

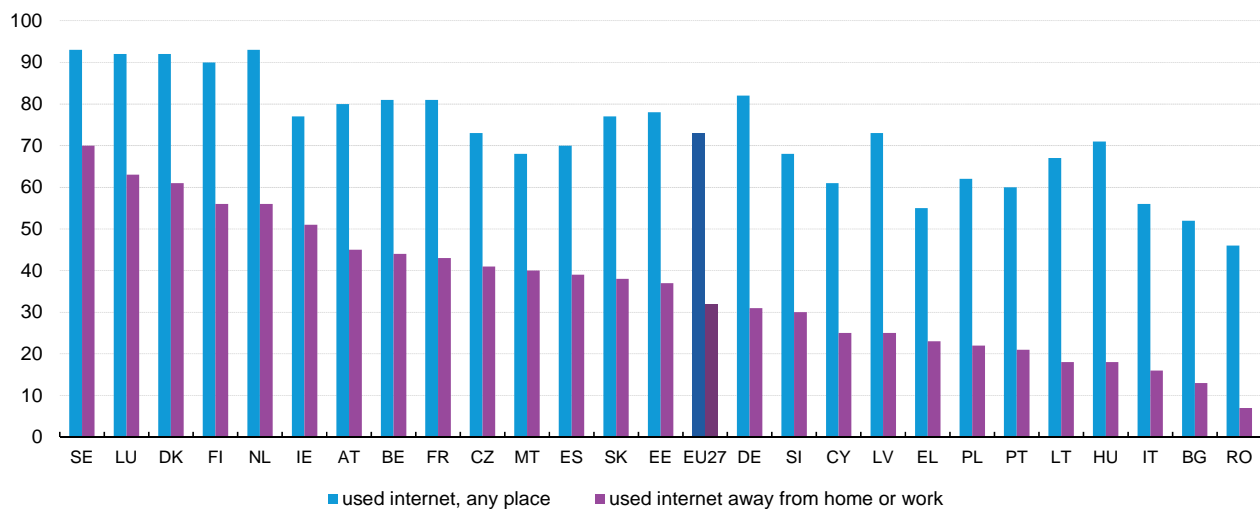
## Internet use in households and by individuals in 2012

### One third of Europeans used the internet on mobile devices away from home or work

**A large majority of households and individuals uses the internet today. It allows users to access information and services at any time and any place. Mobile internet usage has become popular with the emergence of new mobile devices such as smartphones or tablet computers, especially among young people. About 60% of the young EU27 population (aged 16-24 years) used the internet on the move. This issue of *Statistics in Focus* provides an overview of the results from the 2012 Survey on ICT (information and communication technology) usage in households and by individuals and takes a closer look at the activities carried out by internet users.**

The percentage of individuals in the EU who used the internet in 2012 was 73 %. About one third of individuals used the internet on mobile devices away from home or work (figure 1). There were significant differences in mobile internet usage between countries. The shares for individuals who used portable computers or handheld devices through a mobile phone network or wireless connection away from home or work were above 50 % in six Member States: Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden. The shares were below 20 % in five Member States: Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania and Romania.

**Figure 1: Individuals who used the internet, at any place and away from home or work, 2012 (% of individuals)**



Note: EU27 without UK

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [isoc\\_ci\\_ifp\\_iu](#), [isoc\\_cimobi\\_dev](#))

## Three quarters of EU households had access to the internet in 2012

The proportion of households in the EU with access to the internet was 76 % in 2012, an increase of 6 percentage points compared with 2010 (table 1). Broadband access enables higher speed when browsing and performing activities. It has now reached a level close to saturation among households with internet access. In the EU27, 72 % of households have access to broadband at home, an increase of 11 percentage points compared with 2010.

The share of internet access varied among Member States, ranging from more than 90 % of households in Denmark, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Sweden to below 55 % in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece. Significant disparities in broadband take-up by households remain in 2012, with a rate of only around 50 % of households in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania. However, Bulgaria and Romania showed impressive recent growth. The proportion of households with broadband connections in these countries doubled between 2010 and 2012. Between 2008 and 2012, the highest growth, more than 30 percentage points, was recorded in the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovakia.

**Table 1: Internet access and broadband internet connections in households (%)**

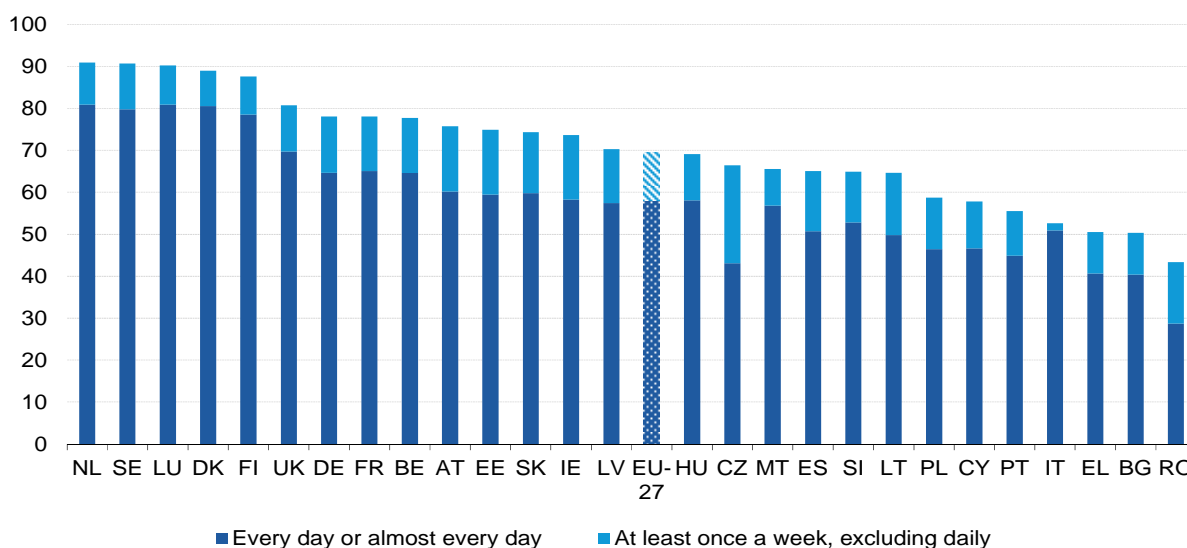
	Internet connections in households			Broadband internet connections		
	2008	2010	2012	2008	2010	2012
EU-27	60	70	76	49	61	72
BE	64	73	78	60	70	75
BG	25	33	51	21	26	51
CZ	46	61	71	36	54	68
DK	82	86	92	74	80	85
DE	75	82	85	55	75	82
EE	58	68	75	54	64	74
IE	63	72	81	43	58	65
EL	31	46	54	22	41	51
ES	51	59	68	45	57	67
FR	62	74	80	57	66	77
IT	47	59	63	31	49	55
CY	43	54	62	33	51	62
LV	53	60	69	40	53	67
LT	51	61	62	43	54	61
LU	80	90	93	61	70	68
HU	48	60	69	42	52	68
MT	59	70	77	55	69	77
NL	86	91	94	74	80	83
AT	69	73	79	54	64	77
PL	48	63	70	38	57	67
PT	46	54	61	39	50	60
RO	30	42	54	13	23	50
SI	59	68	74	50	62	73
SK	58	67	75	35	49	72
FI	72	81	87	66	76	85
SE	84	88	92	71	83	87
UK	71	80	83	62	70	80
IS	88	92	95	83	87	91
NO	84	90	93	73	83	86
HR	45	56	66	27	49	60
ME	:	:	55	:	:	52
MK	29	46	:	23	37	:
TR	25	42	47	22	34	43

Notes: EU27 for 2012 includes 2011 data for UK, UK: 2011 instead of 2012 data, include estimates for Northern Ireland

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [isoc\\_bde15b\\_h](#))

## Seven in ten individuals used the internet at least once a week

**Figure 2: Individuals who used the internet at least once a week, 2012 (% of individuals)**



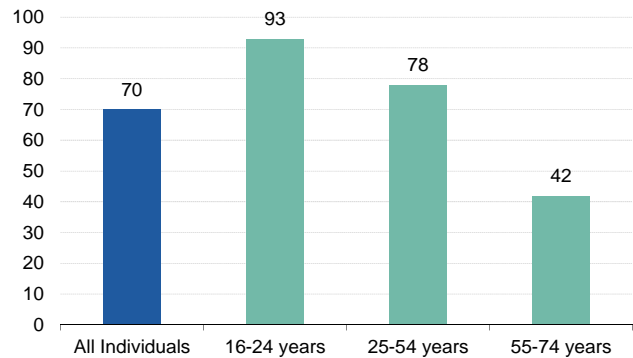
Note: 2011 data for UK, EU27 with 2011 data for UK

Source: Eurostat (online data codes : [isoc\\_bdek\\_di](#), [isoc\\_ci\\_ifp\\_fu](#))

Nearly 60 % of individuals in the EU used the internet daily. Seven in ten individuals used the internet at least once a week. The shares for individuals who used the internet regularly were above 80 % in six Member States: Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The shares were below 60 % in seven Member States: Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal and Romania (figure 2).

There were significant gaps in usage ('digital divides') when looking at age groups (figure 3). More than 9 in 10 young people aged 16-24 were regular users. The percentage of regular internet users in the age group 25-54 was 78 % and it was only 42 % in the age group 55-74 years.

**Figure 3: Individuals who used the internet at least once a week, by age group, EU27, 2012 (% of individuals)**



Note: EU27 with 2011 data for UK

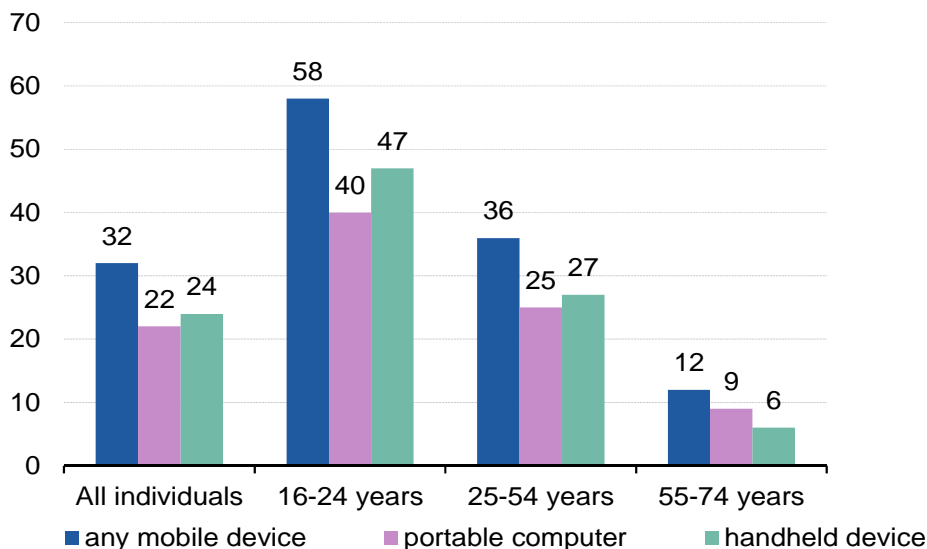
Source: Eurostat (online data code: [isoc\\_bdek\\_dj](#))

### Nearly 60% of the young EU27 population used the internet on the move

Individuals in the EU27 aged 16-74 years made slightly more use of handheld devices, including mobile or smart phones and other small internet enabling devices, than of portable computers (including laptops, netbooks, tablets). The proportion of young people aged 16-24 using handheld devices (47 %) for internet access was

7 percentage points higher than for those using portable computers (40 %). Overall, about one third of individuals in the EU27 used mobile devices to access the internet away from home or work. The share of mobile internet usage by young people was at 58 % almost five times higher than the share of 12 % for the population aged 55-74 (figure 4).

**Figure 4: Individuals who used the internet away from home or work, by age group and type of mobile device, EU27, 2012 (% of individuals)**

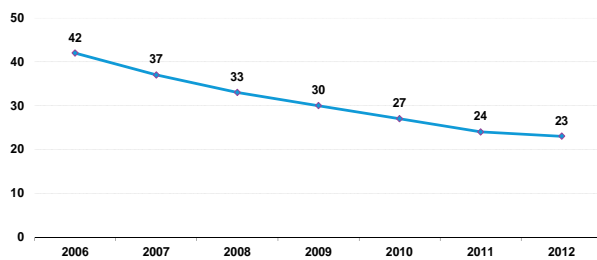


Note: EU27 without UK

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [isoc\\_cimobi\\_dev](#))

## Almost one quarter of individuals aged 16-74 in the EU had never used the internet

**Figure 5: Individuals who have never used the internet, EU27, 2006-2012 (% of individuals)**



Note: EU27 with 2011 data for UK

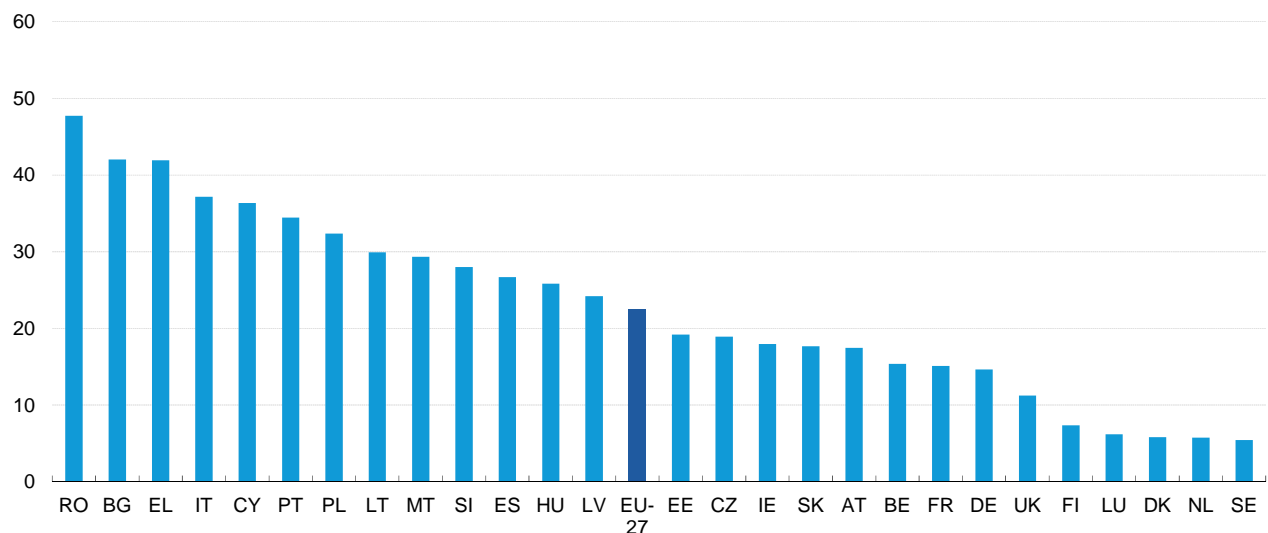
Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bdek\\_di](#))

In the EU27, the proportion of individuals who never used the internet declined from 42 % in 2006 to 23 % in 2012 (figure 5). The recent decline in

the proportion of non-users in the EU was minor, from 24 % in 2011 to 23 % in 2012, still 8 percentage points above the EU target of 15 % non-users set for 2015 in the Digital Agenda.

Large digital divides remain when looking at the share of the population who never used the internet in different countries (figure 6). The highest shares of the population with no past experiences in internet use at all whether at home, at work or at any other place were registered in Romania (48 %), Bulgaria (42 %) and Greece (42 %), the lowest in Sweden (5 %), the Netherlands, Denmark and Luxembourg (all 6 %) and Finland (7 %). Another five Member States (Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, Poland and Lithuania) showed proportions between 30 % and 40 % for the population being excluded and without user skills regarding the internet.

**Figure 6: Individuals who have never used the internet, 2012 (% of individuals)**



Note: 2011 data for UK, EU27 with 2011 data for UK

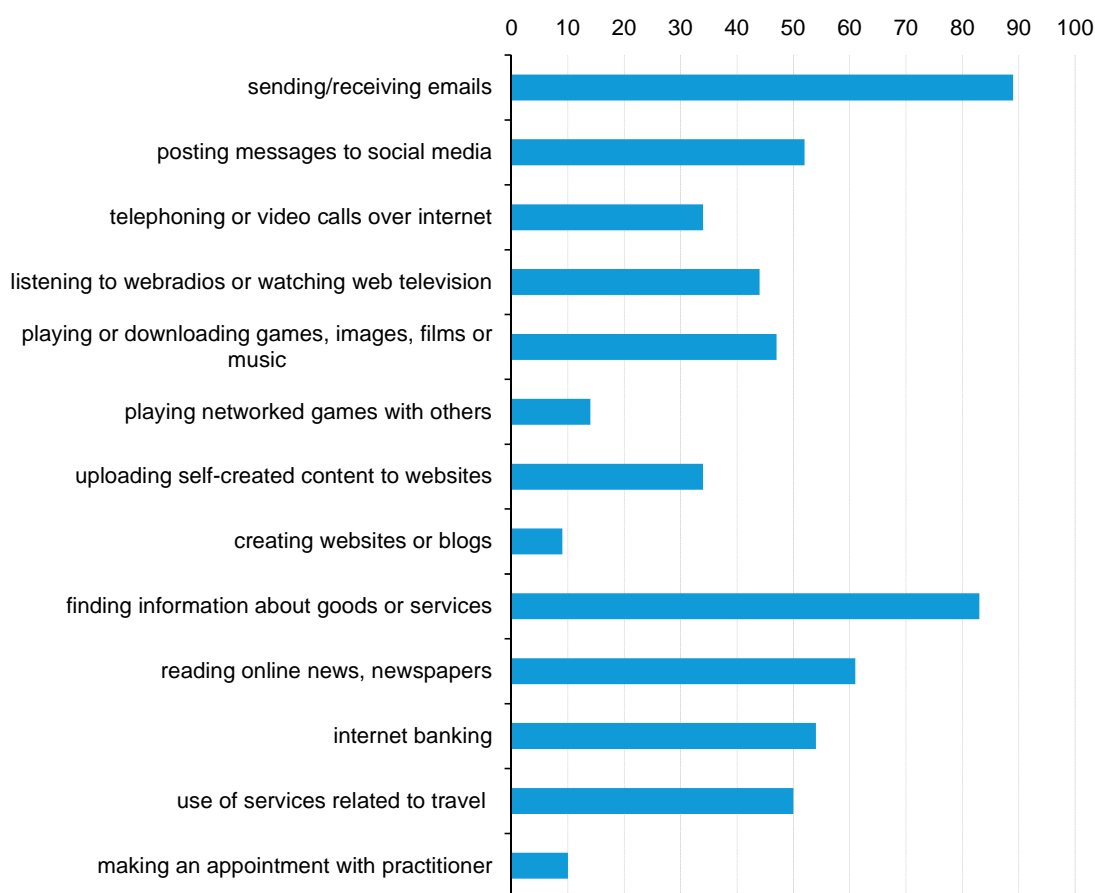
Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bdek\\_di](#))

## A majority of internet users communicated by e-mail and in social media, searched for information about goods and services, read online news and used internet banking

Nine out of ten internet users communicated by e-mail (figure 7). Social media are playing an increasingly important role in communicating with others for private purposes. One in two internet users posted messages to social media. More than 80% searched for information about goods and

services and more than 60 % read online news, newspapers or news magazines. Other popular uses were internet banking and the use of travel related services (54 % and 50 % of internet users respectively).

**Figure 7: Use of internet for communication, entertainment and other selected activities, EU27, 2012 (% of internet users)**



Source: Eurostat (online data codes : [isoc\\_bde15cua](#), [isoc\\_ci\\_ac\\_i](#))

Two new indicators released by Eurostat as part of the set of indicators included in the Benchmarking Digital Europe Framework 2011-2015 cover the creation of websites or blogs and the use of the internet for making appointments with practitioners

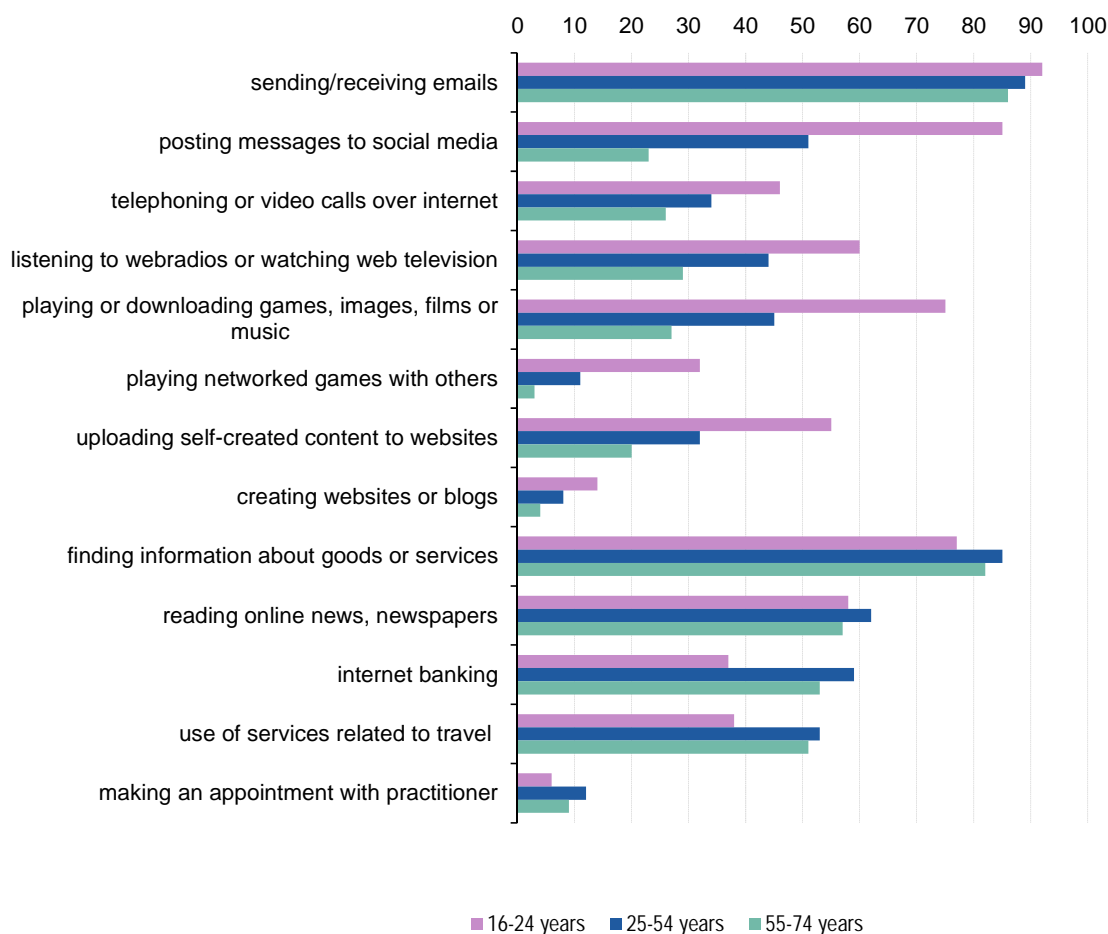
in hospitals or health care centres. The proportion of internet users in the EU27 who made such appointments was 10 %. The share of internet users who created websites or blogs was 9 %.

### One in two internet users aged 55-74 used online services for banking and travel purposes

Communication by e-mail had similar importance for internet users in all age groups. The shares of internet users communicating by e-mail varied slightly from 86 % in the age group 55-74 to 92 % in the age group 16-24. Larger differences in usage among the younger and older populations who have used the internet were recorded for other activities surveyed in 2012. Activities such as communicating in social media, listening to web radios and watching web television as well as

playing games, films or music and uploading content to websites attracted more than half of the young internet users aged 16-24. Most young internet users also searched for information about goods or services and read online news (figure 8). Besides communicating by e-mail, the majority of internet users in the age groups 25-54 and 55-74 years searched for information about goods or services, read online news and used services for banking and travel purposes.

**Figure 8: Use of internet for communication, entertainment and other selected activities, by age group, EU27, 2012 (% of internet users)**



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [isoc\\_bde15cua](#), [isoc\\_ci\\_ac\\_i](#))

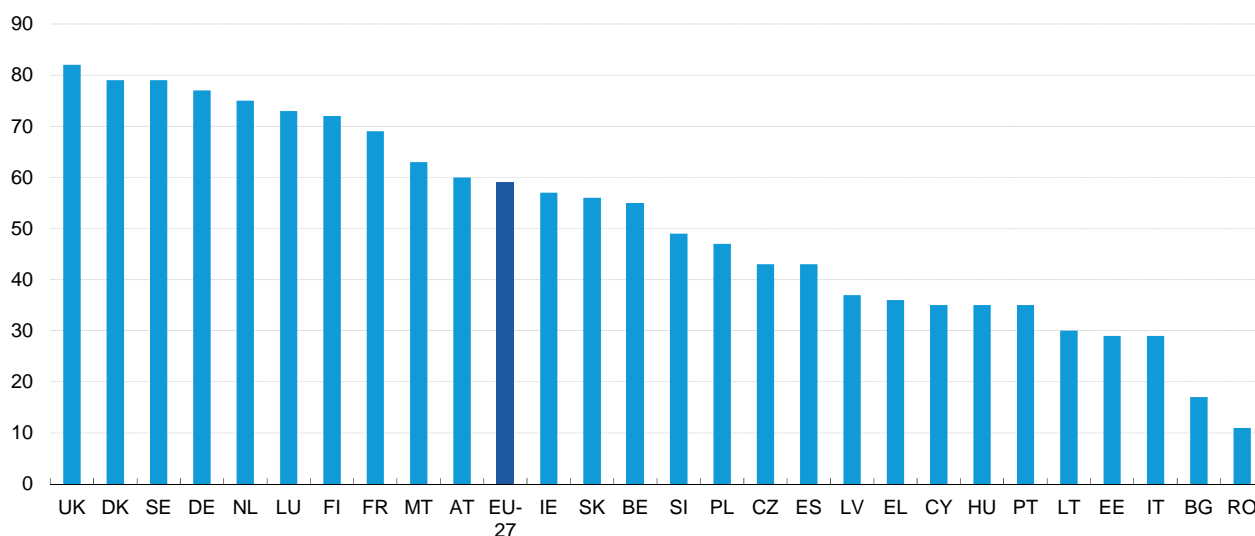
### Three in five internet users shopped online

Buying over the internet (e-commerce or e-shopping) has become very popular in the EU. Consumers appreciate the convenience of shopping anytime and anywhere, getting better access to information and a broader selection of products, comparing prices or obtaining opinions from other consumers. Not all users who take advantage of informing themselves over the internet about available goods or services finally also buy such products online. Reasons may include a preference to shop in person or trust or security concerns. Figure 9 shows the proportions of e-shoppers among internet users. The reference period of

covering the last twelve months prior to the survey for this indicator takes into account seasonal effects in e-commerce.

In 2012, 59 % of internet users in the EU27 reported having bought or ordered goods or services over the internet for private purposes. The share of e-shoppers among internet users varied considerably between Member States, ranging from 11 % in Romania, 17 % in Bulgaria, 29 % in Italy and Estonia and 30 % in Lithuania to 82 % in the United Kingdom, 79 % in Denmark and Sweden, 77 % in Germany and 75 % in the Netherlands (figure 9).

**Figure 9: Internet users who bought or ordered goods or services for private use over the internet in the last 12 months, 2012 (% of internet users)**



Note: 2011 data for UK, EU27 with 2012 data for UK

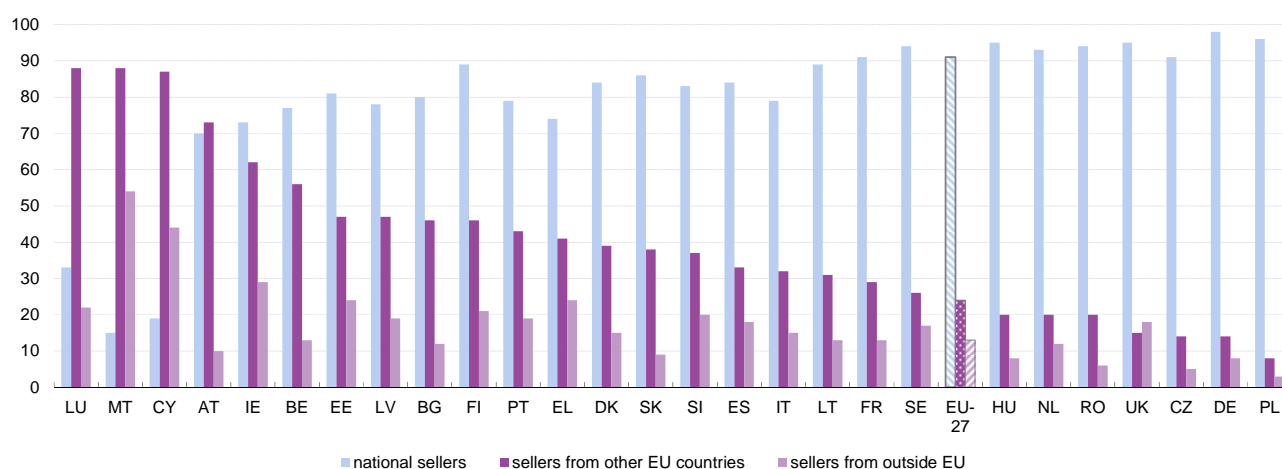
Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bdek\\_smi](#))

### About a quarter of online shoppers bought or ordered goods or services from sellers in other EU countries

The level of cross-border online purchases can indicate the functioning of the EU single market for e-commerce and the extent to which consumers make use of wider choices and lower prices. Among individuals in the EU27 who bought or ordered goods or services over the internet in the last 12 months prior to the survey, nine out of ten bought from sellers based in their country of residence and one in four bought at least once from sellers from other EU countries. Cross-border EU

purchases by individuals were most important in smaller Member States. More than 70 % of e-shoppers in Luxembourg, Malta, Cyprus and Austria stated that they bought or ordered from sellers in other EU Member States. In four Member States, the United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Germany and Poland, less than one fifth of online shoppers bought from other EU countries (figure 10).

**Figure 10: National and cross-border purchases by e-shoppers, 2012 (% of individuals who bought or ordered over the internet in the last 12 months)**



Note: 2011 data for UK, EU27 with 2012 data for UK

Source: Eurostat (online data codes : [isoc\\_bdek\\_smi](#), [isoc\\_ec\\_ibuy](#))

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Source: EU survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals.

2012 data are based on selected aggregate data transmitted by Member States and other countries. An update of the public database covering all collected characteristics is foreseen during the first quarter 2013. The survey covered households with at least one person aged 16-74, and individuals aged 16-74. Households were asked about internet access by any member of the household at home, individuals about the last time of internet use, frequency and place of use, mobile use, activities and e-skills. Sample sizes EU27 (without UK): 144107 households and 204858 individuals (2012).

The findings are used for monitoring several EU policies, in particular the Digital Agenda (<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda>). Most indicators presented in this publication are included in the 2011-2015 Benchmarking Digital Europe Framework ([http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/benchmarking/benchmarking\\_digital\\_europe\\_2011-2015.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/benchmarking/benchmarking_digital_europe_2011-2015.pdf)).

Country codes: European Union (27 countries) is written as EU27 and includes Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), 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 United Kingdom (UK). Other countries: Island (IS), Norway (NO), Croatia (HR), Montenegro (ME), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (MK) and Turkey (TR).

'Digital divide' is a term used to describe gaps and pattern of access to and use of computers and the internet across the population and countries. The indicator on broadband internet access measures the proportion of *households* having subscribed to at least a basic level of broadband. Broadband technologies include DSL (Digital Subscriber

Line), cable, optical fibre, satellite and 3G/4G mobile telephony networks (e.g. UMTS).

In general, *individuals* were asked about activities they had carried out on the internet in the last 3 months prior to the survey at home or at any other location for private purposes. The main reference period was the first quarter of 2012 (the data was collected in most countries in the second quarter).

Communication activities in 2012 included posting messages to chat sites, blogs, social networking sites, newsgroups or online discussion forum or use of instant messaging. Telephoning or video calls (via webcam) over the internet involved the instalment of a program for making live audio and visual communication. Reading news included any type of online news, newspapers or news magazines, either free of charge or paid. Services related to travel or travel related accommodation include services for information (e.g. websites for tourists informing about attractions, hotels, flight schedules), often combined with services for booking of travel tickets, hotel rooms etc. Internet banking includes electronic transactions with a bank for payment etc. or for looking up account information. Share purchases are not included in internet banking but in the activity on ordering or buying goods or services. Making an appointment with a practitioner targets websites of hospitals and health care centres and excludes e-mail. The definition of e-commerce excludes manually typed e-mails. On mobile internet usage and ubiquitous connectivity (a special module was included in the 2012 model questionnaire), individuals were asked about the use of portable computers (e.g. laptop, netbook, tablet computer) or handheld devices (e.g. mobile phones or smartphones, mp3 player, games console, PDA) for accessing the internet away from home or their usual work place ('on the move' or nomadic use). Network connections can include mobile phone networks (e.g. UMTS/3G) as well as wireless connections (e.g. hotspots with public WiFi at hotels, airports, cafés etc., WiFi use with mobile devices at another person's home).

---

## Further information

Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on "Information society statistics"

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information\\_society/data/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information_society/data/database)

Further information about "Information society statistics"

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information\\_society/introduction](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information_society/introduction)

---

### Journalists can contact the media support service:

Bech Building, Office A4/125, L-2920 Luxembourg

Tel.: (352) 4301 33408

Fax: (352) 4301 35349

E-mail: [eurostat-mediasupport@ec.europa.eu](mailto:eurostat-mediasupport@ec.europa.eu)

---

### European Statistical Data Support:

With the members of the 'European statistical system', Eurostat has set up a network of support centres in nearly every Member State and in some EFTA countries.

Their role is to provide help and guidance to Internet users of European statistics.

Contact details for this support network can be found on the Eurostat website at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>.

---

All Eurostat publications can be ordered via the 'EU Bookshop':

<http://bookshop.europa.eu/>.

---

Manuscript completed on: 13.12.2012

Data extracted on: 30.11.2012

ISSN 1977-0316

Catalogue number: KS-SF-12-050-EN-N

© European Union, 2012