

Nutrition is an important determinant of health. Inadequate consumption of fruit and vegetables is one factor that can play a role in increased morbidity and premature death. A recent European Commission White Paper advocated increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables as one of a number of tools to offset a worsening trend of poor diets and low physical activity. Proper nutrition assists in preventing a number of obesity-related chronic conditions, including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, stroke, certain cancers, musculoskeletal disorders and a range of mental health conditions (European Commission, 2007).

Estimates of the supply of fruit and vegetables available for consumption in different countries are calculated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In 2007, levels of the supply of both fruit and vegetables differed substantially across European countries (Figure 2.5.1). The per capita fruit supply in a number of central and eastern European countries, including Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, the Slovak Republic, the Czech Republic and Estonia, was below 80 kg per person, contrasting with an EU average of 105. Fruit supply was greater in Western and Southern Europe, with estimates for Luxembourg and Greece above 160 kg per person, more than twice the amount of those countries reporting the lowest supply.

The per capita availability of vegetables was highest in Mediterranean countries, including Greece, Turkey, Malta, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Cyprus, all at 150 kg per person or more. Supply was lower than the EU average in Nordic countries, as well as in some central and eastern European countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia). The spread between countries with the lowest and highest per capita supply of vegetables is three-fold.

The supply of fruit and vegetables for consumption has increased across the European Union in the three decades since 1980 (Figures 2.5.2 and 2.5.3). Fruit supply increased from an average of 88 kg per capita in 1980 to 105 in 2007. Greece and Poland both increased per capita fruit supply, although large absolute differences remain. Fruit supply in Ireland increased rapidly from the late 1990s. The supply of vegetables increased more modestly, from an average of 102 to 116 kg per capita across all EU countries during the years 1980 to 2007. Vegetable supply increased substantially in Finland, although the amount remains relatively low. Supply has changed

little in Greece, but levels per capita vegetable remain the highest. In contrast, the supply of vegetables in Bulgaria has declined recently to one of the lowest levels among member states.

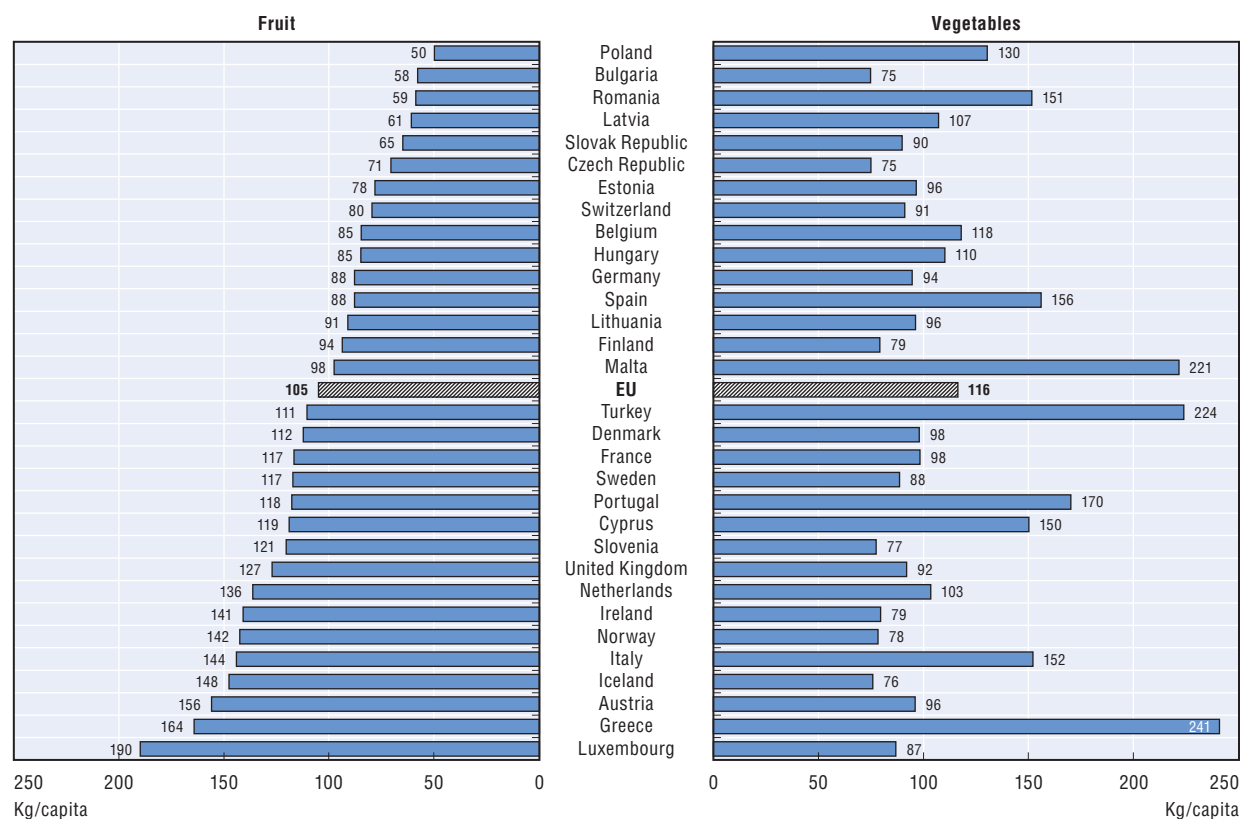
Many factors play a role in ensuring an adequate supply of fruit and vegetables. In recent years, the harvested production of the main types of fruit and vegetables in the European Union has remained relatively stable, although there was growth in imports from non-EU countries (Martinez-Palou and Rohner-Thielen, 2008). The majority of suppliers growing fresh vegetables are located in Romania, Poland and Lithuania. Most citrus farms are located in Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece, Italy), with Poland and Romania also large fruit-producing countries. The price of fruit and vegetables varies considerably among member states. In 2006, for example, it was almost half the EU average in Bulgaria and a number of other eastern European countries adjusted by purchasing power parity, but more than 20% higher in Ireland, Luxembourg and Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden) (Martinez-Palou and Rohner-Thielen, 2008).

### Definition and deviations

Estimates of food available for consumption are based on annual production and trade of food commodities figures as supplied by national Ministries of Agriculture and Trade to the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). Gross apparent consumption = (Commercial production + estimated own account production for self-consumption + imports + opening stocks) – (exports + usage for processed food + feed + non-food usage + wastage + closing stocks).

Per person consumption is derived from dividing the total amount of fruit and vegetables available for human consumption by the total population actually partaking of food supplies during the reference period. Per person figures represent the average supply available for the population as a whole, and do not necessarily indicate what is actually consumed by individuals. Actual food consumption may be lower than the quantity shown, depending on wastage and losses of food in the household.

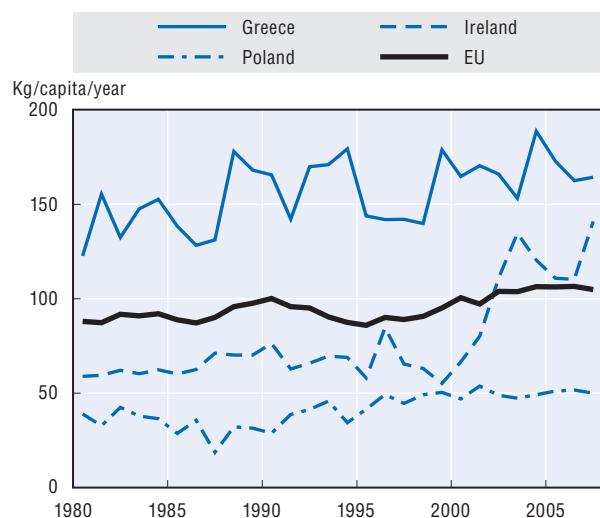
## 2.5.1. Supply of fruit and vegetables for consumption, 2007



Source: FAOSTAT Database; OECD Health Data 2010.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932336445>

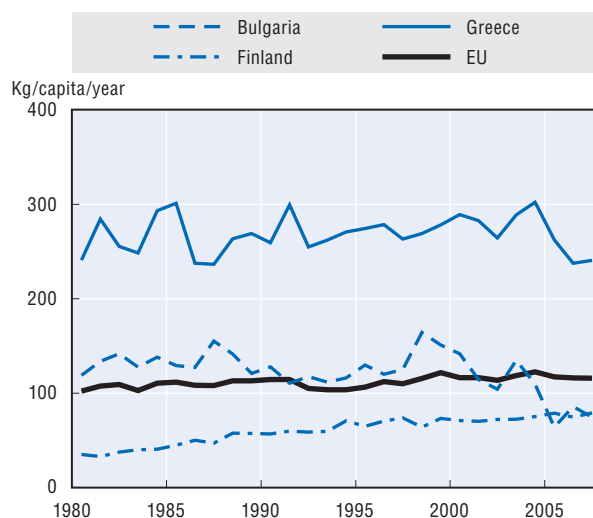
## 2.5.2. Trends in supply of fruit, selected EU countries, 1980-2007



Source: FAOSTAT Database; OECD Health Data 2010.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932336464>

## 2.5.3. Trends in supply of vegetables, selected EU countries, 1980-2007



Source: FAOSTAT Database; OECD Health Data 2010.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932336483>



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