

Introduction to the Belgian Health System

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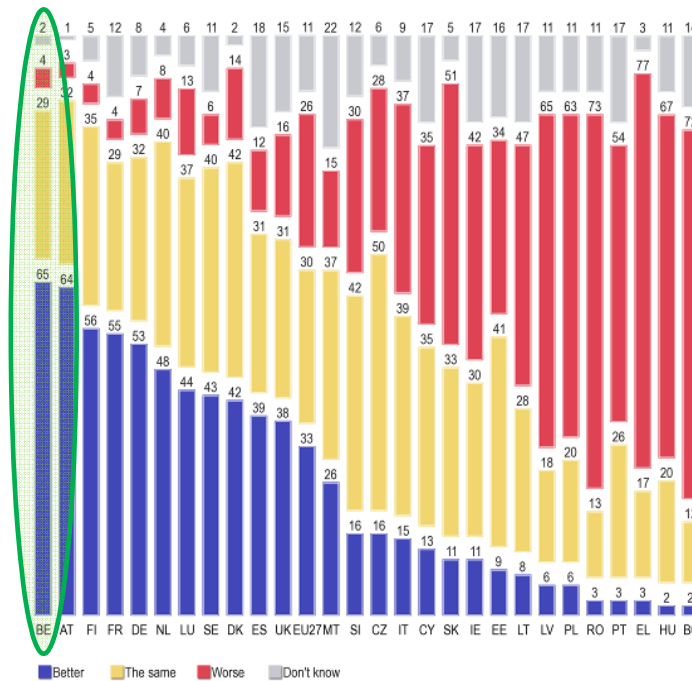


Intro



Eurobarometer: Based on what you know, do you think that the quality of healthcare in (OUR COUNTRY) compared to other Member States is... ?

■ Better ■ The same ■ Worse ■ Don't know



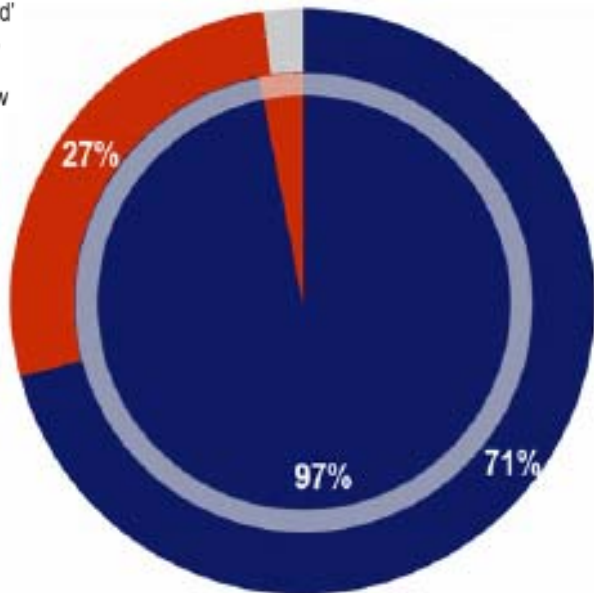
Source: Eurobarometer (April 2010) Patient safety and quality of healthcare

Intro



EUROBAROMETER: 'How would you evaluate the overall quality of healthcare in Belgium ?'

- Total 'Good'
- Total 'Bad'
- Don't know

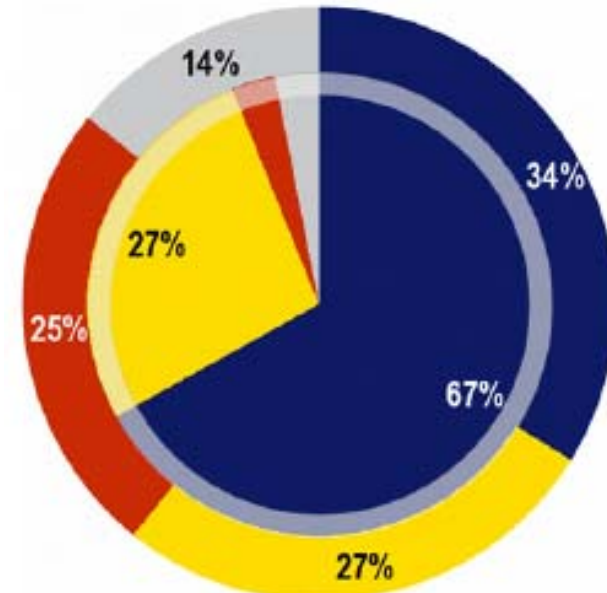


EU28 ● Outer pie

BE 🇧🇪 Inner pie

EUROBAROMETER: 'Based on what you know, do you think that the quality of healthcare in Belgium compared to other Member States is... ?'

- Better
- The same
- Worse
- Don't know



EU28 ● Outer pie

BE 🇧🇪 Inner pie

Intro



*“From a citizen’s perspective, the assessment is quite **positive**: a large part (78%) of the Belgian population reports to be in good health, which is a better result than the EU-15 average. The Belgian population also reports to be satisfied with their contacts with the health system, especially in ambulatory care. However, a more balanced image appears when examining the whole set of indicators.”*

(KCE Report 259C – Performance Report 2015)

Content



1. Belgium for Beginners
2. Characteristics of the Belgian Health system
3. Performance of the Belgian Health system
4. Conclusion



1. Belgium for Beginners

- 1. Belgium for Beginners**
- 2. Characteristics of the Belgian Health system
- 3. Performance of the Belgian Health system
- 4. Challenges for the future
- 5. Conclusion

1. Belgium for Beginners



Geography, Socio-demography, Economy

- 11.250.585 inhabitants/ 30.528 km²
- 3 official languages: Dutch - French – German
- Open market and primarily service oriented economy
- GDP/capita > €36.000
- Considerable Pharmaceutical Industry



1. Belgium for Beginners



Geography, Socio-demography, Economy

	Belgium	EU
Demographic factors		
Population size (thousands)	11 274	509 394
Share of population over age 65 (%)	18.1	18.9
Fertility rate ¹	1.7	1.6
Socioeconomic factors		
GDP per capita (EUR PPP)	34 200	28 900
Relative poverty rate ² (%)	10.0	10.7
Unemployment rate (%)	8.5	9.4

1. Number of children born per woman aged 15-49.

2. Percentage of persons living with less than 50% of median equalised disposable income. These data refer to 2013.

Source: Eurostat Database; OECD (for relative poverty rate).

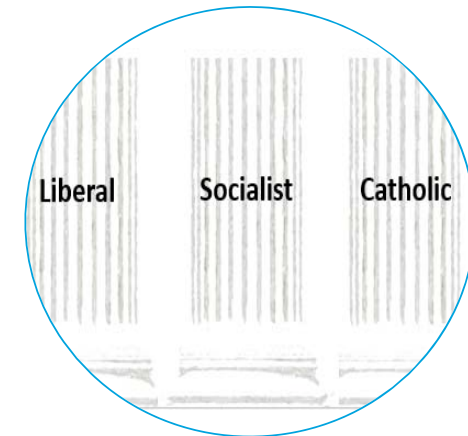
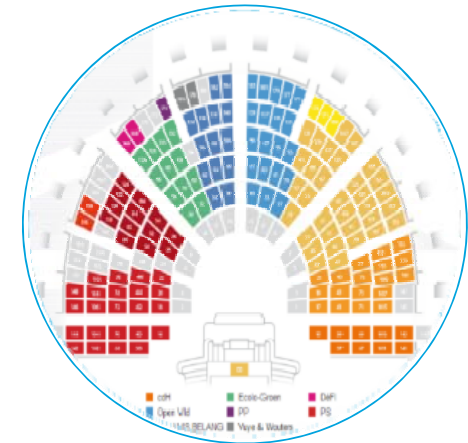
[DRAFT country profile Belgium – OECD; Observatorium;EC]

1. Belgium for Beginners



Political and historical context

- Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of governance
- Federal state
- Legacy of strong “pillarization” (e.g. political parties, trade unions, news papers, and ... health insurance providers)



1. Belgium for Beginners

BELGIUM

THE FEDERAL STATE



THE COMMUNITIES

THE FLEMISH COMMUNITY



THE REGIONS

THE FLEMISH REGION



THE FRENCH COMMUNITY



THE BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION



THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COMMUNITY



THE WALLOON REGION



- **1 Federal level** Foreign affairs, Defense, Justice, Fiscal Policy, Domestic Affairs, Social Security and a share of Health policy (curative care)
- **3 Communities** Person-related matters (education, cultural affairs, language, health and welfare,...)
- **3 Regions** Territorial matters (economy, energy, agriculture, environment,...)
- **10 Provinces and 589 municipalities**

1. Belgium for Beginners



The European Union

Art. 168: new health article in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU

- Principle of Subsidiarity
- High level of human protection in All community policies
- Complement national policy + encourage cooperation



1. Belgium for Beginners



Examples of EU Health Legislation outside article 168.

- Free movement of products
 - Rules on market access of pharmaceutical products, medical devices
- Free movement of services
 - Professional qualifications of health professionals
- Free movement of persons
 - Coordination of social security systems
 - Directive on cross-border care (free movement of patients)



2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system

1. Belgium for Beginners
- 2. Characteristics of the Belgian Health system**
3. Performance of the Belgian Health system
4. Challenges for the future
5. Conclusion

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



1. Organisation and Governance
2. Principles
3. Service delivery
4. Financing
5. Medical products

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



- Competencies of the federal and regional authorities
- Competencies at federal Level
- Principles of health service delivery
- Principles of healthcare financing

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Competencies of federal -regional authorities

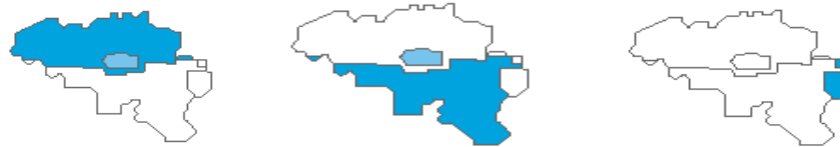


Health competence - Federal level
Regulation and financing of the compulsory health insurance
Financing of Hospital budgets
Legislation on professionals qualifications
Registration and price control of Pharmaceuticals
Health Workforce Planning and forecasting

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Competencies of federal -regional authorities



Health competence - Federated entities

Financing of health infrastructure and heavy medical equipment

Quality control in acute hospitals

Health promotion and disease prevention

The definition of recognition norms for hospitals

Maternity and child health care

Coordination in primary care

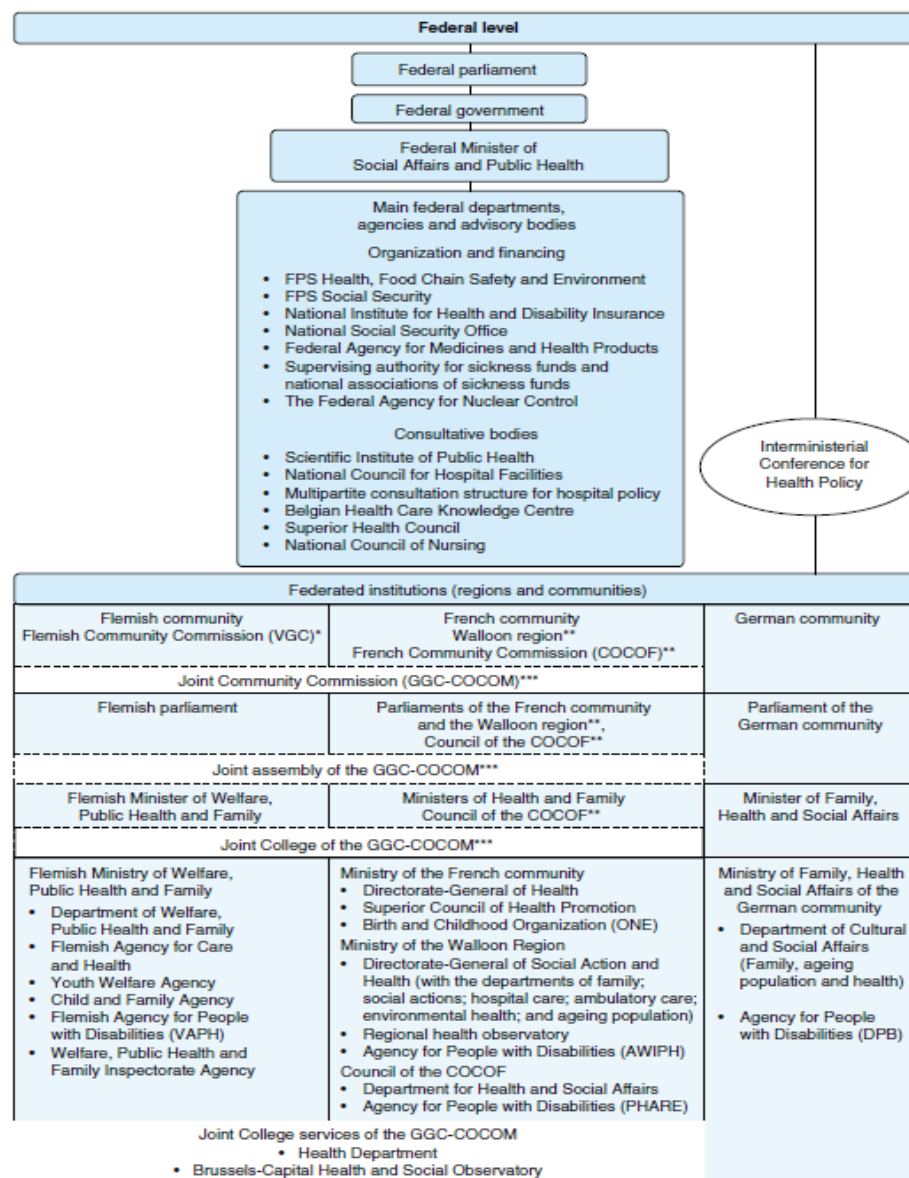
Long-term care

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Organisation

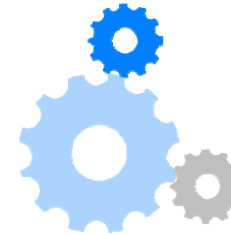




2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system

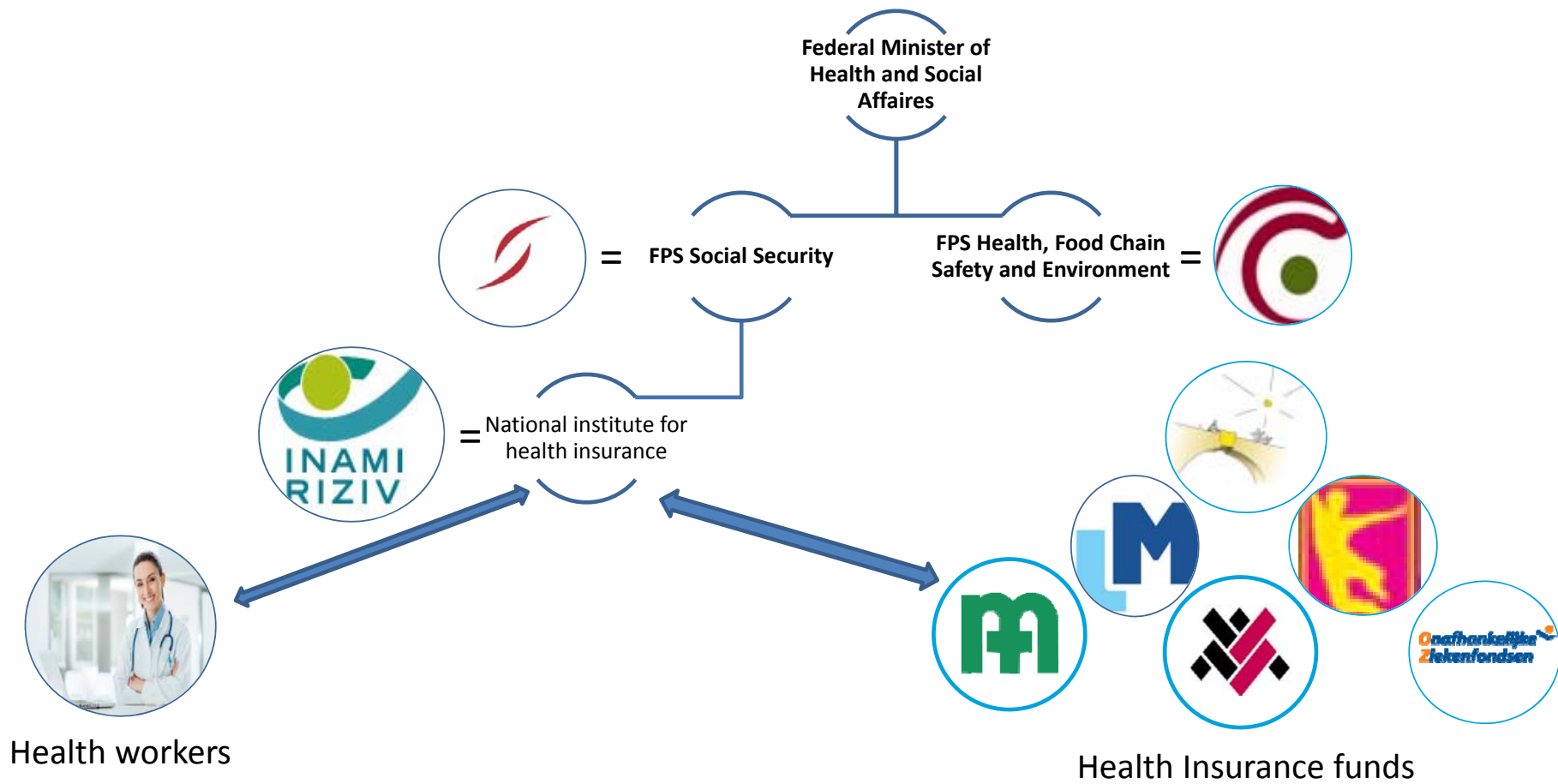


Organisation



Collaboration - Examples of policy areas		Federal	Federated
Health workforce	Health workforce planning	Minister of Health	Minister of Education
	Defining professionals qualifications	Minister of Health	
	Handing out recognitions		Minister of Health

Federal level



2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Principles of health service delivery

- Provision of care is done by private not-for profit organizations, while the framework is set by the state
- Freedom of choice for patients, no gatekeeper function
- The majority of doctors operate as self-employed, paid fee-for-service

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system

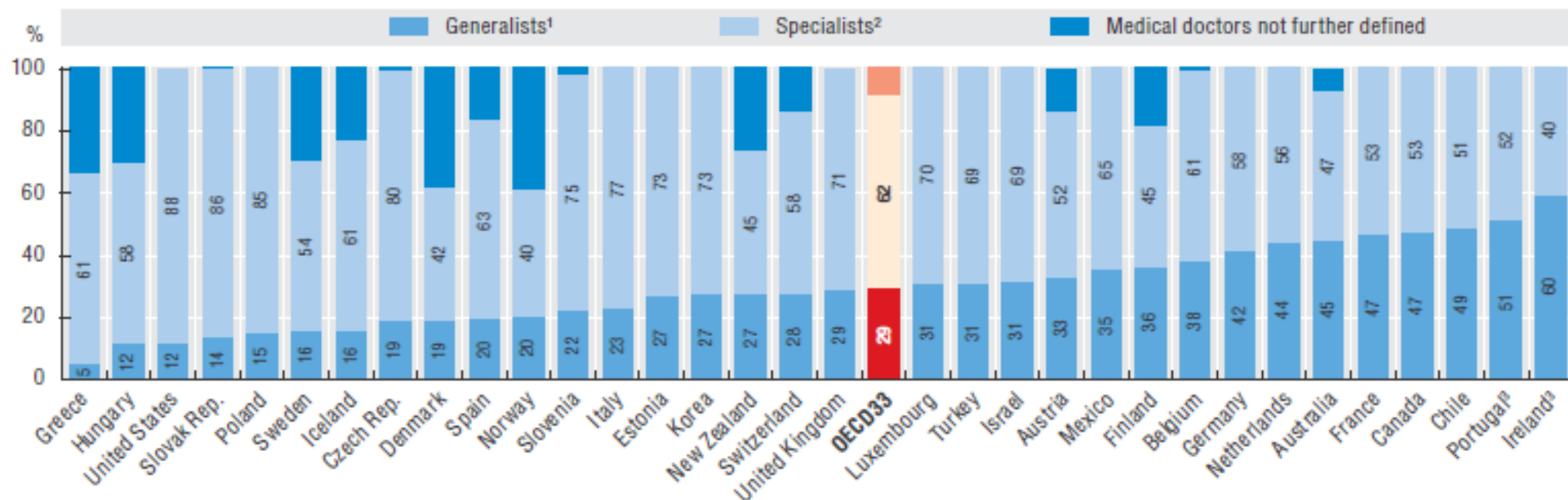


Service Delivery

- Stable # of health care professionals since 2000
 - Planning and limiting admission to the education curriculum
- Decrease in total number of acute beds, increase in average capacity of hospitals

Generalists and specialists as a share of all doctors

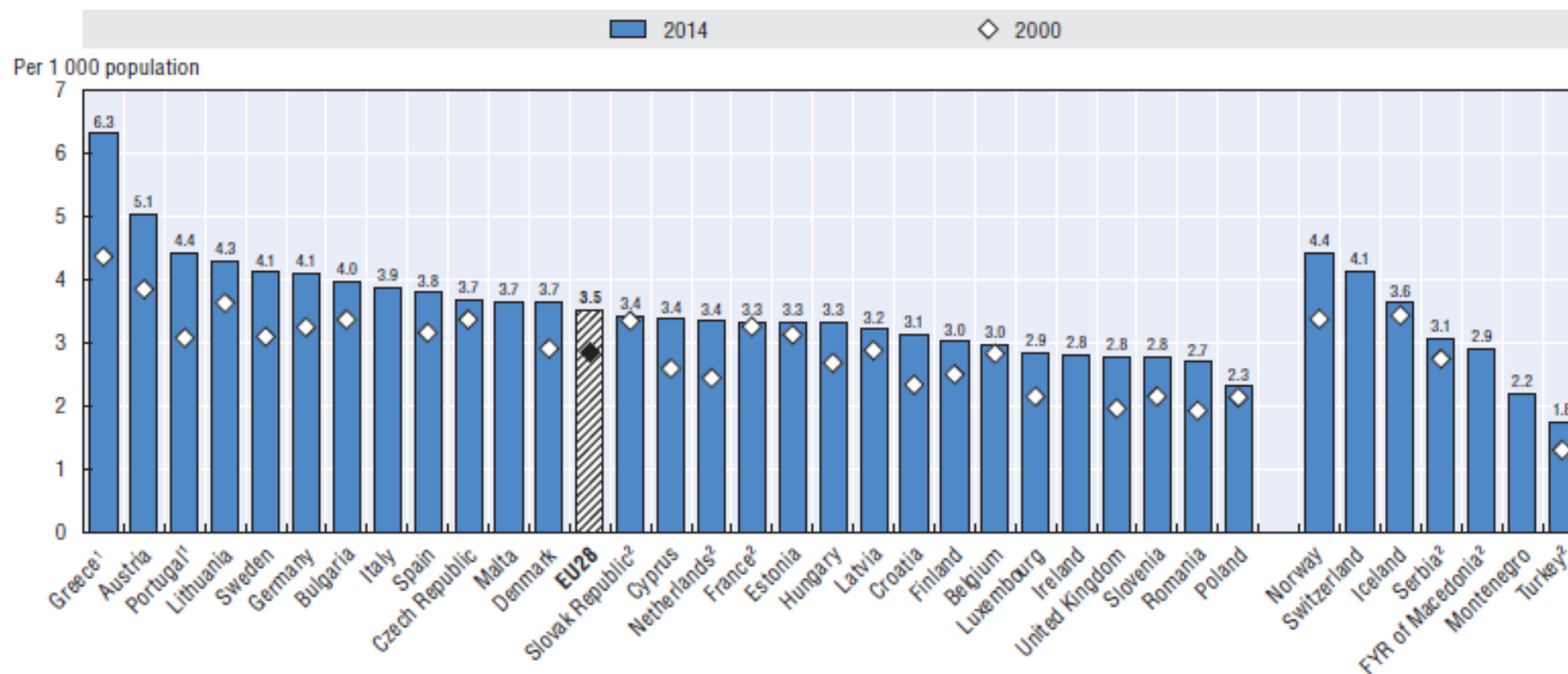
(2013 or nearest year)



1. Generalists include general practitioners/family doctors and other generalist (non-specialist) medical practitioners.
2. Specialists include paediatricians, obstetricians/gynaecologists, psychiatrists, medical, surgical and other specialists.
3. In Ireland and Portugal, most generalists are not GPs ("family doctors"), but rather non-specialist doctors working in hospitals or other settings. In Portugal, there is some double-counting of doctors with more than one specialty.

[OECD Health Statistics 2015, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health-data-en>]

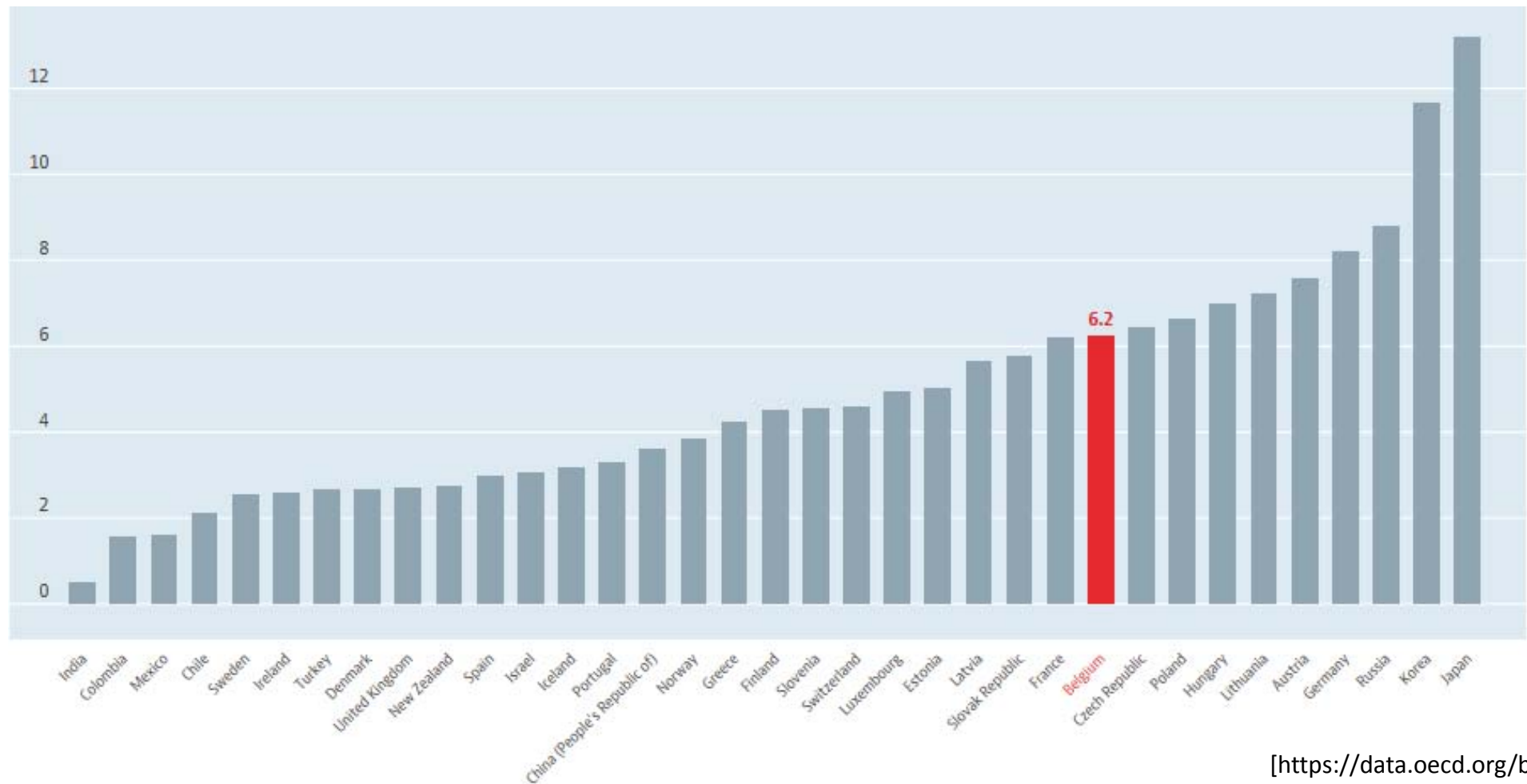
Practicing doctors/ 1000 population



1. Data refer to all doctors licensed to practice, resulting in a large over-estimation of the number of practising doctors (e.g. of around 30% in Portugal).
2. Data include not only doctors providing direct care to patients, but also those working in the health sector as managers, educators, researchers, etc. (adding another 5-10% of doctors).

[OECD Health Statistics 2016; Eurostat Database.]

Hospital Beds (Total, Per 1000 inhabitants -2014)



[<https://data.oecd.org/belgium.htm>]

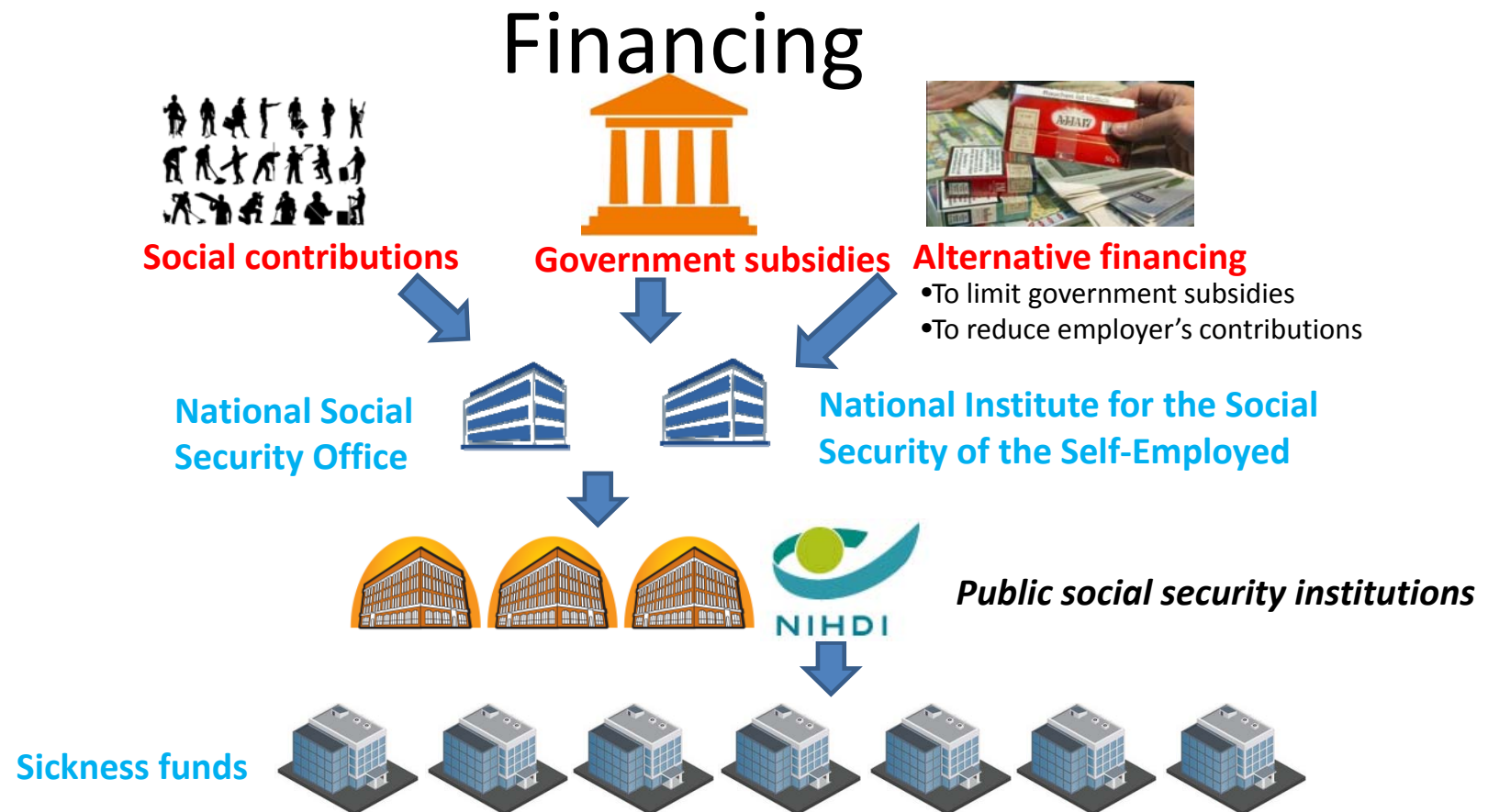
2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Principles of healthcare financing

- Solidarity through compulsory social insurance
- Healthcare insurance is part of a broader mandatory social security system based on income
- Reimbursement by the Non-profit sickness funds
- Fees are negotiated between sickness funds, physicians and government
- Social corrections (chronic illness - low income)

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system




2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Financing

- A Compulsory health care insurance

- 
- Almost the whole population is covered: $\pm 99\%$
 - A very broad benefits package
 - Almost 75% of all health care expenses is covered by the compulsory health care insurance

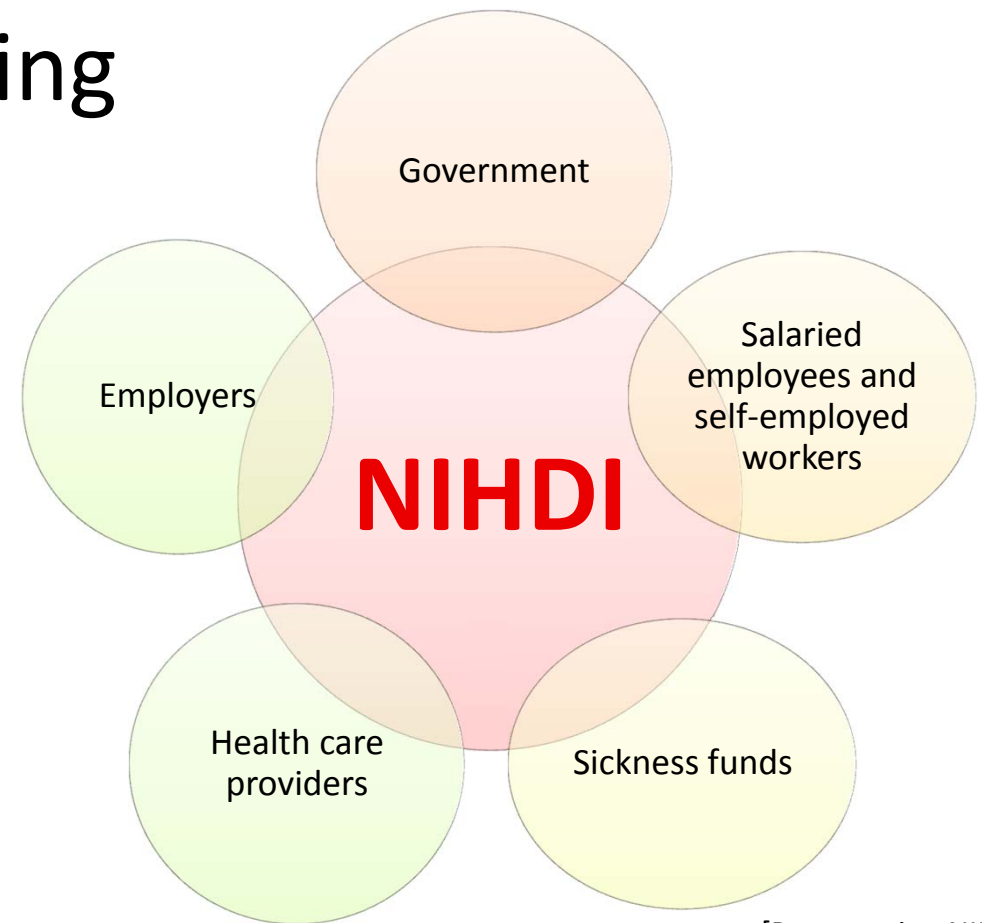
- 
- All working people have to pay **social security contributions**
 - All entitled persons must **affiliate** with a sickness fund

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



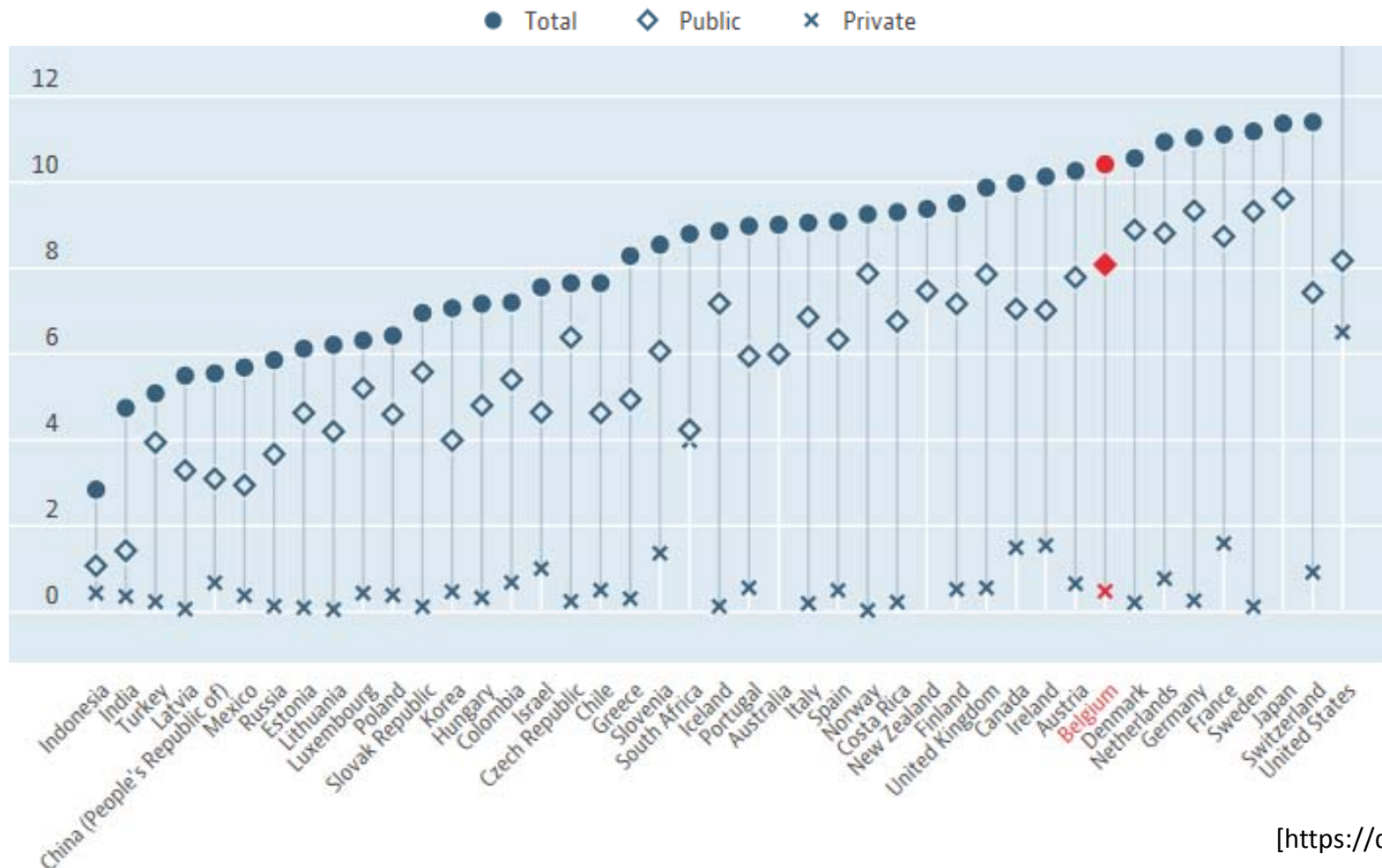
Financing

- The collective negotiation process in the health insurance



[Presentation NIHDI]

Health Spending (% of GDP – 2014)

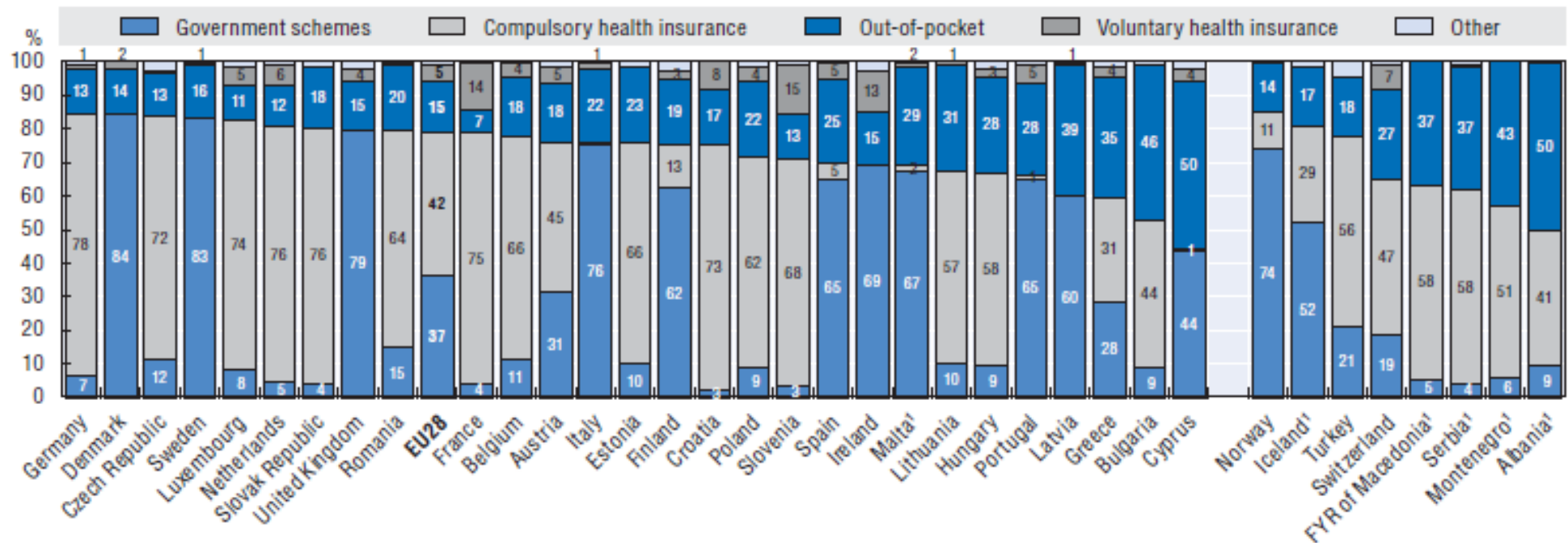


[<https://data.oecd.org/belgium.htm>]

Current Health Expenditure (By type of financing 2014)



5.11. Current health expenditure by type of financing, 2014



Note: Countries are ranked by government schemes and compulsory health insurance as a share of current health expenditure.

1. Includes investments.

[OECD Health Statistics 2016; Eurostat Database; WHO, Global Health Expenditure Database]

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Medical Products

- Provision through Community & Hospital pharmacies
- Selective reimbursement
 - Prescription by physicians, dentist and midwives
 - 7 reimbursement categories (Medical-therapeutical importance)

2. Characteristics of the Belgian health system



Medical Products

Regulation	
Market authorization	Federal Ministry of Public Health
	Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products
Determination of maximum price	Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs
Level of Reimbursement	Commission for the compensation for Medicinal Products - NIDHI

3. Performance of the Belgian health system

1. Belgium for Beginners
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4. Challenges for the future
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3. Performance of the Belgian health system



- Health System Performance Assessment (HSPA): a process that allows the health system to be assessed holistically based on measurable indicators.
- Belgium:
 - Regular evaluations of the performance of the health system.
 - one of the first country's to perform such an assessment systematically

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



PERFORMANCE OF THE BELGIAN HEALTH SYSTEM - REPORT 2015



Table of contents	
Part 1 - Context and methods	
Part 2 – Results	Preventive care
	Curative care
	Mental Healthcare
	Long-term care for the elderly
	Care at the end of life
	Efficiency of the healthcare system
	Efficiency of the healthcare system
	Sustainability
	Health Status
	Health Promotion and Lifestyles
	Equity an inequalities
	Conclusions on strengths and weaknesses of the Belgian Health System
Part 3 – Discussion	

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



- The performance of the health system is evaluated according to five dimensions:

1. Quality



2. Accessibility



3. Efficiency



4. Sustainability



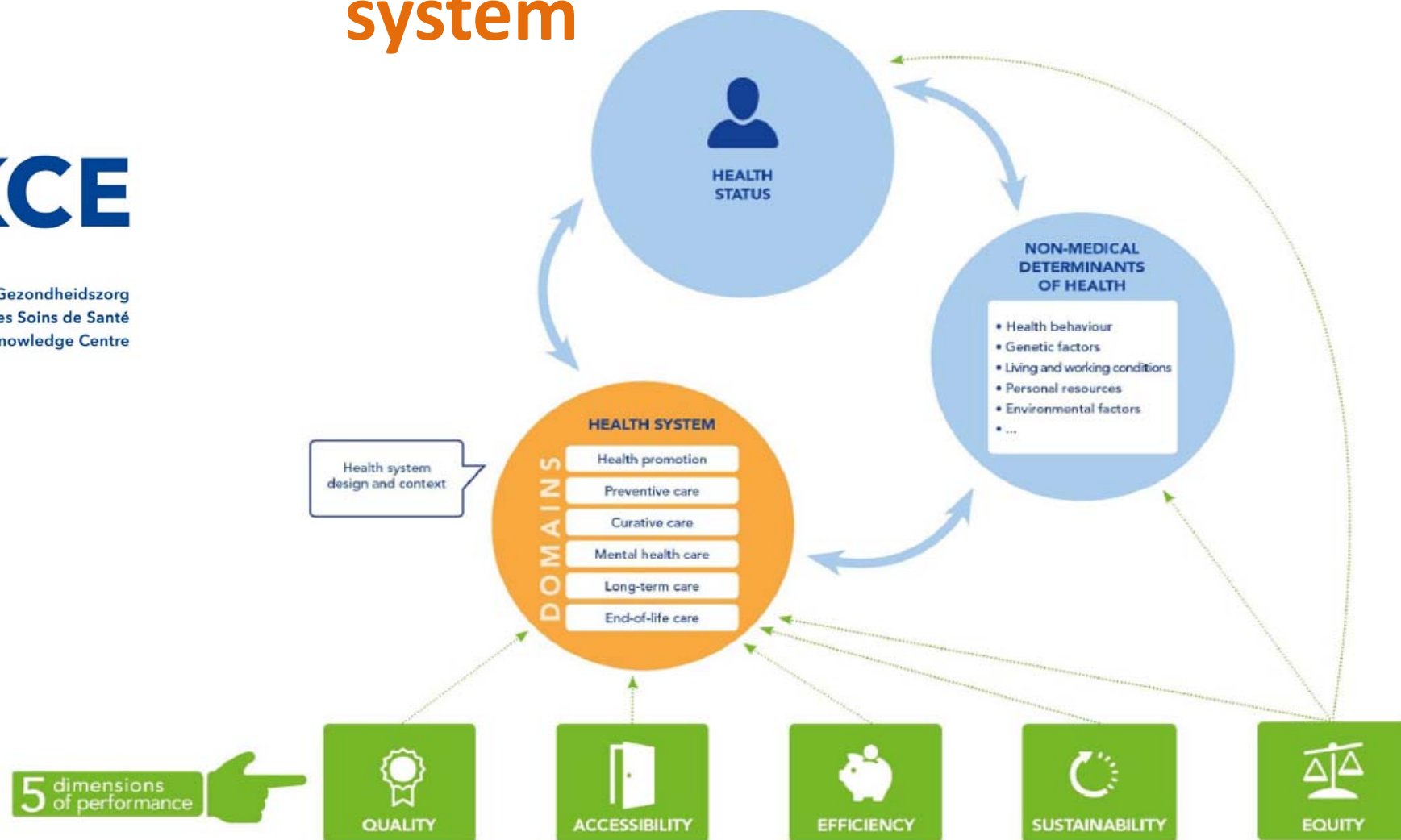
5. Equity.



3. Performance of the Belgian health system






Federaal Kenniscentrum voor de Gezondheidszorg
Centre Fédéral d'Expertise des Soins de Santé
Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre



3. Performance of the Belgian health system

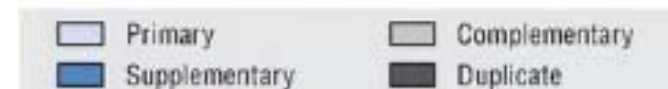
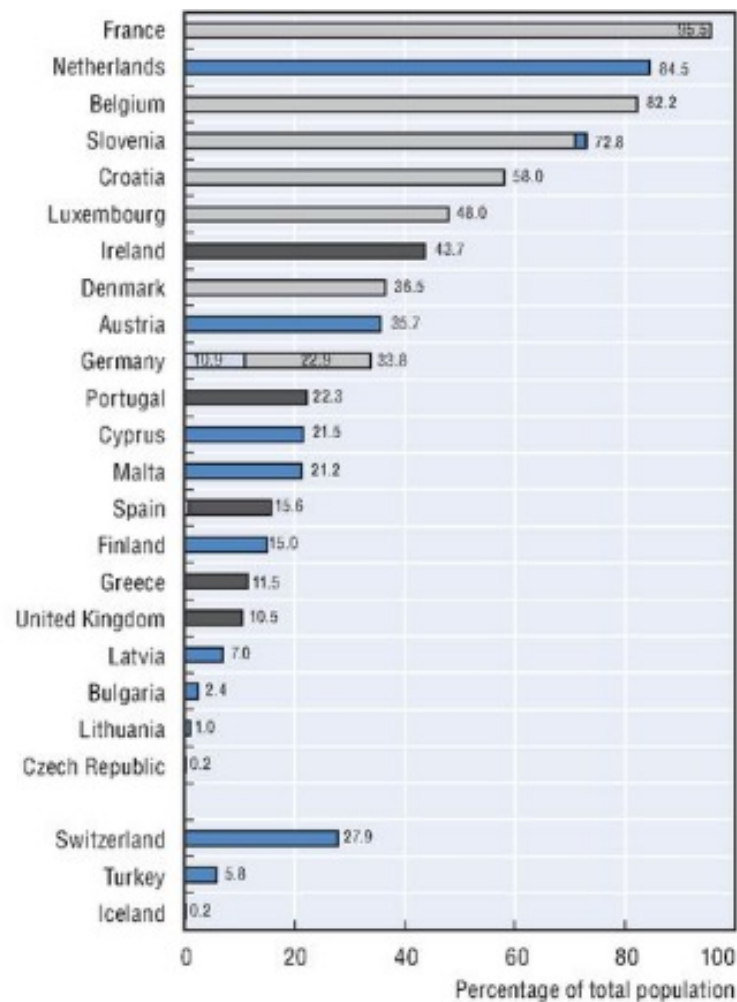


KCE Performance Indicator		Score
Financial accessibility	Health insurance of the population (% of population)	98.9 
	Out-of-pocket payments (% of total health expenditures)	17.9 
	Self-reported delayed contacts with health services for financial reasons (% of households)	8.0 
Health Workforce	Practicing physicians (/1000 population)	2.95
	Practicing nurses (/1000 population)	9.51
Waiting time	Waiting time of more than two weeks to get an appointment with a specialist (% of population asking an appointment)	38.4

[<https://kce.fgov.be/>]

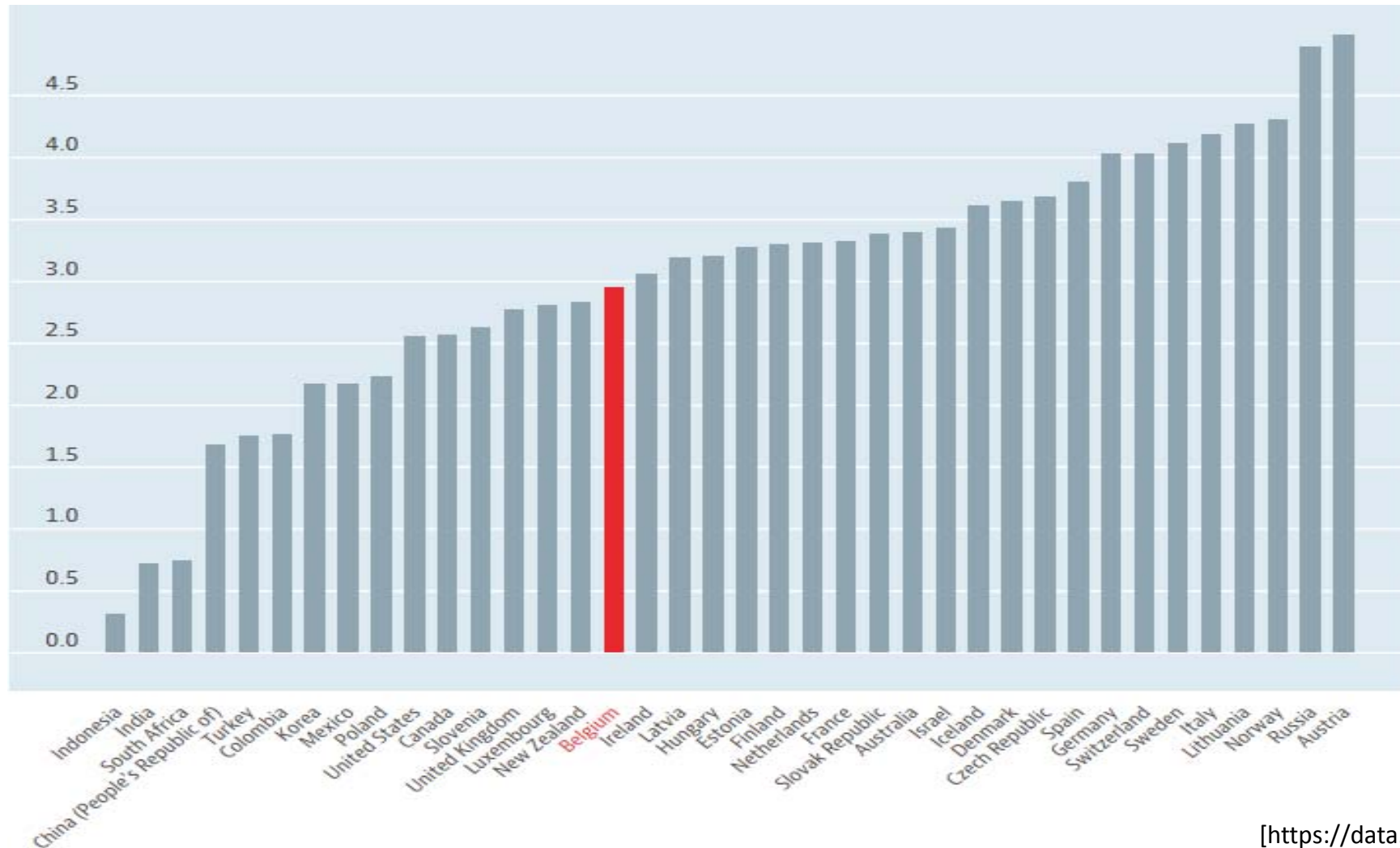
Health insurance coverage, by type, 2014

(or nearest year)



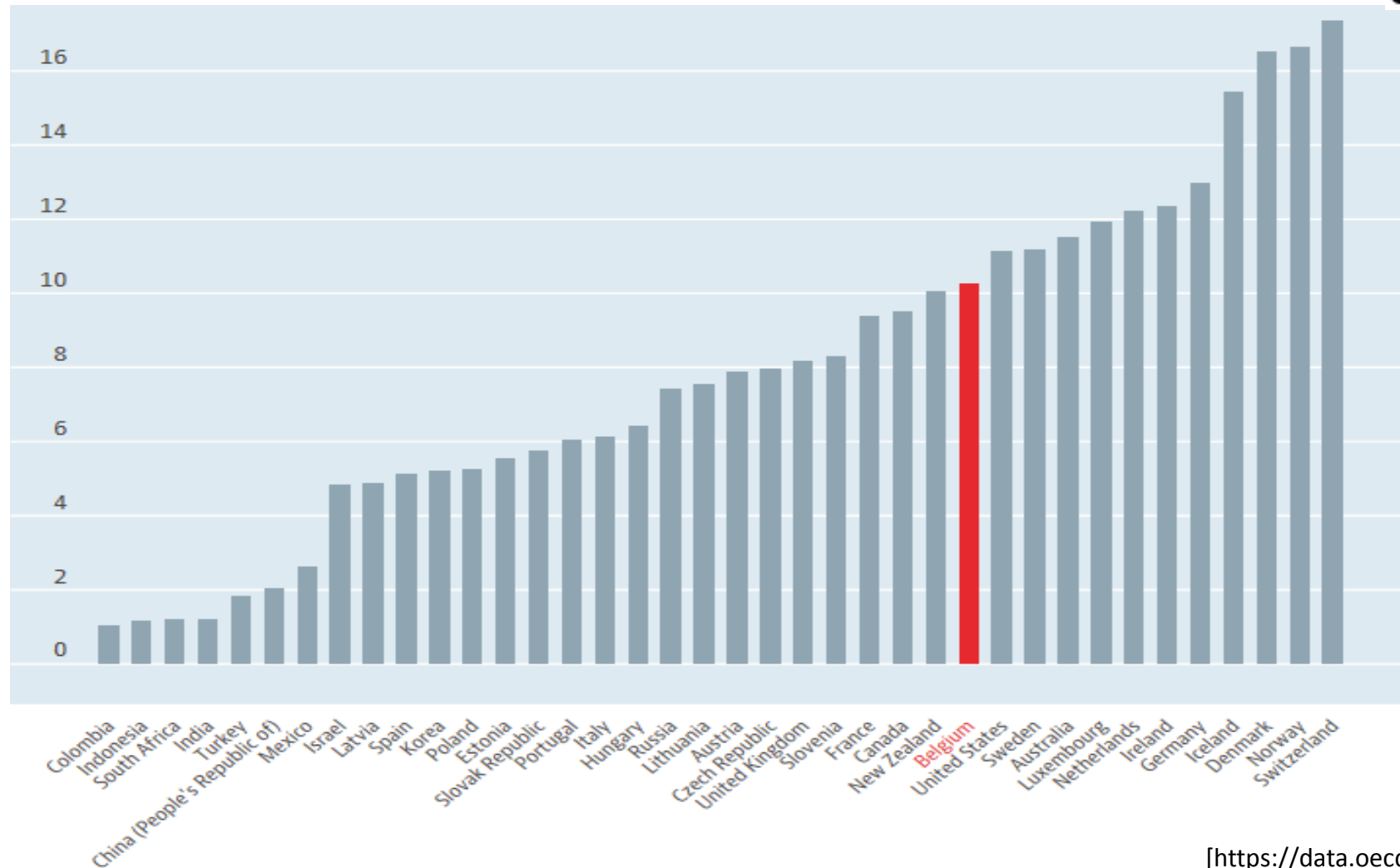
[<http://www.oecd.org/eu/health-at-a-glance-europe-23056088.htm>]

Doctors (Total, Per 1000 inhabitants - 2013)



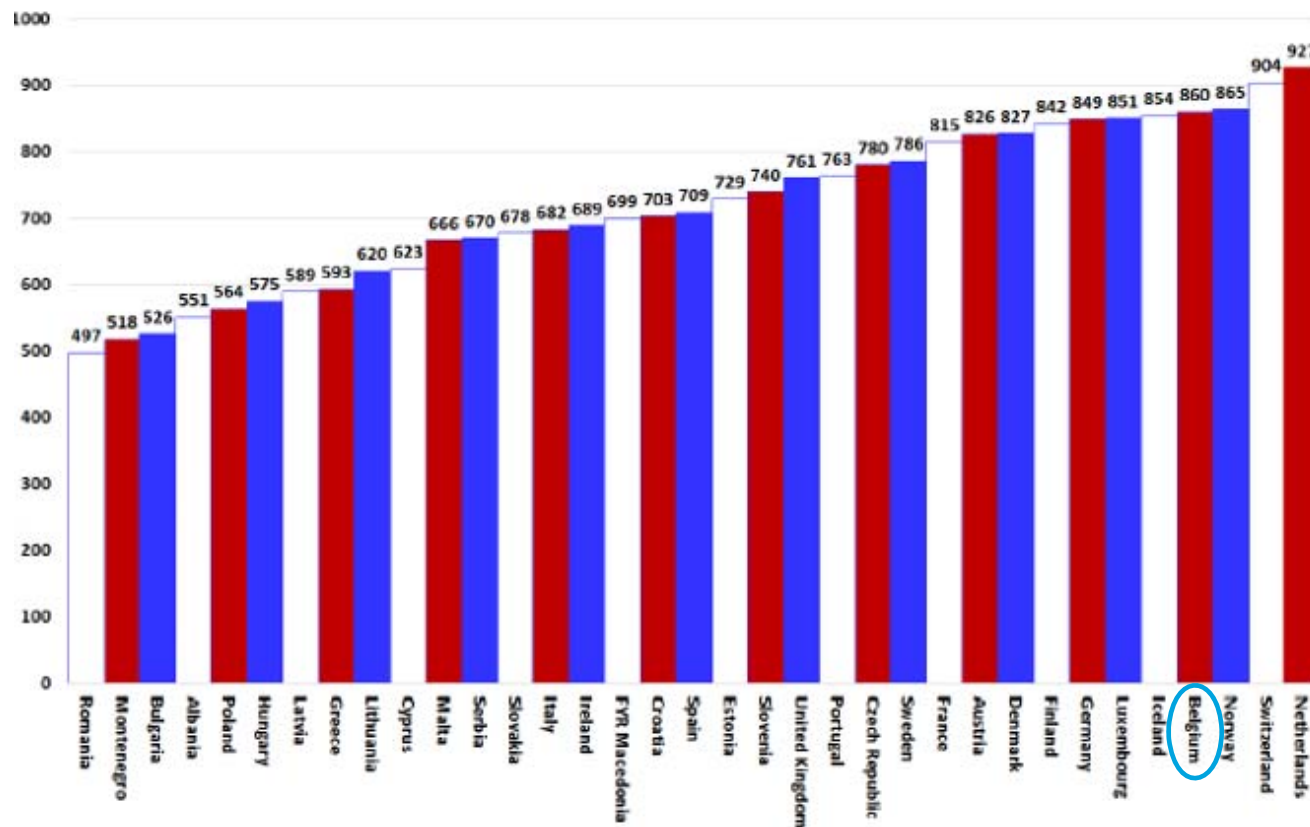
[<https://data.oecd.org/belgium.htm>]

Nurses (Total, Per 1000 inhabitants - 2014)



[<https://data.oecd.org/belgium.htm>]

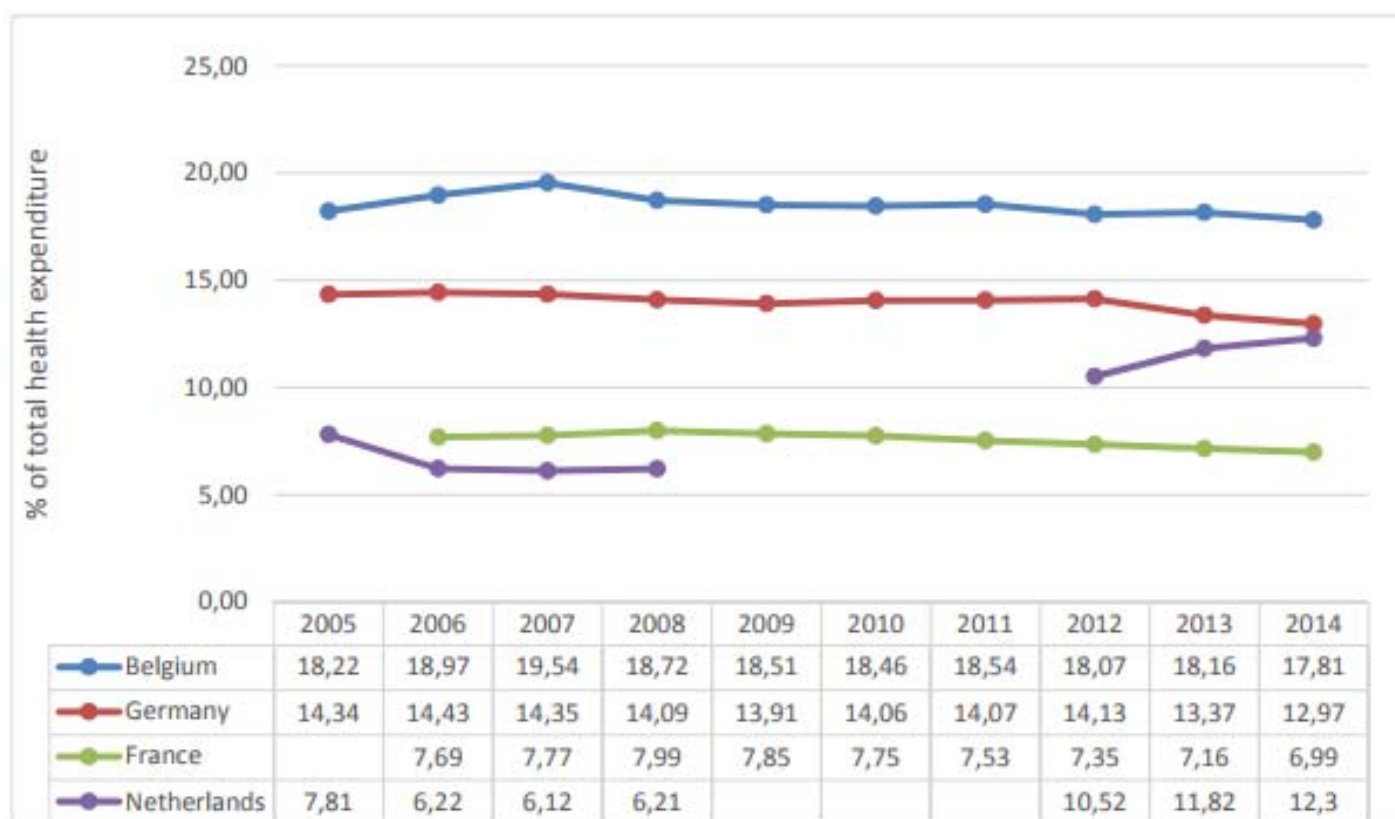
EHCI 2016 Total scores



[http://www.healthpowerhouse.com/files/EHCI_2016/EHCI_2016_report.pdf]

Out-of-pocket expenditures as share in total health expenditure

(Belgium and neighbouring countries, 2005-2014)



[<https://socialsecurity.belgium.be/sites/default/files/analysis-social-situation-and-protection-belgium-2017-en.pdf>]

% reporting unmet medical needs (2015)



3. Performance of the Belgian health system



KCE Performance Indicator		Score
Safety	Prevalence of hospital-acquired infections (% of patients hospitalized)	7.1
	Incidence of post-operative sepsis after abdominal surgery (/100 000 abdominal surgery discharges)	2114
Continuity	Coverage of global medical record (% of pop with at least one contact with their GP within three years)	62
	GP encounter within 7 days after hospital discharge (% patients 65+)	54.6
Patient centeredness	Doctor spending enough time with patients during the consultation (% of respondents, contact with GP/SP)	GP: 97.7 SP: 96.3

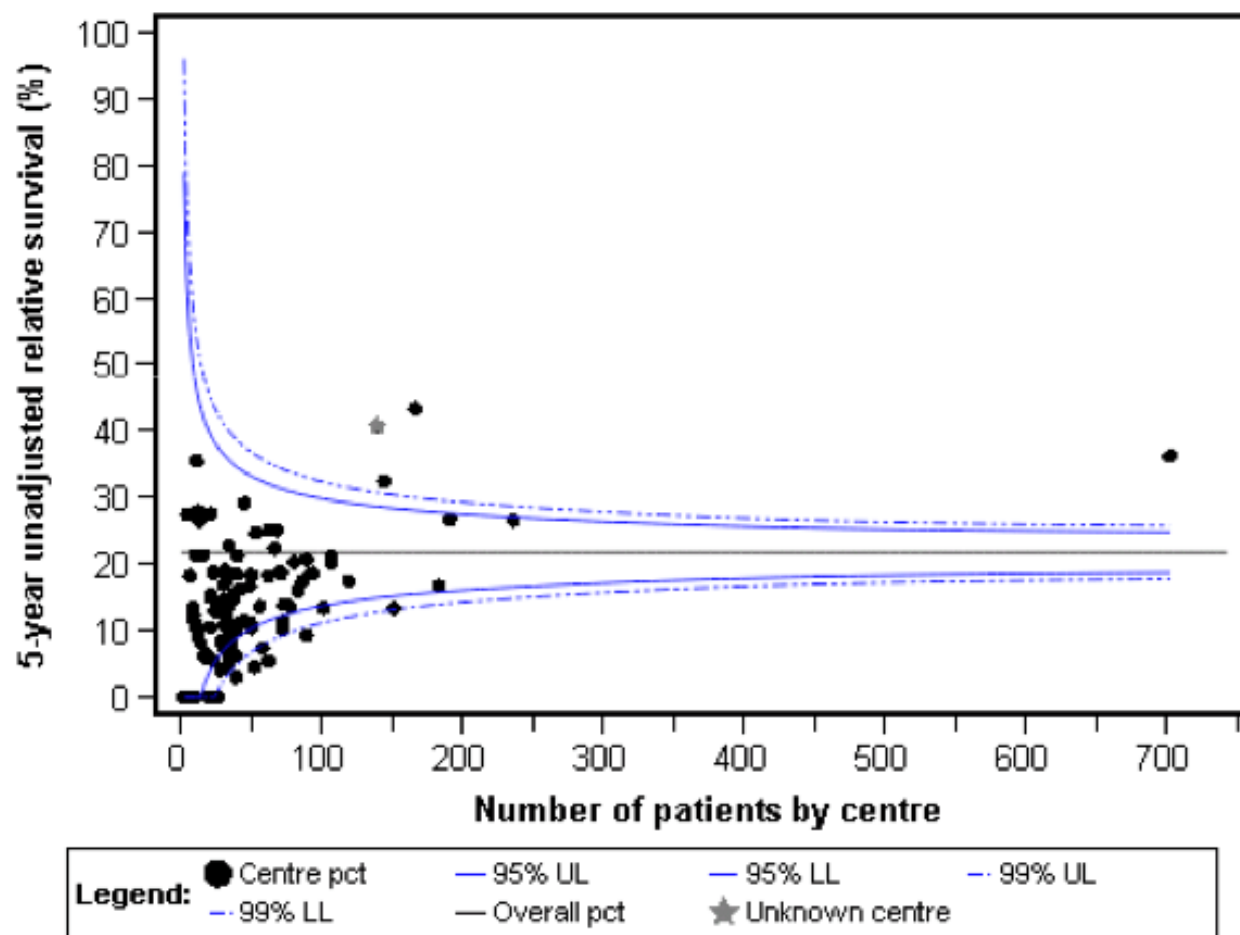
[<https://kce.fgov.be/>]

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



KCE Performance Indicator		Score
Effectiveness	Asthma hospital admissions in adults (/100 000 pop)	38 ●
	Breast cancer 5-year relative survival rate (%)	88.3 ●
Appropriateness	Use of antibiotics (total DDD/1000 pop/day)	28.7 ●
	Medical radiation exposure due to inappropriate medical imaging (mSv/capita/year)	0.90 ●

5-year unadjusted relative survival Oesophagus (%)



[https://kce.fgov.be/sites/default/files/page_documents/KCE_200_Quality_indicators_for_the_management_of_upper_gastrointestinal_cancer_second_rint_0.pdf]

Amenable mortality per 100,000 pop



3. Performance of the Belgian health system



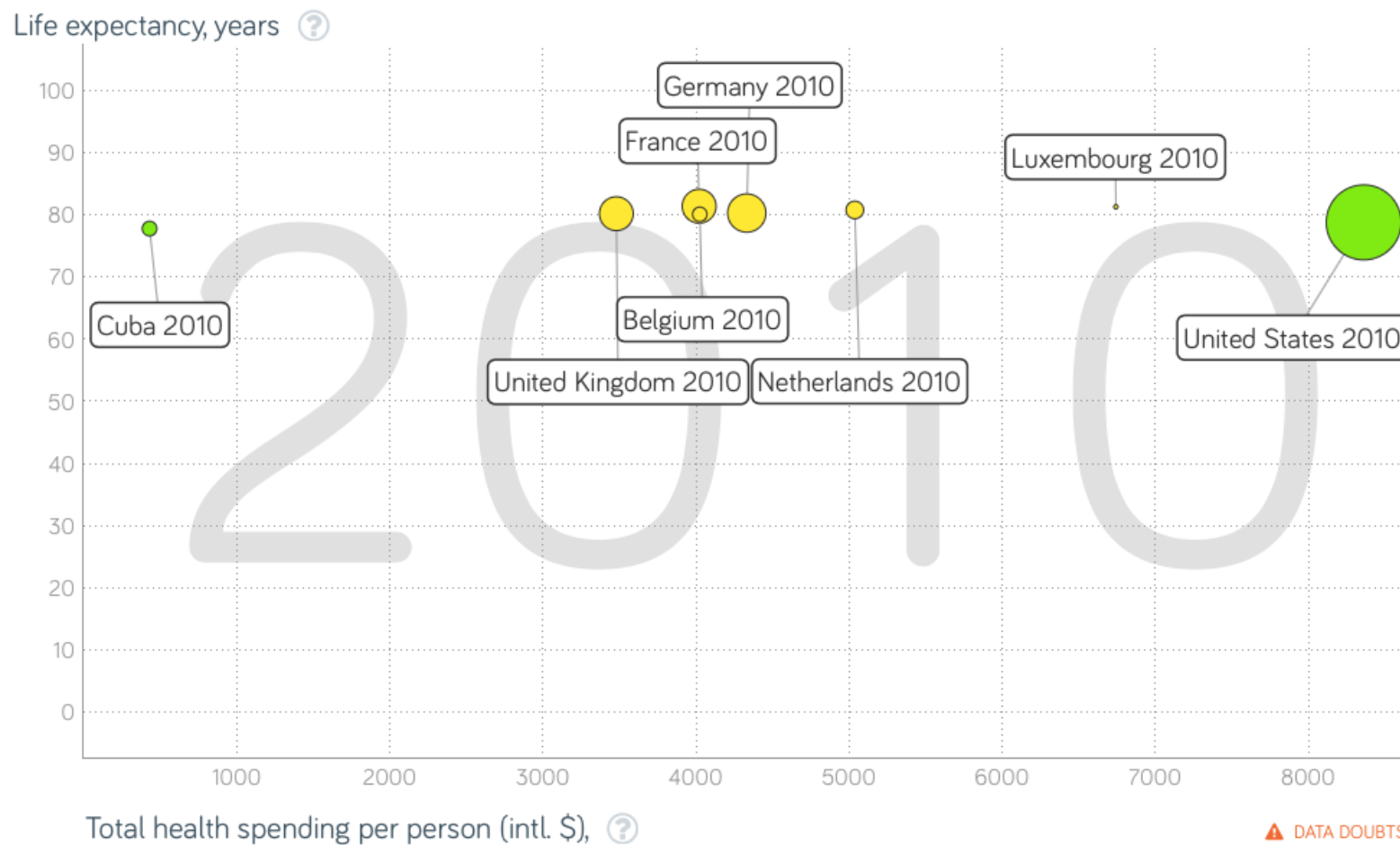
KCE Performance Indicator	Score
One-day surgical admissions (% of surgical admissions)	48.5 ●
Length of stay normal delivery (mean, days)	4.0 ●
Use of low-cost medication (% of total ambulatory Daily Defined Doses)	54.8 ●

Length of hospital stay (Acute care, Days, 1999-2013)



[<https://data.oecd.org/healthcare/length-of-hospital-stay.htm>]

3. Performance of the Belgian health system

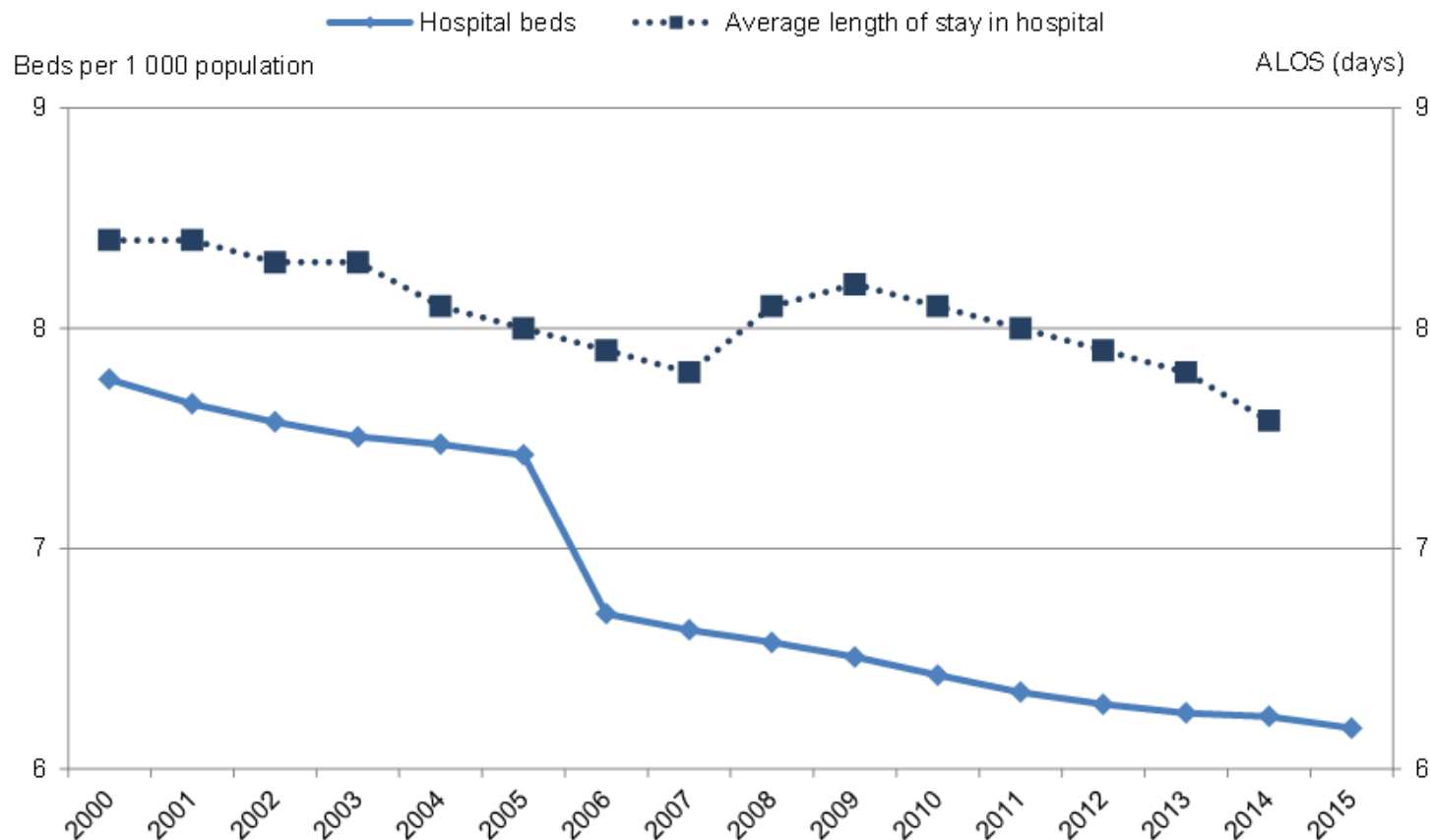


3. Performance of the Belgian health system



KCE Performance Indicator		Score
Health Workforce in the future (inflow, outflow)	Mean age of practicing GPs (in FTE, years)	52.8 ●
	Medical graduates becoming GP (% of those with medical specialization)	28 ●
Hospital-centrism	Curative care bed-days (number/capita)	1.1 ●

Beds per 1000 population



Note: There is a break in the series of hospital beds in 2006 (when beds in psychiatric care institutions were excluded), explaining the large reduction in that year.

Source: Eurostat Database

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



KCE Performance Indicator	Score
Income distribution in population (GINI coefficient)	0.259 ○
Degree of progressivity of financing healthcare (Ratio progressive receipts / total receipts, expressed as a %)	7.5 ○
Degree of regressivity of financing healthcare (Ratio regressive receipts / progressive receipts)	3.5 ○

Life expectancy (2001) and healthy life expectancy (2004) at age 25, by sex and level of education







	Life expectancy		Healthy life expectancy	
	male	female	male	female
Higher education	55	59.9	46.33	47.1
Higher secondary education	52.5	58.8	41.54	41.27
Lower secondary education	51.3	58.0	39.71	42.01
Primary education	49.3	56.2	36.65	36.27
No diploma	47.6	54.0	27.75	28.92

[Deboosere et. al., Van Oyen et. al. in de Performantie van het Belgische gezondheidssysteem (2012)]

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



Preventive Care

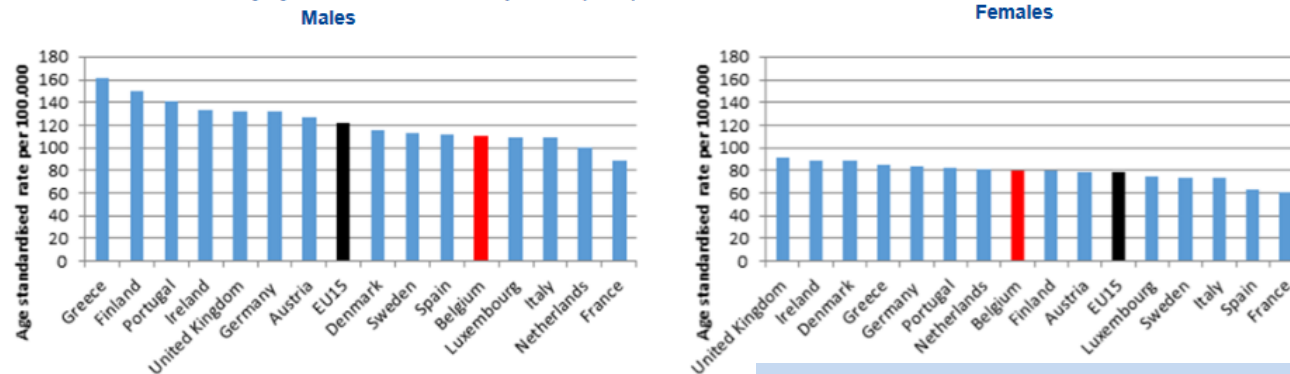
KCE Performance Indicator		Score
Vaccination coverage	Polio, diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccination in children (% , 3th/4 th dose)	3d: 99.0  4d: 92.0
	Measles vaccination in children (% , 1th/2th dose)	1d: 95.5  2d: 85.0
Incidence infectious diseases preventable by vaccination	Incidence of measles (new cases/million pop)	6.1 
Cancer screening	Breast cancer screening (% women aged 50-69)	62.7 
	Cervix cancer screening (% women aged 25-64)	53.6 
Oral health	No regular contacts with dentist (% pop aged 3+)	50.8 

[<https://kce.fgov.be/>]

Amenable vs preventable mortality



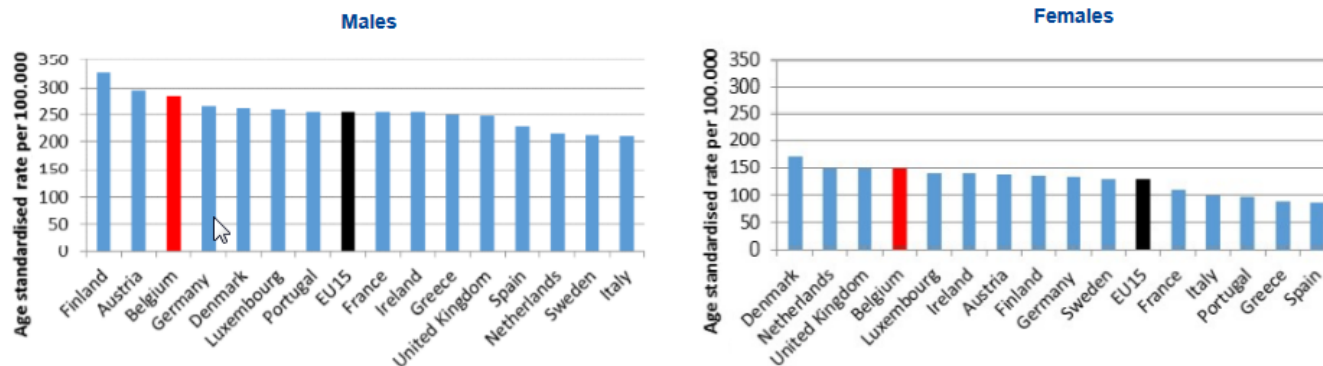
Figure 135 – Amenable Mortality by sex: international comparison (2012)



Source: Eurostat database.

😊 Amenable mortality
 ☹️ Preventable mortality

Figure 136 – Preventable Mortality by sex: international comparison (2012)



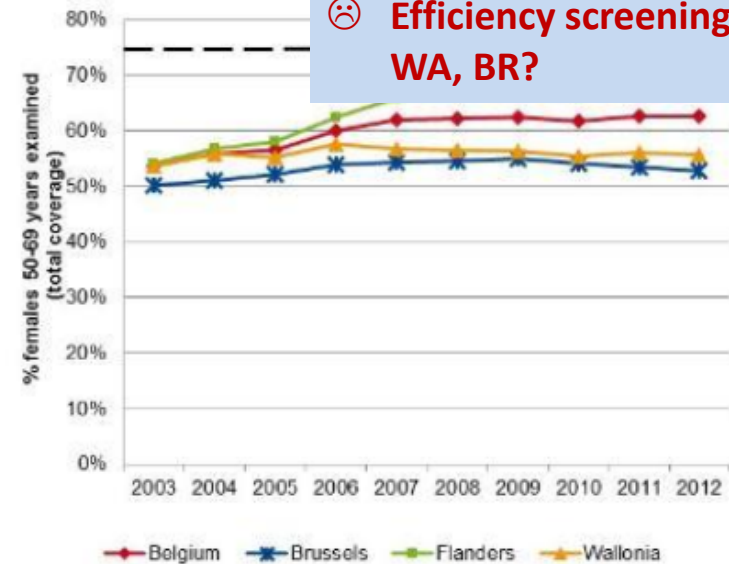
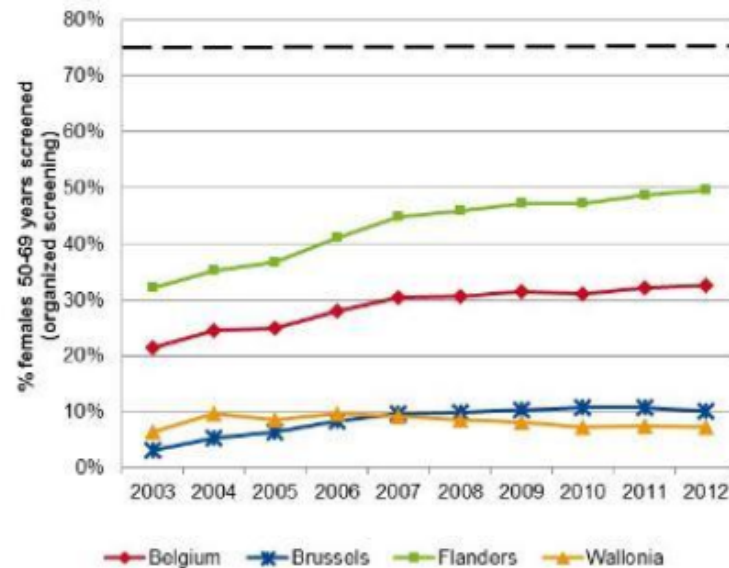
Source: Eurostat database

Breast cancer screening



- 😊 Stable prevalence (~63%)
- 😊 Close to EU-15 average
- 😞 Below 75% threshold
- 😞 Efficiency screening program in WA, BR?

Figure 8 – Coverage of breast cancer screening (organized and all mammograms) in women 50-69 years








Source: IMA Atlas 2015

Note: mammothest = organized screening program, mammogram = organized + opportunistic screening + diagnostic test; Dashed line= European target screening rate.

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



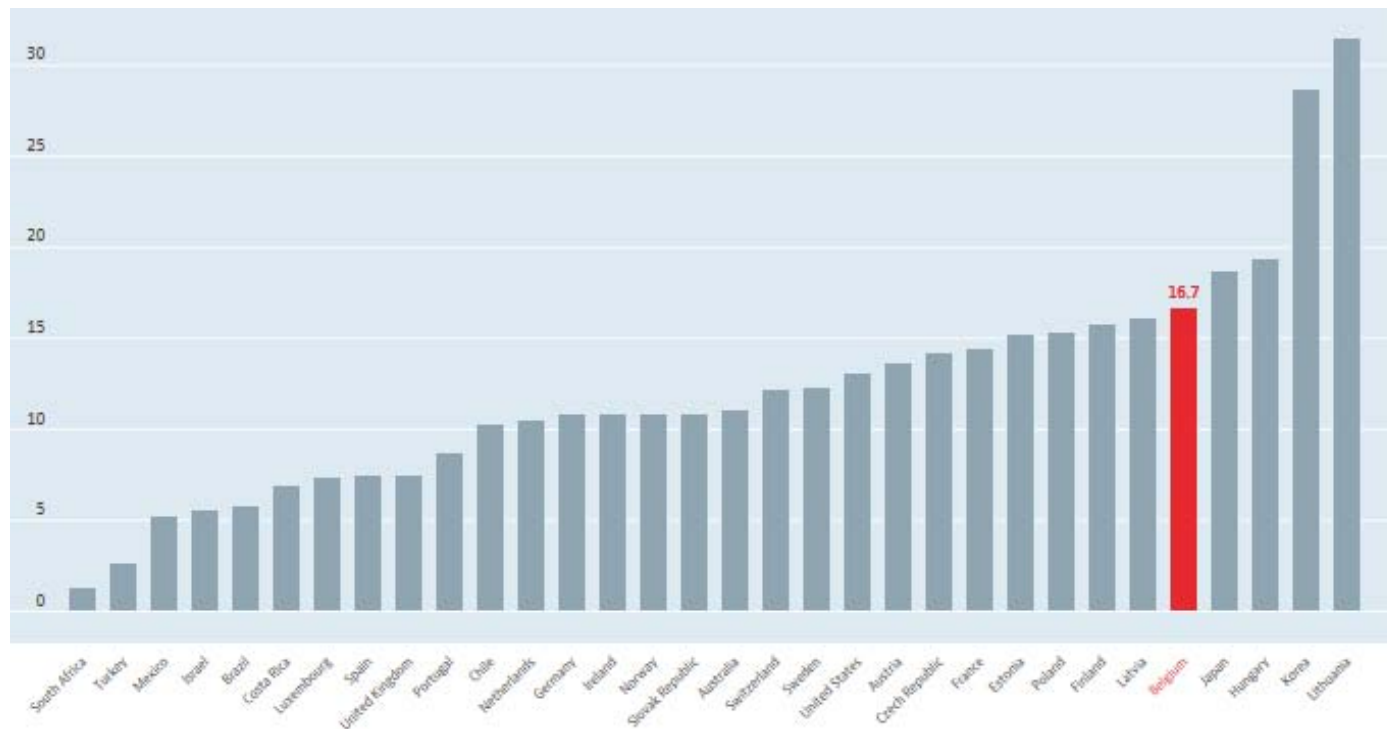
Mental Health Care

	Indicator	Score
Health Status	Deaths due to suicide (/100 000 pop)	18.3 
Accessibility of care	Practicing psychiatrists (/1000 pop)	0.17 
Appropriateness of care	ER visits for social, mental or psychic reason (% of admission in ER in general hospitals)	1.5 
Appropriateness of prescribing pattern in ambulatory patients	Use of antidepressants (% of adult population, at least once in the year)	13.4 
Safety of prescribing pattern in ambulatory patients	Patients (65+ years old) prescribed antidepressants with anticholinergic effect (%)	15.4 

[<https://kce.fgov.be/>]

Suicide rates



(Total, per 100 000 persons, 2013)



3. Performance of the Belgian health system



Long Term Care





	Indicator	Score
Use of long-term care services	Long-term care in residential facility (% pop aged 65+)	8.4
	Long-term home nursing care (% pop aged 65+)	4.9
	Informal carers (% of pop aged 15+)	9
Safety for elderly	Fall incident during the last 12 months (% pop aged 65+)	20
Safety in residential care	Prevalence of pressure ulcers (grade II-IV) in home for the elderly (% of residents)	/ 
	Prevalence of MRSA carriage in residential facility (% of residents)	12.2 

[<https://kce.fgov.be/>]

3. Performance of the Belgian health system








End of Life-Care

	Indicator	Score
	Patients who received palliative care (% of terminal cancer patients who died in the year)	51.0 
Lack of timely palliative care	Patients who died within one week after start of palliative care (% of terminal cancer patients who received palliative care and died in the year)	19.6 
Aggressiveness of care at the end of life	Patients who received chemotherapy in the last 14 days of life (% of terminal cancer patients who died in the year)	11.2 
Patient centeredness	Death at usual place of residence (home or in residential care) (% of terminal cancer patients who died in the year)	29.6 

3. Performance of the Belgian health system

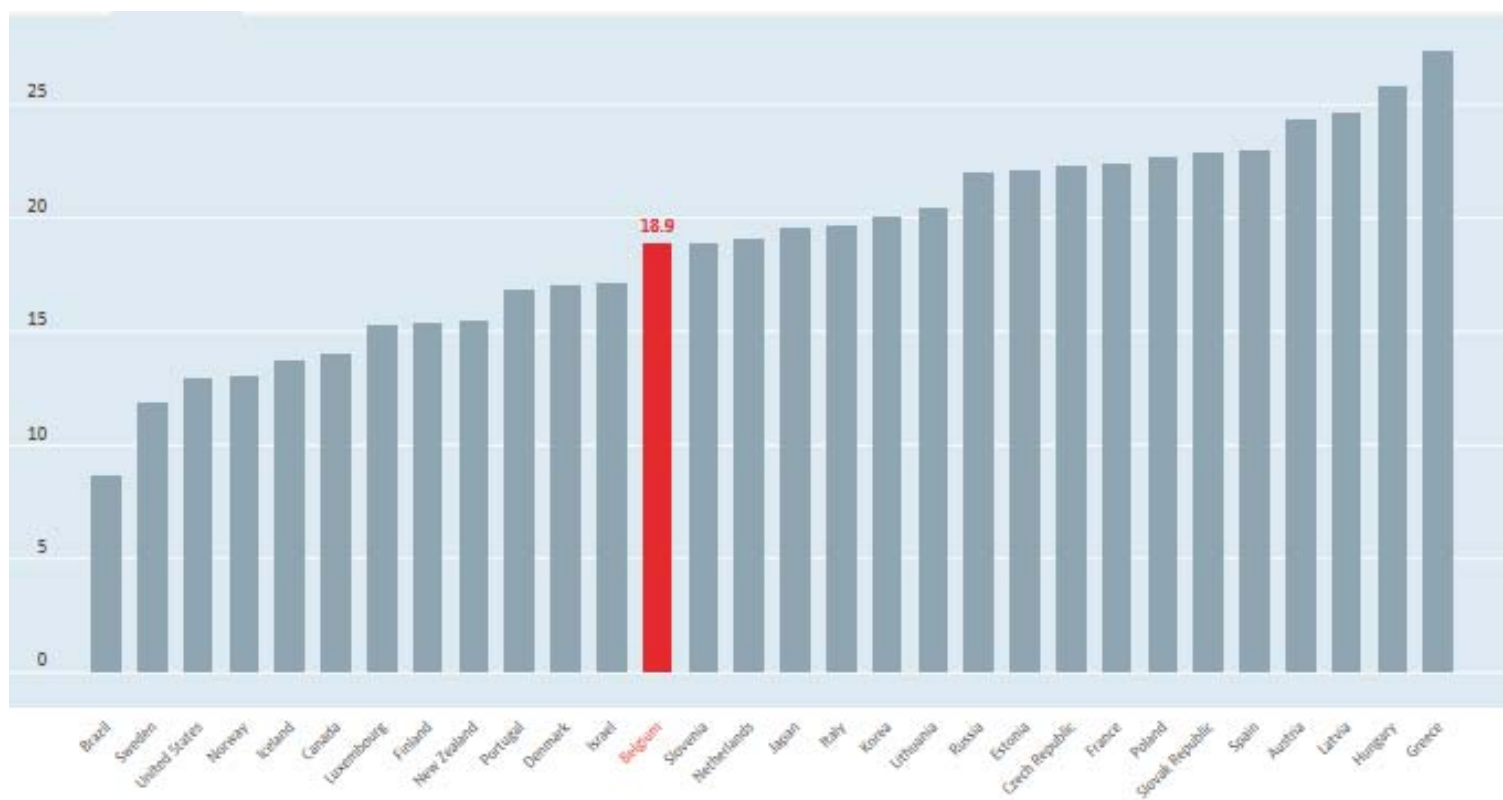


Non-medical determinants of health and health promotion

	Indicator	Score
Health outcomes	Obesity in adults (BMI \geq 30) (% pop aged 18+)	13.7 
Lifestyles	Daily smokers (% pop aged 15+)	18.9 
Effective health services	Global Medical Record + (% pop aged 45-75 with GMR)	22 
Health literacy (Empowerment)	Health literacy (at least sufficient level) (% of pop aged 18+)	58.7 
Policy	Tobacco Control Scaled	47/100 

Daily smokers

(Total, % of population aged 15+, 2014)

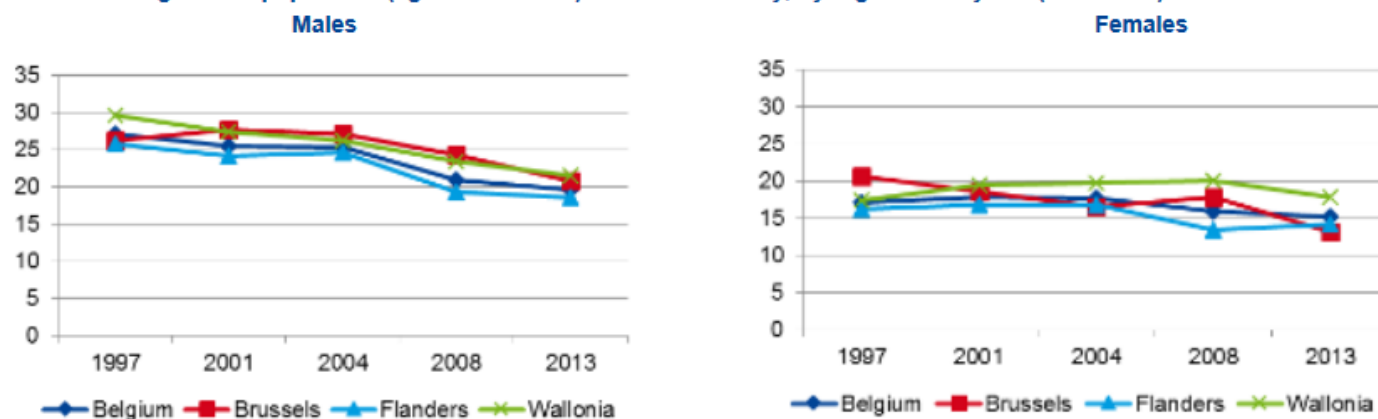


[<https://data.oecd.org/belgium.htm>]

Daily smokers

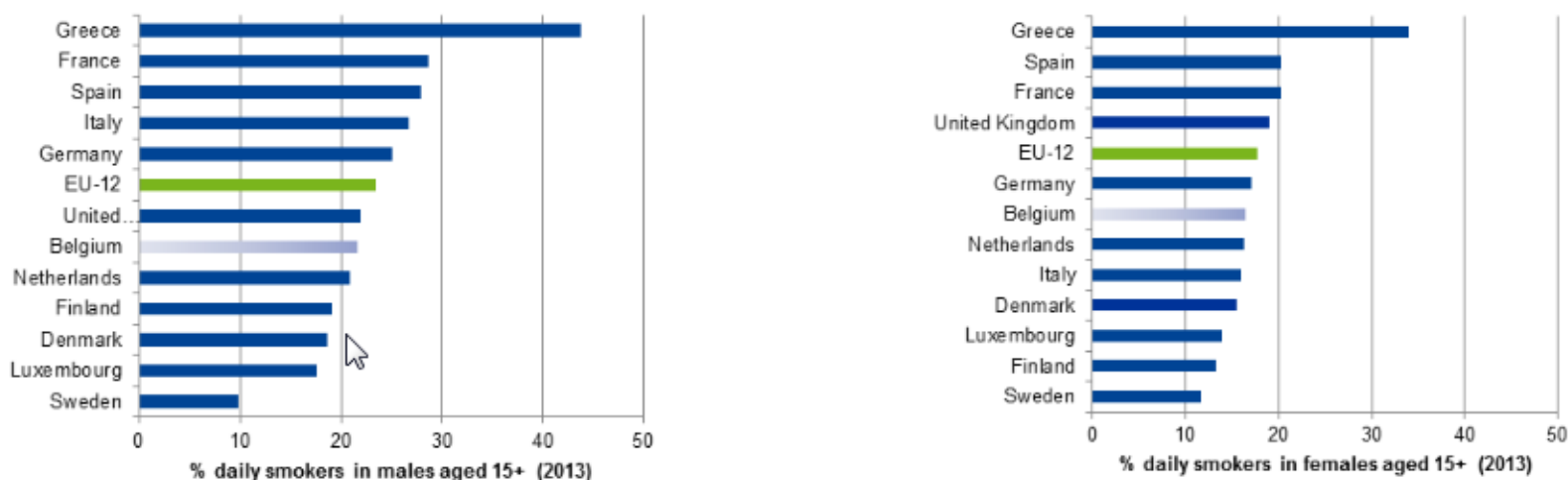


Figure 152 – Percentage of the population (aged 15 or older) that smokes daily, by region and by sex (1997-2013)

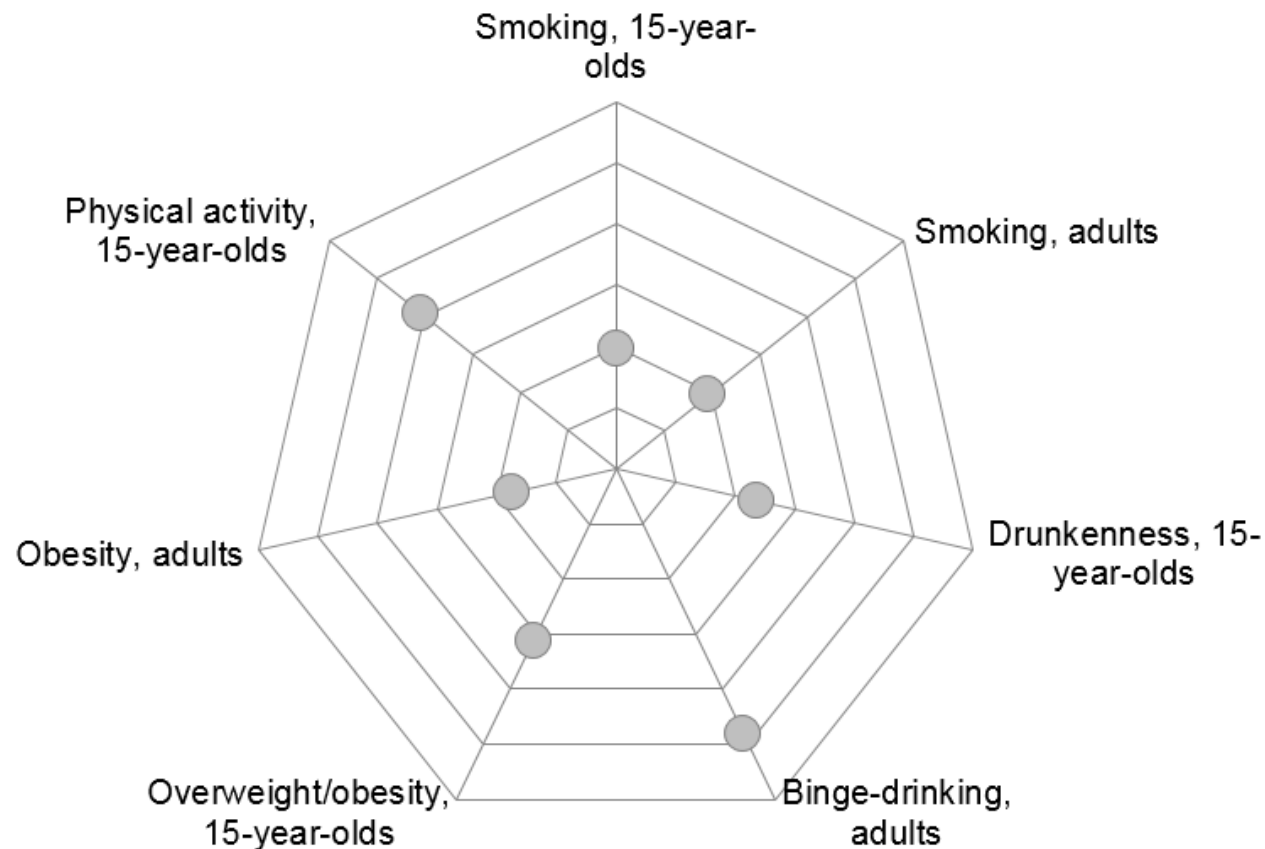


- 😊 Decreasing prevalence
- 😊 Below EU-15 average
- 😞 Prevalence remains high
- 😞 Disparities between sex, region, SES

Figure 153 –Percentage of the population (aged 15 and older) that smokes daily, by sex: international comparison (2013)



Important Public Health Issues



Note: The closer the dot is to the center "target", the better the country performs compared to other EU countries. The further it is from the center, the worse the country performs. No country is in the center "target" as there is room for progress in all countries in all areas. Data on physical activity among adults are not available for Belgium.

Source: OECD calculations based on Eurostat Database (EHIS in or around 2014), OECD Health Statistics and HBSC survey in 2013-14.

(Chart design: [Laboratorio MeS](#)).

[DRAFT country profile Belgium – OECD; Observatorium;EC]

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



Health Status

- Positive evolution of life expectancy and premature mortality
⇒ *high contribution of preventable mortality*
- Relatively good self-rated health
- Mediocre to poor results for health promotion and lifestyle indicators
- All health indicators show socioeconomic and regional gradient (FL > BR > WA)
- Women live longer but report lower health-related quality of life

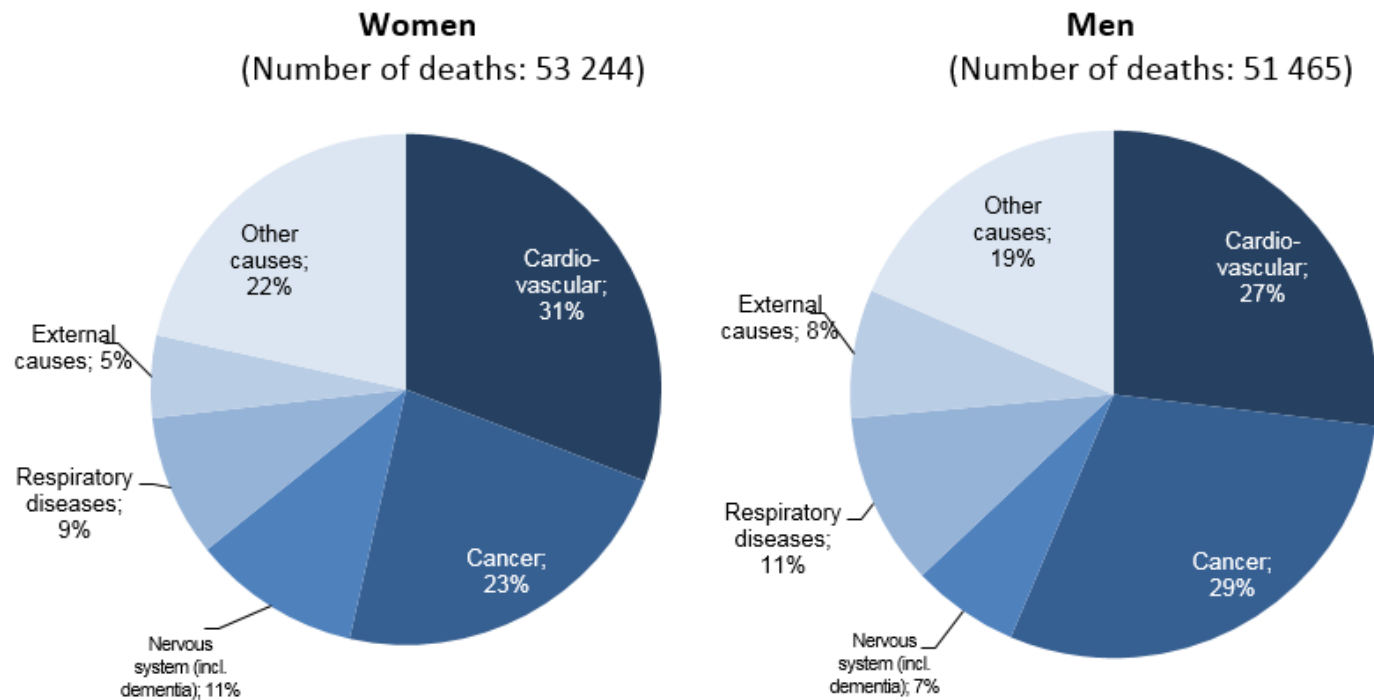
3. Performance of the Belgian health system



Health Status

- 76.8% of the Belgian inhabitants report to be in good or very good health
- Life expectancy at birth:
 - 77.8 years for men (EU15= 78.6)
 - 83.2 years for women (EU15= 83.7)
- Most important causes of death:
 - cardiovascular diseases (28,6%)
 - cancer (26,3%)

Leading causes of death in Belgium (2014)



Note: The data are presented by broad ICD chapter. Dementia was added to the nervous system diseases' chapter to include it with Alzheimer's disease (the main form of dementia).

Source: Eurostat database

[DRAFT country profile Belgium – OECD; Observatorium;EC]

3. Performance of the Belgian health system



Overall Trends

- Civilians are overall positive (78% satisfaction rate)
- Good Accessibility (Mandatory insurance and social corrections for low income families)
- Improving efficiency (but progress still needed)
- Average Quality (close to the EU-average)
- Improvement needed in Prevention
- Alarming indicators concerning Mental Health
- #Doctors and #nurses needs ongoing attention

4. Challenges for the future

1. Belgium for Beginners
2. Characteristics of the Belgian Health system
3. Performance of the Belgian Health system
- 4. Challenges for the future**
5. Conclusion

4. Challenges for the future



- Current Health Policy(federal government): Central Objectives
 - Rationalizing healthcare services
 - Improving health equity
 - Safeguarding equitable access to healthcare

4. Challenges for the future



- Current Health Policy (federal government): Reform areas
 - Health targets
 - Healthcare budget
 - Distribution of competences among health professionals
 - Case-based hospital financing system
 - Integrated care
 - Reform of the hospital-landscape

5. Conclusion

1. Belgium for Beginners
2. Characteristics of the Belgian Health system
3. Performance of the Belgian Health system
4. Challenges for the future
- 5. Conclusion**

5. Conclusion



- Health system governance is shaped by two forces: federalization and pillarization
- General satisfaction can be explained by high overall access and (perceived) quality
- But attention should be given to:
 - Accessibility for most vulnerable
 - Adequacy and variations in quality
 - Hospitalocentrism

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?