

Leave Policy Changes: April 2018

From the 2017 Review of Leave Policies onwards, we have organised the overview of policy changes in the included countries in table form (see below). The table below gives an overview of policy changes according to the different types of leave distinguished in our report, i.e. Maternity leave, Paternity leave, Parental leave, as well as Other statutory measures. We do not summarise changes in other policies at this point (e.g. childcare), so readers can refer to the country notes for this. For the four types of leave, **we distinguish whether a policy has newly been introduced** (marked by symbol: ✓) **or whether a policy has been abolished** (x). Regarding the reforms of existing policies, we distinguish three types of change: If a change can be quantified, such as an increase in the replacement rate of a leave benefit or a reduction of leave duration, we classify it as either **expansion** (↑) or **cutback** (↓). If a change cannot be easily quantified, such as a change in flexibility rules, we classify it as **recalibration** (o). The table only gives a brief list of changes, which are depicted in more detail in each respective country note.

Which **types of changes** have been reported in the 2018 Review of Leave Policies (i.e. policy changes enacted between April 2017 and June 2018)?¹ First, it is interesting to note that leave policy changes continue to be constantly on the agenda. Of the 43 countries included in this year's review, the majority (25) report *some* policy change within the previous year, as compared with a minority of countries (18) reporting no change at all. However, it is important to note that **the majority of the reported policy changes do not affect our other comparative tables** (e.g. Maternity leave, Paternity leave, Parental leave). In other words, these changes are often small and incremental, and only in a few cases, there is a change in the main parameters of the leave systems.

For Maternity leave, overall 13 changes are reported; while seven changes are reported for Paternity leave. Also for Parental leave, with 15 changes much activity is reported. Nine changes concern other leave measures. Generally, expansions are much more frequently reported than cutbacks or abolishment, but there are some notable exceptions. For example, in Sweden the gender-equality bonus in Parental leave was abolished; and in Slovenia, the number of paid Paternity leave days was increased by five, while the number of unpaid days decreased by 25. Expansions are manifold, including an increased benefit for inactive/unemployed parents in Croatian Maternity and Parental leave, or an additional allowance for parents with two and more children in Latvia. Notable newly introduced measures include a shorter-term, and better-paid Parental leave option in the Czech Republic; vice versa, a longer-term, lower-paid option has been introduced in Canada. Also in the Czech Republic, a seven-day Paternity leave has been newly created. A leave to take care of sick children was installed in the Greek public sector, and an ECEC entitlement for children aged three and above in Poland.

¹ Later changes that are under way but not yet enacted will be included in forthcoming review(s). In many countries, there are also on-going discussions about policy reforms, which have not been decided upon yet; these discussions are also portrayed in the policy changes sections of each country note.

Summarising table: Overview of leave policy changes in 2017/2018

	Maternity leave	Paternity leave	Parental leave	Other statutory leave measures
Australia				
Austria				
Belgium				
Brazil				
Bulgaria	o made transferable to grandparents	↑ adoptive fathers eligible	↑ servicemen eligible	✓ Adoption leave for foster parents
Canada (outside Quebec)	o 4 weeks earlier start date		✓ longer-term, lower benefit option	
China	↑ 120 days in Xinjiang, one year in Tibet	✓ 15 days in Xinjiang, 30 days in Tibet		
Croatia	↑ Allowance increased for inactive and unemployed parents		↑ Higher benefit (ceiling increased) and higher allowance for inactive and unemployed parents	
Czech Republic		✓ 7 days	✓ short-term leave option and better-paid	
Denmark	↑ in case of infant death 14 weeks of leave now also eligible to fathers and co-mothers			
Estonia			o change in formula of reducing benefit when working	
Finland				

France				
Germany	↑ improved job protection and eligibility			
Greece	↑ extended to surrogate mothers			✓ leave to care for sick child (public sector)
Hungary				
Iceland				
Ireland				
Israel				
Italy		↑ obligatory leave period increased		
Japan			↑ length increased if no childcare	
Korea	↑ ceiling increased		↑ payment and ceiling increased	
Latvia				↑ additional allowance for parents with two or more children
Lithuania				
Luxembourg	↑ length of postnatal leave increased from 8 to 12 weeks	↑ length of special leave used by fathers as proxy for Paternity increased from 2 to 10 days		↑ length of leave for sick children extended from two up to 18 days per child (depending on age)
Malta				✓ Assisted procreation leave
Mexico				

Netherlands	↑ length increased from 16 to 20 weeks in case of multiple pregnancy		↑ 3 days reserved for fathers in period immediately after birth, paid from January 2019	
New Zealand			↑ increased duration of paid period from 18 to 22 weeks from 1 July 2018	
Norway			o individual entitlements extended but no overall change to length	
Poland				✓ ECEC entitlement for 3 year olds and above
Portugal				
Romania	o benefit adjustments		o benefit adjustments	
Russian Federation	↑ benefit height		↑ benefit height	✓ targeted child allowances for families with low wages
Slovak Republic				
Slovenia		↑ 5 more paid days ↓ 25 less unpaid days	↑ adoptive parents of older children	
South Africa		↑ Paternity leave bill launched	↑ leave bill launched	↑ benefit value increased
Spain				
Sweden			x gender equality bonus	
Switzerland				
United Kingdom				

United States				
Uruguay	↑ benefit height; 14 weeks of leave for civil servants			✓ part-time for care

Key:

✓: introduction, x: abolishment, ↑: expansion, ↓: cutback, o: recalibration.