

Latvia¹

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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 (*grūtniecības un dzemdību atvaļinājums*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 56 days before and 56 days after the birth of a child. No part of the leave is obligatory.

Payment and funding

- For employed women: 80 per cent of the previous earnings calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- For self-employed women: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions made during the period of the 12 calendar months ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins.
- The average amount of the maternity benefit (in total) during the last 12 months was €1,582.84 and the number of recipients was around 2,446 per month.
- The benefit is paid in two parts: the first part is calculated for the 56 days before the due date and the second part is calculated for

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the 56 days after the actual birth date.

- Funded from social insurance.
- Maternity benefit is not taxable.

Flexibility in use

- None, except for when the leave can be started (not earlier than 56 days before birth). The leave days that were not used before the birth, cannot be used after the birth, i.e. the post-natal leave period cannot exceed 56 days.
- The right to the maternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the first part of the leave (if the eligible person fails to apply until the end of that period, the right cannot be exercised).

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

- All women who are (self-)employed and have paid social insurance contributions for at least 12 months during the last 24 months, before the month in which the leave begins.
- All women who are spouses of a self-employed man and who have joined the social insurance system voluntarily.
- For the period after the childbirth – father of a child or any other person who takes care of a new-born at home and fulfils the social insurance criteria is entitled to paid Maternity leave of 56 or 70 days if:
 - the mother is unable to take care of the child until the 42nd post-natal day due to sickness;
 - the mother has refused to take care of the child;
 - the mother has died during childbirth or before the 42nd post-natal day;
 - the child is a foundling (the child has been abandoned, and the mother is unknown).

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

- If the mother has required medical supervision due to the pregnancy (no later than at the 12th week of the pregnancy) – 14 extra days of leave before the birth of a child are provided.
- In the case of multiple births or complications during pregnancy, childbirth, or the postpartum period, 14 extra days of leave after the birth are provided.
- In a case where employment has ended due to the company's liquidation, leave is provided if the leave has started no later than 210 days after the end of employment.

b. Paternity leave (*atvaļinājums bērna tēvam*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 10 calendar days after childbirth.

Payment and funding

- For employed men: 80 per cent of previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- For self-employed men: 80 per cent of previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for the period of 12 calendar months, ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins.
- The average amount of the paternity benefit (in total) during the last 12 months was €292.37 and the number of recipients was around 925 per month.
- Funded from social insurance.

Flexibility in use

- None, except for when the leave can be started.
- The leave can be divided into parts as agreed with the employer.
- The right to the paternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the Paternity leave.

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

- The father of a child if the application is submitted during the first two months after the birth.
- The same insurance period eligibility criteria needed as for Maternity leave.
- One of the adoptive parents until the child reaches three years of age.
- Same-sex couples are not eligible.

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 father

- None.

c. Parental leave (*bērna kopšanas atvaļinājums*)

(responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 18 months per parent until the child reaches eight years of age.
- Leave is an individual entitlement, but only one parent may receive payment (for a maximum period of 18 months).

Payment and funding

- There are three separate benefits that are paid after the birth of a child: parental benefit, child birth benefit, and child care allowance.

Parental benefit

- Only parents who are participants of the social security system and fulfil the insurance period are entitled to the benefit (see Maternity leave-eligibility).
- Parents can choose between two options: 1) if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches one year of age, the parental benefit is 60 per cent of the previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins; 2) if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches 18 months of age, the parental benefit is 43.75 per cent of the previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- Funded in the same way as for Maternity and Paternity leave.
- The average amount of parental benefit during the last 12 months was €368.09 per month and the number of recipients was around 25,395 per month – they were mostly women.
- The amount of parental benefit is reduced to 30 per cent of the average gross insurance contributions salary, if the beneficiary continues to work during Parental leave.

Child birth benefit

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child, if the child has been taken under guardianship until they reach one year of age.
- The benefit is a lump sum allowance of €421.17 for each child and it is available to all parents (also the parents not paying

- social insurance).
- The right to the child birth benefit starts on day eight of child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted, and ends six months later.

Child care allowance

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child if the child has been taken under guardianship.
- The benefit is €171 per month for each child, until a child reaches 18 months of age and then €42.69 per month for each child, until a child reaches 24 months of age,
- The application for the child care allowance should be submitted within the six months since the first day of child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted.
- Unemployed and economically inactive parents who have not received maternity, parental, or child care allowance are entitled to receive the child care benefit of €171 per month for each child until a child reaches 18 months of age, and then €42.69 per month for each child until a child reaches 24 months of age.
- Additionally, one of the parents, guardians, or adoptive parents are entitled to receive the family state benefit:
 - The amount of the family state benefit is €11.38 per month for the first child; €22.76 per month for the second child; €34.14 per month for the third child; and €50.07 per month for the fourth and any other children. The benefit is paid after the child reaches one year of age until they turn 15 years of age (or 20 years of age if a child continues their studies and has not been married). The benefit is paid directly to the child after they reach 18 years of age, if prior to that they have been under guardianship.
 - Families with two or more children are entitled to additional benefit: €10 per month for families with two children; €66 per month for families with three children; €116 per month for families with four children; €166 per month for families with five children; €216 per month for families with six children, and so on. When calculating the number of children in the family, the following children are not counted: children for whom the family state benefit is received by the other parent; children older than 20 years of age; children younger than 20 years of age but have not continued their studies after they turned 15 years of age; children younger than one year of age.
 - Families with disabled children or children diagnosed with coeliac disease are entitled to additional benefit: €106.72 per month for each child with a disability or coeliac disease.
- Additionally, one of the parents, a guardian, or one of the adoptive parents are entitled to receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child: €213.43 per month for each child with a disability,

until the child reaches 18 years of age.

Flexibility in use

- Both parents are entitled to 18 months of the leave until a child reaches eight years of age. It can be taken on a part-time basis.
- The leave can be used simultaneously by both parents, but only one parent can receive the benefit.
- Only one of the parents can receive the parental benefit for the period of 18 months. Parents are entitled to transfer the benefit right to one another.

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

- One of the parents (adoptive or biological) of the child;
- Child's foster family member;
- Child's guardian or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court;
- The eligible person must have the personal identification code, which is given to citizens, persons with the official 'non-citizen' status, refugees, or alternative status.
- One of the same-sex partners is eligible.

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 mother

- None except those mentioned above.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- Adoptive parents are entitled to Paternity and Parental leave. Payment and funding are provided on the same grounds as for biological parents.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Parents who have joined the social insurance system (employed, self-employed, or parents whose spouse is self-employed) are entitled to sickness leave and benefit for a child up to 14 years of age: 14 days per sickness episode if a child has been taken care

of at home, or up to 21 days if a child has been admitted to hospital;

- Grandparents, foster parents, guardian, or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court are also entitled to sickness leave and benefit;
- The sickness benefit is calculated in the same way as the maternity and paternity benefits.

Flexible working

- Pregnant women, women in the post-natal period up to one year after the birth, parents who have a child up to 14 years of age (or up to 18 years of age if a child has a disability), and breast-feeding women are entitled to part-time work with the right to return to a full-time work pattern when they need to do so.
- Pregnant women are entitled to leave the work place for a doctor's appointment.
- Parents who have a child up to 18 years of age are entitled to temporary absence in the case of the sickness of a child or an accident, as well as for a doctor's appointment.
- Parents who have a child up to three years of age (or 18 years of age if a child has a disability) are entitled to annual leave during the summer months as a priority group.
- Parents who have one or two children up to 14 years of age are entitled to additional annual leave – one working day (paid).
- Parents who have three or more children up to 16 years of age (or up to 18 years of age if a child has a disability) are entitled to additional annual leave – three working days (paid).

Specific provision for (breast-)feeding

- Parents (both mothers and fathers) with a child up to 18 months of age are entitled to a paid additional break for feeding their child – at least 30 minutes every three hours (or 60 minutes every three hours, if a parent has more than one child up to 18 months of age). Upon request, parents are entitled to combine these breaks, thus prolonging a lunch break or shortening their working hours.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Latvia is three years, but only half of this is paid (at a low earnings-related level). According to the Law on Education, Article 17, municipalities are responsible for ensuring that all children from 18 months of age registered in their area receive ECEC in the institution that is closest to the child's home; a child can also attend an ECEC institution in another

municipality and receive the same financial support as those children who attend an institution in the municipality of their place of residence. Unfortunately, there are no municipalities that can offer a place in a municipal ECEC institution for all children: for instance, in September 2017, there were around 1,000 children from the ages of one and a half to four who did not receive a place in a municipal ECEC institution.

Since the uptake of Parental leave is mostly until a child reaches 18 months of age, municipalities provide financial support for fees in private ECEC institutions if no place is available in a municipal service when a child reaches 18 months of age. The amount of allowance is decided by calculating the average expenses for one child per month in a municipal ECEC institution. For instance, in 2018, Riga's municipal allowance was €231 per month, which covers around 60 to 70 per cent of the actual costs. In some municipalities, parents who choose to employ a nanny are entitled to a municipal allowance: the allowance is usually provided for children who are at least 18 months of age, until a place in a municipal ECEC institution is available. The allowance amount offered differs in each municipality. In 2018, only 19 out of 119 municipalities provided such support, and the amounts vary from €43.00 per month in Vecumnieki municipality (one of the 70 smallest municipalities) to €116.00 per month in Riga municipality, and €188.00 per month in Mārupe municipality (one of the 30 largest municipalities).

Levels of attendance at formal ECEC services for children under the age of three are below the average both for the countries included in this review and OECD countries; but above the average for children over the age of three years. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

3. Changes in policy since May 2018 (including proposals currently under discussion)

There have been no major changes in recent years, except for the additional allowance for families with two or more children that was introduced in 2018. In light of the European Parliament directive, the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers, and the repeal of Council Directive 2010/18/EU, the Ministry of Welfare is planning to perform an in-depth analysis into the possibility of extending Paternity leave from ten calendar days to ten working days in 2019. Also, an analysis of the gender equality policy from a men's rights perspective is planned in 2020. Such analysis could give a better perspective on ways to promote the uptake of Parental leave among men, hence promoting equal sharing of household and family responsibilities.

4. Uptake of leave

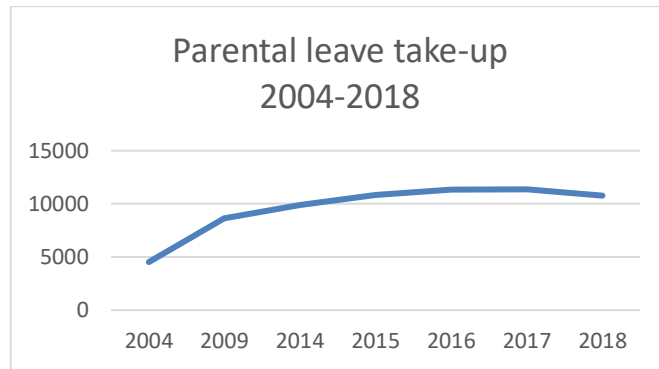
Data on uptake are from the State Social Insurance Agency and the data on the average salaries are from the Central Statistical Bureau.

a. Maternity leave

100 per cent of pregnant employed women take Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

Paternity leave was introduced in 2002, and since then the uptake has risen every year (over the last five years, 200 more people on average take Paternity leave each year).



c. Parental leave

The uptake of Parental leave during the last four years has almost doubled. Most of the parents taking this leave are women (81.6 per cent of the total number in 2018). However, more and more men are filing requests for parental benefits: in 2013, only seven per cent of the total number of Parental leave benefit recipients were men, rising to 18.4 per cent in 2018.



Most of the working parents who received parental benefits were men (82.4 per cent in 2016, 79.7 per cent in 2017, and 80.2 per cent in 2018). The most likely reason is the gender pay gap: in 2016, the average salary for men was €1,150, compared with €807.30 for women.

d. Other employment-related measures

No data available.