



# Press release

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14 Health

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2010 European Perinatal Health Report

## Switzerland average overall with a few exceptions

Neuchâtel, 27.05.2013 (FSO) – **The health of mothers and newborns as well as the medical management of birth vary greatly from one country to another. For the first time, a European report on perinatal health includes data from the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) enabling a comparison to be made between the situation in Switzerland and in the other countries. For most of the indicators, Switzerland falls within the European average. However, Switzerland has the lowest proportion of adolescent mothers (1.1%) and one of the highest of mothers born abroad (41.1%).**

The health of mothers and newborns is a crucial area of public health, also in Europe. Over recent decades, technological advances have enabled more couples to conceive and more premature babies to survive, but they have also created new health risks. Obstetrical practices change too. Good quality perinatal data and their international comparison are essential to a better understanding of these changes and their effects. Switzerland is featured for the first time in the report from the EURO-PERISTAT project published today.

### Profile of women giving birth

With 1.1% of births to women under the age of 20 in 2010, Switzerland recorded the lowest proportion of adolescent mothers in Europe. In the other countries, this proportion ranges from 1.4% (Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands) and 10.6% (Romania). Women aged 35 years and older represent 25.8% of women who gave birth in Switzerland in 2010. This proportion, high in European comparison, is nevertheless lower than that recorded in Ireland (27.9%), in Spain (29.5%) and in Italy (34.7%).

The rate of women giving birth to twins or triplets ranges between 9.1 per 1000 in Rumania and 26.5 per 1000 in Cyprus. With 18.7 per 1000, Switzerland shows a high rate, close or equal to that of Germany, Slovenia or Luxembourg.

The proportion of mothers born abroad differs greatly from one country to another. In the Czech Republic and Finland it is lower than 10%. With 41.1% of mothers born abroad, Switzerland has the second highest rate in Europe after Luxembourg (66%).

**Medical care**

The resort to a caesarean section is increasing throughout Europe, with the exception of Finland and Sweden where there was a slight decrease between 2004 and 2010. In 2010, a third of deliveries were made in this way in Switzerland. Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Italy and Cyprus present even higher rates.

The proportion of births without obstetrical intervention (vaginal birth without induction, forceps, ventouse or episiotomy) was 34.8% in Switzerland in 2010. 0.7% of births took place at home, 1.5% in a birthing home and 97.8% at hospital.

SWISS FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE  
Press Office

### **EURO-PERISTAT project**

This project was launched in 1999 by the European Union with the aim of developing comparable, valid and reliable indicators for the evaluation and monitoring of perinatal health in Europe. In 2008 the first report was published with data for the year 2004 from 25 of the 26 EU members plus Norway. The new report published today concerns data for 2010 from 26 of the 27 EU members as well as Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. It contains 10 core indicators and 20 recommended indicators. For certain indicators, this is the first time that it is possible to compare the situation in Switzerland with that in the other European countries.

### **Methodological note**

The data published for Switzerland are based on several different statistics: the statistics of natural population change, the Hospital Medical Statistics and the Assisted Reproductive Technology Statistics. For some indicators, these data have been supplemented with data from the Swiss Federation of Midwives and the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative.

Other indicators, such as the APGAR score, maternal smoking during pregnancy, the body mass index of the mother before pregnancy, her level of education or her occupation have not been calculated for Switzerland due to a lack of available data at national level.

The sources, definitions and criteria for inclusion may lead to slight discrepancies with other figures published by the FSO.

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### ***New publication:***

European Perinatal Health Report : Health and care of pregnant women and babies in Europe in 2010  
[www.europeristat.com](http://www.europeristat.com)

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This press release has been established on the basis of the European Statistics Code of Practice, which ensures the independence, integrity and accountability of national and community statistical offices. Privileged access is supervised and under embargo.

This press release is the result of international collaboration and was therefore sent to the members of the EURO-PERISTAT project scientific committee several days prior to publication.