



Peer Review on “The financial impact of maternity and paternity”

Czech Republic, 8-9 October 2018

Peer Country Commenting Paper - Slovenia

How far are we considering parental and paternity leave?

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Written by A.Del Fabro, U.Rajšp, S.Trtnik, Ministry of labour, family, social affairs and equal opportunities

October, 2018



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

Unit C1

Contact: Alberto Cortellese

E-mail: EMPL-C1-UNIT@ec.europa.eu

Web site: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=750&langId=en>

European Commission

B-1049 Brussels

Peer Review on “The financial impact of maternity and paternity leave”

How far are we considering parental and paternity leave?

Czech Republic, 8-9 October 2018

Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
Peer Review on “The financial impact of maternity and paternity”
Prague, 8-9 October 2018

**Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union.**

Freephone number (*):

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

LEGAL NOTICE

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission

This document has received financial support from the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation "EaSI" (2014-2020). For further information please consult:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/easi>

© European Union, **2018**

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Situation in Slovenia	1
3	Assessment of the policy measure.....	2
3.1	Childcare services	2
3.2	Reconciliation of professional and family life	3
4	Assessment of success factors and transferability	4
4.1	Childcare services	4
4.2	More flexibility in the parental allowance	5
4.3	Fathers' involvement	5
5	Questions	6
6	List of references	7
	Annex 1 Summary table	8
	Annex 2 Example of relevant practice.....	9

1 Introduction

This paper has been prepared for the Peer Review on "The financial impact of maternity and paternity leave". It provides a comparative assessment of the policy example of the Host Country and the situation in Slovenia. For information on the host country policy example, please refer to the Host Country Discussion Paper.

2 Situation in Slovenia

Demographic changes concerning the fertility rate show gradual downward trend. In Slovenia the fertility rate has been falling since the first half of the 1980s. In 1981, it fell below two children born per woman in average for the first time and has continued to fall. The lowest fertility rate in the country was recorded in 2003 (1.20 child per women). In 2015, there was again a slight rise in the fertility rate (1.57 child per women) which continued in 2016 (1.58 child per women) and 2017 (1.62 child per women) (SORS, 2018). Slovenia was below the European average (EU-28 = 1.58 child per women) until 2016.

In the past two decades, the trends in families and family life have been continuing evolving in Slovenia. The changes in the forms and compositions of families are reflected in the pluralisation of family forms and reduction in the number of family members. Data on families and family life in Slovenia show that the prevailing family model is still a family with two different-sex parents. It should be emphasised that within two-parent families, the share of reconstituted families has been increasing. These are families where at least one parent is a social parent, and are usually formed after the parents have divorced or their cohabitation has been dissolved and they form another family. This of course is the logical result of the fact that the share of divorces and cohabitation break-ups has been rising. The number of single-parent families has also been increasing and such families now constitute one third of families in Slovenia. According to data from the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia (SORS), 22.7% of families were single-parent families in 1991 and 33.3% in 2015. The majority are maternal single-parent families (81.3%) but the share of single fathers with children is increasing (the share of paternal single-parent families among all families increased from 3.2% in 1991 to 6.3% in 2015). This is also the result of fathers increasingly taking a more active role in families.

High full-time employment of both women and men has been characteristic of Slovenia since World War II. The employment rate (20–64 age group) of women (69.7%, Eurostat, 2017) is lower than the employment rate of men (76.9%, Eurostat, 2017). However, Slovenia scores relatively high on the European scale (EU average 66.5% of women compare to 78% of men, Eurostat 2017) and the gender gap in this area is smaller than in the majority of European countries. An important fact is that when women with small children continue with their careers and, thus, their employment participation is not reduced. This high labour participation is in part explained by the wide availability of kindergartens caring for children from 11 months to 6 years.

The ageing of the population as a result of the longer life span and the reduction in fertility rate also has a significant impact on the organisation of family life. For instance, it affects the middle generation taking care for the elderly and children in the family. In Slovenia in January 2018, there were 401.262 inhabitants aged 65 and over, which is more than one fifth of the total population (SORS 2018).

In 2015, Slovenia was fourth among countries with the lowest rate of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, an indicator illustrating the status of children (Eurostat, 2015).

Family policy in Slovenia is based on an integral and inclusive approach, which means that it includes all types of families, taking into account the plurality of family forms and different needs arising from this plurality. It also respects the autonomy of the family and individuality of its members, protects children's rights in the family and beyond, as well as it places emphasis on the security and quality of life of families and children. Important elements of family policy also include the reconciliation of professional and family life, equal opportunities for both genders, a wide spectrum of programmes and

services for families, and contributions towards costs to make the maintenance of children and family protection easier in special life circumstances. Slovene family policy gives emphasis to nine priority areas, i.e.

- programmes supporting families;
- parental protection and family benefits;
- alternative care of children;
- social assistance to families;
- reconciliation of professional and family life;
- labour market and employment;
- health and healthcare;
- care, upbringing and education; and
- housing.

It must be emphasised that all these areas are equally important.

3 Assessment of the policy measure

3.1 Childcare services

Slovenia has a very well developed early childhood education and care (ECEC), which is important for the reconciliation of professional and family life. It is also widely available and affordable, due to very high public subsidies. There is an entitlement to ECEC on a full-time basis in pre-school and day-care centres (that comprise nursery and kindergarten classes) from the end of the parental leave, when children reach 11 months. Pre-school, covering child care and kindergarten, welcome children from 11 months to six years.

A well developed and flexible pre-school education and day-care system has very important and broader social impacts. It enables parents (and in particular women due to the traditional division of care responsibilities) to enter and remain in the labour market as well as to better reconcile their professional and family life. This means that parents (in particular women) do no longer need to decide between their career and their family. Due to its well-operating pre-school education system Slovenia also has a high rate of women's participation in the labour market (above the EU average). Moreover, the employment rate for women with children younger than six years (66.3%, Eurostat) is also higher than the employment rate of women without children (53.4%, Eurostat). Nonetheless, it is important that this system is maintained and improved, in particular in terms of providing higher flexibility.

More than 80.3% of pre-school children (age 11 months to 6 years) are included in public childcare in Slovenia (SORS, 2018). In the school year 2017/2018 (SORS, 2018), 63.5% of children up to the age of 3 years were included. Slovenia pursues the EU 2020 strategic goal which envisages 95% of children in the second age group (three to six years old) to be enrolled in a pre-school institution. In Slovenia, the share of enrolled children in this age group is currently 91.0%. Since this share depends on family policy, the flexibility of the labour market and affordability of the programme, it will have to be determined what improvements are needed to achieve the EU 2020 goal.

All families with children included in approved ECEC programmes provided by public and private pre-school and day-care centres/providers are entitled to a subsidy. On average, the subsidy amounted to 68% of the costs per child in 2014 (Kuralt, 2015). There are nine income brackets, with parent fees ranging from 0% to 77% of the programme price. An additional subsidy has been granted by some local communities. Parents pay 30% of the parent fee for their income bracket to enrol a second child in ECEC. For each subsequent child ECEC is free of charge.

3.2 Reconciliation of professional and family life

The task of the state is to create suitable conditions for people to decide to start a family and for families to have a high quality of life, and to ensure the security and protection of all family members (children in particular). In part, the state does this by contributing towards the costs of the maintenance and care of children and by granting special rights arising from parenthood. The purpose of these rights and direct financial assistance to families is to ensure that parents can provide quality parenting and that children have a high-quality childhood, to provide families with the best possible conditions for life, facilitate the reconciliation of family and professional obligations and improve the living conditions of socially disadvantaged families, families with many children, single-parent families and families with special needs children.

Maternity, paternity and parental leave and related compensations are extremely important rights in terms of the reconciliation of professional and family life. This area is well regulated in Slovenia.

Maternity leave is intended for the preparation for birth, care of the child immediately after birth and protection of the mother's health upon and after childbirth. Mothers are entitled to maternity leave in the form of full absence from work for 105 consecutive days, of which they are obliged to take at least 15 days. The start of maternity leave is 28 days before the due date, except when the birth is premature. In exceptional circumstances, maternity leave may be used by the father, a grandparent or another person. The amount of maternity leave compensation is equal to 100% of the salary basis.

Paternity leave (first adopted in 2003) is intended for fathers to participate in the care of children as early as possible. Fathers are entitled to paternity leave of 30 calendar days with compensation in the form of full or partial absence from work. They can take all the 30 days immediately or take up part of it immediately after birth and the rest before the child finishes the first grade. In case they decide not to use all the leave immediately, fathers must take: 1. at least 15 days in the form of full or part absence from work until one month after the parental leave for the child is finished; 2. maximum 15 days in the form of full or part absence from work until the child finishes the first grade of elementary school.

The amount of paternity leave compensation is equal to 100% of the salary basis but may not be more than 2.5 times the amount of the average monthly wage in Slovenia (the same applies to parental leave, while there is no ceiling for maternity leave). In 2016, when 20 345 children were born, 16 291 fathers used the first 15 days of paternity leave (MLFSEO). The gap in paternity leave take up is the result of the fact that paternity leave is not mandatory and that fathers who are not employed or self-employed are not entitled to the leave.

The utilisation of paternity leave in Slovenia is relatively constant, approximately 80% of fathers use the first 15 days of paternity leave.

Parental leave is intended for the care of the child. Mothers and fathers are entitled to 130 days of parental leave each (altogether 260 days) in the form of full or partial absence from work. The mother can transfer 100 days of parental leave to the father, while 30 days are non-transferrable. In general, the father can use no more than 230 days, only in exceptional circumstances can he use all 260 days. The father may transfer 130 days of parental leave to the mother (the mother can use all 260 days). Parental leave is extended in the event of the birth of twins or more children at the same time, a prematurely born child or a child who needs special care. A part of the parental leave of a maximum 75 days may be carried forward and taken any time until the child completes the first grade of primary school. Adopters and persons in whose care the child was entrusted for the purpose of adoption, other persons or a child's grandparent are also entitled to parental leave. The amount of parental leave compensation is equal to 100% of the salary basis but may not be more than 2.5 the amount of the average monthly wage in Slovenia.

The number of persons entitled to parental leave compensation is related to the number of births in the current year, as well as to the share of employed and self-employed persons (people included in the parental protection insurance scheme) among young parents. The share of persons entitled to compensation is more or less constant and amounts to 88% of all births (Children and their position in Slovenia today: Situation analysis of the position of children in Slovenia, IRSSV, 2016). There were 22 782 in 2011 and 20 064 in 2016 (MLFSEO). According to data, 16 000 mothers and 1 185 fathers used parental leaves. The rest have the right to parental benefit for unemployed (252 EUR per month for 365 days after birth).

More **flexible forms of work**, including the right to reduced working time, facilitate the reconciliation of professional and family responsibilities. The Parental Protection and Family Benefits Act (ZSDP-1) stipulates that one of the parents who takes care of a child under three years of age shall have the right to work part-time. Starting from 2014, if the parent takes care of at least two children, they have the right to work part-time until the youngest child completes the first grade of primary school in accordance with the regulations governing primary education. The right to work part-time for one year cannot be transferred to the other parent, except in certain special cases. The condition of non-transferability of one year for each parent was added to encourage fathers to exercise this right. The number of persons who are entitled to part-time work and the amount of the payment of social security contributions for parenthood have been steadily increasing. In 2011, there were 10108 beneficiaries and the amount required for payments was EUR 11.5 million, while in 2016 there were 14 485 beneficiaries (2 714 fathers and 11 085 mothers) and EUR 17.2 million were required for payments (as the contributions are paid with regard to the proportionate part of the minimum wage, the increase in the minimum wage also increases the amount required for payments, so it does not depend only on the number of beneficiaries).

The employer and the worker may agree in the employment contract that the worker will work from home to complete certain activities or a part of them.

If a worker proposes a different distribution of working time during his employment relationship to reconcile professional and family life, the employer must justify his decision in writing, taking into consideration the needs of the working process. The written justification may also be sent by e-mail to the e-mail address of the worker provided and whose use is required by the employer.

Slovenia pursues the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy for growth and jobs, for which reason it undertook to increase the labour force participation rate to 75% of the population aged 20–64 by 2020 (National Reform Programme 2011–2012). According to the latest data available, the employment rate of women is 66.7% and of men 73.3% (Eurostat, 2016).

4 Assessment of success factors and transferability

4.1 Childcare services

Since Slovenia has a very well developed public childcare system with high percentage of children enrolled in day care and kindergartens as well as high level of inclusion in labour market (men and also women), Czech Republic solution with children's groups is not suitable for Slovenia. Although it seems a very good solution for countries which tackle with low employment rate of women due to insufficient offer of available childcare services, this is not the case in Slovenia.

In Slovenia, too, there is no gap between the end of parental leave and childcare entitlement. The demand is almost fully met due to the intensive construction of kindergartens and day care in the 1970s and 1980s and a lower number of births. Municipalities are obliged to open additional classes or units, or to grant a concession if the number of parents who have expressed interest in enrolling their children in ECEC programmes is high enough to open at least one pre-school class (Stropnik 2018). In case of such parents' demand, the municipality is obligated to begin the process to

ensure enough available spaces in the public kindergarten or to grant a concession within 30 days. For instance, from 2007-2017, the municipality of Ljubljana opened 96 new pre-school classes (from 11 months to 6 years old). In addition, Slovenia ensures the affordability of child care services, which supports the take up of those services.

4.2 More flexibility in the parental allowance

Wage compensation during parental leave is very important. Slovenia was the first European country to introduce one-year parental leave in 1986 and also the only country providing 100% wage compensation during such leave. Soon after Sweden (1974), Slovenia (1976) also introduced the option of division of parental leave between both parents. In Slovenia the amount of wage compensation during parental leave equals to 100% of the basis (average wage in the past 12 months), but may not be more than 2.5 the amount of the average monthly wage in Slovenia.

The share of fathers taking some of the parental leave increased slightly from around 5% in the mid-2000s to 6-7% in 2012–2016 (MLFSAEO, 2018). This shift may be the result of the introduction of paternity leave in 2003 that led to fathers' higher awareness of their rights, as well as their increased readiness to take over the care of a very young child.

The study entitled 'Attitudes on family issues and needs of families' (Slovenian Public Opinion, 2016) showed that the greatest share of respondents (21.9%) believed that it would be best if parents divided the parental leave equally, i.e. each utilising one half. It is not insignificant that this percentage is higher among young people. As many as 35% of young people (up to 30 years of age) believe that the parents should divide parental leave equally. This confirmed the fact that gender equality means a lot to the younger generation and that they believe that taking care of children is the task of both parents. The state is encouraging this and provides the option of equal utilisation of parental leave.

Economic disadvantages of taking the leave can only be avoided by applying full salary compensation, which has been the case in Slovenia for many decades. Salary compensations are funded partly from parental protection insurance and mostly from general taxation, and this has not been questioned. This means that the Slovenian fathers cannot use the major reason named by fathers in other countries for not taking up parental leave, namely larger foregone earnings because they usually earn more than their female partners. The case of Slovenia proves that other reasons are decisive for the division of care work between the partners, even if they are both employed full time. However, full salary compensation undoubtedly alleviates the risk of poverty among children (in Slovenia, it is one of the lowest in the EU) (Stropanik 2018).

There are many reasons why the majority of fathers do not take parental leave. One of the reasons is poor awareness of fathers about the rights they are entitled to upon the birth of a child. Another reason is the lack of sympathy of employers, superiors and co-workers for the utilisation of paternity leave. There is also a lack of understanding of the importance and aim of paternity and parental leave among parents themselves. One of the solutions to this problem would certainly be to raise awareness and to better inform both parents and employers. The study entitled Attitudes on family issues and needs of families (Slovenian Public Opinion, 2016) showed that fathers would be more inclined to use paternity leave if employers had more consideration for it.

Parental leave system in Slovenia is very flexible and Czech Republic new solution has some similarities with it.

4.3 Fathers' involvement

Ninety calendar days of paternity leave were gradually introduced in 2003-2005, of which 15 days were with full salary compensation and 75 days without pay, but with social security contributions based on the minimum wage paid for the father from the central government budget.

To comply with the European Union (EU) legislation (Council Directive 2010/18/EU) requesting at least one month of the parental leave to be provided on a non-transferable basis, the paternity leave with salary compensation was extended by 15 days in 2014

(30 non-transferable days of paternity leave are considered as one non-transferable month of parental leave under the mentioned Directive). A gradual extension was foreseen (by five days a year) with concurrent shortening of unpaid leave (by 25 days a year). The adaptation to the new regulation started in 2016, and from January 2018 there are 30 paid days of paternity leave (Stropnik, 2018).

There is quite some flexibility in use. Paternity leave may be taken full-time or part-time. The duration of leave does not change if taken part-time. For children born from 1 May 2018 onwards, at least 15 days of leave may be taken until one month following the end of the parental leave (when the child reaches 11 months). The rest may be taken until the child completes the first grade of primary school.

Salary compensation is 100% of the individual's base salary. The maximum monthly amount is 2.5 times the average monthly salary in Slovenia.

The utilisation of paternity leave in Slovenia is relatively high and constant, approximately 80% of fathers use the first 15 days of paternity leave (until the child is six months old).

Roughly four in five fathers take up to (and close to) 15 days of paternity leave, while less than one in five leave-takers took more than 15 days.¹ A considerable number of fathers made use of their right to additional paid days (5 days in 2016, 10 in 2017 and 15 in 2018). In recent months, 1 in 5 leave takers took all 30 days of paternity leave available from January 2018 (one in four took 16-30 days). The first 15 days are usually taken when the mother and child come home from the hospital.

Use of parental leave is very flexible in Slovenia, parents can alternate in receiving the parental allowance as they agree at the beginning of the use the parental leave.

5 Questions

- Do you have any statistics so far how many fathers used parental leave since January 2018?
- Do you have any statistics so far how many fathers used paternity leave since February 2018?

¹ The proportions quoted in this section relate to all fathers; the proportions are thus higher for eligible fathers.

6 List of references

SORS, 2018. Available at: Fertility rate:
http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=05J1002S&ti=&path=../Database/Dem_soc/05_prebivalstvo/30_Rodnost/05_05J10_rojeni_SL/&lang=2

SORS, 2018. Available at: Families:
http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=05F5000S&ti=&path=../Database/Dem_soc/05_prebivalstvo/18_Druzine/05_05F50_druzine_KR/&lang=2

SORS, 2018. Available at: Inhabitants:
http://pxweb.stat.si/pxweb/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=05C1002S&ti=&path=../Database/Dem_soc/05_prebivalstvo/10_stevilo_preb/05_05C10_prebivalstvo_kohez/&lang=2

EUROSTAT, 2017. Available at: Employment and unemployment
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

EUROSTAT, 2015. Available at:
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lucas/data/primary-data/2015>

ZSDP-1. Available at: Parental Protection and Family Benefits . Available at:
<http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/pregledPredpisa?id=ZAKO6688>

KURALT, 2015 The state determines, the municipalities and parents pay', *Delo*, 12 December 2015

MLFSAEO, 2018. Available at:
http://www.mddsz.gov.si/si/uvcljavljanje_pravic/statistika/druz_prejemki_zavarovanje_sv/#c18828, own calculations

IRSSV, 2016. Available at: Situation analysis of the position of children in Slovenia
<https://www.irssv.si/index.php/raz-porocila/socialne-zadeve>

Stropnik, N. (2018) 'Thirty days of (fully) compensated paternity leave in Slovenia from January 2018', *ESPN Flash Report 2018/7*, European Social Policy Network, Brussels, February 2018. Available at:
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?advSearchKey=ESPNFlash&mode=advancedSubmit&catId=22&policyArea=0&policyAreaSub=0&country=0&year=0>

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 implementing the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave concluded by BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME, CEEP and ETUC and repealing Directive 96/34/EC. Available at:
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32010L0018>

Annex 1 Summary table

The main points covered by the paper are summarised below.

Situation in the peer country

- High full-time employment of both women and men.
- Well-developed and flexible pre-school education and day-care system (more than 80,3% of pre-school children are included in public childcare - 63.5% of children up to the age of 3 years, 91,0% of children in age group three to six years old).
- Well-developed and "family friendly" maternity, paternity and parental leave.
- flexible forms of work.

Assessment of the policy measure

- Paternity leave - 30 calendar days with compensation in the form of full or partial absence from work.
- maternity and parental leave with full compensation.
- possibility of joining a kindergarten from 11 months of age of the child (end of parental leave).
- one of the parents who takes care of a child under three years of age has the right to work part-time.

Assessment of success factors and transferability

- Paternity leave: high or good success / transferable with financial consequences,
- Compensation of leaves: high or good success / transferable with financial consequences,
- Child care: high or good success / transferable with financial consequences,
- Right to part-time work: partially good, bad side - this measure is to a greater extent used by women. Transferable with some adaptations.

Questions

- Do you have any statistics so far how many fathers used parental leave since January 2018?
- Do you have any statistics so far how many fathers used paternity leave since February 2018?

Annex 2 Example of relevant practice

Short summary of a relevant policy practice/example, key fields indicated below (max. 1 page)

Name of the practice:	Paternity leave and paternity allowance
Year of implementation:	2003
Coordinating authority:	The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities
Objectives:	Paternity leave is intended for fathers to participate in the care of children as early as possible.
Main activities:	<p>Ninety calendar days of paternity leave were gradually introduced in 2003-2005, of which 15 days were with full salary compensation and 75 days without pay but with social security contributions based on the minimum wage paid for the father from the central government budget.</p> <p>The paternity leave with salary compensation was extended by 15 days in 2014. A gradual extension was foreseen (by five days a year) with concurrent shortening of unpaid leave (by 25 days a year), starting when the economy recovers from the crisis.² Therefore, the adaptation to the new regulation started in 2016, and from January 2018 there are 30 paid days of paternity leave. (Stropnik, 2018)</p> <p>There is quite some flexibility in use. Paternity leave may be taken full-time or part-time. The duration of leave does not change if taken part-time. For children born from 1 May 2018 onwards, at least 15 days of leave may be taken until one month following the end of the parental leave. The rest may be taken until the child completes the first grade of primary school.</p> <p>Salary compensation is 100% of the individual's base salary. The maximum monthly amount is 2.5 times the average monthly salary in Slovenia (set at its level in 2006). The minimum salary compensation is kept unchanged, at EUR 323.55.</p> <p>Fatherhood programmes</p> <p>Awareness-raising activities under the banner 'Daddy, be active' were organised in the mid-2000s, including 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.</p> <p>The "Family-Friendly Enterprise" certificate was introduced in 2007. It increased awareness of the need for a work-life balance of employees with children (Stropnik, 2010). However, the introduced measures are seldom used by fathers (Štrkalj, 2014).</p>

² In the year following the year in which economic growth exceeds 2.5% of GDP.

Results so far:	število očetov			
	Year	First 15 paid days	Unpaid max 75 days	5/10 paid days (introduced in 2016, 2017)
	2017	16.366	1.844	9.502
	2016	16.291	2.328	9.526
	2015	16.374	2.890	
	2014	16.695	2.996	
	2013	16.625	3.414	
	2012	17.468	3.586	
	2011	17.776	3.669	
	2010	18.042	3.734	
	2009	17.534	3.329	
	2008	15.800	2.352	
	2007	15.289	1.943	
	2006	14.098	1.441	
	2005	11.308	/	
	2004	12.667	/	

