



# HOW ALCOHOL IMPEDES ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PRODUCTIVITY IN THE EU



## Economic harm due to alcohol

The harm due to alcohol drains precious resources from European countries. This fact sheet details the economic harm caused by the alcohol industry in the EU, in OECD countries, and specifically in Norway, Germany, Sweden, France, and the Netherlands.

- Alcohol is the third leading risk for disease burden in Europe, according to WHO Europe.
  - In the European Union (EU), alcohol causes 1 in 7 deaths among males and 1 in 13 deaths among females aged 15–64 years.
  - This means: 11.8% of all deaths in this age category are due to alcohol.
- This massive health harm of alcohol also means serious economic harm – resulting in a decrease in the welfare of societies in Europe.





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## Loss of human, welfare, and economic resources

- The resources needed to tackle the health harm caused by alcohol ('direct costs' of health care, crime, property loss, welfare assistance, i.a.) are lost for investments in more efficient purposes.
- In addition, a substantial amount of the potential economic output is lost because of alcohol harm ('indirect costs') – for example premature mortality, inability to work, decreased productivity and incarceration due to alcohol.



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## Productivity loss due to alcohol deaths

- The total production losses due to alcohol deaths alone in the EU in 2016 were **€32.1 billion**.
- The share of GDP lost due to alcohol deaths alone was 0.215% for the whole EU.
- Four countries faced a burden exceeding 0.5% of GDP and these were Lithuania (0.875% of GDP), Latvia (0.751%), Estonia (0.640%) and Romania (0.626%).

[Source](#)



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## Alcohol, cancer, and economic loss

- Half of all cancers caused by alcohol in the WHO European Region are **due to low dose alcohol consumption** – less than 1.5 liters of wine or less than 3.5 liters of beer or less than 450 milliliters of spirits per week.
- Over 200 million people in the WHO European Region are at risk of developing cancer due to alcohol.

[Source](#)



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## FACT SHEET



**€4.6 Bn**

**Productivity loss from cancer deaths due to alcohol**

Premature deaths from alcohol-attributable cancer cost €4.58 billion in productivity losses.

[Source](#)



**23,000**

**Cancer deaths due to alcohol in EU+**

Alcohol caused ca. 23,300 cancer deaths among people aged younger than 65 years in the EU plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the UK in 2018.

[Source](#)



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## Economic harm due to alcohol in the OECD

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released a **landmark report in 2021** detailing the economic harm caused by the alcohol industry.



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**595 Bln**

**Productivity loss due to alcohol harm**

Reduced productivity of employees due to alcohol harm amounts to US\$ 595 billion (adjusted for purchasing power).

[Source](#)



**1.6%**

**Lost GDP due to alcohol harm**

OECD estimates that the growth domestic product (GDP) will be 1.6% lower on average in OECD countries annually, over the next 30 years.

[Source](#)





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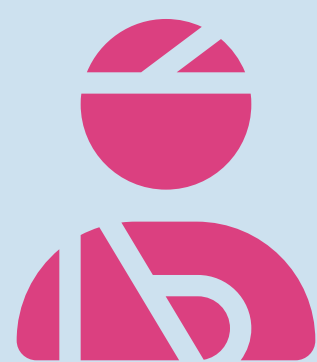


## Germany loses billions due to alcohol harm each year

Alcohol harm leads to €57 billion in direct and indirect costs to German society. **Health insurance company AOK** reported that in one Germany city alone (Dortmund) there were almost 6000 days of sick leave due to alcohol in 2021.



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**6000**

**Days of sick leave due to alcohol in one German city**

The products of the alcohol industry caused 5,938 days of sick leave in 2021 in one German city, Dortmund.

[Source](#)



**57bn**

**Costs of harm caused by the alcohol industry**

The direct and indirect costs from disease due to the products and practices of the alcohol industry in Germany amount to €57 billion every year.

[Source](#)





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## Sweden faces heavy alcohol costs in healthcare and economy

The costs of alcohol harm in Sweden amount to **SEK 103 billion (ca. €10 billion)**, annually, according to a 2019 study. Analysis by Ramboll shows that the total cost of alcohol-related health and medical care in Sweden amounts to almost SEK 4.2 billion





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## 10 Billion

Annual costs due to alcohol harm  
in Sweden

The costs of alcohol harm in Sweden amount to SEK 103 billion (ca. €10 billion), annually, according to a 2019 study.

[Source](#)



## 57bn

Costs of harm caused by the alcohol  
industry

The direct and indirect costs from disease due to the products and practices of the alcohol industry in Germany amount to €57 billion every year.

[Source](#)





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## France: Costs due to alcohol harm dwarf alcohol tax revenue

A brand new report from the French Observatory of Drugs and Addiction Trends (Observatoire français des drogues et des tendances addictives, **OFDT**) reveals that the social costs of alcohol amounted to €102 billion in France in 2019.





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## 102 Billion

**Social costs of alcohol harm in  
2019**

In France in 2019, the social costs of alcohol harm amounted to €102 billion.

[Source](#)



## 4bn

**Government revenue from alcohol  
taxes**

The French government received €4 billion from the taxes on alcohol in 2019.

[Source](#)





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## Staggering costs due to alcohol in the Netherlands and Norway

Harm caused by alcohol costs Norway between **\$11 billion annually**, finds Oslo Economics. Oslo Economics calculated the costs caused by the products and practices of the alcohol industry to Norwegian society.

In the Netherlands alcohol harm burdens society with ca. **€2.9 billion every year**, according to findings from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM).





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€

**11 Billion**

## Economic cost of alcohol harm

The harm caused by the alcohol industry costs Norway between 80 to 100 billion Norwegian kroner (\$9 to \$11 billion) annually. For context, the annual costs of alcohol harm in Norway amount to the cost of three Winter Olympics in Beijing 2022.

€

**2.9bn**

## Annual costs due to alcohol harm in the Netherlands

The harm caused by the alcohol industry in the Netherlands burdens society with €2.3 to €2.9 billion every year, according to findings from the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM).