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During the first quarter of 2017 Social Security Benefits outlay increased by €1.8 million compared to the same quarter in 2016.

Government Expenditure on Social Security Benefits: January-March 2017

Social Security Benefits Expenditure

Social Security Benefits expenditure totalled €208.4 million by the end of the first three months of 2017, a 0.9 per cent rise from the same period in 2016. The increase was due to a €3.8 million rise in Contributory Benefits outlay. Conversely, Non-Contributory Benefits expenditure recorded a decline of €2.0 million (Table 1).

In the first quarter of 2017, Contributory Benefits expenditure amounted to €165.8 million, 2.3 per cent higher than the corresponding 2016 period. Pensions in respect of Retirement registered the largest increase of €3.5 million, followed by Pensions in respect of Widowhood (€2.2 million) and Contributory Bonus (€0.7 million). The rise in Contributory Benefits outlay was partially offset by decreases recorded under Pensions in respect of Invalidity (€2.1 million) and Other Benefits (€0.5 million) (Table 2).

Non-Contributory expenditure totalled €42.6 million in the first three months of 2017, reflecting a 4.4 per cent decrease from 2016. The drop in outlay was mainly due to a €2.3 million decline recorded under Social Assistance outlay. Further decreases were also registered in Children's Allowance (€0.5 million), In-Work Benefit (€0.2 million) and Non-Contributory Bonus (€0.1 million). On the other hand, a €0.4 million increase in outlay was recorded under both Disability Pensions/Allowance and Supplementary Assistance, together with a €0.2 million rise registered under Old Age Pension (Table 3).

Social Security Beneficiaries¹

The Two-Thirds Pension contained the largest cohort of Contributory Benefits' beneficiaries with 44,741 recipients registered by the end of the first quarter of 2017. The same benefit recorded the biggest increase in beneficiaries with 1,976 more recipients than the first quarter of 2016. Conversely, the largest drops in recipients were recorded by the Unemployment Benefit (272) and the National Minimum Invalidity Pension (235) (Table 2).

In the first three months of 2017, the majority of Non-Contributory recipients consisted of Children's Allowance (40,659) and Supplementary Assistance (22,652). Unemployment Assistance Tapering and In-Work Benefit recorded the largest increases in beneficiaries with 663 and 558 more recipients respectively. On the other hand, Unemployment Assistance registered the largest drop with 1,472 less recipients (Table 3) ■

¹ Refer to methodological note 3

Table 1. Comparative Social Security Benefits: January-March

Description	Jan-Mar 2015	Jan-Mar 2016	Jan-Mar 2017	Jan-Mar 2017 / Jan-Mar 2016	
				Change	% change
	€ 000				
Contributory Benefits	151,682	162,032	165,818	3,787	2.3
Non-Contributory Benefits	45,177	44,560	42,579	-1,981	-4.4
Total Social Security Benefits	196,859	206,592	208,398	1,806	0.9

Chart 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure: January-March 2000-2017

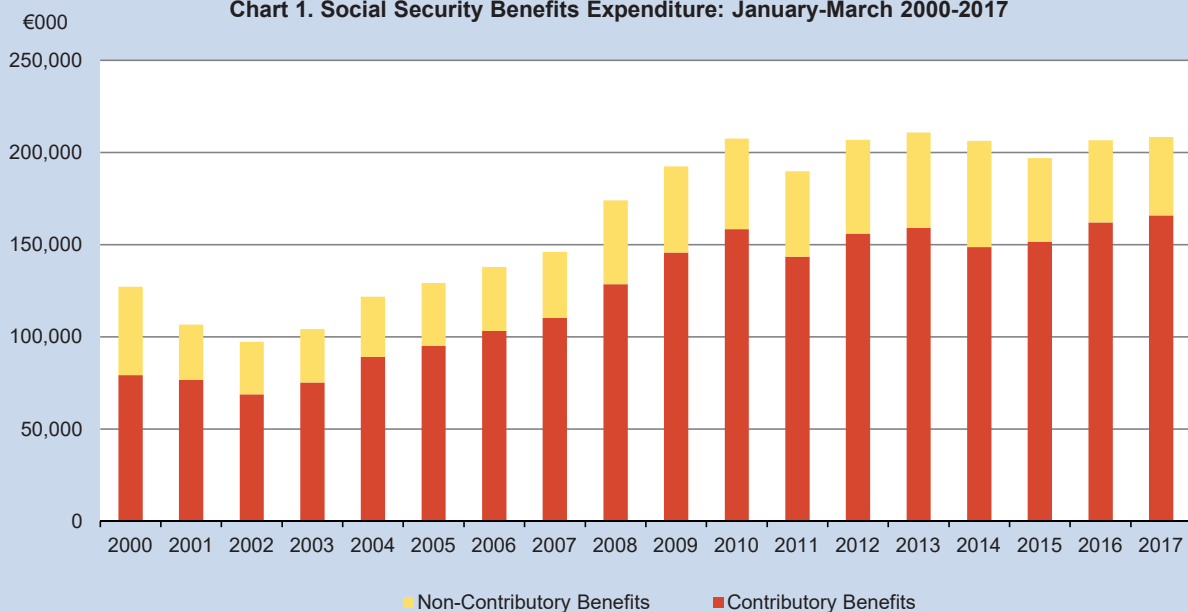


Chart 2. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by ESSPROS functions for January-March 2017

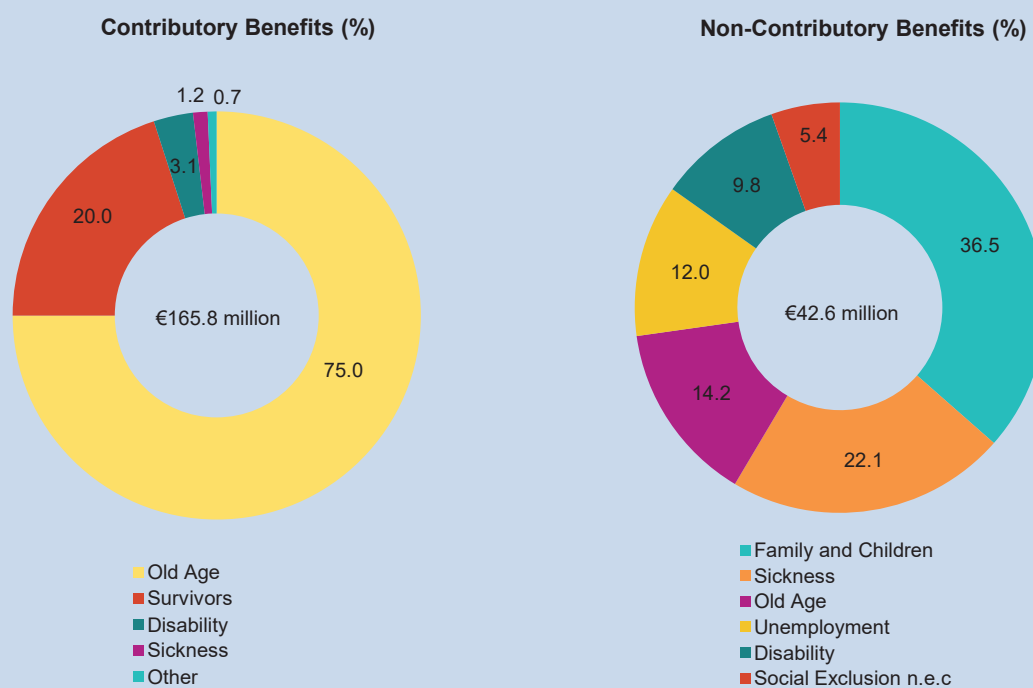


Table 2. Comparative Social Security Contributory Benefits: January-March

Description	Jan-Mar 2015		Jan-Mar 2016		Jan-Mar 2017	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	151,682	-	162,032	-	165,818
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	103,023	-	110,063	-	113,600
Retirement Pension	6,470	7,403	6,484	7,465	6,692	7,790
National Minimum Pension	5,546	9,163	5,681	9,785	6,021	8,440
Increased Retirement Pension	907	1,768	843	1,572	781	1,568
Two-thirds Pension	40,776	80,179	42,765	86,464	44,741	92,022
Increased National Minimum Pension	1,784	4,428	1,785	4,694	1,742	3,692
Decreased National Minimum Pension	53	81	47	83	53	89
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	7,542	-	7,301	-	5,227
Invalidity Pension	277	372	233	323	188	202
Increased Invalidity Pension	131	227	113	204	95	138
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	3,817	6,933	3,668	6,765	3,433	4,882
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension	6	10	5	10	3	4
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	26,764	-	28,315	-	30,473
Widows' Pension	215	375	211	588	227	404
Early Survivors' Pension	1,623	3,046	1,671	3,200	1,709	3,415
Survivors' Pension	6,925	13,098	7,102	13,811	7,515	15,343
National Minimum Widows' Pension	6,455	10,246	6,408	10,715	6,274	11,310
Pension of Widows with Children ¹	1	-	0	0	0	0
Benefit in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	403	-	423	-	397
Injury Benefit	533	287	472	285	484	308
Injury Pension	274	105	264	138	251	76
Injury Gratuity	9	11	0	0	6	13
Other Benefits	-	3,392	-	3,151	-	2,647
Unemployment Benefit	1,056	425	734	278	462	162
Special Unemployment Benefit	233	170	165	106	84	46
Maternity Benefit	1,077	867	1,043	919	1,000	835
Sickness Benefit	7,406	1,674	7,614	1,573	7,737	1,462
Orphans' Allowance	17	23	14	18	15	21
Marriage Grant	424	114	508	138	420	115
Re-Marriage Gratuity ²	79	118	88	119	91	5
Bonus	-	10,557	-	12,779	-	13,475

¹ For confidentiality reasons, 2015 expenditure for Pension of Widows with Children is included under Widows' Pension.

² After the first payment of 2017, the Re-Marriage Gratuity became inactive with recipients being converted to a Widows Pension.

Table 3. Comparative Social Security Non-Contributory Benefits: January-March

Description	Jan-Mar 2015		Jan-Mar 2016		Jan-Mar 2017	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	45,177	-	44,560	-	42,579
Child Allowance	-	10,562	-	10,218	-	9,751
Childrens Allowance	40,198	10,167	40,621	10,000	40,659	9,556
Foster Child Allowance	188	396	187	218	166	196
Old Age Pension	-	5,300	-	5,434	-	5,672
Age Pension	5,037	4,870	5,023	4,963	4,825	5,144
Carers Pension ¹	119	155	93	118	-	-
Increased Carers' Allowance ¹	-	-	-	-	91	145
Blind Pension / Assistance Visually Impaired ²	235	274	287	353	318	383
Disability Pension/Allowance	-	3,306	-	3,815	-	4,260
Disability Child Allowance	974	299	1,138	355	1,235	342
Disability Pension ³	2,003	2,391	2,076	2,529	-	-
Severely Disability Pension ⁴	512	616	731	932	-	-
Severe Disability Assistance ⁴	-	-	-	-	3,085	3,918
Disability Assistance ^{3,5}	-	-	-	-	2	-
Total Social Assistance	-	18,588	-	17,290	-	14,964
Drug Addicts Allowance	18	5	26	9	35	10
Social Assistance	6,246	6,946	5,573	6,592	5,420	6,384
Social Assistance for Carers ⁶	297	269	273	257	-	-
Carer's Allowance ⁶	-	-	-	-	270	288
Social Assistance for Single Parents	3,774	3,986	3,219	3,554	2,950	3,319
Unemployment Assistance	4,168	4,958	3,048	3,400	1,576	1,592
Social Assistance Board ⁷	13	11	2	-	4	2
Unemployment Assistance Taper	814	751	2,076	1,826	2,739	1,974
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	1,743	1,664	1,734	1,653	1,492	1,395
Medical Assistance	-	4,272	-	4,251	-	4,252
Sickness Assistance	12,614	4,244	12,228	4,225	11,994	4,220
Leprosy Assistance	32	17	29	15	28	15
Milk Grant	40	11	33	10	35	16
Tuberculosis Assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplementary Assistance	23,479	1,771	22,963	1,861	22,652	2,227
In-Work Benefit ⁸	-	-	1,338	366	1,896	208
Bonus	-	1,378	-	1,325	-	1,245

¹ In 2017, Carers Pension was replaced by Increased Carers' Allowance.

² In 2017, Blind Pension was renamed Assistance Visually Impaired.

³ In 2017, Disability Pension was replaced by Disability Assistance.

⁴ In 2017, Severely Disability Pension was replaced by Severely Disability Assistance.

⁵ For confidentiality reasons, 2017 outlay for Disability Assistance has been included under Severe Disability Assistance.

⁶ In 2017, Social Assistance for Carers was replaced by Carer's Allowance.

⁷ For confidentiality reasons, 2016 outlay for Social Assistance Board has been included under Unemployment Assistance.

⁸ Paid for the first time in April 2015.

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 Unique Beneficiaries Report.
3. 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 chart 2 are in line with the European System of Integrated Social Protection Statistics (ESSPROS) Manual 2012 Edition (ISBN 978-92-79-24751-4). This methodology is mandatory for all EU Member States.
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: <http://nso.gov.mt/statdb/start>
Glossary: http://nso.gov.mt/en/nso/Sources_and_Methods/Unit_A2/Public_Finance/Pages/Government-Expenditure-on-Social-Security-Benefits.aspx
8. Kindly indicate source when quoting from this release.
9. The advanced news release calendar may be accessed at www.nso.gov.mt