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Thematic Report on Poverty and Social Inclusion Indicators

Poverty and Social Inclusion Indicators in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025 in Comparative Perspective Covering 2018–2021

Stefanie Sprong

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List of Abbreviations

AROP	At Risk of Poverty
AROP BST	At Risk of Poverty Before Social Transfers
AROP AST	At Risk of Poverty After Social Transfers
AROPE	At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute
ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EU2020	European Union strategy for the decade up to 2020
EU2030	European Union targets for the decade up to 2030
EU SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SILC	Survey on Income and Living Conditions
VLWI	Very Low Work Intensity

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Minister's Foreword



The *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025*, the national strategy for poverty reduction and improved social inclusion in Ireland, bases its targets and monitors progress using 22 indicators (17 EU and 5 National).

The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed, descriptive overview of Ireland's performance on the Roadmap indicators, both monetary and non-monetary in a comparative perspective. It also examines our performance on indicators related to specific groups that are more vulnerable to being at risk of poverty or social exclusion – such as children, lone parents, older people and people with disabilities.

This report builds on a companion study, *A Review of the Poverty Indicators for Social Inclusion in Ireland*, which evaluates the progress and appropriateness of the indicators used in the Roadmap, and was published in June of this year.

It is encouraging to see that in the time period covered by the report (2018 – 2021), Ireland's ranking relative to other EU countries has improved for both non-monetary (3rd out of 27 EU member states in 2021, a gain of three places on 2018) and monetary (11th of 27 EU member states in 2021, a gain of three places on 2018) indicators. Non-monetary indicators include measurements of our performance in health, housing and childcare. Monetary indicators include the at-risk of poverty rate for the population as a whole, both before and after social transfers, and those people at-risk of poverty and social exclusion, for both the overall population and specific cohorts such as people with disabilities.

Considering Ireland's performance in the wider European context is a useful exercise. However, while the overall results are positive, it is also clear that we still have much work to do in respect of certain indicators and social groups. As Minister with responsibility for Social Inclusion, I see this research as an important contribution to our understanding as it highlights the policy areas that require most attention as we continue to work towards achieving the Roadmap's targets and ambitions.

I would like to thank Stefanie Sprong and Bertrand Maître in the ESRI for their detailed analyses in producing this report. I also wish to acknowledge the contribution of the Social Inclusion Division in the Department of Social Protection which managed the study through to its publication.

Joe O'Brien, T.D.

Minister of State with responsibility for Social Inclusion

Executive Summary

Introduction

Reducing poverty and social exclusion has been a longstanding commitment of the Irish government. The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025 showcases Ireland’s ambition for decreasing poverty and increasing social inclusion, detailing the ambition to make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive states in the EU in key domains.

Recognising the multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion, the Roadmap identified 22 indicators (17 EU and 5 national) to set its targets and subsequently monitor progress. The Roadmap’s targets were specified in both absolute and relative terms.¹ The relative targets are set with the ambition to make Ireland one of the best-performing countries in the EU. For indicators where Ireland was outside the top five ranking in 2018, the goal is to position it within the top five ranked EU countries by 2025.² Where it was already within the top five, the aim is to become the top or second-ranked country. The absolute targets were set in terms of the level of performance that would need to be achieved to reach the target ranking, based on 2018 data. An overview of all targets can be found in Table A1 in the appendix.

This report provides a detailed, descriptive overview of Ireland’s performance on the Roadmap’s indicators in comparative perspective. The study draws on published Eurostat statistics as well as an analysis of microdata from the 2018 and 2021 waves of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC).³ These data allow for cross-country comparisons and are thus well suited to give

¹ In this report, we use the terms ‘absolute’ and ‘quantitative’ to refer to targets that are set in terms of levels that need to be reached. The term ‘relative’ is used to refer to targets that are specified in terms of country rankings. This is in line with the wording used in the Roadmap.

² Except for the At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion (AROPE) rate for people with disabilities, for which the target is to be in the top 10.

³ Note that this report uses the EU SILC data from 2021 because the relevant 2022 data were not yet available for all EU countries. More information on the methodology can be found in Chapter 2.

insight into Ireland's relative performance on the 17 EU indicators that were chosen to track progress. However, it is important to note that the data presented in this report are from 2021, and countries' performance on the indicators may have changed since.

The aim of the report is not to explain the relative performance of countries on the indicators, but rather to identify how Ireland and the other EU countries compare in terms of levels of poverty and social inclusion. Such an overview can help policy makers to make better informed decisions, focus efforts on areas that require the most attention, and explore learning from the best performing countries that it is Ireland's aim to join. The following research questions are covered in this report:

1. How has Ireland's ranking on each of the Roadmap's indicators changed since 2018?
2. Are changes in ranking related to changes in Ireland's performance on the indicators (i.e. internal changes) or changes in the performance of other countries (i.e. external changes)?
3. Which groups of the population across EU countries are identified as the most vulnerable on these indicators?
4. What are the best-performing countries in terms of protecting the most vulnerable groups?

The report builds on a companion study (Sprong & Maitre, 2023) which evaluates the progress and appropriateness of the indicators in Ireland.

Ranking across monetary Indicators

On average, Ireland ranked 11th out of the 27 EU countries on the monetary indicators in 2021, an improvement of three positions compared to 2018. By 2021, Ireland was at its target for the in-work poverty measure (4th position) and was close to reaching the income inequality target (6th position). On four other indicators, Ireland ranked between 8th and 15th, while it was ranked among the bottom five countries in terms of the At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion (AROPE) for people with disabilities (24th position).

Between 2018 and 2021, the country rankings were quite stable and there was a clear pattern of EU countries that performed consistently well or poorly. The best-performing countries were a mix of Eastern and Northern European countries comprising Czechia, Slovenia, Finland, Slovakia and the Netherlands, respectively. The worst-performing countries were Greece, Italy, Spain, Bulgaria and Romania, respectively (i.e. Romania was ranked 27th).

Ireland's progress of three places in the average ranking of the monetary indicators between 2018 and 2021 was driven by both internal and external changes. For example, the absolute values for the S80/S20 ratio and At Risk of Poverty After Social Transfers (AROP AST) rate in Ireland decreased (i.e. improved) between 2018 and 2021, while some countries that had better rankings in 2018 recorded increases and fell down the ranking.

Ranking across non-monetary Indicators

The Roadmap also included a number of indicators to monitor progress in a wide range of domains that contribute to better living conditions, including indicators of housing quality, health and childcare. On average, across the seven indicators, Ireland ranked 3rd out of the 27 EU countries in 2021, gaining three positions compared to 2018. Moreover, Ireland met its goals of being among the top five countries on four of the seven non-monetary indicators in 2021. That is, Ireland was ranked 1st in terms of the housing cost overburden and formal childcare measures and ranked third and fifth on the overcrowding and good health indicators.⁴ On the other three indicators, Ireland ranked 7th (unmet medical examination needs), 14th (severe material deprivation) and 27th (very low work intensity (VLWI)). However, in interpreting these results, it is important to consider how the performance in these areas was measured. The limitations of some of these measures are discussed in more detail in this report (and in Sprong & Maitre, 2023).

⁴ The finding on housing, while possibly surprising, is in line with Disch and Slaymaker (2023).

Compared to the monetary indicators, there were more changes in the country rankings on the non-monetary indicators between 2018 and 2021 and the countries that were in the top or bottom five were more mixed. In 2021, the best-performing countries comprised Cyprus, Malta, Ireland, Slovenia and Finland, while Denmark, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria and Latvia were at the bottom of the rankings.

Ireland's improvement of three places in the mean rankings between 2018 and 2021 was related to changes in its own performance and the performance of other countries. For example, the improvement of two places for the housing cost overburden rate in Ireland between 2018 and 2021 was due to a reduction of 0.9 of a percentage point but also to a deterioration of the position of countries that were better ranked in 2018.

Rankings for social risk groups

Disaggregating how countries perform on the indicators with regard to vulnerable groups is important because overall trends can hide the difficulties and challenges faced by certain groups. Therefore, Chapter 5 presents the country rankings for four social risk groups (lone parents; people with disabilities; children; and older people⁵).

Across the nine indicators used for lone parents, Ireland was the 2nd best performing country on the in-work AROP and housing overcrowding indicators. Ireland was also relatively highly ranked on the AROP AST (6th) as well as the housing cost overburden indicator (7th) for this group. Moreover, there was a very large difference in the ranking between the AROP BST (27th) and AST, which highlights the effectiveness of social transfers for lifting lone parents out of income poverty in Ireland. However, there were two indicators on which Ireland performed particularly poorly for lone parents: Ireland was ranked last on the AROPE (compared to 14th for the general population) and the VLWI indicators for this group in 2021.

⁵ While people aged 65 or over may not currently experience disproportionately high levels of poverty and social exclusion, they are still included as a social risk group because a high level of dependence on social transfers makes them vulnerable to changes in the economic cycle.

Ireland's relative performance on the available EU indicators for people with disabilities were quite mixed. Ireland was in the top five for the housing cost overburden (1st), overcrowding (3rd) and subjective health indicators (5th) in 2021. At the same time, it was in the bottom five on the VLWI (27th) and AROPE (24th) indicators, and near the bottom for the AROP BST and AST (22nd and 20th, respectively) and severe material deprivation (22nd). These results indicate that, compared to other European countries, people with disabilities in Ireland face greater challenges in terms of income, work and material deprivation, yet they are faring relatively well in terms of housing and subjective health.

Ireland's relative performance on the available indicators for children was quite mixed, though it was mostly in the middle of the rankings. Across the seven indicators for children, Ireland ranked among the best performing countries on the housing overcrowding (4th) and housing cost overburden (5th) indicators in 2021, in the middle for the AROPE and severe material deprivation, and last for the VLWI (27th), which was also the case for the total population. The difference in Ireland's ranking on the AROP BST (23rd) and AST (6th), which is the largest from all countries, shows that, like for lone parents, social transfers make a large contribution to reducing income poverty among children.

The country rankings for older people suggest that this group fares relatively well in Ireland. On the seven available indicators, Ireland is among the top five countries for housing cost (1st), overcrowding (4th) and subjective health (1st) and is ranked in the middle for the other indicators, with the worst ranking being recorded for its performance in terms of the AROP AST (20th).

Finally, a comparison of the four social risk groups within countries shows that lone parents tend to be the most vulnerable: they tend to be the most at-risk group on all available EU indicators across all European countries. This was also true in Ireland, where lone parents were the most vulnerable group on four of the seven common indicators. Moreover, the rankings indicated that lone parents and people with disabilities in Ireland often fared worse on the indicators compared to their counterparts in other EU countries. In contrast, people aged 65 or over appeared the

least vulnerable of the four social risk groups both in Ireland and in other European countries.

Conclusions

Overall, the results demonstrated that between 2018 and 2021, Ireland had improved its ranking on several indicators. This suggests that progress is being made towards the goals and targets specified in the Roadmap. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that not all indicators are equally important and that some indicators are better able to assess progress than others. In particular, the rankings in this report showed that the indicators with greater weaknesses were often less able to discern patterns of well and poorly performing countries and there was often greater change over time on these indicators. While the Roadmap's indicators were chosen from the European Pillar of Social Rights' list of indicators for monitoring the EU's performance on social inclusion, this underscores the need to continue to carefully consider the indicators that are used, as also highlighted in a recent ESRI review of the indicators (Sprong & Maître, 2023).

The changes in Ireland's rankings were related both to changes in Ireland's performance on the indicators and to changes in the performance of other countries. In most cases, there was a change in the absolute level of both Ireland and other countries. However, in a small number of cases, Ireland's changed ranking was solely driven by external change. This highlights how country rankings are dependent on how other countries perform and can show a country is doing worse in relative terms even if it is doing better in absolute terms or vice versa. Moreover, it is important to note that country rankings might overstate the differences between countries. Ranking targets should therefore continue to be complemented by absolute targets, something that was done in the Roadmap.

Finally, the rankings for the social risk groups indicated that lone parents and people with disabilities in Ireland were often in a worse position than the same groups in other EU countries as well as the general population in Ireland. This highlights the support for these groups as policy areas that require particular attention, and that, if addressed, may help to improve the absolute and relative performance. It also

shows the importance of going beyond national averages, which may hide substantial diversity within the population.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the paper

In early 2020, the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments was published, which details the Government’s commitments to reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion. It includes a variety of goals and targets across different domains, and progress is monitored using a set of national and EU indicators.

The Roadmap uses quantitative and ranking targets.⁶ The ranking targets are set with the ambition to place Ireland within the top-ranking EU countries. For indicators where Ireland was outside of the top five ranking in 2018, the goal is to position it within the top five ranked EU countries by 2025. Where it was already within the top five, the aim is to become the first- or second-ranked country.⁷

The purpose of the current report is to provide a detailed, descriptive overview of Ireland’s performance on the Roadmap indicators in comparative perspective. The analysis will identify the top five countries that Ireland aims to join for each indicator, explore how much country rankings vary over time, pinpoint the most vulnerable groups across EU countries, and indicate which countries do best in protecting the most vulnerable.

⁶ In this report, we use the terms ‘absolute’ and ‘quantitative’ to refer to targets that are set in terms of levels that need to be reached. The term ‘relative’ is used to refer to targets that are specified in terms of country rankings.

⁷ These relative targets are complemented by absolute rates, which indicate the levels of performance that would need to be achieved to reach the target ranking, based on 2018 data.

In short, this report will consider the following questions:

1. How has Ireland's ranking on the Roadmap indicators changed since 2018?
2. Are changes in ranking related to changes in Ireland's performance on the indicators (i.e. internal changes) or changes in the performance of other countries (i.e. external changes)?
3. Which groups of the population across EU countries are identified as the most vulnerable on these indicators?
4. What are the best-performing countries in terms of protecting the most vulnerable groups?

The study builds on a previous report that evaluates the individual indicators for Ireland (Sprong & Maitre, 2023).

1.2 The EU strategy for social inclusion

Building a more inclusive and more social Europe has an important place in the European Union's ambition for the future. A prominent example of the EU's commitment to improving income and living conditions is the creation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, which provides a reference framework for monitoring performance. The Pillar was published by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission in 2017, and set out a list of key principles and rights that were considered to be critical for the future functioning of societies.

Reducing poverty and social exclusion by promoting equal opportunities was one of the core themes of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Notably, during the Social Summit in Porto in early 2021, the EU partners underlined their commitment to transform the Pillar's principles into action and agreed to three 2030 headline targets:

1. At least 78 per cent of people aged 20 to 64 should be in employment;
2. At least 60 per cent of all adults should participate in training every year;
3. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million, including at least 5 million children.

1.3 The ambitions outlined in Ireland’s Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025 showcases Ireland’s ambition for reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion. The overall ambition was to reduce the national consistent poverty rate to 2 per cent or less (from 5.6 per cent in 2018) and to ‘make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive states in the EU’ by improving (or maintaining) the state’s ranking in key domains.

The Roadmap includes 22 specific targets which are set against a range of indicators to monitor progress. These targets are the product of an extensive consultation process and were informed by European and international social inclusion policies (see the Roadmap for more information). The European Pillar of Social Rights played a particularly important role in this, with many of the chosen indicators being the same as those used in the Living Conditions in Europe 2018 report which followed the publication of the Pillar.

Notwithstanding the relevance of the European strategy for the targets in the Roadmap, it is important to acknowledge that the Roadmap is part of the long-held commitment of the Irish government to reduce poverty and social exclusion, which is built on its definition of poverty and social inclusion:

People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources, people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society. (National Anti-Poverty Strategy, 1997)

In addition to this definition, the Roadmap highlights the importance of the broader achievement of social inclusion, which was defined as follows:

Social Inclusion is achieved when people have access to sufficient income, resources and services to enable them to play an active part in their communities and participate in activities that are considered the norm for

people in society generally. (Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025, 2020)

1.4 The poverty literature: a short overview

The EU's and Ireland's ambitions regarding the reduction of poverty and social inclusion and the choices of indicators to monitor progress follow the academic discussions around the topic. While income continues to play an important role in measuring poverty (Bradshaw & Chen, 1996; Förster & Pearson, 2002; Kus et al., 2016), research is increasingly recognising the multidimensional nature of poverty, combining monetary measures with non-monetary measures that capture low socioeconomic status and deprivation (Maître et al., 2006; Nolan & Whelan, 2007; Saunders & Naidoo, 2009; Tomlinson & Walker, 2009). Therefore, this section first reviews the income-based approaches to measuring poverty and social exclusion, before touching on some non-monetary approaches.

Townsend's definition of poverty, which underlines the lack of (material) resources, underpins most of the approaches to poverty (1979, p. 31):

Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or are at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.

In line with Townsend's definition, to be considered poor, two core elements are typically considered: a lack of resources and a general inability to participate in society to a normal standard (Maître et al., 2006; Nolan & Whelan, 2011; Townsend, 1979; Nolan & Whelan, 2007).

Income thresholds are a common way of translating these definitions to measures that can identify people or households living in poverty. The European Commission and the Irish government, for example, use the At Risk of Poverty (AROP) indicator, which identifies a poverty line based on people's disposable income. The poverty line is established using an income threshold related to the mean or median income.

This threshold is commonly 60 per cent of the median equivalised household income, although thresholds of between 40 and 70 per cent have been used too (Bradshaw, 2001; Saunders & Naidoo, 2009; Whelan, 2007).

However, following Ringen (1988), concerns have been raised over a sole reliance on income-based measures, such as the AROP indicator, for identifying those in poverty. These concerns include the limited ability of income-based measures to capture different needs, standards of living and patterns of consumption, to take account of non-cash benefits and accumulated debt, and to capture economic fluctuations in periods of rapid economic change (Watson et al., 2017; Whelan et al., 2019).

Consequently, research and policy in Ireland and the EU increasingly recognise the importance of taking a multidimensional approach to poverty. Crucially, in line with the understanding of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon (Nolan & Whelan, 2007; Whelan et al., 2019), the current Irish consistent poverty indicator, which is Ireland's headline indicator, is based on the dual condition of (a) being below the 60 per cent median income threshold and (b) lacking two or more basic necessities (see Maître & Privalko, 2021 for a recent review of the deprivation items). The official EU headline measure of poverty is also grounded in the understanding of poverty as multidimensional: the 'At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion' (AROPE) indicator identifies people as being at risk of poverty or social exclusion if they are:⁸

- below a country-specific 60 per cent income poverty threshold (i.e. AROP); or
- above a six-item material deprivation threshold; or
- in a very low work intensity (VLWI) household.

However, it is important to note that while the Irish consistent poverty measure and the AROPE indicator both take a multidimensional approach, there is a critical difference in how they combine the different components: the Irish consistent poverty measure follows an 'intersection' approach where people are identified if they are

⁸ The AROPE measure used previously in the former EU2020 strategy differed slightly from the current one with regard to the deprivation and VLWI indicators.

both below the income threshold and materially deprived, whereas the EU AROPE measure takes a 'union' approach where people are counted if they meet any of the three criteria. Here, the multidimensional poverty approach primarily handles each welfare component separately, while other multidimensional poverty approaches simultaneously take all welfare components into account (Alkire & Foster, 1994; Arndt et al., 2018). Accordingly, the EU AROPE indicator is sometimes criticised because there is no clear logic for the three components and how they are combined (Nolan & Whelan, 2011) and rates differ across countries depending on which of the component measures are included (Copeland & Daly, 2012, p. 274; Maître et al., 2013). The VLWI component has been criticised because it is a factor contributing to poverty but not an outcome in itself, its inclusion does not have a clear rationale and it does not equally apply to all household types (see Sprong & Maitre, 2023).

Finally, there is a range of measures that consider poverty and social exclusion in a broader sense. These measures look at other elements of social inclusion, such as housing or health conditions, childcare arrangements and social participation. The Roadmap, for example, includes indicators that assess housing affordability and the subjective health of the population. These indicators offer valuable additional insights and can help policy makers to combat poverty and build a more inclusive society. However, these measures also have limitations and may not always match up with people's experiences (see Sprong & Maître, 2023 for a review of the Roadmap indicators).

1.5 Welfare state typologies

This report covers a wide range of countries with different social protection systems, which can be classified into different welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Ferrera, 1996; Bukodi and Róbert, 2007; Lauzadyte-Tutliene et al, 2018). While these welfare state typologies have evolved over time, particularly with the profound transformation of Eastern European countries, the welfare regime literature generally distinguishes up to five different welfare state models:

1. a (Scandinavian) social democratic model in which the state plays a substantial and more interventionist role and in which there is typically a generous and universal provision of benefits and services;
2. a liberal (Anglo-Saxon) model in which there is a stronger reliance on the market and in which the state plays a much smaller role, with benefits and services often being means-tested and mostly targeted at people being failed by the market;
3. a conservative, corporatist (continental European) model in which relatively generous benefits and rights exist but are often tied to insurance contributions (e.g. through labour market attachment);
4. a model that characterises several Southern European countries and relies extensively on family support, with uneven and minimalist benefits;
5. a model that is relatively common in Central and Eastern European countries, which is characterised by lower generosity in spending on social protection, education and health care (Lauzadyte-Tutliene et al., 2018).

The purpose of the report is not to analyse the poverty indicator outcomes across different welfare regimes. However, we might still expect to be able to discern some patterns in the country ranking that fit into the welfare regime classifications. We may, for example, expect that countries with more generous welfare states, such as Sweden and Denmark, which have a social democratic model, will have lower levels of poverty and social exclusion and thus be ranked relatively highly. In contrast, countries that spend less on social welfare, such as Bulgaria and Romania, may be predicted to be lower ranked.

1.6 Relevant groups

When considering countries' performance on poverty and social inclusion indicators, it can be important to explore how the country is performing with regard to specific groups of the population rather than only considering the overall trends, because general trends can hide the difficulties and challenges faced by certain groups. It may, for example, be the case that the overall poverty rate is low but it is substantially higher for people with disabilities.

Following the literature, not all groups in society face the same levels of risk of poverty and social exclusion. Certain groups, such as lone parents, are particularly at risk (Chzhen & Bradshaw, 2012; Watson et al., 2018). According to Watson et al. (2016), social risk groups are those who have higher levels of difficulty in achieving adequate living standards through the market due to specific barriers to their labour market participation. They further argue that in addition to social class disparities, social risk is an important principle of differentiation, and describe three broad drivers of social risk:

1. Life-course stage: children and people older than 'working-age' are vulnerable to social exclusion due to reduced or no access to employment.
2. Personal resources: illness or disability may limit a person's capacity to work as well as involving additional costs associated with treatment, medication or disability-specific devices and aids (Cullinan et al., 2011). Disability may also be penalised in the labour market through discrimination or unaccommodating facilities.
3. Non-work caring responsibilities: responsibility for childcare or others who have an illness or disability is likely to reduce the person's capacity to engage in paid work.

Based on this understanding of social risk groups and the factors underlying social risk, the following social risk groups are considered in this report:

- Children
- People with disabilities
- Lone parents with dependent children
- Older people.⁹

These groups in line with the groups mentioned most in the Roadmap.

⁹ While since 2009 people aged 65 and over have the lowest AROP rates of all age groups, they experienced the highest AROP rates in the late 1990s. Such fluctuations are highly dependent on the rate of the state pension, making older people potentially vulnerable to economic circumstance changes.

1.7 Outline of the report

The remainder of the report is organised as follows. Chapter 2 describes the data and the methodology. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the current rankings on the monetary indicators and the change in rankings between 2018 and 2021. Chapter 4 focuses on the non-monetary indicators by describing the current ranking as well as the change in rankings between 2018 and 2021. Chapter 5 considers how EU countries are doing on the monetary and non-monetary indicators with regard to the four vulnerable groups. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the main observations and conclusions.

Chapter 2: Data and methodology

2.1 Introduction

The Roadmap contains a range of targets at both the national and the EU level. In this report, we focus on the EU targets and measures (presented in Table 1A of the Roadmap).¹⁰ The EU measures are based on data from the European Union Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC). In this chapter, we briefly discuss the EU SILC data and methodology and describe how the indicators are constructed.

2.2 The EU SILC

The EU SILC is a European-wide survey with national data collected by EU countries (the Central Statistics Office in Ireland) and coordinated by the European Statistical Office (Eurostat). The EU SILC is the EU's official data source to provide information about household and individual income and living conditions. It is a voluntary survey of private households, covers a variety of issues (income, living conditions, employment, education, health, etc.) and is used to derive the key EU indicators on poverty, material deprivation and social exclusion.

This report draws on the EU SILC 2021, which is the most recent data available for all included countries at the time of writing.¹¹ However, it is important to note that the data presented in this report are from 2021 and countries' performance on the indicators may have changed since. The EU SILC surveys were collected across Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is likely that the change in the mode of data collection due to health restrictions and the economic impact of COVID-19 as well as the rising cost of living might have impacted on countries' performances and rankings.

¹⁰ Table 1A of the Roadmap includes measures on the level of social participation and integration. However, these variables were part of a special rotational SILC module and new information is not available. Therefore, this report does not cover social participation and integration.

¹¹ For some countries the 2022 data were available. However, since this report focuses on country rankings, the 2021 data were preferred as they were available for most countries.

The survey has been run every year since 2004 and covers all EU countries plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. While some information is mainly collected at the household level (e.g. data on housing conditions), other information is collected directly from individual respondents (e.g. data on education). In 2021 the number of households in the EU SILC varied from 4,080 in Luxembourg to 30,936 in Germany; it was 4,846 in Ireland.

2.3 EU measures

The main statistics are publicly available from the Eurostat website. Below, we describe the measures used in the Roadmap report as constructed by Eurostat, covering both monetary and non-monetary indicators.

At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion (AROPE)

The AROPE indicator is the official EU poverty measure. It identifies the percentage of the population that are at risk of poverty OR severely materially deprived OR living in a Very Low Work Intensity (VLWI) household. People are considered at risk of poverty (AROP) if they are living in a household with an equivalised disposable income that is below 60 per cent of the national median equivalised disposable income (after tax and social transfers).¹² They are considered severely materially deprived if they experience an enforced lack of *at least seven out of 13 items* that are considered essential for social inclusion and participation in society (see glossary for details).¹³ People are considered to be living in a VLWI household if the overall work intensity of the household was equal or less than 20 per cent of the available time of working-age adults during the previous 12 months. Working-age adults are defined as people aged between 18 and 64, excluding inactive people aged 60 to 64 living in a household where pensions form the main source of income as well as students aged 18 to 24.

¹² Eurostat uses the modified OECD scale, which assigns the first adult in a household a weight of 1, children under 14 a weight of 0.3 and any other individuals a weight of 0.5.

¹³ The Eurostat measure of material deprivation used here is different to the Irish measure of deprivation. The Eurostat AROPE was revised in 2017 and implemented from 2021; the 13-item version is known as AROPE 2030.

Income distribution (S80/S20)

The S80/S20 indicator measures the level of income inequality in a country and is calculated as the ratio of the total income received by people in the top 20 per cent of the income distribution (top income quintile) to those in the bottom 20 per cent (bottom income quintile).

AROP before and after social transfers

The income poverty measures are based on two indicators: at risk of poverty BST and AST. These indicators report the percentage of the population living in a household with an equivalised income (BST and AST) of less than the 60 per cent national median equivalised disposable income. Social transfers include social benefits that households receive, such as state and private pensions and unemployment or child benefits. The interest of reporting these two indicators is to estimate the impact of social transfers in reducing income poverty.

In-work poverty

The in-work AROP measure identifies the population aged 18 to 59 who are in work (employee or self-employed) and live in a household with an equivalised disposable income below the 60 per cent national median equivalised disposable income.

Housing cost overburden rate

In the Roadmap, the housing cost overburden rate is based on a Eurostat indicator. It is calculated as the share of the population living in households allocating more than 40 per cent of their total disposable income (net of housing allowances) to housing costs (net of housing allowances).

Housing overcrowding rate

The Eurostat housing overcrowding rate is based on the number of rooms that are available to a household, the household's size, the ages of its members and the family situation. Accordingly, a household is considered as living in overcrowded accommodation if it does not have a minimum of one room for the household, one room per couple, one room for each single person aged 18 and over, one room per

pair of single people of the same gender aged 12–17 and/or one room per pair of children aged under 12.

Subjective health

The self-reported health measure is based on a question that asks people aged 16 and over to judge their general health on a five-point scale ranging from ‘very good’ to ‘very bad’. Based on this information, a dummy indicator is created which shows if people report their health as (very) good or not.

Unmet needs for medical examination

The unmet medical examination needs indicator used in the Roadmap is based on a question that asked respondents aged 16 and over if they had needed a medical examination or treatment for a health problem but not received it because they could not afford it in the past 12 months.¹⁴

Formal childcare attendance

The Eurostat indicator of children’s participation in formal childcare or education focuses on children from the age of three to minimum compulsory school age. This is a categorical measure that takes three values depending on the weekly hours that children spend in formal childcare or education. It distinguishes the share of children spending (a) 0 hours or (b) 1 to 29 hours or (c) 30 hours or over. Eurostat defines formal childcare as children being in any of (1) education at pre-school or equivalent, (2) education at compulsory education, (3) childcare at centre-based services outside school hours and (4) childcare at a day-care centre organised or controlled by a public or private structure.

The Roadmap focuses on reporting the share of children from the age of three to minimum compulsory school age that were in formal childcare for a total of one to 29 hours per week. It compares the children in this category to all other categories, thereby combining children that did not spend any time in formal care and those that spent 30 hours or more in formal childcare.

¹⁴ For ease of simplification, we refer sometimes to unmet needs for medical examination or treatment as unmet healthcare needs.

2.4 Vulnerable group definitions

Lone parents

A lone parent is defined as a single person (with no cohabiting partner) living with dependent children under the age of 18.¹⁵

People with disabilities

For the definition of people with disabilities, Eurostat follows the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: 'Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.' In the EU SILC, people with disabilities are identified using the following question: 'For at least the past 6 months, to what extent have you been limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do?' Respondents can answer using the following categories: (1) severely limited, (2) limited but not severely or (3) not limited at all. Respondents answering (1) or (2) are classified as people with disabilities.

Children and young people

Children and young people are defined as all those under the age of 18.

Older people

Older people are defined as everyone aged 65 or above.

¹⁵ Dependent children are individuals aged 0–17 years and 18–24 years if inactive and living with at least one parent (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Dependent_children).

Chapter 3: Ranking across monetary EU indicators

3.1 Introduction

As detailed in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025, the national ambition is to place Ireland within the top five EU countries on all indicators of the Roadmap,¹⁶ or to become the top or second-ranked country if Ireland was already in the top five in 2018.¹⁷ This chapter presents the country rankings on each of seven EU monetary indicators in 2021 as well as the mean ranking across these indicators. This will give insight into Ireland’s current performance as well as an indication of what countries it aims to join in the coming years. Furthermore, this chapter shows how the 2021 rankings compare to the 2018 rankings, which may give an idea of how much change might reasonably be expected by 2025, although it is important to bear in mind that the timeframes are slightly different (i.e. three vs four years) and the past couple of years have been particularly turbulent due to the pandemic and the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and consequences for energy and food prices.

3.2 Relative performance on the monetary EU indicators

Table 3.1 presents the country ranking on the monetary indicators in 2021. It also includes a column showing the average ranking across the indicators.¹⁸ The table has been sorted by the countries’ average ranking order and for ease of interpretation they are colour coded: countries in the top five are shown in green; countries in the middle in yellow; and countries in the bottom five in pink. Arrows are used to indicate if a country’s mean ranking increased (↑), decreased (↓) or stayed stable (↔) between 2018 and 2021. The figures for Ireland are shown in bold.

On average, Ireland is ranked 11th out of 27 countries in terms of the monetary indicators. Looking at each of the indicators, Ireland is only among the top five EU

¹⁶ Except for the AROPE rate for people with disabilities for which the target is to be in the top 10.

¹⁷ The target is to maintain Ireland’s position at least within the top five for the Housing Cost Overburden rate and the Overcrowding rate.

¹⁸ The average rankings across the indicators were calculated in the following way: First, the mean ranking position was calculated by adding up the ranking positions of a country and dividing it by the number of available indicators. Then, countries were ranked based on their mean ranking position.

countries for the in-work AROP measure (4th position), yet is quite close to the top five for the income inequality measure S80/S20 (6th position) and for the AROP AST indicator (8th position). For most other indicators Ireland finds itself in the middle: it is ranked 14th for AROPE (2030) and AROP before social transfers (BST) indicators, and 15th for child AROP. However, for the measure of AROP for people with disabilities, Ireland is located near the bottom of the ranking, in 24th position.

The overview presents a relatively clear and consistent pattern of ranking across the seven EU monetary indicators. This is particularly true for the top and bottom five countries: these countries tend to perform either very well or very badly across all the indicators. The best performing countries are a mix of Eastern European countries (Czechia, Slovenia, Slovakia) and Northern European countries (Finland, Denmark, Netherlands). The best performing country is Czechia, being ranked first on the AROPE (2030), AROP AST (AST) and AROP for people with disabilities; its lowest position is fourth for the income inequality measure (S80/S20). The countries with the lowest rankings are a mix of Southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain) and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Romania). Romania is ranked 27th on average and has the lowest ranking position for the AROPE (2030), in-work AROP and child AROP but is also ranked 26th for all the other indicators except AROP BST (23rd position).

Table 3.1: Overview of the EU monetary indicators 2021

	Average ranking	AROPE (2030)	S80/20	AROP BST	AROP AST	In-work AROP	AROPE <18	AROPE disabilities
CZ↔	1	1	4	1	1	2	3	1
SI↑	2	2	2	7	3	5	1	6
FI↑	3	3	5	18	2	1	2	2
SK↓	4	4	1	4	4	8	10	3
NL↓	5	5	7	5	10	7	5	9
DK↔	6	8	8	11	4	9	4	5
CY↑	7	8	13	2	9	16	9	14
BE↑	8	11	3	20	6	3	13	19
PL↑	9	6	9	17	13	18	6	10
SE↓	10	7	10	21	14	10	10	8
IE↑	11	14	6	14	8	4	15	24
AT↓	12	8	11	22	12	14	15	4
HU↑	13	13	12	9	6	13	19	17
HR↑	14	17	16	7	19	6	8	21
FR↓	15	12	14	27	10	11	15	12
MT↓	16	15	18	3	16	12	19	20
EE↑	17	19	18	6	23	21	7	22
DE↓	18	16	17	15	15	17	21	16
LU↑	19	18	15	13	17	26	22	7
LT↑	20	21	23	12	21	14	14	23
PT↓	21	20	20	15	18	23	18	15
LV↓	22	23	25	9	27	19	12	25
EL↑	23	25	21	25	20	22	24	13
IT↓	23	22	22	26	22	24	23	11
ES↓	25	24	24	24	24	25	26	18
BG↔	26	26	27	19	25	20	25	27
RO↔	27	27	26	23	26	27	27	26

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Note: Cells in green indicate being in the top 5, pink in the bottom 5 and yellow in between. The average rankings are obtained by ranking the countries on their mean ranking position. The results for Slovakia for the S80/20, AROP BST, AROP AST, and in-work AROP indicators are based on 2020 statistics. For the country codes, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

3.3 Change in ranking over time

Table 3.2 shows how the 2021 country rankings compare to the 2018 rankings. The numbers indicate how many positions each country gained or lost (on each indicator and overall). Countries are listed alphabetically, and the table is again colour-coded to make interpretation easier: green indicates an improved ranking; yellow no change in ranking; and pink a regression.

Most countries experienced at least some change in their average ranking on the monetary indicators between 2018 and 2021. Only four countries did not change their mean ranking. Of the other 23 countries, twelve countries improved their ranking and eleven countries saw their ranking go down.

Even though many countries experienced some upward or downward movement, patterns were generally relatively stable over time, with the top and bottom five countries remaining mostly the same between 2018 and 2021. The countries that were already in the top five in 2018 remain in the top five in 2021, with Czechia staying in first place. Similarly, there is little movement out of the top five between 2018 and 2021. Indeed, four out of five of the bottom countries in 2021 were also among the bottom five in 2018. The only exceptions were Italy and Lithuania: Italy was in the bottom five in 2018 at place 23 but is now in the middle group at place 22; Lithuania was ranked 23rd in 2018 moved to the 20th position in 2021.

Nevertheless, despite change being relatively modest generally, some countries experienced notable change in their mean ranking between 2018 and 2021. Some countries gained a considerable number of places in the average ranking: Poland and Hungary gained most positions (i.e. four), followed by Ireland, Belgium and Lithuania who gained 3 places. In contrast, with a loss of five places, Austria and France saw their ranking go down most.

Table 3.2: Ranking position changes across the EU monetary indicators between 2018 and 2021

	Average ranking	AROPE (2030)	S80/20	AROP BST	AROP AST	In-work AROP	AROPE <18	AROPE disabilities
AT	-5	-2	-5	-6	-3	0	-4	-2
BE	3	4	2	-8	8	1	4	0
BG	0	0	0	2	-1	2	0	0
CY	1	4	1	0	3	-3	0	1
CZ	0	0	-2	0	0	0	-2	6
DE	-3	-5	0	-2	-2	1	-13	1
DK	0	-1	0	-3	0	-1	0	3
EE	1	1	-1	0	0	-2	0	1
EL	1	0	0	2	-1	1	2	3
ES	-1	-2	-2	-4	-2	1	-2	3
FI	2	2	-1	-3	0	0	3	4
FR	-5	-3	-4	-5	-2	0	4	-9
HR	2	2	0	7	1	-1	4	-2
HU	4	3	3	16	-1	4	2	-5
IE	3	3	4	-4	3	-1	5	-2
IT	-1	-1	1	-3	-1	1	0	-1
LT	3	3	2	-1	4	2	8	2
LU	1	-4	4	13	-1	-2	-6	2
LV	-1	0	-1	-2	-1	-4	6	-1
MT	-4	-2	-5	0	1	-2	-5	-2
NL	-1	-1	0	0	-4	1	-2	-5
PL	4	4	3	2	-3	3	0	2
PT	-2	-2	0	2	0	-3	-5	-1
RO	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
SE	-1	1	-1	-3	0	1	-1	3
SI	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	-2
SK	-2	-2	0	0	-1	-2	4	-2

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC

Note: Green indicates an improved ranking; yellow no change in ranking; and pink a regression. For a list with the country codes and related country names, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

3.4 Change in ranking per indicator

The mean change in ranking of countries may hide considerable differences across the indicators. It could, for example, be the case that a country moves up on the rankings on 'indicator A' by five places, while going down five positions on the rankings of 'indicator B', thereby making its mean change zero. This section therefore considers the change in individual indicators (also shown in Table 3.2).

Compared to 2018, Ireland's average ranking had improved by three places in 2021. This was because it performed relatively better on four indicators: the AROPE (+3); S80/S20 (+4); AROP AST (+3); and AROP under 18 (+5). The positive changes recorded for these indicators were similar or even slightly bigger than the average gains of other countries that improved their ranking. However, there were also three indicators for which Ireland recorded a negative change: AROP BST (-4); in-work AROP (-1); and AROP for people with disabilities (-2). These negative changes thus reduced Ireland improved standing in the average ranking.

Median changes in ranking were generally quite modest, with the median positive and negative changes in rank generally being between two and three positions. The largest changes in ranking were found for the AROP for those under 18 years of age: countries that changed ranking tended to gain or lose four positions on this indicator. Conversely, for the in-work AROP, countries that gained positions typically improved by one position, and those that lost positions typically went down two positions.

Nevertheless, there was substantial variation in the range of the ranking change across the indicators. The largest improvements were recorded on the AROP BST (+13 for LU; +16 for HU) and the AROP for those under 18 years of age (+8 for LT; +6 LV). Large negative changes in rankings were found for the same indicators: Belgium and Austria lost 8 and 6 places, respectively, on the AROP BST; and

Germany and Luxembourg lost 13 and 6 places, respectively, on the AROP for those under 18 years of age.¹⁹

3.5 The absolute changes behind the relative changes

An important remaining question is whether any observed changes in Ireland's ranking tend to be driven by internal or external changes. Changing rankings can be driven by changes in the country's absolute performance on an indicator or by changes in other countries' absolute performances on this indicator. For example, Ireland could improve its ranking on an indicator in two different ways, yet the result would appear the same. On the one hand, it could be that Ireland's absolute performance on an indicator improves while other countries' absolute levels on the indicator remain the same or improve by less. On the other hand, it is possible that Ireland's absolute performance remains the same (or deteriorates) but the absolute performance of other countries deteriorates (but by more).

In this section we therefore explore the drivers of Ireland's change over time, examining if changes in rankings were associated with changes in absolute levels of Ireland or other countries.²⁰ Table 3.3 shows the percentage point difference for each of the seven indicators in 2021 and we highlight the differences using the same colour scheme used for Table 3.2.

¹⁹ A detailed examination of the indicators of the AROPE measure for those under 18 years of age showed that the main driver of the AROPE increase was a large increase of the VLWI indicator in Germany and a large increase of the AROP indicator in Luxembourg.

²⁰ It is also important to recognise that the country results are based on sample means. These estimates come with a certain level of uncertainty. Accordingly, country rankings might overstate the differences between countries. Countries may get a different ranking when the difference in the underlying mean scores is not statistically significant (e.g. an estimate of 12.5 per cent for country A and an estimate of 12.6 per cent for country B will give them a different ranking, but the difference may not be statistically significant).

Table 3.3 Percentage point change in the absolute rates, 2018–2021

	AROPE		AROP		In-work	AROPE	AROPE
	(2030)	S80/20	AROP BST	AST	AROP	<18	disabilities
AT	0.5	0.04	1.6	0.4	-0.4	1.2	1.1
BE	-1.7	-0.37	2.5	-3.7	-1.3	-3	-0.1
BG	-1.3	-0.21	-0.9	0.1	-0.1	-0.5	-4.8
CY	-1.8	-0.06	-1.1	-1.6	0.3	-1.3	-0.1
CZ	-1.1	0.11	1.6	-1	0	0.3	-6
DE	2.2	-0.19	1.5	-0.2	-0.5	6	-0.6
DK	-0.2	-0.18	1.8	-0.4	-0.5	-1.4	-1.4
EE	-1.4	-0.04	0.9	-1.3	0.7	0.4	-4.5
EL	-2	0.28	-1.8	1.1	0.2	-2.1	-1.8
ES	0.5	0.16	3.3	0.2	-0.3	2.9	-2.4
FI	-2.4	-0.07	0.7	-1.2	-0.3	-2.7	-4.6
FR	1.4	0.19	2.9	1	-0.2	-1.2	6.2
HR	-1.2	-0.22	-2.6	-0.1	-0.3	-3.6	0.7
HU	-1.2	-0.16	-5.6	-0.1	-1	-3.2	2.6
IE	-0.8	-0.4	2.3	-2	-0.5	-1.9	1.1
IT	-0.5	-0.23	2.7	-0.2	-0.6	0.1	-0.6
LT	-5.1	-0.95	0.7	-2.9	-0.7	-7.2	-6.3
LU	1	-0.59	-4.5	1.4	2	6	-1.8
LV	-2.3	-0.15	1.4	0.1	1.7	-3.5	-3.2
MT	1.1	0.75	-0.8	0.1	1	-0.1	1.9
NL	0.1	-0.17	1.6	1.1	-1	-0.2	4
PL	-1.4	-0.23	-0.7	0	-0.7	-0.4	-1.9
PT	0.8	0.44	-0.2	1.1	1.7	0.5	0.8
RO	-4.3	-0.08	0.2	-0.9	0.2	-2.7	-2.3
SE	-0.5	-0.09	0.3	-0.7	-0.6	-0.8	-3.1
SI	-2.2	-0.14	-0.2	-1.6	-1.2	-2.1	1.7
SK	0.4	0	0.3	0.1	-0.7	-3.6	2.6

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Note: Green indicates an improved ranking; yellow no change in ranking; and pink a regression. See country codes in appendix Table A2.

AROPE (2023)

Between 2018 and 2021, Ireland's AROPE (2030) rate fell from 20.8 to 20.0 per cent and its ranking improved from the 17th to the 14th position. The three-place improvement was related to both internal and external changes. Ireland experienced a 0.8 percentage point improvement in the AROPE rate. While many countries with worse 2018 AROPE rankings than Ireland experienced a large reduction in their rates, these reductions were lower than the percentage points gap existing with Ireland, keeping these countries behind Ireland. Furthermore, Luxembourg, Malta and Germany, which had better ranking positions than Ireland but with somewhat similar AROPE rates in 2018, experienced a relatively large increase in AROPE rates, causing them to rank below Ireland in 2021. Finally, none of the other countries with better 2018 AROPE rates than Ireland experienced increases in their AROPE rates that were large enough to place them behind Ireland in the rankings in 2021.

S80/S20

Compared to 2018, Ireland's level of income inequality (S80/S20) fell from 4.23 to 3.83, moving it from the 10th to the 6th place. This increase seems to be driven mostly by internal changes. Between 2018 and 2021, income inequality decreased for most countries: it increased for only five countries and stayed stable for one. However, among the countries with better absolute income inequality rates, the improvement was largest for Ireland (9.5 per cent) and Belgium (9.8 per cent), the reduction being more modest for the other countries: between 1.9 and 4.4 per cent. This explains why Ireland improved its ranking by four positions.

AROP before social transfers

In 2018, the AROP BST stood at 41 per cent for Ireland, putting it in 10th place. By 2021 the rate had increased to 43.3 per cent, placing Ireland in 14th position. Over this period, the AROP BST increased for 18 countries while it decreased for the other nine. Ireland's drop in the rankings was partly related to the 2.3 percentage points increase, but also to external changes. Two countries were relatively close to Ireland in 2018 but, in contrast to Ireland, witnessed a reduction in their AROP BST rate or a smaller regression, thereby overtaking Ireland: Latvia had an AROP BST rate of 41.8 in 2018 which increased to 42.5 in 2021, less than Ireland; and Croatia

had a rate of 42.9 before but this decreased to 40.3. Finally, two countries ranked substantially below Ireland in 2018 but improved their absolute rate to such an extent that they overtook Ireland in the rankings: Hungary was ranked 25th at 46.1 per cent in 2018 but ranked 9th in 2021 at 40.5 per cent; Luxembourg ranked 26th at 47.4 per cent in 2018 and ranked 13th at 42.9 per cent in 2021.

AROP after social transfers

Compared to 2018, Ireland's AROP AST rate fell from 14.9 to 12.9 per cent, moving Ireland from the 11th to the 8th place. Between 2018 and 2021, an almost equal number of countries saw their AROP AST increase (12 countries) and decrease (15 countries). After Belgium and Lithuania, which improved their rates by 3.7 and 2.9 percentage points respectively, Ireland improved most in an absolute sense.

Moreover, with the exception of Slovenia, the countries that were better ranked than Ireland in 2018 did not experience the same magnitude of poverty reduction. Thus, the improvement in Ireland's ranking on the AROP AST seems largely driven by internal changes.

In-work AROP

Between 2018 and 2021, Ireland's in-work AROP rate decreased by 0.5 percentage points from 4.8 to 4.3 per cent. This absolute change was associated with a slight drop in the rankings from the 3rd to the 4th place. In this period, 18 countries experienced a fall in the in-work AROP rates, while it increased for only eight countries and remained identical for Czechia. Overall, the magnitude of change was quite similar over time across countries, and the rankings remained rather stable. Ireland's drop from the 3rd to the 4th position, despite the improvement in the absolute level, was largely due to the improvement of a country that ranked just below Ireland in 2018: Belgium's in-work AROP rate decreased by 1.3 percentage points, from 5.1 to 3.8 per cent. This meant that Ireland mostly lost a place due to external changes.

AROPE for children

For Ireland, the AROPE for children fell from 24.7 to 22.8 per cent between 2018 and 2021, with a corresponding ranking going from 20th to 15th position. Ireland's lower

child poverty rate is in line with the trend observed in most other countries: the child AROP fell for 19 countries and increased in only eight.

Ireland's substantial improvement in ranking is related to both internal and external changes. Ireland's 1.9 percentage point reduction in the AROPE for children represents a substantial internal change and helped it to climb up the rankings. On the other hand, there were some notable external changes, with Germany and Luxembourg experiencing dramatic increases in their AROPE rate for children. Both these countries were ranked higher than Ireland in 2018 but experienced a six-percentage point increase in their AROPE rate for children, which placed them behind Ireland in 2021.

AROPE for people with disabilities

Of all the monetary indicators, the AROPE for people with disabilities shows the greatest variation across countries. For example, the rate is about 2.7 times as high in Bulgaria (45.3 per cent) as it is in Slovakia (16.9 per cent). In Ireland, the AROPE for people with disabilities increased by 1.1 percentage points, from roughly 38 per cent in 2018 to 39 per cent in 2021. This was linked to a drop in the rankings from the 22nd to the 24th position.

Between 2018 and 2021, the AROPE for people with disabilities decreased in 17 countries and increased for the other 10, including Ireland. The percentage points decrease ranged from -1 for Cyprus to -6.3 for Lithuania, whereas the increase ranged from 0.7 for Croatia to 4 for the Netherlands. While Ireland's two-position drop in the rankings was partly driven by an internal change, external changes also played a role. Two countries that ranked below in 2018 experienced substantial improvements in their absolute rates, allowing them to overtake Ireland: Estonia ranked 23rd at 41.6 per cent but improved to 22nd at 37.1 per cent; and Latvia ranked 25th at 45.2 per cent but improved to 23rd at 38.9 per cent. However, it is important to note that the small size of the underlying sample for people with disabilities in some countries increases the likelihood that the changes over time in absolute levels may not be statistically significant.

3.6 Summary

This chapter focused on the relative performance of EU countries across seven of the monetary EU indicators used in the Roadmap. In particular, it tried to identify Ireland's current position, the top five countries it aims to join, and whether changes in Ireland's position in the country ranking were driven by internal or external changes. Furthermore, it investigated how much movement there was in the mean rankings and how stable the top and bottom five countries were over time.

On average, Ireland is ranked 11th out of the 27 EU countries in 2021, which is three positions higher than in 2018. In 2021, Ireland met its target of being among the best five performing countries for the in-work AROP measure (4th position) and was close to reaching the target on the income inequality measure S80/S20 (6th position). On most other indicators, Ireland tended to be ranked in the middle, ranking between 8th and 15th place. However, there was one exception: Ireland was in the bottom five in terms of the AROPE for people with disabilities.

There was a clear pattern of countries that were consistently performing well or poorly, and while there was some movement, their rankings were relatively stable between 2018 and 2021. The best performing countries that Ireland aims to join are a mix of Eastern and Northern European countries: Czechia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and the Netherlands. The countries with the lowest rankings are a mix of Southern European countries (Greece, Italy, Spain) and Eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Romania). This is largely in line with what would have been expected based on welfare state theories.

Ireland's three-place improvement in the average rankings was related to both internal and external changes. In some cases, the change in Ireland's ranking position was mostly related to a change in Ireland's absolute performance (i.e. an internal change). This was the case for the S80/S20 income inequality indicator and the AROP AST, on which Ireland improved its ranking by improving more than most other countries. In other cases, Ireland's new place in the rankings was mostly linked to changes in the absolute levels of other countries (i.e. external changes). This held true for the AROP BST and the in-work AROP, on which Ireland lost positions due to

the improvements recorded for other countries. Finally, in the remainder of cases, the change in Ireland's ranking was the result of a combination of internal and external changes. For example, Ireland improved its ranking on the AROPE for children from 20th to 15th because the absolute AROPE rate for children decreased for Ireland while it increased for two countries that had been slightly ahead of Ireland in 2018.

Chapter 4: Ranking across non-monetary EU indicators

4.1 Introduction

The Roadmap not only stated the ambition to put Ireland in the top five countries by 2025 with regard to the monetary indicators, it detailed the same ambition for the non-monetary indicators. The current chapter follows the same structure as the previous chapter on the monetary indicators. It provides an overview of the country rankings on the seven non-monetary EU indicators in 2021 to gain a better understanding of Ireland's current performance on these indicators in comparative perspective, and to get a sense of the top five countries Ireland hopes to join by 2025. This chapter also investigates how the country rankings developed from 2018 to 2021 to understand how much movement there has been in the recent period. This can be indicative of how much change is likely to take place in the period between 2021 and 2025, and thus of how likely it might be that the 2025 targets will be reached.

4.2 Country ranking on non-monetary EU indicators

Table 4.1 shows the ranking of Ireland and the other EU countries on the non-monetary indicators in 2021, with the first column showing the average ranking across these indicators. Like before, the table has been sorted by the countries' average ranking, meaning that the best-performing countries are shown at the top and the worst-performing countries at the bottom. Moreover, the table is again colour-coded to allow for easy interpretation. For each indicator, countries in the top five are coloured green, countries in the middle are shown in yellow, and countries in the bottom five in pink. Finally, three types of arrows indicate if the average ranking of a country has increased (↑), decreased (↓) or remained the same (↔) between 2018 and 2021. The figures for Ireland are shown in bold.

On average, Ireland is ranked 3rd out of 27 countries in terms of the current non-monetary indicators. Ireland was in the top five in four of the seven indicators: housing cost overburden rate (1st), housing overcrowding (3rd), subjective health (5th) and the share of children above the age of three receiving formal childcare between 1 and 29 hours a week (1st). On two of the remaining indicators, Ireland

ranked in the middle: unmet healthcare needs (7th) and severe material deprivation (14th). Finally, on one indicator Ireland was in last place: it ranked 27th in terms of the share of very low work intensity (VLWI) households.

It is worth noting that Ireland's performance on some of these indicators may also be tied to the way these indicators measure performance. Importantly, a recent review of the Roadmap indicators found that there are limitations and issues for some indicators and that not all are fully suitable for their intended purpose (Sprong & Maitre, 2023), and that this can affect the country rankings. For example, the indicator for formal childcare used in the Roadmap is based on children above the age of three who attend formal care between 1 and 29 hours per week, on which Ireland is ranked first of all 27 EU countries. However, if children above the age of three who were in formal care for more than 29 hours per week were also counted, Ireland would rank 21st.²¹ In addition, the review of Roadmap indicators mentioned how the housing cost overburden indicator may not fully capture the current issues around affordability in Ireland (Sprong & Maitre, 2023). For example, a recent report found that the high housing costs gap between younger and older renters in Ireland was particularly wide compared to other European countries (Disch and Slaymaker, 2023).

It is hard to discern a clear pattern in the ranking of countries across the seven non-monetary indicators. This may be related to the limitations of some of these indicators and to the fact that these indicators cover different policy spheres with variable countries' performances, though welfare state theory and research would suggest that some groups of countries would perform better across a range of service and policy domains. The best-ranking countries are Cyprus, Malta, Ireland, Slovenia and Finland; the worst-ranking countries are Denmark, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria and Latvia. These sets of countries bear little resemblance to the policy

²¹ This is because the indicator used in the Roadmap compares children above the age of three who attend childcare between 1 to 29 hours per week to all other groups, thereby combining the group of children who do not attend childcare at all with the group that attends childcare for more than 29 hours per week. If a country has a low ranking on the Roadmap's formal childcare indicator this could thus be because it has a large share of children that are in childcare full-time.

configurations found in welfare state analyses. Unlike the monetary indicators, no country ranks consistently in the top or bottom five. Even Lithuania, which is ranked 27th in terms of the average ranking across the indicators, is ranked 11th in terms of housing cost overburden rate, 12th for the share of VLWI households and 15th for severe material deprivation. Similarly, Cyprus, which is in first place overall, is in the top five on only three indicators (housing cost overburden rate, housing overcrowding and subjective health), while it is in the middle on the remaining four indicators (unmet healthcare needs, VWLI households, children in formal care and severe material deprivation).

Table 4.1: Overview of the EU non-monetary indicators, 2021

	Housing		Good	Unmet			Severe	
	Average ranking	cost overburden	subjective health	medical need	VLWI	Formal childcare	material deprivation	
CY↑	1	1	3	7	11	7	9	
MT↓	2	4	2	6	7	6	14	
IE↑	3	1	3	5	7	27	1	14
SI↑	4	7	13	15	1	2	21	3
FI↑	5	8	7	13	1	17	17	1
CZ↓	6	17	17	9	1	8	11	3
AT↓	7	16	15	12	7	13	3	3
NL↓	7	25	3	14	1	17	2	7
LU↑	9	12	8	10	18	10	9	8
SE↓	10	21	18	19	1	19	10	2
EE↑	11	9	16	24	12	5	20	6
HU↑	12	1	14	20	12	8	15	24
ES↓	13	22	6	11	7	24	4	23
PL↑	14	14	24	18	17	3	16	10
DE↓	15	23	11	23	1	20	13	13
RO↑	16	19	26	2	26	1	5	27
FR↓	17	13	10	17	23	22	8	18
HR↑	18	10	23	16	16	14	22	12
SK↓	18	6	22	21	20	4	23	17
IT↓	20	18	20	4	21	23	12	18
BE↓	21	19	5	8	22	25	19	21
LT↑	22	4	19	27	12	15	25	22
DK↓	23	26	9	22	15	21	24	11
PT↓	23	15	12	25	24	6	26	20
EL↓	25	27	21	1	27	26	6	25
BG↔	26	24	25	7	19	16	18	26
LV↓	27	11	27	25	25	12	27	15

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Note: Cells in green indicate being in the top 5, pink in the bottom 5 and yellow in between. The average rankings are obtained by ranking the countries on their mean ranking position. The results for Slovakia for the housing cost, overcrowding, unmet medical need and formal childcare indicators are

based on 2020 statistics. For France the result for housing cost is based on 2020 statistics. For the country codes, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

4.3 Change in average country rankings 2018–2021

Table 4.2 presents the difference in ranking between 2018 and 2021 for the non-monetary EU indicators, with the numbers showing how many places a country went up or down in the ranking. Countries are listed in alphabetical order and colours indicate if the ranking improved or not: Green denotes a better ranking; yellow no change in ranking; and pink a worse ranking.

Between 2018 and 2021, nearly all countries experienced at least some change in their average ranking on the non-monetary indicators: 11 countries improved their ranking, 15 countries experienced a drop in their ranking, and one country remained in the same position. In most cases, the change in average ranking was between one and three places. However, in some cases the change was larger: Slovenia (+5) and Hungary (+9) gained most places, while the Netherlands (-4) and Denmark (-7) lost most. These big gains and losses represent substantial change in a three-year period, which brings up the question of how credible they are in policy terms and to what extent they might be caused by how they are measured. Here, it is also important to underline that rankings can overstate differences between countries, if these differences are small or even non-significant when considering statistical uncertainty.

There was substantial movement in and out of the top and bottom five. Only Malta and Cyprus were in the top five in both 2018 and 2021. The Netherlands, Austria and Czechia had been ranked 3rd, 4th and 5th, respectively in 2018, but were no longer among the five best performing countries in 2021. Greece, Bulgaria and Latvia were in the bottom five in 2018 and were still there in 2021. However, while Lithuania, Croatia and Poland²² were among the lowest ranked countries in 2018, they had improved their ranking enough to be in the middle group in 2021.

²² Poland and Croatia jointly ranked 22nd, meaning that there was no 23rd place.

Table 4.2: Ranking position changes across the EU non-monetary indicators between 2018 and 2021

	Average ranking	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	Good subjective health	Unmet medical need	VLWI	Formal childcare	Severe material deprivation
AT	-3	-2	0	0	-4	-4	2	3
BE	-3	-1	1	1	1	0	-3	-4
BG	0	2	0	2	2	2	8	0
CY	1	1	0	0	13	4	0	2
CZ	-1	-2	0	6	0	-6	1	1
DE	-3	1	-3	-2	2	-6	-3	-4
DK	-7	-1	2	-6	-4	0	-7	-1
EE	1	-5	-2	0	3	-1	1	1
EL	-1	0	0	0	0	1	-3	0
ES	-3	-4	-1	-4	-4	-1	2	-2
FI	2	-2	0	0	0	7	-2	2
FR	-3	-6	-1	0	-6	-10	0	2
HR	4	-1	1	4	-2	6	0	3
HU	9	21	4	2	-1	-2	5	-1
IE	3	2	-1	-3	11	-1	1	1
IT	-1	-2	0	-1	3	-1	2	-1
LT	3	6	0	0	1	4	-2	2
LU	2	8	2	9	-8	3	2	-6
LV	-1	2	-1	1	1	-1	0	7
MT	-1	-3	1	-1	-4	-2	-5	-3
NL	-4	-4	1	-3	2	0	-1	-2
PL	3	-2	-1	5	2	4	1	2
PT	-1	-4	0	0	-2	4	-1	-1
RO	4	4	1	4	-1	7	-1	0
SE	-2	-4	-2	-11	2	-3	3	-1
SI	5	1	0	3	2	-1	3	5
SK	-3	-1	0	-7	-5	-1	-4	-3

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Note: Green denotes a better ranking; yellow no change in ranking; and pink a worse ranking. The average rankings are obtained by ranking the countries on their mean ranking position. For a list with the country codes and related country names, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

4.4 Change in ranking per indicator

As mentioned in the previous chapter, it is important to look beyond the average country rankings because they can hide considerable variation across the specific indicators. This is particularly true if there are large drops on some indicators and large gains on others. Below, we briefly describe the change across the individual non-monetary EU indicators (see Table 4.2).

Ireland's mean ranking on the non-monetary indicators went up from the 6th to 3rd between 2018 and 2021. This three-place improvement was largely driven by the much-improved ranking on the share of people with unmet healthcare needs (+11), though ranking improvements were also recorded for the housing cost overburden rate (+2), the share of children in formal childcare (+1) and the share of people in severe material deprivation (+1). At the same time, it lost positions on three other indicators: the housing overcrowding rate (-1), subjective health (-3) and the share of people living in VLWI households (-1).

The range of the change in country rankings differed substantially across the non-monetary EU indicators. For some indicators, the ranking was rather stable. For example, for the housing overcrowding rate 11 countries remained in the same position, and the changes in position that took place were between -3 (Germany) and +4 (Hungary). Likewise, changes were relatively modest for the severe material deprivation indicator: while only three countries stayed in the same position, changes were typically around two places and ranged from -6 (Luxembourg) to 7 (Latvia).

For other indicators there was much more change. No country remained in the same position for the housing cost overburden rate between 2018 and 2021, and changes ranged from -6 places (France) to 21 places (Hungary). For the unmet healthcare needs indicators changes were also substantial, with only two countries maintaining

their 2018 position in 2021 and the change in ranking ranging from –8 (Luxembourg) to 13 (Cyprus).

4.5 The absolute changes behind the relative changes

With so many changes between 2018 and 2021, the question of whether the changes in the country rankings are related to internal (i.e. changes in Ireland's absolute levels) or external changes (i.e. changes in other countries' absolute levels) arguably becomes even more relevant. Additionally, an examination of the absolute changes underlying the changes in the country rankings across the non-monetary indicators is of particular relevance in light of the rather extreme change for some countries on the non-monetary indicators.

The paragraphs below will therefore examine if the changes in Ireland's rankings between 2018 and 2021 were mostly related to changes in the absolute levels of Ireland or other countries. Table 4.3 reports the percentage point difference between the absolute score in 2018 and 2021. The green cells show values that present an absolute improvement from 2018 to 2021, while the pink cells indicate that the country's absolute score deteriorated. Yellow cells are used to highlight where the absolute rate was the same in 2018 and 2021. Tables showing the absolute values for each country for 2018 and 2021, on which Table 3.3 is based, can be found in the appendix.

Table 4.3 Percentage point change in the absolute rates 2018-2021

	Housing		Good	Unmet		Formal	Severe
	cost	Overcrowding	subjective	medical	VLWI	childcare	material
	overburden		health	need			deprivation
AT	-0.7	0.9	-0.3	0	1	6.8	-1
BE	-1.4	0.2	1	-0.6	-1.2	-5.3	-0.2
BG	-6.3	-3.7	1.7	-0.8	-0.6	10.3	-3.2
CY	0.5	-0.2	0.2	-1.3	-2.3	2	-1.2
CZ	-1.6	-0.3	5	0	0.9	0.8	-0.6
DE	-3.5	3.1	0.5	-0.1	1.3	-4.1	0.8
DK	0.8	0	-2	0	-0.3	-6.2	-0.4
EE	0.4	2.3	6.5	-0.4	-0.2	4.9	-1.2
EL	-10.7	-0.7	1.3	-2.6	-1.5	-23.9	-2.2
ES	1	1.7	-3.4	0	0.8	2.6	-0.4
FI	0	0.1	1.4	0	-2.5	0	-1.1
FR	0.9	1.2	0.8	0.9	3.2	-0.1	-0.8
HR	-0.6	-4.9	3.7	-0.1	-1.8	3.7	-2.6
HU	-7.1	-6.6	3.3	-0.1	0	12.8	-1.7
IE	-0.9	0.7	-3	-0.8	-0.2	5.4	-1
IT	-1	0.2	-0.8	-0.9	0.1	4.7	-0.6
LT	-2.9	0.9	4.1	-0.2	-1.1	1.1	-5.6
LU	-4.2	-0.7	6.5	0.4	-2.4	3.7	0.8
LV	-1.8	-2.1	3.4	-2.4	-0.6	0.4	-5.1
MT	1	-0.5	-2.4	0	0	-5.6	0.7
NL	3.1	-0.7	-2.1	-0.1	0.2	-3.5	-0.5
PL	-0.5	-3.5	5.4	-0.6	-1.5	6.3	-1.6
PT	0.2	1	0.9	0.1	-1.6	-0.2	-0.6
RO	-2.8	-5.3	4.1	-0.1	-2.5	-20	-5.2
SE	0.2	1	-4.9	-0.1	0.7	1.3	0
SI	-0.8	-1.6	4.2	-0.1	-0.8	7.1	-1.4
SK	-0.9	-5.4	-1.1	0.2	-0.2	0.2	0.3

Source: Eurostat's web database: EU-SILC.

Note: Green indicates an improvement ; yellow no change; and pink a regression. See country codes in appendix Table A2.

Housing cost overburden

From 2018 to 2021 Ireland's housing cost overburden rate fell from 3.4 to 2.5 per cent, improving Ireland's ranking from 3rd to 1st (together with Hungary and Cyprus). In this same period, 16 other countries experienced an absolute improvement in their housing cost overburden rate, while it increased for nine countries and remained the same for one.

Behind Ireland's move to the top of the ranking were both internal and external changes. On the one hand, Ireland's housing cost overburden rate reduced by 0.9 percentage points, thus presenting an absolute improvement compared to 2018. On the other hand, countries that ranked higher than Ireland previously saw their absolute levels deteriorate, while none of the countries that ranked lower than Ireland in 2018 improved enough to overtake Ireland. Notably, Malta was ranked 1st at 1.7 per cent in 2018 but was only 4th in 2021 because the housing cost overburden rate increased to 2.7 per cent. Moreover, the absolute level of Cyprus, which ranked 2nd in 2018, increased from 2.0 to 2.5 per cent, making it equal to Ireland. Of note too is the progress made by Hungary, which went from 22nd at 9.6 per cent in 2018 to shared 1st at 2.5 per cent in 2021, although what is behind this change remains an important question.

Housing overcrowding

Between 2018 and 2021, Ireland's housing overcrowding rate increased from 2.7 to 3.4 per cent and Ireland went from 2nd place to a joint 3rd position. In this period, the housing overcrowding rate decreased for 14 countries, increased for 12 countries and remained stable for one. The lower ranking was partly driven by the 0.7 percentage point increase in the housing overcrowding rate, yet it was also associated with changes in the performance of other countries. Most importantly, Malta was in 3rd place at 3.4 per cent in 2018 and went up to 2nd place at 2.9 per cent in 2021; the Netherlands was in 4th position at 4.1 per cent in 2018 but improved to a joint 3rd place at 3.4 per cent in 2021.

Subjective health

Across the EU, the proportion of people rating their health as (very) good increased in 18 countries while decreasing for the other nine countries. For Ireland, the share

of people rating their own health as good or very good decreased from 87.6 to 84.6 per cent, changing its ranking from 2nd to 5th.

The three-place ranking change for Ireland was partly related to the 3.0 percentage point decrease in the subjective health rate. However, the performance of other countries mattered too. With an absolute rate of 90.0 per cent in 2021, Greece remain securely in 1st place. Italy and Cyprus also remained relatively stable in the ranking and had better absolute rates than Ireland in 2021: Cyprus stayed in 3rd place with the rate going from 85.8 per cent in 2018 to 86.0 in 2021; Italy went from joint 3rd place to 4th place after the share of people reporting (very) good health went down slightly from 85.8 to 85.0 per cent. Finally, Romania, which was ranked four places below Ireland in 2018, increased its self-reported good health rate by 4.1 percentage points to 87.1 per cent in 2021, making it the 2nd best performing country in the EU. Thus, it was Ireland's worse performance on the subjective health indicator combined with similarly ranked countries doing comparatively better in the 2018–2021 period that caused Ireland's drop of three positions.

Unmet healthcare needs

Between 2018 and 2021, Ireland's unmet needs for medical examination due to costs rate decreased from 0.9 to 0.1 per cent, moving Ireland from 18th to joint 7th place. In that period, the share of people with unmet healthcare needs due to costs decreased for 17 countries, increased for four and stayed the same for the other six. Given the period covered includes the onset of the Covid pandemic, it is likely that increased demands and health services' limitations became more important drivers of unmet healthcare needs restrictions, and the focus of the indicator on costs alone misses this.

The change in Ireland's ranking seems to be driven mostly by the change in its own performance, with other countries often improving their absolute performance less than Ireland. Only Greece, Latvia, Cyprus and Italy improved their performance more than Ireland, but they were ranked substantially below Ireland in 2018, meaning that their improvements were not sufficient to surpass Ireland. Yet it is worth mentioning that the very low rates on this indicator likely reduce the substantive meaning of the

changes in ranking, and underline the need for a better indicator (Guidi & Ingleby, 2023; Sprong & Maitre, 2023)

People in VLWI households

Ireland's share of people living in VLWI households decreased by 0.2 percentage points from 13.2 to 13.0 per cent between 2018 and 2021. Despite this small absolute improvement, Ireland's ranking fell from 26th to 27th place. In this period, the percentage of people living in VLWI households decreased for 17 countries, increased for eight countries and was stable for two countries.

Ireland's change in position was mainly driven by external changes. Even though Ireland slightly improved its absolute performance on the indicator, 14 countries experienced a bigger absolute improvement than Ireland. Importantly, Greece, which was the only country that ranked below Ireland in 2018, saw the share of people living in VLWI households fall by 1.5 percentage points to 12.1 per cent in 2021. This meant that Ireland lost its 26th place despite the slight improvement in the absolute rate.

Children (older than three years) attending formal care (1–29 hours)

In 2018 the share of children above the age of three attending formal care for 1 to 29 hours in Ireland was 69.2 per cent, making Ireland the 2nd best country in the EU behind the Netherlands. In 2021, this percentage increased to 74.6 per cent, putting Ireland in first place. Between 2018 and 2021, 16 other countries witnessed an increase in the share of children attending formal care above the age of three, nine countries saw the percentage decrease and one did not see any change.

While Ireland improved its absolute performance on this indicator by 5.4 percentage points, its improved position was largely due to change in performance of the Netherlands, which saw its rate decrease by 3.5 percentage points to 65.9 per cent. In addition, Greece and Romania, which ranked 3rd and 4th at 65.6 and 63.5 per cent respectively in 2018, saw their rate on the formal childcare indicator for children above the age of three attending 1–29 hours of care go down substantially. In 2021, Greece's rate decreased to 41.7 per cent and Romania's to 43.5 per cent. For Greece this change was largely caused by an increase in the share of children that

attended formal care for more than 30 hours per week. Nevertheless, their ranking only changed to 5th (Romania) and 6th (Greece) because the gap to other countries had been so large previously.

Severe material deprivation

Ireland improved its ranking on the severe material deprivation indicator from 15th (together with Croatia) to 14th between 2018 and 2021. This was associated with a 1 percentage point reduction in severe material deprivation, from 6.1 to 5.1 per cent.

Most other countries also improved their performance with regard to the severe material deprivation indicator in this period: it decreased for 22 countries, increased for four, and remained stable for one country. There were 12 countries that improved their performance more than Ireland, explaining why Ireland's improved absolute performance did not have a larger effect. In fact, the reason why Ireland gained a position in the ranking was partly that Malta experienced an increase in its severe material deprivation rate from 4.7 per cent in 2018 to 5.4 per cent in 2021, resulting in a drop from 13th to 16th place.

4.6 Summary

Similarly to the previous chapter, this chapter explored the EU countries' rankings across seven non-EU monetary indicators covering a wide range of issues such as housing, health and childcare. It again examined where Ireland stands currently, what the best- and worst-performing countries are, how stable rankings were over time, and if changes in Ireland's ranking were mostly driven by internal or external changes.

On average, Ireland ranked 3rd out of 27 countries in 2021, which was a three-place improvement compared to 2018. Ahead of the 2025 timeline, Ireland reached its goal of being among the top five countries on four of the seven non-monetary indicators in 2021, although this might be related to the indicators used and not always reflect people's experiences in these areas (Sprong & Maitre, 2023). On the other three indicators, Ireland ranked in the middle on two of them, but last of all EU countries for the share of very low work intensity (VLWI) households.

In contrast to the monetary indicators, there was no clear pattern of high- or low-ranking countries across the seven non-monetary indicators, which might be related to the limitations of some of these indicators but also to the diversity of domains they cover. In addition, between 2018 and 2021, there were more changes in the average country ranking than for the monetary indicators. Nevertheless, it was possible to identify some countries that seemed to perform consistently better or worse. Among the best-performing countries in 2021 were Cyprus, Malta, Ireland, Slovenia and Finland. The worst-ranking countries comprised Denmark, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria and Latvia. Particularly, the low ranking of Denmark is worth noting, which is surprising, given its social democratic welfare model (e.g., Lauzadyte-Tutliene et al., 2018).

Ireland's move from 6th to 3rd position was largely driven by the improved ranking on the share of people with unmet healthcare needs, and to a lesser extent to the housing cost overburden rate, the share of children in formal childcare, and the share of people in severe material deprivation. The recorded changes in Ireland's ranking on the indicators were again a mix of internal and external changes. For example, the improved ranking on the housing cost overburden rate was related to an absolute improvement of 0.8 percentage points as well as to a deterioration in the absolute levels for countries that had previously ranked above Ireland.

Finally, this ranking differs significantly from other rankings, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Index, which assesses progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.²³ In the overall country rankings among all 193 UN member states, Ireland occupies 17th position and stands at 14th among EU countries. The top-performing EU nations include Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Austria, while the poorest performers within the EU are Romania, Lithuania, Malta, Bulgaria and Cyprus.

²³ There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 targets covering domains from poverty eradication to the provision of clean water and sanitation, which makes the country ranking not really comparable with the EU indicators.

The results of this report showed that the indicators that had been identified as having substantial drawbacks were less able to discern patterns of well and poorly performing countries, and rankings were, for example, very different from what might be expected based on welfare state typologies. Moreover, these indicators often showed greater change over time, which casts further doubt on their accuracy. This was particularly true for several non-monetary indicators, and highlights the need for carefully consideration of indicators in these areas.

Chapter 5: Ranking for vulnerable groups

5.1 Introduction

The EU indicators used in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025 mostly focus on the overall population, although it is important to acknowledge that some indicators consider specific groups of the population (e.g. the AROPE rate for children under the age of 18 years and for people with disabilities). Nevertheless, the Roadmap recognises that certain groups are at a greater risk of poverty and social exclusion and may therefore need extra support. Accordingly, this chapter extends the analysis of the previous two chapters by looking at the country rankings across key EU indicators for four vulnerable groups: lone parents, children, people with disabilities and older people. In doing so, this chapter aims to identify the best- and worst-performing countries with regard to protecting these vulnerable groups. Additionally, it considers which of these four vulnerable groups is the most at risk on each indicator for each country.

In the sections below, we report the country rankings on relevant available indicators for these four social risk groups (see Tables 5.1–5.4). In this chapter we combine the relevant monetary and non-monetary indicators for each group. This means that we have more indicators for some groups than for others. For children, we cannot report their subjective health because this question is only asked to adults. For older people, we do not report the very low work intensity (VLWI) measure because this measure excludes people above the age of 64.

The results are again presented in the form of league tables. They are sorted by their AROPE (2030) ranking, which is the EU headline poverty indicator, rather than the average ranking as in previous chapters,²⁴ but use the same colour-coding scheme: for each indicator, countries in the top five are coloured green, countries in the middle are shown in yellow, and countries in the bottom five in pink. In the final

²⁴ Following statistical disclosure rules, we cannot report statistics that are based on group sizes smaller than 30. This means that we are not able to report a ranking for every country on every indicator due to small sample sizes, which makes it difficult to calculate an average ranking.

section, we show a table that indicates which of the four groups within a country is the most vulnerable on an indicator.

The last table in this chapter (Table 5.5) shows which of the four vulnerable groups considered in the chapter is the most at risk within a country according to each indicator. In this table, the countries are sorted in alphabetical order, and for each indicator the worst-ranked group is listed. To ease interpretation, groups are also given a colour: lone parents (LP) are shown in light blue; people aged 65 and over (OP) in purple; people with disabilities in dark blue; and children (YP) in orange. When two social groups are in the same cell, the colour is a mix of their respective colours.

5.2 Country rankings for lone parents

Ireland's relative performance for lone parents is quite mixed (see Table 5.1). On some indicators Ireland finds itself among the worst-performing countries: it is ranked 27th on the AROPE (2030), AROP BST and VLWI, and 23rd on severe material deprivation. On other indicators, Ireland is ranked among or near the top five countries for lone parents: 2nd on the in-work AROP indicator and the housing overcrowding rate, 6th on the AROP AST and 7th on the housing cost overburden rate. Finally, Ireland is in the middle of the ranking for good subjective health (13th).

Ireland's performance on the nine indicators shows that lone parents face substantial challenges compared to other EU countries, but also when compared to the general population in Ireland. For example, Ireland ranked 14th on the AROPE for the overall population but 27th for lone parents. Nevertheless, the difference in the ranking between the AROP BST and AROP AST highlights the effectiveness of social transfers in lifting lone parents out of poverty. Without social transfers the position of lone parents would be much worse, yet this also highlights their high dependence on social transfers.

Even though there is no clear pattern in the ranking of countries for lone parents, some countries perform well or badly across many indicators. The best-performing country for lone parents is Slovenia, which ranks 1st or 2nd on five of the nine

indicators and 7th and 8th on the others, though data are not available for two indicators. Other countries that appear to be performing relatively well for lone parents are Finland, Poland and Slovakia. In terms of countries that are performing less well, Bulgaria is in the bottom five countries on five of the nine indicators and in the middle on the remaining four. Other countries that find themselves in the bottom five on multiple indicators are Lithuania, Spain and Ireland.

Table 5.1: Country rankings for lone parents across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	In- work AROP	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	VLWI	Severe material deprivation	Good subjective health
SI	1	2	2	7	8	N/A	1	1	N/A
FI	2	14	1	27	1	9	9	2	11
SE	3	12	8	8	9	11	6	4	9
PL	4	9	4	5	N/A	7	12	12	N/A
SK	5	4	15	26	N/A	N/A	2	14	N/A
DK	6	13	3	11	21	8	14	8	24
PT	7	3	12	14	15	25	7	16	1
NL	8	22	13	3	14	5	25	7	22
BE	9	18	5	4	11	6	22	19	12
EE	10	11	20	6	12	16	3	5	21
IT	11	6	17	16	16	17	13	11	3
HU	12	1	9	17	2	13	5	24	6
CY	13	21	10	20	6	1	15	5	4
CZ	14	7	14	18	20	18	16	9	8
LV	15	15	21	23	13	23	8	13	20
HR	16	8	21	11	19	24	11	17	5
DE	17	24	7	14	17	14	21	15	15
LU	18	19	18	13	3	10	4	3	14
AT	18	20	25	24	18	19	23	10	17
FR	20	26	24	1	N/A	12	24	18	18
EL	21	10	15	21	24	20	19	25	2
LT	22	25	23	22	4	21	18	20	23
MT	23	17	26	19	10	3	26	22	19
BG	24	16	19	25	22	22	20	26	7
RO	25	5	11	9	5	15	10	27	16
ES	26	23	27	10	23	4	17	21	10
IE	27	27	6	2	7	2	27	23	13

Source: Eurostat's web database and microdata for housing cost and overcrowding; EU-SILC UDB 2021 version of 2022-09.

Note: N/A = not applicable as no data available at the time. Cells in green indicate being in the top 5; pink in the bottom 5; and yellow in between. For the country codes, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

5.3 Country rankings for people with disabilities

Ireland's results for people with disabilities are rather diverse, with big contrasts in terms of the rankings across different indicators (see Table 5.2). Indeed, Ireland is in the top five countries across three indicators: housing cost overburden (1st), overcrowding (3rd) and subjective health (5th). However, at the same time, Ireland is ranked in the bottom five countries for VLWI (27th) and AROPE (24th), and near the bottom for AROP BST and AST (respectively 22nd and 20th) and severe material deprivation (22nd). These results indicate that compared to people with disabilities in other European countries, people with disabilities in Ireland face great challenges in terms of income, work and material deprivation, yet they are faring relatively well in terms of housing and subjective health.

While some countries perform well or poorly on all indicators for people with disabilities, there are also countries that perform well in one category but poorly in others. Overall, Finland is the best-performing country for people with disabilities: it is ranked within the top five countries on five indicators and in the middle on the others. A group of four countries composed of Czechia, Slovakia, Austria and Denmark is also performing very well as they are within the top five countries across four indicators. On the other hand, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece have the worst country rankings and are in the bottom five on five of the nine indicators for people with disabilities.

Table 5.2: Country rankings for people with disabilities across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	VLWI	Severe material deprivation	Good subjective health
CZ	1	16	1	14	14	16	2	17
FI	2	9	3	8	13	7	1	4
SK	3	3	2	N/A	N/A	3	13	18
AT	4	8	5	12	16	4	3	6
DK	5	2	4	23	8	17	11	3
SI	6	10	11	15	11	8	9	11
LU	7	1	9	10	10	6	4	1
SE	8	11	17	21	19	15	5	7
NL	9	12	13	24	4	20	8	2
PL	10	18	15	N/A	N/A	12	10	22
IT	11	21	9	9	21	22	14	12
FR	12	24	7	N/A	7	23	20	13
EL	13	27	6	22	20	25	24	20
CY	14	20	14	2	1	18	7	21
PT	15	7	18	7	12	2	18	19
DE	16	25	16	19	9	24	16	23
HU	17	19	12	3	17	13	25	24
ES	18	6	19	17	6	20	23	8
BE	19	26	8	18	5	26	21	9
MT	20	15	22	4	2	11	17	26
HR	21	17	24	11	22	5	12	15
EE	22	4	26	6	15	9	5	14
LT	23	14	25	5	18	19	19	25
IE	24	22	20	1	3	27	22	5
LV	25	4	27	16	25	10	15	27
RO	26	23	21	13	24	1	27	10
BG	27	12	23	20	23	14	26	16

Source: Eurostat's web database and microdata for housing cost and overcrowding; EU-SILC UDB 2021 version of 2022-09.

Note: N/A = not applicable as no data available at the time. Cells in green indicate being in the top 5, pink in the bottom 5 and yellow in between. For the country codes, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

5.4 Country rankings for children

Ireland's relative performance for children is again mixed, though Ireland is mostly in the middle of the rankings (see Table 5.3). Across the seven indicators for people under the age of 18, Ireland is ranked among the best performing countries on the housing overcrowding (4th) and housing cost overburden (5th) indicators, yet it is ranked in the middle for the AROPE 2030 and severe material deprivation and at the bottom position for the VLWI (27th), which was also the case for the total population. Finally, of all countries, Ireland experienced the largest improvement in ranking between the AROP BST (23rd) and AST (6th), suggesting that the effect of social transfers in the reduction of child poverty in Ireland is the largest of all EU countries.

The best-performing countries across the indicators are Finland and Slovenia, both being in the top five on five of the seven indicators. Other well-performing countries are the Netherlands with four indicators among the top five rankings and Czechia, Denmark and Hungary with three in the top five. The worst-performing countries are Bulgaria, which is ranked in the bottom five across all indicators, and Romania, which is in the bottom five on five of the seven indicators. Other countries with poor rankings are three Southern European countries: Spain is in the bottom five on four indicators, and Greece and Italy have low rankings on three indicators.

Table 5.3: Country rankings for children across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	VLWI	Severe material deprivation
SI	1	5	3	9	11	1	2
FI	2	10	1	1	5	15	1
CZ	3	3	4	19	17	13	9
DK	4	4	2	21	9	9	10
NL	5	2	7	9	3	17	3
PL	6	18	8	11	23	2	6
EE	7	11	10	12	15	4	3
HR	8	7	14	6	24	12	7
CY	9	8	11	3	1	7	12
SE	10	16	17	15	14	21	3
SK	10	13	16	7	20	7	21
LV	12	12	13	13	25	10	13
BE	13	14	9	17	8	23	22
LT	14	20	15	4	19	19	16
AT	15	21	20	18	16	16	8
FR	15	19	18	13	10	26	17
IE	15	23	6	5	4	27	18
PT	18	6	21	23	12	5	14
MT	19	9	19	7	2	14	20
HU	19	1	5	2	18	10	24
DE	21	17	12	24	13	24	15
LU	22	25	25	15	6	5	11
IT	23	24	24	22	22	20	18
EL	24	15	22	27	21	18	25
BG	25	26	23	25	26	24	26
ES	26	22	26	26	7	22	23
RO	27	27	27	20	27	3	27

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Note: Cells in green indicate being in the top 5, pink in the bottom 5 and yellow in between. For the country codes, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

5.5 Country rankings for people aged 65 and over

Compared to older people in other EU countries, older people in Ireland fare relatively well (see Table 5.4). On the seven available indicators for people aged 65 and above, Ireland is among the top five countries for housing cost (1st), overcrowding (4th) and good health (1st) and is ranked in the middle for the other indicators, with the worst ranking being recorded for AROP AST (20th).

The list of best-performing countries is slightly different for people aged 65 and over than for the other three vulnerable groups. In particular, while Luxembourg was not previously among the best performing countries for the other social risk groups, it is now the best country of all for people 65 and over. Other well-performing countries are Czechia, Sweden, Finland, Cyprus and Ireland.

However, the list of countries that are not doing so well on the indicators for older people is relatively similar to rankings for the general population and the other groups. Although Bulgaria ranks second on the AROP BST indicator, it is again the country with the lowest rankings, being in the bottom five on five of the seven indicators for this social risk group.²⁵ Romania is also relatively low in the country rankings for older people and ranks last on the overcrowding and severe material deprivation indicators. Latvia and Lithuania are performing poorly as they are ranked in the bottom five on four indicators such as the AROPE (2030), AROP AST and good subjective health for people aged 65 and over.

²⁵ In the Eurostat measure of AROP BST used here, all pensions (state, occupational and private) are counted in social transfers and social transfers are not included in the household income. This explains the high AROP BST for people aged 65 and over. Eurostat also publishes AROP BST results with pensions excluded from social transfers.

Table 5.4: Country rankings for people aged 65 and over across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	Severe material deprivation	Good subjective health
LU	1	22	1	9	6	1	5
CZ	2	17	3	17	17	4	18
DK	3	19	5	24	9	7	6
FI	4	23	6	10	5	2	2
SE	4	24	7	21	14	2	8
FR	6	26	4	13	10	16	10
SK	7	4	2	7	20	18	21
AT	8	20	9	16	16	4	7
BE	9	25	9	22	8	13	3
NL	10	27	13	25	3	8	4
SI	11	18	14	12	11	10	12
IT	11	9	11	11	22	16	13
PL	13	5	15	20	23	14	19
EL	14	13	8	26	21	25	9
HU	15	1	11	3	18	23	17
CY	16	16	18	2	1	6	14
DE	17	21	17	23	13	10	15
ES	18	10	15	15	7	20	11
IE	19	14	20	1	4	9	1
PT	20	15	19	8	12	22	25
MT	21	7	22	4	2	15	16
HR	22	7	23	19	24	21	24
LT	23	11	25	6	19	23	27
RO	24	12	21	18	27	27	21
EE	25	6	26	4	15	12	23
BG	26	2	24	27	26	26	20
LV	27	3	27	13	25	18	26

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Note: Cells in green indicate being in the top 5, pink in the bottom 5 and yellow in between. For the country codes, please see Table A2 in the appendix.

5.6 Social indicators performance overview across social risk groups

Table 5.5 shows that there is a clear pattern across indicators and countries in terms of which vulnerable group is most at risk. Of the four social risk groups, the highest poverty and social exclusion rates within a country are typically recorded for lone parents. Lone parents appear to be particularly at risk in terms of the AROPE (2030), the AROP AST and severe material deprivation. This is true also in Ireland, where lone parents have the lowest ranking for the AROPE (2030), housing cost and severe material deprivation and they share that position on the AROP AST with people with disabilities.

While lone parents appear to be the most vulnerable of the four social risk groups considered in this report, some other patterns are worth noting too. Firstly, people aged 65 and over generally have the highest rates on the AROP BST, despite generally having a lower AROP AST rate, thus highlighting their dependence on social transfers. Secondly, in several countries people with disabilities are most at risk of facing a housing cost overburden and severe material deprivation. This is, for example, the case in Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Thirdly, in a substantial number of countries, including Ireland, the housing overcrowding rate is greatest for children and people aged 65 and over.

Table 5.5: The most vulnerable group on each indicator for each country in 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	Severe material deprivation
AT	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
BE	LP	65+	LP	PD	LP	LP
BG	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
CY	LP	65+	LP	LP	YP/ 65+	LP
CZ	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
DE	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
DK	LP	65+	LP	PD	LP	LP
EE	65+	65+	65+	LP	LP	LP
EL	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
ES	LP	65+	LP	LP	YP/ 65+	LP
FI	LP	65+	LP	PD	LP	LP
FR	LP	65+	LP	65+	LP	LP
HR	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
HU	LP	PD	LP	LP	YP/ 65+	LP
IE	LP	65+	PD/ LP	LP	YP/ 65+	LP
IT	LP	65+	LP	LP	YP/ 65+	LP
LT	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
LU	LP	65+	LP	PD	LP	PD
LV	65+	65+	65+	LP	LP	LP
MT	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
NL	LP	65+	LP	PD	LP	PD
PL	LP	65+	LP	65+	YP/ 65+	LP
PT	LP	65+	LP	LP	LP	LP
RO	LP	65+	YP	PD	YP/ 65+	LP
SE	LP	65+	LP	PD	YP/ 65+	PD/ LP
SI	PD	65+	LP	LP	YP/ 65+	PD
SK	LP	65+	LP	65+	YP/ 65+	LP

Source: Author's calculations; EU-SILC.

Note: For the country codes, please see Table A2 in the appendix. Lone parents (LP) are shown in light blue; people aged 65 and over (OP) in purple; people with disabilities in dark blue; and children (YP) in pink. When two social groups are in the same cell, the colour is a mix of their respective colours.

5.7 Summary

While the previous two chapters described countries' performances for the total population, this chapter focused on groups that are particularly vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion: lone parents, children, people with disabilities and older people. In order to understand which countries are doing best in protecting vulnerable groups across the relevant monetary and non-monetary indicators, country rankings were presented for four social risk groups. Additionally, this chapter investigated which group was most vulnerable on the indicators in every country.

The most vulnerable group across countries and indicators was lone parents: the highest poverty and social exclusion rates within a country were generally recorded for this group. Nevertheless, there was quite a lot of variation in the country ranking across the indicators for the vulnerable groups. However, Finland consistently ranked among the best-performing countries for all vulnerable groups. Among other countries that performed well were several Eastern and Northern European countries, such as Slovakia, Czechia, Sweden and Denmark.

Lone parents were also the most vulnerable group in Ireland, being most at risk on four of the seven indicators from the four vulnerable groups. Moreover, the rankings showed that lone parents and people with disabilities in Ireland often had higher rates of poverty and social exclusion compared with the same groups in many other EU countries as well as the general population in Ireland. For example, Ireland ranked 14th on the AROPE (2030) for the general population, but 27th on the same indicator for lone parents. In contrast, Ireland performed relatively well in the rankings for older people and children. For example, Ireland ranked 5th on the subjective health indicator for the general population but 1st on this indicator for older people. Altogether, this suggests that additional support may be particularly needed for lone parents and people with disabilities.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments represents an important policy initiative aimed at reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion in Ireland. The objective is to ensure that all citizens have access to the opportunities and resources they need to participate fully in society and achieve their full potential. Several specific goals and targets are outlined to work towards achieving this, which are all set with the ambition to place Ireland within the top-ranking EU countries. Frequent monitoring of progress is an important element of any policy aimed at reducing poverty and social exclusion as it allows policy makers to identify areas or groups that require the most attention.

This report drew on data from the EU SILC to provide insights into Ireland's relative performance on the 17 EU indicators that were chosen to track progress in the Roadmap. It identified the top and bottom five countries for each indicator and examined how country rankings changed between 2018 and 2021, thereby offering valuable information for determining whether Ireland is on track to achieve its goals. Furthermore, the report examined which countries had the best and worst rankings for lone parents, people with disabilities, children and older people as well as which vulnerable group was most at risk on the indicators in each of the EU countries.

6.2 Ranking across EU monetary indicators

Chapter 3 focused on the country rankings on the seven monetary EU indicators that are used in the Roadmap. It showed that Ireland had improved its mean ranking on these indicators from 14th in 2018 to 11th in 2021. On most of the individual monetary indicators Ireland was among the average-performing countries. However, it was already in the top five on the in-work AROP measure (4th) and close to the top five on the income inequality measure S80/S20 (6th), yet in the bottom five on the AROPE for people with disabilities (24th). Where Ireland improved its ranking, this was usually due to a combination of absolute improvements in the Irish levels and decreased performances of other countries.

While there was some movement in the rankings on the monetary indicators between 2018 and 2021, a pattern of well and poorly performing countries was evident. Among the best-performing were several Central and Northern European countries. These ranked highly on all or most monetary indicators. Among the worst-performing countries were several Southern and Eastern European countries. In particular, Bulgaria and Romania had low rankings on all indicators, which may be related to their comparatively ungenerous welfare systems but also to their lower levels of wealth generally.

6.3 Ranking across EU non-monetary indicators

Chapter 4 investigated the country rankings on the seven monetary EU indicators identified in the Roadmap. Ireland improved its mean ranking from 6th in 2018 to 3rd in 2021. On several of the non-monetary indicators, Ireland was among the five best-performing countries and in some cases even ranked first. This was, for example, the case for the formal childcare indicator, although this is likely related to how this indicator is constructed. On three of the non-monetary indicators Ireland ranked outside the top five, and on one of these it was in the bottom five (i.e. 27th on the share VLWI indicator). Where Ireland changed its ranking, this was again driven by a combination of internal and external changes.

Compared to the monetary indicators, there were considerable changes in ranking on the non-monetary indicators in the 2018–2021 period. In addition, it was difficult to discern a clear pattern of countries that were consistently ranked highly or lowly, which might also reflect weaknesses of some of the non-monetary indicators. Among the countries that tended to perform relatively well were Cyprus, Malta, Ireland, Slovenia and Finland, while Denmark, Portugal, Greece, Bulgaria and Latvia generally did less well.

Even though there was no clear pattern of highly or lowly ranked countries, the countries that generally did well or not so well on the non-monetary indicators were sometimes quite surprising, especially considering what would be expected based on their welfare state models. For example, Denmark was not ranked in the top five on any of the non-monetary indicators, despite having quite a generous welfare

state. The groupings are also quite different from other rankings, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Index, which tracks progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. In the country rankings of the overall performance of all 193 UN member states, Ireland ranks 17th, and 14th of the EU countries. The five best-performing EU countries are Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany and Austria, while the five worst-performing EU countries are Romania, Lithuania, Malta, Bulgaria and Cyprus. This might indicate the limitations of some of these non-monetary indicators but also the fact that they cover different policy spheres with variable countries' performances.

6.4 Ranking of vulnerable groups

Chapter 5 looked at relative performance on a set of indicators for vulnerable groups. At times the rankings for the vulnerable groups were quite similar to those for the general population, but sometimes the rankings were rather different. Generally, Ireland performed relatively well on the indicators for older people and children, but much less so for people with disabilities and lone parents. For example, Ireland ranked 8th on the AROP AST for the general population, but 20th on this indicator for people with disabilities.

Across the vulnerable groups, Ireland was performing comparatively well on the housing overcrowding indicator. It was among the top five best performing countries on this indicator for all four social risk groups, which is similar to Ireland's performance on this in the general population. However, there was clear room for improvement on the AROPE and VLWI indicators, on which Ireland ranked among the bottom five countries for lone parents, people with disabilities and children.

The most vulnerable across countries and indicators were lone parents: The highest poverty and social exclusion rates within a country were generally recorded for this group. The vulnerability of this group suggests that it requires additional assistance to protect it against poverty and social exclusion, but also that there are challenges to putting adequate supports in place. Nevertheless, there was quite a lot of variation in the countries across the indicators for the vulnerable groups, and Finland consistently ranked among the best-performing countries for all vulnerable groups.

6.5 Conclusion

The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025: Ambition, Goals, Commitments is an important step towards reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion in Ireland. The aim is to position Ireland within the top five countries on all 17 EU indicators by 2025. Regular monitoring of progress towards achieving this overall aim is vital for policy makers to be able to make informed decisions and focus efforts on areas that require the most attention.

Drawing on data from the EU SILC, this report offered insights into Ireland's relative performance in reducing poverty and increasing social inclusion. It identified the top five countries that Ireland aimed to join for each indicator and examined how rankings changed between 2018 and 2021 to give an indication of what change can be expected by 2025. Additionally, the report looked at the most vulnerable groups across EU countries and highlighted which countries did the best job of protecting them.

The results demonstrated that Ireland had improved its ranking on several indicators since 2018. This shows that progress is being made towards the goals and targets specified in the Roadmap. Substantial gains were, for example, noted on the income inequality indicator and the AROP for people under 18. Particularly notable was the 11-place improvement on the unmet healthcare needs indicator, yet the extremely low rates on this indicator across countries with large variation in health services provision, and the recorded improvement in most countries despite an intervening pandemic, suggest that it might not be very meaningful.

Ireland's improved performance on several monetary and non-monetary indicators suggests that it may be reasonable to expect that at least some of the targets will be reached by 2025. In fact, in 2021, Ireland was already at the specified 2025 target on five of the indicators: the in-work AROP, subjective health, formal childcare, housing

cost and overcrowding indicators.²⁶ Moreover, on another eight indicators Ireland had improved its ranking in 2021 compared to 2018. However, it is not a given that performance in these areas will remain strong, especially considering current challenges, such as those associated with the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis. Moreover, it is particularly hard to predict changes in Ireland's relative performance because it depends on the performance of other countries.

The changes in Ireland's ranking were related to changes in Ireland's performance on the indicators as well as to changes in the performance of other countries. In some cases, Ireland's ranking improved because it witnessed an improvement in the absolute levels while there was little absolute change for other countries. However, in most cases it was a combination of internal and external changes, with there being a change in the absolute level of Ireland and other countries.

In a small number of cases, the changes were solely driven by external changes. Notably, Ireland recorded a small absolute improvement on the in-work AROP, yet still lost a place in the rankings. This highlights a weakness of focusing on country rankings: they are dependent on how other countries perform and may suggest a country is doing worse in relative terms even if it is doing better in absolute terms or vice versa. Furthermore, it is important to recognise that country rankings might overstate differences between countries that might be small or even non-significant when considering statistical uncertainty.

Given the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, rising food and energy costs and the impacts of the war in Ukraine, solely looking at country rankings may be particularly problematic because this could overlook the absolute rise in poverty and social exclusion. It is therefore worth considering adding more individual-level indicators, which may be better able to capture the experience of particular groups, such as young adults. Furthermore, it is pertinent that ranking targets continue to be accompanied by quantitative targets. In this regard, it is important to note that in addition to relative targets, the Roadmap included absolute targets. Progress on

²⁶ While Ireland was in the top five on the in-work, housing overcrowding and subjective good health indicators in 2021, its ranking on these indicators was slightly lower than in 2018.

these absolute targets was recently investigated as part of a review of the Roadmap's indicators (please see Sprong & Maitre, 2023).

It is crucial to acknowledge that not all indicators are equally important, even though they have been treated as such in this report. Some indicators, such as the AROPE (2030), are headline indicators, whereas others, such as the AROP BST, are more instrumental. Besides, some indicators are likely better able to assess progress than others. A recent review on the Roadmap's indicators (Sprong & Maitre, 2023) pointed out that the EU indicators are accessible, well established and comparable across EU countries, yet some indicators, for example in the areas of housing and childcare, may have limitations and conceptual issues and therefore may not be the most suitable for their intended purpose. The results of this report showed that the indicators that had been identified as having substantial drawbacks were less able to discern patterns of well and poorly performing countries, and rankings were, for example, very different from what might be expected based on welfare state typologies. Moreover, these indicators often showed greater change over time, which casts further doubt on their accuracy. This was particularly true for several non-monetary indicators, thereby highlighting the need to carefully consider indicators in these areas.

Finally, the results from the chapter focused on the social risk groups indicated that lone parents and people with disabilities in Ireland often had higher rates of poverty and social exclusion compared to the same groups in many other EU countries as well as compared to the general population in Ireland. These differences highlight the importance of going beyond looking at general statistics, which may hide substantial diversity within the population. Looking at the performance on indicators for specific at-risk groups can also help to identify policy areas that require particular attention and that, if addressed, may help to improve the absolute and relative performance.

Providing additional support to lone parents, for whom the highest poverty and social exclusion rates within most EU countries were recorded, may be of particular importance. The potential of social policy reforms for the alleviation of poverty is also evidenced by the experience of people aged 65 and over in Ireland: In the late 1990s

this social risk group had the highest AROP rates of the four vulnerable groups in Ireland, yet over the 2000s the implementation of a strong increase in the maximum rate of the state pension contributed to a rapid decline of the AROP of people aged 65 and over in Ireland (Roantree et al., 2021).

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Appendix

Table A1: EU measures and targets

Aim	Measure	EU ranking target by 2025	Absolute target by 2025
Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion: Become a top 5 country	The share of people who are at risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE) – Headline Measure	5	16.7%
Income Distribution: Become a top 5 country	S80/20: The income quintile share ratio	5	3.8:1
Income Poverty: Become a top 5 country or improve rank within the top 5 countries	• The share of people who are at risk of poverty BST (incl. pensions)	5	37.9%
	• The share of people who are at risk of poverty AST	5	12.8%
	• The in-work at risk of poverty rate	2	3.5%
	• The AROPE rate for children under 18 years of age	5	16%
	• The AROPE rate for people with disabilities	10	28.7%
Housing Quality: Maintain rank within the top 5 countries	• The housing cost overburden rate	Top 5	2%
	• The overcrowding rate	Top 5	2.5%
Socio-economic Aspects of Living Conditions: Become a top 5 country or maintain/improve rank within the top 5 countries	• The share of the population who report their health as either good or very good	1	84.2%
	• The share of the population reporting unmet health care needs due to cost/expense	5	0.1%
	• The share of the population living in households with very low work intensity	5	5.5%
	• The share of children receiving formal childcare	1	69.4%
	• The share of the population suffering severe material deprivation	5	3.1%

Source: Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025, Table 1A.

Table A2: List of country codes

AT	Austria	IE	Ireland
BE	Belgium	IT	Italy
BG	Bulgaria	LT	Lithuania
CY	Cyprus	LU	Luxembourg
CZ	Czechia	LV	Latvia
DE	Germany	MT	Malta
DK	Denmark	NL	Netherlands
EE	Estonia	PL	Poland
EL	Greece	PT	Portugal
ES	Spain	RO	Romania
FI	Finland	SE	Sweden
FR	France	SI	Slovenia
HR	Croatia	SK	Slovakia
HU	Hungary		

Table A3.1: Performance on EU monetary indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	S80/20	AROP BST	AROP AST	In-work AROP	AROPE <18	AROPE disabilities
	%		%	%	%	%	%
AT	17.3	4.08	44.9	14.7	7.6	22.8	21.4
BE	18.8	3.42	44.4	12.7	3.8	20.5	33.3
BG	31.7	7.45	44.3	22.1	10.0	33.0	45.3
CY	17.3	4.23	35.8	13.8	7.7	19.2	29.1
CZ	10.7	3.43	35.6	8.6	3.5	13.3	18.2
DE	20.7	4.88	43.5	15.8	8.5	23.5	30.6
DK	17.3	3.93	41.0	12.3	5.6	14.0	24.0
EE	22.2	5.03	39.6	20.6	10.2	17.4	37.1
EL	28.3	5.79	48.2	19.6	11.1	32.0	28.3
ES	27.8	6.19	47.9	21.7	12.7	33.4	33.0
FI	14.2	3.58	43.9	10.8	2.8	13.2	18.5
FR	19.3	4.42	48.6	14.4	6.9	22.8	28.1
HR	20.9	4.78	40.3	19.2	4.9	18.6	34.1
HU	19.4	4.19	40.5	12.7	7.5	23.2	31.4
IE	20.0	3.83	43.3	12.9	4.3	22.8	39.3
IT	25.2	5.86	48.5	20.1	11.7	29.7	27.1
LT	23.4	6.14	42.5	20.0	7.6	21.6	38.9
LU	21.1	4.59	42.9	18.1	13.5	29.4	24.7
LV	26.1	6.63	40.5	23.4	9.9	20.1	41.2
MT	20.3	5.03	36.2	16.9	7.4	23.2	33.4
NL	16.6	3.88	39.5	14.4	5.1	14.9	26.5
PL	16.8	4.02	43.7	14.8	9.0	16.5	26.9
PT	22.4	5.66	43.5	18.4	11.3	22.9	29.7
RO	34.4	7.13	46.1	22.6	15.2	41.5	44.2
SE	17.2	4.04	44.6	15.7	6.5	19.7	25.4
SI	13.2	3.24	40.3	11.7	4.8	11.0	24.2
SK	15.6	3.03	37.4	12.3	5.3	19.7	19.5

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A3.2: Performance on EU monetary indicators, 2018

	AROPE (2030)	S80/20	AROP BST	AROP AST	In-work AROP	AROPE <18	AROPE disabilities
	%		%	%	%	%	%
AT	16.8	4.04	43.3	14.3	8.0	21.6	20.3
BE	20.5	3.79	41.9	16.4	5.1	23.5	33.4
BG	33.0	7.66	45.2	22.0	10.1	33.5	50.1
CY	19.1	4.29	36.9	15.4	7.4	20.5	29.2
CZ	11.8	3.32	34.0	9.6	3.5	13.0	24.2
DE	18.5	5.07	42.0	16.0	9.0	17.5	31.2
DK	17.5	4.11	39.2	12.7	6.1	15.4	25.4
EE	23.6	5.07	38.7	21.9	9.5	17.0	41.6
EL	30.3	5.51	50.0	18.5	10.9	34.1	30.1
ES	27.3	6.03	44.6	21.5	13.0	30.5	35.4
FI	16.6	3.65	43.2	12.0	3.1	15.9	23.1
FR	17.9	4.23	45.7	13.4	7.1	24.0	21.9
HR	22.1	5.00	42.9	19.3	5.2	22.2	33.4
HU	20.6	4.35	46.1	12.8	8.5	26.4	28.8
IE	20.8	4.23	41.0	14.9	4.8	24.7	38.2
IT	25.7	6.09	45.8	20.3	12.3	29.6	27.7
LT	28.5	7.09	41.8	22.9	8.3	28.8	45.2
LU	20.1	5.18	47.4	16.7	11.5	23.4	26.5
LV	28.4	6.78	39.1	23.3	8.2	23.6	44.4
MT	19.2	4.28	37.0	16.8	6.4	23.3	31.5
NL	16.5	4.05	37.9	13.3	6.1	15.1	22.5
PL	18.2	4.25	44.4	14.8	9.7	16.9	28.8
PT	21.6	5.22	43.7	17.3	9.6	22.4	28.9
RO	38.7	7.21	45.9	23.5	15.0	44.2	46.5
SE	17.7	4.13	44.3	16.4	7.1	20.5	28.5
SI	15.4	3.38	40.5	13.3	6.0	13.1	22.5
SK	15.2	3.03	37.1	12.2	6.0	23.3	16.9

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A3.3: Absolute difference between 2021 & 2018 EU monetary indicators, 2018-2021

	AROPE (2030)	S80/20	AROP BST	Arop AST	In-work AROP	AROPE <18	AROPE disabilities
	%		%	%	%	%	%
AT	0.5	0.04	1.6	0.4	-0.4	1.2	1.1
BE	-1.7	-0.37	2.5	-3.7	-1.3	-3	-0.1
BG	-1.3	-0.21	-0.9	0.1	-0.1	-0.5	-4.8
CY	-1.8	-0.06	-1.1	-1.6	0.3	-1.3	-0.1
CZ	-1.1	0.11	1.6	-1	0	0.3	-6
DE	2.2	-0.19	1.5	-0.2	-0.5	6	-0.6
DK	-0.2	-0.18	1.8	-0.4	-0.5	-1.4	-1.4
EE	-1.4	-0.04	0.9	-1.3	0.7	0.4	-4.5
EL	-2	0.28	-1.8	1.1	0.2	-2.1	-1.8
ES	0.5	0.16	3.3	0.2	-0.3	2.9	-2.4
FI	-2.4	-0.07	0.7	-1.2	-0.3	-2.7	-4.6
FR	1.4	0.19	2.9	1	-0.2	-1.2	6.2
HR	-1.2	-0.22	-2.6	-0.1	-0.3	-3.6	0.7
HU	-1.2	-0.16	-5.6	-0.1	-1	-3.2	2.6
IE	-0.8	-0.4	2.3	-2	-0.5	-1.9	1.1
IT	-0.5	-0.23	2.7	-0.2	-0.6	0.1	-0.6
LT	-5.1	-0.95	0.7	-2.9	-0.7	-7.2	-6.3
LU	1	-0.59	-4.5	1.4	2	6	-1.8
LV	-2.3	-0.15	1.4	0.1	1.7	-3.5	-3.2
MT	1.1	0.75	-0.8	0.1	1	-0.1	1.9
NL	0.1	-0.17	1.6	1.1	-1	-0.2	4
PL	-1.4	-0.23	-0.7	0	-0.7	-0.4	-1.9
PT	0.8	0.44	-0.2	1.1	1.7	0.5	0.8
RO	-4.3	-0.08	0.2	-0.9	0.2	-2.7	-2.3
SE	-0.5	-0.09	0.3	-0.7	-0.6	-0.8	-3.1
SI	-2.2	-0.14	-0.2	-1.6	-1.2	-2.1	1.7
SK	0.4	0	0.3	0.1	-0.7	-3.6	2.6

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Note: The S80/S20 results are the differences of the ratios measured in absolute terms (2018 ratio of S80/S20 minus 2021 ratio of S80/S20 of 2021).

Table A4.1: Performance on EU non-monetary indicators, 2021

	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowd- ing	Good subjective health	Unmet medical need	VLWI	Formal childcare	Severe material deprivation
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT	6.1	14.4	78.1	0.1	7.4	61.6	1.8
BE	7.5	5.9	81.4	1.2	11.9	14.0	6.3
BG	11.6	37.9	82.1	0.7	8.4	15.2	19.1
CY	2.5	2.3	86.0	0.1	5.8	39.1	2.6
CZ	6.2	15.4	80.6	0.0	5.4	26.6	1.8
DE	10.7	10.5	73.2	0.0	9.3	25.9	4.2
DK	15.5	9.2	73.5	0.3	9.7	9.1	3.1
EE	4.4	14.9	69.7	0.2	5.1	13.6	1.9
EL	28.8	28.5	90.0	5.7	12.1	41.7	13.9
ES	9.9	6.4	79.3	0.1	11.6	55.1	8.3
FI	4.3	7.4	78.0	0.0	8.6	21.4	1.1
FR	5.6	9.4	76.0	1.6	10.7	34.7	5.9
HR	4.5	34.4	76.5	0.4	7.5	11.8	3.5
HU	2.5	13.5	75.5	0.2	5.4	21.7	10.2
IE	2.5	3.4	84.6	0.1	13.0	74.6	5.1
IT	7.2	28.0	85.0	1.1	10.8	26.5	5.9
LT	2.7	23.7	61.5	0.2	8.1	7.8	6.4
LU	5.1	7.7	79.7	0.6	5.5	32.9	2.4
LV	4.9	41.3	62.1	1.8	6.7	2.9	5.3
MT	2.7	2.9	82.6	0.1	5.3	25.7	5.4
NL	12.5	3.4	77.7	0.0	8.6	65.9	2.1
PL	5.7	35.7	75.9	0.5	4.2	21.6	2.9
PT	5.9	10.6	62.1	1.7	5.3	5.3	6.0
RO	7.5	41.0	87.1	3.3	3.5	43.5	23.1
SE	8.5	16.2	75.8	0.0	8.9	26.8	1.4
SI	4.1	10.9	77.6	0.0	3.6	13.5	1.8
SK	3.2	30.1	75.3	0.8	5.0	10.1	5.7

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A4.2: Performance on EU non-monetary indicators, 2018

	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowd- ing	Good subjective health	Unmet medical need	VLWI	Formal childcare	Severe material deprivation
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT	6.8	13.5	78.4	0.1	6.4	54.8	2.8
BE	8.9	5.7	80.4	1.8	13.1	19.3	6.5
BG	17.9	41.6	80.4	1.5	9	4.9	22.3
CY	2	2.5	85.8	1.4	8.1	37.1	3.8
CZ	7.8	15.7	75.6	0	4.5	25.8	2.4
DE	14.2	7.4	72.7	0.1	8	30	3.4
DK	14.7	9.2	75.5	0.3	10	15.3	3.5
EE	4	12.6	63.2	0.6	5.3	8.7	3.1
EL	39.5	29.2	88.7	8.3	13.6	65.6	16.1
ES	8.9	4.7	82.7	0.1	10.8	52.5	8.7
FI	4.3	7.3	76.6	0	11.1	21.4	2.2
FR	4.7	8.2	75.2	0.7	7.5	34.8	6.7
HR	5.1	39.3	72.8	0.5	9.3	8.1	6.1
HU	9.6	20.1	72.2	0.3	5.4	8.9	11.9
IE	3.4	2.7	87.6	0.9	13.2	69.2	6.1
IT	8.2	27.8	85.8	2	10.7	21.8	6.5
LT	5.6	22.8	57.4	0.4	9.2	6.7	12
LU	9.3	8.4	73.2	0.2	7.9	29.2	1.6
LV	6.7	43.4	58.7	4.2	7.3	2.5	10.4
M T	1.7	3.4	85	0.1	5.3	31.3	4.7
NL	9.4	4.1	79.8	0.1	8.4	69.4	2.6
PL	6.2	39.2	70.5	1.1	5.7	15.3	4.5
PT	5.7	9.6	61.2	1.6	6.9	5.5	6.6
RO	10.3	46.3	83	3.4	6	63.5	28.3
SE	8.3	15.2	80.7	0.1	8.2	25.5	1.4
SI	4.9	12.5	73.4	0.1	4.4	6.4	3.2
SK	4.1	35.5	76.4	0.6	5.2	9.9	5.4

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A4.3: Percentage points difference between 2021 and 2018 EU non-monetary indicators rates

	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowd- ing	Good subjective health	Unmet medical need	VLWI	Formal childcare	Severe material deprivation
AT	-0.7	0.9	-0.3	0.0	1.0	6.8	-1.0
BE	-1.4	0.2	1.0	-0.6	-1.2	-5.3	-0.2
BG	-6.3	-3.7	1.7	-0.8	-0.6	10.3	-3.2
CY	0.5	-0.2	0.2	-1.3	-2.3	2.0	-1.2
CZ	-1.6	-0.3	5.0	0.0	0.9	0.8	-0.6
DE	-3.5	3.1	0.5	-0.1	1.3	-4.1	0.8
DK	0.8	0.0	-2.0	0.0	-0.3	-6.2	-0.4
EE	0.4	2.3	6.5	-0.4	-0.2	4.9	-1.2
EL	-10.7	-0.7	1.3	-2.6	-1.5	-23.9	-2.2
ES	1.0	1.7	-3.4	0.0	0.8	2.6	-0.4
FI	0.0	0.1	1.4	0.0	-2.5	0.0	-1.1
FR	0.9	1.2	0.8	0.9	3.2	-0.1	-0.8
HR	-0.6	-4.9	3.7	-0.1	-1.8	3.7	-2.6
HU	-7.1	-6.6	3.3	-0.1	0.0	12.8	-1.7
IE	-0.9	0.7	-3.0	-0.8	-0.2	5.4	-1.0
IT	-1.0	0.2	-0.8	-0.9	0.1	4.7	-0.6
LT	-2.9	0.9	4.1	-0.2	-1.1	1.1	-5.6
LU	-4.2	-0.7	6.5	0.4	-2.4	3.7	0.8
LV	-1.8	-2.1	3.4	-2.4	-0.6	0.4	-5.1
MT	1.0	-0.5	-2.4	0.0	0.0	-5.6	0.7
NL	3.1	-0.7	-2.1	-0.1	0.2	-3.5	-0.5
PL	-0.5	-3.5	5.4	-0.6	-1.5	6.3	-1.6
PT	0.2	1.0	0.9	0.1	-1.6	-0.2	-0.6
RO	-2.8	-5.3	4.1	-0.1	-2.5	-20.0	-5.2
SE	0.2	1.0	-4.9	-0.1	0.7	1.3	0.0
SI	-0.8	-1.6	4.2	-0.1	-0.8	7.1	-1.4
SK	-0.9	-5.4	-1.1	0.2	-0.2	0.2	0.3

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A5.1: Performance for lone parents across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	In-work AROP	Housing cost overbur den	Overcro wding	VLWI	Severe material deprivat ion	Good subjecti ve health
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT	45.5	57.8	34.9	19.0	17.1	41.7	28.0	7.7	74.4
BE	39.0	55.5	25.5	10.0	11.7	13.0	27.5	16.9	80.0
BG	52.9	53.1	35.7	27.3	24.8	61.1	26.3	31.5	83.5
CY	41.0	58.4	28.6	21.5	6.8	2.4	23.4	4.9	86.4
CZ	41.8	46.8	32.4	21.1	18.0	40.0	24.1	7.6	83.4
DE	44.9	61.6	26.6	19.5	16.9	28.3	27.4	11.1	75.7
DK	36.8	51.2	24.2	18.9	24.4	15.6	23.2	7.4	64.7
EE	39.3	49.2	36.6	12.8	11.8	33.1	14.2	4.9	72.6
EL	49.3	48.3	33.9	24.7	60.5	42.7	25.9	27.4	90.3
ES	54.3	60.5	45.5	18.2	29.4	7.2	24.3	18.1	81.8
FI	25.5	52.7	13.7	32.9	4.5	17.8	17.6	2.4	81.2
FR	47.4	66.9	39.3	6.3		21.6	29.7	15.5	74.3
HR	43.9	46.9	37.5	18.9	17.7	66.1	19.0	12.7	84.5
HU	40.7	23.4	28.2	20.5	5.3	24.1	14.8	24.7	84.1
IE	57.7	76.6	25.9	9.5	7.4	5.3	49.4	24.4	77.3
IT	39.6	46.6	34.1	19.6	16.8	38.5	21.0	9.1	87.0
LT	49.7	64.7	39.1	25.6	5.9	46.3	24.7	17.1	66.9
LU	45.5	55.8	42.4	26.9	5.6	19.3	14.5	2.7	76.8
LV	43.0	53.0	37.5	25.8	11.8	64.2	16.0	9.7	72.7
MT	52.6	54.1	44.8	21.4	11.4	6.2	37.1	19.5	73.3
NL	38.9	60.0	31.2	9.9	12.8	11.9	30.8	5.1	71.3
PL	34.4	47.9	25.1	11.0		13.2	19.8	9.6	
PT	38.2	41.3	30.6	19.5	14.4	67.8	15.7	11.9	91.3
RO	53.5	42.0	28.8	16.4	6.3	32.6	18.6	47.2	74.8
SE	32.2	49.7	28.0	15.3	10.7	21.4	15.5	4.0	81.9
SI	23.1	39.2	21.8	13.6	9.2		8.0	0.9	
SK	35.1	41.8	33.9	28.7			12.2	10.5	

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A5.2: Performance for people with disabilities across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	VLWI	Severe material deprivation	Good subjective health
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT	21.4	64.7	17.8	8.0	12.4	11.7	3.7	29.1
BE	33.3	74.6	18.8	13.3	4.4	31.5	12.4	25.8
BG	45.3	66.1	31.6	16.8	25.0	16.0	28.4	17.0
CY	29.1	70.9	21.6	2.6	1.6	18.9	4.1	14.7
CZ	18.2	67.2	12.7	8.8	10.9	16.7	2.9	16.6
DE	31.0	74.3	22.4	15.7	7.3	23.8	9.1	11.8
DK	24.0	58.9	14.6	26.1	7.3	18.4	6.4	31.3
EE	37.1	62.1	34.0	4.8	12.4	12.7	4.0	18.2
EL	28.3	76.7	18.0	24.9	17.6	24.7	15.0	15.9
ES	33.0	63.1	23.1	9.8	5.3	19.6	13.0	28.7
FI	18.5	64.9	13.5	6.4	8.9	12.2	2.3	31.0
FR	28.1	74.2	18.6		6.7	22.0	11.2	19.5
HR	34.1	68.2	31.8	8.0	23.8	11.9	7.8	17.9
HU	31.4	69.9	21.1	2.8	12.6	15.7	17.7	11.3
IE	39.3	72.3	25.9	2.3	3.1	36.7	12.6	29.8
IT	27.1	71.3	19.2	6.5	18.4	19.7	8.3	19.8
LT	38.9	66.6	32.6	3.2	15.2	19.2	10.9	11.0
LU	24.7	58.0	19.2	7.1	7.5	12.0	3.8	35.9
LV	41.2	62.1	37.5	9.5	32.9	13.1	8.7	9.1
MT	33.4	66.9	27.1	3.0	2.3	13.5	9.2	10.2
NL	26.5	66.1	21.4	33.1	3.2	19.6	5.2	34.1
PL	26.9	69.2	22.0			14.6	6.3	13.8
PT	29.7	64.1	23.0	5.9	8.1	9.2	10.8	16.0
RO	44.2	72.7	26.1	8.5	25.0	5.8	31.5	22.6
SE	25.4	65.8	22.6	20.7	16.2	16.6	4.0	28.9
SI	24.2	65.3	19.7	9.2	8.0	12.3	5.6	21.4
SK	19.5	61.3	13.0			11.3	8.2	16.1

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A5.3: Performance for children across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowd- ing	VLWI	Severe material deprivation
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT	22.8	39.1	19.9	4.8	23.7	6.9	2.7
BE	20.5	33.6	15.1	4.3	10.3	9.7	8.6
BG	33.0	41.9	24.2	9.7	58.1	10.6	20.0
CY	19.2	29.6	15.8	2.0	3.7	4.8	4.2
CZ	13.3	24.6	11.4	6.2	25.1	6.4	2.8
DE	23.5	37.6	16.2	8.9	17.8	10.6	5.5
DK	14.0	24.9	9.6	6.8	11.1	5.7	3.3
EE	17.4	32.0	15.5	3.7	21.6	3.9	1.7
EL	32.0	35.4	23.7	35.7	42.6	7.5	16.1
ES	33.4	40.2	28.9	13.2	9.6	9.1	10.8
FI	13.2	30.9	9.1	1.4	8.2	6.8	0.7
FR	22.8	38.6	18.6	3.8	14.7	11.4	6.9
HR	18.6	28.2	17.1	2.9	48.2	6.2	2.6
HU	23.2	8.9	11.9	1.8	29.1	6.0	15.2
IE	22.8	40.3	13.7	2.5	5.5	13.6	7.1
IT	29.7	40.4	26.0	7.2	42.9	8.2	7.1
LT	21.6	38.9	17.2	2.3	37.0	8.1	6.7
LU	29.4	40.9	27.8	3.9	9.2	4.1	3.7
LV	20.1	32.1	16.9	3.8	57.9	6.0	4.7
MT	23.2	29.7	19.6	3.0	4.7	6.5	7.2
NL	14.9	23.4	13.8	3.1	4.8	7.0	1.7
PL	16.5	38.3	14.6	3.3	46.4	2.9	2.5
PT	22.9	28.1	20.4	7.4	17.5	4.1	4.9
RO	41.5	43.6	29.7	6.3	60.7	3.2	28.2
SE	19.7	35.5	18.1	3.9	21.5	8.5	1.7
SI	11.0	26.4	10.2	3.1	15.2	1.7	1.1
SK	19.7	32.6	17.6	3.0	38.5	4.8	7.4

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC.

Table A5.4: Performance for people aged 65 and over across selected EU indicators, 2021

	AROPE (2030)	AROP BST	AROP AST	Housing cost overburden	Overcrowding	Severe material deprivation
	%	%	%	%	%	%
AT	15.0	90.3	14.8	6.1	23.7	1.0
BE	17.0	93.8	14.8	10.7	10.3	3.0
BG	45.7	77.8	34.6	20.5	58.1	25.7
CY	20.0	88.1	19.5	1.8	3.7	1.1
CZ	11.2	88.3	10.5	6.5	25.1	1.0
DE	20.4	91.4	19.4	13.2	17.8	2.6
DK	12.7	89.6	11.6	17.7	11.1	1.2
EE	41.6	82.2	40.6	2.4	21.6	2.8
EL	19.3	84.2	13.5	19.3	42.6	10.3
ES	20.5	83.7	17.5	6.0	9.6	5.8
FI	13.1	91.7	12.7	4.9	8.2	0.7
FR	13.5	94.3	10.9	5.9	14.7	4.5
HR	33.3	82.4	32.4	7.5	48.2	5.9
HU	19.9	15.2	15.6	2.3	29.1	8.2
IE	21.3	86.4	20.4	1.3	5.5	2.2
IT	18.1	83.0	15.6	5.4	42.9	4.5
LT	38.7	84.0	35.9	2.8	37.0	8.2
LU	9.3	91.6	9.1	4.7	9.2	0.6
LV	45.9	79.3	44.6	5.9	57.9	5.7
MT	29.9	82.4	28.1	2.4	4.7	4.0
NL	17.2	95.4	16.4	19.1	4.8	1.7
PL	18.6	80.6	17.5	8.3	46.4	3.2
PT	24.2	87.4	20.1	4.0	17.5	7.9
RO	38.8	84.1	22.0	7.2	60.7	26.3
SE	13.1	93.7	12.9	10.3	21.5	0.7
SI	18.1	89.0	17.1	5.6	15.2	2.6
SK	13.9	79.5	10.3	3.4	38.5	5.7

Source: Eurostat's web database; EU-SILC

Glossary

At risk of poverty (AROP): a term used at EU level to denote whether a household's income falls below the 60% of median income threshold. It is also known as income poverty.

At risk of income poverty or social exclusion (AROPE): this EU measure combines the number of people who are at risk of poverty or severe material deprivation or low work intensity (see below for details of each component). In cases where people experience more than one of these indicators, they are counted only once. The Irish version of this measure is the combination of at risk of poverty and basic deprivation.

At risk of income poverty thresholds: income thresholds derived as proportions of median income. These are based on the household income adjusted for household size and composition (referred to as equivalised income). A household at risk of income poverty has an adjusted (or equivalised) income below 60% of the median adjusted household income. The at risk of income poverty rate takes account of household income from all sources, number of adults and number of children in the household. There are some minor differences in the income concept and the equivalence scale between the Irish and EU measures of at risk of income poverty.

Basic deprivation (Irish measure): people who are denied – through lack of income – at least **two items or activities on this index / list of 11** are regarded as experiencing relative deprivation. This is enforced deprivation as distinct from the personal choice not to have the items. Eleven basic items are used to construct the deprivation index:

- unable to afford two pairs of strong shoes
- unable to afford a warm waterproof overcoat
- unable to afford new (not second-hand) clothes
- Unable to afford a meal with meat, chicken or fish (vegetarian equivalent) every second day
- unable to afford a roast joint or its equivalent once a week
- without heating at some stage in the last year through lack of money
- unable to afford to keep the home adequately warm
- unable to afford to buy presents for family or friends at least once a year
- unable to afford to replace any worn-out furniture
- unable to afford to have family or friends for a drink or meal once a month
- unable to afford a morning, afternoon or evening out in the last fortnight for entertainment.

The indicator of basic deprivation was developed by the Economic and Social Research Institute using data from the Survey on Income and Living Conditions. See Maître et al. (2006) for further information on the indicator.

Consistent income poverty: this is a measure of income poverty used in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007–2016 (NAPinclusion) that takes account of the household's living standards as well as the household size, composition and total income. A household is consistently poor if the household income is below the at risk of income poverty threshold (see above) and the household members are deprived of at least 2 out of the 11 items on the basic deprivation list.

Correlation: a correlation between two variables refers to a statistical relationship of dependence between them. This relationship of dependence can be measured by a correlation coefficient. There are many correlation coefficients; the best known is the Pearson correlation coefficient, which measures the strength of the linear relationship between two variables.

Deprivation: see definition of basic deprivation above for measure of deprivation used in NAPinclusion.

Economic vulnerability: a measure of the economic situation of a household based on whether it is at risk of income poverty, experiences enforced basic deprivation and has difficulty making ends meet.

Employment rate: the employment rate is the proportion of the working-age population that is employed. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines employed persons as those aged 15 years and over who have worked for payment or profit in the reference week (usually the week preceding the survey) or who had a job from which they were temporarily absent for reasons such as holidays, maternity leave or sick leave.

Equivalence scales: a set of relativities between the needs of households of differing size and composition, used to adjust household income to take account of the greater needs of larger households. In Ireland the national scale attributes a weight of 1 to the first adult (aged 14+), 0.66 to each subsequent adult and 0.33 to each child. International comparisons such as the one done by Eurostat use the modified OECD scale, which attributes a weight of 1 to the first adult (aged 14+), 0.5 to each subsequent adult and 0.3 to each child.

Equivalised income: This refers to household income from all sources adjusted for differences in household size and composition (number of adults and children). It is calculated by dividing total disposable (i.e. after-tax) household income by the equivalence scale value. It can be interpreted as income per adult-equivalent.

EU SILC: European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions – this is a voluntary household survey carried out annually in a number of EU Member States allowing comparable statistics on income and living conditions to be compiled. In Ireland, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) has been conducting the survey since 2003. The results are reported in the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). Any data as compiled by Eurostat and any reference to the questions or questionnaire in the household survey are here referred to as ‘EU SILC’.

Gini coefficient: a measure of inequality that ranges between 0 and 100 per cent. It is the relationship between cumulative shares of the population arranged according to the level of income and the cumulative share of total income received by them. If there was perfect equality (i.e. each person receives the same income), the Gini coefficient would be 0 per cent. A Gini coefficient of 100 per cent indicates total inequality and that the entire national income is in the hands of one person.

Household: a household is usually defined for statistical purposes as either a person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping arrangements – that is, sharing at least one meal a day or sharing a living room or sitting room.

Household equivalent (or equivalised) income: household income adjusted to take account of differences in household size and composition by means of equivalence scales.

Income poverty and social exclusion: these terms are defined broadly in NAPinclusion as follows.

‘People are living in income poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society.’

The two concepts are very similar when used in Irish policy making but income poverty is sometimes used in the narrower context to refer to low income (or wealth). On the other hand, social exclusion is almost always used in the broader sense, to refer to the inability to participate in society because of a lack of resources that are normally available to the general population.

Income poverty gap: the shortfall in incomes for those who fall below the at risk of income poverty threshold.

Lone parent: a parent who has primary custody of a dependent child and is not living with the other parent.

Material deprivation (EU2030): this revised indicator is one of the European Commission’s common indicators on social protection and social inclusion. It is based on 13 items related to deprivation at

both the household and the individual level, and measures the proportion of the population lacking at least seven of the 13 items. The seven household deprivation items relate to the household's inability to:

- face unexpected expenses
- afford one-week annual holiday away from home
- avoid arrears (in mortgage, rent, utility bills and/or hire purchase instalments)
- afford a meal with meat, chicken or fish or vegetarian equivalent every second day
- afford keeping their home adequately warm
- have access to a car/van for personal use
- replace worn-out furniture.

The six personal deprivations (collected for all persons 16 and over) are the person's inability to:

- replace worn-out clothes with some new ones
- have two pairs of properly fitting shoes
- spend a small amount of money each week on him/herself ('pocket money')
- have regular leisure activities
- get together with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month
- have an internet connection.

Mean: the average value (for example, the average income in a sample obtained via household survey).

Median: the value that divides a sample in half (e.g. the income level above and below which half the people in a sample fall).

Quintile: One-fifth of a sample divided into five equal parts to show how income, for example, is spread throughout the population; each quintile represents where a person's or household's income is located, ranging from the bottom quintile (lowest fifth or 20 per cent) to the top quintile (highest fifth or 20 per cent).

Severe material deprivation: this EU indicator measures the proportion of the population lacking at least seven of the thirteen items listed in the EU2030 index of material deprivation (see definition above).

SILC: in Ireland, the CSO is responsible for carrying out the Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC). It produces analysis in accordance with Irish national income poverty targets, indicators and

related issues. These results are reported in the SILC. Any data on Ireland that are sourced specifically from the CSO are here referred to as 'SILC'.

Social welfare transfers: cash receipts paid from various social welfare schemes received by the individual or household.

Well-being: 'a positive physical, social and mental state. It requires that basic needs are met, that individuals have a sense of purpose, that they feel able to achieve important goals, to participate in society and to live lives they value and have reason to value. Well-being is enhanced by conditions that include financial and personal security, meaningful and rewarding work, supportive personal relationships, strong and inclusive communities, good health, a healthy and attractive environment, and values of democracy and social justice' (NESC, 2009, p. 3).