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The coordination of personal life and work: The role of employers

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1. Balance of personal life and work – a necessity

One of the most significant long-term tendencies for the labour market these days is an increase[1] in the proportion of working people with paternity responsibilities. This is because the model of two breadwinners in a household is becoming more established in the labour market, and the number of single parents who participate in this market is increasing. Therefore, the number of employees who have significant family responsibilities in addition to professional ones, increases. According to the Eurostat data[2], every third EU resident not only takes care of children under 15 years of age, but also elderly family members or family members with a disability.

On the other hand, the well-being of employees is determined not only by reducing stress, but for the coordination of work and family responsibilities. The coordination of personal life and work is also relevant for people who do not have such responsibilities. The opportunity to have a meaningful personal life, such as to make time for sports, learning, hobbies and activities that promote the growth, improvement, and experience of emotional satisfaction, is also important.

Consequently, how the working environment adapts in response to the changes in society has a significant impact on the formation of an attractive organisational microclimate: by attracting and maintaining valuable employees and by achieving the aims of the company. Research has shown that organisations that initiate good working conditions for the employees to coordinate their personal life and work, have a noticeably lower employee turnover, see an increase in employee productivity and, the employees are more involved in the activities of the organisation and are more likely to return to the organisation[3] after career breaks.

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1 OECD Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/firms-contribution-to-the-reconciliation-between-work-and-family-life_344836028454

2 Reconciliation of work and family life – statistics: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Reconciliation_of_work_and_family_life_-_statistics&oldid=511883

3 European Agency Safety and Health Work, E-Facts 57: Issues of family and coordination of work and personal life, 2012. (Šeimos klausimai ir darbo ir asmeninio gyvenimo derinimas)

The role of the employer to achieve the balance between work and personal responsibilities for employees is essential. The employer not only provides measures, such as the tools necessary for the coordination of personal life and work, but also creates the work culture, where the employees would not be afraid to tell their employers they have personal responsibilities and would feel comfortable using measures available without the fear that this would affect their career perspectives or attitude of colleagues towards them.

This publication provides recommendations for employers concerning where to begin making the working environment friendly for personal responsibilities of the employees, and how to create and implement the policy for coordination of personal life and work within the organisation consistently and purposefully. We expect the recommendations provided will be a good starting point for organisations that want their employees to have an opportunity to find a balance between responsibilities of personal life and work.

2. Coordination of personal life and work: stages to ensure changes

The creation of a friendly environment for the coordination of work and personal life within an organisation is a long-lasting process, which requires the responsibility of the organisation to act systematically in the area of ensuring the balance between the professional and personal responsibilities of the employees. The following steps will help you to ensure that the changes being achieved will be performed systematically, smoothly and purposefully.

Team building. Any change starts from the initiative and motivated people; consequently, to change the inner culture on the issues for coordination of personal life and work within the organisation, it is important to build an initiative, prepare to act purposefully, and develop a creative team. The built team has to be responsible for implementing changes step by step, coordinating the work, managing and coordinating all the processes, and

disseminating information to other employees of the organisation. It is recommended to involve employees in the team from various subdivisions of the organisation, who may transfer the topic of coordination of personal life and work to different processes of the organisation and decisions related to it. It is also important not to forget that the issues of coordination of personal life and work are complex, unequally touching different groups of employees; consequently, the best results are achieved, when the diversity of different experiences and attitudes is ensured during the work process. The creation of a friendly policy of balance for all the employees, as well as identification and consideration of the needs of all the employees is easier, if people of various ages, different genders, and different family compositions are involved in a mutually creative process. If this is difficult to do, valuable insights from various employees of the organisation may be collected by organising 'focus' groups or surveys of another nature.

Evaluation of situation. First task of the built team, to create policy of personal life and work within the organisation that is effective and conforming to the needs of employees, is evaluation of the current situation. It consists of four steps as follows:

1)   **Stock-taking of available measures for coordination of personal life and work** is performed for the employees of the organisation, i.e., all measures, both statutory and proposed by the organisation, that are available for employees of the organisation are marked.

2)   In accordance with stock-taking of measures and other factors related to work that specificity may affect the balance of work and personal life of the employees (for example, overtime, business trips and etc.,) **the administrative data are collected**. To identify which groups of employees more often/less frequently use various measures, the data should be distinguished into demographic cross-sections, for example, gender, family composition, age, nature of work (if relevant for the organisation) etc. It is recommended to include additional cross-sections if you see that they may be relevant from the perspective of work specificity. Thoroughly collected data is very important for the evaluation of a situation, because it helps to ascertain whether and how the employees use the measures available to them, and whether and how differently the issues of balance touch different groups of employees.

3)   Although the administrative data allow one to look up common tendencies about culture for coordination of personal life and work within the organisation, however, it does not disclose the reasons for the current situation and other subtle nuances. **'Focus' groups** help to do this. Taking into consideration the problem areas identified during the analysis of administrative data, it is recommended to organise 'focus' groups with employees, during which the insights of participants would help to ascertain why

employees choose certain behaviour models and what factors have the biggest impact on the quality of coordination of personal life and work.

4) 'Focus' group(s) help(s) to understand the tendencies hiding under administrative data better, and **the survey of employee opinion** – what attitudes related to the role of genders affect the culture of the organisation and how employees evaluate their own opportunities to coordinate the work and personal life. The survey of employee opinion is a significant part of the evaluation of the situation, which identifies areas where efforts are needed to increase the consciousness of employees.

Data analysis. The analysis of a systematised survey of employee opinion, 'focus' groups and administrative data allows to take a complex view of the challenges of coordination of personal life and work as well as to plan target measures for employees of the organisation.

During data analysis, recommendations are as follows:

• Not to limit to general data. If it is possible, distinguish data to specific, significant signs for the analysis, for example, gender, age, family composition, work functions, etc. The experiences of employees belonging to different groups may vary considerably.

• To search for a connection between insights collected using different methods (administrative data, 'focus' groups, survey of employees): they may contradict or supplement each other. In both cases, you will receive valuable references, which actions to take are purposeful (to focus on turnover of attitudes, to install specific measures or both of them), to install effective policy for coordination of personal life and work within the organisation more efficiently.

• To assign the task of data analysis to the person who has basic knowledge in the area of gender equality. The research being performed in Lithuania and abroad always help to expand the point of view. External experts can be invited to perform the analysis.

• To remember that attitudes do not necessarily determine changes in behaviour. For instance, a survey of employees can show that majority of men working at the company agree with the statement 'it is normal for men to take parental leave'; however, the administrative data can disclose that this attitude is not established practically (men do not take parental or paternity leave), therefore, it may be possible to search for solutions to change their behaviour.

• The analysis underperformance may be employed as a laboratory of insights, which will help to generate ideas about possible measures that may be involved in an action plan.

Planning. After analysing data and realising what challenges are encountered by employees or their groups within the organisation, in order to achieve the balance between personal life and work, it is time to start planning target measures, which should enter **the action plan of the organisation**. The action plan should raise the aims of organisation in the area of balance and provide specific measures and actions, which are supposed to ensure the implementation of aims, define the distribution of actions on a time basis, and set out specific achievable results (indicators), which would help to evaluate how the organisation succeeds in achieving aims raised in the action plan. During the preparation of an action plan, it is significant to consider the tendencies identified during the evaluation of a situation, because it is the only way to plan the measures, which would be purposeful, effective and conforming the needs of employees. It is also important to set out specific employees who would be responsible for the implementation of measures, coordination of actions, and supervision. After the preparation of the action plan, it is important to introduce it to managers of the organisation because their approval is necessary, both on implementation of raised measures practically and reminding employees that the organisation priorities the balance of personal life and work of employees.

Implementation. In this stage, the organisation has already implemented the measures set out under the priorities raised in the plan. It should be highlighted that assurance of a higher balance between work and personal life for the employees is not the final process, and after the implementation of measures set out in the plan, the work does not end. It should be returned to the first stage by evaluating oneself, whether the measures set out had a desirable effect, and whether it has reached the raised aims. Also, the problem points and issues should be identified, new priorities raised and new measures planned. The evaluation of the situation should be performed periodically.

The fourth chapter of the publication describes the study of 'Swedbank' case, which presents the implementation of these stages practically.

3. Holistic access: measures, work culture and communication

The organisation, in order to conclude the conditions for employees to reach the balance between work and personal life, can achieve real results only by pursuing them at all levels consistently:

- By involving various groups of employees to the formation of policy and considering their needs. The policy for coordination of personal life and work, and measures will conform the needs of employees and will be used by them only by using this method;

- By proposing packages of measures;

- By constantly reminding the employees about available measures to know the opportunities provided for them;

- By formalising general policy on the issues about personal life and work, so that access to available resources for employees is independent from the relationship with their manager;

- By creating friendly company culture for coordination of personal life and work for employees to feel free to use the measures available and by this reason not to receive hostility from their manager(s) or colleagues;

- By authorising the manager(s) to display the example for employees and to disseminate the message about the significance of balance.

Parallel work in all mentioned areas will ensure sustainable and effective policy for coordination of personal life and work. In the following sections, the measures for coordination of personal life and work are discussed, which may be proposed by employers for employees, and advice are provided how to improve internal communication and an organisational working place culture favourable to create a balance.

3.1 Measures for coordination of personal life and work

The measures for coordination of personal life and work, provided in the Labour Code and additional ones, which may be proposed by the employer at his/her discretion for the employees working at the organisation are introduced below. This list is not final, consequently, the organisations taking into consideration the needs of their employees,

can create additional measures which help to reach the balance between work and personal life for employees more successfully. This list should help in the stage of evaluation of the situation as a starting point by reviewing which measures are available within the organisation and as the source of potential ideas during the preparation of the action plan.

- Flexible work schedule.

- Individual work schedule.

- Remote work.

- Part-time work.

- Additional days off for family and personal reasons.

- Career consultation.

- Measures for those on parental leave.

- Financial support for nursing and custody of relatives of employees.

- Kindergartens and occupations.

- Benefits for leisure time.

- Benefits for health.

- Workation.

Flexible work schedule

Flexible work schedule is an order of working time mode, when the employee must stay at a working place at specific fixed hours of working day (shift) and other hours of the working day (shift) can be worked before or after these hours by setting out a flexible start and/or finish of the working time.

The employer can set out such a working time mode for one, several employees (group of employees) or for all employees within the working environment. Such a schedule can be applied for all or only several days of working week.

Flexible work schedule consists of fixed and non-fixed hours:

- Fixed hours of working day (shift), when the employee must work at the working place is set out by the employer. The change of this working time can be made after warning the employee no later than before two working days of the employee;

- Non-fixed hours of working day (shift), which are worked by the employee on his/her choice before and/or after fixed hours, i.e., in the beginning and/or in the end of the working day (shift). Non-fixed hours can be set out by the employee himself/herself.

Example. The employer has set out fixed hours of working day, which are from 10.00 to 15.00 – the employee must remain at his/her working place during these hours. Flexible start of working time can start at, for example, 6.00 to 10.00, end time – from 15.00 to 19.00. A specific start and/or end of working time must be set out by the employee himself/herself.

Source – Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, Art. 113, 116.

Individual work schedule

The employee and the employer can agree on the individual mode of working time by setting out a personal work schedule to the specific employee.

By setting out an individual work schedule, it is significant to ensure that the working time rate[*] would be implemented per working day (shift), week, month or other reference period, which must not exceed three consecutive months.

Example. 4-day work week from Tuesday to Friday, 10 hours a day, is set out for the employee.

Individual work schedule differs from a flexible work schedule by setting out an individual work schedule; the work is being done during a fixed time set in the schedule. In case of a flexible work schedule, the employee is granted the right to change the non-fixed beginning and (or) end of working day (shift) on his/her discretion.

If the request of the employee for the mode of individual working time is based on a desire to coordinate work and family responsibilities of the employer, the employer can refuse to satisfy the request of the employee only for significant, objective reasons.

[*]The working time rate of an employee is 40 hours per week, unless the regulations of labour law set out shortened working time rate for the employee or parties agree on part-time work.

Source – Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, Art. 113.

Remote work

Remote work is one of the forms of a flexible work organisation, applied in the cases when the physical presence at the working place of the employee is unnecessary, and his/her functions can be performed remotely. Remote work can be applied in case the functions can be done remotely by working part of the working time. Although, remote work during the pandemic period became the working form, it should not be forgotten that opportunities for such work are set out in the Labour Code.

The remote work in Lithuania is assigned at the request of the employee or the agreement of the parties.

If the employee working remotely incurs additional expenses related to his/her job, acquisition of working tools, installation and use, then they must be reimbursed. The size of compensation and the order of payment must be set out by the agreement between the employee and the employer.

It is important to know that the refusal of the employee to work remotely, when the employer proposes it, cannot be a legal reason to terminate the labour contract or to change working conditions. However, if the country announces a state of emergency or a lockdown, from this perspective, another regulation shall enter into force.

Although, remote work as a measure for coordination of personal life and work is set out in the Labour Code a long time ago, it has been universally applicable for a big circle of employees since the announcement of the 2020 lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. State Labour Inspectorate has prepared comprehensive recommendations for employers[4] on how to organise remote work, ensure the safety and health of employees and set out all risk factors.

Several essential aspects related to it, which should be known by employers are provided below.

In the case of remote work, the time worked by the employee is calculated in the order set out by the employer. The employee distinguishes his/her own working time at his/her discretion without violating the minimum requirements of work and rest time. When assigning a remote work, the requirements of working place are established in written

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4 Methodological recommendations on the opportunities, advantages and implementation of remote work in companies, institutions and organisations as well as ensuring of the safety and health of employees. Access via internet: http://www.vdi.lt/AtmUploads/Nuotolinisdarbas.pdf.

form (if they are raised), the measures for work are provided on the order of provision, the rules of using working tools, and subdivision, division and responsible person of working place, with whom the employee needs to settle for the performed work in the order set out by the employer.

Remote work does not raise limitations for the calculation of work seniority, appointment to a higher position, or improvement of qualification, and does not restrict or constrain other work rights of the employee. The order for implementation of remote work set out by the employer does not have to violate personal data protection and his/her right to a private life.

The employer must conclude conditions for the employees working remotely to communicate and collaborate with other employees and representatives of employees working in the working place of the employer, and to receive information from the employer.

The employers must ensure the safety and health of employees who work remotely.

The assurance of work safety when working remotely

The aspects of remote work safety are described in the LR Law of the Safety and Health of Employees:

- Those who work remotely must have the same conditions of the safety and health as others (i.e., employees who work at the working place);

- The employer when making the decision on remote work, if necessary, provides the employee with work and personal safety measures;

- The employer must train how to use work measures safely, and the employee must take care of his/her own and other people's safety and health with proper use of provided work measures;

- The law emphasises that the safety and health of employees are all preventive measures used to protect the employees from professional risk and/or to minimise it as much as possible.

Besides, the recommendations of the State Labour inspectorate on remote work indicate the following clauses as well:

- The laws do not establish exceptions for the duty of the employer to conclude safe and harmless working conditions for health, therefore, the professional risk needs to

be evaluated by the employer in all cases. In other words, the requirements, which are applied in the physical working place, shall also be applied to remote work;

• If remote work is assigned at the request of the employees, the employee himself/herself shall ensure that his/her chosen working place for remote work is appropriate and safe to perform work. Consequently, the liability to ensure safe working conditions is not only for the employer, but also for the employee himself/herself;

• The employer may not assign remote work if the imposed working place does not conform to the legal requirements or it may conclude higher expenses for reimbursement, especially if work would be done from a foreign country.

When organising remote work, it is also recommended to consider the following risk factors:

• **Psychosocial risk.** When working remotely, the challenges related to the coordination of work and personal life may arise because of staying in one place. Especially for women, because they are more involved in taking care of children and home than men. These challenges may also differ because of different personal characteristics of employees, family composition, age, attitude, etc. The organisations are recommended to perform the evaluation of psychosocial professional risk factors: the employer is proposed to clearly specify and discuss duties, expectations and deadlines for work; and for the employees – to control the workload under performance, follow the mode of work and rest, take regular breaks, follow the agreements with other colleagues, etc.;

• **Ergonomic risk.** The place of remote work should conform the requirements of the safety and health of employees (as at the office): for example, work desk, chair and other measures are proper for work, there is a proper lighting, separate space where they can concentrate, etc;

• **Physical risk factors.** The place of remote work shall be safe (fire safety, electrical safety), and the prevention of incidents, etc., should be taken into account;

• **Physical risk factors.** The place of remote work shall be comfortable for work: quiet, enlightened properly, a proper temperature and thermal comfort should be ensured. For example, if there is no proper lighting, the employee may contact a responsible person on the acquisition of additional devices of lighting on the funds of the employer, etc.

Sources: Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, Art. 49, 52. Methodological recommendations of State Labour Inspectorate on the opportunities, advantages and implementation of remote work within companies, institutions and organisations as well as assurance of the safety and health of employees.

Part-time work

The laws of Lithuania establish the opportunity for the employee and the employer to agree on part-time work by reducing the number of working hours on a desirable part. Part-time work can be established flexibly: by reducing working hours per day, per working week or working month or doing both of them. Part-time work can be established for a limited period or for an indefinite period of time.

The employee who has agreed to part-time work no more than once every six months (if not set out otherwise) has the right to request a change a condition of part-time work.

The employer shall consider this request and inform the employee about his reasoned decision within ten working days.

Temporary part-time work

The employee who desires to work part-time temporarily for family, personal or other reasons (no more than for the period of one year) has the right to submit a request to the employer. The request of the employee to work part-time temporarily (i.e., by shortening the working day to 4 hours a day or reducing the number of working days to 3 working days per working week) is satisfiable, if[*]:

- The duration of working relations with the employer is more than three years;

- Part-time work will be no longer than one year;

- The request was submitted at least 30 days before the entry into force of part-time work.

The employer can refuse to satisfy the request of the employee only for important reasons. The request to set out part-time work repeatedly can be submitted by the employee if he/she has worked full-time for the same period as part-time.

[*]The above-mentioned restrictions on the duration of part-time and setting it out are not valid when the employer agrees with other conditions on part-time proposed by the employee or if:

- The employee reasons his/her request with the conclusion of the health care institution about the health condition of the employee, disability, the necessity to nurse a family member;

- It is requested by a pregnant, given birth recently or breastfeeding employee;

- It is requested by an employee raising a child under 3 years of age;

- It is requested by an employee raising a child under 14 years of age or a child with a disability under the age of 18 alone.

These persons can return to the conditions of full-time work after a written warning to the employer within two weeks, with the exception of cases when the employer agrees not to follow this deadline.

The work for employees, working on part-time conditions, does not raise restrictions by setting out the duration of annual leave, calculation of work seniority, appointment to higher positions, improvement of qualification, does not restrict other rights of the employee in comparison with employees who do the same and equal work on full-time work conditions, taking into consideration the work seniority, qualification and other circumstances. Part-time work is paid in proportion to the time worked or to the performed work in comparison with full-time work conditions.

Source – Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, Article 40.

Additional days off for family and personal reasons

The employee may be provided with additional paid or unpaid leave to take care of family or personal responsibilities, thus facilitating the coordination of work and private life.

Father days and mother days

In Lithuania, parents having family responsibilities, raising 2 or more children under 12 years of age or one child with a disability under the age of 18 years, can take advantage of additional days off, which are called mother days or father days. They belong to both parents every month.

1 additional rest day per month - for each of the parents, raising 2 or more children under 12 years of age or one child with a disability under the age of 18 years. 2 additional rest days per month - for each of the parents, raising 3 or more children under 12 years of age. Rest days are provided by paying the employee his/her average wage.

This additional rest time can be used flexibly. For instance, if 1 additional rest day belongs to the employee, he/she can request to shorten his working time by 2 hours per week.

Free half-day on the first day of the school year

Working parents who do not have the right to use father days or mother days are provided with an additional free half-day on the first day of the school year. This right can be used by parents who have 1 or more children under 14 years of age, learning under preschool, primary or general education programmes. This time is paid by paying the average wage of the employee.

Leave for parents who raise children and children with disabilities alone

Additional annual leave is granted for single parents who raise a child under 14 years of age or a child with a disability under 18 years of age alone. They are allowed more annual leave – 25 working days, if they work five days a week, and 30 working days, if they work 6 days a week. The right for this leave is also granted to employees under 18 years of age.

Training leave

Training leave may be granted in case the employee studies under formal education programs and (or) non-formal adult education programs.

The employees who are studying under formal education programmes (for example, studies at university, studies at vocational training school) after submitting the certificate confirming it to the employer, can be provided with training leave for the following activities:

- to prepare for and to take usual examinations – 3 calendar days for each examination;

- to prepare and take credit tests – 2 calendar days for every credit test;

- to perform and consult for laboratory works – a number of days, which is set out in the curriculum and syllabus;

- to finish and defend final (bachelor's, master's) work, doctoral dissertation or art project – 30 calendar days;

- to prepare for and take state (final) examinations – 6 calendar days for every examination.

The employees who participate in the non-formal adult education programmes (for example, computer literacy, language learning courses, various seminars and etc.,) are provided with training leave for up to 5 working days per year to participate in non-formal adult education programmes. Such leave is provided after informing the employer no later than before 20 working days. They can be provided immediately or in parts.

Creative leave

The employee can be provided with creative leave for up to 12 months to create art work or science work. The payment of wages on this issue is set out by the Labour Law Norms and agreements of the parties.

Unpaid leave for personal or family reasons

In Lithuania, the employer shall satisfy the request of the employee to provide unpaid leave no sooner than it is requested by the employee, if such request is submitted by:

- the employee, raising a child under 14 years of age – up to 14 calendar days;

- the employee with a disability, as well as the employee, raising a child with a disability under 18 years of age or nursing a person with a disability, whom the necessity of constant care is established – up to 30 calendar days;

- during maternity leave and parental leave at the request of the father (the mother during paternity leave); the total duration of this leave may not exceed three months;

- the employee nursing an ill family member or a person living together with the employee, or the employee has submitted the conclusion of health care institution about his/her health condition – for the period, which is recommended by health care institution;

- the employee to get married – up to 3 calendar days;

- the employee to participate in the funeral of a deceased family member – up to 5 calendar days;

- the employee in cases and on order, as established in the collective agreement – duration established in it;

- this leave may be paid on the initiative of the employer;

- unpaid free time is provided to the employee to satisfy his/her personal needs at the request of the employee and on the agreement of the employer during the working day (shift).

Source – Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania, Articles 135, 136, 137, 138.

Career consultation

The department of an organisation or a person who is responsible for the staff can provide services of career consultation for the employees of the organisation before and after a career break, which can be taken because of care for children and other persons, health

problems, aims of training and professional improvement. During career consultations, the employee is assisted in preparing to leave and return to the working place smoothly, and expectations and plans are discussed.

During career consultation, before or after a career break, the plan can be created, in which the employee and organisation agree on such clauses:

- forms of more flexible work organisation, after returning to work (for example, flexible work schedule, individual mode of working time, remote work);

- maintenance and raising and updating the qualification during a career break, in the end or after it;

- the need for an employee to be involved in the activity of the organisation, socialising, and periodical work meetings voluntarily during career break;

- the need of the employee to be involved in informational systems of the organisation (for example, a document management system) and in communication channels (for example, newsletters, intranet, etc.);

- possible career perspectives and expectations within this organisation for the employee after returning from their career break;

- the preparation of the organisation to respond to new needs of the employee to coordinate their work and private life (for example, the need to work at the work place, adapted to persons with disability or with health disorders, for persons, raising or patronising minor children, etc.) after their career break.

Measures for those who are on parental leave

To encourage a faster and smoother return to work of the employee after parental leave, the organisation, can apply target measures, when the employee is on the above-mentioned leave. In case of a long career break, which usually relates to parental leave, the employee can lose working skills, professional contacts, motivation to work at the same working place, can feel too detached from the activity of the company, nature of work, staff.

In case of such reasons, the employer may encounter a higher employee turnover, a larger number of employees who do not return after parental leave, and a longer and more complex process of adaptation of returned employees. Therefore, the employer is recommended to have and propose measures, which are dedicated to the employees who are on parental leave. In every case, they should be applied **only with the agreement of the employee.**

Such measures might be as follows[5]:

- seminars for the improvement of qualifications, training, and courses (remote or direct);

- access to the platforms of self-study courses;

- subscription to professional media channels and internet websites;

- newsletters;

- invitations to periodical work meetings of staff;

- invitations to events of the organisation or staff socialisation;

- KIT (Keeping in Touch) days (periods, when the employee returns to work for a short time and joins the staff);

- maintenance/ increase of wage level for the employees who are on parental leave;

- the opportunity to maintain a package of benefits, etc.

Warranties at work and financial incentives for nursing and care of employees' relatives

The organisation can contribute financially to the expenses of nursing and care of employees' relatives through several methods:

- by paying target benefits to the employee as a premium to the wage;

- by covering costs incurred and reasoned by the employee for nursing and care;

- by financing the services of nursing and care directly.

Financial support may be of definite period and size, i.e., by establishing the period of financial support and part of the payment (percentage) in case of partial financing. These conditions must be applied **equally for all employees.**

The employee, to coordinate work with nursing and care of relatives, can agree with the employer on a flexible work schedule, individual mode of working time, remote work, part-time work, and unpaid leave. The employer is authorised by Labour Code (see Art. 28) to assist the employee in executing his/her family responsibilities.

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5 Fair Work Ombudsman. 'Best Practice Guide: Parental Leave', 2013. Access via internet: https://www.fairwork.gov.au/sites/default/files/migration/711/parental-leave-best-practice-guide.pdf.

Kindergartens and employment

By reacting to insufficient supply and availability of the services of child care, some organisations equip a room for children of employees on their premises with or without a supervising individual. The kindergarten of employees' children can be incorporated. The premises for children should be adapted to their different needs – preparation for lessons, spending of leisure time, education and so on.

In case the room or kindergarten is absent within the organisation, the costs incurred by employees for child care (kindergarten, nanny, etc.,) can be reimbursed by the employer by establishing a period of reimbursement and (or) size (percentage) in case of partial reimbursement.

The organisation can also organise non-formal activities for children of employees during their leisure time or to reimburse the costs (part or whole) incurred by the employees. The non-formal educational activities for children of employees can be as follows:

- children's camps;
- circles;
- sport workouts;
- culture events;
- trips, etc.

Such measures assist the employees, in having children to coordinate family and work responsibilities more effectively.

Benefits for leisure time

The organisation can provide the employees with additional benefits to spend family and personal leisure time, for example, by providing the opportunity to use:

- a gym;
- a pool;
- sports lessons;
- art lessons;
- culture events, etc.

Benefits for health

The organisation can provide the employees with additional benefits to maintain good health of the employees, for example, by providing the opportunity to use:

- private health insurance;

- preventive health check-ups at the working place;

- vaccines;

- services of physiotherapy, massage, SPA;

- gym, pool;

- health package (vitamins, food supplements);

- additional day-off to use health services.

Workation

Workation is an opportunity for employees to work remotely from any place in the world, which allows coordination of rest and work. The employees should agree date, duration and place of workation with the employer in advance.

This is a perfect motivational measure, which allows the employees to run away from the routine and to rest after working hours qualitatively.

3.2 Examples of good practice from abroad

Taking into consideration good foreign practice, it can be witnessed that the most successful examples for coordination of personal life and work arise from a clear understanding of the employees, what needs they have, and a high-minded decision to meet these needs. Such decisions often require an essential change of practices applied previously, which are already obsolete in the contemporary world.

For example, the company of tax services 'Ryan, LLC' started changing practices of working time registration and focusing more on the productivity of employees in a long-lasting perspective. Such a change of attitude has required to provide an opportunity for more flexible work schedule for employees, to reject the registration of usual long working hours and observation of spent time at the working place, and to provide an opportunity

to work from home. This method has resulted in higher satisfaction among employees and a clear increase in work results[6].

Lists of companies ensuring the satisfaction of employees and balance of personal life and work mostly show that these organisations, which take into account emotional health, personal needs and contemporary life challenges of employees, win the most[7]. The measures outlined in the previous section have been successfully applied from various perspectives, within many foreign companies and organisations. To ensure the well-being of the employees and to become attractive characters in the rapidly changing labour market, the organisations adopt both practical and more innovative measures to promote the motivation and well-being of employees.

Practical measures, which respond to the aspects of personal life of employees, usually touch upon additional paid day-off for health, care of relatives, and, in the case of IKEA – for moving out[8]. One of the companies, that has a long-lasting reputation for the satisfaction of employees is 'Unilever'. The company has been listed as one[9] of the best employers in the UK for over a year. One of the measures, ensuring the balance of personal life and work of its employees is a parental leave policy applied within the company. The company assigned a paid maternity leave of 40 weeks and paid adoption leave of 90 days. With these measures, the company assists its employees in coordinating their work and personal life responsibilities easier. The company also provides emergency child care and grants subsidies for kindergartens.

Among the innovative measures, it is worth mentioning the increasing attention and opportunities for employees to contribute to the activities of community mobilisation or volunteering. For example, the UK company 'QVC UK' has launched a programme, which assigns land plots for the employees to provide them with an opportunity to grow their own fruits and vegetables. The employees, by using this method, are encouraged to live more sustainably, to spend more time outside, and to donate the profit collected from

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6 Wilson, A. 10 businesses that have mastered work/life balance. Workstars, 2020. Access via internet: https://www.workstars.com/recognition-and-engagement-blog/2020/03/12/10-businesses-that-have-mastered-work-life-balance/.

7 Campbell, M; Gavett, G. What Covid-19 Has Done to Our Well-Being, in 12 Charts, Harvard Business Review, 2021. Access via internet: https://hbr.org/2021/02/what-covid-19-has-done-to-our-well-being-in-12-charts.

8 Maxwell, G. Employee and Labor Relations Student Workbook: Case Study Series on Work-Life Balance in Large Organizations, Society for Human Resource Management, 2008. Access via internet: https://www.shrm.org/certification/educators/Documents/Worklife%20Balance%20Case%20Final_SW.pdf.

9 Bishop, C. Huit entreprises londoniennes qui sont en train de révolutionner l'équilibre entre travail et vie personnelle, WeWork Ideas, 2019. Access via internet: https://www.wework.com/fr-FR/ideas/professional-development/management-leadership/eight-london-companies-that-are-revolutionizing-work-life-balance.

grown fruits and vegetables to local charity organisations[10]. Such an example of a social liability is usually defined as an effective method to improve the feeling of satisfaction, and balance of personal life and work of the employees, especially on a local level.

3.3 Formation of work culture and communication

It is significant to understand that if the organisation has confirmed measures for coordination of work and personal life, it does not necessarily mean that these measures are, in fact, used. After performing surveys of employees within the organisation, it is commonly ascertained that the employees do not know about certain opportunities to coordinate their personal life and work. Consequently, internal communication may have a decisive impact on the assistance in reaching a balance for employees.

The employees can also avoid using such measures if they know that the organisation's culture and working environment is not favourable for those who actively coordinate work and personal life responsibilities; therefore, the role of the employer is essential in the creation of an organisational culture, which would be favourable for those coordinating their personal life and work.

The following sections provide advice for the employer concerning how to inform employees about available opportunities to reach a balance between work and life, and how to formulate an open work culture where the employee would not feel they have to hide their need to coordinate work with their personal life.

3.3.1 Internal communication

The survey of employees' opinions and 'focus groups' usually show that employees do not use the measures for coordination of their personal life and work, which exist within the organisation, because they often do not know about such opportunities. The internal communication of an organisation is very important as a means of providing information concerning what measures are available, as well as what measures could be used and when to employees. To increase the information for employees about opportunities to coordinate personal life and work, the employer can:

- prepare campaigns of information about measures for coordination of personal life and work, which exist within the organisation;

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10 Jackson, L. Why wellbeing works for business, The Guardian, 2017. Access via internet: https://www.theguardian.com/careers/2017/feb/17/wellbeing-works-for-business-uk-workplace-mental-health.

- ensure that the communication is constant, for example, by sending reminders through the organisation's newsletters about the balance and measures that will assist in reaching it;

- adapt strategic communication, for example, to communicate certain measures during the relevant period (the employees are reminded of study leave before their examination session, etc.);

- provide the information about measures for the coordination of personal life and work in a convenient way, for example, by converting official documents related to the coordination of personal life and work policy and (or) measures into visually attractive ones, usually as easily understood reminders;

- ensure the staff specialists are ready to present the opportunities to use measures and to answer questions related to the balance of personal life and work of employees.

3.3.2 Raise of consciousness of employees and employers

The surveys of employee opinion and focus groups can disclose that employees are reluctant to use available measures for the coordination of their personal life and work, and fear that they will be disadvantaged by other colleagues or employers, and that it will impact their career opportunities, or they do not want their colleagues to doubt their motivation. Therefore, they avoid expressing their needs related to their family and personal life. To change this approach, the employer can promote the consciousness of employees in various methods:

- by executing the campaigns of consciousness concerning the importance of coordination of personal life and work;

- by establishing theme weeks of communication for the discussion of the challenges of coordination of personal life and work;

- by organising discussions of employees or non-formal meetings about the needs of the staff;

- by executing surveys of employees and focus groups about how they succeed in coordinating family, personal life and work responsibilities.

It is important to pay attention to the fact that consciousness is necessary on the whole level of the organisation, therefore it is recommended:

- to prepare training courses concerning raising the consciousness of employers who make decisions concerning the flexibility of work of employees, coordination measures, overtime, workload, etc.;

- to introduce the topic of balance into the training courses of staff specialists to be prepared to provide employees with necessary information about measures available for them;

- to set clear provisions of non-discrimination in the perspective of persons who use measures for coordination of personal and work life in internal documents, and through this method, form a favourable standard of the level of organisation.

3.3.3 Example of employers

The example of employers, involvement and taking of liability are very important factors, both to ensure that measures which facilitate the coordination of personal life and work would be implemented and used, and in the creation of a work culture, which would be favourable for the needs of family problems and personal life of employees.

What you can do as an employer

- Set an example that you would like your employees to follow. If you reply to emails, calls and/or participate in the meetings during your holiday or outside of working hours, you leave the office after working hours, constantly or rarely use day offs, you send a clear message to your employees that such a work model is acceptable within the organisation and that they are expected to follow suit. It is important to understand that the behaviour of the employer is noticeable, and it forms clear expectations for other employees of the organisation.

- Encourage and support employees who communicate openly about their needs related to their family and personal life. The inspiration for employees to talk more openly about their personal life can be reached by your own example – share challenges you encounter when coordinating personal life and work. Establish a new standard that open communication about the coordination of personal life and work is acceptable.

- Never criticise or embarrass employees who have to leave a meeting or work earlier because of their family and personal responsibilities publicly. Show them understanding and support for their needs.

- Never make a decision not to allow an employee to a business trip or event after working hours on the basis that he/she has children. Conclude equal conditions for all employees to participate in business trips and important events, and if the employee informs that, because of his/her family or other personal reasons he/she cannot participate, search for another person.

- Conclude conditions for employees to come to you for issues concerning their personal life and work.

• Organise routine meetings with employees (for example, once a month), during which you would ascertain the needs of the employees concerning the challenges raised for the coordination of work and personal life, and what support and help is needed at work for a more effective coordination. Having ascertained the needs of the employees, meetings can be organised less frequently. Their organisation is necessary for the involvement and increase in the availability of employers to solve these issues from the perspective of the employees. You may not be able to solve all the challenges, but the attention and effort shown can ease the burden on employees in their personal lives and relieve their additional anxiety, tension and stress.

• Review the workload of employees constantly, by ensuring that the aims raised and tasks set out are possible to perform during working time. Talk with the employees to ascertain how much time is needed for them to perform various tasks. Sometimes, tasks may take much longer than they may seem. If necessary, apportion tasks between team members and (or) prioritise tasks which need to be performed first.

3.3.4 Rules followed by everyone

It is recommended to establish clear internal rules for the creation of a friendly environment within the organisation to coordinate work and personal life, which would help employees to maintain a distinction between work and personal life. It is important that the rules would be introduced and followed both by all employees and employers of the organisation. Rules can be various depending on the nature and specificity of work within every organisation. Several proposals that should be expedient to involve are provided below:

• colleagues are not called outside working hours (unless in exceptional cases);

• letters for colleagues are sent only during working hours (for one reason or another, when working before/after working hours, automatic sending of a letter during working hours is set);

• colleagues are not messaged/called during their vacation/incapability;

• the organisation clearly communicates that the employees are not expected to be available during vacation or incapability;

• a professional communication system is used for communication between colleagues, thus preventing possible messaging/calling outside working hours;

• it is agreed that employees in their personal computers/telephones do not have installed communication platform used during working hours and do not check e-mail;

• efforts are made not to organise important meetings at the beginning and end of
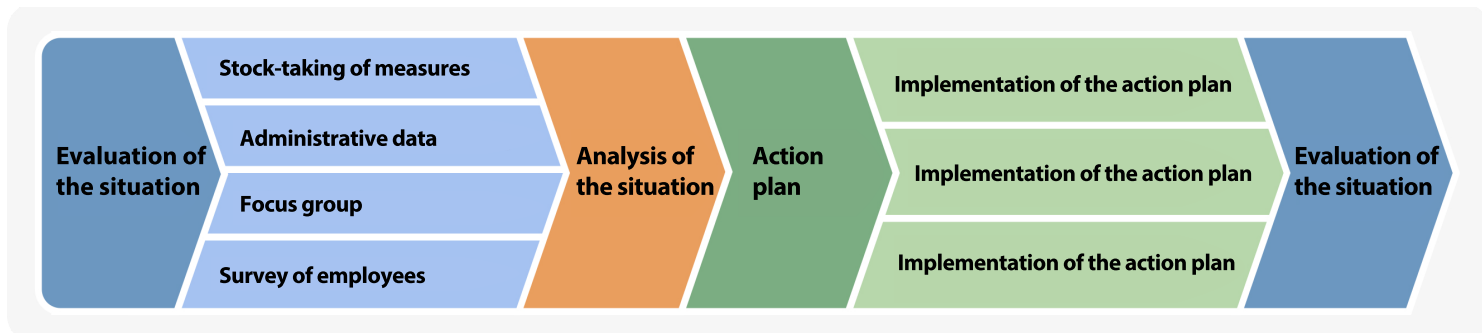
the working day, so that employees who have children could drive children to school or to pick them up. Social events or important meetings are not organised after work.

• personal life and rest time of the employees is respected, tasks which have to be done outside working hours are not delegated, or it is agreed in advance and set out that the employee will be remunerated for it.

4. Good practice: the case of 'Swedbank'

Prepared by: Kristina Vabolytė, Senior Staff Consultant at 'Swedbank' and Margarita Jankauskaitė, Expert of Center of Development of Equal Opportunities

'Swedbank' in cooperation with the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and Center of Development of Equal Opportunities, has been installing a sustainable policy assisting in reaching the balance of personal life and work[11]. The following scheme provides the sequence of executed actions.

Evaluation of the situation		Analysis of the situation	Action plan		Evaluation of the situation
	Stock-taking of measures			Implementation of the action plan	
	Administrative data			Implementation of the action plan	
	Focus group			Implementation of the action plan	
	Survey of employees				

4.1 Before starting work

The development of a high-quality policy for coordination of work and personal life that meets the needs of employees is a thorough, responsible and creative job. Therefore, before starting work, we have compiled a team of people having the power to make ideas and decisions. We have compiled the working group where the colleagues from different divisions of the personnel board, units of Communication and Sustainability, 'Swedbank' academies in Lithuania, were invited to join. More insights and (or) proposals are guaranteed when colleagues of different ages are involved in the mutual creative process. Balanced teams from the perspective of genders also add value. We even have taken into consideration these aspects when organising surveys and forming 'focus' groups we were reaching out to involve employees of different age groups, genders, and fields.

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11 The case of good practice based on experience which was collected in cooperation with „Swedbank" AB is provided. The actions described have been implementing during 2020-2022 years during implementation of the project „Everybody talks about it: the coordination of work and personal life becomes a reality". Project has been implemented by the Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson together with Center of Development of Equal Opportunities and Agency of Social Advertisement 'Nomoshiti'. Experts of gender equality, equal opportunities, communication and creative area have been consulting and working together with the team of organisation during the whole process.
Project is partly financed by the funds of the program of European Union Rights, Equality and Citizenship (2014-2020). More information on www.daugiaubalanso.lt.

4.2 Overview and analysis of good practic

Before taking into consideration how to ensure the package of measures proposed within the company, it would give as much benefit as possible for the balance of work and personal life of the employees, in the beginning, we ascertained what measures are applied in other companies both Lithuanian and foreign.

Having performed the analysis of the information, we noticed that the list of possible measures is long (see Control list of measures for coordination of work and personal life, see Appendix 1). Most of them were already proposed within the company. It has helped us to better understand where we are at the starting point and to raise the question 'in which direction for we want to and (or) are able to move?' We also have identified all measures, both regulated by state laws and proposed by initiative of the company, and have prepared tables for the collection of administrative data.

Collection of administrative data

Concerning the proposal of measures, the company expects them to be effective and facilitating to reach the balance between work and personal life, and the latter for the quality of work conditions and results. Hence, the list of measures is not enough to have before your eyes. It is important to know what measures, what scope and which employees use them.

In the search for answers to these questions, we have created a table for the collection of administrative data. 30 indicators were set out for analysis. They consist of all the measures needed for the coordination of work and personal life within a company (for example, those on parental leave, those having used days for health, father days, mother days, days off to get married, days off for graduation, and other reasons) and aspects related to work specificity (for example, work on a flexible work schedule, business trips, consultations in a career centre and other reasons) – in our opinion, everything that may have an impact on the balance of work and personal life. This data was evaluated using six sections: gender, age, the family composition of employees (i.e., having children 0-6 years of age, 7-12 years of age, older than 13 years of age, and those employees who do not have children at all), the nature of the work (those working with customers, and all others), the duration of the working day (full-time or part-time work) and the city where the employee works (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, and others). To distinguish these sections, we wanted to ascertain what factors and what influences increase the willingness and (or) opportunities for the employee to use the measures proposed within the company. We have additionally taken an interest in how actively the channels of internal communication are used by the employees in the search for information concerning this topic.

After a year, by recollecting administrative data, we have reduced the number of indicators and sections. We have limited ourselves within the data, which has revealed the largest gaps in the analysis of information for the first time. Therefore, the number of indicators has decreased and three main sections left are: gender, family status (i.e., the number of children and their age), and the nature of the performed work. A primary analysis disclosed that these factors made the strongest impact on the measures, which ensure the balance of personal and professional life and whether the employees have used them in general (see the table in Appendix 1). For example, we have noticed that women are more likely to take sick leave to take care of a family member than men, and men are more likely to take father days than women; the employees who do not have children are three and a half times more likely to use days for health than those who have children between the ages of 0-6.

In our case, the age of the employees, the city where the employee works and the duration of working time were not significant factors. However, it does not mean that they will not be significant for companies with other peculiarities. The administrative data should be collected periodically (once a year) because the analysis of this information (which we will introduce later) helps to understand the tendencies specific to the organisational culture and (or) behaviour of the employees, which impact the efficiency of the application of these measures and the creation of a positive working environment.

'Focus' groups: a developed look

An analysis of the administrative data shows a general view of the company; however, it does not allow the company to notice more subtle elements. We have utilised discussions among focus groups to fill these gaps. These methods will help to draw a subjective motivation for employees to choose one or another model of behaviour.

Appendix 3 of this description provides a list of questions for a 'focus' group. Every specific case should choose questions by taking into consideration the results of administrative data: we have employed the 'focus' group as an opportunity to discuss 'problem points' more precisely, which have been emphasised by administrative data (for example, having ascertained that men use father days more actively than women use mother days) and to understand the reasons behind abstract numbers.

In a collection of participants in a focus group discussion, we can reflect upon the diversity of employees specific to the company: interlocutors can be invited to introduce different signs, such as gender, age, family status, nature of performed work, and others, and their combinations (the example of a selection table of the participants of 'focus' groups is provided in Appendix 4).

Good practice: the case of 'Swedbank'

We organised one 'focus' group. If necessary, several 'focus' groups might be formed. It is important to consider what factors may potentially decrease the openness of participants to ensure as open a discussion as possible occurs. Our organised group was hosted by people who did not work at the company: a woman and a man. Our group solely consisted of specialists to ensure that employers and their subordinate employees would not participate in the same discussion; the representatives of the staff board did not participate in the discussion either. In such a method, the participants were ensured absolute confidentiality.

When planning a 'focus' group, a backup option can be prepared in case participants of the discussion are confused and/or unwilling to share their insights openly. Our backup option was to propose anonymous feedback questionnaires in which employees could anonymously say what they were afraid to say during the meeting after the 'focus' group. However, the participants shared their opinions actively and openly; therefore, the backup option was not necessary.

The survey of employees

'Focus' group(s) help to understand the tendencies hiding under a significant volume of administrative data. The survey of employees helps to evaluate the approaches of employees more representatively, along with their impact on the organisational culture, how the opportunities to coordinate work and personal life are evaluated by the employees, and whether (or how much) the settled working routine is favourable for it.

When discussing the balance of work and personal life, the impact of proposed measures should not be emphasised: the efficiency of measures will be minor if we will not have a culture supporting the balance and existing practices. These circumstances should not be ignored, because the probability of making an action is determined by several main factors: personal evaluation of potential action, how the action will be evaluated by others, and the that it is possible to do so.

Therefore, we have taken the time to examine the approaches of employees in more detail. To develop stronger starting points of data analysis, several questions were integrated from the national survey performed in 2020 in the order of the Ombudsperson of the Office of Equal Opportunities[12]. We wanted to employ the observed differences in understanding what challenges can be solved during the improvement of organisational culture, and what challenges require more global changes at a societal level. The example of the survey of employees can be found in Appendix 5.

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12 Coordination of personal life and work. Representative survey of residents of Lithuania, 'Vilmorus', 2020 m. Access via internet – https://lygybe.lt/data/public/uploads/2020/11/balance-tyrimo-ataskaita-2020.pdf.

4.3 Analysis of situation

Data processing

Processed and summarised information (administrative data, results of the survey of employees and insights of 'focus' group) has disclosed the complexity of the situation. For example, they have shown that differences in the expectations of women and men in society impact employees' decision to use one or another measure(s) for the coordination of work and personal life. Likewise, they disclosed that the nature of certain performed functions within subdivisions can impact different opportunities to use certain measures for the coordination of work and personal life (for example, the employees working in direct customer service can choose remote work only in exceptional cases because of the nature of their work), the approaches and real practices of employees do not always coincide. Eventually, not all employees have full and comprehensive information concerning the measures proposed within the company for the coordination of work and personal life.

The diversity of employees is a significant factor enriching collective experiences and determining the success of the company. Together, it is forming an attractive organisational culture. The analysed administrative, survey, and 'focus' group data only confirmed that our lives are very complex and individual; therefore, there is no single 'recipe' for the coordination of work and personal life for everybody.

This means that it is crucial to understand the policy for the coordination of work and personal life within the company not as an object (clearly regulated, unchanging document), but as a project – live, and dynamic process. Whereas we understood that, instead of looking for balanced decisions of work and personal life that are equal for everyone, it is important to understand that every employee has the opportunity to choose and use measures that are the best for the present circumstances of the life of the employee. The deliberate package of measures and work culture formed purposefully facilitates the decision-making process.

Share the insights

One of the key principles we have been striving for since the beginning of the project is communication and involvement. We were sharing information about the project, its course and planned actions with the company's management, personnel council team, labour council of the company, heads of departments, and all employees.

This step was important in several ways. Firstly, the feedback was important for employees having participated in the surveys. The publication of insights became

particular gratifying for those who had taken the time to answer the questions and contribute in the search for sustainable solutions. Feedback helped to strengthen the feeling that the opinion of every employee is important, and attentively listening of the opinion helped to create and support the desirable organisational culture.

Secondly, the presentations accompanied by discussions helped to develop a greater understanding of the potential reasons certain answers were given, and has improved the insights of the primary analysis.

Eventually, the research material always provide a perfect opportunity to communicate and form the provisions. In this case, to re-express significant objects for the company's culture, the aim to install a work environment within the space of the employees the personal lives, the needs of every employee and the valuable approaches related to it. Therefore, we were preparing the information for employees and announcing notifications in the intranet of the company.

4.4 Towards the higher balance of work and personal life: directions of action plan

Certain measures for the coordination of work and personal life are established in the Labour Code of LR; therefore, their implementation is obliged by law. However, to implement the philosophy of our people, to keep our promise as an employer, to search for solutions that will help the employees to coordinate professional and personal needs, we have raised the objective for ourselves to create an action plan for this company, which would be relevant, specific and implementable. Throughout its creation, we have raised the following aims:

- to reduce an impact of parental leave on career opportunities of employees;

- to form and support the organisational culture that promotes and ensures opportunities to have a balance of work and personal life;

- to create a single and functioning overtime policy;

- to encourage employees to use the service of career consultation as a tool which helps to plan the career break and 'manage' it;

- to encourage the attitude of employees acting as managers towards the coordination of work and personal life;

- to increase the consciousness of employees and information about coordination of work and personal life;

We have raised specific objectives to reach every aim (30 in total); we have set out the timetable for their implementation and indicators to be achieved (an example is provided in Appendix 6).

Creation of an action plan

The main structure of our created action plan was based on administrative data, insights from surveys of employees and 'focus' groups. To specify it and to fill it with content, several meetings were arranged. During the first meeting, participants of the workgroup proposed various ideas by using the 'brainstorming' method to implement one aim or another. During the second meeting, we finally formed the objectives and set out the timetable for their implementation.

Throughout the search for ways to reach a sustainable result, we applied a holistic approach, which included levels of macro (company's culture), meso (attitudes and practices of employees acting as managers) and micro (information and proactive interest of employees of the company in opportunities proposed within the company), and at the same time, to distinct actions oriented to target groups. Therefore, we have performed additional analyses. For example, we have reviewed training courses of the company and evaluated what content could be added (see more in the Results section). For a better understanding of what measures could ease the challenges faced by the employees working with the customers directly or attitudes, the needs and expectations of the employees having children under 2 years of age, and to identify conditions facilitating and promoting their return from parental leave, we performed additional interviews and surveys.

Special attention to the action plan was drawn into the internal communication to ensure employees have a sufficient amount of information regarding the measures for the coordination of work and personal life, and the opportunities for improvement applied within the company, and that this information would reach the employees at the right time and would not be 'drowned' between other messages. We discussed what channels are the best to disseminate these messages and how to ensure the systematically of their provision.

During the creation of the action plan, we understood that internal communication was significant not only as a means of informing employees, but also in regard to the attitudes and organisational culture of employees: the more we heard about discussions concerning the issues for the coordination of work and personal life within the company, the more significant they seem to us and promote to re-think our behaviour, to change it.

We introduced the aims raised and the activities planned for their implementation to the management. Their agreement and support for the initiatives proposed by the workgroup were important in ensuring that the aim for the balance between work and personal life was an important and desirable part of organisational culture.

The employees and external experts in areas of staff management, internal communication, career management, administration of working relations and mental health, have participated in the group for action plan preparation and implementation. This composition was slightly changed during the work process; however, the main coordinating individuals remained the same. The team consisted of 12 to 15 people in total. The team conducted periodical meetings to share what was done, calibrate subsequent actions, and share insights.

Results of the implementation of the action plan

The list of measures is provided below, which was implemented within a year. Many of the measures are continuous; therefore, the results of the implementation of the action plan mark the beginning of the process rather than the endpoint.

The following are results of our work within the company, in order to ensure better opportunities for the coordination of work and personal life.

1) We have prepared and updated various documents regulating the internal order:

• The principles and guidelines for the coordination of work and personal life within the organisation;

• The information/reminder about current measures for the coordination of work and personal life: flexible work schedule, mother days, father days, days for health and other benefits proposed within the company and principles of their use; principles of contact days (Keeping in touch) for employees in parental leave.

2) Despite the need to work overtime which occurs for one or another reason, we do not encourage 'the overtime culture' within the organisation. In order to create single and functioning overtime policy, which would allow employees to participate actively in the process of their registration, would reduce the administrative workload of direct managers and would allow observing tendencies facilitating to search for the reason for overtime within the company, we have:

• prepared the rules of overtime within the organisation, which would describe the aspects of work planning, accounting of overtime, remuneration and others;

- created a functional system allowing employees to enter information about overtime;

- created tools which help to plan tasks, evaluate workloads, predict overtime, and discuss these issues within teams;

- communicated the overtime policy for managers and employees within the company.

3) Through the creation and implementation of the action plan, we have understood the importance of the role of heads of departments. Hence, we also focused on working with managers:

- updated the content of training courses for managers and added topics about coordination of work and personal life, and opportunities provided within the organisation;

- added some content into the training courses dedicated for managers with aspects highlighting the role of manager within the team, in order to reach the balance of work and personal life;

- (for example, by installing measures of flexibility, ensuring opportunities for coordination of work and personal life, by defining the spectrum of liabilities for manager and employer more clearly);

- educated competencies of managers in the area of mental health care, by providing knowledge on how to recognise employees who have emotional disorders, the ones who are at risk of burnout, etc;

- invited the managers to the discussion with a sociologist M. Pivoriūtė about the fast time, as well as inviting them to the groups of self-reflection and discussions, where they had an opportunity to know themselves better, to evaluate their balance, to find reasons for the balance deficiency in their life, to acquire skills how to talk about this topic with the employees of their team.

4) To encourage employees to use the service of career consultation as a tool facilitating planning career break and 'manage' it, we have:

- collected the team of employees who have used the career consultation and generated ideas together with them on how it is possible to introduce the service of career consultation for employees and to encourage them to use this service;

- prepared the communication plan with specific measures, establishing periodicity which will remind the employees about opportunities of career consultation;

- chosen a personalised form for the communication – insightful, real stories from

employees performing different functions and having different liabilities from various departments within the organisation (Example is provided in Appendix 7).

5)   In the performance of data analysis, we have noticed that the nature of work of the so-called frontline employees who communicate with customers directly, has peculiarities which determine the opportunity to use one or another measure for coordination of work and personal life proposed within the company. This circumstance has become a challenge, which was accepted to make the culture oriented to the balance of work and personal life a reality for every employee. In search of solutions, we have:

• performed the interview with frontline employees trying to ascertain what challenges of work and personal life are faced exactly by the employees of these departments;

• reviewed the current measures for coordination of work and personal life through the prism of frontline employees and have evaluated their necessity;

• agreed on further directions of work in this area..

6)   Realising that the balance for coordination of work and personal life of employees mostly depends on the employees themselves and their attitudes, we have drawn attention to communication about this topic and for the activities to increase the consciousness of employees:

• updated rules on the provision of additional benefits, where the current measures for coordination of work and personal life are described, the information performed on a 'friendly' format and delivered to the employees;

• started sending target reminders, which remind employees that they can be interested in using one or another proposed measure and how to do so;

• invited employees to participate in the challenge 'A day without meetings' and to share their own experience how they succeeded to have such day;

• believing that the examples of colleagues are inspiring, we invited all employees to share their personal stories about how they have found more balance in their lives, and we have presented the stories of the employees within the organisation;

• along with external partners we have introduced a tool - 'The formula for coordination of work and personal life', which allows to measure and self-evaluate whether you can spend as much time in different areas of life as you would like[13].

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13 The formula of work and personal life: https://daugiaubalanso.lt/formule/.

4.5 What is important to pay attention to?

We hope that our insights will help other organisations form a sustainable policy for the coordination of work and personal life within the company. This will contribute to the positive mental health and emotional well-being of employees, as well as the establishment of provisions of gender equality not only within the organisation, but also on a societal level. The most important insights and advice that are important to consider when planning changes are as follows:

- **Support of chief managers.** The whole measures for the coordination of work and personal life are a part of a wider organisational culture. The constant development of it is not possible without agreement by chief managers because it may require either small or systemic changes;

- **Agreement of community.** Even the most innovative ideas are condemned to collapse if they are not supported by the community being proposed. Therefore, when creating action plans for the coordination of work and personal life, it is important to listen to the opinions of employees and to involve their representatives in the process of generating ideas;

- **Stock-taking.** With constant changes, the needs for coordination of work and personal life are also changing. Hence, it is important to evaluate the satisfaction of employees regarding their current balance of work and personal life systematically, and to react to changes of it to ensure our understanding or reasons for changes, and that the package of measures proposed within the company is relevant;

- **Internal communication.** Internal communication is important to be employed as a tool of information and formation of the company's culture;

- **Attention to diversity.** The diversity of people is an important part of our society. The acceptance of diversity must be based on specific actions, realising that a positive experience of it is possible only if differences do not become a reason for discrimination;

- **The approach is not equal to an action.** Those who think and say that smoking is harmful to a person's health do not necessarily encourage a person to quit smoking. This rule also applies to other types of actions. Consequently, it is important to understand that the approaches declared are broadcasted through actions, the desired organisational culture and values declared are vital in real practices and experiences: if the company talks about coordination of work and personal life and the managers set an example by remaining in the office after working hours, the organisation is unlikely to expect changes in its employees' behaviour and trust the policy declared;

- **Holistic approach.** A sustainable approach for the balance of work and personal life helps to ensure that it is reached on all levels: the company forms a general policy, proposes packages of measures; heads of departments perform an important practical role in the implementation of this policy as mediators or disseminators of values; the employees take responsibility and take an interest in the information about the benefits proposed to them actively and use them by reaching the balance of work and personal life;

- **The policy for coordination of work and personal life is a process.** We are in a flow of constant feelings, emotions, thoughts and experiences. The policy for coordination of work and personal life is perceived more effectively as an ongoing process, but not a document, which has a beginning and an end.

50 ar daugiau darbuotojų turinti įmonė, vadovaudamasi LR darbo kodekso normomis, privalo turėti lygių galimybių politiką ir numatyti konkrečias priemones jai įgyvendinti (Darbo kodeksas, 26 straipsnis). Veiksmų, kuriais siekiama didesnio darbo ir asmeninio gyvenimo balanso, planas galėtų tapti integralia platesnės apimties dokumento dalimi.

Appendixes

Appendix 1. Control list

Control list of measures for coordination of work and personal life
The list is to self-evaluate what measures for coordination of work and personal life are applied within your organisations. The comments specify what action is being taken and which measure is being implemented.

Organisation: _____

☐ **Remote work**

(Comments)

☐ **Flexible work schedule**

(Comments)

☐ **Parental leave**

(Comments)

☐ **Maternity leave**

(Comments)

☐ **Paternity leave**

(Comments)

☐ **Part-time work**

(Comments)

☐ **Mother days and father days**

(Comments)

☐ **Consultation before and after career break**

(Comments)

☐ **Additional paid day offs for family, personal reasons**

(Comments)

☐ **Additional financial support for reimbursement of expenses of nursing and care of employees' relatives**

(Comments)

☐ **Room for children of employees, kindergarten, nanny or reimbursement for them**

(Comments)

☐ **Measures for those in parental leave**

(Comments)

☐ **Organisation of measures for non-formal education for children of employees and (or) financing**

(Comments)

☐ **Events for raising of consciousness of employees or informational events, occupations, campaigns on this relative topic**

(Comments)

☐ **Periodical surveys of employees about their needs and challenges for the coordination of work and personal life**

(Comments)

☐ **Benefits for family leisure time**

(Comments)

☐ **Premiums (one-time) related with any area of personal and family life, allowances and bonuses or other benefits**

(Comments)

☐ **Other measures not mentioned**

(Comments)

Evaluation: _____
_____
_____
_____

Evaluated by: _____

Appendix 2. Example of questionnaire of administrative data

Indicators	Gender		Family composition (if have children)				Nature of work*	
	Women	Men	0–6 yrs.	7–12 yrs.	13–18 yrs.	Do not have	X	Y
Employees of the company								
Persons on parental leave								
Persons who returned to work after parental leave								
Persons who did not return to work after parental leave								
Men on paternity leave								
Women on maternity leave								
Persons having used mother days or father days								
Persons having used mother days or father days								
Persons having used additional leave for examinations, credit tests, on the occasion of graduation from higher or high school								
Persons having used days for health								
Persons having used additional day off on the first day of school year due to a child learning at school								
Persons currently working on individual work schedule								

_____

* Nature of work has to be: manufacture, customer service, administration, and others. The work group of every company will have to decide which groups of employees are important to distinguish.

Indicators	Gender		Family composition (if have children)				Nature of work	
	Women	Men	0–6 yrs.	7–12 yrs.	13–18 yrs.	Do not have	X	Y
Persons currently working full-time or part of their working time remotely								
A number of satisfied requests (granted permissions) to work on flexible work schedule a year								
Persons currently working a fixed duration of working day and working days a week								
Persons currently working part-time								
Persons who were paid overtime								
Persons having used service of career consultation a year								

Appendix 3. Example of questionnaire of focus groups

Communication

How well do you feel being informed about additional benefits, and warranties for coordination of work and personal life proposed within the company? How do you evaluate the communication of this information, for example, the availability of information, clarity, provision - is it easy to find? How could this communication be improved?

Remote, flexible, hybrid work

How much has the COVID-19 pandemic increased flexibility in your place of work? How has it occurred? How do you evaluate these changes? How would you evaluate the formalisation of flexible work methods? For example, when an individual work schedule is established officially, a flexible beginning and end of the work is set, or an official agreement for remote work days is achieved? How do you evaluate situations when the employee agrees with the employer on flexibility non-officially without validating it?

Overtime policy and fixation system

How do you think what importance is to talk about overtime policy within the organisation? Who should do that? Have you heard the organisation talking about this topic at the current time?

Managers

How important is the role of the manager concerning the questions related to the conditions for the coordination of family and work (overtime/mother days/father days, flexibility of work)? To what extent is the opportunity to use measures for the coordination of family and work dependent on the decision of the manager? How clear are the rules defining conditions for coordination of work and personal life, and what is the approach of the organisation concerning these things? How much attention have you felt from the managers' side for this topic? What nature of attention was it, and how did it occur?

The formation of a favourable culture for the coordination of personal life and work

How do you think the organisation, managers and employees should be responsible for the coordination of work and personal life? What roles should they all employ by ensuring the balance? Where and in which field are there the most barriers, difficulties, and obstacles?

Appendix 4. Example of a table for target selection of the participants of a focus group

Name	Woman	Man	Under 35 yrs.	36-45 yrs.	46+ yrs.	Has children 0-6 yrs.	Has children 7-12 yrs.	Has children 13-18 yrs.	Without children	Customer service	Other	Full-time work	Part-time work
1		✓				✓							
2	✓					✓	✓						
3		✓				✓	✓						
4												✓	
5			✓	✓	✓								✓
6	✓								✓				
7	✓				✓								
8		✓							✓				
9										✓	✓		
10													

Primary table.

Name	Gender		Has children				Nature of work		
	Woman	Man	0–6 yrs.	7–12 yrs.	13–18 yrs.	Do not have	Service	Office	Manufacture
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									

Note. This table will help to select interlocutors for the discussion and to ensure that various aspects of identity would be introduced in the conversation. After entering a name, indicate what aspects of identity the human expresses. In an ideal case, no blank columns would be left, and in the perspective of genders, they should be balanced at maximum.

Appendix 5. Example of a questionnaire utilised for the survey of employees

1. How do you think you succeed to coordinate personal life and work?

1) Very well.

2) Good – there are challenges, but I manage them.

3) On average.

4) I am not satisfied. It could be better.

5) Bad. I have a lot of challenges to face every day.

6) I do not know.

2. Please answer, do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Fully agree	Partially agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Partially disagree	Fully disagree
The father can take care of children equally as the mother does					
I think it is normal if a woman returns to work without a year of parental leave					
I think it is normal when a man takes parental leave					
I think it is normal when a man takes sick leave if his child is ill or care is necessary for another family member					
The need to coordinate personal life and work is relevant only for a small number of employees					
It is normal to work overtime in my job, if necessary					
The working issues are usually solved outside of working hours					
It is normal when a person chooses not to take a vacation because of their heavy workload					

	Fully agree	Partially agree	Neither agree, nor disagree	Partially disagree	Fully disagree
I feel that responsibilities at work disturb my personal life					
I know what measures for coordination of work and personal life can be used in my job					
I can use flexible forms of work (for example, remote work, flexible work schedule) in my job without any problems					
I feel tension when I need to coordinate work and personal issues					
To pursue a career, I would be prepared to work longer by giving up personal plans (cancel a workout, weekend plans, etc.)					
Taking parental leave would impact my career negatively					
Repetitive sick leaves for family responsibilities (for example, disease/disability of children/family member) would negatively impact my career					
I have hidden the real reasons for leaving work earlier or for a short time from colleagues or an employer to settle personal matters					
I would like my working conditions to be more flexible					
My employer/manager has a favourable attitude towards the coordination of work and personal life					

3. When accepting a job offer, I would prefer a workplace where:

☐ a lower wage is proposed, but with the opportunity to coordinate work and family responsibilities conveniently;

☐ a higher wage is proposed, but without the opportunity to coordinate work and family responsibilities conveniently;

☐ I have no opinion.

4. Choose the most appropriate answers (up to 5):

If I would choose a workplace, the most important thing to me would be:

☐ wage;

☐ friendly team;

☐ an opportunity to coordinate life, personal and family life;

☐ career opportunities;

☐ an opportunity to learn and improve;

☐ an opportunity to work an interesting work;

☐ notoriety and reputation of the name of organisation;

☐ wage bonuses proposed by the organisation.

5. Choose the most appropriate answers:

The successful career of women in my workplace would be disturbed by:

☐ having children;

☐ not having children;

☐ young age;

☐ older age;

☐ appearance;

☐ care of family member with disability;

☐ nursing of family member;

☐ none of the above;

☐ other (indicate) _____.

The successful career of men in my workplace would be disturbed by:

☐ having children;

☐ not having children;

☐ young age;

☐ older age;

☐ appearance;

☐ care of family member with disability;

☐ nursing of family member;

☐ none of the above;

☐ other (indicate)_____.

6. Your gender:

☐ Woman

☐ Man

7. Do you have minor children?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Do you take care of an elderly, ill or disabled family member(s)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix 6. Example of an action plan for the promotion of the balance of work and personal life within the company

Action plan for promotion of the balance of work and personal life within the 'Company'							
Aims and actions	**Responsible person**	**2022/01**	**2022/02**	**...**	**...**	**2023/12**	**Indicators of result**
							2022	**2023**
1 aim. To reduce the impact of parental leave for career opportunities of employees	**Name, Surname**						Agreement for the statement 'Going for parental leave would impact my career negatively'
1.1. To analyse the attitudes, needs and expectations of employees having children under 2 years of age; to set conditions possibly facilitating/promoting the return from parental leave	Personnel Board						**45 %**	**35 %**
1.2. To prepare the description of 'Keeping in touch' principles and activities for employees on parental leave	Personnel Board						Proportion of men on parental leave out of all men who have children
1.3. To communicate and inform the employees about measures applied concerning the parental leave.	Communication and Sustainability Board						**2.2 %**	**Positive tendency (growth)**
1.4. ...							Proportion of employees, having formed their work under flexible schedule
2 aim. To create and support the organisational culture, which promotes and ensures opportunities to have balance of work and personal life	**Name, Surname**						
2.1. To prepare principles and guidelines for coordination of work and personal life	Name, Surname Name, Surname						**3 %**	**Positive tendency (growth)**
2.2. To prepare plan about principles and guidelines, and specific attractive measures for employees and managers	Communication and Sustainability Board						Proportion of employees having used mother days/ father days

Action plan for promotion of the balance of work and personal life within the 'Company'							
Aims and actions	Responsible person	2022/01	2022/02	...	...	2023/12	Indicators of result	
							2022	2023
2.3. ...							41% of men, 31% of women	**Positive tendency (growth), growth of women is faster**
2.4. ...								
3 aim. ...	**Name, Surname**							
3.1. ...								
3.2. ...								

People of 'Swedbank' | Story of Mykolas:
From an internship to a software engineer

13/07/2021 09:00 AM

The strength of our organisation – we, the people of 'Swedbank'. Experienced and just starting a career path, newbies of the company or colleagues having a big seniority, happy and serious – different! We want to introduce you with the experiences of different colleagues more, to share their career stories, to celebrate the anniversary of the seniority, so in this rubric of intranet: people from 'Swedbank', we will find new stories about colleagues and will be able to know each other better. Our first guest is a colleague, Mykolas Gečas, and his career story.

During his studies, in search for a nearby place for an internship, Mykolas Gečas joined a team of IT Helpers at 'Swedbank'. 'At that time, I had little hope that I would be invited or that my candidacy would be reviewed. However, as it turned out, I not only started an

internship, but a few months later, I became a specialist in the same team'. Eventually, Mykolas decided to grow within the company, and now, he is a software engineer at the 'Baltic Payments' division.

Growth 'Swedbank'

'When working in the team of IT Helper, I have had the opportunity to get introduced with and to help colleagues working in various positions. One of them mentioned that if someday I needed a consultation or assistance to ascertain career perspectives within the bank, he would help with pleasure. I did not forget the proposal and when I felt that it was time for a change, I contacted him. This colleague is a career consultant at 'Swedbank', who assisted me in ascertaining which direction I should move. Together, we purified my strengths and potential, and then, after reviewing all job offers, we chose where I could realise myself after acquiring additional knowledge. It only took my desire to grow and some time to enjoy my position on the international team'.

Perhaps you are also considering a career change? Then you have a great opportunity for a pleasant change. To discover the opportunity of career consultation, find all the information on https://social.swedbank.net/lt/karjera-2/Pages/Karjeros-konsultacijos.aspx

People of 'Swedbank' | Story of Gertrūda:
'When you feel a support, you can do more than you think'.

21/07/2021 15:30 PM

The strength of our organisation – we, the people of Swedbank. Experienced and just starting a career path, newbies of the company or colleagues having a big seniority, happy and serious – different! We want to introduce you to the experiences of different colleagues, to share their career stories, to celebrate the anniversary of members of seniority. So, in this rubric of intranet, People of 'Swedbank', we will share new stories about colleagues and will get to know each other better. Our second interlocutor is our colleague, Gertrūda Urbonaitė, and her career story at 'Swedbank'.

Just after graduation, Gertrūda joined the team of administrators at 'Swedbank'. She had been developing her desire of working for a big organisation, so on the first day, she felt as though her dream had come true. After becoming introduced to the specificity of

her work, Gertrūda wanted more and began searching for opportunities to change her profession without leaving her beloved colleagues.

'Although, I felt comfortable in the chair of an administrator, over time, I felt an increasing curiosity for new experiences and knowledge. I felt a growing desire to improve. More and more often I was dreaming of being in a new position. The only obstacle in my mind was not knowing where to start. The career consultation offered by "Swedbank" was my answer! It only took a few conversations, strong support, and a clear self-analysis to understand which direction I wanted to move into and that I was able to achieve anything I wanted!

'Together, with career consultants, we were ascertaining my interests, my skills, what knowledge was insufficient and when my strengths were. I discovered every feature by examining my work experience and specific stories, and the things I was able to purify, allowed me to come to the job interview with a much clearer knowledge of myself'.

If you also feel a desire for a change, we invite you to discover internal career opportunities at Swedbank'. All information can be found here.

Last week, we shared a career story of Mykolas. In case you missed it, it could be found [here].