

Sport statistics

2018 edition



Eurostat's sport statistics — harmonised EU-level sport data

The growing economic and social impact of sport has secured it an important place in EU strategies and programmes. Evidence-based policies in this field call for harmonised and comparable statistics.

Thanks to cooperation between Eurostat and the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), such statistics have been disseminated regularly since 2015.

As no Eurostat data collection is devoted specifically to sport, sport statistics are derived from already existing EU surveys. Reflecting sport's multidisciplinary nature, they currently cover:

- employment — data from the [EU Labour Force Survey](#);
- international trade in sporting goods — [COMEXT](#) data;
- attendance at live sport events — data from the [EU Survey on Income & Living Conditions \(SILC\)](#) ad-hoc module;
- active engagement in sport and physical activity — data from the [European Health Interview Survey \(EHIS\)](#).

The data on employment and international trade are updated annually. The data on attendance at live sport events and active engagement in sport and physical activity are disseminated when the results of the respective surveys (conducted at varying intervals) are published.



Sport policy

Eurostat's statistics have a role to play in developing and monitoring EU policy on sport, particularly as regards:

- **sport's economic dimension**

EU sport policy is designed to maximise economic benefits from sport. The European Commission aims to identify the sector's potential, safeguard it and provide support through the sharing of best practices in areas like sport statistics, state aid or sustainable funding for grassroots sport.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/sport/policy/economic_dimension/index_en.htm

- **physical activity to promote health**

Science shows that taking part in sport and physical activities benefits individuals, society and the economy — both directly and indirectly. Accordingly, the Commission is taking action in policy areas including sport, health, transport, education and research. One key aspect is implementing the 2013 Council Recommendation on promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors. Implementation is closely monitored, using a set of indicators and in cooperation with the EU Member States and the World Health Organisation.

See: http://ec.europa.eu/sport/policy/societal_role/health_participation_en.htm

- **European Week of Sport**

This EU-wide initiative, designed to raise awareness of the benefits of sport and physical activity, is for everyone — regardless of age, background and fitness level. Focusing on grassroots initiatives, it encourages people to #BeActive regularly and creates opportunities for them to exercise more in their everyday lives.

See: <http://ec.europa.eu/sport/week>

- **Erasmus+ Sport**

In the sporting arena, Erasmus+ helps:

- to develop, transfer and implement innovative ideas and practices across Europe;
- to develop the European dimension of sport by encouraging cooperation between stakeholders.

See: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/sport_en

Sport-related jobs

The ‘[Vilnius definition of sport](#)’, drafted by the Commission-led EU Working Group on Sport and Economics, provides the basis for Eurostat’s sport employment data.

Eurostat’s definition of employment in sport is based on the statistical definition (sporting activities as an economic sector under the [NACE](#) classification). It also introduces the dimension of occupation under the [ISCO](#) classification (which includes sport and fitness workers employed outside the sport sector).

Employment in sport thus covers employers, employees and self-employed people in three types of situation:

- people with a sport-related occupation in the sport sector (ISCO 342*NACE 93.1), e.g. professional athletes, professional coaches in fitness centres;
- people with non-sport jobs in the sport sector (NACE 93.1), e.g. fitness centre receptionists;
- people with a sport-related job (ISCO 342) outside the sport sector, e.g. school sport instructors.

Data on sport employment are taken from the EU [Labour Force Survey](#). This provides information on workers’ labour status and their socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, age and educational attainment (classified by [ISCED](#) level).

The employment figures presented here are person counts, not full-time equivalents. They thus include all paid workers in sport-related jobs, regardless of whether they work full-time or part-time.

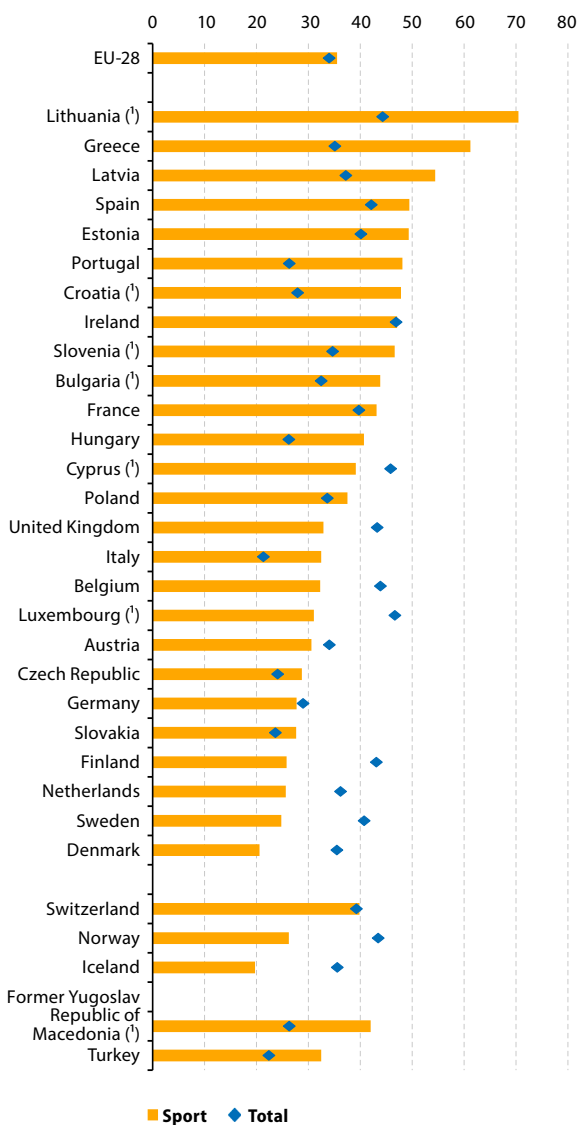
Table 1: Employment in sport, EU-28, 2016

Socio-demographic characteristics		Number of persons employed in sport (thousands)	Distribution of persons employed...	
			... in the field of sport	... in overall employment
			(%)	
Gender	Women	762.6	45.0	45.9
	Men	931.5	55.0	54.1
Age group	Aged 15–29	638.6	37.7	18.6
	Aged 30–64	1 002.9	59.2	79.1
	Aged 65+	52.7	3.1	2.3
Educational attainment level	Low (ISCED 0–2)	258.6	15.3	17.9
	Medium (ISCED 3–4)	830.9	49.2	48.1
	High (ISCED 5–8)	600.0	35.5	34.0

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [sprt_emp_sex](#), [sprt_emp_age](#), [sprt_emp_edu](#), [lfsa_egan](#) and [lfsa_egaed](#))

Figure 1: Persons with tertiary educational attainment — in sport employment and in total employment, 2016

(%)



Note: Data not available (not reliable) for Malta and Romania.

(¹) Data of low reliability for sport employment.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [sprt_emp_edu](#) and [lfsa_egaed](#))

International trade in sporting goods

Statistics on international trade in sporting goods measure the value in euros of sporting goods traded between EU countries (intra-EU trade) and between EU and non-EU countries (extra-EU trade).

These data come from Eurostat's [COMEXT](#) database of trade statistics and cover EU countries and the EFTA and candidate countries.

Internationally traded sport-related items are identified by the [Harmonised System](#) classification and grouped by sport discipline, or as specific types of sport equipment and accessories.



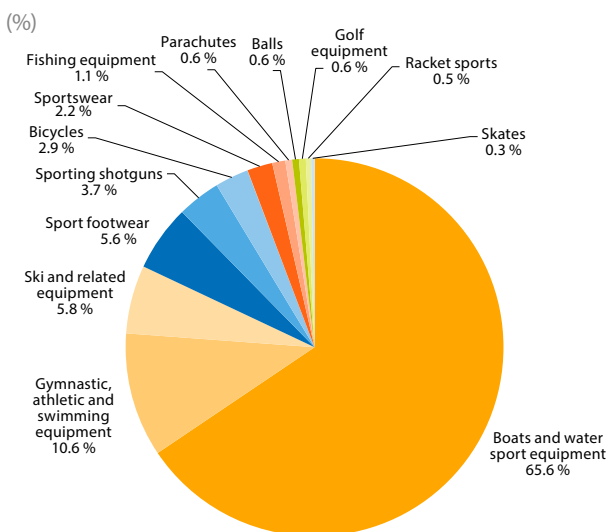
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The product groups concerned (covered by Harmonised System (HS) 6-digit codes) are:

- skis & related equipment
- skates
- boats & water sport equipment
- golf equipment
- racket sports (tennis & badminton) equipment
- balls
- gymnastic, athletic & swimming equipment
- fishing equipment
- bicycles
- parachutes
- sportswear
- footwear
- sporting shotguns.

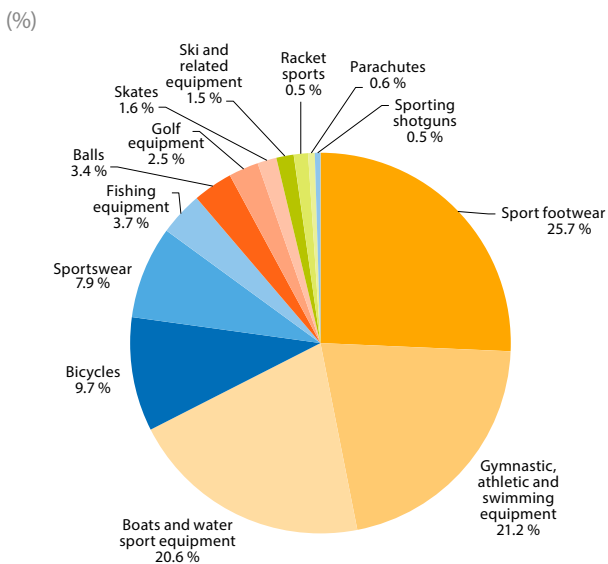
The following import and export indicators are available for selected partner countries or geo-economic regions: value of trade in thousands of euros, trade in sporting goods as a percentage of a country's total trade, contribution of different countries to total EU trade in sporting goods, categories of sporting goods as percentages of total sport trade, at country level and EU-wide.

Figure 2: Extra-EU exports of sporting goods (value in euro), by product, EU-28, 2016



Source: Eurostat (online data code: [sprt_trd_prd](#))

Figure 3: Extra-EU imports of sporting goods (value in euro), by product, EU-28, 2016



Source: Eurostat (online data code: [sprt_trd_prd](#))

Involvement in sport — as spectator or participant

Eurostat can provide data on two types of involvement in sport:

- attendance at live sport events;
- active participation in sport.

The most recent data on attendance at live sport events (professional or amateur) were obtained from the EU-SILC (Survey on Income and Living Conditions) 2015 ad-hoc module on social and cultural participation. This was conducted throughout the EU and in some EFTA and candidate countries.

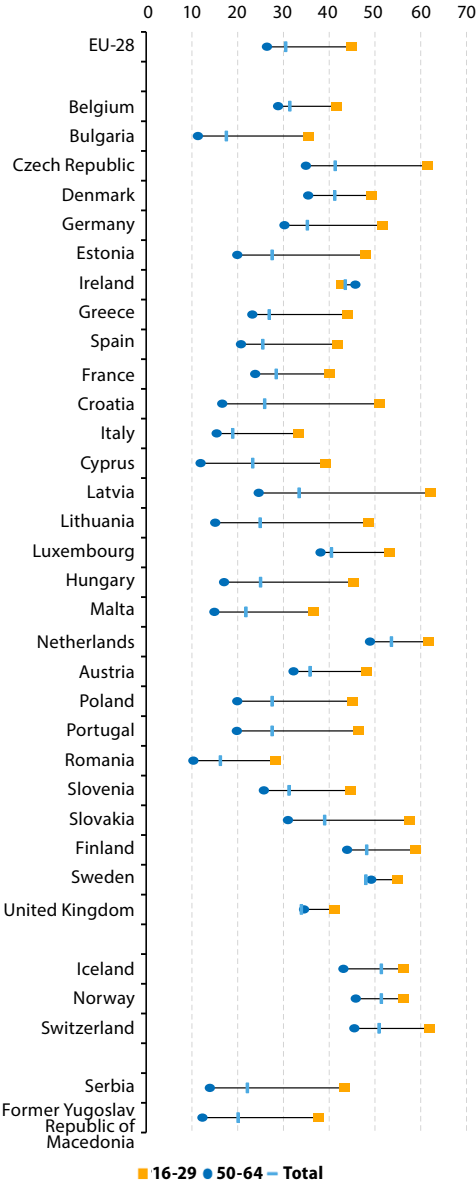
The target population comprised people aged 16 and up who were asked how many sport events they had attended during the 12 months before the survey. Data are broken down not only by age, sex and educational attainment (standard breakdowns), but also by characteristics including household type, income quintile and degree of urbanisation. Questions about why respondents did not attend sport events were also included.

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Figure 4: Attending live sport events at least once in the previous 12 months, by age group, 2015

(% of population aged 16 and more)



Note: Estimated data for EU-28. Data of low reliability for Ireland, Poland and the United Kingdom.
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_scp03)

Engaging actively in sport

The most recent data on engaging in sport and non-work-related physical activities come from 'wave 2' of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), held in the EU countries around 2014. The reference period was a typical 7-day week and the target population was people aged 15 and up.

The EHIS survey has produced statistics on the following non-work-related physical activities, set out in the database on Eurostat's website (Eurobase):

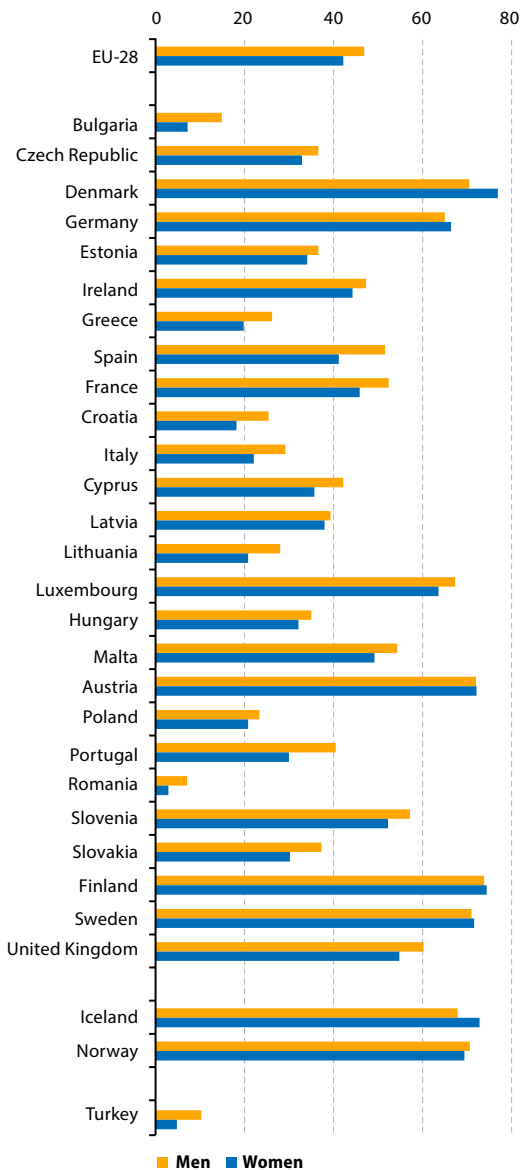
- engaging in sport, fitness or recreational physical activities ('aerobic sports'), e.g. Nordic walking, brisk walking, ball games, jogging, cycling, swimming, aerobics, rowing, badminton;
- muscle-strengthening — exercise done specifically to improve or maintain the strength of the major muscle groups: legs, back, shoulders, arms, etc. (e.g. resistance training);
- commuting on foot;
- commuting by bicycle.

The distribution of population engaging in 'aerobic activities' for at least 10 minutes a week is available for different breakdown variables (age, sex, educational attainment, etc.).



Figure 5: Practising sport, fitness or recreational (leisure) physical activities at least once a week, by sex, 2014

(% of population aged 15 and more)



Note: Estimated data for EU-28 (no data for Belgium and the Netherlands)

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [hlth_ehis_pe3e](#))

Data dissemination

• Statistical database & website

The **database** on Eurostat's website provides **free online access** to all Eurostat statistics.

The website includes a [section on sport statistics](#). This serves as a gateway to sport data, listed by topic. It also provides an overview of the surveys from which the data are taken, links to EU policy tools on sport and access to the methodological notes for each dataset.

The [Statistics Illustrated](#) page provides the clearest and easiest way to understand Eurostat data — dynamic data visualisations. The selection of charts shows how indicators have developed over time and the differences between EU countries, thus helping to identify patterns and trends.

[Statistics Explained](#) is a wiki-based system that presents statistical topics in a straightforward format. Its articles, including those on [sport statistics](#), make up a kind of encyclopaedia of European statistics.

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Did you know?

- 38 % of people in sport employment in the EU are aged between 15 and 29 (twice the percentage in total employment).
- The largest category of sporting goods imported into the EU is sport footwear.
- In Germany and the EU Scandinavian countries, women take part in sport, fitness or recreational activities slightly more than men.

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