

Europe's Beating Cancer Plan

New findings on cancer inequalities and national cancer action

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The 2025 Country Cancer Profiles and Synthesis Report provide new insights on the cancer situation for the EU27, Norway and Iceland. They were published under the European Cancer Inequalities Registry on 3 February. <https://cancer-inequalities.jrc.ec.europa.eu/country-cancer-profiles-2025>



CANCER IN THE EU

The number of people living with cancer in the EU is **increasing** due to the ageing population and lower cancer mortality. Large differences in cancer incidence and mortality persist across countries, with wide disparities between high- and low-income countries, higher rates among men than women and among people with low education levels.

Variations between countries can be explained by **different exposure to risk factors** for cancer as well as the **different capacity of health systems** to provide timely and affordable access to early diagnosis, high quality of cancer care and treatment. Europe's Beating Cancer Plan is helping EU countries to address this through its ten flagship initiatives and dozens of supporting actions.



Every minute, **five people** find out they have cancer and more than two people lose their lives to the disease.



In 2022, over **2.7 million** new cancer cases were expected to be diagnosed.



In 2021 cancer was the second-leading cause of mortality with **1.15 million persons** dying from it.



Colorectal, lung, prostate and breast cancer account for **half** of all cancer cases.



PREVENTION

With **40%** of cancer cases linked to known risk factors, such as smoking, obesity, physical inactivity, harmful alcohol consumption and exposure to air pollution, **millions** of new cancer cases could be prevented in the EU in the coming decades through joint efforts to meet prevention targets.

In 2024 the EU adopted new **recommendations on smoke-free environments** and **vaccine preventable cancers** to support Member States to reduce risks and strengthen access to prevention services.



The share of smokers in the EU has decreased from **22%** in 2012 to **18%** in 2022.

If tobacco reduction targets are met, almost two million cancer cases can be prevented in the EU between 2023-2050.



51% of adults in the EU are still overweight.

Obesity among adolescents has increased from **17%** in 2014 to **21%** in 2022.



EARLY DETECTION

New EU cancer screening recommendations are in place since December 2022 with the aim to ensure that breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings are offered to 90% of eligible persons across the EU. They also seek to extend screening programmes to prostate, lung, and under certain circumstances, gastric cancer.



As of 2022, **80%** of EU countries had introduced breast, cervical and colorectal **cancer screening programmes**.

Breast cancer screening participation has decreased from **58.5%** to **57.5%** between 2014 and 2022.

Coverage differs widely across countries: **from 10% to 85%**.

Cervical cancer screening participation stands at **55%** in 2022.

Coverage differs widely across countries: **from 10% to 80%**.

Colorectal cancer screening participation stands at **42%** in 2022.

Coverage differs widely across countries: **from 8% to 77%**.



CANCER CARE

Comprehensive cancer care is a key priority under Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. The Commission is supporting Member States to establish an **EU Network of Comprehensive Cancer Centres**. The Network will by 2028 link 100 multidisciplinary structures that manage all aspects of cancer care, research and specialised medical training.



Health expenditure on cancer care is projected to grow by an average of **59%** in the EU between 2023 and 2050, increasing overall healthcare expenditures by **6%**. Spending on prevention has increased from **3%** between 2014-19 to **6%** in 2021.

ON AVERAGE IN THE EU, HEALTH EXPENDITURE ON CANCER IS PROJECTED TO INCREASE BY MORE THAN 50% IN 2050 COMPARED TO 2023

Projected increase in per capita cancer health expenditure, in real terms, from 2023 to 2050

