

Family-Friendly Measures Report 2010

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.0 Introduction

The Maltese economy depends on the productivity of its Human Resources, thus it is fundamental that every organisation, its work structures and management strategies provide employment conditions and opportunities that best ensure employee retention, motivation and loyalty.

Government's broad HR management strategy is primarily established through such documents as the EU 2020 Strategy, the National Reform Programme and national action plans among others, and it focuses on the principle that investing in the potential of individuals is closely linked to the nation's competitiveness.

National Competitiveness may be affected as a result of the employment patterns in Malta which are changing as a result of socio-economic impacts such as:

1. higher education – the continuous increase of the level of education among the Maltese population is resulting, among other things, in an increased number of educated women who enjoy easier access to the labour market. This effect contributes favourably to one's personal development as well as to the economic growth in relation to the Gross Domestic Product of the Maltese economy.
2. new technology – people are far more reachable and accessible. The use of the internet has made the world even smaller as it makes it possible for people in different time-zones to make contact at any time. Such development is also making it easier for people to work from home.
3. changes in the physical environment – the European Union is facing unprecedented demographic changes - an ageing population due to increases in life expectancy, low birth rates, changing family structure and migration.

Socio-economic changes may support workers in achieving a better balance between workplace and workforce needs, thus improving the quality of life.

Therefore, in order to gain a competitive edge, it is essential to ensure that policies are being reviewed regularly and where necessary, new ones are adopted.

1.1 Purpose of this Study

Government's HR strategy is primarily aimed at securing a better work-life balance with a view to minimising any potential negative effects that may result from socio-economic changes.

This study mainly focuses on the Family-Friendly Measures currently available to the employees in the Public Administration with the objective of analysing the utilisation of such measures by:

1. Numbers
2. Gender
3. Preference

Reliable, accurate and timely data assists in the analysis of and facilitates the identification of better solutions for an improved balance between the exigencies of the Public Administration and those of its Human Resources.

Chapter 2 - Methodology

2.0 Methodology

The Family-Friendly Measures report is based on a survey of the family-friendly measures availed of by employees in the Public Service and in the Public Sector during 2010. The survey was carried out by HR Systems and Data Management Directorate within PAHRO and the data was collected through the Directors (Corporate Services) within the line Ministries. The 2010 Family-Friendly Measures Survey has taken a different approach from the previous years. This year, the survey did not request the number of officers who were availing themselves of any of the family-friendly measures on a particular date but the total number of officers who benefited from any family-friendly measures from the 1st January to the 31st December, both days inclusive. In this regard, the new approach secures that any employees who would have availed themselves of any particular measure, for any given period of time, would be captured in this report.

Chapter 3 - Findings

3.0 Findings

Survey findings on the use of family-friendly measures by public employees are illustrated at Appendices 1 and 2.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

4.0 Introduction

The information provided was gender specific, and categorised by salary scale or by category of employees. Through this data the Public Administration HR Office (PAHRO) could be further assisted in undertaking a deeper level of analysis further to which new policies can be developed with the introduction of new measures and/or fine-tuning of existing initiatives.

4.1 Use of Family-Friendly Measures by Gender

On comparing the family-friendly measures availed of as at November 2009 and those availed of in 2010, an increase in the over-all utilisation was observed.

Consistent with the results of previous surveys, this survey reveals that female employees are the primary beneficiaries of family-friendly measures. Table 4.1 below presents a comparative analysis between male and female family-friendly measures beneficiaries. This table clearly illustrates that when compared to the uptake by females, the utilisation of family-friendly measures by male employees is still very low. This could be attributed to a number of factors namely: social, cultural and financial. However, further studies would need to be undertaken to understand the reasons behind the current situation. The most popular family-friendly measure with male employees is flexible hours.

Table 4.1: Comparative Analysis between Male and Female Family-Friendly Measures Beneficiaries

Family-friendly Measure	Female	Male	Total
Adoption Leave	3	2	5
Responsibility Leave	43	13	56
Parental Leave	461	9	470
Career break	265	7	272
Leave to accompany spouse on government assignments abroad	9	3	12
Reduced hours	942	47	989
Teleworking	369	45	414
Flexible working hours	199	181	380
Grand Total	2291	307	2598

Although the number of males availing themselves of family-friendly measures is well below that of females, it can be noted that there was a marked increase in male employees who availed themselves of family-friendly initiatives which allow a better work-life balance without financial losses. In November 2009, 28 male employees availed themselves of teleworking. In 2010, a 61% increase was registered as 45 male employees availed themselves of teleworking.

Another pattern which emerges is that male employees tend to choose those family-friendly measures which balance their work and family responsibilities without decreasing their take home pay. This may be an indication that the Maltese Society is still operating within a traditional male-breadwinner model.

This survey also indicates that employees in Category A positions (salary scales 1-5 for the public service and top management positions for the public sector), make limited use of family-friendly measures (See Appendices 3 and 4). A possible reason for the low uptake of family-friendly measures in Category A positions could be attributed to the fact that employees in this category:

- are mostly male;
- have heavy workloads;
- are likely to be beyond child bearing age (average age in Category A positions is 49.1) and such measures as parental, career, fostering would be less popular.

The majority of family-friendly measures beneficiaries are employees occupying the middle categories (salary scales 6 – 10 (middle management) and 11 – 15 of the Public Service (professional, administrative, executive and clerical levels in the public sector). It is noted that there is a low uptake of family-friendly measures by employees in salary scales 16 – 20; a possible explanation for this could be that the majority of grades in this category are traditional male trades and occupations.¹ A holistic snapshot of Public Service employees by employee category is shown in Table 4.2.

¹ See Appendix 2.1 of the PSMC.

Table 4.2: Comparison in the Uptake of Family-Friendly Measures by Different Employee Categories

Family-friendly measure	Scales 1-5 Top management	Scales 6-10 Middle Management or Professional	Scales 11-15 Administrative, Executive or Clerical	Scales 16-20 Supervisory, Technical or Industrial	Definite Contracts	Total
Maternity leave	7	357	195	14	8	581
Adoption leave	0	3	2	0	0	5
Responsibility leave	1	21	27	7	0	56
Parental leave	4	317	134	12	3	470
Career break	1	133	122	16	0	272
Leave to accompany spouse on government assignments abroad	0	8	4	0	0	12
Reduced hours	17	377	525	66	4	989
Teleworking	20	110	267	15	2	414
Flexible hours	8	122	179	62	9	380
Grand Total	58	1448	1455	192	26	3179

When comparing family-friendly measures availed of by employees in Scale 6 – 10 (middle management) with those in Scales 11 – 15 (Technical, Supervisory and Clerical grades), table 4.2 above illustrates that whilst officers in Scale 6 – 10 are more likely to avail themselves of Parental Leave/Career Break, such measures as telework, reduced hours and flexible work schedules are more popular with officers in Scales 11 – 15. This could imply either a lower preference for telework, reduced hours or flexible work schedules; or rejected requests by management owing to the nature of work and workload of officers in Scales 6 – 10.

The uptake by female employees outnumbers the male uptake across all the family-friendly measures. The family-friendly measure which is mostly availed of by females is the career break. The family-friendly measure which is availed of by nearly as

many males as females is flexible work schedules. This could possibly indicate a shift in the Maltese culture whereby male employees are becoming more aware of the need to share in family responsibilities. However, further in-depth studies would be required to permit further understanding of the underlying reasons for such patterns in the utilisation of these family-friendly measures.

Chapter 5 – Recommendations and Way Forward

5.0 Recommendations and Way Forward

Further to the analysis of the survey results, the Public Administration HR Office is submitting the following recommendations and way forward:

1. Consider applying for EU Funding to undertake a project to:
 - i) assess the implementation and management of teleworking in the Public Service;
 - ii) support structures for the better implementation and monitoring of family-friendly measures in the Public Service;
2. Requests from Senior Management for flexible hours or teleworking on account of a family-friendly reason should be facilitated thus encouraging take-up at this level, whilst further promoting Government's agenda in extending accessibility and facilitating take-up of such measures.
3. Line Ministries should seek to promote the utilisation of family-friendly measures which allow a better balance between work and family needs without decreasing take-home pay.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

6.0 Conclusion

It is one of Government's primary objectives to create a family-friendly work environment so as to promote social inclusion at all levels, to foster female labour market participation and to sustain the financial independence of employees. Family-friendly measures are a fundamental tool for achieving these objectives, while maintaining a balance between work commitments and family responsibilities. Thus, it is important to review existing policies and to design new policies continuously, so as to achieve sustainable socio-economic development and to secure Malta's competitive edge.

APPENDIX 1

PUBLIC SERVICE – TOTALS

PUBLIC SERVICE TOTALS - 2010

		Scale 1-5		Scale 6-10		Scale 11-15		Scale 16-20		Definite Contracts		TOTALS		
		W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	GRAND TOTAL
Maternity Leave	14 weeks paid	7		357		195		14		8		581		581
Adoption Leave	5 weeks paid	0	0	3	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	2	5
Leave for Fostering	1 year unpaid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Responsibility Leave	1 year unpaid, renewable	1	0	14	7	25	2	3	4	0	0	43	13	56
Parental Leave	1 year unpaid	4	0	312	5	131	3	12	0	2	1	461	9	470
Career Break	Upto 5 years unpaid	1	0	129	4	119	3	16	0	0	0	265	7	272
Leave to acc spouse on govt asgmts abroad	1 year unpaid, renewable	0	0	5	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	9	3	12
Reduced hrs – 20 hrs/wk	1 yr paid pro-rata, renewable	9	1	128	7	135	3	18	1	0	0	290	12	302
Reduced hrs – 25 hrs/wk	1 yr paid pro-rata, renewable	1	1	35	2	60	1	12	0	2	0	110	4	114
Reduced hrs – 30 hrs/wk	1 yr paid pro-rata, renewable	4	0	151	12	213	10	28	3	1	0	397	25	422
Reduced hrs – 35 hrs/wk	1 yr paid pro-rata, renewable	0	1	26	2	82	2	3	0	1	0	112	5	117
Rdcd hrs – other amnts	1 yr paid pro-rata, renewable	0	0	14	0	18	1	1	0	0	0	33	1	34
Teleworking		15	5	101	9	240	27	11	4	2	0	369	45	414
Flexible Work Schedules		5	3	52	70	111	68	25	37	6	3	199	181	380
TOTALS		47	11	1327	121	1333	122	143	49	22	4	2872	307	3179

APPENDIX 2

PUBLIC ENTITIES – TOTALS

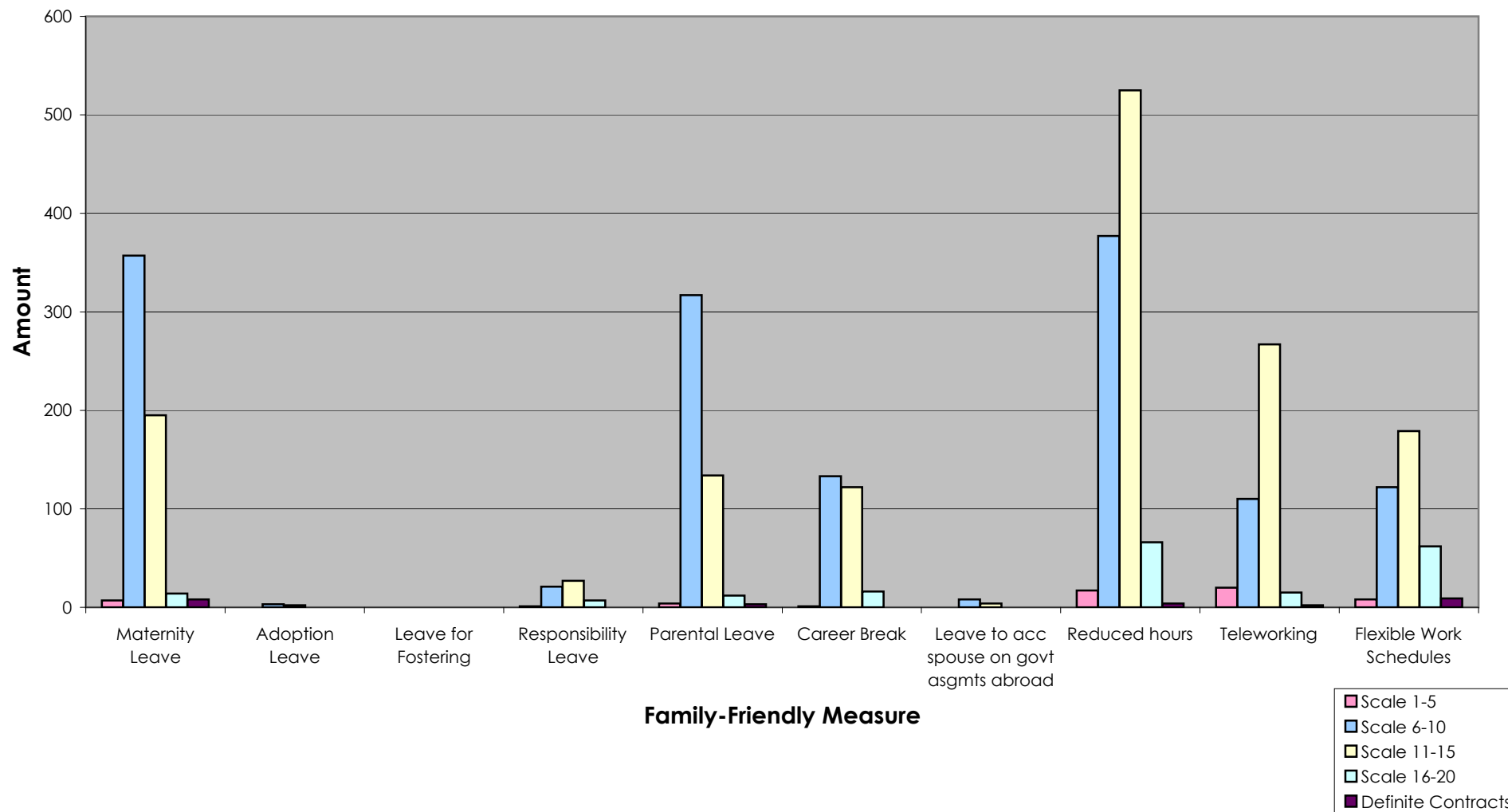
PUBLIC ENTITIES TOTAL

		Top Management		Middle Mangt & Professional		Administrative/ Executive/ Clerical		Supervisory/ Technical/ Industrial		TOTALS		
		W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	GRAND TOTAL
Maternity Leave	14 weeks paid	4		51		73		11		139		139
Adoption Leave		0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	2	4
Leave for Fostering		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Responsibility Leave		0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	3
Parental Leave		0	0	36	1	97	0	4	1	137	2	139
Career Break		1	0	20	0	28	5	12	2	61	7	68
Leave to acc spouse on govt asgmts abroad		0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3
Reduced hrs timetable		7	0	109	7	334	23	65	9	515	39	554
Teleworking		3	1	40	7	71	5	7	0	121	13	134
Flexible Work Schedules		11	17	101	53	170	41	20	65	302	176	478
TOTALS		26	20	359	68	777	75	119	78	1281	241	1522

APPENDIX 3

PUBLIC OFFICERS WHO BENEFITTED FROM FAMILY-FRIENDLY MEASURES – BY EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY

Public Officers who benefitted from Family-Friendly Measures - by Employment Category (1st January 2010 to 31st December 2010)



APPENDIX 4

PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES WHO BENEFITTED FROM FAMILY-FRIENDLY MEASURES – BY CATEGORY

Public Sector Employees who benefitted from Family-Friendly Measures - by Category (1st January 2010 to 31st December 2010)

