

Changes in the situation of Hungarian families after 2010 in EU comparison



KINCS

MÁRIA KOPP INSTITUTE
FOR DEMOGRAPHY
AND FAMILIES



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2025

Foreword

Europe is currently undergoing a period of change and challenges that fundamentally shape the continent's social structure, economic situation and vision for the future, while its demographic concerns continue to weaken its global weight and competitiveness. Hungary's situation in terms of demographic and economic challenges is similar in many respects, but the solutions are largely different from the practices followed by most Member States.

Since 2010, the Hungarian government has been pursuing a consistent and active family policy aimed at promoting work-life balance, supporting home ownership, ensuring the financial security of families, encouraging births, and fostering intergenerational cooperation, while also guaranteeing flexibility for family members. In line with these principles, more than 30 family-friendly measures are now in place to support families who have children and are raising them, to help them grow, and to increase the income and standard of living of Hungarians.

This edition published by KINCS was prepared with the aim of providing a comprehensive overview of the situation of Hungarian families after 2010 in a European context, with particular regard to employment, livelihood and demographic processes. The following pages describe trends in births and fertility rates, health data, poverty, savings, home ownership, and utility costs, with a focus also on the situation of working mothers and the childcare availability.

The comparative data clearly show that Hungary has come a long way in the last 15 years and has achieved significant results in supporting families and improving the standard of living of the population. Between 2010 and 2023, Hungary recorded the largest increase in the EU in the willingness to marry and have children. The proportion of children born in wedlock rose the most in Hungary, and the number of children born to foreign mothers remained low. Employment grew at the second fastest rate among EU countries, and more and more mothers with young children are working in the labor market. The risk of poverty has decreased significantly, the proportion of people living in their own homes has increased, and Hungarian households pay one of the lowest electricity and gas prices in the European Union. Hungary has moved from being one of the EU's laggards to one of its leaders in many areas, and its performance, based on reliable, comparable, and objective data, is significantly more favorable than many people want to see or believe.

We trust that our publication will provide valuable information to all readers and contribute to the continuation of policies that focus on active families, serving the growth and long-term prospects of the Hungarian people.

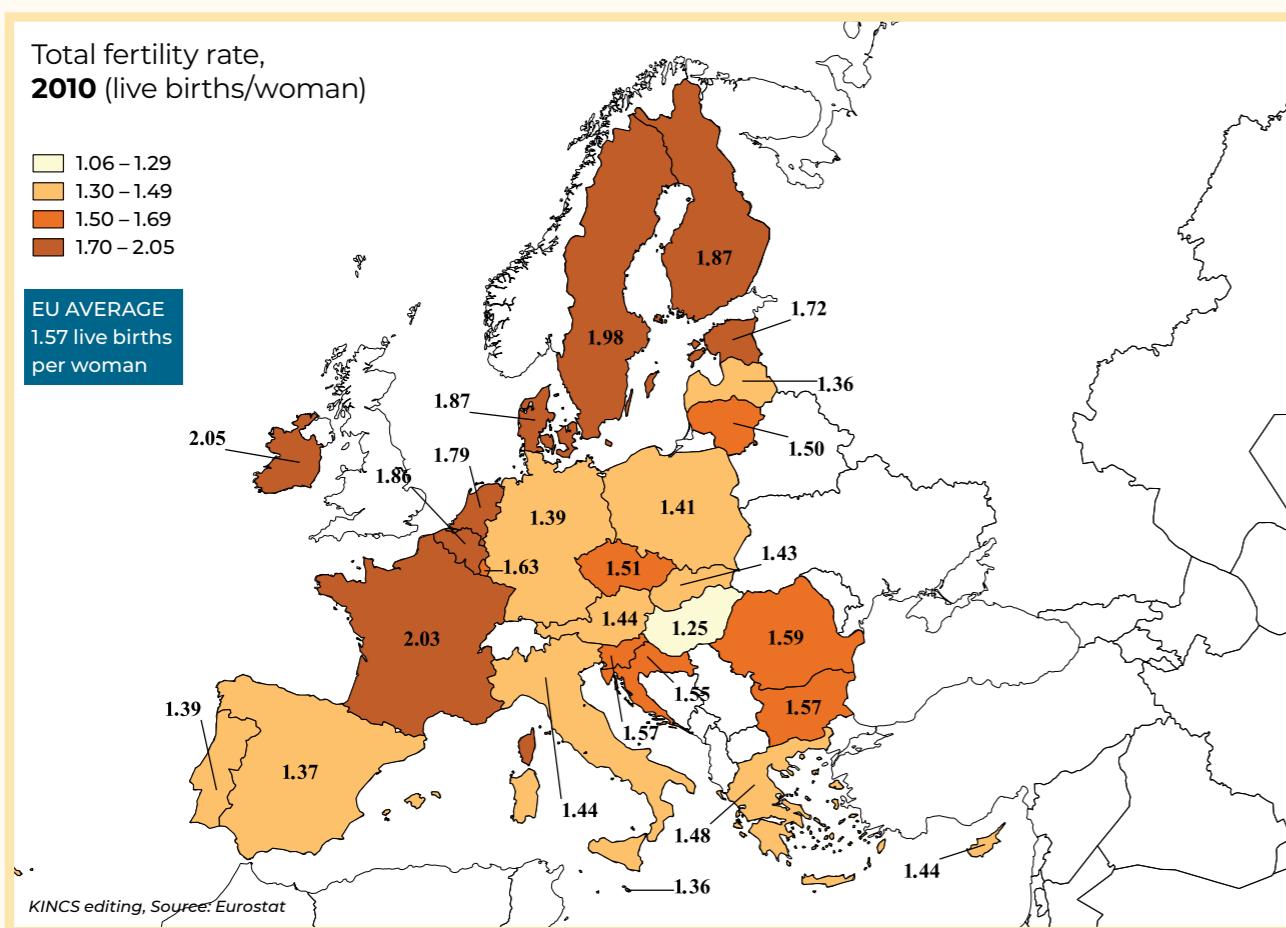
Tünde Fűrész
President
KINCS

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Total fertility rate (2010, 2023, change between 2010 and 2023)

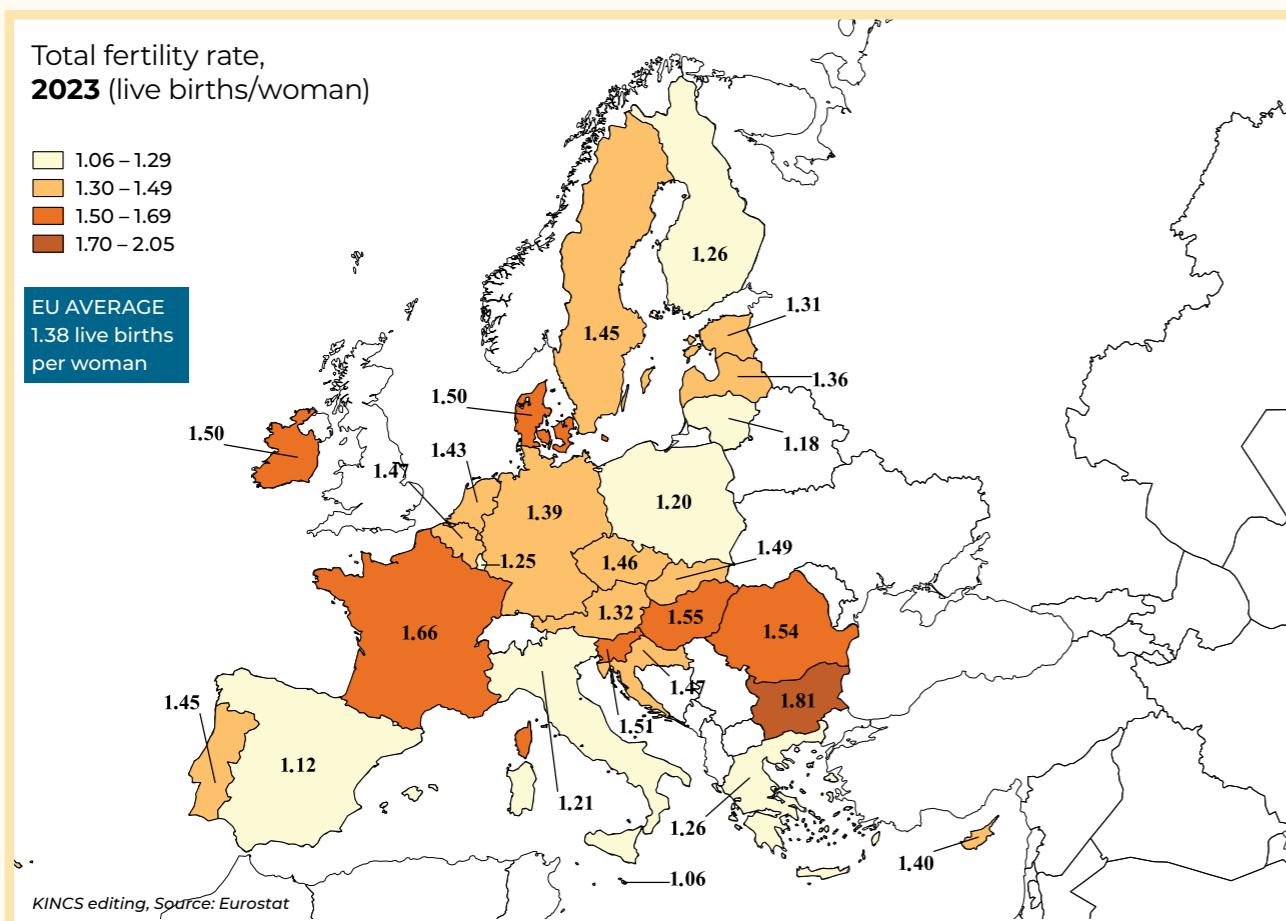


The total fertility rate (TFR) is the indicator that most accurately describes the willingness of people living in EU member states to have children. It shows how many children a woman would give birth to on average during her lifetime in the European Union if the fertility data for a given year remained constant.

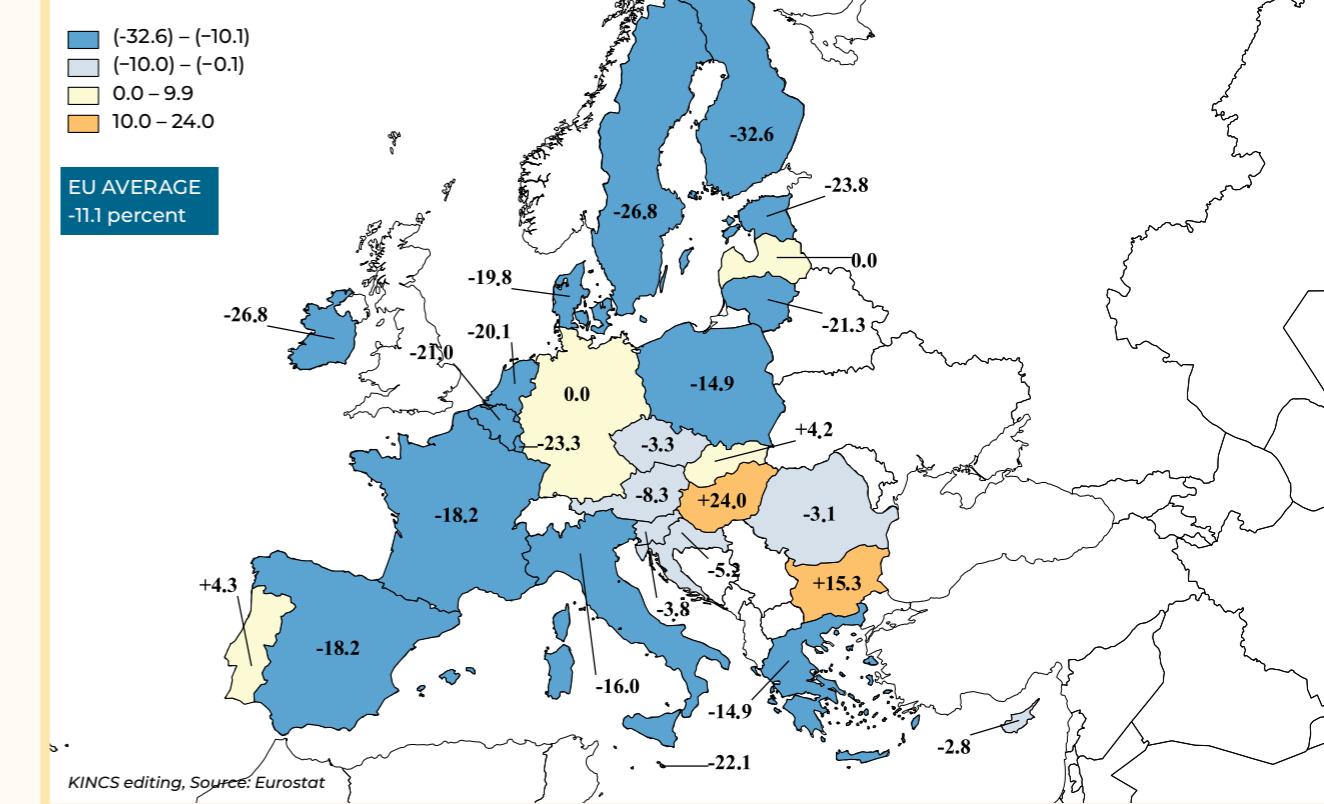
None of the European Union countries has a fertility rate high enough to maintain their population at the replacement level of 2.1. In 2023, Bulgaria had the highest fertility rate in the European Union (1.81), while Malta had the lowest (1.06). In the European Union (EU27), the average total fertility rate fell from 1.57 to 1.38 between 2010 and 2023. During this period, the average number of live births per woman increased in four countries (including Hungary), remained unchanged in two countries, and decreased in 21 countries, falling below the replacement level even in countries where it had reached that level at the beginning of the decade. Between 2010 and 2023, there was a shift within the regions of the European Union: previously, fertility rates were highest in Western and Northern European countries, but today they are highest mainly in Central and Eastern European countries.

Between 2010 and 2023, Hungary recorded the largest increase in TFR among EU Member States, from 1.25 to 1.55. As a result, Hungary jumped from last place in the EU ranking to third place. This was the most significant change in position during this period. In contrast, fertility rates declined in most EU countries during the period under review.

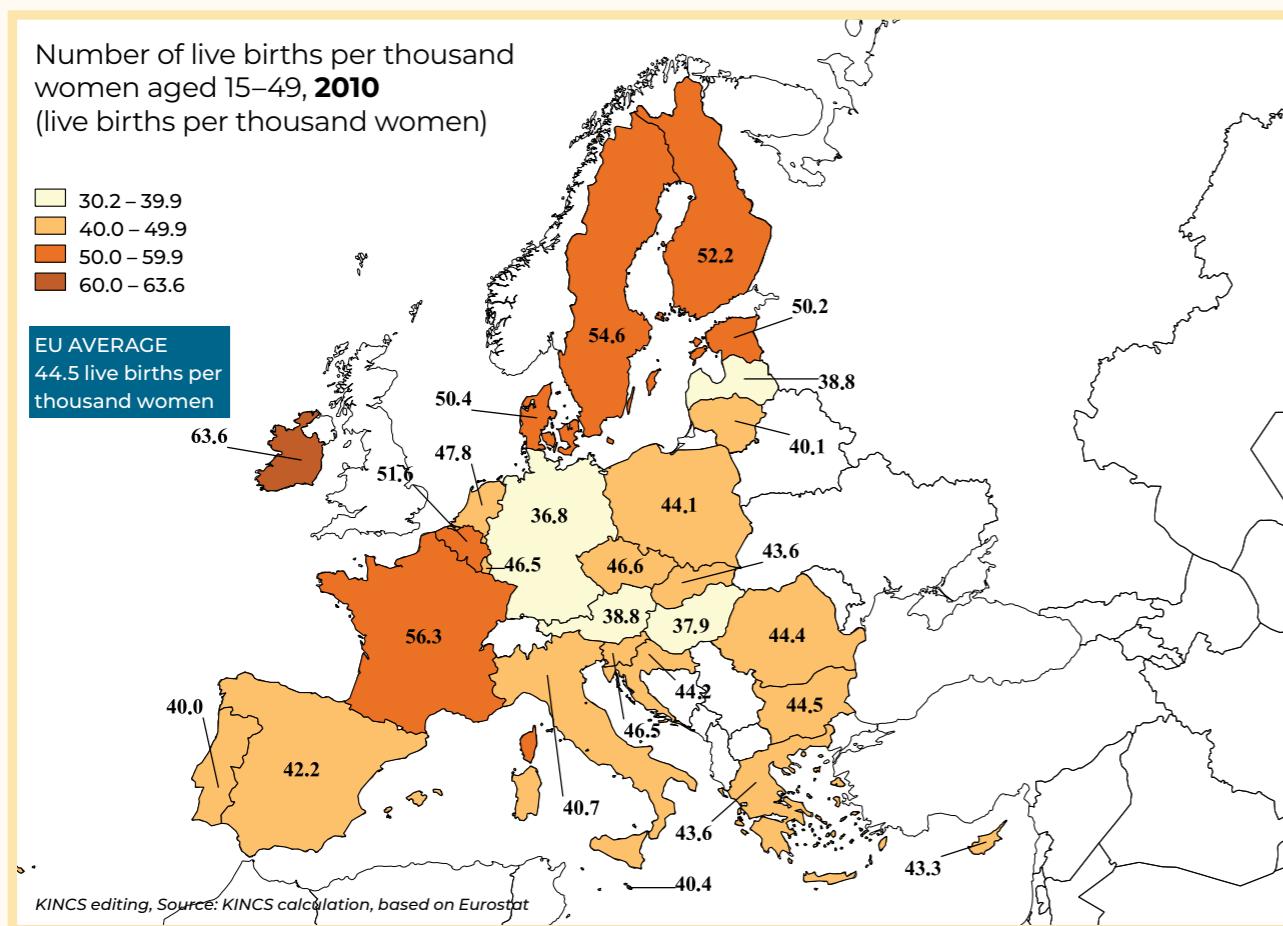
After 2010, fertility declined in most EU countries, while it increased most significantly in Hungary.



Change in total fertility rate, **2010 vs. 2023** (percentage)



Number of live births per 1,000 women aged 15–49
(2010, 2023, change between 2010 and 2023)



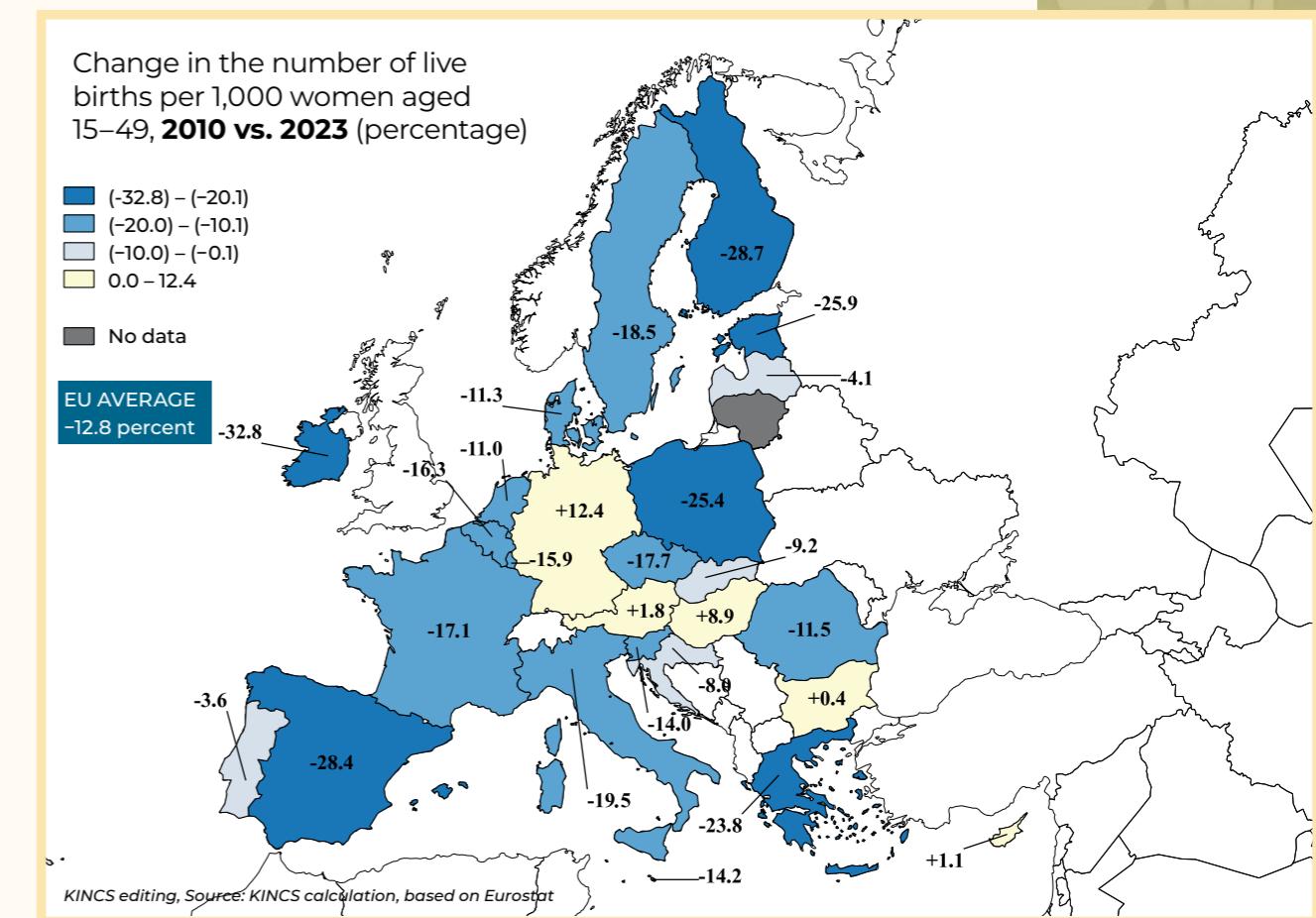
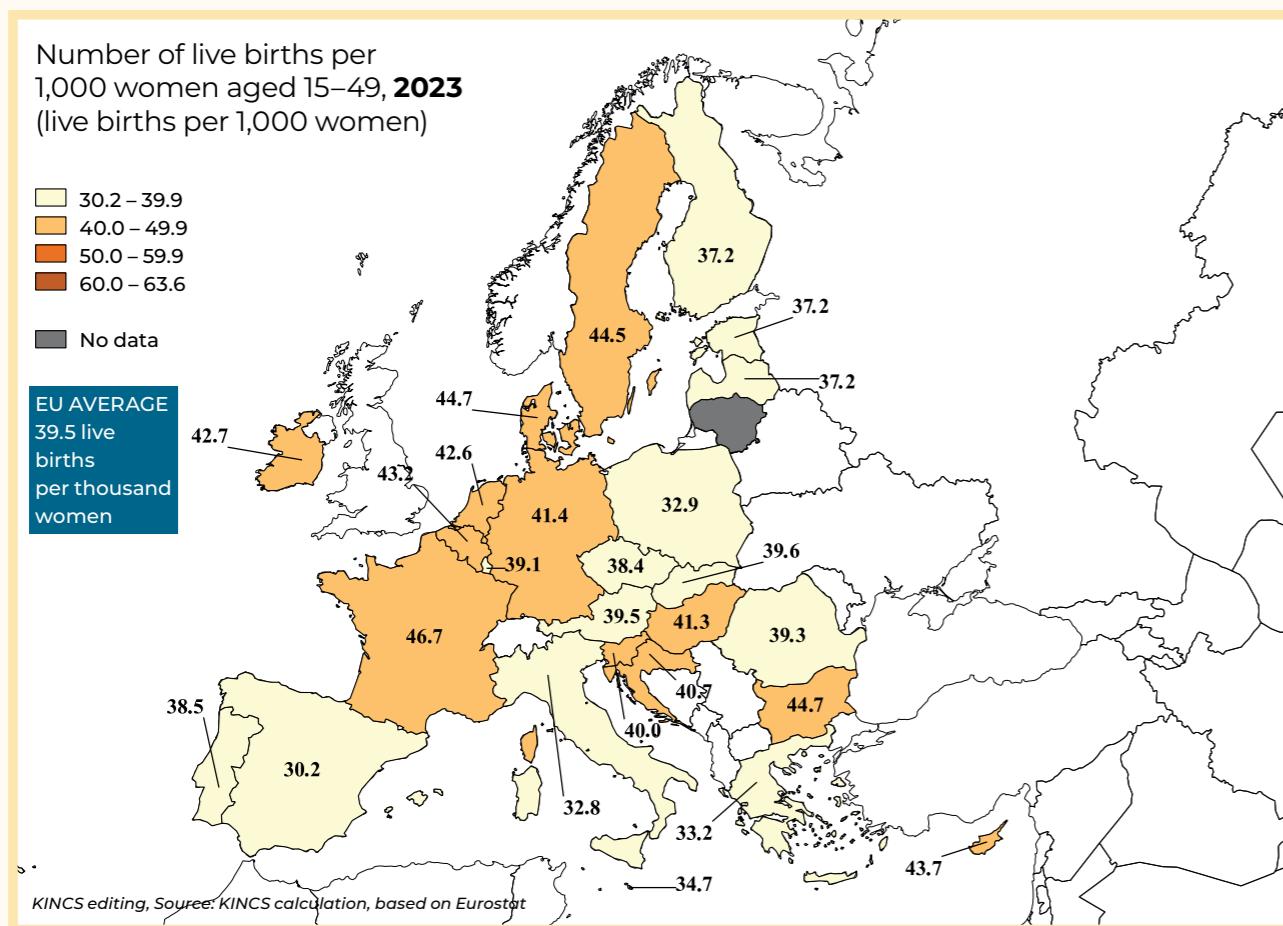
In the European Union, children born to mothers who have resided in the European Union for at least 12 months prior to giving birth are included in the number of births. The birth rate shows the number of live births per thousand inhabitants. It is worth examining the number of live births per thousand women of childbearing age, i.e. women aged 15-49.

In 2010, nearly 4.8 million children were born in the European Union, but by 2023, their number had fallen below 4 million. The number of live births per thousand women aged 15–49 fell from 44.5 to 39.5 at the EU level during this period.

Between 2010 and 2023, only two countries in the EU, Hungary and Germany, showed a significant increase in the number of births per thousand women of childbearing age. In Hungary, the indicator rose from 37.9 to 41.3, while during the same period, the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15–49 fell most significantly in Ireland (-32.8%) and Finland (-28.7%), and it has also declined significantly in the Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece, Italy).

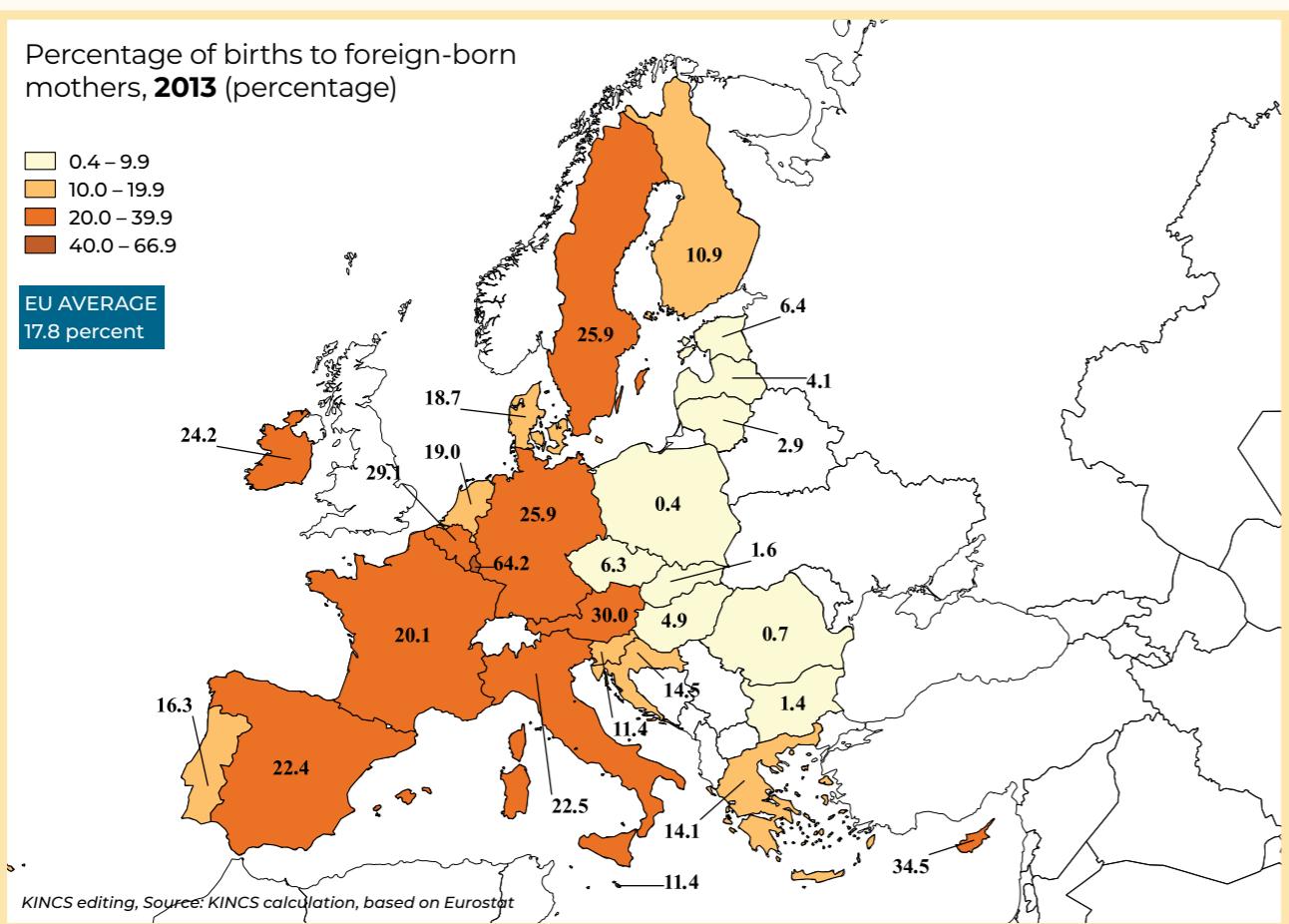
While the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15–49 fell by more than 13% on average in the European Union Member States between 2010 and 2023, it increased by nearly 9% in Hungary.

After 2010, the number of live births per woman of childbearing age declined in most EU countries, while it increased significantly in Hungary.



FOREIGN-BORN MOTHERS

Percentage of births to foreign-born mothers (2013, 2023, change between 2013 and 2023)



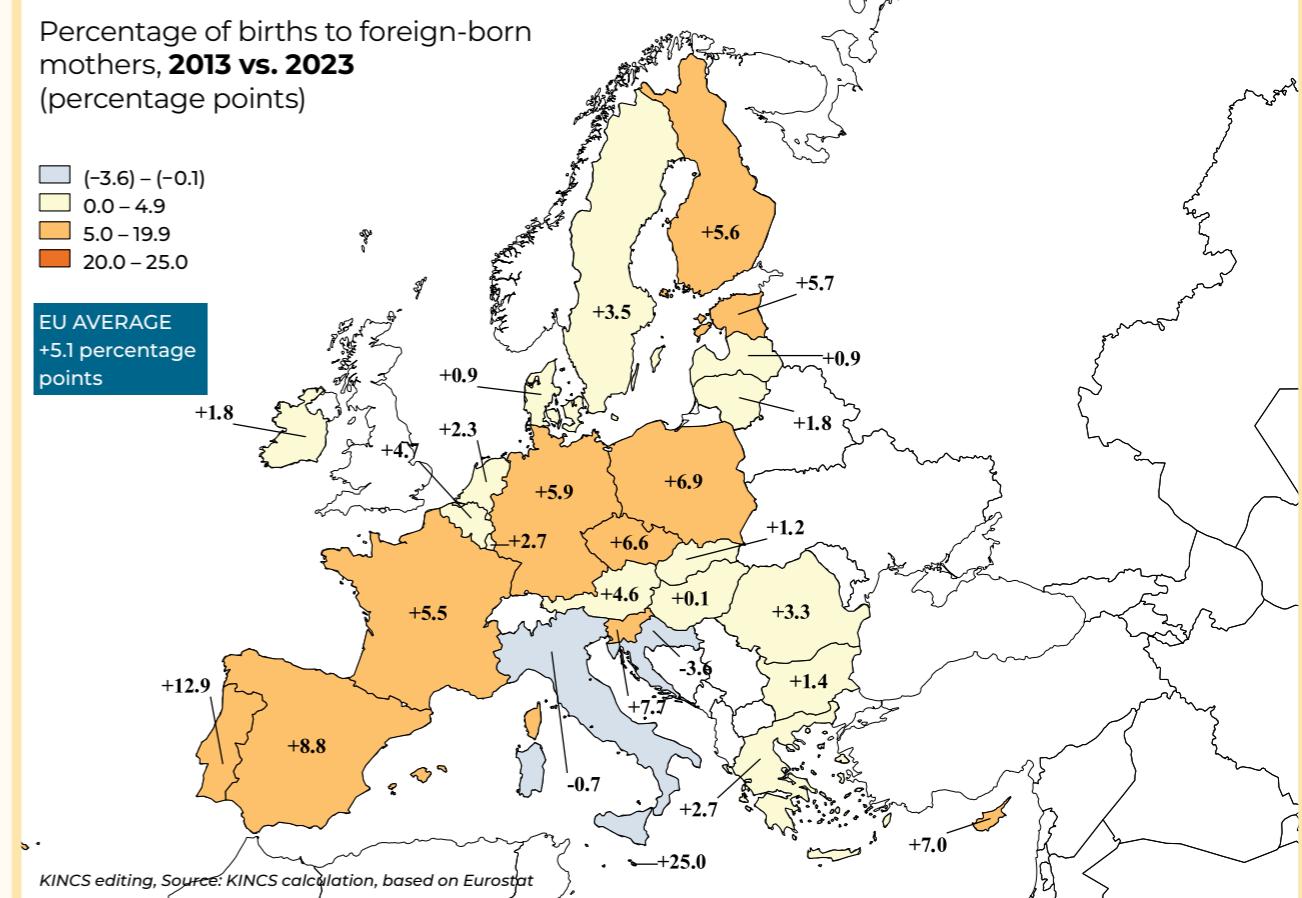
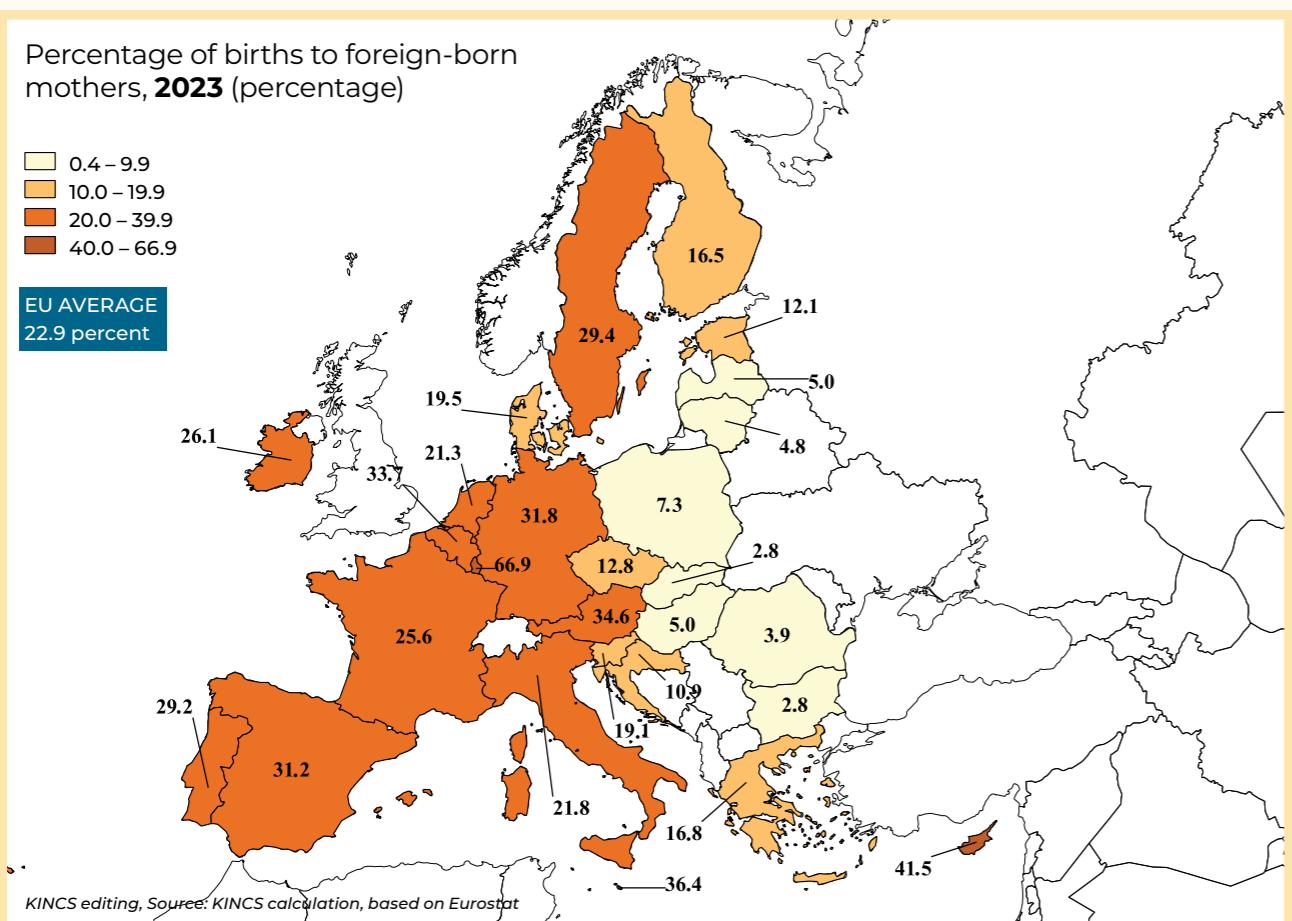
A child is considered to be born to a foreign mother if the mother was born outside the given country. A birth is considered to be to a mother born outside the EU if the mother was born in a country outside the EU. According to EU rules, a child is considered to be born to a mother born abroad if the mother was born in another EU Member State or in a country outside the EU. As data for 2010 was not available, data from 2013 were used.

The number and proportion of children born to foreign mothers is steadily increasing in the European Union, reaching nearly 23 percent in 2023. Four-fifths of mothers born abroad come from countries outside the EU, and in 2023, one in six newborns had roots outside Europe.

Today, with the exception of the Central and Eastern European Member States, in most EU countries, one in three to one in five newborns has a mother of foreign origin. In Malta, Austria, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Portugal, one in three newborns has a foreign mother; in Ireland and France, one in four; and in Italy, the Netherlands, and Denmark, one in five. In Luxembourg, two out of three children are born to foreign mothers. A quarter of children born in Germany and Sweden have mothers from other countries. Compared to 2010, the Iberian Peninsula has seen the largest increase in the number of births to foreign-born mothers.

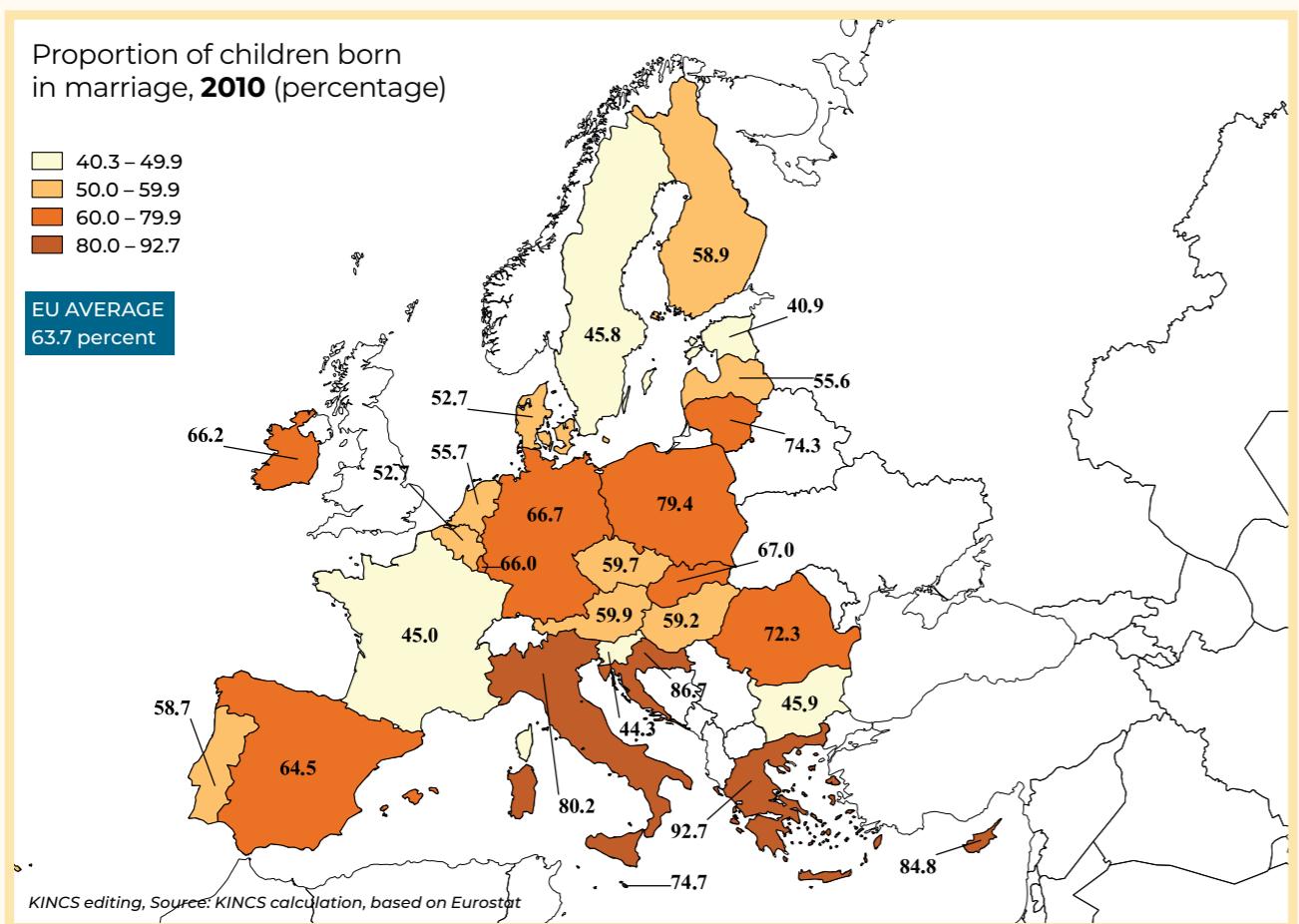
In Hungary, the number and proportion of births to foreign mothers is low, at only 5 percent. Mothers born abroad are typically women who have moved to the mother country from Hungarian communities beyond the borders of the Carpathian Basin.

Over the past ten years, the proportion of children born to foreign mothers has increased by nearly a third in the EU, while in Hungary it has remained consistently low.



CHILDREN BORN IN MARRIAGE

Proportion of children born in marriage (2010, 2023, change between 2010 and 2023)

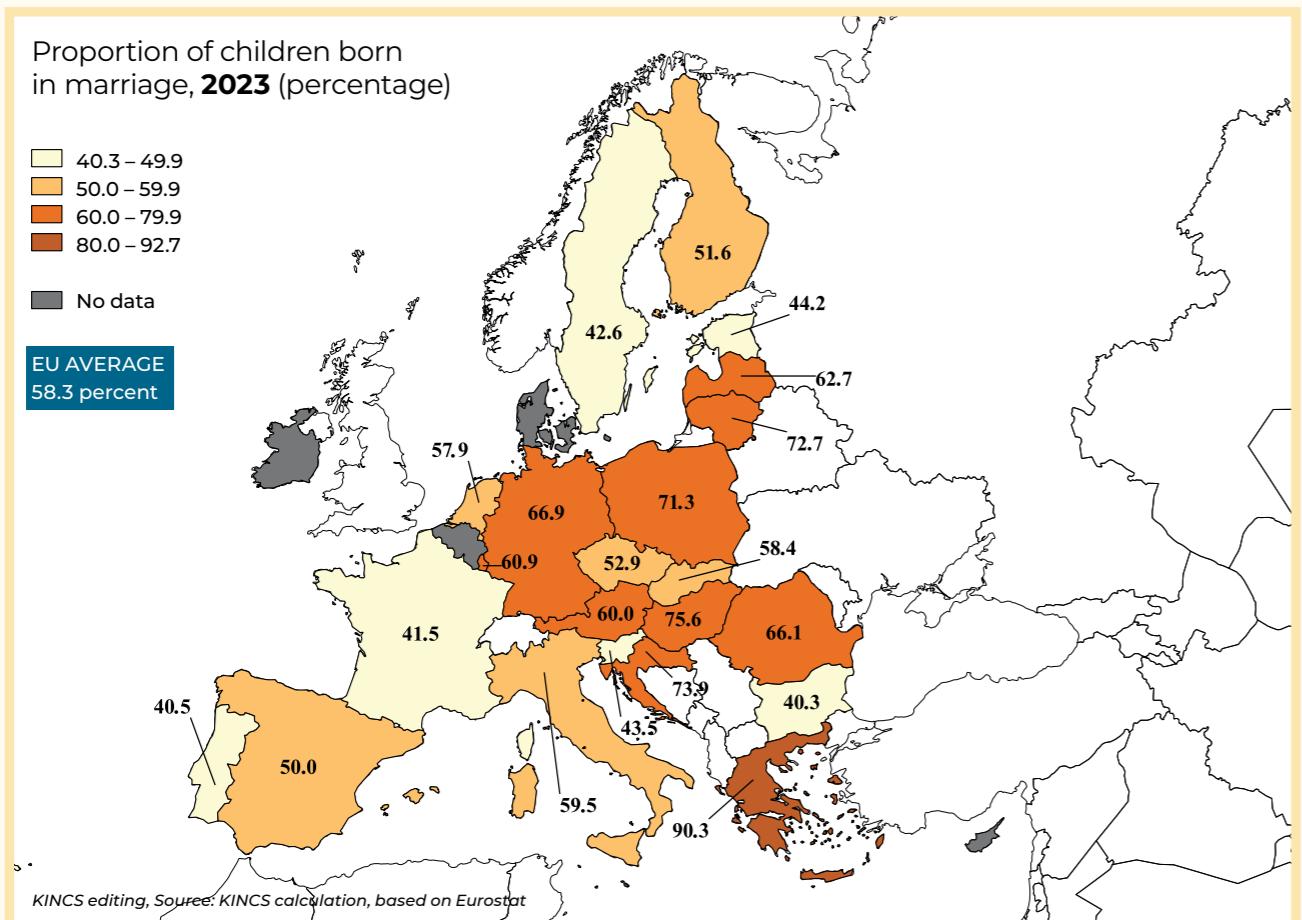


All births where the mother's marital status at the time of the child's birth is married are considered to be births within marriage.

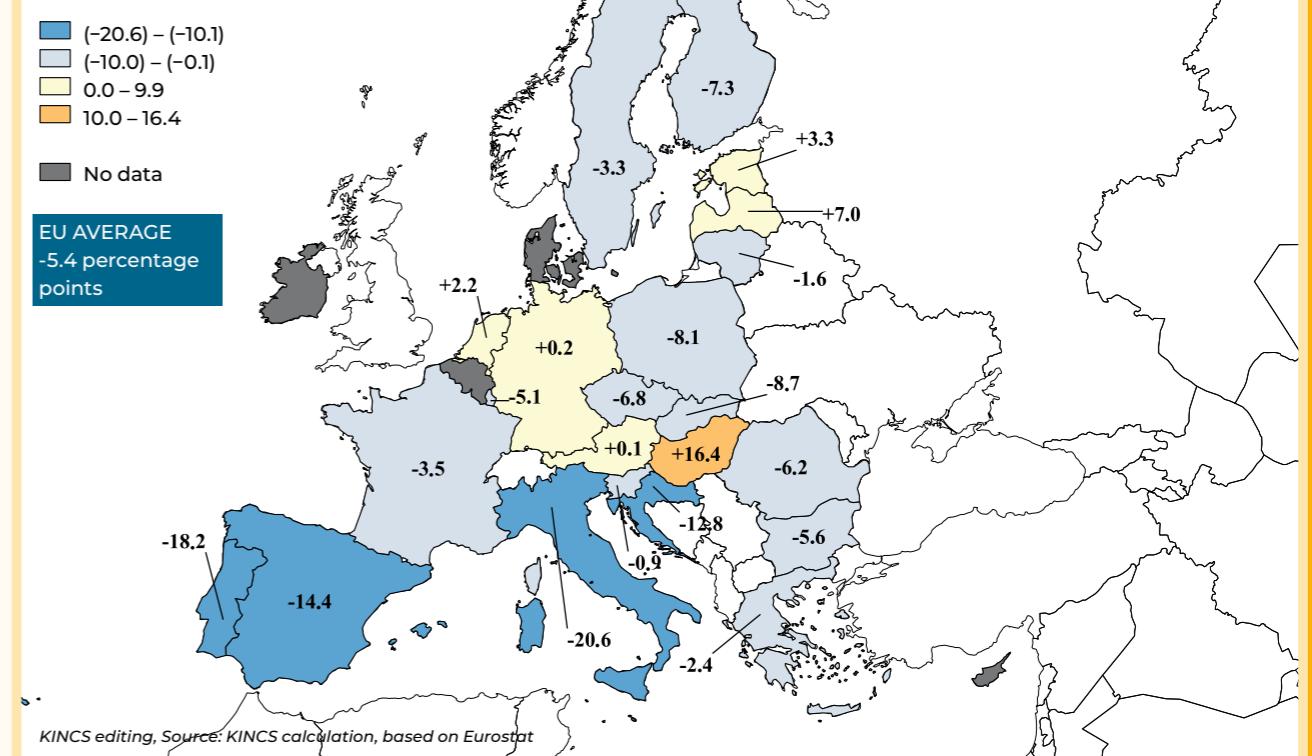
The majority of European Union Member States saw a decline in the proportion of newborns born within marriage between 2010 and 2023: it stagnated in two, rose slightly in three, and declined in sixteen Member States. It is important to note that there has been a significant decline in southern countries. While the decline was more than 10 percentage points in Croatia and Spain, it was even more significant in Portugal (18.2 percentage points) and Italy (20 percentage points).

According to Eurostat data, in 2023, there were one-third more marriages in Hungary than in 2010, while the number of divorces decreased by one-quarter. As a result, three out of four children are now born in wedlock (compared to only six out of ten in the first half of the 2010s). In Hungary, the proportion of children born within marriage increased by 16.4 percentage points (from 59.2 percent to 75.6 percent), which is a uniquely high increase within the EU, especially considering that during this period, the EU average decreased by 5.4 percentage points (from 63.7 percent to 58.3 percent).

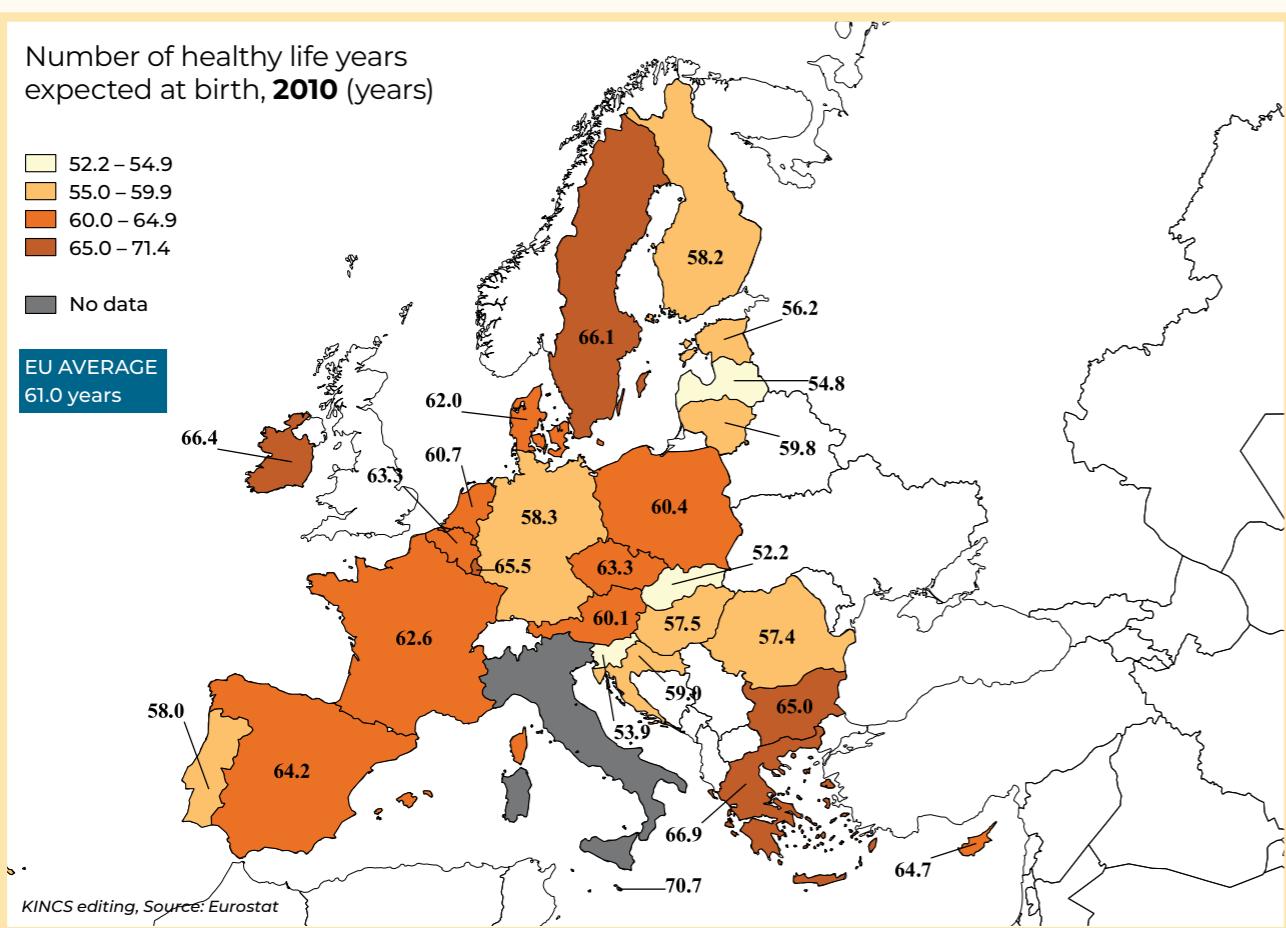
After 2010, the proportion of children born within marriage declined in most EU Member States, while it increased most significantly in Hungary.



Change in the proportion of children born within marriage, **2010 vs. 2023** (percentage points)



Number of healthy life years expected at birth (2010, 2023, change between 2010 and 2023)

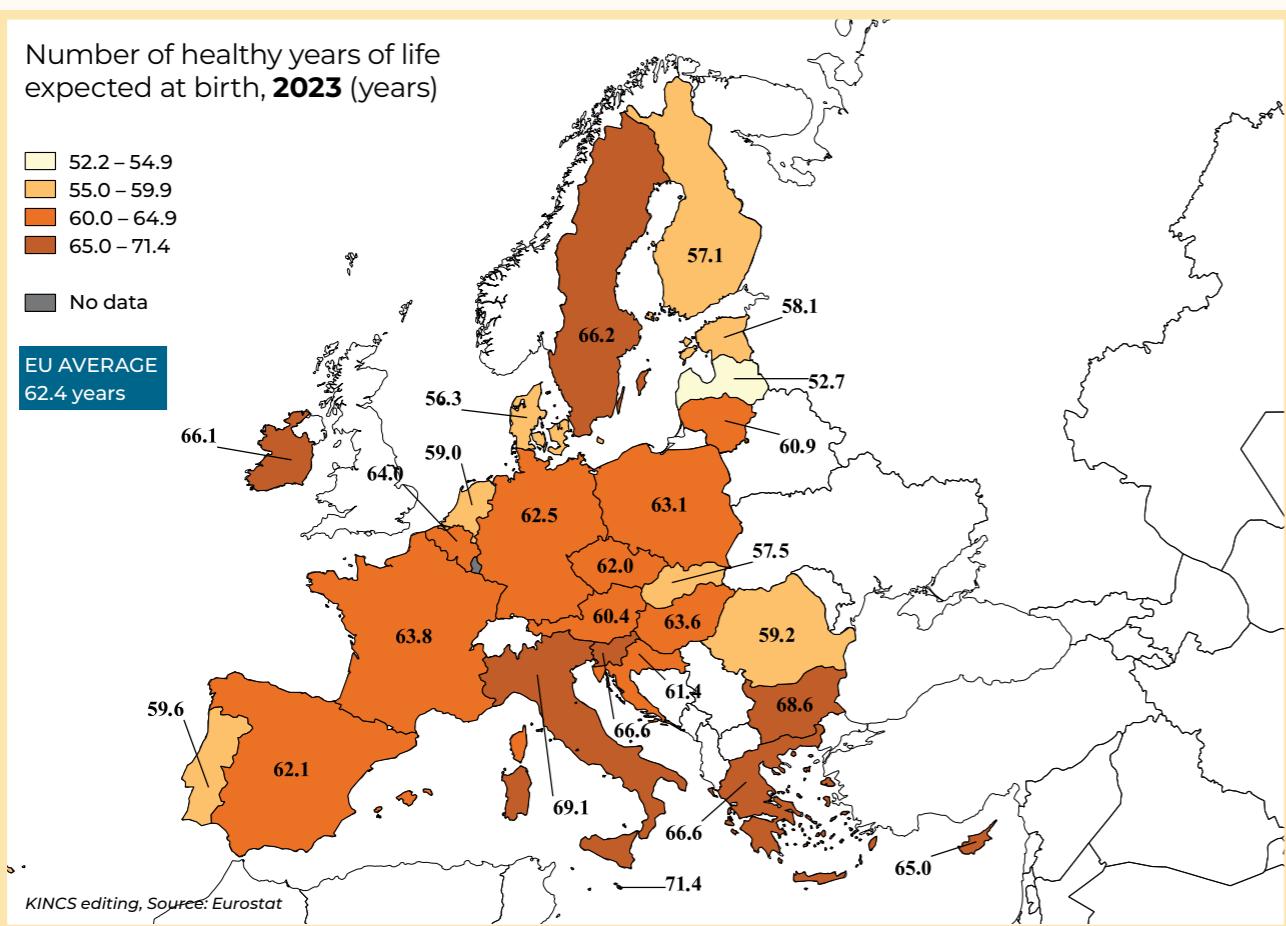
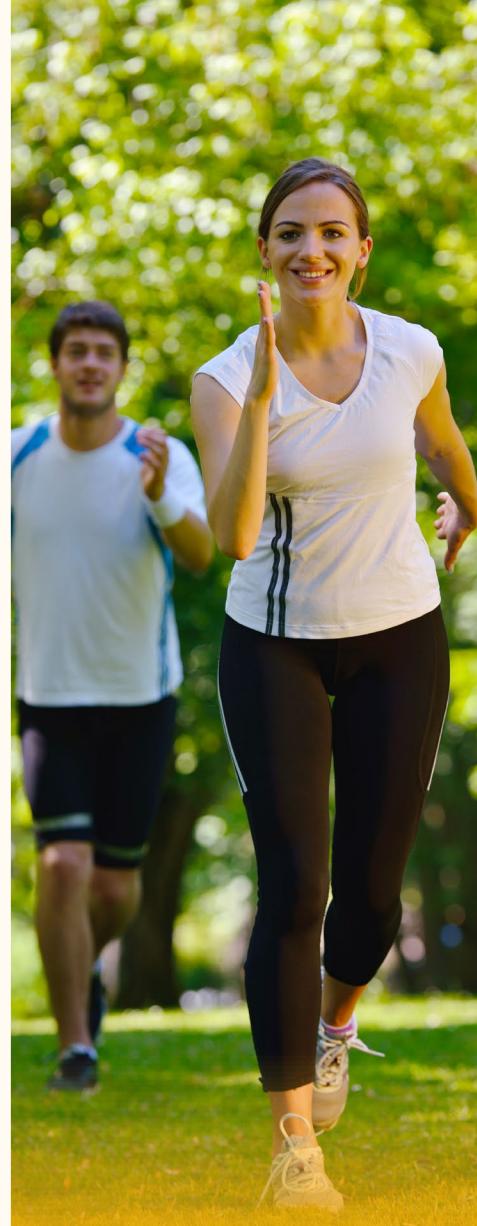


The number of healthy life years expected at birth, i.e. healthy life expectancy, expresses the number of years that can be lived without limitations due to health conditions.

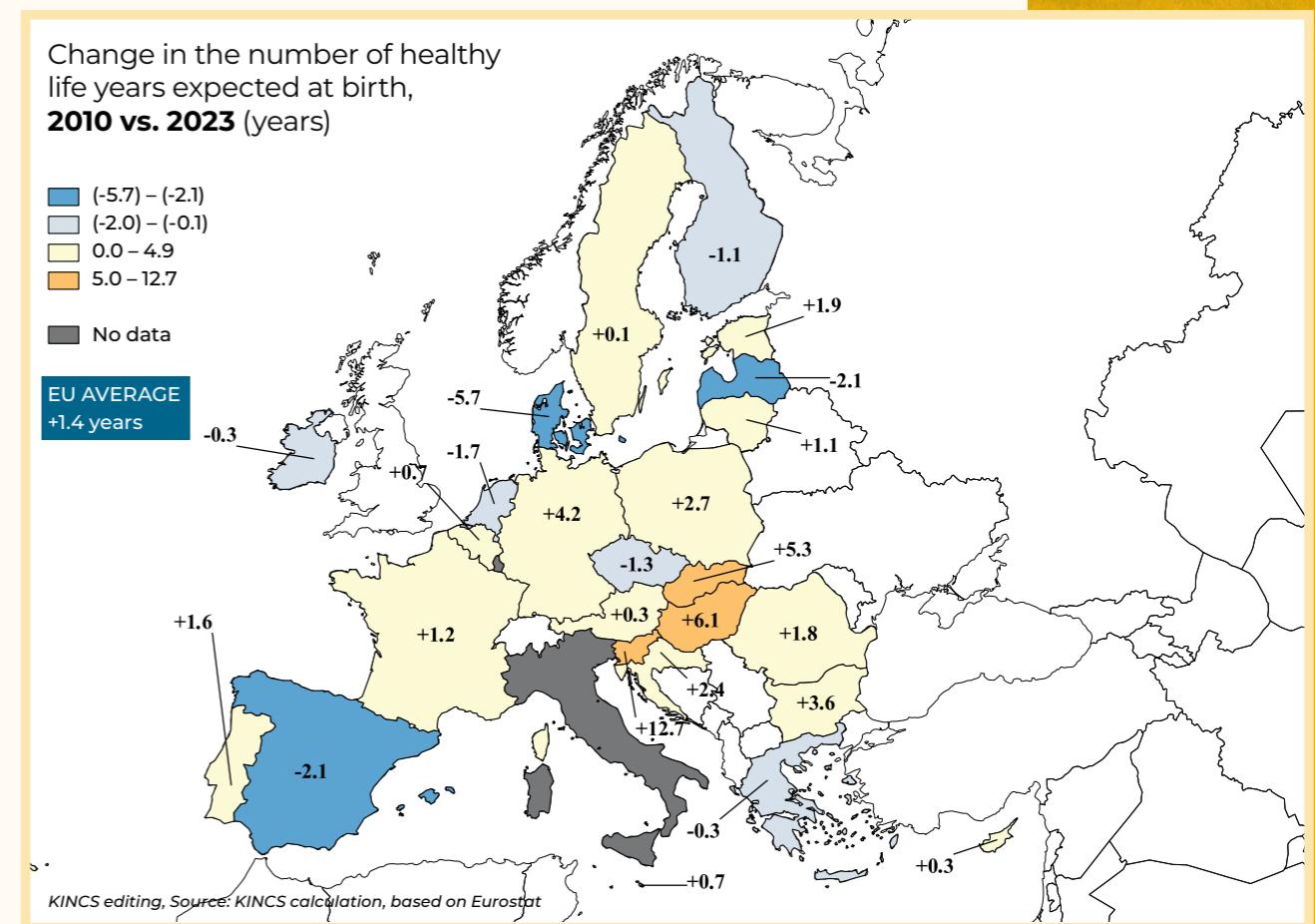
A key question is whether the extra years gained through increased life expectancy are spent in good or poor health. Since life expectancy at birth does not provide a complete answer to this question, it is worth looking at the number of healthy years expected at birth, which focuses on quality of life rather than life expectancy alone. As such, healthy life years at birth are an important indicator of the health status of European Union residents.

While in 2010, Hungary had the sixth lowest number of healthy life years expected at birth (only 57.5 years), by 2023, Hungarians can expect to live in good health for an average of 63.6 years, exceeding the EU average (62.4 years). This represents the second largest increase (+6.1 years) among Member States. It is also important to note that the number of healthy life years expected at birth has decreased in one-third of EU Member States, most significantly in Denmark, by nearly six years, as well as in Spain and Latvia, where citizens can expect two fewer healthy life years in 2023 than in 2010. Thanks to the favorable developments experienced in Hungary since 2010, the number of healthy years of life expected at birth is now higher in our country than in most EU Member States.

After 2010, the average number of healthy years of life increased in most EU Member States, with Hungary recording the second-largest increase.

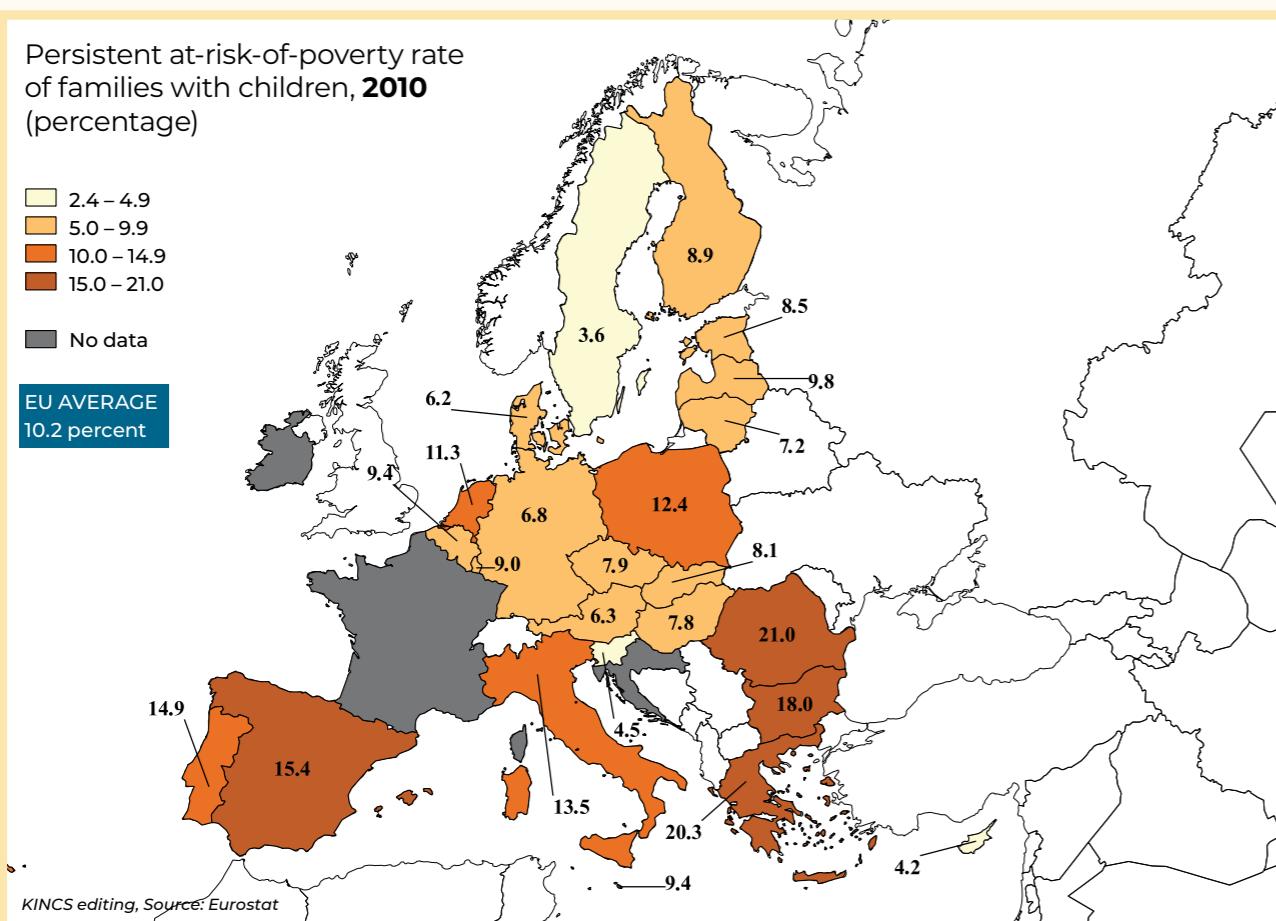


Change in the number of healthy life years expected at birth, **2010 vs. 2023** (years)



Persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate of families with children

(2010, 2024, change between 2010 and 2024)



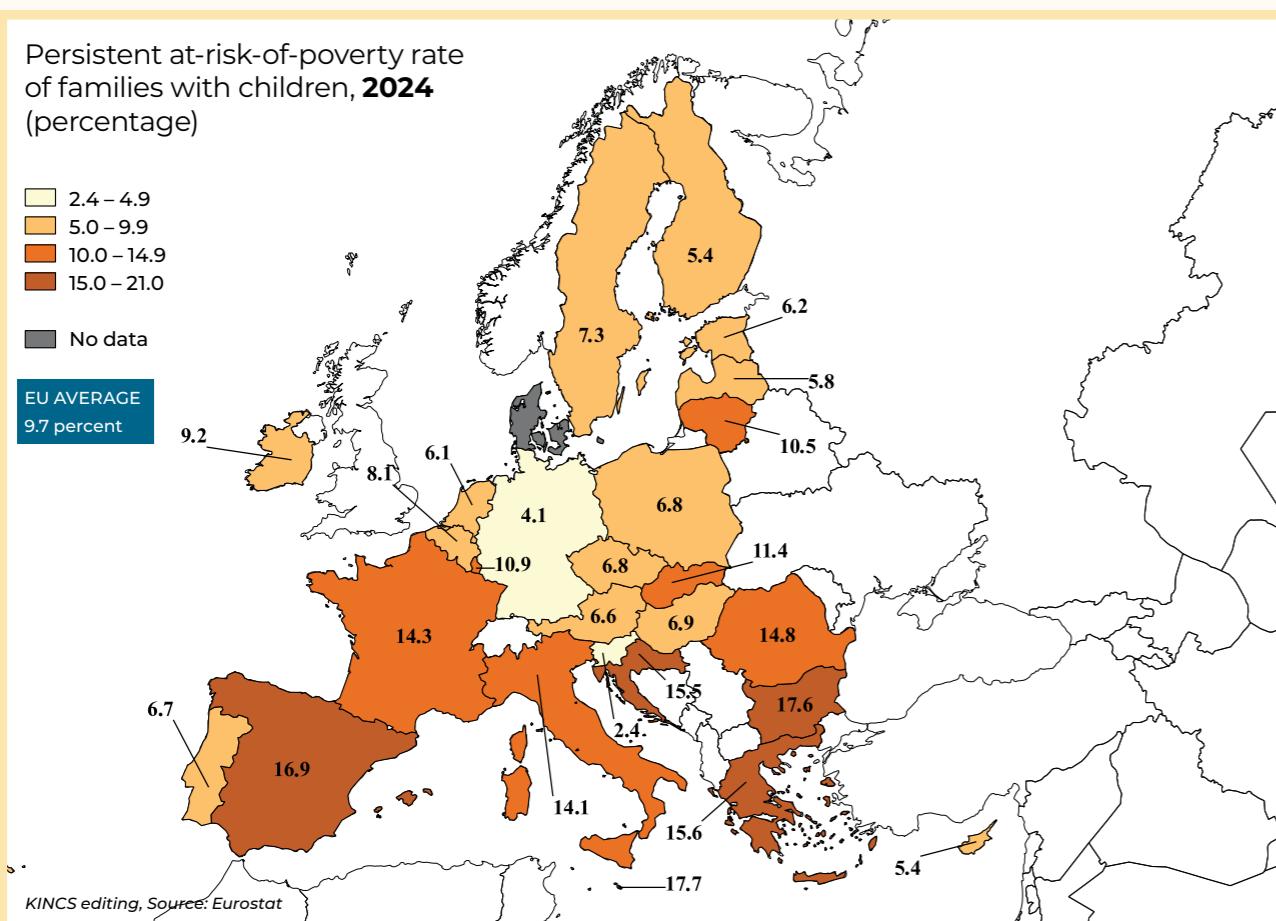
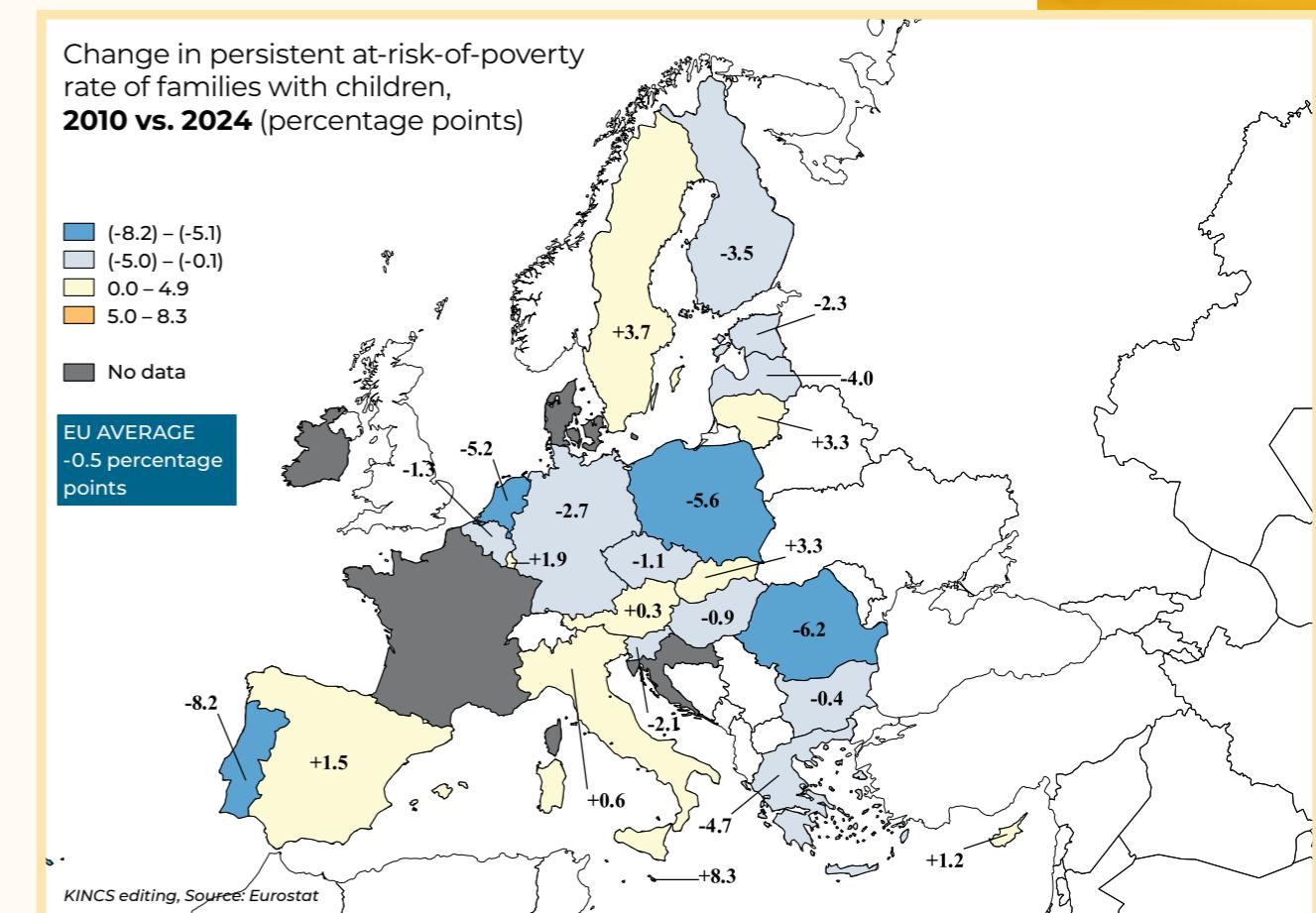
We consider someone to be at risk of persistent poverty if they experience financial difficulties over a long period—at least three years—and are therefore at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

Looking at individual EU Member States, it can be seen that in 2024, Slovenia had the lowest persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate of families with children (2.4%), while Malta recorded a figure seven times higher (17.7%).

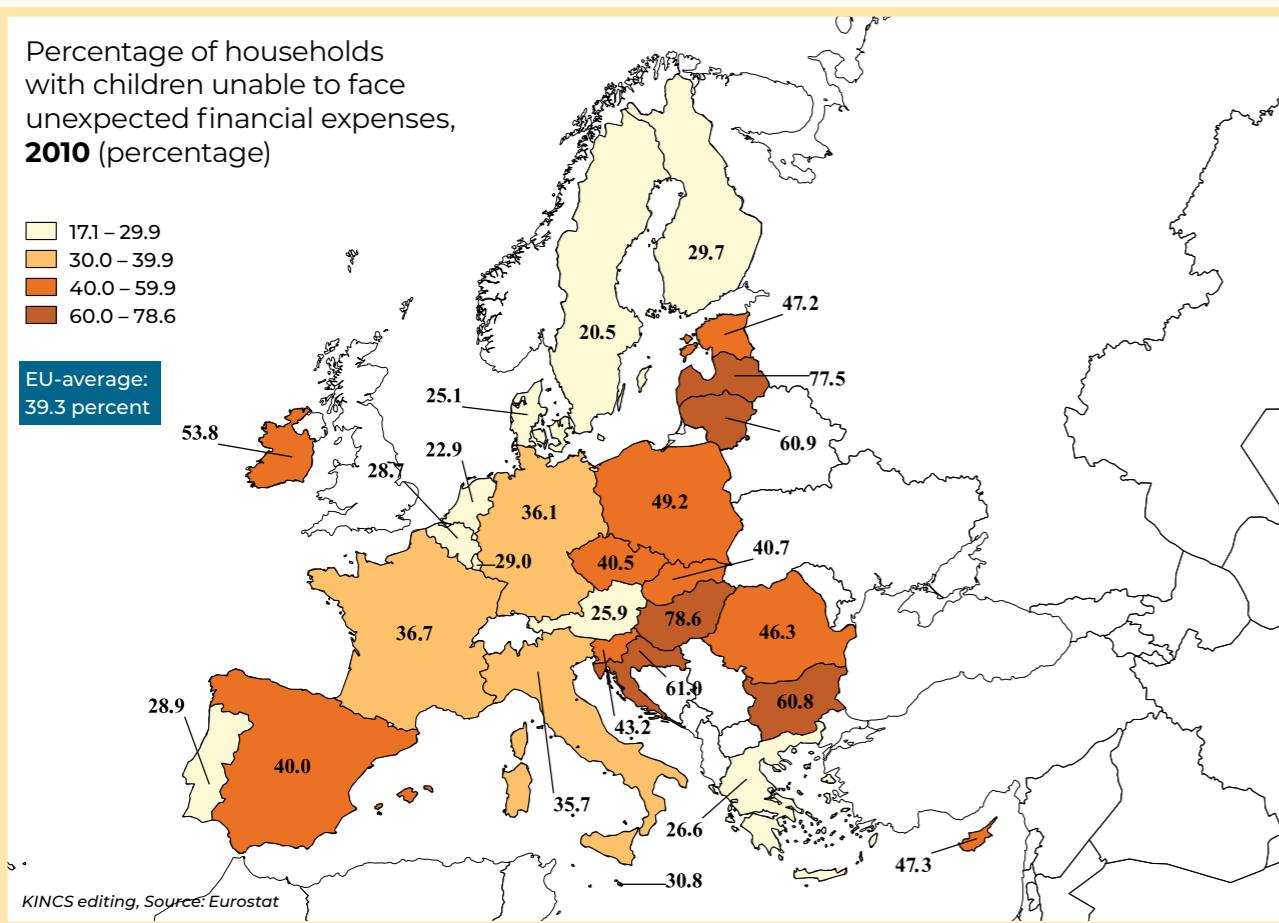
Hungary ranks in the middle with 6.9 percent, which is nearly one-third lower than the European Union average.

Between 2010 and 2024, the picture among Member States is mixed: the indicator deteriorated in several countries, stagnated in a few, but, encouragingly, improved in most Member States. The persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate of families with children worsened most significantly in Malta (by 8.3 percentage points, from 9.4% to 17.7%), while it fell most sharply in Portugal (by 8.2 percentage points, from 14.9% to 6.7%).

While one-tenth of families with children in the European Union are at risk of persistent poverty, in Hungary this figure is less than 7 percent.

Change in persistent at-risk-of-poverty rate of families with children, **2010 vs. 2024** (percentage points)

Proportion of households with children unable to face unexpected financial expenses (2010, 2024, change between 2010 and 2024)

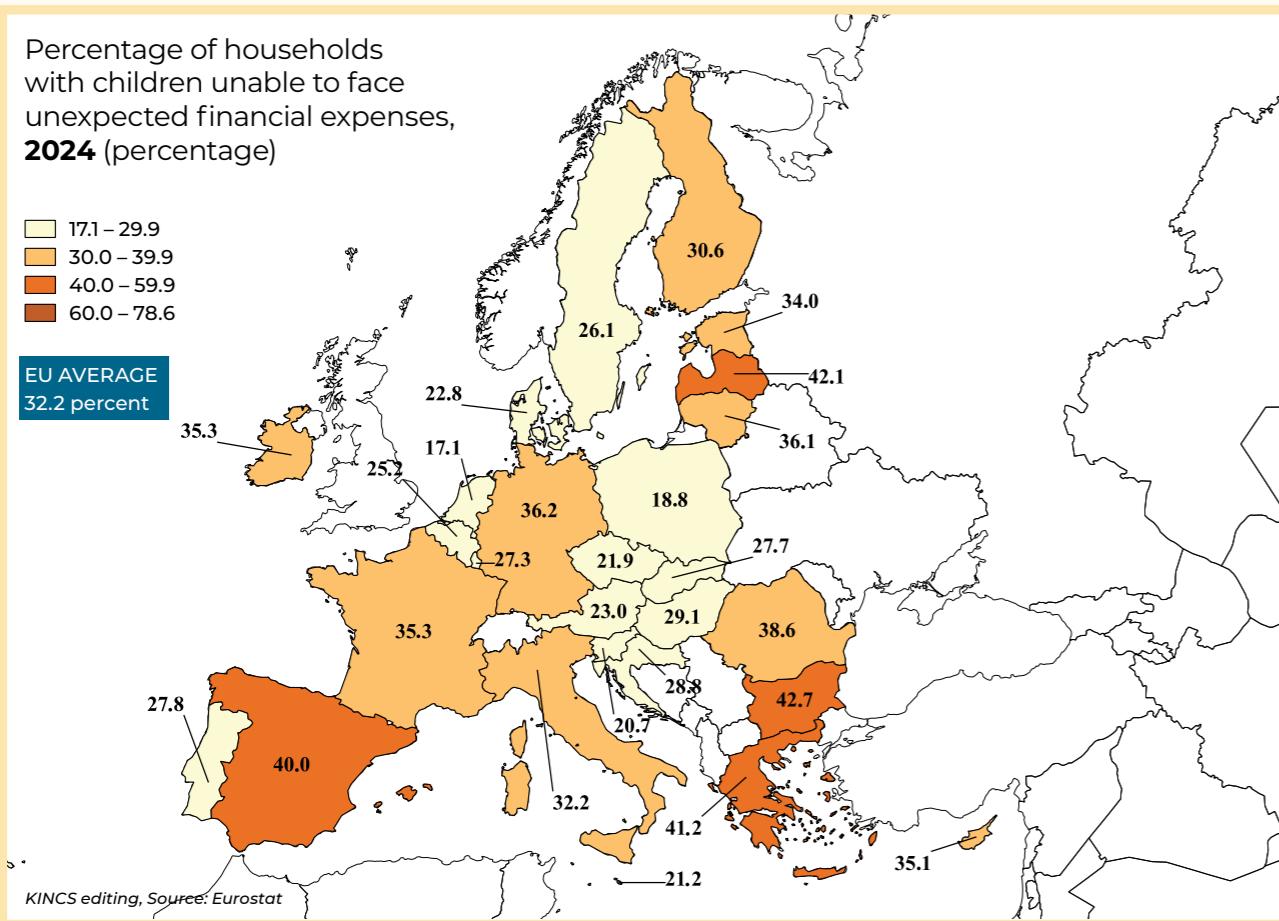


The inability to face unexpected financial expenses refers to the percentage of persons in the total population who are in the state of enforced inability to face unexpected financial expenses.

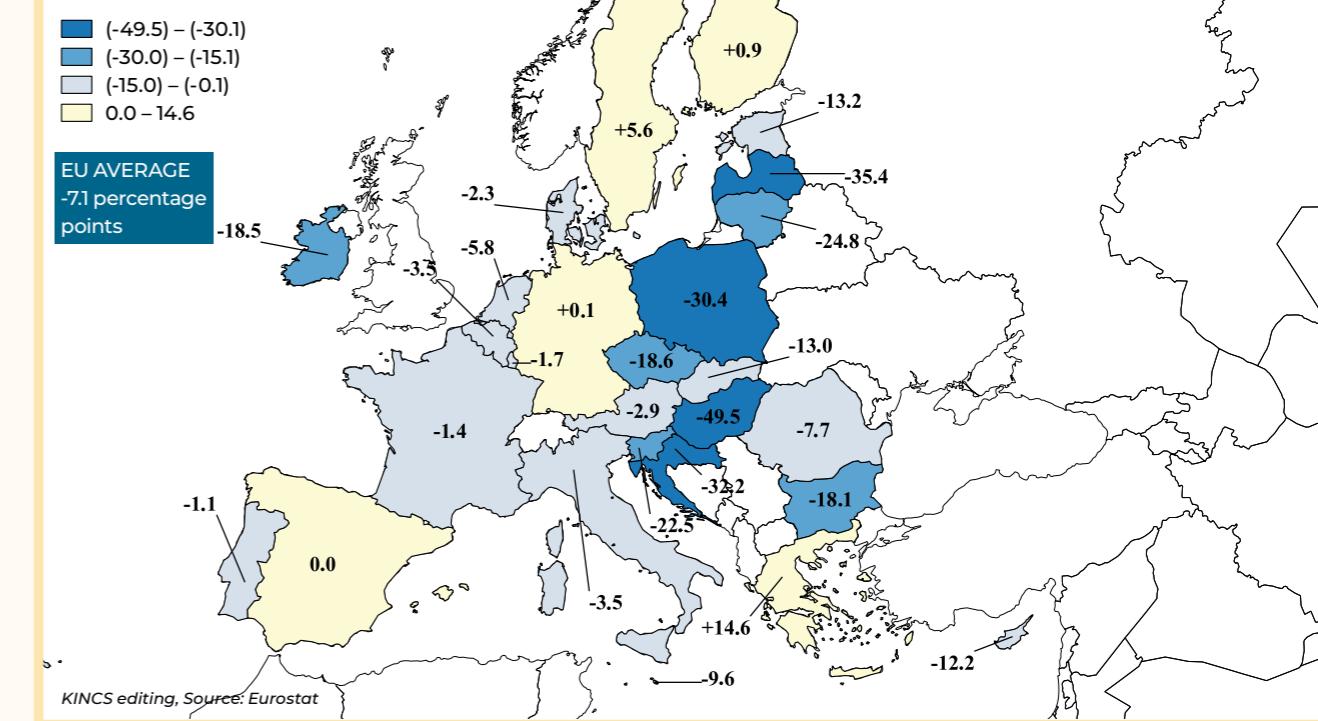
Between 2010 and 2024, the proportion of households with children unable to face unexpected financial expenses fell by 7.1 percentage points in the European Union (from 39.3 percent to 32.2 percent), but still affected almost one in three households with children. The largest decrease, approximately 49.5 percentage points, was observed in Hungary (from 78.6 percent to 29.1 percent), where the proportion of households with children unable to face unexpected financial expenses fell below the EU average in fourteen years. In contrast, in Greece, the proportion increased by 14.6 percentage points over the same period, which is the highest increase among Member States. In 2024, the Netherlands had the lowest proportion of households with children that were unable to cope with unexpected financial burdens (17.1%), while Bulgaria had the highest (42.7%).

While in 2010, Central and Eastern European Member States had the highest proportion of households with children that were unable to face unexpected financial expenses, by 2024, Western European Member States typically had higher values for this indicator.

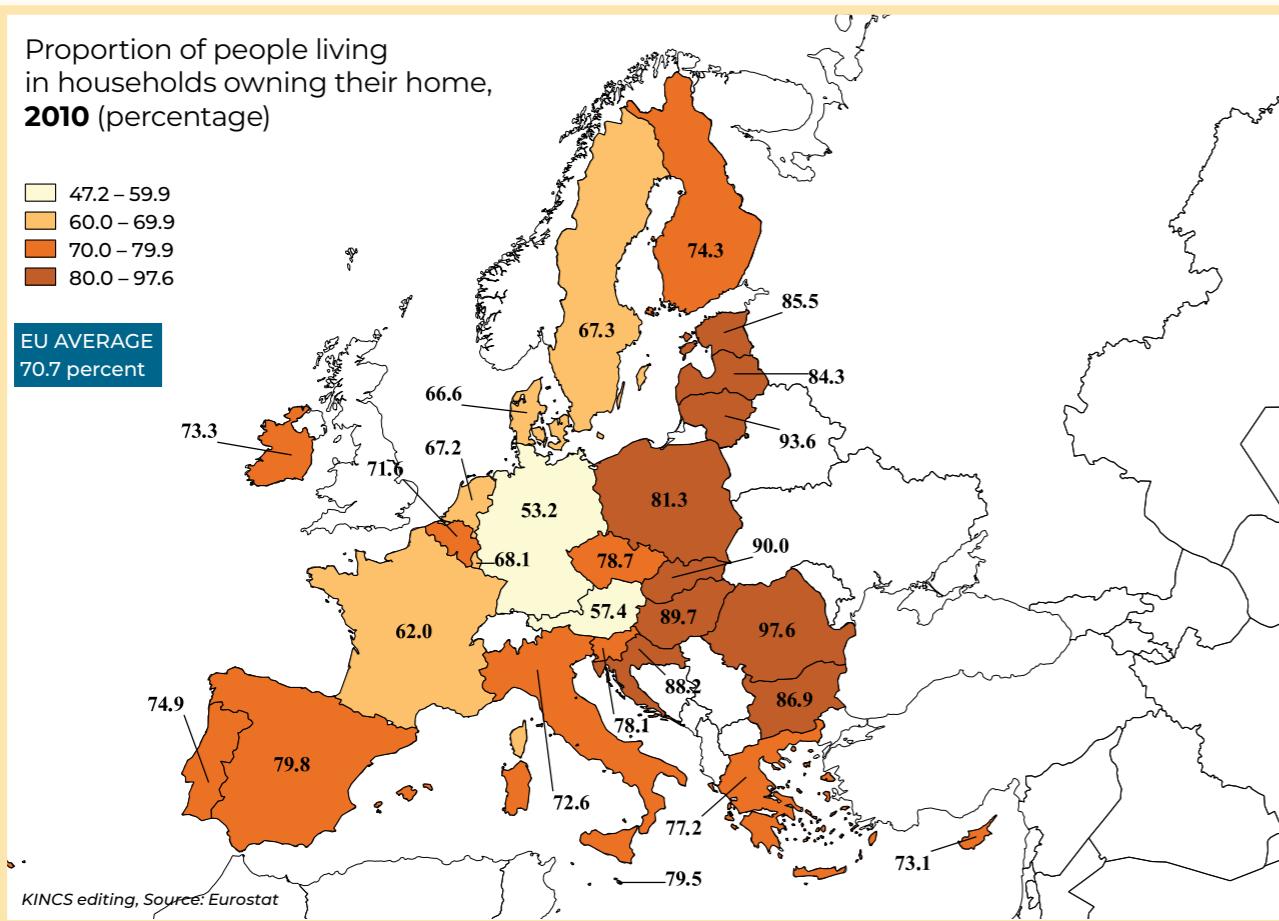
In the European Union, Hungary recorded the largest decline after 2010 in the proportion of families with children unable to face unexpected financial expenses.



Change in the proportion of households with children unable to face unexpected financial expenses, **2010 vs. 2024** (percentage points)



Proportion of people living in households owning their home (2010, 2024, change between 2010 and 2024)

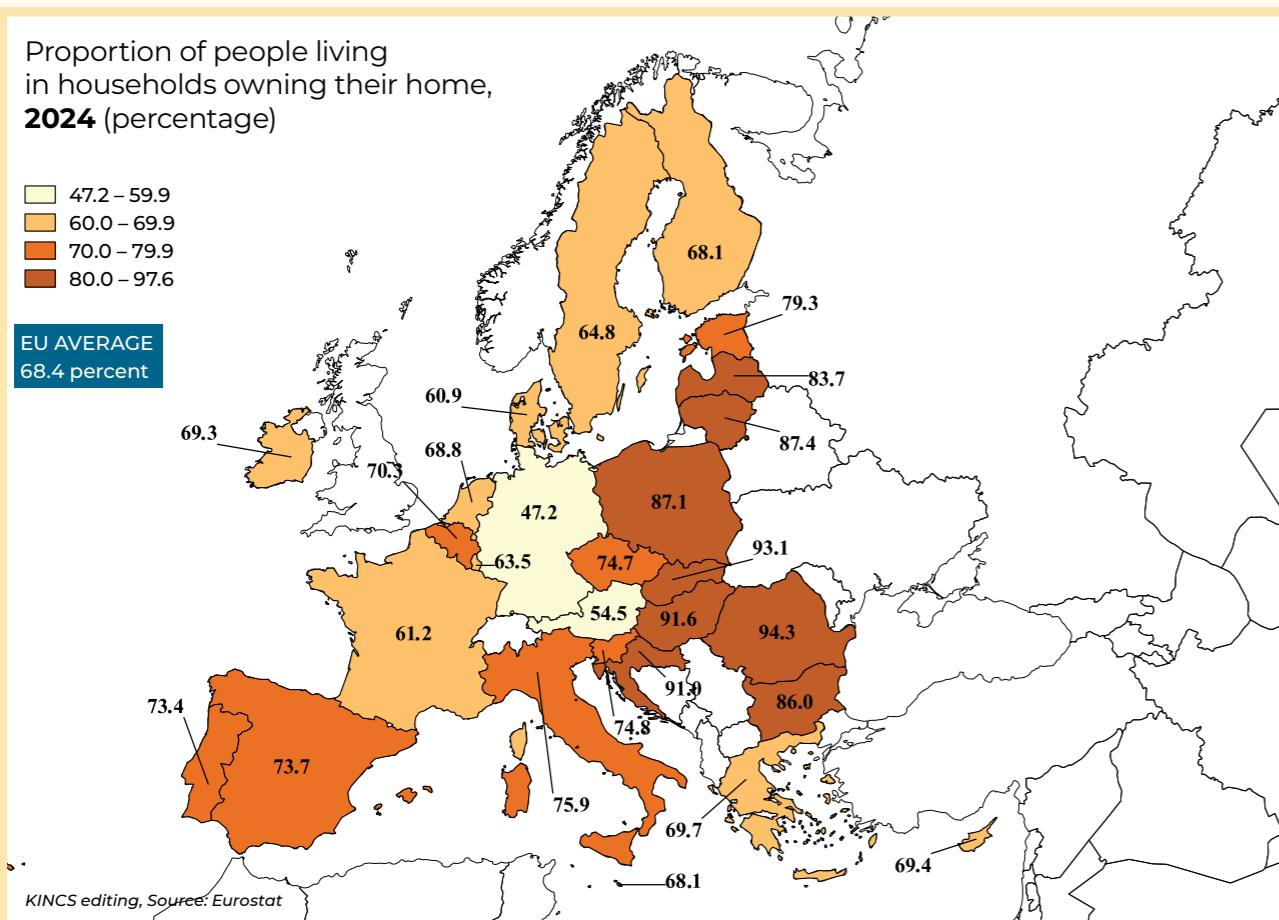
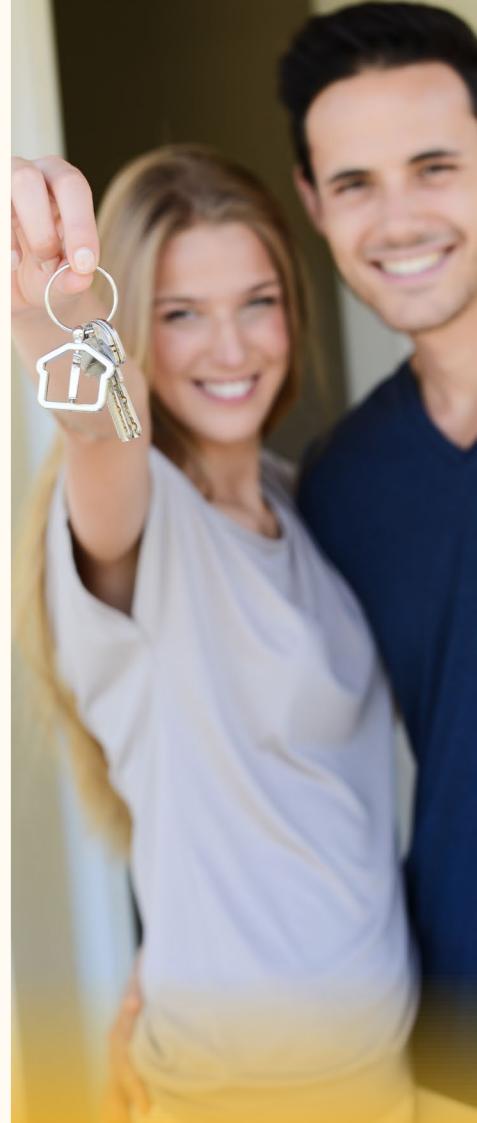


The proportion of homeowners in a given country refers to the percentage of people who live in their own homes, including those who live in the property as immediate family members or relatives of the owner.

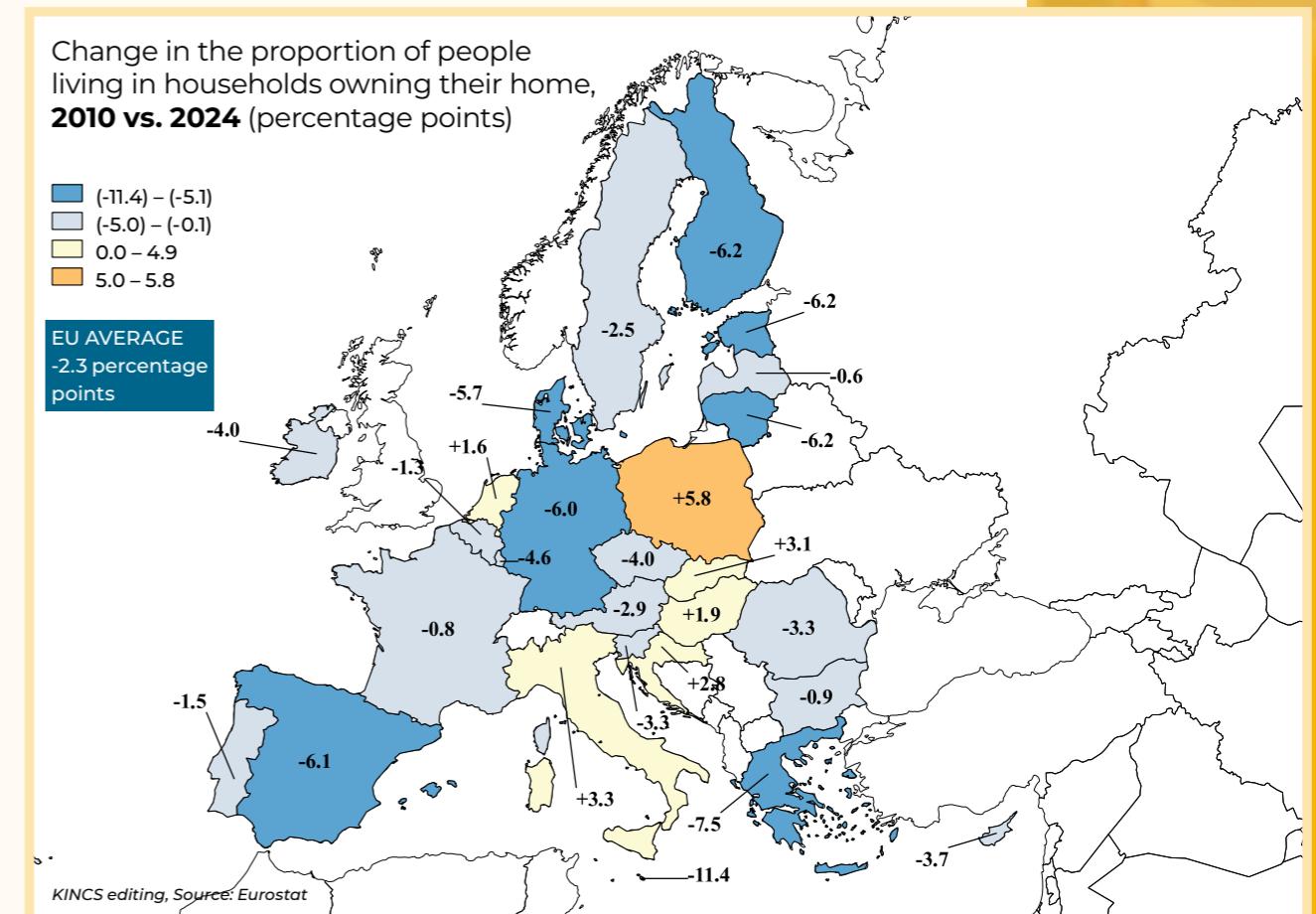
The proportion of people living in owner-occupied housing in the European Union fell by 2.3 percentage points between 2010 and 2024, with 7 out of 10 EU citizens (68.4%) living in their own homes in 2024. While renting is more common in Western Europe, home ownership is a priority in the Central and Eastern Member States of the European Union: the highest proportion of EU citizens living in their own homes is in Romania (94.3%), followed by Slovakia (93.1%) and Hungary (91.6%). Hungary has the third highest proportion of people living in their own homes among EU Member States. At the other end of the scale are Germany (47.2%), Austria (54.5%) and Denmark (60.9%).

Between 2010 and 2024, the proportion of people living in owner-occupied dwellings decreased in nearly three-quarters of Member States: the largest decrease was in Malta (11.4 percentage points), from 79.5 percent to 68.1 percent. In contrast, the indicator rose by almost 6 percentage points in Poland. In Hungary, the increase was nearly 2 percentage points between 2010 and 2024.

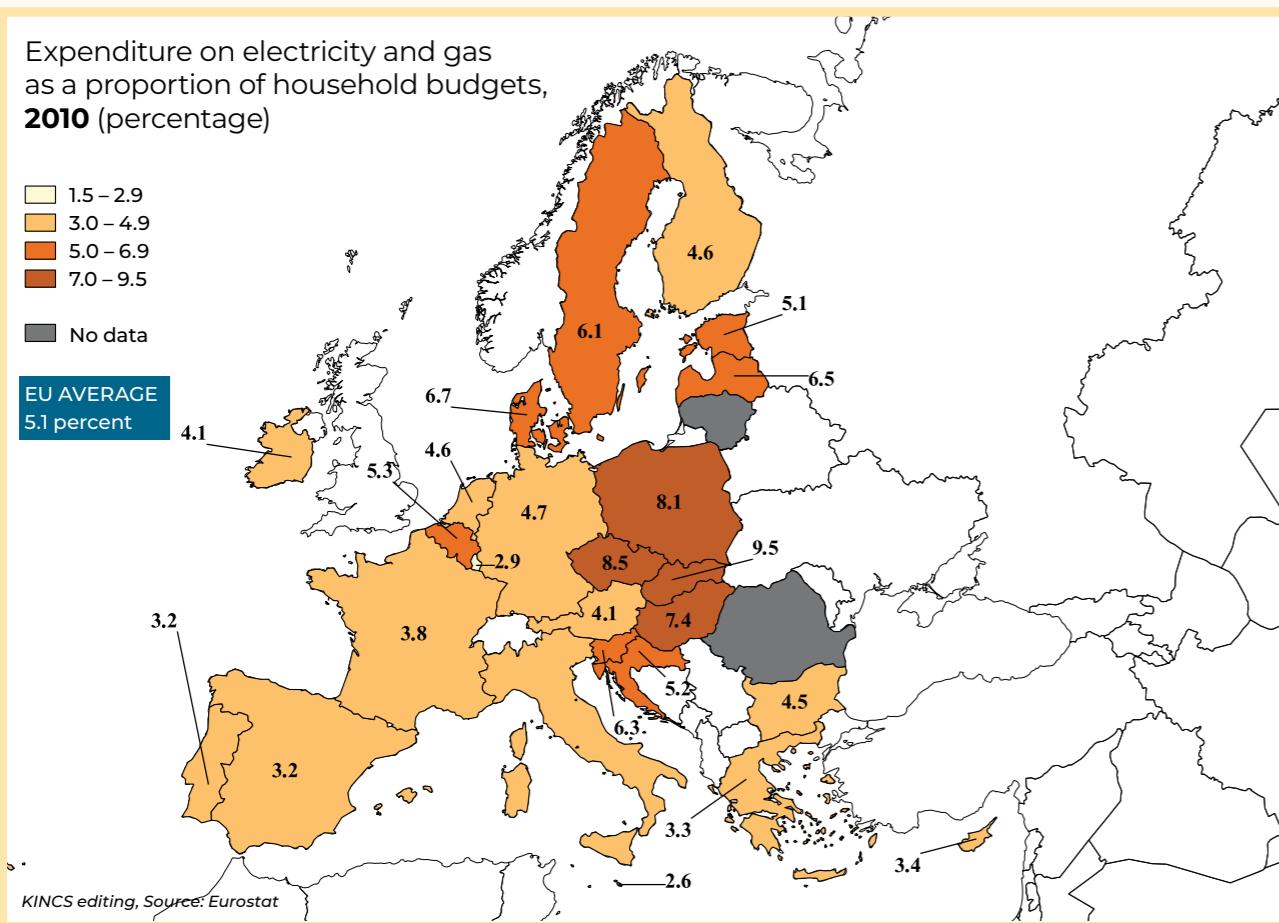
Since 2010, the proportion of people living in their own homes has decreased in most EU countries, while it has increased in Hungary.



Change in the proportion of people living in households owning their home, **2010 vs. 2024** (percentage points)



Expenditure on electricity and gas as a proportion of household budgets (2010, 2024, change between 2010 and 2024)



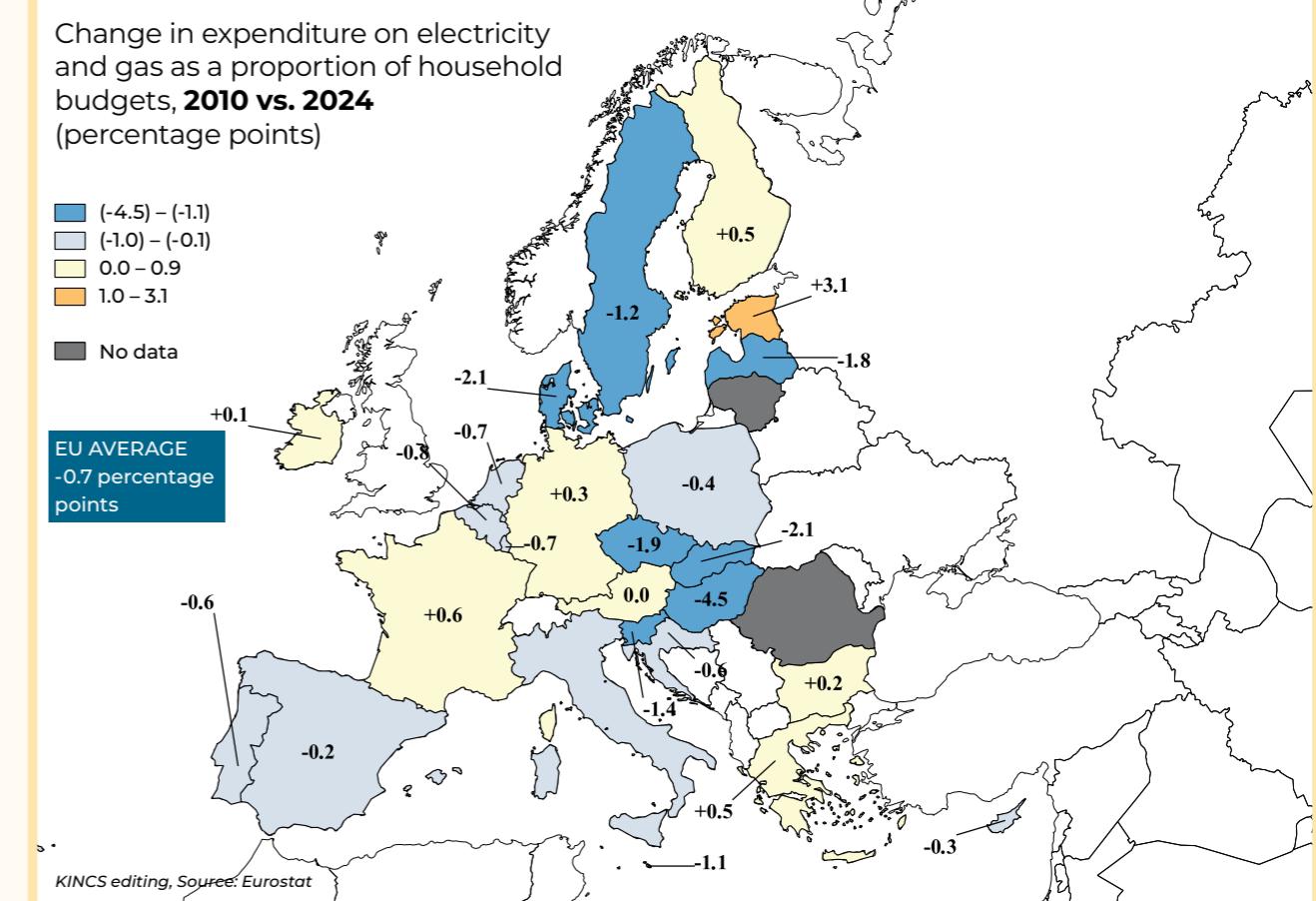
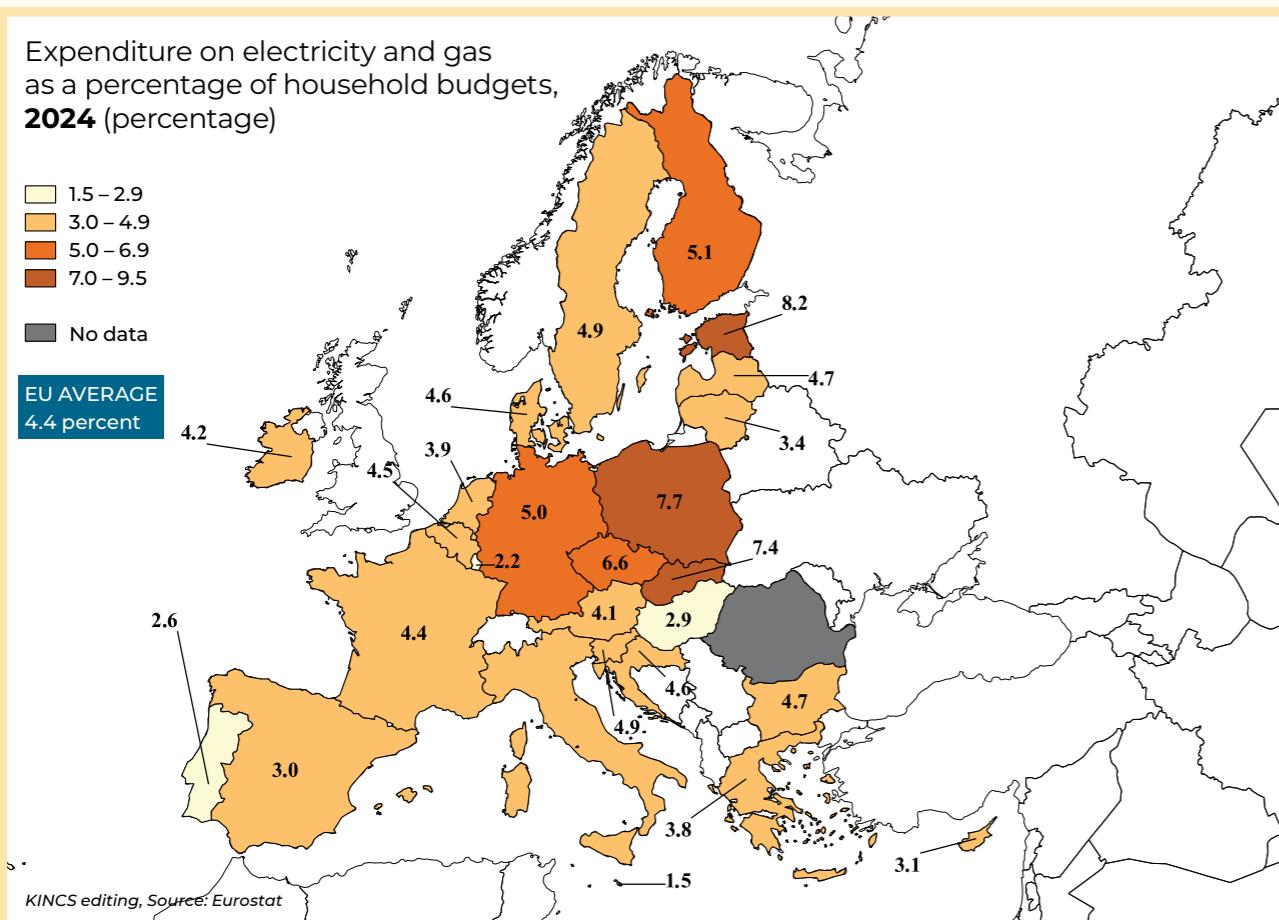
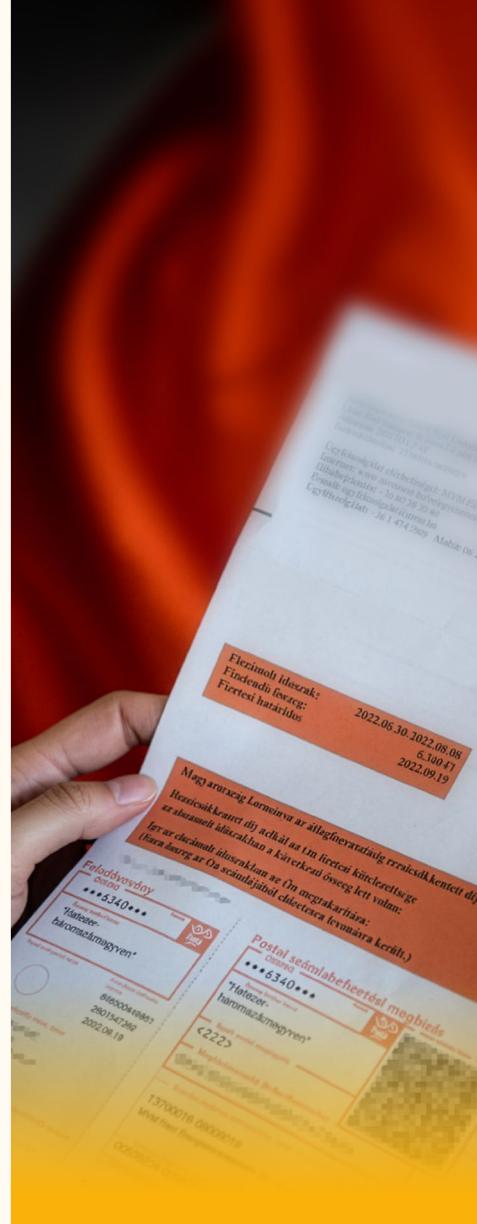
The purpose of the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP) is to classify and analyze the individual consumption expenditures of households, non-profit institutions serving households, and government agencies. One category that can be examined within this is expenditure on electricity and gas as a proportion of household expenditure, which shows what proportion of a given household's budget is spent on electricity and gas.

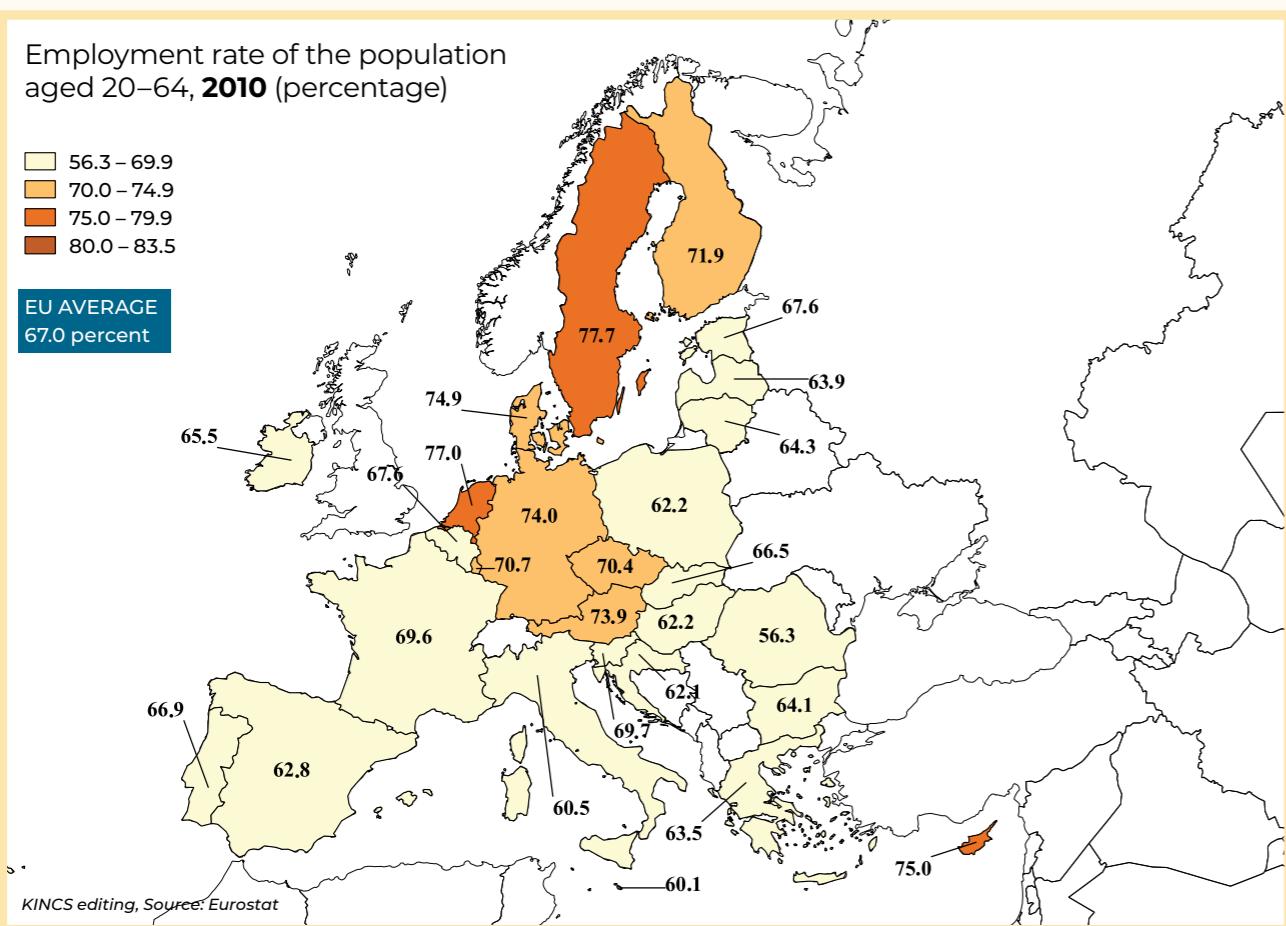
In recent years, households have spent around a quarter of their consumption expenditure on basic necessities such as housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels. Within this broad category, spending on electricity and gas accounted for an average of 4.4 percent of household budgets in EU Member States in 2024, ranging from 1.5 percent in Malta to 7.4 percent in Slovakia. Hungarian households spent 2.9 percent on these items, the fourth lowest figure among the Member States providing data.

Compared to 2010, the average share of electricity and gas costs in household expenditure fell slightly in EU Member States (from 5.1 to 4.4 percent). However, it is important to note that there was an increase in a significant number of Member States: in Germany, electricity and gas accounted for 6 percent more of household expenditure, and in France, 16 percent more.

In contrast, Hungary saw the largest decrease in the proportion of household expenditure spent on electricity and gas: in 2024, electricity and gas accounted for only 2.9 percent of household expenditure, two-fifths or 39 percent of the 2010 figure (7.4 percent).

Since 2010, families in several EU Member States have been spending more and more on utilities, while in Hungary, household spending on electricity and gas has fallen the most.

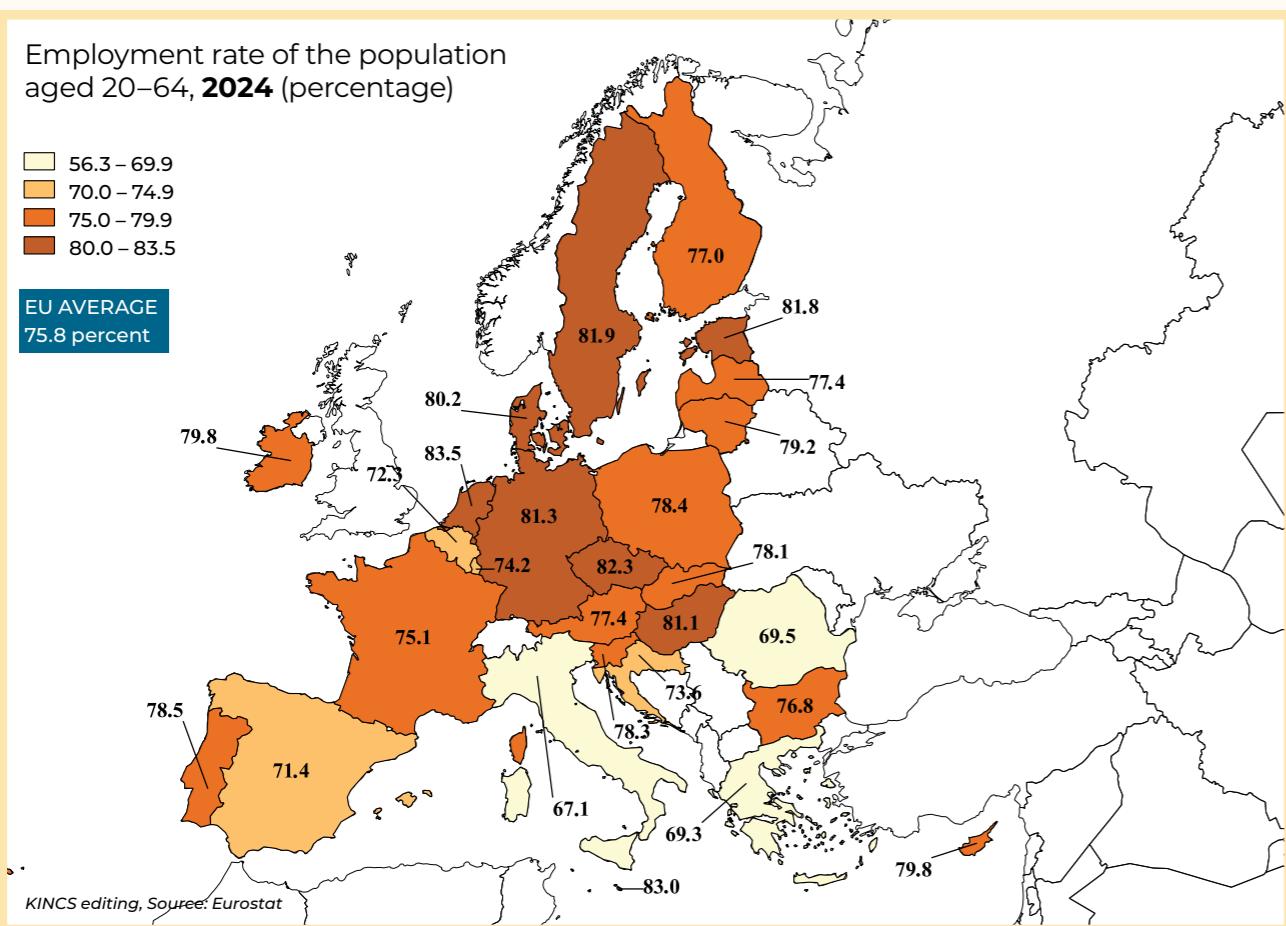
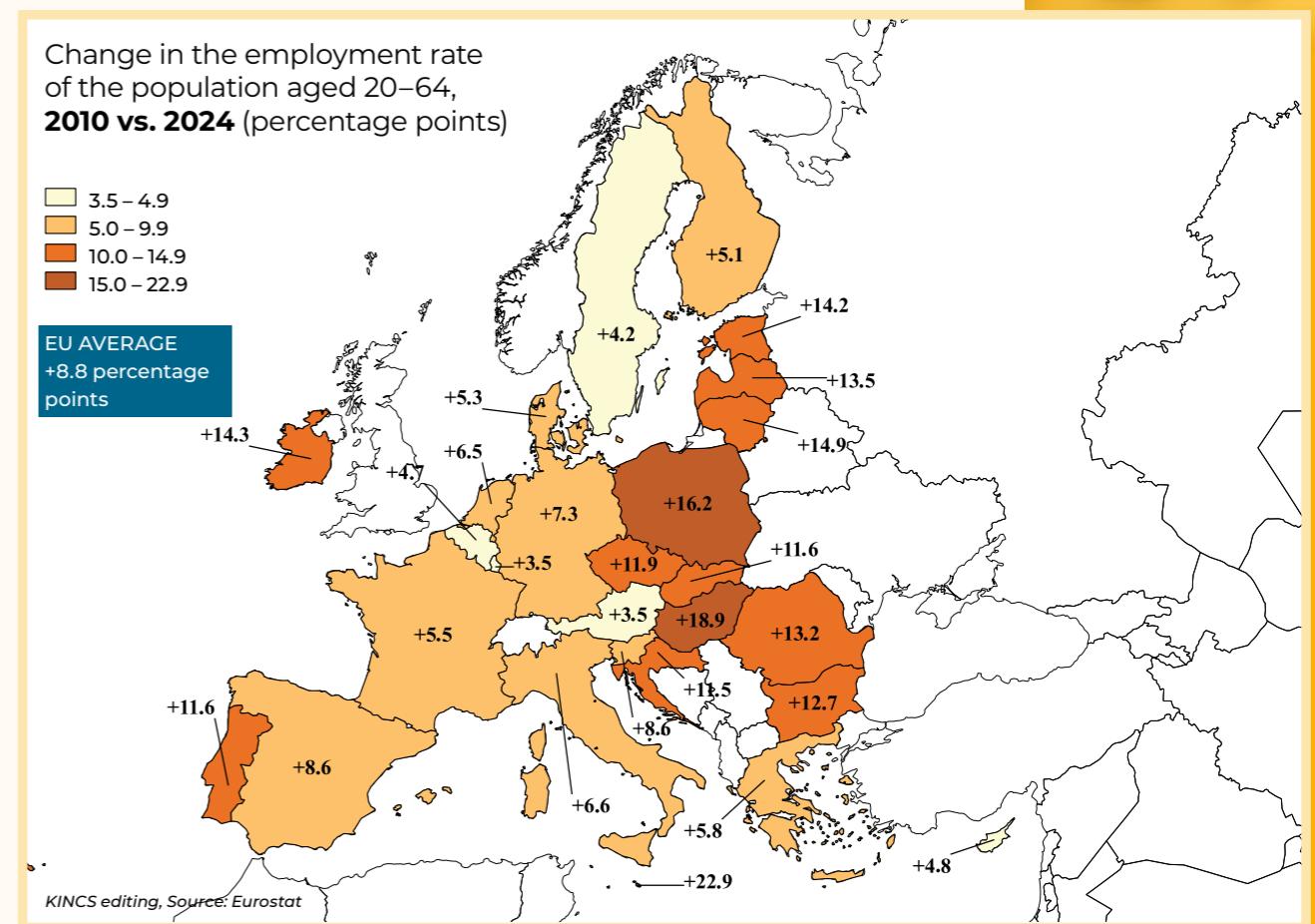


Employment rate (people aged 20–64),
2010, 2024, change between 2010 and 2024

The employment rate is the ratio of employed persons to the total population of the same age group.

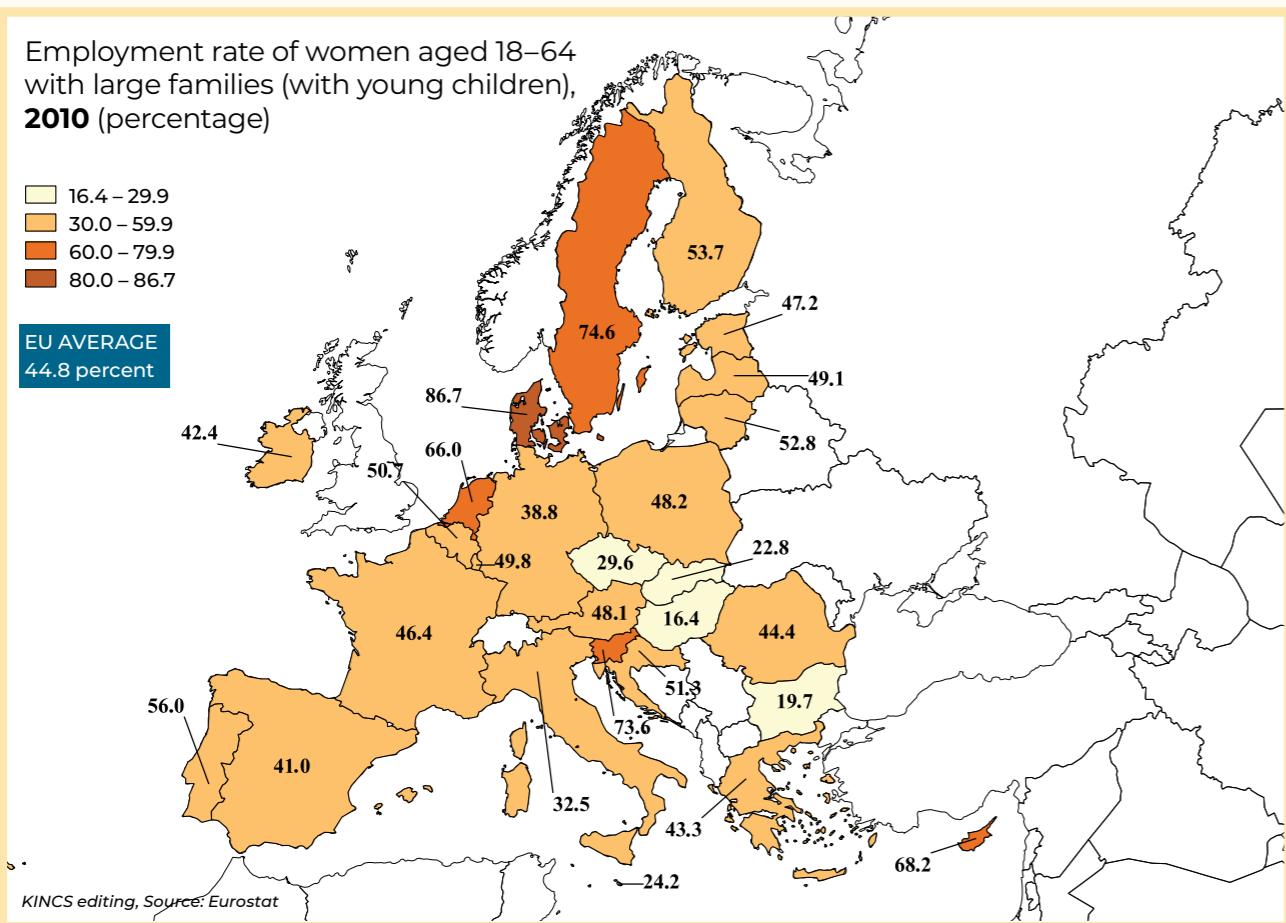
Between 2010 and 2024, the employment rate for people aged 20–64 rose in all Member States of the European Union, increasing by an average of 8.8 percentage points across the Union as a whole, from 67.0 percent to 75.8 percent. The largest increase occurred in Malta (+22.9 percentage points) and Hungary, where the employment rate improved by 18.9 percentage points (from 62.2 percent to 81.1 percent), while the smallest increase, only 3.5 percentage points, was measured in Austria. Hungary's performance thus far exceeds the European Union average and ranks among the best-performing countries, along with other Central and Eastern European countries such as Poland (+16.2 percentage points) and Romania (+13.2 percentage points), as well as the Baltic countries. In contrast, the improvement was more moderate in Western Europe: Germany saw a 7.3 percentage point increase and France a 5.5 percentage point increase, with the employment rate rising from 74.0 percent to 81.3 percent in the former and from 69.6 percent to 75.1 percent in the latter.

After 2010, employment increased in all EU countries, with Hungary seeing the second-largest increase.

Change in the employment rate of the population aged 20–64, **2010 vs. 2024** (percentage points)

WORKING MOTHERS

Employment rate of women aged 18–64 with large families (with young children) (2010, 2024, change between 2010 and 2024)



Employment rates can be calculated not only for the entire population, but also for specific age groups and genders. The employment rate of women aged 18–64 raising three children (at least one of whom is under the age of six) measures the ratio of employed mothers with young children and large families to the female population of the same age.

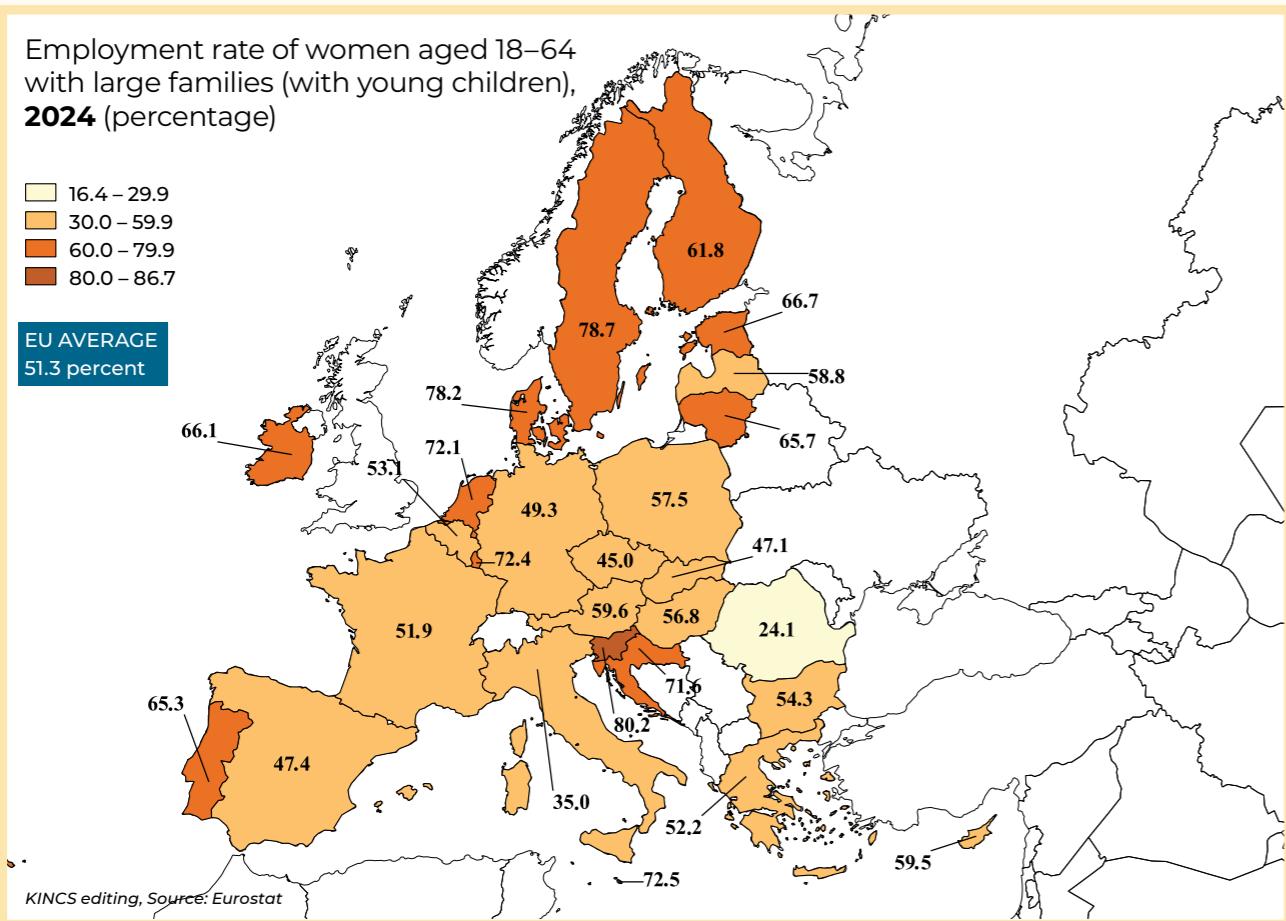
Between 2010 and 2024, the employment rate of women aged 18–64 with young children and large families rose by an average of 6.5 percentage points across the European Union. Compared to 2010, employment levels increased in almost all EU Member States.

However, the data reveal significant differences between countries. The largest increases were achieved by Malta with 48.3 percentage points, Hungary with 40.4 percentage points, and Bulgaria with 34.6 percentage points.

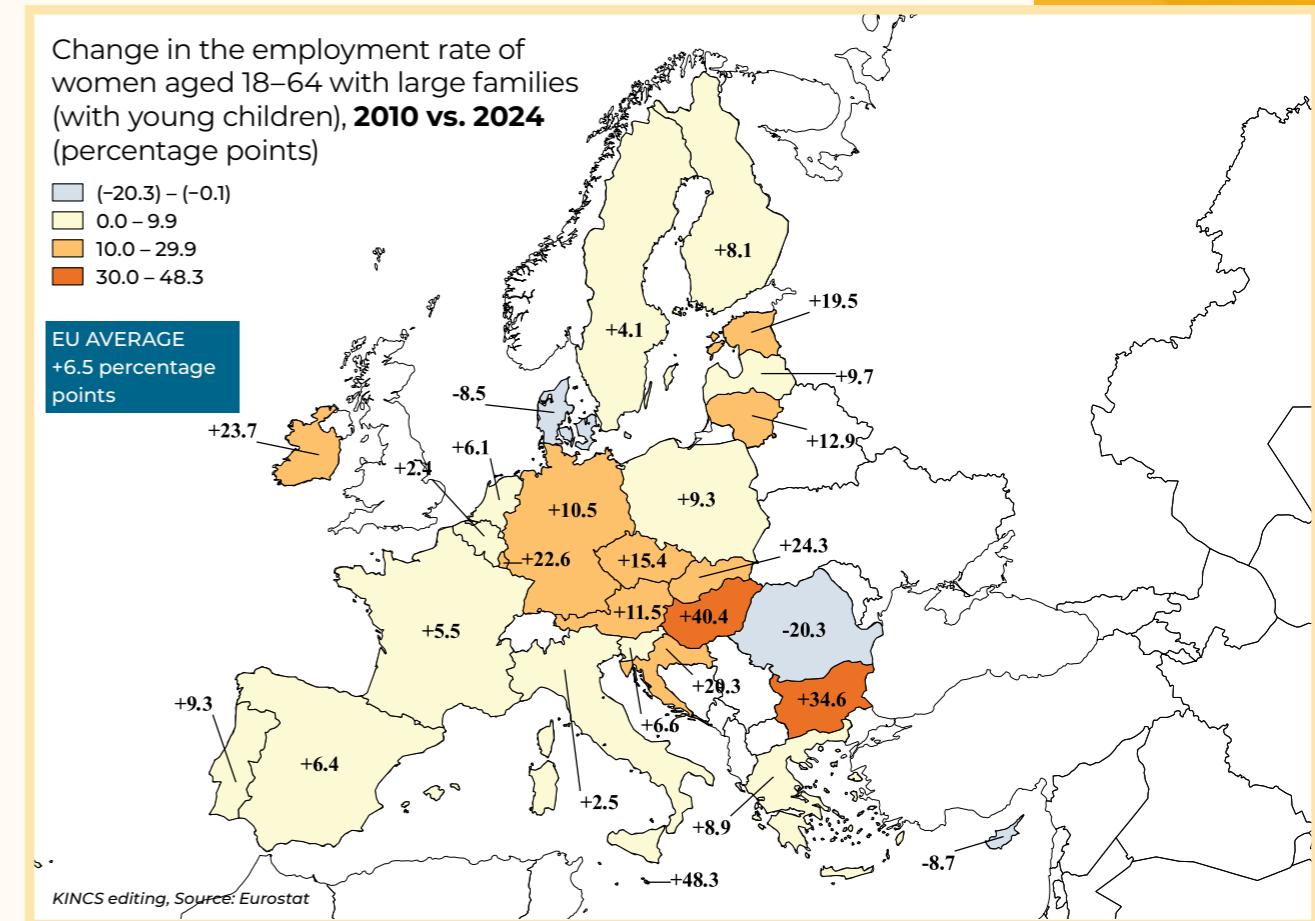
Between 2010 and 2024, the employment rate of women with large families raising children under the age of six increased three and a half times in Hungary. While in 2010, only one in six women with small children and large families was employed, by 2024, this figure had risen to five out of ten. This means that Hungary has moved from last place in the 2010 ranking of European Union Member States to above the EU average.

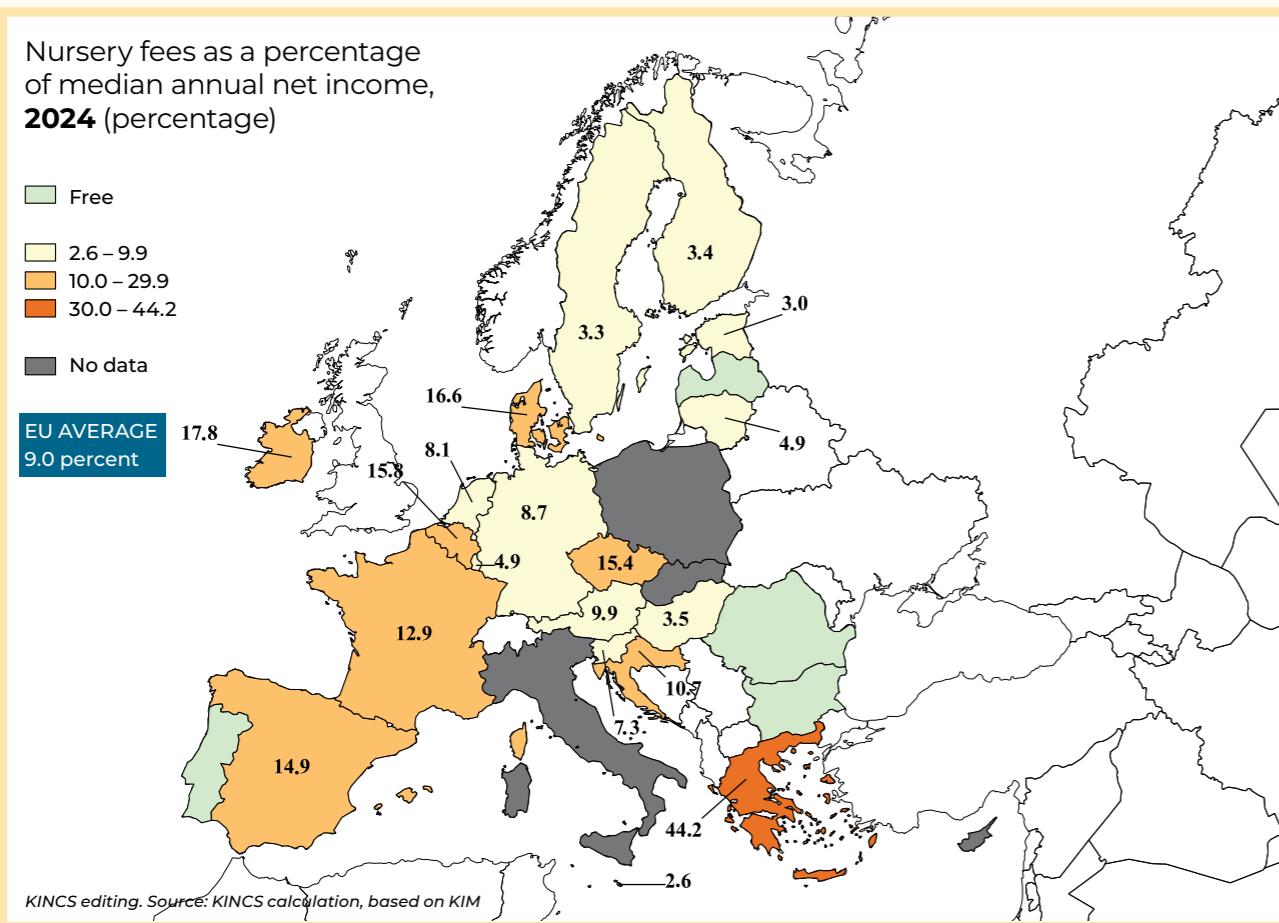
Several countries saw a significant decline during this period. The employment rate of women with young children and large families fell the most in Romania, by 20.3 percentage points, while Denmark saw a decline of 8.5 percentage points and Cyprus 8.7 percentage points.

Since 2010, more and more women with large families raising young children have been working in the EU, with the highest increase in Hungary.



Change in the employment rate of women aged 18–64 with large families (with young children), **2010 vs. 2024** (percentage points)





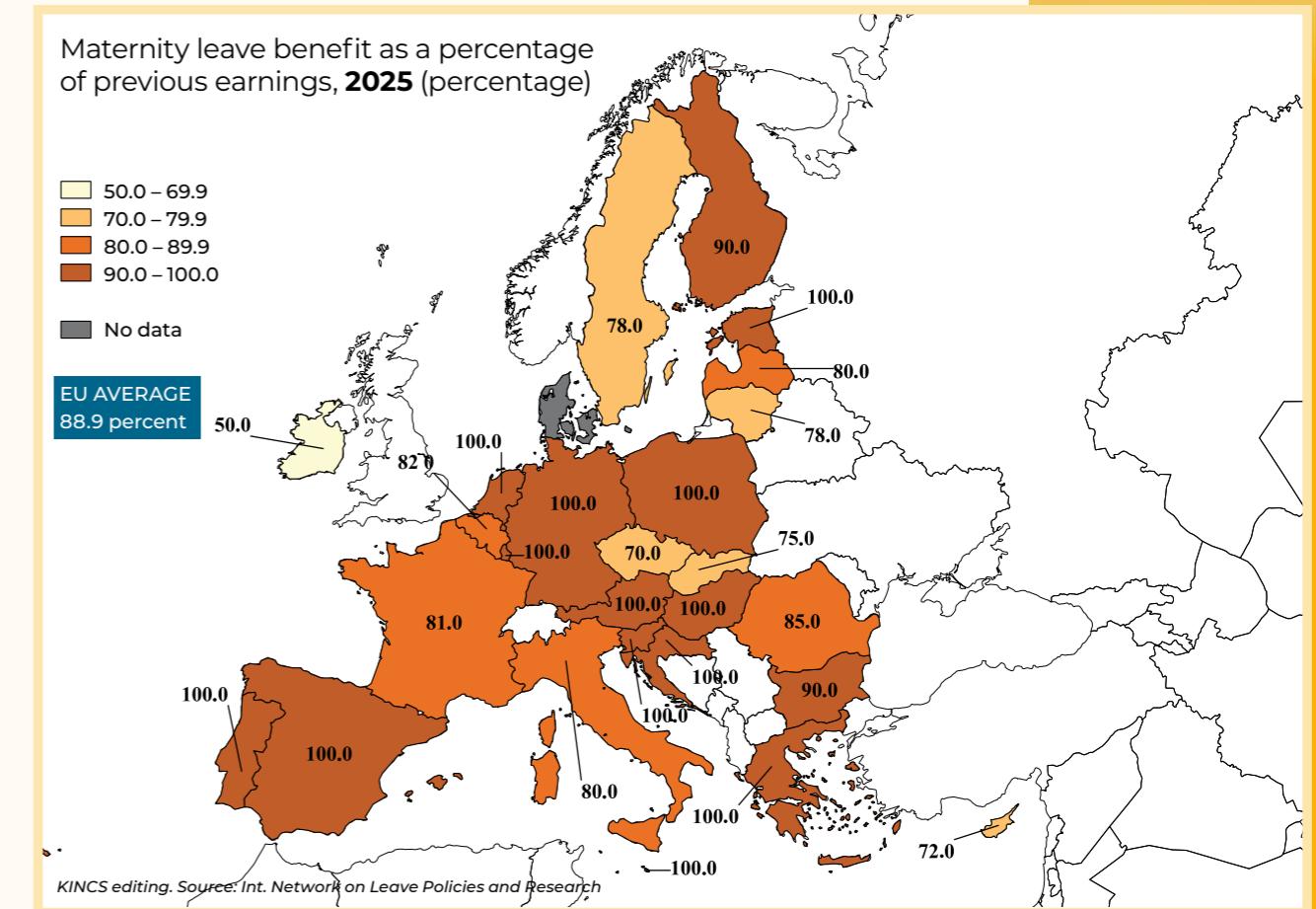
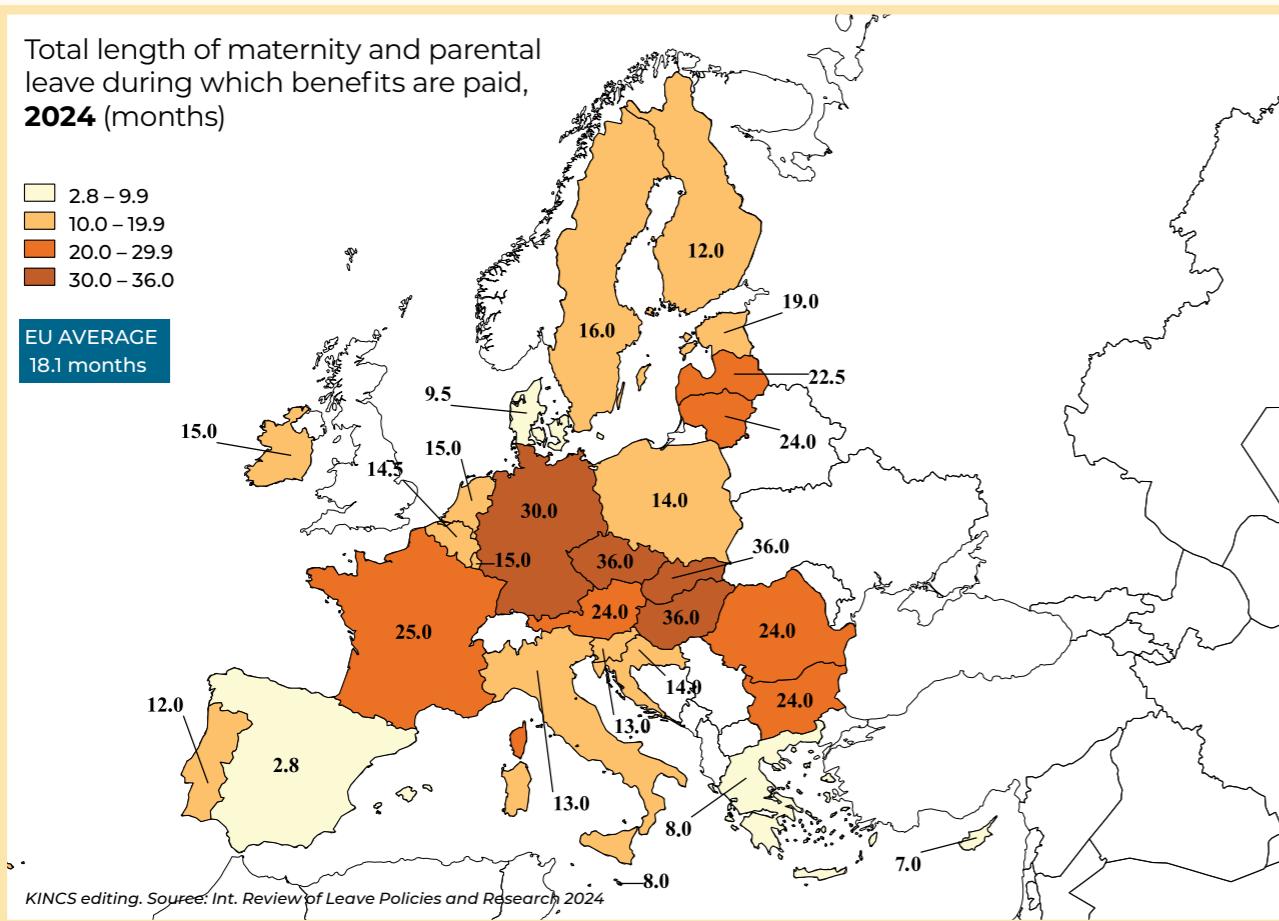
We illustrate the situation of childcare in Europe with three maps. The first map shows the level of nursery fees, indicating what proportion of the median income in a given country nursery care makes up for a child under the age of 3. The second map shows how many months parents can stay at home with their child on maternity or parental leave while receiving benefits. The third map shows the ratio of maternity leave benefits to previous earnings.

In 2024, Greece asked for the highest nursery fee amounts, reaching 44.2 percent of median income, while in several countries – such as Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Portugal – no fees are charged at all. In Hungary, less than half the EU average (9%) is paid for nursery care, on average 3.5 percent of the median wage, but many families are completely exempt from paying nursery fees thanks to state subsidies. In contrast, in some Western European countries, the cost of childcare is a significant burden for families.

In terms of the duration of paid parental leave, Hungary, together with Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Germany, is one of the few Member States where either parent can stay at home to care for their child until the child is almost three years old. On average, Member States provide only 18 months of paid leave. In some Member States, the duration of leave is less than one year: 2.8 months in Spain, 8 months in Greece, and 9.5 months in Denmark.

In 2025, the level of maternity leave benefits reached 100 percent of previous earnings in nearly half of the EU27 countries, while the EU average was 88.9 percent. The lowest rate was provided in Ireland (50%). In Hungary, 100 percent of previous earnings are paid during maternity leave, which is tax- and contribution-free, so it means a larger amount for new mothers than when they were still working.

Hungary offers the longest period of paid childcare in the European Union, the highest amount of maternity benefits in relation to the mother's previous salary, and one of the cheapest nursery care.



Methodological notes

When calculating EU averages, the following principles were applied: firstly, in the case of cross-sectional data an unweighted average has been calculated in the event of any data gaps. On the maps showing change, the average of the two years being compared have been subtracted from each other (except for two variables, for which an unweighted average has been used: "Change in total fertility rate, 2010–2023", "Change in number of births per 1,000 women aged 15–49, 2010–2023"). In all other cases, a weighted average has been used.

Percentage point: The absolute difference between values expressed as percentages is indicated by the percentage point, which is obtained by subtracting the two values expressed as percentages from each other.

The data reflect the situation as of September 12, 2025.

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