

# Influence of Europe on French Parental Leave Policies

No direct Influence of the European Directives on the French law concerning parental leaves

What about the paternity leave?



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# The Creation of French Paternity Leave in 2001: What Influence of EU Policies ?

An announcement of the *Conférence de la famille* on June 15th, 2001

Presented as a major breakthrough by Segolene Royal

A context of strong European pressure



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## The Creation of French Paternity Leave in 2001: What Influence of EU Policies ?

An issue which is not wholly connected in France to the theme of parental leave sharing

Rather, a will to reassert the authority of the father

Little public debate before its announcement in June 2001

European influences (especially of the Nordic model) only mentioned at the very end of the legislative process



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## The Creation of French Paternity Leave in 2001: What Influence of EU Policies ?

*Report of the Social Affairs Committee of the National Assembly on Social Security Financing Bill (2002):*

Scandinavian paternity leave policies mentioned as examples

Before that hardly any references to Scandinavian model



Differences in the approach to paternity leave (France/Nordic countries)



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## The Creation of French Paternity Leave in 2001: What Influence of EU Policies ?

French paternity leave: a policy designed to promote father-child interaction rather than gender equality

Not linked to the issue of sharing parental leave

Along with the paternity leave reform: creation of 'livret de paternité', parental recognition ceremony, reform of parental authority..

m1

m2

## A gender perspective on the Parental leave allowance reforms in France

### *Three questions :*

- ➡ What connexion between family and labour market policies ?
- ➡ What are the objectives behind the Parental Leave Allowance reform in 2013?
- ➡ Is there an effect of economic crisis on the restructuring patterns?



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**m1**      marie-therese; 15.10.2013

**m2**      marie-therese; 15.10.2013

# Parental leave allowance reforms and labour market policy

## 1- To keep out women from the labour market

**1984** : the first child rearing policy measure (flat-rate allowance paid by social security)– APE

*Context : high level of unemployment + development of part-time work*

**1994** : extension of the entitlement to APE to parents with two children (instead of three)

*Context : economic recession. New policy incentives for part-time work in labour market policy.*



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## 2- To avoid the womens exit from the labour market

**2004** : Prestation d'accueil du jeune enfant (Childcare benefit): encouraging part-time child rearing.

*Context : drop in economic growth + new objectives for Family Policy: gender equality + reducing child poverty*



## 2013 : a reform by the socialist government

### What's new?

From a family policy issue to a women's right issue:

- Part of the Law on Gender Equality
- ... not a family policy reform



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### At least three aims :

- 1 -To boost women's employment
- 2 -To foster the sharing of parental responsibilities
- 3- To expand childcare options

# 2013 : a reform by the socialist government

What does this reform entail ?

## 1- Parents with a single child

*Until now* : parents entitled to 6 months of prenatal leave allowance after the end of maternity leave (or paternity leave).

*After the reform*: 6 months more for the other parent.

## 2- Parents with 2 or more children

*Until now* : the duration of the parental leave allowance is until the last child reaches the age of 3.

*After the reform* : the duration will be maintained at 3 years only if the second parent takes 6 months. Otherwise the entitlement is reduced to 2,5 years.

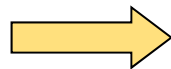


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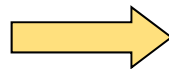
## A contested reform



**From a gender perspective** : the question of the duration is fundamental  
The impact of the reform on women's employment seems very limited



**The reform targets fathers.**  
Incentive to fathers to take up part of the parental leave and to share child rearing



« **Free choice** » for mothers to remain in the workforce and « free choice » for fathers to stay home and care for their children ?



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# What link between the reform and the economic crisis ?

## 1- Effects of the reform on the arguments pushed forwards by pro-family groups

• Pro family unions support the idea of a long parental leave allowance for three reasons:

- high value put on family care
- parental leave allowance mainly used by low-income families
- a substantial reduction of the length would put pressure on child care services

## 2 – Effect on the importance assigned to budget-related aspects

- Savings on benefits
- Benefit rates are not revised
- less spending on childcare facilities



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Thank you for your attention



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