



Resolution 1274 (2002)¹

Parental leave

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Parental leave was first introduced in Europe more than a century ago as a key element of social and employment policies for women in work at the time of childbirth. Its purpose was to protect the health of mothers and to enable them to look after their children.
2. Parental leave has since been adapted to meet the needs not only of women but also of men who wish to balance work and family life and ensure their children's well-being.
3. The issue of parental leave is closely linked to that of the role of men in family life, since it permits a genuine partnership in the sharing of responsibilities between women and men in both the private and the public sphere.
4. The Assembly observes that parental leave legislation, to be effective, must be correctly and systematically implemented and backed by measures to create an environment conducive to such leave.
5. In this regard, the Assembly refers to Committee of Ministers Recommendation R (94) 14, which aimed to encourage governments of member states to "support the implementation of coherent and integrated family policies" and laid down as a basic principle that "the family must be a place where equality, including legal equality, (...) is especially promoted by sharing responsibility for running the home and looking after children, and, more specifically, by ensuring that mother and father take turns and complement each other in carrying out their respective roles".
6. It also refers to its [Resolution 1018 \(1994\)](#) on equality of rights between men and women, in which it invited member states to introduce into their legislation the principle of parental leave and the concept of paid leave for one of the parents for the purpose of looking after their children.
7. However, it is disappointed to note that, despite all that has been done, parental leave is not applied equally in all member states and motherhood is still an obstacle to women's careers in many countries.
8. The Assembly therefore urges the governments of member states:
 - to take the necessary steps to ensure that their legislation recognises different types of family structures, if they have not already done so, and, accordingly, to introduce the principle of paid parental leave including adoption leave;*
 - to set up suitable structures for the implementation of parental leave, including adoption leave;*
 - to enact laws encouraging parental responsibility, by means, in particular, of part-time work and flexible working time;*
 - to take the necessary steps to assist parents to return to employment after a period of parental leave;*
 - to launch campaigns to raise awareness among trade unions, social partners and, especially, employers about the need for systems of help with childcare;*
 - to investigate possibilities of home-based jobs;*

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 26 March 2002 (see [Doc. 9315](#), report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, rapporteur: Mrs Zwerver).



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to consider as a basic necessity the creation of childcare centres.