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FLASH REPORT

Country:	Malta
Title:	COVID-19 benefits for parents
Date:	08 June 2020
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<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	With the closure of all schools and child-care centres during the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents were forced to stay at home in order to look after their children. The Government set up a Parent Benefit for parents employed in the private sector of Malta, with children under 16 years of age, who were not able to work from home and who due to the impact of COVID-19, after 8 March 2020 could not go to work to take care of their children
Grounds of discrimination:	Gender
Field of application:	Employment, Social security
Source:	Policy development

Content

Policy development: After schools were shut down on 8 March 2020, as a measure to combat the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic, parents of children who were under 16 and who could not go to work in order to take care of children were entitled to a benefit. Persons who were eligible received a direct payment of EUR 166.15 per week if working full-time or EUR 103.85 per week if working part-time. Moreover, social security contributions were paid in order to safeguard future contributory pension rights.

Key points of analysis: Both mothers and fathers could apply for this benefit, which enabled one of the parents to stay home to take care of their children due to the closure of schools. Grandparents were considered to be a vulnerable group, and because social distancing rules applied, they could therefore not take care of the stay at home children either. Parents who benefitted from the COVID Parental Benefit, were considered to be on unpaid vacation leave by their employers and therefore no wages/salaries were due by employers. Therefore, this also indirectly helped employers who would have had to pay salaries for workers who were at home at a time when business was at an all time low. It is positive that this was one of the first measures taken, recognising the fact that most parents are in employment and that the particular circumstances had put parents in a very difficult situation. A few years ago it would have been taken for granted that the mother was always at home to take care of the children. This shows that with the increase of the employment rate for women, our society is changing.

Internet link source: <https://socialsecurity.gov.mt/covid19/Documents/INF%20-%20Covid19ParentBenefitEN.pdf>