

Accidents at work statistics

Statistics Explained

*Data extracted in September 2026
Planned article update: October 2027*

Highlights

There were 3 367 fatal accidents at work in the EU in 2024, an increase of 45 deaths compared with the year before.

In 2024, close to a quarter (23.0%) of all fatal accidents at work in the EU took place in the construction sector.

In 2024, around three quarters (75.9%) of all accidents at work in the EU caused wounds, superficial injuries, dislocations, sprains, strains, concussions or internal injuries.

This article presents a set of main statistical findings in relation to indicators concerning [non-fatal](#) and [fatal accidents at work](#) in the [European Union \(EU\)](#) ; the statistics presented were collected as part of the [European statistics on accidents at work \(ESAW\)](#) administrative data collection exercise.

This article is included in a set of statistical articles concerning specific health conditions in the EU which forms part of an online publication on [Health in the European Union - facts and figures](#)

An accident at work is defined in ESAW methodology as a discrete occurrence during the course of work which leads to physical or mental harm. Fatal accidents at work are those that lead to the death of the victim within 1 year of the accident taking place. Non-fatal accidents at work are defined as those that cause at least 4 full calendar days of absence from work (they are sometimes also called 'serious accidents at work'). Non-fatal accidents at work may result in a considerable number of working days being lost and often involve considerable harm for the workers concerned and their families. They have the potential to force people, for example, to live with a permanent disability, to leave the labour market, or to change jobs.

Number of accidents

In 2024, there were 2.78 million non-fatal accidents at work that resulted in at least 4 calendar days of absence from work and 3 367 fatal accidents at work in the [EU](#) (see Table 1), a ratio of 826 non-fatal accidents for every fatal accident.

Compared with the year before, non-fatal accidents decreased by 43 742 (down 1.5%) and fatal accidents increased by 45 (up 1.4%).

Men were considerably more likely than women to have an accident at work. In 2024, around 2 out of every 3 (67.2%) non-fatal accidents at work in the EU involved men. Factors that influence these statistics include the proportion of men and women who are in employment; the different types of work that men and women carry out; and the activities in which they work.

For example, there are far more accidents in the mining, manufacturing or construction sectors, which tend to be

male dominated. It is generally the case that men tend to work on a full-time basis, whereas women are more likely to work on a part-time basis; as such, women spend a shorter period of time (on average) in the workplace, and this may also decrease their likelihood of having an accident at work. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of non-fatal accidents at work in the EU that involved men decreased (down 41 154), while there was a decrease (down 1 923) in the number of non-fatal accidents that involved women.

Number of non-fatal and fatal accidents at work, 2024
(people)

	Non-fatal accidents at work involving at least 4 calendar days of absence from work				Fatal accidents at work
	Total	Men	Women		Total
EU	2 780 969	1 868 756	911 881		3 367
Belgium	59 671	40 960	18 709		40
Bulgaria	2 263	1 510	753		80
Czechia	35 874	23 650	12 224		70
Denmark	56 285	33 372	22 913		32
Germany	761 309	552 955	208 177		361
Estonia	5 118	3 241	1 877		14
Ireland	22 029	14 152	7 760		29
Greece	5 271	3 542	1 729		55
Spain	476 082	335 076	141 006		402
France	602 845	357 679	245 165		830
Croatia	7 909	4 925	2 984		48
Italy	262 818	190 048	72 770		482
Cyprus	1 320	922	398		5
Latvia	2 291	1 473	818		25
Lithuania	3 234	2 096	1 101		31
Luxembourg	5 846	4 334	1 512		4
Hungary	26 190	16 440	9 750		79
Malta	1 499	1 159	340		4
Netherlands	85 177	47 736	37 440		26
Austria	56 059	42 657	13 402		103
Poland	65 517	38 819	26 698		250
Portugal	127 254	87 214	40 040		120
Romania	3 762	2 572	1 190		163
Slovenia	13 868	9 677	4 191		13
Slovakia	8 136	5 134	3 002		25
Finland	31 906	20 084	11 822		36
Sweden	51 437	27 329	24 108		40
Iceland	1 459	944	515		5
Norway	18 885	10 866	7 946		25
Switzerland	98 200	74 474	23 726		54

Note: non-fatal accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least four full calendar days of absence from work (serious accidents).

(*) The total includes individuals of unknown sex in addition to men and women. Therefore, the sum of the data for men and women may not equal the total.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hsw_n2_01 and hsw_n2_02)

eurostat 

Table 1: Number of non-fatal and fatal accidents at work, 2024 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_01) and (hsw_n2_02)

Incidence rates

An alternative way to analyse the information on accidents at work is to express the number of accidents in relation to the number of employed people; this produces a ratio referred to as an incidence rate. In Figures 1 and 2, simple incidence rates are shown relating the number of accidents to the overall number of employed people. For any given country, these statistics give an indication of the likelihood that an employed person had an accident.

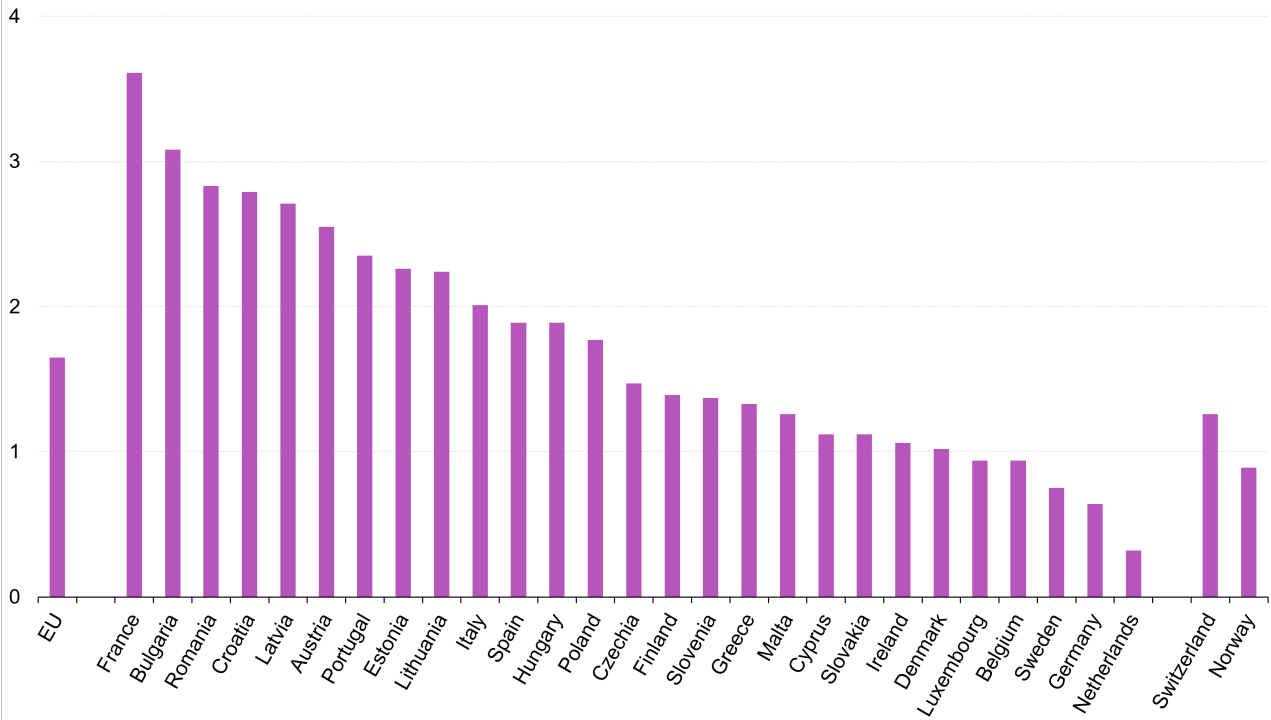
Across the whole of the EU, there were 1.65 fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people in 2024. Fatal accidents at work are relatively rare events and so their number and incidence can vary greatly from year to year, particularly in smaller EU countries. In 2024, the number of fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people ranged from fewer than 1.00 in Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden to at least 3.00 fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people in Bulgaria and France (see Figure 1).

The highest incidence rate among EU countries was recorded in France, with 3.61 fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people. However, France has a specific system for notification and recognition of accidents at work centred on reporting work-related events. This system does not usually differentiate between the accidents where the main cause is the work and the accidents occurring at work. The latter cases should be excluded only if other work-related causal elements are ruled out. This might lead to a higher number of work accidents reported in France in comparison with other countries, including those with similar accident notification systems. The main

characteristics differentiating the French system from other systems are listed in the [1] attached to ESAW metadata.

Fatal accidents at work, 2024

(incidence rates per 100 000 employed people)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_02)

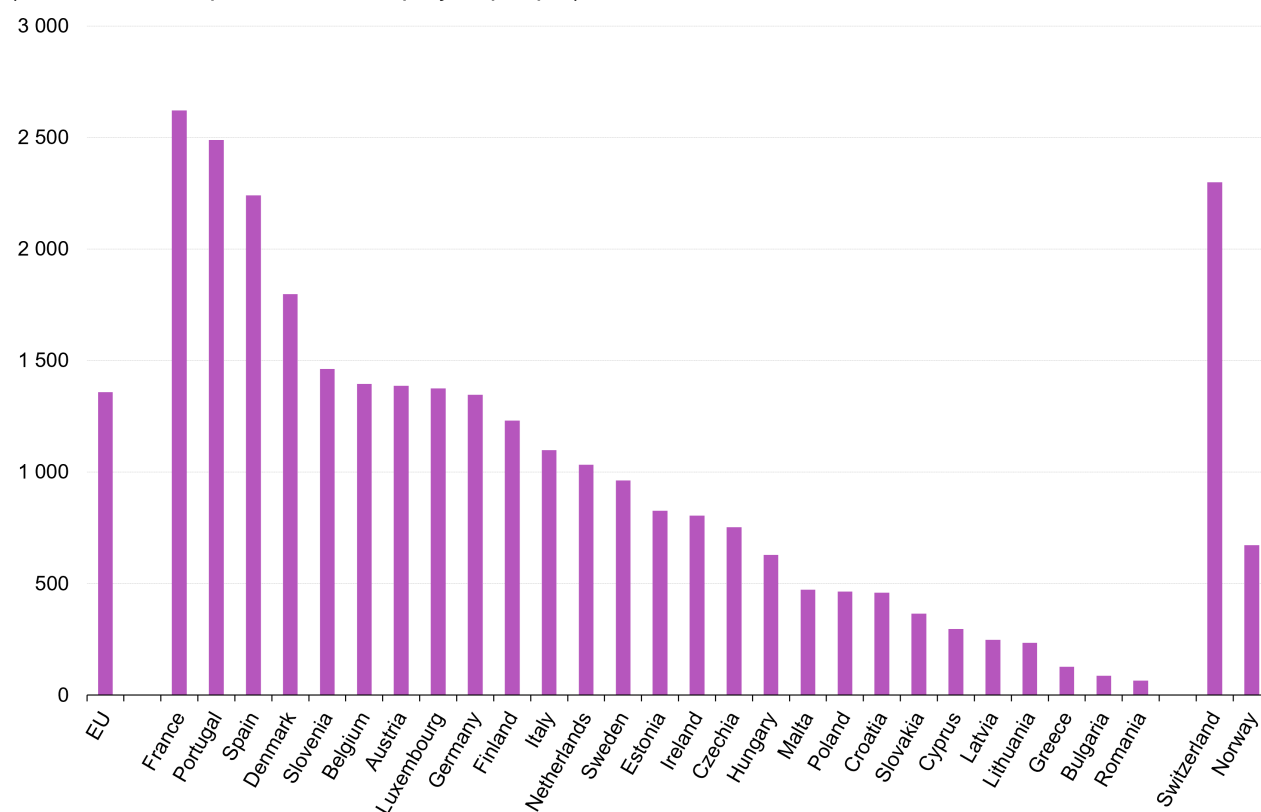
Figure 1: Fatal accidents at work, 2024 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_02)

Across the EU, there were 1 359 non-fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people in 2024. The range for incidence rates among EU countries was from fewer than 100 non-fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people in Romania (65) and Bulgaria (87) to more than 2 000 per 100 000 employed people in France (2 622), Portugal (2 489) and Spain (2 241) (see Figure 2).

Particularly low incidence rates for non-fatal accidents may reflect under-reporting, for example, linked to poorly established reporting systems, little financial incentive for victims to report such accidents, or non-binding legal obligations for employers. In the same way, well-established reporting/recognition systems may often explain high incidence rates in some countries. While the phenomenon of low non-fatal incidence rates can in part be considered to reflect under-reporting, the situation for incidence rates of fatal accidents is different as it is much more difficult to avoid reporting a fatal accident.

Non-fatal accidents at work, 2024

(incidence rates per 100 000 employed people)



Note: non-fatal (serious) accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least 4 full calendar days of absence from work.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_01)

Figure 2: Non-fatal accidents at work, 2024 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_01)

Standardised incidence rates

When comparing data between countries, incidence rates can be difficult to interpret, for example, when comparing the effectiveness of measures to prevent accidents at work. This is because the likelihood of having an accident is, among other factors, related to the economic activity in which a person works; the relative importance (weight) of different economic activities varies between countries according to the structure of each domestic economy.

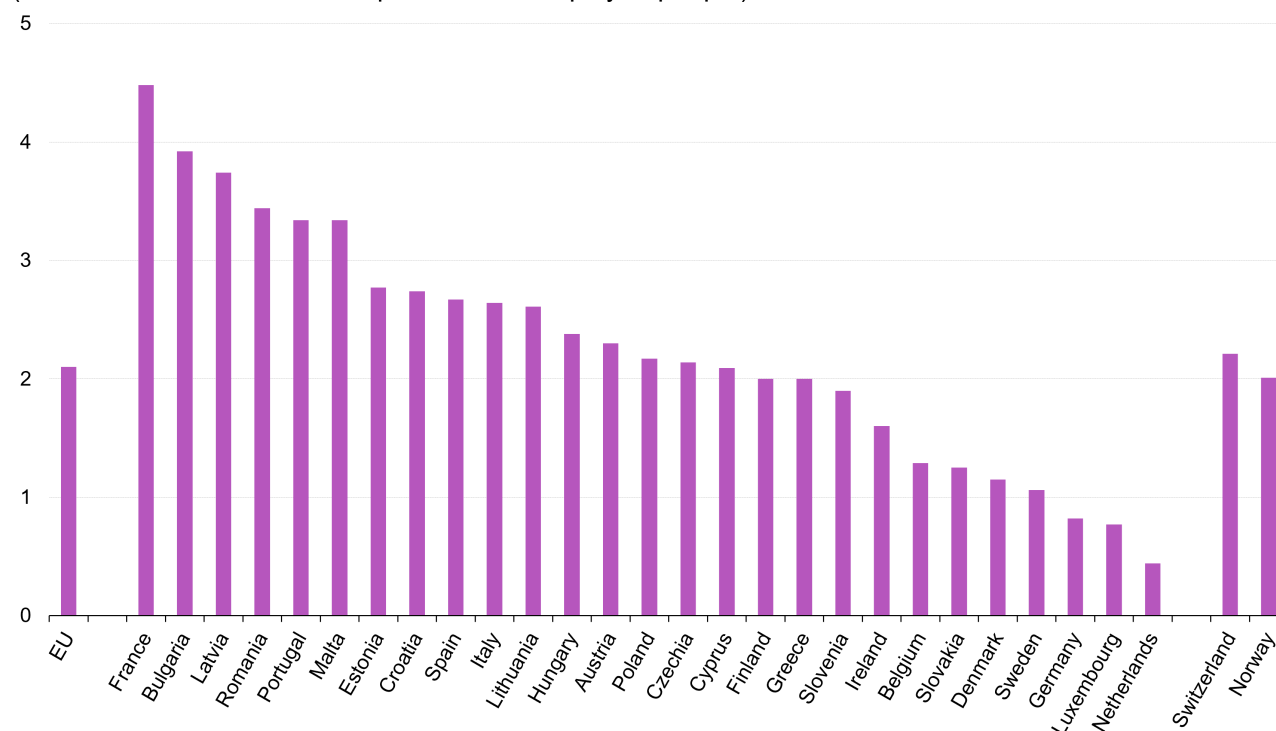
To account for this, standardised incidence rates are calculated and data for these are shown in Figures 3 and 4. Such rates assume that the relative sizes of economic activities within each national economy are the same as within the EU as a whole. As such, these standardised incidence rates give a more neutral comparison of the health and safety situation across countries. Note that these standardised incidence rates have a slightly narrower activity coverage than the simple incidence rates, as they exclude the mining and quarrying sector as well as some service activities. Standardised incidence rates only cover [NACE Rev. 2](#) Sections A and C to N, thus excluding Sections B and O to U.

On this basis, across the EU there was an average of 2.10 fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people in 2024 (see Figure 3), while there were 1 464 non-fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people (see Figure 4). In 2024, the highest standardised incidence of fatal accidents at work was recorded in France (4.48 deaths per 100 000 employed people), followed by Bulgaria (3.92 deaths per 100 000 employed people) and Latvia (3.74 deaths per 100 000 employed people).

At the other end of the range, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany recorded the three lowest standardised incidence rates among EU countries, with fewer than 1.00 fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people in 2024.

Fatal accidents at work, 2024

(standardised incidence rates per 100 000 employed people)



Note: NACE Sections A and C–N.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_mi01)

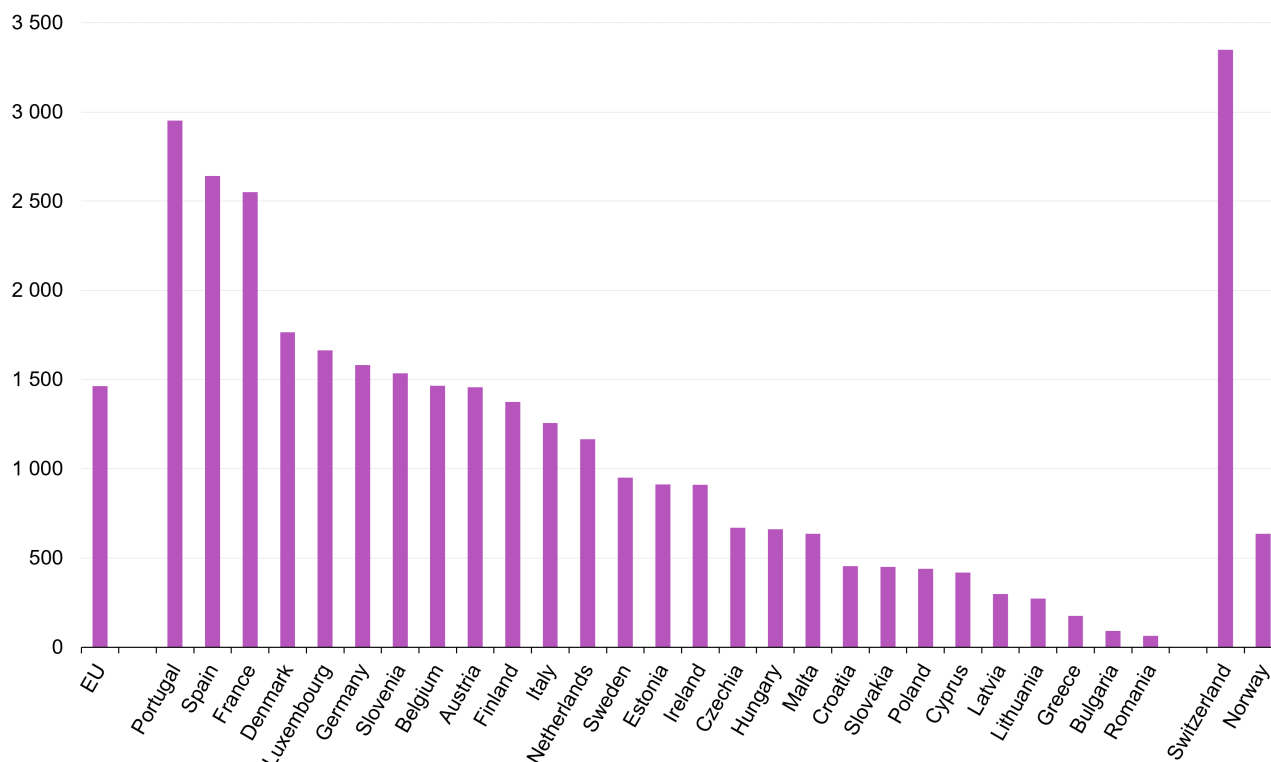
Figure 3: Fatal accidents at work, 2024 Source: Eurostat (hsw_mi01)

Figure 4 shows that the standardised incidence rate of non-fatal accidents at work in 2024 was generally higher in some of the EU countries with insurance-based accident reporting systems: Portugal reported 2 951, followed by Spain and France with rates of 2 641 and 2 550 per 100 000 employed people, respectively. Insurance-based accident reporting systems offer a significant financial compensation for the victim when an accident is reported, as opposed to legal obligation systems in which victims are covered by the general social security system.

Among the eastern or **Baltic** EU countries, which mostly have legal obligation systems, Slovenia (1 536 per 100 000) and Estonia (913 per 100 000) were the only ones to report an incidence rate of more than 700 non-fatal accidents per 100 000 employed people. By far the lowest standardised incidence rates were reported in Romania and Bulgaria, at 64 and 92 non-fatal work accidents per 100 000 employed people, respectively; again, it should be noted that these values may reflect a relatively high degree of under-reporting.

Non-fatal accidents at work, 2024

(standardised incidence rates per 100 000 employed people)



Note: non-fatal (serious) accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least 4 full calendar days of absence from work. NACE Sections A and C–N.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_mi01)

Figure 4: Non-fatal accidents at work, 2024 Source: Eurostat (hsw_mi01)

Analysis by activity

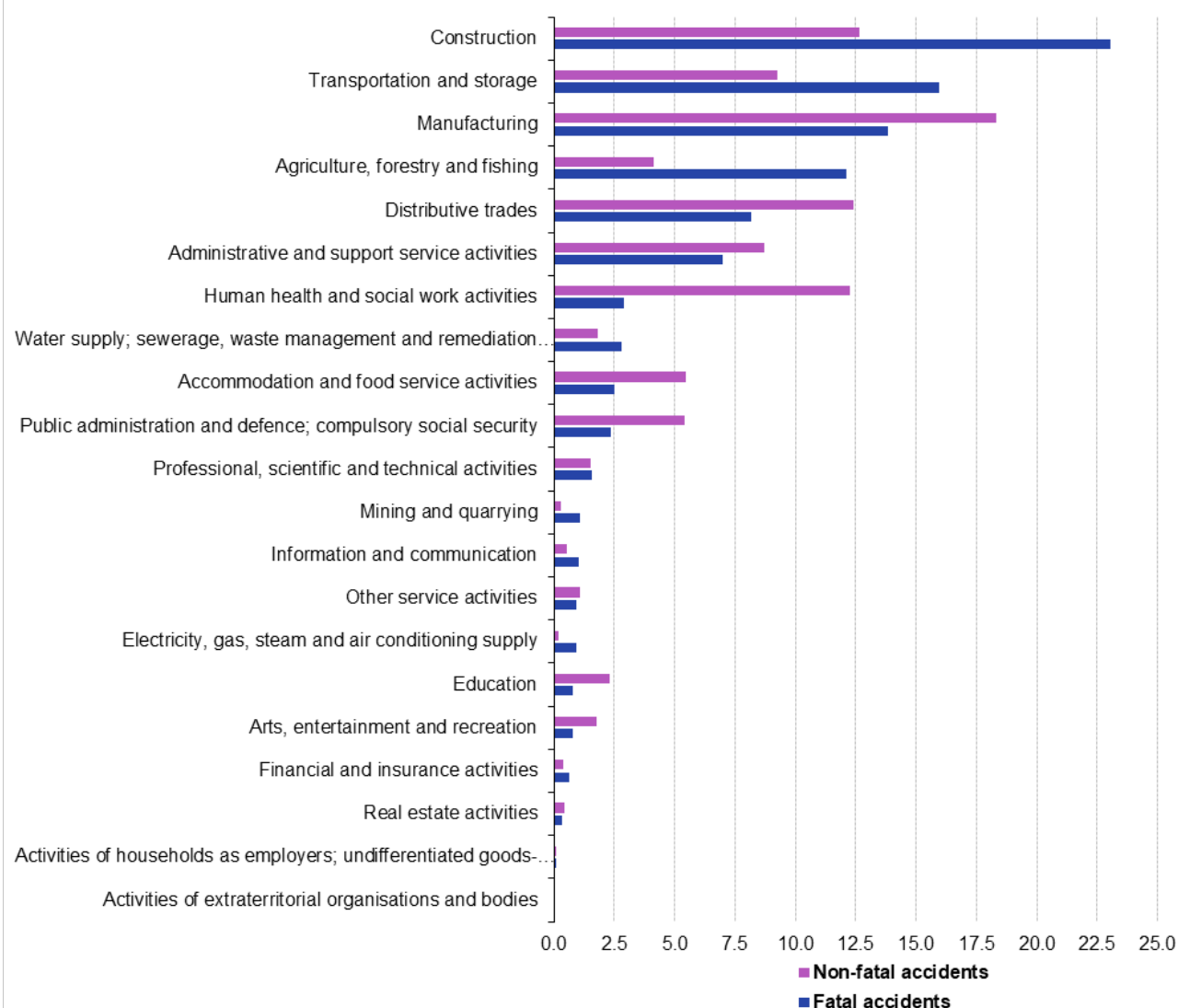
As noted above, the incidence of accidents may – in part – be higher for men (than for women) due to the economic activities where they are more likely to work. Indeed, the number of accidents at work varies greatly depending upon the economic activity in question (see Figure 5) and is positively skewed in relation to male-dominated activities.

Within the EU, the construction, transportation and storage, manufacturing, and agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors together accounted for 65.0% of all fatal accidents at work in 2024 and 44.4% of all non-fatal accidents at work. Close to a quarter (23.0%) of all fatal accidents at work in the EU took place within the construction sector, while transportation and storage (15.9%) had the next highest share. Manufacturing (13.8%) and agriculture, forestry and fishing (12.1%) were the only other NACE sections for which double-digit shares of the total number of fatal accidents were recorded.

Non-fatal accidents were relatively common in 2024 within EU manufacturing (18.3% of the total), construction (12.7%), distributive trades (12.4%) and human health and social work activities (12.3%); these 4 were the only NACE sections for which double-digit shares of the total number of non-fatal accidents were recorded.

Fatal and non-fatal accidents at work by NACE section, EU, 2024

(% of fatal and non-fatal accidents)



Note: non-fatal (serious) accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least 4 full calendar days of absence from work. Ranked on the values for fatal accidents.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: hsw_n2_01 and hsw_n2_02)

eurostat

Figure 5: Fatal and non-fatal accidents at work by NACE section, EU, 2024 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_01) and (hsw_n2_02)

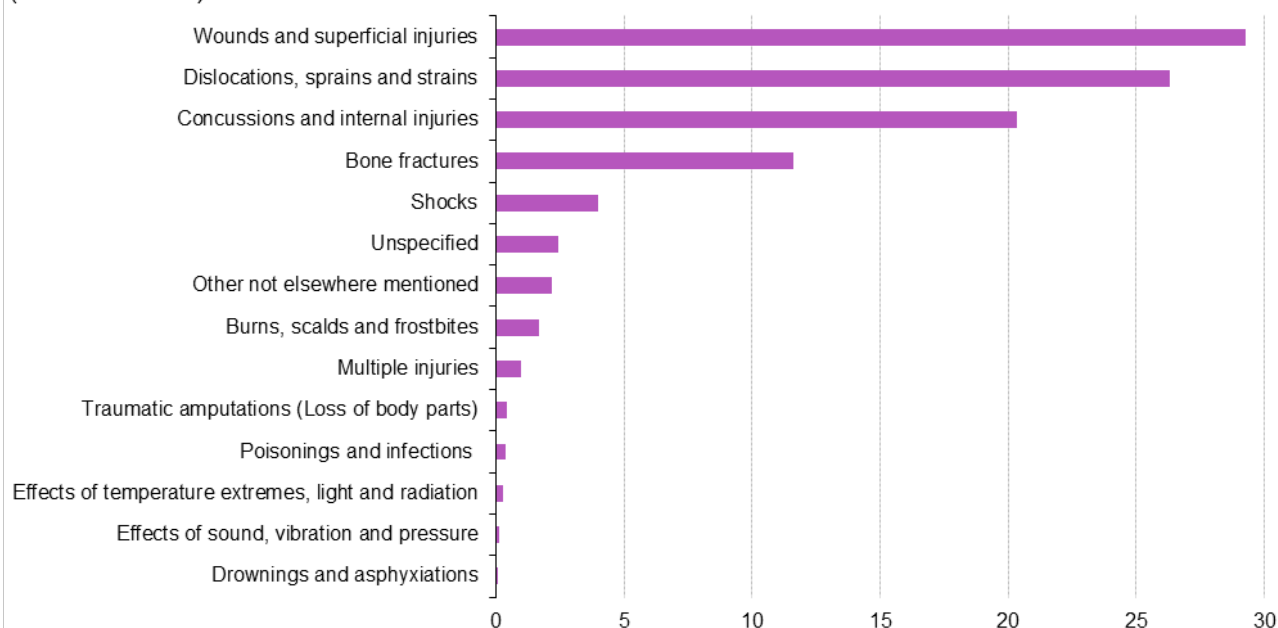
Analysis by type of injury

Figure 6 presents an analysis of data according to the type of injury sustained when people were involved in accidents. In the EU, there were 3 types of particularly common injuries in 2024, namely, wounds and superficial injuries (29.3% of the total), dislocations, sprains and strains (26.3%) and concussions and internal injuries (20.3%). These were followed by 1 other relatively common type, bone fractures (11.6%). None of the other types of injuries accounted for a double-digit share of the total number of accidents in the EU, with the next highest share for shocks (4.0%).

Although not shown in this article, the data collected in the context of ESAW also include an analysis of which body parts were injured in accidents (such as the head, neck, back, torso and organs, arms and hands, and legs and feet) as well as information on the causes and circumstances of accidents.

Fatal and non-fatal accidents at work by type of injury, EU, 2024

(% of accidents)



Note: non-fatal (serious) accidents reported in the framework of ESAW are accidents that imply at least 4 full calendar days of absence from work.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: hsw_n2_07)

eurostat

Figure 6: Fatal and non-fatal accidents at work by type of injury, EU, 2024 Source: Eurostat (hsw_n2_07)

Source data for tables and graphs

- [Download Excel file](#)

Data sources

In December 2008, the [European Parliament](#) and the [Council](#) adopted [Regulation \(EC\) No 1338/2008](#) on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work. The regulation is designed to ensure that health statistics provide adequate information for all EU countries to monitor Community actions in the field of public health and health and safety at work. In April 2011, [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 349/2011](#) on statistics on accidents at work was adopted specifying in detail the variables, breakdowns and metadata that EU countries are required to deliver – this legislation is being implemented in a number of phases. Note also that [Commission Decision No 2011/231/EU](#) from April 2011 granted derogations to certain EU countries with respect to the transmission of statistics on accidents at work.

European statistics on accidents at work (ESAW) is the main data source for EU statistics relating to health and safety at work issues. ESAW includes data on occupational accidents that result in at least 4 calendar days of absence from work, including fatal accidents. The phrase 'during the course of work' means while engaged in an occupational activity or during the time spent at work. This generally includes cases of road traffic accidents in the course of work but excludes accidents during the journey between home and the workplace.

The statistics presented for accidents at work refer to declarations made either to public (social security administrations) or private insurance schemes, or to other relevant national authorities (for example, those controlling labour or workplace inspections). Indicators on accidents at work may be presented as absolute values, as percentage distributions, as incidence rates in relation to every 100 000 employed people (the denominator being provided by the authorities that are responsible for ESAW data collection in EU countries or by the EU's [labour force survey \(EU-LFS\)](#)) or as standardised incidence rates.

The data generally relate to all economic activities, unless otherwise specified. For example, the analyses in Figures 3 and 4 cover NACE Sections A and C to N. Because the frequency of accidents at work varies between

NACE activities – high risk activities include agriculture, forestry and fishing, manufacturing, construction, distributive trades, and transportation and storage – a standardisation procedure is performed to facilitate the comparison of national data. A direct standardisation method is used with weights calculated for the European reference population: the weights represent the proportion of the reference (working) population in each NACE activity. National incidence rates are calculated for each NACE activity, and these are combined using the fixed set of EU weights to produce an overall standardised incidence rate for the EU country concerned. More details are available in a [\[2\]](#).

Statistics on accidents at work may reflect under-coverage or under-reporting. Under-coverage exists when the relevant population is not covered by the data source for accidents, for example when a certain economic activity or employment type is excluded. Under-reporting relates to the situation where an accident occurs but is not reported although the related economic activity is included. The extent of under-coverage of ESAW data can be analysed partially by comparing the reference population (of workers) in ESAW with data derived from the LFS. Under-reporting is more difficult to analyse and establish but some comparisons are available. Comparing results from the reporting systems used for the legal obligation to report an accident with systems based on insurance reports is 1 possible method; this may indicate under-reporting in the system for the legal obligation of accidents or over-reporting in insurance-based systems. Another method is to compare (geographically or over time) the ratio of fatal to non-fatal accidents, as the reporting of fatal accidents can be expected to be accurate due to their severe nature. Comparisons can also be made with data from household surveys, for example from the EU-LFS (which includes periodic modules on accidents at work and work-related health problems).

In addition, changes in the way data are collected and processed in EU countries may have an influence on the number and incidence of accidents at work in a particular year. For example, on 30 June 2016 a number of derogations from provisions in the EU regulation governing ESAW ended for several EU countries. This had a significant effect on the data concerning accidents at work for the reference year 2014. For example, for the first time French data included full coverage of all employees in economic activities covered by NACE Sections A to S. This led to a substantial increase in the number of accidents recorded in France (compared with 2013). In a similar vein, the 2014 data for Belgium included information pertaining to accidents in the public sector for the first time and this also resulted in an increase in the reported number of accidents. In 2016, some correction factors were removed from Greek data by the national statistical authority due to methodological issues which caused a considerable decrease in the number of accidents reported for reference year 2014 (compared with 2013). Finally, Dutch and Norwegian data (the latter are not included in the EU total) for the 2014 reference year for non-fatal accidents decreased significantly due to methodological issues.

Context

A safe, healthy working environment is a crucial factor in an individual's quality of life and is also a collective concern. Governments in EU countries recognise the social and economic benefits of better health and safety at work. Reliable, comparable, up-to-date statistical information is vital for setting policy objectives and adopting suitable policy measures and preventative actions.

The [Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) (Article 153) states that '[...] the Union shall support and complement the activities of the EU Member States in the following fields: (a) improvement in particular of the working environment to protect workers' health and safety; [...]'.

The main principles governing the protection of workers' health and safety are laid down in a 1989 framework [Directive \(89/391/EEC\)](#), the basic objective of which is to encourage improvements in occupational health and safety. All sectors of activity, both public and private, are covered by this legislation, which establishes the principle that the employer has a duty to ensure workers' health and safety in all aspects relating to work, while the worker has an obligation to follow the employer's health and safety instructions and report potential dangers.

Within this field, the European Commission's policy agenda for the period 2021 to 2027 was set out in the Communication [EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021–27](#) ([COM\(2021\) 323 final](#)). It aims to ensure that the EU continues to play a leading role in the promotion of high standards for working conditions within the EU as well as further afield. The communication outlined 3 major challenges

- anticipating and managing change in the new world of work brought about by the green, digital and demographic transitions
- improving prevention of workplace accidents and illnesses

- increasing preparedness for any potential future health crises.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the crucial importance of health policy, including health and safety at work. The European Commission is working towards providing strategic policy orientations that aim to contribute to the improvement of the health and safety of workers across the EU. This is particularly important with respect to a new set of risks, such as those resulting from new ways of working, new technologies and digitalisation, or the impact of pandemics and associated containment measures, alongside more traditional risks of accidents at work, such as exposure to dangerous substances.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, preventive measures were put in place with the aim of limiting the spread of the Coronavirus and to combat the pandemic. Among these, some economic activities were either completely stopped or restricted by many governments or employers. In some cases, working remotely or from home became more common. This had a direct impact on all economic activities. For those sectors where the activity was stopped or reduced, the number of accidents decreased. Inactivity or reduced activity in certain sectors resulted in a lower number of workers and/or hours worked, and therefore showed an unusually large decrease in reported accidents at work. By contrast, in some sectors the COVID-19 pandemic generated an increase in activity. For example, this was the case for human health activities, residential care activities or social work activities without accommodation. These activities were generally characterised by higher numbers of reported accidents at work during the pandemic, especially when COVID-19 cases of occupational origin were included (following national practices and legislation).

Public services that deal with receipt of notifications as well as the reporting, investigation and recognition of accidents at work may have functioned with limited capacities during parts of the crisis.

The combined impact of the issues described above led to an overall decrease in the reported number of accidents at work for reference year 2020, while there was a partial rebound across most EU countries and many economic activities during 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the number of occupational COVID-19 cases recognised as accidents at work reduced considerably also as the effect of administrative decisions related to ceasing recognition in several countries.

Explore further

Other articles

- [Accidents and injuries statistics](#)
- [Accidents at work - statistics by economic activity](#)
- [Accidents at work - statistics on causes and circumstances](#)
- [Health in the European Union - facts and figures](#) - online publication
- [Health statistics introduced](#)

Database

- [Health](#) , see

Health and safety at work (hsw)

Accidents at work (ESAW, 2008 onwards) (hsw_acc_work)

Main indicators (hsw_mi)

Details by NACE Rev. 2 activity (2008 onwards) (hsw_n2)

Causes and circumstances of accidents at work (ESAW phase III) (hsw_ph3)

Accidents at work (ESAW) - until 2007 (hsw_acc7_work)

Accidents at work and other work-related health problems (source LFS) (hsw_apex)

Work related health problems and accidental injuries - LFS 1999 (hsw_inj_pb)

Occupational diseases (EODS; 2013 onwards) - experimental statistics (hsw_occ)

Thematic section

- [Health](#)

Methodology

ESMS metadata files

- [Accidents at work \(ESAW, 2008 onwards\)](#) (ESMS metadata file – hsw_acc_work_esms)
- [2020. Accidents at work and other work-related health problems](#) (ESMS metadata file – lfso_20_esms)

Publication

- [European statistics on accidents at work \(ESAW\) – Summary methodology – 2013 edition](#)

External links

- [European Agency for Safety and Health at Work](#)
- [European Commission – Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion – Health and safety at work](#) , see
 - [EU strategic framework \(2021–27\)](#)
- [European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions \(EUROFOUND\) – Health and well-being](#)
- [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) – Safety and health at work](#)