

5. Technical Appendix

What is the International Review?

The International Review provides comparable information on leave policies in participating countries in the form of country notes. Each country note is organised in four sections: Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents; Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy; Changes in policy since the preceding review; and Take-up of leave. Before 2018, the review also included a fifth section on Research and publications.

Types of leave covered are: Maternity leave; Paternity leave; Parental leave; Childcare leave and Career breaks; and Other employment-related measures, including leave to care for sick or disabled relatives. Definitions of each main type of leave are given at <https://www.leavenetwork.org/leave-policies-research/defining-policies/>. Information on each type of leave in country notes is organised using a common format.

In addition, the International Review has a number of comparative tables, enabling comparison to be made between participating countries. The formatting of these tables was revised in 2024, to make them more user-friendly. The 2024 tables are also accompanied by [open-source Excell data](#), making it easier to reuse the data.

Information included in the International Review refers to a common reference date, usually April in the year of publication.

The International Review is published on-line, both as a complete document and disaggregated into individual countries and cross-national tables. An archive of previous reviews, going back to 2005, is also available on-line.

How is the review produced?

Country notes are produced by one or more national experts, usually members of the International Network on Leave Policies and Research. After a country note is initially prepared, the authors are requested to review and update it each year. The International Review is overseen and edited by an editorial group, currently consisting of six network members; each year, one member of the team assumes the role of lead editor.

For each edition of the International Review, countries are allocated between members of the editorial team. Members then contact the national experts for the countries for which they are responsible, asking the experts to review and update the previous year's country note. The editors then review and edit the revised country notes, returning the edited country note to national experts for them to check; editors will also ask experts to clarify any points that are not clear. Once the national experts respond, the country note is considered finalised for the current year. While one member of the editorial team undertakes a copy edit of the whole review before it is published, there is no funding available to permit a thorough copy edit by a professional copy editor.

Responsibility for updating cross-national tables is normally divided between members of the editorial team, so each editor has overview of one or two tables. Editors update the entries in each table for the countries they are responsible for. National experts are also requested, each year, to check their country's entry in the tables and inform the editorial team if they find any errors. For the 2024 revision, most work on these tables was undertaken by the lead editor.

Overall, the International Review depends on the knowledge and experience of the national experts who author and revise country notes. However, **the editorial team always welcome comments from users of the International Review, either raising queries about country notes and comparative tables, or making suggestions about items for inclusion in future editions.**

The International Review does not receive any direct funding although the indirect support from the institutions of contributors is gratefully acknowledged.

How are countries selected for the review?

When the International Review was begun, in 2005, the first countries to be included reflected the membership of the network as it then stood. As the network has gained new members from new countries, so too has the review expanded to include those countries.

The majority of the countries covered by the International Review are European, and in recent years a proactive attempt has been made to include all European Union member states. However, the International Review now also includes many non-European countries. It was recently decided to limit new entrants in any one year to two countries given the extra time that it takes to develop a new country note.

Format and house style

The format of the International Review is decided by the editorial team, in consultation with the network's coordinators and network members. Over time, new items have been included, in response to changing conditions or emerging interests.

The house style conventions, used in editing the International Review, stem from a period of time when the International Review was funded and published by a UK government department. The department requested the review use its 'style guide'. Although no longer funded and published by the department, the editors have mostly continued to use the house style.

Some technical notes

- For presenting financial amounts, e.g. payment to people taking leave, the reference currency used is the Euro. Other national currencies are expressed in Euros based on the exchange rate at a common date shortly before the International Review is published.

- All information about leave policies refers to a common reference date given at the top of each country note, usually April of the year in which the International Review is published. Any changes in leave policies scheduled to be introduced after this date are *not* included in Section 1, which provides information on leave policies at the common reference date; such upcoming changes may, however, be noted in Section 3, on 'Changes in policy'.
- Duration of leave uses a common duration period. If that duration is months but the period of leave in a country is expressed as weeks, weeks are converted to months on the basis of 4.3 weeks=1 month, i.e. 12 weeks would be expressed as 2.8 months.