The statistics presented in this article are based on the official figures for police-recorded offences (criminal acts) in the European Union between 2008 and 2016. Figures show that car thefts, home burglaries and robberies have decreased between 2008 and 2016. Sexual violence, however, appears to have increased.

**Car thefts down by 36 % between 2008 and 2016**

Police in the European Union (EU) recorded about 660 000 car thefts in 2016, a 1.9 % reduction since 2015. Figure 1 illustrates this downward trend. Car thefts fell by 36 % between 2008 and 2016, with downward trends in most EU Member States.¹

Taking population size into account, the figures for 2016 were highest in Luxembourg, Italy, Sweden, Greece, and France, with over 200 police-recorded car thefts per 100 000 people. Seventeen countries had fewer than 100 car thefts per 100 000 people, the lowest figures being in Slovakia, Estonia, Croatia, Romania and Denmark.

To assess the risk of car theft, we also need to know the number of cars. In 2016, for example, Luxembourg had 662 passenger cars per 1 000 inhabitants and Italy 625, while it was 261 in Romania and 374 in Croatia.²

¹The geographical unit for crime statistics is the area with the same criminal law (territory of criminal law jurisdiction), 'country' for short.

²Source: Eurostat table [road_eqs_carhab]
Robberies down by 24 % between 2012 and 2016

EU-wide, police-recorded robberies fell by 24 % between 2012 and 2016, to around 396 000 in 2016. By contrast, there was relatively little change between 2009 and 2011. Figure 1 shows that the downward trend in the EU between 2012 and 2016 flattened out in the last 2 years of that period. There was, however, a 9 % rise in Spain and a 15 % rise in the United Kingdom between 2015 and 2016.

Belgium, Spain, France, Portugal, England and Wales had the highest number of police-recorded robberies relative to population size in 2016 (over 100 per 100 000 people), while the figure was below 20 for Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Cyprus, and Slovenia. It should be noted that it is not always possible to compare countries directly since some of those with the lowest robbery figures stated that car and shop robberies were not included.

Downward trend, but still over 5 000 homicides annually

There were about 5 200 police-recorded intentional homicides in the EU in 2016, a 3.3 % fall compared with 2015. Overall, there has been a downward trend since 2008. However, homicides have increased in France, Germany and the United Kingdom in recent years. The figures include terrorism-related deaths.

Latvia and Lithuania had the most police-recorded intentional homicides relative to population size (about 5 per 100 000 people in 2016). As Figure 2 shows, 13 Member States had fewer than 1 per 100 000. By way of comparison, the United States had 5.4 homicides per 100 000 people in 2016, while the figure was 10.8 in...
Instances of attempted homicide are counted separately and several figures are missing. The available figures suggest that the overall number of homicide attempts remained fairly stable over 2008-2016.

Figure 2: Intentional homicides, 2016 (police-recorded offences per 100 000 inhabitants)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: crim_off_cat)

Over 8% increase in police-recorded sexual violence between 2015 and 2016

Instances of police-recorded sexual violence in the EU rose by over 8% between 2015 and 2016, to about 248,000 in 2016. Figure 3 shows a steady rise of 26% between 2013 and 2016. These figures include rape and other types of sexual assault, though the figures for some countries may leave out some crimes.

Instances of police-recorded sexual violence relative to population size varied greatly in 2016 – between 5 and 190 per 100,000 people. This huge variation is probably affected both by differences in what is perceived as a crime and by the proportion of crimes reported to the police.

Home burglaries down by 10 % between 2012 and 2016

Police-recorded home burglaries totalled around 1 334 000 in 2016, representing a fall of below 1 % compared with 2015. Several EU Member States exhibit a downward trend and the EU total fell by 10 % between 2012 and 2016. However, Germany’s figure rose by 5 % and France’s by 1%. Figures include burglaries of private homes, flats, villas, summerhouses, hotel rooms, cabins, etc., but not theft (stealing without breaking in) or vandalism (without stealing). Home burglary figures changed relatively little in several countries over 2008-2016. The figures from Sweden, Belgium, Finland and Hungary were the most stable.

The number of police-recorded home burglaries per 100 000 people varied hugely among EU Member States in 2016, as shown in Figure 4. Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, Luxembourg, France, England and Wales and Italy had over 300 burglaries per 100 000 people in 2016, while the figure was below 100 for Finland, Lithuania, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Poland.
Police-recorded assault increased by 3 % between 2015 and 2016

EU-wide, police-recorded assaults numbered about 1 111 000 in 2016. This represented a 3.4 % increase compared with 2015, and a rise of nearly 14 % compared with 2013.

Even relative to population size, the number of assaults varies widely across the EU. This variation reflects not only the relative frequency of crime, but also different laws and recording practices. The standard category covers serious assault - excluding minor, lethal, and sexual assault - while some countries include one or more of these crimes. Because of changes in methodology, total figures for 2008-2012 are not compared. Police figures also depend on the extent to which people report the crimes. For instance, EU citizens have a reasonable level of trust in their police forces, but this varies considerably between Member States, from 3.6 to 8.2 (on a scale of 0 to 10); the EU average is 5.9.4

4Source: Eurostat 'Trust in institutions’ EU-SILC ad-hoc module 2013 table [ilc_pw03]
Data sources

Data sources include police and other law enforcement agencies, prosecution, courts, prisons, relevant ministries, and statistical offices. It is national authorities that take decisions on official crime statistics and collect the data. One contact per country collects the figures and sends them to Eurostat once a year, together with the Survey on Crime Trends for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

This article presents results based on official figures for police-recorded offences (criminal acts) between 2008 and 2016. For earlier results, summary crime statistics are available for 1950 – 1992, and tables by crime for 1993 – 2007. There are figures missing for some countries in all these periods, particularly the earliest ones. Eurostat updates tables when countries send new or improved figures.

The figures from all EU countries are added to arrive at EU totals. If a 2016 figure is missing, the figure for 2015 from the same country is used. In some cases, figures for earlier years are missing; these are replaced by an average of the year before and after. The database tables contain only figures reported to Eurostat.

Missing data matter

In this article, 'EU total' is simply the sum of figures from all EU countries. If some figures are missing, adding only those reported would give too low a total. Often it is the most recent figure that is delayed. If there is no figure for 2016, the 2015 figure from the same country is used. In some cases, figures for earlier years are missing and are replaced by averaging those for the years before and after. However, for a variety of reasons, some countries lack figures on certain crimes for all the years. Then it is not so easy to replace the missing figures. Kidnapping is a case in point, for some countries there are no figures between 2008 and 2016.

The figures reported for 2016 total about 14 500, a lower boundary for the EU total. To show a possible upper boundary, we replace the missing figures by estimates based on population size and the maximum reported rate. Adding these estimates to the reported figures results in a sum of more than 20 100 (39 % higher). If we use an average rate the total would be 16 400. However, none of these totals should be regarded as official statistics. The example demonstrates that missing figures can result in a wide range of possible totals. To give accurate EU totals, figures for all the countries are needed each year.

More information is available about comparing results between countries or years, and about small numbers.

Source data for tables and graphs

Source data for tables and graphs

Context

Crime is a recurring topic in public debate, and users of crime statistics include national authorities, EU institutions, media, politicians, organisations and the public. The authorities in each country establish the criminal laws that define crimes, proceedings and reactions and thereby govern official crime statistics. There are EU regulations or international laws for particular types of crimes. However, there is no general regulation covering EU crime statistics.

Official crime statistics are collected by authorities such as the police, prosecution, criminal courts, and prisons. Of those, police figures give the broadest picture, as they include all crimes recorded, irrespective of whether they are brought to court. Each figure is the annual sum of recorded offences (criminal acts), which usually

\[5\text{In exceptional cases, the figure from a subcategory may be used}\]

\[6\text{Population-weighted median rate}\]
exceeds the number of court cases. Official crime statistics reflect how authorities (police, prosecutors, courts and prisons), register and handle cases. They do not measure the total incidence of crime, so other sources should be consulted.

Other articles
- Quality of life indicators - economic and physical safety
- SDG_16_-_Peace,_justice_and_strong_institutions_ (statistical_annex)

Publications
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Notes
View this article online at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Crime_statistics