Environmental economy – statistics by Member State

Statistics Explained

Data extracted: February 2026
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Highlights

In 2023, labour productivity of the environmental economy in the EU saw a 5.2% decrease - compared to 2021.

This article presents statistics on the environmental economy of the EU countries as it is defined in the environmental goods and services sector (EGSS) accounts. The environmental economy produces goods and services such as organic vegetables, renewable energy, or treatment of waste and wastewater that help to either protect the environment or preserve the stock of natural resources. These products and activities are classified according to their purpose, following the classification of environmental purposes (CEP). Together with the article 'Environmental economy - statistics on employment and growth' , this article provides insight into a sector that is vital for Europe's transition towards a competitive climate-neutral economy as envisioned under the European Green Deal .

Key figures

According to Eurostat estimates, the environmental economy in 2023 among the EU countries saw the highest growth in Ireland (19.1%), followed by the Netherlands (12.9%) and Malta (10.5%). By contrast, it decreased by 13.8% in Bulgaria and 8.4% in Romania. For all countries, the majority of gross value added and employment in the environmental economy is related to goods and services sold or intended to be sold on the market . The remainder stems from production for own use (ancillary or final) or for non-market purposes (as give-away for free or at non-significant prices). This article focuses on all activities of the environmental economy without any distinction between market, non-market or for own final use activities.

Growth rates vary across countries (Figure 1). Both gross value added and employment increased in 12 of the EU countries in 2023. Some countries, such as Sweden or Luxemburg had a negative growth of the gross value added (GVA) and employment in 2023 compared with 2022. In other countries like Denmark, Germany or Greece, employment went up in 2023 (8.7%, 8.0% and 7.2% respectively) while GVA decreased (-0.1%, -4.3% and -6.7% respectively).

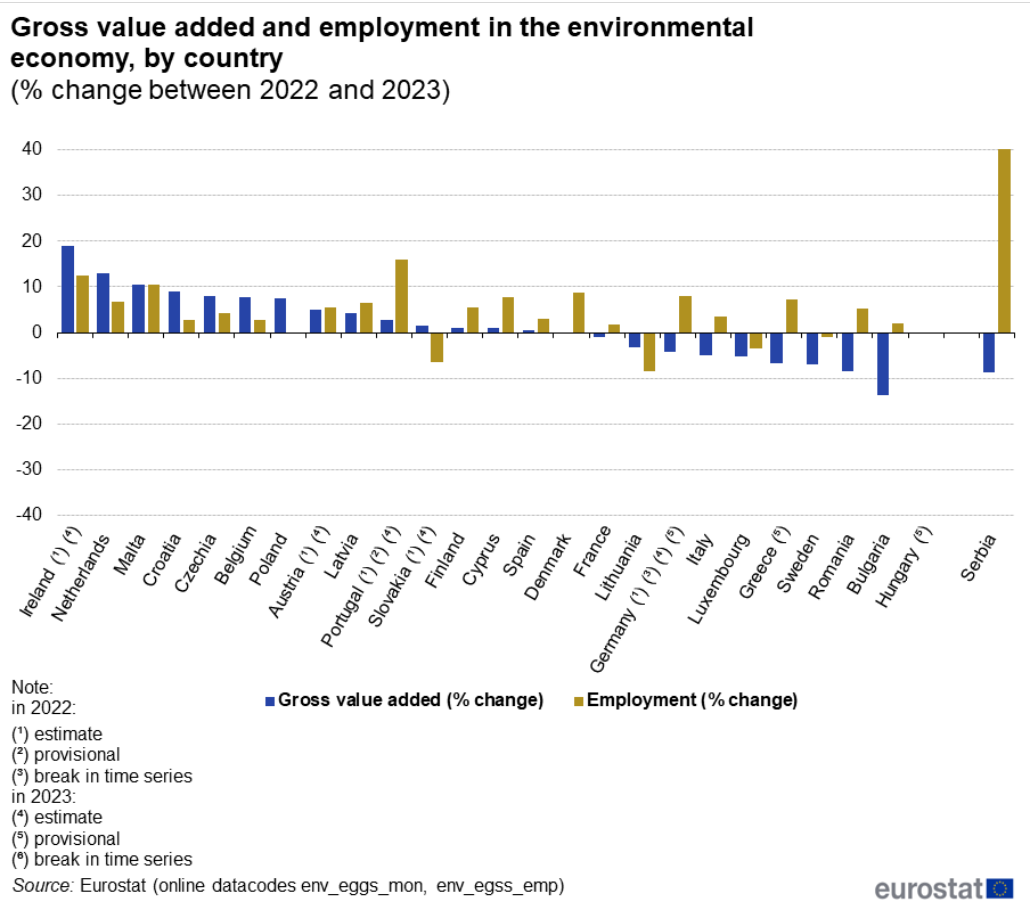

Figure 1: Gross value added and employment related to total output of the environmental economy, by country Source: Eurostat (env_egss_emp), (env_egss_mon)

Gross value added

In 2023, total output of the environmental economy contributed between 7.2% (Finland) and 0.9% (Malta) to the GDP of EU countries (Figure 2). Large parts of the gross value added in Finland stem from renewable energy produc-
tion. The environmental economy had been growing faster in 2023 than the overall national economy in 10 countries.

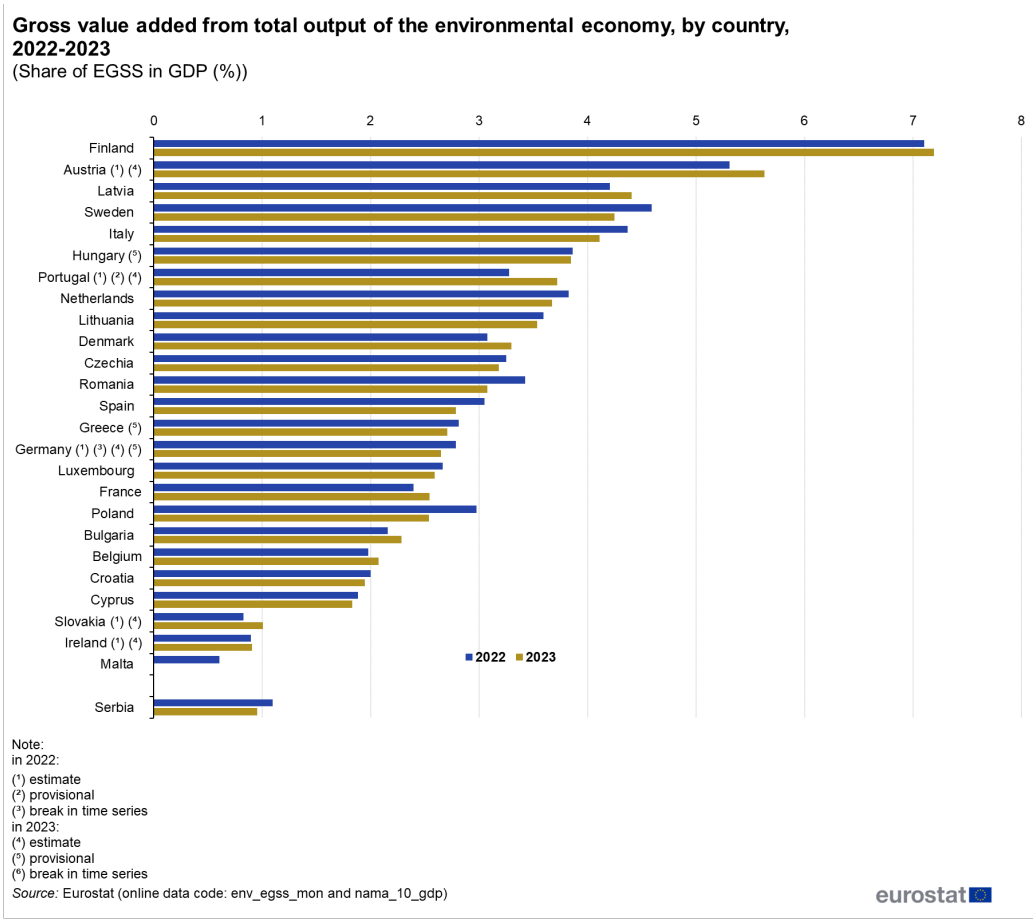

Figure 2: Gross value added from total output of the environmental economy, by country, 2022-2023 Source: Eurostat (env_egss_mon), (nama_10_gdp)

Employment

Eurostat estimates that, among the 5 largest EU economies (Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Poland), output of environmental goods and services generated - in terms of employment - circa 3.7 million full-time equivalent in 2023. In 2023, output of environmental goods and services created jobs in 20 EU countries. The 5 most contributing countries, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain, created around 248 100 new jobs in 2023. By contrast, 5 EU countries presented a decrease in the number of jobs in the environmental goods and services economy of more than 11 500 jobs in total (Figure 4). Most employment in the environmental economy is related to the waste and the energy sector (Figure 3).

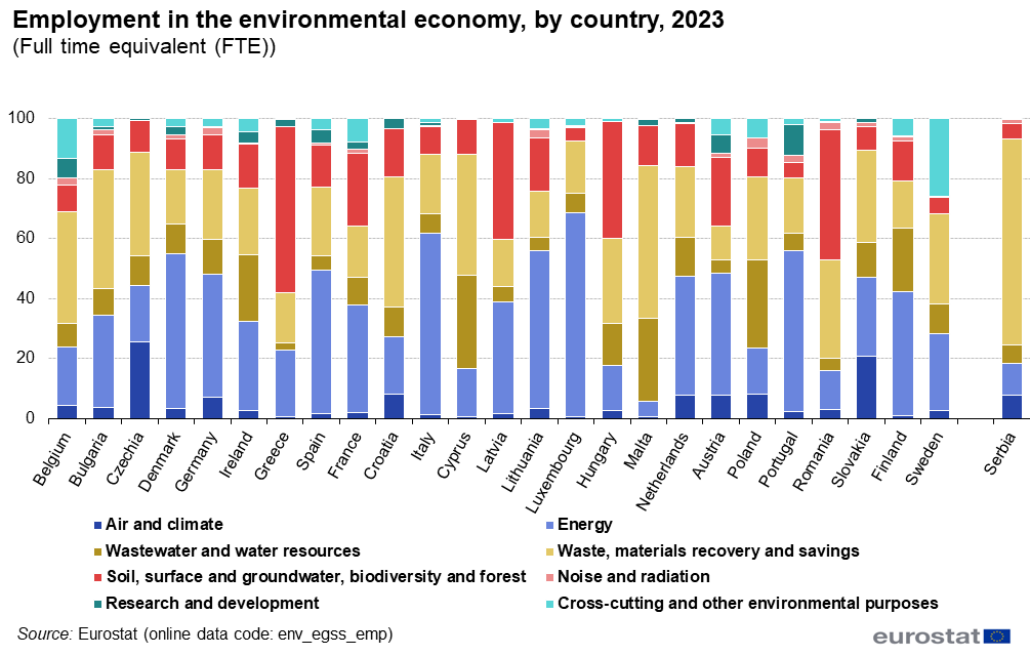

Figure 3: Employment in the environmental economy, by country, 2023 Source: Eurostat (env_egss_emp)

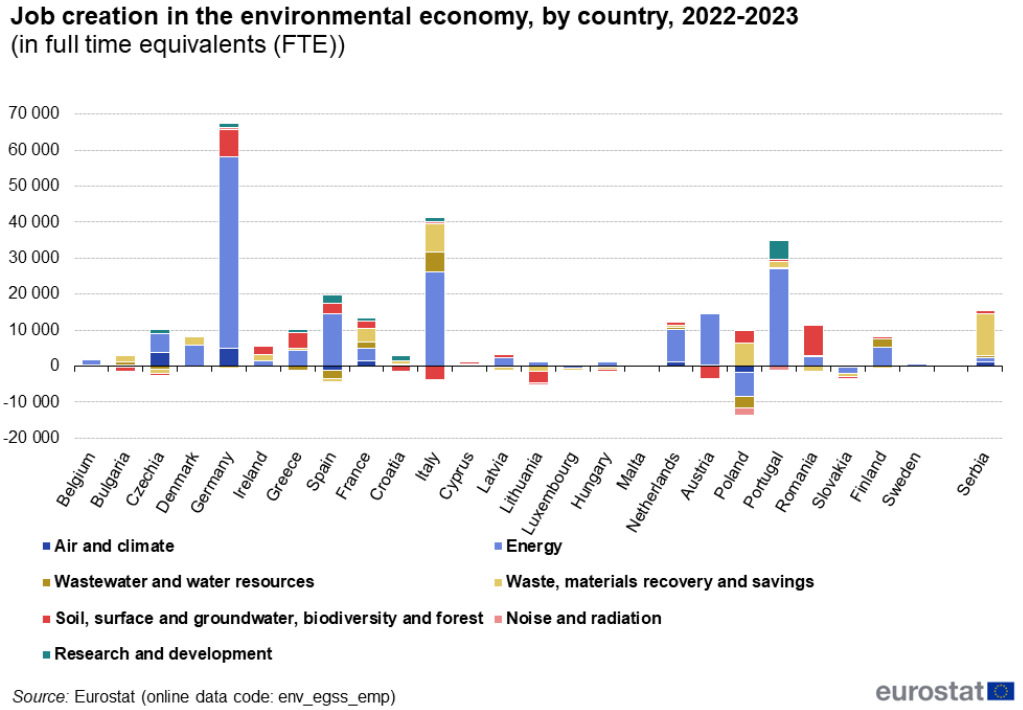

Figure 4: Job creation in the environmental economy, by country, 2022-2023 Source: Eurostat (env_egss_emp)

Exports

In 2023, environmental goods and services contributed to the economy-wide exports by 12.8% in Denmark, 12.2% in Finland, 10.1% in Austria and 9.5% in Czechia, but below 1% in Ireland (Figure 5). The composition of environmental exports varies across countries.

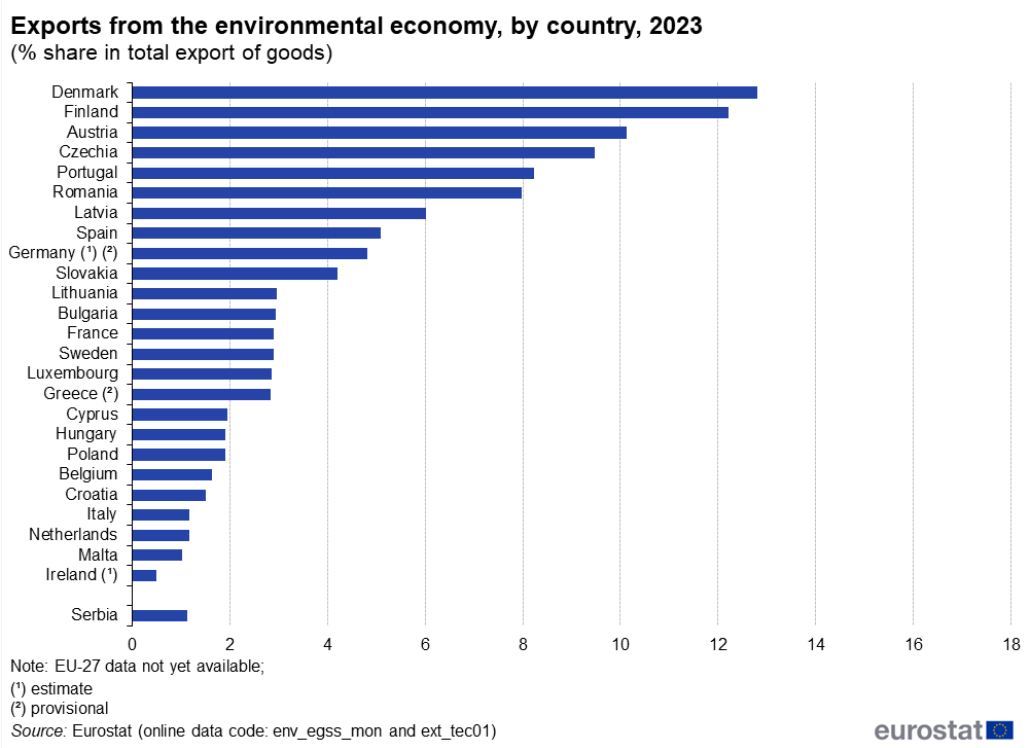

Figure 5: Exports from the environmental economy, by country, 2023 Source: Eurostat (env_egss_mon), (ext_tec01)

Economic indicators

EGSS data can be used to derive sector-specific indicators. Let us consider gross value added of the renewable energy sector, comprising energy production itself but also the manufacturing of equipment such as photovoltaic cells and wind turbines, the installation of equipment, and any related research, consultancy, and management services. Calculating the ratio of GVA in euros and full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs provides insight into the labour productivity (labour productivity) of the renewable energy sector. Labour productivity measures the amount of goods and services produced by each member of the labour force, or in other words, the output produced per unit of input of labour, e.g. in 2023 Spain spent 23706 FTE in order to add more than € 14.4 billion to GVA by renewable energy production. The ratio of the 2 figures is 605.9, the highest among the EU countries.

Figure 6 suggests considerable differences between countries and provides scope for assessing the factors behind productivity levels, among them income, energy prices, subsidies for renewable energy, composition of the renewable energy mix, and the scope of activities covered. More detailed data for individual NACE sections suggest, for example, that large parts of value added in many countries are generated by water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (i.e. NACE E).

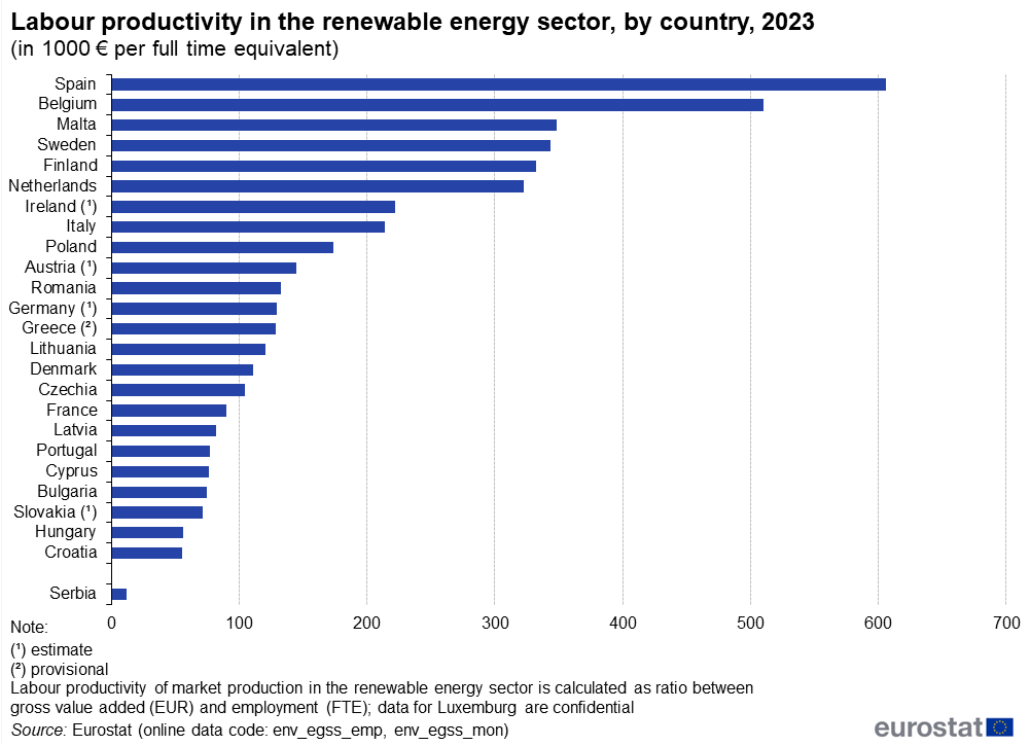

Figure 6: Labour productivity in the renewable energy sector, market production by country, 2023 Source: Eurostat (env_egss_emp), (env_egss_mon)

To remove any price effects and make the production volume comparable over time, labour productivity has to be assessed using a deflator , instead of current prices of the years under assessment. In addition, the productivity in the different environmental purpose sectors becomes comparable with each other. The labour productivity in the EU in 2023 was highest in the economic sector managing waste water and other water resources. An FTE in this sector produced
more than double the gross value added as in the sector responsible for managing soil, water bodies and biodiversity.

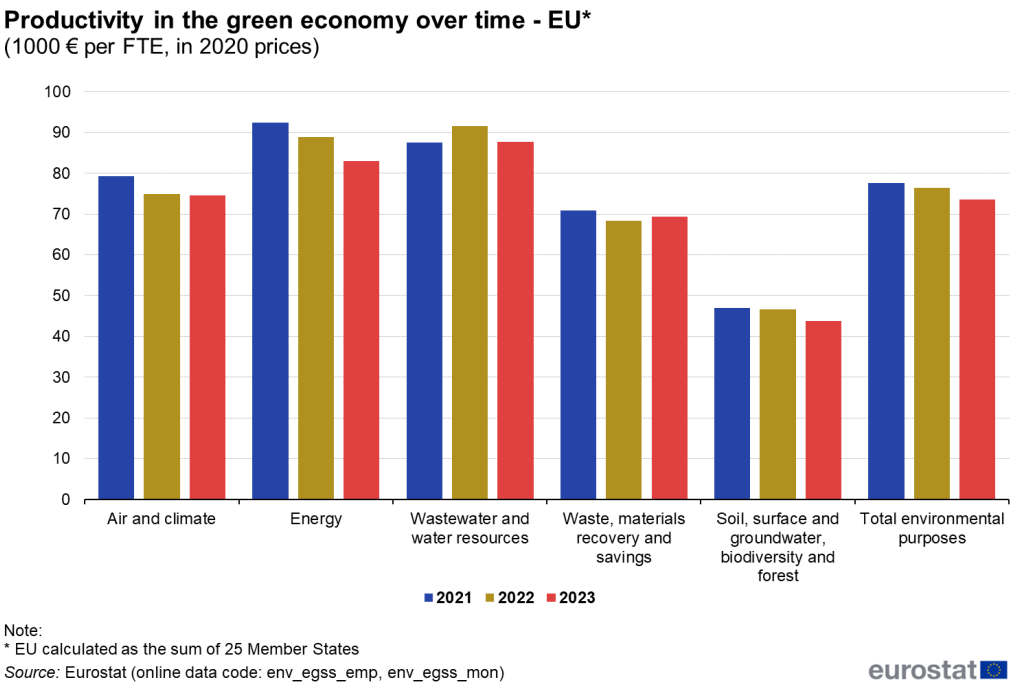

Figure 7: Productivity in the green economy over time - EU Source: Eurostat (env_egss_emp), (env_egss_mon)

While in 2021, the renewable energy sector in the EU displayed the highest labour productivity, with around 92 300 € per FTE, the productivity dropped to 82 900 € per FTE in 2023. This affected the overall labour productivity of the EGSS in the EU which decreased by 5.2% from 2021 to 2023.

Scope and variables

Goods and services are considered environmental if their purpose is either to protect the environment or to maintain or restore the stock of natural resources. Environmental goods and services comprise a large and diverse basket of products including renewable energy, electric vehicles, organically grown fruits and vegetables, sewerage and waste treatment services or the rehabilitation of mining sites. It is not straightforward to delimit environmental products from conventional ones. As principle criterion, environmental goods and services should have an environmental purpose. Such a purpose is identified in practice by considering the actual environmental impacts in conjunction with technical product features that must be suitable to protect the environment or preserve natural resources. To guide data compilers, Regulation (EU) No 2015/2174 proposes an indicative compendium of environmental goods and services. EGSS accounts capture environmental goods and services produced within a country and report on the related output, gross value added, employment, and exports as defined in the international system of National Accounts (SNA 2008) and its European version, the European System of National and Regional Accounts (ESA 2010) .

The following definitions apply:

- Market output consists of all products that are produced for market disposal, either through sales at economically significant prices or through barter or payment in kind. Market output of environmental goods and services is valued at basic prices, that is, the prices received from purchasers plus subsidies minus taxes on products. Reporting of EGSS market output is mandatory for Member States, whereas reporting of the following characteristics is voluntary: (i) non-market output generated by governments and non-profit organisations, (ii) output produced for own final use, and (iii) ancillary output for transformation through in-house production processes.
- Gross value added is the difference between output and intermediate consumption . The gross value added of all economic sectors plus taxes minus subsidies on products comprises the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country.

- Employment comprises the number of persons engaged in the production of environmental goods and services. Employment in EGSS is quantified in full-time equivalents , defined as total hours worked divided by the annual working hours in a full-time job.
- Exports comprise all transactions of market output, including sales, barter and gifts, from residents to non-residents.

Output, gross value added, employment, and exports are reported in the EGSS accounts as totals and disaggregated by (i) 21 economic sections according to NACE Rev. 2 and (ii) 8 divisions of environmental purposes which are further subdivided into several groups and classes. Environmental purposes include:

- Environmental protection activities that prevent, reduce and eliminate pollution or any other degradation of the environment. Air and climate protection, treatment of waste and wastewater, or environmental research and development represent environmental protection activities as well.
- Resource management activities that preserve the stock of natural resources, thereby safeguarding them against depletion. The production of renewable energy, measures to use heat and energy more efficiently, or the management of forests are typical resource management activities.

See the CEP technical note for further detail.

Source data for tables and graphs

- Environmental economy statistics by Member States 2026

Data sources

This article presents the most recent data on gross value added, employment, and exports related to market production in the environmental economy . Eurostat collected the data in 2025 as part of the mandatory reporting for Member States.

Data for the environmental economy are recorded according to the principles of national accounting, following the guidance in the EGSS Handbook and the EGSS Practical Guide . As data reporting is mandatory since 2018 only, not all countries cover relevant goods and services in a comprehensive manner yet. Pertinent cases are flagged as estimate, provisional or break in time series. To account for the resulting uncertainty, EU aggregates are not yet calculated from the data reported by Member States. Instead, Eurostat estimates aggregates by combining information from national accounts, environmental protection expenditure accounts, structural business statistics, industrial commodity statistics, labour statistics, international trade statistics, agriculture statistics and energy statistics.

As methods and data sources for compiling EGSS accounts mature, accuracy and completeness of data will improve alongside. Data validation and the development of methodological guidance together with Member States will remain an important part of Eurostat's efforts to increase the coherence and quality of EGSS data in the future.

Context

Regulation (EU) No 538/2014) implements environmental-economic accounts as satellite accounts of National Accounts (ESA 2010) . The European environmental-economic accounts adhere to the same accounting principles as national accounts and are consistent with the United Nation's System of Environmental-Economic Accounting – Central Framework (SEEA-CF) , which serves as an international statistical standard. At present, 6 separate modules present data on: (i) air emissions , (ii) environmental taxes , (iii) circular economy and material flows , (iv) environmental protection expenditure , (v) physical energy flows and (vi) Environmental goods and services . The industries producing environmental goods and services are commonly referred to as environmental economy.

Explore further

Other articles

- Environmental economy – statistics on employment and growth
- Environmental protection expenditure accounts

Database

- Environment (env) , see:

Environmental goods and services sector (env_egss)

Employment in the environmental goods and services sector (env_egss_emp)

Production, value added and exports in the environmental goods and services sector (env_egss_mon)

Thematic section

- Environment

Methodology

- Environmental good and services sector accounts Handbook 2016 edition
- Environmental good and services sector accounts Practical guide 2016 edition
- Production, value added, employment and exports in the environmental goods and services sector (ESMS metadata file — env_egs_esms)

Legislation

- Regulation (EU) No 691/2011 on European environmental economic accounts
- Summaries of EU legislation: European environmental economic accounts
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 2015/2174 on the indicative compendium for environmental goods and services sector
- Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/1131 on the introduction of the CEP classification
- Regulation (EU) No 549/2013 of 21 May 2013 on the European system of national and regional accounts in the EU (ESA2010)
- Summaries of EU legislation: European Union system of national and regional accounts

External links

- Strategic framework for a competitive and sustainable EU bioeconomy
- European Green Deal
- EU Circular Economy Action Plan
- Eco-innovation Action Plan (EcoAP)
- Study on the competitiveness of the EU Renewable Energy Industry (EU REI)
- Communication of the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions 'Green Employment Initiative: Tapping into the job creation potential of the green economy' (COM (2014) 446 final)
- OECD - Sustainable, green, and inclusive business