

**2nd Annual Conference of the Cities for Children Network
May 6 and 7, 2008 in Stuttgart City Hall**

Meeting of the Working Group 4 Work-Life Balance on May 7, 2008

Moderation: Dr. Zoltan Bretter, City Councillor, Pecs, Hungary

WG 4 agrees on the following agenda:

1. Collect: Immersed issues to be discussed in the WG. Assigning responsible persons/cities.
2. Decide: Who will be moderating during the next year? How will the group work together (ways of communication, next meeting)?

1. Issues and responsibilities

1.1. How do corporations deal with issues of work-life-balance?

Some members of the group share the experience, that corporations are rather tentative when it comes to answering questions concerning their aims and offers to realize work-life-balance for their employees. Is there a chance to discuss this issue with representatives of corporations? The shared concern is that corporations do not act in favour of work-life-balance for their employees.

The city of Nuernberg talks about their good experiences: Since 7 years a network of 250 companies, other organizations and the municipality exists called "Alliance for Families" with Mr. Lehmann being responsible for the contacts to corporations since 4 years. The biggest issue is, how childcare can be assured when parents work. It is crucial to gain awareness and support from the top management of companies. Than agreements can be made with middle management and single compartments of the companies. Working groups with participants of different corporations do meet regularly to discuss about care taking in holidays or care taking of older peopler. The network is acting without formal constitution as association or the like to be able to act more flexible. Corporations contribute donations. The strongest argument when talking to corporations is, that it pays off to care about work-life-balance.

The city of Nuernberg (Mr. Lehmann or his successor) will prepare a prentation on their best-practice for the next meeting of WG4. In addition to this, studies on the return on investment of work-life-balance should be searched.

1.2. National Legislation for Public Servants

Seite 2

In Hungary working hours are very strictly regulated by law. In Germany the law enables very flexible working hours (forms of contracts, e.g. in Nuernberg exist 120 different models of working-time) but the possibility to profit from the law depends on someones boss and the state of family friendliness in the departments (acceptance of different working-times by colleagues).

1.3. Support for families with children (subsidies)

Discussion of the pros and cons of generous support of maternity leaves (e.g. in Hungary for staying at home up to 3 years per child rather huge subsidies are granted).

1.3.1. Women are facing problems when getting back on the job after 2-10 years of maternal leave. In France parents can work up to 50 or 80% while taking family leave (mostly taken by women). The possibility to work part time depends on the corporations and the opening hours of child care institutions. Examples in the city of Nuernberg show, that part time workers are more effective (benefit for companies). On the other hand working part time hampers careers. The city of Strasbourg (Mrs. Gall) will prepare a presentation on the pros and cons of part time work for the next meeting of WG4.

1.3.2. Women may get depressed when staying at home with their children plus they need rather long time to find back into their job again. Training possibilities throughout maternity leave are seen as possible solution and cities could be marketing training possibilities or even offer them themselves. As only companies know, what their employees have to know, general municipal training does probably not make sense. The internet could be a helpfull tool for this-training purposes.

The city of Strasbourg (Mrs. Gall or Mrs. Henry) will find out, how companies and municipalities are involved in training until the next meeting of WG4.

1.3.3. Child care services should be expanded.

1.4. Focus on families not only on women – men in families

The discussion focusses mostly on women when dealing with work-life-balance although it should be discussed as a family issue. All cities agree that until now mostly women are taking maternity/parental leaves. There are some changes in Germany due to changes in law that encourage both partners to stay at home for some time. It seems to be consensus, that family and career do not go together.

Talking about and creating awareness for work-life-balance and family issues it could be better since more provocative to talk about men than women.

The city of Wroclaw (Mr. Golema) will prepare a presentation on “husband-wife-balance” until the next meeting of WG4.

Seite 3

1.5. Consequences of work force mobility: Euro-Orphanhood

A city from Romania should be invited to the next meeting as they are facing this problem as well as Poland or Hungary.

The city of Pecs (Mr. Bretter) will invite a Romanian city.

2. Organizational issues

The city of Strasbourg takes over the moderation.

The next meeting will be in January 2009, Strasbourg will send a program proposal to the participants of WG 4.

Strasbourg will think of possibilities (ways of communication) to stay in contact and exchange informations in the time until the next meeting.

Protocol: Christine Kestel, Robert Bosch Foundation