

No holidays for 27pc of EU workers

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Despite slight improvements over the past decade, a significant share of the European Union's working population still cannot afford a basic one-week holiday, according to new data from Eurostat.

In 2024, 27pc of adults aged 16 and over in the EU reported being unable to afford a one-week vacation — a marginal decrease from 28.5pc in 2023, and a more notable drop of 10.6 percentage points compared to 2014.

While these figures suggest slow but steady progress, they also underscore persistent economic inequalities across the EU and its member states.

The disparities are especially stark when viewed by country. Romania recorded the highest share of residents unable to afford a holiday at 58.6pc, followed by Greece (46.0pc) and Bulgaria (41.4pc).

Eurostat's data points to a broader issue of financial hardship in parts of the EU, despite visible improvement in overall global development indicators.

Millions of Europeans are still struggling to meet basic standards of financial well-being, particularly when it comes to affording leisure and rest.

After Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria, Portugal and Hungary also face significant challenges in holiday affordability.

In 2024, 39.3pc of Hungarian residents and 35.2pc of Portuguese residents could not afford a week-long holiday.

These figures contrast sharply with countries like Luxembourg, where only 7.9pc of the population faced similar constraints, and Sweden, with a rate of 8.7pc.

This disparity underscores the uneven economic recovery and differing living standards across the EU.

The Eurostat data also suggests how economic conditions influence leisure opportunities. For those who can afford it, a week-long holiday serves as an indicator of financial well-being, reflecting income beyond basic needs.

"It is sadly no surprise that more people can't afford a holiday when, at the same time, dividends increased up to 13 times more quickly than people's pay packets and CEOs paid themselves over 100 times more than the average worker," said Esther Lynch, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) in a statement.

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