



Sustainability@Leave

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Parenting Leave Policies in Slovenia and Inequalities





Parenting Leaves in Slovenia: Types of Leave and Design Elements



Parenting Leave Policy in Slovenia

- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Parental Leave

Maternity leave

Purpose: Protection of the mother's health and care for the newborn before and immediately after birth.

Length of leave: 105 days, 28 days before the birth, it is obligatory to take 15 calendar days of leave.

Payment: 100 % of average monthly earnings during the 12 months prior to the leave. If the contributions were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, €685.48 (gross) a month is counted for the missing period. There is no upper limit, and the minimum is €685.48.

Eligibility: the person must be insured under Parental Protection Insurance at least one day before the leave starts. If not currently insured, still eligible for earnings compensation if insured for at least 12 months in the past 3 years.

Citizenship / residence condition: Not based on citizenship. Access depends on insurance status or residence (permanent or temporary residence); for flat-rate benefits, both parent and child must reside in Slovenia.

Flexibility of use:

Continuous leave; the part unused before the birth may be claimed after childbirth if the birth took place before the expected date; limited transfer (e.g., to father in exceptional cases).

Paternity leave

Purpose: Enable fathers to participate in early childcare and bonding.

Length of leave: 15 calendar days (extended by an additional 10 days for each additional child in the case of multiple births).

Payment: 100 % of average earnings during the 12 months prior to the leave, to an upper limit of 2.5 times the average gross salary in Slovenia, per month, in the previous calendar year (€6,340.08 per month). If the contributions were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, €685.48 (gross) per month is counted for the missing period.

Eligibility: As for Maternity leave. The father is not entitled if: there was a stillbirth; he was legally deprived of his parental right or prohibited from contacting the child; or if he is not able to nurse and care for the child (medical certificate).

Citizenship / residence condition: Not based on citizenship. Access depends on insurance status or residence (permanent or temporary residence); for flat-rate benefits, both parent and child must reside in Slovenia.

Flexibility of use:

Paternity leave may be taken as full-time or part-time continuous leave until the child's age of three months. The duration of leave does not change, if taken part-time.

Parental leave

Purpose: Enable both parents to care for the child after maternity/paternity leave and reconcile work and family life.

Length of leave: 160 calendar days per parent (extended in the cases of multiple or premature births, or the birth of a child in need of special care, and if they have at least 2 children below 8 years), leave is an individual entitlement, part of which (100 days) is transferable to the other parent.

Payment: 100 % of average earnings during the 12 months prior to the leave, to an upper limit of 2.5 times the average gross salary in Slovenia, per month, in the previous calendar year (€6,340.08 per month). If the contributions were paid during a period shorter than 12 months, €685.48 (gross) per month is counted for the missing period.

Eligibility: the person must be insured under Parental Protection Insurance at least one day before the leave starts. If not currently insured, still eligible for earnings compensation if insured for at least 12 months in the past 3 years.

Citizenship / residence condition: Not based on citizenship. Access depends on insurance status or residence (permanent or temporary residence); for flat-rate benefits, both parent and child must reside in Slovenia.

Flexibility of use: Each parent can transfer up to 100 days to the other. Leave can be taken full-time or part-time (part-time does not extend total duration). One parent must take leave immediately after maternity leave. Each parent has up to 60 non-transferable days, usable until the child is 8 (max twice per year, at least 15 days each time). Non-transferable days can also be used during maternity leave. Both parents can take part-time leave at the same time (20 hours per week each).

Parenting Leave Policy in Slovenia: history and recent changes

- **1927–1974:** only maternity leave (since 1958: 105 days, fully paid)
- **1975:** introduction of **parental (childcare) leave**: 141 days, transferable to father
- **1986:** parental leave extended to 260 days
- **1992:** after Slovenia independence unified system of leave was set in legislation
 - total **365 days** of leave (maternity + childcare leave)
 - flexible use (e.g. part-time until the child is 17 months old, extension for twins)



Parenting Leave Policy in Slovenia: history and recent changes

- **2001:** New Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act
 - **260 days paid parental leave** shared between parents (as a family right, not an individual right of each parent)
- **2003–2005:** paternity leave was introduced
 - 90 days total, 15 days fully paid, 75 days unpaid (gradual introduction)
- **2014–2018:** 2014 new Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (still in force with several amendments)
 - alignment with Parental Leave Directive (2010)
 - shift toward individual rights for each parent
 - paternity leave increased to 30 fully paid days (2018)



Parenting Leave Policy in Slovenia: history and recent changes

- **2023 reform (EU Work-Life Balance Directive, 2019):**
 - 160 days per parent (320 total)
 - 60 days per parent non-transferable
 - ... in practice the father may still transfer 100 days to the mother, so the mother can still use 260 days, but the father now has 60 non-transferable days of his own that can be used up to the child's age of 8.
 - paternity leave reduced to 15 days (shift toward parental leave)
- **2025:** expansion (rights extended to foster carers for children 8-15 years)



Who is eligible, who not?

- Eligibility for Parental leave in Slovenia depends on parents' contribution to Parental Protection Insurance. This insurance covers persons on employment contracts (both permanent and fixed-term, either full-time or part-time); the self-employed (including farmers).
- The Parental leave and earnings compensation are the rights of biological, adoptive and foster parents. Same-sex partner is eligible if they have legally adopted the child (only possible after legalization of same-sex marriage and joint adoption in 2022). In not adopted, the biological parent is entitled to the whole parental leave.
- Migrants are eligible for Parental leave under the same rights if included in the Parental Protection Insurance and if legally residing in Slovenia.



Who is eligible, who not?

- **Parental allowance:** for those without contributions (not eligible for insurance-based leave), includes students, unemployed, and migrants
- Must live in Slovenia (permanent or temporary residence) with the child.
- Flat-rate benefit: €507.43 net per month for 365 days (longer duration in special cases (e.g. multiple or premature births, child with special needs))
- Mother receives benefit for first 77 days, after, one parent receives it based on agreement.
- Unemployed – those not currently insured but insured for at least 12 months in the past 3 years, receive €685.48 (gross) per month, plus €20 (gross) for each month of past insurance, but by no more than €340 (gross).

What do we know about take-up rates?

■ Maternity leave

- Mandatory; nearly all employed women take it (usually the full leave)

■ Paternity leave

- ~90% of fathers took paternity leave in 2025 (same as 2024; higher in earlier years: 98% in 2023, 93% in 2022)
- Maximum: 15 days
- Average taken in 2025: 10.87 days (similar to 2024; lower than previous years)
- Typically used when mother and child return home from hospital



What do we know about take-up rates?

- **Parental leave**
 - Most mothers take the full entitlement
 - Fathers' share remains low (~4% since 2017; 4.1% in 2025)
- Introduction of 60 days non-transferable leave for fathers shows impact:
 - 86% uptake in 2025
 - Much higher than transferable leave uptake
 - Suggests growing father involvement and (perhaps) shifting attitudes

Parenting Leave Policy in Slovenia and Gender Equality

- Core inequality persists in gendered take-up
 - Formally: Both parents have equal entitlements (especially after 2023 reform)
 - In practice: Leave remains strongly feminized
 - Mechanisms: persistence of traditional gender roles mothers take most leave (shown also in public attitudes); wage differences make it economically more rational for mothers to take leave, lack of supportive workplace culture, despite government campaigns, e.g. “Active fathers make the world a better place!”



Parenting Leave Policies in Slovenia and Inequalities

- Slovenia belongs to countries with more inclusive access to parental leaves, “universal adult-worker model”, “universal mixed model” (Dobrotič and Blum, 2019):
 - Wide eligibility coverage (inclusion of different labour-market groups, most parents can access some form of benefit)
 - Dual structure of benefits (earnings-related benefits (for those with contributions), flat-rate benefits (for those without sufficient employment history))
 - Generous compensation levels, for those with contributions
 - Slovenia scores high on coverage, but lower on equality of outcomes
- Dual system (insiders vs outsiders): parents in standard employment → full access, high benefits; precarious/unemployed → partial access, lower benefits
- Increasing precarious work deepens these gaps



Research gap /data gap

- Administrative data gap (the data do not allow calculation of mothers/fathers' use of paid leaves in terms of overall uptake, annual trends, eligibility-based rates).
- Under-researched area: link of policy design with workplace practices, employers' perspective





Final Discussion

