

Leave policy changes: April 2022

The table below gives a quick overview of larger policy changes in the included countries. For more information about those changes, we point to the individual country notes.

The table 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 2022 Review of Leave Policies? Please note that these are only policy changes enacted in the year *up to April 2022* (whereas there are often significant policy changes close to be enacted or enacted later that year, see, e.g., this year's country note on Spain)?¹ In this 2022 edition of the leave review, **49 countries** are included. Of those, 19 report *some* policy change (while the rest reports continuity across the different types of leave), which seems to indicate *less* activity on leave reform when compared to previous years. Some of the enacted changes are small, others target specific groups, and a few transform the main parameters of national leave systems.

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.

For **Maternity leave**, seven countries report changes; seven for **Paternity leave**; and eight for **Parental leave**. Changes in six countries concern **other statutory leave** measures. Compared to previous years, there is thus no field that stands out as particularly subject to reform (whereas in past years a comparatively strong focus showed on reforming Paternity leave measures).

When it comes to qualifying the changes, a few **measures were newly introduced**. This included the introduction of a new Parental leave scheme as well as a pregnancy leave in Finland, as well as a newly introduced carer’s leave in Greece. Also in Greece, a right to flexible working has been installed.

Regarding the reform of existing measures, **expansionary measures** are most widespread. We see, for instance, an extension of Maternity leave for higher number of children in Cyprus as well as making eligibility criteria less strict in Japan. In a number of countries (including e.g., Cyprus, Czech Republic, Italy), we observe an increase in Paternity leave rights – which indicates a relation to implementation of the respective **EU directive**. Outright **retrenchment** measures are very rare, and rarer than in previous years. Basically, only a reduction of the income limit to receive Parental leave benefits has been reported from Germany, and this concerns very high-income parents (see country note).

Overview of leave policy changes in 2021/22

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
Argentina				✓ Establishment of childcare services in companies with 100+ employees now mandatory
Australia				

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
Austria				
Belgium				
Bosnia and Herzegovina				
Brazil				
Bulgaria	↑ social benefit for non-working mothers		↑ benefit during the second year of leave	
Canada: Quebec only	↑↑ Enhancement of the low-income supplement ↑↑ Additional weeks for single parents	↑ Enhancement of the low-income supplement ↑↑ Additional weeks for single parents	↑ Enhancement of the low-income supplement ↑↑ Additional weeks for single parents	
China				
Chile				
Croatia				
Cyprus	↑ extended for the second child and for the third and any subsequent child	↑ the period in which paternity leave can be taken was extended		
Czech Republic		↑ 14 days		
Denmark	o: turned into parental leave	o: turned into parental leave	o: change in earmarked leave with	

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
			more weeks for father; more flexibility for LGBT+ families	
Estonia	o	o	o	↑
Finland ²	x	x	✓ New scheme	✓ Pregnancy leave o Cash-for-care benefit
France		↑ Increased to 25 working days		
Germany ³			↑ additional leave benefit month for early-born children ↓ income limit reduced for high-earning parents Recalibration of part- time definition	
Greece		o expansion of days	✓ part of leave is paid o extension of the child's age	✓ carer's leave ✓ leave due to force majeure

² Changes valid from 1 August 2022

³ Changes effective as of 1 September 2021.

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
			o obligation of recording the leave	✓ flexible working as a right o greater protection of work rights
Hungary				
Iceland				
Ireland			↑ length of paid leave increased	
Israel				
Italy		o Paternity leave became a stable right (no need to renew it with each budget)		
Japan			↑ Eligibility criteria for parental leave became less strict	
Korea			↑ Parental leave benefit	
Latvia				
Lithuania				
Luxembourg				

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
Malta				
Mexico				
Netherlands				
New Zealand				
Norway				o fathers can apply to take leave at a later stage
Poland				
Portugal				
Romania				
Russian Federation				
Serbia	↑ ceiling; minimum benefit; eligibility criteria			
Slovakia	- o end to need for mothers' formal transfer of care to fathers - ↑ benefit height			
Slovenia				↑ minimum sick leave benefit
South Africa				

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
Spain				-
Sweden				
Switzerland				
United Kingdom				
United States				
Uruguay				

Key:

✓ introduction, x abolishment, ↑ expansion, ↓ cutback, o recalibration