

Slovak Republic¹

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April 2018 – N.B. this country note has not been updated for 2019.

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 (*materská dovolenka*) (responsibility of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 34 weeks: six to eight weeks of pre-natal leave; and 26 to 28 weeks of post-natal leave.

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

- 75 per cent of daily earnings calculated based on the previous year. There is a ceiling of two times the national average monthly wage.² If maternity benefit is lower than parental allowance (see 1.c. below), then an additional payment is made to cover the difference.
- Payment is made from sickness insurance contributions, collected by the Social Insurance Agency, plus employers and employees (each of whom pay 1.4 per cent of earnings). Self-employed workers pay 4.4 per cent of declared earnings.

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² The average wage in 2017 was €954.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can start from six to eight weeks before birth.
- Mothers can choose the beginning of their Maternity leave, within the limits defined by the law.
- Fathers can claim maternity benefit, based on the mother's agreement (provided that the mother doesn't receive maternity benefit or parental allowance). In order to claim this maternity benefit, fathers must care for the child personally and have paid sickness insurance for a total of 270 days in the previous two years. During this time, they are not allowed to work. In this case, maternity benefit is paid, after at least a period of six weeks from the birth. Fathers can take a leave for maximum of 28 weeks.
- If the mother decides to go back to work, in order for the father to claim her maternity benefit, he has to be personally be at home with the child and care for them. The aim of this stipulation is to prevent the father from taking the maternity benefit (which would be higher, as men get higher wages on average) and continue working.
- If the mother dies, fathers can still claim maternity benefits.
- There is no provision for same-sex couples to share 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 days, during the two years before the birth. The same applies to self-employed persons and insured persons in the voluntary sector.

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

- Maternity leave is extended to 37 weeks for single mothers and 43 weeks in the case of multiple births.
- In the case of foster carers, there are 28 weeks (31 weeks for single people, and 37 weeks for persons caring for at least two new-born children).
- In the case of a stillbirth, the mother is granted a maximum of 14 weeks of Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

No statutory entitlement. There is an option for the father to take maternity benefit as part of the provision for Maternity leave, after six weeks from the birth of the baby (see 1.a.).

c. Parental leave (*rodičovská dovolenka*) (responsibility of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)

Length of leave

- Until the child reaches three years of age.
- If the child has a long-term health problem or disability, the age limit increases to six years.
- Leave is a family entitlement, which only one parent may use.

Payment and funding

- A parental allowance (*rodičovský príspevok*) of €214.70 per month is available to all families who meet the eligibility conditions, whether or not they take Parental leave.
- Parental allowance is funded from general taxation. The period of caring for a child (up to the age of six years, when compulsory education begins) is covered by pension contributions, which are paid by the state.

Flexibility in use

- Parents can work full-time or part-time while receiving parental benefit.
- Only one parent is entitled to parental allowance.

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

- The parents must be permanent or temporary residents in the Slovak Republic in order to be eligible.
- Parental allowance is provided from the birth of the child, if parents are not eligible for maternity benefit.
- The parental allowance is not provided to parents if their older child (up to three years of age, or up to six years of age if they have a long-term health problem or disability) has been removed from their personal care. In such cases, the Local Office of the Labour, Social Affairs and Family provides an allowance to a foster parent for that child.

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

- Parental leave and parental allowance can continue until a child is 6 years old if the child has a long-term health problem or disability.
- Parental allowance is increased by 25 per cent per child in the case of multiple births.

- Parental allowance is reduced by 50 per cent if any older child under parental responsibility is absent from compulsory education.

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 ten days of leave per episode of illness, either to care for a sick relative at home (including a sick child) or to take care of a child under the age of ten for other reasons (e.g. if the child's school is closed). They receive an earnings-related benefit (*ošetrovné*) paid at a 55 per cent of the assessment base for a maximum of ten calendar days. There is no limit to the number of episodes tolerated, so long as these do not exceed ten days per year.

Flexible working

- None relating to leave provision.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- None.

Other measures

- A childcare allowance (*Príspevok na starostlivosť o dieťa*) is available to cover some of the costs of childcare. It is provided to one of the parents (whether foster or biological) if they work or take part in secondary or tertiary education. The allowance is provided in three forms. The first is where childcare is provided by official providers, where it is paid up to the level of officially declared costs, with an upper limit of €280 per month. The second is where childcare is provided by other persons or relatives, where it is paid at €41.10 per month, without the need to declare childcare costs. The third is where childcare is provided by the kindergarten, established by the municipality or local administrative authority, which is included in the official network

of schools and school facilities. It is paid at the maximum level of €80. The allowance is paid up to the age of three (or six in the case of a child with a long-term health problem or disability).

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

Slovakia is among the OECD countries with the lowest employment rate for mothers. ECEC services in Slovakia favour older children, with the highest enrolment rates among children aged four and five. This reflects the upper age limit for Parental leave, but also a shortage of places in kindergartens – due to their limited capacity, kindergartens prioritise older children who should be in the process of preparation for compulsory education. At the moment, massive investments into ECEC services for young children, based mainly on EU funds, are being implemented. The maximum period of paid post-natal leave available in Slovakia is three years, but this is paid at a low earnings-related level or at a flat-rate. There is no entitlement to ECEC during this three-year period. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years of age are very low, well below the average both for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries. Levels of attendance for children over three years of age are much higher, but still below both averages. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

3. Changes in policy since April 2017 (including proposals currently under discussion)

New amendments to the Act on Social Services No. 448/2008 have been made to improve conditions in childcare facilities for very young children (under three years of age), coming into effect on 1 January 2018. While, originally, the Act defined this type of childcare provided by state facilities as a tool to support work-life balance, and restricted access exclusively to working parents, since 2018, childcare facilities for children under three years of age can also be used by unemployed parents. The condition is that there are available places that cannot be used by parents reconciling family and work responsibilities. The newly amended act defines an obligation for providers to join a register of social service providers and it re-defines qualification requirements for staff. In addition, the level of some family benefits has been increased, but to a very limited extent.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has declared a significant increase in social benefits for people with disabilities and their (informal) caregivers. Since July 2017, the government has increased the amounts of nursing allowance (*príspevok na opatrovanie*) paid to

people who care for long-term dependent relatives – as well as a personal assistance allowance, paid to severely disabled people who are dependent on personal assistance.

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

Nearly all mothers take Maternity leave as it is obligatory. The number of fathers accessing maternity benefits has increased. In March 2017, 1,767 men received maternity benefit and they represent seven per cent of all recipients. Compared to the previous year, this number has increased by 837 fathers. Newer data are not available.

b. Paternity leave

There is no statutory leave entitlement.

c. Parental leave

There is no information on Parental leave use. Parental leave allowance is paid to all families. The number of men receiving parental allowance is persistently low.