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Government Expenditure on Social Security Benefits: January-March 2023

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During the first quarter of 2023, Government outlay towards Social Security Benefits rose by €25.1 million in comparison to 2022.



Social Security Benefits Expenditure

Between January and March 2023, spending on Social Security Benefits totalled €359.2 million, 7.5 per cent higher than the previous year. Higher expenditure was reported for both Contributory (€15.9 million) and Non-Contributory Benefits (€9.2 million) (Table 1).

Government spending towards Contributory Benefits amounted to €287.4 million, a 5.9 per cent rise from 2022. Pensions in respect of Retirement recorded the largest increase of €8.8 million, a result of 735 more persons in receipt of the Two-Thirds Pension. Further increases were registered under Contributory Bonus (€4.3 million) and Pensions in respect of Widowhood (€2.8 million). The rise in outlay was marginally offset by a €0.1 million drop witnessed under Pensions in respect of Invalidity (Table 2).

By the end of March 2023, €71.8 million went towards Non-Contributory Benefits, a 14.7 per cent increase in comparison to the previous year. Increases were recorded under all benefit categories, which consisted of Total In-Work Benefit (€2.3 million), Total Social Assistance (€1.6 million), Child Allowance (€1.3 million), Total Supplementary Allowance (€1.2 million), Disability Pensions/Allowance (€1.0 million), Assistance to help the Elderly Live Independently (€0.9 million), Non-Contributory Bonus (€0.3 million), Age Pension (€0.3 million), Medical Assistance (€0.2 million) and Carers Allowances/Grants (€0.1 million) (Table 3).

Social Security Beneficiaries

During the first quarter of 2023, the largest number of Contributory beneficiaries was recorded under the Two-Thirds Pension (56,332). Survivors Pension reported the highest increase among recipients, with 988 additional beneficiaries when compared to 2022. On the other hand, the biggest drop in recipients was registered under Retirement Pension (984) (Table 2).

Children's Allowance reported the highest number of Non-Contributory recipients, with 41,760 families in receipt of the benefit. In-Work Benefit recorded the largest increase in beneficiaries at 16,285,¹ while the largest decline in recipients was witnessed under Sickness Assistance (348) (Table 3).

¹ Refer to methodological note 3.

Chart 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure

January-March in euro

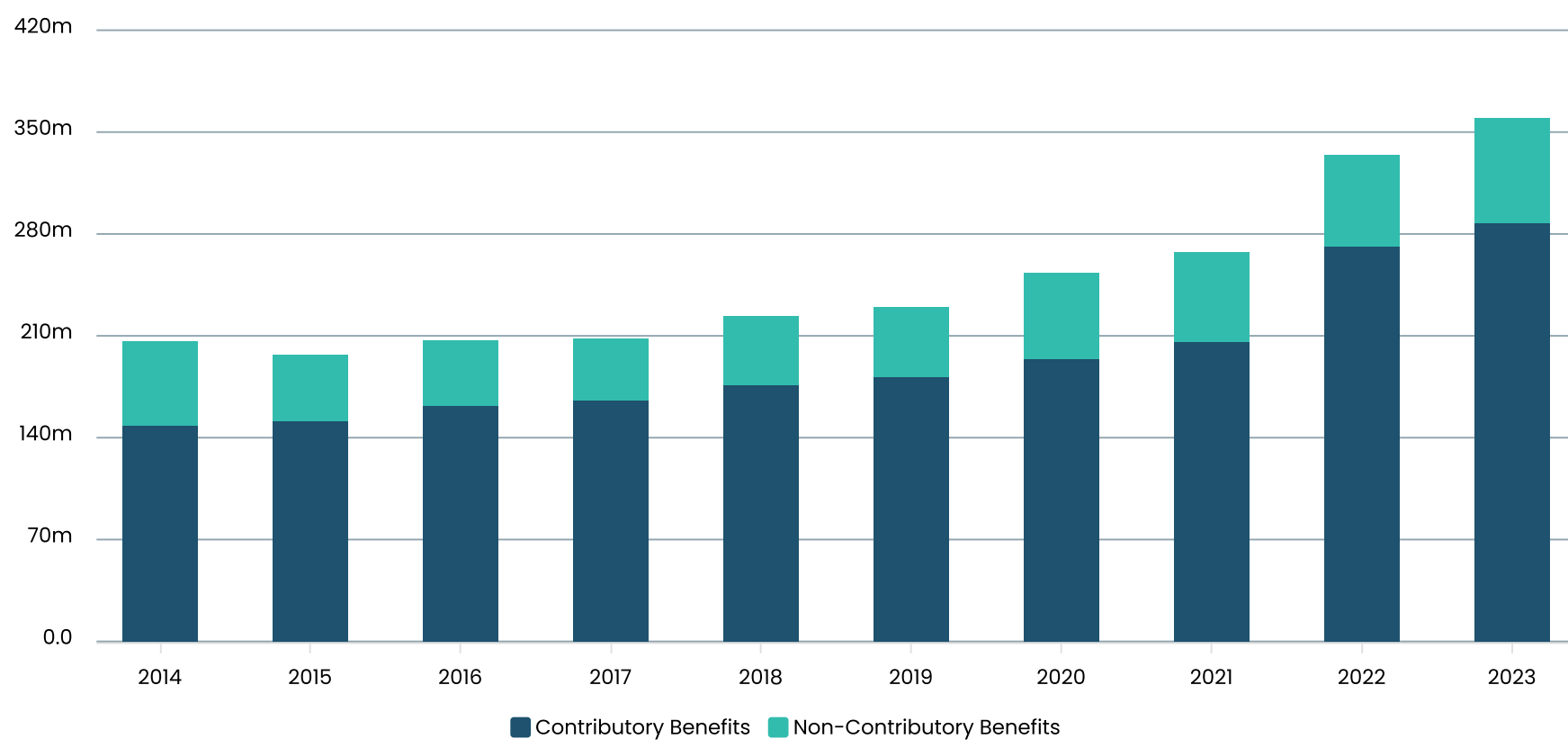
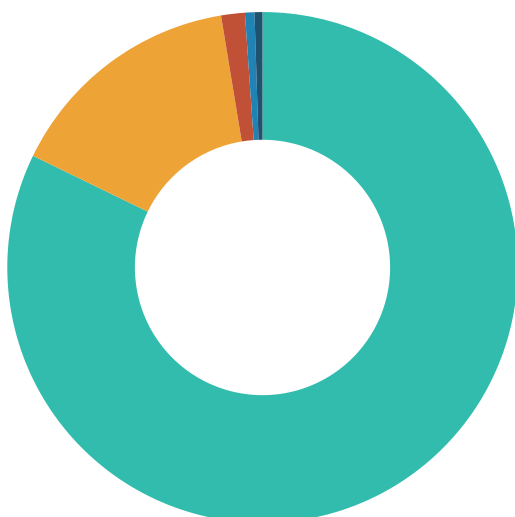


Chart 2. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by ESSPROS functions

Contributory Benefits (%)

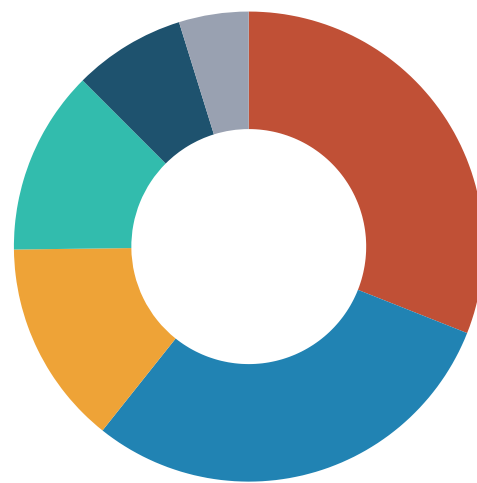
January-March 2023



Old Age Survivors Disability Sickness Other

Non-Contributory Benefits (%)

January-March 2023



Old Age Family and Children Disability Sickness Social Exclusion n.e.c Unemployment

Table 1. Social Security Benefits Expenditure by period and description

Description	Jan-Mar 2021	Jan-Mar 2022	Jan-Mar 2023	Jan-Mar 2023 / Jan-Mar 2022	
				Change	% change
				€ 000	
Contributory Benefits	205,520	271,558	287,446	15,888	5.9
Non-Contributory Benefits	61,656	62,611	71,800	9,189	14.7
Total Social Security Benefits	267,176	334,169	359,246	25,077	7.5

Table 2. Social Security Contributory Benefits by period and description

Description	Jan-Mar 2021		Jan-Mar 2022		Jan-Mar 2023	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Contributory Benefits	-	205,520	-	271,558	-	287,446
Pensions in respect of Retirement	-	144,916	-	202,245	-	211,086
Retirement Pension	5,543	8,601	4,608	7,641	3,624	6,987
National Minimum Pension	7,061	10,520	7,790	13,264	7,747	13,193
Increased Retirement Pension	1,060	2,275	537	1,652	466	1,534
Two-Thirds Pension	51,791	117,190	55,597	173,092	56,332	183,176
Increased National Minimum Pension	2,629	6,218	2,554	6,458	2,318	6,088
Decreased National Minimum Pension	69	111	68	137	59	109
Pensions in respect of Invalidity	-	4,507	-	4,473	-	4,423
Invalidity Pension	108	129	96	128	92	129
Increased Invalidity Pension	45	78	37	71	27	68
National Minimum Invalidity Pension	2,700	4,300	2,552	4,275	2,365	4,225
Decreased National Minimum Invalidity Pension ¹	2	c	2	c	1	c
Pensions in respect of Widowhood	-	34,925	-	37,445	-	40,235
Widows' Pension	146	229	144	313	131	278
Early Survivors' Pension	1,767	3,624	1,474	2,989	1,097	2,388
Survivors' Pension	9,657	20,929	11,068	24,948	12,056	29,288
National Minimum Widows' Pension	5,278	10,142	4,784	9,196	3,855	8,280
Benefits in respect of Industrial Injuries and Gratuities	-	326	-	360	-	402
Injury Benefit	402	252	395	282	397	305
Injury Pension	211	66	198	63	195	66
Injury Gratuity	4	8	3	15	7	32
Other Benefits	-	2,812	-	3,000	-	2,980
Unemployment Benefit	1,026	418	425	264	465	306
Special Unemployment Benefit	91	62	50	32	43	25
Maternity Benefit	794	694	860	852	919	914
Sickness Benefit	6,474	1,533	8,738	1,668	8,536	1,553
Orphans' Allowance	8	13	9	12	7	9
Marriage Grant	346	93	663	171	578	173
COVID-19 Benefits	-	236	-	c	-	-
Additional Unemployment Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disability Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Medical Benefit	-	-	-	-	-	-
Parent Benefit ²	596	236	1	c	-	-
Bonus	-	17,799	-	24,035	-	28,321

^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.

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

Description	Jan-Mar 2021		Jan-Mar 2022		Jan-Mar 2023	
	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000	Beneficiaries	€ 000
Non-Contributory Benefits	-	61,656	-	62,611	-	71,800
Child Allowance	-	10,975	-	10,807	-	12,139
Children's Allowance	41,326	9,298	41,472	9,140	41,760	9,080
Foster Child Allowance	177	481	185	503	190	444
Child Benefit Bonus	765	330	657	276	839	347
Children's Allowance Supplement	41,300	866	41,307	888	41,632	2,267
Tapered Foster Child Allowance ^{1,2}	-	-	-	-	2	c
Age Pension	4,530	7,150	4,138	5,103	3,992	5,361
Disability Pensions/Allowance	-	9,482	-	8,231	-	9,270
Disability Child Allowance	1,644	585	1,795	768	2,005	883
Disability Assistance	212	297	290	292	374	408
Severe Disability Assistance	3,364	6,045	3,680	4,949	3,849	5,499
Increased Severe Disability Assistance	795	2,000	882	1,670	923	1,863
Assistance Visually Impaired	402	554	414	552	421	618
Total Social Assistance	-	10,485	-	12,200	-	13,803
Drug Addicts Allowance	37	13	24	12	49	21
Social Assistance	4,033	5,028	3,804	6,053	3,638	6,562
Social Assistance for Single Parents	2,355	2,679	2,218	3,516	2,108	3,865
Unemployment Assistance	758	844	399	457	311	399
Social Assistance Board ³	1	c	2	c	1	c
Unemployment Assistance Taper	1,177	758	1,059	1,092	938	970
Subsidiary Unemployment Assistance	1,027	1,164	905	1,071	1,407	1,986
Medical Assistance	-	4,285	-	4,137	-	4,299
Sickness Assistance	11,187	4,264	10,836	4,119	10,488	4,285
Leprosy Assistance	18	11	16	10	15	8
Milk Grant	34	10	26	8	22	6
Tuberculosis Assistance ⁴	-	-	-	-	1	c
Carers Allowances/Grants	-	2,619	-	2,973	-	3,097
Increased Carers' Allowance	1,205	2,127	1,282	2,232	1,363	2,470
Carers' Allowance	316	380	346	526	373	627
Carer's Grant	374	111	408	215	-	-
Total Supplementary Allowance	-	2,986	-	4,296	-	5,499
Supplementary Allowance	21,933	2,986	21,170	4,296	20,964	4,325
Additional COLA Household Mechanism ⁵	-	-	-	-	3,490	1,173
Assistance to Help the Elderly Live Independently	36,369	11,098	38,445	12,418	38,764	13,277
Total In-Work Benefit	-	1,216	-	1,024	-	3,338
In-Work Benefit ⁶	4,208	975	6,477	946	22,762	3,338
In-Work Supplement ⁷	995	241	309	79	1	c
Bonus	-	1,360	-	1,423	-	1,719

^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.

²For confidentiality reasons, Tapered Foster Child Allowance outlay included under corresponding Foster Care Allowance expenditure.

³For confidentiality reasons, Social Assistance Board outlay for 2022 has been included under corresponding Unemployment Assistance expenditure.

⁴For confidentiality reasons, Tuberculosis Assistance outlay for 2022 has been included under corresponding Sickness Assistance expenditure.

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

⁶In-Work Benefit payments for 2023 are to be taken as provisional. Refer to Methodological Note 3.

⁷For confidentiality reasons, In-Work Supplement outlay for 2022 has been included under corresponding In-Work Benefit.

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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. In 2022, a complete revamp of the In-Work Benefit (IWB) was carried out by the Income Support and Compliance Division, with now 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. 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.
5. The functions provided in charts 2 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 7.
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](#)
8. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.
9. A detailed news release calendar is available [online](#).