

*Data extracted in May 2017. Most recent data: Further Eurostat information, Main tables and Database .
Planned article update: July 2018.*

This article presents crime statistics across the European Union (EU), based on official figures for police-recorded offences. In addition, results on criminal justice system personnel and the prison population are introduced. Note that for each EU-28 aggregate¹, only countries with complete data for the period 2008–2015 are included in the calculation. This means that for several crimes, one or more countries are excluded from the calculation due to missing data.

Main statistical findings

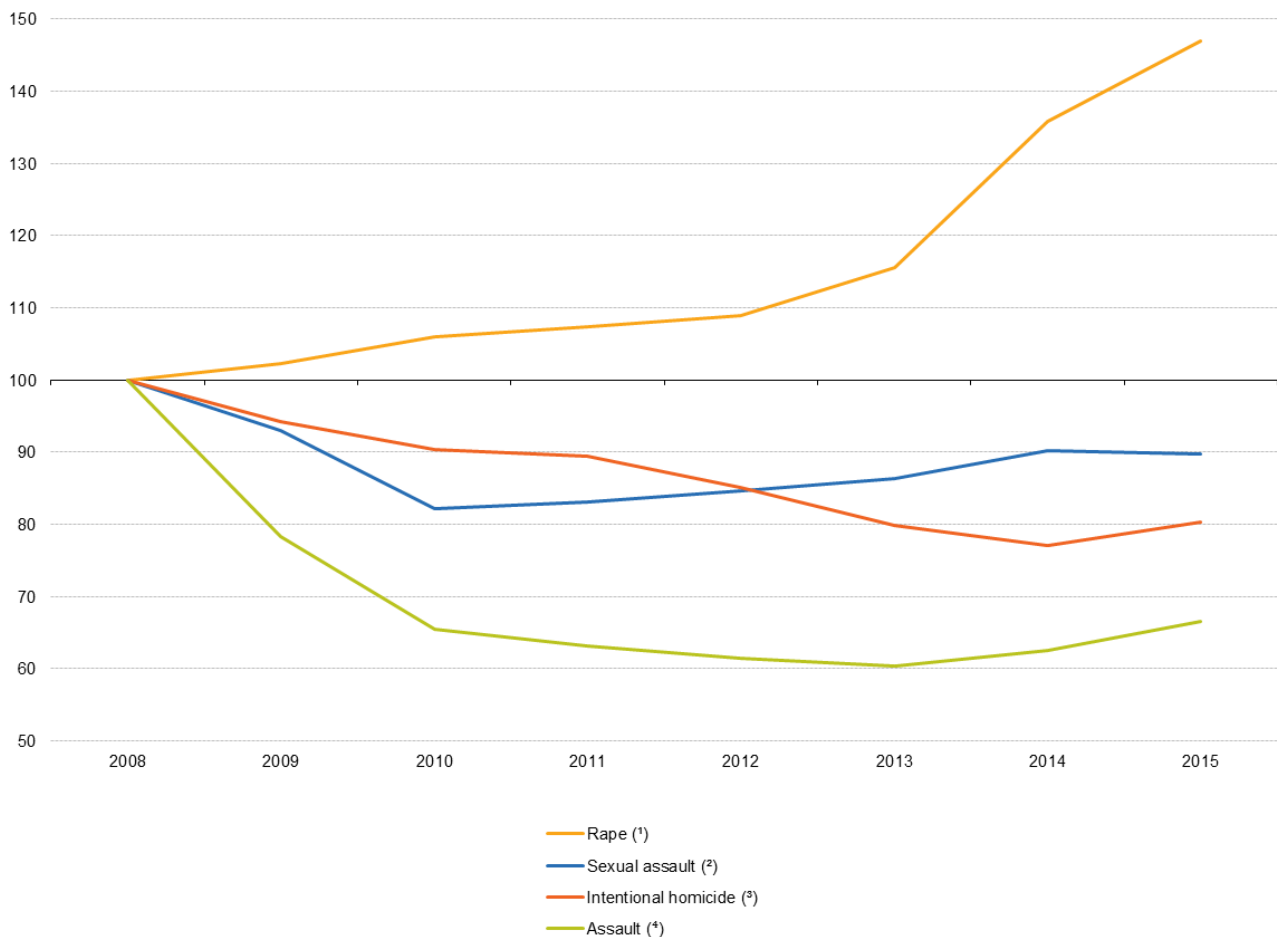
Non-sexual violence

Intentional homicide

Intentional **homicide** is defined as an unlawful death purposefully inflicted on a person by another person, including serious assault leading to death and death as a result of a terrorist attack. Attempted homicide, manslaughter, death due to legal intervention, justifiable homicide in self-defence and death due to armed conflict are excluded. Intentional homicide is reported fairly consistently across jurisdictions within the EU, with definitions varying less between countries than for other types of crime.

The figures for intentional homicide show a consistent decrease from 2008–2014 before a rebound in 2015 (see Figure 1). The total number across the EU-28 (excluding the Netherlands, UK England and Wales and UK Scotland) in 2015 was 4 528, 19.6 % less than in 2008 (5 634) but 4.3 % more than in 2014 (4 340).

¹Figures are reported by territory of jurisdiction, notably the United Kingdom consists of three jurisdictions: England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Therefore, for crime statistics, an EU-28 indicator covers 30 "countries" (short for territory of jurisdiction).



(*) Italy and UK Scotland not available for all years.

(²) Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia and UK England and Wales not available for all years.

(³) The Netherlands, UK England and Wales and UK Scotland not available for all years.

(⁴) Poland and UK Scotland not available for all years.

Figure 1: Police-recorded rape, sexual assault, intentional homicide and assault, EU-28, 2008–2015(2008 = 100)Source: Eurostat (crimoffcat)

The number of intentional homicides recorded by the police in each jurisdiction is shown in Table 1 of the article tables .

Assault

Assault refers to physical attack against the body of another person resulting in serious bodily injury. It excludes indecent/sexual assault, threats and slapping/punching. Assault leading to death is also excluded.

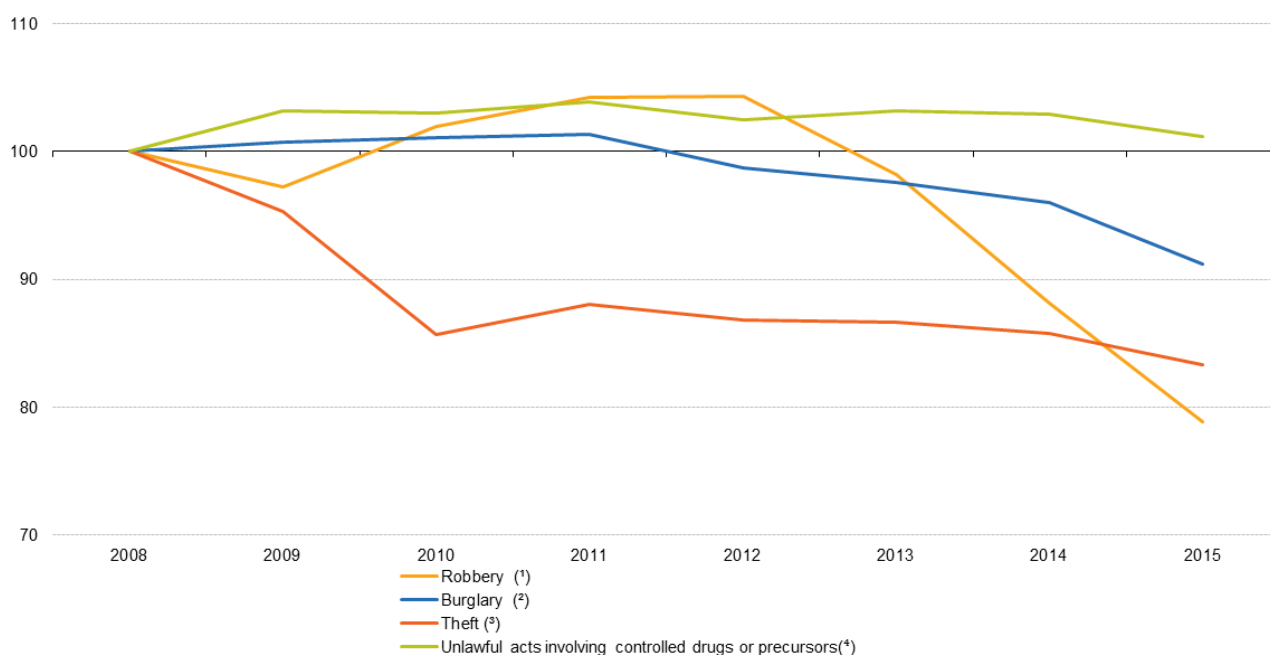
The overall number of police-recorded assault offences dropped by almost 40 % across the EU-28 (excluding Poland and UK Scotland) during the period 2008–2013 while in 2014 the number increased by 3.6 % and in 2015 by 6.6 %. (see Figure 1). Technical changes limit the comparison over the whole period, especially from 2008 to 2009 for Germany, and from 2009 to 2010 for Sweden and Portugal.

The number of assaults recorded by the police in each jurisdiction is shown in Table 2 of the article tables .

Robbery

Robbery is defined for the purpose of this article as the theft of property from a person, overcoming resistance by force or threat of force. Muggings and theft with violence should be included, pick-pocketing and extortion excluded.

After an initial fall between 2008 and 2009, the number of recorded offences across the EU-28 (excluding UK Scotland) increased through to 2011 before strongly decreasing by about one fifth between 2013 and 2015 (see Figure 2).



(*) UK Scotland not available for all years.

(²) Estonia, Italy, Latvia, UK Scotland and Lithuania not available for all years.

(³) Latvia and UK Scotland not available for all years.

(⁴) UK Scotland not available for all years.

Figure 2: Police-recorded robbery, burglary, theft and unlawful acts involving controlled drugs or precursors, EU-28, 2008–2015(2008 = 100)Source: Eurostat (crimoffcat)

The number of robberies recorded by the police in each jurisdiction is shown in Table 3 of the article tables .

Kidnapping

Kidnapping is defined as unlawfully detaining a person or persons against their will (including through the use of force, threat, fraud or enticement) for the purpose of demanding for their liberation an illicit gain or any other economic gain or other material benefit, or in order to oblige someone to do or not to do something. Disputes over child custody are excluded from this definition.

After a relatively stable period between 2009 and 2012, there was an increase across the EU-28 (excluding Denmark, Romania, Sweden and UK Scotland) between 2013 and 2015. The recent rise is chiefly due to figures from France and the United Kingdom. Most other countries did not show a similar pattern. The figures for Germany show a relatively stable level from 2009 to 2015, but were not comparable between 2008 to 2009 which affected as well the EU-28 aggregate.

The number of kidnappings recorded by the police in each jurisdiction is shown in Table 4 of the article tables .

Theft

Theft is defined as depriving a person or organisation of property without force with the intent to keep it. For the purpose of this article, theft excludes burglary, housebreaking, robbery and theft of a motor vehicle.

The level of police-recorded theft remained relatively stable across the EU-28 (excluding Latvia and UK Scotland) during the period 2010–2015. Data from Germany and France have undergone methodological changes between 2008 and 2009 that affect the overall comparability for these years. The United Kingdom and the Netherlands show a clear downward trend from 2008-2015.

The number of thefts recorded by the police in each jurisdiction is shown in Table 5 of the article tables .

Burglary

Burglary refers to gaining unauthorised access to a part of a building, dwelling or other premises. It includes the use of force or false keys, with the intent to steal goods (breaking and entering), theft from a house, apartment or other dwelling, factory, shop, office, or military establishment. However, it excludes theft from a car, from a container, from a vending machine, from a parking meter and from fenced meadows or compounds.

The number of police-recorded burglary offences across the EU-28 (excluding Estonia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and UK Scotland) showed a slight increase from 2008 to 2011 before a downward trend from 2012 to 2015. The most recent results (see Figure 2), show that the number of burglary offences fell by 5.0 % in 2015. During the period 2008-2015, burglary offences decreased in the United Kingdom (by 31 % in England and 24 % in Northern Ireland), while they increased in Germany (19 %) and France (24 %).

The number of burglaries recorded by the police in each jurisdiction is shown in Table 6 of the article tables .

Drug offences

Unlawful acts involving controlled drugs or precursors include illegal possession, cultivation, production, supplying, transportation, importing, exporting, financing of drug operations, excluding those solely in connection with personal use.

After a 3.2 % increase in 2009, the number of police-recorded offences relating to unlawful acts involving controlled drugs or precursors across the EU-28 (excluding UK Scotland) was rather stable during the period 2009–2014. The most recent data available shows that this pattern continued in 2015, as the number of offences was almost unchanged, a fall of 1.7 % compared with the previous year (see Figure 2).

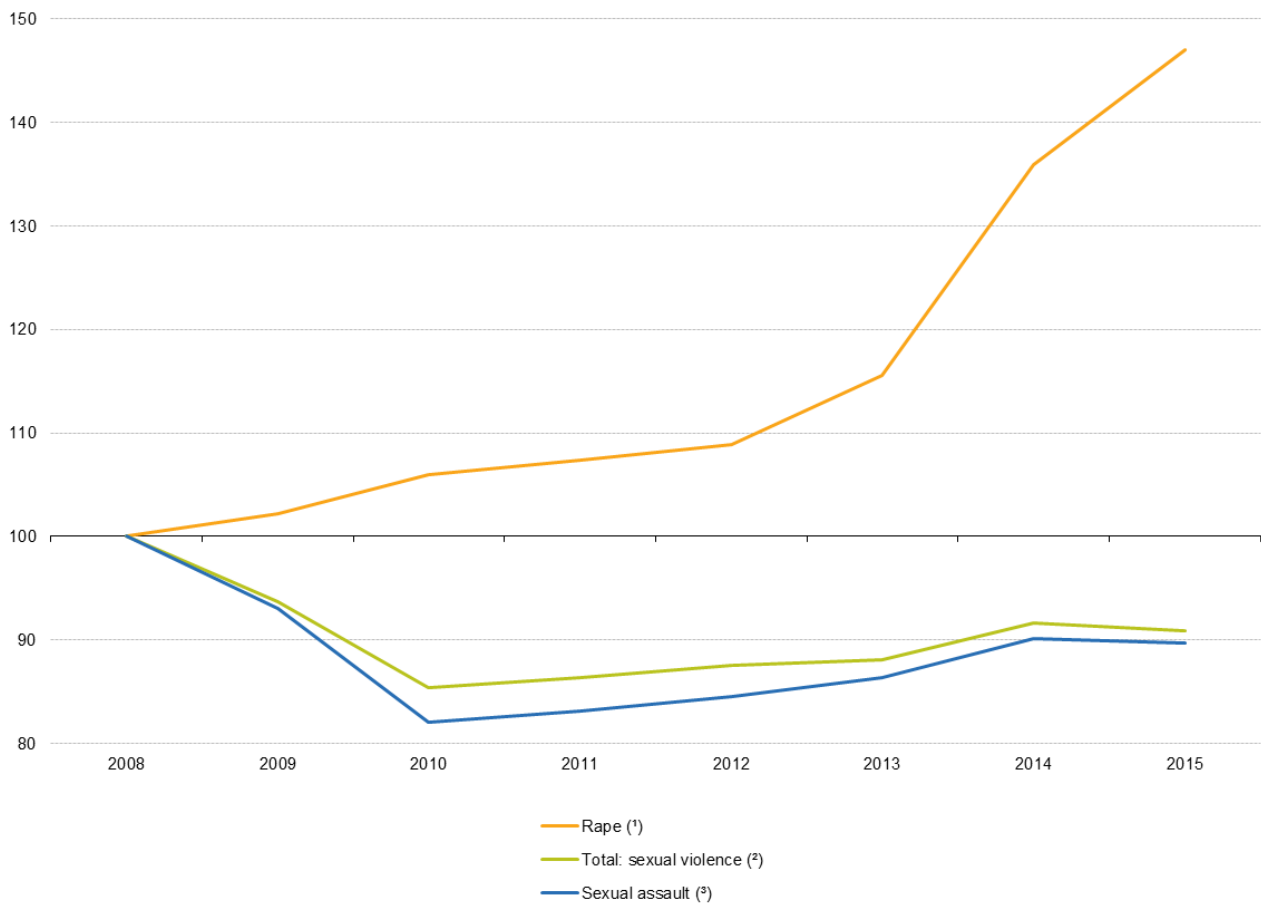
The number of unlawful acts involving controlled drugs or precursors recorded by the police in each jurisdiction is shown in Table 7 of the article tables .

Sexual violence

Sexual violence includes rape and other sexual assault. Rape is defined as sexual intercourse without valid consent and sexual assault refers to sexual violence not amounting to rape. Sexual assault includes an unwanted sexual act, an attempt to obtain a sexual act, or contact or communication with unwanted sexual attention not amounting to rape. It also includes sexual assault with or without physical contact, including drug-facilitated sexual assault; sexual assault committed against a marital partner against her/his will, sexual assault against a helpless person, unwanted groping or fondling, harassment and threats of a sexual nature. Finally it should be reminded that figures refer only to the number of police-recorded offences.

Between 2008 and 2015, the figures for sexual violence fell by 9.1 % across the EU (excluding Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, UK England, Wales and Scotland). After a decrease in 2009 and 2010, there was a clear increase during the period 2010–2014 before a small drop of 0.9 % in 2015.

The figures for rape show an increase by 47.0 % between 2008 and 2015 (excluding Italy and UK Scotland). The observed rise in EU figures for rape is particularly influenced by the figures for UK England and Wales (+173 % between 2008 and 2015). The reduction in the number of sexual assaults at EU level was largely influenced by German figures which are not comparable between 2009 and 2010 (See Figure 3).



(¹) Italy and UK Scotland not available for all years.

(²) Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, UK England and Wales and UK Scotland not available for all years.

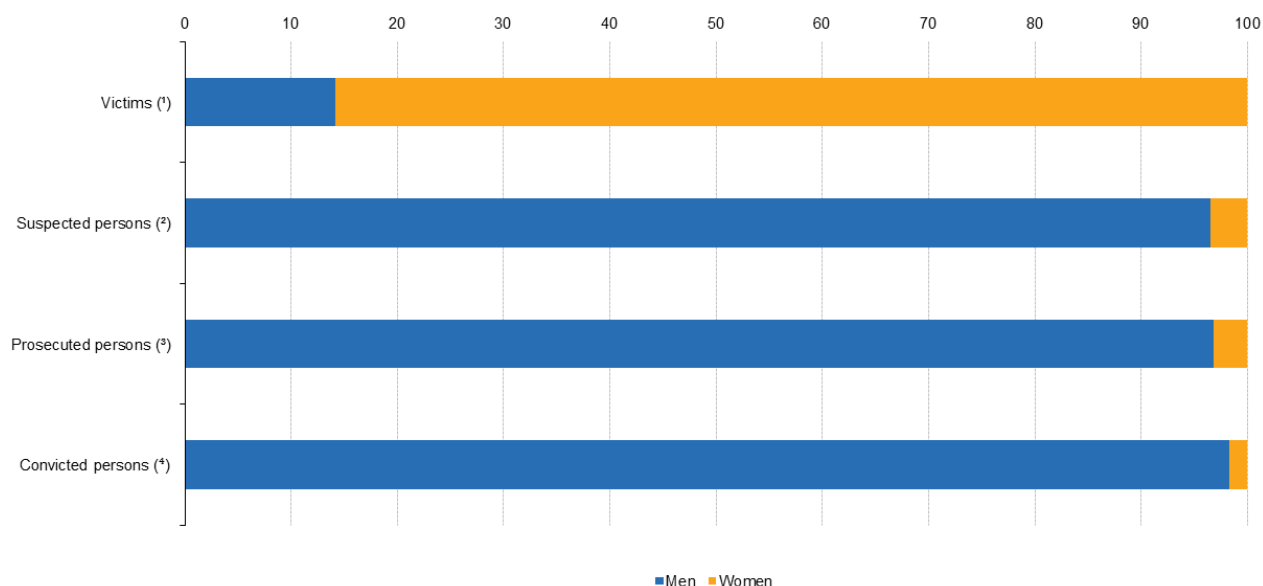
(³) Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia and UK England and Wales not available for all years.

Figure 3: Police-recorded sexual violence offences, EU-28, 2008–15 (2008 = 100) Source: Eurostat (crimoffcat)

The overall numbers of police-recorded sexual violence, rape and sexual assault offences in each jurisdiction are shown in Tables 8, 9 and 10 of the article tables .

Gender distribution

Figure 4 shows police-recorded offences for sexual violence by gender of victims and people suspected, prosecuted and convicted. Most victims of sexual violence (85.8 %) are female, whereas most suspects (96.5 %) and offenders (98.3 % of convicted persons) are male. Note that there are more missing data for figures by gender, than for totals.



(*) Belgium, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden and UK Scotland not available.

(†) Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Romania and the United Kingdom not available.

(‡) Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Sweden and UK Scotland not available.

(¶) Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta and UK Scotland not available.

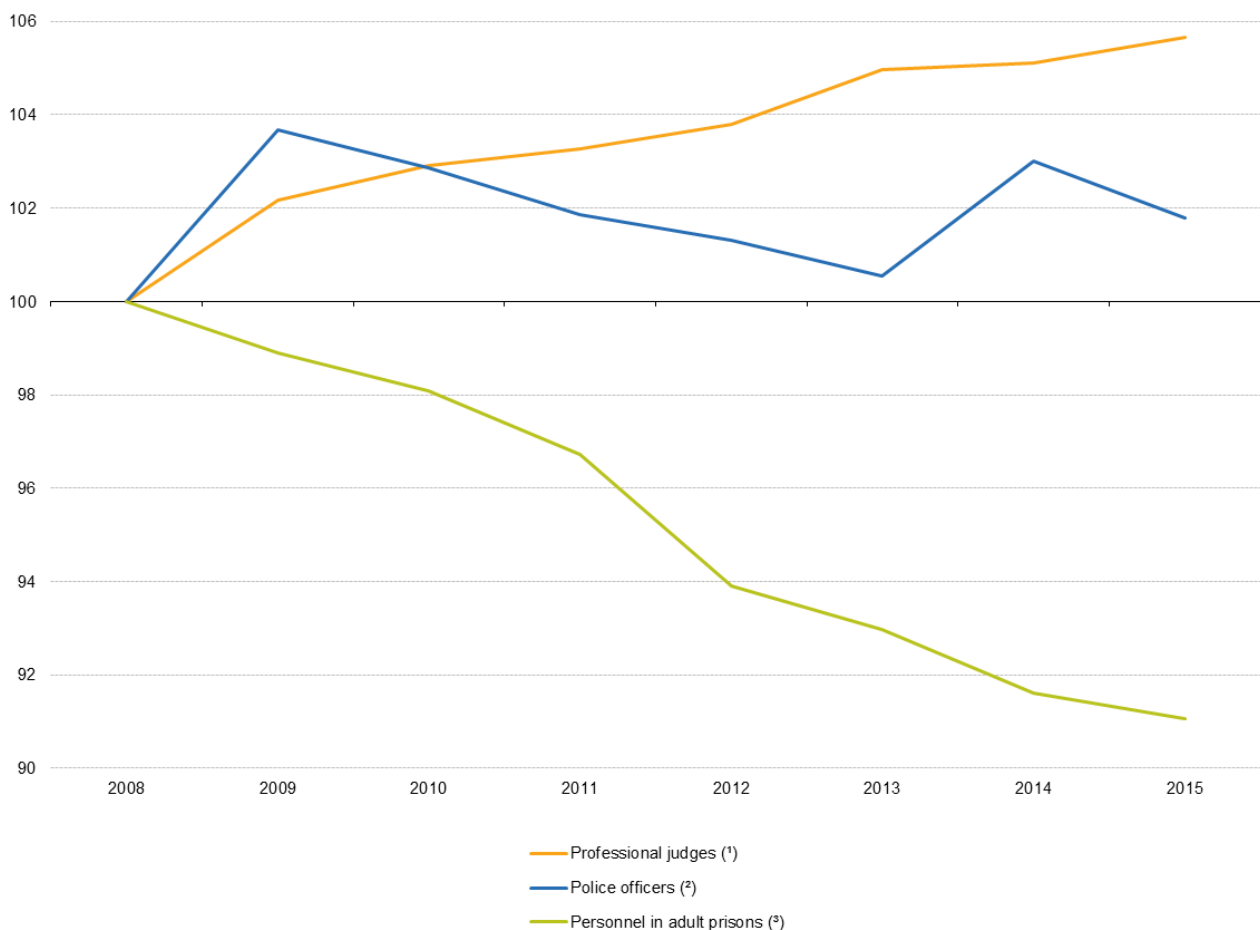
Figure 4: Police-recorded sexual violence offences, people by legal status and gender, EU-28, 2015(% of total)Source: Eurostat (crimhomsoff)

Personnel in the criminal justice system

In this article the analysis covers the number of [police officers](#) , professional judges and prison personnel working in adult prisons, with data referring to the situation on 31 December of each year.

Police officers are defined as employees of public agencies, whose principal functions are the prevention, detection and investigation of crime and apprehension of alleged offenders. The definition excludes support staff such as secretaries and clerks. Professional judges are defined as both full-time and part-time official legal professionals, who have been recruited and are paid to practise as a judge. They are authorised to hear civil, criminal and other cases, including cases in appeal courts, and to make dispositions in a court of law. Non-professional judges such as lay judges and lay magistrates are excluded. Personnel in adult prisons refers to people employed in penal or correctional institutions, including management, treatment, custodial and other personnel, such as prison maintenance and the provision of prison food.

Figure 5 shows recent developments in the number of personnel across the different stages of the criminal justice system (police, courts and prison).



(*) Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, UK England and Wales and UK Northern Ireland not available for all years.

(**) Germany, Italy, Ireland and Latvia not available for all years.

(*) Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden not available for all years.

Figure 5: Personnel in the criminal justice system, EU-28, 2008–15 (2008 = 100) Source: Eurostat (crimjustjob)

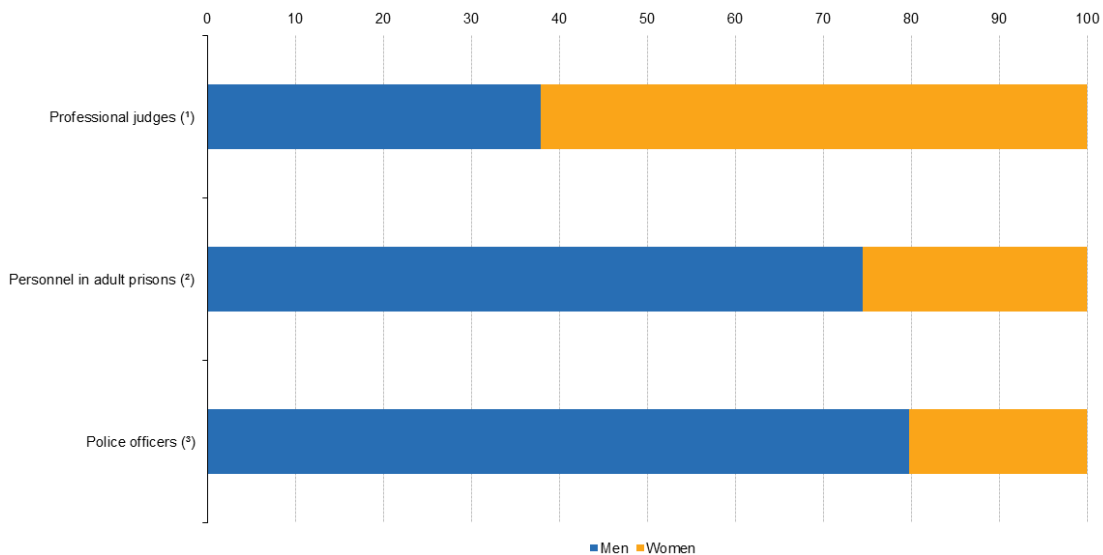
The overall number of police officers across the EU-28 (excluding Germany, Italy, Ireland and Latvia) decreased from 2010 to 2013, a loss which was compensated by an increase in 2014. During 2015, the number of police officers fell again by 1.2 %. Across the EU-28 (excluding Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, UK England and Wales and UK Northern Ireland), the number of professional judges grew regularly over 2008–2015, with an overall increase of 5.6 %. In contrast to the gradual rise in the number of professional judges, there was an overall reduction in the number of personnel working in adult prisons with a fall of 8.9 % between 2008 and 2015 across the EU-28 (excluding Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden).

The total numbers of police officers in each jurisdiction are shown in Table 11 of the article tables, while Tables 14 and 17 show the total numbers of professional judges and the personnel in adult prisons.

Gender distribution

There was a considerable difference in the gender distribution of the personnel working in the EU’s criminal justice system (see Figure 6). Women are particularly under-represented in the police and prison services, but over-represented among professional judges.

In 2015, women accounted for 20.3 % of police officers across the EU-28 (data available for only 14 jurisdictions). The share of women working in adult prisons was slightly higher, accounting for one quarter of the total across the EU-28 (data available for only 12 jurisdictions), a share that was relatively stable between 2008 and 2015. By contrast, women accounted for a majority of the personnel among professional judges, with a 62.1 % share of the total across the EU-28 (data available for 16 jurisdictions) in 2015.



(*) Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, UK England and Wales and UK Northern Ireland not available.

(†) Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden and UK Northern Ireland not available.

(‡) Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary, Slovakia and Sweden not available.

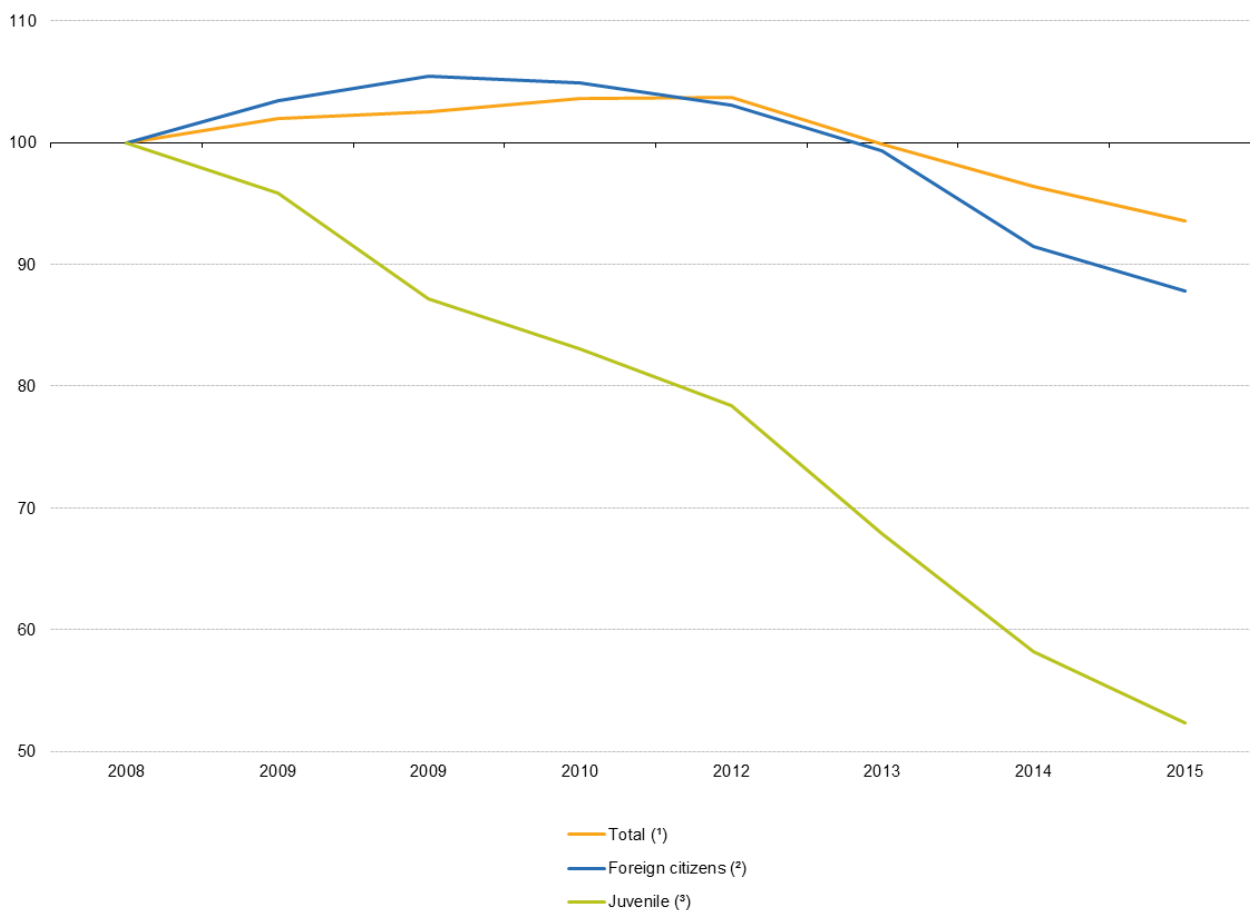
Figure 6: Personnel in the criminal justice system by sex, EU-28, 2015(% of total)Source: Eurostat (crimjustjob)

The number of male and female police officers is shown in Tables 12 and 13 of the article tables , while Tables 15 and 16 show the number of male and female judges and Tables 18 and 19 show the number of male and female personnel in adult prisons.

Prison population

Prison population refers to institutions under the authority of the prison administration where persons are deprived of their liberty, except centres for the detention of foreign citizens pending an investigation into their immigration status, or without a legal right to stay.

The total number of prisoners across the EU-28 (excluding Belgium) rose slightly each year between 2008 and 2012, and then fell by 3.6 % in 2013 and by 3.5 % in 2014 and by 2.9 % in 2015. The prison population in 2015 was 6.4 % below what it had been in 2008 (see Figure 7).



(¹) Belgium not available for all years.

(²) Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Malta and Sweden not available for all years.

(³) Belgium, Germany and Spain not available for all years.

Figure 7: Prison population, EU-28, 2008–15 (2008 = 100) Source: Eurostat (crimprisage) and (crimpristz)

The number of prisoners with foreign citizenship (including other EU citizenship) rose somewhat faster in 2009 and 2010 across the EU-28 (excluding Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Malta and Sweden), but declined as from 2011. By 2015 it was 12.2 % below the 2008 level.

By contrast, there was a considerable reduction in the number of juvenile² prisoners across the EU-28 (excluding Belgium, Germany and Spain) during the period 2008–2015. This was, for the major part, due to reductions in Poland and the United Kingdom. The number of juvenile prisoners fell by at least 4 % each year during the period under consideration, resulting in an overall reduction of 47.6 % between 2008 and 2015. The largest yearly reduction in juvenile prisoners occurred in 2014, with 14.3 %.

The total prison population for individual jurisdictions is shown in Table 20 of the article tables, while the juvenile prison population is shown in Table 23, and the numbers of prisoners by citizenship (national and foreign citizens) are shown in Tables 24 and 25.

Gender distribution

Men accounted for the vast majority of the prison population across the EU-28 (excluding Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Croatia, Austria, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden) with 94 % in 2015, a share that has remained relatively stable since 2008.

The numbers of male and female prisoners are shown in Tables 21 and 22 of the article tables.

²Usually defined as under 18 years old

Data sources and availability

The results in this article are based on the joint data collection between Eurostat and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ([UNODC](#)). The Survey on Crime Trends by the UNODC is supplemented by an additional data request by Eurostat. The basic data is produced by national authorities, such as police, prosecution services, courts and prisons, and mostly reported as summary figures for the calendar year. Figures are reported by territory of jurisdiction, for instance the United Kingdom consists of three: England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. For short we use the term "country" for the geographical unit.

Reported crime data should use standard definitions as far as possible, and be provided with detailed information about divergences. Such divergences often mean that figures from different countries do not represent exactly the same, though labelled the same. The figures from each country may be perfectly acceptable for national statistics, but less so for international comparisons. Eurostat continuously works to improve the comparability of crime statistics, in cooperation with EU institutions and national authorities. Implementing [The International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes](#) is a key component of this work.

Crime data are official figures based on administrative records. Crime statistics based on police records, obviously exclude crimes that have not been reported to the police. Inferences about crime based on this data should take into account several factors, including:

- legal system, law enforcement, and criminal justice systems.
- rates for crimes to be reported and recorded (by the police).
- the way crime is measured (reporting to the police, identification of suspects, etc.).
- counting methods (in cases of multiple offences, multiple victims, etc.)
- which offences are included in national crime categories.

Figures for the prison population may also be affected by several factors, including:

- number of cases dealt with by the courts.
- the percentage receiving a custodial sentence.
- the length of the sentences imposed.
- the size of the population on remand.
- survey period and time of the year, amnesties, etc.

Comparing crime statistics between different jurisdictions can be misleading without sufficient knowledge about local data and methods. In this article, direct comparisons between jurisdictions have been avoided and the focus is instead on developments over time. Such comparisons rely on the assumption that the characteristics of the national recording systems, etc. are fairly constant over time. However, apparent changes in the crime figures are sometimes partly due to changes in methods or definitions.

Analyses of time series for the EU-28 are only based on jurisdictions for which data are available for the whole of the period (2008–2015). The EU-28 numbers do not always include data for all countries, due to missing data for one or more years/countries.

Clearly, overall results for the EU-28 hide variations between countries, so national figures are presented in a set of dedicated article tables , as well as in the [database](#) . Furthermore, detailed information for each country is available in [metadata](#) .

In order to identify trends, indices have been calculated:

- $I_t = (C_t/C_0) * 100$ index value for year t
- C_t = value recorded for year t
- C_0 = value recorded in the reference year (here: the year 2008).

Total figures from administrative records do not suffer statistical uncertainty as sample surveys. Still, interpretation of small numbers, small proportions, and short time changes, should ideally use additional relevant information. For example, in small countries, homicide rates may change considerably from one year to the next, without necessarily reflecting a change in the crime trend.

The [database](#) contains detailed results of the Eurostat–UNODC joint data collection from 2008–2015, with associated metadata. In addition, there are tables for the period 1993–2007 covering fewer crimes. For 1950–1993 the total police-recorded crime is available for selected countries. As noted above, for comparison between countries, users are strongly advised to consult the metadata files, as well as national sources.

Context

Crime and justice are recurring topics in public debate, and are of constant interest to media, politicians, organizations and the general public. EUROSTAT collects and presents figures on crime and the criminal justice administration. The overall goal is to make policy-relevant information and analysis available to the European community in an efficient way. The 2004 [Hague programme](#) mandates Eurostat to develop comparable statistics on crime and criminal justice. Also the 2010 [Stockholm programme](#) underlines the need for crime statistics. Strategic action plans outline the concrete work, usually for 5-year periods, see links under "Other information"

See also

- Public spending on police, courts and prisons: [Government expenditure on public order and safety](#)
- Crime victimization and prevalence: [Physical safety, quality of life indicator](#)

Further Eurostat information

- [Crime and criminal justice statistics main page](#)

Publications

- Crime and criminal justice statistics 2008–2013 [Statistics in Focus Issue 3/2015](#) , published December 2015
- Crime and criminal justice statistics 2006–2009 [Statistics in Focus Issue 6/2012](#) , published 18 January 2012
- Crime and criminal justice statistics -2008 [Statistics in Focus Issue 58/2010](#) , published 29 November 2010

Database

- [Crime and criminal justice](#)

Methodology / Metadata

- [Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics - ESMS metadata file — crimesms](#)
- [Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics - Methodological guide for users](#)
- [Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics - Reference Metadata at Country Level](#)
- [Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics - Summary quality report on the 2016 data collection](#)

Source data for tables and figures (MS Excel)

- [Crime and criminal justice: FIGURES](#)
- [Crime and criminal justice: TABLES](#)

Other information

- [Action Plan 2006–2010](#)
- [Action Plan 2011–2015](#)

External links

- [European Institute for Gender Equality](#)
- [European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction](#)
- [European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics](#)
- [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights](#)
- [European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation](#)
- [United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)

Notes

View this article online at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Crime_and_criminal_justice_statistics