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During the first nine months of 2017 Social Security Benefits outlay rose by €34.7 million.

Government Expenditure on Social Security Benefits: January-September 2017

Social Security Benefits Expenditure

Social Security Benefits expenditure totalled €703.2 million by the end of September 2017, a 5.2 per cent hike in comparison to the same nine-month period in 2016. A €34.6 million increase in Contributory Benefits outlay was the catalyst for the abovementioned rise in Social Security Benefits expenditure (Table 1).

Contributory Benefits outlay amounted to €561.7 million, 6.6 per cent higher than 2016. A €19.6 million rise in Pensions in respect of Retirement, due to a significant increase in Two-Thirds Pension recipients, along with a €15.8 million increase in Pensions in respect of Widowhood, following double payments in July, were the main contributors to the positive growth in Contributory Benefits outlay. A further increase was recorded under Contributory Bonus (€2.8 million). The rise in Contributory outlay was slightly offset by declines in Pensions in respect of Invalidity (€2.6 million), Other Benefits (€1.0 million) and Benefit in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities (€0.1 million; Table 2).

The first three quarters of 2017 witnessed a €141.5 million expenditure on Non-Contributory Benefits, in line with the same period in 2016. The biggest change was reported under Social Assistance where outlay decreased by €5.2 million from 2016 following a drop in beneficiaries, while other decreases in expenditure were registered under Child Allowance (€1.0 million) and Non-Contributory Bonus (€0.2 million). Conversely, increases in outlay were recorded under Old Age Pension (€1.9 million), Disability Pension/Allowance (€1.6 million), Medical Assistance (€1.4 million), Supplementary Assistance (€1.1 million) and In-Work Benefit (€0.4 million; Table 3).

In the third quarter of 2017 Government outlay on Social Security Benefits totalled €223.4 million, a drop of €22.0 million from the corresponding quarter in 2016. The reason behind the decrease was a €18.8 million decline in Contributory expenditure, caused by a double payment being made in August 2016 to Retirement Pensioners (Table 4). Additionally, Non-Contributory expenditure decreased from €48.3 million in 2016 to €45.2 million in 2017. A €5.4 million dip in Social Assistance outlay, again the result of a double payment made in August 2016, was the reason for the decline in Non-Contributory spending (Table 5).

Social Security Beneficiaries¹

Two-Thirds Pension recipients formed the largest share of Contributory beneficiaries, continuing a long-standing trend, with 47,207 persons in receipt of a Two-Thirds Pension by the end of September 2017. Furthermore, the Two-Thirds Pension registered the largest rise in beneficiaries with 2,450 more recipients than the corresponding period in 2016. On the other hand, the Unemployment Benefit reported the greatest decline in recipients with 447 less individuals (Table 2).

After the first nine months of 2017, the majority of Non-Contributory recipients consisted of Children's Allowance (42,769), followed by Supplementary Assistance (24,720). The In-Work Benefit recorded the largest rise in beneficiaries with 1,292 more recipients while the biggest drop in recipients was reported by the Unemployment Assistance (1,581; Table 3).

It was the same situation quarter-wise with Two-Thirds pensioners forming the largest share of Contributory beneficiaries with 46,260 recipients (Table 4) while the biggest cohort of Non-Contributory recipients consisted of Children's Allowance beneficiaries (41,026; Table 5) ■

¹ Refer to methodological note 3.

Table 1. Comparative Social Security Benefits: January-September

Description	Jan-Sep 2015	Jan-Sep 2016	Jan-Sep 2017	Jan-Sep 2017 / Jan-Sep 2016	
				Change	% change
	€ 000				
Contributory Benefits	495,952	527,049	561,693	34,644	6.6
Non-Contributory Benefits	152,065	141,473	141,490	17	0.0
Total Social Security Benefits	648,017	668,522	703,183	34,661	5.2

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

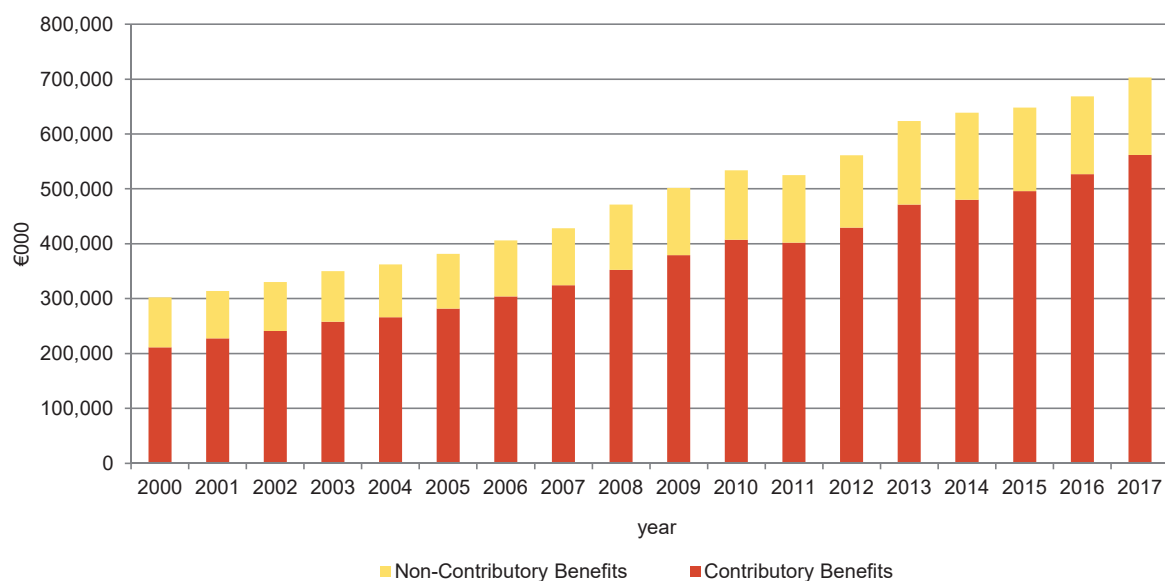


Chart 2. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by ESSPROS functions for January - September 2017

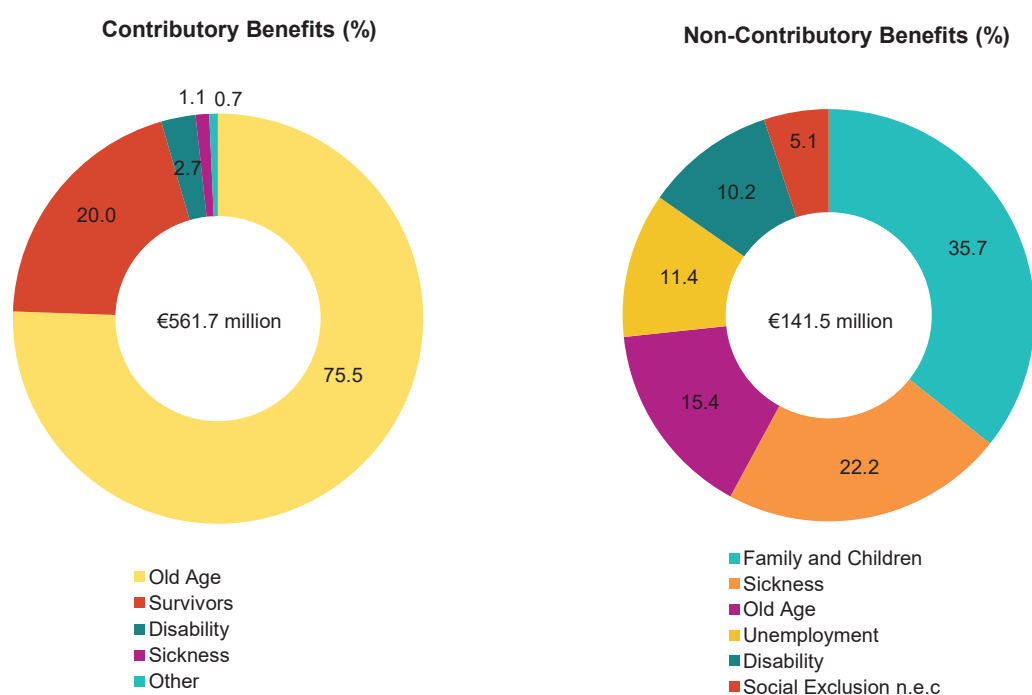


Table 2. Comparative Social Security Contributory Benefits: January-September

Description	Jan-Sep 2015		Jan-Sep 2016		Jan-Sep 2017	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	495,952	-	527,049	-	561,693
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	339,233	-	365,592	-	385,240
Retirement Pension	6,663	24,464	6,705	25,144	6,906	25,655
National Minimum Pension	5,751	23,538	6,016	25,743	6,362	25,498
Increased Retirement Pension	925	5,609	851	5,539	821	5,256
Two-thirds Pension	42,691	273,802	44,757	296,765	47,207	317,135
Increased National Minimum Pension	1,837	11,558	1,833	12,120	1,818	11,407
Decreased National Minimum Pension	54	263	58	280	59	288
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	18,793	-	18,002	-	15,446
Invalidity Pension	294	916	238	752	200	594
Increased Invalidity Pension	131	565	116	528	95	380
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	4,034	17,287	3,904	16,700	3,648	14,458
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension	6	25	6	23	3	13
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	82,269	-	86,233	-	102,025
Widows' Pension	217	1,163	215	1,333	229	1,347
Early Survivors' Pension	1,652	9,133	1,738	9,647	1,799	11,276
Survivors' Pension	7,216	40,352	7,549	42,771	8,094	52,059
National Minimum Widows' Pension	6,689	31,621	6,641	32,482	6,615	37,343
Pension of Widows with Children ¹	1	-	0	0	0	0
Benefit in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	1,146	-	1,324	-	1,271
Injury Benefit	1,389	830	1,423	979	1,496	992
Injury Pension	277	267	267	311	254	234
Injury Gratuity	28	50	17	34	22	45
Other Benefits	-	9,886	-	9,273	-	8,323
Unemployment Benefit	1,750	963	1,421	787	974	505
Special Unemployment Benefit	393	358	287	238	174	143
Maternity Benefit	2,855	2,580	2,749	2,557	2,704	2,526
Sickness Benefit	15,454	4,894	16,132	4,617	15,896	4,431
Orphans' Allowance	17	57	15	56	18	94
Marriage Grant	2,423	656	2,369	649	2,228	618
Re-Marriage Gratuity ²	84	379	90	369	91	5
Bonus	-	44,625	-	46,624	-	49,389

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-September

Description	Jan-Sep 2015		Jan-Sep 2016		Jan-Sep 2017	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	152,065	-	141,473	-	141,490
Child Allowance	-	31,807	-	31,012	-	29,999
Childrens Allowance	42,410	30,624	42,544	30,067	42,769	29,102
Foster Child Allowance	197	1,183	187	945	173	897
Old Age Pension	-	17,997	-	18,281	-	20,137
Age Pension	5,304	16,536	5,259	16,705	5,071	16,871
Carers Pension ¹	128	450	100	382	-	-
Increased Carers' Allowance ¹	-	-	-	-	386	1,964
Blind Pension / Assistance Visually Impaired ²	274	1,011	312	1,194	336	1,301
Disability Pension/Allowance	-	11,563	-	12,969	-	14,566
Disability Child Allowance	1,075	913	1,248	1,056	1,319	1,060
Disability Pension ³	2,076	8,169	2,150	8,634	-	-
Severely Disability Pension ⁴	660	2,481	827	3,279	-	-
Severe Disability Assistance ⁴	-	-	-	-	3,218	12,980
Increased Severe Disability Assistance ⁴	-	-	-	-	157	337
Disability Assistance ³	-	-	-	-	57	189
Total Social Assistance	-	57,613	-	53,202	-	48,038
Drug Addicts Allowance	45	19	63	27	63	54
Social Assistance	6,768	22,082	6,094	21,486	5,824	20,790
Social Assistance for Carers ⁵	320	881	301	832	-	-
Carer's Allowance ⁵	-	-	-	-	288	959
Social Assistance for Single Parents	3,938	12,588	3,410	11,444	3,171	10,866
Unemployment Assistance	4,611	13,294	3,434	8,124	1,853	4,669
Social Assistance Board	24	29	4	4	5	4
Unemployment Assistance Taper	1,786	3,712	2,785	6,456	3,344	6,287
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	2,278	5,008	2,117	4,828	1,783	4,408
Medical Assistance	-	12,651	-	12,730	-	14,175
Sickness Assistance	13,008	12,559	12,724	12,658	12,538	14,081
Leprosy Assistance	32	47	29	45	28	49
Milk Grant	93	44	56	27	73	45
Tuberculosis Assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplementary Assistance	24,396	5,338	23,774	5,706	24,720	6,820
In-Work Benefit ⁶	1,247	630	1,783	1,220	3,075	1,587
Child Supplementary Benefit ⁷	14,301	7,718	-	-	-	-
Bonus	-	6,749	-	6,354	-	6,168

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 and Increased Severely Disability Assistance.

⁵ In 2017, Social Assistance for Carers was replaced by Carer's Allowance.

⁶ Paid for the first time in April 2015.

⁷ One-time payment made in September 2015.

Table 4. Comparative Social Security Contributory Benefits: July-September

Description	Jul-Sep 2015		Jul-Sep 2016		Jul-Sep 2017	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	183,629	-	197,034	-	178,233
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	134,274	-	145,917	-	118,912
Retirement Pension	6,338	9,770	6,571	10,187	6,715	7,620
National Minimum Pension	5,528	7,202	5,842	8,146	6,165	8,652
Increased Retirement Pension	853	2,158	818	2,431	766	1,573
Two-thirds Pension	41,972	111,463	43,988	121,266	46,260	97,164
Increased National Minimum Pension	1,754	3,580	1,729	3,778	1,728	3,812
Decreased National Minimum Pension	51	102	53	109	54	91
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	5,634	-	5,337	-	5,019
Invalidity Pension	249	269	200	214	183	196
Increased Invalidity Pension	120	166	107	151	83	110
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	3,684	5,191	3,516	4,968	3,360	4,707
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension	5	7	3	4	3	5
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	28,072	-	29,540	-	39,275
Widows' Pension	212	407	203	369	222	517
Early Survivors' Pension	1,628	3,052	1,682	3,238	1,711	4,450
Survivors' Pension	7,004	13,763	7,308	14,952	7,749	20,252
National Minimum Widows' Pension	6,420	10,850	6,356	10,981	6,291	14,056
Pension of Widows with Children	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefit in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	363	-	452	-	432
Injury Benefit	575	271	569	341	598	338
Injury Pension	265	77	259	96	245	81
Injury Gratuity	7	15	5	15	6	12
Other Benefits	-	3,360	-	3,056	-	2,737
Unemployment Benefit	679	246	612	240	420	167
Special Unemployment Benefit	134	79	110	57	79	48
Maternity Benefit	1,092	915	989	867	1,039	803
Sickness Benefit	5,541	1,606	5,601	1,407	5,860	1,359
Orphans' Allowance	15	17	15	19	15	43
Marriage Grant	1,352	367	1,245	342	1,201	317
Re-Marriage Gratuity ¹	82	129	89	126	0	0
Bonus	-	11,927	-	12,731	-	11,858

¹ After the first payment of 2017, the Re-Marriage Gratuity became inactive with recipients being converted to a Widows Pension.

Table 5. Comparative Social Security Non-Contributory Benefits: July-September

Description	Jul-Sep 2015		Jul-Sep 2016		Jul-Sep 2017	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	56,557	-	48,319	-	45,153
Child Allowance	-	10,638	-	10,724	-	10,042
Childrens Allowance	40,870	10,313	40,825	10,463	41,026	9,669
Foster Child Allowance	188	324	181	260	164	374
Old Age Pension	-	5,536	-	5,585	-	6,271
Age Pension	4,995	5,082	4,897	5,108	4,794	4,981
Carers Pension ¹	96	129	88	107	-	-
Increased Carers' Allowance ¹	-	-	-	-	366	902
Blind Pension / Assistance Visually Impaired ²	269	325	303	370	323	388
Disability Pension/Allowance	-	3,644	-	4,063	-	4,495
Disability Child Allowance	1,030	296	1,190	360	1,241	344
Disability Pension ³	2,043	2,519	2,125	2,663	-	-
Severely Disability Pension ⁴	652	829	817	1,039	-	-
Severe Disability Assistance ⁴	-	-	-	-	3,096	3,851
Increased Severe Disability Assistance ⁴	-	-	-	-	154	192
Disability Assistance ^{3,5}	-	-	-	-	57	108
Total Social Assistance	-	21,114	-	19,768	-	14,417
Drug Addicts Allowance	30	10	33	12	23	6
Social Assistance	5,828	8,458	5,531	8,408	5,295	6,089
Social Assistance for Carers ⁵	290	337	277	321	-	-
Carer's Allowance ⁵	-	-	-	-	264	277
Social Assistance for Single Parents	3,414	4,827	3,097	4,459	2,877	3,199
Unemployment Assistance	3,319	3,973	1,997	2,237	1,214	1,494
Social Assistance Board ⁶	10	8	2	-	1	-
Unemployment Assistance Taper	1,671	1,762	2,554	2,791	2,889	1,902
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	1,786	1,739	1,569	1,540	1,382	1,451
Medical Assistance	-	4,190	-	4,250	-	5,655
Sickness Assistance	12,282	4,158	12,104	4,226	11,993	5,623
Leprosy Assistance	29	15	28	15	27	19
Milk Grant	47	17	24	8	35	13
Tuberculosis Assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplementary allowance	23,704	1,795	23,144	2,005	24,049	2,284
In-Work Benefit ⁷	1,243	387	1,381	545	2,424	745
Child Supplementary Benefit ⁸	14,301	7,718	-	-	-	-
Bonus	-	1,533	-	1,379	-	1,244

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 and Increased Severe Disability Assistance.

⁵ In 2017, Social Assistance for Carers was replaced by Carer's Allowance.

⁶ For confidentiality reasons, 2016 and 2017 outlays for Social Assistance Board have been included under corresponding Unemployment Assistance.

⁷ Paid for the first time in April 2015.

⁸ One-time payment made in September 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. Any quotations from this news release are to be cited and/or referenced.
9. A detailed news release calendar is available on https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx