

Artan Mustafa (European University Institute-EUI)

April 2026

For comparisons with other countries in this review on leave provision and early childhood education and care services, please see the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review (also available individually on the [Leave Network website](#)). To contact authors of country notes, see the [members](#) page on the Leave Network website.

1. Current leave and other employment-related policies to support parents

a. Maternity leave (*pushimi i lehonisë*) (responsibility of the Employment Agency and the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- Employed mothers. 12 months: up to 45 calendar days before the expected date of birth (upon the employee's request and medical evidence) or up to 28 calendar days before the expected date of birth (upon the employer's request because the woman is unable to perform her job and with the employee's consent).³⁰⁶
- Unemployed mothers. 6 months, starting from the date of birth.

Payment, funding and taxation

- Employed mothers. 70 per cent of previous earnings for the first 6 months of Maternity leave; 50 per cent of the average national wage for 3 months; unpaid for the final 3 months. Mothers also receive three additional top-ups during Maternity leave, each equivalent to the net minimum wage in the country in 2025 (worth €325.9 a month³⁰⁷).
- During the first 6 months, taxes and pension saving contributions are paid as normal. Payments from the government (second period of payment) are not taxed.
- Funded by employers for the first 6 months and by the government from general taxation for the next 3 months

³⁰⁵ Please cite as: Mustafa, A. (2026) 'Kosovo country note', in Dobrotić, I., Arnalds, A., Kaufman, G., Koslowski, A., Moss, P. and Valentova, M. (eds.) *International Review of Leave Policies and Research 2025*. Available at: <https://www.leavenetwork.org/annual-review-reports/>

³⁰⁶ See: Law No.03/L-212 on Labour, <https://qzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2735>

³⁰⁷ Notice regarding the guidelines on the implementation of child and maternity allowances. Available at: <https://zck-kpz-platform.rks-gov.net/en/notice-regarding-the-guidelines-on-the-implementation-of-child-and-maternity-allowances/>

- Unemployed mothers: Maternity allowance paid at the level of the net national minimum wage per month in 2025 (€325.9 a month). The payment is not taxed, and is paid from the state budget (from taxes).

Flexibility in use

- None.

Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)

- All employed women are eligible.
- If self-employed, mothers have to provide evidence of approved leave and compensation received during the first 6 months of leave in order to qualify for the additional three months of government-paid leave.³⁰⁸
- Non-standard workers, although in principle covered by the same rights applicable to all employees, are in practice not covered: this happens, e.g., due to the difficulty in defining who the employer is (in the case of domestic workers and related workers who conduct work for several employers/households); or lack of clarity in tax/contribution arrangements; and to the fact that most such work takes place in the informal system.³⁰⁹
- Unemployed women must be unemployed for at least 9 months during the 12 months before the birth of the child to be eligible for the Maternity allowance.³¹⁰

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g., multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; lone parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- In the case of the death of the newborn child, the minimum mandatory length of Maternity leave for employed mothers is 45 days.
- Maternity leave can be transferred to the father in the case of the biological mother's death, or to a foster parent in cases where the parents have died or abandoned the child.
- After the end of the first 6 months of employer-paid Maternity leave, mothers can transfer the remaining Maternity leave (months 7 to 12) to the father.³¹¹

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)

- None reported.

³⁰⁸ Administrative Instruction No. 01/2018 (Article 5). Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2735>.

³⁰⁹ Haxhikadrija, A. and Mustafa, A. (2024) 'Access for domestic workers to labour and social protection : the case of Kosovo', *SEER : Journal for labour and social affairs in Eastern Europe*, Vol. 27, 2: 181-206. Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/1814/78037>

³¹⁰ <https://mfpt.rks-gov.net/NewsDetails/8/1123>

³¹¹ Law No.03/L-212 on Labour (Article 49, paragraph 8). Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2735>

b. Paternity leave (*të drejtat e të atit të fëmijës*) (responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, Labour and Transfers)

Length of leave (before and after birth)

- 12 working days.³¹²

Payment, funding and taxation

- 100 per cent of previous earnings for 2 days, unpaid for the remaining leave period.
- Funded and paid by employers.

Flexibility in use

- 2 days of paid leave should be taken at the time of childbirth, but the remaining 2 weeks of unpaid leave can be used until the child turns 6 months of age. The employee must inform the employer of their intention to take leave at least 10 days in advance.

Eligibility (e.g., related to employment or family circumstances)

- Employed fathers are eligible.
- Since same-sex marriage is not recognised by law, it is legally unclear if/how rights are applied.

Variation in leave due to child or family reasons (e.g. multiple or premature births; poor health or disability of child or mother; single parent); or delegation of leave to person other than the mother

- Paternity leave can be transferred to a foster parent only in case of the death of both biological parents.

Regional or local variations in leave policy

- None.

Additional note (e.g., if leave payments are supplemented by collective agreements, employer exclusion, or rights to postpone)

- None reported.

c. Parental leave.

No statutory entitlement.

d. Childcare leave or career breaks

No statutory entitlement.

³¹²Law No.03/L-212 on Labour (Article 50). Available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2735>

e. Other types of leave and flexible working

Adoption leave and pay

- Adoptive parents have the same right to Maternity and Paternity leave, as in the case of the birth of a biological child.³¹³ There are no other provisions for adoptive parents.

Time off for the care of dependants

- Employed persons have the right, upon request, to take unpaid leave of unspecified duration. During this period, they still have to pay their mandatory social contributions.

Specific provision for (breast)feeding

- None. Breastfeeding women are prohibited from working night shifts or performing physically demanding or hazardous tasks

Flexible working for carers

- One of the parents of a child with disabilities has the right to work part-time after the end of Maternity leave, and until the child turns 2 years. In the cases of the death of both or one of the parents, this right can be transferred to the other guardian.

Time off for antenatal appointments and care

- None.

Other provisions of leave

- Marriage and death leave. An employed person has the right to fully paid leave of 5 days per year for their own marriage and an additional 5 days in the event of the death of a family member. These leaves are paid by the employer at the level of 100 per cent of previous earnings. Additional entitlements may be regulated by specific employment contracts.

2. Relationship between leave policy and early childhood education and care policy

The maximum period of post-natal leave per family is 12 months with 6 months well paid and the final 3 months being unpaid. All children aged between 5 and 6 years must attend a one year preparatory pre-school programme, which, in principle, lasts 2.5 hours per weekday (in practice, it usually lasts about 1.5 hours). There is, therefore, a significant gap of approximately 54 months between the end of well-paid leave and an entitlement to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in the form of compulsory attendance.

³¹³ Law No.03/L-212 on Labour (Article 50, paragraph 3). Available at: <https://gzk.rks.gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2735>

This preparatory pre-school programme generally takes place in public elementary schools (and is, thus, tax-funded), but it can also take place in licensed private elementary schools or ECEC facilities if children are enrolled in such schools/facilities. Enrolment in regular ECEC facilities for children under the age of 6 years is very low, about 10.6 per cent of the child population of this cohort.³¹⁴ There are about 80 public ECEC facilities in the country; the rest are private, for-profit facilities. Both public and private facilities charge user fees. This structure of leaves and ECEC services is strongly familialistic and contributes to a low female employment rate, which stood at 21.2 per cent in 2024 (compared to 55.9 male employment rate)³¹⁵; it also contributes to maintaining ECEC enrolment and wider long-term social inequality, such as based on income, area of living, ethnicity backgrounds, etc.³¹⁶

Since June 2022, the policy of prioritising enrolment for vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in public ECEC facilities was discontinued. Given the very limited availability of public ECEC facilities, this policy change was a step back since it risks worsening access for children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Although the number of public ECEC facilities is gradually increasing, they cannot meet the demand. Since October 2023, the municipality of Prishtina (Kosovo's capital city) began a modest programme (covering children from 120 families) of subsidies for the enrolment of children under 6 years in private ECEC facilities. This policy of subsidising enrolment is also being tested at the national level by targeting children in families on the minimum income (poverty protection programme). In December 2024, the government of Kosovo and the World Bank launched a €1.8 million national pilot voucher programme to finance the enrolment of 3 to 5-year-old children of these families in ECEC facilities as well as transportation to the facility.³¹⁷

Given that most of the existing ECEC services are market-based, the recent introduction (September 2021) of universal cash child benefits, as well as their increased amount, is a positive development in supporting family budgets. Since November 2025, families receive a monthly benefit of €30 per child under the age of 16; for families with more than two children in this age group, the benefit increases to €45 per child. In February 2025, 406,799 children were covered by the benefit.³¹⁸ Between September 2021 and August 2024, children under 2 received €20 per month, while children aged 2 and above received €10 per month.

³¹⁴ Enrolment figure (13,995) from *Annual statistical report with educational indicators*, p.29. Available at: <https://mash.rks-gov.net/alldocuments/raport-vjetor-statistikor-metregues-arsimor/> ; Population base figure (131,255) from Census data. Available at: https://askdata.rks-gov.net/pxweb/en/ASKdata/ASKdata_Census%20population_1_Demographic_Characteristics/census2024_00.px/

³¹⁵ *Labour market statistics-2024*, <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/085719f6-0ef0-4365-afa7-9a02c8d10cf5.pdf>

³¹⁶ Mustafa, A. (2021) 'Early Childhood Education and Care in Kosovo: A Targeted Educational Approach Producing and Maintaining Social and Gender Inequalities', *Revija za socijalnu politiku*, Vol.28, 3: 367-389.

³¹⁷ <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/blog/launching-of-the-pilot-voucher-program-for-kindergartens-part-of-the-world-bank-project-early-childhood-education-and-care-for-kosovos-human-capital/>

³¹⁸ *Social welfare statistics*. Available at: <https://ask.rks-gov.net/Releases/Details/9989>

For ECEC attendance levels, see 'relationship between leave and ECEC entitlements' in the [cross-country tables](#) at the front of the review.

3. Changes in policy since April 2025 (including proposals currently under discussion)

The Labour Law, which regulates leave entitlements, has not been amended since 2010 despite various government pledges and initiatives to do so. These pledges included a commitment to introduce Parental leave. On the other hand, in June 2025, the Maternity allowance for unemployed women, as well as the top-ups for employed women on Maternity leave, increased to €325.90 per month (from €170), following the first rise in the net minimum wage since 2011.³¹⁹ Although the minimum wage increased to €425 (gross) during the first 6 months of 2026,³²⁰ Maternity leave benefits were not increased at the same time. The Prime Minister has pledged to increase maternity leave benefits from July 2026 to €500,³²¹ probably in anticipation of the increase of the minimum wage to €500.

Regarding ECEC services, the 1 year preparatory programme for children aged 5 to 6 years became mandatory (previously optional) starting from the 2024/25 school year. In the previous (2024/25) year, the enrolment rate in the programme was approximately 87 per cent.³²²

4. Uptake of leave

a. Maternity leave

In December 2025, a total of 1,947 employed women and 8,117 unemployed women received state-funded Maternity benefits.³²³ According to the Kosovo Statistics Agency, there were 14,251 births registered during the second half of the same year.³²⁴ This implies that the take-up rate of state-funded part of Maternity benefits may have been below 100 per cent (around 70 per cent). A partial reason may be the fact that the state-funded Maternity benefits for employed women (provided during months 6 to 9 of leave) are too low and financially unattractive. Furthermore, many women in self-employment and non-standard employment may be, in practice, uncovered.

According to data issued by the Employment Agency for 2024, 66.5 per cent of employed women on Maternity leave had been working in the private sector.³²⁵ Since the last three months of leave for employed persons (months 9 to 12) are

³¹⁹ 261st government meeting. Available at: <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/news/mbledhja-e-261-te-e-qeverise/>

³²⁰ 273rd Meeting of the Government. Available at: <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/news/mbledhja-e-273-te-e-qeverise/>

³²¹ Min 17:15 of his speech. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oGNDHnhjR8>

³²² Source base: Annual statistical report with educational indicators. Available at: <https://mash.rks-gov.net/alldocuments/raport-vjetor-statistikor-me-tregues-arsimor/>

³²³ Data issued by the Ministry of Labour, Family, and Values of the War of Liberation to the author on 22.4.2026 upon an access to public information request.

³²⁴ Live births, <https://ask.rks-gov.net/Themes/Population>

³²⁵ Data issued by the Employment Agency of the Republic of Kosovo to the author on 21.5.2025 upon an access to public information request.

voluntary and unpaid, take-up of this part of Maternity leave could also be lower than 100 per cent.

b. Paternity leave

No information available. As these leaves are employer-paid and not administered by a public authority (e.g., a social insurance agency or similar), the respective data is neither collected nor reported.

c. Parental leave

No statutory entitlement.