

Readers' guide

Health at a Glance: Europe is the first step in the *State of Health in the EU* cycle of knowledge brokering. It is designed to provide a cross-country assessment of national health systems' performance in the European Union. It also provides more in-depth analysis on two important topics in the thematic chapters upfront.

The publication is divided in two parts. Part I contains the two thematic chapters. In this edition, Chapter 1 focuses on the impact of the pandemic on young people's health, including both their mental health and physical health. It notes that EU countries have implemented a range of measures to protect and care for young people's mental and physical health, but also highlights that the magnitude of the impact warrants further actions to ensure the pandemic does not leave permanent scars on the aspirations, opportunities and outcomes of a generation of young people. Chapter 2 reviews the impact that the pandemic has had on disrupting a wide range of health services for non-COVID patients and the consequences of these disruptions. It synthesises a large amount of evidence about the impact of disruptions in primary care services, mental health care, cancer care, chronic care, and elective surgery, and describes and assesses some of the main strategies that EU countries have used to mitigate the impact of these disruptions on access to care for the population, while noting that some backlogs still persist and need to be addressed.

Part II includes six chapters that provide an overview of key indicators of health and health systems across EU member states, candidate countries, European Free Trade Association countries and the United Kingdom. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the health status of the population and some of the main risk factors to health. Chapter 5 reviews the most recent trends in health spending, including the first impacts of the pandemic on health expenditure per capita and as a share of GDP, as well as the mix in public and private financing. The last three chapters are structured around the three objectives set out in the 2014 European Commission Communication on effective, accessible and resilient health systems (https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/systems_performance_assessment/docs/com2014_215_final_en.pdf). The selection of indicators in all chapters is based largely on the European Core Health Indicators (ECHI) shortlist (https://ec.europa.eu/health/indicators/echi/list_en). For the first time, this edition of *Health at a Glance: Europe* covers the two new candidate countries to the EU (Moldova and Ukraine). However, the coverage of these two new candidate countries is limited as it stands to those indicators for which comparable data are readily available. As these two new candidate countries become more integrated into the European data collection system, the next editions of *Health at a Glance: Europe* should be able to compare them for a broader set of indicators.

The data presented in this publication come mainly from official national statistics, and have been collected in many cases through the administration of joint questionnaires by the OECD, Eurostat and WHO. The data have been validated by the three organisations to ensure that they meet high standards of data quality and comparability. Some data also come from European surveys co-ordinated by Eurostat, notably the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions Survey (EU-SILC) and the second wave of the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), as well as from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other sources.

Presentation of indicators and calculation of EU averages

With the exception of the first two thematic chapters, all indicators in the rest of the publication are presented in the following way. The text provides a brief commentary highlighting the key findings conveyed by the data, defines the indicator and signals any significant data comparability limitation. This is accompanied by a set of figures that typically show current levels of the indicator and, where possible, trends over time.

The EU averages include only EU member states and are calculated either as population-weighted averages (to be consistent with the averages that are calculated by Eurostat) or as unweighted averages (when these averages are calculated by the OECD or other organisations). The calculation method is generally mentioned in a footnote under each figure. By definition, a weighted average gives more weight to the most populated countries and can be interpreted as a comparison with the EU as a whole. An unweighted average gives equal weight to all countries regardless of their population size and can be interpreted as a measure of comparison with other countries.

Population data

The population data used to calculate rates per capita and population-weighted averages come from the Eurostat demographics database. The data relate to mid-year estimates (calculated as the average between the beginning and the end of the year). Population estimates are subject to revision, so they may differ from the latest population figures released by Eurostat or national statistical offices.

Data limitations

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

Data sources

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* for all OECD member countries, including 22 EU member states and five additional countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Kingdom). This information is available in OECD.Stat (<https://oe.cd/ds/health-statistics>). For the other countries, readers are invited to consult the Eurostat database for more information on sources and methods (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>) or the data sources mentioned underneath the figures.

Readers interested in an interactive presentation of the European Core Health Indicators (ECHI) can consult DG SANTE’s ECHI data tool at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dyna/echi/>.



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