

5 May 2022 | 1100 hrs | 079/2022

During the first quarter of 2022, Government outlay towards Social Security Benefits rose by €65.8 million in comparison to 2021.

Government Expenditure on Social Security Benefits: January-March 2022

Social Security Benefits Expenditure

By the end of March 2022, spending on Social Security Benefits totalled €321.8 million, 25.7 per cent higher than the previous year. A €66.0 million rise in Contributory expenditure was the primary reason behind the increase in spending, while Non-Contributory outlay fell marginally by €0.3 million (Table 1).

Government spending towards Contributory Benefits amounted to €271.6 million, a 32.1 per cent rise from 2021. Pensions in respect of Retirement recorded the largest increase of €57.3 million, a result of two regular Two-Thirds Pension payments made in March 2022. Further increases were registered under Contributory Bonus (€6.2 million), Pensions in respect of Widowhood (€2.5 million) and Other Benefits (€0.2 million) (Table 2).

Between January and March 2022, €50.2 million went towards Non-Contributory Benefits, a 0.5 per cent decrease in comparison to the previous year. Age Pension exhibited the largest drop at €2.0 million, with lower spending also reported under Disability Pensions/Allowance (€1.3 million), Total In-Work Benefit (€0.2 million), Child Allowance (€0.2 million) and Medical Assistance (€0.1 million). Conversely, higher outlay was recorded under Total Social Assistance (€1.7 million), Supplementary Allowance (€1.3 million), Carers Allowances/Grants (€0.5 million) and Non-Contributory Bonus (€0.1 million) (Table 3).

Social Security Beneficiaries

In the first quarter of 2022, the largest number of Contributory beneficiaries was recorded under the Two-Thirds Pension (55,611). Furthermore, the 3,817 increase in Two-Thirds pensioners was the highest reported among the Contributory benefits. On the other hand, the biggest drop in recipients was registered under the Retirement Pension (935) (Table 2).

Children's Allowance reported the highest number of Non-Contributory recipients, with 41,471 families in receipt of the benefit. The In-Work Benefit recorded the largest increase in beneficiaries of 2,268, while the highest drop in recipients was witnessed under Supplementary Allowance (761) (Table 3) ■

Table 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by period and description

Description	Jan-Mar 2020	Jan-Mar 2021	Jan-Mar 2022	Jan-Mar 2022 / Jan-Mar 2021	
				Change	% change
	€ 000				
Contributory Benefits	194,252	205,520	271,558	66,038	32.1
Non-Contributory Benefits	48,728	50,446	50,194	-253	-0.5
Total Social Security Benefits	242,980	255,966	321,751	65,785	25.7

Chart 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure: January-March 2013-2022

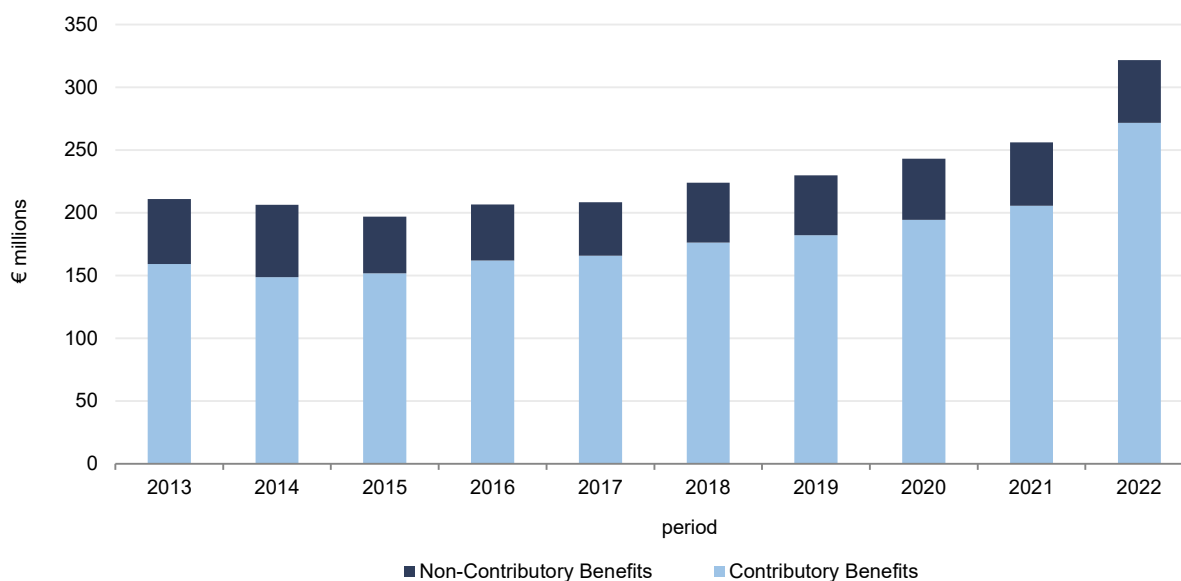


Chart 2. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by ESSPROS functions for January-March 2022

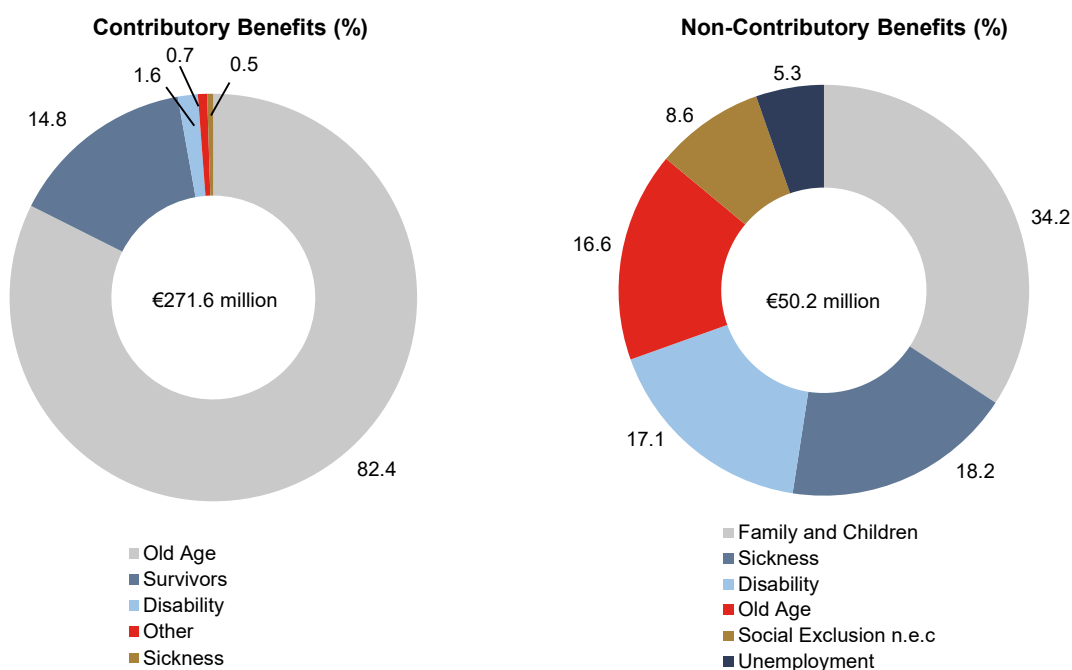


Table 2. Social Security Contributory Benefits by period and description

Description	Jan-Mar 2020		Jan-Mar 2021		Jan-Mar 2022	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	194,252	-	205,520	-	271,558
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	135,613	-	144,916	-	202,245
Retirement Pension	5,083	6,920	5,543	8,601	4,608	7,641
National Minimum Pension	6,399	9,749	7,061	10,520	7,791	13,264
Increased Retirement Pension	598	1,365	1,060	2,275	537	1,652
Two-Thirds Pension	50,221	112,824	51,794	117,190	55,611	173,092
Increased National Minimum Pension	1,959	4,664	2,631	6,218	2,555	6,458
Decreased National Minimum Pension	54	92	69	111	68	137
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	4,737	-	4,507	-	4,473
Invalidity Pension	126	127	108	129	96	128
Increased Invalidity Pension	56	96	45	78	37	71
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	2,941	4,514	2,700	4,300	2,552	4,275
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension ¹	2	c	2	c	2	c
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	34,252	-	34,925	-	37,445
Widows' Pension	194	316	147	229	144	313
Early Survivors' Pension	1,859	3,864	1,767	3,624	1,474	2,989
Survivors' Pension	8,773	19,177	9,657	20,929	11,071	24,948
National Minimum Widows' Pension	5,608	10,894	5,278	10,142	4,785	9,196
Benefits in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	425	-	326	-	360
Injury Benefit	543	347	402	252	395	282
Injury Pension	222	70	211	66	198	63
Injury Gratuity	3	7	4	8	3	15
Other Benefits	-	2,744	-	2,812	-	3,000
Unemployment Benefit	703	224	1,027	418	425	264
Special Unemployment Benefit	75	51	91	62	50	32
Maternity Benefit	861	746	794	694	860	852
Sickness Benefit	7,762	1,583	6,474	1,533	8,735	1,668
Orphans' Allowance	10	14	8	13	9	12
Marriage Grant	442	126	346	93	663	171
COVID-19 Benefits²	-	-	-	236	-	c
Additional Unemployment Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disability Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parent Benefit ³	-	-	596	236	1	c
Bonus	-	16,482	-	17,799	-	24,035

^cConfidential

¹For confidentiality reasons, outlay for Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension has been included under National Minimum Invalidity Pension.

²Introduced to aid individuals working in the private sector who, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, became unemployed or unable to go to work due to medical or family reasons.

³For confidentiality reasons, 2022 outlay for Parent Benefit has been included under Other Benefits aggregate.

Table 3. Social Security Non-Contributory Benefits by period and description

Description	Jan-Mar 2020		Jan-Mar 2021		Jan-Mar 2022	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	48,728	-	50,446	-	50,194
Child Allowance	-	9,775	-	10,975	-	10,807
Children's Allowance	40,329	9,275	41,326	9,298	41,471	9,140
Foster Child Allowance	175	396	177	481	185	503
Child Benefit Bonus	345	104	765	330	657	276
Children's Allowance Supplement ¹	-	-	41,301	866	41,308	888
Age Pension	4,678	7,041	4,535	7,150	4,143	5,103
Disability Pensions/Allowance	-	8,634	-	9,482	-	8,231
Disability Child Allowance	1,618	589	1,644	585	1,795	768
Disability Assistance	164	197	212	297	290	292
Severe Disability Assistance	3,173	5,449	3,367	6,045	3,684	4,949
Increased Severe Disability Assistance	700	1,726	795	2,000	882	1,670
Assistance Visually Impaired	395	673	402	554	414	552
Total Social Assistance	-	10,828	-	10,485	-	12,200
Drug Addicts Allowance	26	13	37	13	32	12
Social Assistance	4,162	5,021	4,034	5,028	3,808	6,053
Social Assistance for Single Parents	2,319	2,740	2,355	2,679	2,218	3,516
Unemployment Assistance	706	842	759	844	400	457
Social Assistance Board ²	1	c	1	c	2	c
Unemployment Assistance Taper	1,686	1,121	1,178	758	1,058	1,092
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	927	1,091	1,028	1,164	907	1,071
Medical Assistance	-	4,352	-	4,285	-	4,137
Sickness Assistance	11,354	4,332	11,187	4,264	10,840	4,119
Leprosy Assistance	21	12	18	11	16	10
Milk Grant	20	8	34	10	26	8
Carers Allowances/Grants	-	2,761	-	2,508	-	2,973
Increased Carers' Allowance	1,071	2,463	1,205	2,127	1,282	2,232
Carers' Allowance	247	298	316	380	346	526
Carer's Grant ³	-	-	-	-	408	215
Supplementary Allowance	22,555	2,292	21,940	2,986	21,179	4,296
Total In-Work Benefit	-	1,346	-	1,216	-	1,024
In-Work Benefit	3,927	1,346	4,208	975	6,476	946
In-Work Supplement	-	-	995	241	309	79
Bonus	-	1,699	-	1,360	-	1,423

^cConfidential

¹Supplementary payment to Children's Allowance recipients, first payments made in January 2021.

²For confidentiality reasons, outlay for Social Assistance Board has been included under Unemployment Assistance.

³Introduced in 2021 but originally reported outside the Social Security Benefits vote.

Methodological Notes

1. Expenditure data provided in this news release is extracted from the administrative records of the Social Security Department, and is based on the Government's Consolidated Fund.
2. Beneficiaries data is obtained from the Department of Social Security's Unique Beneficiaries Report.
3. For every benefit, the corresponding beneficiaries reflect any person who has received the benefit at least once during the reference period. The number of beneficiaries may not be aggregated since persons obtaining two or more different benefits during the same period are listed once under each benefit. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the annual number of beneficiaries is not equal to the sum of the quarters since beneficiaries obtaining the same benefit in more than one quarter are only counted once.
4. The functions provided in charts 2 and 3 are in line with the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS) Manual 2019 Edition (ISBN 978-92-79-24751-4). This methodology is mandatory for all EU Member States. A detailed breakdown of which benefits are classified under each function is provided in the Social Security Benefits Glossary that can be accessed from the 'Sources and Methods' link listed in note 7.
5. Expenditure data is not normally subject to revision, while beneficiaries data may be revised.
6. Figures may not add up exactly due to rounding.
7. More information relating to this news release may be accessed at:
Statistical Database: <https://statdb.nso.gov.mt/start>
Sources and Methods: https://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_A2/Public_Finance/Pages/Government-Expenditure-on-Social-Security-Benefits.aspx
8. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.
9. Statistics in this news release should be interpreted in the context of the COVID-19 situation.
10. A detailed news release calendar is available on: https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx