



Parental Leaves and Family Support Policies

Results of the survey conducted at 22 companies in Italy's
Emilia-Romagna Region

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7th International LP&R seminar Leave Policies in Time of Global Economic
Crisis

Bologna, 7-8 October 2010

Hera Group

The Hera Group was established on 1 November 2002 from the union of 13 public utility companies in Emilia Romagna. Hera Group is the Italy's second largest multi-utility company for turnover.

The Hera Group offers energy, water and environmental services in 6 Provinces of the Emilia-Romagna region as well as to the Province of Pesaro-Urbino in the Marche region.

Some important information for 2009

Revenue: 4.2 billion euros

Population served: 3 million

Gas sold: 2.8 billion m³

Water sold: 257 million m³

Waste treated: 5.1 million tons

Workforce: 6,481

Public shareholders: 62%

Hera S.p.A. has been listed on the Milan Stock Exchange since June 2003.



Impronta Etica

Impronta Etica is an Italian non-profit organization for the development of a Corporate Social Responsibility culture. It was founded in 2001 by some companies located in Italy's Emilia-Romagna region.



The goal of the association is to promote sustainable development, creating a network of firms that see social commitment as an essential part of their mission and are willing to initiate social accountability practices.

Impronta Etica is also committed to strengthening Italy's presence in Europe: for this reason the association became a partner of CSR Europe in 2002 with the goal of promoting the exchange of best practices on a European level and to take part in the European debate on CSR.

The organization has 27 members. Hera Group is one of them.

Introduction

On 5 October 2009, Impronta Etica launched the Charter for Equal Opportunities and Equality in the Workplace along with other associations related to the business world, the National Office of the Equality Councillor with the participation of the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Equal Opportunity.

This Charter promotes an improved focus upon the valorisation of diversity in Italian companies.

The Hera Group signed the Charter in October 2009.

Impronta Etica and the Hera Group believe that the protection and promotion of equal opportunity is an important element for responsible management of any relationship with employees. The development of support policies for parents and families is part of this.

This is why the Hera Group and Impronta Etica have collaborated with the University of Modena and Reggio-Emilia to organise the 7th annual seminar of the international network on leave policies and research.

This is also why they have promoted a survey on paternity/maternity/parental leaves and all related company policies with a panel of companies from Italy's Emilia-Romagna region.

Survey: the goals

- Understanding to what extent employees take advantage of opportunities made available by law in support of maternity and paternity leaves;
- Recognising possible organisational issues connected to the use of these opportunities;
- Developing a better level of understanding for participating companies;
- Recognising the frequency of voluntary practice in support of parenthood at these companies;
- Highlighting the best practices to promote at these companies.

Survey: the method

Research was conducted by questionnaire. It contained 40 questions and could be filled out on-line.

The questionnaire that was provided is a partial re-adaptation of the one used by Johanna Lammi-Taskula and Minna Salmi for research conducted in Finland in 2009. The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Prof. Dino Giovannini) collaborated to draw up the final version of the questionnaire.

Participation in the survey was proposed to the 27 companies that are members of Impronta Etica and other 16 companies in the Emilia-Romagna region chosen because they came from various industrial sectors and were already committed to social responsibility policies or because they were interested in their development. 22 companies responded.

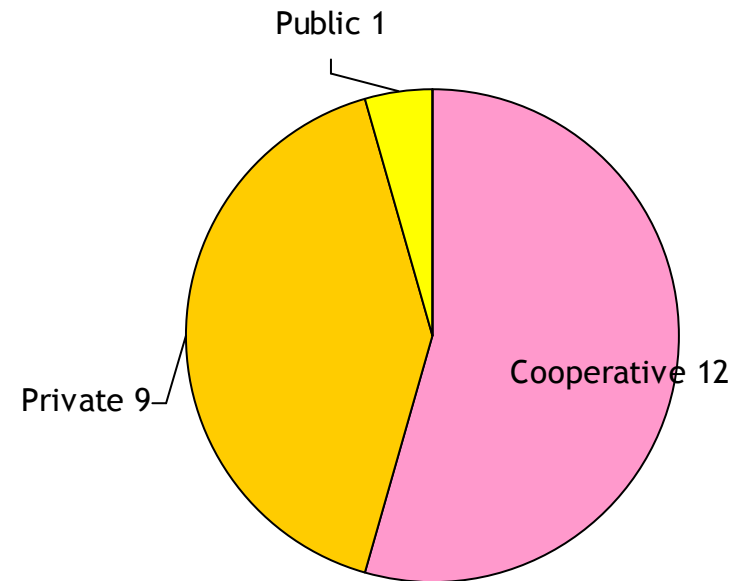
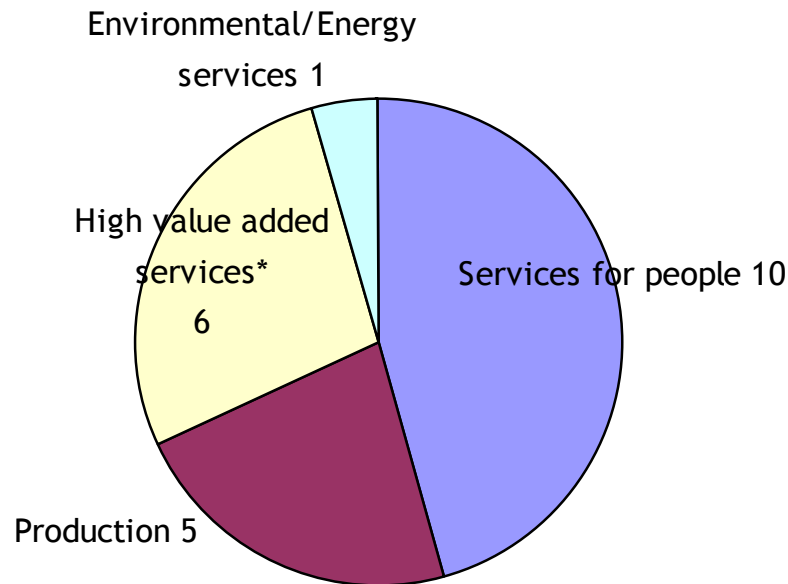
Information results pertain to the two year period of 2008-2009.

Survey: participating companies

- ▶ Cadiai Cooperativa Sociale
- ▶ Camst
- ▶ CCC Consorzio Cooperative Costruzioni
- ▶ Ceramica Cir
- ▶ CMB Cooperativa Muratori e Braccianti di Carpi
- ▶ Conad
- ▶ Conad CentroNord
- ▶ Coop Adriatica
- ▶ Coop Nordest
- ▶ CoopFond
- ▶ Formula Servizi
- ▶ Gam Edit S.r.l.
- ▶ Gruppo Hera
- ▶ Indica S.r.l.
- ▶ Mediagroup 98
- ▶ Parmalat (Italia)
- ▶ Rolland S.r.l.
- ▶ SCS Azioninova
- ▶ Unieco Soc. Cop.
- ▶ Unipol Gruppo finanziario - comparto assicurativo
- ▶ Unipol Gruppo finanziario - comparto bancario
- ▶ Zarri S.r.l.

Survey: the sector of participating companies

Sector:



Most of the companies (10 of the 22) operate in the field of offering services to citizens or high value-added services* (6 of the 22). 12 of the 22 companies are part of the cooperative sector.

Positions held by those who responded

Of the 22: 13 human resources managers/heads, 2 communication/marketing managers, 2 administrative employees, 1 administration head, 1 vice-president, 1 general manager assistant, 1 human resources assistant.

Main Results of the survey

- Analysis of staff of the company interviewed
- Use of parental leaves
- Information about leaves
- After the leaves
- Critical organisational elements in managing the leaves
- Impact of leaves upon professional performance
- Leaves and part-time employment
- Flexibility of work schedules
- Other family support efforts

Analysis of staff of the company interviewed

Female personnel

61% of the 44,796 employees from the 22 participating companies are women.

Age of personnel

The amount of female employees under the age of 42 is very limited: only 2 of the 22 companies register over 50% of female employees under 42 years of age. Most companies, 13 of the 22, register less than 30% of their female employees under the age of 42.

Type of contract

The great majority of companies interviewed have a very stable occupation: 16 companies of the 21 which responded register 90% of their employees with an open-ended contract. Only 1 company registers less than 80% of their employees with open-ended contracts.

Use of parental leaves during 2008-2009* (1/2)

Women

- 2,418 maternity leaves were taken during this two year period
- 1,619 parental leaves taken after maternity leaves
- The average duration of parental leaves was 146 days out of the 180 maximum granted by law.

Approximately 67% of these women also took a parental leave of absence during this period, following their maternity leave. The average duration of these leaves is elevated: almost 5 months.

Use of parental leaves during 2008-2009 (2/2)

Men

- 5 paternity leaves were taken during this two year period
- 88 parental leaves were taken by men
- The average duration of leaves taken by men was 18 days.

The fruition of a period of parental leave of absence by men is very low: only 88 cases during this two year period with an average duration of 18 days out of the (maximum) 180 days provided for by law or out of the (minimum) 90 days provided for the assignment of an additional month to the man (thus to the couple) of a total of 10 - 11 months.

Information related to men with rights to parental leaves of absence during this two year period is not available. However, only 5% of the 1,707 parental leaves of absence available were taken by men. This is a very low percentage considering the fact that 40% of the companies' personnel are male.

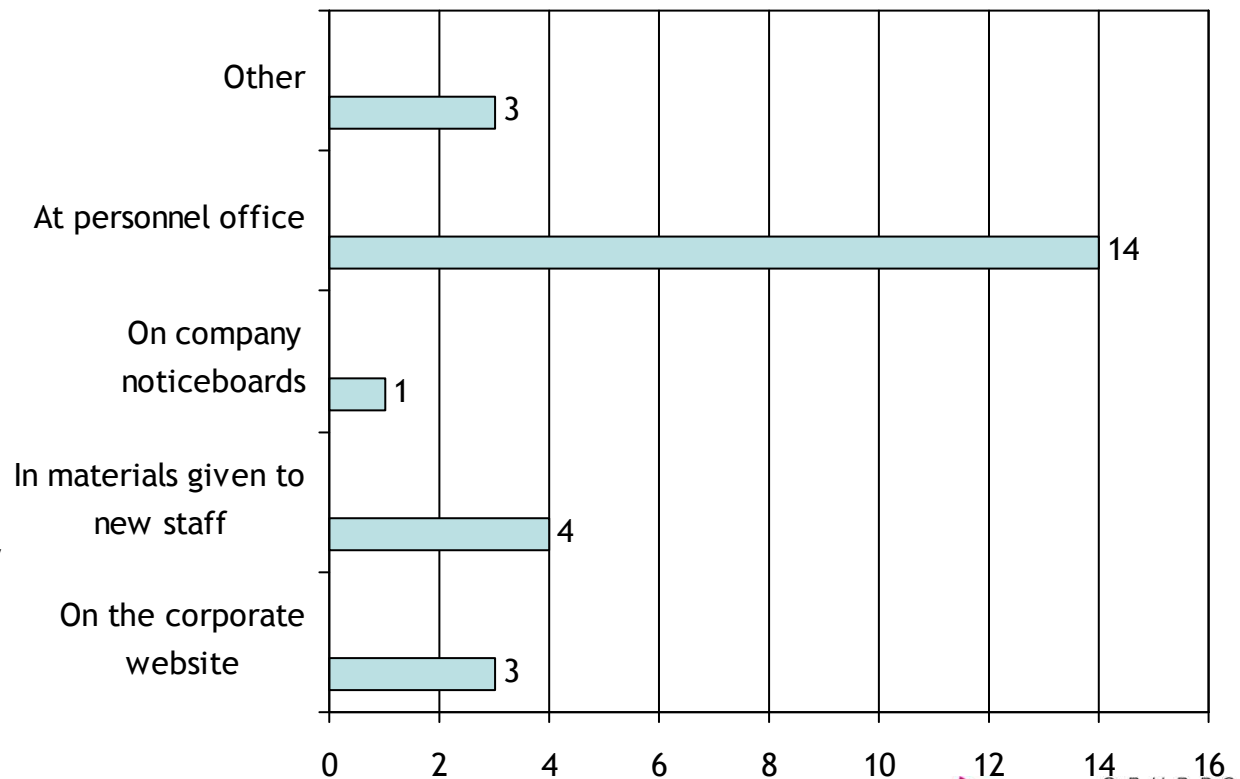
Information regarding leaves of absence:

20 of the 22 companies interviewed make the information related to the rights and duties of leaves of absence available: 1 company does not consider it necessary and 1 company does not make information available, but considers it opportune.

Where information is made available

Available information is found prevalently at the Personnel Office.

There is little use of internal communication instruments (only 3 companies use the company network and only 1 uses the bulletin board).



After the leave of absence: resignations

After maternity leaves:

- Resignations following maternity leave: a 1.6% average in 2008 in comparison with 6.6% in 2009.
- Only 4 companies registered resignations.

After paternity leaves:

- No resignations were registered following the 5 cases of paternity leaves during the two year period (2008-2009)

After parental leaves:

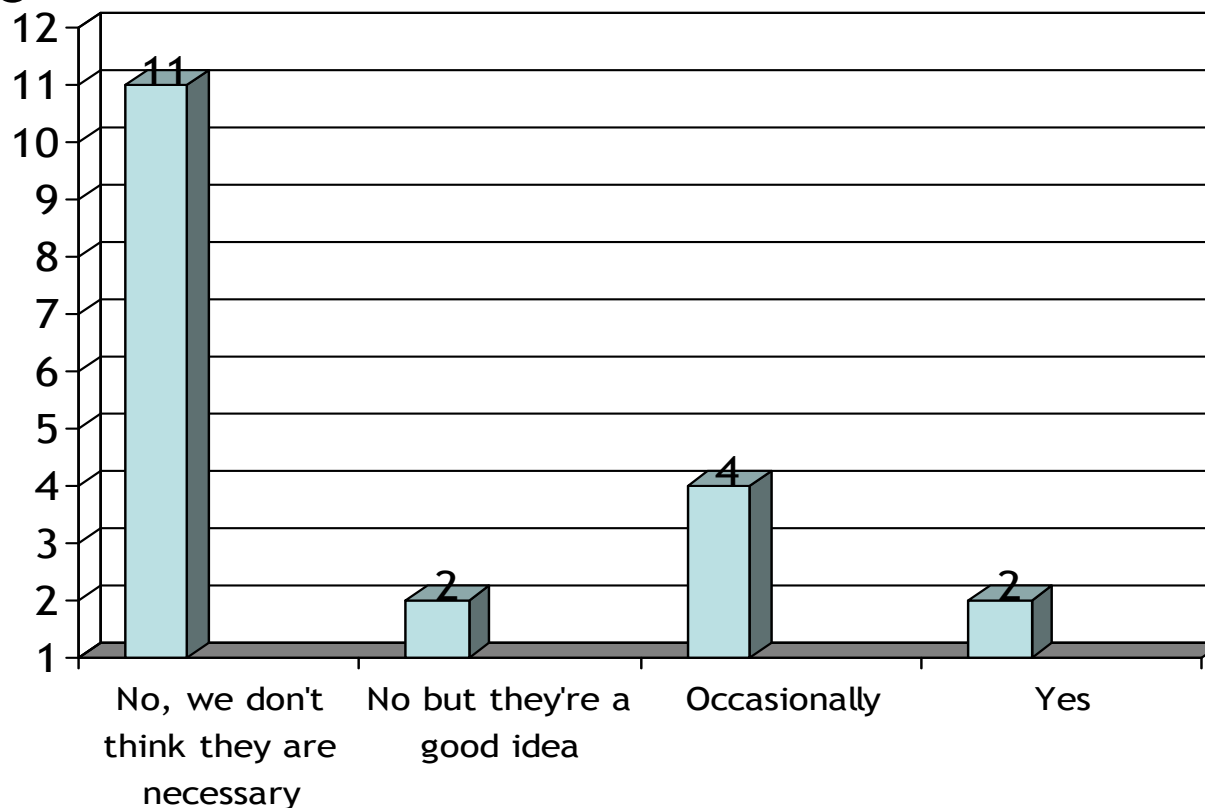
- Resignations following parental leave (both parents combined): a 1.9% average in 2008 in comparison with 0.7% in 2009.
- 4 companies registered resignations(3 companies are the same ones registering resignations following maternity leave).



The amount of resignations after maternity leave in 2009 are worthy of note. The amount of companies involved is low (4 out of 17) and they are the same ones as for maternity/parental leave.

After the leave of absence: training

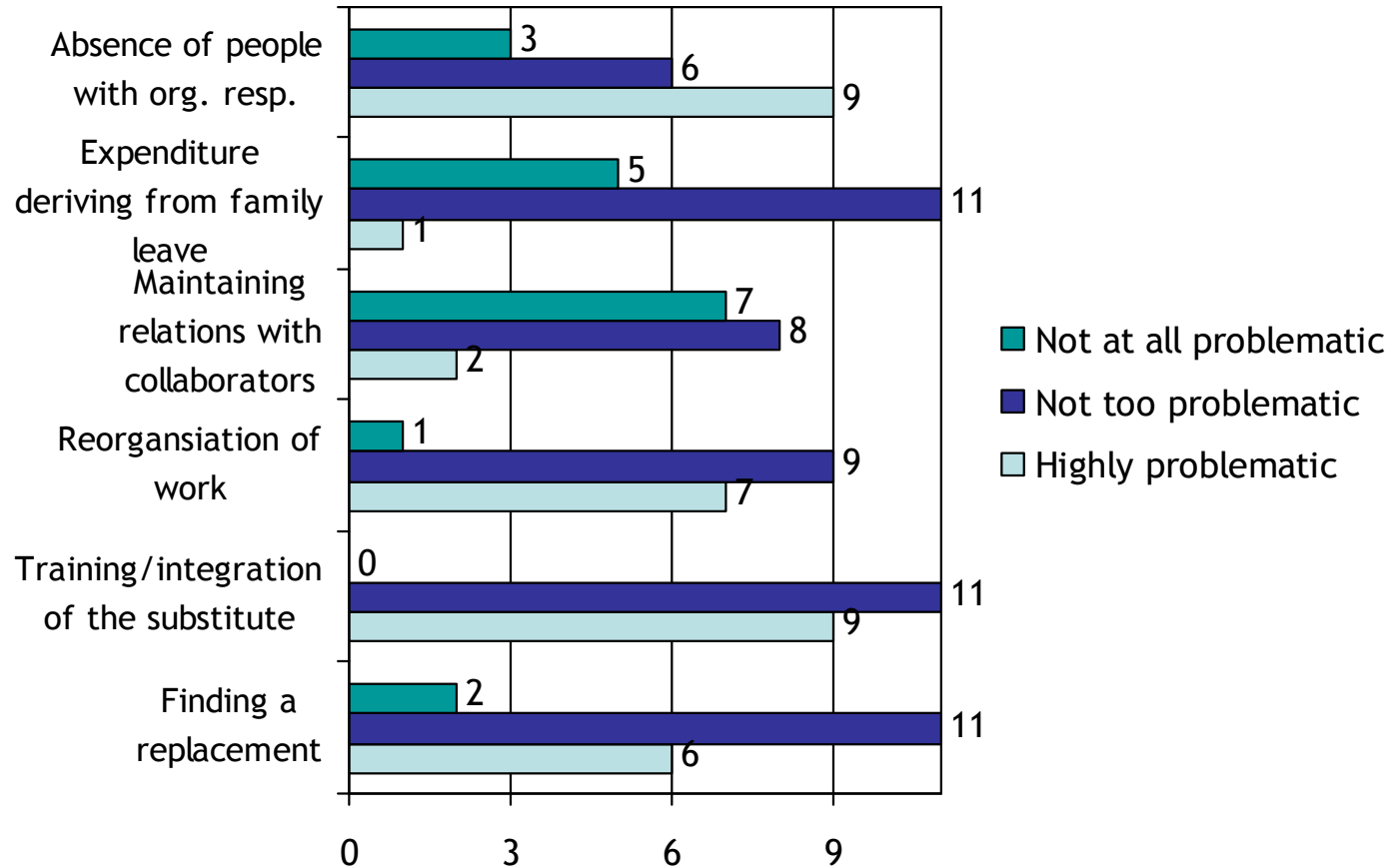
Are training or re-integration courses organised for employees returning from leaves of absence?



Most of the companies (11 out of 19) do not consider training necessary following maternity/paternity/parental leaves of absence.

This is noteworthy, considering that the average parental leave taken by women is approximately 5 months.

Critical organisational elements in managing the leaves

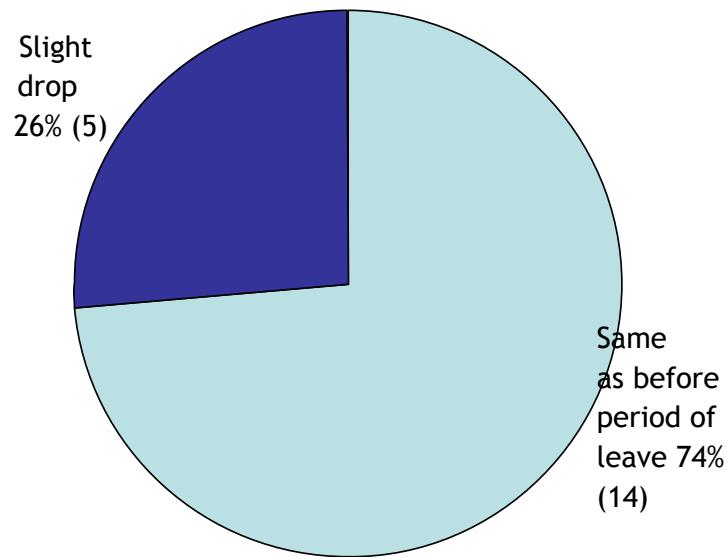


The most noted critical organisational elements considered “very problematic” in managing leaves of absence are: the lack of personnel holding a position of responsibility (9 companies out of 20) and the integration of the substitute (9 out of 20). A certain amount of issues also arise from leave-related expenses.

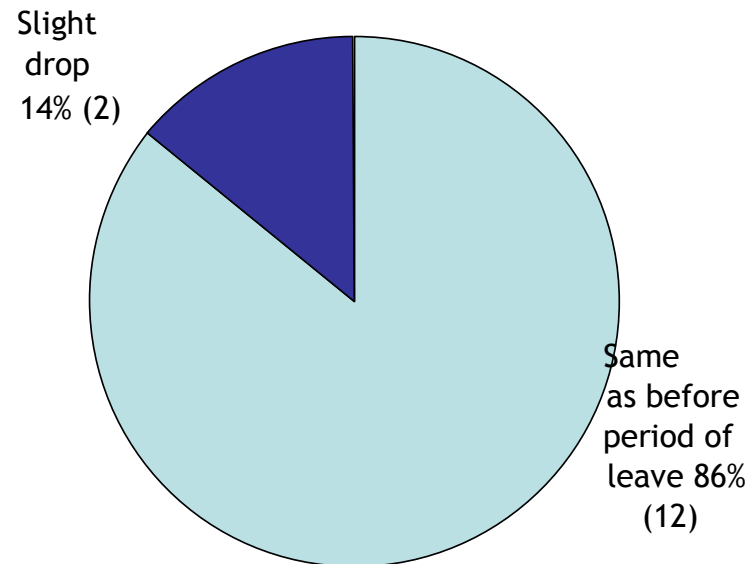
Impact of leave upon professional performance

Is professional performance altered upon return?

Women



Men



Responses indicate that professional performance is practically unchanged upon return from a leave of absence. The slight decline is registered a little more often in women's performances.

The reasons for a slight decline can be found in the amount of time necessary for updates and the lack of available time to carry them out.

Leaves and part-time employment: some notes

The request for part-time employment following maternity/parental leave from women regards employees who are almost exclusively without positions of organisational responsibility: during the two year period being examined, 9% of the requests were made by women holding no positions of responsibility in comparison with the 2% of those who do.

Requests for part-time employment from women is fairly contained.

We have noted that these companies grant part-time employment to both women with and without position of responsibility in over 90% of the cases.

There are practically no requests for part-time employment from men following a leave of absence.

Flexibility of work schedules

- 18 companies apply flexibility in both arrival and departure schedules
- 3 companies apply telecommuting
- 3 companies apply a broad choice of schedules: part-time and employees self management of schedules
- 2 companies (with over 50% of female employees under the age of 42) apply both telecommuting and flexibility in arrival/departure schedules

Other family support efforts

- 12 companies: do not develop any further actions
- 4 companies: offer scholastic support (coupons for scholastic purposes)
- 3 companies: offer financial aid for treatment of children suffering from illness
- 2 companies: offer company /intercompany daycare
- 1 company: grants loans with advantageous conditions (prestiti d'onore)
- Other:
 - 1 company provides baby-sitter vouchers
 - 1 company offers holiday homes to employees and families at advantageous prices
 - 1 company considers that in the case of an employee's financial difficulty, the Board of Directors will examine the possibility of an advance payment of his/her liquidation



Over half of the companies do not develop any particular family support efforts. Those that do are mostly committed to offering financial aid for the treatment of children suffering from illness and for scholastic support for children.

Conclusion

- Elevated use of parental leaves by women (2 out of 3) and of long duration. Men's use of these leaves is practically non-existent.
- Most of the companies (15 out of 22) do not enforce improvement measures regarding leaves of absence and more than half do not consider this necessary.
- Information pertaining to leaves of absence provided by the companies leave definite room for improvement.
- Part-time employment is not often requested and is generally granted.
- Over half of the companies do not adopt support efforts to the family other than the flexibility of work schedules.

Back up



Back up

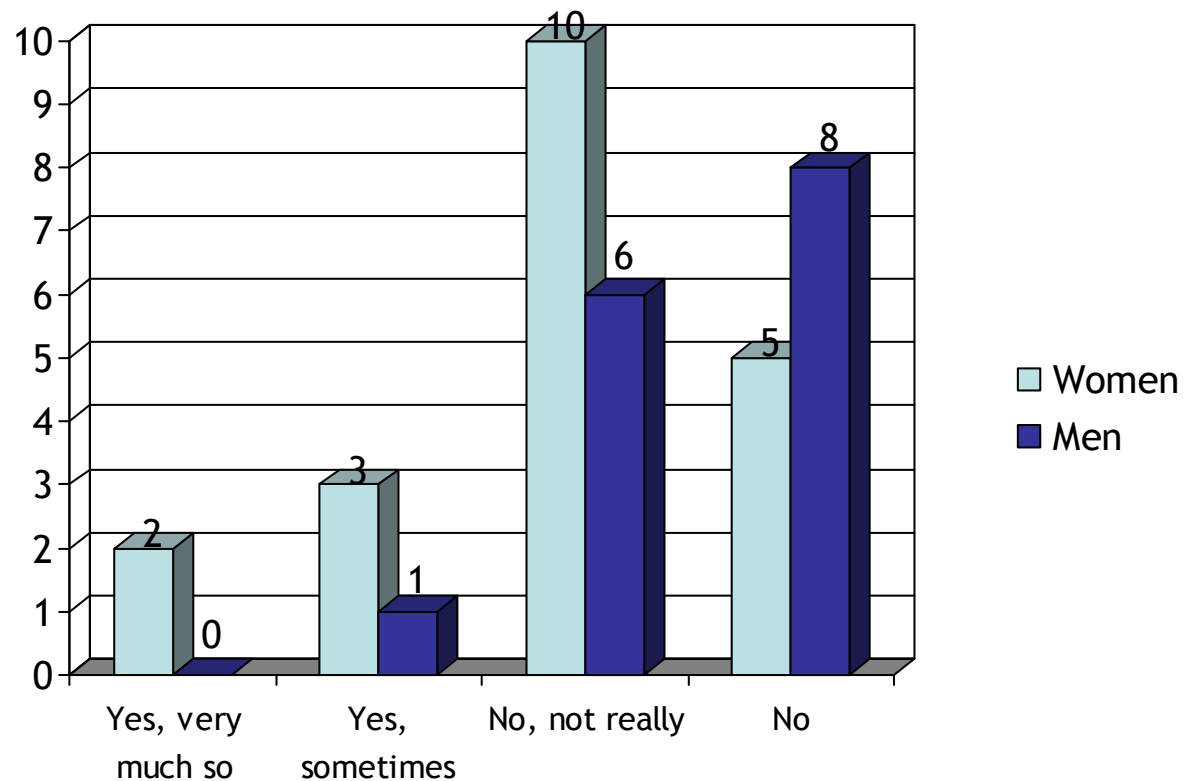
The survey: the 22 participating companies

Company	Sector	N° empl.
Cadai Cooperativa Sociale	Socially useful NPO Cooperative	1125
Camst	Restaurant industry	10330
CCC Consorzio Cooperative Costruzioni	Construction and Furniture	190
Ceramica Cir	Ceramic industry	456
CMB Cooperativa Muratori e Braccianti di Carpi	Construction and Furniture	850
Conad	Consortium of commercial and marketing services	169
Conad CentroNord	Large-scale retailer	148
Coop Adriatica	Wholesale	8822
Coop Nordest	Wholesale	4086
CoopFond	Financial	21
Formula Servizi	Hygiene, Logistic services Personal service	1719
Gam Edit S.r.l.	Lithography and publishing	15

Company	Sector	N° empl.
Gruppo Hera	Environmental and energy services	6481
Indica S.r.l.	Consultancy and Communication	6
Mediagroup 98	Communication and information services	276
Parmalat (Italia)	Food processing	2233
Rolland S.r.l.	Chemical products, detergents and dyes	16
SCS Azioninnova	Consulting and training	91
Unieco Soc. Cop.	Construction and Furniture	613
Unipol Gruppo finanziario comparto assicurativo	Insurance	4763
Unipol Gruppo finanziario comparto bancario	Monetary and financial brokerage	2348
Zarri S.r.l.	Machinery and plant production	38

Other results - After the leave of absence

Do those employees returning from maternity/ paternity/parental leave have re-integration problems?



Considering the amount of negative responses given by those interviewed, it seems that men have less integration problems following leaves of absence.

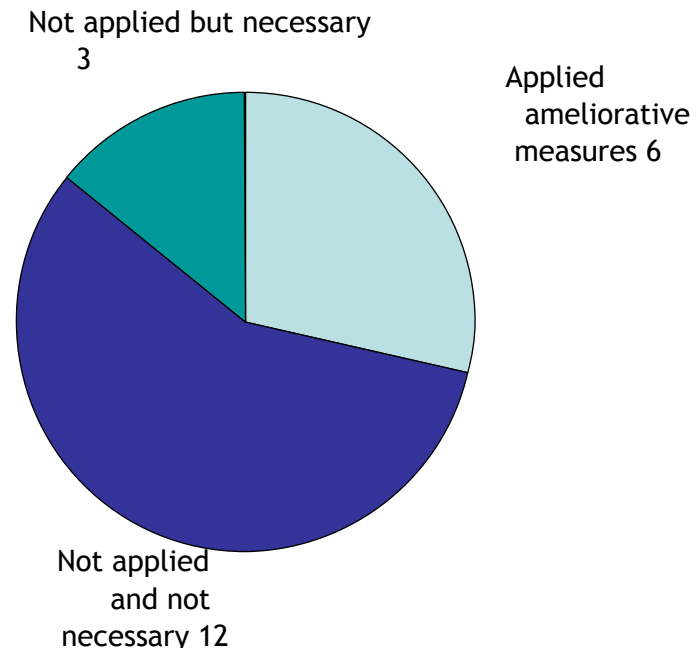
Other results - Parental leaves for sick children: amendments applied to the law (L.D. 151/2001 and smi)

12 companies do not apply amendments (improvement measures) and do not consider them a necessity.

6 companies apply improvement measures such as:

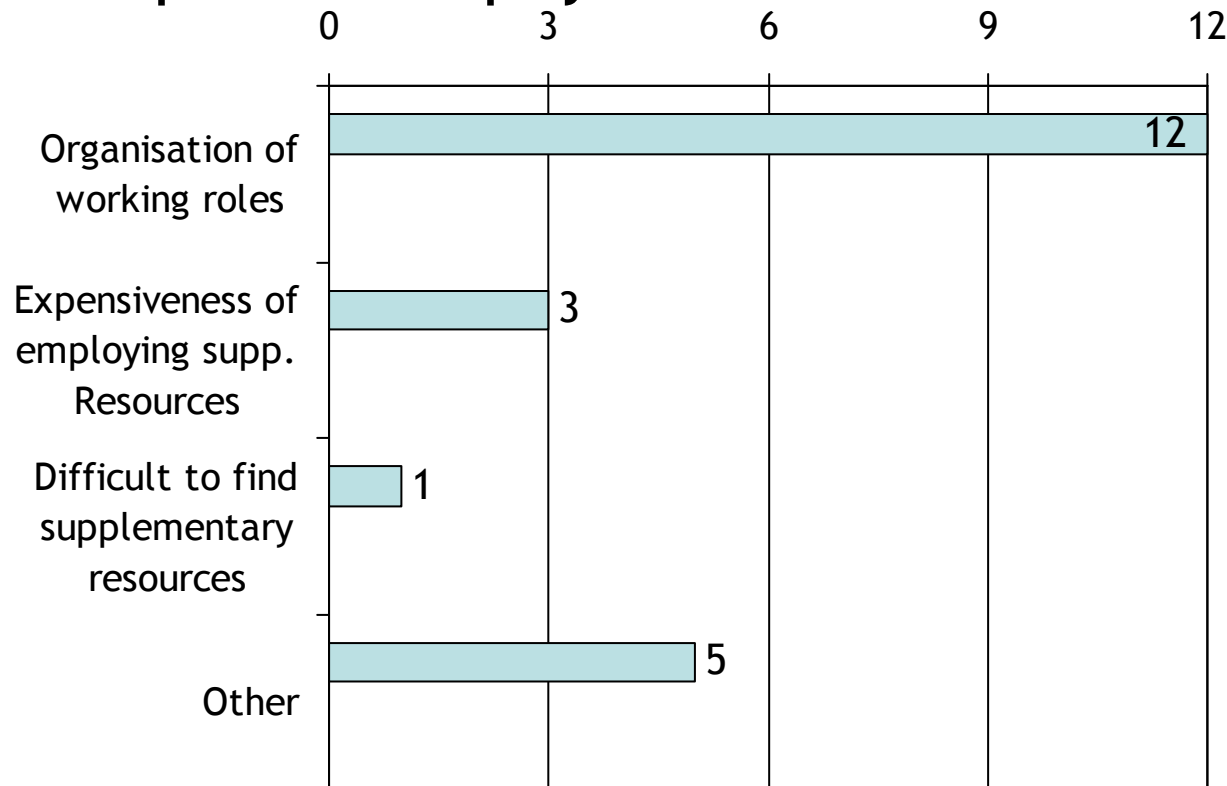
- Extending the limits of the duration of leaves for sick children (prevalently between the ages of 3 and 8 or between the ages of 8 and 12);
- Supplementary benefits for the mother's parental leave;
- Leave of absence without pay for treating children between the ages of 3 -8 suffering from a serious illness

3 companies do not apply improvement measures but they do consider them a necessity.



Other results - Leaves and part-time work: possible issues

What are the causes of problems related to part-time employment?



Is an increase in part-time employment being considered?

- 12 companies answered no
- 2 companies answered yes
- 7 companies answered perhaps

Organising professional duties is noted as the principal challenging issue when dealing with part-time employment.

“altro” (other) includes replies that emphasize the absence of problems (3 companies), as well as those challenges connected to specific activities, or the organisational management of professional activities of two people.

Other results - Other support efforts for families

Are there any support policies for the care of children from a single-parent home?

- 13 companies answered “no, we don’t think it is necessary”
- 4 companies answered “no, but it would be opportune”
- 2 answered yes:
 - Organisation of a flexible work schedule and permission granted
 - Enforcement of Protocol for the development of positive actions to reconcile personal-professional life which - among other things - includes: a two-year leave of absence without pay for serious health issues of the employee or his/her dependant family members; in case of a particularly challenging financial situation, the possibility of taking a paid 1 month leave is granted for absence due to serious health problems of family members.

Over half of the companies do not develop support efforts for de-facto families i.e.: families consisting of a couple (heterosexual or homosexual) that are not married in which only one member is a parent.

There are no laws in Italy that acknowledge rights to de-facto couples, let alone adoption by these couples.

Italian Legislation* states the following:

Duration of leaves

- ▶ Maternity leave: the employee has the right/duty to leave the workplace for 5 months, 2 months prior to giving birth and 3 months after or, upon medical certificate, 1 month prior and 4 months after the date of birth of the child
- ▶ Paternity leave: the 3-month leave of absence after the date of birth of the child is entitled to the father in case of death or grave sickness or abandonment by the mother, or if full custody of the child is granted to the father.
- ▶ Parental leave: optional leave of absences can be taken until the child is 8 years old. Both parents have this right for a maximum period of 6 months per parent and for no longer than 10 months for both parents combined. If the father takes a leave of at least 3 months, he will be granted 1 extra month, bringing the total to 11 months.
- ▶ Parental leave for sick children: parents can alternate taking leaves of absence for an unlimited amount of time necessary for the child to receive treatment until he or she is 3 years old. From the ages of 3-8, parents are granted 5 work days per year.

Italian Legislation* states the following:

Economic benefits

Maternity leave:

- ▶ By law, 80% of pay received the month before the beginning of the leave of absence is granted. In the national labour collective bargaining contracts (CCNL) adopted by the Hera Group, 100% integration is provided. Maternity leave is also paid for in the case of cessation of the professional relationship if no more than 60 days have passed since the cessation at the beginning of the 7th month of pregnancy (Legislative Decree 151/2001 art. 23 & 24).
- ▶ Holidays, Christmas bonus and fourteenth month salary also accumulate during maternity leave.

Italian Legislation* states the following:

Economic benefits

Sick children:

- ▶ No benefits are granted and holidays, Christmas bonus and fourteenth month salary do not accumulate. Leaves of absence due to sick children are calculated into seniority and deemed contributions are paid in full until the child is 3 years old; after that, until the child is 8 years old, a portion of deemed contributions is paid.

Italian Legislation* states the following:

Economic benefits

Parental leave:

- ▶ Benefits corresponding to 30% of pay is granted for a maximum overall period (both parents combined) of 6 months for parental leave of absence taken until the child is 3 years old. Deemed contributions are paid in full during these periods.
- ▶ For any further amount of time requested after the child has reached 3 years of age (until he or she is 8 years old), benefits are granted only if the revenue of the requesting parent is below 2.5 times the cost of the minimum pension wage (i.e. €14,981.53 for 2010). During this period of time, deemed contributions are granted within regulatory limits.
- ▶ Holidays, Christmas bonus and fourteenth month salary do not accumulate during parental leave.