

Another approach adopted in some European countries to encourage fathers' use of parental leave is the introduction of some forms of "bonus" (e.g. additional leave or tax breaks for fathers to boost their take-up rates). Sweden has set up a "Gender Equality Bonus", which offers an economic incentive when parents share parental leave more equally. Each parent receives the equivalent of almost US\$ 10 per day for every day they use the leave equally, up to a total of US\$ 240 (Duvander and Haas, 2013). Since 2007, **Germany** has moved away from a leave policy that supported mothers in staying at home for 3 years after the birth of a child. Parental leave has now been reduced to 12 months. However, its overall duration increases to 14 months if both parents take at least two months of the paid parental leave (Broomhill and Sharp, 2010, p. 4). The benefit shifted from a means-tested flat rate to an income replacement modality at 67 per cent of previous earnings. The proportion of fathers taking leave increased from 3 per cent in 2006 to 28 per cent in 2012, with 83 per cent of these using their individual two-month entitlement. The reform also resulted in the reduction of the overall number of parents taking more than 1 year of paid leave, which was a stated objective of the reform. In fact, just 11 per cent opted to prolong their paid leave to 2 years, paid at 33 per cent of prior earnings

(Blum and Erler, 2013). In **Italy**, each parent is entitled to a six-month period of parental leave, which is an individual and non-transferable entitlement, although the total amount of leave that can be taken by the family is ten months. If the father takes at least three months' leave, he is entitled to one additional month, making a total of 11 months of parental leave for the family. In **France**, women continue to provide the large majority (over 80 per cent) of unpaid care work, especially in households with children (Régnier-Loilier, 2009). They also make up 98–99 per cent of the number of parents taking leave (Fagnani et al., 2013). In January 2014, the adoption of the law on "Equality between women and men" reformed the parental leave scheme to promote men's participation. Parents of one child, who are currently entitled to six months of parental leave, may take another six months provided that it is the second parent who is the beneficiary of the leave. After the birth of the second child, the leave will remain available for 3 years, as long as six months are taken by the second parent, otherwise it will be shortened to 2½ years. In addition, the law has introduced a shorter (18 months) and better paid parental leave for parents with at least two children on an experimental basis. The law aims to raise take-up rate by men from the current 18,000 to 100,000 by 2017.\*

\* Loi pour l'égalité réelle entre les femmes et les hommes et femmes, No. 283, 28 Jan. 2014, available at: <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/ta/ta0282.asp> [29 Mar. 2014]. *Libération*, 28 Jan. 2014, Le texte sur l'égalité femmes-hommes adopté à l'Assemblée, available at: [http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2014/01/28/le-texte-sur-l-egalite-hommes-femmes-adopte-a-l-assemblee\\_976101](http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2014/01/28/le-texte-sur-l-egalite-hommes-femmes-adopte-a-l-assemblee_976101) [29 Mar. 2014] and [http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2014/01/20/egalite-hommes-femmes-les-debats-debutent-en-douceur\\_974298](http://www.liberation.fr/societe/2014/01/20/egalite-hommes-femmes-les-debats-debutent-en-douceur_974298) [29 Mar. 2014].

social partners on parental leave (Directive 2010/18/EU, which replaced the earlier 1996 framework, 96/34/EC). The framework sets out minimum requirements for parental leave with the objectives of reconciling professional and family responsibilities and promoting equal opportunities and treatment between women and men (effective as of March 2012). In part, the revision aimed to increase take-up of parental leave by fathers; it increased leave by one month to a total of four months for each parent and strengthened leave as an individual right by making one month for each parent non-transferable. It set out the importance of income replacement for encouraging take-up, especially by fathers.<sup>16</sup> The revised framework agreement also recognizes the diversity of the labour market and applies to all workers

and to all types of employment contract, including atypical workers (such as part-time and contract workers). It also acknowledges the diversity of family structures, calling for coverage and measures for single parents, same-sex couples, cohabiting couples, adoptive parents and parents of children with disabilities.

Most EU countries now provide fathers with some measure of paid leave (Broomhill and Sharp, 2010). However, few provide the type of parental leave that meets the EU Directive, which requires four months of non-transferable leave to be allocated to fathers. Nevertheless, countries are moving towards more gender-inclusive policies. Germany and France offer two such examples of this shift in work–family policy (see box 3.2).