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Abstract

This report summarises the stylized facts from the fourth wave of the Eurosystem Household Finance and Consumption Survey, which provides household-level data collected in a harmonised way in all 19 euro area countries, as well as in the Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary for a sample of more than 83,000 households. Although the survey does not refer to the same time period in all countries, the most common reference period for the data is 2021. The report presents results on household assets and liabilities, income, and indicators of consumption and credit constraints.

Keywords: Household-level data, assets, liabilities, wealth, financial pressure, consumption

JEL codes: D12, D14, D31

Salient changes in European household finances from 2017 to 2021

The Household Finance and Consumption Survey (HFCS) provides detailed household-level data on various aspects of household balance sheets, income, consumption and related economic and demographic variables. For the fourth survey wave, data have been collected in a harmonised way in all the euro area countries, as well as in the Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary, for a total sample of more than 80,000 households. The fieldwork, originally planned for 2020, was severely disrupted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. As a result, data collection was frequently delayed and the most common reference period became 2021. There were also adverse effects on the cross-country synchronisation of the data since the overall fieldwork period stretched from January 2020 to April 2022.

The euro area economy experienced exceptionally sharp fluctuations between 2017, when the previous survey was conducted, and 2021. The economy expanded between 2017 and 2019, albeit with a gradual reduction in growth momentum from 2.6% in 2017 to 1.6% in 2019. The expansion, supported by favourable financing conditions, was accompanied by a continuing recovery in the labour market, a progressive fall in the unemployment rate and steady wage growth. Annual headline inflation in the euro area remained below the ECB's target, averaging 1.5% between 2017 and 2019.

The macroeconomic landscape changed abruptly in 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Bans on public events, strict lockdowns and restrictions on numerous activities were implemented in the spring of 2020, creating severe adverse effects on the economy. In response to the pandemic, all euro area countries deployed fiscal stimulus measures, including liquidity support for firms to protect jobs and social transfers to support the unemployed and other vulnerable groups. Member States also implemented, in many instances, some forms of moratorium on payments of credit obligations, with the aim of supporting the short-term operational and liquidity challenges faced by borrowers.

Throughout the period, the Eurosystem supported activity and inflation through large-scale purchases of government bonds and other private securities, and very low policy interest rates. The interest rate on the ECB deposit facility, which steered euro area short-term money market rates, remained between -0.4% and -0.5%. Despite the strong and coordinated monetary and fiscal policy response, euro area GDP contracted by 6.1% in 2020 as a result of the lockdown measures and heightened risk aversion.

Box 1 sheds some light on the heterogeneous effects of the COVID-19 pandemic across the population. The impact on household income was strongly mitigated by the large fiscal transfers provided by governments. In all countries, most households reported that their income following the outbreak of the pandemic had remained at the same level as in 2019. The percentage of households that managed to increase

their savings during the period ranges from 6% to 33%, depending on the country. This percentage increases significantly for those at the top wealth quintile.

The economy recovered in 2021, with real GDP growing by 5.3% and the unemployment rate falling to a record low by year-end. Annual headline inflation dropped to 0.3% in 2020, largely owing to falling energy prices, but rapidly increased to 2.6% in 2021 following a rebound in global demand and surging energy prices.

Asset prices increased markedly between the 2017 and 2021 waves. Equity prices fell sharply between January and March 2020, but recovered over the following months. Between December 2017 and December 2021, they increased by 18% based on the Euro Stoxx 50 price index. The Eurostat real house prices index for the euro area recorded comparable gains. The average yield on 10-year government bonds fell from 1.34% in December 2017 to 0.33% in December 2021.

Against this macroeconomic backdrop, the survey results between 2017 and 2021 reveal strong gains in net wealth across the household distribution. Income recorded broad-based, though smaller increases.[1]

The share of households holding real assets remained largely stable, while the share holding financial assets edged up, especially for some of the riskier instruments. The median value of total assets held by households increased by 15.5% to €158,500 in 2021. The gains were broadly shared across the household distribution. Nevertheless, specific groups of households experienced a reduction in the conditional median value of their assets, including households in which the reference person[2] was below retirement age but not working (-4.3%) or had only basic education (-1.1%), and households with 5 or more members (-10%).

The increase in conditional median values was especially high for financial assets (32.6%) and more contained for real assets (5.0%). An increase in holdings was observed for almost all asset classes, with the notable exceptions of direct bond holdings, for which the conditional median value fell by 3%, and money owed to households, which fell by 2.1%.

The most significant real asset remained the household main residence, with an ownership rate of 61.7% in 2021. For homeowners, the median value of the main residence increased by 10.2% to €191,600.

The share of indebted households remained essentially unchanged at 42.9%. There was a shift towards fixed-rate mortgages, with the share of households holding floating-rate mortgages to acquire the household main residence falling from 46.1% in 2017 to 41.8% in 2021. The share of indebted households increased for households in which the reference person was below retirement age but not working

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[1] When comparing evidence between the two waves, monetary values for the 2017 wave data are adjusted for inflation. Country-specific inflation rates, as measured by the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP), are used for the adjustment and lead to an average increase in 2017-wave euro value data of approximately 5%. For the Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary, results in local currency are converted into euro using the appropriate exchange rate.

[2] The reference person is loosely defined as the highest income earner in the household. See Chapter 2 of HFCN (2023), "The Household Finance and Consumption Survey: Methodological report for the 2021 wave", Statistics Paper Series, No. 45, European Central Bank, June.

(3.1 percentage points) or was under 35 years of age (3 percentage points). The share of indebted households declined by up to 3.9 percentage points for households in the top three income quintiles.

The conditional median value of mortgage debt – by far the most significant component of household debt – remained largely unchanged at €87,000. The conditional median value of non-mortgage debt increased by 10.3% to €6,000.

Indicators of debt burden and financial vulnerability reflected varying trends in the underlying variables, namely debt, assets, debt service and income. The median debt-to-asset and loan-to-value ratios of the household main residence tended to decline as house values increased. The median debt-to-income ratio remained stable as the ratios for the most vulnerable households (those found in the lower parts of the income and net wealth distributions) fell, while it rose for households in the upper parts of the net wealth distribution. The median mortgage debt service-to-income ratio, at 14.3% in 2021, remained broadly unchanged from 2017.

Between 2017 and 2021 net wealth in the euro area grew by 13.1% for the median and by 12.4% for the mean household, reaching €123,500 and €292,100 respectively. These figures show a substantial rebound from the previous several years of decline and slow growth. The increase in net wealth was bigger for the bottom two net wealth quintiles and smaller towards the middle quintiles.

Net wealth dynamics were reflected in complex changes in the distribution of net wealth. A reduction of inequality was recorded in the lower half of the distribution, while inequality in the upper half of the distribution increased. Overall measures of inequality provide conflicting indications: the ratio between the net wealth at the 80th and 20th percentiles of net wealth declined by 9.2 percentage points, pointing to a reduction in inequality; the share of net wealth accruing to the top decile increased by 1.6 percentage points, suggesting an increase in inequality; the Gini coefficient remained essentially unchanged.

Between 2017 and 2021 gross household income grew by a modest 3.1% for the median household, to reach €34,000, and by 3.4% for the mean household, to €47,700. Income changes across the net wealth distribution were broadly comparable for the median, at around 3% for most groups, and somewhat more heterogeneous for the mean, with growth within wealth groups typically ranging between 1% and 6.6%. Overall, income inequality in the euro area remained largely unchanged, with some increase in the share of the top income decile.

Expenditures on food and utilities were stable in the aggregate and for most groups of households. The data indicate some reduction in consumption of these two components for the top income decile, owing to lower spending on food outside of the home.

The proportion of households that were fully or partially refused a loan remained broadly unchanged at 10.5%. The share of those who did not apply for credit because of perceived credit constraints rose slightly from 5.2% to 5.4%. Both developments were more pronounced for younger households.

1 Introduction

The Household Finance and Consumption Survey (HFCS) is a joint project among all of the national central banks of the Eurosystem, the central banks of two European Union (EU) countries that have not yet adopted the euro and various national statistical institutes.[3] A detailed description of the methodological features of the HFCS is provided in a companion publication.[4] A list of research publications using the HFCS can be found at this web page.

The HFCS provides detailed household-level data on various aspects of household balance sheets and related economic and demographic variables, including income, private pensions, employment and measures of consumption. A household is defined as a person living alone or a group of people who live together and share expenditures. For example, flatmates and household employees are considered separate households. The target reference population of the survey is all private households, which excludes people living in collective households and in institutions, such as the elderly living in institutionalised households.

The HFCS is conducted in a decentralised manner, in the sense that each institution participating in the Household Finance and Consumption Network, namely the national central bank (NCB) or national statistical institute (NSI), is responsible for conducting the survey. The European Central Bank (ECB) works alongside the HFCN in coordinating the whole project, ensuring that a common methodology is followed, pooling and assuring the quality of country datasets, and disseminating the survey results and microdata through a single access gateway.

Table 1 provides a snapshot of the HFCS fieldwork periods in each country. While the fourth wave of the HFCS was originally planned for 2020, the fieldwork was severely disrupted by the lockdown measures deployed in many countries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were frequent delays in collecting the data and significant differences across countries, depending on the public health conditions prevailing at the time when the interviews were due to take place and on the availability of appropriate staff to collect the data at that point in time. As a result, the most common reference period for the data was not 2020 but 2021. Moreover, taking all countries into account, the overall fieldwork period stretched from January-June 2020 in Finland to October 2021-April 2022 in Greece. The cross-country synchronization of the data is therefore poorer than in previous waves. In many cases, the COVID-19 pandemic also caused a change in the interview mode, as it was often impossible to collect the data though personal interviews.[5]

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[3]   The first wave of the HFCS was conducted in 15 euro area countries; the second wave in 18 euro area countries, as well as in Hungary and Poland; the third wave in all 19 countries of the euro area in 2017, as well as in Croatia, Hungary and Poland; and the fourth wave in all 19 countries of the euro area in 2021, as well as the Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary.

[4]   See HFCN (2023), "The Household Finance and Consumption Survey: Methodological report for the 2021 wave", Statistics Paper Series, No. 45, European Central Bank, June.

[5]   See HFCN (2023), op. cit.

Table 1

Fieldwork and reference periods of the 2021 wave and inflation adjustment factor

Country	Fieldwork period	Assets and liabilities	Income	Inflation adjustment factor between the 2017 and 2021 waves***
Belgium	July 2020 – June 2021	Time of interview	2019	1.074
Czech Republic	February 2020 - February 2022	Time of interview	Last calendar year	-
Germany	April 2021 – January 2022	Time of interview	Last calendar year	1.070
Estonia	January 2021 – August 2021	Time of interview*	2020	1.098
Ireland	July 2020 – January 2021	Time of interview	Last 12 months	1.004
Greece	October 2021 – April 2022	2021	Last 12 months	0.998
Spain	November 2020 – July 2021	Time of interview	2019	1.022
France	September 2020 – March 2021	Time of interview	2020***	1.061
Croatia	September 2020 – December 2020	Time of interview	Last 12 months	1.024
Italy	March 2021 – December 2021	31 December 2020**	2020	1.031
Cyprus	March 2021 – November 2021	Time of interview	2019	1.025
Latvia	August 2020 – December 2020	Time of interview	2019	1.055
Lithuania	September 2020 – February 2022	Time of interview	Time of interview	1.150
Luxembourg	October 2021 – December 2021	Time of interview	2020	1.052
Hungary	October 2020 – December 2020	Time of interview	Last 12 months	1.100
Malta	November 2020 – February 2021	31 October 2020	2020	1.054
Netherlands	May 2021 – June 2021	Time of interview	2020	1.085
Austria	May 2021 – February 2022	Time of interview	2020	1.080
Portugal	October 2020 – February 2021	Time of interview	2019	1.014
Slovenia	June 2020 – December 2021	Time of interview	Last calendar year	1.055
Slovakia	July 2021 – October 2021	Time of interview	2020	1.105
Finland	January 2020 – June 2020	31 December 2019	2019	1.032

Source: HFCS metadata.
Note: The periods mentioned in the "Assets and Liabilities" and "Income" columns refer to the reference periods used in the country-specific questionnaire for the respective variables.
* Time of interview for variables collected at the interview; 30 April 2021 for variables derived from register data.
** Time of interview for value of dwellings.
*** The reference year for the income data for France is based on 2019 administrative data (fiscal data) adjusted statistically to reflect household income in 2020 as much as possible.

To facilitate comparisons over time in real terms, the figures for past waves in individual countries have been adjusted for inflation using the Harmonised Index of

Consumer Prices.[6] The adjustment factors between the two latest survey waves are shown in the right-hand column of Table 1. An adjustment factor of, for example, 1.074 indicates that inflation between the two survey waves was 7.4%. For countries that had yet to adopt the euro, results in local currency were converted into euro at the prevailing exchange rate.[7] No other intervention was made to adjust the data to a precise common period across countries.

In describing the evidence, reference is made to groups of households, identified by either economic or demographic characteristics. The key economic characteristics are quintiles of net wealth and income. Quintiles are defined as the points that divide wealth, or income, data into five equal groups of households. In the 2021 wave of the HFCS, the cut-off points identifying euro area net wealth quintiles were € 11,582, € 76,520, € 184,219, and € 383,228. Meanwhile, the cut-off points for euro area gross annual household income were € 16,543, € 27,340, € 41,298, and € 66,056. The last quintile was further divided into two equal groups, identifying the top two deciles. The cut-off point identifying these net wealth deciles in the euro area was € 644,631, while the cut-off point for the two annual income deciles was € 93,140. The key demographic characteristics include household size and the age, education, and employment status of the "household reference person", which is loosely defined as the highest income earner in the household.

The HFCS is designed around a common set of methodological principles, which enhance the comparability of results. A distinctive feature of the HFCS is that the country wealth surveys that are part of the project follow an ex ante harmonised methodology. In particular, all country-level HFCS datasets provide a set of core output variables according to a set of common definitions and descriptive features based on an output-oriented approach.

Household samples were designed in each country to ensure both euro area and country representative results. Approximately 83,000 households were surveyed in the fourth wave, with varying sample sizes across countries. All country surveys had a probabilistic sample design. This means that each household in the target population has an ex-ante defined non-zero probability of being part of the sample. Given the unequal distribution of household wealth and the fact that certain financial instruments are almost exclusively held (and in large quantities) by the wealthiest households, most countries apply some type of oversampling of wealthy households.

Continuous improvements are made to the HFCS to increase the coverage of the wealthy segment of the population and in some countries, significant enhancements were made following the 2017 wave.[8] While these improvements increased the quality of the 2021 data, they also introduced a methodological discontinuity, making any comparison of the 2021 results with previous waves less reliable. Therefore, when describing the evidence, changes between 2017 and 2021 are computed with

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[6] The values of assets, debt, income and consumption were adjusted for by multiplying the third-wave figures with the ratio between the yearly averages of the price level between the reference years in the third and fourth survey waves.

[7] For the Czech Republic, average over 2021; for Croatia, 2020; for Hungary, average from October 2019 to September 2020.

[8] See "Survey on Italian Household Income and Wealth – 2020" (2022), *Banca d'Italia Statistics Series*, 22 July.

reference, for 2021, to (the closest possible approximation of) the earlier sample design. As a result, the percentage changes shown in the tables are denoted as "adjusted percentage changes" and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the 2017 and 2021 figures also shown in the tables.[9]

One feature of survey data is the existence of item non-response, i.e. where a respondent is unable to provide a reliable answer to all questions asked. Imputation is the process of assigning a value to a variable when it was not correctly collected or not collected at all. For the HFCS, a multiple stochastic imputation strategy has been chosen. The dataset provides five imputed values (replicates) for every missing value corresponding to one or other variable that makes up household wealth, consumption or income.

In the 2021 wave, 13 countries had a panel component, following the same households as in the previous wave.

Box 1
The heterogeneous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic and financial situation of households

This box analyses the heterogeneous impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the economic and financial situation of households across countries and population sub-groups. National accounts provide aggregate information on the main phenomena that occurred during the pandemic, such as the slump in spending, the moderate reduction in income and the sharp increase in savings in liquid assets. This box complements that aggregate information by showing trends and changes in these variables at the household level, based on an ad hoc module included in selected country-level surveys of the Household Finance and Consumption Survey (HFCS) in 2020 or 2021.[10]

The impact of the pandemic on the labour markets and labour income was heterogeneous across countries and across households (Chart A). Among households with at least one employed member, the percentage of respondents reporting at least one type of adverse income or labour market change, such as job loss or wage reduction, ranged from less than 10% in Slovenia to around 45% in Spain and Portugal. In most countries, the most frequent change was a temporary reduction in labour income. The share of households reporting at least one change was generally higher among households in the first quintile of the income distribution or where the reference person was self-employed or worked in contact-intensive service sectors. In most countries, a high level of education of the reference person tended to protect against these shocks.

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[9]　Further methodological updates, improving on accuracy and coverage, were made in France and Cyprus, where weights were revised across all waves, and in Ireland, where the dataset for wave 2017 was revised.

[10]　The charts report results for available countries only. The list of questions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that were asked in various countries is given in the Appendix of HFCN (2023), "The Household Finance and Consumption Survey: Methodological report for the 2021 wave", ECB Statistics Paper No. 45, June 2023.

Chart A

Changes in labour market status and labour earnings, percentage

(percentages of households with at least one active member – PE0100x in (1,2,3))
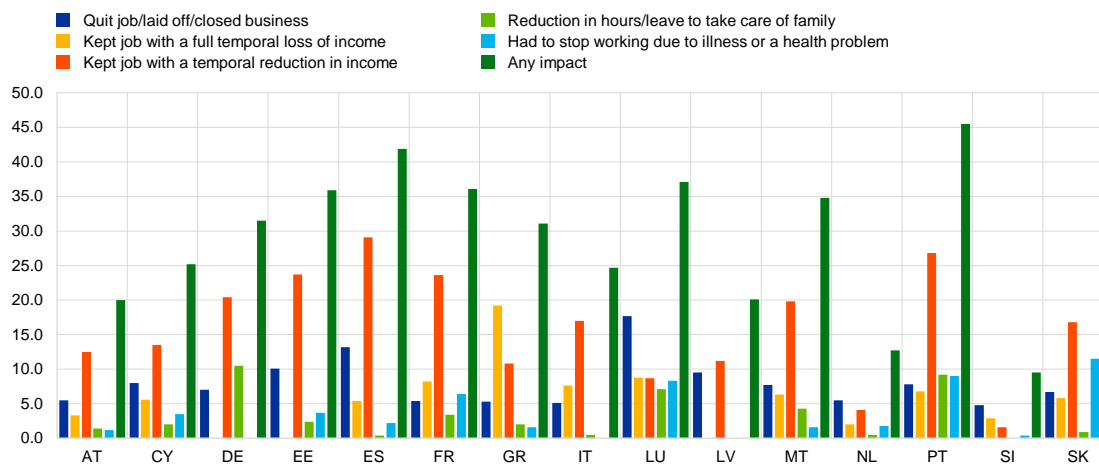
- Quit job/laid off/closed business
- Kept job with a full temporal loss of income
- Kept job with a temporal reduction in income
- Reduction in hours/leave to take care of family
- Had to stop working due to illness or a health problem
- Any impact

Source: HFCS 2021, questions in the special module on the effect of the coronavirus on household finances.
Note: The chart shows output harmonised data typically based on the answers to the question: "Have you or any member of your household experienced any of the following changes in labour market status or labour earnings?"
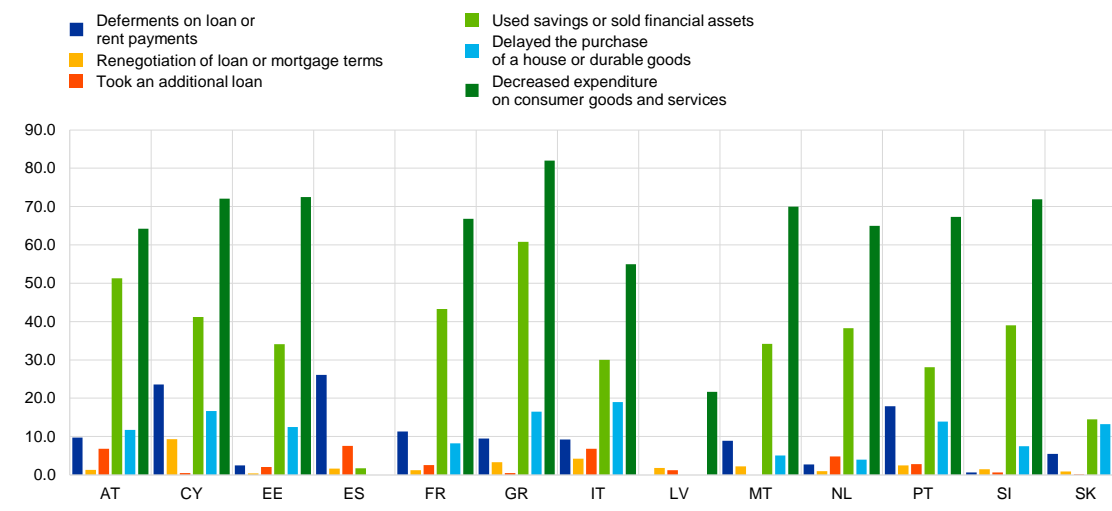
The impact of the labour market shocks on household income was strongly mitigated by the large fiscal transfers provided by governments. In all countries, most households reported that their income had remained at the same level as in 2019. The largest shares of households reporting a drop in income, at more than 40%, were observed in Spain and Portugal.

Households that experienced income losses managed to offset those losses via several strategies (Chart B). Most frequently, they reduced spending on food, clothing, travel or other non-durable consumer goods and services. This strategy was followed by at least two thirds of households in Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, France, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia (among those households that lost income). In Austria, Italy, the Netherlands and Slovakia, these percentages were lower but still high (42% or more). The extent of the reduction in spending varied across the income distribution. While in most countries it was adopted mainly by households in the first income quintile, in Estonia and the Netherlands this percentage was higher for households at the top of the distribution. The second most frequent strategy was the use of savings or the sale of financial assets, with the share of households doing so ranging from about 15% in Slovakia to 61% in Greece. In Cyprus, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Malta and Portugal, deferring loan or rent payments was also an important adjustment made by households, exceeding 8% in those countries.

Chart B

Compensation for loss of income, percentage

(percentages of households that experienced a drop in income)

- ■ Deferments on loan or rent payments (dark blue)
- ■ Renegotiation of loan or mortgage terms (orange)
- ■ Took an additional loan (red)
- ■ Used savings or sold financial assets (light green)
- ■ Delayed the purchase of a house or durable goods (light blue)
- ■ Decreased expenditure on consumer goods and services (dark green)

Source: HFCS 2021, questions in the special module on the effect of the coronavirus on household finances.
Notes: The chart shows the answers to the question: "How did your household compensate for the loss of income?". Answers on categories "Delayed the purchase of a house or durable goods" and "decreased expenditure on consumer goods and services" not available for Spain. Answers on categories "Deferments on loan or rent payments", "Used savings or sold financial assets" and "Delayed the purchase of a house or durable goods" not available for Latvia.

National accounts document a sharp increase in household savings and particularly in liquid financial assets (i.e. cash and bank deposits) during the pandemic. This HFCS module shows perceptions among households of how the coronavirus changed their ability to save. In all countries, most households reported that they did not adjust their saving behaviour. The share of households that increased their savings ranged from 5% in Greece to 36% in Ireland (Chart C). This share increases significantly for those households at the top wealth quintile, where most deposits are concentrated (50% to 70% of total deposits, depending on the country).[11] As a result, the increase in total savings found in national accounts data is likely due, for the most part, to households at the top of the wealth distribution and is largely caused by the constraints on consumption during the lockdowns (e.g. less travel and eating outside the home). At the same time, even in the lower quintiles around 10% of households reported to have saved more.

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[11]   While the results for Portugal were collected in a slightly different way and are not shown in the chart, they do support these findings. For example, in Portugal the percentage of households saving more than usual increased in 2020, as compared with 2017. The additional savings were mostly due to declines in expenditures, whereas in 2017 the increase in income was the predominant factor. The importance of unplanned savings increased when compared with 2017 and became the main reason for the increase in savings across all groups of households. Lastly, compared with 2017, there was a broadly based increase in the percentage of households investing their additional savings in deposits.

Chart C

Share of households that saved more by net wealth quintile, percentage

(percentages of households)
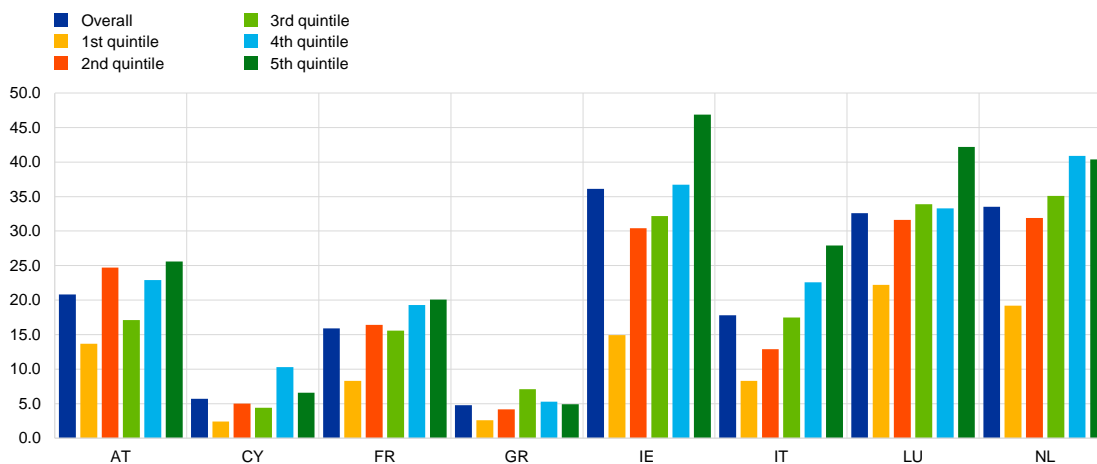
Legend: Overall | 1st quintile | 2nd quintile | 3rd quintile | 4th quintile | 5th quintile

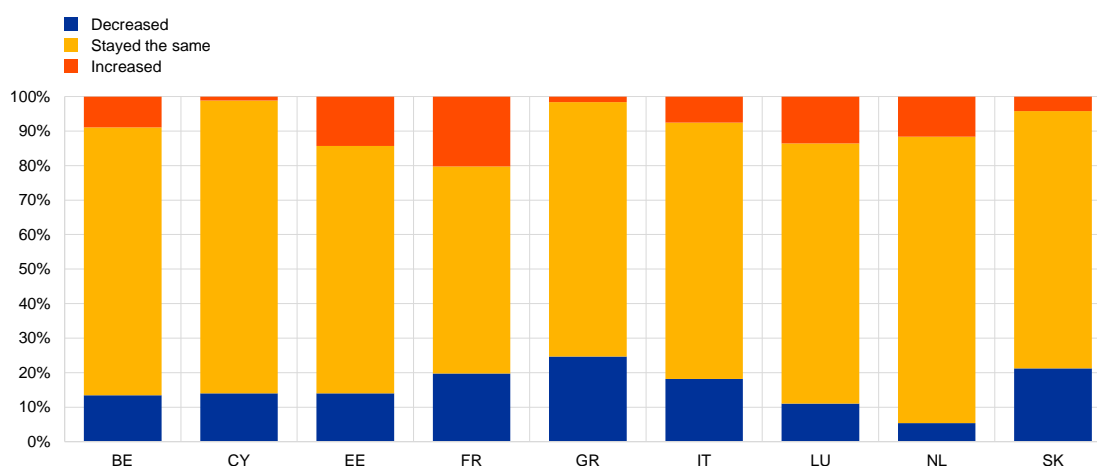Source: HFCS 2021, questions in the special module on the effect of the coronavirus on household finances.
Note: The chart shows the answers to the question: "Did you increase your savings?", with the exception of Ireland where the question was: "Did your household's savings increase during March to June 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?"

While the financial wealth of most households in all countries did not change due to the COVID-19 crisis, a considerable proportion of households did report a change in their financial wealth (Chart D). For example, between 4% of households (in the Netherlands) and 24% (in Greece) experienced a decline in financial wealth. Conversely, a similar share of households reported an increase in financial wealth, the lowest share being observed for Cyprus and Greece and the highest for France.

Chart D

Change in financial wealth owing to the COVID-19 crisis

(percentages)

Legend: Decreased | Stayed the same | Increased

Source: HFCS 2021, questions in the special module on the effect of the coronavirus on household finances.
Note: The chart shows the answers to the question: "Did your financial wealth change as a result of the COVID-19 crisis?"

2   Assets

2.1   Trend in assets holdings

Between the 2017 and 2021 waves, participation rates for real assets remained largely stable, while participation rates in financial assets edged up, especially for some of the riskier components (Table 2). Over the same period, the total value of assets held by households increased. The median total asset value increased by 15.5% to €158,500, while the mean value was up 18.9% to reach €325,700 in 2021.[12] The roughly comparable increase in median and mean values of total assets indicates that the gains were quite broadly shared across the household distribution. The increase in conditional median values was especially high for financial assets (+37.4%) and more restrained for real assets (+12.3%). An increase in conditional median values was observed for almost all asset classes, with the notable exception of direct bond holdings and money owed to households, whose value fell between 2017 and 2021.

Ownership of real assets, which include valuables, vehicles, self-employed business wealth, the household main residence and other real estate, remained widespread but not universal, with a participation rate of 91.7% in 2021, almost unchanged from 2017. A rise in median value characterised almost all real assets.

The most significant real asset remained the household main residence, with an ownership rate of 61.7% in 2021, essentially unchanged from 2017. The conditional median value of the household main residence was €191,600, while the conditional mean was €247,300, marking an increase of 10.2% and 12.2% respectively, from the 2017 wave. The value of other real estate property followed a similar trend, but was much stronger for more expensive properties: the conditional median value rose by 8.3% and the conditional mean value by 15.9%. The ownership rate for other real estate property remained stable around 25%.

Ownership of self-employment business wealth[13] was 11.5% in 2021, 0.5 percentage points lower than in 2017. Surviving activities experienced an increase in both the conditional median and mean values of self-employment business wealth, rising by 32.5% and 32.2% in 2021 to reach €41,000 and €293,300 respectively.

Vehicle ownership, which mostly concerns cars, increased by 1.4 percentage points from 2017 to 2021, when 78% of households owned a vehicle. The conditional median value of the vehicle rose to €7,000, 13.2% higher than in 2017.

Ownership of financial assets, which include deposits, mutual funds, bonds, publicly traded shares, money owed to the household, voluntary pensions and whole life

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[12]   To provide a measure of the statistical significance of the changes, standard errors caused by sampling and imputation of missing data are given for selected estimates. The findings highlighted in the report are significant or interesting in a broader context.

[13].   Self-employment business wealth is wealth obtained from a business run as sole proprietorship, as independent professional or in partnership, or from active participation in running limited liability companies.

insurance, among others, climbed to 98.7% in 2021 from 97.7% in 2017. The increase in ownership rates was particularly notable for certain riskier asset types, including mutual funds and shares. The conditional median and mean values of financial assets increased by 37.4% and 23.7% respectively. The conditional median value of financial assets rose to €15,000 in 2021 and the conditional mean to €66,400. This large increase in value was broad-based across asset classes and particularly significant for deposits; the only exception was in direct holdings of bonds and money owed to households, whose conditional value fell markedly between 2017 and 2021.

Deposits remained the most widely held asset in household portfolios, with the ownership rate rising by a further 1.0 percentage point to 98.6% in 2021. The conditional median value was €9,000 in 2021, while the conditional mean was €30,100, showing an increase of 39.5% and 28.1%, respectively from the levels recorded in 2017. The much larger increase in the conditional median is indicative of a reduction in the skewness of the distribution of holdings, which may be the result of precautionary saving and fiscal support measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second most widely held financial asset was "voluntary pensions and whole life insurance". Ownership of this asset type remained roughly stable around 28.4% in 2021. The conditional median and mean values increased by 7% and 4% from 2017, to reach €16,000 and €44,800 respectively.

While mutual funds and publicly traded shares were less widely held, their ownership rates rose by 1.9 percentage points or more to reach 12.9% and 10.9% in 2021. The conditional median values also rose, to €18,000 and €10,000, respectively, and the two conditional mean values climbed to €59,500 and €54,700.

Other types of financial assets were each held by less than 10% of households. Bonds and money owed to households were the only financial assets to experience a reduction both in participation rates and in holdings. Bonds were only held by 3.2% of households in 2021, 0.2 percentage points lower than in 2017. The conditional median values of bonds fell by 3% to €20,000 while the mean rose by 21.7% to €62,400 respectively. 6.4% of households had money owed to them in 2021, 1.2 percentage points lower than in 2017.

Table 2

Assets and asset components

(percentage of households for participation rates and EUR thousands at 2021 values for the medians and the means)

Asset type	Participation rate			Conditional median			Conditional mean		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change
Euro area									
Total assets	100.0	100.0	0.0	137.2	158.5	15.5	273.8	325.7	18.9
S.E.				(1.9)	(2.3)		(3.3)	(4.4)	
Real assets									
Total real assets	91.2	91.7	0.4	136.9	153.7	12.3	242.8	283.5	16.8
S.E.	(0.2)	(0.2)		(1.8)	(1.8)		(3.3)	(4.2)	
Household main residence (HMR)	60.4	61.7	0.1	173.9	191.6	10.2	220.5	247.3	12.2
Other real estate property	24.9	25.0	-1.0	100.3	108.7	8.3	206.7	239.6	15.9
Vehicles	76.4	78.0	1.4	6.2	7.0	13.2	10.5	11.9	13.9
Valuables	44.2	44.9	0.4	3.1	3.0	-3.8	11.2	10.6	-6.1
Self-employment business wealth	10.7	11.5	-0.5	30.9	41.0	32.5	221.9	293.3	32.2
Financial assets									
Total financial assets	97.7	98.7	1.0	10.9	15.0	37.4	53.7	66.4	23.7
S.E.	(0.1)	(0.1)		(0.2)	(0.3)		(1.0)	(1.5)	
Deposits	97.6	98.6	1.0	6.5	9.0	39.5	23.5	30.1	28.1
Mutual funds	10.3	12.9	2.3	16.0	18.0	12.2	55.0	59.5	8.2
Bonds	3.2	3.2	-0.2	20.6	20.0	-3.0	51.3	62.4	21.7
Shares (publicly traded)	8.7	10.9	1.9	8.6	10.0	16.8	48.4	54.7	12.9
Money owed to households	7.5	6.4	-1.2	3.1	3.0	-2.1	15.5	18.9	22.2
Voluntary pensions/ Whole life insurance	28.5	28.4	-0.4	14.9	16.0	7.0	43.1	44.8	4.0
Other financial assets	7.8	9.6	1.6	2.7	4.5	68.3	59.1	66.3	12.2
Non-euro area									
Total assets	100.0	100.0	0.0	66.6	78.4	21.6	109.3	127.6	21.2
S.E.				(0.9)	(1.3)		(3.2)	(2.7)	
Real assets									
Total real assets	91.7	93.3	-0.2	67.0	77.3	21.1	108.7	122.6	20.7
S.E.	(0.4)	(0.3)		(0.8)	(1.3)		(3.3)	(2.8)	
Financial assets									
Total financial assets	87.0	92.5	6.5	3.3	3.9	74.2	11.1	14.3	18.3
S.E.	(0.4)	(0.3)		(0.1)	(0.1)		(0.6)	(0.6)	

Notes: Table 2 reports the statistics for households' asset holdings and their participation rates and distinguishes between different real and financial asset components. The first two sub-columns represent the participation rates (i) on having total assets, (ii) on having total real assets and (iii) on having financial assets, (iv) where each asset type is broken down by its components. Total real assets have the following components: 1: Household main residence (HMR), 2: other real estate property, 3: vehicles, 4: valuables and 5: self-employment business wealth. Financial assets include: 1: deposits, 2: total mutual funds, 3: bonds, 4: shares (publicly traded), 5: money owed to the household, 6: total value of voluntary pensions and whole life insurance and 7: other financial assets (private non-self-employed businesses, assets in managed accounts and other types of financial assets). Column 3 displays the percentage point change in participation rates from 2017 to 2021. Columns 4 to 6 display the conditional medians of having one of the asset components in 2017 and 2021, and the adjusted percentage change from 2017 to 2021. Likewise, columns 7 to 9 report the conditional means and the adjusted percentage change. Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage (point) changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Euro area comprises Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, France, Latvia, Luxemburg, Austria, Finland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Netherlands, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017, and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries. Throughout the report, the lines marked with S.E. give standard errors for euro area estimates (in parentheses).

2.2 Asset holdings in the cross section

Table 3 below shows conditional medians for households' real, financial, and total asset holdings across households with different characteristics. Table 4 shows the participation rates for such holdings.

Increases in asset holdings between 2017 and 2021 were broadly shared across the household distribution. Nevertheless, there are specific groups of households amongst those examined here that experienced a reduction in the conditional median value of their assets. These include households in which the reference

person was below retirement age but not working (-4.3%) or had only basic education (-1.1%), and households with five or more members (-10%). In all three cases the reduction was determined by a decline in the conditional value of real assets. The conditional value of financial assets increased for all groups of households considered in Table 3.

Further to these changes over time, the cross-sectional distribution of assets among euro area households had the following characteristics in 2021.

Single-member households tended to hold fewer assets than couples or households with children (or other people). In 2021 the conditional median value of real asset holdings among single-member households was €84,900, substantially below the median across all households of €153,700. The difference was slightly less pronounced for financial assets: the median value of financial asset holdings among single-member households was €10,400, below the median of €15,000 across all households.

Households accumulate asset holdings over time by saving income, through inheritance, or thanks to capital gains. When members of the household retire, they usually receive less income and might start to use accumulated assets to finance their consumption. Such life-cycle behaviour typically leads to a hump-shaped pattern of household asset holdings as a function of the reference person's age.

In 2021 the conditional median value of total asset holdings of households with a reference person below 35 years of age was €29,100, more than five times lower than the conditional median for all households, at €158,500. Households with a reference person between 55 and 64 years of age had the highest conditional median total asset holdings, consistent with life-cycle saving behaviour.

Households in which the reference person had a higher level of education tended to have more assets than households in which the reference person had only basic education. Total assets in 2021 for households with a reference person with basic education amounted to €97,100, versus €272,800 for households with a reference person with tertiary education.

Amongst all real assets, households' own home is particularly noteworthy. For homeowners, this is often the most valuable real asset. Households that rent their home usually have a very low value of real assets, as these assets often consist of vehicles and valuables only. In 2021 the conditional median value of real assets for outright owners was €220,500, for owners with a mortgage it was €272,600 and for renters it was €7,000.

The conditional median value of total assets was over twice as high for households in which the reference person was self-employed (€371,400) than for those in which the reference person was an employee (€158,900). When the reference person was below retirement age but not working, conditional median asset holdings were much lower (€18,700). For retired households, they amounted to €175,600.

The conditional median asset holdings of households at the bottom of the income distribution (the first two deciles) was €33,800 in 2021, almost 20 times smaller than that of households in the top decile of the income distribution, at €624,000.

Table 3

Conditional amounts of real, financial, and total assets

(thousands of 2021 EUR)

Household characteristics	Conditional median real assets			Conditional median financial assets			Conditional median total assets		
	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change
Euro area									
All households	136.9	153.7	5.0	10.9	15.0	32.6	137.2	158.5	8.5
S.E.	(1.8)	(1.8)		(0.2)	(0.3)		(1.9)	(2.3)	
Number of household members									
1	64.3	84.9	24.4	7.5	10.4	37.1	53.5	75.1	30.6
2	162.3	174.9	2.2	16.8	21.8	25.5	182.0	199.7	4.6
3	159.3	181.6	5.7	10.6	15.5	41.2	172.9	199.8	7.5
4	206.1	224.4	1.9	13.5	16.0	9.6	223.0	255.0	4.3
5 or more	187.6	191.7	-8.2	7.7	8.9	8.8	196.8	197.7	-10.0
Age of reference person									
16-34	13.4	18.5	34.3	5.4	7.4	32.1	20.9	29.1	30.6
35-44	131.3	142.2	-1.2	9.2	12.6	31.1	133.7	148.1	1.8
45-54	166.0	179.8	2.2	12.6	15.4	18.0	174.8	190.9	2.9
55-64	175.8	194.2	4.5	17.0	20.2	16.0	198.7	215.9	2.9
65-74	171.6	175.3	-3.1	15.5	19.4	22.4	185.1	193.9	-0.1
75+	123.6	138.4	6.3	10.9	16.5	48.2	119.2	146.9	16.8
Education of reference person									
Basic education	98.2	100.7	-6.3	4.6	5.6	10.1	89.0	97.1	-1.1
Secondary	127.0	145.6	7.7	10.4	13.8	29.4	123.2	149.9	14.3
Tertiary	221.6	247.1	5.9	28.7	33.8	13.3	253.3	272.8	3.5
Housing status									
Owner – outright	206.5	220.5	2.5	18.8	25.0	29.1	242.0	271.4	8.1
Owner with mortgage	246.0	272.6	9.5	18.2	21.5	17.2	279.8	310.0	9.7
Renter or other	6.2	7.0	9.9	4.7	6.3	28.2	11.5	14.8	25.9
Work status of reference person									
Employee	130.7	151.8	8.9	11.4	15.8	31.4	135.7	158.9	11.0
Self-employed	265.4	323.7	7.5	21.0	28.3	21.1	299.7	371.4	9.4
Retired	154.5	161.7	1.0	14.1	18.2	27.3	157.5	175.6	7.2
Other not working	41.8	30.1	-39.3	1.7	1.9	12.8	17.3	18.7	-4.3
Percentile of income									
Below 20	43.7	50.6	12.2	2.0	2.3	10.9	24.5	33.8	24.8
20-39.9	73.1	92.5	17.5	4.5	6.7	43.0	64.7	91.2	26.5
40-59.9	126.1	135.8	2.0	9.8	13.3	30.8	137.2	145.8	-0.5
60-79.9	186.4	213.9	10.0	20.1	26.9	29.2	213.8	250.0	10.9
80-89.9	267.9	302.1	6.8	37.7	50.7	25.9	321.2	362.0	6.3
90-100	418.7	495.8	9.2	80.6	105.0	25.5	537.9	624.0	6.2
Percentile of net wealth									
Below 20	2.2	3.0	39.4	0.9	1.2	28.4	2.7	4.0	44.1
20-39.9	14.3	20.6	27.0	8.6	12.0	32.2	30.0	41.6	22.6
40-59.9	107.8	124.5	8.6	10.3	13.0	17.3	124.0	145.6	8.9
60-79.9	218.5	250.4	8.3	23.2	30.4	28.9	256.3	295.0	9.5
80-89.9	374.0	418.8	7.3	58.1	73.1	21.4	445.9	511.0	8.8
90-100	723.6	844.7	10.8	133.4	182.5	29.5	891.3	1070.9	12.1
Non-euro area									
All households	67.0	77.3	21.1	3.3	3.9	74.2	66.6	78.4	21.6
S.E.	(0.8)	(1.3)		(0.1)	(0.1)		(0.9)	(1.3)	

Note: Table 3 reports the medians, conditional on participation, of households' real, financial and total assets and differentiates by several household groups.
The following asset components belong to total real assets: household main residence (HMR), other real estate property, vehicles, valuables and self-employed business wealth. Financial asset components are deposits, total mutual funds, bonds, shares (publicly traded), money owed to the household, total value of voluntary pensions and whole life insurance, and other financial assets (private non-self-employed businesses, assets in managed accounts and other types of financial assets). The first three sub-columns display the medians of real assets in 2017 and 2021 and the percentage change from 2017 to 2021. Meanwhile, sub-columns 4 to 6 show the medians of financial assets in those same years and the percentage change and sub-columns 7 to 9 present the medians of total assets. Each type of asset is broken down by different household groups, which are: 1: all households, 2: number of household members, 3: age group of the reference person, 4: education of the reference person, 5: housing status of the household, 6: work status of the reference person, 7: percentiles of household income within the euro area, 8: percentiles of household net wealth within the euro area and 9: all households of non-euro area countries. Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

Table 4

Participation rates for real, financial and total assets

(percentage of households)

Household characteristics	Participation rate, real assets			Participation rate, financial assets		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted change
Euro area						
All households	91.2	91.7	0.4	97.7	98.7	1.0
Standard error	(0.2)	(0.2)		(0.1)	(0.1)	
Number of household members						
1	82.6	83.9	1.2	97.1	98.3	1.2
2	95.0	95.1	-0.1	98.1	99.0	0.9
3	95.8	97.0	1.0	98.2	99.0	0.6
4	97.2	97.8	0.4	98.1	99.1	0.8
5 or more	96.0	95.4	-0.9	97.1	98.2	0.8
Age of reference person						
16-34	83.0	82.8	-0.3	97.9	98.9	1.0
35-44	93.0	92.8	-0.3	97.3	98.6	1.2
45-54	93.6	94.0	0.4	97.7	98.6	0.9
55-64	94.6	95.0	0.3	98.1	98.9	0.8
65-74	93.2	93.5	0.2	97.8	98.8	1.0
75+	87.8	89.4	1.5	97.4	98.4	1.0
Education of reference person						
Basic education	89.1	90.1	0.7	95.0	97.0	1.9
Secondary	90.4	91.4	1.1	98.5	99.2	0.6
Tertiary	94.7	93.6	-1.2	99.4	99.7	0.2
Housing status						
Owner – outright	100.0	100.0	0.0	97.7	98.7	1.0
Owner with mortgage	100.0	100.0	0.0	99.7	99.8	0.2
Renter or other	77.8	78.4	1.0	96.7	98.1	1.3
Work status of reference person						
Employee	93.0	92.9	-0.1	98.6	99.3	0.6
Self-employed	98.1	98.1	-0.2	98.3	99.6	1.3
Retired	90.8	91.2	0.4	98.0	98.9	0.9
Other not working	78.4	81.7	2.8	92.1	94.2	2.2
Percentile of income						
Below 20	78.5	82.3	3.5	92.1	95.4	3.3
20-39.9	89.3	90.0	0.5	97.7	98.9	0.9
40-59.9	93.9	92.2	-1.8	99.1	99.5	0.4
60-79.9	95.8	96.4	0.5	99.7	99.8	0.1
80-89.9	98.3	97.8	-0.5	99.9	99.9	0.0
90-100	98.7	97.9	-0.9	99.9	99.9	0.0
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	65.6	69.7	3.7	93.5	96.4	2.7
20-39.9	91.9	90.9	-1.1	98.4	98.7	0.3
40-59.9	98.9	98.6	-0.4	97.9	99.1	1.1
60-79.9	99.7	99.6	-0.2	98.8	99.5	0.7
80-89.9	99.8	99.9	0.1	99.8	99.8	0.0
90-100	99.9	99.9	0.0	99.9	99.9	0.0
Non-euro area						
All households	91.7	93.3	-0.2	87.0	92.5	6.5
Standard error	(0.4)	(0.3)		(0.4)	(0.3)	

Notes: The table reports participation rates, i.e. the percentages of households holding real and financial assets, and differentiates by several breakdowns of household types.
Total real assets have the following components: household main residence, other real estate property, vehicles, valuables and self-employed business wealth. The components of financial assets are: deposits, total mutual funds, bonds, shares (publicly traded), money owed to the household, total value of voluntary pensions and whole life insurance, and other financial assets (private non-self-employed businesses, assets in managed accounts and other types of financial asset). The first three sub-columns show the participation rates for real assets in 2017 and 2021, and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Sub-columns four to six show the participation rates for financial assets and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Each type of asset is broken down by different household groups, using the following criteria: (1) all households, (2) number of household members, (3) age of the reference person, (4) education of the reference person, (5) housing status of the household, (6) work status of the reference person, (7) percentile of household income within the euro area, (8) percentile of household net wealth within the euro area and (9) all households of non-euro area countries. Standard errors were calculated using the Rao-Wu rescaled bootstrap method and replicate weights provided by the countries (1,000 replicates). Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage point changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

3 Liabilities

3.1 Total debt and debt components

The percentage of indebted households in the euro area was 42.9% in 2021, essentially unchanged from 2017 (Table 5). Participation rates remained roughly constant for both mortgage and non-mortgage debt, at 23.7% and 27.9% respectively. While the conditional median value of mortgage debt also remained practically unchanged, at €87,000, its conditional mean value increased by 1.9% to €123,900 in 2021. The conditional median and mean values of non-mortgage debt increased by 10.3% and 2.8% to €6,000 and €14,900 respectively.

Participation in mortgage debt to acquire the household main residence decreased somewhat to 20.8% in 2021. Between 2017 and 2021 there was a shift towards fixed-rate mortgages: the share of households holding floating-rate mortgages fell from 46% in 2017 to 42% in 2021. The conditional median value of mortgages arranged to acquire the household main residence edged down (-0.6%) to €84,400 in 2021, while for mortgages to acquire other properties it increased slightly (+0.2%) to €76,500. A comparably larger increase was recorded for the mean value of mortgages arranged to acquire other properties (+5.7%). In 2021 the mean value of such mortgages for indebted households was €133,900, compared with €111,200 for mortgages on the main residence, which reported a gentler increase (+1.4%). Regarding forms of non-mortgage debt, a particularly large increase was recorded in the conditional median value of credit lines and overdraft debt (+20.3%), which reached €1,500 in 2021. The conditional median value of credit card debt increased by 4.1% to €900, while its conditional mean value rose by 9.5% to €1,800.

The trend in the share of indebted households was heterogeneous across the population (Table 6). For example, it declined by up to 3.9 percentage points for households in the top two income quintiles and by 3.7 percentage points for households in the top net wealth decile, but went up for households in which the reference person was below retirement age but not working (+3.1 percentage points) or was under 35 years of age (+3.2 percentage points). At the top of the income distribution, the decline in the fraction of indebted households was recorded for both mortgage (by up to -2.4 percentage points) and non-mortgage debt (by up to -2.3 percentage points). The increase in the share of indebted households amongst those in which the reference person was below retirement age but not working was more pronounced for non-mortgage debt (+3.1 percentage points) than for mortgage debt (almost unchanged). A similar pattern can be observed for the increase in indebtedness among younger households.

The trend in the conditional level of indebtedness was also heterogeneous across the population (Table 7). Among the distributional breakdowns discussed here, the largest increases in the median outstanding balance of total debt were recorded for households in which the reference person was below 35 (+22.6%) and at the 9th decile of the net wealth distribution (+18.9%). The most sizable declines can be

observed for the smallest and largest households (-16.3% and -14.9%, respectively) and for retired households (-9.8%). The conditional median value of mortgage debt increased, for example, among younger and income-rich households. A particularly large percentage increase in the conditional median value of non-mortgage debt can be observed for households below retirement age but not working (+29.4%) and for the self-employed (+21.2%).

Table 5

Debt and debt components

(percentage of households for participation rates and thousands of 2021 EUR for the medians and the means)

Liability type	Participation rate			Conditional median			Conditional mean		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change
Euro area									
Total debt	42.3	42.9	0.0	30.7	30.5	-3.1	76.3	78.3	0.0
S.E.	(0.3)	(0.4)		(1.0)	(0.9)		(1.3)	(1.5)	
Mortgage debt									
Total mortgage debt	23.7	23.7	-0.5	85.6	87.0	-0.7	120.4	123.9	1.9
S.E.	(0.3)	(0.3)		(1.2)	(1.8)		(2.2)	(2.3)	
HMR mortgage	20.6	20.8	-0.3	82.5	84.4	-0.6	108.7	111.2	1.4
of which at variable rate	9.5	8.7	-1.0	80.0	83.0	2.5	108.1	109.4	0.5
Other property mortgage	4.9	4.7	-0.3	74.8	76.5	0.2	124.6	133.9	5.7
Non-mortgage debt									
Total non-mortgage debt	27.7	27.9	0.1	5.3	6.0	10.3	13.8	14.9	2.8
S.E.	(0.3)	(0.4)		(0.1)	(0.2)		(0.5)	(0.5)	
Credit line/overdraft debt	6.9	5.0	-2.0	1.2	1.5	20.3	4.5	4.6	0.5
Credit card debt	4.3	4.0	-0.4	0.8	0.9	4.1	1.6	1.8	9.5
Other non-mortgage debt	22.1	23.1	1.0	6.8	7.0	3.3	15.6	16.7	1.5
Non-euro area									
Total debt	38.6	27.2	-4.3	3.1	7.9	25.6	15.7	20.6	-7.9
S.E.	(0.6)	(0.6)		(0.5)	(0.5)		(0.5)	(1.2)	
Mortgage debt									
Total mortgage debt	15.1	13.7	-1.3	23.7	17.4	-18.5	34.7	29.2	-15.7
S.E.	(0.4)	(0.4)		(0.7)	(1.1)		(0.9)	(1.3)	
Non-mortgage debt									
Total non-mortgage debt	29.8	17.2	-4.2	0.8	2.5	22.0	2.8	9.4	21.3
S.E.	(0.6)	(0.5)		(0.1)	(0.2)		(0.3)	(1.6)	

Notes: Table 5 reports statistics for households' outstanding debt balances and participation rates, and distinguishes between mortgage and non-mortgage debt components. Mortgage debt is defined as the outstanding balance of mortgage debt ("collateralised liabilities", "secured debt") owed by households on all properties they own. This is the sum of mortgage debt with HMR as collateral and mortgage debt collateralised with other household properties. Non-mortgage debt is defined as the outstanding balance of other, non-mortgage debt (total unsecured debt/non-collateralised liabilities) and includes outstanding balances on credit lines or overdrafts, outstanding balances on credit cards for which the card holder is charged interest, and outstanding balances on all other loans (car loans, consumer loans, instalment loans, private loans from relatives, friends, employers, etc.). The first three sub-columns show participation rates in 2017 and 2021 and the percentage change. Meanwhile, sub-columns 4 to 6 display the conditional median of each debt component among indebted households in 2017 and 2021, and the percentage change between 2017 and 2021, and sub-columns 7 to 9 present the conditional means in those same years and the percentage change. Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage (point) changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Euro area comprises Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Austria and Finland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Netherlands, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

In 2021 mortgage debt remained by far the most significant component of households' debt portfolio. The conditional median value of mortgage debt increased with the size of the household, the level of education of the reference person and the household income. More precisely, it ranged from €65,000 for one-member households to €105,000 for households with four members (and €100,700 for households with five or more members); it increased from €59,700 when the reference person had basic education to €110,000 for those with tertiary education;

and it ranged from €50,000 for households in the bottom income quintile to €147,000 for households in the top decile. Meanwhile, the conditional median value of mortgage debt decreased with age, falling from €143,600 in households in which the reference person was below 35 years of age to €40,000 where the reference person was aged between 65 and 74.

The median outstanding balance of non-mortgage debt was especially low among elderly households (€2,600), households in which the reference person was below retirement age but not working (€3,000) and households in the first income quintile (€2,800). Conversely, it was relatively high for self-employed households (€10,000) and households in the top income and net wealth deciles (€9,100 and €10,000 respectively).

Table 6

Participation rates for liabilities

(percentages of households)

Household characteristics	Participation rate, mortgage debt			Participation rate, non-mortgage debt			Participation rate, total debt		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted change
Euro area									
All households	23.7	23.7	-0.5	27.7	27.9	0.1	42.3	42.9	0.0
Standard error	(0.3)	(0.3)		(0.3)	(0.4)		(0.3)	(0.4)	
Number of household members									
1	11.8	12.5	0.4	19.9	20.5	0.7	28.0	29.4	1.3
2	20.0	19.5	-1.0	26.1	25.7	-0.6	38.5	38.9	-0.2
3	34.2	34.4	-0.9	35.9	35.0	-1.1	57.3	56.0	-2.3
4	44.2	46.7	1.1	36.9	40.1	2.9	63.6	66.7	2.0
5 or more	41.3	41.2	-1.0	40.9	41.6	0.5	63.1	64.7	1.0
Age of reference person									
16-34	20.1	21.4	0.7	38.8	40.9	2.4	51.0	54.2	3.0
35-44	41.5	42.0	-0.7	36.7	38.4	1.6	61.6	63.6	1.1
45-54	36.5	37.6	0.0	35.1	34.4	-1.0	56.8	57.4	-0.3
55-64	23.0	23.2	-0.5	28.3	29.1	0.4	43.0	44.2	0.4
65-74	11.0	11.1	-0.2	17.6	17.8	0.1	25.9	26.2	0.0
75+	3.3	3.3	0.0	6.8	6.7	-0.2	9.5	9.3	-0.2
Education of reference person									
Basic education	12.8	13.0	-0.3	21.6	23.6	1.9	29.3	31.0	1.2
Secondary	22.6	21.7	-1.7	30.9	30.8	-0.3	44.6	44.1	-1.3
Tertiary	36.7	35.7	-1.4	29.4	28.0	-1.5	52.8	51.7	-1.4
Housing status									
Owner – outright	4.9	4.3	-0.8	19.1	19.7	0.3	22.5	22.6	-0.3
Owner with mortgage	100.0	100.0	0.0	38.3	36.7	-1.6	100.0	100.0	0.0
Renter or other	2.8	3.0	0.1	30.7	31.8	0.9	32.2	33.5	0.9
Work status of reference person									
Employee	34.0	34.9	-0.5	36.1	36.1	-0.4	56.6	57.9	0.0
Self-employed	36.1	34.0	-1.5	34.2	33.6	-0.4	56.0	53.2	-2.5
Retired	8.0	7.5	-0.5	13.4	13.9	0.4	19.3	19.7	0.1
Other not working	9.4	9.6	0.2	23.0	25.9	3.1	29.0	31.8	3.1
Percentile of income									
Below 20	7.4	7.6	0.0	19.2	20.4	1.3	24.4	25.5	1.2
20-39.9	12.6	14.3	1.1	22.7	24.5	1.6	30.9	33.7	2.3
40-59.9	19.6	21.1	0.3	29.4	32.0	2.6	41.5	44.2	1.7
60-79.9	31.8	32.5	-0.2	34.3	32.6	-2.4	53.1	52.4	-1.8
80-89.9	42.6	38.6	-4.9	34.3	31.6	-2.3	59.7	56.2	-3.9
90-100	51.5	47.9	-3.0	31.1	28.2	-2.9	64.0	61.0	-2.9
Percentile of net wealth									
Below 20	7.0	5.2	-2.0	38.3	40.9	2.2	41.9	43.1	0.7
20-39.9	14.8	16.6	0.1	27.7	27.7	0.2	35.7	36.5	-0.1
40-59.9	32.5	32.5	-1.3	26.0	26.3	0.2	45.2	45.5	-0.8
60-79.9	31.4	32.0	0.6	23.7	24.0	0.4	44.2	45.9	1.6
80-89.9	29.4	31.9	2.2	22.7	20.2	-2.5	41.9	43.2	1.0
90-100	35.9	32.8	-2.4	22.7	20.9	-2.3	47.6	43.8	-3.7
Non-euro area									
All households	15.1	13.7	-1.3	29.8	17.2	-4.2	38.6	27.2	-4.3
Standard error	(0.4)	(0.4)		(0.6)	(0.5)		(0.6)	(0.6)	

Note: The table reports the participation rates, i.e. the percentages of households having mortgage debt, non-mortgage debt and total debt and differentiates by several breakdowns of household types.

The first three sub-columns show percentages for mortgage debt in 2017 and in 2021, and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Sub-columns 4 to 6 show the median rates for non-mortgage debt and sub-columns 7 to 9 the median rates for total debt and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Each type of liability is broken down by different household groups, using the following criteria: (1) all households, (2) number of household members, (3) age of the reference person, (4) education of the reference person, (5) housing status of the household, (6) work status of the reference person, (7) percentile of household income within the euro area, (8) percentile of household net wealth within the euro area and (9) all households of non-euro area countries. Standard errors were calculated using the Rao-Wu rescaled bootstrap method and replicate weights provided by the countries (1,000 replicates). Adjusted changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage point changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Greece, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

Table 7

Conditional amounts for liabilities

(percentage of households for participation rates and thousands of 2021 EUR for the medians)

Household characteristics	Conditional median mortgage debt			Conditional median non-mortgage debt			Conditional median total debt		
	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change
Euro area									
All households	85.6	87.0	-0.7	5.3	6.0	10.3	30.7	30.5	-3.1
S.E.	(1.2)	(1.8)		(0.1)	(0.2)		(1.0)	(0.9)	
Number of household members									
1	71.1	65.0	-13.0	4.2	4.5	7.2	14.1	12.4	-16.3
2	75.5	80.0	6.0	5.2	5.5	5.8	20.7	20.0	-3.4
3	85.6	85.0	-3.0	6.1	6.1	0.2	38.6	43.2	4.0
4	101.2	105.0	2.0	6.9	8.0	14.7	65.1	74.1	9.3
5 or more	103.8	100.7	-3.7	6.8	7.2	2.4	58.8	50.9	-14.9
Age of reference person									
16-34	130.3	143.6	11.0	5.9	5.9	0.5	13.9	18.0	22.6
35-44	106.9	109.7	2.2	5.8	6.2	4.0	66.3	65.2	-4.9
45-54	75.8	79.6	1.6	6.1	7.0	11.2	41.4	46.6	7.8
55-64	60.7	60.0	-1.1	5.5	6.0	9.5	22.0	20.9	-8.4
65-74	52.1	40.0	-24.2	3.7	4.0	7.2	10.4	10.0	-3.9
75+	41.3	49.8	18.6	2.6	2.6	-0.3	5.7	5.3	-5.3
Education of reference person									
Basic education	59.3	59.7	-1.6	4.1	4.0	-2.9	11.4	10.5	-12.2
Secondary	76.8	75.3	-4.5	5.2	6.0	14.3	21.4	21.0	-6.5
Tertiary	107.0	110.0	0.7	7.1	7.5	5.0	64.5	68.9	2.4
Housing status									
Owner – outright	65.4	72.0	6.1	6.2	5.9	-3.0	9.3	8.8	-7.7
Owner with mortgage	86.5	89.5	2.1	6.5	8.0	23.0	91.8	93.6	0.3
Renter or other	84.6	75.0	-11.8	4.4	4.6	1.6	5.3	5.3	-2.7
Work status of reference person									
Employee	92.7	94.6	1.3	5.9	6.4	6.2	40.0	42.3	-0.1
Self-employed	83.0	89.7	1.4	8.2	10.0	21.2	54.0	55.4	-6.2
Retired	47.1	42.0	-13.0	3.8	3.7	-4.5	9.9	9.0	-9.8
Other not working	62.5	58.7	-9.0	2.3	3.0	29.4	5.8	6.9	18.3
Percentile of income									
Below 20	46.2	50.0	7.3	2.5	2.8	6.3	5.5	5.7	-2.4
20-39.9	49.0	50.3	2.0	3.5	4.0	13.4	10.0	10.0	-4.6
40-59.9	72.0	68.8	-5.5	5.1	6.0	17.1	17.8	19.6	-5.2
60-79.9	84.9	90.0	5.3	7.2	7.9	10.3	38.0	45.5	11.8
80-89.9	113.8	116.8	-0.7	7.6	9.4	15.0	75.3	72.3	-11.8
90-100	133.7	147.0	6.2	9.9	9.1	-6.5	105.5	109.6	-0.7
Percentile of net wealth									
Below 20	148.2	131.0	-11.9	4.5	4.7	3.3	6.1	5.8	-6.5
20-39.9	92.0	89.7	-2.1	4.5	5.0	10.0	11.8	16.5	16.5
40-59.9	81.7	78.4	-5.6	5.7	7.0	22.2	54.4	52.8	-9.1
60-79.9	72.5	79.9	9.1	6.7	6.0	-4.8	44.8	47.6	2.4
80-89.9	74.6	80.8	7.5	7.2	7.4	6.0	44.5	54.7	18.9
90-100	105.2	119.9	-0.4	8.1	10.0	16.1	78.7	82.3	-0.2
Non-euro area									
All households	23.7	17.4	-18.5	0.8	2.5	22.0	3.1	7.9	25.6
S.E.	(0.7)	(1.1)		(0.1)	(0.2)		(0.5)	(0.5)	

3.2   Debt burden and financial vulnerability

Indicators of debt burden and financial vulnerability reflected varying trends in the underlying variables, namely debt, assets, debt service and income. The median debt-asset and loan-value ratios of the household main residence tended to decline as house values increased. The median debt-income ratio was broadly unchanged, as the ratios for the most vulnerable households (in the lower parts of the income and net wealth distributions; Table 8A) fell, while they rose for households in the upper parts of the net wealth distribution. Median mortgage debt service to income ratios remained broadly unchanged.

The debt-asset ratio reflects a household's ultimate capacity to repay its debts. A value above 100% for this ratio is an indicator of heightened insolvency risk. The median ratio of debt to total assets (conditional on holding debt) for the euro area decreased somewhat, falling by around 2.2 percentage points to 23.1% in 2021. This ratio showed a significant reduction between waves in the first net wealth quintile (16 percentage points), yet remained high (96.2%), which is typical of this quintile. Similarly, the lowest income quintile recorded a decline of 12 percentage points. Certain age-related heterogeneous dynamics could also be observed: the median debt-asset ratio declined most strongly for younger households, aged 16-34 years (from 53.1% to 49.7%) but declined also for the other age groups.

The debt-income ratio shows how much income a household needs in order to cover its total debt. Across all households, the median debt-income ratio decreased by 1.5 percentage points to 72.8%. The ratios for households in the lower part of the income and wealth distributions and those with basic education fell substantially, whereas those for households in the upper parts of the net wealth distribution and for households with tertiary education increased.

Debt service-income ratios provide information on the drain that debt payments place on the current income flow and thus reflect the burden of short-term commitments. The ratio for mortgage debt service fell slightly, by 0.5 percentage points to 14.3% between 2017 and 2021 (Table 8B). The trend was quite similar across the income distribution, only rising somewhat in the second quintile, and across the net wealth distribution.

Lastly, the median loan-value ratio for the mortgage on the main residence decreased noticeably from 44.7% to 40.0%, largely due to the upward trend in real

estate prices observed in most countries. This decrease was particularly pronounced for lower-income households and those without tertiary education.

Table 8A

Debt burden and financial fragility

(percentages)

Household characteristics	Conditional median debt-asset ratio			Conditional median debt-income ratio		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted change
Euro area						
All households	25.4	23.1	-2.2	71.1	72.8	-1.5
S.E.	(0.6)	(0.7)		(2.1)	(2.4)	
Number of household members						
1	32.7	26.9	-6.3	58.6	59.9	-2.4
2	17.7	15.5	-2.1	49.9	48.4	-3.1
3	27.2	22.6	-4.1	79.9	80.6	-3.4
4	27.3	28.0	1.3	112.4	120.6	6.3
5 or more	30.3	28.7	-1.3	92.6	89.0	-6.1
Age of reference person						
16-34	53.1	49.7	-3.3	57.4	66.6	7.3
35-44	38.7	36.8	-1.7	146.1	136.8	-14.7
45-54	21.7	21.2	-0.4	80.2	86.2	3.6
55-64	13.2	11.9	-1.1	54.4	51.6	-4.8
65-74	8.5	7.2	-1.4	30.7	32.5	1.5
75+	5.3	4.8	-0.3	20.7	18.8	-1.9
Education of reference person						
Basic education	25.3	20.8	-4.4	47.9	43.3	-7.9
Secondary	25.9	22.9	-3.1	56.2	54.3	-4.5
Tertiary	25.2	24.2	-0.8	101.8	115.0	12.7
Housing status						
Owner – outright	3.6	3.3	-0.3	24.0	23.7	-0.4
Owner with mortgage	34.4	31.4	-2.9	187.5	190.8	3.0
Renter or other	40.4	39.2	-1.4	18.2	17.2	-1.1
Work status of reference person						
Employee	31.9	29.6	-2.6	81.8	84.2	-0.3
Self-employed	15.9	13.9	-1.4	113.6	104.0	-10.5
Retired	7.4	6.9	-0.6	29.3	28.3	-1.0
Other not working	37.8	31.2	-6.5	38.2	43.9	4.4
Percentile of income						
Below 20	37.3	25.7	-12.0	73.5	69.0	-8.6
20-39.9	28.6	24.2	-4.7	47.9	47.5	-2.4
40-59.9	27.9	27.6	0.0	54.3	54.8	-3.8
60-79.9	24.8	24.2	-0.6	76.2	85.1	6.7
80-89.9	25.1	22.1	-3.4	98.8	92.5	-11.0
90-100	19.9	17.4	-1.6	79.5	77.8	1.2
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	113.3	96.2	-16.0	27.2	22.7	-4.4
20-39.9	33.3	33.5	-1.6	37.7	55.9	7.1
40-59.9	34.3	30.0	-4.6	144.1	141.7	-8.3
60-79.9	16.2	14.8	-1.1	85.0	92.6	8.0
80-89.9	9.7	9.9	0.5	74.3	86.1	11.3
90-100	6.9	6.4	-0.4	82.8	83.8	1.6
Non-euro area						
All households	7.4	13.6	-0.8	20.9	40.2	-3.3
S.E.	(0.5)	(0.8)		(1.4)	(2.0)	

Notes: The table reports different measures of financial burden in 2017 and 2021.
The first three sub-columns report the medians of the debt-asset ratio, which is calculated as the ratio between total liabilities and total gross assets for indebted households, and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. The sub-columns 4 to 6 show the medians of the debt-income ratio, which is calculated as the ratio between total liabilities and household annual gross income for indebted households and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Both indicators are calculated for households broken down as follows: (1) all households, (2) number of household members, (3) age of the reference person, (4) education of the reference person, (5) housing status of the household, (6) work status of the reference person, (7) percentile of household income within the euro area, (8) percentile of household net wealth within the euro area and (9) all households of non-euro area countries. Standard errors were calculated using the Rao-Wu rescaled bootstrap method and replicate weights provided by the countries (1,000 replicates). Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage point changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Finland. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

Table 8B

Debt burden and financial fragility

(percentages)

Household characteristics	Conditional median mortgage debt service income ratio			Conditional median loan-value ratio of household main residence		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted change
Euro area						
All households	14.8	14.3	-0.5	44.7	40.0	-4.8
S.E.	(0.2)	(0.2)		(0.7)	(0.7)	
Number of household members						
1	18.8	18.1	-0.8	44.1	35.6	-9.1
2	14.0	13.2	-0.8	41.2	36.3	-4.9
3	14.1	13.2	-1.0	47.1	40.1	-7.1
4	14.4	14.4	0.0	44.5	43.4	-1.0
5 or more	14.0	13.2	-0.8	44.9	44.1	-0.5
Age of reference person						
16-34	18.0	17.8	-0.2	71.2	62.4	-8.7
35-44	15.6	15.3	-0.1	54.9	52.4	-2.3
45-54	14.0	13.3	-0.6	35.1	34.0	-1.3
55-64	12.9	12.5	-0.4	29.4	25.0	-4.4
65-74	13.2	13.0	-0.1	23.0	17.0	-6.5
75+	13.2	10.7	-2.5	20.0	22.0	1.9
Education of reference person						
Basic education	16.7	16.1	-0.9	43.2	37.1	-6.5
Secondary	15.1	14.4	-0.7	44.0	38.2	-6.6
Tertiary	14.1	13.7	-0.2	46.1	42.2	-3.9
Housing status						
Owner – outright	11.9	12.4	0.5			
Owner with mortgage	15.2	14.6	-0.5	44.7	40.0	-4.8
Renter or other	11.9	11.8	-0.5			
Work status of reference person						
Employee	14.7	14.0	-0.7	48.6	43.9	-4.9
Self-employed	15.6	14.7	-0.8	35.8	34.3	-2.1
Retired	13.6	13.7	0.0	20.9	20.0	-0.9
Other not working	20.8	20.2	-0.8	47.4	36.9	-10.7
Percentile of income						
Below 20	41.6	42.0	-0.3	47.6	36.5	-11.9
20-39.9	21.0	21.6	0.5	45.0	41.7	-4.6
40-59.9	18.1	16.5	-1.5	48.5	42.9	-4.9
60-79.9	15.1	14.6	-0.6	46.0	42.8	-3.8
80-89.9	12.8	12.4	0.0	46.2	40.5	-5.2
90-100	9.9	9.0	-0.5	36.2	33.8	-2.1
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	20.7	19.1	-1.7	122.7	119.3	-2.0
20-39.9	17.7	17.3	-0.5	80.8	75.3	-3.4
40-59.9	15.7	15.3	-0.4	52.1	47.8	-3.3
60-79.9	13.6	13.1	-0.4	31.7	30.5	0.0
80-89.9	13.0	12.7	0.0	23.2	22.4	-0.7
90-100	13.0	12.1	-0.7	20.0	18.6	-1.5
Non-euro area						
All households	12.9	10.4	-2.2	30.7	23.2	-7.8
S.E.	(0.3)	(0.3)		(1.1)	(1.3)	

Notes: The table reports different measures of financial burden in 2017 and 2021.

The first three sub-columns show the mortgage debt service-income ratio, defined as the ratio between total monthly mortgage debt payments and household gross monthly income, and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. The sub-columns 4 to 6 show the loan-value ratio, defined as the ratio between the outstanding amount of the household main residence mortgage and the current value of that property and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Both indicators are calculated for households broken down as follows: (1) all households, (2) number of household members, (3) age of the reference person, (4) education of the reference person, (5) housing status of the household, (6) work status of the reference person, (7) percentile of household income within the euro area, (8) percentile of household net wealth within the euro area and (9) all households of non-euro area countries. Standard errors were calculated using the Rao-Wu rescaled bootstrap method and replicate weights provided by the countries (1,000 replicates). Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage point changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

4 Net wealth

Net wealth, meaning the difference between total assets and total liabilities, grew noticeably between 2017 and 2021. The growth rate was 13.1% for the mean and 12.4% for the median, bringing net wealth to €123,500 for the median and to €292,100 for the mean (Table 9). These developments mark a substantial rebound from the low levels observed from 2010 onwards (Chart 1).

These changes in net wealth are caused by increases in the value of most assets, including housing, shares and business wealth, and only a limited increase in debt. While the gap between the median and the mean remained wide, due to the substantial heterogeneity in the structure of balance sheets across households, net wealth also increased for the bottom parts of the net wealth and income distributions.

Looking across household sub-groups, considerable heterogeneity in net wealth can be observed, in terms of both the amount and the trend over time. However, most groups of households experienced an increase in their mean and median net wealth.

Chart 1

Median and mean net wealth, euro area

(EUR thousands at 2021 values)
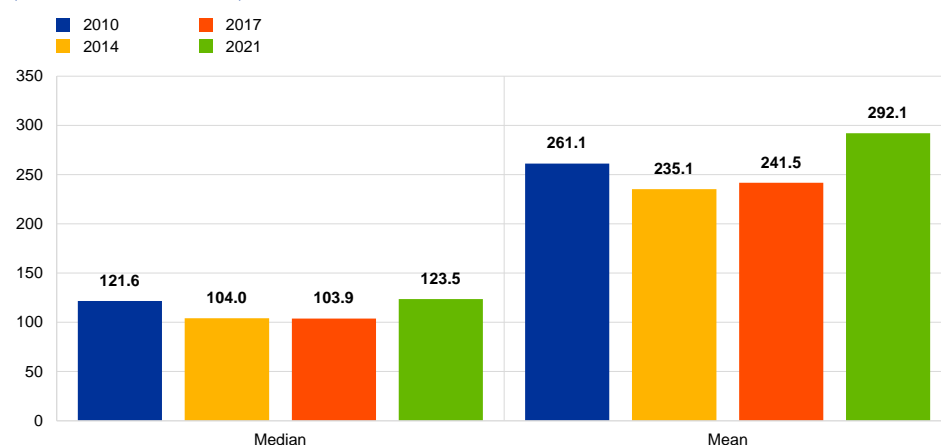
Source: HFCS. Euro area comprises Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, France, Latvia, Luxemburg, Austria, Finland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Netherlands, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia.
Notes: In 2010 Estonia, Ireland, Latvia and Lithuania are missing; in 2014 Lithuania is missing. Standard errors for waves 2017 and 2021 are shown in Table 9.

Across households, net wealth tends to increase with the number of household members, partly because larger households tend to have more income earners. In 2021 median and mean net wealth were €64,000 and €185,200 respectively, for single-member households, and €125,900 and €355,400 respectively, for households with five or more members.

Table 9

Net wealth

(thousands of 2021 EUR)

Household characteristics	Median net wealth			Mean net wealth		
	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change
Euro area						
All households	103.9	123.5	13.1	241.5	292.1	12.4
S.E.	(1.5)	(1.7)		(3.2)	(4.3)	
Number of household members						
1	45.2	64.0	34.6	152.3	185.2	16.5
2	151.1	167.1	7.3	299.7	352.1	10.6
3	121.6	153.5	16.9	248.1	318.5	17.7
4	149.5	178.0	7.3	289.0	387.5	19.0
5 or more	119.4	125.9	-1.7	337.5	355.4	-5.7
Age of reference person						
16-34	14.9	21.7	39.0	68.9	100.2	39.6
35-44	73.7	88.4	11.4	167.9	198.4	11.4
45-54	135.0	146.8	1.0	286.7	343.6	10.3
55-64	175.4	195.2	3.3	325.1	393.6	8.9
65-74	174.3	185.3	1.5	314.7	341.2	2.1
75+	117.3	144.4	16.7	251.2	308.1	18.1
Education of reference person						
Basic education	74.5	83.5	2.5	148.4	162.8	0.4
Secondary	88.0	114.3	24.6	209.6	258.0	15.9
Tertiary	182.9	204.3	5.8	385.1	446.3	7.6
Housing status						
Owner – outright	237.5	266.6	7.6	396.7	478.8	12.7
Owner with mortgage	165.9	193.2	15.1	302.3	345.1	10.6
Renter or other	9.4	12.0	27.0	54.4	64.3	11.5
Work status of reference person						
Employee	86.1	107.3	20.8	191.4	233.2	16.4
Self-employed	247.6	315.0	9.9	597.4	784.5	17.2
Retired	152.2	168.0	7.4	274.6	301.7	7.9
Other not working	13.5	15.7	0.6	97.5	97.8	-3.5
Percentile of income						
Below 20	20.2	29.8	31.0	78.7	95.2	15.0
20-39.9	50.9	73.0	27.9	118.3	143.0	14.8
40-59.9	105.4	111.0	0.7	186.1	192.0	-0.1
60-79.9	156.2	189.0	13.9	251.1	301.0	14.8
80-89.9	241.9	285.9	12.1	365.2	456.1	18.9
90-100	439.0	517.6	7.3	782.6	1002.8	12.6
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	1.1	2.0	75.0	-4.8	-0.9	-
20-39.9	25.3	35.0	24.9	28.2	38.0	23.6
40-59.9	104.0	123.5	13.0	106.2	126.5	12.3
60-79.9	230.5	265.5	9.5	236.1	271.2	9.3
80-89.9	421.3	480.9	8.5	427.8	490.3	8.6
90-100	827.3	1011.0	14.7	1256.8	1561.1	13.7
Non-euro area						
All households	61.1	73.3	27.0	103.2	122.0	22.8
S.E.	(1.2)	(1.0)		(3.2)	(2.7)	

When charted against the age of the reference person, net wealth had a hump-shaped pattern, rising until the age of 60 or so and declining thereafter. In 2021 the median peaked at €195,200, for the 55-64 age range, while the mean peaked for the same age range at €393,600. In percentage terms, the increases in net wealth presented a U-shaped pattern, with particularly strong increases among young households under 34 years of age and those aged over 74 (for both mean and the median).

Both median and mean net wealth rise strongly with level of education. Households with secondary education recorded considerable increases in net wealth, of around 25% for the median and more than 15% for the mean. By contrast, net wealth of households with tertiary education grew by more than 5%, but barely increased for households with only basic education.

The housing status of the reference person bears a strong correlation with net wealth: while renters owned €64,300 of net wealth (mean), for homeowners with a mortgage and outright homeowners, the corresponding values were €345,100 and €478,800 respectively. For all three groups of households, mean net wealth grew by more than 10%.

Net wealth also varies according to the work status of the reference person. It is lowest when the reference person does not work and is not retired, increases for employees and the retired, and is highest among the self-employed. Between 2017 and 2021, median and mean net wealth for employees increased by around 20%. By contrast, net wealth among retired households rose by around 8% and for the other households (including those that are neither working nor retired) the median stagnated while the mean declined.

The increases in median and mean net wealth were particularly notable for the bottom two quintiles of gross income, exceeding 15%. Net wealth for households in the middle income quintile barely increased, while it rose by 10-15%, or sometimes more, for the top two quintiles.

Net wealth dynamics were reflected in complex changes in the distribution of net wealth. A reduction of inequality was recorded in the lower half of the distribution, while inequality in the upper half of the distribution increased. Overall measures of inequality provide conflicting indications: the ratio between the net wealth at the 80th and 20th percentiles of net wealth declined by 9.2 percentage points, pointing to a reduction in inequality; the share of net wealth accruing to the top decile increased

by 1.6 percentage points, suggesting an increase in inequality; the Gini coefficient remained essentially unchanged.

5 Income

Gross household income rose modestly between 2017 and 2021. For the median household, gross income increased by 3.1% to €34,000 and mean gross income increased by 3.4% to €47,700 (Table 10).[14] These changes further strengthened the income growth observed since 2014 (Chart 2).

Looking across household characteristics, one can observe considerable variance in income across households, though less so than for net wealth.

Household income tends to increase with household size, as larger households typically have more income earners. For single-member households, median income in 2021 stood at €21,400, while mean income was €28,000. Median and mean incomes for households with three or more household members exceeded €44,000 and €60,000 respectively. Between 2017 and 2021, median incomes of single-member and large households (five or more members) grew the most (around 4%), while those in between rose by less than 3%.

Chart 2

Median and mean gross household income, euro area

(EUR thousands at 2021 values)
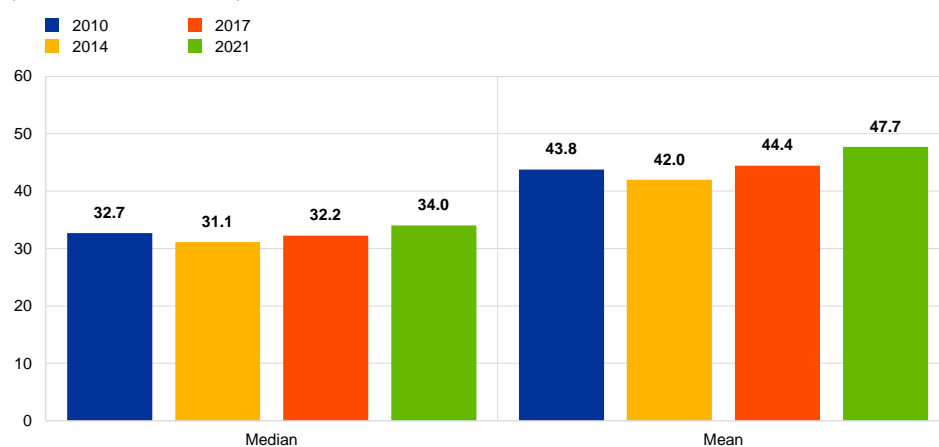
■ 2010   ■ 2017
■ 2014   ■ 2021

Source: HFCS. Euro area comprises Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, France, Latvia, Luxemburg, Austria, Finland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, Netherlands, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia.
Note: In 2010 Estonia, Ireland, Latvia and Lithuania are missing; in 2014 Lithuania is missing. Standard errors for waves 2017 and 2021 are shown in Table 10.

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[14]   The reference year for income is 2019 for some countries and 2020 for others (Table 1 above). Income for the latter group was affected by fiscal measures aimed at protecting households from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 10

Gross household income

(thousands of 2021 EUR)

Household characteristics	Median income			Mean income		
	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change
Euro area						
All households	32.2	34.0	3.1	44.4	47.7	3.4
S.E.	(0.2)	(0.3)		(0.3)	(0.4)	
Number of household members						
1	20.4	21.4	4.4	26.8	28.0	3.3
2	38.2	38.7	0.3	48.9	52.1	3.6
3	41.6	44.1	2.7	54.1	60.3	7.0
4	49.5	52.8	2.3	61.6	68.6	3.6
5 or more	48.3	51.7	4.0	62.4	69.9	4.9
Age of reference person						
16-34	28.6	30.8	5.6	35.2	38.8	9.6
35-44	38.0	41.3	5.1	48.7	52.5	4.7
45-54	41.3	41.4	-1.5	56.4	59.5	-0.3
55-64	36.9	38.7	1.8	51.0	56.1	4.4
65-74	29.8	29.0	-2.6	39.1	39.4	-2.7
75+	22.1	24.6	8.1	29.9	33.4	10.6
Education of reference person						
Basic education	20.6	20.7	-0.1	26.4	27.2	1.7
Secondary	34.0	35.0	1.4	42.8	44.8	2.5
Tertiary	51.3	51.2	-1.7	65.8	69.0	-0.8
Housing status						
Owner – outright	32.1	33.6	2.7	44.6	48.3	3.4
Owner with mortgage	52.1	52.0	-0.3	64.3	66.5	1.2
Renter or other	24.9	26.9	5.1	34.0	36.8	6.1
Work status of reference person						
Employee	41.4	42.3	0.3	52.5	56.1	4.0
Self-employed	40.3	46.1	5.2	63.9	75.9	3.4
Retired	27.2	27.4	0.5	34.9	35.4	0.9
Other not working	12.8	13.3	3.8	18.0	18.9	5.8
Percentile of income						
Below 20	10.2	10.8	6.6	9.3	9.8	6.6
20-39.9	20.8	21.9	4.6	20.8	21.9	4.5
40-59.9	32.3	34.0	4.3	32.6	34.1	3.2
60-79.9	49.7	51.3	1.6	50.4	52.0	1.4
80-89.9	73.7	77.4	2.3	74.3	78.0	2.2
90-100	116.5	126.1	2.7	144.3	163.5	4.7
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	18.5	19.8	4.5	23.7	25.5	6.6
20-39.9	26.6	27.8	3.7	32.4	33.9	3.4
40-59.9	29.9	31.2	2.5	37.4	38.8	2.7
60-79.9	39.4	41.1	2.3	48.8	51.1	1.0
80-89.9	53.1	53.6	-0.2	62.2	65.7	5.2
90-100	74.2	80.5	2.6	97.5	112.8	3.8
Non-euro area						
All households	14.3	16.5	17.5	17.6	20.4	17.8
S.E.	(0.2)	(0.2)		(0.2)	(0.1)	

When charted against the age of the reference person, gross income presents a hump-shaped pattern, similar to net wealth, though it tends to peak earlier, at around the age of 50. In 2021 income by age peaked at €41,400 for the median and €59,500 for the mean. Between 2017 and 2021, household income grew strongly for households under 45 years of age and for those aged over 75.

Both median and mean incomes strongly increased with the level of education. Income increases from 2017 to 2021 across different education groups were mixed, with households with a secondary level of education generally reporting more favourable developments than other households.

Homeowners with a mortgage tended to have substantially higher mean and median incomes than outright homeowners and renters. Between 2017 and 2021 incomes of homeowners with a mortgage essentially stagnated compared with incomes of renters and outright homeowners, which increased by around 3-6%.

In 2021 the mean income of the self-employed was substantially higher than the mean income of the employed, though the difference was much smaller when it came to median income. Incomes were lower for households in which the reference person was retired or not employed. The median and mean incomes of retired people grew by less than 1% only between 2017 and 2021, less so than for households with other work statuses. Incomes of the self-employed grew more strongly, by around 3-5%.

In 2021 median income ranged from €10,800 for the lowest income quintile to €126,100 for the top 10% of the income distribution. Between 2017 and 2021, incomes grew across the entire income distribution, although less strongly in the upper half. In 2021, compared with 2017, median and mean income were 6.6% higher in the bottom income quintile and 2.7% and 4.7% higher respectively, in the top income decile.

Measures of income inequality remained essentially unchanged between 2017 and 2021, with some increase in the share of the top income quintile. The ratio between the income of households at the 90th percentile of the income distribution and the income of the median household remained constant at 2.7. The ratio between the income of the median household and the income of the household at the tenth percentile of the income distribution grew modestly due to a somewhat stronger increase at the median.

Income changes across the net wealth distribution were broadly comparable for the median, at around 2-5% for most groups, and somewhat more heterogeneous for the mean, with growth within wealth groups ranging between 1% and 6.6%.

6   Consumption and credit constraints

Between 2017 and 2021, the median annual value of food consumption remained roughly unchanged at around €5,500. The amount spent on utilities was also largely the same, at around €2,600 both in 2017 and 2021 (Table 11).

However, the changes become more pronounced across household groups. For example, median expenditures on food grew by around 7% for households below 35 years or age and those aged over 74 and tended to decline for middle aged households (ages 35-54). Spending on both food and utilities grew by at least 6.9% for the bottom two income quintiles, but did not increase much (or even decreased) in the top two quintiles. Similarly, the increase in spending was stronger in the lowest and the medium net wealth quintiles.

The share of households that had applied for credit within the last three years dropped slightly to 21.9% (Table 12A). The changes among all sub-groups of the population considered were relatively modest. The percentage of those that did not apply for credit because of perceived credit constraints increased marginally to 5.4%. Across the age distribution, the largest increases were seen among younger households, with the percentage climbing by 2.3 percentage points to 9.6% for those aged 16-34.

The proportion of households that were fully or partially refused a loan was broadly unchanged around 10.5% in 2021. A reduction across lower income quintiles was counterbalanced by increases in the upper part of the distribution.

These combined developments resulted in the proportion of credit-constrained households (as defined in the notes to Table 12B) increasing negligibly for most sub-groups of the population, from 6.8% to 6.9% for the euro area as a whole.

Table 11

Consumption

(thousands of 2021 EUR)

Household characteristics	Median expenditures on food			Median expenditures on utilities		
	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change	2017	2021	Adjusted percentage change
Euro area						
All Households	5.5	5.4	-0.9	2.6	2.6	1.4
S.E.	(0.0)	(0.0)		(0.0)	(0.0)	
Number of household members						
1	3.7	3.6	-3.0	2.0	2.1	3.2
2	5.9	6.0	1.6	3.0	3.0	0.2
3	6.4	6.6	2.4	3.0	3.0	0.2
4	7.5	7.8	4.2	3.2	3.3	0.4
5 or more	8.6	8.4	-2.8	3.5	3.5	-3.6
Age of reference person						
16-34	4.5	4.8	7.2	2.2	2.2	0.5
35-44	6.1	6.0	-2.1	2.7	2.8	1.9
45-54	6.2	6.0	-3.7	3.1	3.0	-2.0
55-64	5.8	6.0	3.8	3.0	3.0	-1.1
65-74	5.5	5.4	-2.6	2.6	2.6	0.7
75+	4.5	4.8	6.9	2.4	2.5	0.9
Education of reference person						
Basic education	4.8	4.8	0.2	2.1	2.1	0.7
Secondary	5.5	5.4	-1.7	2.9	2.9	0.8
Tertiary	6.5	6.2	-6.6	3.1	3.0	-2.3
Housing status						
Owner – outright	6.0	6.0	0.2	2.9	3.0	4.5
Owner with mortgage	6.8	6.6	-2.9	3.3	3.1	-5.4
Renter or other	4.5	4.6	6.8	2.2	2.3	3.4
Work status of reference person						
Employee	6.0	6.0	0.1	2.8	2.9	-1.2
Self-employed	6.2	6.7	6.7	3.1	3.1	-2.4
Retired	5.1	4.8	-6.5	2.6	2.6	0.1
Other not working	3.7	3.6	-2.1	1.8	1.8	-2.1
Percentile of income						
Below 20	3.2	3.6	12.2	1.6	1.8	11.3
20-39.9	4.5	4.8	6.9	2.2	2.3	4.5
40-59.9	5.3	5.6	1.7	2.6	2.8	3.5
60-79.9	6.7	6.6	-1.3	3.1	3.2	-0.8
80-89.9	7.7	7.8	1.3	3.7	3.6	-3.8
90-100	9.6	9.0	-6.7	4.4	4.2	-3.6
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	3.9	3.9	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.1
20-39.9	4.9	4.8	-1.0	2.3	2.4	6.0
40-59.9	5.2	5.4	3.4	2.6	2.5	-6.0
60-79.9	6.2	6.0	-3.0	3.1	3.0	-1.9
80-89.9	7.4	7.2	-3.0	3.5	3.6	2.5
90-100	8.4	8.4	-0.6	4.0	4.2	3.9
Non-euro area						
All households	3.2	2.8	8.7	2.1	1.5	-9.4
S.E.	(0.0)	(0.0)		(0.1)	(0.0)	

Notes: The table reports household consumption in 2017 and 2021.
There are two different indicators of household consumption, both referring to annual amounts: (1) total household expenditure on food, both at home and outside the home, and (2) total household expenditure on utilities. The first three sub-columns report the median annual food expenditure at home and outside the home in 2017 and in 2021, and the adjusted percentage change between those years, calculated using the historical weights for Italy. Sub-columns 4 to 6 show the median annual amount spent on utilities in those same years and the corresponding percentage change. All statistics are broken down by different household groups as follows: (1) all households, (2) number of household members, (3) age of the reference person, (4) education of the reference person, (5) housing status of the household, (6) work status of the reference person, (7) percentile of income within the euro area, (8) percentile of net wealth within the euro area and (9) all households in the non-euro area. Standard errors were calculated using the Rao-Wu rescaled bootstrap method and replicate weights provided by the countries (1,000 replicates). Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland. Non-euro area comprise Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

Table 12A

Credit constraints

(percentage of households)

Household characteristics	Applied for credit within last 3 years			Not applying for credit due to perceived credit constraint		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted change
Euro area						
All households	23.2	21.9	-1.5	5.2	5.4	0.2
S.E.	(0.3)	(0.3)		(0.2)	(0.2)	
Number of household members						
1	14.7	13.0	-1.6	4.9	5.3	0.5
2	21.0	20.6	-0.5	4.0	4.0	0.0
3	32.7	30.3	-2.6	6.6	6.5	0.0
4	36.0	34.4	-2.3	6.2	6.2	-0.1
5 or more	32.3	35.3	2.7	7.7	9.2	1.6
Age of reference person						
16-34	33.3	32.9	-0.7	7.3	9.6	2.3
35-44	34.4	33.3	-1.4	6.5	6.8	0.4
45-54	29.8	26.8	-3.3	6.9	7.0	0.1
55-64	21.7	21.3	-0.6	4.9	4.2	-0.6
65-74	12.8	12.6	-0.1	2.8	3.4	0.6
75+	4.5	4.7	0.1	2.4	2.0	-0.4
Education of reference person						
Basic education	15.8	16.0	0.2	6.2	6.9	0.5
Secondary	24.6	22.8	-2.0	5.6	5.8	0.3
Tertiary	28.9	25.7	-3.3	3.6	3.6	0.2
Housing status						
Owner – outright	14.3	12.4	-1.9	2.7	2.7	0.0
Owner with mortgage	47.9	45.3	-2.4	3.8	3.8	0.0
Renter or other	19.2	19.2	-0.3	8.4	9.2	0.6
Work status of reference person						
Employee	32.1	30.5	-2.3	5.2	5.4	0.2
Self-employed	30.1	25.1	-4.2	6.6	5.9	-0.5
Retired	10.1	9.6	-0.5	2.7	2.7	0.0
Other not working	12.3	14.6	2.4	10.9	13.5	2.8
Percentile of income						
Below 20	10.9	10.9	0.0	8.4	9.4	1.1
20-39.9	16.7	18.1	1.2	6.8	6.6	-0.2
40-59.9	23.1	23.2	-0.6	5.3	5.6	0.2
60-79.9	31.1	27.6	-3.6	3.4	3.2	0.1
80-89.9	33.5	28.2	-5.0	2.3	2.1	-0.1
90-100	35.0	30.8	-3.7	1.9	2.2	0.2
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	21.5	21.9	0.2	11.6	13.0	1.2
20-39.9	22.6	23.0	-0.1	5.6	6.4	1.2
40-59.9	25.1	23.3	-2.2	4.0	3.6	-0.3
60-79.9	23.2	21.0	-2.2	3.2	2.1	-1.0
80-89.9	22.1	20.2	-1.5	1.6	2.0	0.1
90-100	24.9	20.2	-4.6	1.5	1.6	0.0
Non-euro area						
All households	11.7	76.5	63.4	4.8	4.2	-1.7
S.E.	(0.4)	(0.3)		(0.3)	(0.4)	

Notes: The table reports credit constraints among households.
The first three sub-columns show the percentage of households that had applied for credit in the previous three years in 2017 and 2021, and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Sub-columns 4 and 5 show those households that chose not to apply for credit owing to a perceived credit constraint and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. All statistics are broken down by different household groups, as follows: (1) all households, (2) number of household members, (3) age of the reference person, (4) education of the reference person, (5) housing status of the household, (6) work status of the reference person, (7) percentile of income within the euro area, (8) percentile of net wealth within the euro area and (9) all households in the non-euro area. Standard errors were calculated using the Rao-Wu rescaled bootstrap method and replicate weights provided by the countries (1,000 replicates). Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage point changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

Table 12B

Credit constraints

Household characteristics	Refused or only reduced credit (among those applying in last 3 years)			Credit constrained household		
	2017	2021	Adjusted change	2017	2021	Adjusted change
Euro area						
All households	10.6	10.5	0.0	6.8	6.9	0.1
S.E.	(0.5)	(0.6)		(0.2)	(0.2)	
Number of household members						
1	13.8	12.9	-0.8	6.2	6.2	0.1
2	8.6	8.3	-0.3	5.4	5.2	-0.2
3	12.0	12.7	0.9	9.2	9.4	0.3
4	8.1	8.0	-0.1	8.0	8.0	-0.1
5 or more	11.2	12.3	2.1	9.9	12.4	2.9
Age of reference person						
16-34	11.8	11.4	-0.2	10.1	12.2	2.2
35-44	11.9	11.4	-0.3	9.3	9.1	0.0
45-54	9.6	10.7	1.4	8.6	8.8	0.2
55-64	10.1	8.0	-2.0	6.3	5.5	-0.7
65-74	6.8	10.6	3.4	3.5	4.2	0.7
75+	12.1	10.3	-1.8	2.9	2.4	-0.5
Education of reference person						
Basic education	16.5	16.5	0.1	7.9	8.6	0.6
Secondary	10.4	10.6	0.4	7.3	7.4	0.2
Tertiary	7.3	7.1	-0.2	5.1	4.8	-0.1
Housing status						
Owner – outright	8.4	7.8	-0.7	3.5	3.4	-0.2
Owner with mortgage	6.1	6.4	0.3	6.1	5.8	-0.3
Renter or other	17.7	17.6	0.0	10.4	11.2	0.7
Work status of reference person						
Employee	9.2	9.7	0.7	7.3	7.5	0.2
Self-employed	15.3	10.3	-4.6	9.5	7.4	-2.0
Retired	8.1	9.1	0.8	3.3	3.3	0.0
Other not working	22.9	21.5	-1.5	12.3	15.1	3.0
Percentile of income						
Below 20	27.3	23.7	-3.2	10.1	10.8	0.7
20-39.9	17.8	15.4	-2.0	8.5	8.2	-0.3
40-59.9	11.0	9.3	-1.8	7.1	6.9	-0.4
60-79.9	5.8	7.6	1.8	4.8	4.8	0.2
80-89.9	6.5	8.4	2.4	3.9	4.4	0.7
90-100	4.6	4.1	-0.5	2.9	3.4	0.3
Percentile of net wealth						
Below 20	21.3	20.1	-0.9	14.1	15.3	1.0
20-39.9	11.8	13.6	2.2	7.5	8.6	1.5
40-59.9	9.8	7.6	-2.2	5.8	4.9	-0.8
60-79.9	6.2	6.4	0.3	4.2	3.2	-0.9
80-89.9	4.3	5.4	1.2	2.3	2.9	0.3
90-100	4.7	2.7	-2.0	2.5	2.0	-0.5
Non-euro area						
All households	14.3	15.6	-4.0	5.4	4.6	-1.9
S.E.	(1.6)	(4.1)		(0.3)	(0.4)	

Notes: The table reports credit constraints among households.

The first three sub-columns show those that had applied for credit in the previous three years but were denied it or were offered a smaller amount than they had applied for, and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. Sub-columns 4 to 6 show the percentage of credit-constrained households in 2017 and in 2021, and the percentage point change from 2017 to 2021. A credit-constrained household is defined as a household to which one or more of the following situations apply: (i) applied for credit within the last three years but was turned down, and did not report a successful re-application, (ii) applied for credit but was not granted the full amount applied for, or (iii) did not apply for credit owing to a perceived credit constraint. Households with missing information on applying for credit or on not applying for credit due to a perceived credit constraint are not included. The information on credit constraints is not necessarily fully imputed for all countries; remaining missing values may cause slight numerical inconsistencies between the individual components and the composite credit-constrained household indicator. All statistics are broken down by different household groups, as follows: (1) all households, (2) number of household members, (3) age of the reference person, (4) education of the reference person, (5) housing status of the household, (6) work status of the reference person, (7) percentile of income within the euro area, (8) percentile of net wealth within the euro area and (9) all households in the non-euro area. Standard errors were calculated using the Rao-Wu rescaled bootstrap method and replicate weights provided by the countries (1,000 replicates). Adjusted percentage changes: for the euro area, percentage changes are computed with reference to an unchanged sample design and do not match the values that would be obtained by directly comparing the figures shown in the 2017 and 2021 columns; for the non-euro area aggregate, percentage point changes are computed with reference to Hungary and Croatia only. Data are included for the following euro area countries in this table: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland. Non-euro area comprises Croatia, Hungary and Poland in 2017; and Czech Republic, Croatia and Hungary in 2021. For the inflation adjustment of the 2021 wave, various HICP levels were used, depending on the year in which the countries ran most of the fieldwork. More specifically, the HICP level in 2019 was used for Finland, the HICP level in 2020 was used for Ireland, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Malta and Portugal, and the HICP level in 2021 was used for all other countries.

Abbreviations

Countries

AT	Austria		IT	Italy
BE	Belgium		JP	Japan
BG	Bulgaria		LT	Lithuania
CH	Switzerland		LU	Luxembourg
CY	Cyprus		LV	Latvia
CZ	Czech Republic		MT	Malta
DK	Denmark		NL	Netherlands
DE	Germany		PL	Poland
EE	Estonia		PT	Portugal
IE	Ireland		RO	Romania
ES	Spain		SE	Sweden
FI	Finland		SI	Slovenia
FR	France		SK	Slovakia
GR	Greece		UK	United Kingdom
HR	Croatia		US	United States
HU	Hungary			

Other

CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing		LFS	Labour force survey
CATI	Computer-assisted telephone interviewing		MFI	Monetary financial institution
CASI	Computer-assisted self-interviewing		MI	Multiple imputation
CAWI	Computer-assisted web interviewing		NACE	European Classification of Economic Activities
ESA	European System of Accounts		NCB	National central bank
EU-SILC	EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions		NSI	National statistical institute
FKP	Financially knowledgeable person		NUTS	Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics
HFCN	Household Finance and Consumption Network		PAPI	Paper-and-pencil Interviewing
HFCS	Household Finance and Consumption Survey		PSU	Primary sampling unit
HMR	Household main residence		RP	Reference person
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education		UDB	User database
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations			