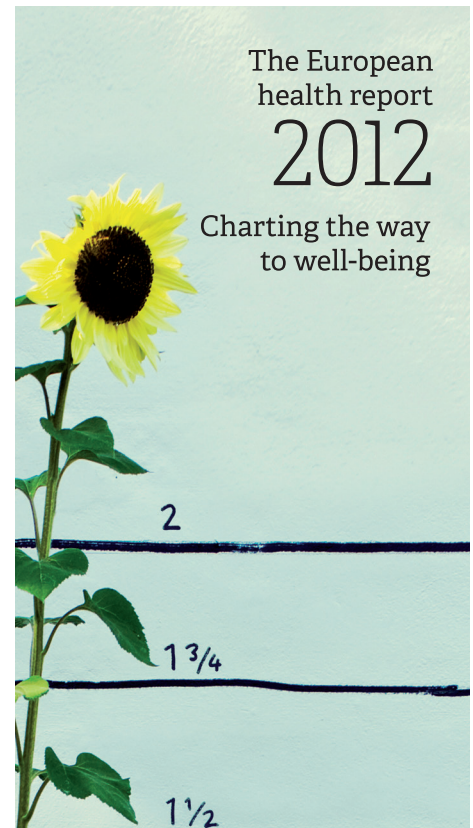


Demographic change, life expectancy and mortality trends in Europe: fact sheet

Inequalities in health are a hallmark of health statistics for the WHO European Region.

Demographic trends

- While the population of the 53 Member States in the Region has grown to nearly 900 million, decreasing fertility rates mean that this trend will soon cease. Projections suggest that the size of the population in the Region as a whole will not change significantly in the coming decades.
- The Region's population is ageing rapidly. The group aged 65 or more years constituted 15% of the total by the end of 2010 and is projected to comprise more than 25% by 2050, so it is the fastest-growing segment of the population.
- Strong public policies and health and social services (which require both budgetary planning and training) are needed to meet the needs of this ageing population.
- Migration is influencing the demographic trends in Europe: migrants number 73 million, nearly 8% of the Region's total population. This group is usually younger, less affluent and more likely to become ill than the general population.
- The proportion of the population living in urban areas reached nearly 70% in 2010 and is expected to keep increasing.



Life expectancy

- Life expectancy at birth, a significant indicator for health, has increased by 5 years since 1980, reaching 76 years on average in 2010. Nevertheless, it differs across countries, ranging from 68.7 to 82.2 years in 2010: a gap of 13.5 years (Fig. 1).
- The Region shows a significant and growing gender gap (7.5 years) in life expectancy. In 2010, average life expectancy at birth was 80 years for women and 72.5 years for men. In terms of trends in Europe, men are today where women were 40 years ago (Fig. 2). These inequalities tend to be widest in countries with lower overall life expectancy levels.
- More people in the WHO European Region are living past the age of 65 years. Upon reaching 65, people are expected to live an average 15.5 years more. Here, too, women have greater life expectancy than men, although they spend a shorter share of their lifetimes in good health.

Fig. 1. Differences in gains in life expectancy at birth in the WHO European Region (%), 1995–2009

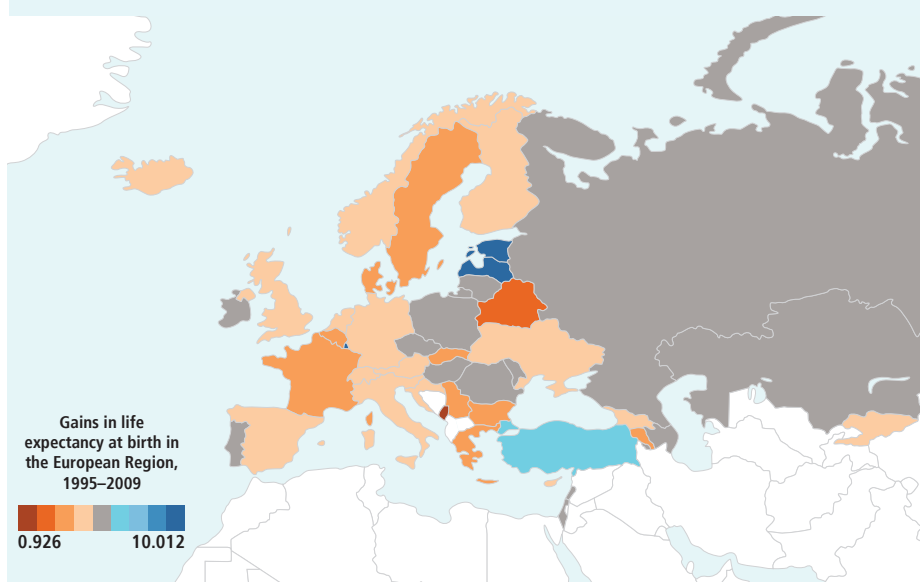
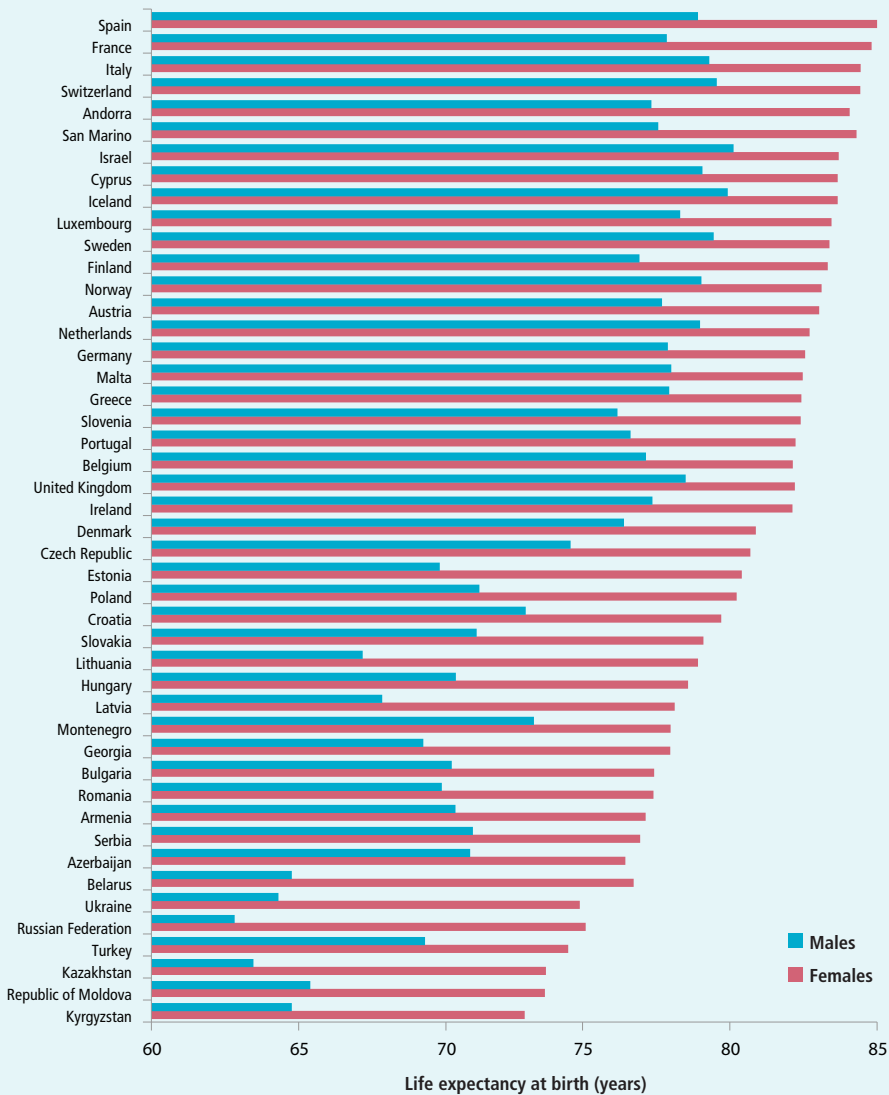


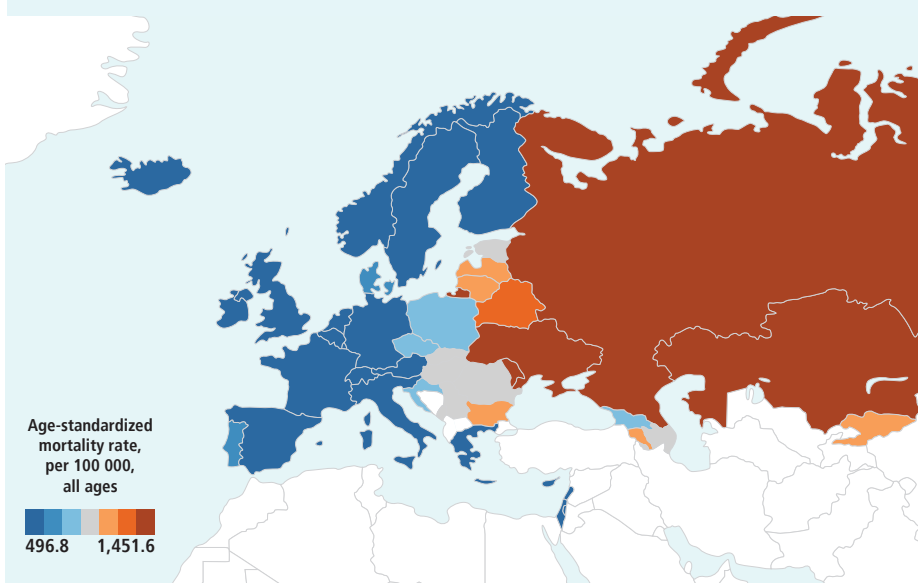
Fig. 2. Gender gap in life expectancy at birth (years) in the WHO European Region, last reported data, 2006–2010



Mortality

- While overall mortality from all causes of death in the WHO European Region continues to decline, the trends show large gaps between countries. The highest mortality rates are found in the in the eastern part of the Region and the lowest towards the western countries (Fig. 3).
- The rate of child mortality (deaths under 5 years of age) in the WHO European Region is the lowest in the world: 7.9 per 1000 live births. Nevertheless, striking differences are seen between countries, ranging from 50% below to 60% above the regional average.
- The maternal mortality ratio for the Region was 13.3 deaths per 100 000 live births in 2010, showing a 50% reduction since 1990. Again, there is much variation between countries.

Fig. 3. All-cause mortality in countries in the European Region, last reported data, 2006–2010



Source: European Health for All database [online database]. Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2012 (<http://data.euro.who.int/hfad>).

This information is taken from The European health report 2012: charting the way to well-being.

To download the report, or for more information, visit <http://www.euro.who.int/european-health-report-2012>