

# Slovenia<sup>1</sup>

**Nada Stropnik** (Institute for Economic Research, Slovenia)

April 2021

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 (*materinski dopust*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)**

*Length of leave (before and after birth)*

- 105 calendar days (15 weeks): four weeks (28 days) before the birth and 11 weeks following the birth. It is obligatory to take 15 days of leave.

*Payment and funding*

- 100 per cent of average monthly earnings (or other base on which Parental leave contributions were paid) during the 12 months prior to the leave. The last of these 12 months is defined as the penultimate one before the month of the first application for leave. Not all income on which the contributions were paid is counted into the basic income (e.g. in-work benefits and other income received in addition to basic earnings). If the contributions were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, €543.29 (gross) a month is factored in for the missing period. There is no upper limit, and the minimum is €543.29.
- Women who are not insured at the time when the leave starts, but who have been insured for at least 12 months in the last three

---

<sup>1</sup> Please cite as: Stropnik, N. (2021) 'Slovenia country note', in Koslowski, A., Blum, S., Dobrotić, I., Kaufman, G., and Moss, P. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2021*. Available at: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/review-2021/>

years before the start of Maternity leave, receive the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€543.29) that is increased by €20 (gross) per each month of insurance, but by no more than €340 (gross).

- The parent (or adoptive parent or foster parent) who was taking care of a child in its first year – i.e. the person who was receiving parental earnings compensation – receives pension credits for child-rearing.<sup>2</sup> Funded partly from Parental Protection Insurance that forms part of Social Security Insurance. Contributions to Parental Protection Insurance are 0.1 per cent of gross earnings for employees and the same for employers. However, over 90 per cent of the total financing of the Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave earnings compensations is financed from the central government budget.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Flexibility in use*

- The part unused before the birth may be claimed after childbirth if the birth took place before the envisaged date.

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

- The person must be covered by Parental Protection Insurance (which is part of social security) just prior to the first day of the leave. This insurance covers persons on employment contracts (both permanent and fixed-term, either full-time or part-time); the self-employed (including persons performing agricultural activities); and temporary agency workers. For the unemployed, see the 'payment and funding' section.
- The person who is not insured at the time of exercising the right to salary compensation, but who has been insured for at least 12 months during the last three years, is eligible for earnings compensation (and not for the 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*

- Leave (77 days or fewer) can be delegated to the father or another person who nurses and cares for a child if the mother

---

<sup>2</sup> For the impact of these pension credits on the gender pension gap, see: Kump, N. and Stropnik, N. (2020) *Results of the standard simulations for Slovenia, Project MIGAPE* (Mind the gap in pensions), Ljubljana: Institute for Economic Research. Available at:

[http://www.migape.eu/pubs/WP2\\_SIE\\_Report\\_20200422.pdf](http://www.migape.eu/pubs/WP2_SIE_Report_20200422.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> 92 per cent, according to MISSOC – Mutual Information System on Social Protection (update as of 1 July 2019). Available at: <https://www.missoc.org/>.

dies, abandons the child, or is not able to nurse and care for the child (medical certificate is needed).

- The father or one of the grandparents is also entitled to Maternity leave with the mother's (and father's) consent, in cases where the mother who gives birth to the child is younger than 18 years of age and has the status of an apprentice, a pupil, or a student. In that case, Maternity leave lasts 77 days minus the age of the child (in days) when the father or the grandparent commences Maternity leave.

#### **b. Paternity leave (*očetovski dopust*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)**

##### *Length of leave*

- 30 calendar days.

##### *Payment and funding*

- 100 per cent of average monthly earnings (or other base on which Parental Protection Insurance contributions were paid) during the 12 months prior to the leave, up to a ceiling of 2.5 times the average salary in Slovenia [€3,664.30 per month]. Not all income on which Parental leave contributions were paid is counted towards the basic earnings (e.g. in-work benefits and other income received in addition to basic earnings). If the contributions were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, €543.29 (gross) per month is factored in for the missing period.
- The parent (or adoptive parent or foster parent) who was taking care of a child in its first year – i.e. the person who was receiving parental earnings compensation – receives pension credits for child-rearing.
- Funding is the same as for Maternity leave.

##### *Flexibility in use*

- Paternity leave may be taken as full-time or part-time leave. The duration of leave does not change, if taken part-time.
- At least 15 days of leave may be taken up to one month following the end of Parental leave. Up to 15 days of the total of 30 days of Paternity leave may be taken until the child completes the first year of primary school.

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

- As for Maternity leave.
- The father is not entitled to Paternity leave if: there was a stillbirth; he was legally deprived of his parental right or prohibited from contacting the child; if, according to the Centre for Social Work's opinion, he has evidently shown no intention to care for the child or is otherwise neglecting his parental responsibilities; or if he is not able to nurse and care for the child (medical certificate is needed).

*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*

- Paternity leave (normally 30 calendar days) is extended by an additional ten days for each additional child in the case of 1) multiple live births, or 2) adoption of multiple children born from 1 January 2020 on, if the children have not yet completed the first grade of primary school. These additional days may be taken until the child completes the first year of primary school.
- If the father does not use Paternity leave, the following persons are entitled to it: mother's husband or co-habiting partner; partner of either sex in the registered same-sex partnership; and other persons who are nursing and taking care of the child. The same applies to the spouse, co-habiting partner, or partner in the registered same-sex partnership of the person using Maternity leave.

**c. Parental leave (*starševski dopust*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities)**

*Length of leave*

- 130 calendar days per parent. Leave is an individual entitlement.

*Payment and funding*

- As for Paternity leave (see 1b).
- For persons not insured at the time the leave starts, but who have been insured for at least 12 months in the last three years before exercising the right to salary compensation (Maternity, Paternity, or Parental, whichever is taken first), see 1a.
- The parent (or adoptive parent or foster parent) who was taking care of a child in its first year – i.e. the person who was receiving

parental earnings compensation – receives pension credits for child-rearing.

- Funding as for Maternity leave.

#### *Flexibility in use*

- The mother may transfer 100 days of her entitlement to the father (30 days are the mother's exclusive right), while the father may transfer all 130 days of his Parental leave to the mother.
- The parents must agree upon the use of Parental leave, in writing, 30 days prior to the expiry of Maternity leave. If the parents cannot reach an agreement, or their decision is not to the benefit of the child, the Centre for Social Work decides on this matter by considering the best interests of the child.
- Separated parents have the same rights as those living together.
- The Parental leave and earnings compensation are the rights of biological, adoptive and foster parents. If the same-sex partner has not adopted the child, he/she is not eligible. In that case, the biological parent is entitled to the whole of the parental leave and the respective earnings compensation.
- At least 185 days must be taken as a continuous full-time or part-time leave: in the case of part-time leave being taken, the duration of leave is not extended proportionately. Up to 75 days may be taken at any time until the child completes the first grade of elementary school (full-time or part-time), but not more than twice a year, with each section lasting at least 15 days.
- Parents can combine Parental leave (20 hours per week for the mother, 20 hours per week for the father) and take it at the same time.
- In rare cases, where the father is unknown and his entitlement cannot be transferred to the mother, a single mother is entitled to all 260 days of Parental leave.

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

- As 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 parents*

- In the case of a premature birth, the leave is prolonged by as many days as the pregnancy was shortened.
- In the case of multiple births or adoption of multiple children, Parental leave is extended by 90 days for each additional child. It is also extended by 90 days in the case of the birth of a child in need of special care.

- Leave is extended by 30 days if parents already have at least two children who have not yet completed the first grade of primary school; by 60 days if they have three such children; and by 90 days if they have four or more such children.
- Additional leave for premature or multiple births, or if parents have two or more younger children, is a family entitlement (i.e. the parents must decide which of them will take the leave).
- A person other than a parent who nurses and cares for the child is entitled to Parental leave, reduced by the number of days the parents have already used.
- If the mother is below 18 years of age and is an apprentice, pupil, or student, one of the grandparents (who is insured for Parental leave) may take the leave with the parents' consent.
- Adoptive parents have the same entitlements to Parental leave as other parents (see section 3). The leave should start no later than 15 days from the placement of the child into the family for the purpose of adoption or the adoption itself. It may be used until the child has completed the first grade of primary school.
- There are 30 days of Parental leave in the case of the adoption of a child who has completed the first grade of primary school and is below 15 years of age.
- Foster parents are eligible for 30 days of Parental leave for a foster child for which they cannot take regular Parental leave any more, but who has not yet completed the first grade of primary school. The leave should start no later than 15 days after the placement of the child into foster care.

*Parental benefit for persons who are not eligible for insurance-based leave and earnings compensation*

- Parents who are not eligible for insurance-based Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave and earnings compensation, are entitled to flat-rate parental benefit. Both the parent and the child must have permanent or temporary residence status and reside in Slovenia. The benefit amounts to €402.18 net per month and is received for 365 days from the birth of a child (longer in the cases of multiple or premature births, or the birth of a child in need of special care). The mother is entitled to parental benefit for the first 77 days after the birth of the child. The father is entitled in this period only if the mother abandons the child, is not able to nurse and care for the child (medical certificate is needed), or dies. After 77 days, parental benefit is the right of one of the parents and is used according to their written agreement. Another person nursing and caring for the child, as well as fulfilling the same conditions as the parent, is entitled to the parental benefit, too – namely for 365 days minus the number of days the parents have already used. While receiving the parental benefit, the parent is covered by the pension and disability insurance.

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

No statutory entitlement.

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

##### *Time off for the care of dependants*

- An insured person is entitled to take leave to care for an immediate co-resident family member who is ill (spouse and children, biological or adopted). Generally, seven working days of leave may be taken for each episode of illness per family – however, 15 working days may be taken for a child of up to seven years of age or a child who is moderately, severely, or very severely mentally and physically disabled. In exceptional cases, if required due to the health condition of the sick family member, the period may be extended to 14 and 30 working days respectively, or longer in extreme cases (up to six months).
- Leave is paid at 80 per cent of the individual's average earnings in the preceding calendar year. It cannot be lower than the guaranteed wage [approximately €238] or higher than the wage which the person would receive if they were working.

##### *Flexible working*

- A parent who is taking care of a child below three years of age (or 18 years of age if the child has a severe physical disability, or a moderate or severe mental disability), or at least two children, the younger of whom has not yet completed the first grade of elementary school<sup>4</sup>, has the right to work part-time. The hours worked must be equal to or longer than half of full-time working hours. For hours not worked, social security contributions<sup>5</sup> based on the proportional part of the average monthly earnings during the previous 12 months<sup>6</sup> – but not less than the proportional part of the minimum wage and not more than the proportional part of 2.5 times the national average salary – are paid.

##### *Specific provision for (breast)feeding*

- Breastfeeding mothers who work full-time have the right to a break during working time lasting no less than one hour per day,

---

<sup>4</sup> In this case, one year of the entitlement is a non-transferrable right for each of the parents.

<sup>5</sup> Social security contributions include pension credits.

<sup>6</sup> This basis is defined in 1a above.

until their child is 18 months of age. Payment is made for one hour per day, based on the proportional part of the basis defined in section 1.a (which cannot be more than the proportional part of 2.5 times the national average salary).

#### *Other*

- A parent leaving the labour market in order to take care of four or more children – and who has been insured for Parental leave or has been an active job searcher for at least 12 months in the last three years – is entitled to have social security contributions (based on the minimum wage) paid from the state budget, until the youngest child completes the first grade of primary school.

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

The maximum period of post-natal leave is 12.2 months, paid at a high rate. There is an entitlement to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) from the end of Parental leave, available on a full-time basis in centres. There is no gap, therefore, between the end of well-paid leave and an ECEC entitlement.

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

## **3. Changes in policy since April 2020 (including proposals currently under discussion)**

On 1 January 2021, some of the Amendments to the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (adopted in December 2019) became effective, including:

- The minimum Maternity/Paternity/Parental leave salary compensation (previously set at 55 per cent of the minimum wage) and the parental benefit (a flat-rate payment received by parents who are not eligible for the Maternity/Parental leave salary compensation, previously amounting to €258.09) were raised to the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€543.29 gross, or €402.18 net) for children born from 1 January 2021 on.
- If the contributions for parental insurance were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€543.29; previously 55 per cent of the minimum wage) is factored in for the missing period.

- The persons not insured at the time when the leave starts, but who have been insured for at least 12 months in the last three years before exercising the right to salary compensation, receive the (hypothetical gross) amount of basic minimum income (€543.29) that is increased by €20 (gross) per each month of insurance, but by no more than €340 (gross).

On 1 January 2021, the Amendment to the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act, adopted in October 2020, became effective, too. The basis for the social security contributions payment for a parent who is taking care of a child below three years of age (or at least two children, one of whom has not yet completed the first grade of elementary school) and thus working part-time (see Section 1.e) has changed to the proportional part of earnings in the previous 12 months. The basis cannot be less than the proportional part of the minimum wage and not more than 2.5 the national average salary. The same basis is used for the proportional payment of time for breastfeeding.

## **Policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic to end of April 2021**

### *Childcare and schools*

- For ECEC and school closures during spring/summer 2020, see the Slovenian country note 2020.
- As of autumn 2020, only emergency ECEC services<sup>7</sup> were provided from 26 October 2020 to 25 January 2021. The facilities re-opened for all children in some regions on 26 January 2021 and in the whole country on 9 February 2021. Then again only emergency ECEC services were provided from 1 to 11 April 2021. Parents are excused from paying parent fees during the ECEC providers' closure (i.e. while only emergency services are provided) if children are not attending. From 1 October 2020, parents are not paying fees for the period of the child's non-attendance due to enforced quarantine.
- Elementary schools<sup>8</sup> (grades 1-5) were closed from 2 November 2020. Grades 1-3 returned to school in some regions on 26 January 2021 and in the whole country on 9 February 2021, while higher grades returned on 15 February 2021. All schools were closed again from 1 to 11 April 2021.

---

<sup>7</sup> For children whose both parents, or a single parent, were employed in critical infrastructure sectors, and in educational institutions, social security institutions, the Slovenian Armed Forces, the Police, and professional fire-fighting units.

<sup>8</sup> There are nine grades of elementary school that includes primary and lower secondary education, i.e. ISCED 1-2, and starts at the age of six.

### *Parental leave*

- There were no modifications to Parental leave.

### *Other measures for parents and other carers*

- The employed parent/guardian who has to care for the child<sup>9</sup> at home because of *force majeure* that is a consequence of childcare due to an enforced quarantine of a child, or closure of kindergartens, schools and social care institutions, and thus cannot work (not even from home), is entitled to 80 per cent salary compensation (based on one's average salary in the last three months), but not less than the minimum wage. The measure was in force between 13 March and 30 June 2020, and again from 1 September 2020. The state budget fully reimburses the employer the amount of salary compensations.
- Since 1 September 2020, the self-employed persons, partners in firms who are managers (insured as shareholders), and farmers have been entitled to a tax-free flat-rate partial reimbursement of foregone income while not being able to work due to care for a child<sup>10</sup> as a consequence of child's quarantine or strictly restricted kindergarten or school attendance (or kindergarten or school closure). They receive €250 for each period of childcare, but not more than €250 for ten days, €500 for 20 days and €750 per month.

## **4. Uptake of leave**

### **a. Maternity leave**

As Maternity leave is obligatory, all employed women should take up some (normally all) leave.

### **b. Paternity leave**

Roughly four in five fathers<sup>11</sup> take up to (and close to) 15 days of Paternity leave (13.7 days on average in 2020), while over half of leave-takers take more than 15 days (24.6 days on average in 2020). The first

---

<sup>9</sup> The child up to and including the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of elementary school (i.e. around age 12), the child with disabilities in an adapted/special programme, or the child with special needs who requires continuous care.

<sup>10</sup> For the age of child, see the former footnote.

<sup>11</sup> This proportion relates to all fathers and is thus higher for eligible fathers.

15 days are usually taken when the mother and child come home from the hospital.<sup>12</sup>

#### **d. Parental leave**

Most mothers take the entire Parental leave allocation, some take a good portion of it, while very few do not take it (usually due to health reasons). In 2017-2020 the share of fathers among all leave-takers remained at around four per cent. Considering the full earnings compensation while taking leave (except from June 2012 to December 2018 when it was 90 per cent), the reasons for fathers' persistent low participation may be found in the traditional division of tasks within the family; societal attitudes (not the declared ones, but rather those that rule people's behaviour); the absence of a positive image of the father who takes over more family responsibilities; and employers' expectations of their male employees.<sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup> Paternity leave provisions and fathers having the same individual entitlement to Parental leave as mothers, do not significantly influence mothers' earlier return to work after their leave period. Since fathers usually take only part of the Parental leave (if any at all), women's professional careers continue to be affected by their absence from work as a direct result of taking up Parental leave.

---

<sup>12</sup> Stropnik, N. (2018) 'Fathers' rights and uptake of leaves in Slovenia,' Peer review on 'Instruments to foster long-term paternal involvement in family work,' Berlin, 4-5 October 2018. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/mlp-gender-equality-seminar-long-term-paternal-involvement-family-work\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/mlp-gender-equality-seminar-long-term-paternal-involvement-family-work_en).

<sup>13</sup> Rakar, T., Stropnik, N., Boškić, R., Dremelj, P., Nagode, M. and Kovač, N. (2010) *Raziskava o vplivih veljavnih ukrepov družinske politike na odločanje za otroke [Research on the impact of family policy measures on deciding to have children]*, Ljubljana: Social Protection Institute of the Republic of Slovenia. Available at: <http://www.irssv.si/publikacije/leto-2010/index.html>

<sup>14</sup> Hrženjak, M. (ed.) (2016) *Spremembe očetovstva: moški med delom in starševstvom [Changing fatherhood: men between employment and parenthood]*. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut.