

Key facts and figures about Europe and the Europeans

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With 27 member countries and a population of nearly half a billion, the European Union covers a large part of Europe. Since its creation, it has worked to bring prosperity and stability to its citizens. Its policies and actions affect us all directly and indirectly.

The European Union aims to be a fair and caring society, committed to promoting economic prosperity and creating jobs by making companies more competitive and giving workers new skills.

With its neighbours and others, the EU works to spread prosperity, democratic progress, the rule of law and human rights beyond its frontiers. The European Union is the world's biggest trading power and a major donor of financial and technical assistance to poorer countries.

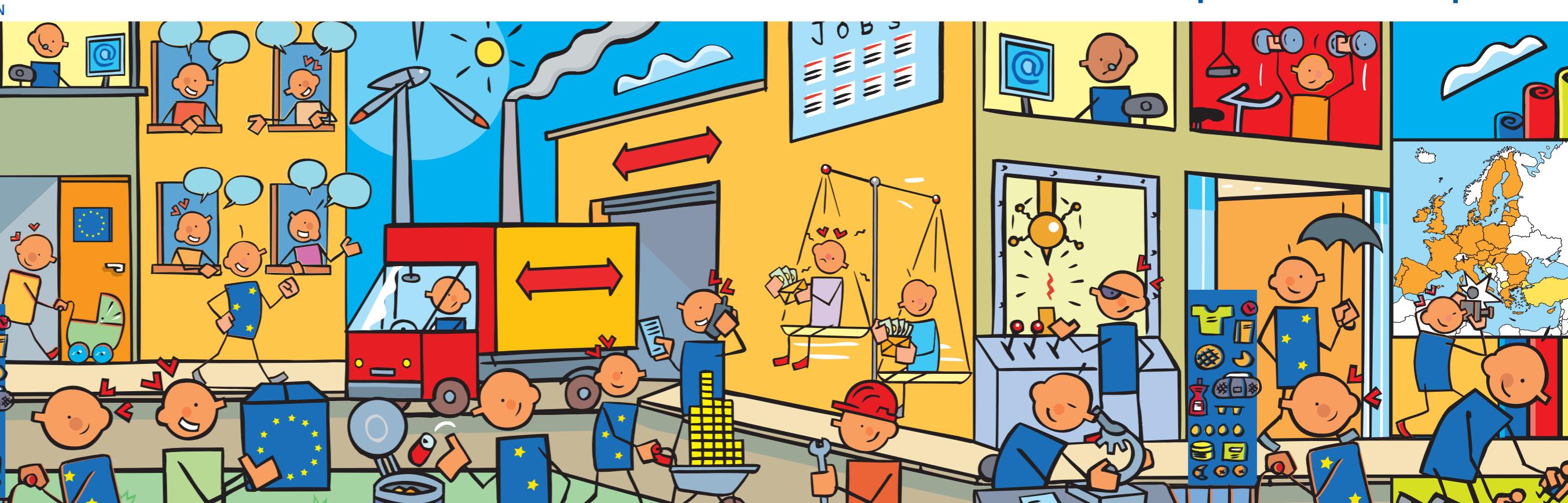
Using charts, graphs and entertaining illustrations, this booklet sets out basic facts and figures about the European Union and its member states.

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Key

EU members

EU-27  means the current membership of the European Union

EU-25  means the EU as constituted in 2004

EU-15  means the EU in its pre-2004 formation

BE  Belgium

BG  Bulgaria

CZ  Czech Republic

DK  Denmark

DE  Germany

EE  Estonia

IE  Ireland

EL  Greece

ES  Spain

FR  France

IT  Italy

CY  Cyprus

LV  Latvia

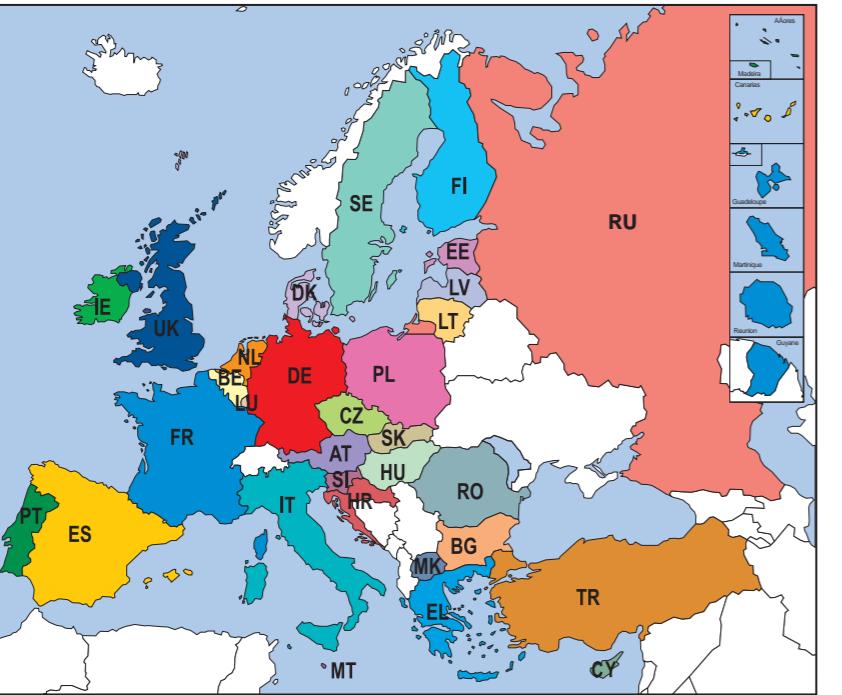
LT  Lithuania

LU  Luxembourg

HU  Hungary

MT  Malta

NL  Netherlands



AT  Austria

PL  Poland

PT  Portugal

RO  Romania

SI  Slovenia

SK  Slovakia

FI  Finland

SE  Sweden

UK  United Kingdom

Candidate countries

HR  Croatia

MK  Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

TR  Turkey

Other countries

CN  China

IN  India

JP  Japan

RU  Russia

US  United States

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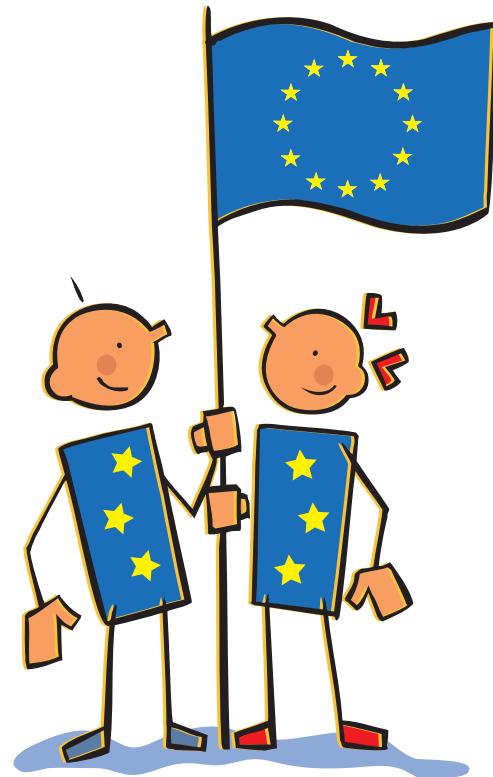
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Cataloguing data and other bibliographical information can be found at the end of this publication.

Key facts and figures about Europe and the Europeans



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The European Union – a success story

The European Union needs no introduction. Over half a century, it has brought political stability and economic prosperity to its citizens. It has created a frontier-free single market and a single currency, the euro. It has reunited a fractured continent. The European Union is a major economic and commercial power and the world's biggest donor of development aid to poorer countries. Its membership has grown from six to 27 nations, bringing the EU's population to nearly half a billion.

Not all European countries are, or wish to be, EU members – but the Union welcomes membership applications from any democratic European country. It maintains close and friendly relations with all its neighbours, both in Europe and around the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Though richly diverse, EU countries are united in their commitment to peace, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. They seek to uphold these values in Europe and beyond, to build and share prosperity, and to exert their collective influence by acting together on the world stage.

Through a series of graphs and charts, this booklet presents basic facts and figures about the European Union and its member states, sometimes comparing them with other major economies. The candidate countries which have applied to join the Union are also included, but in a separate section.

For simplicity, some figures have been rounded up. The abbreviations used for each country are those given in the key on the inside front cover. The cut-off date for data used in this publication was May 2007.

You can learn lots more online about the European Union, the way it works and how it affects you via its Internet portal (europa.eu). For statistical data you can go straight to Eurostat, the EU's statistical office (epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu). There you can access thousands of items free of charge.

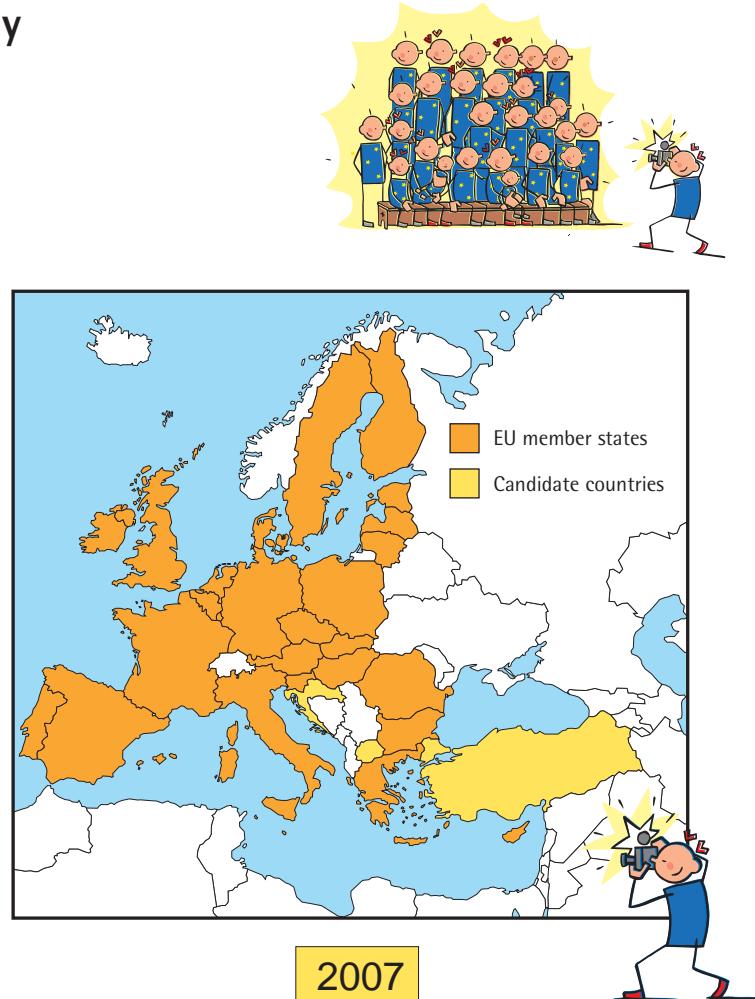
The European Union – a growing family

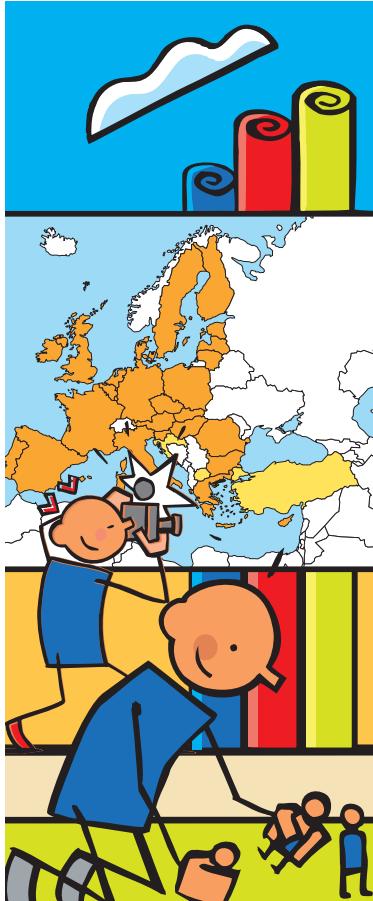
The EU began life in the 1950s as the European Economic Community with six founding members – Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. They created a new way of coming together to manage their joint interests, based essentially on economic integration. They were joined by Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom in 1973, Greece in 1981, and Spain and Portugal in 1986. Unification of Germany in 1990 brought in the *Länder* from eastern Germany.

In 1992, a new treaty gave more responsibilities to the Community institutions and introduced new forms of cooperation between national governments, thus creating the European Union as such. The EU was enlarged in 1995 to include Austria, Finland and Sweden.

The Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia joined in 2004, followed in 2007 by Bulgaria and Romania. Three candidates, Croatia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, have applied for membership.

Europe has always been home to different peoples and cultures. Every member state includes people from other countries – usually with close historical ties to the host country. The EU sees ethnic and cultural diversity as an asset, and promotes tolerance, respect and mutual understanding.





Size and population

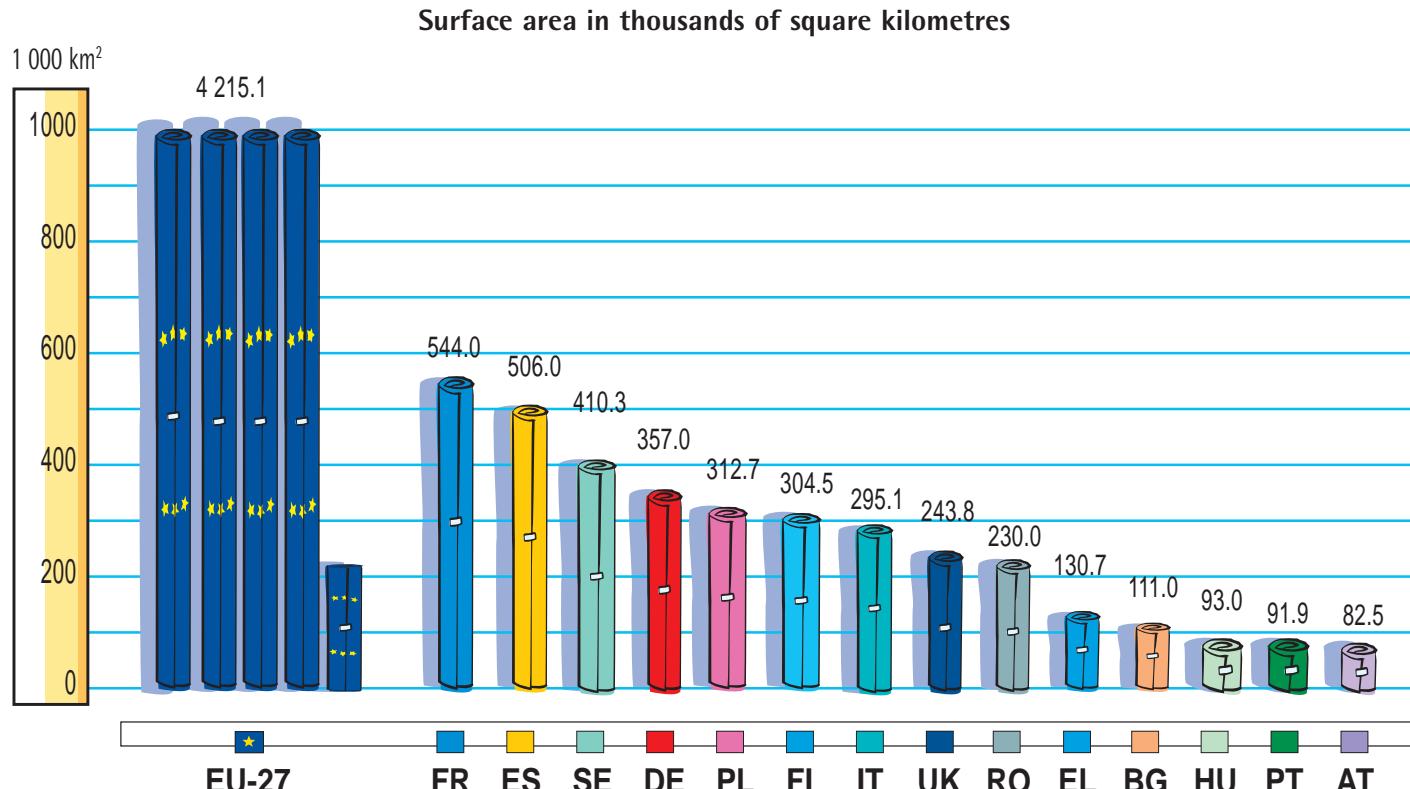
The European Union is less than half the size of the United States, but its population is over 50% larger. In fact, the EU population is the world's third largest after China and India.

Birth rates in the EU are falling and Europeans are living longer. These trends have important implications for the future.



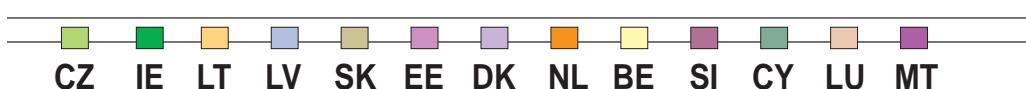
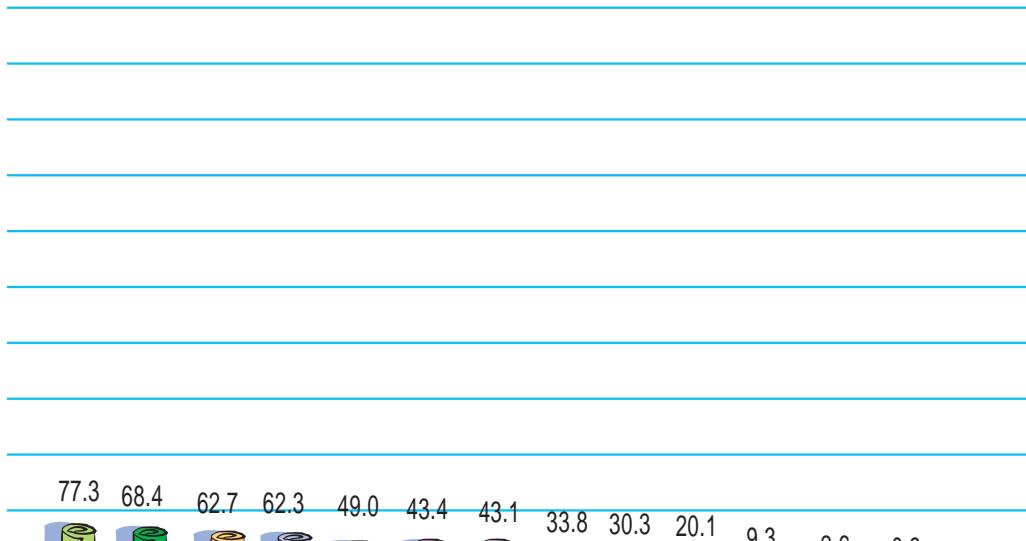
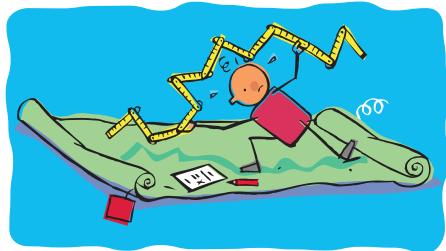
How big is the EU?

The European Union covers more than 4 million km². Seen on a map of the world, this is not a huge area – but it embraces 27 countries. Their size varies widely, with France the biggest and Malta the smallest.



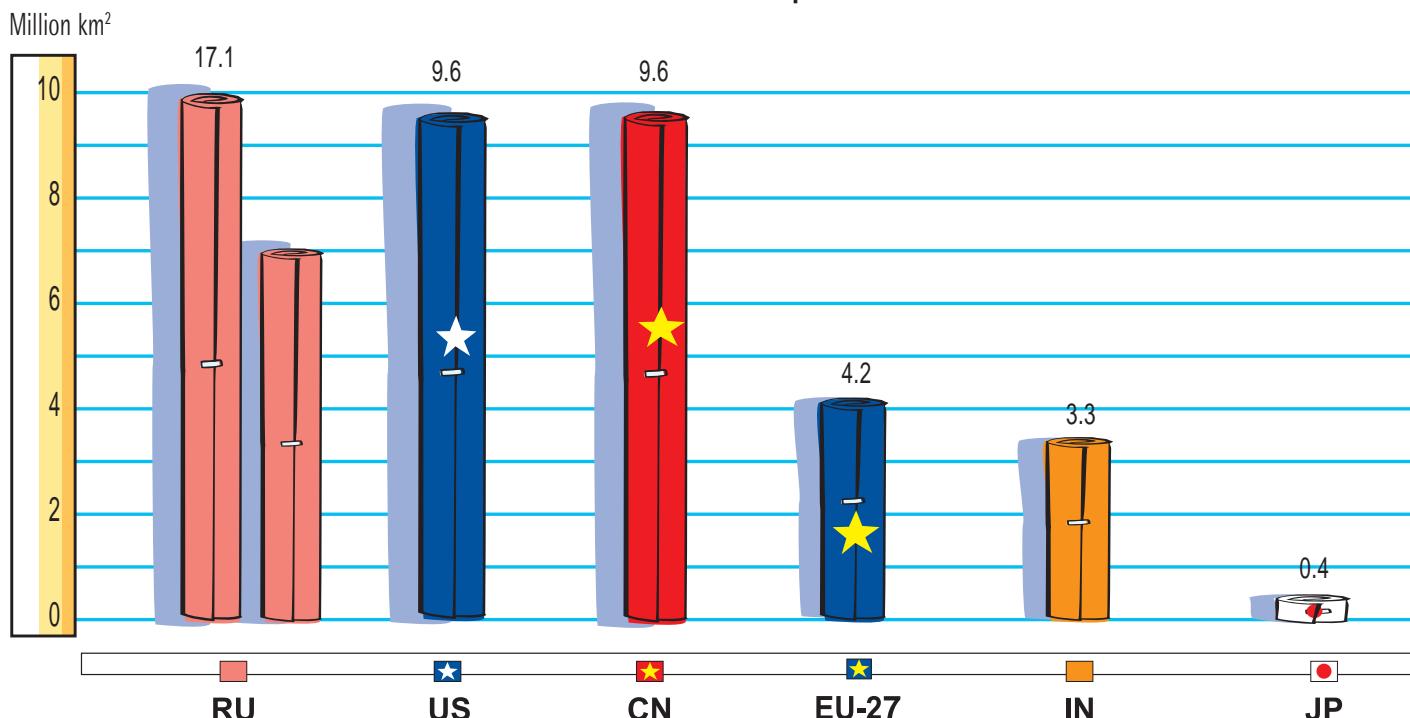
The figure for France does not include the overseas departments.

Source: Eurostat.





Surface area in millions of square kilometres

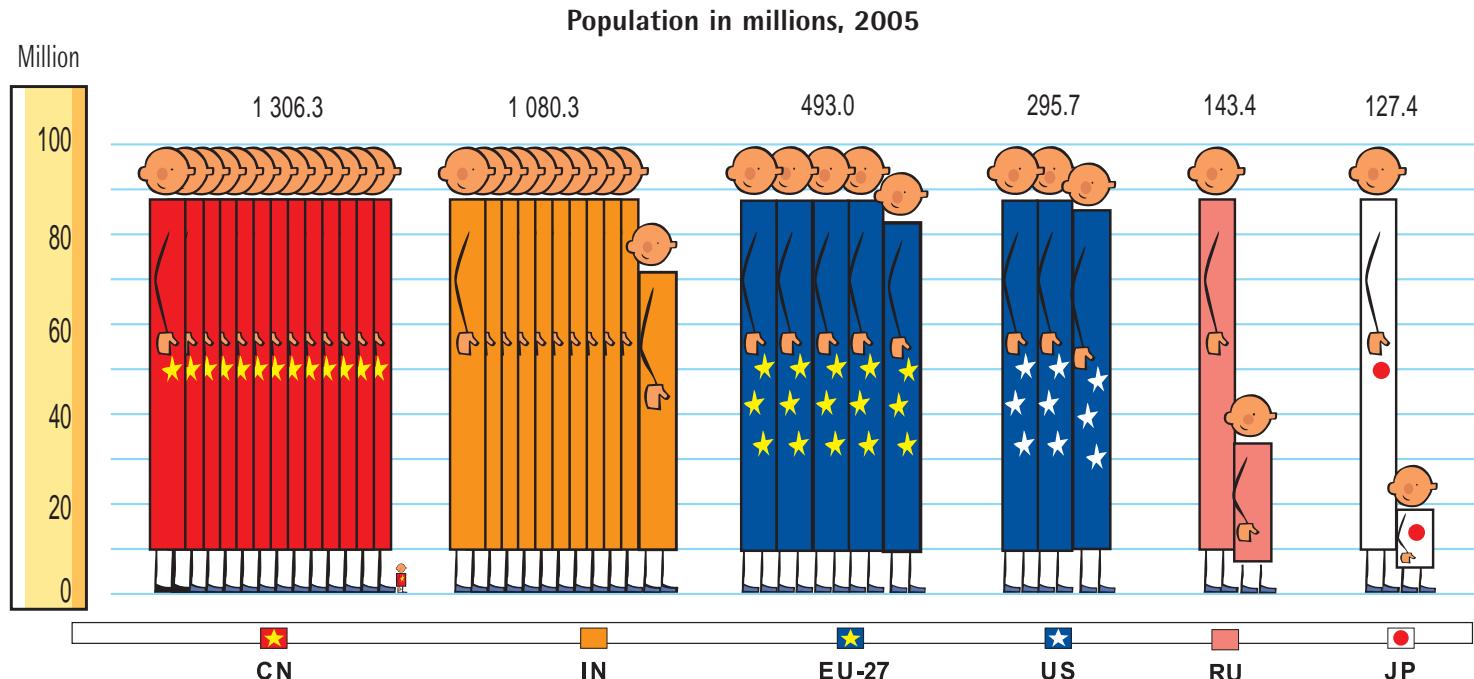
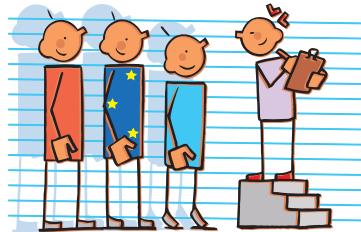


Sources: Eurostat, World Bank.

How many people live in the EU?

The European Union has 493 million inhabitants – the world's third largest population after China and India.

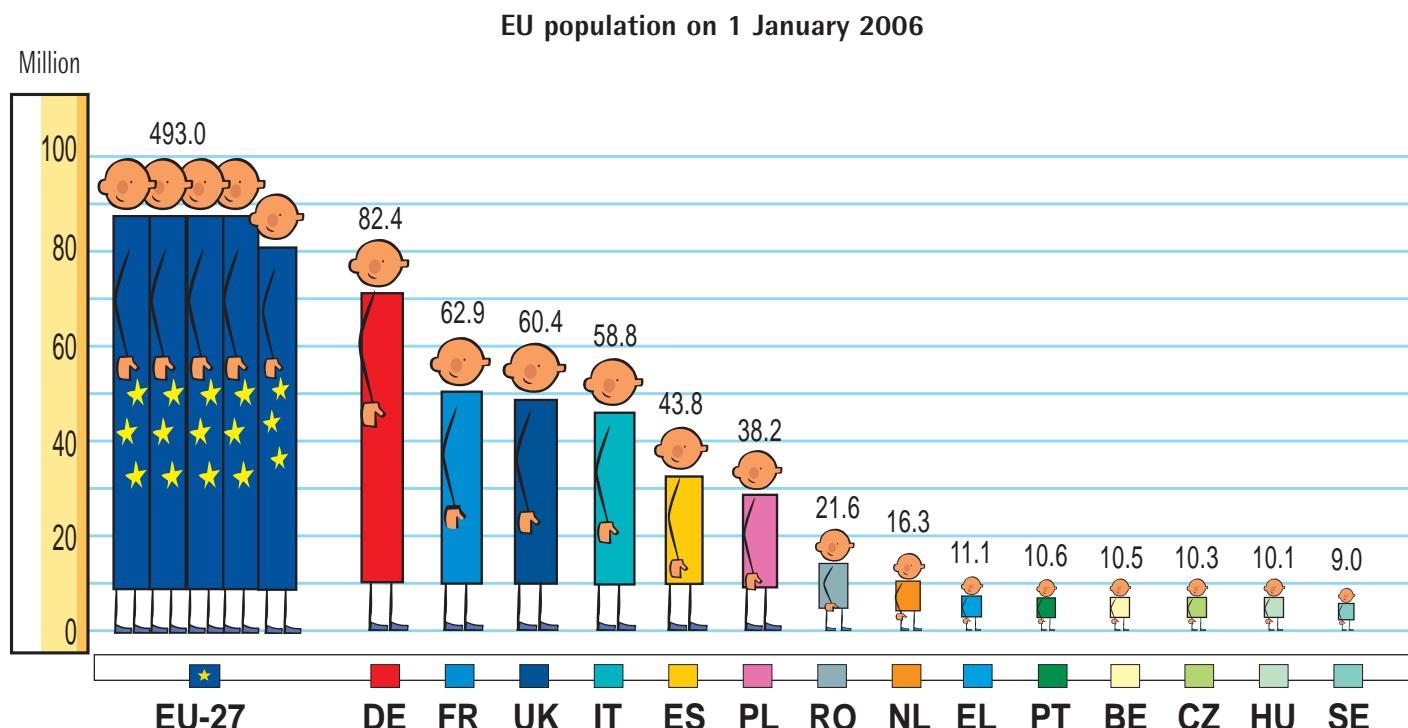
The developed world's share of the global population is shrinking – from 30% in 1960 to 16% in 2005. Four out of every five people on the planet now live in the developing world. To support poorer countries, the EU actively promotes global development. It is the world's leading provider of development aid.



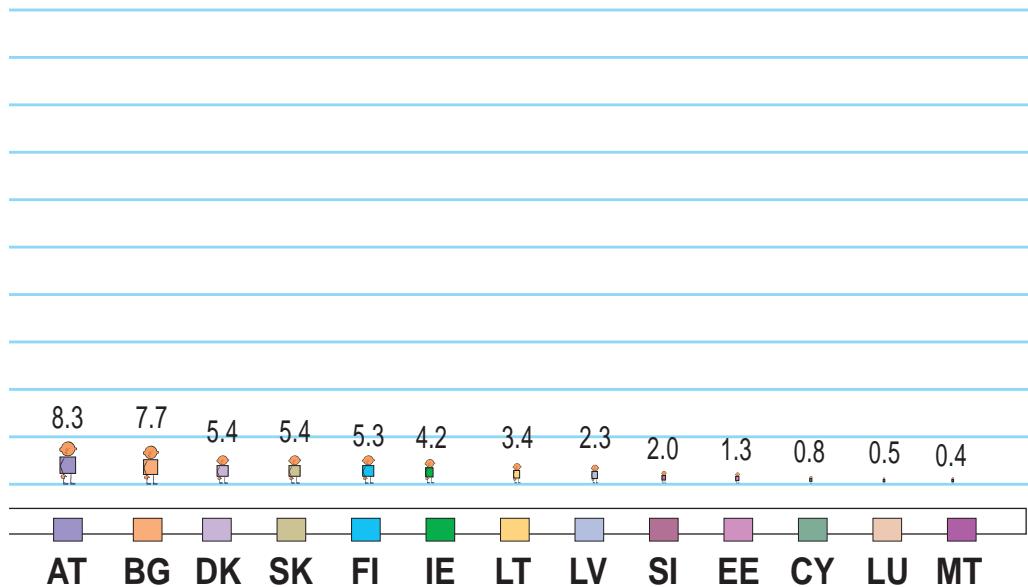
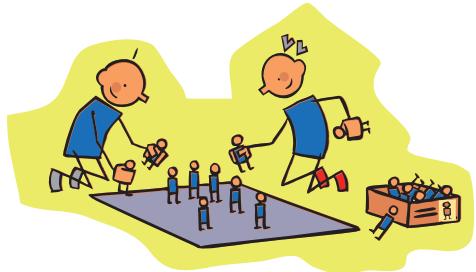
Figures for the EU-27 are for 1 January 2006. Figures for the other countries are for mid-2005.

Sources: World Bank, Eurostat, www.census.gov

The EU's 493 million people are not spread evenly across the continent: some countries (and regions) are more densely populated than others. A large surface area does not necessarily equate with a large population.



Source: Eurostat.



Source: Eurostat.



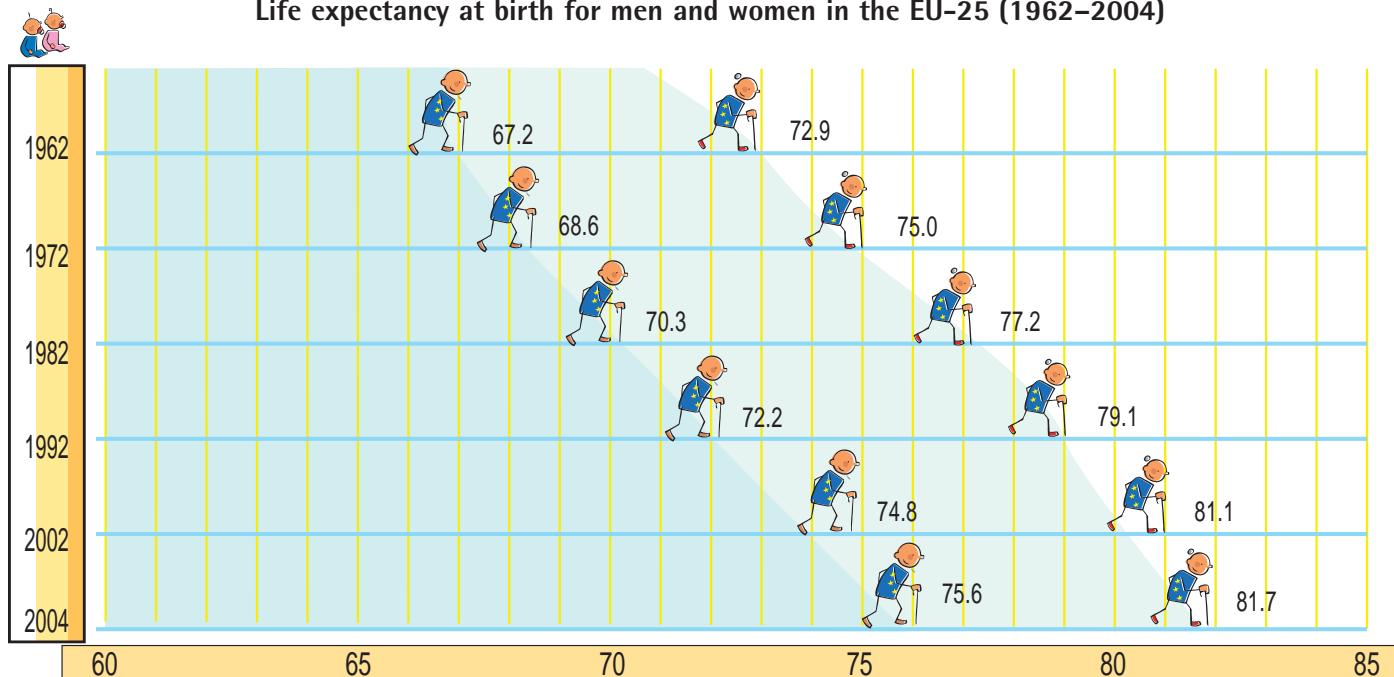
Europeans are living longer

Life expectancy in the European Union is rising. Those born in 1960 could expect to survive to the age of about 67 (men) and 73 (women). For babies born in 2004 the figures are nearly 76 for men and nearly 82 for women.



By way of comparison, figures from the United Nations show that babies born between 2000 and 2005 in Somalia, one of the world's poorest countries, can expect to live until the age of 46 (men) and 49 (women).

Life expectancy at birth for men and women in the EU-25 (1962–2004)

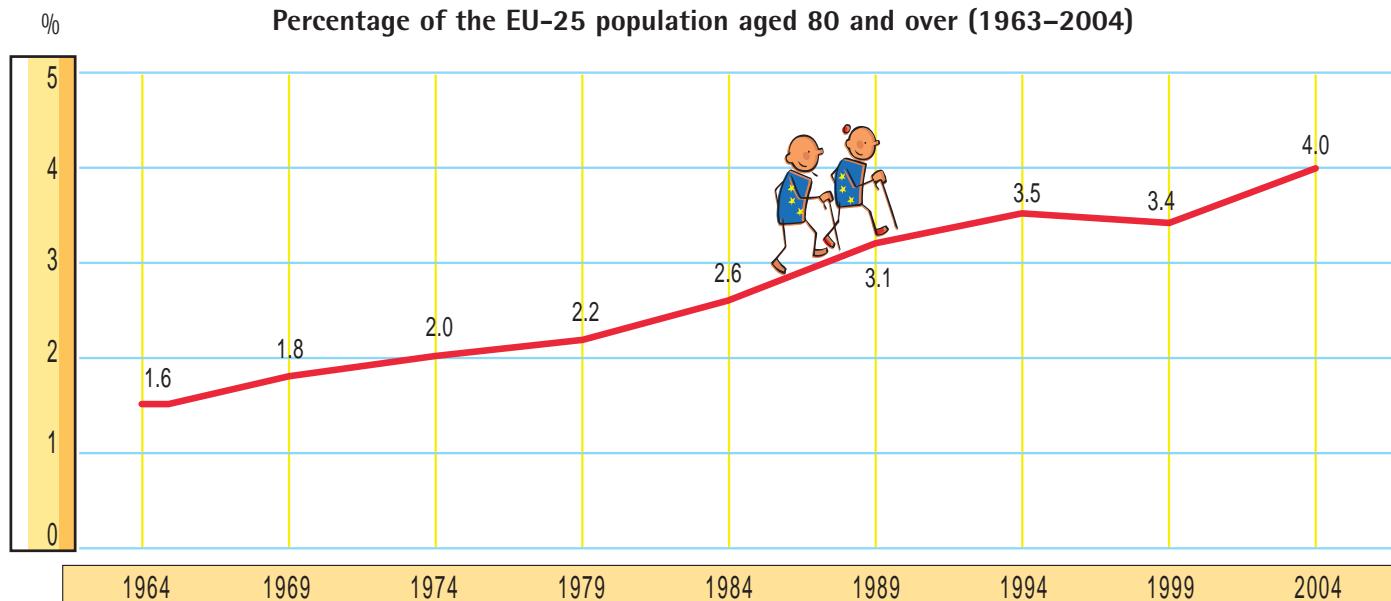


Source: Eurostat.

In 1960, most women in the EU had two or more children. In statistical terms, there were more than 2.5 children per woman. By 2004, the total fertility rate had fallen to about 1.5 children per woman. France and Ireland have the highest fertility rates at slightly under two children per woman. The lowest (less than 1.25) are in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland and Slovakia.

With fewer young people, the EU workforce is shrinking. Fewer workers will have to support more and more pensioners, as this graph shows. The number of over-80s is forecast to reach 6.3% of the population by 2025.

To boost the working population, Europe needs more people of working age to take jobs, to have them retire later, to get more women to work, to update workers' skills through lifelong learning programmes and to promote targeted immigration. More babies would also help!



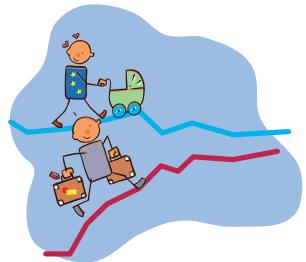
Source: Eurostat.



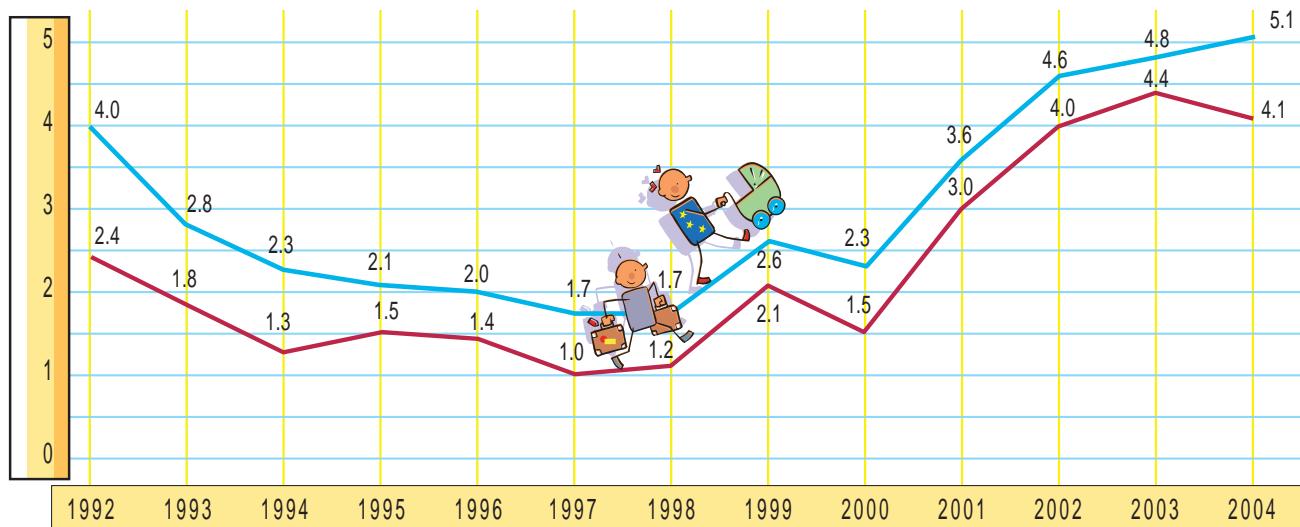
Population growth

Europe's population increases through a combination of **natural growth** (i.e. more people are born than die) and **net migration** (i.e. more people settle in the EU than leave it).

Today, most of the EU's total population growth is due to net migration. Indeed, without immigration, the populations of Germany, Greece and Italy would have fallen in recent years. Immigration brings much-needed young people into the EU workforce.



**Total population growth (blue line) and net migration (red line) in the EU-25,
per 1 000 inhabitants (1992–2004)**

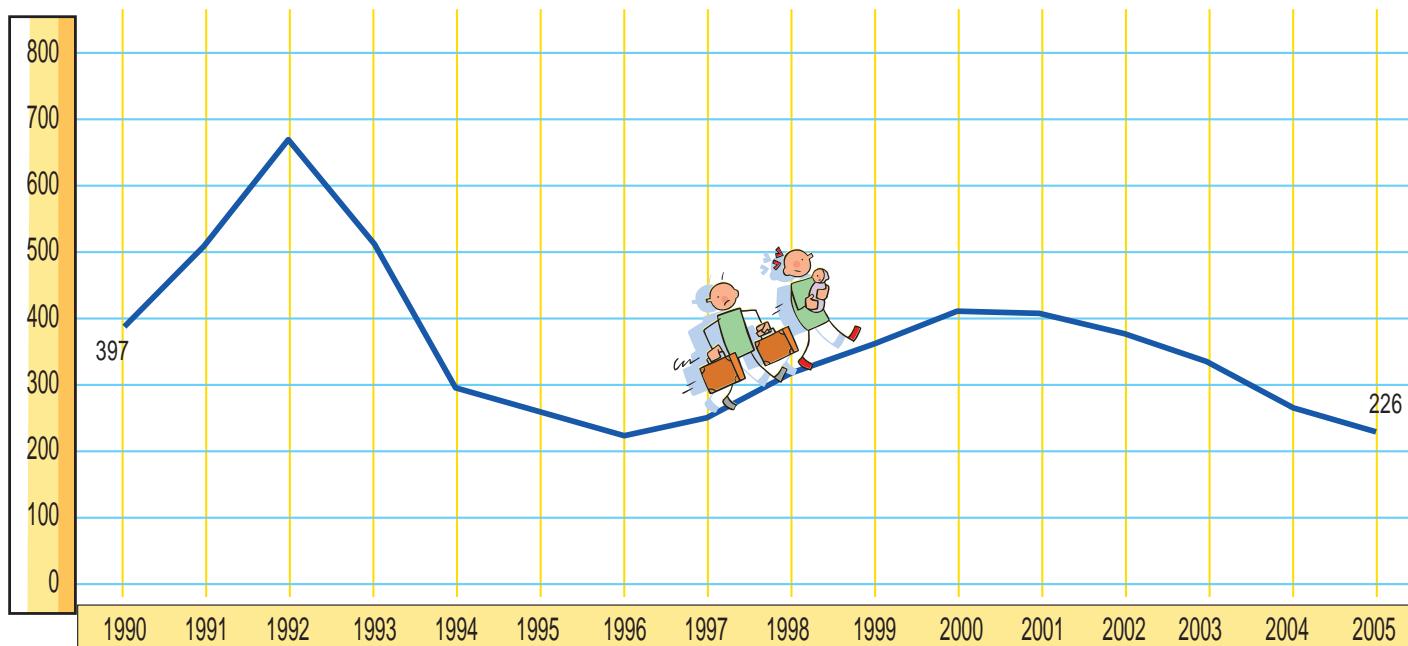


Source: Eurostat.

Europe has a long tradition of hospitality and of giving refuge to people fleeing war or persecution in the world's troubled areas. The number of asylum seekers increases in times of war, such as during the Balkan conflicts in the early 1990s. The number of asylum applications in the EU has fallen since those days and in 2005 it was lower than at any time in the previous 15 years.



Asylum applications in the EU in thousands (1990–2005)



Figures for 1990–94 are for EU-15.

Source: Eurostat.



Quality of life

A good quality of life depends on a series of factors, including having enough money and being in good health. How wealthy and healthy are Europeans? The answer varies from one country to another.

To get a rough idea of the material standard of living in a particular country we can measure the total value of everything that country produces in a given calendar year (its 'gross domestic product' or GDP) and then divide that figure by the number of inhabitants.

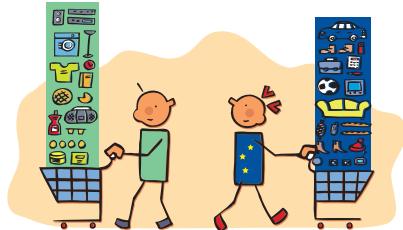
But what you can buy with the same amount of money varies from country to country. To make standards of living comparable, we need to take account of these differences in purchasing power. We can do this by measuring the price of a comparable and representative 'basket' of goods and services in each country and expressing this price not in local currencies or euro but in a common notional currency we call the purchasing power standard (PPS).

PPS eliminates differences in price levels between countries, so that comparing GDP per inhabitant in PPS gives a fair comparison of national living standards across the EU.

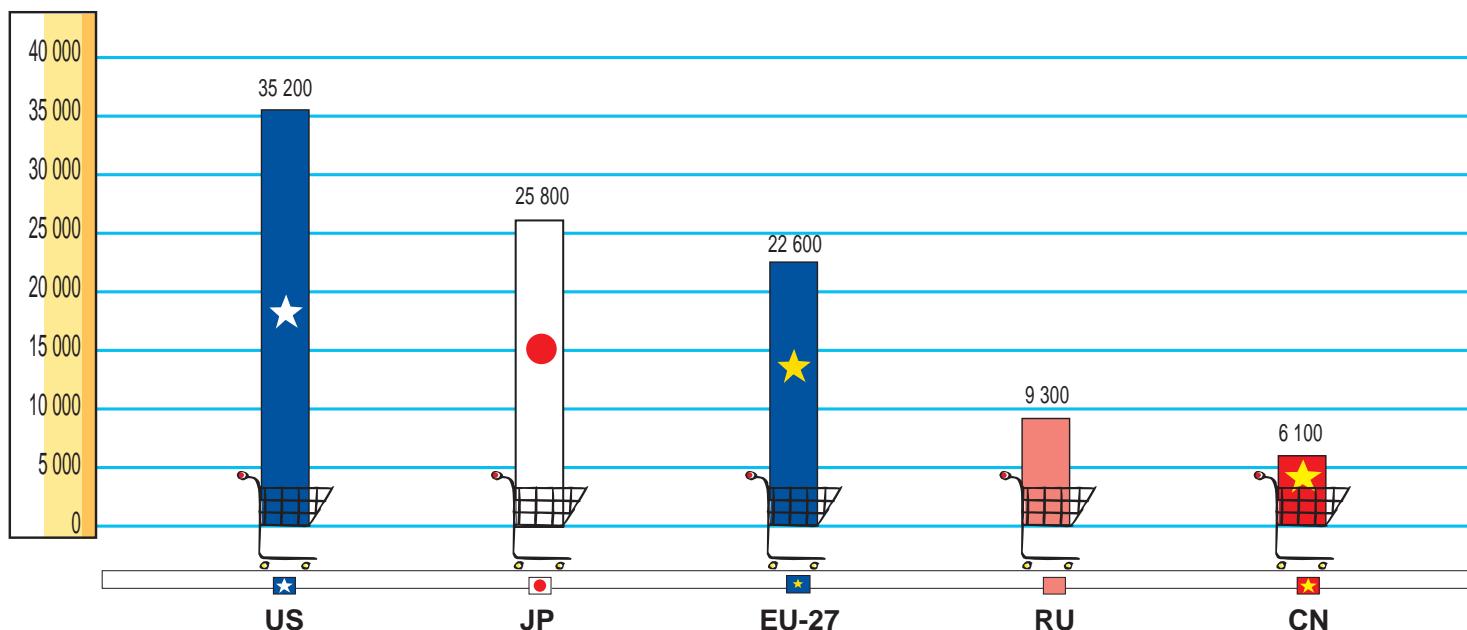


How wealthy are Europeans?

Standards of living in Europe have improved significantly over the past decade. Based on the PPS, which makes international comparisons possible, EU standards of living are among the highest in the world.



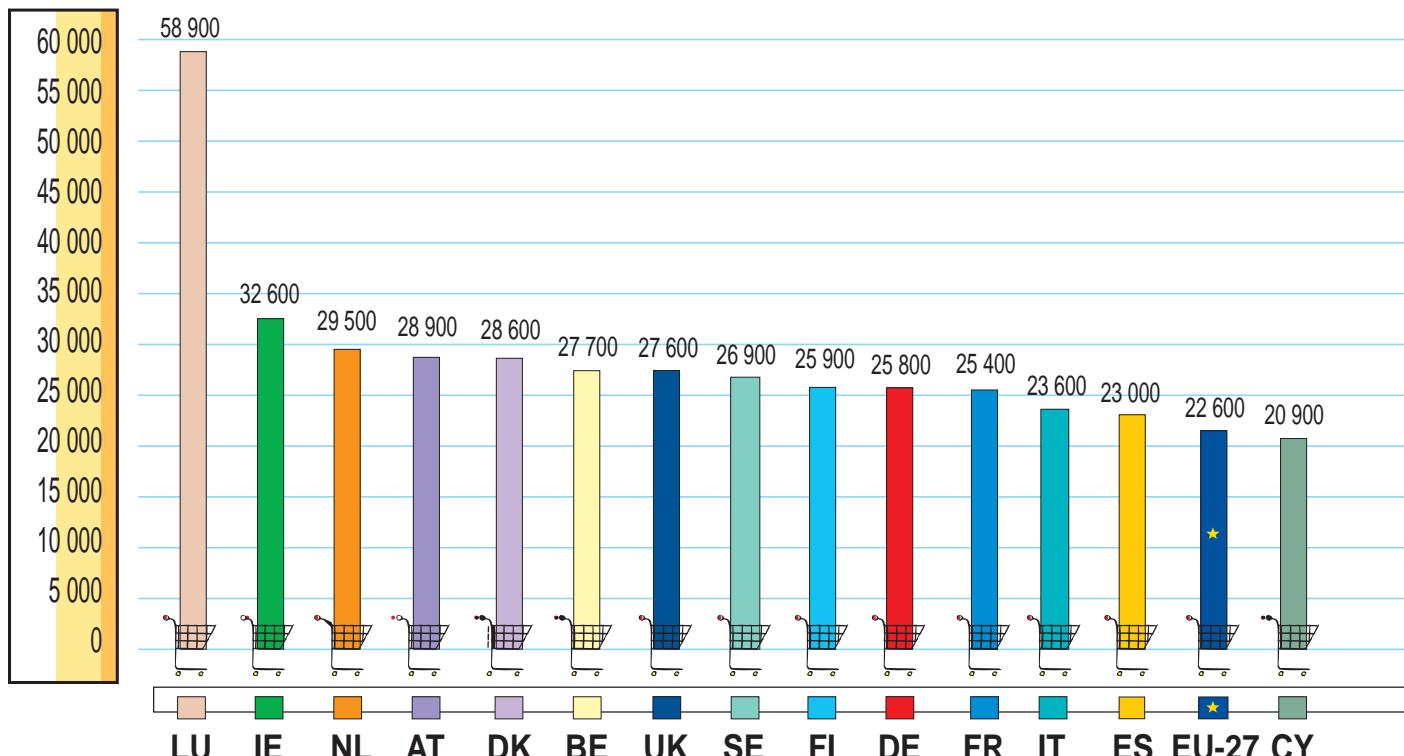
GDP per inhabitant in PPS (2005)



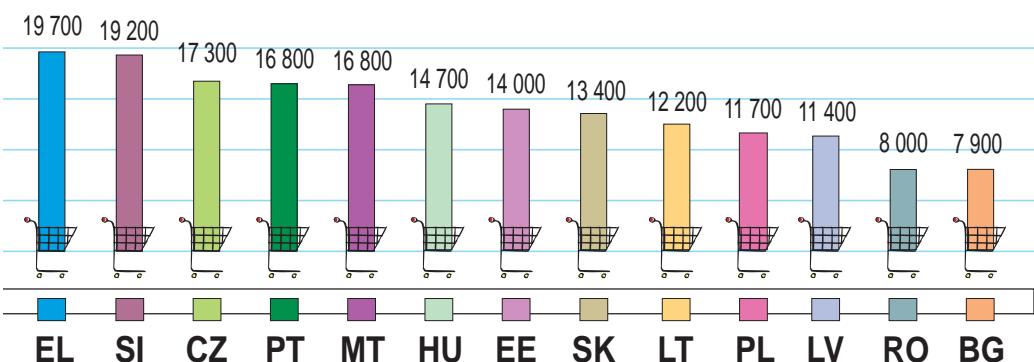
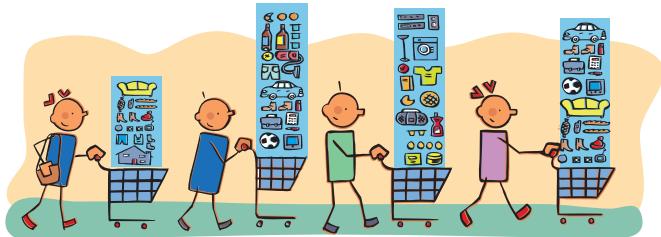
Sources: IMF, Eurostat.

The standard of living in the EU varies. GDP per inhabitant (in PPS) is highest in Luxembourg and lowest in Bulgaria. The EU is striving to narrow the gap between its rich and poor members, strengthen the European economy, make it more competitive and create more jobs so we can all enjoy a better quality of life. As it is, GDP growth is currently faster in the poorer countries which have joined the EU since 2004 than in the other member states.

GDP per inhabitant in PPS in the EU-27 (2005)



Source: Eurostat.

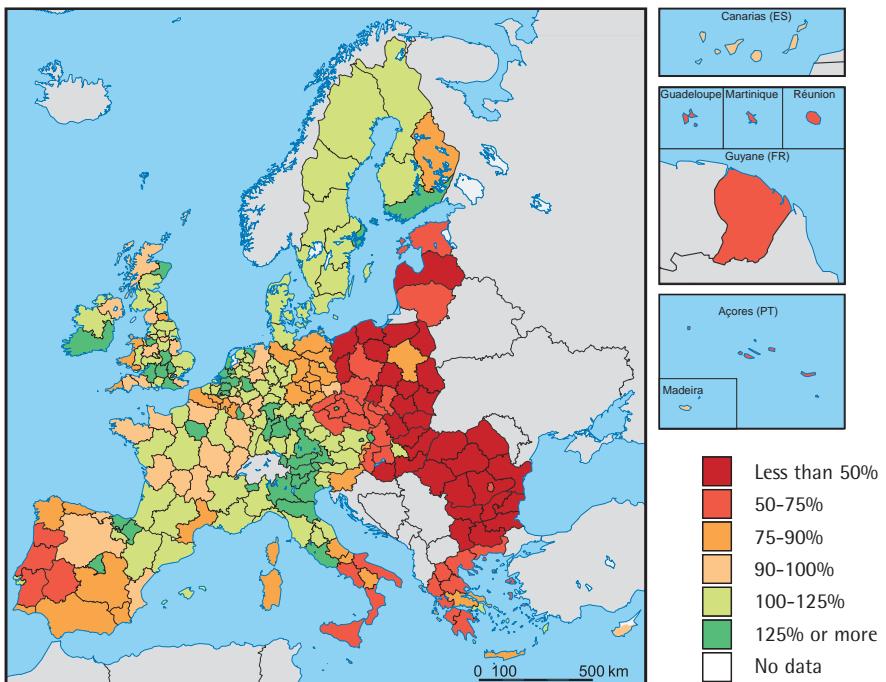


Standards of living can also vary from region to region within a single country. In some regions of the EU, as the map shows, GDP per inhabitant in PPS is less than 50% of the EU-27 average. In the most prosperous regions it can be more than 25% above the EU-27 average.

The EU has created so-called Structural Funds to help even out these differences by improving living standards in poorer regions. Over 35% of the EU's budget is used to boost the economies of these regions, and in turn strengthen the EU as a whole.



GDP per inhabitant in PPS as a percentage of the EU-27 average (2004)



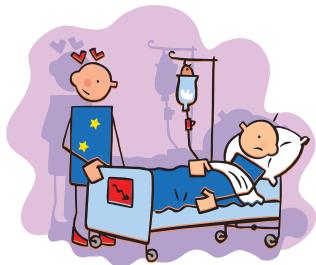
Source: European Commission.



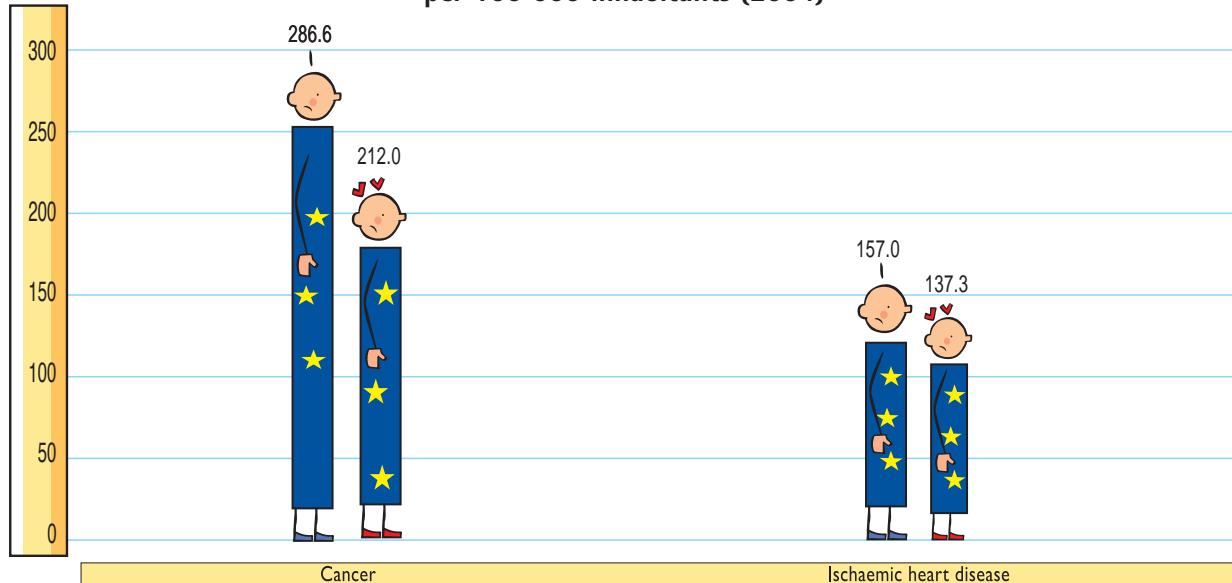
How healthy are Europeans?

Although Europeans are leading longer and healthier lives, they can do more to protect themselves from the two biggest single causes of death – heart disease and cancer. A healthy and active lifestyle helps. Smoking, poor diet and lack of exercise are among the factors that increase your risk of ischaemic heart disease, in which clogged or damaged arteries deliver too little blood to the heart.

More men than women die of these diseases in the EU, and the proportion of the population affected varies widely from one country to another. In 2004, Hungary had the highest death rate from cancer for both men and women. France had the lowest death rate from ischaemic heart disease for both sexes.



Deaths from cancer (malignant neoplasms) and ischaemic heart disease in the EU-25 per 100 000 inhabitants (2004)

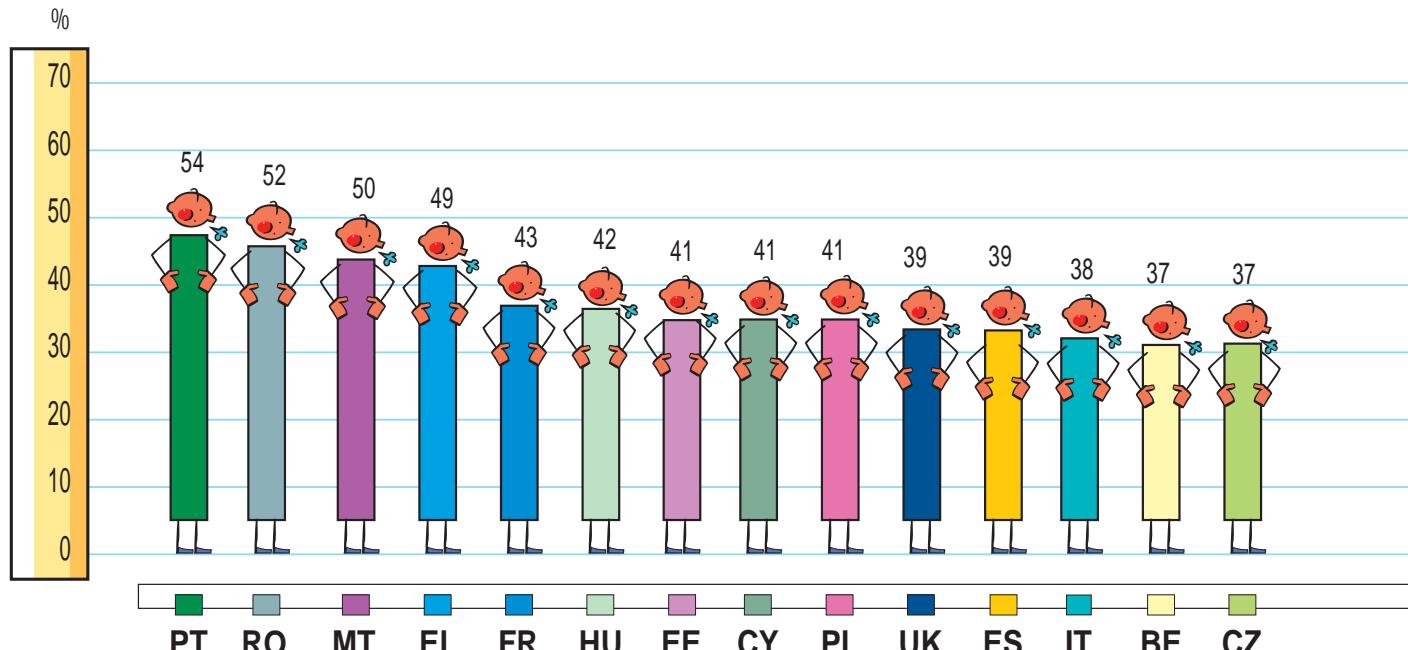


Source: Eurostat.

Physical exercise is good for health. A Eurobarometer survey published in November 2006 showed that 64% of people in the EU engaged in some sort of physical activity in an average week. Top of the list was Finland, where 83% of those polled said they were involved in physical effort via recreational, sports or leisure-time activities. The Finns were followed by the Dutch, with 79%, and the Lithuanians, with 78%.

Least active were the Portuguese, followed by the Romanians and Maltese.

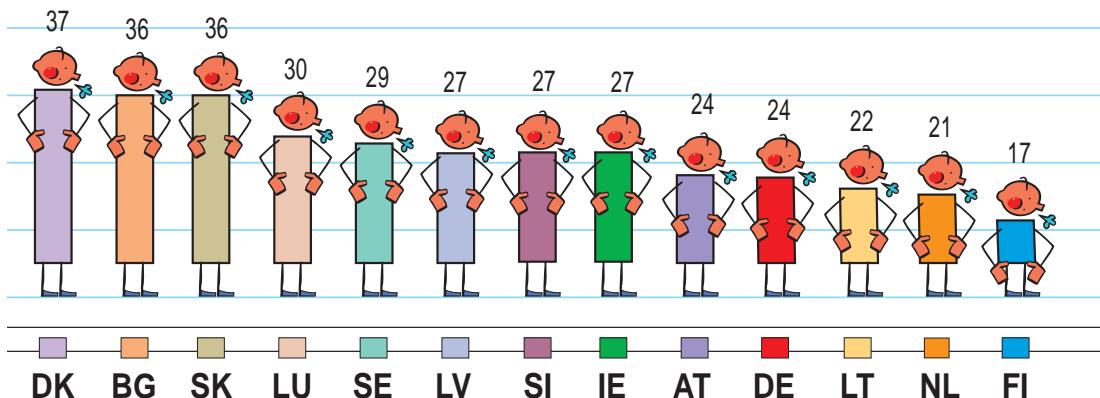
Percentage of people interviewed in the EU-27 who take no regular exercise (2006)



Source: Eurobarometer.

Overall, more men than women go in for sports, and the younger you are, the more physically active you are likely to be.

The graph shows the percentage of people interviewed in each EU country who say they get no physical exercise in a given week.



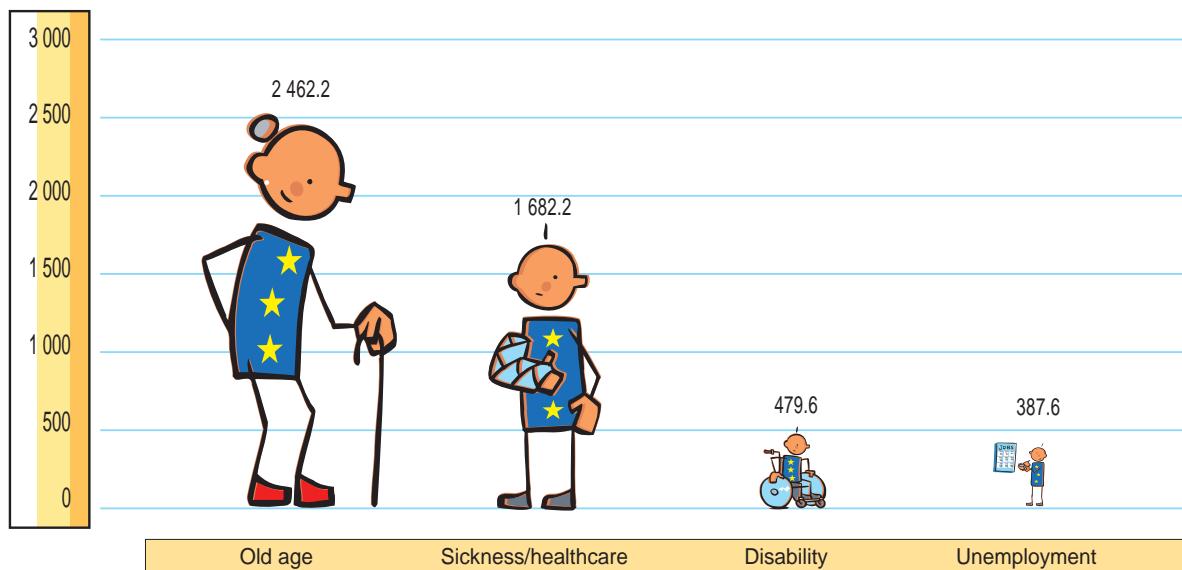
A fair and caring society

The European social model takes different forms in different countries, but all EU countries aim to be fair and caring societies. Tax revenue helps pay for social protection systems (such as pension, healthcare and unemployment benefits) which are designed to protect vulnerable members of society. The amount of money spent on each inhabitant varies from country to country.

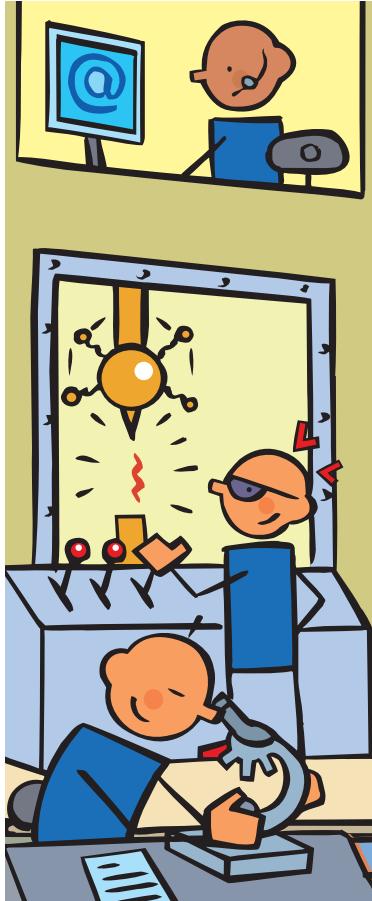
As the population ages, those in work have to support an increasing number of senior citizens. To take account of this trend, and to keep welfare costs under control, EU countries are redesigning their social protection systems. Europe's social model has to be modernised to preserve it for future generations.



Spending on four types of social protection per inhabitant in PPS, EU-25 (2004)



Source: Eurostat.



Education, research and the information society

The EU's ambition is to become the world's most dynamic knowledge-based economy. That means investing heavily in research (the source of new knowledge) and in education and training, which give people access to that new knowledge.

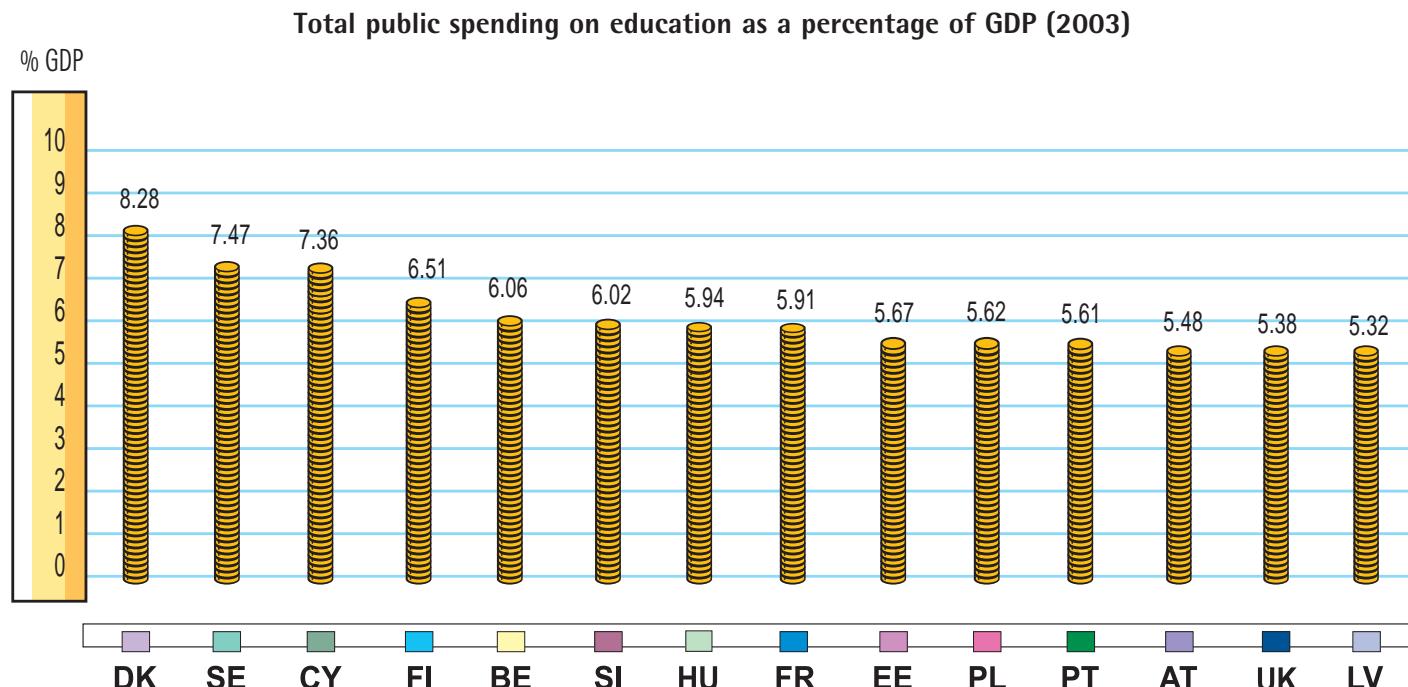
Particularly important is training the workforce in information technology skills, and providing easier and faster access to the Internet for schools, businesses and people at home.

A thriving economy needs people to stay in work longer and to learn new skills throughout their working lives. 'Lifelong learning' is the watchword. In the EU, the number of adults taking part in learning activities has been rising – reaching 9.6% of people aged between 25 and 64 in 2006.

As it competes for economic success in the global marketplace, the European Union is up against 'traditional' rivals such as Japan and the United States and newer ones like China and India.

Education: investing in people

Education is the key to success – for individuals and for the EU as a whole. How much of its wealth does each EU country spend on educating its people?

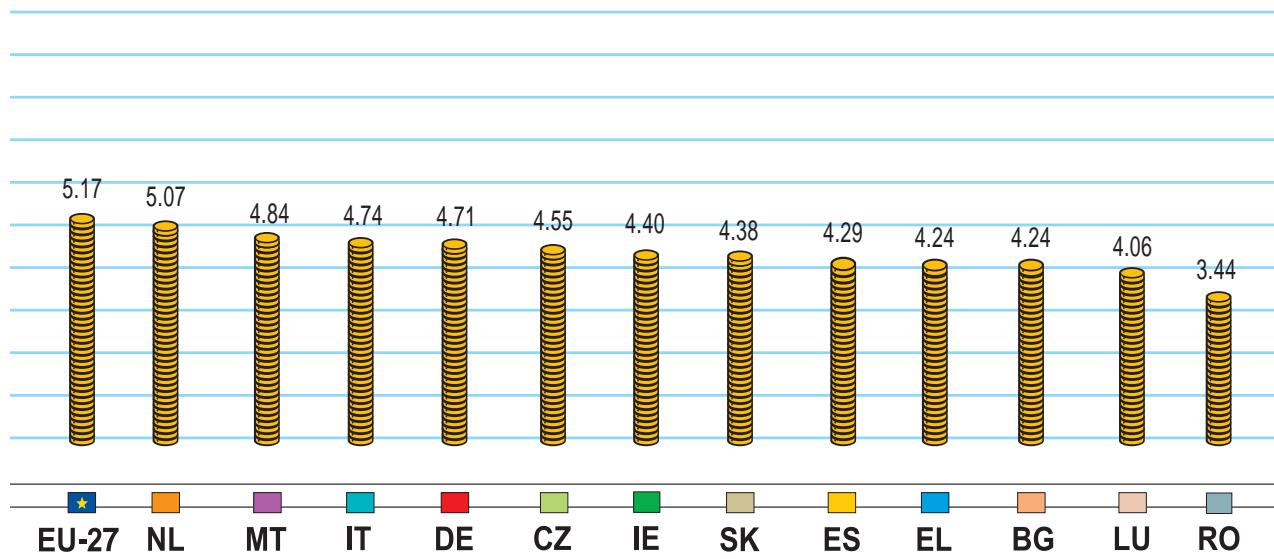


DK: figures do not include post-secondary non-tertiary education.

FR: figures do not include French overseas departments.

PT: figures do not include local government expenditure.

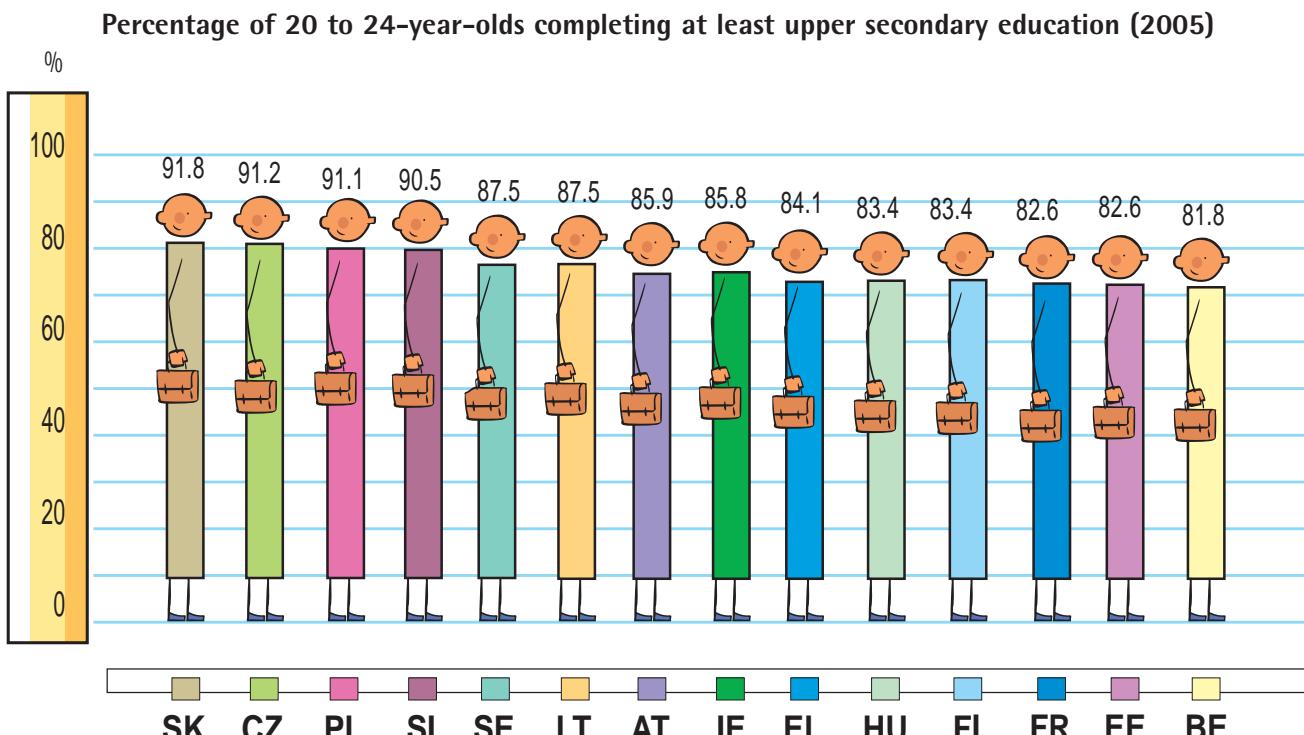
Source: Eurostat.

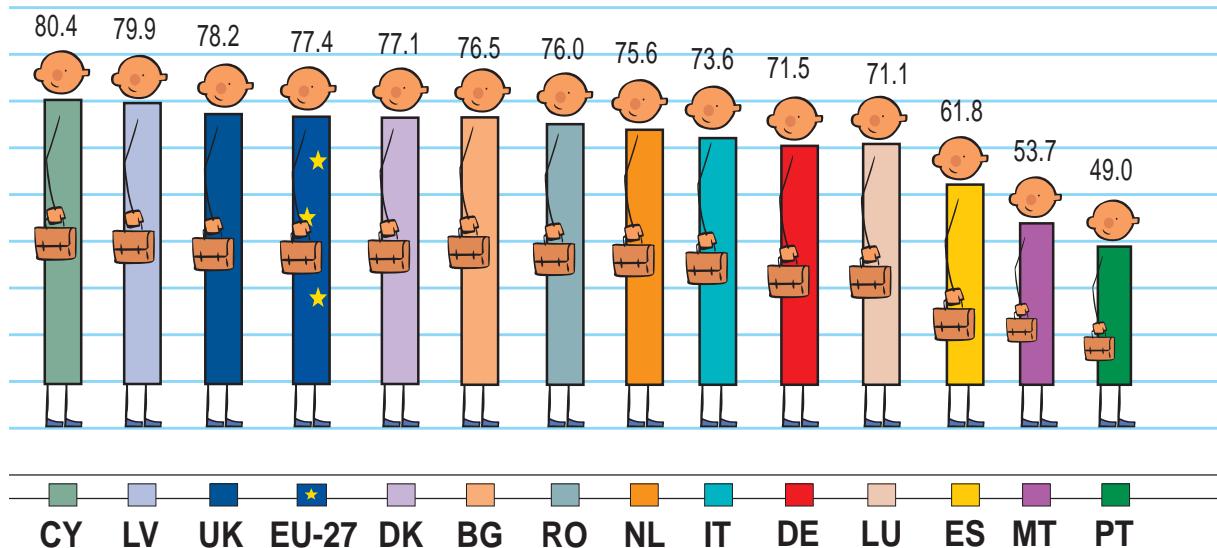


NL: figures include public spending on government-dependent private institutions.

LU: figures do not include tertiary education.

Education beyond the minimum school leaving age – and especially at university level – is the key to a satisfying career for many people, and is essential in giving the EU a well-qualified workforce. In today's EU, the vast majority of young people have been educated to upper secondary level or beyond.





The subjects Europeans study

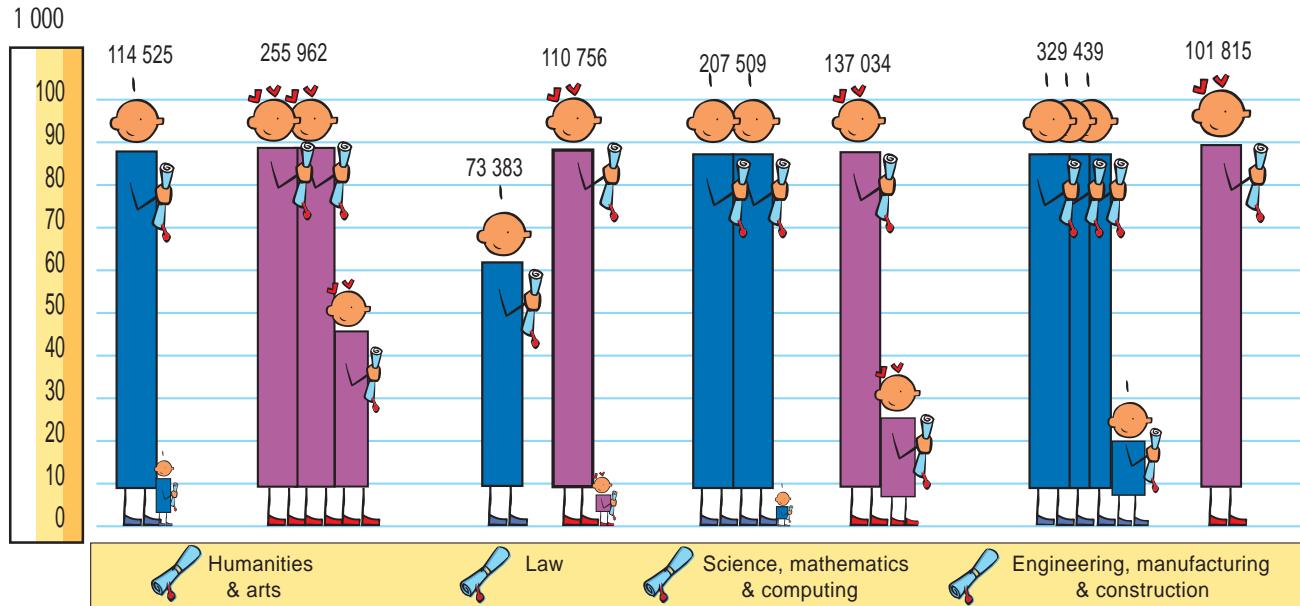
Women, whose educational attainments were below men's in Europe a generation ago, have now caught up. In 2004, nearly 55% of young people graduating from higher education in the EU were women.

The subjects Europeans choose to study tend to differ according to their gender: more men choose science, computing and engineering, while more women choose the arts, humanities and law.



Europe needs well-qualified people in all walks of life. In particular, it needs more women in professional careers, and more scientists (of both genders) to carry out vital research.

Higher education graduates by gender and field of study, EU-25 (2004)



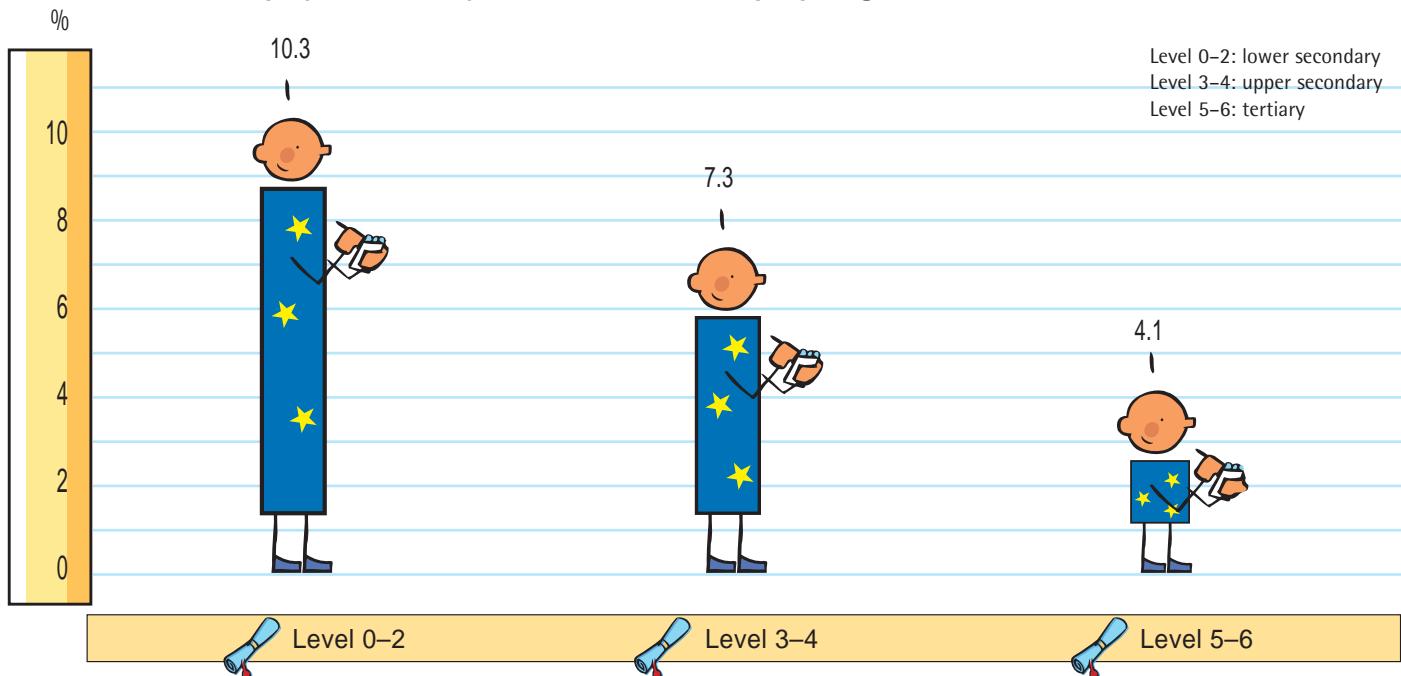
Source: Eurostat.

Better education means better job prospects

On the whole, the less educated you are, the more likely you are to be unemployed. If you have completed 'tertiary' education (e.g. a university degree course), your risk of being out of work is less than half that of someone who never got beyond primary or lower secondary schooling.



Unemployment rate by educational level for people aged 25 to 64, EU-27 (2006)



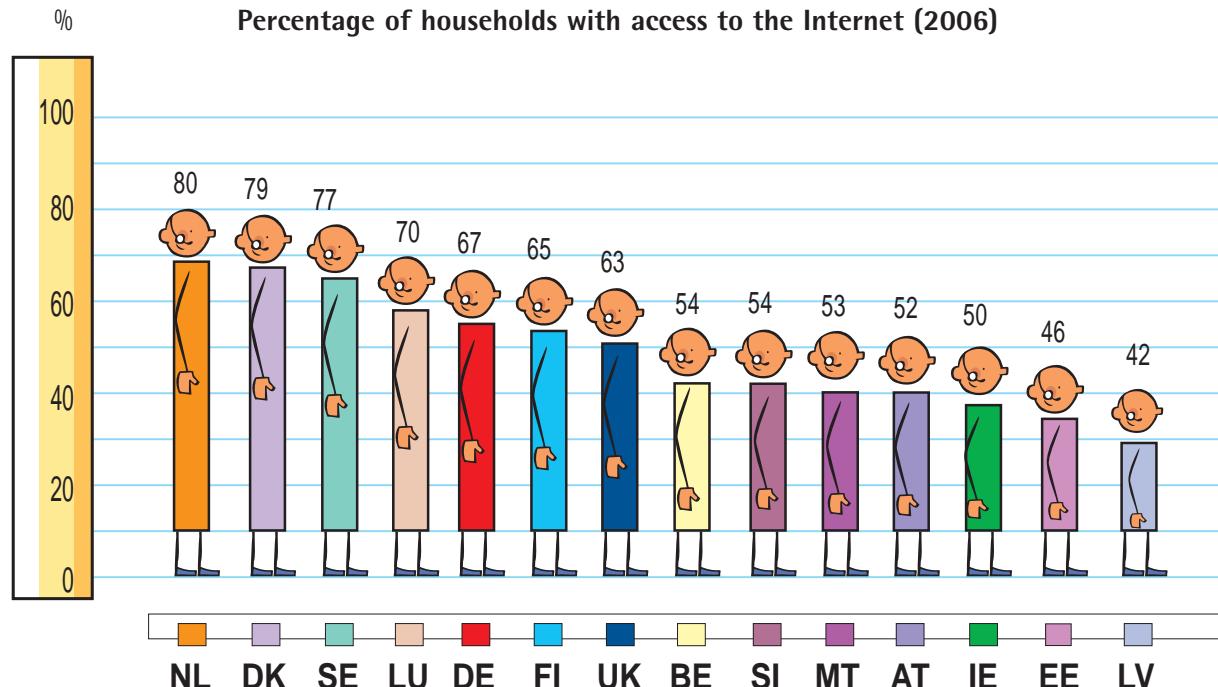
Source: Eurostat, labour force survey.



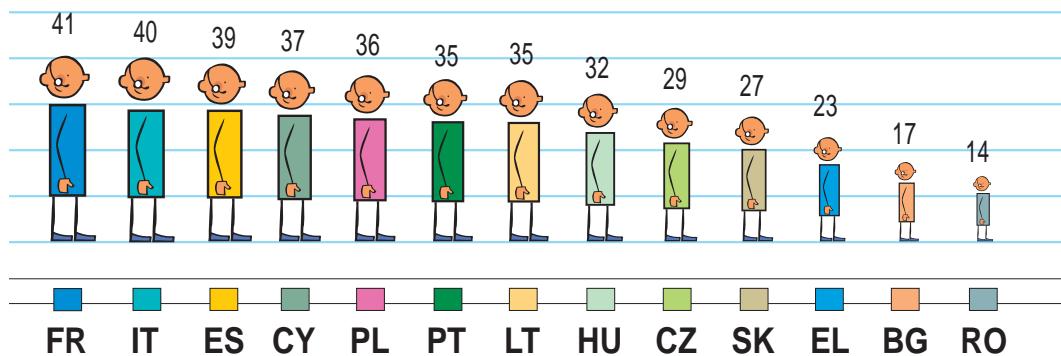
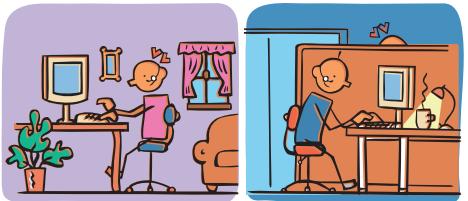
Information technology: an essential tool

All over the EU, more and more firms and households are connected to the Internet, and more business is being done online – which boosts efficiency. By 2006, more than 90% of businesses and 49% of households in the EU-27 had access to the Internet.

However, there are big national differences. For example, 80% of households in the Netherlands had Internet access in 2006 while in Romania this figure was only 14%. One of the EU's priorities is to ensure that all its citizens have fast, reliable access to the Internet and the skills to handle information technology. The 'digital divide' between people in different countries and regions must be narrowed.



Source: Eurostat, survey on ICT usage.

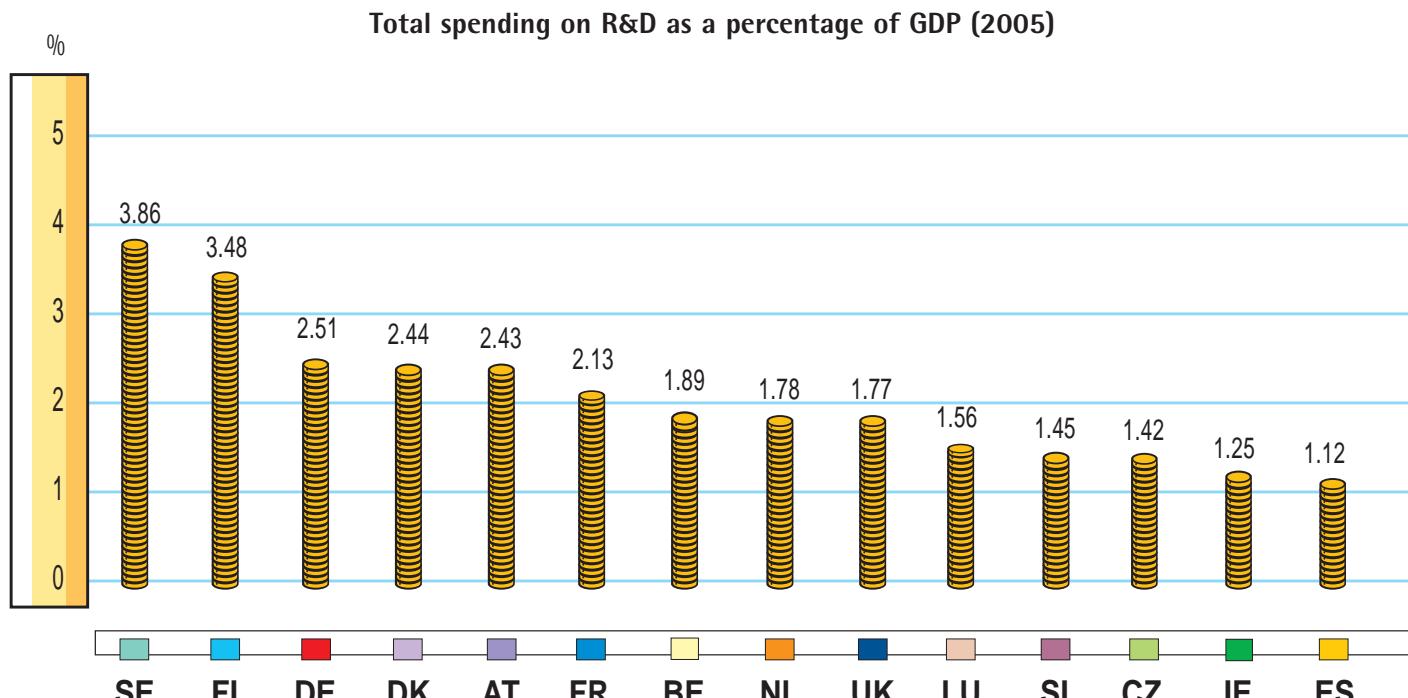




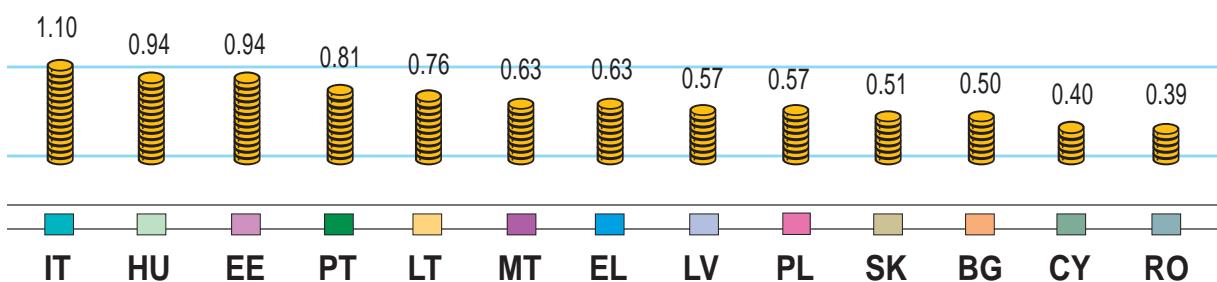
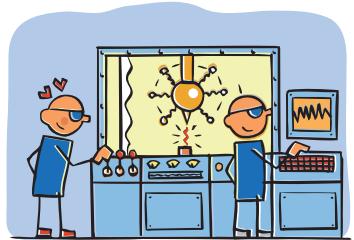
Research: key to the future

Research and development (R&D), especially in new technologies, holds the key to future economic growth and jobs. The EU's aim is to invest more in research to bring its R&D spending in line with that of the United States and Japan. In 2004, Japan spent the equivalent of 3.15% of its gross domestic product (GDP) on R&D and the US 2.59%, compared with the EU average of 1.92%.

But the EU figure masks considerable difference between national performances. Figures for 2005 show that Sweden and Finland already outspend Japan, while other EU countries spend less than 1%.



Figures are for 2004 for Belgium, Italy, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. Figures for 2003 for Greece. Source: Eurostat.





Europeans at work

Employment and the creation of more and better jobs for its citizens are top priorities for the EU. The Union must also help provide equal opportunities, so that everyone who wants to can work. The aim is to raise the number of people of working age with jobs to the level of 70% of the working-age population by 2010.

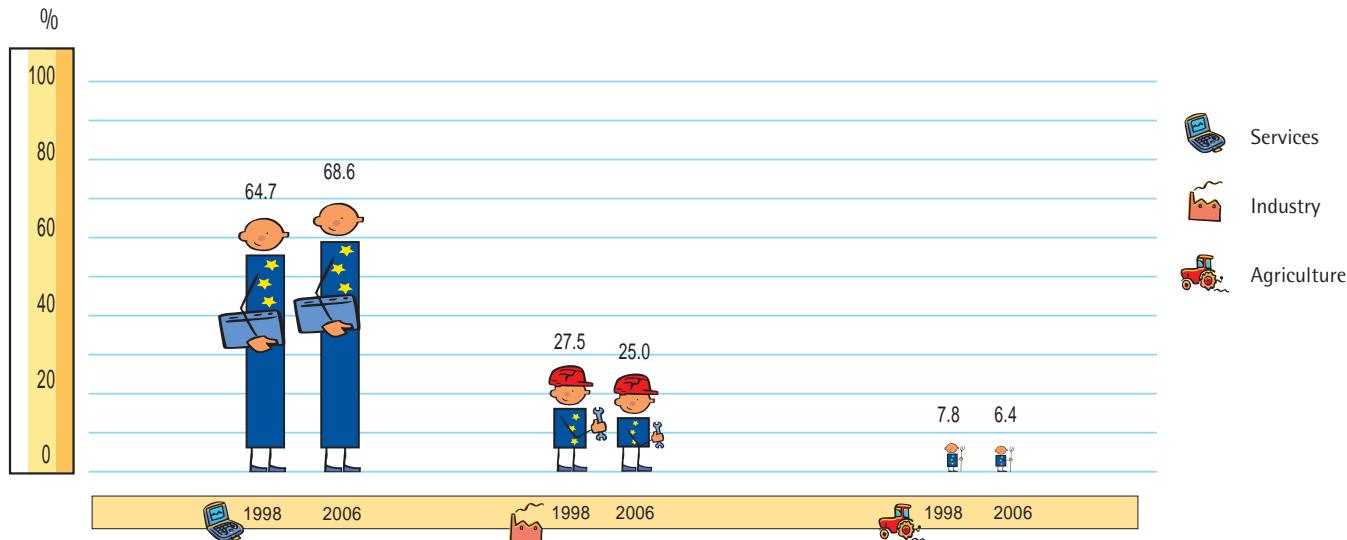
The jobs people do

In the 1950s, more than 20% of the EU's population worked in farming and around 40% in industry. Since then, employment in agriculture and industry has fallen while the number of jobs in the services sector has soared. By 2004, more than two thirds of jobs in the 25-nation EU were in the services sector. The figure for agriculture was 5.0% and for industry 27.9%.

Recent figures show that, while employment levels continue to rise in services and fall in agriculture, the number of industrial jobs has remained relatively stable.



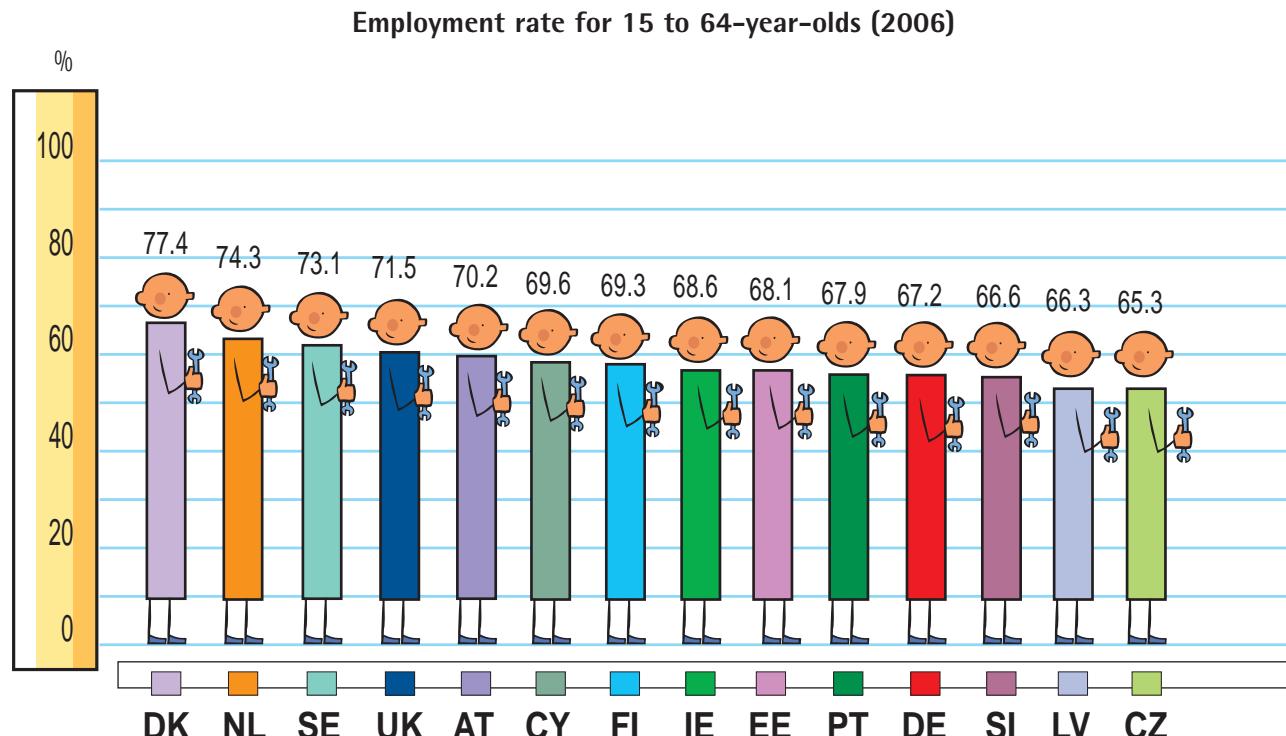
Percentage of workforce employed in agriculture, industry and services, EU-27 (1998 and 2006)



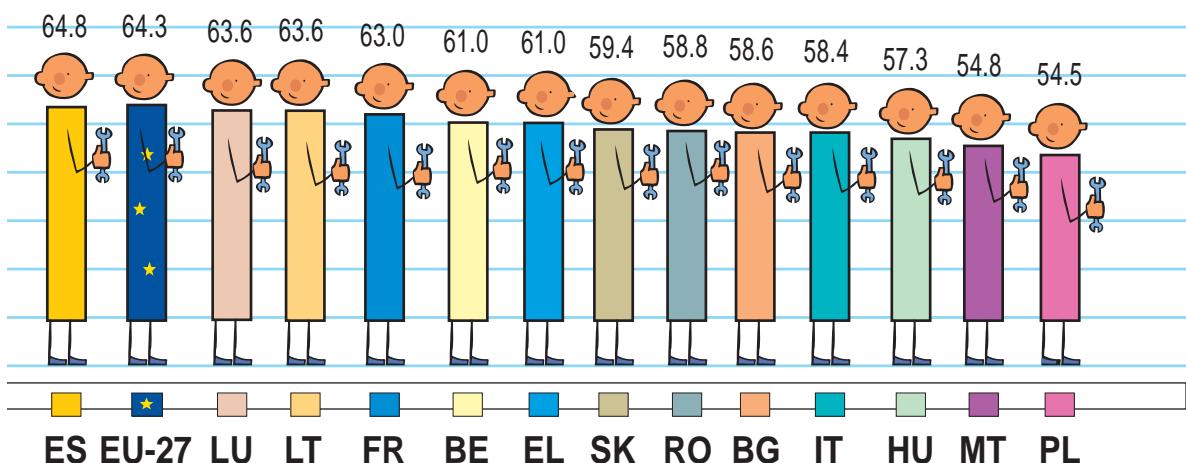
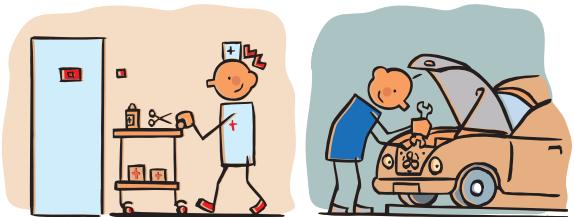
Sources: Eurostat, national accounts, annual average.

How many people work in the EU?

In 2006, 64.3% of people of working age in the EU-27 had jobs. The level was highest in Denmark and lowest in Poland. It is also different for men and for women.

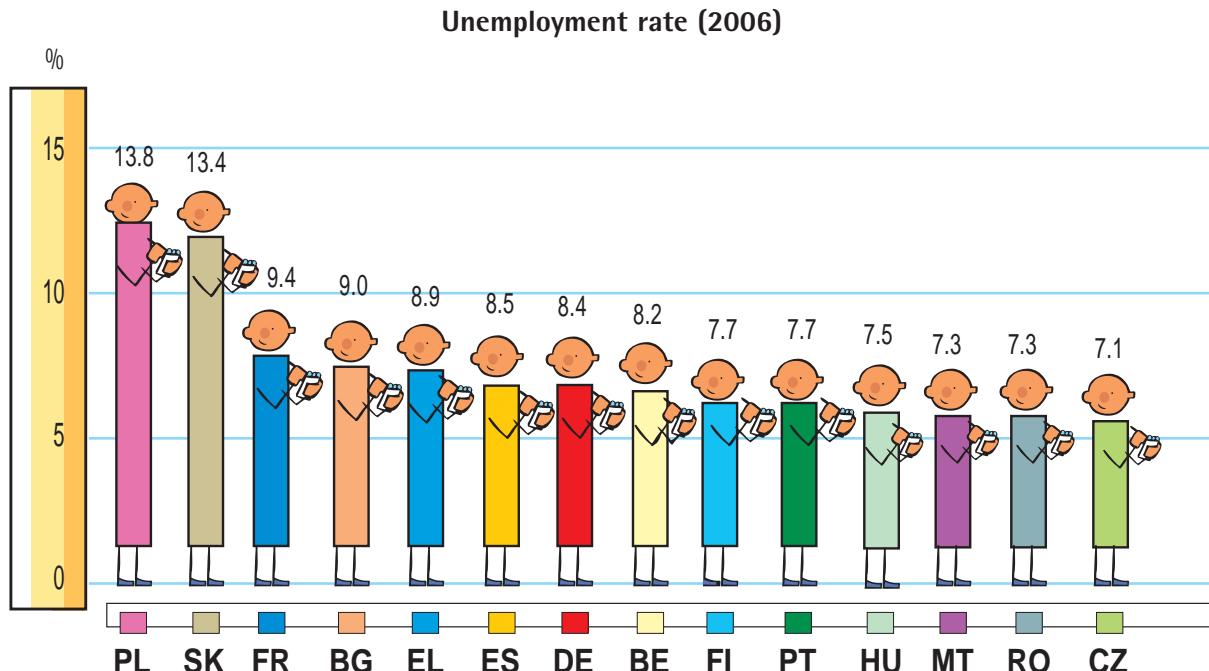


Source: Eurostat, labour force survey.

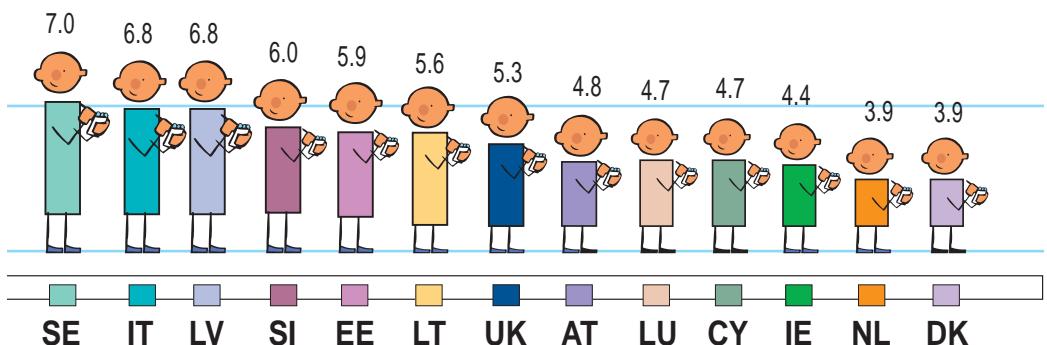


Tackling unemployment is vital for the EU. The unemployment rate varies from one country and region to another. In 2006, the Netherlands and Denmark had the lowest level of unemployment, while Poland had the highest.

Overall, 7.9% of the EU's labour force in the EU-27 was unemployed in 2006, compared with 4.6% in the United States.



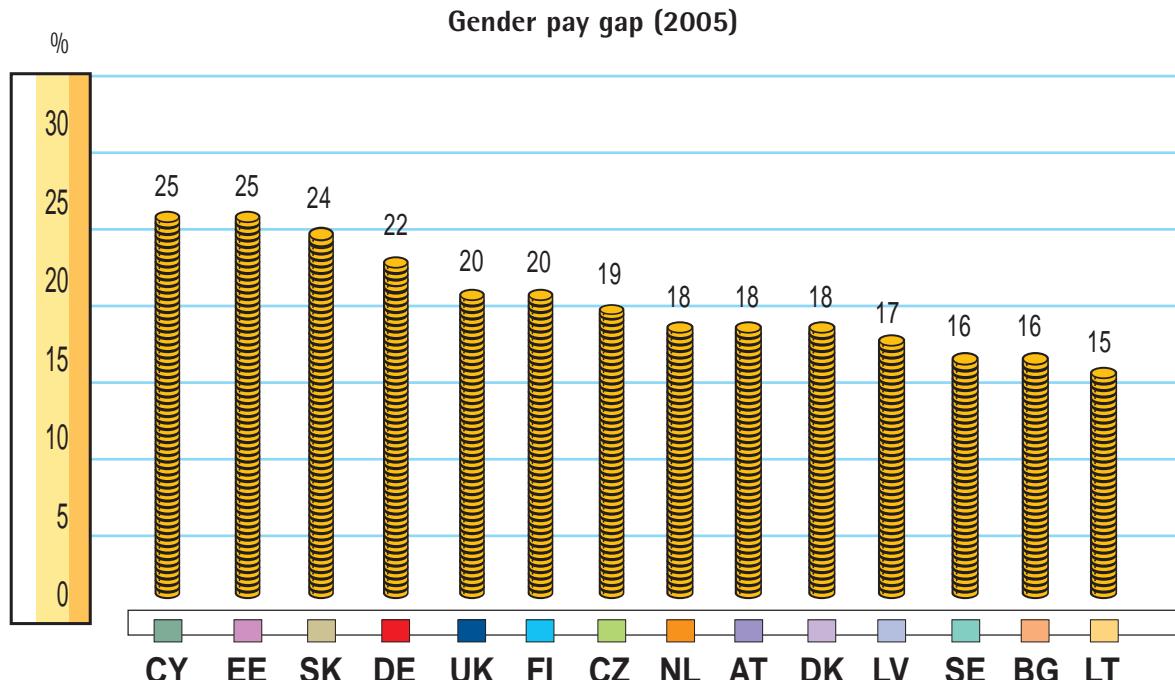
Source: Eurostat.



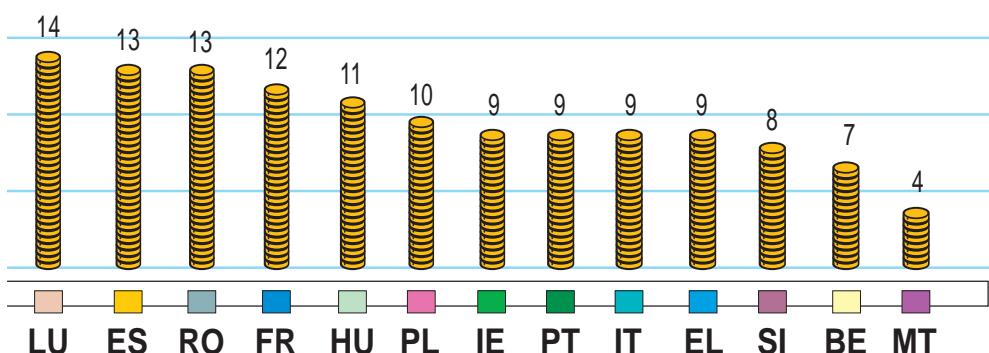
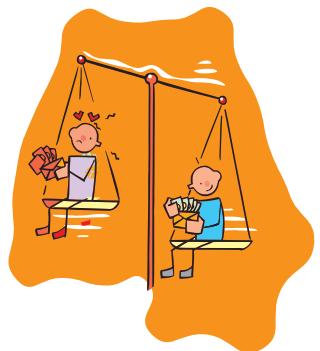
The gender gap

In all EU countries, women earn (on average) less than men. The gender pay gap is widest in Estonia and Cyprus, where women earned 25% less than men in 2005. It is narrowest (4%) in Malta. If the EU is to increase its working population, better pay and conditions are needed to attract more women into the labour market. The average gender pay gap in the EU narrowed from 17% to 15% between 1998 and 2005.

The EU must also keep both men and women working longer. It is making a special effort to help people of all ages to find jobs and keep them. That includes policies to encourage part-time work and to remove conflicting pressures between work and family life.



Sources: Eurostat.



♀♂ Equal opportunities for all?

In each age bracket, more men than women have jobs in the EU. This is sometimes due to discrimination in the workplace, sometimes the result of personal choice or cultural traditions.



Sources: Eurostat, labour force survey, annual average.

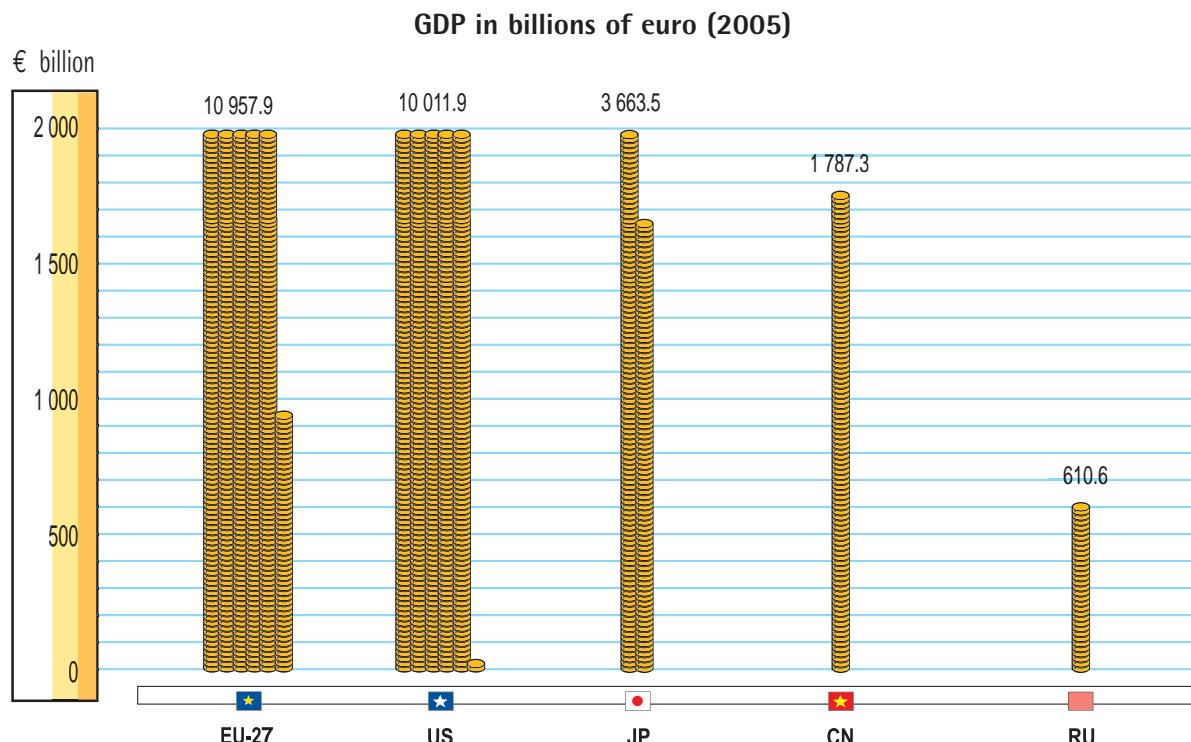


Economic activity and trade

One of the EU's main aims is economic progress. Over the past 50 years, and especially since the 1980s, much has been done to break down the barriers between the EU's national economies and to create a single market where goods, people, money and services can move around freely. Trade between EU countries has greatly increased and, at the same time, the EU has become a major world trading power.

How much does the EU produce?

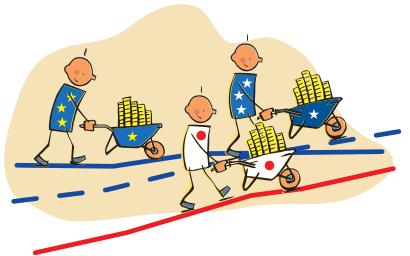
The EU's gross domestic product (GDP) – i.e. the economy's output of goods and services – is steadily growing. Following the entry of new member states in 2004, the EU's GDP is now greater than that of the United States.



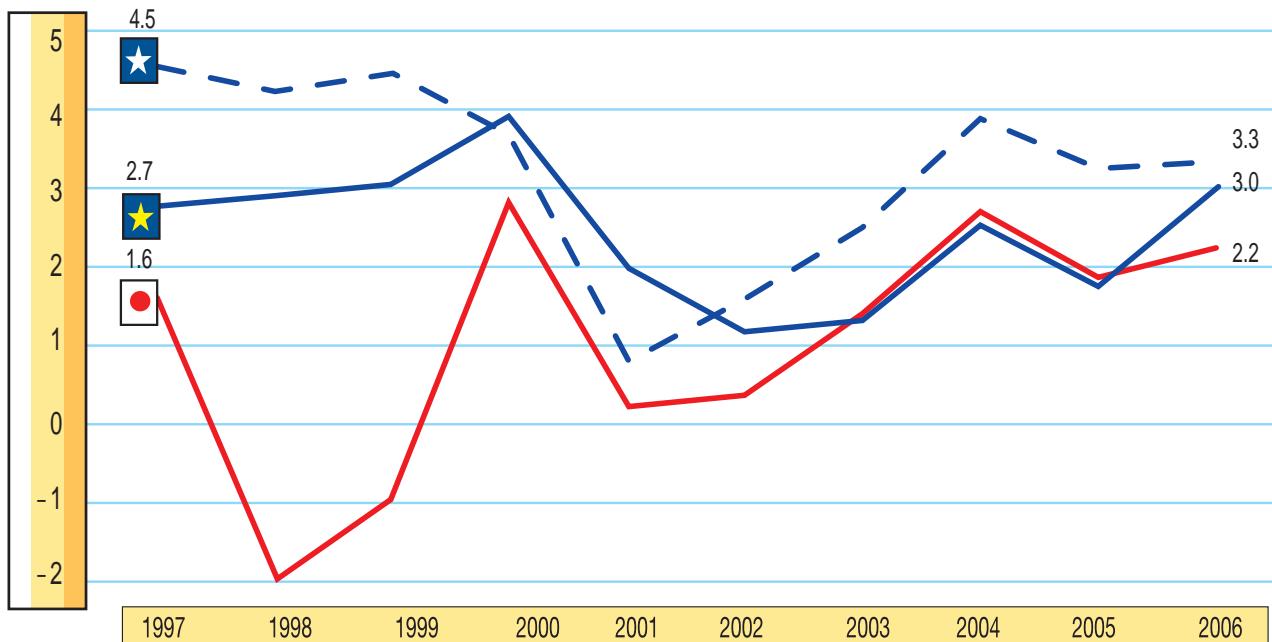
Sources: IMF, Eurostat.

In all EU countries, over 60% of GDP is generated by the service sector (this includes things such as banking, tourism, transport and insurance). Industry and agriculture, although still important, have declined in economic importance in recent years.

Although the Union's GDP continues to rise, it has grown more slowly than that of the United States in recent years, but faster than that of Japan.



GDP growth (percentage change over previous year)



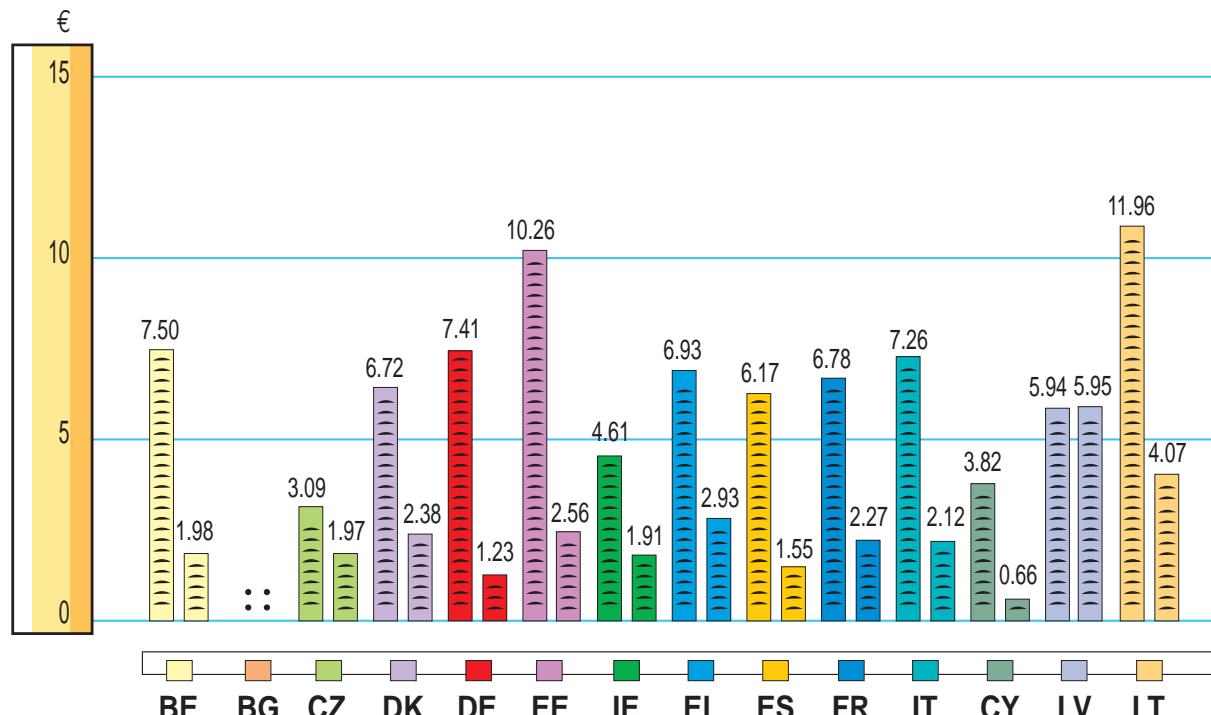
Source: Eurostat.



Delivering value for money

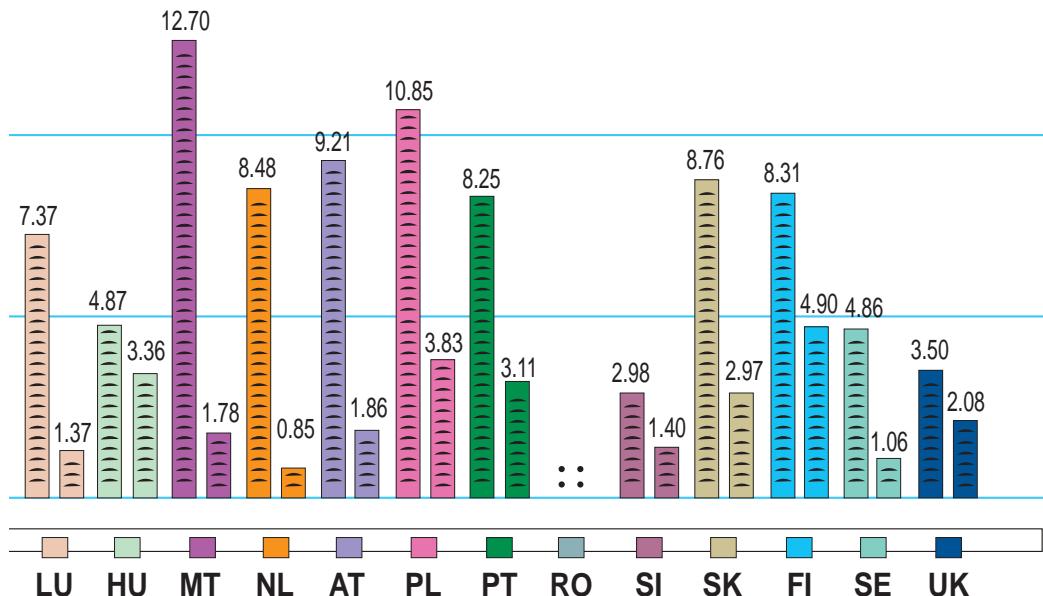
The single market is one of the EU's greatest achievements. It has broken down economic frontiers in Europe and has increased competition, which has resulted in better quality and lower prices for goods and services. Some of the most dramatic price reductions have been in areas like air travel and communications. Take the case of a 10-minute telephone call to the United States. Prices in the Netherlands fell by 90% between 1997 and 2005. Callers from Latvia have been less fortunate.

The cost in euro of a 10-minute phone call to the US: standard weekday tariffs, including tax



For countries joining the EU since 2004, the figures in the left-hand column are for 2000 or 2001.

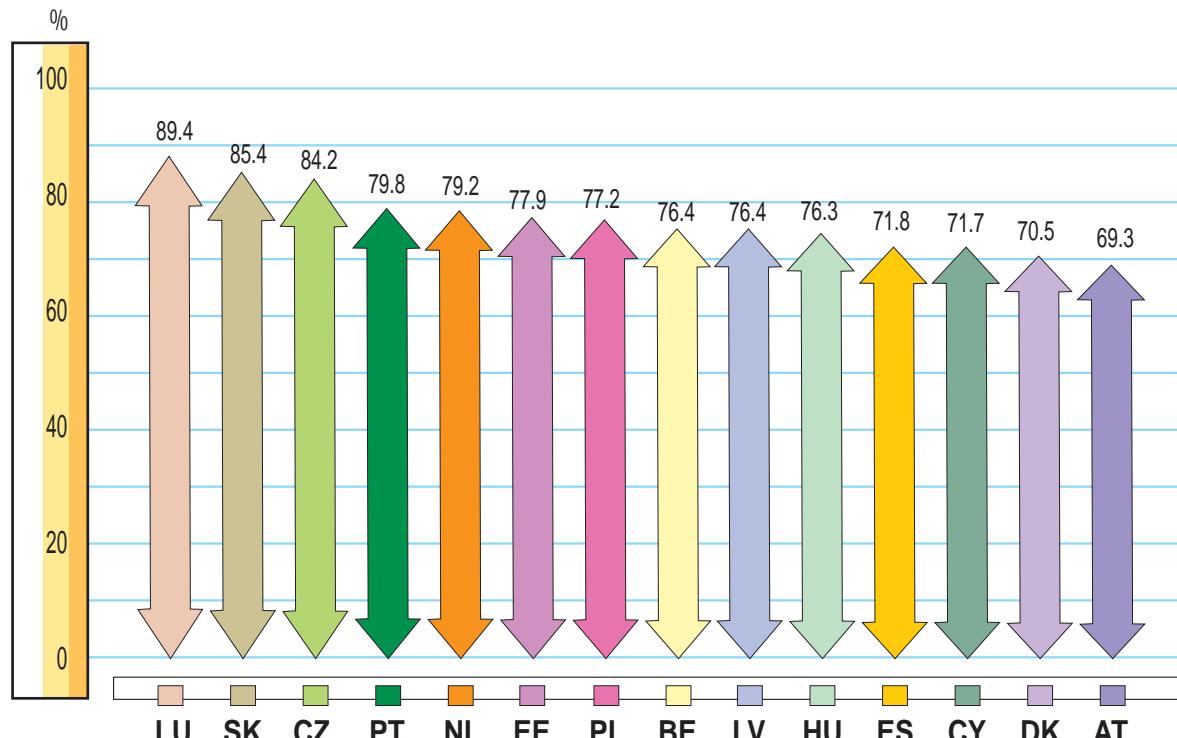
Sources: Eurostat, Teligen.



A major trading power

Although the EU makes up only 7% of the world's population, its trade with the rest of the world accounts for approximately a fifth of global exports and imports.

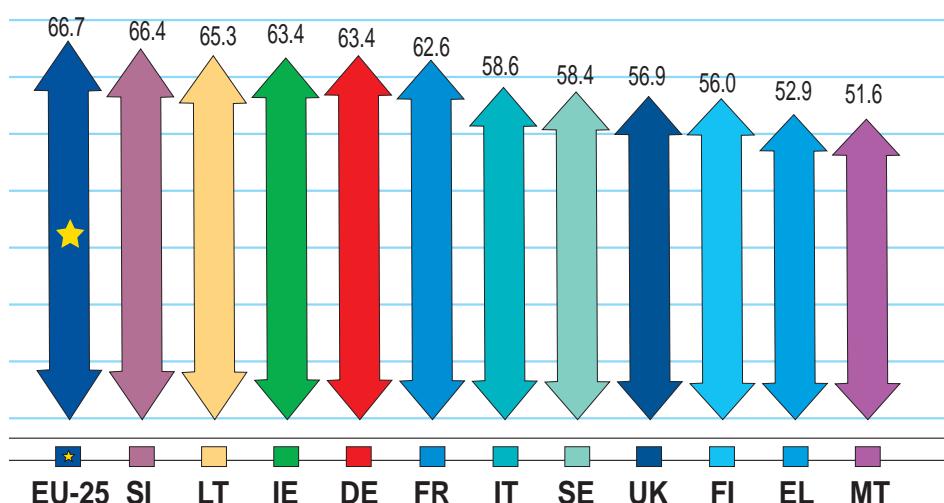
Exports to other EU members as a percentage of each country's total exports (2005)



Source: Eurostat.

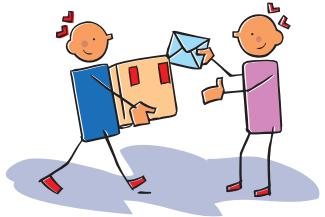
Trade between EU countries themselves represents two thirds of all EU trade, although levels vary between the member states. The single market has made trade between them much easier as goods, services, capital and people can now move freely across national borders.

The graph below shows how much EU countries exported to each other in 2005 as a share of their total exports. Luxembourg comes first, followed by Slovakia and the Czech Republic.



The EU is the main exporter in the world and the second biggest importer. The United States is the EU's most important trading partner, followed by China. In 2005, the EU accounted for 18.1% of world exports and 18.9% of global imports.

The European Union is also an important trading partner for less developed countries, most of whose exports enter the EU duty-free or at reduced rates of duty. This preferential access to the EU market is aimed at boosting the economic growth of poorer countries around the world.



Sources: Eurostat, IMF.



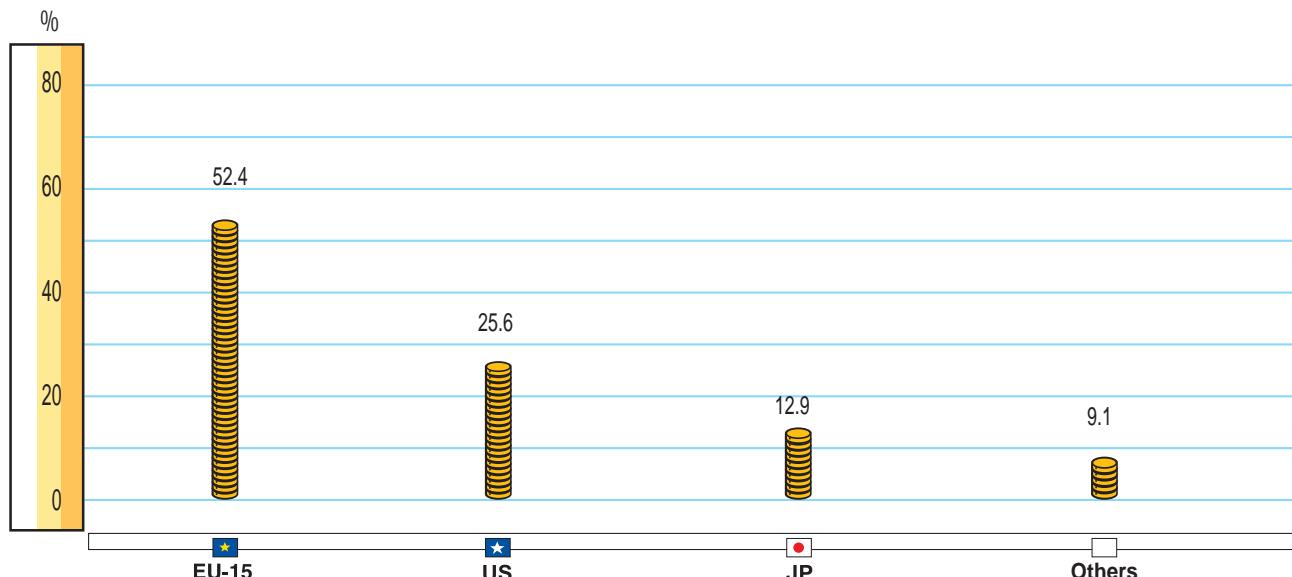
The EU: fighting world poverty

Poverty is still a global problem, in spite of progress over recent decades. More than 1 billion people around the world, one third of them in sub-Saharan Africa, live on less than a dollar a day.

As a major economic power, the EU plays its part through trade and aid to fight world poverty and promote global development. It seeks to use its influence within the World Trade Organisation to ensure fair rules for world trade and to make globalisation benefit all nations, including the poorest. It is the world's biggest donor of official development assistance.



Official development aid as a proportion of total aid given by the main OECD countries (2005)



The figure for the EU-15 includes aid managed by the EU institutions.

Source: OECD.



Transport, energy and the environment

Transport and energy are vital to the EU economy. Europeans and the products they consume in ever increasing quantity and variety are carried across the continent by all modes of transport – but most of all by road.

As the economy grows, so does the demand for transport and energy. But this growth means increasing congestion and fuel consumption, which in turn create more pollution. These are Europe-wide problems that require Europe-wide solutions which are decided at EU level.

Sustainable development is a top priority for the EU, which takes environmental concerns into account in all its policymaking.



Going places

Railways and inland waterways (i.e. rivers and canals), once so important for moving goods and passengers around Europe, now carry only a small percentage of the total. Three quarters of the European Union's freight now goes by road – as do more than three quarters of travellers in the EU.

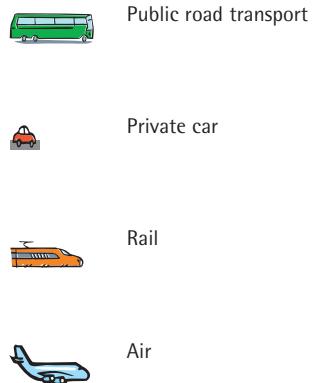
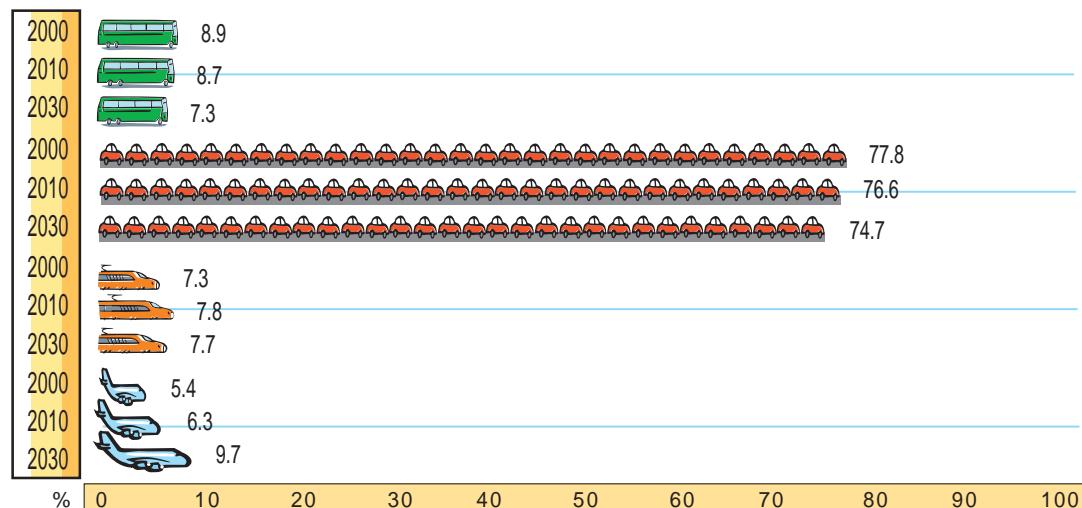
Forecasts predict that road transport will remain by far the most important mode of travel for passengers and that air travel will continue to boom.

To ease congestion on the roads and improve the environment, the EU is encouraging people to travel by public transport and urging transport firms to move freight to trains, barges and ships.

To tackle congestion at Europe's airports, the EU is creating a unified Europe-wide system of air traffic management (the 'single European sky').



Use of four means of passenger transport in the EU-25 as a percentage of total passenger transport, measured in passenger-kilometres (2000, 2010 and 2030)



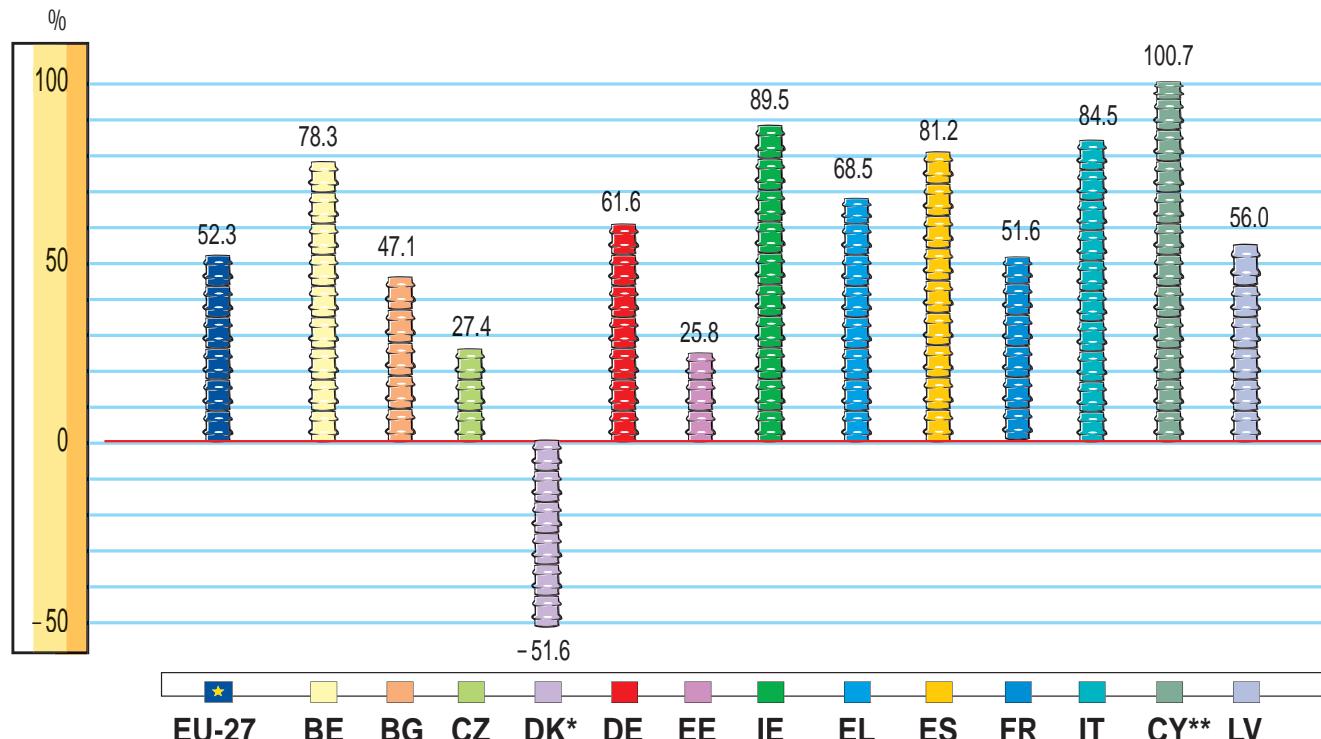
Source: European Commission.



Secure energy supplies

EU countries depend on imports for more than half the energy they consume. However, the level of import-dependence differs greatly, with Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta almost totally reliant on imports, while Denmark is actually a net exporter of energy and Poland and the UK have relatively low levels of import dependence.

Net dependence on energy imports as a percentage of total consumption, EU-27 (2005)



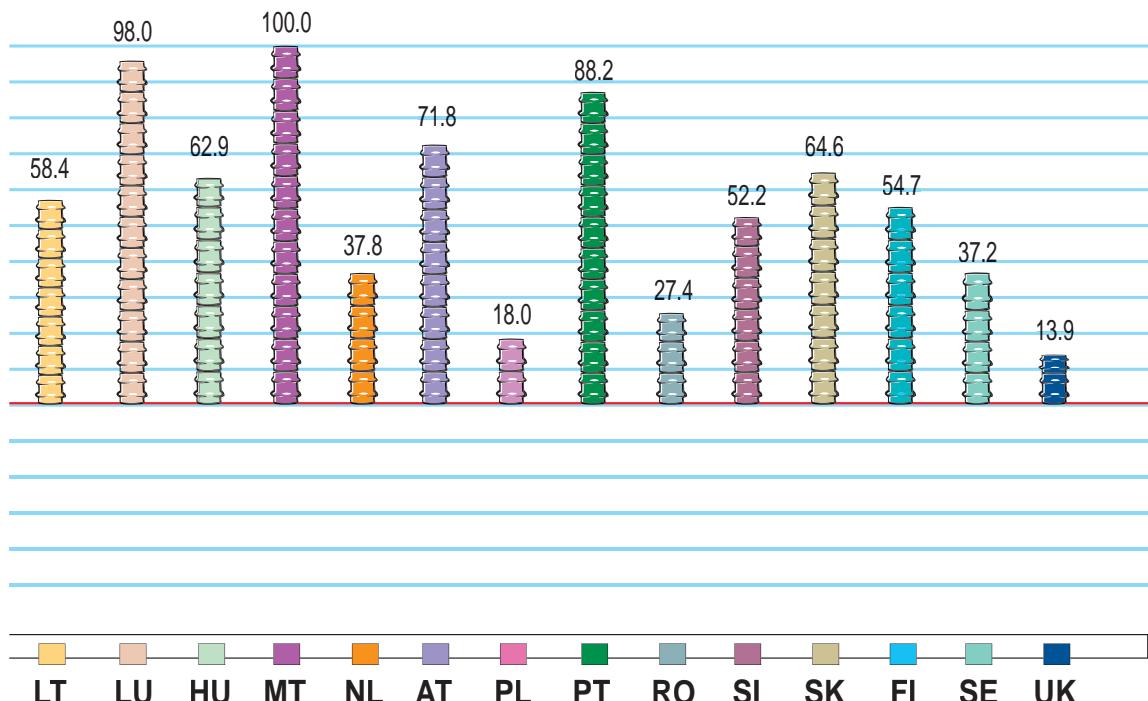
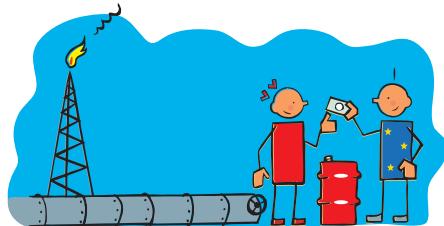
* The negative rate indicates that Denmark was a net energy exporter.

** Cyprus imported more energy than it used during the year. The surplus was stocked.

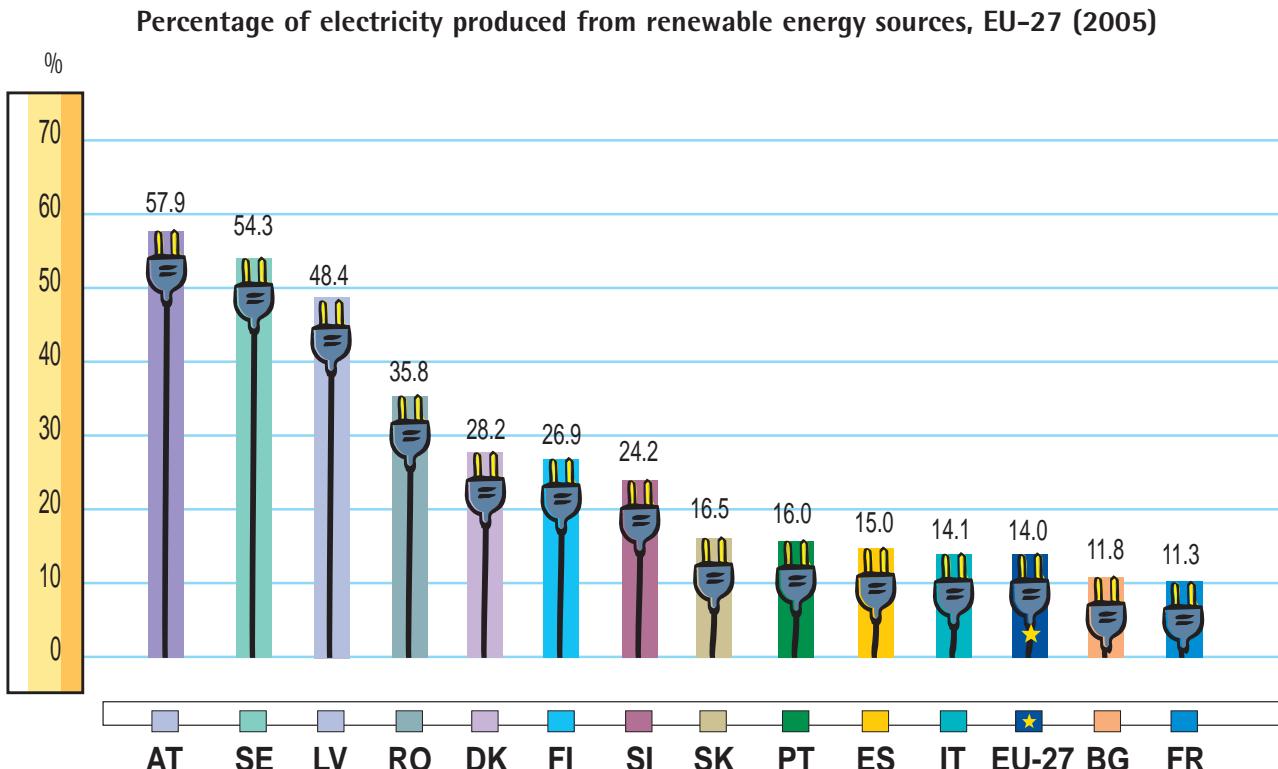
Source: Eurostat.

The overall level of the EU's reliance on imported energy was 52.3% in 2005 and is forecast to rise as domestic resources dwindle. At present, the EU gets about 50% of the gas it consumes from just three sources – Russia, Norway and Algeria.

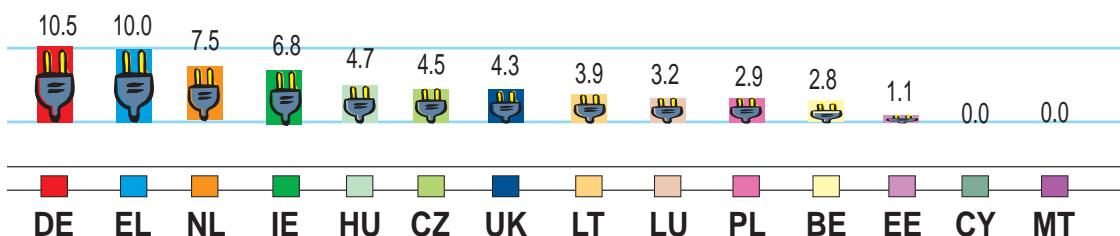
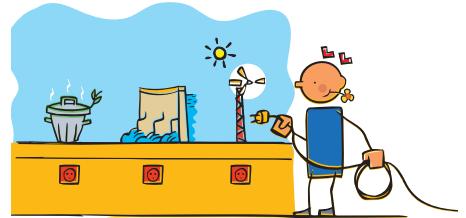
To handle its growing import dependence, the EU is working hard to increase energy efficiency, develop renewable resources and diversify its range of outside suppliers.



Using energy more efficiently and switching to low-polluting renewable resources also make sense as part of the EU's strategy to combat global warming resulting from burning fossil fuels, especially coal and oil. Using fossil fuels to produce energy releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming. The EU has set a target of generating 21% of its electricity from renewable sources such as wind, solar, hydro, geothermal and biomass by 2010.



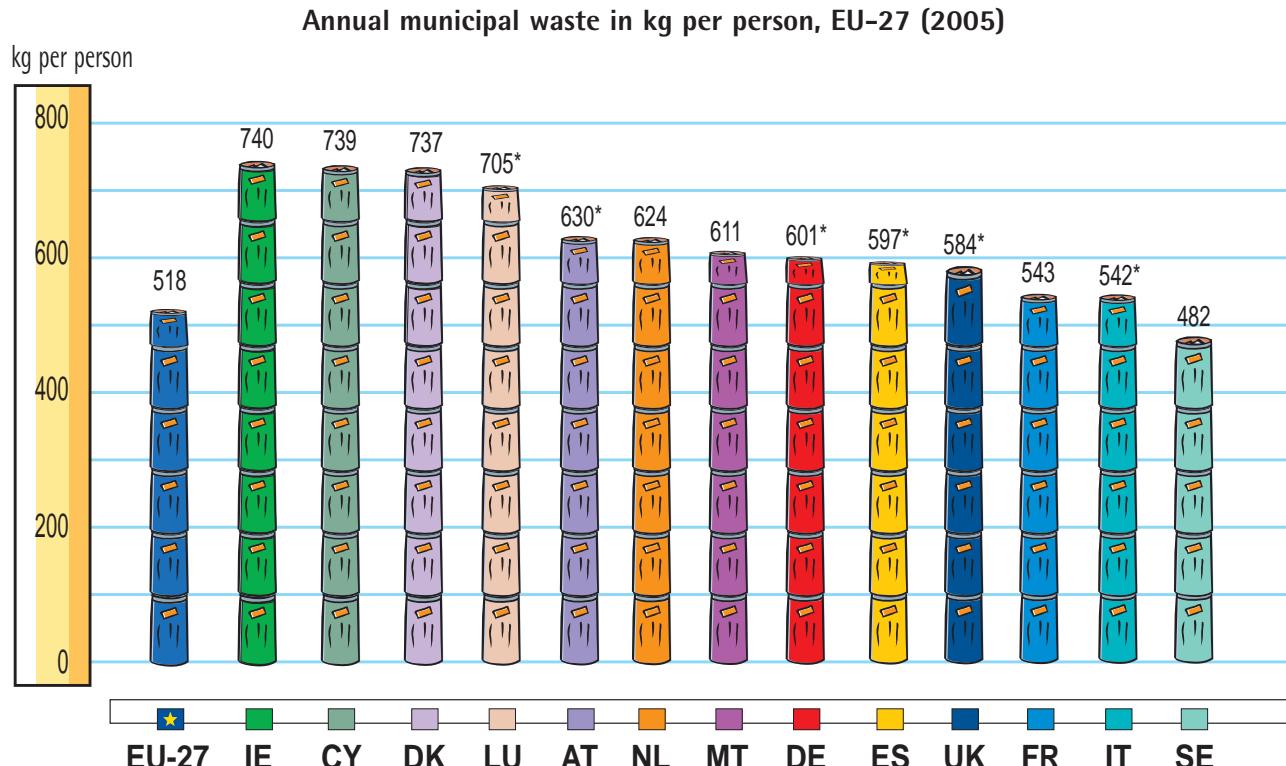
Source: Eurostat.





Protecting the environment

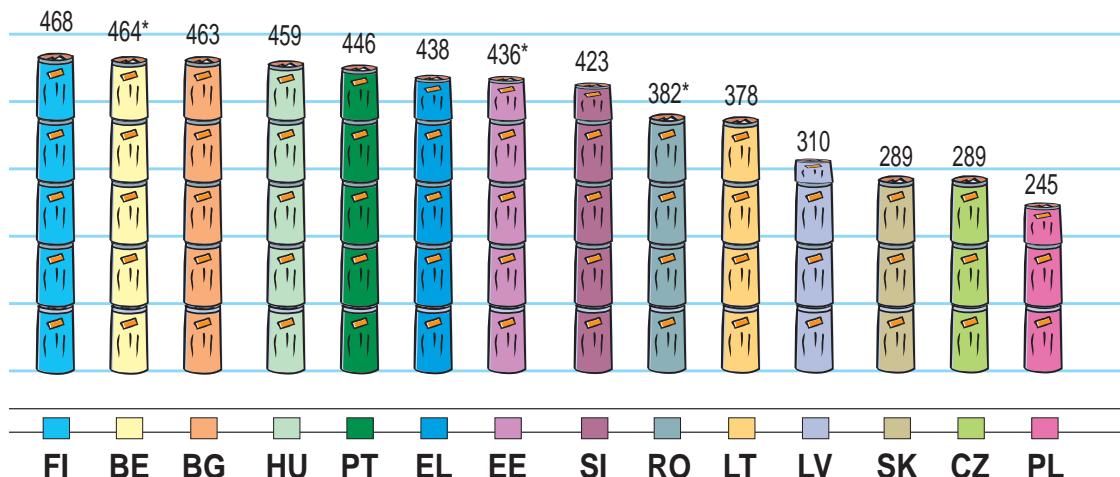
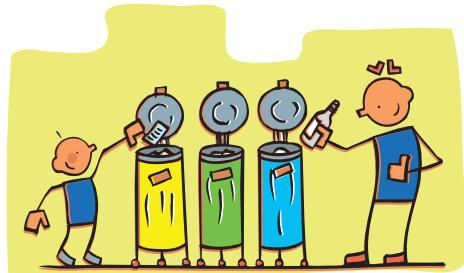
As Europeans grow more prosperous, they have a responsibility to produce less waste and to manage it more efficiently. At present, each citizen in the EU-27 produces on average just over half a tonne of municipal waste a year. This waste has to be recycled or disposed of in landfills or by incineration.



* Means estimated or provisional figures.

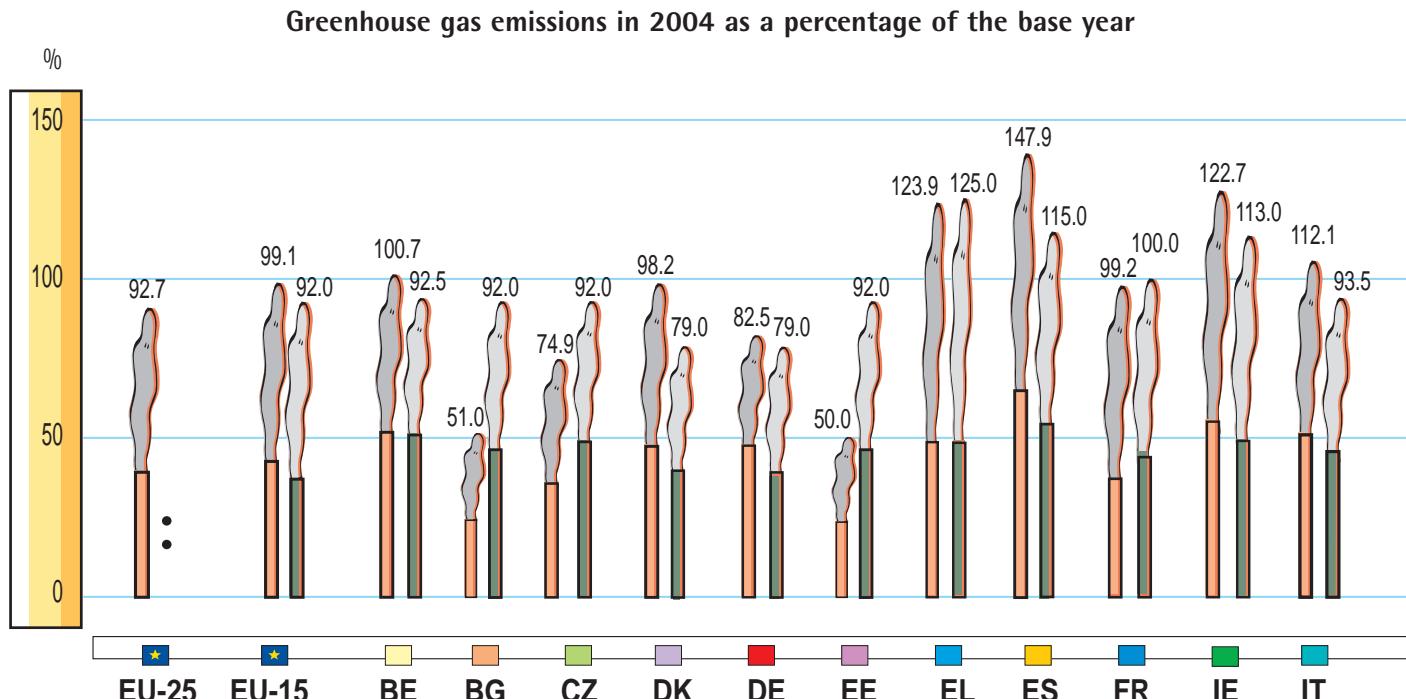
Source: Eurostat.

In most EU countries the amount of municipal waste from households, offices and public institutions has stabilised in recent years or is falling. But it is still rising in others. Ireland has the highest level of waste per capita and Poland the lowest.



A main cause of global warming are the so-called greenhouse gases emitted by power plants, factories, farms, the transport sector and households. These include carbon dioxide, principally from the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas), and methane.

Under the international Kyoto Protocol, the EU-15 must cut its global greenhouse gas emissions by 8% (compared with levels in 1990, which serves as the base year) by 2008–12. To reach this target, EU-15 countries have agreed a burden-sharing arrangement whereby the economically less advanced can still increase emissions while the rest reduce theirs. The individual national targets are set out in the table.

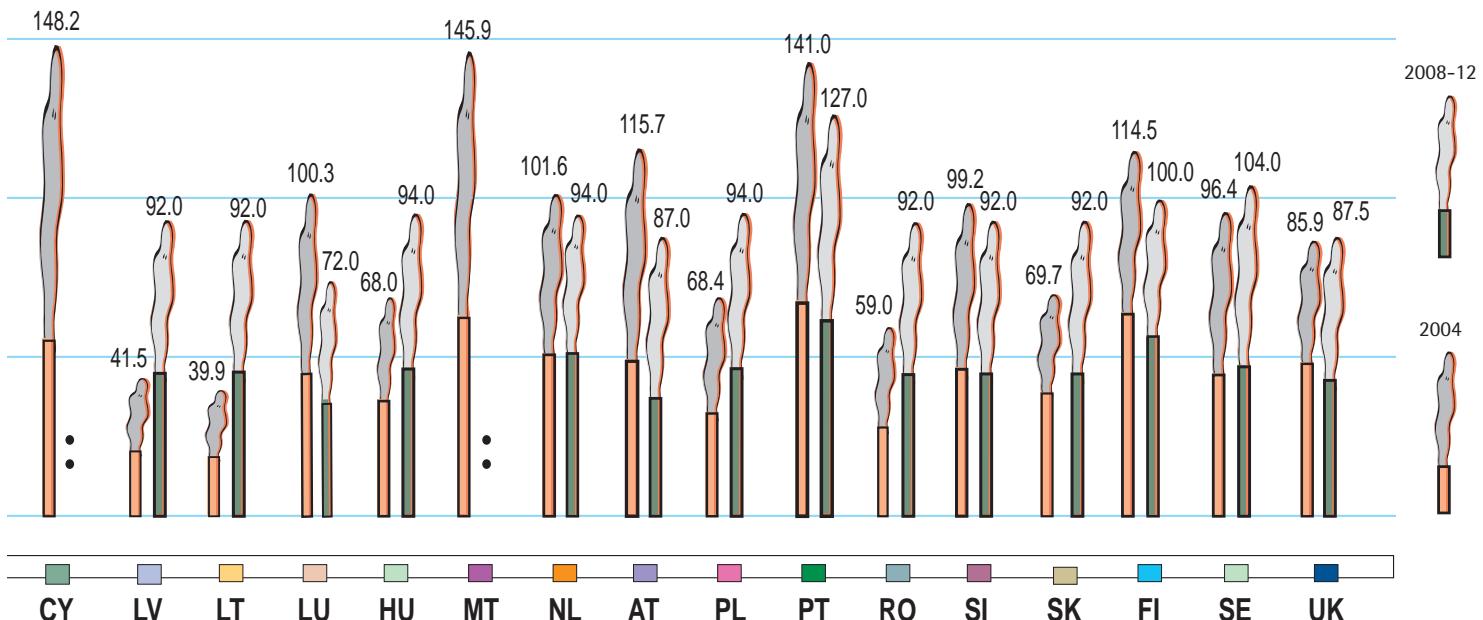


Some EU countries have chosen a reference year other than 1990; their reductions are calculated accordingly.

Sources: European Environment Agency, European Topic Centre on Air and Climate Change.

Ten countries that have joined the EU since 2004 have individual emission reduction targets. Cyprus and Malta do not.

Under Kyoto, Japan is committed to a 6% reduction. The United States has not ratified the Kyoto Protocol.





Europeans living together

Increasingly, EU citizens are getting to know one another and developing their sense of belonging together as Europeans – though not all are equally enthusiastic about the EU. Many spend their holidays in another European country, and increasing numbers of people go to study or work abroad, thanks to freedom of movement within the EU. A high percentage of European school pupils learn at least one European language besides their own.



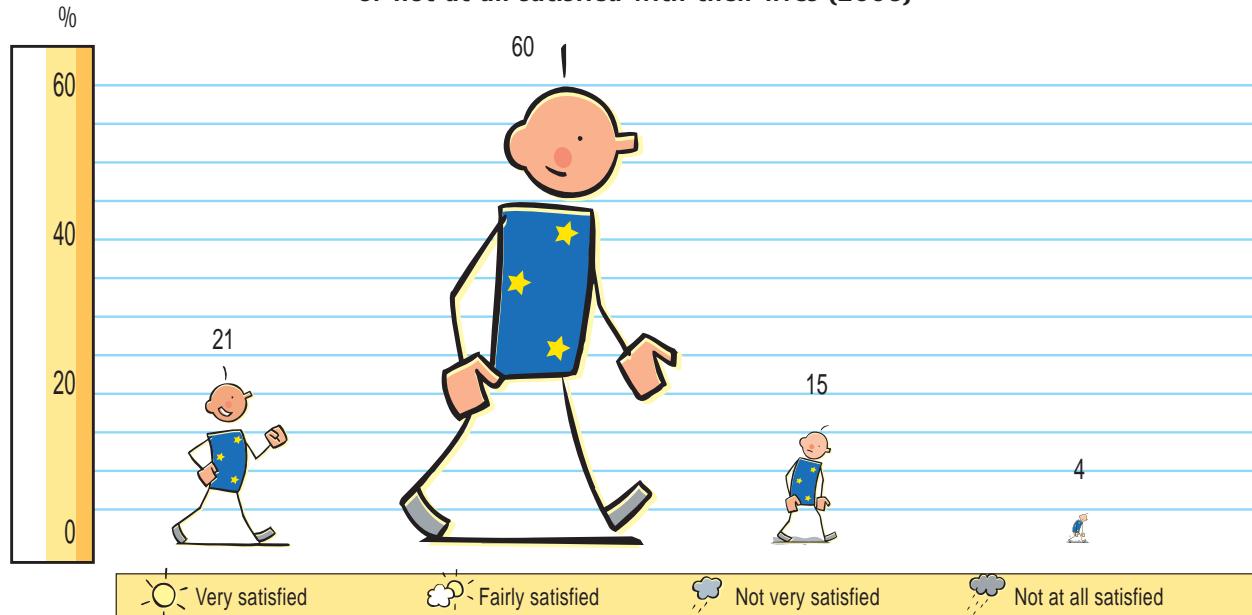
Happy Europeans with shared concerns

In a Eurobarometer survey carried out in spring 2006, eight out of 10 EU citizens said they were fairly or very satisfied with their life, and most were optimistic about the future. The 'very satisfied' percentage was 21% compared with 23% in the previous survey in autumn 2005.

The number of people who say they are not at all satisfied has, for the past decade, remained relatively small at around 4%.



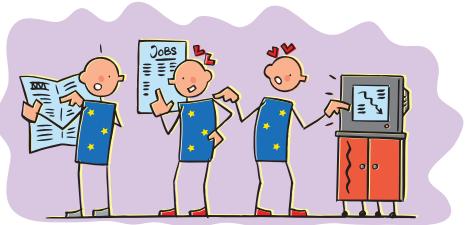
Percentage of EU-25 citizens who are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with their lives (2006)



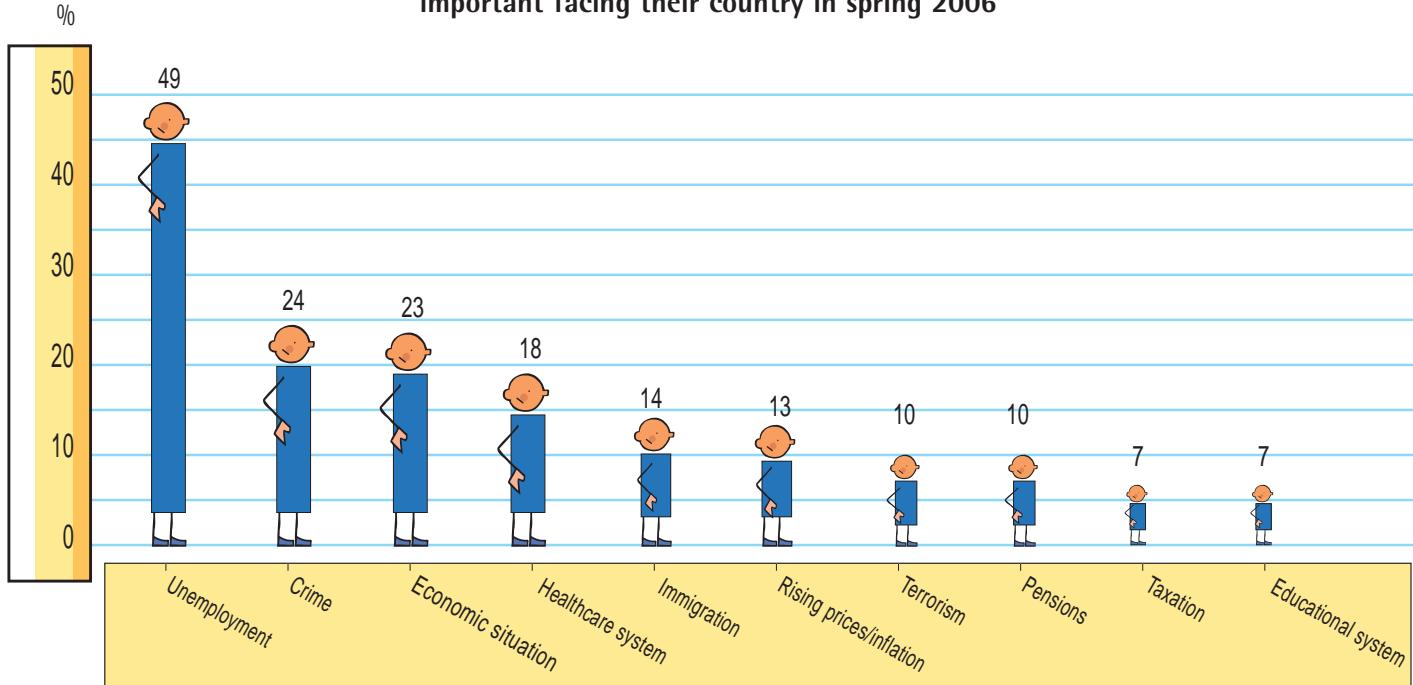
Source: Eurobarometer.

Although generally happy with their life, Europeans do have concerns and worries. Unemployment remains the main concern for many people in the EU. In a 2006 survey, only 10% of participants felt that terrorism was one of the top two issues facing their country.

Although results vary, reflecting the diversity of cultures and opinions in the EU, the survey shows that EU citizens share many common concerns.



Percentage of EU-25 citizens who see each issue as one of the two most important facing their country in spring 2006

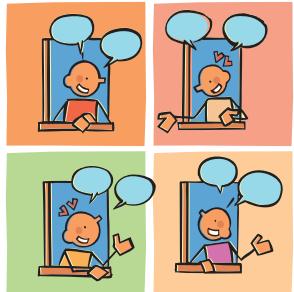


Source: Eurobarometer.

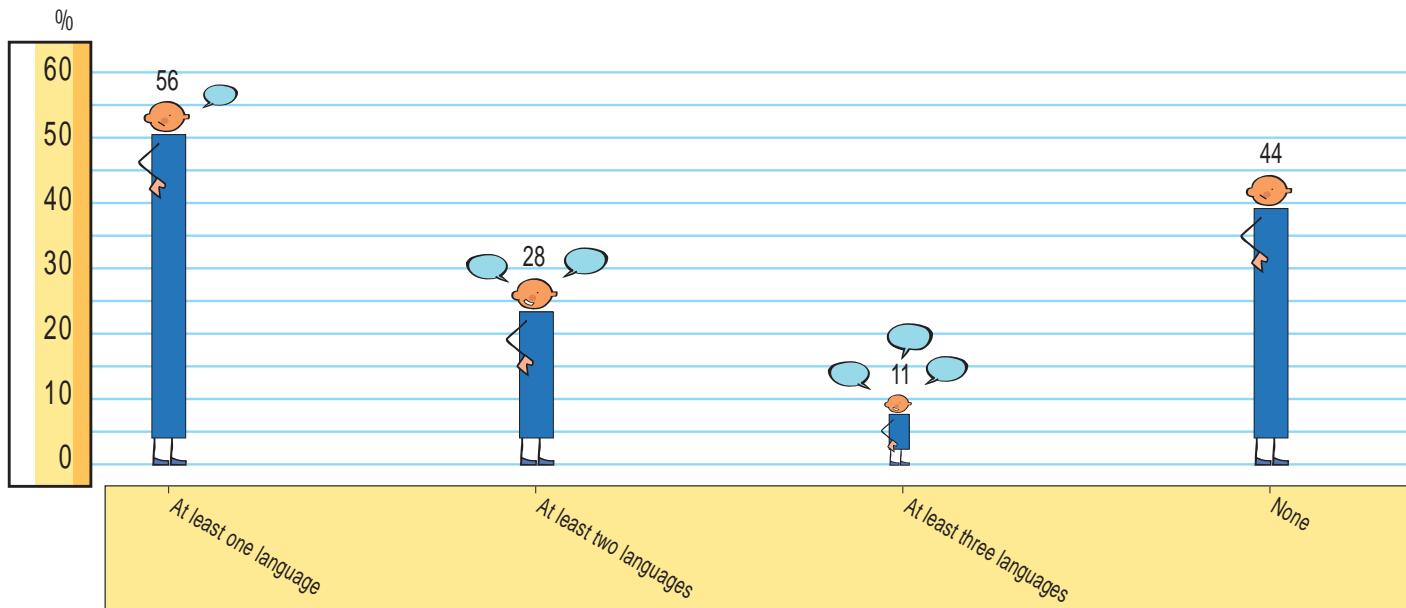
Chatting with the neighbours

Speaking a foreign language is useful for many purposes – studying abroad, travel, business contacts and international friendship – and it opens up all sorts of job opportunities. That is why the EU encourages its citizens to learn two languages in addition to their mother tongue.

A clear majority of Europeans (56%) say they can hold a conversation in one foreign language. Of these, some can speak two or even three foreign languages. However, 44% of Europeans know no language other than their mother tongue.



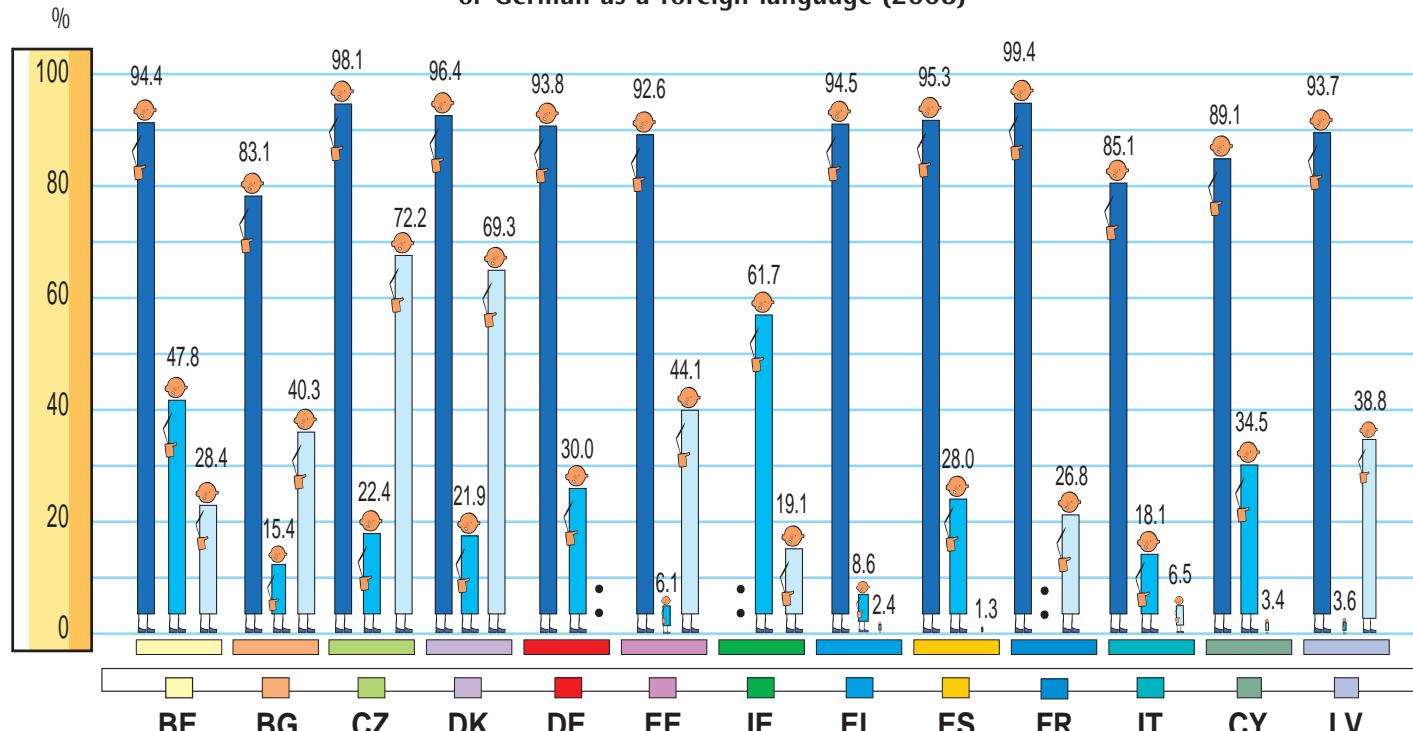
Percentage of people who can hold a conversation in a language other than their mother tongue (2005)



Source: Eurobarometer.

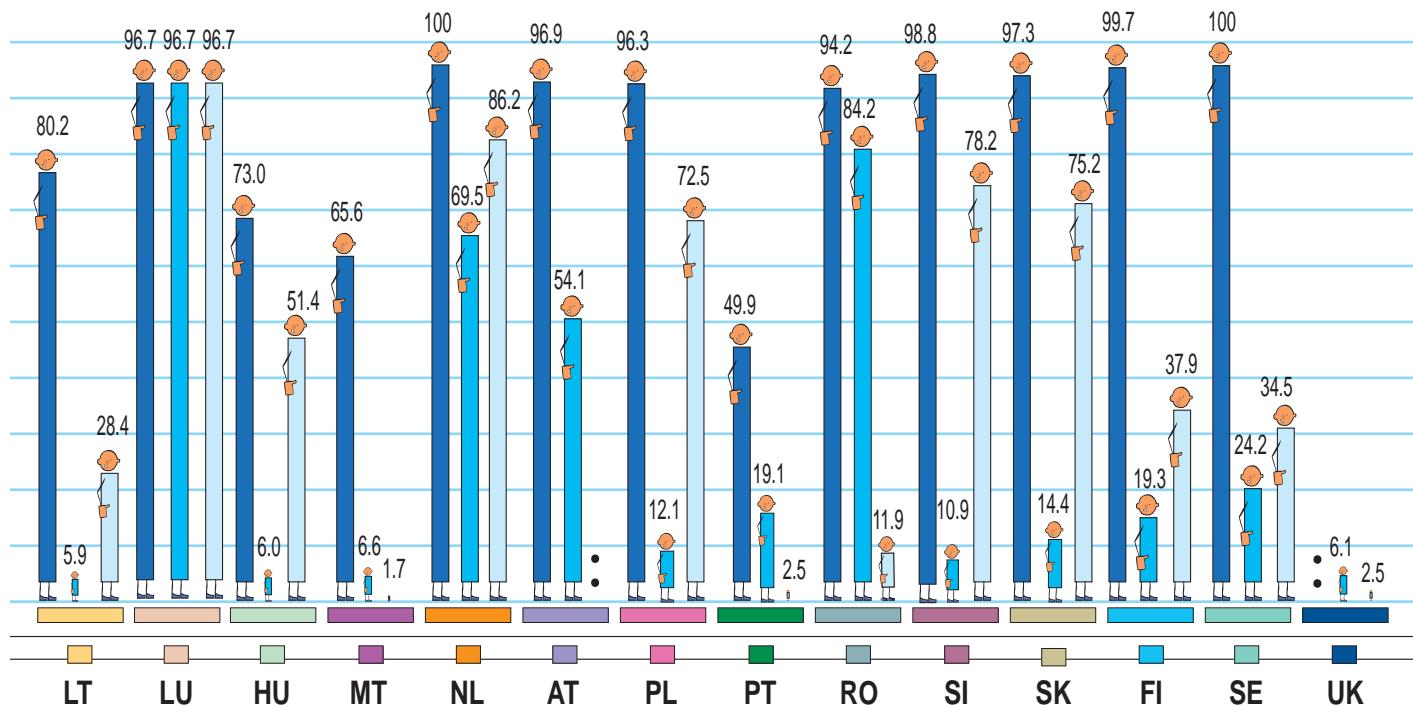
The languages most commonly used by non-native speakers are English, French and German. Russian is widely spoken in the central and east European countries which have joined the EU since 2004.

Percentage of pupils in upper secondary level general education who are learning English, French or German as a foreign language (2005)



Source: Unesco/OECD/Eurostat data collection.

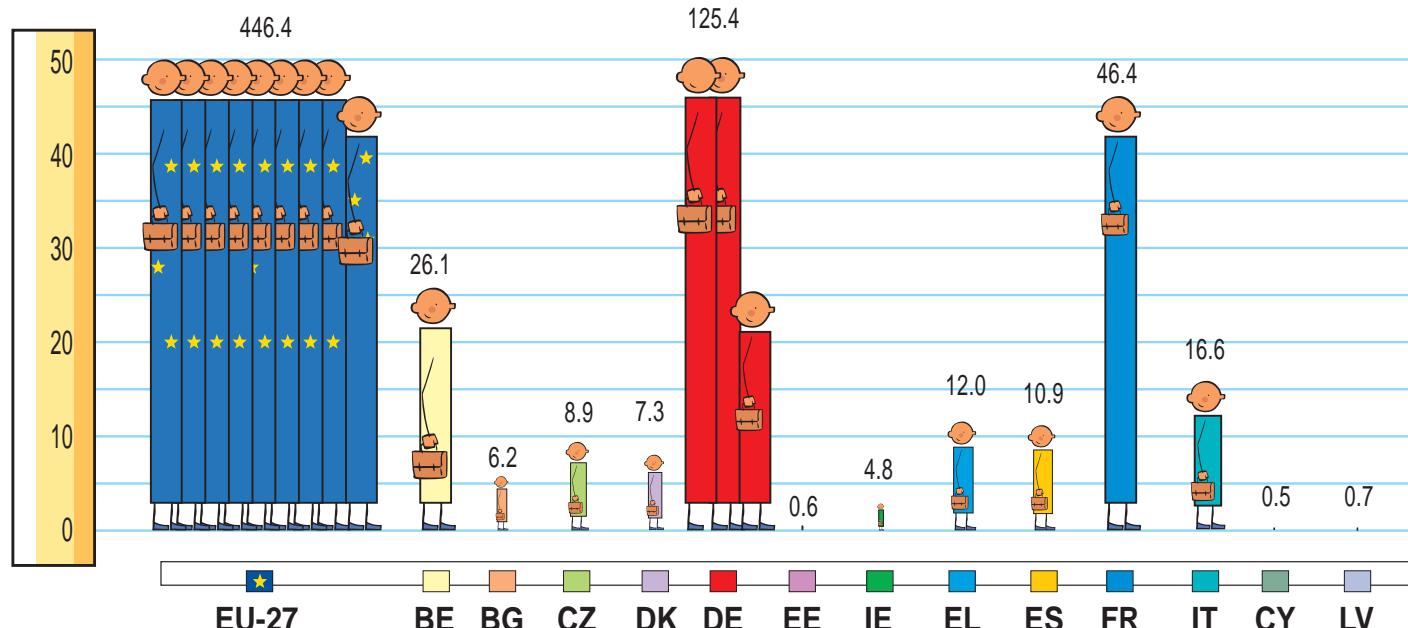
English
French
German



Studying together

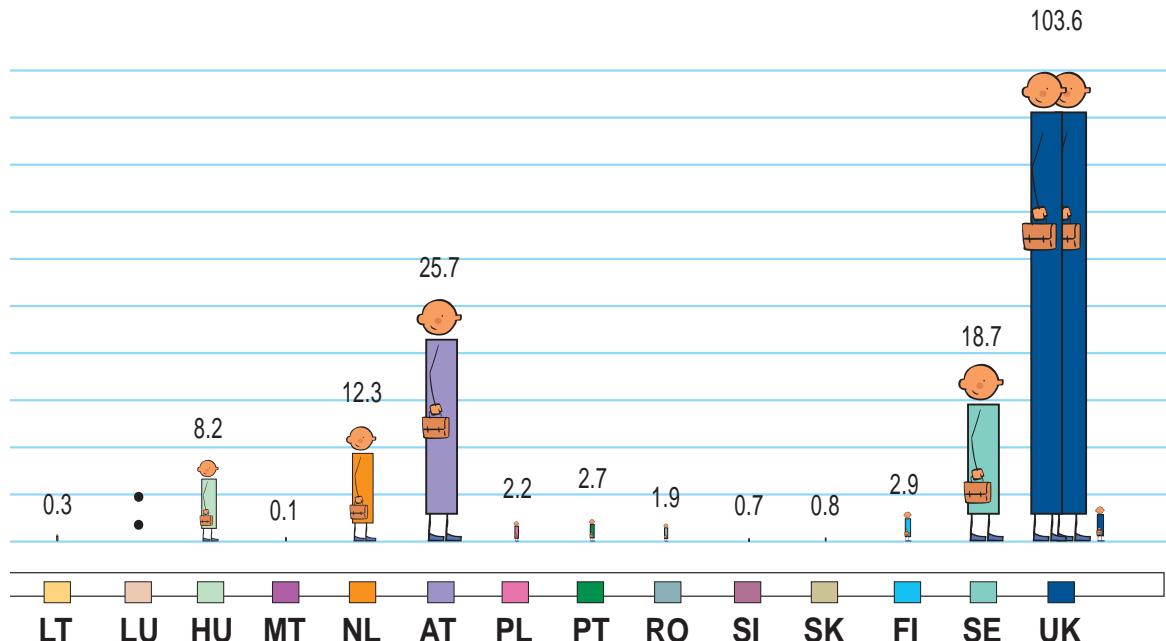
Increasing numbers of young people are following educational courses in European countries other than their home country. Erasmus is an important EU-funded programme which enables university-level students and teachers to spend a year in another EU country. More than a million students have taken part in it since it began in 1987. This scheme has now gone global with the launch, in 2004, of *Erasmus Mundus*.

Students from one EU country studying in another, by host country (in thousands), EU-27 (2004)



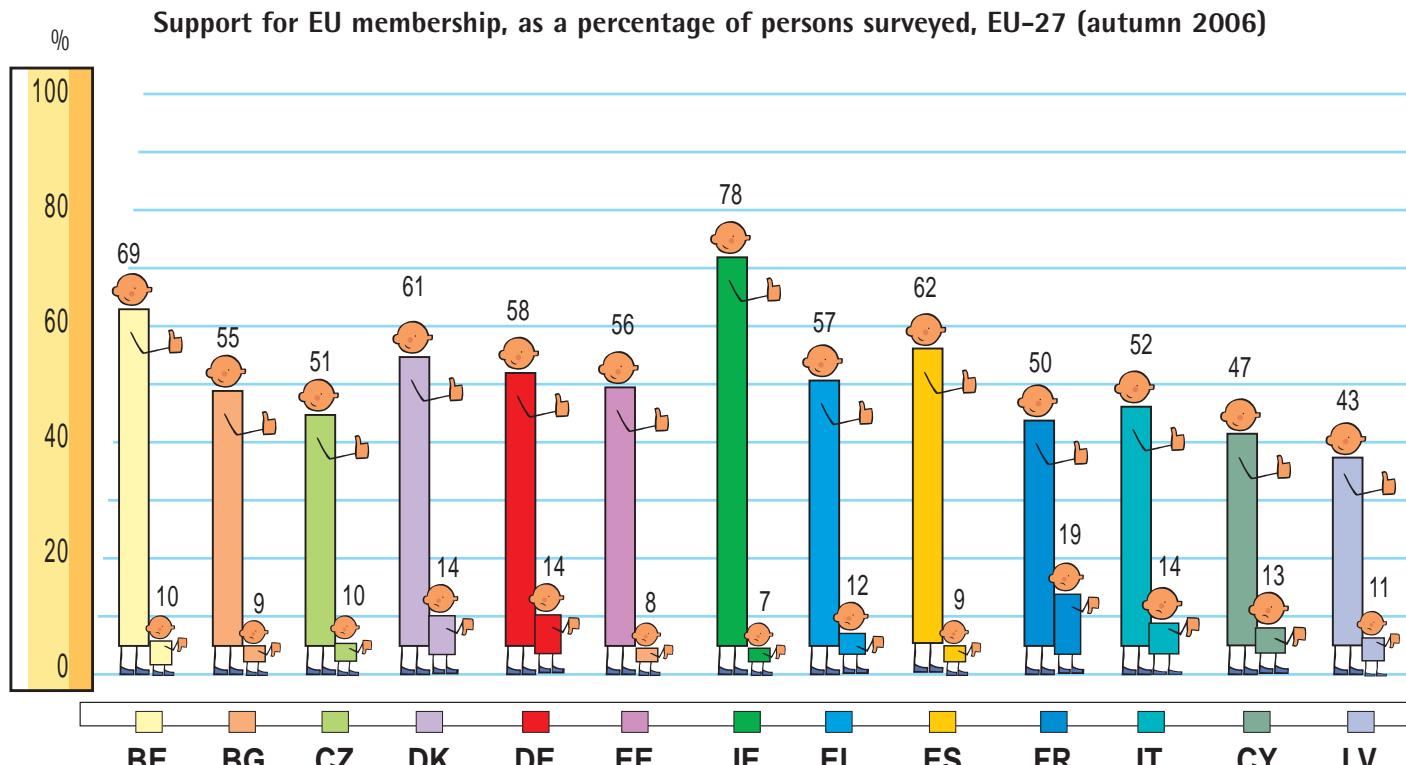
Source: Eurostat.

Separately from Erasmus, nearly half a million students are studying at any one time in another EU country. The figures are set out in the table.



Supporters or sceptics?

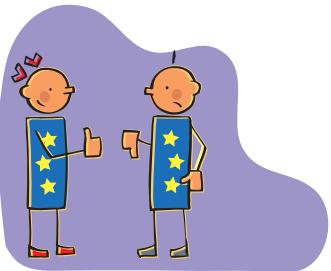
The majority of citizens in all EU countries believe membership is a good thing for their country. The level of support varies across the Union and fluctuates over time. A 2006 Eurobarometer survey showed the strongest supporters are still some of the older member states (Ireland and the Benelux countries), although approval ratings in the countries that joined the EU in 2004 have risen in the period since then, with the exception of Hungary.



'Don't knows' and non-committal answers are not included.

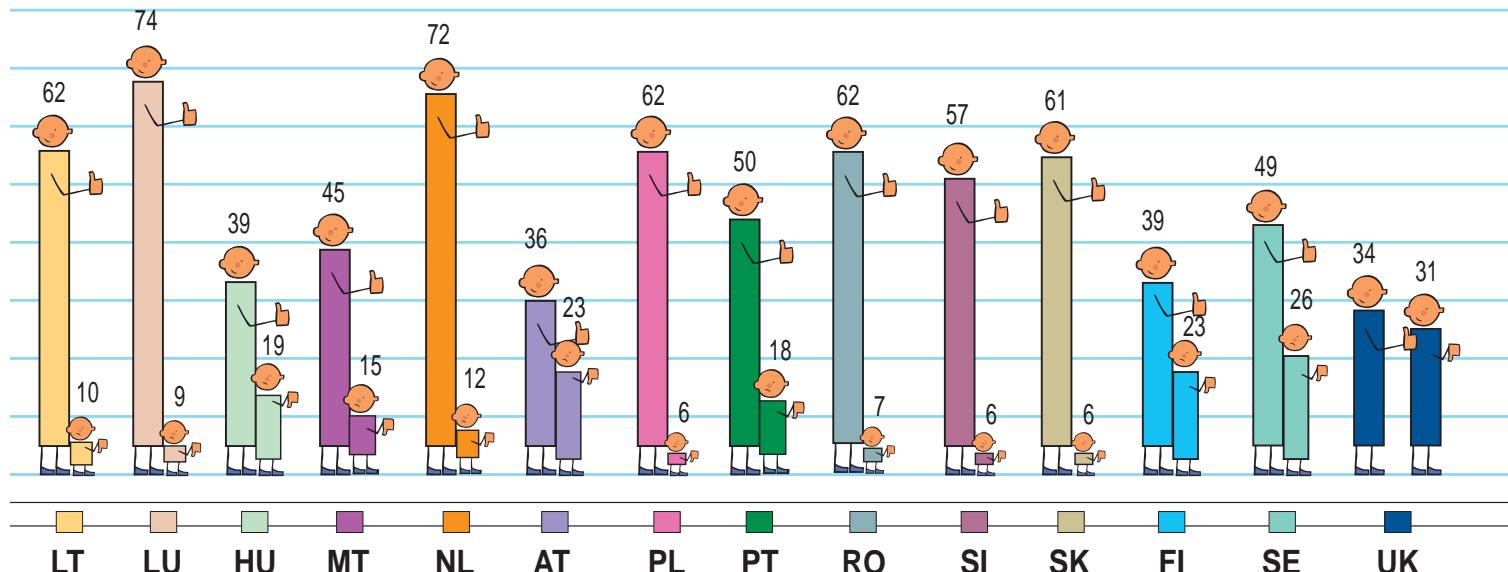
Source: Eurobarometer.

Hungary joins those countries with the lowest level of public support for the EU — Finland, Austria and bottom-placed United Kingdom, where the gap between those who think the EU is a good thing for their country and those who believe it to be a bad thing is the narrowest.



↙️👍 A good thing

↙️👎 A bad thing



Reaping the benefits

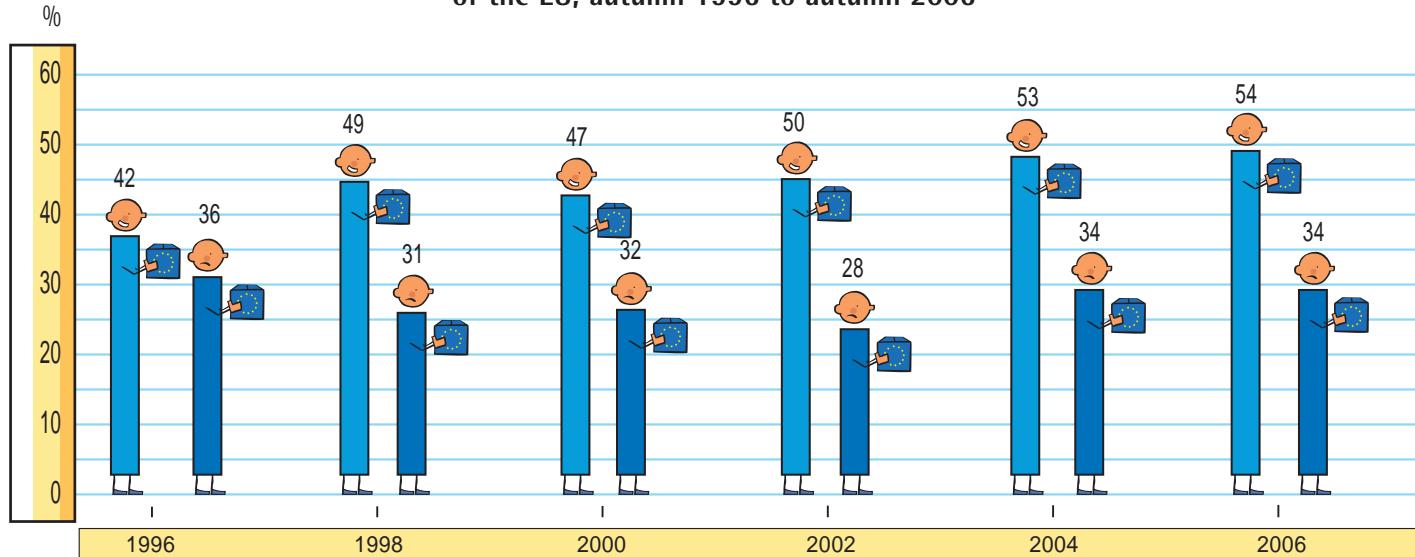
According to the same opinion poll, a majority of people in the EU (54%) consider their country has actually benefited from its membership of the Union. Here the strongest believers are in Ireland (87%), followed by newcomer Lithuania (77%), and then Denmark and Greece (both with 74%). The biggest sceptics are in Hungary, Sweden and the UK, where only 39 to 41% of those polled thought their country had benefited from being in the EU.



The following graph shows that the lead of positive responses over negative ones was 20% at the end of 2006, compared with only 6% 10 years earlier.

 Benefited
 Not benefited

Percentage of EU citizens who believe that their country has benefited or not from being a member of the EU, autumn 1996 to autumn 2006



Source: Eurobarometer.



The candidate countries

If a country has applied to join the European Union and its application has been officially accepted, it becomes a 'candidate country'. At present there are three candidate countries – Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

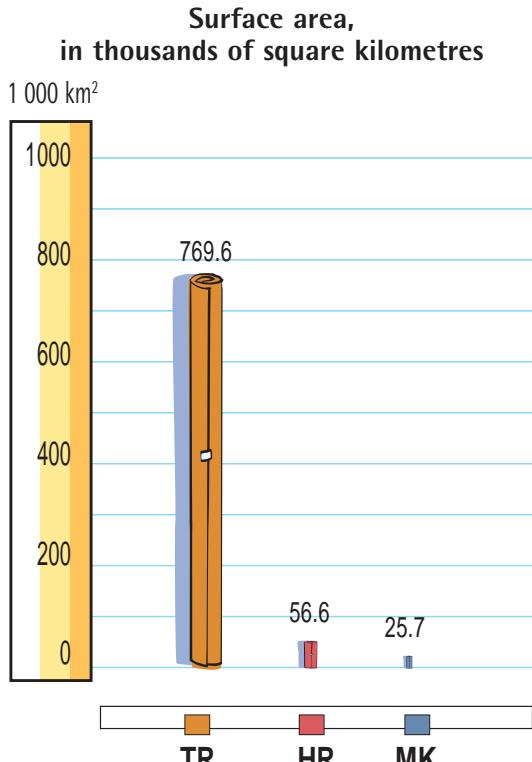
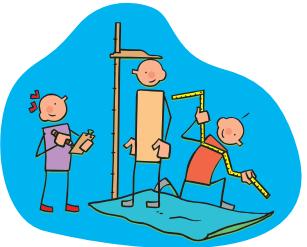
Before a candidate country can join the EU it must have a stable system of democratic government, institutions that ensure the rule of law and respect for human rights. It must also have a functioning market economy and an administration capable of implementing EU laws and policies. The specific membership terms for each candidate country are worked out in negotiations with the European Commission.

Negotiations generally take several years to complete.

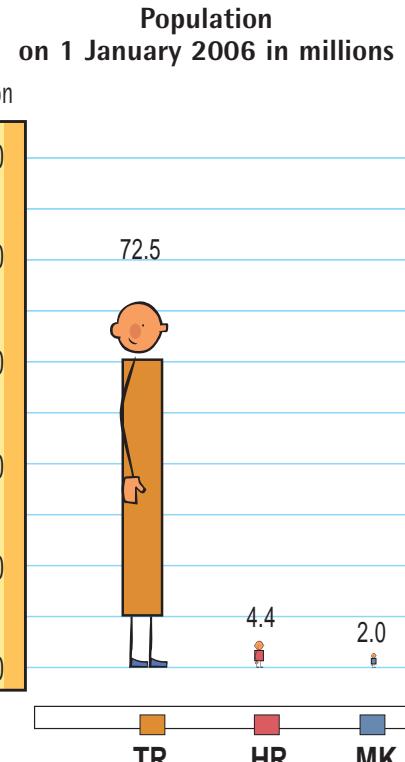


Size and population

The candidate countries differ in size, with Turkey by far the largest. Its population is bigger than any current EU member except Germany. Together, the three candidates would increase the total EU population by 16%.



Source: European Commission.



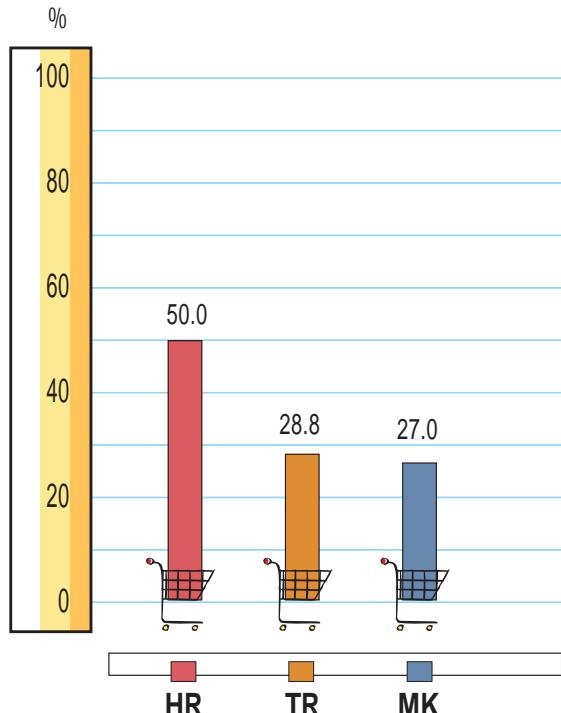
Source: Eurostat.

How wealthy are they?

When you compare their GDP in PPS per inhabitant, the candidate countries are considerably less wealthy than the EU average. However, Croatia has a per capita GDP which is higher than those of Bulgaria and Romania, who became EU members in 2007.



GDP in PPS per inhabitant as a percentage of the EU-27 average (2005)

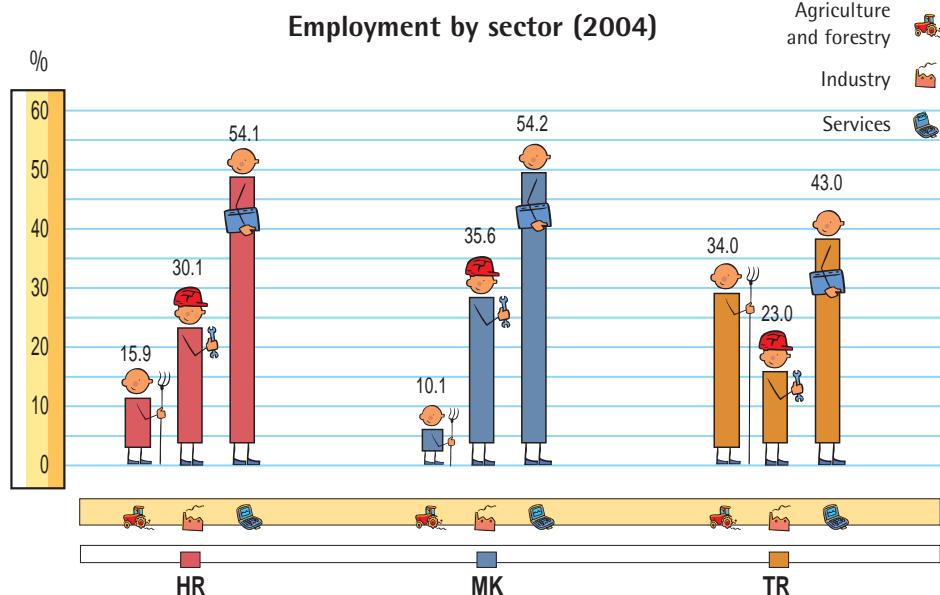
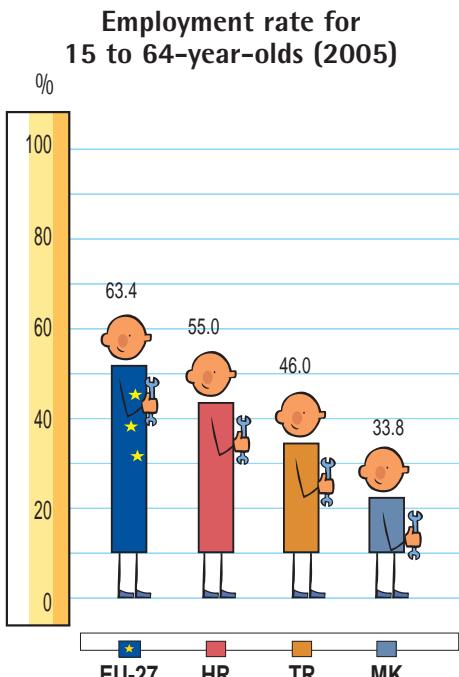


Source: Eurostat.

People at work

Economic reforms in recent years have brought great changes in the candidate countries, helping to create new jobs. But employment rates among people of working age in the candidate countries are lower than the EU average.

In the candidate countries, as in the EU, services (including tourism) are an important part of the economy. As with the countries that have joined the EU since 2004, the candidate countries have a larger share of the population employed in agriculture than the EU-15.



Sources: For EU-27 and HR – Eurostat, labour force survey, annual average. For MK and TR – national data.

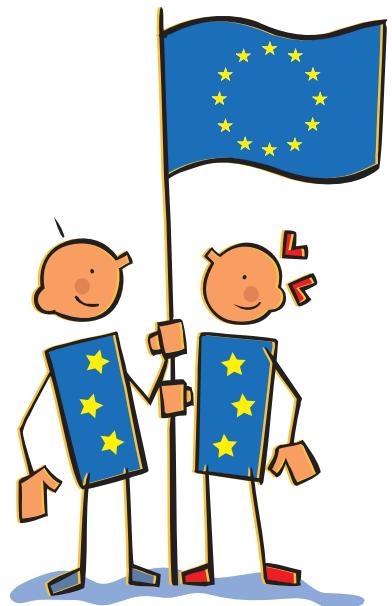
Source: European Commission.

A friendly neighbourhood

The recent enlargements of the European Union have united a once-divided continent, creating a wide area of stability and prosperity in Europe. Although these are still early days, the citizens of the countries which have joined the Union since 2004 already benefit in terms of economic growth, personal mobility and the modernisation of previously neglected infrastructures.

The EU seeks to live in harmony with its neighbours and to support their efforts towards democracy, stability and prosperity. The EU's external borders should not become a new dividing line in Europe separating the Union from its neighbours – Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, the Caucasus and Balkan regions to the east, and the countries of the eastern Mediterranean and north Africa to the south.

The aim is to develop closer relationships with each of them based on trade, economic and political cooperation, joint efforts in R&D, environmental protection, science and culture as well as technical assistance. With the Balkan countries, the EU has special association agreements as a first step towards joining the EU. The first of these agreements were signed with Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which have now the formal status of candidates to join the EU.



European Commission

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