



**Resolution 1939 (2013)<sup>1</sup>**

Final version

## Parental leave as a way to foster gender equality

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Parental leave, which is leave granted to parents, irrespective of their gender, for the care of a child, represents one of the pillars of policies for the reconciliation of professional and private life, as well as a tool to foster gender equality within families, at work and in society at large. It also responds to the need increasingly expressed by men to have more time to take care of newborn, young or newly adopted children, corresponding to a trend already visible in society, moving towards overcoming the traditional view of women as caregivers and men exclusively as breadwinners.

2. The Parliamentary Assembly welcomes the introduction in recent years of some form of parental leave in almost all Council of Europe member States. However, the Assembly notes, on the one hand, the great disparity between different systems and, on the other hand, the limited use of parental leave in practice. It therefore proposes measures aimed at reviewing the current systems by introducing elements to promote the take-up of parental leave by fathers and at co-ordinating parental leave with other policies.

3. In the light of these considerations, and recalling its [Resolution 1921 \(2013\)](#) on gender equality, reconciliation of private and working life and co-responsibility, the Assembly calls on Council of Europe member States to:

3.1. introduce parental leave schemes enabling parents, irrespective of their sex, to look after their children on an equal footing. These systems should satisfy the following criteria:

3.1.1. they should reserve a part of the leave for fathers, which cannot be transferred to the other parent and is lost if it is not used, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and provide a system of bonuses for cases where both parents take parental leave, as a way of creating an incentive for the take-up of parental leave by fathers;

3.1.2. they should be flexible, with the possibility for parents to take the leave in one block or to break it up and to combine it with full-time or part-time work;

3.1.3. they should be available to all workers irrespective of their type of contract (including those on fixed-term, part-time or temporary work contracts) and of employers (whether public or private and irrespective of the size of the entity);

3.2. mobilise sufficient resources to support the implementation of parental leave schemes through financial incentives, information and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at the general public and promotional measures encouraging men in particular to use their leave entitlement;

3.3. incorporate parental leave in a framework of policies, in particular adequate early childhood education and care policies, allowing both parents to reconcile private and working life according to flexible arrangements corresponding to their specific wishes and requirements.

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1. *Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 31 May 2013 (see [Doc. 13207](#), report of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, rapporteur: Mr Rigoni; and [Doc. 13208](#), opinion of the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development, rapporteur: Ms Ohlsson).*



4. In the long run, the Assembly encourages Council of Europe member States to replace the various types of leave currently available (maternity, paternity, parental, childcare leave) with a single parental leave, available to both parents and to be shared equally.
5. Convinced that social partners – employers' and workers' organisations – have an important role to play in the implementation of parental leave schemes, the Assembly encourages them to overcome obstacles in order to create a workplace culture that facilitates the take-up of parental leave, especially among male workers, and the reintegration of both women and men into the labour market by offering them flexible employment and childcare schemes once parental leave has ended.
6. The Assembly calls in particular on employers and their organisations to guarantee that parents can enjoy their entitlement to parental leave irrespective of their gender, without any negative consequences for their career prospects and professional development.