

Paternal leave in Europe

Regulations and available data on parental leave in EU Member States¹

A caveat to the following overview of the different regulations: in many countries, the child-raising allowance is not linked with parental leave. As the terms denoting this allowance vary, it may sometimes remain unclear whether fathers have any entitlements at all, and if so, to what exactly they are entitled. The following table can only provide very basic guidance, because the available and accessible data leave many questions unanswered. It is based on MISSOC (Mutual Information System on Social Protection in the EU Member States) data relating to the child-raising allowance. The information is supplemented by data from the section on maternity benefits. The percentages for men were taken from various sources, which are indicated in the table. However, as precise indications of dates are often missing, the data are not really comparable.

¹ Source: Land Steiermark (ed.) (2003): Regelungen und vorhandene Daten zur Elternzeit in anderen EU Mitgliedstaaten. In: Väternkarenz, pp. 41–47.

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Country	Basic principles	Beneficiaries	Conditions	Amounts of benefits	Percentage of men on paternal leave and/or receiving child-raising allowance
Belgium	No special allowance (only maternity leave and maternity benefit 7 weeks before and 8 weeks after delivery)	Not applicable (father only in case of death of mother)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Denmark	Tax-financed universal protection scheme	Parents with children under the age of 9 are entitled to a leave to take care of them	Salaried, non-salaried workers, unemployed and persons living with a minimum income who fulfill the conditions that entitle them to daily benefits in case of sickness	60% of the allowance of the unemployment insurance	Fathers are entitled to 2 weeks leave at the birth of their child. 50% of the men make use of this right Only 10% of the fathers take child-raising leave (despite full pay in the civil service).
Germany	Tax-financed scheme for the entire population	Non-working or part-time working mothers or fathers	An annual income ceiling is applicable	€ 307 per month for the first 24 months following the child's birth Instead of a child-raising allowance of up to € 307 during 24 months, parents opting for a shorter period of 12 months may receive up to € 460	2.4 % ²

² Financial Times Deutschland, 2003: Männer, die Elternzeit beanspruchen

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Country	Basic principles	Beneficiaries	Conditions	Amounts of benefits	Percentage of men on paternal leave and/or receiving child-raising allowance
Greece	No special allowance (maternity benefit 63 days before and 63 days after confinement)	Not applicable	No special allowance	No special allowance	Not applicable
Spain	No special allowance (maternity benefit (prestación por maternidad) for a maximum of 16 weeks)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
France	Child-raising allowance (allocation parentale d'éducation, APE) paid to the parent who interrupts or reduces his/her professional activity	Family of two or more children including at least one under the age of three	Proof of a previous activity: 8 quarters (in the sense of old-age insurance), consecutive or not, during the 10 years prior to the third child birth or during the 5 years prior to the second child birth	Full amount for parents who completely stop working: € 487.30. Reduced amounts: € 322.28 if the part-time activity does not exceed 50% of the legal working time; € 243.72 if the activity is in the range between 50% and 80% of the working time	Not clear
Ireland	No special allowance (maternity benefit: 18 weeks)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

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Country	Basic principles	Beneficiaries	Conditions	Amounts of benefits	Percentage of men on paternal leave and/or receiving child-raising allowance
Iceland	No special allowance (father and mother are each entitled to 3 months 'maternity leave')	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not clear
Italy	No special allowance 6 months leave for the mother The optional supplementary parental leave (astensione facoltativa dal lavoro) may be requested by the father if the mother does not claim it	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable 80% of earnings for the compulsory period, and 30% for the supplementary period	Very few ³
Liechtenstein	No entitlement to child-raising allowance (except maternity leave: 20 weeks)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable (During maternity leave: 80% of earnings)	Not applicable

³ Cf. Nuber 2000

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Country	Basic principles	Beneficiaries	Conditions	Amounts of benefits	Percentage of men on paternal leave and/or receiving child-raising allowance
Luxembourg	Child-raising allowance (allocation d'éducation): cash benefit aimed at recognising the upbringing activity	Person(s) dealing with the child upbringing (fathers from 1999 onwards)	For the parent who educates a child under 2 years and either does not have a regular income or whose income, cumulated with that of the husband/wife, does not exceed € 3,870.65 when educating one child, € 5,160.87 when educating two children, € 6,451.09 when educating three children	Allowance: € 439.41. Half the allowance is granted in case of part-time employment	Not clear
Netherlands	No special allowance (maternity benefit for 16 weeks)	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable (100% of daily earnings)	Not applicable

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<p>Norway</p>	<p>All categories of occupationally active women are entitled to parental benefit (fødselspenger) equal to cash benefit in case of sickness. Benefits can be taken out by the father</p> <p>Non-active mothers are entitled to a maternity grant (engangsstønad ved fødsel). Adoption is also covered</p>		<p>Where both parents have earned a right to parental benefit (fødselspenger), the maximum benefit period is 42 weeks at the full rate or 52 weeks at an 80% rate. Parental benefit may be drawn from 12 weeks before confinement at the earliest, and 3 weeks of benefit must be taken out before confinement and by the mother. 4 weeks are reserved for the father and cannot be taken out by the mother. Apart from the 6 weeks after confinement reserved for the mother, the benefit can also be taken out by the father on the basis of his own earnings, provided he has worked for at least 6 of the last 10 months immediately before he started his leave</p>	<p>The compensation level of the full-rate parental benefit is the same as that of sickness cash benefits (sykepenger), i.e. 100% of the income from work up to an annual 6 times the basic amount (grunnbeløpet) i.e. NOK 308,160 (€ 38,465)</p> <p>The maternity grant (engangsstønad ved fødsel) for non-active women is paid as a lump sum of NOK 32,138 (€ 4,011)</p> <p>Should the parental benefit for the full period be lower than the maternity grant, the parental benefit will be topped with the differential</p>	

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Country	Basic principles	Beneficiaries	Conditions	Amounts of benefits	Percentage of men on paternal leave and/or receiving child-raising allowance
Austria	Child-raising allowance (Kinderbetreuungsgeld) is a family benefit that is granted regardless of prior employment or compulsory insurance	Mothers and fathers entitled to child benefit (Familienbeihilfe), in exceptional cases also without being entitled to this benefit	<p>The gross additional income must not exceed € 14,600 for the calendar year. In this respect only the income of the parent who receives the child-raising allowance will be considered</p> <p>In terms of pension insurance, 18 months of receiving child-raising allowance following the birth of the child are credited as contribution periods</p>	€ 14.53 daily until the child has reached the age of three provided the other parent claims child-raising allowance (Kinderbetreuungsgeld) for a minimum period of three months. The benefit is due only for one child. Single parents and families living on low incomes are granted a supplement in addition to the child-raising allowance.	2.2 % (September 2003)
Portugal	No special allowance Maternity benefit (subsídio de maternidade) for 120 days	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

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Finland	<p>No special allowance (maternity allowance (äitiysraha) paid to the mother for 105 days, paternity allowance (isyysraha) can be paid to a father for a maximum of 18 days)</p> <p>Since Dec. 2002, fathers have been entitled to 12 days leave in addition to the 18 days, provided they also use the last 12 days of parental leave instead of the mother. This means a father can take 42 days of leave, of which 24 working days must be used as 'daddy month' after the parental leave⁴</p>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Around 2% ⁵

⁴ Cf. Salmi, 2002

⁵ Cf. Salmi, 2002

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Country	Basic principles	Beneficiaries	Conditions	Amounts of benefits	Percentage of men on paternal leave and/or receiving child-raising allowance
Sweden	No special allowance (havandeskapspenning) is payable for a maximum of 50 days ; parent's cash benefit (föräldrapenning) is payable for a total of 480 days per child)	Not applicable (parent's cash benefit can be taken out by either of the parents or shared by them) 'Daddy month' must be used, otherwise it is lost	Not applicable	Not applicable	38% of the men take at least 1 month leave.
United Kingdom	No special allowance, but dependants additions are payable on most other benefits	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Source EUROPA MISSOC: Comparative Tables on Social Protection in the Member States

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/missoc/2002/index_chapitre9_en.htm