

# Work-Life Balance: Commission welcomes the provisional agreement reached today

Today, the European Parliament and the Council reached a provisional agreement on the European Commission's proposal for [a new Directive on work-life balance for parents and carers](#). First Vice-President Frans **Timmermans**, Commissioners Marianne **Thyssen** and Věra **Jourová** welcomed the agreement with the following statement:

*"The provisional agreement reached by the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission today is good news for families in Europe. The European Pillar of Social Rights is about improving the daily lives of Europeans. Today's provisional agreement makes this vision very concrete, giving families with working parents and carers a real choice on how to combine their work and family life. This is a huge step towards a more social Europe and shows the true spirit of the Pillar.*

*New work-life balance rules that are fit for purpose in the 21st century will open up opportunities for working women and men to share caring responsibilities, for children and relatives, on an equal basis. Today's agreement sets a European minimum standard of 10 days of paternity leave for fathers following the birth of their child, to be compensated at the level of sick pay. It strengthens the existing right to 4 months of parental leave, by making 2 months non-transferable between parents and introducing compensation for these 2 months at a level to be determined by the Member States. We also agreed on European provisions for carer's leave by attributing 5 days per worker per year, as a new European entitlement for workers. Last but not least, the new rules strengthen the right for all parents and carers to request flexible working arrangements.*

*But this is not only about strengthening the rights of individuals. The new rules are a model for how to align social and economic priorities. Businesses will be able to attract and retain talented women and men. The European economy will gain from this proposal, which will contribute to closing the gender employment gap. Better work-life balance for both women and men is not only the fair, but also the smart thing to do."*

## **Next steps**

This provisional agreement now has to be formally adopted by both the European Parliament and the Council.

## **Background**

To address the challenges that working parents and carers face in reconciling work and family responsibilities, the European Commission proposed the 'Work-life Balance' Initiative in April 2017. This initiative is a key deliverable

of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

The Directive on work-life balance sets a number of new or higher standards for parental, paternity and carer's leave, and the right to request flexible working arrangements. It takes account of the needs of small and medium-sized companies and makes sure that they are not disproportionately affected. The new Directive is complemented with policy and funding measures, supporting Member States in enforcing existing dismissal protection legislation, developing formal care services and addressing economic disincentives for second earners to work.

**For more information**

[Press release: Delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights – Commission adopts first concrete initiatives](#)

[Factsheet: A new start to support work-life balance for parents and carers](#)

[Work Life Balance Eurobarometer](#)

[Factsheet: Social Priorities under the Juncker Commission](#)