

154/2013 - 25 October 2013

Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey 2012

Buildings, roads and other artificial areas cover 5% of the EU

...and forests 40%

In 2012, forests and other wooded land occupied around 40% of the total area of the **EU**, cropland a quarter and grassland a further fifth, while artificial areas¹, such as buildings, road and rail networks accounted for 5%.

These data² are published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union** and are based on a large scale land survey, the Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS)³, conducted most recently in 2012. LUCAS is the largest harmonised land survey ever implemented in the EU, with data collected in 27 **EU** Member States⁴ by 750 field surveyors at 270 000 points. At each of these points, the field surveyors recorded the land cover and land use and took photographs. These photographs can be found in the **LUCAS Photo viewer**⁵ in the **Statistical Atlas** on the Eurostat website. By clicking on one of the points, access will be given to the photos collected at each point as well as to additional information, such as the size of the plot and the type of land cover.

LUCAS data forms the basis for spatial and territorial analyses which are increasingly important for planning and management of agricultural, forest, water and urban areas and mitigation of the impact of natural hazards and climate change.

More than half of Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Slovenia and Latvia covered with forests

In **Sweden** (76% of total land area), **Finland** (72%), **Estonia** (61%), **Slovenia** (60%) and **Latvia** (56%) more than half of the country is covered by forests and other wooded areas.

The highest shares of cropland are observed in **Denmark** (49%), **Hungary** (47%), **Romania** (36%), the **Czech Republic** and **Poland** (both 34%), **Germany** (33%), **Bulgaria** and **Italy** (both 32%) and **France** (31%).

Ireland (67%) has more than two thirds of the country covered by natural or agricultural grasslands, followed by the **United Kingdom** (40%), the **Netherlands** (38%), **Luxembourg** (37%) and **Belgium** (32%).

Finland (16%), **Sweden** (12%) and the **Netherlands** (11%) have the largest proportions of water areas, while **Cyprus** (21%), **Greece** (19%), **Malta** (15%), **Spain** and **Portugal** (both 12%) had the highest proportions of shrub land.

A third of **Malta** is covered with built-up and other artificial areas, followed by **Belgium** (13%), **Luxembourg** and the **Netherlands** (both 12%).

Land cover, 2012, in % of total area

	Forest and other wooded land	Cropland	Grassland	Water/wetland	Built-up and other artificial areas ¹	Shrub land ¹	Bare land ¹
EU27	41	25	20	5	5	4	2
Belgium	25	28	32	1	13	0	0
Bulgaria	43	32	17	1	2	4	1
Czech Republic	39	34	20	2	4	1	1
Denmark	18	49	21	2	7	1	1
Germany	33	33	23	2	8	1	1
Estonia	61	11	16	7	2	2	1
Ireland	13	5	67	7	4	2	2
Greece	37	23	11	2	4	19	3
Spain	37	28	14	1	4	12	5
France	32	31	27	2	6	2	1
Italy	35	32	15	3	8	5	2
Cyprus	30	19	15	1	7	21	7
Latvia	56	14	21	6	2	1	1
Lithuania	39	27	27	4	3	0	1
Luxembourg	31	18	37	1	12	0	1
Hungary	24	47	19	3	4	2	1
Malta	5	27	11	1	33	15	8
Netherlands	13	23	38	11	12	2	1
Austria	48	18	23	2	6	1	3
Poland	36	34	22	2	4	1	1
Portugal	44	18	15	2	6	12	3
Romania	31	36	25	3	2	2	1
Slovenia	60	12	21	1	4	1	1
Slovakia	46	28	19	1	3	2	1
Finland	72	5	4	16	2	1	1
Sweden	76	4	5	12	2	1	1
United Kingdom	20	22	40	5	7	6	1

The shares might not sum up to 100% due to rounding.

- Built-up and other artificial areas** include roofed constructions, such as buildings and greenhouses, non-built up areas, such as yards, car parks, cemeteries and linear features, such as roads and rail networks. **Shrub land** is an area dominated by shrubs and low woody plants capable of reaching heights up to 5m. **Bare land** is an area with no dominant vegetation or areas covered by lichens.
- More detailed data can be found on the Eurostat web site:
<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/lucas/data/database>
- In the Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS) 270 000 points were selected from a standard 2 km grid with, in total, around 1 million points all over the EU. The land cover and the visible land use were classified according to the harmonized LUCAS land cover and land use classification. For further information:
<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/lucas/methodology>
- Croatia, which joined the EU on 1 July 2013, did not take part in the 2012 survey.
- <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistical-atlas/gis/viewer/?myConfig=LUCAS-2012.xml>. The photo viewer also provides the following information about the selected LUCAS point: the size of the plot in hectares; the date of observation; the type of land cover; the usage of the land and the NUTS 2010 region.
It also contains an **order form** (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/lucas/data/LUCAS_primary_data/form) for users to request the photos.

Published by: **Eurostat Press Office**

Louise CORSELLI-NORDBLAD
Tel: +352-4301-33 444
eurostat-pressoffice@ec.europa.eu

For further information:

Alessandra PALMIERI
Tel: +352-4301-31 776
alessandra.palmieri@ec.europa.eu

Eurostat News Releases on the Internet: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>