

# Social participation and integration statistics

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in September 2017*

*No planned update date since the data source is an ad-hoc module*

This article presents statistics on [social participation](#) in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) in 2015. They are based on data currently available in Eurostat from the [EU SILC ad-hoc 2015 Module on Social and cultural participation and Material deprivation](#) which contains, among others, variables measuring social engagement and participation of people aged 16 and over.

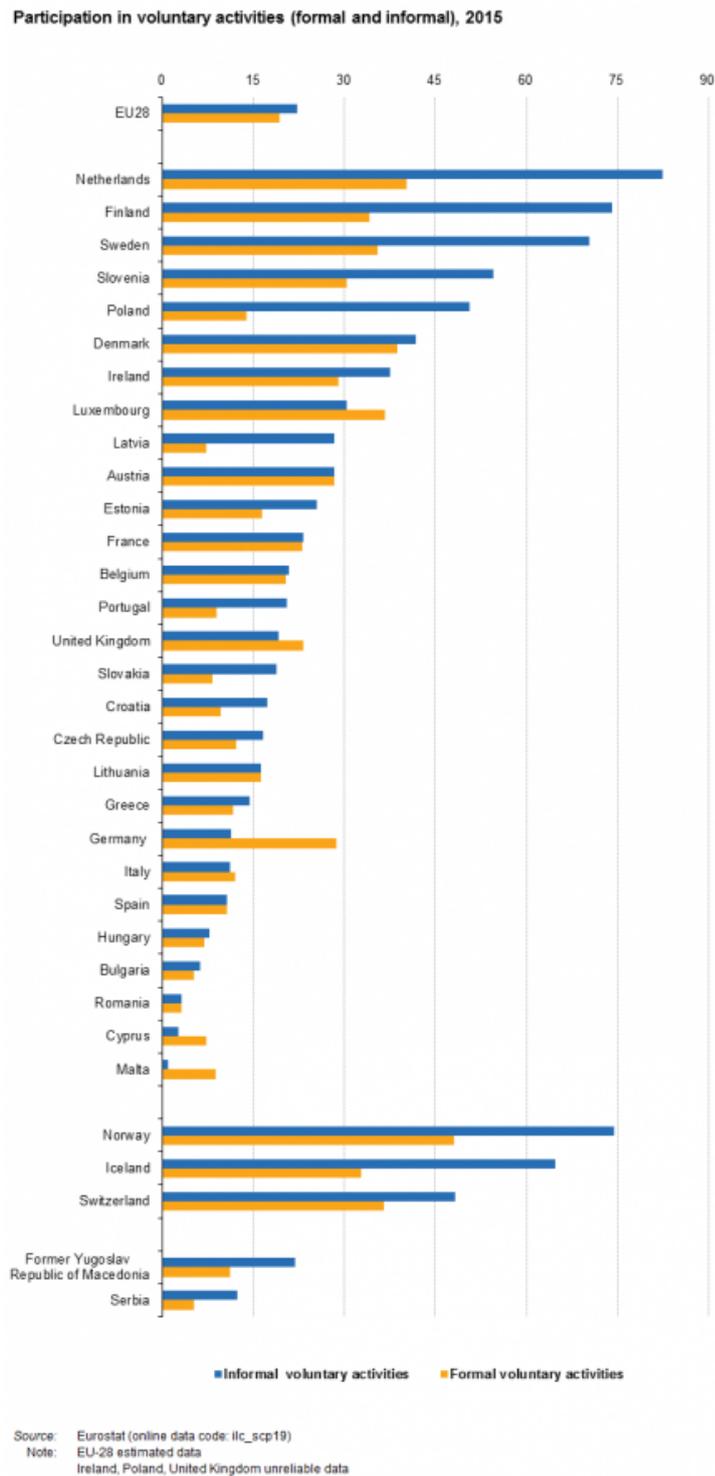
For this article, the dimensions on formal and informal volunteering, active citizenship, having contact with family and friends, having someone for help or to discuss personal matters and communication via social media (for detailed definitions, see the section on Data sources and availability) are used. Active participation in cultural and social life is closely linked with living conditions by households and individuals. This also relates to the concepts of cultural- and social capital which, in addition to economic capital, has significance for the quality of life.

The analyses used for the article cover all [EU Member States](#) and several non-EU Member States.

## Formal and informal voluntary activities

In the 2015 EU-SILC ad-hoc module, two questions were asked about volunteering, i.e. whether people were involved in formal and/or informal voluntary activities during the past twelve months preceding the survey.

In 2015, the involvement in informal voluntary activities in the EU-28 was slightly higher than in formal (organised) voluntary activities (22.2 % versus 19.3 %). This pattern was repeated across most of the EU Member States as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Participation in voluntary activities (formal and informal), 2015 (% people aged 16+)**  
 Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp19)

Some Member States had high levels for formal and informal volunteering, such as the Netherlands (82.5 % for informal volunteering and 40.3 % for formal), Finland (74.2 % informal and 34.1 % formal) and Sweden (70.4 % informal and 35.5 % formal). At the other end of the spectrum, we find Romania (3.2 % for both) Cyprus (2.6 % informal and 7.2 % formal) and Malta (0.9 % informal and 8.8 % formal).

While these large differences between Member States may be attributed to different cultural or social structures (i.e. societies which favour more non-organised voluntary activities than others), it can be observed in all the participating European countries that educational attainment strongly influences the voluntary-participation

patterns. At EU-28 level, in 2015, the participation rate for formal voluntary activities was 28.4 % for people with tertiary education ( [ISCED 2011 levels 5-8](#) ) and 11.5 % for people with less than primary, primary and lower secondary education ( [ISCED 2011 levels 0-2](#) ) (see Table 1).

**Participation in voluntary activities (formal and informal), by educational level, 2015**  
(% of people aged 16 and over)

	Formal voluntary activities				Informal voluntary activities			
	Total	Low (ISCED 0-2)	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	High (ISCED 5-8)	Total	Low (ISCED 0-2)	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	High (ISCED 5-8)
<b>EU28 <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>29.6</b>
Belgium	20.4	13.3	18.5	28.1	20.8	16.4	21.0	24.2
Bulgaria	5.2	1.7	3.8	13.4	6.3	3.9	5.6	11.4
Czech Republic	12.2	7.6	11.5	18.4	16.6	11.4	15.8	23.5
Denmark	38.7	32.2	39.1	43.1	41.8	33.5	43.9	45.3
Germany	28.6	19.5	28.6	36.4	11.4	8.4	11.6	13.4
Estonia	16.4	10.4	15.5	21.1	25.5	20.4	24.6	29.7
Ireland <sup>(2)</sup>	29.0	18.8	26.7	38.4	37.6	29.5	35.0	45.5
Greece	11.7	8.5	11.9	16.6	14.4	11.5	14.8	18.5
Spain	10.7	7.2	11.7	16.5	10.6	7.9	11.3	15.1
France	23.0	14.9	23.8	29.8	23.3	18.2	24.6	26.0
Croatia	9.7	4.8	10.2	16.9	17.2	10.1	18.2	27.1
Italy	12.0	8.4	14.6	16.8	11.2	8.0	12.6	17.1
Cyprus	7.2	3.2	6.4	12.2	2.6	1.6	2.2	4.2
Latvia	7.3	4.5	6.0	11.8	28.3	16.3	27.7	38.2
Lithuania	16.3	8.0	13.2	27.6	16.3	10.0	15.3	22.3
Luxembourg	36.7	26.7	39.6	47.6	30.3	25.3	33.3	33.5
Hungary	6.9	4.5	5.7	12.3	7.8	4.9	7.1	12.6
Malta	8.8	5.9	10.0	16.9	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.1
Netherlands	40.3	29.7	39.1	49.7	82.5	69.2	84.6	89.7
Austria	28.3	15.7	29.9	35.6	28.3	18.9	29.2	34.1
Poland <sup>(2)</sup>	13.8	8.3	11.3	24.6	50.6	35.9	50.0	63.7
Portugal	9.0	5.9	13.4	16.7	20.5	16.9	24.6	30.6
Romania	3.2	2.1	2.7	8.2	3.2	1.6	3.2	8.2
Slovenia	30.4	18.7	30.8	38.5	54.6	40.6	55.1	64.0
Slovakia	8.3	4.5	7.5	13.6	18.8	13.9	18.1	24.6
Finland	34.1	24.5	33.7	42.0	74.2	61.7	77.1	80.0
Sweden	35.5	28.3	36.1	40.5	70.4	62.5	72.2	74.5
United Kingdom <sup>(2)</sup>	23.3	13.5	20.3	35.0	19.2	11.8	18.1	27.1
Iceland	32.8	24.6	33.8	40.7	64.8	60.2	66.8	67.7
Norway	48.0	35.4	49.1	57.7	74.5	66.9	74.8	81.0
Switzerland	36.5	24.9	36.7	42.9	48.2	41.1	50.3	48.7
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	11.2	5.4	12.5	21.2	21.9	18.3	22.0	30.4
Serbia	5.2	2.4	5.8	8.2	12.4	8.0	13.2	17.3

Note: <sup>1</sup> Estimated data  
<sup>2</sup> Unreliable data

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp19)

eurostat 

**Table 1: Participation in voluntary activities (formal and informal), by educational level, 2015**  
(% people aged 16+) Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp19)

There are no significant differences between women and men or across the different age groups. At EU-28 level, the involvement of men was slightly higher in the case of formal voluntary activities, while women were more involved in informal voluntary work. The most active age group was 65 to 74 years olds who tended to participate the most in both types of voluntary activities (21.3 % for formal and 23.9 % for informal), followed by people young people aged 16-24 (20.6 % formal and 22.5 % informal) and people between the age of 25-64 years (19.5 % formal and 23.3 % informal), as shown in Table 2.

**Participation in formal or informal voluntary activities, by main age-groups, 2015**  
(% of people aged 16 and over)

	Formal voluntary activities				Informal voluntary activities			
	16-24	25-64	65-74	75+	16-24	25-64	65-74	75+
<b>EU28 <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>13.3</b>
Belgium	20.3	20.9	24.7	12.2	17.3	21.5	27.6	13.4
Bulgaria	6.1	5.9	4.4	1.0	8.2	7.1	4.4	1.6
Czech Republic	13.9	12.8	11.8	5.4	19.2	17.4	15.4	8.4
Denmark	40.2	39.8	40.8	22.6	34.9	44.7	45.8	23.3
Germany	28.1	27.8	33.1	28.8	7.8	10.6	16.8	13.8
Estonia	22.9	17.6	13.0	5.6	27.6	27.7	23.0	11.8
Ireland <sup>(2)</sup>	26.5	30.8	28.2	17.0	28.9	39.4	39.6	25.8
Greece	13.2	12.7	10.8	6.0	16.9	15.4	14.5	6.6
Spain	11.1	11.2	11.6	6.3	10.5	11.5	10.7	5.0
France	21.5	23.6	27.5	16.9	19.1	24.1	29.8	16.9
Croatia	14.0	10.6	6.2	2.3	16.8	19.9	13.2	5.5
Italy	16.2	12.6	11.4	5.9	11.8	12.1	11.3	5.7
Cyprus	5.6	8.1	6.2	3.1	1.9	3.0	3.2	0.5
Latvia	8.2	8.2	5.0	3.2	23.8	31.5	27.7	14.8
Lithuania	16.8	18.7	12.7	5.9	24.0	17.7	10.1	4.9
Luxembourg	41.4	36.5	38.4	25.4	29.9	31.0	31.2	20.5
Hungary	12.0	6.9	4.8	2.0	11.4	8.1	6.0	2.5
Malta	5.5	9.0	12.6	6.3	0.4	1.0	1.3	0.5
Netherlands	45.5	42.2	38.7	20.1	90.2	86.6	77.3	47.2
Austria	31.5	30.1	26.3	13.6	28.6	29.8	29.2	15.7
Poland <sup>(2)</sup>	14.8	15.0	12.2	4.5	50.5	55.1	45.1	20.5
Portugal	14.4	9.6	6.2	4.2	20.4	23.0	17.9	9.8
Romania	8.3	2.9	1.6	0.8	7.4	3.1	1.7	0.6
Slovenia	38.1	31.1	30.7	15.1	56.6	57.7	55.4	26.5
Slovakia	7.9	8.7	7.9	4.4	19.0	19.8	18.2	7.4
Finland	28.7	37.5	34.4	19.4	77.3	80.3	72.3	36.6
Sweden	34.4	36.8	35.4	28.4	71.8	73.8	69.3	49.2
United Kingdom <sup>(2)</sup>	24.5	22.7	29.1	18.8	20.5	18.5	24.9	15.2
Iceland	34.0	35.7	25.6	13.9	65.5	68.7	59.4	34.9
Norway	50.9	50.5	42.7	30.4	78.0	80.1	64.1	38.5
Switzerland	39.3	37.9	35.6	22.7	44.2	47.6	58.2	44.1
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	14.4	12.0	6.7	2.1	25.9	23.5	15.0	5.5
Serbia	12.5	5.1	2.2	1.0	18.5	13.4	7.3	4.5

Note: <sup>1</sup> Estimated data  
<sup>2</sup> Unreliable data

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp19)



**Table 2: Participation in formal or informal voluntary activities, by main age-groups, 2015 (% of people aged 16 and over)** Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp19)

## Active citizenship

Active citizenship in the 2015 ad-hoc module is understood as participation in activities related to political groups, associations or parties, including attending any of their meetings or signing a petition. In 2015, at EU-28 level, 12.8 % of all the people replied that they were active citizens according to the definition above. Among the EU-28, we find the highest rate in Sweden (31.3 %), followed by the Netherlands (25.3 %) and France (24.8 %). The least active citizens were observed in Cyprus (2.1 %), Slovakia (2.8 %) and Romania (3.6 %).

Persons with high educational attainment are more active citizens compared with the total population. In 2015, at EU-28 level, 22.6 % of all Europeans with tertiary education stated that they participated in activities related to active citizenship, while the corresponding rates for persons with medium education (upper secondary, ISCED 3-4 ) and low education (less than primary education, ISCED 0-2 ) were 12.1 % and 6.1 % respectively. The most striking difference in levels of participation between the highest and the lowest educated persons is to be seen in France (27.5 pp); the Netherlands (23.8 pp) and the United Kingdom (22.9 pp), see Table 3.

**Active citizens, by educational level, and by income, 2015**  
(% of people aged 16 and over)

	Total	Education			Income		Gender	
		Low (ISCED 0-2)	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	High (ISCED 5-8)	Quintile with 20% lowest income	Quintile with 20% highest income	Women	Men
<b>EU28 (*)</b>	12.8	6.1	12.1	22.6	9.5	18.7	12.4	13.2
Belgium	4.9	1.6	4.1	8.3	3.0	7.6	3.6	6.3
Bulgaria	3.7	1.5	3.1	8.3	1.6	7.7	3.4	4.1
Czech Republic	4.2	2.0	3.8	7.3	2.9	5.1	3.7	4.7
Denmark	9.5	6.1	8.2	13.8	10.0	10.1	8.7	10.3
Germany	13.9	7.2	13.1	21.7	11.3	18.3	13.5	14.4
Estonia	8.7	4.6	8.0	12.1	7.3	11.1	8.4	9.0
Ireland (†)	13.0	7.9	12.1	17.5	9.5	18.3	12.6	13.6
Greece	8.4	5.7	8.9	11.9	6.3	10.7	6.4	10.4
Spain	7.9	3.9	9.5	13.9	4.9	14.1	7.3	8.4
France	24.8	12.5	22.7	40.0	17.5	35.2	25.5	24.1
Croatia	5.7	1.9	6.5	10.0	3.5	7.7	4.9	6.6
Italy	6.3	3.5	7.5	11.7	4.0	10.0	5.7	6.8
Cyprus	2.1	1.3	1.8	3.4	0.6	4.5	1.2	3.1
Latvia	5.6	2.4	4.3	10.6	2.5	9.4	5.5	5.7
Lithuania	6.3	1.8	4.5	12.6	2.4	12.1	6.6	5.9
Luxembourg	17.2	10.3	18.9	25.2	10.7	24.4	15.8	18.6
Hungary	4.7	1.6	4.2	9.1	3.0	7.5	4.3	5.2
Malta	9.7	9.6	9.1	11.2	7.2	10.1	8.8	10.7
Netherlands	25.3	12.5	24.2	36.3	23.7	30.9	24.9	25.7
Austria	11.9	3.7	10.2	21.7	8.7	17.9	10.3	13.6
Poland (†)	7.3	3.0	6.4	13.1	4.6	12.5	6.3	8.5
Portugal	9.9	5.2	12.6	25.8	5.0	18.1	8.8	11.2
Romania	3.6	2.0	3.5	9.3	1.6	6.4	3.3	3.9
Slovenia	9.8	4.3	8.2	17.3	6.9	14.4	9.5	10.0
Slovakia	2.8	1.1	2.3	5.5	1.9	3.6	2.5	3.1
Finland	24.2	13.6	23.3	33.1	20.7	28.2	26.4	22.0
Sweden	31.3	24.3	30.3	38.8	28.7	34.0	32.2	30.4
United Kingdom (†)	20.2	9.0	18.6	31.9	14.1	32.2	19.9	20.6
Iceland	24.9	15.1	23.5	37.3	24.0	27.5	26.7	23.0
Norway	16.2	12.2	14.2	22.3	15.3	16.9	16.7	15.7
Switzerland	26.9	15.6	25.7	35.6	21.3	32.0	24.1	29.8
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	9.8	4.1	11.7	17.4	3.4	5.0	7.1	12.6
Serbia	4.0	2.3	4.2	6.1	3.4	4.9	2.8	5.2

Note: <sup>1</sup> Estimated data  
<sup>2</sup> Unreliable data

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: ilc\_scp19 and ilc\_scp20)



**Table 3: Active citizens, by educational level, and by income, 2015 (% people aged 16+) Source: (ilc\_scp20)**

There are no significant differences when it comes to active citizenship by gender, neither at EU-28 level (the rates are 12.4 % for women and 13.2 % for men), with the exception of Greece (10.4 % for men and 6.4 % for women), nor across the remaining countries, with the exception of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (12.6 % for men and 7.1 % for women). The reversed pattern is found in Finland (22.0 % men and 26.4 % women), Sweden (30.4 % for men and 32.2 % for women) and Lithuania (5.9 % for men and 6.6 % for women). More women are politically active also in two of the non-EU country Iceland (23.0 % men and 26.7 % women) and Norway (15.7 % for men and 16.7 % for women) (Table 3).

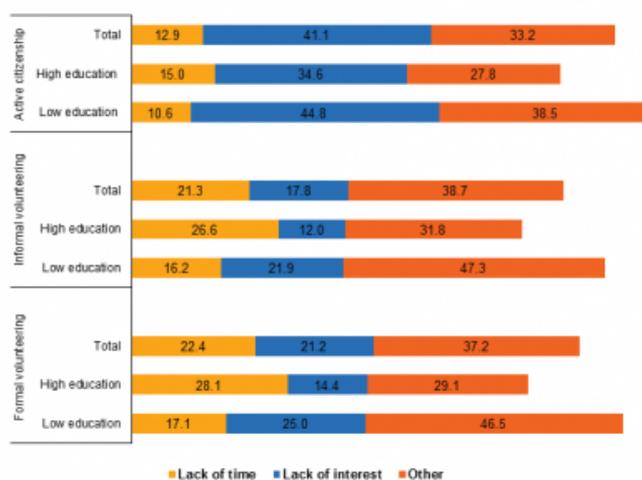
People with higher income tend to be more active citizens compared with the total population. This is true regardless of the household types and/or the degree of urbanisation – it is the level of income that influences the variations across the countries. The participation rate at EU-28 level, for the persons in the highest **income quintile** was 18.7 %, while it was 9.5 % for the persons in the lowest **income quintile**, as shown in Table 3.

## Reasons for non-participation

In 2015, 41.1 % of all Europeans stated that they were not interested in participating in active citizenship activities. The most frequent answer given for not volunteering was "other reasons<sup>1</sup>", (37.2 % for formal and 38.7 % for informal). For all three questions on informal/formal voluntary activities and active citizenship, at EU-28 level, people with low education answered more frequently that they are not interested in such activities, while people with tertiary education stated that they cannot participate due to lack of time or other reasons, as shown in Figure 2.

<sup>1</sup> Those who say "no", but the reason is other than "not having time" or "having no interest"

Reason for non-participation in volunteering and active citizenship, by educational level EU-28, 2015



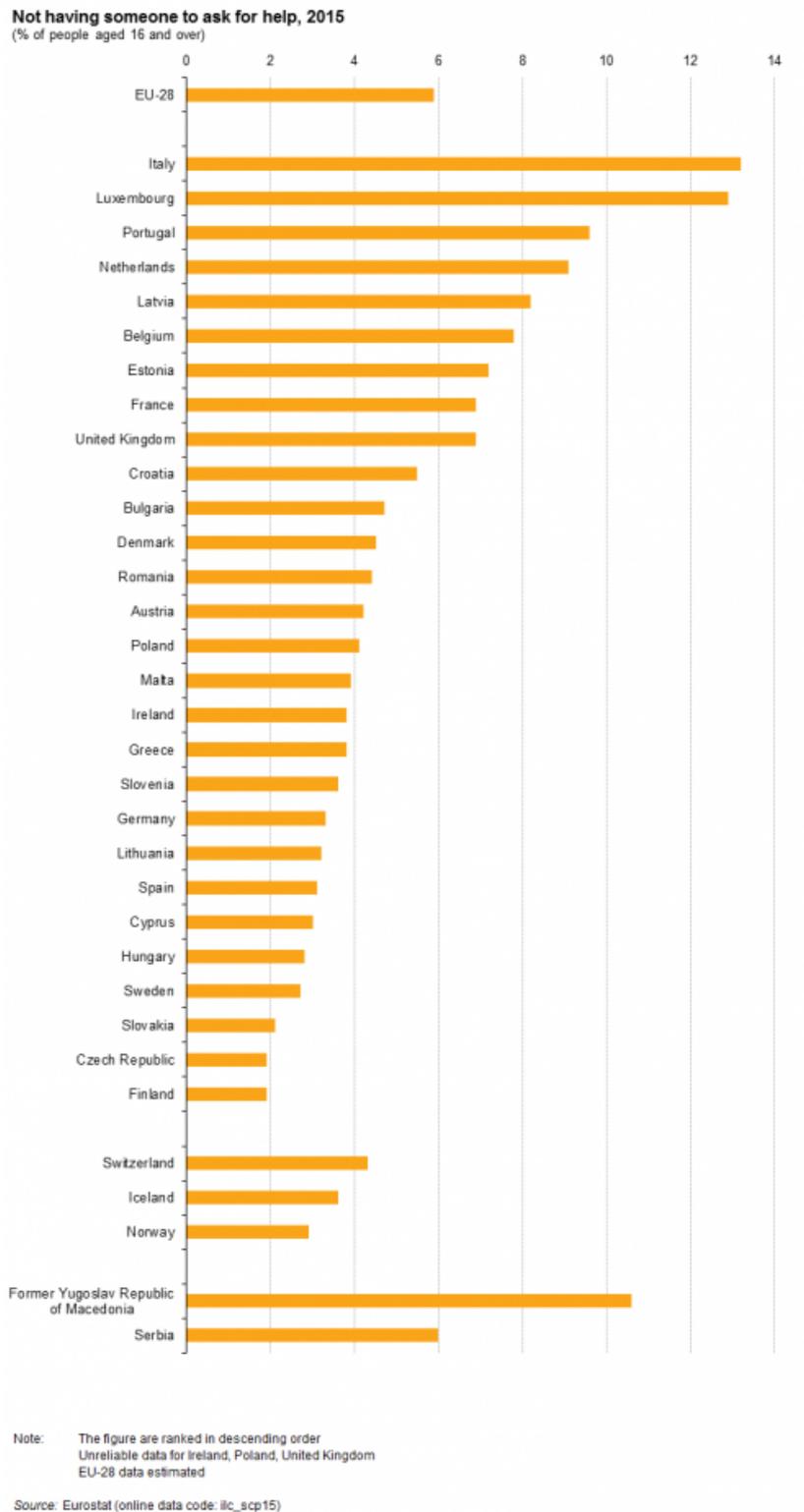
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp21)  
 Note: 2015 data estimated for EU-28

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Figure 2: Reason for non-participation in volunteering and active citizenship, by educational level EU-28, 2015 (% people aged 16+) Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp21)

### Having someone for help or to discuss personal matters

In 2015, 5.9 % of the EU-28 population could not ask any relative, friend or neighbour for help. In two Member States, the rates for people in the same situation were twice the EU average: Italy (13.2 %) and Luxembourg (12.9 %). Only 1.9 % of the population in both Czech Republic and Finland responded that they didn't have anyone for help. In the majority of Member States the proportion of persons who have nobody to ask for help was well below the EU-28 average, as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Not having someone to ask for help, 2015 (% people aged 16+)** Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp15)

In all Member States, more people with low education had a limited possibility to ask a relative, friend or neighbour for help than the total population (see Table 4).

### Not having someone to ask for help, by education, 2015

(% of people aged 16 and over)

	Total	Low (ISCED 0-2)	High (ISCED 5-8)
<b>EU28 <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>3.5</b>
Belgium	7.8	12.5	5.3
Bulgaria	4.7	7.1	3.3
Czech Republic	1.9	3.1	0.9
Denmark	4.5	7.3	2.2
Germany	3.3	5.5	2.2
Estonia	7.2	10.5	4.8
Ireland <sup>(2)</sup>	3.8	4.5	3.1
Greece	3.8	4.4	2.9
Spain	3.1	4.1	1.5
France	6.9	10.4	3.4
Croatia	5.5	8.2	3.1
Italy	13.2	16.7	8.3
Cyprus	3.0	3.9	1.7
Latvia	8.2	12.5	5.2
Lithuania	3.2	6.2	1.6
Luxembourg	12.9	18.9	6.5
Hungary	2.8	4.1	2.1
Malta	3.9	5.0	1.7
Netherlands	9.1	17.2	4.4
Austria	4.2	6.9	2.8
Poland <sup>(2)</sup>	4.1	5.9	1.7
Portugal	9.6	11.6	4.4
Romania	4.4	5.3	2.8
Slovenia	3.6	6.1	1.6
Slovakia	2.1	4.6	1.1
Finland	1.9	2.8	1.3
Sweden	2.7	4.6	1.6
United Kingdom <sup>(1)</sup>	6.9	9.5	5.6
Iceland	3.6	5.5	1.9
Norway	2.9	5.1	1.2
Switzerland	4.3	8.1	3.2
<b>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>11.7</b>	<b>6.9</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>3.1</b>

Note: <sup>1</sup> Estimated data

<sup>2</sup> Unreliable data

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp15)

eurostat 

**Table 4: Not having someone to ask for help, by education, 2015 (% of people aged 16 and over)**  
Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp15)

In 2015, 6.0 % of the EU-28 population didn't have anyone to discuss personal matters with, as shown in Table 5. The majority of Member States were below the EU-28 average, with the exceptions of France and Italy, where 12.4 % and 11.9 % of persons respectively were in this situation. Looking at gender differences, more European men (6.7 %) than women (5.4 %) didn't have anyone to discuss personal matters with. Among the Member States, we find the largest gender gap in France, followed by the Netherlands and Finland (6.6 percentage points (pp) for France, 3.7 pp for the Netherlands and 2.8 for Finland).

### Not having someone to discuss personal matters, by sex and age, 2015

(% of people aged 16 and over)

	Total	Total		25 - 64		65 - 74		≤ 75.0	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
EU28 <sup>(1)</sup>	6.0	6.7	5.4	6.5	4.9	8.7	7.0	9.9	8.8
Belgium	6.8	7.5	6.2	7.3	5.4	9.7	8.4	12.5	12.1
Bulgaria	4.7	5.1	4.3	5.0	3.3	5.5	5.8	7.8	8.3
Czech Republic	2.3	2.6	1.9	2.9	1.6	1.9	2.5	3.6	4.0
Denmark	3.8	5.2	2.4	4.8	2.2	5.3	3.0	10.3	3.7
Germany	3.8	4.0	3.6	4.5	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.0
Estonia	5.9	6.6	5.4	6.4	3.7	9.4	9.4	13.5	12.6
Ireland <sup>(1)</sup>	4.0	4.8	3.4	4.4	3.4	7.2	3.9	7.0	3.6
Greece	3.6	3.8	3.3	3.6	2.9	4.9	4.3	5.2	5.9
Spain	2.2	2.5	2.0	2.3	1.8	2.8	2.5	4.4	3.9
France <sup>(1)</sup>	12.4	16.2	9.6	14.7	7.6	23.4	14.3	24.7	18.2
Croatia	4.9	5.4	4.5	5.2	3.3	7.5	7.3	9.9	11.0
Italy	11.9	12.5	11.4	12.6	11.0	15.1	14.0	14.4	14.1
Cyprus	2.0	2.5	1.6	2.7	1.6	2.7	1.7	5.1	2.7
Latvia	6.2	6.1	6.3	5.6	4.9	10.6	8.9	12.8	12.7
Lithuania	5.0	4.9	5.1	4.2	3.6	9.8	7.3	12.2	13.1
Luxembourg	5.6	6.7	4.5	6.6	4.7	9.2	4.3	14.0	3.9
Hungary	2.3	2.5	2.1	2.8	1.8	2.0	2.6	4.0	4.4
Malta	5.1	5.4	4.7	5.1	4.3	9.0	5.8	9.1	10.5
Netherlands	7.7	9.6	5.9	8.5	5.0	14.9	10.7	20.4	9.8
Austria	3.5	4.2	2.9	3.7	2.6	7.8	4.2	7.1	6.2
Poland <sup>(1)</sup>	4.7	4.9	4.5	5.0	4.2	5.5	5.7	8.7	8.4
Portugal	6.1	6.8	5.5	6.3	4.4	10.5	9.1	10.0	10.0
Romania	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.1	5.7	6.9	7.1	8.8
Slovenia	2.4	2.9	2.0	2.4	1.5	5.2	4.3	9.3	3.8
Slovakia	2.2	2.6	1.8	2.6	1.5	3.0	3.1	4.0	3.0
Finland	4.4	5.8	3.0	4.5	2.0	11.1	4.0	14.4	9.1
Sweden	4.4	5.5	3.3	5.1	2.7	8.1	4.0	9.4	8.1
United Kingdom	4.6	5.2	4.1	4.8	4.4	5.8	3.5	7.9	4.9
Iceland	4.5	5.5	3.5	5.7	2.4	8.5	6.6	13.2	11.7
Norway	3.1	4.1	2.1	4.0	1.7	4.6	3.0	5.6	5.0
Switzerland	4.6	5.6	3.7	5.4	3.4	6.7	5.3	12.4	8.7
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	8.7	8.9	8.5	9.3	7.7	10.1	12.9	10.9	15.9
Serbia	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.2	2.8	5.9	5.1	7.7	7.6

Note: <sup>1</sup> Estimated data

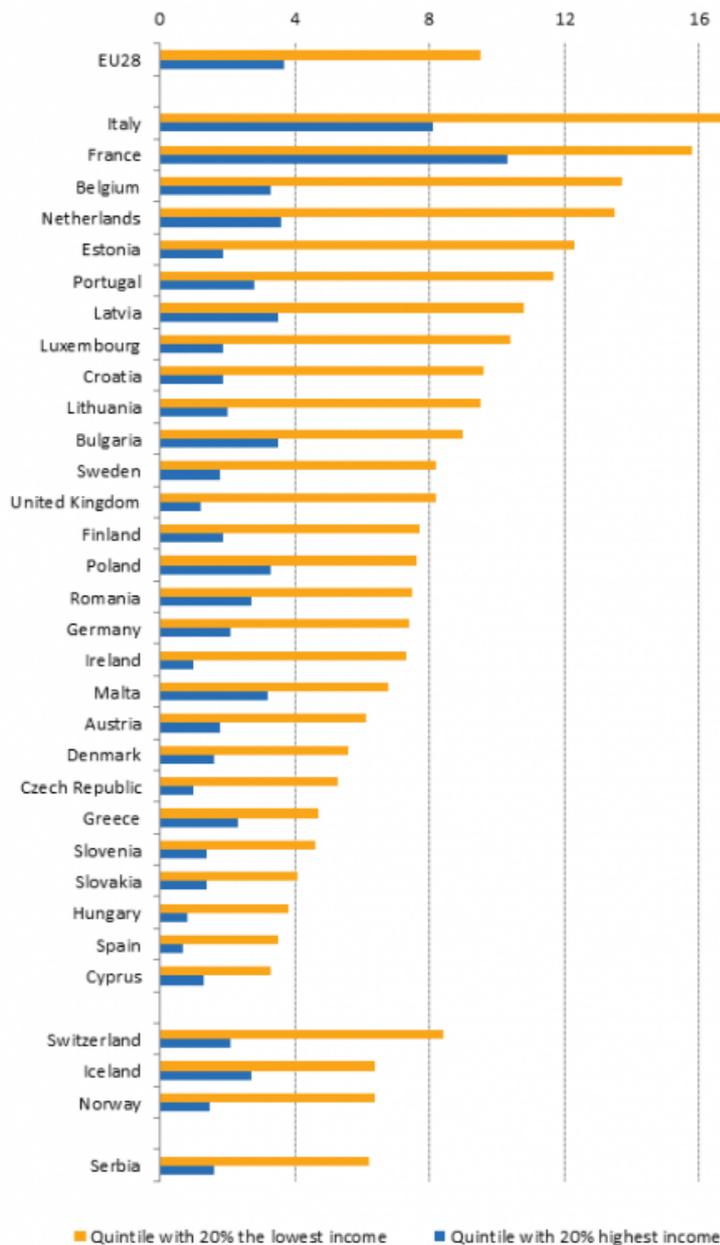
Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp17)

eurostat 

Table 5: Not having someone to discuss personal matters, by sex and age, 2015 (% of people aged 16 and over) Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp17)

Income inequality seems to influence social isolation; more than twice as many Europeans with lower income stated that they didn't have anyone to discuss personal matters with (see Figure 4). The largest differences between persons with low and high income were reported in both Belgium and Estonia (10.4 pp); the lowest were observed in Cyprus (2.0 pp) and Greece (2.4 pp).

## Not having anyone to discuss personal matters with by income quintile 2015



Note: Unreliable data EU28, Ireland, France, Poland, United Kingdom

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp18)



Figure 4: Not having anyone to discuss personal matters with, by income quintile, 2015 (% people aged 16+) Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp18)

### Integration with friends and relatives

In most EU-28 Member States more than one third of people reported getting together with relatives every week (35.2 %, see Table 6). In Cyprus, Slovakia and Greece most people said they were in contact with relatives on a daily basis (respectively 45.4 %, 36.3 % and 35.7 %). On average, 15.1 % of people in the EU-28 reported getting together with relatives less often than once a month or not at all in 2015. At 24.8 %, Latvia recorded the highest share of people who never got together with relatives, or only did so less than once a month, followed

by Estonia (23.0 %) and Lithuania (22.2 %).

**Frequency of getting together with relatives and friends, 2015 (% people aged 16+)**  
(% people aged 16+)

	Frequency of getting together with family (relatives)						Frequency of getting together with friends					
	Every day	Every week	Once a month	Several times a month	Not in the last 12 months	At least once a year	Every day	Every week	Once a month	Several times a month	Not in the last 12 months	At least once a year
<b>EU 28 (1)</b>	16.7	35.2	12.9	20.2	2.3	12.8	15.0	38.2	13.0	23.0	3.2	7.7
Belgium	18.6	47.4	8.2	14.6	2.9	8.3	16.2	47.6	10.0	17.7	2.8	5.6
Bulgaria	21.9	21.0	20.9	22.2	2.3	11.7	24.6	28.0	16.4	23.3	3.8	3.9
Czech Republic	14.3	35.2	14.4	28.2	1.7	6.1	10.8	32.5	18.5	29.8	3.7	4.7
Denmark	3.1	29.5	19.7	32.8	0.8	14.0	7.6	35.2	17.3	29.0	1.0	9.9
Germany	14.3	30.5	14.4	22.0	2.1	16.7	11.7	36.9	13.9	29.1	1.4	7.0
Estonia	4.3	25.0	24.9	22.8	3.2	19.8	9.6	34.6	20.1	23.8	2.5	9.4
Ireland (1)	19.2	38.0	12.7	13.8	4.3	12.0	13.2	41.5	15.4	18.8	4.5	6.6
Greece	35.7	34.2	8.8	15.3	0.8	5.1	40.3	40.1	4.8	11.2	1.4	2.3
Spain	22.3	40.8	8.6	15.2	2.6	10.5	25.6	43.4	8.0	14.0	3.9	5.1
France	13.7	34.8	10.8	21.6	1.8	17.3	13.2	37.4	10.5	26.4	1.8	10.7
Croatia	29.7	29.0	11.7	17.5	1.6	10.5	38.8	33.1	6.5	15.9	2.0	3.8
Italy	22.4	42.0	8.1	16.6	3.2	7.8	16.5	43.1	9.7	20.7	5.3	4.6
Cyprus	45.4	33.7	2.9	6.5	3.5	8.0	37.1	42.3	4.9	12.7	1.2	1.8
Latvia	4.3	24.8	21.8	24.1	1.7	23.1	7.4	30.8	21.7	27.6	0.6	11.9
Lithuania	3.1	22.8	23.4	28.5	0.3	21.9	8.1	25.1	20.7	26.4	1.7	18.0
Luxembourg	14.7	36.7	11.3	16.5	2.6	18.2	17.1	41.1	12.7	20.9	2.2	6.0
Hungary	16.5	33.1	18.1	21.6	1.2	9.4	19.7	33.1	16.3	20.8	2.0	8.1
Malta	34.7	40.8	6.6	9.8	1.9	6.3	19.3	30.6	13.9	14.6	13.9	7.6
Netherlands	5.9	46.3	11.6	24.9	2.0	9.4	7.5	47.9	10.2	24.9	2.3	7.1
Austria	7.4	35.3	18.6	22.1	2.9	13.6	7.3	45.1	14.6	24.7	3.0	5.3
Poland (1)	6.3	20.8	23.4	29.9	0.7	18.8	5.0	19.8	24.6	30.5	2.6	17.4
Portugal	32.6	38.6	7.8	10.9	3.3	6.9	36.7	33.3	8.2	10.8	5.6	5.4
Romania	25.3	27.0	13.3	21.1	2.9	10.3	10.9	30.2	16.2	26.3	5.2	11.3
Slovenia	10.6	35.2	17.8	22.8	1.3	12.2	15.3	40.5	14.2	22.0	2.0	6.0
Slovakia	36.3	30.3	10.0	18.2	0.4	4.8	24.9	32.9	11.7	23.0	1.3	6.3
Finland	10.0	44.6	13.8	22.0	1.7	8.0	15.9	46.5	10.2	20.1	1.9	5.3
Sweden	5.5	38.6	15.3	22.9	4.2	13.5	13.6	51.6	9.9	17.6	2.8	4.5
United Kingdom (1)	15.5	41.1	13.2	14.2	3.2	12.8	9.7	44.3	15.5	18.4	5.4	6.8
Iceland	6.5	40.4	14.2	27.9	1.1	9.9	5.4	31.6	18.8	34.1	2.0	8.1
Norway	11.8	41.7	14.6	20.2	1.4	10.4	13.9	52.2	10.6	19.6	1.1	2.6
Switzerland	9.3	36.9	16.0	18.9	1.5	17.5	8.4	51.8	13.1	19.7	0.7	5.4
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	85.8	10.7	0.9	1.8	0.3	0.5	48.2	27.4	6.3	15.1	1.9	3.1
Serbia	25.0	23.9	14.8	19.9	1.3	15.1	28.5	32.4	11.7	18.3	1.8	7.2

Note: <sup>1</sup> Estimated data  
<sup>2</sup> Unreliable data

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp09)

eurostat

**Table 6: Frequency of getting together with relatives and friends, 2015 (% people aged 16+)**  
Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp09)

Similarly, most people in the EU-28 reported getting together with friends every week (38.2 %), while 10.9 % of the EU-28 population got together with friends less often than once a month in 2015. Greece, Cyprus and Croatia had the highest proportions (more than 70 %) of people who saw friends most frequently (on daily basis or weekly); while in Malta, Poland and Lithuania we find the highest share of population which got together with friends less often than once a month in 2015 ( 21.5 %, 20.0 % and 19.7 % respectively), please see Table 6.

## Communication via social media

The respondents were also asked about the frequency with which they participate in social networking sites, such as community-based web sites, online discussion forums, chat rooms and other social spaces online. In 2015, in the EU-28, more than half of the population (50.5 %) reported that they have not communicated via social media during the last 12 months. However, the second most common answer was the frequency 'daily' (26.2 %). The variation between the 'never' and 'daily' is explained by age: the majority of young people between 16 to 24 years old used social media on a daily basis (66.4 %); while not even one tenth (6.8 %) of the elder people between 65 to 74 years old did, as shown in Table 7. This pattern was repeated across all the reporting countries.

## Communication via social media (daily or never), by age, 2015

(% of people aged 16 and over)

	Total		Daily		Not in the last 12 months	
	Daily	Not in the last 12 months	16-24	65-74	16-24	65-74
<b>EU 28 <sup>(1)</sup></b>	26.2	50.5	66.4	6.8	9.6	81.3
Belgium	35.2	46.4	79.2	8.8	7.4	79.7
Bulgaria	30.7	52.5	68.9	5.3	20.9	87.2
Czech Republic	22.8	48.2	68.2	4.5	7.1	80.2
Denmark	40.7	29.6	82.2	15.9	1.9	57.7
Germany	23.2	48.6	60.3	6.3	9.3	73.7
Estonia	27.4	57.2	76.5	5.2	7.1	88.3
Ireland <sup>(2)</sup>	41.8	40.0	87.3	15.3	4.4	72.8
Greece	28.8	52.9	78.8	2.1	9.5	93.2
Spain	30.9	51.1	75.7	6.2	8.7	87.3
France	20.2	56.6	61.4	4.9	10.3	85.9
Croatia	24.8	63.3	76.8	3.0	9.5	95.2
Italy	23.8	59.6	68.6	3.6	13.3	91.6
Cyprus	40.6	47.1	83.5	6.9	6.8	88.1
Latvia	19.5	46.7	56.3	2.8	6.4	86.6
Lithuania	18.6	53.2	64.4	1.1	6.7	92.2
Luxembourg	36.9	43.5	81.9	11.2	3.3	80.0
Hungary	24.0	46.5	63.9	3.6	10.4	81.2
Malta	42.6	43.6	85.0	12.1	7.2	78.4
Netherlands	39.2	38.6	71.2	17.2	8.0	70.6
Austria	32.8	49.1	77.8	9.8	7.0	81.1
Poland <sup>(2)</sup>	17.6	51.6	56.2	2.0	6.1	88.0
Portugal	24.8	53.7	73.2	5.3	8.4	87.5
Romania	17.3	50.7	43.0	3.6	21.4	79.8
Slovenia	21.5	57.9	69.4	3.5	8.6	89.3
Slovakia	31.5	41.8	73.6	3.8	7.6	84.8
Finland	35.5	43.5	73.1	11.0	6.2	76.5
Sweden	41.2	37.6	79.3	17.4	4.7	68.3
United Kingdom <sup>(2)</sup>	35.1	42.7	76.4	12.7	5.8	71.1
Iceland	34.6	26.1	55.9	19.5	5.6	54.5
Norway	45.5	36.8	79.9	17.9	8.8	67.5
Switzerland	24.0	50.5	55.5	6.3	11.6	82.5
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	37.7	46.8	78.3	4.2	12.0	90.4
Serbia	21.5	61.4	70.9	2.0	10.7	95.2

Note: <sup>1</sup> Estimated data

<sup>2</sup> Unreliable data

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc\_scp13)

eurostat 

Table 7: Communication via social media (daily or never), by age, 2015 (% of people aged 16 and over) Source: Eurostat (ilc\_scp13)

# Social Participation and Integration in the EU-28

## How to read it

The rates represent the share of the total population (people aged 16 and over) in countries which reported the highest and the lowest results together with the EU-28 aggregate in 2015.

### Formal volunteering (\*) in the EU-28



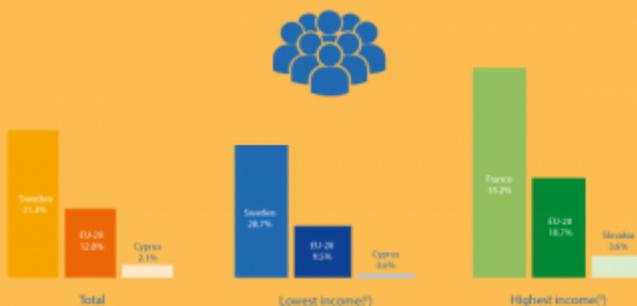
(\*) Formal volunteering refers to activities organised through an organisation, formal group or club that includes unpaid work in charitable or religious organisations.

### Informal volunteering (\*) in the EU-28



(\*) Informal volunteering refers to helping other people or family (i.e. not being in the same household or helping animals or other informal voluntary activities such as cleaning a beach or street).

### Active citizens in the EU-28 and by income (1)



(1) Active citizenship in the 2015 ad hoc module is understood as a declaration in activities related to political groups, associations or parties, including attending any of their meetings or signing a petition.

(2) First income quintile group represents the 20% of the population with the lowest income.

(3) Fifth income quintile group represents the 20% of the population with the highest income.

### Not having someone to ask for help (\*)



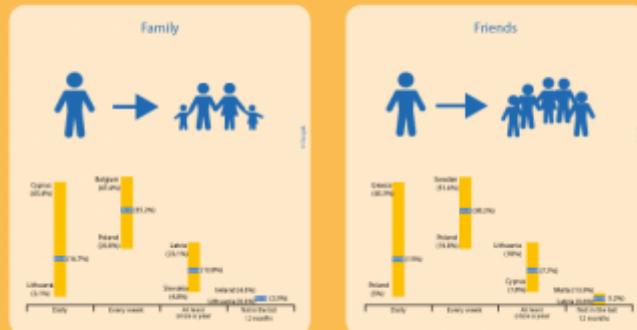
(\*) Ability to ask for help measures the respondent's possibility to ask any kind of help (moral, material or financial) from any relatives, friends or neighbours.

### Not having someone to discuss personal matter (\*)



(\*) To discuss personal matters is defined as the presence of at least one person the respondent can discuss personal matters with.

### Getting together with family and friends (\*)



(\*) Getting together with friends or family also about the frequency with which the respondent usually gets together with regular friends during a usual week (by relatives or friends who do not live in the respondent's household should be considered).

### Communication via social media



## Source data for tables and graphs

- [Social participation and integration statistics - download excel file](#)

## Data sources

The ad-hoc module 2015 on 'Social and cultural participation' defines the items on social engagement and participation in the following way:

*Formal volunteering* refers to activities organised through an organisation, a formal group or a club. It also includes unpaid work for charitable or religious organisations.

*Informal volunteering* refers to:

- helping other people, including family members not living in the same household (e.g. cooking for others, taking care of people in hospitals/at home, taking people for a walk, shopping, etc)
- helping animals (e.g. taking care of homeless, wild animals)
- other informal voluntary activities such as cleaning a beach, a forest etc.

*Getting together with friends or family* asks about the frequency with which the respondent usually gets together with family or friends during a normal year. Only relatives or friends who don't live in the respondent's household should be considered.

*Contact with friends or family* asks about the frequency with which the respondent is usually in contact with family or friends during a normal year. Contact can be made by telephone, SMS, letter, fax, Internet (e-mail, Skype, Facebook, FaceTime or other social networks and other internet communication tools), etc. Only relatives or friends who don't live in the respondent's household should be considered. It should be real contact, e.g. a letter or a conversation. Sharing or viewing photos is not a real contact and is excluded.

*Ability to ask for help* measures the respondent's possibility to ask for any kind of help: moral, material or financial from any relatives, friends or neighbours. Both relatives and friends should be understood in their widest meaning. The question is about the possibility for the respondent to ask for help whether the respondent needs it or not.

*To discuss personal matters* is defined as the presence of at least one person the respondent can discuss personal matters with. The potential is to have somebody to discuss personal matters with, whether the respondent needs it or not. It can be anybody, including household members and not necessarily family or friends.

*Communication via social media* is defined as the frequency with which the respondent participates actively in social networking sites, such as community-based web sites, online discussion forums, chat rooms and other social spaces online. Active participation means not only joining social networks but also contributing actively to the discussion. Posting messages, photos, "likes", etc. is also included. A social media should be understood as any website that enables users to create public profiles within that website and form relationships with other users (not necessarily friends or people really close to him/her) of the same website who access their profile. Examples of such social media can be: Facebook, My Space, LinkedIn, Twitter etc.

All the variables above are collected at personal level via personal interview with all current household members aged 16 and over or, if applicable, with each selected respondent. The age refers to the age at the end of the income reference period.

## Context

At the Laeken European Council in December 2001, European heads of state and government endorsed a first set of common statistical indicators for social exclusion and poverty that are subject to a continuing process of refinement by the indicators sub-group (ISG) of the social protection committee (SPC). These indicators are an essential element in the open method of coordination (OMC) to monitor the progress made by the EU's Member States in alleviating poverty and social exclusion.

EU-SILC is the reference source for EU statistics on income and living conditions and, in particular, for indicators concerning social inclusion. In the context of the Europe 2020 strategy, the European Council adopted in

June 2010 a headline target for social inclusion — namely, that by 2020 there should be at least 20 million fewer people in the EU at risk of poverty or social exclusion than there were in 2008. EU-SILC is the source used to monitor progress towards this headline target, which is measured through an indicator that combines the at-risk-of-poverty rate, the severe material deprivation rate, and the proportion of people living in households with very low work intensity — see the article on social inclusion statistics for more information.

Ad-hoc modules are developed each year in order to complement the variables permanently collected in EU-SILC with supplementary variables highlighting unexplored aspects of social inclusion.

The 2015 ad-hoc module include variables on social and cultural participation (15 variables) as well as variables on material deprivation (7 variables). These two topics had been also the themes for previous ad-hoc modules in 2006 (on social participation) and in 2014 and 2009 (on material deprivation).

## Other articles

- [Culture statistics - cultural participation](#)
- [Quality of life indicators - governance and basic rights](#) (online publication)
- [Quality of life indicators - leisure](#) (online publication)
- [Quality of life indicators - social interactions](#) (online publication)

## Database

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

EU-SILC ad-hoc modules (ilc\_ahm)

Frequency of getting together with family (relatives) or friends by sex, age and educational attainment level

Frequency of getting together with family (relatives) or friends by income quintile, household type and degree of urbanisation

Frequency of contacts with family (relatives) or friends by sex, age and educational attainment level

Frequency of communication via social media by sex, age and educational attainment level

Frequency of communication via social media by income quintile, household type and degree of urbanisation

Having someone to ask for help by sex, age and educational attainment level

Having someone to ask for help by income quintile, household type and degree of urbanisation

Having someone to discuss personal matters by sex, age and educational attainment level

Having someone to discuss personal matters by income quintile, household type and degree of urbanisation

Participation in formal or informal voluntary activities, active citizenship by sex, age and educational attainment level

Participation in formal or informal voluntary activities, active citizenship by income quintile, household type and degree of urbanisation

Reasons of non-participation in formal or informal voluntary activities, active citizenship in the last 12 months by sex, age and educational attainment level

Reasons of non-participation in formal or informal voluntary activities, active citizenship in the last 12 months by by income quintile, household type and degree of urbanisation

## Dedicated section

- [Income and living conditions](#)
- [Ad-hoc modules](#)

## Publications

- [Monitoring social inclusion in Europe — 2017 edition](#)
- [Quality of life - Facts and views — 2015 edition](#)
- [Living conditions in Europe — 2014 Edition](#)

## Methodology

- [Income and living conditions](#) (ESMS metadata file — `ilc_esms`)
- [Ad-hoc modules](#) (see 2015 – Social/cultural participation and material deprivation)
- [Income and living conditions methodology](#)
- [EU statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\) methodology](#) (online EU SILC methodology)

## Legislation

- [Regulation \(EC\) No 1177/2003](#) of 16 June 2003 concerning Community statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)
- [Summaries of EU Legislation: EU statistics on income and living conditions](#)
- [Regulation \(EC\) No 1553/2005](#) of 7 September 2005 amending Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 concerning Community statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC)
- [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 67/2014](#) of 27 January 2014 implementing Regulation (EC) No 1177/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning Community statistics on income and living conditions (EU-SILC) as regards the 2015 list of target secondary variables on social and cultural participation and material deprivation

## External links

- [European Commission — Education and culture](#)
- [European Commission — Culture for growth and jobs](#)
- [Creative Europe](#)