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NEWS REPORT

Country:	Sweden
Title:	Government White Paper, restriction of parental leave benefit for parents coming to Sweden with older children
Date:	24 February 2017
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<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Legislative changes to reduce the period of parental leave for parents coming to Sweden with older children
Ground of discrimination	Sex
Source:	Government White Paper (SOU) 2016:73
Field:	Parental leave
Applicable law:	Social Insurance Code (2010:110)

Content

Case/law/policy development: In February 2016, the Government appointed an inquiry chair to make an overhaul of the parental benefit scheme and to propose changes for increased gender balance. The Inquiry is to deliver its report in late 2017. One specific part of the remit was to be reported back earlier; an analysis and a proposal of measures to restrict the use of parental benefit for parents coming to Sweden with older children. This flash report regards the Inquiry's report on that specific matter, Government White Paper (SOU) 2016:73.

Restricting the use of parental leave benefit for persons arriving in Sweden with older children is one of many actions aiming to speed up the establishment in the Swedish labour market of newly arrived persons. Today, parents who move to Sweden with older children are normally eligible for a full period of parental benefit, i.e. the same amount of days that are awarded in connection with a child's birth (480 days). This overcompensation in relation to the needs of parents with older children leads to the postponing of parents to search for jobs, education or take up other activities designed to promote labour market participation. Postponed entry to the labour market as a result of long periods of parental leave, is particularly significant for women. The inquiry chair reports that prolonged and intensive use of parental benefit during the years following arrival in Sweden is most prominent among women who came to Sweden with children from countries outside the EU/Nordic region, and who subsequently went on to have more children in Sweden.

The inquiry chair suggests a reduction of the number of days for which parental leave benefit is paid to a parent coming to Sweden with an older child; if the child is above one year of age or above two years of age, respectively, the parental leave benefit will be reduced to roughly correspond to the number of days used by the average parent after the child's first or second birthday. Thus, if a child becomes a resident of Sweden during the second year of his/her life, parental benefit for the parents should be provided for a maximum of 200 days. If the child instead becomes a resident of Sweden after the

second year of life, the maximum is 100 days. The suggested changes do not affect persons covered by EU social security coordination, nor parents who temporarily move away from Sweden and who are still considered to be residents of Sweden as defined in the Social Insurance Code.

The inquiry chair expects the proposal to speed up the process of establishment on the labour market primarily for women, increase financial independence for women in the short and long term, and thereby contribute to the promotion of gender equality. The inquiry chair underlines that the proposal to restrict parental benefit is based on the assumption that parental leave awarded to parents coming to Sweden with children should be shared equally between the parents.

Internet link source:

http://www.regeringen.se/4aabda/contentassets/f40edaa4a3424459bfcc6b66c8916fe1/begransningar-i-foraldrapenningen-for-foraldrar-som-kommer-till-sverige-med-barn-sou-2016_73.pdf

Summary in English