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NEWS REPORT

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| Country: | The Netherlands |
| Title: | Bill to extend paid birth leave for the mother's partner (father) submitted to Parliament |
| Date: | 22 December 2016 |
| Expert: | Marlies Vegter |
| <u>Context</u> | |
| Issue at stake: | Extension of birth leave for fathers |
| Ground of discrimination: | Sex |
| Source: | Policy development |
| Field: | Parental leave |
| Applicable law: | Article 4(2) Employment and Care Act |

Content

Policy development: On 25 November 2016, the government submitted a bill to Parliament that aims to extend the paid birth leave for fathers from two to five days. At present fathers are entitled to two days of paid birth leave. If the bill is adopted, they will receive three more days. Not only fathers are entitled to the extended leave, but all partners of the mother, i.e. a person the mother is married to, a registered partner, one she has been living together with unmarried on an ongoing basis and one who has acknowledged the child. The purpose of the extended paid leave is to strengthen the bond between the partner/father and the child. The three extra days will be paid out of the collective funds. The partner/father can apply, through his employer, for an allowance during these days. Only employees are entitled to the leave.

The three extra days would be granted as of 1 January 2019, as the administrative process behind the payment is rather complex. Due to this complexity, the Social Economic Council and the Council of State opposed the bill. However, the government persisted and submitted the bill to Parliament.

Key points of analysis: The birth leave of two days was introduced on 1 January 2002. The reason behind the wish to extend the leave is the hope that it will contribute to a better division of tasks between men and women and in that way create a better work-life balance for both. Until now, women still perform most of the tasks at home and invest more time in taking care of the children than men do. In interviews, fathers state that they are willing to work less and spend more time with their children but they point out that the family income would become too low if they did and that their employer is not in favour of part-time work. The idea behind the bill is that when fathers are more involved in the care for their child from the beginning, they might continue to do so in later years. Whether an extension of paid birth leave with three days will have such a big effect is doubtful. For that reason, the government wishes to take further steps to improve the work-life balance. However, it first wants to receive advice on the topic from the Social Economic Council.

Internet link source:

<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/kamerstukken/2016/11/25/wetsvoorstel-uitbreiding-kraamverlof-inclusief-memorie-van-toelichting>, accessed 20 December 2016.