

# Czech Republic<sup>1</sup>

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For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the Leave Network website). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members page](#) on the Leave Network 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)*

- 28 weeks: six to eight weeks before the birth and 20 to 22 weeks following the 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*

- 70 per cent of daily earnings up to a maximum payment of CZK36,750 [€1,434]<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

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<sup>2</sup> Conversion of currency undertaken for 24 June 2019, using: <https://www1.oanda.com/currency/converter/>.

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.

- Parents on leave can work from the start of the seventh week after childbirth, but not on the same job from which they are taking leave.

*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 calendar days during the last two years. There are no further citizenship requirements.
- A self-employed worker must meet the same condition as an employee, and, in addition, have contributed to sickness insurance for at least calendar 180 days during the last year.
- Students are entitled to the benefit.

*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**

*Length of leave*

- Seven calendar days.

*Payment and funding*

- 70 per cent of daily earnings up to a maximum payment of CZK8,575 [€334.60] per seven days.
- Payment is financed from sickness insurance contributions by employers, paying 2.3 per cent of earnings.

*Flexibility in use*

- It can be taken at any time during the six weeks after the birth of the child.
- All seven days must be taken as a block.

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

- Sickness insured workers, including employees and self-employed men.
- Must be officially registered as the father.

**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 at a time is entitled to the benefit.

*Payment and funding*

- A parental benefit – *rodicovsky prispevek* – is available to all families who meet the eligibility conditions, whether or not they take Parental leave. It can be considered as a home-care benefit for at-home parents, as well as – partly – a benefit to subsidise care costs, since parents can work full-time or part-time while receiving this benefit (but access to publicly-funded childcare is then limited, see below).
- 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 12 months old. If taking the 12-month option, the maximum amount is the maximum payment on the maternity benefit, i.e. CZK36,750 [€1,434] per month (i.e. 6 months of maternal benefit and 6 months of parental benefit). The upper limit of this parental benefit corresponds to the upper limit of the maternity benefit. If a parent did not pay sickness insurance, the limit is CZK7,600 [€296.55] per month. The maximum amount payable for the whole period is CZK220,000 [€8,584.47].
- 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 without any limitation, but as they cannot make use of public childcare facilities, they are then responsible to ensure the care of the child by another person.

- Both parents can take Parental leave at the same time, but only one of them is entitled to the parental benefit. They can alternate in receiving the benefit as often they want.

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

- There are no special requirements for leave; however, each parent must ask for formal approval of the employer.
- Parents can choose the period and amount of the parental benefit that they receive, on the condition that at least one parent in a family is a person paying sickness insurance.
- Non-Czech nationals must have been registered as resident for at least one year.
- Payment of the parental benefit is conditional: where there is a child under two years of age, parents must not use a publicly-funded ECEC service for more than 46 hours a month. There is no limitation on service use for older children.
- Parental leave is available to registered partners.

*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 case of multiple births, the maximum amount payable for the whole period is CZK330,000 [€12,876.70]. The upper limit per month is 1.5 times higher than in the case of a single birth. Accordingly, if a parent has not paid sickness insurance, the upper limit is CZK11,400 [€444.83].
- In the case of a disabled child, a parent is entitled to the parental benefit at the basic rate of CZK7,600 [€296.55] per month until the child is seven years of age. If the child is diagnosed with a long-term disability, the parent is entitled to the parental benefit at the lower rate of CZK3,000 [€117.06] from years seven to 15 of the child's life.
- 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.
- Same-sex couples can legally adopt.

#### *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 of age – otherwise, only in the case of a serious illness).
- Leave is paid at 60 per cent of earnings up to a ceiling of CZK855 [€33.36] per day.
- A parent can take no more than nine days of leave in one block of time, but there is no limit regarding the frequency of taking leave. Parents may alternate with each other in taking leave to care for a sick child.
- There are no length of service requirements in order to be eligible.

#### *Flexible working*

- None.
- Currently pensions are treated according to Act No. 306/2008 Coll. (effective from 1 January 2010). The Act introduced, in particular, measures implementing parametric changes of the basic pension insurance system. Compared to the legislation in effect prior to the adoption of the above Act, among the important approved changes is a 'step-by-step extension of the insurance period needed to establish a right to an old-age pension from 25 to 35 years,' including non-contributory periods, or to 30 years without non-contributory periods. Non-contributory insurance periods include time spent caring for a child below four years of age (i.e. the whole period of Maternity leave and Parental leave).

#### *Specific provision for (breast)feeding*

- 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 recently Parental leave has been systematically reformed in order to increase the degree of flexibility. Now parents can decide the length of leave for themselves.
- There is an entitlement to ECEC for a child aged five (so only one year before the basic school attendance) for the whole day.

- Despite the introduction of the option for parents to use the formal services also for children aged two and older (since 2012), levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years of age are very low – well below the average for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries. Levels of attendance for children over three years of age are much higher (around average by both measures). For actual attendance levels, see ‘relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements’ on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

### **3. Changes in policy since April 2018 (including proposals currently under discussion)**

- In 2018, two main measures were introduced. The first was a new option to take the parental benefit for a shorter period than up to the child’s second birthday. From 1 January 2018, the shortest period a parent could choose is six months, with the maximum payment of the same amount as the maximum payment for Maternity leave. The maximum amount payable for the whole period remained at CZK220,000 [€8,584.47] for a single childbirth, but it increased to CZK330,000 [€12,876.70] for multiple childbirths.
- The second was brought into effect on 1 February 2018: a one-week Paternity leave (seven calendar days). It can be taken within six weeks after the childbirth. Fathers are entitled to the same conditions as mothers on Maternity leave.
- At the end of 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs proposed an increase in the total amount of the [parental benefit from CZK220,000 [€8,584.47] to CZK300,000 [€11,706.10]: this should be in effect from 2020. It has been discussed whether all parents on Parental leave would be entitled on this increased amount or only those who would start to take this benefit from 2020.

## **4. Uptake of leave**

### **a. Maternity leave**

Nearly all mothers take Maternity leave.

### **b. Paternity leave**

No information is available so far as the leave has only been introduced in 2018.

### **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 the 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 the parental benefit (for context, 375,876 women received the benefit in that year).
- Since 2008, there has been no further increase: in 2010, 4,986 men received the parental benefit, compared with 328,777 women (i.e. 1.5 per cent of recipients were men, the same proportion as in 2008). In 2015, 5,100 men received the parental benefit (i.e. 1.8 per cent of all recipients).
- There is no information about how long women or men take Parental leave for. It is assumed that most parents taking leave do so only until their child's third birthday (when their entitlement to leave, although not the benefit, ends) as they prefer not to lose their jobs.