



# Situation of Drowning and Drowning Prevention in Europe



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# Description of the European Situation

## DROWNING

in the WHO European Region

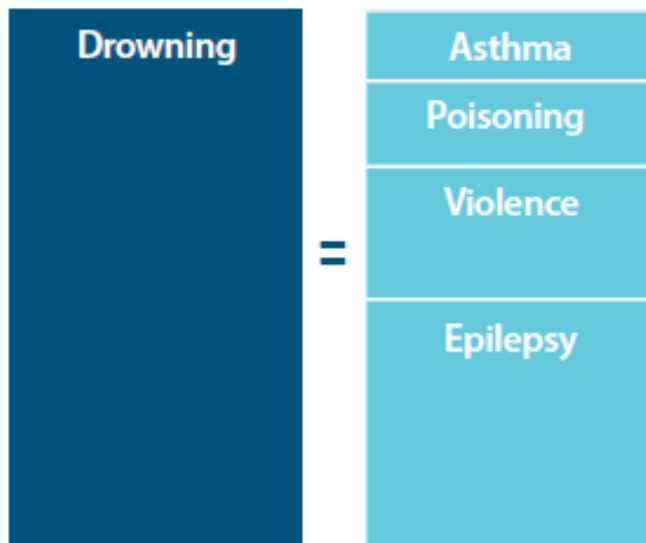
An average of

**3.5**



people  
drown  
every  
hour

Drowning is the  
second leading cause of death  
among 5–14-year-olds



**5**  
**times**

as many  
**males** as  
**females** die  
from drowning



source: WHO Europe



# Drowning is still a topic

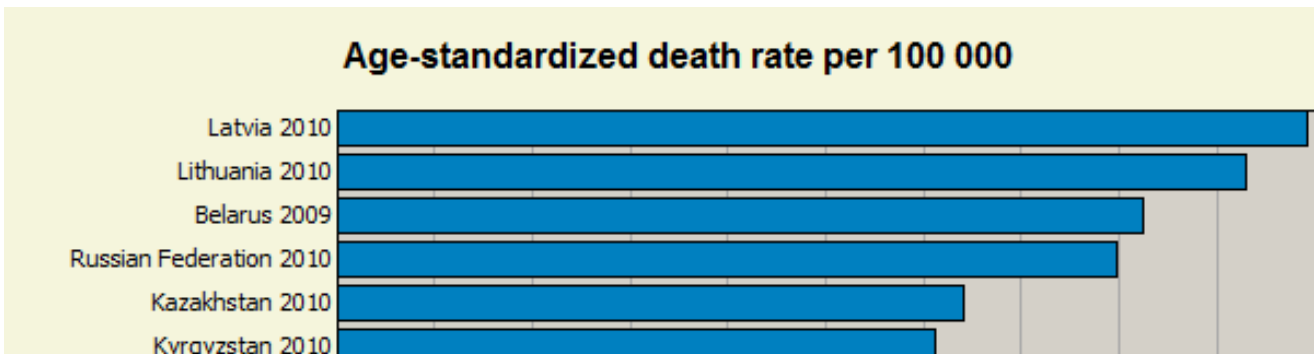
**Drowning is a leading  
killer in Europe.**



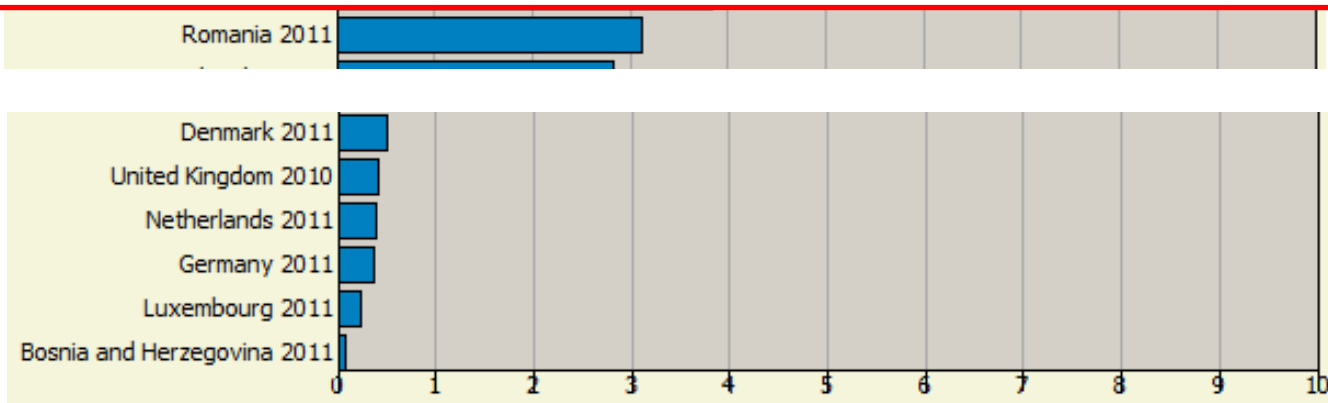
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# The Situation in Europe in 2011



Death rates in 3 countries with highest rates (Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus) are **23 times higher** than in the safest 3 countries (Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands)



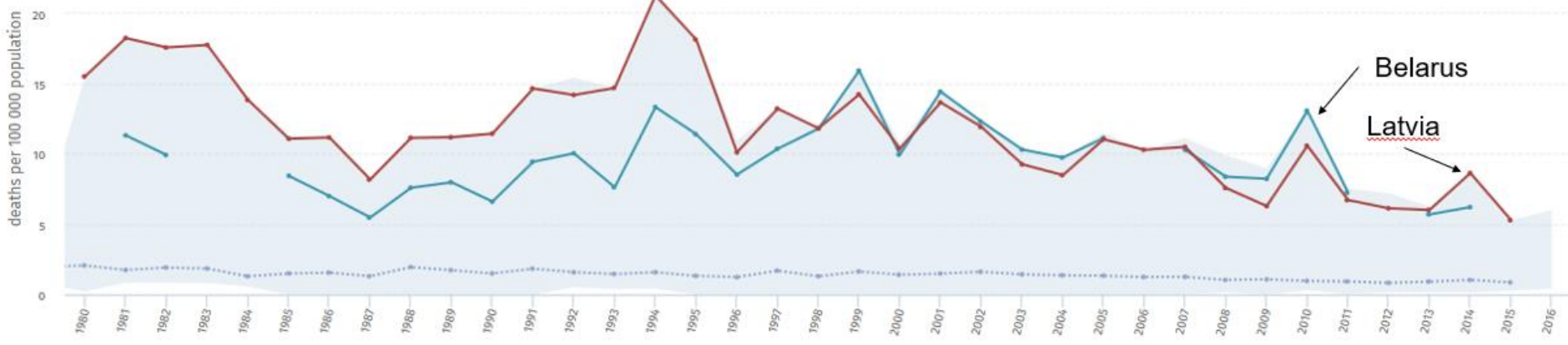
source: WHO Europe



# Actual Data of WHO Europe



Accidental drowning and submersion, per 100 000 population (age-standardized death rate)



Highest SDR:

Country	Latest Data
BLR	6,23
LTU	6,01
LVA	5,30
RUS	4,96
MDA	4,81
KAZ	4,45
UKR	4,42

Lowest SDR:

Country	Latest Data
ALB	0,00
SMR	0,00
DNK	0,34
GBR	0,40
ISR	0,40
AUT	0,42
NLD	0,45

source: WHO Europe





# Definition of Drowning

Update of the Amsterdam definition after WCDP 2013 in Potsdam:

**Drowning** is defined as “the process of experiencing respiratory impairment from submersion/immersion in liquid; outcomes are classified as

- |   |                  |               |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| ● | - death,         | (fatal)       |
| ● | - morbidity and  | } (non-fatal) |
| ● | - no morbidity.” |               |

*The International Lifesaving Federation strongly recommends that all organizations involved in epidemiological research, vital statistical data collection, rescue organizations, the medical community, media, and the lay public should use the definition and nomenclature (terms) as agreed upon by the international community as a basis for useful communication and include it in their glossary.*

source: <http://www.ilsf.org/about/position-statements>



# Fatal Drowning in ICD-10

## W65-W74 accidents with drowning and submersion

- W65 drowning and submersion in a bathtub
- W66 drowning and submersion after a fall into the bathtub
- W67 drowning and submersion in a swimming pool
- W68 drowning and submersion after a fall into a swimming pool
- W69 drowning and submersion in natural waters
- W70 drowning and submersion after a fall into natural waters
- W73 other specified drowning and submersion
- W74 not specified drowning and submersion

usually „Drowning“  
in the statistics,  
= but only ≈50% of  
all fatal cases

## other water related death in the statistics:

- W16 wounded by under water sport and diving into the water without drowning and submersion
- V90 watersport accident with drowning and submersion
- V92 drowning and submersion in water traffic without an accident of a watercraft
- V93 accident on board of a watercraft without an accident of the watercraft and without drowning and submersion
- X36, X38, X39 Collapse of dam or man-made structure; flood; other forces of nature
- X71 suicide by drowning and submersion
- X92 assault by drowning and submersion
- Y21 drowning and submersion, circumstances unknown



# Main Message:

Key Elements: **Prevention** and **Rescue**

**Information** (of the public about the hazards)

**Training** (how to swim and to rescue, how to train this)

**Rescue** (lifeguard services, disaster operation)



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# Good Example: Drowning at Work

- European Law for Occupational Safety and Health
- obligate risk assessment at all workplaces
- obligate risk management by the employers
- ranking of measures:
  - priority of measures for groups
  - technical, organisational, personal measures (TOP)
- programs for individuals under special risks



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# Safe Equipment on the European Market

- European Law for Product Safety (Consumer Protection)
- only safe products on the market
  - leisure boats, sport equipment, PFDs
  - inflatable toys
- obligate risk assessment by the manufacturer
- declaration of remaining risks which could not avoided
- CE-signage of products
- market surveillance by governments
- state authorities to enforce the law



# European and National Law

- regulations for
  - private landowners have to care for hazards
  - municipalities for places with public access
  - operators of designated bathing areas
  - operators of marinas
  - operators of pools
  - hosts and organisers of public events
- authorities responsible for enforcement of the regulations





# Access Management



**Install barriers controlling  
access to water**



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# What else is necessary to prevent drowning?

1. awake a societal awareness of drowning and its risks
2. integration of NGO's familiar with water safety
3. ability to swim in all parts of the population
4. policies and programs for certain target groups
5. efficient system for information, training and rescue



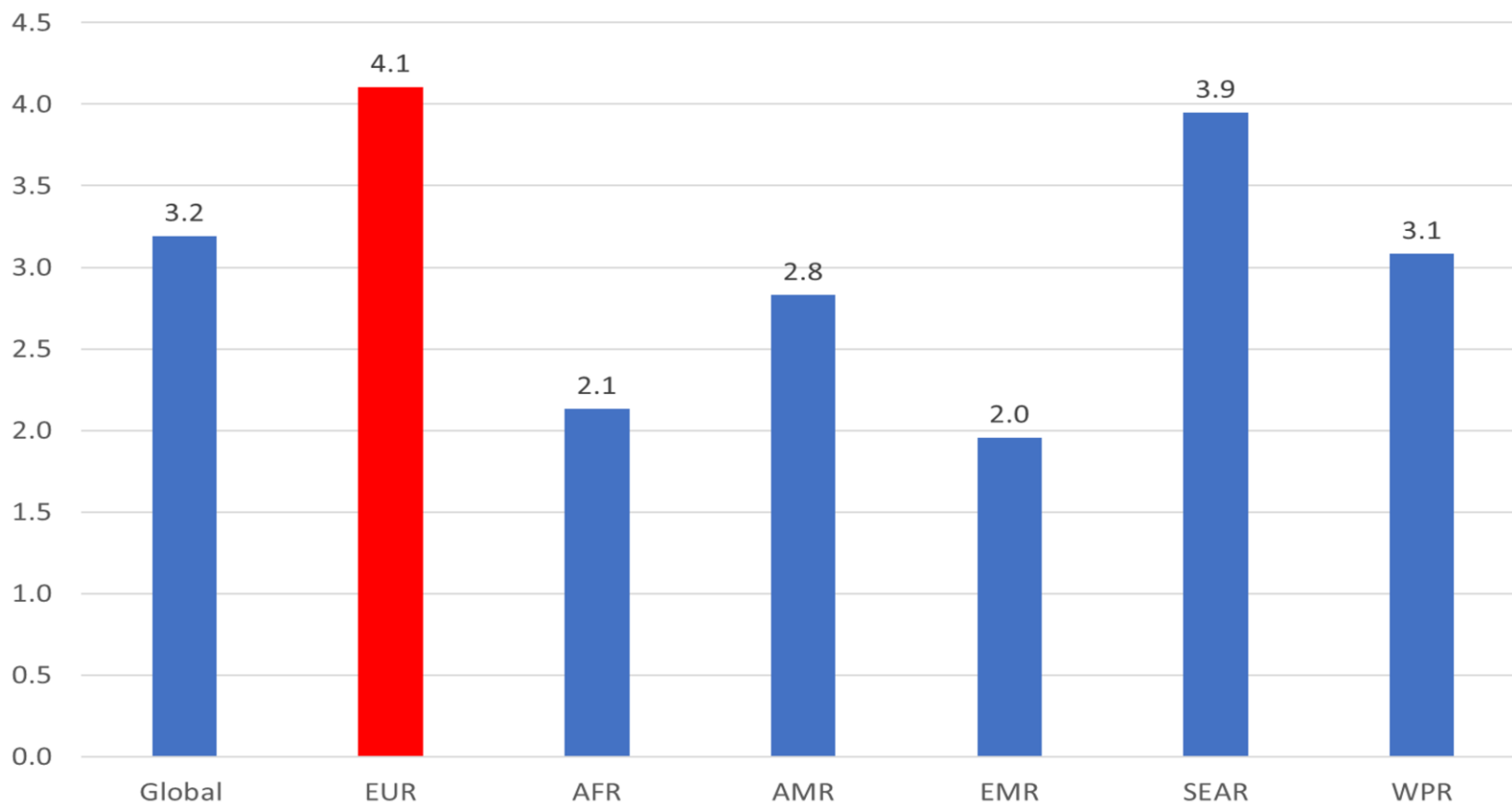
# State of the Art Risk Assessments

- ILSE defined methods for
  - risk assessments of designated bathing areas
  - risk assessments of marinas
  - risk assessments of pools
  - risk assessments for lifesaving championships
  - risk assessment for water sport events
  - risk assessment for mass events
  - risk management for such events
  - risk management and crowd control near waters
  - alcohol management



# Description of the European Situation

Drowning mortality by WHO Region, 30-49 years males, 2019



source: WHO Europe

# Check your behaviour !





# Use Personal Safety Equipment !



**Always wear a life jacket,  
when boating or doing  
other aquatic activities.**



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# Do not swim alone !



**Always swim at  
lifeguarded waterways**



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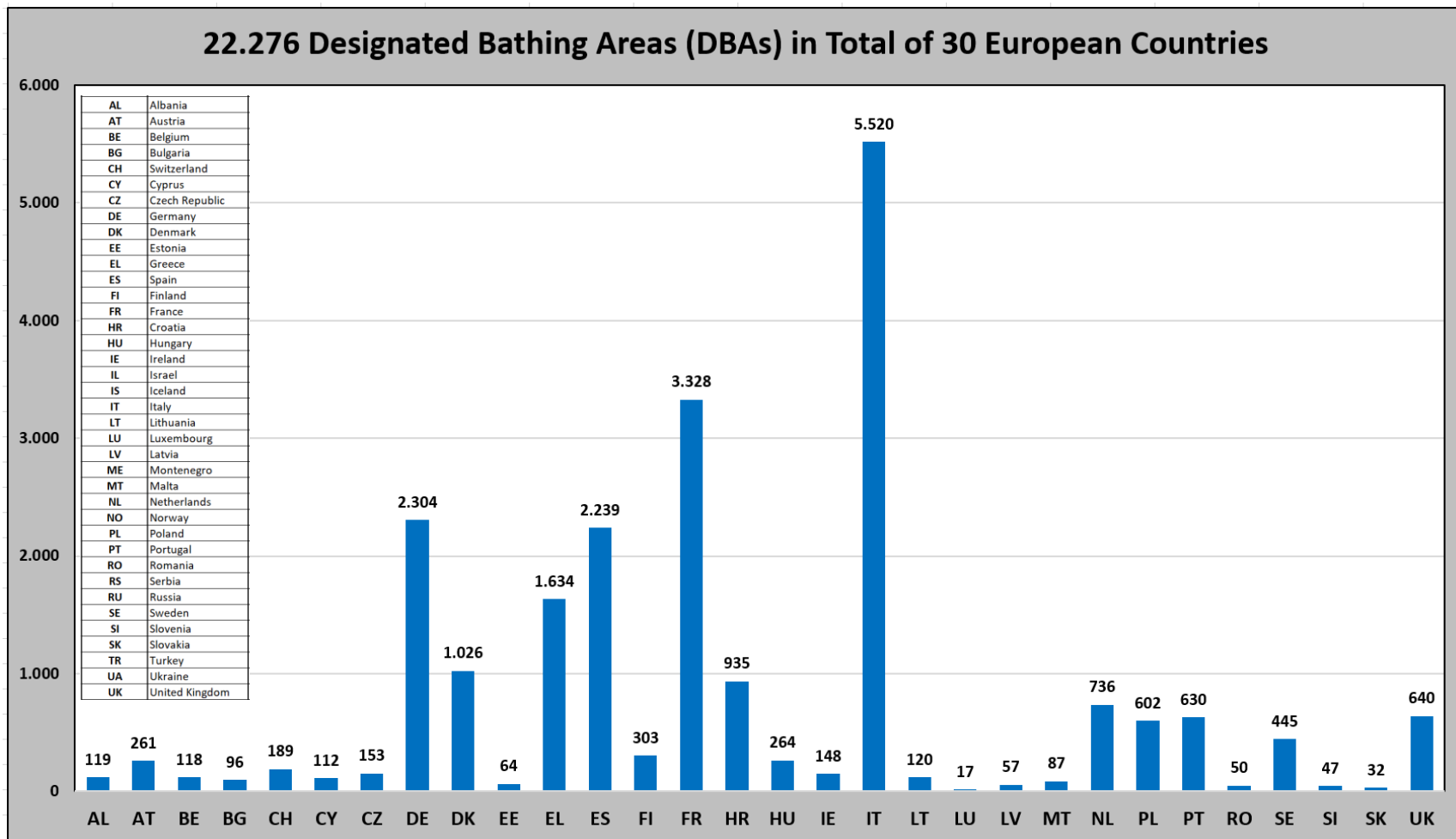
## Drowning in Europe happens in the Spare Time

### Status of Designated Bathing Areas (DBAs) in European Countries

- European Directive 2006/7/EC concerning the Management of Bathing Water Quality
- **22.276 DBAs** (**14.818 DBAs at the coasts**) notified by the governments of the EU Member States
- all are monitored regarding bathing water quality, but not all are lifeguarded beaches
- **3.766 DBAs = 25 %** are Blue Flag Beaches according the criteria of FEE – these are lifeguarded beaches with a risk assessment

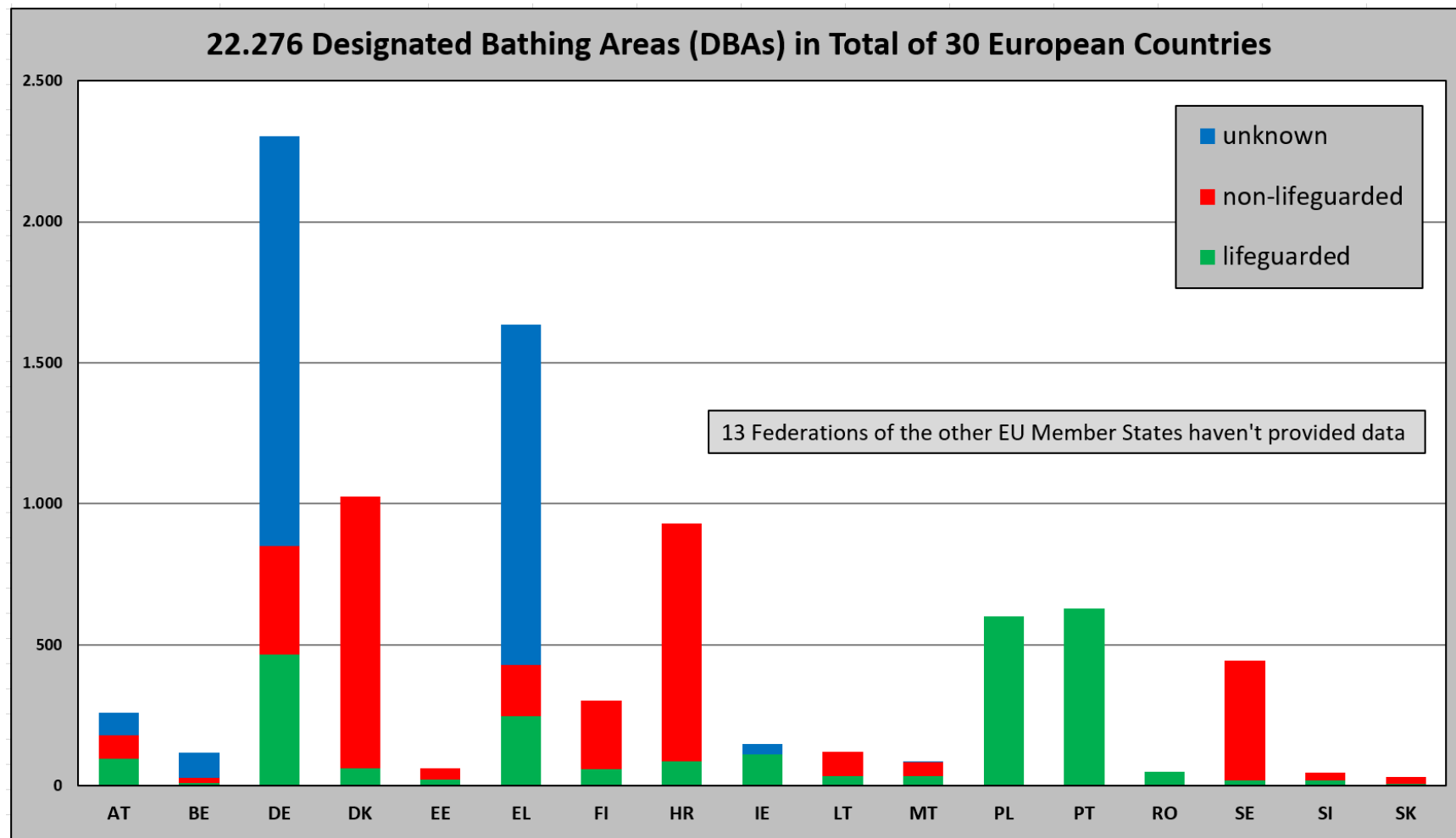


# DBAs monitored for Bathing Water Quality





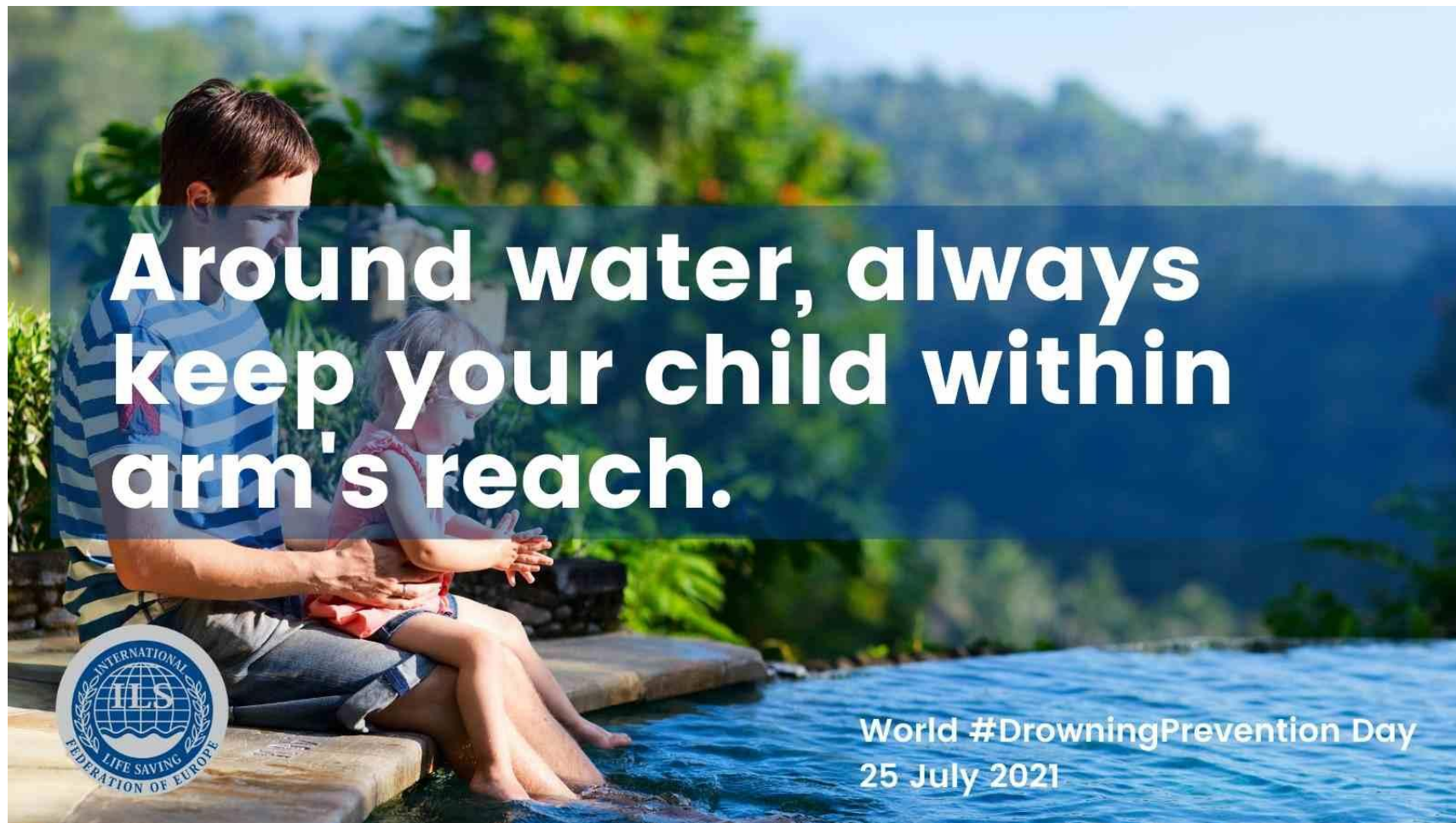
# DBAs monitored for Bathing Water Quality







# Watch your Children !







# Ability to Swim – a Human Right !





# UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/75/273 of April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 on Global Drowning Prevention



Anyone can drown,  
no one should.

Everybody can do something !



# How Prevention Works

## 10 ACTIONS TO PREVENT DROWNING

1



Install barriers controlling access to water

2



Provide safe places away from water for pre-school children

3



Teach children basic swimming, water safety and safe rescue skills

4



Train people in safe rescue and resuscitation

5



Strengthen public awareness and highlight the vulnerability of children



Set and enforce safe boating, shipping and ferry regulations

6



Improve flood risk management locally and nationally

7



Coordinate drowning prevention efforts with other sectors

8



Develop a national water safety plan

9



Address priority research questions with well-designed studies

10

source: WHO





# It is a task for all of us !



**We can all take action to  
end drowning**



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# Be able to rescue !







# Lessons learned

## Our Message:

Every non-swimmer becomes a swimmer !  
Every swimmer becomes a lifesaver !

- **Please support us in our fight against drowning !**
- **Please support us to make Europe safer !**
- **Please support our prevention programs !**

**Thank you for your efforts and attention !**