



# RECONCILING WORK AND FAMILY LIFE - A FOCUS ON FATHER'S LEAVE IN AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

International Federation for Family Development, 11th International Advocacy  
Workshop, Paris, 4-6 September 2023

Willem Adema D.Phil.  
Senior Economist, Social Policy Division  
OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs



## What to expect in this presentation?

---

- A snapshot of fertility rates and women's employment outcomes, and other factors that may affect fertility trends
- The magnitude and nature of public family supports across OECD countries
- A focus on father's leave
- Concluding observations

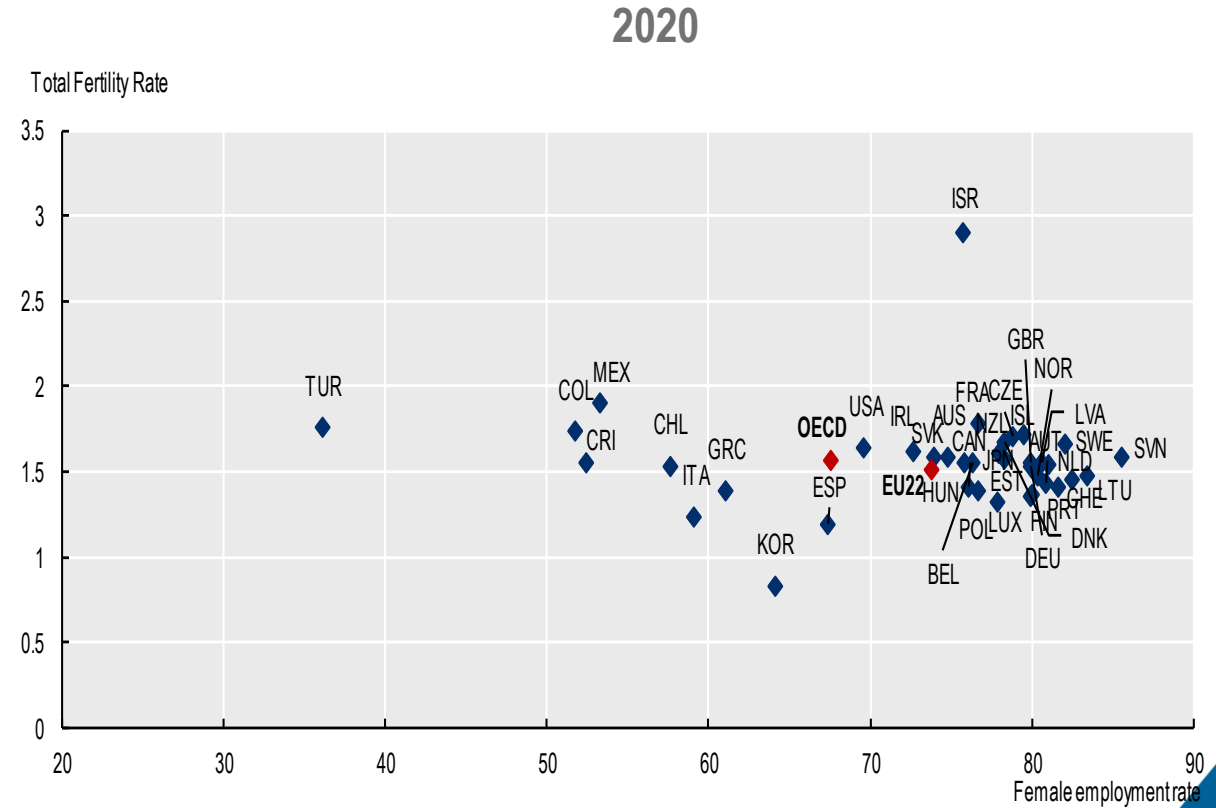
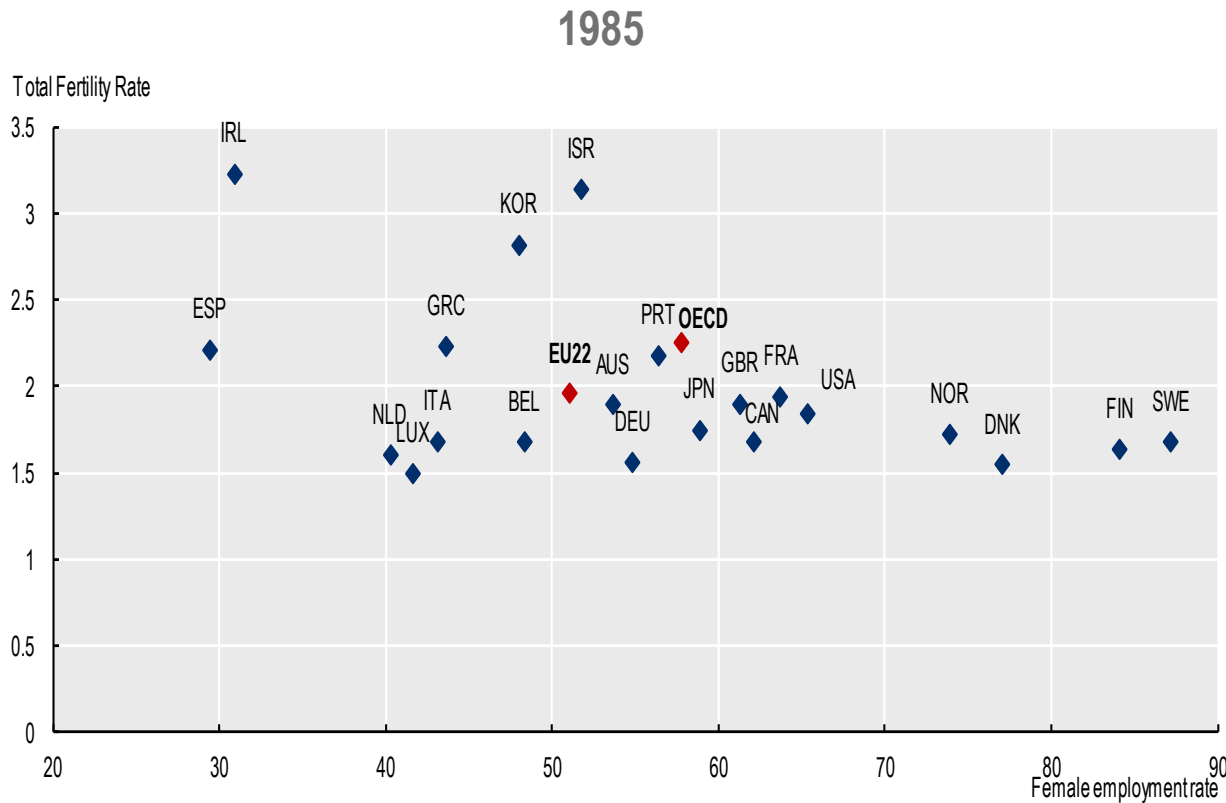


# A SNAPSHOT OF FERTILITY AND FEMALE EMPLOYMENT



# Over the past decades, fertility rates declined somewhat, while women's employment increased markedly

Total fertility rates and employment rates, women, age 25- 54 (1985 and 2020)

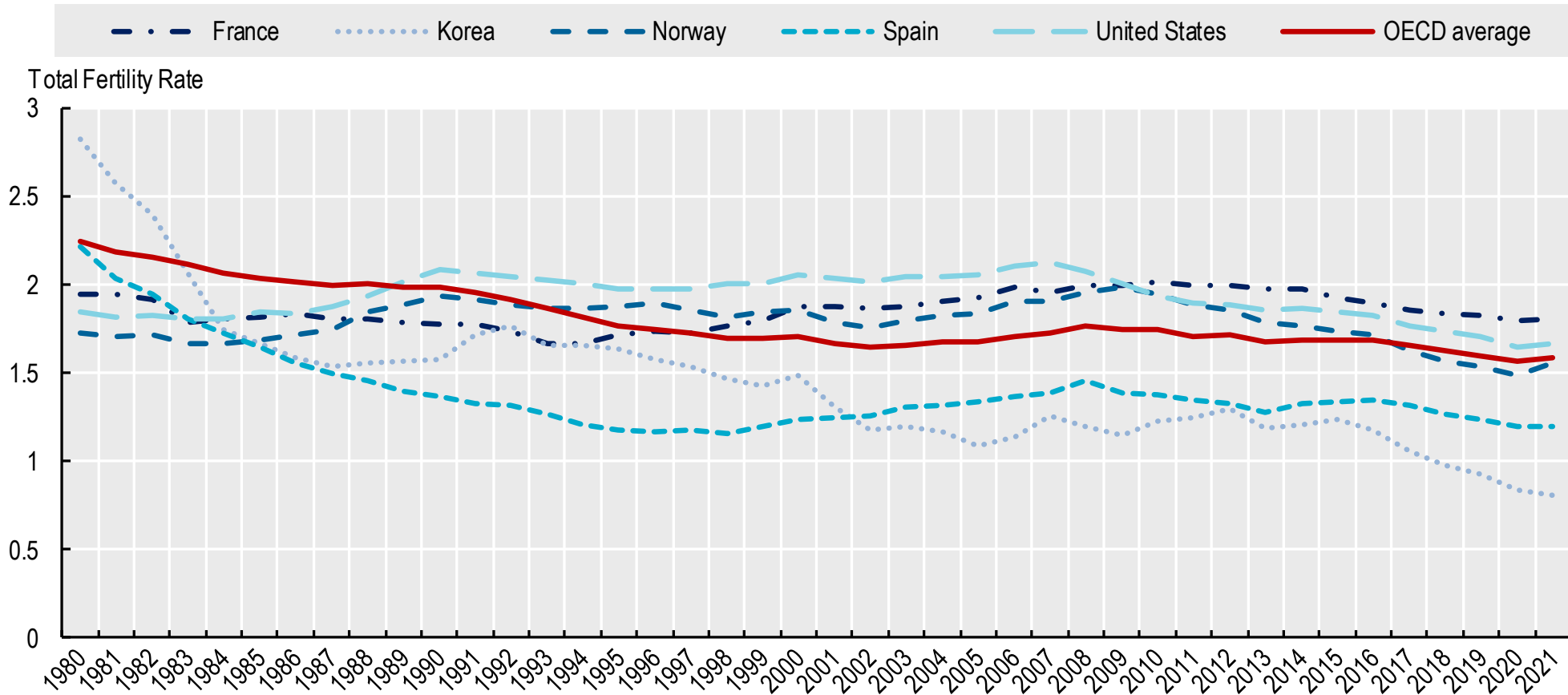


Source: OECD calculations based on data from the OECD Family Database and OECD Employment Database



# Fertility rates stabilized in the early 2000s, but declined again over the past decade

Total fertility rates, selected countries, 1980-2021

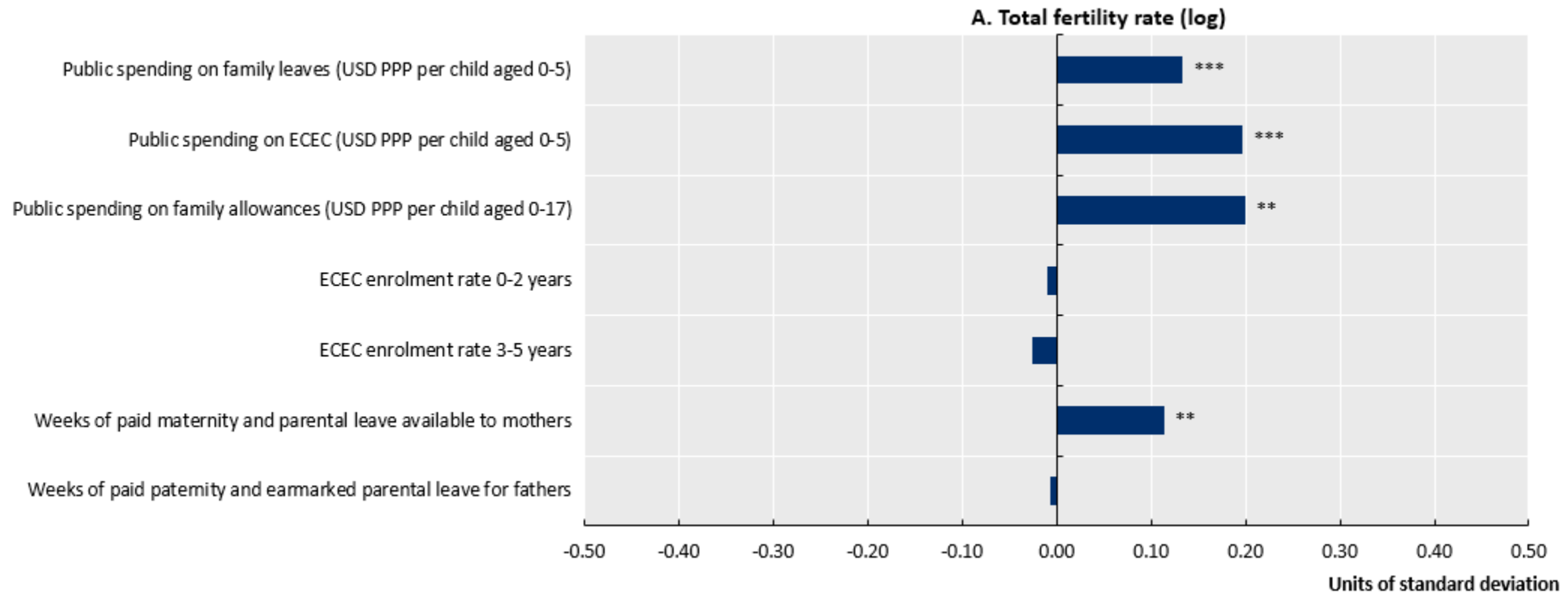


Sources: OECD Family Database Indicator SF2.1



# Family policy and labour markets are important determinants of the TFR ...

Estimated association between family policies and labour market outcomes with total fertility rates, 2002-2018

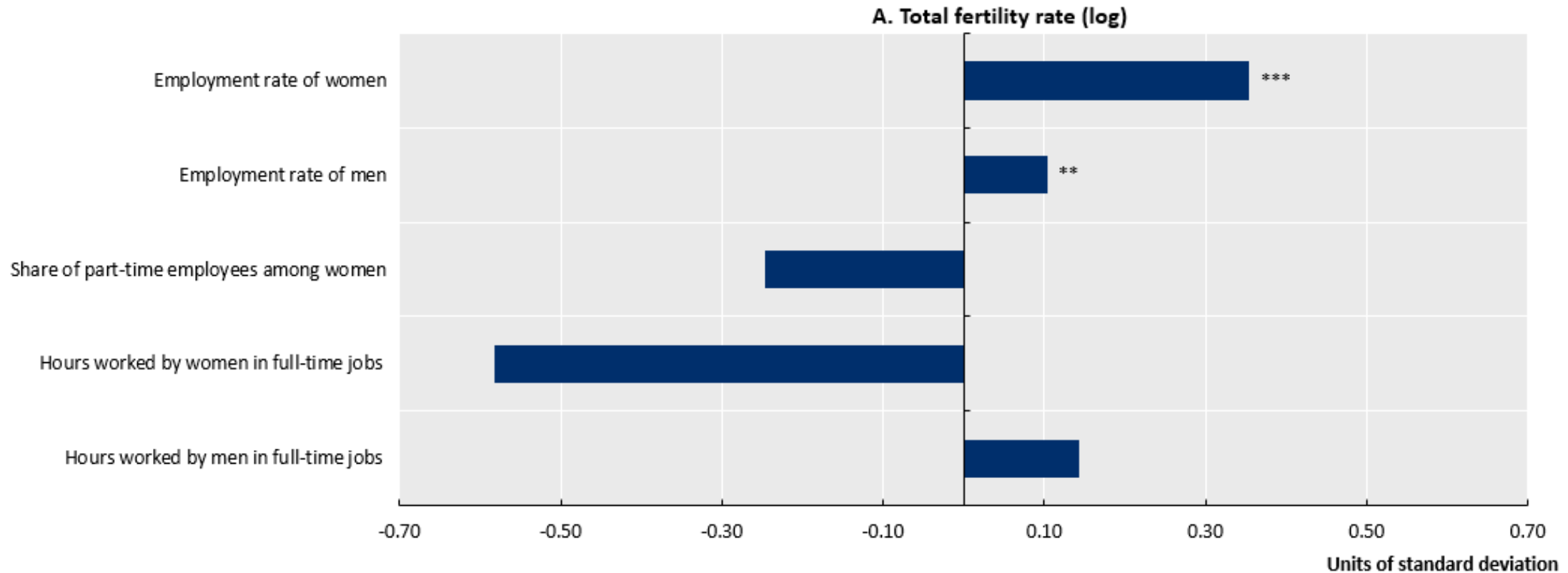


Source: OECD calculations based on data from OECD Family Database, OECD Employment Database, OECD Social Expenditure Database, OECD National Accounts, UNESCO UIS Database, OECD Tax and Benefit Models and the UN World Population Prospects.



# ...Family policy and labour markets are important determinants of the TFR (continued)

Estimated association between family policies and labour market outcomes with total fertility rates, 2002-2018, cont.



Source: OECD calculations based on data from OECD Family Database, OECD Employment Database, OECD Social Expenditure Database, OECD National Accounts, UNESCO UIS Database, OECD Tax and Benefit Models and the UN World Population Prospects.



# A COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY POLICY FRAMEWORK





## Family policy across the OECD: objectives and emphasis vary across countries

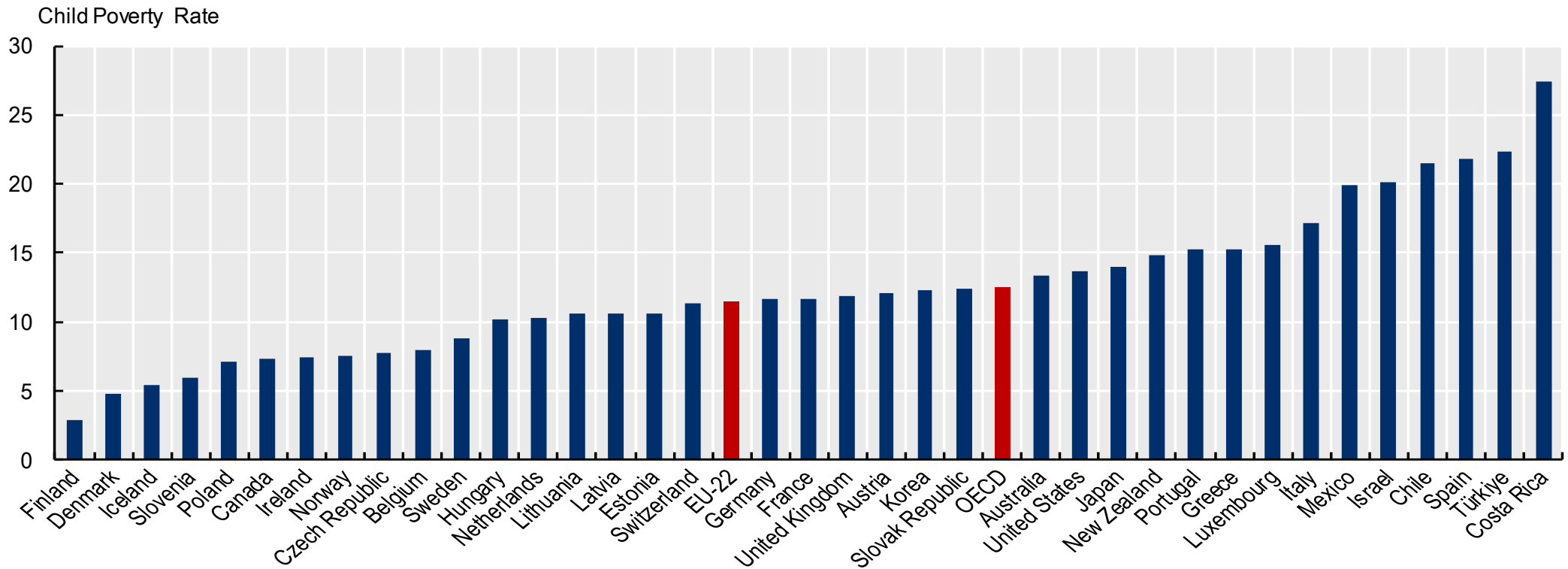
---

- Promoting choice for parents in reconciling work and family life
- Enabling people to have children at the time of their choice
- Improve the efficient use of economic resources and mobilise hitherto unused labour supply, to improve family resources, strengthen the tax base, and promote economic growth
- Enhancing gender equity
- Reducing family poverty and enhancing child development



# Over 10% of children in the EU and OECD experience poverty, 2020

Child poverty rate, children <18 years old, 2020 or latest available year



Note: an equivalised household disposable income (i.e. an income after taxes and transfers adjusted for household size) below the poverty threshold. The poverty threshold is set here at 50% of the median disposable income in each country.

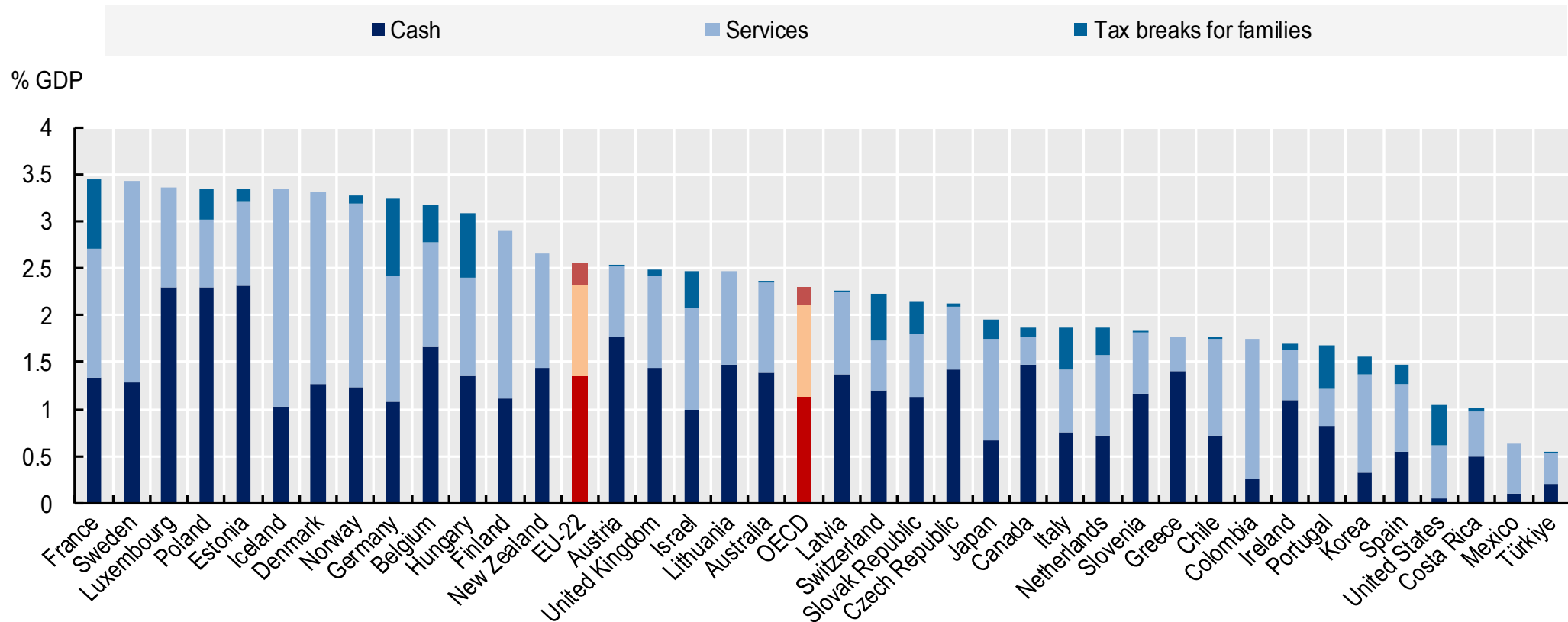
Data refer to 2020 for all countries except Costa Rica, Finland, Latvia, the Netherlands and the United States (2021); Denmark, France, Germany, Switzerland and Türkiye (2019); Japan (2018); Chile, Iceland

Source: OECD Income Distribution Database



# Public family benefit spending levels and structures across the OECD

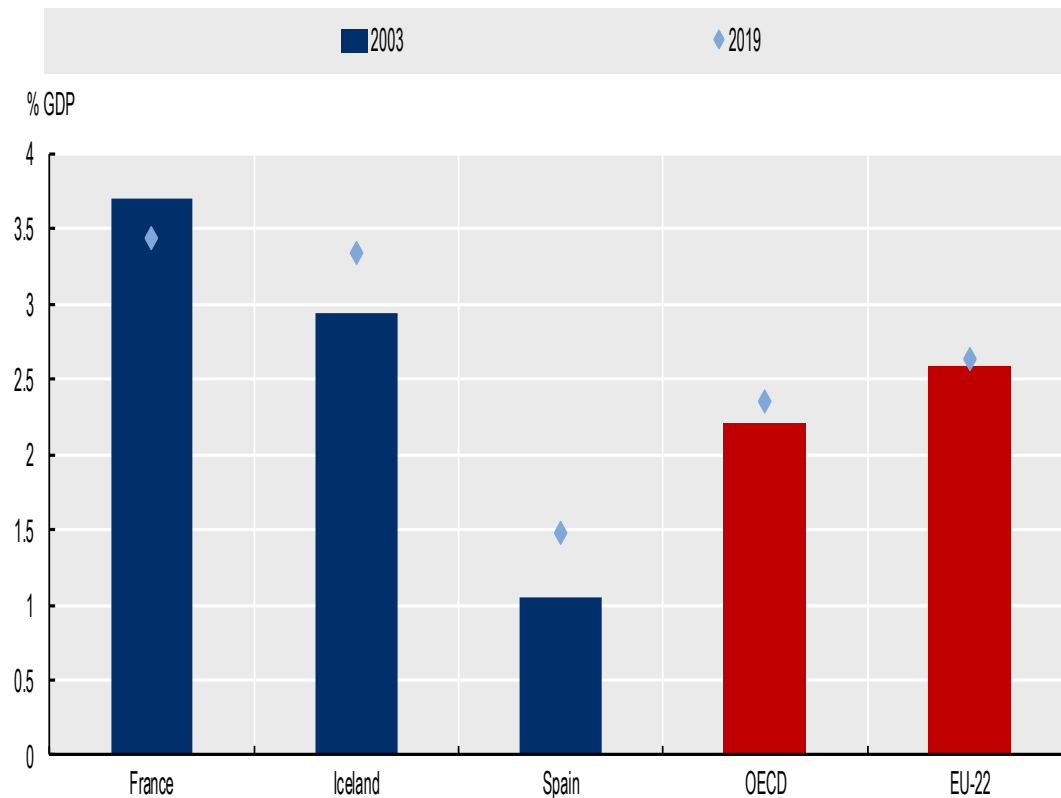
Public expenditure on family benefits by type of expenditure, in percent of GDP, 2019 or latest available.



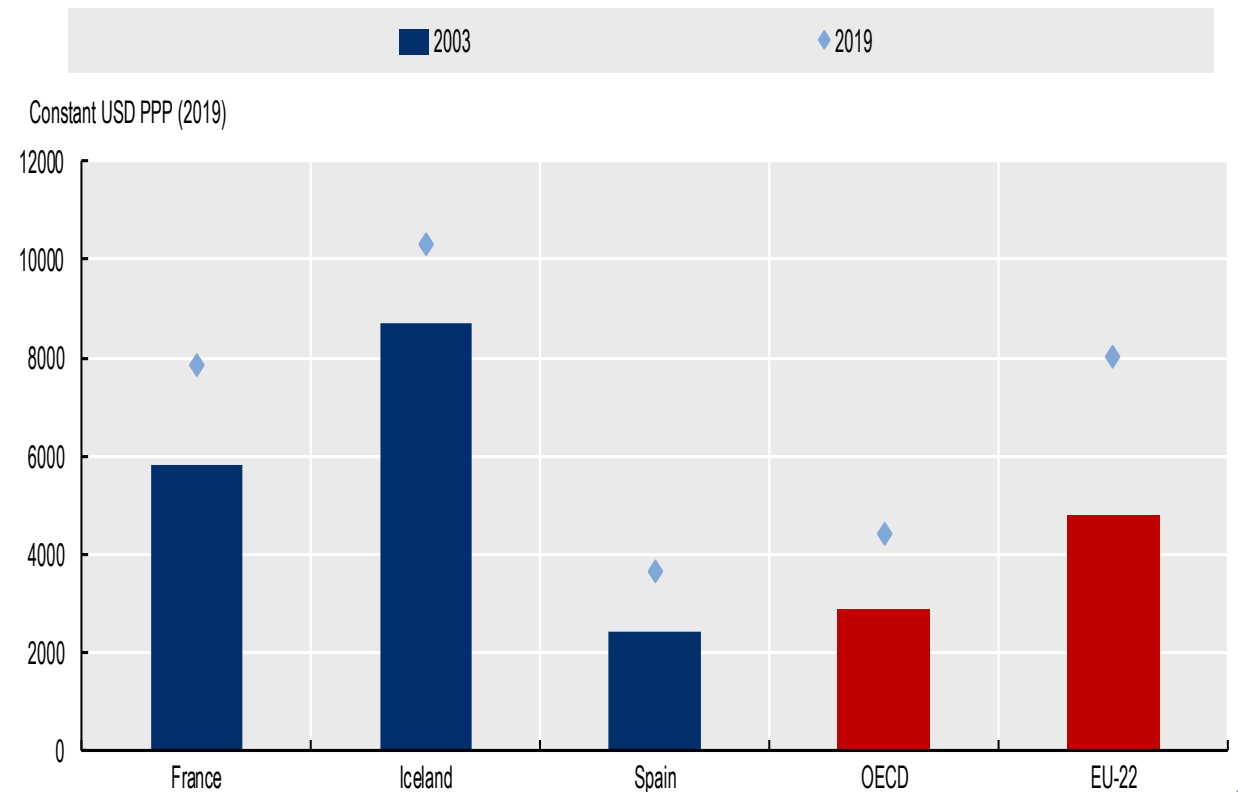


# Public spending on family benefits trends seem fairly flat, but spending per child has increased strongly

Public expenditure on family benefits, in percent of GDP, 2003 and 2019



Public expenditure on family benefits per child (0-14 years old), in constant USD PPP (2019), 2003 and 2019



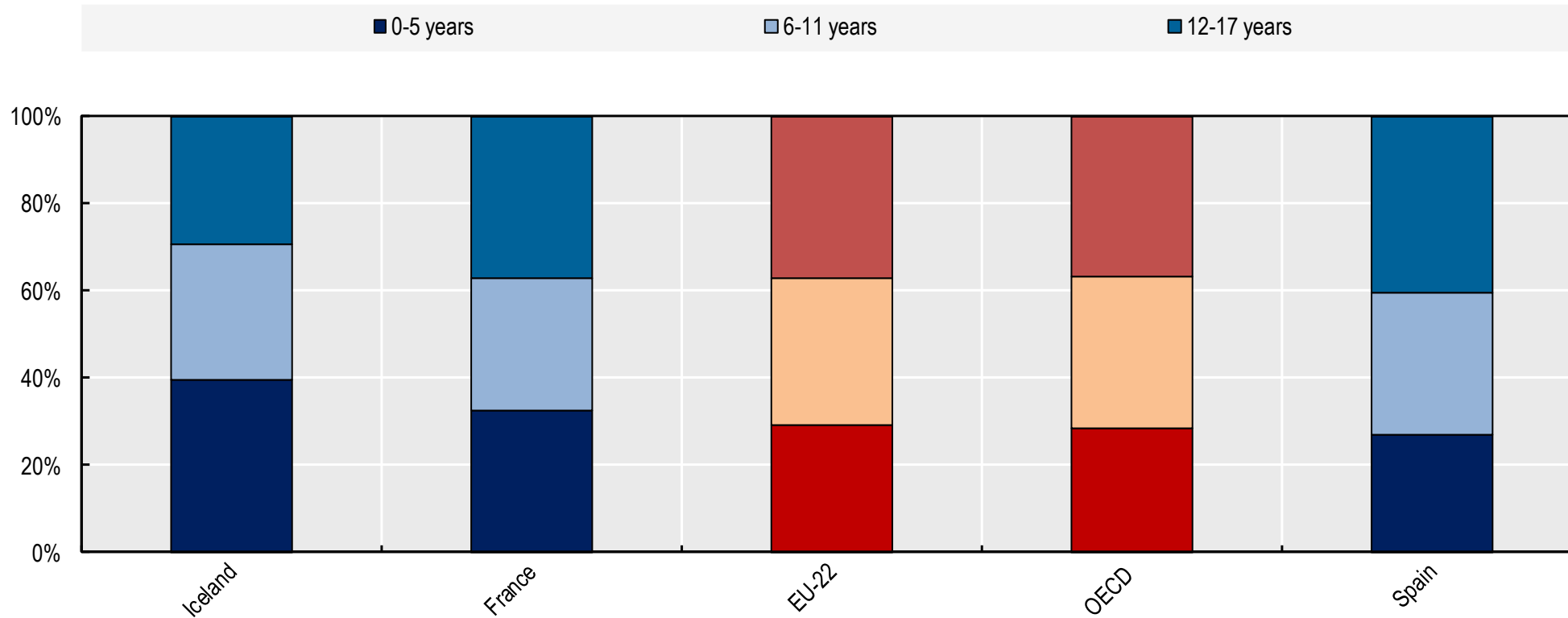
Note: Spending data include spending on family cash benefits and family services as well as Tax Breaks towards families. The OECD average excludes Colombia, Costa Rica, Estonia, Greece, Israel, Italy, Korea, Latvia and Lithuania. The EU-22 average excludes Estonia, Greece, Italy, Latvia and Lithuania.

Sources: OECD Social Expenditure Database and UN World Population Prospects



# The share of public spending on family benefits on pre-school aged children is relatively high in Iceland.

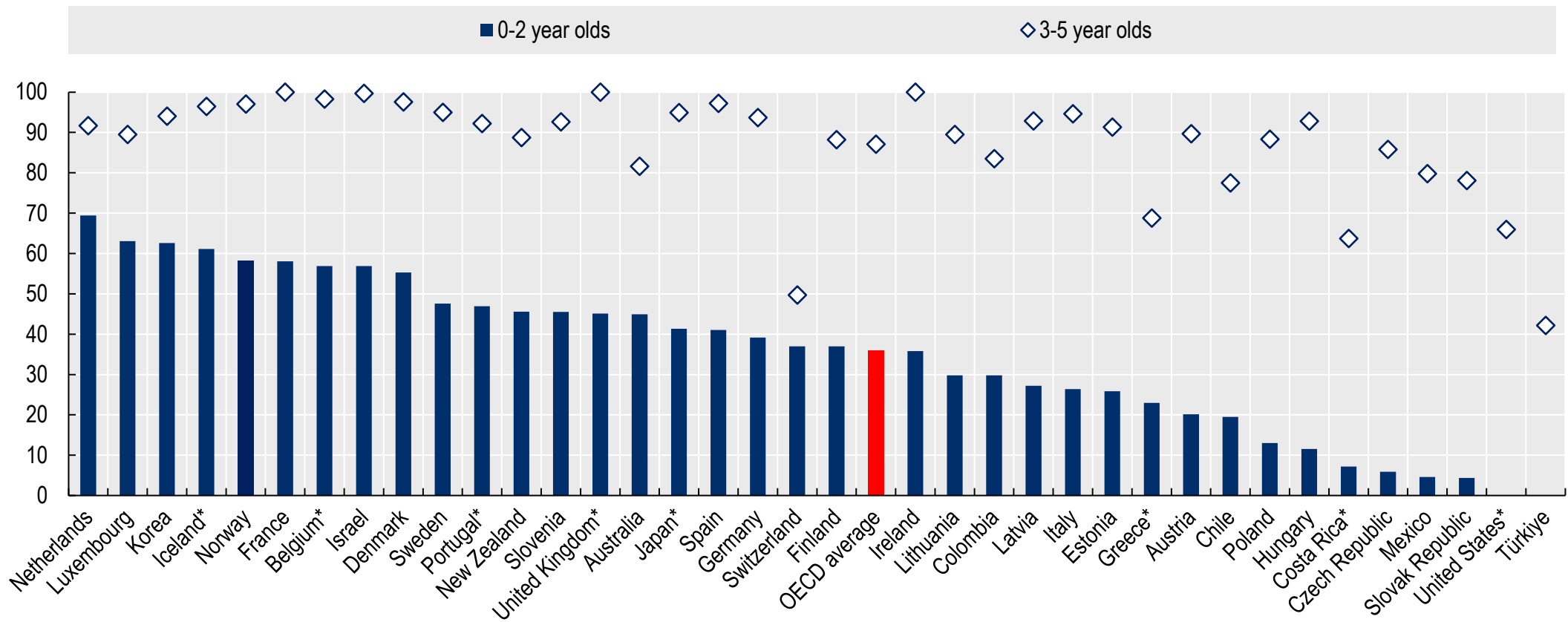
Public expenditure on family benefits by age, in percent of GDP, 2019





# Enrolment rates in early childhood education and care are lowest for the youngest children

Percent of children enrolled in early childhood education and care services, 2020 or latest available



Note: Data on 0–2-year-olds for the United States is missing.  
Source: OECD Family Database Indicator PF3.2

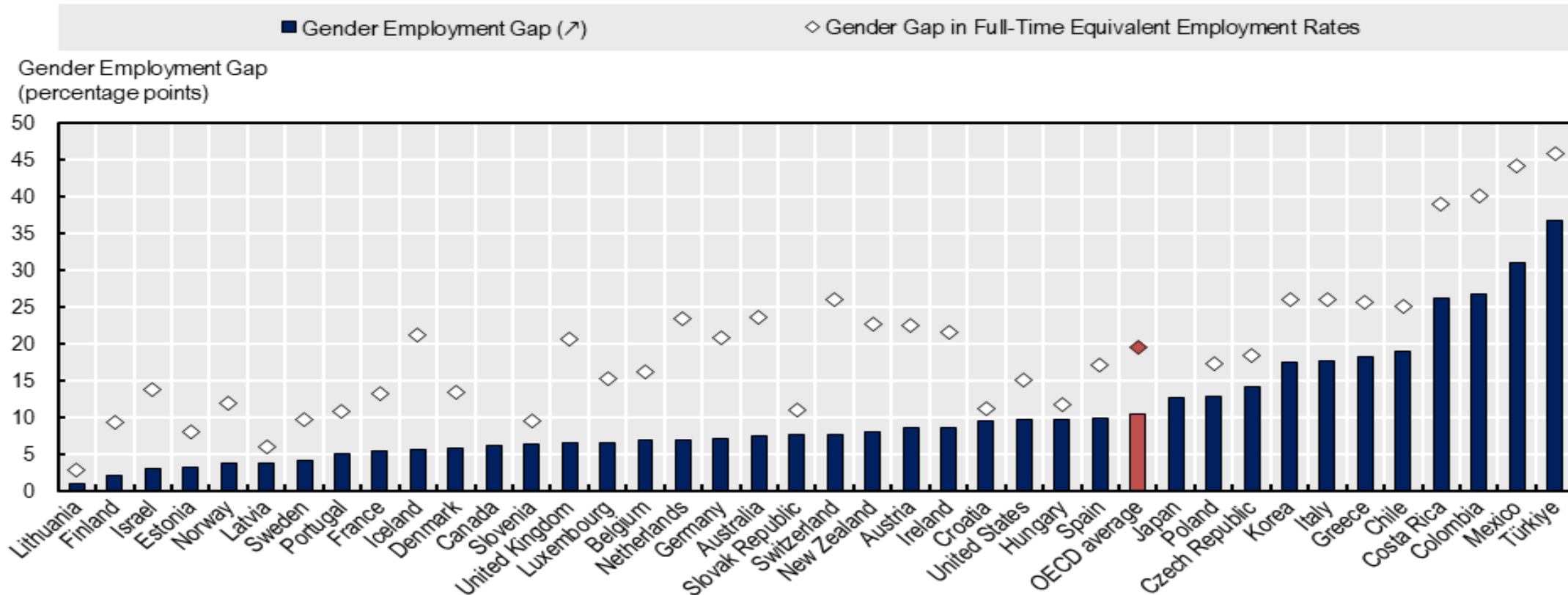


# A FOCUS ON FATHER'S LEAVE



# Gender gaps in employment remains significant, especially when working hours are accounted for

Gender difference (men minus women) in the employment rate and the full-time equivalent employment rate, 15-64 year olds, 2021



Notes: The full-time equivalent employment rate is calculated as the employment rate for 15-64 years old multiplied by the average usual hours worked per week per person in employment (both dependent and self-employment), divided by 40. For the United States, the full-time.

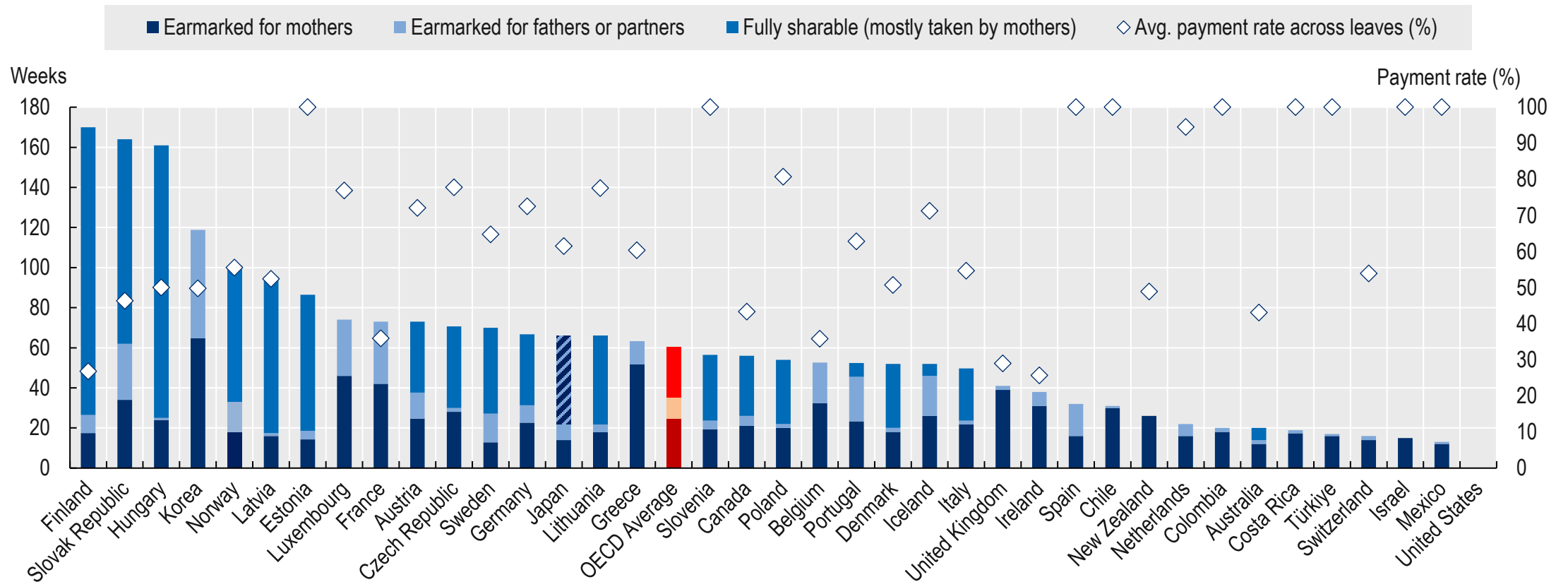
Source: OECD Employment Database and OECD Labour Force Projections.





# The duration of paid leave benefits for parents is about one year on average across the OECD

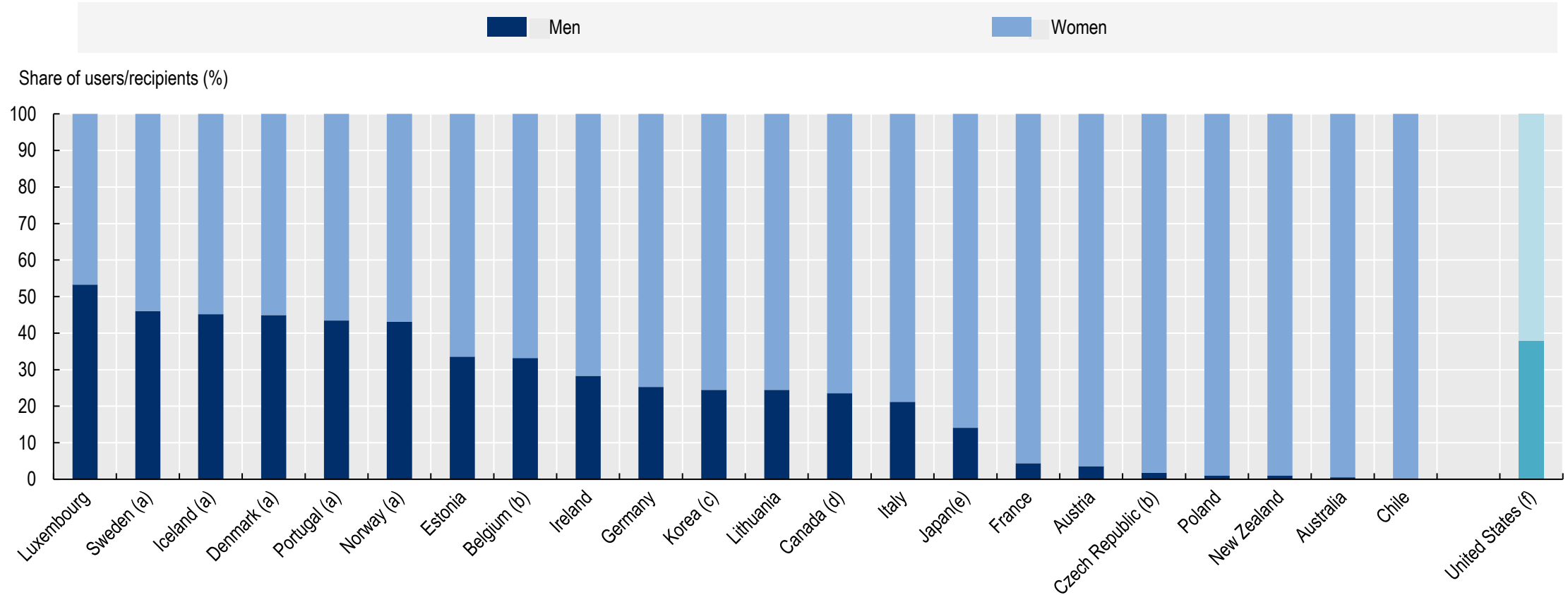
Duration of paid parental leave entitlements in weeks<sup>1</sup> (left axis) and average payment rates<sup>2</sup> (right axis) across different leaves (maternity leave, paternity leave, parental leave, home care leave), 2022





# In some OECD countries, the number of parental leave users who are fathers is close to 50%...

Gender distribution of recipients/users of publicly-administered parental leave/benefits, 2021 or latest year available



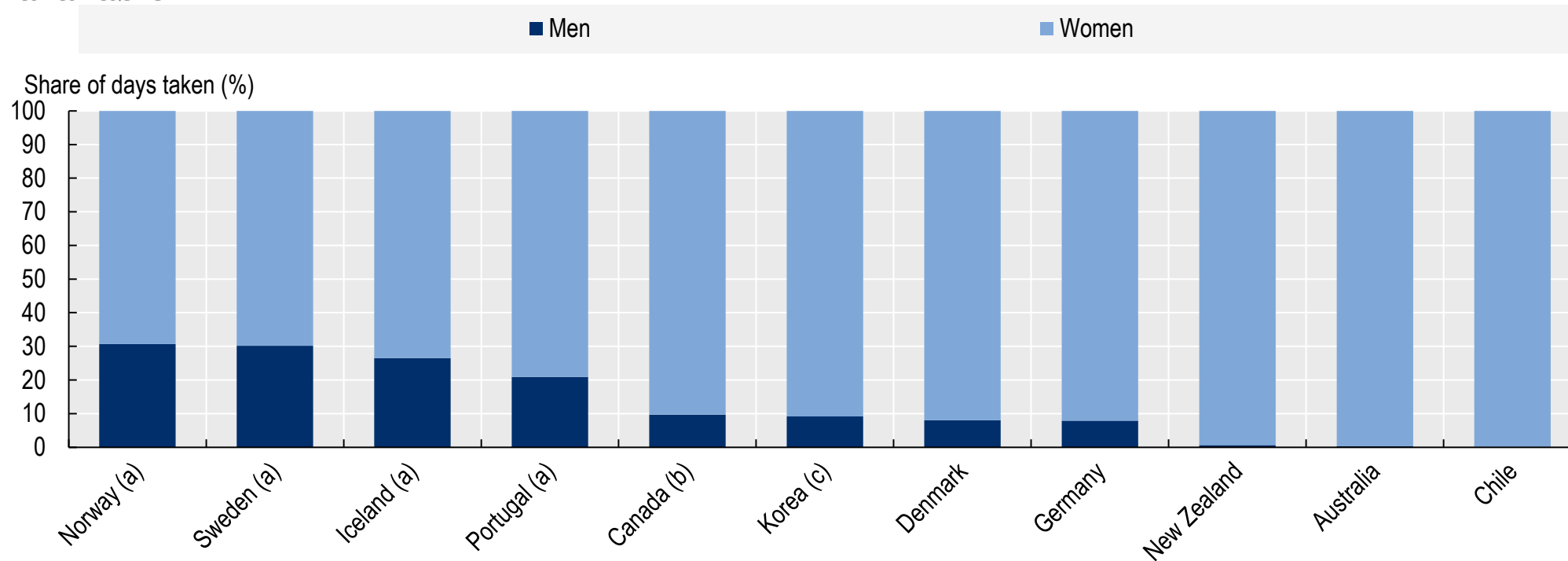
Notes: Data refer to recipients/users of publicly-administered parental leave benefits or publicly-administered paid parental leave, and do not include users of maternity or paternity leave unless the country in question does not make a distinction between the different leaves. Data for the United States are estimates of users of paid leave around birth of the first child, based on the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). Besides public paid leave insurance benefits for pregnancy and/or family caregiving in 9 US states and districts, and contrary to other countries, this also includes employer-provided schemes. For more detailed note see the source..

Source: OECD Family Database, Indicator PF2.2 Use of childbirth-related leave benefits, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2-2-Use-childbirth-leave.pdf> and <https://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2-2-Use-childbirth-leave.xlsx>



# ...but fathers still use only a small fraction of all available leave taken

Gender distribution in total days of publicly-administered parental leave/benefits receipt/use, 2021 or latest year available



Notes: Data refer to recipients/users of publicly-administered parental leave benefits or publicly-administered paid parental leave, and do not include users of maternity or paternity leave unless the country in question does not make a distinction between the different leaves. a) The national leave framework and/or the data source do not distinguish between maternity, paternity and parental leave. b) Data do not cover parents in Québec, which since 2006 has administered its own parental benefits under the Québec Parental Insurance Plan. c) For Korea, data refer to recipients of employment insurance parental leave benefits and cover private sector employees only. Source: OECD Family Database, Indicator PF2.2 Use of childbirth-related leave benefits, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2-2-Use-childbirth-leave.pdf> and <https://www.oecd.org/els/family/PF2-2-Use-childbirth-leave.xlsx>



# CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS



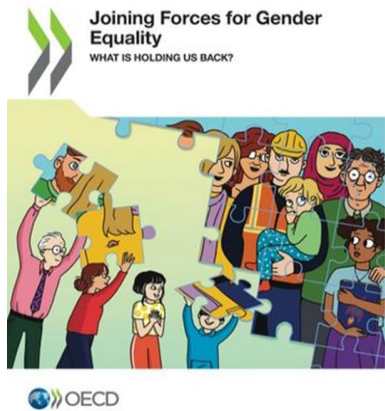
## Some concluding observations

---

- In past decades, fertility-rates have trended downwards in most OECD countries. Policy and labour market factors can help sustain birth-rates, but a return to “replacement rate” level in OECD countries is unlikely.
- Public spending trends on family benefits are fairly flat, but are significantly upward in terms of spending per child.
- Many countries have developed ECEC systems, but coverage gaps exist for younger children (0-2) in many countries
- In recent years, many OECD countries have moved to provide publicly paid father’s leave for about 10 weeks on average.



# Further information



Email [willem.adema@oecd.org](mailto:willem.adema@oecd.org)

Follow us on X Twitter [@OECD\\_Social](https://twitter.com/OECD_Social)

Visit our website <http://oe.cd/fdb>  
<http://oe.cd/gender>

