

Reader's guide

Health at a Glance: Europe 2014 presents key indicators of health and health systems in 35 European countries, including the 28 European Union member states, four candidate countries* and three European Free Trade Association countries. This third edition builds on the two previous in 2010 and 2012 and presents a greater number of indicators included in the list of European Core Health Indicators (ECHI, www.echim.org/), reflecting progress in data availability and comparability. Complementing the chapter on quality of care which was added in 2012, this 2014 edition includes a new chapter on access to care, based mainly on ECHI indicators, complemented with some additional indicators related to financial access and geographic access.

The data presented in this publication are mostly official national statistics and have in many cases been collected through questionnaires administered by the OECD, Eurostat and WHO. Some data have also been collected through European surveys co-ordinated by Eurostat, notably the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Survey (EU-SILC) and the first wave of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS). The data have been validated by the three organisations to ensure that they meet standards of data quality and comparability. All indicators are presented in the form of easy-to-read figures and explanatory text, based on a two-page format per indicator.

Structure of the publication

This publication is structured around six chapters:

- Chapter 1 on *Health Status* highlights the variations across countries in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy, and also presents more specific indicators on different causes of mortality and morbidity, including both communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- Chapter 2 on *Determinants of Health* focuses mainly on non-medical determinants of health related to modifiable lifestyles and behaviours, such as smoking and alcohol drinking, the consumption of illegal drugs, nutrition habits, and overweight and obesity. It also includes an indicator on air pollution, as another important factor affecting health.
- Chapter 3 on *Health Care Resources and Activities* reviews some of the inputs and outputs of health care systems, including the supply of doctors and nurses, the availability of different types of equipment used for diagnosis or treatment, and the provision of a range of services to treat various health problems.
- Chapter 4 on *Quality of Care* provides comparisons on care for chronic and acute conditions, cancers and communicable diseases. The chapter also includes some indicators related to patient safety, building on the data developmental work carried out under the OECD Health Care Quality Indicators project.
- Chapter 5 is a new chapter on *Access to Care* in this European edition, which presents a small set of indicators related to financial access to care, geographic access, and timely access (waiting times), as well as unmet care needs for medical care and dental care.

* Albania has become a EU candidate country on 27 June 2014, but is not included in this publication due to limited data availability when this report was prepared.

- Chapter 6 on *Health Expenditure and Financing* examines trends in health spending across European countries, both overall and for different types of health services and goods, including pharmaceuticals. It also looks at how these health services and goods are paid for and the mix between public funding, private health insurance, and direct out-of-pocket payments by households.

An annex provides some additional tables on the demographic and economic context within which different health systems operate, as well as additional data on health expenditure trends.

Presentation of indicators

Each of the topics covered in this publication is presented over two pages. The first provides a brief commentary highlighting the key findings conveyed by the data, defines the indicator(s) and discusses any significant national variations from that definition which might affect data comparability. On the facing page is a set of figures. These typically show current levels of the indicator and, where possible, trends over time. In some cases, an additional figure relating the indicator to another variable is included.

The average in the figures includes only European Union (EU) member states, and is calculated as the *unweighted average* of the EU member states presented (up to 28, if there is full data coverage). Some weighted averages are also presented in the tables on health expenditure and GDP in the annex.

Data and limitations

Limitations in data comparability are indicated both in the text (in the box related to “Definition and comparability”) as well as in footnotes to charts.

Readers interested in using the data presented in this publication for further analysis and research are encouraged to consult the full documentation of definitions, sources and methods contained in *OECD Health Statistics 2014* for all OECD member countries, including 21 EU member states and 4 additional countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey). This information is available on OECD.Stat (http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?DataSetCode=HEALTH_STAT). For the ten other countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia), readers should consult the *Eurostat Database* for more information on sources and methods: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database.

Readers interested in an interactive presentation of the ECHI indicators can also consult DG SANCO's ECHI data tool at http://ec.europa.eu/health/indicators/indicators/index_en.htm.

Population figures

The population figures for all EU member states and candidate countries presented in the annex and which are used to calculate rates per capita in this publication come from the *Eurostat Demographics Database*. The data were extracted in June 2014, and relate to mid-year estimates (calculated as the average between the beginning and end of the year population figures). Population estimates are subject to revision, so they may differ from the latest population figures released by Eurostat or national statistical offices.

Some member states such as France and the United Kingdom have overseas colonies, protectorates and territories. These populations are generally excluded. However, the calculation of GDP per capita and other economic measures may be based on a different population in these countries, depending on the data coverage.

Country ISO codes

Austria	AUT	Lithuania	LTU
Belgium	BEL	Luxembourg	LUX
Bulgaria	BGR	Malta	MLT
Croatia	HRV	Montenegro	MNE
Cyprus ^{1, 2}	CYP	Netherlands	NLD
Czech Republic	CZE	Norway	NOR
Denmark	DNK	Poland	POL
Estonia	EST	Portugal	PRT
Finland	FIN	Romania	ROU
France	FRA	Serbia	SRB
FYR of Macedonia	MKD	Slovak Republic	SVK
Germany	DEU	Slovenia	SVN
Greece	GRC	Spain	ESP
Hungary	HUN	Sweden	SWE
Iceland	ISL	Switzerland	CHE
Ireland	IRL	Turkey	TUR
Italy	ITA	United Kingdom	GBR
Latvia	LVA		

1. Note by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to "Cyprus" relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus" issue.
2. Note by all the European Union member states of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.



From:
Health at a Glance: Europe 2014

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance_eur-2014-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD/European Union (2014), "Reader's guide", in *Health at a Glance: Europe 2014*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/health_glance_eur-2014-3-en

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.