



Parental leave in Denmark, Finland and Portugal

Friederike Sprang, Research officer at the Observatory,
friederike.sprang@iss-ffm.de

As of: October 2023

In its Dossier 2/2023, the **Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe** looked at equal care and how the European Union promotes a gender-equal division of care work. This was accompanied by background research on parental leave in Denmark, Finland and Portugal which is presented here as an overview. The **Dossier 2/2023** only contains information on reformed regulations that implemented the Work-life Balance Directive.

Content

1	Denmark	1
2	Finland	3
3	Portugal	5
4	Further information	7

1 Denmark

The information on Denmark has been compiled with the assistance of the Centre for Labour Law and International Affairs of the **Danish Ministry of Employment**.¹

Table 1: Overview on parental leave regulations in Denmark

	Mother	Father / co-parent	Maternity leave benefits
Before birth	Four weeks leave	-	Four weeks
Immediately after birth	Ten weeks leave, two of which are mandatory	Two weeks leave	Ten weeks for mothers
			Two weeks for fathers/co-parents
Parental leave	32 weeks leave	32 weeks leave	14 weeks for mothers
			22 weeks for fathers/co-parents
Total	46 weeks leave	34 weeks leave	Four + 24 weeks for mothers
			24 weeks for fathers/co-parents

Source: Author's illustration

¹ Please note that the information provided sets out the principles and basic rights of parents and is not a complete overview of all the rights and requirements contained within the [Maternity Leave Act](#).

The right to leave and benefits before the birth of the child

Mothers have the right to four weeks leave with maternity leave benefits² before the expected birth of a child.

The right to leave after the birth of the child

Mothers have the right to ten weeks maternity leave after the birth of the child and then a further 32 weeks parental leave.

Mothers' leave: 10 + 32 weeks = 42 weeks leave after the birth.

Fathers/co-parents have the right to two weeks leave within the first ten weeks after the birth of the child and then a further 32 weeks parental leave.

Fathers/co-parents' leave: 2 + 32 weeks = 34 weeks leave after the birth.

The right to maternity leave benefits after the birth of the child

After the birth of the child, each parent³ has the right to 24 weeks maternity leave benefits. Thus, the accumulated leave periods for each parent extend beyond the right to maternity leave benefits.

Non-transferability of benefits (Implementation of Work-life Balance Directive)

If the parent is a worker, eleven of the 24 weeks maternity leave benefits are non-transferable. The eleven weeks include two weeks for each parent in connection with the birth of the child. The remaining nine weeks non-transferable benefits must be used before the child is one year old, otherwise they will lapse. 13 of the 24 weeks maternity leave benefits may be transferred to the other parent.

The non-transferability of benefits implements the Work-life Balance Directive with regards to parental leave.

The right to pay during leave

The right to pay during leave is regulated by the Social Partners through collective agreements or individual employment contracts. If the worker is entitled to pay during leave, the employer will receive maternity leave benefits as reimbursement.

² Maternity leave benefits are at the same level as sick leave benefits. Maternity leave benefits are financed through general taxation.

³ Please note that the right to benefits is on the condition that the parent fulfils the employment requirements set out in the Maternity Leave Act.

2 Finland

The information on Finland⁴ was researched by **Carlotta von Westerholt**, research officer at the Observatory.

Table 2: Overview on parental leave regulations in Finland

	Mother / birthing parent	Father / second parent
Before birth	40 days pregnancy leave has to start at least 14 days before the estimated due date	-
After birth	160 days 63 days of those can be transferred to the other parent	160 days 63 days of those can be transferred to the other parent
Total	200 days	160 days

Source: Author's illustration

Pregnancy leave

The pregnant person is entitled to 40 days of paid pregnancy leave. The leave can start 30 days before and no later than 14 days before the estimated due date.

Parental leave

In the case of two parents: Each parent is entitled to 160 working days of paid parental leave. Of these, up to 18 days may be taken at a time.

For single parents: Entitlement to 320 days of paid parental leave.

The leave may be taken until the child reaches the age of two or up to two years after the adoption of the child. Unless otherwise agreed with the employer, the leave may be divided into a maximum of four periods.

In the case of multiple births, the quota increases by 84 working days per child.

⁴ See: The Equality Law Network Report (2022): [The transposition of the Work-Life Balance Directive in EU Member States: A long way ahead](#); the press release of the Finnish government (1. August 2022): [Family leave reform increases equality and takes better account of different types of families](#); the report of COFACE (2022): [EU work-life balance directive transposition: A mixed picture](#); Kela, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland and Blum et al. [19th International Review of Leave Policies and Related Research 2023](#).

Non-transferable entitlements

97 working days are individual and non-transferable.

Remuneration

In principle, remuneration is calculated on the basis of income over the last twelve calendar months. However, there is a minimum daily rate, which was 31.99 euros per working day in 2023.

Pregnancy leave: 90 percent of the original salary during the 40 days.

Parental leave: the first 16 working days are remunerated at a maximum of 90 percent of the reference salary. For the 144 working days thereafter, remuneration is up to 70 percent of the reference salary.

3 Portugal

The information on Portugal⁵ was researched by **Friederike Sprang**, research officer at the Observatory.

Table 3: Overview on parental leave regulations in Portugal

	Mother / birthing parent	Father / second parent
Initial parental leave	Between 120 and 180 days in total, depending on the compensation chosen as well as the division of the leave after the first 42 days.	
Thereof before birth	Up to 30 days can also be taken before birth	-
Thereof directly after birth (obligatory)	42 days	7 days immediately after birth and the remaining 21 days within the first 42 days after birth.
Entitlement to extended leave	3 months	3 months
Total entitlement	6 months and 180 days	

Source: Author's illustration

Initial parental leave after birth

In total, both parents are entitled to 120 or 150 days of compensated initial parental leave. The length depends on the compensation chosen and the division of the leave. For multiple births, the leave is increased by 30 days per child.

If parents take more than 120 days of leave, they may combine the remaining days with part-time work after the 120 days and take them at the same time.

Remuneration

If 120 days of leave are chosen, they are remunerated at 90 percent of the average gross salary for the last six months.

If 150 days are chosen, they are remunerated at 80 percent of the reference salary.

⁵ See: Equality Law Network (2022); Blum et al. (2023); the [website of the social security Portugal](#); Dinheiro Vivo (5. Juli 2023): [Subsídio parental pago a 90% com retroativos a 1 de maio](#); Cofina Media (5. Juli 2023): [Pais a gozar licença parental têm um mês para mudar para novas regras](#).

There is a minimum amount of compensation, which also depends on the chosen length and distribution of the leave and ranges from 10.25 euros to 12.80 euros per day.

Non-transferable entitlements

Mother / birthing person: 72 days. Of these, 30 days can also be taken before the birth and 42 days must be taken immediately after the birth.

Father / second parent: 28 days. Of these, seven days must be taken immediately after the birth and the 21 other days must be taken within the first 42 days after birth. The second parent is entitled to an additional seven days as long as they take them within the first 42 days after the birth.

The non-transferable entitlements are mandatory in each case.

Increase of the initial leave by another 30 days

If each parent takes at least 30 consecutive days or twice 15 consecutive days of initial parental leave after the first 42 days, the parents receive an additional 30 days of paid initial leave. If the total time off amounts to 150 days, it is paid at 100 percent; if it amounts to 180 days, it is paid at 83 percent.

If the second parent takes 60 consecutive days or two periods of 30 days, the 180 days are compensated at 90 percent of the reference salary.

Extended parental leave

After the initial parental leave, both parents are individually entitled to three months of extended leave.

If the leave is taken directly after the initial leave or directly after the other parent has taken the extended leave, it is remunerated at 30 percent of the reference salary (min. 5.91 euros per day). If both parents take the entire extended leave, the compensation increases to 40 percent (min. 6.40 euros per day).

If the extended leave is combined with part-time work, the parents receive 20 percent of the reference salary in addition to their part-time salary.

4 Further information

- For more information on care work, the EU Work-life balance directive and its implementation, see the [Dossier 2/2023](#) of the Observatory on Equal Care.
- You can also view further publications of the Observatory on the topic of Equal Care on our [Website](#).

The **Observatory for Sociopolitical Developments in Europe** is a project by the Institute for Social Work and Social Education (ISS), which is funded by the German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ). In its work, it comparatively analyses sociopolitical developments in Europe. The aim of our work is to connect key actors across Europe, promote the exchange of expertise and foster mutual learning.

The publication does not reflect the view of the German federal government. The responsibility for the content remains with the authors.

Contact: friederike.sprang@iss-ffm.de