

## Internet use in households and by individuals in 2011

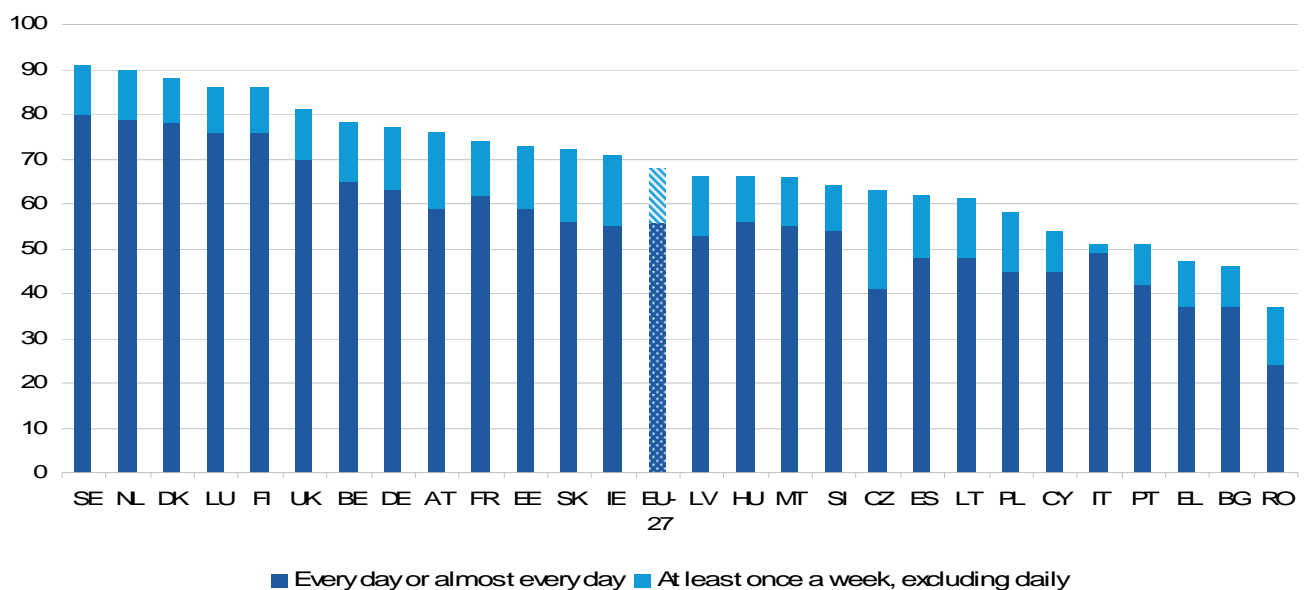
Two thirds of Europeans used the internet on average at least once a week, one quarter have never used it

The internet has become important for daily life, education, work and participation in society. A large majority of households and individuals make use of it today. Nevertheless there are significant differences in access and usage between countries and socio-economic groups. About a quarter of the EU-27 population aged 16 to 74 years old have never used the internet. Among those who used it, most internet users have searched for information and news, consulted wikis, participated in social networks and bought products online. This issue of *Statistics in Focus* provides an overview of the latest results from

the Survey on ICT (information and communication technology) usage in households and by individuals and takes a closer look at the activities done by internet users.

More than half of the individuals (56%) in the EU used the internet everyday or almost every day (figure 1). Two out of three individuals used the internet at least once a week (68%). The shares for individuals who used the internet regularly were above 80% in six Member States: Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The shares were below 60% in seven Member States: Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal and Romania.

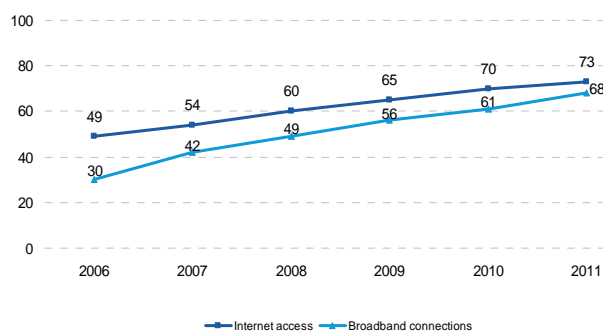
Figure 1: Individuals who used the internet at least once a week, 2011 (% of individuals)



Source: Eurostat (online data codes : [isoc\\_bdek\\_di](#), [isoc\\_ci\\_ifp\\_fu](#))

## Nearly three quarters of EU households had access to the internet in 2011

**Figure 2: Internet access and broadband internet connections in households, EU27 (%)**



Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bde15b\\_h](#))

The proportion of households in the EU with access to the internet reached 73% in 2011, representing an increase of 24 percentage points compared with 2006 (figure 2).

Broadband internet access enables higher speed when browsing and performing activities over the internet. For example, downloading an article or software from a website can take a few seconds with broadband and several minutes without a broadband internet connection.

In 2011, more than two thirds (68%) of households in the EU had used broadband connections, representing a notable increase of 26 percentage points (p.p.) compared with 2007 and of 38 p.p. compared with 2006. Today most households with internet access have broadband.

The share of internet access varied among Member States, ranging from 90% of households and above in the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Sweden and Denmark to 50% and below in Bulgaria, Romania and Greece (table 1).

There were also significant disparities in broadband take-up by households between countries. The percentages were well below 50% in Bulgaria, Greece and Romania. However, several Member States showed a growth of 30 percentage points or more compared to 2007. The growth was highest in Greece at 38 percentage points, followed by Cyprus (36 p.p.), the Czech Republic (35 p.p.), Malta and Poland (both 31 p.p.).

**Table 1: Internet access and broadband internet connections in households (%)**

	Internet connections in households			Broadband internet connections		
	2007	2009	2011	2007	2009	2011
EU-27	54	65	73	42	56	68
BE	60	67	77	56	63	74
BG	19	30	45	15	26	40
CZ	35	54	67	28	49	63
DK	78	83	90	70	76	84
DE	71	79	83	50	65	78
EE	53	63	71	48	62	66
IE	57	67	78	31	54	65
EL	25	38	50	7	33	45
ES	45	54	64	39	51	62
FR	49	63	76	43	57	70
IT	43	53	62	25	39	52
CY	39	53	57	20	47	56
LV	51	58	64	32	50	59
LT	44	60	62	34	50	57
LU	75	87	91	58	71	68
HU	38	55	65	33	51	61
MT	54	64	75	44	63	75
NL	83	90	94	74	77	83
AT	60	70	75	46	58	72
PL	41	59	67	30	51	61
PT	40	48	58	30	46	57
RO	22	38	47	8	24	31
SI	58	64	73	44	56	67
SK	46	62	71	27	42	55
FI	69	78	84	63	74	81
SE	79	86	91	67	79	86
UK <sup>1</sup>	67	77	85	57	69	83
IS	84	90	93	76	87	93
NO	78	86	92	67	78	80
HR	41	50	61	23	39	56
MK	:	42	:	:	34	:
TR	20	30	43	17	26	39
RS	26	37	:	7	23	:

<sup>1</sup>UK data for 2009 and 2011 include estimates for Northern Ireland

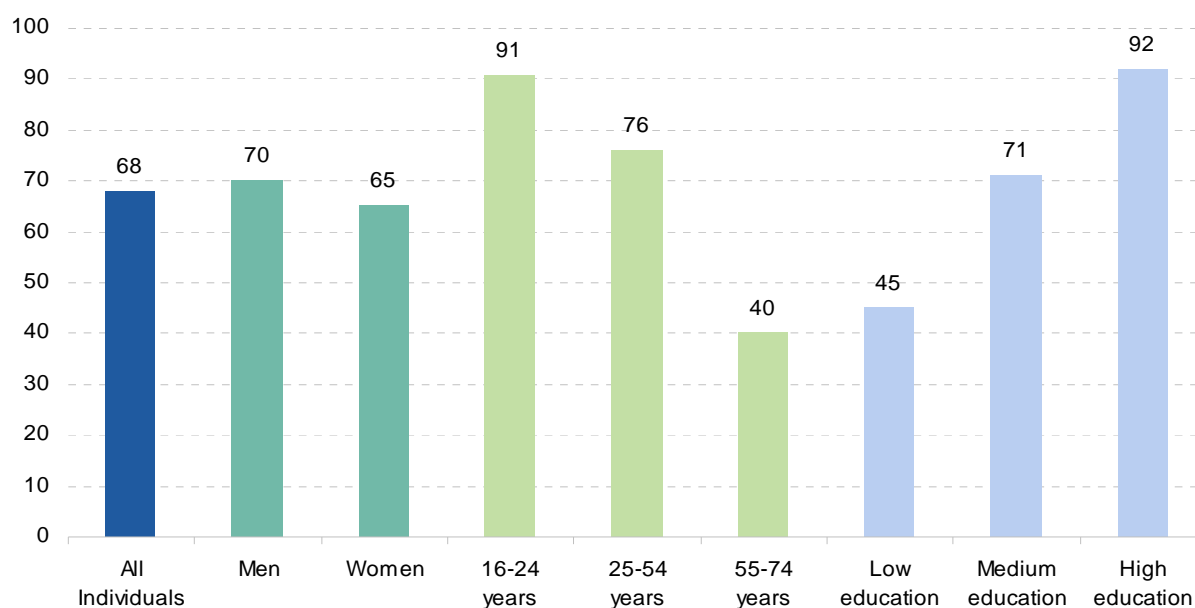
Source: Eurostat (online data code: [isoc\\_bde15b\\_h](#))

## Nine in ten individuals aged 16-24 used the internet regularly

In 2011, 71% of individuals in the EU27 used the internet at least once in the last three months prior to the survey. More than two thirds of individuals (68%) in the EU27 had used the internet regularly (on average at least once a week), either at home, at work or at any other place (table 2). This indicator was included in the set of key performance targets

of the Digital Agenda for Europe: By 2015, 75% of the population should have used the internet regularly. The current level of use was 7 percentage points below this target. There were significant gaps in usage ('digital divides') when looking at age groups and level of formal education (figure 3).

**Figure 3: Individuals who used the internet on average at least once a week, by gender, age group and level of formal education, EU27, 2011 (% of individuals)**



Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bdek\\_di](#))

**Table 2: Internet use and frequency of use by individuals, 2011 (% of individuals)**

	Internet users and non-users			Frequency of use (on average)	
	Used internet within the last 3 months	Used internet within the last 12 months	Never used internet	Every day or almost every day	At least once a week (including daily use)
<b>EU-27</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>BE</b>	82	83	14	65	78
<b>BG</b>	48	51	46	37	46
<b>CZ</b>	70	73	24	41	63
<b>DK</b>	90	91	7	78	88
<b>DE</b>	81	83	16	63	77
<b>EE</b>	77	77	20	59	73
<b>IE</b>	75	77	21	55	71
<b>EL</b>	52	53	45	37	47
<b>ES</b>	67	69	29	48	62
<b>FR</b>	78	80	18	62	74
<b>IT</b>	54	57	39	49	51
<b>CY</b>	57	58	41	45	54
<b>LV</b>	70	72	27	53	66
<b>LT</b>	64	65	33	48	61
<b>LU</b>	90	91	8	76	86
<b>HU</b>	68	70	28	56	66
<b>MT</b>	68	69	30	55	66
<b>NL</b>	91	92	7	79	90
<b>AT</b>	79	80	18	59	76
<b>PL</b>	62	65	33	45	58
<b>PT</b>	55	58	41	42	51
<b>RO</b>	40	44	54	24	37
<b>SI</b>	67	69	29	54	64
<b>SK</b>	74	78	20	56	72
<b>FI</b>	89	89	9	76	86
<b>SE</b>	93	94	5	80	91
<b>UK<sup>1</sup></b>	85	87	11	70	81
<b>IS</b>	95	95	4	88	94
<b>NO</b>	93	94	5	82	91
<b>HR</b>	58	60	39	44	55
<b>TR</b>	40	43	55	26	36

<sup>1</sup>UK data include estimates for Northern Ireland

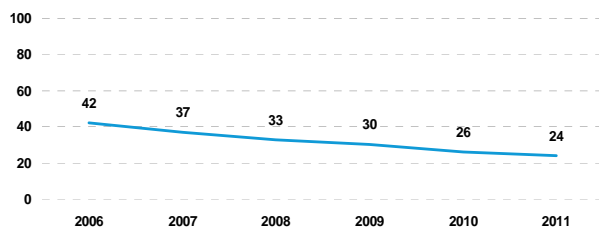
Source: Eurostat (online data codes : [isoc\\_ci\\_ifp\\_iu](#), [isoc\\_bde15cua](#))

The percentage of regular internet users among younger persons aged 16-24 was 91% while it was only 40% for the age group 55-74 years. The percentage of the population with high formal education using the internet was more than twice as

much as the share for the population with a low level of education. Differences between men and women were relatively small. Slightly more than two thirds of men (70%) and 65% of women used the internet regularly.

## One in four individuals aged 16-74 in the EU had never used the internet

**Figure 4: Individuals who have never used the internet, EU27, 2006-2011 (% of individuals)**



Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bdek\\_di](#))

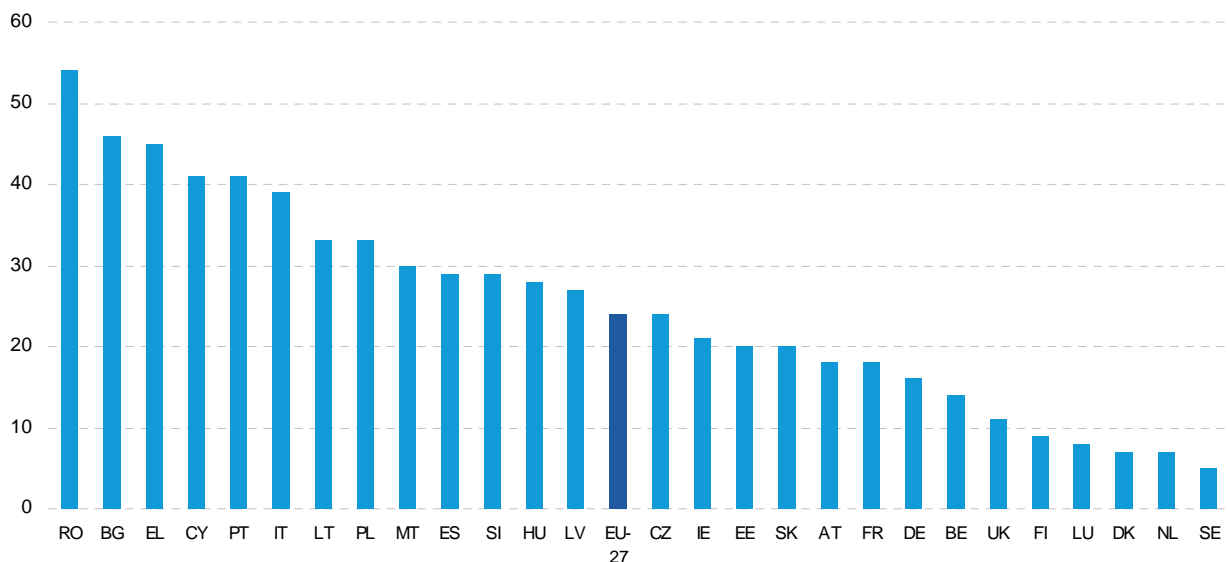
In the EU27, the proportion of individuals who never used the internet was 24% in 2011 (figure 4).

The proportion of non-users in the EU declined only by 2 percentage points over one year, from 26% in 2010 to 24% in 2011.

The average annual decline was around 4 percentage points in the period from 2006 to 2010. Although the rate of decline has slowed down, reaching the share of not more than 15% non-users set as an EU target for 2015 in the Digital Agenda remains possible.

Large digital divides were evident when looking at the share of the population who have never used the internet across Member States (figure 5). The highest shares of the population with no past experiences in internet use at all whether at home, at work or at any other place were registered in Romania (54%), Bulgaria (46%), Greece (45%), Cyprus (41%) and Portugal (41%), and the lowest in Sweden (5%), the Netherlands and Denmark (both 7%), Luxembourg (8%) and Finland (9%). Another four Member States (Italy, Lithuania, Malta and Poland) showed proportions between 30% and below 40% for the population being excluded and without user skills regarding the internet.

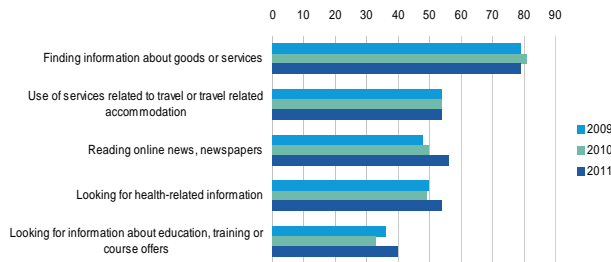
**Figure 5: Individuals who have never used the internet, 2011 (% of individuals)**



Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bdek\\_di](#))

**A majority of internet users searched for information about goods and services, travel or health, read online news, consulted wikis and participated in social networks**

**Figure 6: Use of internet for obtaining information and reading online news, EU27, 2009-2011 (% of internet users)**



Source: Eurostat (online data codes : [isoc\\_bde15cua](#), [isoc\\_ci\\_ac\\_i](#))

The internet has found wide recognition as a source of information by users. Nearly 80% of internet users searched for information about goods and services for private purposes (figure 6).

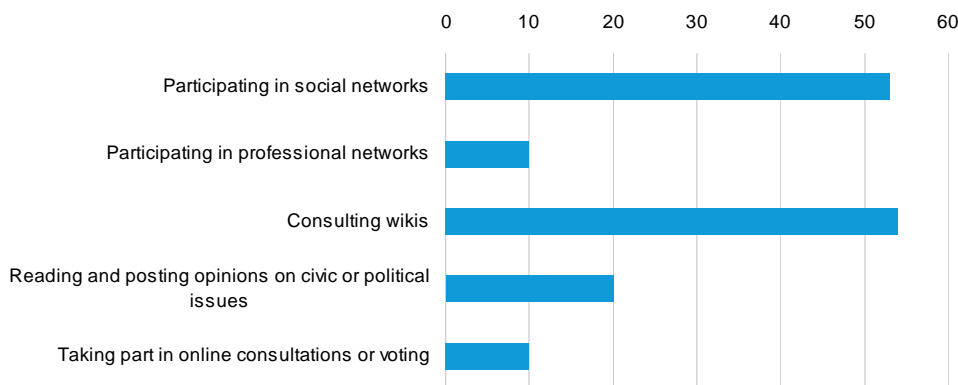
More than half of internet users in the EU in the first quarter of 2011 read news online (56%), used services related to travel or travel related accommodation (54%) or looked for health related information (54%). Furthermore, a significant share of internet users (40%) searched for information about education, training or course offers.

Looking at the use of such information services over the last few years, the use of the internet for searching product information and about travel and accommodation remained relatively stable. More significant increases were noticed for reading online news and using information about health, education and training. In particular, reading online news showed steady growth and increased by 6 percentage points compared with 2010.

Eurostat is releasing 5 new indicators on internet usage in 2011 (figure 7). They are part of the set of indicators included in the Benchmarking Digital Europe Framework 2011-2015 that supports monitoring of the Digital Agenda and covers issues related to participation in social and professional networks, consulting wikis and civic or political participation.

In the EU27, more than half of internet users (53%) participated in social networks. The proportion of internet users who participated in professional networks was 10%. A significant share of internet users made use of new learning opportunities: More than half of internet users (54%) consulted wikis on any subject. One in five internet users stated that they read and posted opinions on civic or political issues. One in ten internet users took part in online consultations or voting.

**Figure 7: Use of internet for social and professional networking, learning, civic and political participation, EU27, 2011 (% of internet users)**



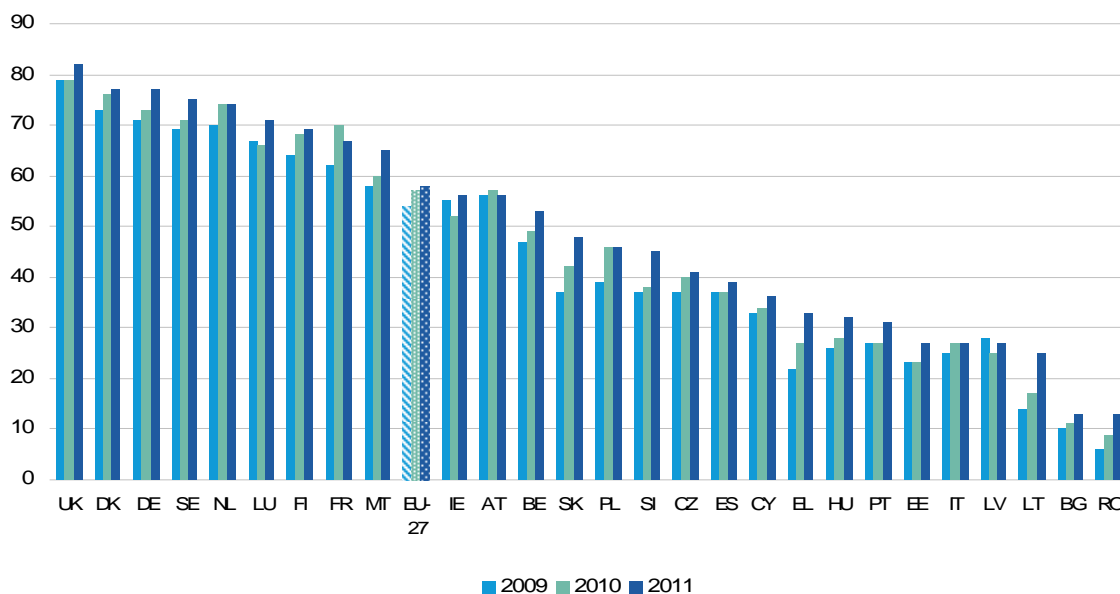
Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bde15cua](#))

### Three in five internet users shopped online within the last twelve months

Buying over the internet (e-commerce or e-shopping) has become very popular in the EU. Consumers appreciate the convenience of shopping anytime and anywhere, getting better access to information and a broader selection of products, comparing prices or obtaining opinions from other consumers. Not all users who take advantage of informing themselves over the internet about

available goods or services finally also buy such products online. Reasons may include the preference to shop in person or trust or security concerns. Figure 8 shows the proportions of e-shoppers among internet users. The reference period of the last twelve months prior to the survey for this indicator takes into account seasonal effects in e-commerce.

**Figure 8: Internet users who bought or ordered goods or services for private use over the internet in the last 12 months, 2009-2011 (% of internet users)**



Source: Eurostat (online data code : [isoc\\_bdek\\_smi](#))

In 2011, 58% of internet users in the EU27 have bought or ordered goods or services over the internet for private purposes in the last 12 months, compared with 57% in 2010 and 54% in 2009. However, the share of e-shoppers among internet users varied considerably between Member States,

ranging from 13 % in Bulgaria and Romania, 25% in Lithuania and 27% in Estonia, Italy and Latvia to 82% in the United Kingdom, 77% in Denmark and Germany, 75% in Sweden and 74% in the Netherlands. Compared with 2010, Lithuania and Slovenia recorded the highest increases.

### Three in ten internet users submitted completed web forms to public authorities

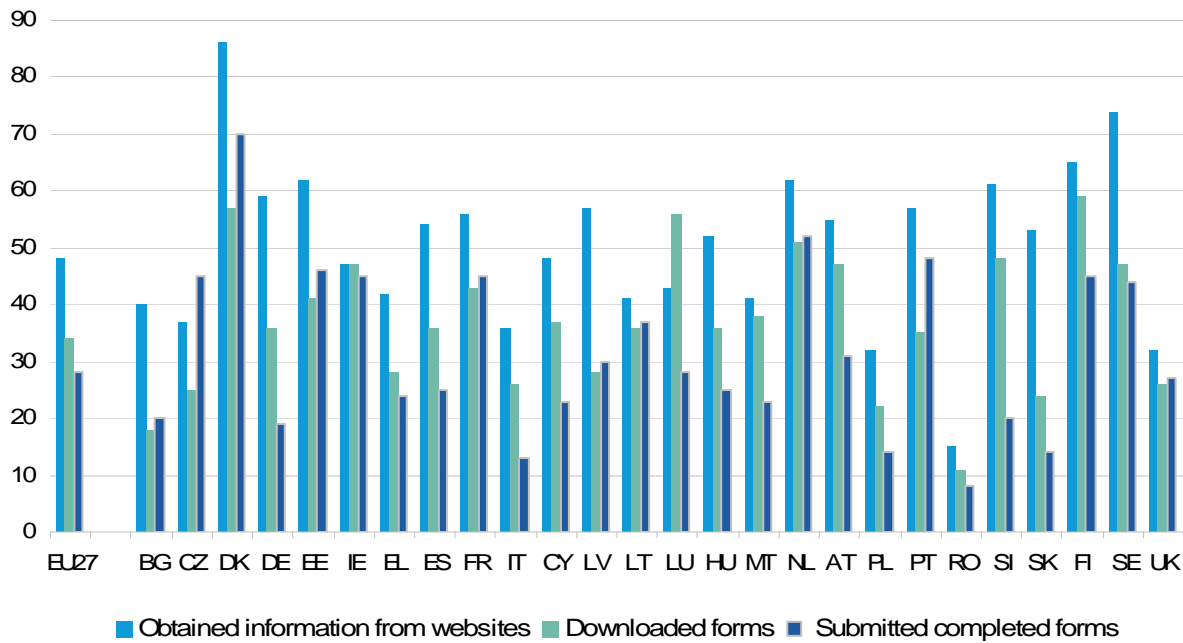
The survey collected indicators on e-government which covers interactions between citizens and all levels of government (local or city, regional, national) for a) obtaining information from public authorities' websites, b) downloading forms and c) submitting completed forms. Findings for these indicators are shown in Figure 9. Almost half of

EU internet users have obtained information from public authorities' websites within the last twelve months prior to the survey and one third downloaded forms. Looking at a higher level and two-way type of interaction with public authorities, the proportion of internet users in the EU27 who submitted completed web forms was 28%,

6 percentage points lower than the proportion for downloading forms. However, ten Member States showed higher shares for submitting than for downloading forms. This could be attributed to an increasing offer or easiness to use such facilities on e-government websites or user preferences, for

example for sending tax declarations online. Another aspect was that national population censuses were carried out in early 2011 for which it was possible in several countries to complete questionnaires and return them via web forms.

**Figure 9: Internet users who interacted with public authorities in the last 12 months, by type of interaction, 2011 (% of internet users)**



Note: Data for BE not reliable but included in EU27 aggregate

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [isoc\\_bde15ei](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?code=sdg_15_10_01))

## METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Source: EU survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals.

2011 data are based on selected aggregate data transmitted by Member States and other countries. Data for UK (2009-2011) include estimates for Northern Ireland. An update of the public database covering all collected characteristics is foreseen during the first quarter 2012.

The survey covered households with at least one person aged 16-74, and individuals aged 16-74. Households were asked about internet access by any member of the household at home, individuals about the last time of internet use, frequency and place of use, mobile use, activities and e-skills. Sample sizes EU27: 149331 households and 214580 individuals (2011).

The findings are used for monitoring several EU policies, in particular the Digital Agenda. The Digital Agenda for Europe ([http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/digital-agenda/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm)) is one of the flagship initiatives under the Europe 2020 strategy. Most indicators presented in this publication are included in the 2011-2015 Benchmarking Digital Europe Framework

([http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/benchmarking/benchmarking\\_digital\\_europe\\_2011-2015.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/benchmarking/benchmarking_digital_europe_2011-2015.pdf)).

Country codes: European Union (27 countries) is written as EU27 and includes Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK). Other countries for which data are presented in this publication: Island (IS), Norway (NO), Croatia (HR), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (MK), Turkey (TR) and Serbia (RS).

Definitions, reference periods of selected data:

'Digital divide' is a term used to describe gaps and pattern of access to and use of computers and the internet across the population and countries.

The indicator on broadband internet access measures the proportion of *households* having subscribed to at least a basic level of broadband. Broadband technologies include DSL

(Digital Subscriber Line), cable, optical fibre, satellite and 3G/4G mobile telephony networks (e.g. UMTS).

In general, *individuals* were asked about activities they had carried out on the internet in the last 3 months prior to the survey at home or at any other location for private purposes. The main reference period was the first quarter of 2011 (the data was collected in most countries in the second quarter).

Reading news included any type of online news, newspapers or news magazines, either free of charge or paid. Services related to travel or travel related accommodation include services for information (e.g. websites for tourists informing about attractions, hotels, flight schedules), often combined with services for booking of travel tickets, hotel rooms etc.

Wiki software is a type of collaborative software program that allows web pages to be created and collaboratively edited using a common web browser. The most popular example is Wikipedia. Reading and posting opinions on civic or political issues refers to websites used to read opinions and to make own opinions known. The websites may have been created by anyone or any organisation, including public or private (e.g. news agencies), governmental or non-governmental. Taking part in on-line consultations or voting to define civic or political issues may address urban planning or signing a petition via a website and relate to active participation. They

are one-time actions with a given timeframe for feedback and refer to the systematic collection of opinions. Social networking sites include tools for posting personal data into a profile, uploading user-created content, allowing personalised interaction and communication with others by posting messages, and defining social relationships by determining who has access to data, who can communicate with whom and how. Popular examples are Facebook, Twitter. Professional networks are also seen in the broader context of social networking and have the same requirement of profile creation or contributing through messaging or chat or uploading text or audio-visual content files. Examples are LinkedIn, Xing, Ecademy.

The definition of e-commerce excludes manually typed e-mails.

The definition of education levels is: high (tertiary education, ISCED 5 or 6), medium (upper secondary education or post secondary, but not tertiary, ISCED 3 or 4), low (no formal education completed, primary or lower secondary education, ISCED 0, 1 or 2).

Further explanations on the questions included in the survey can be found in the dedicated section on Information Society Statistics / Methodology / Methodological Manual / Methodological Manual 2011: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ict>

## Further information

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Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on "Information society statistics"

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information\\_society/data/database](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information_society/data/database)

Further information about "Information society statistics"

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information\\_society/introduction](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information_society/introduction)

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### European Statistical Data Support:

With the members of the 'European statistical system', Eurostat has set up a network of support centres in nearly every Member State and in some EFTA countries.

Their role is to provide help and guidance to Internet users of European statistics.

Contact details for this support network can be found on the Eurostat website at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/>.

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