

BUILDRES Project

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EU COUNTRIES DESK RESEARCH

Partner organisation: Hexagonale

Research on: France

Country overview, healthcare services and financial & social benefits

France's demographic context reflects ongoing changes in fertility and family formation that are directly relevant to parenting and pregnancy policy. France has a population of approximately 68–69 million, with a total fertility rate of about 1.6 children per woman in recent years, marking a notable decline from earlier decades and falling below replacement level. The average age at childbirth is around 31 years, reflecting delayed parenthood linked to education, employment stability, and housing conditions. Birth numbers have steadily decreased, while the proportion of single-parent households has increased, with roughly one in four children living in a single-parent family. Although France historically maintained one of the highest fertility rates in the European Union, recent economic uncertainty, inflation, and work–family balance challenges have influenced reproductive decision-making and the timing of pregnancies.

Pregnancy and reproductive healthcare services are embedded within France's universal health coverage system (Protection universelle maladie, part of the social security system). All legally residing women are entitled to comprehensive maternity care. Prenatal care includes a series of compulsory medical examinations, ultrasound screenings, and laboratory tests fully covered by public health insurance. From the sixth month of pregnancy until 12 days after birth, 100% of pregnancy-related healthcare costs are reimbursed, including hospital delivery. Women are entitled to 16 weeks of paid maternity leave for a first or second child (6 weeks before birth and 10 after), with longer durations for third or multiple births. Fathers/partners are entitled to 28 days of paternity leave, partially compulsory and compensated through social insurance. Postnatal care includes home visits by midwives, maternal health monitoring, and structured infant check-ups within the first months of life. Medically assisted reproduction (MAR) is publicly funded and accessible under regulated conditions, including for single women and same-sex female couples, reinforcing reproductive autonomy.

Family-oriented financial and social benefits are administered primarily through the Caisse d'Allocations Familiales (CAF) and aim to reduce the economic burden of raising children. Key supports include:

- Family Allowance (Allocations familiales), paid from the second child onward, with income-adjusted amounts.
- Birth and Adoption Grants (Prime à la naissance / adoption), paid under income conditions to help cover early expenses.
- Parental Education Allowance (PreParE), supporting parents who reduce or interrupt employment to care for a young child.



- Childcare subsidies, covering part of crèche (daycare) or registered childminder costs.
- Housing benefits (APL) and income support such as the Revenu de solidarité active (RSA) for low-income households.

These measures are financed through social contributions and taxes and form part of one of Europe's most comprehensive family policy systems. Despite this strong institutional support, financial vulnerability remains concentrated among single parents, particularly single mothers, who face higher risks of poverty and employment instability. Work–family reconciliation continues to be shaped by gendered employment patterns, with mothers significantly more likely to reduce working hours following childbirth.

Overall, France combines universal maternity healthcare, paid parental leave, and structured family allowances to promote child wellbeing and reproductive security. However, declining fertility rates and socio-economic pressures suggest that even generous welfare provisions may not fully offset broader structural challenges influencing parenting and pregnancy decisions.

Name of the organisation	Maison-Né - Centre de santé spécialisé en périnatalité
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	A highly-rated perinatal health centre supporting pregnant women and young children (0–6 years) with medical, psychological and social care. It's focused on holistic maternal and infant wellbeing.
Country	France
Mail	paris12@maison-ne.com
Phone	01 83 95 60 68
Website	https://www.maison-ne.com/
Address	Paris 12 25, rue Beccaria 75012
Name of the organisation	Agapa - Association Deuil Périnatal, lvg, lmg, Arrêt Naturel De Grossesse
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Provides empathetic, volunteer-based support for parents experiencing perinatal grief, pregnancy termination (IVG/IMG) and natural pregnancy loss — offering listening services and community support.
Country	France
Mail	contact@agapa.fr
Phone	01 40 45 06 36
Website	https://www.association-agapa.fr/
Address	47, rue de la Procession 75015 Paris
Name of the organisation	Solidarité Paris Maman
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Charity that assists mothers (often with babies) in vulnerable situations with practical support and resources, including material aid and social accompaniment.
Country	France
Mail	secretariat@solipam.fr
Phone	01 48 24 16 28
Website	Solidarité Paris Maman
Address	52 rue Richer, 75009 Paris
Name of the organisation	Association Maman
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Community organisation aimed at supporting mothers with resources and peer-group connections (including for emotional wellbeing and social support during early parenthood).
Country	France
Mail	
Phone	
Website	https://www.maman-blues.fr/
Address	
Name of the organisation	La Leche League France
Short Description (Around 300 characters)	Provides breastfeeding and maternal support through mother-to-mother groups, guidance and education.



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