Ralph Kattenbach *

The Right to Part-Time: Practical Implications from the Managerial Point of View **

In 2001 the employee’s right to reduce working-time according to their own preferences was implemented in Germany. This legal title hardly effects the slowly but steadily growing number of part-time jobs. Nevertheless, data from the socio-economic panel suggest that about 25% of employees wish to reduce their working-time even if this is associated with a loss of income. The HR-manager is seen as a mediator and is expected to play a major role moderating the effect of the legislative implementation. Therefore the HR managers’ concepts and attitudes towards part-time as well as the psychological contract are the subject of the presented study. 42 HR-managers have been interviewed. The data are analysed according to qualitative content analysis. In common use the right to reduce one’s working-time is rather seen as a matter of negotiation than an obligation to comply. Indeed, the majority of the HR-managers express their goodwill but the acceptance of the part-time requests is dependent on general beliefs, work ethic, and role concepts. Regarding the right to part-time, these are indicators for a weak direct impact of labour law on the managerial reality.

Key words: Part-time, Reduced Working Hours, Psychological Contract, Human Resources, Work Ethic