

# Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>

Jirina Kocourková (Charles University)

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 (*materska dovolena*) (responsibility of the Social Security system)

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- Twenty-eight weeks: six to eight weeks before the birth and 20 to 22 weeks following birth. It is obligatory to take 14 weeks, including at least six weeks after the birth.

*Payment (applied for the whole period of Maternity leave) and funding*

- Seventy per cent of daily earnings up to a maximum payment of CZK31,740 [€1,157<sup>2</sup>] per month.
- Payment is financed from sickness insurance contributions by employers, paying 2.3 per cent of earnings.

*Flexibility in use*

- Leave can be started six to eight weeks before birth.
- From the start of the seventh week after childbirth, either parent may use the leave, i.e. the mother may alternate with the father of the child, with no restriction on the frequency of alternation. If the father uses the leave, he must do so for at least seven days.

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

- To be eligible for maternity benefit, an employee must have contributed to sickness insurance for at least 270 days during the last two years.
- A self-employed worker must meet the same condition as an employee, and in addition have contributed to sickness insurance for at least 180 days during the last year.
- Students are entitled to the benefit.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please cite as: Kocourková, J. (2015) 'Czech Republic country note', in: P. Moss (ed.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2015*. Available at: [http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp\\_and\\_r\\_reports/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/)

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

*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 the case of multiple births, the length of leave is increased by nine weeks.
- When the child is stillborn, the mother is granted 14 weeks of Maternity leave.

## **b. Paternity leave**

No statutory entitlement.

## **c. Parental leave (*rodicovska dovolena*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs)**

*Length of leave*

- Both parents can take leave until the child's third birthday. Leave is an individual entitlement, but only one parent is entitled to the benefit.

*Payment and funding*

- A Parental benefit - *rodicovsky prispevek* - is available to all families who meet the eligibility condition whether or not they take Parental leave; as parents can work full time or part time while receiving parental benefit, it can be considered as a benefit to subsidise care costs, as well as a home care benefit for at-home parents.
- The period and amount of Parental benefit can be chosen from a number of options; the longest option is until the child is 48 months old and the shortest option is until the child is 24 months old. For example, the maximum amount if taking the 24 month option is 70 per cent of previous monthly earnings, with a ceiling of CZK11,500 [€419] per month; while taking benefit until a child is three years has a ceiling of CZK7,000 [€255]. The maximum amount payable for the whole period is CZK220,000 [€8,0139].
- While Parental leave can only be taken up to the child's third birthday, the Parental benefit is paid until the child's fourth birthday.
- Parental benefit is funded from general taxation.

*Flexibility in use*

- The selected Parental benefit option may be changed after three months.
- Parents on leave can work, but not on the same job from which he/she is taking leave.
- Both parents can take Parental leave at the same time, but only one of them is entitled to parental benefit. They can alternate in receiving benefit as often they want.

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

- There are no special requirements for leave; however, each parent has to ask for formal approval of the employer.
- Parents can choose the period and amount of Parental benefit on condition that at least one parent in a family is a person participating in sickness insurance
- Payment of Parental benefit is conditional, where there is a child under two years, on parents not using a publicly-funded ECEC service for more than 45 hours a month. There is no limitation on service use for older children.

*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*

- In the case of a disabled child, a parent is entitled to Parental benefit at the basic rate of CZK7,600 [€277] per month until the child is seven years of age. If the child is diagnosed as suffering from a long-term disability the parent is entitled to Parental benefit at the lower rate of CZK3,000 [€109] from seven to 15 years of child's age.
- Parental benefit can be taken by grandparents or other persons where they provide day care for the child and the parents agree to transfer their entitlement.

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

No statutory entitlement.

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

*Adoption leave and pay*

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

*Time off for the care of dependants*

- Employees can take leave to care for a sick relative at home (in all cases of illness for a child under ten years; otherwise, only in case of a serious illness). Leave is paid at 60 per cent of earnings up to a ceiling of CZK855 [€31] per day. A parent can take no more than nine days in one block of time, but there is no limit regarding the frequency of taking leave; parents are allowed to alternate with each other during the course of taking leave to care for a sick child.

*Flexible working*

- None.

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

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave available in the Czech Republic is three years, but most of this is low paid; leave paid at a high earnings-related rate runs for only five months. There is an entitlement to ECEC for a child aged five (the only one year before the basic school attendance) for the whole day. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under 3 years are very low, well below the average for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries; levels of attendance for children over 3 years are much higher, around both averages. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

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

An expert committee on family policy was established by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 2015 to propose new policies including leave arrangements and forms of childcare.

This is part of the political programme of the new government established in 2014. In contrast to her conservative predecessors, the Social Democrat Minister of Labour and Social Affairs aims to develop the Czech family policy in line with EU recommendations.

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

### **a. Maternity leave**

Nearly all mothers take Maternity leave.

### **b. Paternity leave**

There is no statutory leave entitlement.

### **c. Parental leave**

Legislation on Parental leave, so that fathers could take leave, was introduced in 1990, but truly equal conditions for both parents were not introduced until January 2001. However, the number of men receiving Parental benefit in comparison to women has remained negligible. In 2001, men accounted for 0.77 per cent of recipients of this benefit; since then, there has been a slight increase, but only to 0.99 per cent in 2003, 1.4 per cent in 2006, and 1.5 per cent in 2008 when 5,724 men received Parental benefit compared with 375,876 women. Since 2008, there has been no further increase; in 2010 4,986 men received Parental benefit compared with 328,777 women, i.e. 1.5 per cent of recipients were men, the same proportion as 2008. In 2013 5,200 men received Parental benefit, i.e. 1.8 per cent of all recipients.

There is no information about how long women or men take Parental leave. It is assumed that most parents taking leave stay on leave only until their child's third birthday (when entitlement to leave, though not benefit, ends) as they prefer not to lose their jobs.

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

### **a. General overview**

Recently research on work-life balance has been undertaken in particular by the Department of Demography and Geodemography at Charles University, by the Department of Gender Studies at the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Science, and by the working group on family policy in the Research Institute for Labour and Social Affairs.

### **b. Selected publications since April 2014**

Paloncyová, J., Barvíková, J., Šťastná, A., Svobodová, K and Kuchařová, V. (2013) *Systems of day care for children up to the age of 6 in France and the Czech Republic*. Prague: VUPSV. The monograph describes the systems of day care for children up to the age of six years in both the countries in detail. The focus is on parental care in the context of family policy provisions, payment-based non-family individual care, as well as non-family collective care in its various forms.

Paloncyová, J., Barvíková, J., Kuchařová, V and Psychlová K. (2014) *New forms of child day care in the Czech Republic*. Prague: VUPSV.

The monograph is the final outcome of the project 'New forms of child day care in the Czech Republic' carried out between April 2012 and April 2014. The aim was to generate proposals

for a broadening of the offer of non-family day care services in the Czech Republic on the basis of best practice examples from France. Proposals for collective care services include innovations feasible under the current legal conditions dealing in particular with questions of quality standards and the registration and control of services.

Blum, S., Formánková, L. and Dobrotič, I. (2014) 'Family policies in "hybrid" welfare states after the crisis: Pathways between policy expansion and retrenchment', *Journal of Social Policy & Administration*, Vol.48, No.4: 468-491.

This article analyzes family policy reforms during the crisis in three small European welfare states – Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Focusing on the 'rationale' behind the reforms, it aims to explore how family policy was affected by the crisis and whether the crisis gave rise to new policy pathways and ideas in the area. The exploratory case studies of reforms conducted in the three countries between 2009 and 2013 show that everywhere the pre-crisis policy pathways were also continued in the period of crisis. The reforms were framed by diverse paradigms related to national-specific contexts along with newly emerged austerity arguments.

### **c. Ongoing research**

None reported.