

Provision of deficit and debt data for 2016 – second notification – Euro area and EU28 government deficit at 1.5% and 1.7% of GDP respectively – Government debt at 88.9% and 83.2%

In 2016, the government deficit and debt of both the **euro area** (EA19) and the **EU28** decreased in relative terms compared with 2015. In the **euro area** the government deficit to GDP ratio fell from 2.1% in 2015 to 1.5% in 2016, and in the **EU28** from 2.4% to 1.7%. In the **euro area** the government debt to GDP ratio declined from 89.9% at the end of 2015 to 88.9% at the end of 2016, and in the **EU28** from 84.5% to 83.2%.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

EU announces €106 million support package for people affected by the crises in Sudan

Some 4.8 million people in Sudan currently need urgent assistance. The announcement comes as Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** is currently in Sudan, visiting EU humanitarian aid projects in South Darfur.

“Here in Sudan the humanitarian situation continues to be critical. Millions have been displaced for many years in Darfur. Our new EU funding is crucial to respond to the needs of the increasing numbers of refugees, notably from South Sudan, and internally displaced people, as well as of the hosting communities. The humanitarian aid I am announcing today will help bring life-saving relief to the most vulnerable populations. Full humanitarian access throughout the country is crucial so that humanitarian workers can deliver aid safely to those in need”, said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**.

“The European Union is committed to directly support the people of Sudan. Our new development aid will boost our ongoing efforts through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa. It addresses the needs of the most vulnerable Sudanese communities and offer livelihood opportunities, by better linking the EU’s humanitarian and development work in Sudan”, said Commissioner for

International Cooperation and Development Neven **Mimica**.

- €46 million of the support package will help respond to the most pressing humanitarian needs in the fields of food, nutrition, health, protection, shelter, education, water and sanitation. €13 million of which is part of an emergency assistance package announced [earlier this year](#).
- €60 million of development funds will be channelled through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, to support displaced persons, migrants and host communities. The package is an opportunity to implement pilot projects within this humanitarian-development framework. These would focus for example delivering basic services such as food, water, sanitation and education in the Abyei locality, tackling under-nutrition in eastern Sudan and addressing forced displacement in urban settings in Darfur.

All EU assistance in Sudan is provided to humanitarian and development organisations with no funding going through the government.

Background

Since 2011, the EU has mobilised €422 million in humanitarian assistance to people affected by conflict, natural disasters, outbreaks, food insecurity and undernutrition in Sudan.

As Sudan has not ratified the revised version of the Cotonou Agreement, the core instrument for providing development support to the people of Sudan is through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF). The country is moreover part of the EU response to the food security and El Niño crises and of the Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP) for the Horn of Africa, while also benefitting from EUTF programmes implemented at regional level. EU development support for projects benefitting directly the people of Sudan currently totals €275 million.

Sudan currently hosts the second largest number of internally displaced people (3.3 million) and the third largest number of refugees in Africa (more than 965.000).

Thirteen years since the start of the Darfur crisis, 2.7 million people continue to be uprooted in this region alone, while conflict also affects South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The number of refugees has been steadily increasing over the last years as well, in particular since the South Sudanese conflict started in 2013. More than 180.000 South Sudanese have sought refuge in Sudan since the beginning of this year alone, the large majority of them being children.

In addition, acute undernutrition rates in Sudan are among the highest in Africa: 1 in 6 children suffers from acute undernutrition, 1 in 20 from its most severe form which is likely to cause death unless treated. In 2017, 3.4 million people are facing severe food insecurity. In recent months, considerable new humanitarian needs have emerged, linked to the spread of epidemics, a mass influx of South Sudanese refugees and high undernutrition

in newly accessible areas of Jebel Marra, Darfur.

For More Information

[EU humanitarian aid in Sudan](#)

[EU development aid in Sudan](#)

[Factsheet – EU Actions on Migration in Sudan](#)

European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2017: promoting sustainable workplaces for all ages

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) kicks off the European Week for Safety and Health at Work today. Running until 27 October, the week allows businesses, occupational safety and health experts and workers to come together and exchange best practices on sustainable work and healthy ageing, as part of the 'Healthy Workplaces for All Ages' campaign.

In line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, EU-OSHA promotes fair working conditions and assists employers and workers to address their challenges.

Promoting safe and healthy workplaces for people of all ages is vital to sustaining Europe's workforce. Currently, workers exit the labour market at the age of 61 on average – much younger than the average official retirement age (65) set by many EU Member States.^[1]

"Earlier this year, the European Commission launched the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) – 20 principles about equal opportunities and access to labour market, fair working conditions, and social protection and inclusion. EU-OSHA strongly supports these principles through promoting good practices, assisting employers and workers to address challenges together, and creating many practical tools and guidance materials aimed at risk assessment and life-long learning, among others." said Dr Christa Sedlatschek, Director of EU-OSHA.

Since early 2016, EU-OSHA's [national focal points](#), [official campaign partners](#) and [campaign media partners](#) have supported the Healthy Workplaces for All Ages campaign. Many of the focal points host special events this week, including a conference for journalists and experts about the current situation of work in Luxembourg, a press conference in Hungary about results

of the Good Practice Awards, and a conference in Lithuania titled 'Safe workplaces for all ages'. In Estonia, the 19th Health and Safety Day Seminar will gather 300 participants. Dozens of events will take place in many different countries throughout the week.

EU-OSHA's Official campaign partners are also hosting events across Europe. In Poland, the [Medicover 'Wellbeing team'](#) continues two months of awareness-raising events promoting preventive actions. The offices of [ZF TRW Active & Passive Safety Technology](#) are initiating tailored activities such as providing medical exams or giving ergonomic and sport advice sessions to workers. Their office in Romania will sponsor a 'family health' day.

Media partner [Safety Focus](#) organises three events in several locations throughout Italy in October – including one titled '[Farming, Healthy Workplaces for All Ages](#)' and [IOSH Magazine](#) organises a webinar for their members from different countries.

One of the highlights of EU-OSHA's work throughout the campaign is the recently released **Joint Report** '[Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies](#)'. Coordinated by EU-OSHA, the report has contributions from Cedefop^[2], Eurofound^[3] and EIGE^[4]. This cross-agency collaboration highlights the diverse factors that impact the European workforce and the actions needed to keep the whole population healthy and active. It includes facts and figures, the latest EU legislation and employment trends, and places extra focus on the vocational education and training sector and gender in relation to work and ageing. This Joint Report follows many multilingual campaign resources made available by EU-OSHA, including an [e-guide](#), [data visualisation tool](#), [Good Practices Award booklet](#), etc.

The European Week for Safety and Health at Work allows partners to share the campaign results built up over the past two years. These exchanges lead up to the [Healthy Workplaces Summit](#) next month, on 21-22 November, taking place in Bilbao, Spain.

Links:

EU-OSHA, Cedefop, Eurofound and EIGE (2017), Joint report on Towards age-friendly work in Europe: a life-course perspective on work and ageing from EU Agencies, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

7 November 2017: Annual High-Level Meeting with Religious Leaders

The news:

Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans will host European Parliament Vice-President Mairead McGuinness and the leaders of different religious communities in Europe at the annual high-level meeting. This year's discussion will be framed around the theme of 'The Future of Europe: a values-based and effective Union'.

The background:

The dialogue with churches, religious associations or communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations allows for an open exchange of views between EU institutions and important parts of European society on EU policies. It was established in the beginning of the 1990s by EU Commission President Jacques Delors and offers an opportunity to engage in the European policy making process. Currently the dialogue is under responsibility of the First Vice President Timmermans.

The event:

The high-level meeting takes place from 10h00 to 12h00, and is followed by a working lunch. A press conference is planned for 12h00, in the European Commission's Berlaymont press room. The press conference will include opening remarks by First Vice-President Timmermans and Vice-President McGuinness, and the opportunity to ask questions to all participants. Bilateral interviews may also be possible, and interested journalists are invited to get in touch with the Commission's Spokespersons' Service.

The sources:

More information about the dialogue with churches, religious associations or communities and philosophical and non-confessional organisations is available [here](#). The press release on the 2016 high level meeting is available [here](#).

Antitrust: Commission confirms inspection in the car sector in Germany

The European Commission can confirm that as of 16 October 2017 its officials carried out an unannounced inspection at the premises of a car manufacturer in Germany.

The inspection is related to Commission concerns that several German car manufacturers may have violated EU antitrust rules that prohibit cartels and restrictive business practices (Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The Commission officials were accompanied by their counterparts from the German national competition authority.

Inspections are a preliminary step in investigations of suspected anti-competitive practices. The fact that the Commission carries out inspections does not mean that the inspected companies are guilty of anti-competitive behaviour, nor does it prejudice the outcome of the investigation itself. The Commission respects the rights of defence, in particular the right of companies to be heard, in antitrust proceedings.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anti-competitive conduct. Their duration depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of each case, the extent to which the companies concerned co-operate with the Commission and the exercise of the rights of defence.