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During the first quarter of 2018 Social Security Benefits outlay rose by €15.5 million in comparison to 2017.

Government Expenditure on Social Security Benefits: January-March 2018

Social Security Benefits Expenditure

A total of €223.9 million was spent on Social Security Benefits between January and March 2018, reflecting a 7.4 per cent rise from the same period in 2017. Increases in spending were registered under both Contributory Benefits (€10.4 million) and Non-Contributory Benefits (€5.0 million) (Table 1).

During the first quarter of 2018, Contributory Benefits expenditure totalled €176.2 million, 6.3 per cent more than 2017. An €8.5 million rise in Pensions in respect of Retirement, the consequence of an €8.4 million increase reported under Two-Thirds Pension, was the main catalyst for the increase. Furthermore, higher spending was also registered by Pensions in respect of Widowhood (€1.4 million) and Contributory Bonus (€0.5 million). Conversely, the rise in Contributory Benefits outlay was partially offset by a drop in expenditure for Pensions in respect of Invalidity (€0.1 million) (Table 2).

Non-Contributory outlay reached €47.6 million by the end of March 2018, an 11.9 per cent growth when compared to 2017. Double payments in March made for both Old Age Pension and Disability Pensions/Allowance, resulting in a joint increase of €5.1 million, was the main reason for the recorded increase. Further increases were also registered under In-Work Benefit (€0.5 million), Non-Contributory Bonus (€0.3 million), Supplementary Assistance (€0.2 million) and Child Allowance (€0.1 million). Social Assistance recorded the sole drop in expenditure with €1.1 million less spent on such benefits during the first quarter of 2018 (Table 3).

Social Security Beneficiaries¹

Two-Thirds pensioners accounted for the highest share of Contributory beneficiaries with 47,071 persons obtaining the pension during the first quarter of 2018. This is more than five-times higher than the second largest share of Contributory beneficiaries reported by the Sickness Benefit (9,156). Furthermore, both above-mentioned benefits registered the biggest increases in Contributory recipients with 2,347 more Two-Thirds pensioners and 1,419 more Sickness beneficiaries in comparison to the first quarter of 2017. At the other end of the spectrum, the largest drop in recipients was reported by the Retirement Pension (561) (Table 2).

By the end of March 2018, Childrens Allowance (40,905) formed the largest share of Non-Contributory beneficiaries followed by the Supplementary Assistance (23,567). The In-Work Benefit reported the largest rise in recipients with 1,064 more than the same quarter in 2017. Conversely, the Unemployment Assistance registered the biggest decline in recipients with 496 less persons (Table 3) ■

¹ Refer to methodological note 3.

Table 1. Comparative Social Security Benefits: January-March

Description	Jan-Mar 2016	Jan-Mar 2017	Jan-Mar 2018	Jan-Mar 2018 / Jan-Mar 2017	
				Change	% change
	€ 000				
Contributory Benefits	162,032	165,818	176,228	10,409	6.3
Non-Contributory Benefits	44,560	42,579	47,627	5,048	11.9
Total Social Security Benefits	206,592	208,398	223,855	15,457	7.4

Chart 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure: January - March 2001-2018

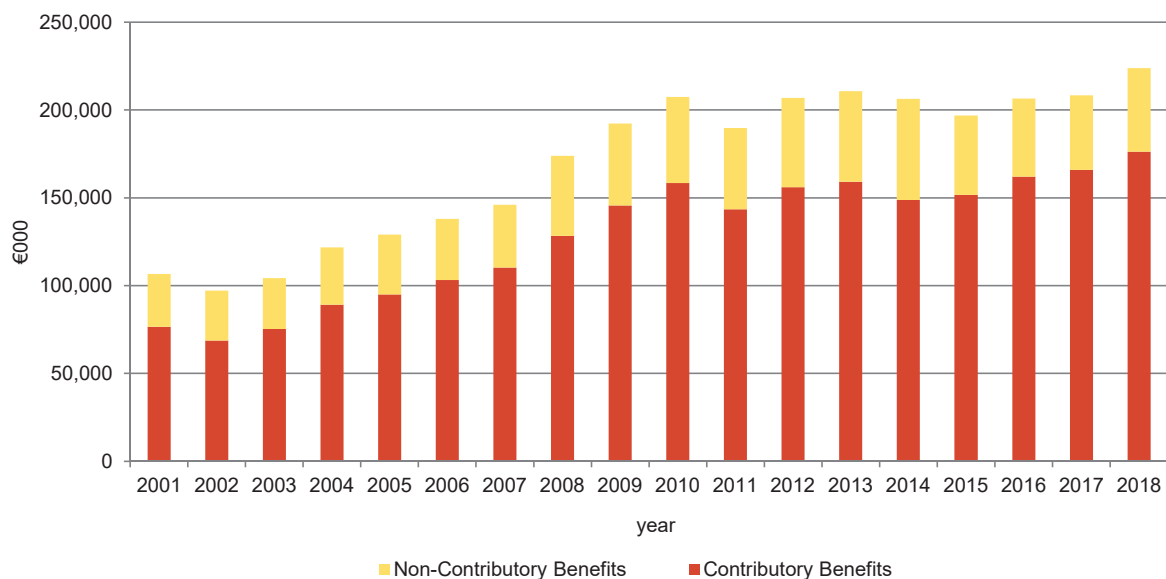


Chart 2. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by ESSPROS functions for January - March 2018

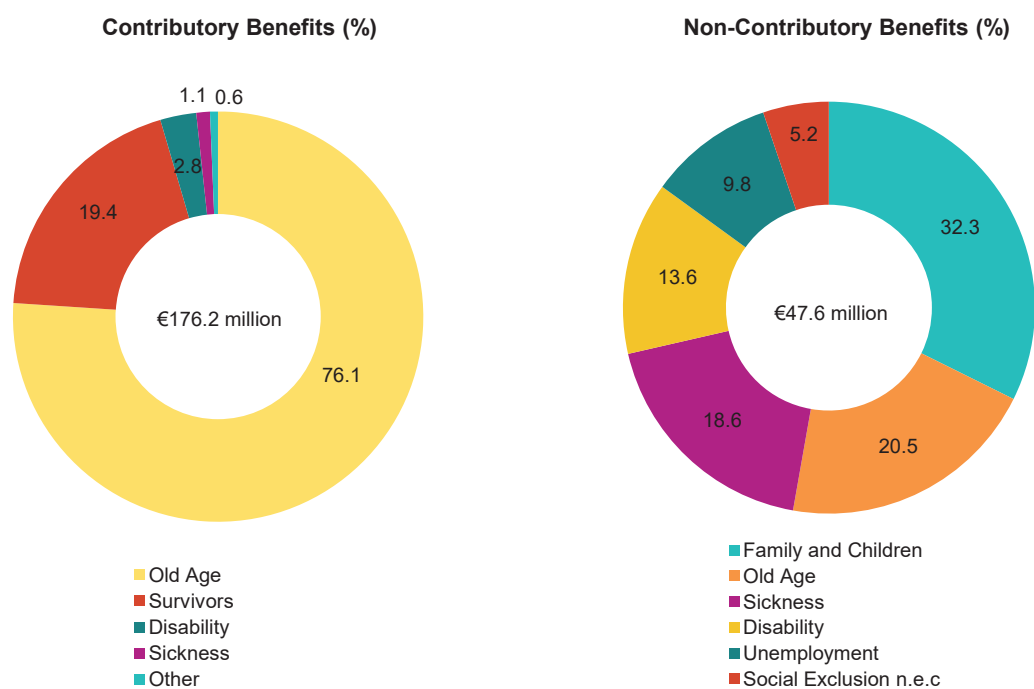


Table 2. Comparative Social Security Contributory Benefits: January-March

Description	Jan-Mar 2016		Jan-Mar 2017		Jan-Mar 2018	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	162,032	-	165,818	-	176,228
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	110,063	-	113,600	-	122,113
Retirement Pension	6,484	7,465	6,690	7,790	6,129	7,366
National Minimum Pension	5,681	9,785	6,011	8,440	6,279	8,871
Increased Retirement Pension	843	1,572	780	1,568	706	1,509
Two-thirds Pension	42,765	86,464	44,724	92,022	47,071	100,376
Increased National Minimum Pension	1,785	4,694	1,739	3,692	1,776	3,892
Decreased National Minimum Pension	47	83	53	89	60	99
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	7,301	-	5,227	-	5,158
Invalidity Pension	233	323	188	202	182	191
Increased Invalidity Pension	113	204	94	138	78	113
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	3,668	6,765	3,432	4,882	3,313	4,846
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension	5	10	3	4	3	7
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	28,315	-	30,473	-	31,883
Widows' Pension	211	588	226	404	210	395
Early Survivors' Pension	1,671	3,200	1,708	3,415	1,725	3,455
Survivors' Pension	7,102	13,811	7,511	15,343	7,834	16,333
National Minimum Widows' Pension	6,408	10,715	6,268	11,310	6,363	11,699
Pension of Widows with Children	0	0	0	0	0	0
Benefit in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	423	-	397	-	427
Injury Benefit	472	285	484	308	542	335
Injury Pension	264	138	251	76	240	74
Injury Gratuity	0	0	6	13	7	18
Other Benefits	-	3,151	-	2,647	-	2,684
Unemployment Benefit	734	278	461	162	462	161
Special Unemployment Benefit	165	106	85	46	64	34
Maternity Benefit	1,043	919	1,000	835	927	792
Sickness Benefit	7,614	1,573	7,737	1,462	9,156	1,535
Orphans' Allowance	14	18	15	21	14	22
Marriage Grant	508	138	420	115	497	140
Re-Marriage Gratuity ¹	88	119	91	5	0	0
Bonus	-	12,779	-	13,475	-	13,963

¹ 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 2016		Jan-Mar 2017		Jan-Mar 2018	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	44,560	-	42,579	-	47,627
Child Allowance	-	10,218	-	9,751	-	9,861
Children's Allowance	40,621	10,000	40,665	9,556	40,905	9,451
Foster Child Allowance	187	218	166	196	167	410
Old Age Pension	-	5,434	-	5,672	-	8,718
Age Pension	5,023	4,963	4,825	5,144	4,808	6,505
Carers Pension ¹	93	118	-	-	-	-
Increased Carers' Allowance ¹	-	-	87	145	616	1,670
Blind Pension / Assistance Visually Impaired ²	287	353	318	383	332	543
Disability Pension/Allowance	-	3,815	-	4,260	-	6,300
Disability Child Allowance	1,138	355	1,235	342	1,324	385
Disability Pension ³	2,076	2,529	-	-	-	-
Severely Disability Pension ⁴	731	932	-	-	-	-
Severe Disability Assistance ⁴	-	-	3,085	3,918	3,003	4,936
Increased Severe Disability Assistance ⁴	-	-	-	-	404	847
Disability Assistance ^{3,5}	-	-	2	-	94	132
Total Social Assistance	-	17,290	-	14,964	-	13,832
Drug Addicts Allowance	26	9	34	10	22	8
Social Assistance	5,573	6,592	5,420	6,384	5,063	5,927
Social Assistance for Carers ⁶	273	257	-	-	-	-
Carer's Allowance ⁶	-	-	270	288	230	242
Social Assistance for Single Parents	3,219	3,554	2,948	3,319	2,695	3,077
Unemployment Assistance	3,048	3,400	1,575	1,592	1,079	1,235
Social Assistance Board	2	-	4	2	0	0
Unemployment Assistance Taper	2,076	1,826	2,739	1,974	2,818	1,907
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	1,734	1,653	1,493	1,395	1,353	1,435
Medical Assistance	-	4,251	-	4,252	-	4,253
Sickness Assistance	12,227	4,225	11,990	4,220	11,781	4,225
Leprosy Assistance	29	15	28	15	24	13
Milk Grant	33	10	35	16	24	14
Tuberculosis Assistance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplementary Assistance	22,963	1,861	22,646	2,227	23,567	2,452
In-Work Benefit	1,338	366	1,898	208	2,962	660
Bonus	-	1,325	-	1,245	-	1,551

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 For confidentiality reasons, 2017 outlay of Disability Assistance was included in under Severe Disability Assistance.

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

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. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.
9. A detailed news release calendar is available on https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx