



FOCUS

► Fostering Caring Masculinities

Slovenian National Report

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Part I

Fostering Caring Masculinities

1. Introduction

The project Fostering Caring Masculinities (FOCUS) aims to examine and improve men's opportunities for balancing work and private/family life in order to encourage the preparedness of men to take over caring tasks. To reach this goal the project focuses on companies' framework conditions to perceive and include men as actors and target groups in equality policies.

FOCUS is a project involving five countries: Germany, Iceland, Norway, Slovenia and Spain.¹

The project is funded through EU's Community Action programme to promote Gender equality between men and women. FOCUS is connected to one of priority themes of the program, "the role of men in the promotion of gender equality, in particular the role of men and fathers in the reconciliation of work and private life". The project was initiated by the Norwegian Ministry for Children and Family Affairs who also co-funds the project.

1.1. Work life balance

According to Fiona Williams (2003) we should not ask ourselves how care and the needs for care are implemented in the work, but how work can be involved and implemented into care. This line of thinking, acting and implementing the work/life balance aims at family friendly policy as well as at work policy enabling men and women to share responsibilities, caring and family life. In this regard traditional gender roles are challenged, which opens space for rethinking the concepts of men, women, femininity and masculinity. Moreover it changes the perception of caring as a gender-related burden and an undervalued activity in society. It enables us to think of it as beneficial for the public sphere.

Europe is currently characterised by a new type of work life where dual-career adaptations are more common along with increased requirements for flexibility. Responsibility for care is becoming the normal situation for working people. The stereotype of the husband as the main breadwinner is in decline in Europe and is gradually being replaced by ideals of active fathering and equal sharing of care responsibilities (Brandth and Kvande 2003, Holter 2003, Puchert et al. 2005).

At the same time Europe is facing huge demographic challenges, which make care an even more important topic. These challenges are related to family reconciliation and fertility, but also to health care and care for elderly people. It is neither desirable (from a

¹ These are the partner institutions in the five countries: Dissens e.V. (Germany), Jafnsrættisstofa/Centre for Gender Equality (Iceland), Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet/The Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud (Norway), Mirovni Institut/Peace Institute (Slovenia) and Universitat de Girona/University of Girona (Spain)

gender equality perspective) nor probable (from the perspective of ongoing changes) that care maintains the traditional female bias.

In some parts of Europe we can see positive changes among men: their private wishes, obligations and attitudes are undergoing great change, but work life is not keeping pace. Men still live in a state of preparedness for their jobs, women in a state of preparedness for the home (Lilleaas 2004). Hegemonic and traditional gender role models are still effective among men and women, in partnerships and, most of all, in the work sphere (Puchert et al. 2005).

EU-research (e.g.: Work Changes Gender, cf. Puchert et al. 2005) shows that male employees are more family- and care-oriented than previously. However, development trends in the post-industrial society appear to support the fact that some groups of men still are attracted to the breadwinner model. Many men let their jobs take precedence over the rest of their life. There are many reasons why men still linger in the sphere of work life. Men's strong identification with their work seems to be a cultural and symbolic solution that has its roots in traditional man's ideals where the father was the breadwinner. Men in general work more overtime compared to women. The breadwinner conduct can be understood as a structural phenomenon that is maintained in society and work life. The breadwinner model refers to deep-rooted masculinity and gender standards.

We have chosen in this project to focus our study and operations on work life. In particular, we look at how work life affects men's opportunities to practise caring masculinities and examine ongoing shifts in men's work environment in Europe. We also focus on how the work environment interacts with changing masculinities and how this affects opportunities for gender equality. The project places emphasis on organisational cultures, and more specifically on the role of internal innovators in the process of gender changes.

Even though we start at the labour market and inside the companies, we see work sphere and private sphere as deeply inter-related. Changes in the labour market will necessarily affect the private sphere. In this project we want to focus on work life and its managers in order to acquire more knowledge of what causes gender equality to remain only an ideal rather than something the managers put into action. With the intervening in companies and in the dialog with experts and innovators, the project aims to initiate change and encourage managers to move from an idealistic gender equality discourse to a more action-oriented practice.

1.2. National reports

This report is one out of five national reports. These national reports provide a brief introduction to the social conditions in each respective country before moving on to an analysis of workplace studies.

Each of the five national partners has carried out qualitative workplace studies in two different companies, one private and one public. In these studies we have interviewed male employees and managers with a focus on three main topics. These are their private

lives, their experiences pertaining to work and their ideas concerning organisational measures for balancing work and private life.

The national reports describe the findings from those studies and suggest possible measures that can be developed on the organisational level within a company. The innovative aspect of this project is the most important one. Our main goal is to help provide good guidelines for what companies can do in this area.

In addition to the national reports there is a report on the European dimension of the project, written by Mari Teigen at the Institute for Social Research in Oslo. This report compares the findings from the five national reports and analyses how the five countries are different and alike.

A website has been set up, where you will find more information on project partners, our final conference and links the different reports. As the guidelines are developed you will also find these posted online. Its address is www.caringmasculinities.org.

Part II

General Conditions of Gender Equality in Slovenia: Work, Family, Public Life

2. Working sphere

2.1. Legislation on work conditions

The following acts regulate employment in Slovenia: *Employment Relationships Act, Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act, Pension and Disability Insurance Act, Health Care and Health Insurance Act, Occupational Safety and Health Act, Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act.*

► Working time

The Employment Relationships Act defines working time as the sum of effective working time, break time, and the time of authorized absence from work in accordance with the Act and the collective labour agreement. Full working time must not exceed 40 hours per week. The Act or the collective labour agreement can define full working time as shorter than 40 hours per week but not shorter than 36 hours per week. Overtime work can take up a maximum of eight hours per week, a maximum of 20 hours per month, and a maximum of 180 hours per year. A working day cannot last longer than 10 hours. During a working day, an employee working full-time has a right to a 30-minute break.

In accordance with the provisions of the Act (Article 190 of the *Employment Relationships Act*), employers must not make employees work over full working time due to the protection of pregnancy and parenthood.

► Dismissal

According to the *Labour Relationships Act* a regular or irregular termination of employment contract must be given in writing. The employer must give the reason for dismissal and justify it in writing as well as inform the employee of legal protection and his/her rights relating to unemployment insurance.

The reasons for a regular termination of employment contract from the side of the employer are:

- a certain type of work is no longer needed, subject to employment contractual conditions, due to economic, organizational, technological, structural, or similar reasons on the side of the employer (dismissal on business grounds);
- expected working results are not achieved, because the employee does not finish his/her work in time, professionally enough, with insufficient quality, or because he/she does not fulfil the conditions to do certain work as prescribed by law and the implementing regulations based on law, because of which the employee does not or cannot comply with the contractual or other employment obligations (dismissal on the grounds of incapacity);

- breach of contractual or other employment obligations (dismissal on the grounds of breach of obligations).

The following grounds are considered unfounded for a regular termination of employment contract: temporary absence from work due to illness, injury or nursing a family member in accordance with health insurance or absence from work due to parental leave in accordance with the regulations on parenthood.

If the employee terminates employment contract, the length of the period of notice is 30 days. The employment contract or the collective labour agreement can arrange for a longer period of notice, but it must not exceed 150 days. If the employer terminates employment contract on business grounds, the minimum period of notice is 30 days if the employee's length of service with the employer is under 5 years, and 150 days if the employer's length of service with the employer is above 25 years. If the employer terminates the employment contracts on the grounds of breach of contract on the side of the employee, the minimum period of notice is 30 days. The employer must not terminate the employment contract of an employee who is pregnant and throughout the time when she breastfeeds, as well as the contract of parents during their parental leave in the form of complete absence from work (*Employment Relationships Act*).

► Legislation regarding working conditions for pregnant women

In 2003 the *Rules on the protection of health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth and are breastfeeding* was adopted on the basis of the *Employment Relationships Act*. These Rules demand that the employer estimates the kind, degree and length of the exposure to the factors that can have a negative effect on the health of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth and are breastfeeding for all such work that can involve such risks; the employer must furthermore estimate the kind and degree of injury and health damage risks as well as take the necessary security precautions. In accordance with the Rules, the employee has a right to paid leave from work for the time of any such pregnancy-, birth-, and breastfeeding-related examinations that cannot be undergone outside regular working hours (*Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 82/2003*).

Article 115 of the *Employment Relationships Act* ensures special legal protection against the termination of the employment contract for pregnant workers and parents. The employer must not terminate the employment contract of an employee who is pregnant and throughout the time that she breastfeeds, as well as parents during their parental leave in the form of complete absence from work. If the employer does not know of the employee's pregnancy at the time of the termination of the employment contract, special legal protection against dismissal is applied if the employee informs the employer of her pregnancy and proves it with a medical certificate. During the time of employment, the employer is not allowed to demand or seek any information of the employee's pregnancy unless she allows it herself to exercise her rights during the time of pregnancy.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (Article 23) imposes the obligation on the employer to inform pregnant workers on the risk estimation results, and the precautionary measures taken in regard of occupational safety and health. The Act regulates against pregnant and breastfeeding workers having to do work which exposes them to risk factors and working conditions that are set down in the implementing

regulations issued by the minister responsible for labour in agreement with the minister responsible for health. If a pregnant or breastfeeding employee does work that exposes her to risk factors, procedures or working conditions that are identified by the risk estimate as hazardous to her or her baby's health, the employer must take appropriate measures temporarily to accommodate the working conditions or the working hours. If despite the accommodation of the working conditions or the working hours the health risk cannot be avoided, the employer must arrange a different appropriate work for the worker to do, with equal salary as in her former workplace if that is to her advantage. If the employer does not arrange any different, suitable work for the worker to do, she must be ensured a wage compensation for the time of her absence from work in accordance with the Act. During pregnancy, one year after giving birth, and throughout breastfeeding, the employee must not work overtime and night shifts if this poses health risks to her or her child (*Advocacy for Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in EU and Slovenia*, 2003, pp. 15, 16).

According to the *Employment Relationships Act*, a breastfeeding employee working full-time has a right to a breastfeeding break during working hours, lasting at least one hour a day.

The employee is allowed to refuse a business trip abroad on the basis of reasonable grounds such as pregnancy, the care of a child under 5 years of age, the care and upbringing of a child under 15 years of age if the employee is a single parent, living, upbringing, and taking care of the child on his/her own.

► Gender equality in the workplace

Article 6 of the *General Provisions of the Employment Relationships Act* invokes the prohibition of discrimination, which means, among other things, that women and men must be granted the same possibilities and the same treatment in employment, promotion, training, education, retraining, salaries, and other benefits derived from the employment relationship, absences from work, working conditions, working time, and the termination of the employment contract.

According to Article 133 of the *Employment Relationships Act*, the employer is obliged to ensure equal pay to the employees for equal work and work of equal value regardless of the employees' genders. The provisions of employment contracts, collective labour agreements, or employers' general acts which are in conflict with the article are therefore null and void. In case of violations, the employee is entitled to demand legal protection.

The provisions of Article 25 of the *Employment Relationships Act* prohibit the advertising of specific workplaces exclusively for men or exclusively for women, unless the specified gender is a necessary condition for doing the work. Job advertisements, furthermore, must not suggest the employer's preference for a worker of one particular gender. In relation to job advertisements, labour inspectors found a total of 38 violations in 2004, six of which were violations of the principle of equal treatment while placing a job advertisement; a workplace was advertised as either exclusively for men or for women.

► The prohibition of sexual and other harassment at work

Article 45 of the *Employment Relationships Act* prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace. Article 15a of the *Draft Amending Civil Servants Act* passed in 2005 prohibits any unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal practice or behaviour of a civil servant which is based on whatever personal circumstance and which creates intimidating, hostile, degrading, abusive or insulting working environment for a person and insults his/her dignity. Until the beginning of 2003, when the new *Employment Relationships Act* was enforced, the provisions of the *Penal Code for sexual harassment* had been applied. The provisions define a criminal offence as the breach of sexual inviolability with the abuse of position, with a maximum sentence of a three years' imprisonment. Statistical data provided by the police point to an increase of criminal offences directed against sexual inviolability with the abuse of position in recent years; in 2003 there were 27 offences directed against sexual inviolability with the abuse of position with 80 per cent of the victims being female.

► Equal treatment of women and men in the systems of compulsory social security and the professional systems of social security (health insurance, pension and disability insurance, unemployment insurance)

Equal treatment in the fields of social security and health insurance in Slovenia is generally provided for in articles 50 and 51 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia*. The provisions of the *Pension and Disability Insurance Act* on voluntary supplementary insurance explicitly state that the conditions for the acquisition of rights based on voluntary supplementary insurance must not be applied differently for either gender (article 294).

2.2. Legislation on parental leave

Parental leave is regulated by the *Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act (Official Gazette, no. 110/03-UBP)*, adopted in 2001. Parental leave consists of four kinds of leave: maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave to take care of a child, and adoption leave. Maternity leave lasts 105 days and is intended for the preparation for childbirth and childcare immediately after the birth. The right to maternity leave is granted to the mother, and – under the following conditions – the father, if the mother dies, leaves the child, or is, following the opinion of the doctor in charge, temporarily or permanently incapable of independent life and work. In agreement with the mother, the father may also exercise his right to maternity leave when birth is given by a mother younger than 18 years having a status of apprentice, primary- or secondary-school pupil, or student. In these cases, one of the grandparents of the child also has the right to maternity leave.

Prior to the adoption of the *Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act* paternity leave did not exist. An information booklet, *Parental Protection Insurance*, published by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, defines paternity leave as "a leave intended for fathers to be able to engage, together with the mother, in the protection and care of the child in the tenderest period of the child's life". It consists of 15 days of paid leave which have to be used within the time of the mother's maternity leave, and 75 days of unpaid leave during which the state guarantees the payment of social security contributions based on the minimum wage; these 75 days of leave must be used by the

time of the child's 3rd birthday. The distinctive feature of paternity leave is its untransferability, i.e. it is intended solely for fathers (Rener et al. 2005, pp. 32-35). *The Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act* introduced the right to paternity leave gradually. In 2003 fathers could use 15 days of paternity leave within the time of the mother's maternity leave, in 2004 the right was extended for 30 days, making a total of 45 days, since 1st January 2005 the right has been recognized for 90 days. According to the figures provided by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, the right was claimed by 10,971 fathers of the children born in 2003 in the average length of 8 days. The most significant drawback of the existing regulation is that it does not provide wage compensation for paternity leave for the 75 days of the leave that fathers can use after the maternity leave has finished; the state merely ensures the payment of social security contributions on the basis of minimum wage for the period. This is likely to discourage fathers from making use of paternity leave in its entirety.

The third kind of parental leave is leave to take care of a child. It extends up to 260 days starting after maternity leave has finished, and it may be obtained by either or both of the parents, as well as, under certain conditions, grandparents or other persons. Parental leave to take care of a child in the form of total absence from work may not be used by both parents simultaneously, except when two or more live-born infants are born at the same time, or when a child who needs special care and protection is born, or when a child is born into a family which already takes care of at least two children under the age of 8, or when parents take care of a child who needs special care and protection.

Adoption leave is available to adoptive parents or persons who have been entrusted with the protection and upbringing of the child with the intention of adoption. Adoption leave lasts for 150 days for a child between 1 and 4 years of age, and 120 days for a child between 5 and 10 years of age. The leave may be used by one or both of the parents; it may be used by both parents simultaneously, in which case the total duration of the leave must not exceed 150 or 120 days (Rener et al. 2005, pp. 32-35).

2.3. Employment Statistics

► Employment and Unemployment

In 2004 the population activity rate was 59 per cent (women 52.9 %, men 65.6 %), and the employment/population ratio amounted to 55.5 per cent (women 49.5 %, men 61.8 %). The share of active women in the age group 15 – 64 years in the same period was 65.0 per cent (men 74.5 per cent), the share of employed women in the same age group was 60.5 per cent (men 71.8 per cent). The survey unemployment rate dropped from 7.7 per cent in 2001 to 6.1 per cent in 2004. However, the gap between the unemployment rate for men and for women in the same period widened which made the unemployment rate for women 0.7 per cent higher than the unemployment rate for men.

Table 1: Survey unemployment rates, by sex, from 2000 to 2004

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total	7.7	5.9	5.9	6.6	6.1
Women	7.7	6.3	6.3	7.1	6.4
Men	7.6	5.6	7.0	6.1	5.7

Source: Employment Service of the Republic of Slovenia, Annual Report 2004.

Table 2: Activity rates, by sex, in Slovenia 1999/2 -2004/2

	2000/2	2001/2	2002/2	2003/2	2004/2
Total					
Activity rate	57.7	57.8	58.1	56.5	59.0
Employment/ population ratio	53.6	54.4	54.7	52.8	55.5
Employment/ population ratio 15- 64	62.7	62.7	64.3	56.5	65.7
Men					
Activity rate	64.1	64.8	64.7	63.2	65.6
Employment/ population ratio	59.6	61.2	61.1	59.3	61.8
Employment/ population ratio 15- 64	66.8	66.8	68.7	63.2	65.7
Women					
Activity rate	51.7	51.3	51.9	50.2	52.9
Employment/ population ratio	47.9	48.1	48.6	46.7	50.4
Employment/ population ratio 15- 64	58.6	58.6	59.8	50.2	61.3

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

► Full-time and part-time employment rates

The majority of employed population consists of people with full-time employment. In 2004, people with part-time employment amounted to 11 per cent of employed women and 7.9 per cent of employed men. About 22 per cent of employed population regularly work on Saturdays, and 13 per cent work on Sundays, among these approximately 44 per cent are women. In recent years part-time employment rate has grown, and it is a bit higher among women. In 2003, 14.9 per cent of all employed women, and 12.7 per cent of all employed men, were those with a part-time employment. New forms of work are also becoming more common. Among employed population, 5.4 per cent of workers (6.1 % women and 4.8 % men) did telework, i.e. work from home, in their houses or flats (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 3: Average number of usual weekly hours of work in main job, by sex

	Males	Females
Time		
2004/01	41.6	39.6
2004/02	41.7	39.2
2004/03	41.6	39.4
2004/04	41.8	39.6
2005/01	41.9	39.4
2005/02	41.8	39.4
2005/03	41.9	39.6
2005/04	41.6	39.1

Source: Eurostat, 2005

► The impact of parenting on employment

Data are not available.

► Overtime work by the number of children

Data are not available.

2.4. Wages and salaries

Data from the year 2002 show that women with the same professional qualifications as men earn an average of 9.5 per cent less than their male counterparts. On average, women employed in companies, firms, and organisations in Slovenia earned 90.5 per cent of men's salaries within each professional qualification group. In comparison with the year 2000, when women earned an average of 12.2 per cent less than men, the gap narrowed by 2.7 per cent. In 2002, the biggest gap was the one among the employees with vocational training qualifications (23.7 %), and the smallest was the one among the employees having doctorates (7.8 %) (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 4: Average monthly gross earnings of female workers employed in companies, firms and organizations represented as shares of male average monthly gross earnings, by professional qualifications required to do certain works, 2002

	Total	University qualifications			Non-university prof.	Secondary prof. qual.	Lower prof. qual.	Highly skilled workers	Skilled workers	Semi-skilled workers	Unskilled workers
		Phd	Master's degree	Total							
2000	87.8	85.9	83.2	79.3	87.5	88.5	85.9	83.0	80.1	84.8	88.0
2002	90.5	92.2	88.2	80.3	91.3	91.8	90.9	80.0	76.2	88.1	88.6

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

2.5. Information on the representation of the sexes in management and in boards

The number of women within top management positions in companies, social partnership organizations as well as other associations and organizations is decidedly low. The numbers of women within top management, however, have slightly risen in recent years. In 2003 there were 4 per cents of women among the chairs of the boards of the biggest companies and business entities (in 2000 there were none). In boards the percentage of women was 22. In management there were 34 per cent of women.² A hundred of the most successful firms and companies in Slovenia were led by 99 male and 3 female chairs of the board.³

All the major Slovene trade union confederations (*The Federation of Free Unions of Slovenia, The Confederation of Unions '90, The Confederation of Unions Pergam*) are chaired by men. The examination of the union confederations' management showed that men are usually presidents whereas women are a bit more common in the positions of vice-presidents, but they remain exceptionally rare.

A similar situation is to be found in the employers' organizations (*The Association of Employers of Slovenia, The Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, The Chamber of Craft of Slovenia*), where there are no women in the top positions of the chairs of the organizations. In the board of the *Association of Employers of Slovenia* there are 3 female members (20 %).⁴ In the management of *The Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia* there are two women, one in the position of vice president and the other in the position of secretary general (along the male president and two male vice presidents). Among the managers of the regional chambers of *The Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia* the share of women is 38.5 per cent.⁵ The management of *The Chamber of Craft of Slovenia* is comprised of men only, among the chairs of regional chambers of craft there are 8 per cent of women. Yet women make up the majority of regional chambers of craft secretaries with a share of 71 per cent⁶ (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

2.6. Information on the sex-specific types of employment

The analyses of the labour market in Slovenia suggest both a vertical and a horizontal segregation, based on sex, in labour market.⁷ Data for 2003 show that women, who on average achieve higher educational levels, make up only a third (33.2 %) of the employees in the highest and best-paid working positions (high civil servants, managers, legislators). In terms of occupations, women are represented above the average among clerical staff (65.4 %), services and sales workers (64.9 %), and professionals (59.6), but on the other side, they are the rarest in craft and related trades (8 %). In terms of the

² Source: *Database – Women and men in decision-making, 2004*.

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/women_men_stats/index_en.htm.

³ In two of the companies, there were two chairs of the board, and both were male. Source: *Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia*. Data on 2 February 2004.

⁴ Source: *The Association of Employers of Slovenia*, their own data, 2004. www.zds.si.

⁵ Source: *The Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia*, their own data, 2004. www.gzs.si.

⁶ Source: *The Chamber of Craft of Slovenia*, their own data, 2004. www.ozs.si.

⁷ See for instance: Kanjuo Mrcela, A., Cernigoj Sadar, N.: *Gender, Work and Employment in Ten Candidate Countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Final Report*. Country: Slovenia. European Foundation: 2004.

sectors of activities, women form the majority of employees in service activities (54.9 %), especially in health and social work, education, financial intermediation, hotels, restaurants, and tourism. In craft and related trades women represent one third of the employed, the least of them working in construction⁸ (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 5: The share of women among persons in employment by sectors of activity, Slovenia, 2000/2 -2003/2

	2000/2	2001/2	2002/2	2003/2
Total	46.2	45.6	45.8	45.6
Agriculture	46.7	44.6	45.9	45.3
Industry	34.8	34.3	33.9	32.0
Mining and quarrying	13.7	-	-	-
Manufacture	40.5	40.3	39.6	37.5
Electricity, gas and water supply	18.4	11.1	14.0	12.5
Construction	9.9	11	9.4	9.6
Services	54.3	54.5	54.8	55.0
Wholesale, retail; certain repair	52.1	50.2	52.1	53.4
Hotels and restaurants	57.9	62.8	62.1	58.3
Transport, storage and communication	22.7	24	22.9	20.3
Financial intermediation	67.7	63.7	62.6	68.2
Real estate, renting and business activities	42.9	44.2	44.5	45.3
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	50.1	52.2	50.6	53.1
Education	78.7	76	76.4	75.8
Health and social work	79.9	78.1	76.6	80.9
Other social and personal services	50.6	49.7	51.4	52.6

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

Table 6: The share of women among persons in employment by major groups of occupation, Slovenia, 2000-2003, second quarter

	2000/2	2001/2	2002/2	2003/2
Total	46.0	46.2	45.8	45.6
Legislators, senior officials and managers	31.3	30.2	29.1	33.2
Professionals	61.6	61.4	57.7	60.0
Technicians and associate professionals	47.3	49.1	53.8	52.3
Clerks	69.1	68.9	65.0	66.2
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	61.4	62.7	64.0	64.2
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	45.9	45.6	46.6	45.7
Craft and related trades workers	5.9	6.0	9.0	7.9
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	38.1	37.6	37.3	35.5
Elementary occupations	65.5	62.8	55.8	54.4

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

⁸ Standard Classification of Occupations and Standard Classification of Activities were used. Source: Labour Force (by the Labour Force Survey). Statistical Information, nr. 225/2004. Statistical Office of the RS, 2004.

2.7. Information on the use of parental leave

In view of the encouragement of the responsibility that women and men share in upbringing their children, it is important for them to decide how to make use of parental leave and the ensuing rights, such as the splitting of the 260 days of parental leave after the end of the mother's 105 days of maternity leave. In Slovenia, it is women who mostly take parental leave in its entirety. Thus, in 2003 only 2.3 per cent of fathers claimed the right to parental leave. Nevertheless, it can be said that there have been some positive changes, as the share of the fathers had been less than 1 per cent before that year.

The Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act introduced the right of parents to work part-time up to the child's age of three years. The findings of the research *"Parents between Work and Family"* show that 3-4 per cent of parents work part-time after parental leave has ended, among them, however, there are 90 per cent of women (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

3. Conditions outside working sphere

3.1. The Family Act (the rights of mother and father following the birth of their child)

The family policies of Slovenia are basically outlined in the *Resolution on the implementation of family policies in Slovenia* (*Official Gazette*, nr. 40; 17 July 1993). The state pledges to carry out the following activities in order to balance family and work life: more appropriate moral and material social appreciation of work with children and a more balanced distribution of responsibility for them between mother and father, as well as among parents, companies (employers) and the society; the reorganization of working hours; legal modifications in the forms of employment; a more fitting arrangements for maternity leave and the leave to take care of a sick child with a guarantee of equal employment after the leaves; comprehensive social insurance in cases of part-time employment and temporary breaks in work due to the care of a young child and the care of a child with physical and mental impairment; and a guarantee to all parents, who wish it, a place for their child in an educational institution, a nursery or another form of childminding facilities. The Resolution states an awareness of "the need for a social intervention in these common points", and the Resolution therefore lists further measures in the same direction, among them are the wage compensation for maternity leave and parental leave; and a right to different working hours for parents with young children up to the age of three (Renner et al., 2005, pp. 32-35).

The Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act (*Official Gazette*, nr. 110/03-UBP), adopted in 2001, redefined the rights ensuing from parental protection insurance. The rights from the parental protection insurance were divided into parental leave (for more on parental leave, see the appropriate section), parental compensation, and the right to part-time work.

Parental compensation equals 100 per cent of the basic salary in the previous year provided that the entitled person was fully insured in the whole previous year, with the

minimal parental compensation being 55 per cent of the minimum salary in the Republic of Slovenia or, at its highest, 2.5 average monthly salaries in Slovenia. The right to parental compensation is given to those persons entitled to the right to parental leave having been insured under this act before the date of entry into force of a particular type of parental leave. The right to parental compensation is also given to those persons not entitled to the right to parental leave provided that they have been insured under this act at least twelve months within the three years preceding the date of entry into force of a particular type of parental leave. If parents or other persons do not take the parental leave for the whole length allowed under this act, they can choose to claim the parental compensation as a reimbursement for child-minding expenses, residential rents, and the solution of the housing problem. The amount of this reimbursement is equal to the amount of the unpaid compensation for parental leave. Regardless of the length of unused parental leave, the reimbursements cannot exceed five monthly compensations for parental leave.

The right to the child benefit is given to one of the parents or other persons for a child with a permanent residence in the Republic of Slovenia. The child is entitled to the child benefit until he/she reaches the age of 18 years, and over 18 years if he/she is at school, as long as he/she has the status of a pupil, apprentice or undergraduate student, but only until he/she reaches the age of 26 years. The right to the child benefit is given for the period of one year at a time. If the child lives in a single-parent family the amount of the child benefit is higher by 10 per cent. A single-parent family is a community of one parent and his/her children when the parental right, in accordance with a specific act, is exercised solely by him-/herself. If the preschool child does not attend preschool education in agreement with kindergarten legislation, a single amount of the child benefit from the previous article is raised by 20 per cent (www.sigov.si/mddsz/doc).

The large-family benefit is an annual benefit for families with more children. The large-family benefit for a family with three children is 82,000.00 Slovene tolar (i.e. € 342.18), and the benefit for a family with four or more children is 100,000.00 Slovene tolar (i.e. € 417.29) and it is paid out as a lump sum. The right to the large-family benefit is conferred on one of the parents provided that one of the parents and the children have a shared permanent residence in the Republic of Slovenia. A large-family under this act is a family with three or more children. The right to the large-family benefit is also granted one of the children if three or more children from one and the same family live together without parents (www.sigov.si/mddsz/doc).

Ensuring the right of parents to work part-time up to the child's age of three years has provided a formal possibility to balance work and family life. One of the parents who takes care of a child until the child's age of three has the right to work part-time, which must amount to at least half of the regular weekly working hours. Balancing work and family life is furthermore governed by the *Employment Relationships Act*. Point 3 of the Article 187 of the Act states that employers must facilitate an easier balance of professional and family obligations. The legislation on employment relationships does not include the regulation of the possibilities to balance work and family life; rather it considers the obligations of a family life a private matter of each individual. There are no mechanisms within the Slovene labour market which would encourage the creation of family-friendly working environments. In reality, family life constantly has to adapt to the needs of the labour market, whereas at the same time there is no dialogue in the opposite direction (Rener et al. 2005, pp. 32-35).

3.2. Information on the reproduction of the population

► The birth rate

In 2004 there were 1,997,590 inhabitants in the Republic of Slovenia, 977,052 were men and 1,020,538 were women. Women make up 51.19 per cent of the total population.

Table 7: Population by sex for the years 2002, 2003, and 2004

	Total	Number of men	Number of women	The share of women (%)
2002	1,964,036	958,576	1,005,460	51.19
2003	1,996,433	976,802	1,019,631	51.07
2004	1,997,590	977,052	1,020,538	51.09

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

Table 8: Population and citizens of the Republic of Slovenia by sex, 2002 census

	Total population			Citizens of the RS		
	Total	Women	The share of women (%)	Total	Women	The share of women (%)
Total	1,964,036	1,005,460	51.2	1,924,677	992,281	51.6

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

► The age of parents at the birth of the first child (births and abortions)

Data for the years 2002-2004 show that birth rates vary, the decrease from 2000 to 2001 is particularly obvious, as is a reasonable increase from 2003 to 2004. Beside that, the comparison of the data for 2001 (17,477 live births) and 2004 (17,961 live births) shows a growth in the birth rate. The average age of mothers at the time of birth was 29.2 years in 2004, while it was 28.5 in 2001 (data for the age of mothers at live births). On average, fathers are nearly three years older than mothers at the birth of the child.

The number of legal abortions kept falling from year to year – in 2000 there were 8,429 legal abortions, in 2001 7,799, and in 2002 7,327 legal abortions⁹ (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

⁹ Source: *Health Statistical Yearbook 2002, Institute of Public Health of the RS, 2004.*

Table 9: Live births by sex from 2000 to 2004

	Number of live births	Number of live-born boys	Number of live-born girls	The share of live-born girls (%)
2000	18,180	9,368	8,812	48.47
2001	17,477	9,064	8,413	48.14
2002	17,501	9,025	8,476	48.43
2003	17,321	8,930	8,391	48.44
2004	17,961	9,101	8,860	49.33

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

Table 10: Mean age of mother at live births and mean age of mother at first birth

	Age of mother at live births	Age of mother at first birth
2000	28.3	26.5
2001	28.5	26.7
2002	28.8	27.2
2003	29.0	27.3
2004	29.2	27.5

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

► Marriage and divorce

In contrast to the year 2000, the number of marriages in 2004 fell remarkably, while at the same time the number of divorces rose. In 2000 there were 7,201 marriages and 2,125 divorces. In 2004 there were 643 fewer marriages and 286 more divorces. The average age of the groom and the bride was higher in each consecutive year, on average in 2004 the groom was 32.6 years old, and the bride was 29.6 years old (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 11: Marriages and divorces from 2000 to 2004

	Number of marriages	Number of divorces
2000	7,201	2,125
2001	6,935	2,274
2002	7,064	2,457
2003	6,756	2,461
2004	6,558	2,411

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

Table 12: Mean age at marriage by sex from 2000 to 2004

	Men	Women
2000	31.4	28.4
2001	31.8	28.8
2002	32.3	29.2
2003	32.3	29.2
2004	32.6	29.6

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

► Same-sex partnerships

The Registration of a Same-Sex Civil Partnership Act was adopted in June 2005, to enter into force in July 2006. With the act Slovenia became the 18th country in Europe with such legislation, and it is the first country in the world where the legislation was implemented by a right-wing government. The main deficiency of the act, which basically does not regulate much more than property rights between the partners, is in its denial of the status of next of kin. As a result, partners in same-sex partnerships remain without the rights in the fields of social, health, pension and other insurances (based on the partnership), same-sex partners are also without rights in all other areas related to the status of next of kin in various legal and other day-to-day circumstances (deprivation of freedom, death, procedural rights of next of kin). The law imposes mutual obligations on partners in various segments (e.g. partner maintenance obligation, the obligation to take care of an ill partner), but it refuses them the rights that make the fulfilment of these obligation possible (the eligibility of the partner as a dependant, the right to leave from work when the partner is ill, the right to the compensation for the care of a family member, etc.).

Gay and lesbian organizations consider the act discriminatory and unconstitutional, and some gay and lesbian activists have called on gays and lesbians not to support the act and refuse to register their partnerships under it.

A research on the everyday life of gays and lesbians in Slovenia, based on the sample of 443 respondents (Švab and Kuhar, 2005), shows that the majority of gays and lesbians (62 %) want to register their partnerships. The chief reasons for this are of a pragmatic nature (social security, tax relieves, etc.) rather than of ideological ones (e.g. marriage as a sign of love).

► The number of children living with both parents

58.3 per cent of all families consist of marriages or extramarital unions with children. Of the 18.7 per cent of single-parent families, 16.1 per cent are such where the mother lives with children and 2.6 per cent where the father lives with children. There are 23 per cent of married couples and cohabiting partners without children (www.stat.si/doc/pub/slo_fig_05.pdf).

Table 13: Divorces with regard to whom the children were assigned, Slovenia, 2002-2004
(Only dependent children born in the last marriage are included.)

	2002	2003	2004
Total	2457	2461	2411
Without children	975	985	1047
Husband	107	100	101
Wife	1281	1294	1169
Husband and wife	69	75	91
Other possibilities and unknown	25	7	3

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Ministry of the Interior - Central Population Register

► Foster placement

Table 14: Data on foster parents

Number of foster parents with a licence for foster placement	Total	878
	female	794
	male	84
<hr/>		
Number of foster parents with fostering as an occupation		125
Number of foster parents currently looking after foster children		770
Number of foster parents currently not looking after foster children		108
Number of free placements at foster parents		180

Source: www.sigov.si/mddsz/index.php?CID=13&ID=970 (7 March 2006)

Table 15: Data on foster children

Number of children in foster placements	Total	1217
	girls	615
	boys	602
<hr/>		
Number of children placed in families carrying out fostering as relatives		367

Source: www.sigov.si/mddsz/index.php?CID=13&ID=970 (7 March 2006)

3.3. Education

► Primary and secondary education

Primary-school education in Slovenia is obligatory. In the academic year 2003/2004 there were 177,535 pupils enrolled in primary schools, 90,358 or 48.8 per cent of whom were girls. At the same time, 103,203 pupils attended secondary schools, of whom 51,673 or 50.2 per cent were girls. This makes clear the fact that more girls than boys continue their education at the secondary level (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

► Post-secondary vocational and higher education

Increasing numbers of students decide to study at post-secondary vocational and higher educational organizations as well as universities. In 2004 almost half of the population aged between 19 and 23 years was included in a form of tertiary education.

In 2000 82,812 students were enrolled at this level of education, 57.2 per cent of them were women. In 2004 91,299 students attended higher and university educational institutions, 54,163 (i.e. 59.3 per cent) were women. In the same year, 11,608 students completed their studies; 7,334 (i.e. 63.2 per cent) of those were women. Women more frequently decide to continue their education at higher educational institutions and universities; their share is also higher among those who complete the level of studies (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 16: Number and share of students enrolled in undergraduate studies from 2001/2002 to 2004/2005 by sex, and number of graduates by sex from 2001 to 2004

	Number of under-graduate enrolments	Number of female students	Share of female students (%)		Number of graduates	Number of female graduates	Share of female graduates (%)
2001/2002	88,100	51,800	58.8	2001	10,375	6,434	62.0
2002/2003	87,056	50,161	57.6	2002	12,029	6,930	57.6
2003/2004	87,205	50,744	58.2	2003	11,232	7,183	64.0
2004/2005	91,299	54,163	59.3	2004	11,608	7,334	63.2

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004, Statistical Information 2005.

► Postgraduate education

Students completing their master's and specialist's degrees in 2001 consisted of 50.2 per cent of women. In 2003 the share of women was 54.4 per cent.

In 2001, 298 students completed their doctorates, 49.0 per cent of them were women. In 2003 and 2004 the share of women who were awarded doctorates fell to 41.4 and 40.6 per cent respectively (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 17: Number and share of doctorates and master's and specialist's degrees by sex from 2001 to 2003

	Total number of doctorates (men and women)	Number of doctorates awarded to women	Share of doctorates awarded to women (%)		Total number of master's and specialist's degrees (men and women)	Number of master's and specialist's degrees awarded to women	Share of master's and specialist's degrees awarded to women (%)
2001	298	146	49.0		905	454	50.2
2002	318	144	45.3		1,058	572	54.1
2003	367	152	41.4		1,082	570	52.7
2004	355	144	40.6		1,096	596	54.4

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004, Statistical Information 2005.

3.4. Information on childcare

In the year 2001 only 339 children between 1 and 6 years attended private kindergartens. This is due to the fact that in Slovenia kindergartens are largely public, there are only few private kindergartens.

Table 18: Kindergartens in Slovenia
(Data include independent kindergartens, kindergartens with a unit, branch units of a kindergarten, kindergartens as a part of another institution and kindergartens as a part of an elementary school.)

	Kindergartens					
	Institutions	Class units	Children		Care and educational staff	
			total	girls	total	women
2002/03	773	3342	58968	28177	6949	6829
2003/04	767	3243	54515	25815	6729	6636
2004/05	752	3262	54815	26033	6762	6716
	Children / Class units					
	Total number of children	Number of children by age groups		Number of class units	Number of class units for children with special educational needs	
		up to 3 years	3 years and above			
2004/05	54815	13157	41658	3262	42	

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Ministry of the Interior – Central Population Register

3.5. Information on the participation of men and women in political and public life

Ensuring equal opportunities for women and men to stand as candidates in state and local elections in the *Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia*, Slovenia has pledged to eliminate the under-representation of women in elected political bodies and assure the equality of women and men at all levels of political decision-making.

► Women in government

The representation of women in the Government of the Republic of Slovenia is low, in the present government, established after the last election in 2004, there is one woman minister (i.e. 5.9 per cent), after the election in 2000 there were three women ministers in the government (i.e. 20 per cent). Secretariat-general of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia is headed by a woman secretary general, in the positions of secretaries of state there are four women (i.e. 22.2 per cent).

In governmental agencies and state administration bodies the representation of women and men in comparison with their representation in the political area is more balanced. In 2004 the share of women among senior administrative workers was 52 per cent, but there were fewer of them in the highest positions. Among the clerks in a position appointed for a term of office, the share of women was 25.6 per cent, the highest share of women being among heads of government offices (38.5 %), and the lowest among directors general of government directorates (13.3 %).¹⁰

In 2004 the share of women in government bodies was 36.2 per cent, the lowest being in government working bodies (11.3 %), and somewhat higher in government councils (35.7 %) and government working groups (38.3 %). Women made up 21.8 per cent of the representative of the RS in international working bodies. The situation was similar as

¹⁰ Source: Ministry of Public Administration, 2005, as on 31 December 2004.

regards the representatives of public enterprises, public limited companies and public limited-liability companies, where the share of women was 20.3 per cent. The situation was relatively balanced only in the field of public institution representatives, where the share of women was 48.9 per cent, women being more strongly represented than men in social security institutions (71.4 per cent of women) and public social service centres (70.8 per cent of women).¹¹

In the last election for the National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia in 2004, 11 women MPs were elected (12.2 %), after the final establishment of Parliament, 12 women (13.3 %) got into Parliament of the total 90 MPs. This means that the situation in the highest legislative body in terms of the number of woman MPs remained unchanged in comparison to the previous Parliament.

The share of women in political decision making at the local level is similarly low. In the local election of 2000 the share of women in the candidates lists was 21 per cent, and the share of elected women councillors was 13.1 per cent. In the same election, 12 (i.e. 6.2 %) of the elected mayors were women.

In June 2004 the National Assembly passed the *Constitutional Act* amending Article 43 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia*, which added a further, fourth paragraph, authorizing the legislator to pass laws in order to provide the necessary measures which will encourage equal opportunities for men and women alike when standing for election to state and local community bodies. This authorization is already being enforced, as in July 2005 the *Act Amending Local Elections Act* was adopted, which makes it obligatory for the candidates lists to consist of at least a 20-per-cent representation of each sex, with a gradual increase of the representation share (to 30 % in 2010, and to 40 % in 2014). Furthermore, the candidates in the first half of the lists must be listed in the alternating order as to their sex. *The Act Amending National Assembly Elections Act*, equally providing measures to encourage equal opportunities for men and women standing for election. It was passed in the beginning of 2006.

Already before the aforementioned amendment of the Constitution, the *Election of Slovenian Members to the European Parliament Act* had been adopted. The novelty introduced by the act in its Article 15, important for an equal representation of the sexes, refers to the drafting of the lists of candidates. The act states that neither sex shall be represented on a candidates list with a share lower than 40 per cent. Each list must be compiled in such a way that at least one candidate of each sex is put in the top half of the list. Lists not drafted in accordance with this provision are considered invalid. In the 2004 European Parliament election 3 women candidates were elected (42.8 %) among the seven elected MEPs.

In September 2004, in pursuance of Article 14 of the *Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act*, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted the *Decree regulating the criteria for the implementation of the principle of balanced representation of women and men*, which had been prepared by the experts in the Office for Equal Opportunities. The decree imposes the principle of equal representation of both sexes on the government when it appoints consultation and coordination bodies as well as other working bodies and delegations. This principle is observed by the government in such a

¹¹ Source: <http://interispo.sigov.si/delovnatelesa/>, as on 17 March 2004.

way that it ensures a 40-per-cent representation of each sex in all government bodies, expert councils and public entities. The principle holds both for members and substitute members. The decree also specifies certain exceptions to the principle of the balanced representation of women and men when it is objectively not possible to ensure a balanced representation of women and men, e.g. when membership follows a particular office, when there is no qualified expert of a certain sex available, when the proposer does not get a particular person's consent, or when there are other justifiable objective reasons.

Similar positive measures as in the *Election of Slovenian Members to the European Parliament Act* were instituted with the adoption of the *Local Elections Act*, and in July 2005 with the *Act Amending Local Elections Act*. Article 70a of the *Act Amending Local Elections Act* imposes on political parties or voters, nominating more than one election candidate for a local councillor in a certain constituency, the obligation to nominate the candidates and draft the lists in such a manner that each sex is represented by at least 40 per cent of the candidacies, and that the candidates in the first half of the lists are listed in the alternating order as to their sex. Local electoral commissions will reject any lists that will fail to comply with the provisions. The act, however, includes a transitional period; the 2006 local election candidates lists will demand at least a 20-per-cent representation of women and men, the 2010 election at least a 30-per-cent representation of women and men. The 40-per-cent representation of women and men will only be obligatory from the 2014 local election. The transitional period also allows the first-half alternation as to the candidates' sex to follow the order of one member of each sex in every three candidates.

Since September 2004 when the *Decree regulating the criteria for the implementation of the principle of balanced representation of women and men* was adopted, there have not been any positive effects noticed yet. The data collected by the Office for Equal Opportunities show that the representation of women in government bodies, delegations, expert councils and public entities remains at the same level as it was in 2004, i.e. between 35 and 36 per cent. The Office for Equal Opportunities estimates that the proposers rely too much on the use of exceptions to the principle of equal representation allowed by the decree. In the areas of finances, economy, traffic, defence, the exceptions are mainly taken advantage of in order to favour the representation of men, in the areas of work, family, social affairs, and education the exceptions favour the representation of women. This is one of the ways to sustain the division between "male" and "female" areas of work. We must realise, however, that the effects of the decree will not be evident overnight; rather, a longer period of time will be needed. For a more concise assessment of the effects of the decree on the balanced representation of the sexes, we will have to wait at least for the staff report of the Government of the RS for the year 2005.

The *Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Act* binds political parties to present an action plan to the Office for Equal Opportunities every four years in which they declare their views on the issue of the balanced representation of the sexes and, in accordance with that, define ways and measures to encourage a more balanced representation of women and men in the party's bodies, candidates lists in the National Assembly and local elections, and the presidential election. The political party that fails to present the plan is punished with a fine of at least 300,000 Slovene tolar (i.e. € 1251.88). By July 2005 only two political parties had presented their action plans to the Office for Equal Opportunities, further two had informed the Office that they had adopted a decision

consistently to follow the principle of the balanced representation of women and men when compiling candidates lists (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

► Women in political parties

Despite the fact that the share of women on the candidates lists in the National Assembly elections compiled by political parties slowly grows (14.8 % in 1992, 18.6 % in 1996, 23.4 % in 2000, 24.9 in 2004), the electability of women remains low. In the last election to the National assembly of the Republic of Slovenia in 2004, 11 women were elected (12.2 %), after the final establishment of Parliament, 12 women (13.3 %) got into Parliament, making up the same share as in the previous Parliament. The share of women is even lower in the National Council, where after the last election in 2002 of the total 40 councillors there are only 3 women (7.5 %), which means two women fewer than in the previous office (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 19: Candidates in the National Assembly election by sex and the share of women (2000 and 2004)

	2000	2004
Total	1007	1395
Women	236	347
Share of women (%)	23.4	24.9

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

Table 20: The number and share of women in the 2004 National Assembly election, by parliamentary parties

Parliamentary parties	Number of seats	Share (%)	Number of women	Share of women (%)
Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)	29	29.08	3	10.3
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS)	23	22.80	3	13.0
The United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD)	10	10.17	2	20.0
Slovenian People's Party (SLS)	7	6.82	0	0
New Slovenia - Christian People's Party (NSi)	9	9.09	2	22.2
Democratic Party of Retired Persons of Slovenia (DeSUS)	4	4.04	0	0
Slovenian National Party (SNS)	6	6.27	1	16.7
Italian and Hungarian national community representatives	2	2.2	1	50.0

Source: The National Assembly of the Republic of Slovenia, 2005.

As is the case at the national level, women are similarly under-represented at the local level as well. The share of women candidates on the local councillors lists has grown slightly (in the 2002 election it was 21 %), but the share of elected women candidates remains significantly lower than the share of elected men candidates. In the 2002 local election the share of elected women councillors was 13.1 per cent (in 1998 it was 11.7 per cent), the share of women mayors was 6.2 per cent (in 1998 it was 4.2 per cent). In view of the improvements introduced by the *Act Amending Local Elections Act*, it is expected

that the representation of women among the elected councillors and mayors in the 2006 local election will be stronger (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

Table 21: Men and Women Mayors in the 1998 and 2002 local elections

	1998	2002
Mayors (total)	191	193
Men	183	181
Women	8	12
Share of women (%)	4.2%	6.2%

Source: Statistical Office of the RS, Statistical Yearbook 2004.

3.6. Information on time spending by sex

A research carried out by Eurostat¹² has shown that Slovene women between the ages of 20 and 74 years set aside an average of 1 hour and 5 minutes less to free time than their male counterparts in the same age group (women 4 hrs 29 mins, men 5 hrs 34 mins). The situation is similar with employed women who spend 1 hour and 1 minute less free time than employed men (women 3 hrs 51 mins, men 4 hrs 52 mins).

Table 22: Time use structure in the age group 20 – 74 years, by sex

Activities	Men	Women
Free time (unspecified time use)	5:34	4:29
Meals, personal care	2:13	2:08
Sleep	8:17	8:24
Travel	1:09	1:02
Domestic work	2:39	4:57
Gainful work, study	4:07	2:59
Total	24 h	24 h

Source: Eurostat, 2004.

Table 23: Time use structure of the employed, by sex

Activities	Men	Women
Free time (unspecified time use)	4:52	3:51
Meals, personal care	2:07	2:02
Sleep	8:06	8:12
Travel	1:14	1:09
Domestic work	2:24	4:24
Gainful work, study	5:20	4:23
Total	24 h	24 h

Source: Eurostat, 2004.

¹² *How Europeans spend their time: Everyday life of women and men (Data 1998 – 2002)*. Eurostat. 2004.

The Eurostat research has shown that a traditional division of labour between the sexes still persists in Slovenia. The data on the time employed women and men spend on gainful work and study¹³ (women 4 hrs 23 mins, men 5 hrs 20 mins) and domestic work¹⁴ (women 4 hrs 24 mins, men 2 hrs 24 mins) show the division of work between the partners or parents in the family to be exceptionally unfavourable for women. The study demonstrates that women mostly do domestic work like cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and take care of children and ill family members. Men do most of the repairs in the home, while gardening is quite equally shared between women and men. Mothers, in comparison to fathers, devote more time to the care of children (childcare of children younger than 6 years: women 2 hrs 23 mins, men 0 hrs 56 mins), and to spending time with children (children up to 9 years of age: women 6 hrs 9 mins, men 4 hrs 7 mins). Men devote more time to their free time than women (women 3 hrs 51 mins, men 4 hrs 37 mins) (*Draft of the IVth CEDAW Report*).

¹³ Gainful work and study include main and second jobs and related activities, breaks and travel during working hours, and job seeking, studying and vocational training.

¹⁴ Domestic work includes housework, child and adult care, gardening, pet care, construction and repairs, shopping and services, and household management.

Part III

Gender, Care and Work-life Balance in Organisations

4. Public company: Radio Slovenia

4.1. Short presentation of the company

Radio Slovenia consists of three national radio channels that conceptually complement one another. Channel One is politically informative. It informs its listeners about domestic and foreign politics, economy, culture and other important social events. Music on Channel One of Radio Slovenia is meant to be as likeable as possible for the largest section of the listeners, and it gives priority to Slovene music.

Channel Two is also informative, but it includes more entertainment contents. The creators of the channels call it "the recreational service programme", and, among the three radio channels, it enjoys the highest share of listeners. Channel Two, also known as Val 202, primarily plays contemporary, popular music.

On Radio Slovenia's Channel Three, culturally informative, artistic, educational, and popularly scientific contents prevail. Classical music is the most widely-recognized part of the channel, as it makes up three quarters of the programme. Whereas Channels One and Two of the national radio have to compete with regional, local and also commercial radio stations, Channel three remains without competition in the Slovene radio space. None of more than ninety radio stations, broadcasting in Slovenia, air classical music.

News programming as one of the most important elements of the national radio and its advantage in competition with other radio stations is created for all three channels simultaneously. This means that all three channels broadcast the main news programmes at the same time (The First Morning Chronicle at 5.30 am, The Second Morning Chronicle at 7.00 am, Today until 13.00 at 1 pm, Events and Echoes at 3.30 pm, Radio News at 7.00 pm, and the Day's Mirror at 10.00 pm). Each of the channels also broadcasts its own, short news bulletins.

Radio Slovenia started broadcasting in 1928 under the name Radio Ljubljana. The employees of all three channels produce 72 hours of programmes every day.

The management of RTV Slovenia (joint management of the national radio and television) consists of 16 members, 12 of them are men and 4 are women. Similar ratios are to be found in the Supervisory Board and the Programme Council. In the Supervisory Board there are 10 men and one woman, in the Programme Council there are 20 men and 8 women.

338 workers are employed by Radio Slovenia, 91 of them work in radio production. There are 183 full-time male employees, and 146 full-time female employees. 6 men and 3 women work part-time, 7 men and just as many women work under fixed-term contracts.

In top management, including both radio and television, there are 25 men and 7 women, in middle management there are 33 men and 7 women, in low managements there are 55 men and 30 women. The institution does not cooperate with other companies/organizations when making decisions.

A working week takes 40 working hours. People in management work an average 45-hour working week.

1300 of the employees at RTV Slovenia are members of trade unions. The average length of time the people at RTV Slovenia have been working there is 18 years.

The employees have a right to paid sick leave if a family member falls ill. They also have a right to unpaid leave. The employees do not have the possibility, however, to work part-time for a period of time, unless this is specified by legal provisions. Beside this, the employees have the possibility to work from home or to work a compressed week, but this is only viable in certain working positions.

The public institution does not offer its employees a kindergarten or other kinds of support to help taking care of their children. Neither does the institution offer breastfeeding leave. The institution does not have any measures or mechanisms to encourage male employees to take paternity leave, and it does not offer any other tools that could help the employees balance their work and family life. RTV Slovenia nevertheless does focus on equal pay between male and female employees.

Working at Radio Slovenia is done in two forms: working shifts mainly by the employees in radio production (radio sound engineers and editing technicians, presenters, and journalists working in the news section preparing main daily news programmes. The majority of journalists do not work shifts, and their working day is not strictly defined. This usually means that they have to attend daily or weekly editorial meetings, and they organize the rest of their working time according to the demands of the programme, events they're covering, the availability of people they need to interview or talk to.

4.2. The interviews – key informants

Six people were interviewed at Radio Slovenia. Three of them are employed men working full-time who are also fathers, aged 31, 34, and 44 years. They all live in classical nuclear families together with a wife and two children. At least one of the children was younger than thirteen years at the time of the interview.

The other three respondents, aged 41, 44, and 49 years, are management workers, one of them is a woman. Both male respondents were working in top management, the woman respondent was working in middle management at the time of the interviews. One of the respondents does not live with a family, another lives in a single-parent family, and the third lives in a classical nuclear family. Only in the last case are the children in the family younger than thirteen years; the other two respondents have older children.

All six respondents have a higher education or university degree, on average they have been working at Radio Slovenia for 15 years. Except for one, none of them has fixed working time. Consequently, their work exceeding eight hours a day does not count as

working overtime. The management workers estimate that each week they put in from 10 to 15 hours of overtime, even though it does not count as such. These are the hours that extend over the regular eight-hour working day.

Among the three employed men, only one said he worked 5 extra hours every week, but this is also the time that extends over the regular eight-hour working week, although he is not paid for working overtime and this work is not recognized as overtime. The other two employed men do not work overtime.

Throughout their employment at Radio Slovenia, all the three employed men and one of the management workers have never taken paid or unpaid leave to take care of an ill child or family member, while the other two management workers have already taken such leave.

All the respondents, except for one, use the possibilities of working from home (home office) and working flexible time in order to balance family and work life. One of the employed men does not have the possibility to work from home, as he has to be present in the radio studio. In his case, the balancing is only possible because of flexible working hours and changing shifts with his co-workers.

The interviews with the respondents were carried out in four days. The employed men at Radio Slovenia were interviewed on 22, 23 and 24 March 2006. The interviews with the representatives of the institution were done on 29 March 2006. An average interview took 60 minutes. All the respondents filled in the Questionnaire B before the interview (but not in advance).

4.3. Work life

Answering the question on the satisfaction that the respondents gain from doing their work, they mentioned three key factors that define their satisfaction: the specific kind of work, the salary, and the problem of rewards.

The respondents emphasised that journalism is a way of life, and that such kind of work demands a certain degree of adaptation. This suggests it is difficult to draw a clear-cut line between work life and family life or free time. Radio programmes are aired 24 hours a day, and events that have to be reported on happen at different times. This calls for constant adaptation and frequently makes fixed planning of individuals' activities impossible.

"Journalism is a job different from other jobs that finish at two, three, four o'clock. This really is a way of life. I think that the family needs to establish such relationships that people you live with accept it. That is doesn't cause conflicts" (a management representative).

Because the respondents wish to do such kind of work, they express an overall satisfaction with the work they do. The respondents not working in management mostly put forward the problem of payment. They felt they were not paid adequately with regard to their investment in their work. One of them, for instance, asserted that the work "fulfils his everyday expectations and challenges", and that he is, except for the financial part, completely satisfied. He rationalized his dissatisfaction with the salary by adding that "money surely isn't everything". This kind of attitude is essentially different from the case

of the analyzed private company where the money seems to be one of the prime motives for employment. Putting journalism as a satisfying way of life first seems to be the orientation that prevails at Radio Slovenia, with financial gains coming second.

The management is aware of the problem of inadequate payment. One of the managers thus says that the radio's employees display strong loyalty to the radio, being "extremely devoted in the moments when it's most needed", but simultaneously notes that "the level of dissatisfaction with payment with regard to the work done is considerable". The respondent is aware that as someone with responsibilities, the manager has to maintain equilibrium between two sides: between the need of the institution to present itself as "credible, fast, and effective" on the outside, and to be cautious not to "cut too deep in the core of the human resources" when trying to achieve that, as employees might block you.

A similar position was expressed by another respondent from top management who spoke of the employees as "a treasure to be taken care of". He stressed that the most basic business philosophy is a linear cutting of expenses; the cuts are possible either at fixed expenses (salaries) or variable expenses (programmes). Personally, he espouses the principles of renaissance architecture: order, weight, and the right proportions. Only in such a way, he believes, can the radio make good programmes that will satisfy their listeners and will be different from their commercial competition.

"Hats off to my colleagues who, despite the incomparability of their salaries with others, especially in the printed media, continue to feel loyalty, like coming to work, and want to make themselves useful. This is the highest level of culture. This is a manifestation of what we belong to, what we wish, what we know, what we want" (a management representative).

The third factor the respondents mentioned in relationship to their work at Radio Slovenia was the problem of an undeveloped system of rewarding and the related issue of older employees. This is closely related to the fact, emphasised by all three management workers, that the radio's staff is an ageing staff.

4.3.1. An unregulated system of promotion

Radio Slovenia has no regulated system of promotion. Promotion, in the words of one of the managers, is "left to actions permeated by pressures from the radio's management or from trade unions, sometimes a combination of both." The problem lies in the fact that the levers of promotion are operated "from the outside of the radio", due to the fact that Radio is part of the bigger institution Radio and Television Slovenia. Simultaneously, the manager says, an informal automatism has been established which means that people get promoted according to the time they have spent at the institution. This is the consequence of Radio Slovenia being part of the public sector, where such policies of promotion are still in place. Instead of this, another management representative claims, there should be "a variable fond" which would help stimulate creativity and inventiveness. The third management representative adds that the very absence of a system of the promotion of the people who create extra value sustains the negative side of Radio Slovenia's "satisfying itself with mediocrity" and even seeing the extra value as unwanted.

One of the respondents mentioned another deficiency in the system of promotion. This deficiency suggests that the only promotion possible is the one from the journalist to the editor. The respondent believes there should be the possibility of promotion to "the

highest level of a journalist", as only that would allow for better programming, rather than the highest level of journalism actually meaning editorial work.

Despite everything, the management respondents are unanimous in suggesting that for promotion there are certain results within the institution needed. There is the question, as one of them says, of "what kind of traces you leave in the media space". This includes both the quality of journalism and the loyalty to Radio Slovenia. The latter after all also shows in the "sacrifice" of one's free time. It seems that at least some sacrifice of the sort (also related to the already mentioned inadequate payment) is a component of penetrating journalism. In other words, this means it is expected from a "penetrating journalist" that he/she will occasionally put his/her family in the second place. Those who do not do this, the manager says, are at least to some extent marginalised.

"If we were to follow the careers of people and their presences in the programmes, if we were to analyze the important topics that people deal with in the programmes, then we would find out that those [not sacrificing part of their free time] remain more or less excluded from the 'top'" (a management representative).

Even though the other three respondents (the representatives of the employees) agreed on these criteria for promotion, they added the importance of "likeability". One of them stressed that the work process is often based on "personal relations", not professional, which means that someone who works well may be disqualified if he/she is not to his/her superior's liking. At the same time, he says, Radio Slovenia often functions as a kind of social institution that supports and rewards workers for some of their past accomplishments (or following the principle of seniority), not for their achievements "here and now". All this, he claims, affects the relationships: "The young find it difficult to bear working themselves into the ground and getting little money for it, whereas all the medals go to the 'old ones'".

4.3.2. An ageing staff

Both the managers and the younger respondents mentioned the split between younger and older workers. One of the representatives of the employees calls attention to the following:

"Older colleagues know that their positions are no longer as central as they used to be. The majority of them, especially women, find it hard to face that. They are no longer the first violins, the first voices, they are no longer the ones who make the world go around. They won't let the younger colleagues get those roles. And then our listeners keep reproaching us for being the same as we were twenty years ago" (a representative of the employees).

This is the problem that the managers realise, too. Although the distinction, and after all the nature, of the national radio lies in its "conservativeness", which means that it needs more time to change but it also reflects on the changes more deeply, the managers are aware that it is not sufficiently taken care of the people who have given their whole lives to the institution. One of the management representatives says: "We should set up an attractive pensions fond to allow people who have given blood, sweat and tears to this radio to leave it with dignity, with their heads up, not like the ruins of life." The very fact that some leave their whole lives at Radio Slovenia points to the problem of the relationship between younger and older employees, claims one of the employees. The young come after the older workers and change or add to their way of working: "If you take away Radio Slovenia from some people's lives, what is left to them? It is obvious that

those who have left their whole lives here, and who have had no private lives outside Radio Slovenia, are very sensitive to everything that happens in relation to their department."

Another problem related to the ageing staff that the respondents pointed to is the phenomenon of the so-called "sacred cows". This means that part of the work is left to outsourced staff who can often produce more (and more innovatively) than the older employees, but whose payment is limited. A manager says: "The efficiency of older workers is lower than that of the younger ones, who have no regular permanent employment. This makes us all run into the financial anchor which gives god-given salaries to permanent employees." Some respondents thus also hinted at Radio Slovenia being a social institution: "So many social cases who couldn't get employment anywhere else work with us. There aren't as many anywhere else." A manager agrees with this: "Here socialism is still alive for some people." At the same time this respondent calls attention to the cuts in social rights. "The possibilities for young employees with families are increasingly fewer. There were golden times that each of us took advantage of as much as we could. I think that the field of social rights is now getting smaller not bigger in comparison with certain former times."

To sum up, the respondents are generally satisfied with the work they do, because they see a "life's mission" in it. Every single one of them emphasises loyalty to Radio Slovenia. "We know why we're here and what we do," says one of them. They also utter no major criticisms either of the management or of their superiors. The superiors, in their words, try to stay in touch with their juniors, take criticism into account, and see it as an impulse for growth and development, and most of all keep "their doors always open". Such expressions of satisfaction are of course only partial, and can only be related to the experiences of our respondents. This is very clearly expressed by one of them who says: "The Radio has taken a very fair attitude toward me. Here I've got especially my editor, the programme director and Radio Slovenia director in mind. Only good experiences. [...] But I also listen to others who will tell you something completely different." The main two problems that both the management representatives and the representatives of the employees are aware of are the inadequate payment for the work done and the wide problem of the ageing staff. Or, in the words of one of the managers: "It's true RTV Slovenia has some sacred cows, and it has some golden retrievers who are not adequately paid."

4.4. Family/private life

"Our journalists and editors, as well as the employees in general are somehow the 'victims' of their work. Journalism isn't work where people come to an office, it's a life philosophy. Ask anyone here, and they'll quietly admit that they have very little family life" (a management representative).

"I think that a caring father is first and foremost the father that his children consider a caring father. I think this is the most important criterion" (a representative of the employees).

Quite expectedly, all the respondents in our survey put their family in the first place. Although some of them specifically stressed the need to balance work and family life and sometimes make compromises that go against family life, they consider a settled and satisfying family life the highest value. "The family surely does come first," says one of the

employees, "but at the moment we're all careful to keep our jobs. Family thus comes second." Another respondent affirms that family life can be taxing, but at the same time adds that this is the most beautiful thing that can happen to you. The respondent claims that children provide stimulation and fill with energy. "At the moment my family means the most to me. Family life isn't everything I have, but it's the most crucial part of my life and at the moment I'm investing all my energy into it." The third employed men we interviewed reached similar conclusions: "There's never too much time for the family, that's a fact. If I had a bit more, that'd be great ... I'd put family first. Nothing else means so much to me. If family life's ok, everything else will be ok. If it's not, it just won't do."

Where the young respondents idealize the family, the older ones, who also put family first, express certain regret that they did not devote more time and attention to their families. Even though such observations mostly relate to the age of the respondents, this regret can be linked to the issue of career (and consequently the position in the workplace): when considering whether to devote time to family or work, it seems that the latter often turns out to be more uncompromising. "In my view, we have all made mistakes in this respect," says one of the managers. "Looking back, I think I should definitely have spent more time with the family. But the working process was such that we didn't work from six to two, or from seven to three; rather, we used to work all the time." The respondent says that with the accumulated experiences it would now be easier to keep away from professional obligations rather than children. "Whether I'd succeed, I don't know. Whether my job would allow it, I don't know. But I'd definitely devote more attention to my children. More time. I'd take time off. By their age of seven years I'd use my leave as much as possible to be with them."

Another respondent from top management has reached similar conclusions. "With years going by you learn that, proportionally, the investment of time in professional work gives back less than the investment of time in family, private life. Although it is, in term of hours, smaller, it definitely gives back more. This disproportion is probably one of life's rules. While our jobs can be the end of us, the two hours you devote to the family pay back enormously."

The majority of the respondents try to compensate for the compromises they have to accept because of professional obligations during holidays. They emphasise that this is the time when they completely focus on their families and as a result of the aforementioned compromises they can afford "something more". What "something more" signifies depends on each individual's interpretation; basically it can be understood with the principle of protestant ethics – the respondents do not set themselves any limits when holidays are concerned and they afford more than usually. By doing this, they reward themselves, and they reward the families with their presence. One of them, for example, says: "When we go on holiday, we go somewhere and we afford something. ... We know that those moments are only ours. I have to say that we afford quite something." A management representative similarly claims that working a different schedule would allow spending two or three hours more with the family. The respondent sees the compensation for "journalism as a way of life" in the fact that she has "concentrated on the quality time together" and that, in her view, the time they spend together is quality time: "I don't spend holidays with my friends and their families, because in that case I couldn't be with my children a hundred per cent. We travel, we discover the world ... I concentrate very deeply on these common programmes that have to be something special. I often make sure that we make trips, so that we don't waste our

weekends just like that." The respondent adds that once in a while, every two to three years, it is good to afford a week's travelling all alone. Another respondent in the employee's group also affords similar "getaways": "Once in a while we afford ourselves lives apart. We take some time for ourselves, without the children. Which I find very important ... I think it's good if – to put it crudely – we occasionally miss one another a bit, so that, as a result, we love one another even more.

4.4.1. Birth and caring masculinities

The respondents describe their understanding of caring masculinities in different ways. They agree that the father's help to the mother at birth is crucially important and they all made sure in various ways to put aside that time and devote it to their partners and the newly-born children.

All the management representatives were not able to take paternity leave at the time of their children's birth as the mechanism didn't exist yet. Despite that, one of them decided together with his partner that he'd stay at home. At the births of both his children he therefore took more than half a month's leave, the decision being primarily based on the positive effects of the care for the child. He believes that this is the time when some specific intimacy with the child is established that should be kept off limits for others. "I think it's a good investment at birth which later, but very quickly, pays off. This means fewer troubles with breastfeeding, and fewer sleepless nights."

In addition to the emphasis on the importance of initial contacts with the child, the respondents stressed the use of paternity leave or regular leave in order to be able to help their partners. One of the employees, when there was still no possibility of taking paternity leave, stayed at home at the birth of his first child, because he thought that he could help his partner himself, rather than call midwives. "Let her rest," he says, "because I know that the pregnancy was tiresome enough, and the birth even more so." Another representative of the employees similarly asserts: "My wife lay through most of that time. She couldn't take care of herself and the baby at the same time. I was the one who jumped in at the time."

The respondents described the time before and at birth as "a special time", when the partner needs attention. The father's presence turns out to be important for psychological reasons as well.

"I tried to understand pregnancy and the expectation of the baby from my wife's perspective. I managed to find out that the time of pregnancy is a special time when emotions function differently than usually. ... It's good to utter certain words, which would otherwise not need to be said, more frequently. I told her more often that I loved her. I think it had a positive effect on the whole process of nine months before the birth. Throughout the time I adapted my working schedule to this" (a representative of the employees).

4.4.2. Paternity leave

All three representatives of the employees, with children younger than 13 years, had the chance to use paternity leave that has legally existed in Slovenia since 2003. Two respondents used paternity leave, the third took regular leave during the time when he could have used paternity leave. All the respondents who were interviewed were familiar with the possibility of paternity leave but they were not fully acquainted with the length of paternity leave and the possibilities of its use.

The first respondent was employed in another institution at the birth of his second child when he took paternity leave, but he did the same kind of work as he does now. He mentioned having some troubles with his superior when he mentioned taking paternity leave. His boss was namely not familiar with the possibility of paternity leave: "My boss looked at me strangely when I came to him and told him I wanted paternity leave. Why not, I've got the right to it! Basically, there was nothing he could do."

The respondents thought it was – despite the legal possibilities of taking paternity leave – better not to "fight to the bitter end"; instead, one should explain why one wants paternity leave. The respondents were aware that this means absence from work which is not systematically sorted out. Employers are not likely to employ a new worker for the time of three months; rather, they will try to "fill in" the absences with outsourced staff. One of the respondents therefore thought it was important to let your employer know of the fact you were going to become father as soon as you know it yourself. "If I know I've got six more months to prepare myself, it's something completely different from someone coming to me in the ninth month of pregnancy. ... There has to be a professional attitude! That's been my position all along."

Some of the respondents had certain doubts exactly because of the fear that due to their absence their co-workers would need to do extra work. One of them thus used some days of his regular leave before the birth of his child rather than paternity leave. He says he did not take paternity leave as he did not think it was fair to his colleagues to take it, because there was a considerable workload to do at the time. "If I take paternity leave, my colleagues will have to work more due to my absence. I still took leave, but not two months in one go as I could have. I took two weeks, then I got back to work."

The respondents believe that family obligations are a legitimate reason for absence from work or shorter working hours. Both colleagues and superiors will show sympathy for that. The problem is that some colleagues use family obligations as an excuse not to do certain work. This is the reason that some employees limit themselves (i.e. they do not take paternity leave), as they have the feeling their absence would be understood as unfounded despite the fact they have a legal basis for it.

A management respondent said that various calculations were linked to paternity leave and parental leave to take care of a child. The respondent realises that partners sometimes try to find out what will pay off better and how to get more money – whether the father or the mother should take the leave.

The respondents were not of one mind on the question whether paternity leave is stigmatized or not. Some of them mentioned paternity leave being accepted as something absolutely normal by a younger generation of fathers and colleagues at Radio Slovenia. One of the younger respondents had the impression it was accepted and appreciated by his generation. Some others pointed out that no-one would probably oppose paternity leave aloud, but silently it can still be a reason for derision, ridicule, and mockery. This may have to do with a simple lack of the understanding of the leave, as one of the respondents mentioned, "You know, why paternity leave since your wife's at home, she'll take care of everything", or it may have to do with mere mockery of the type: "He took maternity leave". Two respondents mentioned the case of a well-known and prominent journalist, the president of a journalists' association, who took paternity leave, which

media reported about. They thought that such "prominent and important people" can importantly contribute to the de-stigmatization of paternity leave.

4.4.3. Sharing housework

Sociology of the family has recently been highlighting that sharing housework in the family no longer necessarily follows gender schemes, even though such "patriarchal patterns" still, at least partly, define and delineate housework sharing. This means that nowadays we can speak of the division of labour in relation to time management of the partners or their preferences. This does not automatically mean, however, that such a division of labour, seemingly purged of gender bias, is also equal.

Our respondents reached similar conclusions. Those who live in partnerships often emphasised that sharing housework is "flexible", which means that it adapts daily to the time that each of the partners has at his/her disposal. "There's no agreement," says one of the employees, when asked about sharing caring activities. "It depends on the moment. Sometimes my partner doesn't feel well, sometimes it's me." The other respondent stresses, too, that the division of labour arose quite spontaneously, without any special agreement. "We've got these things relatively equally divided," he says. "We both take care of the children, we both do the shopping, we both cook. We've reached this totally spontaneously when we got children and our family life changed. That wasn't an actual agreement, it happened spontaneously, because I think we're both aware what it means to have a family and children."

Having said that, there remain certain "hard and fast" divisions that still reflect the typical gendered division of housework (see the appended summary). One of the employees, for instance, first stressed that within the family his are "technical tasks", but he went on to say that he also does other things if needed. Here we find an interesting combination of praise and apology. The respondent is aware that a stigma is related to doing "female tasks", but at the same time he is aware of the contemporary "ideology of the caring father", which highly praises doing exactly such tasks.

"I have no special tasks related to the care of others, except for the little one [i.e. the child] to the extent that it's needed. Changing nappies, too. I used to do the ironing as well [laughter] when I had the time. ... To me it goes without saying. I've got no prejudices against it. If I need to take a cloth into my hands and clean something, I'll do it" (a representative of the employees).

Whereas the "contemporary" division of labour according to time demands planning as you go, there are no such arrangements needed with the gendered division, characterized by patriarchal social norms and expectations. "I think we've reached this as a matter of course," the same respondent says. "I know there are certain things I do much more easily than she does. That's why I won't do the ironing nowadays. If a pair of trousers or a shirt needs ironing, I'll do it. If there's no urgent need, then my wife does it. And she leaves certain things to me."

The reply above shows that "gender roles" affecting the division of labour in the household are not irrelevant, but they are also not unbridgeable. This usually means that women still do the majority of housework, with men only helping – but only if it is needed. It seems there are two mechanisms shaping the division of housework that exist concurrently: flexible arrangements according to the time available or, in some cases, divisions according to preferences, all of which are still marked by the gendered divisions

of labour in the broader context that comes to the fore as soon as both partners have the time available for a specific task. The mechanism can also work in the opposite direction: because of the time pressure, the partners fall back on the well-established gendered patterns of the divisions of labour, because this does not demand any additional efforts, arrangements, or agreements. Time pressure has the effect of the double-edged sword: it can relax the traditional gendered divisions of housework, but it can also enforce them. One of the respondents, for example, explains why it is his wife who as a rule takes leave to take care of an ill child:

"If the child gets ill, my wife will normally take care of him. I don't know, just like that, it's a kind of agreement [laughter]. Really, if taking leave is needed, she's always the first to do it. Perhaps it's some primal maternal care. But it's true that when she cannot do it ... or she can't get the leave, then I take the leave" (a representative of the employees).

Such gendered divisions of work are of course not the rule. It seems that all the respondents included in the research took quite a significant share of caring and family activities, which can also be divided in total contrast to traditional divisions. The case of one of the male employees clearly shows how preferences take the most important part in the division of housework. His wife, for instance, does not cook, as cooking is his pleasure and, as he put it, "I can claim, without any false modesty, that I belong to the best amateur cooks." It is important to add that he was allowed to start cooking when still a teenager. He got support from his parents for whom he quickly started cooking, as he got back from school before them. Such "socialization" surely prompted his description – as regards sharing housework – of the family as a modern family. "This means that there's no task that would be directly related to me or to her. Following some silent agreement she takes more care of the financial part, and I take more care of the housekeeping. But it's not something cemented. Sometimes she prepares something, or I get the car registered, even though in principle she does it. I'm primarily expected to be at home, to take care of the children, to be their role model."

To recapitulate, the respondents put family life in the first place. At the same time they realise that their professional obligations crucially limit the time they can spend with the family. Older respondents even express a degree of regret because, as they see it, they have not devoted enough time to their families. The respondents compensate their absence from family life in various ways. Most frequently, they mention spending quality time together (e.g. on holidays or at weekends), as well as performing everyday tasks and family chores together. The respondents are familiar with the possibility of paternity leave, some of them also used it or took their regular leave instead. They thought that the father's presence just before birth and at birth is important both for the child and for the partner who needs help and psychological support. Some of the respondents added the problem of absence from work. They express uneasiness that their colleagues could be more burdened due to their absence. They pointed out that despite the legal possibility of paternity leave, it is important to establish a professional attitude and inform one's superiors well in advance that one wants such a leave. The conclusion to be drawn from this suggests that paternity leave is not taken for granted. It seems that all the respondents in the survey who live with minors are very involved in the care and upbringing of their children. Caring activities are most frequently shared in accordance with the time available, following flexible adaptation rather than any fixed predetermined agreements or even self-evident expectations. Despite everything, it would be impossible to speak of a total absence of gender ideology or gendered divisions of labour. The latter

becomes explicit especially when both partners, in terms of time available, could perform the same domestic chore or caring activity.

4.5. Existing tools/actions promoting caring masculinities

It was emphasised in the introduction that the respondents, when discussing the balance between work and family obligations, mentioned the specific characteristics of their work. This is primarily linked to their potential twenty-four-hour "standby". They point out that journalism is a way of life, which has considerable influence on family life as well. Because of that, the respondents claim, it is important to "reach an agreement" with the partner, which means that the partner is aware of the respondent's work as a way of life and that this does not cause endless conflicts. In other words, journalism means that you are at work even when you are at home. One of the respondents, for example, was the day's programme editor the day before the interview. This meant that he had to see through the programme from nine o'clock in the morning to seven o'clock in the evening. "There is a possibility to go home a bit earlier, but the programme has to end normally, and if anything happens, you've got to get back. I was "on standby" and continued to listen to the radio until seven o'clock."

All the respondents mentioned the importance of agreements when balancing family and professionally life. Partners have to divide obligations or plan them in advance according to their schedules every day. The very specific characteristics of radio work, however, do not allow for much advance planning, as constant unforeseen events fundamentally characterize journalism.

"I chose this work knowing and accepting that there are five shifts, working Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. You've got to adapt your life to that properly. My family is used to it. ... Agreeing on things will solve everything. We've got no problems, as we've grown used to this kind of communication. Perhaps phones tend to ring more because of that. But in principle we try to arrange things a day in advance so that things flow smoothly" (a representative of the employees).

Based on the interviews carried out at radio Slovenia, we can conclude that there exist three main mechanisms that can be interpreted as instruments allowing a balance between work and family obligations, and with it the inclusion of men into caring activities. The instruments are: home office, flexible working hours, and contemporary means of communication.

4.5.1. Home office

All the respondents, except for one who creates radio programmes in the very place of production (at broadcasting), have already used the possibility of working from home. This possibility is closely related to the flexibility of working time. The respondents could thus finish work earlier due to family obligations, and later continue working at home. For one of the respondents this is a regular practice as the respondent's work on the website contents calls not only for daily but hourly updates. That is why the respondent does some of the work at home, where he can use a hybrid computer.

"If I'm at home and the computer is on, I can do practically the same things I do at work. I may not have the contact with my workmates, I may not do everything as quickly, I need to make an additional phone call, send an e-mail, whatever. But I can do it at home. ... I can tell my editor that the child is ill, I can't go to work, I need to help my wife, because she can't do it on her own. And the editor says, it's ok, no problem" (a representative of the employees).

4.5.2. The flexibility of working time

There are three methods that the respondents talked about which can be related to the flexibility of working time: the individualization of the working process, mutual agreements, and the method of fine tuning.

► The individualization of the working process

The majority of journalists working at Radio Slovenia have no clearly fixed working hours, even though their hours of attendance are recorded. The main working-time philosophy is the obligatory attendance at editorial meetings and the timely production of radio products. Apart from that each worker can structure his/her working time in his/her own way. Such structuring, however, crucially depends on the time of events, interviews, press conferences and so on, as well as on technical demands (e.g. radio programmes can only be edited within the pre-designed time slots). Radio Slovenia has been recently introducing a new possibility of journalists' own editing (various sections have their own special computer work stations that operate as a desktop editing studio), which has furthermore allowed for the individualization of the working process. An individual's own personal organization is decisively related to this. One of the management respondents thinks that a lot of people working at Radio Slovenia can balance their work and family lives on their own, but this demands a high degree of self-organization.

"I think two things can be expected here: the organization where we work has to be well-organized to take into account a human being as a whole, while at the same time each individual has to organize his/her own life. Sometimes you have to be a specialist for combinations. ... I remember a colleague of mine praising someone from a very high position in this house. She said that he was in his office every day until 11 o'clock in the evening. But was that praise or criticism? Someone who can't organize his/her working time and workaholically stays in his/her office from dawn to dusk, I think that such a person cannot do his/her work well" (a management representative).

Another way of enabling a better balance between work and family obligations can be included among the possibilities of the individualization of the working process – this is the worker's own initiative. One of the managers explains: "If you raise a problem worth a journalistic consideration out of your own initiative, you're more likely to finish work sooner than if you wait for other people to send you somewhere and ruin your day."

► Mutual agreements (at the level of co-workers)

The possibility of the individualized working time described above is not feasible for those employees who work at Radio Slovenia's technical production, and for the journalists whose work is linked to live broadcasts from the studio. In these cases, however, the flexibility of working time can be achieved through the change of shifts, which is done through purely informal agreements among co-workers. One of the respondents gives an explanation: "There's no problem if you need to stand in for someone. We're on good terms with one another, there are no fights. ... There's no problem if you've got to find a solution at very short notice. You know your working schedule ten days in advance. So you can find a solution."

► The method of fine tuning

The respondents also mentioned the possibility of arranging flexible working hours through agreements with their superior editors. One of them called such arrangements "the method of fine tuning". In the respondent's words, the editors of different sections listen to their juniors who have family obligations and grant them leave. This is only made possible because of the outsourced staff who can jump in at such moments and do some additional work: "An editor can do this if he/she can balance between his/her own understanding of what his/her section has to contribute to radio programmes and between the awareness of each journalist's personal circumstances."

The respondents frequently mention a "fair" attitude in this relation. Such an attitude excludes the "exploitation" of supposed family commitments to avoid professional obligations and tasks. "If you expect certain family responsibilities within the coming weeks," says one of them, "you can simply explain it to your superior. I think they will listen and understand. Things can be arranged."

A respondent stressed the importance of people's own experiences. The respondent believes that the method of "fine tuning" works better if a particular editor, responsible for it, has his/her own personal experience of family life, which makes it easier for him/her to empathize. "Both my superiors have been in the same position, they are familiar with it, and they are good at assessing family and individual needs."

The method of "fine tuning" is not only important for the balance of family and professional obligations, it also has an important impact on the success of the working process. "Someone with a non-deferrable family obligation or with something causing worries will surely not be likely to do his/her professional work well," says one of the management representatives.

4.5.3. Modern means of communication

One of the new instruments, quite specific to radio work, that allows, especially the editors, an easier balancing of work and family obligations is the internet as a medium that "freezes the time". Radio and Television Slovenia updates its webpage with the prompt uploading of its most important programmes. The editors thus do not have to listen to the radio when programmes are broadcast live; instead, they can listen to particular programmes later on, the next day or even later. Family activities, therefore, no longer need to be interrupted because of listening to radio programmes. One of the respondents who has to listen to the programmes daily (the programmes the respondent is responsible for last ten hours each day) illustrates the organization and rationalization of the process: "Now and then I still tune in to the programme, but I don't want it to affect our family life. ... The internet helps me a lot. I listen to important programmes when I've got the time for it." The respondent argues that it is not possible to walk around with an earphone and live family life only in part: "When it's time for family life, I want to give myself to it a hundred per cent," says one of the management representatives.

When none of the aforementioned methods proves possible to realise, the respondents seek other ways by looking for help within their immediate families. Grandparents function as social support networks that regularly "fill in" the time when parents are absent because of their professional obligations.

Going over the main points again, we can conclude that the respondents try to balance their family and professional obligations using three informal mechanisms: working from home, flexible working hours, and the use of modern communication technology. Flexible working hours are the most elastic "method" which includes a series of instruments: the individualization of the working process (the organization of one's own working time, modern technical equipment (individual editing of radio programmes), own initiative), mutual agreements and the method of fine tuning (agreements with editors).

Radio Slovenia does not deal with the issue of the balancing of family and professional obligations at the institutional level, the balance is strived for at the middle level. Therefore, there are no systematic solutions, these are achieved at informal levels, but the respondents do not see this as problematic. They balance family and professional obligations through the agreements with their colleagues and arrangements with their superiors.

4.6. Suggested new tools/action work to promote caring masculinities

The respondents did not mention any new mechanisms that could enable a better balance between professional and family obligations and promote caring masculinities. The most frequently mentioned issue was the problem of a kindergarten which would be run within Radio Slovenia. One of the respondents thought that an institution like Radio Slovenia – operating twenty-four hours a day – calls for a kindergarten open from 6 am to 10 pm. The respondent recalls more examples with both partners working at Radio Slovenia. The main disadvantage of such a kindergarten that the respondents mentioned was the socialization of children. They thought that children would first "grow up" in Ljubljana, and later on they would have to go to primary schools outside Ljubljana, which would be tough for them and might have negative effects.

"Kindergartens have good and bad points. It can be a bridge when you've got things to do that you really can't postpone and you can put children somewhere safe where people will look after them. But it can also mean a certain segregation of the children whose parents work in the same institution. You tear the children away from the environment where they live" (a management representative).

Such a possibility used to exist at Radio Slovenia years ago. It was intended for the time when workers had obligations at work, but they did not have any childminding facilities available. There is another possibility that the respondents did not explicitly mention. The institution could organize a service that would bring children from kindergarten/school to Radio Slovenia where children could wait in a special place (the radio kindergarten) for their parents to finish work.

Financial assistance was also brought forth. Since childminding possibilities already exist, the employer could make such facilities affordable by providing financial assistance.

One of the respondents suggested promoting caring masculinities by providing fathers with a few additional free days each year that they could spend with their children.

4.7. Strategic plans within the company on gender issues

Radio Slovenia has no strategic plans on the balancing of family and professional obligations of its employees. It only acknowledges the legislative rights of its workers.

5. Private company: Pop TV

5.1. Short presentation of the company

Pro Plus Ltd. is a private company doing business in television management, Slovene television programmes production, and selling television advertising space. The main activity of the company is the production of the television programmes of two channels – POP TV and Kanal A [Channel A]. Pro Plus is a company of a mixed ownership structure, being owned by Slovene and foreign owners (CME – Central European Media Enterprises Ltd.). The commercial television programme POP TV was launched in 1995, and today the company makes two television channels, POP TV and Kanal A. In addition to the two commercial television channels, Pro Plus runs the internet daily newspaper 24ur.com.

The management of POP TV consists of 13 members, 10 of them are men and 3 are women; there are 150 permanent employees, and 284 members of outsourced staff. Of the 150 permanent full-time employees, there are 66 men and 82 women. There are 2 women working part-time, and 5 women working under a temporary contract. Of the 284 outsourced staff, there are 157 men and 127 women.

In top managements there are 10 men and 3 women, in middle managements there are 22 men and 10 women. In low managements there are 191 men and 198 women. The working week lasts 40 hours and on average both the management workers and the employees in the company work a 40-hour working week.

The average length of employment at POP TV is 7 years and 1 month.

The organization does not cooperate with other companies/organizations when making decisions. POP TV focuses on equal pay between male and female employees. However, the company does not provide or encourage the possibilities of balancing professional and family life, except for the acknowledgement of the legislative rights of its workers.

The employees have the right to sick leave if a member of their family falls ill. The employees have a further right to unpaid leave. If an employee decided to work part-time for a period of time, the company would employ a new worker to do the remaining work. It has to be added, however, that this is only viable for certain working positions, i.e. for the lowest levels of management.

The employees have the possibility of working from home, but as the interviews show, this possibility is only feasible for particular kinds of work, while for other kinds (e.g. journalism, production) this turns out to be utterly impossible. The employees working at

POP TV do not have the possibility of working flexible working hours, neither do they have the possibility of working a compressed week.

The company does not offer its employees a kindergarten or any other kind of support in taking care of their children. The company permits breastfeeding leave, which is a legal right granted to women only. The company does not have any measures or mechanisms to encourage male employees to take paternity leave, and it does not offer any other tools that could help the employees balance their professional and private life.

5.2. The interviews

Six interviews were carried out at POP TV, among the respondents there were three full-time male employees who are also fathers. They live in classical nuclear families with partners and children most of whom are younger than 13 years and they attend kindergartens or primary schools.

The other three interviews were done with three managers, two were full-time male employees and one was a full-time female employee; they also live in classical nuclear families with partners and underage children from their present and/or previous relationships. One of the men and the woman are in top management, the other man works in middle management.

All the interviewed respondents are between 33 and 40 years old; they work full-time, and they also do regular overtime work – an average of 5 hours a week or more. Four respondents are married, two cohabit with their partners; all the six respondents live together with partners and children from their present relationships, one of them lives together with a child from his present relationship and children from his partner's previous relationship.

Four respondents have finished secondary education, one has finished higher education, and one has got a master's degree. The six respondents have worked at POP TV from 5.5 to 9 years.

The interviews at POP TV were carried out in two days: on 22 March 2006 the representatives of the employees were interviewed, and on 24 March 2006 the management representatives were interviewed. On average, an interview took between 50 and 60 minutes. The respondents filled in Questionnaire B before the interview. We received the completed Questionnaire A one week before the interviews, i.e. on 15 March 2006.

5.3. Professional life (satisfaction with work, relationships and the company)

The respondents at POP TV value professional life highly and express overall satisfaction with work. The respondents make a clear distinction between them as a private company and others who work for public institutions, which are in their own perception seen as the remnants of socialism. The commercial orientation of the private company is chiefly reflected in the very pronounced individualism and liberal logic that places the individual as a rational, independent subject, responsible for his/her own decisions and choices

between professional and family life. The factors with an important impact on job promotion are flexibility, responsiveness within a given situation, and well-done work.

5.3.1. Satisfaction with work

POP TV is a private commercial television station making part of Pro Plus company. The production of television programmes and selling television advertising space as POP TV's main activities call for an explicitly profit-based orientation of the company, which is manifested in the entire mentality of the organization culture and management politics. The definition of what a private company stands for is given by a manager, who explains "that it's a classical, surely productivity-oriented, commercial company, and we actually live from what we produce ... our work is characterized by doing whatever we do with the aim of making profit."

The relationship of I vs. the others – i.e. the perception of POP TV as a private company on the one side and state, public institutions on the other side – is very prominent. Public institutions are seen as the remnants of the former regime, where payments are lower and where people work only to meet the minimum standards. Another obvious difference, noted by the respondents, between private and public companies lies in the need to record hours of attendance at work in the latter.

"Either you work for a financially successful firm, where the capital is a very strong drive and you'll try to pursue a career there or you are employed in an economically less intensive industry, having more free time but less economic strength" (a management representative).

The respondents perceive their autonomy and freedom of choice within their informal agreements with the superiors that allow them flexible working hours. The respondents see the comparison and choice between private and public companies as a matter of personal decision and preference.

"Either you've got a public-company job with a lower salary where you can get home at three in the afternoon, not caring how much you do, or you take a harder way where you need to invest a bit more, sometimes come back in the evening or at other times, but then you're paid better money" (a management representative).

One of the comparisons between private and public companies encompasses the field in which a company operates and which has consequences for the working time. Public companies have fixed working time, for instance from 8 am to 4 pm, while private companies have flexible working hours.

"We're not manufacturing industry. If you work at Rog [a factory producing bicycles], the manufacture can stop at 4 o'clock, and that's something completely different" (a management representative).

The professional lives are of exceptional importance for the POP TV respondents. Even though they express satisfaction with their family lives and value the family highly, they put their work life in the first place. As a management representative says: "As far as I am concerned, I can say that my job prevails, that my job comes first and I try to balance that with my private life ... If it comes to an either-or situation and I've got to decide, I'll decide for my work."

Accordingly, the answers on the satisfaction with work or working posts are generally very positive, which the respondents explain by the issue of employment changeability. Namely, the respondents are satisfied with their work, otherwise, as they put it, they would have already changed it. Besides, there arises a strongly emphasised parallel between the personality and the job, as one of the employees says: "Yes, I'm completely satisfied with it, as it's just like me ... For somebody like me, being dynamic and restless, this is an excellent work to do." In addition to the dynamism, the satisfaction with work is also related to the autonomy and creativity that one of the management representatives points out: "The possibility to be creative, ... to fully develop your skills – that's very important to me. And it fulfils my life, that's why my work satisfies me". The respondents are aware of the demands and stress, but they see them as integral parts of the job they do, and which are compensated by the fact that their work is well-paid. The salary is part of the mutual relationship between the employees and the company; the answers to the question of what the company expects from its employees can be summarized by the thought of a management representative who says: "certain devotion, professionalism and in return good payment".

Efforts and stress at work are understood as something that is a matter of personal preference, a matter of each individual's choice of work. One of the management representatives explains that "it's a job that can be highly stressful at certain moments, but I chose it myself. ... I know well in advance what awaits me when we start various projects, so I really can't complain". Only one of the respondents, one of the employees, emphasized the negative aspect of the work, saying "my phone can be ringing the whole day whether I'm at work or not, whether it's weekend or not", but "it doesn't trouble me to the degree when I could say it gets on my nerves".

5.3.2. Relationships and the company

The respondents perceive the work relationships between the superiors and juniors as good, respectable, and healthily competitive, which is understood as pertaining to the politics of a capital-oriented company. This is demanded by liberal mentality that one of the management representatives somehow excuses by comparing it to other private companies.

"Our work concentrates on making profit from whatever we do. The mentality logically follows this. ... Well, it's in no way different from other, productivity-oriented companies in the world. If people of the same kind are gathered here, appropriate relationships will develop. On the one hand, we're close to one another, because we've got the same goal, but on the other hand, this brings competitiveness, which is healthy for the company but it's not necessarily healthy for the individual. ... But I claim that only those people join the company who take this as part of their job, as part of culture, of the way of life" (a management representative).

Capital-oriented companies are based on a specific company culture, which brings about competitive relationships between employees. Work, relationships, and organization culture are also perceived as a way of life which is furthermore understood as a matter of each individual's free choice. Together with liberal mentality, profit-oriented companies operate along rules, order, and strictly defined roles of employees that give the workers a sense of belonging to the company, but not irreplacability, as the following statements reveal.

"It's namely true that the company is capital-oriented, requiring maximum profits, but everything within the company is very precisely spelt out, the role of each employee as well as the final aim of the whole company. That is to say, each part, each little stone, every single person in the company is an important part of the whole, and the company lets each employee know this" (a representative of the employees).

At the same time, explicit individualism and neoliberal mentality can be gathered from the interviews, which show in the realisation of the respondents that each individual is responsible for his/her own decisions while being fully replaceable when the company sees no more use in him/her. There exists an obvious one-way relationship between the employee and the company, in which an individual is useful to the company in return for payment. In short, there is no recognition of a mutual relationship between the individual and the company in which the individual would be as important to the company just as the company is important to the individual. This is particularly evident in the question of what the company expects from its employees.

"Well, as long as the company feels I can give it something more, that is contribute to higher numbers, to a more successful company, I will be more interesting for the company than someone new they could take on. When things change, that is when I'm not as good anymore, the company won't be merciful, rather it will thank me for my contribution and I'll have to accept it. Everybody in the company knows it. As long as things go in that direction, as long as they require the people they need, it's ok, otherwise it's "Thank you and goodbye". Unfortunately, that's how it is. At least I see it that way" (a representative of the employees).

A management representative supports this by highlighting that "the brand comes first, that is the interests of the company come before its people", and the respondent confirms the aim of the company when asked about the expectations of the company: "to bring in good financial results". As this is a private commercial television station, high ratings are crucial, which is emphasised by one of the management representatives when describing the company as "expecting high ratings, it's a crude matter of fact".

The issue of management judgement also presents us with very homogenous and conformist answers. Especially the employees who do not have much close contact with the management typically assess the management from the perspective of an outside observer. They gauge the management's successes through end results, i.e. the profits made, and through comparisons with other companies.

"I can't say anything very specific, as we don't have a lot of contact. But I can tell you from the aspect that the company has been doing good work for ten years now; because its status is quite good in Slovenia, it's obviously been functioning well" (a representative of the employees).

The replies are very similar and the respondents' judgement of their management judgement is positive. Neither from the side of the employees nor from the managers can we discern any critical attitudes towards the management of the company. This might spring from the fact that POP TV is a private commercial television station within the Pro Plus company. The only aspect of the management assessment is making profit.

"Essentially, it is the management that has to take care of the company's success. If it wasn't good in pursuing this goal, it would probably be very quickly replaced. And if the management wasn't the way it is, that is if it wasn't able to explain the goal to the employees well enough, then the goal wouldn't exist at all" (a representative of the employees).

Among the managers the answers are equally highly consistent, like "I believe our management does a good job, ... I think they're very capable managers". Only one management representative pointed out the neoliberal position of the company's management, when describing the management as "demanding toward the individual. The brand comes first, people come second."

The question of promotion also reveals a very strong perception of individual investment that can be seen mainly at three levels: well-done work, flexibility and responsiveness within a given situation, and relationships with others. Well-done work is emphasized by one of the respondents among the employees who says "I think it's mostly your own initiatives; if you see there's something to be done, you do it." Promotion also depends on the individual's own career wishes, which came forth in the interviews as well. A career path can namely present obstacles to the balance between professional and family life, and it can bring additional work obligations.

"As soon as I wanted to get one rung higher, that is one management level higher, well that would be harder. ... I'm not one of those who want to climb terribly high, as I think that my family would suffer then. I've got children in the ages when they need my attention" (a management representative).

A management representative also pointed to good work as one of the factors of promotion, when saying "If you prove you're good, there are always possibilities of promotion, at least this has been our experience so far. I think the company takes good care to motivate its employees". Answering the question of how the company motivates its employees, the management representative underlines professional training as well as financial stimulation and free days: "there are certain sugar cubes that the company offers, from training to an extra free day."

Experiences, responsiveness and flexibility of the individual within a given working situation are more important than the formal level of education achieved when it comes to promotion.

"We need people with knowledge and not necessarily with formal education, we need people with knowledge, with experiences, but they have to be flexible and respond quickly to problems and solve them fast. Our company makes television products that change very quickly, that's our advantage. We make "fast-food products", not in the sense of actual food, and this demands people who grasp new circumstances quickly and know how to respond in a moment, both mentally and with actual output" (a management representative).

5.4. Family/private life

The respondents at POP TV emphasize their families as an important value, but within the context of balancing family and professional obligations they rank the family as inferior to work. Housework, despite its sharing between the partners, remains asymmetrical in terms of gender. Men enter the area of housework and family obligations predominantly through their playing with children.

5.4.1. The family and the understanding of care

The respondents from POP TV live with partners, four of them are married, and two of them cohabit with their partners. They live together with children from their present and previous relationships, some of the children attend kindergartens, some primary schools,

all of them are underage. The respondents emphasise the family as a very important value. One of the employees says: "Family life means an awful lot to me, it fulfils me. It means a lot to me and I find it very good." Very clear satisfaction is shown by one of the management representatives who makes a distinction between the immediate and the extended family: "We've got this basic family unit, that's the tree of us as a family", whereas the extended family consists of grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

The respondents at POP TV have no weighty caring responsibilities other than those related to their partners and children. They understand care as relationship and as organization, a service that one person offers to another, but in particular they understand care in relationship to children. An employee defines care as relationship when saying: "I don't see caring as merely taking enough care for the child to survive. I mean, you pick the child from kindergarten, have him/her around, feed and clean him/her. That's no caring. Caring means teaching the child a lot, because children absorb knowledge."

A management respondent understands caring in terms of organization when explaining: "To me care means having my son get up in time, having him dresses, taking him to school on time. I take care that he isn't late for his activities, at home I take care that he's ok, that he isn't hungry or thirsty. We try to fulfil his wishes, wishes to play, wishes to be with me".

A broader definition of care can be discerned as a relationship to children and the elderly with a particular emphasis on the active role of the person who takes care, in this case the father.

"You've got to be especially active in the upbringing of children as well as in the care of others. Even if you look after an elder person. For example, if you need to get something from a shop, caring doesn't mean bringing bread, putting it on the table and saying "Bye". That's really nothing. I put caring on a more spiritual rather than materialistic level. I find the relationship more important than anything else" (a representative of the employees).

In capitalist, liberal mentality, care is linked to the private sphere, to family life, and is as such a matter of each individual rather than the broader society. In the interviews, the respondents relate caring as work and as relationship with family and family life, which can be seen from the following thoughts of one of the management representatives who stresses the mutuality of the relationship: "I perceive of caring as taken for granted, as part of life in relation to the family unit, that is to the child and the partner as the basic task, as the purpose. To the parents and to my brother. ... If you've got a good relationship with your family and if your parents took care all their lives, I think it's logical you give something in return. As a mutual relationship, as gratefulness for their past work ...".

The respondents see the caring role of the man as the father in support and understanding and mostly in security that primarily includes financial security. In addition to reliability, caring in both the material and emotional aspects is an important part of the family's expectations, as one of the employees says: "certain reliability and caring, and as someone you can count on in any situation". The male respondents' perception of caring that is especially strong is the financial support of the family with the father as the primary breadwinner (the so-called breadwinner model). An employee

points out active participation in family life, which signifies doing housework and actively participating in the caring and upbringing of children. Nevertheless, the respondent at the same time emphasizes the role of the man as the breadwinner.

"The family surely expects me to take part in the education of children, to actively take part in housekeeping, to occasionally suggest something new, to make up something innovative – whether it's a game or some other activities, to be active and suggest a trip, not to be merely passive, nodding, "Yes, ok, let's go there". To be careful about my work as this means a financial income that is quite important for family life. Without it, however you look at it, it wouldn't do. We can philosophize about certain ideals, but the reality is different" (a representative of the employees).

5.4.2. (Not) Sharing housework and social networks

The respondents emphasized equal distribution of housework, which turns out to be a very modern notion but which is often not part of the respondents' everyday lives. This also proved to be the case with the interviewees at POP TV, where we could hear "we're a very modern family" (a representative of the employees) and "we don't have any patriarchal relationships, we all take care of one another and of ourselves. Somehow, everyone for everyone else" (a representative of the employees). However, there still persists a gendered division of housework, i.e. women more frequently do the majority of routine housework, such as cooking and cleaning, whereas men tend to do work that is not time-determined, such as small repairs and paying the bills. The interviews also brought up an obvious division of housework to male and female work, or in other words, what men can and what women cannot do.

"With us ... ok, let's say there are still male tasks; a woman, for example, can't climb onto the roof and repair a brick there or something like that. As far as things like washing or cooking go, there's no problem. I'm that kind of guy. Ironing a shirt, for instance, well ok, I don't do that now that I'm married, but I used to iron shirts before I was married. I'm good at all the housework, so essentially as far as this is concerned I'm very balanced" (a representative of the employees).

Men participate in family life especially through the upbringing and care of children, less often through domestic tasks, in particular the housework. Involving themselves in housework is mostly perceived by men in terms of help to their partners.

"I see to the financial part, I look after the child in the morning, but we share tasks in the afternoon as well; my wife and I both do the chores. My wife irons, cleans, I don't do this, but because of that I help her more with the child in order to take some of the burden off her shoulders in that way. As the shopping goes, we share it, too, as much as time allows it; whoever has the possibility, does it" (a management representative).

A management representative points out explicit, traditionally male chores which are not routine in the sense that they would have to be done every day or that they would be strictly determined by time: "I also do the cooking, but that's mostly done by my wife. ... As for small repairs in the house, that's for me to do, things to do around the house, things around the cars, their cleaning and maintenance. Besides, I take care of the family's financial management, I pay the bills online ..."

Despite the fact that both partners take care of children, there is a difference between the genders. Caring, particularly emotional support and the "less pleasant tasks", such as looking after an ill child, are predominantly performed by women. This can also be seen

from the number of days that the respondents and their partners used for a leave to take care of an ill child. Men participate in family life especially through their care of children, i.e. through playing with them.

"In our family, we both do everything, although it's true that my wife spends more time with children, because they want to spend more time with her, and daddy is good for some other things. For instance, cuddling and hugging are things to do with mummy, and going to bed too, and we're now in the period when the youngest son, who's three, only wants his mummy to dress him and belt him up in the car. But, however, mummy isn't very good at putting together a toy railway" (a representative of the employees).

On this point we notice a decidedly dualistic division: men are more technical, while women are more emotional, which is clarified by one of the respondents from the group of the employees as being linked to the child's wishes. "Well, I think we follow, sometimes even too much, the child's wishes."

Informal networks are an important support in domestic tasks, both in housework and caring activities, especially childminding. These networks are mostly formed by grandparents, i.e. the respondents' and their partners' parents.

"In relation to the child and in relation to us, if there's any need for help with housework or childcare or making dinner. Most of the time we've got sweet worries, having to decide whose parents we turn to. ... Uncles and aunts help too, so we've got it all very nicely arranged, I find it ideal in a way" (a management representative).

Grandparents are an important informal support for the balancing of professional and private lives of the respondents and their partners. The employees at POP TV enjoy the help of their parents and, as a management representative says, "we get quite some help from my mother-in-law and my mother. That's help that means a lot".

5.4.3. Balancing work and family life

Time pressure at work and also in the wider labour market mixes with the fear of losing the job, which is probably more significant in private companies but it is also dependent on the kind of work and workplace. Time pressure affects both men and women, but the question that arises at this point is how men and women face this pressure and at the same time avoid the traditional, gendered division of housework. Time pressure can namely lead the partners to fall back on the well-established patterns of the gendered division of labour, while the same pressures can also play an important role in the easing of the classical patterns of the housework sharing between the partners. Time pressure thus has the effect of a double-edged sword: on the one side it can soften the traditional patterns of the gendered division of housework with partners coming to an arrangement to share housework according to the time available, but on the other side time pressure can enforce the established patterns of gendered functioning.

The increasing time pressure at work has an impact on both men and women when they try to strike a balance between work and family life, but there are other important elements to this: the workplace, the kind of work, and working environment. Some workers will thus take no lunch break in order to be able to get home to their families earlier.

"I work intensively at work, there are no lunch breaks and suchlike, because I try to finish early enough to be at home at 5.30, so I can be ready at six to spend time with the child (a management representative).

Time pressure is a harsh reality at POP TV and the respondents deal with it with the help of technology (cars, mobile phones), social networks (grandparents), and paid domestic help. Balancing professional and family life is an issue first and foremost in relation to children and their activities, which mostly signifies servicing children (taking them to afternoon free-time activities).

"We've got two kids, we need to agree on who's going to take who when, say, to extracurricular activities or check their homework. So, without two cars and two mobiles this wouldn't even be possible to carry out, and of course without her parents, and occasionally mine" (a representative of the employees).

Life, at the same time, is handled like a carefully planned project, conditioned by the work that the respondents do.

"My way of functioning is always to have everything arranged in time. I've always got Plan B and Plan C ready for each situation. If anything goes wrong, we're immediately on Plan B. We just never waste time. So, things are always planned in advance ..." (a representative of the employees).

The managers at POP TV see capitalism as the basic departure point of human actions, and an important segment that the managers as well as the employees point to is that balancing work and family life can also be achieved with the buying of time. Time can be bought, for instance, with paid domestic help.

"You can buy time with financial sources and spend it with the family. I've got a cleaner so I don't have to do the cleaning. I've got an accountant firm to deal with that, so I don't have to do the paperwork when I'd rather be with my child, and I can sleep to have the energy for my child, and also for my job, for my life" (a management representative).

Time pressure, as has already been pointed out, can be understood as the preservation of traditional, binary divisions (e.g. man-woman, public-private), which also came to the fore in the interviews, especially on the point career-family, but this also depends on the position at work, the possibilities for promotion and the wish to build a career. As the interviews reveal, the balancing of work and family life is a matter of agreement between the partners.

"Somehow my wife and I decided, I mean, I've got better possibilities here, perhaps I'm more ambitious than her. So it's been agreed I'm the first choice for a career and she' the first choice, perhaps, for the family. This doesn't mean I hold her back, but if we've got the same possibilities, it's her who would opt for the family. And if there really are no other options, then I'll do it, no problem, but she is the first choice as far as the family is concerned. There is 1 in 10 chances that I'd go from work earlier because of the child" (a management representative).

The answers, both the managers' and the employees', also reflect the perception that as an individual you have to decide either for private or for public life. The incompatibility of both spheres is primarily related to economical sources, i.e. the income that turns out to be an important factor in the individual's decision.

"If you've decided you're going to invest in your private life most of all, it will definitely show at the economic level. It's quite impossible to have both levels at the top height ..." (a representative of the employees).

5.5. The existing tools to promote balancing work and family life

The respondents at POP TV indicate the following ways to balance professional and family life: paternity leave and paid leave, which are legal rights of the employees, flexible working hours and informal agreements at departmental levels.

POP TV as a private company strives for maximum profits, and it is only expected that liberal mentality and the view of the role of the individual and his/her relationship to the company should follow the logic. This is most evident in the answers that stress the view that the balance between family and work life depends on the individual's personal choices. Such a person is understood as an individual, independent, and rational entity who knows his/her work and is aware of what is expected from him/her.

"You can't say the company is obliged to take care of that [balance between family and work life] ... You've got to accept certain rules in order to be able to work at Pro Plus, the rules are what they are. If you've decided to work at Pro Plus, you simply accept this" (a representative of the employees).

"People who join our company know it and considering the specifics ... a journalist can't expect to be understood if he/she doesn't prepare a report at 7 in the evening if that's the time when the Parliament happens to be sitting. ... I think everyone is aware of that, even before they send an application letter" (a management representative).

On the issue of the balance between private and professional life, differences occur in regard to gender as well as the position at work (management, employees). The standpoint that undeniably prevails, however, argues that the balance is not for the company to take care of, because the company's aim is making profit, which is – according to the respondents – incompatible with family life.

"There is little room here to think differently or to tolerate stuff with different aims or goals. The balance is, of course, in the company's plans, but only to show a balanced image on the outside and so on" (a management representative).

There are differences between top management that strives for goals achievement and maximum profits, and the balance between work and family life at the middle level, at the level of departments and sections. Additionally, the managers' own experiences of family life is important, as well as the dimension of gender.

A respondent thinks that there is a difference between men's and women's perception of the family. A man's absence from work due to family obligations is understood as a sign of his loyalty to the family, he is seen as sensitive and understanding. A woman's absence for the same reasons, the respondents says, gets the response in the sense of "Oh, again?"

"To exaggerate: if a man's got a family photo on his desk that's seen as his loyalty to the family, as something lovely. If a woman's got it, that's a sign of her weakness. I'm really exaggerating here, but basically that's it ... the very experience of a manager in their private life. Now then, if we're dealing with a person who's isolated from their family life or if they have no children, when

discussing family life, then it surely follows they have no sympathy for it, a child and the related experiences being something that's very difficult to describe to someone without the experiences" (a management representative).

Work, nevertheless, can also serve as an excuse, in the words of one of the employees, when balancing family and private life, and using paternity leave. A representative of the employees says "it mostly depends on what a man is like – whether he really cares or he only talks about it at work as if he cared, but he actually doesn't. And then you can also nicely take paternity leave to go skiing for two weeks, if you're like that".

Balancing professional and family life is furthermore understood as a matter of individual choice and decision. The role of the company, as has already been said, is primarily to make it possible for the individual to balance private and public obligations, which is seen as an individual choice of each man.

"I wouldn't say "encourage" but rather "make possible". I don't know how Pro Plus could encourage carrying out family obligations, it can only help to make that possible. It's nice for a firm to support campaigns like that, but it primarily has to make things possible. I don't know if your technical director can say "Go, spend time with your child". Well, ok, I'll do it if I feel like it, but if not I won't" (a representative of the employees).

Out of all of our respondents, only one management representative considers that there is more the company could do to facilitate the balance between professional and family life of its employees. It turns out that working time extending long into the afternoon/evening is a major problem, as this time is taken at the expense of spending time with the family. The respondent explains that "it's a problem because working hours are relatively long, it's a problem in regard to spending time with the family after work. If I get home at 5.30 or 6 pm, my seconds to spend with other family members are few. But on the other side, we do go to work a bit later and working time is a bit more flexible. But that's also not really quality time."

The awareness that the company is productivity-oriented is ever present. This implies that the company does respect its employees' rights if they point them out, but it does not have a broad strategy to help balancing work and family life.

"I think such awareness lacks and will continue to for some time. To think, in the long term, it would be great for a mother to be on maternity leave or spend 14 days with an ill child, as otherwise she will be tired at work anyway and she won't be productive at all. I think this is rubbish. You want a person here and push them to the limit whatever the costs. ... I can speak about the theory here and how it is really in practice" (a management representative).

This is the point where another question arises: is the company the right institution to care of the balance between professional and family life, especially if the company is private and based on maximizing its profits? This is pointed out by a management representative when saying "it's not hygienic to expect it from a commercial company. ... If the state ... in general did more in the direction of gender differences ...so the mentality in the society would gradually change and with it the position of the woman." Another question may also be pertinent at the same time: does this not merely mean placing the responsibility from one actor to another, i.e. the responsibility of the company to the responsibility of the state?

5.5.1. Paternity leave, parental leave, paid leave – employees' legal rights

Paternity leave was used by two interviewed men as their children were born in the time when the act regulating paternity leave had already been enforced. The respondents got the information on paternity leave from the media, the company did not publicize this legal possibility.

"They didn't inform me at work: "Now you can take paternity leave." I'd seen in the media that the possibility existed and so I decided to take a few days of paternity leave" (a representative of the employees).

Paternity leave, particularly its first 15 paid days, as can be gathered from the respondents' answers, is nowadays taken for granted. The aspect of its being taken for granted and the wide approval of the first 15 days change when it comes to the rest 75 days of unpaid paternity leave. This is when career building and the possibilities of promotion become the priority, which can also be seen from the young staff at POP TV that are still fighting for their places in their professional careers.

"Even though it would be fine and great and I support it, I wouldn't choose to take a leave for a longer period. I think I can offer more somewhere else and that I can make up for it, even if I'm not intensively with the child those three months" (a management representative).

Paternity leave undoubtedly encourages and has a positive effect on fostering caring masculinities, which is also confirmed by a management representative, when evaluating paternity leave: "Emotionally, it's absolutely welcome and I support it and I've got good experience with it ... It's great if you are with your partner and the child to offer this support at least in the first two weeks".

It has to be stressed that we are talking about the first 15 paid days of paternity leave. In addition to that, there is also unpaid paternity leave and parental leave to take care of a child lasting 260 days that can be divided between the partners. But it is largely women who use the parental leave with a small fragment of men using it (in 2005, 9.1 % of men took the leave). One of the reasons for this is definitely the position at the workplace, the career, and the predominance of professional life and colleagues that informally control the individual's decisions.

"If I said I needed one day of parental leave, I'd probably get it, of course, but in the end ... If you work four or five days a week, there's probably a difference, isn't there? They'll put up with you for two or three months, but why should someone work four days and someone else five days a week. It can be sustained for some time, but then others will reject you" (a representative of the employees).

5.5.2. Flexible working hours

In addition to paternity leave, flexible working hours are another mechanism for balancing professional and family life. The respondents at POP TV see flexible working hours as a possibility to run on some errands within working time if their work allows it, or to come to work later, having arranged it with their superior.

"Flexible working hours ... if I've got to do certain things in the morning, if I've got to go somewhere, I go and do it, so I won't be at work at 8 o'clock but at 10 o'clock, and no-one will complain ... Well, we haven't got any cards to record our hours of attendance at work (a representative of the employees).

"I've got quite free hands. If I need to, the company's flexible enough to let me run somewhere if the work allows it. The company will not prevent it, they will understand it because I'm also fair with the overtime, so they won't check on my half-an-hour or two-hour absence" (a management representative).

What possibilities does the company offer for the balance between work and family life? One of the management representatives' answers to this question is flexible working hours "because this gives support", but at the same time the respondent stresses that "on the other hand, the management is somehow obliged to be available to the company at any moment". Balancing family and professional life is inferior to work, because – as mentioned before by a management representative – "if it comes to an either-or situation and I've got to decide, I'll decide for my work."

5.5.3. Agreements at departmental levels

The respondents, especially the representatives of the employees, see the role of the company at balancing professional and family/private life chiefly in the company's not putting any obstacles to it. A frequent answer to the question of how the company takes care of the balance between work and family life concerns co-workers coming to an agreement within their own departments/sections. A management representative believes that the company does take care of the balance between the demands of private and professional life: "I've got this agreement demanding that work has to be done, without any excuses; but if it is possible to go home earlier now and then, for instance at 3 pm, they won't make it difficult for me."

Balancing work and family/private life at POP TV is addressed at middle level, i.e. at the operational level, on the basis of informal agreements and arrangements between colleagues and with superiors.

"I've got enough room for manoeuvre to organize things. It has never happened that someone would prevent me from getting a child from somewhere saying "You've got a meeting now and it won't be postponed only because you've got to get the kid". That doesn't happen" (a representative of the employees).

Co-ordination, then, is achieved at a personal, informal level, as there is no systematic plan to balance private and professional life in the company. The respondents perceive the role of the company mostly in its allowing the employees to achieve the balance between family and work life themselves. The respondents' answers also reveal that the employees are only aware of the possibilities for the balancing at departmental levels, in the form of informal agreements.

"In my department it can definitely be done. I mean, if I express the wish to meet some obligation with the child the next day, which is part of family life, or take my wife to the doctor's or wherever, it can all be arranged" (a representative of the employees).

5.6. Suggested new tools to promote a good balance between work and family life

The following suggestions and ideas were provided by the management representatives only. The employees had no such suggestions.

5.6.1. Kindergarten

The respondents have underage children who attend either kindergartens or primary schools. The biggest problem of balancing professional and private life is therefore childcare in the time after kindergartens close. Consequently, the respondents most frequently pointed out kindergartens and childcare that can be a problem for parents with atypical working hours.

"It's hard for me to strike a balance and get the child because the kindergarten closes at 4 or 4.30 pm. I'd like to do that, though, or get the child earlier and put him somewhere else or closer into some kind of childminding facility within the company" (a management representative).

It became evident that the respondents had already been thinking about a kindergarten within the company. A kindergarten for children between the ages of two and six years, as the respondents pointed out, would function as afternoon childminding for the time after regular kindergartens close. This would ease the problem that parents face on a daily basis, i.e. who is going to get the child from kindergarten.

Such a company kindergarten, however, also has a negative side to it, as a management representative points out, which lies in the extension of working hours and an even increased dominance of work over family life.

"It's a question of how much that really makes things easier, it may enslave you even more. ... It's a question now, whether it's good or bad if you're forced to go home earlier; it brings pluses in other respects" (a management representative).

5.6.2. Awareness: counselling, a webpage

The awareness of the employees of their own rights is an important element that can encourage the balance between professional and family obligations. A management representative mentions a counselling service that would offer employees legal help and information on their rights when balancing work and family life. Information on paternity leave, for instance. It namely became clear that the respondents did not know exactly what paternity leave is and what it allows employed fathers.

"It could be on a webpage or available in some sort of a counselling service where you could get advice on how to deal with it all when you're planning your family. This is not the case now (a management representative).

5.7. Strategic plans within the company on gender issues

Except for the acknowledgement of the legislative rights of its workers, POP TV has no strategic plans on the balancing of family and professional obligations of its employees.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Good practices

Both at POP TV and Radio Slovenia, balancing professional and family life is approached within the context of middle management, at the informal level, and is not dealt with systematically at the level of the company/institution. Based on the interviews conducted in the two analyzed companies, the following practices of balancing work and family obligations can be pointed out:

► Outsourced staff

A strategy of balancing the needs of employees used by middle management is the replacement of absent workers with outsourced staff. The strategy has its limits, because such replacements are not possible at all levels of the working process. Replacements of this kind are also not formalized and are not systematically regulated; rather, they are always a matter of arrangements between the superiors and the person who needs replacement. This is called the method of fine tuning, and it demands from the management the maintenance of a sensible equilibrium between the requirements of the company (e.g. television, radio programmes) and the needs of the employees. The employees frequently emphasised that such replacements are welcome and made possible because of good and fair-minded relationships with the superiors as well as the sympathy of the superiors with the individual's private life. The respondents find that their superiors tend to be more sensitive to such balancing if they have their own personal experiences of family life.

A negative side of this strategy is the lack of replacements in the opposite direction. The family and similar obligations of outsourced staff are namely taken into account to a lesser extent. It has to be added, however, that outsourced staff are likely to be younger and, as a rule, without family obligations. The use of outsourced staff furthermore involves certain expenses which additionally restrict the possibilities to use this strategy. In the words of a manager: "The elasticity of the balance and easier life of our regular employees is in the funds allocated for outsourced staff, and the funds are not unlimited".

► Informal mechanisms

An additional strategy, closely related to the aforementioned employment of outsourced staff, is the informal mechanism of balancing work obligations among the employees both in the horizontal and vertical directions. In practice, this means changing shifts or replacements during individual working obligations (e.g. attending press conferences). The respondents stressed that such mechanisms of shift-changing and reciprocal help can only function if mutual agreements are adhered to. This leads to the employees practicing certain self-restraint, as it was clearly expressed that "too frequent" use of such agreements because of family obligations is not acceptable. Self-restraint is closely linked to the formal mechanism of seeking a balance between professional and family obligations, which the interviews illustrate in the case of paternity leave.

► Formal mechanisms

In Slovenia, the following formal mechanisms of balancing work and family obligations exist: paternity leave (only to be used by employed men), parental leave to take care of a child, unpaid and paid leave, paid sick leave, part-time work (to be used by employed men and women). On the basis of the interviews it can be concluded that the mechanisms which can be used by both men and women are still predominantly used by women only. Men take advantage of the mechanisms only exceptionally, mostly in the cases when their partners cannot use them. Referring to paternity leave, male respondents emphasized that they find the leave useful (they mainly used the first, paid part of paternity leave, i.e. the first fifteen days), but they also brought up the point that their absence means extra work for their co-workers. This results in the establishment of a degree of self-control or self-restraint, just as in the case of the informal mechanisms mentioned above. Some respondents added loyalty to the company next to the loyalty to their colleagues; their longer absences could have a negative impact on the work process in the company. This relates to the belief that longer absences from work (as well as putting family life first) weaken the possibilities of promotion.

An obstacle to the use of formal mechanisms, like paid sick leave, is bureaucratic obstacles. The respondents said they preferred (and found it easier) to take regular paid leave rather than justify their absences with medical certificates and suchlike.

It has to be added that some men do not wish to lay much emphasis on their families and family obligations and restrict themselves in that respect, while it is often quite different with women, who have no choice, being taken for granted that they are the ones who will, for instance, take leave if a child gets ill. The woman as the one who stays at home is a kind of "default choice", but this does not mean that there are no agreements reached between parents and that men never use sick leave or other formal and informal mechanisms.

► Flexible working hours / Flexitime

There are two kinds of flexible working time. The first allows for a later arrival at work and consequently later departure from it (flexitime), the second does not fix an eight-hour working day; rather, it sets deadlines for certain tasks to be finished, regardless of when they are done and how long they take (flexible working hours). The respondents generally use the term "flexible working hours" for both possibilities.

The advantage of this mechanism is that it facilitates the balance between individuals' personal working hours and their partners' and children's schedules. Each individual can thus more easily meet family obligations. The disadvantage of the mechanism, however, lies in the lack of any clear-cut distinction between private life and professional obligations; the latter – in terms of time and otherwise – increasingly encroach on individuals' private lives, with work to be done, for instance, late in the evenings, at weekends, and so on. This creates a "false impression" of greater freedom, autonomy and control.

► Technology

In replying to the question on the balance between family and professional obligations, the respondents regularly reported the use of modern technology. Two cars, mobile phones, and an internet access from home were the most frequently mentioned technological advances.

The use of the mobile telephone permits instant arrangements and ad hoc agreements because of flexible working hours and unforeseen professional obligations. Mobile phones have a further function of parental control over children. Some respondents emphasized the importance of two cars in the family as the factor that makes the servicing of children's extracurricular activities and morning transport to school or kindergarten possible. The second family car is thus something to rely on when balancing children's and parent's obligations proves impossible.

The internet provides help for balancing family and work obligations at more levels. One of the possibilities that the internet brings is working from home, which allows employees to put off some of their obligations until later in the day in order to be present at the family obligations that are not flexible (e.g. to be present at children's activities, etc.). Another possibility enabled by the internet, which is also specific to journalism, is a delayed viewing of television programmes or listening to radio shows that are immediately archived on the web pages of the analyzed companies. Individuals, therefore, do not need to listen to a programme at the time when it is broadcast, as they can do it later on the internet. Even though the internet makes it possible for both parents to attend to the caring activities that they cannot be postponed, it also has its negative aspects. The main of the internet's drawbacks is a further blurring of the boundary between private life and work, with professional obligations being put off until later in the afternoon or evening. The internet, moreover, is not a universally applicable means of balancing family and work obligations, because its use is limited to specific kinds of work.

6.2. The respondents' suggestions

The respondents put forward four suggestions concerning the balance between family and work obligations.

► A kindergarten within the company

One of the most frequent suggestions was the introduction of a kindergarten operating within the company with its opening times in synch with the employees' working hours. This would reduce the time needed to take children to and pick them up from kindergartens. Besides, the employees would avoid the problem of adapting their working time to the working time of kindergartens, which is seen as a setback by some of the respondents.

The negative sides of such a company kindergarten that the respondents envisaged are in the child being "torn out" from his/her place of residence, not attending kindergarten together with the children he/she spends free time with. This is particularly relevant for

those who commute to work from smaller places, who also stressed the importance of socialization in the place of residence.

Some respondents furthermore called attention to the fact that a company kindergarten could serve as "an excuse" for the prolongation of working time.

► Financial aid

Financial aid is seen as a mechanism which could allow employees to find their own childminder (e.g. a paid babysitter) in place of a company kindergarten, especially for the time after regular kindergartners close. The problem relating to this and the previous suggestions concerns employers' interests; since the system of public kindergartens in Slovenia is relatively effective, employers are probably not likely to consider offering their employees financial aid of the sort. In Slovenia, the value of a family-friendly company – sometimes used for companies' own promotion – is not placed high enough for the companies to justify the financial burden of founding a company kindergarten or providing financial "benefits" for private childminding.

► Free days

The third suggestion made involved special, paid free days offered by the company to promote caring masculinities. This would be days intended for the father to spend with his children.

As in the case of paternity leave, the problem of misuse may arise here as well.

► Access to information

Some employees find that the existing formal mechanisms are not known enough, therefore an information centre should be set up (e.g. counselling for future parents within the company, relevant information collected on the intranet, etc.) as a form of information service for future fathers.

6.3. The authors' suggestions

Based on the interviews and the mechanisms described above, the authors of this research suggest the following strategies/mechanisms to facilitate balancing work and family obligations:

► Family canteen in the company

Interviews with the employees show that at least some of them do not use their lunch breaks at work so as to be able to go home earlier instead and give their attention to their children, even though afternoons usually revolve around making dinner and taking children to their free-time activities. Quality meals in the company – with flexible working time and the possibility of others, e.g. family members, to attend, as well as the possibility for the employees to take a warm meal home for their family and themselves – could be an important contribution of the organization to relieving private life of routine obligations.

► Crisis kindergarten / playroom

As an alternative to company kindergartens – taking into account the comments on such kindergartens – there is another possibility of organizing childcare in the time after regular kindergartens close but when employees still have obligations at work. Companies would organize a special service responsible for complete childminding, including picking children from home or kindergarten, bringing them to the employees' place of work, and taking care of them in a special playroom during the time when parents – due to exceptional circumstances or other reasons – continue to fulfil their professional obligations. This would also solve the problem of who is going to pick the child from kindergarten. Such a facility would charge its services but it would also be subsidized from the side of the company. The service should be cheaper in comparison to private childminding.

Facilities of this kind would take some of parental caring activities from parents' shoulders, but the suggestion may also be a double-edged sword, because it gives parents an excuse to stay at work even longer.

► The implementation of legislation

The authors find the idea of an information centre adequate and realizable without any major problems at the company level. We also suggest the setting up of a special webpage with all the relevant information for future parents on the subject of balancing professional and family obligations. Such a webpage should be publicized, and the employers encouraged to distribute the information among their employees as part of organization culture (family-friendly companies).

Seminars for future parents should be organized by the company's Personnel Department which would inform employees of their legal possibilities for balancing professional and family obligations, as well as specific practices/mechanisms operating at the company level.

The suggested practices and mechanisms could be introduced with the help of policies promoting family-friendly companies, which would present that as a value orientation at the company level, at the state level, and broader. On the other hand, the companies pursuing such policies could use that for their own promotion.

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8. Appendices

8.1. Selected questions from the questionnaire

Together with the semi-structured interviews carried out with the representatives of the organisation and male employees, the Slovene research group conducted a survey among the male employees in both selected companies. The survey was done via the internet. The male employees were invited to cooperate using e-mail and/or personal mail.

In both organizations together, there are 249 gainfully employed men. The questionnaire was completed by 97 male employees. Below, there are some selected questions from the questionnaire. The shares are given in percentage.

► Demographics

1. Age

19 to 29 years	23.7
30 to 39 years	39.2
40 years and over	35.1

2. What is your level of education?

Primary school	2.1
Vocational school	5.2
Secondary school	52.6
Upper technical secondary school	7.2
High school, university, academy	30.9
Master's degree, specialization	2.1
Doctoral degree	-

3. Education (in comparison with the male employee's partner)

Men with higher education than their partners	16.5
Men with lower education than their partners	30.9
Equal level of education	37.1
No partner	15.5

4. Where do you currently live?

Urban centre (Ljubljana, Maribor)	73.2
Town (Celje, Kranj, Nova Gorica ...)	12.4
Smaller place	7.2
Countryside, village	7.2

5. Type of family

Nuclear family	35.1
Extended family	5.2
Single-parent family	5.2
A couple without children	32.0
Family of origin	12.4
Living alone	10.3

6. How often do you engage in the following activities?

	Every day	3 or 4 times a week	Once or twice a week	A few times a month	Never
Sports	8.2	14.4	38.1	32.0	7.2
Watching television	64.9	20.6	10.3	2.1	2.1
Playing with children	27.8	8.2	7.2	20.6	36.1
Hobbies	13.4	21.6	30.9	24.7	9.3
Reading	34.0	15.5	26.8	18.6	5.2
Going to cultural events/cinema	-	3.1	15.5	70.1	11.3
Cooking	7.2	24.7	27.8	28.9	11.3
Cleaning, ironing, laundry	5.2	20.6	25.8	40.2	8.2

► **Children**

(Only the men with children were asked the following questions. Fifty-one respondents answered them.)

7. Do you have any children?

Yes	52.6
No	47.4

8. How are your children taken care of during the time of your professional obligations?

	First child	Second child	Third child
The child goes to nursery or kindergarten	23.5	5.9	3.9
The child attends extended stay at school	15.7	9.8	-
The child is taken care of by the partner	7.8	5.9	2.0
The child is taken care of by grandparents	3.9	3.9	-
The child is taken care of by a paid babysitter	3.9	2.0	2.0
The child does not need childminding	43.1	27.5	7.8

9. Who most frequently performs the following tasks related to caring for children in your household?

	Mostly myself	Mostly my partner	Others	Not needed
Personal care of the child (washing, dressing ...)	11.8	43.1	-	45.1
Staying at home if the child gets ill	11.8	52.9	5.9	29.4
Cooking and feeding the child	13.7	58.8	-	27.5
Playing with the child, going for walks	41.2	27.5	-	31.4
Transport to school, kindergarten	49.0	17.6	2.0	31.4
Taking the child to extracurricular activities	41.2	23.5	-	35.3
Helping with schoolwork	33.3	23.5	2.0	41.2
Evening rituals (reading fairy tales, etc.)	27.5	33.3	-	39.2

10. Have you ever used paternal leave or parental leave to take care of a child?

	Radio Slovenia	Pop TV
Yes, paternal leave	16.0	34.6
Yes, parental leave to take care of a child	84.0	65.4
Yes, paternal leave and parental leave to take care of a child	-	-
No	-	-

11. How did your superiors react to your use of paternal leave and/or parental leave to take care of a child?

	Radio Slovenia	Pop TV
They approved of it or even encouraged me	33.3	30.0
Fine, but they found it unusual	16.7	10.0
They did not comment on it	50.0	50.0
When absent, I had to fulfil certain conditions (e.g. I had to be available on the phone)	-	10.0
They did not approve of it	-	-

12. How did your co-workers react to your use of paternal leave and/or parental leave to take care of a child?

	Radio Slovenia	Pop TV
They approved of it or even encouraged me	50.0	80.0
Fine, but they found it unusual	-	-
They did not comment on it	50.0	10.0
When absent, I had to fulfil certain conditions (e.g. I had to be available on the phone)	-	10.0
They did not approve of it	-	-

► The elderly and those in need of help

13. Who most frequently performs the following tasks related to caring for the elderly and those in need of help?

	Mostly myself	Mostly my partner	Others	Not needed
Cooking for the elderly and those in need of help	3.1	4.1	7.2	85.6
Cleaning their flat/room	6.2	6.2	7.2	80.4
Washing, caring, personal hygiene	1.0	2.1	7.2	89.7
Accompanying them to see the doctor	18.6	4.1	7.2	70.1
Shopping	11.3	4.1	4.1	80.4
Socializing (visits, going for walks, etc.)	28.9	12.4	4.1	54.6

► The workplace

14. What is your position within the company?

	Radio Slovenia	Pop TV
Top management	0.0	1.8
Management	14.6	14.3
Specialists	46.3	30.4
Employees	34.1	46.4
Other	4.9	7.1

15. The position within the company (comparison with the male employee's partner)

Men in a higher position than their partners	13.4
Men in a lower position than their partners	13.4
Equal position	36.1
No partner	14.4
Other	22.7

16. Please state for each of the following statements to what extent you agree with it (1 – do not agree at all, 5 – fully agree)

Radio Slovenia/Pop TV

	1	2	3	4	5
My family obligations are taken into account at my workplace (e.g. the arrangement of working time, the possibilities of using leave, etc.)	9.8/8.9	7.3/12.5	12.2/26.8	39.0/19.6	31.7/31.1
At my workplace, it is customary to work overtime	9.8/10.7	12.2/17.9	29.3/21.4	9.8/7.1	39.0/42.9
My private life often suffers because of my work	12.2/14.3	22.0/12.5	22.0/14.3	19.5/21.4	24.4/37.5
I frequently fulfil professional obligations at home	12.2/37.5	22.0/25.0	22.0/19.6	19.5/7.1	24.4/10.7
Working overtime and constant presence at work give me better chances for promotion	48.8/42.9	17.1/14.3	17.1/19.6	7.3/12.5	9.8/10.7
At my workplace, they encourage the use of parental/paternal leave	31.7/30.4	14.6/8.9	36.6/42.9	7.3/3.6	9.8/14.3

17. How do your superiors react to your absence from work because of your caring for an ill child or another family member, or to your need to adapt working hours to family obligations?

	Radio Slovenia	Pop TV
They approve of it or even encourage me	2.4	10.7
Fine, but they find it unusual	-	-
They do not comment on it	51.2	32.1
If absent, I have to fulfil certain conditions (e.g. I have to be available on the phone)	14.6	25.0
They do not approve of it	7.3	-
I am never absent because of such obligations	19.5	23.2
Other	4.9	8.9

18. How do your co-workers react to your absence from work because of your caring for an ill child or another family member, or to your need to adapt working hours to family obligations?

	Radio Slovenia	Pop TV
They approve of it or even encourage me	7.3	17.9
Fine, but they find it unusual	2.4	-
They do not comment on it	43.9	33.9
If absent, I have to fulfil certain conditions (e.g. I have to be available on the phone)	9.8	17.9
They do not approve of it	9.8	-
I am never absent because of such obligations	22.0	25.0
Other	4.9	5.4

19. Please note for each of the following statements whether it is true for you or not.

Radio Slovenia/Pop TV

	Yes	No
My job allows me to organize my own working hours	53.7/48.2	46.3/51.8
They have informed me on the possibilities of paternal leave at my job	34.1/21.4	65.9/78.6
My job allows me to work part-time	46.3/32.1	53.7/67.9
My job allows me to work from home	43.9/17.9	56.1/82.1

20. On the scale from 1 to 5, decide what the level of your general satisfaction with your job is (1 – totally dissatisfied, 5 – completely satisfied)

	1	2	3	4	5
Radio Slovenia	-	4.9	19.5	63.4	12.2
Pop TV	1.8	8.9	21.4	51.8	16.1

21. What could contribute to your greater participation in family life (taking care of children and other family members in need of help)? You can choose more answers.

	Yes	No
To be able to work part-time and have working hours adjusted to my needs	25.8	74.2
To be able to do professional work at home as well	19.6	80.4
To have more information on the possibilities of parental leave, the leave to take care of a sick child, etc.	12.4	87.6
Greater appreciation of caring for family at work	20.6	79.4
A greater wish for my participation expressed by my partner	8.2	91.8
I already participate enough	51.5	48.5