



European health systems resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic

Takeaways from the State of Health in the EU's Companion Report 2021

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22 April 2022*

Companion Report 2021

- Draws three takeaway messages based on the findings of the **Country Health Profiles 2021**:

1

Understanding the far-reaching health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

2

Locking in the advantages of digital innovation in healthcare delivery and public health

3

Rethinking health workforce strategies and planning after the COVID-19 pandemic

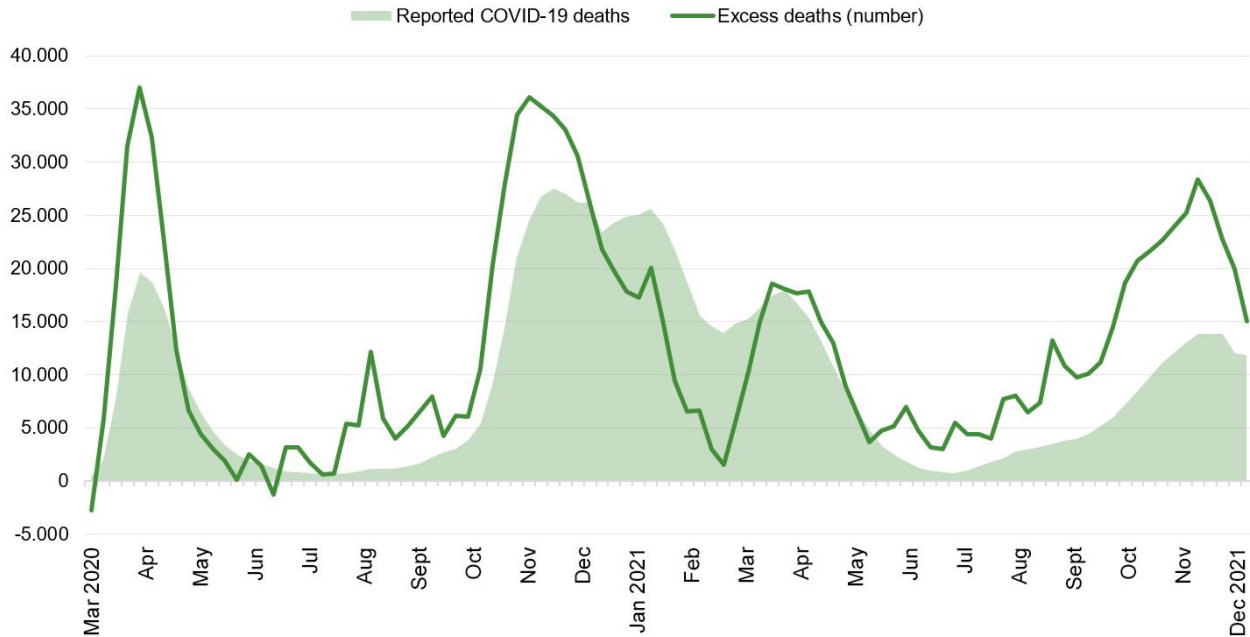
- European Commission's perspective, linking national health policy and investment priorities to the main **EU-level health policy initiatives and support instruments**



1

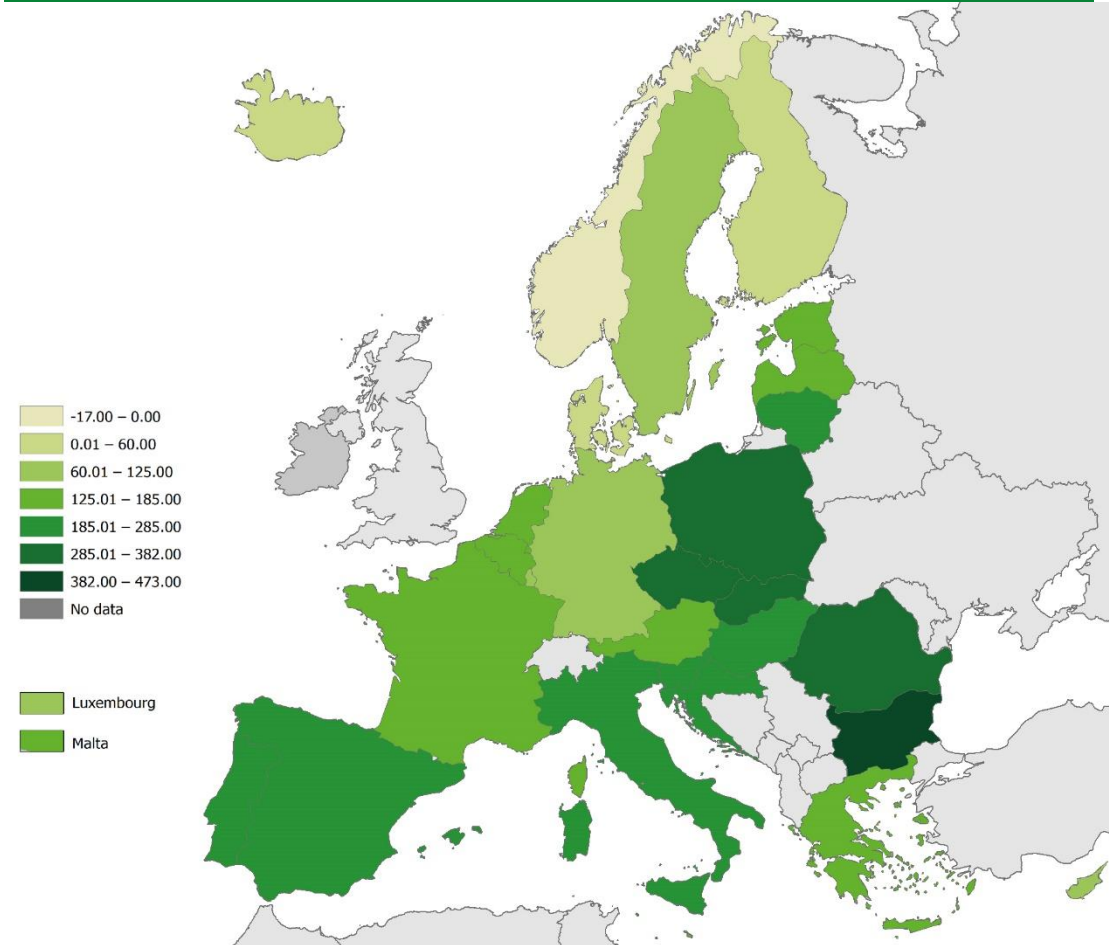
Understanding the far-reaching health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

Reported COVID-19 deaths and excess deaths in the EU/EEA



Note: Data excludes IE (data not available), includes IS, NO. Baseline to calculate excess mortality: (2016-2019).
Source: ECDC, Eurostat Database

Cumulative excess deaths (rate per 100 000) (Mar 2020; Dec 2021)

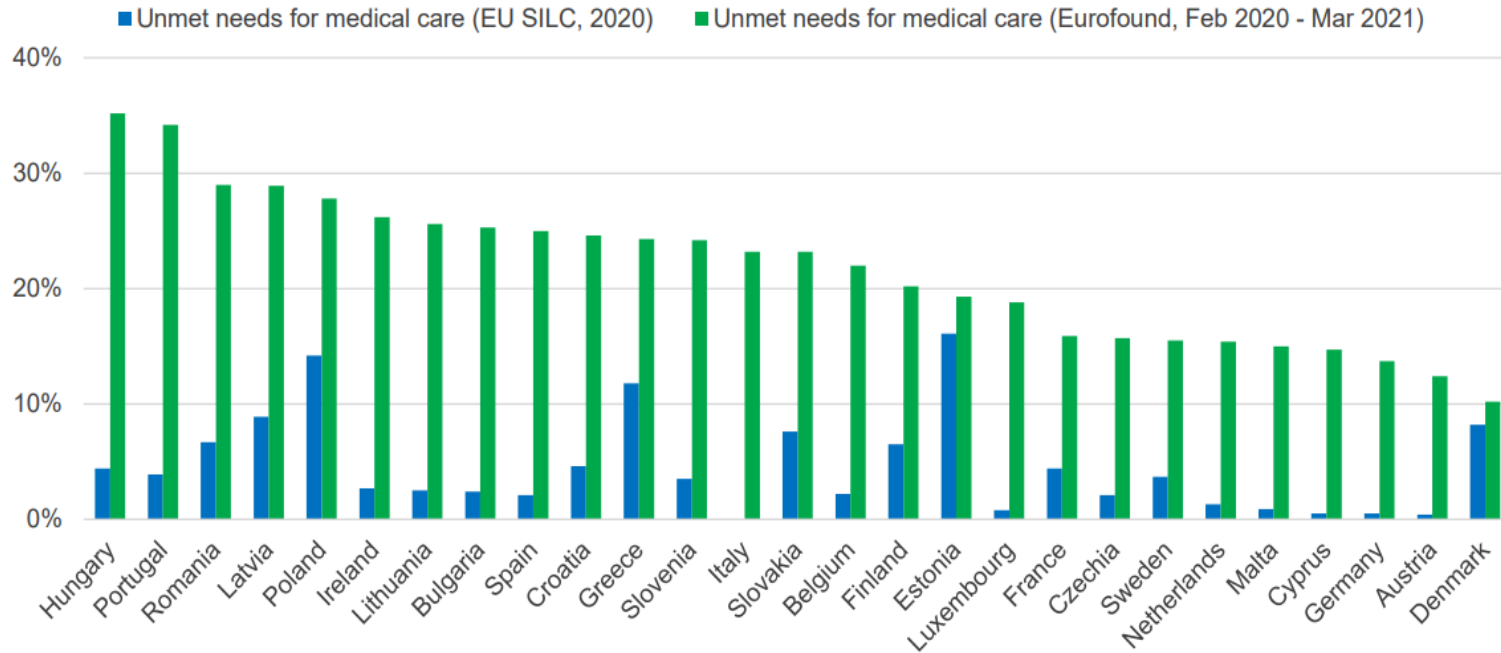


Source: ECDC, Eurostat Database

1

Understanding the far-reaching health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

Unmet needs for medical care, breakdown by country (2020, 2021)



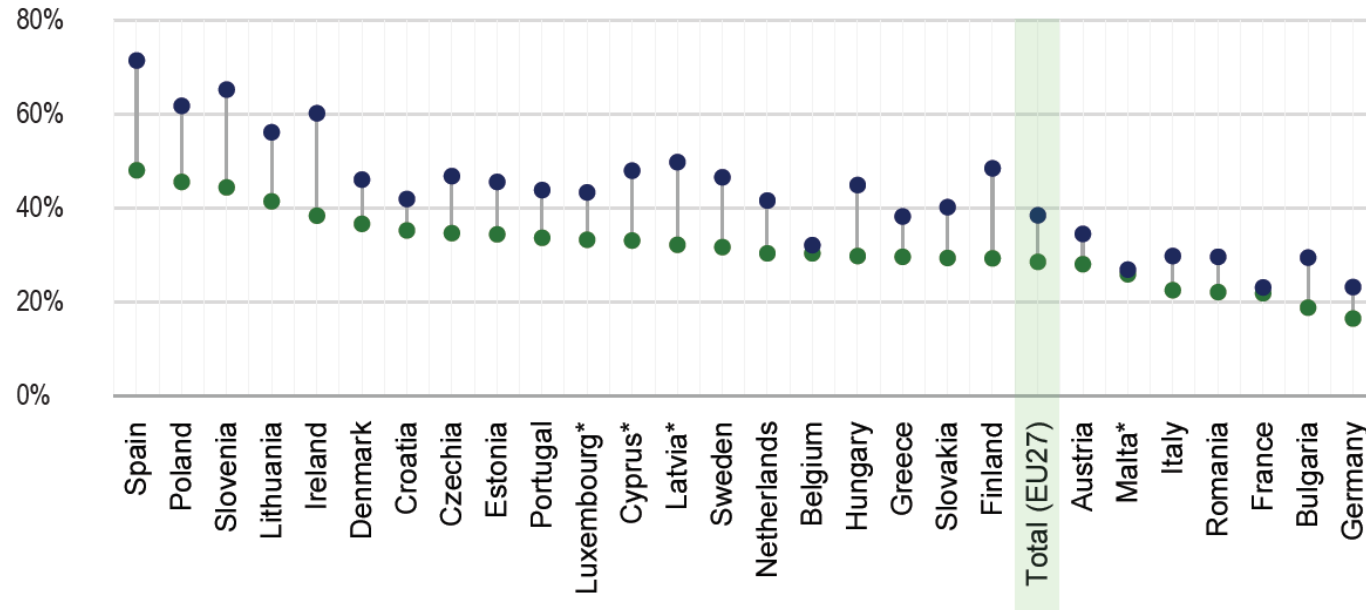
- Significant **morbidity** impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Forgone non-COVID care and missed diagnoses**
- Impact on people's **mental health**
- **Post-COVID-19 condition** ('Long COVID')

Sources: Eurofound (2020) Eurostat database (EU-SILC – part of the European Pillar of Social Right's [Social Scoreboard](#)). Please note that the two indicators are not comparable due to methodological differences¹⁰.

2

Locking in the advantages of digital innovation in healthcare delivery and public health

Share of population that had a remote GP consultation (Jun 2020, Feb 2021)



- COVID-19 led to a massive acceleration in the take-up of **digital health tools**
- Digital health technologies have been used to boost **public health measures**
- After the COVID-19 emergency, need to evaluate the potential of digital health technologies to foster the pursuit of a wider array of objectives - **efficiency, quality of care and accessibility**

Source: Eurofound (2021) Living, working and COVID-19 dataset. *Low reliability.

● June / July 2020

● February / March 2021



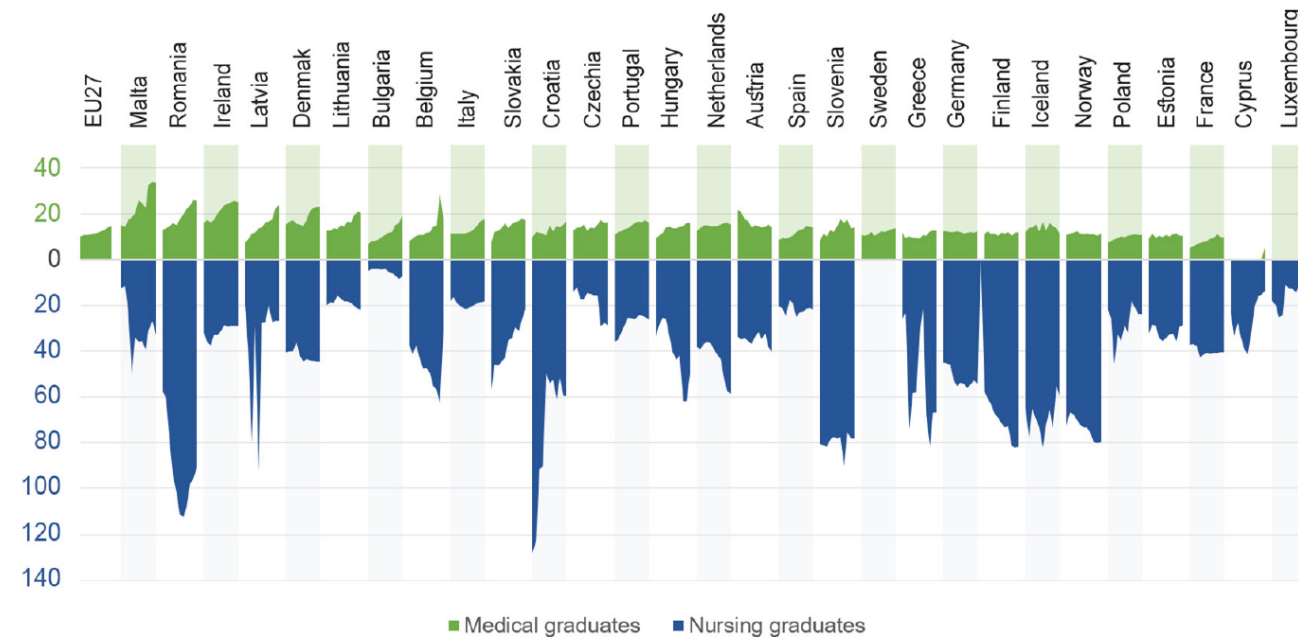
2

Locking in the advantages of digital innovation in healthcare delivery and public health

- **Securing a positive digital health technology legacy after the pandemic:**
 - How should the use of digital health technologies be recalibrated to serve a **broader set of objectives** (quality, efficiency, accessibility)?
 - How to **incentivize their use in a non-emergency context**?
 - How to minimize risks of **widening health inequalities through digital exclusion**?
 - Need to ensure sustained investment in implementation and maintenance of **IT infrastructure** and equipment (including **cybersecurity** and **training** of personnel)
- Commission flagship initiative: [European Health Data Space \(EHDS\)](#)

Rethinking health workforce strategies and planning after the COVID-19 pandemic

Medical and nursing graduates per 100 000 population, 2009-2019



Source: Eurostat database. 2018 data for Denmark, Greece, France, Poland (both variables) Croatia and Slovenia (nursing graduates); no data on nursing graduates for Sweden.

- Strategies to expand health workforce capacity were essential to avert health system failure in the countries hardest-hit by COVID-19.
- **Avenues out of the health workforce crisis post-COVID-19 pandemic:**
 - 1) Implement **better workforce planning**
 - 2) Increase investment in **training and education**
 - 3) New skills and **skill-mix innovations** (e.g., task-shifting, not as a substitute for expansion of the size of the workforce)

European Health Union

- **Key initiatives:**
 - **Stronger surveillance, scientific analysis and guidance mandate** for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (**ECDC**) and for the European Medicines Agency (**EMA**);
 - **Coordinated development, production and procurement of critical medical countermeasures via** the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (**HERA**);
 - **Modernized regulatory framework for pharmaceuticals supporting innovation, reliability of supply chains and accessibility** through the **Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe**;
 - **Stronger cancer prevention, care and R&I** via **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan**;
 - **Better exchange and access to health data** to support healthcare delivery, health research and policymaking through the **European Health Data Space**.

EU funding instruments supporting health

Focus on collaborative trans-national projects

EU4Health

Horizon Europe

Digital Europe

Interreg projects

Focus on national/regional projects

Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

EU Cohesion Policy funds

Technical Support instrument

InvestEU

Other EIB funding



Thank you

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https://ec.europa.eu/health/state-health-eu/overview_en

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