

Analysis of a cancer profile of 10 European states

EPH14

ISPOR Europe 2025
9-12 November 2025
Glasgow, Scotland, UK

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Introduction

Europe is facing the civilisational challenge posed by cancer. Despite concerted, pan-European endeavours to influence health policy on cancer at the central level, the actual organisation of cancer care and prevention remains a national responsibility.

Objective

This study aimed to gather and compare epidemiological indicators and oncology care data in ten selected European countries.

Method

A targeted review of cancer databases was conducted to assess the basic epidemiological and healthcare profiles in Poland, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and Italy.

Results

According to the European Cancer Information System (ECIS), cancer incidence rates in 2022 ranged from 537 cases per 100,000 population in Poland to 690 in Italy. Mortality rates varied from 241 in Finland to 326 in Italy. These values fluctuate around the EU average of 613.9 new cases and 289.3 deaths per 100,000 people. Lung and colorectal cancers were the two leading causes of cancer-related deaths across all countries.

All countries have implemented national cancer plans aligned, to varying degrees, with the objectives of Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. Full alignment was observed in Poland and Spain. In 2023, cancer care expenditure ranged from 4% of total healthcare spending in Finland to 8% in Germany and Poland. Despite this, Poland recorded the lowest cancer screening rates—only 35% of women underwent breast cancer screening (compared to 82% in Finland), and just 11% were screened for cervical cancer (versus 74% in Czechia).

Figure 1. Policy

Country	National Cancer Control Plan (NCCP)	Alignment with Europe's Beating Cancer Plan (EBCP) [1,2,3]						
		Pillars of EBCP			Transversal themes of EBCP			
		Prevention	Early detection	Diagnosis and treatment	Quality of life	Cancer inequalities	Paediatric cancer	Research and innovation
Poland	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Czechia	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Estonia	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Finland	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Spain	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Netherlands	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Germany	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Slovenia	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
United Kingdom	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Italy	YES	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● the national plan/program includes a dedicated section on the given topic;

● the national plan/program addresses the topic within one of its sections, but it is not the sole focus.

Figure 2. Epidemiology

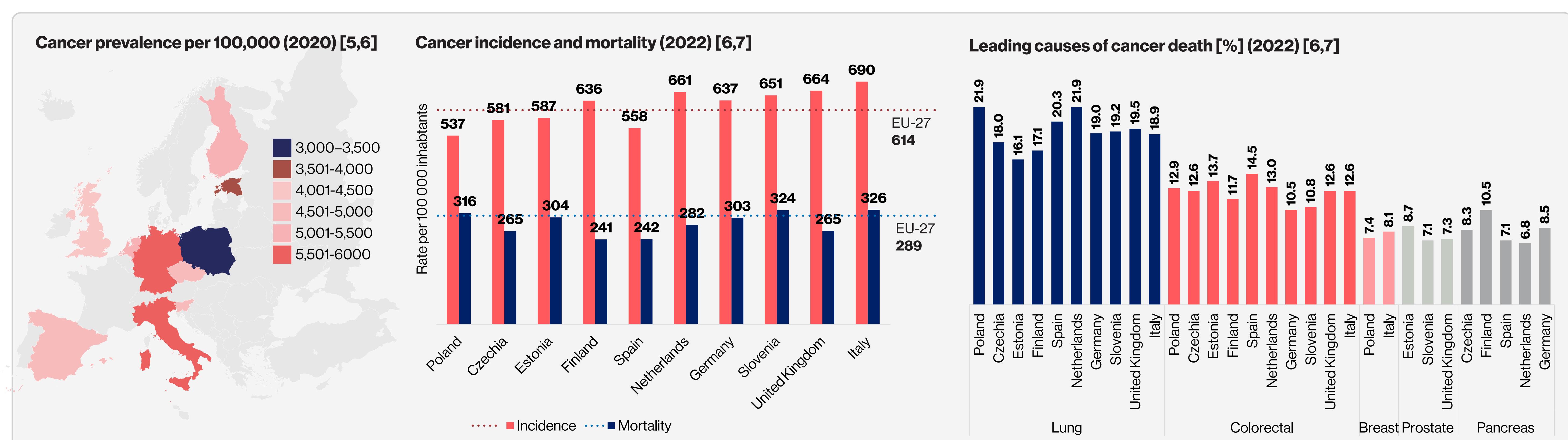
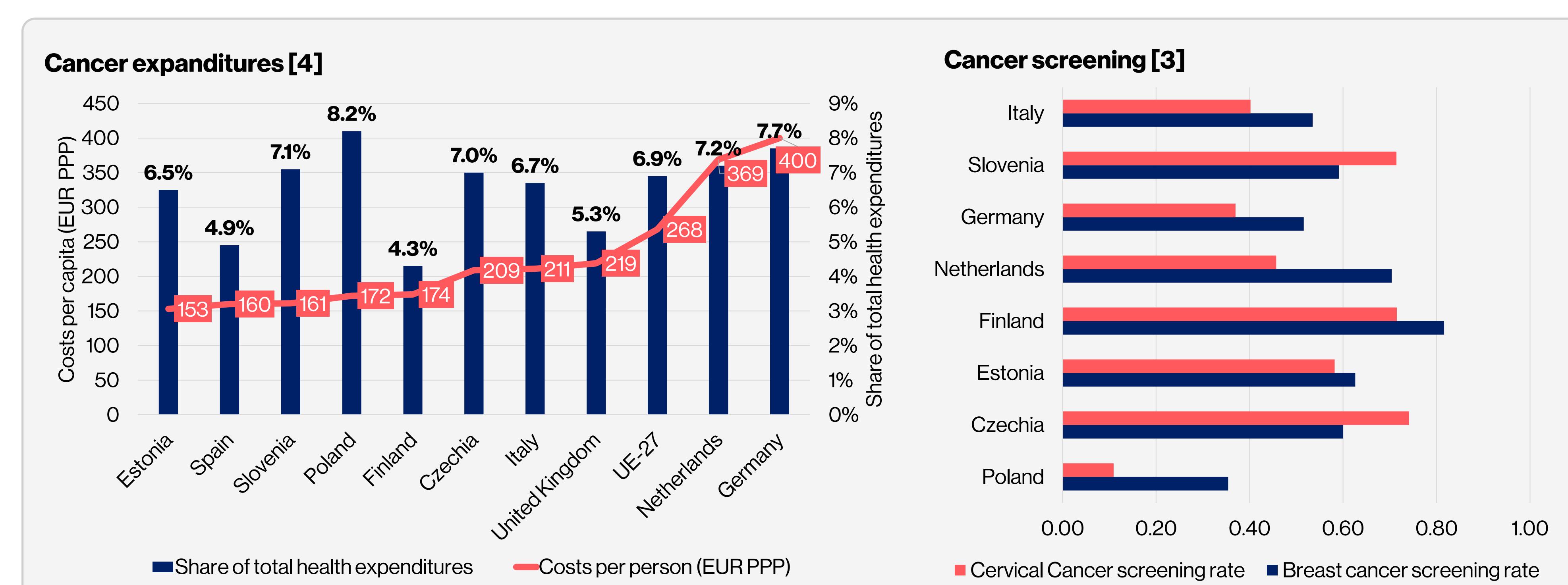


Figure 3. Actions



Conclusions

Despite shared strategic frameworks and comparable spending levels, significant differences remain in outcomes and preventive efforts. This highlights the need for not only structural reforms but also robust public health initiatives to improve cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment across Europe.