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April 2018

NB. The Latvian country note is included for the first time in the 2018 International Review of Leave Policies & Research.

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 (*grūtniecības un dzemdību atvaļinājums*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Fifty-six (56) days before and 56 days after the birth of a child. No part of the leave is obligatory.

Payment and funding

- For employed women: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions salary that is calculated for a period of 12 calendar months ending two months before the month in which the leave begins;
- for self-employed women: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions made during the period of 12 calendar months ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins;
- The average amount of the Maternity benefit (in total) during the last 12 months was €1,582.84 EUR; the number of recipients was around 2,446 per month.
- The benefit is paid in two parts, the first part is calculated for the 56 days before the due date and the second part is calculated for the 56 days after the actual birth date.

Flexibility in use

- None except for when the leave can be started (not earlier than 56 days before birth);
- The right to the maternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the first part of the leave.

¹ Please cite as: Pīlpa, N. (2018) 'Latvia country note', in Blum, S., Koslowski, A., Macht, A. and Moss, P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2018*. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/

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

- All women who are employed and have paid social insurance contributions for at least 12 months during the last 24 months before the month in which the leave begins;
- All self-employed women;
- All women who are spouses of a self-employed man and who have joined the social insurance system voluntarily;
- For the period after the childbirth – father of a child or any other person who takes care of a newborn at home if:
 - the mother is unable to take care of the child until the 42nd postnatal day due to sickness;
 - the mother has refused to take care of the child;
 - the mother has died during childbirth or before the 42nd postnatal day;
 - the child is a foundling (the child has been abandoned and the mother is unknown).

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 mother

- If the mother has required medical supervision due to the pregnancy no later than at the 12th week of the pregnancy – 14 extra days before the birth of a child are provided;
- In case of multiple birth or complications during pregnancy, childbirth or postpartum period, 14 extra days after the child birth are provided;
- In case employment relations have ended due to the liquidation, leave is provided if the leave has started no later than 210 days after the end of employment relations;
- If the mother is unable to take care for the child until the 42nd postnatal day due to sickness, has refused to take care for the child, has died during childbirth or before the 42nd post-natal day or if the child is a foundling, then 56 or 70 days after the childbirth are provided to the father of a child or any other person who takes care of a child at home.

b. Paternity leave (*atvaļinājums bērna tēvam*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Ten (10) calendar days after childbirth.

Payment and funding

- For employed men: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions salary that is calculated for a period of 12 calendar months ending two months before the month in which the leave begins;
- for self-employed men: 80 per cent of the gross insurance contributions made during the period of 12 calendar months ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins;
- The average amount of the paternity benefit (in total) during the last 12 months was €292.37; the number of receivers was around 925 per month.

Flexibility in use

- None except for when the leave can be started.

- The right to the paternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the leave.

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

- Father of a child during the first two months after the child birth;
- one of the adoptive parents until the child reaches 3 years of age.

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 mother

- None.

c. Parental leave (*bērna kopšanas atvaļinājums*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Eighteen (18) months per parent until the child reaches 8 years of age;
- Leave is an individual entitlement, but only one parent may receive payment (for a maximum period of 18 months).

Payment and funding

- There are three separate benefits that are paid after the birth of a child: parental benefit, child birth benefit and child care allowance.

Parental benefit:

- only parents who are participants of the social security system are entitled to the benefit
- if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches one year of age: 60 per cent of the gross insurance contributions salary calculating it for a period of 12 calendar months ending two months before the month in which the leave begins
- if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches 18 months of age: 43.75 per cent of the gross insurance contributions salary calculating it for a period of 12 calendar months ending two months before the month in which the leave begins
- funded as for the maternity and paternity leave
- average amount of the parental benefit during the last 12 months was €368.09 per month; the number of receivers was around 25,395 per month, mostly women.

Child birth benefit:

- paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child if the child has been taken under the guardianship until one year of age
- the benefit is a lump sum allowance of €421.17 for each child
- the right to the child birth benefit starts on the eight day of child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted and ends six months after it.

Child care allowance:

- paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child if the child has been taken under the guardianship
- the benefit is 171 EUR per month for each child until a child reaches 18 months of

- age and 42.69 EUR per month for each child until a child reaches 24 months of age
 - the right to the child care allowance starts on the first day of child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted and ends six months after it.
- Unemployed parents who have not received maternity, parental or child care allowance are entitled to receive the child care benefit of 171 EUR per month for each child until a child reaches 18 months of age and 42.69 EUR per month for each child until a child reaches 24 months of age.
- Additionally one of the parents, guardian or one of the adoptive parents are entitled to receive the family state benefit:
 - The amount of the family state benefit is €11.38 per month for the first child; €22.76 per month for the second child; 34.14 EUR per months for the third child and €50.07 per month for the fourth and any next child. The benefit is paid after the child reaches one year of age until 15 years of age or 20 years of age if a child continues the studies and has not been married. The benefit is paid directly to the child after he or she reaches 18 years of age if prior to that the child has been under guardianship;
 - Families with two or more children are entitled to additional benefit: €10 per month for families with two children; €66 per month for families with three children; €116 per month for families with four children; €166 per month for families with five children; €216 per month for families with six children, etc. When calculating the number of children deceased children; children for whom the family state benefit is received by other parent; children older than 20 years of age; children younger than 20 years of age but haven't continued the studies after 15 years of age; children younger than one year of age; are not counted;
 - Families with disabled children or children diagnosed with celiac are entitled to additional benefit: €106.72 per month for each child with disability or celiac.
- Additionally one of the parents, a guardian or one of the adoptive parents are entitled to receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child, which is €213.43 per month for each child with disability until child reaches 18 years of age.

Flexibility in use

- Both parents are entitled to 18 months of the leave until a child reaches eight years of age;
- Only one of the parents can receive the parental benefit.

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

- One of the parents of a child;
- one of the adoptive parents of a child;
- child's foster family member;
- child's guardian or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court.

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 mother

- None except those mentioned above.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- Adoptive parents are entitled to Paternity and Parental leave. Payment and funding is provided on the same grounds as for biological parents.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Parents who have joined the social insurance system (employed, self-employed or parents whose spouse is self-employed) are entitled to sickness leave and benefit for a child up to 14 years of age for 14 days if a child has been taken care of at home or up to 21 days if a child has been placed in hospital;
- grandparents, foster parents, guardian or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphan's court are also entitled to sickness leave and benefit;
- the sickness benefit is calculated the same as the Maternity and Paternity benefits.

Flexible working

- Pregnant women, women in post-natal period up to one year after the child birth, parents who have a child up to 14 years of age or up to 18 years of age if a child has a disability and breastfeeding women during the period of breastfeeding are entitled to part-time work with the right to return to full-time work pattern when a person requires so;
- pregnant women are entitled to leave the work place for a doctor's appointment if needed;
- parents who have a child up to 18 years of age are entitled to temporary absence in case of sickness of a child or an accident, as well as for a doctor's appointment if needed;
- parents who have a child up to three years of age or 18 years of age if a child has a disability as a priority group are entitled to annual leave during the Summer months;
- parents who have one or two children up to 14 years of age are entitled to additional annual leave – one working day (paid);
- parents who have three or more children up to 16 years of age or up to 18 years of age if a child has a disability are entitled to additional annual leave – three working days (paid).

Specific provision for (breast)-feeding

- Parents (both mothers and fathers) with a child up to 18 months of age are entitled to additional break for feeding a child – at least 30 minutes every three hours or 60 minutes every three hours if a parent has more than one child up to 18 months of age. Upon the request, parents are entitled to combine the breaks thus prolonging lunch break or shortening working hours.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Latvia is three years, but only half of this is paid, at a low earnings-related level. According to the Law on Education, Art. 17 municipalities are responsible for ensuring that all children from 18 months that have been

registered in their area receive ECEC in the institution that is closest to the child's home; a child can also attend an ECEC institution in another municipality and receive the same financial support as those children who attend an institution in the municipality of their place of residence. Unfortunately, there are no municipalities that can offer a place in a municipal ECEC institution for all children; for instance, in September 2017 there were around 1000 1.5 to 4 years-olds who did not receive a place in a municipal ECEC institution.

Since the take-up of Parental leave is mostly until a child reaches 18 months of age, municipalities provide financial support for fees in private ECEC institutions if no place is available in a municipal service when a child reaches 18 months of age. The amount of the allowance is decided by calculating the average expenses for one child per month in a municipal ECEC institution. For instance, in 2018 Riga municipality's allowance is €231.00 which covers around 60 to 70 per cent of the actual costs. In some municipalities, parents who choose to employ a nanny are entitled to a municipal allowance; the allowance is usually provided for children who are at least 18 months of age until a place in a municipal ECEC institution is available. The amount of this allowance differs in each municipality. In 2018, only 19 out of 119 municipalities provided such support, and the amounts vary from €43.00 per month in Vecumnieki municipality (one of the 70 smallest municipalities) to €116.00 per month in Riga municipality and €188.00 per month in Mārupe municipality (one of the 30 largest municipalities).

Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are below the average for the countries included in this review and OECD countries; but above the average for children over three years. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

3. Changes in policy since May 2017 (including proposals currently under discussion)

There have been no major changes in recent years, except for the additional allowance for families with two or more children that was introduced in 2018. In the light of the proposal for the directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU, the Ministry of Welfare is planning to perform an in-depth analysis of the possibility to extend the Paternity leave from ten calendar days to ten working days in 2019. Also, an analysis of the gender equality policy from the men's rights perspective is planned in 2020. Such analysis could give a better perspective on ways to promote the up-take of Parental leave among men, hence promoting equal sharing of household and family responsibilities.

4. Take-up of leave

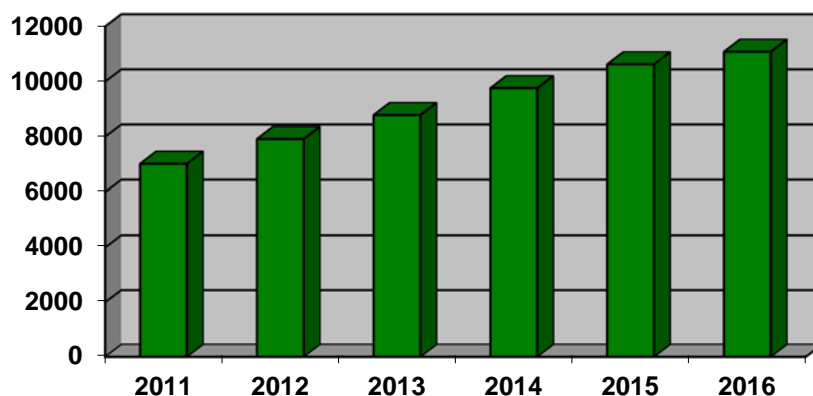
Data on take-up are from the State Social Insurance Agency and the data on the average salaries are from the Central Statistical Bureau.

a. Maternity leave

One hundred (100) per cent of employed women take Maternity leave.

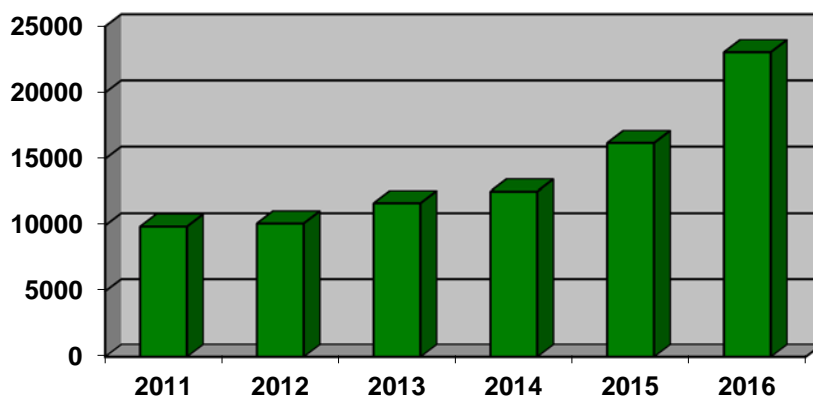
b. Paternity leave

Paternity leave was introduced in 2002, and since then the take-up has risen on average by 800 persons every year.



c. Parental leave

The take-up of Parental leave during the last four years has almost doubled. Most of the parents taking this leave are women (80 per cent of the total number in 2016). However, more and more men are filing requests for the parental benefits: in 2013 only seven per cent of the total number of Parental leave benefit recipients were men, rising to 19 per cent in 2015 and 20 per cent in 2016.



Most of the working parents who received parental benefits were men (89 per cent in 2015, 81 per cent in 2016). The most likely reason is the gender pay gap: in 2016 the average salary for men was €1,150 compared with €807.30 for women.

d. Other employment-related measures

No data available.

5. Research and publications on leave and other employment-related policies since April 2017

a. General overview

To the best of my knowledge, no state- or privately-funded research and publications have been launched during recent years.

b. Selected recent publications

None reported.

c. Ongoing research

None reported.