

Social benefit recipients database (SOCR)

Options for a simplified data collection process

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Outline

1. Database on social benefits recipients (SOCR)
 - Content and scope
 - Uses of SOCR
2. December 2013 Workshop
3. Simplifying the data collection: Options, pros & cons
 - Reduce information by programme
 - Reduce number of programmes (select “most important”)
 - Focus on working-age benefits (as SPC/ISG data collection)
 - Other criteria
4. Conclusion

SOCR: Content and scope

- **Three rounds of data collection:**
 - 2007 and 2008 figures (collected in 2011)
 - 2009 and 2010 figures (collected in 2012)
 - 2011 and 2011 figures (collection scheduled for mid-2014)
- **Programmes:**
 - Income replacement benefits: Benefits paid in cash on a recurring/regular basis
 - Supplements: Housing benefits, partial unemployment schemes and some tax credits
 - Not included: Other supplements (e.g., child benefits), grants and lump-sum benefits
- **Social protection areas:**
 - All branches of social protection except Health and ALMP
- **Recipient statistics:**
 - Beneficiary stocks (annual/quarterly averages)
 - Inflows, outflows
 - Average benefit amount per beneficiary

How complete is the database?

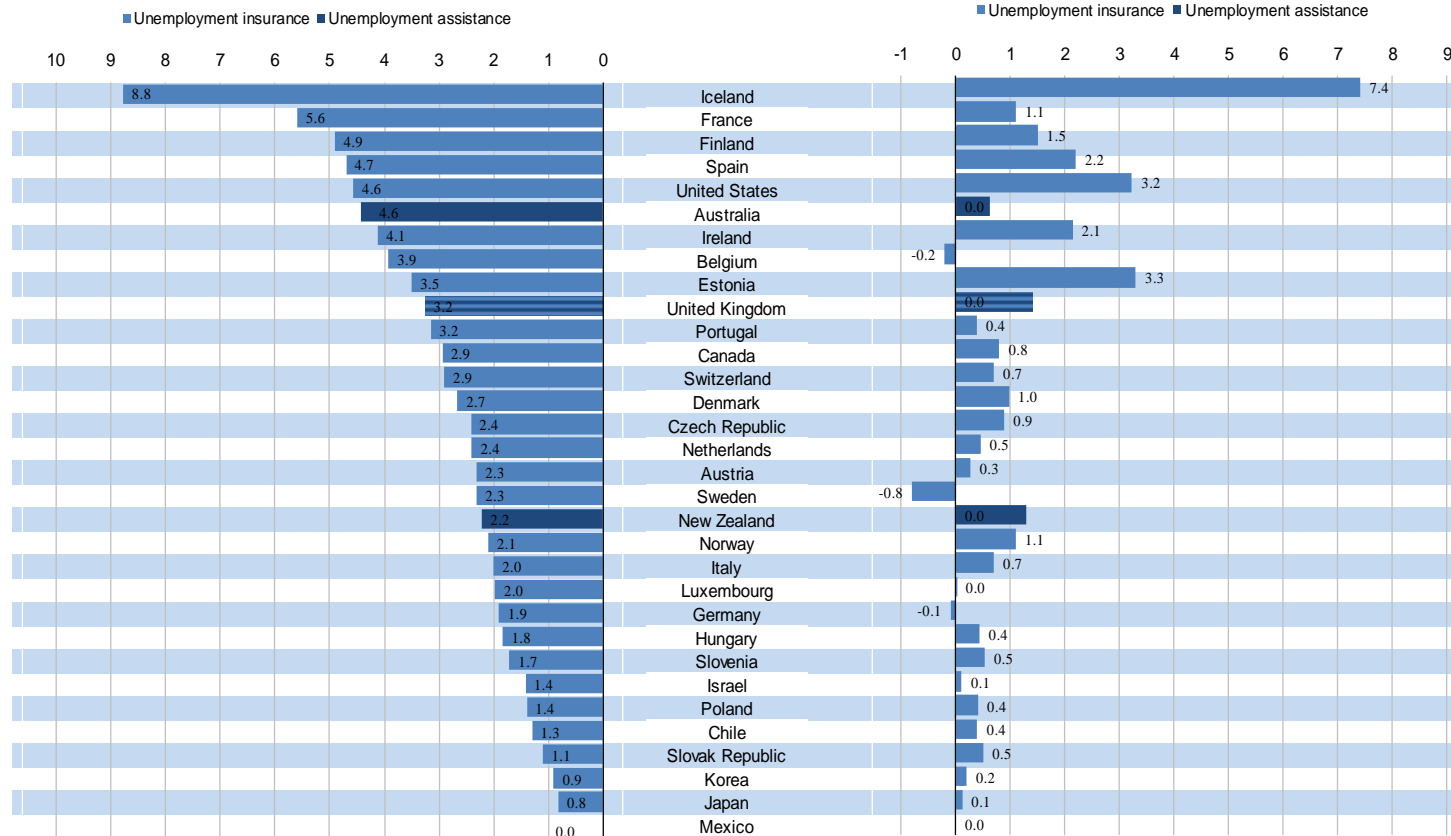
- SOCR includes detailed data for 25 EU countries (37 in total)
 - In the 2012 round, 34 out of 40 countries responded the questionnaire
 - 22 out EU27 countries responded
 - 12 of 13 OECD non-EU countries responded
- All programmes: Annual stocks available for 25 EU countries
- For selected programmes
 - quarterly stocks available for 18 EU countries (mainly unemployment)
 - inflows or outflows available for 21 EU countries (unemployment, old-age)
 - average benefit amounts available for 20 EU countries
 - age and sex breakdowns available for 20 EU countries (pensions)

Uses of recipient data

Primary out-of-work benefits: A first line of support for the unemployed

Panel A. Participation: Number of recipients of cash transfers as a percentage of the 15-64 population

Panel B. Percentage point change between 2007 and 2010

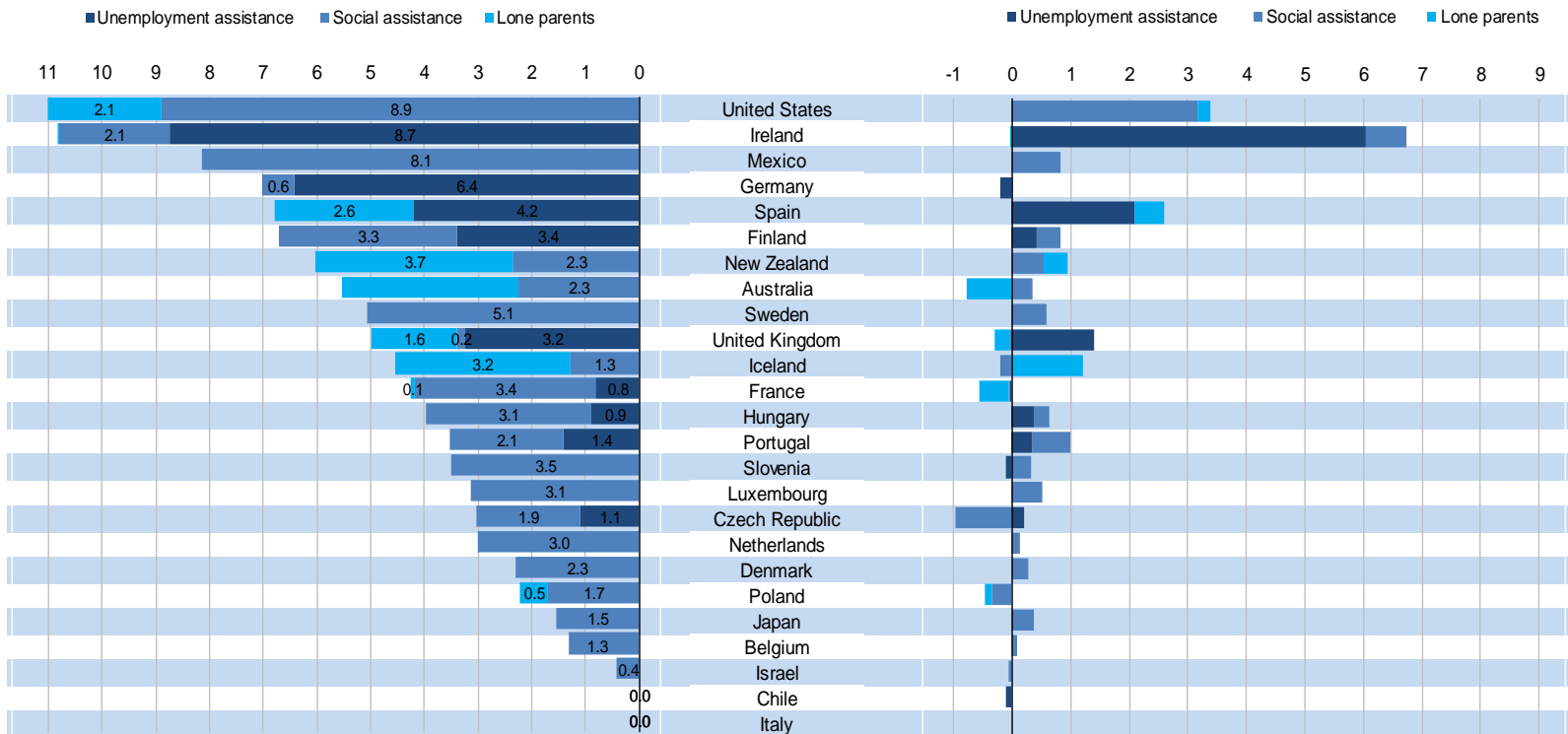


Uses of recipient data

Secondary out-of-work benefits: Safety nets are crucial for the poorest, but receipt rates are often low

Panel A. Participation: Number of recipients of cash transfers as a percentage of the 15-64 population

Panel B. Percentage point change between 2007 and 2010



December 2013 Workshop

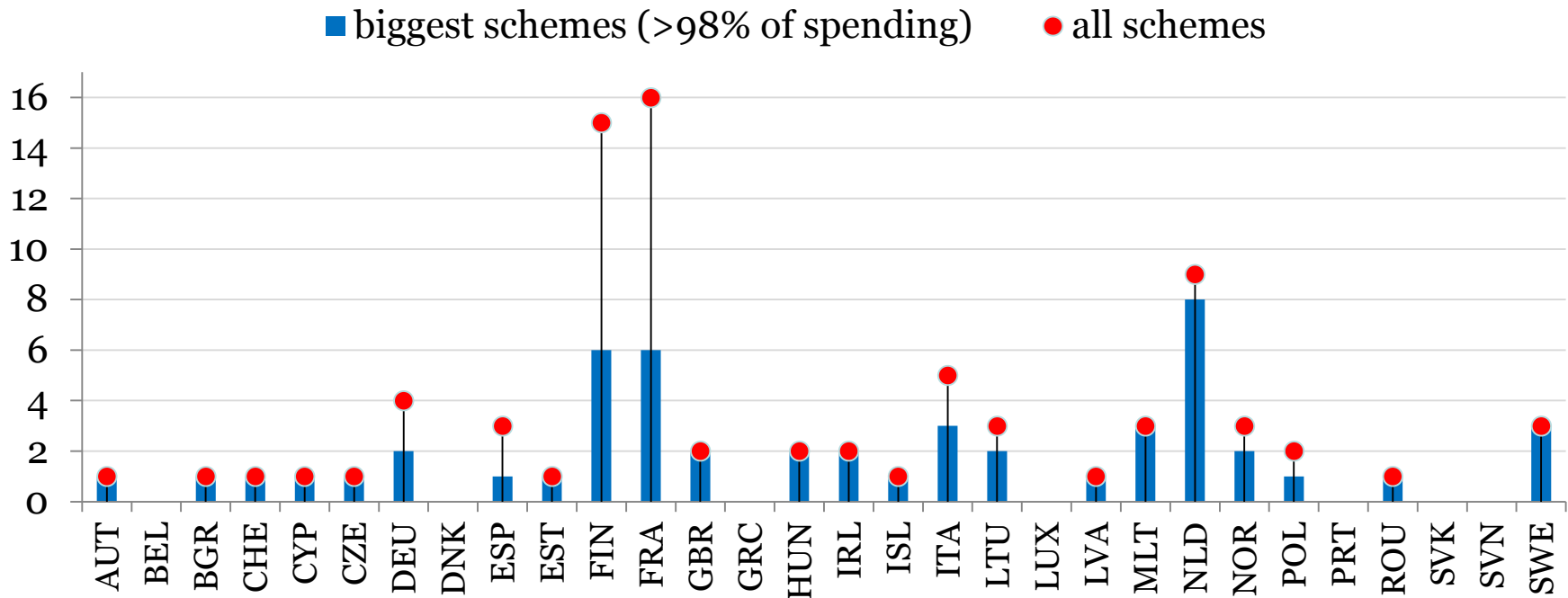
- Technical workshop on benefit recipients data co-organised by DG EMPL, Eurostat and OECD
- Summary
 - Unified, regular and systematic data collection is desirable
 - Some countries expressed concerns about data collection burden
 - Desirable to seek pragmatic approach that balances data needs for policy makers with keeping data collection manageable
 - Identify main priorities in short term
 - Identify options for organising data collection at the European level in the medium term
 - Addressing double counting at a reasonable cost
 - E.g., identify minimum data requirements, while keeping an option for more comprehensive data collection depending on feasibility

Options to simplify the data collection

- Trade-offs between completeness and collection effort
- Options to simplify come with advantages and disadvantages
- Options to be discussed (not a proposal):
 - Fewer variables by programme
 - Reduced frequency of data (quarterly >> annual)
 - Reduced number of programmes
 - Keep only large programmes in terms of recipients
 - Keep only large programmes in terms of expenditure
 - Keep only “main” out-of-work benefits (as in SPC/ISG data collection)
 - Keep programmes that play key role as an income safety net
 - Keep programmes that are very responsive to economic conditions

“Main” schemes in terms of spending

Illustration for unemployment benefits in 2010



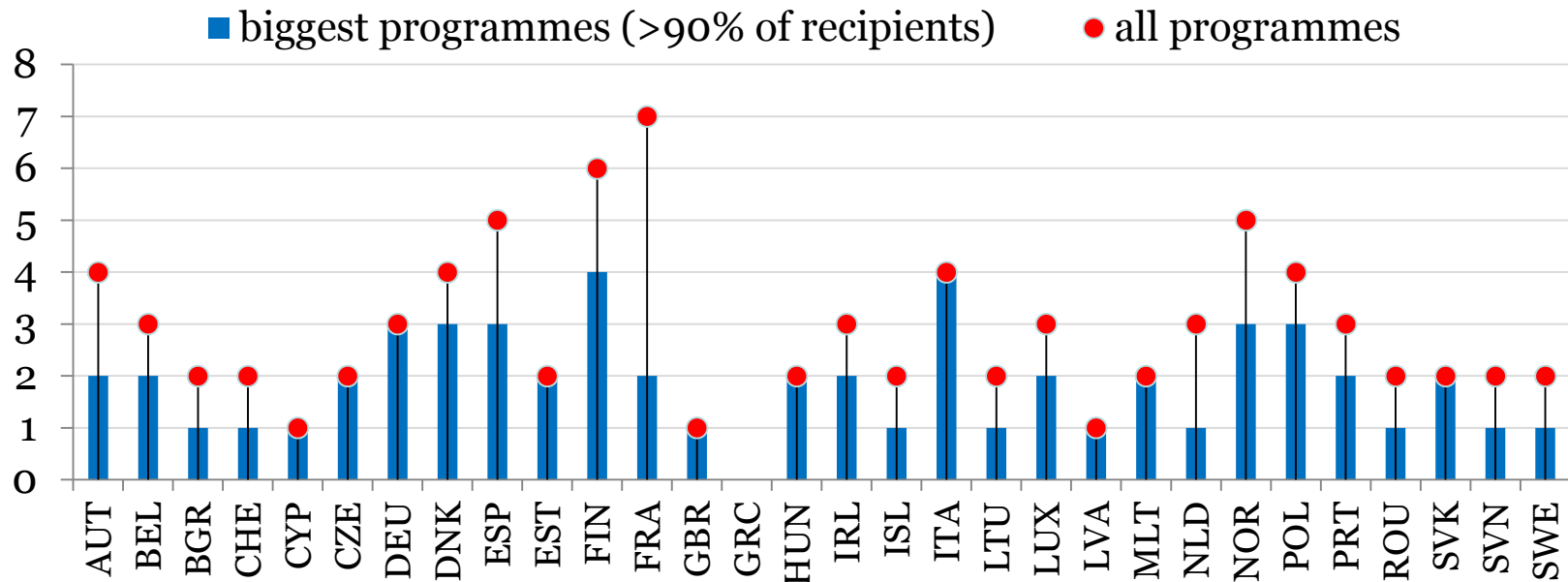
Identification of “main schemes” is not possible in a few countries:

Greece, Portugal, Slovenia: 2010 spending data are missing.

Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, Slovak Republic: OECD was advised that disaggregate spending data should not be disseminated.

“Main” programmes in terms of recipients

Illustration for unemployment benefits in 2010



Notes: 2010 recipients data for Greece are missing.

Pros & cons of different options

Option	Implications
Fewer variables	Risk missing information on key factors driving expenditure trends. Some variables are essential for comparability (e.g., recipient stocks adjusted for double counting)
Lower time frequency (quarterly >> annual)	Data less timely, time-series analyses more difficult (e.g. substitution between programmes).
Exclude pensions (already in ESSPROS)	Reduce overlap between SOCR and ESSPROS, but SOCR data at programme level is policy-relevant.
Exclude 'small' schemes/ programmes ('low' spending levels / recipient numbers)	As programmes change, not clear how selection is to be updated without breaks in series. Risk to miss new measures or small ones with important social policy function (e.g., short-time working schemes).
Keep only 'main' prog's (as in SPC/ISG)	Some important ('big') programmes are currently not included in the SPC/ISG data.
Prioritise poverty- alleviation prog's	More collection effort, but helps inform key policy debates.
Prioritise prog's with major stabilisation role	More collection effort, but helps inform key policy debates.

For discussion

Preliminary discussion of the options for the simplification of the OECD data collection

The European Commission and OECD would like to receive feed-back from the countries on the options for simplifying the collection of benefit recipient data as presented (doc SP-2014-05.2-Annex 1).

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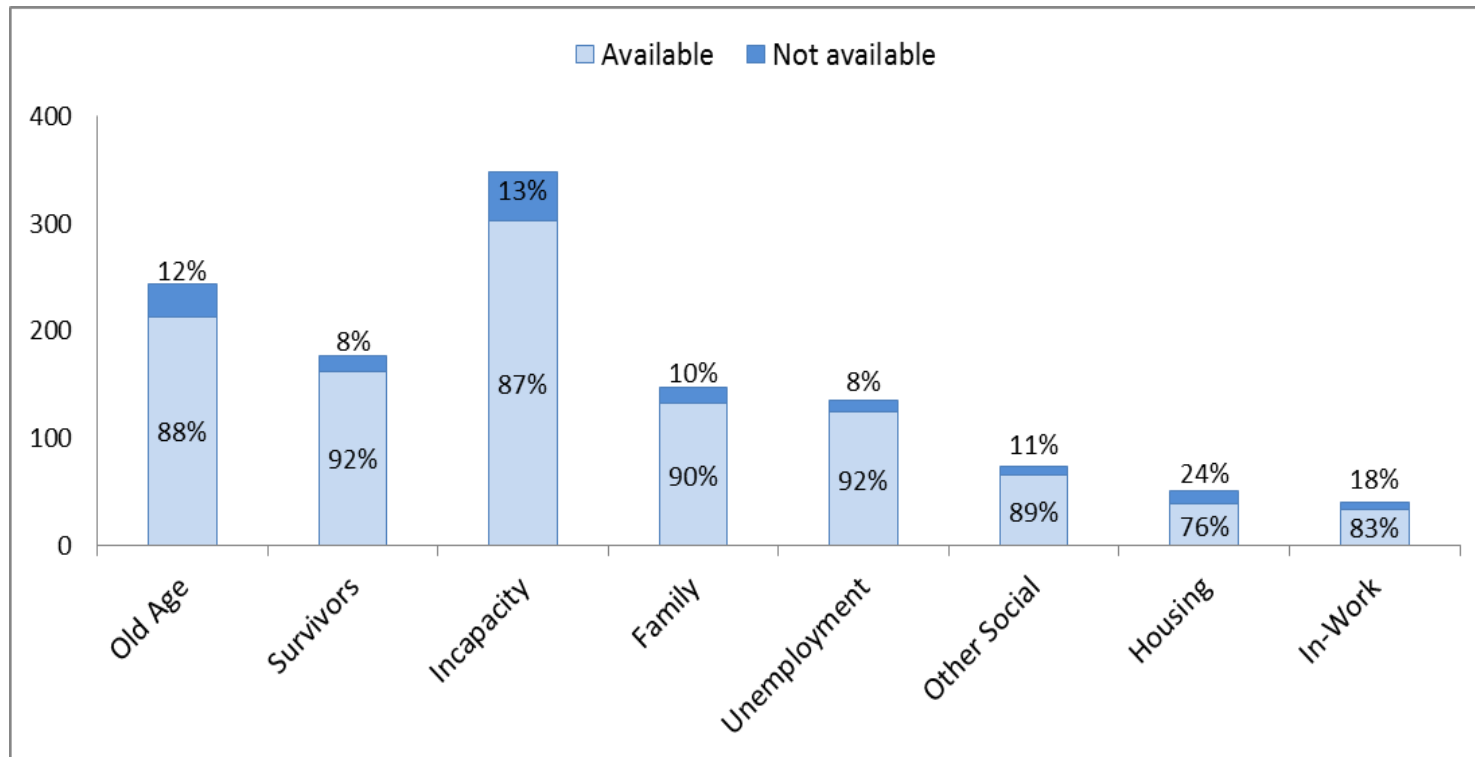
Additional slides

How complete is the database?

Almost all Unemployment programmes are available, missing are pretty concentrated in Housing and In-Work branches.

SOCR annual stocks availability by branch – 2010

Number of available and not-available programmes by branch of social protection



Programmes included in ISG and in SOCR

	Consistency of programmes					Consistency of stocks		
	<i>All ISG programmes appear to be included in SOCR</i>	<i>Some SOCR prgs. not included in ISG</i>	<i>Some ISG prgs. not in SOCR</i>	<i>Not enough information to verify</i>		<i>ISG and SOCR stocks appear consistent</i>	<i>ISG and SOCR stocks are slightly inconsistent</i>	<i>Not enough information to verify</i>
Unemployment	AUT, CZE, EST, ESP, FRA, ITA, LVA, LTU, LUX, HUN, MLT, NLD, POL, PRT, ROU, SVK, SVN, UK	AUT, LUX, SVK	DNK, SWE	DEU,	Active labour market programmes			
						EST, ITA, LVA, LUX, HUN, MLT, NLD, SVN, SWE, UK	SVK	DEU, DNK, POL, ROU
Social Assistance	AUT, BEL, CZE, DNK, EST, ESP, FRA, LVA, LTU, LUX, MLT, NLD, PRT, ROU, SVK, SVN, SWE, UK	CZE	ITA, HUN, POL	DEU	In-kind benefits			
						LUX, HUN, NLD, SVN, SWE	AUT, LVA, MLT, PRT, SVK	DEU, DNK, ITA, POL, ROU, UK
Disability	AUT, BEL, CZE, DNK, HUN, EST, ESP, FRA, ITA, LVA, LTU, LUX, MLT, NLD, POL, PRT, ROU, SVK, SVN, SWE, UK	DNK, ESP, FRA, HUN,		DEU				
						AUT, BEL, CZE, EST, ITA, HUN, POL, SWE	LVA, LTU, NLD, FIN, PRT, SVK, SVN, UK	DEU, DNK, ESP, FRA, LUX, MLT, ROU