

# Purchasing Power Parities and related economic indicators for EU, Acceding and Candidate Countries and EFTA<sup>1</sup>

## Statistics in focus

### Final results for 2000 and preliminary results for 2001

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#### ECONOMY AND FINANCE

THEME 2 – 56/2002

#### PRICES AND PURCHASING POWER PARITIES

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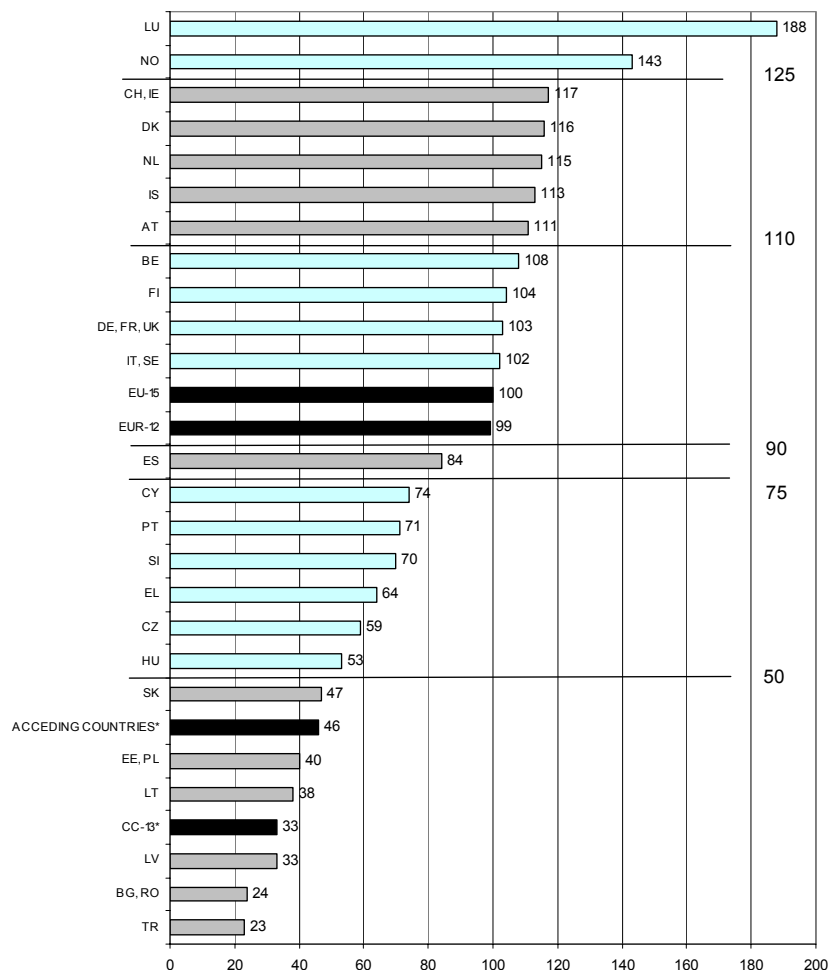
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This article presents final Purchasing Power Parities and related economic indicators for 2000 for the 31 countries<sup>(2)</sup> participating in the European Comparison Programme (ECP), as well as preliminary results for 2001. The ECP – in which Eurostat closely co-operates with OECD – is aimed at making annual volume comparisons of the main National Accounts aggregates: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and its components.

Chart 1: Per capita volume index at the level of total GDP  
2001 preliminary results, EU-15=100



\*Without Malta



Manuscript completed on: 15.12.2002  
ISSN 1024-4298  
Catalogue number: KS-NJ-02-056-EN-C  
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<sup>(1)</sup> Excluding Liechtenstein

<sup>(2)</sup> The 15 EU Member States, the 10 Acceding Countries, the 3 Candidate Countries, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland

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## Purchasing Power Parities and international volume comparisons

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The differences in values of GDP between countries, even when revalued in a common currency using exchange rates, do not only correspond to a “volume of goods and services” component but also to a “level of prices” component, which can sometimes assume sizeable proportions.

Exchange rates are determined by many factors, which reflect demand and supply on the currency markets, such as international trade and interest rate differentials. In other words, exchange rates usually reflect other elements than price differences alone. Therefore, the use of exchange rates as conversion factors in cross-country comparisons is not advisable.

To obtain a pure comparison of volumes, it is essential to use special conversion rates (spatial deflators) which remove the effect of price level differences between countries. Purchasing Power Parities (PPPs) are such currency conversion rates

that convert economic indicators expressed in national currencies to an artificial common currency, that are called Purchasing Power Standard (PPS). In other words, PPPs are used to convert nominal final expenditures on product groups, aggregates and GDP of the different countries taking part in the comparison into comparable volumes, expressed in PPS units.

With the launch of the euro, for the first time, prices can be compared directly between the countries in the euro-zone. However, the euro has different purchasing power in the individual euro-zone countries, depending on the national price levels. Therefore, it is still necessary to calculate PPPs for the establishment of pure volume aggregates in PPS. In other words, for the non-euro-zone countries PPPs are currency converters and eliminate the effects of different price levels, while for the euro-zone countries they only fulfil a price deflator function.

### Box 1: How are PPPs calculated and what is PPS?

In their simplest form, PPPs are a set of relative prices, which show the ratio of the prices in national currency of the same good or service in different countries (e.g. a loaf of bread costs 1.87 euro in France, 1.68 euro in Germany, 95 pence in the UK, etc). For the price collections, a basket of comparable goods and services is used, selected as representative of the whole range of goods and services, as well as of consumption patterns in the various countries.

The simple relative prices at product level are subsequently aggregated (weighted together) to PPPs for groups of products, for total consumption and finally for GDP.

To fix a numéraire for the numerical procedure of the PPP calculation, usually one country is used as a base country and set to equal 1. For the European Union the selection of a single country (currency) as a base seemed inappropriate. Therefore, PPS is the artificial common reference currency unit used in the European Union to express the volume of economic aggregates for the purpose of spatial comparisons. Economic volume aggregates in PPS are obtained by dividing their original value in national currency units by the respective PPPs.

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## Per capita GDP volume index <sup>(3)</sup> in 2001

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The **per capita GDP volume indices** shown in **Chart 1** represent the real volumes of production (GDP values in national currency, converted using PPPs) in per capita terms, expressed in relation to the European Union average. If the per capita GDP volume index of a country is higher than 100, this country's level of production per head of population is higher than the EU average and vice versa. However, these indices are not intended to rank countries strictly. In fact, they only provide an indication of the comparative order of magnitude of the per capita GDP volume in one country in relation to others.

It is therefore preferable to use these indices for dividing countries into groups of a comparable level. In this respect, the 2001 preliminary results presented here highlight the following groups of countries:

**Group I** ( $\geq 125\%$  of the EU average): Norway and Luxembourg;

**Group II** ( $\geq 110\%$  and  $< 125\%$  of the EU average): Austria, Iceland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland and Ireland;

**Group III** ( $\geq 90\%$  and  $< 110\%$  of the EU average, i.e. close to the EU average): Sweden, France, Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, Finland and Belgium;

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<sup>(3)</sup> One of the particularly important uses of PPPs is for the European Commission to establish both the list of regions that could benefit from the EU Structural Funds as well as the amount of funds to be allocated to each region. One criterion for allocating these funds is based on PPP-converted GDP per capita. The aim of the Structural Funds is to gradually reduce economic disparities between and within EU Member States.

**Group IV** ( $\geq 75\%$  and  $< 90\%$  of the EU average): Spain;

**Group V** ( $\geq 50\%$  and  $< 75\%$  of the EU average): Hungary, Czech Republic, Greece, Slovenia, Portugal and Cyprus;

**Group VI** ( $< 50\%$  of the EU average): Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Slovakia.

It is remarkable that almost no country has changed group between 2000 and 2001, and that France, the United Kingdom and Germany have become closer than ever.

The per capita GDP for Luxembourg and Norway are

the highest of all countries participating in the comparison, by some distance. One of the reasons for Luxembourg's high GDP per capita is the large share of cross-border workers in total employment: while contributing to GDP, they are not taken into consideration as part of the resident population which is used to calculate GDP per head. The large difference between the V.I. per capita for Household consumption and GDP is due to the fact that a non-negligible part of the Luxembourgish exports is accounted for by expenditure on certain products on the Luxembourg territory made by cross-border shoppers. Norway's results are significantly influenced by oil price variations due to its position as a large oil exporter.

### **Box 2: Revisions of PPP and comparability of data**

It has already been mentioned above that the data for 2001 presented in this paper have preliminary character. This preliminary status arises from the regular PPP revision calendar. Preliminary results for every given year are published 12 months after the end of the reference year. At that time, the results of the two consumer price surveys for the reference year as well as preliminary data for all other input data are available. Final data for the same reference year are published 24 months after the end of the reference year. Naturally, once collected the prices for the reference year do not change between the preliminary data and the final data. Yet, all other input data and particularly the NA related data such as the GDP expenditure weights that are needed for aggregating the PPP up to GDP level, for instance, are themselves subject to regular revisions. 24 months after the end of the reference year, however, such other input data have reached a sufficiently final status to allow for the calculation and publication of the final PPP for a given year. This system represents a compromise between user needs, who prefer quick availability of data, and statisticians whose mission is to provide a reliable information based on sufficiently final input data<sup>(4)</sup>.

This regular revision calendar does, however, not embrace major PPP revisions. These appear with major methodological changes, such as the introduction of new accounting frameworks. For the majority of the ECP participants, the reference year 2000 can be seen as the first year in which the PPP weights taken from National Accounts are fully based on ESA95<sup>(5)</sup>. The years before 2000 were affected by the gradual introduction of ESA95 since 1995, in different countries at different points in time. Moreover, all Candidate Countries now fully participate in the price surveys according to the survey cycle, while in the past, estimates had to be partly used. The years before 2000, therefore, include a multitude of minor or major breaks in the time series, which negatively affected the comparability over time or even between countries within one given year. To facilitate economic analysis, Eurostat and the ECP participants have decided to revise the PPPs for the years 1995 to 2000 in the light of ESA95. This enormous exercise will be undertaken in the first half of 2003. The publication of first results from the revision is foreseen for October 2003 and a more extended publication with detailed results and methodological explanations early in 2004.

As a consequence of the above described circumstances, currently only the data for 2000 and 2001 are more closely comparable, as they have been compiled following the same methodology, whereas comparability with previous years' data is weaker. This is why no longer time series are given. In addition, users should also be aware that the data for 2000, that have currently final status, will undergo changes in the major revision next year. This is firstly due to the fact that in the framework of the revision methodological decisions may be taken that will affect data for all years currently available. Secondly, the 2000 data will change to the extent they depend, in the framework of the 3-year survey cycle for consumer goods, on extrapolated PPP of 1999 and 1998, which are themselves subject to revision.

<sup>(4)</sup> For the ECP publication calendar 2003, see methodological note on page 7

<sup>(5)</sup> ESA95 (European System of Accounts 1995; Commission Regulation (EC) 2223/1996 of 25 June 1996) is the current European methodological framework for compiling National Accounts. Since 1995, it has gradually replaced the former system – ESA79.

**Box 3: Maltese results**

The data for Malta are not included in this publication. Malta is currently undertaking a revision of its National Accounts in order to adopt ESA95. The revision results are expected to become available in summer 2003. To avoid multiple revisions of data and user confusion, the Maltese statistical office and Eurostat decided not to show the results for 2000 and 2001 before the revision is finalised.

## Purchasing Power Parities for GDP and selected components in 2000 and 2001

Table 1 shows the exchange rate to the euro and the PPP at GDP level for 2000 and 2001. In addition to PPPs at GDP level, Table 1 also presents PPPs for the two following components: Household and

NPISH final consumption expenditure and Actual individual consumption. When analysing these PPPs, it appears that they are generally more or less close to that of total GDP.

**Table 1 : Euro exchange rates and Purchasing Power Parities, in 2000 and in 2001**

	2000 (Final results)				2001 (Preliminary results)			
	Exchange rate to the Euro	Purchasing Power Parity (1 PPS in National Currency)			Exchange rate to the Euro	Purchasing Power Parity (1 PPS in National Currency)		
		GDP	Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure (*)	Actual individual consumption (**)		GDP	Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure (*)	Actual individual consumption (**)
Belgium (BE)	1	0.994520	1.00022	1.00476	1	0.979092	0.983844	0.990534
Denmark (DK)	7.45382	9.05928	9.03311	9.08495	7.45207	9.27280	9.35858	9.38481
Germany (DE)	1	1.02691	0.998257	1.01088	1	1.04793	1.02030	1.03099
Greece (EL)	1	0.753117	0.779556	0.756176	1	0.796929	0.809598	0.784743
Spain (ES)	1	0.821262	0.827120	0.813768	1	0.829546	0.822250	0.811421
France (FR)	1	1.02330	1.01724	1.01334	1	1.00661	0.987349	0.988755
Ireland (IE)	1	1.04071	1.07435	1.04600	1	1.08606	1.12651	1.10434
Italy (IT)	1	0.874605	0.884367	0.885729	1	0.880228	0.914650	0.911149
Luxembourg (LU)	1	1.06934	0.974099	1.04699	1	1.09658	1.00432	1.08113
Netherlands (NL)	1	1.00600	0.993942	0.965773	1	1.00298	0.98635	0.96494
Austria (AT)	1	0.988303	0.969095	0.978955	1	1.01219	0.980974	0.995721
Portugal (PT)	1	0.731522	0.723084	0.733879	1	0.743536	0.739665	0.752095
Finland (FI)	1	1.07831	1.15678	1.14387	1	1.08296	1.16254	1.14909
Sweden (SE)	8.44519	10.2799	10.7576	10.6682	9.25511	10.7234	11.2357	11.1400
United Kingdom (UK)	0.609478	0.701340	0.719836	0.714055	0.621874	0.702483	0.715631	0.710287
<b>EU-15</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
Iceland (IS)	72.5848	90.4116	94.8855	92.3776	87.4173	98.6959	106.453	103.986
Norway (NO)	8.11292	9.7834	10.4442	10.3393	8.04844	10.0654	10.8375	10.7545
Switzerland (CH)	1.55786	2.07145	2.11920	2.16134	1.51052	2.10288	2.15059	2.18925
Cyprus (CY)	0.573924	0.464054	0.470770	0.470385	0.575893	0.487772	0.510843	0.508028
Czech Republic (CZ)	35.5995	15.2133	16.0440	14.2086	34.0685	15.3475	15.7832	14.1147
Estonia (EE)	15.6466	7.01593	7.14754	6.30427	15.6466	7.64962	7.89668	6.98072
Hungary (HU)	260.045	114.716	116.789	103.819	256.591	118.810	123.070	110.245
Latvia (LV)	0.559227	0.262703	0.296854	0.253813	0.560060	0.260637	0.288551	0.250780
Lithuania (LT)	3.69516	1.59778	1.72971	1.48299	3.58229	1.53728	1.69491	1.44974
Poland (PL)	4.00817	2.01804	2.16164	2.00899	3.67214	2.06152	2.21450	2.07140
Slovakia (SK)	42.6017	16.2184	17.1796	14.6745	43.3001	16.7584	17.9127	15.2491
Slovenia (SI)	206.613	133.567	136.279	130.493	217.980	141.420	144.245	138.859
Bulgaria (BG)	1.94792	0.566196	0.617644	0.559967	1.94819	0.652727	0.752350	0.671136
Romania (RO)	19 921.8	6 775.15	8 020.96	6 993.68	26 004.0	9 265.88	10 526.40	9 226.44
Turkey (TR)	574 816	323 196	370 000	338 367	1 102 430	497 363	542 264	495 509

\*Household final consumption expenditure refers to consumption of goods and services which households actually paid for. Non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) final consumption expenditure is the sum of their costs less receipts from sales.

\*\*Actual individual consumption consists of household and NPISH final consumption expenditure plus goods and services for individual consumption provided by the government free of charge or at reduced prices, e.g. in education and health. The latter are goods and services that, while provided by government, are consumed individually by households.

## Price level indices and per capita volume indices for GDP and selected components, in 2000 and 2001

For 2000 and 2001, Table 2 shows Price Level Indices (PLIs) and per capita Volume Indices (V.I.) for total GDP and two of its components: Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure, and Actual individual consumption.

PLIs are obtained as the ratio between PPP and the exchange rate for each country. These indices provide a comparison of the countries' Price Levels with respect to the EU average: if the PLI is higher than 100, the country concerned is relatively expensive compared to the EU average. In this case, the use of exchange rates would overestimate the volumes; the opposite is true if the PLI is lower than 100.

The V.I. for Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure and Actual individual consumption in table 2 represent the real volumes of expenditure / consumption (aggregate values in national currency, converted using PPPs) in per capita terms, expressed in relation to the European Union average. If the V.I. of a country and a certain aggregate is higher than 100, it means that in this country the level of expenditure / consumption per head of population is higher than in the average of the EU and vice versa.

It is interesting to compare the V.I. for household and NPISH final consumption expenditure with the one for actual individual consumption in Table 2. The differences between both V.I.s are, relative to the EU average, the goods and services that are provided free of charge or at reduced prices by the government to the households (e.g. for education and health). Big state re-distribution effects in 2001 are particularly noticeable for Denmark, Sweden and Norway. These countries have a V.I. for actual individual consumption, which is, relative to the EU average, at least 10 percentage points higher than the one for their final consumption expenditure.

As already mentioned above, both sets of indices are not intended to rank countries strictly, but to provide the order of magnitude.

Table 2 shows that disparities in the PLI for GDP among EU Member States lie between 74 (Portugal) and 124 (Denmark) in 2001, while they are spread between 34 (Bulgaria) and 139 (Switzerland) when considering all participating countries in the ECP. In 2000, these disparities lay between 73 (Portugal) and 122 (Sweden and Denmark) for the EU-15, and 29 (Bulgaria) and 133 (Switzerland). PLIs and per capita V.I.s for GDP appear to be much less dispersed in EU-15 than in the whole set of 31 countries. This is confirmed by the computation of indicators of dispersion like the coefficient of variation of PLIs, defined as standard deviation divided by mean, on different country groups (EU-15 and the whole set of countries). This coefficient reaches 14.3% in 2000

and 13.5% in 2001 for EU-15, is stable at 25.1% in 2000 and in 2001 for acceding countries, whereas it reaches 38.3% in 2000 and 37.6% in 2001 for the whole set of participating countries.

In EU-15, Portugal and Spain are going closer to the EU average between 2000 and 2001, both in PLIs and per capita V.I.s.

Other countries tend to get closer to the EU average in terms of prices only. Two groups can be distinguished: countries with above average PLIs which are decreasing closer to the EU average, such as France, the Netherlands and especially the UK and Sweden, and countries with PLI below the EU average that tend to go up to the average, like Italy and Greece. In the case of the UK and Sweden, however, it has to be noted that this development is also influenced by the development of the exchange rates, as both countries do not belong to the eurozone. Both countries' currencies have depreciated between 2000 and 2001 what leads to lower PLI. Finally, some countries with per capita V.I.s for GDP above the EU average are getting closer to it: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Sweden.

These conclusions should be analysed with caution. As no long time series are available, a distinction between structural changes and short-term economic circumstances is not possible.

In the EFTA-3 group (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland), the most significant feature is the very fast decrease in the Prices Level Index of Iceland between 2000 and 2001, however, fully explained by a sharp depreciation of the Icelandic Krona against the euro.

Acceding countries and the three CC all have PLIs well below the EU-15 average, the highest index being that of Cyprus, by some distance (85 in 2001). But all except Latvia, Lithuania and Turkey have experienced rises in their PLIs, getting closer to the EU-15 average. These rises were especially considerable in Poland, Bulgaria and in Estonia. In the case of Turkey, the fall in PLIs has been sharp (-19.8%), mostly as a consequence of the depreciation of the Turkish lira.

Per capita V.I.s for GDP have also risen to the EU-15 average over +4% points in Hungary, around +3% points in the Czech Republic and Slovenia and around 2% points in Latvia and Lithuania.

Table 2 : Price level indices and Volume indices per capita in PPS, EU-15=100, for 2000 and 2001

	2000 (Final results)						2001 (Preliminary results)					
	Price level index, EU-15=100			Per capita volume index, EU-15=100			Price level index, EU-15=100			Per capita volume index, EU-15=100		
	GDP	Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure (*)	Actual individual consumption (**)	GDP	Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure (*)	Actual individual consumption (**)	GDP	Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure (*)	Actual individual consumption (**)	GDP	Household and NPISH final consumption expenditure (*)	Actual individual consumption (**)
BE	99	100	100	107	99	102	98	98	99	108	100	103
DK	122	121	122	118	96	108	124	126	126	116	92	105
DE	103	100	101	106	110	107	105	102	103	103	107	105
EL	76	79	77	67	78	72	80	81	78	64	74	69
ES	82	83	81	82	82	81	83	82	81	84	85	83
FR	102	102	101	101	95	99	101	99	99	103	98	102
IE	104	107	105	115	91	91	109	113	110	117	91	91
IT	87	88	89	102	104	102	88	91	91	102	101	100
LU	107	97	105	195	150	142	110	100	108	188	149	142
NL	101	99	97	111	96	102	100	99	96	115	99	104
AT	99	97	98	114	113	112	101	98	100	111	112	109
PT	73	72	73	70	74	73	74	74	75	71	74	72
FI	108	116	114	104	82	87	108	116	115	104	82	88
SE	122	127	126	106	85	98	116	121	120	102	81	93
UK	115	118	117	102	112	110	113	115	114	103	114	112
<b>EUR-12</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>EU-15</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
IS	125	131	127	117	113	122	113	122	119	113	102	111
NO	121	129	127	147	101	110	125	135	134	143	98	108
CH	133	136	139	120	120	110	139	142	145	117	118	108
<b>EFTA-3</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>108</b>
CY	81	82	82	75	87	82	85	89	88	74	82	78
CZ	43	45	40	56	49	56	45	46	41	59	53	58
EE	45	46	40	40	38	42	49	50	45	40	37	41
HU	44	45	40	49	43	49	46	48	43	53	46	51
LV	47	53	45	31	29	33	47	52	45	33	32	35
LT	43	47	40	36	36	43	43	47	40	38	38	44
PL	50	54	50	40	41	41	56	60	56	40	42	41
SK	38	40	34	46	42	47	39	41	35	47	43	48
SI	65	66	63	67	62	65	65	66	64	70	62	66
<b>ACCEDING COUNTRIES***</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>
BG	29	32	29	25	28	28	34	39	34	24	25	26
RO	34	40	35	23	24	25	36	40	35	24	26	27
TR	56	64	59	25	27	26	45	49	45	23	26	25
<b>CC-13***</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>35</b>

\*See table 1

\*\*See table 1

\*\*\* Without Malta

## ➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

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### Publication calendar 2003

During the calendar year 2003 the following PPP related publications are planned:

- 30. April 2003 – Relative prices for Furniture, glassware and tableware
- 23. May 2003 – Nowcast of the PPP 2002
- 30. June 2003 - Relative prices for services
- 31. October 2003 – Revision of the PPP 1995 to 2000 – first aggregated results
- 15. December 2003 – Final PPP data 2001 and preliminary data 2002
- 19. December 2003 – Relative prices for Transport goods

### International price and volume comparisons

At international level, Eurostat participates in the “International Comparison Programme” (ICP), which has been running for 30 years. In Europe, Eurostat and the OECD co-operate in the framework of the “European Comparison Programme” (ECP), in which Eurostat annually establishes PPPs for the 15 EU Member States, the 10 Acceding Countries, 3 Candidate Countries and three EFTA countries, Norway, Iceland and Switzerland. A rolling 3-year survey cycle is used for consumer prices. About one third of the consumer goods is surveyed every year, and for the remaining two thirds, suitable consumer price indices are used for extrapolation in the intervening years. Capital goods prices, rents, and GDP weights are collected annually. The same applies to salaries in the government sector, which are used as proxy-PPPs for the respective part of this sector.

For the non-European OECD member countries, OECD partly uses a benchmark-extrapolation approach, with price surveys every third year.

### To know more about:

*“Purchasing Power Parities and Real Expenditures, 1999 Benchmark Year”, OECD 2002*

# Further information:

## ➤ Databases

New Cronos, Domain: price

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