

Leave policy changes: April 2020

From the 2017 Review of Leave Policies onwards, we have organised the overview of policy changes in the included countries in table form. 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).

For 2020, it is important to note that this section refers to the **regular leave policy changes**; for leave policies under the **COVID-19 pandemic**, please consult the special supplement and supplementary section.

Which **types of changes** have been reported in the 2020 Review of Leave Policies (i.e. policy changes enacted between May 2019 and April 2020)?¹ In this year's edition of the leave review, 45 countries are included. Of those, 25 report some policy change, while 20 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, 9 countries report changes; 8 for Paternity leave; and 16 for Parental leave. Changes in 7 countries concern other statutory leave measures. Compared to previous years, there was thus in 2019/20 a comparatively strong focus on reforming Parental leave measures.

¹ 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 portrayed in the policy changes sections of each country note.

When it comes to qualifying the changes, a few **measures were newly introduced**, including a nursing leave in two Chinese provinces, the reinstatement of a collective reimbursement fund for self-employed in Danish Maternity leave, and notably two new leave entitlements: for a parents' leave in Ireland, and for 10 consecutive days of Paternity leave in South Africa.

Regarding the reform of existing measures, **expansionary measures** are most widespread, including the introduction of a legal claim to Paternity leave in Austria, benefits increase in Maternity leave in Bulgaria, relaxed eligibility-criteria for employment-based Maternity leave benefits in Croatia, a parental benefit extension for single mothers in Finland, or an increased benefit height of Parental leave in Slovakia. Outright **retrenchment** measures – as in previous years – were much rarer, but happened as well, as with the decreased benefit level of Maternity, Paternity, and Parental leave in Lithuania. Yet it is important to note that the **recalibration**, which covers measures that cannot be as easily quantified, may sometimes included more 'hidden' retrenchment reforms.

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 2019/20

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
Australia			o changes in work test to qualify for Parental Leave Pay	
Austria		↑ legal claim		↑ legal claim
Belgium			o introduction of 10 per cent leave	
Brazil				

Bulgaria	↑ benefit increase			
Canada				
China				✓ nursing leave (in Yuannan and Shaanxi)
Chile				↑ more diseases covered – Care leave (SANNA)
Croatia	↑ relaxed eligibility criteria for employment-related maternity benefit		↑ relaxed eligibility criteria for employment-related maternity benefit ↑ increase in ceiling on parental benefit for (self)employed (for first 6 or 8 months of leave)	
Cyprus				
Czech Republic			↑ Increase in Parental Allowance	
Denmark	✓ re-instatement of collective reimbursement fund for self-employed		↑ extended ear-marked leave for fathers in the private sector	

Estonia			o change of reference period	
Finland		↑ extension of leave and benefit for multiple birth/ adoption	o parental benefit available for all adoptive children (up to 18 years) ↑ parental benefit extension for single mothers	
France				
Germany				
Greece				
Hungary			o leave can be taken by non-pensioner grandparents	
Iceland			↑ one month for mothers ↑ one month for fathers ↓ one-month family entitlement	
Ireland			o prolongation to 22 weeks (previously 18 weeks) ✓ Parent's leave	
Israel				

Italy		☐☐ 7 days		
Japan				
Korea	↑ benefit level ↑ expansion of maternity benefit entitlement to all women	↑ 10 days	↑ benefit level (for single parents, part-time leave) ↑ expansion of part-time Parental leave	✓ 10 days unpaid care leave
Latvia	o change in eligibility		o change in eligibility	
Lithuania	↑ benefit level o minimum benefit defined	↑ benefit level o minimum benefit defined	↑ benefit level ↑ ceilings o minimum benefit defined	
Luxembourg				
Malta				
Mexico				✓ full-time leave to care for a child under 16 years diagnosed with cancer
Netherlands				
New Zealand				
Norway			↑ multiple and pre-mature births	

Poland				
Portugal	↑ more days for premature birth or child hospitalisation	↑ more compulsory days		↑ more leave if child has cancer
Romania			↑ change to benefits in certain circumstances	
Russian Federation	↑ minimum and maximum payments		↑ minimum and maximum payments	
Slovakia	o Both parents can take leave at the same time		↑ benefit height	
Slovenia		o	o	o
South Africa		✓ 10 consecutive days		✓ 10 weeks adoption, commissioning Parental leave
Spain	o Transferability to the father	↑ 4 weeks		
Sweden				
Switzerland				
United Kingdom				
United States				

Uruguay				
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Key:

√: introduction, **x**: abolishment, ↑: expansion, ↓: cutback, **o**: recalibration