

# Advisory services in the European AKIS



**Introduction and Overview**

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# Structure

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- ❖ The PRO AKIS project
- ❖ Overview of outputs
- ❖ The inventory: AKIS and advisory services
- ❖ The involvement of stakeholders
- ❖ Observations and conclusions



# Some background information

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*Title:* **Prospects for farmers' support: advisory services in the European AKIS**

## ❖ The project

- EU FP 7 – CSA, 1.5 Mio €
- 8 partners from 7 countries: INRA, JHI, SEGES, UAK, UAP, UHOH, UTAD, ZALF
- 30 months, 2012/12 – 2015/5

## ❖ Overall goal:

- Contribute to the performance of advisory services within the European AKISs to provide relevant and reliable knowledge for farmers and other rural actors



# The political background

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*Agricultural advisory services enforced by EU policies:*

## ❖ **Regulations EC 1782/2003 and 73/2009 on CC**

- Farm advisory services to support farmers' compliance (and more)

## ❖ **Regulations EC 1689/2005 and 1305/2013 on RD**

- the use of advisory services
- Setting up of management, relief and advisory services
- Knowledge transfer and information actions
- ... ensure the availability of sufficient advisory capacity ..



# How do we understand 'AKIS'?

## Agricultural knowledge and information/innovation system (AKIS) according to PRO AKIS

- ❖ an AKIS concept that aims at describing knowledge infrastructure (Klerkx *et al.* 2012)
- ❖ it gives a central role to the analysis of agricultural advisory services (Assefa *et al.* 2009)
- ❖ it aims at better understanding knowledge flows within the system, focussing on the issue of knowledge access for a diversity of actors (Hall *et al.* 2006)
- ❖ it works at a scale (mostly national or regional) that matches the aim of describing the situations in the EU member states



AKIS concepts

(Labarthe et al. 2013)



# How do we understand 'Advisory Services'?

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## Agricultural advisory services

- ❖ ... as the entire set of organisations that will enable farmers to co-produce farm-level solutions by establishing service relationships with advisers to produce knowledge and enhance skills ...
- ❖ A clear understanding of the activity providing infrastructures, but not a normative view about the aim, governance, funding and methods of these services...



# PRO AKIS activities and outputs

- ❖ Conceptual framework for the assessment of AKIS
- ❖ Inventory of the AKIS institutions and interactions in the EU-27, consisting of national reports and a searchable database

**Aim of the inventory:** create an overview on advisory systems in the EU given their recent political attention and the drastic institutional changes they undergo

- ❖ Comparative Analyses of challenges for European AKIS through 12 case studies
- ❖ Policy recommendations for European AKIS



# Expected impacts

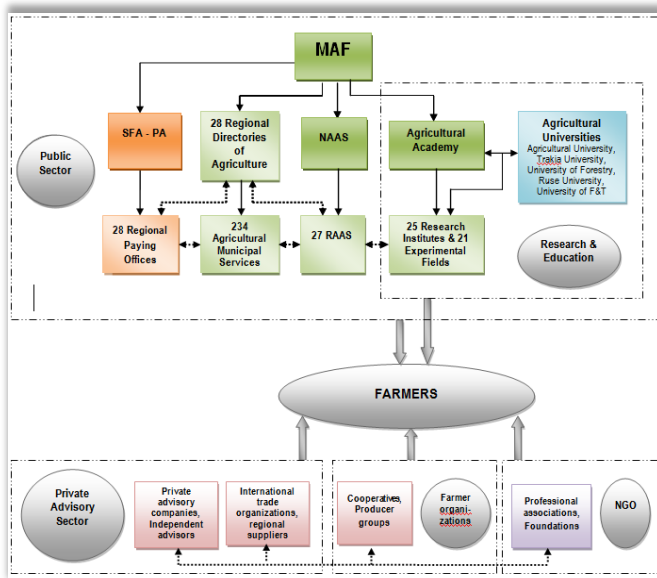
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- ❖ Raising of awareness for AKIS in EU-27
- ❖ Recommendations on 'how to strengthen (F)AS'
- ❖ Enrich discussion about networks and operational groups in the EIP
- ❖ Support for social cohesion in rural areas through information on knowledge flows among different types of farms
- ❖ Tested methods for structured AKIS stakeholder involvement

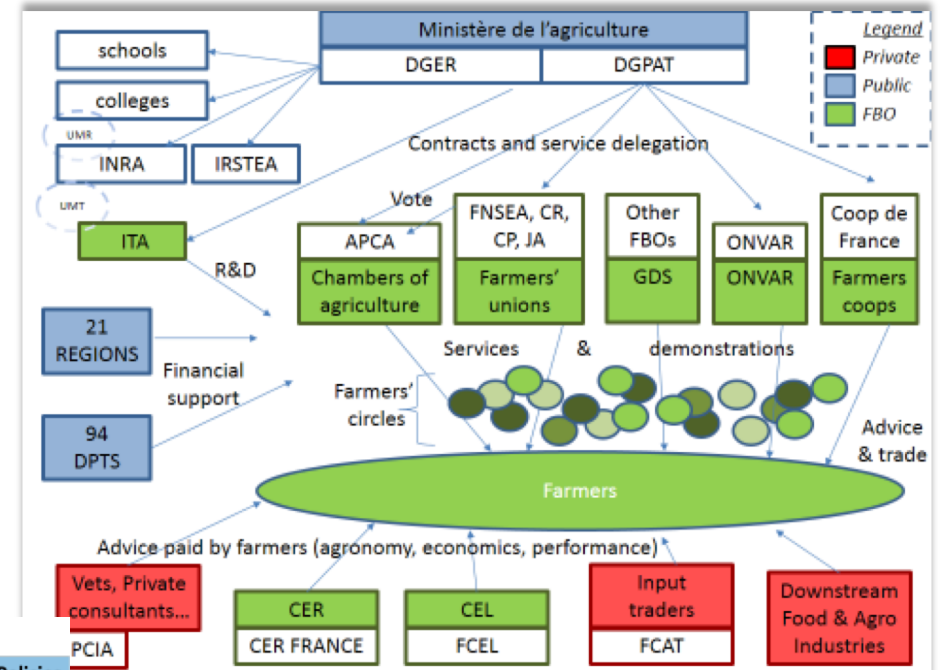




# The Diversity of European AKIS - a visual appraisal

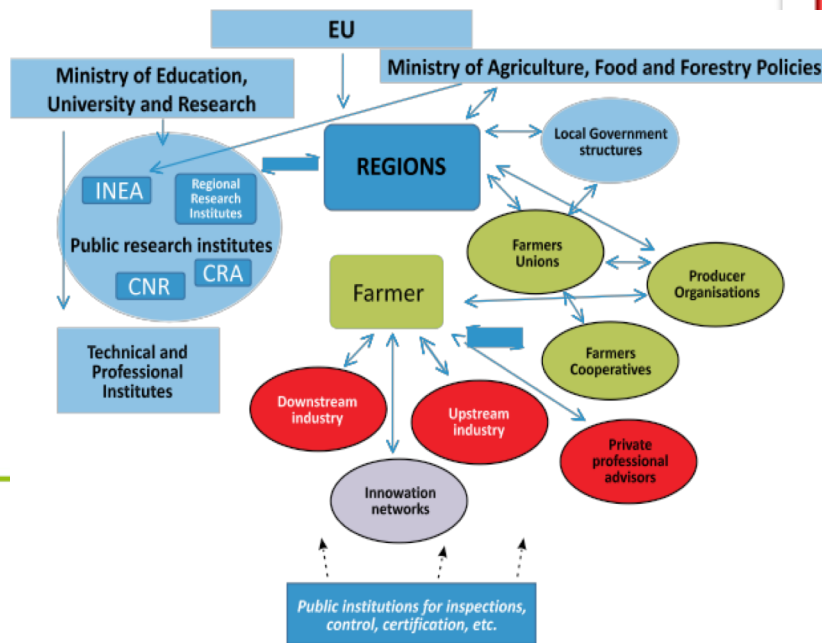


Bulgaria



France

Greece



AKIS in Europe: the inventory



# Positioning of European AKISs - an attempt of systematisation

❖ *The position of the national AKIS in the matrix was constructed according to its qualitative characteristics in the inventory:*

❖ **(1) strong vs weak and (2) fragmented vs integrated**

❖ **(1) Strong**

**vs**

**weak**



dominant institutional actors existing

availability of (public) means for AKIS

Farmers being reached by advice



# Positioning of European AKIS in a two dimension matrix

❖ (2) Fragmented

vs

integrated:



Coordinating structure(s) existing  
National AKIS and/or advisory services policies  
Linkages between various actors  
positively or negatively rated



# Examples for selected AKIS characteristics

## Weak vs Strong

Greece, Portugal: no or few funds for public advisory services; unclear whether farmers are reached

Cyprus: pressure for the restructuring/downsizing of public support

Austria, Ireland: widespread public support

France, Germany: dedicated resources, powerful actors

## Fragmented vs Integrated

Greece, Portugal, Romania: weak or no linkages between different actors

UK: complex open system that follows the laissez-faire model

Austria: public research, education and extension bodies well connected

Ireland: linkages and coordination between public and private actors exists



# Results and conclusions from AKIS inventory

## ❖ **Great diversity of AKIS (in Europe)**

- Comparative appraisal not useful because of the multitude of influencing factors;
- Functional focus is appropriate to support comparison and mutual learning

## ❖ **The conceptual value of AKIS is high**

- Gives an overview and supports analysis of vertical and horizontal interaction and integration

## ❖ **Attention:**

- AKIS concept wasn't well known in the Member States in 2013
- Education wasn't explicitly addressed – although an important component in many Member States



# Dominant advisory services (in 2013)

Type of dominant advisory service org	Country			
<b>Public</b>	Bulgaria Latvia* Slovakia*	Greece Poland*	Hungary*	Ireland Romania*
<b>Private</b>	Estonia*	The Netherlands		
<b>Farmer-Based Organisation</b>	Austria* Finland Slovenia*	Belgium France*	Cyprus Lithuania*	Denmark Portugal
<b>Public/ Private</b>	Czech Republic*	Spain Sweden	United Kingdom	
<b>Public/Private/FBO</b>	Germany*	Italy	Malta	
<b>Public/ FBO</b>	Luxembourg*			



# The major target groups by dominant type of advisory service organisation

Type of advisory organisation	Type of target group (by rank / hierarchy)
Public	Medium commercial farms; Small commercial farms; Young farmers;
Private (private profit companies, individual consultants)	Large commercial farms; Medium commercial farms; Small commercial farms;
FBOs (chambers of agriculture, farmers' unions, farmers' associations, farmers' cooperatives)	Medium commercial farms; Large commercial farms; Small commercial farms; Producers' groups;



# Stakeholder involvement in the AKIS analyses

- ❖ 3 regional workshops in Feb/March 2014:
  - Copenhagen on „northern Europe“ with UK and Ireland, Scandinavian and Baltic Countries
  - Paris on „southern Europe“ with Mediterranean and Eastern European Countries
  - Krakow on „central Europe“ from East to West

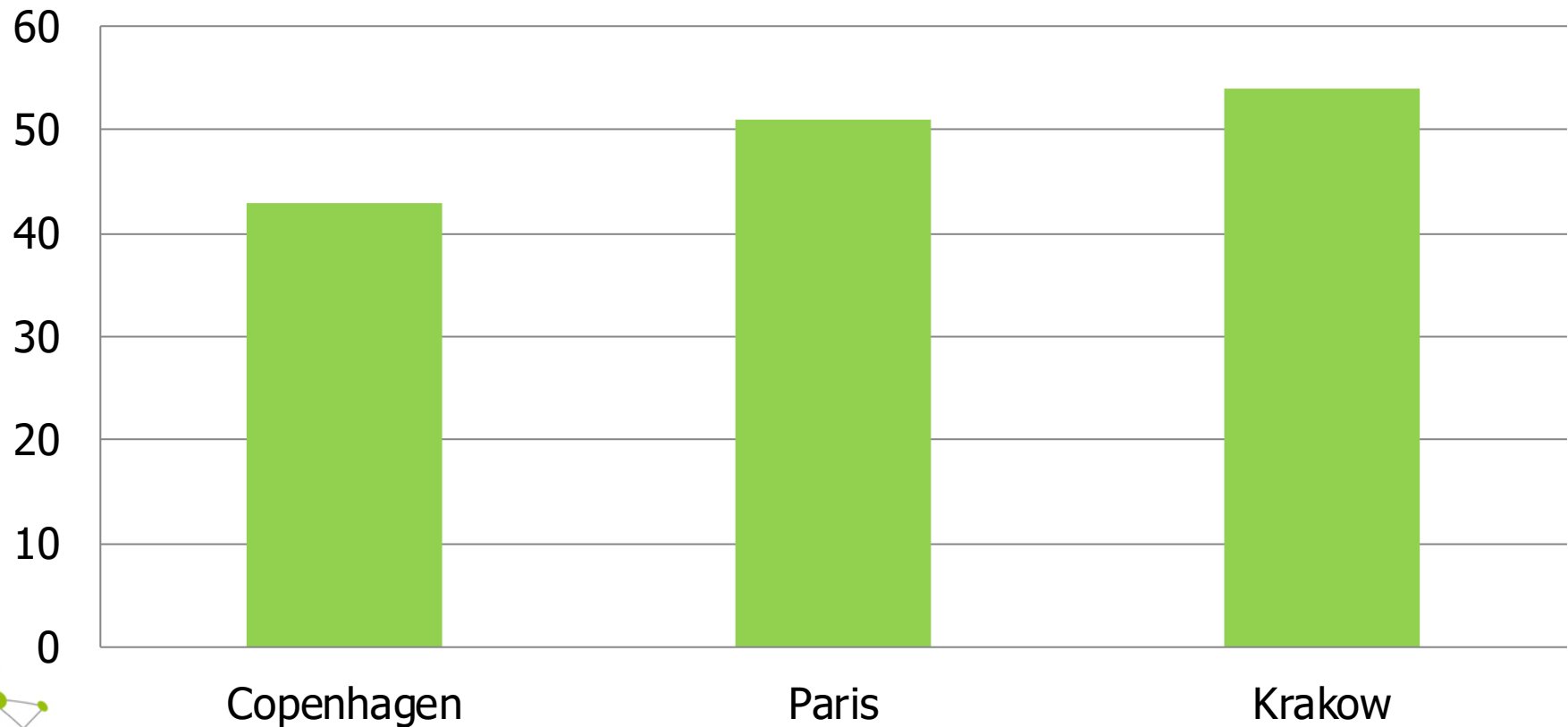




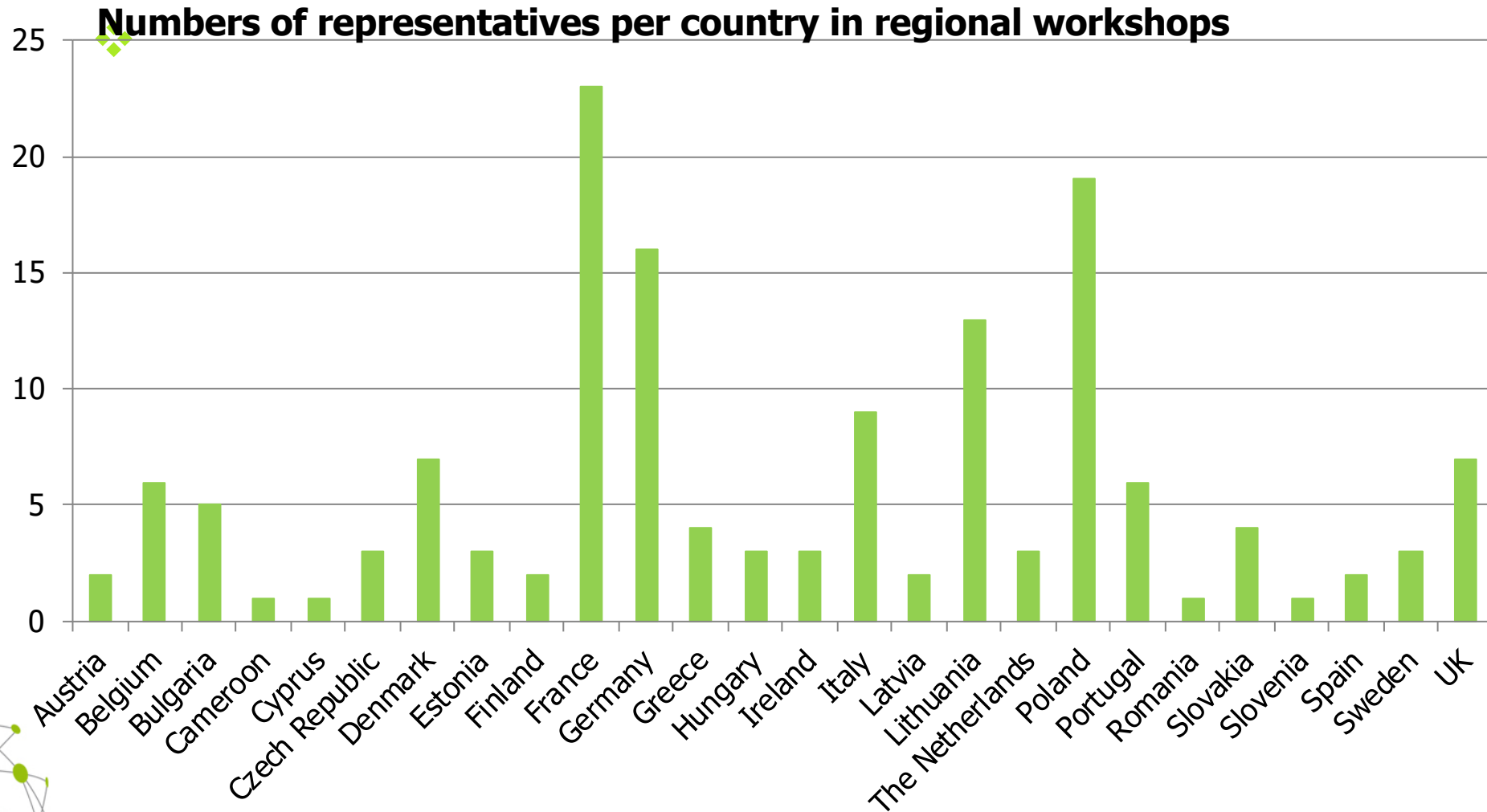
# Who were the stakeholders involved?



## Participants of regional seminars

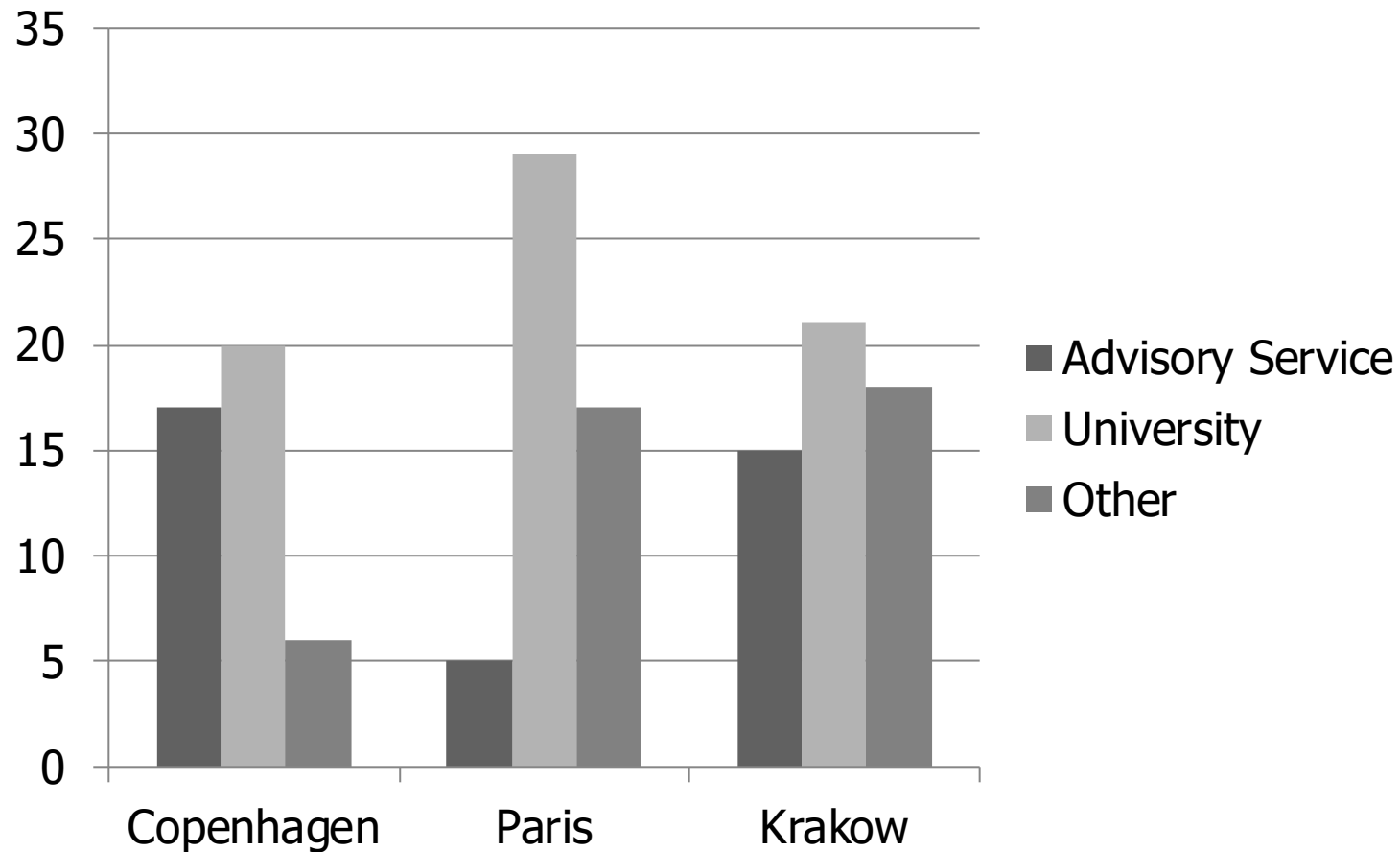


# Who were the stakeholders involved?



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## ◆ Participants organisational affiliation



# Findings emerging from discussions with stakeholders

- ❖ New user groups in AKIS, e.g. migrants to rural areas, new small-scale farmers, young farmers – while also AKIS is broadening.
- ❖ Increasing diversity in types of users, it seems that some groups are excluded from advisory services (e.g. Part-time farmers).
- ❖ Increasing trend to privatisation of advisory services which potentially leads to competition → enhancing cooperation is a critical issue.
- ❖ Emerging new roles of public services in more and more pluralistic advisory systems.
- ❖ Need to assess the quality of advisory services and AKIS.



# Observations and conclusions

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- ❖ Fortunate coincidence of project and political and societal discourses – “Advisory service is back on the European agenda”.
- ❖ High need to exchange and discuss among institutional stakeholders to solve policy implementation challenges  
-> a multi-level, multi-actor governance issue.
- ❖ However, reduced resources and increasing institutional fragmentation in many countries;  
-> little is known which farmers/end users are reached and benefit from advice.
- ❖ Although advice may come from FB and private organisations, public institutions remain with key functions in the AKIS such as coordination, monitoring and quality control.



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Prospects for Farmers' Support : Advisory Services in European AKIS (PRO AKIS)

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