

# Between Job and Care: Conflict or Opportunity?

First results from the German Sample

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## The Carers@Work Project: A Comparison of four European Countries

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## The Partners in Four European Countries

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Responsible Person</b>	<b>Country</b>
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University of Duisburg-Essen	Prof. Dr. Gerhard Bäcker Dr. Angelika Kümmerling	Germany
University of Hamburg	Dr. Hanneli Döhner Susanne Kohler	Germany
University of Oxford	Dr. Andreas Hoff Kate Hamblin	United Kingdom
INRCA Ancona	Dr. Giovanni Lamura Dr. Andrea Principi	Italy
University of Krakow	Dr. Jolanta Perek-Bialas Justyna Stypinska	Poland

## **Our aims**

- to identify gaps in existing knowledge about successful measures to enable family carers to combine paid work and care
- to analyse individual reconciliation conflicts and strategies also in comparing different welfare-/care-regimes
- to analyse company initiatives for workers with care responsibility
- to search for international ‚best practice‘ models
- The project wants to show that a successful reconciliation of work and care is possible if accompanied by company and socio-political measures.

## **Methodology**

- Literature review (responsible: D);
- Secondary data analysis of SHARE and EUROFAMCARE data sets (responsible: I, PL);
- **Carers perspective:**
- Topic-guide interviews with 60 employed family carers in each of the four participating countries (responsible: D, I, PL, UK);

### **- Employers perspective:**

#### **In Germany:**

- 10 case studies in German enterprises, i.e. expert interviews with managers and trade union members
- Expert interviews with members of the employers associations and the main political parties
- Analysis of collective bargaining agreements and other agreements between employers and employees

#### **In all countries (D, I, PL, UK):**

Search for examples of good/best-practice

## **Some research questions: Companies**

- Do companies recognize the problem of combining work and care?
- What is the estimated prevalence rate of working carers?
- Which kind of measures do exist in companies?
- How high is the usage rate especially with regard to eldercare?
- In what kind of companies do we find measures?
- What are the reasons for implementing measures?
- If no measures exist – what are the reasons?

## **First Results – the German case**

## **Important results: Companies I**

- up to now 9 case studies in companies with good/best practice
- Mainly bigger companies (more than 250 employees) of different branches (e.g, metal industry, health care services)
- Percentage of women among employees: between 15% and 90%, average age 40 years
- Interviews with: Human ressource managers, representatives of the work council
- Review of collective agreements and other agreements between employers and employees



## **Results: Companies II**

- **Do companies recognize the problem of combining of work and care?**
  - Mainly yes, but some companies regard the reconciliation of work and care as a topic of growing importance in the future.
- **What is the estimated prevalence rate of working carers?**
  - With regard to „officially known“ working carers rather low.

## Theses regarding low prevalence rate

- Care obligations for an older relative are still a taboo:
- The individuals don't want strain their co-workers
- Working carers are afraid to endanger their job position due to the „care-stigma“ and the labeling of being less productive and applicable
- The persons want to keep on the “respite function” of work
- Rescheduling of working time is not a rare phenomenon. Employees are not requested to explain these rearrangements.

## **Results: Companies III**

- **Which kind of measures do exist in companies?**
  - all offer flexible working time arrangements
  - all offer a change from full time to part time and back to full time
  - all offer longer leave of absence
  - 5 offer telework
  - 2 have company agreements regarding the reconciliation of work and care
  - 3 finance an information and referral service

## **Results: Companies IV**

- **How high is the usage rate especially with regard to eldercare?**
  - This rate is quite low.
  
- **In what kind of companies do we find measures more often? In companies ...**
  - with more than 250 employees
  - which have a long tradition of family friendliness
  - which have a high percentage of older (female) workers
  - which expect a shortage of qualified personnel
  - with high influence of the working council and trade unions

## **Results: Companies V**

- **What are the reasons for implementing measures?**
  - to attract and keep qualified workers
  - to save costs (e.g., related to absenteeism, lower productivity)
  - to follow agreements made in collective bargaining
  - to improve the public image of the company

## Results: Companies V

- **If no measures exist – what are the reasons?**
  - no demand from employees;
  - legal regulations and collective bargaining agreements are sufficient;
  - no benefit expected;
  - no awareness of the impact that eldercare has on the workplace;
  - concerns about the costs of offering elder care policies and measures;
  - **in case of eldercare informal arrangements are made between employer and the employee;**

## Summary:

- Employers and employees can *benefit* from successful reconciliation of work and eldercare;
- However, most employers *hesitate* to introduce special measures due to different reasons;
  - In companies the most common measures to reconcile work and eldercare are *worktime* (flexibility and reduction) and *other flexible forms* (e.g., part-time work);
  - Measures can be found more in *big* than in small or medium sized companies;

Thank you very much for your attention!

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