

PRESS RELEASE 7

DECEMBER 2016

“WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGES IN FAMILY AND IN LABOR MARKET IN GREECE”

EEA PROJECT GR07/3939

CONFERENCE

“WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN CRISIS?”

AUDITORIUM “ALKIS ARGYRIADIS”,
CENTRAL BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

TUESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER 2016

The conference “Work-life balance in crisis?” has been successfully organized on Tuesday 29th of November 2016 at Auditorium “Alkis Argyriadis” in the Central Building of the University of Athens. The conference was jointly organized by the four implementing parties of the project WORLBAL (3939) under the Action “**Work-life balance in the context of changing families and labor market in Greece – WORLBAL with EEA code GR07/3939**”: The Family and Childcare Centre (KMOP) as coordinator, the National Center for Social Research (EKKE), the Greek League for Women’s Rights (GWL) and the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Iceland as partners.

In the beginning of the conference, Antonia Torrens, President of KMOP, Professor Nikos Demertzis, President of the National Center for Social Research (EKKE) and Ellas- Eleni Kourakou, President of the Greek League for Women’s Rights (GWL) delivered an opening address, mentioning the key aspects of reconciliation issue such as: economic crisis, the principle social and cultural values and the undergoing changes in labor market, stressed by high female unemployment rates. At the same time, Guðný Björk Eydal, Professor at the University of Iceland and Ioannis Lymperopoulos, Honorary Consul of Iceland highlighted how the reconciliation issue is perceived by the Icelandic society.

During the first panel, Guðný Björk Eydal, Professor at the University of Iceland and Gudborg Andrea Jonsdottir, Director of the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Iceland gave a comprehensive overview of the legislative initiatives and policies regarding work-life balance. They also underlined the positive impact of implemented policies in the increasing participation of fathers in family life,

through the introduction of quota in parental leave uptake. Laura Maratou – Alipranti, project scientific coordinator and Visiting Professor at the University of Athens, presented the changes imposed by the economic crisis in Greece in family, in family models, in reproducing behaviors as well as in female employment. Also, she mentioned the key aspects of the reconciliation policies such as: a) facilitating



women’s access to labor market, b) encouraging reconciliation between working and family life and c) promoting reallocation of family and housing responsibilities between women and men.

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In the second panel, Athanasios Katsis, Associate Professor at the University of the Peloponnese, presented the main results of the qualitative research conducted by KMOP in a sample of 1000 working women aged 25-55 years old. The aim of the qualitative research was to explore and assess the professional and family needs of women, their preferences regarding the use of care services and their expectations towards the implemented reconciliation policies as well as the father's contribution in daily childcare and household tasks. Moreover, it has been mentioned that the participation of husbands/fathers in family responsibilities has increased while a correlation has been highlighted between their participation level, their education level and the age of their younger child.



In the third panel, the main results of the qualitative research conducted by the EKKE research team- under the supervision of Joanna Tsiganou and Maria Thanopoulou, Research Directors at EKKE- have been presented in 11 case



studies, representing various professional women groups. As a key conclusion, the qualitative research demonstrated that the absence of public care services, the revenue shrinking and the adopted austerity measures constitute a great obstacle in achieving work-life balance. Also, the research stressed the early leaving of women from labor market and their return to the traditional role of wife-mother at home.

The fourth panel focused on the reconciliation policies that are implemented in the EU member-states as well as on the current challenges of Greece's reconciliation policy. Manina Kakepaki, EKKE researcher, assessed Greece's reconciliation policies, through interviews with policy-makers and stakeholders. Her two main conclusions were the following: a) the absence of a central planning in the social policy-shaping and making procedures and b) the fact that the adopted reconciliation policies worked more as facilitators for women in assuming their double responsibilities (family and professional) than as decisive factors combating gender stereotypes and discriminations. Evrydiki Tseliou, political scientist, gave an overview of the different reconciliation policy models of the EU-28 while she made some concrete policy recommendations for a Greek horizontal reconciliation policy model, based on European best practices. At the end of the panel, Antonia Torrens, President of KMOP and Vice-President of the Confederation of the Family Organizations in European Union (COFACE) presented the current challenges that Europe faces in this field and the COFACE's relevant initiatives.

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The conference concluded with a roundtable discussion where political representatives, scientists, academics and experts made short remarks about the challenges that work-life balance faces in our times. In the roundtable discussion participated Eirini-Helen Agathopoulou, President of Research Center for Gender Equality (KETHI), Christina Aggeli, Gender Equality Department of Greek Ombudsman, Foteini Kouvela, General-Secretary for Gender Equality, Sofia Koukoulis-Spiliotopoulos, Independent Expert of European Commission in gender equality issues, Eugenia Tsoumani, Former General-Secretary for Gender Equality and Maria Stratigaki, Vice Mayor of Athens for Social Solidarity, Welfare and Equality and Associate Professor at Panteion University. The conference attended around 100 researchers, academics, social sciences students, political and state representatives, NGOs representatives and associations. At the end of each panel, an interesting debate with public has followed.

PARTNERS



The project «Work-life balance in the context of changing families and labour market in Greece – WORLBAL (EEA GR07/3939)», is co-financed by the Programme Research within priority sectors: “Diversity, inequalities and social inclusion”, of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014.

