



Sustainability@Leave

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Parenting Leave Policies in Greece and Inequalities





Parenting Leaves in Greece: Types of Leave and Design Elements



Three main types of parenting leave: 1. Maternity Leave

Duration & Structure

- Total: **17 weeks**
- **8 weeks before childbirth** (prenatal leave)
- **9 weeks after childbirth** (postnatal leave)
- If birth occurs earlier → remaining leave is transferred after birth

Legal Framework

- Based on **General Labour Code (2000–2001), Article 7**
- Extended rights under **Law 4488/2017 (Art. 44)**:
 - Includes women having children via **surrogacy** (postnatal leave entitlement)

Employment Protection

- Counts as **actual working time**
- Does **not interrupt employment continuity**
- Not deducted from **annual leave**

Additional Notes

- Included in calculation of **Christmas & Easter bonuses**
- Illness beyond 17 weeks:
 - Treated as **sick leave**
 - May affect annual leave if limits exceeded



Three main types of parenting leave: 2. Paternity Leave

Duration & Flexibility

- **14 working days (paid)**
- Can be taken:
 - 2 days before birth + 12 after, or
 - All days after birth
- Must be used within **30 days of birth**

Legal Framework

- **Law 4808/2021 (Art. 27)**
- Aligns with **EU Directive 2019/1158**

Eligibility

- Granted to **all working fathers**
- No conditions or family status restrictions

Scope

- Applies also to:
 - **Adoption**
 - **Fostering (children up to 8 years old)**

Special Provisions

- Flexibility in case of **newborn hospitalization**
- Leave can be postponed (by agreement) to support care and bonding

Key Feature

- **Fully paid leave**



Three main types of parenting leave: 3. Parental Leave

Duration & Nature

- 4 months per parent
- Individual, **non-transferable right**
- Can be taken until the child is 8 years old

Payment

- **Unpaid leave** (overall)
- First 2 months subsidized by DYPA:
 - Benefit $\approx$ minimum wage

Eligibility

- Requires **1 year employment** with same employer

Flexibility

- Can be taken:
 - In one block or instalments
 - As reduced working hours (by agreement)

Coverage and Rights

- Counts as:
 - Insurance time (pension & health)
 - Actual working time (leave, seniority, severance)
- Full social protection maintained

Special Provisions

- Applies to adoptive parents
- Additional rights for 1) Single parents / death of parent; 2) Multiple births



Additional Types of Leave in Greece

Breastfeeding & Childcare Leave (Άδεια Θηλασμού & Φροντίδας παιδιών)

- Reduced working time for up to **30 months after birth** (e.g. 1 hour/day)
- Can be converted into **equivalent paid leave**; also available to fathers

Leave for Adoptive Parents (Άδεια για τη φροντίδα υιοθετημένων παιδιών)

- Same childcare leave rights as biological parents
- Applies to children up to **6 years old**

Leave for Surrogacy (Άδεια για παιδιά με παρένθετη μητρότητα)

Intended parents receive **full childcare leave rights**
Both surrogate and intended mother may access protections

Special Six-Month Maternity Protection Leave (Ειδική εξάμηνη άδεια)

6 additional months after maternity leave
Paid by public employment service (DYPA); **only for mothers**

Caregiver's Leave (Άδεια φροντιστή)

- Up to **5 working days per year (unpaid)**
- For care of seriously ill dependent persons

Force Majeure Leave (Άδεια για λόγους ανωτέρας βίας)

- Up to **2 days per year (paid)**
- For urgent family emergencies (illness/accident)

Flexible Working Arrangements (Ευέλικτες ρυθμίσεις εργασίας)

- Right to request **telework, flexible hours, or part-time work**
- For parents of children up to **12 years old**

Leave for Serious Illness of Child (Άδεια σοβαρών νοσημάτων)

- **10 working days per year (paid)**
- For children with serious or chronic conditions



Additional Types of Leave in Greece

Single-Parent Leave (Άδεια μονογονεϊκών οικογενειών)

- **6–8 working days per year (paid)**
- Additional support for single parents

School Performance Monitoring Leave (Άδεια σχολικής επίδοσης)

- **Up to 4 days per year (paid)**
- To attend school meetings and monitor child progress

Leave for Illness of Child/Dependent (Άδεια ασθένειας παιδιού)

- **6–14 days per year (unpaid)** depending on number of children
- Individual right for each parent

Reduced Hours for Parents of Children with Disabilities

- **1 hour/day reduction** in working time
- With proportional salary reduction





Inequality-Reducing and Inequality-Generating Elements of Parental Leave Design in Greece



Who is eligible, who not?

Eligible Groups

- Employees with **formal employment contracts**
- Parents with **minimum employment duration (e.g. 1 year for parental leave)**
- **Adoptive and foster parents** (under similar conditions)
- Increasing inclusion of **self-employed (in some benefits)**

Groups Facing Barriers / Exclusion

- Workers in **precarious or short-term employment**
- Those without required **insurance contributions or tenure**
- **Informal workers / undeclared work**
- Low-income workers (due to **unpaid leave design**)

Key Structural Issue

- Access depends on:
 - **Labour market status**
 - **Income level**
 - **Type of contract**



Take-up of parenting leaves in Greece

Overall Use of Family Leave

- 40% of parents do not use any family leave
- Only ~19% use only maternity/paternity leave
- About 35% combine different types of leave

Gender Gap in Take-up

- Career breaks for childcare:
 - **Women: ~49.7%**
 - **Men: ~4%**

Fathers' Take-up

- Extremely low use of **parental leave by fathers (~0–1%)**
- Across the EU, fathers' uptake remains generally low, especially when leave is unpaid

Gender Inequalities in Parenting Leave Policies in Greece

Persistent Gender Gap in Care

- Women perform significantly more unpaid care work
- Greece: **+2h 21min daily care gap** (EU among highest)

Policy Design Imbalances

- Long **maternity leave** vs short **paternity leave (14 days)**
- Parental leave mostly **unpaid**

Low Participation of Fathers

- Very low uptake of parental leave by men
- Short paternity leave limits early involvement

Structural Outcome

- Policies reinforce:
 - **Traditional gender roles**
 - Mothers as primary caregivers



Socioeconomic Inequalities in Access and Use

Unequal Access to Leave

- Eligibility depends on:
 - **Stable employment**
 - **Minimum tenure (e.g. 1 year)**
- Excludes many **precarious workers**

Affordability Barrier

- Parental leave largely **unpaid**
- Low-income workers cannot afford to take it

Labour Market Segmentation

- Differences by:
 - Contract type
 - Income level
 - Insurance history

Outcome

- Leave use concentrated among:
 - **Women**
 - **More secure workers**



Final Discussion

Policy Gaps

- Short **paternity leave duration**
- **Low compensation** for parental leave
- Limited **formal childcare services (ECEC)**
- Strong reliance on **family-based care**

Implementation Challenges

- Low uptake by fathers
- Workplace barriers & cultural norms
- Weak work–life balance in practice

Research Gaps

- Limited data on:
 - Fathers' leave use
 - Impact of recent reforms
- Need for more **longitudinal & qualitative studies**

