European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

30 YEARS
SHAPING LEARNING AND SKILLS FOR EUROPE

Training leave and income replacement

Scene setting

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Overview

- Why does making time for adult learning matter in the ILA framework?
- How do challenges vary between short learning activities and extended upskilling programmes?
- How do training leave policies and other important ‘instrument groups’ intersect?
- Which training leave arrangement exists in the EU27?
- Which are the key challenges and what recent developments can be observed?
- Outlook

Why does “making time” for adult learning matter – its anchoring in the ILA recommendation

- Making time for learning is a long-standing issue for policy making – before and after the ILO 140 (1974:1976) convention on paid training leave
- Important component of the “enabling framework” of the ILA Recommendation *[Paragraph 20]*
- Training leave schemes have always included a component regarding the collective employer-employee relations and the legal consequences of taking a leave
- Many training leave schemes have an important public funding component

Making time for learning – Challenges differ between regular but short versus occasional but extended activities

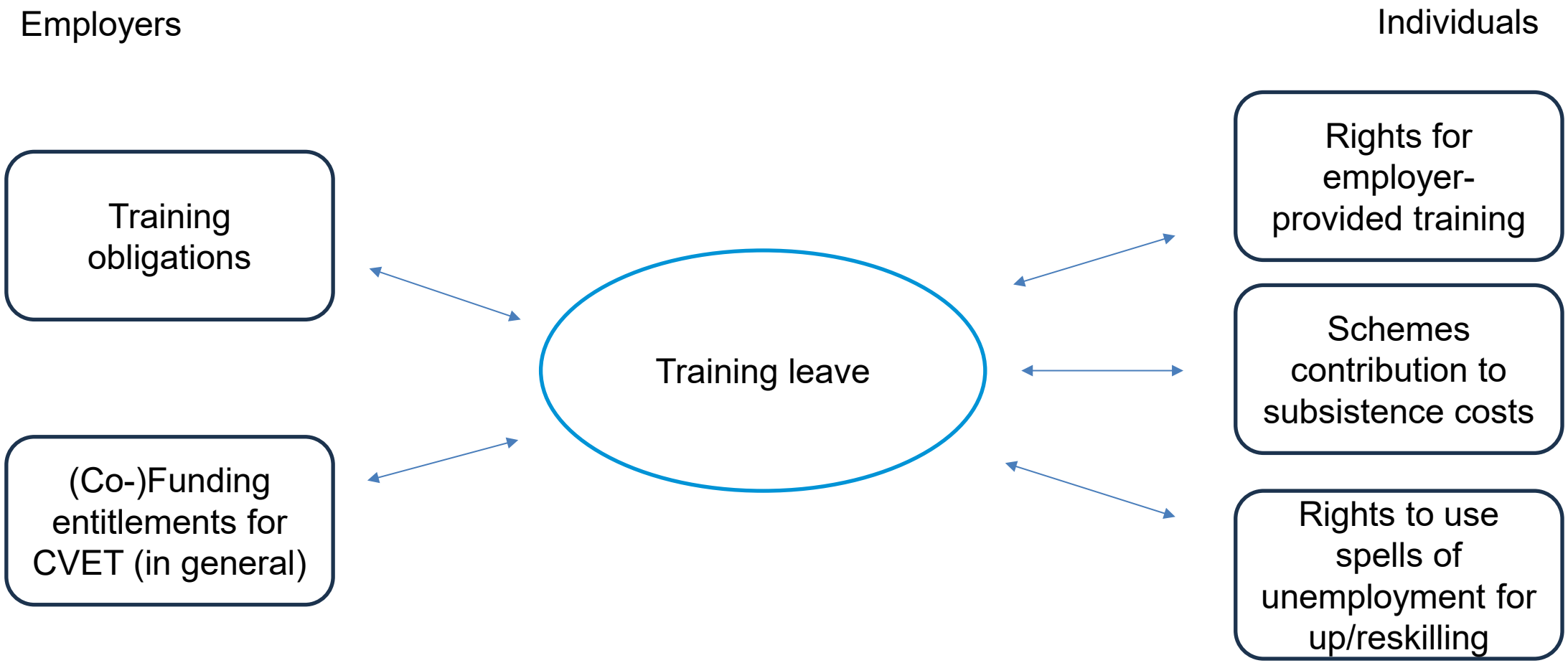
Shorter activities (courses, workshops)

- **Aligning work and family schedules** matters most, since total time can often be squeezed in.
- Unleashing a strong **motivational** effect, when allowing self-chosen learning **in paid working time**
- **Requires flexibility** from **employers** (e.g. reorganising work schedules …)

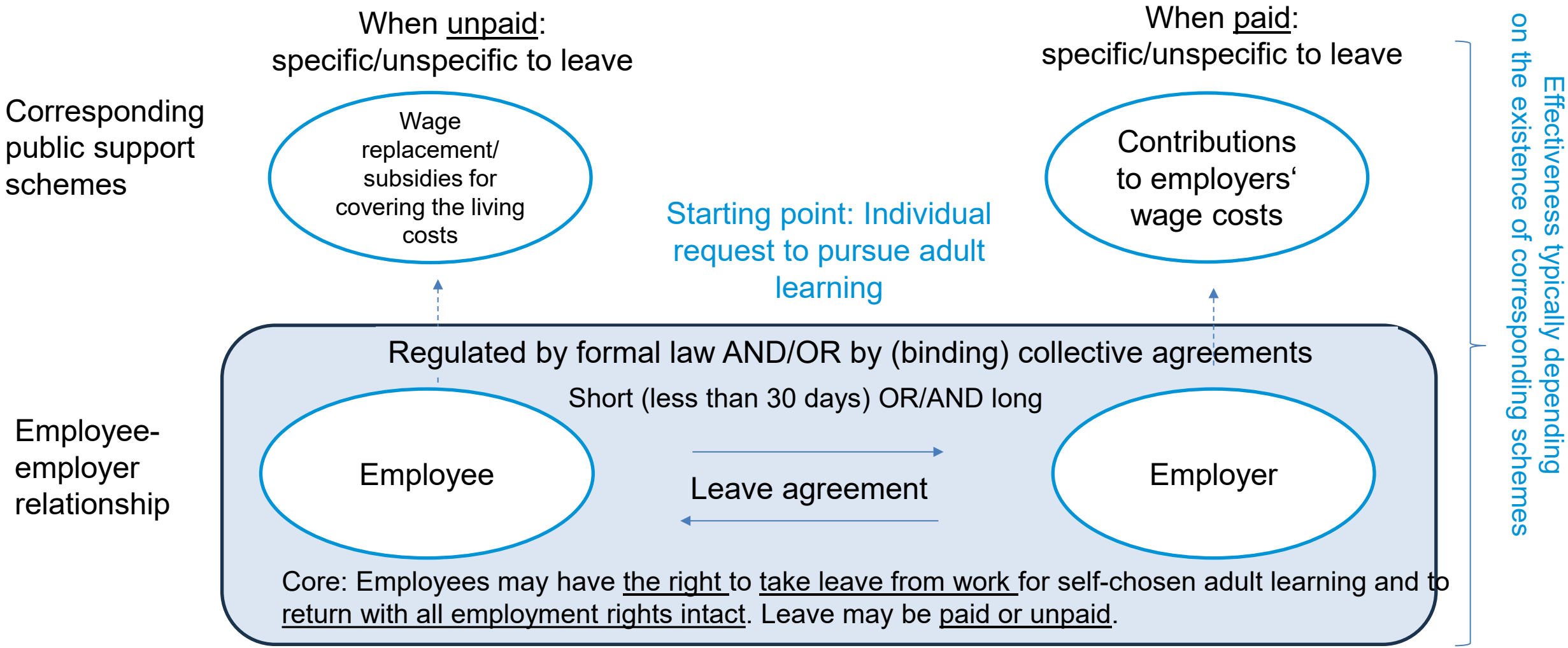
Extended activities (Up/reskilling, formal/certified programmes, 'second chance' education)

- For most adults, extended programmes are doable only with a reduction/a pausing of gainful work
- Common solutions include
  - reducing working hours or
  - taking an extended leave from work or
  - Interrupting gainful work and pursuing education based on
    - an equivalent to the unemployment benefits OR
    - a contribution to the subsistence costs (grant, loan)

Training leave – Intersection with other ‘instrument groups’



Training leave – paid and unpaid – and its corresponding support instruments



Overview on training leave schemes and their intersection with public funding (broad selection of examples)

Maximal duration of Leave/Activity	Contributing to any form of learning (but mainly regular and short activities)	Contributing to specific activities within programmes (e.g. sitting exams …)	Providing space for extended formal adult learning (6 month+)
Short (up to10 days)	DE; *DK1; ES, MT, NL,* PT, (RO), (SK), (FI1),	LV, (LT), (HU), PL	
Medium (11-60 days)	*LU*	EE, CZ	
Long (more than 60 day)			**AT***, **SE1**, **SE2**, **FI2****, **FR**, BG, DK2

Underlined: paid; underlined and italic : Paid and employer reimbursement; Bold: unpaid and wage replacement/subsidy from public source
*AT disrupted from April 2025; ** FI2 disrupted by end of 2024; (in brackets) – partly paid, partly unpaid, or non-defined

For an overview see: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/financing-adult-learning-db/instrument-types/training-leave#diffusion-across-the-eu

Policy challenges – Selection

- Schemes may be used only by low numbers of adults (e.g., ES); partly due to complex administrative requirements and the availability of less complex alternatives
- Limited knowledge about the use of schemes where no public funding is involved – hints that the use of training leave without public funding component is often limited
- Public support schemes can require outstanding high volumes of funding, in particular when they are used to ‘fill gaps’ in other policy areas

Recent changes

- Important instruments funding extended participation spells have been recently discontinued
  - The Finnish Adult Education Allowance (no replacement currently planned)
  - The Austrian Education Leave (*Bildungskarenz*) – to be replaced in 2026 by a less generous scheme
- New schemes are in preparation, yet, implementation is often challenging (see the fate of the German *Bildungszeit* proposal)
- There are recent examples for new schemes implemented, e.g. in
  - Sweden (10/2022: Transition Study Support *Omställningsstudiestöd*)

Conclusions and Outlook

- Training leave and related policies are an area of key importance – they are always in the intersection of education policy, employment and welfare policy and industrial relations
- Leave arrangements are required both for short & regular and extended & occasional activities
- To be effective, training leave arrangements require public co-funding mechanisms
- Public funding for ‘making time’ for learning requires substantial resources

Thank you

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