



Resolution 1921 (2013)¹

Final version

Gender equality, reconciliation of private and working life and co-responsibility

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Although progress has been made along the path towards gender equality, a traditional division of roles between women and men remains widespread in Europe. Men enjoy a privileged position on the labour market, whereas women still do the lion's share in terms of housework and care of dependants (children and elderly persons).
2. At the same time, the financial and economic crisis has had repercussions for the balance in the numbers of women and men in the world of work. In many economies, those sectors which employ a larger proportion of men have been more severely affected by the consequences of the crisis (such as construction, infrastructure, transport and industry more generally, whereas the services sector has done better in maintaining employment levels and profitability).
3. Reconciling private and working life today is a challenge for both women and men. However, some inequalities persist to women's disadvantage in the world of work, in terms of remuneration, discriminatory recruitment and career progression.
4. The Parliamentary Assembly considers that systematic and consistent reconciliation measures should be adopted by all member States, so that everyone who so wishes may engage in a professional activity and can harmonise this with their private and family life. These measures should improve the reconciliation of private and working life for both women and men and foster gender equality.
5. Another prerequisite of better reconciliation between private and working life is an awareness of the importance of co-responsibility, or shared responsibility between women and men in families. Co-responsibility relates to every aspect of family life and includes shared parental responsibility, although it goes further than that.
6. Reconciliation policies are also necessary to prevent and combat poverty and social exclusion. In practice, parents obliged to give up work because the way in which it is organised is incompatible with family commitments, or forced to reduce their work commitments and consequently their income, are at greater risk of poverty and exclusion.
7. The Assembly considers that better reconciliation of private and working life necessitates co-operation between all stakeholders in society, States, enterprises, civil society and individuals and that the latter, women and men, share their responsibilities within their family and society.
8. The Assembly, taking into account the best practices found, thus calls on the authorities of the Council of Europe member States to:
 - 8.1. offer adequate assistance services for dependants (children and elderly persons);
 - 8.2. introduce a parental leave scheme enabling parents, women or men, to look after their children on an equal footing;

1. *Assembly debate* on 25 January 2013 (9th Sitting) (see [Doc. 13080](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Ms Quintanilla). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 25 January 2013 (9th Sitting).



- 8.3. introduce financial support tools geared to families' needs, particularly relating to the care and education of children;
- 8.4. respect the right of fathers to enjoy shared responsibility by ensuring that family law foresees, in case of separation or divorce, the possibility of joint custody of children, in their best interest, which is based on mutual agreement; it should never be imposed;
- 8.5. reform labour law in order to make possible and encourage more flexible forms of organisation, such as different working hours, flexitime and teleworking;
- 8.6. introduce into labour law the principle that these forms of work should not adversely affect career progression;
- 8.7. encourage voluntary application by enterprises of reconciliation measures which are more advantageous than the statutory measures;
- 8.8. introduce financial support (interest-free or low-interest loans) to back up reconciliation measures adopted by enterprises;
- 8.9. encourage research into the impact of the difficulties of reconciling private and working life on employment levels and the competitiveness of different economies;
- 8.10. encourage the collection and analysis of information about the effectiveness of the reconciliation measures adopted;
- 8.11. conduct awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the general public about co-responsibility between women and men within families and in society;
- 8.12. conduct educational and awareness-raising activities in schools on the subject of co-responsibility and of respect for the rights of every member of the family, irrespective of age and gender;
- 8.13. establish a dialogue with social partners and civil society in order to promote the principles set out in this resolution.