



Stillbirth reporting in Europe

A comparison of Euro-Peristat and Eurostat data

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For the Euro-Peristat group

High quality information on stillbirths is a priority

- High health burden ($\approx 25\,000$ per year in the EU)
- Reduction of rates of stillbirth slower than reductions in neonatal mortality
- Stagnation in rates reported for some countries.
- High heterogeneity in rates across countries with comparable standards of living
- Data on stillbirths is not comparable and often of poor quality
- Many stillbirths of unknown origin

Reporting of stillbirths

- Variation in thresholds used for recording SB
 - 16 completed weeks of gestation in Norway
 - 20 completed weeks in the United States
 - 24 completed weeks in the United Kingdom
 - 26 completed weeks in Italy and Spain
 - Denmark and Sweden recorded fetal deaths beginning at 28 completed weeks until 2004 (DK) and 2008 (SE)
- Accurate measurement of stillbirth is also essential for obtaining accurate perinatal mortality rates (stillbirths + early neonatal deaths)
- Regulations and practices governing recording of stillbirths have an impact on live birth reporting

Definitions

- World Health Organisation
 - defines stillbirths as the death of a fetus that has reached a birth weight of 500 grams or if the birth weight is unavailable a gestational age of 22 completed weeks or crown-to-heel length of 25 cm
 - Recommends that international comparisons use a birth weight cutoff of 1000 grams
- Euro-Peristat
 - uses a 22 completed week gestational age cut-off for collection of fetal deaths (if gestational age is missing, then use of birth weight of 500 grams)
 - European comparisons using a cutoff of 28 weeks

COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 328/2011

of 5 April 2011

implementing Regulation (EC) No 1338/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work, as regards statistics on causes of death

For stillbirths at least one of three reporting criteria shall be applied in the following order: (1) birth weight; (2) gestational age; and (3) crown-heel length. Data collection shall be limited to the following groups:

- (a) birth weight from 500 g to 999 g or when birth weight does not apply gestational age from 22 to 27 completed weeks, or when neither of the two applies crown-heel length from 25 to 34 cm (Variable 9); and
- (b) birth weight of 1 000 g and more or when birth weight does not apply gestational age after 27 completed weeks or when neither of the two applies crown-heel length of 35 cm or more (Variable 10).

- Compulsory to provide stillbirths by year of occurrence, but provision of groups a and b is voluntary
- Starting in 2014

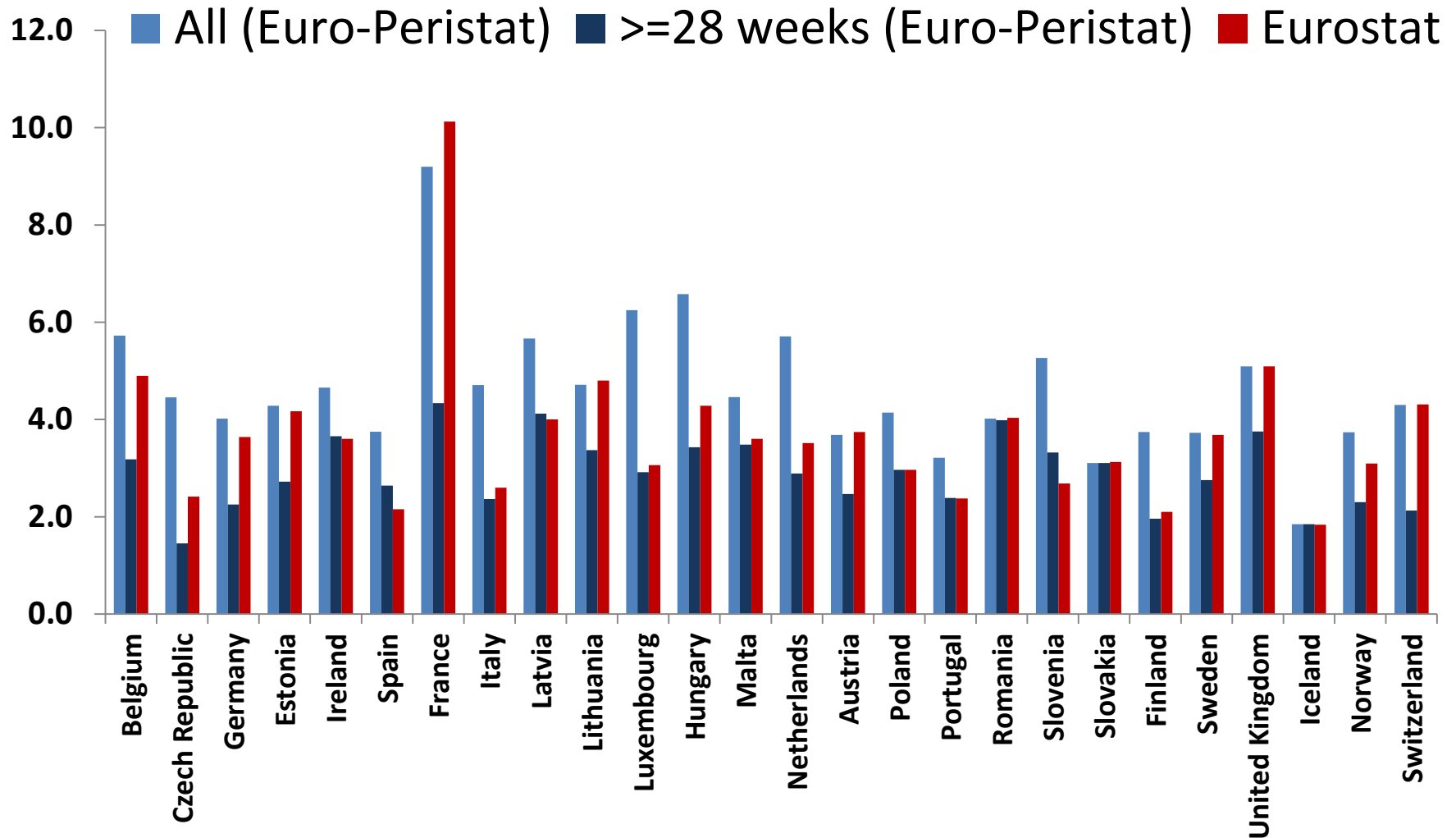
Objectives

- In light of absence of real change to existing regulations:
- Assess how the absence of common guidelines impacts on comparability of stillbirth rates and ranking of European countries

Methods

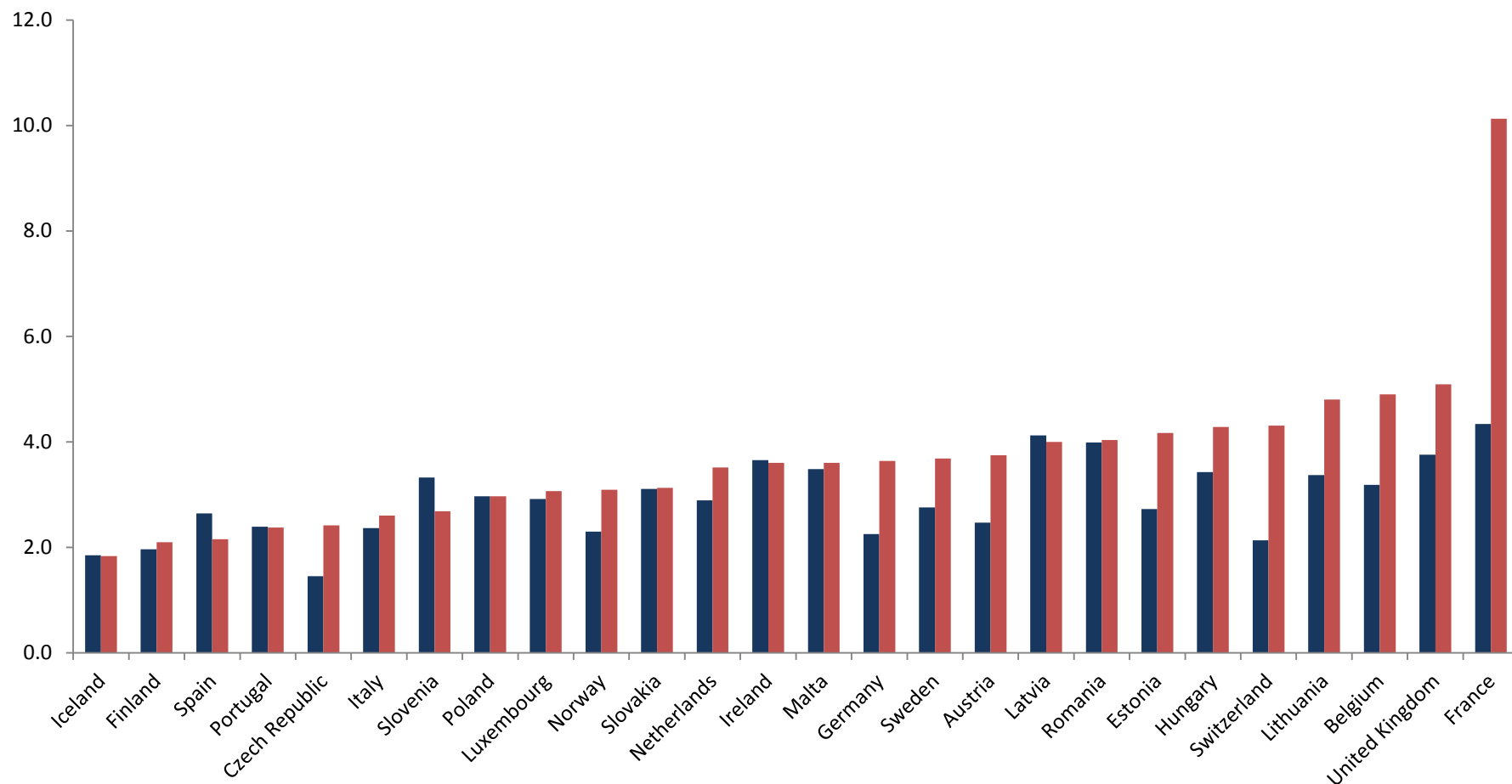
- Compare data in Eurostat with data collected in Euro-Peristat in 2010
- Eurostat data on stillbirths from their website
 - « refers to late fetal deaths, meaning fetal deaths of 28 weeks or more of completed weeks of gestation »
- Euro-Peristat data
 - stillbirth rates for all births (22 + weeks OR local definition if country cannot provide 22 weeks)
 - births ≥ 28 weeks using Euro-Peristat data

Results: stillbirths per 1000 total births

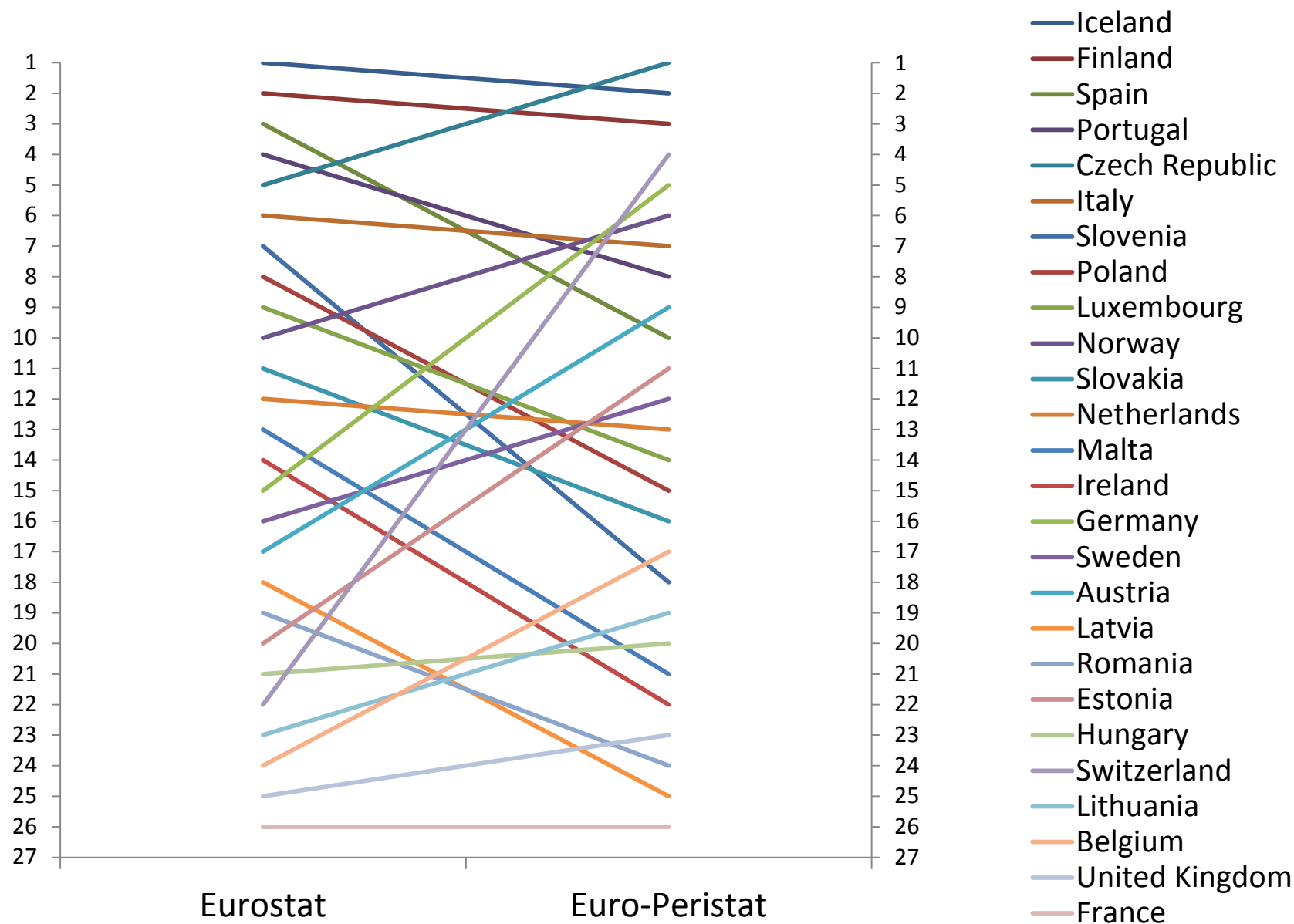


Affects stillbirth rankings

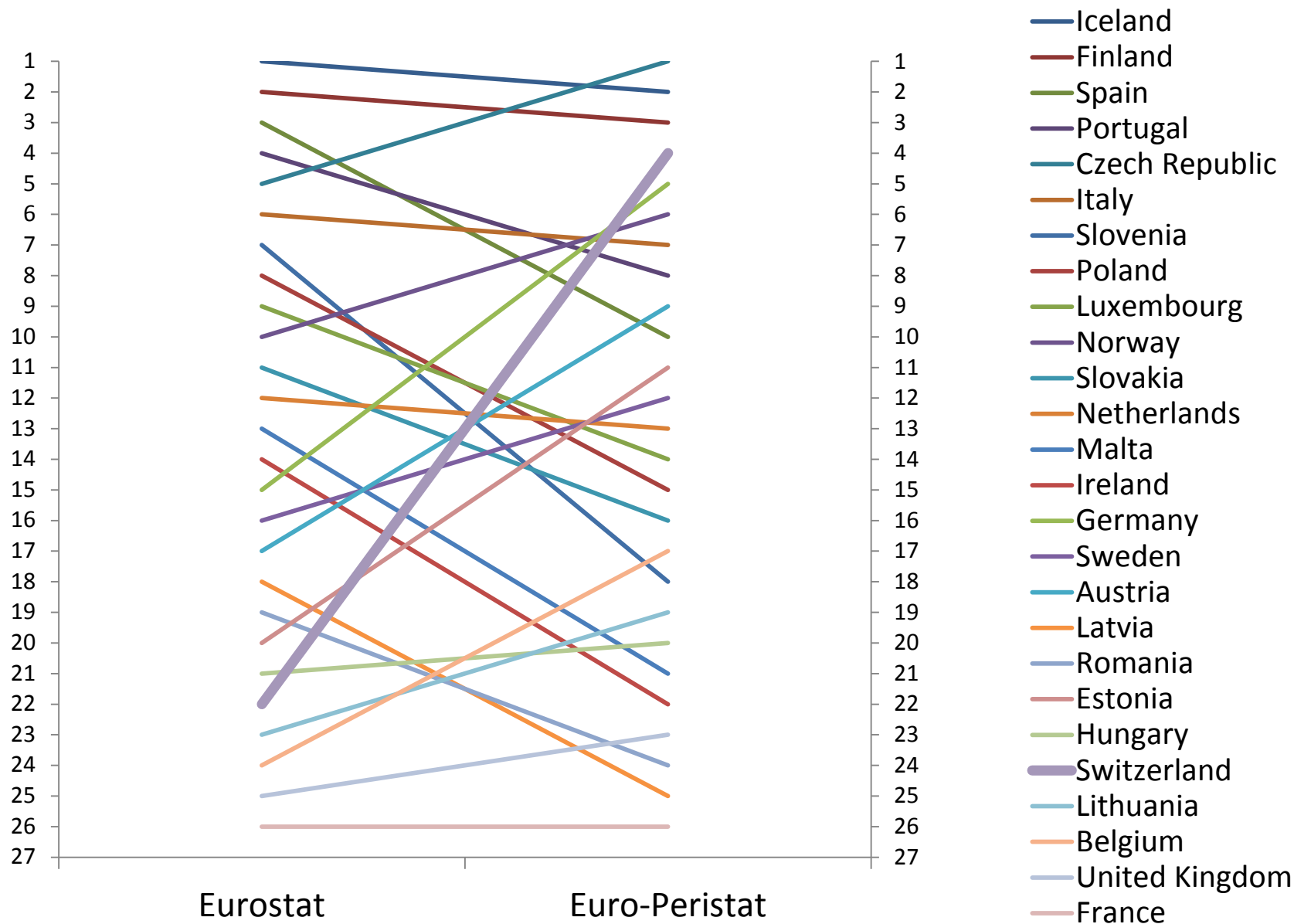
■ ≥ 28 weeks (Euro-Peristat) ■ Eurostat



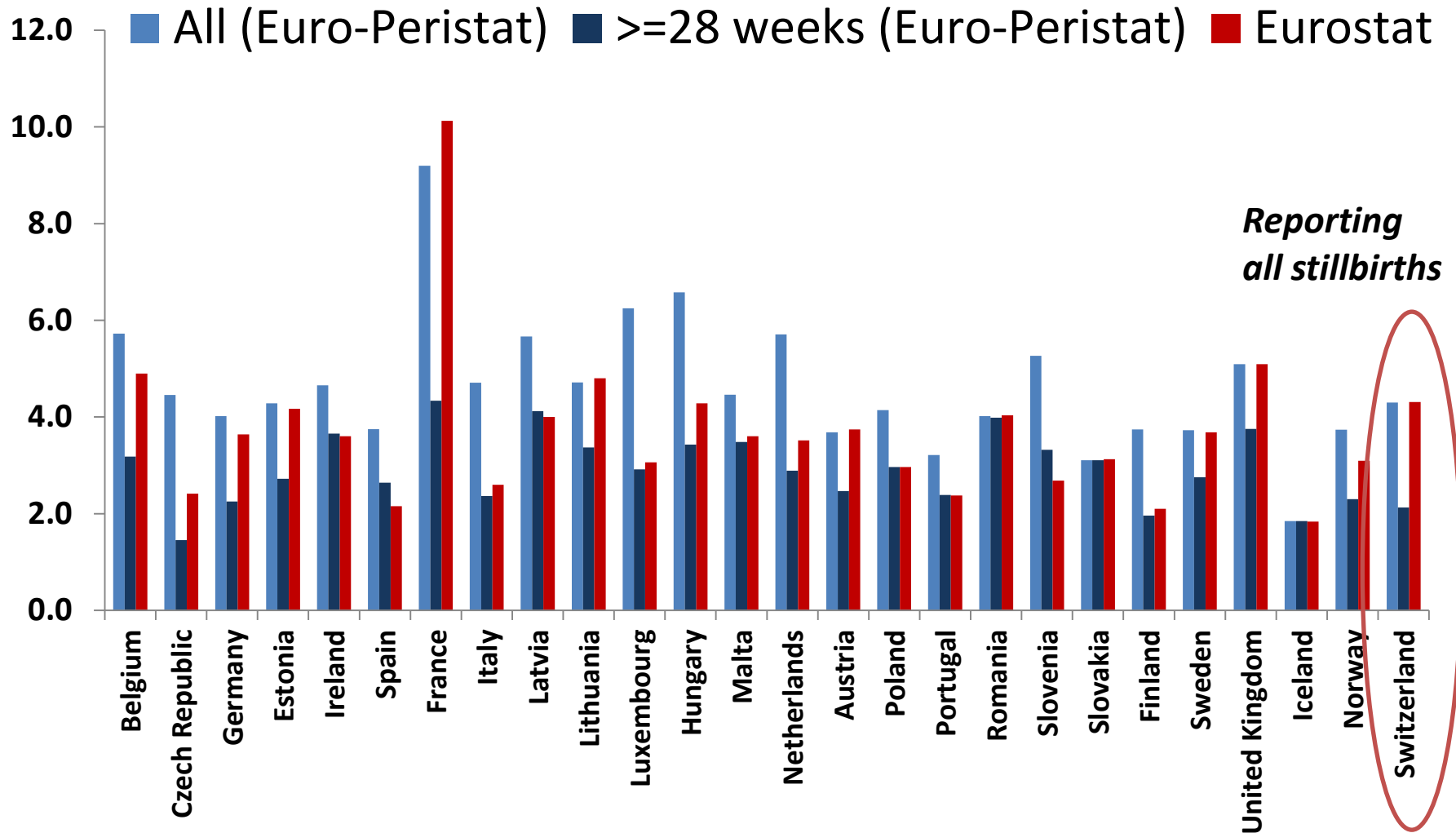
Rankings using Eurostat and Euro-Peristat (≥ 28 weeks)



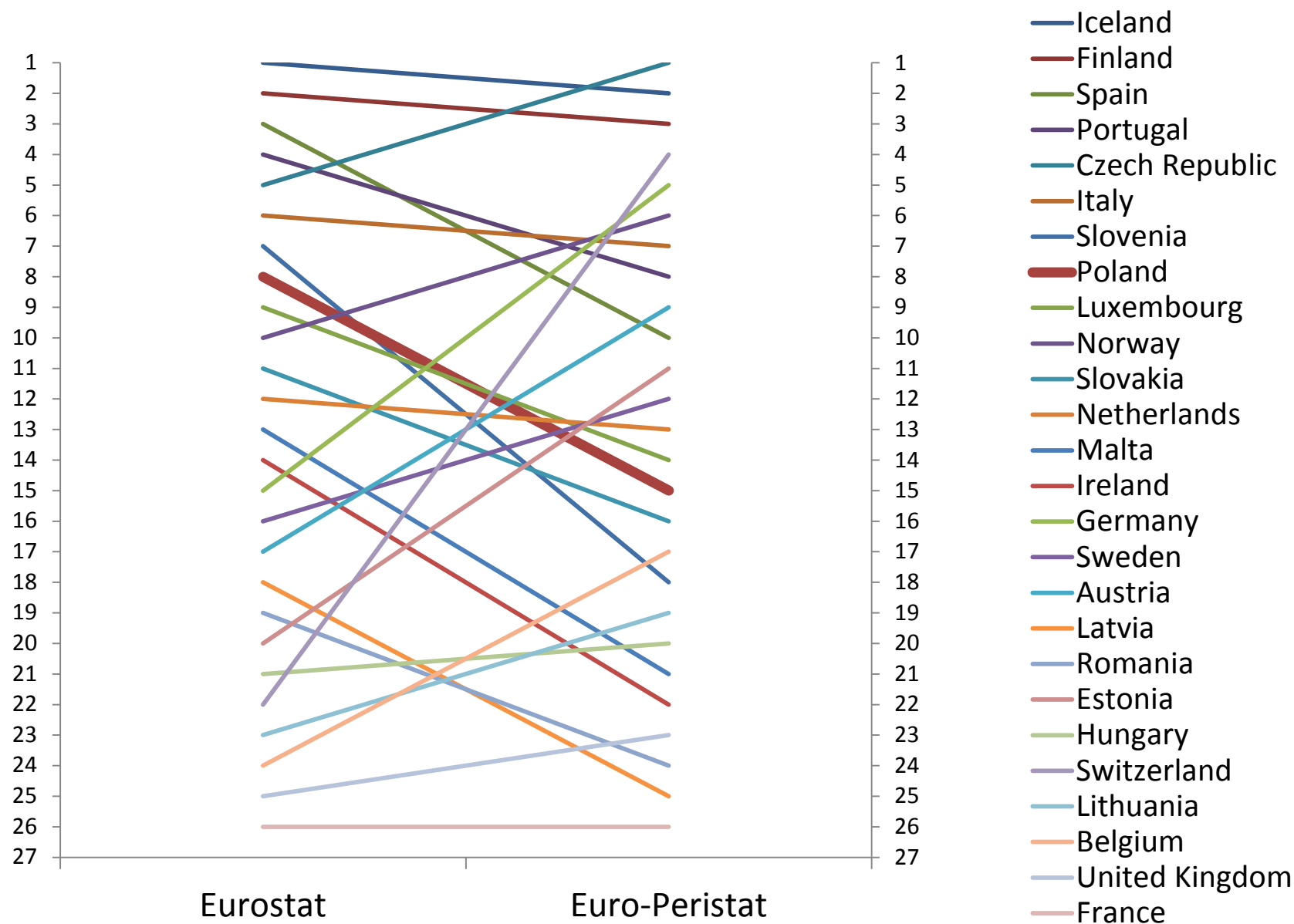
Rankings using Eurostat and Euro-Peristat (≥ 28 weeks)



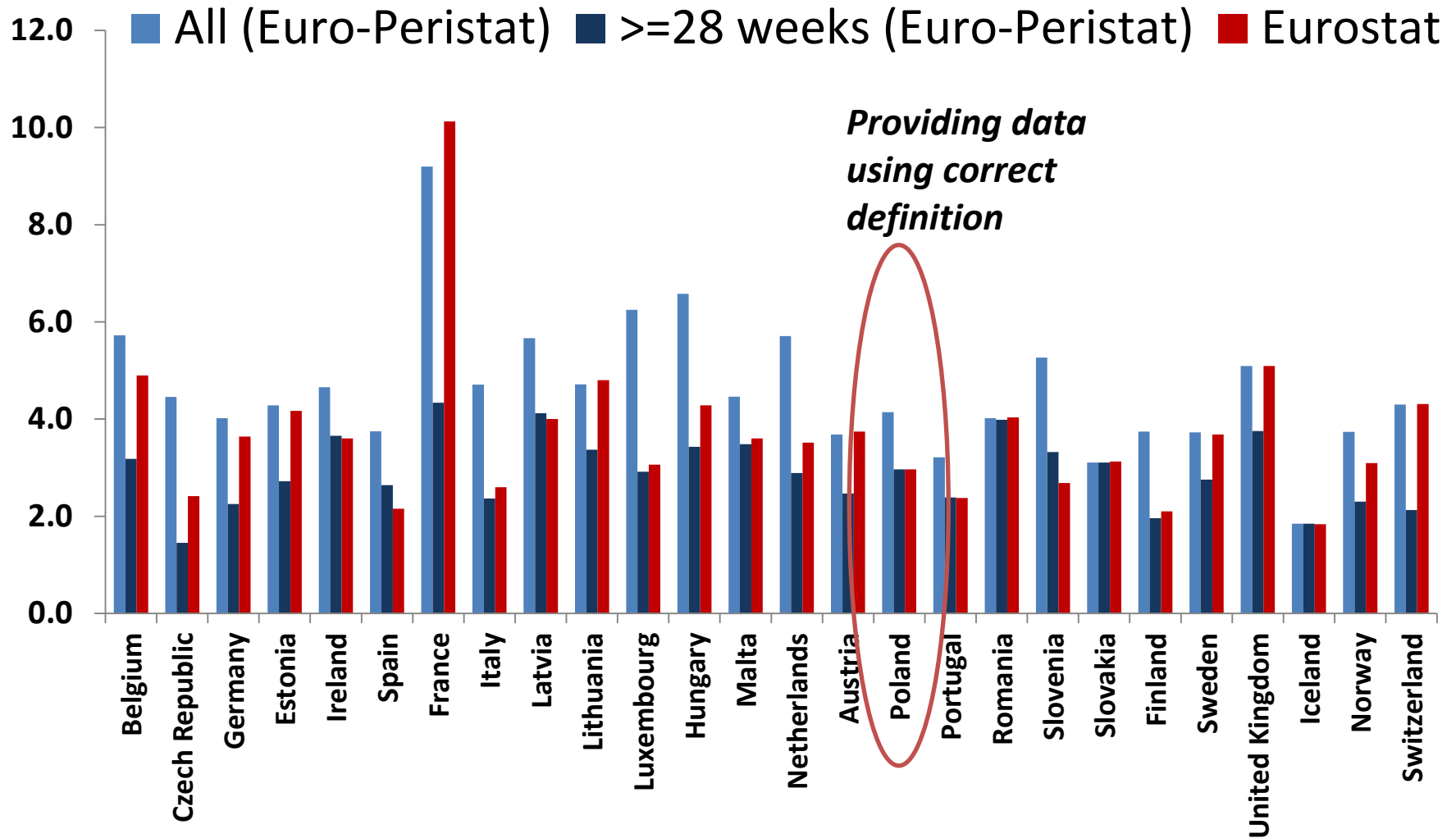
Results: stillbirths per 1000 total births



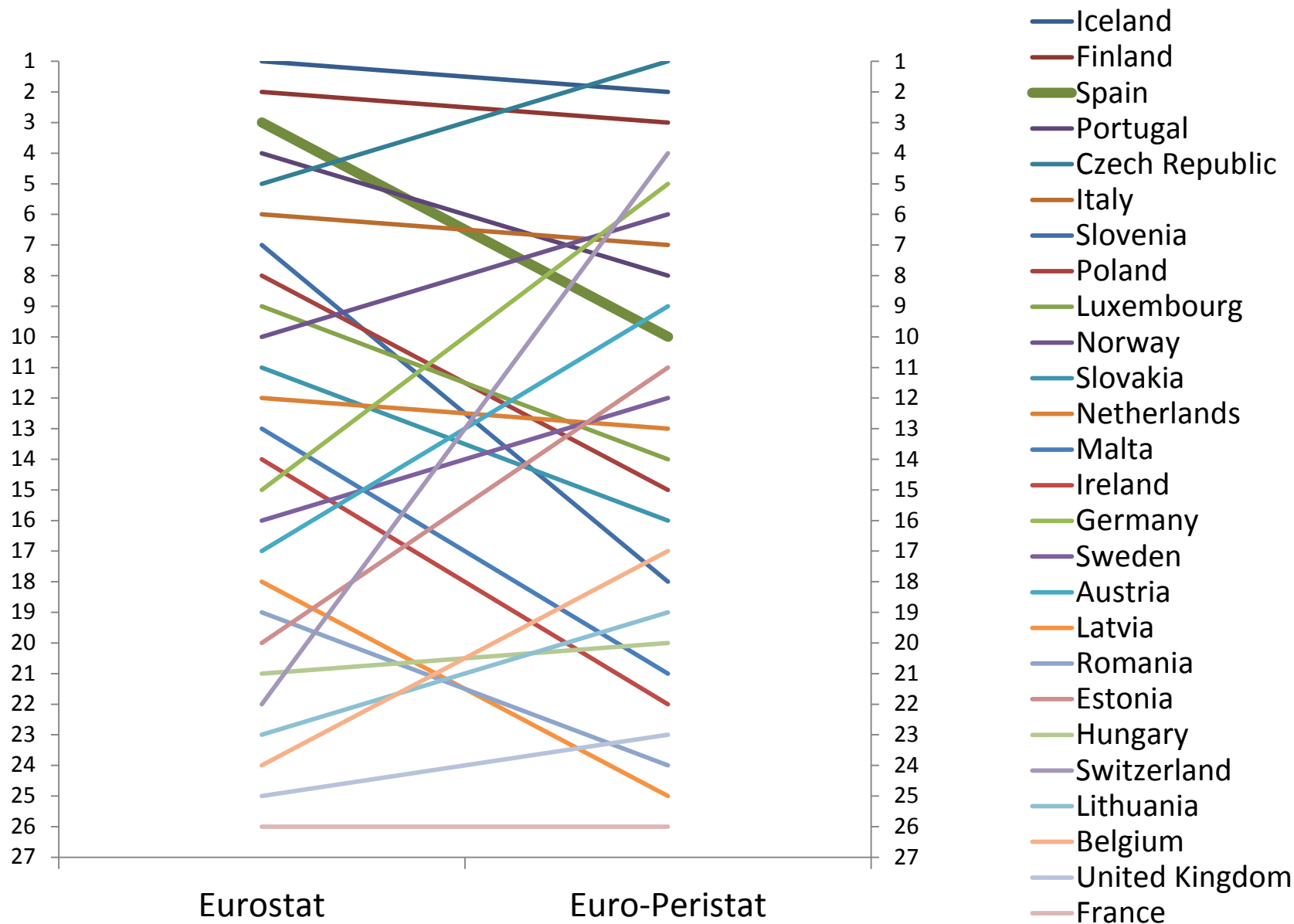
Rankings using Eurostat and Euro-Peristat (≥ 28 weeks)



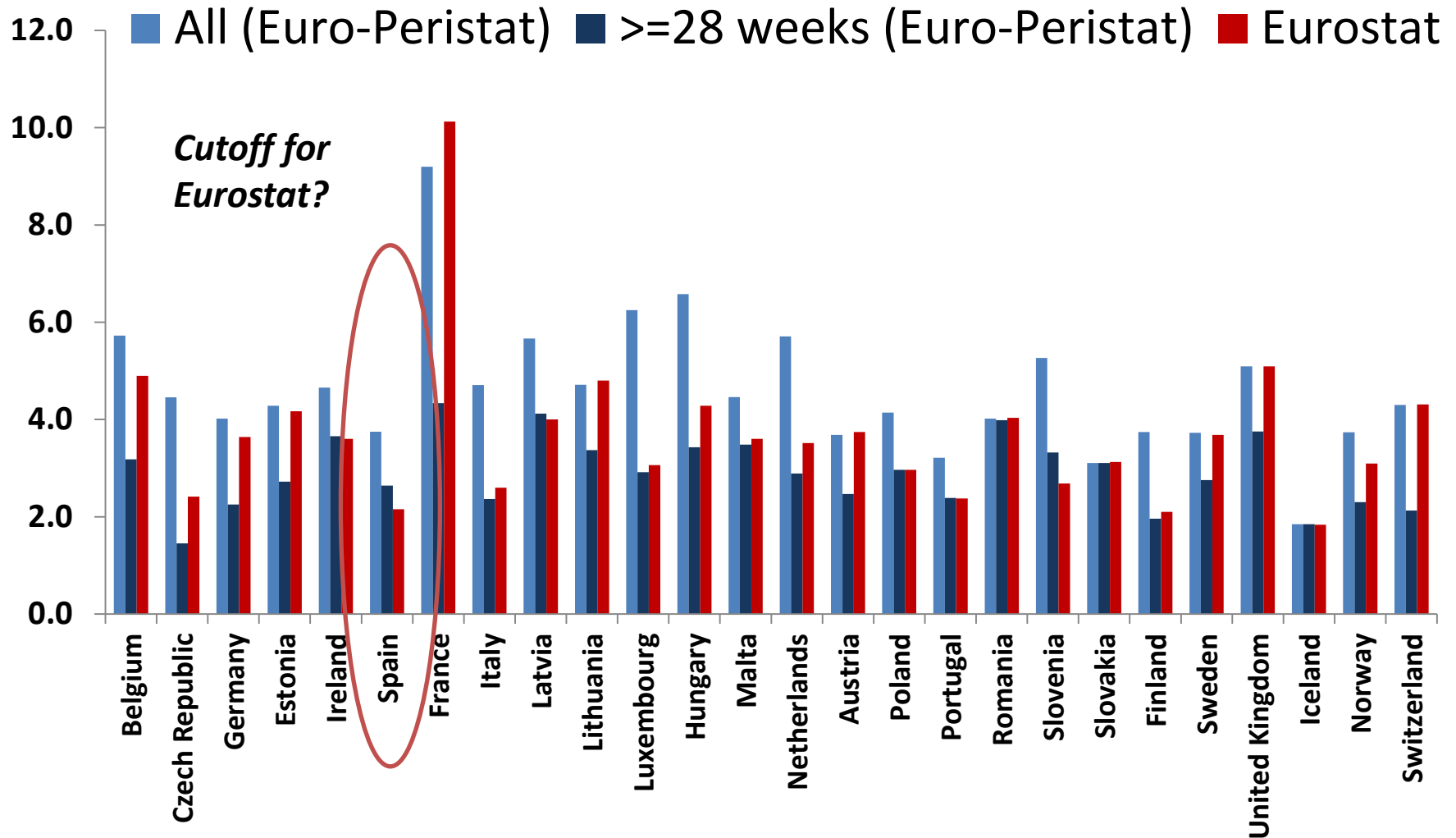
Results: stillbirths per 1000 total births



Rankings using Eurostat and Euro-Peristat (≥ 28 weeks)



Results: stillbirths per 1000 total births



Limitations

- Not all countries can provide stillbirths starting at 22 weeks of gestation to Euro-Peristat
- Some of the difference may be due to the data source which is not always the same

Conclusion

- In the absence of clear guidelines, variations across countries in stillbirth rates are driven largely by definitions
- Changes in rates and rankings are substantial and make these data unusable.
- Most countries have the data to provide comparable rates, at least using a ≥ 28 week GA threshold

Thank you

Summary

| Countries providing Eurostat with “late” fetal deaths | Countries providing Eurostat with ALL fetal deaths | Countries where other definition used or not clear |
|--|--|---|
| Latvia Ireland Portugal Poland Slovakia Romania Malta Luxembourg Finland | France Lithuania Austria Romania Switzerland United Kingdom Iceland Sweden Estonia | Germany Belgium Norway Poland Hungary Netherlands Spain Finland Italy Czech Republic Slovenia |