

Avoidable deaths in 2016

For people under 75, two deaths out of three in the EU could have been avoided

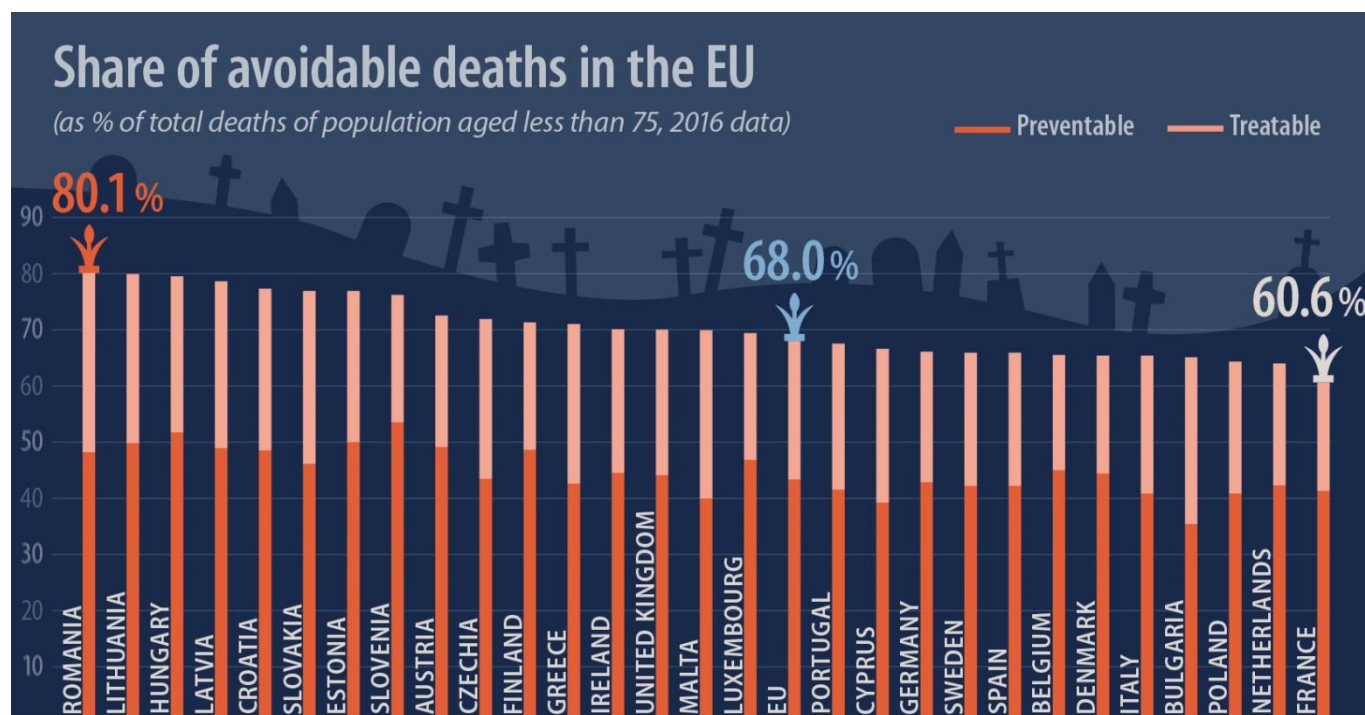
Heart and lung diseases main categories of avoidable death

In the **European Union (EU)**, about 1.7 million persons aged less than 75 died in 2016. Among them, around 1.2 million deaths could be considered as premature according to the recently developed Eurostat-OECD list of avoidable mortality. Out of those, 741 000 *preventable* deaths could have been avoided through effective public health and primary prevention interventions, and 422 000 *treatable* deaths through timely and effective health care interventions.

Heart attacks (174 000 deaths), cancers of the trachea, bronchus and lung (168 000 deaths) and strokes (87 000) accounted together for over a third (37%) of total avoidable causes of death of people aged less than 75. Compared to 2011, avoidable deaths as a share of total deaths decreased by 1.7 percentage points, from 69.7% of total deaths in 2011 to 68.0% in 2016.

This information on avoidable deaths comes from a report issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. The concept of avoidable mortality is based on the idea that certain deaths (for specific age groups and from specific diseases) could be 'avoided' – meaning they would not have occurred at this stage – if there had been effective public health and primary prevention interventions and/or timely and effective health care in place.

Both the treatable mortality and the preventable mortality indicators are meant to be used in a global context of *peer reviewed health system performance assessments*. They provide a warning signal of potential shortcomings in health systems but are not intended to be a definitive measure for monitoring health care across Member States.



Largest shares of preventable deaths in Slovenia and Hungary, lowest in Bulgaria

The proportions of potentially avoidable deaths through effective public health and primary prevention interventions, i.e. preventable deaths, among all deaths of persons aged less than 75 in 2016 vary considerably between EU Member States.

The highest shares of preventable deaths were registered in **Slovenia** (53.5%) and **Hungary** (51.7%), followed by **Estonia** (50.0%), **Lithuania** (49.8%), **Austria** (49.1%) and **Latvia** (48.9%). In contrast, the share was lowest in **Bulgaria** (35.4%), ahead of **Cyprus** (39.2%), **Malta** (39.9%), **Italy** and **Poland** (both 40.8%).

Largest shares of treatable deaths in Romania and Slovakia, lowest in France

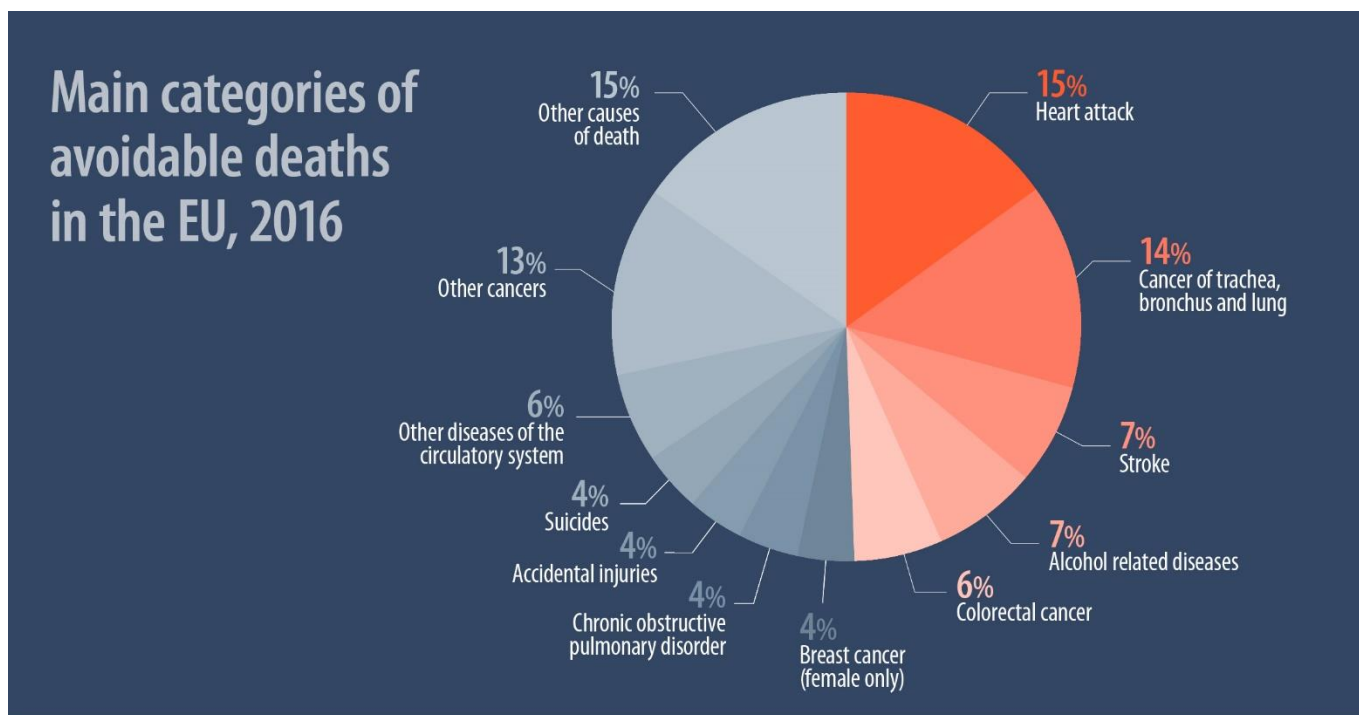
The proportions of potentially avoidable deaths through timely and effective health care interventions, i.e. treatable deaths, among all deaths of persons aged less than 75 in 2016 also vary between EU Member States.

The highest shares of treatable deaths were registered in **Romania** (31.9%) and **Slovakia** (30.8%), followed by **Lithuania** (30.1%), **Malta** (30.0%), **Bulgaria** and **Latvia** (both 29.7%). In contrast, the share was lowest in **France** (19.3%), ahead of **Belgium** (20.5%), **Denmark** (21.0%) and the **Netherlands** (21.7%).

A third of potentially avoidable deaths in the EU concerned heart and lung diseases

In the **EU**, heart attacks (174 000 avoidable deaths, or 15% of total avoidable deaths of persons aged less than 75), cancers of the trachea, bronchus and lung (168 000, 14%) and strokes (87 000, 7%) accounted for over a third of potentially avoidable deaths in 2016.

They were followed by alcohol related diseases (79 000, 7%), colorectal cancers (67 000, 6%), breast cancers and chronic obstructive pulmonary disorders (both 50 000, 4%), accidental injuries (48 000, 4%) and suicides (44 000, 4%).



ec.europa.eu/eurostat 

The source dataset can be found [here](#).

Methods and definitions

The data source is Eurostat statistics on causes of death, which provide information on mortality patterns and form a major element of public health information. Eurostat collects statistics on the causes of death according to a [list](#) of 86 different causes of death.

Data presented in this news release refer to deaths of residents, in or outside their home country.

Avoidable causes of mortality are defined as follows:

- **Preventable mortality:** Causes of death that can be mainly avoided through effective public health and primary prevention interventions (i.e. before the onset of diseases/injuries, to reduce incidence).
- **Treatable (or amenable) mortality:** Causes of death that can be mainly avoided through timely and effective health care interventions, including secondary prevention and treatment (i.e. after the onset of diseases, to reduce case-fatality).

These indicators provide a warning signal of potential shortcomings in health systems but are not intended to be a definitive or unique measure for monitoring health care across Member States.

The OECD and Eurostat, together with an expert group, developed new joint lists of preventable and treatable causes of mortality in 2018. The specific causes of deaths and age ranges used to calculate avoidable deaths can be found [here](#). In this news release, hearts attacks refer to ischaemic heart diseases (ICD code I20-I25) and strokes refer to cerebrovascular diseases (ICD code I60-I69).

Note: The label "amenable" mortality used in the previous Eurostat list was changed to "treatable" to make more explicit the link with health care interventions.

For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) dedicated to health statistics

Eurostat [database](#) on causes of death and public health themes

Eurostat [Statistics Explained article](#) on amenable and preventable deaths statistics

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Potentially avoidable deaths, 2016
(as % of total deaths of population aged less than 75)

	Avoidable deaths					
	Absolute number	% of total deaths	Preventable		Treatable	
			Absolute number	% of total deaths	Absolute number	% of total deaths
EU	1 162 637	68.0%	740 452	43.3%	422 185	24.7%
Belgium	22 122	65.6%	15 191	45.0%	6 931	20.5%
Bulgaria	30 198	65.1%	16 433	35.4%	13 765	29.7%
Czechia	32 632	71.9%	19 710	43.4%	12 922	28.5%
Denmark	12 668	65.5%	8 594	44.4%	4 074	21.0%
Germany	185 565	66.1%	120 108	42.8%	65 457	23.3%
Estonia	4 685	76.9%	3 048	50.0%	1 636	26.9%
Ireland	7 741	70.1%	4 910	44.5%	2 831	25.6%
Greece	23 036	71.0%	13 811	42.6%	9 225	28.4%
Spain	74 585	65.9%	47 741	42.2%	26 844	23.7%
France	113 786	60.6%	77 590	41.3%	36 196	19.3%
Croatia	14 375	77.3%	9 022	48.5%	5 353	28.8%
Italy	100 041	65.4%	62 407	40.8%	37 634	24.6%
Cyprus	1 172	66.5%	690	39.2%	482	27.4%
Latvia	9 530	78.6%	5 927	48.9%	3 603	29.7%
Lithuania	13 887	79.9%	8 659	49.8%	5 228	30.1%
Luxembourg	946	69.4%	638	46.8%	308	22.6%
Hungary	46 387	79.5%	30 177	51.7%	16 209	27.8%
Malta	868	69.9%	495	39.9%	373	30.0%
Netherlands	31 759	64.0%	20 984	42.3%	10 775	21.7%
Austria	18 218	72.5%	12 341	49.1%	5 877	23.4%
Poland	115 217	64.3%	73 163	40.8%	42 054	23.5%
Portugal	22 138	67.6%	13 608	41.5%	8 530	26.0%
Romania	89 301	80.1%	53 754	48.2%	35 547	31.9%
Slovenia	5 006	76.2%	3 513	53.5%	1 492	22.7%
Slovakia	19 119	77.0%	11 459	46.1%	7 660	30.8%
Finland	12 816	71.3%	8 737	48.6%	4 079	22.7%
Sweden	17 216	66.0%	11 027	42.2%	6 189	23.7%
United Kingdom	137 640	70.0%	86 722	44.1%	50 918	25.9%
Iceland	518	68.8%	360	47.8%	158	21.0%
Liechtenstein	64	58.7%	42	38.5%	22	20.2%
Norway	8 484	68.0%	5 712	45.8%	2 772	22.2%
Switzerland	12 089	64.5%	8 222	43.9%	3 867	20.6%
Serbia	27 693	66.6%	16 117	38.8%	11 576	27.9%
Turkey	150 881	74.6%	84 518	41.8%	66 363	32.8%

The source dataset can be found [here](#) (avoidable deaths) and [here](#) (total deaths).