



Statistical release

31 March 2021

Euro area pension fund statistics: fourth quarter of 2020

- [Total assets](#) of euro area pension funds amounted to €3,156 billion in fourth quarter of 2020, €135 billion higher than in third quarter of 2020
- [Total pension entitlements](#) of euro area pension funds rose to €2,785 billion in fourth quarter of 2020, up €46 billion from third quarter of 2020

Total [assets](#) of euro area pension funds increased to €3,156 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020, from €3,021 billion in the third quarter of 2020. Investment fund shares accounted for 46.5% of the pension funds sector's total assets in the fourth quarter of 2020. The second largest category of holdings was debt securities (25.2%), followed by equity (9.2%) (see respective transactions in Chart 1).

Holdings of [investment fund shares](#) increased to €1,467 billion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2020 from €1,381 billion at the end of the previous quarter. Net purchases of investment fund shares amounted to €22 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020, while price and other changes amounted to €64 billion. Looking at the main type of investment fund shares, equity fund shares totalled €461 billion, with net purchases of €17 billion.

Turning to pension funds' holdings of [debt securities](#), these increased to €796 billion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2020 from €775 billion at the end of the previous quarter. Net purchases of debt securities amounted to €19 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020, while price and other changes amounted to €3 billion. Looking at [equity](#) on the assets side, euro area pension funds' holdings increased to €291 billion at the end of the fourth quarter of 2020, from €263 billion at the end of the previous quarter. Net purchases of equity stood at €6 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020, while price

and other changes stood at €22 billion.

Chart 1

Transactions in main assets of euro area pension funds in the fourth quarter of 2020

(quarterly transactions in EUR billions; not seasonally adjusted)



[Data for main assets of euro area pension funds](#)

In terms of the main liabilities, total [pension entitlements](#) of pension funds amounted to €2,785 billion in the fourth quarter of 2020, up from €2,738 billion in the third quarter of 2020. Defined benefit pension schemes amounted to €2,322 billion, accounting for 83.4% of total pension entitlements. Defined contribution pension schemes totalled €463 billion, accounting for 16.6% of total pension entitlements in the fourth quarter of 2020. Net purchases of defined benefit schemes amounted to €16

billion in the fourth quarter of 2020, while those of defined contribution schemes came to €9 billion. Price and other changes of total pension entitlements amounted to €22 billion.

For queries, please use the [statistical information request](#) form.

Notes:

"Defined benefit schemes" includes hybrid schemes.

"Investment funds" includes money market funds and non-money market funds.

Hyperlinks in the main body of the statistical release and in the annex table lead to data that may change with subsequent releases as a result of revisions. Figures shown in the annex table are a snapshot of the data as at the time of the current release.

Table 1. Assets and liabilities of euro area pension funds
(EUR billions; amounts outstanding at end of period; transactions during the period)¹⁾

	Q2 2020	Q3 2020	Q4 2020
Total assets/liabilities	2,950	3,021	3,156
Assets			
Currency and deposits	139	140	142
<i>of which: Transferable deposits</i>	51	53	55
Loans	91	77	77
Debt securities	748	775	796
Equity	260	263	291
Investment fund shares	1,328	1,381	1,467
Money market funds	34	39	44
Non-money market funds	1,294	1,342	1,423
Bond funds	263	263	260
Equity funds	406	416	461
Mixed funds	199	215	226
Real estate funds	150	153	158
Hedge funds	20	14	14
Other funds	256	281	305
Pension fund reserves ²⁾	115	119	121
Financial derivatives	207	204	204
Non-financial assets	36	36	36
Remaining assets	27	26	23
Liabilities			
Loans	94	96	105
Debt securities issued	0	0	0
Equity	23	25	27
Technical reserves ³⁾	2,737	2,755	2,798
<i>of which: Pension entitlements</i>	2,721	2,738	2,785
Defined benefit schemes ⁴⁾	2,283	2,295	2,322
Defined contribution schemes	438	443	463
Financial derivatives	93	97	90
Remaining liabilities	54	58	51
Net worth ⁵⁾	-51	-9	86
Selected transactions - assets			
Loans	5	-15	0
Debt securities	17	25	19
Equity	5	8	6
Investment fund shares	13	26	22
Money market funds	1	4	5
Non-money market funds	12	22	17
Bond funds	-8	-4	-15
Equity funds	29	2	17
Mixed funds	1	11	8
Real estate funds	-4	0	-1
Hedge funds	-2	-7	0
Other funds	-5	20	7

Source: ECB.

1) Figures may not add up due to rounding.

2) Total pension fund reserves may include investments in insurance policies.

3) Total technical reserves may include life insurance.

4) Defined benefit schemes include hybrid schemes.

5) Balancing item as defined in ESA 2010. In a defined benefit pension scheme, the level of pension benefits promised to participating employees is determined by a formula agreed in advance. The liabilities of a defined benefit pension scheme are equal to the present value of the promised benefits, and therefore in a defined benefit pension scheme net worth can be different from zero.