

## CANCER INCIDENCE

In 2018, 3 million new cases of cancer are expected to be diagnosed in the 28 EU member states (Joint Research Centre, 2018). Slightly more than half of these cancers (53% or around 1.6 million) are expected to be diagnosed in men.

The most common cancer sites are breast cancer (with more than 400 000 women expected to be diagnosed in 2018, accounting for 13.5% of all new cancer cases), followed by prostate cancer (376 000 men or 12.5% of new cancer cases), colon and rectum cancers (368 000 men and women for these two cancer sites combined or 12.3% of new cancer cases) and lung cancer (365 000 men and women or 12.2% of new cases). These five cancers represent half of all the cancers that are expected to be diagnosed in EU countries in 2018. Following these five cancers, the most common cancer sites are bladder cancer, skin melanoma cancer, uterus cancer (corpus uteri and cervical), pancreas cancer and kidney cancer. These five other cancers are expected to account for another 20% of all new cancer cases in the European Union in 2018 (Figure 3.28).

Large variations exist in cancer incidence across EU countries. Hungary, Ireland, Denmark, Belgium and France are expected to have the highest age-standardised incidence rates in 2018 (all cancers combined), with rates more than 10% higher than the EU average (Figure 3.29). The incidence of lung cancer and colon and rectal cancer is particularly high in Hungary (more than 50% higher than the EU average), contributing largely to the overall high incidence rate. The high incidence of lung cancer is related to high smoking rates (see the indicator “Smoking among adults” in Chapter 4).

These variations in incidence rates reflect not only variations in the real number of new cancers occurring each year, but also differences in national policies regarding cancer screening to detect different types of cancer as early as possible (see indicators “Screening, survival and mortality from breast cancer and cervical cancer” in Chapter 6), as well as differences in the quality of cancer surveillance and reporting.

Among women, breast cancer accounts for 29% of all new cancers across EU countries. Colon and rectal cancers (12% of cancer cases), lung cancer (10%) and uterus and cervical cancer (8%) are the next more common cancers diagnosed in women. The variation

in breast cancer incidence across EU member states can be partly attributed to variation in the extent and type of screening activities. Mortality rates from breast cancer have declined in most EU countries since the 1990s due to earlier detection and improvements in treatments, but still breast cancer continues to be one of the leading causes of cancer death among women (see indicator “Mortality from cancer” in this chapter and the indicator on “Screening, survival and mortality from breast cancer” in Chapter 6).

Among men, prostate cancer is expected to account for almost one quarter (23%) of all new cancers diagnosed in 2018. The incidence of prostate cancer has increased in most European countries since the late 1990s, partly because the greater use of prostate specific antigen (PSA) tests is leading to greater detection. Lung cancer (14% of new cancer cases), and colon and rectum cancers (13%) also account for a large number of new cancers detected in men.

### Definition and comparability

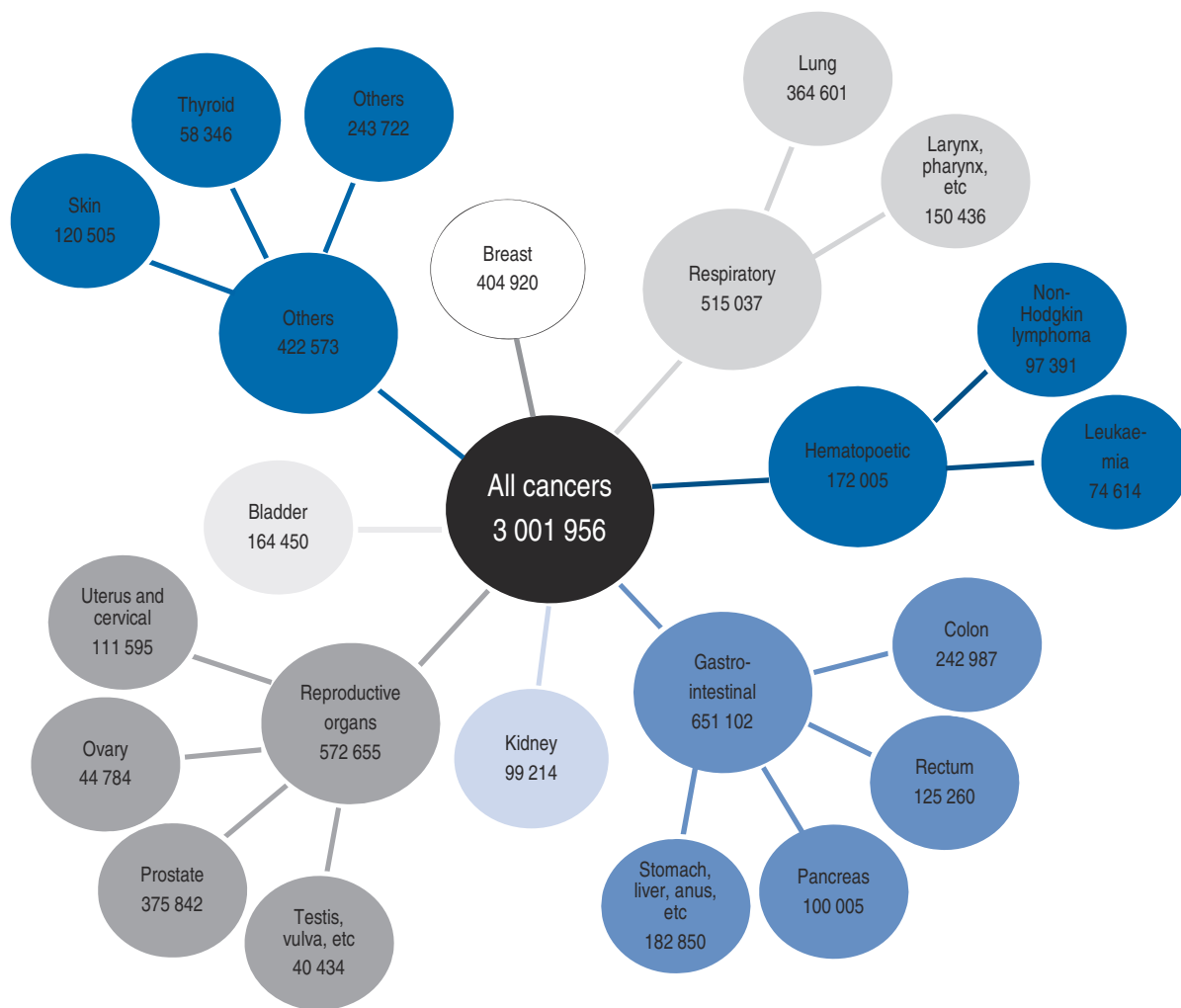
Cancer incidence rates are based on numbers of new cases of cancer registered in a country in a year divided by the population. Differences in the quality of cancer surveillance and reporting across countries may affect the comparability of the data. Rates have been age-standardised based on the new European Standard Population to remove variations arising from differences in age structures across countries and over time. The data come from the European Cancer Information System (ECIS). The estimates for 2018 may differ from national estimates due to differences in methods.

The incidence of all cancers is classified to ICD-10 codes C00-C97 (excluding non-melanoma skin cancer C44).

### Reference

Joint Research Centre (2018), Dataset Collection: European Cancer Information System, <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/dataset-collection-european-cancer-information-system>.

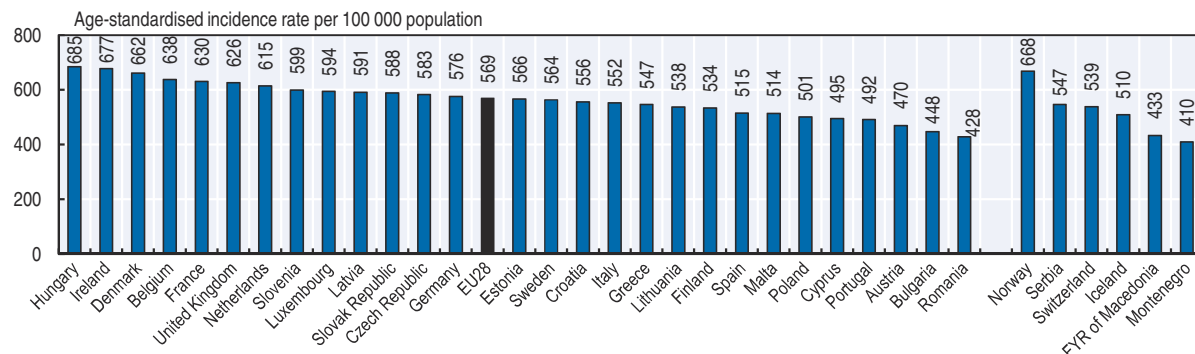
### 3.28. Estimated number of new cancer cases, all EU countries, 2018



Note: Non-melanoma skin cancer is excluded.  
 Source: JRC (European Cancer Information System).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933834794>

### 3.29. Estimated incidence rate for all cancers, by country, 2018



Note: All cancers are included except non-melanoma skin cancer. Numbers are age-standardised based on the European Standard Population.  
 Source: JRC (European Cancer Information System).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933834813>



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