



## European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

### FLASH REPORT

<b>Country:</b>	Finland
<b>Title:</b>	Reform of family related leave
<b>Date:</b>	6 July 2020
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<b><u>Context</u></b>	
<b>Issue at stake:</b>	Working groups have been nominated to prepare amendments to the Sickness Insurance Act provisions on family related social security, which will impact the Employment Contracts Act
<b>Grounds of discrimination:</b>	Gender
<b>Field of application:</b>	Family leave, Social security
<b>Source:</b>	Policy development

### **Content**

**Policy development:** The current Government's Programme promises that a reform of family related leave is to be carried out. There was an attempt to introduce a reform already by the former Government, which could not carry out the reform due to disagreements on its aims. The present Government promised to introduce a reform under which mothers and fathers will have an equal number of non-transferable months of family related leave, but so that the time that is now available for mothers will not become shorter. Both parents are promised a higher benefit during a part of their leave period. At the moment, the benefit paid to mothers for the first part of the leave is higher. The reform shall fulfil the requirements of EU law on family related leave. The Government Programme thus promises an increase of leave that is covered by income-related benefits. The period available for fathers will be extended. The reform is necessary to fulfil the requirements of the Work-life balance Directive (2019/1158/EU).

There will be no reform of the home care leave and related flat rate benefit, however. The home care leave, which may be taken until a child is three years old, has been considered a trap for women who have difficulties in finding work outside the home, such as women with a low level of education and immigrant women in particular.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health started preparing the reform in fall 2019. A tripartite working group was nominated, and a hearing on the reform took place on 25 February 2020. The reform should be carried out in 2020.

**Key points of analysis:** The reform of the family related leave is long overdue. The use of the right to parental leave is gendered, as mothers in most cases make use of the right to the leave period that is transferable between the parents. It is positive that the non-transferable part of leave is increased, as that may have a positive impact on fathers' willingness to share caring. The overall benefit covered leave period, if both parents use their promised right to leave, should become longer. The aim of the reform should take into account different family forms, and legislation should be formulated in gender-neutral

terms. It was a disappointment to many that the home care leave will remain intact. That leave is in practice taken only by mothers.

**Internet link source:** *(preferably open access references from official sources where available)*

Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government 2019, at 3.5, aim 2 <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/marinin-hallitus/hallitusohjelma/luottamuksen-ja-tasa-arvoisten-tyomarkkinoiden-suomi>.

Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. *Perhevapaa uudistus tähtää molempien vanhempien perhevapaiden käyttöön* (Reform of family related leaves has the aim that both parents use their right to family related leave), <https://stm.fi/perhevapaa uudistus>.