



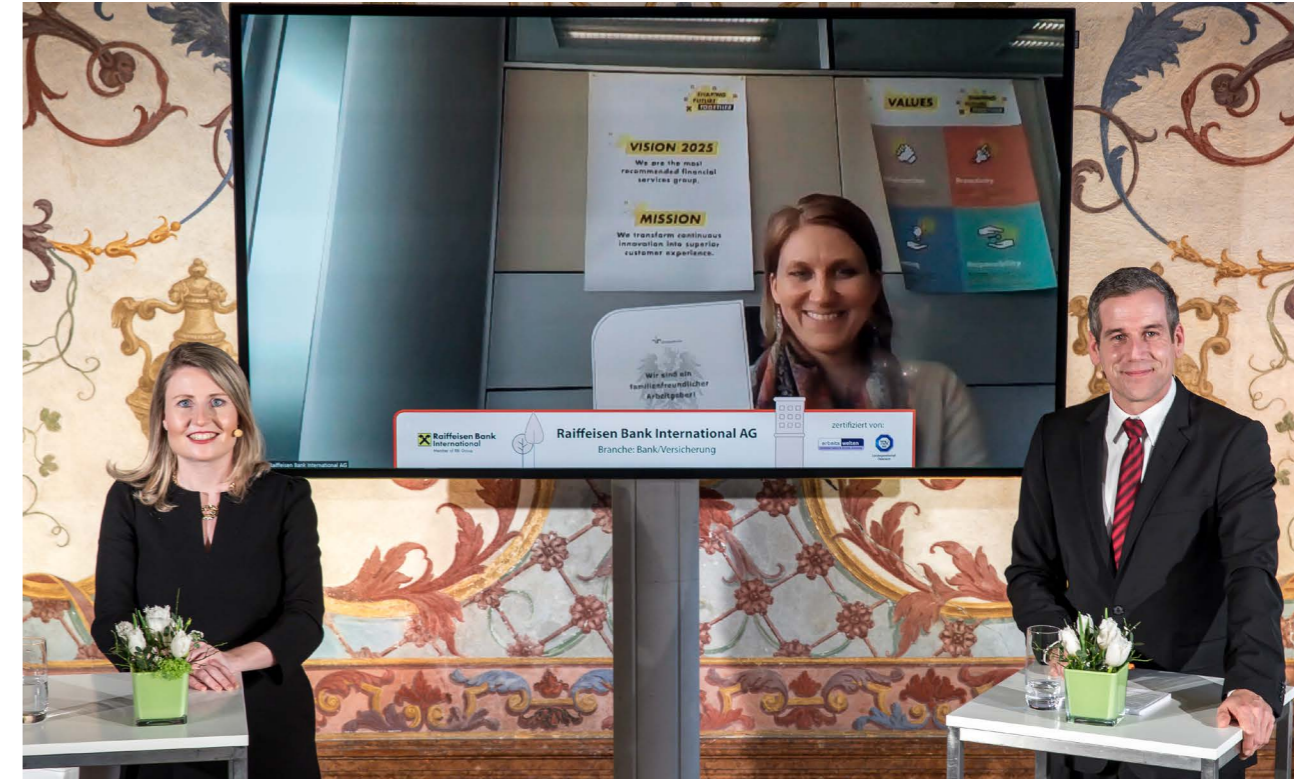
# Child and Career – Myth or manageable?

At the end of 2020, RBI received the state certification *workandfamily* for its family-friendly human resources policy. With this, RBI is committed to expand the existing family-friendly measures in the company. Raiffeisen INSIDE asked Heike Mensi-Klarbach, Head of Group People & Organisational Innovation, about what prompted us to participate in the audit, whether you have to look where it hurts, how we define the term “family” at RBI and more.



**At the end of 2020, RBI received the state certification *workandfamily* for the first time. What was the decisive factor for RBI's participation and why is now the right time?**

We have been dealing with the compatibility of work and family for a very long time. We decided on the audit because it guides us to take a structured look at what we already have to offer. It encourages us to make a critical analysis, provides a framework for our own ambitions and ensures that we have this evaluated. This way, we promote satisfaction, performance and ultimately productivity in the house. In addition, the quality seal supports us in communicating our ambition and



Heike Mensi-Klarbach at the virtual award ceremony with Family Minister Susanne Raab

commitment to work and family to the outside world. So, now is exactly the right time to show what is already there, and at the same time to question ourselves and continuously improve.

**How does RBI compare to other companies? In which context are we pioneers and where is our potential for improvement?**

I would say that we have already come a long way overall. Probably something like pioneers in many areas. For example, our company kindergarten, holiday care for children, but also our flexible working hours and individual part-time models for managers, to name a few examples. So, we already offer a lot, but resting on our laurels is not my style. We want to develop further and look where things are not yet ideal. One example is availability and the question of our (cultural) understanding of availability. This in turn has implications for compatibility and has been turned upside

down by COVID-19 and the change from presence to virtual working. This makes it more important to address the issue of the “New World of Work” and compatibility.

**At the strategy workshop for the audit, you shared a surprisingly critical view of work and family at RBI. As human resources manager: Do you have to look where it hurts? What is your ideal picture?**

Absolutely. Well, my ideal is that we build framework conditions that create a good co-existence – perhaps even better, a togetherness – of work and family or private life. I am convinced that a balanced life is one of the essential criteria for success, individually, but also for the company. Of course, there are phases in life or in the company when one is more or less challenged professionally or privately. That is obvious. But if we create the understanding that balance is important to us, that a successful compatibility ultimately



contributes to the company's success, then we will have achieved our goal.

#### **What does work and family mean for RBI? How do we define family at RBI?**

RBI defines the concept of family very broadly. Of course, there are terms that are socially, even legally defined – for example, for whose care one is released, for whose death one is allowed to take special leave. But for the question of what compatibility means for RBI, we do not have and do not want to limit ourselves to this narrow definition. It is important to value the different life realities of our employees and it is not for us to make an upward or downward valuation by including or excluding people.

#### **What actions and improvements have we committed to over the next three years with the audit?**

We have defined several thematic areas: Eleven in number, each with several individual measures. As you can see, we are ambitious. Since, as I said, we have already implemented many measures, the focus is now on cultural work, for example with our managers, on the topic of communication, but also on human resources development. In addition, we want to focus on maternity leave management, because from our point of view it is important to accompany our employees well during maternity leave.

#### **What concrete examples benefit the employees?**

COVID-19 has made mobile working a central part of our culture. To ensure this also after the pandemic, we want to focus on family-friendly and gender-sensitive framework conditions for mobile working as part of our "New World of Work" strategy. In addition, measures are being pushed to enable individual career planning without professional disadvantages, such as part-time management, job sharing, active fatherhood ("Papamonat", paternity leave, parental part-time) and the

agreement of the Team Collaboration Principles. Furthermore, we have agreed to expand the information offered in the area of work and family, for example on the intranet.

#### **The term "compatibility" is – somewhat pointedly formulated – almost frowned upon. Sometimes it's called a lie or a myth. How can a company support its employees regarding compatibility?**

Well, compatibility means that there are different roles and demands on our employees: namely those from the private and the professional sphere. And both need time. Accordingly, the question of compatibility is a reality and not a myth. How well it succeeds is, of course, another question. And not least the lockdowns have shown us how difficult it is when schools, kindergartens and childcare facilities are no longer available. We do not assume that this will be a long-term situation, that would be impossible to manage. In the short term, we have tried to respond as best we can. This includes flexible working hours or the automatic replenishment of time quotas. Overall, it has shown us how important compatibility is – it has raised awareness of the private and that has been a valuable, albeit painful, reminder.

#### **Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the double burden on parents has become even heavier. They are on video call with a toddler, for example. What can be done to generate more understanding?**

Absolutely right. The double burden became immensely greater, but it also became visible for the first time. Everyone knows that parents have very concrete and important private obligations in addition to their professional ones. But it rarely becomes as visible as it did during the lockdowns. What we take away from this: that mutual appreciation or at least acceptance form the basis for the compatibility between work and family. That is why we also focused on the managers in the context of the audit, whose acceptance and

support of the issue of work and family is essential for long-term success.

In general, however, it is also important for us to create awareness beyond the pandemic, that men and women can live different family models on an equal footing without negative consequences for their "careers". We want to achieve this, for example, by training managers and communicating role models.



#### **WHAT DOES THE STATE CERTIFICATION WORKANDFAMILY MEAN FOR RBI?**

At the end of 2020, RBI received the state certification *workandfamily* for its family-friendly human resources policy. With the award of the basic certificate, RBI is committed to implement a series of targeted measures within the next three years – and thus, is expanding the existing family-friendly measures in the company. Re-certification takes place after three years, during which the potential for improvement and the effectiveness of measures already implemented are continuously evaluated with the support of the audit *workandfamily*.

