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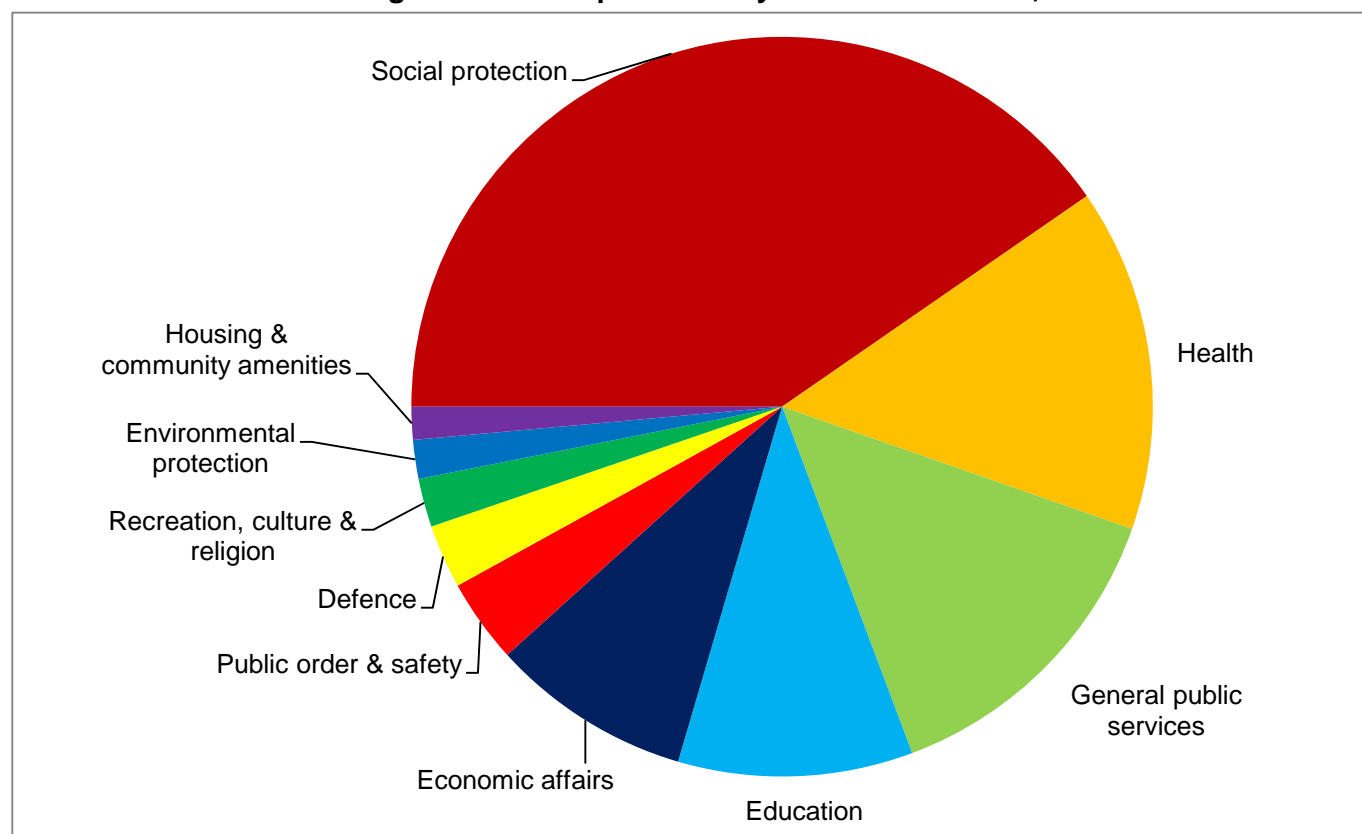
General government expenditure in the EU in 2014

Government expenditure on social protection accounted for almost one fifth of GDP

A detailed breakdown of general government expenditure in the **European Union** (EU) by main functions is available for 2014. The function 'social protection' (19.5% of GDP) was by far the most important, accounting for at least 20% of GDP in **Finland, France, Denmark, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Greece** and **Slovakia**. The next most important areas were 'health' (7.2%), 'general public services' such as external affairs and public debt transactions (6.7%), 'education' (4.9%) and 'economic affairs' (4.2%). The functions 'public order and safety' (1.8%), 'defence' (1.3%), 'recreation, culture and religion' (1.0%), 'environmental protection' (0.8%) and 'housing and community amenities' (0.7%) had more limited weights. These data at **EU** level mask however significant differences between the Member States in the share of GDP devoted to each function of general government expenditure.

This information on general government expenditure by function comes from an online [publication](#) released by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

General government expenditure by function in the EU, 2014



Share of social protection expenditure related to old age highest in Greece and lowest in Ireland

Social protection represented the most important area of general government expenditure in 2014 in all EU Member States except **Cyprus**, where a bank recapitalisation meant that other expenditure was higher. The weight of government social protection expenditure varied across EU Member States from 11.4% of GDP in **Romania** to 25.4% in **Finland**. Eight Member States – **Finland, France, Denmark, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Greece** and **Slovakia** - devoted at least 20% of GDP to social protection, while **Romania** and the three **Baltic Member States** each spent less than 12% of GDP on social protection.

Social protection expenditure can be further broken down into a number of detailed groups. The group 'old age', which includes pensions, made up the largest part of social protection expenditure in nearly all Member States. Government expenditure on 'old age' as a share of GDP was highest in 2014 in **Greece** (15.3%), **Italy** (14.0%), **France** (13.7%) and **Austria** (13.2%), and lowest in **Ireland** (3.7%). 'Old age' accounted for 10.3% of GDP in the EU.

Government expenditure on education and health varied significantly across Member States

With shares above 8% of GDP in 2014, **Denmark** (8.7%), **Finland** (8.3%), **France** (8.2%), **Belgium** and the **Netherlands** (both 8.1%) recorded the highest proportions devoted to health among Member States.

The highest shares of government expenditure on general public services in 2014 were observed in **Cyprus** (18.8% of GDP) and **Hungary** (10.2%).

Denmark (7.2% of GDP), **Sweden** (6.6%), **Finland** (6.4%), **Belgium** (6.3%) and **Portugal** (6.2%) registered the highest shares of government expenditure on education in 2014.

The highest shares of government expenditure on economic affairs in 2014 were recorded in **Hungary** and **Austria** (both 7.4% of GDP).

In 2014, the highest share of expenditure on defence was observed in **Greece** (2.7% of GDP), on public order & safety in **Bulgaria** (2.8%), on environmental protection in **Greece** and **Malta** (both 1.6%), on housing & community amenities in **Cyprus** (2.2%) and on recreation, culture & religion in **Estonia** and **Hungary** (both 2.0%).

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The **euro area** consists of Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland.

Methods and definitions

The Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) classifies government expenditure into ten main divisions (known as the 'COFOG I level' breakdown): general public services; defence; public order and safety; economic affairs; environmental protection; housing and community affairs; health; recreation, culture and religion; education; social protection. These divisions are further broken down into 69 groups (COFOG II level).

For more information

Eurostat [Statistics Explained](#) article.


Eurostat [metadata](#) on general government expenditure by function.

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General government expenditure in the EU Member States by function, 2014

(as % of GDP)

	Total	General public services	Defence	Public order & safety	Economic affairs	Environmental protection	Housing & community amenities	Health	Recreation culture & religion	Education	Social protection	of which:					
												Sickness & disability	Old age	Survivors	Family & children	Unemployment	Others
EU	48.2	6.7	1.3	1.8	4.2	0.8	0.7	7.2	1.0	4.9	19.5	2.8	10.3	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.8
Euro area	49.4	7.0	1.2	1.7	4.4	0.8	0.7	7.3	1.1	4.8	20.4	2.8	10.9	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.4
Belgium	55.1	8.4	0.9	1.9	7.0	0.9	0.4	8.1	1.3	6.3	19.9	3.1	8.9	1.9	2.3	2.2	1.5
Bulgaria	42.1	6.3	1.4	2.8	4.9	0.7	1.6	5.5	1.5	4.1	13.4	0.3	10.0	-	2.5	0.1	0.5
Czech Rep.	42.6	4.8	0.7	1.7	6.1	1.1	0.9	7.7	1.2	5.2	13.2	2.2	8.0	0.6	1.2	0.3	0.9
Denmark	56.0	7.2	1.2	1.0	3.6	0.5	0.2	8.7	1.8	7.2	24.5	5.0	8.4	0.0	4.8	3.1	3.2
Germany	44.3	6.3	1.0	1.6	3.3	0.6	0.4	7.2	0.8	4.3	18.8	3.0	9.1	1.9	1.5	1.8	1.5
Estonia	38.0	4.0	1.8	1.9	4.8	0.6	0.4	5.1	2.0	5.6	11.8	2.0	6.7	0.1	1.8	1.0	0.2
Ireland	38.3	6.1	0.4	1.4	3.2	0.6	0.7	7.6	0.8	4.3	13.2	2.4	3.7	0.9	2.2	2.5	1.5
Greece	49.9	9.9	2.7	2.1	3.7	1.6	0.2	4.7	0.6	4.4	20.1	1.6	15.3	1.6	0.7	0.7	0.2
Spain*	44.5	6.9	0.9	2.0	4.4	0.8	0.5	6.1	1.2	4.1	17.6	2.4	9.2	2.4	0.6	2.5	0.5
France	57.5	6.7	1.7	1.6	5.1	1.0	1.4	8.2	1.5	5.5	24.8	2.9	13.7	1.6	2.5	2.0	2.1
Croatia*	48.2	8.9	1.5	2.1	6.2	0.4	0.7	6.7	1.3	4.7	15.7	5.0	6.7	1.4	1.5	0.4	0.7
Italy	51.3	8.9	1.2	1.9	4.1	1.0	0.7	7.2	0.7	4.1	21.5	1.8	14.0	2.8	1.4	1.2	0.3
Cyprus	48.7	18.8	1.4	1.7	2.8	0.3	2.2	2.7	0.9	5.8	12.2	0.5	5.8	1.4	2.3	1.2	1.0
Latvia	37.3	4.9	0.9	2.0	4.9	0.7	1.1	3.8	1.7	5.9	11.5	1.9	7.4	0.0	0.9	0.4	0.9
Lithuania	34.8	4.6	1.1	1.7	3.2	0.6	0.3	5.5	0.9	5.4	11.5	2.8	6.2	0.3	1.0	0.4	0.8
Luxembourg	42.4	4.7	0.3	1.0	4.5	1.1	0.8	5.0	1.3	5.2	18.6	2.1	10.9	0.0	3.4	1.4	0.8
Hungary	49.9	10.2	0.6	1.9	7.4	1.2	0.9	5.0	2.0	5.2	15.6	3.2	7.5	1.2	2.0	0.5	1.2
Malta	43.2	7.1	0.8	1.4	5.4	1.6	0.3	6.0	1.1	5.8	13.7	1.4	8.0	1.6	1.3	0.5	0.9
Netherlands	46.2	5.2	1.1	1.9	4.2	1.5	0.5	8.1	1.5	5.4	16.9	4.7	6.8	0.1	1.0	1.9	2.4
Austria	52.7	6.9	0.6	1.3	7.4	0.5	0.4	7.9	0.9	5.0	21.7	2.0	13.2	1.5	2.3	1.4	1.3
Poland	42.1	5.0	1.5	2.2	4.6	0.9	0.7	4.6	1.2	5.3	16.1	2.6	9.2	1.8	1.4	0.6	0.5
Portugal	51.7	8.8	1.0	2.2	6.9	0.5	0.6	6.2	0.9	6.2	18.5	1.3	12.0	1.7	1.1	1.5	0.9
Romania	34.9	4.7	0.8	2.1	5.9	0.8	1.2	4.0	1.0	3.0	11.4	0.8	9.0	0.1	0.8	0.2	0.5
Slovenia	49.8	7.5	0.9	1.6	5.7	1.0	0.9	6.6	1.7	5.9	18.0	2.3	10.1	1.5	2.1	0.8	1.2
Slovakia*	41.6	5.7	0.9	2.3	4.5	0.7	0.6	1.9	0.9	4.1	20.0	7.5	7.3	0.9	1.3	0.2	2.8
Finland	58.1	8.3	1.4	1.3	4.8	0.3	0.4	8.3	1.4	6.4	25.4	4.7	12.2	0.8	3.3	2.5	1.9
Sweden	51.8	7.8	1.3	1.3	4.3	0.3	0.8	7.0	1.1	6.6	21.3	4.6	11.0	0.3	2.5	1.4	1.5
UK	43.9	5.4	2.2	2.0	3.0	0.8	0.6	7.6	0.7	5.2	16.5	2.8	8.5	0.1	1.6	0.2	3.3
Iceland	45.7	8.2	0.0	1.5	6.3	0.6	0.4	7.6	3.1	7.7	10.2	3.0	2.6	0.0	2.3	0.7	1.6
Norway	45.6	4.4	1.4	1.0	4.9	0.8	0.7	7.8	1.4	5.1	18.1	6.2	6.5	0.2	3.4	0.4	1.4
Switzerland*	33.7	3.9	1.0	1.7	3.8	0.7	0.2	2.3	0.8	6.0	13.4	:	:	:	:	:	:

The source dataset is available [here](#).

Figures may not add up due to rounding.

* Spain, Croatia, Slovakia and Switzerland: data are provisional. Switzerland: level II data not published.

General government expenditure in the EU Member States by function, 2014
(as % of total government expenditure)

	General public services	Defence	Public order & safety	Economic affairs	Environmental protection	Housing & community amenities	Health	Recreation culture & religion	Education	Social protection	of which:					
											Sickness & disability	Old age	Survivors	Family & children	Unemployment	Others
EU	13.9	2.8	3.7	8.8	1.7	1.4	15.0	2.1	10.2	40.4	5.9	21.4	2.9	3.6	3.0	3.6
Euro area	14.3	2.4	3.5	8.9	1.7	1.4	14.8	2.1	9.7	41.2	5.6	22.1	3.7	3.4	3.6	2.8
Belgium	15.2	1.6	3.4	12.8	1.7	0.7	14.7	2.3	11.4	36.2	5.6	16.1	3.4	4.2	4.1	2.8
Bulgaria	14.9	3.3	6.5	11.7	1.6	3.9	13.0	3.5	9.7	31.9	0.6	23.8	-	6.0	0.2	1.3
Czech Rep.	11.3	1.7	4.0	14.4	2.5	2.1	18.0	2.8	12.2	31.1	5.2	18.7	1.5	2.7	0.6	2.4
Denmark	12.9	2.1	1.8	6.5	0.8	0.4	15.6	3.2	12.8	43.8	8.9	15.0	0.0	8.6	5.6	5.7
Germany	14.3	2.3	3.5	7.5	1.3	0.9	16.3	1.8	9.7	42.4	6.7	20.6	4.2	3.5	4.1	3.3
Estonia	10.5	4.7	5.1	12.6	1.6	1.2	13.5	5.2	14.7	31.0	5.2	17.6	0.2	4.6	2.6	0.8
Ireland	15.9	0.9	3.7	8.4	1.5	1.9	19.9	2.0	11.1	34.6	6.3	9.6	2.4	5.8	6.5	4.0
Greece	19.8	5.4	4.3	7.4	3.1	0.4	9.3	1.2	8.8	40.2	3.2	30.7	3.3	1.4	1.3	0.3
Spain*	15.5	1.9	4.5	9.9	1.9	1.1	13.7	2.6	9.1	39.6	5.3	20.6	5.4	1.3	5.6	1.4
France	11.6	3.0	2.8	8.8	1.7	2.5	14.3	2.5	9.6	43.1	5.0	23.8	2.8	4.4	3.4	3.7
Croatia*	18.5	3.0	4.3	12.8	0.9	1.5	13.9	2.8	9.8	32.5	10.3	13.9	2.8	3.1	0.8	1.6
Italy	17.4	2.4	3.7	8.1	1.9	1.3	14.0	1.4	7.9	41.8	3.5	27.3	5.4	2.8	2.4	0.4
Cyprus	38.5	3.0	3.6	5.7	0.5	4.6	5.5	1.8	11.8	25.0	1.1	11.8	2.9	4.7	2.6	1.9
Latvia	13.2	2.4	5.4	13.1	1.8	3.0	10.2	4.5	15.8	30.7	5.2	19.9	0.0	2.4	1.1	2.1
Lithuania	13.3	3.0	4.8	9.3	1.6	1.0	15.9	2.6	15.5	33.0	8.1	17.7	1.0	2.8	1.1	2.3
Luxembourg	11.0	0.7	2.4	10.5	2.6	1.8	11.9	3.0	12.2	43.9	4.9	25.7	0.0	8.1	3.2	2.0
Hungary	20.4	1.2	3.9	14.8	2.4	1.8	10.0	4.0	10.3	31.2	6.5	15.0	2.3	4.0	1.0	2.4
Malta	16.4	1.8	3.2	12.5	3.7	0.8	13.9	2.5	13.5	31.8	3.2	18.6	3.8	2.9	1.2	2.1
Netherlands	11.3	2.4	4.1	9.1	3.2	1.0	17.4	3.2	11.7	36.5	10.2	14.8	0.3	2.1	4.0	5.1
Austria	13.1	1.1	2.6	14.1	0.9	0.8	15.1	1.7	9.5	41.2	3.8	25.1	2.9	4.4	2.7	2.3
Poland	11.9	3.5	5.3	11.0	2.1	1.7	11.0	2.8	12.5	38.2	6.1	21.9	4.3	3.3	1.3	1.3
Portugal	16.9	1.9	4.3	13.3	0.9	1.2	12.1	1.7	12.0	35.7	2.6	23.1	3.4	2.2	3.0	1.4
Romania	13.4	2.4	6.0	17.1	2.2	3.3	11.5	2.7	8.6	32.7	2.3	25.7	0.2	2.4	0.5	1.6
Slovenia	15.1	1.7	3.3	11.5	2.0	1.8	13.2	3.4	11.9	36.2	4.6	20.3	3.0	4.2	1.5	2.6
Slovakia*	13.6	2.2	5.4	10.8	1.7	1.5	4.5	2.2	9.9	48.1	17.9	17.6	2.1	3.1	0.5	6.9
Finland	14.3	2.4	2.3	8.3	0.4	0.7	14.3	2.5	11.0	43.8	8.0	20.9	1.4	5.7	4.4	3.4
Sweden	15.0	2.5	2.6	8.3	0.6	1.5	13.6	2.1	12.7	41.1	8.8	21.2	0.6	4.9	2.7	2.9
UK	12.2	4.9	4.6	6.8	1.9	1.4	17.3	1.5	11.8	37.5	6.3	19.3	0.1	3.7	0.5	7.6
Iceland	18.0	0.0	3.3	13.9	1.4	0.8	16.6	6.7	16.8	22.4	6.6	5.7	0.0	5.1	1.6	3.4
Norway	9.6	3.2	2.2	10.6	1.8	1.5	17.1	3.1	11.2	39.6	13.6	14.2	0.4	7.4	1.0	3.0
Switzerland*	11.6	2.9	5.0	11.3	2.1	0.6	6.7	2.4	17.8	39.7	:	:	:	:	:	:

The source dataset is available [here](#).

Figures may not add up due to rounding.

* Spain, Croatia, Slovakia and Switzerland: data are provisional. Switzerland: level II data not published.