

# Hungary<sup>1</sup>

**András Gábos** (TÁRKI Social Research Institute)

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**Note on terminology:** the Hungarian terms for the two elements of the Parental leave arrangements discussed in 1c – GYES and GYED – include the word *gondozás*, that is ‘care’. By contrast, GYET - available for families with at least three children, after the youngest child getting older than three (see 1d) - includes the word *nevelés*, that is ‘upbringing’. The Hungarian terms for these three leave arrangements (1c and 1d) literally refer only to the payment element, although in practice they cover both leave periods and cash benefits (e.g. GYES is *Gyermekgondozást segítő ellátás*, literally ‘allowance to support childcare’<sup>2</sup>). The payment related to Maternity leave, has been re-named as ‘Infant care payment’ (CSED – *Csecsemőgondozási díj*) in 2015.

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

### a. Maternity leave (*csecsemőgondozási díj*, CSED) (responsibility of the Ministry of Human Capacities)

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- 24 weeks: up to four weeks prior birth. Two weeks are obligatory.

*Payment (*csecsemőgondozási díj*) and funding*

- 70 per cent of actual average daily earning, with no ceiling on payments. In cases when there has been previous employment (i.e. the pregnant woman is eligible), but no actual income can be determined on the first day of eligibility (e.g. the pregnant woman is on sick leave for several months, or is self-employed and does not have an actual income), the payment is twice the daily amount of the official minimum wage. In this case, the payment is made by the Treasury, not by the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). CSED is a gross income, being taxed by a 15 percent of PIT, but family tax credit can be applied.
- Funded by the NHIF (National Health Insurance Fund), which is financed through contributions from employers, employees and general taxation; employers and employees both pay six per cent of gross earnings.

<sup>1</sup> Please cite as: Gábos, A. (2017) ‘Hungary country note’, in: Blum S., Koslowski A., and Moss P. (eds.) International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2017. Available at: [http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp\\_and\\_r\\_reports/](http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/)

<sup>2</sup> The name of GYES has been slightly modified (previously *Gyermekgondozási segély*) since 2016, while keeping the acronym.

### *Flexibility in use*

- The starting date can be from four weeks prior to birth up to the birth itself.

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

- All mothers are entitled to 24 weeks unpaid Maternity leave.
- Employees and self-employed women with an employment record of at least 365 days within two years prior to the birth of a child (and the birth is given no later than the 42nd day after the end of employment) are entitled to the benefit payment during the period of Maternity leave.
- Insured mothers having a second or third child while they are already receiving GYES or GYED, the receipt of GYES or GYED rather than their employment record makes them eligible for Maternity 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*

- If the new-born is cared for in an institute for prematurely born infants for a year, the unused portion of the Maternity leave can be taken up after the child is taken home.
- Guardians who care for the child are eligible.
- The father (birth or adoptive) is eligible if the mother dies or is not present in the household due to health-related reasons.

## **b. Paternity leave<sup>3</sup> (responsibility of the Ministry of Human Capacities)**

### *Length of leave*

- Five days.

### *Payment and funding*

- 100 per cent of father's average daily wage, with no ceiling on payments.
- Funding as for Maternity leave.

### *Flexibility in use*

- Leave can be taken during the first two months of the child's life.

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

- All employed fathers.

### *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 father.*

- Seven days in case of twins.

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<sup>3</sup> Paternity leave has no separate name in Hungarian; it is just listed as one of the eligible reasons for leave days in the Code of Labour legislation.

### c. Parental leave (responsibility of the Ministry of National Capacities)

- There are two types of leave and benefit: (1) for non-insured parents, *Gyermekgondozást segítő ellátás* (GYES); and (2) for insured parents, *Gyermekgondozási díj* (GYED). Both are family entitlements.

#### *Length of leave*

- GYES: a) until the child's third birthday for parents who are not insured, or b) from the end of GYED (child's second birthday) until the child's third birthday, for insured parents.
- GYED: from the end of the Maternity leave period until the child's second birthday, for insured parents.

#### *Payment and funding*

- GYES: until the child's third birthday, a flat-rate benefit equal to the amount of the minimum old-age pension, HUF28,500[€92]<sup>4</sup> per month in 2016. For multiple births, 200 per cent of this amount is paid in the case of two children, 300 per cent for three children, with similar increases for additional children. Funded by the Treasury from general taxation.
- GYED: benefit of 70 per cent of average daily earnings calculated for the last 180 days prior the birth, up to a ceiling of 70 per cent of twice the minimum daily wage (HUF127,500[€412] per month in 2017; the amount of the benefit being max. HUF178,500[€577]). This is a gross amount, PIT and pension contribution are deducted, but family tax credit can be applied. Funding as for Maternity leave.

#### *Flexibility in use*

- A parent taking GYES cannot work until the child becomes six months old, but can then work unlimited hours while still receiving the full benefit until the child's third birthday. If the parent takes up GYES and works, she/he can still access public childcare for children under three years (*bölcsőde*).
- A parent taking GYED can work unlimited hours after the child becomes six months old, while still receiving the full benefit until the child's second birthday. If the parent takes up GYED and works, she can still access public childcare for children under three years (*bölcsőde*).

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

- GYES: all parents. Guardians are also eligible.
- GYED: either of the parents living with the child is eligible as long as she/he has been employed for at least 365 days within two years prior the birth of the child; however, only one parent at a time can actually take GYED. Foster parents are not eligible.
- GYED: women who would not be eligible under the above listed criteria but completed two semesters at a higher education institution recognised by the state within two years prior to the birth of the child. In this case, they are eligible for one year of payment, beginning at the birth of the child. They receive a payment equal to the minimum wage valid on the first day of their eligibility (HUF127,500[€412] per month in 2017), except those studying for MA or PhD for whom the payment is 70 per cent of the guaranteed minimum wage (HUF 89,250[€288] per month in 2017).

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<sup>4</sup> Conversion of currency undertaken on 21st June 2017, using: <http://finance.yahoo.com/currency-converter>.

- Self-employed parents are eligible if they fulfil all criteria, e.g. in the case of GYED, that they have been insured before the birth.
- As same-sex couples are neither allowed to marry or adopt, they are not eligible for Parental leave as a couple; if one of the partners has a young child, she or he is eligible in her or his own right, but her or his partner is not.

*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 parents*

- GYES: parents of a child with a long-term illness or disability can take leave until the child's tenth birthday (or even longer in discretionary cases); parents of twins are eligible until the children begin elementary school and receive a double payment.
- GYES: can be taken by grandparents from the first to the third birthday of the child if the child is looked after in her/his own home and if the parents agree to transfer their entitlement. Grandparents taking GYES can work less than 30 hours a week, or without limitation if the work is done in the home and the child is older than three years.
- GYED: The duration of the benefit lasts until the children's third birthday in the case of twins.

#### **d. Childcare leave or career breaks**

Either of the parents in a family with three or more children under 18 years may take leave during the period between the third and eighth birthday of the youngest child (*Gyermeknevelési támogatás*, GYET). Benefit payment as for GYES. The person taking up GYET can work less than 30 hours a week, or unlimited hours if the work is done at home. While GYES and GYED are intended to promote childbirth and support reconciliation between work and childrearing, GYET is considered an acknowledgement of parenthood as paid work and consequently recipients are credited with social insurance contributions.

#### **e. Other employment-related measures**

*Adoption leave and pay*

- The same regulations regarding Maternity and Parental leave apply for adoptive parents as for other parents.

*Time off for the care of dependants*

- *Gyermekápolási táppénz* is part of the sick-pay system, the length of which depends on the age of the child: under one year, unlimited; 12-35 months, up to 84 days per child per year; 36-71 months, 42 days; six to 12 years, 14 days. Lone parents are entitled to a double period of leave. Leave is a family entitlement and a sickness benefit is paid at 50 or 60 per cent of actual earnings up to a ceiling.

*Flexible working*

- Mothers are entitled to two paid one-hour breaks per day for breastfeeding until a child is six months old; and to one one-hour break until a child is nine months old. The number of hours is doubled in the case of twins.

*Specific provision for (breast-)feeding*

- None reported.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Hungary is three years (except for families with three or more children, where leave can be taken until a child is eight years); the last year is paid at a low flat rate, but until a child is two years old, insured parents taking leave are paid at a high earnings-related level. Attendance in ECEC (*óvoda*/kindergarten) from three years of age is compulsory (for at least four hours a day). Children under three years are also entitled to an ECEC service (*bölcsőde*/nursery) place if the parent studies full time or if the child becomes six months old. However, there is a shortage of spaces in Hungary; while legislation is in place, implementation varies. So although, by legislation, there is no gap between the end of Parental leave entitlement and the start of an ECEC entitlement, such a gap exists in practice due to a shortage of places in nurseries. Otherwise there is a one year gap between the end of well-paid leave (GYED) and an entitlement for a kindergarten place for three-years-olds.

Levels of attendance in formal services for children under three years (nurseries and other similar forms of institutional care) are well below the average of OECD countries, but is above average for children over three years (in kindergartens). For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

## 3. Changes in policy since April 2016 (including proposals currently under discussion)

Since January 2017, there have been some changes in the type of ECEC institutions. Former family day carers must decide whether to continue their activity as family day carers, or as so-called mini-nurseries or as formal nurseries. Furthermore, only children under the age of three years can attend these institutions; this change is related to the fact that kindergarten attendance is compulsory from three years of age in Hungary since September 2015. There is an incentive for workplace-related nurseries as well. The government plans an increase in nursery and other similar institutional places from 46,000 to 60,000 by 2020.

## 4. Take-up of leave

### a. Maternity leave

Statistics<sup>5</sup> are available only on the number of women receiving benefits. The average monthly number of mothers was 25,886 in 2015, which is 11.3 recipients per thousand women of fertile age. It is supposed that almost all eligible women take the leave.

### b. Paternity leave

The total number of fathers taking leave during 2014<sup>6</sup> was 21,914, using 109,382 days in total, i.e. most fathers taking leave used their full five-day entitlement.

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<sup>5</sup> All statistics in this section are from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (*Központi Statisztikai Hivatal*) Yearbook of Welfare Statistics (see section 3) and website: [https://www.ksh.hu/epolc/2015/szoc2015/pdf/szocevk\\_2015\\_03.pdf](https://www.ksh.hu/epolc/2015/szoc2015/pdf/szocevk_2015_03.pdf) - last accessed 17 March 2017.

<sup>6</sup> No data for 2015 are available yet.

### **c. Parental leave**

Statistics are available only on the number of recipients of the benefits. The average monthly numbers in 2015 were: for GYES, 163,376, which is 71.4 recipients per thousand women of fertile age; for GYED, 85,970, or 37.6 recipients per thousand women of fertile age; and for GYET, 34,587, or 15.1 recipients per thousand of women of fertile age. There is no information on the proportion of parents taking leave, how long they take or on the number of fathers taking Parental leave. An estimate can be made for 2015 on the basis that 0.3 per cent of children under one year, 11.9 per cent of those between one and two years, and 55.7 per cent of those between two and three years were in childcare centres in 2015, so the remainder probably had a parent (predominantly the mother) taking up one of the Parental leave options.

### **d. Other employment-related measures**

In 2016, the total number of paid leave days to care for a sick child was 1,290,400, which represented 5.7 per cent of all paid sick leave days<sup>7</sup>.

## **5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2016**

Please be aware that this is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all publications or research in this area for this country. If you are aware of a publication or research that could be listed in this section, please contact the country note author(s) so that they can include it for the following year.

### **a. General overview**

Research and publications on leave and employment related policies have been scarce in 2016, as in the previous year.

### **b. Selected recent publications**

Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Hungarian Central Statistical Office] (2016) *Szociális statisztikai évkönyv 2016 [Yearbook of Welfare Statistics, 2016]*. Budapest: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal. Available at: <https://www.ksh.hu/polc>

This yearbook contains detailed data on a wide range of welfare measures and services including: social assistance, family benefits, child welfare provision, child protection, social benefits, basic social care and childcare, social work activities and accommodation, rehabilitative employment, sick pay, retirement allowances and the social and guardianship authority administration in 2015, with a detailed methodology.

### **c. Ongoing research**

*Changing Families and Sustainable Societies: Policy Contexts and Diversity over the Life Course and Across Generations (Families and Societies) (2013-2017)*. Families and Societies Funded by the European Union. Hungarian partner: Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA TK).

The main objectives of this project are to investigate the diversity of family forms, relationships, and life courses in Europe; to assess the compatibility of existing policies with these changes; and to contribute to evidence-based policy-making. The project intends to

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<sup>7</sup> Own calculation based on monthly data published by the Hungarian Statistical Office.

extend the knowledge on how policies promote well-being, inclusion and sustainable societal development among families.