



TEXTS ADOPTED

P8_TA(2016)0338

Creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance

European Parliament resolution of 13 September 2016 on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance (2016/2017(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 2 and 3(3) of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Articles 6(a), 8, 10, 153(1), 153(2) and 157 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Articles 7, 9, 23, 24 and 33 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,
- having regard to the European Social Charter of 3 May 1996, in particular Part I and Part II, Articles 2, 4, 16 and 27, on the right of workers with family responsibilities to equal opportunities and equal treatment,
- having regard to Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding¹ (the Maternity Leave Directive),
- having regard to the Commission proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending the Maternity Leave Directive (COM(2008)0637),
- having regard to its position adopted at first reading on 20 October 2010 with a view to the adoption of Directive 2011/.../EU of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/85/EEC on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding and on the introduction of measures to support workers in balancing work and family life², asking – among other things – for a two-week period of paternity leave,

¹ OJ L 348, 28.11.1992, p. 1.

² OJ C 70 E, 8.3.2012, p. 163.

- having regard to Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC¹,
- having regard to Council Directive 2013/62/EU of 17 December 2013 amending Directive 2010/18/EU implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC, following the amendment of the status of Mayotte with regard to the European Union²,
- having regard to Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC³,
- having regard to Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation⁴,
- having regard to Directive 2003/88/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 November 2003 concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time⁵,
- having regard to Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC⁶,
- having regard to its resolution of 25 February 2016 on European Semester for economic policy coordination: Employment and Social Aspects in the Annual Growth Survey 2016⁷,
- having regard to its resolution of 20 May 2015 on maternity leave⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 September 2013 on the application of the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value⁹,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 March 2013 on eliminating gender stereotypes in the EU¹⁰,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 March 2015 on progress on equality between women and men in the European Union in 2013¹¹,

¹ OJ L 68, 18.3.2010, p. 13.

² OJ L 353, 28.12.2013, p. 7.

³ OJ L 180, 15.7.2010, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 16.

⁵ OJ L 299, 18.11.2003, p. 9.

⁶ OJ L 14, 20.1.1998, p. 9.

⁷ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0059.

⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0207.

⁹ OJ C 93, 9.3.2016, p. 110.

¹⁰ OJ C 36, 29.1.2016, p. 18.

¹¹ OJ C 316, 30.8.2016, p. 2.

- having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2015 on the EU Strategy for equality between women and men post-2015¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 8 October 2015 on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation²,
- having regard to its resolution of 3 February 2016 on the new Strategy for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality in Europe post-2015³,
- having regard to its resolution of 12 May 2016 on the application of Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC⁴,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 June 2011 on early childhood education and care: providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow⁵,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 19 June 2015 on equal income opportunities for women and men: Closing the gender gap in pensions,
- having regard to the European Pact for gender equality for the period 2011-2020 adopted by the Council conclusions of 7 March 2011⁶,
- having regard to the Presidency conclusions of the Barcelona European Council of 15 and 16 March 2002,
- having regard to the EU Presidency Trio declaration on gender equality of 7 December 2015 by the Netherlands, Slovakia and Malta,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 3 March 2010 entitled ‘Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to the Commission’s initiative ‘Roadmap: A new start to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families’ (December 2015), as well as to the public and stakeholder consultation,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Commission Work Programme 2016: No time for business as usual’ (COM(2015)0610),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Launching a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights’ (COM(2016)0127),

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0218.

² Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0351.

³ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0042.

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0226.

⁵ OJ C 175, 15.6.2011, p. 8.

⁶ 3073rd Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 7 March 2011.

- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Towards Social Investment for Growth and Cohesion – including implementing the European Social Fund 2014-2020’ (COM(2013)0083) and its Recommendation 2013/112/EU of 20 February 2013 on ‘Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage’,
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘A better work-life balance: stronger support for reconciling professional, private and family life’, (COM(2008)0635),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 February 2011 on Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow (COM(2011)0066),
- having regard to the Commission progress report on the Barcelona objectives of 29 May 2013 entitled ‘The development of childcare facilities for young children in Europe with a view to sustainable and inclusive growth’ (COM(2013)0322),
- having regard to the Commission’s staff working document ‘The Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019’, in particular its Chapter 3.1 ‘Increasing female labour-market participation and the equal economic independence of women and men’,
- having regard to the Commission’s 2015 report on equality between women and men in the European Union (SWD(2016)0054), in particular to the chapter on equal economic independence,
- having regard to the Commission staff working document ‘Employment and Social Developments in Europe 2015’ of 21 January 2016, in particular its Chapter III.2 on social protection,
- having regard to the studies of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) entitled ‘Working time and work-life balance in a life course perspective’ (2013), ‘Caring for children and dependants: Effect on careers of young workers’ (2013), and ‘Working and caring: Reconciliation measures in times of demographic change’ (2015) and to the Sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) (2016),
- having regard to the study of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions on ‘Working time development in the 21st century’ of 2015,
- having regard to the study of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions entitled ‘Promoting parental and paternity leave among fathers’,
- having regard to the report of the European Network of Equality Bodies, Equinet, entitled ‘Equality bodies promoting a better work-life balance for all’ of 8 July 2014,
- having regard to the European Institute for Gender Equality’s 2015 Gender Equality Index and its 2015 report entitled ‘Reconciliation of work, family and private life in the European Union: Policy review’,

- having regard to the European Parliamentary Research Service study of May 2015 entitled ‘Gender equality in employment and occupation – Directive 2006/54/EC, European Implementation Assessment’,
- having regard to the study by Parliament’s Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union entitled ‘Maternity, paternity and parental leave: Data related to duration and compensation rates in the European Union’,
- having regard to the study by Parliament’s Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union entitled ‘Costs and benefits of maternity and paternity leave’,
- having regard to the study by Parliament’s Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union entitled ‘Discrimination Generated by the Intersection of Gender and Disability’,
- having regard to the study by Parliament’s Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, of March 2016, entitled ‘Differences in Men’s and Women’s Work, Care and Leisure Time’,
- having regard to the 2014 Eurocarers Carers’ Strategy, ‘Enabling Carers to Care’,
- having regard to the European Pact for mental health and well-being of 2008 and its priority ‘Mental health in workplace settings’,
- having regard to ILO Convention 156 Concerning Family Responsibilities (1981) and ILO Recommendation 165 Concerning Workers with Family Responsibilities (1981),
- having regard to ILO Part-Time Work Convention 1994, ILO Home Work Convention 1996, ILO Maternity Protection Convention 2000 and ILO Domestic Workers Convention 2011,
- having regard to the ILO report ‘Maternity and paternity at work: law and practice across the world’ (2014),
- having regard to the Agreed Conclusions of 24 March 2016 of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, 60th session, in particular points (e) to (g),
- having regard to the Joint ILO/UNICEF Working Paper of 8 July 2013 ‘Supporting workers with family responsibilities: connecting child development and the decent work agenda’,
- having regard to the OECD Better Life Index 2015,
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the joint deliberations of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality under Rule 55 of the Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0253/2016),

- A. whereas according to the latest Eurostat data, the birth rate in the EU has fallen in recent decades and the EU faces unprecedented demographic challenges¹ to which the Member States should respond; whereas family-friendly policies are important in order to trigger positive demographic trends, because job insecurity and difficult working conditions may have a negative impact on family planning;
- B. whereas in 2014, 5,1 million children were born in the EU-28, corresponding to a crude birth rate of 10,1; whereas, in comparison, this rate was 10,6 in 2000, 12,8 in 1985 and 16,4 in 1970; whereas the EU faces a serious demographic challenge owing to the ever decreasing birth rates in most Member States, which are gradually transforming the Union into a gerontocratic society and posing a direct threat to social and economic growth and development;
- C. whereas the traditional concept of women's and men's roles and of the nuclear family is further challenged, as the number of single-parent families, families based on same-sex unions, adolescent mothers, etc. are on the rise in the EU; whereas a failure to acknowledge this diversity amounts to further discrimination and negatively affects people living in the EU and their families;
- D. whereas equality between men and women is a fundamental principle of the European Union, and Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union prohibit any discrimination on grounds of sex and require equality between men and women to be ensured in all areas, including in the achievement of a work-life balance;
- E. whereas the roadmap presented by the Commission is a starting point; whereas this opportunity must open a process of reorganisation of the work-life balance situation of women and men in Europe and must contribute significantly to achieving higher levels of gender equality;
- F. whereas well designed and implemented reconciliation policies are to be considered as an essential improvement of the working environment, enabling good working conditions and social and professional well-being; whereas at the same time a good work-life balance promotes economic growth, competitiveness, overall labour market participation, gender equality, reduction of the risk of poverty, and intergenerational solidarity, addresses the challenges of an aging society and positively influences birth rates in the EU; whereas the policies to be implemented to attain these objectives must be modern, concentrate on improving women's access to the labour market and equal sharing of domestic and care tasks between women and men, and be based on the establishment of a coherent policy framework supported by collective bargaining and collective agreements to allow for a better balancing of caring, professional and private life;
- G. whereas reconciling work and private life largely depends on the working time arrangements at the workplace; whereas doubts have been raised as to whether more and longer working hours are beneficial to the economy in terms of increased productivity; whereas a significant proportion of workers in the EU has atypical working hours, including working at weekends and on public holidays and doing shift and night work, and almost half of workers worked in their free time in 2015; whereas current findings indicate that working time arrangements change regularly for 31 % of

¹ Eurostat 2015 Demography Report.

employees, often at short notice¹; whereas this might raise health and safety concerns, with an increased risk of accidents at work and poorer health in the long term, and make it difficult for workers to reconcile work with duties towards children and other dependants; whereas some sectors are more severely affected, such as the retail services sector where most of those employed are women;

- H. whereas the Commission and the Member States should launch specific measures to foster adaptable and effective job performance models, in both the public and private sectors, which would enable workers to achieve a work-life balance;
- I. whereas in 2015, the employment rate for men stood at 75,9 % in the EU-28, as compared with 64,3 % for women², despite the fact that women are better educated; whereas the number of women in the workforce is even lower when considering employment rates in full-time equivalents, since the share of part-time employment among women is very high in some Member States; whereas in 2013 men spent 47 hours per week on paid work, compared to 34 hours for women; whereas when combining the working hours of paid work and unpaid work at home, young women on average worked 64 hours, compared to 53 hours worked by young men³; whereas GDP per capita losses attributable to gender gaps in the labour market have been estimated at up to 10 % in Europe;
- J. whereas in the current context of EU employment, socio-economic and equality policies, the Europe 2020 strategy and the goals previously set are far from being reached; whereas without proactive policies designed and implemented to help women enter the job market, especially policies that promote a better work-life balance, any target set at EU level cannot actually be reached;
- K. whereas European labour markets are gender segregated⁴; whereas the Commission also acknowledged this in its communication of 8 March 2016 on the European Pillar of Social Rights (COM(2016)0127, Annex I), stating that ‘women continue to be underrepresented in employment, overrepresented in part-time work and low-paid sectors, and receive lower hourly wages also when performing equivalent work and even though they have surpassed men in educational attainment’;
- L. whereas poverty and widening inequalities have worsened with the macroeconomic policies implemented by the EU and the austerity measures imposed in response to the economic crisis;
- M. whereas the struggle to reconcile family and working life is particularly difficult for single parents, the majority of whom are women; whereas in the 28 EU Member States no less than 34 % of single mothers are at risk of poverty, and children from those families are at a disproportionately greater risk of intergenerational transmission of poverty;

¹ Eurofound (2015): First findings: Sixth European Working Conditions Survey.

² <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

³ Eurofound (2013): Caring for children and dependants: Effect on careers of young workers.

⁴ Eurofound (2015): First findings: Sixth European Working Conditions Survey.

- N. whereas the harmful repercussions of the feminisation of poverty have the greatest impact on children raised by single mothers who are experiencing serious difficulties in reconciling the role of sole provider with their parenting responsibilities;
- O. whereas gender equality in the labour market benefits not only women but the economy and society as a whole, being a key economic asset to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth and the reduction of occupational inequality, as well as labour market efficiency and fluidity; whereas women entering and re-entering working life leads to an increase in family income, consumption, social security contributions and the volume of taxes collected; whereas women still face discrimination in accessing and staying in employment, as well as a denial of labour rights owing, in particular, to pregnancy and maternity;
- P. whereas the gender pay gap stands at 16,3 % and whereas the atypical and uncertain forms of working contracts also affect women more than men;
- Q. whereas inequality in the labour market has lifelong consequences and impacts on women's rights, such as pensions, as the 39 % EU gender pension gap testifies, representing more than double the gender pay gap of 16 %;
- R. whereas among the various occupational categories, the self-employed and businesswomen in particular are having great difficulty in achieving a work-life balance; whereas, very often, women who wish to set up a business have difficulty in gaining access to credit, because financial intermediaries are reluctant to grant loans as they consider women entrepreneurs to be more exposed to risk and less likely to make their businesses grow;
- S. whereas stereotypes widely conveyed by society leave women in a subordinate role; whereas these stereotypes start to develop during childhood and are reflected in educational and training choices and continue into the labour market; whereas women are still too often confined to 'women-friendly' jobs and are often poorly paid; whereas these labour market divisions reproduce stereotypes that impose an overwhelming amount of care to be provided mainly by women, leading to women spending two to ten times longer on unpaid care than men¹; whereas gender stereotypes and gender-based discrimination have negative implications for women's personal, social and economic independence and prospects, and lead to a higher concentration of women in part-time work, career interruptions and a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion, in particular for single mothers, therefore affecting women's autonomy;
- T. whereas family-related types of leave still happen to be grounds for discrimination and stigmatisation for both women and men, despite the existing policy framework and legislation at EU and national level, and this particularly affects women as main carers using family-related leave;
- U. whereas the differences in men's and women's uptake of parental leave shows gender-based discrimination; whereas fathers' participation rate in parental leave in the Member States remains low, with only 10 % of fathers taking at least one day of leave, and 97 % of women use the parental leave that is available for both parents; whereas available data confirms that unpaid or poorly paid family-related types of leave result in

¹ Eurostat data for 2010, Commission's 2015 report on equality between women and men in the European Union (SWD(2016)0054).

low participation rates; whereas entirely or partially non-transferable, properly paid parental leave supports a more balanced take-up by both parents and helps to reduce discrimination against women in the labour market; whereas only a few Member States encourage fathers to make the most of paternity or parental leave, leading to men being deprived of the opportunity to participate equally in taking care of and spending time with their children;

- V. whereas it is vital to introduce measures to promote fathers' access to leave, particularly as fathers who take family leave build a better relationship with their children and are more likely to take an active role in future childcare tasks;
- W. whereas Eurofound studies have illustrated aspects that influence fathers' take-up rates of parental leave, namely: the level of compensation, the flexibility of the leave system, the availability of information, the availability and flexibility of childcare facilities and fear of exclusion from the labour market due to taking leave;
- X. whereas availability of and access to affordable, adequate and quality early childhood education and care (ECEC), care for other dependent persons and high-quality social services is one of the main factors influencing the participation of women in the labour market; whereas there is a lack of sufficient infrastructure offering quality and accessible childcare for all income levels; whereas for 27 % of Europeans the poor quality of childcare makes it difficult to access these services¹; whereas achieving quality services means investing in childcare workforce training²; whereas only 11 Member States have met the first Barcelona target (childcare available for at least 90 % of children between the ages of 3 and the mandatory school age) and only 10 Member States have achieved the second target (at least 33 % of children under three years)³;
- Y. whereas early childhood education and care and children's experiences from the ages of 0-3 have a decisive impact on their cognitive development, given that they develop essential capacities in the first five years;
- Z. whereas work-life balance policies should also enable parents to fulfil their responsibilities towards their children, ensuring the financial means, time and support necessary for both mothers and fathers;
- AA. whereas Europe is the continent with the highest number of older citizens and an ageing process that will continue in the coming decades; whereas many Member States lack sufficient long-term care facilities to address the increase in care needs and the stagnation or reduction of the healthy life years indicator; whereas most of the jobs created in formal home care for older relatives are poorly paid and require a low level of qualifications⁴;

¹ Eurofound European Quality of Life Survey 2012.

² Eurofound (2015), Early childhood care: working conditions, training and quality of services – A systematic review.

³ Progress report on the Barcelona objectives of 29 May 2013 entitled 'The development of childcare facilities for young children in Europe with a view to sustainable and inclusive growth' (COM(2013)0322).

⁴ Eurofound (2013), Caring for children and dependants: Effect on careers of young workers.

- AB. whereas 80 % of care needs are provided by informal carers in the EU; whereas about 3,3 million Europeans aged between 15 and 34 have had to give up full-time work because they lack care facilities for dependent children or older relatives;
- AC. whereas ICT and emerging technologies have changed work and employment environments, organisational cultures and structures across sectors; whereas policy-making must stay up to date with technological developments, in order to ensure that social standards and gender equality advance rather than regress in these new circumstances;
- AD. whereas the combination of care and paid work has an important impact on the sustainability of work and employment rates, in particular for women, who might face at some stage in their life care responsibilities for grandchildren and/or elderly parents¹;
- AE. whereas some legal systems in the EU maintain non-individualisation of tax and social security systems, with women granted only derived rights through their relationship to men, including for access to health and pension services; whereas Member States that impose dependency of the wife/mother are imposing direct discrimination against women and denying full citizenship rights to women through the selective way state services are delivered;
- AF. whereas targeted labour market and work-life balance policies are required in order to take into account intersectional obstacles faced by vulnerable women in terms of work-life balance and job security, such as women with disabilities, young women, migrant and refugee women, women from ethnic minority backgrounds and LGBTI women;
- AG. whereas allowing workers time off for personal and training development in the context of life-long learning without being discriminated against benefits their well-being as well as their contribution to the economy with more skills and higher productivity²;
- AH. whereas the implementation of work-life balance policies will not in itself produce benefits for workers unless it is accompanied by policies to improve living conditions, alongside policies to foster and promote cultural, recreational and sporting activities, among others;

General principles

1. Points out that reconciliation of professional, private and family life is a wide-ranging concept that embraces all overarching policies of a legislative and non-legislative nature aimed at promoting appropriate and proportionate balance between the various aspects of people's lives; considers that achieving a genuine work-life balance requires robust, cross-cutting, structural, coherent and comprehensive policies, including incentives and efficient measures for reconciling work, caring for and spending time with family and friends and time for leisure and personal development; points out that above all a cultural shift in society is needed, tackling gender stereotypes so that work and care are more evenly shared between men and women;
2. Stresses that reconciliation of professional, private and family life needs to be guaranteed as a fundamental right for all people, in the spirit of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, with measures being available for

¹ Eurofound report, Sustainable work over the life course: Concept paper (2015).

² CEDEFOP Research Paper: Training leave. Policies and practices in Europe, 2010.

everyone, going beyond young mothers, fathers or carers; calls for the introduction of a framework to ensure this right as a basic aim of social systems and calls on the EU and the Member States to promote, in both the public and private sectors, business welfare models respecting the right to a work-life balance; considers that this right should be mainstreamed throughout EU activities that might have a direct or indirect impact on this issue;

3. Points out that the EU is facing unprecedented demographic changes – rising life expectancy, lower birth rates, changing family structures with new forms of relation-building and (co)habitation, late parenthood and migration, which pose new challenges for the EU; is concerned that the economic and financial crisis has had a negative impact on public finances needed for work-life balance policies and for guaranteeing the availability of and access to quality and affordable services of general interest; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to put in place positive policies and incentives to support demographic renewal, preserve social security systems and promote the well-being and development of people and of society as a whole;
4. Stresses that the falling birth rate in the EU has been exacerbated by the crisis, given that unemployment, precarious job opportunities, uncertainty about the future and discrimination in the labour market are making young people, in particular young professional women, put off having children for the purpose of remaining active in an increasingly competitive labour market; in this context, calls on the Member States and social partners to promote family-friendly working environments, reconciliation plans, return-to-work programmes, communication channels between employees and employers, and incentives for businesses and self-employed workers, in particular to ensure that people are not economically penalised for having children and that legitimate career aspirations are not opposed to family plans; highlights further that maternity, paternity and parental leave can only be effectively applied with benefits for society and the economy if other policy instruments are applied alongside, including the provision of quality and affordable childcare;
5. Welcomes the Commission's approach to work-life balance policies as key in addressing socio-economic challenges; calls on the European Social Partners to come forward with an agreement on a comprehensive package of legislative and non-legislative measures regarding the reconciliation of professional, private and family life; calls on the Commission, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, to put forward a proposal for such a package as part of the Commission Work Programme 2017 in the context of the announced European pillar of social rights, should it not be possible for an agreement between the social partners to be reached; stresses that legislative proposals should include equality between men and women as a legal basis; calls on the Commission to work in cooperation with social stakeholders towards a pillar of social rights, leading to true social investment that primarily emphasises investment in people;
6. Welcomes the Commission's launch of a public consultation on the European Pillar of Social Rights to gather views and feedback on a number of essential principles to support well-functioning and fair labour markets and welfare systems within the euro area;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure relevant policies and measures take account of the increasing diversity of family relationships, including civil partnerships and parenting and grandparenting arrangements, as well as the diversity of society as a whole, in particular to guarantee that a child is not discriminated against

because of its parents' marital status or family constitution; calls on the Member States to mutually recognise legal documents with a view to guaranteeing free movement without discrimination;

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop and implement policies and provide measures that support those who are most disadvantaged or currently excluded from existing legislation and policies, such as single parents, unmarried couples, same-sex couples, migrants, self-employed people or so-called 'assisting spouses', and families in which one or more members have a disability;
9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that legislation and policies on work-life balance take into account the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Concluding Observations of the 2015 UN CRPD Committee to the EU;
10. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the well-being and best interests of children are one of the primary considerations in the development, monitoring and implementation of work-life balance policies; calls on the Commission and the Member States to fully implement the Recommendation on Investing in Children¹ and closely monitor its progress; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop and introduce initiatives, such as a Child Guarantee, which would place children at the centre of existing poverty alleviation policies so that every child could have access to free healthcare, free education, childcare, decent housing and adequate nutrition, as part of a European integrated plan to combat child poverty;
11. Considers that child poverty is linked to parents' poverty, and therefore calls on the Member States to implement the Recommendation on Child Poverty and Well-being and to use the indicator-based monitoring framework therein;
12. Stresses the importance of incorporating a lifecycle approach in work-life balance policies and corporate strategies in order to ensure that everyone is supported at different times throughout their life and can actively participate in the labour market with labour rights and in society as a whole;
13. Emphasises that a better work-life balance and strengthened gender equality is essential for supporting the participation of women in the labour market, in particular women carers and single mothers, and for achieving the goal of women's empowerment; underlines that the key to women's economic empowerment is the transformation and adaptation of the labour market and welfare systems in order to take into account women's life cycles;
14. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop transformative policies and to invest in awareness-raising campaigns to overcome gender stereotypes and to promote a more equal sharing of care and domestic work, focusing also on the right and need for men to take up care responsibilities without being stigmatised or penalised; considers that businesses should be targeted and supported in their efforts to foster work-life balance and to combat discrimination;
15. Calls on the Member States to step up protection against discrimination and unlawful dismissal related to work-life balance, which particularly affect female workers, and to

¹ Commission Recommendation 2013/112/EU.

ensure access to justice and legal action, including by increasing the amount of information on offer about workers' rights and legal assistance, if required; calls in this context on the Commission and the Member States to propose policies to improve enforcement of anti-discrimination measures in the workplace, including increasing the awareness of legal rights regarding equal treatment by conducting information campaigns, reversal of the burden of proof¹ and empowering national equality bodies to conduct formal investigations on their own initiative of equality issues and help potential victims of discrimination;

16. Highlights that the lack of comparable, comprehensive, reliable and regularly updated equality data makes it more difficult to prove the existence of discrimination, particularly indirect discrimination; calls on the Member States to collect equality data in a systematic way and to make them available, with the involvement of national equality bodies and courts, including with a view to analysing and monitoring these data for the Country-Specific Recommendations; calls on the Commission to take initiatives to further promote such data collection by means of a Recommendation to Member States, and by tasking Eurostat with the development of consultations aiming at mainstreaming data disaggregation on all discrimination grounds in European Social Survey indicators; calls on the Commission to continue to cooperate with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to improve the quantity and quality of sex-disaggregated data in a systematic way;
17. Calls on the Commission to regularly review the progress achieved in critical areas of concern as identified in the Beijing Platform for Action, for which indicators have already been developed by the EIGE, and to take the outcomes of these reviews into account in its assessment of gender equality in the EU;
18. Notes the important role of the national equality bodies in the implementation of the Employment Equality Directive 2000/78/EC, contributing to awareness raising and data collection, staying in touch with social partners and other stakeholders, addressing underreporting and making complaint processes more accessible; calls on the Member States to strengthen the role, capacities and independence of the equality bodies, including Equinet, inter alia through the provision of adequate funding; calls in particular for strengthening of the organisations provided for in the Equal Treatment Directive 2006/54/EC, guaranteeing access to justice and legal action;
19. Considers it necessary that adequate training on non-discrimination legislation in employment and case law be provided for employees of national, regional and local authorities and law enforcement bodies, and for labour inspectors; believes that such training is also of critical importance for judges, prosecutors, lawyers and the police force;
20. Calls on the Member States, together with the Commission, to guarantee that rights to social entitlements assigned by public policies are equally accessible for women and men, in order to ensure that everyone can enjoy their rights and to enable them to achieve a better work-life balance;

Women and men as equal earners and equal carers

¹ European Parliament resolution of 8 October 2015 on the application of Directive 2006/54/EC (P8_TA(2015)0351).

21. Stresses the need to eliminate gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work and to promote equal sharing of responsibilities, costs and care for children and for dependants between women and men, but also within society as a whole, including by ensuring universal access to services of general interest; points in this respect to the need for specific proposals making for better work-life balance;
22. Deplores the persistence of the gender pay gap, which constitutes an infringement of the fundamental principle of equal pay for equal work for female and male workers enshrined in Article 157 TFEU and in particular affects women having and raising children; calls on the EU and the Member States, in cooperation with the social partners and gender equality organisations, to set out and implement policies to close the gender pay gap; calls on the Member States to carry out wage-mapping on a regular basis as a complement to these efforts;
23. Calls on the Commission, in line with the Council conclusions of 16 June 2016 on gender equality, to enhance the status of its strategic engagement on gender equality and to integrate a gender perspective into the Europe 2020 strategy in order to ensure that work on gender equality is not made less of a priority; urges the Commission, therefore, to adopt a post-2015 Gender Equality Strategy in line with the recommendations of the European Pact for gender equality for the period 2011-2020;
24. Calls on the Member States to put in place proactive policies and appropriate investment aimed and designed to support women and men entering, returning to, staying and advancing in the labour market, after periods of family and care-related types of leave, with sustainable and quality employment, in line with Article 27 of the European Social Charter; stresses in particular the need to guarantee reinstatement to the same post or to an equivalent or similar post, protection against dismissal and less favourable treatment as a result of pregnancy, applying for or taking family leave, and a protection period after their return so that they can readjust to their job;
25. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to involve the social partners and civil society in gender equality policies; stresses the importance of adequate funding for such policies, of collective agreements and collective bargaining in combating discrimination and promoting gender equality at work, and of research and exchanges of good practices;
26. Considers that promoting women's participation in the labour market and their economic independence is crucial for meeting the Europe 2020 target of a 75 % overall employment rate and would boost GDP; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen policies and increase investment supporting female employment in quality jobs, particularly in sectors and positions where women are under-represented, such as the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and green economy sectors, or senior management positions across all sectors;

Family- and care-related types of leave

27. Notes that the Commission has withdrawn the revision of the Maternity Leave Directive and calls for it to put forward an ambitious proposal with high-level standards, in close cooperation with the social partners and consultation with civil society, in order to ensure a better work-life balance; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that women are paid and covered by social protection for the duration of maternity leave in order to support families and combat inequalities, strengthen

women's social and economic independence and avoid them being financially penalised for having children; stresses that maternity leave must be accompanied by effective measures protecting the rights of pregnant women and new, breastfeeding and single mothers, reflecting the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation and the World Health Organisation;

28. Calls for improved coordination of different types of leave at EU and Member State level in cooperation with the social partners; points out that better access to different types of leave provides people with life-cycle leave perspectives and increases employment participation, overall efficiency and job satisfaction; notes that where there are no provisions for leave, or where the existing ones are considered to be insufficient, the social partners could have a role to play in establishing new provisions or updating current ones for maternity, paternity and parental leave;
29. Calls on the Member States to provide adequate income replacement and social protection during any type of family- or care-related leave, in particular to ensure that low-income workers can benefit from leave measures on an equal footing with others;
30. Calls on the Commission to publish an implementation report on the Parental Leave Directive and calls on the Commission and the social partners to consider offering an appropriate extension of the minimum duration of parental leave with adequate income replacement and social protection from four to at least six months and to increase the age of the child for which parental leave can be taken; stresses that parents should be given flexibility to use the leave in fractions or all together; calls on the Member States and the social partners to reconsider their systems of financial compensation for parental leave with a view to reaching an adequate level of income replacement that acts as an incentive and also encourages men to take parental leave beyond the minimum time period guaranteed by the directive; reiterates that parental leave should be equally shared between parents and that a significant part of the leave should remain non-transferable¹; underlines that both parents must be treated in the same way in terms of rights to income and the duration of leave;
31. Notes the increased vulnerability of working parents of children with disabilities; calls, therefore, on the Commission to improve and strengthen the provisions of Directive 2010/18/EU regarding the conditions of eligibility and detailed rules for granting parental leave to those who have children with a disability or serious or long-term incapacitating illness; calls on the Member States in this respect to extend the possibility of parental leave for these parents beyond the statutory age of the child provided for in the directive and to grant them additional maternity, paternity (where it exists) and parental leave;
32. Believes that promoting the individualisation of the right to leave arrangements, as well as the role of fathers in bringing up their children by taking up leave, is essential to achieving a gender-balanced reconciliation of work and private life and the Europe 2020 employment target for women and men;

¹ European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2016 on the application of Council Directive 2010/18/EU (P8_TA(2016)0226).

33. Calls on the Commission, in order to allow parents with children or people with dependants to achieve a better work-life balance, to bring forward well-grounded and coherent initiatives on:
- (1) a paternity leave directive with a minimum of a compulsory two-week fully paid leave,
 - (2) a carers' leave directive which supplements the provision of professional care, enables workers to care for dependants and offers the carer adequate remuneration and social protection; calls for employee-driven flexibility and sufficient incentives for men to take up carers' leave,
 - (3) minimum standards applicable in all Member States to address the specific needs of adoptive parents and children and to establish the same rights as for natural parents,

while acknowledging that some Member States have already taken proactive measures on paternity leave and carers' leave;

34. Calls on the Member States to introduce 'care credits' through labour and social security legislation for both women and men as equivalent periods for building up pension rights in order to protect those taking a break from employment to provide informal, unpaid care to a dependant or a family member and to recognise the value of the work of these carers for society as a whole; encourages the Member States to exchange best practices in this area;

Care for dependants

35. Calls on the Member States to effectively implement the Barcelona targets by 2020 and to endorse the 2014 quality framework on early childhood education and care;
36. Recalls that investing in social services, including infrastructure, generates considerable employment effects, also leading to significant additional income for the public sector in employment taxes and social security contributions; asks the Member States to invest in high-quality early childhood education and care and elderly and dependant care services; calls on them to ensure the availability, affordability and universal access to such services by considering, for example, increasing public expenditure on care services, including independent living schemes, and by making better use of the EU funds; calls for the MFF revision to be used also to step up investment in social services and infrastructure, in particular with the help of the ESF, the ERDF and the EFSI; calls on the Member States to consider granting free access to care services for families living in poverty and social exclusion; also notes the disproportionate impact that insufficient investment in public care structures and services has on single parents, the vast majority of whom are women;
37. Stresses the need to recognise the work done by people who devote their time and skills to caring for elderly and dependent persons;
38. Highlights that the care of children with disabilities presents a particular challenge for working parents, which should be recognised by society and supported by public policies and collective bargaining; calls on the Member States, in providing pre-school childcare, to place emphasis not only on accessibility, but also on the quality of that

care, in particular for children from disadvantaged backgrounds and children with disabilities;

39. Calls on the Member States to support fiscal policies as a powerful lever enhancing work-life balance and to foster employment of women;
40. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce targets on care for elderly persons, persons with disabilities and other dependants, similar to the Barcelona targets, with monitoring tools which should measure quality, accessibility and affordability; calls on Eurostat, Eurofound and the EIGE (for its Gender Index), to collect relevant data and to carry out studies to support this work;
41. Calls on the Member States to strengthen the network of specialised services providing care to elderly persons and specifically to build up home service networks; in this sense, also stresses the need for policies on care for elderly persons to be tailored to individual needs and, if possible, for emphasis to be placed on their preferred place of care;
42. Calls on the Commission to work towards European qualitative standards for all care services, including on their availability, accessibility and affordability, which would support Member States in raising care standards; recalls the existing frameworks such as the European Quality Framework for Long-term Care Services, from which inspiration should be drawn; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop policies to enable and accommodate deinstitutionalisation of long-term care, where possible and with the support of community-based care;
43. Points out that an important element in achieving quality services is investing in the workforce¹; calls, therefore, on the Member States and the social partners to promote decent working conditions and quality employment for care workers, including through decent pay, recognition of care workers' status and the development of high-quality vocational training pathways for care workers;

Quality employment

44. Points out the high levels of working poor throughout Europe, with some people having to work more and longer, even combining several jobs, in order to earn a living wage; calls on the Member States and the social partners to develop a wage policy framework with effective measures combating wage discrimination and ensuring adequate wages for all workers, for example through the introduction of minimum wages at national level that guarantee a life in dignity, in line with national practices; calls on the Member States to support collective bargaining as an important factor in developing wage policies;
45. Points out that work-life balance must be based on workers' rights and security on the labour market, and on the right to take time off without it being curtailed by increased mobility and flexibility requirements; stresses the fact that increased flexibility can result in an intensification of the labour market discrimination currently experienced by women – in the shape of lower wages, non-standard forms of employment and disproportionate responsibility for unpaid household tasks – if a clear gender mainstreaming approach is not taken beforehand;

¹ Eurofound (2015), Early childhood care: working conditions, training and quality of services – A systematic review.

46. Calls on Eurofound to further develop its activities in monitoring employment quality through its European Working Conditions Survey, based on its concept of job quality as comprising: earning, prospects, working time quality, skill use and discretion, social environment, physical risk and work intensity; calls on Eurofound, furthermore, to develop its research on policies, social partner agreements and companies' practices which are supportive of job quality¹; calls on Eurofound to keep monitoring the incidence of working time arrangements and to provide analyses of public policies and social partner agreements in this field, including an assessment of how these are negotiated and support work-life balance; calls on Eurofound to develop research on how dual worker households manage their working time arrangements together and how best to support them;
47. Stresses that, on the one hand, work-life balance must be based on workers' rights and security on the labour market, and on the right to take time off without it being curtailed by increased mobility and flexibility requirements; points out, on the other hand, the differences in the personal and family situation of every worker and therefore considers that employees should be given the possibility to make use of flexible working arrangements in order to adapt these to their specific circumstances along the life cycle; considers that such employee-oriented flexibility can promote higher employment rates among women; stresses that employees and employers have a shared responsibility to design and agree on the most appropriate arrangements; calls on the Commission to map the situation in the Member States of a 'Right to request flexible working arrangements';
48. Supports 'smart working' as an approach to organising work through a combination of flexibility, autonomy and collaboration, which does not necessarily require the worker to be present in the workplace or in any pre-defined place and enables them to manage their own working hours, while nevertheless ensuring consistency with the maximum daily and weekly working hours laid down by law and collective agreements; underlines, therefore, the potential of smart working for a better work-life balance, in particular for parents returning to or entering the labour market after maternity or parental leave; rejects, however, a shift from a culture of presence to a culture of permanent availability; calls on the Commission, the Member States and the social partners, when developing smart working policies, to ensure that these do not impose an additional burden on the worker, but rather reinforce a healthy work-life balance and increase workers' well-being; stresses the need to focus on achieving job outcomes to prevent abuse of these new forms of work; calls on the Member States to promote the potential of technology such as digital data, high-speed internet, audio and video technology for smart (tele)working arrangements;
49. Highlights that alternative business models such as cooperatives and mutuals have enormous potential to advance gender equality and a healthy work-life balance, particularly in the emerging 'smart working' digital environment, given the higher levels of employee participation in decision-making; calls on the Commission and the Member States to research the impact of cooperatives and alternative business models on gender equality and work-life balance, especially in technology sectors, and set out policies to promote and share best practice models;

¹ Eurofound report on 'Trends in job quality in Europe' (2012) and Eurofound report on 'Convergence and divergence of job quality in Europe 1995-2010' (2015).

50. Is concerned about the increased amount of involuntary part-time work, particularly among women with caring responsibilities, which increases their risk of in-work poverty; stresses that when a worker chooses part-time work, the quality of their employment and non-discrimination against them as compared to full-time workers must be guaranteed in line with the Part-time Workers Directive¹, and calls on the Commission to follow up on the application of this directive; asks the Member States to ensure that part-time workers, workers facing job discontinuity and workers with career gaps or with periods where fewer hours were worked have the right to access a decent pension scheme without any form of discrimination;
51. Is concerned about the abuse of zero hour contracts in some Member States and use of exploitative contracts, involuntary temporary contracts, irregular, unpredictable and excessive working hours and low-quality internships, which make a healthy work-life balance impossible in the long run; calls, therefore, on the Member States and social partners to urgently tackle the situation of precarious employment, faced in particular by young people and women;
52. Points out that excessive and irregular working hours and insufficient rest periods, job insecurity and the disproportionate output required, are major factors in increased levels of stress, poor physical and mental health and occupational accidents and diseases; points out that flexitime and predictable working hours positively influence the work-life balance²; calls on the Member States and the social partners to secure working hours and to ensure a weekly rest period through the implementation of all relevant legislation; recalls the Commission's obligation to follow up on the implementation of the Working Time Directive and to consider initiating infringement proceedings against Member States who are failing to comply with it;
53. Calls further on the Commission and the Member States, the social partners and stakeholders to focus on innovative organisation in the workplace and to balance both the work-life needs of women and men and business productivity/profitability; notes that the positive link between increasing women's employment, work-life balance and business competitiveness, in terms of reducing absenteeism, output gap, turnover, talent attractiveness, loyalty, resources reallocation for developing welfare plans, increasing living standards and time freeing, has been widely proven by the best practices in Europe in a number of large enterprises and SME networks;
54. Highlights that women and LGBTI persons face specific gender-based obstacles and sources of stress at work, including harassment, exclusion, discrimination or gender stereotypes, which negatively impact their well-being at work and threaten their mental health and their ability to progress in their career; calls on the Commission and the Member States to take further steps to tackle these adverse conditions by ensuring proper implementation of relevant anti-discrimination legislation, as well as gender-sensitive life-long learning programmes, and work with trade unions and civil society organisations;
55. Calls on the Member States to build up and strengthen national labour inspection bodies by providing them with the financial conditions and financial and human resources to give them an effective presence on the ground and thereby enable them to combat job

¹ Council Directive 97/81/EC.

² Eurofound European Working Conditions Survey.

insecurity, unregulated work, and labour and wage discrimination, particularly from the point of view of equality between men and women;

56. Calls on the Member States to fully implement the Equal Treatment Directive 2006/54/EC and on the Commission to revise the directive, and to promote among companies the implementation of plans on gender equality, including actions on desegregation, the development of pay systems and measures to support women's careers; stresses the importance of the role of equality bodies in assisting victims of discrimination and addressing gender stereotypes; calls on the Member States to put in place legislative measures ensuring the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men at work;
57. Reiterates its call to the Council to swiftly adopt the proposal for a Council Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation;
58. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee social security, social protection and remuneration in the case of sick leave in order to enable a genuine work-life balance;

Quality of life

59. Points out that 'quality of life' is a broader concept than 'living conditions' and refers to the overall well-being of individuals in a society, identifying a number of dimensions of human existence as essential for a rounded human life¹;
60. Underlines that leisure inequality and unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men can have an impact on women's personal development, learning of new skills and languages and participation in social, political, cultural and community life, and especially on women's economic situation;
61. Stresses that any form of discrimination against women, including gender segregation, pay and pension gaps, gender stereotypes and high levels of stress in managing professional and private life are reflected in women's high physical inactivity rate and have a huge impact on their physical and mental health²; reiterates the importance of combating stereotypes by promoting and defending gender equality during all stages of education, from primary school onwards; calls on the Member States and social partners to conduct and support awareness-raising and information campaigns as well as programmes that promote gender equality and combat stereotypes;
62. Underlines the importance of lifelong learning for the self-development of workers, including staying up to date with ever-changing working conditions; encourages the Commission and the Member States to promote lifelong learning; calls on the Commission, the Member States and the social partners to develop and put in place policies that provide for educational and training leave, as well as in-work vocational training and life-long learning, including in Member States other than their own; calls on them to make learning inside and outside work, including paid study opportunities, accessible to all workers and in particular to those in disadvantaged situations, and with

¹ Eurofound 3rd European Quality of Life Survey.

² Study by Parliament's Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union, of March 2016, entitled 'Differences in Men's and Women's Work, Care and Leisure Time'.

an emphasis on women employees in sectors where women are structurally underrepresented;

63. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to combat social and economic inequalities; calls on the Member States to promote measures aiming to put in place adequate minimum income schemes, in line with national practices and traditions, to enable all people to live a life in dignity, to support their full participation in society and to ensure independence throughout the life cycle;

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64. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.