

EN
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Answer given by Ms Lahbib
on behalf of the European Commission
(7.7.2025)

The Work-Life Balance Directive¹ provides for minimum standards on the rights to paternity and parental leave in the EU. These new rights make it easier to share care responsibilities between parents and to strike a balance between work and family life. The Directive incentivises fathers to use their rights to paid paternity and parental leave, thereby making it easier for mothers to return to paid work. Under the Directive, workers have the right to request flexible working arrangements such as reduced working hours and flexible working schedules.

Article 18 of the Directive requires Member States to report on the Directive's implementation by August 2027, and the Commission to draw up a report. The Commission currently monitors the implementation of the Directive. If the Commission considers that a Member State's legislation does not comply with the requirements of the Directive, it may open infringement proceedings.

Furthermore, the availability of affordable, accessible and high-quality care services has a strong impact on the employment of carers, mainly women. The Council Recommendation on early childhood education and care – the Barcelona targets for 2030² – encourages Member States to increase participation levels in this area. Article 11(a) recommends that Member States offer solutions for parents with atypical working hours.

The European Social Fund and the recovery and resilience plans include work-life balance targeted measures and reforms to facilitate telework and early childhood education and care, included in the Child Guarantee action plans³, that support parents' return to the labour market. An example is the Rainbow Childcare and Activities Centre⁴.

¹ Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work-life balance for parents and carers and repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU, OJ L 188, 12.7.2019, p. 79–93.

² Council Recommendation of 8 December 2022 on early childhood education and care: the Barcelona targets for 2030 (2022/C 484/01).

³ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/social-protection-social-inclusion/addressing-poverty-and-supporting-social-inclusion/investing-children/european-child-guarantee/national-action-plans-and-progress-reports_en.

⁴ <https://thalia.com.cy/en/example-of-projects/rainbow-childcare-and-activities-centre/>.