

Greece²⁵⁸

Evi Hatzivarnava-Kazassi, Nafsika Moschovakou and Maria Karamessini (Centre for Gender Studies, Panteion University)

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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

Note on leave information. the information given below is based on. (i) leave arrangements for employees in the private sector that are covered by legislation and the National General Collective Agreements (NGCA) signed between the most representative national employers' organisations (SEV, GSEVEE, ESEE, and SETE) and the General Confederation of Labour, which set the uniform minimum provisions for all workers in the private sector²⁵⁹; (ii) leave arrangements for public sector employees that are covered by basic laws and the Code for Civil Servants and relevant legislation.

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²⁵⁹ Provisions for leave arrangements are also included in other kinds of Collective Labour Agreements (i.e., sectoral, professional, and enterprise), which are signed between employers and confederations of large sub-sectors of the economy (e.g., the banking sector) or enterprises of the wider public sector (e.g., the electricity company). Due to the fact that such agreements cannot include worse provisions than the minimum standards included in the National General Collective Agreement, they usually have improved provisions for working parents.

i. Private sector (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security)

a. Maternity leave (basic leave – *Άδεια Μητρότητας*; special leave for the protection of maternity – *Ειδική Άδεια για την Προστασία της Μητρότητας*)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- **Basic leave.** 17 weeks, 8 weeks before the birth and 9 weeks after the birth.
- It is obligatory to take all the basic leave.
- **Special leave.** 9 months, granted after basic Maternity leave and before the beginning of the Childcare leave (if the latter is taken as reduced daily hours of work).
- Working women cannot be dismissed during pregnancy and for 18 months after birth. This also holds for working women in same-sex couples who bear and give birth to a child.

Payment, funding and taxation

- **Basic leave.** 100 per cent of earnings, paid by the e-EFKA, on the condition that these do not exceed those granted to insured persons who belong to the highest insurance class of e-EFKA (the National Social Security Agency, where all employees working under private law contracts are insured (former IKA-ETAM). However, if the amount of salary/wage exceeds this upper limit, the employee can claim a supplementary benefit that is equal to the difference between the employee's salary and the basic benefit received by e-EFKA. The supplementary benefit is granted by DYPA, the Public Employment Service which is, *inter alia*, the social insurance fund for income protection against unemployment.

Mothers are entitled to a 50 per cent reduction of their insurance contributions for the 12 months that follow the birth month or the 12 months following the maternity benefit irrespective of whether they work or are on leave during this period.

- **Special leave.** minimum daily wage as defined by law, as well as social insurance coverage. It is funded by DYPA (Public Employment Service).
- **Basic leave.** payments are taxed. **Special leave.** payments are not taxed.
- Maternity leave (both **basic** and **special**) is fully insured and gives entitlement to full pension rights.

Flexibility in use

- **Basic leave.** None, except for when leave can start. If the birth takes place before the time envisaged, the rest of the leave can be granted after the birth, as long as the total time taken remains at 17 weeks.

- **Special leave.** if the parent uses Childcare leave as a continuous time off work, then the special leave is taken after the Childcare leave. If not, the leave is taken after the basic Maternity leave.

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

- **Basic leave.** to ensure full compensation, 200 working days during the previous two years, irrespective of whether on a fixed-term or permanent contract (or citizenship). Mothers acquiring children through surrogacy are also entitled to receive the post-natal part of the leave. Mothers adopting a child up to eight years of age are also entitled to receive the post-natal part of the leave. Parents in same-sex couples have to declare which parent will make use of the leave.
- **Special leave.** all categories of employees or self-employed, as well as farmers. Mothers acquiring children through surrogacy as well as adoptive mothers of children up to eight years old are also entitled to this benefit. Mothers can transfer up to 7 months of their leave to fathers, irrespective of the employment status of fathers. Parents in same-sex couples declare who will make use of the leave. The parent making use of the leave in same-sex couples can transfer up to seven months to the other parent.
- Self-employed women, who are directly insured in the Social Security Fund for the Self-Employed (OAEE now e-EFKA) and the United Fund for the Self-Employed (ETAA now e-EFKA), and fully covered for medical and pharmaceutical care at the time of the child's birth, are entitled to get a monthly payment for nine months. The monthly pay is equivalent to the minimum wage (€830). Consequently, the total annual amount of the benefit is €7,470. Self-employed surrogate mothers, mothers acquiring children through surrogacy, and mothers that adopt children up to two years of age are also entitled to receive this benefit.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- **Special leave.** Mothers have the right to transfer up to 7 months of Maternity leave to fathers.

Regional or local variation in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- None reported.

b. Paternity leave (Άδεια πατρότητας)

Length of leave

- 14 working days.
- Working fathers cannot be dismissed for six months after birth. In same sex couples, the parents declare to their employers who will make use of the protection.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 100 per cent of earnings.
- Funded by the employer.
- Payments are taxed.

Flexibility in use

- 2 days can be granted before the date of expected birth and the rest should be granted fully or partially within 30 days after birth.

Eligibility

- There are no length of service conditions or conditions related to the conjugal or family circumstances of the working father
- In cases of adoption or foster care, the Paternity leave is granted for children up to eight years old after the placement of the child in the family.
- Same-sex fathers are entitled to this leave but they must declare who will make use of the 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 mother

- None.

Regional or local variation in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- None reported.

c. Parental leave (Γονική Άδεια)

Length of leave

- 4 months per child for each parent.
- Leave is an individual non-transferable right.

Payment, funding and taxation

- Minimum wage level for the first 2 months.
- The leave is considered as real time service. The paid part of the leave is fully insured. The non-paid part of the leave can be fully insured too but in this case the employee pays both the employee and employer contributions.
- Funded as for Maternity leave.

Flexibility in use

- Leave may be taken up to the time that the child turns 8 years.
- Leave may be taken in one or several periods of time or as daily reduced hours or as days of leave distributed weekly or monthly, subject to the agreement of the employer who, in case of disagreement with the time suggested by the employee, needs to explain in writing the reason of his/her disagreement. In any case, the employer needs to provide the leave within two months from the submission of the request.

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

- All employees who have completed 1 year's continuous or consecutive fixed-term contracts with the same employer.
- Though the leave is for each child, it is necessary that 1 year of work with the same employer is completed after the end of any Parental leave taken for a previous child.
- Adoptive and foster parents receive the leave from the time that the child is placed in the family.

Regional or local variation in leave policy

- None.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- Parents with multiple births can receive the benefit for an additional 2 months, irrespectively of the number of children born together.
- Parents who are single due to the death of the other parent or total removal of custody or non-recognition of the child by the other parent are entitled to the receive double Parental leave (time and benefit).

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Leave is granted by the employer according to a set of priorities. requests for Parental leave from parents of children with a disability, with long-term illness or sudden illness and from single parents (due to the death of parent, total removal of parental responsibility, or non-recognition of the child) and mothers who have taken their basic and special Maternity leave are dealt with as an absolute priority. Also, priority is given to parents whose child is hospitalised or ill or whose spouse or close relative is seriously ill as well as parents of multiple or premature births. So, though the employer cannot refuse Parental leave, he/she can negotiate with the employee to take it later if other employees who request leave at the same time meet the priority criteria.

d. Childcare leave (*άδεια φροντίδας τέκνου*) or career breaks

- A working parent, even if his/her spouse is not working, is entitled to a childcare leave that may be taken as. (i) 2 hours less per day for the first 12 months and 1 hour less per day for another 6 months; (ii) full working days that are distributed on a weekly basis; (iii) a period or equal periods of time during the 30 months after Maternity leave. This last option means that a parent can take a number of months off work, up to an estimated 3.6 months or (iv) any other way that the two parties agree. The leave is a family entitlement and is fully compensated. Working parents have an independent right to the use of this leave, after deciding who and for how long each will take the leave.
- This leave is considered part of working time, so is paid and funded by the employer with no upper limit on payment and no reclaiming provision for the employer.
- Adoptive and foster parents are also entitled to this leave from the time the child enters the family.

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- *See above.*

Time off for the care of dependants

- **Carer's leave.** Each working person that has completed 6 months of continuous work or work with consecutive fixed-term contracts is entitled to an unpaid carer's leave up to 5 days in a year for the care of a person who lives in the same household that needs such care due to a serious medical reason.
- **Absence due to reasons of *force majeure*.** Up to twice a year and up to 1 day each time a working parent or carer is entitled to a paid leave for reasons of *force majeure* for urgent family reasons related to illness or an accident.
- **Leave for children's sickness.** Up to 6 working days per year per parent of unpaid leave if the parent has one child; up to 8 working days if they have

two children; and up to 10 working days if they have three or more children. Children should be under 16 years of age or older if they need special care. The leave is also granted for other dependent members of the family (e.g., a disabled spouse, as well as disabled parents or unmarried siblings who cannot care for themselves and the worker cares for them if their annual income is less than the basic income of an unskilled worker).

- **Leave for visiting children's school.** up to 4 working days' paid leave per year per parent for each child that attends school up to the age of 18, funded by the employer. This is a family leave and can be taken by one parent or shared between them.
- **Leave for parents of children with a disability.** one hour per day, if the parent asks for it (unpaid and only applied in businesses with more than 50 employees).
- **Leave for parents whose children, irrespective of their age, need regular transfusion or dialysis or a transplant or have cancer, significant learning difficulties, Down's syndrome, or autism.** 10 working days' paid leave per year, funded by the employer. This is an individual right.
- **Leave for parents due to the hospitalisation** of a child, irrespective of his/her age, which requires their immediate presence. up to 30 working days' unpaid leave per year. This is an individual right.
- **Leave for working parents who are single** due to the death of their spouse or because are unmarried and have the exclusive care of the child up to the age of 12 years. in addition to other leaves, six working days' paid leave per year. If the parent has 3 or more children, the leave is eight working days per year. The leave payment is funded by the employer.
- **Leave for grieving parents.** Working parents, unconditionally, can obtain a 20-day paid leave in the case of the death of their child

Specific provision for (breast) feeding

- None

Flexible working

- Each working parent of a child up to 12 years of age or a carer is entitled, for caring reasons, to ask for flexible working arrangements such as telework, flexible daily work schedule and or part-time work. To claim such arrangements the working parent or carer must have completed six months of continuous work or consecutive fixed-term work contracts with the same employer. The employer should document the reason for possible rejection or postponement of the request.

Antenatal appointments and care

- Pregnant women who need to attend prenatal examinations during their working time are excused from work in order to attend such medical appointments.
- Women are entitled to 7 paid working days for such medically assisted reproduction treatment.

Other provisions

- None reported.

ii. Public sector (responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior)²⁶⁰

a. Maternity leave (Άδεια Μητρότητας)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 5 months. 2 months before the birth and three months after the birth.
- It is obligatory to take all the leave.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 100 per cent of earnings, with no upper limit on payment.
- Maternity leave is fully insured and gives entitlement to full pension rights.
- Payments are taxed.
- Funded through general taxation.

Flexibility in use

- If the birth takes place before the time expected, the rest of the leave can be granted after the birth, so long as the total time taken remains at 5 months. If the birth takes place after the time expected, the leave is extended until the actual birth date, without any respective reduction in the post-natal leave.

Eligibility

- There are no conditions linked to the length of service.
- Mothers that adopt a child up to 8 years or that obtain a child through surrogacy are also entitled to receive the post-natal part of the leave.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- In the case of multiple births, Maternity leave after the birth is extended by 1 month for each additional child.
- For every child after the third, the length of post-natal leave is extended by 2 months.

²⁶⁰ The leave entitlements described in this section cover civil servants, employees of public entities, and local government, as well as any other employee in the above bodies not covered by special regulations.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- None reported.

b. Paternity leave (Άδεια Πατρότητας)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 14 working days. 2 days can be granted before the date of expected birth and the rest should be granted fully or partially within 30 days after birth.

Payment, funding and taxation

- 100 per cent of earnings.
- Payments are taxed.
- Funded through general taxation.

Flexibility in use

- None.

Eligibility

- There are no conditions linked to the length of service or conditions related to the conjugal or family circumstances of the employee.
- In cases of adoption or foster care, Paternity leave is granted for children up to 8 years after the placement of the child in the family.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the father

- None.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- None reported.

c. Parental leave (Γονική άδεια)

Length of leave

- 5 years per parent.
- Leave is an individual non-transferable entitlement.

Payment, funding and taxation

- Minimum wage level for the first 2 months for employees with one or two children (see below provisions for special categories of parents).
- Funded by general taxation.
- For each child, 4 months of the Parental leave are considered as real time service for pension or other purposes.

Flexibility in use

Leave may be taken at any time until the child turns 8 years.

- Leave may be taken in one period or several periods of time or as daily reduced hours.

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

- There are no conditions linked to the length of service.
- An employee can use this leave if his/her spouse does not make use of the childcare leave or flexible working arrangements at the same time
- An employee can make use of this leave irrespectively of the employment situation of his/her spouse.
- In cases of separation, divorce, widowhood, or birth without marriage, only the parent that cares for the child is entitled to this leave.
- Adoptive and foster parents receive the leave from the time that the child is placed in the family.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the parents

- In the case of three or more children, 3 months of the leave are fully paid.
- Employees with twins or triplets or multiple births can receive the Parental leave for each child and can, in addition to the 2 paid months, receive the benefit for 2 extra months irrespective of the number of children in multiple births.
- Parents that are single due to the death of the other parent or total removal of parental custody or non-recognition by the child by the other parent can receive a double leave, i.e., for both length and payment.
- Priority in the granting of the leave is given to special categories of parents such as disabled parents or with a disabled child or a child with long-term or sudden illness, parents with many children, single parents as defined above and mothers following their Maternity leave. Priority is also given to parents due to the hospitalisation or illness of the child or due to disability or serious

illness of the husband/wife, partner or relative, to parents of twins, triplets or multiple births as well as to parents following premature birth.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements; employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- None reported.

d. Childcare leave (Άδεια φροντίδας τέκνου) or career breaks

- A parent can use this fully paid leave in two ways. (i) in a single continuous period of 9 months or (ii) as reduced hours of daily work, that is, 2 hours less per day until the child turns 2 years and 1 hour less if the child is between 2 and 4 years.
- The leave is paid by the employer, funded through general taxation, and is granted after the Maternity leave. The leave does not constitute a personal entitlement and can be used by either or both parents within the total 9 month period.
- For a parent who is unmarried, widowed, divorced, or has a severe disability, the leave is extended by one month if it is taken as one continuous period or by 6 months if it is taken as reduced daily hours of work. In the case of multiple births, an extra 6 months is provided for each child if it is taken as reduced daily hours of work; in the case of the birth of a fourth child, flexible working is extended by 2 years.
- Adoptive and foster parents of children up to 4 years also have the right to receive care leave, that is, reduced working hours per day or the 9 months leave unless the time that is left before the child turns 4 years is less than 9 months.

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- Three months fully paid leave is granted to adoptive and foster parents during the first six months of the finalization of the foster or adoption process if the child is younger than eight years. One of these months can be granted before the finalization of the process. Parents that obtain a child through substitute motherhood have the right to a three month fully paid leave immediately after the birth of the child.
- See sections above for other entitlements.

Time off for the care of dependants

- **Leave for children's illness.** up to four working days of paid leave per year if the employee has one or two children; up to seven working days of paid leave per year if the employee has three children; up to ten working days of paid leave per year if the employee has four or more children; and up to

eight working days of paid leave per year if the employee is a single parent. The leave constitutes an individual right. In addition, parents are entitled to one month of unpaid leave in the case of the hospitalisation of their child due to illness or an accident that requires their presence.

- **Leave for visiting children's school.** up to four working days of paid leave for one child, and up to five working days for two or more children. If the children attend different levels of schools, an extra day is granted. The leave is not a personal entitlement. i.e., if both parents work in the public sector, the total number of days is for both parents to share.
- Up to 22 working days of paid leave per year for employees whose **children or spouses need regular transfusion or periodic therapy, or whose children, even if they are adults have a serious intellectual disability or Down's syndrome or Pervasive Developmental Disorder** that prevent them from working. In the case the employee cares for more than one person the leave goes up to 32 days per year. In the case that more than one employee is entitled to this leave (i.e., spouses caring for a child with PDS), the leave can go up to 32 days for both.
- Employees that are not entitled to the above leave and either themselves or his/her child, irrespective of his/her age, has disability classified as being more than 50 per cent that prevents him/her from working are entitled to a special paid leave of six working days annually. In the case the employee cares for more than one person the leave goes up to ten working days annually. In the case that more than one employee is entitled to this leave, the leave can go up to ten days for both.
- Employees who have a spouse or a child that suffers from cancer and is subject to various forms of treatment are entitled to a special leave for the day the treatment takes place and the following day.

Specific provision for (breast) feeding

- None

Flexible working

- Employees can ask for the reduction of their hours of work by up to 50 per cent, with a reduction of their pay, for a period of up to five years. The hours of non-employment are not considered as real time service. For working parents of children up to 8 years the leave does not need an approval of the Service Council.
- Employees with children or spouses with a disability can reduce their working time by one hour per day, with full recompense of pay.

Antenatal appointments and care

- Women are entitled to 7 paid working days for such medically assisted reproduction treatment.

Other provisions

- All of the above provisions for heterosexual working parents, also include same-sex working parents, who have to declare which parent will make use of each provision.

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

There is an entitlement to ECEC at around four years of age. This means that there is no gap between the end of post-natal leave and an entitlement to ECEC for public sector workers, but there is a gap of around two years for workers in the private sector. However, the gap is larger for both groups (almost 2.5 years for the private sector and almost three years for the public sector) if one considers paid leave only.

According to Eurostat statistics, levels of attendance at formal ECEC services for children both under and over three years of age had fallen due to the pandemic. For children above three it fell from 94.1 per cent in 2019 to 86.9 per cent in 2020, 83.4 per cent in 2021 and 80.5 per cent in 2022. However, it went up to 87 per cent in 2023. For children below three it fell from 32.4 per cent in 2019 to 21.5 per cent in 2020 but went up to 32.3 per cent in 2021 to fall again to 29.1 per cent in 2022. In 2023, it remained to more or less at the same level, that is, 29.6 per cent. These percentages fall below the EU average (27 countries), which for children over three attendance was in 2023, 89 per cent, while for children below three it was 37.5 per cent.

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' in the cross-country tables at the front of the review.
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3. Changes in policy since April 2024 (including proposals currently under discussion)

Since 2024, the 'Neighborhood Babysitters' programme is being implemented at a pilot level initially in 61 municipalities. The Programme mainly concerns the babysitting (family day care) of young children aged from 2 to 30 months, with financial support. More specifically, it concerns the financial support mainly to working parents, single parents, foster parents and generally the family horizontally, for the care of their child or children, either within the family home or at the home of an educator-caregiver. Parents who are fully employed receive a voucher worth €500 to cover childcare costs, while part-time workers and unemployed parents receive €300.

From 1 April 2024 (Ministerial Decision 25058/29-03-2024), the minimum monthly and daily wages were increased, which led to an automatic increase of leave payments and other benefits.

In April 2024 a Joint Ministerial Decision (KYA-28843/18-04-2024), following the Law 5078/2023 (art. 151) and the relevant amendments [Law 5089/2024 (art 6.) and Law 5092/2024 (art 56)], defined the procedure and the conditions for the provision of special maternity benefit to self-employed mothers and mothers who are farmers. The Decision was necessary to enforce the Law and the provision of the benefit (since the 19 April 2024). These new regulations resulted in a significant extension of the length of the benefit provision (from 4 to 9 months) and increased its total amount.

In July 2024 a Joint Ministerial Decision (KYA-39686/10-07-2024) was published to introduce the availability of the 9 month special Maternity leave to employees of special categories (journalists, employees of public-owned enterprises (DEKO) and banks), not insured in e-EFKA. As in all other cases concerning mothers, the Decision also allows these categories of mothers to transfer up to 7 months of this leave to fathers (article 151 of the Law 5078/23).

With this extension and the widening of eligible women, a step forward with regard to the equal treatment of mothers working in the private sector was made, though some reservations have been expressed about whether gender inequality in the take-up of leave is reinforced as it is a leave basically for mothers who can grant only a part of it to fathers.

4. Uptake of leave

Statistics provided by the Labour Inspectors' Authority on private sector employees record people on leave by sex; however, there is no information about how many employees are eligible, but do not make use of their entitlement. Furthermore, these statistics are collected under the equal treatment legislation and do not provide any data on the uptake of leaves that apply exclusively to mothers.

In any case, the available data show an overwhelming use by mothers of the fully compensated Childcare leave (see 1d). In 2023, 2.5 per cent of female employees in full-time employment compared to only 0.1 per cent of male employees used this leave.

Generally, data provided by Labour Inspectors' Authority that examine a set of leaves related to equal treatment legislation (childcare leave, Parental leave, leave for visiting children's school, leave for children's sickness, leave for parents of children with a disability, leave for working parents who are single) clearly show gender differences in the use of those leaves and reflect the unequal sharing of childcare responsibilities within the family in Greece. In total, 6 per cent of female employees in full-time employment used at least one of the above-mentioned leaves, compared to 0.7 per cent of male employees.

The recent introduction of an obligation to digitally record leaves may fill the gap in the provision of this kind of data at least for the private sector but the system is still far away from being fully implemented.