

Work-life balance and self-employment Trier, 19 November 2018

Marlies Vegter



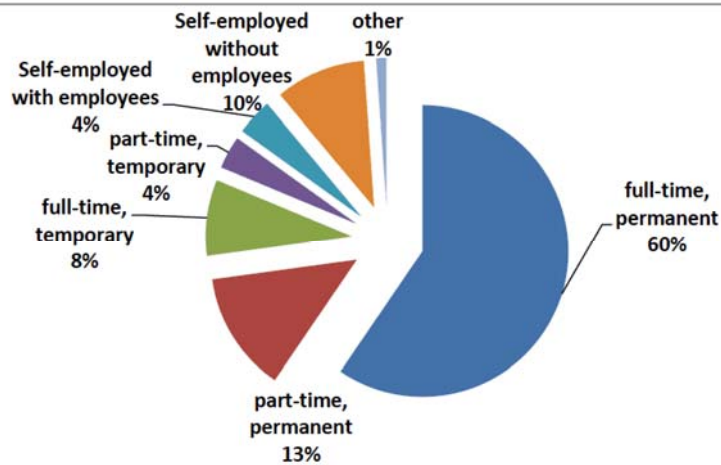
This training session is funded under the 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020' of the European Commission.

Introduction

- Proposed work-life balance directive applies to employees; not to self-employed
- Member States may extend the measures in the directive to self-employed.
If they want



Some figures (2017)



More figures

- Approx. 1/3 of the self-employed in the EU are women
- Relatively often in one-person companies in healthcare, education and culture
- More female self-employed in Member States in the South and East and NL and UK
- Substantial gender pay gap, up to 40-50% in NL and UK (also due to working less hours)

Complicated debate

- Do the self-employed need protection?
- Can they mind their own affairs as independent entrepreneurs?
- Risk of erosion of the social system when self-employed do not pay premiums
- Thin guiding line with employees



Access to social protection

- Proposal for a Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed.
- <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1312&langId=en>. Aims at:
 - 1) Closing formal coverage gaps in social protection systems;
 - 2) Providing access to adequate entitlements;
 - 3) Transferability of social security entitlements;
 - 4) Transparent information about entitlements and obligations.

What about work-life balance?

- Not mentioned in the documents on access to social protection
- Should self-employed organise their leaves and working hours themselves?
- Or should they be able to apply for a benefit that enables them to interrupt their work to take care of children/elderly/sick people?



Research

- Self-employed relatively satisfied with their work-life balance, though 1/3 reports difficulties
- Lack of security, unpredictable working hours, lack of social protection, create stress
- Women see self-employment as a way to combine work and life, but traditional division of tasks does not change (easily)



Existing measures at EU-level

- Directive 2010/41/EU: equal treatment men and women in a self-employed capacity
- Emphasis on equal treatment, not protection
- Maternity leave and/or access to services supplying temporary replacement
- Directive 79/7: equal treatment in social security
- Directive 2006/54: equal access to (self)-employment and equal treatment of self-employed in collective occupational social security schemes

Measures in the Member States



- Peer review in Belgium 2017 on Reconciling Family Life and Entrepreneurship:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1024&newsId=2842&furtherNews=yes>
- Paternity leave for self-employed (Spain, Ireland)
- Parental leave also for self-employed (Germany, Sweden)
- Carer's leave for self-employed (Belgium, Spain, Sweden)

- Service vouchers/maternity aid (Belgium)
- Childcare services for both employed and self-employed (various countries)
- Child benefits for all working parents (Netherlands, Sweden, Estonia)
- Different systems of social protection varying from inclusion of all workers to clearly separated status of employed and self-employed, and variations in between

How to continue?

- Obligation for Member States to introduce the leaves in the draft directive on work-life balance also for self-employed?
- Make family leaves part of the strategy to give workers access to social protection?
- Oblige self-employed to pay social premiums?
- Should work-life balance have the same importance as income protection?

Principles to take into account

Comparable with aims of 'access to protection'

- Coverage of family leaves/work-life measures by social protection/security systems (including obligation to pay premiums)
- Transferability of leaves
- Transparency of rights and obligations
- Flexibility in taking up leaves, e.g. part-time

Attention for women

- Self-employed women often work more hours, earn less and work in sectors where pay is lower (healthcare, childcare, education, personal care)
- Additional measures? Solid system of leaves, investments in the sectors where many women work (vouchers?), training, mentors, etc.



And for men ...(fathers esp.)

- Paternity and parental leave, also for self-employed fathers
- Perhaps partly non-transferable
- Income-based allowance during leave

