

Leave policy changes: April 2019

From the 2017 Review of Leave Policies onwards, we have organised the overview of policy changes in the included countries in table form (see below). The table below 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 2019 Review of Leave Policies (i.e. policy changes enacted between May 2018 and April 2019)?⁷¹ Firstly, it is interesting to note that more than half of the countries report *some* policy change in the 2018/19 period. In this year's edition of the leave review, 45 countries are included, but, as two country notes were not updated (Russian Federation and Slovak Republic), we have policy change information for 43 countries. Of those, 22 report some policy change, while 21 report continuity across all types of leave. Some of the enacted changes are small, others target specific groups, and a few transform the main parameters of national leave systems.

For Maternity leave, 13 countries report changes; 11 for Paternity leave; and 12 for Parental leave. Changes in 14 countries concern other statutory leave measures. Generally, expansions or recalibrations are frequently reported, while there seem to have been very few leave policy cutbacks or abolishment during the last year (one of the exceptions is the babysitter voucher in Italy). Notable expansions include increases of benefit height or ceiling of

⁷¹ 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 also portrayed in the policy changes sections of each country note.

different leave types in a whole range of countries (Bulgaria, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Korea, and Luxembourg). In Spain, changes were substantial, gradually extending Paternity leave to eight weeks (2019-21), and making breastfeeding leave an individual and non-transferable right. In Slovenia, crisis austerity measures were abolished, and thereby benefit levels and ceilings of Maternity, Paternity, and Parental leave re-adapted to pre-crisis levels. Maternity and Paternity leaves for self-employed parents were improved in Belgium. There are also some notable new measures, including the introduction of a seven-day Paternity leave in the Czech Republic, and a 10-day Paternity leave in South Africa.

All of the changes briefly listed in the following table are described in more detail in each respective country note.

Summarising table: Overview of leave policy changes in 2018/19

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
Australia				
Austria				
Belgium	↑ 12 weeks for self-employed mothers	↑ 10 days for self-employed persons		✓ career-savings account ↓ time credit system
Brazil				
Bulgaria	↑ means-tested income height ↑ expansion ↑ eligibility criteria		↑ benefit height	↑ adoption leave benefit

Canada (Québec, no changes)		↑ 5-8 weeks	↑ flexibility ↑ benefit duration	
China	o change in length of leave - 178 days in Guangdong			✓ nursing leave: Shanxi, Sichuan, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia o change in length of nursing leave in Henan
Chile				
Croatia				
Cyprus				
Czech Republic		✓ 7 days	o change in leave variants	
Denmark				✓ entitlement to ECEC for some children
Estonia			↑ minimum benefit and benefit ceiling increased (automatic updating)	
Finland	↑ minimum benefit	↑ minimum benefit	↑ minimum benefit	↑ entitlements for single mothers, fathers with multiple children, and adoptive parents

France		↑ in case of child hospitalisation		
Germany	↑ employment protection			
Greece			↑ benefit height, also for surrogate births (public sector)	✓ leave for foster parents, including same-sex couples ↑ leave to care for sick children ✓ adoption leave for fathers
Hungary				↑ leave and benefit to care for long-term sick children
Iceland	↑ benefit height	↑ benefit height	↑ benefit height	
Ireland				
Israel				
Italy	o allowing pregnant women choice of work up to month nine	□ length increased to 5 days		x voucher babysitter and kindergarten □ kindergarten voucher □□ baby bonus by 20% for second child
Japan				

Korea	↑ ceiling increased		↑ ceiling increased	
Latvia				
Lithuania				
Luxembourg	↑ ceiling increased	↑ ceiling increased	↑ benefit increased	
Malta				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ responsibility leave ✓ special leave ✓ marriage and civil union leave
Mexico				
Netherlands			↑ partners and fathers entitled to paid birth leave, which replaces and extends Paternity leave	✓ new law on innovation and quality in childcare
New Zealand			↑ paid Parental leave increased from 18 to 22 weeks	
Norway			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o length and father's and mother's quota increased; family portion of leave reduced ↑ length of leave for multiple 	

			births/adoptions increased	
Poland				o changes in legislation on leave to care for sick children or grandchildren for self-employed parents and grandparents
Portugal				
Romania				
Russian Federation	No information			
Slovak Republic	No information			
Slovenia	↑ benefit ceiling (austerity measure) abandoned	↑ benefit level and ceiling: pre-crisis levels	↑ benefit level and ceiling: pre-crisis levels	adoption leave level and ceiling: pre-crisis level
South Africa		✓ 10 consecutive days		✓ 10 consecutive weeks of adoption and commissioning Parental leave
Spain	o more flexibility in use	↑ gradual extension to 16 weeks (2019-21)	o	↑ breastfeeding leave made individual and non-transferable right
Sweden				
Switzerland				
United Kingdom				

United States			(see report for changes on federal-state level)	(see report for changes on federal-state level)
Uruguay				

Key:

✓ : introduction, ✕: abolishment, ↑: expansion, ↓: cutback, ○: recalibration