

STAP

NEDERLANDS
INSTITUUT
VOOR ALCOHOLBELEID



Underage Drinking and Law Enforcement

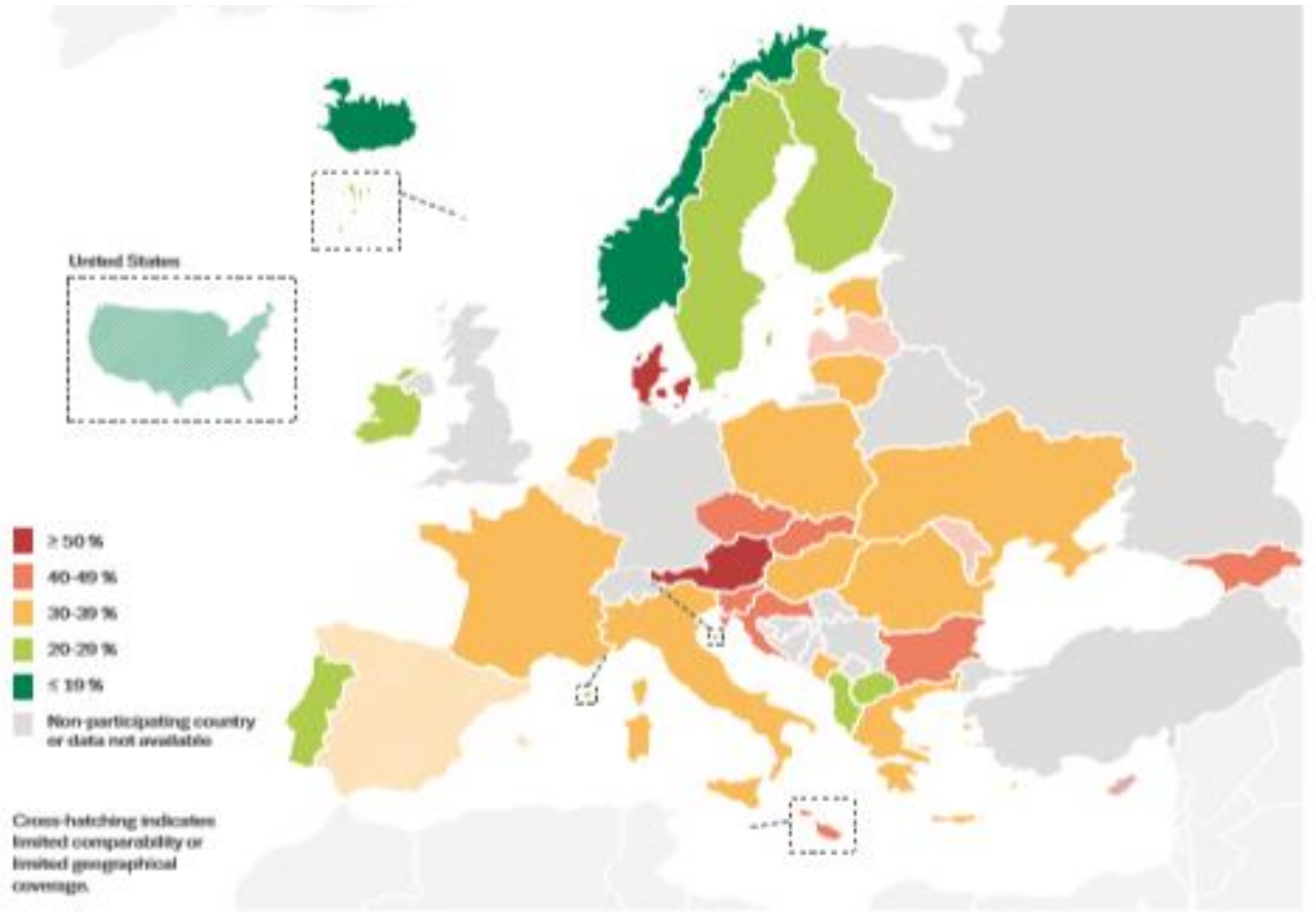
7th European Alcohol Policy Conference
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Policy STAP

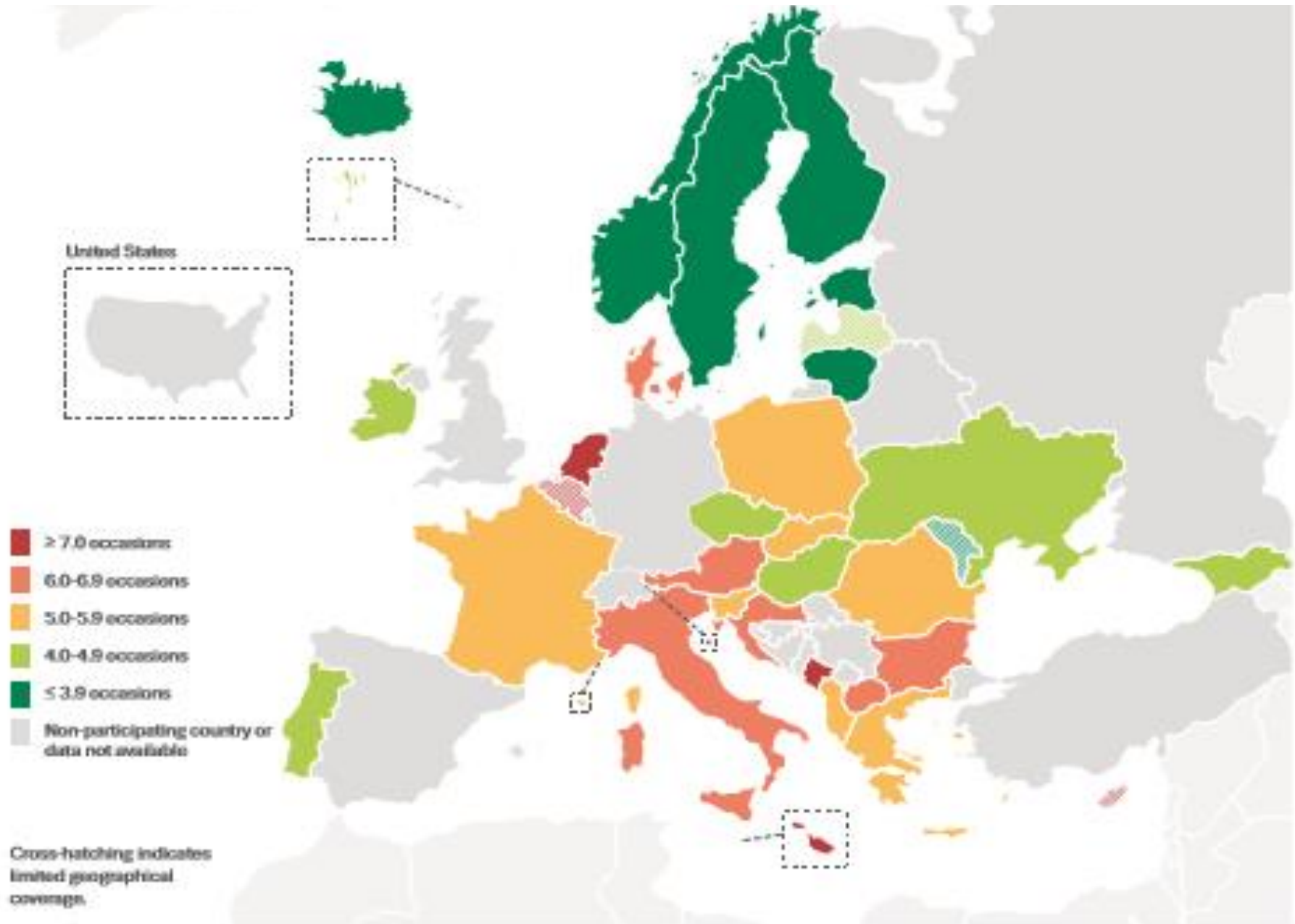
Content

- Some data about underage and binge drinking
- Alcohol age limits in Europe
- Rates of compliance of sellers to age limits
- Unforeseen risks of the decentralization of alcohol enforcement in the Netherland
- Recommendations

ESPAD 2015: Prevalence of 5 or more drinks in the last 30 days (students 15/16)



ESPAD 2015: Frequency of alcohol intake in the last 30 days, mean number of occasions among users (students 15/16)



Binge drinking in the Netherlands



-72% of 16 plus drinkers are binge drinkers

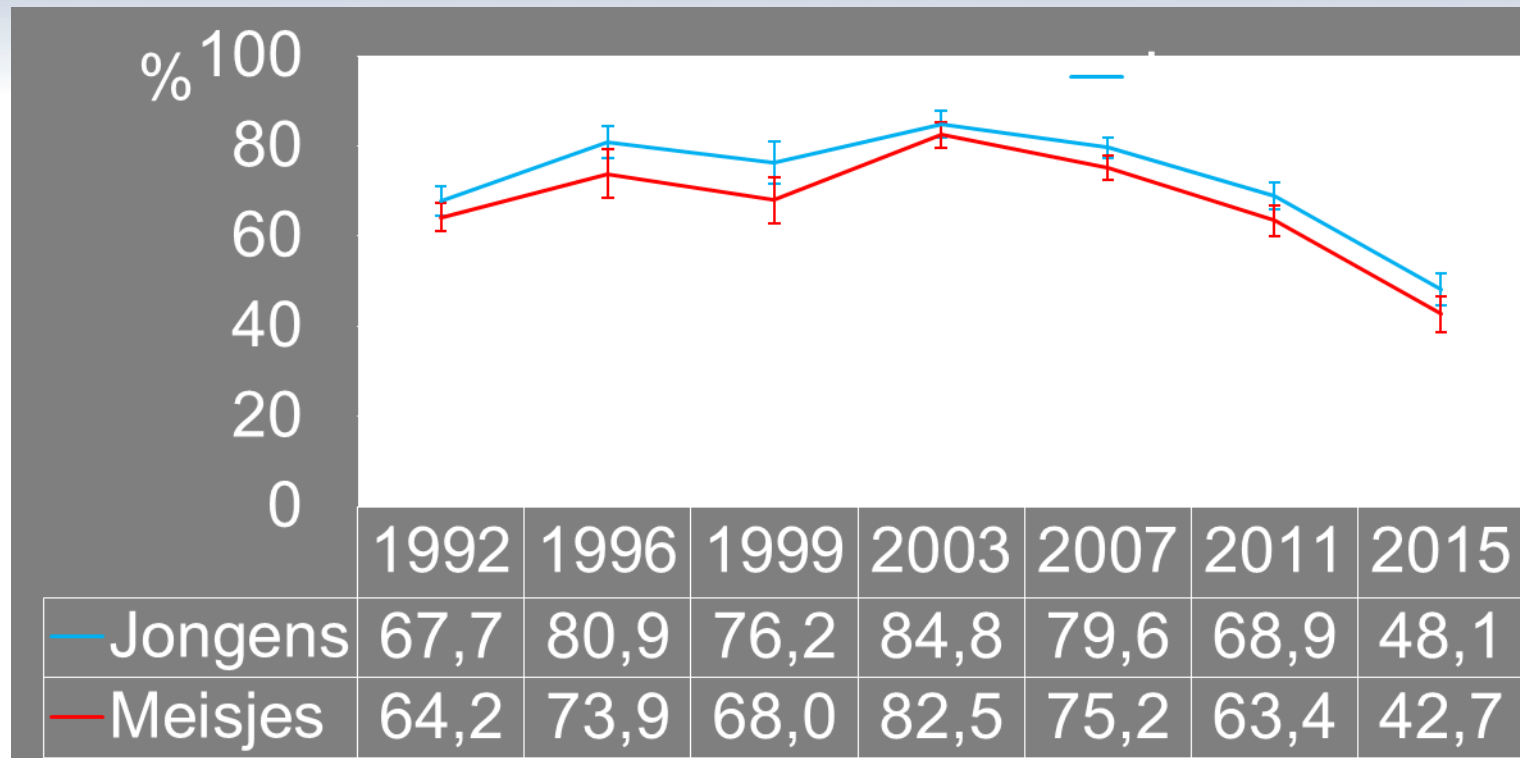
-25% drink more than 10 glasses in a weekend (17 plus)

-2003: 1500 alcohol emergency admissions in hospitals

-2015: 6100 alcohol emergency admissions in hospitals (incl. 1500 minors)

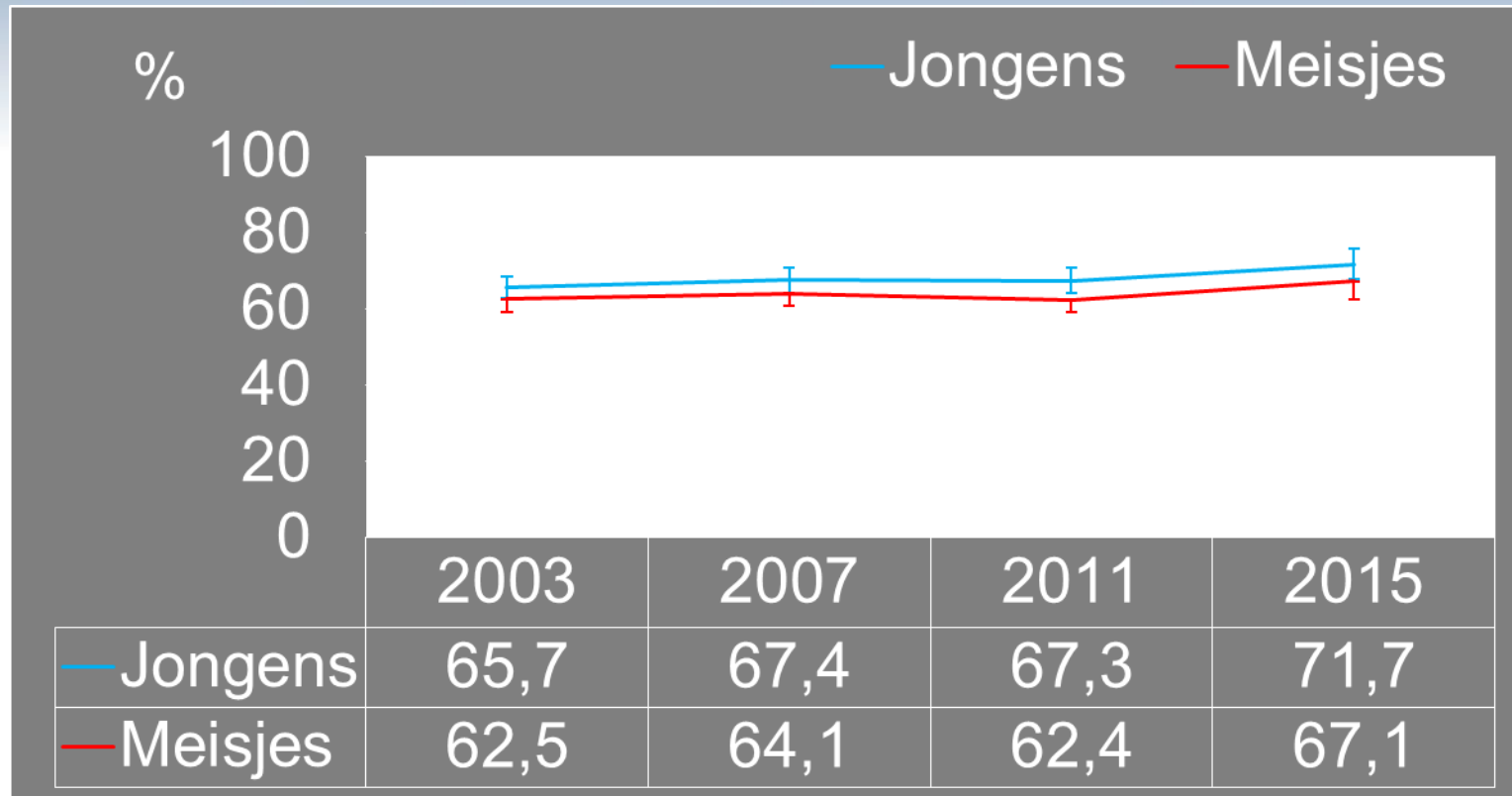


Netherlands: 1992-2015: young people (12-16) start drinking later but.....



Source: Trimbos: Peilstationsonderzoek: 12 t/m 16 jarige scholieren

...about 70% of the young drinkers are binge drinkers

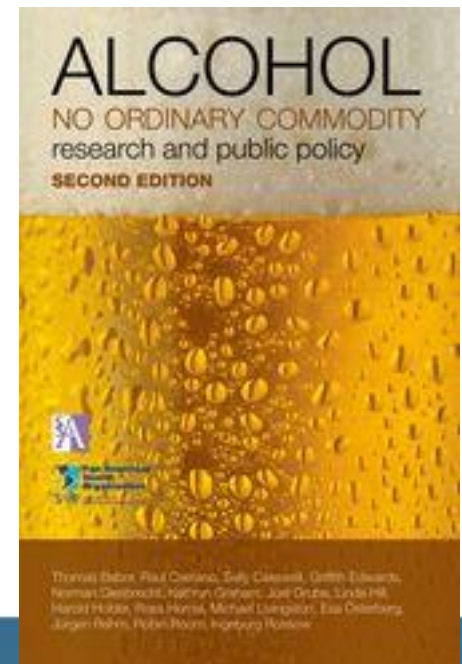


Source: Trimbos: Peilstationsonderzoek: 12 t/m 16 jarige scholieren

Underage drinking in Europe is related to.....

- Easy availability of alcohol (formal settings and informal settings)
- Low prices
- Marketing and sponsoring

*Thomas Babor and others: Alcohol: No Ordinary Commodity: Research and Public Policy; 2010



A evidence based challenge: to improve compliance of age limits

Stockwell:

“Among the various policy options to reduce harm from alcohol by reducing the supply side of alcohol, approaches which reduce the availability of alcohol to youth through the **increase of compliance with existing age-limits** on alcohol sales have been argued to have the **strongest evidence** base.

Stockwell, T. (2006). Alcohol supply, demand, and harm reduction: What is the strongest cocktail? *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 17(4), 269-277.

Compliance to age limits is crucial...

Kuntsche, E., & Gmel:

“The behavior of retailers and the existence of age limits are thought to impact upon drinking behaviour and its consequences....”

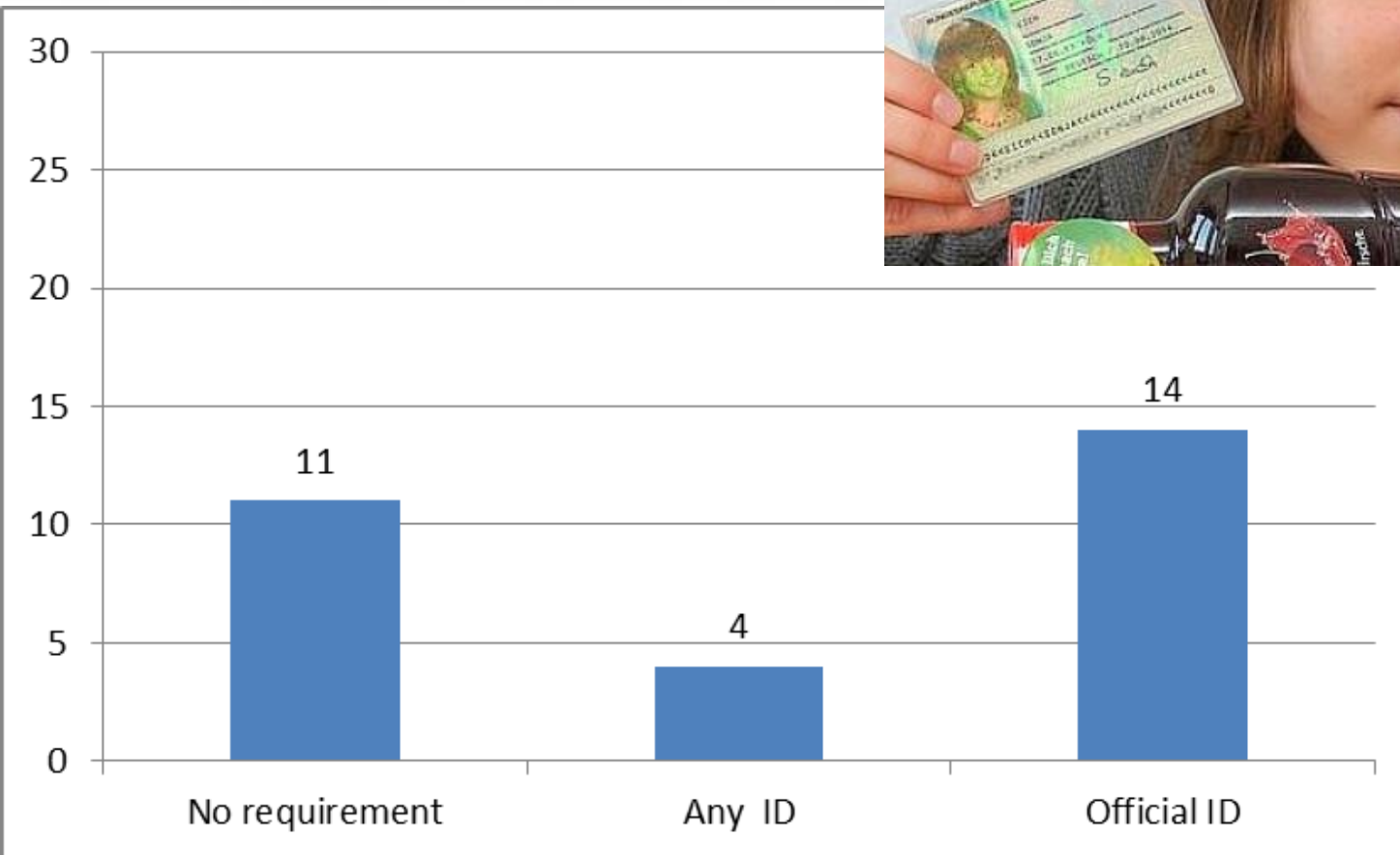
Kuntsche, E., & Gmel, G. (2013). Alcohol consumption in late adolescence and early adulthood—where is the problem. *Swiss Med Wkly*, 143, w13826.

Overview legal age limits in Europe for selling alcohol

(Eyes on Ages, STAP, 2013; and updated)

	Onpremise		Offpremise	
	LA	HA	LA	HA
Norway	18	20	18	20
Finland, Sweden	18	18	18	20
18 Countries	18	18	18	18
Denmark, UK	18	18	16	18
Cypres, Malta	17	17	17	17
Belgium, Germany, Switzerland	16	18	16	18
Austria and Luxembourg	16	16	16	16

The fundamental action for compliance: check the age by means of an ID!



11 European countries have no ID check requirements (Eyes on Ages, 2013)

Results age-limit compliance research vary enormously

- Estonia 35,4% (off-premise)
- Germany 65,1% (general)
- Netherlands 28% (general)
- Poland 23% (general)
- Portugal 44% (general)
- Spain 19% (general; excl liquor))
- Sweden 93% (off-premise)
- Switzerland 69,6 (general)

Some examples of results (Eyes on Ages, STAP, 2013)

National compliance data (18 years; Netherlands)

(Nuchter, 2016)

Selling point	Compliance (%)
Supermarkets	63%
Liquor shops	62%
Bars/clubs	27%
Cafeteria	29%
Sports canteens	17%
Home delivery/online	2%
Total	36%

Decentralization of Alcohol Law Enforcement in the Netherlands

- Decentralization from national level to local level in 2013
- Inspection task moved from **one** centralized authority to **400** mayors



Intended impact of decentralization

- Intensification of enforcement, more fte's
- More political and administrative commitment with enforcement
- Better focus on the local situation (hot spots etc)
- Finally a higher compliance rate

Unintended impact of decentralization (1)

- Enforcement process heavily influenced by local priorities/ interest
- Fear of many mayors to confront local sellers with fines
- Slow and careful implementation of effective enforcement methods (test purchasers); some exceptions!
- More fte's but loss of enforcement expertise, hardly any national coordination
- Finally still a low compliance rate (especially at the typical local selling places: bars and sport canteens).

Unintended impact of decentralization (2)

- Mayors feel more and more free to construct their own alcohol policy and many of them give priority to the economic prosperity in stead of to health issues.
- Our national government feels less responsible for a comprehensive alcohol policy: 'it has the tendency to throw these issues over the (local) fence'



Unintended impact of decentralization: blurring

- More than 40 municipalities participate in a pilot in order to give shops the permission to sell and serve alcohol
- The pilot is, given the existing law, illegal but mayors just don't mind
- The Ministry of Health is not amused but takes no action
- This initiative increases the availability of alcohol and results in more alcohol related problems....



Some recommendations:

- The inspection of alcohol laws (especially regarding age limits and overserving) should take place independent from local administrations. It has to be organized regional or national.
- Cost-effective enforcement of alcohol laws is based on:
 - *good communication with sellers
 - *specific expertise of inspectors
 - *input of underage test purchasers
- The national government shall take the lead in alcohol policy in order to restrict the availability of alcohol for young people

Thanks for your attention



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