



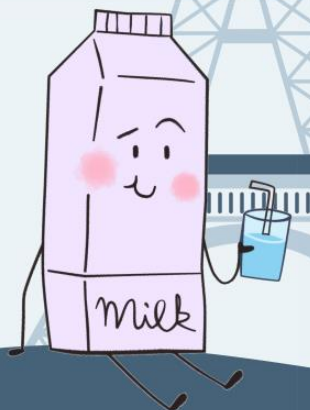
Best-ReMaP
Healthy Food for a Healthy Future

WORK PACKAGE 6

Reducing the marketing of unhealthy foods to children

Maria João Gregório, Directorate-General of Health, Portugal
Ana Contreras Navarro, University College Cork, Ireland
Magdalena Muc, The Open University, UK

18.09.2023



Co-funded by
the Health Programme
of the European Union

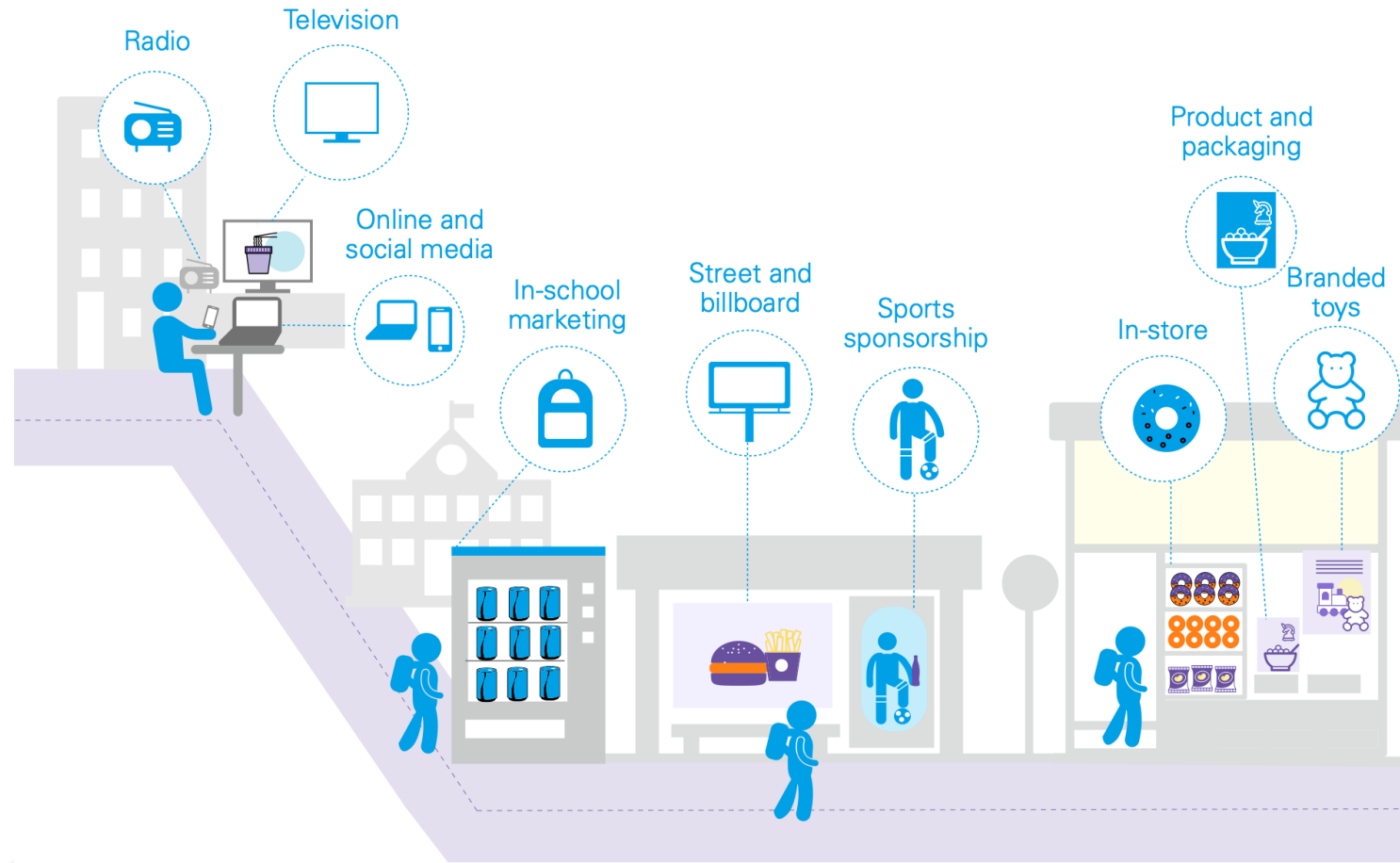


The problem

Childrens' exposure to food marketing



Children are **exposed of a large number of ads and promotion** for unhealthy foods that come from a **variety of sources**



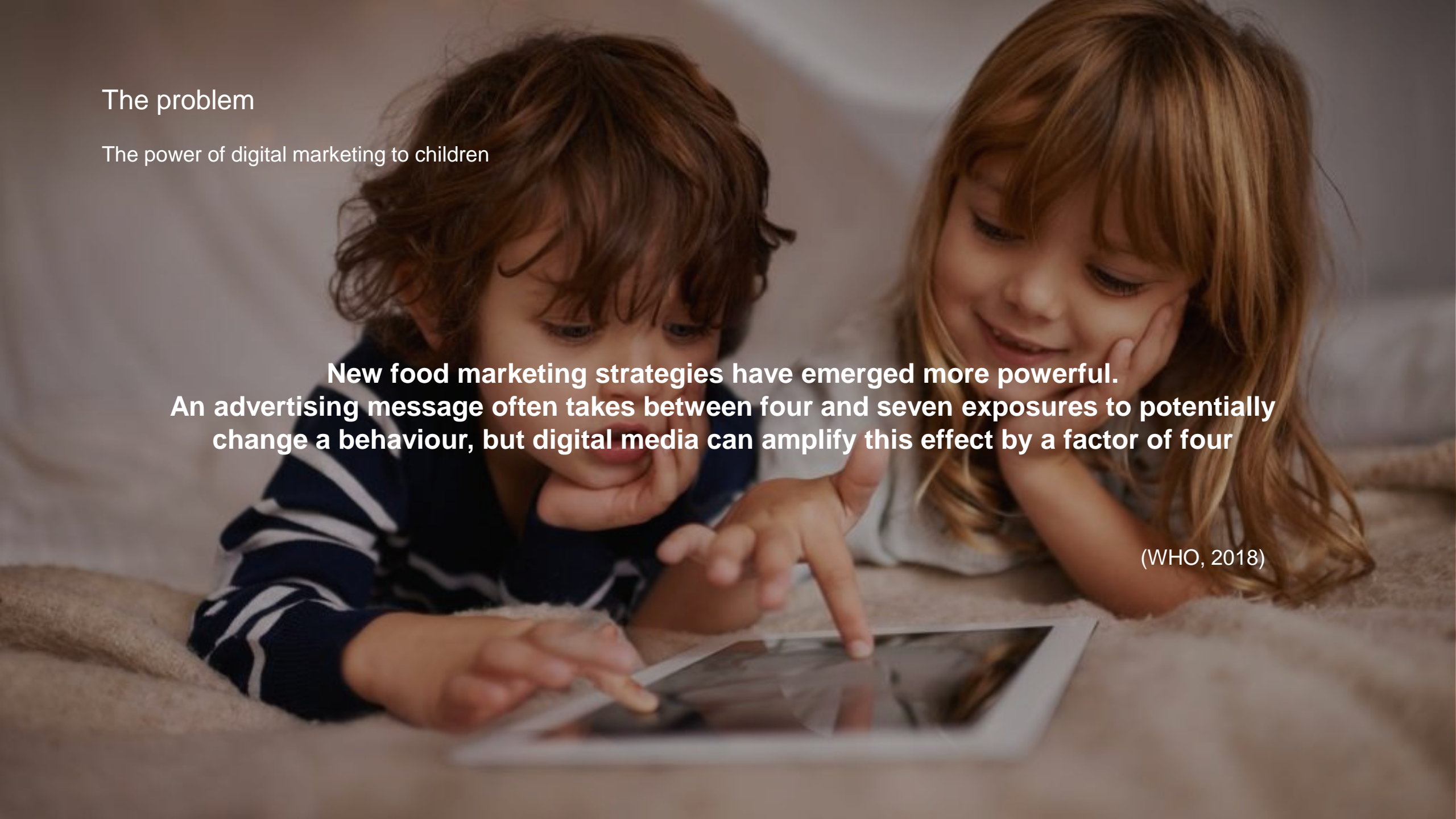
(PHOTO CREDITS: UNICEF/WHO, 2021)

The problem

The power of digital marketing to children

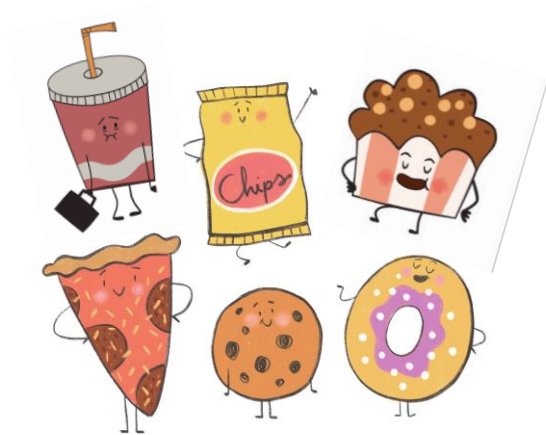
New food marketing strategies have emerged more powerful. An advertising message often takes between four and seven exposures to potentially change a behaviour, but digital media can amplify this effect by a factor of four

(WHO, 2018)



The problem

The majority of food ads promote unhealthy foods



4x more advertisements for food and beverages not permitted to be market according to the WHO NPM

(Kelly et al, Obesity Reviews, 2019)



The problem

Social inequalities in children's exposure to food marketing

More food advertisements and a **higher proportion of unhealthy food advertisements** are found near **schools in lower socioeconomic areas.**

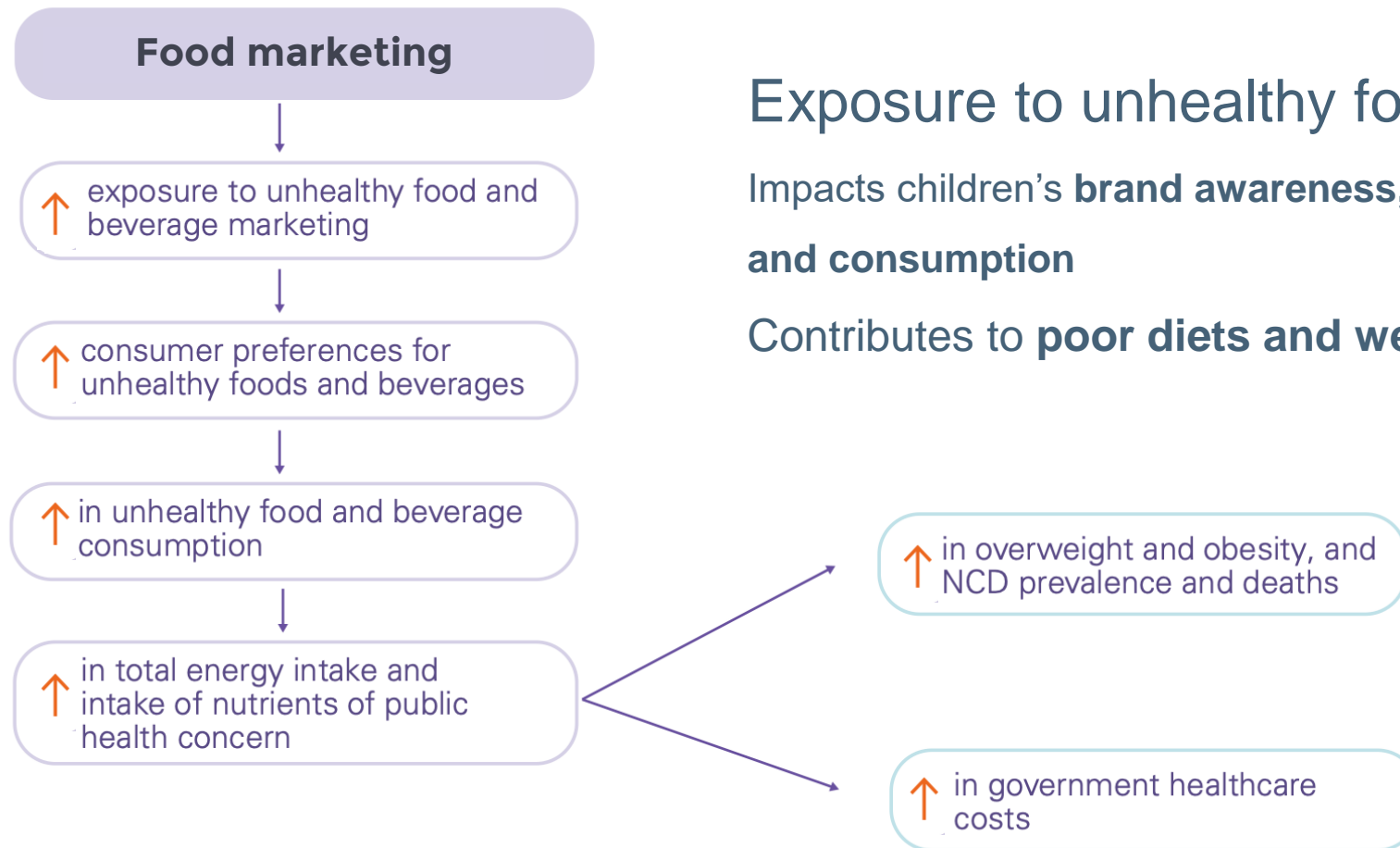
The **highest proportion of advertisements for unhealthy foods in Australian train stations** occurs in **areas with the lowest socioeconomic status.**

(Trapp et al, Health Promotion Journal of Australia, 2021; Sainsbury et al, BMC Public Health, 2017)



The problem

Impact of childrens' exposure to food marketing



Exposure to unhealthy food marketing

Impacts children’s **brand awareness, preferences, requests, purchases and consumption**

Contributes to **poor diets and weight-related outcomes.**

(WHO, 2022; Cairns et al, Appetite, 2013; Boyland et al, The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2016; Boyland et al, JAMA, 2022)

WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

Country Partners

AUSTRIA (BMASGK)

BELGIUM (SCIENSANO)

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (MCA; PHI-FBH; PHI-RS)

BULGARIA (NCPHA)

CROATIA (CIPH)

CYPRUS (MoH CY)

ESTONIA (MoSA; NIHD)

FINLAND (THL)

FRANCE (ANSES; SPF; MoH-FR)

GREECE (ICH)

IRELAND (DoH; CHDR)

LATVIA (CDPC)

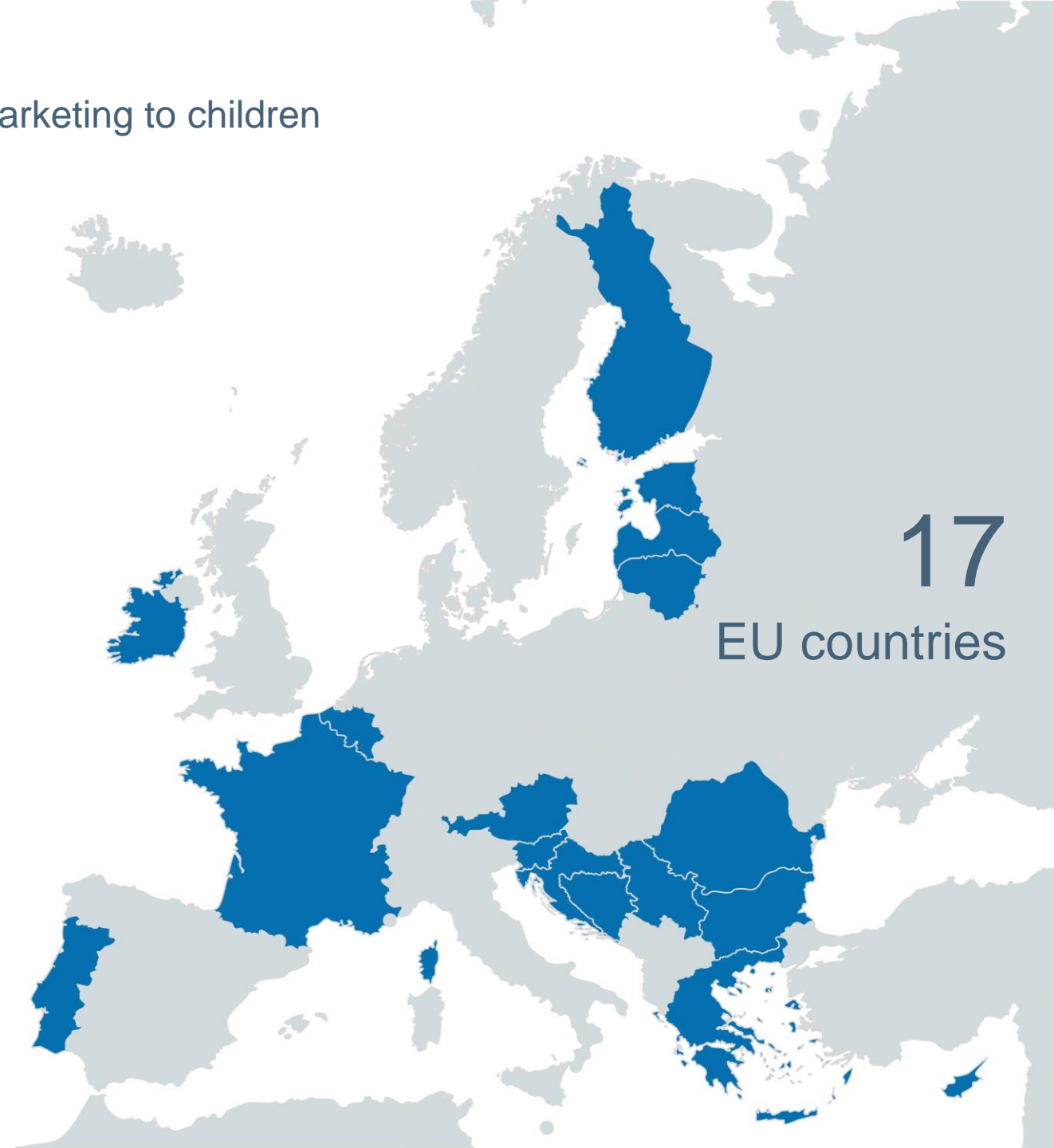
LITHUANIA (LR SAM)

PORTUGAL (DGS; FCNAUP)

ROMANIA (NIPH)

SERBIA (IPHS)

SLOVENIA (NIJZ)



17

EU countries

WP6 of Best-ReMaP

Reducing the marketing of unhealthy foods to children

OBJECTIVE

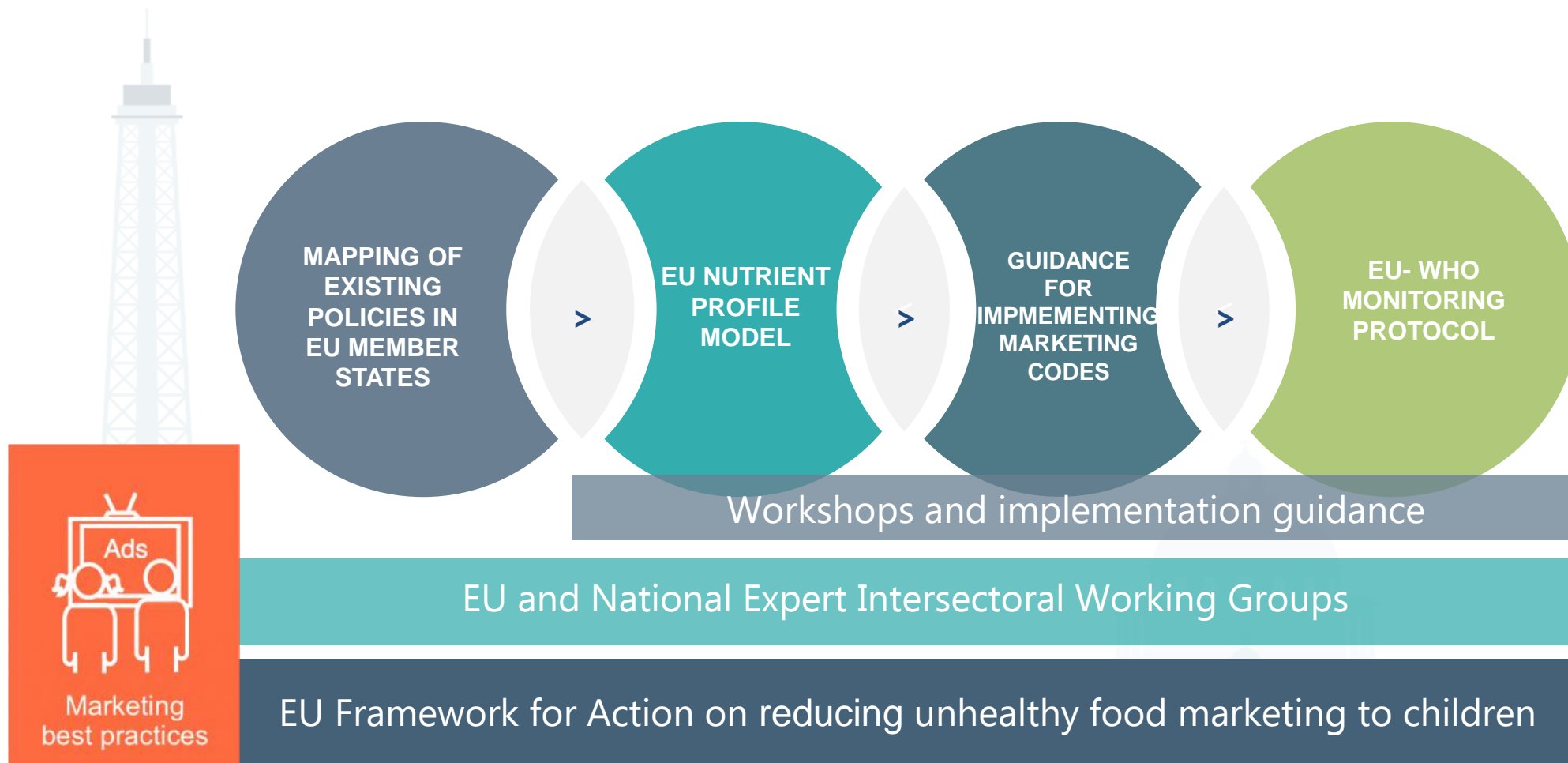
To explore, develop and share, within participating countries, the best practices on how to implement effective policies to reduce marketing of unhealthy food products (food and non-alcoholic beverages) to children (up to 18 years).



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children



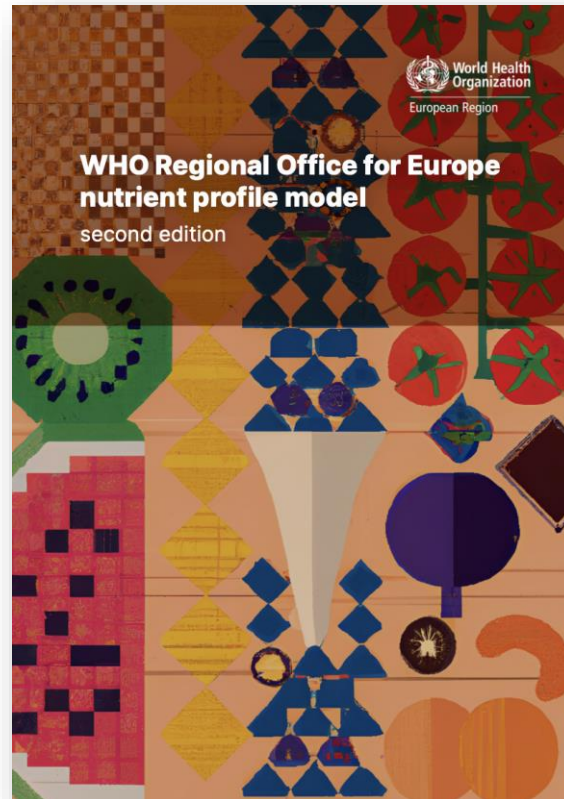
Main actions



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children



WHO Euro Nutrient Profile Model – Second Edition



Category no.	Product category	Examples	Total fat (g)	Saturated fat (g)	Total sugars (g)	Added sugars (g)	Non-sugar sweeteners (g)	Sodium (g)	Energy (kcal)
1	Chocolate and sugar confectionery	Chocolate confectionery (including jellies and boiled sweets); chewing-gum and bubble gum; caramels; liquorice sweets; marzipan sweets				0	0		
	Energy bars, sweet toppings and desserts	Granola and cereal-type bars; Spreadable chocolate and other sweet sandwich toppings; Nut butters (e.g., peanut butter); Honey							
2	Cakes, sweet biscuits and pastries; other sweet bakery wares; and dry mixes for making such	Cookies/sweet biscuits							
	4.4 Energy drinks	Beverages containing caffeine or other stimulants such as guarana, taurine, l-carnitine and vitamins				0	0		
3	Soft drinks, bottled waters and other drinks	Water-based flavoured drinks (carbonated and still); Fruit and vegetable nectars				0	0		
	4.5 Soft drinks, bottled waters and other drinks	Waters (including mineral waters); Coffee, coffee substitutes, tea, herbal infusions and other hot cereal and grain beverages							
4	Savoury snacks	Dairy and plant-based ice creams; Water-based ices (including sorbets); Frozen yoghurts			3	0	0	0.01	
	6 Breakfast cereals	Butter, other fats and vegetable oils						21	0.5
4.1	Juices	Sweet and rasin breads (including brioche)				17	12.5		0.5
	4.2 Dairy milk drinks	Leavened bread (including breads made with all types of cereal flours, e.g., white or whole-grain wheat, spelt and rye); Flatbreads				17	12.5		0.5
4.3	Plant-based milks	Fresh or dried pasta, rice and grains				17	12.5		0.5
	8 Cheese	Fresh and frozen meat, poultry, fish and similar				17			0.5
9	Ready-made and convenience foods and composite dishes	Processed fish and seafood products (including tinned, raw and non-heat-treated, e.g., tinned tuna, smoked fish and fish fingers)				17			0.5
	10 Fresh and frozen fruit, vegetables and legumes	Processed meat, poultry, game and preparations (including tinned, raw, heat- and non-heat-treated, e.g., ham, burgers, sausages and breaded meat products)							Permitted
14	Processed fruit and vegetables	Fresh and frozen fruit, vegetables without additional ingredients (including starch vegetables, roots and tubers)							Permitted
	15 Savoury plant-based foods/meat analogues	Tinned, pickled, dried, battered and breaded vegetables and legumes				3	12.5	0	0.5
17	Sauces, dips and dressings	Tofu and tempeh; Meat analogues (including "veggie" burgers); Stock cubes				17	0	0	0.5
	19	Cooking sauces (including pasta sauce); Dips and dipping sauces; Salad dressings; Condiments (including tomato ketchup)				17	0	0	0.5

Marketing is prohibited of any product, regardless of category, that contains > 1 g per 100 g total fat in the form of industrially produced trans fatty acids.

Published in March 2023

WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children



WHO Euro Nutrient Profile Model – Second Edition

Workshop of implementation

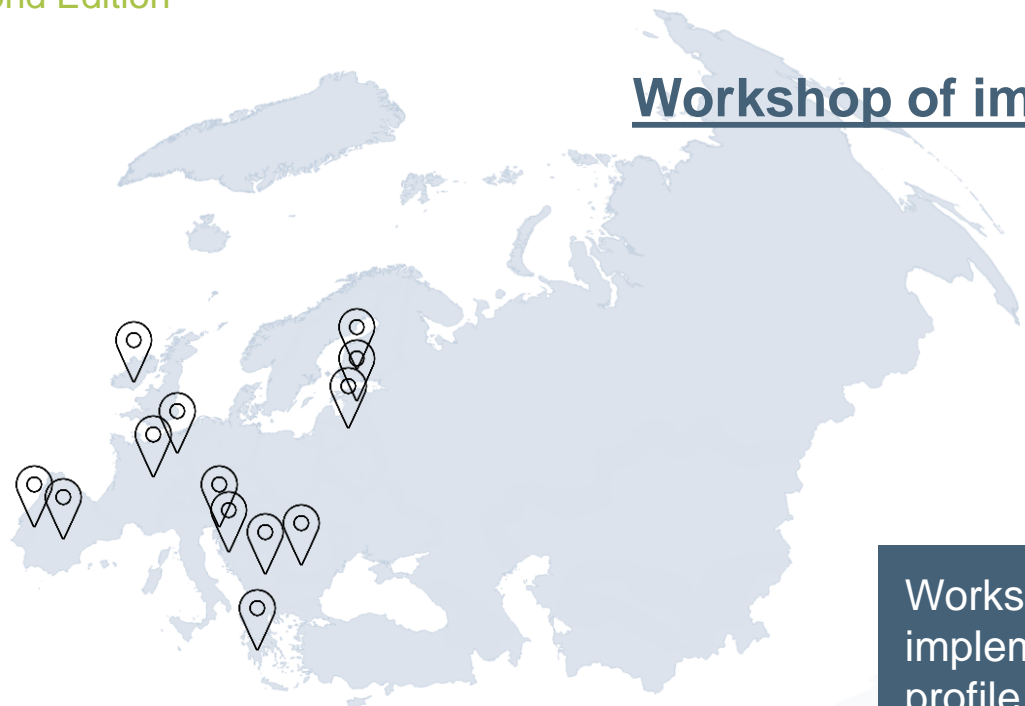
Testing



March - June 2022

Belgium
Croatia
Estonia
Finland
France
Greece
Ireland

Latvia
Portugal
Romania
Serbia
Slovenia
Spain



Workshop on how to use, adapt and implement the EU harmonised nutrient profile model



database with a total of **108 578 products**



Best-ReMaP
Healthy Food for a Healthy Future



World Health Organization
European Region

WP6 Framework for action

How EU and its Member States can protect children from harmful food marketing



01 **TIGHTEN FOOD MARKETING RESTRICTIONS**
Adopt **government-led regulatory approaches**; develop a **new legal framework at EU level**; restrict marketing of unhealthy foods across **marketing types and techniques and marketing communication channels**; and raise the age threshold to **18 years old**, following the **technical guidance for codes of practice and the legal framework for children's protection**.

02 **ENGAGE, MOBILIZE AND EMPOWER ALL STAKEHOLDERS**
Involve and empower different **stakeholders** (government sector, professionals, civil society, the private sector), as well as **parents/caregivers and youth**. Increase **literacy for all stakeholders on food marketing impact** to facilitate this engagement.

03 **USE EVIDENCE TO DEFINE UNHEALTHY FOOD PRODUCTS**
Use an **evidence-based and strict NPM to define unhealthy products**, based on the WHO Europe Nutrient Profile Model (2023).

04 **BE PREPARED TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES**
Seek support from other countries and health organizations (such as WHO).

STRATEGY, LANDSCAPE AND LEGISLATION

NETWORKING

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACHES AND TOOLS

GUIDANCE FOR FUTURE ACTION


05 **IMPLEMENT A CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**
Recognize that food marketing to children is a **major children's right concern - legal framework for children's protection**.

06 **ENCOURAGE COOPERATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING**
Use established networks (WHO European Action Network on Reducing Marketing Pressure to Children and the EU Expert Group) to promote MS cooperation, knowledge and experience exchange.

07 **DEVELOP NEW TOOLS AND DATA**
Food-branded databases (FABLE) and reliable and validated automated tools for marketing monitoring are needed to support policies restricting food marketing to children.

08 **DEFINE AND ACTIVELY SUPPORT MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT**
A **comprehensive, regular, transparent monitoring programme (using the EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol)** in all MS and ensure adequate resources for its implementation including regular updates. **Regular annual monitoring with obligatory reporting to the national parliaments and biannual to the EU Parliament, with provided budget in MSs.**

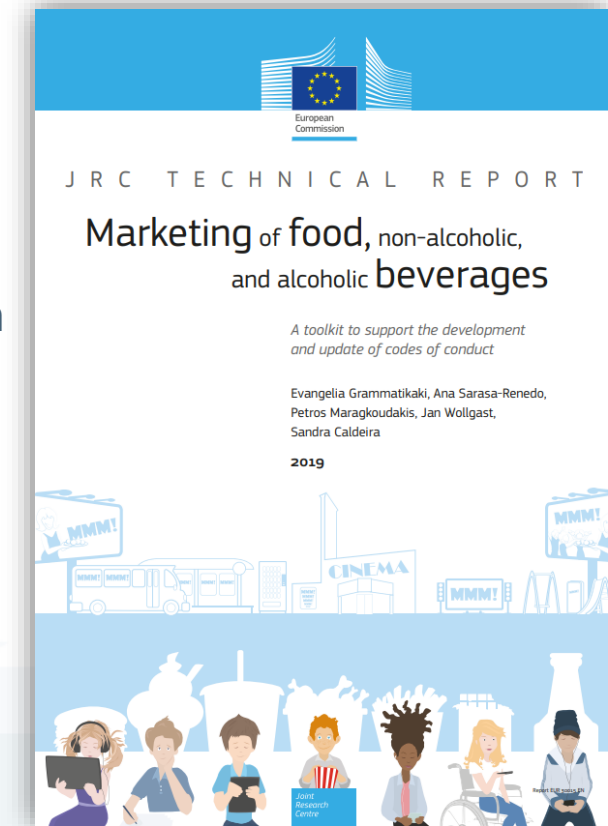
WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

Best-ReMaP Guidance for Implementing of Marketing Codes



Best ReMaP Guidance for Implementation of Marketing Codes

- Marketing codes from IE, PT, SL, analysed.
- Implementation workshop organised.
- Technical guidance report delivered.
- Marketing codes implemented in country partners compared with JRC Marketing Toolkit/Checklist.
- Review of the literature.



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children



Workshop and implementation guidance

Workshop and Implementation Guidance

In March 2022, a workshop with 12 EU MS was organised online



Learned experiences shared by Irish advertising regulators:

- **Engage** with public health bodies.
- **Level** the knowledge base of experts.
- **Collaborate** with experienced policy-makers in similar areas, e.g., tobacco regulators.



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children



Workshop and implementation guidance

Workshop and Implementation Guidance

A technical guidance for implementing food marketing codes report was developed.

Ireland

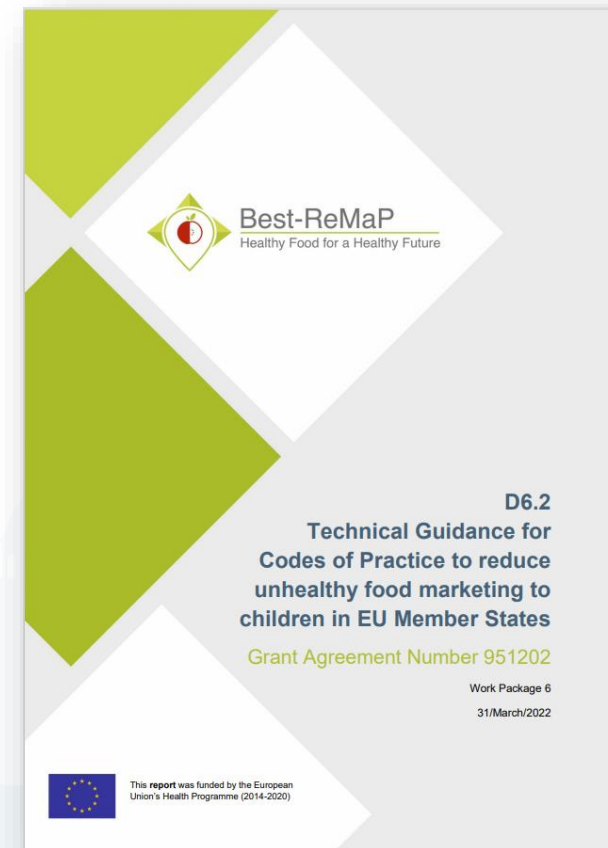
- Children's Commercial Communications Code (BAI 2013)
- Code of Standards for Advertising and Marketing Communications (ASAI 2016)

Portugal

- Law No 30/2019, of 23 Abril

Slovenia

- Slovenian Advertising Code (Slovenian Advertising Chamber 2011)



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children



Progress in development or update of codes

Progress in development or update of codes

1st National stakeholder meeting:



Co-regulation Agreement

Croatia

Code of conduct: Responsible advertising regarding food and drink in children's programmes. Advertising targeted at children.

Code of conduct states that inappropriate commercial communications that feature food and drink are:

- 2.2.1. commercial communications that feature food or drink whose content of fat, including saturated fatty acids, sugar, including added sugar, and/or salt per 100 grams or millilitres exceeds the maximum content of the relevant category, as set out in Annex 1 of the code of conduct;
- commercial communications promoting or condoning incorrect eating habits and unhealthy lifestyles, i.e. commercial communications that:
 - are prohibited under the Advertising Act, such as those that directly incite children to enter into transactions independently or exploit their trust in their parents, teachers or other persons;
 - encourage excessive food consumption;
 - use promotional offers irresponsibly;
 - use aggressive or misleading commercial practices, such as those that are misleading or ambiguous in their descriptions of the nutritional value of the product;
 - use characters or public figures popular among children that are trademark protected in fields other than food or drink.

Annex 1 mentioned in Code of Conduct is Nutrient Profile Model.

Full Code of Conduct available in Estonian: <https://ringhaaling.ee/seadused-juhendid/>



Estonia



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill

Ireland

WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol



The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol

Comprehensive, coordinated, replicable and regular monitoring programme implemented in all Member States' using the EU-wide Monitoring Protocol

- **Review** of existing protocols
- Knowledge and information sharing **workshop**
- **Consultations** with experts including YP
- **Draft** of the EU-WHO protocol
- **Piloting** the EU-WHO protocol

WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol



The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol – the scope

	Marketing Channel/ element	Protocol
Protocols	Internet - potential exposure (not working with children)	WHO P&T + BRM feedback
	Internet - actual exposure (working with children)	WHO CLICK+ BRM feedback
	TV	WHO P&T + BRM feedback
	Outdoor	Best-ReMaP
	Media and brands survey	Best-ReMaP
Other resources	Engaging children (involving children and young people, child's rights and ethics, recruitment and retainment, dissemination)	Best-ReMaP
	Resource planning (research question, time, skills, financial etc.)	Best-ReMaP




WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol

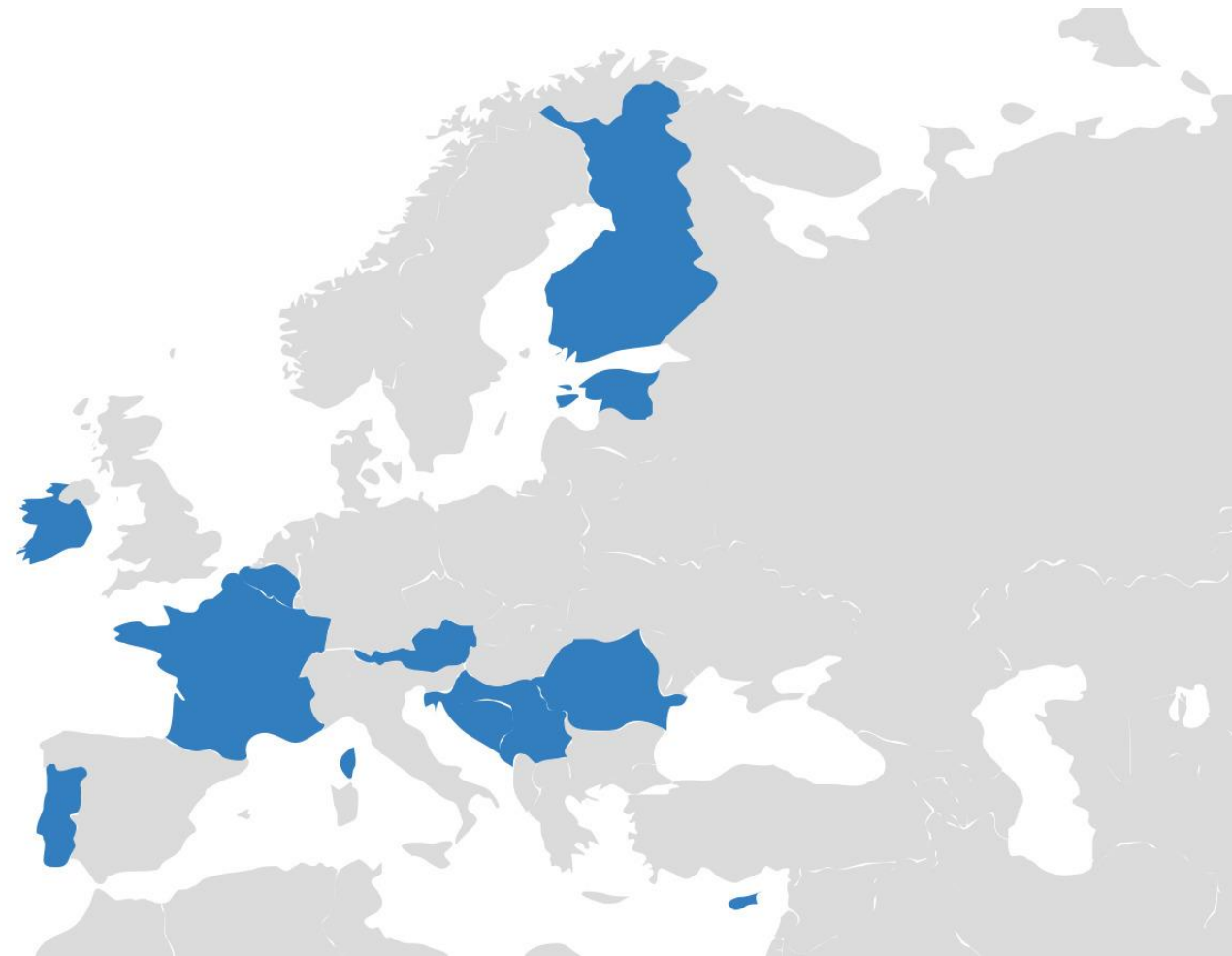


The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol

Piloting

 **25** projects
14 countries

12 digital media
3 TV
5 Outdoors
5 media and brands survey



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol



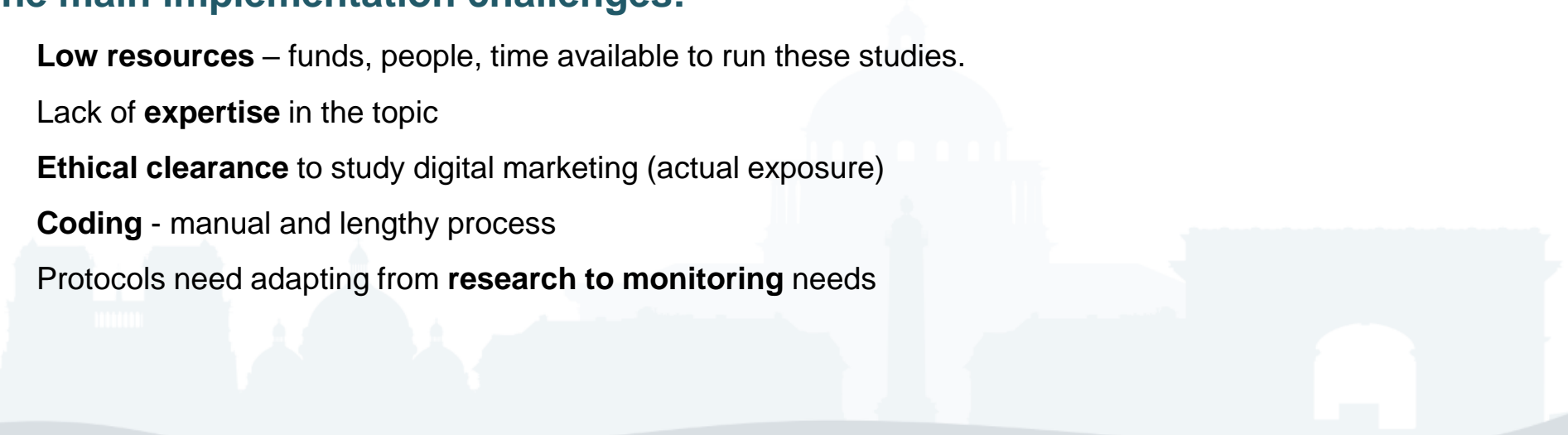
The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol

What have we learned?

EU-WHO monitoring protocols were useful to effectively monitor unhealthy food marketing

The main implementation challenges:

- **Low resources** – funds, people, time available to run these studies.
- Lack of **expertise** in the topic
- **Ethical clearance** to study digital marketing (actual exposure)
- **Coding** - manual and lengthy process
- Protocols need adapting from **research to monitoring** needs



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

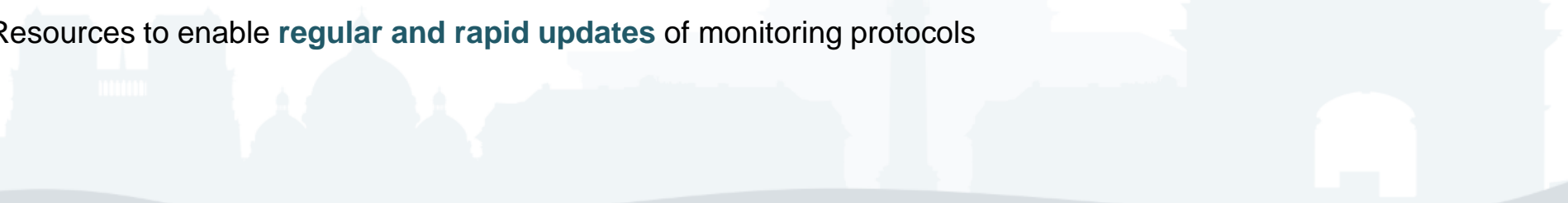
The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol



The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol

Support needed

- More **resources** (both funding and human resources)
- A specific, adequately funded **knowledge and experience exchange platform**,
- EU-harmonised and MS-specific **documentation on GDPR**
- Reliable, validated **tools that automate** aspects of monitoring
- Critical health and media **literacies at all levels** – (including policymakers, ministries, NGOs, researchers, governments, MEPs, and more)
- **IT support**
- **Governmental support**
- Resources to enable **regular and rapid updates** of monitoring protocols



WP6 – Best practices in reducing unhealthy food marketing to children

The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol



The EU-WHO Monitoring Protocol



<https://bestremap.eu/results/>



Best-ReMaP
Healthy Food for a Healthy Future

Thank you for your attention!

Maria João Gregório

mariajoaobg@dgs.min-saude.pt
www.alimentacaosaudavel.dgs.pt
+351916284196

Joint Action on implementation of validated best practices in nutrition
(Reformulation, Marketing and Public Procurement)



Co-funded by
the Health Programme
of the European Union