

199/2016 - 17 October 2016

17 October: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

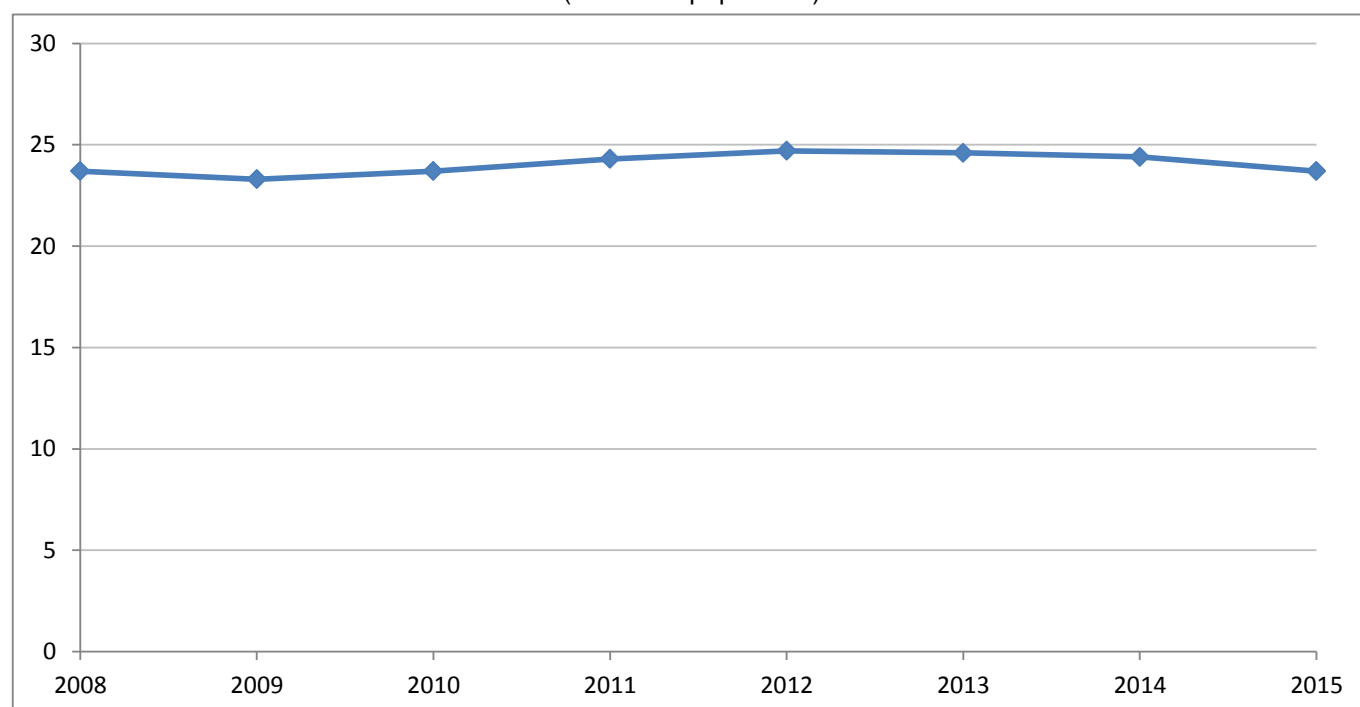
The share of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU back to its pre-crisis level

Contrasting trends across Member States

In 2015, around 119 million people, or 23.7% of the population, in the **European Union** (EU) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. This means that they were in at least one of the following three conditions: at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers (income poverty), severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity. After three consecutive increases between 2009 and 2012 to reach almost 25%, the proportion of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the **EU** has since continuously decreased to return to its 2008 level (23.7%), but it remains in 2015 higher than its 2009 low-point (23.3%). The reduction of the number of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU is one of the key targets of the Europe 2020 strategy.

These figures are published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, on the occasion of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. An [infographic](#) is also available on the Eurostat website.

At risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in the EU, 2008-2015
(% of total population)



2008 and 2009 data exclude Croatia. 2015 data are estimated.

Highest at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in Bulgaria, lowest in the Czech Republic

In 2015, more than a third of the population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion in three Member States: **Bulgaria** (41.3%), **Romania** (37.3%) and **Greece** (35.7%). At the opposite end of the scale, the lowest shares of persons being at risk of poverty or social exclusion were recorded in the **Czech Republic** (14.0%), **Sweden** (16.0%), the **Netherlands** and **Finland** (both 16.8%), **Denmark** and **France** (both 17.7%).

Largest decrease in the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate in Poland and Romania, highest increase in Greece and Cyprus

Among Member States for which data are available, the at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate has grown from 2008 to 2015 in fifteen Member States, with the highest increases being recorded in **Greece** (from 28.1% in 2008 to 35.7% in 2015, or +7.6 percentage points), **Cyprus** (+5.6 pp), **Spain** (+4.8 pp), **Italy** (+3.2 pp) and **Luxembourg** (+3.0 pp). In contrast, the largest decreases among Member States for which data are available were observed in **Poland** (from 30.5% to 23.4%, or -7.1 pp) and **Romania** (-6.9 pp), followed by **Bulgaria** (-3.5 pp) and **Latvia** (-3.3 pp). At **EU** level, the percentage of the total population being at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2015 (23.7%) was back to its 2008 level.

People at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU, 2008 and 2015

	% of total population		in thousands	
	2008	2015	2008	2015
EU*	23.7	23.7	115 910	118 760
Belgium	20.8	21.1	2 190	2 340
Bulgaria	44.8	41.3	3 420	2 980
Czech Republic	15.3	14.0	1 570	1 440
Denmark	16.3	17.7	890	1 000
Germany	20.1	20.0	16 340	16 080
Estonia	21.8	24.2	290	310
Ireland	23.7	:	1 050	:
Greece	28.1	35.7	3 050	3 830
Spain	23.8	28.6	10 790	13 180
France	18.5	17.7	11 150	11 050
Croatia	:	:	:	:
Italy	25.5	28.7	15 080	17 470
Cyprus	23.3	28.9	180	240
Latvia	34.2	30.9	740	610
Lithuania	28.3	29.3	910	860
Luxembourg	15.5	18.5	70	90
Hungary	28.2	28.2	2 790	2 730
Malta	20.1	22.4	80	90
Netherlands**	14.9	16.8	2 430	2 810
Austria	20.6	18.3	1 700	1 550
Poland	30.5	23.4	11 490	8 760
Portugal	26.0	26.6	2 760	2 760
Romania	44.2	37.3	9 110	7 430
Slovenia	18.5	19.2	360	380
Slovakia	20.6	18.4	1 110	960
Finland	17.4	16.8	910	900
Sweden	14.9	16.0	1 370	1 560
United Kingdom	23.2	23.5	14 070	15 030
Iceland	11.8	13.0	40	40
Norway	15.0	15.0	700	770
Switzerland	18.1	:	1 330	:

Figures are rounded to the nearest ten thousands

* Data for 2008 exclude Croatia. Data for 2015 are estimated.

** 2015 data are provisional.

: Data not available

The source dataset can be found [here](#).

About 1 in 6 persons in the EU at risk of income poverty...

Looking at each of the three elements contributing to being at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 17.3% of the **EU** population in 2015 were at risk of poverty after social transfers, meaning that their disposable income was below their national at-risk-of-poverty threshold (see the corresponding table). This proportion of persons at risk of income poverty in the **EU** has slightly increased compared with 2014 (17.2%) and more significantly compared with 2008 (16.5%). As the thresholds reflect actual income distribution in the countries, they vary greatly between Member States and also over time. Across the EU Member States for which data are available, 1 in 4 persons was at risk of income poverty in **Romania** (25.4%) and about 1 in 5 in **Latvia** (22.5%), **Lithuania** (22.2%), **Spain** (22.1%), **Bulgaria** (22.1%), **Estonia** (21.6%), **Greece** (21.4%), **Italy** (19.9%) and **Portugal** (19.5%). In contrast, the lowest rates were observed in the **Czech Republic** (9.7%), the **Netherlands** (12.1%), **Denmark** (12.2%), **Slovakia** (12.3%) and **Finland** (12.4%). Compared with 2008, the proportion of persons at risk of income poverty has increased in twenty-two Member States for which data are available, and has decreased in four.

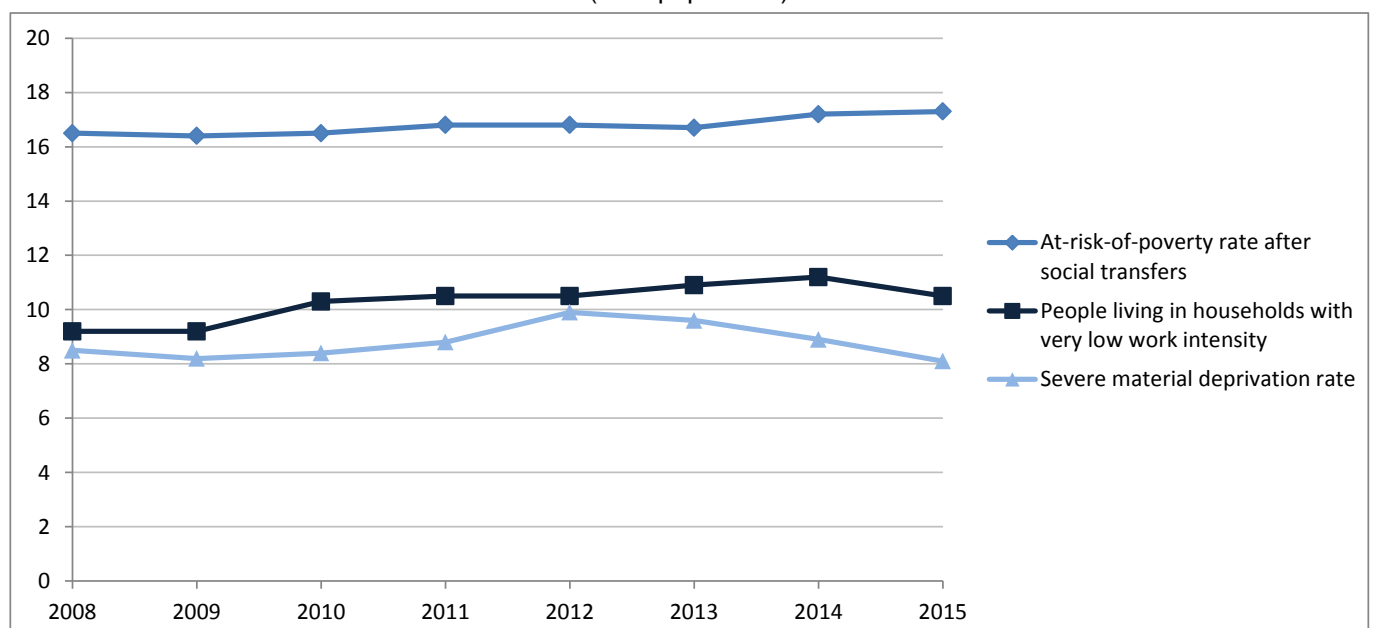
... 1 in 12 severely materially deprived...

In the **EU** in 2015, 8.1% of the population were severely materially deprived, meaning that they had living conditions constrained by a lack of resources such as not being able to afford to pay their bills, keep their home adequately warm, or take a one week holiday away from home. This proportion of persons severely materially deprived in the **EU** has decreased compared with both 2014 (8.9%) and 2008 (8.5%). The share of those severely materially deprived in 2015 varied significantly among Member States for which data are available, ranging from more than 20% of the total population in **Bulgaria** (34.2%), **Romania** (22.7%) and **Greece** (22.2%), to less than 5% in **Sweden** (0.7%), **Luxembourg** (2.0%), **Finland** (2.2%), the **Netherlands** (2.5%), **Austria** (3.6%), **Denmark** (3.7%), **Germany** (4.4%), **Estonia** and **France** (both 4.5%). Compared with 2008, the proportion of persons severely materially deprived has increased in twelve Member States for which data are available, and decreased in fourteen.

...and 1 in 10 living in households with very low work intensity

Looking at low work intensity, 10.5% of the population aged 0-59 in the **EU** lived in households where the adults worked less than 20% of their total work potential during the past year. Compared with 2014, this proportion decreased in the **EU** for the first time since 2008. In 2015, **Greece** (16.8%), **Spain** (15.4%) and **Belgium** (14.9%) had the highest proportions of those living in very low work intensity households, while **Luxembourg** (5.7%) and **Sweden** (5.8%) had the lowest among Member States for which data are available. Compared with 2008, the share of persons aged 0-59 living in households with very low work intensity has increased in a large majority of Member States (twenty), while it decreased in six.

Evolution of the three components of the at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in the EU, (% of population)



2008 and 2009 data exclude Croatia. 2015 data are estimated.

The total number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion is lower than the sum of the numbers of people in each of the three forms of poverty or social exclusion as some persons are affected simultaneously by more than one of these situations.

Components of the at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate in the EU, 2008 and 2015

	At-risk-of-poverty after social transfers (%)		Persons severely materially deprived (%)		Persons aged 0-59 living in households with very low work intensity (%)	
	2008	2015	2008	2015	2008	2015
EU*	16.5	17.3	8.5	8.1	9.2	10.5
Belgium	14.7	14.9	5.6	5.8	11.7	14.9
Bulgaria	21.4	22.0	41.2	34.2	8.1	11.6
Czech Republic	9.0	9.7	6.8	5.6	7.2	6.8
Denmark	11.8	12.2	2.0	3.7	8.5	11.6
Germany	15.2	16.7	5.5	4.4	11.7	9.8
Estonia	19.5	21.6	4.9	4.5	5.3	6.6
Ireland	15.5	:	5.5	:	13.7	:
Greece	20.1	21.4	11.2	22.2	7.5	16.8
Spain	19.8	22.1	3.6	6.4	6.6	15.4
France	12.5	13.6	5.4	4.5	8.8	8.6
Croatia	:	:	:	:	:	:
Italy	18.9	19.9	7.5	11.5	10.4	11.7
Cyprus	15.9	16.2	9.1	15.4	4.5	10.9
Latvia	25.9	22.5	19.3	16.4	5.4	7.8
Lithuania	20.9	22.2	12.5	13.9	6.1	9.2
Luxembourg	13.4	15.3	0.7	2.0	4.7	5.7
Hungary	12.4	14.9	17.9	19.4	12.0	9.4
Malta	15.3	16.3	4.3	8.1	8.6	9.2
Netherlands**	10.5	12.1	1.5	2.5	8.2	10.2
Austria	15.2	13.9	5.9	3.6	7.4	8.2
Poland	16.9	17.6	17.7	8.1	8.0	6.9
Portugal	18.5	19.5	9.7	9.6	6.3	10.9
Romania	23.6	25.4	32.7	22.7	8.5	7.9
Slovenia	12.3	14.3	6.7	5.8	6.7	7.4
Slovakia	10.9	12.3	11.8	9.0	5.2	7.1
Finland	13.6	12.4	3.5	2.2	7.5	10.8
Sweden	12.2	14.5	1.4	0.7	5.5	5.8
United Kingdom	18.7	16.7	4.5	6.1	10.4	11.9
Iceland	10.1	9.6	0.8	1.6	2.6	5.2
Norway	11.4	11.9	2.0	1.7	6.5	7.8
Switzerland	15.7	:	2.1	:	3.3	:

* Data for 2008 exclude Croatia. Data for 2015 are estimated.

** 2015 data are provisional.

: Data not available

At-risk-of-poverty thresholds in the EU, 2008 and 2015
(in national currency)

	Currency	Annual national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers)		Annual at-risk-of-poverty threshold			
				Single adult		Two adults with two children younger than 14 years	
		2008	2015	2008	2015	2008	2015
Belgium	euro	17 985	21 654	10 791	12 993	22 661	27 285
Bulgaria	BGN	4 247	6 516	2 548	3 910	5 351	8 210
Czech Republic	CZK	168 472	204 395	101 083	122 637	212 275	257 537
Denmark	DKK	180 015	211 450	108 009	126 870	226 819	266 428
Germany	euro	18 309	20 668	10 986	12 401	23 070	26 041
Estonia	euro	5 547	7 889	3 328	4 733	6 989	9 940
Ireland	euro	22 995	:	13 797	:	28 973	:
Greece	euro	10 800	7 520	6 480	4 512	13 608	9 475
Spain	euro	13 966	13 352	8 379	8 011	17 597	16 823
France	euro	18 899	21 415	11 340	12 849	23 813	26 983
Croatia	HRK	:	:	:	:	:	:
Italy	euro	15 640	15 846	9 384	9 508	19 706	19 966
Cyprus	euro	16 024	13 793	9 614	8 276	20 190	17 380
Latvia	euro	4 740	5 828	2 844	3 497	5 972	7 344
Lithuania	euro	4 111	5 180	2 467	3 108	5 180	6 527
Luxembourg	euro	30 917	35 270	18 550	21 162	38 955	44 441
Hungary	HUF	1 105 926	1 406 568	663 556	843 941	1 393 467	1 772 275
Malta	euro	10 009	13 493	6 005	8 096	12 611	17 001
Netherlands*	euro	19 522	21 154	11 713	12 692	24 598	26 654
Austria	euro	19 413	23 260	11 648	13 956	24 461	29 308
Poland	PLN	15 720	23 247	9 432	13 948	19 807	29 291
Portugal	euro	8 143	8 435	4 886	5 061	10 260	10 628
Romania	RON	6 510	10 282	3 906	6 169	8 203	12 955
Slovenia	euro	10 893	12 332	6 536	7 399	13 725	15 538
Slovakia	euro	4 791	6 930	2 875	4 158	6 038	8 732
Finland	euro	19 794	23 763	11 876	14 258	24 940	29 942
Sweden	SEK	190 305	242 388	114 183	145 433	239 784	305 408
United Kingdom	GBP	15 068	16 885	9 041	10 131	18 986	21 274
Iceland	ISK	2 822 193	3 669 616	1 693 316	2 201 769	3 555 963	4 623 716
Norway	NOK	254 905	346 569	152 855	207 941	320 996	436 677
Switzerland	CHF	44 332	:	26 599	:	55 858	:

* 2015 data are provisional.

: Data not available

The source dataset can be found [here](#).

The **at-risk-of-poverty rate** is the share of people whose total household income that is available (after social transfers, tax and other deductions) for spending or saving is below the **at-risk-of-poverty threshold**, which is set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income after social transfers.

This indicator does not measure wealth or absolute poverty, but low income in comparison to other residents in that country.

The threshold depends on the income distribution in a country for a given year and varies with the composition of a household. It is therefore important to note that the at-risk-of-income-poverty rate is a **relative measure of poverty** and that the threshold varies greatly between Member States. It also varies over time as it follows the evolution of the national median disposable income: in a number of Member States the threshold has fallen over the period 2008-2015 (Greece, Cyprus) or stayed nearly stable (Spain, Italy and Portugal) due to the economic crisis.

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.

For 2008 and 2009, data for the EU aggregate excludes Croatia.

Methods and definitions

Data on the risk of poverty or social exclusion presented in this News Release are based on the EU-Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). The **EU-SILC survey** is the EU reference source for comparative statistics on income distribution, poverty and living conditions. More information can be found [here](#).

The reference population is all private households and their current members residing in the territory of a given Member State at the time of data collection. Persons living in collective households and in institutions are generally excluded from the target population as well as small and remote parts of the national territory amounting to no more than 2% of the national population.

Persons at-risk-of-poverty are those living in a household with an equivalised disposable income below the risk-of-poverty threshold, which is set at 60% of the national median equivalised disposable income (after social transfers). The equivalised income is calculated by dividing the total household income by its size determined after applying the following weights: 1.0 to the first adult, 0.5 to each other household members aged 14 or over and 0.3 to each household member aged less than 14 years old.

Severely materially deprived persons have living conditions constrained by a lack of resources and experience at least 4 out of the 9 following deprivation items: cannot afford 1) to pay rent/mortgage or utility bills on time, 2) to keep home adequately warm, 3) to face unexpected expenses, 4) to eat meat, fish or a protein equivalent every second day, 5) a one week holiday away from home, 6) a car, 7) a washing machine, 8) a colour TV, or 9) a telephone (including mobile phone).

People living in households with very low work intensity are those aged 0-59 who live in households where on average the adults (aged 18-59) worked less than 20% of their total work potential during the past year. Students are excluded.

The total number of **people at risk of poverty or social exclusion** is lower than the sum of the numbers of people in each of the three forms of poverty or social exclusion as some persons are affected simultaneously by more than one of these situations.

For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) dedicated to statistics on income, social inclusion and living conditions.

Eurostat [database](#) on income and living conditions.

Eurostat [interactive infographic](#) on people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU.

The European Commission website dedicated to the [Europe 2020 strategy](#).

The UN webpage dedicated to the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#).

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