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Elena ZAMFIR

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Flexible working time arrangements in Romania*

Elena ZAMFIR¹

Abstract

The objective of the paper is the analysis of women-related issues focusing on labour market policies and work flexibility in Romania. The active internal dynamics regarding gender issues are strongly influenced by the national and international political processes, especially those incorporating the necessary changes of European and international labour regulations. Anti-discriminatory strategies need to be promoted at every level of society. Sources of information are: literature in the field, official EU Commission documents, and reports of Romanian public institutions: National Institute of Statistics, Research Institute of the Quality of Life (ICCV), as well as, research and reports of international organisations in Romania. Also analysed is information about the regulatory framework of labour flexibility at the national level, collective agreements, company level; working time organisation and its impact on private and family life, innovative working time arrangements. In Romania, especially in the last two years, there is an evident social stress generated by lower income, the increasing rate of unemployment and a lack of job security; and the risk involved in the new economic system yielding an increased level of corruption. Finally, an analysis of the current Romanian society shows the need to introduce efficient social policy for the labour market for supporting women in their work and private life.

Keywords: Flexicurity, flexible work, work time arrangements, nondiscriminatory work policies, collective labour agreements

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¹Prof. Dr Elena Zamfir, researcher, Institutul de Cercetari pentru Calitatea Vietii, Academia Romana, Casa Academiei, Str. 13 Septembrie, nr. 13, Bucuresti, Sector 5, 050718. tel. + 0745 122 238 , email: ezamfir1@gmail.com

Introduction

In accordance with the renewed Lisbon Strategy (2005 - 2008) and the country-specific recommendations adopted by The Council in 2007, Romania, as a member state, adopted the guidelines and legal framework for implementing its national reform programmes (NRP). From 2005 onwards the Romanian Government's main efforts in structural economic and social changes were directed towards sustainable economic growth and creating new jobs to reduce the unemployment rate and lessen the social and economic risks for large portions of the population. The process of Romania's EU integration was related to macroeconomic policies development doubled by microeconomic reforms, oriented towards knowledge and innovation as an essential instrument for improving work and life conditions for the population as a whole.

Such an economic and social strategy is key in establishing concrete measures for promoting and ensuring gender equality in the labour market, developing new instruments and methods for continuing education for all, ensuring individuals have the specific skills and education required for the modern labour market, setting up accurate labour legislation at different levels (national, sector, companies, firms, etc) and for special activities in various domains. In order to improve work/professional life satisfaction for employees, especially in a period of economic crisis which will worsen and sharply reduce the standard of living and social protection, especially in terms of the support for people at risk, the problem of innovation and new jobs creation appear to be a very urgent process required by the social security needs which should protect them. We could estimate this process to be one of the solutions in increasing wages, reducing poverty and coping with an expansion, or even an explosion, in poverty for poorest people.

Perhaps not by chance the EU declared 2009 as a year for Innovations and Creation of the next stage of a knowledge society.

In the European context, Romania has had to rethink the classic labour philosophy and look for very specific and timely answers to modern labour market dynamics and needs. In this framework, work and work time flexibility should be seen as a strong necessity for Romania within the labour policies, closely followed by new work strategies. This new labour strategy should contain proper instruments and concrete measures for eliminating direct and indirect discrimination between men and women, and establishing a work life balance with private life. To stipulate the rights of employees and employers for non-standard work as a form of labour flexibility will become a tool for increasing work security, efficiency of work and labour productivity in the new context of the current economic situation.

The new flexible work strategy should be an important instrument in changing common work place mentalities and stereotypes and collective understandings in

terms of definitions and the typology a non-standard and non-formal work as part of flexible work for people who are obliged or choose to work in special conditions. At the same time this new collective understanding will push demands to accept an antidiscrimination work model in our daily life. In this respect, we can expect that other social actors in different community fields will become more familiar with the implementation the new labour regulatory framework for various forms of work time arrangements and an interactive flexible model of work relationships. In the near future this may create a new culture of social dialog and social communication based on a friendly work atmosphere among all social partners involved in improving living standards and working conditions.

Regulatory framework

National regulations

Commonly in Romania in debates related to work flexibility, the regulatory framework, especially labour legislation, appears as a barrier against the new pattern of non-standard work time and varieties of activities which may be developed in a modern economy. The legislation is in the process of being restructured and is still inaccurate and not sufficiently clear in harmonising the norms, principles, contracts and agreements with work relations at the different levels within public institutions. This is especially true for private organisations. There are a lot of legal stipulations concerning flexibility and work time arrangements. Almost all of them focus on the social protection of targeted people, instead of bringing incentives to labour market.

A very brief history of the main legislation on non-discrimination and gender equality in Romania shows that many European parliament and European Council Directives correspond with Romanian legislation, for example:

The principle of equal pay for work of equal value was in Directive 75/117/EEC of 10.12.1975, on the approximation of laws of member states relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women. In terms of the national framework, the general provisions of directive are covered in:

The Constitution, Article 38, provides that women must receive equal wages to men for equal work.

The Labour Code provides that remuneration be determined according to the quantity, quality and social contribution of the work, and ensure the principle of equal pay for equal work.

Act no.14/1991 of Remuneration (article 2) prohibits discrimination on the basis of political beliefs, ethnicity, religion, age, sex or economic situation.

Law no.202/2002 on equal opportunities between women and men, republished with modifications and completions in 2007 is important for anti-discriminatory by sex policies and as proof in any situation of gender discrimination. This Act on Equal opportunities for women and men is the only legal text that explicitly provides for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

Law no.340/2006 for modification and completion of Law no.202/2002 This law stipulates clearly on equal payment for equal work of equal value, concrete measures for the employees such as: protection against dismissal as employer's reaction regarding a gender discrimination complaint, compulsoriness of the employers to acknowledge the employees on the legal regulations, ensuring the fully application of the equal treatment in acceding the labour market, vocational training, career development and work conditions.

According to the 320/2002 Ordinance of the Minister of Labour, Social Solidarity and Family, in 2003 two seminars have been organized, with the participation of all social dialog directorates and territory labour inspectorates, to inform the civil servants about their specific responsibilities in implementing the national and community legislation regarding the equal opportunities between men and women.

In 2003 The National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Men and Women established an institution which promotes the principles of equal treatment and monitors the equal opportunities concerning the access to the labour market.

Government Decision no.2501992 concerning annual paid and other leave for state employees as Law no.19/2000 on Public System Pensions and other social Insurance rights in Romania covered Council Directive 86/34/EC, of June 1996, in the area of the agreement on parental leave.

The Labour Code which stipulates the principle of employment and flexible work contracts creates a general framework for equal opportunities and equal treatment for women and men in the work place and the premises for implementing flexicurity and flexible working time. Other legislation encourages improvements in social measures support for employees and labour security referring to:

Emergency Ordinance 96/2003 on maternity protection in work places;

Law no.25, March 5/2004, approving Emergency Ordinance 96/2003; on the maternity protection at the work place, stipulated the social protection measures of the pregnant employed, confined or nursing women - exemption of pre-birth consultation, the compulsory after-birth leave, gravidity or confinement leave, maternity risk leave;

Government Decision 158/2005 regarding leave and benefits for social health insurance, etc.

The new amendments of the Romanian Labour Code, in its version as modified by Urgent Ordinance nr.65/05.07.2005, improved the labour flexibility and time arrangement regulations and adjusted those referring to restrictions on contract duration, the opportunities for more flexibility in individual work contracts. Fixed/limited-term employment contracts have been used in very few situations since the amendment of the Labour Code. Some more corrections appeared in 2006 for the Labour Code which defines much more clearly what is meant by fixed-duration contracts in terms of the rights and obligations of employed people. Relevant for deciding these Labour Code amendments were the debates and negotiations among social partners.

The labour code takes into account some specific aspects as follows:

- Individual employment contract,
- Working time and rest period,
- Social dialogue
- Remuneration
- Collective labour agreements
- Labour disputes
- Vocational training for the market needs

Romanian labour Code regulates, through Art.1, „every individual and collective employment relationship, the enforcement of the regulations regarding the employment relationships and the labour jurisdiction. This code also applies to employment relationships regulated by special laws, unless the latter contain specific derogations. In addition, it has as a main principle antidiscrimination and equal treatment for all employees and employers in order to eliminate any direct or indirect discrimination by gender, sexual orientation, social origin, disability, family situation or responsibility, or trade union affiliation. At the same time, the labour code set up the norms and standards for working conditions, social protection, protection of personal data, freedom of association, freedom to work abroad etc.”

Collective agreements

Collective labour agreements as a special regulation for hiring Romanian employees include the main factors which stipulate the conditions for an Individual Labour contract or agreement. It is compulsory that this should be in written form for each employee. This individual agreement contains: a mandatory part with the rights and obligations stipulated by the law in force and another conventional part which contains the rights, duties and responsibilities established by both parts, i.e. the employer and employee. On the basis of collective agreements, individual labour agreement should be very clear regarding:

- Duration of the contract. The rules are usually directed towards undetermined periods of time in order to keep the security of working rights for a long time. In very few cases, more as an exception, collective agreements accept a work contract for a limited time.
- Working location – the location where the work activities will be done
- Type of work activities, job description
- Working conditions
- Wage established
- Working hours and the possibility for time arrangements

In addition, individual agreement contracts could have specific clauses on education, experience, professional status, mobility, some benefits and bonuses for employees and also confidentiality. The agreement for individual work contracts must be signed and registered by the employer with the Romanian Local Labour Inspectorate within 20 days of being signed by the employee and employer. If the organisation or institution has more than 21 employees, the employer must have a collective work agreement with employees, following negotiations. These collective agreements also take into account payment, working conditions and rights resulting from working relationships. Aspects stipulated at the collective level agreements, however, refer to the minimal work conditions. As such, the individual work agreement can contain much more than the rights accepted by the collective agreements but not less than the minimum level fixed by the collective agreement. The established collective labour agreements are registered at the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity and Family, then used as a framework for the individual labour contract.

In Romania, as many studies, research and political debates have pointed out, the collective agreement at the national level started with establishing:

- Minimum wages and variable wages (which include some bonuses and benefits),
- Limited work hours per week,
- Improvement of living working conditions,
- Set up the guarantee fund wages - Law nr. 200/2006,
- Establishing the general information framework and consultation for employees –Law nr. 467/2006;
- The organisation health activities and work security – Law nr. 319/2006;
- Moving employees in some transnational services to different parts of Romania -Law nr. 344/2006 and GD nr. 104/2007;
- Set up and fixed the rules for organisation and functioning of the European committee in plants and institutions - Law nr. 215/2005;
- The protection of employee rights in the event of moving the institutions or some departments of them – Law nr. 67/2006.

Collective agreements for labour relationships in Romania have generally been decided within the national regulatory framework and not as a unique pattern for labour contracts. At the national level, agreements are signed by Employer organisations and by trade union confederations. After the work principles are established, norms and rules are imposed on employees in their specific situation, depending on their units/institutions/organisations (state, private, mixed or foreign organisations). Collective agreements at the national level take into account: the national minimum gross wage, the coefficient for professional skilled, the type of education for administrative staff with secondary education and for graduates and postgraduates – masters, PhD, etc. The benefits and bonuses established by the collective agreements are minimal and it is up to the employers to decide if they are included or not in the basic wage or income. In Romania, especially in state sector organisations, the benefits could be taken into account as follows:

- overtime working after normal weekly hours, working time on non-working days or legal holidays - 100% over the basic wage,
- for night working time – 25% extra,
- undertaking jobs other than their own - 50% extra,
- the length of job service is rewarded by a bonus of 5% of the basic wage for a minimum of three years of service,
- and up to an additional 25% of the basic wage for more than 20 years of seniority.

Collective agreements also stipulate some other activities which could be seen as unique at the national level:

- Supplement extra money for piecework,
- Bonus from the award budget/fund - minimum of 1.5% of the wage paid monthly or cumulated,
- Other negotiated supplements,
- Profit bonus of up to 10% of the net profit for the trade firms,
- Restaurants tickets, presents, crèche allowance, etc.

All these extra opportunities are very flexible in different private companies if correlated with the formula for „other negotiated supplements”.

One major recent dispute has been over wages being lower in Romania than in the EU. This debate relates to the type of variable payment systems, forms of wage flexibility in terms of net wages depending on sectors (especially in the banking system). There is a large diversity in calculating total income (bonuses and benefits) depending on the sector, type of organisation and, indirectly, by gender.

From the national and collective agreements, paid work has to be combined with some incentives according to extra activities and individual responsibilities of employees required by the complexity of the work, the length of time of work

arrangements, professional training and skills potential, etc. In addition, the collective agreements from the employee perspective necessitate including some bonuses in the basic wages, as a part of the total income.

Company level

In Romania, collective bargaining at the big company level or at the sectorial level and big firms (at meso-level approach) has much more freedom to promote more favourable rights for employees. The expectations of workers related to their professional/vocational careers, the diversity of remuneration, the flexibility needs in accordance with life-course requirements are very important aspects in social bargaining and collective negotiations for establishing company work policies. Even the labour expectations and work demands of employees are not in accordance with those of employers, with the dialogue in the company being more clearly oriented towards working time arrangements and the individual employment contract conditions. For this reason many companies have a period of work of 3 - 6 months before the individual contract agreement is signed to evaluate employees' professional capabilities and experience in the field in order to predict their potential in the job.

Another important aspect in companies during the process of recruitment and hiring personnel is the interest in worker selection. A weak point in gender equality results from this in Romania. Female employees have a barrier in the process of selection and, it can be said, indirect discrimination results. As a rule, employers prefer to hire young women (usually to 35) in their company who will accept and be able to work very hard, single women who do not have family responsibilities, women without children or who are sure not to be pregnant in the near future, in order not to pay care or maternal leave. In addition, we notice in some company sexual harassment and different kinds of female women abuse (verbal, physical, emotional or neglect) in the work place. In many cases women accept this situation and do not complain, for the sake of keeping their jobs. Such situations usually create an age imbalance for company employees. The preferred age for hiring is 25 - 35 years old.

It is true that, at the company level, this type of bargaining also has a negative impact on employees. The work demands for employees are very high and fragmented by their narrow responsibilities and in many cases, management is not in a position to ensure their employees' professional satisfaction. In addition, the reconciliation of work and family life remains a desire, but not a reality. From the work requirements of employers and the time arrangements for very complex and difficult activities which the employees have to fulfil in a short time, companies can sometimes create the pathological phenomenon of work dependency / work addiction for employees, especially in young people. This phenomenon has a negative impact on employees: damage to health, few hours for relaxation and very few hours for family and private life.

At the level of companies, firms, sector level, group of units or firms, other benefits related to experience in the field, knowledge of foreign languages, geographical area of work place, etc could be accepted and granted through bargaining and negotiation. As a general remark, companies in comparison to the state and public sectors do not have so many barriers to limiting the work flexibility in terms of wages paid, of flexible work activities and extra bonuses and benefits as forms of increasing general income.

Recent policy debates

All principles for legislative regulation of work flexibility by collective agreements were achieved within the process of EU harmonisation of national legislation. In fact, according to the demands of the European Council and Directives of the European Parliament and European Commission to promote some legislative changes oriented to work flexibility and work security, Romania should start to focus on the new process of work “flexicurity”, which combines work flexibility and work security. As I mentioned in my previous papers referring to child care protection, female segregation at work, flexicurity on the labour market, etc. some national regulations focusing on labour conditions still remain as an important objective for a future coherent legislative programme in order to create a clear and balanced regulatory framework for labour flexibility.

Law nr.19/2000 concerning the public system of pensions and other social insurance rights was considerably improved by Government Emergency Ordinance nr. 96/2003 concerning the protection of mothers in the work place. This Ordinance has created a much more serious problem during the last year, generating large social and political debates about the allocation of allowances from the mother’s/father’s wage.

Maternity leave is 126 days, of which 42 are compulsory for the mother after birth. Employers are obliged to avoid any situation that can affect the health or security of mothers or pregnant women. If their work conditions are potentially dangerous employers are legally obliged to change the work place. Employed women have the right to 75% of their average income for the previous 10 months for the maternal leave period. The parents of a child have the right to ask for paid child care leave of 2 years for healthy children and 3 years for children with disabilities. The level of benefit in 2003 was 600 Ron, representing 123.3% of net average wage and 240% of the minimum wage. In the last 3 years, the 600Ron/month was replaced by 800 Ron/month. From this perspective the legal frame pushed strongly women, especially women with low wages, to exit the labour market. In fact the real reason for this kind of support was the poor offer and bad quality of child care services for the families with a normal income. Parents also have the right to obtain paid leave for an ill child up to 7 years old for normal children and 18 years old for children with disabilities.

Employers may not interrupt employment individual contracts in any of the above-mentioned cases. Even if there are no restrictions in parent eligibility for parental leave, by tradition in Romania, almost all are made by mothers and very few by fathers. Under Law nr. 319/2006 on the labour code, the labour secondary legislation, the work collective contract stipulates the rights and the responsibilities for employers and employees but sometimes they are not very clear and explicit in many respects and especially for general restrictions on the labour market.

Many changes in the labour legislation at the national level were the result of a long process of negotiation between social partners. The social dialogue, especially with trade unions, was heavy with demands for employees in terms of financial benefits. They also asked for elimination of the black economy, child labour, as well as the bureaucracy and corruption of public and private organisations.

For example, the MLSSF opinion was very positive regarding the proposal by the EU for a Green Book as a premise for a White Book in the field of labour flexibility and new work security legislation. For this, the Romanian Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity referring to the modernisation of the Romanian legislation in order to harmonise national regulations to the normative European communities acts started an important process of legislative change to adapt them to the professional orientation required by market need dynamics. This was due to the many critics of the lack of clarity and transparency of national acts in their application for special situations and the rigidity in the field of social dialogue about work time flexibility by type of activity and work relations.

For these reasons some new normative acts for national legislation in accordance with EU regulations were adopted, as follows:

Law nr. 67/2006 on the protection of Employees in the event of an institution, unit or part moving; Law nr. 200/2006 referring to establishing and using Guarantee funds for salaries; Law nr. 217/2005 related to the setting up, organisation and functioning of the European Committee for institutions and organisations; Law nr. 344/2006 related to transfer of employed people within the framework of transnational services, etc.

In concordance with EU recommendations and regulations in harmonising the national legislation with communitarian legislation, the Romanian Government stipulated in NAP Employment 2004 - 2005 that special attention should be paid to the reconciliation of professional and family life in order to solve a major part of the problems of gender equality. In this situation, the Romanian Government considers that in the field of social protection and social support for women, child care services, as well as those for other dependent people, will be developed and provided, encouraging the division of professional and family responsibilities and so facilitating reemployment after maternity leave. At that time it was considered

that social support will be very strong for the integration process of the female labour force by managing to provide care services for at least 90% of the children between 3 years old and the legal age for going to school by 2010. Now we are in a position to assess this promise and to say that the percentage has not been reached. The insufficient number of kindergartens and day centres for children, the use of unqualified baby sitters, the high costs of children care and education will remain a big problem for gender equality and professional career for women in the future. A lot of actions, changes and interventions at the level of social care services for children should be taken within the community. At the moment we can say that child care is a big problem. The necessity of work programme flexibility for women is very clear for employment policies. On one hand, the low level of allowances (except parental leave) helps families to avoid the financial trap. On the other hand, the low quality of child care services requires other solutions. Romania does not have an alternative tradition, and as many families do not have financial resources to employ or to ask for help in child care, the most frequent solution is the so-called “institution of grandparents”. In any case, child care is one of the big barriers and most important reasons for a low rate of female employment, especially in rural areas. We can observe as a negative factor that for many mothers we assist a very quick erosion of institutional support for employed women and precarious child care services. In addition, there has been a rapid decline in jobs offer for women in the last 10 years. We can also observe a deterioration of work conditions for women and an increase in low paid jobs in many activities where women are dominant.

At the same time a large number of jobs appeared in the hidden economy with no security or work protection. Low salaries have appeared, especially in economic areas (textile, education, health, trade, social services) with a predominantly female labour force. Worsening of human relations at the work place, especially in private small enterprises in which trade union control or other types of control are very low. New types of abuse in the work place, especially against women, have appeared. In addition, jobs on the underground economy, with very low labour protection, especially for women, have multiplied. The erosion of institutional support for employed women, especially for women with young children and women over 50 have been increasing. Domestic services for house activities are very underdeveloped.

The mentality, attitude and stereotype factors which still remain in the community and family mean we are not in a position to protect and encourage women's participation in the labour market. Role differentiation in the family is in place even in the changed circumstances of today's society. In spite of fact that during the transition period the incentives for women to participate in economic life increased, the withdrawal of women from the formal labour market and the decrease in female employment is not due to a decrease in incentives but rather to employment opportunities in terms of flexible work and work relationships. The

legislation in this field is still confused and underdeveloped in many respects. It encourages many exceptions for special situations which can have many subjective interpretations depending on the context. For this reason, individual preferences and corruption in the process of hiring or firing people, especially for women, remains.

Due to the minimum provisions of the unique collective agreement at the national level, many benefits can be included or not in the basic wages. This process very often depends on the employers. Thus it is possible for some inequalities to appear in paid work related to: variable wages (being composed of bonuses and other benefits which are in personal agreements), time working arrangements as employee options, flexible individual contract, special demands for employment security and labour market mobility.

For instance, in some sectors of activity employers can opt for a wage freeze or others for a wage increase without taking into account the actual negative impact on the workers.

Working time flexibility: general trends

There are no significant differences by gender in the working time arrangements in Romania.

As the data from INS shows in 2005 in Romania (see the book “The Life conditions of the Romanian population”): “The majority of occupied people in the state sector (83.1%) and in public units / institutions at the national and local level (74.7%) only work during working days. In the private sector, the majority of occupied people work the same, during working days, but by 10.1% less (64.6%). In the private sector it is noticeable that a high proportion of occupied people work in activities with opportunities for working time flexibility (34.7%) and some also on Saturdays and Sundays (23.3%). (2005: 59)”.

“Employees represent two thirds of the category of occupied people. A large majority of them were hired on unlimited duration individual employment contracts (94%), with a very few (5%) having limited duration individual employment contracts. The other categories do not have significant representation. Within the state sector, 97.6% of occupied people had unlimited duration employment individual contracts. They have a very low rate in private institutions (5.2% have an unlimited individual contract)” page.59.

In addition, the working conditions are inappropriate for employees. The factors which negatively affect the health and balance of employee behaviour in

work places are: excessive heating - 1/3 of them; air and noise pollution – 1/5; very cold places - 13% of employees; future negative effects on health – bone, heart eye problems, etc. The working conditions are very different by the sector / branch of the economy. There are very difficult conditions for people occupied in agriculture, extractive industries, construction and transport. In addition, occupied people working in localities other than where they have reside are supposed to suffer much more stress and to support unfavourable travel conditions. In the last category of migrant workers, men are 2.3 times more represented than women. In this regard, we can observe that migrant work is age-related. The number of them is inversely proportional to age, as follows: for the category of people 15 - 24 years old (20.4%); 25 - 49 years old (17.6%); and over 50 years old (7.75%) - data from INS 2005.

If we analyse the migrant workers within the different geographical areas in our country, we can notice that women are much better protected than men. Men are 3.1 times more likely than women not to have a fixed geographical work place. In addition, the flexible work and working time arrangements are much more in favour of women as: working at home 22.0% against the 15.5% for men, part-time working, maternal leave, mother contracts, etc. (Data from INS-2005)

In Romania, during the last five years, very few actions were initiated in the field of flexible work and working time arrangements for elderly people active on the labour market. Politicians do not have a well-structured work strategy for old people, of 60 years old and over, especially for very socially active pensioners. For this reasons some economic activities lose a lot of experience and professional efficiency from this very active social group age. Besides, it encourages an artificial conflict between the generations, accompanied by the very visible process of discrimination by age.

Taking into account the Council recommendation, especially on the 2009 update of the broad guidelines for economic policies of the Member States and Community on implementation of Member States, employment policies and the significant findings of the comparative research in EU countries (See “Flexibility and security over the life course” coordinated by Ruud Muffels - 2008; “Working time options over the life course: New work patterns and company strategies”, coordinated by Dominique Anx, Jean-Yves Boulin, 2006; “Revisions to the European working time directive: recent Eurofound research” – website, etc.) we can observe major interest in innovation of new strategies and policies which fit in the present context for improving the quality of life and working conditions. In this regard, the main policy issues emphasise the standards and instruments to maintaining work flexibility, to adopt various patterns and forms for maintaining and increasing the rate of employment, to harmonise private life with work

satisfaction, to point the importance of non-discriminatory work by gender and to ensure the active work time during the lifetime.

Working time flexibility: national research

Flexibility in the length of working time: part-time work, long hours, overtime, weekend/evening work etc.

At the national level in Romania the research and surveys made by INS, ICCV, National Labour and Social Security Research Institute are much more focused on the indicators and analyses of social inclusion and in this framework we can find the results on work flexibility and working time arrangements.

In the framework of a national research programme focused on flexibility of work and flexicurity, I would like to mention that the special efforts in the last five years of the research institutes, especially the National Institute for Statistics, academic community centres in establishing the social indicators, especially for social inclusion, social assistance and social protection for people at high risk. All these indicators should respond to EU recommendations to cover the main common dimensions of the new problems and phenomena in the context of globalisation. In spite of this, there is still a lack in Romania of social indicators by gender. In many cases the existing indicators are not updated, and sometimes, they do not provide a structured and coherent dimension for gathering empirical data research. In principle, the INS with its national surveys, studies, with some very big national Research Institutes (Research Institute for the Quality of Life, National Research Institute for Economics, and individual research, etc.) are the base sources for establishing a new set of social indicators as the main instruments in comparative approach research.

In addition, the big national surveys done by INS, explicitly addressed work policies, information and analyses of employment contracts and limited work time, work time conciliation with private and family life, the life conditions of Romanians and impact on gender, the regulatory framework on the labour market, case studies on the working time flexibility for firms, companies and some various domains in Romania are from 2005, 2006 and very few in 2007.

The Institute of National Statistics – INSA had a special contribution to improving employment arrangements with the Household Labour Force Survey, AMIGO published in 2005.

Some research findings at the individual or micro level analyse indicators of work satisfaction and labour market mobility have been done in the last two

years. I can mention in this regard just some national and international debates and research conferences in Romania in 2007 and 2008 focused on employment policies and gender equalities (for instance, the International Conference focused on “Flexibility and security on the Romanian labour market on beginning the new stage (2008 - 2010) of the revised Lisbon Strategy “Challenges, Ideas, Solutions and Actions programme”. I consider that some results of the national survey research findings from the INS-AMIGO focused on the Reconciliation between work and family life, especially the chapter of family responsibilities for dependent people had an important impact on work flexibility and time arrangements.

Flexibility in the organisation of working time

In terms of working time flexibility, the findings from the research made by INS-AMIGO in 2005, and other individual researchers show the possibility to vary the start and end of the working day by at least one hour in order to fulfil family responsibilities at home. If people needs to take hours off, they can adjust their working time by changing the start or end of the working day. The hours taken off should be recovered in advance or later on in a compensation form. This kind of work time flexibility is usually spread in different sectors of activities: generally, 46.7% of working age employed people can vary by at least one hour the start or end of the working day for life and family reasons. In rural areas, the flexibility in adjusting the working time according to family needs and responsibilities is higher than in urban areas: 64.2%. On the contrary, in urban areas, 67.2% of employees could not vary and adjust their start or end of working day for family reasons. If we consider other opportunities in flexibility working time as: daily, weekly without any restrictions from employers, usually more women benefited from this freedom: 25.4% against 22.0% in the case of men, as well as people living in rural areas: 44.5% compared to only 7.0% in urban areas. For urgent family situations, occasionally the employees could vary the start and the end of working daily activities. There is also in these situations a small percentage in favour of women: 23.9% of women and 22.5% of men.

The survey research based on a representative national sample, included in the *Complementary survey on reconciliation between work and family life* (NIS-AMIGO – household survey) in the second quarter of 2005, taking into account the working age population of 15,047 thousand people (aged 15-64 years), of which the complementary survey target population amounted to 14,634 thousand people (excluding people abroad for an indefinite period, 413 thousand people), of which 50.8 % women and 59,.% men lived in urban areas.

Some significant results from this household survey (2005) referring to time organisation:

- “Over a third (34%) of the working age population declared to take care of children aged up to 15 years old, or ill, disabled, elderly relatives or friends in need of care, living inside or outside the household.
- Out of 4,981 thousand people with family responsibilities, 53.5% were women, 53.3% lived in urban area and 73.9% were 25 - 44 years old.
- 35.9% of working age women (as against 32.2% in the case of men) and 39% of working age people living in rural areas in comparison with 30.6% in urban areas) had to take care of dependent people.
- About three out of five people aged 25 - 44 years (59.2%) had to take care of dependent people, as against 12.9% in the case of young people aged 15 - 24 years old and 17% in the case of people in the 45 – 64 age group.
- According to the marital status, the highest ration of people who take care of dependent people are those who were married or had a life partner registered (46.6%, 55%, and 4% respectively).
- Lower ratios were registered for divorced people – 30.1%; 17.9% for widowers; 7.4% for single people.
- It is very important from the gender perspective to point that of married people with family responsibilities - 95.9% take care of children.
- Regarding divorced people who take care of dependent people, 85.3% have child care responsibilities. Within these group categories we should emphasise a significant difference by gender: 89.5% in the case of women and 67.5% in of men. Over two-thirds (75.9%) of 4,301 thousand people with child care responsibilities exclusively declared to take care of their own children who live in the same household.
- From the distribution of employment by groups of occupations we could notice that in the group of management leaders and decision-makers the number of women was by 2.4 times lower than for men.
- Regarding work time arrangements by gender, in the second quarter of 2005, full-time workers represented 90.4% of total working age employment.
- 10.3% of women carried out their work activities part time, in comparison with 9.0% of men and 18.4% of people living in rural areas, as against only 2.6% in urban area” (see page 59-62).

Innovative working time arrangements

As a conclusion on the reconciliation between work and family life, it appears from the women point of view the willingness of harmonizing professional life with private life. The women who left the labour market for a long period of time

for different reasons, especially for maternal leave, and desire to re-enter the labour market have to be supported by very active policies with defined measures for adequate child care services. For women in Romania, the child care programme is still a very sensitive problem. Generally speaking, mothers could have access to some specialist child care services as: institutionalised (crèche, day care centre, kindergarten, semi-boarding house, etc); services insured by individual people (paid cares) nanny / baby sitter, etc; help from partner, other unpaid people as grandparents, relatives, neighbours, friends, etc. The very difficult problems regarding childcare are for marginalised groups and individuals (dissolutions families, single parents, the families with more than 2-3 children, poor families, child mothers, Roma population, etc). Their risks in taking care of children and raising them in accordance with normal education requirements are very high because the social work services for family and child are underdeveloped and insufficient. In order to take care of their own children who live in the same household, one out of ten people resort to care services only during working time. For this type of child care support, 53.5% of women and 78.4% of men benefitting live in urban area.

By sex, 43.3% of men ask for help in childcare from the wife or partner, while women rely on relatives, neighbours or friends. Although, according to the law, any of the two parents could benefit from parental leave. In fact, in 2004 (the 12 months before the survey) the findings of the survey of households shows that 92.2% who benefitted from parental leave were women and only 7.8% were men.

For the people who have responsibilities in taking care of dependent people, they could generally take one or more days off for family reasons, without using holiday, unpaid leave or other special leaves.

It is also possible to have the employee absent from work for family reasons with the acceptance of the employer in such conditions as: special leave days remunerated, special leave days not all remunerated or other arrangements. In this case, the highest flexibility of absence from work was noticed in the agricultural sector (81.5%) in comparison with 35.7% in the non-agricultural sector. (Page 52 AMIGO 2005)

Keeping in mind the gender perspective, “the structure of occupied people by sex is different: the frequency of occupied women is lower than men – 43.2% for women against 57.8 % for men. At the same time, the majority of occupied people are male -55.6%, and 44.4% female. By age, the biggest group is 25 - 49 years old – with 66.7%. About one quarter of occupied people represents the group with 50 years old and over while just one person in 10 is young, up to 25 years old.

Three quartets of occupied people work in a private unit/sector, 18.7% are hired in state units, 3.8% work in public units with the importance for national and local level; 3.2% in other forms of units (mixed, cooperative etc). The age distribution of occupied people by sector forms of work place is interesting. It is

visible that of the 25 - 49 years old group about 80% of occupied people are in state units/sectors and private. In the cooperative sectors, the people with 50 years old and over 50 register at 37,3%. The weight of young people varies between 4% of occupied people in state sectors and mixed to about 20% in other forms of units.

If we take into account the specific method of working time organisation we can remark that about 70% of occupied people work just in working days of the week (from Monday to Friday) and about one quarter of them have a flexible programme.

20% of occupied people work on Saturdays or Sundays, and 13% do shift work. There are no important differences by sex.

83.1% of occupied people in the state sectors (83.1%) and in public units with national and local importance (74.7%) work on work days. In private units there is also a big percentage, 64.6%, who work in normal working days, but in this sector we can notice also a high weight of those who work after the variable programme (37.7%) and Saturdays and Sundays (23.3%). Two-thirds of occupied people are employees. The large majority of them had a contract of unlimited duration (94%). We can observe that in state sectors, occupied people with unlimited individual contracts (97.7%) dominate, while in private sectors limited time contracts have a weight of 5.2%.” (Data sources from Life Conditions in Romania 2005, page 58 - 59).

The comparative empirical data analysis and case studies for some companies centred on the flexibility and work time arrangements have some important common objectives: how to combine in a very coherent programme the national (macro-level) regulatory framework with micro-level contracts and agreement in order to create a new model of culture in the field of work relationships with a positive impact on employees and employers and to set the principle norms for friendly social dialogue between social partners.

Working time flexibility: evidence from a life course perspective

In Romania, explicitly, Government efforts to provide legislative support through institutional structures for the concrete actions and specific indicators for measuring and evaluating the efficiency of work flexibility and time arrangements in accordance with private and public organisation proposals started about 10 years ago. Special attention, however, is required in the debates of the social actors and within the political arena of work policies started when there was a

clear requirement from the EU under the Lisbon Agenda. The complex objectives of work place flexibility and security from the life-course perspective have become more important in various debates, studies and empirical research given the major dissatisfaction of employees, employers and trade unions which has been building in the private and public sectors. For this reason, some concrete measures have recently been adopted in the field of labour policies. Thus, a new social strategy for labour flexibility is now mentioned explicitly in the last National Reform Programme (NRP 2007 - 2010).

Flexibility in the length of working time

The legal duration of the working week has been 40 hours/week in Romania since 2005 and remains the same today by legal stipulation in the revised Labour Code of 2006. If we compare our working hours per week with the EU norm for member states of up to 48 hours / week, or with the other proposals (from UK - 65 hours/week) we can observe that our working weekly time could be maintained in the legal EU framework.

In Romania, the findings of the survey of household coordinator by INS in 2005 show the usual duration of the working week distributed by age groups as follows:

From the age group of 15 - 64 years old, the usual working week duration is distributed:

- 7.3% of employed people was under 40 hours of working / week
- 16.9% of employees over 40 hours/week
- 60.0% of employees was 40 hours/week
- 15.8% could not indicate a usual duration

From the total working age employed people actually worked:

- 16.3% worked under 40 hours/week
- 24.4% over 40 hours/week
- 59.3%, 40 hours/week

This part of the report seeks to explain, in accordance with the data providing the European comparative research on flexibility and security work, some conclusions for Romanian work strategies. Thus I present short comments on the employed people split by groups of age (four groups: first, 15 - 24 years old, second 25 - 49 years old, third 50 - 64 years old, fourth over 65 years old) and usual weekly working hours in three years as reference, in the same figure: Figure 1.

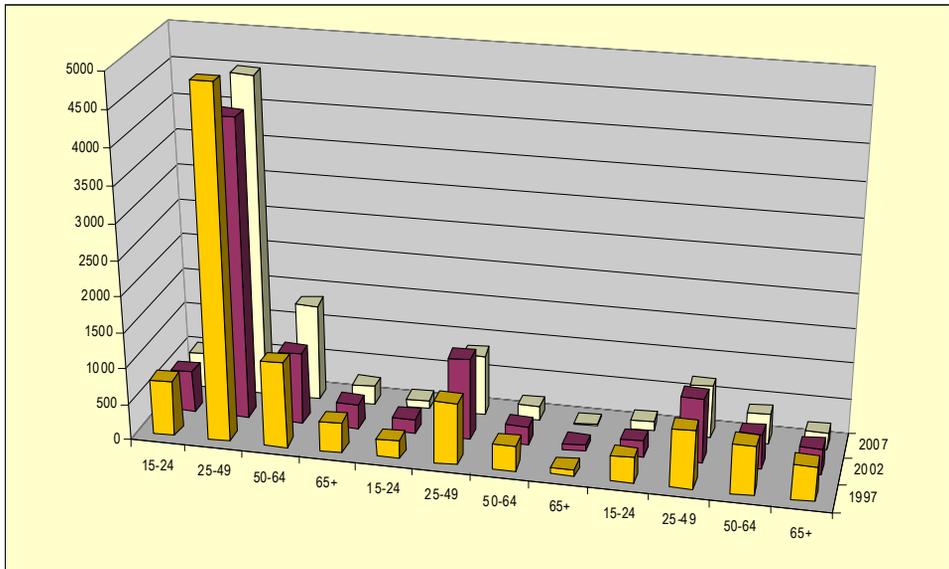


Figure 1. Number of Employed people by age groups and usual hours worked by week (from 1 to 47 hours, 48 hours to 98, and varied programme) in the years 1997, 2002 and 2007.

Data source: NIS

A cross analysis of data concerning *employed people* by age groups and usual length of worked week, partially illustrated by the figure 1, lead to the following conclusions:

- The number of employed people decreased by 12.8% in 2002 and by 16.% in 2007 compared to 1997.
- Dominant for employment is the 25 - 49 years old age group.
- The dominant category for the usual number of hours worked in a week is from 1 to 47 hours, with about 65% of the total. The next category is of the employed with varied programme (about 20%) and the last one is of employed that work 48 and more hours in a week (about 20%).
- For the most important age group, of 25 to 49 years, the decrease in employed people working up to 47 hours by week that occurred in 2002 was partially covered by the increase of employed people working 48 hours and more in a week, and from employed people working with a varied programme.
- For the employed people of 65 years and over, the lowest proportion is of people that work 48 hours and more in a week, and the highest is for a varied program.

- From the gender perspective, males are dominant for almost all categories of age and work programmes. The exception is for females of 65 years and more that work up to 47 hours by week and with a varied programme. Another category where employed women are more represented than men is the age between 50 and 64 working with a varied programme.
- A category dominated by men of employed people working 48 hours or more in a week. In this category the proportion of women is comparable to other categories only for the age group of 15 to 24 years old. Their proportion goes down as the age group gets higher, for the group of 65 years and more being of about 40 % compared with the one of men.
- For all categories of work programme the number of employed young (employed people between 15 and 24 years old) decreased between 1997 and 2007 more than for other categories. The decrease was of 34.7% for employed young that work up to 48 hours by week, of 49.7% for those working 48 and more hours by week, and of 59.1% for young employed people that have a varied programme.

The *occupations and activities* with the higher number of people employed by gender are the following:

- For employed people of 15 to 24 age: Skilled agricultural and fishery workers – for both males and females, Craft and related trades workers in electricity – for both males and females, Service workers and shop and market sales workers in Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles – for females, Plant and machine operators and assemblers in Electricity – for both males and females, Craft and related trades workers in Construction and Elementary occupations in Electricity – for males.
- The occupations and activities for employed people from 25 to 49 years are: Craft and related trades workers in Electricity – for both males and females, Skilled agricultural and fishery workers – for both males and females, Service workers and shop and market sales workers in Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles – for females, Plant and machine operators and assemblers in Electricity – for both males and females, Craft and related trades workers in Construction – for males.
- For employed people of 50 years and more: Skilled agricultural and fishery workers – for both males and females, Elementary occupations in Agriculture – for both males and females, Technicians and associate professionals in Administrative and support service activities – for females, Craft and related trades workers in Construction – for males, Professionals and Craft and related trades workers in Electricity – for females, Technicians and associate professionals in Electricity – for males.

The development between 2002 and 2007 of *work in difficult conditions* shaped the following aspects:

- The people working in the *evening* as a percentage of the total employment increased from 15.5% to 17.4%. The increase was higher for females, with a rise of 2.6% points.
- The population in employment working at *night* as a percentage of the total employment decreased from 8.7% to 8.2%. From a gender perspective this decrease was due to the decrease for males from 11.0 % to 9.9 %. At the same time the percentage of women working at night increased from 5.9% to 6.1 %.
- People in employment working on *Saturdays* as a percentage of the total employment decreased from 29.4% to 24% and were similar for both males and females (from 26.6% to 21.3% for females and from 31.7% to 26.3% for males).
- Employees working on *shift work* as a percentage of the total of employees were of 24.9% in 2007 as against 27.2% in 2002. The change was also against women, with the decrease being only 1.2% compared to the decrease of 3.1% for men.
- The population in employment working on *Sundays* as a percentage of the total employment decreased from 13.4% to 11.3%. In this case the decrease was also larger for males – from 14.4% in 2002 to 11.8% in 2007 compared to the figures for females – from 12.2% to 10.6 %.

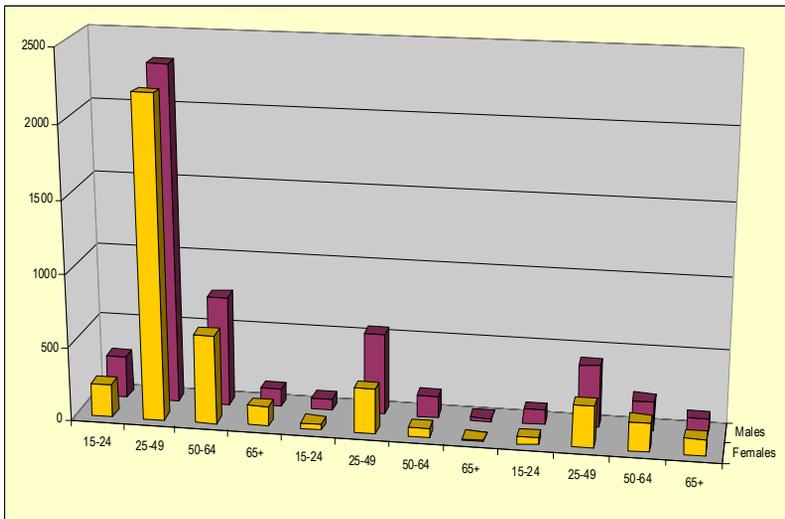


Figure 2 Number of Employed people by gender, age groups and usual hours worked by week (from 1 to 47, 48 to 98, and varied programme) in 2007

Data source: NIS

In figure 2 we have the employed people in 2007 by gender, age groups and usual hours worked by week. We can see that males are preponderant in almost all categories. The exception is for females of 65 years and more that work up to 48 hours by week or with varied programme. There are also closed values (differences less than 5%) for females aged between 25 and 49 that work up to 48 hours by week and aged from 50 to 64 working with varied programme.

Young persons entering the labour market and prime age workers/parents

In accordance with the national work regulation for young people, the entry to labour market age in Romania is 16 years old. The special agreement of parents and some special working conditions are necessary for 15 year olds: to be protected from activities that might be physically or morally unhealthy, to keep the normal conditions for education and personal development, to perform the work in accordance with their skills and abilities, not to work during the night or beyond the legal duration of the working day (8 hours), not to be forced to work, not to be involved in trafficking and criminal activities. Child labour is not allowed by law, even if unpaid. The age of a child in Romania is up to 16 years old. There have been many debates related to this age also being the minimum age for entry to the labour market. Young people at 15 years old do not have the possibility in Romania to finish full-time, compulsory education (there is 10 years mandatory education from starting school at 6 years old) and they are not prepared for work. Usually, the young at 15 or 16 years old do not have enough time to be qualified and well-prepared for a specialised job. They work in jobs not requiring qualifications and receive very low paid. Such activities could be in agriculture or other sectors which accept low skills, in trades or services, in household activities, work in construction or in factories. This situation is specific for young people entering the labour market at 15 years old.

As is mentioned in the Report of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Geneva, 28 - 30 November 2005, Romania has ratified all 8 ILO core labour standards referring to the Declaration on fundamental principles and Rights at Work; on trade union rights and their legislation, on discrimination regarding women and the ethnic minority Roma population, Convention on child labour, ILO Convention in prohibiting forced labour, etc.

The ILO Convention: Worst Forms of Child Labour (2000) stipulates that the minimum age for paid employment is 16 years old. In spite of this legislative regulation the majority of people of 15 years old and over are in the category of "economically active", occupied people, in Romania. Much data from research and from international organisations, such as UNICEF and ILO has lead to reports that many children from Romania are involved in work activities. A large majority of them are from the Roma population and from broken or very poor families. The Romanian Government recognised that child labour is a real problem and that a

package of active action, especially in schools, is necessary to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

Young persons entering the labour market and prime age workers/parents

A rapid demographic change in Romania has had a visible impact in potential labour force on the market. At the moment the old population exceeded the number of young population. In this respect we noticed an important decreasing, from 2005 onwards, in working age population. In addition, the migration labour force was and still remains very high in the last 5 years. All the changes both in the number of young population and work potential by age bring a new philosophy about the intergeneration solidarity and the increasing interest in the continuing education and vocational training for all life-course. All specialists in the demographic policies emphasise the two aspects: using the incentive for increasing birth rate related with the quality of birth and increasing educational level for everybody during their life, especially for young generation. The lack of young people in the labour market could create some dysfunctions and imbalance in developing a normal social and economical system. The young people entering the labour market should have much more incentives for a high education and professional training. The structure of active population in Romania by age groups shows obvious ageing tendencies. As the NRP 2007-2010 emphasizes, "the labour market in Romania is characterized by relatively high inactivity rate, high unemployment rates in the cases of age categories 15-19 years old and 20-24 years old, a high percentage of early retirement from the formal labour market and significant employment in the agricultural sector, characterized by work relationships that are not subject to fiscal regulation. The most important difficulties are promoting the access of youth to the labour market and maintaining in the same time the older workers" (NRP page 75)

According to the revised Lisbon Agenda, Romania should apply urgent measure for attracting and training more people on the labour market, improving the adaptability of the young generations for the market needs, creating a new work culture as well as increasing the investments in human capital.

The data from ILO emphasise the youth unemployment rate which was in 2005 very high 19.7%. Out of 210,300 unemployed persons belonging to the 15-24 age groups, 162,100 are unemployed persons who had never worked before. The long term youth unemployment rate was 13.1% which in the urban area reached 18.2% that representing a 9.5% percentage points higher than in the rural area. In Romania it can be remarked that facilitating the transition from school to employment duties requires many changes in the curricula. This process is necessary in order to adapt the professional qualification to the dynamics of the modern market needs. "In order to facilitate the access of youth on the labour market it was intended to expand measures to encourage youth employment, by modifying the unemployment insurance scheme and by stimulating employment, by granting non-taxable recruitment premiums. These measures concern the youth

aged of at least 16 years, the graduates of educational establishments and special schools.” (NRP 2007-2010, page 78)

Older workers

The results of the measures in Romania during the last 10 years to reduce the unemployment rate, to create job opportunities and for work satisfaction, to establish a balance between work and private life, and to set up instruments for working time flexibility provide some evidences from a life course approach. There will increased stress on instruments and flexible legislation for improving the quality of working conditions for men and women and to fit them to satisfy their personnel life requirements, on the one hand, and the other one to relate and adopt for all course-life the various and many forms of work related to the professional experience, knowledge, skills up-dated to modern market needs. In this sense, the needs for new professional skills, knowledge required by the modern economy during the crisis will be offered by a continuing educational process and training, by a professional reconversion for all life, by a lifelong learning process and adult education in order to implement an efficient employment strategy for a life-course without any discrimination by gender, by age, by beliefs or by economic situation. At the same time such actions from a new modern work strategy perspective will maintain individuals who are very active social actors within the community.

Such policies and strategies should be assessed and understood in the new context of the economic crisis which will have a significant social, moral and human negative impact on communities and individuals. The problem of the new models of people adaptability for a variety of working time arrangements will also be an important issue for decision-makers in order to find urgent solutions for marginalised individuals and communities at high risk of being excluded from the labour market. At the same time special social policies should be developed for creating new jobs, new flexible occupations requested by the revised Lisbon Agenda: “attract and retain in the work force more people on the labour market; improving adaptability and increasing investment in human capital and resources in order to develop a new and efficient long-term strategy in the domain of demography, migration, social exclusion, health or poverty alleviation”. This work approach will assure work place security from a life-course perspective. The demands of access to the labour market will come from both parts: from the employees and from the employers and should be respected as normal rights for them. From the life-course perspective, it could be seen as a very important step to rebuilding and re-establishing intergeneration harmony and solidarity.

Unfortunately, many problems of social active life related to biological age, especially for old people (over 50 years old), have not been solved in Romania. The normative regulations for retirement are confused and incoherent, being dependent on sectors and domains of activities, with the possibility of the

introduction of some subjective options and interpretations by employers because of the number of exceptions allowed. The regulations for retirement and for dismissal of employees from a specific domain do not usually take into account the actual situations, which can vary from one domain to another, the work and professional experience and the performance of the people, the investments in qualified human resources, or the costs of social changes by removing the people from their work place. More than that even, some political decision-makers clearly formulate a general imperative to replace, without analysing the actual situations from the labour domain activity, just to replace very social active and performing people over 50 with a young generation. For them, these requirements appear as a “magic formula” for social changes and social reform. They cannot, however, justify the financial and economic costs, and human negative impact of these types of changes. Many sectors such as science and scientific research, education, culture, etc., need a solid and up-to-date knowledge based on skills accumulated over time during the life-course. The quality of work, productivity and performance depends on continuing education and training. If the decision makers ignore the sector specifics, and certain aspects of the social active life of the group over 50 years old, and in many cases even over 65 years old, many social problems will be added to the existing ones. This fact could create a visible imbalance in quality of work activities and direct age discrimination. They forget that the trend of demographic field is characterised by a decreasing birth rate of birth. Besides, the work performance will suffer and the solidarity and cooperation between generations will be at risk. Many artificial conflicts between generations will open and could escape social control in the near future.

Conclusions

Participation of women on the labour market is lower comparing to men. The main labour market gender indicators show that both, activity rate and employment rate are higher in 2003 (sources by INS) for males (62.5% against 47.6% and 57.9% against 44.6%). In spite of this the same tendency is registered for unemployment rate (7.5 for males and 6.4 for females) showing that there are a lot of women, especially on rural area, that are not looking for work-housewives) There are significant differences between the men and women’s earnings in different national economy’s activities, mainly caused by the different qualification level, the complexity of work and level of work framing. As a matter of fact, the men – women earnings disparities do not direct appear as an inequality issue, the earnings being similar at equal work and equal conditions. It can consider as an indirect discrimination which could be explained. The differences in the employment rate between men and women represent one of the main problems that need to be reformed in a near future within the context of work flexibility and work time arrangements.

Another problem is that women have also lower earnings. The lower participation on labour market is mainly under influence of rural area where women are involved in household work, especially child care. The lower levels of women wages in conditions of equal earnings at equal work have more explanations. One of them is that even if women have the majority in some high level wages activities (finance, banking and insurance activities where women represented in 2003, 70% of employees), they have less leading functions than men. Women have lower qualifications jobs, their averages wages being lower in comparing with men. The lower qualifications of women have also an explanation in higher polarization. Birth of child by young mother, and in the last time even by girl-mother, practically stop their educational process with unwanted consequences on the labour market.

The labour policy at the moment will have to contribute to promoting gender equality by reducing gender gaps in employment rates, in the domestic division of care work and earnings gap

The National Action Plan 2004-2005, in guideline 6 (Gender equality, up-to-date measures that have to be implemented) emphasize on several week point from work strategy for increasing the actions supporting women in eliminating the inequalities in paid work and flexible work relations. Besides, the NAP is explicitly included women's target group in the Employment policy in order to increase measures for employment's stimulation.

In Romania, the administrative mechanisms of monitoring social relations at the work place have illustrated some strong and also some weak points.

May be, in this new socio-economic context, we should move in a new direction of social changes and social development through innovation on the labour market. Some other non-economic strategies focus on improving investment in human capital and human performance, adapting education and training to the new market needs and efficiency of activities, using the highly professional qualified labour force as a life course process, a very active and friendly management will succeed in coping with many negative effects of the new crisis

The new flexicurity policies should promote continuing education and training, lifelong learning and adult education in order to maintain skills, knowledge and competitiveness on the labour market, active policies to hire unemployed or inactive population, more flexible rules regarding social security and social protection for people who change the work place or for temporary interruption of their work activities.

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