

Press release: 13 102-130/23

Perceived and expected income losses in first quarter of 2023 lower than in previous quarter

33% reported decreased household income, 21% reported gains

Vienna, 2023-06-29 – At the beginning of 2023, a third of the population between 18 and 74 years reported a loss of income in the twelve months prior to the survey – thus, down 3 percentage points from the previous quarter. As a study by Statistics Austria on the social impact of the crisis further shows, around 17% of the respondents reported difficulties in meeting their living costs with their current income.

“At the beginning of 2023, the number of people reporting a loss of income in the past twelve months has fallen slightly compared with the previous quarter. The number of people who expect lower incomes in the future has also decreased. Nevertheless, concerns remain at a high level: 17% of people report that they currently have difficulty meeting their living costs with their income,” says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

Previous and expected income losses down slightly

In the first quarter of 2023, 33% of the population aged 18 to 74 said they experienced a decrease in household income in the past twelve months prior to the survey (see table 1). Compared with the previous quarter and the same time one year ago, the share of people with decreased income was slightly lower (Q1/2022: 35%, Q4/2022: 36%). In addition, 21% of respondents reported an increase in their household income (Q1/2022: 20%, Q4/2022: 20%). The improved income situation could be due to the valorisation of social benefits and wage adjustments at the beginning of 2023.

Inflation was again the main reason for subjectively perceived income losses in the first quarter of 2023. 31% of respondents who experienced income losses cited inflation as the most important reason for the reduction in their income. Compared to the previous year, the share of income losses due to inflation increased by ten percentage points.

17% of respondents (projected between 1.0 and 1.18 million people) reported difficulties or great difficulties to make ends meet with their household income at the beginning of 2023. This number has barely changed compared to the previous quarter and remains above the previous year’s level (Q1/2022: 13%, Q4/2022: 17%). In particular individuals in households affected by unemployment (42%) and those with low household incomes (40%) reported difficulties in making ends meet.

In the first quarter of 2023, 27% of respondents expected their household income to decrease in the next twelve months. The proportion of those who expect income losses in the future has fallen compared to the previous quarter and is approaching the number at the beginning of 2022 (Q1/2022: 25%, Q4/2022: 31%).

Housing cost burden slightly lower, yet significantly increased compared to the previous year

Paying housing costs (including energy) was a heavy financial burden for 22% of 18- to 74-year-olds (see table 2). Although this number is down slightly from the previous quarter, it remains well above the level at the beginning of 2022 (Q1/2022: 13%, Q4/2022: 24%).

The number of people anticipating difficulties covering their housing costs declined as well. In the first quarter 2023, 24% expected to be unable to pay their housing costs in the next three months, 3 percentage points less than in the previous quarter. However, the proportion remains at an elevated level compared to the previous year (Q1/2022: 14%).

Non-affordability of household energy

The current survey also collected data on the affordability of household energy. According to their own statements, 14% of the total population aged 18 to 74 (extrapolated between 803 000 and 968 000 people) could not afford their household energy – i.e. did not have the financial means to afford either sufficient electricity or the energy needed to heat their homes (see table 3).

6% of 18- to 74-year olds reported that they had arrears of payment of ancillary housing costs (electricity, gas, district heating and repairs) since the beginning of the fourth quarter 2022 due to financial constraints. People living in multi-child households were particularly affected (17% with late payments), followed by individuals with low income (16%), single-parent households (15%) and people in households affected by unemployment (14%).

Detailed results and in-depth analyses of the affordability of household energy can be found in the report “So geht’s uns heute: Die sozialen Krisenfolgen im 1. Quartal 2023 – Schwerpunkt Energiearmut”, issued jointly by IHS and Statistics Austria. The report is available on our [website](#) along with other detailed results.

Table 1: Financial Situation

| Attribute | | Q1/2022 | Q2/2022 | Q3/2022 | Q4/2022 | Q1/2023 | |
|---|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | | in % | | | | in % | in 1 000 |
| Perceived change in income (last 12 months) | Increase | 19.8 | 19.9 | 21.4 | 19.9 | 21.4 | 1 402 |
| | Unchanged | 45.8 | 43.1 | 42.8 | 44.5 | 45.6 | 2 995 |
| | Decrease | 34.5 | 37.1 | 35.9 | 35.6 | 33.0 | 2 166 |
| Making ends meet with the household income | With great difficulty | 4.7 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 7.4 | 6.2 | 410 |
| | With difficulty | 8.1 | 10.2 | 10.9 | 9.8 | 10.3 | 678 |
| | With slight difficulty | 24.9 | 26.8 | 27.1 | 27.7 | 30.0 | 1 967 |
| | With slight ease | 34.3 | 34.1 | 35.3 | 35.0 | 32.4 | 2 123 |
| | With ease | 17.9 | 15.7 | 15.1 | 13.4 | 14.4 | 946 |
| Expected change in income (next 12 months) | With great ease | 10.1 | 7.9 | 6.1 | 6.7 | 6.7 | 439 |
| | Increase | 17.9 | 14.8 | 15.5 | 16.9 | 15.7 | 1 028 |
| | Unchanged | 57.5 | 54.5 | 51.0 | 52.4 | 57.3 | 3 760 |
| | Decrease | 24.6 | 30.7 | 33.5 | 30.7 | 27.0 | 1 775 |
| Total | | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 6 563 |

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Survey “So geht’s uns heute”. Data as of 13.06.2023.

Table 2: Burden of housing cost

| Attribute | Q1/2022 | Q2/2022 | Q3/2022 | Q4/2022 | Q1/2023 | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| | in % | | | | in % | in 1 000 | |
| Burden of housing cost | Heavy burden | 13.1 | 17.9 | 22.2 | 23.6 | 22,2 | 1 457 |
| | Some burden | 63.7 | 63.7 | 63.3 | 63.8 | 65,7 | 4 313 |
| | No burden | 23.2 | 18.4 | 14.5 | 12.6 | 12,1 | 793 |
| Expected difficulties paying for housing cost (in the next 3 months) | Yes | 13.8 | 18.9 | 30.4 | 26.8 | 23,9 | 1 567 |
| | No | 86.2 | 81.1 | 69.6 | 73.2 | 76,1 | 4 996 |
| Total | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 6 563 | |

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Survey "So geht's uns heute". Data as of 13.06.2023.

Table 3: Affordability of household energy

| Attribute | Q1/2023 | |
|--|---------|----------|
| | in % | in 1 000 |
| Non-affordability of household energy | 13.5 | 887 |
| Delay in payments of ancillary housing costs (electricity, gas, district heating and repairs) since the previous quarter (Q4/2022) | 5.6 | 368 |

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Survey "So geht's uns heute". Data as of 13.06.2023.

Information on methodology, definitions: The sixth wave of the survey "So geht's uns heute" took place in March and April 2023. Approximately 3 300 respondents between 18 and 74 years participated in the survey. The study is co-financed by Eurostat and the Austrian Ministry for Social Affairs. Eleven other EU member states conduct similar pilot studies each quarter. The current results in Austria show the subjective public opinion of the first quarter 2023. The study focuses on personally experienced income losses, the subjective coping with the cost of life, personal well-being and happiness. The quarterly study aims to identify the social effects of developments in the current crisis as early as possible. The sample was drawn from the Austrian civil register. Register data was not used in order to depict changes in the public opinion in a timely manner. The questionnaire can be found on our [website](#) (available in German only).

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