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Environmental statistics in Europe

Facts and figures on the environment: from environmental taxes to water resources

What share of fresh water resources is being abstracted each year? How has the number of wild birds changed over the last 20 years? What share of GDP do environmental taxes account for? In which Member State is the most waste per capita generated? How much fertilizer is consumed in agriculture?

These questions and many others on environmental issues can be answered by consulting the publication¹ "Environmental statistics and accounts in Europe" from Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union. The publication has a special focus on the various impacts that European households have on the environment.

One of the priorities of the European Commission is a better environment for everyone. Statistics are increasingly important for the definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of environmental policies, in particular the "Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth". This publication covers key environmental statistics available at Eurostat, the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission and the European Environment Agency. This Eurostat publication is complementary to the five yearly assessment "European environment - state and outlook 2010", which was published by the European Environment Agency on 30 November 2010².

Largest freshwater resources per capita available in Finland, Sweden and Slovenia

Freshwater resources³ are either stocks held in the ground (groundwater) or are available from rivers, lakes, reservoirs, etc. (surface water). As a consequence of differences in climate and population density, the total freshwater resources available are unevenly distributed between Member States, ranging from 100 m³ per capita in **Malta**, 400 m³ in **Cyprus**, 1 500 m³ in the **Czech Republic** and 1 700 m³ in **Poland** to 20 700 m³ per capita in **Finland**, 19 800 m³ in **Sweden**, 15 800 m³ in **Slovenia**, 14 900 m³ in **Latvia** and 14 800 m³ in **Slovakia**.

The water exploitation index represents the total volume of water abstracted in a given year as a share of total freshwater resources. This index depends on the fresh water resources naturally available as well as the level of use of water by households, industry, energy suppliers and agriculture. The index varies widely among Member States, with the lowest shares observed in **Latvia**, **Slovakia** and **Sweden** (all 1%) and **Ireland** (2%), and the highest in **Cyprus** (64%), **Belgium** (32%), **Spain** (30%) and **Malta** (21%).

Water resources and water exploitation

	Total fresh water resources, long term annual average, thousand m ³ per capita*	Water exploitation index**, %
Belgium	1.9	32
Bulgaria	14.1	6
Czech Republic	1.5	12
Denmark	3.0	4
Germany	2.3	19
Estonia	9.2	15
Ireland	10.7	2
Greece	6.4	13
Spain	2.4	30
France	2.9	17
Italy	2.9	:
Cyprus	0.4	64
Latvia	14.9	1
Lithuania	7.3	9
Luxembourg	3.3	:
Hungary	11.6	5
Malta	0.1	21
Netherlands	5.4	11
Austria	10.1	:
Poland	1.7	18
Portugal	6.9	:
Romania	10.5	3
Slovenia	15.8	3
Slovakia	14.8	1
Finland	20.7	:
Sweden	19.8	1
United Kingdom***	2.9	13
Iceland	532.3	0
Norway	81.1	:
Switzerland	6.9	5
Turkey	3.3	:

* Long term annual average: a minimum 20 years of latest available data. For Malta average based on 1995-2007. Population data: 2008.

** The water exploitation index represents total water abstracted as a percentage of total freshwater resources. Reference period varies between countries: 2002 data: Hungary, 2004 data: Denmark, Germany; 2005 data: Belgium, Poland, Iceland; 2006 data: Spain, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. 2007 data: other countries.

*** Includes England and Wales for the water exploitation index

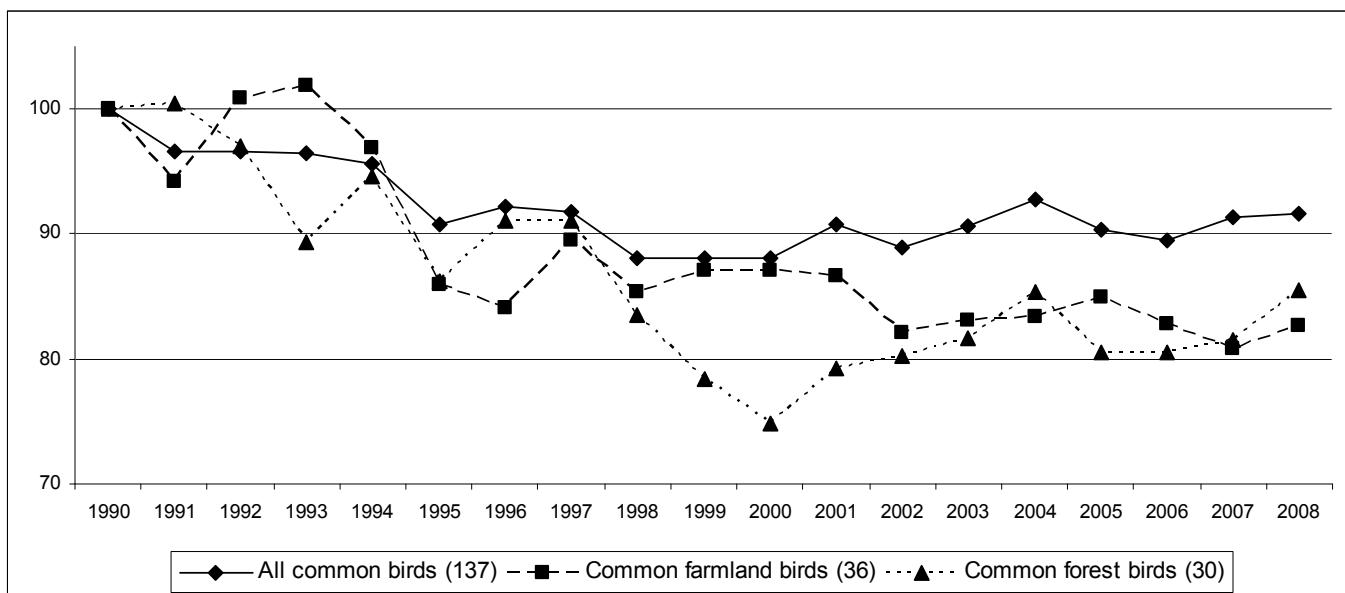
: Data not available

Decrease in common bird populations since 1990

Birds are an excellent indicator of the health of the environment, as they are generally well studied, occur in many habitats and respond to changes in their food sources and in their physical environment. In order to measure the evolution of the number of birds of different species, three series⁴ have been set up. They consist of "all common birds" (137 species) and two sub-sets, "forest birds" (30 species, e.g. woodpeckers, jays, warblers) and "farmland birds" (36 species, e.g. skylarks, partridges, lapwings). The separate series for forest and farmland birds show how the populations of common breeding bird species that depend on forests or on agricultural land for nesting or feeding are faring.

While year to year changes in the indices should be treated with caution, the long-term trends indicate that the common forest and farmland birds are declining far more than birds of the remaining 71 generalist species in the "all common birds" index. Compared with 1990, the index of the number of "all common birds" declined by around 10% by 2008, while those for "common farmland birds" and "common forest birds" fell by 15-20%. Since 2002 however the trends appear to have levelled off.

EU common bird population trends, 1990=100



	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008
All common birds	100.0	96.6	95.5	92.3	88.1	88.0	89.0	92.8	89.5	91.6
Common farmland birds	100.0	100.8	96.8	84.1	85.4	87.1	82.1	83.4	82.8	82.6
Common forest birds	100.0	97.0	94.7	91.1	83.4	74.8	80.3	85.4	80.5	85.5

Source: European Bird Census Council / Royal Society for the Protection of Birds / BirdLife / Statistics Netherlands

Environmental taxes range from 1.6% of GDP in Spain to 5.7% in Denmark

In the EU27 in 2008, environmental taxes⁵ accounted for 2.4% of GDP. The Member States with the highest shares of environmental taxes in GDP were **Denmark** (5.7%), the **Netherlands** (3.9%), **Bulgaria** and **Malta** (both 3.5%), and the lowest **Spain** (1.6%), **Lithuania** (1.7%), **Romania** (1.8%) and **Latvia** (1.9%).

Energy taxes⁵ made up 72% of total environmental taxes in the EU27, transport taxes⁵ 23% and taxes on pollution and resources⁵ 5%. Energy taxes made up the largest proportions of environmental taxes in all Member States, except **Malta**. The highest shares of energy taxes were observed in **Lithuania**, **Luxembourg** and the **Czech Republic** (all 93% of total environmental taxes) and **Slovakia** (90%). The highest shares of transport taxes were found in **Cyprus** (50% of total environmental taxes), **Malta** (48%) and **Ireland** (47%), while the largest proportions of taxes on pollution and resources were observed in **Denmark** (31%), the **Netherlands** (17%) and **Estonia** (14%).

Environmental taxes, 2008

	Total environmental taxes, % of GDP	% of total environmental taxes:		
		Energy taxes	Transport taxes	Pollution/Resources taxes
EU27	2.39	72.1	23.0	4.9
Belgium	1.97	63.4	29.1	7.5
Bulgaria	3.54	86.7	9.4	3.9
Czech Republic	2.45	92.7	6.4	0.9
Denmark	5.72	36.9	32.4	30.7
Germany	2.22	82.4	15.9	1.7
Estonia	2.36	83.7	1.9	14.4
Ireland	2.43	52.4	47.4	0.2
Greece	1.97	60.2	39.8	0.0
Spain	1.63	80.0	19.0	1.0
France	2.11	67.9	27.4	4.7
Italy	2.43	78.3	20.4	1.3
Cyprus	3.14	50.1	49.9	0.0
Latvia	1.94	85.2	11.7	3.1
Lithuania	1.66	93.4	2.7	3.9
Luxembourg	2.51	93.2	6.8	0.0
Hungary	2.70	72.6	21.5	5.9
Malta	3.52	43.0	48.2	8.8
Netherlands	3.87	49.7	33.5	16.8
Austria	2.41	67.7	31.2	1.1
Poland	2.59	87.1	9.7	3.2
Portugal	2.64	72.8	27.2	0.0
Romania	1.78	79.2	20.2	0.6
Slovenia	3.01	78.7	15.8	5.5
Slovakia	1.98	89.9	7.8	2.3
Finland	2.73	64.8	33.2	2.0
Sweden	2.72	80.4	18.7	0.9
United Kingdom	2.42	74.1	22.2	3.7
Norway	2.66	46.2	43.4	10.4

1. **"Environmental statistics and accounts 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.
2. The publication "**European environment - state and outlook 2010**" is the fourth assessment of the state of the European environment, which are published by the European Environment Agency every five years. It provides thematic assessments of key environmental topics which are based, in addition to national data sources, to a large extent on environment statistics provided by Eurostat and the European Statistical System. For more information on the European Environment Agency see <http://www.eea.europa.eu>.
3. **Freshwater resources** are either stocked in the ground (groundwater) or are available through rivers, lakes, reservoirs, etc. (surface water). Freshwater resources are continuously renewed by the natural processes of the hydrological cycle. The hydrological cycle, or water cycle, is a continuous process by which water is purified by evaporation and transported from the earth's surface (including the oceans) to the atmosphere and back to the land and oceans in the form of precipitation.
4. The series are set up on the basis of the predominant habitat used for breeding and feeding (farmland, forest, other). For further information on species: <http://www.ebcc.info/index.php?ID=389>
5. Environmental taxes include taxes on energy, transport, pollution and resources, but value added type taxes are excluded because they are levied on all products. **Energy taxes** include taxes on energy products used for both transport (e.g. petrol and diesel) and stationary purposes (e.g. fuel oils, natural gas, coal and electricity). **Transport taxes** mainly include taxes related to the ownership and use of motor vehicles. They also include taxes on other transport equipment like planes and related transport services like duties on charter or schedule flights. These taxes may be 'one-off' taxes related to imports or sales of equipment, or recurrent taxes such as an annual road tax. **Pollution taxes** include taxes on measured or estimated emissions to air (except CO₂ taxes) and water, on the management of waste, and on noise. **Resource taxes** include any tax linked to extraction or use of a natural resource (e.g. extraction of gas and oil, licences paid for hunting, fishing and the like).

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