

Leave policy changes: April 2025

Table 6 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.

Table 6 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 Statutory other leave measures. We do not summarise changes in other policies at this point (e.g., early childhood education and care). Also, for more details, readers should refer to the country notes. For the four “groups” of changes, **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 or a structure of leave rights, we classify it as **recalibration** (o).

Which **types of changes** have been reported in the 2025 Review of Leave Policies? Please note that these are only policy changes enacted in the year *up to April 2025* (whereas there are often significant policy changes that are expected to be enacted later in the year).¹¹ In this 2025 edition of the leave review, **52 countries** are included. Of those, **21 countries report some policy change** (while the rest report continuity across the different types of leave), which seems to indicate a bit lower activity on leave reform when compared to the previous year. In the previous three years, reforms gained on track after comparatively strong stability over the COVID-19 pandemic years when measures often concerned temporary adaptations and support,¹² but also because of the need to align with the EU Work-Life Balance Directive. Some of the enacted changes are small (e.g., adjustments in benefit levels), others target specific groups, and a few transform the main parameters of national leave systems.

¹¹ 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.

¹² For an overview see: Koslowski, A., Blum, S. and Dobrotić, I. (2022) ‘Leave policy in the time of pandemic: new developments and lessons learned’, in Dobrotić, I., Blum, S. and Koslowski, A. (eds.) *Research Handbook on Leave Policy: Parenting and Social Inequalities in a Global Perspective*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp.384-397.

For **Maternity leave**, six countries report changes; nine for Paternity leave; and 16 for Parental leave. Changes in nine countries concern Statutory other leave measures. Compared to previous years (when there was a comparatively strong focus on reforming Paternity and Parental leave measures), now other statutory measures are also subject to reform.

When it comes to qualifying the changes, the focus was on benefit increase or allowing (easier) access to leaves to different groups of parents, and extension of existing leaves (e.g. Norway). Newly introduced changes were rare (e.g. prenatal leave in the UK).

Regarding the form of existing measures, we see – as in previous years – that expansions and recalibrations are most widespread. Outright **retrenchment** measures are rare. In some cases, we see a tightening of eligibility criteria. Additionally, it should be noted that the absence of a policy reform can also mean significant change, namely, if e.g. benefit levels or benefit ceiling levels are not adapted to the significant inflationary losses we have seen in many countries over the past years.

Table 6: Overview of leave policy changes in 2024/25

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Statutory other leave measures
Argentina				
Australia		x merged with Parental leave	↑ expanded duration o recalibration of reserved portion and concurrent leave	
Austria				o eligibility criteria ✓ benefit for substitute carers
Belgium				
Bosnia and Herzegovina				
Brazil				
Bulgaria	o eligibility criteria		o eligibility criteria	↑ increased one-time financial support at birth for uninsured mothers
Canada				
Canada: Quebec				
China ^{2024 data}				
Chile				
Colombia				
Croatia	↑ benefit height	↑ duration of leave	↑ benefit height	

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Statutory other leave measures
Cyprus			o eligibility age up ↑ more weeks for 2nd and 3rd child	✓young mother (under 30 yrs) benefit
Czech Republic				
Denmark				
Estonia				↑ Increase in sick leave days for dependents
Finland				
France				
Germany			↓ Income limit for couples and single parents lowered ↓ Simultaneous receipt of leave benefits now only possible for max. 1 month and within first 12 months of child's life	
Greece			↑ benefit amount due to the minimum wage increase	Special leave for the protection of maternity: ↑ benefit amount ↑ eligibility expansion ↑ time expansion
Hungary				
Iceland			↑ ceiling	
Ireland			↑ increase from 7 to 9 weeks per parent	
Israel				
Italy			✓↑ payment for employees who have completed or ended their maternity or paternity leave after 31 December 2024	↑ <i>working mothers' bonus</i> (extended to temporary workers and self-employed women) ✓ <i>baby bonus</i> of €1,000 per child born or adopted from January 2025 for families with ISEE not exceeding € 40,000 per year ↑ <i>nursery school bonus</i> (for those born from 2024 in households with

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Statutory other leave measures
				ISEE incomes of less than 40,000 euro)
Japan		↑ introduction of an additional benefit type	↑ introduction of additional benefit type	
Korea		o prolongation of leave ↑ prolongation of paid leave	↑ benefit height o prolongation of leave	↑ benefit height
Latvia			↑ benefit payment for working parental benefit recipients	
Lithuania		↑ leave duration (30 days currently) ↑ easier (more inclusive) eligibility criteria	o change in leave variants	↑ benefit payment
Luxembourg				
Malta				
Mexico				
Netherlands				
New Zealand				
Norway			↑ benefit level ↑ leave length ↓ stricter eligibility criteria for flat-rate payment	
Poland	↑ leave length for premature births			
Portugal				
Romania				
Russian Federation				
Serbia				
Slovakia	↑ benefit level	↑ benefit level	↑ benefit level	

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Statutory other leave measures
Slovenia				
South Africa				
Spain	o benefit level for lone parents	o benefit level for lone parents		
Sweden			O Double days 60; transferable days 45; no flat-rate days, no work free days	
Switzerland				
Türkiye				
United Kingdom				✓ neonatal leave ✓ parental bereavement leave
United States				
Uruguay		↑ public sector: option of 20 calendar days instead of 10 working days ↑ private sector: 17 continuous days of leave beginning on day of birth; non-employee: 15 continuous days of leave beginning on day of birth		
Vietnam	↑ covering new groups and types of labour contracts ↑ eligibility for maternity benefits ↑ Maternity benefits	↑ time period for taking postnatal leave extended ↑ eligibility for paternity benefits		

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