

Duration of working life

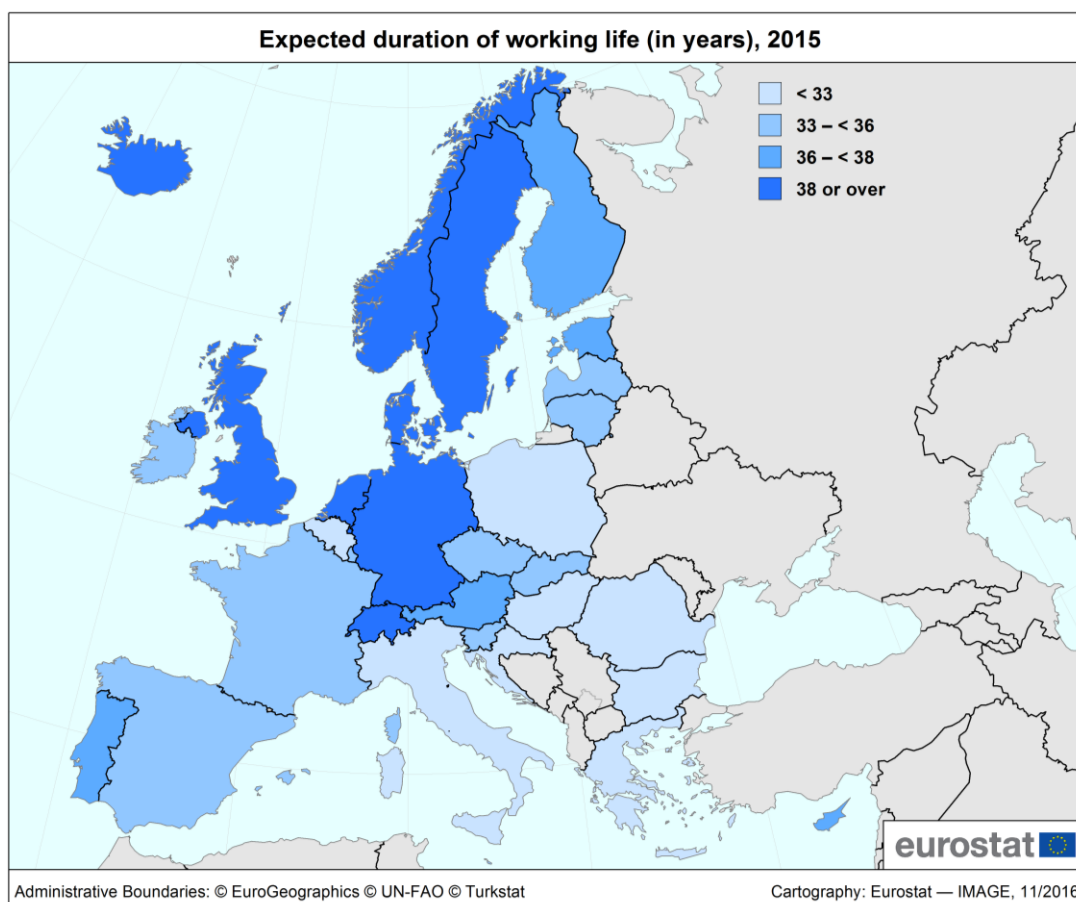
People in the EU can expect to work almost 2 years longer than 10 years ago

Increase mainly driven by longer duration of working life for women

The expected duration of working life in the **European Union** (EU) stood at 35.4 years on average in 2015, up by 1.9 years compared with 2005. In detail over this 10-year period, duration of working life has increased more rapidly for women (32.8 years in 2015 compared with 30.2 years in 2005, or +2.6 years) than for men (37.9 years in 2015 vs. 36.7 years in 2005, or +1.2 year).

Among the EU Member States, working life in 2015 was expected to be longest on average in **Sweden** (41.2 years) and shortest in **Italy** (30.7 years).

This information is issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. This indicator "duration of working life" measures the number of years a person aged 15 is expected to be active (either employed or unemployed) in the labour market throughout his/her life.



Working life more than ten years longer in Sweden than in Italy

Across the EU Member States, the average working life was in 2015 expected to be the longest in **Sweden** (41.2 years), ahead of the **Netherlands** (39.9 years), **Denmark** (39.2 years), the **United Kingdom** (38.6 years) and **Germany** (38.0 years). At the opposite end of the scale, working life was expected to last less than 33 years in **Italy** (30.7 years), **Bulgaria** (32.1 years), **Greece** (32.3 years), **Belgium**, **Croatia**, **Hungary** and **Poland** (32.6 years each) as well as **Romania** (32.8 years). In all Member States except **Lithuania**, duration of working life was expected in 2015 to be longer for men than for women.

Largest increase of duration of working life in Malta, smallest in Denmark

Between 2005 and 2015, the expected duration of working life has increased in all EU Member States, albeit to different extents. It has risen the most in **Malta** (+5.1 years), followed by **Hungary** (+4.2 years), **Luxembourg** (+3.1 years), **Estonia** (+3.0 years) and **Lithuania** (+2.9 years), while it remained nearly the same in **Denmark** (+0.2 year), **Portugal** (+0.3 year) and **Ireland** (+0.4 year). The overall increase in duration of working life is generally driven across Member States by the change in women's duration of working life. This latter has increased between 2005 and 2015 in all EU Member States, notably in **Malta** (+8.6 years), **Spain** (+5.1 years), **Luxembourg** (+4.7 years), **Hungary** (+4.0 years), **Cyprus** (+3.6 years), **Lithuania** (+3.5 years), **Germany** and **Austria** (+3.4 years each). In contrast, duration of working life for men has dropped in five Member States: **Cyprus** (-1.9 years), **Greece** (-1.4 years), **Ireland** (-1.0 year), **Spain** (-0.7 year), and **Portugal** (-0.6 year).

Average expected years of working life in the EU Member States, 2005-2015

	Total			Of which:					
	2005	2015	Change 2015/2005 (in years)	Men			Women		
				2005	2015	Change 2015/2005 (in years)	2005	2015	Change 2015/2005 (in years)
EU	33.5	35.4	1.9	36.7	37.9	1.2	30.2	32.8	2.6
Belgium	31.4	32.6	1.2	34.6	34.6	0.0	28.1	30.4	2.3
Bulgaria	29.6	32.1	2.5	31.3	33.4	2.1	27.7	30.7	3.0
Czech Republic	33.7	35.1	1.4	36.8	38.2	1.4	30.4	31.9	1.5
Denmark	39.0	39.2	0.2	40.8	40.9	0.1	37.1	37.5	0.4
Germany	35.6	38.0	2.4	38.6	40.1	1.5	32.4	35.8	3.4
Estonia	34.0	37.0	3.0	34.2	37.6	3.4	33.8	36.4	2.6
Ireland	34.6	35.0	0.4	39.9	38.9	-1.0	29.1	30.9	1.8
Greece	31.6	32.3	0.7	37.0	35.6	-1.4	25.8	28.9	3.1
Spain	32.8	34.9	2.1	37.9	37.2	-0.7	27.4	32.5	5.1
France	32.9	34.9	2.0	35.1	36.6	1.5	30.6	33.0	2.4
Croatia	31.4	32.6	1.2	33.7	34.5	0.8	28.8	30.7	1.9
Italy	29.6	30.7	1.1	35.2	35.4	0.2	23.7	25.7	2.0
Cyprus	35.7	36.4	0.7	40.9	39.0	-1.9	30.1	33.7	3.6
Latvia	33.1	35.2	2.1	34.0	35.4	1.4	32.1	35.0	2.9
Lithuania	31.9	34.8	2.9	32.2	34.5	2.3	31.6	35.1	3.5
Luxembourg	30.4	33.5	3.1	34.4	35.8	1.4	26.3	31.0	4.7
Hungary	28.4	32.6	4.2	30.7	34.9	4.2	26.0	30.0	4.0
Malta	28.3	33.4	5.1	38.2	39.9	1.7	18.1	26.7	8.6
Netherlands	37.5	39.9	2.4	40.8	42.5	1.7	34.0	37.2	3.2
Austria	34.1	36.7	2.6	37.0	38.8	1.8	31.1	34.5	3.4
Poland	30.6	32.6	2.0	33.0	35.2	2.2	28.1	29.9	1.8
Portugal	36.5	36.8	0.3	38.9	38.3	-0.6	34.0	35.3	1.3
Romania	31.1	32.8	1.7	33.4	36.0	2.6	28.7	29.4	0.7
Slovenia	33.5	34.3	0.8	35.3	35.7	0.4	31.5	32.8	1.3
Slovakia	32.3	33.5	1.2	35.3	35.9	0.6	29.2	30.9	1.7
Finland	35.9	37.6	1.7	36.6	38.1	1.5	35.3	37.2	1.9
Sweden	38.9	41.2	2.3	40.1	42.2	2.1	37.6	40.1	2.5
United Kingdom	37.4	38.6	1.2	40.5	41.2	0.7	34.1	35.9	1.8
Iceland	45.0	46.6	1.6	47.4	48.6	1.2	42.6	44.7	2.1
Norway	38.4	39.8	1.4	39.9	41.0	1.1	36.8	38.5	1.7
Switzerland	40.1	42.5	2.4	43.1	44.7	1.6	36.8	40.1	3.3

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

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.

Methods and definitions

The **duration of working life** indicator measures the number of years a person aged 15 is expected to be active (meaning either employed or unemployed) in the labour market throughout his/her life. This indicator is derived from demographic data and labour market data (EU-LFS survey).

Data refer to the resident population and therefore results relate to persons resident in a country irrespective of the country where those persons work. This difference may be significant in countries with large cross-border flows. For further information, please consult the Eurostat [EU-LFS publication](#).

For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) dedicated to the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS).

Eurostat [database](#) on EU-LFS results.

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