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The Implementation of HEPA Policy in Lithuania: Challenges and Opportunities

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NACIONALINĖ SVEIKATOS TARYBA

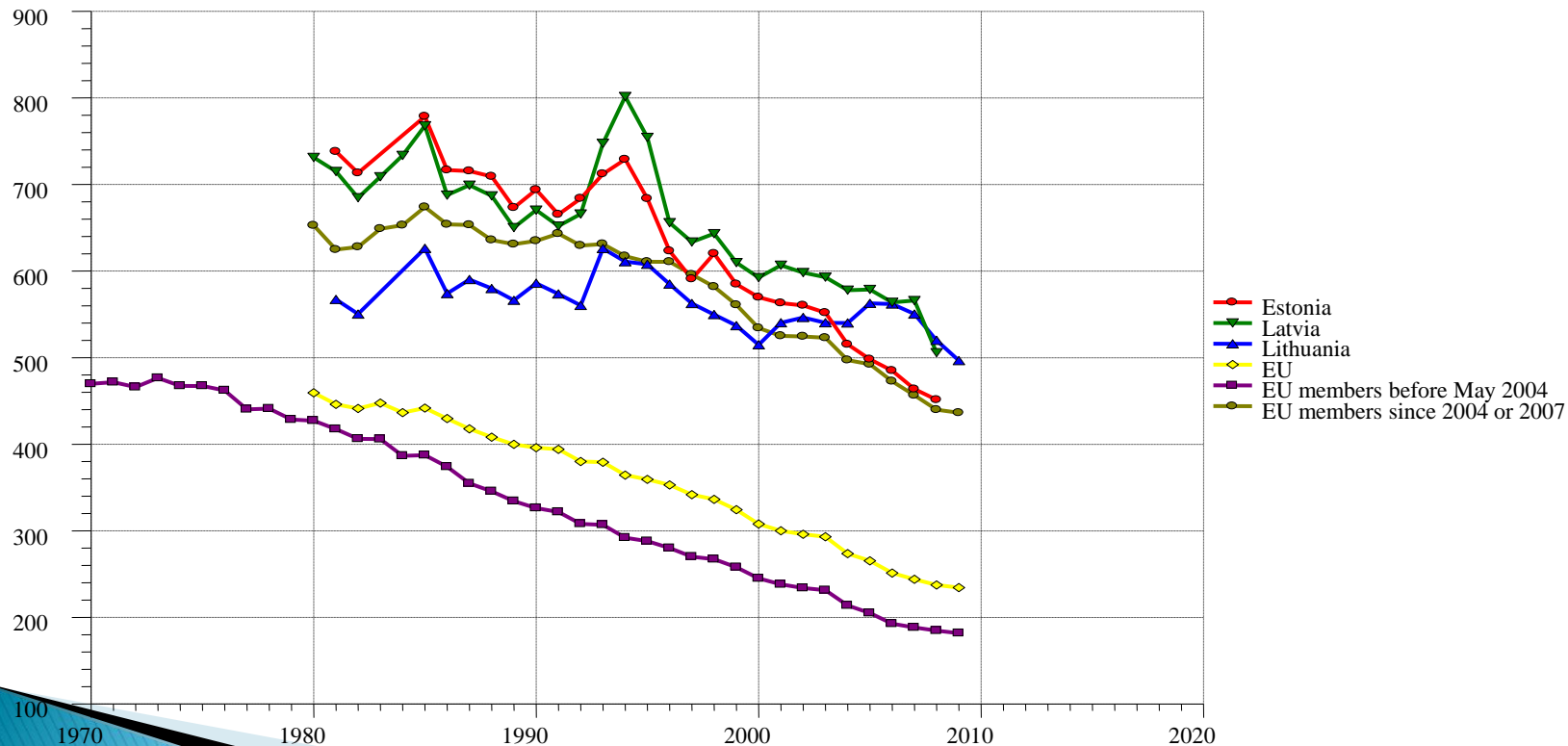
Content of Presentation

- ▶ Where we are?
 - Health situation in Lithuania related to insufficient physical activity
 - Overview of PA level in Lithuania
- ▶ What steps to take and how?
 - European actions in promoting HEPA
 - Lithuania's response to EU initiatives for increasing physical activity (Legislation and policy)
 - Situation after the adoption of the Sport Development
 - High-level sport *vs* physical activity
 - *Setting priorities and plan of actions*
- ▶ What's next? Hopes for the future

▶ Cardiovascular disease (CVD) related morbidity and mortality:

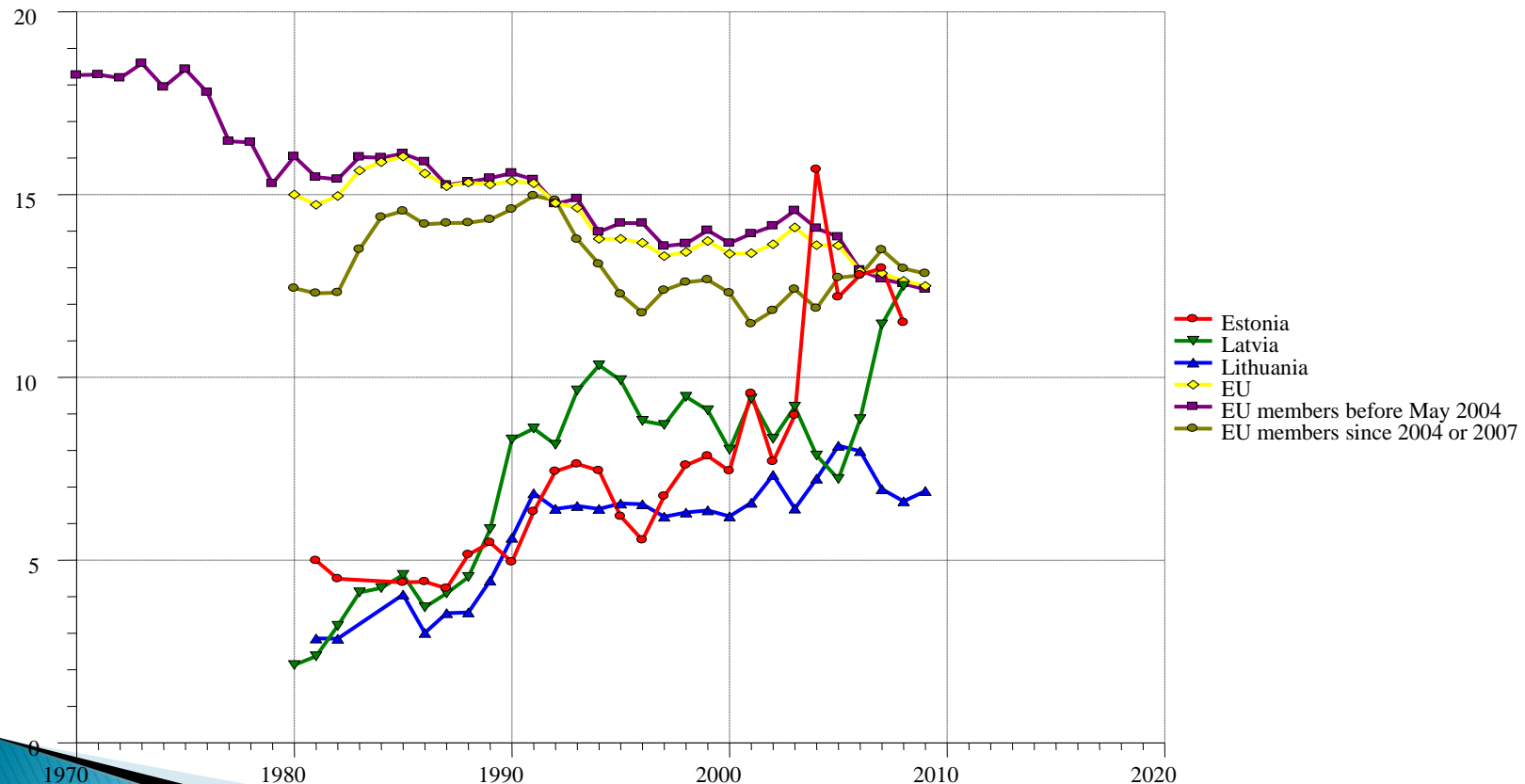
- The first place among causes of death since cardiovascular disease causes nearly half of all deaths in the EU, namely 42%

Age-standardized death rate, CVD per 100.000

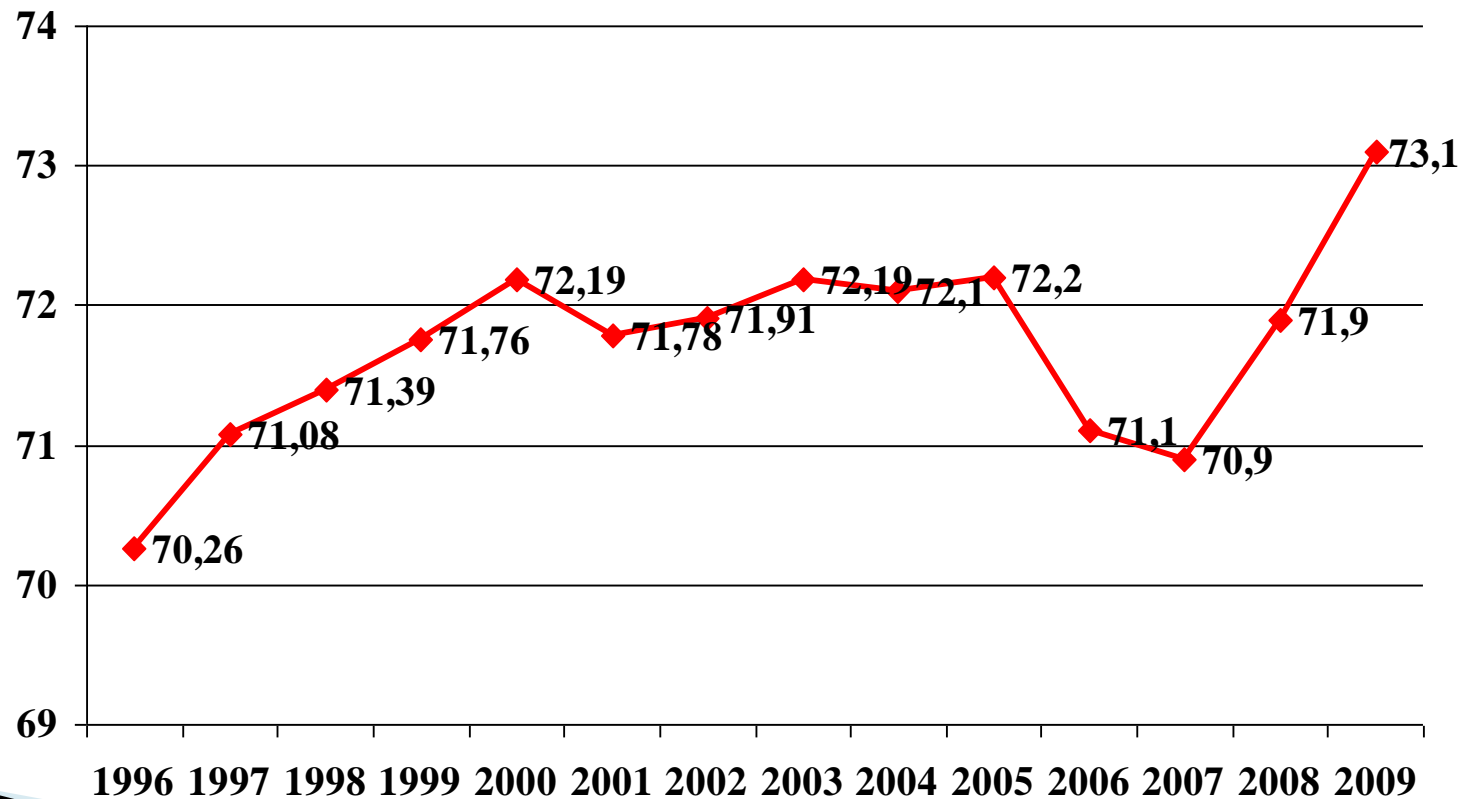


► Morbidity and mortality associated with the metabolic syndrome and diabetes has been steadily increasing

Age-standardized death rate, diabetes per 100.000



- ▶ Life expectancy at birth was 73,1 (female 78,6; male 67,5):
 - among the shortest in the EU (male was the shortest in the EU)



Level of physical activity and sport participation in Lithuania

- ▶ According to the Eurobarometer survey:
 - 44 % of Lithuanians never exercise or play sport (in comparison to Sweden 6 %)
 - 14 % of Lithuanians never get any kind of physical activity (Sweden 2 %)
 - only 12 % of respondents in Lithuania are members of sports' clubs or other clubs involving physical activities (61 % in Germany)

Eurobarometer 72.3. Special Eurobarometer 334: Sport and PA, March 2010

- ▶ Lithuania's response to EU initiatives for increasing physical activity (Legislation and policy)

European Actions in Promoting HEPA

Timeline, 2004 – 2011:

- 2004 European Year of Education through Sport (EYES)
- 2005 HEPA Europe Network
- 2005 EU platform for diet, physical activity and health
- 2005 EU Working Group “Sport & Health”
- 2007 *White Paper on Sport (DG EAC)*
- 2007 *White Paper on nutrition, overweight and obesity-related health issues (DG SANCO)*
- 2008 *EU Physical Activity Guidelines*
- 2009 First Call for Proposals in field of HEPA (part of 1st Preparatory Action in the field of sport)
- 2010 Eurobarometer on Sport & Physical Activity
- 2011 EU Communication *Developing the European Dimension in Sport*

Correlation between PA level and national PA guidelines

- ▶ Among the bottom 12 performers according to the Eurobarometer score (BG, GR, RO, HU, PL, LV, CZ, IT, SK, PT, EE, **LT**), none seem to have national PA guidelines at present, and only 4 (GR, PL, CZ, PT) are members of the WG [Working Group “Sport & Health”]

<...>

*Taken from the presentation given by Michal Krejza,
head of Sport Unit, European Commission – DG Education and
Culture
(HEPA Europe Conference, Olomouc, 24/11/2010)*

Actions taken by Lithuania in Promoting HEPA

Timeline, 2008–2011:

- 2008 *National Strategy for the Promotion of Physical Activity 2008–2020 (Draft)*
- 2009 *National Physical Education and Sport Development Strategy 2009–2020 (Draft)*
- 2010 **Lithuanian Physical Activity and Health Association**
- 2011-03-03 *Physical Activity Promotion Programme 2011–2012 (adopted by the State Department of Physical Education and Sports)*
- 2011-30-24 ***National Sport Development Strategy 2011–2020 (adopted by the Parliament)***
- 2011-03-30 Resolution adopted at the National Conference *Lithuanian HEPA Promotion Strategy in the European Context*



Lithuanian Physical Activity and Health Association

With the incentive of the PASEO project and in response to the EU Physical Activity Guidelines, a national cross-sectoral alliance was founded on February 2, 2010 with its aim to promote HEPA policy development in Lithuania.

Observer Status

- Office of the President
- Ministry of Transport and Communications
- Ministry of Social Security and Labour
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of National Defence
- Lithuanian National Health Board
- Representative of WHO in Lithuania
- National Olympic Committee

Members of the Association

- Lithuanian Academy of Physical Education
- Lithuanian Public Health Association
- Lithuanian Association “Sport for All”
- Association of Municipal Public Health Bureaus
- Kaunas Women’s Employment Information Centre
- Seniors' Initiatives Centre
- Lithuanian Medical Association
- Jonas Koryzna
- Lithuanian Physiotherapists Society
- Lithuanian Special Olympics Committee



Lithuanian Physical Activity and Health Association

Main Objectives

1. To form, promote and disseminate understanding of the community about positive effects of physical activity on health;
2. To participate in the development of HEPA promotion policy;
3. To raise awareness about HEPA benefits in political parties, national and municipal authorities, private and non-governmental organisations;
4. To represent and respond to public interests of the Association and its members.

Situation after the adoption of National Sport Development Strategy 2011–2020

- ▶ The Strategy should be considered as a positive step in developing a legislation framework for HEPA promotion in Lithuania

Situation after the adoption of National Sport Development Strategy 2011–2020

However, the adoption of the strategy also evoked many pessimistic emotions since the role of physical activity is clearly underestimated, e.g.:

- The concept of physical activity was completely taken out from the title of this policy document;
- Sports functionaries who did very little to finance and even ignored population-wide HEPA promotion in the past are named in the strategy as key actors for its implementation;
- It is very likely that PA on governmental level will remain in the shadow of performance sport as it is now.

What is missing in National Sport Development Strategy

Centralization of actions toward the human:



- To understand psychology of lithuanians and different age people;
- To create methodology of human motivation for PA;
- To recruit and educate participants – actors and supporters from the closest enviroment to assist every human to fulfill daily his own obligations for Physical Activity

The position statement of National Health Board concerning HEPA

- ▶ In the resolution adopted at the National Conference, NHB together with other organisations expressed its concern about insufficient development of HEPA in Lithuania conditioned by:
 - Established supremacy of high-level sport over HEPA promotion in strategic policy documents
 - Lack of understanding (even in academic community) to which priority areas the actions should be directed
 - Coordination of HEPA policy implementation was transferred to sport functionaries, who did not give proper attention and financial resources to this issue in the past.

Probable cause for establishing supremacy of high-level sport over PA

- ▶ Misinterpreted EU Physical Activity Guidelines (05–09–2008)
 - Guideline 4 – <...> Links between sport and physical activity strategies should be encouraged.
- ▶ National Health Board noted that this statement should be discussed for modification
 - In our opinion, sport and physical activity guidelines have to be separated since professional sport differs substantially from the development of physical activity.

Differences between high-level sport and physical activity

- ▶ The aim of high-level sport is top performance in competitions achieved by exploiting the possibilities of human organism and often leading to injuries and deteriorated health



- ▶ The essence of physical activity is optimal physical load on human organism for health enhancement

Differences between high-level sport and physical activity

- ▶ Sport participants (athletes) form only a very small group that earns for living from its physical talent and hard work
- ▶ PA participants are members of society who move for health and work capacity




Differences between high-level sport and physical activity

- ▶ Sport is related with business and entertainment and requires big investments and infrastructures for training professional athletes
- ▶ Physical activity is personal human attitude that does not require big investments and infrastructure



What's next? Hopes for the future

Plan of Actions

- ▶ To consolidate the efforts of active organisations (NHB, LPAHA, 'Sport for All', etc.)
 - ▶ To involve Universities (LUHS, LAPE) to develop evidence based approach for PA and adapt it for the needs of Lithuanian population
 - ▶ To raise the awareness of policy makers, authorities and community in general about HEPA benefits and the need for long-term policy development
 - ▶ To improve legislation on HEPA
 - ▶ To train public health professionals how to work effectively with different population groups
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It's a long way to go...



**but only those who don't stop walking
will reach their destination!**