

Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion in Europe



Model-based estimates offer an opportunity to observe and assess unintended pregnancy and abortion over time and, because they enable comparability across borders and groups, to do so for individual countries, for regions and globally. Estimates for regions and subregions, as defined by the United Nations Statistics Division groupings,* can offer advocates, policymakers, researchers and others valuable insight into sexual and reproductive health and autonomy. Regional estimates can help reveal disparities and areas where continued investment is needed to ensure that individuals can access the full spectrum of quality sexual and reproductive health care.

The estimates below provide an overview of the incidence of unintended pregnancy and abortion in Europe from 1990 through 2019; the values are based on average annual estimates for five-year time periods. To view these estimates for countries within this region, find specific country profiles on guttmacher.org.

*Eastern Europe: Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine

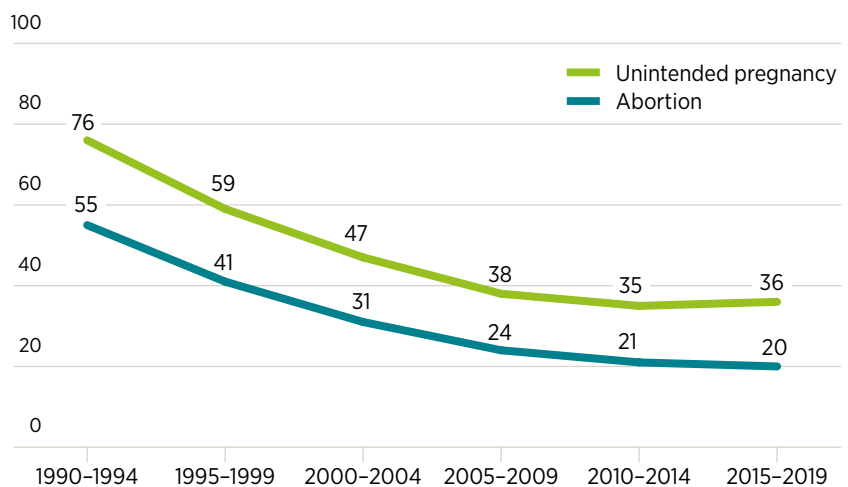
Northern Europe: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom

Southern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain

Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland

In Europe, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 53% over the past 30 years, while that of abortion declined by 64%

Average annual no. per 1,000 women aged 15–49



Unintended pregnancy and abortion in Eastern Europe

- In Eastern Europe, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 64% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.
- During that same period, the abortion rate declined by 70%.
- The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 81% to 67%.
- In 2015–2019, there were a total of 6,370,000 pregnancies annually.
- Of these, 3,290,000 pregnancies were unintended and 2,170,000 ended in abortion.

Unintended pregnancy and abortion in Northern Europe

- In Northern Europe, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 6% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.
- During that same period, the abortion rate declined by 21%.
- The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 43% to 36%.
- In 2015–2019, there were a total of 1,770,000 pregnancies annually.
- Of these, 824,000 pregnancies were unintended and 299,000 ended in abortion.

Unintended pregnancy and abortion in Southern Europe

- In Southern Europe, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 44% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.
- During that same period, the abortion rate declined by 49%.
- The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion fell from 61% to 55%.
- In 2015–2019, there were a total of 2,060,000 pregnancies annually.
- Of these, 843,000 pregnancies were unintended and 464,000 ended in abortion.

Unintended pregnancy and abortion in Western Europe

- In Western Europe, the unintended pregnancy rate declined by 1% between 1990–1994 and 2015–2019.
- During that same period, the abortion rate declined by 5%.
- The share of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion remained at around 38%.
- In 2015–2019, there were a total of 2,770,000 pregnancies annually.
- Of these, 990,000 pregnancies were unintended and 377,000 ended in abortion.

Source

The information in this fact sheet is based on Bearak J et al., Unintended pregnancy and abortion by income, region, and the legal status of abortion: estimates from a comprehensive model for 1990–2019, *Lancet Global Health*, 2020, 8(9):e1152–e1161, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(20\)30315-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(20)30315-6). Regional and subregional trends in this fact sheet were re-estimated using a revised data set, available on OSF; revised estimates are available at the Guttmacher Data Center.

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Good reproductive health policy starts with credible research

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