

Household composition statistics

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in May 2025.
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Highlights

"In 2024, 202 million households resided in the EU, of which over 75 million were single adults without children."

"The number of single-person households without children in the EU increased between 2015 and 2024 by 16.9% compared to 5.8% for all households."

"In 2024, 8.0% of children aged 0-17 in the EU lived in jobless households. It was the same share (8.0%) of people aged 18-59."

This article presents data on how the number and composition of [households](#) have changed in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) and in the EU countries since 2015. Special attention is given to the presence of children in households. The statistics in this article are based on the [EU labour force survey \(EU-LFS\)](#), the largest European household sample survey.

Increasing number of households composed of adults living alone

In 2024, 202 million households resided in the EU. In the same year, the EU had the highest number of single adult households without children (75.0 million), followed by couples without children (49.1 million), other types of households without children (30.5 million) and couples with children (30.3 million).

The total overall number of households in the EU increased between 2015 and 2024 by 5.8%. Single adult households without children experienced the fastest growth rate of 16.9% (see Figure 1). Households made up of couples (according to the legal marital status or de facto relationship) without children increased by 5.2%.

For the rest of households in the EU, the number remained almost unchanged or decreased between 2015 and 2024: couples with children decreased by 4.4% whereas households with 2 adults (not a couple) or more, also referred to as 'other type' of households in this article, fell by 1.6%. In this type of household, the decrease was higher in households with children (-3.3%) than in households without children (-0.9%).

Figure 1

Single adult population

More than one fifth of the adult population live alone or are single parents. The proportion of single adults increases with age. Slightly more than one tenth of young adults aged 18-24 live alone, but almost one third of those aged 65 years or older were also single. For all age groups the proportion of both men and women living alone (with or without children) was higher in 2024 than in 2015. Also in 2024, the number of single adults aged 18-64 increased by 12.7%, while for people older than 64 the increase was 19.8%.

In 2024, the number of adult men living alone (with or without children) increased more steeply than that of adult women living alone, with a significant increase in the number of single adults aged 65 years or over (+35.0% for men compared with 14.4% for women).

Looking at the proportion of the single adult population among the total EU adult population by age, sex and presence of children, there were large differences between men and women in both 2015 and 2024, especially in the 25-54 age bracket (see Figure 2). In this age group, the share of single adult women with children was significantly higher than the share of men in the same situation.

In 2024, most single-parent households were led by women: 5.4% of women aged 25-54 were single parents with children, compared with 1.0% of men in the same age bracket.

Over the whole 2015-2024 period, the share of single men aged 25-54 without children was much higher than the share of women in the same situation and increased faster than for women during this period. In 2024, 19.9% of men aged 25-54 were single without children, compared with 12.0% of women in the same age bracket (in 2015, the figures were 16.5% and 10.4%, respectively).

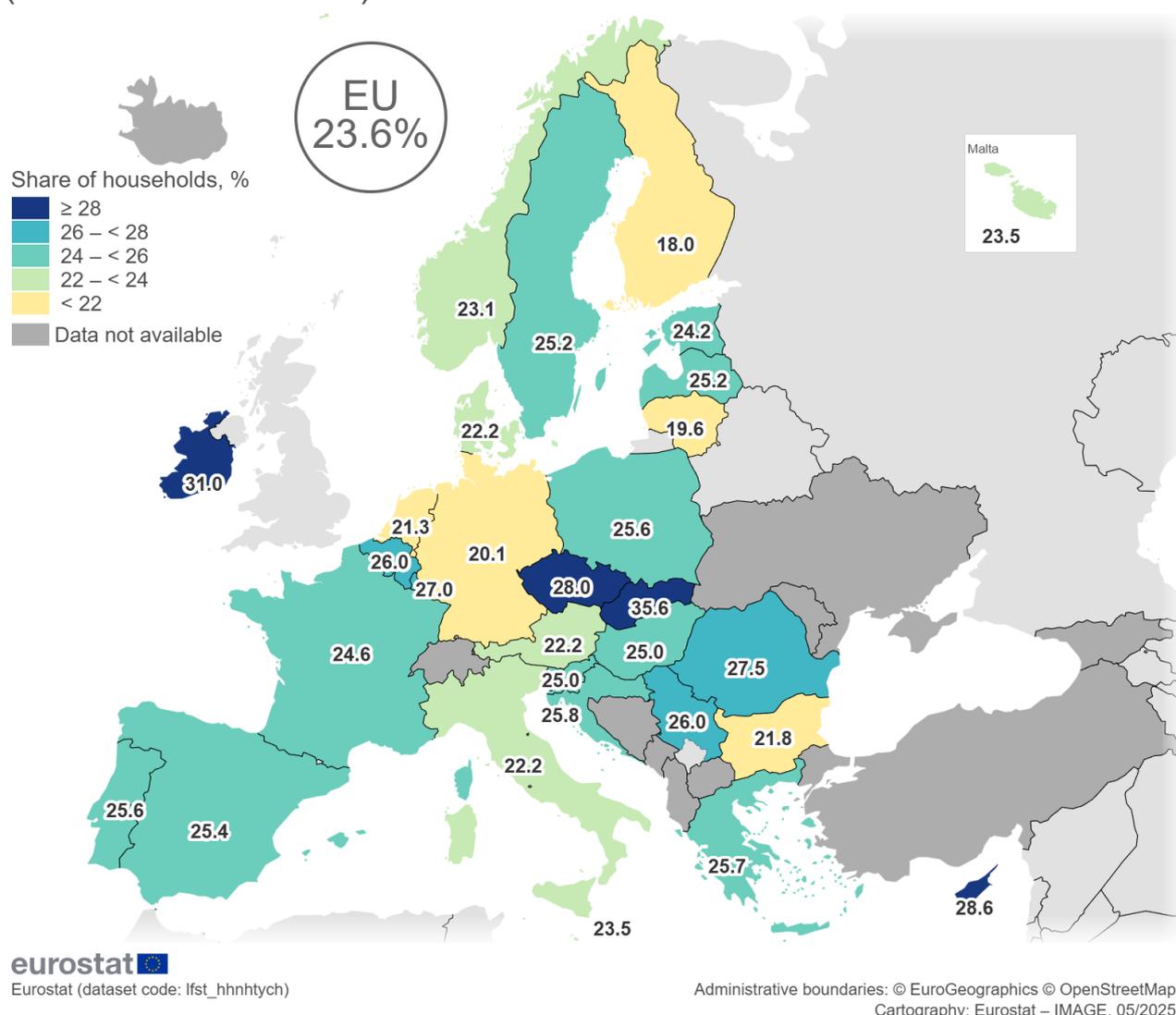
Figure 2

Presence and number of children

The household breakdown shows that the number of children varied considerably between countries (see Map 1). In the EU as a whole in 2024, 23.6% of households included children, whereas 76.4% did not, and around one third of households in Slovakia (35.6%) and Ireland (31.0%) had children. By contrast, less than one fifth of households in Finland (18.0%) and Lithuania (19.6%) included children.

Share of households with children, 2024

(% of total households)



Map 1: Share of households with children, 2024 Source: Eurostat (lfst_hhnhtych)

Couples accounted for 63.5% of households with children in the EU, making it the most common type of household with children. Sweden, Greece, Finland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg had the highest shares of couples (all above 70%), among households with children. By contrast, Denmark and Latvia had the lowest shares of couples (45.9% and 46.4% respectively) among households with children.

Other types of households accounted for less than 1 quarter (23.7%) of households with children in the EU. This share was more than 35% in Slovakia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania, but less than 14% in Finland and Estonia.

Single parents accounted for 12.7% of households with children in the EU as a whole. Among households with children in the EU, the highest proportions of single parents were recorded in Estonia (36.7%), Lithuania (29.5%), Latvia (24.9%) and Denmark (23.2%). By contrast, Slovakia, Greece and Slovenia had the lowest shares (all below 5%).

Among households with children, those with 1 child were the most common. In 2024 almost half of households with children in the EU had 1 child (49.8%), while 37.6% had 2 children, and 12.6% had 3 or more children. Households with 1 child were predominant in all EU countries, except in the Netherlands, where the share of households with 2 children was higher (see Figure 3).

Households with 3 or more children were the least common across countries. Their share in households with children was 20.6% in Ireland, 18.1% in Sweden, and 17.4% in Finland, but below 8% in Portugal, Bulgaria, Italy and Lithuania.

Figure 3

Employment in households

In 2024, households where all adults were employed, either part-time or full-time, were more than half (57.8%) of the total households (excluding those composed solely of students or solely of people outside the labour force and aged 65 or over - see Figure 4).

In 41.4% of households all adults were working full-time, and in 16.4% at least one adult was working part-time while all other adults (if there were any) were working full-time. By contrast, in 28.4% of households, at least one adult was not working and at least one adult was working (either part-time or full-time). In 13.8% no adults were working. The share of households where all adults worked has increased compared to 2023. Consequently, the share of households with some or all non-working member(s) has decreased.

Figure 4The picture changes, however, when looking at the presence or absence of children in the household. All adults were employed in 61.3% of households with economically dependent children in 2024, but only in 56.2% of households without children.

These shares can be broken down as follows:

- **All adults were working full-time** in 38.9% of households with children and in 42.5% of households without children.
- **At least one adult was working part-time and all other adults (if any) were working full-time** in 22.4% of households with children, which is significantly higher than the share of households without children (13.7%)
- **At least one adult was working and one adult was not working** in almost one third of households with children (31.6%) and in only 26.9% of households without children.
- Finally, 7.1% of households with children did not include any employed adults compared with 16.9% of households without children (**no adults working**).

In terms of individual countries, the Netherlands, Estonia, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Lithuania had the highest shares of households in which all adults were working: more than two thirds of the households (see Figure 4).

Focusing only on **households in which all adults were working full-time** , Lithuania ranked first with 62.2% of its households, followed by Estonia (57.4%) and Hungary (53.5%).

Households in which at least one person was working part-time while the other adults were working full-time were more common in the Netherlands (40.5%), Germany (29.5%) and Austria (28.8%).

Slovakia (49.3%), Greece (46.0%) and Croatia (43.7%) had the highest shares of **households with at least one person working and at least one other not working** .

By contrast, in 2024, Belgium (19.2%), Finland (17.9%) and Romania (17.3%) had the highest percentages of **households in which no adults were working** .

Children and adults in jobless households

In 2024, 8.0% of children aged 0-17 in the EU lived in jobless households. It was the same share (8.0%) for people aged 18-59. In 2015, these shares were 10.1% for children aged 0-17 and 10.8% for people aged 18-59, the highest levels throughout the whole period 2015-2024.

Both categories decreased continuously between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, 8.7% of children aged 0-17 and 8.8% of people aged 18-59 lived in households where nobody worked. In 2020 however, the share of children in jobless households increased by 0.4 **percentage points (pp)** and the share of people aged 18-59 by 0.5 pp, most probably due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Figure 5). Between 2021 and 2024, the proportions of both age groups living in jobless households decreased slightly or remained almost the same.

Figure 5 In 2024, 10% or more of children aged 0-17 lived in jobless households in Romania (15.3%), Belgium (11.7%) and France (10.3%). They were less than 4% in Croatia (3.8%), Sweden (3.3%) and Slovenia (1.6%). Between 2015 and 2024, the share of children living in jobless households decreased in most EU countries. The largest decreases were observed in Bulgaria (-9.1 pp), Greece (-7.0 pp) and Sweden (-6.1 pp). This share increased over the same period in Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Luxembourg, Finland and Romania.

In 5 countries more than 10% of people aged 18-59 lived in households where no one was employed, namely in Finland (11.9%), Belgium (11.0%), Denmark (10.3%), Italy (10.3%) and Lithuania (10.0%). Fewer than 5% of people lived in such households in Malta (3.1%), Czechia (3.3%), Slovenia (4.6%), Hungary (4.7%) and Slovakia (4.8%). This share has decreased since 2015 in almost all EU countries, most notably in Greece (-11.0 pp), Spain (-5.6 pp) and Croatia (-5.4 pp).

Data sources

All statistics presented in this article are derived from the EU labour force survey (EU-LFS). The EU-LFS is the largest European household sample survey providing quarterly and annual results on labour participation of people aged 15 years and over. It covers residents in private households and excludes those in **collective households**. Conscripts in military or community service are not included in the results. The EU-LFS is based on the same target populations and uses the same definitions in all countries, which means that the results are comparable between the countries.

Under the specific topic **households statistics**, the EU-LFS currently covers statistics on:

- household composition
- number and size of households
- working status within households
- employment by household composition
- employment by number of children.

Reference period: Yearly results are obtained as averages of the 4 quarters in the year.

Coverage: The results from the EU-LFS currently cover all **EU** countries, 3 **EFTA** countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland), together with the **EU candidate countries** Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Türkiye. For Cyprus, the survey covers only the areas of Cyprus controlled by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. Nevertheless, EU-LFS household data are not available for Iceland and Switzerland.

European aggregates: EU refers to the sum of all EU countries. If data are unavailable for a country, the calculation of the corresponding aggregates takes into account the data for the same country for the most recent period available. Such cases are indicated.

Definitions **Employment** covers persons living in private households, who during the reference week performed work, even for just 1 hour, for pay, profit or family gain, or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent, for example because of illness, holidays, industrial dispute or education and training.

The distinction between **full-time** and **part-time** work is generally based on a spontaneous response by the

respondent. The main exceptions are the Netherlands and Iceland where a 35 hour threshold is applied, Sweden where a threshold is applied to the self-employed, and Norway where persons working between 32 and 36 hours are asked whether this is a full-time or part-time position.

[Jobless households](#) are households in which no member is in employment, i. e. all members are either unemployed or outside the labour force.

A **child** is defined as a household member aged less than 18 years.

Country notes In Germany, from the first quarter of 2020 onwards, the LFS is part of a new system of integrated household surveys. Technical issues and the COVID-19 crisis have had a large impact on data collection processes in 2020, resulting in low response rates and a biased sample.

In the Netherlands, LFS data are collected using a rolling reference week instead of a fixed reference week, i.e. those interviewed are asked about the situation of the week before the interview rather than a pre-selected week.

Time series

Regulation [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1700](#) came into force on 1 January 2021 and introduced a break in the EU-LFS time series for several EU countries.

Additional methodological information

More information on the EU-LFS can be found via the online publication [EU labour force survey](#) , which includes eight articles on the technical and methodological aspects of the survey. The EU-LFS methodology in force from the 2021 data collection onwards is described in [methodology from 2021 onwards](#) . Detailed information on coding lists, explanatory notes and classifications used over time can be found under [documentation](#) .

Context

In addition to the EU labour force survey (EU-LFS), the [EU statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#) is also a source of household statistics. The [EU-SILC](#) is a multi-purpose instrument which focuses mainly on income. However, it also collects information on housing conditions, social exclusion, labour and education.

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- [Unemployment statistics and beyond](#)
- [Unemployment statistics at regional level](#)
- [Labour market statistics at regional level](#)
- [EU labour force survey](#)
- [Young people - family and society](#)

Database

- [Labour Force Survey \(employ\)](#) see:

LFS series -Specific topics (lfst)

Households statistics - LFS series (lfst_hh)

Population by household composition and number of children or age of youngest child (lfst_hh_p)
Employment by household composition (lfst_hh_e)
Employment by number of children and age of youngest child (lfst_hh_k)
Working status within households (lfst_hh_s)
Number and size of households (lfst_hh_n)

- [Income and living conditions \(ilc\)](#) see:

Living conditions (ilc_lv)

Private households (ilc_lvph)],

Average household size (source: SILC) (ilc_lvph01)
Distribution of households by household type from 2003 onwards (source: SILC) (ilc_lvph02)
Distribution of households by household size (source: SILC) (ilc_lvph03)
Distribution of households by household type and income level (source: SILC) (ilc_lvph04)
Distribution of households with children by number of children (source: EU-SILC) (ilc_lvph05)

- [Population and housing censuses \(cens\)](#) , see:

Census - time series of selected indicators (cens_hn)

Housing (cens_hnhsng)

Households by size (number of persons) (cens_hndwsize)

Thematic section

- [Labour Market \(LFS\)](#)
- [Income social inclusion and living conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#)
- [Population and demography](#)

Publications

- [The life of women and men in Europe - 2022 interactive edition](#)
- [The life of women and men in Europe. A statistical portrait - 2020 edition](#)
- [EU labour force survey — online publication](#)
- [Labour force survey in the EU, EFTA and candidate countries — Main characteristics of national surveys, 2020 , 2022 edition](#)
- [Quality report of the European Union Labour Force Survey 2020 , 2022 edition](#)
- [European Union Labour force survey - selection of articles \(Statistics Explained\)](#)

Selected datasets

- [Labour Force Survey](#) , see:

LFS series - specific topic(t_lfst)

Number of persons in households (tsdpc510)

Methodology

ESMS metadata files and EU-LFS methodology

- [Households statistics - LFS series](#) (ESMS metadata file — lfst_hh_esms)
- [Income and living conditions](#) (ESMS metadata file — ilc_sieusilc)
- [Employment and unemployment \(Labour Force Survey\)](#) (ESMS metadata file — employ_esms)
- [LFS series - detailed annual survey results](#) (ESMS metadata file — lfsa_esms)