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# Behavioural indicators in men who have sex with men

Dr. Brenda Spencer, IUMSP, Lausanne

13<sup>th</sup> HIV/AIDS Think Tank Meeting

First presented by Prof. Jonathan Elford, City University London

European Parliament, Brussels, 1 December 2009

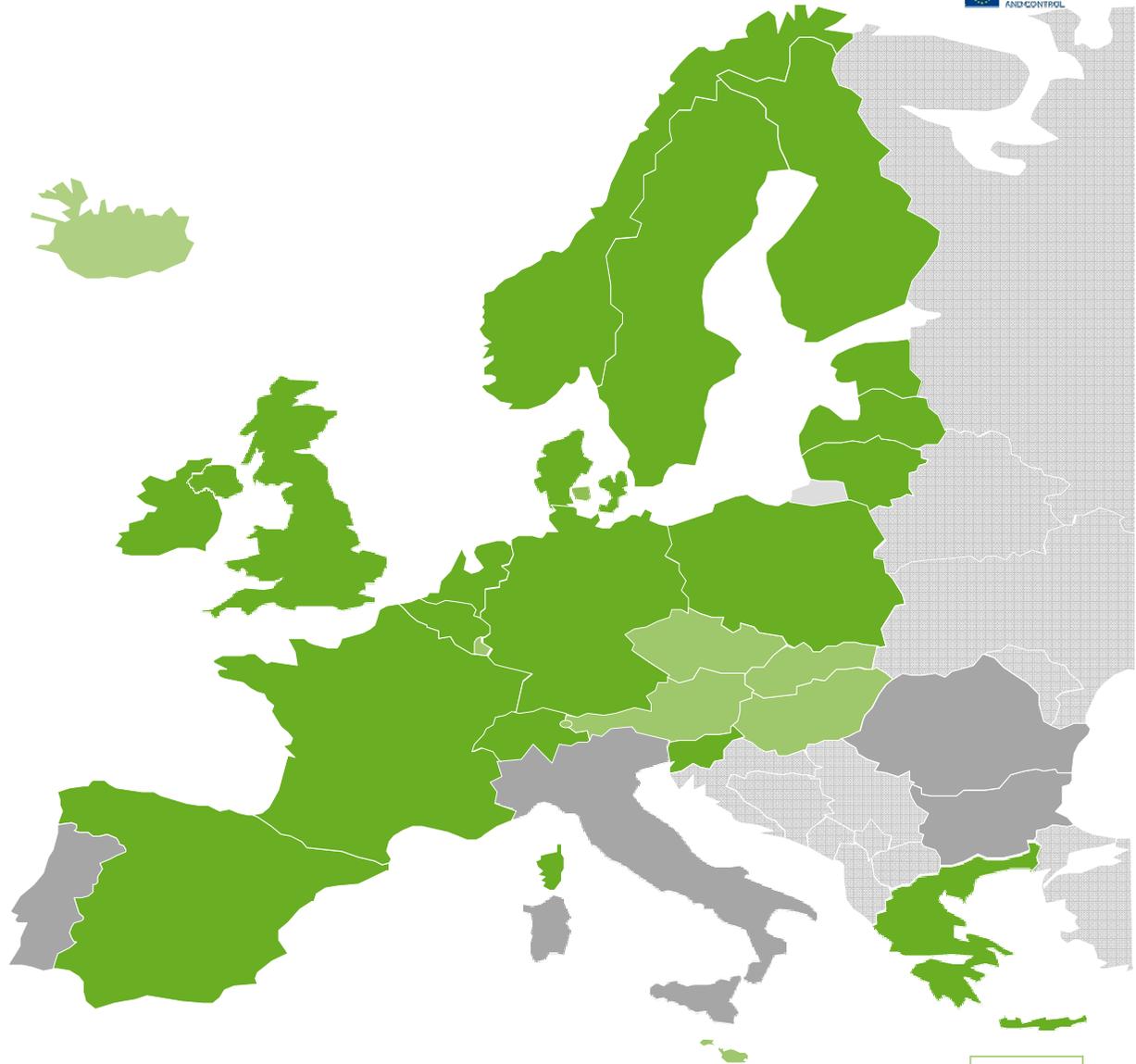
# Europe: behavioural surveillance



**Behavioural surveillance among MSM** (men who have sex with men )

**No behavioural surveillance among MSM**

**Did not return a questionnaire**



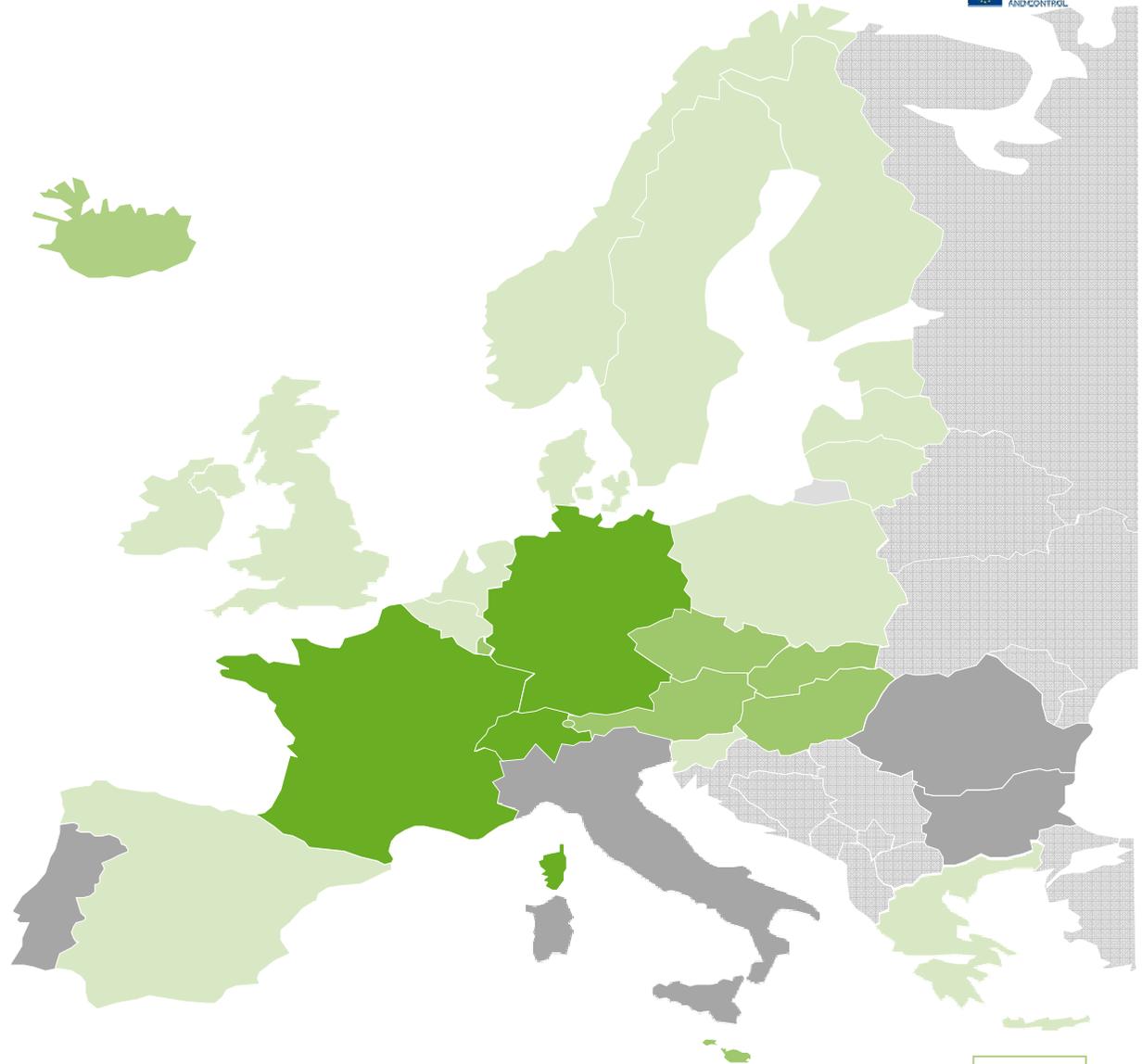
# Europe: behavioural surveillance 1985–1989



**Behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**No behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**Did not return a  
questionnaire**



1985-1989 Germany, France, Switzerland



# Europe: behavioural surveillance 1990–1999

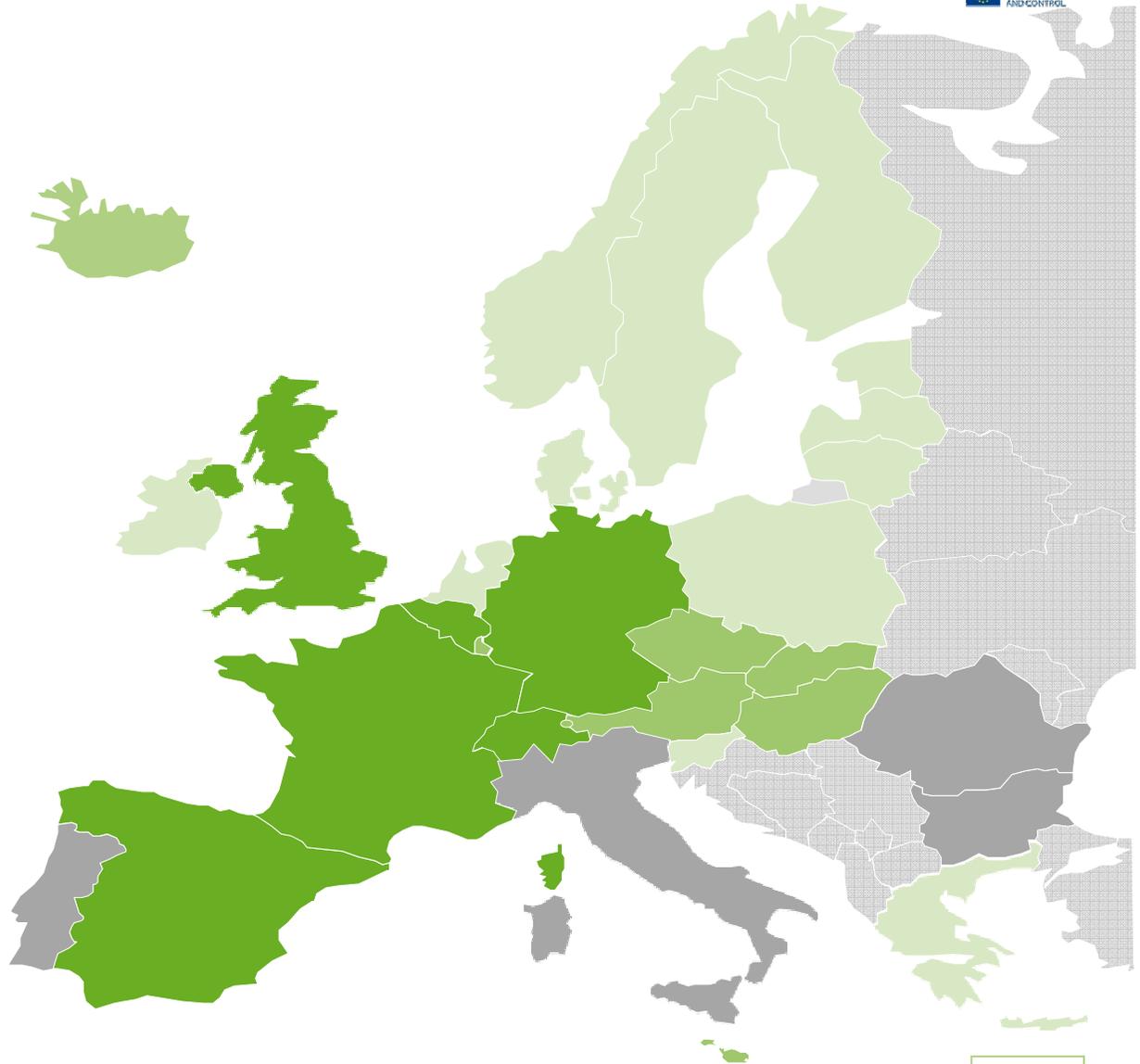


**Behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**No behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**Did not return a  
questionnaire**

1985-1989 Germany, France, Switzerland  
1990-1999 UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), Spain, Belgium



# Europe: behavioural surveillance 2000–2004

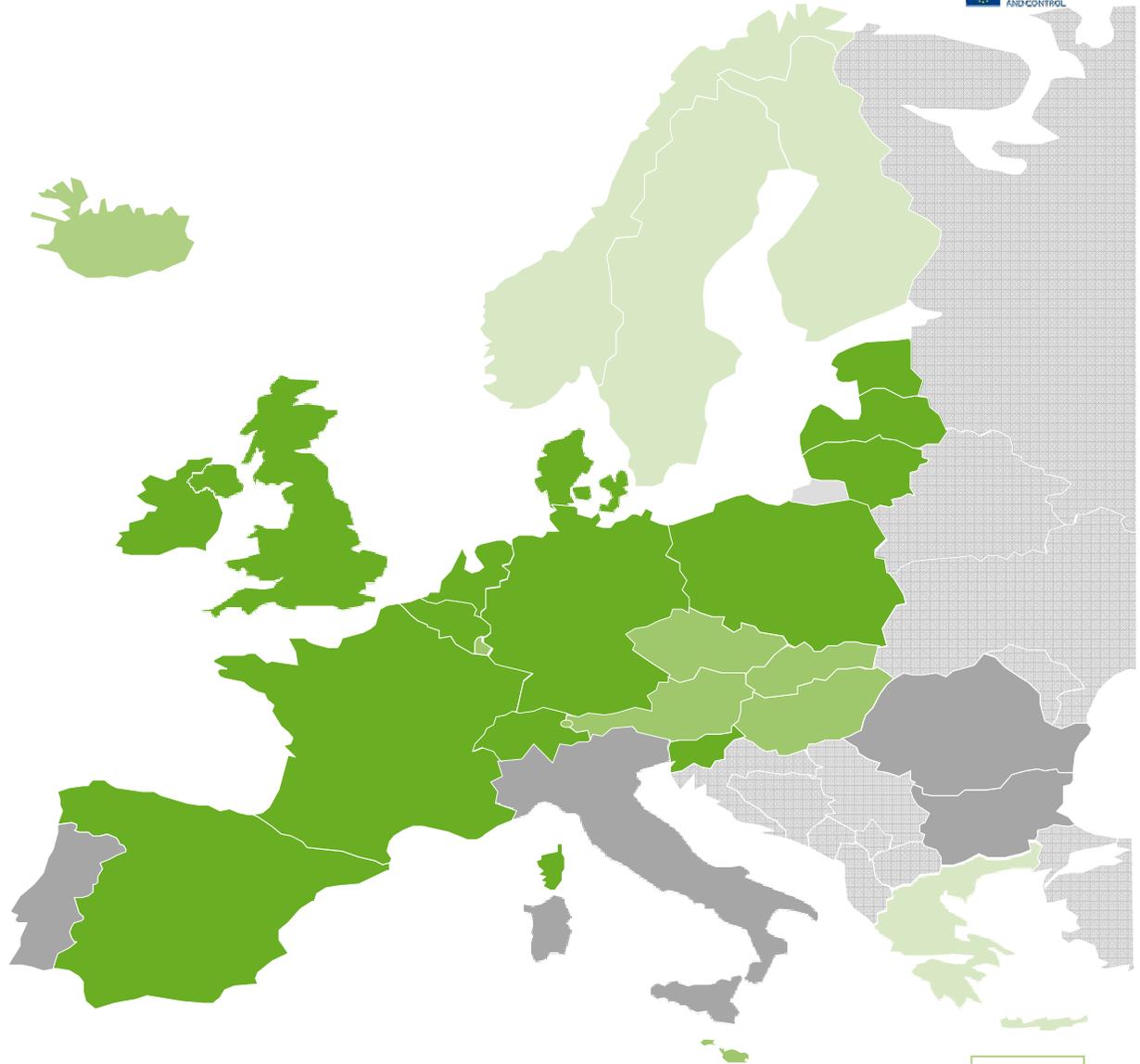


**Behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**No behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**Did not return a  
questionnaire**

1985-1989 Germany, France, Switzerland  
1990-1999 UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), Spain, Belgium  
2000-2004 Ireland, Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia



# Europe: behavioural surveillance 2005–2009

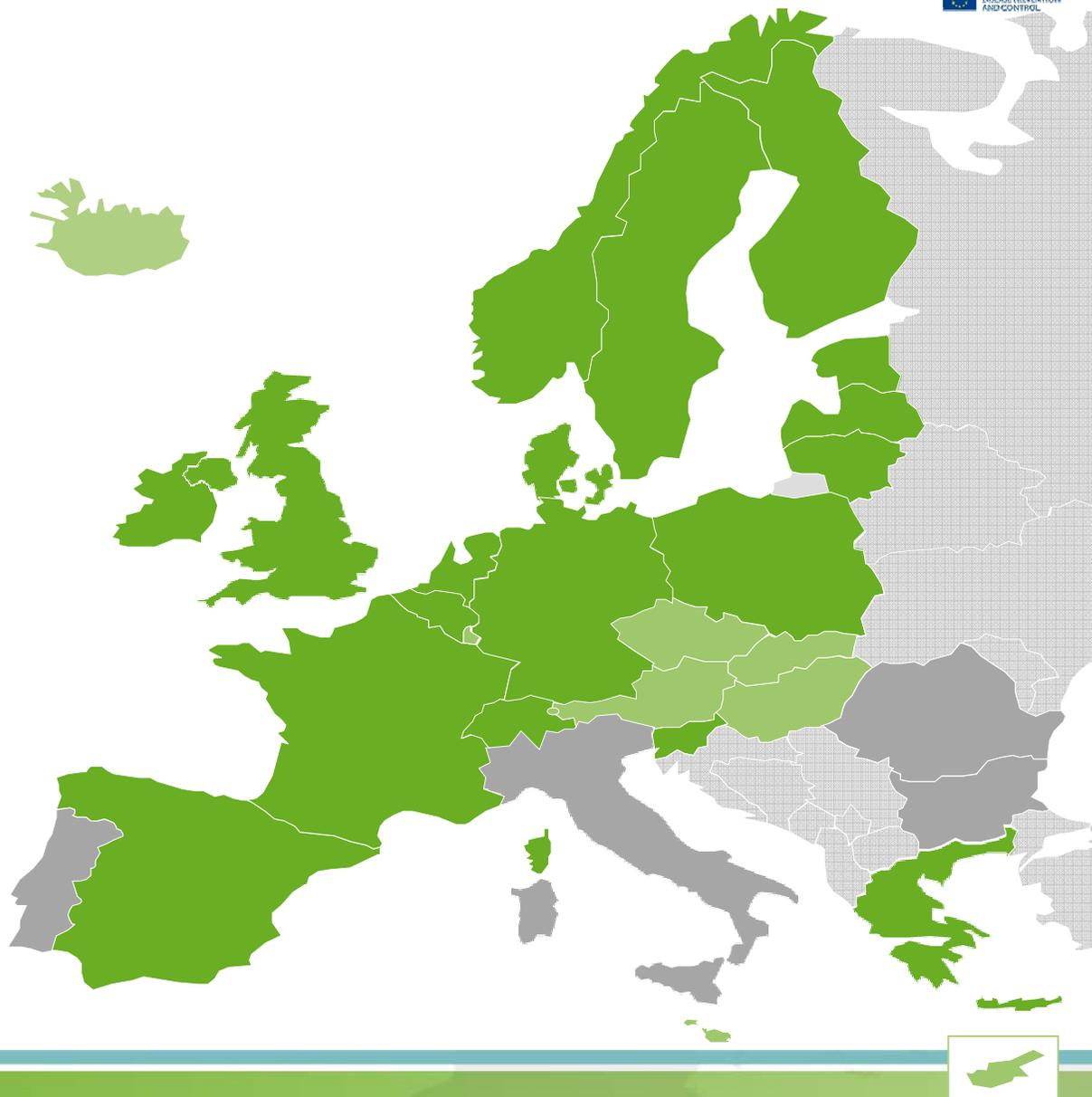


**Behavioural  
surveillance among  
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**No behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**Did not return a  
questionnaire**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 1985-1989 | Germany, France, Switzerland  |
| 1990-1999 | UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), Spain, Belgium          |
| 2000-2004 | Ireland, Netherlands, Denmark, Poland, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia |
| 2005-2009 | Norway, Sweden, Finland, Greece   |



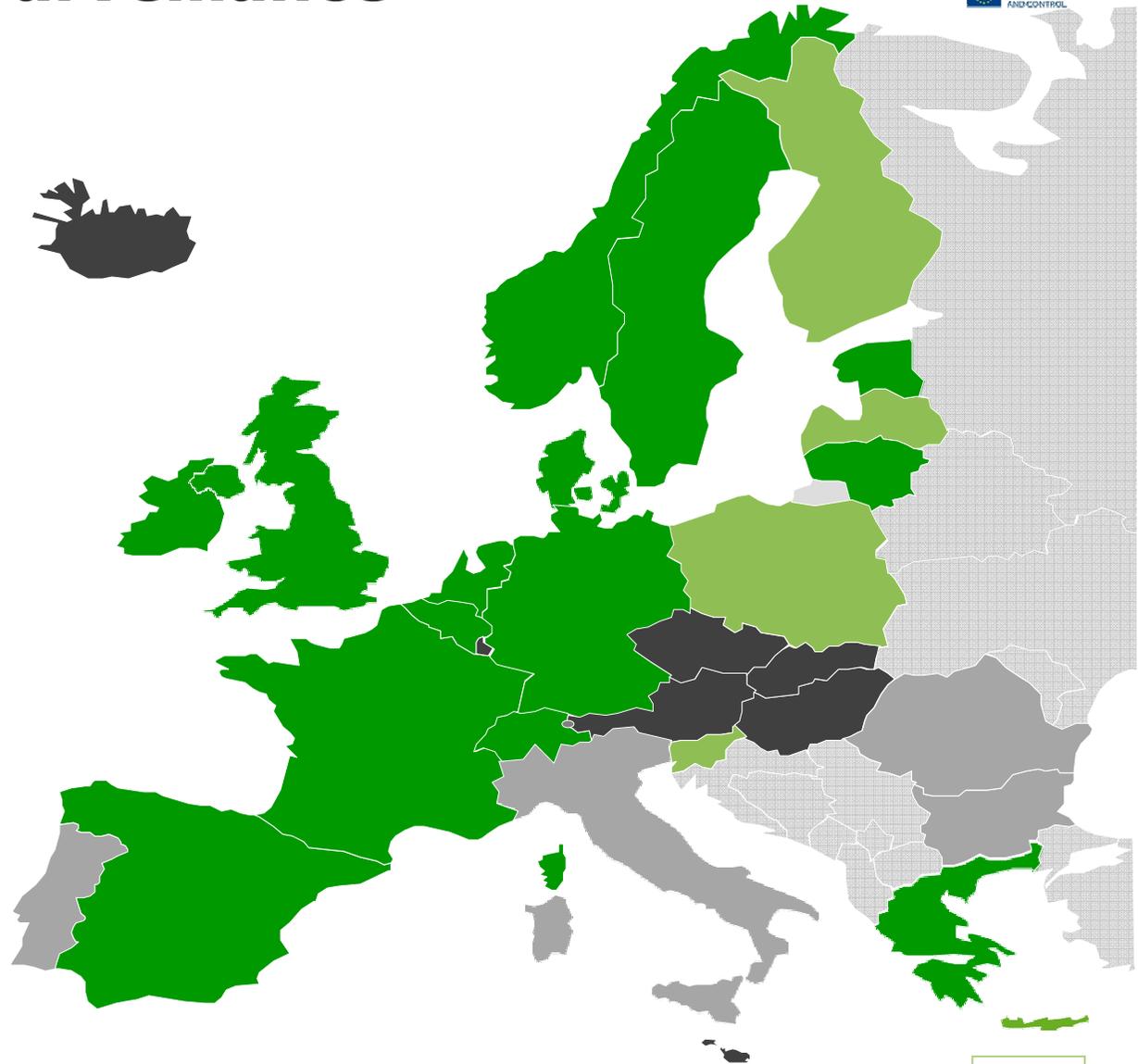
# Using the internet for behavioural surveillance



**Behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**No behavioural  
surveillance among  
MSM**

**Did not return a  
questionnaire**



# Indicators in use

Four main indicators in current use:

- Unprotected anal intercourse (UAI).
- Condom use.
- Number of partners.
- HIV testing.

Considerable diversity exists between countries.

## **UAI: specific indicators currently used**

- UAI with any partner.
- UAI with a casual partner.
- UAI with a main partner.
- UAI with a partner of unknown status.
- UAI with a partner of unknown or discordant status.
- UAI with a casual partner of unknown or discordant status.
- UAI with a main partner of unknown or discordant status.

# Suggested set of indicators



- UAI with a partner of unknown or discordant HIV status\*.
- UAI with a partner of the same HIV status\*.
- Diagnosed with STI.
- Tested for HIV.
- Percentage who are HIV positive.
- Number of sexual partners.
- Used condom at last anal intercourse.
- Where men met their sexual partners.

\* main, casual

# Behavioural indicators in MSM:

## Conclusion



- The diversity of behavioural indicators limits the extent to which direct comparisons can be made between EU Member States at present.
- We suggest that European countries reach an agreement on a core set of indicators.
- The process of harmonising HIV and STI behavioural surveillance among MSM in Europe should continue.

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Eurosurveillance invites authors to submit papers for a special issue on HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections (STI) in men who have sex with men (MSM). The topic is in line with the main theme of World AIDS Day 2009 events organised by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and aims at drawing attention to the epidemiological importance of MSM in HIV and other STI and

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**Eurosurveillance, Volume 14, Issue 47, 26 November 2009**

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## Eurosurveillance, Volume 14, Issue 47, 26 November 2009

### Research articles

#### HIV AND STI BEHAVIOURAL SURVEILLANCE AMONG MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN (MSM) IN EUROPE

J Elford (j.elford@city.ac.uk)<sup>1</sup>, A Jeannin<sup>2</sup>, B Spencer<sup>2</sup>, J P Gervasoni<sup>2</sup>, M J van de Laar<sup>3</sup>, F Dubois-Arber<sup>2</sup>, the HIV and STI Behavioural Surveillance Mapping Group<sup>4</sup>

1. City University, London, United Kingdom
2. Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine (IUMSP), University of Lausanne
3. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Stockholm, Sweden
4. Members of the group are listed at the end of the article

Citation style for this article: Elford J, Jeannin A, Spencer B, Gervasoni JP, van de Laar MJ, Dubois-Arber F, the HIV and STI Behavioural Surveillance Mapping Group. HIV and STI behavioural surveillance among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Europe. *Euro Surveill.* 2009;14(47):pii=19414. Available online: <http://www.eurosurveillance.org/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=19414>

Date of submission: 08 October 2009

This paper describes behavioural surveillance for HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STI) among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Europe, focusing on the methods and indicators used. In August 2008, questionnaires were sent to European Union Member States and European Free Trade Association countries seeking information on behavioural surveillance activities among eight population groups including MSM. Thirty-one countries were invited to take part in the survey and 27 returned a questionnaire on MSM. Of these 27 countries, 14 reported that there was a system of behavioural surveillance among MSM in their country while another four countries had conducted behavioural surveys of some kind in this subpopulation. In the absence of a sampling frame, all European countries used convenience samples for behavioural surveillance among MSM. Most European countries used the Internet for recruiting and surveying MSM for behavioural surveillance reflecting increasing use of the Internet by MSM for meeting sexual partners. While there was a general consensus about the main behavioural indicators (unprotected anal intercourse, condom use, number of partners, HIV testing), there was considerable diversity between countries in the specific indicators used. We suggest that European countries reach an agreement on a core set of indicators. In addition we recommend that the process of harmonising HIV and STI behavioural surveillance among MSM in Europe continues.



# Project team

Françoise Dubois-Arber, IUMSP – team leader (and youth)

Brenda Spencer, IUMSP – general population

André Jeannin, IUMSP - survey on behavioural surveillance in MS

Bertrand Graz, IUMSP – literature review (and youth)

Vivian Hope, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine - IDU

Jonathan Elford, City University London - MSM

France Lert, Inserm Unit U687 "Public Health and Epidemiology of Professional and Social Determinants of Health" France - PLWHA

Helen Ward, STI Prevention and Control Research Group, Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Imperial College London - CSW

Nicola Low, Sexual and Reproductive Health Research Group, Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine, Bern, Switzerland – STI clinic attendees

Mary Haour-Knipe, consultant – migrants and ethnic minorities

Jean-Pierre Gervasoni IUMSP - organisation

Marita van de Laar – Surveillance Unit, ECDC

**This paper was produced for a meeting organized by Health & Consumers DG and represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumers DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.**