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FATHERS IN POLAND

(DATA AND MATERIALS COLLECTED AND
PREPARED BY THE SHARE THE CARE
FOUNDATION)



According to CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center), 58% of respondents indicate that the partnership family model (where each partner works on a regular basis and shares caring and household duties) is highly preferred. In the study 'Polish opinions on parental leave' prepared by IQS research agency for Share the Care Foundation, 92% of Poles between 18 and 45 said time spent with the father is as valuable as time spent with the mother and 91% said that each parent should have the same obligations and rights in childcare. 83% of respondents also said that with the exception of breastfeeding, both genders can take care of a baby equally well. 77% of study participants (84% of women and 71% of men) agree that men should be encouraged to get involved in sharing the care.

However, when it comes to real life, it turns out that Poles are much more traditional than they declare. We have always observed the traditional division of roles - men deal mainly with family income (87%), women also work (although less often than men - only about 55% of them work professionally), but are also responsible for most of the housework and childcare (person mostly responsible for childcare: 60% mother vs father 13%).

Men seem to have it easier professionally, which is why they often do not understand women's struggle in the labour market and their increased efforts required to achieve the same as men. Men work because they have to - they often declare that if they could, they would quit their jobs. At the same time, they tend to believe that staying at home with a child is not a real job - one in four surveyed men agrees with the statement that childcare is not a job. Women feel that their work is underestimated and they consider men to be in a better situation both in the labour market and at home looking after children. For women, work is satisfying, they do not want to give it up.

When it comes to the share of fathers caring for children, around 4,000 fathers annually have been using the option of dividing parental leave in recent years. In 2021, 3,700 took leave while the number of births came to 331,000. That is less than 1%. The highest rate recorded in Poland was in 2014 with 5,200 fathers taking leave out of 375,000 births.

SOME NUMBERS:

31% - PERCENTAGE OF ALL PAID CHILDCARE BENEFITS THAT MEN RECEIVED IN 2021

1% - PARENTAL LEAVE IN 2021 USED BY MEN

55% - OF FATHERS TOOK PATERNITY LEAVE IN 2021.

SOURCE: ZUS (SOCIAL INSURANCE INSTITUTION) DATA



The leave system after the birth of a child in Poland

Parents in Poland are entitled to the following types of leave:

- **20 weeks** of maternity leave, 100% paid (14 weeks is obligatory and 6 weeks can be transferred to the father)
- **32 weeks** of parental leave, paid at 60% (parents can freely share this leave among themselves)
- **2 weeks** of paternity leave, paid at 100%
- **36 months** of childcare leave, unpaid (one month is non-transferable, reserved for the father, the rest may be shared by parents as they wish)

Long application (application 'in advance') – the child's mother may submit an application for maternity and parental leave in advance, in which case she receives 80% of remuneration for the entire period. This is the most frequently practised scenario for the use of maternity and parental leave in Poland.

Why don't fathers take parental leave?

Research conducted by the IQS agency has shown that financial issues and the fear of losing one's job or damaging one's income are the key barriers to taking parental leave by men. 29% of respondents indicated that they were not financially able to afford leave. 30% of respondents said that they were afraid of losing their jobs or felt that taking leave was not welcome in their workplace, while 21% did not receive such consent from their partners.

The Share the Care Foundation conducted syndicated research on parental equality in the workplace in ten large corporations. The research confirmed fears men have regarding dismissal or missing out on promotions when taking parental leave. When asked about barriers to sharing parental leave with their partners, women mentioned ineligibility of fathers to parental leave due to specific forms of employment, family finances and wishing to take a break from work. When asked about incentives to sharing leave, the respondents mentioned factors such as debunking the stereotype that women sharing leave are 'careerist', better availability of information on the opportunities and formalities related to sharing leave, and the employer's organizational culture supporting parental equality.



The EU work-life balance directive - transposition in Poland

In 2019 the European Parliament adopted the work-life balance directive, according to which by August 2022 all EU Member States are required to introduce an individual right to parental leave of four months, including two months that must be non-transferable.

**SOME NUMBERS: 13% OF POLES HAVE HEARD ABOUT THE
WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE
71% OF THEM BELIEVE THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE IS A GOOD IDEA**

SOURCE: IQS RESEARCH, 2020

The Share the Care Foundation conducts extensive advocacy activities for the effective implementation of the work-life balance directive in Poland. Practice and research clearly show that the best tool for creating parental equality is to offer fathers non-transferable parental leave paid at a high rate and used while mothers return to work.

Together with its Programming Committee, the Foundation prepared recommendations for the implementation of the directive in Poland, along with a draft bill. All documents were handed over to the Polish government.



The guidelines of the EU work-life balance directive:

- providing fathers with the possibility of taking paternity leave in the event of the birth of a child, for ten working days, which is not dependent on the employee's previous work experience or his marital status,
- granting parents an individual right to parental leave of four months to be used before the child reaches a maximum of eight years of age, provided that two months of parental leave are not transferable between parents,
- providing employees with the right to care leave of five working days a year to look after children or other dependent relatives,
- providing employees with time off from work due to a force majeure in urgent family matters caused by illness or accident,
- ensuring that workers with children up to at least eight years of age, and carers, have the right to request flexible work arrangements to provide care.





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