

**Resource Type:** Dataset

**Resource Identifier:** EU - Labour Force Survey microdata 1983-2020, release 2021, version 1

**Temporal Coverage:** Yearly data: 1983 – 2020, quarterly data: 1995-2020, adhoc modules: 1999-2020

**Name of Dataset:** EU - Labour Force Survey

**Creator:** Eurostat

**DOI:** DOI: 10.2907/LFS1983-2020V.1

**URL:** <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/203647/1004071/EU+LFS+DOI+2021v1.pdf/>

**Language of Resource:** English

**Publication Date:** 13 November 2021

**Short description:** The EU – Labour Force Survey 2020 dataset covers reference years 1983 – 2020 and contains microdata on the employment status of the population aged 15 years and over. The dataset is available for eligible researchers. Access conditions:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/overview>.

**Changes since last release:** Inclusion of 2020 core LFS data. Country level revisions of previous data (back to 2001) are listed in the documentation provided with the scientific use files.

**Data revisions:** See “LFS\_Data\_Revisions.htm” in the documentation provided with the scientific use files

**Dataset file types:** Annual (1983 – 2020), quarterly (1995 – 2020) and ad hoc (1999 – 2020)

**Geographical Coverage:** The list of countries, which is release dependent, can be accessed here:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/203647/771732/Datasets-availability-table.pdf>

**Keywords:** Labour force, employment, unemployment, hours worked, education, training, atypical work

**Description of the dataset:** The main statistical objective of EU-LFS is to classify the population of working age (15 years and over) into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups: **employed persons, unemployed persons** (both together make up the so-called ‘labour force’) and **persons outside the labour force**. The EU-LFS is the largest European household sample survey.

Alongside a set of core variables which are collected every year, the Member States also collect data on specific topics concerning the labour market in so-called “ad hoc modules”. Ad hoc modules are designed to supplement the core dataset to provide additional information on particular aspects of the labour market.

The programme of historic and future ad hoc modules is published at the following link:

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU\\_labour\\_force\\_survey\\_-\\_ad\\_hoc\\_modules](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_labour_force_survey_-_ad_hoc_modules)

**Methodology:** The methodology of the EU-LFS is summarised here:

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU\\_labour\\_force\\_survey](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_labour_force_survey)

**Statistical unit:** Persons (households can be derived)

**Identifiers in the datasets:** The data sets contain variables at the level of individual persons and at the level of households. The anonymised identifiers allow linking the persons within the household.

**Variables description:**

Variables in the scientific use files (partially anonymised data):

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/EULFS-Database-UserGuide.pdf>

See also variables' descriptions by GESIS: <http://www.gesis.org/en/missy/metadata/EU-LFS/>

Variables in the data transmitted by national statistical offices to Eurostat (under the heading "LFS explanatory notes"):

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU\\_labour\\_force\\_survey\\_-\\_methodology#Core\\_variables\\_.28user\\_guide.29\\_and\\_explanatory\\_notes](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_labour_force_survey_-_methodology#Core_variables_.28user_guide.29_and_explanatory_notes)

**How to access the data:** Eurostat grants access to microdata for scientific purposes in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 557/2013. To apply for access consult:

[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/203647/771732/How\\_to\\_apply\\_for\\_microdata\\_access.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/203647/771732/How_to_apply_for_microdata_access.pdf)

**Statistical disclosure control (SDC) and anonymisation:** The EU-LFS scientific use files (SUFs) contain partially anonymised microdata for scientific purposes to which, along with the removal of direct identifiers, methods of SDC have been applied to reduce to an appropriate level (and in accordance with current best practice) the risk of identification of a statistical unit. Further details concerning statistical disclosure control methodology can be found here:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/overview/self-study-material-for-microdata-users>

The SDC methods used to produce EU-LFS SUFs are described in chapter 7 of the EU-LFS User Guide:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/EULFS-Database-UserGuide.pdf>

Any statistics based on EU-LFS scientific use files must be subject to stringent disclosure control practices prior to publishing. This is to ensure that information concerning specific individuals is not inadvertently released, and cannot be deduced by comparing with other published statistics. The guidelines for publication, which will accompany the SUFs, lay down rules for published statistics based on SUF microdata; specific rules concerning EU-LFS are as follows:

In any reports, including all publications and unpublished papers, three cell size thresholds will be distinguished for LFS results:

- Confidentiality threshold: up to 3 observations (unweighted sample), results must not be published;
- Reliability thresholds: regarding reliability restrictions, Eurostat defines two limits, called 'a' and 'b'. Those reliability limits depend on the sample size and design in the individual Member States. Estimates corresponding to a (weighted) population below limit 'a' should not be published; estimates corresponding to a (weighted) population between limit 'a' and limit 'b' may be published with a warning concerning their limited reliability. This applies to quarterly data, annual averages of quarterly data, yearly data and ad hoc module results. The limits vary across Member States, years, and type of dataset. The thresholds "a" and "b" are provided in the CSV files in the "datafileinfo" folders in the anonymised microdata releases. More information can be found also at the LFS Statistics Explained pages, section "Publication guidelines and thresholds".

**Sampled Universe:** The EU-LFS is a large household sample survey providing quarterly results on labour participation of people aged 15 and over, as well as on persons outside the labour force. All definitions apply to persons aged 15 years and over living in private households. Persons carrying out obligatory military or community service are not included in the target group of the survey, as are persons in institutions/collective households.

**Sampling:** The national statistical institutes are responsible for selecting the sample, preparing the questionnaires, conducting the direct interviews among households, and forwarding the results to Eurostat in accordance with the requirements of the Council Regulation (EC) No 577/98. The national authorities decide on the sampling design. More information can be found in the quality reports, which can be accessed via the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/publications/quality-reporting>

**Collection Mode:** Data are collected by means of sample surveys. Details on the survey modes are available in the quality reports referenced above.

**Questionnaires:** The national questionnaires used by the countries to collect the EU-LFS data as well as specific instructions and other documents for the data collection are available from 2005 onwards here: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU\\_labour\\_force\\_survey\\_-\\_methodology#Core\\_questionnaires](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=EU_labour_force_survey_-_methodology#Core_questionnaires)

**Relations with other datasets:** Other data related to the labour market are available in the domains of job vacancies; labour costs such as the quarterly labour cost index, labour cost levels, Labour Cost Survey; earnings such as gross and net earnings, gender pay gap, minimum wages; Quality of employment. EU-SILC is a related household level survey covering income, social inclusion and living conditions. More statistics on lifelong learning are collected in the Adult Education Survey (AES) and Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS).

**Linking:** Persons belonging to the same household may be linked in LFS SUFs via the household identifier. It is not possible to trace persons over time (over quarters, or over years).

Since SUFs do not contain direct identifiers, it is not possible to link records in different datasets (e.g. LFS with SILC). Indirect identifiers may be used to match datasets, but such an exercise must be explicitly authorised by the data owners before it is pursued.

#### **Publications:**

- Eurostat publications based on LFS data:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/lfs/publications/results>
- Researchers' publications based on EU-LFS microdata:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/content/publications-basis-eurostat-microdata\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cros/content/publications-basis-eurostat-microdata_en)  
(Choose LFS as datasets)