

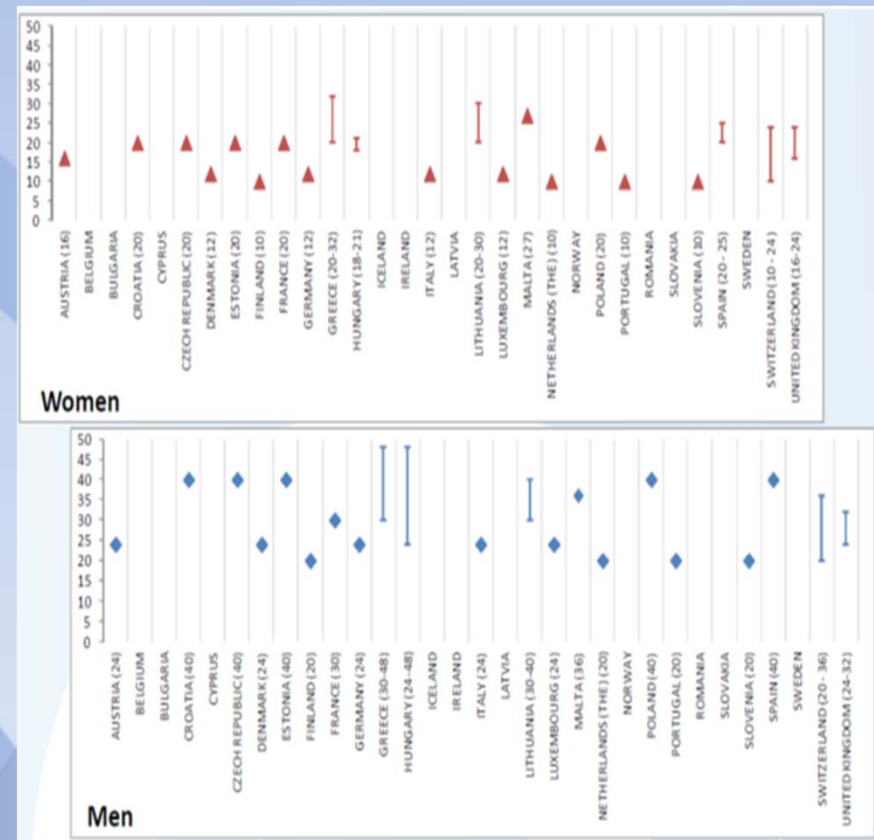
Good practice principles
in the use of drinking guidelines
to reduce alcohol related harm
Work Package 5

**Joint Action RARHA Steering Group meeting
16 February 2016, Helsinki**

Why are we on this road

- Guidelines for limiting drinking in order to reduce risks of harm from alcohol are given in most EU countries.
- Lot of variation in the scope of guidelines, levels of drinking defined as low/high risk, and definitions of "standard drink".
- May confuse consumers and may reduce the potential for effect of risk communications.
- We will clarify reasons behind the variation and work towards consensus on good practice principles for the use of drinking guidelines as a public health measure to reduce short-term and chronic harm from alcohol.

ISS 2014



Co-leaders:

National Institute for Health and Welfare THL (FI)
Istituto Superiore di Sanità ISS (IT)

Work divided in 10 Tasks – Task leaders:

National Institute for Health and Welfare THL (FI)
Istituto Superiore di Sanità ISS (IT)
Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe LWL (DE)
Health Service Executive HSE (IE)
Eurocare (EU)

Actively involved or as followers:

34 partners based in 24 countries

Work meetings:

30 January 2014, Lisbon – hosted by SICAD
5 November 2014, Rome – hosted by ISS
16 December 2014, Münster – hosted by LWL
20-21 January 2015, Dublin – hosted by HSE
18 February 2016, Helsinki – hosted by THL

Work Plan

Working papers to summarize:

- scientific knowledge of health risks of alcohol
- use of drinking guidelines to reduce harm
- drinking by young people: guidelines and evidence
- uses and definitions of "standard drink"

2014

- On-line surveys on consumer views on alcohol risk communication.
- Policy Delphi survey to identify points of convergence and potential for consensus.

2015

Expert/policymaker meetings for exchange and dialogue and to help develop conclusions and policy recommendations.

2014—2016

- Synthesis report
- Policy briefs
- Final conference

2016

Where do EU Countries set the limit for low risk drinking. ISS, November 2014.

Drinking guidelines in the context of brief interventions. ISS, November 2014.

Standard drink measures in Europe: Peoples' understanding of standard drinks and their use in drinking guidelines, alcohol surveys and labelling. HRB, November 2014/May 2015.

Report of RARHA survey Part 2: Standard Drink definitions, communication approaches and public understanding. HSE, November 2014/May 2015.

Reducing alcohol related harm for young people: Summary of survey results. LWL, November/December 2014.

www.rarha.eu > Resources > Deliverables

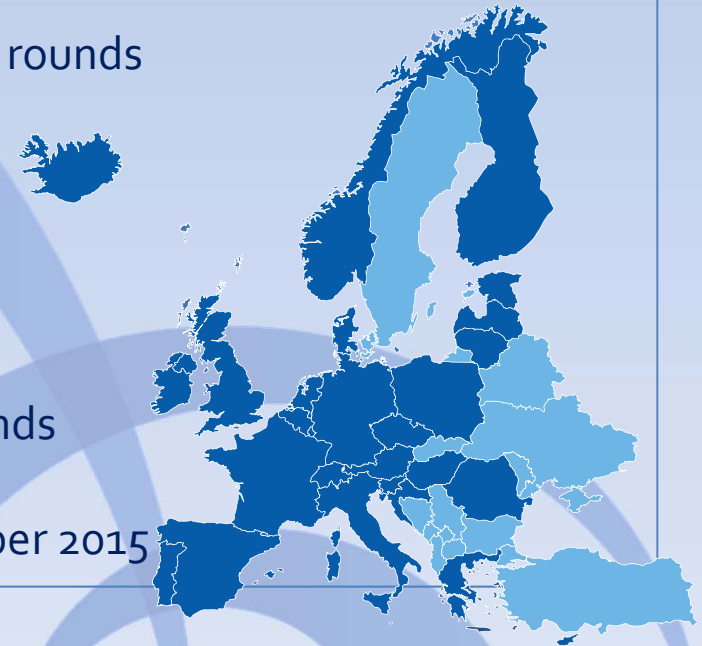
Rehm J & al. Lifetime-risk of alcohol-attributable mortality based on different levels of alcohol consumption in seven European countries. Implications for low-risk drinking guidelines. Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2015.

“Low risk” drinking guidelines as a public health measure

- THL (FI) in charge
- Core planning group – THL (FI), ISS (IT), HSE (IE), Eurocare
- Planning process involving 22 partners
- Two survey rounds: May–June and October–December 2015
- Experts for the panel suggested by RARHA partners and CNAPA members
- Panel composed of 51 experts based in 27 countries
- Second round: 41 experts = 4/5 participating in both rounds

Guidelines regarding drinking by young people

- LWL/DE in charge
- Starting point: existing national guidance
- 13 experts participating in the planning
- Experts suggested by CNAPA members
- 1st round 55 experts, 2nd round 59 = 9/10 in both rounds
- Question about nationality not asked.
- Two survey rounds: June–July and October–November 2015



Drinking guidelines as a public health measure

- Conceptual clarification: purposes of drinking guidelines
“low” versus “high” risk
drinking over longer term versus on single occasion
- Need for gender-specific and age-specific guidelines

Methodological issues

- Scientific basis: use of mortality data; how to factor in morbidity and harms to others

Communication aspects

- How to prevent unwanted effects; groups and situations where general guidelines do not apply; particular harms to highlight in risk communication

Possibility to move towards common guidelines

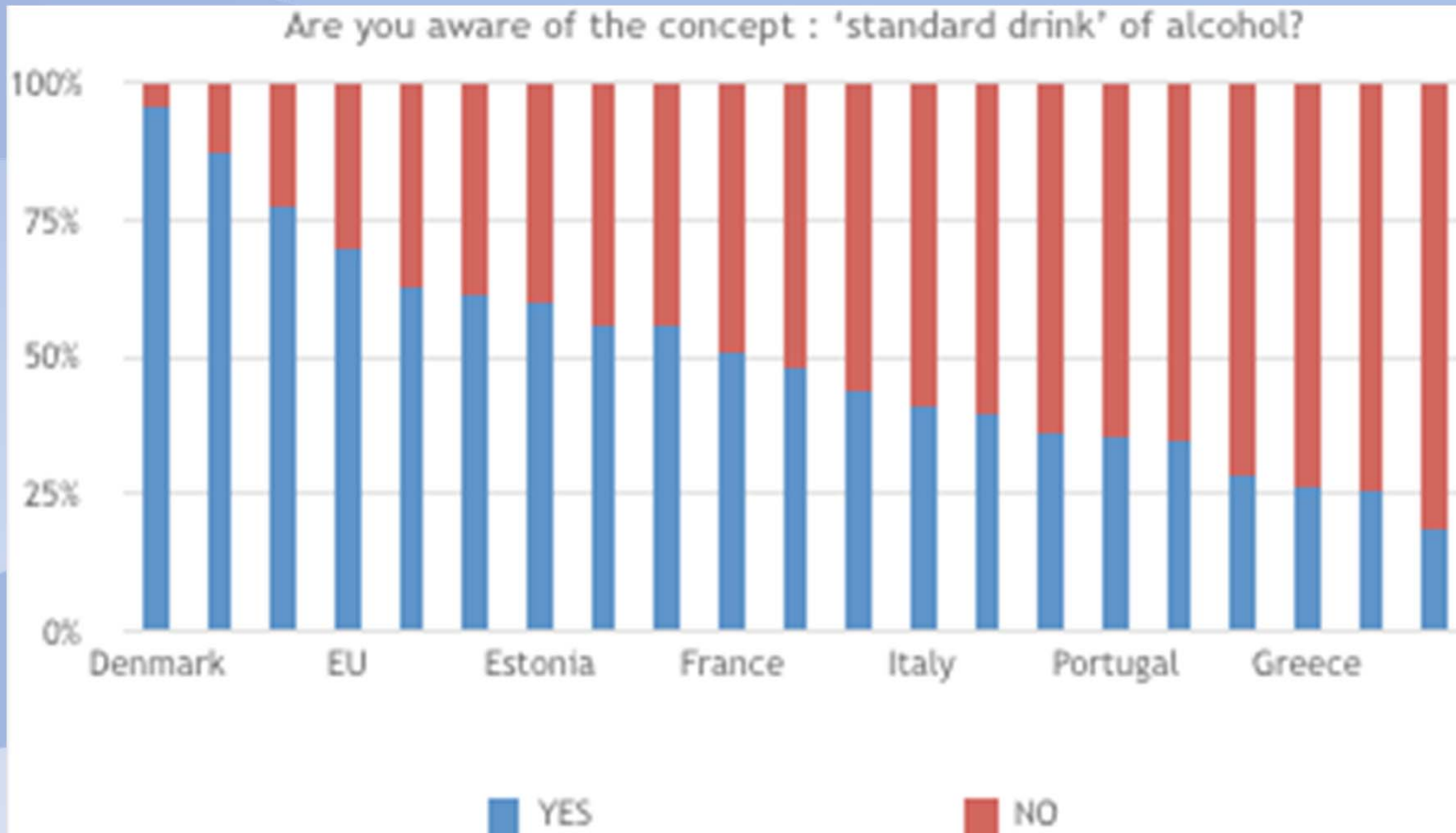
- Desirability of a common definition of “low risk” drinking
- How to set the threshold for “low risk”

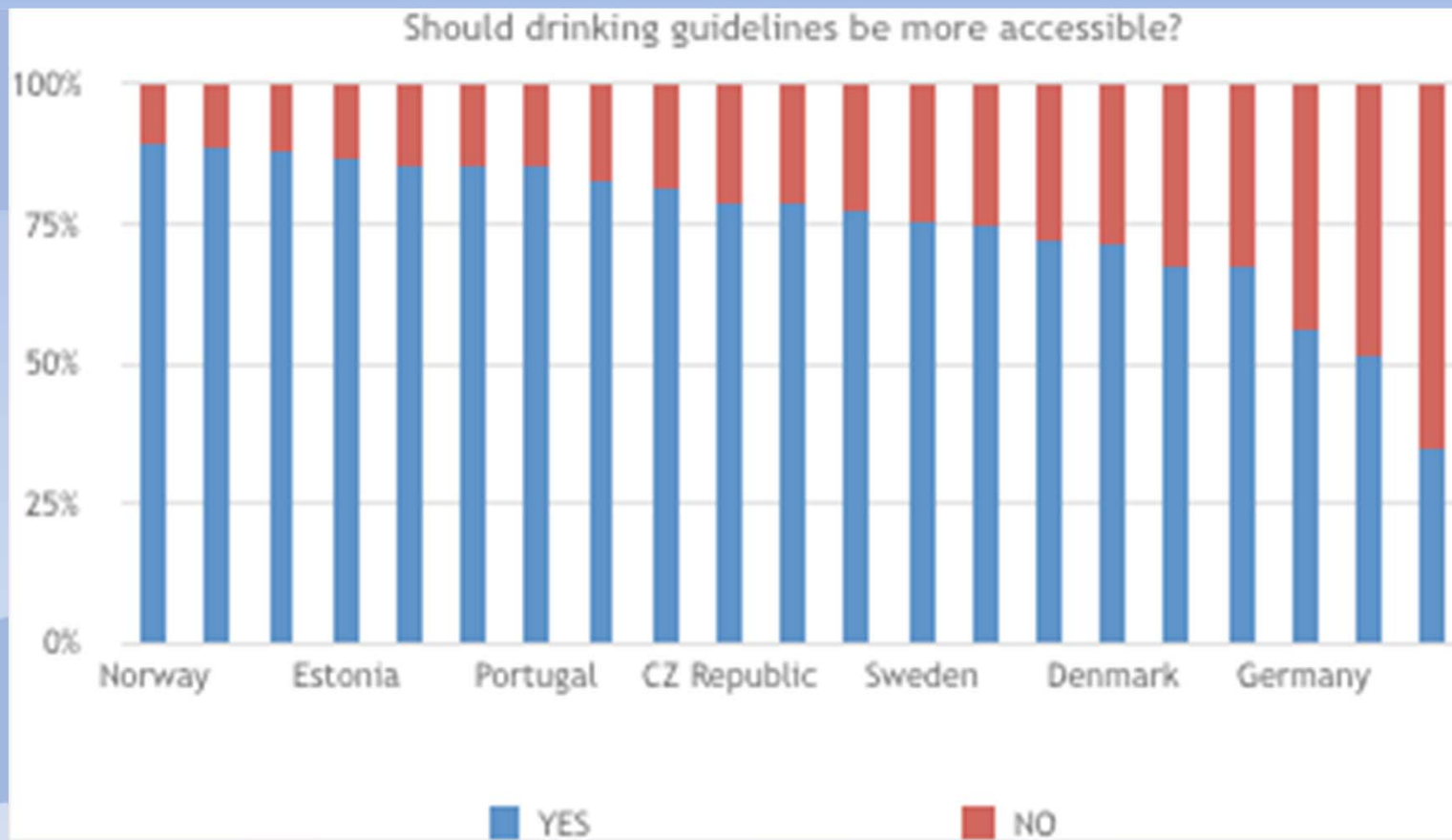
Practical aspects related to the labelling of alcoholic beverages

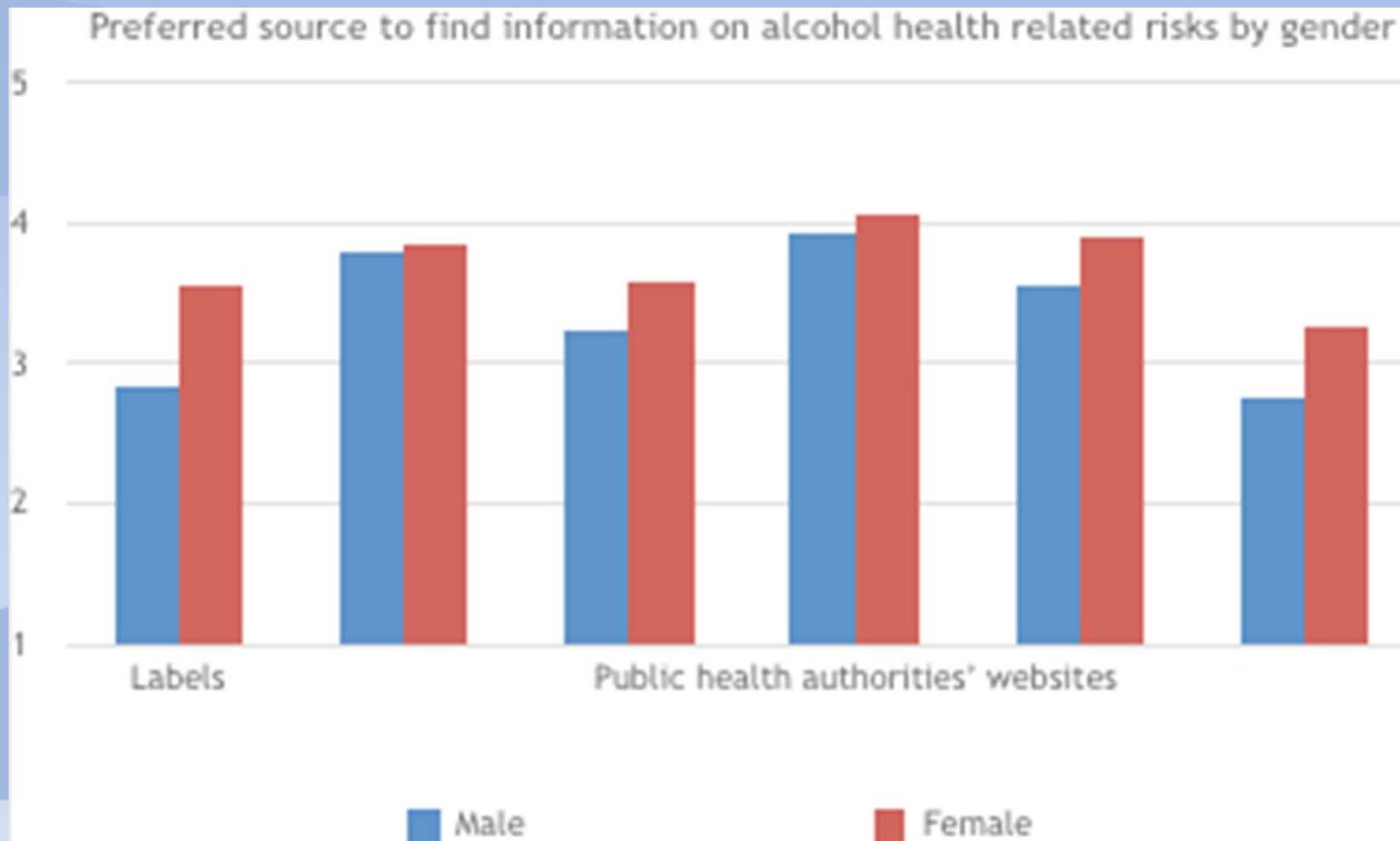
- Usefulness of a common definition of “standard drink”; what health related information should be given on alcoholic beverage labels

- **In the first round** emphasis on agreement with statements derived from background information gathered from partner countries.
- **The second round** sought more detailed information on some issues, also picking up new topics from 1st round comments.
- Topics covered in the 2nd round:
 - Measures for reducing alcohol-related harm
 - Existing good practices in EU member states
 - Relevant actors in the prevention of alcohol-related harm
 - Short- and long-term effects of young people's drinking
 - Gender-specific guidelines
 - Guidelines for young adults between 18 and 25 years of age
 - How to enable young people to learn how to deal with alcohol

- **Consumer survey on communication of alcohol associated risks**
- Carried out by Eurocare and its member organisations in June 2015.
- Online survey circulated in 17 languages in 21 countries through national links.
- Advertised using a range of methods, including Facebook, Twitter, emailing lists, radio interview to raise interest ...
- Almost 8000 respondent; France accounting for almost 30%
- Majority in the age range 30-59 years; only few under-18s
- Topics
 - Awareness and understanding of “standard drink”
 - Understanding of “low risk” drinking and accessibility of guidelines
 - Sources of information, including product labelling







Events organized to share and discuss results of the work

- **RARHA Expert Meeting, 4 November 2014, Rome** – mainly by invitation, organized by ISS
- **RARHA satellite event to the 6th European Alcohol Policy Conference, 26 November 2014, Brussels** – open event, organized in cooperation between SICAD, Eurocare and the Alcohol Policy Network
- **RARHA Expert Meeting, 17 February 2016, Helsinki** – open event, organized by THL
How do guidelines on “low risk” drinking fit in the framework of public health policy to reduce alcohol-related harm?
- **Policy dialogue** to be organized in Brussels, September 2016
Key points from several core work packages
- **WP5 in RARHA final conference**

Coming up during 2016

- Possibly updated versions of background papers
- Summary reports on the Delphi surveys
- WP5 input for RARHA's final technical report

- **WP5 Synthesis report**
- **Policy briefs** – including recommendations and key messages

Grant Agreement: Key messages to policymakers relating to the scientific basis and good practice principles in the use of drinking guidelines as a public health measure will be summarised in one or more policy briefs.

WP5 Work Meeting, 18 February 2016 – main tasks

- Agree on work process towards the synthesis report and outline contents
- Plan for policy briefs
- Discuss work plan: division of labour, timetable

One synthesis report or several topic-specific synthesis reports?

As material available for each

background papers ; summaries of Delphi surveys; presentations and discussions

- Use of “low risk” drinking guidelines as a public health measure
- “Standard drink” practices and health related information on alcoholic beverage labels
- Guidance regarding drinking by young people


One or more policy briefs

Key messages to decision-makers

- Use of “low risk” drinking guidelines as a public health measure
- Use of pre-selected threshold of “acceptable” risk in the guidelines process
- Health related information on alcoholic beverage labels



Joint Action RARHA Objective 3

Clarifying the science underpinnings and public health policy implications of the use of drinking guidelines to reduce alcohol related harm

Process indicators	Output indicators	Outcome indicators
Delivering overviews of: drinking guidelines and their uses; guidelines on youth drinking; science underpinnings; definitions of "standard drink" 	Quality and usefulness of overviews as assessed by associate and collaborating partners	CNAPA members' and other key stakeholders' assessment of the extent to which the science underpinnings and policy implications have been clarified

Joint Action RARHA Objective 4

Building consensus on the use of drinking guidelines to reduce alcohol related harm

Process indicators	Output indicators	Outcome indicators
Identification of divergences between MS that help develop questions for the Policy Delphi survey. 	Measurable increase in areas of consensus between first and last Policy Delphi round. 	Degree of agreement among JA participants on good practice principles in the use of drinking guidelines as a public health measure and on key messages to the population and health professionals

In the short term

- Increased understanding among public health policy makers of the scientific basis and practical implications of the use of low risk drinking guidelines as a public health measure.

In the medium term

- More aligned messages to the general population, subgroups and health professionals about alcohol consumption levels and ways to reduce risks of harm.



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