

## Results of the second survey in the course of the project Re-start for women 2.0

### Further education during family leave – luxury or necessity?

When a child is born, the life of the mother changes on a large scale. Initially, many mothers think it is very important to spend time with their child. But at some point employed mothers need to return to their job. According to a survey conducted in Germany, 74% of gainfully employed parents wish for opportunities to participate in further education during family leave. Many mothers are looking forward to returning to their job. But often they cannot or do not want to carry on as before. In working life, work routines and techniques have often changed within one year. This creates a need for new qualifications. After a long professional break, people returning to their job often face difficulties in coping with new developments in their company.

To maintain promising career prospects there are numerous training opportunities. Today, lifelong learning is the basis of nearly every occupation. This is also true beyond family leave. For many mothers, family leave offers good opportunities to keep up with job-related developments. Nearly all mothers who returned to the labour force after taking part in further education during family leave reported their participation helped them to successfully return to their job. However, in reality only a minority of mother uses further education.

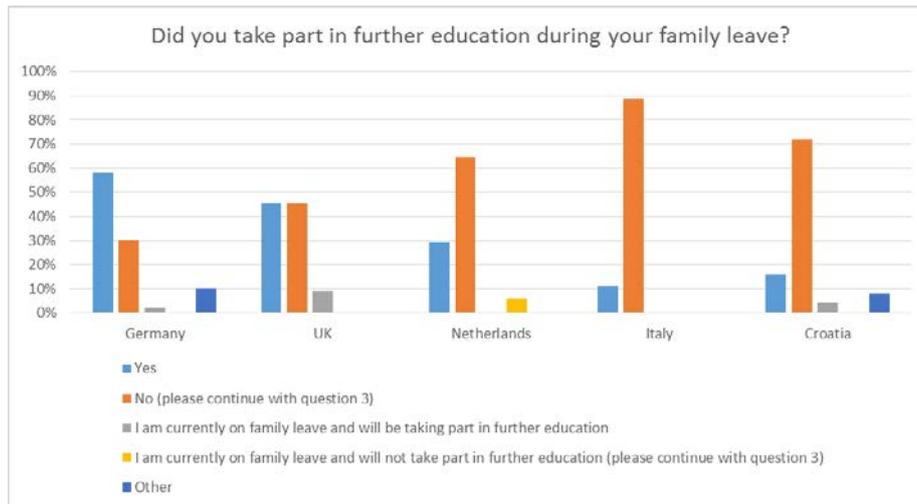
We wanted to explore the reasons for this. Since two years we are investigating the further-education-related behaviour of mothers in the European Union in the course of the European project Re-start women 2.0. The countries involved are the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, Croatia and Germany. Jointly we have developed an e-learning platform for women returning to the labour market after family leave, which also takes into account the country-specific differences concerning the return. An advantage of the platform is that participants can choose freely the time when they want to learn. Thus they can harmonize the further education with family life, as learning requires calmness and concentration.

We asked mothers from these five countries if they have participated in further education during family leave, what they would like to learn, how much time they are able to dedicate to learning, who should be paying for the training and a lot more.

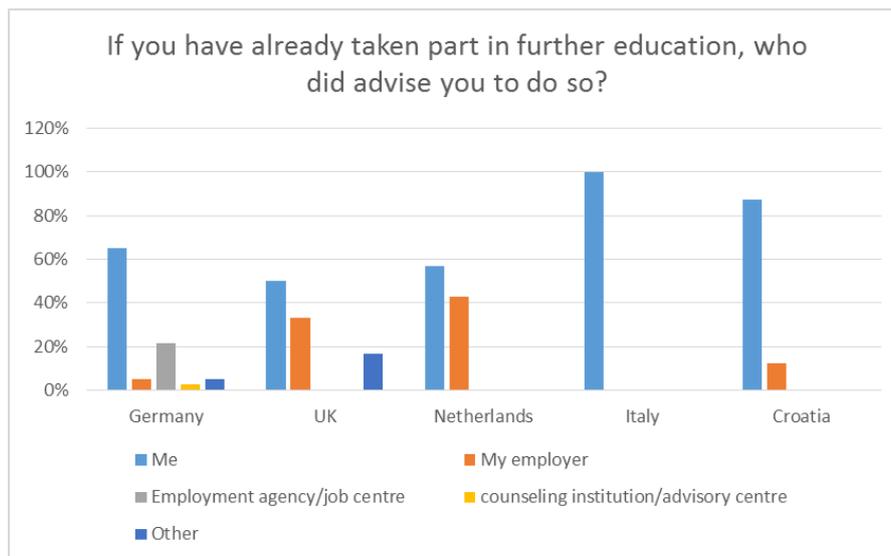
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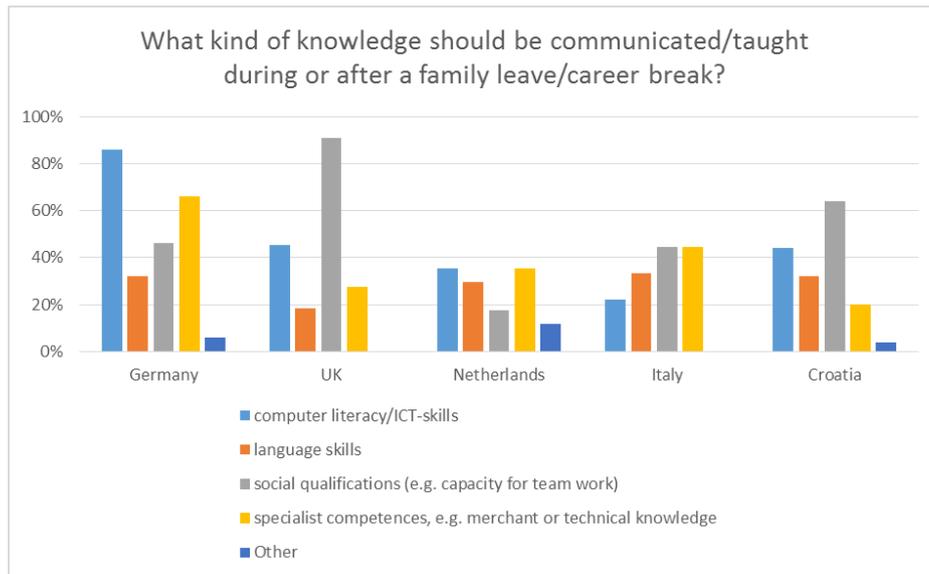
The majority of the respondents from Germany (58%) and nearly half of English respondents (46%) participated in further education during their family leave, whereas in the Netherlands, Italy and Croatia only a small portion of the respondents took part in further education.



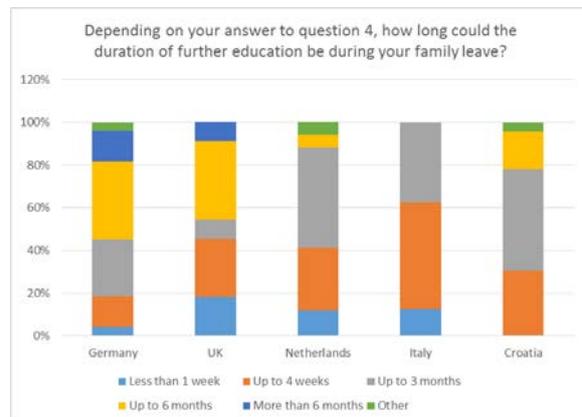
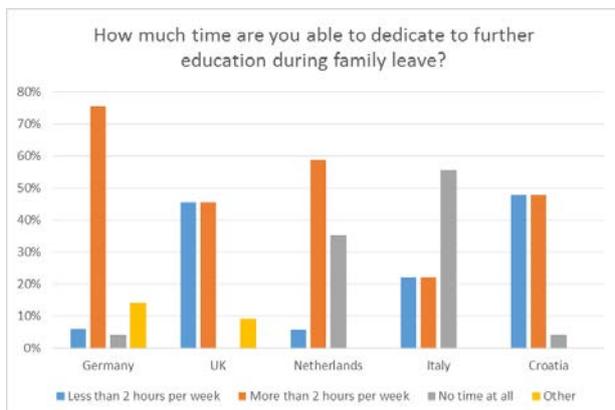
For the majority of respondents from Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Croatia the stimulus to participate in further education came from themselves. Besides, in the Netherlands, the UK and Croatia the employer played an important role in some cases by recommending the participation in further education. For some of the respondents from Germany the stimulus to participate was given by the employment agency.



Concerning the kind of knowledge that should be taught during or after family leave, computer literacy/ICT-skills and specialist competences are of great importance, especially to the German respondents. These competences are also important to the other respondents, however the respondents from the UK and Croatia consider the social qualifications to be the most important skills.

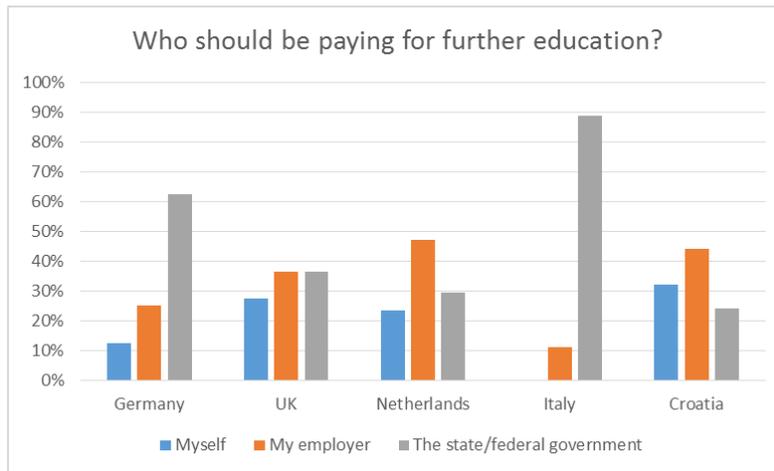


The majority of respondents from the Netherlands and Germany as well as nearly half of respondents from the UK and Croatia are willing to spend more than two hours per week on further education. More than half of Italian respondents as well as 35% of Dutch respondents indicated that they are not able to spend any time on further education. In terms of the duration of a further education programme, there exists no uniform view either between or within the countries.

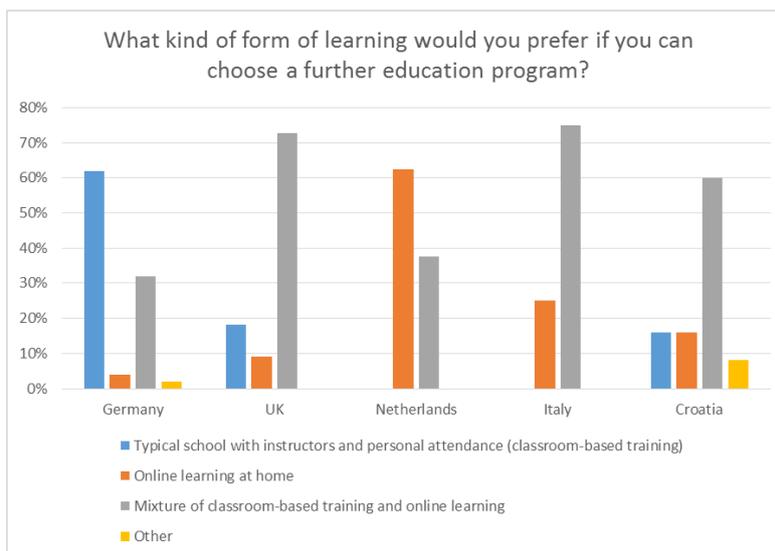


Respondents from all countries rated a proof of participation in further education as very important or important for their return to the job.

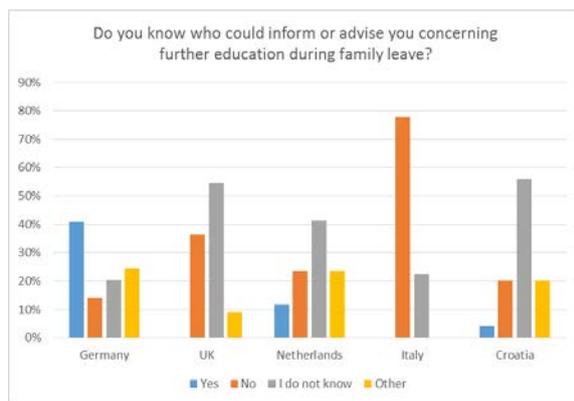
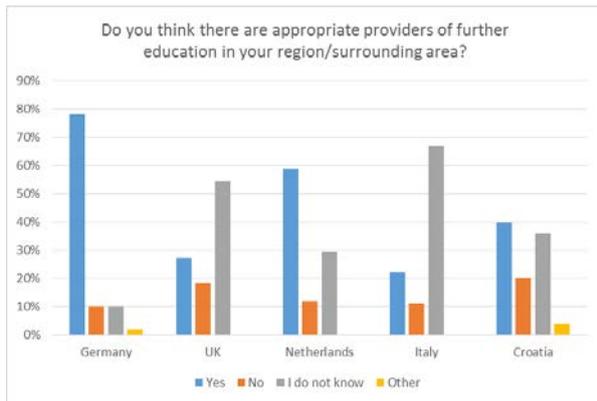
There exists no uniform opinion who should be paying for the further education. The majority of Italian and German respondents thinks it is the state's responsibility whereas in the Netherlands and Croatia many respondents think that employers should be paying for further education. In all countries except Italy a small portion of respondents sees themselves as responsible for financing participation in further education.



The preferred form of learning of respondents from Croatia, Italy and the UK is a mixture of classroom-based training and online learning, whereas the majority of German respondents favours a typical school environment with personal attendance and the majority of respondents from the Netherlands prefers online learning.



Solely respondents from the Netherlands and Germany think there exist suitable further education programmes in their region. Many respondents from the other countries do not know about such offers or think there are no suitable providers of further education in their region. The vast majority of respondents from the UK, Croatia and the Netherlands as well as all respondents from Italy indicated that they do not know who provides information and consultation with regard to further education during family leave. At least 41% of respondents from Germany indicated they are informed about consultation offers.



## Conclusion:

Especially in Italy there seems to be a large need for consultation on further education offers. Additionally people need to be informed about balancing family life and further education during family leave. In the other countries the willingness to participate (willingness to invest time and financial resources) in further education is greater, however there also exists a need for further consultation. Contents and form of learning should be adapted to the specific needs and preferences in the different countries, as there exist some considerable differences between respondents. Depending on the country, also employers should be integrated to stimulate participation in further education. Altogether, respondents rate a proof of participation in further education as (very) important for their return to the job.