

Switzerland¹

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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.

Note on federal, cantonal, and communal government: Switzerland is a federal state with three political levels: the communes, the cantons, and the Confederation. In principle, family policy follows the principles of federalism and subsidiarity: the Confederation cedes responsibility for many areas of family policy to the cantons and the communes, insofar as they are able to perform these tasks, and retains an ancillary and enabling role. The Swiss Constitution defines the areas of responsibility of the Confederation. Pursuant to article 116 of the Swiss Constitution, in fulfilling its tasks, the Confederation shall take due account of the needs of the family and may legislate on family allowances; this article also provides the legal basis for maternity insurance.

Family policy may be organised very differently from one canton to another. Various cantons have also set up special family commissions. In their respective areas of responsibility (e.g., schools, childcare), many cantons and communes also implement family policy measures. Many non-governmental organisations are, in part, subsidised by the state and carry out specific tasks related to family policy. The division of responsibilities among political levels and the number of actors involved is, therefore, complex. For instance, each political level intervenes in early childhood education and care: for example, though most childcare services stem from the market, they are regulated and partially subsidised by the communes and/or the cantons. Finally, the federal level is also involved through a temporary programme, which subsidises new childcare initiatives and the creation of additional places for pre-school children.

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The Swiss political system is a direct democracy: through referendums and initiatives, citizens may challenge any law passed by parliament and propose amendments to the federal constitution. In the case of an amendment proposed to the federal Constitution, a referendum is mandatory.

Note on Leave policies in private law vs. public law: the information provided in this report refers, unless explicitly stated, to the rules applicable for persons working under private law contracts. Leave policies in the public sector of the Confederation, the cantons, and the communes may vary considerably.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

a. Maternity leave (*Congé et allocation de maternité*) (responsibility of the Federal Department of Home Affairs, namely the Federal Social Insurance Office)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Statutory leave is 14 weeks, starting on the day of delivery.² It is obligatory to take eight weeks' leave. In practice however, many collective agreements provide for 16 weeks' paid leave.
- Between the weeks nine and sixteen after birth, women covered by the Employment Act cannot be compelled to return to work. However, only 14 weeks are covered for payment by the statutory Maternity leave insurance.
- Employed women can be exempt from work before birth for medical and health reasons and, in this case, salary payment continues for a limited period, provided the employment relationship has lasted for or was concluded no longer than three months prior, and that the employee has proved her incapacity to work, which is usually done through a medical certificate.

Payment and funding

- The maternity compensation covers 80 per cent of earnings for 98 days, i.e. 14 weeks, up to a ceiling of CHF196 [€191.89]³ per day. The highest income thus covered at 80 per cent are monthly salaries of CHF7,350 [€7,196.00] and the maternity compensation in that case amounts to CHF5,880

² In country notes prior to 2017, the length of statutory leave reported was 16 weeks. The right not to return to work up to 16 weeks after giving birth is guaranteed by the Employment Act. However, the Employment Act does not apply to all companies and all workers (it excludes, for instance, home workers and public administrations). As of 2017, we therefore report 14 weeks of statutory Maternity leave.

³ Conversion of currency undertaken for 21 June 2022, using: https://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/policy_and_exchange_rates/euro_reference_exchange_rates/html/index.en.html

[€5,756.80]. The annual income ceiling for employed and self-employed workers is CHF88,200 [€86,352.07].

- Payments are taxed. The period spent on Maternity leave counts for the establishment of pension credits.
- The leave is funded by the Loss of Earnings Compensation fund, which also provides benefits for people carrying out military service, civil defence, or civil service. It is financed by equal contributions from employees and employers, each paying 0.225 per cent of earnings (0.45 per cent of earnings in total).

Flexibility in use

- In principle, there is no flexibility in leave and compensation: the claim for compensation starts on the day of the delivery.
- However, if the new-born child needs to stay for at least two weeks in the hospital and a medical certificate has been presented, maternity allowances can be prolonged for the corresponding time, but by 56 days at most (law newly implemented, by 1 July 2021).

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

- Eligible for maternity compensation are: employed women, whether employed under a fixed-term or open-ended contract; self-employed workers; women working in their husbands' or partners' businesses (or that of a family member) and who are paid a salary; and women who are on unemployment, sickness, accident, or invalidity benefits or allowances are also entitled to maternity compensation.
- For maternity compensation, women must have a record of nine months of contribution to Old Age and Survivors Insurance; and must have worked for a minimum of five months, during the nine months preceding the birth.
- If the maternity compensation criteria are not met, a mother may make a claim against her employer for the continued payment of her salary, based on article 324a of the Swiss Code of Obligations.⁴ Moreover, certain cantons provide for specific maternity benefits for mothers who do not meet the federal eligibility criteria.
- Only biological mothers are eligible.
- Eligibility does not require citizenship or permanent residency. A permission to work will however be a prerequisite, since only employed or self-employed women are entitled to maternity compensation.

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

- The leave is currently only available to birth mothers⁵.

⁴Bundesgesetz betreffend die Ergänzung des Schweizerischen Zivilgesetzbuches (Fünfter Teil: Obligationenrecht, SR 220 [Federal Action on the Amendment of the Swiss Civil Code (Part Five: the Code of Obligations)]).

⁵ A draft act is under preparation in order to enable fathers to benefit from maternity allowances in the event the mother dies after giving birth to a child.

- Since July 2021, maternity allowances can be prolonged up to 56 additional days if the new-born is hospitalised for at least two weeks after birth.

Regional, local and sectorial differences in leave policy

- In the canton of Geneva, all working mothers are granted 16 weeks of Maternity leave, paid at 80 per cent of earnings. A cantonal Loss of Earnings Compensation fund pays for the two additional weeks, which are not covered by federal dispositions.
- The canton of Fribourg has an additional maternity contribution targeted at all resident mothers, including adoptive and stay-at-home mothers (the latter meaning women who have not been previously attached to the labour market). The daily allowance of CHF32.50 [€31.82] is paid over 98 days (equivalent to CHF975 [€954.57] per month for 3.2 months) if the income is below CHF2,475 [€2,423.14] for single mothers or CHF3,300 [€3,230.86] for both parents. The income ceiling is increased by CHF350 [€342.67] for each additional child living in the same household.
- The Confederation, cantonal public employers, and communes are not subject to the basic legislation, but to specific regulations of their own. However, these regulations generally provide more generous maternity benefits for their employees, i.e. 16 weeks of leave at full earnings or even variation for multiple births, as in the canton of Jura. A minority of cantonal employers grant four additional weeks for mothers who are breastfeeding, bringing their leave up to 20 weeks. Employees working for the Confederation are entitled to 16 weeks of Maternity leave. Maternity compensation for this period corresponds to 100 per cent of the salary.

Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Maternity leaves are often supplemented by collective agreements, which grant full wage replacement and/or extended lengths of leave (approximately two additional weeks, i.e. 16 weeks of paid Maternity leave). Companies, which often take out private supplementary insurance for such cases, cover these expenses. According to representative survey data (N=3,575), in 2016 this concerned 43 per cent of surveyed companies, with public employers and large companies (> 200 employees) being over-represented⁶.

b. Paternity leave (*Congé et allocation de paternité*) (responsibility of the Federal Department of Home Affairs, namely the Federal Social Insurance Office)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 2 weeks

⁶ Rudin, M., Stutz, H., Bischof, S., Bannwart, L. and Jäggi, J. (2017). *Erwerbsunterbrüche vor der Geburt [Work interruption before birth]* (185). Bern: Büro BASS. (67-70). Available at: https://www.buerobass.ch/fileadmin/Files/2018/BSV_2018_ErwerbsunterbruecheGeburt_Schlussbericht.pdf

Payment and funding

- Same as for Maternity leave. The paternity compensation covers 80 per cent of the gross average earnings achieved before the child was born and will be paid during two weeks, i.e. 14 days, up to a ceiling of CHF196 [€191.89] per day. The highest income thus covered at 80 per cent are monthly salaries of CHF7,350 [€7,196.01].

Flexibility in use

- Paternity leave cannot start until the baby is born and must be taken within six months after the baby's birth.
- The leave can be taken in full or on a daily basis.

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

- Employed workers are entitled to Paternity leave if they are legally the father of the child, no minimum employment relationship is required.
- For payment during Paternity leave, fathers must, in principle, also have a record of nine months of contribution to Old Age and Survivors Insurance and must have worked for a minimum of five months, during the nine months preceding the birth.
- Eligibility does not require citizenship or permanent residency. A permission to work will however be a prerequisite, since only employed or self-employed men are entitled to paternity compensation.

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

Additional note (e.g. if leave payments are often supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusions or rights to postpone)

- Pre-existing Paternity Leave allowances granted through collective labour agreements or work contracts may supplement the newly introduced federal Paternity Leave (as of 1 January 2021).

c. Parental leave

No statutory entitlement. There is some indication that a minority of companies in the private sector grant their employees unpaid Parental leaves⁷. Many cantonal public employers also grant unpaid Parental leaves – ranging from a few days up to 24 months – but in a few cases with gendered eligibility criteria (leaves exclusively or predominantly addressed to female civil servants)⁸.

⁷ Swiss Federal Council (FN **Error! Bookmark not defined.**), 14.

⁸ Swiss Federal Council (FN **Error! Bookmark not defined.**), 15 f. ; Fuchs, G. (2008) *Prestations en cas de maternité et initiatives parlementaires sur les congés et prestations*

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement. The years spent out of the labour market to care for children under 16 years of age are credited for old-age pension to the parent who was the main carer during this time (it is split between parents, if both were equally responsible). The amount corresponds to three times the amount of the minimum annual retirement pension. It increases the average annual income from which the retirement pension is calculated (up to a ceiling) when individuals reach retirement age. This reformed Parenting Credit system, regulated in article 52f of the Ordination to the Federal Old Age and Survivor's Insurance, was implemented in January 2015⁹.

e. Other employment-related measures

Adoption leave and pay

- No statutory entitlement. A two-week paid Adoption Leave (under the same scheme as for Maternity and Paternity Leave, the Loss of Earnings Compensation Act) has been accepted in October 2021 and should soon come into effect.¹⁰
- Currently, adoption leave is subject to the involved parties' agreement or to the collective employment agreements. The applicable collective agreement for the Swiss Federal Railways grants, for instance, ten days' adoption leave.¹¹ If nothing is regulated, the right to take a few days off for adoption can be based on Article 329, paragraph three of the Code of Obligations.¹²
- Some cantons¹³ have implemented gender-neutral adoption allowances for all working parents, available to only one of the adoptive parents. The cantons of Vaud and Geneva entitle adoptive parents to 14 and 16 weeks of pay, respectively, at 80 per cent of the salary. Such cantonal allowances are provided only if one of the parents interrupts their employment.
- In the public sector, at present, about half of the cantons offer their employees paid adoption leave between two days and 16 weeks in length¹⁴.

offerts aux parents (notamment congé paternité, congé parental et congé d'adoption): rapport sur la situation actuelle dans l'administration fédérale, les cantons et quelques municipalités [Maternity allowances and parliamentary initiatives about Parental leaves and benefits (Paternity leave, Parental leave and adoption leave): report on the current situation at the federal administration, the cantons and several municipalities]. Available at: <http://www.equality.ch/f/publications.htm>, 14 ff.

⁹ Verordnung über die Alters- und Hinterlassenenversicherung (AHVV) [Ordination to the Federal Old Age and Survivor's Insurance], SR 831.101

¹⁰ <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/fga/2021/2323/fr>

¹¹ Available at: http://gav.arbeitsrechtler.ch/SBB_GAV_2015.pdf

¹² Cardinaux, B. (2015). *Leistungen bei Vaterschaft: eine Aufgabe des Staates? [Paternity benefits: a task of the state?]*, in Belser, E. M. and Waldmann, B. (eds.) *Mehr oder weniger Staat? Festschrift für Peter Hänni zum 65. Geburtstag [More or less state? Commemorative publication for Peter Hänni for his 65th anniversary]*, Berne: Stämpfli Press, 456.

¹³ More information can be found in the corresponding cantonal laws. The following page contains a link to all cantonal online legislation catalogues: <http://www.lexfind.ch>.

¹⁴ For more information, see: Pärli (Fn 6), S. 953.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- During the child's first year, the time taken by mothers to breastfeed or express milk during a working day counts as working time. Salary payment is mandatory within the following limits: for a working day of up to four hours, 30 minutes minimum; for a working day over four hours, 60 minutes minimum; and for a working day over seven hours, 90 minutes minimum¹⁵.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Since January 2021, employees are entitled to paid leave for the time necessary to care for a family member, domestic partner or partner with a medical condition. However, the leave cannot exceed three days per occurrence and ten days per year. The upper limit of ten days does not apply for the care of a child with health impairment.
- Since July 2021, parents of seriously-ill children are eligible to a 14-week paid Care leave (financed through the Loss of earnings compensation act, as for Maternity and Paternity Leaves). The leave can be shared between parents and should be taken within an 18 months time-frame, in one or several blocks/days.

Flexible working

- There is no statutory entitlement to reduced or flexible working hours for employed parents. However, the Employment Act states that the employer should consider the employee's 'family responsibilities' when fixing work and rest hours. Family responsibilities are defined as the education of children up to 15 years of age and the charge of other family members in need of care.
- Some collective labour agreements specifically include the right to reduced working hours for parents and there is some indication that a significant proportion of companies allow flexible working hours¹⁶.
- The Confederation grants its employees the right to reduce their working time by 20 per cent, however the lowest part-time work allowed is at 60 per cent hours.¹⁷

¹⁵ Art. 60 Verordnung 1 zum Arbeitsgesetz (ArGV 1) [Ordination 1 to the Employment Act], SR 822.111.

¹⁶ See Bühler, S. (2004) *Bébés et employeurs - Comment réconcilier travail et vie de famille. Version abrégée de l'étude comparative de l'OCDE portant sur la Nouvelle-Zélande, le Portugal et la Suisse: aspects suisses* (Vol. 1f). [*Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life. Summary version of the OECD comparative study on New Zealand, Portugal and Switzerland: Swiss aspects* (Vol. 1f)]. Berne: Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie.

¹⁷ Art. 60a of the Bundespersonalverordnung (BPV) [Federal Personnel Ordination (FPO), SR 172.220.111.3.

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

The maximum period of paid post-natal leave is just over three and a half months, all paid at a high rate, with the possibility in some cases of an additional two weeks of unpaid leave. In the majority of Swiss cantons (17 out of 26), statutory provision for two years of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is available, with the implementation of an inter-cantonal agreement for the harmonisation of education systems (HarmoS). In these cantons, compulsory schooling now starts when children reach four years of age, while in the rest of the country it starts between five and seven years of age.¹⁸ There is a gap, therefore, of more than three years between the end of well-paid leave and any entitlement to ECEC.

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' on [cross-country comparisons](#) page.

3. Changes in policy since April 2021 (including proposals currently under discussion)

In the past years there have been many proposals and debates in Swiss Parliament to reform leave policies in Switzerland. This has led to adoption of a two week Paternity leave (implemented 1 January 2021), of a new law in favour of caregivers (implemented in January and July 2021), and to the improvement of Maternity leave in the case of hospitalisation of a child (implemented 1 July 2021). Adoption leave is also close from being implemented and several proposals to improve maternity protection are currently discussed. Parental Leave is also the object of attention within Parliament.

Implementation of Care leave and benefits (for seriously ill or frail family members with care needs)

A new Federal law improving reconciliation between paid work and caregiving activities was drafted by the Federal Council in May 2019 and accepted by Parliament in December 2019. This law addressed several parliamentary interventions submitted in the past decade which aimed to support workers with care obligations for seriously ill children or frail and elderly family members (including cohabiting partners). The new law entails among others the following measures: 1) in case of health problems of a family member or partner, employees are entitled to three days per event of paid leave in order to organize and arrange care solutions (maximum ten days per year); 2) old age credits in case of caregiving duties for frail family members or cohabiting partners; 3) continued financial support in case of hospitalization of disabled children; 4) job protection, caregiving allowance and leave of 14 weeks for employed parents caring for a

¹⁸ With HarmoS, pre-primary or elementary programmes are included in obligatory schooling. See EDK. (2019). *Bilan 2019. Harmonisation des éléments visés par l'art. 62, al. 4, Cst. dans le domaine de la scolarité obligatoire*. Bern: Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education: http://edudoc.ch/record/204716/files/Bilanz-Bericht_II_f.pdf

child with serious health problems (due to sickness or accident) to be taken within a period of 18 months maximum. The first three measures were implemented in January 2021, and the fourth will be effective as of July 2021.

Improvement of Maternity Leave

Maternity leave benefits for mothers of children who must stay in hospital for at least two weeks directly after birth was improved as of 1 July 2021. Until then, upon presentation of a medical certificate, mothers could choose to postpone the start of their maternity compensation upon the child's arrival at home. However, due to the ban on mothers' employment during the first eight weeks after delivery, mothers could face economic uncertainty in this difficult period. A Motion proposing that the payment of maternity allowances be prolonged by the length of hospitalisation of the child was accepted by both chambers of the parliament. In December 2020, the Parliament accepted the following law amendment: maternity allowances will be prolonged by 56 days (maximum) if a new-born is hospitalised for at least two weeks. Since no referendum was submitted against this law amendment, it was implemented on 1 July 2021. In January 2022, an initiative was submitted in Federal Parliament by the Canton of Vaud proposing to extend this law to the event of mothers' hospitalisation for at least weeks following birth (in addition to the event of a child's hospitalisation). This proposal has yet to be discussed in Parliament.

New Adoption Leave

A parliamentary initiative in favour of adoption leave, which would be financed through the Loss of Earnings Compensation Act, was accepted in 2015. The drafting of the law was then delayed, jeopardising its implementation. In July 2019, the National Council's Committee for Social Security and Health adopted a draft law by 12 votes against ten and one abstention. Adoptive parents of children under four years would benefit from two weeks of paid leave (80 per cent of salary, as for Maternity Leave), to be taken within the first year following adoption by one parent or shared between them. In October 2019 the Federal Council announced it supported this proposal, and in September 2020 a majority of the National Council adopted it. Since no referendum was submitted against this law (deadline was 20 January 2022), this new adoption leave law should come into effect. The Federal Council has yet to set a date for its implementation.

Proposals concerning Maternity leave

In 2015 a parliamentary initiative submitted by Green-Liberal MP was submitted asking for the transferal of Maternity leave allowances to the father in case of the death of the mother. A majority was found in the Commissions of Social Security and Health of both Chambers but since then the object has not yet been voted in Parliament. The deadline was extended until Spring 2023.

In May 2019 two Motions were submitted aiming to allow the full coverage of medical expenses due to pregnancy. Currently pregnant women have to contribute to these expenses until the 13th week of pregnancy. The Federal Council supported these Motions and they were adopted by a majority in the National Council in September 2019 and by the Council of States in November 2020. A concrete law

amendment will be proposed by the Federal council and will be submitted to Parliament.

In March 2019, a Socialist MP submitted a Motion to increase the maximum daily allowances during Maternity leave. The LECA regulates allowances in case of military or civil service and, since 2005, in case of maternity. Yet, the maximum amount of allowances differs in case of military and civil service (CHF245 [€239.87] per day) and in case of maternity (CHF196 [€191.89] per day). The Motion considers this difference to be discriminatory and asks that the same compensation conditions be applied to women on Maternity leave as to people performing their military or civil service duties. In May 2019 the Federal Council recommended to reject this Motion, considering the increase of social expenditure it would represent and the fact it could jeopardize the other policy reforms currently in discussion in favour of maternity protection and family policies. The Motion was accepted by the National Council in March 2021 and has yet to be confirmed by the Council of States.

Following the publication of two reports in 2017 about the discrimination of mothers following Maternity leave¹⁹, several Motions, Postulates, and Parliamentary initiatives regarding maternity protection were submitted between March and December 2019. They were all either rejected or filed (after a two-year deadline had expired) between Autumn 2020 and December 2021.

Two Motions which had been submitted in May 2019 in order to enable women working in a family farm to benefit from Maternity Leave allowances were retrieved and replaced by a similar Motion in 2021 (submitted by a Liberal MP). It was accepted by both Chambers in June and September 2021. The Federal Council has yet to implement this law amendment.

In September 2019 two Socialist MPs submitted a Motion aiming to entitle self-employed women who give birth to benefit from allowances to cover operating expenses of their business. According to the Loss of Earnings Compensation Act, such allowances are offered to self-employed people during their military or civil service, but they are currently not available for self-employed mothers on Maternity leave, which is considered as unequal treatment. In November 2019 the Federal Council recommended to accept these Motions. A majority was found in December 2019 in the Council of States and in September 2020 in the National Council. The Federal Council has yet to announce an implementation date.

In March 2021, two Motions were submitted by Socialist MPs in order to introduce a pre-natal leave of three weeks, to be financed through the LECA insurance (like Maternity and Paternity leave). Currently pregnant women are entitled to stop

¹⁹ Rudin, M., Stutz, H., Bischof, S., Bannwart, L. and Jäggi, J. (2017) *Erwerbsunterbrüche vor der Geburt* (185), Bern: Büro BASS. Available at: https://www.buerobass.ch/fileadmin/Files/2018/BSV_2018_ErwerbsunterbruecheGeburt_Schlussbericht.pdf ; Lempen, K., and Voloder, A. (2017) *Analyse de la jurisprudence cantonale relative à la loi sur l'égalité entre femmes et hommes (2004-2015). Rapport de recherche* (45). Berne: Bureau fédéral de l'égalité entre femmes et hommes BFEG. Available at: https://www.unige.ch/droit/files/7215/0169/2406/analyse-LEg_2017-lempen.pdf

working before the day of delivery with a medical certificate and are considered on health insurance. The Motions are still pending.

Finally, several proposals (submitted by MPs and Cantons) aim to enable female MPs to participate to parliamentary sessions while being on Maternity leave. Currently the law bans women's activity during the 8 weeks after birth and Maternity allowances are interrupted upon women's return to work between the 8th and 14th week. These interventions have yet to be voted on in parliament.

Proposals concerning Paternity Leave

Following the implementation of Paternity Leave on 1 January 2021, several proposals have been submitted. In June 2021 and March 2022 two Motions by Green MPs asked for Paternity Leave to be granted to fathers in case of the death of the baby, in the same way as Maternity Leave is granted to mothers in this event (i.e., as of the 23rd week of pregnancy). In June 2021 a Green MP asked that fathers be granted job protection during their Paternity leave, as is the case for mothers on Maternity Leave. Finally, in September 2021 a green-liberal MP submitted a Motion asking for Paternity Leave to be available for lesbian couples. These proposals have yet to be treated in Parliament.

Proposals concerning Parental Leave

Between June and September 2021 several pending proposals regarding Parental Leave were rejected or filed after a two-year deadline. Only one intervention by a Socialist MP is still pending. It charges the Federal council to propose a Parental leave model (no specific length or model is suggested by the author). In June 2020 a cantonal parliamentary intervention (Canton of Jura) was submitted asking that cantons are enabled to implement Parental Leave on a cantonal level if they wish to, which they currently cannot do. Both Commissions of Social security and health gave a negative recommendation, arguing a change in the recently implemented law (Paternity Leave as of January 2021) was not adequate. However, the object has yet to be voted in Parliament.

Finally, a Postulate was submitted in June 2021 by the Commission of Social security and health of the National council asking that a cost-benefit analysis be mandated on different Parental Leave models (including models implemented abroad, e.g. Iceland, Sweden and Germany). The Postulate was accepted in September 2021 by 110 votes against 67 (and 3 abstentions).

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

Approximately 70 per cent of women giving birth meet the eligibility criteria for maternity allowances and benefit from them. It is estimated that the majority of recipients take up the maximum length of paid leave (98 days)²⁰. In 2019, the

²⁰ Sottas, G. and Millioud, P. (2008) 'Allocations pour pertes de gain en cas de maternité - premier aperçu'. [Loss of earning compensation allowances for maternity - first

average number of days taken by recipients was 79 days. The number of recipients has been increasing since Maternity leave was introduced, probably because of an increase both in births and female employment. In 2005, 33,810 mothers (this figure is for six months only, since the law came into force on 1 July) benefited from allowances; rising to 60,210 in 2006; 73,990 in 2010, 82,510 in 2015 and 86,180 in 2020²¹. Maternity benefit expenditure increased by 2.3 per cent between 2019 and 2020, to a total of CHF867 million [€848.83 million] spent in 2020.

In 2020, the average amount of the daily indemnities granted to mothers was CHF129 [€126.30] per day, well below the ceiling of CHF196 [€191.89]. According to Sottas and Millioud, in 2006, 80 per cent of leave recipients were married, 15 per cent were single, and five per cent were divorced. The majority of recipients were employees (83 per cent); 14 per cent were self-employed; and three per cent were inactive (eligible because they previously received unemployment, health, or disability benefits). According to register data, in 2020 the mean age of maternity benefit recipients was 32.8 years and 63.4 per cent of recipients were Swiss nationals and 36.6 per cent were foreigners²².

Employed women tend to take a longer Maternity leave than the legal minimum of 14 paid weeks following childbirth. A survey conducted in 2012 with 335 employed women who had had a child in the last five years, revealed that over 60 per cent of them had taken leave that exceeded 14 weeks. But, for only half of them, this additional leave was paid by the employer, while for 37 per cent of the sample, this leave was unpaid²³.

b. Paternity leave

Paternity Leave entitlement was first introduced by 1 January 2021. Statistics on leave uptake are not yet available.

c. Parental leave and parental benefit

No statutory leave entitlement.

overview'] *Sécurité sociale*, vol. 5: 304-307. The available administrative data provide information for calendar years. For this reason, the average length of leave is underestimated because some recipients receive part of their allowances in one year and the rest in another.

²¹ In 2021, the Swiss Statistical Office changed its way of counting recipients for loss of earnings compensation allowances. The figures reported in previous country notes to 2021 edition, are therefore different. A yearly evolution is available at this link:

<https://www.bsv.admin.ch/bsv/fr/home/assurances-sociales/eo-msv/statistik.html#accordion1647948049465>

²² https://www.bsv.admin.ch/bsv/fr/home/assurances-sociales/eo-msv/statistik.html#accordion_557683391647948049475

²³ Aeppli, D. C. (2012) *Wirkungsanalyse. Mutterschaftentschädigung [Analysis of effects. Maternity benefits]*. 95. Available at:

https://www.bsv.admin.ch/dam/bsv/fr/dokumente/eo/studien/wirkungsanalyse_mutterschaftentschaedigung.pdf.download.pdf/analyse_des_effetsdelassurance-materniteenallemand.pdf