



## **Can men do it? Work-Life Balance is also an issue for men!**

That is the challenge that the GENDER CHECK project – a campaign that sets out to promote greater balance between work and private life for women and men in Europe“ wants to set itself.

On the initiative and under the overall control of the ARBEIT UND LEBEN federal working group, this project was put forward and accepted as a proposal of the European Training Network (ETN) within the framework of a programme set up by the EU Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equality. Other participating organisations include the CESEP (Belgium) and the Fédération Leo Lagrange (France) as members of the network.

The focus is on the development, testing and dissemination of a tool to promote balance in all areas of life – the GENDER CHECK. For this purpose, a catalogue of questions will be developed and a series of multiple choice answers drawn up. The check will be made available electronically and should include an evaluation software. The role of men and fathers will be given special consideration.

As the opening event, the European Conference in February of this year had the specific task of pinpointing the variety of existing campaigns and experiences in Europe and of examining, in particular, the role of the men in the promotion of equality.

Experts from six European countries were invited, all of whom reported on the social and economic situation in their respective countries, gave an overview of the legal regulations, wage and internal agreements and other regulations and thus shared their experiences.

As it happens, the topic of work-life balance has since become a central political and social theme. At the same time, we still lack a redefinition of the role of men and especially of fathers, even though first signs of change can be observed – to very different degrees in the various European countries. It has often been emphasised that change is not only a social challenge but that it is also economically necessary. The issue of work –life balance should be discussed within the overall context of the reorganisation of “social times”.

As a European project, the Gender-Check will be tied in with the results of the conference and accompany change processes with the development

and dissemination of this tool, which wants to make the reconciliation of work and private life a social reality, not just for women, but also for men.

Lothar Jansen / Jean-Daniel Mitton