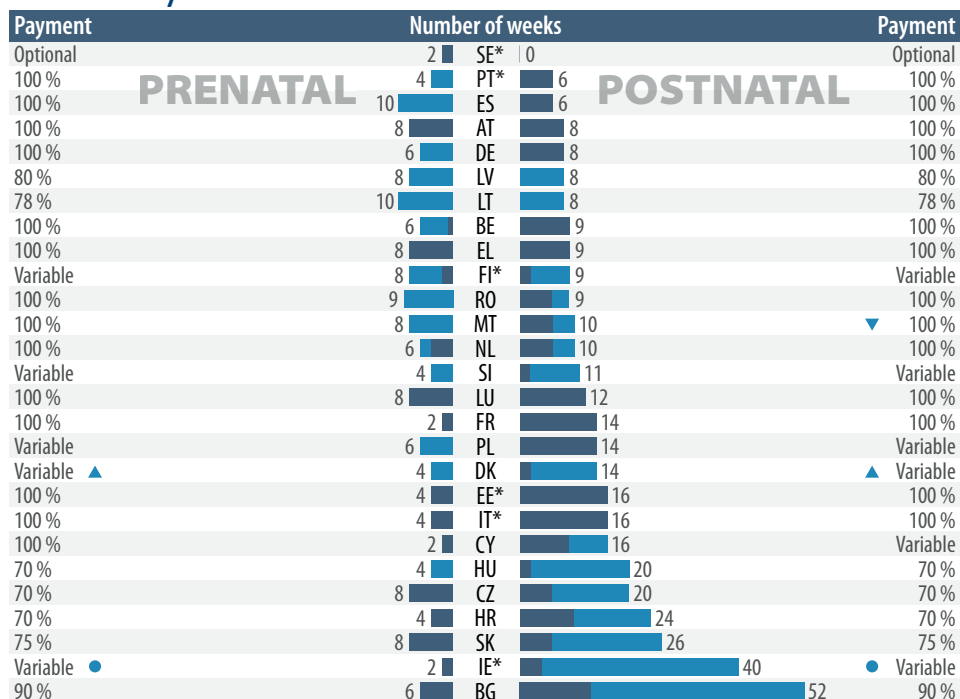


# Maternity and paternity leave in the EU

This infographic aims to present the current maternity and paternity leave situation in EU Member States. Most EU countries also grant an additional period of parental leave, but parental leave is not covered in this infographic.

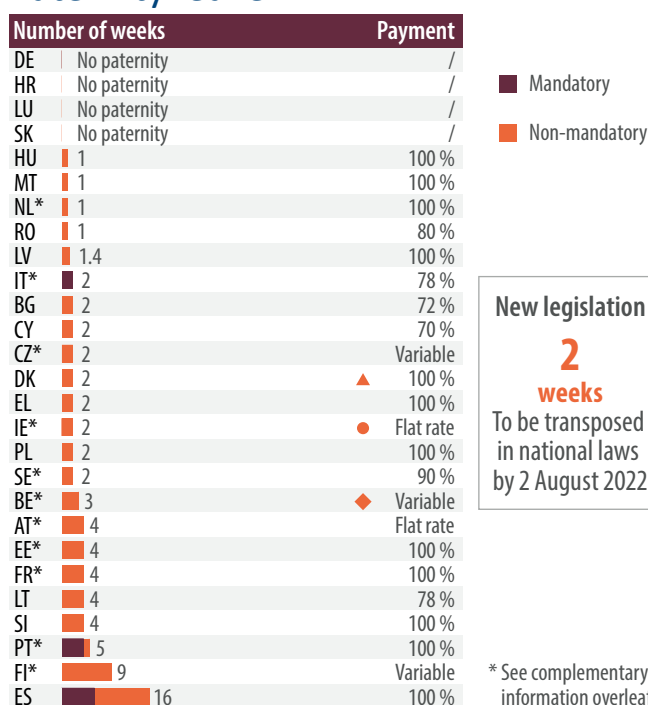
## Maternity leave



Current EU legislation  
**14**  
weeks minimum  
of which 2 mandatory

\* See complementary information overleaf

## Paternity leave



New legislation  
**2**  
weeks  
To be transposed  
in national laws  
by 2 August 2022

\* See complementary information overleaf

## Notes on payment

- ▼ MT Payment postnatal: 6 weeks, 100 %; 4 weeks, flat rate equivalent to the statutory minimum wage
- ▲ DK up to DKK 4 460 (€599) per week before tax based on former earnings
- IE weekly rate of €245
- ◆ BE 100 % for 3 days (paid by the employer), 82 % of earnings for the remaining period
- IE weekly rate of €245
- ▲ DK up to DKK 4 460 (€599) per week before tax based on former earnings

## Definitions

**Maternity leave:** leave from work for mothers in the period immediately preceding and following birth.

**Paternity leave:** leave from work for fathers or recognised second parents, similar to maternity leave

**Parental leave:** leave after maternity/paternity leave which can be taken by either parent

## Current situation

Maternity rights are set out in the 1992 [Pregnant Workers Directive](#). This EU legislation sets the minimum period for maternity leave at 14 weeks, with 2 weeks' compulsory leave before and/or after confinement and an adequate allowance subject to national legislation. A right to two weeks' paternity leave was introduced in a new [directive on work-life balance for parents and carers](#), which entered into force on 1 August 2019. [Member States](#) have until 2 August 2022 to adopt the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with the directive. The right to paternity leave may not be made subject to a period of work qualification or to a length of service qualification.

The European Commission [proposed](#) the new Work-Life Balance Directive following the withdrawal of an earlier proposal for a [maternity leave directive](#), which would have extended the period of maternity leave. The new directive does not do so, but it is expected to be particularly beneficial for [gender equality in the labour market](#). As part of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) (Article 9), it aims to address women's under-representation in the labour market, to help them balance their work and family lives and to encourage a better sharing of caring responsibilities between women and men. As such it adopts a broader approach to modernising the existing EU legal framework in the area of family-related leave and flexible working arrangements, to take account of developments in society over the past decade.

## Explanation of the graphs

Given the complexity of national legislation and differences between the Member States, and the need to facilitate presentation of the data in graphic form, simplifications have been made in respect of a number of countries. The terms of legislation as it applies in the public sector are illustrated in cases where there is a difference with the private sector.

Countries are ordered by the length of maternity leave granted.

Given that national legislation may express leave periods in months, weeks, calendar days or working days, for comparison, they are presented here in rounded weeks.

Some countries also have ceilings on the amount of money paid during maternity/paternity leave, but these are not addressed in this publication.

When national legislation does not state exactly when the maternity leave is supposed to start, the earliest possible time was taken as the starting point.

## \*Complementary information on selected Member States

Austria	Since 1 September 2019, all Austrian employers must allow fathers to take one month's unpaid leave after the birth of their child. The leave entitlement – the so-called 'Papa Monat' – previously applied only to federal-sector employees and any private-sector employees who were covered by a collective agreement.
Belgium	From 1 January 2021, paternity leave increased from 10 days to 15 days. From 2023, it will be extended with another five days, to a total of 20. The extension will apply to employees as well as to self-employed workers and civil servants.
Czechia	As of 1 January 2022, paid paternity leave has been extended from the previous 7 days to 14 days.
Estonia	Fathers can take paternity leave before or after the birth; a new law which entered in force on 1 June 2020 provides for leave of 30 days (4 weeks; paid at 100 %). For mothers, a new law will enter in force on 1 April 2022 and provide for leave of 60-100 days; the rest (40 days) will be added to parental leave.
Finland	Fathers may not work during paternity leave, while mothers may, except during the mandatory leave period. Maternity and paternity allowances are affected by the beneficiaries' circumstances and income.
France	From 1 July 2021, the duration of paternity leave is doubled: it is now 28 days, including the 3 days of birth leave financed by the employer, which are added to the 25 days compensated by the social security system.
Ireland	An additional three weeks of <a href="#">parent's</a> leave and parent's benefit are available to each parent of a child born or adopted on or after 1 November 2019 (bringing the total to five weeks).
Italy	Paid paternity leave was increased from four days to five days in 2019 and from five days to seven days in 2020. On 1 January 2021, the mandatory government-paid paternity leave was increased from seven working days to ten working days, with an optional extra day if the mother gives up one day of her statutory maternity leave.
Netherlands	Since August 2021, fathers or partners (including same-sex partners) are entitled to a paid full work week (five days) paternity leave. They can access an additional five-week paternity leave within the first six months of childbirth which is paid by the Employee Insurance Agency at 70 % of earnings.
Portugal	There is no maternity or paternity leave, only parental leave. There is an option to take 120 or 150 days of leave: 120 days is paid at 100 % and 150 days at 80 %. An extra 30 days are available if parents share the leave period. The father can take any part except the initial parental leave reserved for the mother, which is shown in the graph.
Sweden	Swedish legislation on this issue is more gender neutral than in other Member States. Rather than maternity leave, as shown on the graph, parental leave is the most relevant. Each parent is eligible for up to 240 days paid parental leave (all but 90 days of which may be transferred to the other parent), plus unpaid leave until the child is 18 months old. Maternity leave can be taken before or after birth within 60 days of delivery.

**Sources:** national legislation (e.g. [MISSOC](#)), websites of national institutions, [European Commission website](#), and relevant reports (e.g. [International Network on Leave Policies and Research](#)).

[Revised version](#) presenting the situation in the 27 Member States as known to us on 15 February 2022.

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