

Societal Impact of Pain 2016 – ‘Time for action!’

When pain meets palliative care

Univ.-Prof. Dr. med. Roman Rolke
Department of Palliative Medicine,
Medical Faculty RWTH Aachen University, Germany



Societal Impact of Pain 2016 – ‘Time for action!’
When pain meets palliative care

Rolke
UNIKLINIK
RWTHAACHEN

Starting point

- International initiatives aim to establish `palliative care´ as a human right
 - how about `pain relief´?
- Increasing numbers of palliative care and hospice services in Europe
 - still a mismatch across EU countries!
- Pain is not only a problem among cancer patients
 - neurological pain conditions need more attention;
e.g. children with life-limiting conditions, elderly with parkinson syndrome or dementia



`Pain relief´ as a human right?

We must all die. But that I can save him from days of torture, that is what I feel as my great and ever privilege. Pain is a more terrible lord of mankind than even death itself. Albert Schweitzer, 1931

1948: Declaration of Human Rights

1949: WHO defines health as „a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease...“

1966: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

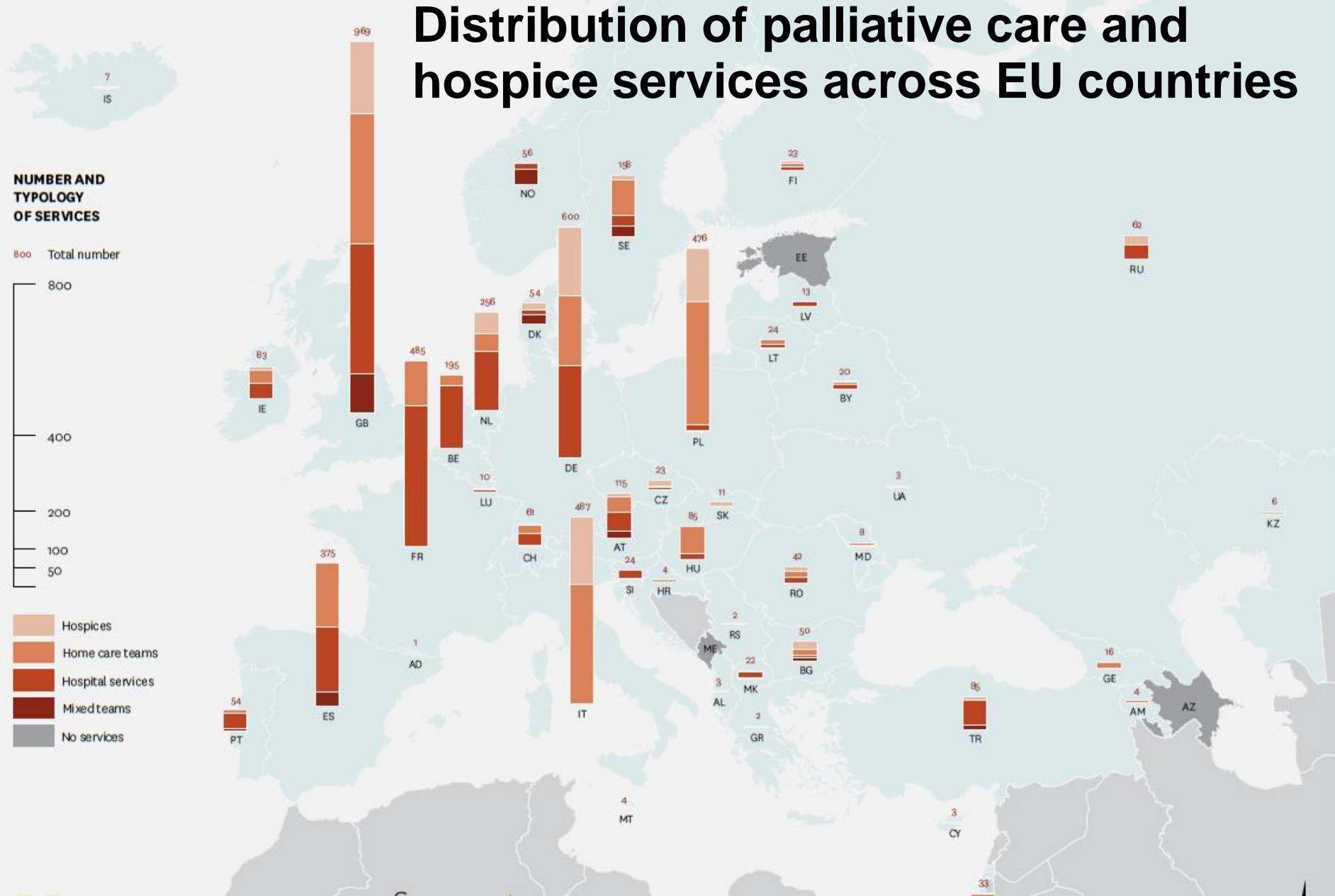
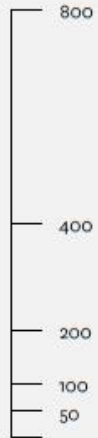
1966: Internat. Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights:
Right „of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health...“



Distribution of palliative care and hospice services across EU countries

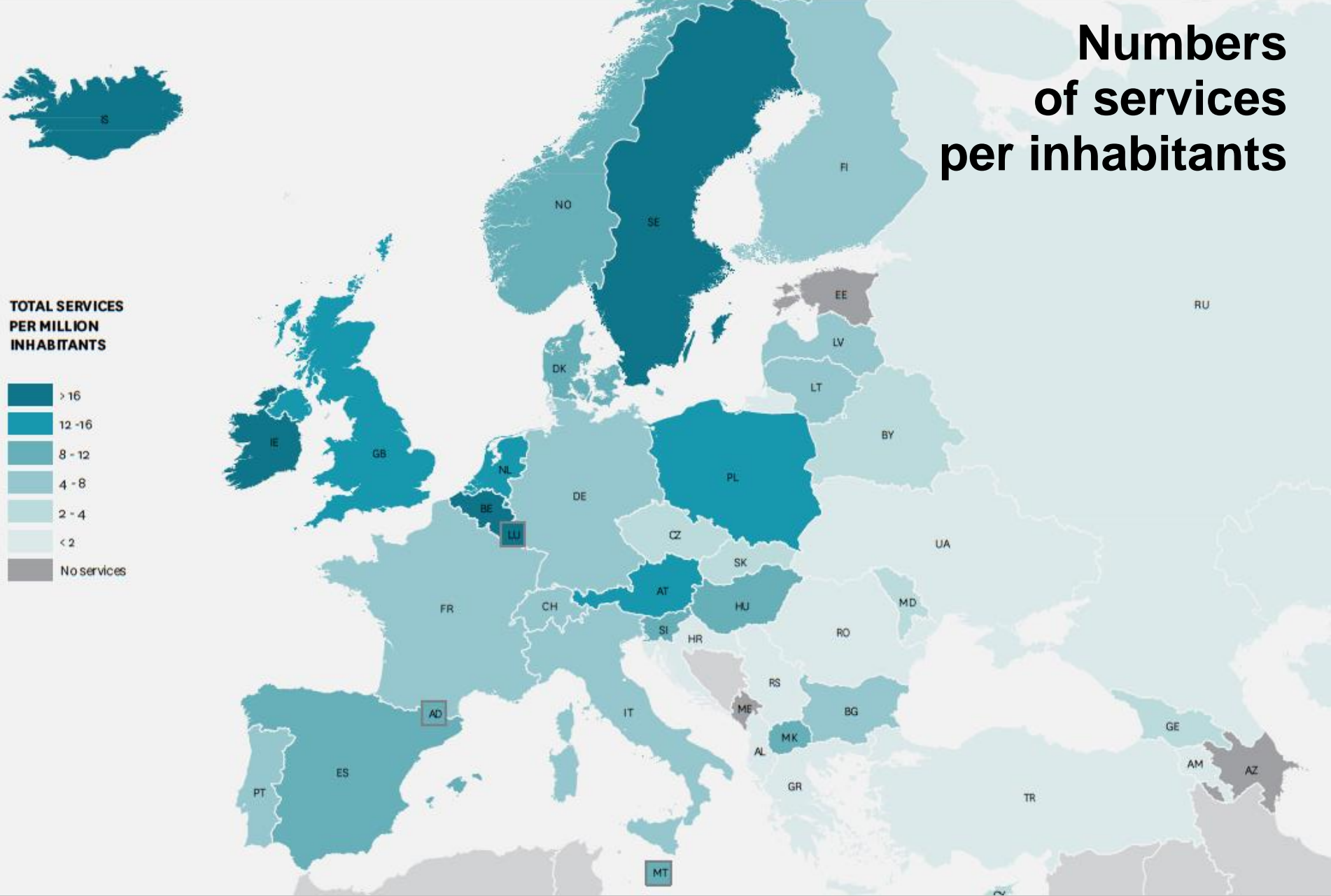
NUMBER AND TYPOLOGY OF SERVICES

800 Total number



Numbers of services per inhabitants

TOTAL SERVICES PER MILLION INHABITANTS



Time for action! for political decision makers

- Facilitate qualification of physicians (palliative care and pain training)
 - and of other health care professionals, e.g. nurses, physiotherapists
- Facilitate reimbursement of professionals and service structures
 - e.g. the German `Hospice and Palliative Care Law´ has established a 95% reimbursement of all hospice costs by long term care insurance and health insurance companies; 5% of costs covered by donations
- Address pain control not only in cancer patients and cancer survivors, but also in non-malignant diseases of children or elderly suffering from muscular pain due to spasticity, or joint pain along with e.g. muscular dystrophy/atrophy
- **Thank you for your attention!**

