

# Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion

Statistics Explained

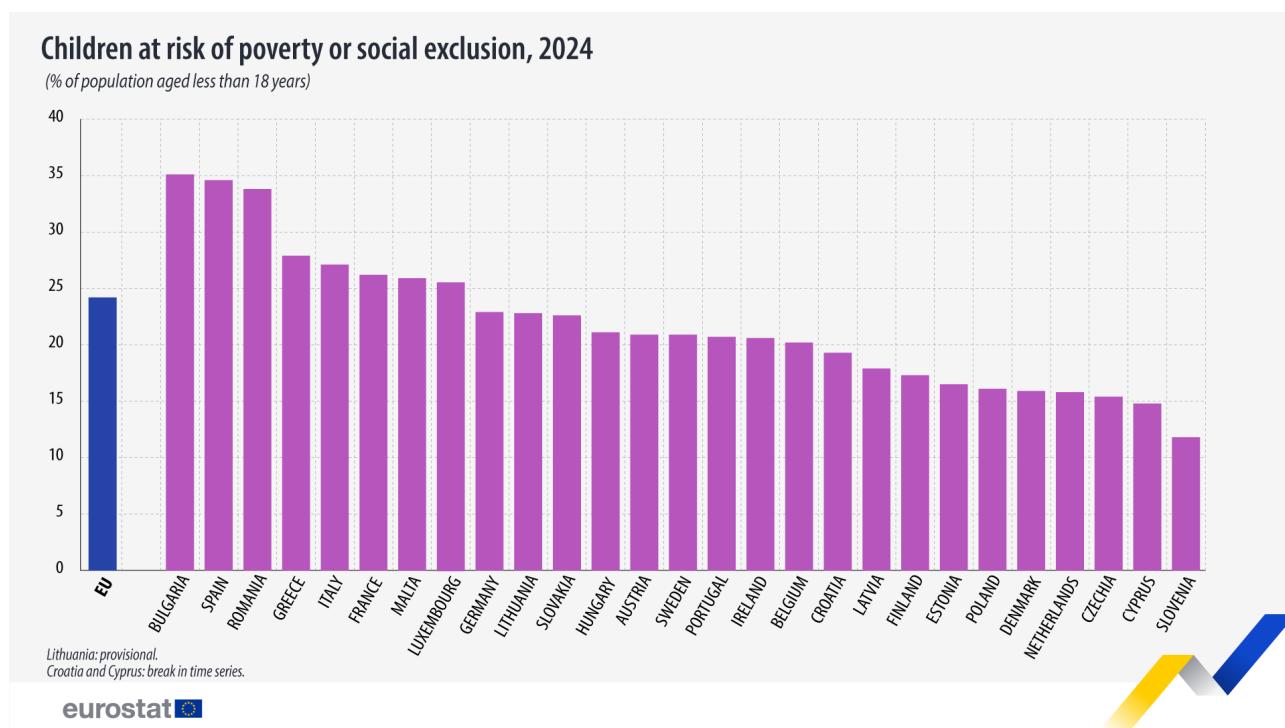
Data extracted on 7 May 2025.  
Planned article update: June 2026.

## Highlights

Between 2023 and 2024, the percentage of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU slightly decreased from 24.8% to 24.2%.

In 2024, 24.2% of children aged less than 18 in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion compared with 20.3% of people aged 18 years and over.

In 2024, in the EU, 11.0% of children aged less than 18 whose parents' level of education was high were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared with 61.2% of children whose parents' level of education was low.



Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2024 Source: Eurostat (ilc\_peps01n)

This article presents statistical data on the situation of children (aged less than 18 years) in the European Union (EU) who were at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) in 2024. The analysis compares children with people aged 18 years and over and displays the impact of the parents' educational attainment on the children AROPE levels.

The percentage of people who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion encompasses people who are in at least one of these three situations:

- people who are **at risk of poverty** : those with an equivalised disposable income that is below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold;
- people who suffer from **severe material and social deprivation** : those who cannot afford at least seven out of thirteen deprivation items (six related to the individual and seven related to the household) that are considered by most people to be desirable or even necessary to lead an adequate quality of life;
- people (aged less than 65 years) **living in a household with very low work intensity** : those living in households where adults worked equal to or less than 20% of their total combined work-time potential during the previous twelve months.

## Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion

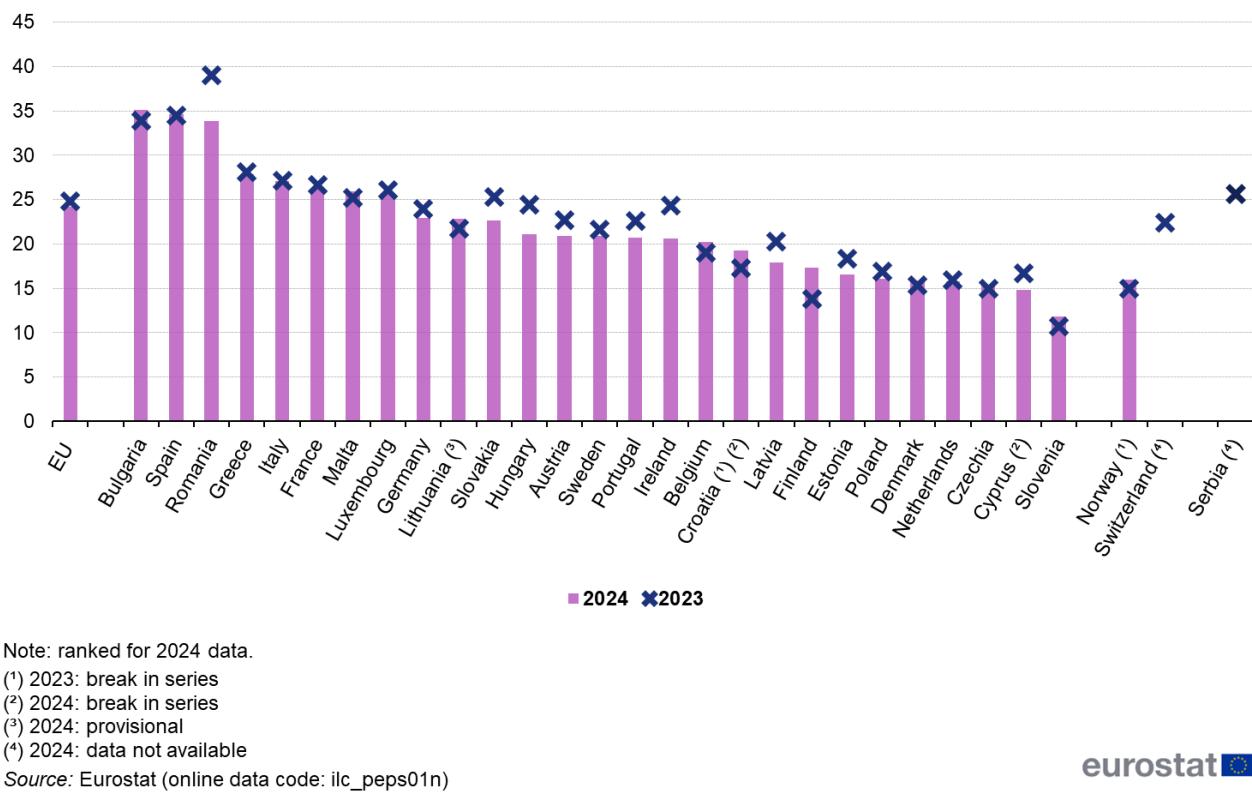
In 2024, the proportion of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU was 24.2%. At national level, the highest rates were observed in Bulgaria (35.1%), Spain (34.6%) and Romania (33.8%). On the other side, the lowest rates were recorded in Slovenia (11.8%), Cyprus (14.8%) and Czechia (15.4%).

### **The percentage of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion slightly decreased between 2023 and 2024**

At the EU level, between 2023 and 2024, the percentage of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion decreased by 0.6 **percentage points (pp)**, from 24.8% to 24.2% (Figure 1).

At the national level, Finland recorded the highest rise, with an increase of 3.5 pp, followed by Croatia (+2 pp), Belgium and Bulgaria (+1.2 pp each). In contrast, large decreases were observed in Romania (-5.2 pp), Ireland (-3.7 pp) and Hungary (-3.3 pp). Italy was the only EU country that did not experience any change, remaining steady at 27.1%.

**Children aged less than 18 years at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2023 and 2024**  
 (% of population in respective age group)



Note: ranked for 2024 data.

(1) 2023: break in series

(2) 2024: break in series

(3) 2024: provisional

(4) 2024: data not available

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_peps01n)

eurostat

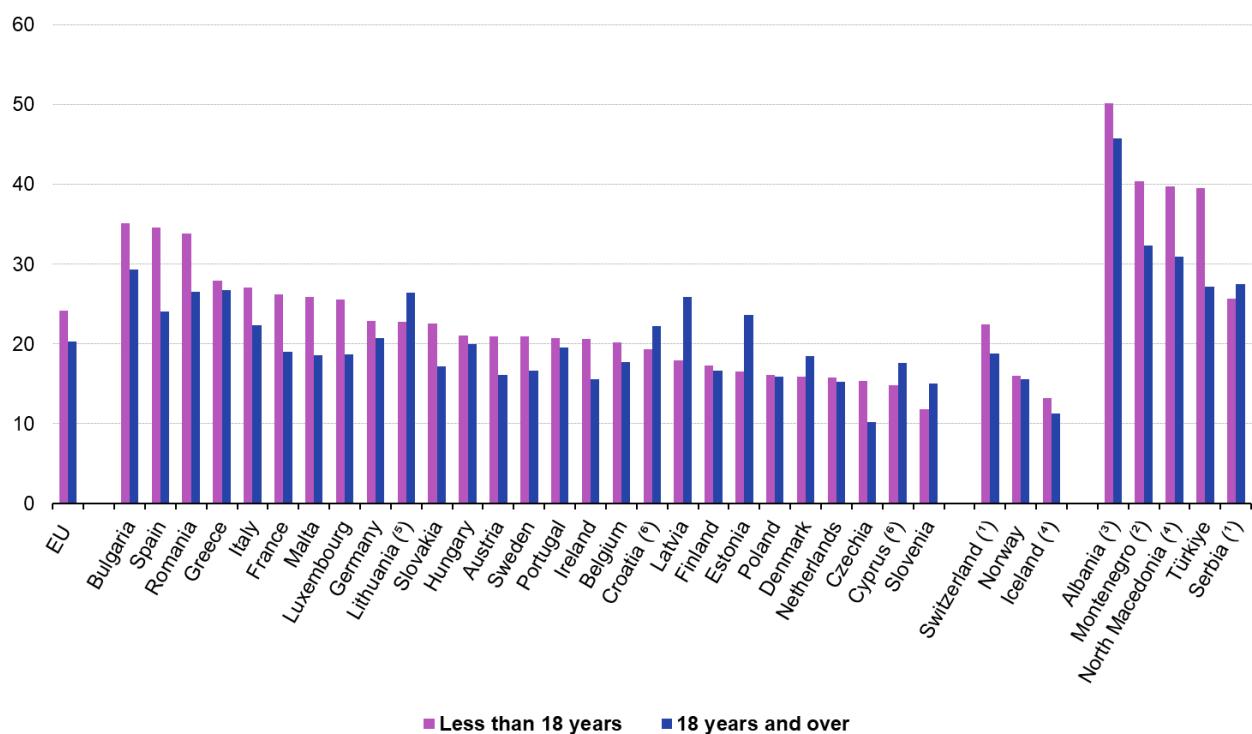
**Figure 1: Children aged less than 18 years at risk of poverty or social exclusion, 2023 and 2024 Source: Eurostat (ilc\_peps01n)**

**In 2024, the risk of poverty or social exclusion was higher for children than for people aged 18 years and over**

In 2024, children aged less than 18 in the EU were at a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion (24.2%) compared with people aged 18 and over (20.3%), resulting in a difference of 3.9 pp (Figure 2). Across the EU countries, 20 of them experienced a higher risk among children aged less than 18, with the largest differences recorded in Spain (10.5 pp), Malta and Romania (both 7.3 pp) and France (7.2 pp). Among the countries where people aged 18 years and over faced a higher risk of poverty or social exclusion than children, the largest differences were observed in Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, with people aged 18 years and over exceeding children's risk by 8.0, 7.1 and 3.6 pp, respectively.

## People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by age group, 2024

(% of population in respective age group)



■ Less than 18 years ■ 18 years and over

Note: ranked for people aged less than 18 years at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

(<sup>1</sup>) 2023 data

(<sup>2</sup>) 2022 data

(<sup>3</sup>) 2021 data

(<sup>4</sup>) 2020 data

(<sup>5</sup>) Provisional data

(<sup>6</sup>) Break in series

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_peps01n)

eurostat

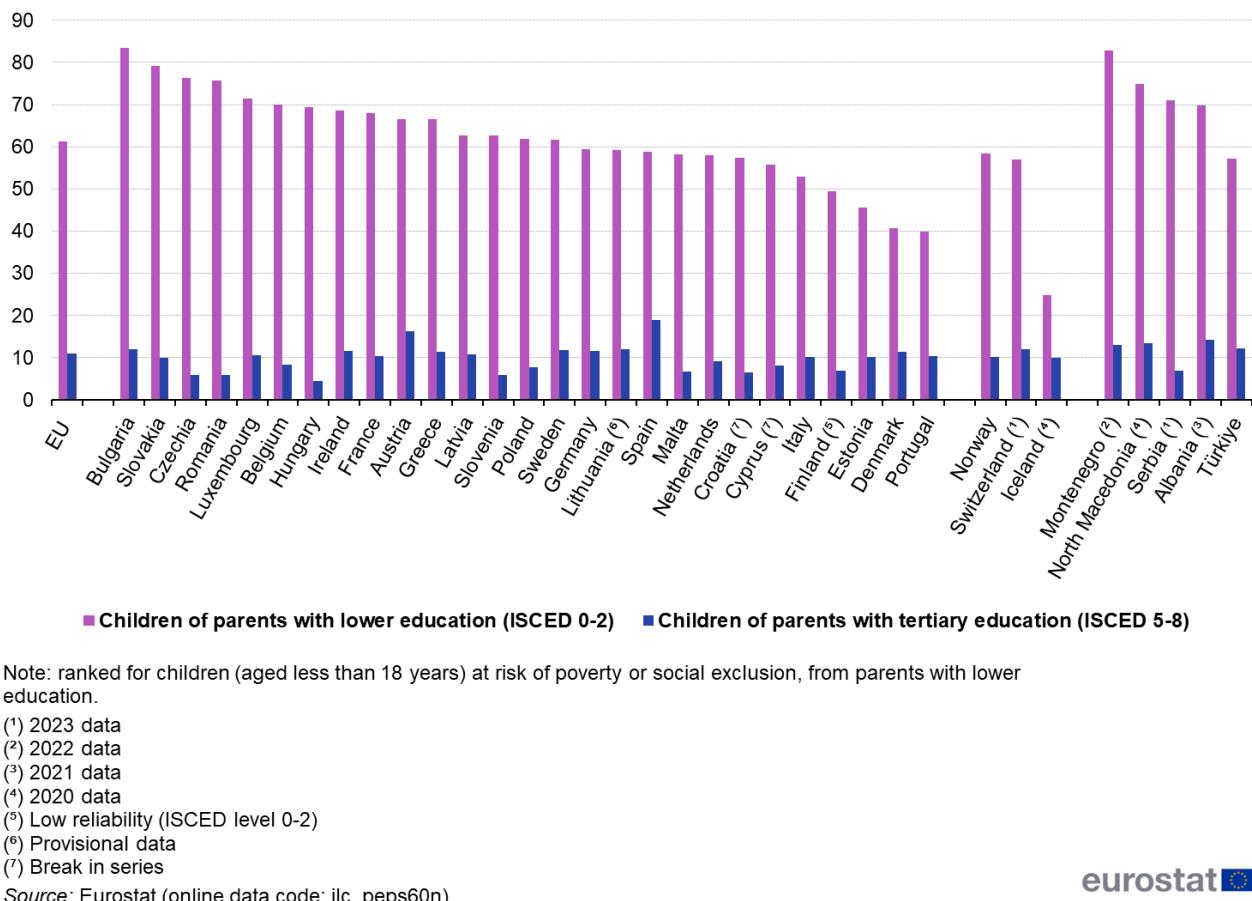
**Figure 2: People at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by age group, 2024 Source: Eurostat (ilc\_peps01n)**

**In 2024, children whose parents attained a higher education level were less likely to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion**

In 2024, 61.2% of children in the EU living with parents who had at most lower secondary education ([ISCED](#) levels 0-2) were at risk of poverty or social exclusion. For those with parents who attained tertiary education ([ISCED](#) levels 5-8), the proportion was 11.0% (Figure 3). This resulted in a risk gap of 50.2 pp based on parents' education levels.

At the national level, the gap was above 50.0 pp in 16 EU countries. The lowest gaps were observed in Denmark (29.3 pp), Portugal (29.5 pp) and Estonia (35.5 pp), while the largest differences were recorded in Romania (69.9 pp), Czechia (70.4 pp) and Bulgaria (71.5 pp).

## Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion by educational attainment level of their parents, 2024 (% of population aged less than 18 years)



■ Children of parents with lower education (ISCED 0-2) ■ Children of parents with tertiary education (ISCED 5-8)

Note: ranked for children (aged less than 18 years) at risk of poverty or social exclusion, from parents with lower education.

(<sup>1</sup>) 2023 data

(<sup>2</sup>) 2022 data

(<sup>3</sup>) 2021 data

(<sup>4</sup>) 2020 data

(<sup>5</sup>) Low reliability (ISCED level 0-2)

(<sup>6</sup>) Provisional data

(<sup>7</sup>) Break in series

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_peps60n)

eurostat

**Figure 3: Children at risk of poverty or social exclusion, by the educational attainment level of their parents, 2024** Source: Eurostat (ilc\_peps60n)

## Source data for tables and graphs

- [Children\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion: tables and figures](#)

## Data sources

The data used in this article are derived from the [EU Statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\)](#).

EU-SILC data are compiled annually and are the main source of statistics that measure income and living conditions in Europe; it is also the main source of information used to link different aspects relating to the quality of life of [households](#) and individuals.

The reference population for the information presented in this article is all private households and their current members residing in the territory of an EU Member State (or non-member country) at the time of data collection; persons living in collective households and in institutions are excluded from the target population. The data for the EU are population-weighted averages of national data. The reference period for individuals' characteristics is 2023. The data is available for the 27 Member States as well as Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Albania and Türkiye.

[At-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion rate \(AROPE\)](#) is the headline indicator to monitor the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan \(EU 2030 targets\)](#) poverty target. It reflects the share of the population which is either [at risk of poverty](#), and/or severely materially and socially deprived and/or lives in a household with [very low work intensity](#).

**Educational attainment level** is classified according to **ISCED** — the international standard classification of education. The (latest) 2011 version defines the following levels:

- ISCED level 0 — early childhood education;
- ISCED level 1 — primary education;
- ISCED level 2 — lower secondary education;
- ISCED level 3 — (upper) secondary education;
- ISCED level 4 — post-secondary non-tertiary education;
- ISCED level 5 — short-cycle tertiary education;
- ISCED level 6 — bachelor's or equivalent level;
- ISCED level 7 — master's or equivalent level;
- ISCED level 8 — doctoral or equivalent level.

The analysis presented in this article focuses on the following aggregations of ISCED levels:

- ISCED levels 0-2: less than primary, primary and lower secondary education;
- ISCED levels 5-8: tertiary education.

## Explore further

### Other articles

- All articles from Living conditions in Europe
- Key figures on European living conditions – 2024 edition
- EU statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) methodology - people at risk of poverty or social exclusion
- Living conditions in Europe — poverty and social exclusion

### Database

- Income and living conditions - detailed datasets (ilc)

### Thematic section

- Income and Living Conditions

### Selected datasets

- Income and living conditions - selected datasets (t\_ilc)

### Methodology

- Income and living conditions (ESMS metadata file — ilc\_esms)
- Income and living conditions — information on data
- Income and living conditions — methodology
- Measuring material deprivation in the EU — Indicators for the whole population and child-specific indicators  
Methodologies and working papers

## External links

- European child guarantee
- Social investment
- European pillar of social rights

## Legislation

- Detailed list of legislative information on EU-SILC provisions for survey design, survey characteristics, data transmission and ad-hoc modules
- Regulation (EC) No 2019/1700 —— the central piece of legislation for social surveys including EU-SILC
- Regulation (EC) No 2019/2242 —— additional central piece of legislation for EU-SILC