

# Norway offers highest level of maternity benefits [INT]<sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

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## EXCERPTS

The highest provider of statutory maternity benefits in Europe and globally is Norway, where an employee earning the equivalent of \$25,000 a year would receive \$12,500 after 6 months' leave, according to new research from Mercer Human Resource Consulting.

Denmark and Italy have the highest level of statutory maternity pay in the European Union. In the EU, the least generous allowances are given in Greece, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom.

The comparisons are based on statutory pay built up over 6 months of leave. For a woman earning \$25,000 a year, total pay accumulated after 6 months' maternity leave would be just \$2,083 in Greece, \$2,883 in Luxembourg, and \$4,009 in the U.K. Yet the entitlements in Denmark, Italy, and Sweden would be as much as \$10,556, \$10,096, and \$10,000, respectively.

Based on the same example, statutory average maternity pay across the EU for 6 months' leave is \$6,824.

Amina Nasir, Senior Researcher at Mercer, says: "This is one area of employment law where wide discrepancies persist across the EU. Allowances in some Member States are more than four times those in others."

The research is part of Mercer's global analysis of employment conditions and benefits in 60 countries worldwide.

In Eastern Europe, the level of maternity pay again varies widely, with the Czech Republic and Russia providing the lowest level of benefits (the equivalent of \$1,762 and \$2,000 respectively, using the case study example), and Hungary and Poland offering more than the EU average (\$8,077 and \$7,692 respectively).

Globally, maternity benefits appear to be lower outside Europe, with the exception of Brazil where an individual earning the equivalent of \$25,000 would receive \$11,538.

Asian countries such as Singapore and Taiwan also have low levels of maternity pay - the equivalent of \$3,846 in both countries.

There are vast differences in the total number of weeks' statutory maternity leave both within Europe and globally. In the EU, Sweden offers by far the most leave, at 96 weeks. Denmark, Italy, Finland, and the U.K. also have generous provision, where women are entitled to up to 50, 47, 44, and 40 weeks' leave, respectively. In contrast, German women are entitled to only 14 weeks' leave - a fraction of the Swedish allowance. Provision in Belgium is similarly low, at 15 weeks.

"There is not always a correlation between the length of maternity leave and the benefit levels provided," says Nasir. "Some countries offer long leave entitlements but low statutory pay, and women may not be able to afford to take extended leave."

Worldwide, Asian countries provide the least number of weeks' statutory maternity leave. Women in Singapore and Taiwan are entitled to just 8 weeks, and in Hong Kong, 10 weeks' leave. Maternity leave allowance in the U.S. is also low, at just 12 weeks. In contrast, women in Australia and New Zealand are entitled to take up to 52 weeks' leave, while in Canada maternity leave is 50 weeks.

"The length of maternity leave often reflects the culture of the country, and may be influenced by factors such as religion, social policies and changing demographics in the workplace," Nasir says.

-Reprinted from HR Daily News

**Related link:** Mercer Study<sup>[2]</sup>

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

**Tags:** maternity and parental leave<sup>[4]</sup>  
work/life balance<sup>[5]</sup>

**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/03/07/norway-offers-highest-level-maternity-benefits-int>  
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