



EUROPEAN WOMEN'S
LOBBY
EUROPEEN DES FEMMES



2 years overdue !

CAMPAIGN

Discrimination of pregnant workers and new fathers/mothers

Edith's story

"I studied at the University for Television and Film in Munich until 2008. After that, I applied there as a part time lecturer in the department for film technique, where we teach the students, how to use the film equipment for their projects. It lasts about three months until I got an answer for my application and meanwhile, I got pregnant.

I wanted to be honest to my new boss, so I went there before signing the contract and told him about my pregnancy. He was not amused and started to complain, this would be typical for women and so on. It was the initiative of one of my (male) colleagues that I finally got the job. In Germany, most of the lecturer jobs are fixed-term jobs, because you should do a qualification project, like to take your doctor's degree or a fine art project, as in my case. So my job was fixed for three years. I promised my chief to come back half a year later.

A few months later, I got pregnant again. This time, my chief started to tell me, how much I will cost him. I dealt with him to come back directly after my maternity protection, to take my overtime. I had made about 200 hours overtime for organizing the semester and etching lessons and there has been no time to work on an own project. When I came back from my parental leave, my team has changed. And when I told them, I will take my overtime, they set me under pressure, to come to work, because there was so much to do. So I came to work, took my new born baby to my office and tried to manage my job. Of course, I failed. After three months, I was incapable of working.

I tried to speak with my colleagues, that I'm not able to work full time any more. My colleagues are about ten years younger and none of them has children, so they weren't interested in finding a solution. Instead of this, they suggested, I should do a time-management-workshop and complained, that I am just lazy and so on. I tried to get an appointment with my chief, but he hedged around, so in December 2011, I wrote him about these problems and that I have worked out possible solutions.

Meanwhile, my contract has been extended for the time of my parental leave. In April 2012, I asked my chief to extend my contract. I won a stipend for a publication project "Camerawomen in Germany". Our students can do film portraits of camera people as technical diploma at our University, but my chief declined my project, because he finds, it does not fit to his department. So he denied an extension of my contract and told me that the reason is, I had not taken the chance to write a publication or work on an own project in the last three years, that would have been my job. The truth is, that no one in my department has ever written a publication or could realize an own project for qualification. When I told him, that there was no time for it, because we have to organize the whole semester, he just commented it of being not of his job and that my pregnancies had cost him 13.000.- € for what he rather had bought technical equipment. So there is nothing anymore, he could do for me. But he invited me to apply again for my job - what I did. And of course, I didn't get it. Now there is a young man on the job, who has no children.

I went to a lawyer and in a few months, there will be a judicial decision of my case."