



**DECLARATION BY THE TRIO PRESIDENCY (SPAIN, BELGIUM AND HUNGARY) AND
POLAND
ON THE IMPACTS OF RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY LIFE ON DEMOGRAPHIC
DYNAMICS**

Gödöllő, 1 April 2011

Spain, Belgium and Hungary, the Member States holding the Presidency during the 18-month period from January 2010 to June 2011, together with Poland, which takes over the Presidency in July 2011, hereby present this joint declaration at the Informal Meeting of Ministers for Demography and Family Policy Issues in Gödöllő.

1. The Presidencies acknowledge that specific measures should be taken to promote effective policy interventions for a better reconciliation of work and family life for women and men throughout the life-course, so as to enhance gender equality, to meet the demographic challenge, and to achieve the headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

- The population of the European Union is shrinking and ageing dramatically. To overcome the demographic challenge we should use every means at our disposal.
- Progress has been made within the social policy field, including the area of family policies both at European and Member State level. Member States have already carried out important measures for better reconciliation of work and family life. Increasing attention has been being paid to family policies including the development of early childhood education and care (following the Spring 2002 Barcelona Council conclusions), developing measures for a more friendly work – life balance in the labour market, and improving income support to families. The Trio Presidency has already launched the Declaration on Equality between Women and Men (26 March 2010) and the Roadmap for a Recommendation on Child Poverty and Child Well-Being (3 September 2010) provide a solid ground for further actions and co-operation.

2. We recognise, however, that more efforts need to be taken. In many countries, very often low birth rates do not reflect the childbearing preferences of women and men for various reasons, such as social and economic situation, gender inequality, and difficulty to reconcile work, personal and family life.

- We have recognised that paid work is the best way to tackle and prevent poverty and we have emphasized the need to create more, sustainable and better jobs during the recovery from the crisis.

- In view of diversity of families and family policies in the European Union, different types of measures are needed to enable women and men to participate in the labour market, thereby reducing risks of child/family poverty and removing barriers to have the number of children they wish. Special attention should be paid to large families and single-parent families.
- The impact of parenthood is very high on women's participation in the labour market who very often have to choose between career and care responsibilities for their children and other members of the family. Parents should be encouraged to make greater use of family-friendly working arrangements and family-related leave. These entitlements should be shared more equally between parents.
- Family-friendly policies and practices at the workplace, flexible work and leave arrangements, as well as adequate and quality dependant and childcare services are essential for the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities.
- The wide gender gaps that persist in the field of employment, including the gender pay gap, should be addressed through inclusive labour-market and family policies, but also by fighting discrimination at the workplace.
- Having a professional career and raising children should be compatible.
- Special attention has to be paid to vulnerable families, including large families and single parent families, since they might be exposed to multiple risks.

3. The Trio Presidency and Poland reaffirm their commitment to continue strengthening policies affecting families, especially with respect to the headline targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy (75% of women and men aged 20-64 to be employed and at least 20 million people to be lifted out of poverty by 2020). The Trio Presidency and Poland therefore invite all relevant actors to make further progress both at European and Member States level in order to achieve better reconciliation of work, family and private life, gender equality and poverty reduction, by taking the following measures:

- developing programmes in the Member States to provide better support for families in line with European policies and strategies;
- promoting flexicurity measures that can lead to a significant increase in the number of jobs while benefiting workers with families;
- meeting and maintaining the objectives defined in Barcelona in 2002 for providing accessible, affordable and quality childcare services;
- providing accessible, affordable and quality care services for the elderly and other adult dependants;
- promoting better sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the household;

- adapting schedules and working hours in the public sector, including schools, public transport, post offices and other public services, and encourage the private sector to make to necessary steps towards this aim;
- promoting consultation and involvement of young people, including youth organizations and networks of young people in decision-making, and reinforce the participation of all stakeholders active in the promotion of the rights of the child; supporting families in the provision of care within households;
- increasing efforts in order to improve cooperation and the exchange of good practices among Member States;
- In 2014 – the twentieth anniversary of the United Nation’s International Year of the Family – launching a European Year of Families in recognition of the importance of families in our societies;
- taking into account the family perspective when designing programmes and legislation at EU level.

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