

## Leave policy changes: April 2023

The table below gives a **quick overview of larger policy changes in the included countries**. For more information about those changes, we point to the individual country notes.

The table gives an overview of policy changes according to the different types of leave distinguished in our report, i.e., Maternity leave, Paternity leave, Parental leave, as well as other statutory measures. We do not summarise changes in other policies at this point (e.g., childcare), so readers can refer to the country notes for this. For the four types of leave, **we distinguish where a policy has newly been introduced** (marked by symbol: ✓) **or where a policy has been abolished** (x). Regarding the reforms of existing policies, we distinguish three types of change: if a change can be quantified, such as an increase in the replacement rate of a leave benefit or a reduction of leave duration, we classify it as either **expansion** (↑) or **cutback** (↓). If a change cannot be easily quantified, such as a change in flexibility rules, we classify it as **recalibration** (o).

Which **types of changes** have been reported in the 2022 Review of Leave Policies? Please note that these are only policy changes enacted in the year *up to April 2022* (whereas there are often significant policy changes close to be enacted or enacted later that year)?<sup>83</sup> In this 2023 edition of the leave review, **50 countries** are included. Of those, **33 countries report some policy change** (while the rest reports continuity across the different types of leave), which seems to indicate *more* activity on leave reform when compared to the previous year. Possibly, reforms gained on track after there was comparatively strong stability over the COVID-19 pandemic years as regarded regular leave

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<sup>83</sup> Later changes that are under way but not yet enacted will be included in forthcoming review(s). In many countries, there are also on-going discussions about policy reforms, which have not been decided upon yet; these discussions are portrayed in the policy changes sections of each country note.

measures (during that period, measures often concerned temporary adaptations and support<sup>84</sup>). Some of the enacted changes are small, others target specific groups, and a few transform the main parameters of national leave systems.

Compared to previous years (when there was a comparatively strong focus on reforming Paternity leave measures related to the respective EU directive), now there is reform activity in all fields of leave policies, also in Maternity leave, Parental leave and other statutory measures.

When it comes to qualifying the changes, a few **measures were newly introduced**. This included the introduction of new leaves, such as a pregnancy leave in Finland, and a two-week adoption leave in Switzerland. A right to (request) flexible working was introduced e.g. in Cyprus and Estonia. And particularly visible is the introduction of new **carer's leaves** in several countries (Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania).

Regarding the reform of existing measures, we see – as in previous years – that expansions and recalibrations are most widespread. Outright **retrenchment** measures are very rare. However, this statement should keep in mind that also the absence of a policy reform can mean significant change, namely, if e.g. benefit levels or benefit cap levels are not adapted to the significant inflationary losses we currently see in many countries (but see e.g. the UK country note for a 10.5% raise of Maternity and Paternity benefits in line with Consumer Prices Index).

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<sup>84</sup> For an overview see: Koslowski, A., Blum, S., & Dobrotić, I. (2022). Leave policy in the time of pandemic: new developments and lessons learned. In Dobrotić, I., Blum, S., & Koslowski, A. (Eds): *Research Handbook on Leave Policy* (pp. 384-397). Edward Elgar Publishing.

## Overview of leave policy changes in 2022/23

	<b>Maternity leave</b>	<b>Paternity leave</b>	<b>Parental leave</b>	<b>Other statutory leave measures</b>
Argentina				
Australia			o more flexibility	
Austria		o no deduction of childcare benefit	o amount of additional earnings	o amount of Family Bonus Plus
Belgium				✓ Four-day working week
Bosnia and Herzegovina	o Maternity allowance in FBiH			
Brazil	o extension shared between mother and father o extension with reduction of working hours			
Bulgaria	↑ upper limit			✓ care leave designated to the father
Canada	o Extension of Sickness Benefits in case of sickness after pregnancy			o Extension of Family caregiver benefit for children  ✓ Extension of Family caregiver benefit for adults

	<b>Maternity leave</b>	<b>Paternity leave</b>	<b>Parental leave</b>	<b>Other statutory leave measures</b>
Canada: Quebec only	↑ Additional weeks for single parents – under both Basic and Special plans			↑ eligibility threshold raised for low-income supplement –
China				
Chile				
Colombia				
Croatia	↑ benefit height for precarious workers and parents using leave part time ↑ less strict eligibility criteria	✓ New scheme	↑ benefit height ↑ less strict eligibility criteria	✓ care leave ✓ flexible working arrangements for carers ✓ Force majeure leave
Cyprus			o introduction of partial paid parental leave	✓ care leave ✓ flexible working
Czech Republic				
Denmark	o Reduced. Converted into pregnancy, maternity and into parental leave	✓ new scheme	o change in earmarked leave with more weeks for father; more flexibility for LGBT+ families	✓ flexible working arrangements for carers
Estonia				✓ Right to request flexible working

	<b>Maternity leave</b>	<b>Paternity leave</b>	<b>Parental leave</b>	<b>Other statutory leave measures</b>
Finland <sup>85</sup>	x	x	✓ new scheme	✓ Pregnancy leave o Cash-for-care benefit
France				
Germany <sup>86</sup>				
Greece	↑ o length and right to transfer part of leave to fathers (private sector)			
Hungary		↑ length		✓ additional low-paid leave for parents
Iceland				✓ Introduction of grief leave
Ireland			↑ length	
Israel				
Italy			↑ length	
Japan		✓ new scheme		
Korea	↑ upper limit	↑ upper limit		

<sup>85</sup> Changes valid from 1 August 2022

<sup>86</sup> Changes effective as of 1 September 2021.

	<b>Maternity leave</b>	<b>Paternity leave</b>	<b>Parental leave</b>	<b>Other statutory leave measures</b>
Latvia		↑ length	✓ ↑ non-transferable period and length of paid leave ↓ benefit payment	✓ carer's leave
Lithuania			✓ non-transferable part for each parent was introduced (with higher benefit)	
Luxembourg				0 other employment-related measures ✓ care-related leaves
Malta		✓ length	↑ Parental leave benefit (private sector) ✓ part of leave is non-transferable (private sector)	✓ flexible working arrangements (new forms) ✓ carers leave (private sector)
Mexico				
Netherlands			✓ payment for part of leave period	
New Zealand				
Norway			0 father's eligibility for leave improved	
Poland			↑ 0 leave lengthened and introduction of	✓ carers leave and force majeure leave

	<b>Maternity leave</b>	<b>Paternity leave</b>	<b>Parental leave</b>	<b>Other statutory leave measures</b>
			mother and father-only period	
Portugal		↑ length of obligatory leave	↑ payment level ✓ part-time option	
Romania		↑ length	↑ non-transferable period increased; pay if multiple births increased	✓ carer's leave introduced ↑ flexible working
Russian Federation	↑ benefit cap		↑ benefit cap	
Serbia				
Slovakia	↑ benefit cap	o period shared with mother	↑ benefit cap	
Slovenia		↓ length ↑ maximum benefit	✓ ↑ non-transferable days and upper limit	
South Africa				
Spain				-
Sweden				
Switzerland	↑ benefit ceiling	↑ benefit ceiling		✓ adoption leave
Türkiye				

	<b>Maternity leave</b>	<b>Paternity leave</b>	<b>Parental leave</b>	<b>Other statutory leave measures</b>
United Kingdom	↑ increase in benefit in line with Consumer Prices Index	↑ increase in benefit in line with Consumer Prices Index		
United States				
Uruguay				

**Key:**

✓ introduction; x abolishment; ↑ expansion/improvement; ↓ cutback; o recalibration. For details of changes see individual country notes.