



# EU Initiatives

## - Situation in the EU

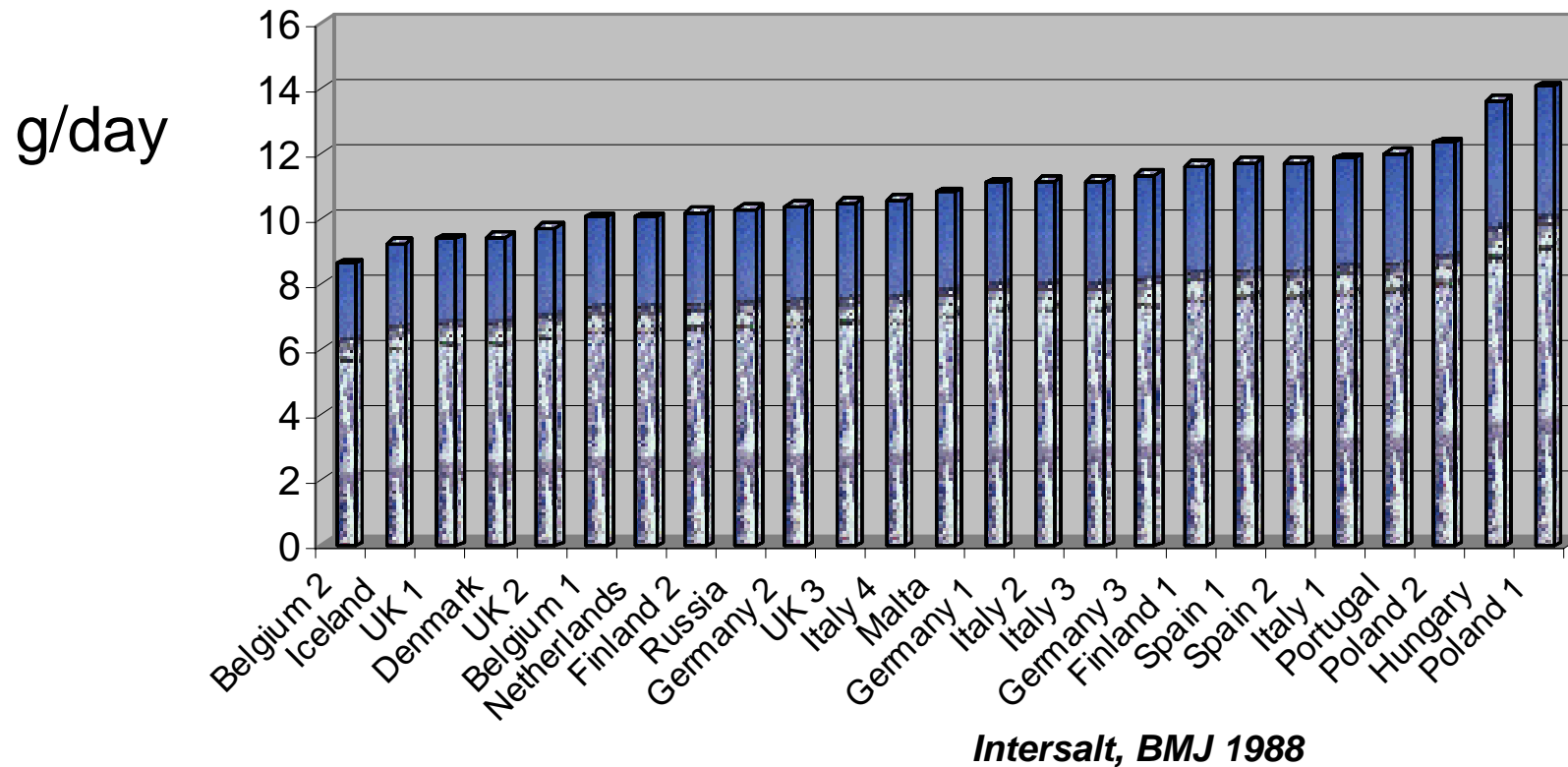
## - Non-legislative initiatives

Stephanie Bodenbach  
European Commission,  
Directorate General Health and Consumers  
Food law, nutrition and labelling

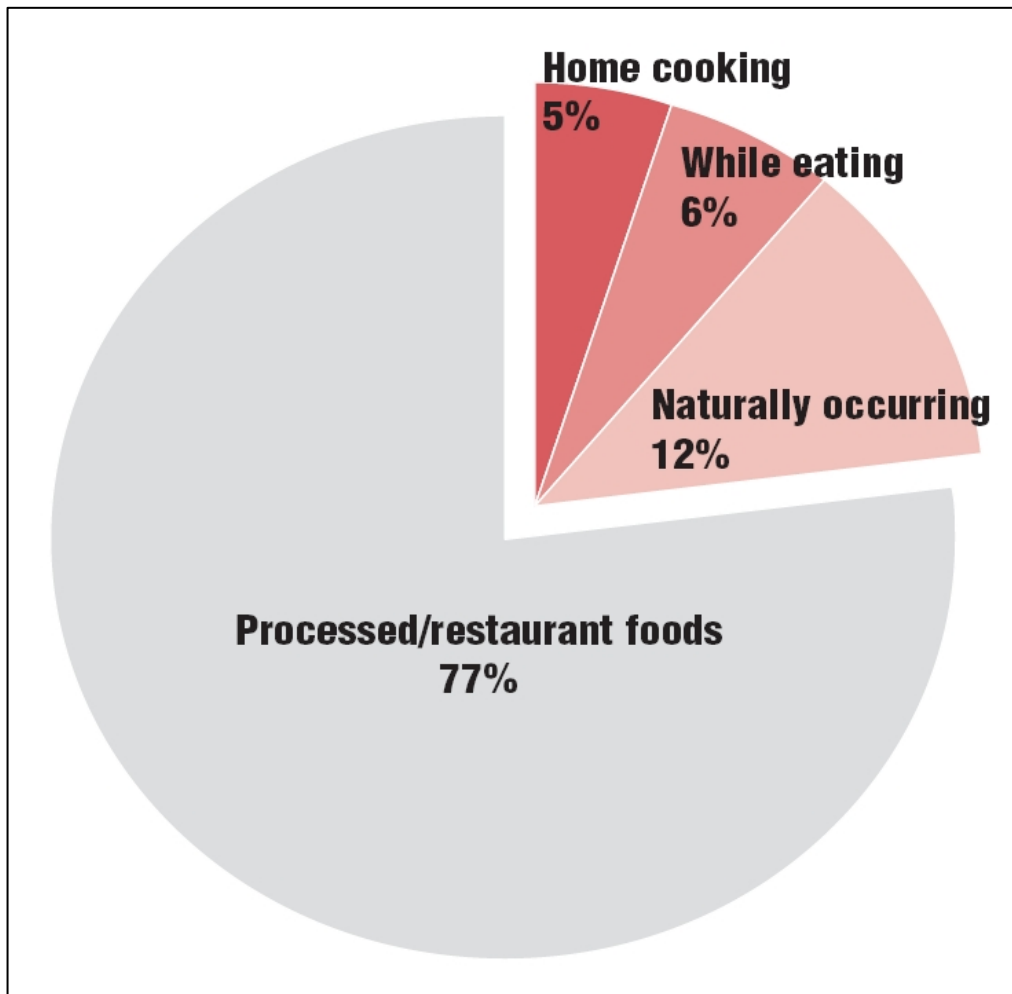
III Convención NAOS  
Madrid, March 12th, 2009

# Salt Consumption in Europe

1985-87 Intersalt study



# Sources of Sodium in the Diet





## European Recommendations on Dietary Salt Reduction: Quantitative Targets & Goals

<b>Recommended target</b>	<b>Countries</b>
<b>4g per day</b>	Republic of Ireland (advised target for adults)
<b>5g or less per day</b>	WHO; Turkey; Estonia; Spain
<b>6g or less per day</b>	UK; Germany; Austria; Switzerland; Republic of Ireland (achievable target for adults); Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Finland (all for women); Italy; Portugal; Bulgaria; Croatia; Macedonia; Poland (1 teaspoonful)
<b>7g per day</b>	Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Finland (all for men)
<b>8g or less per day</b>	France
<b>8.75g per day</b>	Belgium
<b>9g per day</b>	Netherlands

# European Initiatives

## ■ Non-legislative initiatives

### ■ health: limited EU competence

- White Paper on a Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and obesity related health issues, May 07

## (Legislative initiatives

### ■ food law EU competence

- Nutrition and health claims / nutrient profiles
- Nutrition labelling on foods)

## White Paper: High Level Group

- Commission will set up **High Level Group** focused nutrition & physical activity related health issues
  - liaison with governments
  - effective exchange of best practice, policy ideas
  - liaison with EU Platform:
    - fast communication
    - rapid exchange & uptake of public-private partnership approaches

# White Paper: Reformulation

- Interest in composition of foods → reformulation to make diets healthier
- Commission to facilitate roll out of **salt reformulation campaigns** (evidence of effectiveness)

## Context of Salt Reduction in EU

- **07 Council welcomed** White Paper proposal: Member States to consider **salt reduction as first priority** for discussion in High Levels Group
- **High Level Group:** decision to work together on salt reformulation
- **2 salt expert meetings** in 08:  
**EU Framework for National Salt Initiatives**





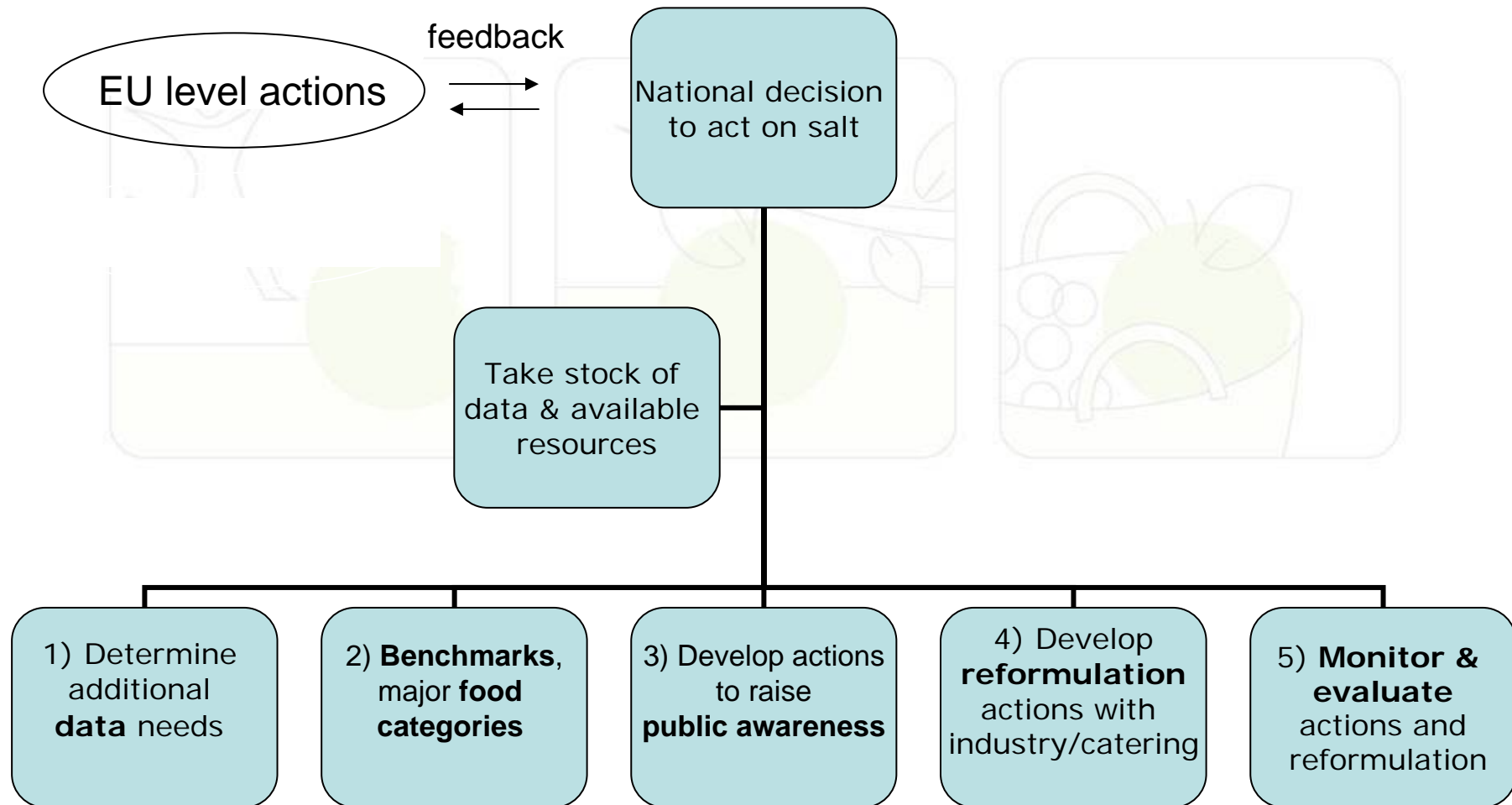
# Why a European framework?

- **Common vision** for a general European approach towards salt reduction
- Overall goal: contribute towards reduced salt intake at population level to achieve the national or WHO recommendations
- **Voluntary** participation of Member States
- **Supporting** and reinforcing **national plans**
  - **comparable progress** across EU
  - **maintain flexibility** for Member States
  - **coordinated messages** for EU food industry
  - **generate momentum** & measurable action<sup>9</sup>

# General principles

- **5 key elements**
- common **minimum benchmarks**
- shared learning, building on experience of States
- **Involving stakeholders:** at EU and national level
- **Maximising impact**
  - food manufacturers should prioritise products with largest market share.
  - salt reduction across full product range, premium to economy
    - ➔ benefit for all population groups

# 5 Key Elements: Simultaneous and Interconnected Strands of National Action



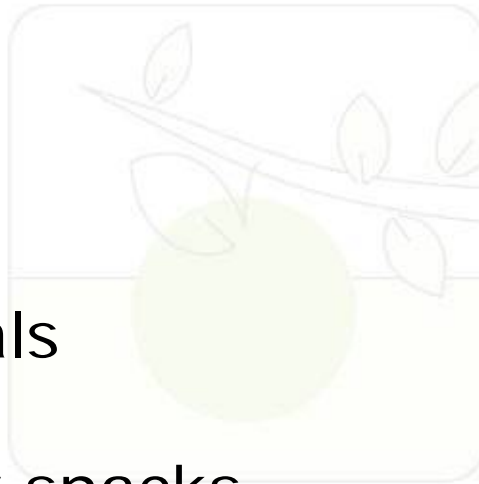


# EU Benchmarks & Food Categories

- common min. European benchmark  
**16 % salt reduction over 4 years**  
applicable to all products, restaurants, catering
- **'salt'** stands for the correct term 'sodium'  
(sodium x 2.5 = salt equivalent amounts)
- **Baseline: 2008** salt levels
- **12 categories of food** priorities for action  
States select **min. 5 categories** for national plan

# Priority: 12 Categories of Food

- Bread
- Meat products
- Cheeses
- Ready meals
- Soups
- Breakfast cereals
- Fish products
- Crisps, savoury snacks
- Catering meals
- Restaurant meals
- Sauces, condiments and spices
- Potato products



# EU Benchmarks & Food Categories

- Benchmarks for food categories that commonly represent major sources of salt in average diets

- **Bread**

**16 % in 4 years**

- **Ready meals**

**16 % in 4 years**

- **Meat products**

**16 % in 4 years**

*Acknowledging that sub-categories of meat may have different benchmarks, including reducing variations between similar products*

- **Cheeses**

**16 % in 4 years**

*Acknowledging that sub-categories of cheese may have different benchmarks, including reducing variations between similar products*

- Member States may set individual benchmarks particularly for sub-categories of bread/meat/cheese

## Lowest Possible Salt Levels

- identify **lowest achievable salt levels at EU level** ('best in class'), at least for 4 food categories **revised** over time
- Member States may identify '*best in class*' products within further food categories
- Food producers are encouraged to move towards the '*best in class*' levels for all categories of food
- Reaching '*best in class*' salt level is sufficient
- Exceeding 16 % target or improving the '*best in class*' levels is strongly encouraged

# Raising Public Awareness

- **National government led action**
- Creates buy in from consumers, supports reformulation action
- Possible partnership with NGOs, industry, media, health sector, national platforms



# Monitoring

- Monitor
  - population salt intake
  - reformulation progress towards benchmarks
  - effectiveness of actions to raise public awareness
- **Member States responsibility,** various approaches possible, chosen according to national situation, options include:
  - Self reporting framework by industry
  - Monitoring salt content of foods, intake data
  - Awareness of consumers / behavioural change in consumers
  - Sodium excretion surveys

# Timeframe

- Achieve broad **endorsement of vision** with federations for locally produced products: by **end of 2008**
- Member States have **monitoring** approach in place by **end of 2008**  
Salt Action Network will publish standard framework with min. data set for information collection & monitoring actions
- **Public awareness** initiatives implemented by **end of 2009**
- First progress / **monitoring reports** by **end of 2009**

# Summary National Salt Initiatives I

- Member States reported back on a template sent out in summer 08
- 27 countries responded  
(25 Member States + Norway + Switzerland)

## Summary National Salt Initiatives II

- Most initiatives are **part of a broader program**

- Most initiatives include as elements:

awareness raising 22

reformulation 21

monitoring 20

data collection 19

benchmarks/food categories 16

- **9 initiatives** could be considered as **ongoing**,  
**14 initiatives** are **planned or just started**,  
a few countries still consider what to do

- **Different baselines** of salt levels

- **9 initiatives** plan reductions over **4 years**,  
**7** chose to aim for **16% reduction**

# Summary National Salt Initiatives III

- Most initiatives focus on food categories:

<b>bread</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>cheeses</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>meat products</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ready meals</b>	<b>13</b>

- Approach to industry:

ask <b>industry</b> to submit plans	17
or direct agreements	16
<b>sectors</b> are targeted	22
or individual companies	11

- Monitoring:

<b>salt content in food</b>	18
<b>awareness of consumers</b>	13
<b>Na excretion</b> surveys	12
<b>industry self-reporting</b>	11



Thank you !