



**Sustainability@Leave**

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# Parenting Leave Policies in Kosovo and Inequalities





## Parenting Leaves in Kosovo: Types of Leave and Design Elements



# Parenting Leave Policy in Kosovo

a model without typical **social insurance**

relevant legislation: Law on Labour (Nr. 03/L-212), 2010

# Parenting Leave Policy in Kosovo

- **Maternity Leave *for employed women*:** up to 12 months of total leave
    - a. 6 months of leave, paid by employer at 70% of prior earnings, which, with medical evidence, can be taken from 45 days before birth, and, upon employer's request, from 28 days before birth
    - b. 3 additional optional months of leave paid by the Government at 50% of the average wage in the country (avg. wage in 2024 was gross €639 a month)
    - c. 3 more voluntary months of unpaid leave
    - d. Three additional tax-paid top-ups at the value of the minimum wage in the country (currently gross €425 a month)
- Rights (under a above) are transferable to the father in cases of death/child abandonment; rights under b/c are transferable on voluntary bases. Cases of adoption not mentioned; same sex marriage not regulated

# Parenting Leave Policy in Kosovo

- **Maternity Leave for unemployed women**

Six months of tax-paid leave/benefit at the value of the minimum wage in the country.  
Citizenship-based. Programme managed by the Government.

- **Parental Leave**

None (paid or unpaid)

Up to 2 years of unpaid *general leave of absence* possible with employer's agreement

- **Paternity Leave** [*ditë pushimi me pagesë me rastin e lindjes së fëmijës ose adoptimit të fëmijës*]

Two days of leave paid by employer

Up to 10 days of unpaid leave in agreement with employer until the child reaches 3 years old

# Additional protection for employed persons

**During maternity leave, employers are prohibited to:**

- Terminate employee contract (except in cases of collective dismissals)
- Move employee to another job
- Move employee to another location of work (city/town) from where she lives without her agreement

**During pregnancy and the breastfeeding period, employed women are prohibited to:**

- Engage in a duty that is harmful for the child and her “reproductive health”
- Work in a night shift
- Extend work hours

# Parenting Leave Policy in Kosovo: main changes in time

**2001- Maternity leave for employed women:** UNMIK's regulation on essential labour law (2001/27) had created the right of *at least* 3 months of leave upon the birth of a child paid by employer (2/3rds of earnings)

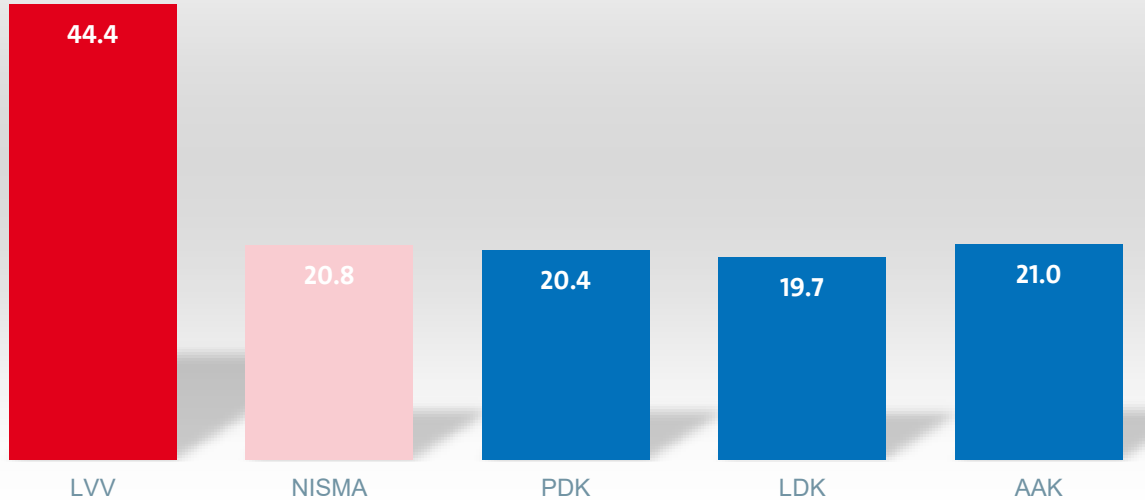
- **Paternity leave:** The right to employees' **paternity leave** existed, but its duration was not specified (it was left to the employer and employee to agree on it)

**2010:** The bulk of the current design – consisting of the **Maternity leave for employed women** (6+3+3 months) and the right to **paternity leave** (2+10 days) derived from the Law on Labour (Nr. 03/L-212) which entered into force in 2010 and has not been updated since then

**2021:** The last update to the design – the **three additional tax-paid top-ups** for employed women in maternity leave and the **maternity benefit for unemployed women**) was made in September 2021 via a **Government decision**

# Parenting Leave Policy in Kosovo: recent changes

Share of votes received by women MP candidates among all party candidates, 2021 election, %



During the same election, the LVV also won 61.1% of the total women votes



# Parenting Leave Policy in Kosovo: main changes

However, changes have not been only in the direction of linear progress

- A general collective agreement (Marrëveshja e përgjithshme kolektive e Kosovës, MPKK) was in force between 2015-2018, but since then business chambers, unions, and the government have not entered a renewed agreement
- A new draft-law on Labour, which among others advanced a parental leave, failed to go through the Government (proposed by then Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, 2018).
- In 2022, a law on the civil code, which would have allowed same sex-marriage, failed to pass through Kosovo's Assembly
- Recently (2025/6), LVV in Government has articulated policies such as subsidies for enrolment in market-provided ECEC facilities, and top-ups for elderly in retirement to take care of young children at home





# Inequality-Reducing and Inequality-Generating Elements of Parental Leave Design in Kosovo



# Who is not eligible?

## Practically ineligible for maternity/paternity leave for employed women/men:

- Non standard workers (NSW)
- Domestic workers

## Not eligible for government benefits during months 7, 8 and 9 of maternity leave:

- Employees who cannot prove they received maternity leave benefits during prior 6 months (especially relevant for self-employed persons and unsustainable employment cases)

## Not eligible for government benefits for unemployed women:

- If there was some employment income during the 12 months prior to the birth of the child

# What do we know about take-up rates?

- **Research gap /data gap:** There is no evidence on leave take up and expenditure on the part of employers/generally there is not much research on leaves
- **Take-up of maternity leave may be well under 100%**
  - In 2024, a total of 6,931 employed women and 14,847 unemployed women received state-funded Maternity benefits.
  - According to the Kosovo Statistics Agency, there were 31,717 births registered in the same year

**No data exist on paternity leave take-up**

# Parenting Leave Policy in Kosovo and Gender Equality

- **2024:** - Female employment rate 21.2% (vs. male 55.9%)
  - Female unemployment rate 18% (vs. male 7.7%)
  - Female inactivity rate 74.1% (vs. male 39.4%)
- Leave design and generally poor employment protection may be disincentivizing female employment
- Unavailability of Early Childhood Education and Care Services (ECEC) – causing an under > 9% ECEC enrolment for children 0-5 years old – and lack of Long-Term Care (LTC) services for dependent persons contribute to keeping women out of paid employment (familialism)



# Other

- Low female employment rate is not cultural but crucially a product of institutions (cf. during the last quarter of 2025, the female employment rate in Albania was 62.7%)
- Within the current design of leaves and employment protection, the maternity benefit may incentivise some women to work in informality
- Remittances (reservation wage) may also contribute to inactivity rate
- Ethnicity is relevant (intersectionality)
- Overall, women are paid less than men, but when women work in formal employment, families usually are not living under the poverty rate threshold





## Final Discussion



# Parenting Leave Policies in Kosovo and Inequalities

- **Design and outcomes:** The design of leaves and its outcomes resemble the general social policy model followed: rights designed to above all favour employers/market do not necessarily produce high employment rates
- **Politics** (including women's mobilization) plays a role, but women friendly policies/advancement are threatened by the emulation of the recent illiberal policies
- **Current problems /possible solutions:** Kosovo would benefit from transferring leave rights' management to a Social Insurance Institution and from establishing a paid parental leave as well as from extending the length of the paid paternity leave

