

A comprehensive look at gender-responsive family policies in Eastern Europe & Central Asia

What are GRFPs?

Gender-responsive family policies (GRFPs) help women, men and couples balance career and family redistributing unpaid care work more equitably and supporting child development. These policies typically focus on the time, finances and/or services parents and caregivers need, such as parental leave or older care services.

Why are they needed?

Women often have to choose between their career and family responsibilities, limiting their overall opportunities.

What is being done?

These policies are increasingly being adopted by governments and companies to ease the burden on women and respond to economic, social and demographic changes.

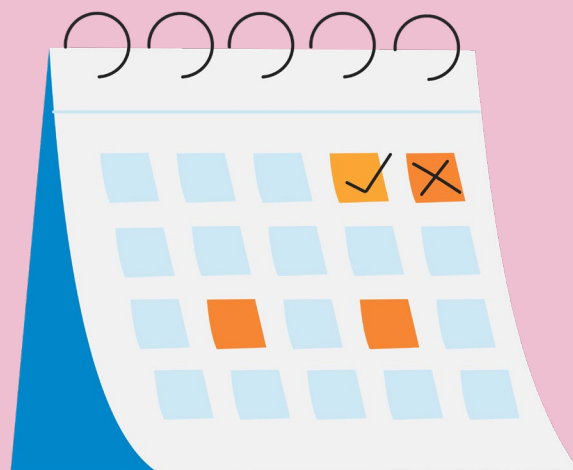
This document provides an overview of gender-responsive family policies (GRFPs) across 21 countries and territories* in the Europe and Central Asia region.

Scroll through to see the policies and key stats:



Maternity Leave

- All **21 countries and territories** have legal provisions for maternity leave, including for adoptive mothers.
- Duration ranges from **16 weeks** (Serbia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan) to **52 weeks** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*).
*UNSCR 1244
- Only **9 countries** offer 100% of previous earnings during maternity leave.



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Paternity Leave

- Paternity leave is available in **18 countries and territories**, but only **13** offer paid leave.
- Duration for paid leave in the 13 countries and territories ranges from **2 to 14 working days**.
- Full earnings during paternity leave are provided in only **10 countries and territories**.



Scroll through to see the policies and key stats:



Parental Leave

- Legal provisions exist in all **21 countries and territories*** allowing either parent to take leave after their maternity or paternity entitlement expires.

*Except Republika Srpska and Brčko District in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Only **3 countries** offer 100% of previous earnings during parental leave, leading to it being underutilized, especially by fathers, and reinforcing traditional gender roles.

- However, it is available to both men and women in only **18 countries and territories** and reserved for women in **3** (North Macedonia, Türkiye and Tajikistan).

- Parents in same-sex relationships, adoptive parents, and self-employed workers are often **denied or restricted** from parental leave and related benefits.



Scroll through to see the policies and key stats:



Carer's Leave

- Carer's leave lets an employee take time off to give or arrange care for a dependant (beyond children) with an illness, injury, disability or needs relating to old age.
- Paid carer's leave is available in only **6 countries**.
- In **9 other countries**, unpaid leave is an option for family care.



Scroll through to see the policies and key stats:



Flexible Working Arrangements

- Part-time or home-based work is allowed in **14 countries and territories**.
- Flexible working schedules are available in **7 countries**.
- Even when available, flexible working arrangements might be limited to parents or offered only under specific circumstances, **excluding** other employees who might benefit.

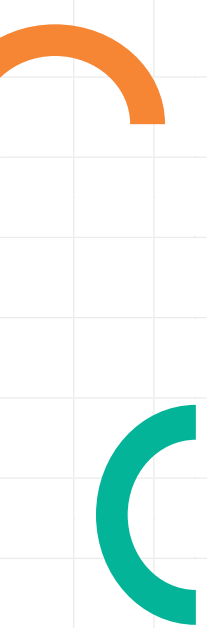


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Early Childhood Education and Care

- Childcare is often insufficient, with only **11 out of 21 countries and territories** presenting a national childcare system for children aged 0-2 years. In all other cases, options to access affordable, high-quality childcare are limited.
- **Fourteen out of 21 countries and territories** have a childcare policy gap, where neither paid parental leave nor statutory childcare is available. The largest gap lasts over **5.5 years**. This contributes to keeping women out of the workforce, as more often than not, they are left to fill the gap.
- Pre-primary education is available in **19 countries and territories** but may be part-time or costly for parents.



Scroll through to see the policies and key stats:



Breastfeeding Breaks

- Paid breastfeeding breaks are available in all **21 countries and territories**, but breastfeeding facilities are largely unavailable.
- Breastfeeding breaks range from **30 minutes every 3 hours** to **120 minutes per day** and can be taken until the child is **9 months old** (Hungary) to **3 years old** (Republic of Moldova).




Scroll through to see the policies and key stats:





Family and Child Benefits & Sick Leave

- Social transfer programmes, which provide birth grants, child allowances and other benefits for families needing extra support, are common but generally modest in scope.
- **All countries and territories** provide paid sick leave, but compensation levels vary.





While gender-responsive family policies exist in the region, they often fall short of providing the comprehensive support needed for women to pursue both career and family aspirations. This shortfall reinforces traditional gender norms and roles, limiting women's economic opportunities and perpetuating gender inequalities. Moreover, the absence of effective GRFPs costs societies both financially—due to reduced workforce participation and productivity—and socially, by undermining demographic resilience, inclusivity and prosperity.



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