A 'New Start' to Support Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers

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SBA Follow-up meeting with Stakeholders

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Employment rate (20-64 years old) by sex (% of total employment), 2015

Source: Labour Force Survey
Employment Impact of Parenthood for one child under 6 in 2015

Source: Labour Force Survey
Women inactivity (20-64 years old) due to caring responsibilities (in % of total inactivity), 2015

Source: Labour Force Survey
Women part-time employment (aged 20-64) due to caring responsibilities (in % of total part-time employment), 2015

Source: Labour Force Survey
'New Start' initiative for work-life balance

Replacing the Commission's 2008 proposal to amend the Maternity Leave Directive

Objective: addressing the obstacles to women's labour market participation through:

- Better reconciliation of work and family responsibilities
- A more equitable use of work-life balance arrangements between women and men

Taking a broad approach, considering a complementary mix of different policies needed for greater work-life balance and female labour market participation
Major milestones

Roadmap published in August 2015, setting out the intention of a comprehensive package, with both legislative and non-legislative options

Two-Phase Social partner consultation on possible improvements to EU legal framework (Nov 2015-Jan 2016, July 2016-Sept 2016)

Broad public consultation on a wider range of possible EU support measures e.g., policy guidance, funds, enhanced EU-level monitoring (Nov 2015-Feb 2016)

2017 CWP: COM will propose "a Pillar of Social Rights (Q1/2017) and will present related initiatives, such as initiatives to address the challenges of work-life balance faced by working families (legislative/non-legislative, incl. impact assessment; Art. 153/157 TFEU)"
Potential legislative proposals

- **Introducing more possibilities for fathers to take leave**, e.g., greater incentives for men to take-up of parental leave and/or the introduction of paternity leave

- **Enhancing protection against dismissal upon return from leave**, e.g., extending period of protection against dismissal, requirement for reasons in writing

- **Introduction of carers’ leave**, e.g., new provisions for temporary carers’ leave for elderly or ill dependants.

- **Improving the possibilities for parents/carers to access flexible working arrangements**, e.g., introducing possibility to take parental leave on a piecemeal or part-time basis and/or right to request telework, flexitime, part-time work
Potential non-legislative measures

- **Policy guidance and/or benchmarks** on all relevant measures to promote work-life balance and female employment (leaves, flexible working arrangements, childcare, long-term care, tax-benefit disincentives)

- More regular monitoring and reporting on work-life balance policies in the **European Semester**

- **Knowledge-sharing and awareness raising activities** with Member States, the social partners and stakeholders

- **Mobilising EU funds to further support Member States**, e.g., clarifying how ESF funds can be used to support work-life balance, strengthening this as a priority in the next MFF
Discussion – Sharing best practices

- In your experience, which Work-Life Balance measures are the most effective in attracting and retaining women in the workplace?

- Do you see a difference in uptake of Work-Life Balance measures (leaves and flexible working arrangements) between women and men? How do you ensure a more gender-balanced use of these entitlements?

- In your experience, how do Work-Life Balance measures influence SMEs' work?

- Would you like to share a best practice on the topic?
Thank you!