

# From one year to 10 days: A look at paternity leaves around the world<sup>[1]</sup>

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**Source:** Agence France-Presse (AFP)

**Format:** Article

**Publication Date:** 2 Jul 2021

## AVAILABILITY

Access online<sup>[2]</sup>

## EXCERPTS

- Paternity leave is generally much shorter than maternity leave, but is better paid, UNICEF said in a report last month
- In India, only government officials have the right to 15 days of paternity leave

The right to paternity leave is becoming more widespread, but there are still vast disparities in what dads are entitled to around the world.

As France doubles the length of time fathers can take off work to 28 days Thursday, here is a snapshot of the situation.

### 21st century phenomenon

Paternity leave is generally much shorter than maternity leave, but is better paid, UNICEF said in a report last month.

Paternity leave was born back in the 1970s, but was limited to a handful of countries. It gradually took shape over the first two decades of the new millennium.

By 2018, 35 out of 41 members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union had some kind of paternity leave arrangements.

### Wide gap in EU

Paternity leave is recognised in 23 of the EU's 27 countries, but there are great disparities and there is often a grey area between paternity and parental leave.

Spain is the most generous member state, with fathers entitled to 16 weeks leave since the beginning of 2021.

But nearly half of EU countries give dads less than the 10-day minimum fixed by the bloc's legislation, with which member states have until August 2022 to enforce.

The legislation will impose paternity leave in three countries that do not have it at the moment: Germany, Slovakia and Croatia, and enforce the minimum 10 days in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania and the Czech Republic.

Sweden, which is advanced in terms of gender equality, is a special case.

The terms paternity and maternity leave are banned from the vocabulary in favour of the term parental leave.

Swedish parents have 480 days leave, of which three months are reserved for the fathers.

Most EU member states pay the father between 70 and 100 percent of their income, while others pay a per diem as is the case in Austria or weekly payments in Ireland.

### Elsewhere in the world

Canada introduced leave for the second parent in 2019: all, including same-sex parents and adoptive parents have the right to five weeks' off work.

In India, only government officials have the right to 15 days of paternity leave.

In the United States paternity leave is offered by several states including New York, California and Nevada, but not at a federal level.

### Not taken up

In some countries most fathers decide not to take advantage of their rights to paternity leave, often due to cultural and professional hurdles.

In Japan, which offers 30 weeks paid leave, only 1.6 percent of fathers leapt at the opportunity when it was first introduced in 2007.

The number had multiplied by five in 2019 and Tokyo hopes to increase the take up to 30 percent by 2025.

With a paternity leave of 53 weeks, South Korea is the most generous country in the world, but many men don't take it.

Paternity leave only accounts for one parental leave out of six.

In Denmark and Sweden, however, where the provisions go back to the 1980s and 1990s, three fathers out of four today use some kind of paternity leave.

**Region:** International <sup>[3]</sup>

**Tags:** parental leave <sup>[4]</sup>

paternity leave <sup>[5]</sup>

fathers <sup>[6]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 6 Jul 2021):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/21/07/one-year-10-days-look-paternity-leaves-around-world>  
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