

# **HEALTH OF CENTRAL EUROPEANS** **AFTER THE FALL OF COMMUNISM**

*Vlado Simko, M.D., Ph.D., New York*

*Emil Ginter, Ph.D., Dr.Sc., Bratislava*

# **DEMISE OF TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM** **AFTER 1989**

## **In previously Soviet dominated Europe:**

**Dramatic improvement in the general health**

**Post- communist countries coming closer to  
democratic Europe**

**This is an uneven progress, more in the west than in  
Russia**

**Czech Republic is approaching health standards of  
established democracies in Europe**

# DEFINITIONS

**DEM - established EU democracies, never under communism**

**POST COM – countries formerly under Soviet domination**

**CZ – Czech Republic**

**SK – Slovak Republic**

## **Markers of population health:**

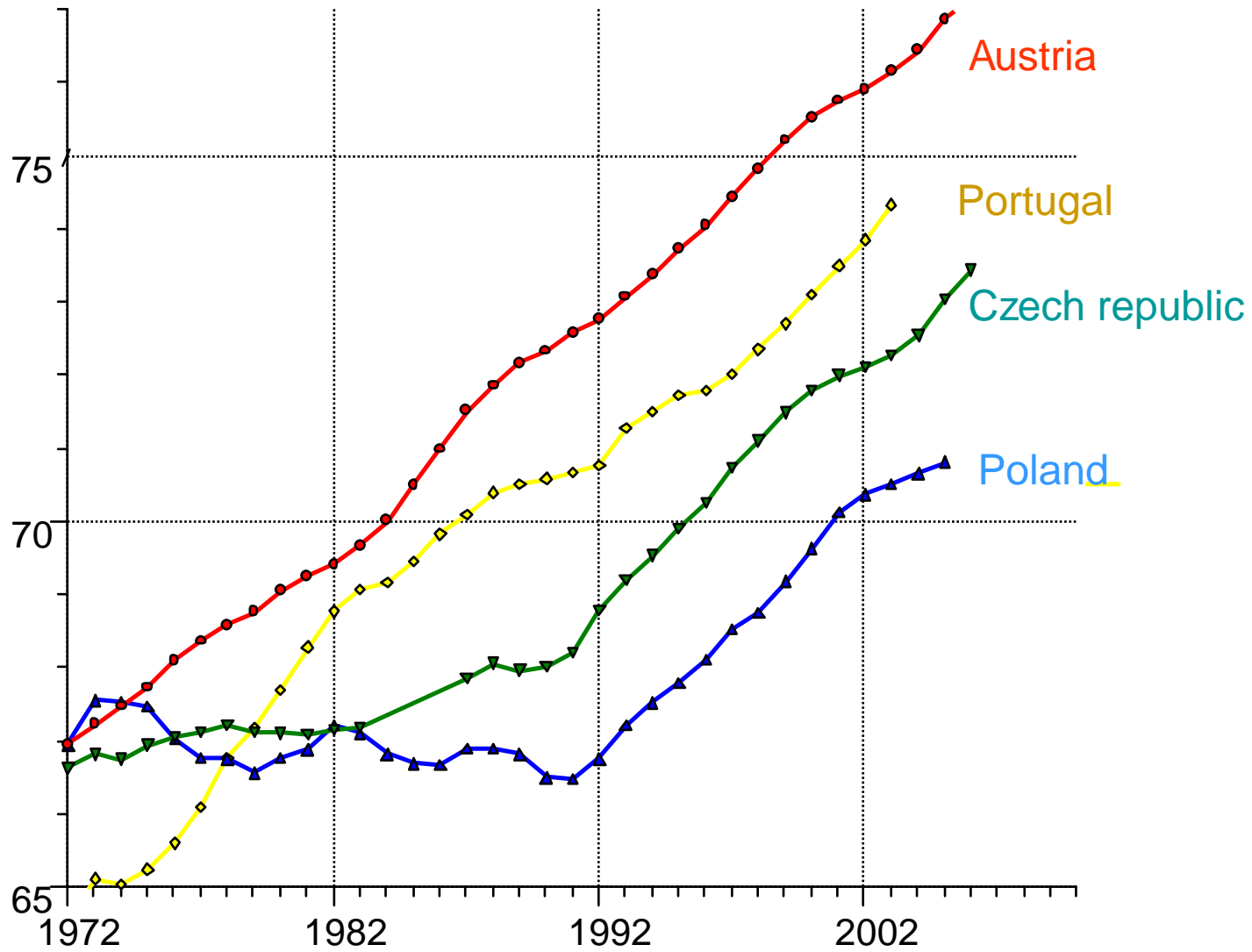
**LE – Life expectancy (in years of life)**

**HALE – Healthy life expectancy (years lived without disease)**

**Standardized mortality / 100,000 population**

**Neonatal mortality**

# Life expectancy of males in years



**Table 1.** Male Life Expectancy at birth (LE) and Healthy Life Expectancy (HALE) in Europe. Last available data (2006-2008).

	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Life expectancy</b>	<b>Healthy life expectancy</b>
1	Switzerland	79,6	71,1
2	Sweden	78,9	71,9
3	Italy	78,6	70,7
4	Norway	78,3	70,4
5	Netherlands	78,2	69,7
6	Austria	77,9	69,3
7	U.K.	77,7	69,1
8	France	77,5	69,3
9	Greece	77,2	69,1
10	Germany	77,2	69,6
11	Spain	77,1	69,9
12	Finland	76,1	68,7
13	Portugal	74,9	66,7
14	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>74,8</b>	<b>66,6</b>
15	<b>Czech Rep.</b>	<b>73,8</b>	<b>65,9</b>
16	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>72,6</b>	<b>63,8</b>
17	<b>Poland</b>	<b>71,0</b>	<b>63,1</b>
18	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>70,9</b>	<b>63,0</b>
19	<b>Romania</b>	<b>69,8</b>	<b>61,0</b>
20	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>69,3</b>	<b>62,6</b>
21	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>68,8</b>	<b>61,5</b>
22	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>67,3</b>	<b>59,2</b>
23	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>65,8</b>	<b>58,0</b>
24	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>64,9</b>	<b>58,9</b>
25	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>64,6</b>	<b>56,6</b>
26	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>62,3</b>	<b>54,9</b>
27	<b>Russia</b>	<b>60,5</b>	<b>52,8</b>

**Table 2.** Female Life Expectancy at birth (LE) and Healthy Life Expectancy (HALE) in Europe. Last available data (2006-2008).

	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Life expectancy</b>	<b>Healthy life expectancy</b>
1	France	84,6	74,7
2	Switzerland	84,3	75,3
3	Italy	84,3	74,7
4	Spain	83,8	75,3
5	Sweden	83,2	74,8
6	Austria	83,2	73,5
7	Finland	83,2	73,5
8	Norway	83,0	73,6
9	Netherlands	82,7	72,6
10	Germany	82,4	74,0
11	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>82,1</b>	<b>72,3</b>
12	Greece	82,0	72,9
13	U.K.	81,9	72,1
14	Portugal	81,6	71,7
15	<b>Czech Rep.</b>	<b>80,3</b>	<b>70,9</b>
16	<b>Poland</b>	<b>79,8</b>	<b>68,5</b>
17	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>79,4</b>	<b>69,3</b>
18	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>78,7</b>	<b>69,4</b>
19	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>78,2</b>	<b>69,0</b>
20	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>77,3</b>	<b>67,7</b>
21	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>77,2</b>	<b>68,2</b>
22	<b>Romania</b>	<b>76,9</b>	<b>65,2</b>
23	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>76,5</b>	<b>67,5</b>
24	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>76,3</b>	<b>66,8</b>
25	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>76,3</b>	<b>64,9</b>
26	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>73,8</b>	<b>63,6</b>
27	<b>Russia</b>	<b>73,3</b>	<b>64,3</b>

# **LEADING CAUSES OF DISEASE** **AND MORTALITY**

**Cardiovascular disorders (myocardial infarction,  
peripheral vascular disease, heart failure, stroke)**

**Malignancy, cancer**

**Chronic liver disease, cirrhosis**

**External causes (injury, accidents, suicide, murder)**

**Life style, alcoholism, smoking, essential nutrients**

**Lower socioeconomic status**

**Society's health expenditure (? USA)**

**Table 3.** Standardized mortality (age 25-64 y. per 100 000) in males caused by cardiovascular diseases, ischaemic heart diseases and cerebrovascular diseases in Europe. Last available data (2005-2008).

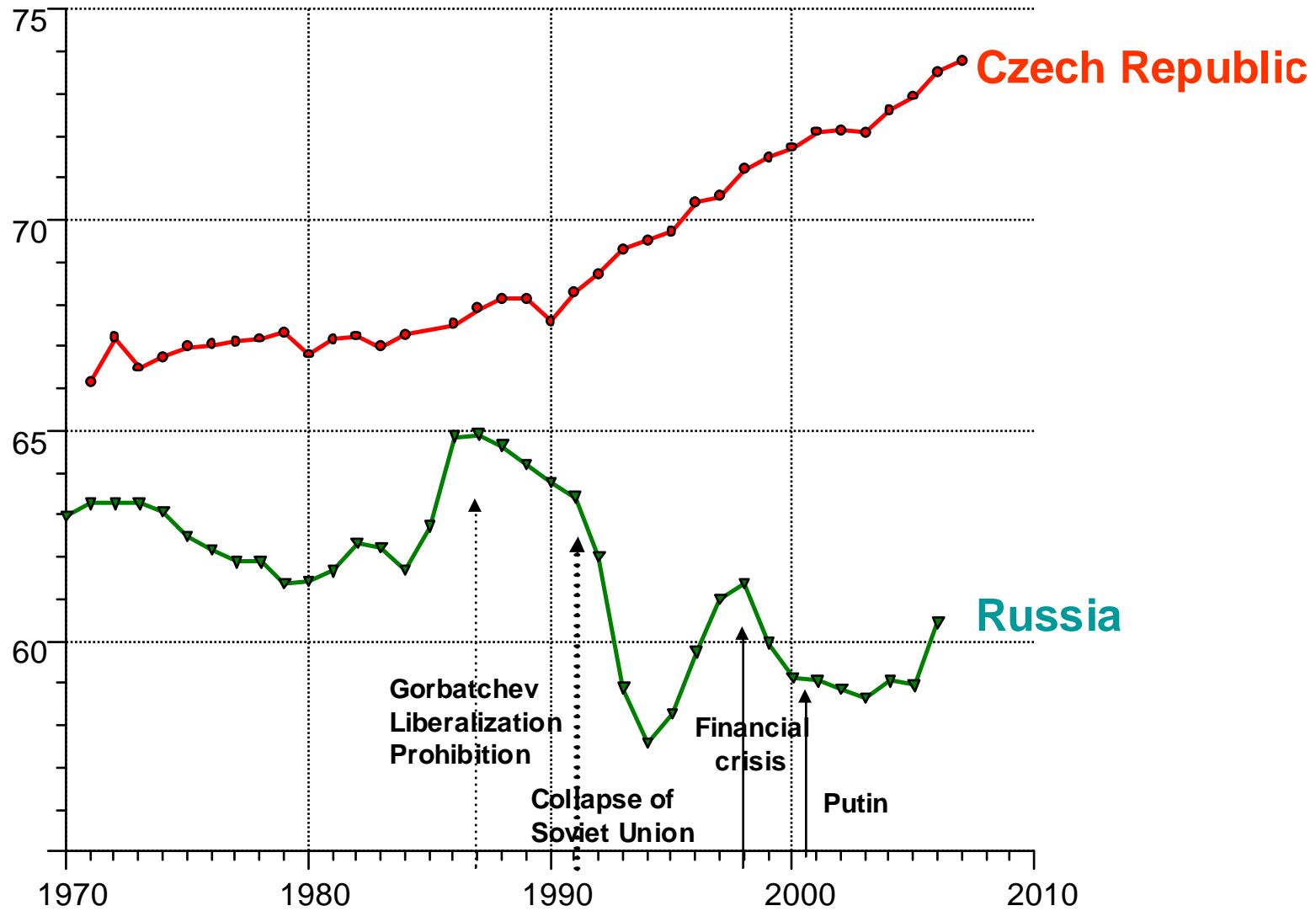
	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Cardiovascular diseases</b>	<b>Ischaemia</b>	<b>Stroke</b>
1	Switzerland	59,7	33,5	5,8
2	France	66,5	27,5	11,5
3	Italy	69,8	34,5	11,1
4	Netherlands	70,6	30,9	9,8
5	Norway	72,3	42,3	10,5
6	Sweden	75,5	43,8	12,1
7	Austria	75,7	45,2	10,2
8	Spain	80,7	40,4	14,4
9	U.K.	96,8	62,9	12,4
10	Germany	100,0	52,1	12,6
11	Portugal	101,9	45,1	31,3
<b>12</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>112,0</b>	<b>51,9</b>	<b>19,9</b>
13	Greece	128,7	85,9	19,7
14	Finland	130,3	73,4	19,3
<b>15</b>	<b>Czech Rep.</b>	<b>170,2</b>	<b>90,8</b>	<b>23,9</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>194,5</b>	<b>93,5</b>	<b>48,5</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>231,5</b>	<b>90,3</b>	<b>45,1</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>257,5</b>	<b>123,4</b>	<b>32,0</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>292,1</b>	<b>135,3</b>	<b>77,1</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>323,2</b>	<b>175,3</b>	<b>56,6</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>358,0</b>	<b>174,7</b>	<b>68,4</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>403,9</b>	<b>124,4</b>	<b>93,9</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>437,9</b>	<b>237,3</b>	<b>64,4</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>512,2</b>	<b>263,8</b>	<b>80,6</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>512,6</b>	<b>333,6</b>	<b>107,5</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>595,9</b>	<b>366,9</b>	<b>110,8</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>673,7</b>	<b>359,7</b>	<b>145,7</b>



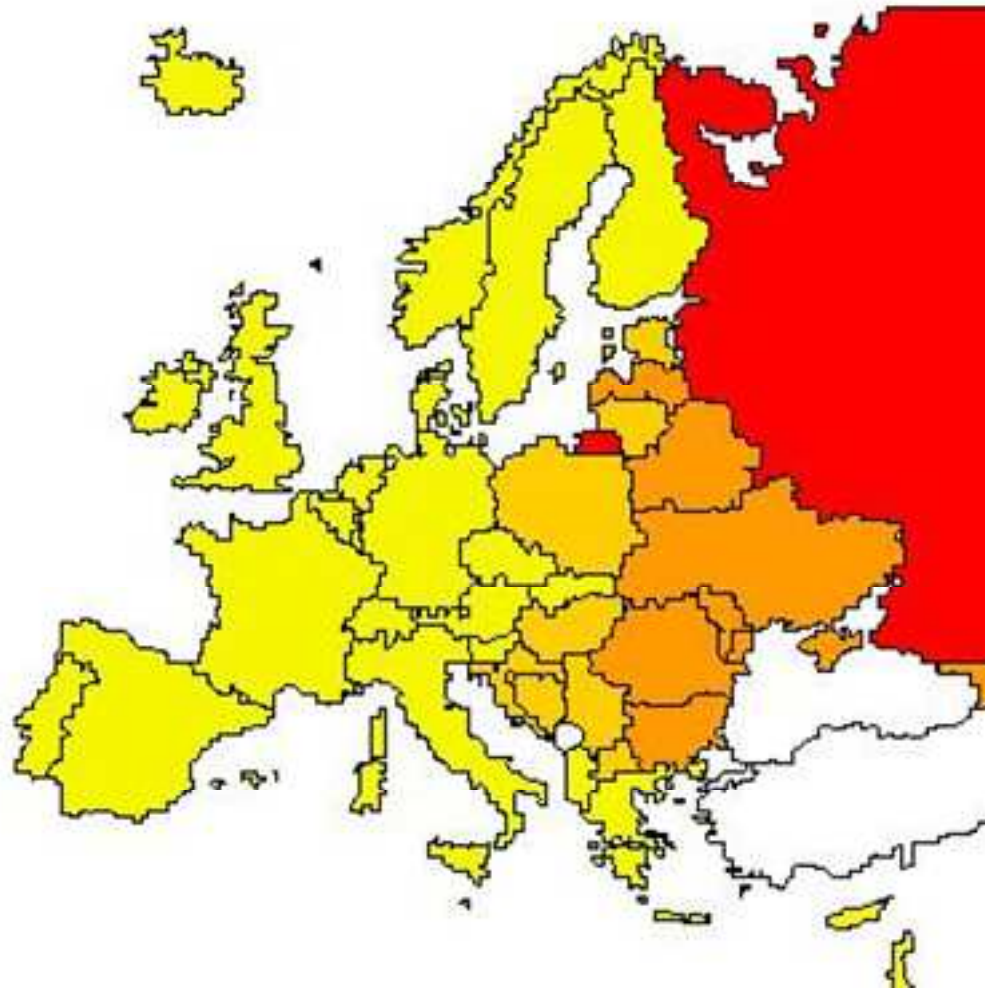
**Table 4.** Standardized mortality (age 25-64 y. per 100 000) in females caused by cardiovascular diseases, ischaemic heart diseases and cerebrovascular diseases in Europe. Last available data (2005-2008).

	<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Cardiovascular diseases</b>	<b>Ischaemia</b>	<b>Stroke</b>
1	Switzerland	19,5	6,4	4,8
2	France	21,1	4,7	6,2
3	Italy	23,8	7,3	6,7
7	Spain	24,4	7,4	7,3
5	Norway	25,1	10,7	6,5
8	Austria	26,9	9,6	7,3
6	Sweden	28,6	12,1	7,8
<b>12</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>	<b>28,8</b>	<b>6,7</b>	<b>9,0</b>
4	Netherlands	30,9	8,8	9,1
14	Finland	30,9	12,1	9,5
10	Germany	34,9	12,7	7,7
9	U.K.	35,8	15,0	9,9
11	Portugal	36,3	9,7	14,4
13	Greece	37,2	17,8	10,5
<b>15</b>	<b>Czech Rep.</b>	<b>54,7</b>	<b>21,7</b>	<b>11,7</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>Croatia</b>	<b>58,7</b>	<b>20,2</b>	<b>19,9</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Poland</b>	<b>67,5</b>	<b>19,6</b>	<b>20,5</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>Slovakia</b>	<b>76,3</b>	<b>31,1</b>	<b>11,3</b>
<b>21</b>	<b>Estonia</b>	<b>90,9</b>	<b>32,8</b>	<b>27,0</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>103,7</b>	<b>47,8</b>	<b>24,2</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Romania</b>	<b>113,3</b>	<b>42,1</b>	<b>41,5</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>Lithuania</b>	<b>113,4</b>	<b>47,7</b>	<b>28,4</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Latvia</b>	<b>138,3</b>	<b>55,6</b>	<b>35,7</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>151,0</b>	<b>77,6</b>	<b>50,3</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>Bulgaria</b>	<b>154,8</b>	<b>35,0</b>	<b>43,2</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>Ukraine</b>	<b>199,1</b>	<b>114,0</b>	<b>51,6</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>Russia</b>	<b>212,7</b>	<b>89,0</b>	<b>66,4</b>

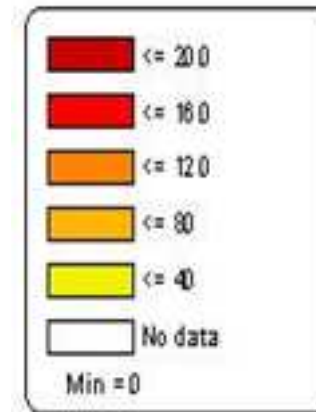
# Male life expectancy at birth in years



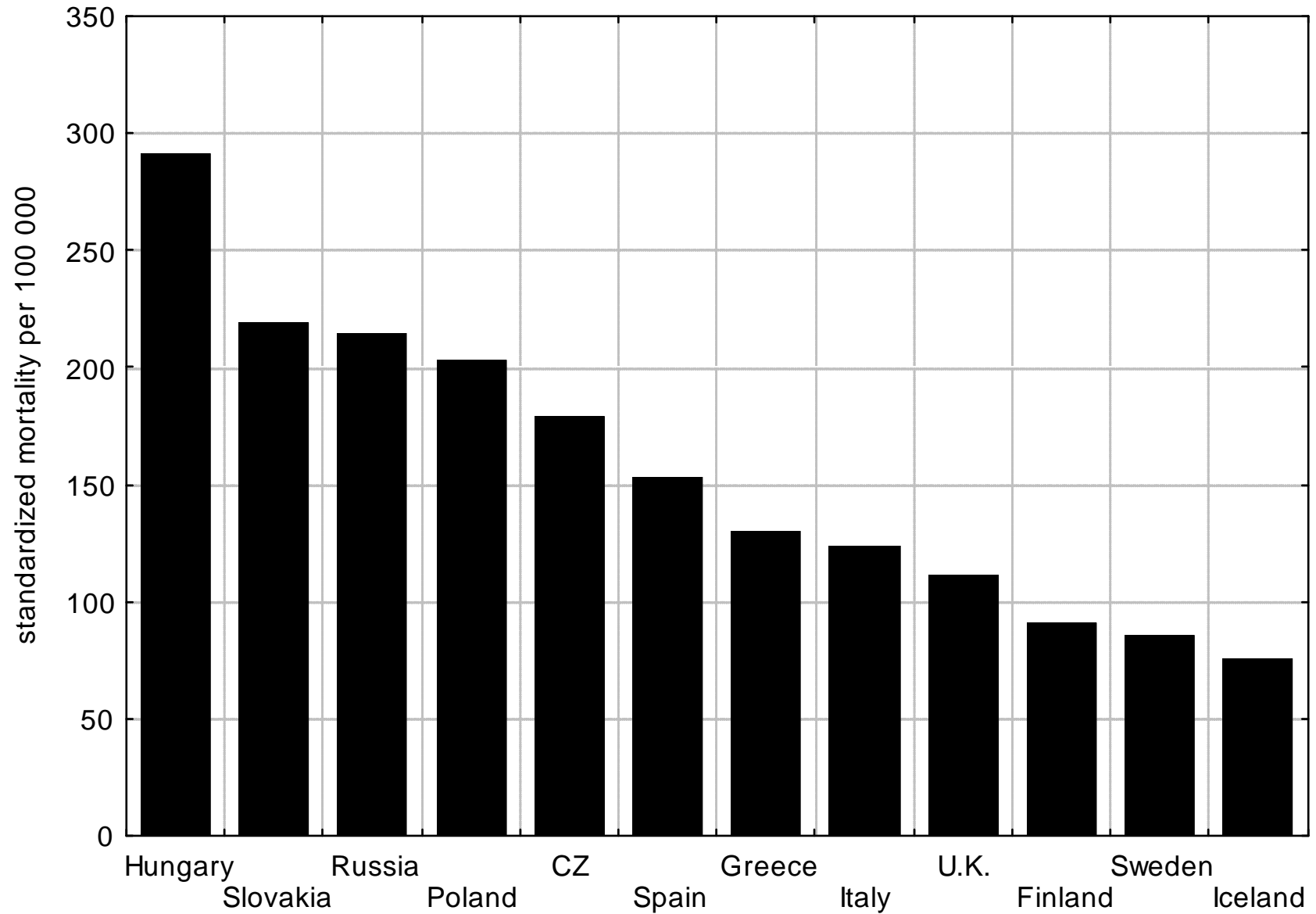
# Cerebrovascular mortality in males aged 25-64 years



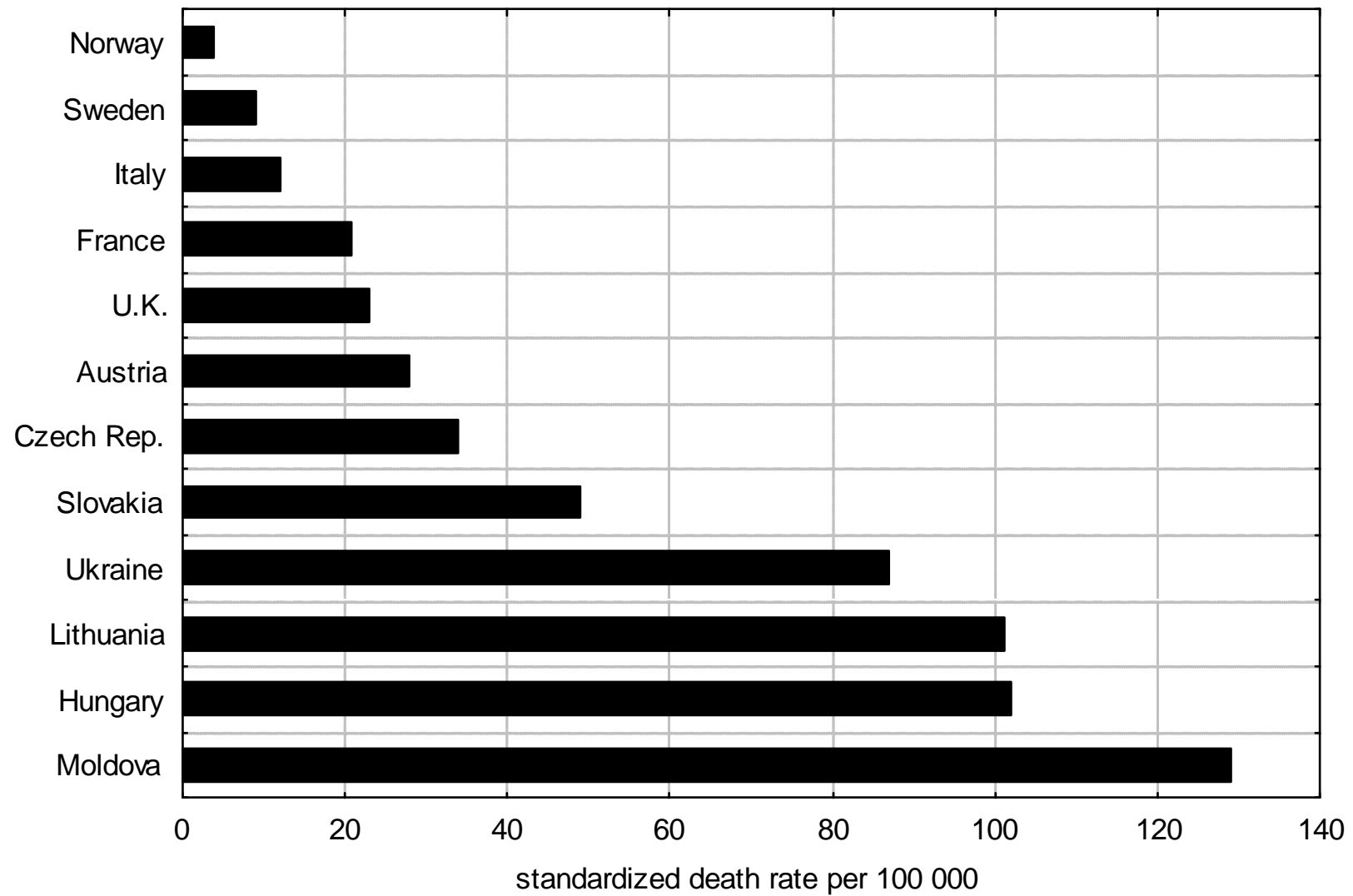
Mortality per 100 000



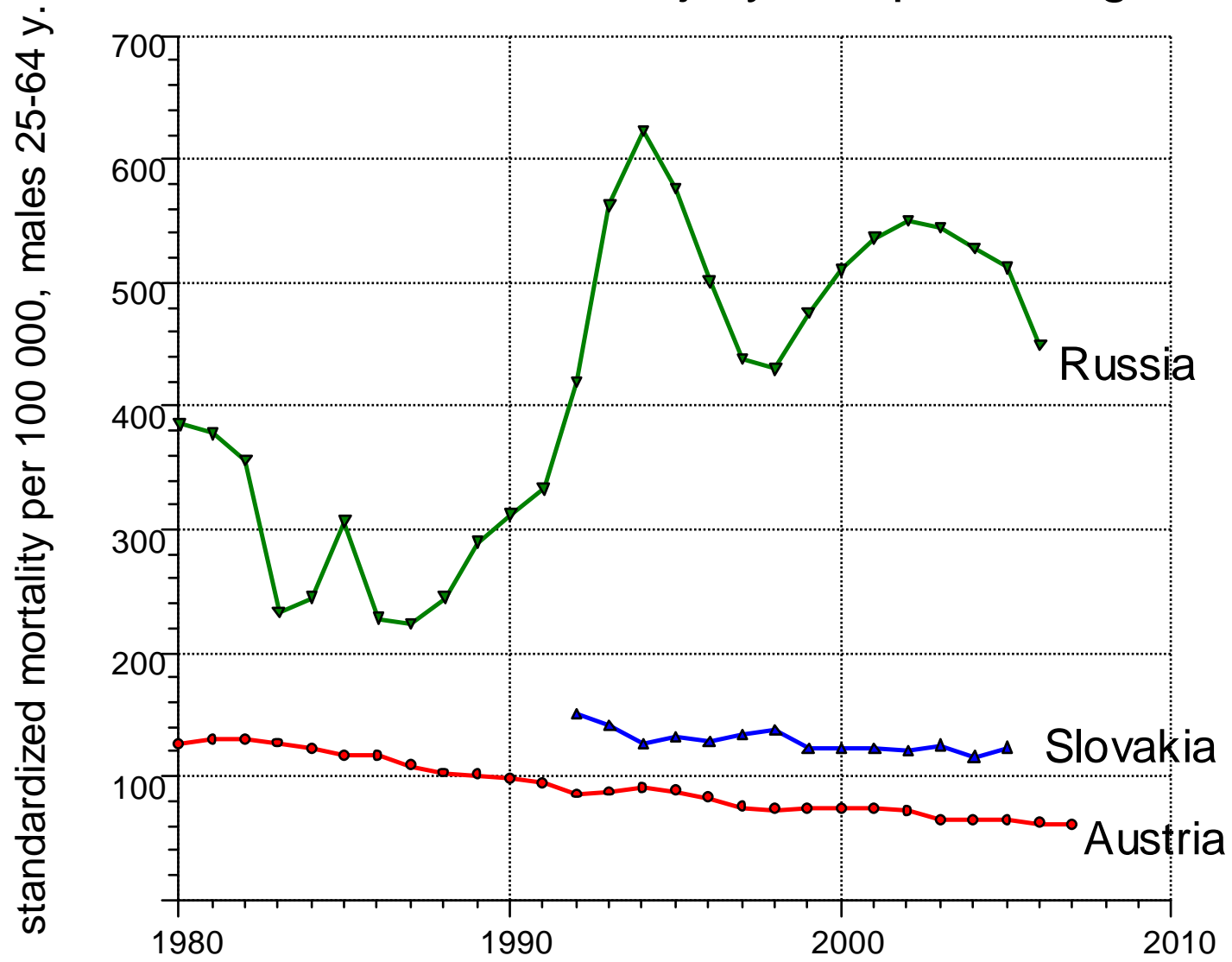
Male cancer mortality in age 25-64 years (2005-2007)



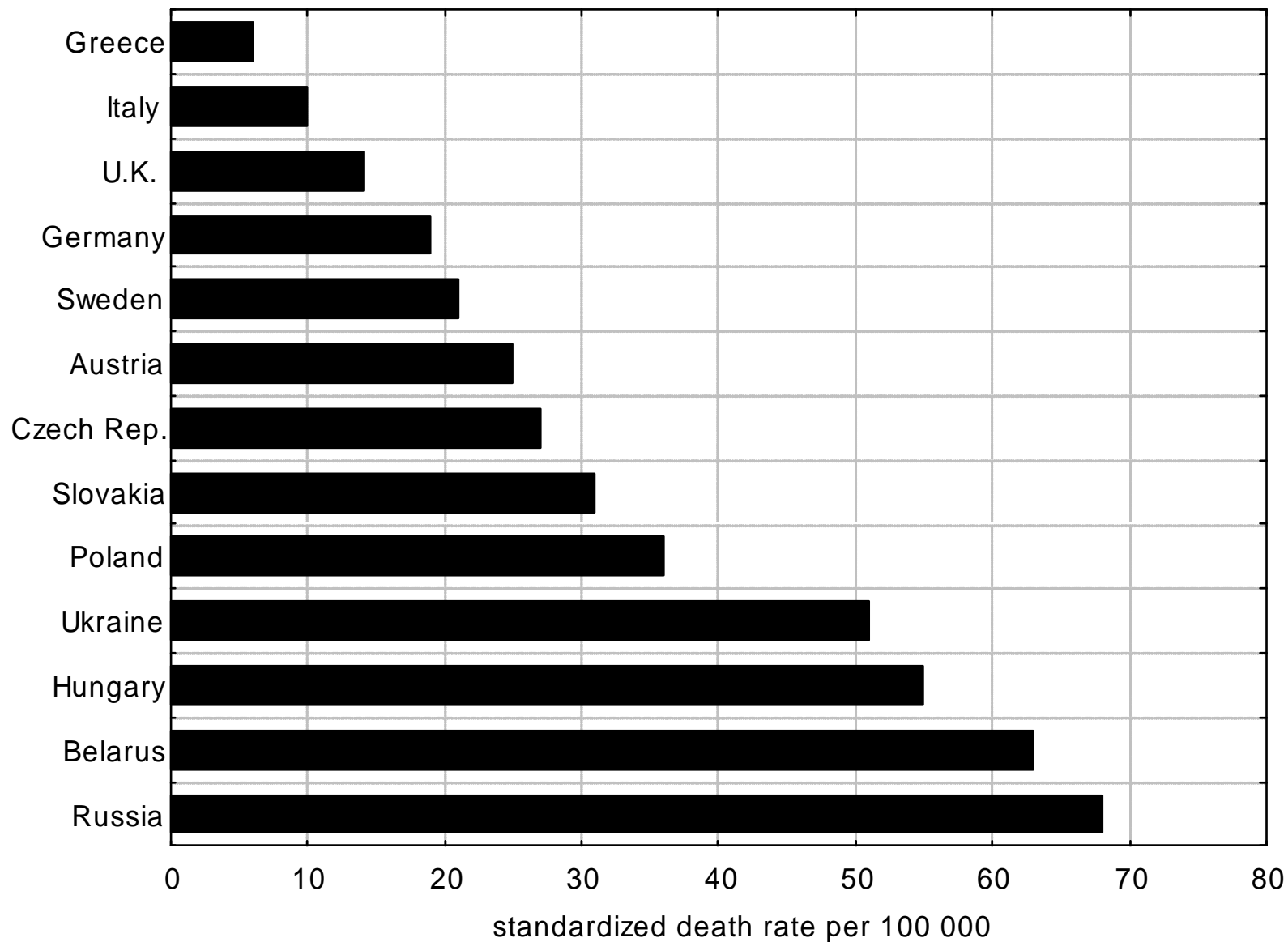
# Mortality from chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, males, 25-65 y. 2005-2007



# External causes of injury and poisoning



## Male suicides (age 25-64 y.) in Europe (2005-2007)



# **SOCIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES**

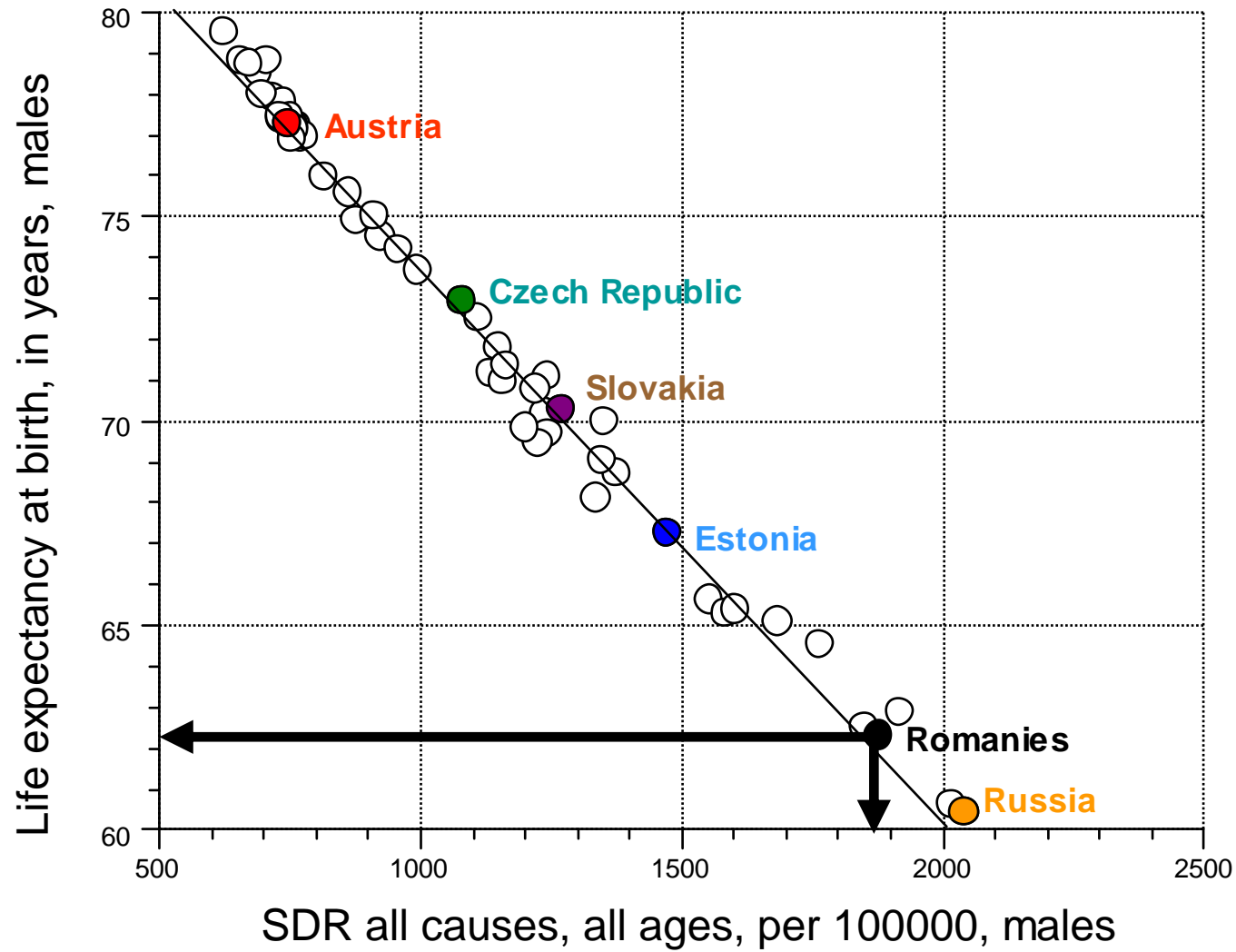
**Proportion, extremely poor and very rich**

**Social and health condition of Roma minority**

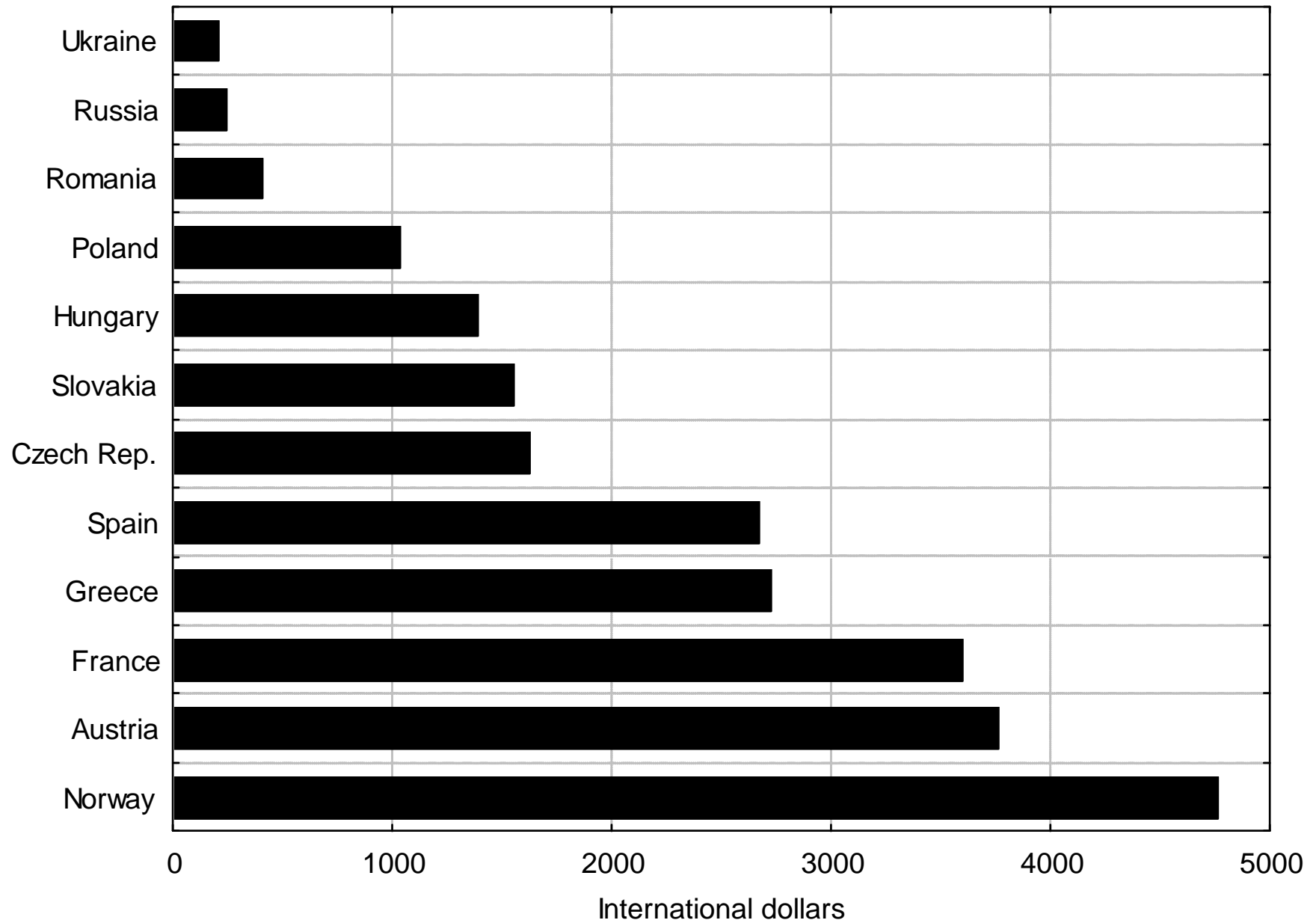
**Proportion of Roma minority and its integration with the majority vary in different European countries**



# Close correlation between mortality (all causes-all ages) and life expectancy in European males



## Per capita expenditure on health (2006-7)



# **RUSSIA, THE POWER CENTER OF FORMER SOVIET EMPIRE**

**Some of the worst population indicators:**

**Male LE 20 years below Iceland**

**“ worse than Pakistan, Bangladesh**

**Cardio mortality, males 25 – 64, 10 x higher  
than in Switzerland**

**Suicides 11 x higher than in Greece**

**ENIGMA: Cancer and suicide in Hungary**

# **CONCLUSION:**

## **Lesson from communism**

**“Free” health care = communist propaganda**

**Failure of central planning, elimination of checks and balances, of democratic freedom**

**Failure of economic progress, deficiency in personnel qualification, medications, equipment**

**IMPACT OF THE COMMUNIST TOTALITY WILL TAKE SEVERAL DECADES TO ALLOW HEALTH STANDARD OF DEM COUNTRIES**