



## Parental leave in the Netherlands and the neighbouring countries, how does it work?

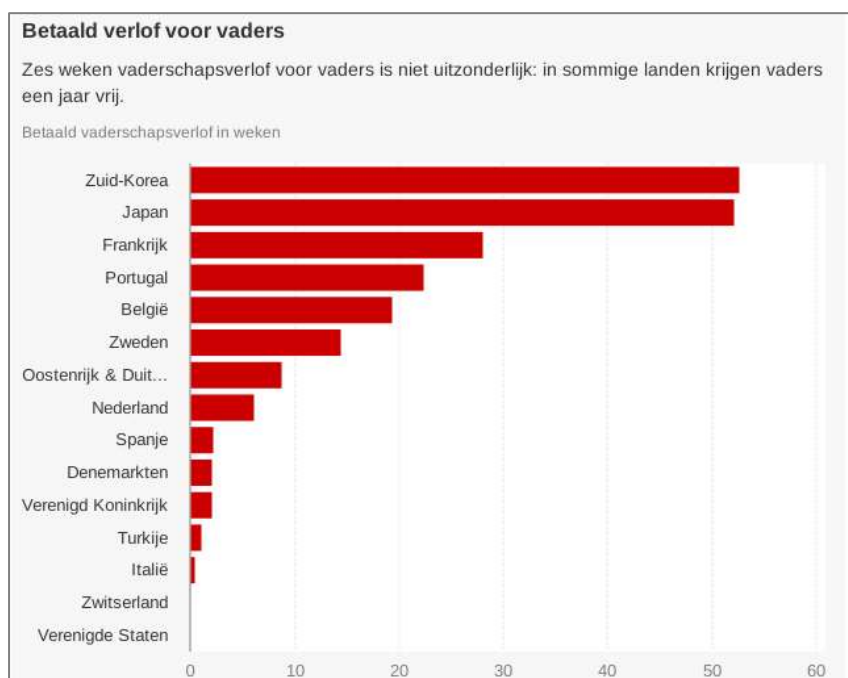
### Leave arrangements for parents in the EU – a comparison

On 2 August 2022, additional parental leave will be introduced in the Netherlands. Under the new rules, both fathers and mothers are entitled to a benefit for a period of 9 weeks in the first year of their child's life. In the Netherlands, the partner was already entitled to 5 weeks of additional birth leave, also with a benefit. This amendment raised the question of how this has actually been arranged in our neighbouring countries.

In this article, we will list the starting points of the schemes for birth leave and parental leave, as they apply in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. For each country, you will also find links to the official information of the government of the relevant country.

When a child is born, the parents have to face a lot. Traditionally, mothers are entitled to pregnancy leave and birth leave, but in many countries the partner comes off badly when it comes to possibilities for leave. Also after the pregnancy, the possibilities for working parents to take paid leave are usually limited, though there are exceptions such as South Korea and Japan, where more than one year of leave can be taken.

The image below speaks for itself:



General article (in Dutch):

<https://www.ad.nl/werk/een-jaar-lang-vaderschapsverlof-in-deze-landen-kan-het-a4f43cb9/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.nl%2F>

To make it easier to combine work and care, early 2019 it was agreed within Europe that parents in all member states should at least be entitled to 4 months of parental leave, at least 2 months of which as paid leave. In addition, every parent should be entitled to 10 days of post-birth leave, immediately after his or her partner has given birth. It is therefore expected that the above diagram will look different in the coming years.

*The European starting points have been laid down in Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for workers and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18 EU of the Council.*

*In this directive, it was also agreed that employees will be entitled to 5 days of leave per year for providing care to a sick relative. In addition, formal caregivers are given the right to ask their employer for more flexible working hours.*

The good thing about an European directive is that there are equal starting points within the member states. However, every member state has to "translate" the starting principles of the directive into schemes of its own within 3 years after the directive entered into force. This means that both the name and the contents of the scheme will look different in each country, and that the date on which the entitlement will come into force will also be different in each country.

To give you an idea of the differences, below you will find an overview of the most important schemes and characteristics in Belgium, the Netherlands and France:

	<b>MOTHER</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>BOTH PARENTS</b>
Belgium	<p><b>Maternity leave</b> At least 15 weeks, the employee receives a benefit from the government.</p> <p><a href="#">Official information</a> (NL)</p>	<p><b>Birth - paternity leave</b></p> <p>10 days if the child is born before 1 January 2021; 15 days if the child is born from 1 January 2021 and before 1 January 2023; 20 days if the child is born from 1 January 2023. Leave to be taken within 4 months, calculated from the day of childbirth.</p> <p>The employer continues to pay 100% of the wage during the first 3 days, after which the employee receives a benefit from the government.</p> <p><a href="#">Official information</a> (NL)</p>	<p><b>Parental leave</b></p> <p>4 months, to be taken within the first 12 years of the child's life. The employee receives an interruption benefit from the government (time credit).</p> <p><a href="#">Official information</a> (NL)</p>
Netherlands	<p><b>Pregnancy leave</b> At least 16 weeks, the employer continues to pay the wage and receives a benefit from the government.</p> <p><a href="#">Official information</a> (NL)</p>	<p><b>Birth leave</b></p> <p>Since 2019 one working week, to be taken within 4 weeks of the day of childbirth. The employer continues to pay 100% of the wage.</p> <p><b>Additional post-birth leave</b></p> <p>Since 2021 no more than 5 times the number of working hours per week, to be taken within 6 months of the day of childbirth, for children born on 1 July 2020 or later. The employee receives a benefit from the government.</p> <p><a href="#">Official information</a> (NL)</p>	<p><b>Parental leave</b></p> <p>Up to and including 1 August 2022 26 weeks of unpaid leave, to be taken in the first 8 years of the child's life. From 2 August 2022 9 weeks of paid leave, to be taken in the first year of the child's life. The employee is entitled to a benefit from the government.</p> <p><a href="#">Official information</a> (NL)</p>

	MOTHER	PARTNER	BOTH PARENTS
France	<p><b>Maternity leave (Congé de maternité)</b></p> <p>At least 16 weeks, the employee receives a benefit from the government.</p> <p><a href="#">Official information (FR)</a></p>	<p><b>Birth leave (Congé de naissance)</b></p> <p>3 days from the day of childbirth or the first working day after the day of childbirth, the employer continues to pay the wage.</p> <p><a href="#">Official information (FR)</a></p> <p><b>Paternity leave (Congé de paternité et d'accueil)</b></p> <p>The duration of the leave depends on the (expected) birth date of the child.</p> <p><i>Before 1 July 2021:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 11 days for 1 child</li> <li>- 18 days for &gt; 1 child</li> </ul> <p>Leave to be taken within 4 months, calculated from the day of childbirth.</p> <p><i>After 1 July 2021:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25 days for 1 child</li> <li>- 32 days for &gt; 1 child</li> </ul> <p>Leave to be taken within 6 months, calculated from the day of childbirth.</p> <p>Employees may receive a benefit from the government (<a href="#">calculation module</a>).</p> <p><a href="#">Official information (FR)</a></p>	<p><b>Parental leave (Congé parental)</b></p> <p>1 year, to be taken before the 3rd birthday of the child (parents will be given more time for taking the leave in the event of multiple births).</p> <p>In principle, the employee does not receive any wage, but may claim 2 benefits within the framework of the "Prestation d'accueil du jeune enfant (Paje)":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Basic benefit (Allocation de base)</li> <li>- Benefit for the shared education of the child (Prestation partagée d'éducation de l'enfant) (PreParE)</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Official information (FR)</a></p>

Please note: though in some countries the name of the leave scheme for partners (paternity leave, congé de paternité) seems to exclude parents of the other sex, it is generally indicated that parents of the other sex or parents other than the biological father are also entitled to them. For example, in Belgium reference is made to "meeouders" (co-parents).