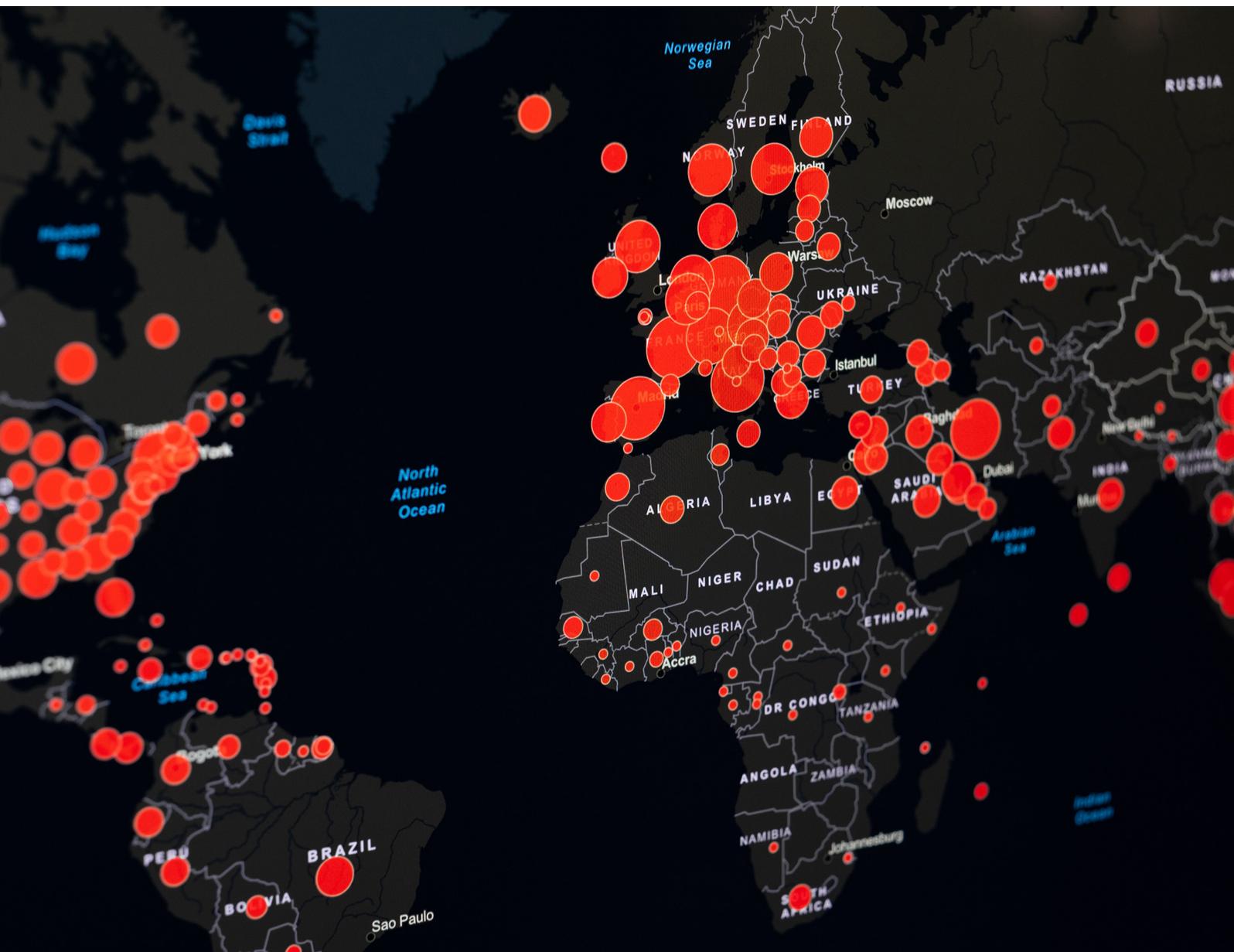


# How well have OECD countries responded to the coronavirus crisis?

A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



### **The world leader in global business intelligence**

The Economist Intelligence Unit (The EIU) is the research and analysis division of The Economist Group, the sister company to The Economist newspaper. Created in 1946, we have over 70 years' experience in helping businesses, financial firms and governments to understand how the world is changing and how that creates opportunities to be seized and risks to be managed.

Given that many of the issues facing the world have an international (if not global) dimension, The EIU is ideally positioned to be commentator, interpreter and forecaster on the phenomenon of globalisation as it gathers pace and impact.

### **EIU subscription services**

The world's leading organisations rely on our subscription services for data, analysis and forecasts to keep them informed about what is happening around the world. We specialise in:

- **Country Analysis:** Access to regular, detailed country-specific economic and political forecasts, as well as assessments of the business and regulatory environments in different markets.
- **Risk Analysis:** Our risk services identify actual and potential threats around the world and help our clients understand the implications for their organisations.
- **Industry Analysis:** Five year forecasts, analysis of key themes and news analysis for six key industries in 60 major economies. These forecasts are based on the latest data and in-depth analysis of industry trends.

### **EIU Consulting**

EIU Consulting is a bespoke service designed to provide solutions specific to our customers' needs. We specialise in these key sectors:

- **Healthcare:** Together with our two specialised consultancies, Bazian and Clearstate, The EIU helps healthcare organisations build and maintain successful and sustainable businesses across the healthcare ecosystem. **Find out more at: [eiu.com/healthcare](http://eiu.com/healthcare)**
- **Public Policy:** Trusted by the sector's most influential stakeholders, our global public policy practice provides evidence-based research for policy-makers and stakeholders seeking clear and measurable outcomes. **Find out more at: [eiu.com/publicpolicy](http://eiu.com/publicpolicy)**

### **The Economist Corporate Network**

The Economist Corporate Network (ECN) is The Economist Group's advisory service for organisational leaders seeking to better understand the economic and business environments of global markets. Delivering independent, thought-provoking content, ECN provides clients with the knowledge, insight, and interaction that support better-informed strategies and decisions.

The Network is part of The Economist Intelligence Unit and is led by experts with in-depth understanding of the geographies and markets they oversee. The Network's membership-based operations cover Asia-Pacific, the Middle East, and Africa. Through a distinctive blend of interactive conferences, specially designed events, C-suite discussions, member briefings, and high-calibre research, The Economist Corporate Network delivers a range of macro (global, regional, national, and territorial) as well as industry-focused analysis on prevailing conditions and forecast trends.

## The EIU tracker ranks the quality of policy responses to the pandemic given countries' risk profiles.

The Economist Intelligence Unit has constructed an index to rank the quality of the policy response to coronavirus across 21 OECD countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and the US). Countries are assessed against three "quality of response" criteria (number of tests, provision of non-Covid-19 healthcare and the number of above-average excess deaths). Three mitigating factors adjust scores to take pre-existing risk factors (share of older population, obesity prevalence and number of international arrivals) into account. The resulting index shows which countries have so far managed the pandemic best, given their risk profiles.



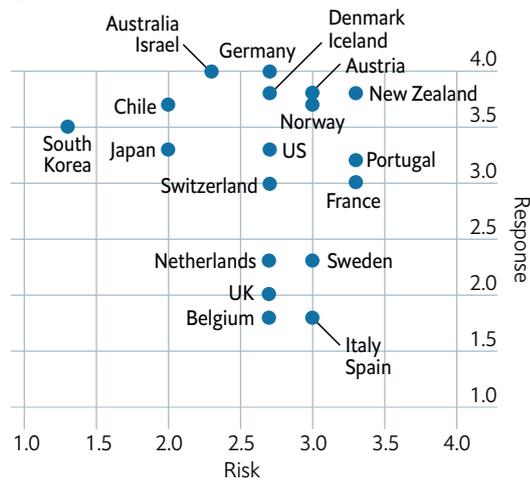
### Assessing the quality of OECD countries' responses to Covid-19

	Quality of response			Risk factors			Assessment	
	Tests	Provision of non Covid-19 healthcare	Death rate	Obesity prevalence	Share of population aged 65+	International arrivals	Score	Category
<i>1 - worst response/lowest risk ; 4 - best response/highest risk</i>								
Australia	4	4	4	3	3	1	3.44	Very good
Austria	4	3	4	2	3	4	3.56	Very good
Belgium	4	3	1	2	3	3	2.11	Poor
Chile	3	3	4	3	2	1	3.11	Good
Denmark	4	3	4	1	3	4	3.44	Very good
France	3	3	3	2	4	4	3.11	Good
Germany	3	4	4	2	4	2	3.56	Very good
Iceland	4	3	4	2	2	4	3.44	Very good
Italy	4	3	1	1	4	4	2.22	Poor
Israel	4	4	4	3	2	2	3.44	Very good
Japan	1	3	4	1	4	1	2.89	Fair
Netherlands	2	3	2	2	3	3	2.44	Fair
New Zealand	4	3	4	4	3	3	3.67	Very good
Norway	3	3	4	2	3	4	3.44	Very good
Portugal	4	3	3	2	4	4	3.22	Good
South Korea	2	3	4	1	2	1	2.78	Fair
Spain	4	3	1	2	3	4	2.22	Poor
Sweden	3	3	2	2	4	3	2.56	Fair
Switzerland	3	3	3	1	3	4	2.89	Fair
UK	4	4	1	3	3	2	2.22	Poor
US	4	4	3	4	3	1	3.11	Good

## HOW WELL HAVE OECD COUNTRIES RESPONDED TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS?

### Response to coronavirus vs. risk factors

(1 - worst response/lowest risk ; 4 - best response/highest risk)



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit.

swiftly. Not all of them introduced stringent lockdowns, but all implemented aggressive testing and tracing programmes.

At the other end of the spectrum, **Belgium, Italy, Spain** and the **UK** record the lowest scores. This is partly understandable in the case of Italy and Spain: these countries were the first in Europe to be hit by the pandemic and had little time to prepare. However, it is harder to explain the UK's poor score. The global connectivity of the UK—and especially London—may help to explain its high excess death toll (as at early June, UK statistics show that the number of extra deaths per million people is the second highest in the world, after Spain), but the country had a slower build-up of cases than other European countries and more time to prepare. In addition, Britain's centralised public healthcare system provided the government with crucial data as to who was most at risk. An insufficiently fast and co-ordinated response, an initial lack of testing capacity, and a decision to suspend track and trace in early March may help to explain why the UK became an outlier.

In the middle category, **France, Chile, Portugal** and the **US** tackled the pandemic well; **Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Sweden** and **Switzerland** did slightly less well. Three countries stand out: Sweden, the US and Chile. Sweden's response to the pandemic was highly debated and widely criticised inside and outside of the country. Epidemiologists advising the Swedish government bet on herd immunity (herd immunity assumes that if a significant share of the population catches a virus, the pathogen will cease to circulate, hence protecting the rest of the population). As a result, Sweden did not impose a lockdown, and social-distancing measures were mild compared with those imposed in other countries. Despite its controversial approach, Sweden's number of excess deaths is lower than that of Spain or Italy, each of which had a similar risk profile and imposed stringent lockdowns.

The US ranking also provides interesting insights. The country records the highest number of deaths worldwide, partly reflecting population size and, perhaps, the poor initial response of the US

The governments of **Australia, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Israel, New Zealand** and **Norway** register the highest scores in our index and have performed best in managing the public health emergency caused by the pandemic. These countries have so far recorded low numbers of extra deaths during the pandemic, put solid tracking and testing programmes in place, and continued to provide healthcare services to non-coronavirus patients. This is a particularly impressive feat, given that in most of these countries over-65s account for a significant share of the population, making them vulnerable to severe coronavirus infection. Overall, these countries appear to have succeeded in containing the pandemic because they reacted early and

## HOW WELL HAVE OECD COUNTRIES RESPONDED TO THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS?

---

administration. However, the high number of deaths also reflects existing risk factors, such as a high prevalence of obesity and an ageing population. When assessed against these risk factors, the US's performance is not as poor as the crude data may suggest. In fact, it is better than that of most of the countries that shared a similar risk profile.

Finally, Chile's performance is comparable to that of France or the US, and much better than that of the UK, for instance. This shows that richer countries did not necessarily tackle the pandemic better than less affluent ones.

## Methodology:

A weight of four is applied to the number of excess deaths per million people; all other criteria are weighted as one. The score is then calculated as an average of the six criteria.

### 1) *Tests*

Tests per million people

<15,000 scores 1, 10,000-20,000 scores 2, 20,000-50,000 scores 3, >50,000 scores 4 Source: Latest available government data (as at June 9th)

### 2) *Provision of non-Covid 19 healthcare*

Share of cancer-related surgeries cancelled

>50% scores 1, 40-50% scores 2, 30-40% scores 3, <30% scores 4

Source: "Elective surgery during the SARS CoV-2 pandemic", A. Bhangu et al., British Journal of Surgery, 2020

### 3) *Death rate*

Excess deaths per million people

>600 scores 1, 400-600 scores 2, 200-400 scores 3, <200 scores 4

Source: Financial Times; latest available national data (as at June 9th); Johns Hopkins University; EIU calculations

### 4) *Obesity prevalence*

Share of obese people (age-standardised)

<20% scores 1, 20-25% scores 2, 25-30% scores 3, >30% scores 4

Source: World Health Organisation (2016 data)

### 4) *Share of population aged 65+*

Percentage of the population aged 65 and over

<10% scores 1, 10-15% scores 2, 15-20% scores 3, >20% scores 4

Source: The EIU (2018 data)

### 5) *International arrivals*

Number of international arrivals as a share of the population

<40% scores 1, 40-70% scores 2, 70-100% scores 3, >100% scores 4

Source: The EIU (2018 data)

# Country Analysis

## We monitor the world to prepare you for what's ahead

---

Country Analysis provides you with the best forward-looking data and analysis to understand a country's political, policy and economic outlook.

From financial institutions to corporates, governmental departments and universities, the world's leading organisations rely on our Country Analysis service to keep them informed about the world and what it will look like tomorrow. Included in our service:

- Global outlook and daily insights spanning politics, economics and market-moving topics.
- Overviews of country forecasts over the medium-term outlook.
- Medium-term country forecasts on 200 countries' political and economic landscape.
- Long-term country forecasts on the structural trends shaping 80 major economies.
- Industry analysis on the outlook for six major industries in 70 markets.
- Regulatory intelligence on the policies that will impact the business environment in 50 key economies.
- Commodity forecasts on supply, demand and prices of 40 critical goods.
- Macroeconomic data on forecasts, as well as historic trends.
- Industry data on demand and supply of key goods, now and in the future.
- Proprietary ratings on the business environment.

### How Country Analysis helps you to stay ahead

**Unparalleled coverage** - global, regional and country-level analysis for over 200 markets. 20,000 data series every month, led by our worldwide network of expert analysts and on the ground contributors.

**360-degree view** - our approach is unique; deliberately designed to intersect politics, policy and the economy, our methodology leads to a more nuanced perspective than simple number crunching.

**Beating consensus** - with over 70 years of experience, we have a track record of making bold calls and getting them right.

**"Severe contest"** - our editorial team is fiercely independent and rightly so. This ensures you can trust our analysis and apply the insights it offers with confidence.

Find out more information about our service features, delivery platforms and how Country Analysis could benefit your organisation by visiting:

[eiu.com/n/solutions/country-analysis](https://eiu.com/n/solutions/country-analysis)

### **Copyright**

*© 2020 The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited. All rights reserved. Neither this publication nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited.*

**While every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of this information, The Economist Intelligence Unit Ltd. cannot accept any responsibility or liability for reliance by any person on this report or any of the information, opinions or conclusions set out in this report.**

LONDON  
20 Cabot Square  
London  
E14 4QW  
United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7576 8181  
Email: london@eiu.com

NEW YORK  
750 Third Avenue  
5th Floor  
New York, NY 10017  
United States  
Tel: + 1 212 698 9717  
Email: americas@eiu.com

HONG KONG  
1301 Cityplaza Four  
12 Taikoo Wan Road  
Taikoo Shing  
Hong Kong  
Tel: + 852 2802 7288  
Email: asia@eiu.com