

Provision of deficit and debt data for 2016 – first notification – Euro area and EU28 government deficit at 1.5% and 1.7% of GDP respectively – Government debt at 89.2% and 83.5%

In 2016, the government deficit and debt of both the **euro area** (EA19) and the **EU28** decreased in relative terms compared with 2015. In the **euro area** the government deficit to GDP ratio fell from 2.1% in 2015 to 1.5% in 2016, and in the **EU28** from 2.4% to 1.7%. In the **euro area** the government debt to GDP ratio declined from 90.3% at the end of 2015 to 89.2% at the end of 2016, and in the **EU28** from 84.9% to 83.5%.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

Only the SNP will stand up for Scotland

“The Nasty Party”.

It was with those three words that Theresa May – in her description of how the Tories were seen by ordinary people – first came to national political prominence.

Liberal Democrats expected to surpass 100,000 members

The Liberal Democrat membership surge is about to take the party to a landmark 100,000 members – thanks to a staggering 12,500 joining since Theresa May announced the snap General Election last Tuesday.

Reaching six figures makes the party bigger than it has been since the mid-1990s and puts it on course to reach its highest membership ever within

days. The biggest the party has been since its formation is 101,768 in 1994.

It means that more than 50,000 members have joined since last year's European referendum and more than 67,500 since the 2015 General Election.

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron pledged to build the party to 100,000 members by the end of the parliament as a key pledge during his 2015 leadership campaign – but at that point everyone expected the end of the parliament to be 2020.

[Join the Liberal Democrats](#)

Tim Farron said:

“Thousands of people are joining the Liberal Democrats every day because they want to change Britain's future.

“People want a strong opposition to Theresa May's Hard Brexit agenda and the Liberal Democrats are the only party challenging them up and down the country. Jeremy Corbyn's Labour has completely failed, offering no opposition whatsoever and giving Theresa May a blank cheque to pursue a Hard Brexit.

“This election is your chance to change the direction of our country. If you want to stop a disastrous Hard Brexit, if you want to keep Britain in the Single Market, if you want a strong opposition to fight for an open, tolerant and united Britain, this is your chance.”

The landmark figure is just the latest sign of the party's gathering momentum:

- The latest poll in Sunday's Observer gave the party a four point increase. The party is consistently polling between 11-14%, close to double its average for most of 2015 and 2016.
 - We are on a winning streak. Not only did we win the Richmond Park by-election in stunning style in December 2016, we have had an astonishing run of council by-election gains – more than 30 since last May – making it the best year for by-election gains in the party's history. We are winning from the Tories, Labour and UKIP, and in areas that voted both Leave and Remain. We are also the only party to have increased its share of the vote in every recent parliamentary by-election.
 - We have over-taken Labour in fundraising. In the last quarter of 2016, the Liberal Democrats raised nearly £2m – more money than the Labour Party for the first time ever.
-

Заявление Верховного Представителя ЕС Федерики Могерини в связи с гибелью члена СММ ОБСЕ в не подконтрольной правительству части

Today's news from Pryshyb – a part of the Luhansk region not currently controlled by the government of Ukraine – that a member of the OSCE's Special Monitoring Mission has been killed by a mine is a tragic reminder of the urgent need for progress on a peaceful resolution of the conflict, which has already taken many innocent lives.

Our condolences go to the family of the victim and I wish a speedy recovery to others injured in this incident, which needs to be thoroughly investigated. Those responsible must be held accountable. I was already in touch with OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier; we have agreed to stay in close contact.

Full implementation of the Minsk agreements remains the basis for a sustainable solution that respects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The European Union will continue to support the vital work of the OSCE and its Special Monitoring Mission, which must be granted full, secure and unimpeded access to all conflict-affected areas, with safety of monitors of crucial importance. The EU will also continue to support de-mining efforts.

Without proper and unimpeded monitoring by the Mission, there cannot be a credible and verified improvement of the security situation, which is the basis for further progress on the political track of the peace process.

Road traffic remains biggest source of noise pollution in Europe

The EEA briefing '[Managing exposure to noise in Europe](#)' provides updated estimates of the numbers of people exposed to noise in Europe. It also provides an update on the measures being taken by EU Member States in addressing noise issues.

Noise pollution remains a major environmental health problem in Europe, with the transport sector being a major cause. Road traffic noise is the dominant source affecting human exposure above the EU's threshold of 55 decibels (dB) for daily exposure and 50 dB for night exposure. Around 100 million people

are exposed to road traffic noise above 55 dB in the 33 member countries of the EEA (Figure 1). Of these, 32 million are exposed to very high noise levels (above 65 dB). Railways is the second largest source, with 19 million people exposed above 55 dB. Aircraft noise, close to major airports, is the third main source, with more than 4.1 million people exposed, followed by industrial noise within urban areas, with 1.0 million people exposed.

Noise from road traffic alone is the second most harmful environmental stressor in Europe, behind air pollution, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The harmful effects of noise arise mainly from the stress reaction it causes in the human body, which can also occur during sleep. These can potentially lead to premature death, cardiovascular disease, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbance, hypertension and, at the least, annoyance.

Figure 1. Number of people in the EEA-33 member countries exposed to noise levels above 55 dB L_{den} , 2012

Tackling noise pollution in the EU

The European Union has taken action to address the problem through the 2002 [Environmental Noise Directive](#) (END). The EU legislation requires Member States to prepare noise maps that inform the development of action plans designed to prevent and reduce harmful exposure. The briefing also presents an updated summary of the different types of measures used by countries to reduce noise. These range from actions that control noise at source, such as introducing low noise road surfaces, quieter aircraft and railway stock, through to measures such as improving urban design to reduce traffic volumes and restricting housing developments in high noise areas.

The briefing is a follow-up to the EEA's [Noise in Europe 2014 report](#) and its release coincides with the [Noise in Europe conference](#) held in Brussels on 24 April and International Noise Awareness Day on 26 April. The briefing is based on the latest data reported to the EEA by its member countries in accordance with the EU's Environmental Noise Directive (END). Accompanying the briefing are [updated country factsheets](#) and a [new web-viewer](#) which shows updated data on noise pollution across Europe.