4 February: World Cancer Day

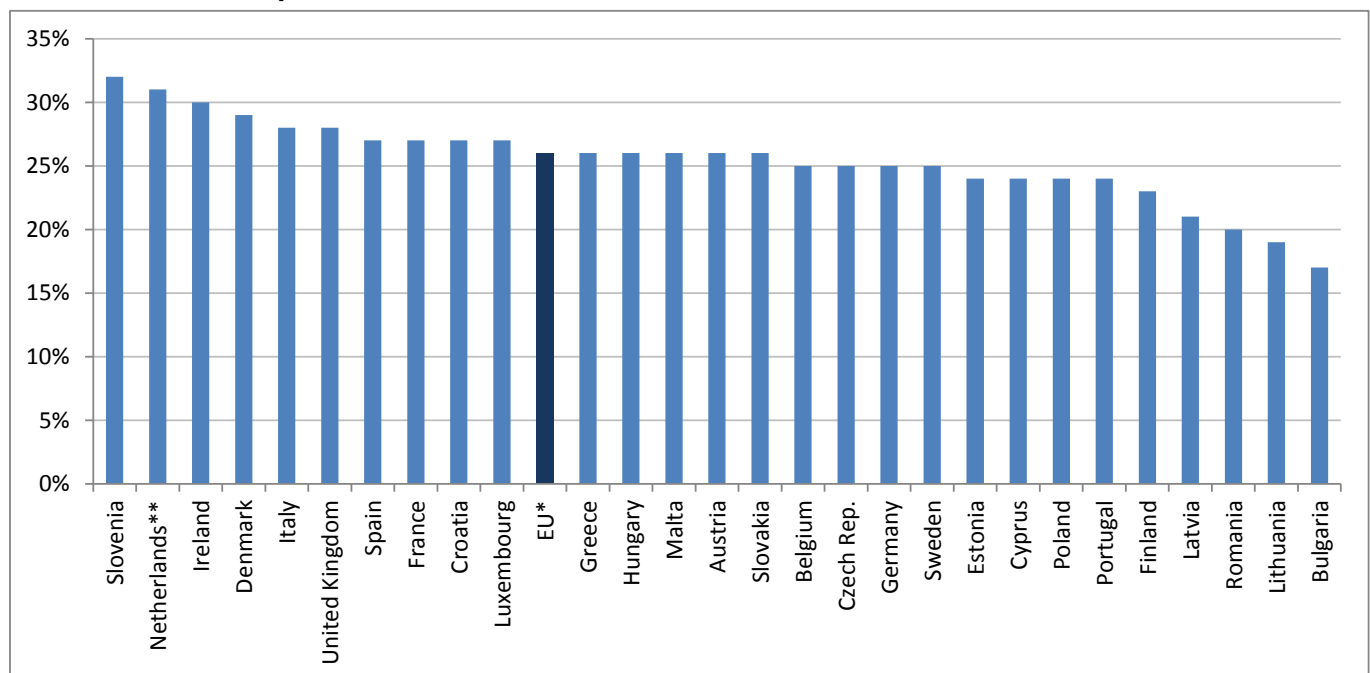# Still 1 in 4 deaths caused by cancer in the EU

Main fatal cancer: lung cancer for men, breast cancer for women

In the **European Union** (EU), cancer was the cause of death for almost 1.3 million persons in 2013, responsible for just over a quarter (26%) of all deaths. Men (726 500 deaths due to cancer) were more affected than women (570 300). In addition, fatal cancer represented more than a third (37%) of all deaths for the **EU** population aged less than 65, while this level was below a quarter (23%) for the older population (those aged 65 years and over).

Leading to the death of nearly 270 000 persons (or 21% of all deaths due to cancer), lung cancer was the main type of fatal cancer in the **EU** in 2013, followed by colorectal cancer (153 100 or 12%), breast cancer (92 600 or 16% for the female population only), pancreas cancer (81 300 or 6%) and prostate cancer (72 700 or 10% of all fatal cancers for the male population only).

This information is published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, on the occasion of the World Cancer Day, taking place each year on 4 February. An underlined infographic is also available on the Eurostat website.

Proportion of deaths due to cancer in the EU Member States, 2013

*   EU aggregate is estimated using 2012 data for the Netherlands.
**   2012 data instead of 2013.

Highest share of deaths due to cancer in Slovenia and the Netherlands

Among the total population, cancer was in 2013 the cause of at least 30% of deaths in **Slovenia** (32%), the **Netherlands** (31% in 2012) and **Ireland** (30%), while it represented less than a fifth of all causes of death in **Bulgaria** (17%) and **Lithuania** (19%).

In every EU Member State, fatal cancers killed more men than women, with the highest gender gaps being observed in **Greece** and **Spain** (in these two Member States, men accounted for 61% of all fatal cancer in 2013), followed by **Bulgaria** and **Portugal**.

Lung cancer killed more than 185 000 men in the EU in 2013

In all Member States, the most prevalent cancer leading to death in 2013 was lung cancer. The highest proportion of lung cancer among all deaths due to cancer were recorded in **Hungary** (26%), followed by **Belgium**, **Denmark**, **Greece**, the **Netherlands** (in 2012) and **Poland** (all 24%), and the lowest in **Portugal** (15%) and **Sweden** (16%). In almost every Member State, lung cancer affected even more men than women: at **EU** level, lung cancer accounted for 26% of all male fatal cancer (185 600 deaths), compared with 15% for female (83 500 deaths).
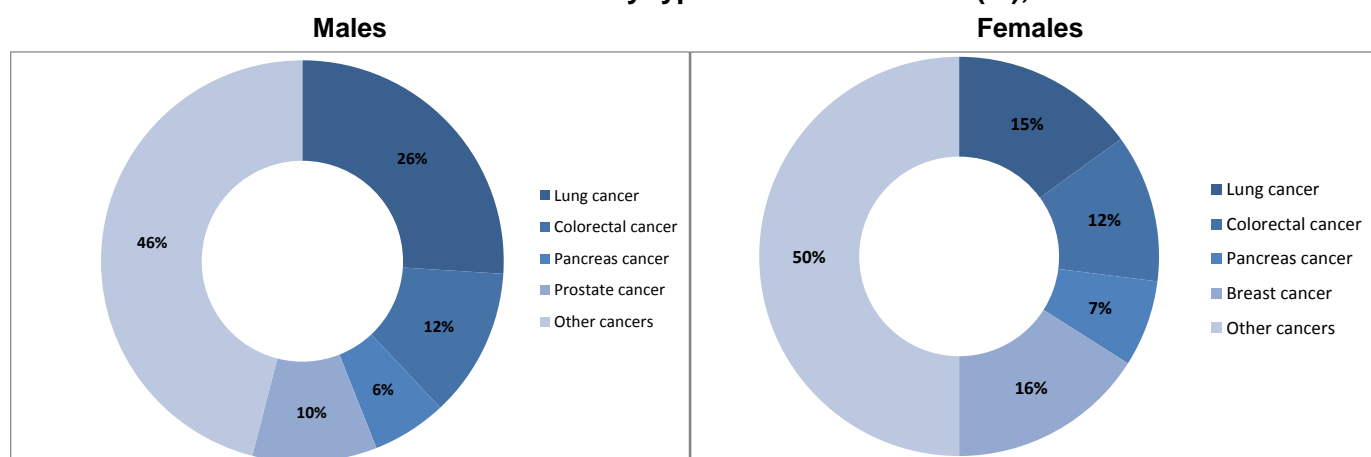
Regarding colorectal cancer, the highest proportions of deaths due to this type of cancer among all fatal cancer were registered in **Hungary** and **Slovakia** (both 16%), **Spain**, **Croatia** and **Portugal** (all 15%). On the opposite end of the scale, colorectal cancer represented less than 10% of all deaths due to cancer in **Greece** and **Cyprus** (both 9%). Globally, men and women were equally affected by colorectal cancer, which for both represented 12% of all fatal cancer. Same applied for pancreas cancer, which accounted for 6% of all deaths due to cancer among the male population and for 7% among the female population.

Breast cancer killed more than 92 000 women in the EU in 2013

While it can also concern men, breast cancer primarily affects women, for which it represented in 2013 the most common fatal cancer, accounting for 16% of all deaths due to cancer among the female population in the **EU** (92 600 deaths). Across Member States, the highest shares of deaths due to breast cancer among the sole female population were observed in **Cyprus** and **Malta** (both 21% of all deaths due to cancer for women), **Luxembourg** (20%) and **Belgium** (19%), while the lowest was recorded in **Estonia** (12%), ahead of the **Czech Republic**, **Poland** and **Sweden** (all 14%).

Prostate cancer, which does not affect women, caused 10% of all deaths of men due to cancer in 2013 in the **EU** (72 700 deaths). Among Member States, the highest share among the sole male population was observed in **Sweden** (20% of all deaths due to cancer among the male population), followed at a distance by **Denmark** (15%), **Cyprus** and **Finland** (both 14%). In contrast, the lowest percentages were recorded in **Hungary** and **Romania** (both 7%), **Italy**, **Luxembourg**, **Malta**, **Poland** and **Slovakia** (all 8%).

Fatal cancers in the EU by type of cancer and sex (%), 2013

Males

Lung cancer: 26%
Colorectal cancer: 12%
Pancreas cancer: 6%
Prostate cancer: 10%
Other cancers: 46%

- Lung cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Pancreas cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Other cancers

Lung cancer is the most common fatal cancer for males in the EU

Females

Lung cancer: 15%
Colorectal cancer: 12%
Pancreas cancer: 7%
Breast cancer: 16%
Other cancers: 50%

- Lung cancer
- Colorectal cancer
- Pancreas cancer
- Breast cancer
- Other cancers

Breast cancer is the most common fatal cancer for females in the EU

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Deaths due to cancer in the EU Member States, by type of cancer and sex, 2013
(respective shares in total fatal cancer)

	All cancers			Lung cancer			Colorectal cancer			Breast cancer*		Pancreas cancer			Prostate cancer**	
	Total	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**Women**	**Total**	**Men**	**Women**	**Total**	**Men**
EU***	**1 296 902**	**726 542**	**570 319**	**21%**	**26%**	**15%**	**12%**	**12%**	**12%**	**7%**	**16%**	**6%**	**6%**	**7%**	**6%**	**10%**
Belgium	27 513	15 364	12 149	24%	30%	16%	11%	10%	12%	8%	19%	6%	5%	7%	5%	10%
Bulgaria	18 114	10 847	7 267	20%	27%	9%	14%	14%	14%	7%	18%	6%	6%	6%	5%	9%
Czech Rep.	27 179	15 099	12 080	20%	25%	14%	13%	14%	12%	6%	14%	7%	7%	8%	5%	9%
Denmark	15 257	8 001	7 253	24%	24%	24%	12%	12%	12%	7%	15%	6%	6%	7%	8%	15%
Germany	224 386	122 056	102 330	20%	24%	15%	11%	11%	12%	8%	17%	7%	7%	8%	6%	11%
Estonia	3 682	1 980	1 702	18%	24%	10%	13%	11%	15%	6%	12%	7%	7%	8%	7%	13%
Ireland	8 724	4 606	4 118	21%	23%	18%	12%	13%	11%	8%	17%	6%	5%	6%	6%	11%
Greece	28 844	17 547	11 297	24%	32%	12%	9%	8%	10%	7%	18%	6%	5%	7%	5%	9%
Spain	107 136	65 642	41 494	20%	27%	10%	15%	14%	15%	6%	16%	6%	5%	7%	5%	9%
France	155 986	90 380	65 606	20%	25%	12%	11%	10%	12%	8%	18%	7%	6%	8%	6%	10%
Croatia	13 822	7 907	5 915	20%	26%	12%	15%	15%	15%	7%	17%	5%	5%	6%	5%	9%
Italy	168 144	94 449	73 695	20%	26%	12%	11%	11%	12%	7%	16%	7%	6%	8%	4%	8%
Cyprus	1 241	732	509	19%	28%	6%	9%	9%	9%	9%	21%	5%	6%	4%	8%	14%
Latvia	5 965	3 190	2 775	17%	25%	8%	11%	10%	14%	7%	16%	6%	5%	7%	6%	12%
Lithuania	7 836	4 313	3 523	17%	24%	7%	12%	11%	13%	7%	16%	6%	5%	6%	7%	12%
Luxembourg	1 021	552	469	19%	25%	13%	13%	12%	15%	9%	20%	7%	6%	8%	4%	8%
Hungary	32 748	17 815	14 933	26%	30%	21%	16%	16%	15%	7%	15%	6%	5%	7%	4%	7%
Malta	851	463	388	18%	25%	10%	13%	13%	12%	10%	21%	8%	7%	10%	4%	8%
Netherlands**	43 538	23 642	19 894	24%	27%	20%	12%	12%	13%	7%	16%	6%	6%	6%	6%	11%
Austria	20 213	10 893	9 320	18%	22%	14%	11%	11%	11%	8%	17%	7%	7%	8%	6%	11%
Poland	94 184	52 233	41 951	24%	31%	16%	12%	12%	12%	6%	14%	5%	5%	6%	5%	8%
Portugal	25 916	15 460	10 456	15%	20%	8%	15%	14%	15%	6%	16%	5%	5%	6%	7%	11%
Romania	49 350	29 179	20 171	20%	27%	11%	12%	11%	12%	7%	16%	6%	5%	6%	4%	7%
Slovenia	6 078	3 391	2 687	18%	22%	13%	13%	14%	12%	7%	15%	6%	5%	7%	6%	11%
Slovakia	13 397	7 737	5 660	17%	22%	10%	16%	16%	15%	7%	17%	5%	5%	6%	5%	8%
Finland	11 898	6 285	5 613	19%	24%	13%	10%	10%	10%	7%	15%	9%	8%	9%	7%	14%
Sweden	22 234	11 468	10 730	16%	16%	17%	12%	12%	13%	7%	14%	8%	7%	8%	11%	20%
United Kingdom	161 645	85 311	76 334	22%	23%	21%	10%	10%	10%	7%	15%	5%	5%	6%	7%	13%
Norway	10 722	5 735	4 987	21%	21%	20%	15%	13%	16%	6%	13%	7%	6%	7%	9%	18%
Switzerland	16 980	9 360	7 620	19%	21%	16%	10%	10%	10%	8%	18%	7%	6%	8%	8%	15%
Serbia	21 091	12 101	8 990	25%	31%	16%	13%	14%	11%	8%	18%	5%	5%	5%	4%	8%
Turkey**	67 777	44 105	23 672	30%	39%	13%	8%	7%	10%	4%	12%	5%	5%	6%	4%	7%

* Breast cancer affects almost exclusively women. For this reason, only data for women are presented in this table. Total refers however to the share among the total population (i.e. males and females).
** Although prostate cancer only affects men, total refers to the share among the total population (i.e. males and females).
*** EU aggregates are estimated using 2012 data for the Netherlands.
**** 2012 data instead of 2013.
The source dataset can be found here.

Cancer: responsible for more than 35% of deaths among those aged less than 65, and under 25% amongst those aged 65 and over

Looking at age groups, 337 100 persons aged less than 65 died in 2013 in the **EU** because of cancer, meaning that cancers represented 37% of all causes of death for this age group. Among Member States, at least 4 deaths out of 10 was due to cancer for people aged less than 65 in the **Netherlands** (47% in 2012), **Italy** (46%), **Spain** (45%), **Slovenia** (44%), **Croatia** (41%), **Greece** and **Portugal** (both 40%), while fatal cancer accounted for fewer than 30% of deaths in this age group in the three Baltic Member State – **Lithuania** (23%), **Latvia** (24%) and **Estonia** (26%) – followed by **Finland** (28%) and **Bulgaria** (29%).

For the population aged 65 and over, cancer represented fewer than a quarter (23% or 959 800 persons) of all deaths in the **EU** in 2013, with the highest shares registered in **Slovenia** (29%), the **Netherlands** (28% in 2012), **Denmark** and **Ireland** (both 27%), **Italy** and the **United Kingdom** (both 26%), **France** and **Luxembourg** (both 25%), and the lowest in **Bulgaria** (14%), **Romania** (16%) and **Lithuania** (18%).

Deaths due to cancer in the EU Member States, by age group, 2013
(absolute numbers & shares in total causes of death)

	Deaths due to cancer total population		Deaths due to cancer population aged less than 65		Deaths due to cancer population aged 65 and over	
	Absolute number	**Share in all deaths**	**Absolute number**	**Share in all deaths**	**Absolute number**	**Share in all deaths**
EU*	**1 296 902**	**26%**	**337 061**	**37%**	**959 831**	**23%**
Belgium	27 513	25%	6 805	37%	20 708	23%
Bulgaria	18 114	17%	6 541	29%	11 573	14%
Czech Rep.	27 179	25%	7 853	34%	19 326	22%
Denmark	15 257	29%	3 402	38%	11 855	27%
Germany	224 386	25%	53 130	38%	171 256	23%
Estonia	3 682	24%	920	26%	2 762	23%
Ireland	8 724	30%	2 288	39%	6 436	27%
Greece	28 844	26%	6 694	40%	22 150	23%
Spain	107 136	27%	26 975	45%	80 161	24%
France	155 986	27%	42 498	39%	113 488	25%
Croatia	13 822	27%	4 112	41%	9 710	24%
Italy	168 144	28%	33 660	46%	134 484	26%
Cyprus	1 241	24%	337	38%	904	21%
Latvia	5 965	21%	1 765	24%	4 199	20%
Lithuania	7 836	19%	2 519	23%	5 317	18%
Luxembourg	1 021	27%	281	36%	740	25%
Hungary	32 748	26%	12 259	38%	20 489	22%
Malta	851	26%	216	38%	635	23%
Netherlands**	43 538	31%	11 500	47%	32 031	28%
Austria	20 213	26%	4 896	38%	15 317	23%
Poland	94 184	24%	34 269	31%	59 915	22%
Portugal	25 916	24%	6 971	40%	18 944	21%
Romania	49 350	20%	19 824	32%	29 526	16%
Slovenia	6 078	32%	1 677	44%	4 401	29%
Slovakia	13 397	26%	4 855	34%	8 542	23%
Finland	11 898	23%	2 629	28%	9 269	22%
Sweden	22 234	25%	4 125	36%	18 108	23%
United Kingdom	161 645	28%	34 060	37%	127 585	26%
Norway	10 722	27%	2 398	39%	8 324	24%
Switzerland	16 980	26%	3 867	39%	13 113	24%
Serbia	21 091	21%	8 151	37%	12 939	17%
Turkey**	67 777	21%	29 775	29%	37 998	17%

Figures may not add up due to deaths of unknown age.
*   EU aggregates are estimated using 2012 data for the Netherlands.
** 2012 data instead of 2013.
The source dataset can be found here.

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

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. Causes of death data refer to the *underlying cause* which - according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) - is "the disease or injury which initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death, or the circumstances of the accident or violence which produced the fatal injury". Causes of death data are derived from death certificates. The medical certification of death is an obligation in all Member States.

Eurostat collects statistics on the causes of death according to a list of 86 different causes of death. Data on deaths due to cancer presented in this news release refer to deaths from malignant neoplasm (ICD code C).

Data presented in this news release refer to deaths reported in the country, i.e. deaths by residents and non-residents in the reporting country.

For more information

Eurostat website section dedicated to health statistics.

Eurostat database on causes of death.

Eurostat metadata on causes of death statistics.

Eurostat Statistics Explained article on cancer statistics and that on specific cancers.

Eurostat infographic on cancer deaths in the EU.

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