

Working Conditions

Parental and paternity leave – Uptake by fathers



Produced for the European Commission in the context of negotiations on a work-life balance package for families and carers

Parental and paternity leave – Uptake by fathers



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Country codes: EU28 and Norway

AT	Austria	FI	Finland	NL	Netherlands
BE	Belgium	FR	France	PL	Poland
BG	Bulgaria	HR	Croatia	PT	Portugal
CY	Cyprus	HU	Hungary	RO	Romania
CZ	Czech Republic	IE	Ireland	SE	Sweden
DE	Germany	IT	Italy	SI	Slovenia
DK	Denmark	LT	Lithuania	SK	Slovakia
EE	Estonia	LU	Luxembourg	UK	United Kingdom
EL	Greece	LV	Latvia		
ES	Spain	MT	Malta	NO	Norway

Introduction

This report has been compiled in the context of ongoing negotiations at EU level aimed at adopting a work-life balance package for families and carers. Eurofound was requested by the European Commission's Gender Equality Unit in DG JUST to provide an update of the available data regarding paternity/parental leave for fathers. The idea was that the data would be developed further to feed into a Eurofound seminar on work-life balance taking place in Brussels on 16 October 2018.¹

In its 'Initiative to support work-life balance for working parents and carers', the European Commission presents a list of legislative and non-legislative measures on how the work-life balance of these workers – who are faced with care demands and obligations in their private sphere – can best be promoted (European Commission, 2017a, 2017b). One of the specific objectives of the proposed Directive is 'to increase take-up of family-related leave and flexible working arrangements by men' (European Commission, 2017b, p. 2).

In this context, the proposed Directive enables the following changes to leave entitlements which are particularly relevant for working fathers:

- The introduction of an individual entitlement to paternity leave of 10 working days, to be taken around the time of birth and compensated for at a minimum of sick-pay level.
- The revision of currently existing entitlements of parental leave in order to provide for: i) the right for flexible uptake, such as part time or piecemeal; ii) four months of the leave being non-transferable between parents; and iii) payment of four months, compensated for at a minimum of sick-pay level.

The Commission also recommended, as one of the non-legislative measures complementing the proposed Directive, improving the collection of EU-level data by Eurostat on the uptake of family-related leave and flexible working arrangements by women and men, in cooperation with employment policy committees (SPC, EMCO) and in coordination with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (European Commission, 2017a).

At the time of drafting of the report (September 2018), the proposal was under negotiation with the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. In January 2019, the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the proposal for a Directive on work-life balance. Regarding fathers' leave entitlements, the agreement establishes 10 days of paternity leave for fathers following childbirth to be compensated for at the level of sick pay. In addition, two months out of the already existing minimum of four months parental leave shall be non-transferable between parents, together with the requirement that compensation for these two months shall be introduced, the amount of which is to be determined by Member States.

During the course of editing this report, the European Commission also published new findings from a Eurobarometer survey on work-life balance, which show that only four in ten European men have taken paternity leave and three in ten have taken parental leave. The two main reasons for not availing of their entitlements are financial issues (21%) or the fact that the spouse had already used up the family entitlement (21%) (European Commission, 2018). While not intended to pre-empt the more rigorous efforts of compiling Europe-wide comparable statistics, this report looks into the currently available national statistics on the uptake of family-related leave by fathers across the EU28 and Norway, without any attempt to harmonise the data or indicators. The information was compiled based on a questionnaire distributed to the Network of Eurofound Correspondents at the end of March 2018. The report provides a comparative overview of key features of the various leave arrangements available for fathers, including information on duration, compensation, eligibility and who pays, in addition to statistics regarding the persons eligible and the number of beneficiaries captured in the data (see Table 1 and Table A1 in Annex 1).

¹ A modern agenda for work-life balance – online webcast.

1 Overview of conditions for fathers' entitlement to paternity and parental leave

All EU Member States now have in place a paid entitlement for fathers to spend time with their children, either in the months around the time of the child's birth and/or after this time. Between 2016 and 2018, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Cyprus were the last Member States to introduce such an entitlement for fathers.

However, this is not an individual right for fathers in all countries; in some countries, it is a family rather than individual right. Sometimes a father's entitlement to it depends on the mother's entitlement. Often, sub-periods of 'parental leave' or 'childcare' are transferable between the parents, but as it is not always possible for both parents to take the leave (at least for a short period of time), in some cases the mother has to give her consent for the right to be transferred to the father.

Challenges in data collection

The main challenge stems from the fact that all the national systems of family leave are unique. Not only do schemes have different characteristics, but the terminology used in different national languages may be subject to ambiguity in the context of an international comparison. For instance, only some countries have a type of leave that is taken around the time of the child's birth, which is only available for fathers and is distinct from other family-related leave – and explicitly called 'father's' or 'paternity' leave. For instance, this leave is called *Vaderschapsverlof/Congé de paternité* in Belgium, *Congedo di paternità* in Italy, *Urlop ojcowski* in Poland and *Tėvystės atostogos* in Lithuania. Other countries have leave systems termed 'parental leave' or 'childcare leave', which are accessible for both parents but might have a certain number of days or weeks reserved for either parent – around the time of the child's birth and afterwards (*Föräldrapenning* (Sweden); *Licença parental exclusiva do pai* (Portugal); or *faedreorlov* as part of *barselsorlov* (Denmark)). Some countries use the national equivalent of the term 'maternity leave', but still have transferable periods – often related to the age of the child – which fathers can take (e.g. *Prestaciones por maternidad* (Spain); *davka materské* (Slovakia)). In other countries, such leave periods available to both parents are called 'parental leave' (e.g. *Elternzeit* (Germany); *Roditeljski dopust*

(Croatia)) or have a more neutral term (for instance, *Karenzurlaub*, meaning 'period of rest' (Austria)) but these are distinct from the leave periods around the time of the child's birth, which are exclusively reserved for mothers and/or pregnant women.

In some countries, statistics can be obtained separately for different sub-periods, while in other cases no separate data is available for the different periods of leave or entitlements. This means that periods of 'paternity' and 'parental' leave and their uptake by men can only be presented jointly, with data for fathers on leave sometimes being mixed with data on periods of maternity leave that are exclusively available to mothers.

Sources of data

The most comprehensive overview of family leave systems is provided on an annual basis by the International Network on Leave Policies and Research (Blum et al, 2017, 2018). Comparative tables are provided by MISSOC (2018). Eurofound's *Working Life country profiles* contain a section for each country profile (under 'Individual employment relations') on statutory maternity, paternity and parental leave, including a brief description and information on maximum duration, compensation arrangements and financing (Eurofound, 2017a). As a comprehensive account of all the leave arrangements would greatly expand the scope of this report, the next section will provide a short overview only. Table 1 presents the family leave entitlements (or their constituent parts) available in each EU Member State and Norway, divided into 'paternity' and 'parental' leave – irrespective of whether there is separate national legislation in place. The first case contains typically shorter periods of leave, to be taken around the time of the child's birth (or not too long thereafter), which are exclusively reserved for the father, while the second contains leave which can be taken by either parent. For further information, the reader should refer to the sources quoted above which, together with Table A1 in Annex 1 (which gives an overview of different leave arrangements, national terms, administration of the data and information on who is eligible and captured in the data), will provide the most important background information necessary to interpret the data cited in the report.

Table 1: Paternity and parental leave – Duration and compensation for fathers

	Paternity leave and/or benefits	Parental leave and/or benefits
Austria	Not available, with the exception of 'Family time bonus' (maximum €700 for 31 days) – to be deducted from the father's daily rate of childcare benefit if he later takes parental leave.	<i>Kinderbetreuungsgeld</i> (benefit)/ <i>Karenz</i> (leave) (1a-c) Previous model (reflected in the data) up to 2017: four flat-rate options (from €436 per month to €1,000 per month) and one income-dependent model (80% of last net income). For more details, see Eurofound's Working Life country profile. 1a-c relate to different sources and scope of data – see Table A1 in Annex 1.
Belgium	<i>Vaderschapsverlof/Congé de paternité</i> (2a) 10 days during the first four months after the birth. For the first three (mandatory) days, there is no change in salary. For the remaining seven days, the mutual fund pays 82% of the usual gross salary.	<i>Ouderschapsverlof</i> (2b) Reduction of working time by 50%: €401.25 for workers under 50 and €680.62 for those over 50. Reduction of working time by 20%: €136.12 for workers under 50 and €272.25 for those over 50. Temporary break of work (four months): €802.52.
Bulgaria	<i>Otpusk po bashtinstvo</i> (3a) 15 calendar days of leave immediately after delivery of the baby: 90% of the average gross wage or average daily contributory income for up to 15 calendar days if there are 12 months of social security contributions.	<i>Otpusk poradi bremennost, razhdane i osinovavane</i> (3b) The father can use the remainder of 410 days' parental leave with the consent of the mother once the child is six months old: 90% of the average gross salary. <i>Otpusk za otgleddane na dete do 2 godishna vazrast</i> (3c) Leave for children up to two years old (two years and six months for every additional child). It can be transferred to the father, grandmother or grandfather. Flat rate: BGN 340 (2015–2017); €174 from 10 October 2018.
Cyprus	<i>Άδεια πατρότητας</i> (4a) Two consecutive weeks, to be taken within the first 16 weeks following the birth or adoption. The weekly rate of maternity allowance is equal to 72% of the weekly value of the insurance point of the insured person's basic insurance in the relevant contribution year. The maximum covered by the Social Insurance Services is €753.32 per week (2017).	<i>Γονική άδεια</i> (4b) Unpaid. The total duration of parental leave is up to 18 weeks, and 23 weeks in the case of a widowed parent. Parental leave is taken with a minimum duration of one week and a maximum duration of five weeks per calendar year; for families with three or more children, the maximum duration is increased to seven weeks.
Czech Republic	<i>Otcovská dovolená</i> and <i>dávka otcovské poporodní péče</i> (allowance) (5a) As of February 2018, fathers are entitled to up to 70% of their salary (70% of the claimant's reduced daily reference amount) for seven calendar days of leave within six weeks of the birth, adoption or fostering of a child.	<i>Rodičovská dovolená</i> (leave) and <i>rodičovský příspěvek</i> (allowance) (5b) Parental benefits up to child's fourth birthday. Parental allowance is paid to a parent until the youngest child in the family turns four, up to a maximum of CZK 220,000 (€8,524). 70% of the claimant's reduced daily reference amount.
Germany	Not applicable – see parental leave.	<i>Elternzeit</i> (leave)/ <i>Elterngeld</i> (benefit) (6a) Up to three years after the child's birth for each parent, 24 months of which can be taken up to the child's 8th birthday: 67% of net earnings. Threshold: minimum of €300, maximum of €1,800. <i>ElterngeldPlus</i> – from 2015 (6b). Replaces a proportion of income if the parents reduce their working hours to care for their children (not in the data).
Denmark	<i>Fædreorlov</i> (as part of <i>Barselsorlov</i>) (7a) Two weeks' paternity leave in connection with the birth. Full pay.	<i>Forældreorlov</i> (as part of <i>Barselsorlov</i>) (7b) After the 14 weeks of maternity leave, the employer pays a further 11 weeks' leave, with both parents having the right to four weeks each. The remaining three weeks' leave can be taken by either the mother or the father. The part of the 11 weeks' leave granted to each of the parents cannot be exchanged between them and, if not taken, the payment is cancelled. Full pay: 100%, but maximum is €530 per week.

	Paternity leave and/or benefits	Parental leave and/or benefits
Estonia	<p><i>Isapuhkus</i> (8a)</p> <p>10 working days, with compensation based on average wage (of the last six months prior to the paternity leave), up to a maximum of three times the Estonian mean gross wage.</p> <p>As of July 2020, the duration of paternity leave will be 30 calendar days and it will be remunerated on the same basis as parental leave benefits.</p>	<p><i>Lapsehoolduspukkus</i> (8b)</p> <p>The amount of the benefit per calendar month is 100% of the average income per calendar month calculated on the basis of the social tax paid in the calendar year prior to the date on which the right to receive the benefit occurs. There are thresholds: Maximum: three times the national average wage; (8b-max); Minimum: level of the minimum wage (for parents who did not work or whose earnings were below) (8b-min).</p> <p>As of 1 September 2019, the benefit will be 100% of the average income, calculated on the basis of the social tax paid within 12 months prior to the pregnancy.</p>
Greece	<p><i>Άδεια Γέννησης Τέκνου</i> (12a)</p> <p>Private sector: two days for each birth – full wage, paid by the employer.</p> <p><i>Γονική άδεια φροντίδας παιδιού</i></p> <p>Public sector: if both parents are employees, a joint declaration to their departments states which of them will make use of the reduced hours or the parental leave, unless they use the joint declaration to state the periods that they will each use, which must be successive and within the time limits in the previous paragraph. If either spouse is employed in the private sector and is entitled to similar concessions in whole or in part, he or she is entitled to make use of the concessions referred to in paragraph 2 insofar as his or her spouse does not make use of their own rights or insofar as they fall short of the said concessions.</p> <p>Article 53 of the Civil Service Code.</p>	<p><i>Γονική Άδεια Ανατροφής</i> (12b)</p> <p>Private sector: four months up to the child's sixth birthday. Given to both parents under a private law job contract. It is an individual right of each parent and cannot be transferred to another person. Unpaid.</p>
Spain	<p><i>Permiso por nacimiento</i> (birth benefit) (9a)</p> <p>Two days at the time of the birth, 100% paid for by the employer.</p> <p><i>Permiso de paternidad</i> (9b)</p> <p>As of 1 January 2017, four uninterrupted weeks (up from 13 calendar days previously), as an individual right for the father, to be taken any time during the maternity leave.</p>	<p><i>Prestaciones por maternidad</i> (9c)</p> <p>16 weeks, with extension to 18 weeks in the case of the birth or adoption of a child with disabilities. A minimum of six weeks must be taken after the birth by the mother. The following 10 weeks can be shared between the mother and father, either overlapping or only for one (depending on the parents' choice). 100% of the regulatory base.</p> <p><i>Excedencia por cuidado de hijos</i> (9d)</p> <p>Leave until the child is three years old. Unpaid.</p>
Finland	<p><i>Isyysvapaa/faderskapsledighet</i> (10a)</p> <p>54 working days of which 18 working days can be used at the same time as the maternity leave: minimum €23.73 per working day as of 2017, maximum 70% of income.</p>	<p><i>Vanhempainvapaa/föräldraledighet</i> (10b)</p> <p>158 working days after the maternal leave has ended, to be taken by either the mother or father or divided between them. Minimum €23.73 per working day as of 2017, maximum 70% of labour income.</p>
France	<p><i>Congé paternité et d'accueil de l'enfant</i> (11a)</p> <p>For a single child, fathers may take 11 consecutive days after the child's birth including Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. For more than one child, the leave consists of a maximum of 18 days. The amount of the allowance, based on the illness allowance (<i>indemnité journalière</i>), was capped at €86 on 1 January 2018 for unemployed and salaried fathers, or €54.43 for a self-employed father.</p> <p>In addition, the French Labour Code grants three days of leave. Compensation is 100% (LC, Article L.3142-2).</p>	<p><i>Congé parental</i> (11b)</p> <p>The basic duration of parental leave for one child is one year, renewable twice, i.e. three years in total. Employees do not receive a salary during parental leave, but may bank the time saved in their working time account.</p> <p><i>PreParE – Prestation partagée d'éducation de l'enfant</i></p> <p>An allowance of up to €396.01 (lump sum benefit) may be obtained for 12 months (6 months for each parent) to 24 months from two children.</p>

	Paternity leave and/or benefits	Parental leave and/or benefits
Croatia	<p>No statutory paternity leave – see parental leave.</p> <p>However, for fathers, paid leave of seven days is indirectly stipulated by the Labour Act (OG 93/14, 127/17), which in Article 86 states:</p> <p>‘During the calendar year, the worker shall be entitled to be free from work with remuneration (paid leave) for important personal purposes including the birth of a child. Collective agreements, working regulations or employment contracts can enable better regulations’.</p>	<p><i>Rodiljni dopust</i> (maternity leave) (13a)</p> <p>From 28 days before birth until the child turns six months. Following the obligatory 70 days after birth for the mother, the remaining maternity leave can also be taken by the father, provided the mother agrees. 100% of average earnings, with a ceiling of 120% of the budgetary base rate for the first six months (HRK 3,991.20 or €5,328.16).</p> <p><i>Roditeljski dopust</i> (parental leave) (13b)</p> <p>An employed or self-employed parent is entitled to parental leave (or ‘additional maternity leave’) after the child reaches the age of 6 months, and they may use it until the child’s eighth birthday (for the first and second child). It may be used by both parents for an equal duration: eight months for the first and second child. The leave may be used in one period or in more parts, twice per year at most, each time for a duration of at least 30 days. 70% of the budgetary base rate after the first six months (HRK 2,328.20 or €314).</p>
Hungary	<p><i>Paternity leave</i> (14a)</p> <p>Five days, to be taken in the first two months following the birth. 100% of the father’s average wage.</p>	<p><i>Gyermekgondozási díj</i> (GYED) (childcare benefit) (14b)</p> <p>After the maternity leave until the child’s second birthday: 70% of the previous average daily earning, but capped at a given percentage of the statutory minimum wage (in 2017: HUF 178,500/month, about €549).</p> <p><i>Gyermekgondozást segítő ellátás</i> (GYES) (childcare allowance) (14c)</p> <p>After the second birthday of the child until their third birthday: a non-mandatory flat-rate benefit equal to the amount of the minimum old-age pension (in 2017: monthly gross HUF 28,500, about €88).</p> <p><i>Gyermekevelési támogatás</i> (GYET) (child-rearing support) (14d)</p> <p>In the case of three or more children, from the third birthday of the youngest child until their eighth birthday: a non-mandatory flat-rate benefit equal to the amount of the minimum old-age pension (in 2017: monthly gross HUF 28,500, about €88).</p>
Ireland	<p><i>Paternity leave</i> (15a)</p> <p>Two weeks. Standard rate: €240 per week (2018) or rate of illness benefit, whichever is higher.</p> <p>All employees are entitled to take it during the first 26 weeks following the birth of a child.</p>	<p><i>Parental leave</i> (15b)</p> <p>18 weeks unpaid. Both parents have equal and separate entitlement to 18 weeks unpaid parental leave per child (for a child up to the age of 8).</p>
Italy	<p><i>Congedo di paternità</i> (16a, b)</p> <p>Two obligatory days in 2017 (16a), and up to four days in 2018 (it can be increased to five days if the father replaces the mother in relation to the mandatory leave period).</p> <p>Compensated for at 100%.</p>	<p><i>Congedo parentale</i> (16c)</p> <p>Six months per parent – individual and non-transferable, maximum 10 months; it can be extended to 11 months when shared and when the father takes at least three months. 30% of basic remuneration up to the child’s 6th birthday, unpaid afterwards.</p>
Lithuania	<p><i>Tėvytės atostogos</i> (17a)</p> <p>In Lithuania, men are entitled to paternity leave from the date of the birth of a child until the child is one month old (28 days).</p> <p>100% of the allowance beneficiary’s reimbursed remuneration.</p>	<p><i>Vaiko priežiūros atostogos</i> (17b)</p> <p>Parental leave is granted until the child reaches the age of three. A maternity (paternity) allowance is paid for the period of a childcare leave after the end of maternity leave until the child is one or two years old.</p> <p>Option 1: duration until child turns one – 100% of the allowance beneficiary’s reimbursed remuneration.</p> <p>Option 2: duration until child turns two – 70% of the allowance beneficiary’s reimbursed remuneration until the first birthday of the child; 40% until the second birthday.</p> <p>Unpaid afterwards, until the child turns three.</p>

	Paternity leave and/or benefits	Parental leave and/or benefits
Luxembourg	<p><i>Congé extraordinaire</i> (18a)</p> <p>Up to 2017: two days (four for public servants), 100% paid by employers.</p> <p>Since the law of 15 December 2017, the paternity leave is 10 days.</p>	<p><i>Congé parental</i> (18b)</p> <p>Under the new system, the parental leave allowance, previously paid at a fixed rate of €1,778 per month, becomes a replacement income that is paid pro rata to the income earned and hours worked by the parent taking parental leave, with minimum and maximum thresholds. The allowance cannot be less than the minimum wage (social minimum wage), which on 1 January 2017 was €1,998.59 for a full-time employment contract (40 hours), and its upper limit will be €3,330.98 (five thirds of the minimum wage).</p>
Latvia	<p><i>Paternitātes pabalsts</i> (benefit) (19a)</p> <p>The father of a child is entitled to leave of 10 calendar days. This leave shall be granted immediately after the birth of the child, but no later than a two-month period from the birth of the child. 80% of the average wage of the beneficiary, derived from insurance contributions.</p>	<p><i>Vecāku pabalsts</i> (benefit) (19b)</p> <p>Benefit duration and amount are established according to the chosen duration of receiving the benefit and also in conjunction with whether parents work or stay on leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Until the child reaches the age of 1 year – 60% of the recipient's average wage subject to insurance contributions ○ Until the child reaches the age of 1.5 years – 43.75% of the recipient's average wage subject to insurance contributions.
Malta	<p><i>Paternity leave</i> (20a)</p> <p>Private sector: one working day. Public sector: two days paid leave.</p>	<p><i>Parental leave</i> (20b) (in the private sector, unless covered by wage regulation orders)</p> <p>Both male and female workers have the individual right to take care of a child for a period of four months until the child has attained the age of eight. Parental leave can be taken in fixed periods of one month each. Unpaid.</p>
Netherlands	<p><i>Kraamverlof</i> (21a)</p> <p>Fathers are entitled to two working days' leave after the birth, paid at 100% without ceiling by the employer. Three additional days could be granted via parental leave.</p>	<p><i>Ouderschapsverlof</i> (21b)</p> <p>Up to the eighth birthday of the child, parents can take leave amounting to 26 times the length of the working week for the number of hours the employee chooses. Not paid, unless part of a collective agreement.</p>
Norway	<p><i>Pappapermisjon</i> (22a)</p> <p>Two weeks around the time of the child's birth (paternity leave) (+ 10 weeks 'Father's' quota – see parental leave); no statutory payment, but may be included in collective agreements or payment can be negotiated with employer.</p>	<p><i>Foreldrepengeperioden</i> (leave) (22b)</p> <p>Model up to 30 June 2018: the parental leave period after birth is divided into three parts: a leave period of three weeks before birth and 10 weeks after birth exclusively for the mother, a leave period of 10 weeks exclusively for the father ('Father's quota') and the common leave period (father or mother by choice) of 26 weeks. It is possible to extend the leave period from 49 to 59 weeks with a 20% reduction in allowance. In this case, the common leave period is 36 weeks.</p> <p>As of 1 July 2018: mother's quota is 15 weeks, father's quota is 15 weeks, common quota 16 weeks. In addition, mother can take three weeks' leave before the estimated date of birth.</p> <p>49 weeks with 100% pay or 59 weeks with 80% pay (based on income, but income not exceeding 6 times the basic amount – in 2016 NOK 555,456 (approximately €58,400).</p>
Poland	<p><i>Urlop ojcowski</i> (23a)</p> <p>14 calendar days, starting from the birth of the child until he or she is one year old. 100% of basic pay.</p>	<p><i>Urlop rodzicielski</i> (23b)</p> <p>Maximum 32 weeks after maternity leave. It can be divided into four parts, which can be used both by the mother and father. One part of the leave has to last for at least eight weeks. 60–80% of basic pay (salary).</p>

	Paternity leave and/or benefits	Parental leave and/or benefits
Portugal	<p><i>Licença parental exclusiva do pai</i> (fathers only parental leave) (24a) – part of the parental leave regulation.</p> <p>It is obligatory for the father to take 15 working days' exclusive parental leave, of which five days must be taken consecutively immediately after the birth and 10 days during the subsequent 30 days. Another 10 days are optional (24b).</p> <p>Up to April 2009: father's exclusive parental leave corresponds to five compulsory working days and 15 optional consecutive days. Since May 2009: father's exclusive parental leave corresponds to 10 compulsory working days and 10 optional working days. Since 2015, father's compulsory parental leave increased from 10 to 15 working days. 100% paid, no ceiling.</p>	<p><i>Licença parental inicial</i> (initial parental leave of 120/150 days) (24c)</p> <p>Parents can choose between two options (120–150 days, plus additional 30 days if the leave is shared) of varying duration, with impact on the level of allowance: 120 and 150 days' initial parental leave corresponds to a daily allowance of 100% and 80% of the average daily wage – slightly more (83%) if the leave is shared. Minimum amount of €11 per day for those on low earnings.</p> <p><i>Extended parental leave</i> (24d)</p> <p>For the extended parental leave of three months, the benefit corresponds to a daily allowance of 25% of the average daily wage (or €5.2 per day minimum).</p> <p>Social parental leave benefit (23e): parents who are not working and do not have contributions for social security are entitled to parental social benefit.</p>
Romania	<p><i>Concediul de paternitate</i> (25a)</p> <p>Five days of paid leave, which can be supplemented with 10 more days if the father has taken child-rearing classes – 15 days in total.</p> <p>100% of the average income of the last 12 months.</p>	<p><i>Concediul parental/pentru creșterea copilului</i> (child-related leave as main beneficiary) (25b) or (child-related leave as second beneficiary) (25c)</p> <p>Up to the child's second birthday, for the main beneficiary.</p> <p>The legislation grants the second parent the right to at least one month's parental leave. The second parent can either: 1) request at least one month of leave or 2) compensation and leave are suspended for the other parent for the duration of the second beneficiary's leave and the first parent will have the choice of taking unpaid leave or going back to work. Paid leave – indemnity = 85% of the average net income of the last 12 months during the last 2 years prior to the child's birthday. Limits: RON 1,250 (€267), RON 8,500 (€1,818).</p>
Sweden	Not applicable, see parental leave.	<p><i>Föräldraförsäkring</i> (parents' insurance)/<i>Föräldrapenning</i> (benefit) (26a)</p> <p>480 days of paid leave, of which 90 days are reserved for each parent. 390 days based on income (if previously employed, this is often around 80% of wages), 90 days at SEK 180 (€17) per day.</p>
Slovenia	<p><i>Očetovski dopust</i> (27a) and (27b)</p> <p>A father has the right to paternity leave up to 90 days. (27ab) The first 15 days (27a) must be used by the time the child has reached the end of its sixth month; the remainder may be used in the form of full leave until the child has reached three years of age. The level of paternity allowance for the 15 days taken by the father when the child is born amounts to 100% of the father's average pay. Since 2016, an additional five days are available to fathers and compensated for at 90% of average pay.</p> <p>The father receives no allowance for the remaining 75 days (27b), although his social security contributions (amounting to the minimum wage) are paid for the duration of paternity leave.</p>	<p><i>Starševski dopust</i> (27c)</p> <p>130 days for each parent. The level of childcare allowance is determined on the basis of 90% of the average pay which the beneficiary received in the preceding 12 months. The allowance may not exceed two-and-a-half times the gross average pay.</p>
Slovakia	No statutory paternity leave, but the father can avail of maternity benefit and/or parental leave and benefit.	<p><i>Materská dovolenka</i> (maternity benefit) (28a) and <i>rodičovská dovolenka</i> (parental leave) (28b)</p> <p>Maternity benefit: 75% of daily average earnings can be transferred to the father after the child is six weeks old, provided that he takes care of the child personally.</p> <p>The parental allowance is paid out to one parent only at a flat rate (€213 monthly), whereby parents may work – full or part time.</p>
United Kingdom	<p><i>Statutory paternity pay</i> (29a)</p> <p>Two weeks' voluntary paternity leave. Paid by the employer but 92% can be recouped. Same level as statutory maternity or shared parental leave pay (flat rate or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower).</p>	<p><i>Shared parental leave</i> (29b)</p> <p>Since 2015, employed mothers can transfer all their leave, except for two weeks of mandatory leave, to the father.</p> <p>The shared parental leave (ShPP) is paid at the rate of GBP145.18 (approximately €163.90) a week or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower. It is paid at the same level throughout for 39 weeks.</p>

Note: In this table, the Member States are listed according to the alphabetical order of their two-letter ISO code names. A code differentiating the type of leave/allowance is given in parentheses after the name of the leave: for example: Luxembourg – *Congé extraordinaire* (18a). See Annex 1, Table A1 for full listing of the codes and more information about the different types of leave in every country.

Sources: National contributions from the Network of Eurofound Correspondents, Eurofound's Working Life country profiles (2018), International Network on Leave Policies and Research (Blum et al, 2017) and MISSOC (2018).

Table 2: Paternity and parental leave – Duration and compensation for fathers

	Duration		
	One working week or less	Up to two working weeks	More than two working weeks
High compensation rate: 80–100% of pay	Greece (12a) Hungary (14a) Italy (16a, b) Luxembourg (18a) until 2017 Malta (20a) Netherlands (21a) Romania (25a) – unconditional	Belgium (2a) Denmark (7a) Estonia (8a) Spain (9b) until 2016 Luxembourg (18a) – as of 15 December 2017 Latvia (19a) Poland (23a)	Bulgaria (3a) Estonia (8a) – as of July 2020 Spain (9b) – as of January 2017 Lithuania (17a) Portugal (24a, b) Romania (25a) – conditional Slovenia (27a)
Medium compensation rate: around 50–70% of pay	Czech Republic (5a)	Cyprus (4a)	Finland (10a)
Flat rates		France (11a) Ireland (15a) United Kingdom (29a)	
Unpaid		Norway (22a)	

Note: Working week is either five working days or seven calendar days.

Source: Compilation based on Table 1.

Compensation for paternity leave

While paternity leave taken around the time of the child's birth is typically well paid – in the majority of cases with no significant loss of earnings – the periods are usually very short, ranging from a week or less (Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands) to two weeks (Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom); and in a few countries, the period is over two weeks – see Table 2.

Compensation for parental leave

Parental leave, in contrast, is typically less well compensated. In only around a third of the countries, the replacement ratio stands somewhere between 80% and 100%, but typically also with some upper thresholds and/or for shorter periods of the leave. For example: this is the case in Austria when parents choose the income-dependent option; in Croatia, for the first six months; in Estonia and Lithuania, when parents choose the first option with the shortest duration; in Spain, for the *prestaciones por maternidad*; and in Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Sweden. Some countries have lower replacement ratios of

around 70%, including the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary and Poland, while other countries operate a mixed model, with income-dependent or flat-rate options that may partially vary depending on the duration chosen (Austria, Latvia, Slovakia, United Kingdom) or that pay out flat-rate benefits (Belgium, Bulgaria, France and Luxembourg, until recently) which can also turn out to be relatively low (particularly for those with higher wages). Italy has the lowest compensation ratio: 30% of basic remuneration until the child's sixth birthday or, under certain conditions, related to income and previous uptake, until the child's eighth birthday, when it is unpaid thereafter. For parents in Lithuania who choose a longer leave duration beyond the first birthday of the child, the compensation rate is 70% of the beneficiary's reimbursed remuneration until the child's first birthday, 40% until the child's second birthday and is unpaid until the child turns three.

Finally, in six Member States, parental leave that fathers can take is not compensated. This includes Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands and Spain (for the *excedencia por cuidado de hijos* (9d)). In some of these countries, however, collective agreements might enable some payments or employers might voluntarily pay for a certain time (see also Eurofound 2017a, for family leave clauses in collective agreements).

2 National data on fathers' uptake of paternity and parental leave

The data availability on fathers' uptake varies greatly across Member States and Norway and figures are not comparable across countries. This is mainly due to differences in the national leave systems, but also due to differences in how the uptake is being measured. For instance, some offices provide data on yearly averages or snapshots of the number of recipients of an allowance at a certain point in time. While the data is available in a relatively timely manner, the approach usually does not allow the joining up of data on men and women as parents in cases in order to observe how the leave was shared. Other statistics observe cohorts of babies or children over a time period. They record only after the end of entitlement to leave if and to what extent one or the other has availed of his or her entitlement. By design, such data is only available with a considerable lag time; it does, however, give a better insight into the question of equal sharing.

This report presents some rough comparisons based on the following approach:

1. The data obtained from heterogeneous national leave systems, irrespective of their names in national terminology, are grouped into the categories 'parental', 'paternity' or mixed types.
2. A small set of common indicators is extracted, such as the shares of uptake by men among all parents and in relation to the number of births and the length of time spent on leave.

In addition, the report includes recent research findings and further data on the characteristics of the fathers, and the determinants for fathers not taking up their entitlements.

The mapping of available national statistics shows that, most commonly, such statistics are kept by administrative bodies, usually the ones which are paying out the benefit, and then often made available via national statistical offices. Normally, the data refer to recipients of allowances, while unpaid episodes of leave or data on those who are not entitled to paid leave (e.g. self-employed people in some countries) or data on leave periods paid by employers without any compensation from national funds are not available. Some statistics refer to different sub-periods of the leave (e.g. until the child reaches a certain age), or different phases or options (e.g. when it can be taken in blocks), while others only refer to the total duration of the leave, without further breakdown. Also, for countries with a 'universal' benefit scheme, it is not always possible to distinguish between benefits paid to working parents to compensate them for their foregone earnings while on leave and benefits paid to non-working parents (such as the unemployed and students).

National statistics on uptake by fathers of paternity and parental leave

The following national statistics are presented in this report:

- Number of male recipients of the allowance (Table A2 for paternity leave, Table A3 for parental leave, Table A4 for 'mixed' cases, all in Annex 1).
- Number of men taking up paternity leave in relation to 100 live births (Figure 1).
- Number of men on parental leave or number of benefits received by men on parental leave per 100 live births (Table 3).
- Share of men taking a certain type of leave or a certain benefit in relation to all parents (Figure 2 and Figure 3).
- Duration: average number of days spent on leave or for which the allowance was received, for men and women (Table A5).
- Additional information on the features of the leave, who is eligible and who is covered in the data, and administration of the benefits and provision of figures is summarised in Table A1 in Annex 1.

3 | Main findings

The number of fathers taking advantage of their paternity leave entitlements has been on the rise in most countries over the past decade. The total numbers of men receiving paternity leave benefits went up significantly in Italy, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (until 2016). Also, in Slovenia, Denmark and Spain the numbers recently started to increase, following some decline earlier, while in France the number of fathers going on paternity leave was in decline, with some small variation (depending on the source of data).

When looking at parental leave schemes and entitlements, a similar picture emerges: despite some exceptions (i.e. Latvia until 2013, the Czech Republic and Spain), the common trend across countries is that of an increasing number of fathers taking advantage of their entitlements to parental leave. More data on the number of recipients are presented in Tables A2–A4 in Annex 1.

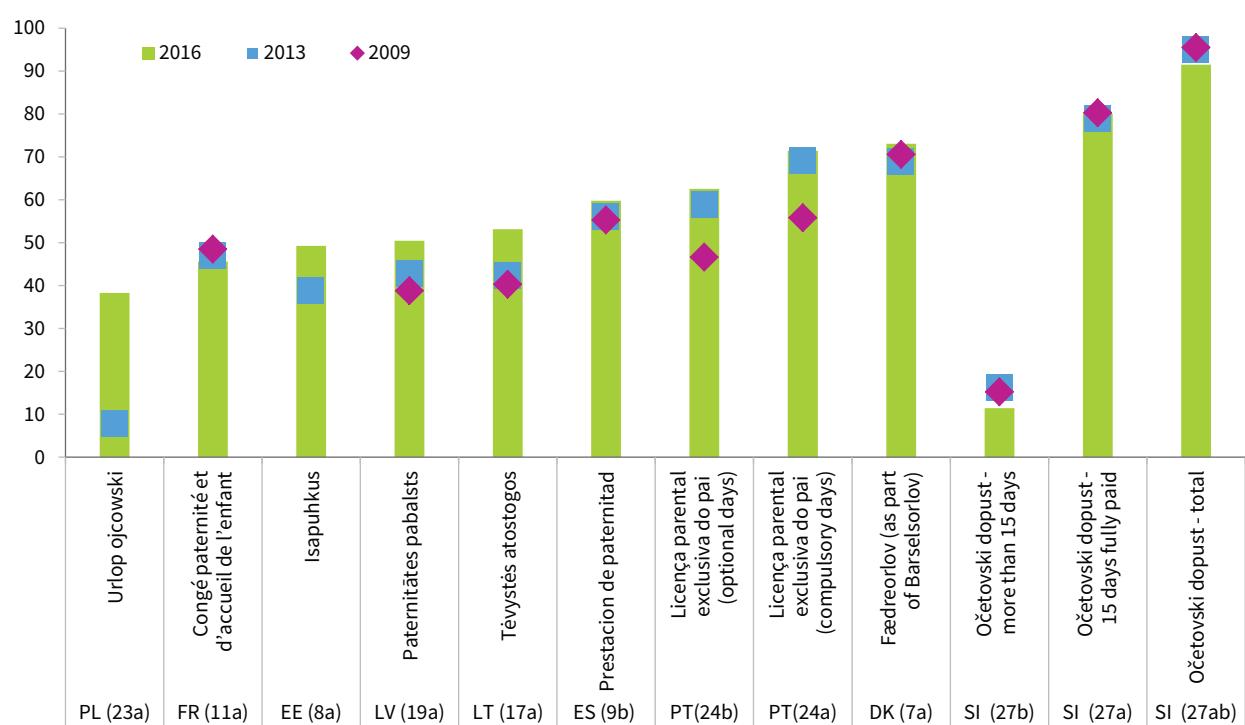
Uptake of paternity and parental leave in relation to births

As birth rates keep changing over the course of the years, it is clear that relative numbers are more meaningful in this context than absolute figures. Calculating the number of fathers per 100 live births

going on leave is relatively straightforward in the case of paternity leave, as these episodes by definition are taken close to the time of the child's birth.

Figure 1 shows the number of fathers on **paternity leave** and/or obtaining paternity-related benefits around the time of their child's birth, for countries which have such schemes and/or data separately available. Over time, these rates were relatively stable, with some recent growth particularly in the central and eastern European Member States that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007. Among the countries listed in the chart, Slovenia has the highest number of men per 100 children who were taking paternity leave: around 80 men per 100 children born take the fully paid 15-day period and another 10–14 men per 100 children born prolonged their leave on an unpaid basis from 2006 to 2016. In 2016, a new option of an additional five paid days was introduced and proved popular (9,526 fathers), thereby reducing the number of fathers on unpaid days. High rates of paternity leave (60–80 fathers per 100 children) were also observed in Denmark, Portugal (for both the mandatory and compulsory leave days) and Spain. The rates were lower (40–60 fathers per 100 children) in Estonia, France, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, with the latter country and the three Baltic States reflecting the highest growth in uptake since 2013.

Figure 1: Men on paternity leave in relation to the number of live births, 2009–2016



Source: National statistics; see Tables A1 and A2 in Annex 1, author's own calculations; number of total live births: Eurostat [demo_gind]

Less straightforward to interpret and compare across countries are the figures regarding the uptake of **parental leave** by fathers in relation to the number of children, especially in those cases where the available statistics are based on parents drawing benefits. Besides the question of eligibility and which fathers can be captured in the data, parental leave typically stretches over a longer period of time within which it can be taken, i.e. it can be taken in blocks, which can result in double and triple counting. The incidence of fathers taking the leave is again determined by the rules of the leave or benefit system. In some countries, episodes of benefit drawing can be counted for each and every single day taken, whereas in others there are minimum or maximum periods that one parent must or can take when receiving the benefit. In addition, some countries do not have statistics on paternity and parental leave periods separately available, leading to an overestimation of the incidence vis-à-vis countries with separate statistics for parental leave as, usually, the incidence of fathers taking paternity days off as compared to parental leave is higher, and due to fragmentation, some double counting is likely.

Following all these reservations, Table 3 below depicts the number of men receiving parental benefits within a year after the birth in relation to the number of live births within the same year. The reader is advised to read the data in conjunction with Table 1 and Table A1 in Annex 1.

The data show a predominance of very low and medium-low uptake of parental leave by fathers for different parts of leave and drawing periods, including in particular, but not exclusively, the central and eastern European Member States. The Nordic countries are at the other end of the scale, with wide-ranging eligibility criteria and well-paid schemes which partially combine parental and paternity leave periods and allow for the fragmented use of the leave – for example, to cite an extreme case, for every child born in Sweden in a certain year, more than three parental leave benefits are paid out to Swedish fathers.

Countries which showed considerable growth in the proportion of fathers per child taking parental leave were **Germany** (21% of children born in 2008 versus 34% of children born in 2014 were cared for by their fathers on parental leave while receiving *Elterngeld*), **Portugal** (from 10% in 2009 to 34% in 2016 of fathers sharing the initial parental leave with mothers) and **Estonia** (also up from 8% in 2008 to 20% in 2017).

In **Latvia**, on the other hand, the number of fathers receiving parental benefit (*Vecāku pabalsts* – 19b) has dropped significantly, especially in the years of financial crisis, and by 2017 had not returned to the levels of 2008. Since 2008, frequent changes to the parental benefit legislation were made, essentially reducing its amount in the context of austerity measures. Also, in 2009, it was decided that the unemployed could only have one benefit, reducing the number of unemployed fathers who had hitherto received parental benefits.

Table 3: Number of men on parental leave/or number of benefits received by men on parental leave per 100 live births, 2008 – 2017

Country	Type of leave	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Very low											
Croatia (13a)	<i>Rodiljni dopust</i> (maternal leave – days shared with father)			0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	
Spain (9b)	<i>Prestaciones por maternidad</i>	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.3
Slovakia (28a)	<i>Davka materské</i> (maternity benefit)					0	1	1	3	5	
Romania (25c)	Child-rearing indemnity – as second beneficiary						0.5	2.8	1.3		
Hungary (14d)	GYET (childrearing support)						4	4	4	3	3
Czech Republic (5b)	<i>Rodičovský příspěvek</i> (parental allowance)	5.3	5.1	4.6	5.3	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.5
Croatia (13b)	<i>Roditeljski dopust</i> (parental leave after the child reaches six months)			2	2	2	5	5	5	5	
Medium low											
Italy (16c)	<i>Congedo parentale</i>					6	7	7	9	11	
Portugal (23e)	Social parental leave benefit		4.0	7.0	6.8	7.6	8.0	7.7	7.7	7	
Slovakia (28b)	<i>Rodičovský príspevok</i> (parental allowance)		6	7	8	9	10	10	10	10	11
Bulgaria (3b)	Childcare leave up to two years of age	3	6	8	9	10	9	10	11	11	

Country	Type of leave	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Medium low											
Latvia (19b)	<i>Vecāku pabalsts</i>	55	60	33	13	8	8	12	24	34	36
Belgium (2b)	<i>Ouderschapsverlof met uitkeringen</i>		9	11	11	11	12	13	14	15	16
Romania (25b)	Child-rearing indemnity – as main beneficiary				13	17	15	14	13		
Austria (1a)	<i>Kinderbetreuungsgeld</i> (all fathers obtaining it for at least two months)	10	12	13	14	15	15	15			
Estonia (8b)	Parental benefit (total of all types of benefit)	8	14	15	14	14	15	17	18	19	20
Luxembourg (18b)	<i>Congé parentale</i>	15	16	17	17	16	17	17	18	18	
Medium											
Lithuania (17b)	<i>Vaiko priežiūros atostogos</i>		10	11	10	10	13	21	26	28	32
Portugal (24c)	Men who shared initial parental leave of 120/150 days with mothers*		9	19	21	23	24	25	28	30	
Germany (6a)	<i>Elterngeld</i>	21	24	25	27	29	32	34			
Poland (23ab)	<i>Urlop ojcowski</i> and <i>urlop rodzicielski</i>					43	41	42			
Denmark (7b)	<i>Forældreorlov</i> (as part of <i>Barselsorlov</i>)	26	30	31	32	32	44	46	45	49	
Norway (22b)	<i>Foreldrepenge</i>	60	61	62	65	68	69	68	70		
High											
Portugal (24cde)	Benefit for initial parental leave, benefit for extended parental leave and benefit for social parental leave		44	74	80	80	81	79	84	88	87
Denmark (7ab)	<i>Barselsorlov</i> , total	87	93	94	98	96	98	102	99	106	
Finland (10ab)	All parental allowances	91	90	92	98	102	103	103	118	117	
Sweden (26a)	<i>Föräldrapenning</i> (parental benefit)	264	262	270	286	294	300	300	309	314	336

Note: Numbers above 100% are mainly due to double and triple counting of periods of benefits. The code for the type of leave is shown in parentheses after the country name.

Source: Unless otherwise indicated, national sources, as per Table A1. *Portugal source: CITE (2017). Number of men on parental and/or paternity leave in relation to the number of live births within each year obtained via Eurostat [demo_gind]

Proportion of men among parents receiving parental benefits

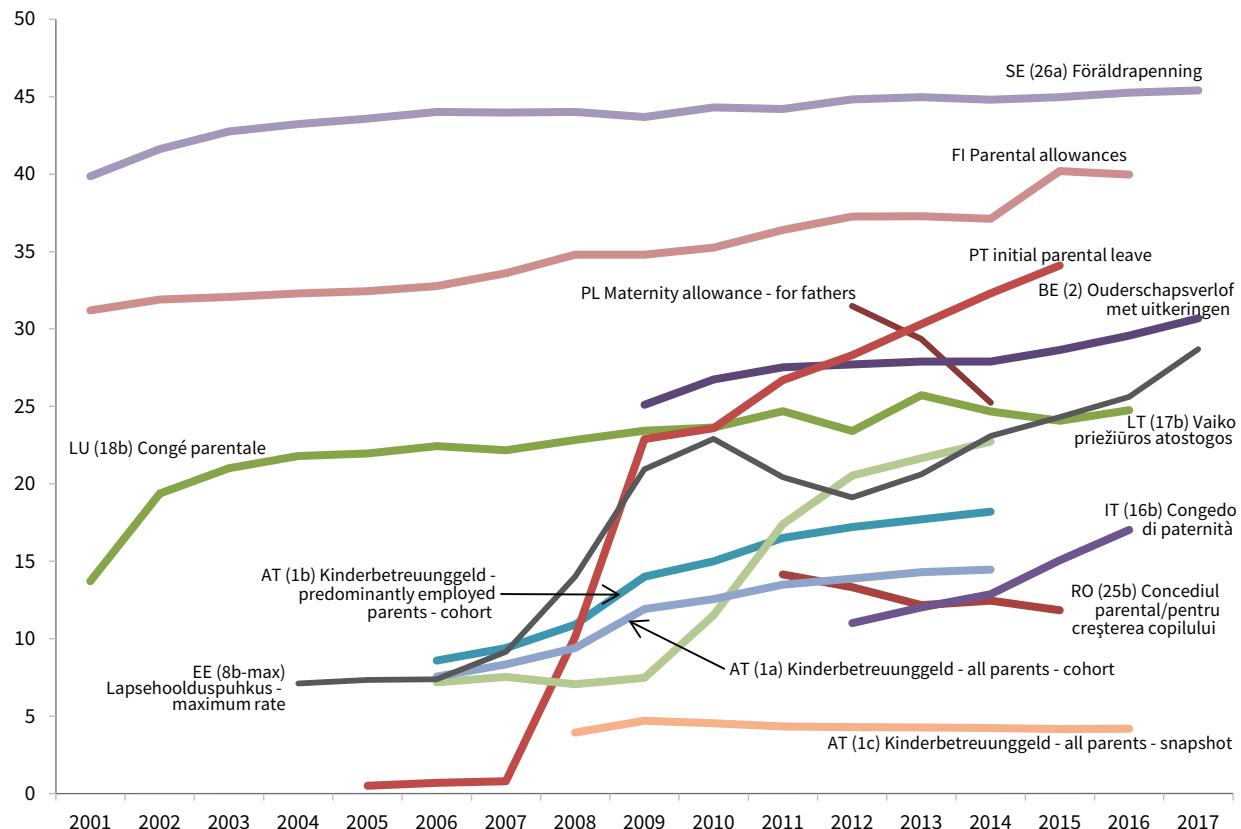
Another indicator of ‘uptake’ – which could be obtained from most countries – is the share of men among all recipients of parental leave allowances. These shares are now depicted below in two separate figures for better readability. Figure 2 summarises countries with shares exceeding 10%, while Figure 3 combines countries in which fathers make up less than 10% of all recipients of some kind of parental leave or childcare allowance.

Starting from relatively low levels (below or around 10%) in 2005, growth was particularly high in **Portugal**, where the proportion of men sharing the ‘initial parental leave’ went from hardly any to about 30% in 2016. Growth of the share was also high in **Lithuania** and **Italy**, reaching between 17% and 22% at the end of the period which can be observed with the available data. **Estonia** and **Slovakia** similarly recorded considerable growth of the share of fathers taking parental leave benefits – yet both still remain below 10%. In Estonia, the high growth of the share was interrupted and slowed down between 2009 and 2012,

which was probably linked to the suspension of the publicly financed scheme in the context of the economic crisis, although employers could still pay the benefit on a voluntary basis. In **Finland**, there was considerable growth in the share of fathers taking parental allowance, from around 30% at the beginning of the millennium up to 40% in 2016.

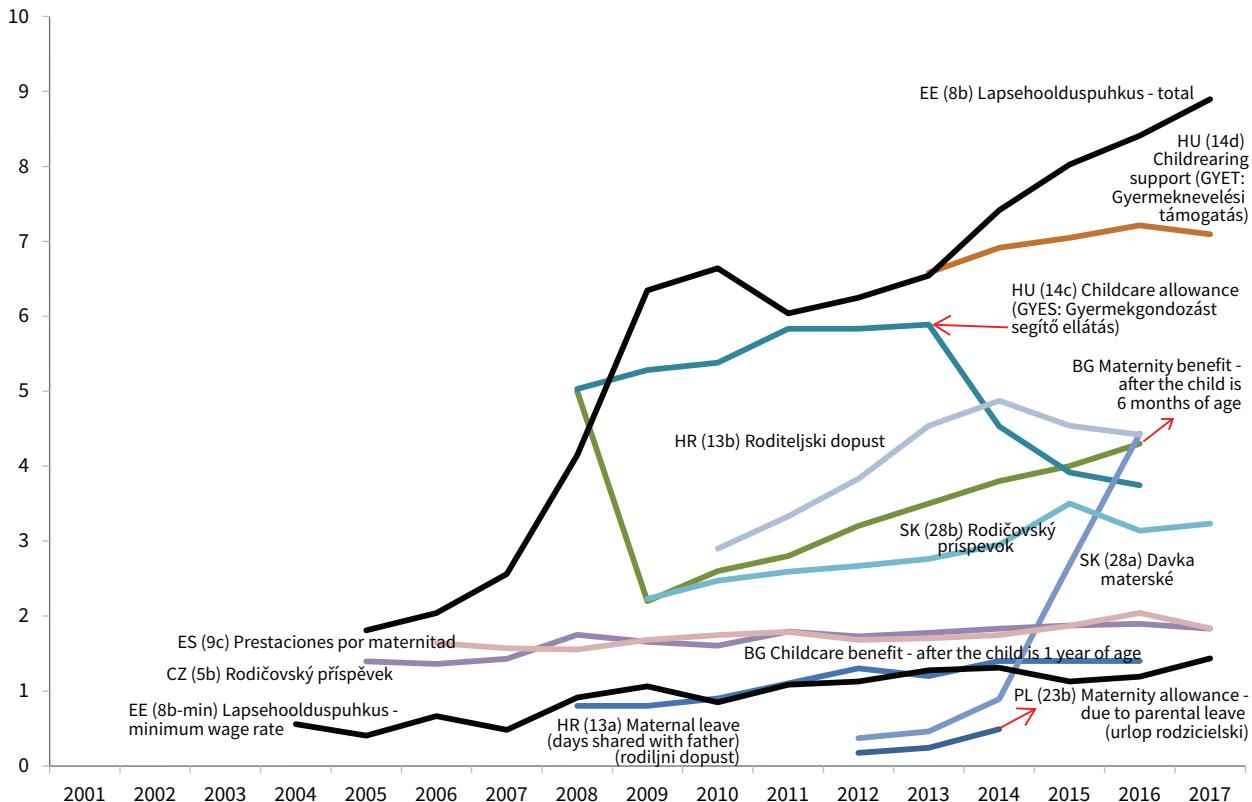
The importance of being clear about what the data contain and how they were generated is evident in the case of **Austria**. The official social security statistics, as published annually by Statistics Austria, provide a ‘snapshot’ of the number of recipients of parental leave allowance (*Kinderbetreuungsgeld* – 1c) in December of each year. According to these figures, the share of fathers remained consistently low at around 4%. However, other data paint a different picture. Riesenfelder and Danzer (2017), using a cohort approach, followed up on the actual uptake after the whole period of entitlement had expired. Their figures suggest a considerable upward trend of the share of fathers on parental leave – increasing to 14.5% for all fathers (1a) and 18.2% for fathers of babies born in 2014 who were ‘predominantly employed’ (1b) before their leave entitlement. This example shows that data on uptake might be underestimated if they refer only to the status quo at a certain point in time, especially if the

Figure 2: Share of fathers taking parental leave/benefits relative to all eligible parents taking parental leave allowance (2001–2017) for countries or leave types where the share is greater than 10%



Note: See description of the leave/benefits and sources in Table A1 in Annex 1.
Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018)

Figure 3: Share of fathers taking parental leave/benefits relative to all eligible parents taking parental leave allowance (2001–2017) for countries or leave types where the share is less than 10%



Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018); see description of the leave/benefits and sources in Table A1 in Annex 1

timing of the fathers' leave is not equally distributed over the whole year.

Smaller upward trends, yet departing from already higher initial levels of fathers' shares, were observed in **Belgium, Luxembourg and Sweden**.

A more 'modest' growth of the share of fathers in parental leave was recorded in **Hungary** (for the GYET benefit), **Spain** (prestacion por maternidad), **Bulgaria** (for the leave after the child is one year old), **Poland** (parental leave) and **Slovakia** (parental allowance). Fathers' shares also remained relatively stable 'overall' in **Bulgaria** (for the shared leave after the child is six months old), and **Croatia** (for the maternal leave days which can be shared with the father) and the **Czech Republic** (rodičovský príspevok). Declining shares, on the other hand, were found in **Hungary** (for the GYES benefit), **Poland** (the maternity leave benefit for fathers) and **Romania** (for men being the main beneficiary of child-rearing indemnity).

Propensity of fathers to take leave

What is the current state of fathers' participation in parental and paternity leave and how has it developed? Combining information from both indicators – the share of fathers in relation to births and the share of fathers among parents – it can be concluded that progress has been made in some countries in terms of increasing fathers' participation (Austria, Estonia for higher rates of benefits, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Italy, Portugal), or in maintaining higher levels (Sweden, Belgium, Luxembourg). But it also shows that a good number of countries with available data have low levels of fathers' participation in family leave (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary and Romania), despite some partial growth (Estonia for lower benefit rates, or Slovakia).

Differentiated figures

For countries where more differentiated figures (different parts of the leave or different benefit entitlements) were available, it is clear that not all countries can be ‘lumped together’. Fathers’ participation is greater among predominantly employed² fathers in **Austria** (than for those that are unemployed³) and the share of Austrian fathers is also highest (30%) in the shortest and income-related leave option but lowest (10%) in the longest flat-rate variant of the leave. A similar picture emerges in **Estonia**, where the share of men who took parental leave benefit at the maximum rate rose significantly⁴ from 7% in 2004 to 29% in 2017, while the share of men obtaining lower benefits (‘in the rate of the parental benefit or in the rate of monthly minimum wages’) remained extremely low at less than 2%. **Portuguese** uptake of fathers’ exclusive paternity leave days was higher for the compulsory than for the voluntary days, and uptake by Portuguese fathers receiving social parental benefit continues to be low.⁵

Taking all types of parental allowances available to Portuguese fathers together (i.e. including the ‘extended’ leave), the share of fathers in relation to all births remained relatively stable between 2009 and 2017, despite considerable growth in the initial shared parental leave.

In **Slovakia**, the share of men taking maternity benefit (*davka materske*) instead of the mother, or after she finished drawing her benefit, has increased from 0.3% to 4.4%, while the share of fathers taking parental benefit (*rodičovský príspevok*) has remained low at around 3%. In both cases, fathers can take the benefit provided the mother is not taking care of the child at the same time. One explanation for the increase is that replacement rates for the income-related maternity benefits have recently been increased, from 60% in 2011 to 75% in 2017 (Eurofound, 2017c). At the same time, media campaigns promoting the uptake were run in 2015 and 2016.

Countries without data over time

In **Cyprus**, according to data from the Labour Relations Department of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, 934 people (89% women and 11% men) registered their parental leave with the social security services between 2003 and 2011.

In **Greece**, there is no database in which the uptake of paternity or parental leave by fathers is systematically gathered. The most recent source available is the Labour Inspectorate’s Annual Report 2013, presented in KETHI (2016), on the use of parental leave in a sample of private sector enterprises (see Table 4 overleaf). While the share of men absent from work due to childcare or

Sweden: Progress from mapping the incidence to measures for ‘sharing equally’

The figures on the father’s uptake presented in the section above merely refer to the incidence. For example, a father taking just one day of leave would also be counted as ‘participating’ and sharing the family leave entitlement. Data on the actual duration of the leave were scarcely available and could not be obtained for the majority of Member States (see section on duration below and Table A5 in Annex 1).

In Sweden, the policy debate has progressed beyond the mere counting of the number of fathers on parental leave and now focuses more on increasing the number of couples who share their family entitlements equally. ‘Equal sharing’ in this context means that couples share the total amount of family leave days – between 40 and 60. For babies born in 2013, Swedish statistics show that only 14% of families have ‘shared equally’. Sharing equally is most common in families where either parent works in a job that ‘requires special theoretical competence’ (in that case, 28% of families share equally), or when the woman has a managerial position (23%). In contrast, families where the man works in a managerial position tend to ‘share equally’ in only 10% of the cases.

Source: Swedish National contribution, based on Försäkringskassan.

² Fathers with more than 183 days of employment (excluding minimal employment, i.e. employment below the social security threshold) within 365 days in a time slot ending six months before the child’s birth (for mothers) or six months before the start of the drawing period of the childcare benefit (for fathers).

³ More detailed figures are available (in German) in Riesenfelder (2017) and an overview is provided in Riesenfelder and Danzer (2017).

⁴ It should be stressed, however, that this group only concerns a minority of all parents on parental leave: in 2017 there were 1,255 parents in this group and among them 360 men.

⁵ Workers not covered by the Portuguese social security system, including civil servants, are not eligible for the paid paternity leave days. For this reason, the proportion of fathers per 100 live births taking the obligatory paternity leave days is less than 100%. Read more about the development of family leave in Portugal in Cunha et al (2017).

Table 4: Use of parental leave in a sample of Greek private sector enterprises

	Men		Women	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
Childcare leave	118	61	3,337	1,621
Parental leave	12	0	1,136	291
Children's school attendance licence	2,215	267	8,061	1,660
Sick leave for dependent family members	107	4	653	222
Reduced working day for child's disability	63	10	103	3
Single parent's leave	44	1	154	132
Total	2,599	343	13,444	3,829

Source: KETHI (2016) *Greek Labour Inspectorate, Annual Report 2013*.

parental leave is extremely low, it is higher for other family-related leave, such as sick leave for dependent family members, or reduced working days for caring for a disabled child.

In **Ireland**, where paid paternity leave was only introduced at the end of 2016, no data for the full year are yet available; however, 29,702 Irish fathers took the paternity benefit (payment for employed and self-employed people who are on paternity leave from work) between January and November 2017.

In the **United Kingdom**, 218,500 fathers received statutory paternity leave pay from 2016 to 2017, an increase of about 2% from the previous year. Data on the uptake of the new entitlement to statutory shared parental pay are not yet available.

Duration

Besides the incidence of men going on parental or paternity leave, another and even more important indicator for fathers' uptake is its duration or length: how much time fathers spend on paternity or parental leave with their children. In this regard, the authors have obtained statistics only from a very limited set of countries (see Table A5 in Annex 1).

Looking at those average days, three points are worth highlighting.

First, the average duration is determined by the provisions of each national leave scheme in place, and therefore varies considerably across countries. In **Germany**, men spent on average 92 days on parental leave with their children. In **Slovakia**, the small number of men who took maternity benefit spent 196 days on it. In **Denmark**, fathers spent around 30 days on *barselsorloven*, and in **Sweden**, fathers of babies born in 2013 spent on average 69 days on parental leave.

In **Finland**, in 2016, fathers took 21 days (out of the maximum of 54) of the paternity allowance period, spending on average 15 days at home with the mother after the birth and 26 days after the maternity and parental leave had ended. In **France**, the majority of the fathers that took paternity leave (95%) took the full amount of 11 days (or more). Around half of them took the leave immediately after the child's birth, the rest later, but only 7% took the leave after the end of the maternity leave period.

Second, mothers continue to spend a much longer time on parental leave than fathers: four times longer in **Germany** and **Sweden** and 10 times longer in **Denmark**.

Third, the average duration has been very stable over time in countries with available data.

Other interesting data on duration show that in **Germany** the youngest and oldest fathers (few in number) have the longest average durations of parental leave (8 months, when they are younger than 20 years old, 4.7 months when they are between 20 and 25 and 3.8 months when they are older than 45), while those 'in prime age' (between 30 and 40) spend on average just 2.9 months. In **Denmark**, there is a clear connection between the duration of the leave taken and the father's level of education. Fathers with the highest level of education (five years or more of higher education) spent on average 48 days on leave in 2015 – up from 26 days in 2003. Those with three to four years of higher education spent 40 days on average in 2015 (up from 24), while those with 'no education' or 'upper secondary' education spent only around half of the time: 20–23 days on average in 2015, up from 17 days in 2003. In **Sweden**, data from Försäkringskassan for children born in 2013 also showed considerable differences regarding the duration among occupations: male workers with higher education took on average 100 days of parental leave, while the duration was lowest for workers in agriculture (48 days).

4 Recent research on fathers' uptake of paternity and parental leave

The national experts from the Network of Eurofound Correspondents were asked to provide relevant and recent research (2014–2017) on the uptake of paternity/parental leave by fathers.

Statistical research on the development of fathers' participation in leave and evaluation studies on policy measures was the most prevalent theme in the supplementary research, available in around half of the countries. A few countries conduct more regular research on family leave, such as the Italian Observatory on Family Support Measures (Osservatorio Sulle Prestazioni a sostegno della famiglia) and the Portuguese Observatory of Families and Family Policies (Observatório das Famílias e das Políticas de Família).

In other countries, government ministries or social security funds have – sometimes repeatedly – commissioned evaluation studies to examine the status quo of family leave, its uptake and the effects of past reforms, often with a view to informing future reforms of family leave. Examples include: the Austrian *Wiedereinstiegsmonitoring* (Monitoring of re-entries) (Riesenfelder, 2017; Riesenfelder and Danzer, 2017); the German *Elterngeld Monitor* (Parental Leave Benefit Monitor) which was conducted in 2012 by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW, 2011, 2012); the Estonian study by Praxis on parental leave ahead of envisaged reforms (Biin et al, 2013); the recent Finnish research on family policies in the past two decades, based on detailed administrative data regarding 'about 573,566 families' with children (Saarikallio-Torp and Haataja, 2016); and a study (unpublished) commissioned by the Cypriot Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, estimating the expected impacts ahead of the introduction of paid paternity leave.

Various gender equality bodies/institutes or departments or women's organisations, which also address family leave-related research in their reports, represent other useful sources. Examples are studies by the Belgian *Vrouwenraad* (2016), the Belgian Institute for Gender Equality (2011), the Danish *Minister for Ligestilling* (2018), Gender Equality Monitoring for the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs (2016) and the Croatian Gender Equality Ombudsperson's regular reports (various years). In such reports, equality-related themes, such as the division of care responsibilities by gender and career interruptions, were prevalent research questions.

Opinions about what defines care role models were examined in several countries, with Spain and Croatia conceptualising 'fatherhood' and 'masculinity' (Barbeta-Viñas and Cano, 2017; Jugovic, 2016; Maskalan, 2016). Some countries specifically examined the questions fathers ask when contemplating leave choices. In Belgium and France, reports were based on online surveys among fathers. In Finland (Lammi-Taskula et al, 2017) and Norway (Kitterød et al, 2017), the reasons why fathers do not take leave were studied. Childcare was further explored in the Czech Republic (Paloncyová et al, 2014), Lithuania (Šarlauskas and Telešienė, 2014) and Spain (Borràs et al, 2018).

In Table 5, these themes are arranged in similar categories as those above, by the relative level of participation. The table shows that countries with an already higher rate of fathers' participation tend to focus their research more on statistics and policy evaluation studies and on themes around the 'equal sharing' of childcare. Countries with hitherto very low father participation rates tended to research traditional beliefs on gender roles, with the most recent research including questions on attitudes towards fathers' participation.

Table 5: Overview of recent research on fathers' uptake of parental and paternity leave in the EU28 and Norway, 2018

Research strand	Participation rates of father		
	High	Medium	Low
Statistics and evaluation studies on participation by fathers	Belgium: RVA/ONEM (2012); Vrouwenvraad (2016) Denmark: Andersen (2016) Finland: Saarikallio-Torp and Haataja (2016) Norway: Hamre (2017)	Austria: Riesenfelder and Danzer (2017) Riesenfelder (2017) Germany: Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2018); BMBFSJ (2017); DIW (2012) Italy – INPS (2017) Portugal: Wall and Leitão (2017); Cunha et al (2017)	Slovakia: Eurofound (2017c) Estonia: Biin et al (2013) Spain: Meil et al (2017)
Equal sharing	Denmark: Minister of Gender Equality (2018) France: Périvier (2017) Portugal: Perista et al (2016); Cunha et al (2017) Sweden: Ministry of Employment (2014)	Austria: BMASK (2018) Luxembourg: Zhelyazkova (2013)	
Traditional beliefs about gender roles/opinions and attitudes towards fathers' participation	Norway: Schou (2017) Portugal: Cunha et al (2017)		Croatia: Jugovic (2016); Maskalan (2016) Czech Republic: Kuchařová and Peychlová (2016) Spain: Barbeta-Viñas, and Cano (2017) Hungary: Bencsik and Juhász (2012) Slovenia: Hrženjak (2016)
Involvement in childcare		Lithuania: Šarlauskas and Telešienė (2014)	Czech Republic: Paloncyová et al (2014) Spain: Borràs et al (2018)
Why fathers choose not to take parental leave	Belgium: VIVA-SVV (2016) Portugal: Cunha et al (2017) Norway: Kitterød et al (2017) Finland: Saarikallio-Torp and Haataja (2016)	Luxembourg: Zhelyazkova (2013)	

Note: No additional research available for Bulgaria, Malta, Greece, Latvia, Poland or Romania.

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018)

Reasons why fathers take or forego their entitlements

The question as to why fathers take or forego their entitlements is a multifaceted one and singling out specific factors would not do justice to the complexity of the issue.

Contextual factors, in particular societal attitudes towards the role of fathers in relation to childcare, may already exert an impact on what kind of family leave arrangements are in place, how they have been designed and made available to fathers, how rigorously their uptake is supported within the business sphere and how strongly they are already adopted by fathers – thereby generating sufficient critical mass for new fathers to participate in childcare. Whether men take up their leave entitlements and how equally they share childcare and the distribution of paid and unpaid work

with their partners are decisions for both the household and the individual. The joint income of both partners and the opportunity costs in terms of foregone wage increases and career advancements are probably one of the most important ‘objective’ or tangible determinants of such a decision. Yet, in the context of persistent gender pay gaps and the influence of stereotypical gender roles, the household choice still tends to reinforce the status quo of the traditional model of male chief earner–female care provider.

Beyond the household level, other individual and job-specific factors may play a role in influencing the decision for men to partake of leave entitlements – such as age, education, the sector or occupation and company size; additional factors could include the place where people live and work, job prospects in the area and the type and accessibility of childcare facilities (Eurofound, 2019, forthcoming). Ultimately, job

security, as reflected in the type of employment contract held by the father, but also the actual or perceived level of support from the employer, can strongly influence the decision to take leave. In the sections below, the authors present recent statistics and research evidence from studies across Europe to illustrate this.

Obstacles and supporting factors

Looking into the most recent national research findings and statistics from the past five years, as reported by Eurofound's Network of Correspondents, the following main obstacles and supporting factors to taking leave were identified in various countries:

- The design and features of the leave: notably the level of compensation rates, but also the extent to which leave can be taken on a flexible basis.
- The perceived low support of the company and onerous administrative requirements to obtain benefits.
- Fathers' lack of eligibility to go on family-related leave and receive compensation.

Income and job security

Several studies have pointed to income-related considerations as key factors in the decision for fathers to partake or not in parental leave.

A recent survey in the **Czech Republic** (Kuchařov and Pejchlová, 2016), asking parents what types of parental leave fathers would take, found concerns about fathers' salary and employment security to be key. This is also mirrored by a qualitative study of **Norwegian** fathers which found job/income and career-related risks as major hindrances to fathers taking their whole entitlement (Kitterød et al, 2017). A **Finnish** (Salmi and Närvä, 2017) survey of fathers in relation to part-time family leave showed that 59% of respondents abstained from taking the leave mainly due to financial considerations, while only 3% of respondents said that uncertainty in the work situation was a hindrance. And in **Belgium**, where the share of fathers going on parental leave has risen recently, a survey of 2,399 men entitled to parental leave showed that over half (54%) did not take it due to financial reasons. This was particularly relevant for fathers and families with low incomes (VIVA-SVV, 2016).

In **Germany**, where parental leave benefit is linked to income, workers with higher incomes take *Elterngeld* more often than those with a low income. Prior to enactment of the new law, there was lively debate regarding the social aspects of the parental leave scheme, where there were already indications that uptake by fathers seemed to be greatest in families with higher incomes. Parental leave as a research issue has lost momentum since the introduction of the new *ElterngeldPlus* scheme, which has been broadly backed

by the Social Democrats, the Greens and the Left. As of 2018, debates on *ElterngeldPlus* in Parliament show that there is also support from both the Christian Democrat and Christian Social unions. Households with a high net income are still overrepresented among parents obtaining the benefit: 51% of parents with *ElterngeldPlus* have more than €3,000 per month at their disposal, as compared to 47% of all families with children younger than six years old. According to a survey of parents by the Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach (2018), loss of income and the fear of experiencing disadvantages at work remain obstacles for sharing more equally (and thereby taking advantage of the *Partnerschaftsbonus*).

In the **United Kingdom**, where the shared parental leave benefit is a flat rate and relatively low (equivalent to less than a quarter of men's median full-time weekly earnings), the low level of the benefits has been cited as a major hindrance for fathers to take their shared parental leave entitlements (see UK Parliament, 2017). According to a company survey by XPertHR, employers who top up the shared parental leave pay are twice as likely to receive shared parental leave requests as those who offer just the statutory rate (Carty, 2016). The study finds that one employer in four either enhances shared parental pay above the statutory minimum or plans to over the coming year, but over double this number currently offer enhanced maternity pay.

Zhelyazkova (2013) studied the decisions of fathers in **Luxembourg** to go on parental leave, based on an opportunity-cost approach, in which such costs are calculated in terms of income foregone minus the benefit obtained. She found that fathers with the lowest opportunity costs in terms of direct earnings foregone were more likely to go on leave than those whose costs were between €1,500 and €2,000. For those with higher costs, there was no significant difference – only those with very high opportunity costs had a significantly lower likelihood of taking up the leave. She also looked into 'indirect' opportunity costs in terms of foregone pay increases or missed promotion opportunities and found that fathers who had recently received higher pay were more likely to take leave than fathers with very modest pay increases, indicating that security of employment influences the decision to take leave.

The situation is different in **Hungary**, where fathers appeared to take on the childcare role only exceptionally and out of financial necessity. Bencsik and Juhász (2012) conducted qualitative and quantitative research into the social perceptions and attitudes towards fathers who are on GYES or GYED. In the qualitative phase of the research, in-depth interviews were carried out with seven couples where the father took paternity leave. They found that paternity leave by fathers was usually chosen for financial reasons. Most of the couples reported that in their environment their decision was seen as strange. Takács (2017) also found that there were financial reasons behind the fathers'

decision to take paternity leave, and that couples usually chose this option when the mother's salary was higher than the father's. Most of these fathers took paternity leave for less than a year, only two of them were 'full-time fathers' and none of them had a paid job during the paternity leave.

Design of the leave: flexibility aspects

How the leave is designed is another factor that could influence uptake. In a recent **Czech** survey, which investigated parents' preferences prior to the introduction of the new 'motivational parental leave', while two-thirds of respondents said that they would definitely take it, more than half of the interested respondents said that they would prefer a flexible uptake in terms of individual days – to help the mother 'in case of need' (Kuchařová and Peychlová, 2016). According to **Irish** research, there is a company-specific dimension to it. A company survey by employer organisation IBEC (2017) showed that large companies were more likely to allow their employees to take parental leave entitlements in a fragmented way: 70% out of a total of 373 employers responding allowed employees to fragment their leave, with 46% of this number allowing the leave to be taken on a daily basis and 43% on a weekly basis. Companies with over 500 employees were more likely to agree to fragmentation (100%) than smaller companies with less than 50 employees (54%), and foreign-owned firms were more likely to agree to it (83%) than Irish-owned firms (61%).

Company support

In **Estonia**, results from the Gender Equality Monitor in 2013 and 2016 showed basically similar results. Roughly a third of respondents stated that in their workplace it was difficult for fathers to stay on parental leave for at least one month or longer. However, men, compared to women, felt more confident about this issue (Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, 2014, 2016). The second Equality Report from **Germany** points out that fathers often have to justify longer periods of leave for infant care and have difficulties convincing employers why these are necessary (BMBFSJ, 2017). In a **Portuguese** qualitative study of men on parental leave, interviewees reported not only that their superiors and even social security misinformed them about their rights, but also that employers lacked understanding of their decision to share leave and of their motivation for staying at home with the baby. The men interviewed felt they were seen as transgressors for not putting their work and career interests ahead of family interests, questioning the image of the good worker. There were even some workers who suffered reprisals such as a cut in salary or dismissal (Cunha et al, 2017).

In the **United Kingdom**, where shared parental leave has only recently been introduced, there is evidence from surveys to show that people think their employers would not approve of the leave: a survey of 1,010

working parents by the NGO Working Families (2015) found that nearly half (45%) of fathers in their annual Modern Families Index in 2015 felt their employer would not approve of them availing of shared parental leave. At the same time, more respondents agreed than disagreed that being allowed to take shared parental leave would boost their commitment to their employer. Similarly, the Fawcett Society found that 35% of fathers in employment with children under the age of 18 believe that fathers who take time off to care for children are not supported by their employers (Fawcett Society, 2016). **Slovenian** research (Hrženjak, 2016) suggests that employers' expectations of their male employees could be one reason for the fathers' low uptake of parental leave, but in a wider context this reflects attitudes in society and the absence of a positive image of the father carrying out more family responsibilities.

However, there are also recent counter-examples highlighted by the research. A case-study-based research of **Austrian** companies showed growing acceptance and 'snowball effects', with increasing numbers of male employees taking their parental leave or part-time entitlements, once a few others had started to take theirs, with senior managers in particular acting as role models.

As soon as the first fellow takes parental leave, the second one says, 'Well, if he can do it, I can do it too'. [...] Six years ago, there was this guy who set the ball rolling. The others then started grappling with the issue, which led to men taking parental leave as well as women.

(Interview with the management of a small company – BMASK 2018, p. 28)

And the research also showed that within the surveyed companies, short-term parental leave (more than long-term) was becoming the new norm and was perceived as being 'more and more cool'.

Salmi and Närvi's (2017) online survey of part-time leave among 1,239 **Finnish** men showed that 'difficulty in addressing the employer' or 'the employer objected' were among the least frequently quoted obstacles.

Legal entitlement to the leave

While many fathers can take paid paternity or parental leave, still not all do, due to a lack of legal entitlement to it. This is a hindrance, particularly in countries where it is not an individual entitlement but connected to the mothers' entitlement, or where the entitlement is linked to certain eligibility criteria, such as a minimum number of contributions to social security schemes, or to the employment status of the father.

In **Portugal**, for instance, there is a legal obstacle to the father taking 'initial parental leave', related to the mother's position in the job market. If she is not eligible for the initial parental leave, whether on account of being inactive or for any other reason, the father loses

the right to it even if he is working, and is only entitled to the father's exclusive initial parental leave. This explains why just 71% of Portuguese fathers of newborn babies take the mandatory paternity leave days. Similarly, in the **United Kingdom**, analysis by the Trades Union Congress (TUC, 2015) showed that the strict eligibility rules constitute a barrier, with 40% of working fathers with a child aged under one not qualifying for shared parental leave because their partner is not in paid work (fathers are only entitled to shared parental leave if the mother of their child is entitled to maternity leave). In **Norway**, around 13% of fathers were found to be ineligible for the father's quota (Kitterød et al, 2017). More information on eligibility can be found in Table A1 in Annex 1.

Administrative requirements

Another obstacle seems to be the administrative requirements linked to obtaining benefits, which in some countries were perceived as too demanding for parents or for companies.

According to a survey of 972 parents in **Germany** who were recipients of *ElterngeldPlus* – the more flexible variant which can be combined with work – the vast majority of the respondents find the application procedure difficult, with slightly more men than women finding it difficult. Only 25% of mothers and 20% of fathers said that they found it easy to complete the application form (Deutscher Bundestag, 2018). In **Norway**, Kitterød et al (2017) reported that other problems associated with the non-uptake of leave were related to the administration within NAV (the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration), including complicated application forms and the lack of information and competence among NAV employees. Norman and Fagan (2017) found that applying for shared parental leave in the **United Kingdom** is also a complex process, as illustrated by the government's 66-page technical guide, representing a hindrance for companies who are actively trying to promote shared parental leave.

Individual and job-related factors

The obstacles and supporting factors discussed above are those which can potentially – to a greater or lesser extent – be influenced by policymakers. The available data and research, however, also point to some individual and job-related factors that influence uptake and these are described in this section.

Age

Male recipients of parental or paternity leave benefits are most often found in the 30–40 age bracket in those countries for which data were obtained: in the **Czech Republic**, fathers on parental leave were 'getting older', as reflected by a shift in prevalence from the 30–34 age group to the 35–39 age group between 2004 and 2015.

In **Finland**, most fathers on parental or paternity leave are in the 30–34 age group. In **Italy**, more than half of fathers on leave are between 34 and 44 years old. In **Germany**, 35% of fathers on parental leave are aged between 30 and 35, and another 30% are aged between 35 and 40. These data are closely linked to the overall age distribution of fathers and do not reveal more about the influence of a father's age on his decision to take parental leave (unlike the French multivariate research – see next section).

Occupation or employment status

The employment status or occupation of the father is another factor to be investigated. Descriptive univariate statistics obtained show that, in **Austria**, fathers on parental leave are overrepresented among farmers, the self-employed and civil servants. In **Italy**, blue-collar workers make up a growing share (61% in 2016, up from 57% in 2012) of all private sector male recipients of parental leave beneficiaries, while the white-collar workers' share amounted to 33% in 2016 – indicating that overall the propensity of white-collar workers to take parental leave remains higher. In **Sweden**, the share of male parents who took fewer than five days of parental leave was found to be highest among agricultural workers (34%), managers (29%) and those performing work not requiring special vocational training (29%), while it was lowest among workers requiring a theoretical special competence (11%) and those whose work requires a short university education or equivalent (16%).

Residence

Residence might be another determinant of the likelihood that fathers take leave. Based on administrative statistics, the share of men among all parents who take leave varies considerably across regions, defined on a NUTS 2 basis. From countries with available data, it was relatively often (but not always) found to be higher in locations around capital cities, as was the case in **Austria**, the **Czech Republic** and **Bulgaria**. The share of **Swedish** fathers 'sharing equally' the number of days (i.e. 40–60) is among the highest in Stockholm. The picture is not so clear in **Germany**, where the share of fathers on parental leave in Berlin ranks only fifth among all regions, yet it is still in the upper tercile. In **Portugal**, the regional distribution of fathers taking out any kind of parental leave benefit is even, with the lowest share in Faro (42%) deviating not much from the highest in Aveiro, Braga and Leiria (47%), and Lisbon having a slightly lower share (43%). In **Spain**, the share of fathers taking out *prestaciones por maternidad* (parental leave) in Madrid was slightly lower than the national average.

Findings from multivariate studies

Beyond the findings reported above, some recent studies applied multivariate models to examine the factors determining the non-uptake of parental or paternity leave by fathers, and considered several determinants simultaneously.

According to a study based on **Finnish** register data (Saarikallio-Torp and Haataja, 2016), one-fifth of fathers do not take any parental leave. The probability of not taking any parental leave is especially high among low-income workers and those with a low level of education, entrepreneurs and the unemployed. In contrast, highly educated, high-paid men working in the public sector in big organisations and/or in predominantly female sectors are more likely to take paternity leave. For **France**, recent multivariate research by the statistical service of the French Ministry of Social Affairs (DREES) found that 'older' fathers (35–40 years old), especially those older than 40, were less likely to take paternity leave upon the birth of their first child (Legendre and Lhommeau, 2016). Also less likely to take leave were fathers with three or more children in the household, those regularly working more than 40 hours per week and those with a very low household income. Fathers on fixed-term term contracts in any sector

(48%) and self-employed workers⁶ (32%) also had lower odds of availing of their entitlement. On the other hand, fathers working in the public sector were most likely to avail of their paternity leave entitlements (88%), followed by private sector employees with permanent contracts (80%).

In **Norway**, where fathers were entitled to a 'father's quota' of 10 weeks until mid-2018⁷, Kitterød et al (2017) studied those who were entitled to it but did not take it for the entire duration. They tended not to have a university degree, to have either a low or very high income, and to be fathers born abroad. Moreover, limited uptake of the father's quota is common among employees in sectors such as accommodation and food service activities, human health and social work activities, transport and storage and real estate, scientific, technical, administrative and support services. One key finding of this study was also that a father's non-uptake of the entire quota does not necessarily indicate his non-involvement in care for his children: some of the fathers using the full quota were not necessarily absent from work, but combined the benefit with flexible working while they were not the main childcarer. On the other hand, some fathers who did not avail of the full entitlement period might have been caring for the child during periods of unemployment or while on sick leave.

⁶ In France, the ceiling for the payment is lower for the self-employed than that for private sector workers (€52.10 per day and €82.32 per day respectively in 2014), which may explain the low participation of the former.

⁷ This increased to 15 weeks as of 1 July 2018.

5 | Summary and conclusions

This report presents country-specific data on fathers' uptake of parental and paternity leave across Europe since the beginning of the millennium, insofar as they were available.

The data are heterogeneous and patchy, mainly due to the fact that the national leave systems are so different, but also in terms of how the data are captured and reported. Care has been taken to compare like with like as far as possible. It is also important to stress that the data obtained are better suited for within-country comparisons over time, whereas cross-country comparisons should only be made with the utmost caution and by consulting the background information provided in Table 1 and Table A1 in Annex 1, together with other country-specific information.

Against this background, it can be concluded that progress has been made in many Member States in increasing the number and share of fathers who are taking parental or paternity leave.

While paternity leave around the time of the child's birth is typically well paid – in the majority of cases without major loss of earnings – the periods are usually very short. Looking at these shorter and typically better-compensated periods of leave exclusively available for fathers, it can be concluded that the uptake is relatively high among eligible fathers in most Member States for which data were available. Progress in the number of men per 100 children who take such leave or benefits has been made since 2013 in the Baltic States and Poland in particular, and before that in Portugal and Slovenia.

However, with the exception of the initial family time typically taken around the time of the birth of the child, the data on parental leave suggest that this benefit is not yet fully exploited. Parental leave is typically less well compensated and in a number of Member States the right to parental leave remains a family right rather than an individual right. Moreover, some legal frameworks maintain the principle that the mother is the main beneficiary of leave policies rather than the mother and father together, effectively excluding a number of fathers from such leave.

Nevertheless, progress has been made in several countries on increasing the share of fathers taking parental leave (Austria, Estonia for higher rates of benefits, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal), or in maintaining already high levels (Belgium, Luxembourg, Sweden). But the research also shows that

a good number of countries with available data remain at low levels of father participation (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania), despite some partial growth (Estonia for those receiving lower amounts of compensation or Slovakia).

However, not all newborn children have eligible fathers who can take advantage of such entitlements, as such prerogatives may be linked to the mother's entitlement or the father's employment status. It should be noted that the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is currently working on assessing the eligibility of potential mothers and fathers for paid parental leave in the EU.

This report has brought together information on the incidence of fathers' participation in paternity and parental leave from national statistics in Europe, in the form of the number of men among parents or per 100 children. However, these measures fall short of indicating the actual extent of father participation, as they only record the 'incidence', meaning that in many countries fathers would already be counted as participating in the statistics if they had taken a few days off work.

On the other hand, data on the actual duration of the leave by gender were scarce, but where they were available they showed that fathers take much shorter periods of family leave than mothers, with little progress noted among those few countries able to provide such data. In the spirit of 'what cannot be measured cannot be managed', any efforts to improve the data collection on family leave across Europe are important prerequisites when the objective is to increase men's participation in family-related leave.

In this regard, the Swedish method of collecting data and monitoring the extent and development of 'equal sharing' of family leave days could be considered a good example for others.

Research conducted over the past five years or so has not shown any original or surprising findings. Maintaining an adequate level of household income remains a key concern of families and strongly influences the decision as to whether and to what extent men take leave or cut back on working time. In cases where mothers have well-paid jobs, fathers start off from relatively secure job positions, the compensation ratios for foregone pay are high, the parents are well educated, the administrative hurdles to obtain benefits are low and the companies and social

environment are regarded as supportive, the likelihood that fathers participate to a greater extent in family-related leave and care has been found to be higher.

The role that companies and the social environment can play is also highlighted by recent research, with findings in several countries pointing to the perceived lack of employers' support as a hindrance in fathers' decisions to take more leave, while research in other countries shows how such support – notably with managers

acting as role models – can also greatly promote uptake. Whether men sharing family leave more equally with their partners becomes 'cool' and 'the new norm' in response to the lead taken by others, or whether men feel embarrassed if they have to engage in childcare work through necessity, are societal issues that cannot be solved solely by putting entitlements in place. What is needed is to arrive at a shared understanding of those involved at various levels – governments and social partners, employers and employed parents, fathers and mothers – in order to promote a more equal sharing among women and men.

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Annexes

Annex 1

Descriptions of family leave and additional data

Table A1: Background information on fathers' uptake data

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Austria	Karenzurlaub (leave), Kinderbetreuungsgeld (childcare benefit) (1a-c) According to labour law, the maximum duration of parental leave (entitlement by family) is up to the child's second birthday. There are no mandatory periods for fathers, only optional ones. New model for births from 1 March 2017: parents can choose between flat-rate childcare benefit account or an income-related model. The available data relate to a previous model (for births up to 28 February 2017). Within this model, parents could choose between four flat rates or an income-related model: €436 per month for 30 months or for 36 months if both parents apply for the payment (30+6 bonus months' option); €624 per month for 20 months or 24 months (20+4 bonus months' option); €800 a month for 15 months or 18 months (15+3 bonus months' option); €1,000 per month for 12 months or 14 months (for those earning less than €1,000 per month (12+2 bonus months' option) - 80% of the last net income for 12 months or 14 months for those earning between €1,000 and €2,000 a month (12+2 bonus months' income-related option)).	All parents, universal benefit, including employed, self-employed, civil servants, unemployed, students, etc.	The childcare benefit is administered by the social security institutions which are obliged by the Childcare Benefit Act (<i>Kinderbetreuungsgeldgesetz</i> (KBGG, §36 (2))) to provide statistical data (e.g. on the number of beneficiaries, how long they intend to draw the benefits, etc.) to the Minister for Families and Youth. The Federal Ministry provides monthly statistics on the beneficiaries of the childcare benefit (numbers, by gender, professional group, social security institution, regional province, family status), but no further data (e.g. length of drawing by each parent).	Data relate to the previous model, before 2017 and represent an average across all options. The data presented here, by: (1a) and (1b) Riesenfelder and Danzer (2017) are based on a cohort approach and include all fathers' and predominantly employed fathers separately. Fathers with more than 183 days of employment (excluding minimal employment, i.e. employment below the social security threshold) within 365 days in a time slot ending six months before the child's birth (mothers) or six months before the start of the drawing period of the childcare benefit (fathers). (1c) Statistik Austria (2017) – <i>Kinderbetreuungsgeldbezieher</i> , December each year. As the minimum drawing period of the benefit is two months, all figures (1a-c) refer to parents obtaining it for at least two months.
Belgium	Vaderschapsverlof/Congé de paternité (2a) and Ouderschapsverlof met uitkeringen (parental leave with benefits) (2b) (2a) 10 days during the first 4 months after the birth. For the first three (mandatory) days, there is no change in salary; for the remaining seven days, the mutual fund pays 82% of the usual gross salary. Ouderschapsverlof (2b) Reduction of working time by a half: €401.25 for workers under 50 and €680.62 for 50+. Reduction of working time by a fifth: €136.12 for under 50 and €272.25 for 50+. Temporary break of work (four months); €802.52	All male employees. Unemployed and self-employed fathers are not eligible.	Rijksdienst Voor Arbeidsvoorziening/Office National de l'emploi.	(2a) No data. (2b) Yearly average of fathers on paid parental leave.
Bulgaria	Otpusk po bashtinstvo (3a), Maternity benefit (after the child is six months old) (3b) and Childcare leave up to two years old (3c) (3a) <i>Otpusk po bashtinstvo</i> (paternity leave): in addition, the father of a newborn child acquires the right to use 15 calendar days of leave immediately after the delivery of the baby from the hospital. (3b) Maternity leave is 410 calendar days, of which 45 obligatory days should be taken before the child's birth. The father could use the remainder of 410 days parental leave instead of the mother (with the consent of the mother) after the child is older than six months. Compensation at 90% of the average gross salary. (3c) <i>Otpusk za orgleidane na dete do 2 godishna vazast</i> – after the child is one year old – until the child is two years old. Leave for children up to two years old (two years and six months for every additional child). It can be transferred to the father, grandmother or grandfather. Flat rate: 2015–2017 fixed at BGN 340 (€174).	For all leave: paid social insurance for at least 12 months.	The only body capturing data on maternity/parental leave by fathers in Bulgaria is the National Social Security Institute (NSSI). NSSI is responsible for payment of benefits for childbirth and maternity/paternity leave. NSSI captures only paid episodes of all eligible fathers for all types of maternity/parental leave. The data here include all types of leave (3a-c).	

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Czech Republic	Otcovská dovolená and Dávka otcovského poporodního péče (allowance) (5a) Rodičovská dovolená (leave) and Rodičovský příspěvek (allowance) (5b)	<p>(5a) Newly introduced paternity leave and allowance: no data.</p> <p>(5b) Rodičovská dovolená (leave) and Rodičovský příspěvek (allowance).</p> <p>Parental allowance up to child's fourth birthday. Parental allowance is paid to a parent until the youngest child in the family is four years old, up to a maximum amount of CZK 220,000 (€8,524). 70% of the claimant's reduced daily reference amount.</p>	<p>Parental leave applies to the mother of the child (after the end of her maternity leave) and to the father (from the child's birth). They can apply for parental leave from their employer until the child is three years old. The parental allowance can be taken until the child is four years old. The figure goes beyond those on parental leave.</p>	<p>(5a) No data.</p> <p>(5b) Average monthly number of parental allowance recipients. The number of parental allowance recipients does not correspond to the number of parents on parental leave, as parents who are self-employed, not in the labour force, or unemployed, etc. next to working parents can also be included.</p>
Germany	Elterngeld (6a) and ElterngeldPlus (6b)	<p>(6a) Parental leave is available for a maximum of three years. From July 2015, parental leave can be taken in three blocks without the employer's consent: two blocks may lie between the third and eighth year of a child's life and last up to two years respectively (previously only 12 months). The employer may refuse the claim of a third block of parental leave between the third and eighth year of life only for urgent operational reasons. Parental leave allowance is paid for 14 months if fathers choose to take two months of parental leave. A separate maternity leave regulation is not in place.</p> <p>(6b) A new option as of 2015 in which parents can claim benefits when reducing their working hours. No data in this report.</p>	<p>All parents, employed, unemployed and self-employed, students.</p>	<p>Federal Statistical Office (<i>destatis</i>) monitors the uptake of the schemes Elterngeld and ElterngeldPlus laid down in the Federal Act on parental leave allowances and parental leave (<i>BundesElterngeld und Elterngeldgesetz, BEEG</i>, 2007; latest revision regarding the new <i>ElterngeldPlus</i> and partnership bonus scheme in 2015). The database is the parental leave allowances per child (<i>Bezugsstatistik</i>) registered by the authorities at the end of the duration of the allowance scheme.</p>
Denmark	Fædrelov (7a) and Forældrelov (7b) – both as part of <i>Barselelof</i>	<p>(7a) First two weeks after birth are earmarked for men.</p> <p>(7b) In Denmark the employed and secured unemployed parents of a child have a right to receive parental leave benefits from 4 weeks before the (expected) birth of a child until 14 weeks after the child is born. The 4 weeks before birth and 14 weeks after the birth are exclusively for the mother.</p> <p>After the 14 weeks, the parents have 32 weeks to share between them. Whether it is paid by the employer or by parental benefits is decided through the parents' contractual terms with the employer.</p> <p>Most businesses pay full wages in parts of parental leave, in which case the subsidiaries go to the business. After the 14 weeks, the employer pays a further 11 weeks' leave, with both parents having the right to 4 weeks each. The remaining three weeks' leave can be taken by either the mother or the father. The part of the 11 weeks' leave granted to each of the parents cannot be traded between them and, if not taken, the payment is cancelled.</p>	<p>Employed, self-employed and secured unemployed.</p>	<p>The register is based on the subsidiary system. It therefore covers all employed parents in all kinds of jobs and sectors who took at least one day of paid parental leave.</p> <p>In theory, a company can fail to register for parental leave benefits, but that would be highly unlikely since the business then will fail the subsidiaries. There are also statistics on parents outside the labour market, but technically they are not taking parental leave; they simply stay in the social benefit system they are already a part of.</p> <p>Both series for (7a) and (7b) only contain men that are employed or self-employed.</p>

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Estonia	Paternity benefit (8a) and Parental benefit (8b) Currently, there are two different types of leave available for fathers: (8a) 'Paternity leave' is available for working fathers. It comprises 10 working days, paid in the amount of the father's average wage and it can be taken during a period of two months prior to the birth date or two months after the birth. (8b) 'Parental leave' can be used by either the mother or father. It can be taken up to 3 years, and is paid up to 18 months. Parents can share the leave, but cannot stay on the leave together (for example, mother takes a year and then father takes remaining six months, etc.). However, the parental leave is mostly used by mothers only.	(8a) Working fathers. (8b) All parents are eligible, irrespective of their employment status.	Source: Estonian National Social Insurance Board, national social insurance statistics	(8a) Working fathers who received the paternity benefit. (8b) Working fathers and mothers who received the parental benefit – total, all types of compensation rates. (8b-100) Recipients of the parental benefit at 100% of income. (8b-max) Recipients of the parental benefit with the highest rate of compensation. (8b-min) Recipients of the parental benefit with the low rate of compensation, equal to the statutory minimum wage.
Spain	Prestación de paternidad (9a) and Prestaciones por maternidad (9b) (9a) As of 1 January 2017, four uninterrupted weeks, as individual right for the father, to be taken any time during the maternity leave. (9b) In Spain, maternity leave gives mothers the right to take six weeks of paid leave after the birth plus 10 weeks that can be shared between the mother and father. These 10 weeks can be taken full time or part time.	(9a) Paternity leave is for all employed fathers, and self-employed (Leave Review 2017). (9b) Employed (including self-employed).	Social Security (Seguridad Social).	(9a) Fathers receiving paternity leave allowance. (9b) Fathers receiving maternity leave allowance.
Finland	Paternity leave – <i>Isyysvapaat/faderskapsledighet (10a)</i> and Parental leave – <i>Vanhemppainvapaa/föräldralördighet (10b)</i> Family leave in Finland is based on the Employment Contracts Act. The family leave system consists of the maternity leave, the paternity leave and the parental leave. Fathers are entitled to a 9-week-long paternity leave (5½ working days), to be taken before the child turns 2. Three weeks of these can be used at the same time as the maternity leave, which lasts 105 working days (divided into a prenatal leave of 30–50 working days and a post-natal leave of 55–75 working days). In addition, the parental leave allowance, that lasts up to 158 working days after the maternity leave has ended, can be taken by either the mother or the father or be divided between them according to what the parents decide.	Universal, not related to employment.	In Finland, The Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), is the public authority responsible for family entitlements.	The data includes all sub-periods of parental leave for which parental allowance can be drawn, that is: maternity leave (<i>isyysvapaat</i>), paternity leave (<i>isyysvapaat</i>) and parental leave (<i>vanhemppainvapaa</i>) (10a, b).
France	Congé d'accueil à l'enfant (11a) and Prestation partagée d'éducation de l'enfant/PreParE (11b) (11a) For a single child, fathers may take 11 consecutive days after the birth of a child, including Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. For more than 1 child, the leave consists of a maximum of 18 days. In addition, the French Labour Code grants three days of leave. (11b) In addition to paternity leave, on the arrival of a child, a father who has at least one year of seniority in the company can benefit, like the mother, from a parental leave of education. This leave allows him to interrupt his professional activity for three years while retaining his employment contract. This leave is unpaid. However, the parent may obtain an allowance.	(11a) Employed, self-employed, unemployed. (11b) A lump sum allowance is paid to parents of children under three who are not working or who work part time. The amount is €396.01 for someone employed part time and €256.01 for someone employed part time between 50% and 80% of a full-time job. To receive it, the parent must have at least eight-quarters of old-age pension contributions validated for a professional activity, during a period that varies according to the number of children.	(11a) Paid paternity leave allowance is paid by compulsory social security. The main source that provides an analysis of the data issued from the different social security regimes is the MGD study of the statistic services of the Ministry of Social Affairs (DREES) launched every five years since 2002 (<i>Enquête Modes de garde et d'accueil des jeunes</i>). However, only the last one, launched in 2013, collects for the first time eligibility and fathers' use of paternity leave following the birth of their youngest child. (11b) No data.	

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Croatia	Maternal leave days shared with father - <i>Rodiljni dopust</i> (13a) and Parental leave after the child reached six months - <i>Roditeljski dopust</i> - (13b) Croatian legislation distinguishes between 'maternity' leave (<i>rodiljni dopust</i>) and 'parental' leave (<i>roditeljski dopust</i>). There is no statutory maternity leave. The maximum period of leave in Croatia is 12 or 14 months for the first and the second child, depending on whether and how a mother and father share the leave. Maternity leave lasts until the baby is six months old. The first 70 days following the birth can, one at a time, be used only by the mother, whereas the remaining period of maternity leave is usually used by the mother, but the father can use it instead, if the mother agrees. While parental leave is a personal right of both parents, one parent can transfer two months of their entitlement to the other if they are both employed and if both parents give written consent. Parents can use their entitlement at the same time or consecutively. Leave can be taken in the following ways: a) fully (in one period); b) partially (no more than two times per year, each time for no less than 30 days); c) part time (duration is doubled and compensation is 50% of the compensation for full-time leave). Leave can be taken until the child turns eight years old.	Both (13a) and (13b) Employed and self-employed parents.	Both (13a) and (13b) The Croatian Health Insurance Fund is responsible for the data collection of the mothers and fathers that used paid maternity leave (<i>rodiljni dopust</i>) and paid Parental leave (<i>roditeljski dopust</i>) during the year. These data are not published by the Croatian Health Insurance Fund but are available at Yearly Report by the Gender Equality Ombudsman.	Not available.
Hungary	GYET (child-rearing support) (14b) and GYES (childcare allowance) (14c) GYET (14b) Parental leave in Hungary is a family entitlement, so parents can choose whether the father or the mother will stay with the child, although usually it is the latter. Parental leave for insured parents: a) After the maternity leave, until the child's second birthday; b) After the second birthday of the child until his/her third birthday (non-mandatory). (14c) GYES is a flat-rate benefit equal to the amount of the minimum old-age pension' (€91 in 2018). For multiple births, 200% of this amount is paid in the case of two children, 300% for three children, with similar increases for 'additional children'.	GYET (14b) All parents (insured and uninsured), it is for families with three or more children (the youngest child should be between three and eight years old). GYES (14c) All parents (insured and uninsured), until the child's third birthday.	The Hungarian State Treasury has data.	(14b) Number of GYET beneficiaries, persons, 2013-2017. (14c) Monthly average number of GYES beneficiaries according to gender, per 1,000.
Italy	Congedo di paternità - Mandatory paternity leave days - (16a) and Voluntary paternity leave days (16b) and Congedo parentale (16c) The paternity leave can be mandatory and voluntary. Data is provided on the number of beneficiaries of the two types of leave. For 2016 and 2017, the mandatory paternity leave was increased to two days, whereas for 2018 it was further augmented to four days. The paternity leave was introduced in Italy for private sector employees on an experimental basis by law 92/2012 (Art. 4-242-4) for the years 2013-2015 and it has been extended thereafter twice, in 2015 for 2016, and in 2016 for 2017 and 2018. The original measure provided for one day of mandatory leave and two days of voluntary leave. Both the mandatory and the voluntary paternity leave must be taken within the fifth month from the child's birth. The voluntary leave remained set at two days in 2016, it was suspended in 2017 and it has been reintroduced as one day in 2018. The voluntary paternity leave can be taken as an alternative and in replacement of the mandatory maternity leave. (16c) Parental leave is only voluntary: 6 months per parent – individual and non-transferable, max. 10 months, whereby it can be extended to 11 months when shared and when the father takes at least 3 months. 30% of basic remuneration up to the children's age of six years, unpaid afterwards.	(16a, b) All employees and self-employed workers (From 2017 Leave Review). (16c) All employed parents, except domestic workers and home helps. Self-employed workers are generally entitled to three months, which can be taken only during the first year after the child's birth (from 2017 Leave Review).	The source for data on parental leave is the National Institute of Social Security (Inps). In the database and statistics section there is a dedicated observatory on family support measures (<i>Osservatorio sulle prestazioni a sostegno della famiglia</i>). Only private sector employees. (16c) Data on parental leave is available in three separate datasets covering private sector employees (including agriculture), self-employed workers and semi-autonomous workers respectively, which corresponds to three different schemes. Data are provided per type of employment contract (open-ended, fixed-term, seasonal). Parental leave (2012-2016). Number of male beneficiaries by employment contract (private sector employees), age and job classification.	

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Lithuania	Tėvystės atostogos (17a) – Paternity leave and Vaiko priežiūros atostogos (17b) – Parental leave <p>(17a) Average duration of paternity leave in Lithuania is 30 days since paternity leave is granted to insured men from the day of birth of the child until the child reaches 1 month old.</p> <p>(17b) Parental leave is granted until the child reaches three years old. A maternity (paternity) allowance is paid for the period of a childcare leave after the end of a maternity leave until the child is one or two years old. Parents can choose between two options of length and benefit.</p>	Fathers who have at least 12 months of social insurance during the last 24 months. Same-sex couples are not eligible (from Leave Review.)	In Lithuania, data related to paternity/parental leave are collected and published by two main bodies: the State Social Insurance Fund Board under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (Sodra) and the Lithuanian Statistics Department (LSD). However, both of them (Sodra and LSD) publish basically the same data. LSD receives aggregate data from Sodra and then publishes them in the LSD's database.	Data covers only those parents who take paternity/parental leave in Lithuania. The data capture all parents in different forms of employment (employed, self-employed, etc.), i.e. although eligible for the benefits. Only the paid part of leave episodes is covered (17a) – LSD data: annual average of paternity benefit recipients. (17b) Sodra data: number of parental leave benefit recipients by gender – Men.
Luxembourg	Parental leave – Congé parentale (18b) <p>The parent can request either the 'first parental leave', which must be taken immediately after the maternity or adoption leave, or the 'second parental leave', which must be taken before the child's 6th birthday (or 12th birthday for adopted children). Parental leave is only granted once per child. If one of the parents waives their right to parental leave, the leave cannot be transferred to their spouse to allow the latter to take two periods of parental leave.</p>	Affiliated to the Luxembourg social security system and in uninterrupted employment for at least 12 months; working for a minimum of 10 hours a week (based on Leave Review network).	Sourced from the Luxembourg Ministry of Family, Integration and Greater Region. Administrative data from social security registers provided by the General Inspectorate of Social Security (IGSS). During parental leave, the parent is entitled to an allowance paid by the <i>Caisse pour l'avenir des enfants</i> (CAE) (Children's Future Fund) as a replacement income.	The sources capture episodes of paid and unpaid leave, the eligible fathers, the different types of leave and the leave of fathers in different sectors. Data refer to number of fathers on parental leave per year, adding up the first and the second part of the leave.
Latvia	Paternity leave – Paternitātes pabalsts (19a) and Parental leave – Vecāku pabalsts (19b) <p>(19a) Paternity leave is granted not later than two months after the child is born. The benefit must be requested within six months from the first day of the leave.</p> <p>The benefit shall be granted in the amount of 80% of the average insurance contributions salary of the applicant. The average insurance contributions of an employee for the receipt of the paternity benefit is calculated for a period of 12 calendar months ending 2 months prior to the month in which the leave began. For a self-employed person, the average insurance contributions salary shall be calculated for the 12-month period ending one-quarter before the quarter in which the leave begins.</p> <p>In Latvia there is a complicated system of transferability of leave and benefit, the number of the days immediately following child birth and the maximum length of leave. These terms are established by law as changeable items, and are not specifically captured by the statistics.</p>	A man is eligible for paternity benefit if he is working at a paid job, has social insurance and is the father of a newborn child. He is eligible to take leave in relation to his child's birth for the duration of 10 calendar days. A self-employed person has the right to receive paternity benefit if he has made social insurance contributions. By completing an application for the allocation of the benefit, the self-employed individual must himself specify the period during which the leave will be taken.	Two main sources regularly capture the uptake of paternity/parental leave by fathers: the State Revenue Service (employers are requested to provide data about leave periods awarded to fathers) and the State Social Insurance Agency (VSAA) that receives this data from VID and calculates benefits relevant to income, any conditions and length of leave. Statistical data is not regularly casted or published, but is available free of charge on request. Publicly available statistical data can be found on the VSAA homepage (but not in English). Basic data on social benefits is published by the Central Statistical Bureau's in their statistical yearbook and the Central Statistical Bureau's online database. More detailed data is available from primary data in the State Social Insurance Agency (including data collected by the State Revenue Service) for policymaking and analytical needs on demand.	These sources capture the following cases: paid leave episodes, and it is possible to identify episodes when the request for leave and/or benefit was rejected; all eligible fathers (i.e. employed, self-employed) (working fathers who have paid social contributions and consequently are social insured); every type of episode; employed in all sectors; all episodes of paternity/parental leave – if they are fragmented. Breakdowns of the recipients by age groups could be obtained, but the Agency does not have information on profession and education level of a recipients, and sectors.

See (19a).

See (19a).

See (19a).

See (19a).

These may be one of the child's parents if they are on parental leave or do not earn income as a self-employed person, or are not on parental leave or earn income as a self-employed person during the childcare.

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Netherlands	Parental leave - Ouderschapsverlof (21b) <p>Dutch national policy states employees are entitled to three days of leave after the birth of a child. This is not to be confused with maternity/paternity/partner leave (<i>kraamverlof</i> or <i>vaderschapsverlof</i>) which is provided for the actual birth of a child. Parental leave is for parents and partners after the birth of a child. Parents in the Netherlands can take parental leave until their children turn eight years old. Parents in the Netherlands are entitled to parental leave of up to 26 times their total weekly working hours. So, for instance, a 40-hour work week means an employee is eligible for 26×40 hours = 1,040 hours of parental leave until a child turns eight. In principle, parental leave is unpaid, but this can vary per collective labour agreement.</p>	<p>Employees who work more than 12 hours per week and have children up to 8 years old, who care for one or more of those children. Entrepreneurs, including solo self-employed people have different, more limited access to social security support than employees. Entrepreneurs, as their own employers, pay their own social security contributions and the share of contributions usually paid by an employer. As such, there appears to be less data available on maternity, let alone father-specific leave. For solo self-employed individuals and their partners, the Dutch government established a different policy, the ZEZ (Zelfstandig en Zwanger). Solo self-employed and pregnant.</p>	<p>The national public employment agency, the UWV, orchestrates and executes the social security payments in the Netherlands and as such has access to data on employees and their use of different social security benefits.</p> <p>The main data source on parental leave is the national statistics bureau, Central Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS).</p>	<p>Data maintained by the CBS, which is publicly available, focuses on employee information only. The data presented therefore only include information on total eligible employees. Entrepreneurs and solo self-employed are not included in the data sets (parental leave).</p> <p>The data sets for 2005–2015 and for 2005–2013, maintained by Statistic Netherlands, track the extent to which employees make use of parental leave, and also to what degree the employer compensated the employee. Three categories of compensation are defined, whether the employer paid for the leave (1) in its entirety, (2) a portion of the leave or (3) none of the leave.</p>
Norway	Foreldrepenger (22b) <p>Currently, the parental leave period after birth is divided into three parts: a leave period of 10 weeks exclusively for the mother, a leave period of 10 weeks exclusively for the father and the common leave period (father or mother, by choice) of 26 weeks. It is possible to extend the leave period from 46 to 56 weeks with a 20% reduction in allowance. In this case, the common leave period is 36 weeks.</p>	<p>Anyone with pensionable earnings for a minimum of 6 of the last 10 months before the time of the contribution is eligible for parental benefit (foreldrepenger).</p>	<p>The main data source of the use of paternal leave by fathers is the NAV (Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) register on paternal benefits. NAV publishes yearly statistical overviews on paternal leave, as well as periodical reports.</p>	<p>The self-employed are included. Fathers' right to benefits (from the common quota) is limited if the mother is not eligible to benefit (not vice versa). The statistics cannot single out fathers with limited rights; they appear in the statistics as non-users.</p>
Poland	Paternity allowance - of at least one day - (<i>urlop ojcowski</i>) (23a) and Maternity allowance - maternity leave for fathers, paternity leave (<i>urlop ojcowski</i>) and parental leave <p>(<i>urlop rodzicielski</i>) (23a, b).</p>	<p>(23a) Not obligatory, two weeks, only for fathers.</p> <p>(23a, b) Maternity leave is 20 weeks (14 of them are reserved for mothers, after which time fathers can use the 6 weeks that are left, instead of the mother). Maximum six weeks can be used before the birth of the child. Parental leave is then a maximum of 32 weeks after the maternity leave. It can be divided into four parts, which can be used both by the mother and father; they can take the leave at the same time or one of them can take all the leave. One part of the leave has to last for at least eight weeks.</p>	<p>Only for employees with a contract of employment, the self-employed and entrepreneurs (excluding people working on civil-law contracts).</p>	<p>ZUS (Social Insurance Institution) uses the term 'maternity allowance' in reference to all types of leave for mothers and fathers. According to law, there are three types of leave for fathers: maternity leave for fathers, paternity leave (<i>urlop ojcowski</i>) and parental leave (<i>urlop rodzicielski</i>).</p> <p>(23a) Number of recipients covers everyone who takes paternity leave for at least one day. ZUS collects the data on maternity allowances which are paid for periods of maternity leave or other periods of leave taken under the terms of the maternity leave, additional maternity leave, paternity leave and parental leave.</p>

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Portugal	Initial parental leave - Licença parental inicial / 'Initial parental leave' of 120/150 days (24a) Optional days – Father's exclusive parental leave (24a) and Optional days – Father's exclusive parental leave (24b) Extended parental leave (24d) and Social parental leave benefit (24e)	<p>(23a) and (23b) 'Father's exclusive leave (i.e. non-transferable) of 15 compulsory working days (of which five days must be taken consecutively immediately after birth, captured here and 10 days during the subsequent 30 days) (paid at 100%).</p> <p>Specific leave for fathers was introduced in 1999: the 'paternity leave' of 5 working days, initially optional; and the optional 'parental leave' of 15 days for the father; initial parental leave with bonus of 1 month when parents share the leave (if father and mother take 30 days or two periods of consecutive 15 days alone). Two possible scenarios in case of sharing: 150 days paid at 100% or 180 days paid at 83%.</p> <p>(24c) After the 42 days (6 weeks) following the birth, compulsory for mothers, the remaining period may be shared between the father and the mother by mutual agreement. Both parents can take initial parental leave at the same time, for up to 15 days, to be taken between the 4th and 5th month.</p> <p>(24d) Extended parental leave. For the extended parental leave of three months the benefit corresponds to a daily allowance of 25% of the average daily wage (or €5.2 per day minimum).</p> <p>(24e) Parents, mothers or fathers, who are not working and do not have contributions for social security are entitled to parental social benefit.</p>	<p>The Institute of Social Security (<i>Instituto de Segurança Social - ISS</i>) is the entity responsible for collecting and publishing data on the beneficiaries of parental leave benefits in Portugal.</p>	<p>Fathers working in the private sector and workers in public functions since 1 January 2006, thus excluding civil servants and workers whose welfare system is not part of the general social security system, like some workers in the banking sector. Parents, mothers or fathers, who are not working and do not have contributions for social security are entitled to parental social benefit, paid at a percentage of the Social Support Index (<i>Índice de Apoios Sociais - IAS</i>) -> see (24e).</p> <p>(24c) Parents receiving the benefit for initial parental leave.</p> <p>(24c, d, e) Total number of parents on parental leave, including those on initial parental leave (c), extended parental leave (d) and those on social parental leave (e),</p> <p>(24e) Parents receiving the social parental benefit, including those who received a bonus.</p>
Romania	Child-rearing indemnity – as main beneficiary (25b) and Child-rearing indemnity – as second beneficiary (25c)	<p>Not available.</p>	<p>No official data were provided, so data are from unofficial sources: article, Badea (2015) for (25b) and Gheorghe (2015) for (25c).</p>	<p>Number of male child benefit recipients, as main beneficiary (25b) or as second beneficiary (25c).</p>
Sweden	Föräldraperning - Parental benefit (26a)	<p>In Sweden parents have a right to compensation (parental benefit) and the right to parental leave. The right to have parental leave is more generous. According to the law of Swedish parental leave, a parent can be absent from work to take care of his/her child up until the child is 18 months old. The parental benefit consists of 480 days per child, and on three different compensation levels (the sickness benefit level, basic level and the minimum level). Parental benefit allows the parent to stay home from work and obtain compensation for extended periods of time, individual days or a certain number of hours. If there are two parents with joint guardianship who share the days the parents share 195 each at sickness benefit level and 45 days each at the minimum level. Sixty days of the sickness benefit are reserved and cannot be transferred to another parent.</p>	<p>All parents in Sweden are entitled to paid parental leave (2017 Leave Review).</p>	<p>Parental benefit (<i>föräldraperning</i>) is paid by Föräldrapernning.</p> <p>Those receiving the benefit.</p>

Country	Type of leave, duration and rates of compensation	Who is eligible	Data administration and/or source	What the data contains
Slovenia	Paternity leave – Očetovski dopust (27a) fully paid and unpaid days (27b) The uptake of maternity/parental leave by fathers is regulated by the Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act, 2014. 15 days fully paid, further 75 days unpaid.	Only for employees with a contract of employment, the self-employed and entrepreneurs (excluding people working on civil-law contracts).	The Act stipulates in Article 104 that an information database be set up and run for the purposes of managing the procedures and deciding on rights under this Act, monitoring, planning and managing family policy for scientific and research purposes and for statistical purposes. The so-called central database is managed by the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Centres for Social Work. The ministry and the centres maintain databases on maternity and paternity allowance as well as of parental leave and allowance and transferred parental leave and allowance.	The data here refer to paternity leave, paid and unpaid episodes. (27a) refers to the number of fathers taking a maximum of 15 days. (27b) refers to fathers taking more than 15 days.
Slovakia	Maternity benefit – davka materské (28a) and Parental allowance – rodičovský príspevok (28b) (28a) In Slovakia, with regard to childcare, a father may ask for parental leave during which he may receive a maternity or parental allowance. The possibility of receiving these allowances is, however, linked to the fact that the mother is not taking care of the child at the same time. The condition is that, during the period of maternity benefit received by fathers, the mother does not receive this benefit. Also, parallel parental and maternity benefits are excluded.	Taking the maternity benefit is conditional upon the payment of insurance contributions for sickness insurance – Act No. 46/2003 Coll. on social insurance.	There is no database of fathers taking the maternity benefit. There are only statistics on all recipients of the maternity benefit, but without more detailed information. Female mothers are on maternity benefit for 34 weeks. A male parent may also request a maternity benefit if he agrees that he will take care of a child under the age of three. The maximum duration of the maternity benefit for a father is 28 weeks.	Fathers obtaining the maternity benefit.

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018), EurWORK's Working Life country profiles (2018) and International Network on Leave Policies and Research (2017).

Number of male recipients of parental/paternity leave allowance

Paternity allowances and leave

Table A2: Development of the number of male recipients of paternity allowances (2009–2017)

Country	Leave (Code)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Source
Number of male recipients of paternity benefits or allowances											
Estonia	<i>Isapuhkus (8a)</i>					5,253	5,701	6,460	6,924	7,220	Estonian National Social Insurance Board, national social insurance statistics.
Spain	<i>Prestación de paternidad (9b)</i>	273,024	275,637	269,715	245,867	237,988	235,678	238,806	244,468	264,632	Spanish Ministry for Employment and social security.
France	<i>Congé de paternité (11a)</i>	400,000	405,000	411,000	403,000	382,000	376,000	366,000	358,000		DREES series which ends in 2014, based on the data provided by the social security.
	<i>Congé de paternité (11a)</i>	377,000	383,000	389,000	381,000	376,000	370,000				CNAMTS, Central fund of the MSA, RSI, calculation DREES.
Italy	<i>Congedo di paternità (Mandatory leave days) (16a)</i>					50,474	67,672	72,754	92,858		INPS (2017)
	<i>Congedo di paternità (Voluntary leave days) (16b)</i>					5,432	8,130	9,587	9,186		INPS (2017)
Lithuania	<i>Tėvystės atostogos (17a)</i>	12,966	12,349	12,029	12,124	12,642	13,476	14,933	16,277	15,100	LSD (various years)
Latvia	<i>Paternitātes pabalsts (19a)</i>	8,549	7,097	7,017	7,913	8,785	9,761	10,625	11,081	10,966	Statistical Department of SSIA.
Poland	<i>Paternity allowance (urlop ojcowski) (23a)</i>				28,600	28,600		148,500	146,400		ZUS, 2016, ZUS, various years, quarterly information on cash benefits from the Social Insurance Fund and other benefits.

Number of men on paternity leave

Denmark	<i>Fædreorlov (7a)</i>	44,312	44,621	41,451	39,303	38,506	41,042	40,077	44,996		Statistic Denmark's register.
Italy	<i>Congedo di paternità (Mandatory leave days) (16a)</i>					50,474	67,672	72,754	92,858		INPS (2017)
	<i>Congedo di paternità (Voluntary leave days) (16b)</i>					5,432	8,130	9,587	9,186		INPS (2017)
Slovenia	<i>Paternity leave (Očetovski dopust) – up to 15 days (23a)</i>	17,534	18,042	17,776	17,468	16,625	16,695	16,374	16,291		MDDSZ (2018)
	<i>Paternity leave (Očetovski dopust) – Total, 15 days or more (23a, b)</i>	20,863	21,776	21,445	21,054	20,039	19,691	19,264	18,210		MDDSZ (2018)

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018)

Parental leave allowances

Table A3: Development of the number of male beneficiaries of parental allowances (2009–2017)

Country	Leave (Code)	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Source
Number of male beneficiaries of parental allowances											
Austria	<i>Kinderbetreuungsgeld – all fathers (1a)</i>	9,485	10,426	11,228	11,735	12,171	12,627				Riesenfelder (2017), Table 1, p. 15; For definitions, see Riesenfelder and Danzer (2017), p. 85.
Czech Republic	Parental allowance (5b)	6,000	5,400	5,800	5,300	5,200	5,100	5,200	5,200	5,100	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) database.
Denmark	<i>Forældreorlov (7b)</i>	18,681	19,797	18,609	18,266	24,782	26,317	26,431	30,376		Statistic Denmark's register.
Estonia	Parental benefit (8b)	2,140	2,347	2,075	2,030	2,036	2,280	2,459	2,611	2,746	Statistics Estonia, SW22.
Spain	Prestaciones por maternidad (9b)	5,726	5,805	5,798	5,028	4,919	4,912	5,208	5,688	4,930	<i>Instituto Nacional de Seguridad Social.</i> <i>Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social.</i>
Croatia	<i>Rodiljni dopust (13a)</i>		131	131	133	165	163	170	158		<i>Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova</i> (various years)
	<i>Roditeljski dopust (13b)</i>		877	927	1,042	2,023	2,036	2,030	1,930		<i>Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova</i> (various years)
Hungary	GYES (childcare allowance) (14c)	9,200	9,600	9,900	9,800	9,500	7,300	6,400	6,100		Hungarian State Treasury
	GYET (child-rearing support) (14b)					3,210	3,362	3,263	3,234	3,090	Hungarian State Treasury
Italy	<i>Congedo parentale (16c)</i>				31,549	34,118	36,540	45,003	52,567		INPS (2017)
Lithuania	<i>Vaiko priežiūros atostogos (17b)</i>	3,300	3,600	3,100	2,900	4,100	6,300	7,800	8,900	9,700	Sodra
Luxembourg	<i>Congé parental (18b)</i>	894	976	968	942	1,049	1,050	1,106	1,079		Activity report 2016, Ministry of Family, Integration and Greater Region, pp. 178, 179
Latvia	<i>Vecāku pabalsts (19b)</i>	13,130	6,514	2,406	1,493	1,739	2,507	5,216	7,502	7,512	Statistical Department of SSIA
Portugal	Parental leave beneficiaries (24c, d, e)	43,309	75,124	77,403	72,111	67,137	65,439	71,502	76,282	74,919	Source: Institute for Social Security (<i>Instituto de Segurança Social – ISS</i>)
Romania	Child-rearing indemnity – as main beneficiary (25b)			25,123	34,586	27,559	28,424	24,815			Badea (2015)
Sweden	<i>Föräldrapenning</i> (Parental benefit)	292,846	311,740	319,429	333,246	340,246	344,658	355,383	368,779	387,286	http://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-annne/socialforsakring-mm/stod-till-barnfamiljer/foraldrarforsakring
Slovakia	Maternity benefit (<i>davka materské</i>)				222	314	717	1,731	3,079		1. On-request data from Social Insurance Agency.
	Parental allowance (<i>rodičovský príspevok</i>)	3,971	4,525	4,803	5,019	5,210	5,550	5,710	5,894	6,088	1. On-request data from Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family; 2. Statistical Office of Slovak Republic; 3. Slovak legislation.
Number of parental/childcare allowances paid out to men											
Bulgaria	Childcare benefit – after the child is one year old (3b)	4,678	5,727	6,139	6,590	6,068	6,907	7,294	7,189		National Social Security Institute (NSSI)
Number of men taking parental leave											
Netherlands	<i>Ouderschapsverlof (21b)</i>	46,000		63,000		61,000		70,000			CBS (2016)

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018)

Mixed figures on paternity and parental allowances or leave

Table A4: Development of the number of male recipients of parental or paternity leave allowances* (2009–2017)

Country	Code	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Source
Belgium	2a, b	11,145	13,891	14,454	14,063	14,849	15,976	16,718	17,824	19,555	Rijksdienst Voor Arbeidsvoorziening/ Office National de l'Emploi
Bulgaria	3a, b	18,834	20,896	21,307	21,639	23,697	26,804	29,099	31,671	n/a	National Social Security Institute (NSSI) Note: data relate to the number of benefits for 15 days' paternity leave after the birth of a child and the second 6 months of maternity paid out to men. Total number of monthly benefits paid out – sum for the whole year.
Denmark	7a, b	58,478	59,615	57,599	55,312	54,933	57,940	57,658	65,035		Statistic Denmark's register
Finland	10a, b	54,570	56,393	58,808	60,470	59,683	58,789	65,485	61,817	n/a	Kela (2017), p. 45
Poland	23a, b	n/a	n/a	n/a	165,600	150,700	159,300				ZUS (2016)

*Note: In these cases it is not possible to distinguish between the different leave – paternity or parental. Data refer to benefits paid out to men. Poland: maternity allowance – maternity leave for fathers, paternity leave (urlop ojcowski) and parental leave (urlop rodzicielski); Denmark: Barselsorlov (3a, b); Bulgaria: maternity benefit – after the child is six months old, including otpusk po bashtinstvo (paternity leave) and otpusk poradi bremennost, razhdane i osinovyavane (leave due to pregnancy, childbirth and adoption); Belgium: Vaderschapsverlof/Congé de paternité and Ouderschapsverlof met uitkeringen; Finland: all parental allowances, including maternity leave (äitiysvapaa), paternity leave (isyyysvapaa) and parental leave (vanhempainvapaa). (n/a = not available.)

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018)

Duration of the leave or benefit-drawing periods

Table A5: Average duration of the leave by gender (2009–2017)

Type of leave/ benefit	Name of leave/ benefit in country	Country	Sex	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Source
Parental and paternity leave	Barselsorlov – including both parts which can be shared with the mother and days earmarked for father	Denmark	Women	298.3	297.7	297.3	296.4	296.9	296.4	297.6			Statistic Denmark's register
			Men	28.0	29.1	29.2	29.5	30.1	29.7	30.8			
Parental leave	Elterngeld	Germany	Women						348.5				DESTATIS
			Men						92.3				
	Maternity benefit (davka materské)	Slovakia	Women				238.0	238.0	238.0	238.0	238.0		On-request data from Social Insurance Agency
			Men				196.0	196.0	196.0	196.0	196.0		
	Parental allowance (rodičovský príspěvok)	Slovakia	Men						550.8	552.9	546.6		On-request data from Central Office of Labour, Social Affairs and Family
Paternity leave	Paternity benefit	Estonia	Men					9.5	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.7	Estonian National Social Insurance Board, national social insurance statistics

Source: Network of Eurofound Correspondents (2018)

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In the context of ongoing negotiations at EU level on adopting a work-life balance package for families and caregivers, Eurofound was requested by the European Commission to provide an update of the available data regarding paternity and parental leave for fathers. This report presents the currently available national statistics on the uptake of family-related leave by fathers over time across the EU28 and Norway, based on information compiled by the Network of Eurofound Correspondents. It gives a comparative overview of the main features of the various leave arrangements available for fathers, including information on duration, compensation, eligibility and the number of beneficiaries captured in the data. Despite the unevenness and lack of coherent statistics, the report concludes that in several Member States progress has been made in increasing the number and share of fathers who are taking parental or paternity leave.

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