

Documentation of statistics for Recidivism 2023

1 Introduction

The purpose of Recidivism is to analyze the extent of new criminality among persons who have been released after serving in jail or have received a guilty decision during a calendar year.

The statistics on Recidivism was made up the first time for persons released or convicted in 2007 and has hereafter been produced annually.

2 Statistical presentation

The statistics on recidivism form part of the criminal statistics. The criminal statistics include statistics on criminal cases as reported criminal offences, victims of reported criminal offences, imprisonments and convictions.

The statistics shed light on new criminality among people who have been released after serving in jail or have received a guilty decision during a year. The extent and type of new crimes committed during a follow-up period of two years are calculated.

Furthermore, information on level of education and the extent of criminality the five years previous to the actual year form part of the statistics.

2.1 Data description

The statistics on Recidivism form part of the criminal statistics. The criminal statistics include statistics on criminal cases as reported criminal offences, victims of reported criminal offences, imprisonments and convictions.

The statistics on Recidivism are person-based statistics, which shed light on the extent and type of criminality committed during a follow-up period of two year by persons who have been released after serving in jail or have received a guilty decision during a calendar year.

More specific, the starting point is persons who, during a year:

1. Are released after serving in jail and/or
2. Are sentenced an unsuspended imprisonment which is served during remand and/or
3. Have preventive measures which are expired/abolished and/or
4. Have received a guilty decision, excl. unsuspended imprisonments

If a person meet more than one of the above conditions the occurrence with the earliest date is chosen as the starting point for the follow-up period.

All guilty decisions made the same or the following three years after the initial occurrence are regarded as potential recidivism occurrences. Decisions for three years are selected in the first instance despite only new crimes committed within two years are regarded as recidivism occurrences, cf. above. This is due to the fact that there can be a time-lag between the date of the offence and the date of the decision. If only decisions made within two years were selected, a number of offences committed within two years but not brought before the court within two years, would not be included in the statistics.

By linking to the charge with the same journal number and personal identification number the exact date of the crime is identified. All crimes committed within two years from the initial occurrence are regarded as recidivism occurrences.

Only persons who have been resident in Denmark through the entire follow-up period are included in the statistics. That implies, that persons who have died or emigrated during the follow-up period are excluded from the statistics.

As from the reference period 2008-2010 the statistics are supplied with information on educational level and as from the period 2009-2011 furthermore with information on criminality the five years before the actual calendar year.

In the published statistics the starting population is divided by index offence, index penalty, duration until recidivism, offence at first recidivism, offence at maximum penalty in the follow-up period, penalty at first recidivism, penalty at maximum penalty in the follow-up period, number of recidivism occurrences in combination with sex, age educational level and previous decisions.

2.2 Classification system

Grouping of the types of decisions and of codes of the criminal offences.

The criminal offences are divided into the penal code, the road traffic act and special law/legislation. The penal code is furthermore divided into four subgroups: Sexual offences, Crimes of violence, Offences against property and Other offences. The most special laws/legislation are referred to as single acts, while the rest are categorized as 'Other special laws/legislations'.

The applied grouping can be seen in the annual publication [Criminality](#).

2.3 Sector coverage

Not relevant for this statistics.

2.4 Statistical concepts and definitions

Previous convictions: Previous crime is defined as one or several guilty decisions five years prior to the actual year.

Recidivism: Recidivism is defined as a new crime committed within a follow-up period of two years after a release from serving in jail or receiving a guilty decision

Type of offence: Type of offence describes the kind of law violation which the index offence concerns and also the type of offence of the recidivism occurrences.

The criminal offences are divided into the penal code, the road traffic act and special law/legislation. Violations of the penal code are grouped in sexual offences, crimes of violence, offences against property and other offences. The most special laws/legislation are referred to as single acts, while the rest are categorized as 'Other special laws/legislations'.

The applied grouping can be seen in the annual publication Criminality in [Annex 1](#).

Type of penalty: Type of penalty describes the kind of conviction that has been made. It includes unsuspended and suspended imprisonment, fines, withdrawals of charges, prosecution dropped, preventive measures, acquittals etc. A main distinction is made between guilty and not-guilty type of sentence. Acquittals and prosecution dropped constitute not-guilty type of sentence while all other type of sentence constitute guilty type of sentence. In the statistics on Recidivism only guilty type of sentences are included.

2.5 Statistical unit

The unit in the statistics on Recidivism is persons. One person are represented only once in the index population but can be represented with several recidivism occurrences.

2.6 Statistical population

The population covered by the statistics is persons, who have been released after serving in jail or have received a guilty decision, excl. unsuspended imprisonment. The statistics include persons who have found guilty in violation of the penal code, the road traffic act and/or the special laws.

2.7 Reference area

Denmark, except the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

2.8 Time coverage

The statistics covers the period from 2007 and onwards.

2.9 Base period

Not relevant to this statistics.

2.10 Unit of measure

Number.

2.11 Reference period

01-01-2021 - 31-12-2023

2.12 Frequency of dissemination

Annual.

2.13 Legal acts and other agreements

The Act on Statistics Denmark §6.

There is no EU Regulation related to the statistics on convictions.

2.14 Cost and burden

There is no response burden as the statistics are based on registers.

2.15 Comment

Other information can be found on the statistics' [Subject Page](#) or obtained by contacting Statistics Denmark.

3 Statistical processing

The source to the statistics are data from other statistical registers operated by Statistics Denmark. Data from the registers are delivered yearly via System-to-system-transmission. Data are already validated. However, central variables go through a probability check in form of a comparison with data from the previous year. Data about decisions, charges and admissions to prisons from Statistics Denmark's criminal statistical registers are linked to data from Statistics Denmark's register of the population's highest level of education and Statistics Denmark's register of Populations Statistics.

3.1 Source data

A number of Statistics Denmark's criminal statistical registers (decisions, charges and admissions to prisons). Data to this registers originate from the Central Criminal Register operated by the National Commissioner of the Danish Police. Furthermore data from Statistics Denmark's register of the population's highest level of education and Statistics Denmark's Register of Population Statistics.

3.2 Frequency of data collection

Annual.

3.3 Data collection

System-to-system-transmission.

3.4 Data validation

The statistics are based on data from other statistical registers in Statistics Denmark and therefore already validated. However, central variables go through a probability check in form of a comparison with data from the previous year. Explanations of possible big deflections in the distribution of key variables are looked for. E.g. changes in the legislation or in the administrative praxis may cause fluctuations in the distributions.

3.5 Data compilation

Data about decisions, charges and admissions to prisons from Statistics Denmark's criminal statistical registers are linked to data from Statistics Denmark's register of Population Statistics. the population's highest level of education and Statistics Denmark's register of Populations Statistics. Only persons who have been resident in Denmark through the entire follow-up period are included in the statistics. That implies, that persons who have died or emigrated during the follow-up period are excluded from the statistics. Information from Statistics Denmark's register on the populations highest level of education as at October 1 the year before the reference year are linked to the defined population. For each person, variables telling how many new crimes the person has committed during the follow-up period, are calculated. Also variables telling which type of crimes the person has committed and which kind of penalty the person has received, are calculated. Finally, the number of decisions during the last five years before the reference year, are calculated.

3.6 Adjustment

No further corrections of data than mentioned in "Data validation" and "Data compilation" are done.

4 Relevance

Statistikken bliver anvendt bredt af myndigheder, organisationer, forskere, pressen mv. Tabellerne i Statistikbanken er hyppigt anvendt. Fremsatte synspunkter og ønsker fra centrale brugere tages i betragtning ved udarbejdelse af statistikken.

4.1 User Needs

Users are ministries (especially the Ministry of Justice), the local police authorities, courts, municipalities and counties, different organizations, educational institutions, research or scientific institutions, the media, private firms and private individuals.

Applications are public and private planning, education, research/scientific and public debate.

4.2 User Satisfaction

The statistics on convictions are often used by the press and the tables on <http://www.statbank.dk> are used frequently. In connection with the preparation of the annual publication *Kriminalitet* (Criminality) a consulting meeting with key users of the statistics is held. Forwarded views and suggestions are taken into consideration in the planning of the statistics.

4.3 Data completeness rate

Not relevant for this statistics.

5 Accuracy and reliability

The statistics on recidivism is based on other of Statistics Denmark's statistical registers where the reliability is considered to be good. However, the number of emigrants is assessed to be underestimated with 15-20 percentages. The statistics include persons who are registered with a decision in the central criminal register at the time the extract to Statistics Denmark is done. A number of decisions made during the calendar year will happen not to be registered at that time. That implies that the total number of persons in the defined population presumably is underestimated.

5.1 Overall accuracy

The data come from a single total extract from the Central Criminal Register. Both the National Commissioner of the Danish Police and the authorities reporting to the Criminal Register do control to ensure the correctness of the registered data. The statistics include all decisions registered in the central criminal register at the time the extract to Statistics Denmark is done, typically about February 1st following the relevant calendar year. A number of decisions made during the calendar year will happen not to be registered before the time of extraction. That implies that the total number of persons which has received one or several decisions during a year presumably is underestimated. The exact size is not known but is regarded as limited and of the same extent each year.

5.2 Sampling error

There is no sampling errors as the statistics are compiled on the basis of registers.

5.3 Non-sampling error

The statistics include all persons who have got one or several convictions which have been registered in the central criminal register at the time the extract to Statistics Denmark is done, typically about February 1st following the relevant calendar year. A number of convictions made during the calendar year will happen not to be registered before the time of extraction. That implies that the total number of persons which has received one or several decisions during a year presumably is under-estimated. The exact size is not known but is regarded as limited and of the same extent each year.

The statistics does not include all fines as minor offences resulting in fines below DKK 2,500 for violation of the road traffic act and fines below DKK 1,000 for violation of the main part of the other special laws are not registered in the central criminal register.

5.4 Quality management

Statistics Denmark follows the recommendations on organisation and management of quality given in the Code of Practice for European Statistics (CoP) and the implementation guidelines given in the Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System (QAF). A Working Group on Quality and a central quality assurance function have been established to continuously carry through control of products and processes.

5.5 Quality assurance

Statistics Denmark follows the principles in the Code of Practice for European Statistics (CoP) and uses the Quality Assurance Framework of the European Statistical System (QAF) for the implementation of the principles. This involves continuous decentralized and central control of products and processes based on documentation following international standards. The central quality assurance function reports to the Working Group on Quality. Reports include suggestions for improvement that are assessed, decided and subsequently implemented.

5.6 Quality assessment

The data come from a single total extract from the Central Criminal Register. Both the National Commissioner of the Danish Police and the authorities reporting to the Criminal Register do control to ensure the correctness of the registered data. The statistics include all decisions registered in the central criminal register at the time the extract to Statistics Denmark is done, typically about February 1st following the relevant calendar year. A number of decisions made during the calendar year will happen not to be registered before the time of extraction. That implies that the total number of persons which has received one or several decisions during a year presumably is underestimated. The exact size is not known but is regarded as limited and of the same extent each year. The statistics does not include all fines as minor offences resulting in fines below DKK 2,500 for violation of the road traffic act and fines below DKK 1,000 for violation of the main part of the other special laws are not registered in the Central Criminal Register. By studying the development in the number of persons with a decision (typical fines) for violation of the road traffic act and other special laws as police regulation and euphoriants act it has to be considered that the activity of the police in the form of e.g. speed controls or special efforts in the night life by itself can affect the number of convictions. An increase in the number of persons with decision in these areas does not necessarily reflect an increase in the number of persons violating these laws but can also reflect that a greater proportion are discovered and registered. For the reliability of the data from the Population Register please consult the documentation of statistics [Befolkningen](#). For the reliability of the data from the status register of the population's highest education please consult the documentation of statistics [Highest education attained](#).

5.7 Data revision - policy

Statistics Denmark revises published figures in accordance with the [Revision Policy for Statistics Denmark](#). The common procedures and principles of the Revision Policy are for some statistics supplemented by a specific revision practice.

5.8 Data revision practice

Only final figures are published and are not later revised.

6 Timeliness and punctuality

The statistics are published approximately 1 year and 9 months after the end of the reference period. The punctuality is very high as the statistics usually are published without delay in relation to the scheduled time.

6.1 Timeliness and time lag - final results

Only final figures are published. The statistics are published within 2 years after the end of the reference period. Time of publication the last 5 years has been: 2021-2023: 1 year, 10 months, 3 days 2020-2022: 1 year, 11 months, 7 days 2019-2021: 1 year, 9 months, 4 days 2018-2020: 1 year, 9 months, 11 days 2017-2019: 1 year, 9 months, 5 days

6.2 Punctuality

The punctuality is very high as the statistics usually are published without delay in relation to the scheduled time.

7 Comparability

Since 2007, the statistics has been prepared on the same data source. In general the statistics is therefore comparable during time.

Some of the published data are not available for all years.

No international comparable statistics are available.

7.1 Comparability - geographical

Several countries produce recidivism statistics. However, methods and definitions varies and hence directly comparable statistics are not available.

7.2 Comparability over time

Since 2007, the statistics has been prepared on the same data source. In general the statistics is therefore comparable during time. As from 2008 the statistics are supplied with information on educational level and as from 2009 furthermore with information on previous criminality. As a consequence of law amendments or wishes for more information on specific kind of offences the division of type of offences can be altered during the years. Fines for violation of the road traffic act below DKK 2,500 are not included in the statistics as from 2012. Earlier the limit was DKK 1,500.

By studying the development in the number of persons with decisions (typical fines) for violation of the road traffic act and other special laws as police regulation and euphoriants act it has to be considered that the activity of the police in the form of e.g. speed controls or special efforts in the night life by itself can affect the number of convicted persons. An increase in the number of persons with decisions in these areas does not necessarily reflect an increase in the number of persons committed this kind of crimes but can also reflect that a greater proportion are discovered and registered.

7.3 Coherence - cross domain

The statistics on Recidivism build on the same data source as the statistics on convictions. The unit in convictions is the conviction while it in Recidivism is persons who have been released after serving in jail or have received a guilty decision during a calendar year.

Convictions include all convictions while Recidivism only include persons who have been found guilty.

Only persons who have been resident in Denmark through the entire follow-up period are included in the statistics. That implies, that persons who have died or emigrated during the follow-up period are excluded from the statistics.

Furthermore Recidivism only include persons resident in Denmark through the entire follow-up period. Convictions also include persons subsequently emigrated or died as well as tourists and others without a Danish personal identification number.

7.4 Coherence - internal

The source of the statistics is the decision register, which is formed on the basis of an annual extract from the National Police's central Criminal Register. Source and output are consistent.

8 Accessibility and clarity

The statistics on convictions are published in: [News from Statistics Denmark](#), the publication [Kriminalitet \(Criminality\)](#) and in [StatBank](#).

At Statistics Denmark's webpage the statistics furthermore are presented on its [Subject Page](#).

Taylor made statistics can be prepared on bases of the ready-made files. Through Statistics Denmark's Division of Research Service it is possible for researchers to be granted access to anonymized data.

8.1 Release calendar

The publication date appears in the release calendar. The date is confirmed in the weeks before.

8.3 User access

Statistics are always published at 8:00 a.m. at the day announced in the release calendar. No one outside of Statistics Denmark can access the statistics before they are published.

8.2 Release calendar access

The Release Calendar can be accessed on our English website: [Release Calendar](#).

8.4 News release

The statistics on convictions are published in: [News from Statistics Denmark](#).

8.5 Publications

The statistics are annually published in the publication [Kriminalitet \(Criminality\)](#).

8.6 On-line database

The statistics are published in the StatBank under the subject [Recidivism](#) in the following tables:

- [RECIDIV1](#): Persons by sex, age, duration until recidivism, index penalty, index offence and time
- [RECIDIV2](#): Persons by sex, age, index offence, offence at first recidivism and time
- [RECIDIV3](#): Persons by sex, age, index penalty, index offence, offence at first recidivism, penalty at first recidivism and time
- [RECIDIV4](#): Persons by sex, age, index penalty, index offence, offence (at maximum penalty in follow-up period), penalty (at maximum penalty in follow-up period) and time
- [RECIDIV5](#): Persons by sex, age, index penalty, index offence, recidivism occurrence and time
- [RECIDIV6](#): Persons by sex, age, education, duration until recidivism and time
- [RECIDIV7](#): Persons by sex, age, education, offence (at maximum penalty in follow-up period) and time
- [RECIDIV8](#): Persons by sex, age, education, penalty (at maximum penalty in follow-up period) and time
- [RECIDIV9](#): Persons by sex, age, education, recidivism occurrence and time
- [RECIDIV10](#): Persons by sex, age, previous convictions, recidivism occurrence, duration until recidivism and time
- [RECIDIV11](#): Persons by sex, age, previous convictions, recidivism occurrence, penalty at first recidivism and time
- [RECIDIV12](#): Persons by sex, age, previous convictions, recidivism occurrence, penalty (at maximum penalty in follow-up period) and time

8.7 Micro-data access

Data on recidivism are kept as ready-made files containing basic information at individual level. Taylor made statistics can be prepared on bases of the ready-made files. Through Statistics Denmark's Division of Research Service it is possible for researchers to be granted access to anonymized data, i.e., data for which all identification details such as ID numbers have been removed.

8.8 Other

Final data are available to DST Consulting, The Division of Research Services and other users in Statistics Denmark in the form of module data.

8.9 Confidentiality - policy

In the preparing of Recidivism the guidelines in Statistics Denmark's [Data Confidentiality Policy](#) are followed.

8.10 Confidentiality - data treatment

The published statistics on Recidivism is distributed by no other characteristics than sex, age and level of education. This ensures that Recidivism not can be related to individuals.

8.11 Documentation on methodology

Documentation of the statistical variables can be seen on Statistics Denmark's [website](#).

A description of the statistical method may be found in the annual publication Kriminalitet (Criminality): [Concepts and sources of the statistics \(danish only\)](#).

8.12 Quality documentation

Results from the quality evaluation of products and selected processes are available in detail for each statistics and in summary reports for the Working Group on Quality.

9 Contact

The administrative placement of these statistics is in the division of Population and Education, Social Statistics. The contact person is Iben Birgitte Pedersen, tel.: + 45 2360 3711, and e-mail: IPE@dst.dk.