

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse how the concept of work-life balance (and reconciliation policies in general) is constructed and defined at the European Union level. In order to analyse these often implicit definitions, the European Commission's working documents from 1995 to 2016 are gathered and subjected to category and content analysis. Reconciliation policies and work-life balance are stable concepts, occurring in 152 documents over the studied 22 years period. Annual Reports on gender equality and documents connected to the European Employment Strategy are specifically analysed. Even though the "reconciliation policies are part of equality policies" argumentation is often stressed, the expressed goals are usually connected to the goals of employment policies and economic policies, with economic growth being behind this argumentation. The most represented policy areas are leave policies, mainly parental leave, and services for childcare and other dependants, usually connected to the same goal – bringing more women into the labour market.