

Living conditions in Europe - material deprivation and economic strain

Statistics Explained

Data extracted in August 2025.

Planned article update: September 2026.

Highlights 2024, 6.4% of the EU population, or around 27.5 million people, faced severe material and social deprivation, down from 6.8% in 2023.

The highest rates of severe deprivation were observed in Romania at 17.2%, followed by Bulgaria (16.6%) and Greece (14.0%). In contrast, the lowest rates were recorded in Luxembourg, Poland, Croatia and Slovenia, all below 2.5%.

At a regional level, the highest rate of severe material and social deprivation was recorded in Greece's west islands, reaching 28.0%, while most regions in the Nordic countries reported rates below 5.0%.

Significant regional disparities were noted, with variations in the rate of severe material and social deprivation exceeding 15.0 [percentage points](#) (pp), in Italy, Greece, Romania and France.

This article focuses on the severe material and social deprivation within the [European Union \(EU\)](#) in 2024. Values are presented at both country and regional level, as well as among different demographic groups.

The [severe material and social deprivation rate \(SMSD\)](#) shows an enforced lack of necessary and desirable items to lead an adequate life. It is defined as the proportion of the population experiencing an enforced lack of at least 7 out of 13 deprivation items (6 related to the individual and 7 related to the household).

Severe material and social deprivation

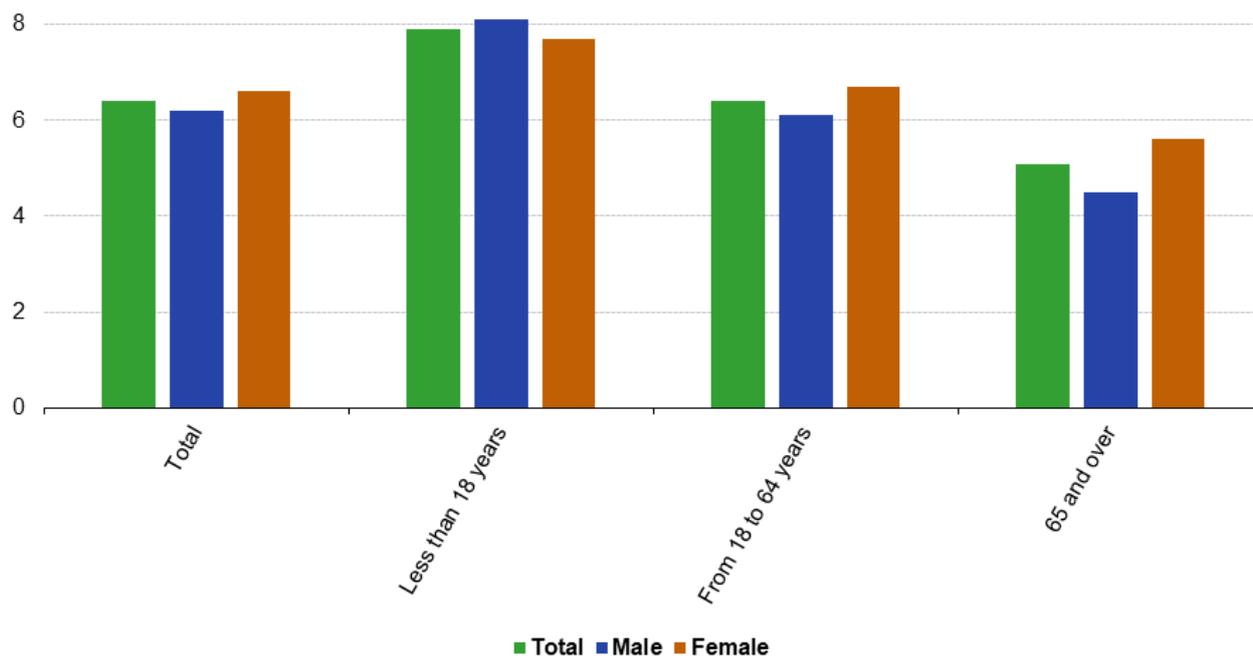
Females more likely to experience severe material and social deprivation

In 2024, as shown in Figure 1, the EU recorded a slightly higher severe material and social deprivation rate among females (6.6%) compared with males (6.2%). This pattern of higher rates for females is consistent across all observed age groups, except for people under 18 years, where the rate for males (8.1%) was higher than for females (7.7%).

Among people aged 18 to 64 years, the overall rate was 6.4%, with females (6.7%) having a higher rate than males (6.1%). For the 65 years and over age group, the severe material and social deprivation rate was the lowest, at 5.1%. Notably, males in this age group had a lower rate (4.5%) compared to females (5.6%).

Severe material and social deprivation rate, by age and sex, EU, 2024

% of population in respective group



Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mdspd11)

eurostat 

Figure 1: Severe material and social deprivation rate, by age and sex, EU, 2024 (%) Source: Eurostat (ilc_mdspd11)

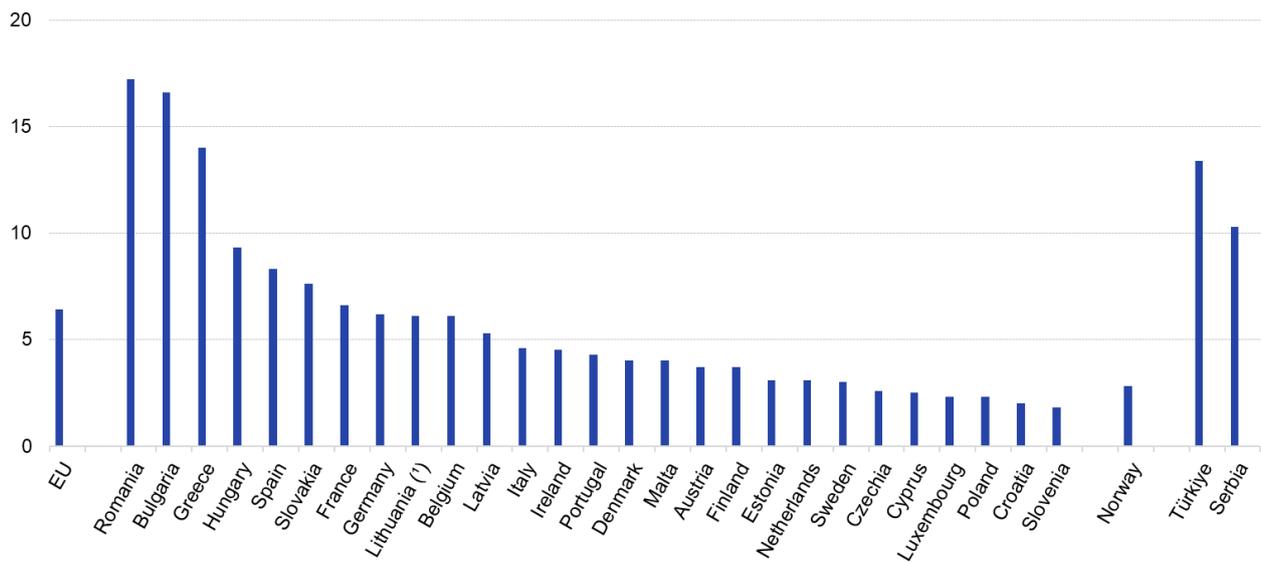
Severe material and social deprivation rate in 2024 highest in Romania and lowest in Slovenia

At the EU level, the rate of severe material and social deprivation decreased from 6.8% in 2023 to 6.4% in 2024.

Figure 2 shows that in 2024, the highest rates were observed in Romania (17.2%), Bulgaria (16.6%) and Greece (14.0%). These 3 countries were the only ones to record a rate above 10.0% at the EU level. Meanwhile, Slovenia (1.8%), Croatia (2.0%), Poland and Luxembourg (both at 2.3%) and Cyprus (2.5%) recorded the lowest rates.

Severe material and social deprivation rate, 2024

(%)



Notes: ranked on severe material and social deprivation rate.

Data not available: Switzerland, Iceland, Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

(*) Provisional.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mdspd11)

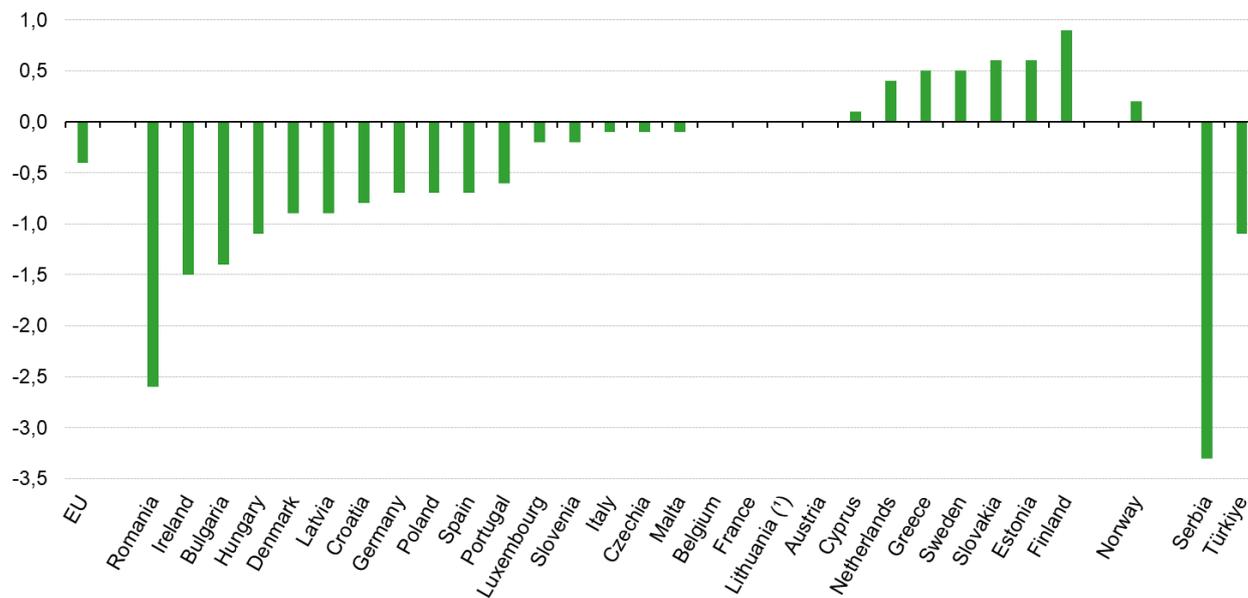
eurostat

Figure 2: Severe material and social deprivation rate, 2024 (%) Source: Eurostat (ilc_mdspd11)

Between 2023 and 2024, the largest reductions in severe material and social deprivation rates were observed in Romania (down 2.6 pp), Ireland (down 1.5 pp) and Bulgaria (down 1.4 pp), as shown in Figure 3. Smaller declines, below 1.0 pp, were recorded in 12 other countries. In contrast, the largest increases were observed in Finland (up 0.9 pp), Estonia and Slovakia (both up 0.6 pp), Sweden and Greece (both up 0.5 pp).

Difference in severe material and social deprivation rate between 2024 and 2023

(pp)



Notes: ranked on the percentage point difference in severe material and social deprivation rates between 2024 and 2023. Data not available: Switzerland, Iceland, Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

(*) Provisional.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mdspd11)

eurostat

Figure 3: Difference in severe material and social deprivation rate between 2024 and 2023 (pp) Source: Eurostat (ilc_mdspd11)

Regions located in Southern and Eastern Europe reported the highest severe material and social deprivation

Map 1 illustrates the distribution of severe material and social deprivation rates at regional level in 2024. Among all EU regions, Greece's western region of Ionia Nisia recorded the highest regional share of severe material and social deprivation, with 28.0% of the population facing such conditions.

Across the EU, 8 regions had a share of people experiencing severe material and social deprivation ranging from 20.3% to 28.0%. These regions are primarily located in southern and eastern Europe. Specifically, they include 2 regions in Greece, 3 regions in Bulgaria, 2 regions in Romania and 1 region in the south of Italy. Conversely, close to one third of the regions had severe material and social deprivation rates below 3.5%, with most of them located in the [EU Nordic countries](#), as well as in Estonia, Poland, Slovenia, Czechia, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy, Croatia and Cyprus.

Map 1: Severe material and social deprivation rate by NUTS 2 regions, 2024

(%)

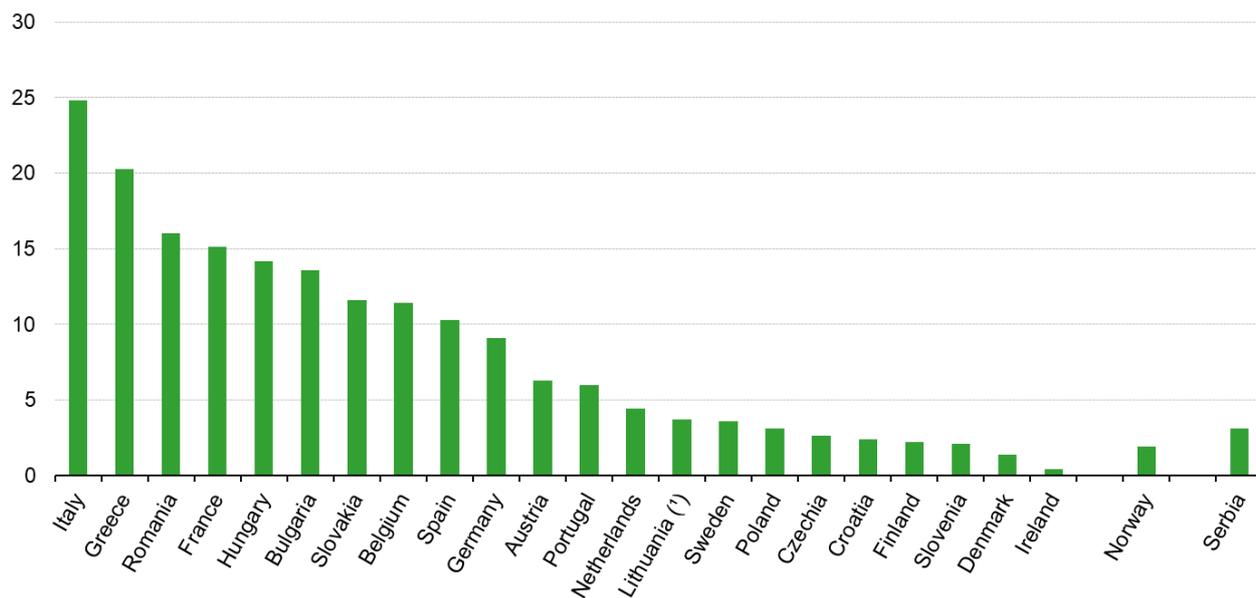
Source: Eurostat ([ilc_mdspd11](#)) and ([ilc_mdspd18](#))

Italy shows significant interregional disparities, with differences of nearly 25 percentage points

Italy, Greece, Romania and France showed significant inter-regional differences in severe material and social deprivation rates with values greater than 15 pp. The difference between the highest and lowest rates within these EU countries were 24.8 pp, 20.3 pp, 16.0 pp and 15.1 pp, respectively. By contrast, inter-regional differences were less than 2.0 pp in Denmark and Ireland.

Inter-regional differences in severe material and social deprivation rates, 2024

(pp)



Note: ranked on inter-regional differences in severe material and social deprivation.
Data not available: Switzerland, Iceland, Albania, North Macedonia and Montenegro.

(*) Provisional.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_mdspd18)



Figure 4: Inter-regional differences in severe material and social deprivation rates, 2024 (pp) Source: Eurostat (ilc_mdspd18)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Severe material and social deprivation: 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.

Context

The [severe material and social deprivation rate \(SMSD\)](#) is an [EU-SILC](#) indicator that shows an enforced lack of necessary and desirable items to lead an adequate life. The indicator, adopted by the [Indicators' Sub-Group \(ISG\)](#) of the [Social Protection Committee \(SPC\)](#), distinguishes between individuals who cannot afford a certain good, service or social activities. It is defined as the proportion of the population experiencing an enforced lack of at least 7 out of 13 deprivation items (6 related to the individual and 7 related to the household).

List of items at household level

- capacity to face unexpected expenses
- capacity to afford paying for one week annual holiday away from home
- capacity to being confronted with payment arrears (on mortgage or rental payments, utility bills, hire purchase instalments or other loan payments)
- capacity to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day
- ability to keep home adequately
- have access to a car/van for personal use
- replacing worn-out furniture

List of items at individual level

- having internet connection
- replacing worn-out clothes by some new ones
- having 2 pairs of properly fitting shoes (including a pair of all-weather shoes)
- spending a small amount of money each week on him/herself
- having regular leisure activities
- getting together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month

This measure complements the relative analysis of [monetary poverty](#) by providing information on absolute poverty.

The severe material and social deprivation indicator (SMSD) is part of the at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate defined in the framework of the [EU 2030 target on poverty and social exclusion](#).

The severe material and social deprivation indicator (SMSD) is part of the [at risk of poverty or social exclusion rate \(AROPE\)](#). The AROPE ratio is the share of the total population which is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. The headline target ([EU2030 target](#)) on poverty and social inclusion of the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#) is to reduce the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million by 2030. Progress towards this target is monitored through the AROPE rate, published by Eurostat.

The [Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics \(NUTS\)](#) is a geographical nomenclature subdividing the economic territory of the European Union (EU) into regions at 3 different levels:

- NUTS 1: major socio-economic regions
- NUTS 2: basic regions (for regional policies)
- NUTS 3: small regions (for specific diagnoses)

Above NUTS 1, there is the 'national' level of the Member States.

Explore further

Other articles

- All articles from [Living conditions](#)
- [Living conditions in Europe — poverty and social exclusion](#)
- [EU statistics on income and living conditions \(EU-SILC\) methodology - people at risk of poverty or social exclusion](#)

Database

- [Income and living conditions - detailed datasets \(ilc\)](#)

Thematic section

- [Income and living conditions](#)

Publications

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

Methodology

- [Income and living conditions — information on data](#)
- [Income and living conditions — methodology](#)
- [Income and living conditions \(ESMS metadata file — ilc_esms\)](#)
- [Measuring material deprivation in the EU — Indicators for the whole population and child-specific indicators](#)

External links

- [European Commission — Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion: Indicators' Sub-Group of the Social Protection Committee](#)
- [Social investment](#)
- [European pillar of social rights](#)

Legislation

- [Income and living conditions – legislation](#)