

SOCIAL PROTECTION OF MATERNITY IN EUROPE

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Abstract. In conditions of aggravation the demographic problems in developed and developing countries, one of the most important goals of social and economic policy is the creation of comfortable conditions for increasing the birth rate. It should be noted, that the policy in this area is significantly differentiated among the countries. For example, the duration of maternity leave is 13 weeks in Ireland and 52 weeks in Albania, Montenegro; maternity benefits in Slovakia are paid in the amount of 65% of the previous earnings, while in most European countries the value of this indicator is 100%, but the period of payment of these benefits varies. In general, the conducted comparative analysis for European countries shows, that Austria, Hungary, Germany, Latvia, Norway and Sweden can be included in the list of countries with the best conditions. However, these countries are not exceptional leaders in terms of birth rate in Europe. It can be concluded, that the conditions of the social protection of motherhood and childhood are not the single factor, determining the birth rate in the state.

Keywords: social protection of citizens, motherhood and childhood, birth rate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Protection of motherhood and childhood is one of the main forms of state social support for the population in most developed and developing countries. Convention № 183 of the International Labor Organization "On the revision of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952" determines the following elements as the main for successful organization of the maternity protection:

- the right for maternity leave of at least 14 weeks;
- monetary allowances for women, who are absent at work, due to maternity leave, at the level of at least two thirds of the previous earnings of a woman;
- the right for breaks for breastfeeding and other types of support, provided to nursing mothers;
- protection against discrimination and dismissal, as well as guaranteed right to return to work after the termination of maternity leave.

Protection of motherhood and childhood is regulated by national legislation and considerably varies among the countries.

According to the data of International Labor Organization (ILO), maternity leave with minimum duration 12 weeks is provided in 157 of 185 countries, analyzed by the ILO, herewith in 98 countries the duration of maternity leave is no less than 14 weeks, and only in 42 countries this figure is 18 weeks or more. The duration of maternity leave is less than 12 weeks, as a rule, in the countries of the Middle East and Africa.

Maternity benefits are paid in 183 of 185 countries, analyzed by the ILO. The only exception is the United States and Papua New Guinea. In 107 countries, maternity benefits are financed from the state social insurance system, in 47 countries - at the expense of the employer, in 29 countries there are mixed schemes of payments (co-financing by the employer and the state). The best conditions for the social security of motherhood and childhood are in Europe.

2. METHODS

In the article, based on the methods of comparative analysis, an assessment of maternal and childhood protection in Europe is given, the degree of social protection of women during pregnancy and childbirth in the Russian Federation is considered.

The information base for the article was the data of the International Labor Organization and the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation.

3. RESULTS

In Europe, the situation with the provision of social support for motherhood is the most successful. It is mainly carried out through the state social insurance system. Exceptions are only Denmark, Germany, Malta, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, where is the mixed financing system.

Analysis of the data, presented in Table 1, indicates that in most European countries the duration of maternity leave does not exceed 20 weeks. The shortest time - 12-14 weeks - is provided in Germany, Iceland, Sweden, Switzerland. While the longest maternity leave is in Croatia - 58 weeks; in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and The United Kingdom it is 52 weeks.

At the same time, the amount of maternity payments in Europe is no less than 70% of the average income in the previous period (with the exception of Slovenia, where the benefit is set at 65%). In 25 countries, funding is provided at 100% of previous incomes.

With regard to parental leave, it can be noted, that this type of leave is not provided in Europe, only in Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Montenegro and Switzerland. In other countries, the duration of parental leave varies from 2 weeks in Albania to 156 weeks in a number of countries. However, the conditions for the payment of benefits vary considerably. For example, in 16 European countries benefits are not provided, in 6 countries there are fixed payments, in 7 countries, the amount of benefits is less than 70% of income for the previous period, in 6 countries the amount of benefits reaches 100%. At the same time, the duration of paid parental leave varies considerably: from 2 weeks in Albania to 104 weeks in Austria, Hungary and Poland.

Country	Duration of maternity leave, weeks	Maternity benefits (in% of previous earnings)	Duration of parental leave, weeks	Child care allowances (in% of previous earnings)
Austria	16	100 %	104	Flat amount
Albania	52	80 %	2	100 %
Andorra	16	100 %	-	-
Belarus	18	100 %	156	80% of the subsistence minimum
Belgium	15	82% for the first 30 days; 75% for the remaining days *	17	Flat amount
Bulgaria	32	90 %	26	90 %
Bosnia and Herzegovina	52	50 % до 100 %	156	-
The United Kingdom	52	For the first 6 weeks - 90%; 7-39 weeks – flat amount; 40-52 weeks - not paid	13	-
Hungary	14	70 %	156	70% for insured parents (104 weeks); for uninsured parents in a flat amount (52 weeks)
Germany	14	100 %	156 (52 weeks are paid)	67 %
Greece	17	100 %	17	-

Denmark	18	100 %	32	100 %
Iceland	13	80 %	26 (13 weeks are paid)	80 % *
Ireland	26 (plus 16 weeks without payment)	80 % *	17	-
Spain	16	100 %	156	-
Italy	22	80 %	26	30 %
Cyprus	18	75 %	13	-
Latvia	16	80 %	78	70 %
Lithuania	18	100 %	156 (52 weeks are paid)	100% before the child reaches the age of 1 year, or 70% before the child reaches the age of 2.
Luxembourg	16	100 %	26	Flat amount
Macedonia	39	100 %	156	-
Malta	18	100 % 14 weeks	13	-
Moldova	18	100 %	156	Partially paid
Monaco	16	90%*	-	-
The Netherlands	16	100 % *	26	-
Norway	35	100 %	49 or 59	100 % - 49 weeks or 80 % - 59 weeks*

Poland	26	100 %	156 (104 weeks are paid)	60% - 26 weeks and in the established amount up to 104 weeks
Portugal	17 (or 21)	100 % (or 80% for 150 days)	17 or 21 + 13 addit. weeks	100 % - 17 weeks 80 % - 21 weeks + 25% in addit. 13 weeks
The Russian Federation	20	100 %*	156 (78 weeks are paid)	40 %*
Romania	18	85%	156 (52 weeks are paid) or 104 weeks	75 % **
San Marino	22	100 %	-	-
Serbia	20	100 % *	52	100 % - first 26 weeks 60 % - from 27 till 39 weeks; 30 % - from 40 till 52 weeks
Slovakia	34	65 %	156	Flat amount
Slovenia	15	100 %	37	80 % *
Ukraine	18	100 %	156 (78 weeks are paid)	Partially paid

Finland	18	70 %	26	70 %
France	16	100 % *	156 (26 weeks are paid)	Flat amount
Croatia	58	100% up to 6 months after birth, then flat amount	104	-
Montenegro	52	100 %	-	-
The Czech Republic	28	70 %	156	Flat amount
Switzerland	14	80 %*	-	-
Sweden	14	80 %	80	85 % * 65 weeks and 15 weeks in the established amount
Estonia	20	100 %	36	-

Table 1. Maternity and parental leaves in European countries

(It is made by the authors, according to the data, presented in (Voruba, 2001))

* up to the set maximum

** There are two options in Romania:

1) 52 weeks are paid at a rate of 75% to the set maximum and incentive payments are provided if the parent starts working;

2) 104 weeks are paid at a rate of 75% to the set maximum (but this maximum is lower than in the first variant) and there are no incentive payments.

Summarizing the data on social guarantees for the birth of a child in European countries, it can be noted, that the social protection of women during

this period is quite high: maternity leaves and benefits are provided in all countries. The most comfortable conditions during pregnancy and childbirth are created in Albania, the United Kingdom and the countries of the former Yugoslavia: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro, where the duration of maternity leave is at least 52 weeks and payments are up to 100% of previous incomes. However, the following regularity can be observed: the longer is the maternity leave, the less is the parental leave (for example, in Albania), or the parental leave is not paid (in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United Kingdom, Macedonia, Croatia and Montenegro).

Minimum social guarantees for women during pregnancy and childbirth are in countries of Western Europe, where in most cases the duration of maternity leave does not exceed 16 weeks, but with maternity benefits at rate of 100% from income in the previous period. Although, for fairness, we should note, that in some cases, the short duration of maternity leave is compensated by a long paid parental leave (for example, in Austria and Germany).

Among the elements of successful organization of maternity protection, in addition to paid maternity and parental leaves, there are the conditions, created for women to feed their children. According to Table 2, it can be seen, that in most European countries, paid breaks are provided for feeding children, with a total duration from 60 to 120 minutes per day. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Portugal, Romania are the countries with better conditions by this criterion, where breaks with total duration 120 minutes per day are provided for feeding children until they reach 12 months.

Country	Payment	Age of child, months	Break	Total duration
Austria, Luxembourg	+	undefined	2 times for 45 minutes	90 minutes
Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, the Russian Federation	+	18	every 3 hours for 30 minutes	60 minutes

Belgium	+	9	2 times for 30 minutes	60 minutes
Bulgaria	+	8	2 times for 60 minutes	120 minutes
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Portugal, Romania	+	12	2 times for 60 minutes	120 minutes
Hungary	+	9	2 times for 60 minutes	120 minutes
Germany	+	undefined	2 times for 30 minutes	60 minutes
Ireland	+	6	Once for 60 minutes	60 minutes
Spain, Cyprus	+	9	Once for 60 minutes	60 minutes
Macedonia	+	12	Once for 90 minutes	90 minutes
The Netherlands	+	9	undefined	maximum 25% of the working time
Norway	-	undefined	2 times for 30 minutes	60 minutes
Slovakia	+	6	2 times for 30 minutes	60 minutes

Slovenia	+	undefined	undefined	60 minutes
France, Croatia, the Czech Republic	+	12	2 times for 30 minutes	60 minutes
Finland, Sweden, Switzerland	+	undefined	undefined	undefined

Table 2. Conditions for nursing mothers in European countries

(It is made by the authors, according to the data, submitted in ((Voruba, 2001))

Having considered all the conditions for the social protection of women during pregnancy, childbirth and childcare in European countries, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Latvia, Norway and Sweden can be ranked among the countries with the best conditions. While minimum guarantees are provided in Andorra, Greece, Spain, Malta, Monaco, San Marino and the Netherlands.

4. DISCUSSION

Despite the more comfortable conditions, created for women during pregnancy and childbirth, the first group of the above countries is not the leader in the birth rate. In particular, in Austria the birth rate is 9.8, Germany - 9, while in Spain - 9.4, Greece - 8.5 (Table 3).

Country	Birthrate (permille)	Country	Birth rate (per mille)
Austria	9,8	Moldova	11,5
Albania	13,1	Monaco	6,6
Andorra	7,8	The Netherlands	10,1
Belarus	12,5	Norway	12,2
Belgium	10,9	Poland	9,6
Bulgaria	9,2	Portugal	9,1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	8,8	The Russian Federation	11,3
The United Kingdom	11,9	Romania	10,1
Hungary	9,2	San Marino	8,6
Germany	9	Serbia	9
Greece	8,5	Slovakia	9,8
Denmark	10,2	Slovenia	8,3
Iceland	13,8	Ukraine	10,7
Ireland	14,5	Finland	10
Spain	9,4	France	11,8
Italy	8,3	Croatia	9
Cyprus	11,4	Montenegro	10,2
Latvia	9,9	The Czech Republic	9,5
Lithuania	10,4	Switzerland	10,5
Luxembourg	11,4	Sweden	11,8
Macedonia	11,5	Estonia	10,3
Malta	10,1		

Table 3. The birth rate in European countries in 2015

(It is made by the authors, according to the data, submitted in (Maternity and paternity at work: Law and practice across the world, n. d))

In other words, there is no direct correlation between the level of social protection of motherhood and childhood and the level of birth rate.

5. SUMMARY

Based on the study of social protection of motherhood and childhood in European countries, it seems possible to draw the following conclusions:

1. In Europe, a sufficiently high level of social protection of motherhood and childhood is provided. In all countries, there are some social protection measures, including the following:

- maternity leave duration varies from 12-14 weeks in Germany, Iceland, Sweden, Switzerland to 58 weeks in Croatia;

- maternity benefits are no less than 70% of the average income for the previous period. In 25 examined countries, funding is envisaged at the level of 100% from previous incomes;

- parental leave is not provided only in Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, Montenegro and Switzerland. In other countries, the duration of parental leave varies from 2 weeks in Albania to 156 weeks in a number of countries;

- there are different options for the calculation of child care allowances during the period of parental leave: 1) they can be established in a flat amount; 2) they can depend on income in the previous period. In this case, benefits can be established for a fixed period or for the entire period of parental leave. For fairness, it should be noted, that in states, which have a higher level of cash allowances for child care, the duration of parental leave is less. In 16 European countries there are no allowances in the period of parental leave;

- special conditions for nursing mothers: in most European countries, from 60 to 120 minutes per day are provided for the feeding of the child.

Mostly, the states use various measures of social support for women during pregnancy and child care in the aggregate.

2. States adhere to established traditions in the implementation of social policies in the field of support for motherhood and childhood. Thus, similar conditions were created in the countries of the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro) and the former USSR

(Belarus, Moldova, Lithuania, the Russian Federation, Ukraine).

3. Indicators of the level of social protection of citizens and the birth rate in the country are dependent, but the conditions of motherhood and childhood protection don't play the key role in increasing the birth rate. The level of birth rate is determined primarily by the level of social protection, security, stability in the state and the established traditions. In particular, sufficiently high birth rate in Europe in 2015 was in the UK, Norway, Sweden and other countries, which differ from other by comfortable living conditions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, in the countries of Europe, the necessary conditions have been created to ensure the social protection of motherhood and childhood. However, to solve demographic problems, the countries should not be limited only by creating conditions during pregnancy and childbirth. The problem of increasing the birth rate is more global, requiring the implementation of measures for creation comfortable living conditions as a whole, including social protection, high incomes, security of citizens, stability, etc.

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