



**EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum**  
**Gothenburg, 25-26 October 2017**  
**Workshop 3: Work-life balance**  
**Wednesday, 25 October 11:30-13:00**



**City of  
Gothenburg**

Venue: Room K35, Eriksbergshallen, [Maskingatan 11, S-41764 Gothenburg](#)

## Background

The workshops organised during the EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum (SAF) in Gothenburg will offer participants an opportunity to discuss the principles and rights enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights.

This workshop will focus on the principle of work-life balance, principle 9 in the social pillar, which states, “Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services.”

On 26 April 2017, the European Commission adopted [a proposal for a directive on work-life balance for parents and carers](#), which is the first legislative initiative to accompany the social pillar. The proposal aims to replace the 2010 Directive on parental leave.

In parallel, the European Commission also presented a [Communication on a non-legislative initiative to promote the reconciliation of work and private life of working parents and carers](#). The communication recognises women are still under-represented in the labour market. This is caused by women’s greater uptake of childcare or family-care, lack of childcare provisions and tax disincentives. In the communication, the Commission proposes three actions:

- Improved, gender-balanced family leave and flexible working arrangements
- Improved access to quality and affordable childcare and long-term care
- Identify and discourage financial disincentives affecting parents and caregivers

On 11 October, the Committee of the Regions organised a workshop to assess the potential impact of the work-life balance package on the EU’s cities and regions. The workshop participants recognised the key role of local authorities to develop and implement policies that support work-life balance, especially in terms of public services for childcare, long-term care, education, social services and employment.

## Objective

This workshop will discuss the Commission’s work-life balance initiative and will focus on the parts most relevant to cities, which is ensuring access to quality and affordable childcare, care for people with disabilities and other long-term care services.

The objective of this workshop is:

- to discuss the work-life balance initiative from the perspective of cities
- to identify examples of how cities can deliver the principle of work-life balance at local level (e.g. how they already do so and what can be done better in the future)
- to reflect on what support cities would need to be able to deliver this principle

## Format

The workshop will be interactive and participants are invited to share their own experiences, know-how and practical examples. The workshop will start with a brief introduction to the topic and be followed by a presentation from an invited expert. Participants will then exchange views based on some guiding questions.

Participants will be divided in small groups. Each group will discuss one or two of the guiding questions and identify 1-2 key messages. The workshop chair, presenter and facilitator will each follow one group to help moderate the discussions. Each group will nominate a rapporteur to present its ideas and key messages to the workshop plenary. Participants from the other groups will be encouraged to ask questions and further discuss the ideas raised. At the end of the workshop, all participants will agree on the 3-5 key messages to present at the plenary after lunch.

Chair: Ricarda Götz, deputy co-ordinator of the European FemCities Network and city expert on gender equality, Vienna

Presenter: Paola Panzeri, COFACE Families Europe

Facilitator: Silvia Ganzerla, EUROCITIES

- Introduction to the theme of the workshop by the chair - *10 mins*
- Presentation of the work-life balance initiative - *15 mins followed by 10 mins Q&A*
- Exchange between participants in small groups - *30 mins*
- Discussion in workshop plenary with reporting from small groups - *20 mins*
- Wrap-up and conclusions from the workshop by chair - *5 min*

## Expected outcomes

The workshop is expected to produce 3-5 key messages on how cities can deliver the principle of work-life balance through offering flexible services. The key messages from the workshop will be presented by the chair in the plenary after lunch (14h00-15h00). The key messages will be integrated into a report about the SAF meeting and inform EUROCITIES reaction to the European Pillar of Social Rights.

## Guiding questions

The workshop participants are invited to reflect on the following questions:

1. *What is your city doing to promote work-life balance? What good practices can you share from your city on improving work-life balance? What did you find worked best and why?*
2. *What kind of structures already exist in your city to promote work-life balance? (e.g. dedicated services for childcare and long-term care, networks, monitoring systems) What challenges do you face in your city to improve these structures?*
3. *How could your city better promote work-life balance for all? What support would your city need from other cities, national government or EU institutions?*
  - *Do you think if EU funding was earmarked for work-life balance services it would help your city?*
  - *The European Commission is planning to revise the EU targets for early*

*childhood education and care and develop long-term care targets. Do you think this would help your city better monitor work-life balance improvements? If yes, how?*

- *What can cities learn from one another about innovative ways to promote work-life balance?*



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For further information please consult: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>*