

Slovenia¹

Nada Stropnik (Institute for Economic Research, Slovenia)

April 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 (*materinski dopust*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 105 calendar days (15 weeks): four weeks (28 days) before the birth and 11 weeks following the birth. It is obligatory to take 15 days of leave.

Payment and funding

- 100 per cent of average basic income on which Parental leave contributions were paid during the 12 months prior to the leave. The last of these 12 months is defined as the penultimate one before the month of the first application for leave. Not all income on which the contributions were paid is counted into the basic income (e.g. in-work benefits and other income received in addition to basic earnings). If the contributions were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, 55 per cent of the minimum wage² [€323.55 a month] is factored in for the missing period.

¹ Stropnik, N. (2019) 'Slovenia country note,' in Koslowski, A., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Macht, A., and Moss, P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2019*. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/

² The uprated minimum wage as of 2006 is used as the basis wherever referred to in this overview.

There is no upper limit, and the minimum is 55 per cent of the minimum wage [€323.55].

- Women who are not insured at the time when the leave starts, but who have been insured for at least 12 months in the last three years before the start of Maternity leave, receive 55 to 105 per cent of the minimum wage [approximately €324 to €618] per month, depending on the period they have been insured for, in the last three years.
- Non-employed parents do not receive pension credits for child-rearing but employed parents do (i.e. those who were receiving earnings compensation during the leave).
- Funded partly from Parental Protection Insurance that forms part of Social Security Insurance. Contributions to Parental Protection Insurance are 0.1 per cent of gross earnings for employees and the same for employers. As much as 92 per cent of the total financing of the Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave earnings compensations is financed from the central government budget.³

Flexibility in use

- The part unused before the birth may be claimed after childbirth if the birth took place before the envisaged date.

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

- The person must be covered by Parental Protection Insurance (which is part of social security) just prior to the first day of the leave. This insurance covers persons on employment contracts (both permanent and fixed-term, either full-time or part-time); the self-employed (including persons performing agricultural activities); and temporary agency workers. For the unemployed, see the 'payment and funding' section.

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

- Leave (77 days or fewer) can be delegated to the father or another person who nurses and cares for a child if the mother dies, abandons the child, or is not able to nurse and care for the child (medical certificate is needed).
- The father or one of the grandparents is also entitled to Maternity leave with the mother's (and father's) consent, in cases where the mother who gives birth to the child is younger than 18 years of age and has the status of an apprentice, a pupil, or a student.

³ MISSOC – Mutual Information System on Social Protection (update as of 1 July 2018). Available at: <https://www.missoc.org/>.

In that case, Maternity leave lasts 77 days minus the age of the child (in days) when the father or the grandparent commences Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave (*očetoovski dopust*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)

Length of leave

- 30 calendar days.

Payment and funding

- 100 per cent of average monthly earnings (or other base on which Parental Protection Insurance contributions were paid) during the 12 months prior to the leave, up to a ceiling of 2.5 times the average salary in Slovenia [approximately €2,900 net per month]. Not all income on which Parental leave contributions were paid is counted towards the basic earnings (e.g. in-work benefits and other income received in addition to basic earnings). If the contributions were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, 55 per cent of the minimum wage [€323.55 per month] is factored in for the missing period.
- Non-employed fathers (i.e. those who did not receive earnings compensation during the leave) do not receive pension credits for child-rearing, but employed fathers do.
- Funding is the same as for Maternity leave.

Flexibility in use

- Paternity leave may be taken as full-time or part-time leave. The duration of leave does not change, if taken part-time.
- For children born from 1 May 2018 onwards, at least 15 days of leave may be taken until one month following the end of Parental leave. Up to 15 days of the total of 30 days of Paternity leave may be taken until the child completes the first year of primary school.

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

- As for Maternity leave.
- The father is not entitled to Paternity leave if: there was a stillbirth; he was legally deprived of his parental right or prohibited from contacting the child; if, according to the Centre for Social Work's opinion, he has evidently shown no intention to care for the child or is otherwise neglecting his parental

responsibilities; or if he is not able to nurse and care for the child (medical certificate is needed).

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

- If the father does not use Paternity leave, the following persons are entitled to it: mother's husband or co-habiting partner; partner of either sex in the registered same-sex partnership; and other persons who are nursing and taking care of the child. The same applies to the spouse, co-habiting partner, or partner in the registered same-sex partnership of the person using Maternity leave.

c. Parental leave (*starševski dopust*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)

Length of leave

- 130 calendar days per parent. Leave is an individual entitlement.

Payment and funding

- As for Paternity leave (see 1.b.).
- For persons not insured at the time the leave starts, but who have been insured for at least 12 months in the last three years before the start of leave (Maternity, Paternity, or Parental, whichever is taken first), see 1.a.
- Non-employed mothers/parents (i.e. those who did not receive earnings compensation during the leave) do not receive pension credits for child-rearing, but employed parents do.
- Funding as for Maternity leave.

Flexibility in use

- The mother may transfer 100 days of her entitlement to the father (30 days are the mother's exclusive right), while the father may transfer all 130 days of his Parental leave to the mother.
- The parents must agree upon the use of Parental leave, in writing, 30 days prior to the expiry of Maternity leave. If the parents cannot reach an agreement, or their decision is not to the benefit of the child, the Centre for Social Work decides on this matter by considering the best interests of the child.
- At least 185 days must be taken as a continuous full-time or part-time leave: in the case of part-time leave being taken, the

duration of leave is not extended proportionately. Up to 75 days may be taken at any time until the child completes the first grade of elementary school (full-time or part-time), but not more than twice a year, with each section lasting at least 15 days.

- Parents can combine Parental leave (20 hours per week for the mother, 20 hours per week for the father) and take it at the same time.
- In rare cases, where the father is unknown and his entitlement cannot be transferred to the mother, a single mother is entitled to all 260 days of Parental leave.

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

- As for Maternity leave.

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 the case of a premature birth, the leave is prolonged by as many days as the pregnancy was shortened.
- In the case of multiple births or adoption of multiple children, Parental leave is extended by 90 days for each additional child. It is also extended by 90 days in the case of the birth of a child in need of special care.
- Leave is extended by 30 days if parents already have at least two children who have not yet completed the first grade of primary school; by 60 days if they have three such children; and by 90 days if they have four or more such children.
- Additional leave for premature or multiple births, or if parents have two or more younger children, is a family entitlement (i.e. the parents must decide which of them will take the leave).
- A person other than a parent who nurses and cares for the child is entitled to Parental leave, reduced by the number of days the parents have already used.
- If the mother is below 18 years of age and is an apprentice, pupil, or student, one of the grandparents (who is insured for Parental leave) may take the leave with the parents' consent.

Parental benefit for persons who are not eligible for insurance-based leave and earnings compensation

- Parents who are not eligible for insurance-based Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave and earnings compensation, are entitled to flat-rate parental benefit. Both the parent and the child must have permanent residence status and reside in Slovenia. The benefit amounts to €252.04 per month and is received for 365 days from the birth of a child. The mother is

entitled to parental benefit for the first 77 days after the birth of the child. The father is entitled in this period only if the mother abandons the child, is not able to nurse and care for the child (medical certificate is needed), or dies. After 77 days, parental benefit is the right of one of the parents and is used according to their written agreement. Another person nursing and caring for the child, as well as fulfilling the same conditions as the parent, is entitled to the parental benefit, too – namely for 365 days minus the number of days the parents have already used.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

- No statutory entitlement.

d. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- All adoptive parents have the same entitlements to Parental leave as other parents (see section 3).
- There are 30 days of Parental leave in the case of the adoption of a child who has completed the first grade of primary school and is below 15 years of age.

Time off for the care of dependants

- An insured person is entitled to take leave to care for an immediate co-resident family member who is ill (spouse and children, biological or adopted). Generally, seven working days of leave may be taken for each episode of illness per family – however, 15 working days may be taken for a child of up to seven years of age or a child who is moderately, severely, or very severely mentally and physically disabled. In exceptional cases, if required due to the health condition of the sick family member, the period may be extended to 14 and 30 working days respectively, or longer in extreme cases (up to six months).
- Leave is paid at 80 per cent of the individual's average earnings in the preceding calendar year. It cannot be lower than the guaranteed wage [approximately €238] or higher than the wage which the person would receive if they were working.

Flexible working

- A parent who is taking care of a child below three years of age (or 18 years of age if the child has a severe physical disability, or a moderate or severe mental disability) has the right to work part-time. The hours worked must be equal to or longer than half of

full-time working hours. There is no payment, but social security contributions,⁴ based on the proportional part of the minimum wage, are paid for the hours not worked.

- A parent who is taking care of two children may extend the right to work part-time until the younger child completes the first grade of elementary school, with social security contributions paid based on the proportional part of the minimum wage for the hours not worked. One year of this entitlement is a non-transferrable right for each of the parents.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- Breastfeeding mothers who work full-time have the right to a break during working time lasting no less than one hour per day, until their child is 18 months of age. Payment amounting to a proportion of the minimum wage is made until the child is nine months old; during the remaining period, only social security contributions are paid, based on the proportional part of the minimum wage.

Other

- A parent leaving the labour market in order to take care of four or more children – and who has been insured for Parental leave or has been an active job searcher for at least 12 months in the last three years – is entitled to have social security contributions (based on the minimum wage) paid from the state budget, until the youngest child completes the first grade of primary school.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Slovenia is 12.1 months.⁵ Post-natal leave paid at a high earnings-related rate runs for a year. There is an entitlement to ECEC from the end of Parental leave, available on a full-time basis in centres. So, there is no gap between the end of leave and an ECEC entitlement. Levels of attendance at formal services for children both under and over three years are above the average both for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

⁴ Social security contributions include pension credits.

⁵ This is a summary of Maternity leave and Parental leave (Paternity leave can be taken after Parental leave). For Slovenia, the time periods are: 77 days of Maternity leave (28 days must be taken before the foreseen delivery date); 30 days of Paternity leave; and 260 days of Parental leave. The sum is 367 days or 12.06 (12.1) months.

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

Cuts in earnings compensation introduced during the economic crisis were abandoned on 1 January 2019: 1) maternity earnings compensation without a ceiling; 2) paternity and parental earnings compensation rate returned from 90 per cent to 100 per cent; 3) paternity and parental earnings compensation ceiling returned from two times to 2.5 times the average salary in Slovenia.

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

As Maternity leave is obligatory, all employed women should take up some (normally all) leave.

b. Paternity leave

Roughly four in five fathers take up to (and close to) 15 days of Paternity leave, while fewer than one in five leave-takers took more than 15 days⁶ – mainly because their earnings were not (fully) compensated during the rest of the leave before 2016. A considerable number of fathers made use of their right to additional paid days⁷ (five days in 2016, ten in 2017, and 15 in 2018). In mid-2018, one in five leave-takers took all 30 days of Paternity leave, available from January 2018 (one in four took 16 to 30 days). The first 15 days are usually taken when the mother and child come home from the hospital.⁸

e. Parental leave

Some fathers take Parental leave, but mothers take it more variably: some take the entire Parental leave allocation, some take a good portion

⁶ The proportions quoted in this section relate to all fathers and are thus higher for eligible fathers.

⁷ Stropnik, N. (2018), 'Thirty days of (fully) compensated Paternity leave in Slovenia from January 2018,' *ESPN Flash Report 2018/7*, European Social Policy Network, European Commission, Brussels, February 2018. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=ESPNFlash&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0>.

⁸ Stropnik, Nada (2018), 'Fathers' rights and uptake of leaves in Slovenia,' Peer review on 'Instruments to foster long-term paternal involvement in family work,' Berlin, 4-5 October 2018. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/mlp-gender-equality-seminar-long-term-paternal-involvement-family-work_en.

of it, while very few do not take it (usually due to health reasons). The share of fathers taking some of the leave increased from around five per cent in the mid-2000s to six to seven per cent in 2012–2016.⁹ This shift may have been the result of the introduction of Paternity leave in 2003 that led to fathers' higher awareness of their rights, as well as their increased readiness to take over the care of a very young child. Considering the full earnings compensation while taking leave (available until the end of May 2012), the reasons for fathers' low participation may be found in the traditional division of tasks within the family; societal attitudes (not the declared ones, but rather those that rule people's behaviour); the absence of a positive image of the father who takes over more family responsibilities; and employers' expectations of their male employees.^{10 11} Paternity leave provisions and fathers having the same entitlement to Parental leave as mothers, do not significantly influence mothers' earlier return to work after their leave period. Since fathers usually take only part of the leave (if any at all), women's professional careers continue to be affected by their absence from work as a direct result of taking up Parental leave.

⁹ MLFSAEO (2019), 'Statistika – Družinski prejemki, zavarovanje za starševsko varstvo' ['Statistics – Family benefits, parental protection insurance'], Ljubljana: Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. Available at: http://www.mddsz.gov.si/si/ouveljavljanje_pravic/statistika/druz_prejemki_za_varovanje_sv/#c18828, own calculations.

¹⁰ Rakar, T., Stropnik, N., Boškić, R., Dremelj, P., Nagode, M., and Kovač, N. (2010), *Raziskava o vplivih veljavnih ukrepov družinske politike na odločanje za otroke* [Research on the impact of family policy measures on deciding to have children], Ljubljana: Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: <http://www.irsv.si/publikacije/leto-2010/index.html>

¹¹ Hrženjak, M. (Ed.) (2016), *Spremembe očetovstva: moški med delom in starševstvom* [Changing fatherhood: men between employment and parenthood], Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut.