

Slovak Republic¹

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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

a. Maternity leave (*materská dovolenka*) (responsibility of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Thirty-four (34) weeks: six to eight weeks of pre-natal leave; and 26 to 28 weeks of post-natal leave.

Payment (applied for the whole period of Maternity leave) and funding

- Seventy-five (75) per cent of daily earnings calculated based on the previous year. There is a ceiling of two times the national average monthly wage². If maternity benefit is lower than parental allowance (see 1c below), then an additional payment is made to cover the difference.
- Payment is made from sickness insurance contributions, collected by the Social Insurance Agency and by employers and employees (each of whom pay 1.4 per cent of earnings). Self-employed workers pay 4.4 per cent of declared earnings.

Flexibility in use

- Leave can start from six to eight weeks before birth.
- Mothers can choose the beginning of Maternity leave, within the limits defined by the law.
- Fathers can claim maternity benefit, based on the mother's agreement (provided that the mother doesn't receive maternity benefit or parental allowance). In order to claim this maternity benefit, fathers have to care for the child personally and to pay a sickness insurance for a total of 270 days in the previous two years. During this time, they are not allowed to work. In this case, maternity benefit is

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² The average wage in 2017 was €954.

paid, after at least a period of six weeks from the birth. Fathers can take a leave for maximum of 28 weeks.

- If the mother decides to go back to work, in order for the father to claim her maternity benefit, he has to be personally be at home with the child and care for the baby. The aim of this stipulation is to prevent the father to take maternity benefit (which would be higher as men get higher wages on average) and continue working.
- If the mother dies, fathers can still claim maternity benefits.
- There is no provision for same sex parents to share leave.

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

- To be eligible for maternity benefit, an employee must have contributed to sickness insurance for at least 270 days, during the two years before the birth. The same applies to self-employed persons and insured persons in the voluntary sector.

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

- Maternity leave is extended to 37 weeks for single mothers and 43 weeks in the case of multiple births.
- In the case of foster carers, there are 28 weeks (31 weeks for single persons, 37 weeks for persons caring for at least two new-born children).
- In the case of a stillbirth, the mother is granted a maximum of 14 weeks of Maternity leave.

b. Paternity leave

- No statutory entitlement.
- There is an option for the father to take maternity benefit as part of the provision for Maternity leave, after six weeks from the birth of the baby (see 1a).

c. Parental leave (*rodičovská dovolenka*) (responsibility of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family)

Length of leave

- Until the child reaches three years.
- If the child has a long-term health problem or disability, the age limit increases to six years.
- Leave is a family entitlement, which only one parent may use.

Payment and funding

- A Parental allowance (*rodičovský príspevok*) of €214.70 per month is available to all families who meet the eligibility condition whether they take Parental leave;
- Parental allowance is funded from general taxation. The period of caring for a child (up to the age of six years, when compulsory education begins) is covered by pension contributions, which are paid by the state.

Flexibility in use

- Parents can work full time or part time while receiving parental benefit.
- Only one parent is entitled to Parental allowance.

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

- The parents have to be permanent or temporary residents in the Slovak Republic in order to be eligible.
- Parental allowance is provided from the birth of the child, if parents are not eligible for maternity benefit.
- The parental allowance is not provided to parents if their older child (up to three years or older child up to six years if s/he has a long-term health problem or disability) has been removed from their personal care. In such cases, the Local Office of the Labour, Social Affairs and Family provides an allowance to a foster parent for that child.

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

- Parental leave and Parental allowance can continue until a child is 6 years old if the child has a long-term health problem or disability.
- Parental allowance is increased by 25 per cent per child in the case of multiple births.
- Parental allowance is reduced by 50 per cent, if any older child under parental responsibility displays absenteeism from compulsory education.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- For adoptive parents the same regulations for Parental leave apply as for other parents.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Employees can take ten days of leave per episode either to care for a sick relative at home (including a sick child) or to take care of a child under the age of ten years for other reasons, e.g. if the child's school is closed. They receive an earnings-related benefit (*ošetrovné*) paid at a 55 per cent of the assessment base for a maximum of ten calendar days. There is no limit to the numbers of episodes tolerated, as long as these do not exceed the maximum number of 10 days per year.

Flexible working

- None relating to Leave provision.

Specific provision for (breast-)feeding

- None.

Other measures

- A Childcare allowance (*Príspevok na starostlivosť o dieťa*) is available to cover some of the costs of childcare. It is provided to one of the parents (or foster parents) if they work or take part in secondary or tertiary education. The allowance is provided in three forms. The first is where childcare is provided by official providers, where it is paid up to the level of officially declared costs, with a ceiling of €280 per month. The second is where childcare is provided by other persons or relatives where it is paid at the level of €41.10 per month, without the need to declare childcare costs. The third one is where childcare is provided by the kindergarten, established by municipality or local administrative authority, which is included in the official network of schools and school facilities. It is paid at the maximum level of €80. The allowance is paid up to the age of three years (or six years in the case of a child with a long-term health problem or disability).

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

Slovakia belongs to the OECD countries with the lowest employment rate for mothers. ECEC services in Slovakia favour older children, with the highest enrolment rates among four and five-year-old children. This reflects the upper age limit for Parental leave, but also a shortage of places in kindergartens; with limited capacity, kindergartens prefer older children who should be in the process of preparation for compulsory education. At the moment, massive investments into ECEC services for young children, based mainly on EU funds, are implemented. The maximum period of paid post-natal leave available in Slovakia is three years, but this is paid at a low earnings-related level or at a flat rate. There is no entitlement to ECEC during this three-year period. Levels of attendance at formal services for children under three years are very low, well below the average for the countries included in this review and for OECD countries; levels of attendance for children over three years are much higher, but still below both averages. For actual attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

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

New amendments to the Act on Social Services No. 448/2008 have been made to improve conditions in child-care facilities for very young children (less than three-years-old), coming into effect on 1 January 2018. While originally the Act defined this type of childcare provided by state facilities, as a tool to support work-life balance and restricted access only to working parents, since 2018, child-care facilities for children under three years can be used also by unemployed parents. The condition is that there are available places that cannot be used by parents reconciling family and work responsibilities. The newly amended Act defines an obligation for providers to join a register of social services providers and it re-defines qualification requirements for staff. In addition, the level of some family benefits has been increased, but to a very limited extent.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family has declared a significant increase in social benefits for disabled persons and their (informal) caregivers. Since July 2017, the government will increase the amounts of Nursing allowance (*príspevok na opatrovanie*), paid to persons who care for long-term dependent relatives, as well as a Personal assistance allowance, paid to severely disabled persons dependent on personal assistance.

4. Take-up of leave

a. Maternity leave

Nearly all mothers take Maternity leave as it is obligatory. The number of fathers accessing maternity benefits has increased. In March 2017, 1,767 men receive maternity benefit and they represent seven per cent per cent of all recipients. Compared to previous year, the number has increased by 837 fathers. Newer data are not available.

b. Paternity leave

There is no statutory leave entitlement.

c. Parental leave

There is no information on Parental leave use. Parental leave allowance is paid to all families. The number of men receiving Parental allowance is persistently low.

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

Recently, policy-oriented research on child raising, work-life balance, supply and use of pre-school institutional care, has been undertaken in particular by the Institute for Labour and Family Research, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Relevant research has been conducted at the Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Science, as well as at the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Philosophy of Comenius University in Bratislava within the international research project *International Social Survey Programme* (ISSP). Important contributions to the study of population attitudes toward family, care, gender equality and related issues were published by the non-governmental Institute of Public Affairs.

b. Selected recent publications

Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family (2017) *Report on the Social Situation of the Population in Slovak Republic for 2016*. Available at: <https://www.employment.gov.sk/files/slovensky/ministerstvo/analyticke-centrum/report-on-social-situation-2016.pdf>

c. Ongoing research

The Institute for Labour and Family Research represents one of the most important actors in the field of family policy research. Currently, the Institute implements several research projects aimed at reconciling work and family life, gender equality, as well as quality of social services.

The Institute for Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Science has implemented the *European Value Survey*, which includes questions on population attitudes towards family, family behaviour and aspiration, work-life balance preferences, division of labour within households and other family-policy related issues. Up till now, some preliminary, partial information have been published, and a book is under preparation. For more details contact: Zuzana Kusa at Zuzana.Kusa@savba.sk.