

POLITICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

BRINGING MEN INTO CARE

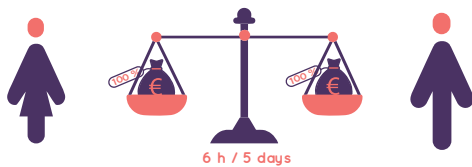
1 All existing **leaves** must be of **equal length for women and men, non-transferable, and fully paid**. EU Directives and national laws should assure gender equality in entitlements



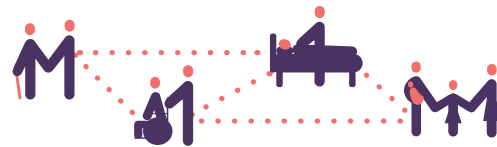
2 A **universal access** to high quality, public-funded and full-day education and care (ECEC) services for the ages 0 to 3 should be provided to prevent a *care gap* between leaves and care services



3 A **shorter fully paid work week** (30-35 hours) for all workers, men and women, will reduce gender gaps in paid work

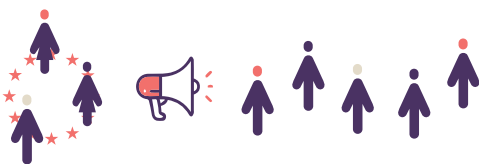


4 The **universal provision of long-term and care services** for elderly and people with disabilities is needed to guarantee work-life balance of carers



5 The EU Work-Life Balance Directive and its **gender impacts** should be regularly **monitored** and evaluated

6 An EU-wide awareness raising **campaign encouraging men** to use work-life balance measures is recommended



7 **Gender equality plans** in companies can be enforced by their introduction **into collective agreements**



1.

EQUAL, NON-TRANSFERABLE, AND FULLY PAID MATERNITY/PATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVES FOR EACH PARENT

The guaranty of a fully paid and non-transferable maternity/paternity/parental leave which is **EQUAL for MEN and WOMEN** is a **necessary condition** to promote an equal uptake of birth and parental leave by women and men.

The leave must be **non-transferable**. The principle of "use it or lose it" works for men across the EU, if the maternity/paternity/parental leave is fully paid.

Currently, **maternity leave** is regulated separately by Directive 92/85/EEC. This leave should be included or considered explicitly in the EU Work-Life Balance Directive to guarantee equal rights for men and women. Currently the entitlement to **paternity leave** is 10 working days (two calendar weeks) while for maternity leave it lasts 14 weeks, so this must be modified **to equal paternity entitlements to maternity entitlements**.

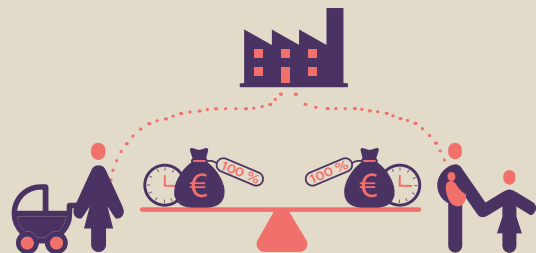
Once men will have the same length of leave as women (which is fully paid and non-transferable), and, thus, equality between men and women is obtained, further extensions such as the two fully paid months of parental leave could be implemented.

In this scenario, the **total length** for each parent should be about **6 months**, including all leaves (paternity, maternity and parental leave, or any other names given in each country). The 14 weeks of paternity and maternity leave, and the two non-transferable parental leave months sum up to 6 months of total length for each parent. For two parents, this will cover the care of any child in the EU over the first year at home.

Full payment is a requirement for most men to use the leave. Therefore 100% payment with a low ceiling would suppose that the leave is not fully paid. If some countries include a ceiling, they must assure that most men (and women) receive their full income while caring for their child.

Fully paid maternity, paternity and parental leave should be taken **within the first year** for shorter leaves (4+4 leaves) and within the first **18 months** of the babies for longer leaves (such as 6+6), once they are implemented. Parents should have the right to use their non-transferable leave in a **flexible way as they decide**. This will encourage men to use leave to learn to care for the child over significant periods of time, and not piecewise over many years.

The EU Directive needs to **include all workers**, also self-employed, home workers and other groups which may have specific Social Security conditions in each country.



2.

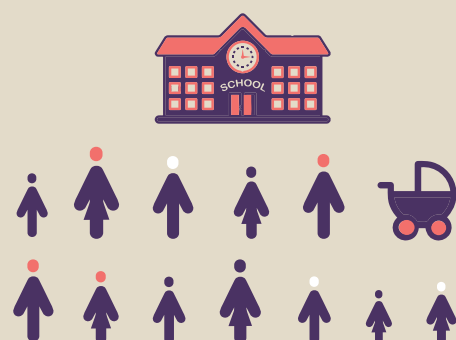
UNIVERSAL PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES (ECEC) FOR AGES FROM 0 TO 3

Once parents finish their paternity/maternity/parental leave, children need to have the right to access affordable, full-day and high-quality ECEC services. That is, any care gap between the maternity/paternity/parental leave and the ECEC service provision should be closed.

Considering the Recommendation by the European Platform for Investing in Children, and the strong gendered relationship between rates of working parents and access to ECEC services, **universal entitlement for children aged 0-3 to high-quality ECEC services** is a necessary condition for parents, also for men, to make full time jobs and care compatible.

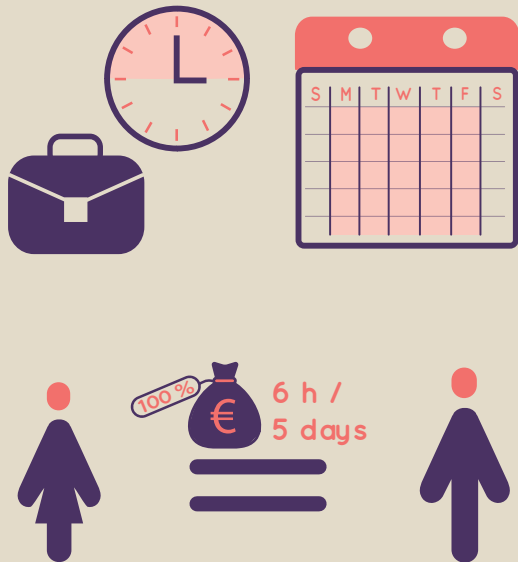
The EU should support this and set objectives to increase significantly 0-3 ECEC coverage rates to approach those in 3-6 ECEC. The Barcelona targets are clearly insufficiently. About **90% of targeted population in 0-3 range**, as in 3-6 ECEC, seems reasonable.

Moreover, the 0-3 ECEC services should be available for enough hours a day and offer flexible schedules, to assure the wellbeing of children and parents with full-time jobs.



3.

A SHORTER FULLY PAID WORK WEEK FOR ALL WORKERS



A progressive change from entitlement to “reduced working hours” for people who care for family members to an entitlement for all employees would **encourage men to participate more in care**, because they would **not lose income**.

In all countries work hours reduction and part-time work for care reasons lead to an important **reduction of wages** and to a **motherhood penalty** over time, because women use these measures nearly exclusively. Weekly paid work hours of mothers with young children show that a 35-hours-week is doable for working parents in EU countries. Men do not usually work part-time or reduce weekly hours for economic provision reasons. A 35-hours-week for all workers without wage loss should be explored further, as in the Norwegian, Icelandic, Slovenian and Austrian examples of the MiC project.

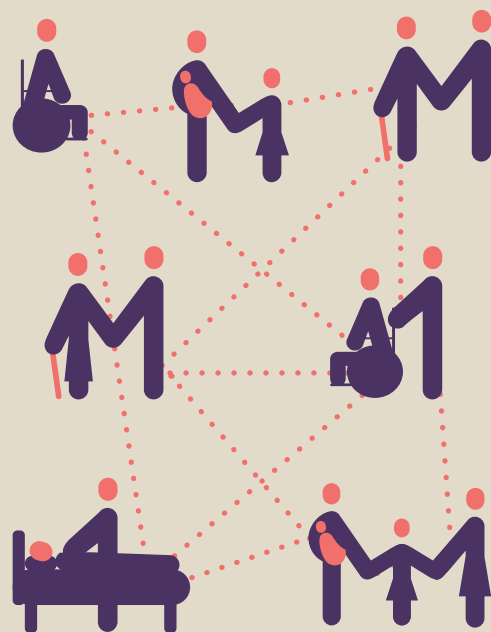
4.

UNIVERSAL PROVISION OF LONG-TERM AND CARE SERVICES FOR ELDER PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Including practical **mechanisms to ensure the right to affordable long-term care services of high quality**, in particular home care and community-based services declared in the principle 18 of the European Pillar of Social Rights, as well as residential care homes. Empowering elder people and people with disabilities to effectively choose and use them according to their needs.

Including mechanisms to ensure the right to flexible working arrangements for those caring for elder people and relatives recognised in the WLB Directive. Assure **full payment for the five days of carers’ leave** included in the WLB Directive, which can be used to care for elder people and other relatives.

Advocating and securing funding to study how to **encourage men’s involvement in elder care** regarding support for informal male carers and formal care employment.



5.

REGULAR MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE AND ITS GENDER IMPACTS

Improve current indicators, so the implementation of the directive and men's involvement can be measured regarding main topics, including **disaggregation by sex, educational attainment and occupation in each kind of indicator** (in addition to the specific variables):

A. PATERNITY/MATERNITY/PARENTAL LEAVE:

Effective level of payment, **number of days used** in the first 12 and 18 months of the child, number of days used alone and at the same time that the other parent, full-time or part time use (by type of worker)

B. CARERS' LEAVE, FORCE MAJEURE TIME OFF WORK:

Percentage of entitled people, percentage of people who uses them, number of days used a year, cause.

C. FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS:

- Reduced working hours
(by level of payment and by cause of reduction: care of children, care of elder people or other relatives, education/training, others)
- Flexible working hours and overwork
- Spatial flexibility (home-office)
(indicators on national regulation and use)

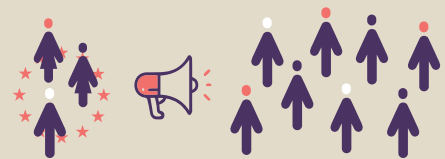
D. RELATION WITH OTHER POLICIES AND IMPACTS:

- Harmonized indicators on ECEC 0-3 and 3-6 separately (by each age of children): on number of hours used weekly, cost per child, rate of coverage by parent(s) characteristic(s)
- Annual or bi-annual **harmonized time use surveys** covering all EU countries, which include paid work, unpaid work, income and attitudinal variables on fairness of work distribution for both adults in families.

6.

AN EU-WIDE AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN ON MEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN CARE THROUGH THE USE OF EXISTING WORK-LIFE BALANCE RIGHTS

Launching an EU-wide awareness raising campaign on existing work-life balance rights, how to use it and the relevance of their use on gender equality, **focusing on men's involvement in care** and how to increase their participation. Encouraging corporate social responsibility (CSR) to focus on this so that employers are conscious about the need of male employees for taking time off and flexibility.



7.

INCLUDING GENDER EQUALITY PLANS INTO COMPANIES' COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS



Promoting **gender equality plans**: set up guides and minimum requirements for plans, include the promotion of men's involvement in care, work flexibility for carers and the importance to introduce them **into collective agreements**. This would be a basis to promote trainings & awareness raising campaigns, improve knowledge and communication at company level, and modify organisational cultures.

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE BASED ON THE STUDY "MEN IN CARE"

The background for this document is the EU project [Men in Care – workplace support for caring masculinities](#). Through this project, we have studied the political context of eight countries and companies from six European countries (Austria, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and North Macedonia in a MiC-Austrian cooperation project), assessing how structural conditions and organisational cultures can affect men with caring responsibilities.

Several work-life balance policies create incentives for women to cover a greater part of the caring work and for men to stay fully in the labour market without high involvement in caring. Well-designed EU Directives and national laws are institutional reference points that influence expectations and practices of men, women and employers. The [Work-life Balance Directive](#) (Directive 2019/1158) introduces a set of legislative actions including a 10 working days paternity leave, ensuring two months of non-transferable parental leave compensated at a level determined by each Member State out of four months parental leave, introducing 5 days per year of leave to care for relatives, and extending the right to request flexible working arrangements to carers and working parents of children up to eight years old. We propose the seven measures to promote men's involvement in care, considering the [Work-life Balance Directive](#), the [EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), the [MiC experiences](#) and analyses, further literature and statistics¹.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Fernández Lozano, Irina, Jurado Guerrero, T. 2021. [Carving out Space for Caring Masculinities. Results from a European Study. Men in care. Workplace support for caring masculinities](#). Action grant VS-2018-0417.

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Scambor, E., Warat, M., Gärtner, M., Ciaputa, E., Freljih, M., Hrženjak, M., Humer, Ž. & P. Abril Morales (2022). *CARING MASCULINITIES IN CARING ORGANIZATIONS? Insights from international workplace studies*. In: Scambor, E., Gärtner, M., Holter, Ø.G., Snickare, L. & M. Warat (eds.) *GWO Special Issue Caring Masculinities at Work: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives across Europe (forthcoming)*.

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EDITING AND LAYOUT

GRIGRI [@magathings](#)

¹ The MiC research consortium worked with secondary data and surveys, which are mainly based on a heteronormative set up of families. The MiC partners are aware of the gender binary bias rooted in data which limits the evidence and discussion of diverse families that move beyond the heteronormative family model.



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