

AT A GLANCE

Comparison of key figures in the 2016 Stability Programmes and European Commission spring 2016 forecast

The purpose of this note is to show the differences between some key indicators used by Euro Area Member States in their 2016 Stability Programmes (SP) and the spring 2016 forecast of the European Commission (EC).

According to Article 4 of [Council Directive 2011/85/EU](#) the budgetary planning of the Member States “shall be based on the most likely macrofiscal scenario or on a more prudent scenario. (...). Significant differences between the chosen macrofiscal scenario and the (most recent) Commission’s forecast shall be described with reasoning (...).”

Significant differences for **2016** appear notably as regards the growth forecast for Cyprus, the budget balance forecast for Portugal and the structural budget balance forecasts for Spain, France and Slovenia (see table below). Blue (respectively grey) cells indicate that the Member State is more (respectively less) optimistic than the EC.

2016	Budget Balance (%)			Structural budget balance (%)			Debt (%)			Growth (%)			Unemployment (%)		
	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ
Belgium	-2.5	-2.8	0.3	-1.7	-2.3	0.6	106.2	106.4	-0.2	1.2	1.2	0.0	7.9	8.2	-0.3
Germany	0.0	0.2	-0.2	0.0	0.4	-0.4	68.3	68.6	-0.3	1.7	1.6	0.1	4.5	4.6	-0.1
Estonia	-0.4	-0.1	-0.3	0.3	0.0	0.3	9.6	9.6	0.0	2.0	1.9	0.1	6.6	6.5	0.1
Ireland	-1.1	-1.1	0.0	-2.0	-2.0	0.0	88.2	89.1	-0.9	4.9	4.9	0.0	8.4	8.2	0.2
Spain	-3.6	-3.9	0.3	-1.8	-3.1	1.3	99.1	100.3	-1.2	2.7	2.6	0.1	19.9	20.0	-0.1
France	-3.3	-3.4	0.1	-1.3	-2.4	1.1	96.2	96.4	-0.2	1.5	1.3	0.2	n.a.	10.2	n.a.
Italy	-2.3	-2.4	0.1	-1.2	-1.7	0.5	132.4	132.7	-0.3	1.2	1.1	0.1	11.4	11.4	0.0
Cyprus	-0.4	-0.4	0.0	0.7	0.4	0.3	105.6	108.9	-3.3	2.2	1.7	0.5	13.5	13.4	0.1
Latvia	-1.0	-1.0	0.0	-0.9	-1.6	0.7	40.3	39.8	0.5	3.0	2.8	0.2	8.9	9.6	-0.7
Lithuania	-0.8	-1.1	0.3	-0.7	-1.2	0.5	41.1	41.1	0.0	2.5	2.8	-0.3	8.0	7.8	0.2
Luxembourg	0.8	1.0	-0.2	1.9	1.4	0.5	22.4	22.5	-0.1	2.9	3.3	-0.4	5.3	6.2	-0.9
Malta	-0.7	-0.9	0.2	-1.5	-1.6	0.1	62.6	60.9	1.7	4.2	4.1	0.1	5.3	5.1	0.2
Netherlands	-1.7	-1.7	0.0	-1.6	-1.5	-0.1	65.4	64.9	0.5	1.8	1.7	0.1	6.5	6.4	0.1
Austria	-1.6	-1.5	-0.1	-0.9	-0.9	0.0	84.3	84.9	-0.6	1.6	1.5	0.1	5.9	5.9	0.0
Portugal	-2.2	-2.7	0.5	-1.7	-2.2	0.5	124.8	126.0	-1.2	1.8	1.5	0.3	11.4	11.6	-0.2
Slovenia	-2.2	-2.4	0.2	-1.5	-2.5	1.0	80.2	80.2	0.0	1.7	1.7	0.0	8.6	8.6	0.0
Slovakia	-2.1	-2.4	0.3	-1.7	-2.1	0.4	52.9	53.4	-0.5	3.2	3.2	0.0	10.4	10.5	-0.1
Finland	-2.5	-2.5	0.0	-1.5	-1.6	0.1	65.0	65.2	-0.2	0.9	0.7	0.2	9.3	9.4	-0.1

Significant differences in **2017** appear notably as regards the as regards the budget balance forecasts for Belgium, Portugal, France and Slovenia and the structural budget balance forecasts for France, Slovenia, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Latvia and Slovakia (see table below). Blue (respectively grey) cells indicate that the Member State is more (respectively less) optimistic than the EC.

2017	Budget Balance (%)			Structural budget balance (%)			Debt (%)			Growth (%)			Unemployment (%)		
	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ
Belgium	-1.4	-2.3	0.9	-0.8	-2.1	1.3	104.7	105.6	-0.9	1.5	1.6	-0.1	7.9	7.7	0.2
Germany	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.4	-0.4	65.8	66.3	-0.5	1.5	1.6	-0.1	5.0	4.7	0.3
Estonia	-0.5	-0.2	-0.3	0.2	-0.2	0.4	10.4	9.3	1.1	3.0	2.4	0.6	7.6	7.7	-0.1
Ireland	-0.4	-0.6	0.2	-0.8	-1.0	0.2	85.5	86.6	-1.1	3.9	3.7	0.2	7.8	7.5	0.3
Spain	-2.9	-3.1	0.2	-1.7	-3.2	1.5	99.0	99.6	-0.6	2.4	2.5	-0.1	17.9	18.1	-0.2
France	-2.7	-3.2	0.5	-0.8	-2.7	1.9	96.5	97.0	-0.5	1.5	1.7	-0.2	n.a.	10.1	n.a.
Italy	-1.8	-1.9	0.1	-1.1	-1.7	0.6	130.9	131.8	-0.9	1.4	1.3	0.1	10.8	11.2	-0.4
Cyprus	-0.5	0.0	-0.5	-0.2	-0.5	0.3	101.7	105.4	-3.7	2.5	2.0	0.5	12.5	12.4	0.1
Latvia	-1.0	-1.0	0.0	-1.1	-1.6	0.5	38.3	35.6	2.7	3.3	3.1	0.2	8.4	9.3	-0.9
Lithuania	0.0	-0.4	0.4	-0.7	-0.8	0.1	39.9	42.9	-3.0	3.2	3.1	0.1	7.1	6.4	0.7
Luxembourg	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.6	0.3	0.3	22.9	22.8	0.1	4.5	3.9	0.6	5.5	6.2	-0.7
Malta	-0.6	-0.8	0.2	-0.9	-1.2	0.3	60.4	58.3	2.1	3.1	3.5	-0.4	5.3	5.1	0.2
Netherlands	-1.2	-1.2	0.0	-1.2	-1.2	0.0	64.1	63.9	0.2	2.0	2.0	0.0	6.3	6.1	0.2
Austria	-1.5	-1.4	-0.1	-1.0	-1.2	0.2	82.6	83.0	-0.4	1.6	1.6	0.0	6.1	6.1	0.0
Portugal	-1.4	-2.3	0.9	-1.3	-2.5	1.2	122.3	124.5	-2.2	1.8	1.7	0.1	10.9	10.7	0.2
Slovenia	-1.6	-2.1	0.5	-1.3	-2.9	1.6	78.2	78.0	0.2	2.4	2.3	0.1	8.1	8.1	0.0
Slovakia	-1.3	-1.6	0.3	-1.0	-1.5	0.5	52.2	52.7	-0.5	3.6	3.3	0.3	9.5	9.5	0.0
Finland	-2.1	-2.3	0.2	-1.4	-1.5	0.1	66.7	66.9	-0.2	1.2	0.7	0.5	9.0	9.3	-0.3

Sources: The [SP](#) as submitted by the Member States in April/May 2016 and the spring 2016 [EC forecast](#) (statistical annex tables 1, 24, 36, 41 and 42) of May 2016.

Notes: The [approach](#) used in the EC forecast: (1) For 2016, the national budgets and other measures known in sufficient detail by the cut-off date of the forecast are taken into consideration; (2) for 2017, the 'no-policy-change' assumption implies the extrapolation of revenue and expenditure trends and the inclusion of measures that are known in sufficient detail. The [Code of Conduct of the SGP](#) requires that Member States apply a similar approach in the SP: "Each Member State should (...) define a scenario at unchanged policies and make public the involved assumptions, methodologies and relevant parameters". As indicated above, [Directive 2011/85/EU](#), requires that they use the most likely macrofiscal scenario or a more prudent scenario. As programme country, Greece did not (have to) submit a SP.

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