SCK·CEN

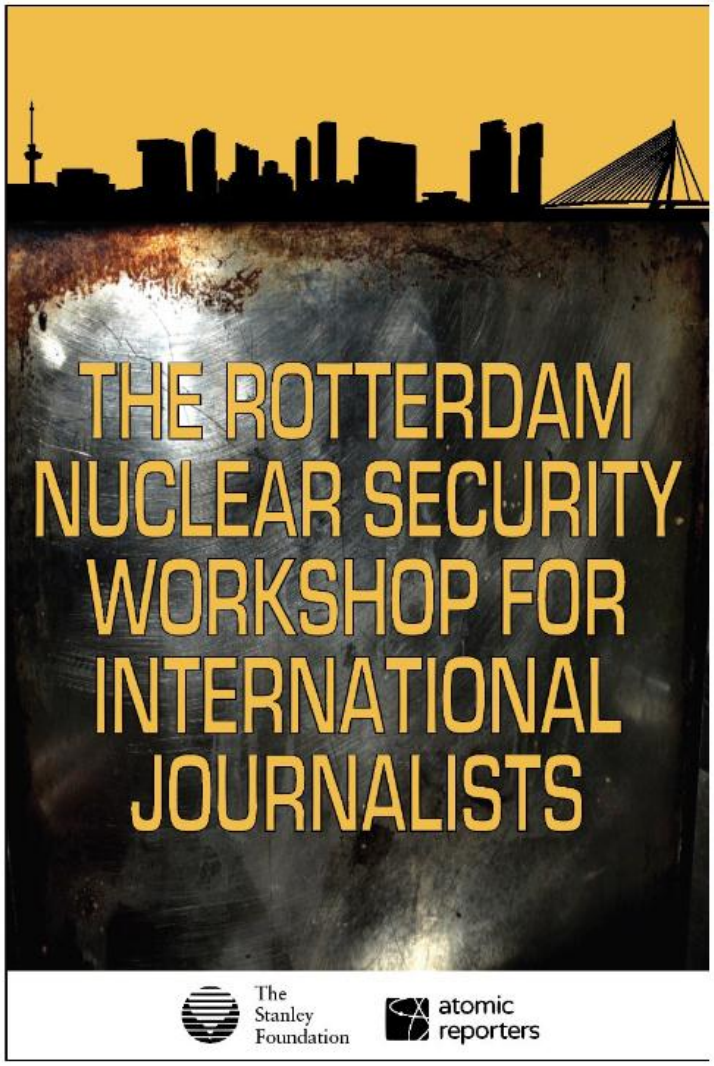
STUDIECENTRUM VOOR KERNENERGIE
CENTRE D'ETUDE DE L'ENERGIE NUCLEAIRE

Improving communication with media in nuclear emergencies: General and practical suggestions

Tanja Perko
tperko@sckcen.be

Media represent, interpret and construct the reality

Table–top exercise: RDD or dirty bomb
Lessons learned



29 February-1 March 2016

Field reporting = challenge for emergency management
As close to the issue as possible

Although danger, not allowed, disturbing, uncertain ….

the journalists want to and have to report from the area of the emergency.

- In every emergency, there will be journalists reporting from the field.

Fukushima, 2011, Veerle de Vos

Chernoby,1986, Vladimir Schevchenko

RICOMET 2015

Risk perception, communication and ethics of exposures to ionising radiation

>120 participants

Lessons leaned: No common understanding

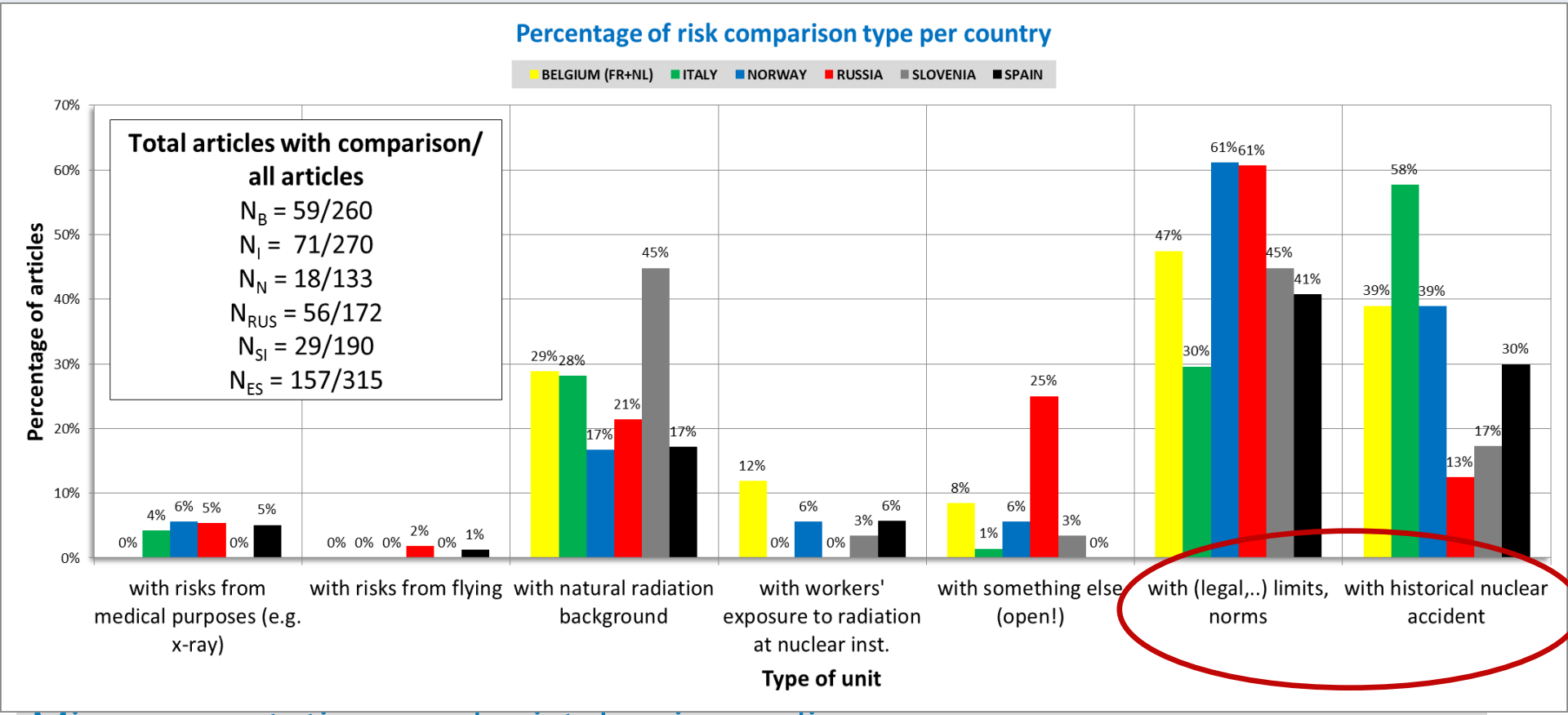
Fukushima through the prism of Chernobyl

Media content analysis (N=1340)

“Fukushima “ and “nuclear”
March 11th - May 11th, 2011

- Narratives are strongly used
- Nuclear accidents journalism has its dissimilarities in comparing with other accidents
- **Unimportance of radiological risks** - Importance of energy policy

Perko T. at al (2015); Submitted Risk Analysis



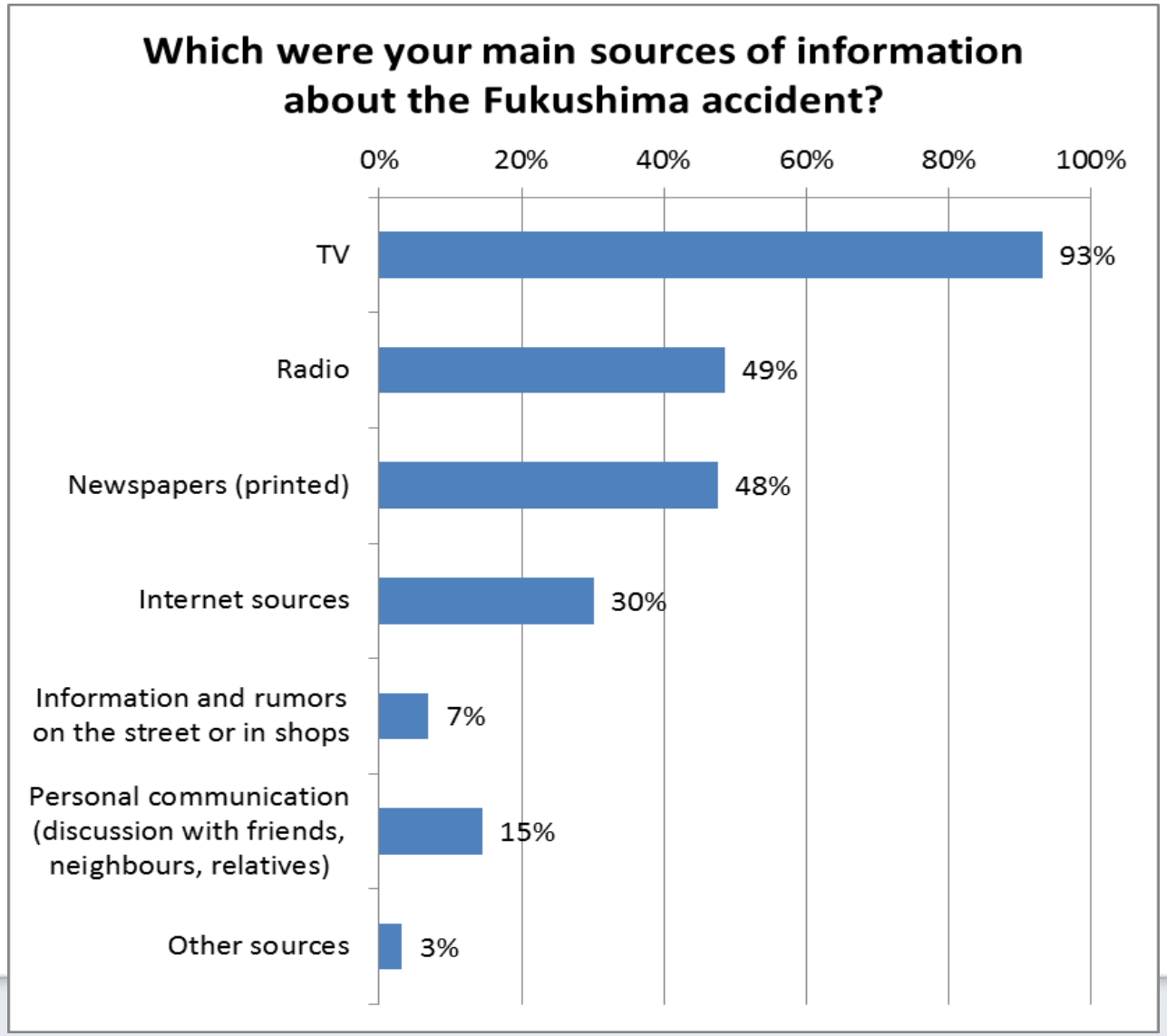
Misrepresentations and mistakes in media

- References to non-existing norms (e. g. levels in the enviroment)
- Using norms for drinking water as benchmark for seawater
- Mixing up allowed levels for general population and emergency workers
- Mixing up dose and dose rate
- Presenting permitted levels as «safe»

Perko T. at al (2014); Journal of radiation protection

SCK•CEN Barometer 2013:
Turcanu C. & Perko T.,

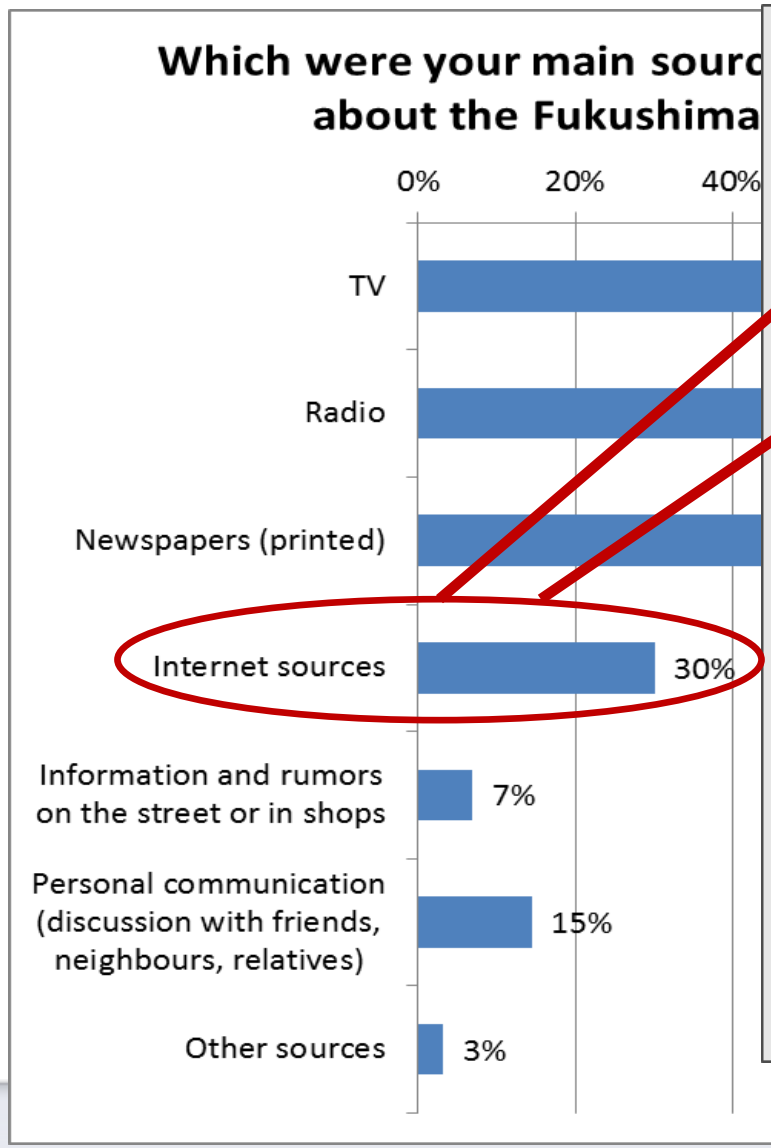
Importance of traditional media in nuclear emergencies

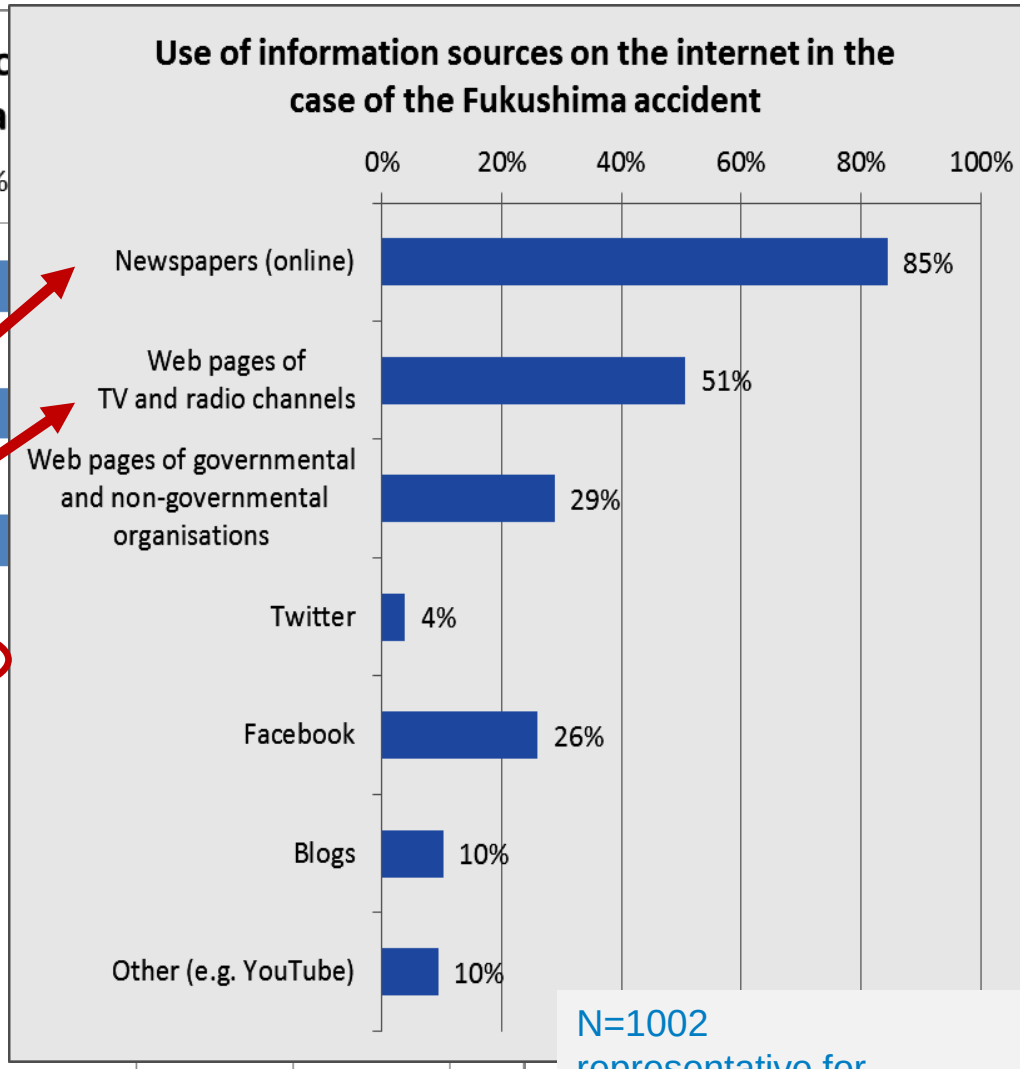


N=1002
representative for
Belgian population, 2013

SCK•CEN Barometer 2013:
Turcanu C. & Perko T.,

Importance of traditional media in nuclear emergencies

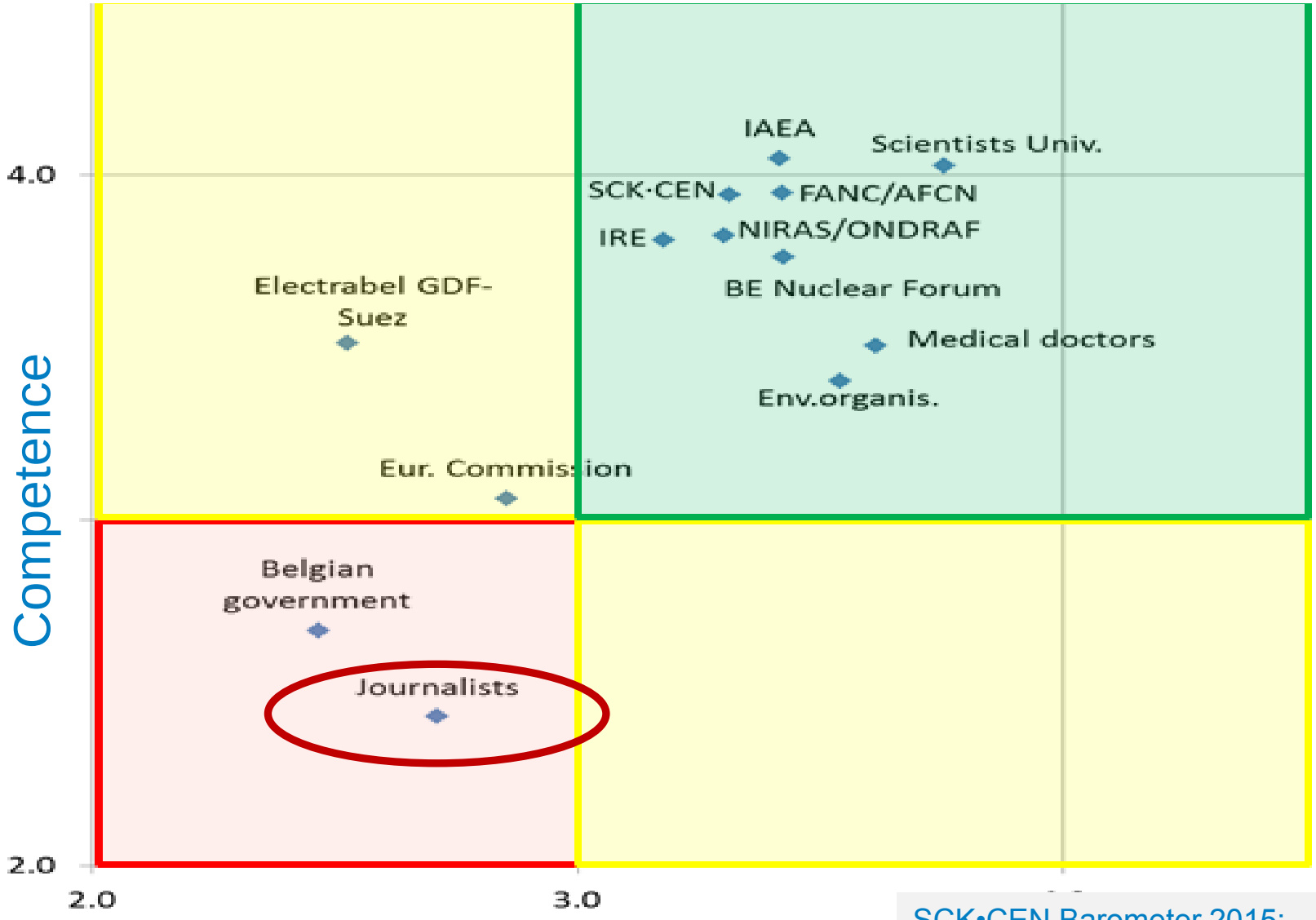




N=1002
representative for
Belgian population, 2013

Journalists: Low trust and competence regards risks and benefits of nuclear technology (N=1028)

If you know the following actors can you tell us if you think they are: telling the **truth** about risks and benefits of nuclear technologies and **technically competent** to point out the risks and benefits of nuclear technologies?



SCK•CEN Barometer 2015:
Turcanu C., Perko T., Latre E.

Findings important for **public communication** / challenges

- Local population have higher trust in experts than in media.
- Nuclear emergency receives huge media coverage and limited content (Usually is content limited to a national level).
- Local population receives a great attention of (international) media at the beginning of an accident.
- Recovery phase (important for local population) is not in the main attention of mass media.
- It is not satisfactory communicated what science can and can not do.
- Complexity of an emergency is in media reduced - by focusing on one or few aspects of an emergency.

Citizen's journalism in nuclear emergencies

> 2 million

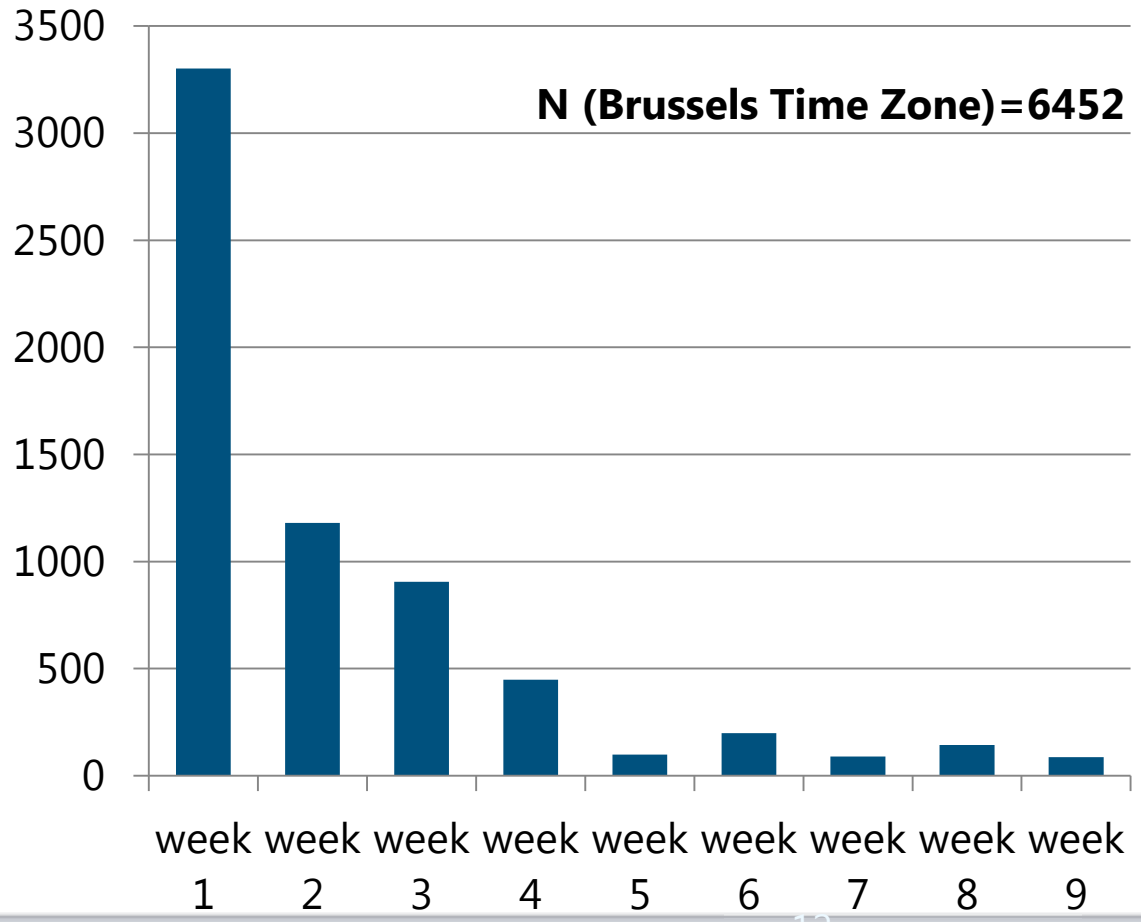
"Fukushima"

March 11th - May 11th, 2011

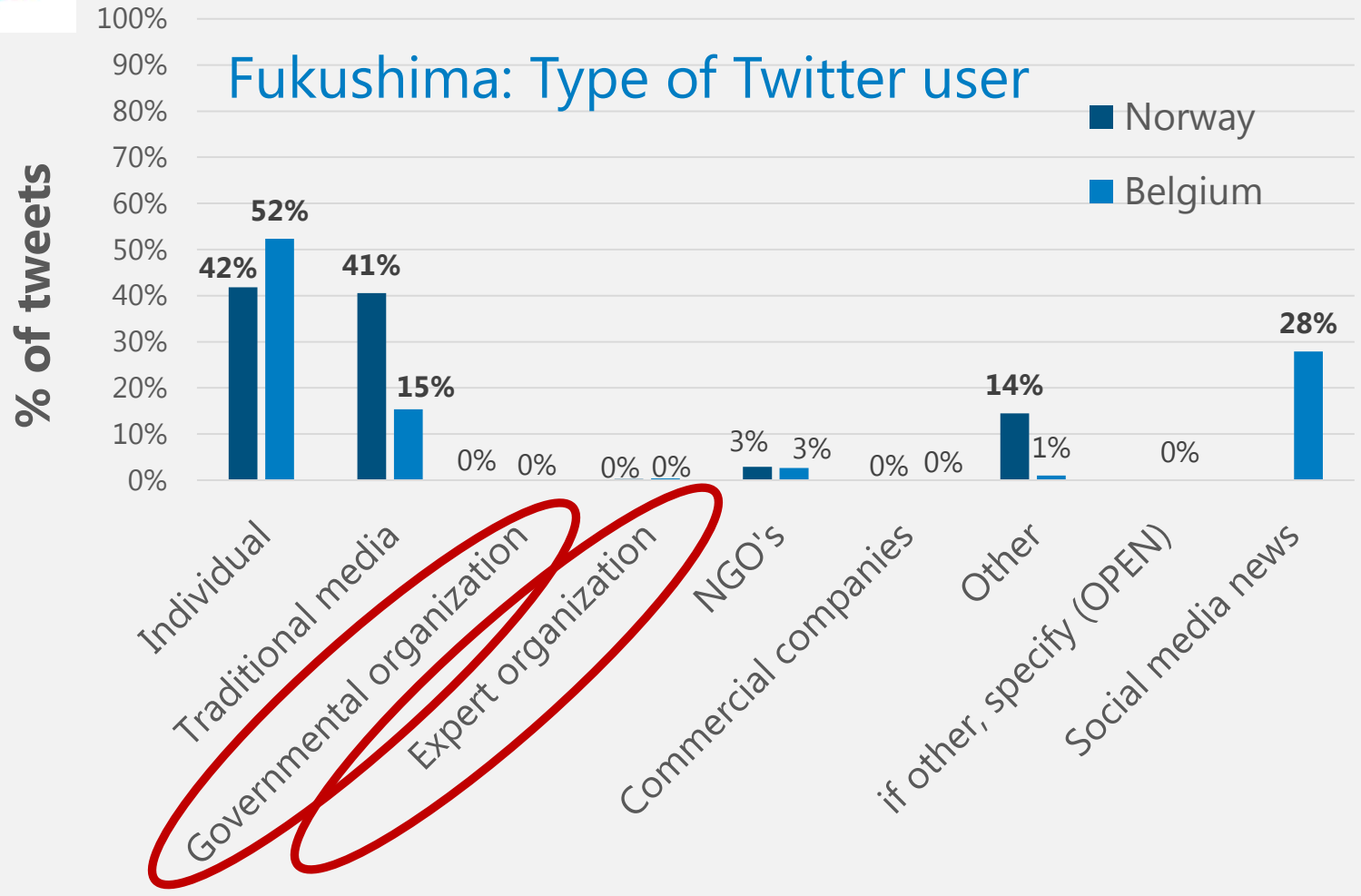
- > **2 million** tweets with the word "Fukushima" globally in the two-month period

- Fukushima was a tweet-worthy event in Europe

  > **6400** tweets in the Brussels time zone



(Non)Presence of emergency management in social media during an emergency in 2011



"Fukushima"
March 11th - May 11th, 2011

Lessons to be learned

Communication with mass media during and after a nuclear emergency	
CHALLENGE	**OPPORTUNITY**
different **motivations** and types of **process** applied by mass media and emergency management	the **power** of mass media to reach out to an audience with information important for compliance with protective actions

Points for improvement

- Experts don't' form a social group in media from a communication point of view. (Scientific community is anonymous in media).
- Uncertainty is not satisfactory communicated by experts.
- Journalists want to have experts as an information source not PR.
- Experts are under-skilled for media communication. (Lack of empathy)
- Identity of an expert in media is often limited to an identity of his/her employer.
- In general, experts are recognised as trustworthy information source, however, trustworthiness of experts is questioned in nuclear emergencies.
- For experts are mass media one among the most important information sources during emergencies.

Suggestions

- Harmonisation of communication is not possible, but better communications might be.
- Accountable and effective communication is and always will be about humans first, technology is not substitution

Call for the **incorporation of social and ethical aspects into account during core R&D related to nuclear emergency management.**

RICOMET 2016

Risk perception, communication and ethics of exposures to ionising radiation

WHEN/ WHERE

1st to 3rd of June 2016

Bucharest, Romania

RICOMET 2015, Slovenia

FOCAL POINTS

Creating a Strategic Research Agenda on Social Sciences and Humanities in Radiation Protection

Policy making related to different applications of ionizing radiation.

Welcome to join us

EAGLE

EUROPEAN JOINT PROGRAMME FOR THE INTEGRATION OF RADIATION PROTECTION RESEARCH CONCERT

OPERA OPEN PROJECT FOR EUROPEAN RADIATION RESEARCH AREA

PLATENSO