



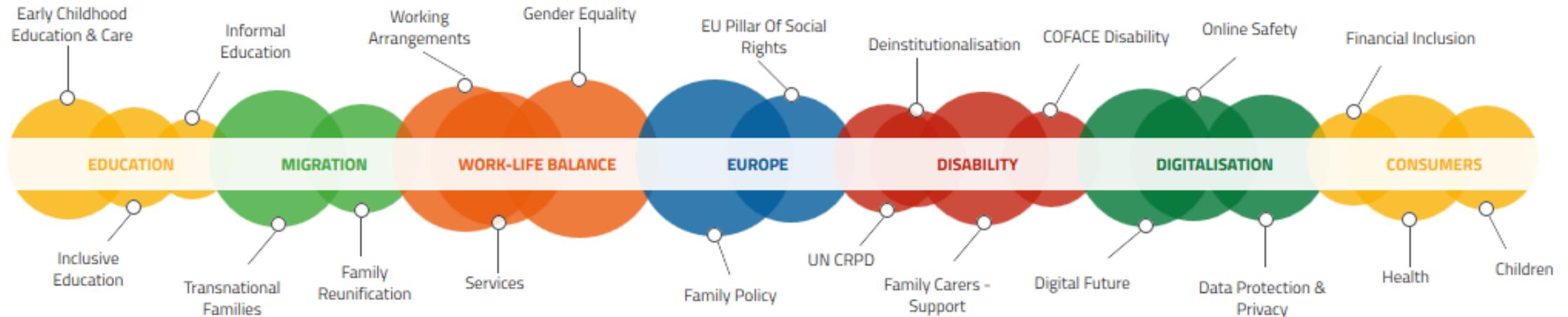
*Challenges of Teleworking :
organization of working time, work life balance
and the right to disconnect*

Elizabeth Gosme
Director
COFACE Families Europe

EESC Public hearing, 7th January 2021

COFACE Families Europe

- Pluralistic NGO (58 organisations in 23 European countries)
- Values: Non-discrimination, Human rights, Social inclusion etc.
- Represent, advocate for the rights and interest of all types of families
- Monitor EU initiatives, build the capacity of COFACE network
- Funded under EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation



COFACE position

- The need for work-life balance, like many societal issues, has been magnified by the pandemic, as a huge number of services in Europe closed down and the burden was shifted onto families like never before. An aspiration for some, and a basic need for others to reconcile care and work.
- “Future of work” and how technologies and digitalization are having a deep impact on employment opportunities, also magnified with the pandemic. Recent Commission data indicates that in many EU countries, more than half of the workers who have started working from home since the pandemic had no prior experience with teleworking.
- We refer to smart work as one type of flexible working arrangement that can help many families reconcile their work and family life, but also a tool in the hands of businesses to review their relationship with their workers and the community around them.
- Flexible work arrangements can take different forms like smart work, job sharing, tele-work, compressed working hours, possibility to swap shifts among employees... Having access to generous, flexible and paid leaves, plus flexible working arrangements can be very beneficial for allowing workers to better reconcile their work, family and personal life. That balance is essential to keep both society and the economy running today and in the future.

A decorative graphic in the top right corner featuring architectural blueprints, rolled-up documents, and various icons representing social rights such as a graduation cap, a house, a person with a cane, and a shopping cart.

Towards a
European Pillar
of **Social Rights**

Role of civil society



- **Provide family supports of different types:** prevention, emergency, post-emergency, to ensure that workers with caring duties receive support to reconcile work and family life. Under the current exceptional circumstances productivity, working conditions, or both, may be deteriorating for many workers due to, among other problems, lack of childcare, unsuitable working spaces and ICT tools. Shift away from the idea of “work being done only at the workplace” also has some risks. This can rapidly lead to the opposite consequences than the ones desired: from increased stress and anxiety to an even greater inability to reconcile work, family and personal life.
- **Civil society players to co-shape policy and legislation based on needs of families.** Civil society, as always, can help empower and give a voice to families in vulnerable situations, suffering from poor physical and mental health, exclusion, poverty and more. Strong policy, advocacy and campaigning are more important than ever to bring a strong voice for such families in EU and national policy-making. Policies to support the transition to more widespread remote work will need to carefully consider the potential benefits and costs for productivity, job quality, and workers’ work-life balance and mental health. Why families? Productivity of waged labour is essential to the economy, but the other side of the coin is the unpaid work in families which makes this possible. The paid economy hugely depends on the unpaid economy. We are all part of this economy, but women spend far more time in it than men.

References/further reading



- Smart work policy brief (COFACE 2016)
- European Parliament resolution on creating labour market conditions favourable for work-life balance (2016)
- Families on the Edge: Building a comprehensive European work-life balance reality (COFACE, 2017)
- Doughnut economics (Raworth, 2017)
- The changing face of work and family life under COVID-19 (COFACE 2020)
- Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to (European Commission, 2020)
- Living, working and COVID-19 (Eurofound 2020)
- Is home-schooling during the pandemic exacerbating gender inequalities?(Eurydice December 2020)



Get in touch with us!

COFACE Families Europe

Tel: +32 2 511 41 79

Email: lzosme@coface-eu.org

Website: www.coface-eu.org

Join us on:

Twitter [@COFACE_EU](https://twitter.com/COFACE_EU) [@lizgosme](https://twitter.com/lizgosme)

Instagram [@FamiliesEurope](https://www.instagram.com/FamiliesEurope)

Facebook [/COFACE.EU](https://www.facebook.com/COFACE.EU)



COFACE Families Europe is supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)