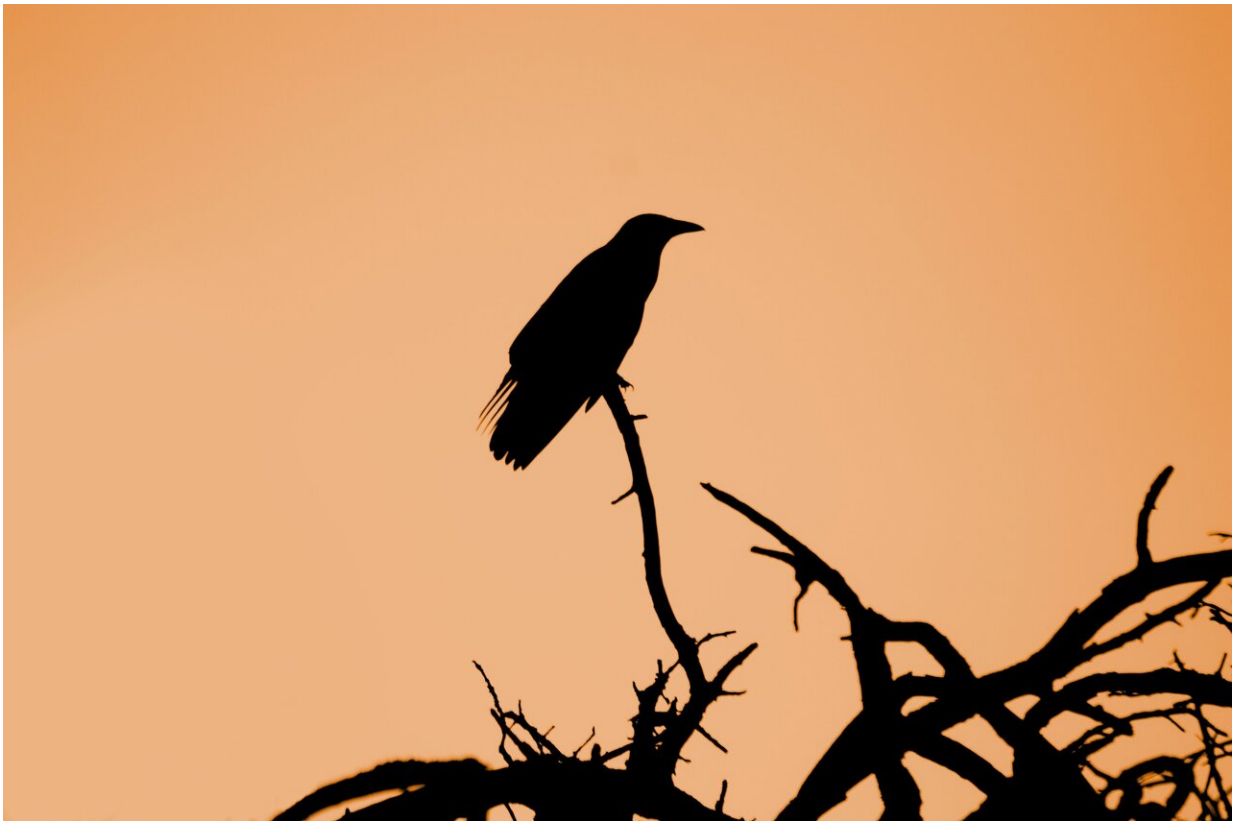


Coronavirus pushes EU annual deaths to record level

July 9 2021



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European Union member states recorded last year their highest level of annual deaths since the bloc started keeping records, official data showed Friday, reflecting the impact of the Coronavirus epidemic.

The EU [population](#) fell from 447.3 million to 447.0 million last year, as the annual toll rose 11 percent over 2019's deaths to 5.2 million, the most deaths since 1961 when Brussels starting compiling the data.

The [birth](#) rate also fell again. Deaths have exceeded births in the now 27-nation union since 2012, but immigration had seen the population grow by four percent between 2001 and 2019.

Giampaolo Lanzieri, an expert at statistics authority Eurostat, said that several factors contributed to the drop in population.

"For sure there has been the impact on mortality. We have observed an increase of over half a million of deaths as what was observed on average in the previous years.

"But (...) there is a likely impact on fertility as well, on the number of births," he told reporters. "And of course there has been also an impact on migration because the borders have been closed."

Nevertheless, the "most prominent" cause of population loss was the impact of the epidemic.

The steepest decline in population was recorded in Italy, which lost 384,000 people or 0.6 percent of its population, followed by Romania and Poland.

Nine of the member states recorded falls in population, with 18 more seeing the more usual increase, including France, where births outstripped deaths and the number of people grew by 0.2 percent.

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