

Latvia¹

Natālija Pīlpa (Ministry of Welfare of the Republic of Latvia)

April 2020

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)

- 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 previous earnings calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid 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 the 12 calendar months ending one quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins.
- The average amount of the maternity benefit (in total) in 2019 was €1,821.36 and the number of recipients was around 2,293 per month.
- The benefit is paid in two parts: the first part is calculated for the 56 days (or 70 days) before the due date and the second part is

¹ Please cite as: Pīlpa, N. (2020) 'Latvia country note,' in in Koslowski, A., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Kaufman, G. and Moss, P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2020*. Available at: http://www.leavenetwork.org/lp_and_r_reports/.

- calculated for the 56 days (or 70 days) after the actual birth date.
- Funded from social insurance.
- Maternity benefit is not taxable.

Flexibility in use

- None, except for when the leave can be started (not earlier than 56 days before birth). The leave days that were not used before the birth, cannot be used after the birth, i.e. the post-natal leave period cannot exceed 56 days.

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

- All women who are (self-)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 women who are spouses of a self-employed man and who have joined the social insurance system voluntarily.
- In a case where employment has ended due to the company's liquidation, leave is provided if the leave has started no later than 210 days after the end of employment.
- All women who have lost the status of (self-)employed no later than 60 days before the first day of Maternity leave.
- For the period after the childbirth – father of a child or any other person who takes care of a new-born at home and fulfils the social insurance criteria is entitled to paid Maternity leave of 56 or 70 days if:
 - the mother is unable to take care of the child until the 42nd post-natal day due to sickness;
 - the mother has refused to take care of the child;
 - the mother has died during childbirth or before the 42nd post-natal day;
 - the child is a foundling (the child has been abandoned, and the mother is unknown).
- The right to the maternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the first part of the leave (if the eligible person fails to apply until the end of that period, the right cannot be exercised).

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 mother has required medical supervision due to the pregnancy (no later than at the 12th week of the pregnancy) – 14 extra days of leave before the birth of a child are provided.
- In the case of multiple births or complications during pregnancy, childbirth, or the postpartum period, 14 extra days of leave after

the birth are provided.

- In the case of premature birth, the maternity benefit is paid in the same amount as it would be if the birth would take place at the due date.

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

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 10 calendar days after childbirth.
- The leave has to be requested no later than two months after childbirth; the benefit has to be requested no later than six months after the first day of the leave.

Payment and funding

- For employed men: 80 per cent of previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid 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) in 2019 was €337.73 and the number of recipients was around 920 per month.
- Funded from social insurance budget.

Flexibility in use

- None, except for when the leave can be started.
- The leave can be divided into parts as agreed with the employer.

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

- The father of a child if the paternity leave is granted no later than the first two months after the birth.
- The same insurance period eligibility criteria needed as for Maternity leave.
- One of the adoptive parents until the child reaches three years of age or one of the adoptive parents if the family has adopted a child from three to eighteen years of age if a court decision to adoption has entered into force on 1 September 2019 or later.
- The right to the paternity benefit ends six months from the first day of the Paternity leave.
- No specific regulation regarding same-sex couples (i.e., the right

to the leave and thus the benefit is attached to any father who falls under the eligibility criteria mentioned above).

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

- None.

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

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 18 months per parent until the child reaches eight 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 insurance system are eligible.
- Parents can choose between two options: 1) if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches one year of age, the parental benefit is 60 per cent of the previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins; 2) if a parent chooses to receive the benefit until a child reaches 18 months of age, the parental benefit is 43.75 per cent of the previous earnings, calculated based on the average salary on which insurance contributions have been paid for a period of 12 calendar months, ending two months before the month in which the leave begins.
- Funded in the same way as for Maternity and Paternity leave.
- The average amount and receivers of the parental benefit in 2019 was €607.24 per month for parents who chose to receive the benefit until a child reaches one year of age (number of recipients: around 2,254 per month, 42.1 per cent of which men) and €408.20 for parents who chose to receive the benefit until a child reaches 18 months of age (number of

- recipients: around 19,492, 15.4 per cent of which men).
- The amount of parental benefit is reduced to 30 per cent of the benefit granted, if the beneficiary discontinues Parental leave in order to resume working.

Child birth benefit

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child, if the child has been taken under guardianship until they reach one year of age.
- The benefit is a lump sum allowance of €421.17 for each child and it is available to all parents (also the parents not paying social insurance).
- The right to the child birth benefit starts on day eight of child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted, and ends six months later.

Child care allowance

- Paid to one of the parents or the legal guardian of a child if the child has been taken under guardianship, or one of the adoptive parents, or a foster parent.
- The benefit is €171 per month for each child, until a child reaches 18 months of age and then €42.69 per month for each child, until a child reaches 24 months of age.
- The application for the child care allowance should be submitted within the six months since the first day of child's life or the day the guardianship has been granted.
- Parents who are not participants of the social contribution system and have not received maternity, parental, or child care allowance are entitled to receive the child care benefit of €171 per month for each child until a child reaches 18 months of age, and then €42.69 per month for each child until a child reaches 24 months of age.
- Additionally, one of the parents, guardians, or 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 per month for the third child; and €50.07 per month for the fourth and any other children. The benefit is paid after the child reaches one year of age until they turn 15 years of age (or 20 years of age if a child continues their studies and has not been married). The benefit is paid directly to the child after they reach 18 years of age, if prior to that they have 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, and so on. When calculating the number of children in the family, the following children are not counted: children for whom the family state benefit is received by the other parent; children older than 20 years of age; children younger than 20 years of age but have not continued their studies after they turned 15 years of age; children younger than one year of age.

- Families with disabled children or children diagnosed with coeliac disease are entitled to additional benefit: €106.72 per month for each child with a disability or coeliac disease.
- 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: €313.43 per month for each child with a disability, until the child reaches 18 years of age and €79.68 once every six months if the State Medical Commission for the Assessment of Health Condition and Working Ability has issued a conclusion on the necessity for a specially fitted vehicle (car) until the 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. It can be taken in several blocks.
- The leave can be used simultaneously by both parents, but only one parent can receive the benefit. Recipient is allowed to transfer the right to benefit to the other parent, if needed. Also, it is allowed to work and receive the benefit, however in those cases the amount of the benefit is reduced (see above).
- Only one of the parents can receive the parental benefit for the period of 12 or 18 months. Parents are entitled to transfer the benefit right to one another.

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

- Only parents who are participants of the social insurance system (see Maternity leave).
- One of the parents (adoptive or biological) of the 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.
- Women who are not (self-)employed at the date when the benefit is requested but were (self-)employed no later than 60 days before the first day of the Maternity leave, or 210 days before the first day of the Maternity leave in case of company's liquidation, or have lost the (self-)employment status during the 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 mother

- A guardian, foster parent or adoptive parent has the right to request a change in the length of parental benefit if the biological parent has had already used the right to parental benefit (only a remaining leave can be used).
- If the next child is born before the previous has reached three years of age, the parental benefit cannot be smaller than the benefit a parent received for the previous child.

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 are 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 sickness benefit for a child up to 14 years of age: 14 days per sickness episode if a child has been taken care of at home, or up to 21 days if a child has been admitted to hospital;
- Parents whose child have been diagnosed with a severe illness and for whom the consilium has issued a respective decision; or parents who receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child if a long-term hospital treatment is needed are entitled to sickness benefit for a period up to 26 weeks in case of a continuous sickness or for no longer than three years in five years period in case of various sickness episodes.
- Grandparents, foster parents, guardian, or any other person who takes care of a child according to the decision of an orphans' court are also entitled to sickness benefit;
- The sickness benefit is calculated in the same way as the maternity and paternity benefits, and is taxable.

Flexible working

- Pregnant women, women in the post-natal period up to one year after the 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 breast-feeding women are entitled to part-time work with the right to return to a full-time work pattern when they need to do so.
- Pregnant women are entitled to leave the work place for a doctor's appointment.
- Parents who have a child up to 18 years of age are entitled to temporary absence in the case of the sickness of a child or an accident, as well as for a doctor's appointment.
- Parents who have a child up to three years of age (or 18 years of age if a child has a disability) are entitled to annual leave during the summer months as a priority group.
- 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 a paid additional break for feeding their 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 request, parents are entitled to combine these breaks, thus prolonging a lunch break or shortening their 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, Article 17, municipalities are responsible for ensuring that all children from 18 months of age 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 2019, there were around 7,500 children from the ages of one and a half to four who did not receive a place in a municipal ECEC institution.

Since the uptake 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 allowance is decided by calculating the average expenses for one child per month in a municipal ECEC institution. For instance, in 2020, Riga's municipal allowance is €246.19 per month, 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 allowance amount offered differs in each municipality. In 2019, only one fifth of all municipalities provided such support, and the amounts vary from €80.00 per month in Ogre municipality to €116.00 per month in Riga municipality, and €199.93 per month in Tukums municipality (both being one of the 10 largest municipalities).

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

3. Changes in policy since April 2019 (including proposals currently under discussion)

There have been a few smaller changes related to leave eligibility and flexibility. Since 1 January 2020 eligibility to Maternity and Parental leave was extended to parents in cases: (1) where employment has ended due to the company's liquidation – leave is provided if the leave has started no later than 210 days after the end of employment, and (2) where the (self-)employment status was lost no later than 60 days before the first day of the Maternity leave. A guardian, foster parent or adoptive parent has the right to request a change in the length of parental benefit if the biological parent has had already used the right to parental benefit. Parental leave benefit become guaranteed in the case of the next childbirth, i.e. if the next child is born before the previous has reached three years of age, the Parental benefit cannot be smaller than the benefit the parent received for the previous child. Parents whose child have been diagnosed with a severe illness and for whom the consilium has issued a respective decision; or parents who receive the allowance for the care of a disabled child if a long-term hospital treatment is needed become entitled to sickness benefit for a period up to 26 weeks in case of a continuous sickness or for no longer than three years in five years period in case of various sickness episodes.

As of 1 September 2020 a person will be entitled to Maternity benefit, if

compulsory contributions for maternity insurance will be made (or had been made) in the Republic of Latvia for at least 3 months in the period of the last 6 months before the month in which the right to Maternity benefit start (the first day of Maternity leave), or for at least 6 months in the last 24 months.

Policy response to the Covid-19 pandemic up to end June 2020

Childcare and schools

- Since 13 March 2020, all schools were closed, and teaching was organised remotely for all students. The school year ended as planned for all grades and was not prolonged. The final exams for 9th-grade students (last year of the primary school) were cancelled. The final exams for 12th-grade students (last year of the high-school) took place as planned with the exception of one final exam that was postponed from March to June;
- Since 13 March 2020, in order for a child to attend a preschool, the parent or other legal guardian was obliged to provide a written statement in which they confirm that neither parents nor a child: 1) has recently (within a two-week period) been to countries listed as the Covid-19 risk countries (since 14 March 2020 – any country); 2) has been in contact with a person diagnosed with the Covid-19 (or anyone who has been in contact with a person diagnosed with the Covid-19) and 3) parents have no other childcare alternative than preschool. The work in preschools since then has been organised in forms of combined groups with a maximum of 13 children per group. As of 31 March 2020, such statement had to be provided once a week (before that – for every day when a child attended preschool). Since 12 May 2020, the requirement to provide a statement is no longer active;
- Since 12 May 2020, preschool re-opened to parents who have no other childcare alternative; however, no written statement is needed, and parents are encouraged to evaluate the risks by themselves. Preschools are allowed to organise compulsory training in person for those pre-schoolers that are planning to enrol primary education in September 2020 (six or five-year-old children). Upon parents request, the training is organised remotely.

Parental leave

- A parent whose Parental benefit ended on 12 March 2020 or later is entitled to benefit period extension up to 9th June 2020 if s/he is employed or self-employed and currently does not have any income and does not receive a lockdown allowance. The benefit is paid at the same amount but not more than €700 per month;
- The childcare allowance for a parent who receives the allowance

for a child aged 18 to 24 months has increased from €42.69 to €171. The increased allowance is calculated and paid for the period from 12 March 2020 to 9 June 2020.

Other measures for parents and other carers

- Employers have been encouraged to organise remote work or provide flexible working hours in order to reduce physical contact. According to the Law on the activities of the state institutions during the emergency situation related to the Covid-19 infection, state institutions were obliged to organise flexible working regime (remote work, shifts or use of other methods to reduce physical contact between employees). On 10 June 2020, the Covid-19 infection spread management law came into force according to which state institutions continued to organise their work remotely as long as it does not restrict rights and freedoms of individuals and does not create an administrative burden. Private sector organises their work as needed;
- Employees (including self-employed) and employers were entitled to lockdown allowance that was paid for those who did not receive any income from their economic activity in the period between 12 March and 30 June 2020. There are several additional criteria to receive this allowance linked to company's profit reduction, etc. The lockdown allowance was 75 per cent of the average gross monthly salary in the six months before the first day of the emergency situation up to a maximum of €700 per month. In the case of micro-enterprise, the lockdown allowance was 50 per cent of the average gross monthly salary for the third and fourth quarter of 2019 up to a maximum of €700 per month. If a person is granted personal income tax reduction for a child up to 24 years of age, an additional allowance is paid amounting €50 (for every child);
- Those who were not eligible to receive lockdown allowance were entitled to lockdown support allowance that is €180 per month plus €50 for every child that is under the persons' care. Also, those who received lockdown allowance that was less than €180 per month were entitled to lockdown support allowance. The allowance amount, in this case, was the difference between the lockdown allowance and €180;
- Municipalities organised warm lunches for elementary school students living in poverty or families with three or more children, and if the finances allocated to the municipality allowed, also for primary school students living in poverty or families with three or more children.

4. Uptake of leave

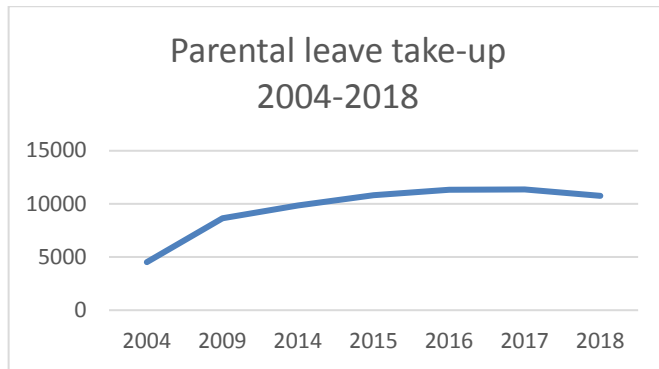
Data on uptake are from the State Social Insurance Agency and the data on the average salaries are from the Central Statistical Bureau.

a. Maternity leave

100 per cent of pregnant employed women take Maternity leave.

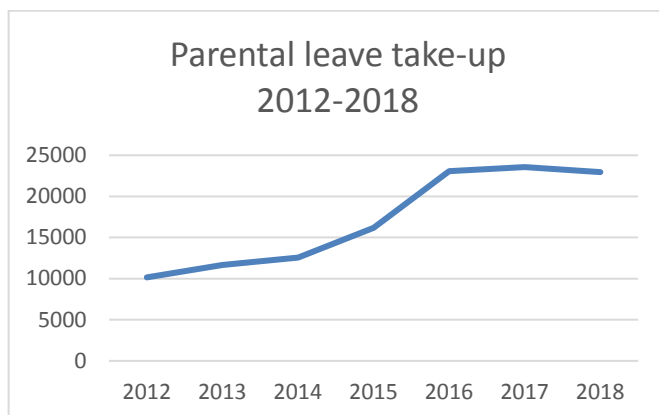
b. Paternity leave

Paternity leave and benefit was introduced in 2002, and since then the uptake has risen every year (over the last five years, 200 more people on average take Paternity leave each year).²



c. Parental leave

The uptake of Parental leave during the last four years has almost doubled. Most of the parents taking this leave are women (81.6 per cent of the total number in 2018).



² Hereinafter data source: State Social Insurance Agency, 2020.

Most of the working parents who received parental benefits were men (82.4 per cent in 2016, 79.7 per cent in 2017, and 80.2 per cent in 2018).

d. Other employment-related measures

No information available.