



European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# **New trends in harm reduction in Europe: progress made – challenges ahead**

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2<sup>nd</sup> European Harm Reduction Conference, 7-9 May 2014, Basel

Session 4: Changes in harm reduction practice

# Progress made... challenges ahead

## Achievements:

- + Harm reduction as major policy component;
- + Growing evidence base;
- + Good levels of availability and coverage of core-interventions;

## Challenges:

- “Europe of two speeds”;
- Adapting practice to new evidence, diversification;
- Addressing neglected harms and new harms.

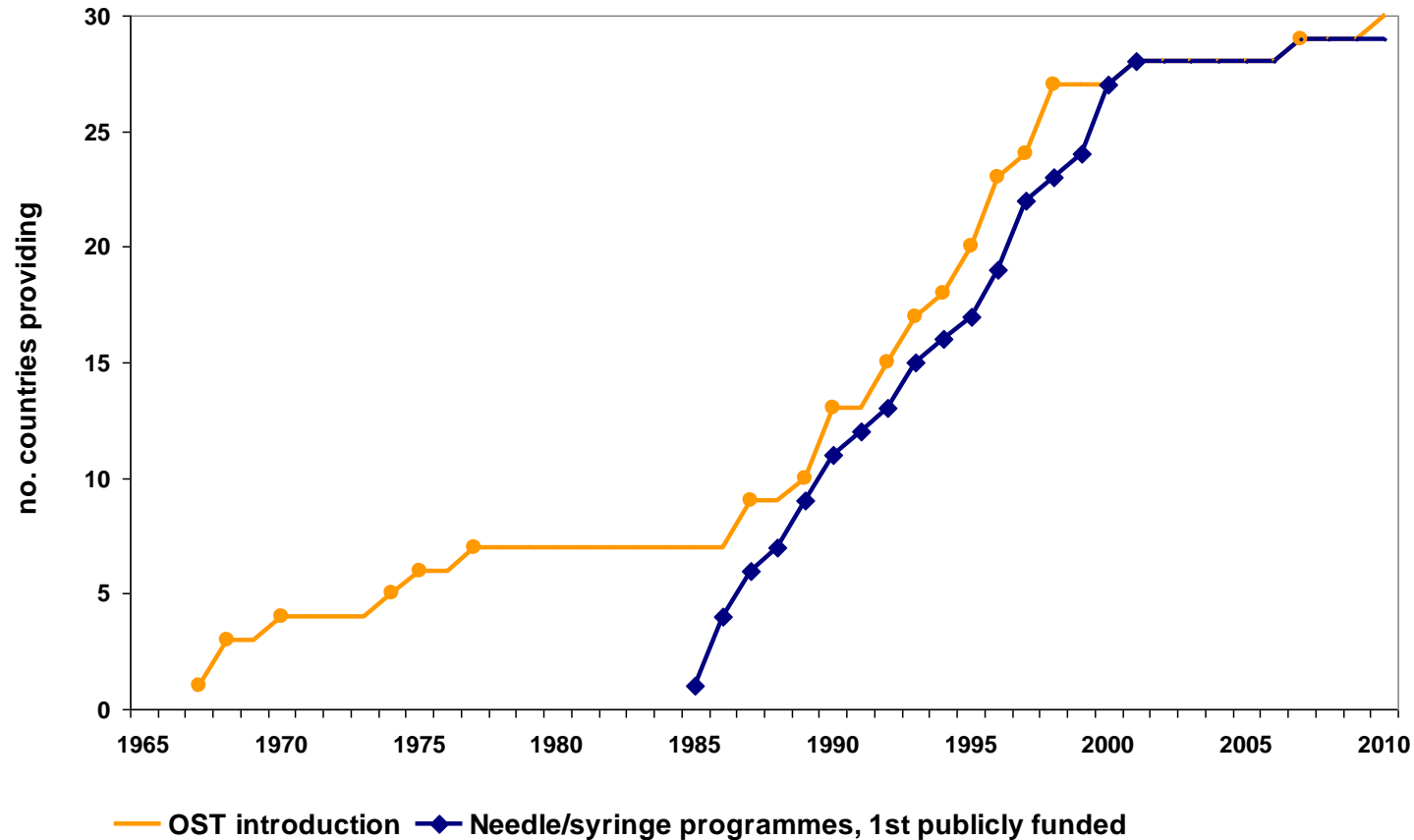
# Progress made...

Harm reduction is a major policy component in the European approach to drug use

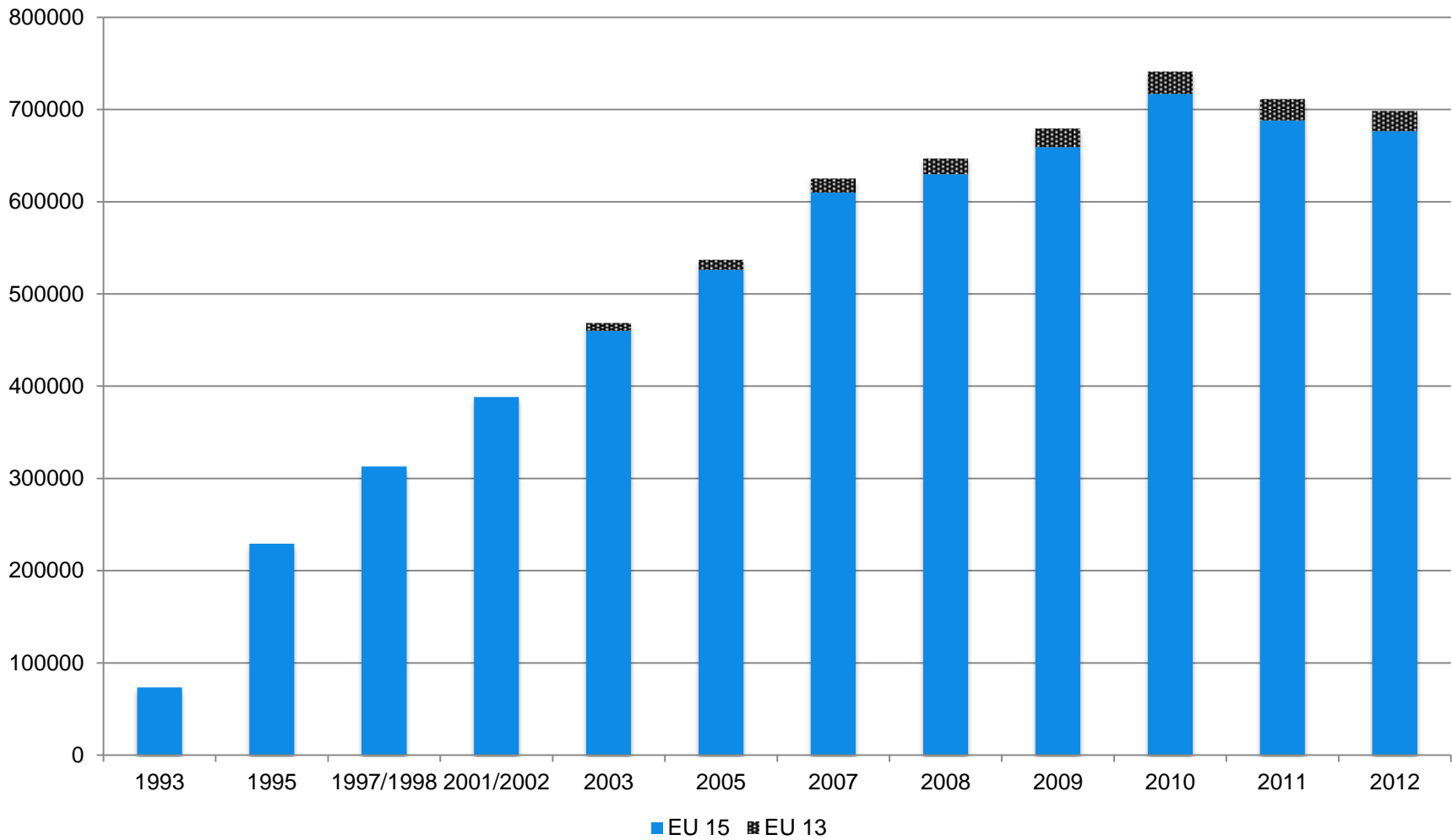
- Majority of people with high risk opioid use patterns are reached by evidence based treatment
- Downward momentum new heroin use and injecting risk behaviour
- Declining trend in the number of new HIV diagnoses among PWID
- Let's have a look back:.....

# 1990s: increasing availability of core interventions

Introduction of OST and NSPs in the EU Member States and candidate countries



# 2000's: Scaling up opioid substitution treatment



# 1.2 million in drug treatment in Europe



Substitution treatment is first choice for opioid users

**730.000** clients in opioid substitution treatment

1 in 2 problem opioid users

# Opioid substitution treatment (OST)

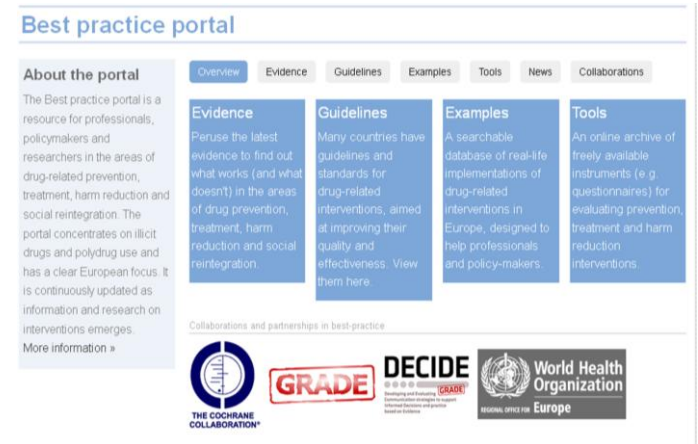
## Increasing OST coverage in Europe

- rising level of GP involvement, lower thresholds;
- treatment guidance to improve quality;
- but a Europe of “two speeds”;

# Growing evidence base

More evidence from ecological studies, meta-analyses, systematic reviews and modeling studies

## EMCDDA Best Practice Portal



- Joint European guidance on prevention and control of infectious diseases among PWID (ECDC/EMCDDA, 2011)
  - Enhanced impact of harm reduction through integrated and combined service provision
  - Co-location of infectious diseases testing and treatment services

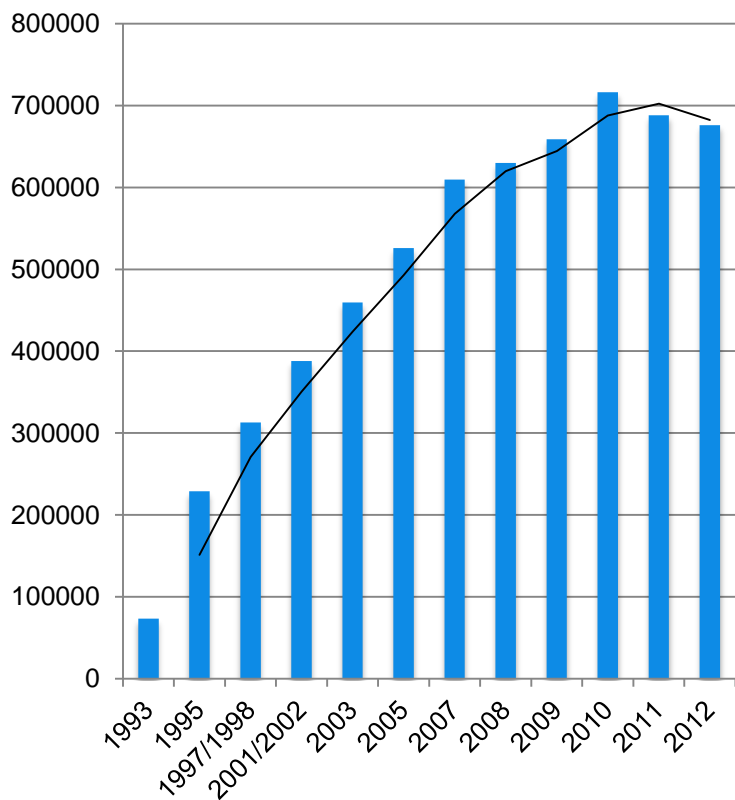
[emcdda.europa.eu](http://emcdda.europa.eu)



# Challenges ahead.....

## 2010's: decreasing number of OST clients

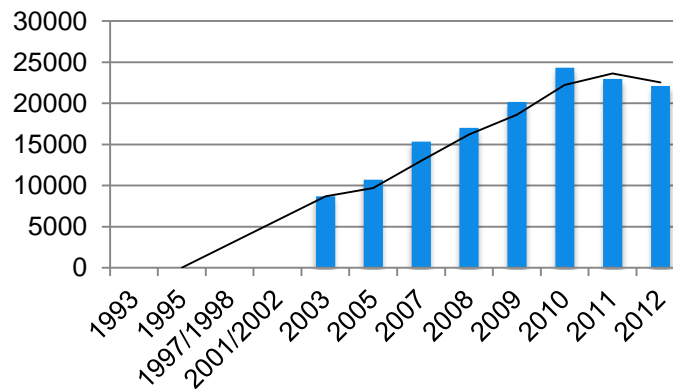
### EU 15



Moving average trendline (2 data points)

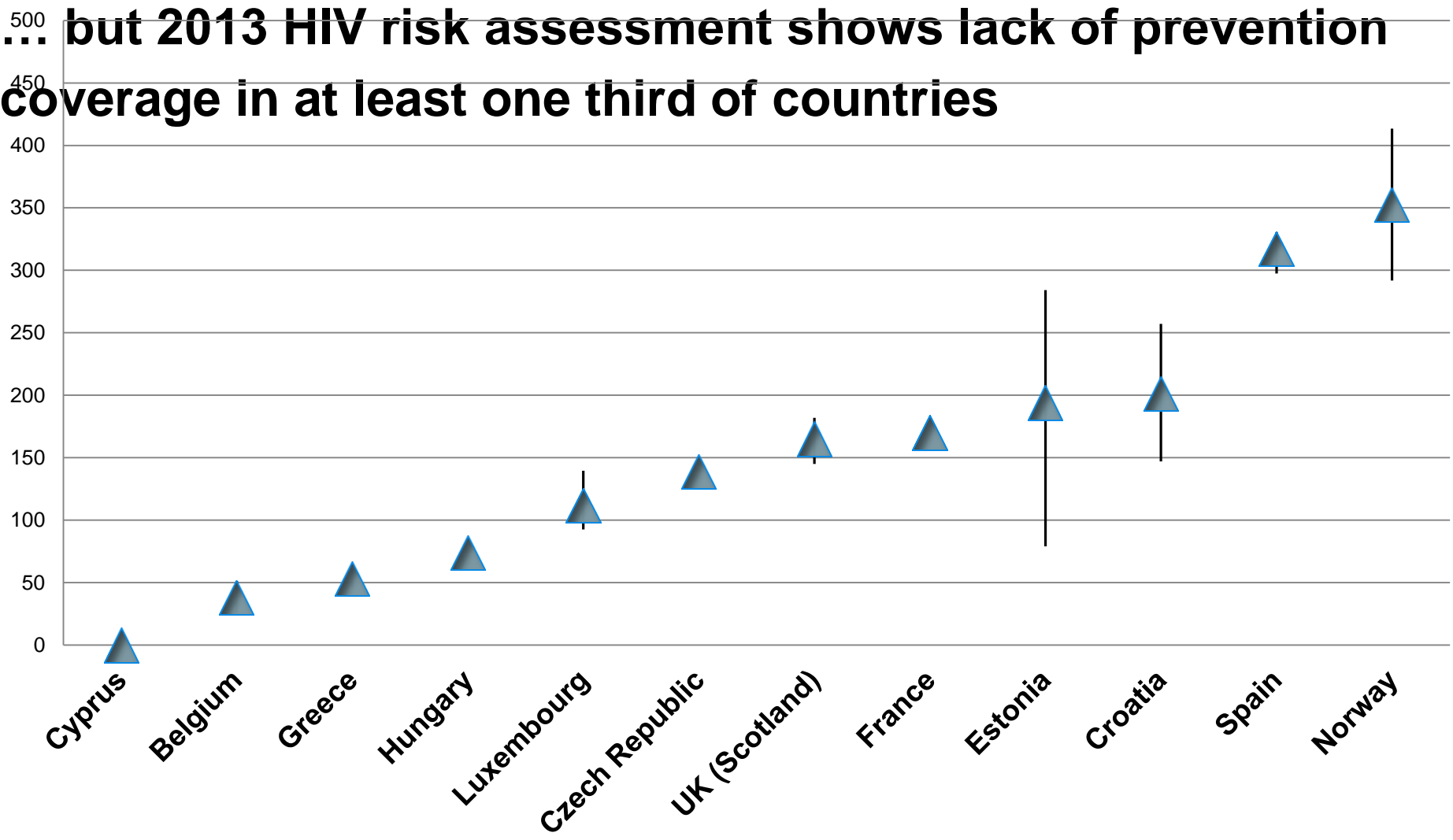
EU 13 = Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

### EU 13 – Scale X 10



# Syringe provision > 100 per year

... but 2013 HIV risk assessment shows lack of prevention coverage in at least one third of countries

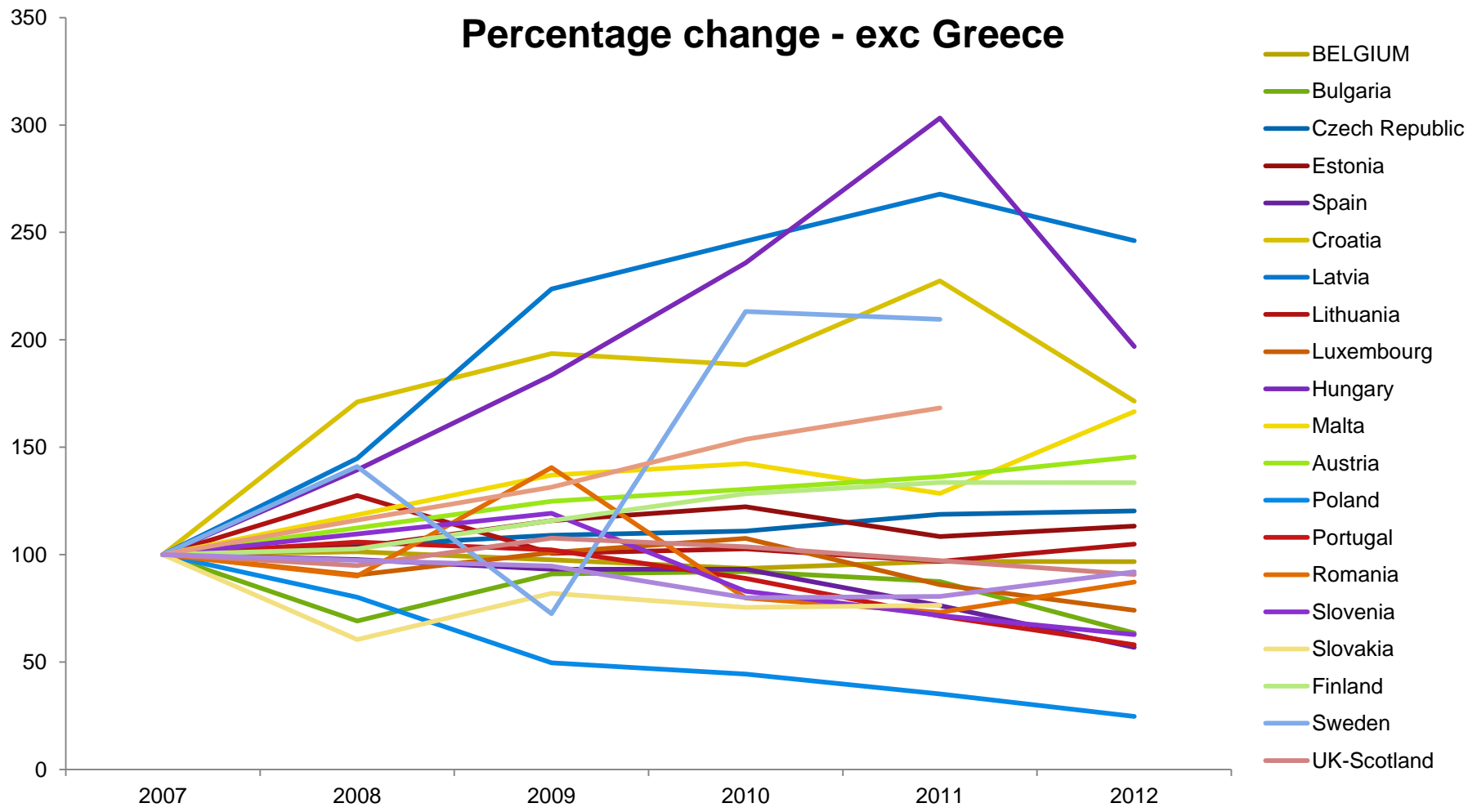


Data available for 12 countries with current estimates of PWID population; syringes distributed through specialised programmes per PWID/2012 (or latest available)

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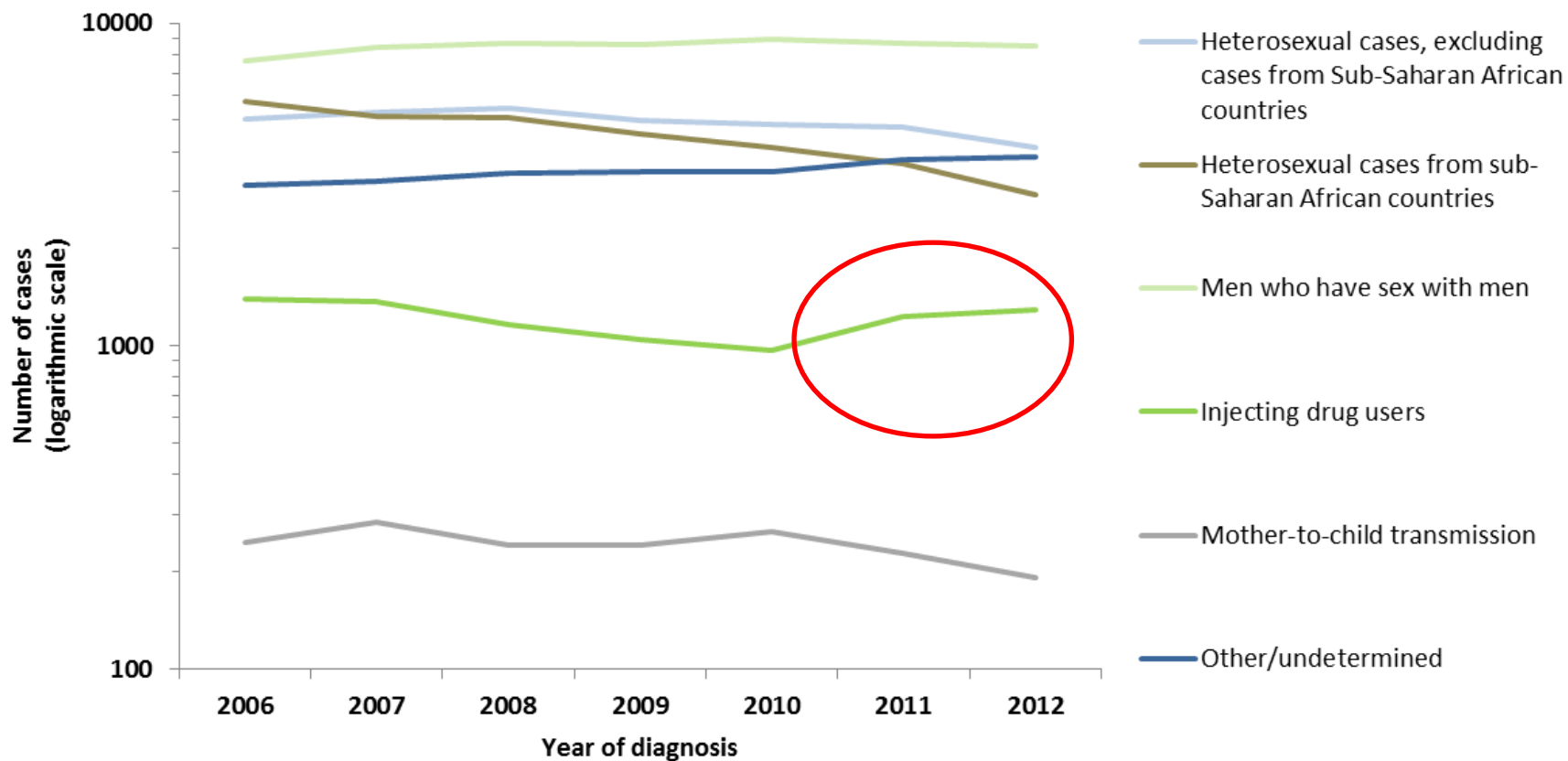
# Trends in syringe provision in 2007-2012

## Syringe provision declines in several countries



# HIV infections reported, 2006-2012

Transmission mode and origin, adjusted for reporting delay



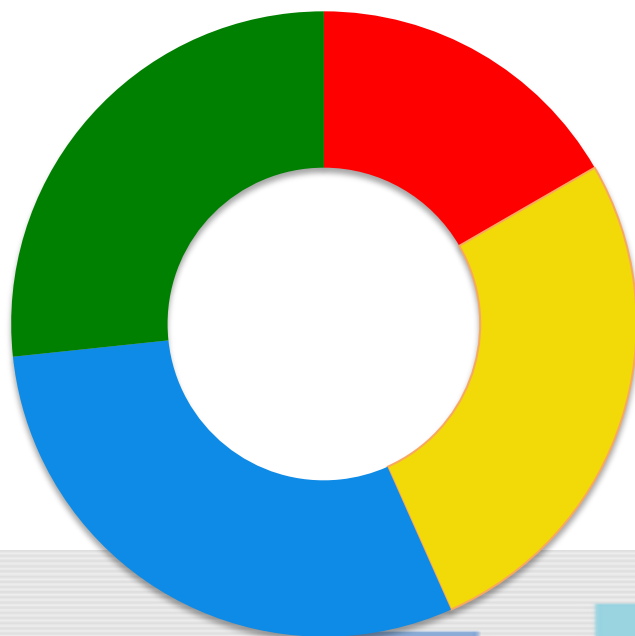
Predominant transmission mode: men who have sex with men

SOURCE: ECDC/WHO, 2013. Data were not included or not available from Estonia, Poland, Spain, Italy.

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# Applying evidence based interventions in prison

- Drug use in prisons: review of evidence for OST;
- Treatment 'gap' to community closing;
  - 8 countries provide to > 10% of prisoner population
- Prison OST not available in 5 countries;
- Throughcare remains a major challenge.



■ none = EL, CY, LT, SK, TR

■ < 3%: HU, LV, RO, PL, SE, CZ, BG, FI (8)

■ > 3% - 10%: BE, EE, NL, DK, NO, FR, ES, HR, DE (9)

■ > 10%: AT, IT, PT, IE, MT, SI, LU, UK Scot. & England (8)

# Addressing neglected harm, new harms

- Existing services face the challenge to increase the harm reduction ‘portfolio’, staff to acquire new skills;
  - Alcohol, tobacco; gambling...; mental health; sexual health; new forms of outreach in times of the internet.
- Role of harm reduction facilities in treatment of hepatitis C infection;
  - e.g. Compiling evidence and experience of HCV treatment provision among PWID: DG SANCO; DPIP projects; EMCDDA *Insights* 2015;
- Reduction of overdose deaths: new initiatives
  - Naloxone take home programmes Scotland, Wales (incl. prison release trial), Denmark; Estonia; Norway...;
  - Drug consumption rooms opened in 2013/14: Denmark, Athens. New legal framework established: Slovenia.

# Challenges

- Establish and maintain evidence-based services, avoid complacency especially where HIV among PWID is decreasing or low;
- Make active use of monitoring to support service planning and scaling up; Assess prevention levels before outbreaks occur (not after!);
- Close gaps in population estimates to determine intervention coverage;
- Develop responses to new synthetic drugs in cooperation with the community.

# Health and social responses to drug use in Europe

www.emcdda.europa.eu/countries/hsr

Countries: health and social responses: [Interactive maps](#) [Treatment profiles](#) [Harm reduction profiles](#)

## Portugal

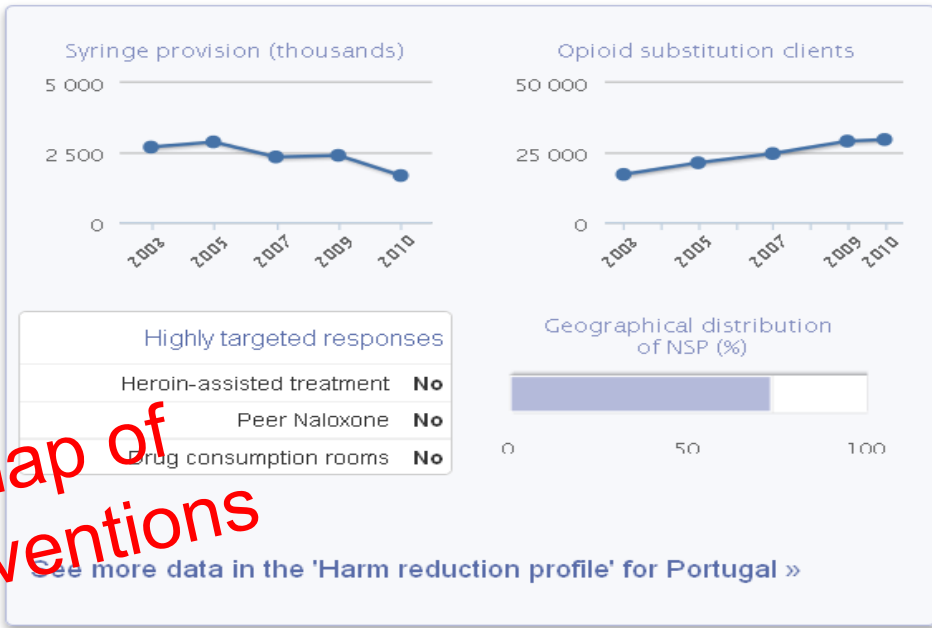
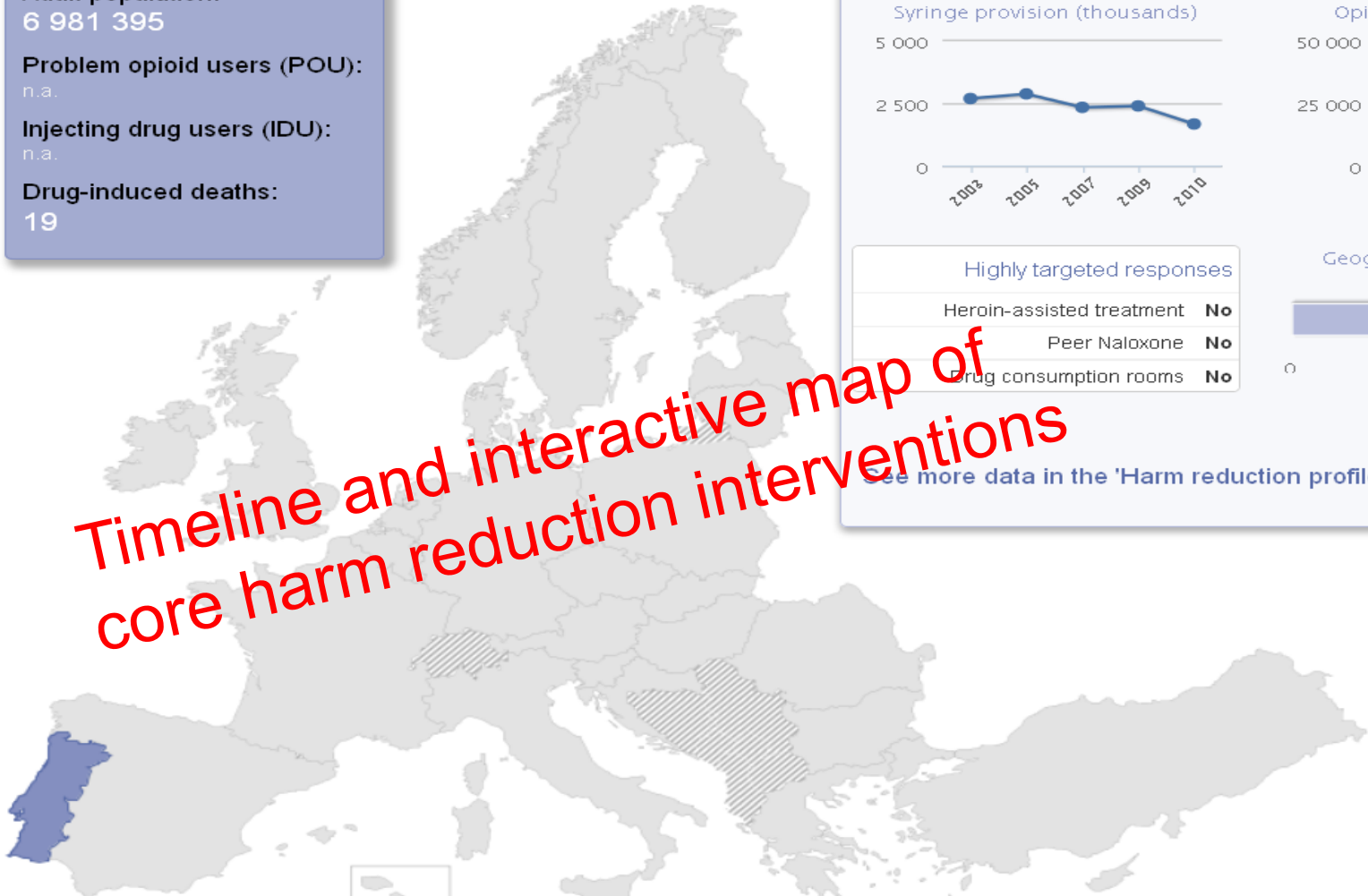
**Adult population:**  
6 981 395

**Problem opioid users (POU):**  
n.a.

**Injecting drug users (IDU):**  
n.a.

**Drug-induced deaths:**  
19

[Start page](#) [Treatment](#) [Harm reduction](#) [Social reintegration](#) [Prison settings](#) [Timeline](#) [Help](#)



Timeline and interactive map of core harm reduction interventions



# European drugs summer school 2014

ILLICIT DRUGS IN EUROPE: DEMAND, SUPPLY AND PUBLIC POLICIES

EUROPEAN SUMMER SCHOOL  
2014  
ILLICIT DRUGS IN EUROPE:  
DEMAND, SUPPLY AND PUBLIC POLICIES



Two-week Summer School in Lisbon  
involving scientific experts from the EMCDDA  
and invited keynote speakers

ISCTE IUL NIDA CESAR FCT



Two-week summer school involving scientific experts from the EMCDDA and keynote speakers

## ILLICIT DRUGS IN EUROPE: DEMAND, SUPPLY AND PUBLIC POLICIES

Lisbon, 30 June–11 July 2014

Registration open: 15 January 2014 - [Promotional video](#)

For more information: [www.drugsummerschool.cies.iscte-iul.pt](http://www.drugsummerschool.cies.iscte-iul.pt)



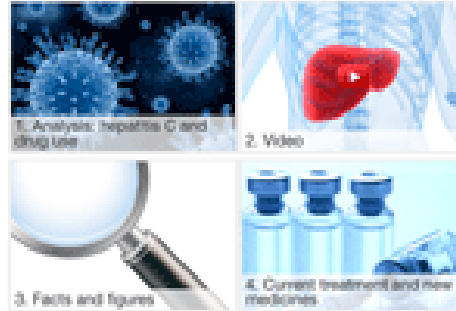
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Thank you!

# EMCDDA products



European Drug Report



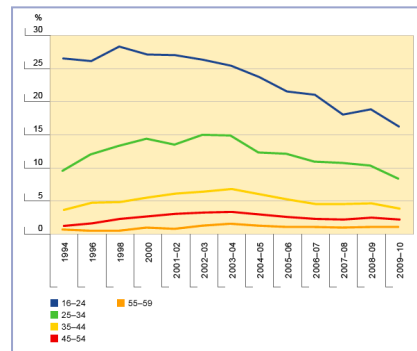
Perspectives on drugs  
POD's



Country overviews



Health and social  
responses profile



Statistical bulletin



Two-week Summer School in Lisbon involving scientific experts from the EMCDDA and invited keynote speakers



European drugs summer school  
30 June – 11 July 2014 ([Video](#))

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