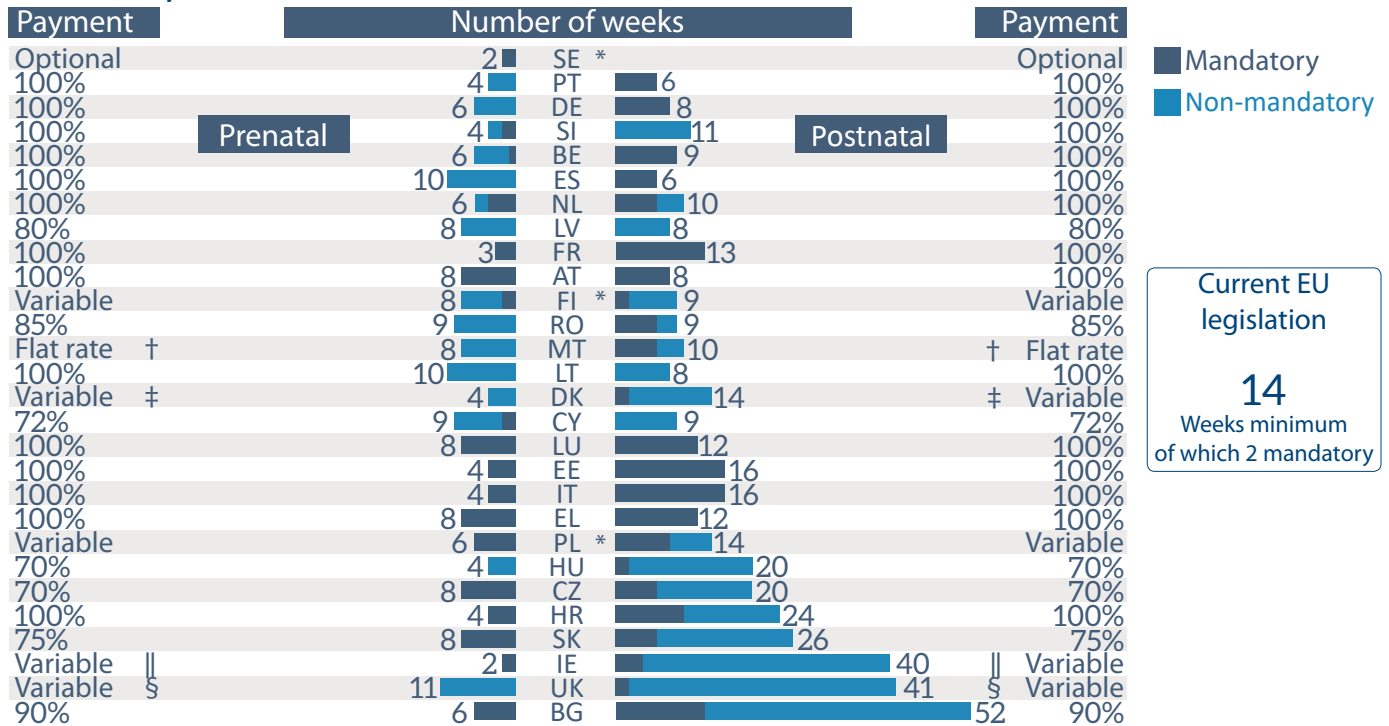


## Maternity and paternity leave in the EU

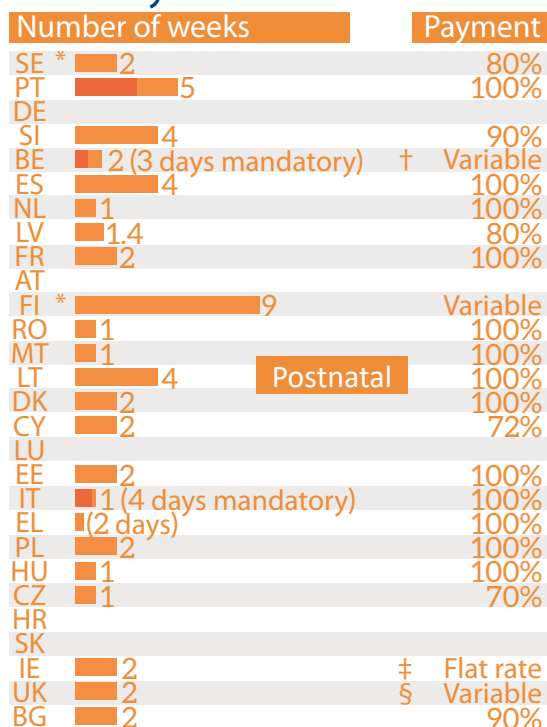
This infographic aims to present the current maternity and paternity leave situation in EU Member States. Most EU countries also grant an additional period of parental leave, but parental leave is not covered in this infographic.

### Maternity leave



\* See notes overleaf

### Paternity leave



Expected new legislation

**2**

Weeks

### Notes on payment

- † MT weekly rate of €66.25
- ‡ DK up to DKK 4 300 (€576) per week based on former earnings
- ¶ IE 100% for 26 weeks; the remaining 16 weeks unpaid
- § UK first 6 weeks 90%; next 33 weeks a flat-rate payment of either £145.18 (€169.47) or 90% of average gross weekly earnings (whichever is lower); the remaining 13 weeks are unpaid.
- † BE 100% for 3 days (paid by the employer), 82% of earnings for the remaining period
- ‡ IE weekly rate of €240
- § UK weekly rate of £145.18 (€169.47) or 90% of average gross weekly earnings (whichever is lower)

### Definitions

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

**Paternity leave:** leave from work for fathers or recognised second parents, similar to maternity leave

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

\* See notes overleaf

## Current situation

In 2019, the EU institutions are [set](#) to approve new work-life balance legislation, which will introduce minimum standards for paid paternity leave across the EU. The maternity rights set out in the [1992 Pregnant Workers](#) Directive will be maintained. This directive 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.

In [2008](#), the Commission proposed to extend the duration of maternity leave to 18 weeks in accordance with the guidelines of the International Labour Organization, making at least 6 weeks compulsory after confinement, with an allowance amounting to full salary. Parliament accepted this proposal in [2010](#), whilst extending it to 20 weeks of maternity leave and 2 weeks of paternity leave under the same conditions. However, following deadlock in the Council, the proposal [was withdrawn](#) in July 2015 and [replaced](#) by the new work-life balance package, which is intended to take a broader approach to modernising the existing EU legal framework in the area of family-related leave and flexible working arrangements. If the draft proposal agreed between the Commission, Parliament and Council is adopted, it would introduce a right to two weeks paternity leave. The package tackles the challenge of work-life balance for working parents and carers, which is expected to be particularly beneficial for gender equality in the labour market, but it does not change the duration of maternity leave. Parliament's vote on the package is scheduled for [4 April 2019](#).

## 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. The terms of legislation as it applies in the public sector are illustrated in cases where there is a difference with the private sector.

Countries are ordered by the length of maternity leave granted.

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.

When national legislation does not state exactly when the maternity leave is supposed to start, the earliest possible time was taken as the starting point.

## Complementary information on selected Member States

Sweden	Swedish legislation on this issue is more gender neutral than in other Member States. Rather than maternity leave, as shown on the graph, parental leave is the most relevant. Each parent is eligible for up to 240 days paid parental leave (all but 90 days of which may be transferred to the other parent), plus unpaid leave until the child is 18 months old. Maternity leave can be taken before or after birth within 60 days of delivery.
Portugal	There is no maternity or paternity leave, only parental leave. There is an option to take 120 or 150 days of leave: 120 days is paid at 100% and 150 days at 80%. An extra 30 days are available if parents share the leave period. The father can take any part except the initial parental leave reserved for the mother, which is shown in the graph.
Netherlands	Apart from the 2 days allotted to fathers, they can take an additional 3 days out of parental leave, making a total of 5 days. All is paid.
Austria	According to the collective agreement for public sector workers, fathers employed in this sector may take a month off from work unpaid. Fathers are also entitled to a 'family-time bonus' (Familienzeitbonus), a monetary benefit for employed fathers who interrupt their employment for between 28 and 31 days to take care of their family within 91 days after the birth.
Finland	Fathers may not work during paternity leave, while mothers may, except during the mandatory leave period. Maternity and paternity allowances are affected by the beneficiaries' circumstances and income. The same formula is used to calculate both, and a <a href="#">calculator</a> is made available by the Finnish social security institution – Kela. The allowance is normally about 70% of income.
Luxembourg	Fathers can take 'leave due to extraordinary circumstances' ( <i>cong�e extraordinaire</i> ) of 10 days for the birth or adoption of a child.
Estonia	Paternity: fathers can take paternity leave before or after the birth; a new law in force on 01/06/2020 will provide for leave of 30 days (4 weeks; paid at 100%). Maternity: a new law in force on 1/04/2022 will provide for leave of 60-100 days; the rest (40 days) will be added to parental leave.
Italy	Fathers can add 1 day to their 4 days of leave if the mother transfers it from her entitlement.
Poland	Maternity leave can cover either 80% or 100% of earnings. If 100% is chosen, the first 6 weeks of parental leave will be paid at 100%, and the rest at 60%. If 80% is chosen, the entire parental leave is also paid at 80%.
Czech Republic	After the sixth week of postnatal maternity leave, the father and the mother can alternate the leave with no restrictions on the frequency of alternation. If the father uses the leave, he must use it for at least 7 days.
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.
United Kingdom	Paternity leave may be 1 or 2 weeks long.
Bulgaria	With the agreement of the mother, after the child reaches 6 months of age, leave can be transferred to the father.

**Sources:** national legislation (e.g. [MISSOC](#)), websites of national institutions, [European Commission website](#), and relevant reports (e.g. [International Network on Leave Policies and Research](#)).

Revised version presenting the situation in the 28 Member States as known to us on 18 March 2019.

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