

Comparison of key figures in the 2019 Stability Programmes and European Commission spring 2019 forecast

The purpose of this document is to show the differences between some key indicators of the 2019 Stability Programmes (SP) of the Euro Area Member States and the spring 2019 forecast of the European Commission (EC). In accordance with Art. 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 (...)."

The comparison of the Member States' and the EC forecasts for 2019 and 2020 shows that Member States are in general more optimistic than the EC (exceptions being Germany and the Netherlands), see tables belows where **blue** (respectively **grey**) cells indicate that the Member State is more (respectively less) optimistic than the EC.

For **2019**, significant differences between Member States' and EC forecasts occur notably for: (1) the nominal budget balance forecasts for **Greece**; (2) the structural balance forecasts for **Greece, Italy and Slovakia**; (3) the debt forecasts for **Greece, Latvia, Italy and Portugal** and (4) the growth forecast for **Malta, Cyprus and Luxembourg**.

2019	Budget Balance (%)			Structural budget balance (%)			Debt (%)			Growth (%)			Unemployment (%)		
	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ
Belgium	-0.8	-1.3	0.5	-0.8	-1.4	0.6	100.6	101.3	-0.7	1.3	1.2	0.1	5.5	5.6	-0.1
Germany	0.75	1.0	-0.25	0.75	1.1	-0.35	58.75	58.4	0.35	1.0	0.5	0.5	3.0	3.1	-0.1
Estonia	-0.4	-0.3	-0.1	-1.1	-1.7	0.6	8.2	8.5	-0.3	3.1	2.8	0.3	5.6	5.7	-0.1
Ireland	0.2	0.0	0.2	-1.1	-1.2	0.1	61.1	61.3	-0.2	3.9	3.8	0.1	5.4	5.4	0.0
Greece	1.6	0.5	1.1	2.9	1.9	1.0	170.6	174.9	-4.3	2.3	2.2	0.1	17.8	18.2	-0.4
Spain	-2.0	-2.3	0.3	-2.7	-2.9	0.2	95.8	96.3	-0.5	2.2	2.1	0.1	13.8	13.5	0.3
France	-3.1	-3.1	0.0	-2.1	-2.6	0.5	98.9	99.0	-0.1	1.4	1.3	0.1	n.a.	8.8	n.a.
Italy	-2.4	-2.5	0.1	-1.5	-2.4	0.9	132.6	133.7	-1.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	11.0	10.9	0.1
Cyprus	3.0	3.0	0.0	1.5	1.1	0.4	95.7	96.4	-0.7	3.6	3.1	0.5	7.0	6.7	0.3
Latvia	-0.5	-0.6	0.1	-1.1	-1.6	0.5	37.4	34.5	2.9	3.2	3.1	0.1	7.0	6.9	0.1
Lithuania	0.4	0.3	0.1	-0.4	-1.0	0.6	37.0	37.0	0.0	2.6	2.7	-0.1	5.9	6.2	-0.3
Luxembourg	1.0	1.4	-0.4	0.9	0.9	0.0	20.2	20.7	-0.5	3.0	2.5	0.5	4.7	5.2	-0.5
Malta	0.9	1.1	-0.2	0.7	0.6	0.1	42.7	42.8	-0.1	6.2	5.5	0.7	3.8	3.8	0.0
Netherlands	1.2	1.4	-0.2	0.6	0.7	-0.1	49.1	49.1	0.0	1.5	1.6	-0.1	3.8	3.5	0.3
Austria	0.3	0.3	0.0	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	69.6	69.7	-0.1	1.7	1.5	0.2	4.6	4.7	-0.1
Portugal	-0.2	-0.4	0.2	0.1	-0.5	0.6	118.6	119.5	-0.9	1.9	1.7	0.2	6.6	6.2	0.4
Slovenia	0.9	0.7	0.2	-0.1	-0.8	0.7	65.4	65.9	-0.5	3.4	3.1	0.3	4.3	4.8	-0.5
Slovakia	0.0	-0.5	0.5	-0.4	-1.3	0.9	47.5	47.3	0.2	4.0	3.8	0.2	6.0	5.9	0.1
Finland	-0.3	-0.4	0.1	-0.7	-1.0	0.3	58.1	58.3	-0.2	1.7	1.6	0.1	6.3	6.7	-0.4



For **2020**, significant differences appear notably as regards: (1) the nominal budget balance forecasts for **Greece** and **Spain**; (2) the structural budget balance forecasts for **Italy, Belgium, Greece, Estonia, Spain, Portugal and Slovakia**; (3) the debt forecasts for **Greece, Italy, Latvia, Belgium, Spain and Portugal** and (4) the growth forecasts for **Luxembourg** and **Malta**.

2020	Budget Balance (%)			Structural budget balance (%)			Debt (%)			Growth (%)			Unemployment (%)		
	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ	SP	EC	Δ
Belgium	-0.2	-1.5	1.3	-0.2	-1.8	1.6	98.5	100.7	-2.2	1.4	1.2	0.2	5.3	5.3	0.0
Germany	0.75	0.8	-0.05	0.5	0.8	-0.3	56.5	55.6	0.9	1.6	1.5	0.1	2.8	2.7	0.1
Estonia	0.1	-0.5	-0.6	-0.4	-1.5	1.1	7.7	8.5	-0.8	2.7	2.4	0.3	5.7	5.7	0.0
Ireland	0.4	0.3	0.1	-0.4	-0.5	0.1	55.8	55.9	-0.1	3.3	3.4	-0.1	5.2	5.0	0.2
Greece	1.1	-0.1	1.2	1.9	0.8	1.1	163.9	168.9	-5.0	2.3	2.2	0.1	16.5	16.8	-0.3
Spain	-1.1	-2.0	0.9	-2.2	-3.2	1.0	94.0	95.7	-1.7	1.9	1.9	0.0	12.3	12.2	0.1
France	-2.0	-2.2	0.2	-1.9	-2.5	0.6	98.7	98.9	-0.2	1.4	1.5	-0.1	n.a.	8.5	n.a.
Italy	-2.1	-3.5	1.4	-1.4	-3.6	2.2	131.3	135.2	-3.9	0.8	0.7	-0.1	11.2	11.0	0.2
Cyprus	2.6	2.8	-0.2	0.8	0.7	0.1	89.1	89.9	-0.8	3.2	2.7	0.5	6.0	5.9	0.1
Latvia	-0.4	-0.6	0.2	-0.8	-1.1	0.3	36.1	33.5	2.6	3.0	2.8	0.2	6.5	6.7	-0.2
Lithuania	0.2	0.0	0.2	-0.3	-0.9	0.6	36.2	36.4	-0.2	2.4	2.4	0.0	5.9	6.0	-0.1
Luxembourg	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.8	0.5	0.3	19.9	20.3	-0.4	3.8	2.6	1.2	4.5	5.2	-0.7
Malta	1.0	0.9	0.1	1.1	0.7	0.4	39.4	40.2	-0.8	5.7	4.8	0.9	3.9	3.9	0.0
Netherlands	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.6	0.2	0.4	47.1	46.7	0.4	1.5	1.6	-0.1	4.0	3.6	0.4
Austria	0.2	0.2	0.0	-0.1	0.0	-0.1	66.5	66.8	-0.3	1.8	1.6	0.2	4.6	4.7	-0.1
Portugal	0.3	-0.1	0.4	0.3	-0.5	0.8	115.2	116.6	-1.4	1.9	1.7	0.2	6.3	5.7	0.6
Slovenia	1.0	0.9	0.1	-0.2	-0.3	0.1	61.3	61.7	-0.4	3.1	2.8	0.3	3.9	4.6	-0.7
Slovakia	0.0	-0.6	0.6	-0.4	-1.4	1.0	45.9	46.0	-0.1	3.7	3.4	0.3	5.6	5.6	0.0
Finland	0.0	-0.2	0.2	-0.3	-0.6	0.3	57.4	57.7	-0.3	1.4	1.2	0.2	6.1	6.2	-0.1

Sources: The [SP](#) as submitted by the Member States in April/May 2019 and the spring 2019 [EC forecast](#) (statistical annex tables 1, 24, 36, 41 and 42) of May 2019. For some countries, the structural balance data as included in the SP differ from the SP structural balance data as recalculated by the EC in their [assessments of the SP](#).

Notes: The approach used in the EC forecast (see [Box I.5 of the forecast document](#)): (a) Given the ongoing ratification process of the Withdrawal Agreement in the UK, projections for 2019 and 2020 are based on a purely technical assumption of status quo in terms of trading relations between the EU27 and the UK; (b) the cut-off date for taking new information into account in this European Economic Forecast was 24 April 2019. The forecast incorporates validated public finance data as published in Eurostat's news release 67/2019 of 23 April 2019. 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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