



SOTSIAALMINISTEERIUM

Contradiction between policies and attitudes – the case of Estonia

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Republic of Estonia

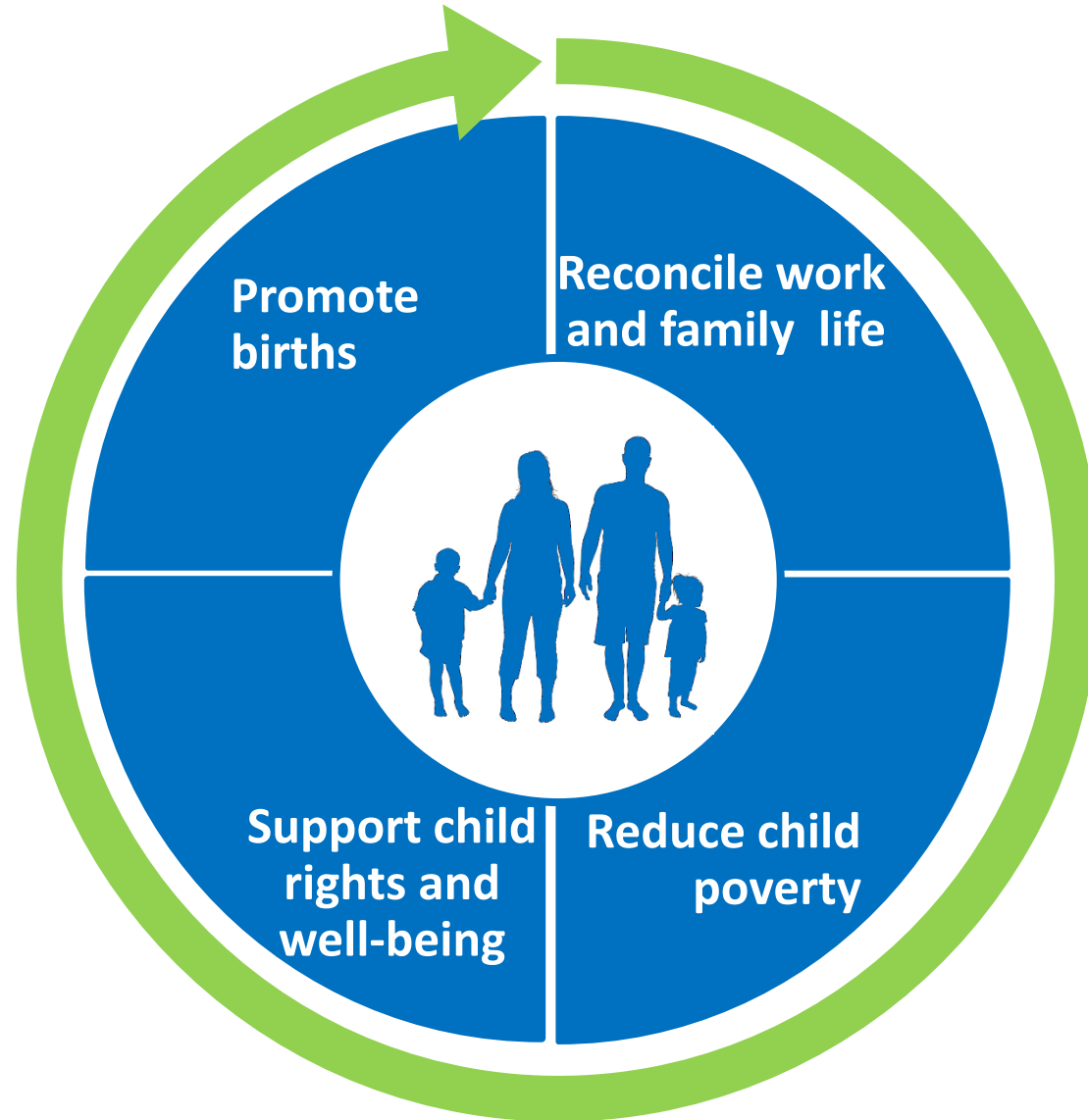
- Estonia gained independence in 1918 and re-independence in 1991
- Population 1,3 million
- Total fertility rate 1,54
- Minimum monthly wage in 2016 is 430 EUR, average monthly wage in 2015 was 1065 EUR (income tax is 20%, 170€ per month is deductible)



General characteristics

- High female education and employment
- Low part time working
- High rate of single parents (92% of them women) and children born out of marriage
- Gender neutral family policy
- Same-sex partnerships were legalized in January 2016

Aims of Estonian family policy



FAMILY BENEFITS

- Estonia's family benefits are designed to partly cover the costs families incur in caring for, raising and educating their children
- There are 10 different types of family benefits and they are funded from the State Budget
- Mix of universal, selective and means-tested family benefits

Family benefits

- Universal family benefits with focus on large families
 - 50€ per 1st and 2nd child (55€ from 2018 and 60€ from 2019)
 - 100€ per 3rd and every next child
 - 170€ for a family with 7 and more children + pension and health insurance (200€ per family with 3-6 children and 370€ per family with 7 or more children from 2017)
- Additional benefits for single parents and lower income families + minimum income scheme
- Maintenance Scheme (from 2017) – 100€ per child per month
- Home benefit for large (3+ children) families, benefit from 8000 - 14 000€

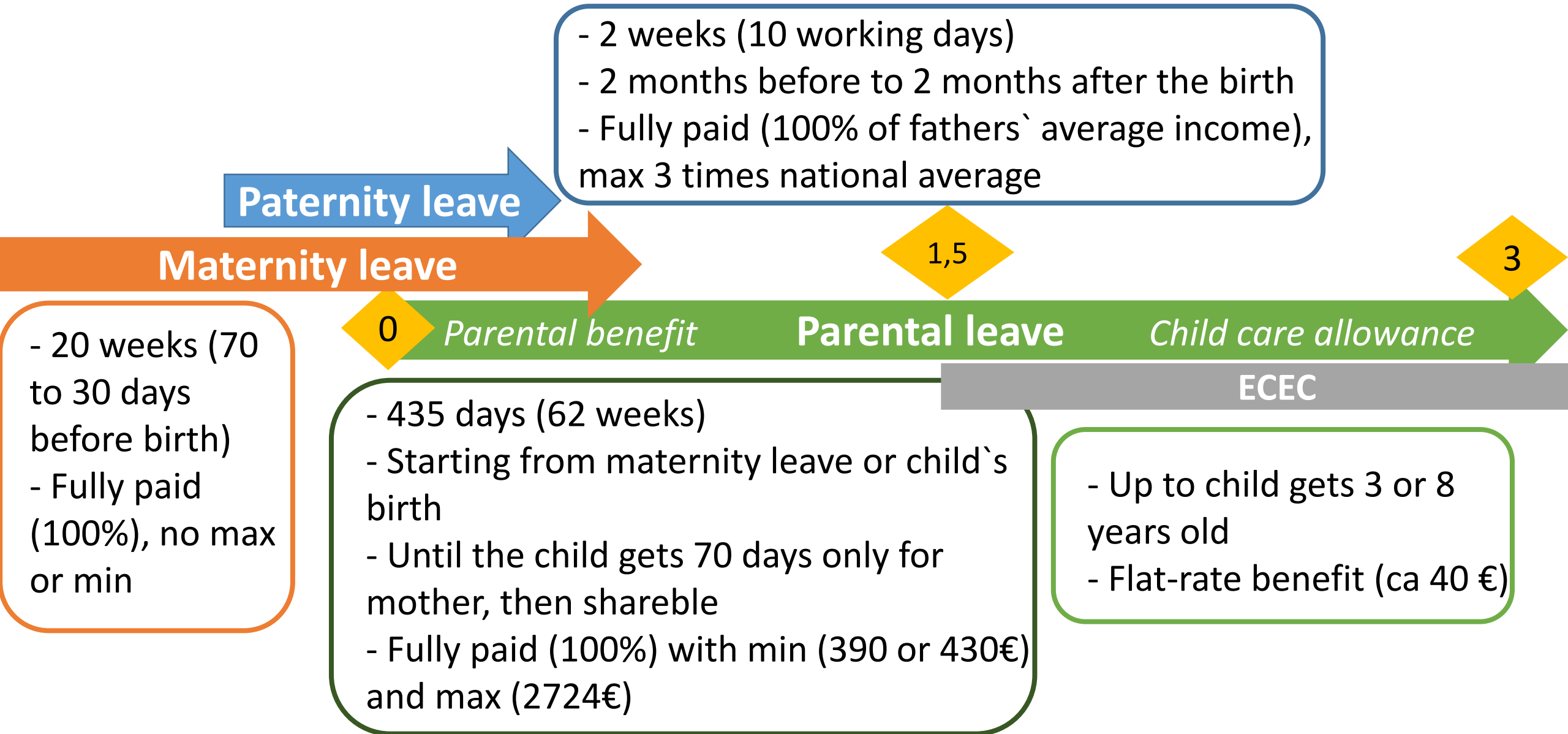
In-kind support

- Free school meal from grades 1 to 12 (compulsory education + high school)
- All children (0-18) have health insurance, including free dental care
- Access to hobby schools for all children

FAMILY LEAVES

- The aim of family leaves is to support the reconciliation of work and family life and maintain family`s income.
- There are 7 types of family leaves and 6 types of benefits connected to them.

Parental leave system



Parental leave and parental benefit

- Leave and benefit are not connected
- Relation to working – A parent may work or earn income during the period in which they receive the parental benefit, but if the income exceeds the rate of the benefit, the amount of the benefit is reduced:
 - Formula – benefit – (income – rate of benefit)/2

Persons have right to get at least half of the benefit granted to them. It is also prohibited to reduce the amount of the benefit under the limit of the benefit base rate.

- Flexibility – possible to change the recipient every month and parental leave can be used by anyone who takes care of the child (the child`s actual custodian)
- Solidarity – benefit paid also to those who have had no previous work relationship and income

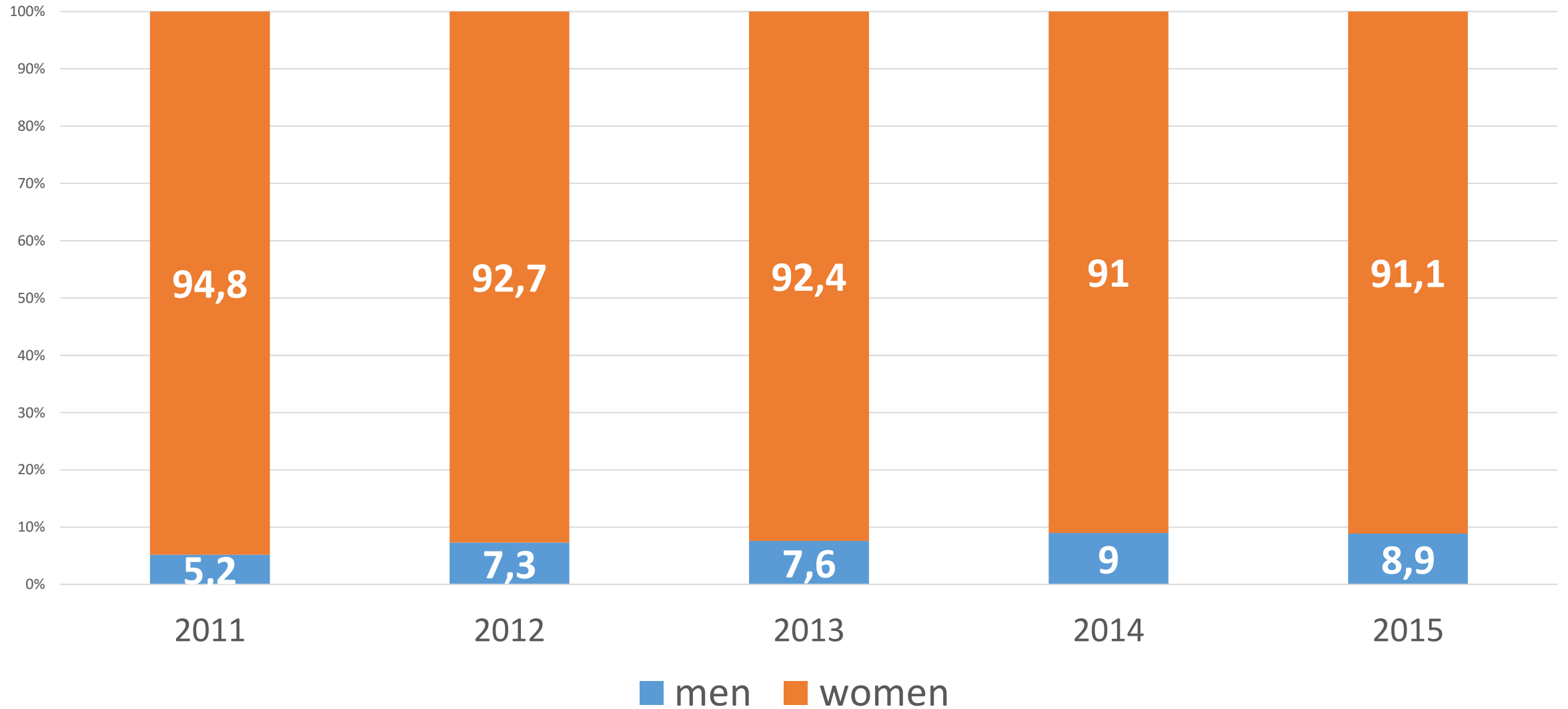
In addition

- Leave to take care of a sick family member
 - 80% of previous salary in case of nursing a child under 12 years of age (up to 14/60 days in a row) or nursing a sick family member (up to 7/10 days in a row).
- Adoptive parents leave
 - 70 days for a person who adopts a child under 10 years of age, financing similar to maternity leave.
- Paid child leave (additional vacation)
 - 3 days for a parent with one or two under 14y olds per year financed in the amount of minimum salary
 - 6 days for a parent with at least three under 14y olds or a child under 3y per year financed in the amount of minimum salary
 - Additional day in a month if a disabled child under 18y, financed in the amount of average salary.
- Unpaid child leave
 - 10 working days for a parent with a child under 14y or until 18y if disabled child.

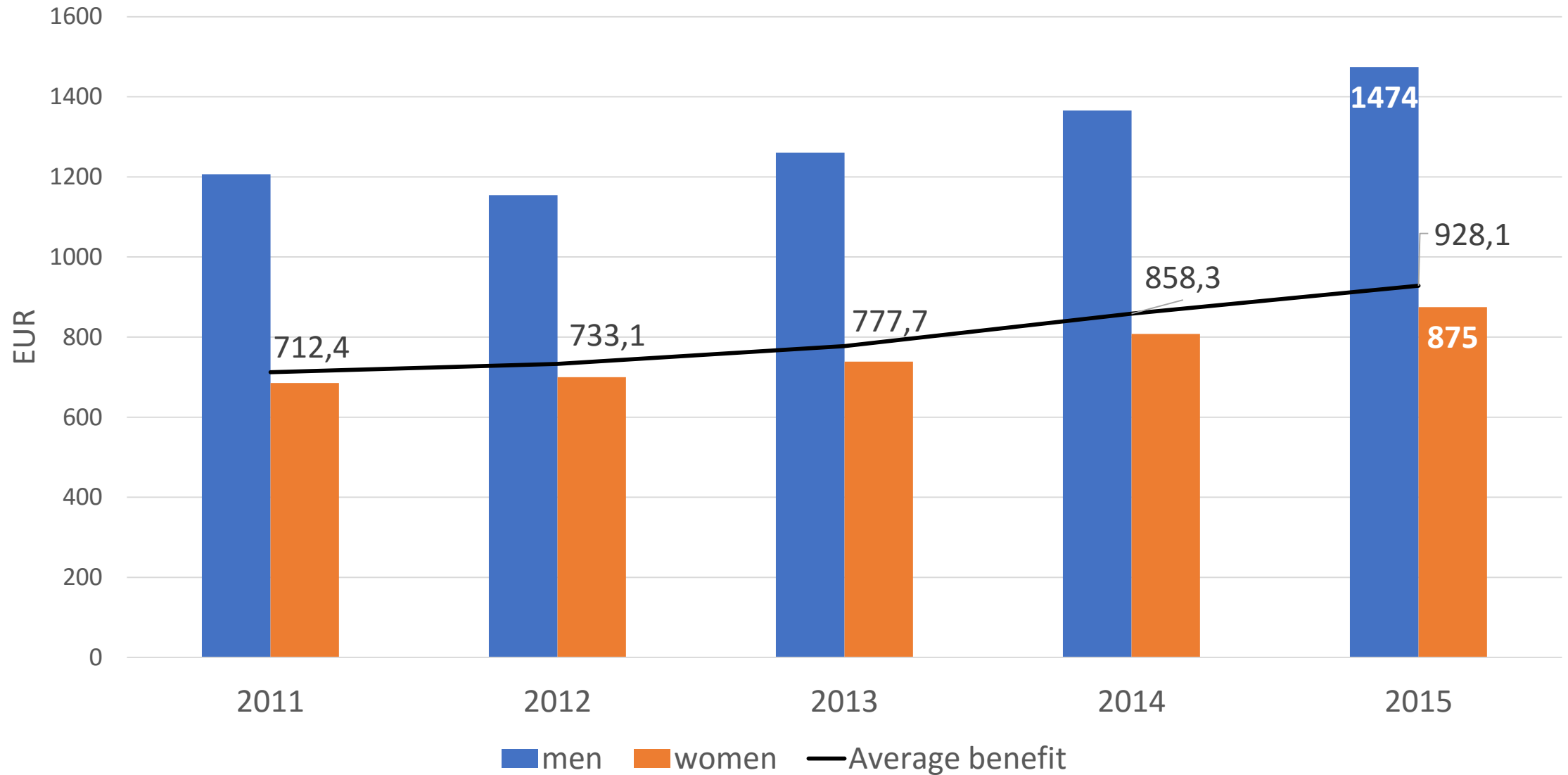
ECEC SYSTEM

- Local governments are obliged to secure a place in a childcare facility to all children at the age between 1,5 – 7 years of age who live in their catchment areas.
- The max fee for parents cannot exceed 20% of min wage (86€)
- State covers child-care service fees in a fixed amount for children with a severe or profound disability aged 0-18

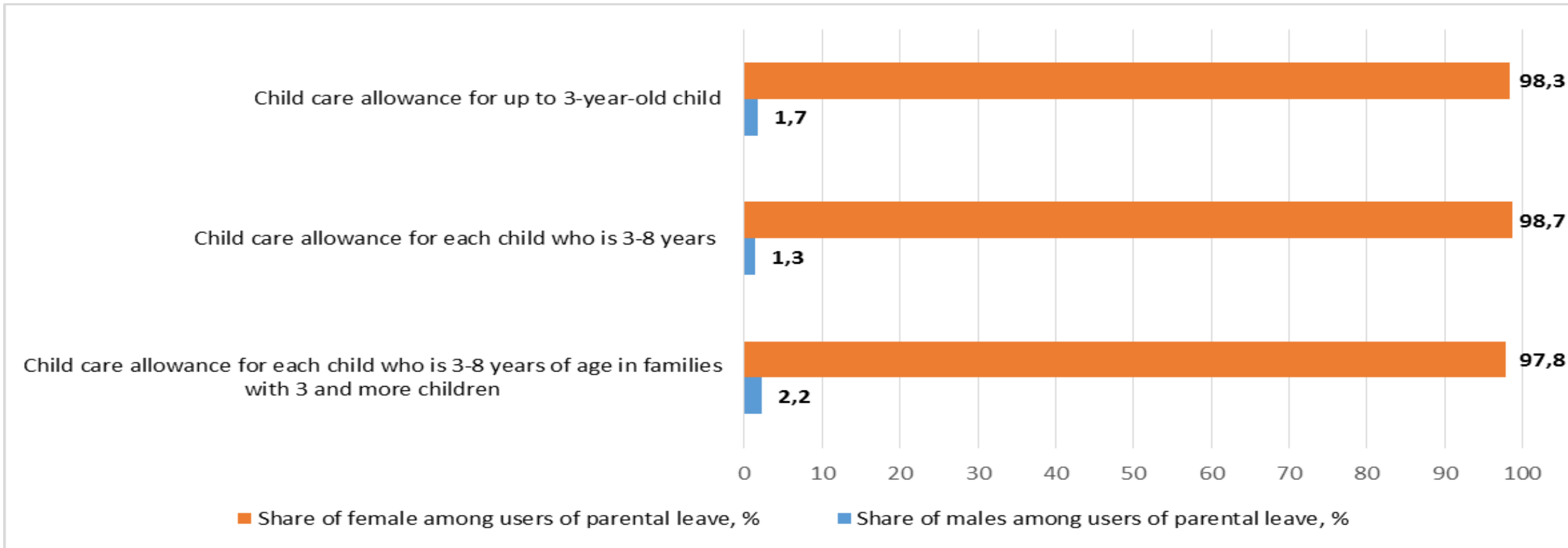
The receivers of parental benefit among men and women



Average size of the parental benefit among men and women

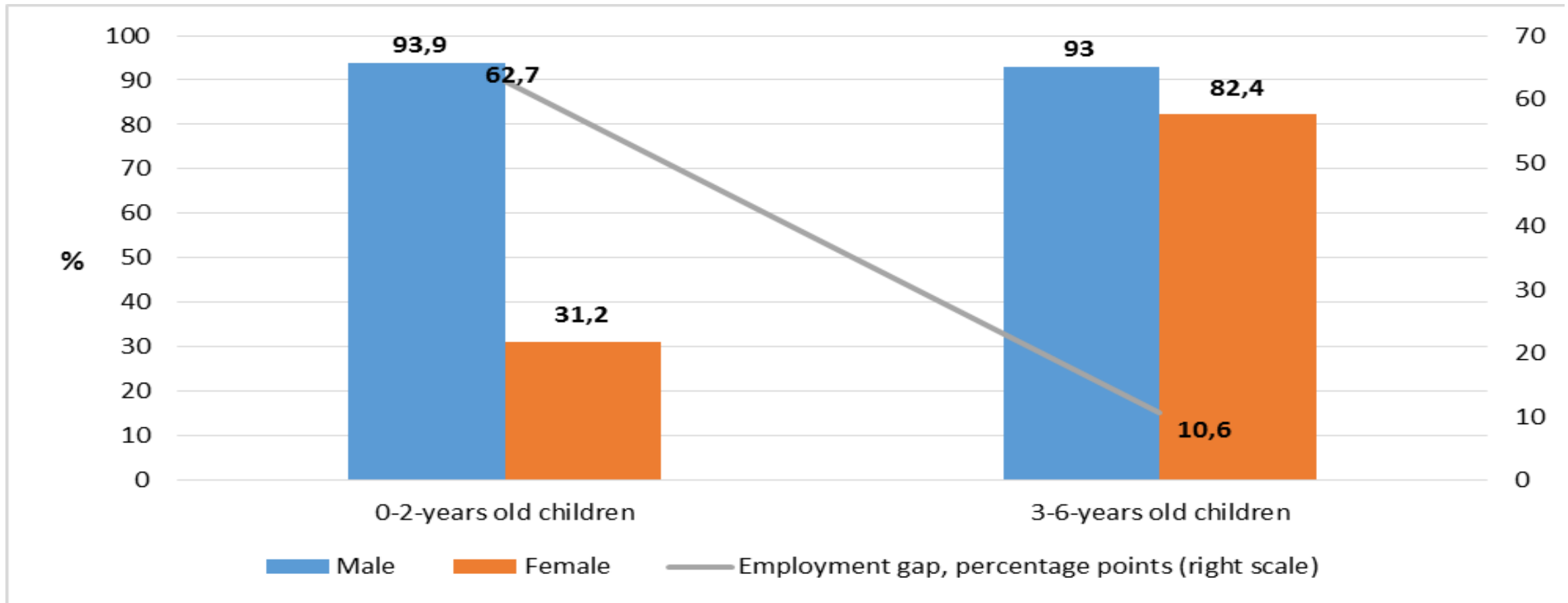


The users of parental leave by sex and type of child care allowance



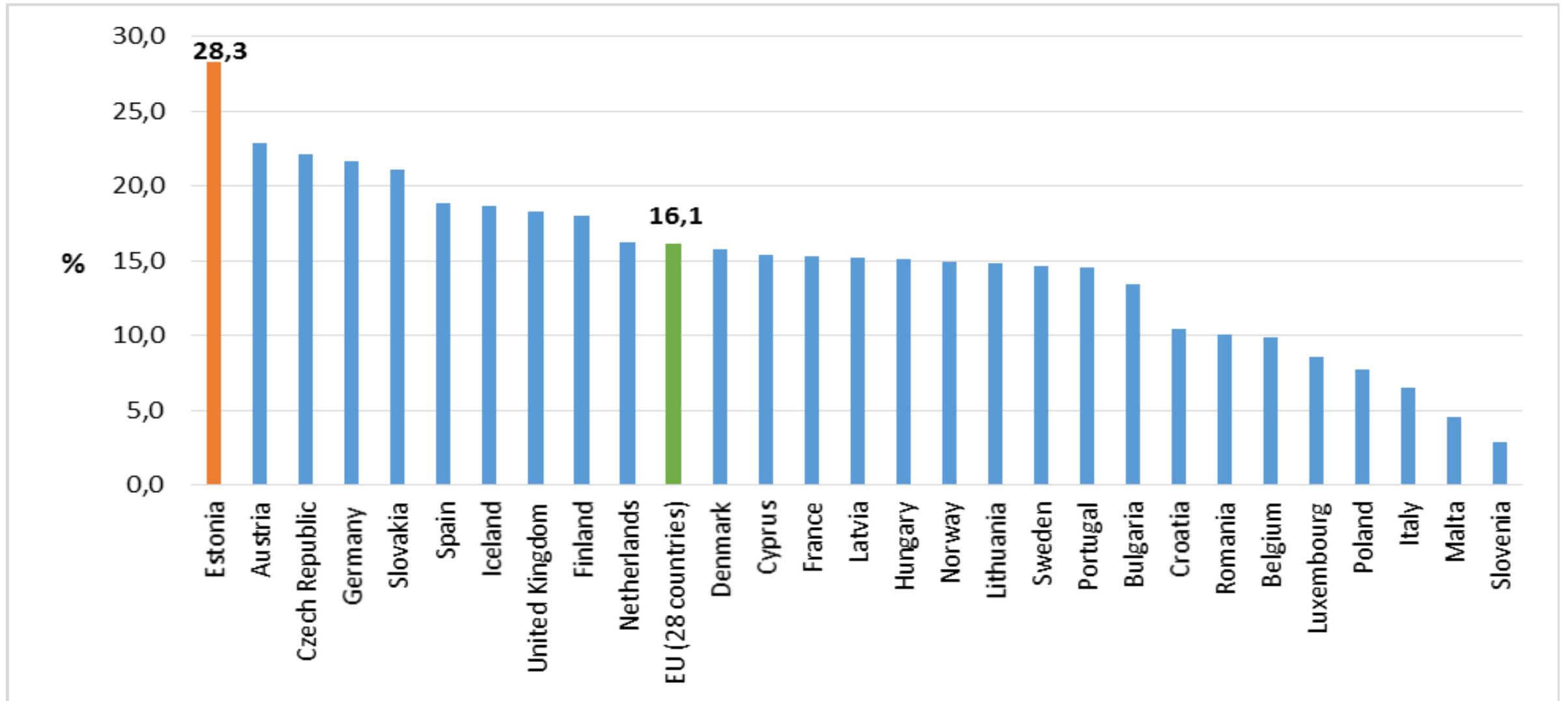
Source: Estonian Social Insurance Board

Employment rate and employment gap of males and females aged 20-49 by presence of children, 2015



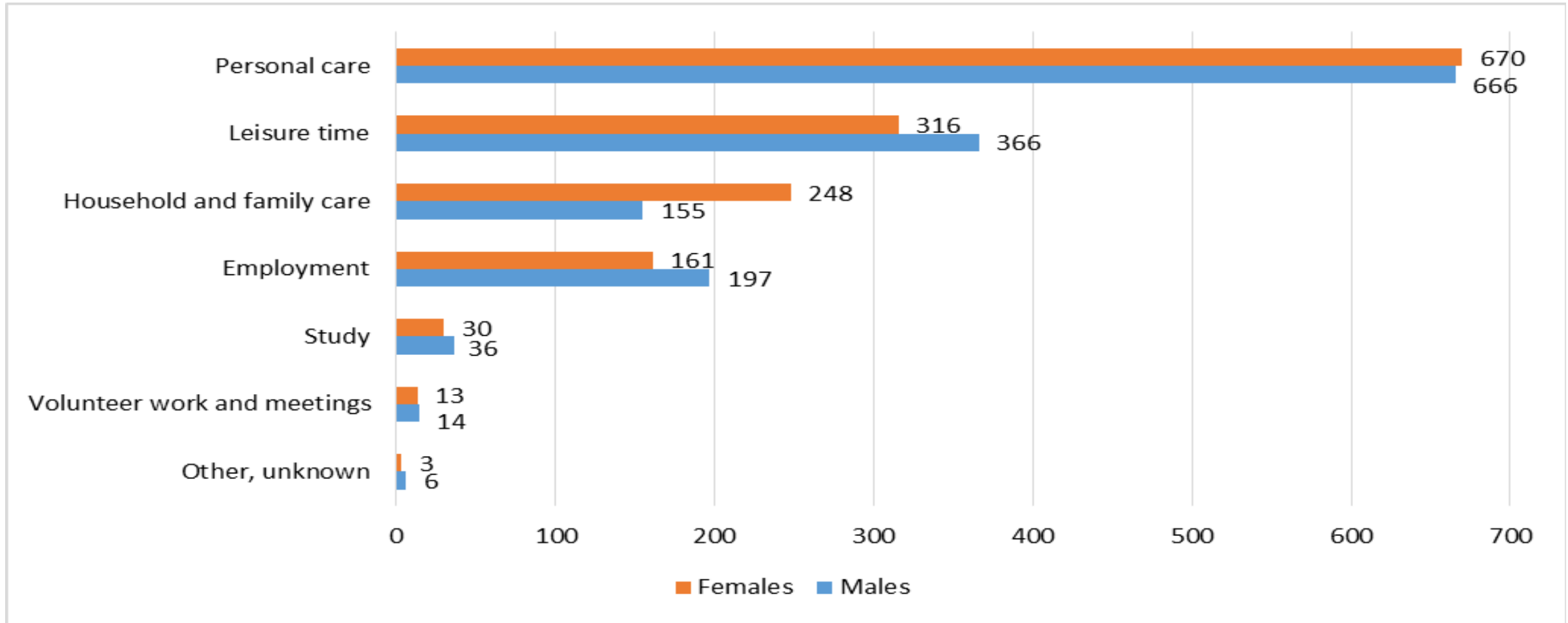
Source: Statistics Estonia, Labour Force Survey

Gender pay gap in 2014, %



Source: Eurostat

Average time use in a day, minutes



Source: Source: Statistics Estonia, Time Use Survey 2009-2010

New directions in family leave policy

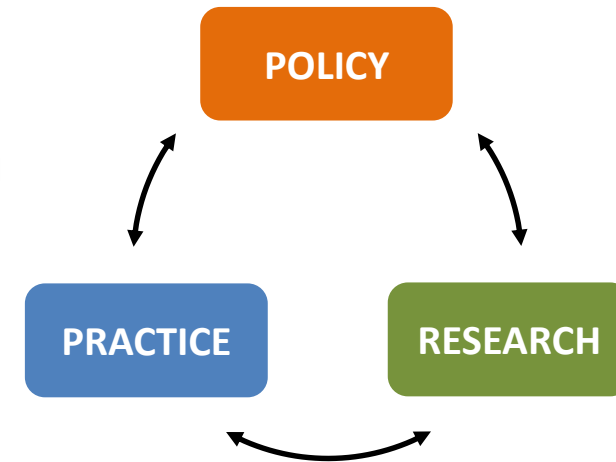
- Compounding of leaves and benefits
- Introducing father`s quota (?)
- Giving more flexibility to fathers
- Changing the leave for adoptive parents (role of fathers)
- Playing around the child care allowance
- Putting more flexibility into the system of ECEC

Bottlenecks of introducing the fathers` quota

- To take the quota from existing period or add it?
- Money?
- What if the father doesn`t use it – ECEC places, risk of poverty for women
- High number of single parents
- Social fathers vs biological fathers
- What if the woman goes back home?

Challenges in promoting gender equality with family policy measures

- Gender neutral family policy doesn't often support gender equality
- Policy vs norms and values
- Best examples from other countries might not work if not the whole picture is taken into consideration



Thank you!

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