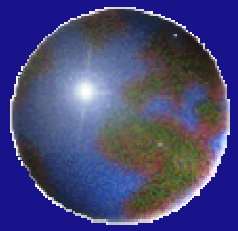

Healthy ageing

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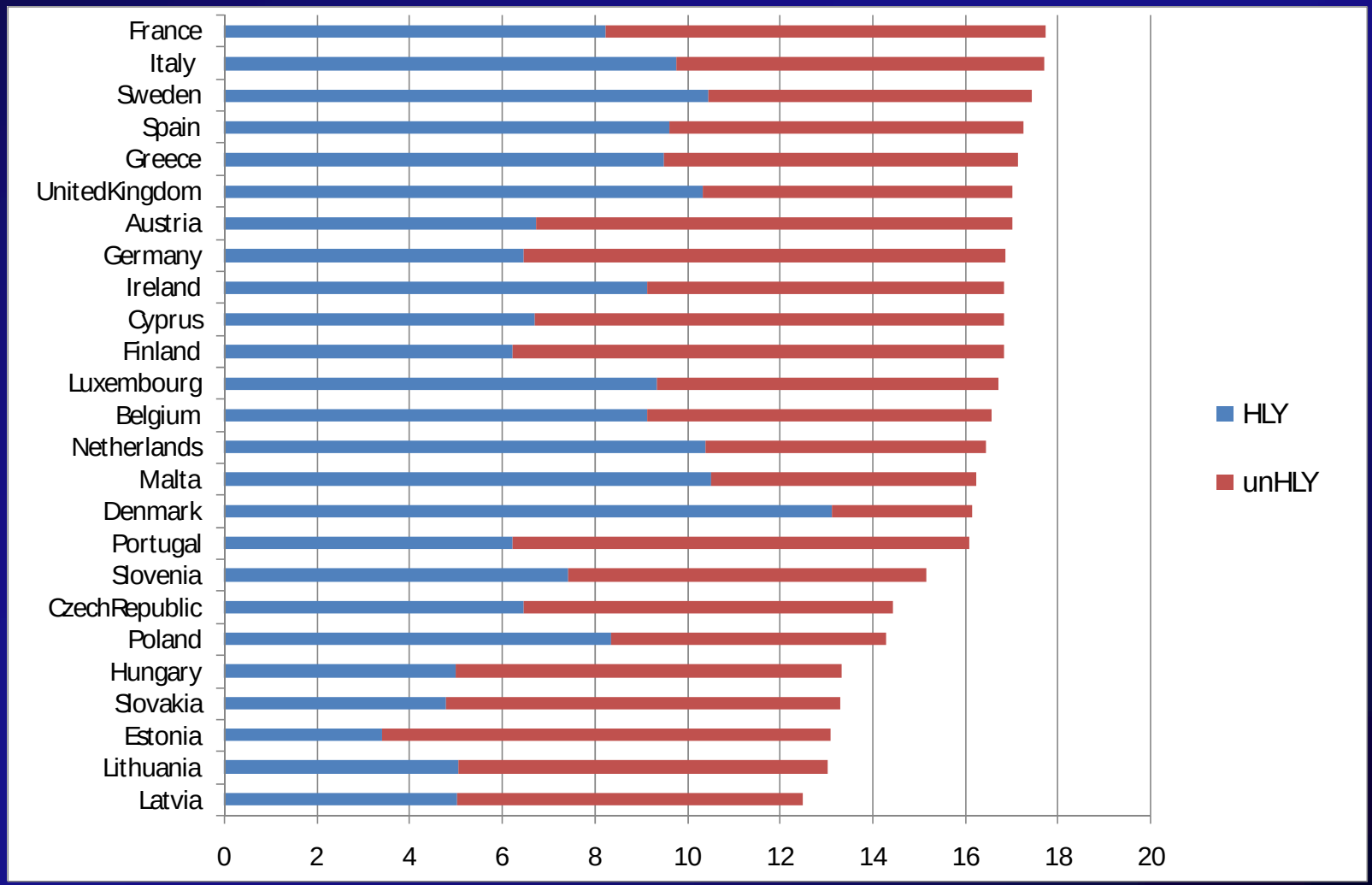
Definitions of health

- For the WHO, "*Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*" (UN, 1946).
- Canguilhem (1979) defines being in good health as also "*the ability to fall ill and recover*".
- Health is not only, "*the ability to function now, but the outlook for future functional ability*" (Fanshel, 1972).

A Summary Measure of Population Health

- In 2004 the European Commission added a health expectancy measure to the set of Structural Indicators, under the name of “Healthy Life Years” (HLY)
- This indicator based on the GALI question (global activity limitation) is actually a Disability-free Life Expectancy
- HLY is the first and only EU Structural Indicator on health

Healthy Life Years at 65: Men 2005



Current initiatives

- Increasing HLY is one of the main objectives of the EU Public Health Programme 2008-2013

Health & Consumer Protection
Directorate-General

FACTSHEET

Health Programme 2008-2013

Together for Health

The Second Programme of Community Action in the Field of Health 2008-2013 comes into force from 1 January 2008. This follows the first Programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008) which financed over 300 projects and other actions.

The objectives are:

- To improve citizens' health security;
- To promote health, including the reduction of health inequalities;
- To generate and disseminate health information and knowledge.

These objectives align future health action with the overall Community objectives of prosperity, solidarity and security.

The financial envelope for the programme is EUR 321 500 000.

To improve citizens' health security:

- Developing EU and Member States' capacity to respond to health threats, for example with health emergency planning and preparedness measures;
- Actions related to patient safety, injuries and accidents, risk assessment and community legislation on blood, tissues and cells.

To promote health, including the reduction of health inequalities:

- Action on health determinants – such as nutrition, alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption, as well as social and environmental determinants;
- Measures on the prevention of major diseases and bridging health inequalities across the EU;
- Increasing healthy life years and promoting healthy ageing.

To generate and disseminate health information and knowledge:

- Action on health indicators and ways of disseminating information to citizens;
- Focus on Community added-value action to exchange knowledge in areas such as gender issues, children's health or rare diseases.

Health-EU
The Public Health Portal of the EU
http://health.europa.eu

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Current initiatives

- Increasing HLY is one of the main objectives of the EU Public Health Programme 2008-2013
- Further cross-national health surveys – European Health Survey System

European Health Survey System (EHSS)

A comprehensive and co-ordinated set of surveys, allowing inter country comparisons and aiming to monitor potential changes in health over time

Two main components:

- European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU- SILC), every year and
- European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), every 5 years
- Both including the Mini European Health Module (MEHM) which includes the GALI

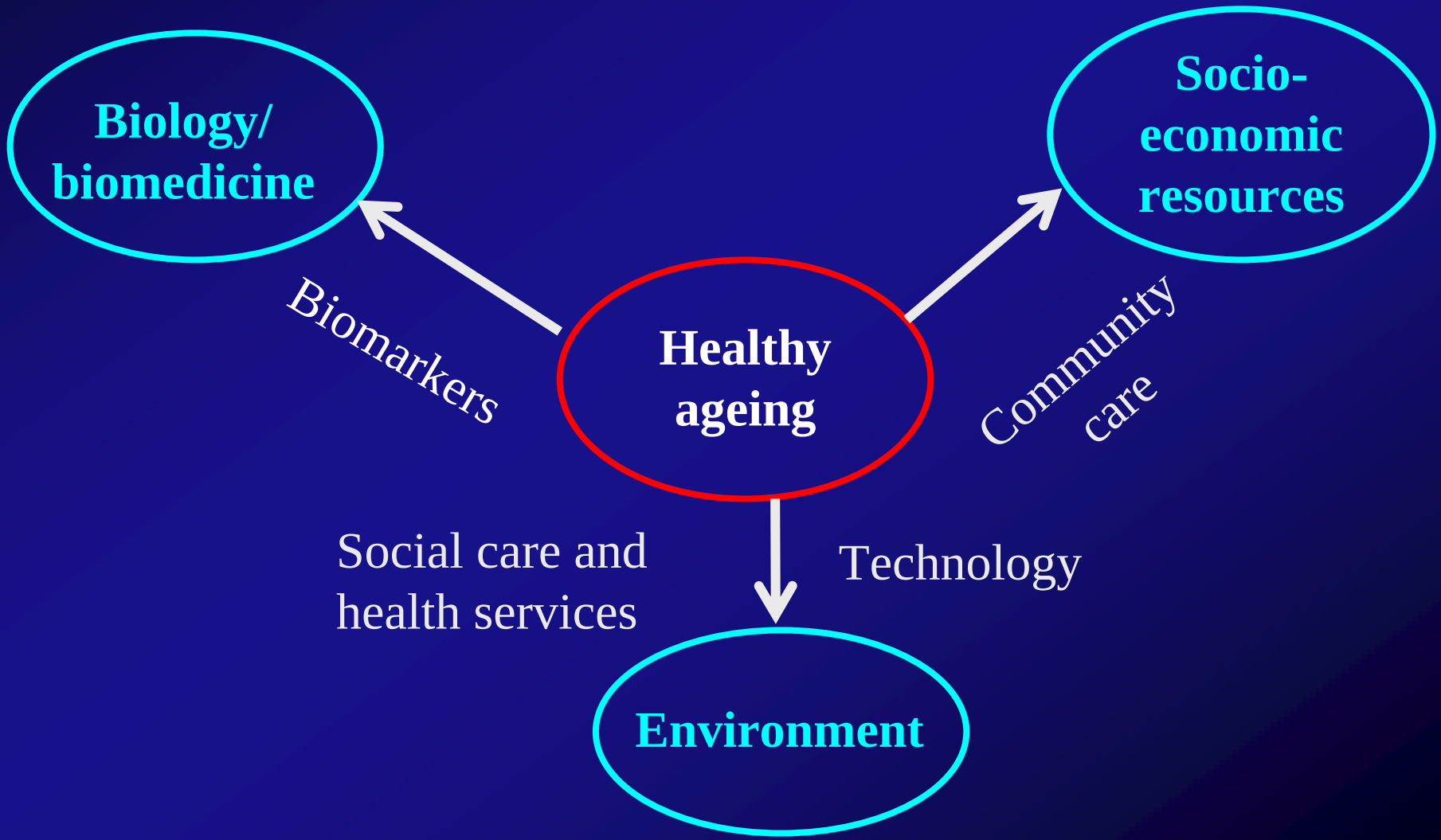
Healthy ageing theme

- Agree a working definition of health and well-being in later life
  - Incorporates views of older people and
  - whether societal beliefs about the role and place of older people play a part;
- Clarify the overlap between this and other three themes:
  - Biology/biomedicine
  - Socio-economic resources
  - Environment

Healthy ageing theme

- Create a coherent framework for health and well-being research into which existing findings can be placed:
  - in the simplest sense this may be in terms of determinants, consequences and expanding the context.
- Identify any new research topics that are likely to emerge in the foreseeable future;
- Determine the key research priorities in this field for the next 10-15 years;

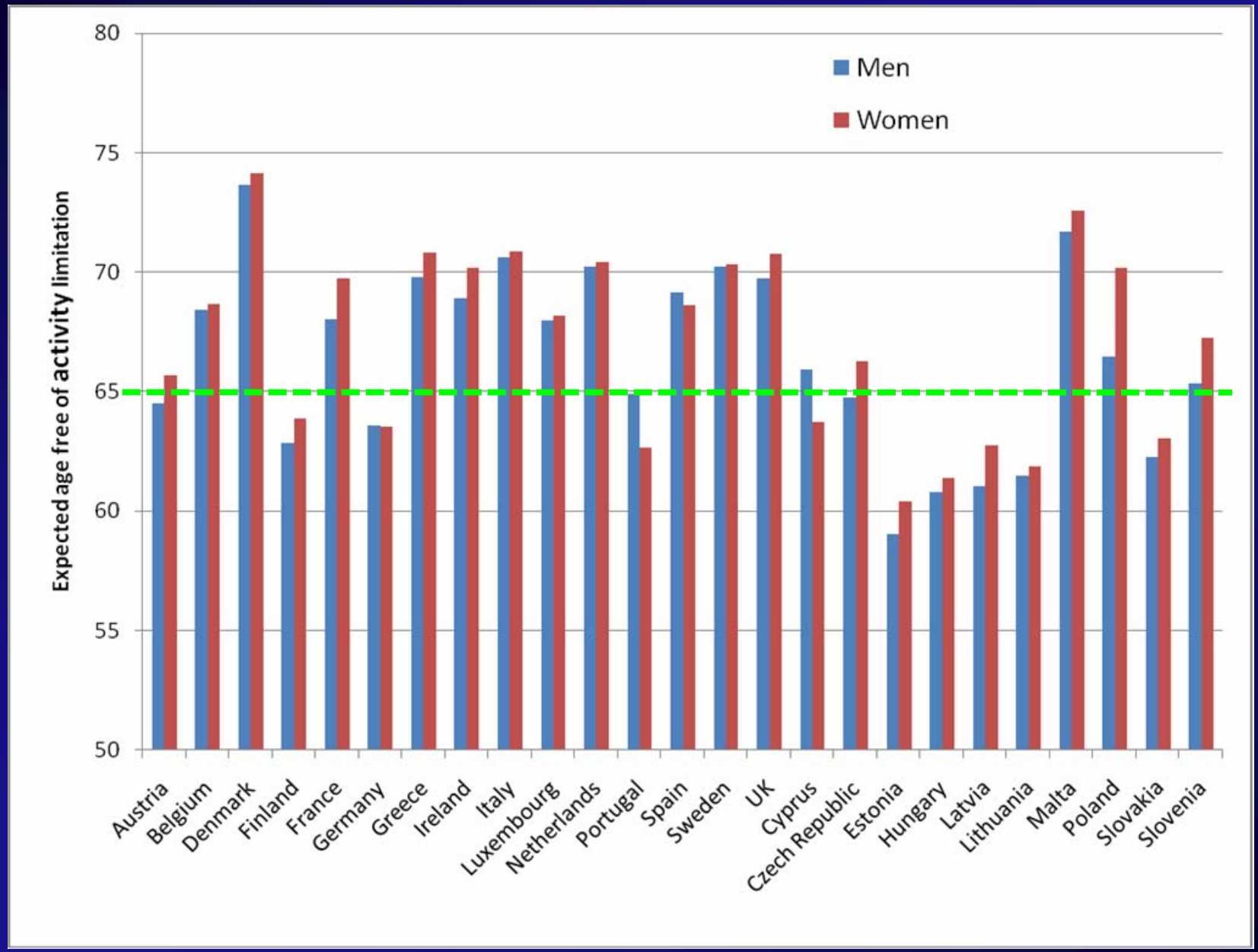
Interaction between themes



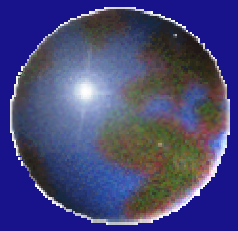
Possible areas

- Determinants of health and well being
- Preventive and anticipatory health care
  - Preventing/postponing disability
- Frailty
- Development of appropriate services
- Health and work in later life

HLY at age 50 in the EU25



(Source: Jagger, Gillies et al., Lancet 2008; 372: 2124–31)



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