

Structure of Earnings Survey

How are earnings distributed in the EU?

Differences across Member States and economic activities

Notable discrepancies can be observed in the Member States of the **European Union** (EU) in gross hourly earnings, not only between the 10% of employees earning the least and the 10% earning the most, but also according to the economic activity, with financial and insurance activities being among the highest paying industries in every EU Member State and accommodation and food services among the lowest paying.

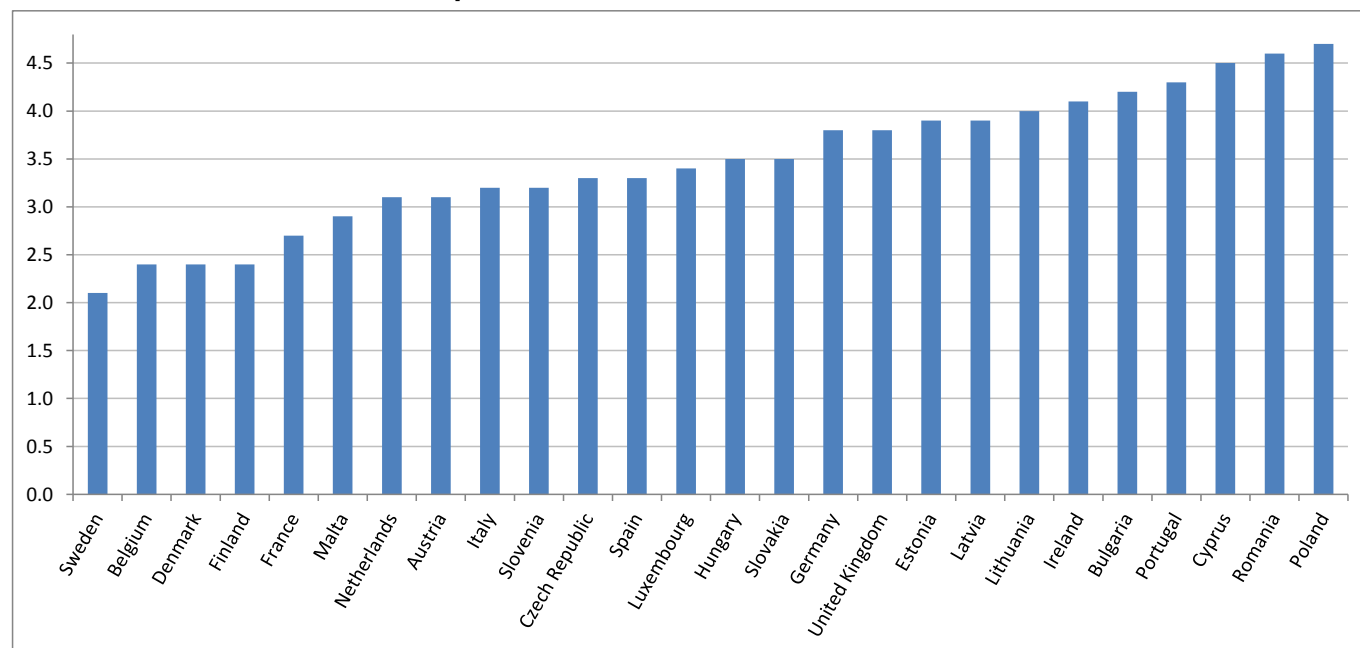
This information on earnings disparities is issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. It is based on the latest results of the four-yearly Structure of Earnings Survey. They are complemented with a more detailed [on-line article](#) and an [interactive infographic](#) on earnings by economic activity.

Largest earnings disparities in Poland, Romania, Cyprus, Portugal, Bulgaria and Ireland

Disparities in gross hourly earnings within a country can be measured using deciles, and in particular the lowest and highest deciles, which correspond to the 10% of employees earning the least (D1) and to the 10% earning the most (D9). As a consequence, a high D9/D1 interdecile ratio indicates large disparities.

Across the EU Member States in 2014, the D9/D1 dispersion ratio ranged from 2.1 in **Sweden** to 4.7 in **Poland**. This means that the 10% best-paid employees earned at least twice as much as the 10% lowest-paid in Sweden, and nearly five times as much in Poland. After Poland, **Romania** (with a ratio of 4.6), **Cyprus** (4.5), **Portugal** (4.3), **Bulgaria** (4.2) and **Ireland** (4.1) registered high disparities in gross hourly earnings. In contrast, the lowest D9/D1 ratios were recorded, after Sweden, in **Belgium**, **Denmark** and **Finland** (all with a ratio of 2.4), **France** (2.7) and **Malta** (2.9).

D9/D1 dispersion ratio in the EU Member States, 2014



Greece and Croatia: data not available

Largest gap between high & median wages in Portugal, between median & low wages in Estonia

The highest disparity on the upper end of the gross hourly earnings distribution in 2014 was registered in **Portugal** (with a D9/Median ratio of 2.8). This means that the 10% best paid employees in Portugal earned almost three times as much the median. Portugal is followed by **Bulgaria, Cyprus, Poland** and **Romania** (all with a ratio of 2.5), **Latvia** (2.3), as well as **Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary** and the **United Kingdom** (all 2.2). In contrast, **Denmark** and **Sweden** (both with a ratio of 1.6), **Finland** (1.7), **Belgium, France, Malta** and the **Netherlands** (all 1.8) recorded the lowest.

For the lower end of the gross hourly earnings distribution, disparities in 2014 were largest in **Estonia** (with a Median/D1 ratio of 2.0). This means that, in Estonia, the 10% least paid employees earned half of the median earnings. Estonia is followed by **Germany, Ireland** and **Poland** (all 1.9), the **Czech Republic, Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania** and **Slovakia** (all 1.8). At the opposite end of the scale, the lowest disparities in the lower end of distribution were recorded in **Sweden** (with a ratio of 1.3), **Belgium** and **Finland** (both 1.4), **Denmark, France, Italy** and **Portugal** (all 1.5).

Gross hourly earnings dispersion ratios, 2014

	Gross hourly earnings (in euro)			Earnings dispersion ratios		
	D1	Median	D9	Median/D1	D9/D1	D9/Median
Belgium	12.8	17.3	30.4	1.4	2.4	1.8
Bulgaria	1.0	1.7	4.2	1.7	4.2	2.5
Czech Republic	2.5	4.6	8.5	1.8	3.3	1.9
Denmark	17.1	25.4	40.5	1.5	2.4	1.6
Germany	8.0	15.3	30.2	1.9	3.8	2.0
Estonia	2.5	4.9	9.7	2.0	3.9	2.0
Ireland	10.6	20.2	43.6	1.9	4.1	2.2
Greece	:	:	:	:	:	:
Spain	6.1	9.8	20.1	1.6	3.3	2.0
France	9.9	14.8	26.7	1.5	2.7	1.8
Croatia	:	:	:	:	:	:
Italy	8.3	12.3	26.2	1.5	3.2	2.1
Cyprus	4.7	8.4	20.9	1.8	4.5	2.5
Latvia	1.9	3.4	7.6	1.7	3.9	2.3
Lithuania	1.7	3.1	6.7	1.8	4.0	2.2
Luxembourg	11.7	18.3	39.5	1.6	3.4	2.2
Hungary	2.2	3.6	7.8	1.6	3.5	2.2
Malta	5.3	8.5	15.6	1.6	2.9	1.8
Netherlands	9.2	16.0	28.4	1.7	3.1	1.8
Austria	8.3	13.8	25.7	1.7	3.1	1.9
Poland	2.3	4.3	10.6	1.9	4.7	2.5
Portugal	3.3	5.1	14.4	1.5	4.3	2.8
Romania	1.1	2.0	5.0	1.8	4.6	2.5
Slovenia	4.5	7.3	14.4	1.6	3.2	2.0
Slovakia	2.5	4.4	8.7	1.8	3.5	2.0
Finland	12.4	17.2	29.2	1.4	2.4	1.7
Sweden	14.1	18.5	29.0	1.3	2.1	1.6
United Kingdom	8.5	14.7	32.7	1.7	3.8	2.2
Iceland	9.7	14.3	24.0	1.5	2.5	1.7
Norway	19.3	28.0	45.4	1.5	2.4	1.6
Switzerland	19.9	29.5	51.6	1.5	2.6	1.8
Montenegro	1.7	3.4	6.9	2.1	4.2	2.0
FYR of Macedonia	1.3	2.2	4.5	1.7	3.5	2.0
Serbia	1.5	2.6	5.3	1.8	3.6	2.0
Turkey	2.0	2.4	6.9	1.2	3.5	2.9

: Data not available

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

Finance & insurance and Information & communication among the highest paying industries...

On the basis of gross monthly earnings, "Financial and insurance activities" ranked among the 3 highest paying economic activities in every EU Member State, except **Ireland** (where it ranked 4th). The sector "Information and communication" was also largely represented among the top 3 paying industries, with the exceptions of **Belgium**, **Spain** and the **Netherlands** (where it ranked 4th), **Italy** and **Luxembourg** (5th position) and **Cyprus** (6th place).

"Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply" was the best paying industry in **Belgium**, **Germany**, **Spain** as well as **Austria**, and ranked second in **Bulgaria**, the **Netherlands**, **Portugal**, **Slovenia** and **Finland**. "Mining and quarrying" ranked first in **Denmark**, the **Netherlands** and the **United-Kingdom** and second in **Poland** and **Romania**. As for "Education", it was the best paying economic activity in **Luxembourg** and the second in **Cyprus**. Finally, "Professional ,scientific and technical activities" ranked among the 2 highest paying industries in only one Member Sate: **Belgium**.

... Accommodation & food and Administrative and support services among the lowest paying

At the opposite end of the ranking, "Accommodation and food service activities" was identified in 2014 as the lowest paying activity of the economy in all Member States, except **Spain**, **Malta** and **Slovenia** (where it was the penultimate). "Administrative and support service activities" also ranked widely in the bottom 3, with the exceptions of **Hungary**, **Malta** (last but 3 position), **Estonia** and **Cyprus** (last but 4) and **Latvia**.

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).

Methods and definitions

Data presented in this News Release come from the four-yearly Structure of Earnings Survey which provides detailed information on the structure and the distribution of earnings in the EU. Apprentices are included. The Structure of Earnings Survey 2014 (SES 2014) covers enterprises with at least 10 employees in all economic activities except agriculture, forestry, fishing, public administration and defence, private households and extra-territorial organisations (NACE Rev. 2 classification: sections B to S excluding O). More information on SES 2014 can be found [here](#).

Median earnings is the level of earnings which divides the employees into two equal groups. Half earn less than the median and half earn more.

Gross hourly earnings refer to the wages and salaries earned by full-time and part-time employees, per hour paid, in the reference month (generally October 2014) before any tax and social security contributions are deducted. Wages and salaries include any overtime pay, shift premiums, allowances, bonuses, commission, etc. The 2014 annual averages of the exchange rate were used in converting national (non-euro) currencies into euro.

Gross monthly earnings refer to the wages and salaries earned by full-time and part-time employees in the reference month (generally October 2014) before any tax and social security contributions are deducted. Wages and salaries include any overtime pay, shift premiums, allowances, bonuses, commission, etc. The gross monthly earnings of part-time employees have been converted into full-time units before being included in the average with the same weight as full time employees. The 2014 annual averages of the exchange rate were used in converting national (non-euro) currencies into euro.

Interdecile dispersion ratios

D1 is the maximum gross hourly earnings received by the 10% of employees earnings least.

D9 is the minimum gross hourly earnings received by the 10% of employees earning most.

Information by industry presented in this News release refer to 17 main **economic activities** according to the [NACE Rev.2](#) classification.

Timetable

A news release on [low wages earners](#) was published on 8 December 2016.

For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) dedicated to statistics on earnings.

Eurostat [database](#) on earnings.

Eurostat [metadata](#) on the Structure of Earnings Survey 2014.

Eurostat [Statistics Explained article](#) on earnings

Eurostat [interactive infographic](#) on earnings by economic activity.

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Ranking of economic activities across EU Member States according to mean monthly earnings, 2014

From 1 (highest mean monthly earnings) to 17 (lowest mean monthly earnings)

NACE Rev.2 sections		BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	FI	SE	SK	UK
B	Mining and quarrying	9	4	5	1	4	4	5	:	3	5	:	3	c	5	5	c	5	c	1	5	2	9	2	4	6	5	5	1
C	Manufacturing	8	13	6	7	6	9	8	:	7	6	:	9	14	12	8	12	7	10	10	7	9	15	12	11	5	7	7	9
D	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1	2	3	4	1	5	c	:	1	3	:	4	c	6	4	c	4	:	2	1	5	2	4	2	2	4	3	4
E	Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	7	12	13	9	9	10	c	:	11	13	:	11	c	11	7	10	10	c	9	11	8	14	10	10	10	9	12	7
F	Construction	12	11	8	11	12	6	10	:	12	11	:	10	11	8	12	15	16	15	7	9	10	12	13	15	9	8	10	6
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	10	10	9	13	13	12	14	:	14	12	:	14	15	13	13	14	11	12	15	15	11	13	9	13	13	10	9	16
H	Transportation and storage	11	8	11	6	14	7	11	:	10	9	:	13	7	10	11	11	9	4	11	10	12	7	8	12	11	12	13	8
I	Accommodation and food service activities	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	:	16	17	:	17	17	17	17	17	17	16	17	17	17	17	17	16	17	17	17	17
J	Information and communication	4	1	1	3	3	2	2	:	4	2	:	5	6	2	2	5	2	2	4	3	1	3	3	1	1	2	1	3
K	Financial and insurance activities	3	3	2	2	2	1	4	:	2	1	:	2	3	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	3	1	1	3	3	1	2	2
L	Real estate activities	5	7	12	12	8	11	7	:	9	10	:	8	16	14	9	c	12	c	6	6	6	6	11	7	8	6	8	10
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	2	5	4	5	5	3	3	:	5	4	:	6	4	3	3	4	3	c	5	4	4	5	5	5	4	3	4	5
N	Administrative and support service activities	16	16	16	15	16	13	15	:	17	16	:	16	13	9	15	16	14	14	16	16	16	16	15	17	16	16	16	15
P	Education	6	9	10	10	7	14	6	:	6	7	:	12	2	16	10	1*	6	9	8	8	7	4	6	9	7	15	11	11
Q	Human health and social work activities	14	6	7	14	10	8	9	:	8	15	:	7	8	7	6	8	13	8	12	13	13	11	7	8	12	14	6	12
R	Arts, entertainment and recreation	15	15	14	16	15	16	12	:	13	8	:	1	1*	15	16	c	8	3	14	12	14	8	16	6	15	13	14	14
S	Other service activities	13	14	15	8	11	15	13	:	15	14	:	15	10	4	14	13	15	c	13	14	15	10	14	14	14	11	15	13

Shades of orange show the best paying industries, while shades of blue show the lowest.

: Data not available

c Confidential

* Data may not be reliable due to small sample size.

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