

HEALTH CARE ACTIVITIES: CAESAREAN SECTIONS

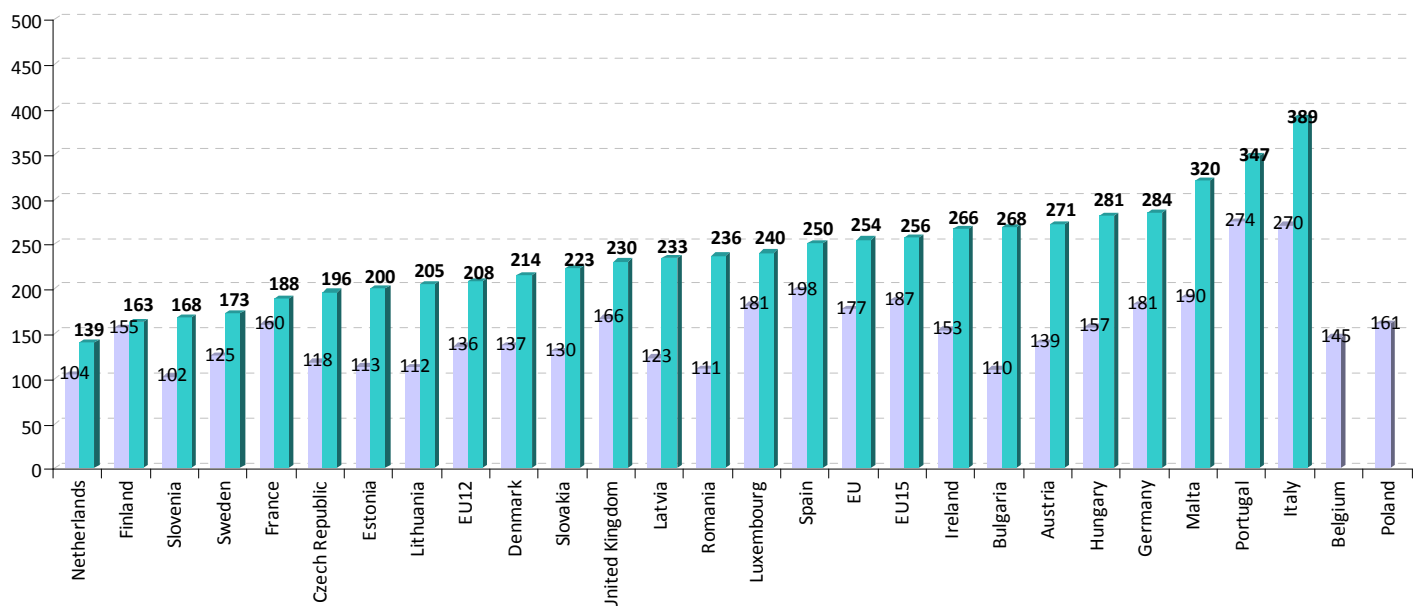
In the last decade the rate of caesarean deliveries increased significantly in most European Member States.

It doubled or almost doubled in some EU12 Member States like Bulgaria (+143,9%), Romania (+113,8%), Latvia (+90,5%), Lithuania (+82,6%), Hungary (+79,4%), and also registered a rather significant increase in Austria (+94,6%).

The less relevant rates of increase were registered in Finland (+4,6) and France (+17,8%), and then in Spain (+26,3%) and Portugal (+26,6%).

In 2007, about a quarter of children in the EU Member States were delivered by means of caesarean sections. This percentage rise up to about a third of the total deliveries in Italy (38,9%), Portugal (34,7%) and Malta (32,0%). While the Member States where the caesarean deliveries were less common are the Netherlands (13,9%), Finland (16,3%), Slovenia (16,8%), Sweden (17,3%) and France (18,8%).

Caesarean sections per 1000 live births
years 1997 - 2007



NOTE. All data refer to 2007 except Italy, Portugal, Sweden and EU15 (2006); Spain (2005); Luxembourg (2004). Data for Cyprus and Greece are not available

Source of data: WHO/Europe, European HFA Database, August 2009

The indicator concerning the caesarean sections is normally analysed by the international institution like WHO and OECD, which work on identifying the different kinds of reasons for these increases, correlating them to health benefits and cost-effectiveness.

Looking at some data and indicators concerning the general health status of infants and mothers it is possible to have a positive picture. The **number of live births per 1000 inhabitants** in the decade 1996 – 2007 shows a general stability all over the European Union Member States.

The early neonatal deaths indicate the numbers of deaths in infants under 7 days of age in a year.

In the decade 1996 – 2007 the **early neonatal deaths** per 1000 live births decreased by a little more than one unit in the EU. A particular improvement was registered in EU12, where the deaths per 1000 live births drop off by more than 2,5 units and the difference between EU12 and EU 15 reduces.

