Croatia

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April 2015

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

a. Maternity leave (rodiljni dopust); maternity exemption from work (rodiljna pošteda od rada); maternity care for the child (rodiljna briga o novorođenom djetetu) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Maternity leave: 28 days before the expected day of birth, then until the child turns six months of age. It is obligatory for mother to take 98 days (28 days before the expected date of delivery and 70 days after the birth), without interruption. In exceptional circumstances, based on a medical assessment, leave can start 45 days before the expected date of delivery.
- Maternity exemption from work/maternity care for the child: from the day of birth until the child turns six months of age.

Payment and funding

- Maternity leave: 100 per cent of average earnings, calculated on the average earnings on which health care contributions were paid during the 6 months prior to the leave, with no ceiling on payments.
- A parent who does not meet the condition of at least 12 months of continual insurance or 18 months of insurance with interruptions in the last two years receives 50 per cent of the ‘budgetary base rate’ of HRK3,326 per month [€439]; gross average earnings in 2014 were HRK 7,953 [€1,051].
- Maternity exemption from work/maternity care for the child: 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate per month
- Funded from general taxation.


2 Conversion of local currency into Euros undertaken on 1-5 June 2015, using http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter/
Flexibility in use

- **Maternity leave**: after the compulsory Maternity leave period, the father of the child has the right to use the remaining period of Maternity leave, if the mother agrees.
- After the compulsory Maternity leave, a parent can use the remaining period of leave on a part-time basis, in which case the duration is doubled with compensation at half the level of full-time leave. The period of part-time leave taken after a child is six months cannot exceed the period of part-time leave taken before the child reaches this age; the maximum period of part-time leave is until nine months after birth.
- **Maternity exemption from work/maternity care for the child**: from the 71st day and in the case of the mother starting employment, the mother can terminate the use of maternity exemption from work/maternity care for the child, in which case the father of the child has the right to use the remaining share of the unused leave, if the mother agrees.

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

- **Maternity leave**: all employed and self-employed persons.
- **Maternity exemption from work**: parents employed on a different employment basis (e.g. parents who are earning a second income on which contributions have been paid), farmers and unemployed parents.
- **Maternity care for the child**: parents outside the labour system, due for example to retirement, incapacity or studying.

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

- In cases of poor health or health risks for the mother and child, the pregnant mother is entitled to sick leave before birth for the duration of the risk (‘sick leave due to illness and complications related to pregnancy’), in addition to Maternity leave. The mother is paid 100 per cent with a ceiling of HRK4,257 [€562] a month.
- Leave is extended in the case of premature births.
- If the parent taking leave dies or is for any other justified reason unable to exercise the right, leave can be transferred to the other parent.

b. Paternity leave

No statutory entitlement.

c. Parental leave (roditelejski dopust) / parental exemption from work (roditelejska pošteda od rada) / parental care for the child (roditelejska briga o novorođenom djetetu) (responsibility of the Ministry of Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity)

Length of leave

- **Parental leave**: four months (120 calendar days) per parent per child for the first and second born child; see ‘variation in leave’ below for third or higher order births. Leave is an individual entitlement, but two months can be transferred from one parent to the other.
- **Parental exemption from work/parental care for the child**: from six months of age until the child turns one year of age, for the first and second born child; or until the child turns three years of age for twins, the third and every subsequent child
Payment and funding

- **Parental leave**: 100 per cent of average earnings for the first six months, with a ceiling of 80 per cent of the budgetary base rate or eight months if both parents use Parental leave; 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate after the first six (or eight) months or if parents do not fulfil the condition of at least 12 months of continual insurance period or 18 months of insurance with interruptions in the last 2 years.
- **Parental exemption from work/parental care for the child**: 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate.
- Funded from general taxation.

Flexibility in use

- **Parental leave**:
  - Leave is a personal right of both parents but one parent can transfer two months of their entitlement to the other, if they are both employed and if both parents agree and with written consent.
  - Parents can use their entitlement at the same time or consecutively. (Although this possibility was deleted in new legislation, legal opinion is that parents can still use leave in whatever way they choose).
  - Leave can be taken in the following ways: a) fully (in one period); b) partially (no more than two times per year, each time for no less than 30 days); c) part-time (duration is doubled and compensation is 50 per cent of the compensation for full-time leave).
  - Leave can be taken until the child turns eight years of age.

- **Parental exemption from work/parental care for the child**: if a parent terminates their leave due to employment/self-employment, the other parent has the right to use the unused share of the first parent’s leave with that parent’s consent.

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

- **Parental leave**: all employed and self-employed persons.
- **Parental exemption from work**: parents employed on a different employment basis (e.g. parents who are earning a second income on which contributions have been paid), farmers and unemployed parents.
- **Parental care for the child**: parents outside the labour system, due for example to retirement, incapacity or studying.

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

- Fifteen months (450 days) per parent for twins, other multiple births and the third and every subsequent child. The additional period is transferable from one parent to another and paid at 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate.
- If the parent taking leave dies or is for any other justified reason unable to exercise the right, leave can be transferred to the other parent.

**d. Childcare leave or career breaks**

If parents have fully used Maternity and Parental leave, one of the employed parents has the right not to work until the child turns three years of age. During that time, the parent’s rights
and obligations regarding his/her employment are suspended, and the rights to compulsory health insurance and retirement insurance are maintained. This is unpaid.

**e. Other employment-related measures**

**Adoption leave and pay**

- Employed/self-employed adoptive parents can take adoption leave (providing the spouse of the adoptive parent is not the parent of the child) of six months per family for an adopted child under 18 years of age, paid as for Maternity leave. Adoption leave is extended for 60 days in the case of the adoption of twins or a child that is the third child or any subsequent child in the family, or of a child with developmental difficulties. After this period of leave, the adoptive parents of a child under eight years of age have the right to Parental leave of six months until the child turns eight years of age and all other rights of employed/self-employed parents.

- In the case of other adoptive parents (i.e. not employed or self-employed), one adoptive parent has the right to adoption leave (providing the spouse of the adoptive parent is not the parent of the child) of 12 months (regardless of the child’s age). Adoption leave is extended for 60 days in the case of the adoption of twins, two or more children or a child that is the third child or any subsequent child in the family, or of a child with developmental difficulties. Unused leave can be transferred to the other adoptive parent on resumption of employment/self-employment under the same condition as parental exemption from work/parental care for the child. Payment is at 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate.

**Time off for the care of dependants**

- There is an entitlement to leave if a co-resident spouse or child is ill, with length and payment depending on the child’s age: for a child under three years, up to 60 days per family for each illness at 100 per cent of average earnings; for a child aged three to seven years, 70 per cent of average earnings (minimum of 25 per cent of budgetary base rate); for a child aged seven to 18 years, up to 40 days for each illness at 70 per cent of average earnings (minimum of 25 per cent of budgetary base rate); older child and co-resident spouse, up to 20 days for each illness at 70 per cent of average earnings, but only for serious medical conditions defined by regulation (minimum of 25 per cent of budgetary base rate). Leave for children under the 18 years of age can be extended on the basis of medical committee decision, and can be used only if the other co-resident parent is in employment or if a parent lives alone with a child (e.g. single parents, divorced parents). All payments subject to a ceiling of HRK4,257 [€562] per month. It can be used on part-time basis.

- A worker has the right to seven days fully paid leave per year for important personal needs, including those related to marriage, childbirth, or the serious illness of a member of the immediate family.

**Flexible working**

- During the first 12 months after the child’s birth, mothers employed full time and who are breastfeeding are entitled to two hours absence from work (once a day for two hours or two times a day for one hour), paid at 100 per cent of the budgetary base rate, recalculated to the hourly rate. If an employed pregnant woman or mother breastfeeding her child works on a job that is harmful to her health and the health of a child she is breastfeeding, and if the employer has not provided for her another position within the company, she has the right to leave, at full earnings to be paid by the employer.
• After Parental leave, one of the employed/self-employed parents has the right to work shorter hours until a child turns three years of age if the child requires increased care due to its health and development, and only if Parental leave was fully used; paid at 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate (recalculated to the hourly rate, only for the hours outside the work).

• Employed or self-employed parents of a child with a serious developmental problem, including physical disability, have the right to take leave to care for the child or to work shorter hours until the child is eight years old. Parents can then work shorter hours, until the child finishes regular education. Payment during this period is: a) during leave, 65 per cent of the budgetary base rate if beneficiary has 12 months of continual insurance period or 18 months of insurance with interruptions in the last 2 years, otherwise 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate; b) during shorter working hours, the difference in salary if the beneficiary has 12 months of continual insurance period or 18 months of insurance with interruptions in the last 2 years, otherwise 50 per cent of the budgetary base rate recalculated to the hourly rate.

Prenatal examinations (slobodan radni dan za prenatalni pregled)

• Pregnant workers have a right to use a number of hours - equivalent to one working day off per month - in order to attend prenatal examinations. Pregnant worker is obliged to announce to the employer the intention to use this right (in a written form, two days in advance)

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Croatia is 12 or 14 months (depending on whether both parents use leave entitlements) for the first and second born child, or three years for twins, other multiple births and the third and every subsequent child); this is paid at 100 per cent of average earnings up to a low ceiling for Parental leave. There is an entitlement to ECEC from six years of age, for at least 250 hours as preparation for school at seven years; attendance is obligatory. Levels of attendance at formal services are well below the average for the countries included in this review. Croatia is not included in the comparative data on ECEC attendance in the OECD Family Database. It does, however, appear in the TransMonEE Database covering countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Individual States; according to this Database, levels of attendance at formal services in Croatia for children under and over 3 years are below the average for the countries included in this review and OECD countries (for more details see Table ‘Relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements’).

3. Changes in policy since April 2014 (including proposals currently under discussion)

To harmonize with the EU Council Directive 2010/18/EU on Parental leave, from December 2014 the Parental leave rights of (self)-employed adoptive parents were equalized with those of (self)-employed biological parents. Now they also become entitled to eight months of Parental leave (two of them non-transferable) until their child turns eight years of age. Previously employed and self-employed adoptive parents were entitled to Parental leave of six months until their child turns eight years of age.
4. Take-up of leave

a. Maternity leave

Although there is the possibility for fathers to use part of Maternity leave (if mothers agree), official data show that Maternity leave is predominantly used by mothers. According to the latest information, for 2014, fathers used the transferred right in 0.4 per cent of cases. Maternity exemption from work is predominantly used by mothers, i.e. only 0.05 per cent of fathers exercised this right in 2014.

There is no official information on what proportion of women and men take Maternity leave. But, Labour Force Survey data show that, on average over the period 2008-2011, 86.8 per cent of employed mothers used the entitlement to leave during the six months after childbirth (i.e. Maternity leave).

b. Paternity leave

No statutory entitlement.

c. Parental leave

Parental leave is also predominantly used by mothers. According to the latest official data, for 2014, fathers account for 4.88 per cent of all Parental leave taken.

There is no official information on take-up rates. But, Labour Force Survey data for 2008-2011 show that the take-up rate for employed mothers during the Parental leave period was 84 per cent for six to twelve months after childbirth, falling to 18 per cent during 12 to 24 months. The take-up rate for fathers was much lower – around 0.3 per cent in the first year after birth.

5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2014

a. General overview

Studies have addressed childcare and gender equality policies.

b. Selected publications since April 2014

None reported.

c. Ongoing research

None reported.