

Introduction

Although the ideal of risk communication is to support the stakeholders to make **informed decisions related to radiation risks** and to establish two-way communication and joint problem solving, communication applied in the radiological field is currently far from best standards. In Europe today, institutions, media and the general public exchange information about ionizing radiation (IR) and associated risks. But from performed investigations it can be seen that there is a big difference between the public perception and intentions of those who are providing information on IR risk. The 2011 Fukushima disaster has demonstrated even greater needs for further improving this communication.

Objectives of the EAGLE Coordination Action

- To clarify information and communication strategies about ionizing radiation to support informed societal decision-making.
- To engage stakeholders in assessing the current dissemination of ionizing radiation information to the public.
- To provide guidance tools for good practice to support the ideal of a participative, citizen-centred communication.

Methods

Public opinion surveys

- Computer Assisted Personal/Telephone Interviews
- In Belgium, Slovenia and France
- N > 1000 in each country
- Representative for 18+ population with respect to gender, age, province, education and habitat



Workshops, dialogues and interviews with publics, journalists and information sources

- **Conferences/workshops;**
 - **RICOMET** > 120 stakeholders from EU countries and broader
- **Round table discussions:**
 - With information sources from Belgium, France, Romania, UK and Slovenia
 - With journalists from Belgium, France, Romania, Finland, Poland and Slovenia
 - With members of a general public from Belgium, France, Romania, Poland, Portugal, Austria and Slovenia.
- **Dialogue groups** in Poland, France and Slovenia with journalists and information sources

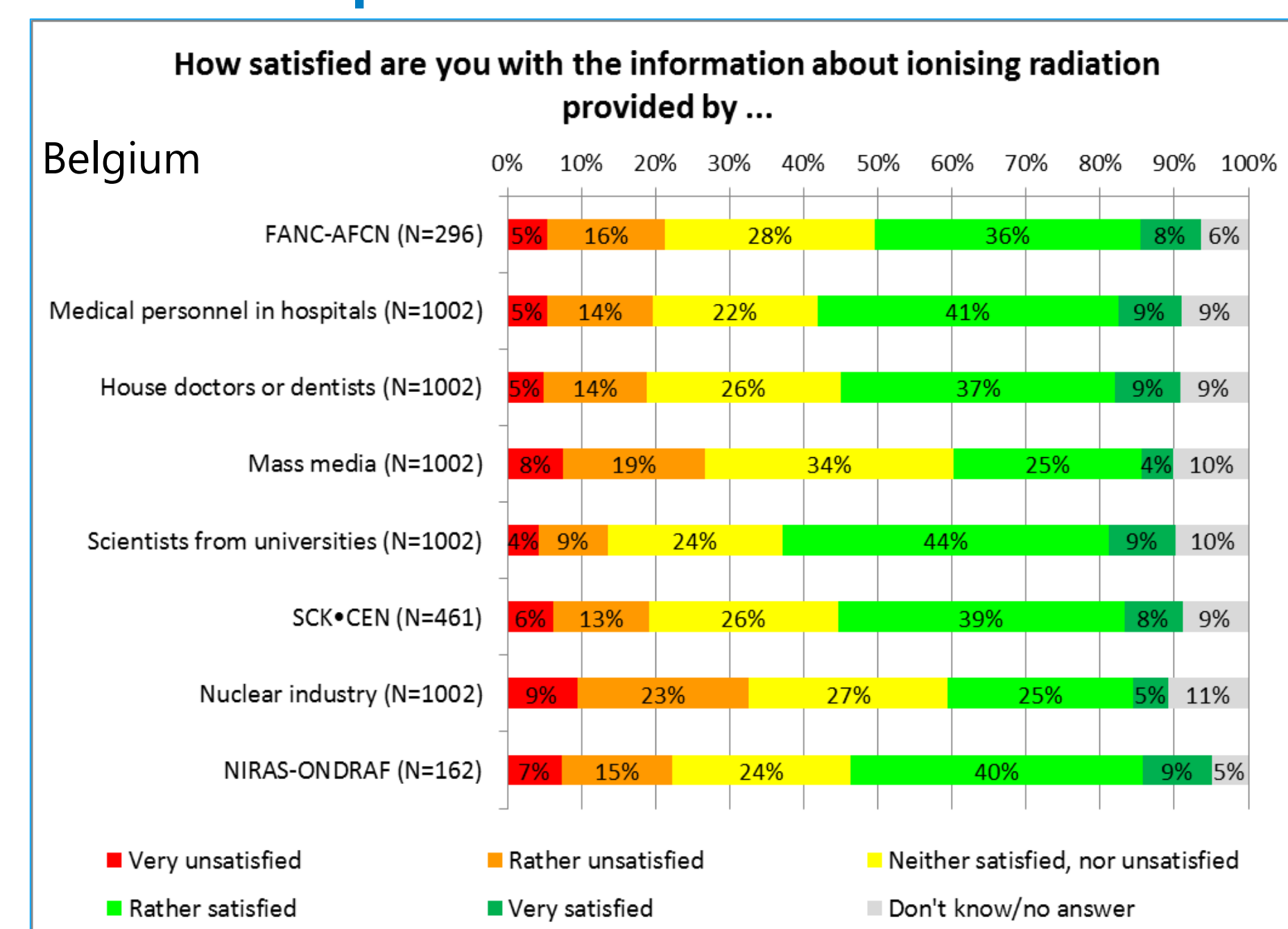
Reviews

- Overview of **mass and social media** treatment of IR topics, including in the aftermath of Fukushima.
- A historical overview of public opinion surveys related to **opinion, attitudes and knowledge** about ionizing radiation in EU.
- School **curriculums** in EU countries



Results

Room for improvement in communication



Knowledge about ionizing radiation is rather low

"Exposure to radiation will always lead to radioactive contamination."



"Natural radioactivity is never dangerous because we are used and adapted to it."



"Vegetables grown near a nuclear power plant cannot be safely consumed because of radioactivity."



Mutual learning by all stakeholders required

- Communication is still too much seen as a one-directional transfer of information from a source to a receiver.
- Communication by users of IR is mainly inspired by the idea that the general public should be 'educated' by 'explaining them the facts' and by assisting people to 'better understand' nuclear technology.
- Citizens miss the recognition by an industry and research of being a competent stakeholder.
- Journalists are very reluctant to communicate with representatives of public relations. They appeal for experts to be trained for media communication.

Areas for further research ... and innovation

- Public opinion research related to ionizing radiation in EU is mainly focused on attitudes towards nuclear energy and omits other applications or challenges.
- *Identify the actual impacts of IRR in everyday life and focus on meaningful issues for the public?*
- Societal communication about IR risks has become more complex, extensive and multi-directional.
- *More joint learning and participative problem-solving?*
- New media speed up, decentralise and diversify information provision while offering platforms for direct citizen participation, expression and feedback.
- *Institutions need support to adapt with new personnel, new practices and new policies?*

Discussion and Conclusion

The EAGLE partners have stated the need to move toward the ideal of citizen-centered communication.

Education, training and information to the public are key factors in the governance of ionizing radiation risks, as are opportunities for dialogue and stakeholder involvement in decision making. EAGLE is engaging stakeholders in assessing the current dissemination of ionizing radiation information to the public and providing practical guidance tools for good practice to support the ideal of a participative, citizen-centred communication.

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Acknowledgement

EAGLE is a coordination project under FP7-EURATOM that aims at clarifying information and communication strategies to support informed societal decision-making.