

Work-life balance in the ICT sector: An opportunity and a way forward



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Currently, only some 17% of ICT professionals in the EU are women. This despite the fact that the sector frequently offers a favourable approach to work-life balance – almost

90 % of ICT professionals say they appreciate their working time arrangements.

Our good practices highlight some of the most effective work-life balance measures ICT companies are implementing across the EU. These measures have resulted in increased recruitment and retention of women ICT professionals, which has allowed companies to tap into a larger talent pool and reduced costs arising from high staff-turnover, lost productivity due to absenteeism, and loss of highly qualified staff due to an inability to combine work and care responsibilities.

Achieving gender equality in the ICT sector would also increase the EU's competitiveness. Getting more women into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects, which are usually needed for a career in ICT, could boost the EU's GDP by € 820 billion by 2050.

EIGE has developed a 6-step approach to help ICT companies integrate work-life balance measures into their organisations and get more women on board.

A 6-step approach:

1. Identify national work-life balance initiatives and partners
2. Identify potential resistance and develop solutions
3. Maximise buy-in from stakeholders
4. Design a solid implementation plan
5. Carefully measure progress
6. Highlight benefits and celebrate early wins

Our business case contains practical steps that organisations can take to introduce work-life balance measures. We have also created a check-list that ICT sector employers can follow to verify they have taken the necessary steps to build an organisation that provides employees with work-life balance options.

Improving work-life balance for all employees, as well as offering special support to working parents and carers, can be done in a variety of ways. The initiatives that companies can offer range from one-off events to longer-term programmes. Some require minimal time and financial investment from employers, while others require significant investment.

EIGE's project has collected examples of good practices implemented by ICT companies to improve work-life balance in the ICT sector, as well as campaigns to get more women into ICT. These aim to make ICT jobs more attractive to girls and women.

Good practices: work-life balance in ICT

Finland - Equality and diversity are cornerstones at Netlight

Netlight is a medium-sized IT company operating in seven countries. It is highly committed to equality and diversity.

All Netlight partners sign the company's Declaration of Equality and an equality clause is included in all agreements signed by the company. In order to strengthen equality and women's role in the organisation, the company launched an initiative called Vostok in 2012, named it in honour of

the spaceflight that carried the first woman into space in 1963. Vostok includes activities, such as Code Pub and Tech EQ, which aim to build networks between women in the ICT sector. Netlight also invests in recruiting new talent and maintains a strong gender focus throughout the recruitment process. Apart from enhancing diversity and productivity, Netlight's ability to recruit women is considered crucial to the company's future. Between 2013 and 2014, Netlight increased the number of women recruits by 60%.

Austria - Innovative practices at Kapsch Group: how to attract women to the workplace — and keep them there

The Kapsch Group is a company operating worldwide, with its headquarters in Austria. As part of its good-employer

policy, the company offers employees a number of measures to help reconcile their professional and personal life, such as flexible working hours, the possibility to work from home, a 'family room' on the company premises, different retirement models, and opportunities for part-time work. A number of activities are organised to ensure employees of either gender who are on parental leave can stay in the company and return to work easily.

Some ICT companies do offer a variety of generous work-life measures for their employees, but this is not true for the majority of employers. The prevalence of a working culture characterised by long working hours and unequal opportunities for training result in a lack of diversity and inclusiveness for women. Conscious effort is needed on behalf of employers, business associations and other partners in order to transform workplaces and attract highly skilled women into the sector.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) commissioned the study 'Supporting work life balance and addressing women's underrepresentation in the labour market: approaches and good practices in ICT sector'. The aim was to identify, collect and select the most promising examples of both workplace work-life balance initiatives, as

well as campaigns and projects promoting ICT and STEM skills and professions among women and girls. The study was carried out by the WorkLife HUB and supported by a network of country experts in the 28 Member States. Further information related to the study is available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/good-practices>

European Institute for Gender Equality, EIGE

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

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