

*Data extracted in April 2025.  
Planned article update: April 2026.*

### Highlights

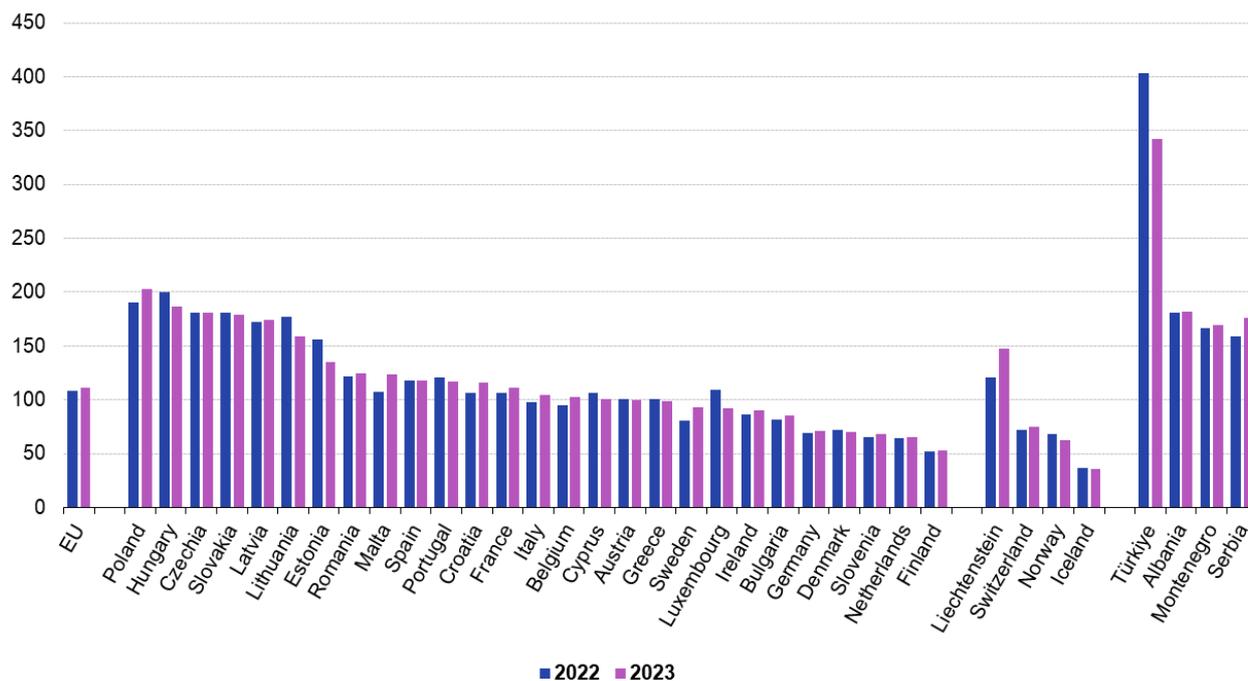
The number of prisoners in the EU was around 499 000 in 2023, a 3.2% increase compared with 2022. There were 111 prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants in the EU in 2023. In 2023, 5.4% of adult prisoners in the EU were women. In 2023, 1 in 5 prisoners in the EU had a foreign citizenship in the reporting country.

This article presents European statistics on [prisoners](#) .

### 1 prisoner per 897 inhabitants in the EU in 2023

There was 1 prisoner per 897 inhabitants in the EU in 2023, or 111 prisoners per 100 000 slightly more than in 2022, when the rate was 108. In 2023, the highest prisoner rate per 100 000 in the EU was in Poland (203) followed by Hungary (187), Czechia (181) and Slovakia (179). The lowest rate was in Finland (53), followed by the Netherlands (66), and Slovenia (68) (Figure 1).

## Prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants, 2022-2023



Source: Eurostat (online data code: crim\_pris\_cap)

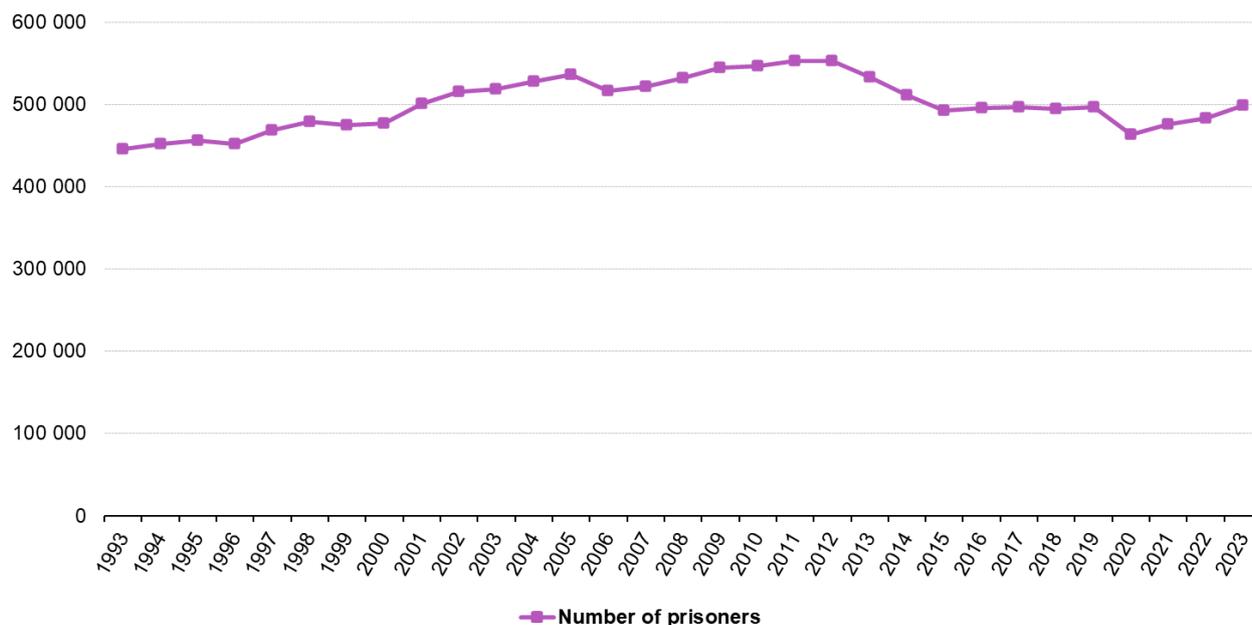


Figure 1: Prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants, 2021-2023. Source: Eurostat (crim\_pris\_cap)

## An increase in the number of prisoners from 2021 to 2023

There were around 499 000 prisoners in the EU in 2023, which is 9.8% less than in 2012, when there were around 553 000 prisoners, the highest number since 1993 (Figure 2). After a period of stability in 2017-2019, there was a decrease of 6.6% in the number of prisoners in 2020, probably due to COVID-19 related measures, followed by a 7.7% total increase from 2021 to 2023.

## Number of prisoners, EU, 1993-2023



Note: Adjusted sum, due to occasionally missing figures  
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: crim\_pris\_pop, crim\_pris\_cap)

eurostat

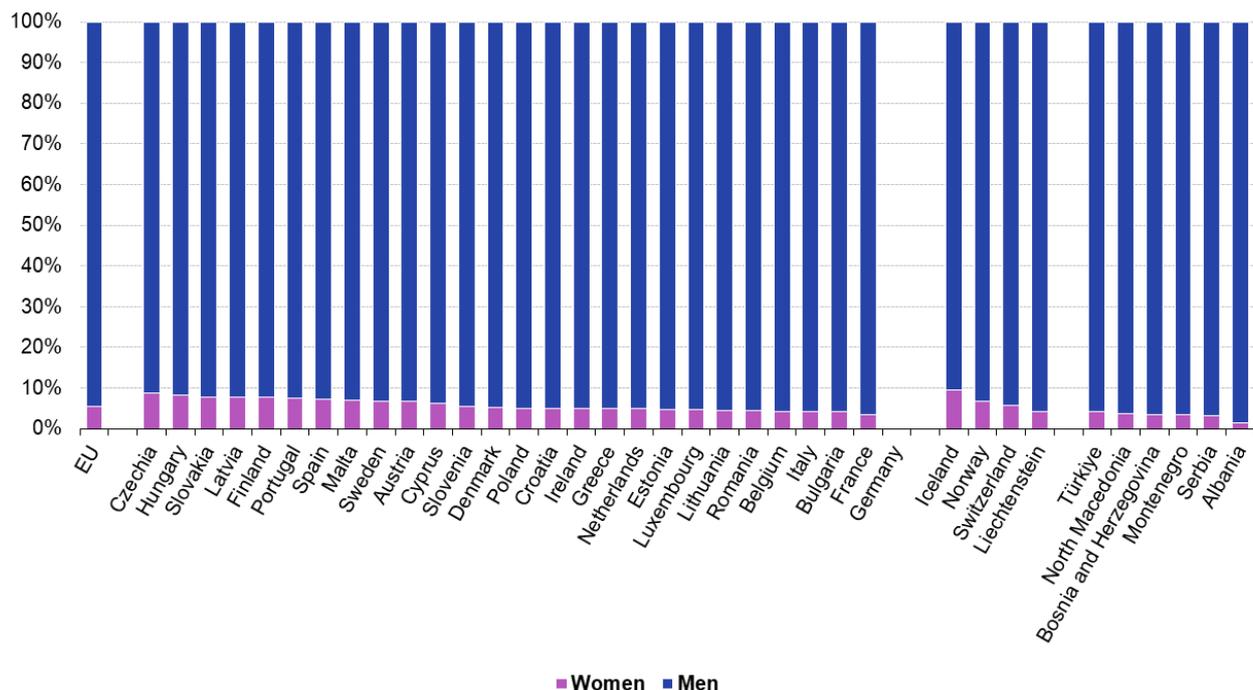
**Figure 2: Number of prisoners, EU, 1993-2023. Source: Eurostat (crim\_pris\_pop) (crim\_pris\_cap)**

## In 2023, 1 out of 19 adult prisoners were women

Since 2016 in the EU 1 out of 19 adult prisoners were women. In 2023, the share of women in prisons was 5.4% – almost the same as in 2022 (5.3%).

The share of women in prisons varies between EU countries (Figure 3). In 2023, the highest share was observed in Czechia (8.8%), followed by Hungary (8.2%), Slovakia, and Latvia (7.7% for both). The lowest share was in France (3.3%) followed by Bulgaria (4.1%), and Italy (4.2%).

## Adult prisoners by sex, 2023



Note: In the EU value, Germany is estimated with the previous years' data.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: crim\_pris\_age)

eurostat

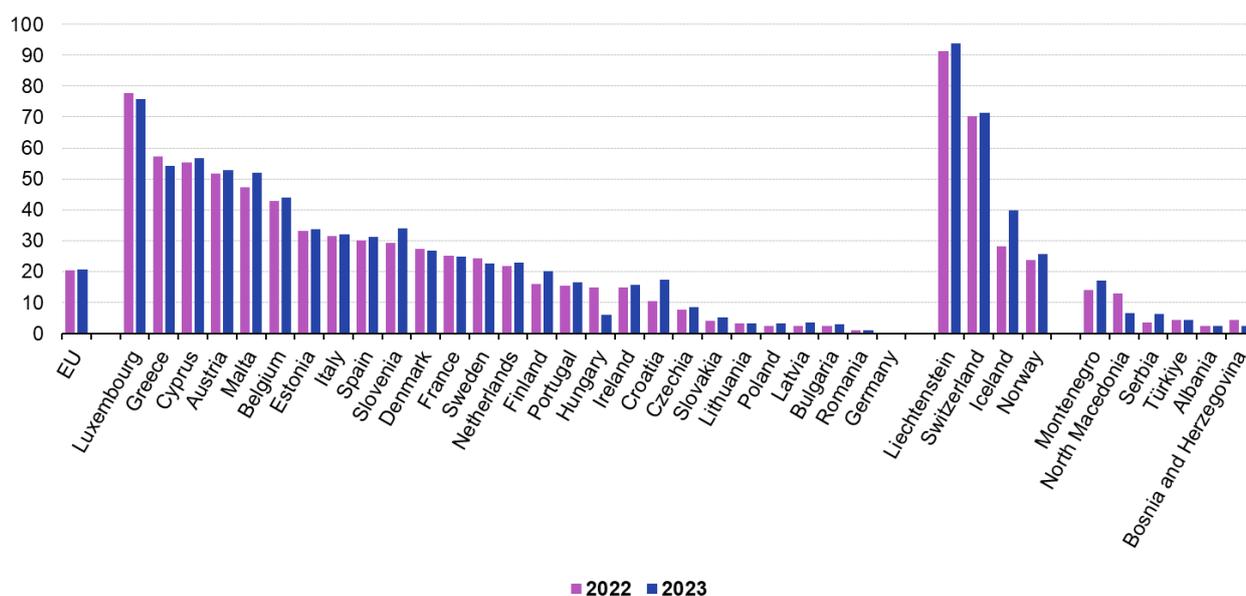
Figure 3: Adult prisoners by sex, 2023. Source: Eurostat (crim\_pris\_age)

## 1 in 5 prisoners had a foreign citizenship in the reporting country in 2023

In 2023, 1 in 5 prisoners in the EU had a foreign citizenship in the reporting country. In EU countries, the percentage of detainees with a foreign citizenship in the reporting country (20.6%) was almost the same than in 2022 (20.4%). The share of prisoners with a foreign citizenship varies between EU countries (Figure 4). The highest share was observed in Luxembourg (75.7%), followed by Greece (54.3%) and Cyprus (56.7%). The lowest share was in Romania (1.1%) followed by Bulgaria (2.9%), and Latvia (3.5%).

## Prisoners with foreign citizenship in the reporting country, 2022-2023

(%)



Note: Value for Germany is not included due to missing data.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: crim\_pris\_ctz)

eurostat

**Figure 4: Percentage of prisoners with foreign citizenship in the reporting country, 2022-2023. Source: Eurostat (crim\_pris\_ctz)**

## Source data for tables and graphs

- [Prison statistics figures](#)

## Data sources

Data sources for prison statistics are national authorities such as prison administration or the national statistical institute. Eurostat collects prison data together with the yearly UN global crime statistics. All results presented in this article are based on official figures.

When EU totals are calculated to indicate an overall trend, missing figures for countries are estimated with the last available year (of the same country). The EU value of the unsentenced detainees percentage is calculated on responding countries in the web database. Other EU totals presented in this article are not disseminated in the web database. The national figures are presented in [the web database](#) as reported (no adjustments).

## Context

In general, each country is responsible for its own criminal laws, criminal justice policies, as well as specifications for relevant statistics. Typically, official statistics on crime and criminal justice are made for administrative purposes and used by national authorities.

Prison statistics are part of official statistics on crime and criminal justice, relating indirectly to crime occurrence and the performance of the criminal justice system.

The number of prisoners (counted at the end of a year) depends on:

- the number in the previous year,
- how many were convicted and actually imprisoned during the year,
- how many left prison during the year: released, pardoned, died, escaped, etc.

The trend in prisoner number depends on:

- how many crimes are brought to court,
- how many are convicted, and actually sentenced to prison,
- length of sentences received, and the actual duration,
- alternative sanctions, early release, amnesties, pardons, etc.,
- law changes, for which types of crime imprisonment is prescribed, and for how long.

## Footnotes

## Explore further

### Other articles

- [Crime statistics](#)
- [Prison occupancy statistics](#)
- [Police, court and prison personnel statistics](#)
- [Government expenditure on public order and safety](#)
- [Trafficking in human beings statistics](#)

### Database

- [Crime and criminal justice statistics](#)

### Thematic section

- [Crime and criminal justice](#)

### Publications

[Crime and criminal justice](#)

### Methodology

- [Methodology overview and links to detailed information](#)

### External links

- [Links to other institutions](#)