

What is the at-risk-of-poverty threshold?

The European poverty line, also known as the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, is a **statistical measure** that is used in all EU countries to measure the at-risk-of-poverty rate. This is the percentage of people living in a household of which the net disposable monthly income is below 60% of the median net standardised family income.

How is the poverty line calculated?

To calculate the at-risk-of-poverty threshold, all incomes of all household members for the year preceding the calculation are added up and divided by the equivalent household size. This way, the standard of living of families with different household sizes can be compared.

The at-risk-of-poverty rate uses the equivalence factors of the 'adjusted OECD scale' to standardise incomes. The first adult in a household is assigned a weight of 1.0, family members aged 14 and over are assigned a weight of 0.5 each and children under the age of 14 a weight of 0.3. The sum of these is the equivalent household size. For example, the equivalent household size of a household with two adults, a 15-year old child, a 12-year old child and a 9-year old child is 2.6.

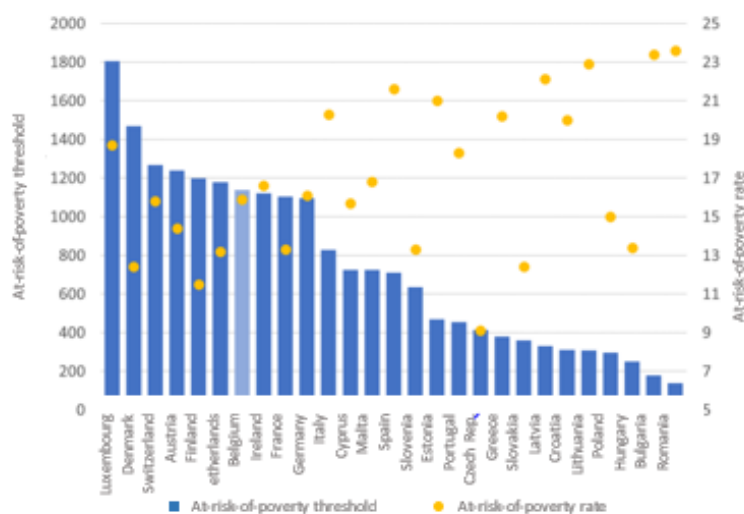
The family income is divided by the equivalent household size. Then **60% of the median standardised family income is taken** (*median = the income that lies exactly in the middle of the income distribution*).

1,139 euros

Calculated in this way, in Belgium, the at-risk-of-poverty threshold for a single person was 1,139 euro per month in 2017. Multiplied by the equivalent household size, this gives a poverty line for the above-mentioned couple with three children of 2,961 euros.

Nearly one in six Belgians lives in a family with an income below this at-risk-of-poverty threshold.

In 2017, the **at-risk-of-poverty rate** stood at **15.9%**. The bar chart below shows the level of the at-risk-of-poverty threshold (in euros per month) and the at-risk-of-poverty rate (in %) for the EU countries in 2017.



Living a dignified life?

The **European poverty line** especially measures the extent to which the member states succeed in guaranteeing their inhabitants a standard of living that is not far below the median level of prosperity of their country. **However, it does not say anything about the extent to which this threshold is sufficient to live a dignified life**, nor does it take into account the expenses that you have to incur. Those with high housing costs, for example, will save less of the same income than those with low housing costs.



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