

Government Expenditure on Social Security Benefits: January-September 2024

NR 202/2024

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Between January and September 2024, Government outlay towards Social Security Benefits rose by €120.8 million in comparison to 2023.



Social Security Benefits Expenditure

During the first three quarters of 2024, spending on Social Security Benefits totalled €1,101.6 million, 12.3 per cent higher than the €980.8 million recorded at the end of September 2023. Higher expenditure was reported for both Contributory (€81.6 million) and Non-Contributory Benefits (€39.2 million) (Table 1).

Government spending towards Contributory Benefits amounted to €872.8 million, a 10.3 per cent rise from 2023. Pensions in respect of Retirement recorded the largest increase of €51.9 million, as the number of Two-Thirds pensioners rose by 2,159 individuals. Further increases were registered under Contributory Bonus (€16.3 million), Pensions in respect of Widowhood (€11.6 million), Other Benefits (€1.7 million) and Deficiency Contributory Bonus (€0.9 million). Conversely, Pensions in respect of Invalidity fell by €0.9 million (Table 2).

By the end of September 2024, Non-Contributory spending amounted to €228.7 million, a 20.7 per cent increase in comparison to the previous year. The rise was largely attributed to an €18.0 million increase in Child Allowance payments, coupled with a €13.1 million increase reported under the Additional Cost of Living Adjustment. The former includes the initial payments of the Special Allowance for Post-Secondary Students (€5.8 million), payable to parents whose children maintain their education status beyond the mandatory age (Table 3).

During the third quarter of 2024, Social Security Benefits spending reached €329.2 million, reflecting a €29.3 million rise from the previous year. Greater outlays were reported under both Contributory (€25.1 million) and Non-Contributory Benefits (€4.1 million). Pensions in respect of Retirement registered the largest increase of €16.1 million under Contributory Benefits (Table 4), while the biggest rise in Non-Contributory outlay was recorded by Child Allowance (€4.5 million) (Table 5).

Social Security Beneficiaries

During the first nine months of 2024, Two-Thirds pensioners totalled 60,982 that was 2,159 more beneficiaries than the corresponding period in 2023. This was the highest increase exhibited among recipients of Contributory Benefits, while, conversely, the biggest drop was registered under National Minimum Widows' Pension (264) (Table 2).

The highest number of Non-Contributory beneficiaries was reported under the Additional Cost of Living Adjustment (98,769), the largest reported increase (87,599) in Non-Contributory Benefits. Furthermore, there were 44,640 families in receipt of Children's Allowance, 622 more than the previous year. The biggest decline in recipients was witnessed under Supplementary Allowance (575) (Table 3).

In the third quarter, the Two-Thirds Pension (57,216) and Children's Allowance (42,751) were the most received Contributory and Non-Contributory Benefits, respectively (Tables 4 and 5).

Chart 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure

January-September in € million

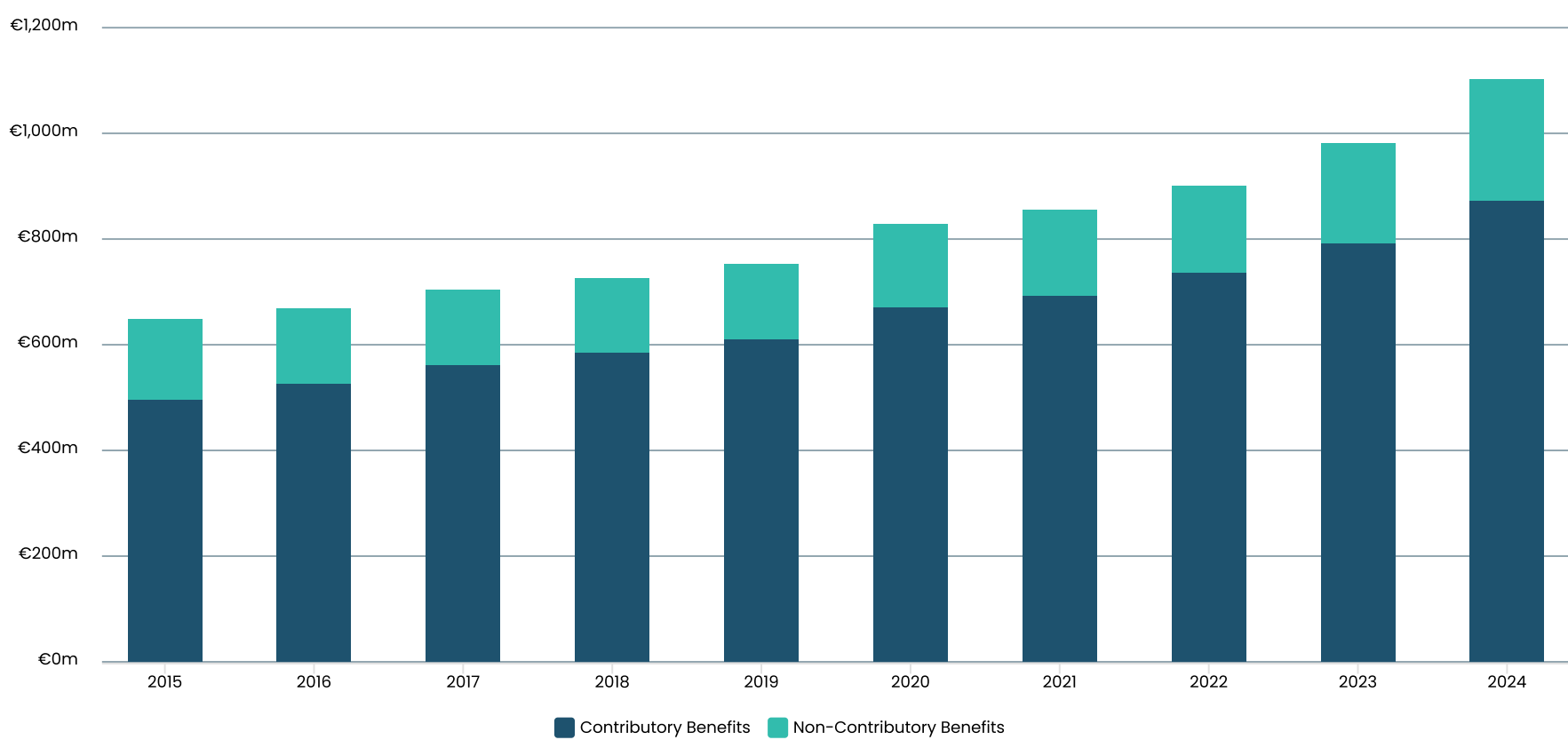
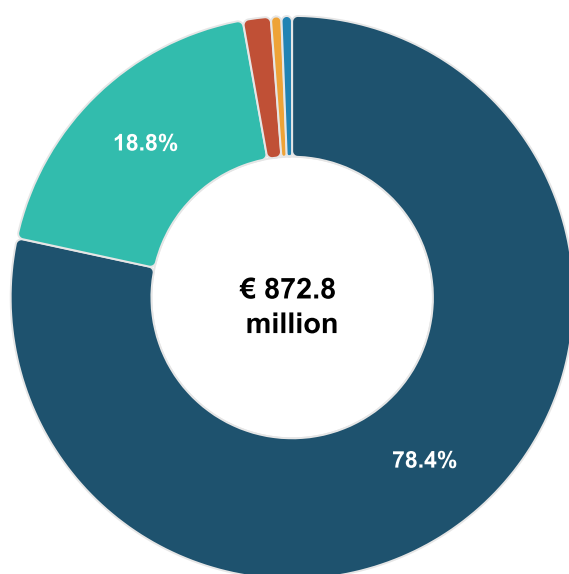


Chart 2. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by ESSPROS¹ functions

Contributory Benefits

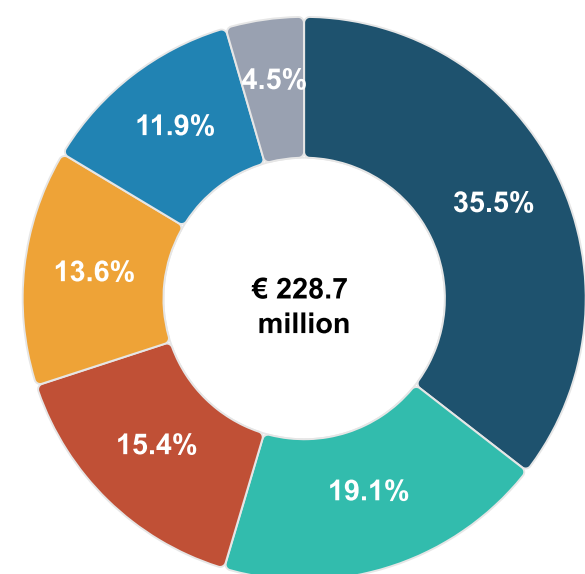
January-September 2024



Old age
Survivors
Disability
Sickness
Other

Non-Contributory Benefits

January-September 2024



Family & Children
Old age
Disability
Sickness
Social exclusion n.e.c
Unemployment

¹ Refer to methodological note 5.

Table 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by period and description

Description	Jan-Sep 2022	Jan-Sep 2023	Jan-Sep 2024	Jan-Sep 2024 / Jan-Sep 2023	
				Change	% change
				€ 000	
Contributory Benefits	737,022	791,217	872,826	81,609	10.3
Non-Contributory Benefits	164,546	189,536	228,730	39,194	20.7
Total Social Security Benefits	901,567	980,753	1,101,556	120,803	12.3

Table 2. Social Security Contributory Benefits by period and description

Description	Jan-Sep 2022		Jan-Sep 2023		Jan-Sep 2024	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	737,022	-	791,217	-	872,826
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	520,773	-	552,948	-	604,806
Retirement Pension	4,717	17,980	3,697	17,081	4,095	19,635
National Minimum Pension	8,011	41,407	8,381	45,041	8,754	48,327
Increased Retirement Pension	562	4,228	481	3,867	1,165	8,166
Two-Thirds Pension	57,318	435,992	58,823	466,730	60,982	503,683
Increased National Minimum Pension	2,628	20,853	2,429	19,971	3,494	24,679
Decreased National Minimum Pension	71	312	59	258	67	316
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	14,339	-	14,566	-	13,694
Invalidity Pension	104	427	97	434	86	400
Increased Invalidity Pension	37	223	27	185	37	211
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	2,671	13,688	2,496	13,946	2,315	13,083
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension ¹	2	c	1	c	1	c
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	125,861	-	135,371	-	147,012
Widows' Pension	145	962	135	948	134	972
Early Survivors' Pension	1,564	8,742	1,182	6,547	957	6,813
Survivors' Pension	12,173	88,209	12,950	100,577	13,282	112,131
National Minimum Widows' Pension	4,922	27,948	4,037	27,299	3,773	27,097
Benefits in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	1,209	-	1,153	-	1,200
Injury Benefit	1,192	926	1,045	856	1,124	919
Injury Pension	202	210	196	218	192	210
Injury Gratuity	15	73	16	79	16	71
Other Benefits	-	8,517	-	8,425	-	10,127
Unemployment Benefit	803	577	935	708	1,193	2,120
Special Unemployment Benefit	95	74	85	66	28	16
Maternity Benefit	2,326	2,254	2,619	2,500	2,479	2,602
Sickness Benefit	22,391	4,819	17,735	4,394	17,720	4,644
Orphans' Allowance	9	36	7	26	5	22
Marriage Grant	2,608	757	2,397	732	2,248	723
COVID-19 Benefits	-	c	-	-	-	-

Additional Unemployment Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disability Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parent Benefit ²	2	c	-	-	-	-
Deficiency Contributory Bonus³	13,773	6,463	13,391	6,601	13,526	7,526
Bonus	-	59,860	-	72,154	-	88,461

^cConfidential

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

²For confidentiality reasons, 2022 outlay for Parent Benefit has been included under Other Benefits aggregate.

³Reported as a standalone benefit from 2024 (previously reported as part of Bonus payments). Figures for 2022 and 2023 extracted to allow for comparison.

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

Description	Jan-Sep 2022		Jan-Sep 2023		Jan-Sep 2024	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	164,546	-	189,536	-	228,730
Child Allowance	-	32,903	-	36,433	-	54,480
Children's Allowance	43,517	27,879	44,018	27,210	44,640	26,982
Foster Child Allowance	198	1,443	204	1,349	193	1,225
Child Benefit Bonus	2,264	934	2,351	944	2,249	1,594
Children's Allowance Supplement	42,935	2,647	43,392	6,918	44,106	18,886
Tapered Foster Child Allowance ¹	-	-	4	13	10	44
Special Allowance For Post-Secondary Students ²	-	-	-	-	10,266	5,750
Age Pension	4,254	15,097	4,090	15,564	3,933	16,052
Disability Pensions/Allowance	-	25,207	-	27,882	-	29,739
Disability Child Allowance	1,960	2,436	2,200	2,771	2,453	3,069
Disability Assistance	339	942	408	1,250	424	1,443
Severe Disability Assistance	3,853	15,071	3,983	16,441	3,867	17,079
Increased Severe Disability Assistance	921	5,099	943	5,565	938	6,135
Assistance Visually Impaired	426	1,658	426	1,856	439	2,013
Total Social Assistance	-	32,766	-	35,680	-	37,149
Drug Addicts Allowance	69	48	95	50	90	62
Social Assistance	4,097	15,802	3,898	16,327	3,729	17,100
Social Assistance for Single Parents	2,367	8,994	2,241	9,494	2,113	9,986
Unemployment Assistance	520	1,241	410	1,148	398	1,268
Social Assistance Board ³	2	c	1	c	1	c
Unemployment Assistance Taper	1,336	2,621	1,136	2,538	1,023	2,347
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	1,420	4,060	1,666	6,124	1,636	6,385
Medical Assistance	-	13,588	-	13,991	-	14,523
Sickness Assistance	11,240	13,537	10,817	13,944	10,393	14,479
Leprosy Assistance	18	30	15	28	14	27
Milk Grant	40	21	40	20	33	17
Tuberculosis Assistance ⁴	-	-	1	c	-	-
Carers Allowances/Grants	-	8,443	-	10,050	-	11,141
Increased Carers' Allowance	1,449	6,836	1,466	7,366	1,357	7,419

Carers' Allowance	409	1,381	456	1,711	514	2,175
Carer's Grant	424	226	441	974	437	1,547
Supplementary Allowance	21,934	13,166	21,469	13,044	20,894	12,427
Assistance to Help the Elderly Live Independently	40,749	12,927	42,611	13,871	43,203	15,623
Total In-Work Benefit	-	4,520	-	10,804	-	11,359
In-Work Benefit ⁵	7,800	4,426	24,669	10,804	24,212	11,359
In-Work Supplement ⁶	365	94	1	c	-	-
Additional Cost of Living Adjustment⁷	-	-	11,170	5,431	98,769	18,535
Bonus	-	5,929	-	6,785	-	7,703

^cConfidential

¹From 2023, foster carers who adopt the child they have been fostering will continue to receive a percentage of the Foster Care Allowance over a maximum four-year period.

²Payable from 2024 to parents whose children maintain their education status beyond the mandatory age of 16.

³For confidentiality reasons, Social Assistance Board outlay has been included under corresponding Unemployment Assistance expenditure.

⁴For confidentiality reasons, Tuberculosis Assistance outlay has been included under corresponding Sickness Assistance expenditure.

⁵In-Work Benefit payments from 2023 are to be taken as provisional. Refer to Methodological Note 3.

⁶For confidentiality reasons, In-Work Supplement outlay for 2023 has been included under corresponding In-Work Benefit.

⁷Additional COLA payments first made to vulnerable families in December 2022, to offset the cost of living increase.

Table 4. Social Security Contributory Benefits by quarter and description

Description	Jul-Sep 2022		Jul-Sep 2023		Jul-Sep 2024	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	223,382	-	242,669	-	267,814
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	160,865	-	173,097	-	189,245
Retirement Pension	3,643	5,086	3,308	4,950	3,441	5,940
National Minimum Pension	7,751	15,606	8,132	17,919	8,510	18,076
Increased Retirement Pension	494	1,219	439	1,109	1,045	2,959
Two-Thirds Pension	55,964	130,834	57,384	141,463	57,216	151,305
Increased National Minimum Pension	2,485	8,035	2,207	7,585	3,314	10,863
Decreased National Minimum Pension	63	85	52	71	59	102
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	5,483	-	5,723	-	4,986
Invalidity Pension	97	173	93	176	70	142
Increased Invalidity Pension	32	87	26	58	32	77
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	2,470	5,223	2,373	5,489	2,160	4,766
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension ¹	2	c	1	c	1	c
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	39,045	-	41,869	-	45,933
Widows' Pension	134	275	128	286	124	284
Early Survivors' Pension	1,197	2,481	818	1,743	910	2,087
Survivors' Pension	11,793	28,109	12,528	31,553	12,830	35,350
National Minimum Widows' Pension	3,967	8,179	3,744	8,288	3,411	8,212
Benefits in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	426	-	407	-	395
Injury Benefit	473	343	435	294	419	297
Injury Pension	197	83	191	85	183	80
Injury Gratuity	1	c	6	28	6	19
Other Benefits	-	2,703	-	2,715	-	3,454
Unemployment Benefit	325	132	432	184	566	751
Special Unemployment Benefit	31	20	38	22	-	-
Maternity Benefit	707	718	906	841	739	784
Sickness Benefit	8,970	1,464	6,326	1,344	7,178	1,573
Orphans' Allowance	8	10	5	6	5	6
Marriage Grant	1,274	359	1,124	317	1,017	339
COVID-19 Benefits	-	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Unemployment Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-

Disability Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parent Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deficiency Contributory Bonus²	49	20	364	49	206	100
Bonus	-	14,840	-	18,810	-	23,703

⁰Confidential

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

²Reported as a standalone benefit from 2024 (previously reported as part of Bonus payments). Figures for 2022 and 2023 extracted to allow for comparison.

Table 5. Social Security Non-Contributory Benefits by quarter and description

Description	Jul-Sep 2022		Jul-Sep 2023		Jul-Sep 2024	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	50,022	-	57,271	-	61,419
Child Allowance	-	11,464	-	12,057	-	16,596
Children's Allowance	41,739	9,775	42,187	9,022	42,751	8,903
Foster Child Allowance	191	462	193	431	181	389
Child Benefit Bonus	818	348	774	294	757	569
Children's Allowance Supplement	41,620	879	42,047	2,304	42,675	6,272
Tapered Foster Child Allowance ¹	-	-	4	5	10	17
Special Allowance for Post-Secondary Students ²	-	-	-	-	785	446
Age Pension	4,028	4,992	3,866	5,028	3,729	5,268
Disability Pensions/Allowance	-	8,561	-	9,320	-	9,958
Disability Child Allowance	1,887	885	2,128	971	2,347	1,057
Disability Assistance	333	336	395	429	414	507
Severe Disability Assistance	3,765	5,070	3,829	5,446	3,670	5,682
Increased Severe Disability Assistance	897	1,717	917	1,845	919	2,039
Assistance Visually Impaired	414	553	418	629	430	674
Total Social Assistance	-	10,234	-	10,823	-	11,221
Drug Addicts Allowance	43	22	41	15	47	20
Social Assistance	3,697	4,684	3,563	4,822	3,368	5,057
Social Assistance for Single Parents	2,133	2,654	2,053	2,794	1,948	2,947
Unemployment Assistance	317	387	299	377	289	410
Social Assistance Board ³	-	-	1	c	-	-
Unemployment Assistance Taper	992	732	914	756	804	685
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	1,209	1,754	1,376	2,060	1,359	2,102
Medical Assistance	-	4,123	-	4,158	-	4,314
Sickness Assistance	10,662	4,110	10,306	4,144	9,890	4,301
Leprosy Assistance	16	9	15	8	14	8
Milk Grant	23	4	21	5	15	5
Tuberculosis Assistance	-	-	-	-	-	-
Carers Allowances/Grants	-	2,729	-	3,445	-	3,623
Increased Carers' Allowance	1,293	2,293	1,308	2,410	1,222	2,422

Carers' Allowance	355	432	429	552	469	673
Carer's Grant	6	3	424	484	421	528
Supplementary Allowance	21,325	4,586	20,875	4,480	20,333	4,130
Assistance to Help the Elderly Live Independently	2,304	163	2,308	157	1,013	217
Total In-Work Benefit	-	1,835	-	3,653	-	3,969
In-Work Benefit ⁴	5,474	1,833	23,614	3,653	23,203	3,969
In-Work Supplement	11	3	-	-	-	-
Additional Cost of Living Adjustment⁵	-	-	4,904	2,530	494	158
Bonus	-	1,335	-	1,620	-	1,964

^cConfidential

¹From 2023, foster carers who adopt the child they have been fostering will continue to receive a percentage of the Foster Care Allowance over a maximum four-year period.

²Payable from 2024 to parents whose children maintain their education status beyond the mandatory age of 16.

³For confidentiality reasons, Social Assistance Board outlay has been included under corresponding Unemployment Assistance expenditure.

⁴In-Work Benefit payments for 2023 are to be taken as provisional. Refer to Methodological Note 3.

⁵Additional COLA payments first made to vulnerable families in December 2022, to offset the cost of living increase.

Methodological Notes

1. Expenditure data provided in this news release is extracted from the administrative records of the Department of Social Security, 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. In 2022, a complete revamp of the In-Work Benefit (IWB) was carried out by the Income Support and Compliance Division, with payments being made to all eligible parents irrespective of application status. Payments are made in arrears, hence the reporting period for reference year N is being covered by payments made between April of year N to March of year N+1. Due to the differences in reporting methods between the data sources listed in Notes 1 and 2, and to maintain consistency in line with the restructuring performed, from 2023 the Unique Beneficiaries Report has been used to extract both the expenditure and beneficiaries data for the IWB.
4. 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. 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. Furthermore, bonus recipients are not reported separately but captured within relative benefits, reflecting their role as secondary payments made to beneficiaries of Pensions in respect of Retirement and Social Assistance, among others.
5. The functions provided in charts 2 and 3 are in line with the [European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics \(ESSPROS\) Manual 2022 Edition \(ISBN 978-92-76-58596-1\)](#). 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 8.
6. Expenditure data is not normally subject to revision, while beneficiaries data may be revised. As of 2023, latest figures for the IWB are to be taken as provisional and subject to revision.
7. Figures may not add up exactly due to rounding.
8. More information relating to this news release may be accessed at:
[Statistical Database](#)
[Sources and Methods](#)
[Statistical Concepts](#)
9. A detailed news release calendar is available [online](#).
10. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately. For guidance on access and re-use of data please visit our [dedicated webpage](#).
11. For further assistance send your request through our [online request form](#).

