

5 October 2015: World Habitat Day

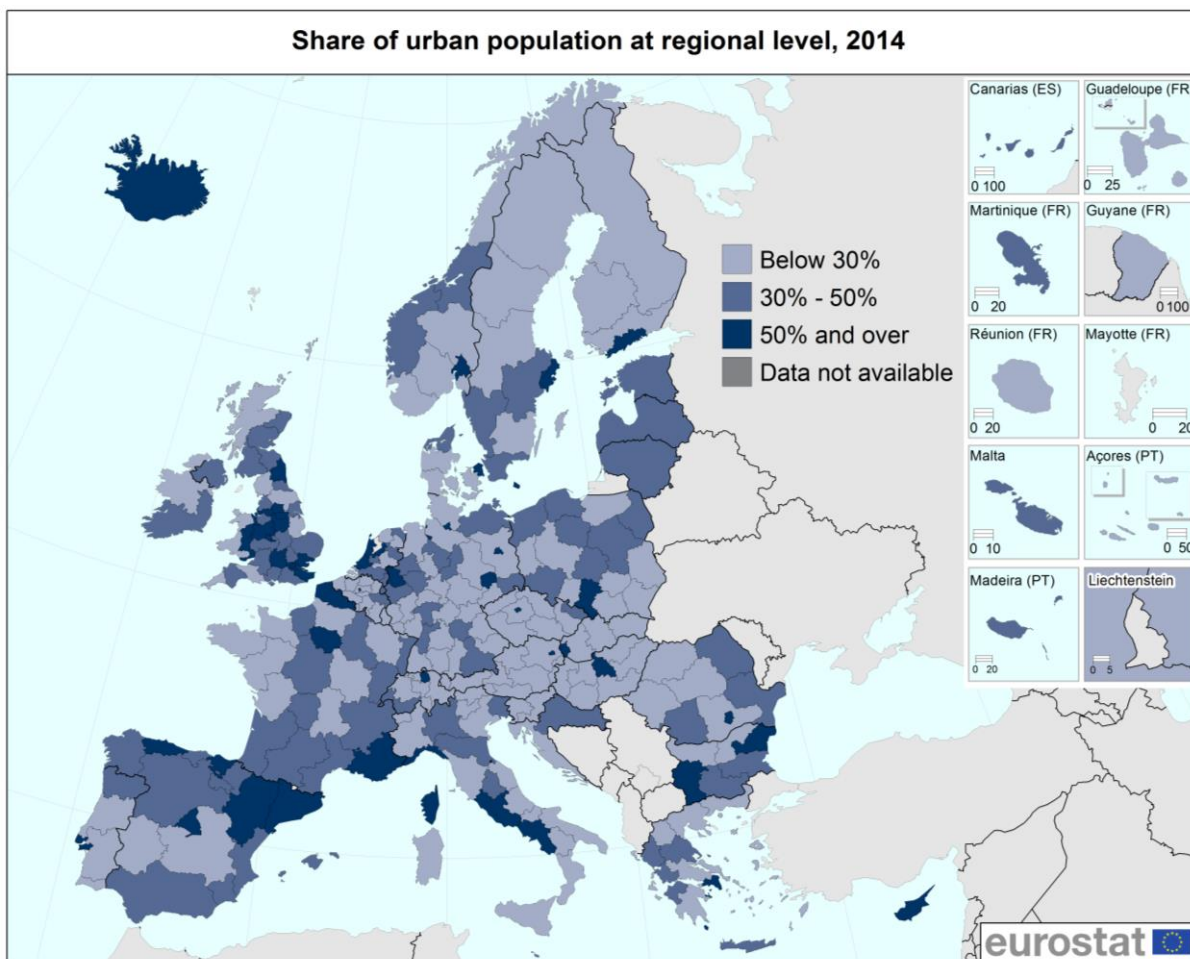
Just over 40% of the EU population lives in cities

Urban population in the Nordic Member States most satisfied with public spaces

Out of 100 persons in the **European Union** (EU) in 2014, 40 were living in densely-populated areas (or cities), 28 in thinly-populated (or rural) areas and 32 in intermediate areas (or towns and suburbs). There are significant discrepancies between the **EU** Member States, some of them having a mainly urban population while in others the population is mainly rural.

With an overall average score of 6.9 on a scale from 0 to 10, the **EU** urban population aged 16 and over was globally satisfied with their city's offer of recreational and green spaces, albeit to a lesser extent than the population living in thinly-populated areas (7.4/10).

On the occasion of today's World Habitat Day, whose theme is "Public spaces for all", **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, publishes some information on the population in the EU living in cities.



The UK with the most urban population, Luxembourg with the most rural

In the EU in 2014, the share of the population living in cities stood at 40.2% in 2014, compared with 27.8% for rural areas and 32.0% for towns and suburbs. Across Member States, more than half of the population was living in cities in the **United Kingdom** (58.6%) and **Cyprus** (54.7%). A large part of the population was also concentrated in urban areas notably in **Spain** (48.5%), **Malta** (48.0%), **Bulgaria** (45.7%) and the **Netherlands** (45.2%).

In contrast, the largest share of the population was living in rural areas in **Luxembourg** (51.0%), followed by **Slovenia** (49.8%), **Lithuania** (47.6%), **Slovakia** (45.6%), **Denmark** (44.4%), **Ireland** (43.5%) and **Romania** (43.1%). The population living in intermediate areas was predominant in **Belgium** (57.1%), while the population was almost evenly distributed between urban, intermediate and rural areas in the **Czech Republic**, **Hungary** and **Finland**.

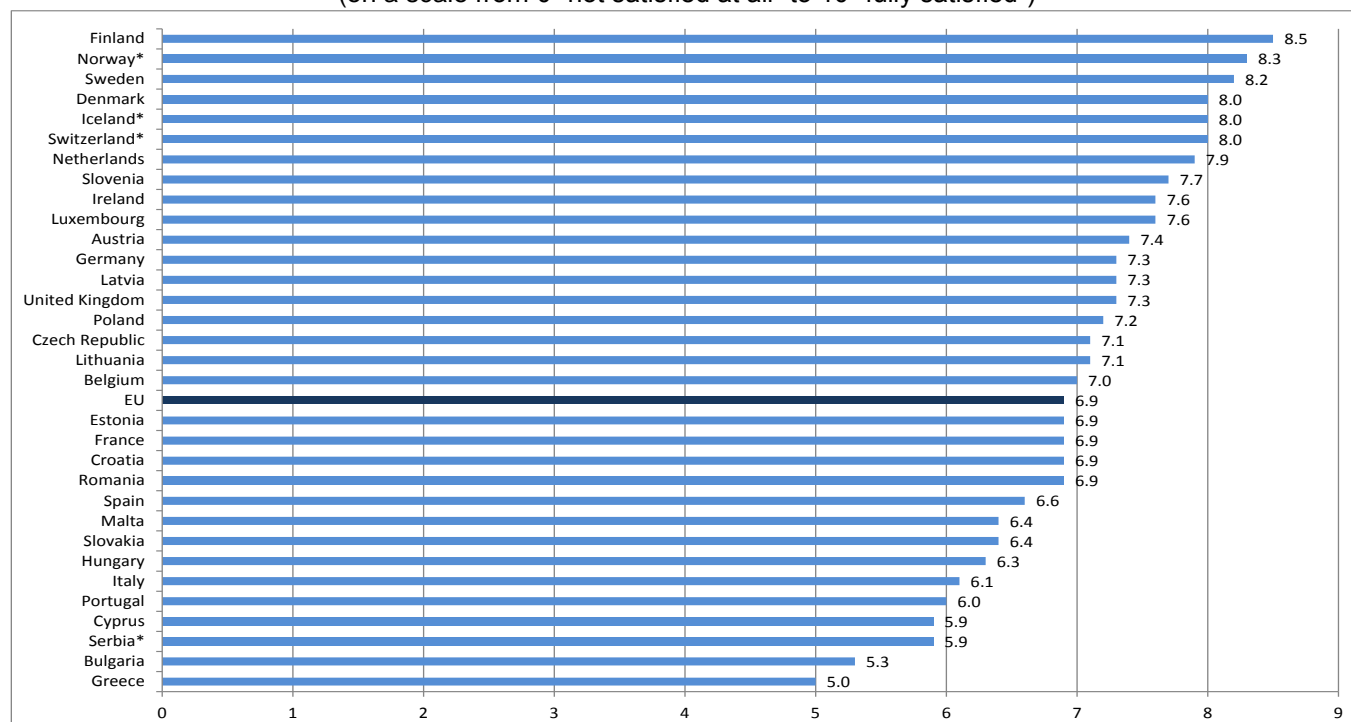
Distribution of population by degree of urbanisation in the EU Member States, 2014

	Densely-populated area	Intermediate area	Thinly-populated area
EU	40.2%	32.0%	27.8%
Belgium	26.7%	57.1%	16.1%
Bulgaria	45.7%	22.0%	32.3%
Czech Republic	30.0%	32.4%	37.5%
Denmark	34.9%	20.6%	44.4%
Germany	35.8%	41.7%	22.6%
Estonia	43.8%	14.7%	41.5%
Ireland	33.7%	22.7%	43.5%
Greece	41.8%	28.3%	29.9%
Spain	48.5%	25.6%	25.9%
France	41.7%	24.5%	33.8%
Croatia	28.2%	30.8%	41.0%
Italy	32.9%	43.0%	24.1%
Cyprus	54.7%	19.3%	26.0%
Latvia	43.0%	20.7%	36.3%
Lithuania	42.9%	9.6%	47.6%
Luxembourg	18.3%	30.7%	51.0%
Hungary	29.8%	34.8%	35.4%
Malta	48.0%	44.5%	7.6%
Netherlands	45.2%	40.2%	14.6%
Austria	29.6%	29.4%	41.0%
Poland	35.2%	23.7%	41.1%
Portugal	43.6%	30.3%	26.1%
Romania	34.7%	22.2%	43.1%
Slovenia	19.1%	31.1%	49.8%
Slovakia	19.0%	35.4%	45.6%
Finland	36.4%	31.7%	31.9%
Sweden	41.2%	30.3%	28.6%
United Kingdom	58.6%	28.0%	13.4%
Iceland	66.8%	18.2%	15.1%
Norway	25.7%	32.3%	42.0%
Switzerland	26.9%	49.6%	23.5%

Highest satisfaction with cities' public spaces in the Nordic Member States

On a scale from 0 ("not satisfied at all") to 10 ("fully satisfied"), EU residents aged 16 and over and living in cities rated their satisfaction with recreational and green spaces at 6.9. Among the EU Member States, satisfaction with recreational and green areas for the population living in densely-populated areas was highest in the three EU Nordic Member States: **Finland** (8.5/10), **Sweden** (8.2/10) and **Denmark** (8.0/10). At the opposite end of the scale, urban populations with the lowest rated satisfaction were those living in **Greece** (5.0/10), **Bulgaria** (5.3/10) and **Cyprus** (5.9/10).

Satisfaction with recreational and green areas, people living in densely-populated areas, 2013 (on a scale from 0 "not satisfied at all" to 10 "fully satisfied")



* Non-EU Member States.

Methods and definitions

Data on population by **degree of urbanisation** presented in this news release are compiled on the basis of the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). More information on the EU-LFS is available [here](#).

The degree of urbanisation classifies local administrative units as cities (densely-populated areas), towns and suburbs (intermediate areas) or rural areas (thinly-populated areas) considering a combination of factors such as population and population density. More information on the typology is available [here](#).

Data on **satisfaction with recreational and green areas** come from the ad-hoc module on subjective well-being implemented in the 2013 EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). This module contains subjective questions (e.g. "How satisfied are you with your life these days?") which complement the mostly objective indicators from existing data collections and social surveys.

Satisfaction with recreational and green areas is measured on an 11 point scale which ranges from 0 ("not satisfied at all") to 10 ("fully satisfied"). It refers to the respondent's opinion about the degree of satisfaction with recreational or green areas (places where the respondent can walk, cycle, do some recreational activities, etc.) in the place where he/she lives. It covers the population aged 16 and over.

More information

The UN website dedicated to the [World Habitat Day](#) for a better urban future.

Eurostat publication "**Quality of life – facts and views**". [PDF-version](#) available on the Eurostat website.

It can also be found in [Statistics Explained](#).

An [interactive infographic](#) on people's well-being in the EU is available on the Eurostat website.

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