



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



2 years overdue !

CAMPAIGN

Discrimination of pregnant workers and new fathers/mothers

Julia's Story

It began with a new ranking, which made me suspicious.

In our Company, there are three-digit, two-digit and single digit categories. Two years before my maternity leave I had worked my way up to double-digit ranking. Aiming for a single digit ranking was not even on my horizon in a company of 1,200 employees, and living for a career is not my goal in the first place. But it did surprise me, however, that after I returned from maternity leave, suddenly I had been demoted to a three-digit ranking of 'executive'.

After having conceptualized, lead and contributed to further education practices and independently collected statistics, even directed selection and interviews, I was welcomed back from my leave with a job post for which the most challenging task included hotel booking for guest speakers. I was stuck in a post for which the main task was mindless data entry...

I write this in the past tense however this degrading experience, which has totally demotivated me, is only 3 weeks underway. If I so much as open my mouth about it internally, I come up against a backlash and defamatory statements. My supervisor has already concretely threatened me saying "you should be grateful to me that I took you back at all since the team is getting along very well without you. I don't want to threaten you but..." At the moment I am trying to endure this situation and to look around me for alternative solutions but the psychological stress of the situation is eating up all my precious energy to the detriment of my new young family.

I would also like to add the example of my friend Maria. After being hired by a Telekom sub-contractor in Karlsruhe, she found herself suddenly re-located to another sub-contractor in Frankfurt after her return from parental leave. Between the commute and the costs of childcare, she could not afford to keep working - she quit. Not to mention the resulting 3 hours of her day that she could no longer spend with her daughter. Telekom has classified the location change as "reasonable". I should add that I, like many young mothers, hear countless stories in toddlers groups, on walks, and from acquaintances and relatives of this nature. My friend Katharina told me that her partner could not take parental leave because he would be the laughing stock of his work environment (construction) and may as well give up his job in advance.