

# Hospital discharges and length of stay statistics

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in December 2025  
Planned article update: December 2026*

## Highlights

In 2023, there were around 46.9 million day case discharges in the EU and 68.2 million hospital discharges of in-patients; these totals include discharges of residents and non-residents.

In 2023, Bulgaria recorded the highest hospital discharge rate for resident in-patients (32 600 per 100 000 inhabitants) among the EU countries. Cyprus recorded the highest hospital discharge rate for resident day care patients (207 600 per 100 000 inhabitants).

In 2023, in-patients in Lithuania spent the longest average number of days in hospital, at 10.5 days.

This article presents an overview of [European Union \(EU\)](#) statistics related to the number and rate of hospital [discharges](#) and the average length of stay for patients in [hospitals](#) . It provides information relating to hospital discharges of [in-patients](#) and [day care](#) patients (also known as a day case), providing analyses for the sex and age of patients and their diagnoses; this may be used as an indicator for the level of [healthcare](#) activity in hospitals. A similar collection of analyses is presented for the average length of stay for in-patients.

This article is included in a set of statistical articles concerning healthcare activities in the EU which forms part of an online publication called [Health in the European Union – facts and figures](#) .

## Hospital discharges

A hospital discharge occurs when a hospital patient is formally released after an episode of care. The reasons for a discharge include the finalisation of treatment, signing out against medical advice, transfer to another healthcare institution or because of death. The data should cover all types of hospitals, including general hospitals, mental health hospitals and other specialised hospitals, as well as all types of diagnosis and treatment, excluding discharges of healthy newborns.

In 2023, there were 68.2 million hospital discharges of in-patients in the EU and 46.9 million hospital day case discharges; these totals include discharges of residents and non-residents. Focusing on in-patients, Germany accounted for 27.0% of the EU total, followed by France with a 15.5% share – see Figure 1.

## Share of EU hospital discharges of in-patients, 2023

(%)

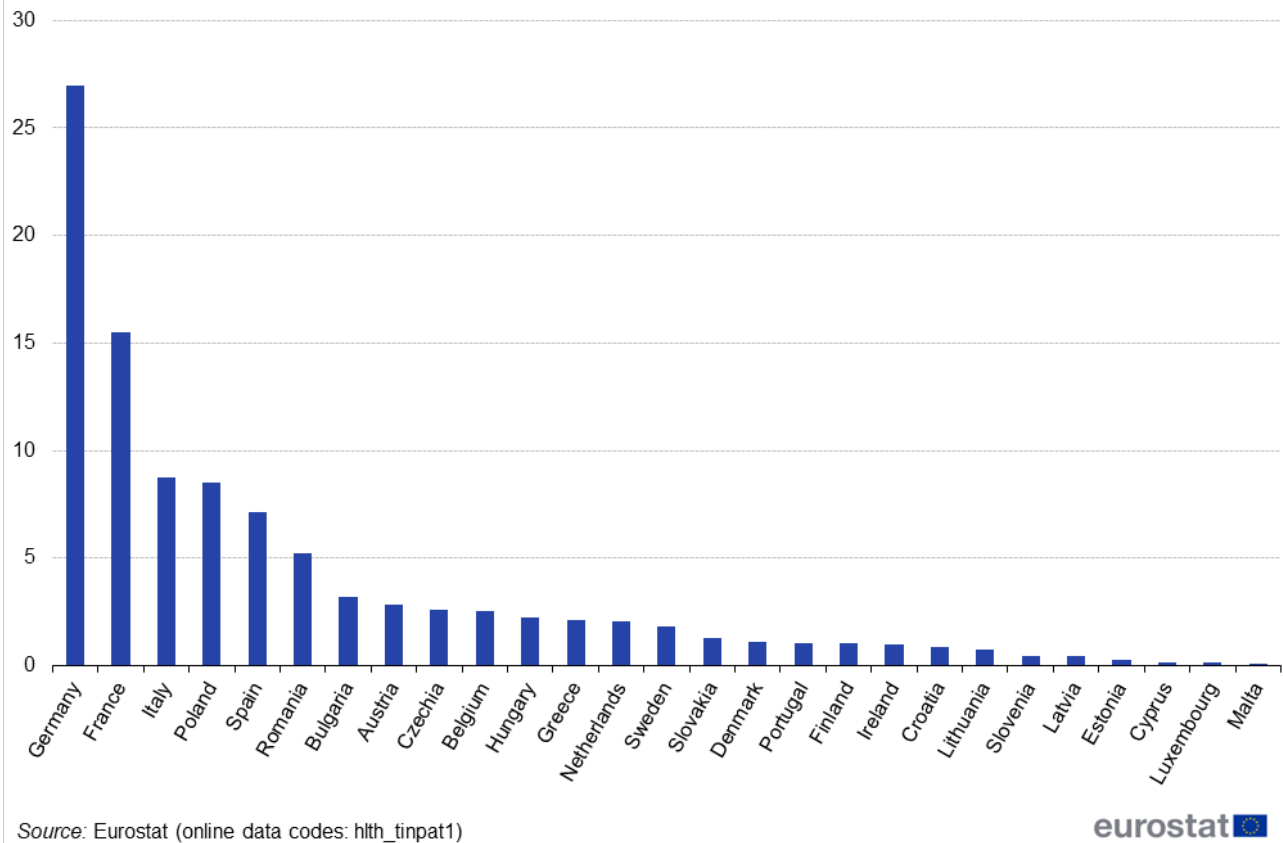
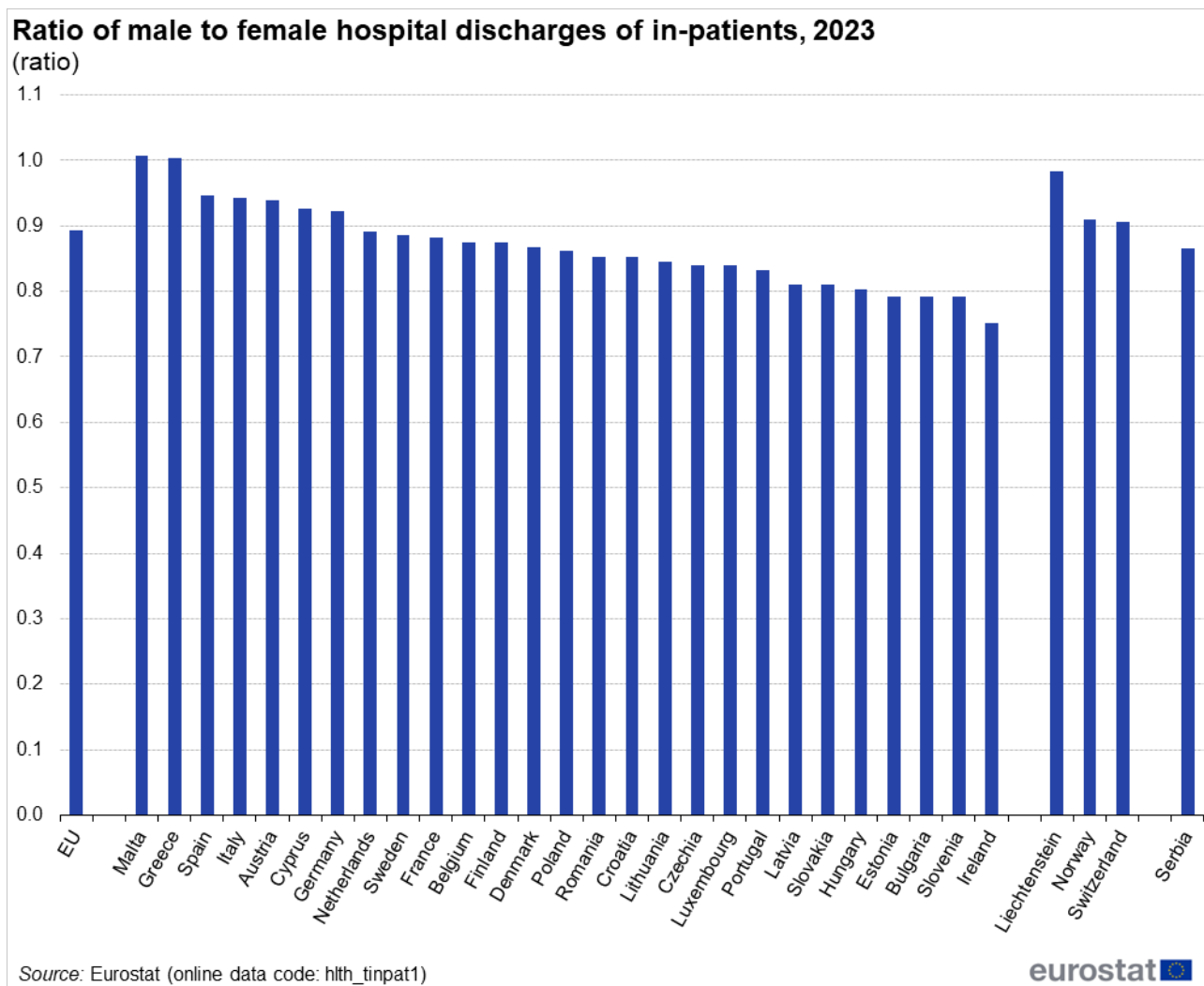


Figure 1: Share of EU hospital discharges of in-patients, 2023 Source: Eurostat (hlth\_tinpat1)

### Fewer discharges of male patients than of female patients in nearly all EU countries

In nearly all EU countries, there were fewer discharges of male in-patients than female in-patients in 2023. The only exceptions were Malta and Greece, where the numbers were almost the same. The biggest difference was observed in Ireland, where the ratio was an average of 0.75 discharges of a male in-patient for every discharge of a female in-patient.



**Figure 2: Ratio of male to female hospital discharges of in-patients, 2023** Source: Eurostat (hlth\_tinpat1)

## Hospital discharges of residents

### Bulgaria reported, by far, the highest hospital discharge rate of resident in-patients

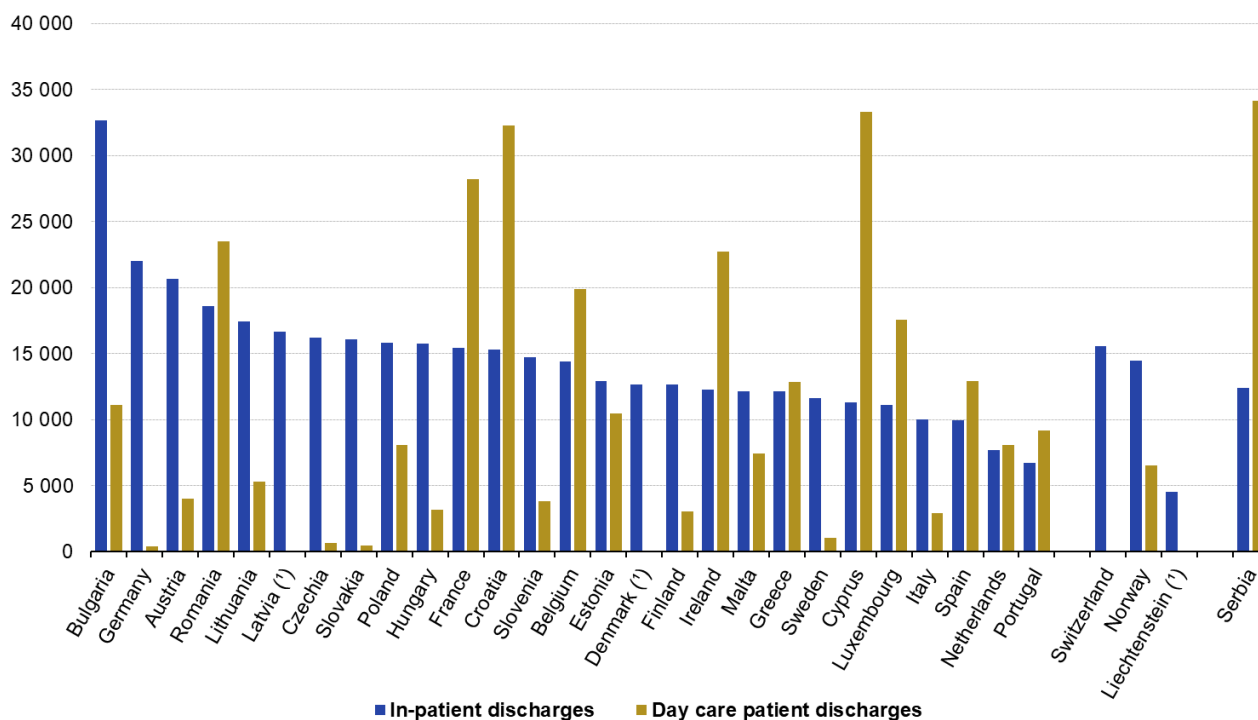
In 2023, relative to population size, hospital discharge rates for resident in-patients generally ranged from 10 000 to 18 600 per 100 000 inhabitants for most EU countries (see Figure 3):

- Austria (20 672 per 100 000 inhabitants), Germany (21 980 per 100 000 inhabitants) and most notably Bulgaria (32 645 per 100 000 inhabitants) reported higher rates
- the Netherlands (7 665 per 100 000 inhabitants) and Portugal (6 728 per 100 000 inhabitants) reported lower rates.

Comparing the highest and lowest ratios, the hospital discharge rate for resident in-patients in Bulgaria was 4.9 times as high as in Portugal.

## Hospital discharges of resident in-patients and day cases, 2023

(per 100 000 inhabitants)



Note: ranked according to the number of in-patient discharges

(\*) Day case discharges: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hlth\_rinpat2 and hlth\_rdc2)

eurostat

**Figure 3: Hospital discharges of resident in-patients and day cases, 2023** Source: Eurostat (hlth\_rinpat2 and hlth\_rdc2)

Turning to hospital day case discharges of resident patients relative to population size (see Figure 3), discharge rates among the EU countries in 2023 were generally in the range of 2 890 to 28 190 per 100 000 inhabitants:

- Cyprus and Croatia reported higher rates: 33 317 and 32 247 per 100 000 inhabitants, respectively
- Sweden (1 030 per 100 000 inhabitants), Czechia (640 per 100 000 inhabitants), Slovakia (450 per 100 000 inhabitants) and Germany (390 per 100 000 inhabitants) reported lower rates.

Comparing the highest and lowest ratios, the hospital discharge rate for resident day care patients in Cyprus was 85 times as high as in Germany.

## Hospital in-patient discharges by diagnosis

Discharges by diagnosis, as presented in Figures 4 and 5 as well as Map 1, refer to the principal diagnosis; in other words, the main condition diagnosed at the end of a patient's hospitalisation. The main condition is the condition primarily responsible for the patient's need for treatment or investigation.

### In the EU, circulatory diseases were the most common main diagnosis for resident in-patients

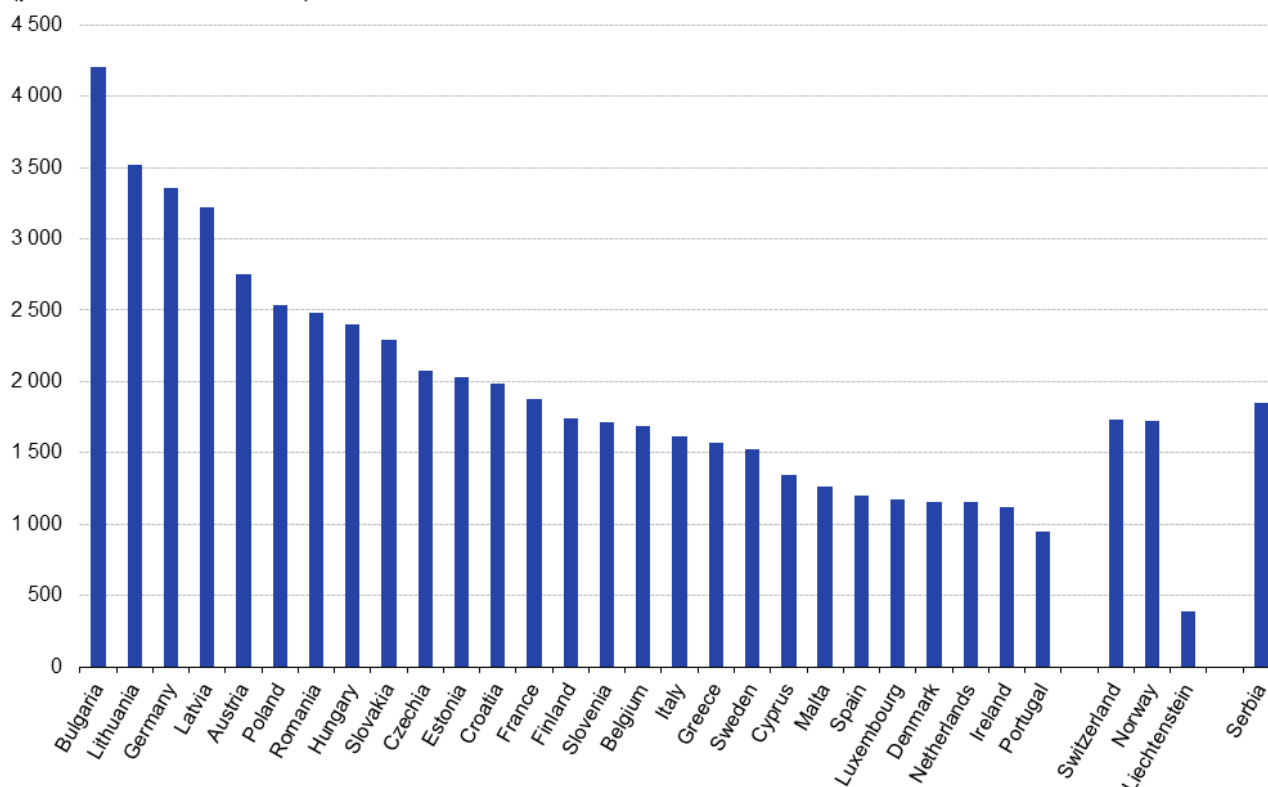
Diseases of the circulatory system accounted for 14.1% of all hospital discharges of resident in-patients across the EU in 2023, making this the most common diagnosis.

In 2023, the number of hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with diseases of the circulatory system ranged among EU countries from 4 200 per 100 000 inhabitants in Bulgaria to 950 per 100 000 inhabitants in Portugal (see Figure 4):

- Latvia (3 225 per 100 000 inhabitants), Germany (3 356 per 100 000 inhabitants), Lithuania (3 515 per 100 000 inhabitants) and most notably Bulgaria (4 200 per 100 000 inhabitants) reported higher rates
- Portugal (950 per 100 000 inhabitants) reported a lower rate.

Comparing the highest and lowest ratios, the resident in-patient hospital discharge rate for diseases of the circulatory system in Bulgaria was 4.4 times as high as in Portugal.

### Hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with diseases of the circulatory system, 2023 (per 100 000 inhabitants)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth\_rinpat2)



**Figure 4: Hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with diseases of the circulatory system, 2023** Source: Eurostat (hlth\_rinpat2)

Map 1 looks at the same indicator as Figure 4, but presents regional data at level 2 of the [NUTS classification](#) .

Among the 244 NUTS level 2 regions in the EU, the 3 highest hospital discharge rates of resident in-patients diagnosed with diseases of the circulatory system in 2023 were in Bulgaria:

- 5 310 per 100 000 inhabitants in Severozapaden,
- 4 960 per 100 000 inhabitants in Severen tsentralen, and
- 4 730 per 100 000 inhabitants in Yuzhen tsentralen.

This rate was over 3 200 per 100 000 inhabitants in 33 regions across the EU (see Map 1); this included 23 of the 38 German regions, all 6 Bulgarian regions and 1 region each from: Latvia (whole country), Lithuania, Austria and Poland.

Among the 244 NUTS level 2 regions in the EU, the 3 lowest hospital discharge rates of resident in-patients diagnosed with diseases of the circulatory system in 2023 were:

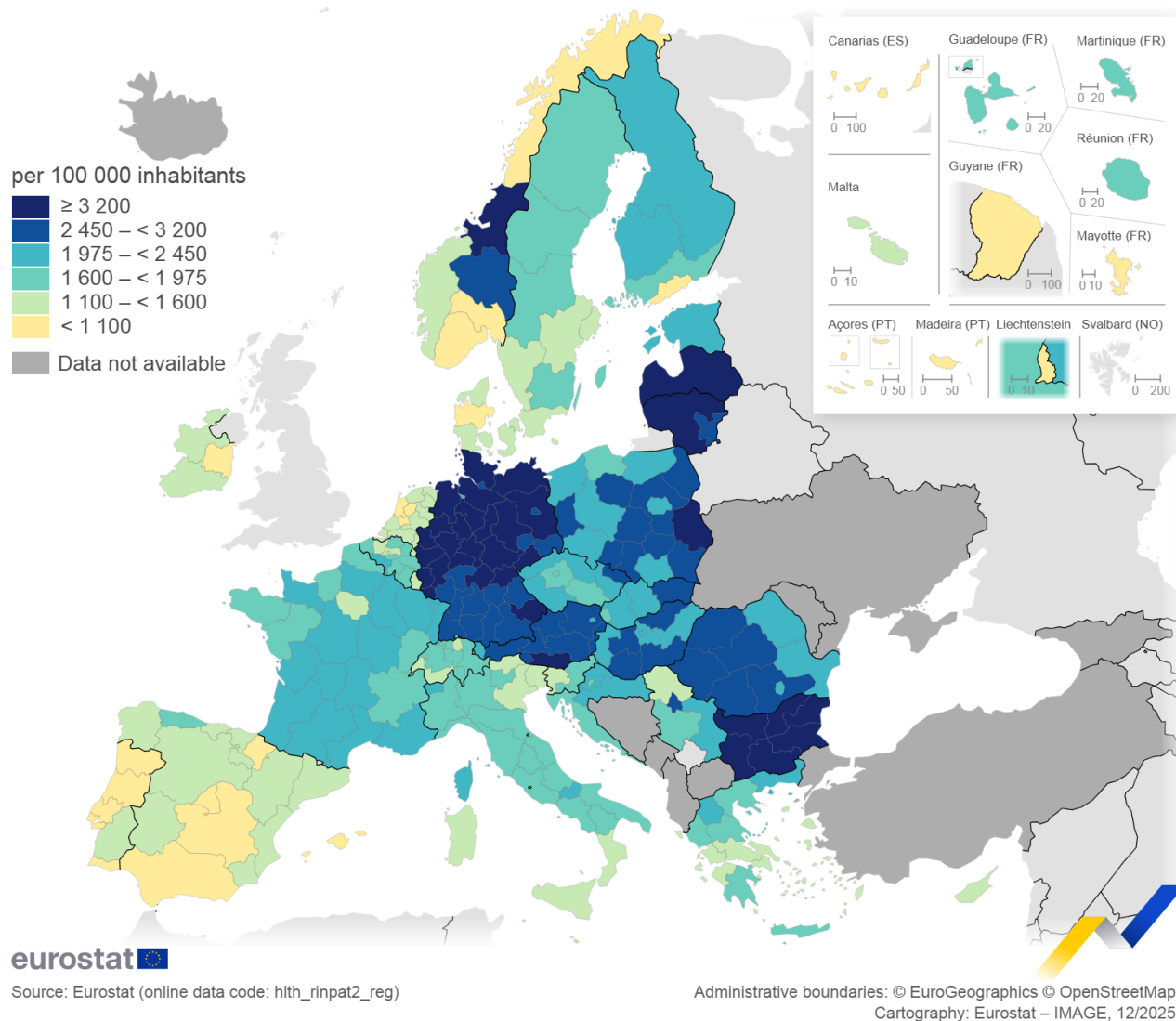
- 285 per 100 000 inhabitants in Região Autónoma da Madeira in Portugal,

- 390 per 100 000 inhabitants in Mayotte in French overseas region,
- 470 per 100 000 inhabitants in Oeste e Vale do Tejo in Portugal.

There were 24 regions where this rate was lower than 1 100 per 100 000 inhabitants; this included 8 of the 9 Portuguese regions, 8 Spanish regions, 3 Dutch regions, 2 French overseas regions and a single region each from: Denmark, Ireland and Finland. Among these 24 regions in the EU, 5 were capital city regions, those of: Ireland, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland.

## Hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with circulatory diseases, 2023

(per 100 000 inhabitants, NUTS level 2 regions)

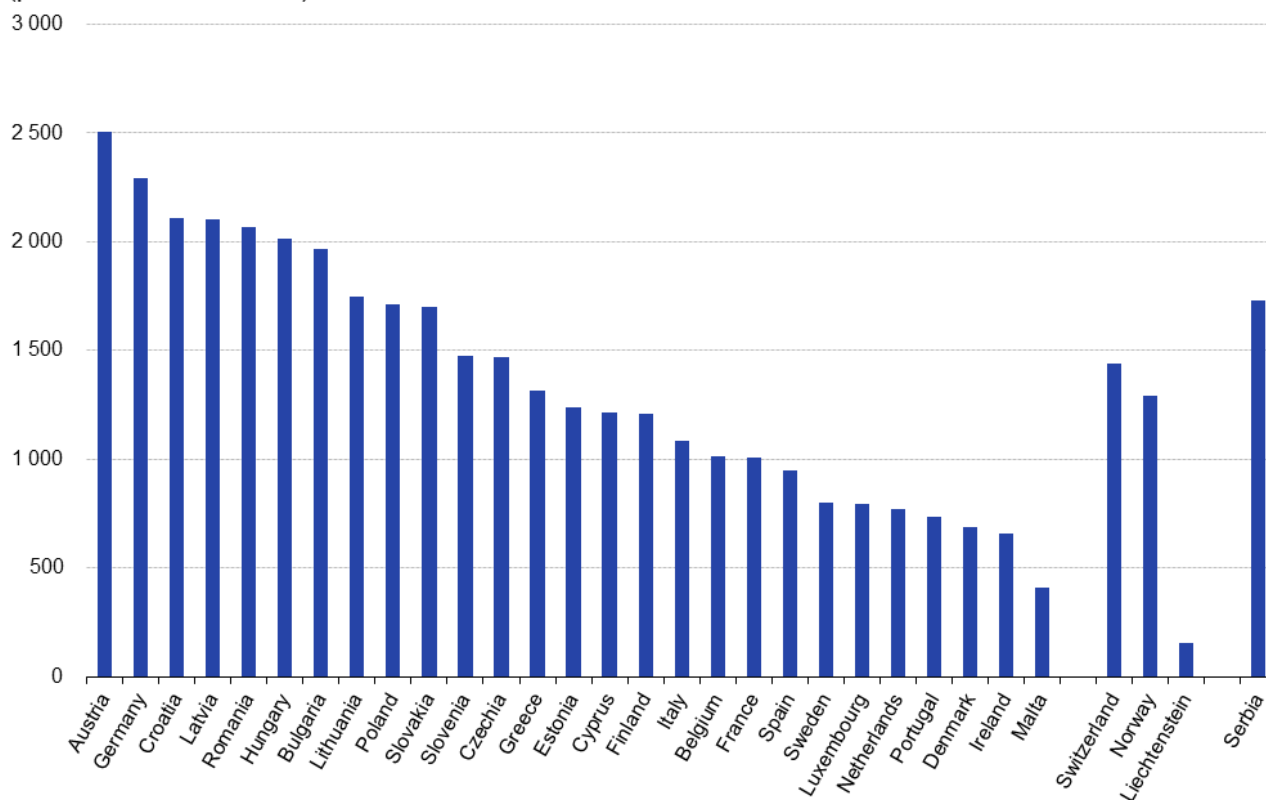


**Map 1: Hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with circulatory diseases, 2023** Source: Eurostat (hlth\_rinpat2\_reg)

Neoplasms accounted for 9.6% of all hospital discharges of resident in-patients across the EU in 2023. The number of hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with neoplasms ranged, among EU countries, from 2 504 per 100 000 inhabitants in Austria to 409 per 100 000 inhabitants in Malta. Comparing the highest and lowest ratios, the resident in-patient hospital discharge rate for neoplasms in Austria was 6.1 times as high as in Malta.

## Hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with neoplasms, 2023

(per 100 000 inhabitants)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth\_rinpat2)

eurostat

**Figure 5: Hospital discharges of resident in-patients diagnosed with neoplasms, 2023** Source: Eurostat (hlth\_rinpat2)

## Average length of hospital stays for in-patients

The average length of stay for hospital in-patients is calculated from the total number of nights spent in hospitals (in-patient [bed-days](#)) divided by the total number of discharges.

In 2023, the average length of a hospital stay for in-patients (residents and non-residents combined) ranged in most EU countries from 5.2 days in Bulgaria to 9.4 days in Hungary. The Netherlands was below this range (4.4 days), while Lithuania (10.5 days) was above it.

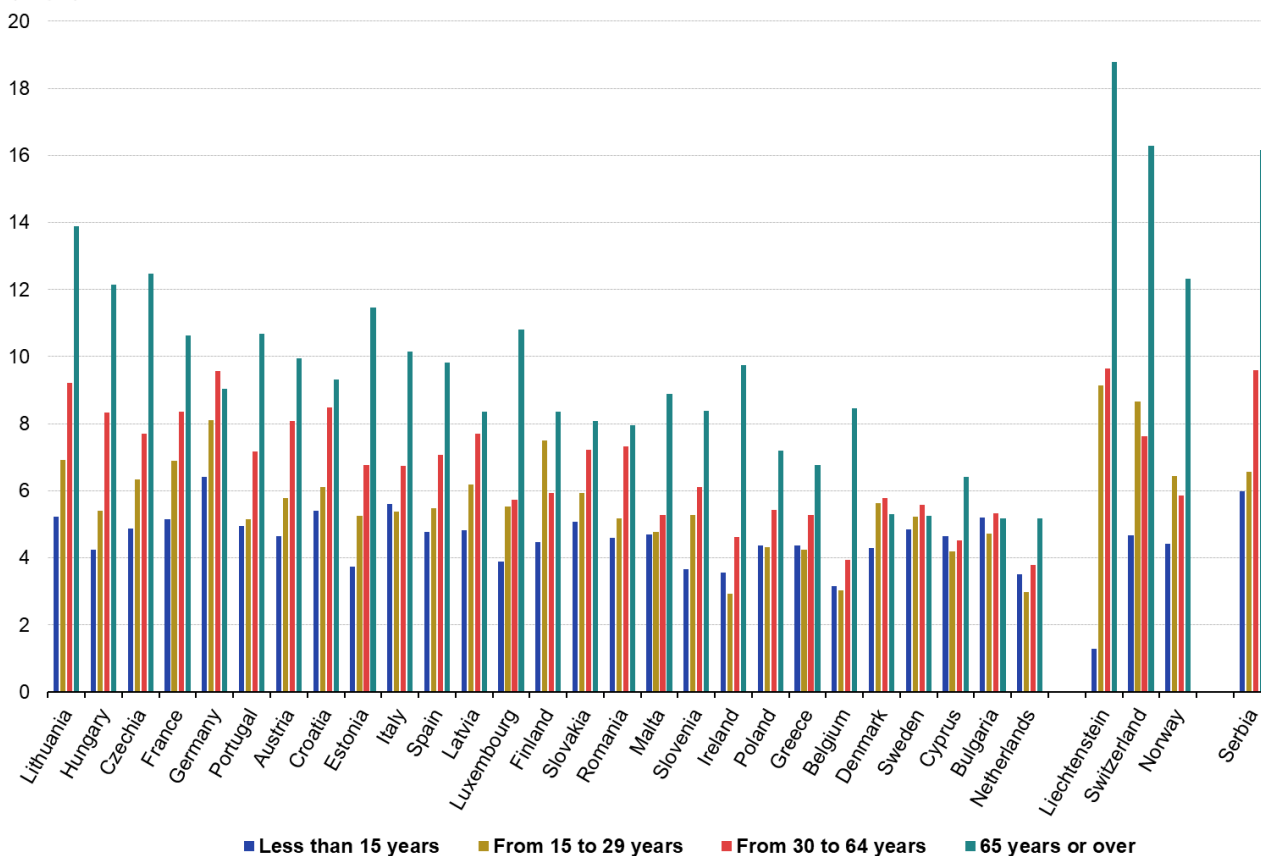
### People aged 65 and over generally stayed in hospital for longer than other age groups

People aged 65 and over generally spent longer in hospital than other age groups. In 2023, in most EU countries, the average length of stay for those aged 65 and over was generally longer than for those aged 15 to 29, 30 to 64 years, and those less than 15 years old (see Figure 6). Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Bulgaria were the only countries to report a higher average length of stay for the age group 30 to 64. Bulgaria was the only country to record the same average length of stay for those aged less than 15 as those aged 65 and over (5.2 days).

Among those aged less than 15, the average length of stay ranged from 3.2 days in Belgium to 6.4 days in Germany. Similarly, in the next age group, 15 to 29 years, the longest average length of stay was recorded in Germany (8.1 days); the shortest average length of stay was in Ireland (2.9 days). Among those aged 30 to 64, the average length of stay was shortest in the Netherlands (3.8 days) and, like with the younger age groups, was longest in Germany (9.6 days). In the oldest age group (65 and older), the average length of stay generally ranges from 5.2 days in Bulgaria and the Netherlands, to 12.5 days in Czechia; Lithuania was the only country to record an average length of stay above this range, at 13.9 days.

## Average length of stay for hospital in-patients, by age group, 2023

(days)



Note: ranked on the average length of stay for all hospital in-patients (total age).

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth\_talos1)

eurostat

Figure 6: Average length of stay for hospital in-patients, by sex, 2023 Source: Eurostat (hlth\_talos1)

### In-patients with mental and behavioural disorders generally spent the longest time in hospital per stay

Among the 9 diagnoses presented in Table 1, the average length of stay for in-patients in 2023 was notably longer for mental and behavioural disorders. The longest average stay for in-patients with mental and behavioural disorders was reported for Spain at 54.3 days. Among the other diagnoses, average stays were generally longest for patients being diagnosed or receiving treatment for diseases of the circulatory system; injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes; diseases of the respiratory system; or neoplasms.

**Average length of stay for hospital in-patients, by disease/injury, 2023**  
(days)

|               | Neoplasms | Mental and behavioural disorders | Diseases of the circulatory system | Diseases of the respiratory system | Diseases of the digestive system | Diseases of the musculo-skeletal system and connective tissue | Diseases of the genitourinary system | Pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium | Injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes |
|---------------|-----------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Belgium       | 6.5       | 9.6                              | 6.7                                | 6.8                                | 4.8                              | 5.3   | 4.4                                  | 3.5                                      | 8.3   |
| Bulgaria      | 4.7       | 30.0                             | 4.1                                | 6.1                                | 4.0                              | 4.4   | 3.7                                  | 4.1                                      | 4.4   |
| Czechia       | 7.0       | 37.2                             | 9.9                                | 10.3                               | 5.8                              | 8.9   | 5.6                                  | 3.9                                      | 9.5   |
| Denmark       | 5.2       | 16.0                             | 4.5                                | 4.7                                | 4.4                              | 2.9   | 3.6                                  | 2.8                                      | 4.4   |
| Germany       | 8.3       | 27.6                             | 8.8                                | 7.6                                | 5.4                              | 10.9  | 5.1                                  | 3.5                                      | 8.0   |
| Estonia       | 8.0       | 18.4                             | 10.5                               | 7.5                                | 5.9                              | 7.2   | 6.6                                  | 3.0                                      | 9.4   |
| Ireland       | 10.0      | 13.7                             | 8.4                                | 7.2                                | 6.4                              | 5.7   | 6.3                                  | 2.6                                      | 8.3   |
| Greece        | 5.9       | 34.5                             | 5.5                                | 6.2                                | 3.9                              | 4.1   | 4.2                                  | 3.5                                      | 5.5   |
| Spain         | 7.7       | 54.3                             | 8.7                                | 7.1                                | 5.5                              | 5.0   | 5.0                                  | 3.0                                      | 8.3   |
| France        | 7.7       | 24.7                             | 7.1                                | 7.7                                | 5.5                              | 6.4   | 5.0                                  | 4.3                                      | 7.6   |
| Croatia       | 6.0       | 27.7                             | 7.1                                | 7.9                                | 5.6                              | 10.0  | 5.5                                  | 4.3                                      | 7.1   |
| Italy         | 7.6       | 14.2                             | 9.4                                | 9.9                                | 6.5                              | 6.0   | 5.7                                  | 3.8                                      | 10.3  |
| Cyprus        | 5.3       | 31.0                             | 6.7                                | 5.9                                | 3.5                              | 3.5   | 4.2                                  | 3.0                                      | 5.7   |
| Latvia        | 7.0       | 20.5                             | 7.2                                | 6.2                                | 5.3                              | 6.5   | 5.0                                  | 3.4                                      | 6.9   |
| Lithuania     | 8.1       | 23.2                             | 14.8                               | 7.5                                | 5.8                              | 9.3   | 6.7                                  | 4.0                                      | 11.7  |
| Luxembourg    | 8.0       | 20.4                             | 9.0                                | 7.2                                | 5.6                              | 5.3   | 4.5                                  | 4.4                                      | 10.4  |
| Hungary       | 6.2       | 28.9                             | 11.7                               | 7.9                                | 5.2                              | 11.0  | 6.8                                  | 4.3                                      | 7.0   |
| Malta         | 11.0      | 18.1                             | 8.0                                | 7.1                                | 4.8                              | 5.2   | 5.6                                  | 2.5                                      | 7.4   |
| Netherlands   | 4.8       | 7.9                              | 5.4                                | 5.3                                | 4.2                              | 2.7   | 3.5                                  | 2.4                                      | 5.3   |
| Austria       | 6.6       | 28.5                             | 10.9                               | 7.7                                | 4.8                              | 9.6   | 5.0                                  | 3.8                                      | 7.6   |
| Poland        | 5.4       | 19.9                             | 6.4                                | 6.5                                | 4.7                              | 7.4   | 4.4                                  | 4.4                                      | 5.5   |
| Portugal      | 8.8       | 22.3                             | 10.2                               | 9.0                                | 7.0                              | 6.1   | 7.4                                  | 3.5                                      | 11.4  |
| Romania       | 5.4       | 20.1                             | 7.1                                | 6.4                                | 5.2                              | 7.8   | 4.5                                  | 4.0                                      | 6.1   |
| Slovenia      | 6.8       | 25.7                             | 7.7                                | 6.6                                | 4.8                              | 5.3   | 4.8                                  | 3.8                                      | 6.8   |
| Slovakia      | 6.4       | 29.0                             | 6.6                                | 7.2                                | 5.2                              | 7.1   | 5.0                                  | 4.5                                      | 6.2   |
| Finland       | 6.7       | 18.9                             | 8.2                                | 6.1                                | 4.4                              | 4.6   | 5.4                                  | 3.1                                      | 8.3   |
| Sweden        | 6.0       | 14.9                             | 5.1                                | 5.1                                | 4.4                              | 3.0   | 4.2                                  | 2.6                                      | 5.0   |
| Liechtenstein | 5.5       | 34.0                             | 4.5                                | 5.0                                | 3.4                              | 4.5   | 3.3                                  | 2.0                                      | 5.0   |
| Norway        | 5.2       | 16.9                             | 4.3                                | 4.6                                | 4.0                              | 3.3   | 3.5                                  | 2.2                                      | 4.2   |
| Switzerland   | 6.4       | 28.2                             | 7.6                                | 6.0                                | 4.8                              | 6.9   | 3.7                                  | 3.8                                      | 6.7   |
| Serbia        | 7.6       | 37.9                             | 7.9                                | 10.3                               | 5.9                              | 11.4  | 6.3                                  | 5.0                                      | 12.2  |

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hlth\_talos1)



**Table 1: Average length of stay for hospital in-patients, by disease/injury, 2023 Source: Eurostat (hlth\_talos1)**

For several of the diagnoses shown in Table 1 there was a relatively high degree of uniformity in the average length of stay in 2023 reported by each EU country. For example, in-patients diagnosed with diseases of the digestive system spent, on average, between 3.5 days (in Cyprus) and 7.0 days (in Portugal) in hospital; patients diagnosed with diseases of the genitourinary systems and those in hospital for pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium, also had a relatively narrow range in their average lengths of stay across EU countries.

The average length of stay for in-patients in 2023 varied somewhat more for: diseases of the respiratory system; neoplasms; injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes; diseases of the musculo-skeletal system and connective tissue; as well as for diseases of the circulatory system. For each of these diseases/conditions, the range between the shortest and longest average stays across the EU countries was between 5.6 and 10.7 days.

For mental and behavioural disorders, the average length of stay varied even more. The shortest average stay in 2023 was 7.9 days as recorded in the Netherlands while the longest, as noted above, was 54.3 days in Spain, a difference of 46.4 days.

## Source data for tables and graphs

- [Hospital discharges and length of stay: tables and figures](#)

## Data sources

### Key concepts

An in-patient is a patient who is formally admitted (or 'hospitalised') to an institution for diagnosis, treatment and/or care and stays for a minimum of 1 night or more than 24 hours in the hospital or other institution providing in-patient care. In contrast to in-patient care, the intention for day care is to discharge the patient on the same day as admitted. Day cases comprise planned medical and paramedical services delivered to patients who have been formally admitted for diagnosis, treatment or other types of health care.

An in-patient or day care patient is discharged from hospital when formally released after a procedure or course of treatment (episode of care). A discharge may occur because of the finalisation of treatment, signing out against medical advice, transfer to another healthcare institution, or because of death.

The average length of stay of in-patients in hospitals is computed by a) calculating the number of hospital days (or bed-days or in-patient days) from the date of admission to an in-patient institution as the date of discharge minus date of admission and b) dividing this by the number of discharges during the year.

## Healthcare resources and activities

Statistics on healthcare activities such as information on discharges and average length of stay are documented in a background article on the [methodology of healthcare non expenditure statistics](#) . This provides information on the scope of the data, its legal basis, the methodology employed, as well as related concepts and definitions.

The [Healthcare non-expenditure statistics manual](#) provides an overview of the classifications, both for mandatory variables and variables provided on voluntary basis.

Statistics on hospital discharges are based on hospital administrative data. The main discharge diagnosis should be defined as the condition diagnosed at the end of the hospitalisation period, primarily responsible for the patient's need for treatment or examination at the hospital. If there is more than one such condition, the one held responsible for the greatest use of resources should be selected. If no diagnosis was made, the main symptom, abnormal finding or problem should be selected as the main diagnosis. Note there is a difference in the coding of cases where the mental and behavioural disorder was established as the main discharge diagnosis, as opposed to cases where a patient who was suffering from a mental and behavioural disorder at the time of discharged for another diagnosis.

The main diagnosis for discharges is based on the [International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems \(ICD-10\)](#) . The diagnoses presented in this article include the following:

- C00 to D48 neoplasms
- F00 to F99 mental and behavioural disorders
- I00 to I99 diseases of the circulatory system
- J00 to J99 diseases of the respiratory system
- K00 to K93 diseases of the digestive system
- M00 to M99 diseases of the musculo-skeletal system and connective tissue
- N00 to N99 diseases of the genitourinary system
- O00 to O99 pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium
- S00 to T98 injury, poisoning and certain other consequences of external causes.

For country specific notes on the collection of healthcare non-expenditure statistics, please refer to the annexes at the end of the national metadata report [European metadata report](#) .

## Context

Statistics on hospital discharges and the average length of hospital stays reflect the balance between the demand for and supply of hospital services. They represent how many patients were actually admitted (as in-patients or day cases) and how long they were treated; they can be complemented by other supply side statistics such as occupancy rates (see an article on [hospital beds](#) ), the frequency of [operations and procedures](#) , [healthcare](#)

[expenditure](#) , as well as demand side statistics (see an article on [unmet medical needs](#) ).

The balance between in-patient and day case discharges, as well as the number of out-patients and the average length of hospital stays, reflect a number of factors:

- demographic changes such as an ageing population which pushes up demand for hospital services
- budgetary pressures to keep costs down, or reimbursements-driven practices
- changes in practices and technology impacting on the length of acute care and/or the balance between in-patient care, day care and out-patient care.

The [European core health indicators \(ECHI\)](#) shortlist includes indicators on hospital in-patient discharges, hospital day cases and average length of stay in the chapter on health services.

## Explore further

### Other articles

#### Online publications

- [Health in the European Union – facts and figures](#)
- [Disability statistics](#)

#### Healthcare activities and expenditure

- [Beds](#)
- [Consultations](#)
- [Healthcare expenditure](#)
- [Surgical operations and procedures](#)
- [Unmet needs for health care](#)

#### Methodology

- [Healthcare non-expenditure](#)

#### General health statistics articles

- [Health statistics introduced](#)
- [Regional health statistics](#)

## Database

- [Health](#) (hlth)

Health care (hlth\_care)

Health care activities (hlth\_act)

Hospital discharges and length of stay for in-patient curative care (hlth\_co\_inpagg)

Hospital discharges - national data (hlth\_hosd)

Hospital discharges by diagnosis, in-patients, total number (hlth\_co\_disch1)

Hospital discharges by diagnosis, in-patients, per 100 000 inhabitants (hlth\_co\_disch2)

Hospital discharges by diagnosis, day cases, total number (hlth\_co\_disch3)

Hospital discharges by diagnosis, day cases, per 100 000 inhabitants (hlth\_co\_disch4)

Length of stay in hospital (hlth\_hostay)

In-patient average length of stay (days) (hlth\_co\_inpst)

- [Health](#) (t\_hlth)

Health care (t\_hlth\_care)

Discharges from hospitals (tps00048)

## Thematic section

- [Health](#)

## Methodology

### Manuals and guidelines

- [Healthcare non-expenditure statistics manual and guidelines for completing the Joint questionnaire on non-monetary healthcare statistics – 2025 edition](#)

### Metadata

- [Health care resources](#) (ESMS metadata file – hlth\_res\_esms)

## External links

- [European Commission – Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety – Public health](#) , see:
  - [European core health indicators \(ECHI\)](#)
  - [Health systems performance assessment](#)
- [OECD / European Commission report 'Health at a Glance'](#)
- [OECD – The future of health systems](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) , see:
  - [WHO – Health system governance](#)
  - [WHO – The Global Health Observatory](#)