

Major Amendments to the ETUC Draft on Work-Life Balance
Second Stage Consultation of the Social Partners

Summary of individual comments and amendments

1. NSZZ Poland

Priority: Carers' leave – separate agreement of the social partners

Reason: bad implementation of current parental leave provisions – carers' leave does not exist/agreement could help remedy the shortcomings found in the parental leave provisions/

Otherwise in agreement with all other points.

2. TUC -UK

Paternity leave/parental leave - greater emphasis on the pay for fathers, i.e. fully paid or paid at earnings replacement level.

3. UGT -Spain

Paternity leave – in agreement, but there should be the possibility of extension of time for those countries which have already a provision on the duration. Pay should be 100 per cent. Licensed caregivers should have the same rights

Flexible working arrangements – should be legally regulated through a European Directive – national bargaining could then improve on those rights.

Otherwise in agreement.

4. ACV-CSC – Belgium

Maternity leave should not be part of work-life balance – it is a matter of health of mother and child.

Insists on need to strengthen quality public services for childcare and elderly care.

Parental leave – pay needs to be adequate otherwise single parents can be easily left out.

Teleworking should be looked at cautiously – very limited applicability

Work life balance should be provided through specific legislation and not leave it up to the individual working arrangements as women are often trapped to have to opt for flexible working arrangements which oftentimes come along with a reduction of rights and can ultimately lead to precarious working conditions.

5. LO; TCO; Saco – Sweden

Carers' leave and flexible working arrangements must be carefully designed to avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes:

Career leave must be short-term and not seen as replacement for quality affordable professional services.

Support on all other issues.

6. FNL – the Netherlands

Carers' leave should be paid.

Carers' leave is a priority because nothing exists yet at European level.

7. UIL – Italy

Single parents need to be taken in to account.

De-skilling and training need to be emphasized in the negotiations.

8. CeC-managers

Flexible working arrangements should become the focus of ETUC's negotiations ("a new approach towards the future working environment")

9. UNISON – UK

The principle of flexibility in working arrangements, including social protection and pension rights should also apply to Carers' leave and should be included in point 1.4.

10. CCOO – Spain

Paternity leave – make sure that the necessary budgets are allocated.

Parental leave – make sure that the necessary budgets are allocated.

Caring should be mainly supported by a qualified, affordable professional service system.

Flexibility working arrangements are mostly accompanied by a reduction in overall working time with negative consequences for the majority of women, i.e. less income. Teleworking can negatively impact on women's position in the labour market.

11. LO – Denmark

Maternity leave: does not support full pay; suggests: “payment and/or entitlement to an adequate allowance in accordance with national legislation and or national practice. Does not support 100 per cent pay!

Protection against dismissal: disagrees with draft proposal and against fixed time frame. Prefers strengthening of the reversal of proof

Paternity leave – 8 to 12 weeks instead of 2-4 weeks as proposed in the draft proposal. Adequate allowance for the father based on national practice.

Parental leave: must be paid (as in the draft proposal); the current directive provides for equal treatment, which is not the case since women are entitled to an additional maternity leave of 14 weeks. Such prolonged leave makes it harder to re-enter the labour market.

Request for a possible amendment which adds: “maternity leave of more than 14 weeks can be considered as parental leave.

Flexible working arrangements should not be regulated at EU level, but collective agreements.

Do not promote already existing gender biases.

Carers’ leave could promote such biases. Instead the system of caring should be in the hands of the welfare state.

Flexibility of working arrangements could reinforce gender biases and benefits men more than women. Alternative to give women and men a certain number of days off per year to take care of sick children.

12. SDC – Romania

Fully supports the draft proposal.

13. EPSU

Fully supports draft proposal.

14. FO – France

Maternity leave: OK with 18 weeks but greater costs associated should not cause reductions in other areas – there should be a clause to that effect. Same for pay.

Paternity leave: length at least a month; should be longer if several children; paid 100 per cent with same conditions as above.

Parental leave: paid at least 80 per cent of the salary – same condition as above/length at least 6 months.

Against non-transferability.

Carers’ leave – caring should be mainly a responsibility of the state. Carers should receive benefits from the state.

Flexible working arrangements should not alleviate the responsibility of the state to provide adequate child care.

15. Nordic IN

Flexible working arrangements should be mainly negotiated by collective agreements at national level.

Agrees on all other points, and provides further arguments.

16. CMKOS -Czech Republic

Fully supports proposal and points to changes proposed to the Czech labour code.