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# **Prevalence and Constellations of Separated and Stepfamilies in Europe**

International Conference on Shared Parenting  
Bridging the Gap between Empirical Evidence and Socio-Legal Practice  
Bonn, Germany  
July 9-11, 2014

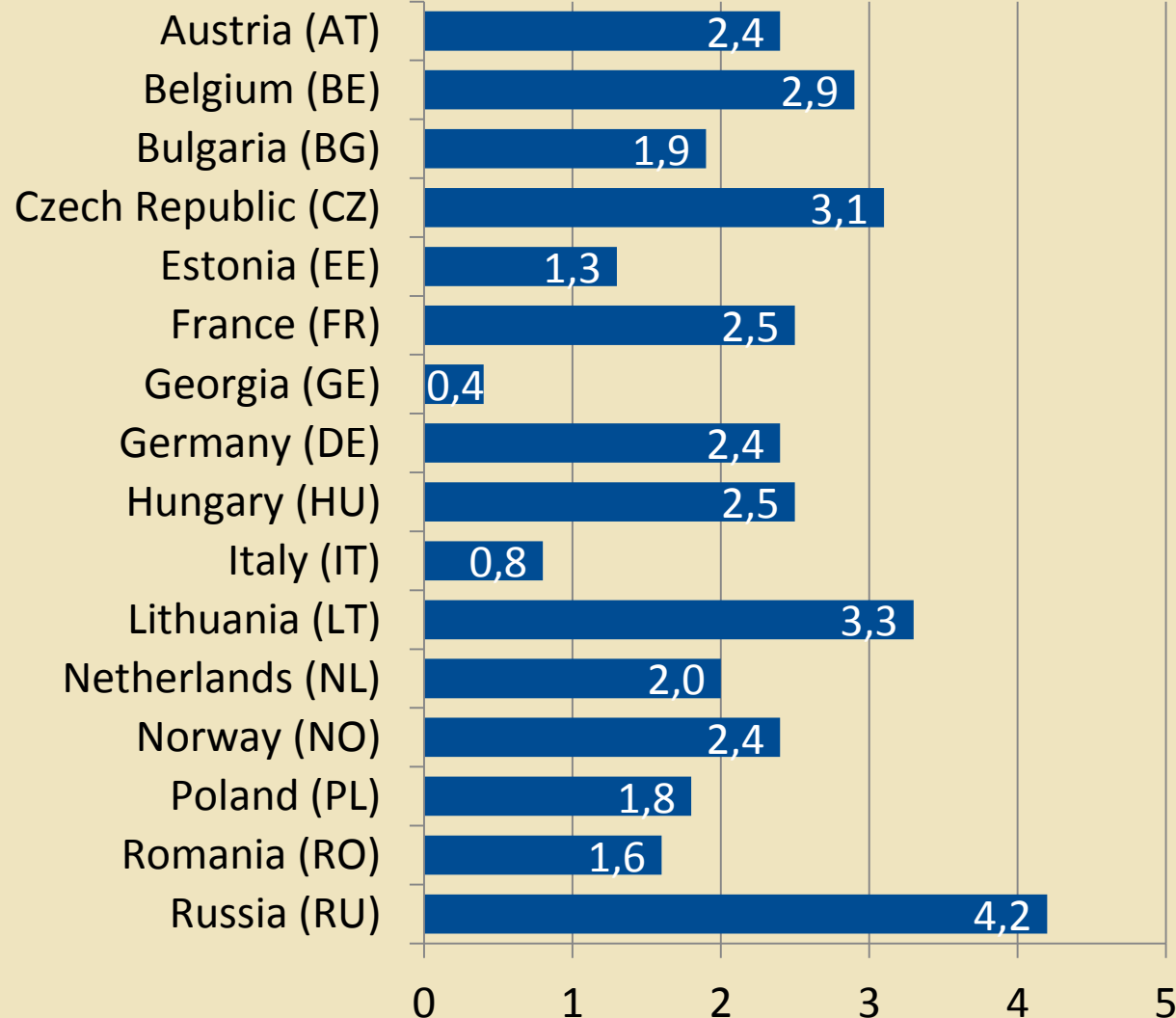
- Background
- Data: GGP
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- Analytic Sample
- Results
- Conclusion

# Background

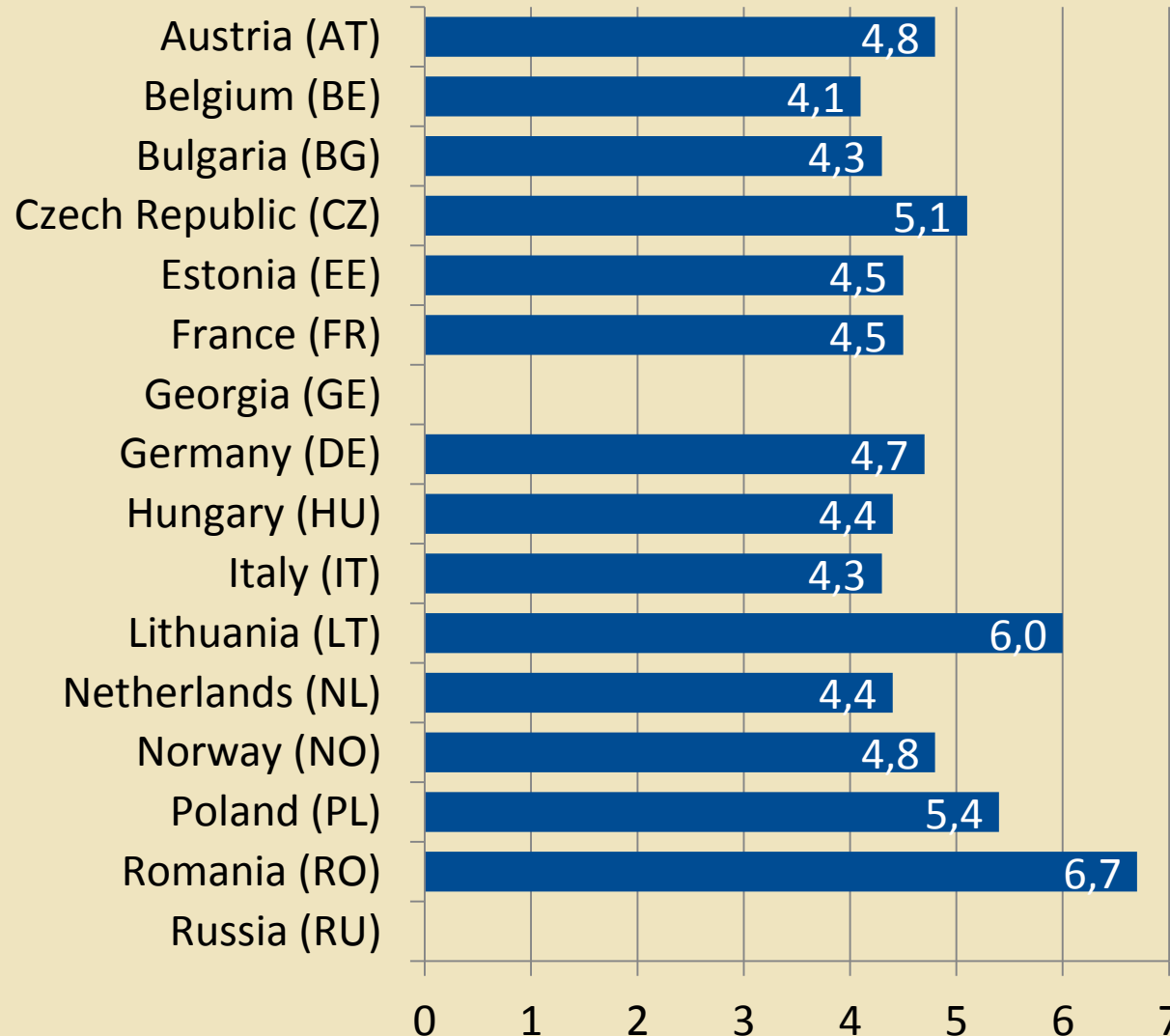
- Shared parenting = separated families
- Separated families = single parent families or stepfamilies
- Single parent families and stepfamilies families are not new family forms, but the structure of this family forms did change noticeably in the last decades
  - **In the past:** single parent or stepfamilies emerged mainly because of a low life expectancy
  - **Nowadays:** single parent or stepfamilies occur mainly because the parents get divorced or separate
- For the research of shared parenting it is of special interest to know how many persons live in separated and stepfamily constellations.

- Official statistics have certain shortcomings
  - captures only divorce (and not separation)
  - stepfamilies are not captured at all
- Social surveys: identification of single and stepfamilies are possible
- For this presentation an international survey is used (Generations & Gender Programme) = comparison of 16 European countries
- Prevalence of separated families in developed countries is relevant to identify the prevalence for shared parenting

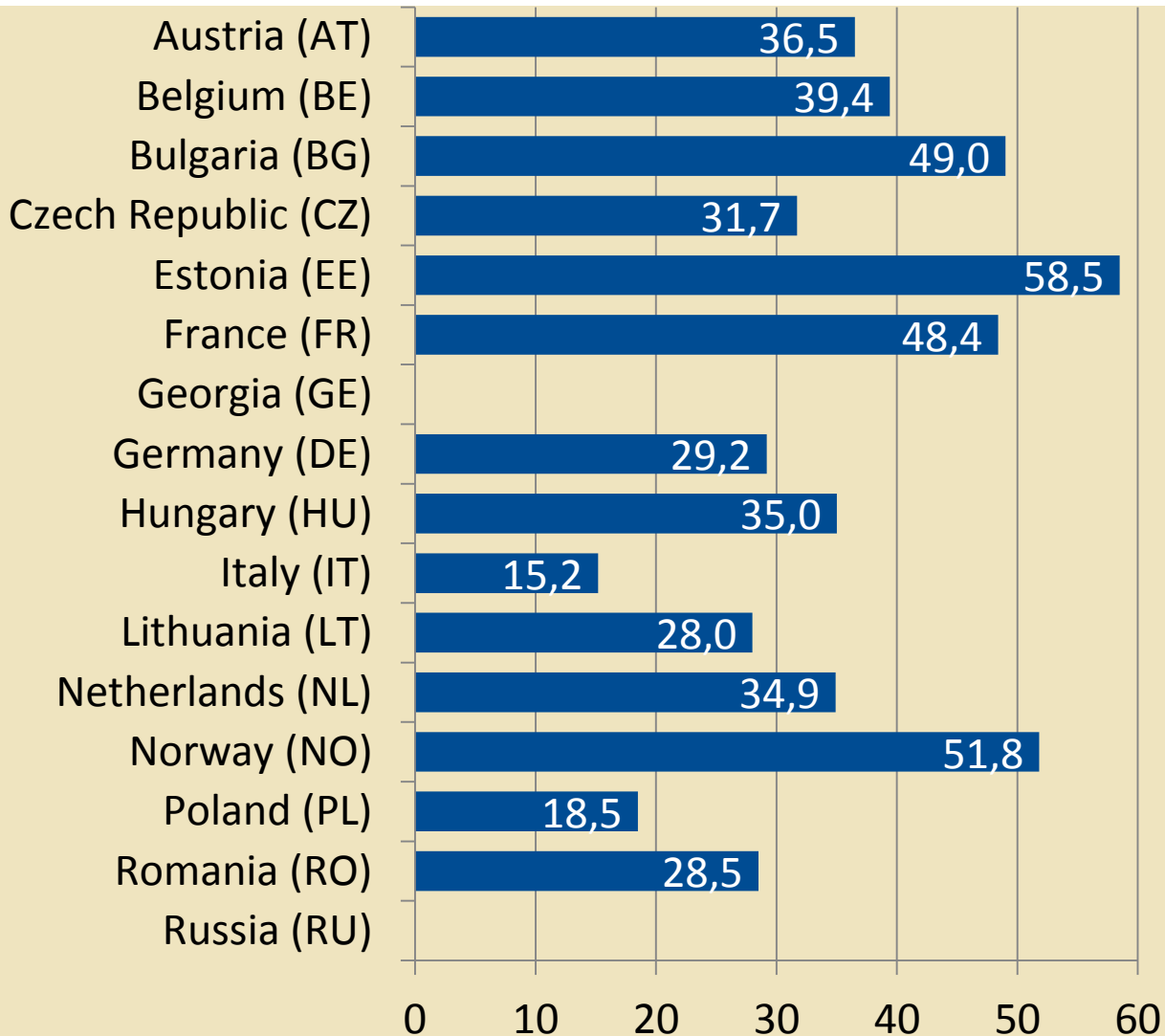
## Crude Divorce Rates 2005 (per 1,000 persons)



## Crude Marriage Rates 2005 (per 1,000 persons)



## Live Births Outside Marriage 2005 (% of live births)





# Data: GGP

# Generations & Gender Programme

## Generations & Gender Programme

- The GGP is a Social Science Research Infrastructure of the United Nations Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE).
- It provides data which improve the knowledge base for social science and policymaking in Europe and other developed countries.
- The GGP is a Longitudinal Survey of 18-79 year olds.
- A broad array of topics including fertility, partnership, the transition to adulthood, economic activity, care duties, and attitudes are covered by these surveys.

## Generations & Gender Programme

- Up till now, 19 countries have conducted at least one wave of data collection (from 2002 on).
- **Currently Wave 1 data are available for 18 countries:**  
Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, and the Russian Federation 
- **Currently Wave 2 data are available for 8 countries:**  
Australia, Bulgaria, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, and the Netherlands

# Operationalization

## Family Form

- In the GGP surveys the respondents could name up to 17 persons with whom they live together **in a household**.
- Classification of children:
  - ‘biological child of current (marriage) partner’
  - ‘biological child of former (marriage) partner’
  - ‘stepchild’
  - ‘adopted child’
  - ‘foster child’
- The differentiation between biological children from a former partner and stepchildren is crucial to identify the totality of stepfamilies.

## Typology of Family Living Arrangements (in a household)

| Family Form                | Relation Child-Respondent     | Relation Child-Respondents Partner |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Nuclear Family             | Biological Child              | Biological Child                   |
| Single Parent Family       | Biological Child              | -                                  |
| Stepfamily                 | Biological Child<br>Stepchild | Stepchild<br>Biological Child      |
| Adoptive- or Foster Family | Adoptive- or Foster Child     | Adoptive- or Foster Child          |

## Non-Resident Children

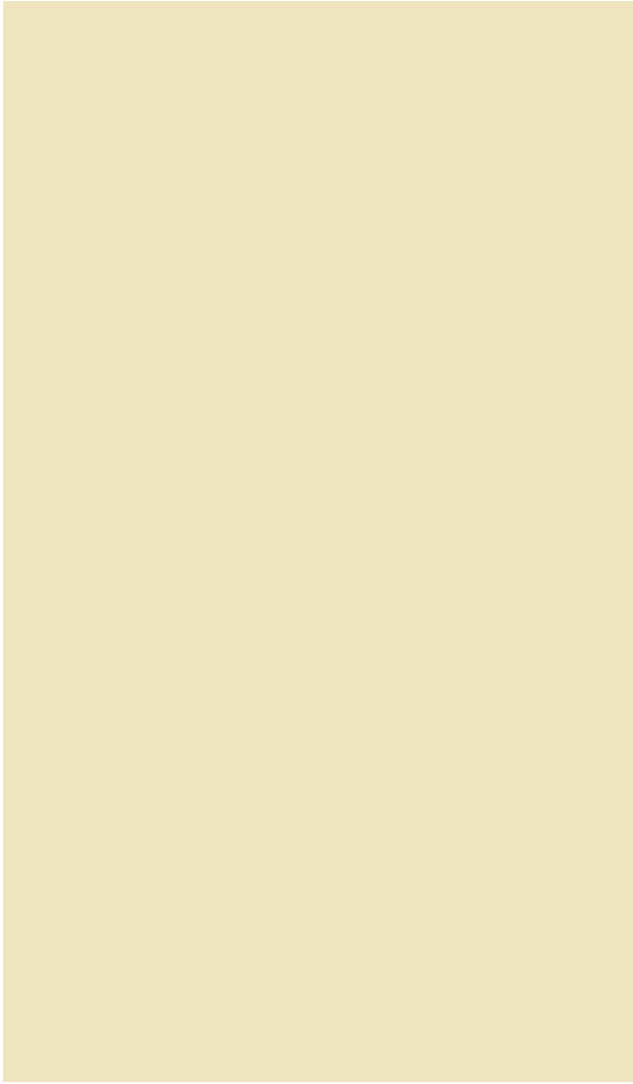
- In the GGP surveys the respondents could name up to 17 **non-resident children**.
- Classification of non-resident children:
  - ‘biological child of current (marriage) partner’
  - ‘biological child of former (marriage) partner’
  - ‘stepchild’
  - ‘adopted child’
  - ‘foster child’
- In addition: non-resident children of the partner could be named.

# Analytic Sample



- 16 countries are included (n = 53,517 family households)
  - **Northern European Countries:**  
Norway
  - **Western European Countries:**  
Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands
  - **Southern European Countries:**  
Italy
  - **Eastern European Countries:**  
Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russia

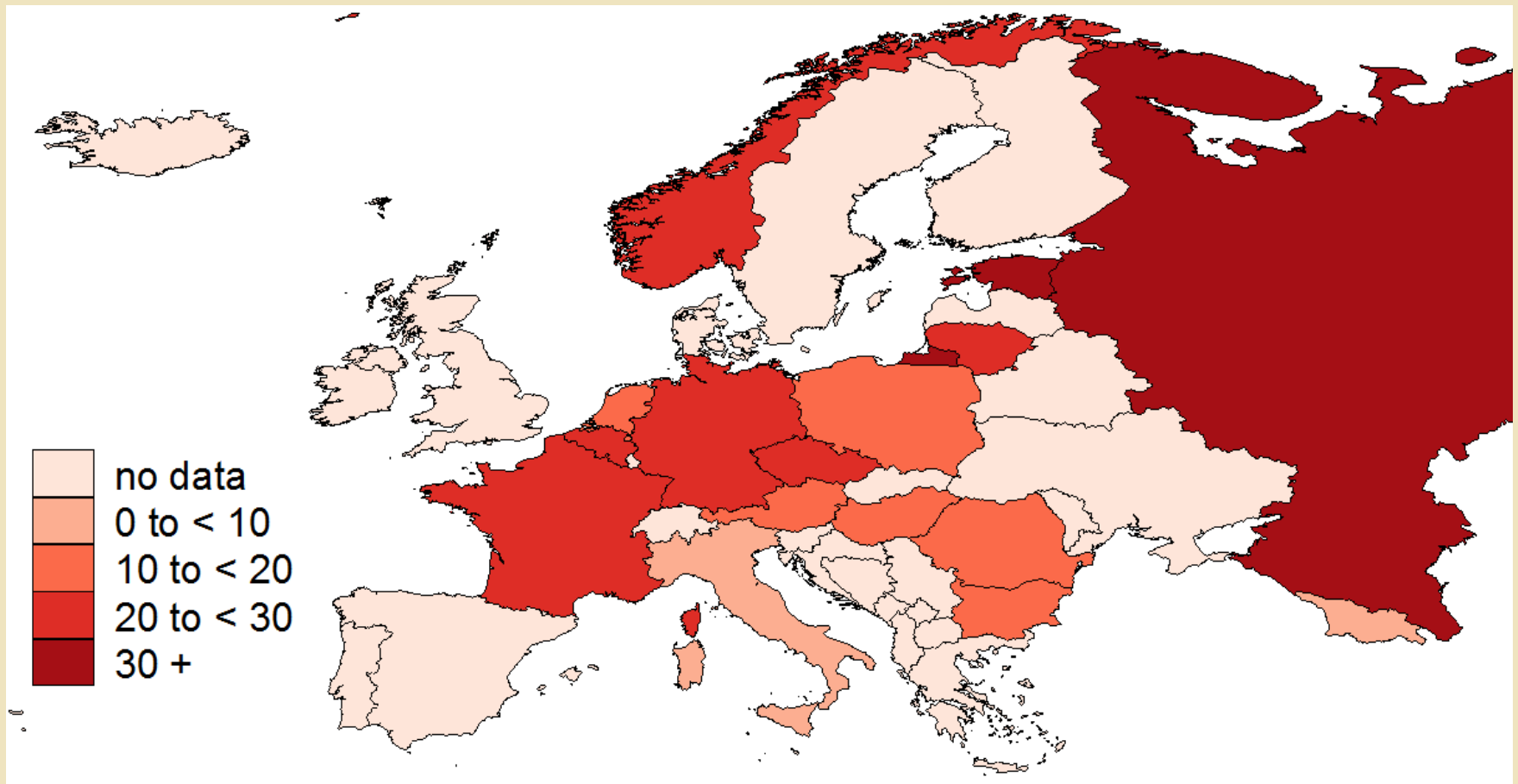
# Analytic Sample



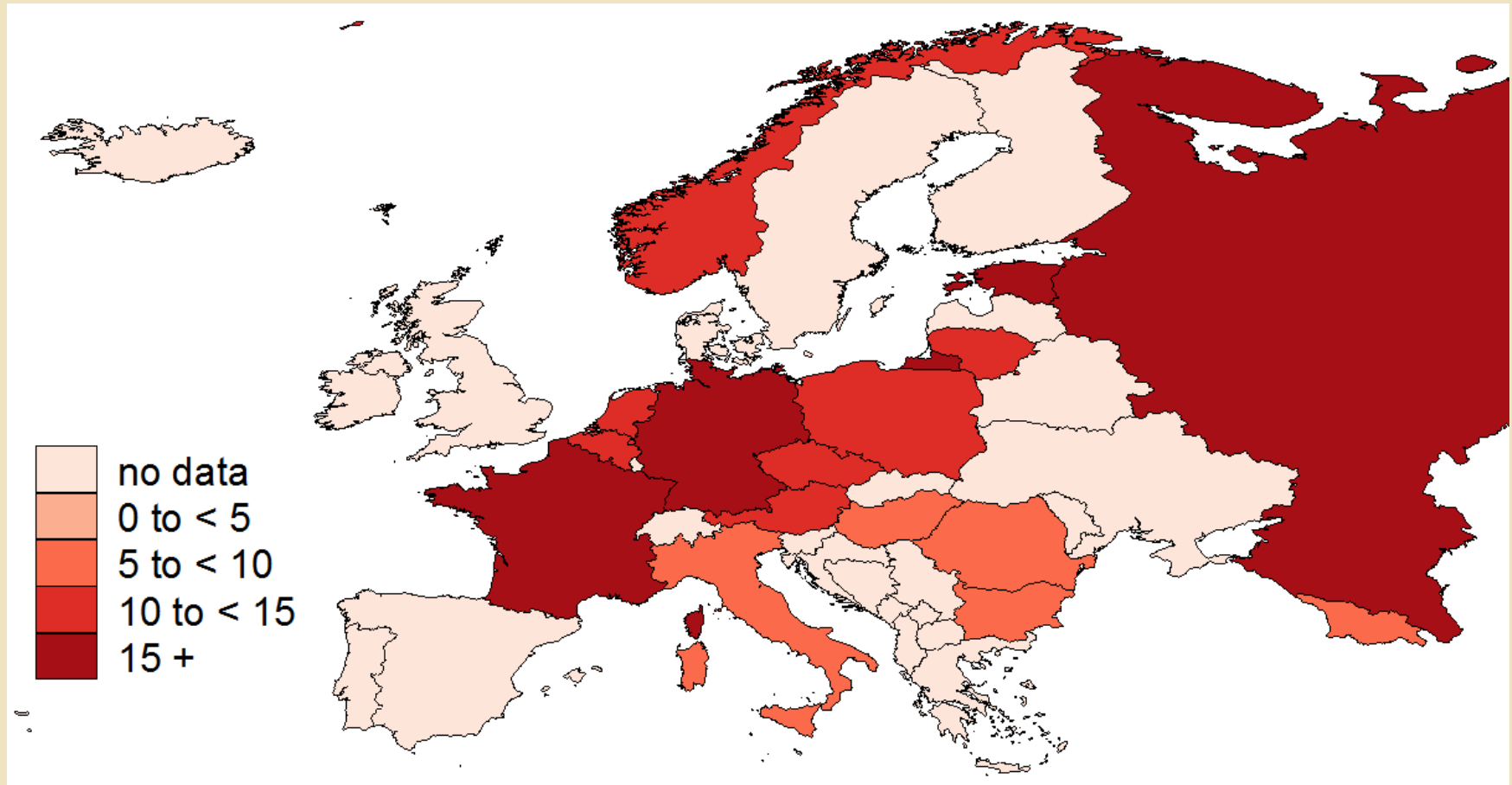
| Country             | Survey year | n (all) | n (families) |
|---------------------|-------------|---------|--------------|
| Austria (A)         | 2008-2009   | 5,000   | 2,446        |
| Belgium (BE)        | 2008-2010   | 7,163   | 2,276        |
| Bulgaria (BG)       | 2004        | 12,815  | 4,656        |
| Czech Republic (CZ) | 2005        | 10,006  | 2,420        |
| Estonia (EE)        | 2004-2005   | 7,855   | 857          |
| France (FR)         | 2005        | 10,079  | 3,163        |
| Georgia (GE)        | 2006        | 10,000  | 3,572        |
| Germany (DE)        | 2005        | 10,017  | 2,990        |
| Hungary (HU)        | 2004-2005   | 13,540  | 3,865        |
| Italy (IT)          | 2003        | 9,570   | 3,193        |
| Lithuania (LT)      | 2006        | 10,036  | 2,964        |
| Netherlands (NL)    | 2002-2004   | 8,161   | 2,621        |
| Norway (NO)         | 2007-2008   | 14,881  | 5,368        |
| Poland (PL)         | 2010        | 19,987  | 5,628        |
| Romania (RO)        | 2005        | 11,986  | 3,638        |
| Russia (RU)         | 2004        | 11,261  | 3,862        |

# Results

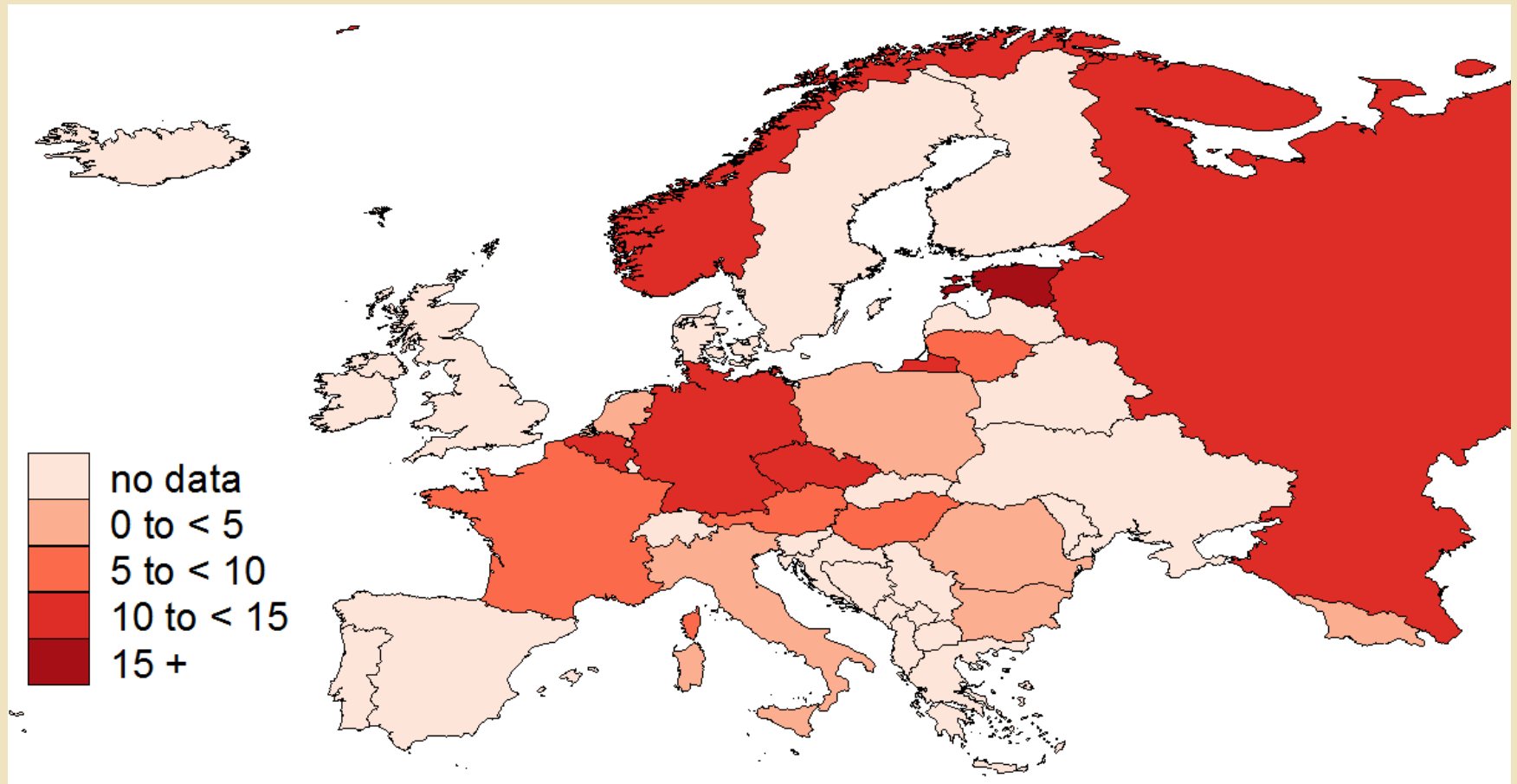
## Percentage of **separated families** with children (<18 years)



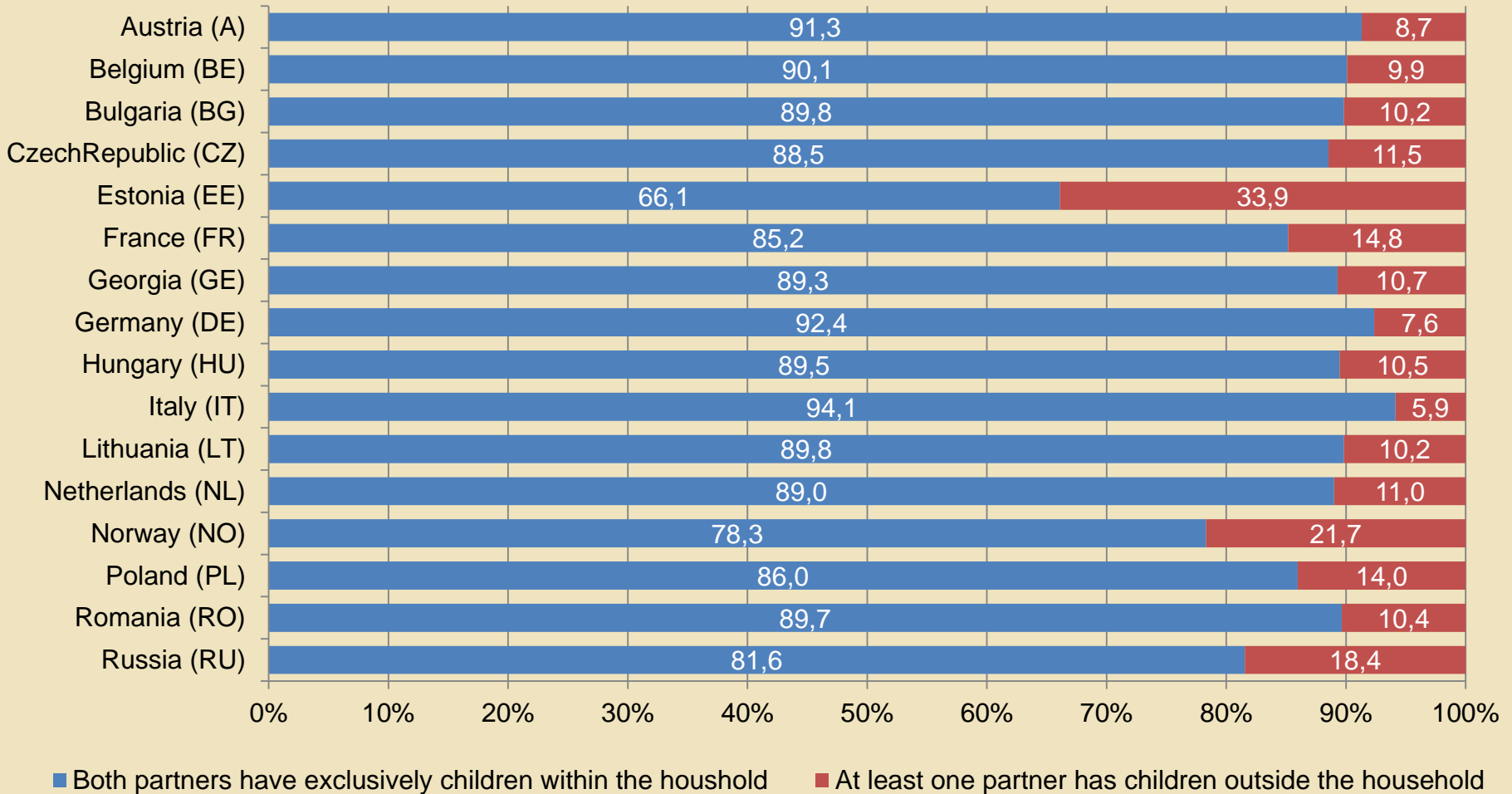
## Percentage of single parent families with children (<18 years)



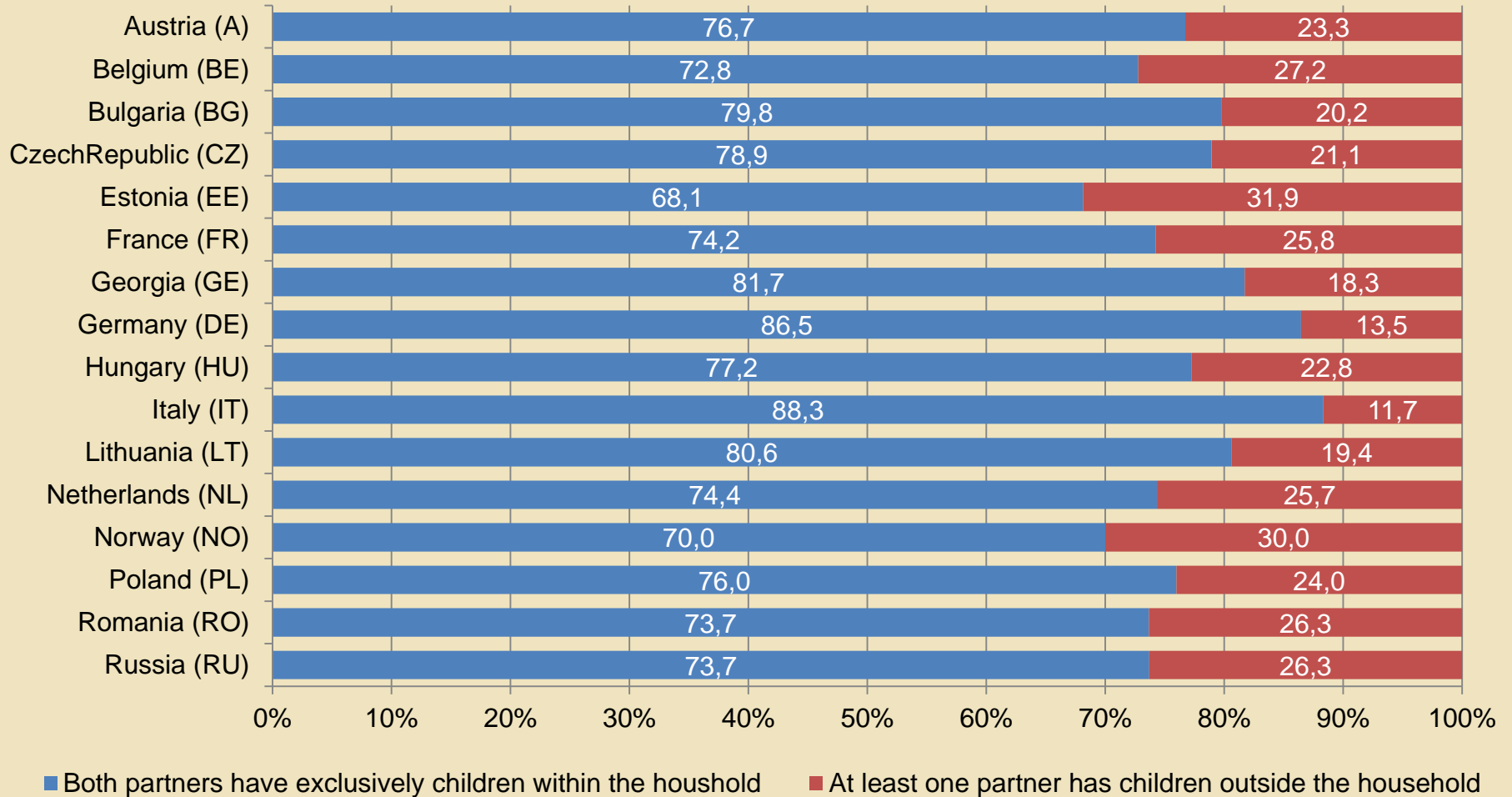
## Percentage of **stepfamilies** with children (<18 years)



## Cross-Household Constellations: Nuclear Families



## Cross-Household Constellations: Separated Families





# Conclusion

- Increasing separation and divorce rates in Europe
- Separated families and stepfamilies = a growing relevant group
- Country = important context factor that influences prevalence of separated families
- First step: description of the phenomenon
- In addition: prevalence of cross-household family constellations (which also applies for nuclear families)

- The pluralisation of family forms in Europe is discussed quiet vehemently – but numbers are missing.
- Lack of appropriate data – this applies especially to separated families because of their high complexity
- Generations & Gender Programme: approved to get an overview of family forms in different European countries
- Pluralisation of family forms is reality in many countries, but the majority of minor children still lives in a traditional nuclear family.

**Thank you  
for your attention!**

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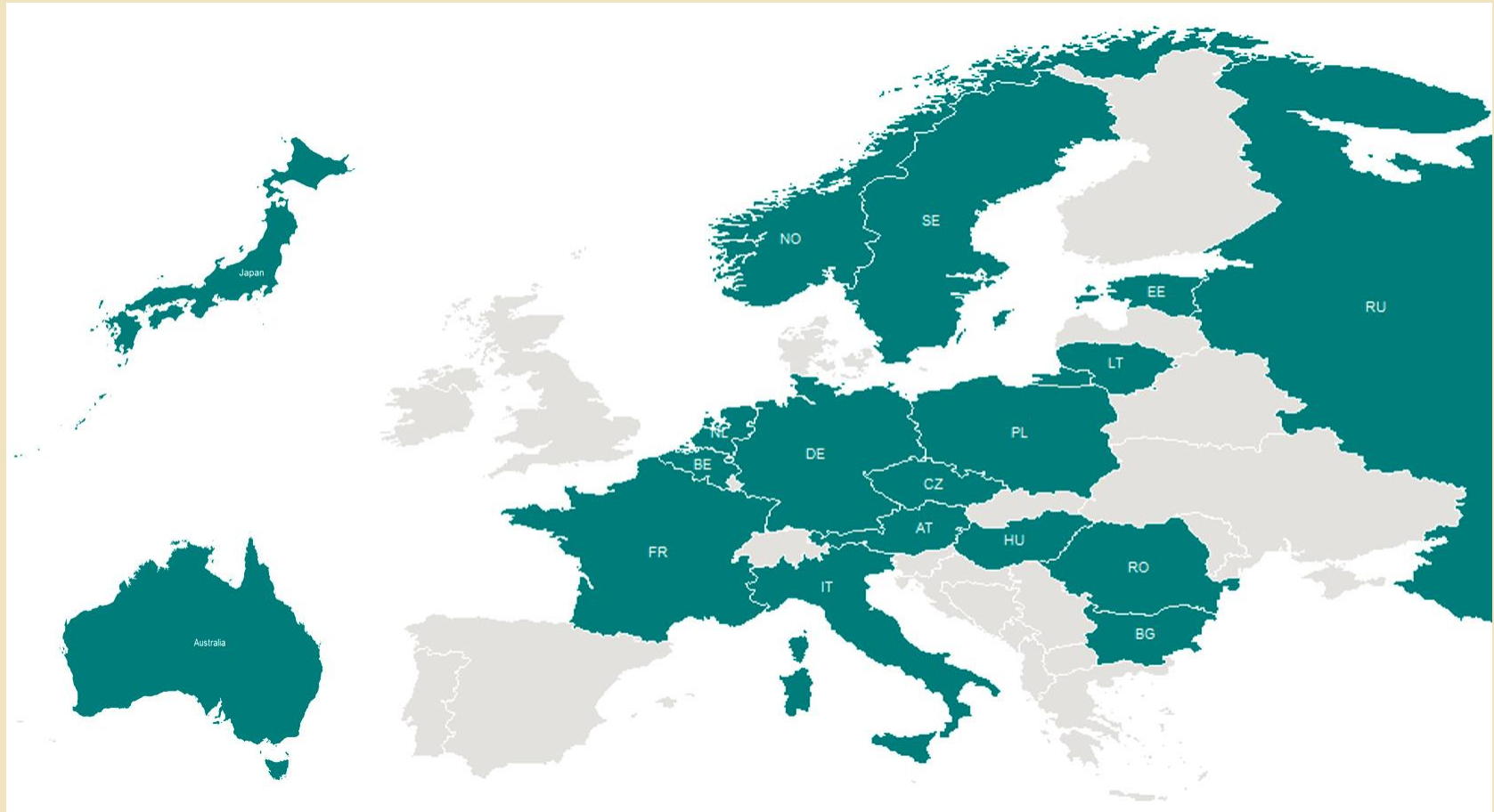
Eurostat (2014): Crude divorce rates. (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00013&plugin=1>)

Eurostat (2014): Crude marriage rates. (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00012&plugin=1>)

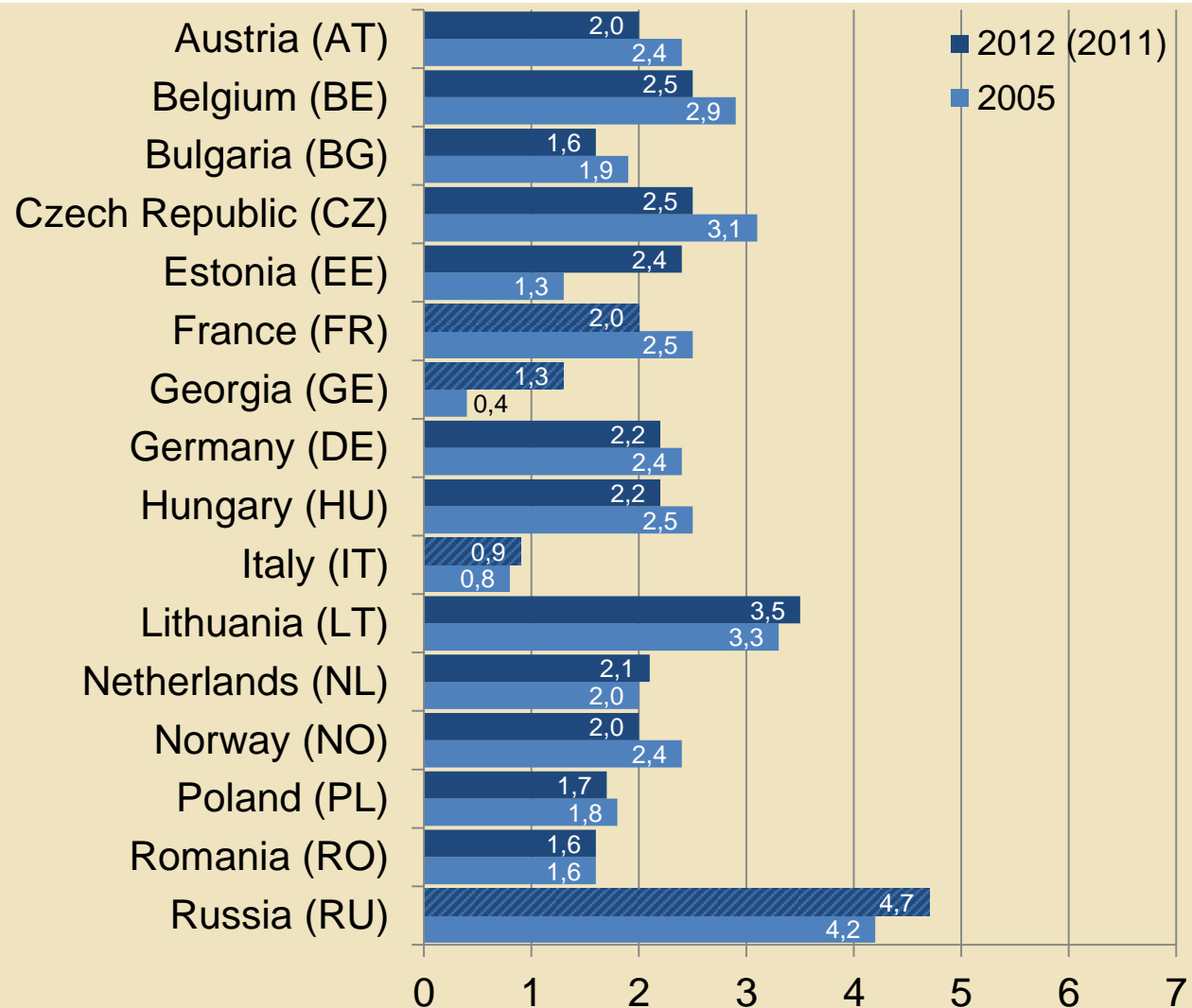
Eurostat (2014): Live births outside marriage. (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00018&plugin=1>)

Generations & Gender Programme (GGP) at <http://www.ggp-i.org/>

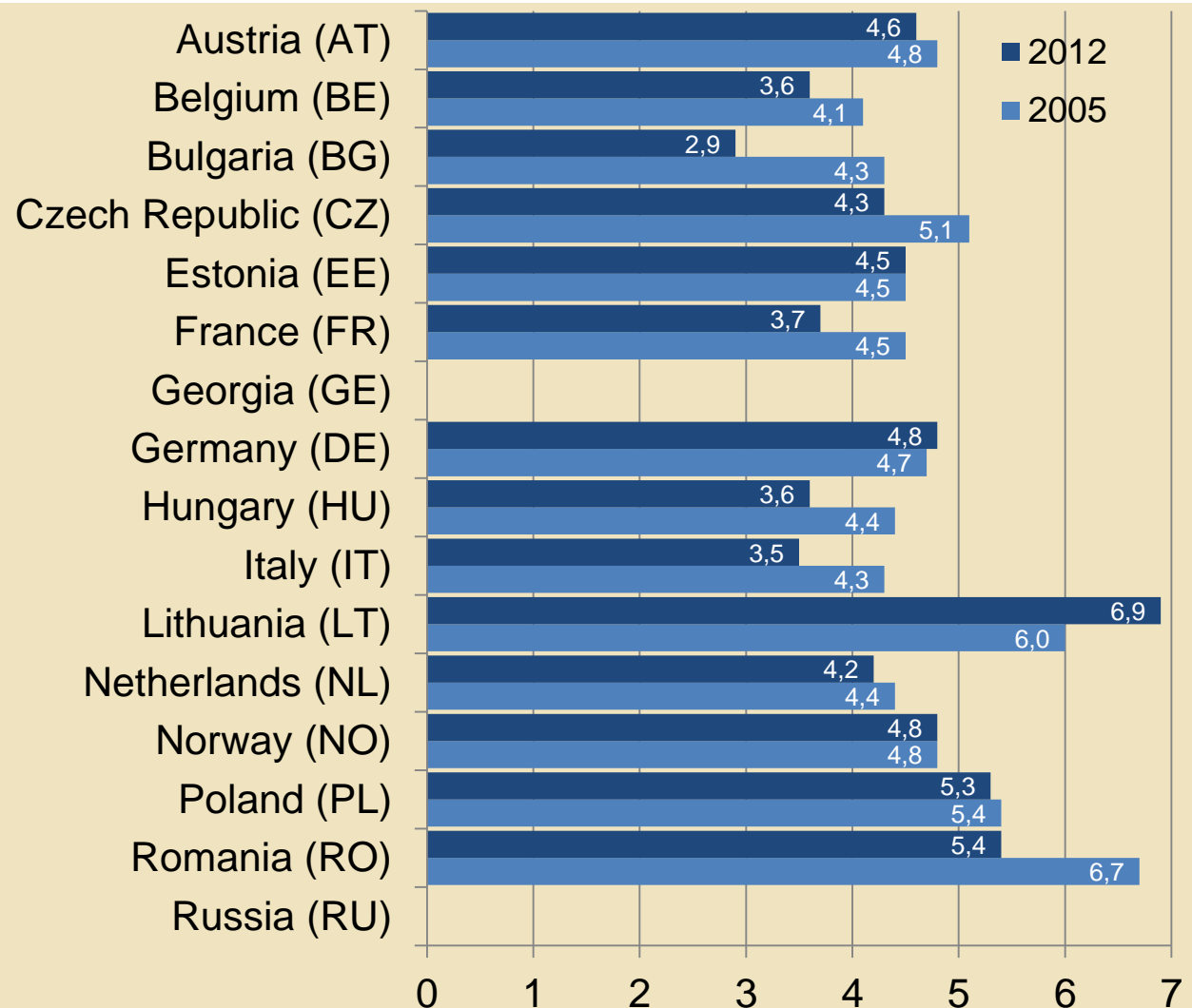
## GGP Countries



## Crude Divorce Rates 2005 & 2012 (per 1,000 persons)



## Crude Marriage Rates 2005 & 2012 (per 1,000 persons)





## Live births outside marriage 2005 & 2012 (% of live births)

