

# Time for families?! Family time policy as a policy field – a European comparison

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Case study : **BENELUX - Different Pathways to reach the Promised Land?**

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## Outline

### Part 1

#### 1 Context & Antecedents

	POP	TFR	GDP	GII	EMPLOY		EMPLOY COUPLES			
					<3	3-5	2FT	FT/HT	1FT	
BE	11.0	1.8	33,127	12 <sup>th</sup>	61	69	37	30	23	(F)
LU	0.5	1.6	68,459	26 <sup>th</sup>	66	65	38	25	34	
NL	16.8	1.8	37,251	1 <sup>st</sup>	78	77	06	59	19	
DE	82.0	1.4	34,437	6 <sup>th</sup>	59	66	23	28	36	(F)

#### Notes.

BE= Belgium, LU= Luxembourg, NL= The Netherlands, DE= *Deutschland*, (F)= Federal state

POP= population (in millions), TFR= total fertility rate, GDP= gross domestic product (in US\$), GII= Gender Inequality Index\*, EMPLOY= Employment of mothers (in %), with at least one child below 3 years or between 3 and 5 years; EMPLOY COUPLES= Employment of couples; with a child below two years (in %), both partners work full-time (= 2FT), one partner works full-time and the other partner works part-time (= FT/HT), only one partner works full-time (= 1FT). See: P.Moss (ed.) Annual Review of Leave Policies 2014 [www.leavenetwork.org](http://www.leavenetwork.org)

\*a composite measure developed by the UN Development Program to reflect inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and the labor market (= the lower the ranking index, the more equal in achievements).

#### 2 Similarities & Differences

- Language: Dutch – French – German
- Religion: R-Catholic / Protestant
- Welfare state regime: conservative / liberal
- Government: coalitions of 2 or more parties

## Part 2

### Focus on Family Time Policies

- **NE**
  1. Part-time work
  2. Life course saving scheme
  
- **LU**
  1. Family allowances
  2. “Chèques Services Accueil” (= child care vouchers)
  
- **BE**
  1. Career Break / Time Credit system (LBO / TK)
  2. ECEC / Preschool

## Part 3

Prime Minister of BENELUX Government > **Manifesto “It’s time to care about time!”**

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***It's time to care about time!***

*A manifesto*

Fred Deven, Prime minister

BENELUX Government

# ***BENELUX leave for parents***

- ✓ Maternity leave as a **health and welfare** measure: 20 weeks
  - ✓ Parental leave as a **care** measure: 4 months for fathers, 4 months for mothers, 4 months for family - Paid 80% of earnings (up to ceiling)
  - ✓ Leave to care for sick children: 60 days/child up to 12 years
- ✂️ But cut Paternity leave...use Parental leave

# ***But we need to go beyond leave for parents!***

Need for a bolder, ***life course approach*** to time policies for inter-connected economic, political and social reasons:

- Environmental sustainability...A new economy not based on growth and consumerism...  
Renewing democracy
- Individual and family well-being...Gender equality...Lengthening working life...Tackling the emerging crisis of care

# ***The Great Transition***

## ***New Economic Foundation***

Distributing increased time to spend with family (caring or just being together), friends or in leisure pursuits creates more space for

- individual well-being to flourish,
- more community engagement, and so
- the advancement of social cohesion and the growth of the core economy.

# ***A High Level Commission on Time and Well-being***

- > **To advice** on development and implementation of a life course approach
- **A TW Commission** (Working Groups & Secretariat), asking for reviews & research, holding hearings and taking evidence
- > **To involve** experts from many fields including: children's rights, economics, education, employment, environment, equality, social pedagogy, as well as citizens of all ages

# ***A High Level Commission on Time and Well-being***

To report within two year on:

- 1. A 'life course time capital' policy** to increase opportunities to take leave over working life for many purposes
- 2. A working hours policy** to include more flexible working hours and reducing normal working hours

# ***This TW Commission will...***

**Review** existing innovative life course and working time policies, e.g. Belgian time credit

**Examine design issues:** payment and funding; eligibility; flexibility; gender equality; if incentives for some purposes, e.g. care of adults; relationship between parental leave, time capital and working hours policies

**Consider** the respective roles of compulsion (e.g. tighter Working Time Directives, tax long working hours) versus persuasion/inducement

# ***Evaluation and targets***

- Are time policies doing what they claim?
- Are they working for all citizens?
- Are they reducing or increasing inequality?
  
- National Statistics Office needs to review existing database & develop database to enable ongoing, comprehensive and detailed evaluation of family time policies

# ***Evaluation and Targets***

- TW Commission to propose targets for take up of leave **as well as** other time policies over 3 & 7 years
- To include men's share of caring: both leave **and** ECEC

## ***Step 1 today!***

➤ Men take 33% of all parental leave days by 2017 ...  
and 50% by 2022

**+**

> 20% of carers in formal ECEC services are men by 2017  
... and 40% by 2022

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