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Which Countries in Europe Offer the Fairest Paid Leave and Unemployment Benefits?



LlewellynConsulting
Independent Economics

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Foreword

The social safety net is an integral part of today's labour market. Unemployment benefits take the rough edges off the business cycle, and paid maternity leave has been shown to improve children's wellbeing for decades down the road.¹

Although popular, workplace social benefits remain controversial. Programs typically aim at three goals: Providing help to workers in need, preserving work incentives, and keeping costs under control. Economists teach these goals are fundamentally in conflict—the so-called “iron triangle” of social welfare programs. More of one goal implies less of the others, requiring hard trade-offs when designing programs.

This report from Glassdoor Economic Research, conducted by Llewellyn Consulting, provides an eye-opening tour of workplace benefits in Europe. We compare the generosity of social benefits in five key areas: Unemployment benefits, paid maternity and paternity leave; general parental leave; paid holiday allowances; and paid sick leave.

Workplace social programs in Europe are generally far more generous than in the U.S. Yet even within Europe benefits vary dramatically. Ireland, Switzerland, and the U.K. offer only modest benefits while Denmark, France, and Spain offer some of the most generous workplace benefits in the world.

Europe in many ways is an experimental laboratory for workplace policies. What can we learn from Europe's vast experience about what works—and what doesn't—in workplace social benefits?

Our mission at Glassdoor is to help people find a job and company that they love. By helping job seekers, employers and policy makers better understand the workplace social safety nets available throughout Europe, we hope this report contributes to that goal.

Dr. Andrew Chamberlain
Chief Economist
Glassdoor

Overview

- 1 | Governments play an important role in providing a safety net for those who are unable to work, and in deciding what benefits and income support people are entitled to.
- 2 | This study summarises which countries in Europe offer what social provisions (paid leave and unemployment benefits), and shows which are most generous. Although few job seekers will choose which country they work in based on social policy alone, this study serves as a benchmark for comparing how different governments look after their workforce.
- 3 | The analysis spans 15 countries and examines five social policies: maternity and paternity leave; general parental leave; paid holiday allowance; paid sick leave; and unemployment benefits. The United States (U.S.) is taken as a benchmark.

¹ See for example, Pedro Carneiro, Katrine V. Løken, and Kjell G. Salvanes (2011) “A Flying Start? Maternity Leave Benefits and Long Run Outcomes of Children,” IZA Discussion Paper No. 5793, available at <http://ftp.iza.org/dp5793.pdf>.

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Key Findings

- Social policy across Europe is generally far more generous than in the U.S. There is, however, considerable variation across the region. Denmark, France, and Spain are the most generous; Ireland, Switzerland, and the UK are the least generous.
- **Maternity Leave:**
Maternity leave in all EU countries has to amount to a minimum of 14 weeks, but the time and pay offered in each country differs considerably. The UK offers the longest time at 52 weeks (1 year), 39 weeks of which are paid at 90 percent of previous earnings for the first 6 weeks and the remainder at up to £140 a week. The UK is followed by Ireland at 42 weeks, 26 of which are paid at a flat rate of €188 per week. Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, France, Austria, and Denmark all offer at or near the statutory 14 weeks at full pay. The U.S. has no mandated paid maternity leave.
- **Paternity Leave:**
Paternity leave is still unregulated by the EU, and entitlements vary dramatically. New fathers in Finland get the most leave by far, with Spain and France the next-most generous. A number of countries — Austria, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland and the U.S. — offer no mandated paternity leave.
- **General Parental Leave:**
General parental leave is regulated in the EU: each parent is entitled to at least 16 weeks of leave. Pay, however, is set by each country. France and Germany offer by far the most time off, although not all of it is paid. Most countries offer less time than France and Germany, but with all of it paid. Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are the most generous in this regard. However, in Ireland, Spain, and the UK, all leave is unpaid and Switzerland offers no leave at all.
- **Paid Holiday:**
Paid holiday entitlement in the EU is set at a minimum of four weeks per year, exclusive of bank holidays, however a number of countries are more generous. Sweden, France, and Denmark offer the most, at 25 working days, or the equivalent of 5 weeks, for a standard Monday to Friday job; the U.S. by contrast has no statutory requirement that employers offer paid vacation at all. The number of paid public holidays is highest in Spain (14), Austria (13), and Italy (12); and lowest in Switzerland (4), the UK (8), and the Netherlands (8).
- **Paid Sick Leave:**
Sick leave and pay are most generous in the Netherlands, where workers can be absent for up to 104 weeks (2 years), while receiving 70 percent of their salary. They are least generous in the UK (28 weeks, paid at a flat rate of around £88 a week); France (26 weeks, paid at 50 percent of earnings); and Ireland (dependent on the specifics of a worker's employment contract). The U.S., once again, has no statutory mandate for paid sick leave.
- **Unemployment Benefits:**
Unemployment benefits (taking both benefits and the eligibility period into account) are greatest in Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands; they are least generous in the UK, Ireland, and Austria.

Key Findings

Figure 1. European Paid Leave and Unemployment Benefits

Indicator	Denmark	France	Spain	Netherlands	Sweden	Finland	Italy	Norway	Austria	Belgium	Germany	U.K.	Switzerland	Ireland	U.S.
Unemployment benefits															
Period covered															
Pay															
Maternity-related entitlements															
Period covered															
Pay															
Paternity-related entitlements															
Period covered															
Pay															
Parental-related entitlements															
Period covered															
Pay															
Annual leave															
Period covered															
Public holidays															
Sick pay															
Period covered															
Pay															
Aggregate score	7.8	7.2	6.4	6.2	5.9	5.8	5.6	5.6	5.4	5.1	4.7	2.9	2.3	2.3	0.3

Most Generous
Second Most Generous
Third Most Generous
Least Generous
Second Least Generous
Third Least Generous
Tied

Notes: Dark green = most generous; medium green = second most generous; light green = third most generous.

Dark red = least generous; lighter red = second least generous; pink = third least generous.

Where scores are tied, i.e. first equal/second equal/last equal, all tied countries are coloured similarly.

Source: Llewellyn Consulting

Introduction

A Difficult Balance

As part of the modern approach to economic management, it is commonly accepted in Europe that governments should provide direct income support to people who do not have a job. Nowadays, when unemployment rises, it is considered appropriate that those who lose their jobs should not lose all of their income, but, for a period, be supported by the rest of society and thereby continue to meet their basic expenditure needs.

Government budgets, however, are not limitless and there are many competing demands for resources. This raises difficult questions: who should receive benefits and under what conditions, how much should they receive, and for how long?

Well-designed social policies act as a safety net, helping get people back to work, encouraging self-sufficiency, and providing adequate support for those who are unable to work due to sickness or disability. Leave entitlements for parents during and after child birth, for instance, and the ability to return to one's job afterwards are important not just to ensure that people are not disadvantaged by starting a family, but also for upholding society's values regarding work and family.



Maternity Leave and Benefits

Maternity-related entitlements (for employed women at around the time of childbirth, or adoption in some countries) vary widely in terms of both the time period covered and the pay available. Every EU country, however, along with Switzerland and Norway, offers at least the statutory EU minimum of 14 weeks maternity leave,¹ and must meet the requirements set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention.²

All EU countries have to offer at least 14 weeks maternity leave.

- **The Most Leave:** The UK and Ireland, at 52 and 42 weeks respectively, offer the most time by some considerable margin.
- **The Least Leave:** Germany and Sweden offer the least, at the (minimum) 14 weeks.
- **The Rest:** Italy offers around 22 weeks; Denmark and Finland 18; Austria, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Spain 16. Belgium's entitlement is 15 weeks.

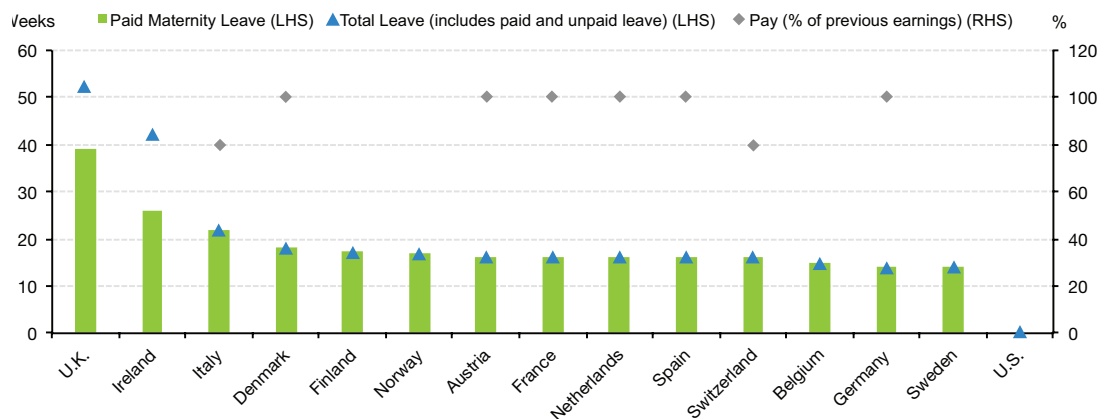
The UK and Ireland offer the most maternity leave by far.

- **The Most Pay:** In Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain new mothers get 100 percent of previous earnings for the whole period of leave.³ Italy covers the full period too, at a still-generous 80 percent of earnings. Switzerland covers 14 out of 16 weeks at 80% of earnings.
- **The Least Pay:** In Ireland, only 26 out of 42 weeks are paid, at a flat rate of €230 per week.
- **The Rest:** In other countries, pay varies over the period of leave. In Belgium, the first four weeks are paid at 82 percent of earnings, falling to 75 percent thereafter. In the UK, 39 of the 52 weeks are paid, the first six weeks at 90 percent of earnings, and the remainder at up to £140-odd per week.

In Sweden and Norway, the maternity-specific monetary allowance is difficult to distinguish from that which is offered to both parents: there is no maternity pay as such, but women can use part of their paid parental leave entitlement. The U.S., in sharp contrast, has no general provision for paid maternity leave. However employed mothers may take advantage of short-term disability benefits offered at the state/federal level and many employers are instituting their own generous programmes to attract and retain employees. Netflix, for example, offers one paid year of maternity and paternity leave to new parents. They also allow parents to return part-time or full-time and take time off as needed throughout the year.

Some countries cover the whole period at full pay, others vary the pay through the period.

Figure 2.
Maternity leave entitlements, selected countries, 2014



Notes: In the UK, the first 6 weeks of leave are paid at 90 percent of earnings, the following 33 have a maximum pay of around £140/week, and the remainder is unpaid. In Ireland, only the first 26 weeks are paid (€230/week). In Finland and Belgium, the compensation rate varies along the period of leave. In Norway and Sweden, maternity is paid together with parental leave. In the U.S. there is no statutory pay.

Source: OECD Family Database, key characteristics of parental systems

Paternity Leave and Benefits

Paternity leave – most often taken in parallel with maternity leave — is not regulated by the EU (and entitlements vary considerably as a result).

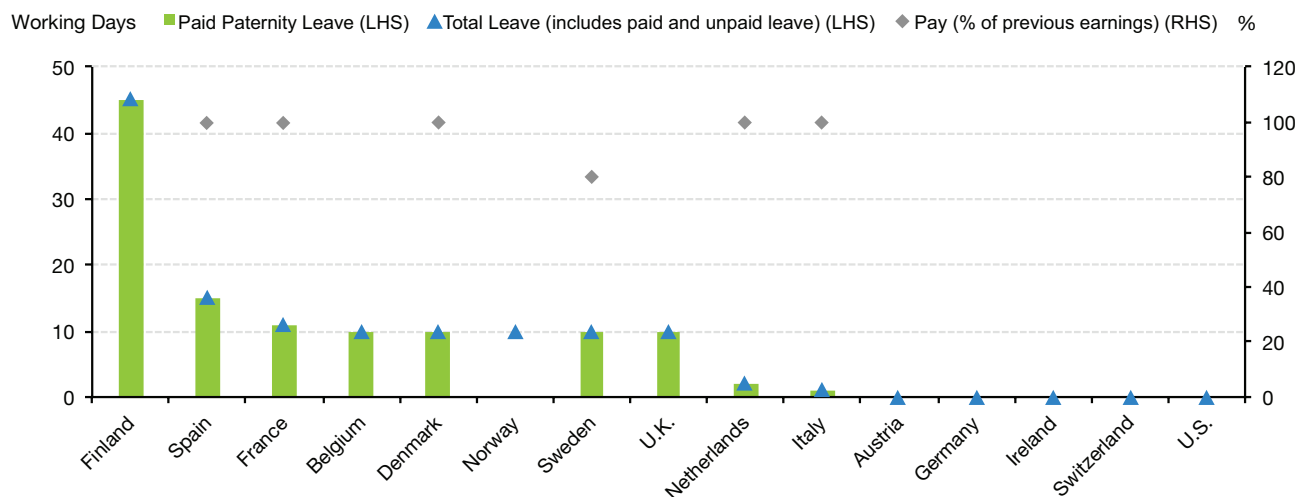
Paternity leave varies considerably between countries.

- **The Most Leave:** Finland offers the most paternity leave by some margin: new fathers get 45 working days off.
- **The Least Leave:** Austria, Germany, Ireland, and Switzerland, like the U.S., have no paternity leave entitlement at all. The Netherlands and Italy offer just two and one days respectively.
- **The Rest:** The next-most-generous entitlements are offered by Spain and France, with 15 and 11 days respectively. Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the UK, each offer 10 days for new fathers.

Finland offers the most paternity days; Austria, Germany, Ireland, Switzerland none at all.

- **The Most Pay:** In Spain, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Italy, the entitlement is 100 percent of earnings for the whole period of leave, although in some cases a ceiling on the total amount that can be paid is applied.
- **The Least Pay:** Norway offers 10 days, but they are unpaid.
- **The Rest:** In Sweden, fathers are covered for the whole period, but at a rate of 80 percent. In other countries, Finland for example, pay varies over the period of leave and is dependent upon the father's income. In Belgium, the first three days are paid at 100 percent of earnings, and the remainder at 82 percent. In the UK, a father is entitled to 90 percent of earnings with a ceiling of around £140 a week.

Figure 3. Paternity leave entitlements, selected countries, 2014



Notes: Finland's paternity leave is 9 weeks, which are assumed to be 45 working days. In Spain (Sweden), fathers can take 15 (10) days, which are assumed to be working days. In Denmark, Norway, and the UK, leave is 2 weeks, which are assumed to be 10 working days.

Source: OECD Family Database, key characteristics of parental systems

General Parental Leave

General parental leave, unlike paternity leave, is regulated. EU legislation⁴ states that each parent has the right to take time off work to care for children up to eight years old for a minimum of four months. The amount paid while on leave, however, is not set in stone by the EU, leaving much scope for countries to lay down rules as they see fit. Countries also differ in the way that the time and monetary allowances are allocated: some allocate on an ‘individual’ basis, others on a ‘family’ basis.

In the EU each parent is entitled to at least 16 weeks of leave. Pay, however, is set by each country.

- **The Most:** France and Germany offer the most time (156 weeks, or 3 years), by a considerable margin. In France, for parents with one child, each parent is entitled to just under €600 per month for six months (26 weeks). For those with two or more children this allowance can be paid until a child is three years old. In Germany, the family is entitled to 67 percent of earnings for 12 months (52 weeks). Austria is the next most generous in terms of time: parents can take up to 104 weeks off, and can choose from among five compensation options.
- **The Least:** Switzerland has no statutory parental leave. Belgium offers 17 weeks to each parent, paying around €800 per month to each of them for the whole period. Ireland and the UK offer 18 weeks of unpaid leave to each parent.
- **The Rest:** In Sweden, parents are entitled to eight and a half weeks of leave, and to 52 additional weeks that can be split between them. Compensation varies depending on the time taken, but is paid at around 78 percent of earnings for the first 56 weeks. Norway (which is outside of the EU) is similarly generous, paying 100 percent of earnings for 46 weeks of leave or 80 percent of earnings for 56 weeks of leave, and offers additional ‘home care’ leave, albeit unpaid.

France and Germany offer the most parental leave by far.

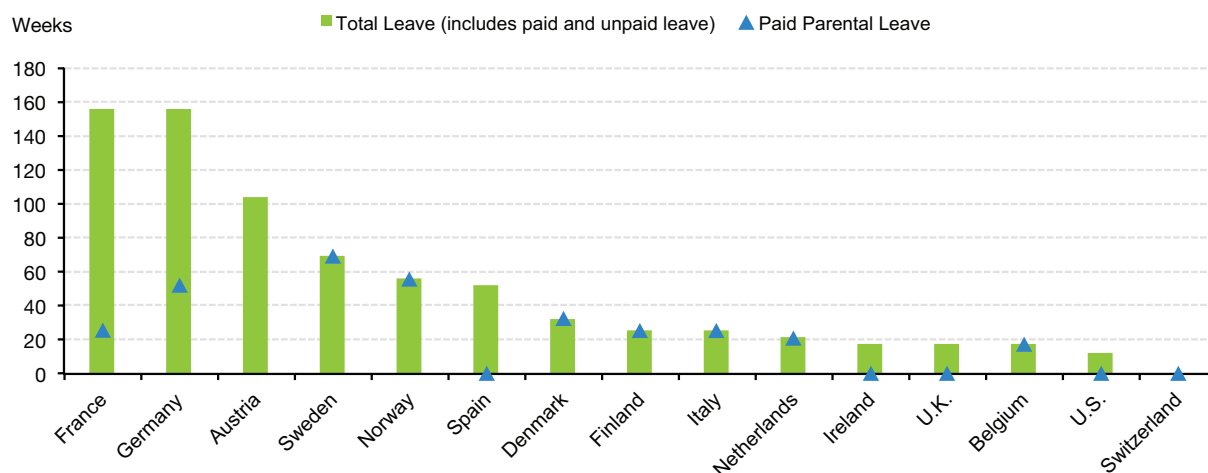
Parental leave in Spain is set at 52 weeks⁵ per parent, can be taken until the child is three years old, but is unpaid. In Denmark, parental leave is less generous, at 32 weeks per parent, but it is paid at 100 percent of earnings (for a max of 32 weeks). In the Netherlands, leave is technically unpaid but parents get tax reductions — leave duration is calculated by multiplying the number of hours each parent works by 26 (for a 40-hour-week, for instance, this amounts to around 22 weeks of leave).

Paid parental leave is most generous in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

In the U.S., parents are entitled to 12 weeks (unpaid) per parent (new birth mothers and fathers as well as new adoptive parents).⁶

General Parental Leave

Figure 4. Parental-leave entitlements, selected countries, as of April 2014



Country	Monetary Allowance, % Previous Income or Actual Amount	Entitlement, Pay and Time Unless Otherwise Stated	Additional Information
France	Flat rate ≈ €600/month for 6 months	Individual	Starts after maternity leave. Can be taken until a child is 3 y/o. If have 2+ children, allowance ≈ €600/month until child is 3 y/o. Each parent can claim payment for max 2.5 years.
Germany	67% of earnings	Family	Payment is for 12 months (ceiling applies).
Austria	Choice of five compensation options	Family	Each parent can postpone up to 3 months of leave to use at a later date.
Sweden	56 weeks at 78% of earnings; 13 weeks at flat rate of €20/day	Family	Payment ceiling applies. 8.5 weeks are reserved for each parent.
Norway	100% (80%) of earnings if parents take 46 (56) weeks in total	Mixed	Payment ceiling applies. Mothers get 3 weeks extra before the birth. Then mother (father) is entitled to 14 (14) weeks. Remaining 18 or 28 weeks are a family entitlement. Additional (unpaid) home care leave available.
Spain	Unpaid	Individual	Until child is 3 y/o. Job is protected for the first year of leave only.
Denmark	100% of earnings	Mixed	Payment ceiling applies. Monetary allowance is for the family.
Finland	Dependent on income level and time taken	Family	Parental leave starts after maternity. 'Home care' leave also available with a basic allowance until the child is 3 y/o.
Italy	30% of earnings	Individual	Total leave per family cannot exceed 43 weeks.
The Netherlands	Unpaid but tax reductions	Individual	Parental leave is calculated by multiplying working hours per week by 26.
Ireland	Unpaid	Individual	N/A
U.K.	Unpaid	Individual	N/A
Belgium	Flat rate ≈ €800/month	Individual	N/A
U.S.	Unpaid	Individual	Max 4 consecutive weeks per calendar year.
Switzerland	N/A	N/A	No statutory leave.

Notes: Individual = each parent receives a monetary allowance. Family = monetary and/or time allowance for both the parents. Mixed = Part of the time entitlement is offered to each parent, another part is for both parents.

Source: OECD Family Database, key characteristics of parental systems

Paid Holiday: Annual Leave & Public Holidays

Paid holiday entitlement in the EU is set at a minimum of four weeks per year, exclusive of bank holidays. Member countries, however, can and do offer more generous holiday allowances.

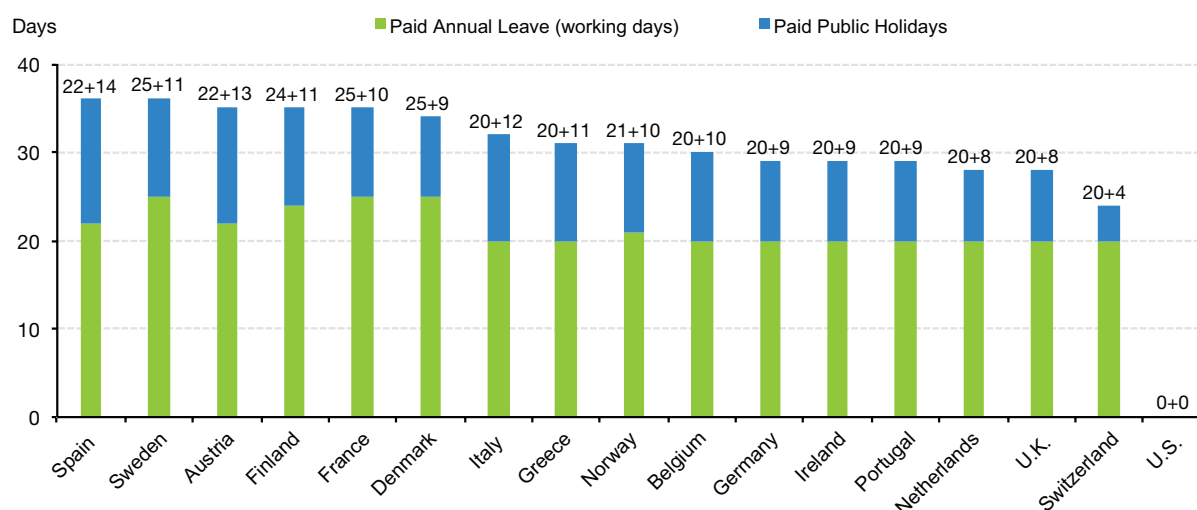
- **The Most Annual Leave:** For a standard Monday-to-Friday job, entitlements are most generous in Sweden, France, and Denmark, with 25 working days, or 5 weeks, a year.⁷ Statutory holidays in Finland are only slightly less⁸, at 24 days; in Spain and Austria, 22; and in Norway, 21.⁹
- **The Least Annual Leave:** Italy, Greece, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, the Netherlands, and the UK (along with Switzerland)¹⁰ all provide the minimum 20 days.

The U.S. operates slightly differently: there is no statutory annual leave entitlement — the number of days is left as part of the compensation package negotiated between the employer and employee. The average entitlement for workers in the U.S. is 10 days.¹¹ Some tech companies in the U.S., such as LinkedIn, Evernote, Zynga and indeed Glassdoor ourselves, offer unlimited personal time off as a perk for employees.

- **The Most Public Holidays:** Workers are entitled to 14 paid public holidays in Spain; 13 in Austria; and 12 in Italy; there are 11 in Sweden, Finland, and Greece; and 10 in France and Belgium and Norway.
- **The Least Public Holidays:** In Switzerland, the number varies widely across cantons (regions), but there are four days that are common to all regions. The UK and the Netherlands each provide eight as standard. In the U.S. there is no legal minimum for paid holidays, although many employers offer some or all of their employees this benefit. The average is six days per year.
- **The Rest:** Denmark, Ireland, and Portugal offer only nine. In Germany, workers also get nine, although some states (Bundesland) receive up to 12.

In Spain people get 36 days of paid holiday a year, in the UK they get 28.

Figure 5. Total paid annual leave (statutory minimum leave plus public holidays)



Notes: Statutory minimum leave is normalised in accordance to a five-day-working week. Paid public holidays exclude those that fall on Sundays, but include those that fall on Saturdays. In the U.S., there is no legal requirement for private businesses to grant paid holidays to their employees.

Source(s): International Labour Organisation, Conditions of work and employment programme (2012); Eures, Living and working conditions; and Ray, Rebecca; Schmitt, John. "No-vacation nation USA — in OECD countries" (PDF). European Economic and Employment Policy Brief (No. 3 -- 2007).

Sick Pay and Leave

Sick pay and sick leave vary enormously from country to country. Countries also apply payment ceilings, or limits.

- **The Most:** Paid sick leave is most generous in the Netherlands: workers who are ill can be absent for up to 104 weeks, and receive 70 percent of their salary for the whole period. In Germany workers can be absent for up to 78 weeks, and receive 100 percent of earnings in the first 6 weeks, and 70 percent thereafter. In Norway and Denmark, the entitlement is for 100 percent of earnings for up to 52 weeks.
- **The Least:** The allowance in the UK is 28 weeks, paid at a flat rate of around £88 a week. In Switzerland, labour law stipulates that employers have to continue paying workers who are absent from work because of illness for at least three weeks.¹² In Ireland, sickness allowance depends on the specific contract of employment. The U.S. has no statutory allowance.
- **The Rest:** In Sweden, Spain, Belgium and Austria, workers can be absent for up to 52 weeks, with pay ranging from 50 percent to 100 percent of earnings. In France it is 26 weeks at 50 percent of earnings.

Paid sick leave is most generous in the Netherlands, and least generous in the UK.

Unemployment Benefits

Like most areas of social policy, unemployment benefit systems across countries vary widely, making it challenging to compare countries. The amount paid and the time period covered can depend on factors such as how long someone has been working, whether he or she has dependents, and even on age.

Although unemployment benefits vary, they tend to be quite generous across Europe, certainly when compared with the United States.

- **The Most:** Denmark offers 90 percent of previous earnings, for up to 104 weeks.¹³ Belgium is also generous. An unemployed person with no dependants is entitled to 65 percent of their prior earnings for the first 13 weeks, after which the rate drops over time.
- **The Least:** The UK offers a flat rate of €66 or €84¹⁴ per week, for up to 26 weeks. Ireland too is one of the least generous, providing a flat-rate of €188 per week for between 22 and 33 weeks, depending on contributions. As a benchmark, the U.S. offers between 40 percent and 50 percent of earnings for up to 26 weeks, depending on the individual state.
- **The Rest:** The Netherlands has a higher initial allowance of 75 percent of earnings, but only for the first nine weeks, after which it falls. France offers 60 percent to 75 percent of earnings for 16 to 52 weeks.

Unemployment benefits across Europe tend to be quite generous.

Denmark is one of the most generous countries, Ireland and the UK the least.

The entitlement in Germany is 60 percent of earnings for at least 26 weeks. In Switzerland, benefits are paid daily, five times a week at 70 percent of earnings, for a minimum of 18 weeks and a maximum of 104, depending on contributions. Many countries apply a payment ceiling.

Taking It All Together

On the basis of the wide range of measures considered above, the European countries that provide the most generous overall labour market social benefits are Denmark, France, and Spain. These countries offer the most maternity pay, paternity pay, annual leave and sick pay.

Ireland, Switzerland, and the UK are at the other end of the spectrum, and are closely followed, perhaps unsurprisingly, by the U.S., reflecting a quite different philosophy. (Figure 1).

Providing workplace entitlements is a complex responsibility for governments. Getting social policy wrong for too long can encourage dependency, reduced labour force participation, and hamper the economy's ability to grow and respond to new challenges. On the other hand, ensuring fairness in the labour market requires some degree of regulation by governments. It is a complex area, and striking the balance right is never easy.

Footnotes

¹ Parental leave, or family leave, is an employee benefit that provides time off work to care for a child. Under EU legislation (Directive 92/85/EEC), all EU countries must ensure that "maternity leave must be for an uninterrupted period of at least 14 weeks before and/or after delivery (at least two weeks before delivery)." There is already a proposal in the European Commission that, if approved, will stipulate maternity leave be at least 18 weeks.

² The ILO convention on maternity leave stipulates that: women should have at least 14 weeks of leave, receive a cash benefit no less than 2/3 of their previous income or a comparable amount, and be protected from dismissal while pregnant or on maternity leave.

³ With payment ceilings: Denmark, DKK 4,075/week; France, €3,129/month; The Netherlands €197/day; Spain, €3,597/month

⁴ EU law (Directive 2010/18/EU) sets out minimum requirements on parental leave and time off from work on grounds of force majeure. Under this Directive, each worker is entitled to parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child, enabling him or her to take care of the child for at least four months.

⁵ Although the period can be extended until the child is three years old. After the first 52 weeks of leave, however, job protection is restricted to a job of the same category.

⁶ This study is based on the [OCED Family Database](#) classifications of all parental leave policies. The U.S. parental leave policy is under the [Family and Medical Leave Act](#), which also allows unpaid leave for reasons other than child birth, such as caring for sick non-infant children, spouses or elderly parents, and therefore is classified as "general parental leave" rather than "maternity leave" or "paternity leave."

⁷ In Sweden, workers over 60 years old are entitled to an additional six working days of leave each year. In France, Saturdays are considered working days. Plus, French workers are entitled to up to 22 days if they work more than 35 hours per week, up to a maximum of 39. In Denmark, workers are entitled to five weeks paid leave. Employees who have been employed for less than a whole calendar year, 'earn' paid holiday at a rate of 2.08 days per month worked.

⁸ In Finland, workers 'earn' paid holiday at a rate of 2 days per month worked, and 2.5 days per month after working a full year. Saturday counts as a working day. In Spain and Austria, annual leave is 30 calendar days, and Saturday is considered a working day. In Austria, after the 26th year of employment, paid annual leave increases to 36 calendar days.

⁹ In Norway, annual leave is 25 working days, but Saturdays are considered working days, even if the employee does not regularly work on that day.

¹⁰ In Switzerland, workers over 50 years old are entitled to 25 days of holiday.

¹¹ <http://cepr.net/documents/no-vacation-update-2014-04.pdf>

¹² During the first year of service, sick leave is three weeks. Any subsequent longer period is fixed on an 'equitable' basis.

¹³ Subject to a ceiling, and the individual having joined and paid certain insurances/State contributions.

¹⁴ Amount depends on the person's age.

© Glassdoor 2016

100 Shoreline Hwy,
Mill Valley, CA 94941

Web: glassdoor.com/research

Email: economics@glassdoor.com

Figure 6. Statutory sick pay and time allowance, selected countries

Country	Statutory Sick Pay, % of Wages or Actual Amount	Period Covered	Additional Information
The Netherlands	70%	Up to 104 weeks	Employers obliged to cover at least 70% of salary for the first 2 years of sickness, but not for longer than the employment contract's duration. Sickness allowance subject to ceiling ≈ €200 per day.
Germany	100%, then 70%	Up to 78 weeks	Salary paid by employer for first 6 weeks of sickness (provided employee has worked there for at least 4 consecutive weeks). Then the state pays 70% of salary for up to 78 weeks over a 3-year period. Extension possible.
Norway	100%	Up to 52 weeks	First 16 days covered by employer, and by the National Insurance Scheme thereafter. Benefit has a ceiling when paid by the public sector.
Denmark	100%	Up to 52 weeks	Employees continue to receive sickness allowance for up to 52 weeks over an 18-month period. In special cases, benefits can be extended by up to 26 weeks. Benefit paid weekly. Ceiling of ≈ €500/pw applies.
Sweden	78%	Up to 52 weeks	Paid by the employer from the 2nd to the 14th day of sickness. Thereafter, benefit paid by the state. The 52 weeks have to be taken within a 15 month period. Extension of around 1.5 years (550 days) paid at 75% of earnings can be offered (payment ceiling applies).
Spain	60%, then 75%	Up to 52 weeks	Paid by the employer from 4th to 15th sick day. Thereafter, covered by the State for up to 12 months, at 60% of earnings until 20th day; 75% thereafter. May be extended for further 180 days with physician certificate. Eligibility: only those who have paid social security contributions for 180 days in the previous 5 years.
Belgium	Varies	Up to 52 weeks	First pay covered by employer (White-collar workers at 100% earnings for up to 1 month; Blue-collar at 100% earnings for the first 7 days and 60% thereafter). Thereafter that, the State pays 60% of earnings for up to 1 year, subject to a ceiling of ≈ €130 per day.
Austria	50%, and then 60%	Up to 52 weeks	Usually paid from the 4th day until the 42nd day of absence, and 60% onwards.
Finland	100%	Up to 43 weeks	First day of sickness is not covered. Employer pays for the first 9 days provided the employee has worked for at least 1 month (otherwise entitlement is for 50% earnings). From the 10th day, benefit is received from the State for up to 300 days over a 2-year period.
U.K.	£88.45 per week	Up to 28 weeks	Paid from the 3rd day of sickness. After the 28th week, employees are entitled to claim Employment and Support Allowance of £50-70 pw.
Italy	50%, and then 67%	Up to 26 weeks	The 26 weeks can be taken within an 18-month period. Paid from the 4th day of sickness by employer (who gets deductions in insurance contributions). Increases to 67% of earnings from the 21st day of sickness.
France	50%	Up to 26 weeks	Paid from the 4th day of absence from work. Subject to a ceiling on (daily) earnings. The 26 weeks can be taken within a 3-year-period and for the same illness.
Switzerland	100%	At least 3 weeks	Employers pay for 3 weeks in first year of sickness. Any subsequent period is fixed on an "equitable" basis. Pay and period dependent on job tenure, collective agreements, and insurance. Special rules apply to the unemployed.
Ireland	Specific to contract	Specific to contract	It is common for employees to be paid 100% of earnings for around 13 weeks and 50% for the next 13 weeks. If no sick pay is received, insured employees are entitled to Illness Benefit provided by Irish social insurance.
U.S.	Specific to state	N/A	Only three states (California, Connecticut, and Massachusetts) and 16 cities have passed legislation on paid sick leave.

Source: Eures Web Portal (European Commission; Rho, Schmitt, Earle, and Heymann (2009), *A Review of Sickness-related leave in 22 High Human Development Index Countries*, CEPR

Figure 7. Unemployment benefits, selected countries

Country	Unemployment Benefits, % of Previous Earnings or Actual Amount	Period Covered	Additional Information
Belgium	65%; then 60%; then 55%; and €36/day thereafter	Unlimited	Ceiling on payment applies. Benefits decrease to 60% of earnings after 13 weeks of absence; to 55% after the following 39 weeks; and to €36/day after 104 weeks. Provided the employee has worked a minimum number of days (between 312 and 624) during previous (12-24) months
The Netherlands	75%; then 70%	Between 9 and 164 weeks	Benefit is 70% after 9 weeks of absence. Period covered employee contributions made to the Social Security System. Ceiling on payment applies. Allowance based on daily wage.
France	Between 57% and 75%	Between 16 and 156 weeks	The daily allowance is composed of a fixed part and of a variable part = 40% of the reference wage. Period covered dependent on employee contributions to the Social Security System, insurance and age.
Denmark	90%	Up to 104 weeks	Ceiling on payments applies. Eligibility subject to joining an unemployment insurance fund and payment of an insurance contribution. Allowance based on daily earnings and paid for five days a week.
Norway	67%	Up to 104 weeks	Ceiling on payment applies. Period covered dependent on earlier income from work.
Germany	60%	Between 26 and 104 weeks	Allowance calculated based on net earnings. Period covered dependent on employee contributions to the Social Security System and age.
Switzerland	70%	Between 18 to 104 weeks	Ceiling on payment applies. Unemployment benefits can be claimed within 2 years, and they are paid in the form of daily allowances 5 times a week. Period covered dependent on employee contributions to the Social Security System made.
Spain	70%; then 60%	Between 17 and 104 weeks	2 types of benefits: contributory unemployment benefits (ceiling on payment applies. Benefit paid at 60% after the 27th week), and special unemployment assistance (non-contributory and paid to job-seekers whose income is less than 75% of the monthly minimum wage). Period covered dependent on employee contributions made to the Social Security System.
Finland	Basic allowance + 45% of the difference between daily wage and basic allowance	Up to 100 weeks	Period covered described as 500 working days. Eligibility subject to being employed for 34 weeks in the last 28 months.
Sweden	Choice of: 80%, then 70%; or €37/day	Up to 60 weeks	Unemployment insurance consists of 2 parts: a voluntary insurance (paid at 80%; then 70% after 40 weeks; financed by contributions and fees); and a basic insurance (covering those not voluntarily insured with a flat-rate benefit of €37/day). The compensation is paid for 5 days a week.
Italy	75% + 25% (difference between wage and ceiling); then 60%; then 45%	Up to 52 weeks or 78 weeks	Regulation as of Jan 2016. Period covered dependent on age (52 weeks max if aged under 55; 78 weeks if aged 55 and over). Paid at 60% after 26 weeks; at 45% after 52 weeks. Provided worker has been insured with the National Institute for Social Security for at least 104 weeks and has accumulated at least 52 weeks of contributions in the 2 years prior to dismissal.
Austria	55%	Between 20 and 52 weeks	Provided the employee has contributed to unemployment insurance for at least 52 weeks in the past 24 months (26 weeks in the past 12 months if aged below 25). Period covered dependent on period of insurance and age. Allowance based on daily net wage.
Ireland	€188 per week	Between 22 and 33 weeks	Period covered dependent on employee contributions made to the Social Security System.
U.K.	€66 or €84	Up to 26 weeks	Allowance dependent on age.
U.S.	40% to 50%	Up to 26 weeks	Benefits paid for a max of 26 weeks in most States. Amount paid and period covered determined by State law. Eligibility subject to meeting requirements of State law. Additional weeks of benefits may be available during times of high unemployment.

Notes: Entitlements as of July 2013, for single unemployed people with no dependents.

Source: Eures (European Commission)