

MEN AND FATHERS AT HOME AND AT WORK – PRACTICAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES -

Bibliographical Analysis

For providing a detailed analyze of both the current situation regarding the involvement of men in family and work spheres and its determinants we will use the next bibliographic references:

- published articles/books and/or previous studies carried out in the field;
- statistical data from the national representative studies: *a.* “Time Use in Romania” (2000) carried out by the National Institute for Statistics, and the one time only *b.* Gender Barometer (2000) undertaken by Gallup Organization of Romania;
- current legal provisions (laws, strategies, action plans) as a measure of the “political will”.

Women and Men on Labour Market in Romania

The indicators we used for designing the evolution and development of the Romanian labour market are employment, unemployment, part time work and the occupational segregation (the share of women in agriculture, industry and services). The first two indicators illustrate the women access on the labour market and the way in which the transition and economic restructuring process affected it; while the last two (part time work and the share of women in services) lead to more flexible work practices and this may have effects on the work and family balancing opportunities.

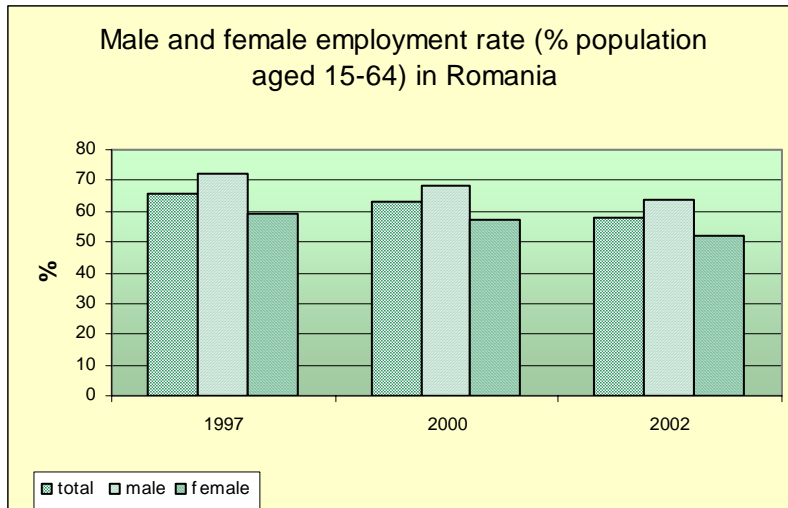
Employment¹ and unemployment² rates evolution

Romania has ones of the highest employment rates of the Central and Eastern Europe, up to 65 %, comparable with the EU 15 average of 64,3 %

¹ The employment rate is defined as the ratio of the number of employed persons 15-64 years old to the working age population. It measures the capacity of a national economy to provide work to its population.

² The unemployment rate is defined as the ratio of the number of unemployed persons to the overall labour force (the sum of employed and unemployed persons).

in 2002. But we have to mention that these high employment rates are mainly due to the considerable size of agriculture in total employment.



Source: Eurostat

The employment rate stood at 63,6 % in 1994 and rose up to 67,7% in 1996³. Since that it has been declining and in 2002 was 57,6 %, below the EU average of 64,3%. Due to the restructuring process concentrated mostly in industry – the male traditional sector of employment, the male employment rate went down from 71,9% in 1997 to 63,6% in 2002. The women employment rate declined slowly from 59,1% in 1997 to 51,8% in 2002.



Source: Eurostat

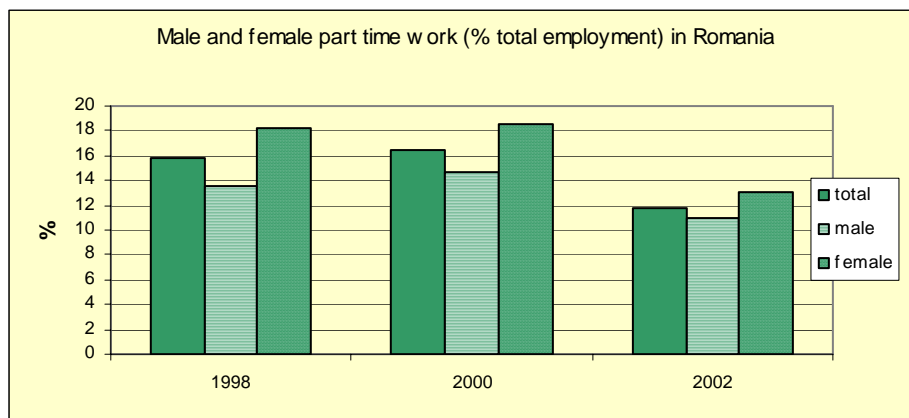
³ Joint Assessment of Employment Priorities in Romania, 2002

Corresponding to its employment rates, Romania has also one of the lowest unemployment rate among the Central and Eastern European countries, varying between 6% and 7%, slightly below the EU average of 7,7 %. One of the most important causes of the declining of employment rates, without important rises of the unemployment was represented by the retirement policies used as a surrogate for the social protection at the beginning of the 90's. Also in Romania the agriculture (manly a subsistence one) absorbed the employment losses from industry.

Atypically, in Romania, the unemployment rates for men are higher than for women, the gender structure of the labour force being strongly affected by the restructuring process mostly of the traditional masculine occupations and activity areas.

Part time work

All the former communist countries have rates of part time work significantly below than the EU countries (18.1% in 2002). In these countries the introduction of temporary work arrangements or part time work arrangements is mostly involuntary, reflecting the employment scarcity, the lack of job opportunities and the incapacity of national economy to generate new jobs. Even if the part time employment rates for men are slightly below than for women, the relative high share of part time work is due to the high level of part time workers among the self employed⁴ (91 % of all the self employed in Romania are in agriculture).



Source: Eurostat

⁴ It is a person who carries out his activity in his own unit or in an individual business, without hiring employees and being helped or not just by his family.

The study *Working Conditions in the Acceding and candidate Countries* carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in 2003 pointed out the differences between the EU part time worker and the CEEC part time worker: the weekly working time of a part timer in all the Central and Eastern European countries is the same or even longer than a full timer. Adopting part time arrangements in ex communist countries is due to the wishes and constraints of improving the household incomes, and not an option for purpose of balancing work and family responsibilities.

Sectoral employment

In all the Central and Eastern European countries employment in agriculture and industry is significantly over the EU average to the detriment of the services sector. In 2001 employment in agriculture was 40,9 %, but next year declined by 5,7%, reaching almost the same level of 1996 year (35,5 %). As we already underlined, the agriculture – largely a subsistence type one – played a refuge role in the absence of employment opportunities.

The shares of employment in industry remained at high levels in most of the former communist countries. Even it has been growing since 1989, the service sector, that should have the mission to absorb the losses from industry and agriculture, is still under-developed in all the Central and Eastern European countries. So, the employment in industry represents 27,5 % of Romanian employment (2001).

Looking to the gender differences, services remain the traditional sector for women employment and industry the traditional sector for men employment.



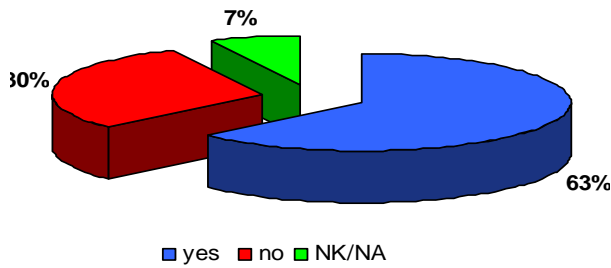
Source: Eurostat

Women, Men, Family and Housework

The data provided by the Gender Barometer, the first Romanian survey carried out in the area of opinions, attitudes and mentalities of men and women with respect to all the aspects of the economic, social and political life, paint a Romanian society rather “traditional”, “patriarchal”, as it is characterized by the segregation of the public and private spheres and the association of the men with public sphere and professional activities and women with private sphere and its specific activities (child care, housework, etc.)

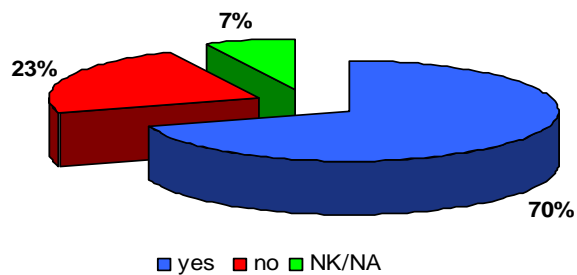
From the answers to the following questions “The housework is rather a duty of women than of men?” and “Earning money is rather a duty of men than of women?”, we found that YES, the majority of the respondents considered making money as a responsibility of men (70% of respondents) and housework as a responsibility of women (63% of respondents). There are no significant differences between men and women with respect to these; on the contrary, it seems that more women agreed with this situation.

The housework is rather a duty of women than of men?



Source: Gallup Organization of Romania, 2000

Earning money is rather a duty of men than of women?



Source: Gallup Organization of Romania, 2000

But the answers shaping the described cultural model vary with age area of residence, incomes, level of education and historical region.

Young respondents are less subjected to these “rules”, as a consequence of the egalitarian education and/or of the fact that they do not have a family of their own yet. 58% of respondents aged 18-29 considered that housework is usually a woman’s duty comparing to 61% of those aged 30-59 and 71% of those aged 60 and over.

Higher the level of education, lower the attachment to the traditional model. 76% of respondents with primary school believe that housework is the duty of women mainly, while 81% consider that making money is the responsibility of men. On the other hand, only 42%, respective 44% of those with tertiary education agreed with the above mentioned issues.

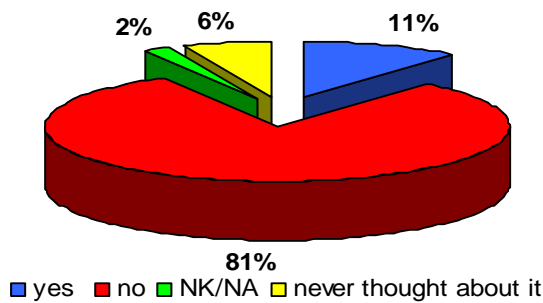
As expected, the traditional model is more common among the residents from rural areas.

The incomes represent the most important variable. Those with highest incomes share a “modern” vision with respect to the roles of men

and women within the family, while the traditional model is widely spread among those with lower incomes.

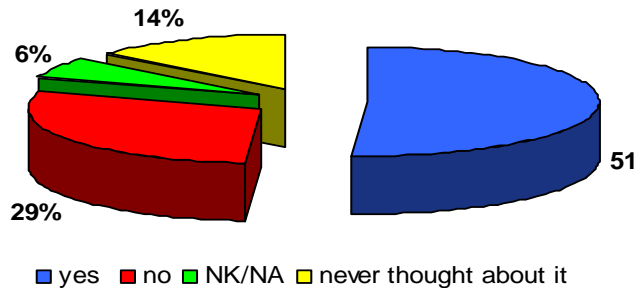
Other astonishing answers are offered by the two questions referring to the housework: “Is the housework the easiest work?” and “Do you think that housework has to be paid like any other work?”. Thus, the large majority consider that the housework is not “easy” at all and, unexpectedly, the idea of paying the housework activities is approved by a majority of 51% of the respondents, while only 29% disagreed.

Is the housework the easiest work?



Source: Gallup Organization of Romania, 2000

Do you think that housework has to be paid like any other work?



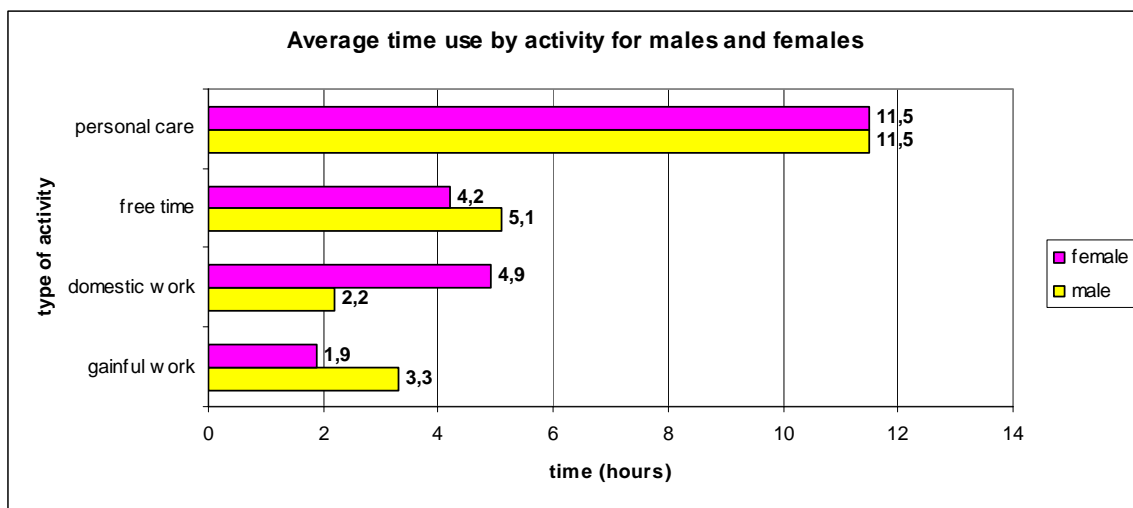
Source: Gallup Organization of Romania, 2000

The cross-tabulation with the historical region shows that Bucharest and Crisana-Maramures are the “modernist” regions, while Oltenia and Muntenia are the most attached to the “traditional” attitudes/mentalities.

Concluding this section we can say that the housework receives, at least at declarative level a good valuing and social recognition.

Theoretically, we can suppose that this thing is reflected by the national policies for family support and for balancing work and family dimensions...

Another survey that provided generous data on the patterns of behaviour with respect to housework responsibilities within the Romanian society is “Time Use in Romania”, carried out in 2000 by the National Institute for Statistics. Thus, there are significant differences between men and women with respect to the total time spent on gainful work/study and domestic work.

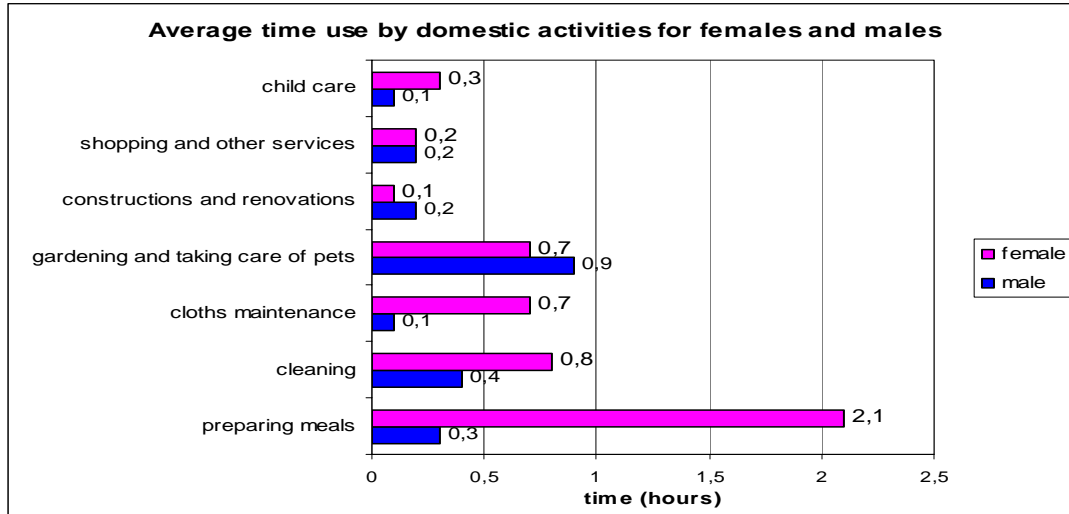


Source: National Institute for Statistics, 2000

Therefore, women spent on average 1/5 of their time (4,9 hours/day) with housework activities, while men spend less than half of this time (2,2 hours/day) with same type of activities. On the over hand, men (3,3 hours/day) spend more time than women (1,9 hours/day) with gainful activities and also have more free time.

Considering these, we can say that the time that women spend with housework activities has important consequences on their involvement in gainful work.

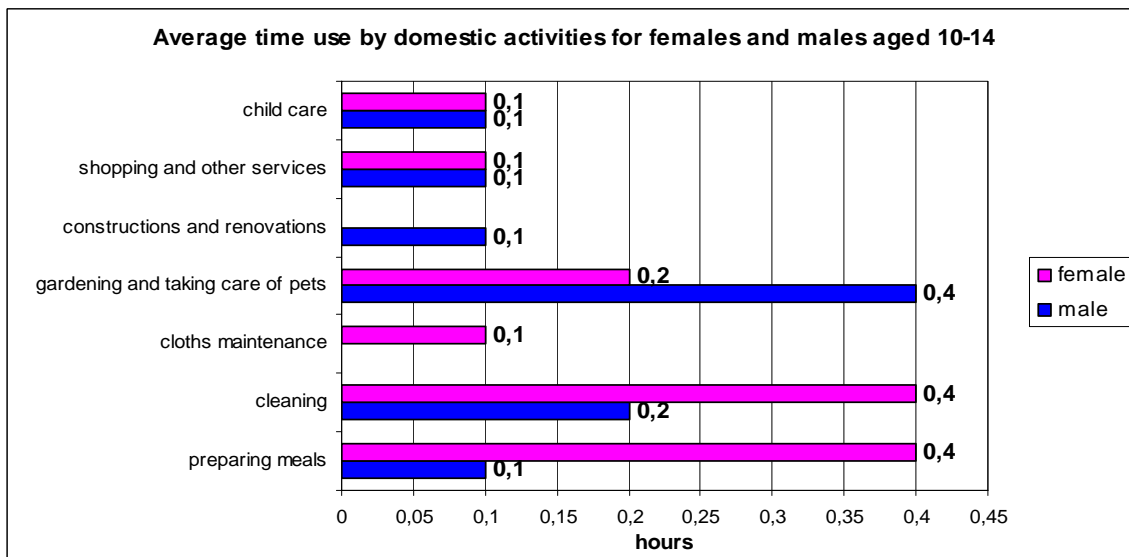
The consequence of Romanian appurtenance to the traditional “male breadwinner” model is, as we already mentioned the unequal allocation of domestic work between men and women.



Source: National Institute for Statistics, 2000

Women do mainly activities such as cooking, house cleaning and maintenance, cloths cleaning and maintenance and child care. Men do mainly gardening, pets caring, constructions and renovations. Even if there are specific activities for men and women, it's obvious that the sharing of domestic work between them is far from being equal.

Socialization process plays a key role in perpetuating this model. As their mothers and fathers do, girls are more involved in activities relating with cooking, house cleaning and cloths cleaning and maintenance, while boys are more involved in gardening, constructions and pets caring.



Source: National Institute for Statistics, 2000

As Vladimir Pasti underlines in its paper “The Last Inequality. Gender Relations in Romania”, the fact that women perform certain activities is perceived as a consequence of their natural skills for cooking, cleaning and child caring “they just know to clean and iron better”. But, as data evidenced, the reality is just the result of the socialization process that asks certain roles and skills for men and women.

Legal Framework

This sub-chapter is dedicated to a survey of the national legislation with direct or indirect effects on the reconciliation of work and family life in Romania.

The lack of clear and well promoted objectives with respect the reconciliation of work and family life, and of overall gender equality is a characteristic for ex-communist countries and Romania as well. Therefore, the Romanian policies regarding the reconciliation of work and family, as well as those regarding the gender equality were “imported” with the “acquis communautaire”, but there are significant gaps between the “laws on paper” and “laws in practice” (i.e. implementation process).

For characterizing the dimensions of the reconciliation issue in the Romanian legislation, as a measure of the political will, we will consider the following:

1. fiscal measures, taxes for those with dependant children or elderly, fees for caring and rearing the children and allowances granted at the children birth, etc.;
2. measures regarding the regular working time, the flexibility of work schedule, part time and parental leaves, etc.;
3. measures for providing accessible and affordable child care services, crèches and kindergartens, day centres, etc.;

The most important instruments used in Romania until now and with significant implications on the reports between work and family life, were, as other papers evidenced⁵: the parental allowances (for caring and rearing the child) and the maternal, paternal and parental leaves. As we already said, Romania display the same model as other ex-communist countries, strongly

⁵ Preda, Pop and Bocioc – The gender dimension of the social security system reform in Romania (project still ongoing)

affected by the industrial restructuring process and by important reductions of the public child care services provisions.

Until 1989 the maternity leave was reduced at its minimum level, consisting in 112 days.

In 1990 year, by enacting the decree-law 31/18.01.1990, the new established national authorities provide a maternity leave of 112 days and also a 1-year leave for caring and rearing the child. The period granted for maternal leave is considered for the calculation of the pension's benefits and all **female employees** can beneficiate of it. The amount of the fee for caring and rearing the child was set at 65% of the monthly net wage.

The Law 120/9.07.1997 raises the leave for caring and rearing the child up to 2 years, or 3 years for a child with disabilities. For women contributing to the state social insurance system as well as for the women activating in the military service, the amount of the fee for caring and rearing the child was set at 85% of the monthly brut wage. For those contributing to the social insurance system for agriculture, the fee was set at 80% of the average of last 6 monthly incomes. Again, the law specifies that the maternal leave is considered for the calculation of the pension's benefits. **For the first time, the art.6 specifies that mother as well as father can be entitled to these provisions.** But the notion of "paternal leave" is introduced and implemented starting with 2000 (the notion is used for the first time in Romania legislation by the Fiscal Code of 2000). This measure has as its aim to promote and encourage the fathers' involvement in caring the child and represents a very important step realized by the national legal framework, as these rights were also considered as women rights/duties.

For the first time the law also stipulates the employers' obligation to guarantee the return to the same workplace of the employees that beneficiated of this law. Another legal provision that has to be mentioned is referring to the fact that for being entitled to the fee for caring and rearing the child the beneficiary can not have any other formal sources of incomes, provision that is still in force.

Another important legal provision contributing to the equal sharing of responsibilities regarding the child care between men and women is introduced by the Law 210/31.12.1999 which regulates the paternal leave. According to this law, any father of a new born child is entitled to a 5 days leave. This leave can be required in the first 8 weeks following the child birth and is fully paid by the employer.

The Fiscal Code of 2004 introduced other very important legal provisions, especially with respect to the amount of the fee for caring and

rearing the child. The Emergency Ordinance 23/10.04.2003 established the quantum of the maternity leave fee at 85% of the average monthly brut salary and the quantum of the fee for caring and rearing the child at 85% of the average monthly salary used for establishing the budget for the state social insurances. This fee is granted only to those that have a minimum stage of contributing to the social insurance system of 10 months.

The data available regarding the parents that applied for the leave for caring and rearing the child prove important changes in the Romanian society.

Month	Beneficiaries of the leave for caring and rearing the child, 2005		
	Total	Out of which: MEN	
		Number	%
January	131270	12675	9.66
February	134803	14967	11.10
March	137626	16759	12.18
April	138768	18745	13.51
May	140470	19198	13.67
June	135971	19719	14.50
Average	136485	17011	12.46

Source: National Pensions House

Even if the situation is far a way from a balanced representation, the data are promising, the percentage of men applying for paternal leave being on an increasing trend.

The beginning of 2006 comes with new regulations regarding the leave as well as the fee for caring and rearing the child up to 2 years. Thus, the Emergency Ordinance 148/2005 stipulates that can be entitled to the leave and the monthly fee for caring and rearing the child only those realizing taxable incomes for a period of 12 months before the child birth or adoption.

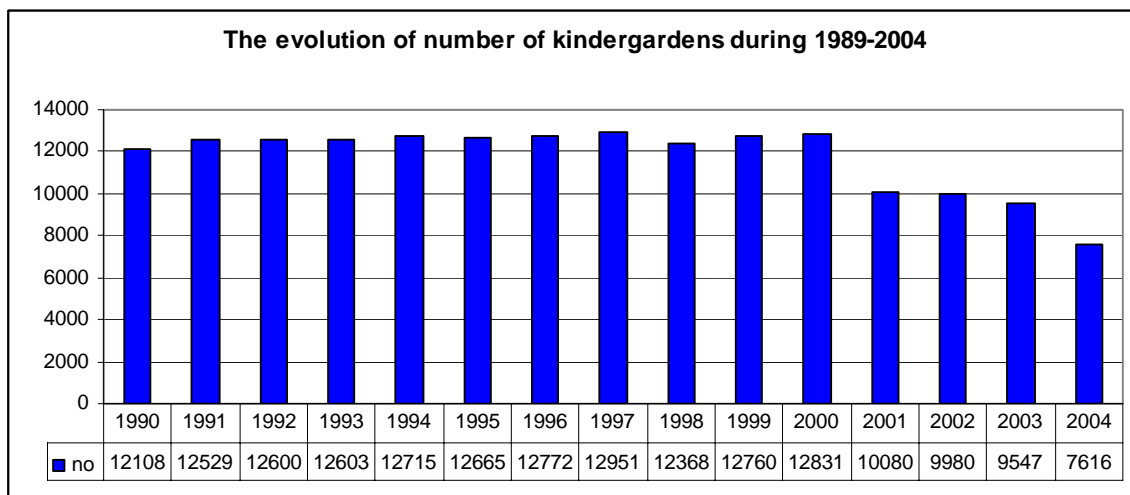
Another new provision addresses to those parents that want to come back to their economic activities, before the second child's anniversary. Thus they are entitled to an amount equal to the minimum wage. This amount was seen as an incentive to the parents to come back earlier to their economic activities.

For the first time, this legal provision split the amount of the fee. Therefore, 200 RON (cca. 56 EURO) are granted to all children, irrespective to their parents' contribution to the social insurance system. The rest of 600 RON (cca. 167 ERUO) are granted only to those parents that realized taxable incomes and contributed to the social insurance system. Due to the fact that serious infringements of the legal framework were reported, the allowance for the child up to 2 years (3 years for those with disabilities) and the fee for caring and rearing the child will be grated via the local public authorities (before, they were granted via the employers).

On the other hand, the Romanian legislation did the firsts steps in creating the legal framework for other types of flexible work. The Labour Code enacted in 2003 regulates the part time work, the work on determined period as well as the house work. Even if the Romanian economy has still a long way to cover until it will generate real opportunities for part time work and house work, the legal framework was created.

Also the articles 147 and 148 from the Labour Code stipulate that the employers with special family needs are entitled to days off, not-included in the holiday leave. The special events and the number of days off are established by law, collective labour contract or other internal regulations.

The public care services are on the last place among the concerns of political authorities, as there were not identified yet proper mechanisms for financing the system of crèches and kindergartens.



Source: National Institute for Statistics, 2005

Due to the restructuring process as well as to the increasing length of the parental leave, the public care services progressively diminished their dimensions and their quality, while their prices rose continuously. Moreover, no studies regarding the adequate financial mechanisms for improving the child care services were performed. But, the lack of accessible and affordable child care services is “supplied”, if we can say so, by a large network of informal caregivers.