

Lithuania¹

Ruta Braziene (Lithuanian Social Research Centre, Institute of Labour and Social Research) Social Research Centre, Institute of Labour and Social Research)

April 2018

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 (*nėštumo ir gimdymo, motinystės atostogos*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour) *ir gimdymo, motinystės atostogos*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Eighteen (18) weeks (126 calendar days; 70 calendar days before child birth and 56 calendar days afterwards).

Payment and funding

- One hundred (100) per cent of previous net earnings. Since 2017, a ceiling is no longer applied.
- Funded from the Social Insurance Fund, which is funded by contributions from employers and employees. Self-employed people are obliged to pay social insurance contributions. Women taking Maternity leave receive pension credits to maintain their pension rights.

Flexibility in use

- None

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

- All employed mothers who have paid at least 12 months of social insurance contributions during the last 24 months are eligible for Maternity

¹ Please cite as Braziene, R. (2018) 'Lithuania 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/

leave. Self-employed women qualify for maternity benefit on the same conditions as employees.

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

- In case of multiple or premature births or complicated baby delivery, 14 extra days are provided.

b. Paternity leave (*térvystés atostogos*) (responsibility of Ministry of Social Security and Labour)*atostogos*) (responsibility of Ministry of Social Security and Labour)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- One month (28 days) within the three months immediately following childbirth.

Payment and funding

- One hundred (100) per cent of previous net earnings. A ceiling of €1,617.40 is applied.

Flexibility in use

- None.

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

- Fathers who have at least 12 months of social insurance during the last 24 months.
- Same-sex couples are not eligible.

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.

c. Parental leave (*vaiko priežiūros atostogos*) (responsibility of Ministry of Social Security and Labour)*priežiūros atostogos*) (responsibility of Ministry of Social Security and Labour)

Length of leave

- Until the child is three years of age. Leave is a family entitlement and can be shared between parents.

Payment and funding

- Parents can choose between two options:
 - One hundred (100) per cent of net earnings until the child is 12 months. A ceiling of €1,617.40 is applied;

- 70 per cent of net earnings until the child is 12 months, with a ceiling of €1,132.18; and 40 per cent of net earnings until the child is 24 months. With a ceiling of €646.98.
- The remaining period of leave until the child is three years of age is unpaid.

Flexibility in use

- Parents can work whilst on leave/collecting parental benefit. But, if parents choose to receive 100 per cent of net earnings until the child is 12 months and start to work, the benefit is reduced by the amount of income they have received; if parents choose to receive 70 per cent of net earnings until the child is 12 months and 40 per cent of net earnings until the child is 24 months and parents start to work during the first year, the benefit is reduced by the amount of income they have received; during the second year the benefit is not reduced.

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

- Parents are eligible for parental benefit if they have paid social insurance taxes at least for 12 months during the last 24 months; as social insurance is compulsory for all workers, self-employed workers are eligible.
- Same-sex couples are not eligible.

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

- In the case of multiple births, the parental benefit increases according to the number of children, but not exceeding a ceiling of 2 average wages in the National Economy, currently €1,600-1,700.
- Grandfather, grandmother or any actual caregiver of a child (if parents do not use leave themselves) is eligible for Parental leave, but not for parental benefit.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- If a person adopts or takes foster care of new-born baby, she/he is entitled to Maternity leave from the moment of adoption up to the child is seventy days of age. Maternity benefit is paid on the same grounds as to biological mother. Adoptive parents or foster caregivers have the same rights to Parental leave and benefit as biological parents.

Time off for the care of dependants

- An employee with a child under 14 years of age can take two weeks of unpaid leave per year.

Flexible working

- The availability of flexible working time arrangements has increased with the entering into force of the new Labour Code (2017). It introduces new types of employment agreements and has brought flexibility to labour relations. The new Labour Code also describes different flexible working time arrangements, e.g. more flexibility in employment contracts (project-based, job-sharing employment contracts, and employment contracts for several employers, apprenticeship and seasonal employment contracts), salary, employment termination, etc. Concerning flexibility, individual arrangements can be requested (though there is not obligation for an employer to agree: e.g. flexible work schedule, individual working regime, overtime, and summary working time.

Specific provision for (breast-)feeding

- According to the Law on Safety and Health at Work (2017), for the breast-feeding women, in addition to the general breaks to rest and eat in at least every three hours can be given a half-hour break for breastfeeding. Under the mother's request the breaks for breastfeeding may be joined and used for shortening of the working day. Breaks for breastfeeding are covered by the worker's average wage.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave available in Lithuania is three years, but only the first year is paid at a high earnings-related rate; if the option for a second year of paid leave is taken, the second year is paid at a low earnings-related rate. There is no entitlement to ECEC at any age. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are below the average for OECD countries, but about 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 are was some discussion about abolition of Paternity and Parental leave payment ceilings. There is was also a discussion of introducing a shared Parental leave between mothers and fathers, of which some amount must be taken by fathers.

4. Take-up of leave

a. Maternity leave

According to the information provided by the Social Insurance Fund Board (SODRA), 100 per cent of employed women take up their full entitlement to Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

No information.

c. Parental leave

According to the information provided by the Social Insurance Fund Board (SODRA) 2018, 78 per cent of women and 22 per cent of men took Parental leave in 2017.

d. Other employment-related measures

No information.

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

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

The low fertility rate in Lithuania is regarded as a threat to national security. Therefore demographic research was included among the tasks of the National Research Programme *Social Challenges to the National Security* by the Research Council of Lithuania. In the framework of this programme in 2010-2013 several research projects were completed or are being implemented, for example, *Gender inequality, public policy and the future of fertility in Lithuania* and *Fertility and family changes: factors, consequences, and possibilities to increase fertility*.is regarded as a threat to national security. Therefore demographic research was included among the tasks of the National Research Programme *Social Challenges to the National Security* by the Research Council of Lithuania. In the framework of this programme in 2010-2013 several research projects were completed or are being implemented, for example, *Gender inequality, public policy and the future of fertility in Lithuania* and *Fertility and family changes: factors, consequences, and possibilities to increase fertility*.

b. Selected recent publications

Kurowska, A. (2017) 'The impact of an unconditional parental benefit on employment of mothers: A comparative study of Estonia and Lithuania', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol.37, No.1/2: 33-50.

The purpose of this paper is to solve the puzzle of the disproportionately lower employment rate of mothers of toddlers with relation to the employment rate of mothers of preschool and school-age children in Estonia. The research is based on the Most Similar System Design and compares Estonia with Lithuania. The applied methods include inferential statistics and microsimulation techniques, employing the OECD Benefits and Wages Calculator, the OECD Family Support Calculator and EUROMOD – the European tax-benefit microsimulation model. The comparison revealed that the overwhelming majority of the crucial aspects of

socio-cultural, economic and institutional conditions were more favourable for maternal employment in Estonia than in Lithuania. This explains the higher maternal employment rates both for mothers of pre-schoolers and school-age children in Estonia. However, one particular element of the institutional context targeted to the mothers of toddlers – the unconditional parental benefit – had an entirely opposite character. This particular feature of the parental leave scheme was the only factor that could explain why the employment rate of mothers of toddlers is disproportionately lower than the employment rate of mothers of older children in Estonia and much lower than the employment of mothers of toddlers in Lithuania. This study complements previous research by providing evidence on the relative importance of universal parental benefit schemes in the context of other country-specific conditions for maternal employment, including the availability of institutional childcare. Furthermore, the results presented show that childcare regime typologies, at least those that characterise Eastern European countries, should be more sensitive to children's age.

Vysniauskiene, S. and Braziene, R. (2017) 'Evaluation of Family Friendly Policy in Lithuania', *Public Policy and Administration*, Vol.16, No.3: 455-467. Available at: DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5755/j01>

Purpose of this article is to disclose the effectiveness of family friendly policy implementation based on the attitudes of the parents with juvenile children, attitudes of experts in family friendly policy. The research goals are the following: 1) to describe the concepts family and family friendly policy; 2) to characterize support for family in the context of the welfare states regimes; 3) to analyse family social support system in Lithuania; 4) to prepare qualitative research methodology; 5) to carry interviews with parents with young children and experts on family friendly policy; 6) to present conclusions and recommendations for the improvement family and working life reconciliation. The research results revealed that there are no considerable differences in both parents and expert's attitudes towards family friendly policy in Lithuania. Both tend to criticize Lithuanian family friendly policy and indicate more disadvantages than advantages. The results indicated, that due to attitudes expressed by the informants, State should ensure adequate benefits and other social assistance means for families with young children; improve existing maternity, paternity and parental leave schemes, the legal basis; to increase public attention and subsidies to young families by helping to purchase real property; to establish more free future parents education centres.

c. Ongoing research

Information on ongoing research is not available.