

Work Life Balance Legal Notice

Social Affairs & Family Affairs Joint Committee Hearing

Dr Anna Borg – Malta Women's Lobby

11.10.2022

Setting the context

Employment rates* for
25-54 yrs age bracket, Jan-March 2022

□ 81% women

□ 93% men

Setting the context

- **20% of women** work part time, **6% of men** work part time
- Almost **1 in 5 women** with care responsibilities had to reduce their working time whilst **13% of men** looked for ways to increase their income
- Women with care responsibilities worked **34 hours per week** on average, **men 42 hours**

Evidence of gender caring gaps

- While **81% of women** in Malta report doing cooking and/or housework on a daily basis, **37% of men** do so

- **42% of women** in Malta do unpaid work related to care & education of their children, grandchildren, elderly and disabled family members, **25% of men** do so

Evidence of gender caring gaps

- **97% of males** with care responsibilities did not take a career break when becoming a parent
- These gender caring gaps contribute to the **motherhood penalty** which manifests itself through the **Gender Pay Gap** (10%), the **Gender Pension Gap** (40%) and **vertical segregation**

Let's now focus on the family policies

- How generous are they in terms of **time** allowed away from work?
 - How generous are they in terms of **compensation level**?
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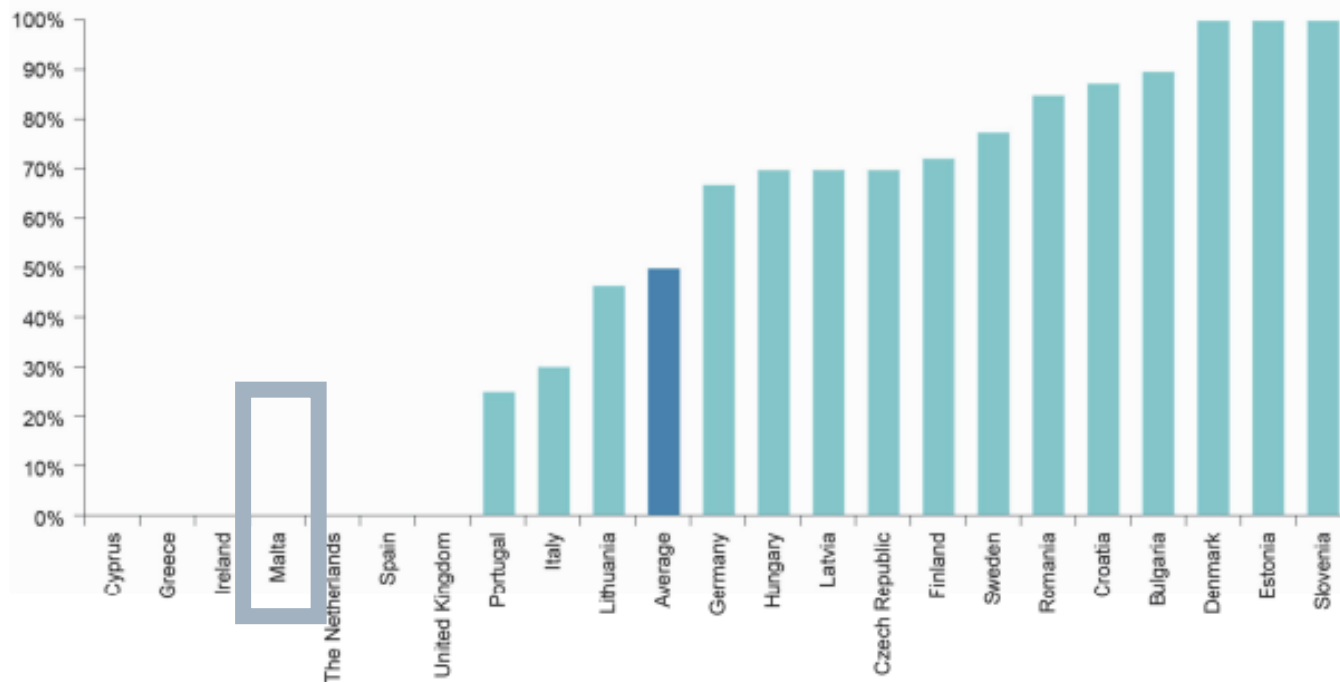
Inadequate Family Leaves

- Subsequent governments have been mean **time-wise** and **compensation level-wise** in relation to **family leaves in Malta**
 - **Men** – a **life consumed by paid work**, hardly any time for the family
 - **Women** – **struggling to cope** with the demands of paid work and family in a context where support is very limited (except for childcare for 0-3yr olds)
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Inadequate family policies

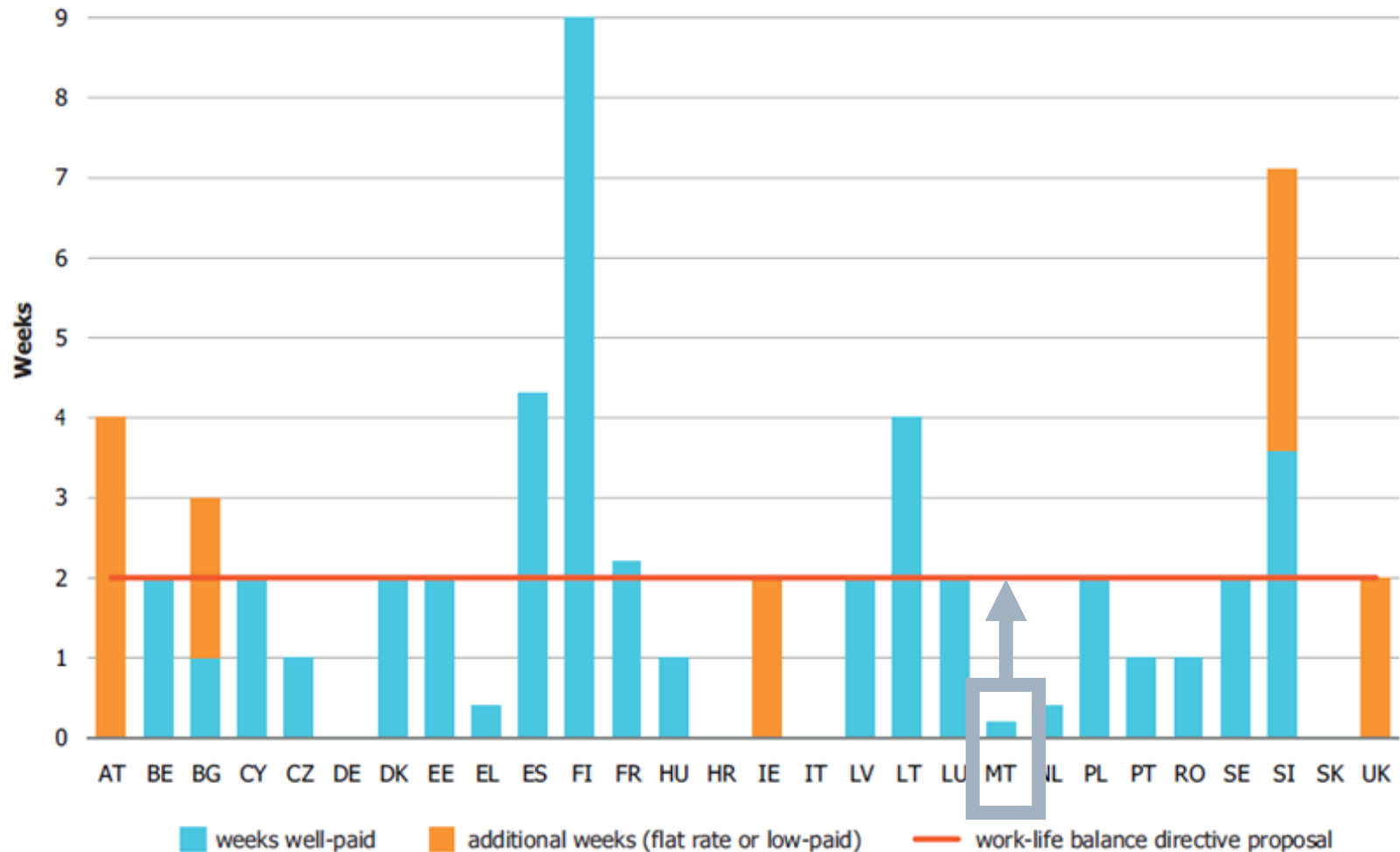
- **Maternity leave** is relatively short in Malta, with 14 weeks at full pay rate and another 4 weeks at reduced pay
 - **Fathers working in the private sector**, get 10 days of leave on the birth/adoption of their children
 - **Parental Leave** is paid at sick pay level (€21.85) at a time when family expenses soar
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Compensation rate levels of Parental Leave before the WLB Directive



As a consequence, uptake of parental leave by men was only 2.3% for Malta in the Public Sector, possibly lower in the Private Sector

Paternity Leave duration before the WLB Directive



Source: European Commission (2018) - Based on Blum et al. (2017) and European Platform for Investing in Children (2018)

Note: Well-paid is defined as at least 66 % of previous earnings. This threshold is set by the European Commission (2010) and indicates that earnings below 66 % create a risk of a low wage trap

Limited support for dual earner families

- ❑ Parents are only allowed **15 hours of urgent family leave** a year when children get sick
- ❑ **Workers in the Private Sector** have fewer family friendly measures when compared to **Public Sector employees**
- ❑ **Malta's school opening hours and school days** are amongst the shortest in the EU

Inadequate family policies = fewer births?

Malta	1.13 births per woman, lowest low
Spain	1.19
Italy	1.24
Greece	1.39

- ❑ **These numbers raise serious questions about the adequacy of family policies** in these countries to sustain dual earner families
- ❑ Decline in birth rate has repercussions on the economy and sustainability of the welfare state

The 3 main aims of the WLB Directive

1. Enable **people with caring responsibilities** to better **balance their work with family commitments**
2. Encourage a **better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men**, thus closing the **caring gaps between women and men**
3. Address the **under-representation of women** in the labour market

Bad Implementation of WLB Directive goes against the spirit of the law

The WLB Directive as implemented in Malta:

- does not fulfill the aims of the Directive
 - does not contribute to closing the caring gaps
 - will only result in a cosmetic change
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