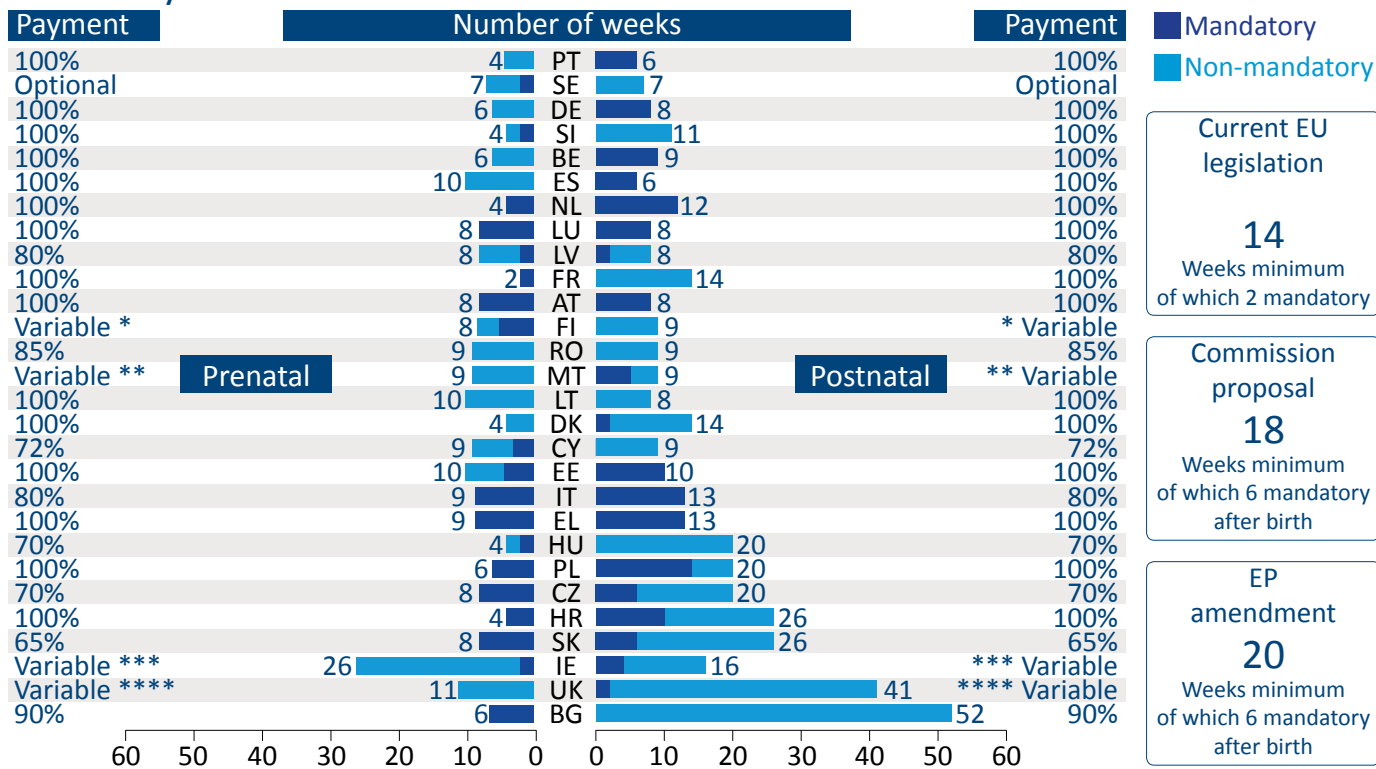


Maternity and paternity leave in the EU

This infographic aims to present the current state of affairs of maternity and paternity leave in EU Member States. Most EU countries also have an additional period of parental leave, but parental leave is not covered in this infographic.

Maternity leave



Current EU legislation

14

Weeks minimum of which 2 mandatory

Commission proposal

18

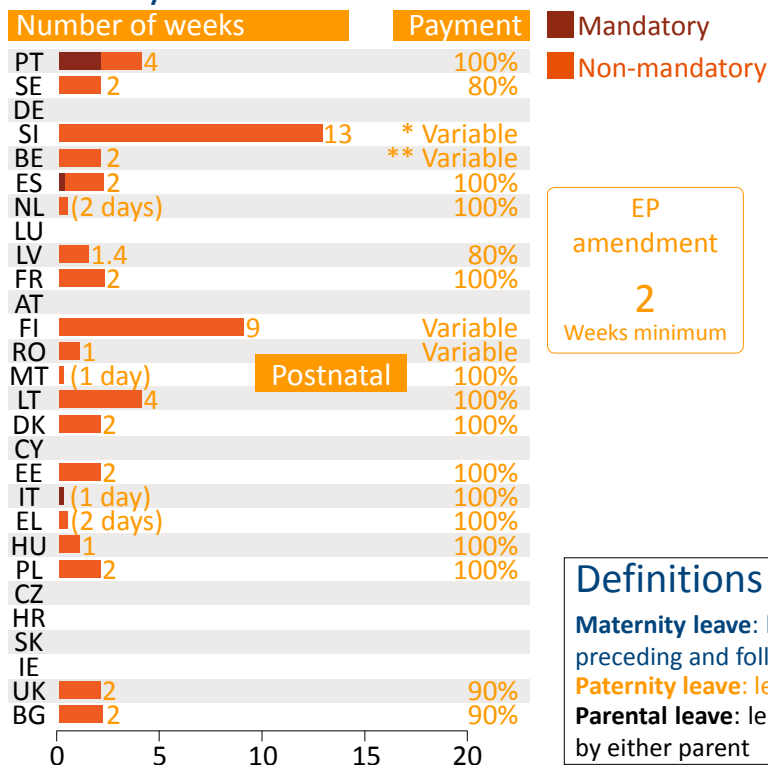
Weeks minimum of which 6 mandatory after birth

EP amendment

20

Weeks minimum of which 6 mandatory after birth

Paternity leave



EP amendment

2

Weeks minimum

Notes on payment

- * FI First 56 days, 90% of salary; remainder (49 days) 70%
- ** MT 100% of earnings (for 14 weeks) + 4 weeks flat rate
- *** IE Weekly rate (€230) paid for 26 weeks; the remaining 16 weeks unpaid
- **** UK First 6 weeks, 90%; next 33 weeks, flat-rate payments of either £138.18 [€170] or 90% of average gross weekly earnings (whichever is lower); the remaining 13 weeks are unpaid.
- * SI 15 days 'paid' + 75 days 'non-paid' (non-paid means that the state pays social security contributions based on the minimum salary (approximately €174 per month))
- ** BE 100% for 3 days (paid by the employer), 82% of salary for the remaining period

Definitions

Maternity leave: leave from work for mothers in the period immediately preceding and following birth.

Paternity leave: leave from work for fathers similar to maternity leave

Parental leave: leave after maternity/paternity leave which can be taken by either parent

State of affairs

With recent news of Jean-Claude Juncker giving six more months to the Council and the Parliament to reach agreement on the maternity leave proposal, the issue of the Maternity Leave Directive has yet again come into focus. Proposed by the EC in 2008 and accepted by the Parliament (with some amendments) in 2010, the directive reached an impasse in the Council more than four years ago and there have been few developments since. The new directive should replace the current 1992 Directive, which sets the minimum period for maternity leave at 14 weeks, with 2 weeks compulsory leave before and/or after confinement and an adequate allowance subject to national legislation. The 2008 proposal set the maternity leave period at 18 weeks with at least 6 weeks compulsory leave after confinement and an allowance amounting to full salary. The Parliament proposed prolonging the maternity leave period to 20 weeks and added 2 weeks of paternity leave under the same conditions as maternity leave.

Explanation of the graphs

Due to the complexity of national legislation and differences between the Member States, and to facilitate presentation of the data in graphic form, simplifications have had to be made in respect of a number of countries.

Countries are ordered by total number of weeks of maternity leave, and paternity leave respectively. Public-sector terms have been chosen in cases where there is a difference with those of the private sector.

Given that national legislation may express leave periods in months, weeks, calendar days or working days, for comparison, they are presented here in rounded weeks.

Some countries also have ceilings on the amount of money paid during maternity/paternity leave but these are not addressed in this publication.

Complementary information on selected Member States

Portugal	No maternity or paternity leave, just parental leave (the graph shows parental leave reserved for the mother). There is the option to have 120 or 150 consecutive days (150 if the leave is shared by both parents). Father can take any part except the initial parental leave reserved for the mother.
Sweden	Swedish legislation on this issue is more gender neutral than in other Member States. The most relevant birth-related leave is the parental leave, rather than the maternity leave. Parental leave can be taken immediately after birth instead of maternity leave and this is in fact the usual practice in Sweden. The two compulsory weeks of maternity leave can be taken either before or after birth.
Belgium	Maternity leave in the private sector: first month 82% + remaining weeks 75%.
Slovenia	15 calendar days compulsory maternity leave can be taken either before or after birth.
Netherlands	The total amount of maternity leave is 16 weeks. Leave must start 4 weeks before birth; up to 6 weeks can be taken before birth, with 10 to 12 weeks after.
Luxembourg	Fathers can have 'leave due to extraordinary circumstances' (<i>congé extraordinaire</i>) of 2 days in case of birth or adoption of a child. Covers 100% of earnings.
Austria	According to collective agreement, fathers employed in the public sector may take a month off work unpaid.
Malta	Paternity leave is called 'birth leave'.
Denmark	In the private sector there is a minimum level of maternity benefit, subject to negotiation with the employer.
Estonia	Fathers can take paternity leave before or after birth.
Italy	One month before birth and four months after is also an option for maternity leave, but with a certificate that this does not harm the mother's health.
Poland	There are two options for maternity leave - 52 weeks paid 80% or 26 weeks paid 100%. 20 weeks in total is obligatory (14 weeks obligatory for the mother; the next 6 weeks can be transferred to the father).
Czech Republic	Maternity leave is 28 weeks total: 6 to 8 weeks before birth and 20 to 22 weeks after birth. 14 weeks are obligatory, at least 6 of which after birth. Father can claim maternity benefit to replace the mother under the same conditions but no earlier than 6 weeks after the birth.
Croatia	After obligatory maternity leave, the mother is entitled to additional maternity leave until the child reaches 6 months of age, which may be transferred to the father.
Bulgaria	Fathers who have at least 12 months of insurance may take paternity leave.

Sources: national legislation (e.g. [MISSOC](#)), websites of national institutions and relevant reports (e.g. [International Network on Leave Policies and Research](#), [Maternity and paternity at work: Law and practice across the world](#)). Additional EP sources: [A new strategy for gender equality post 2015](#).

Revised version presenting the situation in the 28 Member States as known to us on 12 February 2015.

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