

Disability statistics - leisure and social participation

Statistics Explained

Data extracted in: November 2024.
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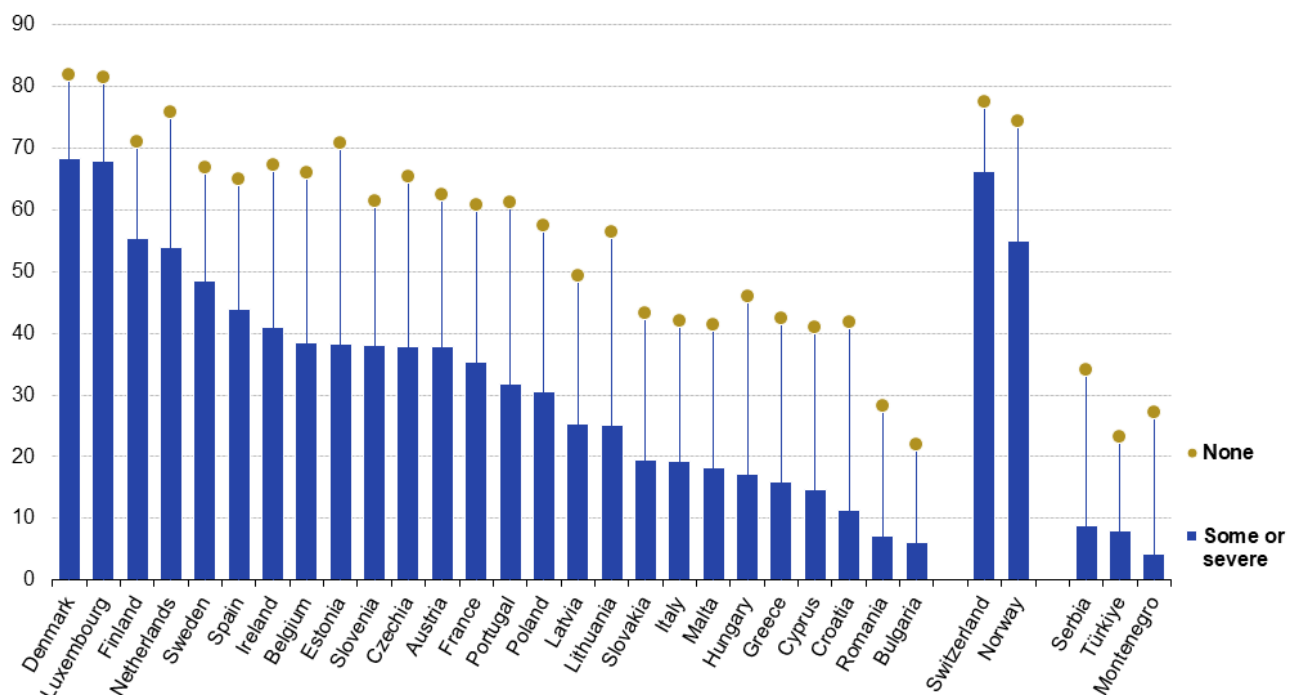
Highlights

In 2022 in the EU, the share of people with a disability who participated in cultural activities or sporting events was overall lower than for the people without a disability.

In 2022 in the EU, 10.3% of people with a disability had participated in a formal voluntary activity, compared with 13.0% among people without a disability.

Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in cultural activities during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022

(%)



Note: Germany, not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp37)

eurostat

Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in cultural activities during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022 (%) Source: Eurostat (ilc_scp37)

Social participation is a key element of the social integration of individuals. However, in all EU countries, the share of the population who reported having participated in a cultural or sporting activity or engaging in voluntary work was lower for people with a disability than for those without.

This article is part of a [set of articles on disability](#) and presents various aspects of the income, social and employment situation of people with a disability ([activity limitation](#)).

The findings presented in this article are based on the [European Union's \(EU's\) statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#) providing data on respondents' assessments of their limitations as well as their leisure activities and social participation.

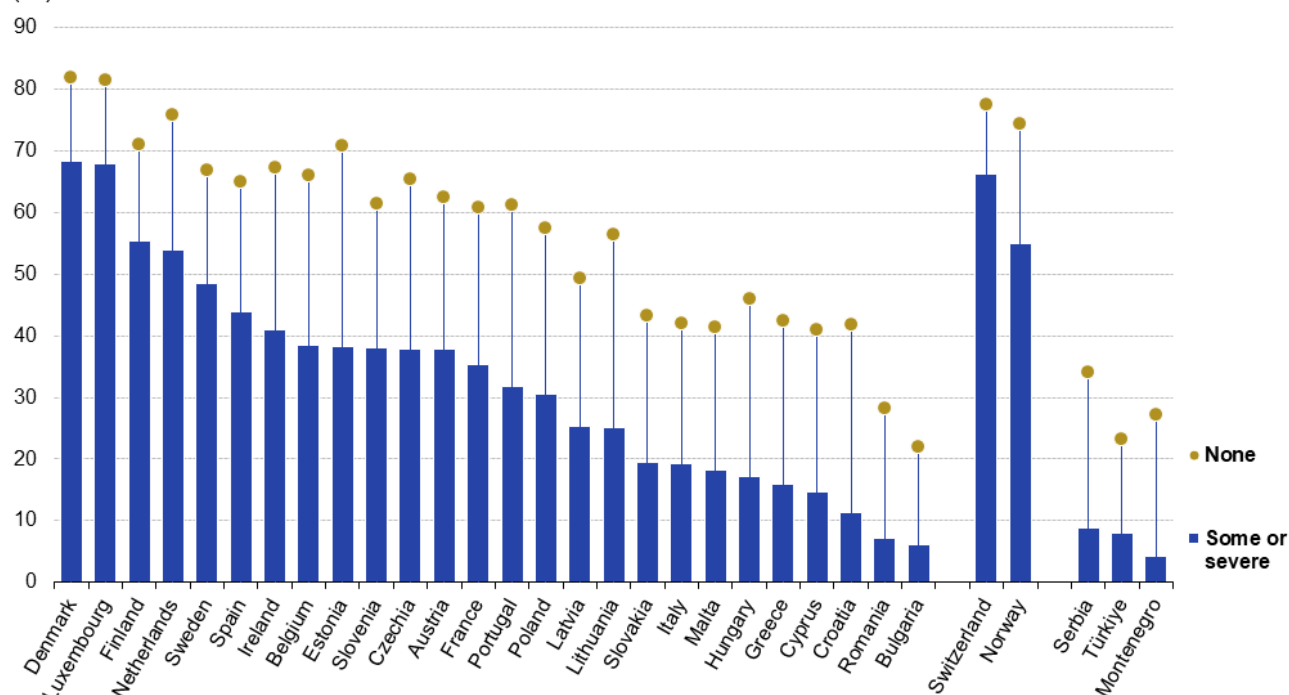
In the EU-SILC, disability is approximated according to the concept of global activity limitation, which is defined as a limitation – because of health problems – in carrying out usual activities (for at least the previous 6 months). This is considered to be an adequate proxy for disability, both by the scientific community and organisations representing people with disabilities.

Participation in cultural and sporting events

In 2022, the share of people aged 16 years or over who reported that they went to the cinema, attended a live performance or visited a cultural site during the previous 12 months ranged between more than 3 quarters in Luxembourg (77.6%) and Denmark (77.1%) to less than 1 quarter in Romania (22.2%) and Bulgaria (19.7%). In all EU countries, the share of the population who reported having participated in such a cultural activity was lower for people with a disability than for those without (see Figure 1). The widest relative disability gap was in Romania where the share of people without a disability reporting that they had participated in a cultural activity was 28.3%, which was 4 times higher than the share among people without a disability (7.1%).

Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in cultural activities during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022

(%)



Note: Germany, not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp37)

eurostat

Figure 1: Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in cultural activities during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022 (%) Source: Eurostat (ilc_scp37)

Looking in more detail, there was a disability gap – with higher shares of participation for people without a disability – in every EU country, for each of 3 types of cultural activities: going to the cinema, attending live cultural performances and visiting cultural sites (see Table 1). In most EU countries, the widest disability gaps were for going to the cinema. For example, in Romania, the share of people who reported that they went to the cinema was 9 times higher among people without a disability than among people with a disability.

In 2022, the share of people aged 16 years or over who reported that they attended live sports events was less varied among the EU countries than participation in cultural activities. The highest share was 40.7% in Ireland and the lowest shares were 7.1% in Bulgaria and 7.0% in Romania. Again, in all EU countries the share of the population who reported having attended a live sports event was lower for people with a disability than for those without. The widest relative disability gap was in Romania, as the share of people without a disability reporting that they had attended a live sports event was 9.2%, which was 5 times higher than the share among people without a disability (1.7%).

Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in cultural activities or sporting events during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022 (%)

	Going to the cinema		Attending live cultural performances (theatre, concerts, ballet)		Visiting cultural sites (historical monuments, museums, art galleries or archaeological sites)		Attending live sports events	
	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe
Belgium	37.7	17.9	43.1	23.1	43.8	24.3	28.6	16.4
Bulgaria	14.7	2.8	11.8	4.4	12.5	3.9	8.1	1.8
Czechia	47.4	18.1	38.2	19.8	47.0	28.4	16.4	11.5
Denmark	57.2	43.0	49.9	37.5	58.2	46.5	35.0	23.2
Germany	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Estonia	50.5	21.0	46.5	24.6	46.2	24.7	24.4	9.6
Ireland	47.8	23.4	37.6	20.8	40.2	23.4	45.0	24.2
Greece	31.9	7.4	32.8	11.8	20.5	8.8	18.9	6.5
Spain	42.5	23.6	36.6	23.4	43.4	29.8	28.4	15.8
France	46.2	23.7	25.2	13.3	36.5	20.0	22.4	11.2
Croatia	28.3	3.9	29.3	6.7	24.0	7.4	27.4	8.8
Italy	32.2	12.7	21.5	10.6	19.9	10.9	15.6	7.3
Cyprus	21.6	5.3	30.8	10.4	16.7	6.0	21.7	7.7
Latvia	19.5	6.4	29.2	13.4	38.9	19.1	17.3	4.7
Lithuania	35.6	9.8	41.8	18.5	35.2	15.1	15.9	4.6
Luxembourg	54.2	36.7	52.3	39.3	66.3	55.5	41.2	28.7
Hungary	31.3	7.2	25.3	10.0	25.4	10.6	15.5	4.4
Malta	27.0	8.7	25.0	7.6	19.1	9.1	15.6	4.9
Netherlands	51.5	29.6	41.8	28.7	48.6	33.9	42.4	26.3
Austria	38.9	16.5	34.2	22.6	36.7	20.6	23.0	12.1
Poland	44.5	18.1	21.1	11.2	35.3	20.3	19.5	7.7
Portugal	33.7	12.5	37.3	18.4	43.3	22.5	29.2	13.3
Romania	19.4	2.2	13.4	2.9	16.9	5.5	9.2	1.7
Slovenia	25.4	9.4	35.9	20.6	44.7	28.6	22.2	13.2
Slovakia	29.0	9.1	16.8	9.0	27.3	13.3	27.0	11.1
Finland	40.5	26.5	35.4	28.7	48.7	38.9	32.8	20.6
Sweden	38.8	24.7	32.9	21.7	45.2	29.9	32.4	19.7
Norway	49.5	32.1	44.0	32.6	39.2	27.3	39.6	25.9
Switzerland	46.9	34.6	49.3	41.0	56.8	47.0	39.0	26.5
Montenegro	19.7	1.8	14.6	2.4	9.1	2.4	15.8	1.5
Serbia	25.1	5.3	22.6	5.7	14.1	4.2	16.7	2.7
Türkiye	17.5	5.0	7.6	2.1	9.4	3.5	6.1	1.4

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp37)

Table 1: Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in cultural activities or sporting events during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022 (%) Source: Eurostat (ilc_scp37)

Getting together with family or friends

In 2022, the share of people aged 16 years or over who reported that they got together with family and relatives at least once a year ranged from 93.6% in Estonia to 99.4% in Poland and Romania. In nearly all EU countries, the share of the population who reported that they got together with family and relatives at least once a year was lower for people with a disability than for those without (see Table 2). The only exception was Cyprus, where the share was 1.8 percentage points (pp) higher for people with a disability. The widest absolute disability gap was in Estonia where the share of people with a disability reporting that they got together with family and relatives at least once a year was 6.6 pp lower than the share among people without a disability.

When analysed by sex, women were more likely than men to have got together with family and relatives at least once a year in a majority of countries, although the differences were not great. Analysing disability and sex together (see Table 2), the share of the population who reported that they got together with family and relatives at least once a year was lower for people with a disability than for those without, both for men and for women. Cyprus was the only exception, with higher shares for people with a disability, both for men and for women.

In terms of the share of people getting together with friends at least once a year, there was more diversity among the EU countries than observed concerning family and relatives. In 2022, the share of people aged 16 years or over who reported that they got together with friends at least once a year ranged from 78.5% in Latvia to more than 98.0% in Denmark, Cyprus, Greece, Croatia and Bulgaria. In all EU countries, the share of the population who reported that they got together with friends at least once a year was lower for people with a disability than for those without. The widest absolute disability gaps were in Malta, Estonia and Latvia where the shares of people with a

disability reporting that they got together with friends at least once a year were, respectively, 20.9 pp, 20.1 pp and 18.2 pp lower than the shares among people without a disability.

When analysed by sex, there was a large majority of EU countries where women were less likely than men to have got together with friends at least once a year; in other words, this was the reverse situation to that for getting together with family and friends. Analysing disability and sex together (see Table 2), the share of the population who reported that they got together with friends at least once a year was lower for people with a disability than for those without, both for men and for women, in every EU country.

Share of people aged 16 years or over having got together with family or friends during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022 (%)

	With family and relatives						With friends					
	Both sexes		Males		Females		Both sexes		Males		Females	
	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe	None	Some or severe
Belgium	97.0	94.6	96.9	93.5	97.0	95.5	98.0	91.9	98.3	92.2	97.6	91.7
Bulgaria	99.2	98.4	99.1	97.7	99.4	98.8	99.3	95.7	99.5	95.7	99.1	95.7
Czechia	98.6	97.0	98.7	96.3	98.4	97.5	98.7	93.6	98.9	93.8	98.5	93.5
Denmark	98.3	96.8	97.8	96.5	98.7	97.0	98.7	97.4	98.4	96.8	99.0	97.9
Germany	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estonia	95.6	89.0	95.4	88.2	95.8	89.5	91.5	71.4	91.8	71.6	91.3	71.2
Ireland	96.4	92.3	96.6	91.0	96.3	93.5	98.1	91.7	98.0	90.9	98.2	92.4
Greece	98.7	97.8	98.5	97.8	99.0	97.9	99.4	95.1	99.6	95.5	99.3	94.8
Spain	95.9	93.9	95.5	94.0	96.3	93.9	95.9	86.1	96.2	88.3	95.6	84.3
France	95.9	94.2	95.7	93.5	96.2	94.7	95.5	85.9	96.1	87.0	95.0	85.1
Croatia	99.5	98.1	99.4	98.0	99.6	98.3	99.7	96.4	99.7	96.9	99.6	95.9
Italy	97.1	95.5	97.0	95.6	97.2	95.3	96.6	84.1	97.1	86.0	96.1	82.7
Cyprus	96.6	98.4	97.6	98.7	95.7	98.1	99.3	95.2	99.4	95.1	99.2	95.2
Latvia	96.8	92.1	96.6	92.9	97.0	91.6	85.5	67.3	85.3	67.2	85.7	67.3
Lithuania	99.4	96.5	99.7	96.4	99.1	96.5	97.7	84.6	97.8	84.6	97.7	84.6
Luxembourg	96.8	95.5	97.1	95.7	96.4	95.4	98.0	96.4	98.3	95.6	97.8	97.2
Hungary	99.2	97.8	99.1	97.4	99.2	98.0	97.4	86.7	98.1	87.9	96.7	85.9
Malta	96.9	93.0	96.7	90.4	97.0	95.0	90.0	69.1	91.7	74.3	88.0	64.9
Netherlands	97.7	95.2	98.0	93.5	97.2	96.5	97.0	91.9	96.7	90.0	97.3	93.3
Austria	96.3	93.2	95.5	92.6	97.2	93.7	97.6	90.3	97.6	91.2	97.5	89.6
Poland	99.6	98.8	99.7	98.6	99.6	99.0	98.7	92.9	99.0	93.6	98.5	92.3
Portugal	97.9	96.9	98.2	97.0	97.6	96.8	97.4	89.8	97.8	91.4	97.0	88.8
Romania	99.6	98.8	99.5	98.6	99.7	98.9	98.9	94.4	99.4	94.8	98.5	94.1
Slovenia	99.0	97.2	98.8	97.7	99.1	96.8	98.4	93.9	98.4	94.7	98.4	93.2
Slovakia	99.4	98.4	99.3	98.4	99.5	98.4	99.1	91.4	99.1	92.6	99.0	90.5
Finland	96.4	95.5	95.8	94.6	97.0	96.2	95.4	89.7	95.0	90.0	95.9	89.5
Sweden	96.7	94.6	96.1	93.3	97.3	95.7	98.1	92.8	98.4	91.3	97.9	93.9
Norway	95.4	95.2	95.6	95.0	95.2	95.3	98.2	93.5	98.4	94.0	98.0	93.1
Switzerland	98.0	96.7	98.5	97.0	97.4	96.6	98.9	97.1	98.8	96.9	99.0	97.2
Montenegro	99.5	96.8	99.3	97.2	99.6	96.4	99.6	93.7	99.7	93.9	99.5	93.6
Serbia	98.9	96.2	99.0	95.2	98.8	96.9	99.5	93.8	99.7	94.5	99.4	93.4
Türkiye	91.7	90.3	91.6	89.8	91.9	90.6	95.8	90.6	96.5	91.5	95.1	90.0

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp35)

Table 2: Share of people aged 16 years or over having got together with family or friends during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022 (%) Source: Eurostat (ilc_scp35)

Participation in voluntary activities or active citizenship

In 2022, the share of people aged 16 years or over who reported having participated in formal voluntary activities was 12.3% in the EU. For people with a disability, the share was 10.3%, while for those without a disability it was higher, 13.0%. A similar situation was observed for participation in informal voluntary activities, although the disability gap was smaller: the shares were 13.3% for people with a disability and 14.7% for those without a disability. This situation was also observed for active citizenship which includes, for example, (active) participation in the activities of a political party or local interest group, or participating in a public consultation, a demonstration or a peaceful protest (including by signing a petition or writing a letter to a politician or to the media). Active citizenship was reported by 7.4% of people with a disability and 8.4% of those without a disability.

When analysed by sex, the disability gaps for participation in voluntary activities and active citizenship in the EU in

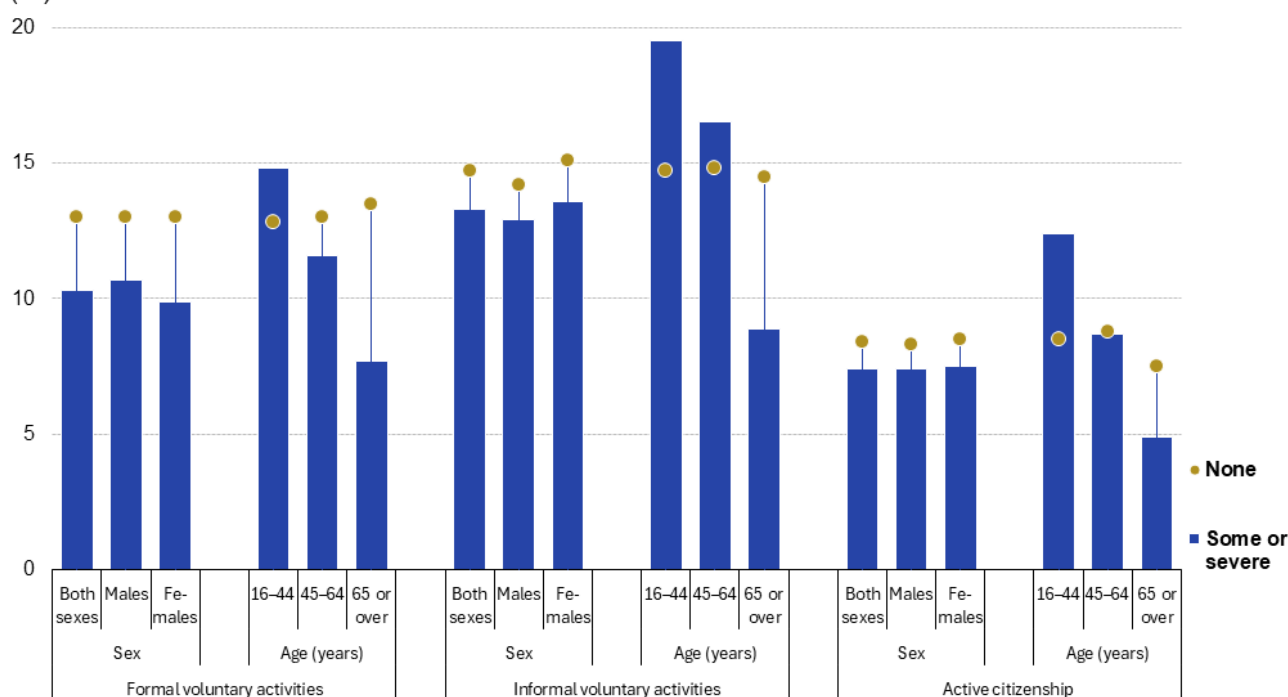
2022 were quite similar, always with higher participation rates for people without a disability.

- For formal voluntary activities it was 2.3 pp for men and 3.1 pp for women.
- For informal voluntary activities it was 1.3 pp for men and 1.5 pp for women.
- For active citizenship activities it was 0.9 pp for men and 1.0 pp for women.

Unlike the analysis by sex, an analysis by age shows differences in disability gaps. For all 3 types of activities – formal voluntary activities, informal voluntary activities and active citizenship – there was a clear age gradient among people with a disability, with notably higher participation rates among younger people than among older people. By contrast, participation rates varied much less by age among people without a disability. Consequently, younger people with a disability had higher participation rates than younger people without a disability, while older people (aged 65 years or over) with a disability had considerably lower participation rates than older people without a disability.

Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in voluntary activities or active citizenship during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), sex and age, EU, 2022

(%)



Note: estimates.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp39)

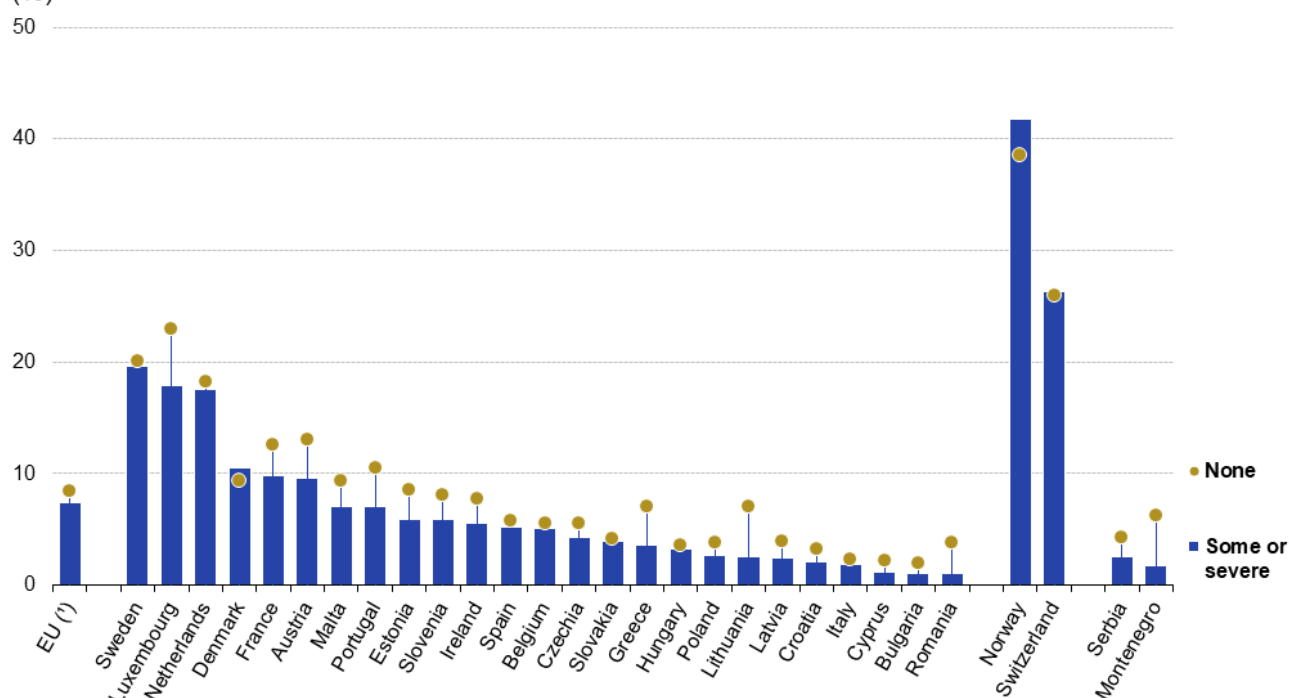
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Figure 2: Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in voluntary activities or active citizenship during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), sex and age, EU, 2022 (%)
Source: Eurostat (ilc_scp39)

Focusing just on active citizenship, participation rates among EU countries were highest in Luxembourg, Sweden and the Netherlands. In Sweden, 19.6% of people aged 16 years or over with a disability participated in active citizenship, while among people without a disability the share was highest in Luxembourg, at 23.0%. In nearly all EU countries, the share of the population having participated in active citizenship during the previous 12 months was lower for people with a disability than for those without (see Figure 3). The widest absolute disability gap was in Luxembourg where the share was 5.1 pp higher for people without a disability (23.0%) than for people with a disability (17.9%); the next largest disability gap was 4.5 pp in Lithuania. The only exception was Denmark, where the share was 1.1 pp higher for people with a disability (10.5%) than for people without a disability (9.4%).

Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in active citizenship during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022

(%)



Note: Germany and Finland, not available.

(*) Estimates.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp39)

eurostat

Figure 3: Share of people aged 16 years or over having participated in active citizenship during the previous 12 months, by level of disability (activity limitation), 2022 (%) Source: Eurostat (ilc_scp39)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Disability statistics – leisure and social participation: tables and figures](#)

Data sources and availability

The EU-SILC is the source of comparative statistics on income distribution and social inclusion in the EU. It provides annual data for the EU countries as well as most [EFTA](#) and [enlargement](#) countries on income, poverty, social exclusion and other aspects of living conditions.

The reference population for the EU-SILC is limited to private [households](#) and their current members residing in the territory of the surveying country at the time of data collection. People living in collective households and institutions are excluded from the reference population; this constitutes a limitation for disability statistics. All household members are surveyed, but only those aged 16 years or over are interviewed.

The source is documented in more detail in this [background article](#), which provides information on the scope of the data, its legal basis, the methodology employed, as well as related concepts and definitions.

Active citizenship refers to participation of a person in political or community activities, such as the activities of a political party or local interest group, participating in a public consultation, protesting, including signing a petition, participating in a demonstration, writing a letter to a politician, writing a letter to the media.

Context

Cultural expression connects people and society, and culture plays an important role within the EU. Cultural heritage enhances lives, strengthens mutual understanding and can promote values. Participating in creative and cultural activities may have a considerable impact on an individual's quality of life, contributing towards overall well-being and enhancing the sense of belonging within society.

Disability statistics are used to measure the impact and effectiveness of EU policy aimed at ensuring equal rights for people with disabilities. The EU has adopted several strategies aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities:

- by reducing discrimination and inequalities,
- by providing support to enjoy fully their human rights, fundamental freedoms and EU rights on an equal basis with others.

In light of this, the [Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021–2030](#) sets EU objectives and priority actions in several areas, such as accessibility, citizens' rights, the quality of life, equal access and non-discrimination, and the promotion of the rights of people with disabilities. To find out more, please visit the [webpage on the monitoring framework for the objectives and actions of this strategy](#).

To ensure sound monitoring and reporting of this topic, the European Commission is reinforcing the collection of data on the situation of people with disabilities in areas where knowledge gaps have been identified, for example in relation to the participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport.

The EU is also a signatory of the [United Nations \(UN\) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#).

Explore further

Other articles

Online publications

- [Disability statistics](#)
- [Health in the European Union - facts and figures](#)

Related articles

- [Self-perceived health statistics](#)
- [Living conditions in Europe – income distribution and income inequality](#)
- [Living conditions in Europe – poverty and social exclusion](#)

Database

- [Disability \(dsb\)](#), see:

Leisure and social participation (dsb_ lsp)

Leisure and cultural participation (dsb_ lspc)

Social interactions (dsb_ lsp i)

Political and public life (dsb_ lsp p)

Thematic section

- [Disability](#)
- [Income and living conditions](#)

Publications

- [Key figures on European living conditions – 2024 edition](#)

Methodology

- [Global activity limitation indicator \(GALI\) implementation guidelines](#)
- [Income and living conditions \(ilc\) \(metadata file\)](#)
- [EU statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\) methodology](#)

Legislation

- [Legal framework from 2021: EU statistics on income and living conditions](#)

External links

Health

- [European Commission – Directorate-General for Health and Public Safety – Public health](#) , see:
 - [Social determinants](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/522 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 March 2021 establishing a Programme for the Union's action in the field of health \('EU4Health Programme'\) for the period 2021–2027](#)
 - [Summary of Regulation \(EU\) 2021/522](#)

Disability

- [European Commission – Persons with disabilities](#) , see:
 - [European disability expertise](#)
 - [European disability strategy 2010–2020](#)
 - [Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021–2030](#)
- [United Nations – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#)
- [World Health Organization – International classification of functioning, disability and health \(ICF\)](#)