

## **Europeanization patterns of gender equality in work-family life reconciliation policies: Germany and Turkey**

With the dramatic changes in the extent to which women and men contribute to unpaid domestic work and paid employment, reconciliation of paid work and family life has become more prominent than ever before within the European Union (EU) agenda. Although the issue was left to national level initiatives for a very long time, particularly from the 2000s documents started to require a relatively stronger convergence from member and candidate states. However, this does not necessarily bring a total policy change. Existing domestic political and cultural conditions may facilitate or prohibit the change at national levels. This paper thus is an endeavour to explore and explain the Europeanization patterns of gender equality of a longstanding candidate country, Turkey and a founding member country, Germany in the specific policy area of work and family life reconciliation over the last decade with a particular emphasis on intervening domestic actors. In the aim of achieving this goal, this study has utilized a combination of the review of the related literature, document analysis and 75 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Turkish and German political elites, civil society organization representatives and key academics sharing the similar research interest as well as the EU-representatives. The collected data have been analysed through a combination of process tracing and thematic analysis. The combination allowed the researcher to identify the key features of a very complex, uneven and less researched process with a greater focus on the intervening causal process. Relying on the data collected especially during the fieldwork, this research contends that the processes of Europeanizing both German and Turkish work and family life reconciliation policies have been filtered through the existence of domestic actors. Although both countries have made various legislative changes in response to the adaptational pressure coming from the EU, the conservative outlook within both the German and Turkish governments, which prioritize women's motherhood and caregiver roles and expect men to work full time together with various country-specific norms and values, country-specific cost-benefit calculations in terms of the relations with the EU, the actions undertaken towards Europeanizing work and family life reconciliation policies remained incomplete, contradictory and patchy in both countries.