

Guide for Employees: Partnerships for Same-Sex Couples

An amendment to the Civil Code came into force on 1 January 2025, introducing a new institution of partnerships for same-sex couples into Czech law. However, the amendment does not allow LGBTQ+ people to enter into equal marriage and still restricts some of their parental rights.

In our guide, you will find a brief overview of the changes as well as tips for employers on how to implement the new rules in practice so that personnel have the same work benefits. If you have any further questions after reading this guide, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@pridebusinessforum.com.

What kind of law was passed?

The Czech Parliament approved an amendment to the Civil Code that introduces the new institution of "partnership" intended for two persons of the same sex. Partners will have the same rights as married couples, with the exception of joint adoption of a child. (This exception is not entirely clear and may be disputed, but for our purposes, we are taking it into account).

What rights will same-sex partners gain by entering into a partnership? Pursuant to the new amendment, partners have the same rights as married couples, with the exception of those that are explicitly excluded.

Partners will thus newly gain the following rights, among others:

- → a manner of entering into a partnership similar to that of entering into a marriage.
- → two days of leave for entering into a partnership.
- → he possibility of having community property.
- → the right to choose a common surname.
- → widow's or widower's pension following the death of a partner.
- → the possibility of transferring entitlements to various benefits (e.g. pension, sickness) to the other partner.

What will happen with registered partnerships that were entered into prior to the amendment coming into force?

Registered partnership entered into prior to the amendment will remain valid. However, it will not be possible to enter into new registered partnerships as before.

If partners who are currently in a registered partnership decide to enter into a new partnership pursuant to the Civil Code, they do not have to first terminate their registered partnership. They can enter directly into a new partnership.

However, the rights that the Civil Code newly grants to partners will not automatically relate to those who remain in a registered partnership.

What does this mean for employees?

From 1 January 2025, there will be two legal regulations governing samesex unions (registered partnerships and partnerships) with which employers will work when providing employee benefits.

In the case of registered partnerships, employers should amend their internal regulations so that registered partners are granted the rights that married couples and parents have, even though registered partners are not entitled to such rights according to the law.

In the case of a new partnership, the number of rights to which partners are not entitled is significantly reduced. Partners will gain entitlement to all rights that married couples and parents have (upon second-parent adoption of a child). However, there still remain certain gaps due to, for example, the absence of implementing regulations and the time lag in adoption.

The law requires same-sex couples to adopt children in two steps (second-parent adoption) instead of it being possible in a single step. This means that not both of the partners will be registered as parents until several months after the birth of a child. An actual parent will thus not be able to draw parental or paternity benefits until the second-parent adoption has been finalised. In this case, the employer should consider the actual parent to be a legal parent even though the second-parent adoption has not been completed.

Benefits	An employee in a registered partnership is entitled by the law	An employee in a registered partnership is entitled by the law
Work leave in the case of registration is of the same duration as statutory leave for a wedding	NO	YES
Work leave in the event of the death of a partner or family member	NO	YES
Work leave in the event of the birth of a partner's child or adoption of a child by a partner in the same duration as paternity leave, entitlement to a paternity benefit for postnatal care (the other partner does not adopt the child)	NO	NO
Work leave in the event of the birth of a partner's child or adoption of a child by a partner in the same duration as paternity leave, entitlement to a paternity benefit for postnatal care (the other partner adopts the child)	NO	YES (the entitlement to the benefit arises upon second-parent adoption / taking the child into custody)
Work leave for accompanying a partner or a partner's child to a medical facility	NO	YES
Work leave for the purpose of caring for a partner and entitlement to attendance benefits	YES	YES

Recommendations of the Pride Business Forum for employers:

Instead of allowing same-sex couples to enter into marriage, lawmakers decided to follow a more complicated path and to maintain two institutions. This will continue to lead to unclear legal interpretation, complications, legal uncertainty and particularly to inequality and indignity for same-sex couples.

Therefore, we recommend that employers modify their internal regulations and explicitly state that employees living in partnerships are entitled to the above-mentioned benefits. This step will provide legal certainty for LGBTQ+ employees.

Guide prepared by Czeslaw Walek in collaboration with Adéla Horáková from the Jsme fér initiative and Martin Bytčánek and Viktor Vráblík from A&O Shearman. Thank you.