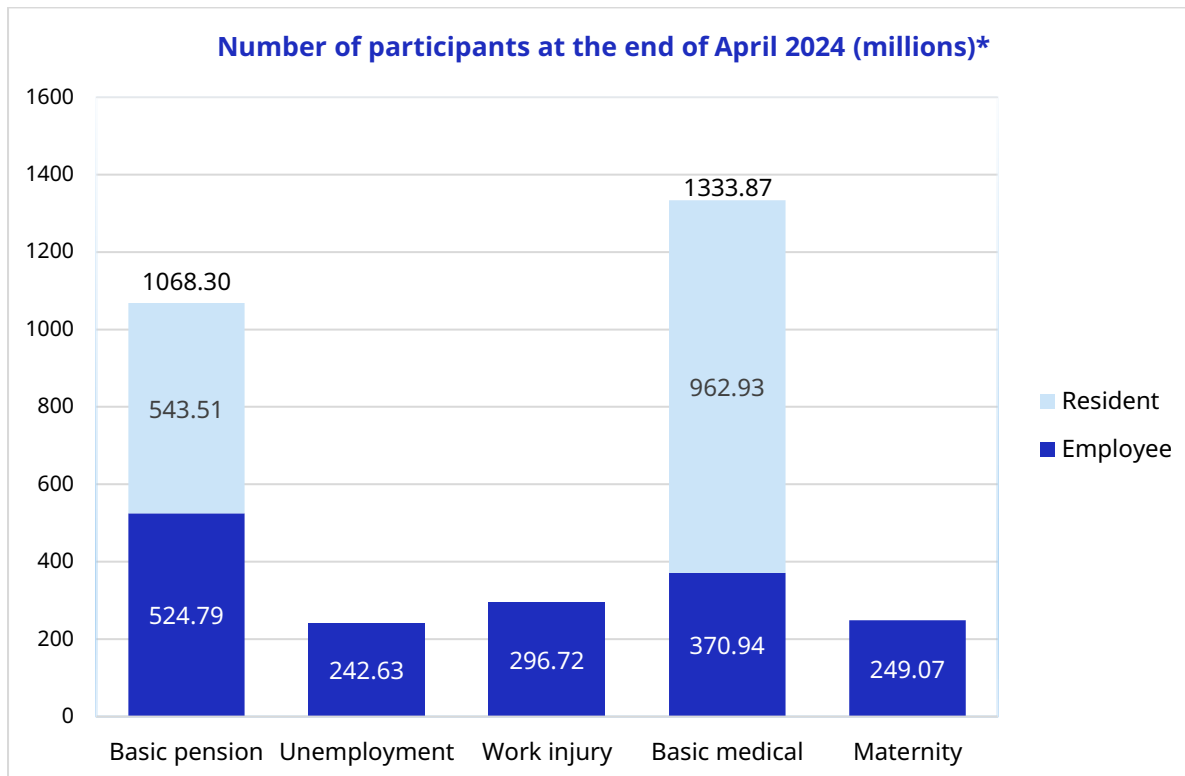




Quarterly Social Security Policy Monitor

Issue 17, April-June 2024

China Social Security Barometer



* Basic medical insurance & maternity insurance data as of the end of December 2023
Latest data available from [MOHRSS](#) and [NHSA](#), 2024

China Social Security Policies

China raises basic pension benefits for retirees by 3% in 2024

On 17 June 2024, The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) and the Ministry of Finance jointly released a [Notification](#) adjusting the basic pension benefits in 2024 for employee retirees (retired before the end of 2023), with an increase of 3% compared to 2023. Provinces should make adjustments aligned with the national adjustment (the ceiling). The adjustment is expected to benefit around 140 million retirees of enterprises, government agencies and public institutions. [Read more](#).

Over 60 million people have opened private pension accounts

As an integral part of the third pillar of China's old-age insurance system, private pension scheme has been piloted in 36 cities and regions in the country for more than one year, attracting over 60 million people to have opened private pension accounts. Data shows that middle- and high-income groups aged from 31 to 40 are the

main force for opening private pension accounts, making contributions and purchasing financial products. In the next phase, China will advance the development of the third pillar and extend the pilot work of private pension scheme nationwide, said MOHRSS. [Read more.](#)

Ministry of Civil Affairs advances the enactment of Social Assistance Law

On 3 June 2024, the Ministry of Civil Affairs released its legislative work plan for 2024, explicitly promoting the enactment of Social Assistance Law and studying the enactment of Child Welfare Law. [Read more in Chinese.](#)

Elderly care services promoted in rural areas in response to ageing population

On 8 May 2024, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and other ministries and departments jointly issued [Guiding Opinions](#) on making an overall and systematic national plan for the development of elderly care services in rural areas, which provide guidance from five aspects: improving the construction of service institutions and service quality, advancing the building of a robust working mechanism and a service supporting system, as well as strengthening management and leadership. [Read more.](#)

China introduces a package of policies on unemployment insurance to assist businesses and stabilize employment

On 26 April 2024, MOHRSS, the Ministry of Finance and State Taxation Administration jointly released a [Notification](#) to continue the implementation of the unemployment insurance policies in supporting enterprises and stabilizing jobs. In terms of burden reduction, the policy of temporary reduction of the contribution rate of unemployment insurance to 1% will be continued until the end of 2025. In terms of job stabilization, the policy of refunding unemployment insurance contributions to insured enterprises that do not cut jobs or whose dismissal rate is within a certain limit will be continued until the end of 2024. Maximum of 60% of the unemployment insurance contributions paid in the previous year will be refunded to qualified micro-, small and middle-sized enterprises (MSMEs) this year, and 30% to large enterprises. In terms of skill enhancement, the skill enhancement subsidy policy will continue to expand the coverage of beneficiaries until the end of 2024. [Read more in Chinese.](#)

Management of designated institutions standardized for assessing the level of incapability in long-term care insurance

On 25 April 2024, National Healthcare Security Administration (NHSA) issued [Measures \(Trial\)](#) to specify the requirements for the management of designated institutions for assessing the level of incapability in long-term care insurance scheme, so as to further standardize the management of the institutions concerned. [Read more.](#)

MOHRSS: the pilot programme of occupational injury insurance for workers engaged in new forms of employment will be expanded in due course

According to the [press conference](#) for the first quarter of 2024 by MOHRSS, by the end of March, over 8 million workers in new forms of employment (NFE) were enrolled in the pilot programme of occupational injury insurance. In the next stage, MOHRSS will improve policies based on the pilot experiences and consider expanding the pilot work to include more NFE workers in the coverage. [Read more in Chinese.](#)

Local Policies and Practices in China

Shandong: expanding the coverage of work-related injury insurance

On 31 May 2024, Human Resources and Social Security Department and other six departments of Shandong Province jointly issued [Trial Measures](#) for including interns, retirees, and other specific workers in the coverage of work-related injury insurance. Specific workers who suffer from injuries or diseases arising from work will

receive timely medical care and financial compensation, dispersing work-related injury risks born by employers. Employer can separately enroll these persons in work-related injury insurance on a voluntary basis, and pay contributions by month. Trail Measures will come into force on 1 July 2024 for a three-year period. [Read more in Chinese.](#)

Multiple measures adopted to boost birth rate

Maternity benefits for the unemployed: [Shanghai issued a Circular](#) allowing women who give birth or have an abortion during the period of receiving unemployment insurance benefits to enjoy living allowances and medical subsidies in line with regulations on maternity insurance, of which living allowances equal to 60% of the local average monthly wage of urban employees for the previous year. The Circular came into effect on 1 January 2024. [Shenzhen](#) allows unemployed people to be enrolled in the maternity insurance and enjoy maternity insurance benefits while receiving unemployment insurance benefits, including maternal medical care and maternity allowances. Their unemployed spouses are entitled to medical benefits without maternity allowances. Medical insurance contributions for the above persons are covered by unemployment insurance funds and paid monthly by local social insurance agencies, no personal payment is required. The amount of maternity allowances is equal to the local average monthly wage of urban employees for the previous year (when giving birth or under the surgery for family planning) divided by 30 and then multiplied by days of maternity leave.

Polices on flexible workers participating in maternity insurance: [Tianjin issued a Circular](#) allowing flexible workers enrolled in maternity insurance for urban employees to pay contributions by month or quarter, or bi-annually or annually. [Zhengzhou](#) specifies that from 1 January 2024, flexible workers who are covered by basic medical insurance for urban employees should participate in maternity insurance and pay monthly contributions equal to 1% of the contribution base for basic medical insurance for urban employees. Those who pay in full maternity insurance contributions are entitled to claim corresponding benefits including maternity allowances, in line with regulations on maternity insurance for urban employees.

Inclusion of assisted reproduction in the coverage of basic medical insurance. More and more provinces have introduced policies to include medical services of assisted reproduction into the coverage of basic medical insurance system. [Read more.](#)

European Policies

EU renews commitment to a strong and resilient social Europe at conference in La Hulpe

On 16 April 2024, at the High-Level Conference on the European Pillar of Social Rights in La Hulpe, Belgium, participants have renewed their commitment to the European Social Model to continue making social and economic progress, combining increased competitiveness and productivity with equal opportunities, promoting more quality jobs and fair working conditions, reduce poverty and inequalities and delivering a fair transition to climate neutrality. In the [Declaration on the Future of the European Pillar of Social Rights](#), the Commission and other signatories pledged to continue implementing the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and further strengthen employment and social dimensions amidst digital and green transitions and the demographic shifts. [Read more.](#)

Commission launches first-stage consultation of social partners on fair telework and the right to disconnect

On 30 April 2024, the Commission has launched the first-stage consultation of European social partners to gather their views on the possible direction of EU action on ensuring fair telework and the right to disconnect. [Read more.](#)

Parliament adopts Platform Work Directive

On 24 April 2024, Members of the European Parliament approved new rules aiming to improve the working conditions of platform workers. The new rules, agreed on by the Parliament and the Council in February and adopted with 554 votes in favour, 56 votes against and 24 abstentions, aim to ensure that platform workers have their employment status classified correctly and to correct bogus self-employment. They also regulate, for the first time ever in the EU, the use of algorithms in the workplace. The legislation now requires the formal approval of the Council of the EU. Read more.

Policies around the World

Singapore announces increases to retirement and re-employment ages

In 2024, Singapore's Ministry of Manpower announced that the country would increase its statutory retirement age from 63 to 64 and its reemployment age from 68 to 69 on 1 July 2026. (The retirement age is the earliest age at which Singaporean employers can require their employees to retire; once employees reach this age, their employers must offer them 1-year reemployment contracts each year until they reach the reemployment age or can no longer meet certain performance and health requirements.) These 1-year increases to the retirement and reemployment ages follow increases implemented in 2022 and are part of a plan approved by government, employer, and labour representatives in 2019 to increase the retirement and reemployment ages to 65 and 70, respectively, by 2030. The gradual age increases are intended to further boost the labour force participation of Singapore's residents aged 65 or older, which has already risen from 23.8 percent to 31.5 percent over the past decade. According to the government, over 90 percent of Singapore's retirement-age workers who requested reemployment contracts in 2023 received them. Read more.

Germany to hike pensions nationwide by 4.57%

The more than 21 million pensioners in Germany would receive a substantial 4.57 percent pension increase beginning on 1 July 2024, after the German Cabinet approved the adjustment in Berlin. With this increase, pensions are set to rise faster than inflation in the country. The last time pensions rose faster than inflation was in 2000. The increase is larger than originally predicted, which the Labour Minister Hubertus Heil, credited to strong wage growth in Germany. Read more.

Ireland: Up to 800,000 workers to be automatically enrolled in pension scheme under new plans

Up to 800,000 workers will be automatically enrolled into a pension scheme for the first time under new legislation published on 5 April 2024. Workers who have no occupational or private pension and would have otherwise been solely reliant on the State Pension upon retirement will have access to the scheme under the bill. Employees aged between 23 and 60 years old, who earn over €20,000 per year and who are not already paying into a pension scheme, would automatically be enrolled. Read more.

Switzerland approves 13th pension payment

In a national referendum held on 3 March 2024, Swiss voters approved a measure that introduces a 13th payment for Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance (OASI) pensions. Under the measure, OASI pensioners will receive a 13th payment equal to their standard monthly payment along with their 12th payment each December starting in 2026. The measure will also raise the maximum annual pension (based on current pension figures) from 29,400 francs (US\$32,546) to 31,850 francs (US\$35,258) for single persons and from 44,100 francs (US\$48,819) to 47,775 francs (US\$52,887) for married couples and registered partners, and it stipulates that supplemental benefits will be unaffected by the additional payment. Proponents of the measure have argued that the 13th payment is needed to help Swiss pensioners deal with rising living costs. Read more.

Argentina adopts new benefit adjustment formula

On 22 March 2024, Argentina's president issued a decree that links future benefit adjustments under the country's contributory pension program to inflation instead of changes in wages and social security revenues. Starting in July, Argentina's National Social Security Administration (Administración Nacional de la Seguridad Social, or ANSES) will adjust pensions each month based on the change in the national consumer price index 2 months prior, as measured by the country's National Institute of Statistics and Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, or INDEC). As a transitional measure, the decree also includes a 12.5 percent increase to pensions in April and additional increases in May and June equal to the higher of the amounts calculated under the old and new benefit adjustment formulas. The adoption of the new formula is intended to provide Argentina's pensioners with better protection against inflation. Read [more](#).

Mexico establishes old-age pension guarantee fund

On 1 May 2024, the Mexican government approved legislation creating the Welfare Pension Fund (Fondo de Pensiones para el Bienestar) to guarantee that old-age pensioners receive 100 percent of their last monthly salaries, up to the average monthly salary of social security participants (currently 16,777.68 pesos [US\$988.61]). The new guarantee applies to individuals aged 65 or older receiving old-age pensions under Mexico's mandatory individual account program implemented in 1997, and it will begin topping up eligible pensioners' benefits on 1 July 2024. The creation of the new guarantee is part of a multi-year government effort to boost the old-age pensions of lower-income Mexicans, and it is intended to complement rather than replace existing pension supplements and guarantees. According to Consar, the commission that regulates the individual account program, the average old-age pension paid under the program in 2023 was around 72 percent of the average national salary. Read [more](#).

ILO initiatives related to social security

The ILO launches a new website for the Global Ratification Campaign of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention No. 102

The International Labour Office (ILO) has launched a dedicated [website](#) to support its Global Ratification Campaign on the **Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention No. 102**. This Campaign, driven by a decision of the International Labour Conference, seeks to support countries in the progressive realization of universal social protection systems, including floors, based on the core principles and minimum benchmarks provided by international social security standards.

ILO launches Global Care Policy Portal and Care Policy Investment Simulator

In March 2024, the ILO launched two new tools that encourage the investment needed to support the two billion people still without adequate maternity and paternity support, parental leave and childcare services. The [ILO Global Care Policy Portal](#), is a knowledge hub on legal and statistical indicators on national care leave policies and services, created to advance the ILO's transformative agenda for gender equality and non-discrimination. It allows users to analyse and compare country-level care leave policies and services for more than 180 countries. The [Care Policy Investment Simulator](#) is the largest online care policy-modelling tool available. Containing data from more than 80 countries and built on more than 180 statistical indicators, the Simulator can help create tailor-made investment packages related to four care policies: childcare-related paid leave (maternity, paternity, and parental leave), breastfeeding breaks, early childhood care and education services, and long-term care services. Both tools are free to use. Read [more](#).

Statistics

New Eurobarometer survey shows a strong social Europe top priority for EU citizens

On 12 April 2024, a new Eurobarometer survey published confirms that 88% of European citizens consider a social Europe to be important to them personally. When asked in which areas the EU should concretely take action to prepare the future of Europe, respondents supported initiatives improving: health care (38%), wages (34%), old age income and pensions (30%). In addition, 74% feel that the EU should promote better working conditions and social standards in non-EU countries with which it trades, even if it means a small price increase for European citizens. Read [more](#).

International Social Security Association releases updated country profiles for Asia and the Pacific

On 23 January 2024, the International Social Security Association (ISSA) announced the release of its first set of updated [country profiles](#) since 2020. This set of profiles covers 53 countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific, and the organization expects to release updated profiles for over 127 more countries and territories in three additional regions—Africa, the Americas, and Europe—by the end of 2024. The ISSA's country profiles contain summaries of mandatory statutory social security programs grouped into six branches, which include old-age, disability, and survivor pensions; medical and long-term care benefits; sickness and maternity benefits; work injury and occupational disease benefits; unemployment benefits; and family and household benefits. Read [more](#).

China publishes Monitoring Survey Report of Rural Migrant Workers (2023)

On 1 May 2024, China published [Monitoring Survey Report of Rural Migrant Workers \(2023\)](#). According to the report, the total number of rural migrant workers in China reached 297.53 million in 2023, an increase of 1.91 million or a rise of 0.6% over the previous year. Specifically, local migrant workers (who work in the township where their household registration is located) stood at 120.95 million, a decline of 2.77 million or down by 2.2%; migrant workers who work outside of their township stood at 176.58 million, an increase of 4.68 million or up by 2.7%. By the end of 2023, rural migrant workers living in urban areas reached 128.16 million. Of all the rural migrant workers, women accounted for 37.3%, 0.7% higher than the share in the previous year. The average age of these people was 43.1 years, up by 0.8 years. In general, the average monthly income of rural migrant workers kept a steady growth, and the proportion of those engaged in the tertiary industry saw a continuous increase. [Read more in Chinese](#).

China advances a universal, fair and sustainable medical security system

By the end of 2023, 1.334 billion people were enrolled in the basic medical insurances, the coverage rate reached over 95%, and over 99% for the low-income rural population, said NHSA at the press conference for the first half of 2024. 371 million participated in basic medical insurance for urban employees, accounting for 27.8% of the total number. [Read more](#).

China solidly pushes forward social security coverage expansion

According to a [press conference](#) held by MOHRSS, in the first quarter of 2024, for a total of 8.21 million people in need, including recipients of minimum living benefit, people in special hardship, people who have returned to poverty, and people with severe disabilities, local governments paid contributions to the resident pension scheme on their behalf. 221,000 eligible fishermen who have quit fishing in Yangtze River Basin have all participated in basic old-age insurance, and 51,000 people have received old-age insurance benefits. The number of social security card holders nationwide has reached 1.38 billion, covering 98 percent of the population, with 986 million of them receiving electronic social security cards at the same time.

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