

This is how the representative items and the weight numbers of the consumer price index changed in 2021

The Hungarian Central Statistical Office made a revision this year again of the group of products and services (i.e. representative items) observed for consumer price index calculations, as well as of the weight of the different groups of products and services within the consumer price index.

HCSO made the revision in line with international methodological standards and in compliance with legal regulations so that the products and services to be observed in 2021 and the weights assigned to them should properly reflect the current habits and structure of consumption of households.

In accordance with international regulations, the elaborated weights are based every year on consumption data from national accounts referring to two years earlier, i.e. 2019 in the present case. To calculate the weights for 2021 – in harmony with the methodological proposals that international organisations, including Eurostat, made for the period of the new corona virus pandemic – we used the data for 2019 as well as further information, the already available preliminary national accounts data for the first three quarters of 2020. It is based on these two data sources that we make an estimation of the consumption structure, considered as representative, which this way includes changes that can be measured owing to the pandemic. The changes because of the new corona virus pandemic affected not only the methodology of the calculation of weights but significant changes prevailed also in their specific values. As a result of restrictions in connection with the pandemic, the largest decrease was observed in the weight of holidays in Hungary as well as abroad and of meals at restaurants. The share of cultural, educational and entertainment services as well as motor fuels lessened for similar reasons. By contrast, the weight of tobacco products, becoming more expensive due to an increase in the excise duty, and of food, also with a higher-than-average inflation, rose. Households spent more on buying durable goods including electronics, too, so the share of these within the consumer price index increased as well.

This year there were also changes in the list of representative items, covering 977 types of products and services. In the case of electronics, the range and the most important characteristics of the purchased and the available products dynamically change year by year. Thus, for example, two types of notebooks, one with lower-medium-class and another with higher-medium-class characteristics, are already included in the sample from this year. The specification was modified for similar reasons for both representative items of mobile phones. Changes of a similar magnitude to that in the case of electronics occurred in the group of observed new and second-hand passenger cars, too: among others a seven-person family car was included in the sample, and the number of observed representative items grew by 2 in the case of second-hand passenger cars. From this year, the group of representative items includes capsule coffee machines, coffee capsules as well as car sharing and bike sharing, which also helps following up changing habits of consumption.

[The methodology of the consumer price index is available here.](#)