

Water exploitation index,
plus (WEI+) (sdg_06_60)

ESMS Indicator Profile (ESMS-IP)
Compiling agency: Statistical Office of the
European Union (Eurostat)

Eurostat metadata

Reference metadata

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Eurostat Quality
Profile

4.5. Source data	EEA
5.1. Frequency of dissemination	Every 2 years
5.2. Timeliness	> T+2 years
6.1. Reference area	All EU MS
6.2. Comparability - geographical	All EU MS
6.3. Coverage - Time	> 10 years
6.4. Comparability - over time	> 4 data points

Description of Eurostat quality grading
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1. Contact

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1.1. Contact organisation

Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat)

1.2. Contact organisation unit	E2: Environmental statistics and accounts; sustainable development
1.5. Contact mail address	e-mail contact : ESTAT-SDG-MONITORING@ec.europa.eu

2. Metadata update

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2.1. Metadata last certified	26/04/2024
2.2. Metadata last posted	02/05/2024
2.3. Metadata last update	02/05/2024

3. Relevance

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The indicator is part of the EU Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator set. It is used to monitor progress towards SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation; which is embedded in the European Commission's Priorities under the 'European Green Deal'.

Among other things, SDG 6 calls for ensuring universal access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, and ending open defecation. It also aims at improving water quality and water-use efficiency and encouraging sustainable abstractions and supply of freshwater. Protecting and restoring water-related ecosystems such as forests, mountains, wetlands and rivers is essential for mitigating water scarcity, as is the implementation of integrated water resources management.

Indicator can be considered as global SDG indicator 6.4.2 "Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources".

The Water Framework Directive is the main European legislation aiming to - among others - to promote sustainable water use based on a long-term protection of available water resources. The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 supports the implementation of the Water Framework Directive's objective by requiring Member States to restore freshwater ecosystems.

The 8th Environment Action Programme sets the environmental policy agenda for the years from 2021 to 2030 and explicitly mentions water-related issues in two of its six priority objectives. These two objectives are: (1) pursuing a zero-pollution ambition for a toxic free-environment, including for air, water and soil and protecting the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts; and (2) protecting, preserving and restoring biodiversity and enhancing natural capital, notably air, water, soil, and forest, freshwater, wetland and marine ecosystems.

4. Statistical Indicator

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4.1. Data description

The regionalised water exploitation index (WEI+) measures total water consumption as a percentage of the renewable freshwater resources available for a given territory and period. It quantifies how much water is abstracted monthly or seasonally and how much water is returned before or after use to the environment via river basins (e.g. leakages, discharges by economic sectors). The difference between water abstractions and water returns is regarded as 'water consumption'. In the absence of Europe-wide agreed formal targets, values above 20 % are generally considered to be a sign of water scarcity, while values equal or greater than 40 % indicate situations of severe water scarcity, meaning the use of freshwater resources is unsustainable.

Annual calculations of the WEI+ at national level do not reflect uneven spatial and seasonal distribution of resources and may therefore mask water stress which occurs on a seasonal or regional basis.

Where data reported by the countries are not sufficient to compute seasonal WEI+, model-based disaggregation is applied by the EEA based on data from the WISE SoE-Water quantity database (WISE 3) and other open sources (JRC, Eurostat, OECD, FAO) and including gap filling methods.
4.2. Unit of measure
% of renewable water resources
4.3. Reference Period
Calendar year.
4.4. Accuracy - overall
Annual calculations at national level cannot reflect uneven spatial and seasonal distribution of resources and may therefore mask water scarcity that occurs on a seasonal or regional basis. For detailed assessment of accuracy please refer to the original source (see link to external data source and metadata in section “Annexes”).
4.5. Source data
EEA Data source: Data modelling based on data from the WISE SoE-Water quantity database (WISE 3) and other open sources (JRC, Eurostat, OECD, FAO) and including gap filling methods. Data provider: European Environment Agency (EEA).

5. Frequency and Timeliness of dissemination Top
5.1. Frequency of dissemination
Every 2 years The indicator is updated every two years with annual data.
5.2. Timeliness
> T+2 years New data points are disseminated within three years after the latest reference year.

6. Coverage and comparability Top
6.1. Reference area
All EU MS Data are presented for all EU Member States plus Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, North Macedonia, Albania, Türkiye and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
6.2. Comparability - geographical
All EU MS Comparability between reporting countries needs to be considered with reservation due to the different nature of external inflow and internal flow (which is precipitation minus actual evapotranspiration), as their share in renewable freshwater resources varies considerably among countries.
6.3. Coverage - Time
> 10 years Presented time series starts in 2000.
6.4. Comparability - over time
> 4 data points

Length of comparable time series without methodological break is longer than 4 data points. Comparability over time is generally good, but can be limited due to data gaps and breaks in series.

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7.1. Dissemination format - Publications

Analysis of indicator is presented in Eurostat's annual monitoring report on Sustainable development in the EU (progress towards SDGs in the EU context).

7.2. Dissemination format - online database

See table [sdg_06_60](#)

7.3. Dissemination format - other

Eurostat dedicated section on SDGs: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/sdi/overview>

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