

Young people - family and society

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in November 2025.
Planned article update: December 2026.*

Highlights

In 2022, 70.8% of people living in households with children in the EU reported to feeling happy all or most of the time, compared to 59.8% in households without children.

In 2024, slightly just under a quarter, 23.5%, of households in the EU included children.

In 2024, over half, 63.5%, of households with children in the EU were couples with children, while single-parent households made up 12.7%.

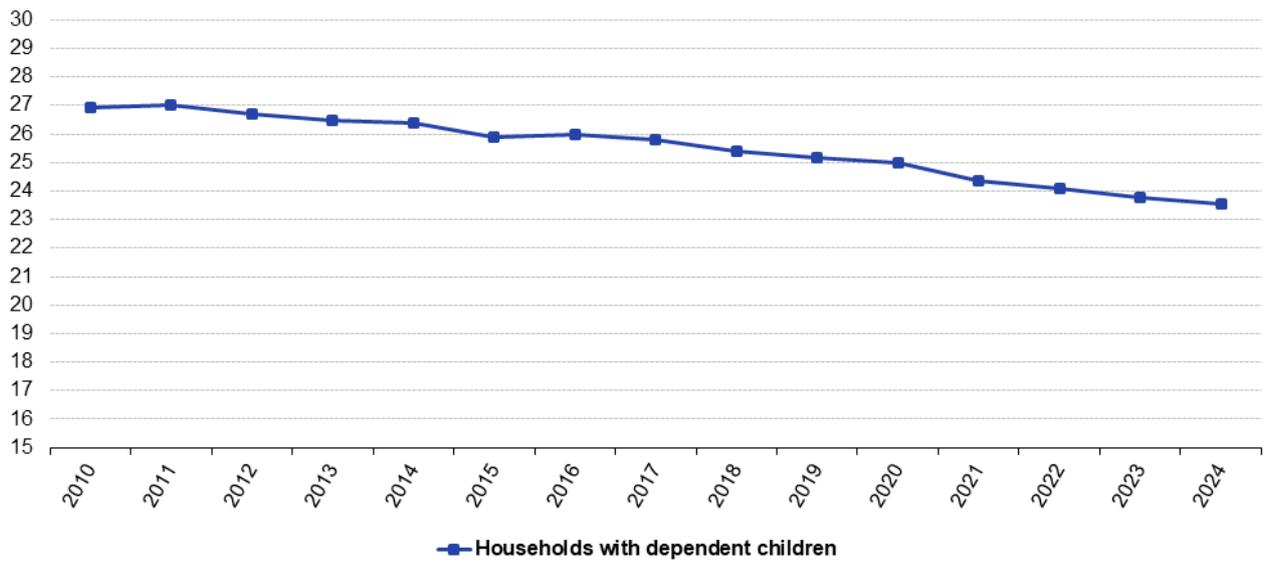
This article presents data about household composition and its link to happiness across the [EU](#).

Family structures in EU countries vary, reflecting cultural and normative differences and other factors. Children most commonly grow up in households with 2 adults, though multigenerational and single-parent households are also prevalent.

Share of households with children

Nearly a quarter of households in the EU included children in 2024, a proportion that has been gradually decreasing over the last 15 years –from 26.9% in 2010 to 26.4% in 2014, and down to 23.5% in 2024 (see Figure 1).

**Proportion of households with dependent children, EU,
2010-2024**
(%)



2021: break in time series.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfst_hhnhtych)

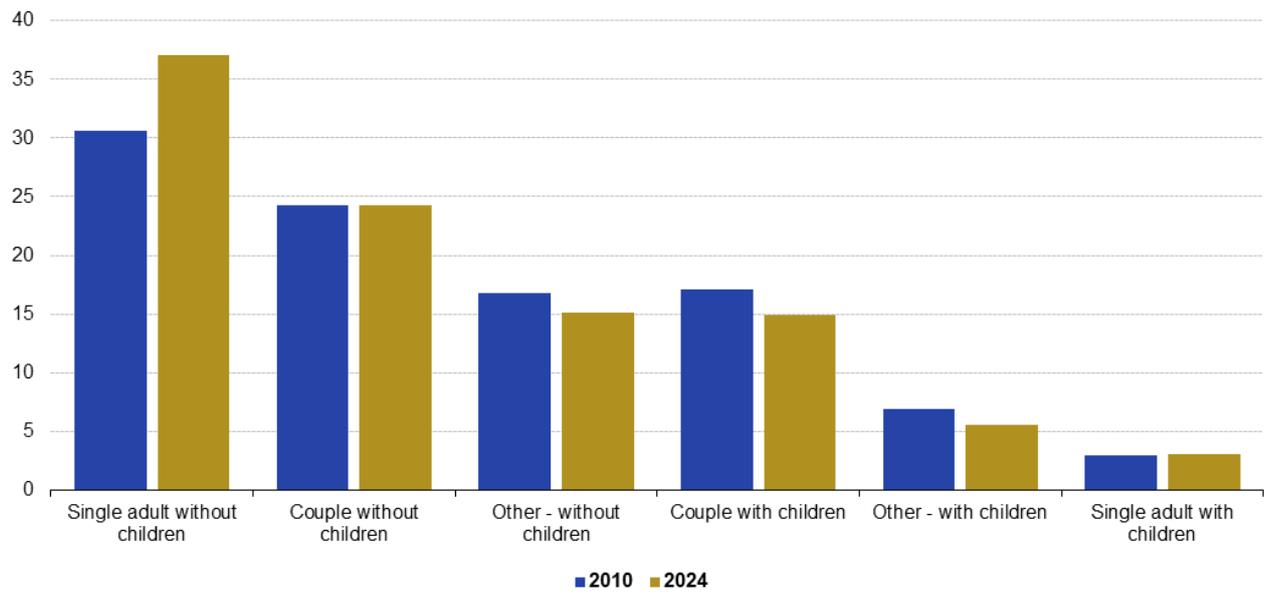
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Figure 1: Proportion of households with dependent children in the EU, 2010-2024 Source: Eurostat (lfst_hhnhtych)

Conversely, the share of single-adult households increased by 6.4 **percentage points** (pp) between 2010 and 2024 (Figure 2). All household types with children saw a decline in their overall proportion compared to 15 years ago, except for single-parent households, which experienced a slight rise. Specifically, the proportion of couples with children fell from 17.1% to 15.0%, and other household types with children dropped from 6.9% to 5.6%.

Composition of private households, EU, 2010 and 2024

(%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfst_hhnhtych)

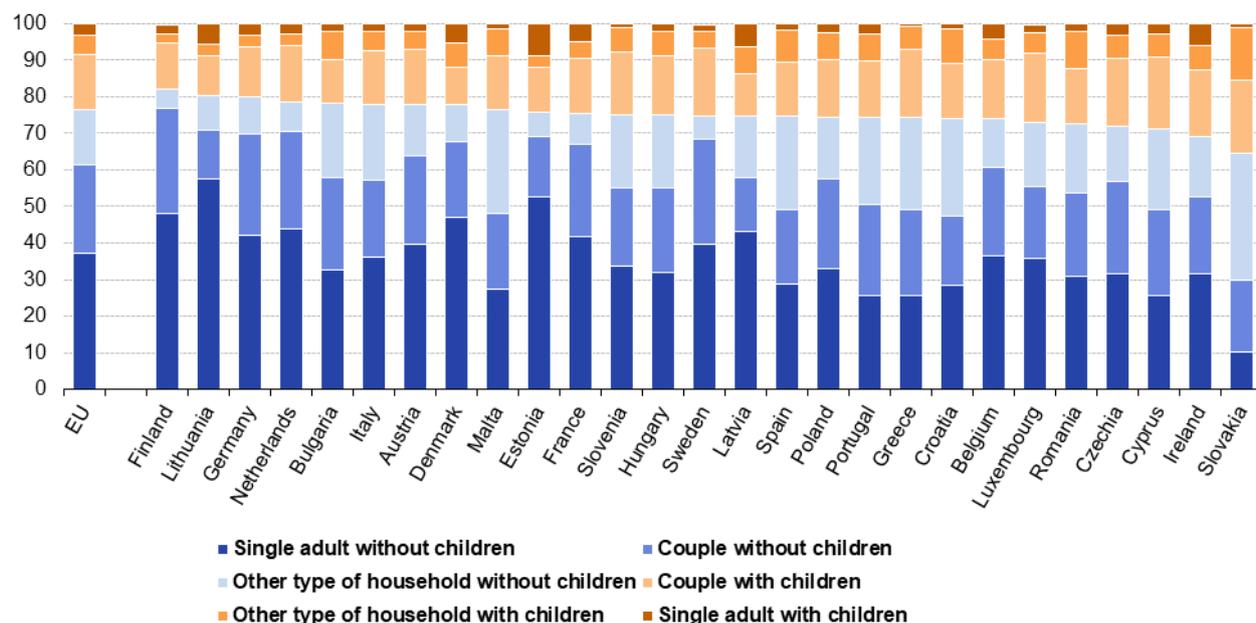
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Figure 2: Composition of private households, EU, 2010 and 2024 Source: Eurostat (lfst_hhnhtych)

Figure 3 shows how household structures vary across EU countries. In 2024, over half of households in Lithuania and Estonia were single-adult households without children. In 12 other EU countries, more than a third of households were single-adult households without children. By contrast, only 1 in 10 households in Slovakia consisted of a single adult.

Composition of private households, 2024

(%)



Spain and France: definitions differ.

Slovenia: low reliability of data on single parent households

Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfst_hhnhtych)

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Figure 3: Composition of private households, 2024 Source: Eurostat (lfst_hhnhtych)

The second most common household type in the EU in 2024 was couples without children, making up 28.6% of households in Sweden and Finland, 27.7% in Germany, and 26.6% in the Netherlands. Conversely, these households constituted 13.4% in Lithuania, 14.7% in Latvia and 16.4% in Estonia. These patterns have remained stable over time, suggesting cultural influences on trends like couples without children.

Overall, highest shares of households without children are found in Finland (82.0%), Lithuania (80.4%) and Germany (80.0%), with lowest in Slovakia (64.4%), Ireland (69%) and Cyprus (71.4%).

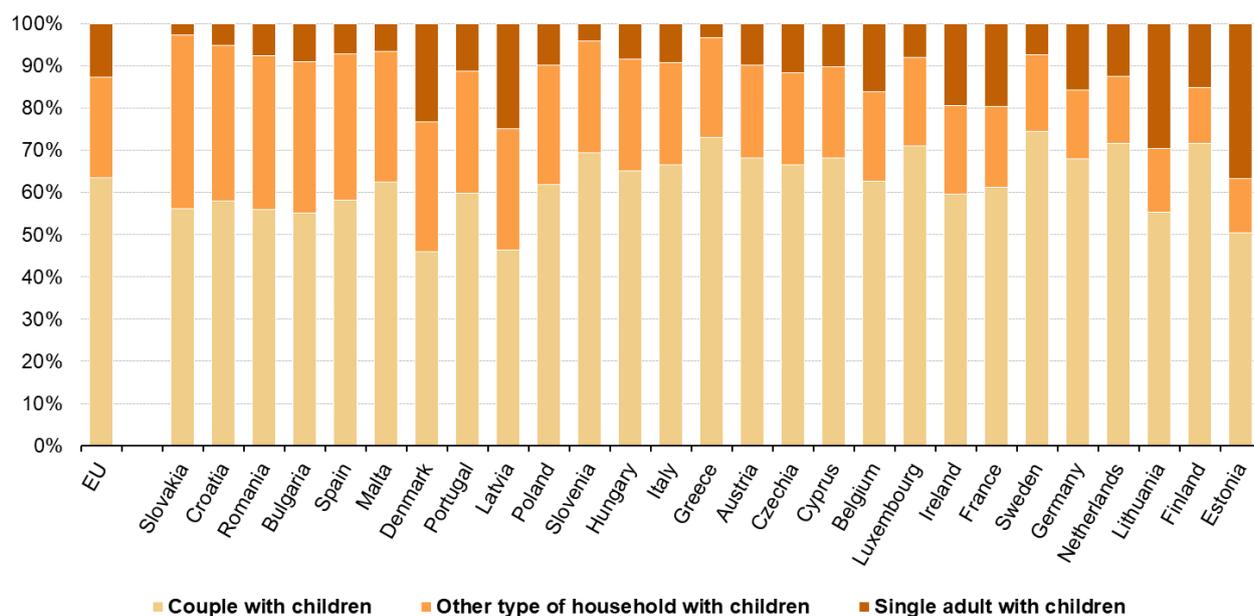
Composition of households with children

Looking closely at households with children (Figure 4), which represent 23.5% of all households, most consisted of couples with children, accounting for 63.5% at the EU level. Other household types with children, such as multigenerational families, accounted for 23.7% and single-parent families 12.7%.

The EU countries with the highest proportion of couples with children among households with children are Sweden, Greece and the Netherlands (74.5%, 73.1% and 71.6% respectively). In other EU countries, this proportion is around half or less (50.5% in Estonia, 46.4% in Latvia and 45.9% in Denmark).

Households with children, 2024

(%)



Spain and France: definitions differ.

Slovenia: low reliability of data on single parent households

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Figure 4: Households with dependent children, 2024 Source: Eurostat (lfst_hhnhtych)

In 2024, Estonia had the highest share of single-parent households, at 36.7%, followed by Lithuania at 29.5% and Latvia at 24.9%. Slovakia (2.7%), Greece (3.4%), Slovenia (4.2%), and Croatia (5.2%) had the lowest shares of single-parent households.

However, Slovakia and Croatia had the highest proportion of households classified under the 'other type' category of households with children, with 41.1% in Slovakia and 36.9% in Croatia being neither single-parent households nor households with couples.

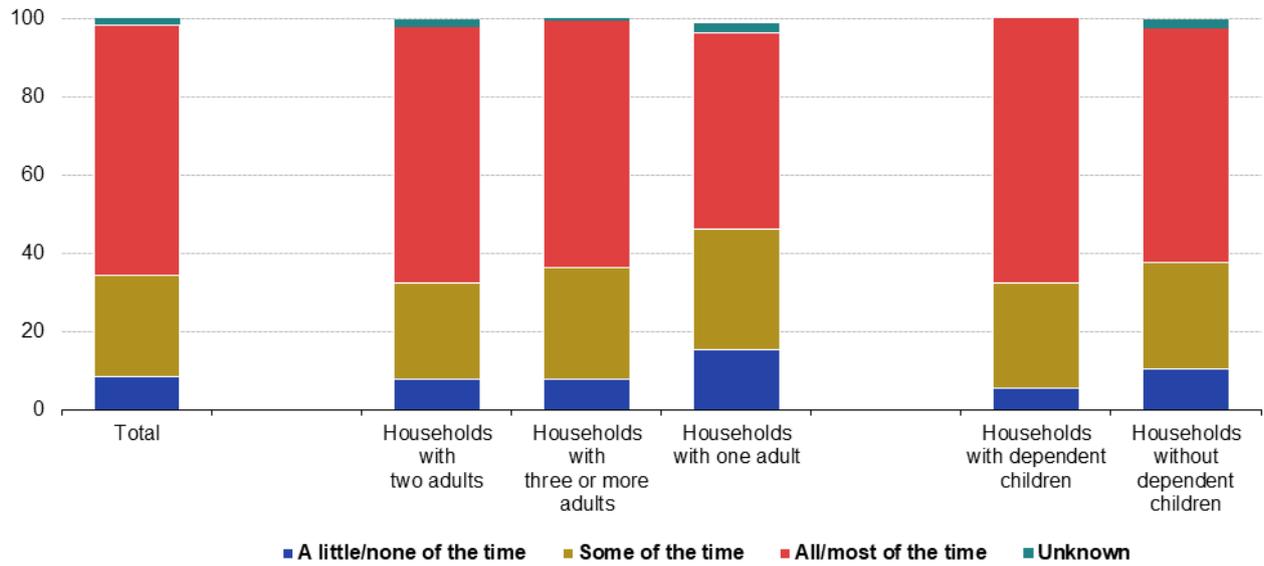
These households, where several generations may live together are also common in Romania (36.5% of households with children), Bulgaria (35.7%) and Spain (34.5%). Estonia and Lithuania, which have the highest share of single-parent families, also have the lowest share of 'other type' households with children: 12.8% and 15.2%, respectively. Finland also has a low share at 13.3%.

Happiness and household composition

The latest data from 2022 on subjective happiness related to household composition in the EU shows that 70.8% of people living in households with dependent children reported being happy all or most of the time over the past 4 weeks, compared to 59.8% of those living in households without dependent children.

Among households without children, 65.4% of individuals in two-adult households reported feeling happy all or most of the time, followed by 63.1% in households with 3 or more adults. In single-adult households, 50.3% reported being happy all or most of the time in the past 4 weeks, 30.8% felt happy some of the time, and 15.2% experienced happiness little or none of the time (Figure 5).

How often people were happy during the 4 weeks prior to the survey, by household composition, EU, 2022 (%)



All data are estimates.

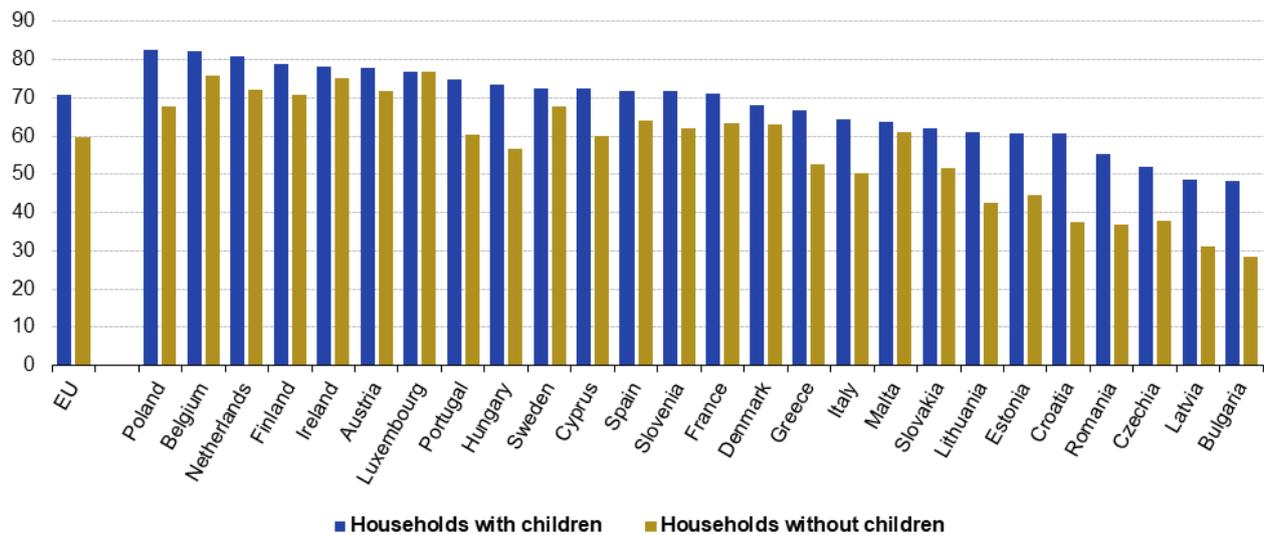
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_pw09)

Figure 5: How often people declared to be happy in the 4 weeks prior to the survey, by household composition, EU, 2022 Source: Eurostat (ilc_pw09)

In nearly every EU country, a high percentage of people living in households with dependent children reported being happy all or most of the time (Figure 6). The gap between happiness levels in households with and without dependent children can be considerable: 23 pp in Croatia, 19.9 pp in Bulgaria, and 18.7 pp in Lithuania. However, there was minimal difference in Luxembourg (-0.1pp), with small differences in Malta (2.7 pp) and Ireland (3.2 pp).

People reporting to be happy all or most of the time, by household composition, 2022

(%)



EU: estimates.

Germany: no data available.

Data ranked by share of people reporting to be happy in households with children.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_pw09)

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Figure 6: People reporting to be happy all or most of the time, by household composition, 2022 Source: Eurostat (ilc_pw09)

Source data for graphs

[Family and society: tables and figures](#)

Data sources

This article's data comes from the [EU labour force survey \(EU-LFS\)](#) and the [EU statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#).

The EU-LFS provides statistics on household numbers, characteristics and types. Moreover, under its specific topic, it details household composition, numbers and sizes, and the estimated age at which young people leave the parental home. 'Other types of households' may refer to households with 2 adults not forming a couple or households with 3 or more adults (e.g., parents with a child aged over 18, multigenerational households, or siblings living together). The survey only includes individuals in private households excluding those in collective or institutional households.

Figures on subjective well-being come from the EU-SILC, specifically the 6-yearly rotating module on well-being, first collected in 2022. The 'being happy' variable denotes a general state of well-being, implying a more sustained happiness over time. It was also collected in the EU-SILC ad hoc modules on well-being in 2010 and 2018.

It is noteworthy that households with [dependent children](#) in the EU-SILC include those with children aged 18-24 years who are inactive and living with at least one parent.

Context

EU policies targeting children In 2021, the [European Commission Strategy on Children's rights and the EU Child's guarantee](#) was adopted. This policy framework aims to protect children's rights and ensure vulnerable children can access basic services. The Commission has implemented various measures to safeguard children, help them fulfil their rights, and place at the centre of EU policymaking. Many of these measures are already in place.

EU policies targeting subjective well-being

Promoting well-being is a key EU aim, as outlined in the [Treaty on European Union](#). The EU considers a wide range of outcomes when assessing social and economic policy goals, including subjective life quality measures. Many international, EU, and national bodies report on subjective well-being, issuing reports that extend going beyond [gross domestic product \(GDP\)](#) as a societal performance measure.

Explore further

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- [Young people - housing conditions](#)
- [Living conditions in Europe - life satisfaction and quality of life](#)

Database

- [Employment and unemployment \(Labour force survey\) \(employ\)](#), see:

LFS series - Specific topics (lfst)

- [Children and youth \(yth\)](#), see:

Youth population (yth_demo)

Youth social inclusion (yth_incl)

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Youth participation (yth_part)

Youth volunteering (yth_volunt)

Thematic section

- [Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)
- [Children and youth](#)
- [Quality of life](#)

Methodology

- [Households statistics — LFS series \(ESMS metadata file — lfst_hh_esms\)](#)
- [EU-SILC methodology](#)