

# Hungary

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For comparisons with other countries in this review – on demographic, economic, employment and gender equality indicators and on leave provision and early childhood education and care services - go to cross-country comparisons page on website. To contact authors of country notes, go to membership-list of members page on website.

## 1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

**Note on terminology:** the Hungarian names for two of the Parental leaves discussed in 1c – GYES and GYED – include the word *gondozas*, that is ‘care’. By contrast, GYET - available after the child is older than three (see 1d) - includes the word *nevelés*, that is ‘upbringing’. The Hungarian names for these three leaves (1c and 1d) literally refer only to the payment element, although in practice they cover leave and payment (e.g. GYES is *gyermekgondozási segély*, literally ‘childcare allowance’).

### a. Maternity leave (*szulesi szabadsag*) (responsibility of the Ministry of National Resources )

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Twenty-four weeks: up to four weeks before birth. However only mothers are entitled to take one type of Parental leave until the child’s first birthday (see 1c).

*Payment (terhessegi-gyermekügyi segely) and funding*

- Seventy per cent of average daily earnings, with no ceiling on payments. In cases when there has been previous employment (i.e. the pregnant woman is eligible) but no actual income can be determined on the first day of eligibility (e.g. the pregnant woman is on sick leave for several months, or is self-employed and does not have an actual income), the payment is twice the amount of the official daily minimum wage. In this case, payment is made by the Treasury, not the National Health Insurance Fund.
- Funded from the National Health Insurance Fund, which is financed by contributions from employers, employees and general taxation; employers and employees both pay 6 per cent of gross earnings to the Health Insurance Fund. As well Maternity leave, this fund supports GYED (see ‘Parental leave’) and health provision.

*Flexibility in use*

- The start date can be between four weeks before birth and the birth itself.

*Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)*

- All women are entitled to 24 weeks unpaid maternity leave.

- Women employees and self-employed women with at least 365 days of previous employment within two years of the birth of a child are entitled to benefit payment for the period of Maternity leave.

*Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother*

- If the newborn is cared for in an institute for prematurely born infants for a year, the unused portion of the maternity leave can be taken up after the child is taken home.
- Adopting mothers are eligible
- Guardians who care for the child are eligible
- The father (birth or adoptive) is eligible if the mother dies or is not present in the household due to health-related reasons.

## **b. Paternity leave<sup>1</sup>**

*Length of leave*

- Five days, to be taken during the first two months of the child's life.

*Payment and funding*

- Hundred per cent of father's average daily wage, with no ceiling on payments.
- Funded from the National Health Insurance Fund, which is financed by contributions from employers and employees.

*Flexibility in use*

- None except for when leave can be started after birth.

*Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)*

- All employed fathers.

*Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the father.*

- 7 days in case of twins.

## **c. Parental leave (responsibility of the Ministry of National Resources)**

There are two types of leave and benefit: (1) for non-insured parents, *Gyermekgondozasi sagely*, GYES; (2) for insured parents, *Gyermekgondozasi dij*, GYED. Both are family entitlements except for GYED up to the child's first birthday, which is an entitlement only for mothers.

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<sup>1</sup> Paternity leave has no separate name in Hungarian; it is just listed as one of the eligible reasons for leave days in the Code of Labour legislation.

### *Length of leave*

- **GYES:**
  - a. Until the child's third birthday for parents not insured.
  - b. From the end of GYED (child's second birthday) until the child's third birthday, for insured parents.
- **GYED:** from the end of the Maternity leave period until the child's second birthday, for insured parents.

### *Payment and funding*

- **GYES:** until the child's third birthday, a flat-rate benefit equal to the amount of the minimum old-age pension, HUF28,500 (€96<sup>2</sup>) per month in 2012. For multiple births, two hundred per cent of this amount is paid in the case of two children, 300 per cent for three children, with similar increases for additional children.
- Funded by the Treasury from general taxation.
- **GYED:** benefit of 70 per cent of average daily earnings, up to a ceiling of 70 per cent of twice the minimum daily wage (HUF 130,200 (€439) per month in 2012. Funded from the National Health Insurance Fund, which is financed by contributions from employers and employees.

### *Flexibility in use*

- A parent taking **GYES** cannot work until the child's first birthday, but can then work less than 30 hours a week, or unlimited hours if she/he works at home or has a disabled or permanently sick child while still receiving the full benefit until the child's third birthday.

### *Eligibility (e.g. related to employment or family circumstances)*

- **GYES:** all parents. Foster parents and guardians are also eligible.
- **GYED:** only the mother may take this leave up to the child's first birthday. Otherwise either of the parents living with the child is eligible as long as she/he has been employed at least for 365 days within the two years before the birth of the child; however, only one parent can actually take GYED. Foster parents are not eligible.

### *Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents*

- **GYES:** parents of a child who cannot be admitted to a childcare centre due to illness can take leave until the child's eighth birthday; parents of a child with a long-term illness or disability can take leave until the child's tenth birthday (longer in discretionary cases); parents of twins are eligible until the children begin elementary school and the benefit payment is doubled
- **GYES:** can be taken by grandparents from the first to the third birthday of the child if the child is looked after in her/his own home and if the parents agree to transfer their entitlement. Grandparents taking GYES can work less than 30 hours a week, or without limitation if the work is done in the home, after the child becomes older than three years of age.

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<sup>2</sup> Conversion of local currency into Euros undertaken on 8 June 2012, using <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter/>

#### **d. Childcare leave or career breaks**

Either of the parents in a family with three or more children may take leave during the period between the second and eighth birthday of the youngest child (*Gyermeknevelési támogatás*, GYET). Benefit payment as for GYES. The person taking up GYET can work less than 30 hours a week, or unlimited hours if the work is done in the home. GYES and GYED are intended to promote childbirth and support reconciliation of work and childrearing; GYET is considered an acknowledgement of parenthood as paid work.

#### **e. Other employment-related measures**

##### *Adoption leave and pay*

- For adoptive parents the same regulations for Maternity and Parental leave apply as for other parents. For foster parents the same regulations for Parental leave apply as for other parents.

##### *Time off for the care of dependants*

- There is an entitlement to leave, the length of which depends on the age of the child: under one year – unlimited; 12-35 months – up to 84 days per child per year; 36-71 months – 42 days; six to 12 years – 14 days. Lone parents are entitled to a double period of leave. Leave is a family entitlement and a benefit is paid at 70 per cent of earnings.

##### *Flexible working*

- Mothers are entitled to two one-hour breaks per day for breastfeeding until a child is six months old; and to one one-hour break until a child is nine months old. The number of hours is doubled in the case of twins.

##### *Job protection*

Parents' employment cannot be terminated if they are on leave to care for their children.

## **2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy**

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave available in Hungary is 3 years, but the last year is paid at a low flat rate; until 2 years, insured parents taking leave are paid at a high earnings-related level. There is an entitlement to ECEC (*óvoda*/kindergarten) from 3 years of age and it is compulsory to attend 4 hours a day from the age of 5 years. Children under three years are also entitled to an ECEC (*bölcsőde*/nursery) place, but there are not enough places; legislation is in place in both cases but implementation varies. So though by legislation, there is no gap between the end of Parental leave entitlement and the start of an ECEC entitlement, there is in practice due to a shortage of places in services for children under 3 years. Otherwise there is a one year gap between the end of well-paid leave and an entitlement to an ECEC place for three-year-olds. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under 3 years are well below the average for the countries included in this review and OECD countries; but above average for children over 3 years. For actual attendance

levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

### **3. Changes in policy since April 2011 (including proposals currently under discussion)**

A new law on the protection of families was passed in 2011 and came into force on 1 January 2012. In the same way as there is already separate legislation for child protection and adult social services, there is now separate legislation for families; it includes statements of principles and brings together or refers to items related to family protection in other legislation. It says that the state contributes to bringing up children. Working parents are eligible for state support for securing childcare during working hours and the state provides flexible services to help parents' employment. Parents are eligible for job protection and other benefits/services to help balance work and family life. Part-time work and atypical work are promoted.

As a result of the modifications in the legislation related to Parental leaves, fathers have become more visible as they are specifically mentioned in relation to eligibilities (e.g. see 1a for transfer of Maternity leave to fathers in certain circumstances).

### **4. Take-up of leave**

#### **a. Maternity leave**

There are only statistics on the number of women receiving benefit. The average monthly number in 2010 was 27,289. It is thought that almost all eligible women take leave.

#### **b. Paternity leave**

The total number of fathers taking leave during 2010 was 21,932, using 109,501 days.

#### **c. Parental leave**

There are only statistics on the number of recipients of benefit. The average monthly numbers in 2010 were: 178,532, or 75.0 recipients per thousand women of fertile age, for GYES; 94,682, or 39.8 recipients per thousand women of fertile age, for GYED; and 39,275, or 16.5 recipients per thousand of women of fertile age, for GYET. There is no information on what proportion of parents take leave or how long they take. It is thought, however, that the number of fathers taking parental leave is very small; over the years, the number of male recipients of benefit has been between 1,000 and 3,000. There is no data available on the proportion of parents taking leave. An estimate can be made on the basis that about 12.6 per cent of children under three years were in childcare centres in 2010, so the remainder probably had a parent (predominantly mother) taking up one of the Parental leave options.

It is thought that mothers with higher education and better paid jobs take shorter periods of leave, especially as the last year of GYES is paid at a flat rate and because of the implications for careers of prolonged absence from work. Some indication of leave-taking is provided by data on the age of children entering *bolcsóde* (nurseries taking children under three years of age); most children enter between 18 months and two years of age.

#### **d. Other employment-related measures**

In 2010, the total number of sick leave days in Hungary was 27,854,000; 3.5 per cent of these were taken for sick children.

### **5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2011**

#### **a. General overview**

Work on issues concerning achieving work–life balance in families with children has been flourishing since 2009. The issues covered are comprehensive, ranging from demography to labour force participation, leave policies, cash benefits and childcare. The overall aim seems to be finding a good or acceptable solution to facilitating women’s return to work and expanding services for young children in a quite unfavourable economic, financial and societal situation created by the recent crisis.

#### **b. Selected publications since April 2011**

Drjenovszky, Zs. (2010) ‘Kismamák a munkahelyen, avagy hogyan számíthat a munkahely a nőkre a gyermekvállalást követően?’ [‘Mothers at work, or how to count on women at the workplace after having children?’], *Munkaügyi Szemle*, 2010/2: 95-102.

This study finds that Hungarian mothers do not want to go back to their workplace before their children are 2 or 3 years old even if they find the ideal childcare, because of traditional attitudes.

Blaskó, Zs. (2011) ‘Három évig a gyermek mellett - de nem minden áron. Közvélemény a kisgyermekes anyák munkába állásáról’ [‘Stay at home for three years – but not at all costs. Social values on maternal employment in Hungary’], *Demográfia*, 2011/1: 23-45.

Public opinion in Hungary has for long been against the employment of mothers with young children. In line with Parental leave policies that allow mothers to stay at home for three years and the scarcity of childcare for children under 3, the majority of the population tends to agree with the idea that a young child will suffer if his or her mother works. The study, based on interviews, concludes that the social norm of the “stay-at-home-mothers for three years” in Hungary is a flexible one, which is at least partly maintained by the lack of family-friendly work opportunities in the country and also by the serious shortage of available childcare for children under 3 years.

Fazekas, K. and Molnár, Gy. (eds) (2011) *Munkaerőpiaci Tükör [The Hungarian Labour Market – Review and Analysis. Effects of the Crises]*. Budapest: MTA

Közgazdaságtudományi Intézet [Institute of Economics, Hungarian Academy of Sciences] This review contains a review of current developments in labour market and employment policy, as well as an in-depth analysis of one subject area within this topic. The publication details the characteristics of Hungarian labour market processes and their interrelations in an easily understandable, transparent structure based on the available statistics and on both theoretical and empirical research. In each chapter, there is an emphasis on the presentation and analysis of the labour market consequences of the economic crisis.

Reizer B. (2011) ‘A gyermekvállalás hatása a család jövedelmére Magyarországon’ [‘Impact of childbearing on the income of families in Hungary’], *Demográfia*, 2011./2-3: 160-176.

The aim of the paper is to describe to what extent the transfer system is able to compensate for decreased household income following childbearing, during Maternity leave. The results indicate that birth of the first child causes a 20 per cent decrease in the equivalent income of

households, furthermore that the decrease was less pronounced in those households which already had children prior to 2001.

Spéder, Zs. (2011). 'Ellentmondó elvárások között Családi férfiszerepek, apaképek a mai Magyarországon' ['Between contradictory expectations: Family related male and father roles in contemporary Hungary'], in: I. Nagy and T. Pongrácz (eds.) *Changing roles, report on the status of women and men, 2011*. Budapest: TÁRKI Zrt.-NEFMI., 207-229.

This study focuses on the expectations and norms of family-related male gender roles. The empirical analysis concentrates on three issues: 1. whether the classical male breadwinner role or rather a kind of involved partnership is expected from men; 2. how important is childbirth in the lives of women and men; 3. what kind of fatherhood is expected from men in Hungary. The study finds that the traditional "male breadwinner role" is deeply ossified in the expectation of Hungarian society.

*Szociális statisztikai évkönyv 2010* [Yearbook of Welfare Statistics, 2010] (with CD-ROM) (2011). Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest

This yearbook contains detailed data on social assistance, family benefits, child welfare provision, child protection, social benefits, basic social care and social day care, social work activities with accommodation, rehabilitative employment, sick pay, retirement allowances and the social and guardianship authority administration in 2010, with a detailed methodology.

### **c. Ongoing research**

None reported.