



European Commission

Eurostat – Unit C.3: Statistics for administrative purposes

Specific indicators – Frequently asked questions

How are specific indicators applied in practice?

1. The specific indicator is the tool developed to implement the “parallelism” principle set out in the EU Staff Regulations.
2. That principle requires salaries of EU staff based in Brussels to evolve each year according to the average salary development of national civil servants within the EU.
3. Each year, the salary movement of national civil servants is measured in real terms, and this is added to the inflation movement in Brussels to identify the nominal salary movement for EU civil servants.

When was the ‘method’ for adjustment of remuneration first introduced?

1. The method for implementing Article 64 and 65 of the Staff Regulations is set out in Annex XI (supplemented by Annex X for staff serving in Extra-EU duty stations).
2. It was first introduced by Council Decision in 1972, and periodically renewed/modified thereafter.
3. The timeline of modification decisions reflects parallel developments in the EU context (eg. enlargement; creation of new institutions; creation of devolved agencies with separate legal identity; associated changes in the numbers of active staff; natural ageing and numbers of retired staff). [Timeline](#)

Who is affected by the calculated adjustment of remuneration?

1. The active staff of most EU institutions and EU Agencies are directly affected by the annual adjustment. By contrast the European Central Bank and the European Investment Bank only formally became EU institutions in 2009 and still operate on separate terms and conditions of employment.
2. The percentage adjustment applies to permanent officials and to other servants of the EU including temporary agents, contract agents. By contrast it does not apply to remuneration of seconded national experts, or to local staff (appointed under national employment contracts).
3. The percentage adjustment also applies directly to pensions of retired staff of the EU institutions. It also applies to remuneration of persons whose salary system is directly linked to the EU (eg. Commissioners, Judges). By contrast, there are specific rules regarding emoluments of MEPs.
4. Similar adjustments apply in partner organisations with similar salary regulations, notably the Coordinated Organisations (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; European Space Agency; Council of Europe; European Centre for Medium range Weather Forecasting; European organisation for exploitation of Meteorological Satellites), the European Patent Office and the European organisation for the safety of air navigation. The adjustment applies indirectly, as a control indicator, to other international organisations, and is notably shared with the United Nations under a 2009 international memorandum of understanding.
5. Taking all these organisations together, currently some 415 000 persons are directly or indirectly affected. [Internal and externals users](#)

How does the remuneration level of EU staff compare with staff of other organisations?

1. Such comparisons are often attempted superficially. However, to answer this question properly a detailed salary benchmarking study is required, analysing job content and job occupant characteristics before comparing pay levels. Such job matching studies are complex and time consuming. International organisations have specific features, and reward policies reflect their different histories and objectives.
2. There can consequently be differences in the individual components of the total remuneration package. On the other hand, international organisations share a number of similarities and are often competing for similar, scarce talent. A pilot

study of this sort was organised by Eurostat in 2014, and a followup study was organised in 2018. Previous studies were conducted by DGHR (eg. 2000, 2009).

What type of index is used to calculate the specific indicators ?

The global specific indicator (EU average) is an arithmetic weighted mean of the country specific indicators, using GDP as weights.

The country specific indicator is the ratio between the average salary for the current period (numerator) and the average salary for the preceding period (denominator). The aggregate is calculated using the average salary by grade, weighted by the latest available staff numbers in each grade. These weights are held constant, to avoid any impact of internal structural changes on the evolution of the indicator.

[Diagram](#) and [Equation](#)