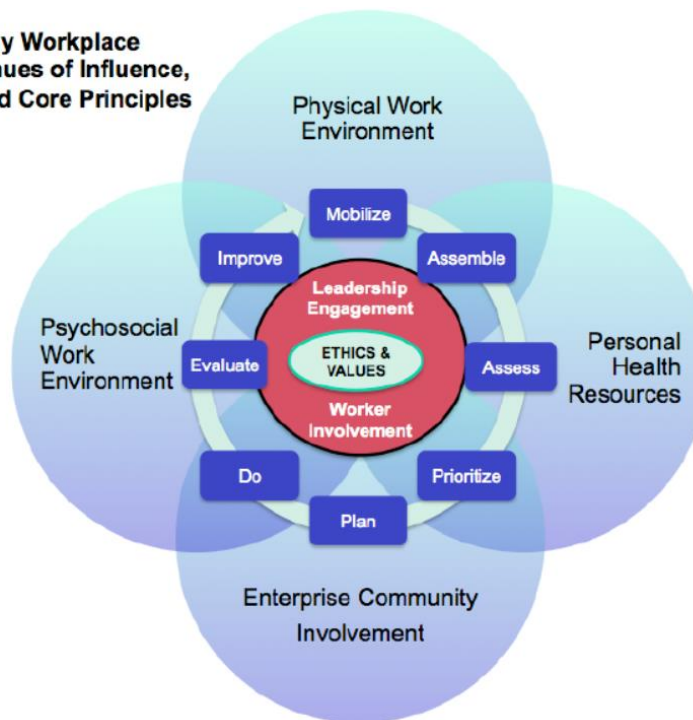
The WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific defines a healthy working environment as follows: "A Healthy Work Environment is a place where everyone works together to achieve a shared vision of health and well-being for workers and the community. This provides all members of the workforce with physical, psychological, social and organizational conditions that protect and promote health and safety. This allows managers and workers to have increasing control over their own health, to improve it and to be more energetic, positive and happy

Within the World Health Organization there is a publication to implement Healthy Workplaces:



A Model for Action For employers, workers, regulatory authorities and professionals

Figure ES1
WHO Healthy Workplace
Model: Avenues of Influence,
Process, and Core Principles



<https://www.who.int/activities/healthy-workplaces-a-who-global-model-for--action>

- Problem

Occupational health deals with all aspects of health and safety in the workplace and has a strong focus on primary prevention of hazards. The health of the workers has several determinants, including risk factors at the workplace leading to cancers, accidents, musculoskeletal diseases, respiratory diseases, hearing loss, circulatory diseases, stress related disorders and communicable diseases and others.

Employment and working conditions in the formal or informal economy embrace other important determinants, including, working hours, salary, workplace policies concerning maternity leave, health promotion and protection provisions, etc

- Alternative

Creating Healthy Workplaces: a model for action, according to WHO guidelines

That includes:

A committed and conscientious leadership in improving the conditions of the environment will also generate a committed team.

The creation of a healthy environment requires the involvement of workers and their representatives

The use of a systematic and comprehensive process to ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness. This consists of gathering the necessary technical and logistical resources, to build the company and the working environment that we imagine in the future. This includes the continuous training of employers and employees. In matters related to specific work safety and the achievement of healthy working environments.



Sustainability and integration. This also involves adapting the company to current legislation on safety in the workplace and occupational risk prevention. Through a Health and Safety Committee within the institution

Good Practices

There are numerous groups and networks from European countries, companies and institutions that deal with health in the working environment:

- ✓ European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities 84- Business for Health.
- ✓ European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, EU-OSHA (sponsored by the EU)
- ✓ European Network for Education and Training in Occupational Safety and Health
- ✓ European Network for Health Promotion in the Working Environment (ENWHP)
- ✓ European Network of Professional Organisations for Safety and Health (ENSHPO)
- ✓ WHO European Network of Collaborating Centres for Occupational Health
- ✓ European Network of Focal Points for Workers' Health at National Level 91
- ✓ Eurosafe European Association for Accident Prevention and Safety Promotion
- ✓ Federation of European Ergonomic Societies (FEES)
- ✓ Federation of Occupational Health Nurses in the European Union (FOHNEU)

3. CONCILIATION MEASURES

The reconciliation of work and personal life consists of the possibility for working people to make compatible, on the one hand, the work aspect and, on the other, the personal aspect in the broadest possible sense, including both family and personal and individual needs, leisure management, etc.

Companies, as employing entities, make available to super staff a series of measures that aim to make their work compatible with the time they need to carry out other activities.

- ✓ For all the reasons, many employers consider that this is a loss of economic potential and productive working time and are not willing to assume the costs.
- ✓ Another associated problem is that working men feel that such measures are not equal and provide different and unfair treatment



GROUP 1

Measures for organising working time (working day and hours, shifts, holidays, etc.) The company offers its staff flexibility in their working day, allowing them to distribute their working hours so that they can combine their professional activity with their personal situation.

ACTIONS

- ✓ Flexible entry and/or exit time
- ✓ Intensive Friday and/or on certain dates (Christmas, Easter, period of adaptation of school schedules, etc.)
- ✓ Intensive day in the summer months
- ✓ Hour pool or possibility to concentrate more hours in a certain day or period and thus accumulate free hours
- ✓ Customized distribution of the day (autonomy to organize the task)
- ✓ Possibility of choosing or changing shifts
- ✓ possibility of reducing the time of the meal and advancing the time of departure-
- ✓ Organisation of training and/or meetings during working hours
- ✓ Flexible vacations-
- ✓ Possibility of taking days off at specific times: birthdays, school accompaniment, personal matters, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve
- ✓ Unpaid leave (leave of absence, unpaid leave, unpaid days)

GROUP 2

Measures of spatial flexibility such as geographical mobility or distance working, which consists of the company providing the staff with the necessary infrastructure to carry out the work in a different physical location within the company.

The possibility of working from home implies a change in the culture of presence towards the performance of objectives for which many companies have already committed themselves

ACTIONS

- ✓ Distance working
- ✓ Videoconferences
- ✓ On-line training
- ✓ Geographical mobility



GROUP 3

Measures relating to social improvements and benefits, including extra pay and non-wage measures to improve the quality of employment, e.g. measures offering flexible pay, allowing employees to save on products or services such as childcare, transport and health insurance.

ACTIONS

- ✓ Financial aid for the birth of children and schooling or childcare fees
- ✓ Subsidized ticket or restaurant service
- ✓ Coach service or transport aids
- ✓ Medical insurance
- ✓ Life insurance/accidents
- ✓ Pension plan
- ✓ Advantageous banking conditions, loans or advances
- ✓ Discounts on purchases of products or services: company products, cars, travel, sports activities, etc.

GROUP 4

Measures relating to improvements in legal permits. The company is extending and improving the permits relating to conciliation provided for in the legislation permits for birth and adoption, for legal guardianship of minors or care of dependent persons.

ACTIONS

- ✓ Paternity Leave Extension
- ✓ Extension of the breastfeeding permit
- ✓ Extension of maternity leave
- ✓ Paid care leave (for school meetings, children's illnesses, accompanying dependents to the doctor, etc.)
- ✓ Unpaid leave (leave of absence, unpaid holidays, unpaid days)
- ✓ Improvements to the reduction of working hours for legal guards
- ✓ Improvements in leave of absence for legal guardianship or care of dependents

The analysis of the most adopted measures has the following characteristics:

Predominance of flexibility measures in the organisation of working time: flexible entry and exit time (71.6%), intensive working hours in the summer months (52.6%) and on Fridays or certain dates (43.1%).

In order of importance, these were followed by measures of spatial flexibility, with distance working being the second most implemented measure (62.9%).



Importance of the measures relating to social benefits and non-wage benefits, such as economic aid for the birth of children and schooling (55.2%) and discounts on purchases and services (44.8%).

The measures that imply improvements to the legislation in force in the area of reconciliation are the least implemented, especially the extension of paternity leave (32.8%).

- Problem

The reconciliation of work and personal life consists of the possibility for working people to make compatible, on the one hand, the work aspect and, on the other, the personal aspect in the broadest possible sense, including both family and personal and individual needs, leisure management, etc.

Companies, as employing entities, make available to superstaff a series of measures that aim to make their work compatible with the time they need to carry out other activities.

- For all the aforementioned reasons, many employers consider that this is a loss of economic potential and productive working time and are not willing to assume the costs.

- Another associated problem is that working men feel that such measures are not equal and provide different and unfair treatment

- Alternative

We will perform the analysis ** focusing on several solutions that will vary according to the focus:

- ✓ GROUP1: Measures of work time organization
- ✓ GROUP2: Spatial flexibility measures such as geographical mobility or distance working
- ✓ GROUP3: Measures relating to social improvements and benefits
- ✓ GROUP4: Measures relating to improvements in legal permits

In order for reconciliation to serve as a strategy for achieving effective equality between women and men, the measures implemented by companies cannot be aimed exclusively at women but must be extended to both women and men. The term co-responsibility refers precisely to the fact that men reduce their absenteeism in the domestic sphere, take responsibility for domestic tasks, care and attention to children, relatives in the ascending line or other dependent persons and, therefore, make use of the reconciliation measures offered by companies to the same extent as women

**According to the national strategic plan for labor conciliation elaborated by S.D.G. for Equality in Business and Collective Bargaining Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities State Secretariat for Social Services and Equality MINISTRY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL SERVICES AND EQUALITY (Real Decreto-Ley 6/2019)

Good Practices

✓ Certification in equality in the company

The Network of Companies with the "Equality in the Company" label or DIE Network is an initiative of the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality to promote the exchange of good practices and experiences in the field of equal opportunities between women and men in the workplace.



All the entities that have obtained the "Equality in the Company" distinction belong to it, a mark of excellence granted by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality to companies and other entities that stand out for the development of equality policies within their organizations. The entities that form part of the DIE Network are spread throughout Spain and are very diverse in terms of age and sectors of activity, but they share a common objective: to make equality policy one of the main organizational strategies for building an egalitarian working environment that benefits both the company's staff and its economic results.

✓ **Emotional Salary**

Measures to reconcile work and personal life also fall within what is known as the emotional wage, which can be defined as the non-monetary remuneration offered by the company to the staff employed. Among the concepts included in the emotional wage are development opportunities, psychological well-being and life balance. In other words, ensuring that staff are in a safe working environment, with recognition and professional opportunities and that they can enjoy all facets of life (work, leisure, family,..)

SPANISH CONCLUSIONS

As general considerations we must take into account:

- Actually, situation has been drastically affected with the crisis of COVID-19, which is seriously hitting Spain (the second most affected country, together with Italy). In March 2020 one million jobs were lost, and the predictions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) advance that our country will suffer a contraction in the economy of 8% and the unemployment rate will grow to 21%
- The situation of happiness at work is determined in the case of Spain by the employment rate, for happiness to exist in the work environment there must be employment
- In this general crisis context, the Medical Union National Confederation (CEMS) explains "in these new working situations, there are jobs, but they are under very poor working conditions", which generates "strong pressure and lack of motivation"
- Stress is behind 30% of work absenteeism in Spain, according to the report Human and Healthy Companies (2019)
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that from 2020, stress and anxiety will be the first causes of absenteeism in the world.
- Among the good practices in order to facilitate well-being we found the "CHO" would be in charge of cohesion, promotion and monitoring of all plans and actions related to the happiness of a company's employees.
- We also find different good practices and conciliation measures in companies such as Repsol, Vodafone, Agbar, Mercadona..
- We find it very interesting Certification in equality in the company The Network of Companies with the "Equality in the Company" label or DIE Network is an initiative of the Institute for Women and Equal Opportunities of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality to promote the exchange of good practices and experiences in the field of equal opportunities between women and men in the workplace.



FINAL CONCLUSIONS

- As we can see, there are *important structural differences* between all the countries in this report. This is something understandable as there are many different cultural approaches.
- Thus, we find in general that *good working conditions* and an *adequate working environment* will be of great importance to have a happy worker in companies.
- At present, due to the irruption of the *Covid-19 the economic future* is uncertain, finding that this future will condition the happiness at work.
- *Stress is one of the factors* that affect happiness and health the most, being highlighted by all countries. There is common consensus on this point in all countries.
- There are very different measures to *favour conciliation* and to obtain an adequate working environment
- We found the figure of the " **CHO**" (**Chief Happiness Officer**) would be in charge of cohesion, promotion and monitoring of all plans and actions related to the happiness of a company's employees.



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

This project is co-funded by the European Commission through the Erasmus+ Programme.
(KA204 - Strategic Partnerships for adult education -2019-1- SI01-KA204-060436).