

Consumers in Europe

Services to citizens in the EU in facts and figures

How many EU households have only mobile phones? For how long do they talk per day on their mobile phones? How many inhabitants are served by each post office in the Member States? How many Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) are there per inhabitant in the EU? How do Europeans prefer to pay for their purchases?

Answers to these questions and many more can be found in the publication¹ "**Consumers in Europe – facts and figures**", jointly published by **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities** and the **General Directorate Health & Consumer Protection of the European Commission**. This third edition of "Consumers in Europe" focuses on network industries providing services of general interest to the European consumers. These services are utilities such as transport, energy, water, electricity, telecommunications, internet, postal services and banking services, which play a fundamental role in the economic and social lives of citizens.

Nearly one mobile phone subscription per inhabitant in the EU27 in 2005

The number of mobile telephone subscriptions² has increased almost fourteen times between 1996 and 2005 in the **EU27**, from 7 subscriptions per 100 inhabitants in 1996 to 96 in 2005. In 2005, thirteen Member States had more than 100 mobile phone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. **Luxembourg** (158), **Lithuania** (127), **Italy** (122), the **Czech Republic** (115) and **Portugal** (111) registered the highest ratios and **Romania** (62), **Poland** (76), **France** (77) and **Bulgaria** (80) the lowest.

In contrast, the number of fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants in the **EU27** has only increased slightly in this period, from 43 lines per 100 inhabitants in 1996 to 48 in 2005. The pattern in the Member States varies: the number of fixed telephone lines has fallen in twelve Member States, while it increased in fourteen and remained stable in one. The Member States with the highest number of fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants in 2005 were **Germany** (67), **Denmark** (61), **France** and **Sweden** (both 58), and the lowest were **Romania** (20), **Slovakia** (22), **Lithuania** (23), the **Czech Republic** and **Poland** (both 31).

Nearly 20% of households in the EU25 had a mobile phone but no fixed line in 2006

In the **EU25** in 2006, 18% of households had mobile phone access, but no fixed telephone access. The proportion varied largely among the Member States: it was less than 10% in **Sweden** (0%), **Malta** (3%), the **Netherlands** (4%) and **Luxembourg** (8%), and 40% or more in **Lithuania** (48%), **Finland** (47%), the **Czech Republic** (42%) and **Latvia** (40%).

The average use of mobile phones also varied considerably between Member States in 2004, ranging from 1.2 minutes per subscriber per day in **Poland**, 1.3 minutes in **Luxembourg** and 1.6 minutes in **Germany** to 6.0 minutes in **Cyprus**, 5.3 minutes in **Finland** and 4.2 minutes in **France**.

Telephony: fixed and mobile

	Mobile telephone subscriptions per 100 inhabitants*		Fixed telephone lines per 100 inhabitants**		Households having mobile phone access but no fixed telephone access, 2006 (%)***	Average duration of cellular mobile calls, 2004 (minutes per subscriber per day)****
	1996	2005	1996	2005		
EU27	7	96	43	48	:	:
EU25	8	95	44	48	18	:
Belgium	5	84	49	32	24	:
Bulgaria	1	80	32	32	17	:
Czech Republic	2	115	27	31	42	1.7
Denmark	25	101	62	61	14	2.6
Germany	7	96	54	67	11	1.6
Estonia	5	107	31	34	36	2.6
Ireland	8	103	38	39	18	3.4
Greece	5	93	50	44	12	2.1
Spain	8	99	39	44	23	3.0
France	4	77	57	58	14	4.2
Italy	11	122	44	43	25	2.2
Cyprus	11	104	56	54	10	6.0
Latvia	1	81	30	37	40	2.2
Lithuania	1	127	28	23	48	2.1
Luxembourg	11	158	63	54	8	1.3
Hungary	5	92	26	34	30	2.4
Malta	4	81	49	52	3	2.8
Netherlands	7	97	54	43	4	2.7
Austria	7	106	48	32	28	3.1
Poland	1	76	17	31	20	1.2
Portugal	7	111	38	40	38	3.8
Romania	1	62	14	20	24	1.8
Slovenia	2	88	33	41	13	3.3
Slovakia	1	84	23	22	38	2.2
Finland	29	103	55	41	47	5.3
Sweden	28	101	68	58	0	2.1
United Kingdom	12	109	52	57	13	2.8

Data for mobile phone subscriptions and fixed telephone lines have been updated compared to the publication.

: Data not available

* More than one subscription per person is possible and pre-paid cards are considered as subscriptions. Source: Eurostat, except for 2005 data for Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, source: ITU (International Telecommunication Union)

** Source: Eurostat, except for 2005 data for Italy, Latvia, United Kingdom and 1996 data for Romania, source: ITU (International Telecommunication Union)

*** Source: Eurobarometer 64.4 (E-Communications Household Survey), European Commission, 2006

**** Italy, United Kingdom: 2001, Latvia: 2002, Greece, France, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria: 2003. Source: Eurostat

Between 700 and 13 000 inhabitants per post office within the EU

The availability of permanent post offices varied greatly among the Member States. In 2005, the highest density was observed in **Cyprus** (700 inhabitants per permanent post office), **Latvia** and **Estonia** (both 2 400) and **Bulgaria** (2 500). **Spain** (13 000) recorded the lowest density, followed by **Malta** (7 900), **Belgium** (7 400) and **Germany** (6 500).

Concerning post boxes, **Sweden** (3.3 post boxes per 1 000 inhabitants), **Estonia** (2.8), **Luxembourg** and **Austria** (both 2.5) registered the highest level of availability in 2005 and **Romania** (0.6), **Bulgaria** (0.7) and **Spain** (0.8) the lowest.

The price of postage for a standard national letter was highest in 2006 in **Finland** (€0.70), **Denmark** (€0.64) and **Italy** (€0.60), and lowest in **Malta** (€0.16), **Slovenia** (€0.20) and **Bulgaria** (€0.23). The price for a standard letter to an international destination within the EU was highest in **Sweden** (€1.19), **Denmark** (€0.97) and **Hungary** (€0.77), and lowest in the **Czech Republic** (€0.34), **Malta** (€0.37) and **Bulgaria** (€0.41).

Postal services

	Average number of inhabitants served by a permanent post office, 2005*	Number of post-boxes per 1 000 inhabitants, 2005*	Price of a postage stamp for a standard letter, euro, 2006**	
			National	EU
Belgium	7 395	1.8	0.52	0.70
Bulgaria	2 464	0.7	0.23	0.41
Czech Republic	2 992	2.4	0.25	0.34
Denmark	5 747	1.7	0.64	0.97
Germany	6 526	1.3	0.55	0.70
Estonia	2 444	2.8	0.28	0.42
Ireland	2 642	1.5	0.48	0.75
Greece	5 313	1.0	0.47	0.65
Spain	12 958	0.8	0.29	0.58
France	3 557	2.4	0.54	0.60
Italy	4 200	1.1	0.60	0.65
Cyprus	743	1.2	0.36	0.54
Latvia	2 366	1.0	0.45	0.65
Lithuania	3 615	1.2	0.29	0.49
Luxembourg	4 345	2.5	0.50	0.70
Hungary	3 551	1.5	0.36	0.77
Malta	7 875	1.2	0.16	0.37
Netherlands	5 108	1.2	0.44	0.72
Austria	4 206	2.5	0.55	0.55
Poland	4 614	1.5	0.52	0.75
Portugal	3 633	1.7	0.45	0.60
Romania	3 188	0.6	:	:
Slovenia	3 525	1.6	0.20	0.65
Slovakia	3 405	1.3	0.41	0.60
Finland	4 114	1.5	0.70	0.70
Sweden	4 566	3.3	0.59	1.19
United Kingdom	4 151	1.9	0.47	0.64

: Data not available

* Source: UPU (Universal Postal Union),
Inhabitants served by a post office: Spain and Cyprus 2004
Post boxes per 1 000 inhabitants: Belgium 2003, Spain 2004

** Source: SOGETI, on the basis of various national information sources

Prices correspond to ordinary mail, letters of standard size and less than 20g. 2005 average exchange rates were used for non euro area Member States. United Kingdom data corresponds to Great Britain.

Highest preference to pay cash in Greece, Poland and Cyprus

In the **EU25** in 2005, 49% of respondents preferred to pay cash when making a purchase of at least 100 euro, 36% preferred to pay by credit card, 7% by cheque and 5% by bank- or postal transfer. **Greece** (95%), **Poland** (75%) and **Cyprus** (70%) had the highest preferences for paying cash. Paying by credit cards was most preferred in **Sweden** (62%), the **Netherlands** (61%) and **Luxembourg** (59%). Only in **France** (35%), **Malta** and the **United Kingdom** (both 13%) and **Ireland** (11%) did more than 10% of respondents prefer to pay by cheque. There was a relatively high percentage who preferred to pay by bank- or postal transfers in **Austria** (29%) and the **Netherlands** (23%).

Among the Member States for which data are available, **Spain** (125) had the highest number of Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) per 100 000 inhabitants, followed by **Portugal** (107) and **Slovenia** (74). The lowest numbers of ATMs per 100 000 inhabitants were found in **Poland** and **Romania** (both 20) and the **Czech Republic** (23).

Banking services, 2005

	Which one of the following means of payment do you prefer to use to pay for a significant purchase of at least 100 euro? (%)**					ATMs per 100 000 inhabitants***
	Cash	Credit card	Cheque	Bank or postal transfer	Other or do not know	
EU25*	49	36	7	5	2	:
Belgium	26	58	1	14	1	70
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	:	54
Czech Republic	59	29	0	7	4	23
Denmark	36	50	2	10	1	54
Germany	51	42	1	5	0	64
Estonia	34	44	1	14	7	58
Ireland	52	28	11	3	6	:
Greece	95	4	0	0	1	56
Spain	65	32	1	1	2	125
France	11	50	35	2	1	41
Italy	68	20	5	4	3	63
Cyprus	70	21	8	0	2	:
Latvia	61	28	1	4	6	:
Lithuania	62	31	1	1	4	29
Luxembourg	26	59	0	13	1	:
Hungary	68	13	5	10	3	35
Malta	50	35	13	1	1	:
Netherlands	14	61	1	23	1	48
Austria	40	25	2	29	4	37
Poland	75	18	0	4	3	20
Portugal	53	36	8	0	3	107
Romania	:	:	:	:	:	20
Slovenia	56	40	2	1	1	74
Slovakia	68	19	3	8	2	:
Finland	40	51	0	7	1	66
Sweden	26	62	0	11	1	30
United Kingdom	37	45	13	1	3	53

: Data not available

* EU27 aggregate not available at the time of publication

** Source: Eurobarometer 63.2 (Public Opinion in Europe on Financial Services), European Commission, 2005

*** Spain, Italy, Portugal, Sweden: 2002, Poland: 2003, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Finland, United Kingdom: 2004, source: Eurostat

1. "Consumers in Europe - Facts and Figures", EUR 25 (excluding VAT). PDF version - free download from Eurostat website.
2. More than one subscription per person is possible and pre-paid cards are considered as subscriptions.

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