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[Press release](#) | 16.06.2011

Pregnant Workers Directive

Plaid MEP condemns UK government for blocking improved maternity leave

The ConDem UK Government is reported to be amongst a number of EU states trying to block new EU legislation to improve maternity leave.

On Friday (17 June) EU ministers meeting in Brussels are set to discuss the Pregnant Workers Directive.

The new law was approved by the European Parliament last October and would guarantee 20 weeks leave on full pay for all new mothers. Now it seems that eleven EU governments, including the UK, want to water down and delay the proposals.

The move has been condemned by the Plaid Cymru MEP **Jill Evans** who voted in favour of the plans at the European Parliament last year.

Speaking from Brussels, **Ms Evans** said:

"By trying to block this progressive law, the UK government is seriously undermining women's participation in the workforce.

"We have looked into the economic consequences of this in some depth and it's wrong to suggest that twenty weeks paid maternity leave is unaffordable.

"We need to take a long term view. Better parental leave represents a long term investment in the workforce and the cost implication could easily be offset by an increase in the number of women in work. By making it easier for pregnant women and new mothers to remain economically active, we are helping the economy in the longer term.

"The UK has fifty two weeks maternity leave but this is not fully paid and so poorer paid workers can be forced back to work sooner than necessary. Twenty weeks maternity leave on full pay would strike the right balance. Helping women stay economically active would actually aid economic competitiveness in the longer term."

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Responsible MEPs



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