

## Consumers in Europe

# An extensive range of statistics on consumers

## Price levels, shopping, housing and much more

What proportion of the **EU27** population live in houses or flats, and what proportion own their dwelling? What kind of energy do households consume? What share of consumers makes formal complaints to sellers? What share of the population cross borders to do their shopping?

Answers to these questions and many more can be found in the publication<sup>1</sup> "**Consumers in Europe**", jointly published by **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities** and the **General Directorate Health & Consumers** of the **European Commission**. This fourth edition of "Consumers in Europe" presents a comprehensive set of data on consumer markets and consumer protection issues. The publication starts with a presentation of the profile of the EU consumer and the retail network, followed by twelve chapters devoted to different consumer markets (food, alcoholic beverages, clothing, housing, furnishings, health, transport, communications, recreation & culture, education, restaurants & hotels and miscellaneous goods & services), each providing data on consumption expenditure and price levels.

### More than half of EU27 households live in houses

In the **EU27** in 2007, 46% of households lived in flats, 30% in detached houses and 22% in semi-detached or terraced houses. The share of households living in flats was highest in **Latvia** (72%), **Estonia** (69%), **Spain** (66%) and **Germany** (62%). The percentage of households living in detached houses was largest in **Slovenia** (65%), **Hungary** (57%), **Romania** (56%) and **Denmark** (48%), while for semi-detached or terraced houses, the share was highest in the **United Kingdom** (59%), **Ireland** and the **Netherlands** (both 55%).

### Almost two thirds of households in the EU27 own their dwelling

In 2007, 65% of households in the **EU27** owned their dwelling, 21% paid rent at market rate, 8% paid rent at a reduced rate and 7% of households occupied free accommodation. More than half of households owned their dwelling in all Member States (except in **Germany**) with the highest proportions in **Romania** (96%), **Lithuania** and **Slovakia** (both 89%) and **Hungary** (87%). The lowest percentages of households owning their dwelling were observed in **Germany** (46%), **Austria** (52%), the **Netherlands** (56%) and **Denmark, France** and **Poland** (all 58%).

## Housing, 2007

	Households by type of dwelling, %			Households by type of tenure, %			
	Flat	Detached house	Semi-detached or terraced house	Owner	Tenant paying rent at market rate	Tenant paying a reduced rate	Accommodation provided free
<b>EU27*</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	26	34	39	67	23	8	2
<b>Bulgaria</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
<b>Czech Republic</b>	56	34	10	72	5	19	4
<b>Denmark</b>	38	48	15	58	42	0	0
<b>Germany**</b>	62	23	13	46	46	6	3
<b>Estonia</b>	69	27	4	83	6	2	10
<b>Ireland</b>	4	41	55	77	9	12	1
<b>Greece</b>	55	35	10	73	20	1	6
<b>Spain</b>	66	16	19	83	8	3	7
<b>France</b>	41	39	20	58	22	16	4
<b>Italy</b>	53	22	19	72	15	4	10
<b>Cyprus</b>	25	44	29	66	12	1	20
<b>Latvia</b>	72	23	5	84	6	7	4
<b>Lithuania</b>	59	32	9	89	1	2	7
<b>Luxembourg</b>	33	35	30	71	22	4	3
<b>Hungary</b>	35	57	8	87	3	4	6
<b>Malta</b>	46	4	49	77	2	19	3
<b>Netherlands</b>	26	14	55	56	43	0	0
<b>Austria</b>	48	39	12	52	33	8	7
<b>Poland</b>	55	40	5	58	3	1	38
<b>Portugal</b>	38	39	23	73	11	8	9
<b>Romania</b>	41	56	3	96	1	1	2
<b>Slovenia</b>	31	65	4	80	6	2	12
<b>Slovakia</b>	53	45	2	89	9	1	2
<b>Finland</b>	43	38	19	67	13	19	1
<b>Sweden</b>	51	42	7	62	36	3	0
<b>United Kingdom</b>	18	24	59	71	8	19	1
<b>Iceland</b>	51	32	15	83	8	8	2
<b>Norway</b>	11	58	19	78	15	5	3

Shares for type of dwelling might not add up to 100% due to other buildings.

: Data not available

\* EU27 estimated

\*\* German data provisional

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC

### Natural gas account for 40% of energy consumption of households in the EU27

Household energy consumption consists of energy delivered to households for space heating, sanitary water heating, cooking and electrical appliances. Fuel for personal transport is not included. In the **EU27** in 2007, households consumed 285 million tonnes of oil equivalent (toe) of energy. Of this energy, 40% came from natural gas, 24% from electrical energy, 15% from petroleum products, 12% from renewable energy, 7% from district heating and 3% from solid fuels.

The highest shares of consumption of natural gas were found in the **Netherlands** (72%), the **United Kingdom** (67%), **Italy** and **Hungary** (both 57%). For electrical energy, the largest proportions were observed in **Malta** (70%), **Sweden** (51%) and **Cyprus** (46%). **Greece** (50%) had the highest share of consumption of petroleum products, followed by **Ireland** (39%) and **Cyprus** (36%).

The strongest shares of renewable energy consumed by households were found in **Latvia** (50%), **Estonia** (39%) and **Portugal** (37%). For district heating, the highest proportions were found in **Estonia** (38%), **Sweden** and **Lithuania** (both 37%), while for solid fuels the largest shares were observed in **Poland** (29%) and **Ireland** (16%).

### Final energy consumption households, 2007

	Total, (000 TOE*)	Of which, %:					
		Natural gas	Electrical energy	Petroleum products	Renewable energy	District heating**	Solid fuels
<b>EU27</b>	<b>284 553</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>24.2</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	8 122	40.4	23.1	32.2	2.5	0.2	1.6
<b>Bulgaria</b>	2 072	1.6	38.9	1.2	29.3	18.2	10.8
<b>Czech Republic</b>	5 914	34.4	21.3	0.4	18.9	15.6	9.4
<b>Denmark</b>	4 461	14.1	21.0	11.4	21.1	32.2	0.0
<b>Germany</b>	60 323	46.7	20.0	18.4	9.0	5.1	0.8
<b>Estonia</b>	962	5.1	15.9	0.9	39.4	37.7	1.1
<b>Ireland</b>	2 911	20.3	23.8	38.7	0.9	0.0	16.3
<b>Greece</b>	5 329	3.3	29.0	49.6	17.3	0.8	0.0
<b>Spain</b>	15 935	23.8	38.6	23.1	13.2	0.0	1.2
<b>France</b>	41 475	31.2	30.2	20.0	17.8	0.0	0.8
<b>Italy</b>	27 914	57.2	20.7	16.3	5.3	0.5	0.0
<b>Cyprus</b>	300	0.0	46.1	35.7	18.2	0.0	0.0
<b>Latvia</b>	1 470	7.5	10.5	2.4	50.2	28.1	1.3
<b>Lithuania</b>	1 349	10.9	15.7	2.8	29.8	37.0	3.8
<b>Luxembourg</b>	661	47.0	10.8	35.0	2.4	4.8	0.0
<b>Hungary</b>	5 551	57.2	17.4	2.1	9.7	11.2	2.4
<b>Malta</b>	81	0.0	70.2	29.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Netherlands</b>	9 236	71.8	22.6	0.6	2.7	2.2	0.0
<b>Austria</b>	6 122	20.8	19.9	21.6	27.0	8.9	1.7
<b>Poland</b>	18 193	17.4	12.5	5.3	12.5	23.6	28.7
<b>Portugal</b>	3 217	6.8	37.1	19.3	36.6	0.2	0.0
<b>Romania</b>	7 507	27.5	11.9	7.8	35.9	16.7	0.1
<b>Slovenia</b>	1 048	8.1	24.8	27.3	30.9	8.9	0.0
<b>Slovakia</b>	2 081	53.4	19.0	0.6	1.9	23.1	2.0
<b>Finland</b>	5 007	0.7	36.9	13.0	19.5	29.7	0.2
<b>Sweden</b>	6 730	0.6	50.6	2.2	9.1	37.3	0.0
<b>United Kingdom</b>	40 582	66.7	24.4	6.6	0.8	0.1	1.4
<b>Croatia</b>	1 717	29.6	32.0	15.0	14.8	8.0	0.2
<b>Turkey</b>	20 727	33.3	15.1	8.4	29.9	0.0	13.3
<b>Iceland***</b>	622	0.0	11.0	0.5	58.9	29.5	0.0
<b>Norway</b>	3 880	0.1	78.5	5.2	15.0	1.3	0.0
<b>Switzerland</b>	5 616	16.7	26.7	45.9	8.1	2.4	0.2

\* A tonne of oil equivalent (toe) is a standardised unit defined on the basis of one tonne of oil having a net calorific value of 41.868 Gigajoules. It is a convenient common measure used to sum up the different fuels, based on their energy content.

\*\* Heat delivered to households by district heating networks.

\*\*\* 2006 data

Source: Eurostat

## Percentage of consumers complaining highest in Northern Europe

In 2008, 16% of consumers aged 15 years and over in the **EU27** had made a formal complaint in the last 12 months to a seller or a provider. The largest shares of consumers complaining were found in **Sweden** (34%), the **Netherlands** (25%), **Germany** and the **United Kingdom** (both 24%), **Finland** (23%) and **Denmark** (22%) and the lowest in **Bulgaria** (4%), **Latvia** and **Portugal** (both 5%), **Lithuania** and **Romania** (both 6%).

In the **EU27**, just over half (51%) of those having made a complaint were satisfied with the way their complaint had been dealt with. The highest levels of satisfaction were found in **Slovakia** (80%), **Slovenia** (73%), the **Czech Republic** and **Austria** (both 68%) and lowest in **France** (30%), **Spain**, **Latvia** and **Hungary** (all 39%).

### Consumer complaints, 2008

	% of population 15 years and over having made a complaint*	% of those having made a complaint satisfied with the way it was dealt with
<b>EU27</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	14	51
<b>Bulgaria</b>	4	62
<b>Czech Republic</b>	11	68
<b>Denmark</b>	22	59
<b>Germany</b>	24	57
<b>Estonia</b>	8	59
<b>Ireland</b>	13	56
<b>Greece</b>	9	45
<b>Spain</b>	11	39
<b>France</b>	11	30
<b>Italy</b>	9	48
<b>Cyprus</b>	10	48
<b>Latvia</b>	5	39
<b>Lithuania</b>	6	49
<b>Luxembourg</b>	8	45
<b>Hungary</b>	11	39
<b>Malta</b>	17	44
<b>Netherlands</b>	25	54
<b>Austria</b>	16	68
<b>Poland</b>	16	60
<b>Portugal</b>	5	54
<b>Romania</b>	6	56
<b>Slovenia</b>	13	73
<b>Slovakia</b>	14	80
<b>Finland</b>	23	60
<b>Sweden</b>	34	63
<b>United Kingdom</b>	24	46

\* Consumers having made a formal complaint in the last 12 months in writing, by telephone or in person to a seller or a provider.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 298, European Commission

## Highest share of cross-border shopping in Luxembourg, Sweden and Denmark

In 2008, a quarter of the **EU27** population aged 15 years and over made a cross-border purchase in another Member State. The highest shares of persons making cross-border purchases in another Member State were observed in **Luxembourg** (68%), **Sweden** (59%), **Denmark** (56%), **Austria** (53%) and **Finland** (51%), and the lowest in **Bulgaria** and **Portugal** (both 9%), **Greece** (10%), **Italy** and **Romania** (both 13%).

In the **EU27** in 2008, 17% of the population made cross-border purchases while on holiday or business trips, 9% made specific trips for shopping, 7% purchased over the internet and 2% made mail orders. A third of the **EU27** population were prepared to use another EU language when purchasing goods and services in another country.

### Cross-border purchases, 2008, % of population 15 years and over

	Made at least one cross-border purchase from another EU Member State	Made cross border purchases:				Prepared to purchase goods and services using another EU language
		On holiday or business trips	On specific trips for shopping	By internet	By mail order	
<b>EU27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	36	24	14	13	2	43
<b>Bulgaria</b>	9	5	3	1	0	34
<b>Czech Republic</b>	33	24	18	3	2	36
<b>Denmark</b>	56	37	18	23	2	60
<b>Germany</b>	27	17	11	6	1	33
<b>Estonia</b>	37	29	9	7	8	46
<b>Ireland</b>	33	24	7	16	3	28
<b>Greece</b>	10	7	3	5	1	36
<b>Spain</b>	17	11	4	8	2	28
<b>France</b>	24	11	9	9	1	38
<b>Italy</b>	13	10	5	4	2	23
<b>Cyprus</b>	34	27	6	13	1	43
<b>Latvia</b>	31	19	11	5	9	37
<b>Lithuania</b>	17	14	4	3	1	27
<b>Luxembourg</b>	68	36	42	38	18	81
<b>Hungary</b>	14	10	6	1	0	20
<b>Malta</b>	36	22	10	23	7	60
<b>Netherlands</b>	47	36	12	16	2	69
<b>Austria</b>	53	35	30	19	8	39
<b>Poland</b>	16	13	9	2	1	27
<b>Portugal</b>	9	6	3	2	0	29
<b>Romania</b>	13	10	8	1	1	31
<b>Slovenia</b>	40	26	27	6	3	55
<b>Slovakia</b>	27	15	20	2	2	36
<b>Finland</b>	51	41	16	14	4	48
<b>Sweden</b>	59	48	16	17	1	65
<b>United Kingdom</b>	35	28	7	12	2	29

Source: Special Eurobarometer 298, European Commission

1. "**Consumers in Europe**", PDF version - free download from Eurostat website. The data presented in this News Release could differ slightly from the data published in the publication, due to updates made after the data extractions used for the publication.

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