



European
Commission

A NEW START TO SUPPORT WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

#SocialRights

Across the European Union, women remain considerably underrepresented in the labour market and in management:

- The **overall employment rate of women is still 11.6 pp lower** than that of men.
- **31.5% of working women work part-time** vs. 8.2% of working men. This is especially the case for those with children.
- **Just over 50% of women work full-time, compared to 71.2% of men.** Therefore the **full-time employment rate gap reaches 25.5 pp.**
- **Caring responsibilities are reasons for inactivity for almost 20% inactive women**, while this is only the case for less than 2% of men.

Taking action is not only a question of fairness, but it is also an economic imperative: the economic loss due to the gender employment gap amounts to around €370 billion per year. The European Commission is proposing a Work-life Balance package, which will help working parents and carers by not obliging them to make a choice between their family lives and their professional careers. The proposal sets new or higher minimum standards to create more convergence between EU Member States, by preserving and extending existing rights.

THIS PROPOSAL IS GOOD FOR

 CITIZENS	 BUSINESS	 MEMBER STATES	 ECONOMY
• The proposal will improve working parents and carer's conditions, and lead to women's higher employment rate, earnings and better career progression • Gender pay and pension gaps, as well as women's exposure to poverty, will be reduced • Fathers will have more opportunities and incentives to participate in family life. • Caregivers looking after an elderly, ill or disabled relative will be able to take time off from work	• More women on the labour market will increase the available talent pool • Skills shortages will be addressed • Businesses will better attract and retain workers. • Workers will be less absent from work and more motivated, which will improve companies' productivity.	• Public finances will be more sustainable by reducing unemployment and increasing tax incomes	• Increasing labour supply will boost competitiveness • Demographic challenges will be addressed by making full use of our human capital

WHAT WILL THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL IMPROVE?

	CURRENT EU LAW	IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL
Paternity Leave 	No minimum standards for paternity leave at EU-level.	All working fathers will be able to take at least 10 working days of paternity leave around the time of birth of the child. Paternity leave will be compensated at least at the level of sick pay.
Parental Leave 	At least 4 months per parent, out of which one month is non-transferable between parents. Parents can take leave until their child is 8 years old. No minimum rules on allowance/ payment.	At least 4 months per parent that cannot be transferred between parents. Parents can take leave in flexible forms (full-time, part-time, in a piecemeal way). Parents can take leave until their child is 12 years old. Parental leave will be compensated at least at the level of sick pay.
Carers' Leave 	No minimum standards for carers at EU-level (except "force majeure" allowing to take short time off for imperative and unexpected family reasons.) No minimum standards at EU level on the length of the leave nor compensation	All workers will have the right to 5 days of carers' leave per year to take care of seriously ill or dependent relatives. Carers' leave will be compensated at least at the level of sick pay
Flexible Working Arrangements 	Right to request reduced and flexible working hours upon return from parental leave Right to request part-time work for all workers	All working parents of children up to 12 and carers with dependent relatives will have the right to request the following flexible working arrangements: 1. Reduced working hours 2. Flexible working hours 3. Flexibility on the place of work

In addition, the European Union will support Member States in:

- Adopting measures to ensure accessible, affordable and quality formal care services
- Reducing tax and benefits disincentives for women to work more.

Other measures will include:

- prioritising EU funding
- awareness-raising measures,
- sharing of good practices,
- enhanced monitoring, including through the EU Semester,
- benchmarking
- improving data collection at EU level.