



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
EUROSTAT

The Director-General

Luxembourg,
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**FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE
DIRECTORS-GENERAL AND PRESIDENTS
OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL INSTITUTES OF THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

Subject: Publication of weekly statistics on deaths in European Union Member States

Dear Colleagues,

Earlier this year, the emergence of the Covid-19 virus and the need for comparable statistics to measure its fast-changing impact placed the European Statistical System in an exceptional situation. In the field of epidemiology, international comparisons are particularly difficult to make due to the different reporting strategies that are in place in Member States. Our statisticians therefore examined alternative data sources, notably demographic data, to identify appropriate statistics.

When Eurostat proposed the introduction of weekly statistics on deaths to help monitor the impact of Covid-19 across the European Union, the reaction from National Statistical Institutes was extremely supportive. The vast majority of you were able to respond in a very positive manner. As a result, on 24 June, and for the very first time, Eurostat published Member States' statistics that are based on a weekly reference period. The first analysis of the data can be accessed via this [link](#).

The challenges we now face include increasing the coverage of Member States, and, for those already providing figures, improving the timeliness, completeness and the level of statistical detail. I therefore invite those of you who are not currently participating, to join us in this important European Statistical System initiative.

Finally, I would like to send my warm thanks to everyone who made this new set of weekly data possible, particularly those in the technical teams, despite the exceptional situation and the difficulties of the exercise.

Yours sincerely,

(eSigned)
Mariana Kotzeva