
FAMILY POLICIES REPORT

2019



FAFCE

*FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC FAMILY
ASSOCIATIONS IN EUROPE*



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FAMILY POLICIES: THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

Family policies aim to support families in their role towards society

Family is the basis of society and constitutes a fundamental resource for the economic and social well-being of a country. Families however remain more vulnerable to economic difficulties and face many obstacles in their care role, especially coming from the labour market. Recognizing the service of families towards society implies to ensure them supporting infrastructures and benefits to facilitate their role in educating and caring for their children, as well as older and disabled persons.

Family policies are a Member States competence

In the European Union, according to the subsidiarity principle, it is the Member states' responsibility to establish their own rules on entitlement to benefits and services, including family benefits. Family policies cover parental and carer's leave policies (eligibility, duration, income replacement, etc.) as well as family benefits, child care and long term care services and flexibility of working arrangements, among others.

The directive on work-life balance for parents and carers sets minimum requirements

Although the European Union is not competent regarding family benefits, it is competent regarding the respect by Member-States of the principle of non-discrimination between men and women (Article 3 of the Treaty of the European Union), especially in the work place (Article 153 (b) (i) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union).

The directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance for parents and carers was introduced to allow parents and people with caring responsibilities to better reconcile their work and caring duties. The directive has been published on 12 July 2019, entered force on 1 August 2019 and must be implemented in national regulation on 2 August 2022 at the latest. It constitutes the minimum legal requirements regarding family policies within the EU.

PARENTAL LEAVE

DURATION OF PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental leave enables employees to have a time-limited job protection after childbirth to care for their new-born child. Leave policies have numerous positive incomes: it supports child, maternal and paternal health and well-being, birth rates and women's employment.

The directive 2019/1158 on work-life balance introduced for the first time at least **4 months of parental leave for an employee**, from which 2 months are non-transferable between the parents and are paid.

Within this framework, EU-Members states are free to establish their own rules regarding the duration of the parental leave and the income replacement.

Duration and income replacement of parental leave in EU-Member States (2016)

EU Member State	Total duration available to a family (months)	Income replacement level
Greece	120	1
Czech Republic	36	2
Estonia	36	3
Spain	36	1
France	36	2
Lithuania	36	2
Slovakia	36	2
Sweden	36	3
Bulgaria	24	2
Germany	24	3
Austria	24	3
Romania	24	3
Latvia	18	2
Luxembourg	12	3
Netherlands	12	1
Denmark	11,1	3
Italy	10 (+1 if father takes 3)	2
Slovenia	8,6	3
Ireland	8,4	1
United Kingdom	8,3	1
Belgium	8	2
Croatia	8	3
Cyprus	8	1
Malta	8	1
Poland	7,4	3
Finland	6,1	3
Portugal	6	3

Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019 Work-life balance*, 2019, p.167.

Note: Income replacement 1=entitlement unpaid, 2=flat rate/<66% earnings, 3=all/most >66% earnings.

ELIGIBILITY TO PARENTAL LEAVE

In the EU, 34 % of women and 23 % of men are ineligible for parental leave.¹ **Employment is the most common condition to be eligible to parental leave.** Only in 4 Member States grant universal access to parental leave and 4 countries allow unemployed or inactive parents to be eligible. In the remaining 20 Member States, eligibility rates for parental leave vary. Self-employment is the most significant criteria in Greece, Italy and Spain, accounting for nearly 50% all men and about 20% of all women not eligible.²

Eligibility to parental leave in the EU Member States

Universal access	Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Finland, Sweden
Access to unemployed and inactive parents	Bulgaria, Denmark, Lithuania, Portugal
Access to employed parents	Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Slovenia
Employment conditions restrictions (length of service, type and sector of employment)	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom

Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019 Work-life balance*, 2019.

PATERNITY LEAVE

The directive on work-life balance for parents and carers set a minimum of **10 working days of paid paternity leave** and proposed an additional incentive (paid non-transferable parental leave of 2 out of 4 months), implemented by several Member States:

Examples of incentives in policy design to promote father's take-up of parental leave

Member State	Incentive
Germany	2-4 months of bonus leave is given if fathers take at least 2 months of leave
France	Longer period of financial payments is provided if both parents use parental leave
Croatia	2 months of bonus leave is given if both parents use parental leave
Italy	1 month of bonus leave is given if fathers take at least 3 months of leave
Austria	2 months of bonus leave is given if both parents use parental leave
Portugal	1 month of bonus leave is given if both parents use parental leave
Romania	1 month of non-transferable leave is available for the other parent (if not used, the total amount of paid leave available for family is reduced from 24 months to 11 months)
Sweden	90 days of fathers-only parental leave which is non-transferable (a father's quota)

Source: Blum, Koslowski, Macht and Moss, 2018. http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports

Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019 Work-life balance*, 2019, p.72.

¹ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019 Work-life balance*, 2019, p. 15.

² EIGE, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Parental-leave duration strongly depends on the possibilities to come back to work with flexible workings arrangements. Depending on the labour market's structure and organization, Member States can encourage diverse family-friendly working practices.

Examples of family-friendly working practices

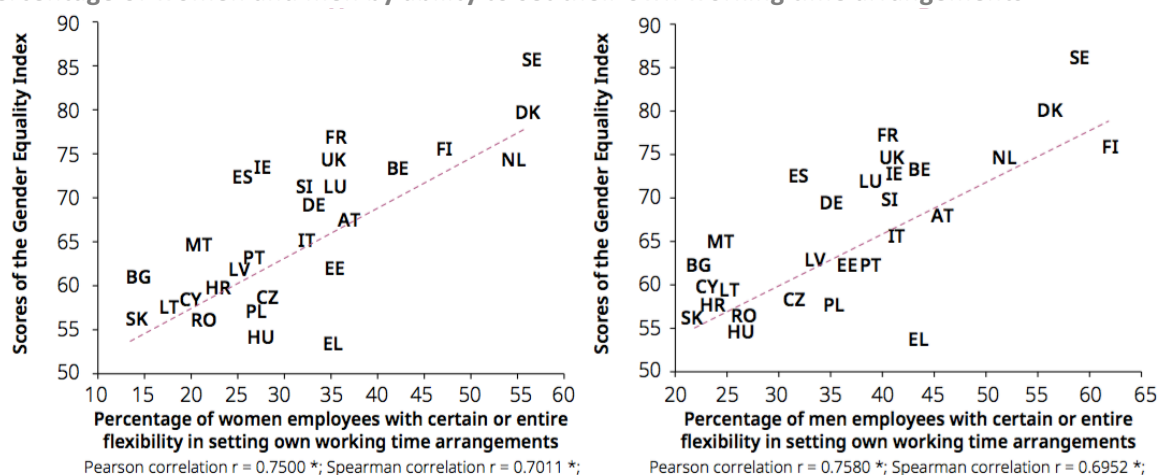
Practice	Description
Term-time working	Employees are employed on a permanent basis but can take leave during school holidays
Flexitime	Employees build up hours worked, so that they can come in late, leave early or take days off as needed
Compressed hours	Employees are employed on a full-time contract, but may work their contracted hours in four days rather than five
Commissioned outcomes	Employees have no fixed hours, but rather an agreed output level that must be met over a certain period of time
Mobile working	Working away from the typical workplace, including working from home
Annual hours	Employees must work a fixed number of hours over the year, but this may not be consistent across the entire year
Childcare support	Employers may have an on-site nursery (either permanent or during set periods, such as school holidays) or subsidise childcare costs

Source: CIPD, *Flexible working practices*, 2018.³

In the UE, however, **half of parents are constrained to come back to work full-time with no flexible working arrangements** or to give up their professional activity.

“In the EU, 57 % of women and 54 % of men have no possibility of changing their working-time provisions, while 14 % of women and 19 % of men could determine their own working hours completely. The private sector not only accounts for a higher share of male employment, but also ensures a higher level of flexibility in working time. Given women's concentration in public-sector jobs, this implies that women have fewer chances for work-life balance via flexibility at work”.⁴

Percentage of women and men by ability to set their own working time arrangements



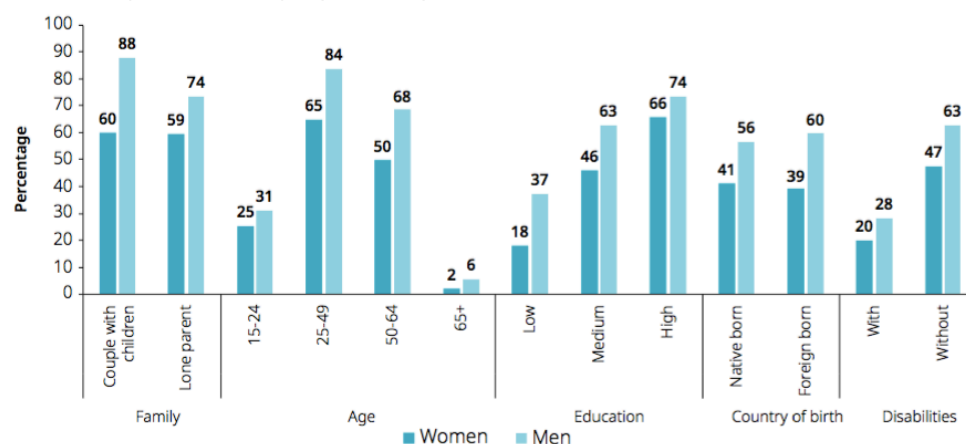
Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019 Work-life balance*, 2019, p. 109.

³ CIPD. 2018. *Flexible working practices*. Retrieved 12 December 2019: <https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/exible-working/factsheet>.

⁴ EIGE, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

As a consequence, mothers and fathers must sacrifice family time for their work time: 60% of mothers and 88% of fathers in a couple work full-time.⁵

Full-time equivalent employment by women and men (2017)



Source: EIGE's calculation, EU LFS.

Note: Calculated as: (sum of total working hours/mean working hours on full time jobs)/ population. Disability status based on EU-SILC.

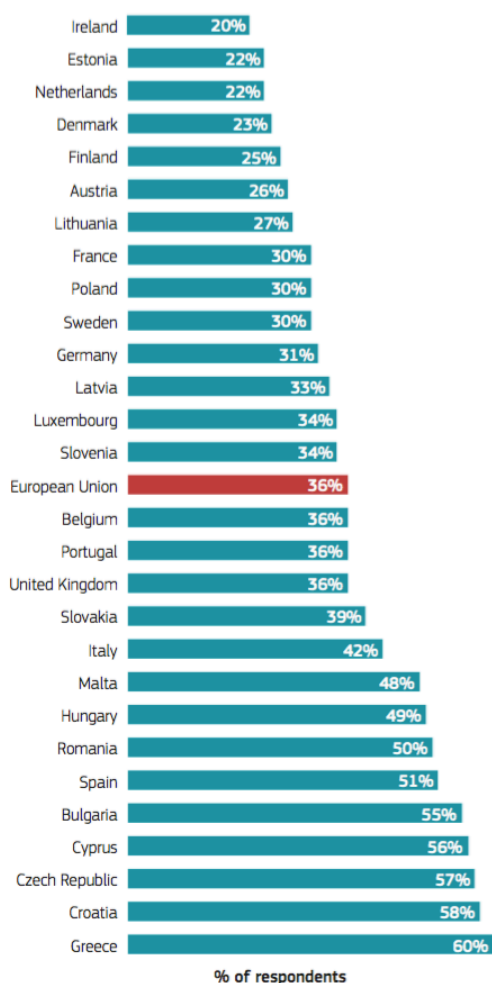
Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019 Work-life balance*, 2019, p.33.

⁵ EIGE, *op. cit.*, p.35.

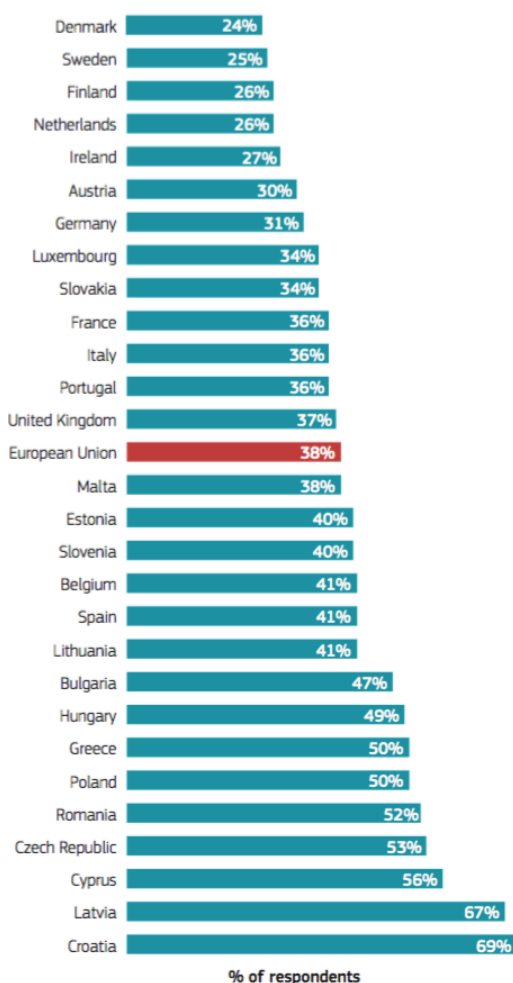
CARE FOR CHILDREN, OLDER PEOPLE & PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Today, **38 % of women and 25 % of men in the UE take care of children, grandchildren, older people and/or people with disabilities every day for 1 hour or more.**⁶ This unpaid work is rarely considered within the workplace and even more in the economic calculations of a country.

Persons who reported that it was “rather difficult or very difficult” to combine paid work with care responsibilities



Persons who reported that it had been difficult to fulfill family responsibilities because of the time spent at work



Source: Eurofund, *European Quality of Life Survey 2016*, 2018.

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE FACILITIES

Accessible and affordable quality child care services are a relevant tool for parents to efficiently balance their return from parental leave and their work life.

“In the EU in 2016, **14 % of households reported that their needs for childcare services were unmet.** This ranged from 22 % of United Kingdom households to 3 % of households in Bulgaria. [...] Affordability (50 %) is the most often cited reason for unmet need. The lack of available places (12 %), opening hours (8 %) and distance (5 %) pose less of a problem”.⁷

⁶ EIGE, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁷ EIGE, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Percentage of women and men who report unmet household need for formal childcare services



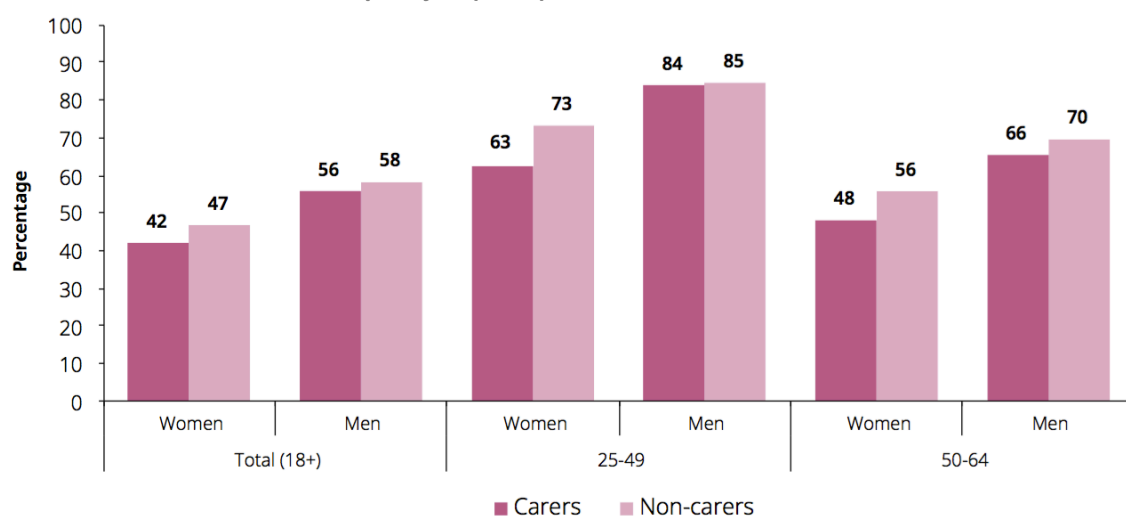
Source: EIGE calculations, EU-SILC ad hoc module on access to services, 2016.

CARER'S LEAVE AND CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The directive on work-life balance introduced the possibility for carers (i.e. workers caring for relatives in need of care or support due to serious medical reasons) to take **5 working days per year**. Member States are free to use a different reference period, allocate leaves on a case-by-case basis or introduce additional conditions.

In a context of demographic winter, the ageing of the European population leads to an ever-growing need for long- term formal and informal care. **In 2017, 1 in 4 people in the EU had a long-term disability**.⁸ Today, 21 % of women and 11 % of men aged 50-64 provide long-term care at least several days a week for older people and/or people with disabilities.⁹ Moreover, half of carers have a paid job and have to combine care's and work duties.

Percentage of women and men caring for older people and/or people with disabilities at least several times a week who have paid job (2016)



Source: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019 Work-life balance*, 2019, p.82.

⁸ EIGE, *op. cit.*, p.78.

⁹ EIGE, *op. cit.* 19, p.15.

FAMILY POLICIES IN SELECTED EU MEMBER STATES

CZECH REPUBLIC

Key contextual information (2015) ¹⁰		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	10,5	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,6	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	30,0	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	66,4	83,0
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	48	66
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	10,0	0,1
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	2,9	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	77,5	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 23 % of women and 5 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Czechia. Eligibility for parental leave is restricted to those in employment. Among the employed population, all women and men were eligible.¹¹

Maternity leave covers 28 weeks. It is paid and offers some flexibility: leave can be taken from six to eight weeks before the birth and can be used by either parent from the seventh week after the child's birth. **Paternity leave** covers 7 days. It is paid and offers some flexibility as it can be used at any time during the first six weeks after the birth of a child.¹²

Unpaid **parental leave** covers the first 3 years of the child's life and can be taken by both parents at the same time. It is accompanied by a parental benefit until the child is 48 months old. There is some flexibility as parents are allowed to work, change their selected parental benefit amount and alternate in receiving the benefit.¹³

¹⁰ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Czechia for 2019", "Key contextual information"*. Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/CZ>.

¹¹ Data retrieved from: *European Institute for Gender Equality, Gender Equality Index 2019: Czechia, 2019*.

¹² *European Platform for Investing in Children, Country profiles - Czech Republic: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3637>.

¹³ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in the Czech Republic include:

- A means-tested **child benefit** to families with income under a given level until the child leaves compulsory education (26 years old limit but not in case of disability or health reasons). The amount varies with the child's age and the family's income.
- **Tax credits** to all families in the form of tax relief or tax bonuses. Unemployed parents do not receive this benefit.¹⁴

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

55 % of women and 46% of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week.¹⁵

The operation of state nurseries for children aged up to 3 ceased at the end of 2013, replaced by private childcare facilities.¹⁶ Only 7 % of children below the age of 3 are under formal care arrangements. From the age of 3 to the minimum compulsory school age, formal childcare is provided for 80 % of children. Only 5 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services, which is the second lowest level of unmet needs for formal childcare services in the EU.¹⁷

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

On average, 11% of women and 6% of men in Czech Republic are involved in informal care of older persons and/ or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Around 32 % of women and 23 % of men in Czech Republic report unmet needs for professional home care services.¹⁸

In 2018, long-term care leave (*dlouhodobé ošetřovné*) was introduced which allows care for a family member for a period of up to 3 months under similar conditions as for sickness leave (with an allowance of 60% of previous daily earnings).¹⁹

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Data retrieved from: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Czechia*, 2019.

¹⁶ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

¹⁷ EIGE, *op.cit.*, 2019.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

Key contextual information (2015) ²⁰		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	5,5	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,7	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	30,6	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	71,8	73,9
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	46	54
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	5,5	0,2
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	32,5	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	82,8	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, all women and men aged 20- 49 (potential parents) were eligible for parental leave in Finland.²¹ In contrast to most of the EU countries, eligibility for parental leave in Finland is not constrained by employment status, duration or type of employment.

Maternity leave covers 105 working days. It is paid and 30-50 days must be taken before birth, including two weeks before and two weeks after birth. **Paternity leave** covers 54 working days. It is paid and offers some flexibility: 1 to 18 days can be taken when the mother is on maternity or parental leave and any remaining days can be taken in two blocks of time, between the end of the parental leave and until the child turns 2 years old.²²

Parental leave covers 158 working days per family. It is paid and offers some flexibility as well: each parent can take leave in two parts (of at least 12 days) and leave can be taken part-time (if both parents take part-time parental leave at the same time) for at least 2 months.²³

Finland also offers a childcare leave allowance from the end of parental leave until a child turns 3, as long as the child is not in a childcare service funded by the local authority.²⁴

²⁰ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Finland for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/FI>.

²¹ EIGE, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Finland*, 2019.

²² EPIC, *Country profiles - Finland: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3640>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Finland include:

- A **universal child benefit** to all families until the child's 17th birthday, varying with the number of children in the family.
- A **child home care allowance** to all families for children between 10 months and 3 years old who are not in early childhood education and care.
- A **private day care allowance** to families where a child under school age is looked after by a caregiver or a private day care provider.
- **Pre-primary education** is provided free of charge for one year.²⁵

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

56 % of women and 50 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week.²⁶

There is a legal entitlement for access to early childhood care centre for children from 9 months old, 20 hours a week. Parents have to work, study, or be self-employed on a full-time basis.²⁷ 33 % of children below the age of 3 and 86% of children from age 3 to the minimum compulsory school age are under formal childcare in Finland. Only 13 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services.²⁸

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

15% of women and 8% of men in Finland are involved in informal care for older persons and/ or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Around 25 % of women and men in Finland report unmet needs for professional home care services.²⁹

²⁵ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

²⁶ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

²⁷ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

²⁸ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

²⁹ Ibid.

Key contextual information (2015) ³⁰		
	Women	Men
Population Millions	66,5	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	2,0	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	30,4	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	66,0	73,2
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	41	53
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	8,9	0,4
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	41,7	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	93,6	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 36 % of women and 25 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in France. Unemployment or inactivity is the main reason for ineligibility for 72 % of women and 58 % of men. The remaining 28 % of women and 42 % of men are ineligible for parental leave due to inadequate length of employment.³¹

Maternity leave covers 16 weeks. It is paid and 14 weeks can be taken after birth. **Paternity leave** covers 2 weeks. It is paid and offers some flexibility: leave must be taken within the four months following birth.³²

Parental leave can cover a maximum period of 24 months for one parent, and 12 months for the other parents, and has to be taken before the child reaches 3 years old. It is low-paid (for eligible working parents) and offers some flexibility as parents can take part-time parental leave.³³

In 2015, a reform (la PreParE) was passed to incite parents to better share the parental leave and involve fathers in childcare responsibilities. It reduces the duration of the parental leave benefit period from 36 to 24 months if the leave is taken by only one of the parents for a second and further child.³⁴

³⁰ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for France for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/FR>.

³¹ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: France*, 2019.

³² EPIC, *Country profiles - France: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3641>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in France include:

- a means-tested **child benefit** to resident children until the child's 20th birthday from the second child.
- a means-tested **child care allowance** which depends on the number of children, household income, age of children and chosen type of childcare.
- a **universal family tax credit** to resident families whose child pursues secondary or higher education, until the child's 25th birthday or the child's first work contract.³⁵

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

57 % of women and 53 % of men in France are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week.³⁶

There is a legal entitlement to childcare in France from 3 years old, for 24 hours a week.³⁷ Around 51 % of children below the age of 3 and 95% of children from the age of 3 are in formal care arrangements. Only 14 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services in France.³⁸

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

32% of women and 20% of men in France are involved in informal care for older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Around 28 % of women and men in France report unmet needs for professional home care services.

³⁵ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

³⁶ European Institute for Gender Equality, *op. cit.*, 2019.

³⁷ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

³⁸ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

GERMANY

Key contextual information (2015) ³⁹		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	81,5	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,5	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	30,9	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	73,6	82,3
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	40	59
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	13,1	0,4
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	25,9	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	89,6	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 22 % of women and 12 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Germany. Eligibility for parental leave is restricted to those in employment.⁴⁰

Maternity leave covers 14 weeks. It is paid and offers some flexibility. Mothers can take 6 weeks before the birth of the child and 8 weeks following the birth. Taking leave before the birth is voluntary. **Parental leave** covers up to 3 years, of which 24 months can be taken up to the child's eighth birthday, per parent. It offers two paid schemes and allows some flexibility.⁴¹

Parents may choose either an income-related benefit for parents taking full-time **leave** or a benefit scheme, replacing a portion of income if parents reduce their working hours. A combination of both is possible. Both parents are entitled to take leave at the same time and can take up to two leave intervals.⁴²

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Germany include a **universal child benefit** to children until the child's full legal age. The extension of this benefit until the child is 21 years of age is possible if children are registered as jobseekers, or until 25 years of age for children in education.

³⁹ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Germany for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/DE>

⁴⁰ EIGE, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Germany*, 2019.

⁴¹ EPIC, *Country profiles - Germany: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPageId=3642>.

⁴² EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

There is a **supplementary child benefit for families on a low income**, with the amount dependent on parental income and assets.⁴³

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

45 % of women and 42 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week.⁴⁴

Since August 2013, the Childcare Funding Act ("*Kinderförderungsgesetz – KiföG*") provides a legal entitlement for children to a childcare place or to family day care from the age of one.⁴⁵ 22 % of children below the age of 3 and 88% of children from the age of 3 are in formal childcare. Only 8 % of households in Germany report unmet needs for formal child- care services.⁴⁶

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

5 % of women and 7 % of men in Germany are involved in informal care for older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Around 15 % of women and men in Germany report unmet needs for professional home care services, which is the third lowest in the EU.⁴⁷

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁴⁵ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁴⁶ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

HUNGARY

Key contextual information (2015) ⁴⁸		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	9,9	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,5	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	29,6	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	62,1	75,8
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	45	62
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	8,3	0,4
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	15,4	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	89,1	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 35 % of women and 20 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Hungary. Unemployment or inactivity was the main reason for ineligibility for 83 % of women and 85 % of men. The remaining 17 % of women and 15 % of men were ineligible for parental leave due to inadequate length of employment.⁴⁹

Maternity leave covers 24 weeks. It is paid if the mother has an employment record of at least a year within the two years prior to the child's birth. It also offers some flexibility, as mothers can choose to take maternity leave from 4 weeks prior to the birth itself. **Paternity leave** covers five days. It is paid if the father has an employment record of at least a year within the two years prior to the child's birth and offers some flexibility, as it can be taken during the first two months of the child's life.⁵⁰

Parental leave covers the first 3 years of a child's life. It is paid through an accompanying parental benefit and the amount received and the flexibility of using it depend on whether the parents have social security insurance. Parents are able to receive the benefit and work unlimited number of hours after the child is 6 months old and until their second birthday (if insured) or third birthday (if not insured). Hungary also offers additional leave entitlements for parents with three or more children. This leave can be taken between the youngest child's third and eighth birthday, and parents receive benefits as during parental leave.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Hungary for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at: <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/HU>

⁴⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Hungary*, 2019.

⁵⁰ EPIC, *Country profiles - Hungary: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPageId=3644>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Hungary include:

- A **universal child benefit**, which includes two benefits: childrearing support (paid from birth until the beginning of primary school) and schooling support (paid for children who are in school). This is paid until the child finishes compulsory education and the amount depends on the number of children in the family.
- A **baby-care allowance** paid during the 24-week maternity leave to mothers who have been insured for at least 365 days within the two years prior to childbirth. The rate of baby-care allowance is 70% of previous daily earnings and there is no upper limit on the amount paid.
- A **childcare benefit** paid from the end of maternity leave until the second birthday of the child (only for mothers who have been insured for at least 365 days within the two years prior to child birth). The amount of the childcare benefit is 70% of previous daily average earnings and it has an upper limit of 70% of twice the amount of the minimum wage. Additional child raising support is available for parents raising three or more children (if the youngest is between the ages of 3 and 8).
- A **child home care allowance** is paid to parents who did not have sufficient insurance contribution or eligible income before the birth of their child to claim baby-care allowance and childcare benefit.
- **Tax allowances** for families with children, varying with the number of children. There is also a tax break up to 24 months for newly married couples where at least one of the spouses is married for the first time.⁵²

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

51 % of both women and men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week.⁵³

There is a legal obligation for children to be enrolled in kindergarten for at least four hours a day, five days a week, from the age of 3. Parents can be exempted from this obligation until the child turns 5, as long as the exemption is not against the interests of the child. In Hungary, working parents can access nurseries that provide day care for children aged 20 weeks to 3 years old. The vast majority of children under 3 years old are looked after at home by their parents.⁵⁴ 14 % of children below the age of 3 and 91% of children from the age of 3 are in formal childcare. Only 8 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services in Hungary.⁵⁵

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

8 % of women and 6 % of men in Hungary are involved in informal care of older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. 23 % of women and men report unmet needs for professional home care services.⁵⁶

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Data retrieved from: European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Hungary*, 2019.

⁵⁴ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁵⁵ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

IRELAND

Key contextual information (2015) ⁵⁷		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	4,6	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,9	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	31,6	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	62,6	75,1
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	44	60
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	12,0	0,8
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	30,6	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	92,0	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 46 % of women and 41 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Ireland. Unemployment or inactivity was a reason for ineligibility for 70 % of women and 35 % of men. Inadequate length of employment was a reason for ineligibility for 19 % of women and 25 % of men. The remaining 11 % of women and 40 % of men were ineligible due to self-employment status.⁵⁸

Maternity leave covers 42 weeks. It is paid for the first 26 weeks (at least two to be taken before birth) and unpaid for the remaining 16 weeks. It offers little flexibility except in the timing of the beginning of leave before the birth. **Paternity leave** covers two weeks. It is paid at the same rate as maternity leave and offers some flexibility: leave can be taken at any time within the first 26 weeks after the child's birth or adoption. Paternity leave can be taken by the mother.⁵⁹

A new paid *Parental Leave Scheme*, due to commence in November 2019, will enable both parents to access two weeks of parental leave paid at the same rate as maternity and paternity benefit during the first year of their child's life.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Ireland for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/IE>

⁵⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Ireland*, 2019.

⁵⁹ EPIC, *Country profiles - Ireland: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3645>.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Ireland include:

- A **childcare programme** (Community Childcare Subvention, which supports parents on low income to avail of reduced childcare costs at participating community childcare service.
- The **Childcare Education and Training Support** (CETS) programme focuses on supporting parents to get back into the workforce by participating in labour focused education.
- The **After-School Childcare** (ASCC) programme is focused on labour activation. It supports previously unemployed parents in their first year of returning to work.⁶¹

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

68 % of women and 63 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week.⁶²

All children in Ireland, within the eligible age range, can benefit from two years of the universal preschool programme (ECCE) prior to starting primary school, for 15 hours a week and 38 weeks per year.⁶³ About 34 % of children below the age of 3 and 93% from the age of 3 are in formal childcare. Around 17 % of households in Ireland report unmet needs for formal childcare services.⁶⁴

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

15% of women and 13% of men in Ireland are involved in informal care for older persons and/ or people with disabilities several days a week or every day.⁶⁵ Ireland offers leave entitlements for carers: employees with at least 12 months of continuous service can take carer's leave for a period between 13 and 104 weeks in order to provide full-time care for a dependent, either in one or several blocks of time. This is unpaid but employees may be entitled to a means-tested carer's benefit.⁶⁶ 32 % of women and men in Ireland report unmet needs for professional home-care services.⁶⁷

⁶¹ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁶² EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁶³ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁶⁴ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁶⁷ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

Key contextual information (2015) ⁶⁸		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	60,8	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,4	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	31,7	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	50,6	70,6
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	31	51
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	9,9	0,2
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	27,3	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	85,9	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 46 % of women and 27 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Italy. Unemployment or inactivity was the main reason for ineligibility for 86 % of women and 51 % of men. In Italy, there are certain eligibility conditions for self-employed men linked to the sector of service. Working in these excluded sectors was a reason for non-eligibility for 42 % of ineligible men.⁶⁹

Maternity leave covers 20 weeks. It is paid and offers a little flexibility: the 20-week period is compulsory but can either be split between four weeks before birth and 16 weeks after, or between eight weeks before birth and 12 weeks after. From 2019, mothers will be able to choose to work during the last few weeks of pregnancy and take 20 weeks of maternity leave after the child's birth. **Paternity leave** covers five days. An optional extra day of leave can be transferred from the maternity leave. It is paid and offers some flexibility: the days can be taken together or separately up until five months after birth.⁷⁰

Parental leave covers six months per parent. It is paid and offers some flexibility: it can be taken at any time until the child is 12 years old, as a single leave period of up to six months or as shorter periods amounting to no more than six months. Italy also offers additional leave entitlements for carers: parents can take unpaid leave without limit to care for a child under 5 years old, and up to five days a year per parent for a child aged 3 to 8.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Italy for 2019", "Key contextual information"*. Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/IT>

⁶⁹ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Italy*, 2019.

⁷⁰ EPIC, *Country profiles - Italy: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3646>.

⁷¹ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Italy include:

- A means-tested **child benefit** to children until the child's 18th birthday, or 21st for dependent students. If a child has a serious disability, there is no age limit to the child benefit.
- A **universal child care allowance** to resident children in the form of vouchers.
- A means-tested family **tax credit**.
- An **additional grant** is also provided at birth, as well as an allowance for families of 3 or more children. In order to encourage fertility and support large families, parents who give birth to a third or higher order child between 2019 and 2021 will be awarded parcels of state-held agricultural land for 20 years. These parents will also be eligible for zero-interest loans up to 200,000€ if they opt to buy their first home near their newly acquired land.⁷²

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

61 % of women and 53 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week. About 29 % of children below the age of 3 and 89% from the age of 3 are under formal childcare. Around 13 % of households in Italy report unmet needs for formal childcare services.⁷³

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

14% of women and 8% men in Italy are involved in informal care for older persons and/ or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. In Italy, entitlements for carers include two years of paid leave over the course of one's entire working life to care for a dependent relative with serious needs.⁷⁴ 35 % of women and men in Italy report unmet needs for professional home care services.⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Key contextual information (2015) ⁷⁶		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	38,0	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,3	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	29,2	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	60,9	74,7
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	44%	62%
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	6,0	0,3
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	5,3	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	43,0	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 27 % of women and 10 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Poland. Eligibility for parental leave is restricted to those in employment. Unemployed or inactive women and men accounted for nearly all of the total ineligible population of potential parents. Among the employed population, all women and men were eligible.⁷⁷

Maternity leave covers 20 weeks, which can be extended up to 37 weeks in the case of multiple births. It is paid and offers some flexibility. A mother has to take the first 14 weeks of the leave entitlement, while the remaining 6 weeks can be shared with the father. **Paternity leave** covers 2 weeks. It is paid and offers some flexibility, as it can be taken during the 24 months after the birth of a child and in two separate parts.⁷⁸

Parental leave covers 32 weeks per family. It is paid and offers some flexibility, as it can be taken as a single period or in up to four parts, combined with part-time working, taken simultaneously and used until the child turns six. Since January 2016, parents who do not qualify for a paid leave entitlement (e.g. students, unemployed, workers with a civil contract) can receive up to 232€ per month for a period of one year. Poland also offers additional leave entitlements for carers: up to 36 additional months can be taken as additional parental leave until the child turns six. While this is unpaid, parents can apply for a monthly benefit if the monthly household income is below a certain level.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Poland for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/PL>.

⁷⁷ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Poland*, 2019.

⁷⁸ EPIC, *Country profiles - Poland: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3652>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Poland include:

- A **child benefit** for families with children up to 18 (or 24 if the child continues education or is disabled) who meet the income requirements, which can be complemented by other allowances, such as allowance for single parents or large families
- A **universal cash benefit**, called “Family 500 Plus”, of 118€ for the second child and any consecutive children below 18 years.
- Discounts for products and services for large families (with three or more children) through the *Large Family Card* programme, irrespective of their income.
- From March 2019, the Ministry of Family, Work, and Social Policy introduced a new **monthly benefit for retired mothers** who have raised four or more children. Women aged 60 and over who do not qualify for a state pension, or who receive a state pension that is less than the amount of the new benefit, will be eligible to receive it.⁸⁰

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

61 % of women and 47% of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week. Only 2 % of children below the age of 3 and 58% of children from age 3 are under formal childcare arrangements, which is the fourth lowest coverage in the EU. Around 15 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services in Poland.⁸¹

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

15% of women and 6% of men in Poland are involved in informal care of older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Around 16 % of women and men in Poland report unmet needs for professional home care services.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁸² Ibid.

Key contextual information (2015) ⁸³		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	10,4	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,3	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	30,9	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	65,9	72,6
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	45	56
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	2,6	0,1
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	47,2	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	89,9	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 23 % of women and 32 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Portugal. Unemployment or inactivity was the main reason for ineligibility for 84 % of women and 52 % of men. The remaining 16 % of women and 48 % of men were ineligible for parental leave due to inadequate length of employment.⁸⁴

Parental leave covers 16 weeks or 20 weeks of shared leave paid at 100% of previous earnings. It is paid and offers some flexibility: it is compulsory for the mother to take six weeks following the birth and the remaining period may be divided between parents. An extra 30 days are available if both parents share the leave, or in the case of twins.⁸⁵

A **father's-only parental leave** covers 25 days. It is paid and offers some flexibility: 15 days are compulsory, five of which must be taken consecutively immediately after birth and the other ten within the first month after birth. An additional **parental leave** provision covers 3 months per parent and is partly paid (25% of previous earnings) if taken immediately after the initial parental leave. It offers some flexibility: it may be taken up to the child's sixth birthday on a full-time basis for three months, on a half-time basis for 12 months per parent.⁸⁶

⁸³ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Portugal for 2019", "Key contextual information"*. Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/PT>

⁸⁴ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Portugal*, 2019.

⁸⁵ EPIC, *Country profiles - Portugal: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3653>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Portugal include:

- A means tested **child benefit** to resident children until the child's 16th birthday, or 24th birthday for children continuing their studies or with disabilities. An additional grant is also provided for children in formal education, aged 6 to 16, depending on their family income. Recently, the child benefit (*abono de família*) was increased for single-parents and for larger families (3 or more children).
- A means-tested **prenatal child benefit** for all resident families during a period of six months up to the child's birth.⁸⁷

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

58 % of women and 55 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week.⁸⁸ Portugal offers additional leave entitlements for carers: up to two years of childcare leave can be taken on a full-time basis. It is unpaid and can only be taken by one parent.⁸⁹

Overall, 48 % of children below the age of 3 and 93% from the age of 3 are in formal childcare. Around 13 % of women and men in Portugal report unmet needs for formal childcare services.⁹⁰

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

8% of women and 6% of men in Portugal are involved in informal care of older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Women and men in Portugal have the highest unmet needs for professional home care across the EU (86 %).⁹¹

⁸⁷ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁸⁸ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁸⁹ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁹⁰ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Key contextual information (2015) ⁹²		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	46,4	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,3	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	34,6	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	56,4	67,6
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	37	51
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	4,9	0,2
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	39,7	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	92,0	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 40 % of women and 31 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in Spain. Unemployment or inactivity was the main reason for ineligibility for 80 % of women and 53 % of men. The remaining 20 % of women and 47 % of men were ineligible for parental leave due to self-employment status.⁹³

Maternity leave is fully paid by the social security system for a duration of 16 weeks and is considered as pensionable service. The mother can share ten weeks with the father, but this is rarely done. To obtain this leave, individuals must have contributed to the social security system for a minimum of 180 days during the previous year or for 360 days over the course of their entire working careers. A flat rate subsidy is guaranteed for the first 42 days after childbirth for women who have contributed less than the above amounts. Additionally, there exists a one-hour-per-day breastfeeding leave for parents with children aged 9-12 months or less, which can be taken by the father as well.⁹⁴

Paternity leave is paid by the social security system and is allocated based on the same requirements as maternity leave. It covers 5 weeks and can be taken at any time after the birth of the child. The government and trade unions agreed to equalize the length of paternity and maternity leave by 2020. Spain offers unpaid **parental leave** for each parent (with no limit to the number of leave periods) until the child is 3 years old.⁹⁵

⁹² Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Portugal for 2019", "Key contextual information"*. Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/ES>

⁹³ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Spain*, 2019.

⁹⁴ EPIC, *Country profiles - Spain: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3657>.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Spain include:

- A means tested **child benefit** to resident children until the child's full legal age, unless the child is disabled, in which case there is no age limit.
- **Birth grants** for families of two or more children and for single families, large families and disabled mothers (in case of low income).
- The General State Budget of 2018 included a new **tax deduction** for working mothers with children under three years old and with child-care costs to encourage mothers to stay in the labour force.⁹⁶

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

59 % of women and 56 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week. About 46 % of children below the age of 3 and 96% from the age of 3 are in formal childcare. Spain has the third highest coverage in the EU. Yet, around 21 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services in Spain, which is the second highest percentage in the EU.⁹⁷

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

15% of women and 10% of men in Spain are involved in informal care of older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Around 31 % of women and men in Spain report unmet needs for professional home care services.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ EPIC, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁹⁷ EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Key contextual information (2015) ⁹⁹		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	9,7	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,9	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	31,0	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	78,3	82,5
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	59	66
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	6,4	0,7
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	64,0	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	96,2	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, all women and men potential parents, aged 20- 49, were eligible for parental leave in Sweden. In contrast to most of the EU countries, eligibility for parental leave is not constrained by employment status, duration or type of employment.¹⁰⁰

Parental leave covers the first 18 months of a child's life per parent, which can also be taken before birth. Parents are each eligible for 240 days of parental leave benefit which can be taken during this period or later. Each parent has a personal non-transferable leave of 90 days but the remaining days can be transferred between parents. The first 13 months are paid at about 80% of the most recent income and the remaining days at a flat rate. There is considerable flexibility in use, as parents can take leave part-time or full-time, can combine paid and unpaid leave, take leave continuously or in several blocks of time, and take up to 30 days leave at the same time.¹⁰¹

(Paternal) temporary leave covers 10 days, is paid and offers some flexibility, as leave can be used at any time during the first 60 days after childbirth.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for Sweden for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/SE>

¹⁰⁰ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: Sweden*, 2019.

¹⁰¹ EPIC, *Country profiles - Spain: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3658>.

¹⁰² Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in Sweden include:

- a **universal child** benefit to all families until the child's 16th birthday, with the amount depending on the size of the family. The allowance can be extended in the form of a general study support benefit if the child is still studying full-time until his 20th birthday.
- Families with children can also apply for a **housing allowance**. The amount received depends on the number of children living in the household, the size of the home, and the income of the family.
- Since 2019, a new care allowance for parents who have children with disabilities was introduced.¹⁰³

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

In Sweden, 52 % of women and 55 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grand- children at least several times a week. Sweden offers leave entitlements for carers: 120 days per child per year of temporary parental leave is available for parents of children under the age of 12 which is paid and can be used to care for sick children.¹⁰⁴

Overall, 53 % of children below the age of 3 and 98% of children from 3 are in formal childcare, which is the second highest coverage in the EU. Only 7 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services in Sweden.¹⁰⁵

INFORMAL CARE FOR OLDER PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND LONG TERM CARE SERVICES

6% of women and 5% of men in Sweden are involved in informal care of older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. 12 % of women and men in Sweden report unmet needs for professional home care services, which is the lowest percentage in the EU.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ EIGE, *op. it.*, 2019.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

UNITED KINGDOM

Key contextual information (2015) ¹⁰⁷		
	Women	Men
Population Number (millions)	64,9	
Fertility rate Number of births per woman	1,8	
Mean age of women at childbirth Years	30,3	
Employment rate % of 20-64 population	71,3	82,5
Full-time employment % of 20-64 population	44	61
Inactivity and part-time work due to care responsibilities % of 15-64 population living in private households	18,9	1,5
Children under the age 3 enrolled into formal care	30,4	
Children between 3 years old and the minimum mandatory school age enrolled into formal care	72,8	

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES

In 2016, 45 % of women and 39 % of men aged 20-49 (potential parents) were ineligible for parental leave in the United Kingdom. Unemployment or inactivity was a reason for ineligibility for 56 % of women and 28 % of men. Inadequate length of employment was a reason for ineligibility for 27 % of women and 32 % of men. The remaining 17 % of women and 40 % of men were ineligible for parental leave due to self-employment status.¹⁰⁸

Statutory maternity leave covers 52 weeks. The first 39 weeks of this leave are paid: the first six weeks are uncapped and paid at 90% of average weekly earnings while the remaining 33 weeks are capped at a set level per week. There is some flexibility in the start date of the leave and when the mother can return to work. After the compulsory two weeks of maternity leave, parents can choose to end maternity leave and take shared parental leave and statutory shared parental pay. **Paternity leave** covers one or two weeks. It is paid and offers some flexibility, as it can be taken within 56 days of the child's birth.¹⁰⁹

Parents can share up to 50 weeks of **parental leave** in the first year of their child's life. This leave is paid at 90% of the parent's average weekly earnings (with a ceiling) and can be taken blocks or in one go, and by parents separately or at the same time. Parents are also entitled to 18 weeks of unpaid parental leave for each child up until the child's 18th birthday.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Data retrieved from the Website: *European Institute for Gender Equality*, "Gender Equality Index", "Index Score for United Kingdom for 2019", "Key contextual information". Available at <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/UK>

¹⁰⁸ European Institute for Gender Equality, *Gender Equality Index 2019: United Kingdom*, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ EPIC, *Country profiles - Spain: Policies and progress towards investing in children*, Retrieved the 12 December 2019 at <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1248&langId=en&intPagId=3659>.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

FAMILY BENEFITS

Benefits offered to families in the United Kingdom include:

- A **universal child benefit** to all adults responsible for a child until the child's 16th birthday (or 20th if the child remains in approved education or training).
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, mothers who receive certain benefits also receive a 'Sure Start' **maternity grant** upon the birth of their first child. Parents in Scotland who receive certain benefits receive a *Pregnancy and Baby Payment* for all children, with a higher amount for the first child.¹¹¹

INFORMAL CHILDCARE AND CHILDCARE SERVICES

60 % of women and 52 % of men are involved in caring for or educating their children or grandchildren at least several times a week. About 33 % of children below the age of 3 and 67% from the age of 3 are in formal childcare. Around 22 % of households report unmet needs for formal childcare services in the United Kingdom, which is the highest percentage of unmet needs in the EU.¹¹²

CARE SERVICES

17% of women and 11% of men in the United Kingdom are involved in informal care of older persons and/or people with disabilities several days a week or every day. Around 21 % of women and men in the United Kingdom report unmet needs for professional home care services.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² EIGE, *op. cit.*, 2019.

¹¹³ Ibid.

CONCLUSIONS

Quality family policies are a determining factor of family and societal well-being. Although family policies are a Member State competence, the 2019 directive on work-life balance for parents and carers set several minimum requirements to allow parents and people with caring responsibilities to better reconcile their work and caring duties.

While family-friendly legislations are being progressively voted and implemented, the situation still need to be improved on the EU level:

- 34 % of women and 23 % of men are ineligible for parental leave, targeting especially unemployed parents;
- Half of parents are constrained to come back to work full-time with no flexible working arrangements or to give up their professional activity. 60% of mothers and 88% of fathers in a couple work full-time;
- 38 % of women and 25 % of men in the UE take care of children, grandchildren, older people and/or people with disabilities every day for 1 hour or more. Half of carers have a paid job and have to combine care's and work duties.

Overall, some trends can be observed:

- Unemployed parents are very often excluded from parental leave and family benefits;
- The legal framework of maternity leave encourages mother to stay in the labour force;
- Fathers are given more possibility to spend time with their children;
- Family benefits legislations do consider the additional difficulties faced by low-income families, large families and families with disabled children.