

Action plans for Hepatitis C: An international overview

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EuHEA Conference 2016, Hamburg, July 13th - 16th 2016

Objectives

With the new direct acting antiviral substances like Sofosbuvir, treating HCV has become much costlier, at least in the short run. Complementing treatment regimens with public health measures in order to avoid new cases or reinfection has therefore gained attention. But what is actually being done in other countries, and what can we learn?

Methods and data

We conducted a desktop research alongside contacting experts, conducting interviews and gathering information from MoH and other stakeholders in each country to paint a clear picture of action plans currently in place or under development with a focus on, but not limited to, Europe. All plans were then according to their **framing**, **content** and their **outcomes**.

Framing

We compared dimensions like the date and time frame of implementation or the budget for the programmes, e.g.:

Country	Presentation of the action plan	Is the action plan already in the implementation phase
Australia	2014 (first strategy: 1999)	Yes
Canada	2009 (first program: 1999)	n.a.
New Zealand	2002	Yes
Belgium	2014	Yes
Denmark	2007	n.a.
France	2009 (first action plan: 1999)	Yes
Ireland	2012	Yes
UK – England	2004 (first strategy: 2002)	Yes
UK – Scotland	2005, 2008, 2011 (each action plan is based on the previous)	Yes

Country	Time frame for implementation
Australia	2014-2017
Canada	n.a.
New Zealand	2002-2007
Belgium	2014-2019
Denmark	n.a.
France	2009-2012
Ireland	2012-2014
UK – England	n.a.
UK – Scotland	Phase I: September 2006 - August 2008 Phase II: May 2008 - March 2011 Framework program: 2011 - 2015

Country	Source of funds	Budget per capita of pop.	Budget per capita of preval. pop.
Australia	Central government	Needle and syringe exchange programme: 0,15 EUR	Needle and syringe exchange programme: 15 EUR
Canada	MoH	0,22 EUR p.a.	44-48 EUR p.a.
New Zealand	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Belgium	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Denmark	Specifically pooled funds/diverse sources	n.a.	n.a.
France	diverse	n.a.	n.a.
Ireland	No dedicated budget	0,00 EUR	0,00 EUR
UK – England	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
UK – Scotland	Phase I: Central government Phase II: Central government	Phase I: 1,05 EUR Phase II: 11,15 EUR	Phase I: 110 EUR Phase II: 1.210 EUR

Content

Coordination and organization

	AUS	CAN	NZL	BEL	DEN	FRA	IRL	GBR (Engl.)	GBR (Scot.)
Nomination of a organization that is primarily responsible for implementation	X	X	X			X	X		X
Nomination of local responsibilities/ local networks/ local collaborations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Actions of communication to regularly inform other people in responsibility/ stakeholder(e.g. regular updated and reports)			X					X	X
Legislative measures	X		X						

Prevention, information, awareness raising, health education

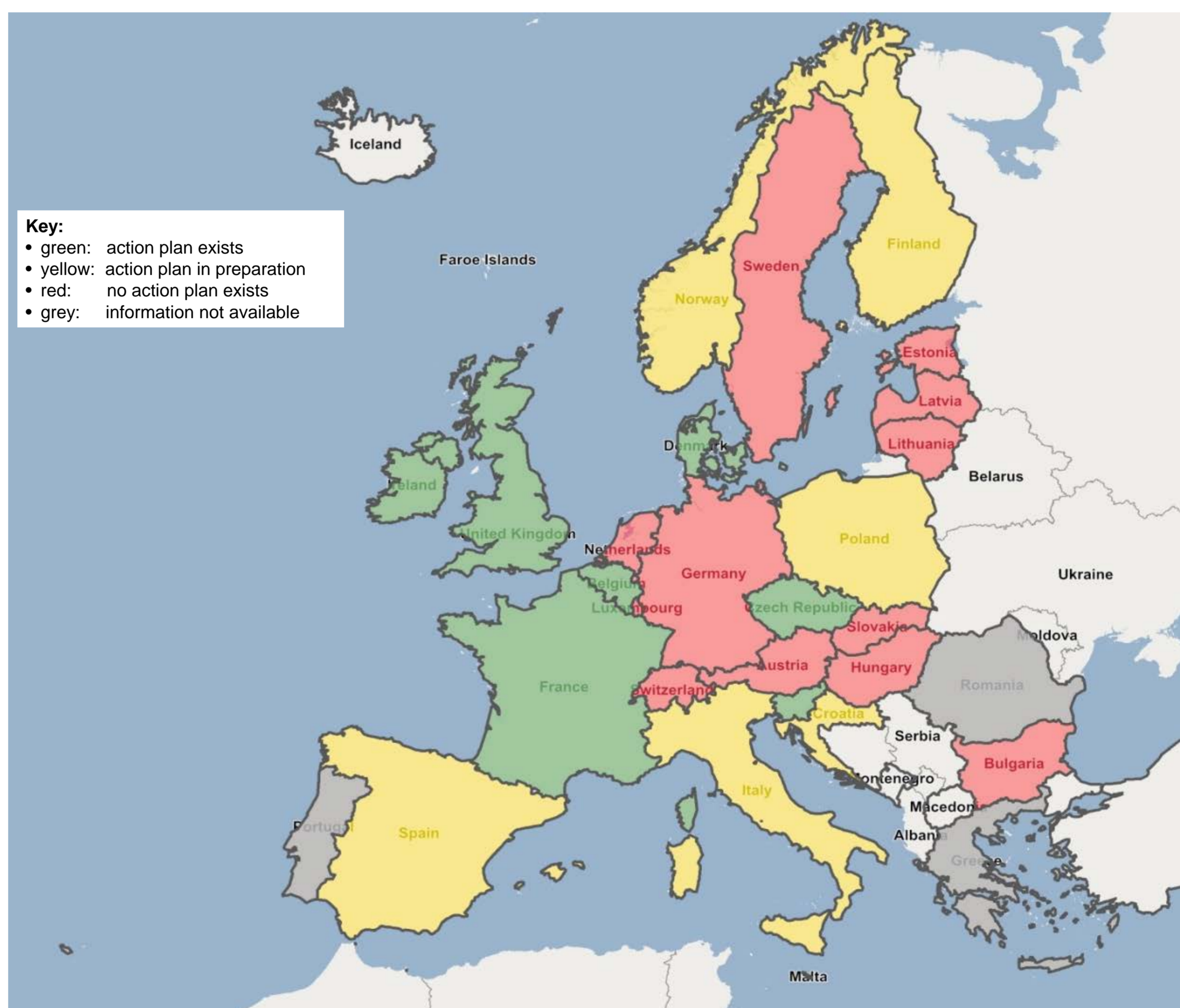
	AUS	CAN	NZL	BEL	DEN	FRA	IRL	GBR (Engl.)	GBR (Scot.)
Needle-Exchange-Programs / Exchange-Programs for drug utensils	X		X	X			X	X	X
Needle-Exchange-Programs (or pilot projects)/ Exchange-Programs for drug utensils in prisons				X				X	X
Development/ Expansion/ Application of guidelines for the provision and handling of Needle-Exchange-Programs / Exchange-Programs for drug utensils			X	X					X
Actions against drug use		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Actions or guidelines for piercings/ tattoos and similar actions				X	X	X	X	X	
General information campaigns	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Special information for									
- Drug users		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
- Prisoners			X	X		X	X	X	X
- Other vulnerable groups (e.g. migrants, ethnic minorities, native population)				X		X	X	X	X
Information and education in educational institutions				X					X
Information for media and other opinion forming instances						X			X

Education and training

	AUS	CAN	NZL	BEL	DEN	FRA	IRL	GBR (Engl.)	GBR (Schottl.)
Education and training of medical professionals that treat/care for people with Hepatitis C, staff-training	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Hepatitis C information/training for prison staff			X			X	X		X

Data and monitoring

	AUS	CAN	NZL	BEL	DEN	FRA	IRL	GBR (Engl.)	GBR (Schottl.)
Development or improvement of clinical databases for HCV (e.g. Prevalence register, register for tests, new cases in drug counseling facilities)				X	X			X	X
Fostering medical research	X	X			X		X	X	X
Evaluation of current service provision, tests, prevention material etc.	X		X	X			X	X	X
Evaluation of measures within the action plan			X		X	X			X



Testing, treatment and care

	AUS	CAN	NZL	BEL	DEN	FRA	IRL	GBR (Engl.)	GBR (Schottl.)
Promotion of testing for HCV	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Group-specific promotion of testing									
- Drug-users	X				X	X	X	X	
- Prisoners	X					X	X	X	
- Other vulnerable groups (e.g. certain migrants, ethnic minorities, first nations)	X					X	X	X	
Clinical guideline development and implementation		X	X			X	X		X
Development and implementation of patient pathways			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Promotion of immunization against HAV and HBV			X	X	X				
Offering treatment and care options in facilities outside the health care system (e.g. in drug counseling or social working facilities,)	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Widening the range of treatment options				X					

Conclusions

- Several European countries have developed action plans for HCV or are in the process of developing one
- There is a considerable difference in the depth and breadth of the action plans
- Nearly all plans tackle the five issues: coordination of the plan, public health aspects, diagnosis and treatment, educational activities and data/monitoring issues
- A dedicated budget and clear governance seem to have a positive impact on success