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1 Introduction

The question of how to reconcile family and work is one that families across Europe have to deal with every day. Part of the issue involves dividing up family duties and gainful employment more equally between partners. Nowadays, many men want to spend more time with their children and have a greater share in family duties. This is an area where social policy can play a supporting role. In May 2017, the [Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe](#) and the German [Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth](#) (BMFSFJ) hosted a European Expert Meeting to promote the Europe-wide exchange on policies to improve work-life balance, especially for fathers. Policy-makers, scientists and stakeholders from Germany and abroad met in Berlin to discuss instruments, experiences and possible success factors to improve the participation of fathers in family work. The Expert Meeting marked the start of a series of European workshops on reconciliation policies organised by the Observatory and the Ministry. On 4 and 5 September 2017, it was followed by a Europe-wide exchange on the reconciliation of care and work.

The European Commission's work-life balance package, published in April 2017, calls for a Directive that would introduce, as minimum standards, four months of paid and non-transferable parental leave for each parent as well as ten days of paid paternity leave at the time of a child's birth.

Many European countries offer incentives to encourage a redistribution of family duties aimed at changing how tasks are shared between partners. This places a stronger focus on the role of fathers: on the one hand fathers are encouraged to play a more active role in family duties, and on the other, their increased participation in family work is being better supported by government measures.

It is the explicit wish of many parents to divide gainful employment and family duties between them in approximately equal shares. At the moment, however, there are only very few families who manage to do so. We therefore need to look at the factors that hinder a more equal distribution of employment and family duties. How can family policy help eliminate these obstacles and encourage parents to share family duties more equally? The following questions were therefore at the centre of discussions at the Expert Meeting:

1. Which measures and instruments effectively promote a greater involvement of fathers in family duties?
2. Which tools have already been implemented in various European states to actively promote the involvement and participation of fathers in family work?

This documentation presents the key results of the two-day workshop and reflects the various discussion strands. The focus was on father-specific (paid) leave periods. The issues discussed included non-transferable parental leave earmarked for fathers, increased flexibility in parental leave models, paternity leave around the time of the birth of a child, and financial incentives for a gender-equal distribution of transferable parental leave. The role of employers

in this context and the question of how to achieve long-term changes in traditional gender-specific roles were also intensively discussed by the participants.

On behalf of the Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe

Sören Hoyer

2 Programme

Monday, 29 May 2017

13:00 **Arrival and Welcome Snack**

13:30 **The new German Reconciliation Policy: Towards an Equal Partnership in Families**

Dr. Ralf Kleindiek (State Secretary, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)

14:00 **The Work-Life Balance Package of the European Commission and new Momentum for Member States**

Tiina Astola (Director General at DG Justice and Consumers, European Commission)

14:30 Coffee Break

15:00 **Panel 1: Daddy Months as Policy Instrument in Norway, Sweden and Iceland (National Inputs and Discussion)**

Berit Brandth (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Sociology and Political Science, Norway)

Charlotta Örn (Ministry for Health and Social Affairs, Sweden)

Rósa Erlingsdóttir (Ministry for Social Affairs and Equality, Iceland)

16:30 Coffee Break

17:00 **Short Summary of Day 1 and Questions for Day 2**

afterwards Evening Programme

Tuesday, 30 May 2017

09:00 **Panel 2: Financial Incentives for a more Equal Sharing of Parental Leave: Experiences in Austria and Sweden (National Inputs and Discussion)**

Olaf Kapella (Austrian Institute for Family Studies, Austria)

Niklas Löfgren (Social Insurance Agency, Sweden)

10:15 Coffee Break

10:45	Panel 3: Promoting Equal Partnership: New Approaches in Estonia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic (National Inputs and Discussion) Linda Sassian (Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU) Nada Stropnik (Institute for Economic Research, Slovenia) Jana Maláčová (Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs, Czech Republic)
12:15	Coffee Break and Snacks
12:45	Where do we go from here? European Perspectives on National and EU Incentives for Father Involvement Liz Gosme (Director, COFACE)
13:00	Final Discussion and Feedback
13:30	Closing Remarks Mark Kamperhoff (Head of EU division, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)
afterwards	Light Lunch

3 Towards an Equal Partnership in Families. How European States Promote Father Involvement in Family Work

3.1 The new German Reconciliation Policy: Towards an Equal Partnership in Families – Words of welcome by Dr. Ralf Kleindiek

State Secretary Dr. Ralf Kleindiek opened the workshop by emphasising the importance of father involvement in family work. The entire family – the fathers themselves as well as mothers and children – stood to profit from this development. Dr. Kleindiek explained that the German government had already successfully introduced a variety of measures, for instance the “Plus” parental allowance – “ElterngeldPlus” – to sustainably strengthen the participation of fathers. In addition to parental leave models Dr. Kleindiek pointed out that flexible working time arrangements were also important. Here he mentioned the opportunities offered by digitisation. He expressed his delight at the opportunities offered by the Europe-wide exchange and emphasised the importance of making the reconciliation of family and work a European issue.



State Secretary Dr. Ralf Kleindiek

Below you will find the entire speech of State Secretary Dr. Ralf Kleindiek:

- Check against delivery -

Dear Director General, dear ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this Expert Meeting at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs. I am pleased that the special focus of today’s meeting is work-life balance with a European perspective. This is a very suitable topic, because the European Union is more than just an attractive economic area. We are also a community of values.

One of these values is support for families, because families provide security, foster relationships and prepare children for life in society. The German government supports families and offers choices while at the same time we let them decide on their own how they want to live. One of the core values is equality between women and men. At the recent W20 summit, women from all G20 countries discussed the question of how women can be empowered economically. As different as the G20 countries may be – all agreed that the participation of women in the labour market is something that women want, and at the same time it is a precondition for prosperity and equality.

We can no longer afford that women have to choose between family and work – nor is it something we want to do. This is why it is important to shape the basic conditions for women and

men in the labour market in such a way that they can better combine work and family life. It is an important precondition to ensure that men and women really have the same chances in the modern working world – again a question of gender equality.

The reconciliation of family and work life has long been a concern for mothers only. Today it has become a growing issue for fathers as well, because fathers often no longer want to be reduced to the role of the breadwinner in the family. They also want to be with their children and have time for them. In Germany this is a fairly recent development. But the new role that many men wish to play in the family becomes quite evident: What we are talking about now is a new form of work-life balance that takes men as much into consideration as women.

Some 60 per cent of parents of young children in Germany would like to share work and care duties more equally. This means being employed and sharing childcare duties on an equal basis. There are advantages for mothers when fathers take on more tasks in family life. Women can increase their weekly working hours, which means they can earn more and better provide for their own retirement. Working more gives them better chances of professional advancement and, as a result, of better wage development.

But there are also advantages for fathers if they are given the opportunity to spend more time with their children and take on more family duties: They can better assume their paternal role, and experience what it means to have sole responsibility for the care of their children. This can create a foundation for a lasting and equal division of family tasks and gainful employment.

Last but certainly not least, children also benefit from a reconciliation policy that takes fathers into consideration. Studies show that it is beneficial to children's development when both parents share childcare duties.

This is one reason why Federal Minister for Family Affairs Manuela Schwesig put forward her concept of a family working time. The concept is very simple: parents who both work close to full-time, receive a bonus: the family allowance. This allowance of 300 euros per month (150 euros for each parent) would be paid for up to two years until the child is eight years old. This family allowance therefore goes beyond the paid parental leave which we call parental allowance. It provides financial assistance for families not only during parental leave but also for two more years on the condition that both parents are back at work. This way, we hope to support a close to full-time employment of both partners and foster a lasting equal division of family duties. The family allowance gives fathers more time for the family; it gives more mothers greater economic independence and, above all, a secure livelihood – now and in their later life.

Two-thirds of parents with children under eight and who would benefit from the family working time support this concept. The strongest agreement, 75 per cent, comes from childless couples who are about to plan a family. These are the families of the future. We are therefore taking the concept of a family working time with the financial benefit of a family allowance into the next legislative term.

Work-life balance is an important topic in connection with children, but it is also becoming increasingly important in the context of dependent family members. At the moment, there are

some 2.8 million people in Germany who are in need of care, and many of these persons are cared for at home by relatives. Therefore, we have established a legal entitlement for people to care for their relatives, a right that includes the option of a partial leave of up to 24 months. In addition, women and men who care for relatives can compensate their income loss with the help of an interest-free loan.

At the moment, there are significant differences between EU Member States in terms of the nature and extent of their legal conditions for reconciliation. I therefore welcome the fact that the European Commission has proposed a new Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers. Such a directive will set standards throughout the EU so that parents can better reconcile family and professional obligations. Since we are a European community of values, I support this discussion on good framework conditions for families at European level. And as a community of states whose intention is to secure prosperity across the entire continent, we can only win on the economic front if we provide good conditions for families.

Public debate in Germany and other European countries has again and again called for more private investment in this area, but also for a stronger public investment. Public investment also includes early childhood education and investment in work-life balance. This much is clear: family policies have enormous macro-economic and fiscal implications. In Germany, for example, the workforce participation of mothers with small children has increased since the introduction of parental allowance. Nowadays, women are returning to work after the birth of a child much earlier than they did ten years ago. The fact that fathers are involved is one of the success stories of the parental allowance scheme. It is the first family-policy scheme that addresses both parents in their responsibility for the family. It provides two partner months that are non-transferable and available to the family only if both parents take parental leave. Here, the earnings replacement is based on each partner's income before birth. This makes parental allowance attractive for fathers. Meanwhile more than one-third of fathers take parental leave – and in some regions this figure is as high as 57 per cent.

For quite some time now, Germany has been implementing a modern family policy that promotes equal partnership in families. In the present legislative term, we have pursued this course with even more determination. The new parental allowance “Plus” scheme, or “Eltern-geldPlus”, for example, has been introduced to help young parents who want to return to work part-time at an early stage. The scheme gives mothers and fathers the possibility to claim parental allowance longer and return to work earlier than before. In fact, parents who work between 25 and 30 hours per week can receive four additional bonus months of parental allowance “Plus” – thus combining part-time work with parental leave. A look at the figures shows that the parental allowance “Plus” scheme is popular: more than 20 per cent of young parents have already opted for the “Plus” allowance.

Another essential condition for a good work-life balance is high-quality childcare. Working parents must be sure that their children are in good hands while they are at work. For a long time this was less self-evident in Germany than in some other European countries. But we have expanded our childcare services enormously in the last 10 years. A total of

400,000 new childcare places have been created. There are now almost 720,000 places in childcare facilities available for children under three. An important milestone and a small revolution in German social policy was the introduction of a legal right to childcare for children above the age of one. Before that, it was quite common that – in most cases – mothers took the complete parental leave of three years, and that children did not start kindergarten until at least the age of three. Today about a third of the children under three are cared for in childcare facilities or daycare. And demands are rising: in the past year, 46 per cent of parents applied for childcare. We will therefore create more places and further improve the quality of childcare, and I am happy to announce that our Parliament, the German Bundestag has recently adopted a fourth investment programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, creating the framework conditions to ensure a better work-life balance through childcare services and family allowances is our job as policy-makers. But employers also need to support their employees and ensure that they can combine their professional and family lives. What working parents need most is more flexibility and more freedom to shape their working time. We therefore need to create a flexible working environment that is suitable for women and men. The possibility to occasionally work from home is still rarely offered in Germany, even though it should not pose a technical problem. Only twelve per cent of the German workforce currently work from home. But there are forward-looking companies. Daimler, for example, has adopted a company agreement on mobile work which is already heading in this direction. It gives employees the right, in consultation with their superiors, to choose any place and time for their activity. The responsibility to be a family-friendly employer is, of course, the same in both the public and private sector. Here, at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, we have also concluded a work agreement to support mobile work, and we are proud of it.

Ladies and gentlemen, the reconciliation of family and work is still a balancing act. Anyone who tries to reconcile the two on a daily basis knows it. And yet, fathers and mothers manage to do so every day. This task will be easier if families are not left alone with their needs. This applies to families in Germany as well as to families in the EU. How topical the issue of reconciliation policies for fathers is at the moment is reflected in the different reforms that many EU Member States are implementing: This year, for example, Austria undertook a far-reaching reform of its childcare allowance scheme. The Czech Republic is currently discussing paternity leave, and in Norway, the distribution of parental leave has become more flexible – to mention just a few of the many interesting models that will be discussed during the next two days.

There are many different arrangements in place in Europe that aim to increase work-life balance for fathers and promote more equal partnership in families. What instruments these are, how they are designed, and what experiences have been made with them – these are some of the topics that will be at the centre of the discussions in this Expert Meeting. I am pleased that we are making work-life balance a European issue, and I wish you and us all fruitful discussions and am already looking forward to the outcomes of this meeting.

3.2 The Work-Life Balance Package of the European Commission and new Momentum for Member States – Keynote Speech by Tiina Astola

In her keynote speech, Tiina Astola, Director-General of the EU Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, outlined the key objectives and aspects of the EU's so-called “work-life balance package”. The work-life balance package, whose foremost objective is gender equality, is one of the ways to deliver on the European Pillar of Social Rights. In addition to the aim of encouraging women's participation in the labour market, Ms. Astola also stressed another goal of the package: giving fathers more time for the family and with their children. Caring for relatives, she said, is another growing challenge for the reconciliation of family and work. She also highlighted the fact that digitisation represents an opportunity for a better balance of family duties and working life.



Director-General Tiina Astola

Ms. Astola then outlined the legislative and non-legislative aspects of the work-life balance package. The proposal for a Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers calls for the introduction of the following EU-wide minimum standards:

- Parental leave: Individual entitlement of both parents to four months of parental leave each. The leave should be compensated at least at sick-pay level and not be transferable from one parent to the other.
- Paternity leave: Individual entitlement of fathers to ten days of paid leave around the time of the birth of a child, to be compensated at least at the level of sick-pay.
- Carers' leave: Individual entitlement of employees to five days of leave per year to care for seriously ill or dependent relatives. Here again, the proposal for a Directive would provide for compensation at least at the level of sick-pay.
- Flexible working arrangements: Formal right of employees to apply to their employers for flexible arrangements regarding their working hours, schedule or place of work for a set period of time. The proposal does not envisage a legal claim to flexible working arrangements, but employers would be obliged to justify any rejection in writing.

Furthermore, the draft proposed by the European Commission includes improving the infrastructure and quality of childcare as well as long-term care with the help of EU funding. It also calls for monitoring and exchange of good practice examples within the European Semester. Ms. Astola also noted that data collection needed to be improved.

Ms. Astola emphasised that these measures aim to have positive effects for women, men, and children as well as for employers:

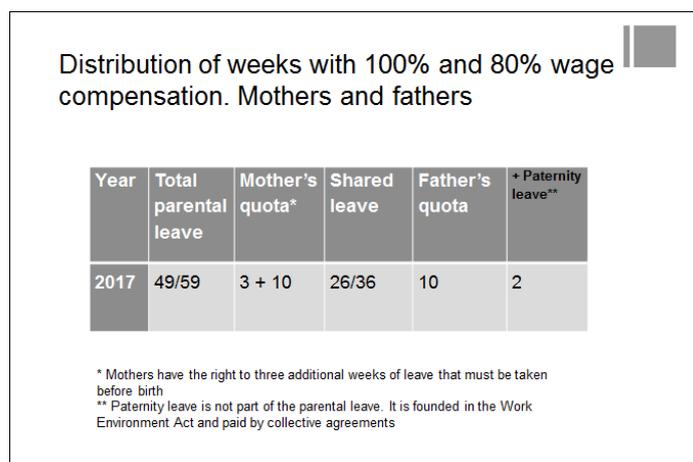
- Women's labour market participation will increase if they have realistic chances to better reconcile family duties and professional life. This will stabilise women's income in the course of their lives and thus help prevent poverty in old age.

- The envisaged measures will encourage more men to take advantage of parental leave and other leave options.
- Children will get more time with both parents and the quality of childcare will improve.
- Employers will benefit from satisfied employees. Work-life balance will be seen as a locational factor in employers' competition for the best minds. Also, an improved work-life balance means fewer absences when a child is ill.

4 Daddy Months as Policy Instrument in Norway, Sweden and Iceland

4.1 Norway – A pioneer for father-specific leave

Berit Brandth, Professor at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, told participants that Norway had introduced so-called “Daddy months” in its parental leave scheme in 1993 and that it has since gradually expanded them. When father-specific leave was introduced, it consisted of four out of a total of 42 weeks of parental leave. In 2017 the father’s quota accounted for ten of 49 weeks of leave (see figure below). Parental leave in Norway is paid at 100 per cent of earnings. It may be extended to a total of 59 weeks at a compensation rate of 80 per cent.



Source: Brandth 2017, workshop presentation

The aims of Norwegian reconciliation policies include improving gender equality and promoting the father-child relationship. Professor Brandth criticised the fact that both Norway and the rest of Europe seldom explicitly emphasise that reconciliation policies also have positive effects for children. The main arguments in favour of improving work-life balance are generally economic arguments and the goal of increasing the birth rate.

Ms. Brandth went on to outline the effects that the introduction of father-specific leave in Norway had. When the father’s quota was introduced in 1993, the percentage of fathers taking parental leave jumped from four to 75 per cent. Every subsequent increase led to proportionally more leave being taken by fathers. Likewise, the reduction by four weeks in 2014 resulted in a corresponding drop in the length of leave that fathers took. For Norway, she said, this means:

the larger the father's quota the more men taking longer periods of parental leave.¹ The idea of father-specific parental leave finds broad support in Norway, but it is currently the subject of political debate. For instance, calls for more freedom of choice led, among other issues, to the reduction of the father's quota by four weeks in 2014. Ms. Brandth emphasised that companies in particular explicitly welcome the father's quota and are against a reduction. It can generally be said that a shift in values has taken place, with father-specific parental leave now being seen as a value in itself.

Professor Brandth named the following aspects as reasons for the success of father-specific leave in Norway:

- Fathers-specific leave is a legal entitlement which does not depend on collective agreement negotiations or on arrangements with employers.
- Parental leave is an individual entitlement of fathers. This gives fathers the feeling that as fathers they have an independent right to parental leave. As a result, they want to claim this right for themselves much as they would take advantage of their vacation or pension rights. Fathers therefore do not have to negotiate their parental leave with their employers or with the mother of the child. This vested right recognises the fact that fathers are important for raising and caring for their children. Symbolically, this recognition has a great deal of importance.
- Parental leave is not transferable. The father's entitlement to ten week of parental leave cannot be transferred to the mother; it therefore lapses if it is not used by the father. This, explained Professor Brandth, is a motivation for many fathers, because letting the claim lapse also means that children lose time with their parents.
- Parental leave in Norway comes with a 100 per cent earnings replacement. This helps men retain their sometimes still prevalent self-image as the main breadwinner even while they are taking care of the children.
- Fathers have clearly internalised the social expectation to take parental leave and assume childcare responsibility. Ms. Brandth reports from her research that fathers who do not take parental leave can sometimes be stigmatised.

According to Ms. Brandth, it has become quite clear that the way father-specific leave is designed plays a large role in how many fathers take advantage of it.

¹ According to 2011 figures, 50 per cent of eligible Norwegian fathers use the exact time of available father-specific leave; 20 per cent use less, and 29 per cent stay in parental leave longer than the months earmarked for them.



Rósa Erlingsdóttir, Charlotta Örn, Berit Brandth, Dr. Sören Hoyer

In addition to taking or not taking leave, however, what is also important is how fathers spend their parental leave. It makes a qualitative difference whether they are alone in parental leave or take leave at the same time as the mother. Flexibility in how parental leave is taken also has an effect on the quality of the leave. About 50 per cent of Norwegian fathers are alone at home during their parental

leave. Research has shown that in these cases, fathers develop stronger childcare skills. They have to learn to interpret the needs of infants and become more than only a support for the mother. Professor Brandth concluded:

“The effects of the father’s quota on fathering practices and gender equality are greatest when fathers are home alone.”

Professor Brandth concluded by encouraging a more critical approach to the flexibilisation of parental leave. Ever since flexible use of parental leave has been possible in Norway, fathers in particular have often taken it on a part-time basis or in several blocks. This changes the quality of parental leave. Professor Brandth’s research results show that if parental leave is taken on a part-time basis, for instance, it is in the end work that dominates the day. Fathers find themselves torn between their work and their time with the children. The rhythm and tempo of their lives is then often more in tune with the working world. Often this also means that fathers assume no more than a supporting role in childcare while mothers take on the main responsibility.

“Continuous leave over a longer period seems the most effective for fathers when it comes to fence off work, take care responsibility and develop as caregivers.”

4.2 Sweden – Long father-specific leave and support by employers

Charlotta Örn, Adviser at the Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, began her presentation by explaining that one of the objectives of the Swedish gender equality policy was to make sure that parental leave was shared equally between men and women. At the moment, she said, policies aimed at migrants and the self-employed, two target groups that so far have taken little parental leave.

Since 1974, parents in Sweden have had a legal entitlement to parental leave. Today, parents in Sweden have a shared entitlement to 480 days of paid parental leave per child, with earnings replacement of 78 per cent. In 1995, a so-called “Daddy month” was introduced, earmarking 30 days of the paid parental leave exclusively for the father. In 2002 this quota was extended

to 60 days, and since 2016, both parents have had a non-transferable entitlement to 90 days of leave. This means that only 300 of the 480 days are transferable. Of these 300 days, only 30 can be used by both parents simultaneously. In addition to parental leave, parents in Sweden are also entitled to 120 days per year of so-called temporary parental leave per child. These can be used, for example, if a child becomes ill. Here, too, earnings are replaced at a rate of 78 per cent. In this case, however, the entitlement can be transferred to other persons, such as grandparents. The ten days leave for the second parent directly after the birth of a child is also part of this temporary parental leave.

In general, both public and private employers agree that parental leave constitutes a natural part of working life for both men and women. It is therefore customary for employers to include parental leave bonuses in collective agreements, thus boosting the statutory earnings replacement rate. Many employers see this family friendliness as a necessary trump card in the competition to attract qualified personnel.

Ms. Örn then presented data to demonstrate that in actual fact parental leave is not yet being shared equally: while women use an average of 345 days of the shared paid parental leave, men use only 104. And although the amount of parental leave taken by fathers has steadily increased, there is still a lot of room for improvement. For instance, research has shown that the greater the mother's share of parental leave, the more unpaid family work ends up being done by the mother. This reduces women's share in gainful employment. Therefore: the more equally parents share parental leave, the more equally they tend to share unpaid family work, which in turn has positive effects on women's labour market participation.

Ms. Örn emphasised that Sweden provides many good examples for a successful reconciliation policy. The availability and quality of childcare as well as other forms of financial support for families are steps towards a more family-friendly society. It is true, of course, that these policies are partially driven by economic issues, but they are also about values and norms. A managing director who takes parental leave is both a good example and an expression of a shift in values.

Ms. Örn concluded by stating that the Swedish government has set up a commission to examine how the parental leave scheme can be modernised. The commission is focusing on a more equal sharing of parental leave, on changes to adapt to other family forms such as same-sex couples or stepfamilies, as well as on other measures to improve the reconciliation of family and work.²

4.3 Iceland – A shift in role perception through father-specific leave

Rósa Erlingsdóttir, Chief Adviser on Gender Equality at the Icelandic Ministry of Welfare, describes Iceland as a country with high labour market participation by both sexes and good

² The results of the commission's work were published at the end of 2017: www.regeringen.se/4afa97/contentassets/01a6fba2043a4e58aeac32cf52bd3449/sou-2017_101_jamstallt-foraldraskap-och-goda-uppvaxtvillkor-for-barn.pdf. For an executive summary in English see p. 37ff.

public childcare. According to the Global Gender Gap Index, Iceland is the country where gender equality is most advanced. At the same time, however, there continues to be an unequal distribution of unpaid family work that is not reflected in the index. As has already been said, a more equal sharing of family work and childcare has a significant impact on women's participation in the labour market. The participation of fathers in family duties is therefore a central starting point on the road to greater gender equality. Ms. Erlingsdóttir sees the Icelandic experience as a positive example of how father-specific leave can contribute to gender equality – even bringing about a shift in social norms, as in the perception of masculinity.

The Icelandic Parental Leave Act was fundamentally reformed in the year 2000. The goal was to give children time with both parents and at the same time to improve the reconciliation of family and work for both women and men. The reform introduced nine months of parental leave with 80 per cent earnings replacement: three of these months are earmarked for the father, three for the mother and three further months freely divisible. The earmarked months are not transferable to the other partner. Not only did this give fathers a legal entitlement to parental leave: it also created the expectation that they should actually use it. Nowadays about 80 per cent of fathers take parental leave. The majority of them take the full three months, while 15 to 20 per cent of men also use parts of the transferable three months. Parental leave can be used flexibly: part-time, in several blocks and also together with the partner. Among other things, the success of the parental leave policy is based on broad acceptance among employers that fathers take leave in order to take care of their children. 75 to 80 per cent of companies – a comparatively high proportion – express themselves favourably about fathers taking parental leave.

The Icelandic government has currently commissioned a committee to discuss reform proposals for the parental leave scheme. Among other things, expanding it to a total of 12 months is being discussed: five non-transferable months for each one of the parents and two transferable months. Critics fear that this could lead to women being out of the labour market for up to seven months.

According to Ms. Erlingsdóttir, the high take-up rate of parental leave by fathers in Iceland means that parents share family duties and childcare more equally and also participate in the labour market more equally than one generation ago. The Parental Leave Act has also helped shift concepts of masculinity among male adolescents. A clear shift towards childcare responsibility being part of the masculine ideal can be observed around the time of the reform of parental leave in 2000.

The Icelandic example shows that legal regulations can contribute to a change of role perception within a society. Icelanders are meanwhile convinced that men and women are equally suited to look after their children – a role perception that a few years ago was clearly still gender-specific and attributed to the mother. Ms. Erlingsdóttir concluded by emphasising that with their behaviour men can make a significant contribution to changing social norms and that this allows them to assume a greater responsibility for gender equality.

4.4 Discussion

The discussion that followed focused primarily on the role of social norms and identities. Participants agreed that it should become more normal for fathers to take parental leave and to participate in childcare. They concurred that it was also the responsibility of mothers to let fathers take over a share of the childcare duties. Non-transferable parental leave for fathers, they agreed, was a way to promote this through legal regulations. At the same time, participants emphasised that men should also take on family duties and childcare responsibilities on a long-term basis, not only for the specified months of parental leave. In Sweden, participants said, father-specific leave has encouraged fathers to increasingly make use of the corresponding leave option when a child is ill. In Iceland, the father's quota has had a positive impact on a more equal sharing of both family duties and gainful employment. Parental leave for fathers give men the chance to gain positive experience with childcare duties. In the long term, this could also mean that men will participate more equally in family duties.



5 Financial Incentives for a more Equal Sharing of Parental Leave: Experiences in Austria and Sweden

5.1 Austria – New instruments to encourage the involvement of fathers

Olaf Kapella, Research Coordinator at the Austrian Institute for Family Studies, gave an introductory overview of Austrian developments in the parental leave scheme. An important step with regard to the involvement of fathers was the introduction in 2010 of an additional parental leave option with earnings replacement to supplement the previously existing lump-sum variants. There is also a 20 per cent bonus available if the second parent also takes parental

leave.³ In 2017, a partnership bonus as well as a family-time bonus for fathers were introduced, both intended to promote a more equal sharing of family work.

The partnership bonus is a one-time financial incentive of € 500 per parent if they share their paid parental leave as equally as possible, at least in a ratio of 60 to 40. The family-time bonus for fathers is a financial support scheme that can be claimed by fathers who take 28 to 31 days of unpaid leave in one block. This bonus must be claimed during the first three months following the birth of a child. Fathers then receive a lump-sum benefit of approximately 700 euros – an amount which is, however, offset against later amounts of paid parental leave. Admittedly, there is no legal entitlement to the bonus and therefore no protection against dismissal. Overall, according to Olaf Kapella, this creates a high administrative burden, especially for the fathers, as they have to provide evidence that they have interrupted their employment and not taken paid leave. Statistics available to date show that the scheme is used above all by men employed in the public sector. Since 2011, public-sector employees have been able to claim an unpaid, four-week leave around the time of the birth of a child, so that employer approval, that is a requirement for the bonus, is not an obstacle.



Olaf Kapella

Mr. Kapella mentioned that there was no political consensus for the term “Daddy month”, and that therefore the term “family-time bonus” had been introduced. He also emphasised that the new regulation was virtually cost-neutral, as the bonus is offset against any paid parental leave taken later on.

According to Mr. Kapella, it is customary in Austria for men to stay at home around the time of the birth of a child. Indeed, women also expect them to do so. In conclusion, Mr. Kapella listed what would have to change from his point of view for fathers to participate more sustainably in family duties and childcare: The business world would have to be more involved and provide incentives for fathers to make it easier for them to take parental leave. There should be a fundamental social emphasis on the responsibility of fathers for both childcare and the care of elderly relatives. Additionally, the effects for women and children, there should be an emphasis on the positive aspects for men themselves when they take on childcare responsibility.

5.2 Sweden – The gender equality bonus remains without effect

Niklas Löfgren, Family Economics Spokesperson for the Swedish Social Insurance Agency, spoke on the introduction of a gender equality bonus in Sweden in 2008 and on the reasons

³ For details, cf. Hoyer/Reich/Reinschmidt (2018): Towards an Equal Partnership in Families – How European States Promote Father Involvement in Family Work, available at: www.beobachtungsstelle-gesellschaftspolitik.de/en/keytopics/familyandreconciliation.



Niklas Löfgren

for its abolition in 2017. The Swedish government introduced the gender equality bonus in order to achieve a more equal sharing of parental leave and to increase the labour market participation of women with young children. The gender equality bonus was initially offered in the form of a tax relief of ten euros per day if parents shared paid parental leave in a proportion of at least 40 to 60. Parents could therefore save up to 1,400 euros

in taxes per year. In 2012 this tax deduction was changed to an automatic bonus payment because many parents forgot to apply for the deduction.

The effectiveness of the gender equality bonus was evaluated in 2010, 2012 and 2014. Parents whose children were born in July 2008 or later were entitled to the bonus. Compared with parents of children born in June 2008, there was no difference in the distribution of parental leave between men and women. As the bonus therefore did not have the desired effect, it was abolished in 2017.

5.3 Discussion

The discussion began with the question of how bonus systems are financed and, as a corollary, with the issue of the burden on the state and employers. In Sweden, ten per cent of the state budget is spent on families with children. The benefits, including the abolished gender equality bonus, are financed by social contributions from employees and employers. In Austria, the bonus programme is tax-financed.

As the discussion progressed, participants talked about possible adjustments to make incentive systems like bonuses more successful. The amount of the bonus or of earnings being replaced was found to be an important factor, especially to encourage men to take up parental leave. Participants discussed whether in Sweden the bonus would have been better accepted if it had involved a higher amount. A participant from Sweden reported that in her own experience it had had more of a deadweight effect. There are many other aspects that influence the individual sharing of parental leave between men and women. Mr. Löfgren also noted that calculating the bonus and applying for it had been very complicated for parents. Mr. Kapella questioned whether it was the right signal when



men had to be talked into using parental leave by means of a high financial incentive. A much better approach would be to improve the infrastructure so that men could actually realise their wishes for a better work-life balance.

Participants also discussed how people with a low income could be supported so that they made more use of bonus systems or benefits with earnings replacement. It was stressed that for lower-income groups even small losses in household income were a hurdle. Therefore, for example, many find a compensation rate of 65 per cent too little. The amount of the financial benefit is therefore a decisive criterion for or against take-up of parental leave among low-income individuals, especially fathers. It was also noted that the level of earnings replacement was not important for people with low income only. For many parents, maintaining a certain standard of living was also an issue. So, too low a ceiling on earnings replacement is counter-productive.

Furthermore, the point was made that there may be too little information available about benefits such as bonus systems. In addition to the actual structure of the schemes, another aspect that might well need adjustment was the publicity made within the intended target groups.

Finally, Liz Gosme of COFACE brought up the issue of promoting a *reconciliation economy*. In particular with regard to low-income earners and poverty prevention, the involvement of fathers in family duties should be encouraged not only through parental leave models, but above all through employment models. Policy-makers should work together with companies to create work-life balance friendly structures at the workplace. This should be made possible not only for office jobs, but also for sectors with working conditions that make reconciliation of work and family more difficult, such as shift work.

6 Promoting Equal Partnership: New Approaches in Estonia, Slovenia and the Czech Republic

6.1 Estonia – Generous earnings replacement, lack of impact and current reform plans

Linda Sassian, Counsellor for Social Affairs at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU, began her talk by outlining the scheme of parental and father-specific leave in Estonia, continuing on to present recent reform plans. In Estonia, fathers are entitled to ten days of paid paternity leave with earnings replacement of 100 per cent, with a ceiling of approximately 2,900 euros.⁴ Roughly half of all fathers take advantage of this leave. Until 2008, a lump-sum payment had been made, but between 2009 and 2012 the payment was suspended. With the introduction of earnings replacement, take-up by fathers rose from around ten to over 40 per

⁴ Calculated on the basis of three times the average income in Estonia.

cent. Here too we see that the existence of earnings replacement has a major impact on the attractiveness of father-specific leave.

The three years of parental leave in Estonia are paid by parental benefit. The first 62 weeks after maternity leave are paid at 100 per cent of personal earnings; with a minimum of 430 euros per month, and a ceiling of approximately 2,900 euros.⁵ The minimum parental benefit can also be claimed by unemployed parents; it corresponds to subsistence benefits. Ms. Sassian pointed out that the low birth rate had been a factor in the introduction of the generous earnings replacement. The scheme is highly flexible. Parents may, for instance, divide up parental benefits on a monthly basis, but they cannot take them at the same time. Also, parents can work while they receive parental benefit. Thus there is no obligation to take leave while receiving parental benefit. When a parent takes up employment the amount of earnings replacement is reduced by half of the income. The maximum reduction of the parental benefit is 50 per cent. Fathers are entitled to take paid parental leave at the earliest 70 days after birth, in other words starting from the end of maternity leave. Despite the generous earnings replacement, fathers claim less than ten per cent of paid parental leave, i.e. parental benefit, while the lion's share of parental benefit is still being used by mothers. And although there has been a slight upward trend in recent years, the take-up rate of fathers is still below ten per cent. The role of fathers as caregivers is increasingly acknowledged in Estonian society. At the same time, however, there is still a perception that mothers should not be employed and that fathers should therefore not go on parental leave. The government is trying to explicitly encourage the involvement of fathers.



Linda Sassian

According to Ms. Sassian, the March 2017 parental leave reform bill proposes that maternity benefit, paternity benefit, parental benefit and childcare benefit should be merged into a single scheme. The plan earmarks a specific period for mothers and fathers individual, while also providing for a shared period. Paid parental leave would be extended to a total of 605 days, including the 70 days earmarked for mothers after the birth of a child. Fathers would receive an individual entitlement of 30 days. This father-specific leave would be non-transferable, but could be used simultaneously with the mother and, if desired, in blocks of a minimum of one

⁵ After a maternity leave period of 70 days after birth and the 62 weeks of parental leave with wage compensation, parents can receive 38 euros per month in childcare benefits until the third birthday of the child. It is not necessary to take parental leave to be eligible for this scheme. Employment is therefore possible.

day. Government plans also include changes to increase the flexibility of parental leave. Parental leave could then be taken in several blocks until a child's third birthday. The reform would also allow parents to use two months at the same time, and the ceilings for additional income would be raised significantly.

6.2 Slovenia – Reforming paternity leave

Nada Stropnik, Researcher at the Institute for Economic Research in Ljubljana, reported that in the post-socialist era Slovenia had managed not only to maintain what had been achieved in terms of family and childcare policies but also to enhance the quality of these policies. She explained that for several years now the perspective on fathers and their role in raising and caring for children had been changing at a both structural and individual level. In 2003, for instance, paternity leave was introduced. Nowadays, fathers are more involved in childcare than one generation before, albeit in a still small proportion.

In Slovenia, paid paternity leave is currently being changed in stages: in 2016 fathers could take a total of 70 calendar days of leave with earnings replacement of 90 per cent for the first 20 days. For the remaining 50 days, the state paid social insurance contributions at the level of the minimum wage.⁶ In 2017, fathers are entitled to 50 days of paternity leave, 25 of them



Nada Stropnik

with earnings replacement. Thirty days with earning replacement will be available as of 2018. The well-paid portion of paternity leave is therefore being extended and the total duration reduced. The scheme is highly flexible. For instance, leave can also be taken on a daily basis. Parental leave is long, and it comes with a comparatively generous earnings replacement rate of 90 per cent. Both parents have an individual entitlement to 130 days of parental leave, an entitlement that can be transferred to the other parent.

Ms. Stropnik then went into the possible effects of these measures on the behaviour of fathers. A change was recognisable, she said, but it was very slow and at a low overall level. Four out of five fathers take 15 days of paternity leave, but only one in five claims more than 15 days. Typically, fathers take days off when the mother comes home from hospital after birth. Moreover, fathers use only just over five per cent of parental leave. Ms. Stropnik attributed this slow or indeed even stagnating shift on the one hand to traditional values and on the other to the

⁶ The first 15 days of paternity leave can be taken within the first six months of a child's life; the remaining days until the child turns three.

role of employers. Mothers often took all parental leave, Ms. Stropnik explained, and have little trust in fathers' childcare ability. Men also often found it difficult to shed their self-image as an "irreplaceable worker" and at the same time as a "replaceable parent". It was therefore difficult for men to deviate from traditional gender roles. In addition, Ms. Stropnik said, a survey had shown that about a fifth of parents did not know that parental leave could be split. At the same time, Slovenian employers were very critical about fathers taking leave. It was easier for them to find a replacement for long-term absent employees – mostly mothers – than for short-term breaks of a few weeks or months. In addition, employers still often considered reconciling work and family life as being a private problem that they did not need to address.

It can be seen that fathers, despite their frequent claims to the contrary, continue to insist on traditional gender roles. House and family work continues to be distributed very unequally on a gender-specific basis. Fathers therefore often assume only the role of a supportive carer. Often they take on selective tasks, above all activities that are flexible and pleasant such as spending time with children on weekends. Recurring care tasks, especially for infants, usually remain the responsibility of mothers.

Concluding her talk, Ms. Stropnik mentioned a few programmes designed to activate fathers for childcare tasks. For some time now, fathers wishing to be present at birth have had to attend a "parenting course". Three quarters of fathers now take part in such courses. Ms. Stropnik also mentioned as a positive example that in the mid-2000s there had been a media campaign entitled "Fathers, get involved!". Advertising spots were shown during important sports events, father-and-child events were held and documentary films were shown. And finally, Ms. Stropnik expressed her regret that within the scope of the "family-friendly employers" programme, which was introduced in 2007 on the model of the German "success factor family" programme, not a single company had so far implemented measures that specifically focused on fathers.

6.3 The Czech Republic – Comprehensive reforms and public debate

Jana Maláčová, Director at the Czech Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, began by describing the situation of childcare in the Czech Republic and then presented the government's current reform efforts aiming to involve fathers more in family work. The Czech Republic gives both parents individual entitlement to three years of unpaid parental leave. A parental benefit provides financial support for at-home parents or for out-of-home care costs. It is independent from the uptake of parental leave. The benefit replaces earnings up to 70 per cent for a minimum of 24 and a maximum of 48 months. This current system encourages mothers to take long breaks, and many stay at home for four years. In the Czech Republic, the social discourse is largely determined by the principle that it is good for children when mothers assume childcare duties at home for four years. This line of reasoning has its origin in the period of post-socialist transformation: it was a way to remove mothers from the labour market, thus in fact turning them into "losers of the transformation", parked away, so to speak, in paid parental leave.

The government is currently planning to make it possible for parents to take up the parental benefit for shorter periods. On the basis of an unchanged total budget of approximately 8,400 euros, parents should be able to receive parental benefit for periods amounting to less than 24 months. The earnings replacement rate would then increase accordingly. It would also become possible to claim only six months of parental benefit. In this variant, a limit of 1,240 euros per month would apply. This would give parents the option of flexibly reducing their time of paid parental leave without being financially worse off.



Jana Maláčová

Parliament has already introduced a one-week paid paternity leave. Starting in 2018, fathers are entitled to a week of paternity leave within the first six weeks after birth, with earnings replacement of 70 per cent. According to Ms. Maláčová, introducing paternity leave was difficult, although the majority of the population supported it very much. She explained that it represented a first step and should above all show that father involvement is good and desired.

Ms. Maláčová noted that in recent years, daycare services for children have already been expanded in order to allow parents to better reconcile their family obligations and their work and thus shorten parental leave periods. There are now children's groups for children from the age of one year. In 2017, there are about 600 groups offering places for roughly ten per cent of children. Also daycare by childminders is possible from the sixth month of life. In 2016, a law was passed to ensure that children from the age of two years have a statutory right to formal childcare. This right will take effect from 2020.

Ms. Maláčová sees public opinion and traditional values as the biggest obstacles to a more equal sharing of family work. The debate, she said, was very politicised and polarised. The government is therefore trying to use the media to sensitise people to this issue. An important argument in this regard is that a greater involvement of fathers in family work would strengthen the stability of families and thus help reduce the high divorce rate in the Czech Republic. Again and again, the argument is also made that a greater participation of mothers in the labour market is one way of combating women's poverty in old age. Finally, Ms. Maláčová reported that video clips were currently being spread via YouTube and Facebook showing prominent personalities likely to serve as role models for young people and promoting a more equal sharing of work and family duties.

6.4 Discussion

Irena Moozova, Director of the Department for Equality and Union citizenship at the EU Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, underlined the importance of flexibility in working time arrangements and asked how this was being dealt with in the various EU Member States. Nada Stropnik reported that part-time work for parents was being encouraged in Slovenia. If one parent reduces his or her working time by up to 50 per cent, the state pays the social security contributions lost due to the reduction at the level of the minimum wage. These contributions can be paid until a child's third birthday, and in the case of multiple-child families, even until the youngest child is six years old. 20 per cent of the recipients of this benefit are fathers. According to Jana Maláčová, the Czech law on working time is currently being reformed. In addition to simplifying teleworking, the new arrangements also stipulate that an application for working part-time can be turned down only if the employer justifies his rejection in writing. This fulfils the requirement of the current EU proposal for a Directive on Work-Life Balance. In principle, however, Czechs have a strong tendency towards full-time employment, because parents strive for a high standard of living. There is therefore also a re-entry programme for mothers. Linda Sassian explained that there are no special regulations for parents in the Estonian law regulating working hours. Overall, she said there was little demand for part-time work, as part-time income was often insufficient. However, Estonian employees have a general right to apply to their employers for flexible working-time arrangements, though there is no obligation for the employer to satisfy these requests. In the further discussion, participants agreed that flexible working arrangements are part of the work-life balance puzzle, and that above all they can serve to increase fathers' involvement in family work. With regard to teleworking, it was noted that it involves a risk that women will end up staying in their home environments, away from the workplace and closer to home and family work. Moreover, there are some professional groups whose activities do not by their nature lend themselves to teleworking. In this context, the question arose as to what basic options employers should provide for their employees. For the Czech Republic, Ms. Maláčová reported that some companies have crèches and children's groups for shift workers. Regulations explicitly allow company crèches, in hospitals for instance, so that parents can work night shifts. At this point the objection was raised that children should have the right to have time off from formal childcare. In the Czech case, therefore, a restriction applies that parents have to work unusual hours in order to have their children cared for outside normal hours.

Discussion participants then stressed that successful reconciliation policies had to ensure that childcare gaps were avoided. This means favouring holistic approaches that include both leave schemes and childcare infrastructure.

Finally, participants discussed leave options available in various EU states when a child is ill. This, they agreed, was a specific and often forgotten problem within the overarching issue of work-life balance. In Slovenia, parents can have up to three weeks' leave per illness of a child, compensated at 80 per cent. In Estonia, parents are entitled to 14 days' leave per illness of a child, with earnings replacement of 80 per cent. In the Czech Republic, parents can take a

maximum of nine days off when a child is ill. Parents can take turns, and there is no limit to how often leave can be taken. This leave comes with an earnings replacement of 60 per cent and a ceiling of 32 euros per day. Overall, the problem with leave in the case of illness of a child is that it is mostly women who take the leave. This, participants thought, is how gender-specific role perceptions are reproduced.

7 Where do we go from here? European Perspectives on National and EU Incentives for Father Involvement

The last speaker, Liz Gosme, Director of COFACE Families Europe, assessed national and EU incentives for increasing fathers' involvement from a European perspective. In an opening comment, she expressed her pleasure about the inspiring exchange during the Expert Meeting. Ms. Gosme welcomed the EU proposal for a Directive as a first step on the way to Europe-wide standards of work-life balance measures. She stated that reconciliation policies were, in a sense, the nexus of family policy and gender equality policy. She described the work-life balance package as a way of rethinking family policy from a new and holistic point of view. The right mix of money, infrastructure and time, she explained, was a crucial element in this regard.



Liz Gosme

To start off, she said, families' income situation had to be secured, gender-specific labour market segregation reduced and the gender pay gap narrowed. Tax systems also needed to be gender and family-friendly. This would also mean abolishing tax advantages linked to the status of marriage alone and reducing indirect taxation of families on products such as nappies, children's clothing or feeding bottles. A special focus should be placed on the financial situation of families in vulnerable situations.

Secondly, affordable and high-quality childcare services would have to be available and accessible to all. Services must be available for all age groups until school entry. It is not only parents that

face work-life balance problems, Ms. Gosme said, but also people who care for relatives. Here, too, it would be necessary to have tailor-made, community-based services available in order to relieve the burden on caregivers and enable them to participate in the labour market.

Thirdly and finally, she noted, paid leave options were important for a good work-life balance – for fathers, for mothers, and for those caring for relatives. All of these persons also needed flexible working arrangements: teleworking, smart work or other flexible arrangements that facilitate reconciliation in everyday life.

Ms. Gosme stressed that all three aspects should be considered as part of the same equation. A holistic policy approach, she said, also meant that one cannot talk about one without considering the others.

With regard to the work-life balance package, she welcomed the life-course perspective, as it also addressed people with care obligations for close relatives. COFACE believes that non-transferability and adequate payment are essential components within the proposed Directive that should not be negotiable in order to truly encourage involvement of fathers.

In her final outlook, she emphasised that, firstly, the Directive should be adopted by the European Parliament and the EU Council without being watered down. This would also send a clear message that the European Union supports families, and it would refute Eurosceptic arguments. Secondly, she called for monitoring of Member States' performance in the area of work-life balance policies through the European Semester. And thirdly, work-life balance should be mainstreamed within the EU Structural and Investment Funds. There were, she said, possible funding opportunities: for expanding infrastructure, testing innovations, training care staff or developing relief options for caregiving relatives. Fourthly, Ms. Gosme called for stronger cross-country exchange. This would lead to successful innovations being disseminated and adapted. The EU Commission's work-life balance package offered a good opportunity for this. For example, a country could organise a [peer review seminar on social protection and social inclusion](#) to deal with the topic of reconciliation policies. A sub-group in the EU Social Protection Committee could also promote greater cooperation on policies between innovative countries.

8 Final round of discussion and feedback

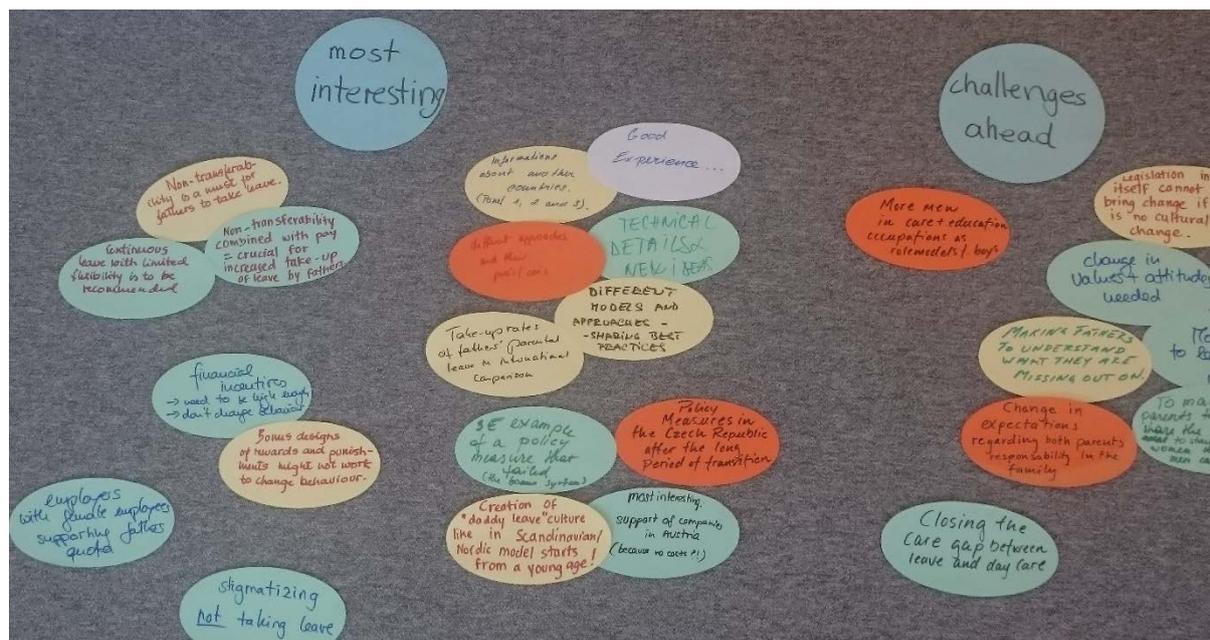
In the concluding discussion round, participants posed open questions and named aspects they had learned during the Expert Meeting. The abundance and breadth of answers showed that this Europe-wide exchange had provided much opportunity for discussion and mutual learning. The central aspects are briefly described below:

As central challenges for the encouragement of fathers' involvement the participants named:

- bringing about a shift in norms and values
- having more men as role models in care and educational institutions
- closing the gap between parental leave and formal childcare
- including all family forms

Participants formulated the following questions as open issues:

- How can a shift in norms and values be achieved? What role can legislation play?
- Is our understanding of full-time and part-time work still in keeping with the times?
- How do precarious jobs influence fathers in their decision to take parental leave?
- How can employers be motivated to create structures that encourage a better reconciliation of family and work?



The answers to the question of what aspects participants found most interesting during discussions can be summarised in the following points:

- Non-transferability and sufficient financial compensation of father-specific leave are essential components for promoting the involvement of fathers
- Flexibility is a positive aspect, but its unwanted effects should always be kept in mind
- Employers with predominantly female employees support father-specific leave
- The role of financial incentives and the design of bonus systems
- The stigma attached to fathers not taking parental leave (Norway)
- The exchange of good examples
- Learning about specific country examples through a presentation of experiences, details, statistics of father-specific leave as well as its advantages and disadvantages

Some additional comments should be mentioned that participants found important in terms of work-life balance and fathers' involvement:

- A holistic approach is very important
- The perspective of the children, their wishes and needs must be taken into account
- The reconciliation of elderly care and work should not be forgotten

In conclusion, Mark Kamperhoff, Head of EU division at the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, thanked all participants for the interesting discussions. He also mentioned that the Observatory and the BMFSFJ would continue to promote Europe-wide exchanges on reconciliation policies. The coming European Expert Meetings in this series on reconciliation policies referred to at the beginning of the workshop will highlight the issue from other perspectives, for instance with regard to the reconciliation of elderly care and work.



9 List of participants

Nicola Amstelveen	Policy Officer, Parental Leave, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Efi Anastasiou	Policy Officer, Unit C1: Social Investment Strategy, European Commission DG EMPL
Tiina Astola	Director-General, European Commission, DG JUST
Kristýna Bálková	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Czech Republic
Anke Böckenhoff	Policy Officer, German Association for Public and Private Welfare
Berit Brandth	Professor, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Sociology and Political Science
Rósa Erlingsdottir	Senior Adviser, Department of Social Affairs and Equality, Ministry of Welfare in Iceland
Nicoletta Finter	Policy Officer, Principle Issues in Family Policy, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Dr. Regina Frey	Agency of the Second Gender Equality Report, Institute for Social Work and Social Education, Germany
Ulrike Gebelein	Policy Officer, Diakonie Germany
Liz Gosme	Director, COFACE Families Europe
Christian Hoenisch	Policy Officer, Equality Policy for Boys and Men, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Miriam Hoheisel	Director, German Association for single mothers and fathers
Dr. Sören Hoyer	Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe
Sven Iversen	Director, Association of German Family Organisations
Mark Kamperhoff	Head of EU division, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Olaf Kapella	Research Coordinator, Austrian Institute for Family Studies

Tanja Kavur	Director, Agency of the Advisory Board for the Reconciliation of elderly care and work
Dr. Ralf Kleindiek	State Secretary, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Simone Lippert	Policy Officer, Fundamental Aspects of Family Policy, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Niklas Löfgren	Family Economics Spokesperson, Swedish Social Security Agency
Jana Maláčová	Director Department of Family and Ageing Policy, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the Czech Republic
Jonathan Menge	Policy Officer Gender Equality and Family Policies, Friedrich-Ebert Foundation
Irena Moozova	Director D "Equality and Union citizenship", European Commission, DG JUST
Christian Noebel	Head of Integration, Reconciliation of Family and work and equal opportunities, Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce
Charlotta Örn	Adviser, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs in Sweden
Sven Paul	Policy Officer, Fundamental Aspects of Gender-Equality Policy, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Cornelia Pust	Policy Officer, Monitoring family-oriented Services and Benefits, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
Silke Raab	Department Women, Gender Equality and Family Policy, German Federation of Trade Unions
Thordis Reimer	Researcher, University of Hamburg
Lena Reinschmidt	Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe
Linda Sassian	Counsellor for Social Affairs, Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU
Diandra Schlitt	Unit Labour Market, German Employers Association
Dr. Dag Schölper	Director, Federal Forum Men, Germany

Peter Siemund Policy Officer, International Family Policy, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Dr. Ulrich Stockter Head of Unit, Maternity Leave and Parental Leave, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Nada Stropnik Researcher, Institute for Economic Research in Ljubljana, Slovenia

Dr. Christine Stüben Head of Unit, Family Care Time and Caring Relatives, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Jana Teske Policy Officer, German Workers' Welfare Association

Dr. Nicole Weidenfeld Head of Unit, Parental Allowance, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Dr. Katharina Wrohlich Researcher, German Institute for Economic Research

Ümit Yuezzen Policy Officer, German Red Cross

Dr. Claudia Zerle-Elsässer Department Families and Family Policy, German Youth Institute

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The fathers' quota as a policy instrument in Norway

Berit Brandth
NTNU
Trondheim
Norway

Development of the leave system

- 1909: Maternity leave (6 weeks)
- 1947: Maternity leave extended to 12 weeks
- **1978**: Leave was extended to 18 weeks.
New: Fathers could share 12 weeks
- 1987 - 1993: Several smaller extensions
- **1993**: The «fathers' quota» – 4 weeks of statutory, earmarked, non-transferable leave for fathers
- 2005 – **2014**: Extensions and one shortening

Distribution of weeks with 100% and 80% wage compensation. Mothers and fathers

Year	Total parental leave	Mother's quota*	Shared leave	Father's quota	+ Paternity leave**
2017	49/59	3 + 10	26/36	10	2

* Mothers have the right to three additional weeks of leave that must be taken before birth

** Paternity leave is not part of the parental leave. It is founded in the Work Environment Act and paid by collective agreements

Leave policy objectives for fathers

- Gender equality:
 - Dual earners/dual carers
- Fathering: Fathers as competent carers
- Strengthen the father-child relationship

The fathers' quota – a success

- Has worked well to get fathers to take leave (from 4 to 75 % the first five years)
- 90 % of eligible fathers use all, more or part of it
- Every time the quota has been prolonged, fathers increased their use accordingly
- It is supported by the general population, parents, social partners and working life

Taking leave – a norm and a «game changer» for fathers

Why does it work?

Design elements

- Based in law
- Individual leave for fathers (ear-marked)
- Not transferable to mothers
- Generously paid

Based in law

“It's a law and... that's very important. It's the most important thing, actually.”

“Public work places have to play by the rules”

Accepted by working life

I knew we were not supposed to have problems at work, but I was a little concerned whether that was actually true. Because sometimes things look good on paper, but it may... it may be that you get some problems. But I had no problems, and I felt really privileged I could have leave.

(Daniel, originally from Spain)

Earmarked

- Fathers do not have to negotiate with work (or the mother)
- 'Prenegotiated' by the state
- Understood as father's right
- Puts pressure on fathers to take leave

"It feels like something you ought to... that it's something you should take, really. (...) It feels like there's pressure on you to take it. That if you want to be a good parent, or a good father, then you have to take the daddy leave."

(Ludvig, engineer)

Non-transferable

- *If all the leave was voluntary [for fathers], then it would be a major problem for men to get... very many men would have problems at work to take voluntary leave. Really. I'm sure! That's what would happen to me at any rate, guaranteed! Yes. And I think that would be the result in very different industries and professions, too. Finance and all that.*

(Kristoffer, bricklayer)

- *If the man must take it or leave it, then it's very difficult for your employer to say, 'No, you can't take it,' which I can easily envision happening. Or 100% happen, because it's a market-oriented society.*

(Johannes, architect)

Generosity

- 100 % of earnings up to a ceiling of about Eur 60 000 per year
- All Nordic countries have a generously paid fathers' quota
- Economically important: Men keep their status as family providers
- Symbolically important: Puts value on caregiving

Pitfalls in leave design:

- The opportunity for mothers and fathers to be home on leave at the same time
- Flexibility in terms of part-time leave in combination with work until the child reaches a certain age

On leave alone or with the mother?

- **Home alone** 53%
 - Mother works full time
 - Father takes the whole fathers' quota and often more
- **Home, but not alone** 47%
 - Mother stays home on a part- or full-time basis
 - Father reduces or splits up the father's quota

Different care practices:

Home alone

- Develop care competence
- Experience the 'slow time' of infant care

Not home alone

- Less care competence
- Supporting player
- More confident with older children

The effects of the father's quota on fathering practices and gender equality are greatest when fathers are home alone

The difficult flexibility

- Intuitively, it is believed that flexible leave is an advantage
- 2007: The father's quota was made flexible
 - can be taken as part-time in combination with work
 - can be split up into blocs of time
 - can be used until the child turns 3 years
- Flexible use has increased among fathers

Flexible use influences the content of the leave (fathering practices)

Part-time leave:

- causes interruptions in the caring routines
- stress
- lets work dominate
- destroys 'slow time' and
- the opportunity to take responsibility for the caring

Stalls development towards gender equality

- Mother has to step in, and when she does, father tends to become the secondary caregiver
- Work is prioritized over caregiving
- Fathering becomes a matter of choice – «*the choice-making father*»
- The process towards developing fathers' care competence is hindered
 - Creates «half-way» fathering
 - «Avoidant» fathering

Watch out for flexibility!

Continuous leave over a longer period seem the most effective for fathers when it comes to fence off work, take care responsibility and develop as caregivers

Conclusion

- Indisputable that earmarked, non-transferable periods have produced the most comprehensive results
- Depending on how it is used, it increases fathers' involvement in childcare, strengthens their care competence and improves father-child relations



Swedish family policy

- Parental insurance



Government Offices of Sweden

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

1

Swedish national objectives

Government objectives of gender equality

- Equal distribution of power and influence
- **Economic equality**
- Equality in education
- **Equal distribution of unpaid care and household work**
- Equal access to health care services
- Men's violence against women must stop

Objectives of the family policy

- Good economic standard for all families with children
- Decrease economic differences between families with and without children
- Policy shall contribute to a gender equal parenthood



Government Offices of Sweden

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs

2

Important reforms to promote gender equality and reconciliation om family and work

- Individual taxation
- Paid parental leave and parental benefits
- Child care services
- Long term care



Government Offices of Sweden

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 3

Paid parental leave and benefits

- **Parental benefit:** 480 days per child divided equally between parents with joint custody
- 90 days reserved for each parent
- **Temporary parental benefit:** For primarily shorter periods of absence until the child is 12 (or in some cases older)
- **Parental leave:** All employees have the right to leave of absence and - right to part-time work



Government Offices of Sweden

Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 4

Conclusions

- Sweden has often been seen as a forerunner and a successful example in providing good access to affordable and qualitative child care
- Other financial support for families are also important to create a family friendly society
- The system has a flexible construction and is intended to give freedom for both parents to choose, not between work or having children, but to successfully combine the two
- It is also intended to give parents the possibilities to have the number of children they want.



Next step to a modern parental insurance

- Intentions and action to develop more equal usage of the parental insurance
- Enhance possibilities for modern families
- Adjust the insurance to current labour market situation and demands
- Further action to make it possible to conciliate family and worklife





VELFERÐARRÁÐUNEYTIÐ
Ministry of Welfare

Daddy Months as Policy Instrument

The Case of Iceland

Rósa Guðrún Erlingsdóttir,
Chief Advisor, Gender Equality

2

Population: 332.529 – 80% urban, mostly located in the southwest part of Iceland

79% of women and 85% of men active in the work force

34% of women have a part-time job, 13% of men

More women (66%) in universities and high schools

90% of children aged 1-5 are in day care. Most municipalities pay 85% of operational cost of kindergartens

Fertility rate in Iceland was 1,7 children per woman in 2016, the lowest in recorded history.

3

The world's 10 most gender-equal countries

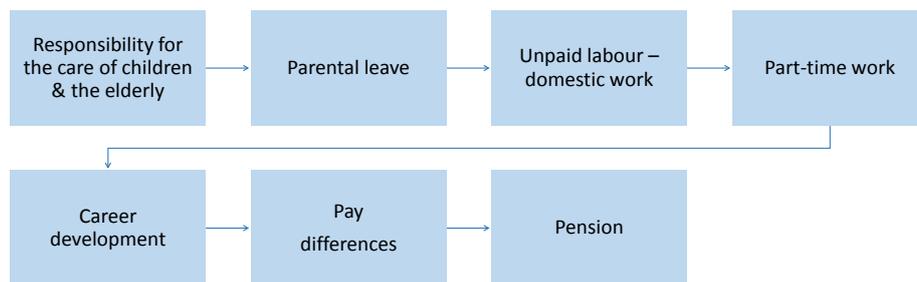
Global Top 10	
The Global Gender Gap Index	Global rank*
Iceland	1
Finland	2
Norway	3
Sweden	4
Rwanda	5
Ireland	6
Philippines	7
Slovenia	8
New Zealand	9
Nicaragua	10

Source: The Global Gender Gap Report 2016
 Note: *2016 rank out of 144 countries

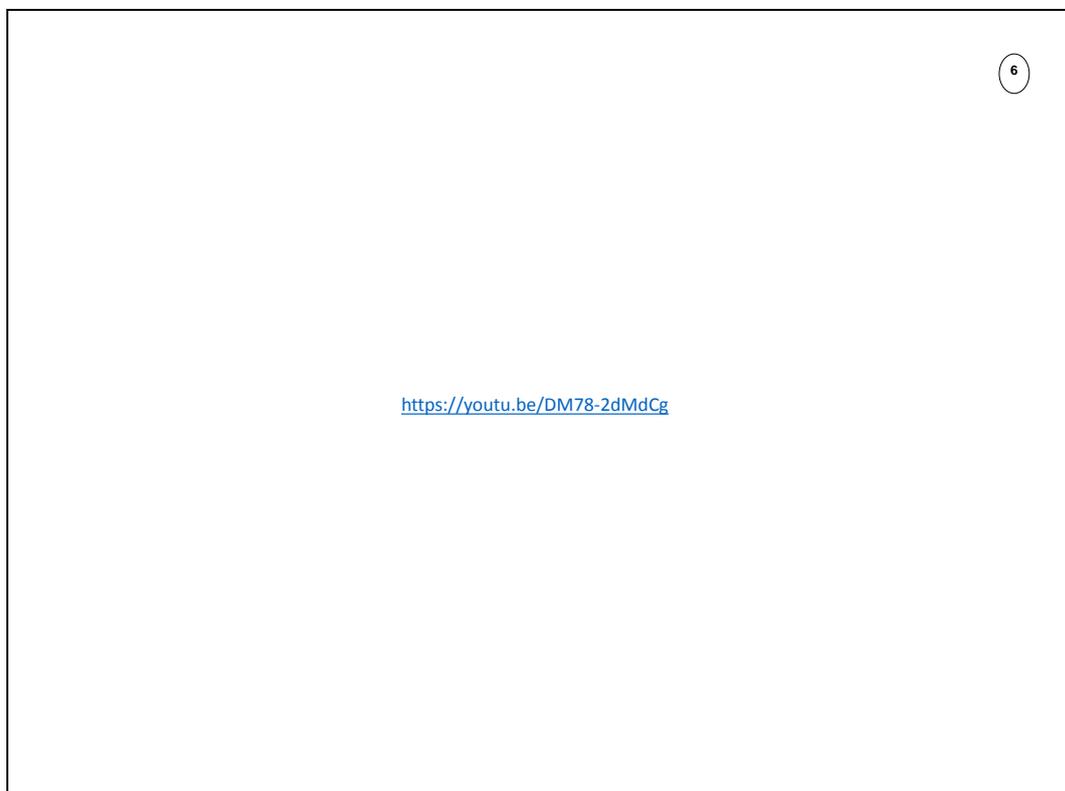
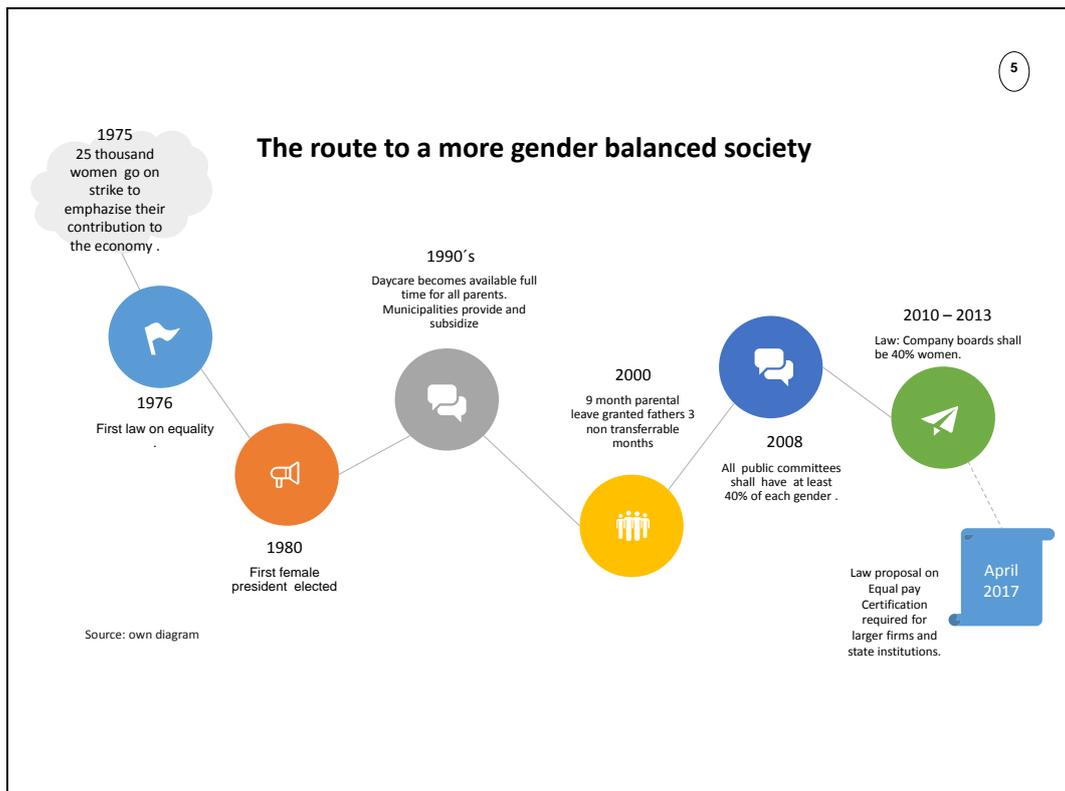
Iceland has taken the top spot eight years in a row, closing more than 87% of its overall gender gap. It remains top performer on Political Empowerment and is in the top 10 on Economic Participation.

4

Division of Work and Family Life – Chain Reaction



Source: own diagram



7

Equality – yes, please
Thank you for you attention!

7



Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung
Austrian Institute for Family Studies

www.oif.ac.at

Väter in der Familienarbeit

Am Beispiel des Kinderbetreuungsgeldes (KBG) bzw.
des Kinderbetreuungsgeld-Kontos in Österreich

Dipl. Sozpäd. (FH) Olaf Kapella

30. Mai 2017



Geltende Regelung vor Einführung des KBG (bis 2001)

■ Karenzgeld (zentrale Aspekte):

- Anspruchsberechtigung: Unselbständige Erwerbstätigkeit für eine Mindestversicherungszeit von 52 Wochen innerhalb der letzten 24 Monate
- Höhe: € rund 410 monatlich
- Bezugsdauer: maximal 24 Monate, wenn beide Elternteile in Anspruch nehmen (1 Elternteil mindestens 6 Monate).
- Arbeitsrechtliche Karenz: Besteht für 24 Monate (Kündigungsschutz)



Vom Kinderbetreuungsgeld zum Kinderbetreuungsgeld-Konto

Entschließungsantrag des Nationalrates

1996

■ Ausgangslage:

Entschließungsantrag des Nationalrates (Juli 1996), dass Bundesländer die Einführung eines Kinderbetreuungschecks bzw. dessen Umsetzung zu prüfen haben.

Ein Modell zur Umwandlung des Karenzgeldes (Arbeitsfreistellung) (Deutschland: Erziehungsgeld von 1986 bis 2007, dann Elterngeld) von einer Versicherungs- zu einer Familienleistung mit der Idee einer zweckgebundenen Subjektförderung für die Dauer von 6 Jahren.



Modifikationen des Kinderbetreuungsgeldes (KBG)

Entschließungsantrag des Nationalrates

Einführung des KBG

1 Variante

30 + 6 Monate

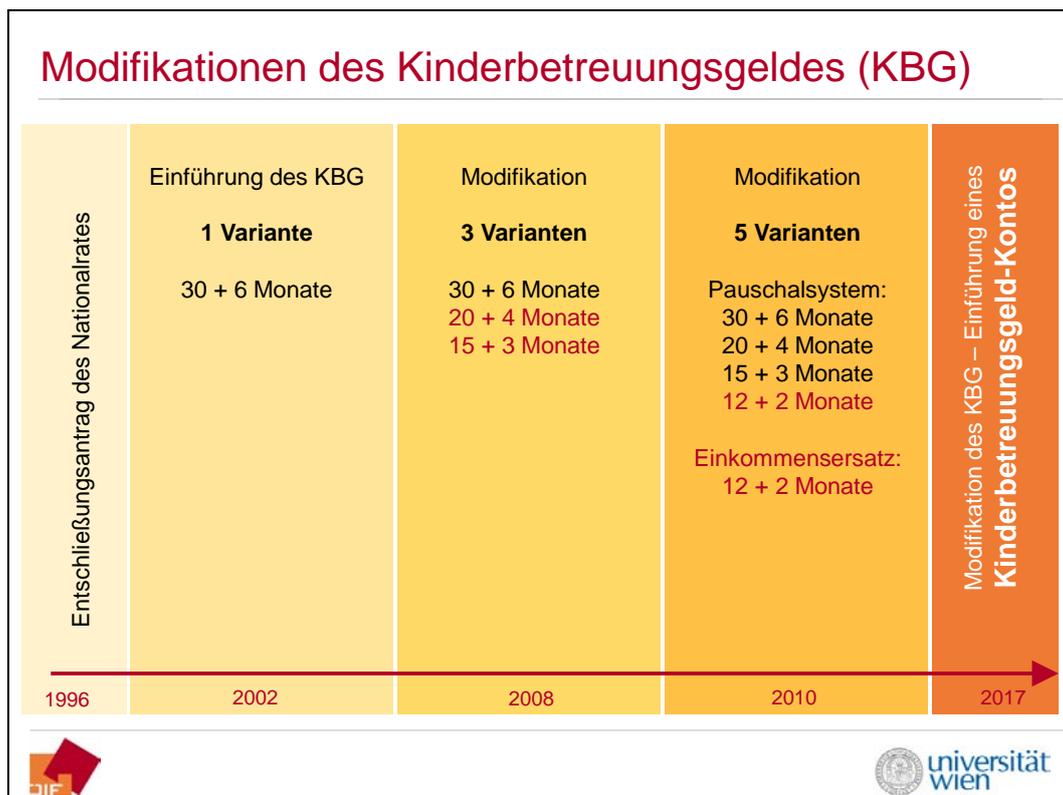
1996

2002

■ Zentrale Neuerungen:

- Von Versicherungsleistung zur Familienleistung – Ausweitung des Bezieher*innen Kreises
- Arbeitsrechtliche Karenz weiterhin für unselbständig Erwerbstätige 24 Monate
- Rund € 436 im Monat
- Maximaler Bezug 36 Monate wenn beide beziehen – zweiter Elternteil mindestens 6 Monate





Väterbeteiligung

■ **Kinderbetreuungsgeld-Konto (1.3.2017) – Zwei Systeme:**

Pauschale Leistung:

- Ein Elternteil bezieht: 365 bis 851 Tage ab Geburt (bis max. 2,5 Lebensjahr des Kindes, von rund €440 pro Monat bis €1.014, max. insgesamt rund €12.365)
- Beide Elternteile beziehen: 456 bis max. 1063 Tage ab Geburt (bis max. zum 3. Lebensjahr des Kindes, €15.450)
- Zuverdienst möglich (bis zu €16.200 pro Kalenderjahr)

Einkommensabhängige Leistung:

- Bis zu €2.000 pro Monat, bis zu 14 Monate lang (max. €28.000)
- Kein Zuverdienst möglich.

Zusätzliche Leistungen:

- **Partnerschaftsbonus:** bei einer 50/50 (oder 60/40) Aufteilung ein Partnerschaftsbonus von €500
- **Familienzeitbonus/Familienzeit** im 1 Monat von € 700 (28 – 31 Tage innerhalb der ersten 91 Tage ab Geburt)




Väterbeteiligung - Familienzeitbonus

■ Familienzeitbonus (Familienzeit) – für Geburten ab 01.03.2017 (Familienzeitbonusgesetz)

Erwerbstätige Väter (Mütter), die sich direkt nach der Geburt ihres Kindes *intensiv und ausschließlich* (www.bmfj.gv.at) der Familie widmen erhalten eine finanzielle Unterstützung.

- Im Einvernehmen mit Arbeitgeber*in – kein Kündigungsschutz
- Höhe rund € 700 (täglich € 22,60)
- Inanspruchnahme des Familienzeitbonus verringert das evtl. später bezogene KBG durch den Elternteil, verringert jedoch nicht die Bezugsdauer
- Kranken- und Pensionsversicherung wird vom Staat finanziert



Väterbeteiligung -Familienzeitbonus

■ Anspruchsvoraussetzungen

- Anspruch und Bezug auf Familienbeihilfe (Deutschland: Kindergeld) für das Kind
- Lebensmittelpunkt von antragstellendem Elternteil, Kind und anderem Elternteil in Österreich
- Ein auf Dauer angelegter gemeinsamer Haushalt mit dem Kind und dem anderen Elternteil sowie idente Hauptwohnsitzmeldungen
- Inanspruchnahme der **Familienzeit**
 - ❖ Familienzeit ist eine 28-, 29-, 30- oder 31-tägige Unterbrechung der Erwerbsausübung des Vaters.
 - ❖ Erwerbsunterbrechung z.B. durch Sonderurlaub (kein Urlaub oder Krankenstand), bei Selbständigen durch eine Ruhemeldung des Gewerbes bzw. Abmeldung bei der SV.



Väterbeteiligung -Familienzeitbonus

■ Anspruchsvoraussetzungen (2)

- Erfüllung des Erwerbstätigkeitserfordernisses vor Bezugsbeginn
 - ❖ 182 Kalendertage vor Bezugsbeginn einer österreichischen kranken- und pensionsversicherungspflichtigen Erwerbstätigkeit nachgegangen sein – keine Leistungen aus der Arbeitslosenversicherung
- Für Nicht-Österreicher*innen zusätzlich ein rechtmäßiger Aufenthalt in Österreich nach dem Niederlassungs- und Aufenthaltsgesetz bzw. nach dem Asylgesetz 2005



Väterbeteiligung -Familienzeitbonus

■ Anspruchsdauer

- Beginn: Frühestens am Tag der Geburt – In-Pflege-Nahme des Kindes
- Vier fixe Bezugsvarianten stehen zur Wahl: 28./ 29./30. oder 31. Tage
- Der vollständige Bezug muss innerhalb der 91 Tage ab Geburt liegen
- Bezug kann nicht unterbrochen, verschoben, verkürzt oder aufgeteilt werden
- Bezug muss sich exakt mit der Familienzeit decken
- Gleichzeitiger Bezug von Familienzeitbonus und KBG ist ausgeschlossen



Väterbeteiligung – politische Umsetzbarkeit

- Kein politischer Konsens zum Begriff „Papamonat“
- Quasi Kostenneutralität
 - Wirtschaft muss zustimmen, hat aber keine Kosten
 - Staat finanziert *Familienzeit* – behält aber bei einer späteren Partner*innen-Beteiligung am Kinderbetreuungsgeld den finanziellen Bonus zur *Familienzeit* wieder ein
 - Wird nicht als „Papa-Monat“ kommuniziert, sondern als *Familienzeit*



Familienzeit - Statistik

	März 2017	April 2017
Gesamt	42	74
Männlich	42	74
Weiblich	0	0
Landeskrankenkassen (gesetzlich), u.a.	31	45
BVA – Versicherungsanstalt öffentlicher Bediensteter	11	29

Quelle: Monatsstatistik BMFJ. Eigene Darstellung.



Väterbeteiligung – lesson learned?

- **Einstellungs- und Werteebene viel Veränderungen – Realisierung nicht wirklich gegeben:**
 - Wirtschaft sollte mehr Impulse geben und Mitarbeiter*innen gezielte Signale geben werden
 - Positive Aspekte für Männer selbst stärker betonen, auch für Partner*in – nicht nur Effekte für Kinder
 - Pflegeverpflichtungen in beide Richtungen für Männer thematisieren – nicht nur für Kinder
 - Neue Erwerbsmodelle und –philosophien
 - Männliche Identität wird nicht nur über finanzielle Anreize aktiviert und gebildet
 - De- oder Familiealisierung in der Politik für Pflegepflichten etc.?

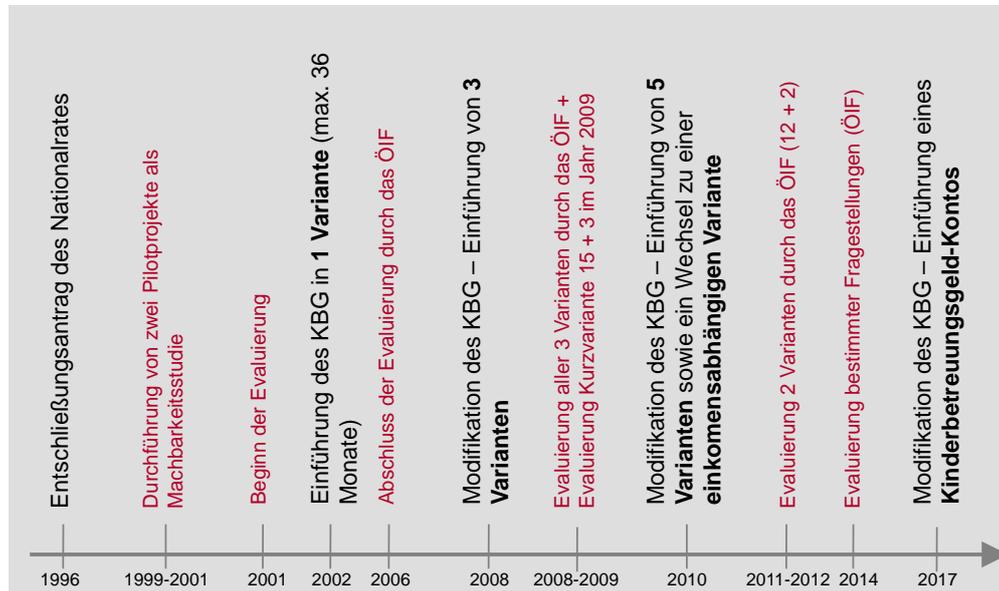


Väterbeteiligung - Historie

- **Historisches**
 - Mit 1.1.1990 wurde die Möglichkeit des Karenzurlaubs für Väter (Dienstnehmer und Heimarbeiter) eingeführt, bis max. zum 1. Geburtstages des Kindes, mit 1.7.1990 bis max. 2. Geburtstages des Kindes verlängert
 - Mit 1.1.2011 wurde eingeführt, dass Väter im öffentlichen Dienst einen bis zu vierwöchigen unbezahlten Karenzurlaub während des Beschäftigungsverbotes der Mutter in Anspruch nehmen können



Evaluierung des Kinderbetreuungsgeld (KBG)



Gender equality bonus

Sid 1 • May 2017 • Swedish social insurance agency, Niklas Löfgren spokesperson for family- economics



Purpose of the reform

1. To increase labour force participation among women and to increase the number of paid workinghours when mothers have young children.
2. To compensate for the lack of "job tax- reduction" when you are home with parental benefit.
3. To get a more equal usage of parental benefit without reducing parents freedom of choice.

Construction

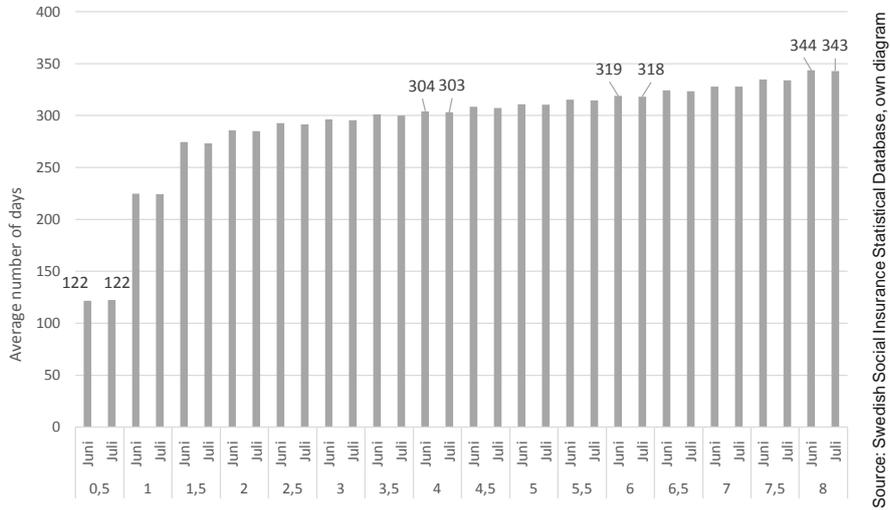
1. For parents to children born from first of July 2008
2. Parents were to apply for the the tax reduction once a year
3. Tax- reduction approx. 10 euros per day.
4. In total maximum of 1 350 euros if you shared complete equal.
5. Changed into a bonus payment from 2012 since many parents forgot to apply for it.
6. The gender equality bonus was abolished from first of January 2017.

When the parent who had used most days with parental benefit worked and the other parent didn't work but instead was home using parental benefit then a "bonus day" was generated.

Sid 2 • May 2017 • Swedish social insurance agency, Niklas Löfgren spokesperson for family- economics



Average number of parental benefit days used by women when the child have reached different ages. Children born in june and july 2008.

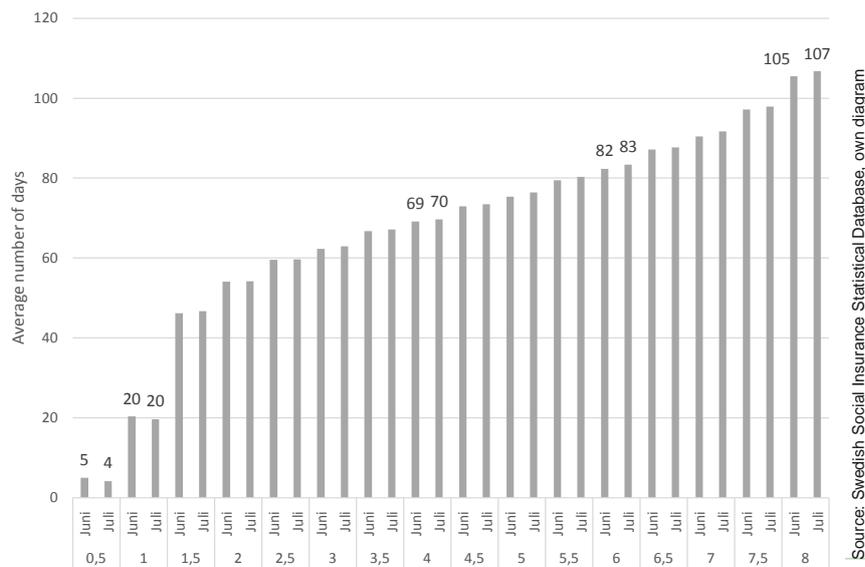


Source: Swedish Social Insurance Statistical Database, own diagram

Sid 3 • May 2017 • Swedish social insurance agency, Niklas Löfgren spokesperson for family- economics



Average number of parental benefit days used by men when the child have reached different ages. Children born in june and july 2008.



Source: Swedish Social Insurance Statistical Database, own diagram

Sid 4 • May 2017 • Swedish social insurance agency, Niklas Löfgren spokesperson for family- economics



Evaluated but no effect found...

1. Evaluated by the Swedish Social insurance agency in both 2010 and 2014.
2. Evaluated by the The Swedish Social Insurance Inspectorate in 2012.
3. "The Institute for evaluation of labour market and education policy" later also agreed on the conclusions made by the two other authorities.



SOTSIAALMINISTEERIUM

Parental leave system in Estonia

Linda Sassian

Counsellor for social affairs
Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU
29-30.05.17 in Berlin

Leave	Duration	Benefit	Payment
Maternity leave	140 days	Maternity leave benefit	100%
Paternity leave	10 days	Paternity leave benefit	100%
Parental leave	3 years	Parental benefit (18 months) & Childcare benefit	100% Flat rate – 38€ per month
Child leave	3/6 days per year	Child leave benefit	Flat rate – 20€ per day
Child leave without pay	10 days per year (per parent)	-	-
Child leave for a parent with a disabled child	12 days per year	Child leave benefit	100%
Adoptive parent leave	70 days	Adoptive parent leave benefit	100%
Leave to take care of a sick child		Leave compensation	80%

Paternity leave and benefit

Scheme parameters

- **Eligibility** – fathers working in public service or with an employment contract
- **Length of leave** – 10 working days
- **Payment** – 100% of earnings with a ceiling of three times average gross monthly salary in Estonia
- **Funding** – state budget (general taxation)
- **Flexibility** – leave can be taken:
 - during the period of 2 months before or 2 months after the birth
 - in blocks, with a minimum of a day at a time

Usage of paternity benefit

- 50% of all fathers used the leave; ca 70% of fathers eligible for the leave
- Average duration 9,6 days
- Average benefit per day 69 €
- Benefit increased from flat-rate to income related benefit in 2008
- Payment was stopped in 2009-2012

Parental leave and parental benefit

Scheme parameters (1) – PARENTAL LEAVE

- **Eligibility** – working parents, but also other family members and actual caregivers (one person at time)
- **Length** – 36 months (until child gets 3 years old)
- **Flexibility**
 - leave can be used in one part or in several parts at any time until the child is 3 years old
 - the recipient can be changed every month
- **Payment** – parental benefit and childcare benefit

Scheme parameters (2) – PARENTAL BENEFIT

- **Eligibility** – working and non-working parents, fathers are eligible for the benefit when the child has reached 70 days of age.
- **Length**
 - For working parents – 435 days, starting after the maternity benefit (paid for 140 days)
 - For parents with no employment relationship – starting from the birth until the child gets 18 months old
- **Size of the benefit**
 - 100% of personal average earnings
 - ceiling of the benefit is three times average gross monthly salary in Estonia (2907.15 € in 2017)
 - minimum of the benefit is 430€ for non-working parents (benefit base rate in 2017) and 470€ for working parents (minimum wage in 2017)

Scheme parameters (3) - PARENTAL BENEFIT

- Funding – state budget (general taxation).
- Flexibility
 - Being on leave while receiving the benefit is not compulsory - a parent may work or earn income during the period in which they receive the benefit.
 - If the income exceeds the rate of the benefit, the amount of the benefit is reduced. Persons have right to get at least half of the benefit granted to them. It is also prohibited to reduce the amount of the benefit under the limit of the benefit base rate.
 - It is possible to change the recipient every month.

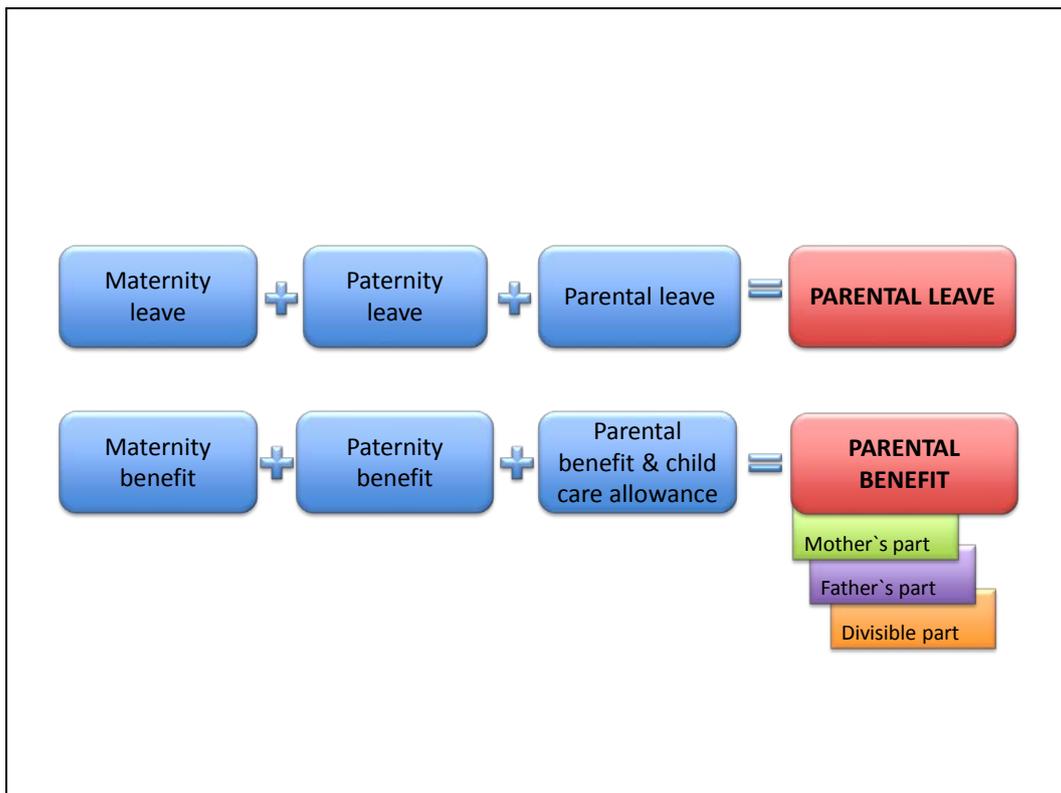
Scheme parameters (4) - CHILDCARE BENEFIT

- Eligibility – working and non-working parents or actual caregivers (not connected to working, availability of child care place etc)
- Length
 - paid from the end of payment of parental benefit until the child is 3
 - for large families the payment continues until the child gets 8 years old
- Size of the benefit - flat-rate payment of 38€ per month
- Funding – state budget
- Flexibility – the recipient can be changed every month

Usage of parental benefit by men

- % of men taking parental benefit has never exceeded 10%
- Starting from 2007 fathers are allowed to take parental benefit earlier – 6 months vs 70 days old child.
- Changes in 2009 and 2011 are connected to recession and changes in men`s unemployment
- With time more people support father`s role, at the same time people feel that it is more difficult for a man to take time off from work

Changes in progress



Father`s individual right

- One month for all fathers regardless of their employment relationship
- Can be used separately or together with mother at any time during parental leave
- Can be taken in blocks, with a minimum of a day at a time
- Working is not allowed during that period – the benefit is reduced proportionally to the income earned
- Non-transferable

Flexibility

- Ca 19 months (max 605 days) of parental benefit can be taken in one part or in several parts (days) at any time until the child is 3 years old
- 2 months of the benefit can be shared by parents and used together (additional 1 month if triplets or premature birth)
- Bigger income can be earned during the period of parental benefit until the benefit is decreased – decrease starts when the monthly income exceeds 1,5 x Estonian average salary (ca 1500€)

Additional incentives

- Child leave and child leave benefit will be changed from family entitlement to individual right – 10 days per child for each parent until the child gets 9



SOTSIAALMINISTEERIUM

Thank you!

linda.sassian@mfa.ee



Inštitut za ekonomska raziskovanja
Institute for Economic Research

PROMOTING EQUAL PARTNERSHIP IN FAMILIES: THE CASE OF SLOVENIA

TOWARDS AN EQUAL PARTNERSHIP IN FAMILIES. HOW EUROPEAN STATES PROMOTE FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN FAMILY WORK
EUROPEAN EXPERT MEETING, BERLIN, 29-30 MAY 2017

Nada Stropnik
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Introduction

- A dual earner gender regime (full-time employment, individual income taxation).
- Slovenia not only managed to preserve most of its achievements in the area of family- and ECEC policies during the post-socialist period, but also continued to improve them.
- A well-regulated, widely available and affordable quality ECEC: a subsidy amounted to an average of 68% of the costs per child in 2014 (Kuralt, 2015); as much as 77% for children up to the age of three years (GRS, 2014, p. 21).
- In recent decades, changes in fathering and fatherhood are occurring on both the structural (policy) and individual (behaviour) level:
 - developments in family and gender-equality policy, such as paternity leave provisions;
 - increased participation of fathers in childcare compared to previous generations of fathers.



Statutory provisions for fathers

- Transfer of the mother's right to parental leave to the father possible since as early as 1975 (Sweden was the first in 1974).
 - Now: an individual father's entitlement to 130 days of parental leave (transferrable to the mother).
 - Paid paternity leave since 2003:
 - (15 paid calendar days + 75 days with social security contributions based on the minimum wage paid from the state budget.
 - In 2017: 25 + 25 days.
 - From 2018: 30 paid days.
 - First 15 days of paid leave: full-time or part-time (also as individual working days, 70%), during the child's first six months;
 - The rest: full-time or part-time leave, until the child completes the first grade of primary school.
 - Full income compensation (temporarily 90% for those earning more than the minimum wage) while on parental or paternity leave.
- 

Impact of policies encouraging fathers to take the leave

- May have helped support an increase in active fathers.
 - Some aspects of fatherhood have been changing in both quantitative and qualitative terms (relatively slow pace of change).
 - 15 days of paternity leave: four in five fathers;
 - More than 15 days: less than one in five leave-takers.
 - Fathers taking some of the parental leave: slowly increasing share of leave-takers (around 5% in the mid-2000s, almost 7% in 2012-2014 (paternity leave was introduced in 2003), below 6% in 2016).
 - Parents absent from work due to childcare responsibilities: fathers accounted for 14% in 1997 and 16% in 2007.
- 

Obstacles to fathers' higher uptake of leaves

- Mothers' wish to be with the child for the whole duration of leave.
- Lack of women's trust in the men's ability to care for babies and infants.
- Harder for men than for women to deviate from their traditional gender role in the family.
- 2010 survey: 22% of the respondents aged 20–49 who had children did not know that the parental leave could be shared between the parents.
- Men's perception of themselves being non-replaceable employees but replaceable parents (particularly widespread among managers).



Obstacles to fathers' higher uptake of leaves (employers)

- Employers not in favour of fathers taking leave: easier to organise a replacement for an employee absent for a year than for the one absent for one to several months.
- Employers got used to mothers' long absence after childbirth and uptake of the leave to care for sick children; they (not even female bosses and colleagues) do not expect fathers to be absent for these reasons. This has not yet become a part of their risk management strategies.
- Slovenian managers do not regard balancing work and family as a relevant issue in the workplace. It is considered a private matter that employers should not have to deal with (Kanjuro Mrčela and Černigoj Sadar, 2007)
- One third of fathers surveyed had to deal with workplace obligations while they were on paternity leave (Renner et al, 2005).



Fathers' behaviour

- Mismatch between fathers' egalitarian attitudes and their traditional behaviour in daily practice.
- Considerable gap between fathers' subjective perception of their fathering activities and the everyday reality of their contribution to childcare.
- The division of care work in the family continues to be gendered and asymmetrical.
- In 2007–2008: employed women spent, on average, 42 hours per week on household tasks and childcare; men 28 hours per week (European Quality of Life Survey). This 'second shift' for women equals almost two additional full-time working days per week.



Fathers' engagement in childcare (1)

- Fathers are less likely than mothers to be either first or second main performers of childcare activities (Stropnik and Čerňič Istenič, 2001; Rakar et al, 2010).
- Fathers prefer to play a supportive role in daily childcare tasks and responsibilities, which translates into less care work and responsibility.
- Men's participation in early child care appears to be optional and they can choose which work they want to do and when.
- Fathers are more able than mothers to negotiate the timing of their involvement, such as spending more time with their children on weekends („weekend fathers“).
- This enables men to more readily reconcile their childcare responsibilities with their professional lives than women (Humer, 2009).



Fathers' engagement in childcare (2)

- Fathers typically use the paternity leave after the mother returns from hospital.
- Men engage in more pleasant, less routine and more time-flexible childcare activities.
- Routine infant care remains mothers' work, while fathers are more involved with somewhat older children and more enjoyable, less routine child care (conversation, reading, listening, playing and educational activities).
- Most frequently fathers cradle and comfort the newborn, change nappies and clothing for the baby, and bath and wash the baby. Least frequently they get up at night because of the child.



Fatherhood programmes

'School for Parents': short course for future fathers, a prerequisite for fathers' presence at childbirth (3 in 4 are present).

Awareness-raising activities under the banner **'Daddy, be active'** (the mid-2000s): TV and radio messaging (TV spots broadcast during sporting events), radio shows, educational documentary film, 'Daddies courses' (sporting and socialising events where fathers ran with their children (hand in hand, with prams, etc.).

"Family-Friendly Enterprise" certificate introduced in 2007: work-family reconciliation measures (no organisation introduced any measure targeted at fathers).



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