

Promoting Economic Participation of Romanian Women via Innovative Work Arrangements; The case for Telework

-Experiences from a EU-Leonardo da Vinci programme-

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Telework for family life-work reconciliation in the EU: promoting women participation and mobility - WOMEN IN, ref.2011-1-ES1-LEO05-36491, is a project currently funded by the European Commission, Leonardo da Vinci Programme, Transfer of Innovation Sub programme and is in be implemented between October 2011 and September 2013.

The project is based on the results of a previous very successful project "Telework for the life-work reconciliation of Spanish women" (El teletrabajo en la conciliación de la vida familiar y laboral de las mujeres españolas, ref. TSI-040100-2008-10) which has been financed by the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Commerce, within the framework of "Plan Avanza", sub-programme "Digital citizenship" and European Social Fund.

In frame of WOMEN IN project, 7 highly experienced partners: UGT Euskadi (ES) (project promoter), INVESLAN (ES) (project coordinator), BEST (AT), EEDE (EL), INFOART (BG), GINGERBREAD (UK) AND INCSMPS (RO), from six European countries are developing an interactive online environment, based on web 2.0, with the aim of encouraging women participation on the labour market through telework. Thus, the project provides them with the essential transversal skills and key competences on teleworking. At the same time, the project aims at promoting the teleworking option at institutional level, as a workplace flexibility programme-thus linking with the essential EU-2020 concept of FLEXICURITY and its potential benefits to the company. The online environment will provide a direct access to an innovative auto – diagnostic tool labelled as "WHILE", designed training itineraries and best practices also under development in frame of project.

In order to extend the concept of teleworking at European level, a comparative analysis on flexible workplace and teleworking policies in partner countries has been carried by the project partners followed by conclusions and recommendations for actions to be taken so as to foster women participation in teleworking.

For the purposes of this comparative analysis the Romanian partner (i.e. INCSMPS) has been carrying out researches on: participation of women on the labour market; women and teleworking; the implementation work-life reconciliation programmes; the use by women of new technologies and training needs/qualification for teleworking etc. Results of the researches undertaken so far have shown telework as a poorly developed option for the reconciliation work and family life in Romania and therefore a minor player in fostering increased participation of women on the labour market. So far, Romania has not adopted any specific legislation on telework, nor did the social partners make any significant forays on the matter. For this type of work, the only applicable rules are those contained in the chapter on "domicile work" of the country's Labour Code.

Scrutinising the few available statistical data, the study concludes that Romanian women have the potential of performing as teleworkers (i.e.: 62% of women aged between 16 – 74 years surveyed by the RO partner have used the computer every day or almost every day). Meanwhile one does not have to forget the particularly favourable climate of today where scores of projects are targeting women with the purpose of encouraging their participation on the labour market as well as in education and training.

In the next stages of project the Romanian partner will contribute to the development of an self-diagnostic tool for key competences required by telework as an innovative way of work organization; the tool will be available in Romanian language and will enable the design of a training itinerary for telework-related

transversal skills. The online environment created will stand for a platform allowing learning, networking, innovation and the sharing of good practices in relation to telework and its potential of reconciling work and family life.

For more information and news about project's progresses, please follow as at: www.woman-in.eu:

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The Refernet ROMANIA Team