



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 8 March 2010
6641/10 (Presse 33)

Council extends parental leave

The Council today¹ adopted a directive extending workers' rights to parental leave from three to four months for each parent ([16945/09](#) + [5922/1/10 REV 1](#)). At least one of the four months cannot be transferred to the other parent (i.e. it is lost if not taken), encouraging fathers to take the leave.

The new directive seeks to better match professional and family life and to promote gender equality on the labour market. It implements the revised framework agreement on parental leave concluded by the social partners at European level.

Other new elements compared to the existing directive 96/34 include the clarification that all workers are covered, regardless of the type of their contract (e.g. fixed-term, part-time and temporary agency workers).

¹ This decision was taken, without debate, at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Council Council.

P R E S S

The new directive also provides for better protection against discrimination and ensures a smoother return to work. A worker applying for or taking parental leave must not be treated less favourably for doing so. When returning from parental leave, workers may request changes to their working hours for a limited period. Employers must consider and respond to such requests, taking into account both employers' and workers' needs.

Member states have two years in which to transpose the new directive into national law.
