



Sustainability@Leave

CA21150

Dejana Pavlović

Institute of Economic Sciences, Belgrade

Parenting Leave in the Republic of Serbia and Inequalities





Parenting Leave in the Republic of Serbia



Parental leave in Serbia

- Three types of leave:
 - ✓ maternity leave
 - ✓ child-care (parental) leave
 - ✓ special-needs child-care leave
- The rights are defined in: Labor Law of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on Financial Support for Families with Children

Maternity leave

- All employed women are entitled to fully paid maternity leave, beginning 28 to 45 days before the expected due date and lasting until 90 days after childbirth
- In case of the mother's death, illness, or if the mother is not employed—the father may take maternity leave instead
- Fathers are also entitled to up to five days of paid leave in the calendar year in which the child is born

Child care leave (parental leave) and special needs child care

- After maternity leave, **child-care leave** begins. This leave lasts **365 days** starting from the initiation of maternity leave, meaning that in practice parental leave ends around the child's **11th month**
- For the birth of a **third child** and for each next child, the mother is entitled to extended leave lasting **up to two years** from the beginning of maternity leave
- Special-needs child-care leave can be granted when a child's disability has been officially assessed and confirmed by a medical commission. Parents may use this leave until the child reaches the age of five

Who is eligible, who not?

- Only formal employed parents (not informal employed parents, part-time employed..)!
- As of August 2023, the right to parental leave was expanded to include **self-employed women** and **women working under non-standard employment contracts**. This means that women who are not in traditional full-time employment now have better access to maternity and childcare leave
- Since August 2023, this option has also been extended to **fathers whose partners are self-employed sole proprietors**, allowing them to take parental leave during the **first three months after childbirth**. However, for the father to qualify, **he must not be self-employed** — he must be employed by an employer

Who is eligible and who not?

- Mothers/fathers/guardians receive 100% of her average salary, calculated based on the 18 months before she/he starts her leave
- The payment cannot be lower than the legal minimum wage
- There is an upper limit, but it is high — three average salaries in Serbia
- In practice, this means that most women receive their full salary during maternity leave
- The Government of the Republic Serbia financial support from 2024:
 - ✓ First child: a one-time payment of 500,000 dinars.
 - ✓ Second child: 600,000 dinars, paid in 24 monthly
 - ✓ Third child: 2,280,000 dinars, paid in 120 monthly

Paternity Leave in Serbia

- Although Serbian law permits fathers to use PPL, uptake remains very low. There are currently no strong policy mechanisms such as gender quotas or use-it-or-lose-it schemes to encourage fathers' participation
- There is no data on take-up rates, only projects findings funded by EU or UN
- The survey "Let's take care of children together", conducted by the SeConS:
 - ✓ 305 working women and men from the public and private sectors participated, showed that the majority of respondents (79,4 percent) believe that it is the mother who should use the entire leave, or at least the greater part of it. Even 47 percent of women share this opinion. Only one fifth of respondents (20,3 percent) believe that both parents should use it equally
 - ✓ Breastfeeding is cited as one of the main reasons why a mother should use the entire leave, followed by tradition

Paternity Leave in Serbia

	Number of births	Number of fathers who used child care leave
2019	64 399	328
2022	62 700	373

One recent study conducted by Serbian members of the COST PPL Network identified three clusters of attitudes:

1. Modern;
2. Moderately traditional;
3. Extremely traditional.

Findings show that attitudes vary according to age, education, marital and parental status



Final Discussion



Parenting Leave Policies in Serbia and Inequalities

- Improve availability and quality of national data on parental leave uptake
- Develop and strengthen policy measures to support parental leave usage
- Encourage and increase the number of researchers working in this field