

EN
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Answer given by Ms Lahbib
on behalf of the European Commission
(14.4.2026)

The Commission is fully committed to gender equality, including maternity protection and work-life balance, in line with the Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2030¹.

EU legislation protects against discrimination on grounds of sex in employment and self-employment². This applies across sectors. Directive 2006/54 establishes the right of women to return to their jobs or equivalent posts after maternity leave on terms and conditions which are no less favourable than before their absence³. In addition, Directive 92/85, protects employees who are pregnant, have given birth or are breastfeeding. The Directive provides for a right to maternity leave for a period of at least 14 weeks before and/or after the birth or adoption⁴. In line with Article 17a of Directive 89/391/EEC⁵, the Commission is reviewing the practical implementation in the Member States of, among other directives, Directive 92/85 during the period 2018-2022. The results of this review are expected to be published later in 2026.

Directive (EU) 2019/1158⁶ also provides for non-transferable paid parental leave, family related leaves, and prohibits dismissal and discrimination for having taken those leaves. The Commission is analysing the transposition and implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/1158 and will report on its implementation by 2028. This report will be accompanied by two studies on the rights to family leave for self-employed persons, and on interactions between the leaves provided for in the Directive and other types of family-related leaves such as adoption leave⁷.

¹ COM(2026) 113 final, Gender equality strategy https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en.

² Article 14 of Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), OJ L 204, 26.7.2006, p. 23-36. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2006/54/oj/eng>.

³ Article 15 of Directive 2006/54/EC.

⁴ Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A31992L0085>.

⁵ Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work (OJ L 183 29.6.1989, p. 1), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A01989L0391-20081211&qid=1774418559221>.

⁶ 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. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1158/oj/eng>.

⁷ Article 18 of Directive (EU) 2019/1158.