

Culture statistics - household expenditure on culture

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in May 2023 and March 2025.
Planned article update: February 2028.*

Highlights

" In 2020, 2.7% of total consumption expenditure by EU households went to culture-related goods and services."

" In 2020, households in the EU spent 27.0% of their total cultural expenditure on audio-video and information processing equipment and 25.1% on books and newspapers. "

This article forms part of the online publication [Culture statistics](#) . It provides an overview of key figures on household consumption expenditure on culture-related goods and services. The data are collected through the [household budget survey \(HBS\)](#) , a national survey carried out by EU countries collecting data primarily on households' consumption expenditure on goods and services.

Household expenditure on cultural goods and services – scope and level

Within household expenditure, the aggregate covering cultural goods and services is based on the [classification of individual consumption by purpose \(COICOP\)](#) and comprises 14 different items grouped into the following 5 broad categories of cultural expenditure:

- equipment (portable devices, information processing equipment and equipment for the reception, reproduction and recording of vision, sound and recording media (CDs, DVDs, Blu-ray disks, vinyl records, etc.);
- books and newspapers;
- fees and subscriptions (broadcasters' fees and subscriptions, including TV on demand, cable and paid TV, as well as various streaming services that enable the reception of audio and video content; this also includes hiring prices for equipment and accessories for cultural purposes);
- attendance and entertainment (cinemas, theatres, museums, libraries, concerts and services of photographers and performing artists);
- articles for artistic expression and creation (including cameras, video cameras, musical instruments, stationery and drawing materials).

2.7% of total household consumption expenditure in the EU was spent on cultural goods and services

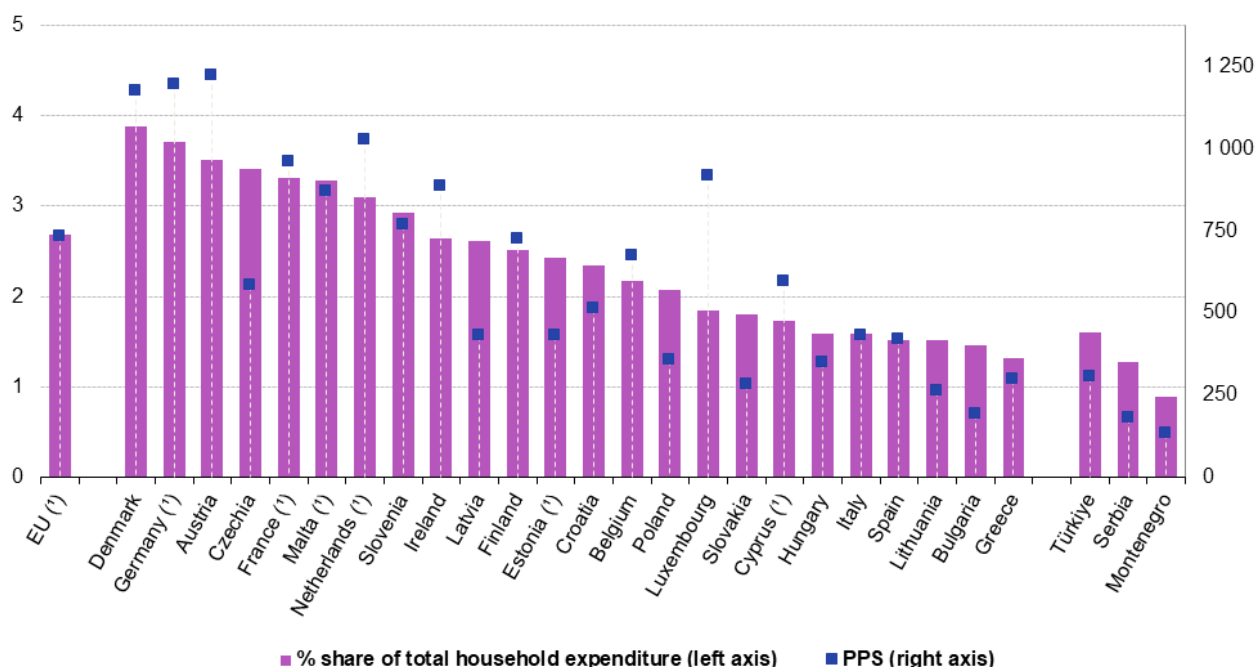
According to the latest HBS data, in 2020 private households in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) spent, on average, an estimated 2.7% of their total expenditure on cultural goods and services (see Figure 1).

The share of culture-related expenditure in total household consumption expenditure varied considerably across the EU countries. Several factors might impact this share, including household income, price levels, the ease of access to cultural venues, national cultural policies, and habits. In 2020, 8 countries recorded a share of cultural expenditure in total household budgets above the average among the 24 EU countries with available data. The highest percentage of the household budget spent on cultural purposes was in Denmark (3.9%). By contrast, in 16 countries the share was below the EU average, with the smallest share in Greece (1.3%).

Figure 1 also shows the average level of household expenditure on cultural goods and services, expressed in **purchasing power standards (PPS)**. The PPS is an artificial currency unit, which makes it possible to produce meaningful indicators required for cross-country comparisons, truly reflecting the differences in the purchasing power of households. In 2020, Austria, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands had the highest levels of expenditure on cultural goods and services, on average, more than 1 000 PPS yearly. Lowest shares with less than 300 PPS were recorded in Greece, Slovakia, Lithuania and Bulgaria.

Mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, 2020

(% and PPS, 2020)



EU aggregate is based on available data.

(*) Estimated

Source: Eurostat (online data code: cult_pcs_hbs)

eurostat

Figure 1: Mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, 2020 Source: Eurostat (cult_pcs_hbs)

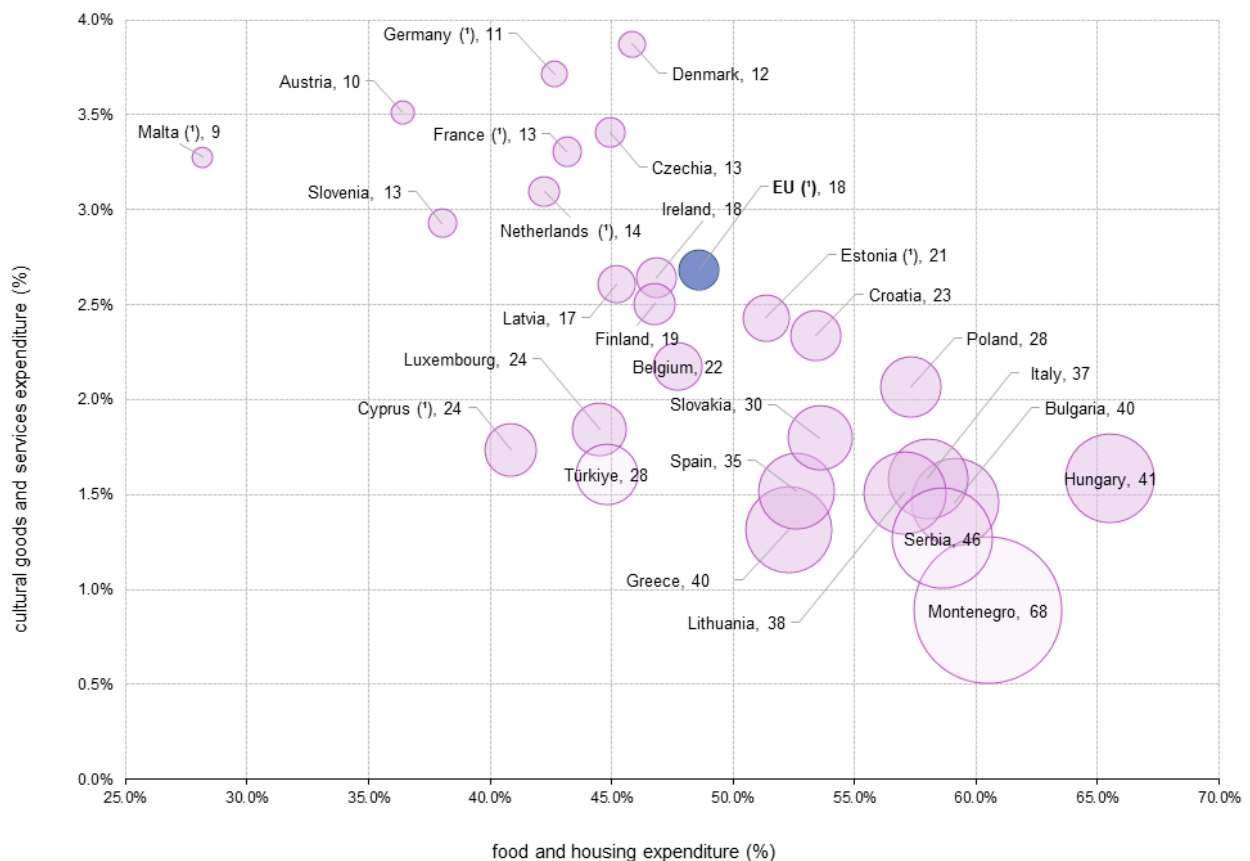
All countries that spent more than 50% of total expenditure on food and housing, spent less than 2.5% on culture

For comparison, at EU level in 2020, 2.7% of household expenditure was spent on culture, while 48.6% went on food and housing. In Figure 2, the vertical axis represents cultural expenses as a percentage of the total households expenditure, while the horizontal axis represents the percentage spent on food and housing, showing an inverse relationship between expenditure in essential goods, such as food and housing, and culture expenditure. In all countries where food and housing accounted for more than 50% of the total, less than 2.5% was spent on culture.

Furthermore, in Figure 2, the size of the circles represents the ratio between the 2 categories of expenditure: the

bigger the circle, the larger the gap between cultural expenditure and food and housing. At EU level, the spending on food and housing was about 18 times higher than on culture, with considerable differences between countries. Notably, in Malta, Austria and Germany, food and housing spending was 9 to 11 times cultural spending; while in Greece, Bulgaria and Hungary households spent over 40 times as much on food and housing as on culture.

Ratio between mean household expenditure on food and housing and on cultural goods and services, 2020



Note: EU aggregates are based on available data.
(*) Estimated.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hbs_exp_t121 and cult_pcs_hbs)

eurostat 

Figure 2: Ratio between mean household expenditure on food and housing and mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, 2020 (% and ratio) Source: Eurostat (hbs_exp_t121) and (cult_pcs_hbs)

Structure of household expenditure for culture-related purposes

On average, EU households allocated about a quarter of their cultural expenditure to information processing and audio-video equipment and another quarter to books and newspapers

In 2020, on average 27.0% of EU household cultural expenditure went on information processing, audio-video equipment and recording media, 25.1% on books and newspapers, 20.9% on broadcasters' fees and hiring of equipment and accessories for culture and 13.6% on attendance and entertainment, leaving the remaining 13.4%

for articles of artistic expression and creation.

Figure 3 shows the structure of household expenditure on culture from the 2015 and 2020 HBSs. Expenditure shares for books and newspapers, and attendance and entertainment remained relatively stable between the 2 surveys. Compared with the 2015 survey, in 2020 a higher share of expenditure went to articles for artistic expression and creation as well as to equipment, while a smaller portion was spent on fees and subscriptions.

The 2020 round of the HBS took place during the COVID-19 pandemic for many countries. Due to the specific circumstances related to the crisis, the fieldwork was altered and changes had to be made to the usual methods of data collection, and thus caution is needed when comparing 2015 with 2020 figures. For more details, please refer to the 'Data sources and methodology' section of this article.

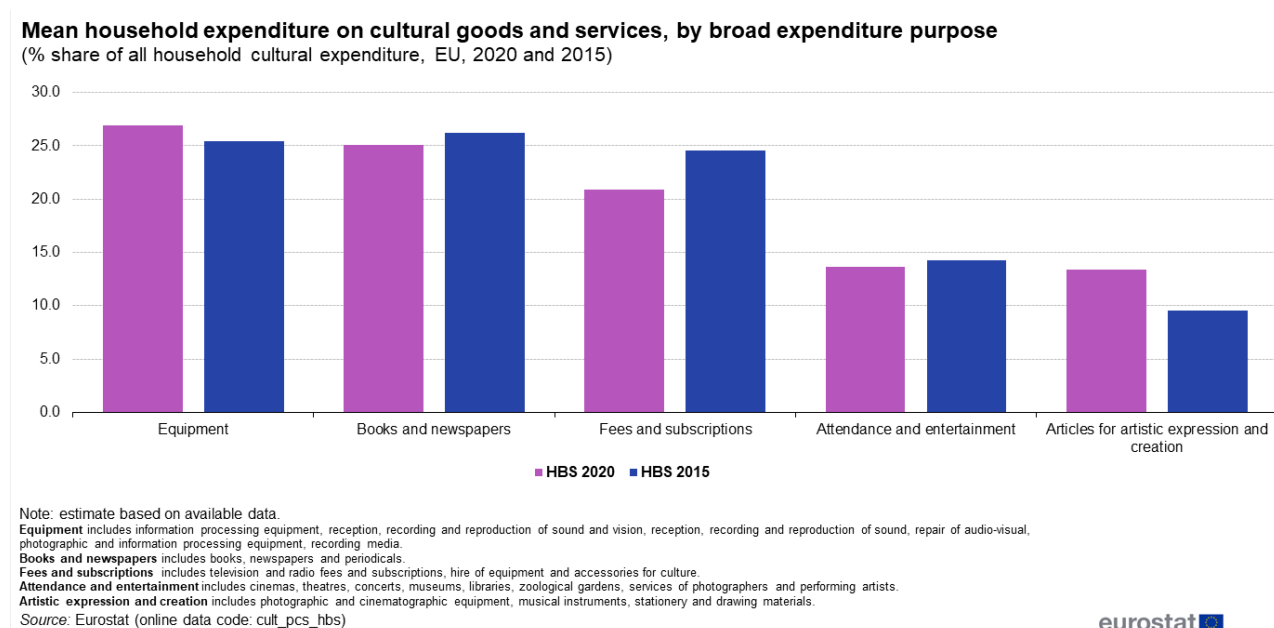


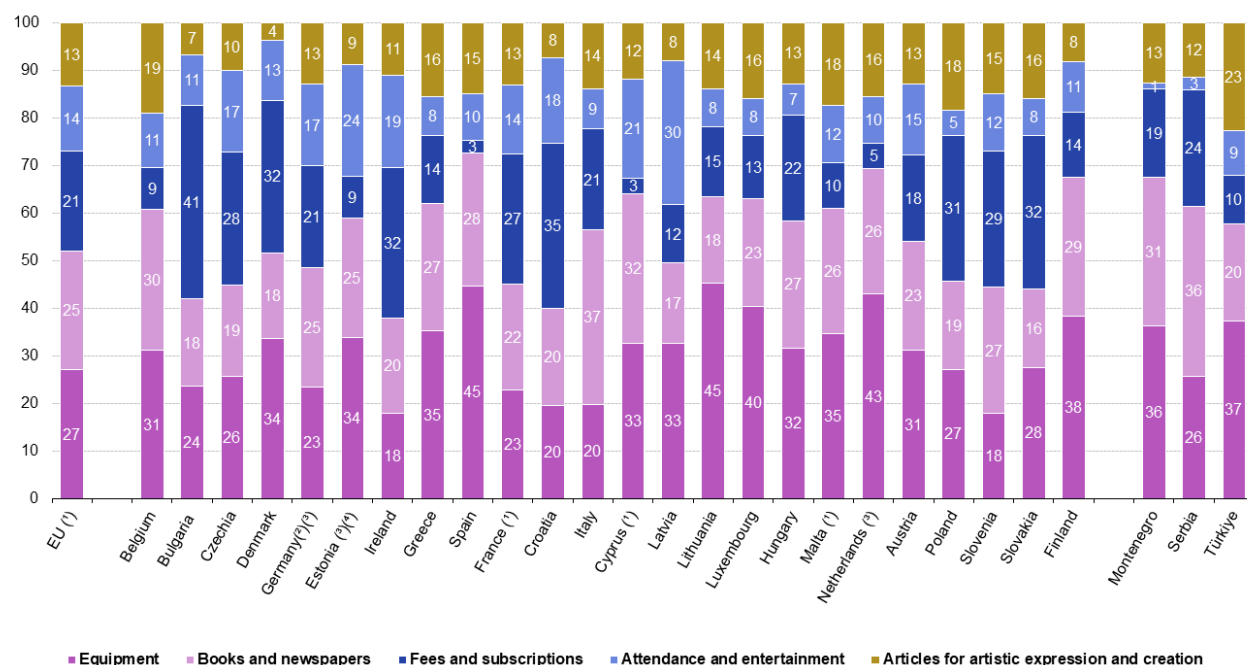
Figure 3: Distribution of mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, by expenditure purpose, EU, 2020 and 2015 Source: Eurostat (cult_pcs_hbs)

The structure of household expenditure across the 5 categories showed in Figure 3 at EU level varied significantly between countries. Figure 4 shows the diverse nature of cultural spending across the EU countries for the 5 aggregates.

- **Information processing equipment, audio-video equipment and recorded media** accounted for the largest part of the households' cultural spending in 14 EU countries. The highest percentage was in Lithuania (45.2%) and Spain (44.7%), while the lowest was in Slovenia (17.8%).
- Household expenditure on **books and newspapers** ranged from 16.4% in Slovakia to 36.6% in Italy. In Italy and Germany, these products represented the largest part of total culture-related expenditure.
- In 8 countries **fees and subscriptions** represented the largest part of expenditure on cultural goods and services. The lowest share for fees and subscriptions was observed in Spain (2.6%), while the highest was in Bulgaria (40.7%).
- **Attendance and entertainment** accounted for more than a fifth of household cultural budgets in Latvia (30.3%), Estonia (23.6%), and Cyprus (20.9%). This category had the lowest impact on household culture-related expenditure in Hungary (6.6%) and Poland (5.3%).

- Expenditure on **articles for artistic expression and creation** accounted for approximately one fifth of households' cultural budgets in Belgium (19.1%). The smallest share of culture-related household budgets was allocated for this purpose in Denmark (3.7%).

Mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, by broad expenditure purpose
(% share of all household cultural expenditure, 2020)



Note: EU aggregate is based on available data.
Portugal, Romania and Sweden - data not available.
(*) Estimated.
(*) Going out and entertainment - estimated.
(*) Articles for artistic expression and creation - estimated.
(*) Fees - estimated.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: cult_pcs_hbs)

eurostat

Figure 4: Mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, by broad expenditure purpose, 2020
Source: Eurostat (cult_pcs_hbs)

Table 1 analyses the structure of cultural expenditure in the EU, providing information about all 14 cultural items that comprise mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services. This level of granularity shows that in 2020 the largest proportion of EU households' expenditure on cultural goods and services went on television and radio broadcasting fees, hiring fees for equipment and accessories for culture (20.9%), followed by newspapers and magazines and information processing equipment (12.6% each), and books (12.4%). Conversely, the smallest shares of household expenditure on cultural goods and services were for photographic and cinematographic equipment (1.7%) and the repair of audiovisual, photographic, and information processing equipment (0.6%).

In 2020, the shares of the different expenditure categories varied greatly across the EU countries. Broadcasters' fees and subscriptions, hire of equipment and accessories for culture ranged from 2.6% of households' cultural budget in Spain to 40.7% in Bulgaria. Books ranged from 5.2% in Slovakia to 24.8% in Italy. Equipment for the reception, recording, and reproduction of sound, vision, and picture ranged from 5.4% in Slovenia to 15.6% in Cyprus.

Distribution of mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, by expenditure purpose, 2020
(in PPS, and % of all household cultural expenditure)

	Household expenditure on cultural goods and services	Information processing equipment	Equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound, vision and picture	Recording media	Equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound	Repair of audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment	Newspapers and periodicals	Books	Television and radio fees, hire of equipment and accessories for culture	Cinemas, theatres, concerts	Museums, libraries, zoological gardens	Photographic services	Stationery and drawing materials	Musical instruments (incl. rental and leasing services)	Cameras and accessories for photographic and cinematographic equipment
		Equipment					Books and newspapers		Fees	Attendance and entertainment			Articles for artistic expression and creation		
EU (*)	731	12.6	7.7	4.0	2.0	0.6	12.6	12.4	20.9	9.2	2.2	2.2	7.4	4.3	1.7
Belgium	672	16.5	8.1	3.4	1.7	1.2	11.9	17.8	8.8	5.0	3.3	3.0	11.1	6.4	1.6
Bulgaria	193	7.2	14.5	0.3	0.9	0.6	7.1	11.2	40.7	9.3	1.0	0.3	6.6		
Czechia	584	11.9	10.3	2.2	1.0	0.4	9.1	10.0	27.9	10.1	5.2	1.8	8.0	0.9	1.2
Denmark	1 173	17.0	9.3	4.2	2.8		11.6	6.6	32.1	7.7	3.6	1.2	1.4		
Germany (*)	1 193		6.1		2.2	0.6			21.3			2.0		5.1	
Estonia (*)	430	18.8	12.7	1.2			14.1	11.1	8.7	19.4	3.5	0.7	5.6	2.3	
Ireland	886	11.0	4.6	1.6	0.2		7.8	12.4	31.6	17.6	0.5	1.1	5.1	5.3	
Greece	296	20.4	12.1	2.4			12.9	14.0	14.2	6.7		1.3	10.3	5.1	
Spain	420	24.1	12.0	6.7	0.6	1.4	6.6	21.3	2.6	6.4	1.5	1.9	11.5	2.1	1.4
France (*)	958	8.7	5.9	4.6	3.0		11.0	11.2	27.4	9.4	1.7		6.9	4.4	1.8
Croatia	513	8.7	9.3	0.9			6.6	13.7	34.7	16.2	1.2	0.4	5.2	1.4	
Italy	432	10.4	6.8	2.3	0.1	0.2	11.8	24.8	21.2	4.7	1.8	2.0	12.5	0.7	
Cyprus (*)	593	14.4	15.6	0.5	0.3	1.8	14.1	17.5	3.2	13.0	2.2	5.7	8.9	2.1	0.9
Latvia	433	15.9	12.9	2.5			11.2	5.6	12.3	26.7	1.9	1.7	6.4		
Lithuania (*)	263	20.0					7.5	10.6	14.7	5.4		2.0	6.8	5.3	1.9
Luxembourg	914	25.9	11.4	0.8	1.7	0.4	9.4	13.3	13.3	6.5	0.8	0.4	9.7	4.4	1.9
Hungary	348	17.8	12.4		1.3		11.7	15.1	22.2	5.4	1.0		10.9	1.4	0.6
Malta (*)	869	19.7	8.9	2.0	0.9	3.1	7.2	18.9	9.7	8.8	0.8	2.3	7.4	3.0	7.1
Netherlands (*)	1 026	24.4	11.6	2.0	4.7	0.3	16.3	10.0	5.4	4.6	3.1	2.0	6.3	7.2	2.0
Austria	1 221	13.6	10.5	5.7	1.0	0.5	15.1	7.7	18.3	10.8	2.3	1.7	6.1	4.1	2.8
Poland	355	14.9	8.9	1.5	1.0	0.7	7.0	11.6	30.7	2.8	1.6	0.8	10.1	7.6	0.7
Portugal															
Romania															
Slovenia	767	9.7	5.4	1.3	1.2	0.2	13.8	12.8	28.6	7.2	2.8	2.0	8.2	5.6	1.2
Slovakia	282	13.0	13.0	0.5	0.7	0.3	11.2	5.2	32.4	5.7	0.8	1.2	12.2	2.4	1.4
Finland	722	18.6	12.5	0.9	5.5	0.7	22.6	6.7	13.6	8.7	0.6	1.4	3.4	3.2	1.7
Sweden															
Montenegro	133	12.5	23.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.4	20.8	18.5	1.0	0.1	0.0	12.5	0.1	0.2
Serbia	181	11.3	12.7	1.0	0.2	0.4	12.3	23.4	24.4	1.3	0.3	0.9	9.4	1.5	0.7
Turkiye	305	10.3	23.3	0.2	0.7	2.8	2.3	17.9	10.3	5.4	0.7	3.2	9.8	12.4	0.6

Note: EU aggregate is based on available data.
Values shown in italics have low reliability.

(*) Estimated.

(*) Cinemas, theatres, concerts - estimated.

(*) Museums, libraries, zoological gardens - estimated.

(*) Cameras and accessories for photographic and cinematographic equipment - estimated.

(*) Musical instruments (incl. rental and leasing services) - estimated.

(*) Television and radio fees, hire of equipment and accessories for culture - estimated.

(*) Equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound - estimated.

(*) Equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound, vision and picture - estimated.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: cult_pcs_hbs)

eurostat

Table 1: Distribution of mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, by expenditure purpose, 2020 Source: Eurostat (cult_pcs_hbs)

Household cultural expenditure - impact of household income

EU mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services was greatly influenced by income levels

In 2020, household expenditure on cultural goods and services varied significantly across the income distribution, showing a strong income dependency.

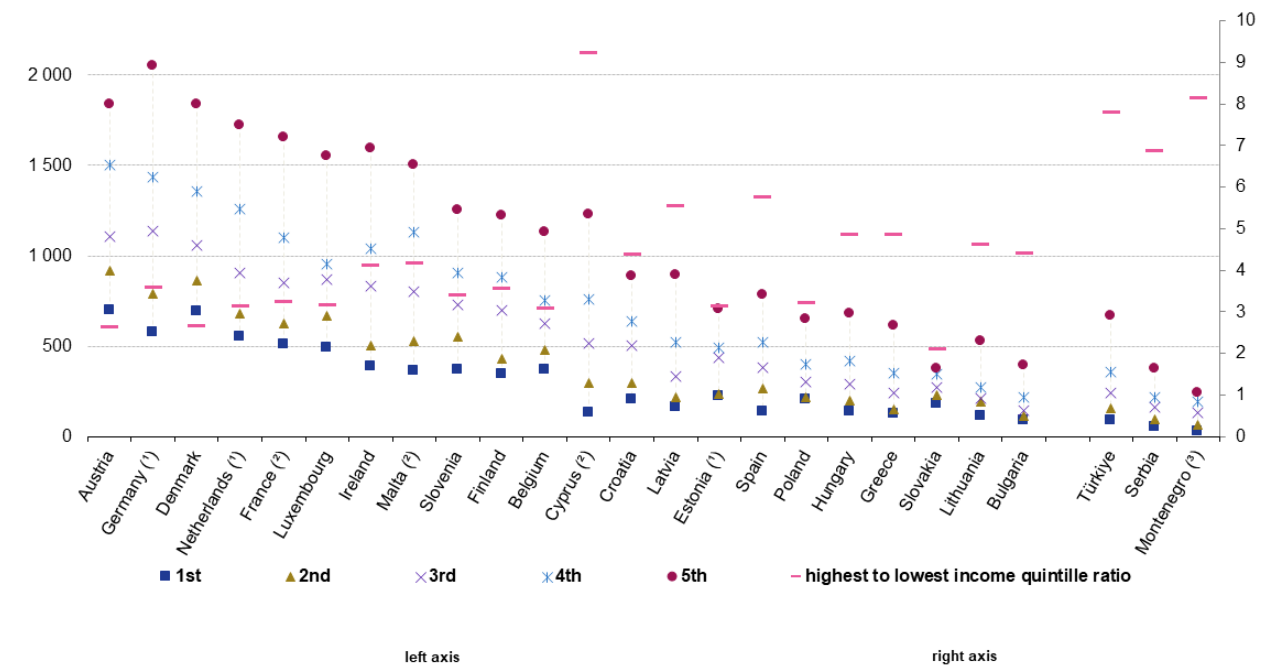
As shown in Figure 5, increases in spending on culture-related purposes were the most pronounced between households in the fourth and fifth income quintile. In 11 out of 22 EU countries with available data, households belonging to the fifth quintile spent at least 1.5 times as much as households from the fourth quintile.

The highest to lowest quintile ratio measures the difference in culture-related expenditure between income groups. With the exception of 3 EU countries, the mean consumption expenditure for households in the fifth quintile was at least 3 times higher than that of households in the first income quintile, indicating sharp inequalities in cultural spending due to income.

The most notable disparities in household expenditure on cultural goods and services across different income quintiles were observed in Cyprus. As shown by the highest-to-lowest income quintile ratio, for households in the fifth quintile, culture-related expenditure was 9 times higher than that in the first quintile (1 226 PPS vs 133 PPS). Significant disparities in culture-related expenditure based on household income were also present in Spain and Latvia, where households in the highest income group spent around 5 times as much on culture as those in the lowest income group.

By contrast, the least variation in household cultural expenditure between different income quintiles was observed in Slovakia, where spending on culture-related purposes was nearly equal between income quintiles, and where households with the highest income spent for culture-related purposes only twice as much as households with the lowest income (375 PPS vs 178 PPS).

Mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, by income quintile
(PPS and quintile ratio, 2020)



Note: Portugal, Romania and Sweden - data not available.
Czechia and Italy - data by quintile not available.
(1) Household expenditure by income quintile - estimated.
(2) Estimated.
(3) First quintile - low reliability.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: cult_pcs_qnt)

eurostat

Figure 5: Mean household expenditure on cultural goods and services, by income quintile, 2020 (in PPS – left axis; highest to lowest quintile ratio – right axis) Source: Eurostat (cult_pcs_qnt)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Household expenditure on culture: tables and figures](#)

Data sources and methodology

Eurostat compiles data on cultural expenditure from the [household budget survey \(HBS\)](#) .

Household consumption expenditure on cultural goods and services reflects the level of cultural participation and may be influenced by a range of factors, including household composition, age, wealth/income, the availability of cultural facilities and price structures. Data on household consumption expenditure are available in national currencies, euro and PPS; the latter are used to eliminate price-level differences between countries. The use of data in PPS terms ensures that information is valued at a uniform price level and therefore reflects only volume differences in the economy, as opposed to price-level differences. As an example of the order of magnitude of the PPS, data [on mean consumption expenditure per household and per adult equivalent](#) , are available in different units of measure, including PPS, national currency and euro, which can be compared by country.

Data are collected using national surveys in each participating country. The collection involves a combination of one or more interviews and diaries or logs maintained by households and/or individuals, generally on a daily basis (recording their consumption over time). The HBS is carried out most often every 5 years, the most recent referring

to 2020. The fieldwork for the 2020 HBS data collection took place between 2018 and 2022 for the majority of EU Member States, with the exceptions of Cyprus, Malta and France, where data were collected between 2015 and 2017. Data for these countries have been produced by converting 2015 to 2020 reference year prices using the 2020 HICP coefficient. For Sweden, data for the 2020 wave were not available at the time of writing. For Portugal and Romania, data for the categories on cultural goods and services were not available. For Czechia and Italy, the data by income quintile were not available.

The data collection and expenditure patterns of households in some EU Member States could have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions.

Data on household expenditure can be used to analyse expenditure patterns of specific types of household or expenditure patterns for particular groups of goods and services (such as cultural items, as covered in this article). This information is mainly used at EU level in connection with consumer protection policy. HBS statistics have also been used in conjunction with information on [Consumer prices of cultural goods and services](#) to develop a consumer market scoreboard that tracks how markets in various sectors of the economy have been performing from a consumer's perspective.

HBS statistics are based on the ECOICOP classification. Developed by the [United Nations Statistics Division](#) the [classification of individual consumption by purpose \(COICOP\)](#) provides a framework to classify and analyse individual consumption expenditure by households, non-profit institutions serving households, and general government. The European version — ECOICOP — extends the classification to five digits to better meet the need for more detailed data on household budgets and consumer price indices.

Culture-related goods and services within ECOICOP cover cultural goods such as books and newspapers, the manufacture of various articles that enable artistic creation (for example, musical instruments, photo and video cameras or drawing materials) or the equipment for the consumption of various forms of culture (TV and stereo equipment, [information and communication technologies](#)), as well as the actual media on which some cultural products can be delivered (CDs, DVDs or Blu-ray).

In an [ESSnet-Culture final report](#) (2012), the following COICOP items were identified as relating to culture (for the consumption expenditure of households):

- books;
- newspapers and periodicals;
- cinemas, theatres and concerts;
- museum, libraries and zoological gardens;
- musical instruments;
- cameras and accessories for photographic and cinematographic equipment;
- stationery and drawing materials;
- services of photographers and performing artists;
- television and radio fees, hire of equipment and accessories for culture;
- information processing equipment;
- reception, recording and reproduction of sound and vision;
- recording media;
- reception, recording and reproduction of sound;
- repair of audiovisual, photographic and information processing equipment.

For the purpose of this article, the concept of household expenditure on cultural goods and services comprises the ECOICOP categories listed in Table 2.

Household expenditure on cultural good and services by broad categories and ECOICOP codes involved

Broad category	ECOICOP Code	Code name
Information processing equipment, audio-video equipment and recorded media	CP09111	Equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound
	CP09112	Equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound and vision
	CP09113	Portable sound and vision devices
	CP09119	Other equipment for the reception, recording and reproduction of sound and picture
	CP0913	Information processing equipment
	CP0914	Recording media
	CP0915	Repair of audio-visual, photographic and information processing equipment
Books and newspapers	CP0951	Books
	CP0952	Newspapers and periodicals
Fees and subscriptions	CP09423	Television and radio licence fees, subscriptions
	CP09424	Hire of equipment and accessories for culture
Attendance and entertainment	CP09421	Cinemas, theatres, concerts
	CP09422	Museums, libraries, zoological gardens
	CP09425	Photographic services
Articles for artistic expression and creation	CP0954	Stationery and drawing material
	CP09121	Cameras
	CP09122	Accessories for photographic and cinematographic equipment
	CP09221	Musical instruments
	CP09429	Other cultural services

Source: Eurostat (Guide to Eurostat culture statistics — 2018 edition)



Table 2: Household expenditure on cultural good and services by broad categories and ECOICOP codes involved Source: Eurostat (Guide to Eurostat culture statistics – 2018 edition)

Context

Culture is one of Europe's greatest assets: it is a source of values, identity and a sense of belonging. It also contributes to well-being, social cohesion and inclusion. The cultural and creative sectors provide a stimulus for economic growth, job creation and international trade.

The EU supports these objectives through the [Creative Europe](#) programme and several policy actions included in the [work plan for culture \(2023-2026\)](#). The work plan, adopted by EU culture ministers in December 2022, sets out 4 main priorities for European cooperation in cultural policymaking:

- Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors.
- Culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society.
- Culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture.
- Culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations.

The production of reliable, comparable and up-to-date cultural statistics, which provide a basis for sound cultural policymaking, is a cross-sectoral priority for the European Commission. Eurostat compiles culture statistics from several different data collections to provide policymakers and other users of statistics with information on the main developments in the field of culture, covering issues such as education, employment, business, international trade, participation patterns and consumption patterns.

Explore further

Other articles

- [Culture](#) (all Statistics Explained articles on culture)
- [Consumer prices of cultural goods and services](#)
- [Household budget survey - statistics on consumption expenditure](#)
- [Household expenditure on sporting goods and services](#)
- [Consumption expenditure of private households \(ESMS metadata file – hbs_esms\)](#)

Database

- [Culture \(cult\)](#) , see:

Private households expenditure on culture ([cult_exp](#))

Mean consumption expenditure of private households on cultural goods and services by COICOP consumption purpose ([cult_pcs_hbs](#))

Mean consumption expenditure of private households on cultural goods and services by income quintile ([cult_pcs_qnt](#))

Mean consumption expenditure per household by COICOP consumption purpose ([hbs_exp_t121](#))

Thematic section

- [Culture](#)
- [Household budget surveys \(HBS\)](#)

Publications

- [Culture statistics - online publication](#)
- [Guide to Eurostat culture statistics — 2018 edition](#)

Methodology

- [European statistical system network on culture \(ESSnet-Culture final report \(2012\)\)](#)
- [Private households expenditure on culture](#) (ESMS metadata file — [cult_exp_esms](#))
- [Consumption expenditure of private households](#) (ESMS metadata file — [hbs_esms](#))
- [Description of data transmission for HBS \(Reference Year 2020\)](#)

External links

- [European Commission — Culture and Creativity](#)
 - [European Commission — Data on the cultural sector](#)
 - [Culture and creative sectors](#)
 - [Creative Europe programme](#)
- [European Council work plan for culture \(2023-2026\)](#)

Legislation

- Household Budget Surveys (HBSs)
- Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013
- Regulation (EC) No 2019/1700 establishing a common framework for European statistics relating to persons and households, based on data at individual level collected from samples