

## EU crime statistics 2005-2007

# Around 600 000 prisoners in the EU27

Between 2005 and 2007, there were on average 607 000 people in prison<sup>1</sup> in the **EU27**, equivalent to about 123 prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants.

The political and social sensitivity of issues of crime and criminal justice, together with growing public concern, has made it increasingly important to obtain a view of the situation in the EU. **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities**, in partnership with the statistical authorities of the Member States and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security, is developing a more comparable system of crime and criminal justice statistics. However, measuring tendencies in crime in the EU remains a difficult task, due to the differences in the data collection sources<sup>2</sup>. In this News Release, figures for the number of prisoners have been taken from a recent report<sup>3</sup> from **Eurostat**, since they are among the most comparable crime indicators between Member States.

### Highest prisoner rates in the Baltic countries, Poland and the Czech Republic

The highest average prisoner rates over the period 2005 to 2007 were recorded in **Estonia** (302 prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants), **Latvia** (293), **Lithuania** (232), **Poland** (228) and the **Czech Republic** (185). The lowest rates were registered in **Slovenia** (60), **Finland** (68), **Denmark** (71), **Ireland** (75 in 2004-2006) and **Sweden** (77). This compares with a rate of 758 prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants in the **USA** over the same period.

**Prisoners**  
(actual numbers and average rate per 100 000 inhabitants)

	2005	2006	2007	per 100 000 inhabitants*
<b>EU27</b>	<b>617 300</b>	<b>599 800</b>	:	<b>123</b>
Belgium	9 330	9 570	9 950	91
Bulgaria	11 400	11 450	10 790	145
Czech Republic	19 000	18 900	19 110	185
Denmark	4 040	3 930	3 650	71
Germany	79 520	77 170	73 320	93
Estonia	4 410	4 310	3 470	302
Ireland	3 020	3 050	:	75
Greece	9 870	10 280	:	91
Spain	60 710	64 220	67 100	146
France	59 200	59 520	60 400	95
Italy	59 520	39 010	48 690	84
Cyprus	540	600	670	79
Latvia	7 000	6 640	6 550	293
Lithuania	7 950	7 980	7 770	232
Luxembourg	740	740	670	152
Hungary	15 720	14 740	14 740	149
Malta	290	380	380	87
Netherlands	17 600	16 230	14 450	99
Austria	8 960	8 780	8 890	107
Poland	82 660	87 670	90 200	228
Portugal	12 690	12 450	11 590	116
Romania	36 700	34 040	29 390	154
Slovenia	1 130	1 130	1 340	60
Slovakia	9 290	8 660	8 240	162
Finland	3 880	3 480	3 370	68
Sweden	7 020	7 150	6 740	77
UK: England & Wales <sup>4</sup>	76 900	79 090	79 730	146
UK: Scotland <sup>4</sup>	6 860	7 180	7 380	139
UK: Northern Ireland <sup>4</sup>	1 330	1 500	1 480	82
Croatia	3 490	3 830	4 290	87
former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	2 080	2 090	:	98
Turkey	55 970	70 520	90 730	102
Montenegro	820	850	960	140
Serbia	8 080	7 860	8 970	112
Iceland	120	120	120	39
Liechtenstein	60	50	40	142
Norway	3 120	3 250	3 420	70
Switzerland	6 140	5 890	5 720	79
<b>USA</b>	<b>2 183 150</b>	<b>2 245 190</b>	<b>2 375 620</b>	<b>758</b>

: Data not available

\* Average of years 2005-2007, except 2004-2006: Ireland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; 2005-2006: Greece

1. Total number of adult and juvenile prisoners (including pre-trial detainees) at 1 September of each year. Including offenders held in Prison Administration facilities, other facilities, juvenile offenders' institutions, drug addicts' institutions and psychiatric or other hospitals. Excluding non-criminal prisoners held for administrative purposes for example, people held pending investigation into their immigration status.

Figures for the prison population may also be affected by many factors, including:

- number of cases dealt with by the courts;
  - the percentage receiving a custodial sentence;
  - the length of the sentences imposed;
  - the size of the population on remand; and
  - the date of the survey, especially in those countries where amnesties (or other early or executive release arrangements) apply.
2. Any attempt to measure the extent of crime in Europe is complicated by the fact that countries have widely differing methods of recording offences. Most of the data are taken from information recorded or reported by the police. Comparisons of crime levels based on the absolute figures would be misleading, since they are affected by many factors, including:
    - different legal and criminal justice systems;
    - rates at which crimes are reported to the police and recorded by them;
    - differences in the point at which crime is measured (for example, report to the police, identification of suspect, etc.);
    - differences in the rules by which multiple offences are counted; and
    - differences in the list of offences that are included in the overall crime figures.
  3. **Eurostat**, Statistics in Focus, Population and social conditions, 36/2009 "**Crime and criminal justice**", available free of charge in pdf format on the Eurostat web site.
  4. Figures for the United Kingdom are reported separately (as England & Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) owing to the existence of three separate jurisdictions.

Issued by:  
**Eurostat Press Office**

**Johan WULLT**  
Tel: +352-4301-33 444  
[eurostat-pressoffice@ec.europa.eu](mailto:eurostat-pressoffice@ec.europa.eu)

Eurostat news releases on the Internet:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

For further information on the data:

**Geoffrey THOMAS**  
Tel: +352-4301-34 198  
[geoffrey.thomas@ec.europa.eu](mailto:geoffrey.thomas@ec.europa.eu)

**Cynthia TAVARES**  
Tel: +352-4301-37 225  
[cynthia.tavares@ext.ec.europa.eu](mailto:cynthia.tavares@ext.ec.europa.eu)