

Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey

Results on EU land cover and use published for the first time

Forests and other wooded areas¹ occupy almost 40% of the total area of the **EU**, cropland nearly a quarter and grassland a further fifth, while built-up and other artificial areas², such as roads and railways, account for 4%. Regarding socio-economic use, over 40% of the land in the **EU** is used for agriculture and almost 30% for forestry. The use of land for residential, commercial and industrial³ purposes accounts for just over 10% of the total area of the **EU**.

These data⁴ are published for the first time by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union** and are based on a large scale land survey, the Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS)⁵, conducted in 2009. Land was surveyed in 23 **EU** Member States⁶, where both the physical cover of the land and its visible socio-economic use were recorded. LUCAS is the largest harmonised land survey ever implemented in the EU. The resulting dataset is unique as it is fully harmonised and comparable with the same definitions and methodology among Member States.

Almost 40% of the EU covered by forests and other wooded areas

In **Finland** (68%), **Sweden** (66%), **Slovenia** (63%), **Estonia** (55%) and **Latvia** (52%) more than half of the country is covered by forests and other wooded areas.

The highest shares of land cover by crops are observed in **Denmark** (48%), **Hungary** (47%), **Poland** (36%), the **Czech Republic** (35%), **Germany** and **Italy** (both 33%), **Spain** and **France** (both 30%).

Ireland (64%) has almost two thirds of the country covered by natural or agricultural grasslands, followed by the **United Kingdom** (42%), the **Netherlands** (38%) and **Belgium** (33%). The largest shares of shrubland are found in **Greece** (21%), **Spain** (14%), **Portugal** (11%) and the **United Kingdom** (10%).

The **Netherlands** (13%) and **Belgium** (10%) have the largest shares of land covered with built-up and other artificial areas.

More than 10% of EU land used for residential, commercial and industrial purposes

The socio-economic use of land reflects to a large extent the physical land cover. However, there are some differences. For example, the use of land for residential, commercial and industrial purposes differs from land covered by built-up and other artificial areas, because some areas covered by vegetation and/or water are used for residential purposes (gardens, parks, small lakes, etc.).

The Member States with the highest shares of areas used for residential, commercial and industrial purposes are the **Netherlands** (37%), **Belgium** (25%), **Denmark** and the **United Kingdom** (both 16%) and **Sweden** (15%).

Land cover, 2009, in % of total area

	Forest and other wooded land	Cropland	Grassland	Shrubland	Water and wetland	Built-up and other artificial areas ²	Bare land
EU*	39	24	20	6	5	4	2
Belgium	26	27	33	1	2	10	1
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Czech Republic	38	35	20	1	2	4	1
Denmark	18	48	22	1	3	6	1
Germany	34	33	23	1	2	7	1
Estonia	55	12	19	1	11	2	1
Ireland	12	5	64	6	8	4	1
Greece	33	24	13	21	2	3	3
Spain	32	30	14	14	1	4	5
France	32	30	27	3	2	5	1
Italy	33	33	16	5	3	7	2
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Latvia	52	12	25	2	5	2	1
Lithuania	37	24	31	1	4	3	1
Luxembourg	36	22	31	1	1	8	1
Hungary	23	47	20	2	3	4	1
Malta	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	12	24	38	1	11	13	1
Austria	47	17	23	2	3	5	3
Poland	33	36	24	1	2	3	1
Portugal	46	19	14	11	2	5	4
Romania	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Slovenia	63	11	18	2	1	3	1
Slovakia	46	28	19	2	1	3	0
Finland	68	6	3	4	16	2	1
Sweden	66	4	4	6	16	2	2
United Kingdom	15	20	42	10	4	7	2

The shares might not sum up to 100% due to rounding.

* EU average based on available Member States

: Data not available

Land use, 2009, in % of total area

	Agriculture	Forestry	Hunting, fishing and no visible use	Commerce, services and residential areas**	Industry, energy, transport and mining***
EU*	43	29	16	8	3
Belgium	53	18	4	19	6
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	:
Czech Republic	50	34	6	7	3
Denmark	64	12	9	12	4
Germany	52	29	5	9	5
Estonia	27	50	9	11	3
Ireland	73	9	5	7	6
Greece	35	9	49	4	3
Spain	53	14	27	3	3
France	54	23	12	8	4
Italy	51	17	20	8	5
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	:
Latvia	32	48	14	4	2
Lithuania	53	34	7	5	2
Luxembourg	53	33	3	5	6
Hungary	62	22	6	7	3
Malta	:	:	:	:	:
Netherlands	55	3	5	25	12
Austria	38	46	6	6	4
Poland	53	27	13	5	3
Portugal	37	38	18	4	4
Romania	:	:	:	:	:
Slovenia	30	51	11	5	3
Slovakia	42	40	8	8	2
Finland	7	62	21	8	2
Sweden	8	54	23	13	2
United Kingdom	66	9	10	13	3

The shares might not sum up to 100% due to rounding.

* EU average based on available Member States

** Also including recreation and sport areas

*** Also including water and waste treatment and construction

: Data not available

1. The definition of "other wooded areas" in the Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS) is broader than the definition of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
2. Built-up and other artificial areas include roofed constructions (buildings and greenhouses), non-built up areas (yards, parkings, cemeteries) and linear features (roads and rail networks).
3. Includes commerce, services, residential areas, industry, energy, transport and mining.
4. More detailed data can be found on the Eurostat web site: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> /Statistics database/General and regional statistics/Land cover and land use, soil and landscape.
5. In the Land Use/Cover Area frame Survey (LUCAS) 235 000 points were visited by 500 field surveyors on the spot. Those spots were selected from a standard 2 km grid with, in total, around 1 million points all over the EU. The land cover and the visible land use were classified according to the harmonized LUCAS land cover and land use nomenclatures.
6. Data for Bulgaria and Romania will be released later in 2010. Malta and Cyprus were not covered by the survey for methodological reasons.

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