



**Eligibility for parental leave
in EU Member States**

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Eligibility for Parental Leave in EU Member States

Foreword

Parental leave is an important policy measure for supporting work–life balance. When both parents are eligible for parental leave, it can also contribute to a more equal sharing of caring and household responsibilities, which is good for gender equality.

Across Europe, we are witnessing a number of work-related, demographic and cultural trends, which make eligibility for parental leave more relevant than ever. Women are continuing to enter the workforce in growing numbers, temporary and short-term employment contracts are rising, birth rates are low and families are diversifying.

Parental leave is crucial to sustain both women’s employment and population growth in the European Union. Without the protection of paid leave or job security while on parental leave, women might drop out of the labour market to care for young children. Potential parents might even reconsider having a child. Parental leave is also important for men who are otherwise unlikely to take time off work to care for their newborn. When men take up parental leave, it helps them to engage more in this new phase of their family life and share caring responsibilities more equally.

In the European Union, there is a growing trend in short-term contracts and self-employment

options, which offer less security and stability than traditional forms of employment. They are also having an impact on eligibility for parental leave in some countries. Zero-hour contracts related to the gig economy are especially prevalent among young people with lower education. Potential parents in these precarious situations might find themselves ineligible for parental leave.

Just as work arrangements are changing, so too are family arrangements. Parental-leave policies need to be adjusted to fit diverse family types. For a more inclusive Europe, single-parent families, adoptive families, mixed families and LGBTQI+ families need to be covered under parental-leave schemes.

With a new directive on work–life balance for parents and carers in place, Member States need to start thinking about how to implement more inclusive social-protection measures. I firmly believe that our research will assist Member States with this important task and ultimately contribute to a better work–life balance and more equality for all families in the European Union.

Carlien Scheele,
Director,

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Abbreviations

Member State abbreviations

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czechia
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK (¹)	United Kingdom

Frequently used abbreviations

Eurofound	European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
EU-LFS	European Union labour force survey
EU-SILC	European Union statistics on income and living conditions
ILO	International Labour Organization
LGBTQI+ (²)	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning and intersex
LP&R	International Network on Leave Policies and Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

(¹) The data collection and analysis, as well as the preparation of this publication were carried out in 2018-2019, when United Kingdom was still a Member State of the European Union.

(²) In this report, we opted for using the initialism LGBTQI+ as it represents the most inclusive umbrella term for people whose sexual orientation differs from heteronormativity and/or whose gender identity falls outside binary categories.

Contents

Foreword	3
Abbreviations	4
Introduction	7
1. Methodology	9
1.1. Selection of statutory parental leave	9
2. Eligibility conditions across the EU	12
2.1. Employment-related eligibility conditions	12
2.2. Household-related eligibility conditions	15
3. Eligibility for parental leave in 2016: estimations for EU Member States	17
3.1. Overall eligibility: all potential parents	17
3.2. Eligibility for potential parents in employment	20
4. Conclusions	24
Annex	26
References	29

List of figures

Figure 1: Percentage of women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave, 2016	18
Figure 2: Percentage of women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave by reason for ineligibility, 2016	19
Figure 3: Percentage of employed women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave, 2016	20
Figure 4: Percentage of employed women and men not eligible for statutory parental leave by age group, 2016	21
Figure 5: Percentage of employed women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave by level of education, 2016	22
Figure 6: Percentage of employed women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave by occupation (service and sales workers, elementary workers, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers) and EU Member State, 2016	23

List of tables

Table 1: Parental-leave policies, 2016, selected for simulation	10
Table 2: Typology of eligibility conditions for parental leave in EU Member States	12
Table 3: Employment-related eligibility conditions for parental-leave policies, 2016	13
Table 4: Eligibility for parental-leave policies according to family/individual situation, 2016	16
Table 5: Key variables of interest used for the analysis	27
Table 6: Variables used for contextual analysis	28

Introduction

Parental leave is a policy measure intended to give both parents an equal opportunity to spend time caring for a young child, usually after maternity leave ⁽³⁾. While parental leave often comes with benefits, its main purpose is to provide job protection for parents of young children — that is, the right of parents to be absent from work for childcare reasons without losing their job. As such, it is one of the most important policy tools to promote not only work–life balance for parents but also gender equality. Since the responsibility of caring for children in most EU countries falls disproportionately on women (EIGE, 2019), the availability to everyone of a good leave policy is essential for supporting women’s employment and gender equality in the labour market.

The first global form of paid leave from employment was introduced in 1919 under the auspices of the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention (ILO, 2014). This female-focused measure was concerned with the health and safety of employed women just before and after childbirth. Subsequently, the late 20th and early 21st centuries have witnessed an expansion of various forms of leave for women and men, as managing a healthy work–life balance has become more and more difficult, especially as more mothers are returning to paid employment in their child’s first year (Moss and Deven, 2015). Currently, all EU Member States have some form of parental-leave policy, although the different leave schemes across Europe vary greatly in aspects such as duration, payment schemes and eligibility rules.

Despite Europe’s diversity in terms of welfare models, it displays some homogeneity when compared to other world regions with respect to more generous and well-compensated leave systems for both mothers and fathers. Alongside maternity/paternity leave and early child-

hood education and care support, parental leave is an important policy tool to facilitate the continued labour-market participation of women and men when they have children. Its availability signals the possibility of combining parenthood with employment to those who may be anticipating parenthood (Osiewalska, 2018).

According to the directive on work–life balance for parents and carers ⁽⁴⁾, EU Member States can make the right to parental leave conditional on a period-of-work qualification or on a length-of-service qualification. This study aims to provide an overview of eligibility rules for parental leave in the EU and to analyse how they affect different groups of potential parents. The results show that 17 Member States set qualification criteria related to duration of employment. Seven Member States do not provide parental leave to self-employed people and 11 Member States do not allow same-sex parents to take leave.

Tensions associated with differential access to statutory paid leave raise the possibility of a new global polarisation between those born into a household or even country that is ‘parental-leave rich’ and those born into one that is ‘parental-leave poor’ (McKay, Mathieu and Doucet, 2016; O’Brien, 2009). These concerns have intensified with rising numbers of insecure employment contracts and practices creating precarious working conditions, including zero-hours contracts and the so-called gig economy (e.g. Heyman and Earle, 2010; ILO, 2018).

Over the last decade, the occurrence of both temporary contracts and self-employment has grown quite strongly in some Member States, and women, young people, foreign-born workers and those with low educational attainment have been more likely to have temporary contracts in the EU (Eurostat ⁽⁵⁾; Eurofound, 2017). In

⁽³⁾ <https://www.leavenetwork.org>

⁽⁴⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU. Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1158/oj>

⁽⁵⁾ Eurostat (lfsi_pt_a)

countries where eligibility for support for work–life balance is dependent on strict conditions based on narrow definitions of employment, it is likely that there will be growing inequalities and divisions between citizens and workers with and without access to the benefits of paid leave provided by a strong social-protection infrastructure (Dobrotić and Blum, 2019).

Changes in gender roles and family formation provide a further rationale to assess eligibility for support for work–family reconciliation. The rise in female education levels and the concomitant increase in female employment rates, coupled with the decline of the male-breadwinner-family model, have unsettled traditional gender work roles and expectations (Connolly, Aldrich, O’Brien, Speight and Poole, 2016; Trask, 2009). In this context, entitlements to job-protected leave after childbirth have become an important policy measure to support parents (ILO, 2014). As the labour-market activation of women and men, and particularly of women of child-bearing age, has become more salient in policy, so too has paid parental leave become more relevant.

The fact that family arrangements have diversified adds to the complexity. Historically, policies have been formulated for and oriented towards the traditional nuclear family; now, they need to be adjusted to accommodate single-parent families, adoptive families and reconstituted families (European Commission, 2019). In addition, there is the new context of increased awareness of LGBTIQ+ individuals and families and of whether work–family policies are sufficiently inclusive or whether they are restricted to heterosexual couples (OECD, 2019; Valfort, 2017).

In this changing demographic, labour market and cultural environment, the aim of this report is to improve the monitoring of work–life balance in the Member States of the EU. Parental leave, and eligibility for it, is the focus of the report. More precisely, the study focuses on potential parents (i.e. women and men from the age of 20–49) in the 28 Member States and estimates the share that would be eligible for parental leave if they had a child. A thorough mapping of the eligibility rules of each Member State was carried out, using the annual reviews and expertise of the International Network on Leave Policies and Research (LP&R) ⁽⁶⁾. These rules were used to identify individuals who meet the criteria and would be therefore eligible if they had a newborn child, and individuals who do not meet the criteria. This microsimulation was done using high-quality EU-wide comparable survey data from Eurostat from the year 2016 (EU labour force survey (EU-LFS) and EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)).

As such, the study provides eligibility rates for each of the Member States and an overview of the main eligibility criteria that they have set. An intersectional perspective helps to identify which groups of women and men are most disadvantaged and most often left out of the parental-leave schemes. In the light of the directive on work–life balance for parents and carers, parental-leave policies are becoming increasingly more important as a work–life balance measure. It is therefore important to know how effective and inclusive these policies are.

The results of this study were used for the preparation of the 2019 Gender Equality Index report (EIGE, 2019).

⁽⁶⁾ LP&R consists of over 60 members, all of whom are experts on leave issues and come from 45 countries across the world. More information about the network can be found here: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/introducing-the-network>

1. Methodology

Tracking rates of eligibility for parental leave is rare, and data on real-time use of leave is not always available (Koslowski, 2019). However, knowledge of eligibility requirements for leave can be ascertained and population-level estimates examined through simulation modelling. This micro-level approach was successfully adopted in an earlier study of access to paid maternity and paternity leave in the United Kingdom, which highlighted eligibility constraints related to both gender and employment (O'Brien, Connolly, Aldrich, Cook and Speight, 2017).

The approach taken for this analysis was to calculate eligibility for paid and unpaid parental leave for women and men in each Member State using a random sample from high-quality survey data from Eurostat (EU-LFS and EU-SILC). The first stage involved the selection of the target parental-leave policy for each of the Member States and detailed mapping of the eligibility rules. This was followed by the second stage, whereby policy rules with regard to eligibility were applied to nationally representative data sets for all EU-28 Member States using microsimulation. This allowed for the identification of all those who would be eligible for parental leave at the time of the survey according to the parental-leave-policy rules of the country of residence if they had a newborn child.

A simulation of eligibility for parental leave was carried out for the population aged 20-49, defined as 'potential parents'. Everybody who fell within the selected age group was included irrespective of their employment status. This makes it possible to capture how eligibility is linked to employment criteria and to assess whether unemployed and economically inactive women and men are also eligible for (paid) parental leave. Furthermore, the population aged 20-49 typically represents the group of individuals at the peak of both their employment and their fertility.

The focus on the population aged 20-49 is due to a few considerations. The majority of people in the EU will have had their first child by the age of 49 years⁽⁷⁾. Although fertility rates are higher after the age of 24 years, and highest between 29 and 31 years, a small group of people in the EU do have children in their early twenties (Eurostat, 2019). The younger age category of 20-24 years is therefore included to investigate young Europeans' access to parental leave. Furthermore, this group may be less likely to accumulate time spent in a job or the tenure requirements needed to access parental leave, and therefore more detailed analytical attention needs to be paid to the prevailing eligibility rates and potential reasons for ineligibility. In short, the focus on 'potential parents' enables simulation analysis that goes beyond employed individuals who have had a child in the previous year, to a larger group in the prime of their economic activity and who may wish to have children (irrespective of whether they already have children or not).

The methodological approach used to select the statutory parental-leave policies, alongside an overview of the eligibility constraints identified in each EU Member State, is presented below. More details about actual microdata used and underlying assumptions of the simulations are provided in Annex 1.

1.1. Selection of statutory parental leave

The focus of this analysis is eligibility for statutory parental leave under the different policies across the EU as of June 2016. Under the 2010 parental-leave directive, parental leave is defined as 'an individual right and in principle non-transferable', though the directive goes on to state that 'Member States are allowed

(7) Eurostat (demo_find).

Table 1: Parental-leave policies, 2016, selected for simulation

MS	Name (in original language) of parental-leave policy identified	Total duration available to a family (months)	Income-replacement level
BE	Ouderschapsverlof/Congé parental	8	2
BG	Отпуск за отглеждане на дете до 2-годишна възраст	24	2
CZ	Rodičovská dovolená	36	2
DK	Forældreorlov	11.1	3
DE	Elternzeit	24	3
EE	Lapsehoolduspuhkus/vanemahüvitis	36	3
IE	Saoire do thuismitheoirí	8.4	1
EL	Άδεια χωρίς αποδοχές	120	1
ES	Excedencia por cuidado de hijos	36	1
FR	Congé parental	36	2
HR	Roditeljski dopust	8	3
IT	Congedo Parentale	10	2
CY	Γονική άδεια	8	1
LV	Bērna kopšanas pabalsts	18	2
LT	Vaiko priežiūros atostogos	36	2
LU	Congé parental	12	3
HU	Gyermekgondozást segítő ellátás	36	2
MT	Leave tal-Ġenituri	8	1
NL	Ouderschapsverlof	12	1
AT	Elternkarenz	24	3
PL	Urlop Rodzicielski	7.4	3
PT	Licença parental complementar	6	3
RO	Concediul parental/pentru cresterea copilului	24	3
SI	Starševski Dopust	8.6	3
SK	Rodičovská dovolenka	36	2
FI	Vanhempainvapaa/föräldraledighet	6.1	3
SE	Föräldraförsäkring	18	3
UK	Parental leave	8.3	1

Source: Koslowski et al., 2016.

NB: Income replacement/parental benefits: 1 = unpaid entitlement, 2 = flat rate/< 66 % of earnings, 3 = all or most/> 66 % of earnings.

to make it transferable' ⁽⁸⁾. The main guiding principle for selecting the parental-leave policy in each country was that it had to be gender neutral, as distinct from maternity leave (granted only to women/mothers/primary caregivers) or paternity leave (granted to men/fathers/secondary caregivers). In the light of differences in national policies, the selected parental-leave policy is the one that immediately follows maternity or paternity leave and thus allows parents to take care of very small children (e.g. under 1 year old).

For identification of parental-leave policies in Member States, the LP&R cross-country annual review (Koslowski, Blum and Moss, 2016) was used as the main data source. Each country report ⁽⁹⁾ in the LP&R annual review has a section on eligibility conditions for parental leave. To ensure a full understanding of the local context along with cross-national comparability of selected parental-leave policies, LP&R national experts guided the selection at country level, providing policy contextualisation, leave definitions and details of entitlements and constraints. Any gaps identified as regards policy specificities were cross-checked with the Mutual Information System on Social Protection database ⁽¹⁰⁾ and government primary sources.

Table 1 summarises the selected statutory parental-leave policies, including a short review of the leave's duration and corresponding generosity of leave benefits. The latter two parameters are not used in the simulation of eligibility for parental leave. Nonetheless, they provide important contextual knowledge to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of parental-leave policy designs: theoretical (simulated) eligibility for parental leave, along with leave duration and compensation levels, are all important underlying factors in the actual rates of parental-leave take-up.

For the purposes of understanding Table 1, parental-leave duration refers to *total* length of paid and unpaid leave, combining individual and family entitlements (Koslowski et al., 2016). Generosity is classified into three categories indicating in which countries parental leave is (1) unpaid, (2) paid at a flat rate or not at a high income-replacement rate and (3) paid relatively well or at full income-replacement rate. For example, as indicated in Table 1, parental-leave policy grants time off to parents, but has no associated income entitlement (i.e. is unpaid), in seven Member States (IE, EL, ES, CY, MT, NL and UK). In contrast, parental leave goes hand in hand with relatively high leave-benefit levels in 12 Member States (DK, DE, EE, HR, LU, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, FI and SE).

⁽⁸⁾ 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. Retrieved from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:068:0013:0020:en:PDF>

⁽⁹⁾ Please see: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/country-reports>

⁽¹⁰⁾ Please see: <https://www.missoc.org>

2. Eligibility conditions across the EU

The current design of parental-leave policies across the EU gives various grounds for ineligibility, as reviewed in Table 2. Broadly, these relate to the person's position in the labour market, family-related criteria and citizenship. To establish a precise overview of eligibility, a descriptive analysis of eligibility for each Member State was conducted.

It should nonetheless be noted that not all the identified reasons for ineligibility can be captured in the subsequent simulation analysis. For example, citizenship was explored but not included in the final simulation due to uneven levels of information on the policy conditions at country level. This implies that simulated eligibility rates might be lower in countries where citizenship-related criteria play a role, as the implemented simulation analysis currently discards this grounds for exclusion as a factor. Examples from LP&R experts revealed varying national practices. For example, in Slovakia, individuals who are living in the country with temporary or permanent residency are eligible for parental leave. Finland requires non-EU nationals and migrant parents to have been living in the country for 180 days prior to the birth of the baby to be eligible. In Croatia, non-EU nationals and migrants, employed

by a Croatian employer, are entitled to parental leave. Unemployed non-citizens or migrants must have had health insurance and permanent residency for 3-5 years to be eligible to benefit from parental leave.

2.1. Employment-related eligibility conditions

Employment status — that is, whether a person is employed, unemployed or inactive, whether they are an employee or self-employed, what sector they work in and their length of service — are noted as the main factors contributing to variability of eligibility for parental leave across the EU. Application of employment-related conditions for accessing parental leave is quite heterogeneous across the EU (see Table 3).

For the majority of EU countries, being an employee is an essential gateway to being eligible for parental leave and for any parental-leave financial benefits. Only seven EU Member States (BG, DK, HR, LT, PT, FI and SE) allow for parents who are *inactive* or *unemployed* to be eligible, but still might apply additional conditions linked to, for example,

Table 2: Typology of eligibility conditions for parental leave in EU Member States

Conditions related to employment/labour-market situation:

- Economic activity status (employed, unemployed, inactive)
- Duration of contract (time with current employer)
- Type of employment (employee, self-employed)
- Economic sector

Conditions related to family/household situation:

- Heterosexual couples
- Same-sex couples
- Lone parents
- Adoptive parents

Conditions related to citizenship status:

- Nationals (not simulated)
- Non-nationals (not simulated)
- Non-EU nationals (not simulated)

insurance payments, which typically need to have been ongoing for at least 12 months. While people who are out of the labour market do not need job protection, they also do not benefit from this significant state-provided work–life balance measure, which in most Member States offers significant financial support.

Across the remaining countries, all individuals who have an *employee* status are eligible for parental leave, though certain employment-related criteria can vary. For example, in 11 countries there is no condition related to length of service, implying that access to parental leave is not constrained by time spent in employment or related social-insurance records (CZ, DE, EE, ES, HR, IT, LV, AT, PL, FI and SE). In the countries that do have such constraints, there is typically a requirement that the employee needs to have been employed for 1 year (in 11 countries), and in some cases in the same job without interruption (e.g. BE, IE, EL, LU, NL and UK). In several Member States, the reference period for the length of service is quite

flexible. For example, in Slovakia, the required 270 days of employment can be accumulated over a 2-year period. Similarly, Hungary requires a work record of 365 days within 2 years, but also allows for 180 days to be spent in education. The inclusion or exclusion of students from parental-leave schemes was not looked at in this study.

In terms of other categories of employment, in seven Member States (BE, IE, EL, ES, CY, AT and UK) *self-employed* parents are not eligible for parental leave. In the remaining 21 EU Member States self-employed parents are eligible for parental leave, but there are still variations in requirements related to the duration of self-employment and the sector in which self-employed parents are engaged. The conditions applied to the self-employed are usually equal to the conditions that apply to employees (except in Denmark). In France and Malta, self-employed people do not have to fulfil conditions related to length of service, while employees do.

Table 3: Employment-related eligibility conditions for parental-leave policies, 2016

Employment-related eligibility criteria						
MS	Unemployed/inactive person		Employee		Self-employed person	
	Eligible	Other conditions	Eligible	Conditions related to length of service/sector	Eligible	Conditions related to length of service/sector
BE	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	No	—
BG	Yes	Must have been insured for > 12 months ⁽¹¹⁾	Yes	> 12 months	Yes	> 12 months
CZ	No	—	Yes	None	Yes	None
DK	Yes	All unemployed/inactive people are eligible for leave ⁽¹²⁾	Yes	120 hours in 13 weeks preceding paid leave	Yes	> 6 months
DE	No	—	Yes	None	Yes	None
EE	Yes ⁽¹³⁾	None	Yes	None	Yes	None

⁽¹¹⁾ This condition is not captured in simulations — all unemployed/inactive people are considered to be ineligible.

⁽¹²⁾ Those in vocational training for > 18 months receive cash benefits/students receive extra 12 months' educational benefits.

⁽¹³⁾ Estonia provides parental-leave benefits to all unemployed/inactive people, according to their previous taxable income (or the minimum level if there was no income).

Employment-related eligibility criteria						
MS	Unemployed/inactive person		Employee		Self-employed person	
	Eligible	Other conditions	Eligible	Conditions related to length of service/sector	Eligible	Conditions related to length of service/sector
IE	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	No	—
EL	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	No	—
ES	No ⁽¹⁴⁾	—	Yes	None	No	—
FR	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	Yes	None
HR	Yes	Non-citizens/migrants must have health insurance and be permanent residents ⁽¹⁵⁾	Yes	None	Yes	None
IT	No	—	Yes	No condition based on length of service, but excludes women and men who are domestic workers and home helps	Yes (not all men)	Self-employed men in three sectors — commerce (retailers), artisanal and agricultural — are not eligible ⁽¹⁶⁾
CY	No	—	Yes	> 6 months	No	—
LV	No	—	Yes	None	Yes	None
LT	Yes	Must have been making social security payments for > 12 months	Yes	> 12 months	Yes	> 12 months
LU	No	—	Yes	> 12 months for at least 20 hours per week	Yes	> 12 months for at least 20 hours per week
HU	No	—	Yes	> 12 months (may include 180 days in education)	Yes	> 12 months (may include 180 days in education)
MT	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	Yes	None
NL	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	Yes	> 12 months
AT	No	—	Yes	None	No	—
PL	No	—	Yes	None	Yes	None
PT	Yes	Must be receiving unemployment benefits	Yes	> 6 months	Yes	> 6 months

⁽¹⁴⁾ Except in two regions — but for the purposes of the simulation, this regional variability is disregarded.

⁽¹⁵⁾ This condition is not simulated; all unemployed/inactive people are considered eligible for the purposes of the simulation.

⁽¹⁶⁾ The Italian system distinguishes between two types of self-employed people: (a) *Liberi professionisti* (self-employed people in sectors which are considered to contain highly intellectual content, such as doctors, lawyers, engineers) and (b) *Lavoratori autonomi* (self-employed people in sectors which are considered capital- and/or labour-intensive, such as mechanics, electricians, plumbers). Within category b, there are two sub-categories: (b)(1) *Lavoratori autonomi che esercitano in forma d'impresa* (self-employed people in three main sectors: commerce (retailers), artisanal and agricultural) and (b)(2) *Lavoratori autonomi che non esercitano in forma d'impresa*. Men in category (b)(1) are ineligible for parental leave.

Employment-related eligibility criteria						
MS	Unemployed/inactive person		Employee		Self-employed person	
	Eligible	Other conditions	Eligible	Conditions related to length of service/sector	Eligible	Conditions related to length of service/sector
RO	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	Yes	> 12 months
SI	No	—	Yes	Must have social insurance the day before the first day of the leave	Yes	Must have social insurance the day before the first day of the leave
SK	No	—	Yes	> 270 days	Yes	> 270 days
FI	Yes	Must have lived in Finland for > 180 days prior to due date ⁽¹⁷⁾	Yes	None	Yes	None
SE	Yes	None	Yes	None	Yes	None
UK	No	—	Yes	> 12 months	No	—

Source: Drawn up by authors, based on Koslowski et al., 2016; Spasova, Bouget, Ghailani and Vanhercke, 2017; Stropnik, Majcen and Prevolnik Rupel, 2017; Gerbery and Bednárík, 2017.

The employment sectors are generally treated equally, with the exception of Greece and Malta, where the public and private sectors have different rules, and Italy, where employees who are domestic workers and home helps are excluded from parental leave along with self-employed men in three sectors (commerce (retailers), artisanal and agricultural). Only one country has a condition connected to working time: in Luxembourg, only those who have worked at least 20 hours per week for the past 12 months are eligible for parental leave.

2.2. Household-related eligibility conditions

Eligibility for parental leave across the EU is often linked not only to employment, but also to different aspects of the family's composition or characteristics of the parents. Household-level eligibility criteria for parental leave, such as the relationship between the household members (i.e. same-sex or heterosexual) and whether they are birth or adoptive parents, are presented in Table 4.

In all of the 28 Member States, lone parents are eligible for parental leave, although the eligibility rights of non-resident mothers and fathers have not been included in the analysis in this study. Also, the study does not look into how lone mothers are treated in cases where there is an individual right to parental leave specific to fathers (i.e. the 'father's quota'), but only into how they are treated in the gender-neutral part of the leave available to all parents.

Adoptive parents are eligible for parental leave in all EU Member States, with the exception of Portugal, which does not provide adoptive fathers an opportunity to take parental leave. Greece, Cyprus and Romania explicitly restrict the eligibility of adoptive parents only if they are not heterosexual.

As of June 2016, in 17 of the 28 Member States, same-sex parents are eligible for parental leave. In the remaining 11 countries, parental leave is the preserve of married or heterosexual couples and same-sex parents are not eligible.

⁽¹⁷⁾ This condition is not simulated; all unemployed/inactive people are treated as eligible.

Table 4: Eligibility for parental-leave policies according to family/individual situation, 2016

MS	Same-sex couples	Adoptive parents	Lone parents
BE	Yes	Yes	Yes
BG	Yes	Yes	Yes
CZ	Yes	Yes	Yes
DK	Yes	Yes	Yes
DE	Yes	Yes	Yes
EE	Yes	Yes	Yes
IE	Yes	Yes	Yes
EL	No	Yes (*)	Yes
ES	Yes	Yes	Yes
FR	Yes	Yes	Yes
HR	No	Yes	Yes
IT	Yes	Yes	Yes
CY	No	Yes (*)	Yes
LV	No	Yes	Yes
LT	No	Yes	Yes
LU	Yes	Yes	Yes
HU	Yes	Yes	Yes
MT	No	Yes	Yes
NL	Yes	Yes	Yes
AT	Yes	Yes	Yes
PL	No	Yes	Yes
PT	No	Yes (women), No (men)	Yes
RO	No	Yes (*)	Yes
SI	No	Yes	Yes
SK	No	Yes	Yes
FI	Yes	Yes	Yes
SE	Yes	Yes	Yes
UK	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Drawn up by authors, based on Koslowski et al., 2016 and confirmation from LP&R experts.

(*) Heterosexual couples only.

3. Eligibility for parental leave in 2016: estimations for EU Member States

3.1. Overall eligibility: all potential parents

The study provides a share of all potential parents (i.e. women and men aged 20-49, employed or not) who met the eligibility criteria of the Member States where they lived in 2016, had they become parents at the time of the simulation. The findings show considerable variation across the EU Member States with respect to simulated eligibility for parental leave for women and men. In the EU, the most inclusive parental-leave schemes were found in three countries (EE, FI and SE), with nearly 100 % eligibility rates⁽¹⁸⁾ for both women and men. In these Member States, individuals were eligible for parental leave regardless of whether they were employed, self-employed, unemployed or inactive and irrespective of the length of time spent in their current job or the type of occupation; regardless of whether they were in a heterosexual or same-sex partnership or a single-parent household; and regardless of whether their child was biological or adoptive. Croatia also has a nearly 100 % eligibility rate in this analysis, even though it does not give access to same-sex couples — due to a small sample size of same-sex couples, this was not adequately captured in the analysis. In the remaining 24 Member States, ineligibility rates were significantly higher, with the highest ineligibility found in Greece, where 62 % of women and 51 % of men were ineligible. Ineligibility was also high in Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Malta and the United Kingdom, particularly for women (see Figure 1).

Across the EU-28, a greater share of potential mothers than potential fathers is ineligible. In

fact, 34 % of women and 23 % of men aged 20-49 years do not have access to parental leave, creating a gender gap in overall eligibility for parental leave of 11 percentage points (p.p.). The gender gap is greatest in Malta, where 43 % of potential mothers and 12 % of potential fathers are ineligible — a gender gap of 31 pp. Portugal is the only exception, where more men (32 %) than women (23 %) were ineligible for parental leave.

The gender difference in the eligibility rate for the total population is mostly caused by the gender differences in labour-market participation. In the EU-28, unemployment or economic inactivity is the main reason for ineligibility for parental leave (78 % of women and 54 % of men) (Figure 2). The other most common reasons for ineligibility are various employment conditions, such as length of service (15 % of women and 20 % of men), or self-employment (7 % of women and 26 % of men). Even though job protection is not relevant for people who are out of the labour market, these people also do not benefit from this important state-provided work-life balance measure, which in most countries also offers financial support.

Since the eligibility criteria in the Member States vary significantly, the reasons for not qualifying for leave also vary a lot. In Czechia, Germany, Latvia and Poland, nearly everyone in work can access parental leave and only unemployed or non-working people of parenting age are excluded⁽¹⁹⁾ (Figure 2). In the remaining Member States, a combination of reasons are behind ineligibility. Self-employment as a reason for ineligibility impacts the highest share of people in

⁽¹⁸⁾ In Estonia, parents cannot take parental leave at the same time as the other parent (the prevalence of this reason for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation). Finland requires non-EU nationals and migrant parents to have been living in the country for 180 days prior to the birth of the baby to be eligible for parental leave (not simulated in the eligibility analysis).

⁽¹⁹⁾ In Latvia and Poland, same-sex couples are not eligible for parental leave, but in Latvia this result was not captured by the microsimulation due to a small sample size.

Figure 1: Percentage of women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave, 2016



Source: Authors' calculation, EU-LFS, EU-SILC.

(*) Portugal is noted to be the only Member State where more men than women are ineligible for parental leave.

NB: 'EU-28' represents the weighted average (population aged 20-49, EU-LFS 2016 (Ifsa_pganws)).

NB: Member States are grouped by size of gender eligibility gap: 'higher ineligibility' refers to a gender gap higher than 1 pp; 'no gap' refers to a gender gap from - 1 to 1 pp; within the groups, Member States are sorted in descending order.

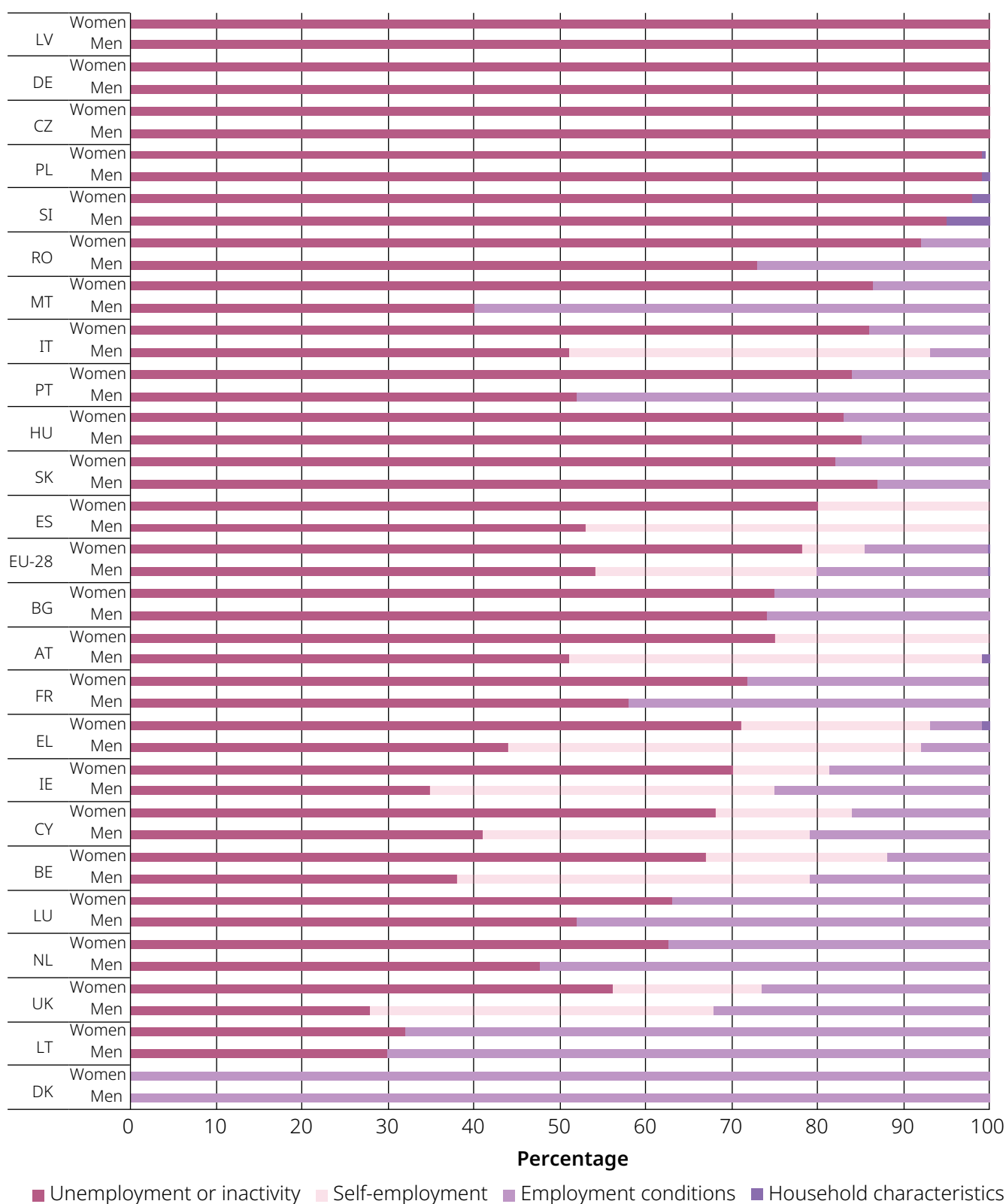
NB: Same-sex couples are ineligible for parental leave in EL, HR, CY, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI and SK. In most Member States, due to small sample sizes, the prevalence of this reason for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation.

Greece, Spain and Italy, accounting for nearly half of all men and about one fifth of all women who are not eligible. This is of note given that both Greece and Italy have the highest levels of self-employed women and men in the EU (Eurostat, 2018). Insufficient length of employment was the key reason for ineligibility in France, Lithuania, Luxembourg and the Netherlands — all these countries require a 12-month length of service of parents for them to be eligible for parental leave.

Patterns of ineligibility are different for women and men. Inactivity or unemployment are more prevalent among women across the EU, while various employment-related conditions, includ-

ing length of service and self-employment, disadvantage men. Conditions related to household situations, such as whether same-sex couples are eligible for parental leave or whether both parents can take parental leave at the same time, account for a low percentage of ineligibility (less than 1 % of women and men). However, 11 Member States have policy rules on eligibility where same-sex parents are not eligible for parental leave, with implications for adoptive parents from same-sex households. The rate of ineligibility of same-sex couples is underestimated in this study due to data restrictions and therefore in reality the share of potential parents excluded for this reason is likely to be higher.

Figure 2: Percentage of women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave by reason for ineligibility, 2016



Source: Authors' calculation, EU-LFS, EU-SILC.

NB: EE, HR, FI and SE are not included because these Member States have nearly 100 % eligibility rates.

NB: 'Household characteristics' includes two separate reasons for ineligibility: (i) same-sex couples are not eligible for parental leave and (ii) partners cannot take parental leave at the same time.

NB: Same-sex couples are ineligible for parental leave in EL, HR, CY, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI and SK. In most Member States, due to small sample sizes, the prevalence of this reason for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation.

3.2. Eligibility for potential parents in employment

Since parental leave is a measure targeted at the employed population, it is important to look at the share of employed potential parents who would not have the opportunity to take leave and would therefore be without job protection and at risk of losing their job. Eligibility rates for parental leave among the EU-28 could be expected to be significantly higher among the employed than the unemployed or inactive, given that the aim of the leave is to provide job protection and time off for working parents. On average in the EU, 10 % of employed women and 12 % of employed men were not eligible in 2016, ranging from 2 % and 3 % of employed women and men, respectively, in Lithuania, to 32 % and 37 % of employed women and men, respectively, in Greece (Figure 3). In nine Mem-

ber States (CZ, DE, EE, HR, LV, PL, SI, FI and SE), nearly all employed women and men can access parental leave, as either there are no restrictive eligibility rules for the employed population or the eligibility restrictions exclude a rather small share of the population ⁽²⁰⁾.

For the economically active, there were eight countries (BG, DK, FR, LU, HU, MT, NL and SK) where a greater share of potential mothers than potential fathers were ineligible. In this group, the rates of ineligibility reach as high as 19 % of employed women and 17 % of employed men in Luxembourg, where anyone who has not worked for at least the last 12 months, for the same employer, for at least 20 hours per week, is excluded. The lowest ineligibility rate was in Slovakia, where 6 % of employed women and 2 % of employed men were excluded, with less strict conditions on employment: only those who have not worked for

Figure 3: Percentage of employed women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave, 2016



Source: Authors' calculations, EU-LFS, EU-SILC.

NB: 'EU-28' represents the weighted average (population aged 20-49, EU-LFS 2016 (Ifsa_pganws)).

NB: Member States are grouped by size of gender eligibility gap: 'higher ineligibility' refers to a gender gap higher than 1 pp; 'no gap' refers to a gender gap from - 1 to 1 pp; within the groups, Member States are sorted in descending order.

NB: Same-sex couples are ineligible for parental leave in EL, HR, CY, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI and SK. In most Member States, due to small sample sizes, the prevalence of this reason for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation.

⁽²⁰⁾ In Estonia and Latvia, parents cannot take parental leave at the same time as the other parent. Finland requires non-EU nationals and migrant parents to have been living in the country for 180 days prior to the birth of the baby to be eligible for parental leave (not simulated in the eligibility analysis). In Croatia, Latvia, Poland and Portugal, same-sex couples are ineligible for parental leave. Due to small sample sizes, the prevalence of these reasons for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation.

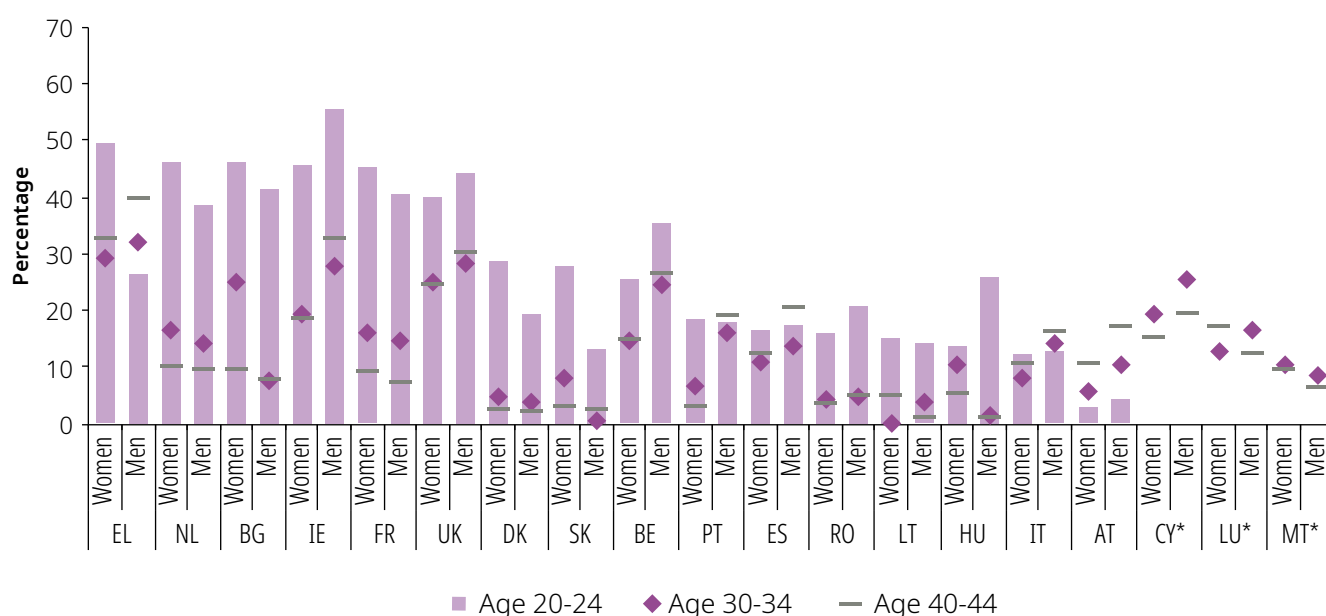
at least 270 days in the last 2 years are excluded. In Lithuania and Romania, less than 5 % of women and men in employment were ineligible and gender gaps in eligibility were very small.

In the remaining nine countries, a greater share of potential fathers than mothers was ineligible (BE, IE, EL, ES, IT, CY, AT, PT and UK). In several of these countries, the ineligibility rates are high because more than one eligibility condition exists and self-employed women and men usually do not have access to parental leave (BE, IE, EL, ES, CY, AT and UK). For example, as many as 37 % of employed men and 32 % of employed women in Greece would not get parental leave if they had a child because they either are self-employed, have not worked for at least 12 months or are living in same-sex couples. Greece, together with Cyprus, is a country where all three eligibility criteria apply (i.e. type of employment, length of employment and type of relationship). The lack of eligibility for parental leave of potential fathers may serve to reinforce traditional gender norms and the resulting childcare responsibilities, which in turn reinforce the disadvantaged position of women.

As a result, ineligibility needs to be considered one of the reasons behind low take-up of parental leave by fathers.

The ineligibility rates vary between groups of employed women and men of different ages, levels of education, occupations and sectors of employment. Such differences underline the importance of assessing the impact of policy design in relation to these characteristics. Among the various age cohorts, younger people are the least likely to be eligible for parental leave as they do not generally have sufficient records of continuous employment, and therefore might decide to postpone parenthood until the career-related eligibility criteria are fulfilled. In six Member States, around 40 % of the youngest age group (20-24) were ineligible (BG, IE, EL, FR, NL and UK). In other countries, the share of this age group that was ineligible was lower, but still substantial. For example, 25 % of potential mothers and 35 % of potential fathers aged 20-24 years in Belgium were ineligible. The only Member State where ineligibility rates progressively increased with age was Austria, where self-employment is the only reason for ineligibility.

Figure 4: Percentage of employed women and men not eligible for statutory parental leave by age group, 2016



Source: Authors' calculation, EU-LFS, EU-SILC.

NB: CY, LU, MT (women and men, 20-24) are not included due to a low number of observations. Data is of low reliability for women and men aged 20-24 in BG, EL, LT, SK; women aged 20-24 in HU; men aged 25-29 in LT. CZ, DE, EE, HR, LV, PL, SI, FI and SE are not included because these Member States have nearly 100 % eligibility rates for the employed population.

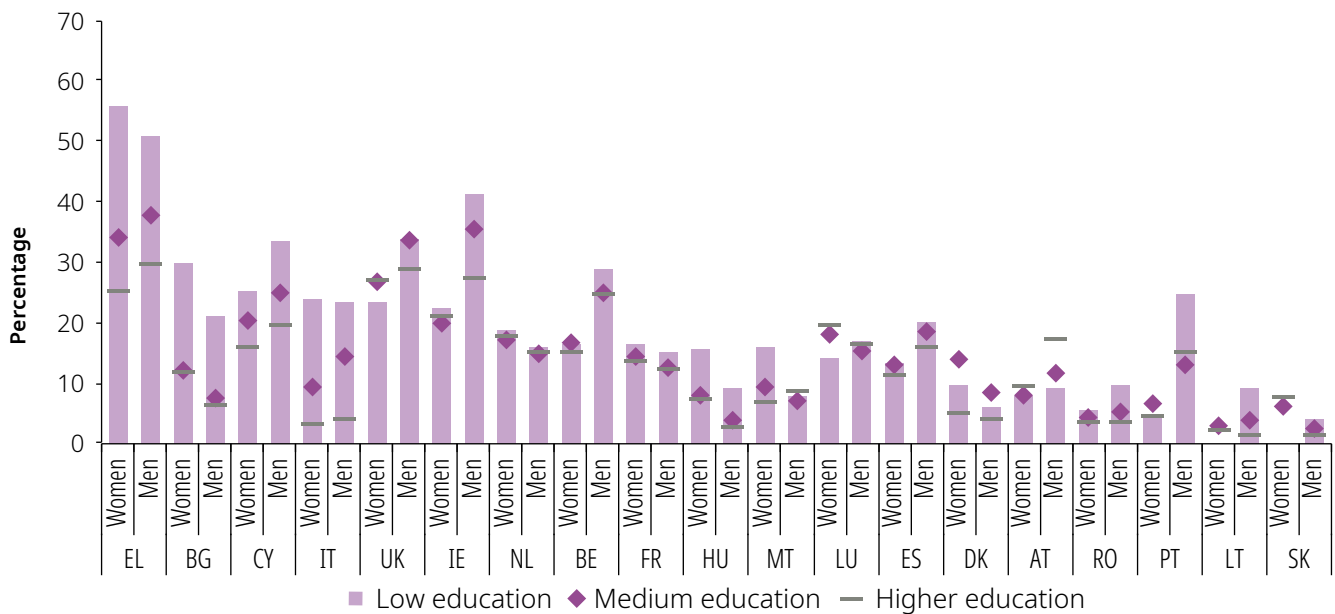
NB: Same-sex couples are ineligible for parental leave in EL, HR, CY, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI and SK. In most Member States, due to small sample sizes, the prevalence of this reason for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation.

In most Member States, there is not much differentiation by education, but in nine countries ineligibility rates are highest for the lowest educated (BG, IE, EL, FR, IT, CY, HU, MT and PT). In Austria, ineligibility increases with education — 8 % of employed women and 9 % of employed men with lower education were ineligible, while 9 % of women and 17 % of men with higher education were ineligible (Figure 5). In Austria, only self-employed people are not eligible for parental leave; therefore, the eligibility rates reflect the overall distribution of self-employed people between different levels of education.

Across the Member States, those working in agriculture, forestry and fishery (who are general-

ly, but not exclusively, male and self-employed), and those in service and sales work (a more mixed gender profile and typically employed rather than self-employed) were least likely to be eligible. Access to parental leave was generally better for employees in higher-skilled occupations than for lower-skilled and manual workers, but not in all Member States. Ineligibility among skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers was extremely high (more than 50 %) in Belgium, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Austria and the United Kingdom. The agricultural sector is the most problematic in most countries as ineligibility in this sector is typically higher than in industry or the service sector, primarily due to the prevalence of self-employment and temporary contracts.

Figure 5: Percentage of employed women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave by level of education, 2016

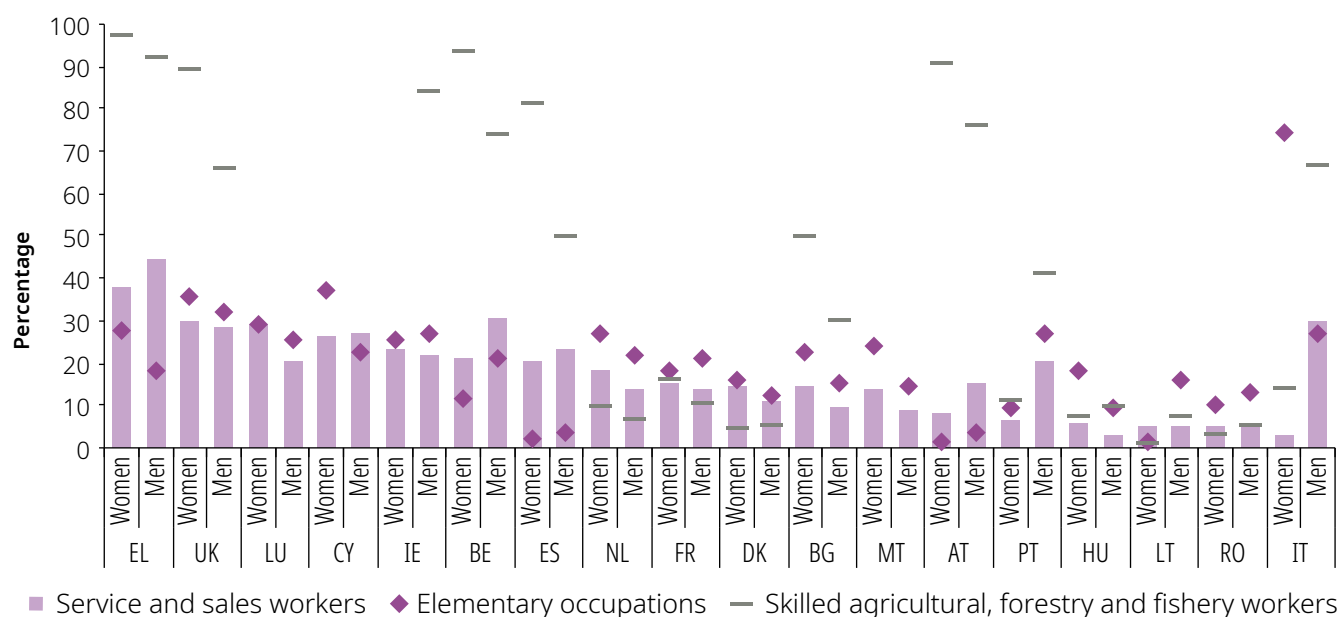


Source: Authors' calculation, EU-LFS, EU-SILC.

NB: SK women with lower education is not included due to low number of observations. Data is of low reliability for women and men with lower education in LT and for men with lower education in SK. CZ, DE, EE, HR, LV, PL, SI, FI and SE are not included because these Member States have nearly 100 % eligibility rates for the employed population.

NB: Same-sex couples are ineligible for parental leave in EL, HR, CY, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI and SK. In most Member States, due to small sample sizes, the prevalence of this reason for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation.

Figure 6: Percentage of employed women and men (aged 20-49) not eligible for statutory parental leave by occupation (service and sales workers, elementary workers, skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers), 2016



Source: Authors' calculation, EU-LFS, EU-SILC.

NB: IE (women, agricultural), CY (women and men, agricultural), LU (women and men, agricultural), MT (women and men, agricultural) and SK (women and men, agricultural) are not included due to a low number of observations. Data is of low reliability for BE (women, agricultural), BG (women, agricultural), DK (women, agricultural), LT (women, agricultural; men, service and agricultural), HU (women, agricultural), PT (women, agricultural), UK (women, agricultural).

NB: CZ, DE, EE, HR, LV, PL, SI, FI and SE are not included because these Member States have 100 % eligibility rates for the employed population.

NB: Same-sex couples are ineligible for parental leave in EL, HR, CY, LV, LT, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI and SK. In most Member States, due to small sample sizes, the prevalence of this reason for ineligibility was not captured by the microsimulation.

4. Conclusions

Since the 1970s, the European region has led policy innovation with respect to parental leave. It is an important policy tool to support individuals as they embark on the transition to parenthood and subsequently to enable parents to combine childcare with employment. In recent years, concern has heightened that employment insecurity may exclude some from the benefits of parental leave, reducing access to job-protected childcare time or job-protected paid childcare time. Without these entitlements, the workers excluded, particularly women, are less likely to maintain labour-market engagement or a sustainable work–family balance between the responsibility of caring for young children and earning income for living. Moreover, ineligible workers are less likely to benefit from the considerable economic, health and social advantages associated with parental leave (Nandi et al., 2018).

This study has conducted a cross-country and intra-country analysis of eligibility for paid and unpaid statutory parental leave across the EU-28. High-quality survey data (EU-LFS and EU-SILC) was assessed to gauge the extent to which different population groups fulfilled the identified eligibility criteria for parental leave in each Member State. The analysis focused on ‘potential parents’, that is all people aged 20–49 years — the peak fertility and employment period.

The findings show considerable variation across the EU Member States with respect to simulated eligibility for parental leave and multiple and varied reasons for ineligibility of women and men. Across the EU-28, the highest rates of eligibility for women and men were found in four countries (EE, HR, FI and SE) with nearly 100 % eligibility of women and men aged 20–49 ⁽²¹⁾. In the remaining 24 Member States, the coverage

was not universal, with ineligibility rates ranging from just 5 % of women and 4 % of men in Denmark to 62 % of women and 51 % of men in Greece. Ineligibility rates were substantially lower among people in employment as, on average, 10 % of employed women and 12 % of employed men were ineligible across the EU-28. As it was not possible to collect and simulate all EU-28 eligibility conditions, it is likely that the eligibility estimates present an optimistic scenario. Notable absences include eligibility conditions with regard to mobile populations (such as non-nationals) and to non-resident parents after separation and divorce. By 2014, the proportion of foreign-born people in the EU had reached 10 % and parental separation was affecting a growing number of European children (Eurostat, 2015).

The ineligible were more likely to be economically inactive, in non-standard types of employment, such as self-employment, and to have been in their job for less than 12 months. These characteristics can signify insecure, unstable, uncertain and even precarious work–life trajectories typically associated with poor regulatory protection. By contrast, those most likely to have access to the benefits of parental leave were the economically active, those with an employee contract rather than the self-employed, and those with a length of service greater than 12 months.

The directive on work–life balance for parents and carers gives Member States a right to make entitlement to parental leave subject to ‘a period of work qualification or to a length of service qualification, which shall not exceed one year’. The eligibility simulation results illustrate well how certain flexible working arrangements such as short-term contracts or other new forms of work can be seen as a double-edged sword.

⁽²¹⁾ In Estonia, parents cannot take parental leave at the same time as the other parent. Finland requires non-EU nationals and migrant parents to have been living in the country for 180 days prior to the birth of the baby to be eligible for parental leave (not simulated in the eligibility analysis). In Croatia, same-sex couples are not eligible for parental leave, but due to a small sample size, the micro-simulation did not capture this result.

While providing flexibility and therefore better support for a work–life balance, non-standard work also puts people in a precarious situation by excluding them from social policies. Non-standard and new forms of work are a fast-growing trend in the labour market, making it urgently important to revisit social-protection mechanisms, which are still designed for old and standard forms of work.

Historically, salaried employees, with standard employment contracts, benefit most from statutory social protection, such as parental-leave entitlements, through the process of building up entitlements and contributions to national taxation and insurance systems (Spasova et al., 2017). However, schemes based on labour-market engagement or performance tend to assume a universal model of the male adult worker, paying insufficient attention to family caring responsibilities, which are most likely to be adopted by women. Historically, some European countries compensated women for taking care of the family through long, low-paid cash-for-care entitlements, based on a universal female-parenthood model (Dobrotić and Blum, 2017). Subsequently, many of these countries have moved towards shorter, well-paid paren-

tal leave with incentives to increase take-up by fathers (e.g. Germany, Austria). This emergent alternative dual-earner/dual-caregiver model attempts to take account of both parents', and not only mothers', time spent caring for children along with their economic provisioning (Gornick and Meyers, 2008).

A key challenge is to reduce gender bias in social-protection systems, to enable movement from labour-market inactivity into employment, through the development of policies to support and protect individuals in caring and earning, without inadvertently reinforcing gender-typed roles, especially for those significant proportions of inactive women with high caring responsibilities and low labour-market attachment. These issues are central to the core themes embedded in the European Pillar of Social Rights (2017) ⁽²²⁾: equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; social protection and inclusion. Similarly, increased awareness of same-sex couples and LGBTQI+ individuals is required to ensure an inclusive approach to those in diverse family and partnership arrangements and to prohibit any discrimination based on sex and gender orientation in eligibility for access to parental leave.

⁽²²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/european-pillar-social-rights-booklet_en

Annex

Microdata sets used for simulations

EU-LFS⁽²³⁾ and EU-SILC⁽²⁴⁾ from the year 2016 were the two microdata sets used for simulating eligibility for parental leave in the Member States, though priority was given to EU-LFS. This data set was used as the underlying simulation data in all but six (BG, EL, LT, HU, PT and SK), country cases. For these six countries, EU-LFS could not provide sufficient information to simulate existing parental-leave policies. More precisely, due to the cross-sectional nature of EU-LFS, it was not possible to capture information on non-continuous employment duration or to assess the duration of social security contributions. Despite this disadvantage, EU-LFS was selected as the preferential data in other country cases due to the ‘employment’ definition used in EU-SILC⁽²⁵⁾. It should still be noted that both microdata sets still are not able to provide complete information for the purposes of parental-leave policy simulations across the EU. For example, besides the simulation restrictions already listed in the footnotes of Table 3, neither data set includes information on the private–public sector distinction, pertinent for Greece and Malta as there are different statutory regimes for the public and private sectors (Blum et al., 2018).

Constructing a household-level data set

A household-level data set with information on the relationship between household members was needed for a number of countries. For ex-

ample, household-level data was needed to identify same-sex couples (see eligibility conditions in Table 4) or to get information on the partner’s economic status, given that it affects eligibility in some countries (e.g. Estonia, Latvia).

The EU-LFS household data set captures data on labour-force activity for members of a household. The ‘HHLINK’ variable, the intra-household relationship indicator, was used to identify the spouse or partner⁽²⁶⁾. These were used to create an individual version of EU-LFS for the reference person and partner. Each variable in the partner version of the data set was given the suffix ‘_P’, and the two data sets were merged to create a household file. The EU-SILC data is stored across four separate data sets: a personal register file and personal data set which are both stored at person level; and a household register and household data file which are both available at household level⁽²⁷⁾. A reference person is not available in EU-SILC, and therefore the primary individual in the household was selected based on the ordering of individual identifiers, and linked to a cohabiting partner. Each household is represented by one row of data, which forms the basis of this simulation analysis. The partner ID is stored in ‘PB180’, which allows for each person in a household to be matched to a partner, thereby resulting in some households with multiple partners (for example older-generation and younger-generation couples). In these cases, the first couple in the household as listed in the original data set was selected. Here, the suffixes ‘1’ and ‘2’ were used to denote person one and person two in the couple.

⁽²³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>

⁽²⁴⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>

⁽²⁵⁾ The employment definition used in EU-LFS closely follows the guidelines of the ILO, while an employment variable used in EU-SILC captures the person’s own perception of their main activity at present. It differs from the ILO concept to the extent that people’s own perception of their main status differs from the strict definitions drawn up by the ILO. More information on the differences between employment definitions can be found in the EU-LFS and EU-SILC user guides.

⁽²⁶⁾ When setting up the data sets, the guidance set out in Mack, Lengerer and Dickhaut, 2016 was followed.

⁽²⁷⁾ When combining the files, the guidance set out in Mack et al., 2016 on how to merge the data and create partner data sets was followed.

Variables used to simulate eligibility

Variables used in the simulation exercise closely reflect the three main purposes of this study: (1) to estimate overall levels of ineligibility; (2) to

identify main reasons for ineligibility; (3) to estimate levels of ineligibility among those in employment. Table 5 provides a review of the exact variables used for the purposes of the simulation across both the EU-LFS and EU-SILC data sets.

Table 5: Key variables of interest used for the analysis

	EU-LFS	EU-SILC	Notes
Economic activity	ILOSTAT (ILO work status)	PL031 (self-defined economic status)	In cases where EU-SILC data sets were used, responses were grouped accordingly to match the ILO definitions as recorded in EU-LFS.
Employment status	STAPRO (professional status)	PL040 (status in employment)	The same categorisation is used in both EU-LFS and EU-SILC (employee, self-employed and family worker (family member working in a family business)).
Length of time in current employment	STARTIME (time since person started to work) HWUSUAL (number of hours per week usually worked)	PL211A-PL211L (monthly economic activity) PL160 (change of job since last year)	EU-LFS: An 'hours of work' variable was used where conditions required a minimum number of hours worked. This was required for countries covered by EU-LFS only. EU-SILC: A variable was created to reflect the number of months in employment from the variables that cover economic activity in each month (PL211A-PL211L), and combine with information on whether the individual had changed job (PL160) where conditions required a minimum length of employment with the same employer. This was required for countries covered by EU-SILC only.
Household relationship	HHLINK (relationship to the reference person in the household)	PB180 (spouse/partner ID)	Variables were used to identify the spouse or partner.
Same-sex relationship	SEX	SEX	Variables were used to determine whether the gender of the reference person was the same as that of their partner in the selected data set.
When the partner is currently taking leave	HOURREAS (main reason for hours actually worked during the reference week being different from the person's usual hours)	—	HOURREAS=9 represents someone working fewer hours than usual because of maternity or parental leave. This variable was used to capture ineligibility by defining an indicator of when a partner is currently taking leave. This eligibility condition was only required for countries covered by EU-LFS only.
Receipt of unemployment benefits	—	PY090G_F (unemployment benefits)	PY090G_F records whether an individual is receiving unemployment benefits. This eligibility condition was only required in countries covered by EU-SILC only.

Variables used for contextual analysis

For those in employment, the analysis also explored the extent to which ineligibility varies by age, qualifications, occupation and sector. It is important to note that in conducting an analysis of eligibility across a range of characteristics, cell

sizes may be small. Therefore breakdowns were not presented where the number of observations did not meet a threshold ($n < 20$) or were flagged as being of limited reliability ($20 < n < 50$) in case of EU-SILC. For EU-LFS data, the official guidelines on reliability limits were followed ⁽²⁸⁾. Results were weighted at household level.

Table 6: Variables used for contextual analysis

	EU-LFS	EU-SILC	Notes
Age group	AGE (age of person interviewed)	RX010 (age at the date of the interview)	The EU-SILC RX010 variable is continuous, whereas the EU-LFS AGE variable is split into age bands. RX010 was therefore grouped into the categories used in AGE: 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44 and 45-49 years of age.
Education	HATLEVID (level of education)	PE040 (highest International Standard Classification of Education level attained)	The EU-SILC PE040 variable uses a more detailed version of the International Standard Classification of Education, these are grouped into the categories used in the EU-LFS HATLEVID variable. This is presented in the following categories: Lower secondary (low), Upper secondary (medium) and Third level (high).
Occupation	ISCO1D (occupation)	PL051 (occupation ISCO-08)	Both variables are coded to ISCO-08 classification.
Sector	NACE1D (economic activity)	PL111 (NACE (Rev 2))	The cell sizes within some of these sectors is often small and required the creation of a more aggregated, four-way categorisation of sectors: agriculture, industry, service and other. In EU-SILC, sectors are grouped differently to EU-LFS, resulting in the following aggregated categories: agriculture, industry and service.

⁽²⁸⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/reliab_yearly_from_1998_onwards.html

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