



Analysis of AMBER Alerts and missing children in Europe



amberalert.eu

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Missing Children

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Executive Summary

The main aim of this document is to gain knowledge and insight in the number of missing children publicised by law enforcement or police mandated organisations and the use of AMBER Alert mechanisms in Europe. This is based on figures made available by authorities from 21 European member states, and Switzerland. Furthermore, AMBER Alert Europe analysed these data on various parameters, such as nationality, age, gender and the recovery rate within one month.

The research was conducted by AMBER Alert Europe with public data collected from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015 and has two main objectives:

- To collect and analyse data and to develop the basis to improve the mechanisms involved when children go missing in Europe;
- To identify differences between countries in missing children cases based on gender, age and the time in which the child was recovered safe and sound.

Data identified AMBER Alerts

- In 2015, 29 AMBER Alerts were issued in 8 European countries: Czech Republic (n=14), Greece (n=6), the Netherlands (n=2), Poland (n=2), France (n=2), Cyprus (n=1), Ireland (n=1) and the United Kingdom (n=1);
- The AMBER Alerts involved 30 children;
- 89 percent of the AMBER Alert cases were solved within 24 hours (n=25);
- The average age of missing children for which an AMBER Alert was issued is 10 years old;

- The Czech Republic issued the majority of AMBER Alerts with 48 percent (n=14);
- On a monthly basis, most of the AMBER Alerts were issued in November (n=7) and April (n=5).

Data identified missing children

- The criteria used by law enforcement to publish information on missing children varies per country;
- AMBER Alert Europe mapped 1848 missing children as publicised by law enforcement in 21 countries;
- On average, 75 percent of missing children mapped on www.amberalert.eu was recovered within one month.



01

Introduction

1.1 Research objectives and approach

The aim of this document is to give insight in the number of AMBER Alerts¹ and missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe, based on figures on missing children publicised by authorities from 21 European member states, and Switzerland on their websites. The criteria to publicly report on missing children cases vary per country.

Estimations of the total amount of children who go missing in Europe every year vary from 250.000² to 1 million³. Missing children include several categories of child disappearances, including parental abductions, runaways, unaccompanied migrant minors, criminal abductions and lost, injured or otherwise missing children. A small sample of these children is shared by law enforcement or police mandated organisations.

For this report, AMBER Alert Europe collected statistics in two areas: 1) AMBER Alerts and 2) missing children publicised by law enforcement on their websites. While the data collected at 2 is not representative of the true missing children numbers, it does illustrate the disparity between countries in how they record and publicise them. With this report AMBER Alert Europe aims to emphasise the importance of AMBER Alert mechanisms and to enrich the discussion about the differences between member states responses to missing children.

How AMBER Alert Europe Works

AMBER Alert Europe provides an always up-to-date overview of recent AMBER Alerts and missing children publicised by law enforcement in Europe. AMBER Alert Europe is the only European organisation that collects and maps data on AMBER Alerts and missing children publicised in Europe. AMBER Alert Europe informs its police expert network, member organizations and even European citizens (website/ social media) on active AMBER Alerts and missing children publicised by law enforcement in Europe.

Missing children

AMBER Alert Europe only maps information made available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations websites as listed in annex A. Additionally, AMBER Alert Europe only maps information on missing children under the age of 18 who are missing less than one month. Information about missing child cases will be deleted from www.amberalert.eu once the child has been found or is missing longer than one month. AMBER Alert Europe only reproduces information published by law enforcement or an organisation mandated by them and does not make any decisions about risk or the circumstances of the child's reported disappearance.

¹ In this document, the name AMBER Alert refers to all child alerting systems, including those with alternate names such as Child Rescue Alert, Child Alert, Alerte Enlèvement etc.

² Ecorys, Study on missing children in the EU (2013) http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/missing_children_study_2013_en.pdf

³ Euronews (2012) <http://www.euronews.com/2012/10/01/has-anyone-seen-my-child/>

AMBER Alert systems in Europe

December 2015

Source: AMBER Alert Europe



Image 1: AMBER Alert systems in Europe

1.2 Definitions

AMBER Alert

When it is believed that the life or health of a missing child is in imminent danger, the police can issue an AMBER Alert. This allows the police to instantly alert the public and make sure everyone is on the lookout for the child. The national criteria for each country can be found further in this report. Most countries use criteria similar to the criteria recommended by the European Commission in 2008:

Criteria for issuing an AMBER Alerts as recommended by the European Commission:

1. The victim is a minor (i.e. under 18 years of age);
2. It is a proven abduction, there are clear elements indicating that it could be a case of abduction;

3. The health or the life of the victim is at high risk;
4. Information is available which, once disseminated, will allow the victim to be located;
5. Publication of this information is not expected to add to the risk facing the victim.

In the best interest of the child, countries like the UK, the Netherlands and France have issued AMBER Alerts without evidence for a proven abduction.

Missing children

A missing child is considered endangered when there is an immediate and significant risk of harm but the case does not reach the criteria for an AMBER Alert. Police can decide to publicise information and ask the help of citizens to recover the child. However the criteria used by law enforcement to publicise information on a missing child's case vary per country.

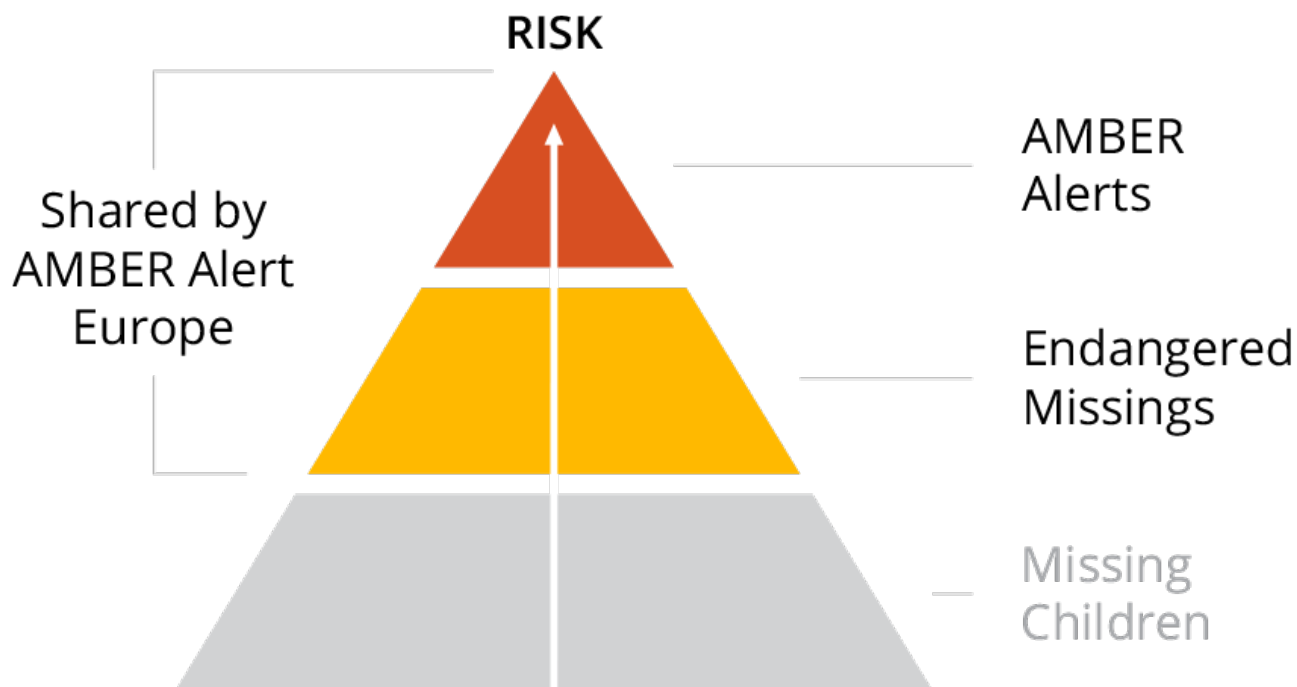


Image 2: Categories of risk. AMBER Alert Europe shares information on AMBER Alerts and (endangered) missing children with police experts partner organisations and European citizens.

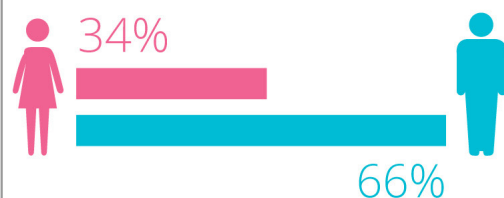
A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the slide, showing the outlines of the continents and major landmasses.

02

AMBER Alerts in Europe

29 AMBER ALERTS
IN THE **EU** IN 2015

In **2014** there
were **25**
AMBER Alerts



27 children
were **successfully** recovered

89%
was recovered
within **24 hours**

AVERAGE AGE: **10**

47%

of the countries that
have an AMBER alert
system, issued an
alert in **2015**



2.1 AMBER Alerts: 29

In total 16 EU member states have an AMBER Alert system in place: Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and United Kingdom. In addition, Switzerland has an AMBER Alert system in place too.⁴

By the end of 2015, 8 AMBER Alert systems have been used more than once by law enforcement agencies: Belgium (n=2), Czech Republic (n=138), Netherlands (n=22), France (n=15), Greece (n=30+), Ireland (n=5), Poland (n=2), United Kingdom (n=3). In addition, 3 AMBER Alert systems have been used once, namely in Germany, Cyprus and Italy. The German and the Cypriot AMBER Alert system have both been used once, Italy partially used the system once.⁴

The 6 remaining countries with an AMBER Alert system have never used it, that is to say Bulgaria, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain

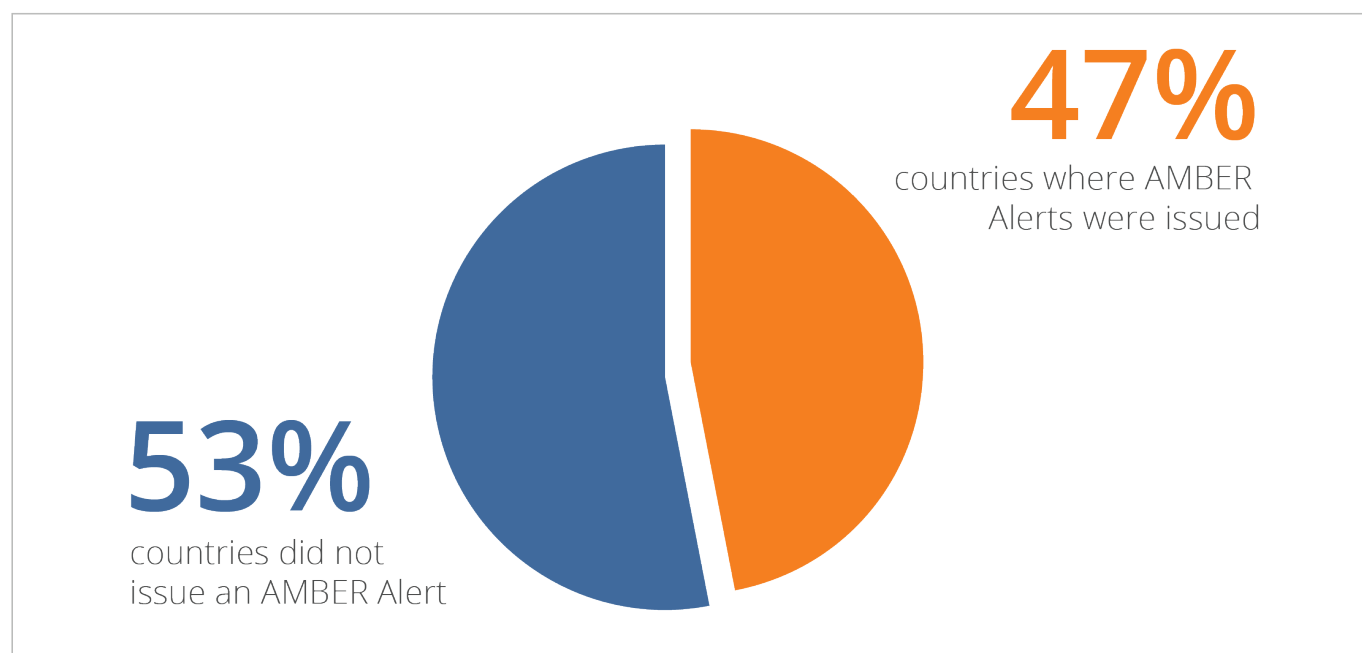
and Switzerland. Additionally, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Slovenia and Sweden do not have an AMBER Alert system in place.⁴

Total AMBER Alerts in 2015

In 2015, 29 AMBER Alerts have been issued. The AMBER Alerts involved 30 children: one AMBER Alert was issued for multiple children (Greece, n=2). 47% of the countries that have an AMBER Alert system in place, issued an alert in 2015 (n=8).

Range and use of European AMBER Alerts

From 1 January to 31 December 2015, 29 AMBER Alerts were issued in 8 European member states. The Czech Republic issued the majority of AMBER Alerts with 48 percent (n=14). Greece accounted for 21 percent of the AMBER Alerts (n=6). France (n=2), the Netherlands (n=2) and Poland (n=2) account each for 7 percent of the AMBER Alerts followed by Cyprus (n=1), Ireland (n=1) and the United Kingdom (n=1), both accounting for 3 percent.



Graph 1: AMBER Alert use (% countries with an AMBER Alert system in place that issued AMBER Alerts in 2015)

⁴ Data retrieved on 1 January 2016

Time between reported missing and recovery

Of the 30 missing children for which an AMBER Alert was issued (29 AMBER Alerts), 27 children were safely recovered (96%), of which most children even within 24 hours (n=25).⁵

1 child has not been recovered safely, she was murdered (Greece). The whereabouts of 2 children are unknown to AMBER Alert Europe (Czech Republic (n=1) and Cyprus (n=1)). There is no information available about the Cypriot AMBER Alert case. Additionally, in case a child is still missing at the time of withdrawal of a Czech alert, authorities do not publicly notify if the child has been found at a later moment. Therefore, these data were not known to AMBER Alert Europe.

Age and gender of missing children (AMBER Alerts)

The average age of children (n=30) for which an AMBER Alert was issued, is 10 years old. 66 percent of the AMBER Alerts were issued for boys (n=19).⁶

Graph 3 shows 18 percent of the AMBER Alert cases were represented by children (both boys and girls) younger than 6 years old (n=5). Most missing boys were aged between 6 and 10 years old (n=7) and between 11-15 years old (n=7), while most missing girls were aged between 11 and 15 years old (n=6). The age of 2 children is unknown. As a result, these cases were not taken into account.

Number of AMBER Alert cases per month

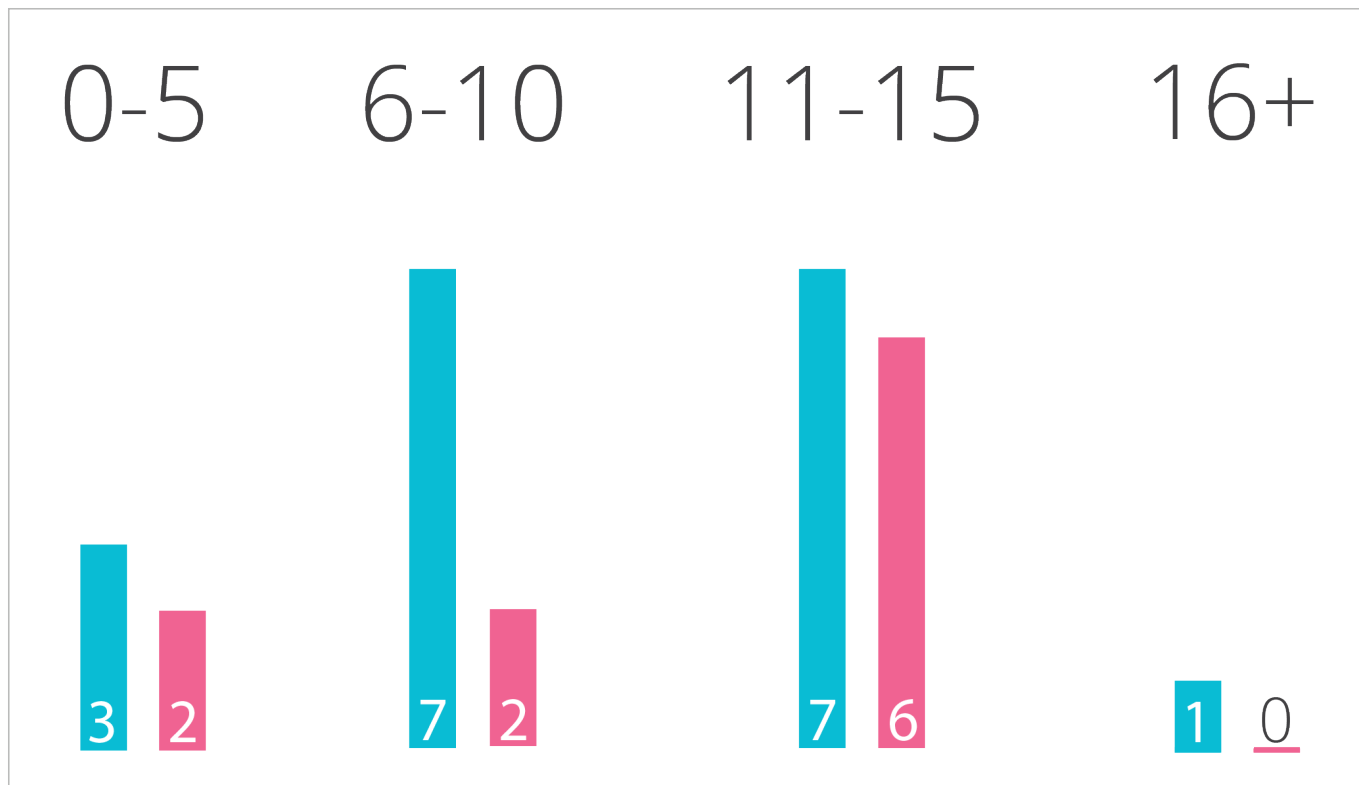
Graph 4 shows the number of AMBER Alerts issued per month ranges from a low of 4 alerts in the first quarter to a high of 10 alerts in the last quarter of 2015. Furthermore, most AMBER Alerts were issued in April (n=5) and November (n=7).



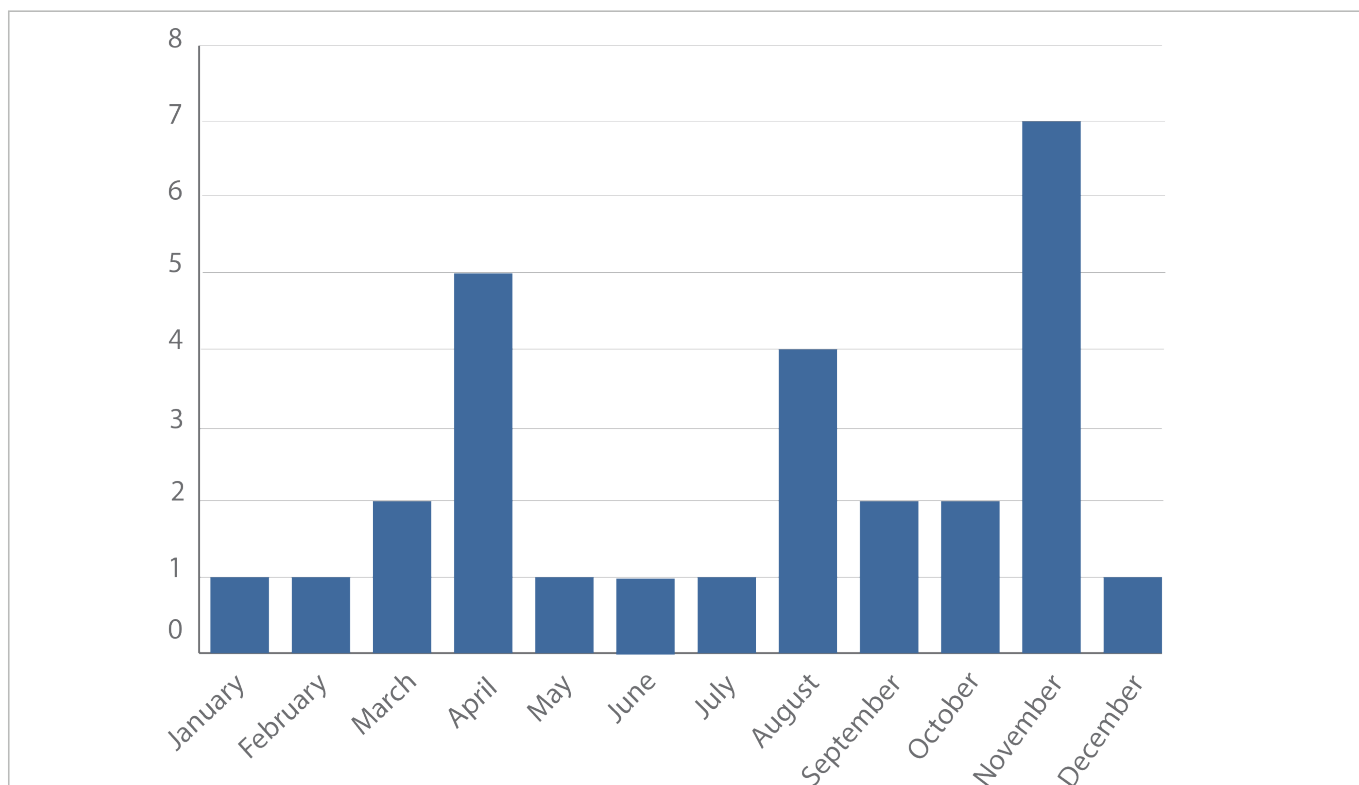
Graph 2: Time span recovered children AMBER Alerts 1/1/2015 to 31/12/2015

⁵ The whereabouts of two children are unknown to AMBER Alert Europe. As a result, these cases were not taken into account.

⁶ There is no information available about the sex and age of the Cypriot AMBER Alert (n=1). Also, AMBER Alert Europe has no information available about the age of 1 Czech AMBER Alert. As a result, this case was not taken into account.



Graph 3: Age and gender of missing children (n=30) for whom an AMBER Alert was issued (n=29). The age of 2 children and the gender of 1 child is unknown to AMBER Alert Europe. As a result, these cases were not taken into account.



Graph 4: Number of AMBER Alert cases by monthly activations from 1/1/2015 to 31/12/2015. The date of 1 AMBER Alert is unknown to AMBER Alert Europe. As a result, this case is not taken into account.



03

**Missing children
mapped in Europe**

1848

MISSING CHILDREN MAPPED ON
WWW.AMBERALERT.EU IN 2015

In 2014 there were

1739

missing children

In 2014 the
average age was

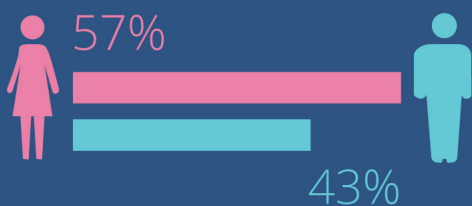
14

75% of the missing children
were **successfully** recovered
within one month

AVERAGE AGE

14

in 2014
62% girls and
38% boys
were
missing



86%

of the missing children
in the **last quarter** had
a photo available

Q1 374 missing children

Q2 439 missing children

Q3 477 missing children

Q4 557 missing children

FEBRUARY

Least children missing (105)

Least **boys** missing (30)

MAY

Least **girls** missing (68)

159

children missing every month

NOVEMBER

Most **girls** missing (111)

DECEMBER

Most children missing (202)

Most **boys** missing (101)

3.1 Mapped: 1848 missing children

This section will give an insight into the statistics regarding missing children cases mapped by AMBER Alert Europe as described below. As the data are only partial, they cannot be used to draw conclusions on the number, gender, age and recovery rate of missing children in Europe.

The criteria used by law enforcement to publicise information on a missing child's case vary per country. Table 1 shows country specific information on missing children, age, gender ratio and recovery rate within one month.

This section will give an insight into the statistics regarding missing children cases mapped by AMBER Alert Europe as described below. As the data are only partial, they cannot be used to draw conclusions on the number, gender, age and recovery rate of missing children in Europe.

The criteria used by law enforcement and police mandated organisations to publicise information on a missing children cases vary per country. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because, thankfully, the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate). A very small percentage of those missing children cases will

be suitable for an AMBER Alert, which is why an effective triage process to assess risk is essential and recommended by AMBER Alert Europe. For more information on risk assessment, see articles and videos on our website.

AMBER Alert Europe maps those cases publicised by law enforcement and police mandated organisations on their national websites as listed in [annex A](#). Additionally, AMBER Alert Europe only maps information on missing children under the age of 18 who are missing less than one month. Information about missing child cases will be deleted from [www.amberalert.eu](#) once the child has been found or is missing longer than one month.

Estimations of the total number of children go missing in Europe every year vary from 250.000⁷ to 1 million⁸. Previous research (Missing Children in the European Union. Mapping, data collection and statistics 2013) shows that there are inconsistencies between countries in the way that they record missing children and therefore the annual total of reports. The current publicity surrounding missing migrant children, with Europol stating that there are more than 10,000 refugee children missing and the Summit Report 2016 shows that there is underreporting and incoherent data. These variations are also reflected in the number of cases mapped by AMBER Alert Europe. All of this highlights the need for more consistency in the way that missing children are responded to as it is currently a lottery depending on which country they go missing in as to how this is dealt with.

⁷ Ecorys, Study on missing children in the EU (2013) <http://www.ecorys.nl/english/projecten/study-missing-children-eu>

⁸ Euronews (2012) <http://www.euronews.com/2012/10/01/has-anyone-seen-my-child/>

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In 2015, AMBER Alert Europe mapped 1848 on her website. For 30 of these children an AMBER Alert was issued (n=29). Table 1 shows country specific information on missing children: age, gender ratio and recovery rate within one month.

⁹The criteria used by law enforcement to publicise information on missing children cases vary per country. There is no information available on Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia. Therefore these countries are not included in this table.

¹⁰Total missing children mapped on www.amberalert.eu. AMBER Alert Europe only maps information made available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations. Additionally, AMBER Alert Europe only maps information on missing children under the age of 18 who are missing less than one month.

¹¹ The whereabouts of 1 child are unknown to AMBER Alert Europe. As a result, this was not taken into account.

¹² No numbers available about 1 case to AMBER Alert Europe. As a result this case was not taken into account.

¹³ Not an EU member state

¹⁴ Weighted average age of missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe. The average age is weighted per country. The arithmetic average is 13 years old (arithmetic mean is the sum of a collection of numbers divided by the number of numbers in the collection).

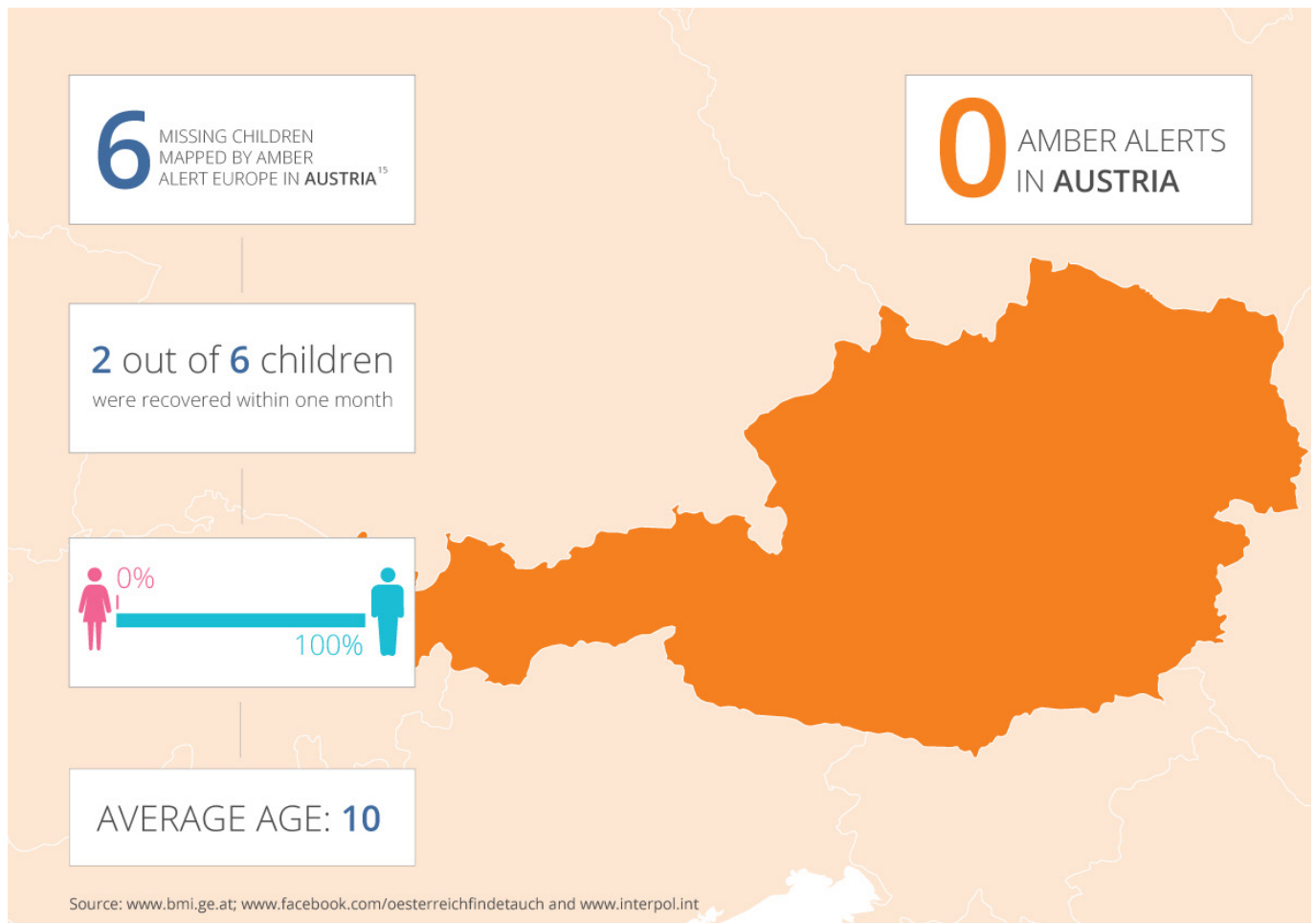
Country ⁹	Total missing children mapped ¹⁰	Average age	%male	%female	Recovery rate within one month
Austria	6	10	100%	0%	33%
Belgium	26	14	19%	81%	54%
Bulgaria	15	13	20%	80%	40%
Croatia	259	15	41%	59%	81%
Cyprus ¹¹	5	7	50%	50%	25%
Czech Republic ¹²	14	11	64%	36%	100%
Denmark	2	6	100%	0%	100%
France	47	12	28%	62%	47%
Germany	52	13	25%	75%	75%
Greece	22	12	41%	59%	91%
Hungary	651	15	49%	51%	73%
Ireland	24	15	62%	38%	88%
Italy	12	15	34%	66%	83%
Latvia	14	15	29%	71%	36%
Luxembourg	5	12	60%	40%	60%
Netherlands	74	13	31%	72%	97%
Poland	435	14	27%	63%	79%
Romania	12	12	50%	50%	17%
Spain	14	14	29%	61%	36%
Sweden	23	14	35%	65%	78%
Switzerland ¹³	14	10	71%	29%	79%
United Kingdom	122	15	52%	48%	71%
Total	1848	14 ¹⁴	43%	57%	75%

Table 1: information on missing children, age, gender ratio and recovery rate within one month.



04

Austria



AMBER Alerts

Austria does not have an AMBER Alert system in place.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 6 cases of missing children that were reported by Austrian law enforcement 2015.¹⁵

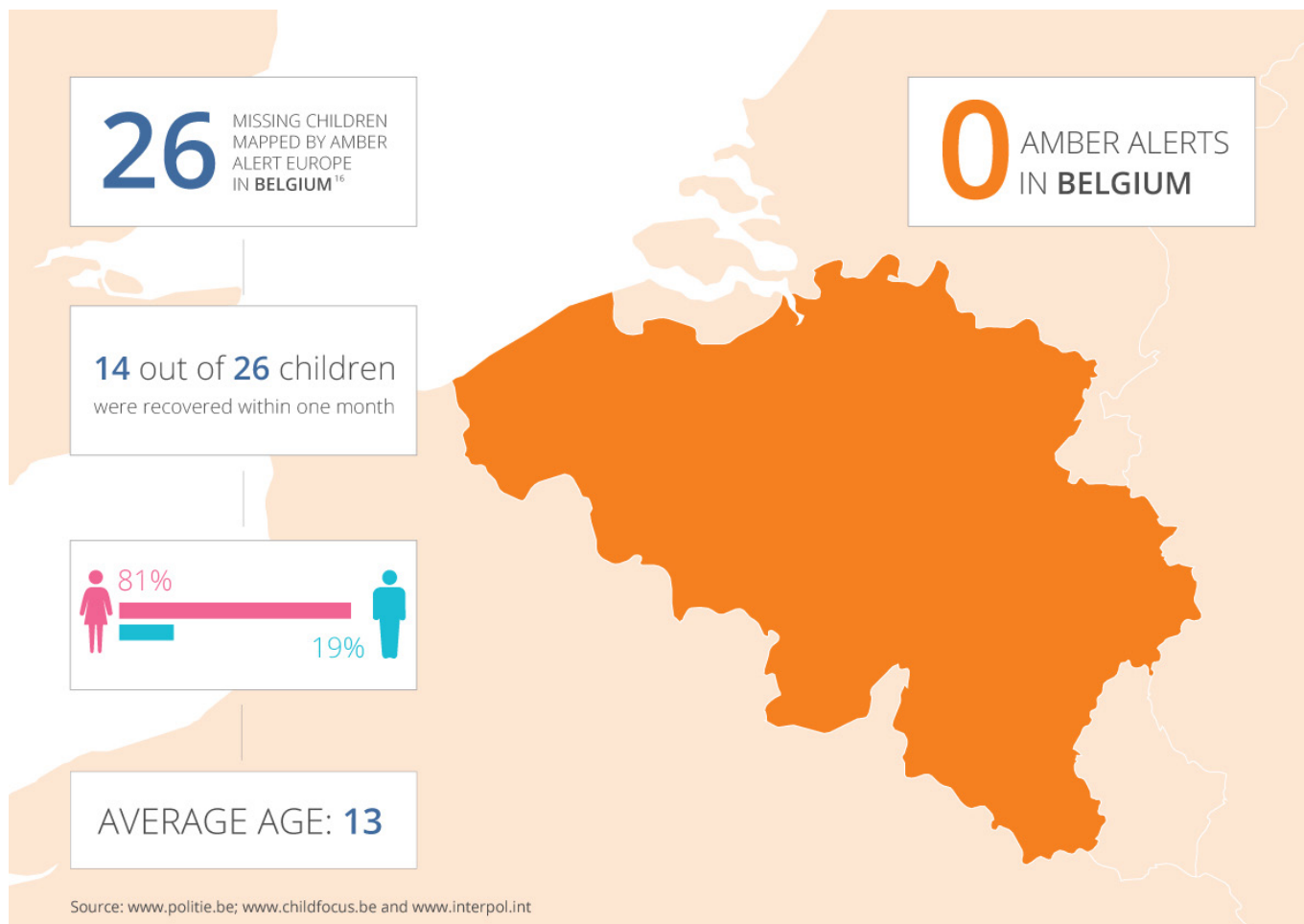
- Average age: 10 years old;
- All cases involved missing boys;
- 2 children were recovered within one month.

¹⁵ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.bmi.gv.at; www.facebook.com/oesterreichfindetauch and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the dark blue page. The map shows the outlines of the major landmasses and some internal borders.

05

Belgium



AMBER Alerts (Child Alert)

No AMBER Alerts were issued in 2015, although Belgium has an AMBER Alert system in place.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Belgium:

- Life of the child is in danger
- Official request from the State who ask the launching of the alert
- Serious elements of the presence of the child in Belgium

The display of AMBER Alerts in Belgium

Belgian AMBER Alerts are displayed across the country on internet banners, social media, TV,

Radio, traffic signs on the motorway and a paper poster campaign if needed.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

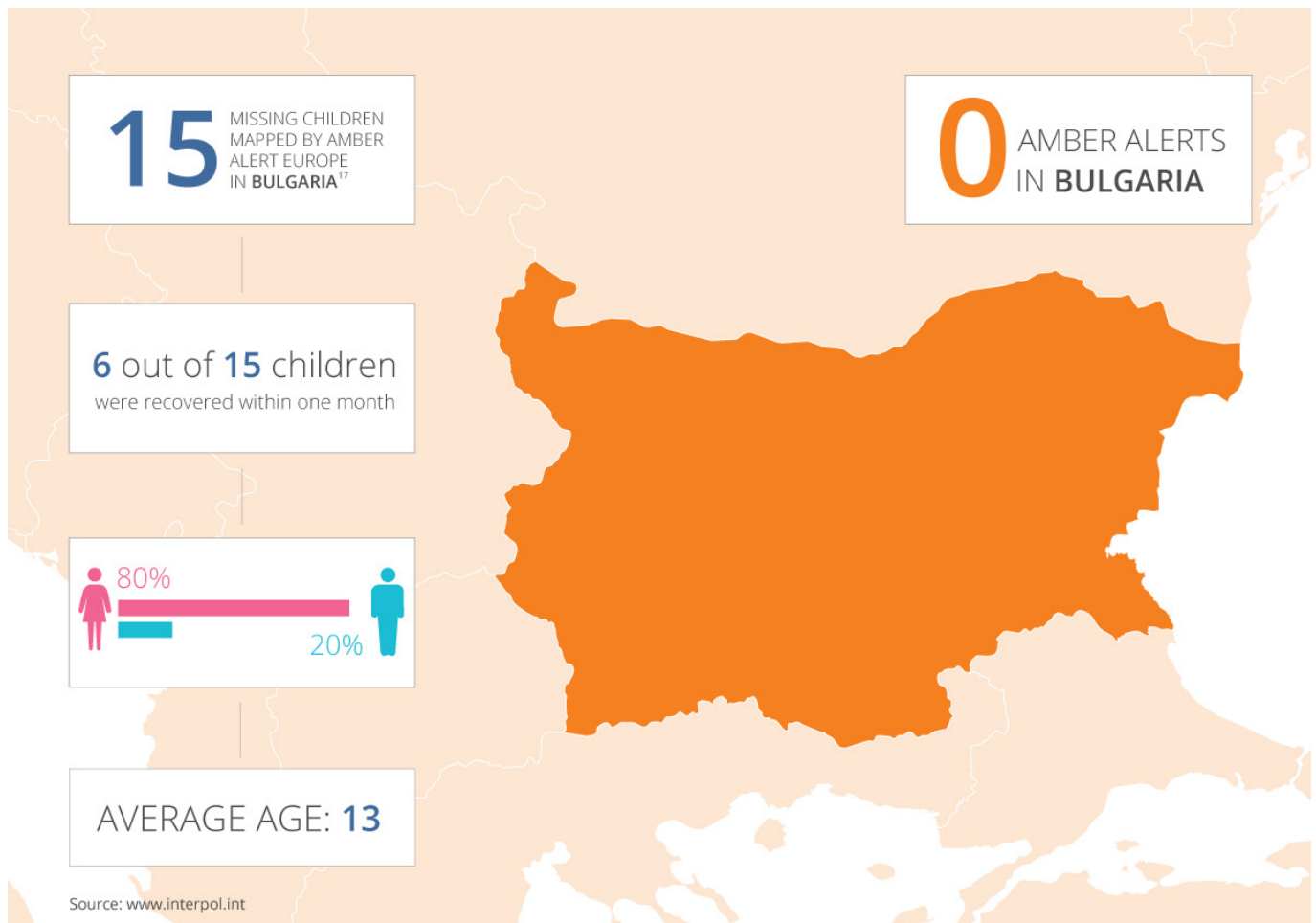
In 2015, AMBER Alert Europe mapped 26 missing children cases reported by Belgian law enforcement.¹⁶

- Average age: 14 years old
- 81 percent girls (n=21); 19 percent boys (n=5).
- 14 of the 26 missing children were recovered within one month (54%)

¹⁶Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.politie.be; www.childfocus.be and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

06

Bulgaria



AMBER Alerts (European Child Alert Automated System (ECAAS))

There were no AMBER Alerts issued Bulgaria in 2015. Nevertheless, Bulgaria has an AMBER Alert system, but has never used it before.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 15 cases of missing children that were reported by Bulgarian law enforcement in 2015.¹⁷

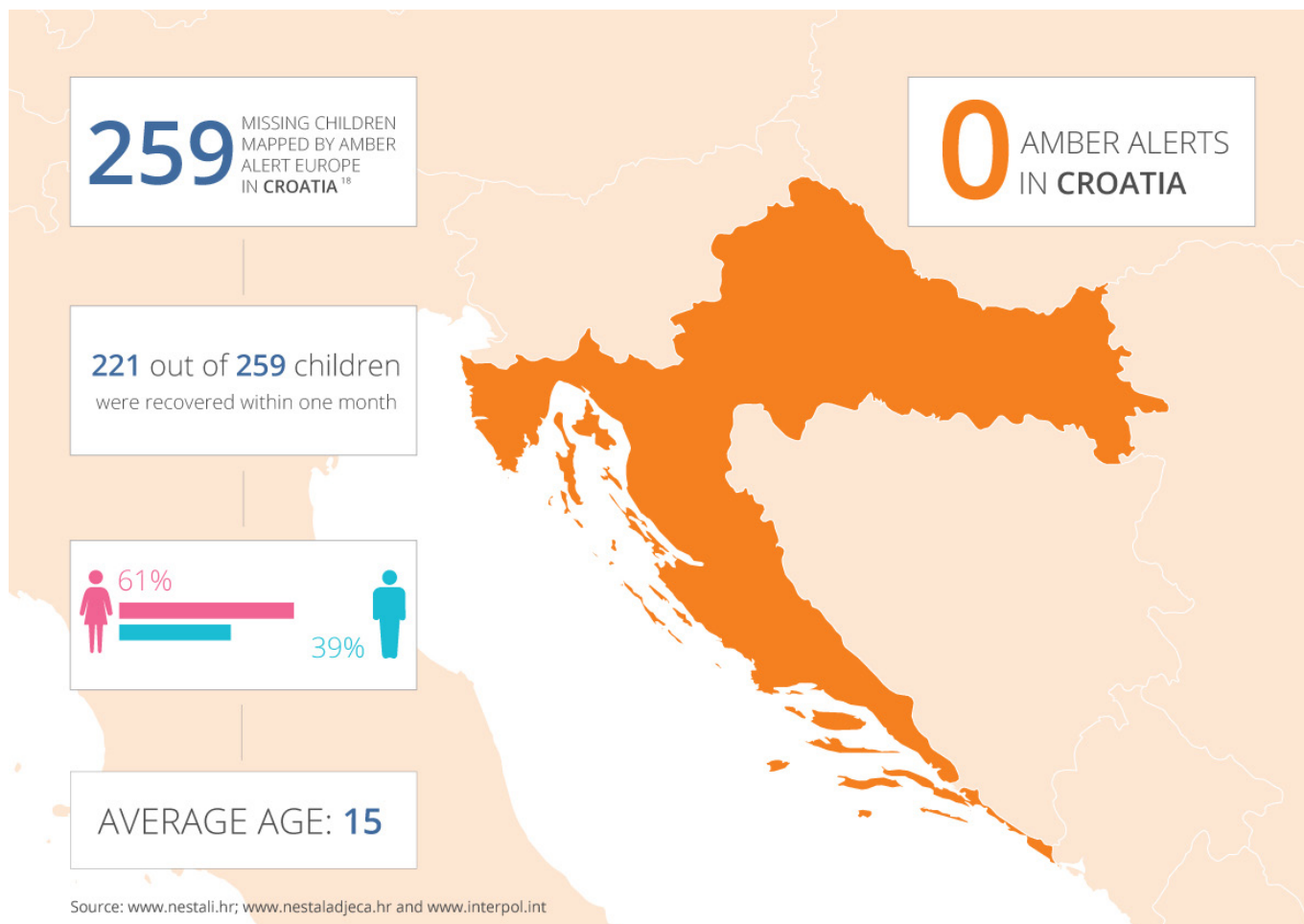
- Average age: 13 years old;
- 80 percent of the cases involved girls (n=12);
- 6 of the 15 children gone missing were recovered within one month (40%).

¹⁷ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the dark blue cover. The map shows the outlines of the continents and major countries.

07

Croatia



AMBER Alerts

Croatia does not have an AMBER Alert system in place.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In 2015, AMBER Alert Europe mapped 259 Croatian missing children cases.¹⁸

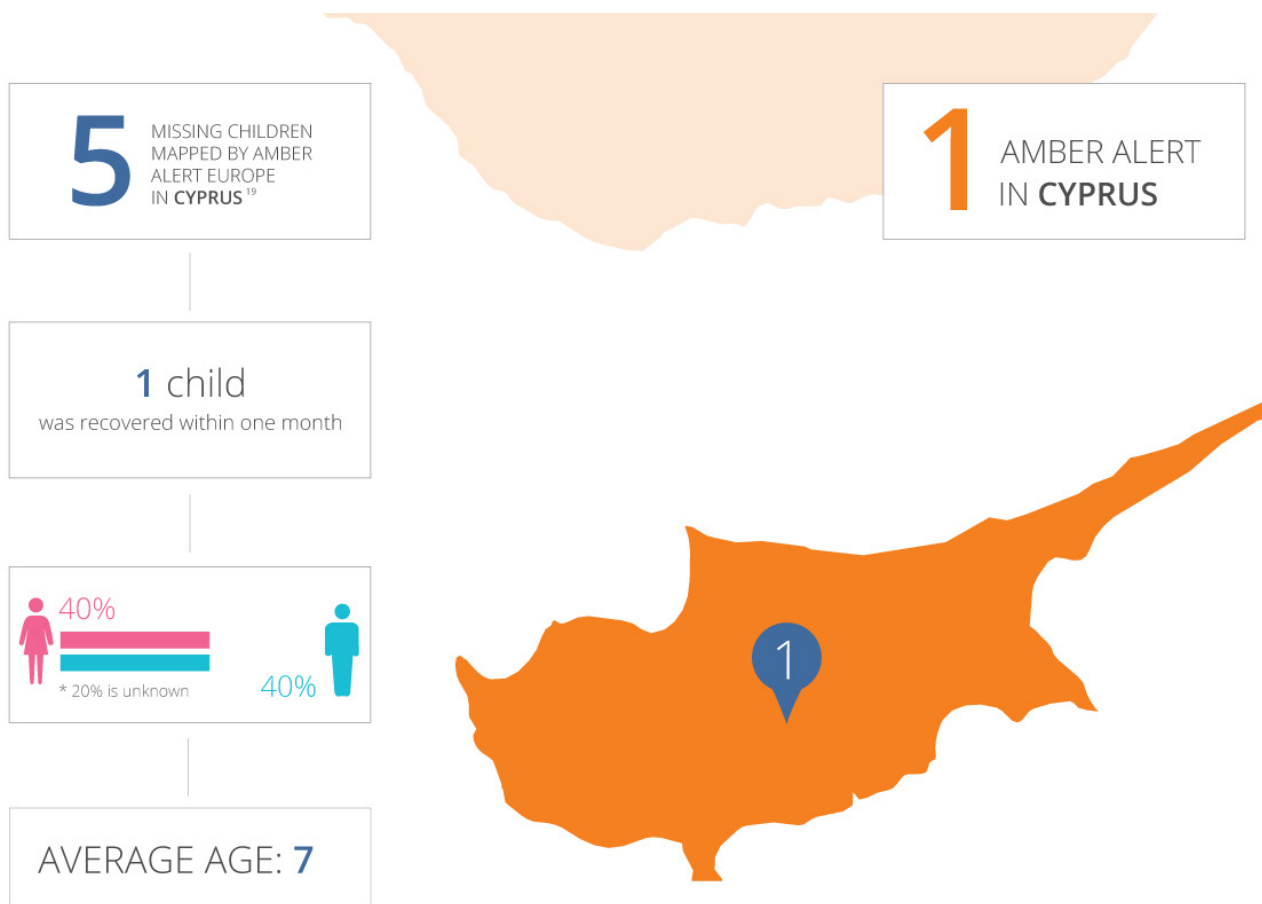
- Average Age: 15 years old;
- 61 percent of the cases involved girls (n=153), 39 percent concerned boys (n=106);
- 81 percent of missing children was recovered within one month (n=247).

¹⁸Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.nestali.hr; www.nestaladjeca.hr and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the dark blue page. The map shows the outlines of the major landmasses of Europe, including the British Isles, Scandinavia, and the Mediterranean region.

08

Cyprus



Source: www.childalert.org.cy and www.interpol.int

AMBER Alerts (Child Alert)

In 2015, the Cypriot police issued 1 AMBER Alert. However, there is no information available about this case.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Cyprus:

- Report declaring the disappearance by the Cyprus Police or a relevant international body
- Affidavit of parent(s)/guardian(s), i.e. written consent for use of personal data and photograph

- In the case of parental abduction, custody document and all accompanying legal documents as well as evidence that the child's well-being is at severe risk or danger
- In case of unilateral guardianship a true copy of the judicial decision that proves guardianship rights

Technical tools available for dissemination

In Cyprus, AMBER Alerts are shown by transport and billboard companies, banks, radio stations, electronic media and printed messages.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In Cyprus, there were 5 missing children cases reported by law enforcement (including the AMBER Alert case) which were mapped by AMBER Alert Europe.¹⁹ There is no information available about 1 missing child's case (the AMBER Alert). As a result, this case was not taken into account in the results below.

- Average age: 7 years old;
- 2 cases involved girls and 2 cases involved boys;
- 1 child was recovered within one month.

¹⁹ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations www.childalert.org.cy and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

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09

Czech Republic



AMBER Alerts (The National Coordination Mechanism for Missing Children (NKMPPD))

The Czech Republic issued the majority of AMBER Alerts with 48 percent (n=14). The average age of the children for which an AMBER Alerts was issued was 10 years old, which is exactly the European average. The high number of AMBER Alerts might be explained by the criteria. According to the Czech authorities, law enforcement also issues AMBER Alerts for endangered missing children. As in most European countries AMBER Alerts are only issued for 'life or death' cases, the Czech Republic does not require this condition.

The numbers on gender and recovery rate also reflect the European average. 56 percent of the cases involved missing boys (n=8). 13 children were recovered within 24 hours (93%).

The whereabouts of 1 child are unknown to AMBER Alert Europe. In case of a child which is still missing at the time of withdrawal of the alert, Czech authorities do not publicly notify if and when the child has been found at a later moment. Therefore these data were not known to AMBER Alert Europe. This procedure is unique for Europe.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in the Czech Republic:

- The missing child is under 15 years of age and his/her life or health is in danger plus any of the following criteria:

- The child may become a victim of an accident due to his/her age
 - The child has no access to his/her life-supporting medicine
 - The child is physically or psychologically handicapped
 - The case involves abduction with signs of violence, with the potential offender suffering from mental condition, unstable with possible unforeseeable reactions, or when previous threats by the potential offender or other circumstantial evidence suggest that the child's life or health are in danger.
- The child is aged 15 to 18 and subject to other conditions (i.e. the child is physically or mentally handicapped or has no access to the life-supporting medicine)

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

The Czech Republic issues AMBER Alerts via TV channels, radio stations, internet, online broadcasting and email.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

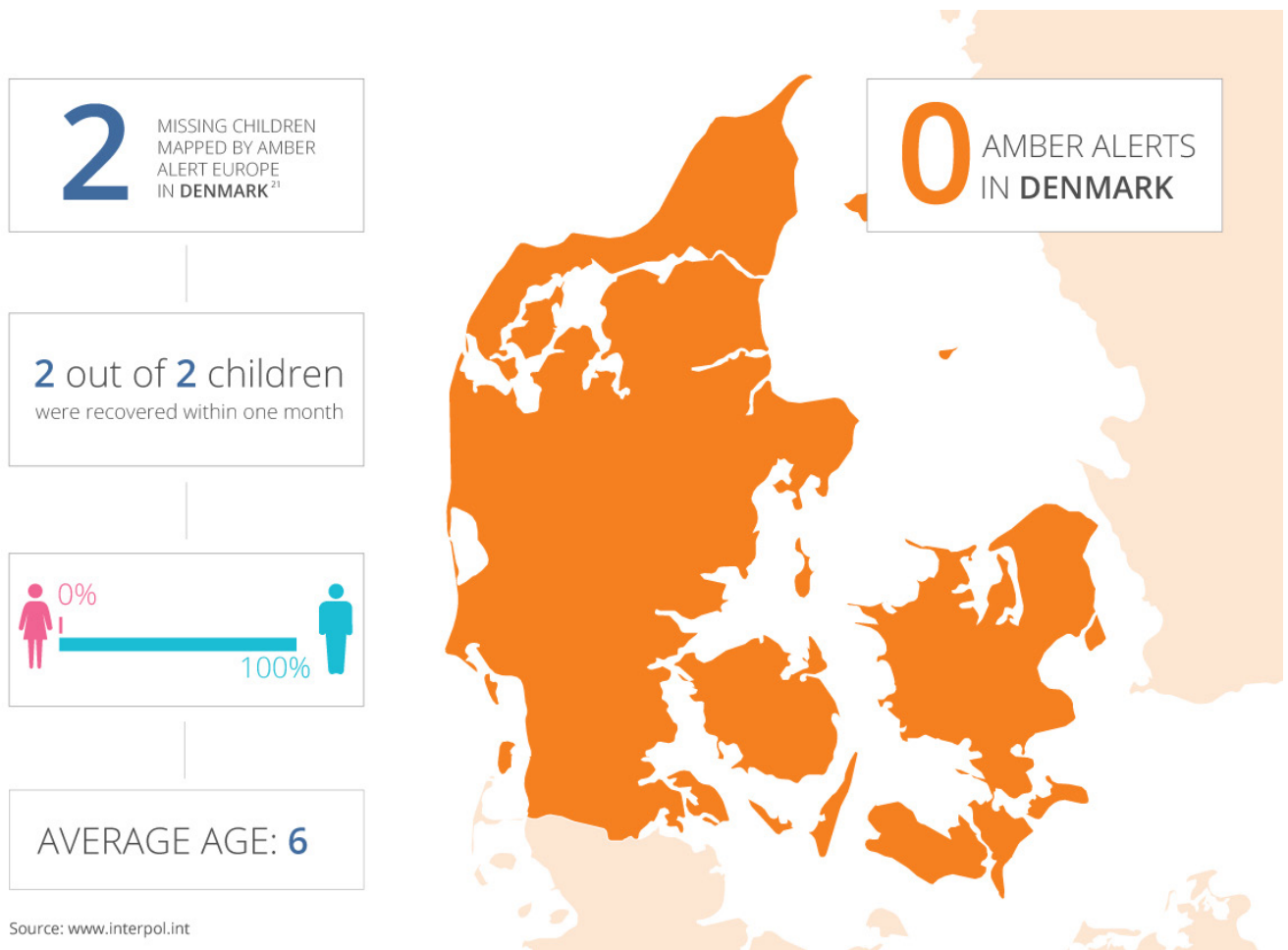
AMBER Alert Europe only mapped the AMBER Alerts in the Czech Republic. ²⁰

²⁰ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.policie.cz. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).



10

Denmark



AMBER Alerts

Denmark does not have an AMBER Alert system in place, hence no AMBER Alerts were issued.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 2 missing children cases that were reported by Danish law enforcement.²¹

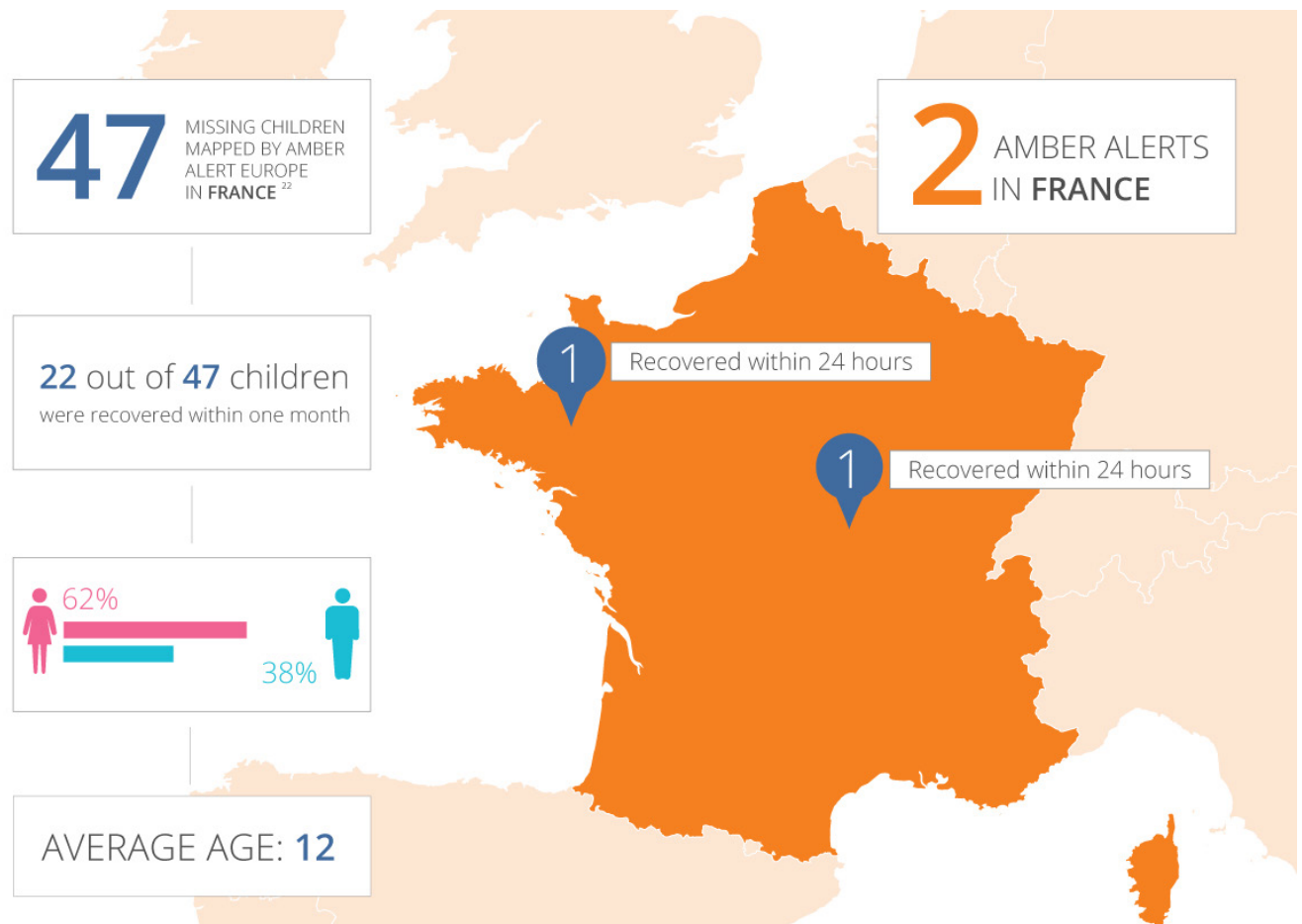
- Average age: 6 years old;
- Both cases involved boys;
- Both children were recovered within one month.

²¹ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the slide. The map shows the outlines of the major landmasses of Europe, including the British Isles, Scandinavia, and the Mediterranean region.

11

France



AMBER Alerts (Alerte Enlèvement)

In 2015, 2 AMBER Alerts were issued in France ($\bar{x}=6$). One case involved a girl, the other a boy.

The first AMBER Alert was issued in April for a 7-year old girl from Sancy. She was found within 24 hours after someone recognised her following the AMBER Alert. The second AMBER Alert was issued in August for a 4-year old boy from Rennes. This child was also recognised following the AMBER Alert, resulting in a quick recovery (less than 24 hours).

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in France:

- Victim is a minor
- Abduction confirmed
- Victim is in danger
- Existence of elements to distribute

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

French AMBER Alerts are displayed and issued across the country on TV, radio, billboards, email, social media and digital screens. There are also partnerships with major transport companies and social networks to provide information on the missing children.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

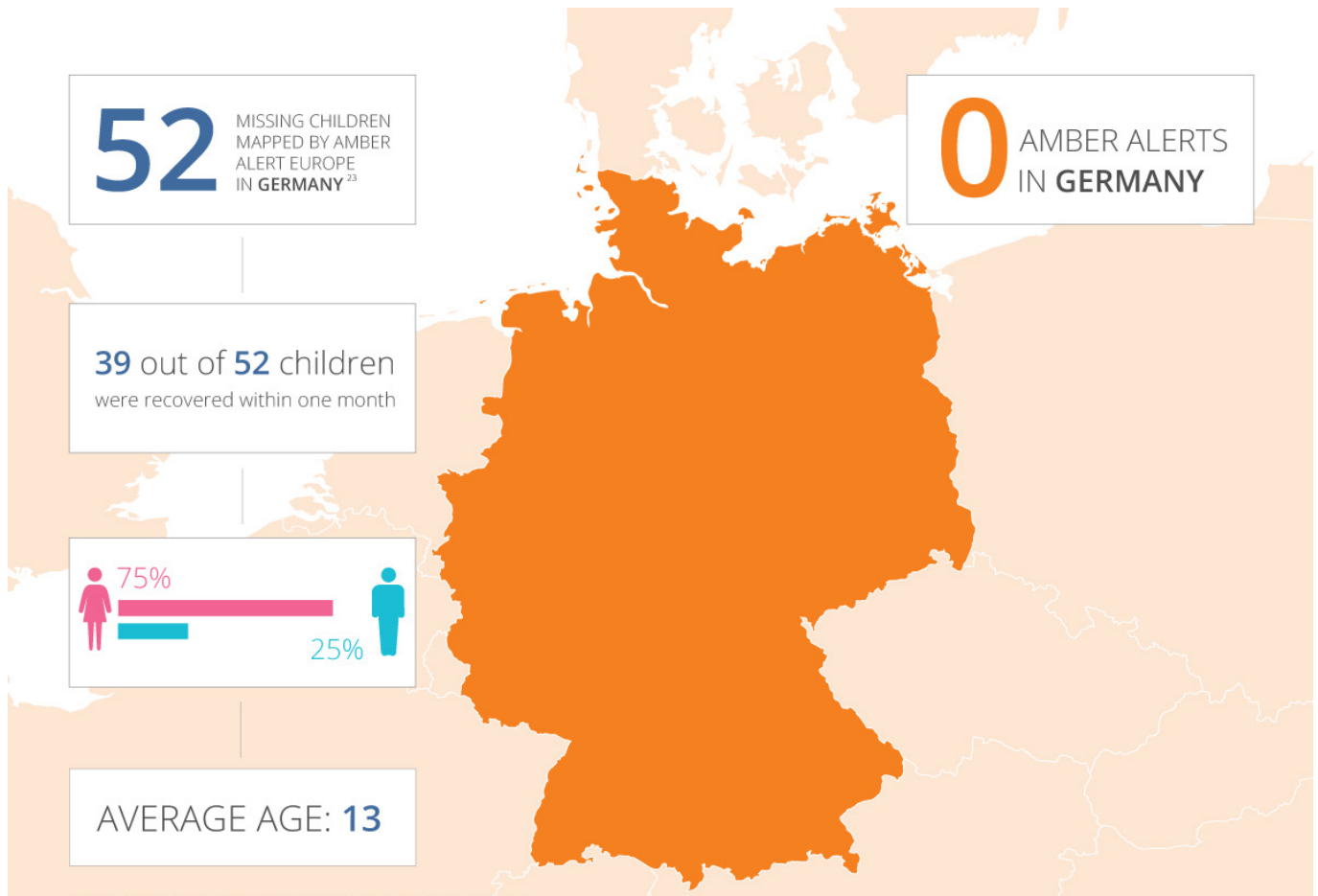
AMBER Alert Europe mapped 47 cases of missing children which were reported by law enforcement in France.²²

- Average age: 12 years old;
- 38 percent of the cases involved boys (n=18), 62 percent concerned girls (n=29);
- 22 children were recovered within one month (47%).

²²Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.116000enfantsdisparus.fr and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

12

Germany



AMBER Alerts

In 2015, the German Police did not issue any AMBER Alerts. Nevertheless, the German NGO responsible for issuing AMBER Alerts closely worked together with the Polish Police in issuing a cross border AMBER Alert. As a result of this swift cooperation, the girl was found quickly in Germany.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Germany:

- The missing child is 14 years or younger
- The investigators assume the missing youngster is in physical danger or in a life-threatening situation (for example an abduction)

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

A German AMBER Alert is issued to press and citizens via email, Apps, QR Code, social media (Facebook, Twitter), SMS (only locally), Radio, TV, digital billboards (metro stations, railway stations, shopping malls, airports).

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

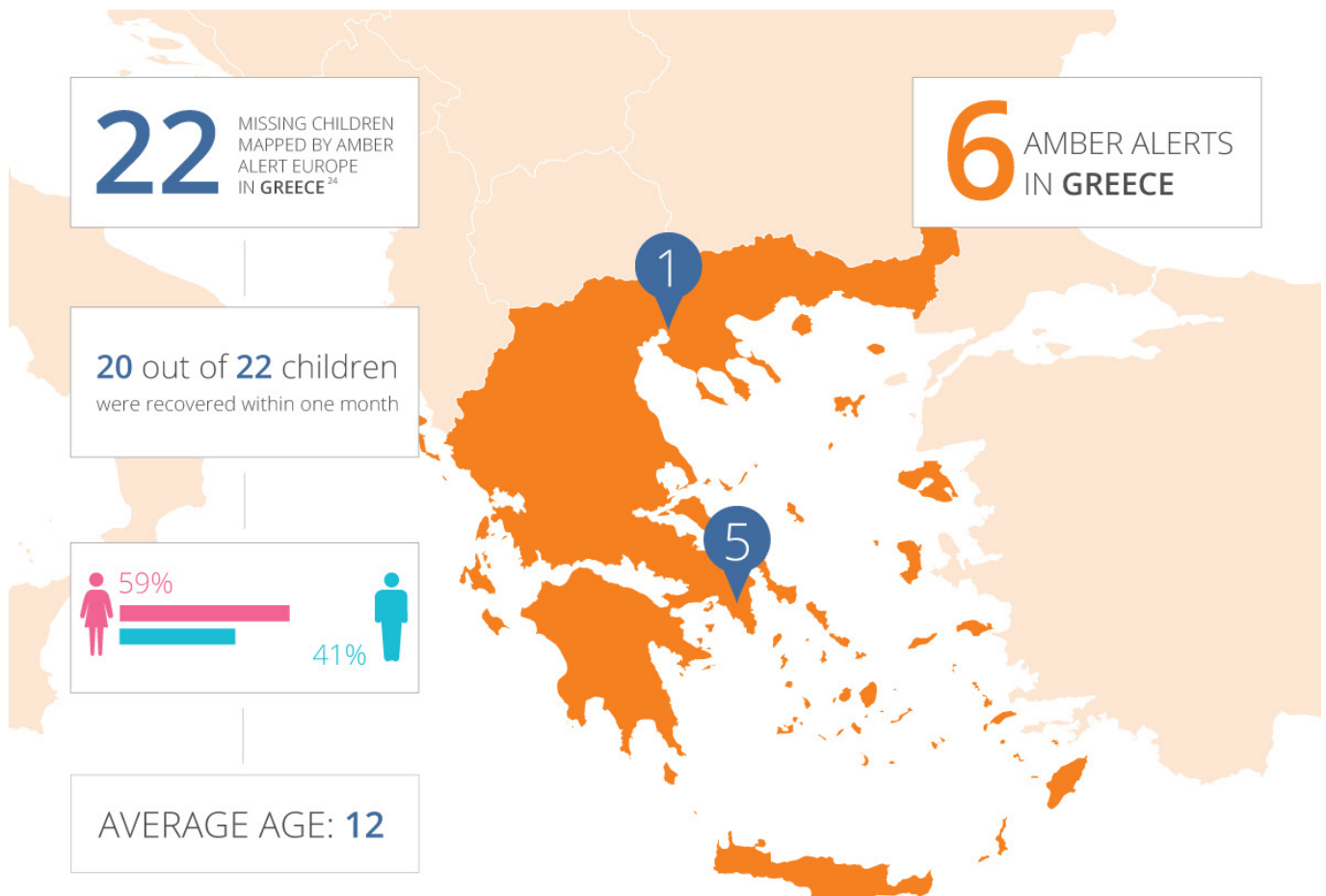
In 2015, there were 52 missing children cases in Germany mapped by AMBER Alert Europe.²³

- Average age 13 years old;
- 39 girls (75%)
- 75 percent of the children was recovered within one month.

²³ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.initiative-vermisste-kinder.de and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

13

Greece



AMBER Alerts (AMBER Alert Hellas)

In 2015, 6 AMBER Alerts (7 children) were reported by Greek police mandated organisations. The children, 6 boys, 1 girl, had an average age of 10 years old. One AMBER Alert was issued for 2 children. 5 AMBER Alerts (6 children) had a positive outcome: the children, all boys, were found safe and well. The girl (4 years old) for whom an AMBER Alert had been issued, has been murdered.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Greece:

- The child involved is a minor
- Strong indications that the minor's life or health might be in danger
- Suspicion that the child might have been abducted
- The launch of the AMBER Alert will offer assistance in locating the child

- Police determines that the activation of the Amber Alert will not endanger the minor's life

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

When an AMBER Alert in Greece is issued, the Greek Police informs the public via posters, SMS text messages, social media, radio, TV and highway signs.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In 2015, 22 missing children publicised by law enforcement or police mandated organisations in Greece were mapped by AMBER Alert Europe.²⁴

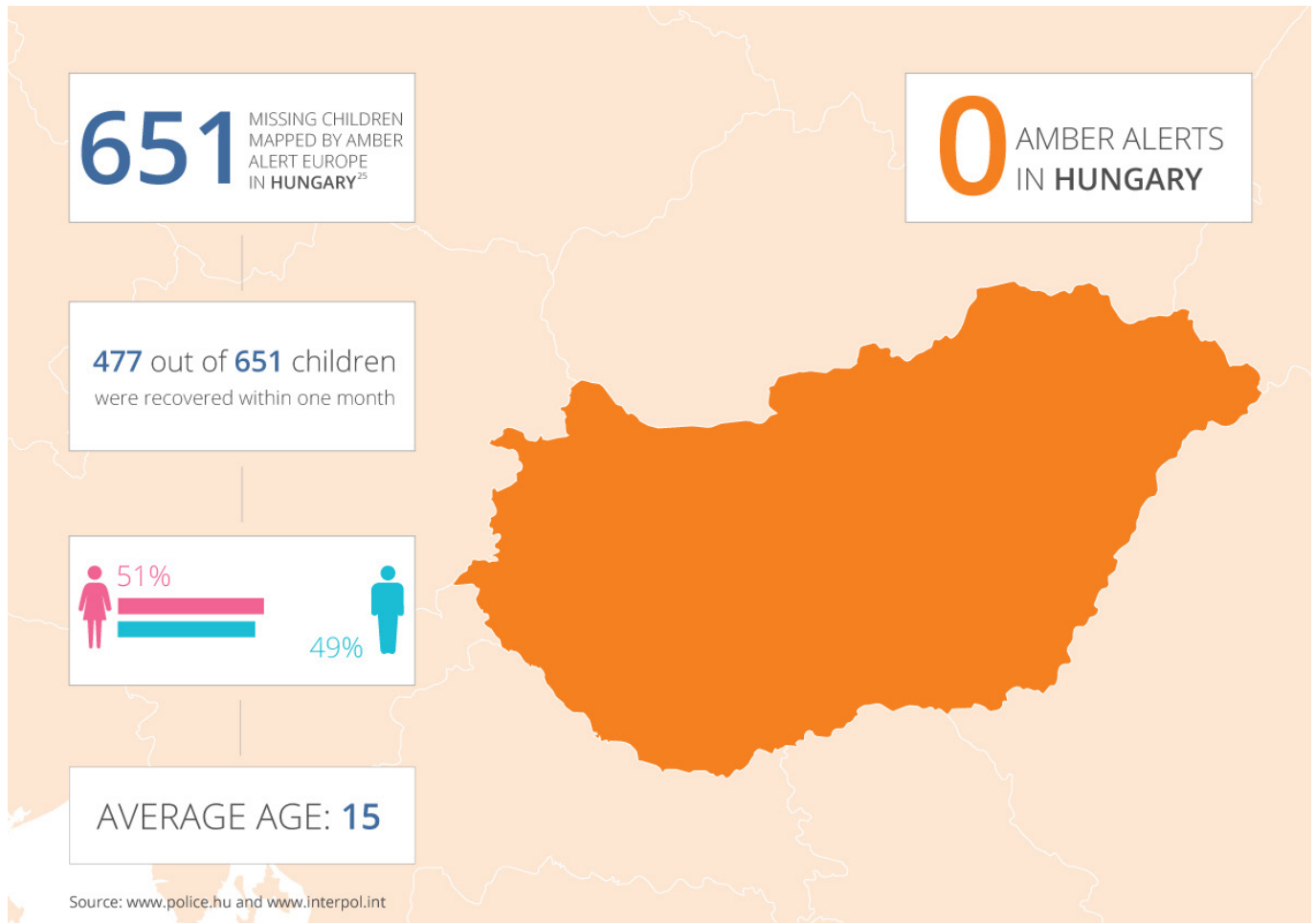
- Average age: 12 years old;
- 59 percent concerned girls (n=13);
- 91 percent of the children was recovered within one month (n=20).

²⁴ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.hamogelo.gr and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).



14

Hungary



AMBER Alerts

Hungary does not have an AMBER Alert system in place, hence no AMBER Alerts were issued.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 651 missing children cases reported by law enforcement in Hungary.²⁵

- Average age: 15 years old;
- 51 percent of all missing children were girls (n=335), 49% were boys (n=316);
- 477 children were recovered within one month (73%).

²⁵ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.police.hu and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

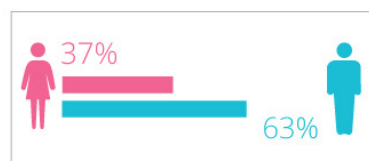


15

Ireland

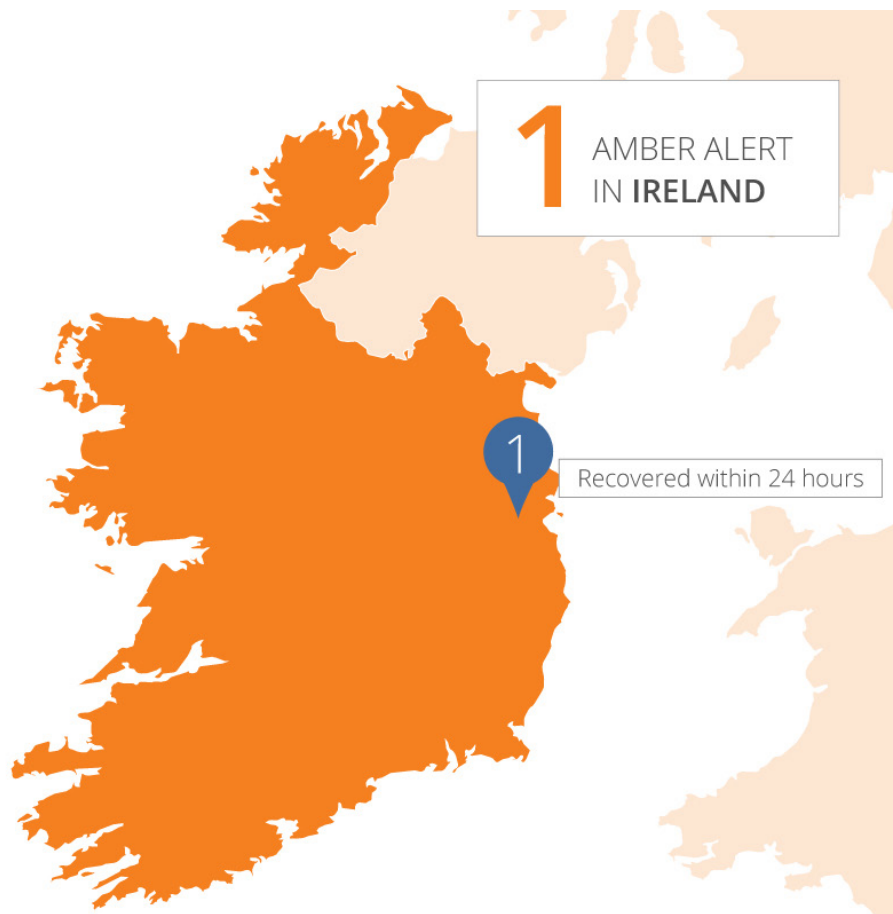
24 MISSING CHILDREN
MAPPED BY AMBER
ALERT EUROPE
IN IRELAND²⁶

21 out of **24** children
were recovered within one month



AVERAGE AGE: **15**

1 AMBER ALERT
IN IRELAND



AMBER Alerts (Child Rescue Ireland (CRI) Alert)

In April an AMBER Alert was issued for a 3-year old girl from Dublin. She was safely recovered within 24 hours.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Ireland:
All four criteria must be met before an AMBER Alert can be considered:

- The child is under the age of 18 years old
- There is reasonable belief that the child has been abducted
- There is a reasonable belief that there is an immediate and serious risk to the health or welfare of a child
- There is sufficient information available to enable the public to assist An Garda Síochána in locating the child.

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

Gardaí supplies information such as the name and description of missing children and the adults they are with, along with details of where they might be or the kind of vehicle in which they are travelling. The alert is issued through the media but Gardaí also use other means to spread the notices, such as electronic road signs, social media, apps, internet, email and Garda Portal Intranet

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In 2015, AMBER Alert Europe mapped 24 cases of missing children that were reported by Irish law enforcement.²⁶

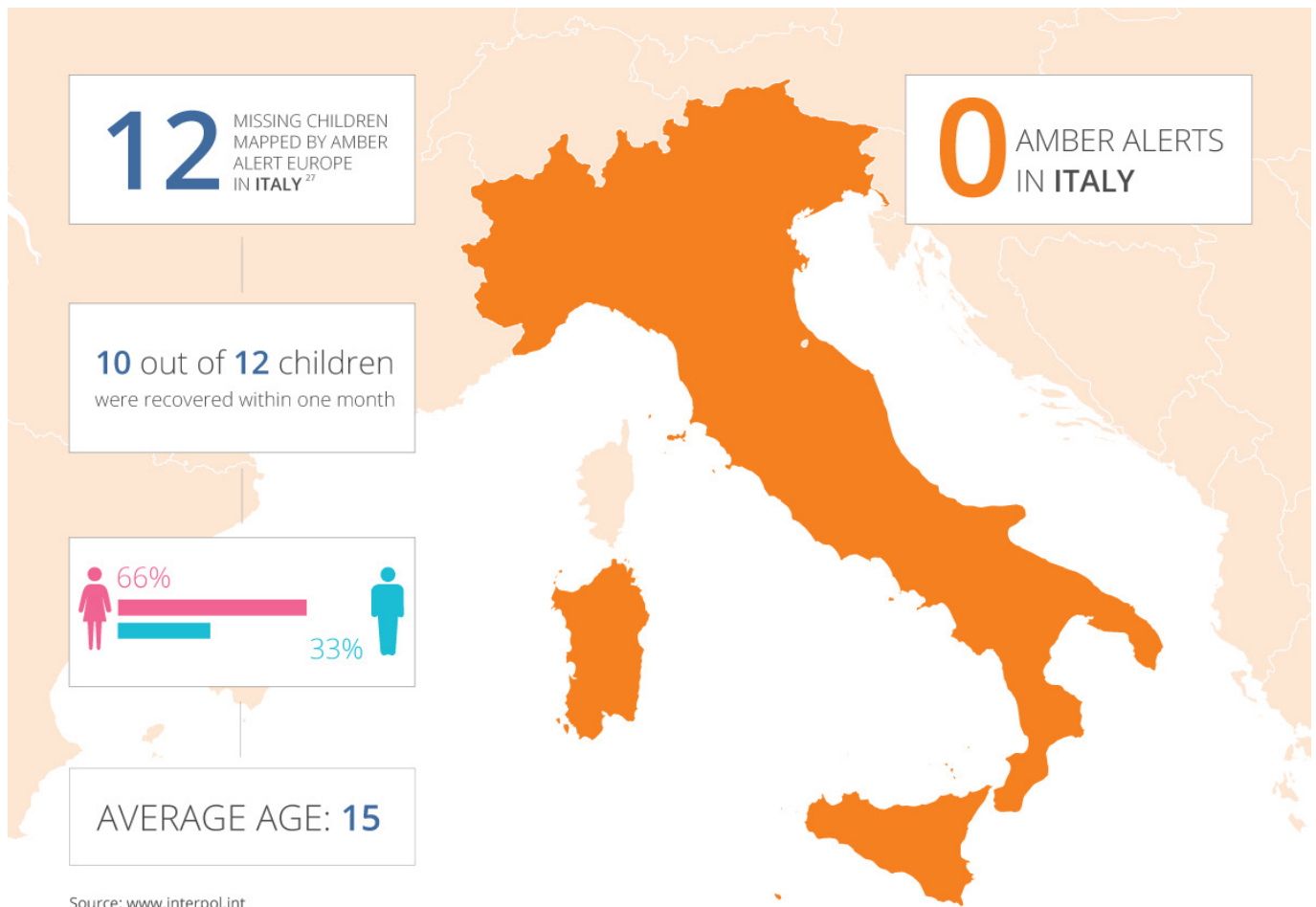
- Average age: 15 years old;
- 15 cases involved boys (63%), 9 cases concerned girls (38%);
- 21 children were recovered within one month (88%).

²⁶ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on <http://ie.missingkids.com>; www.internationalmissingchild.org and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

16

Italy





AMBER Alerts (Italian Child Alert Automated System (ICAAS))

Although Italy has an AMBER Alert system in place, there were no alerts issued in 2015.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Italy:

- Under 18 years
- Imminent danger
- Disappearance not voluntary, not just missing, must be an abduction or kidnap

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

The Italian AMBER Alert System has partnerships with Sky, Autogrill, ports and some other telecom and news organizations. There is the

option to send a pre-formatted video that is edited for the relevant case and was developed for them by Rai, a broadcast organization

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 12 children that were reported missing by Italian law enforcement in 2015.²⁷

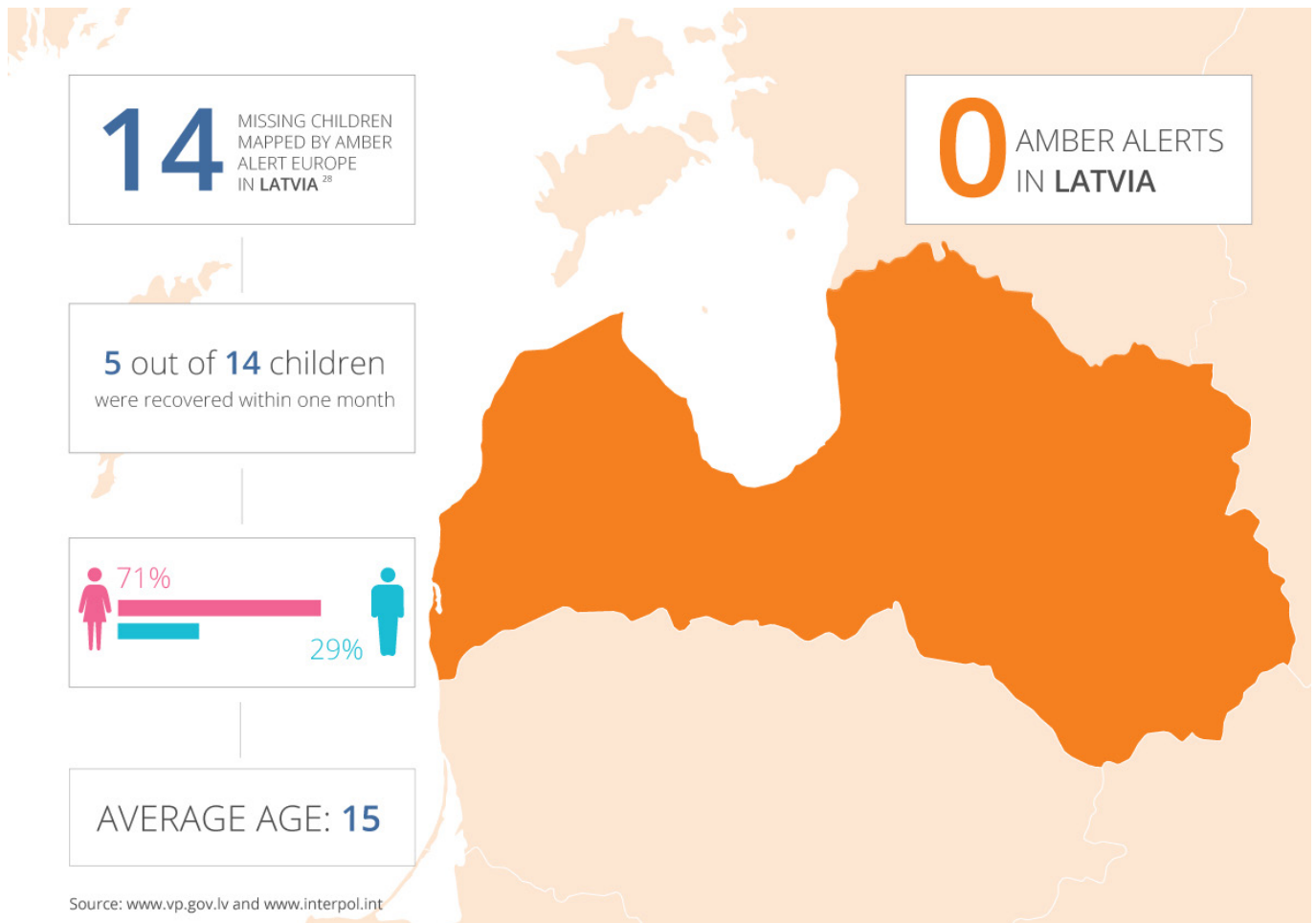
- Average age: 15 years old;
- 8 cases involved girls (67%), 4 cases involved boys (33%);
- 10 children were recovered within one month (83%).

²⁷ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the slide, showing the outlines of the continents and major countries.

17

Latvia



AMBER Alerts

Latvia does not have an AMBER Alert system in place, hence no AMBER Alerts were issued.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In 2015, there were 14 missing children reported by law enforcement in Latvia which were mapped by AMBER Alert Europe.²⁸

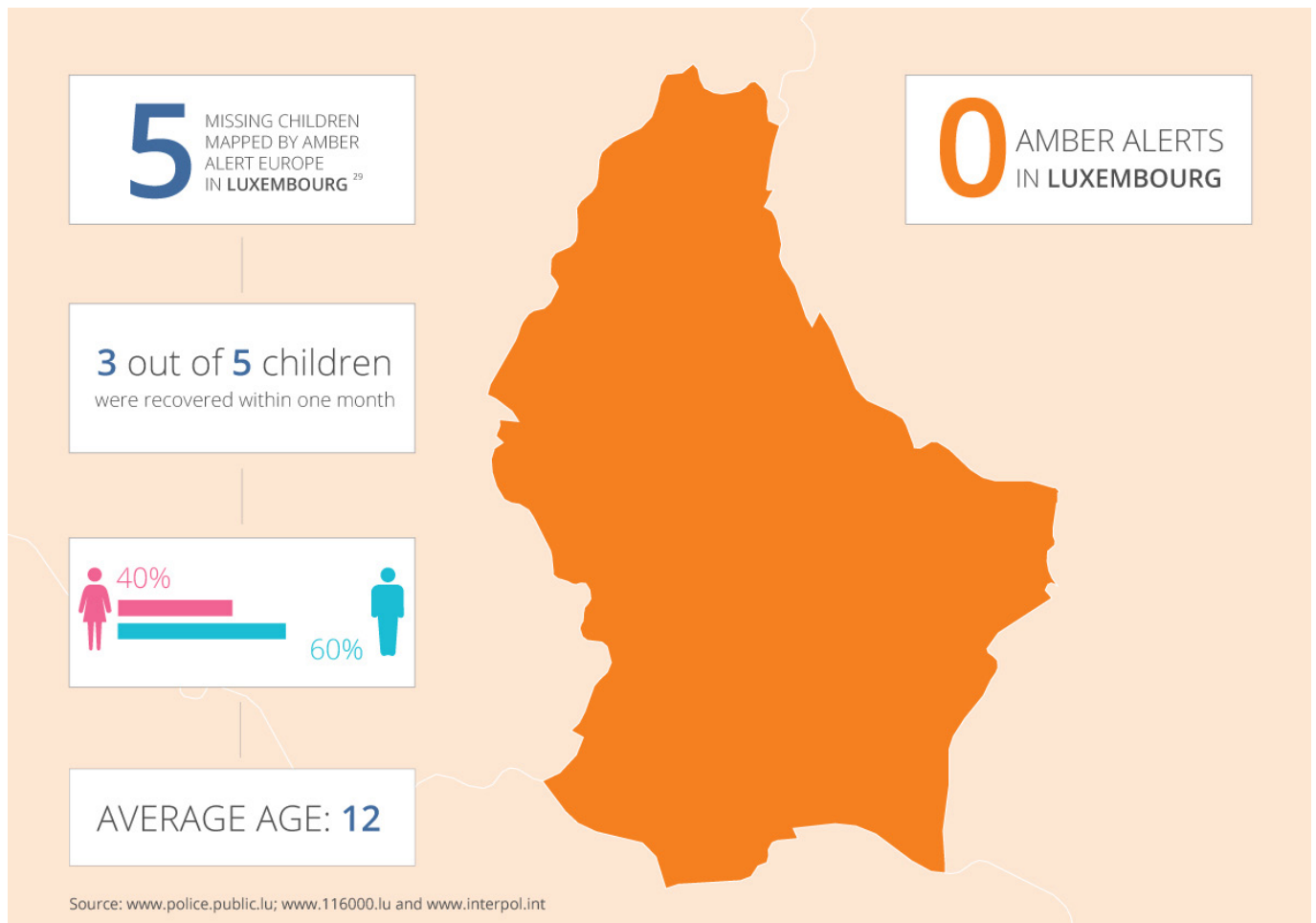
- Average age: 15 years old;
- 10 cases involved girls (71%), 4 cases involved boys (29%);
- 36 percent of the children was recovered within one month.

²⁸ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.vp.gov.lv and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the entire page. The map shows the outlines of the major landmasses of Europe, including the British Isles, Scandinavia, and the Mediterranean region.

18

Luxembourg



AMBER Alerts

In 2015 Luxembourg did not have an AMBER Alert system in place, hence no AMBER Alerts were issued. However, Luxembourg has launched a national AMBER Alert system in 2016.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

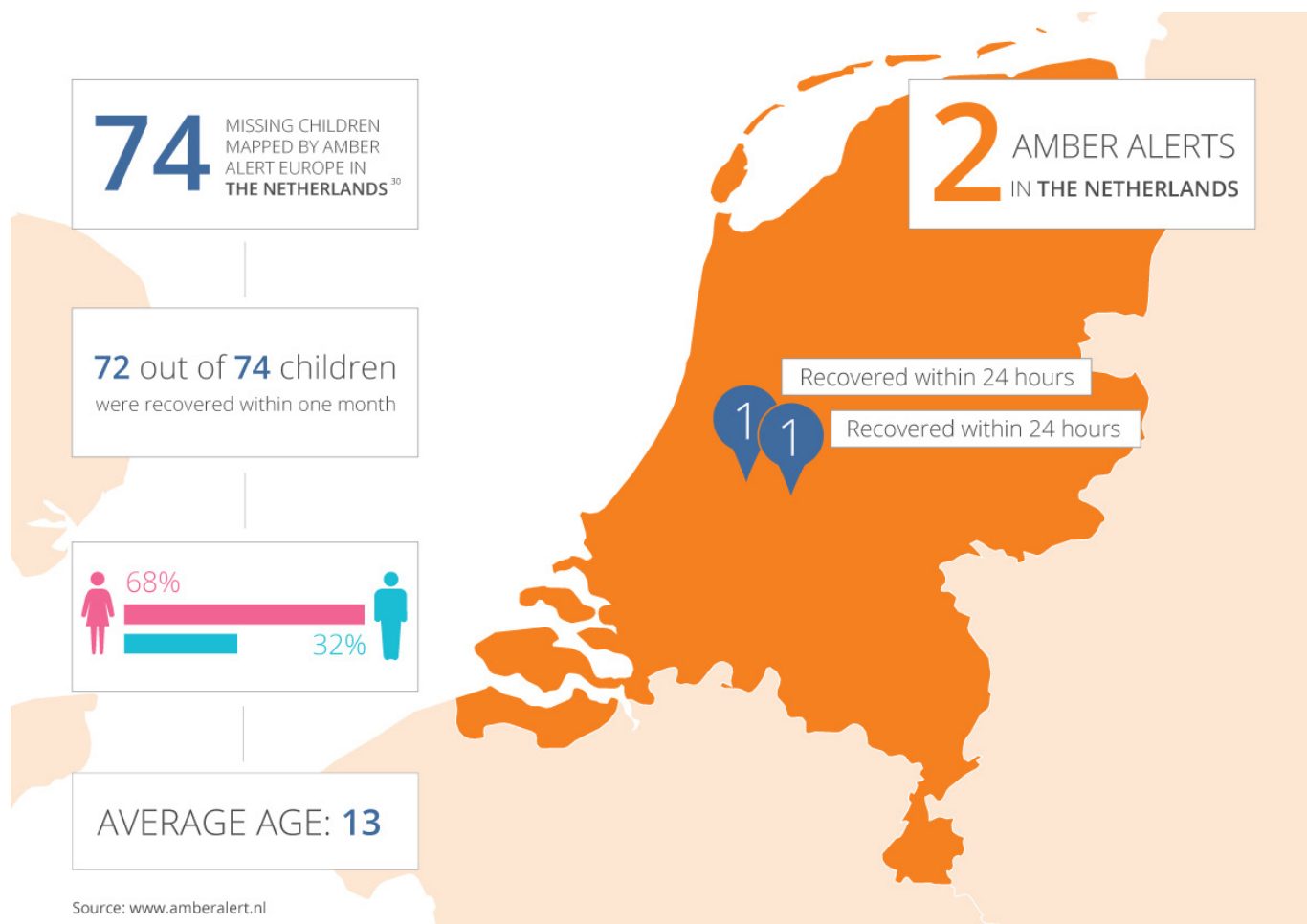
In 2015, 5 children reported missing in Luxembourg were mapped by AMBER Alert Europe.²⁹

- Average age: 12 years old;
- The cases concerned 3 boys (60%) and 2 girls (40%);
- 3 of the 5 children were recovered within one month (60%)

²⁹Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.police.public.lu; www.116000.lu and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

19

The Netherlands



AMBER Alerts

In 2015, the Dutch Police issued 2 AMBER Alerts. The first alert was issued in March for a 9-year old boy from Utrecht. The second alert was issued in November for 12-year-old boy from Vleuten. Both missing children were recovered safe and sound within 24 hours.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in the Netherlands:

- The child is below 18 years of age
- Immediate life-danger or risk of serious harm to the child
- Sufficient information of the victim, including a picture
- Indication that the child is in the Netherlands

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

An AMBER Alert reaches 12 million citizens and organizations. When an AMBER Alert is issued, the picture of the AMBER Alert child is instantly visible everywhere: on TVs, radio, highway signs, billboards signs in buses, social media (Twitter, Facebook), Apps, mail, screensavers, text messages and on thousands of websites. Millions of people are reached indirectly as the alert is also seen on TV, cable news, newspapers, websites of press agencies, highway signs, billboards, ATMs etc.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 74 missing children that were publicised by the Dutch National Police on www.amberalert.nl.³⁰ These children are considered to be endangered (see: www.amberalert.nl).

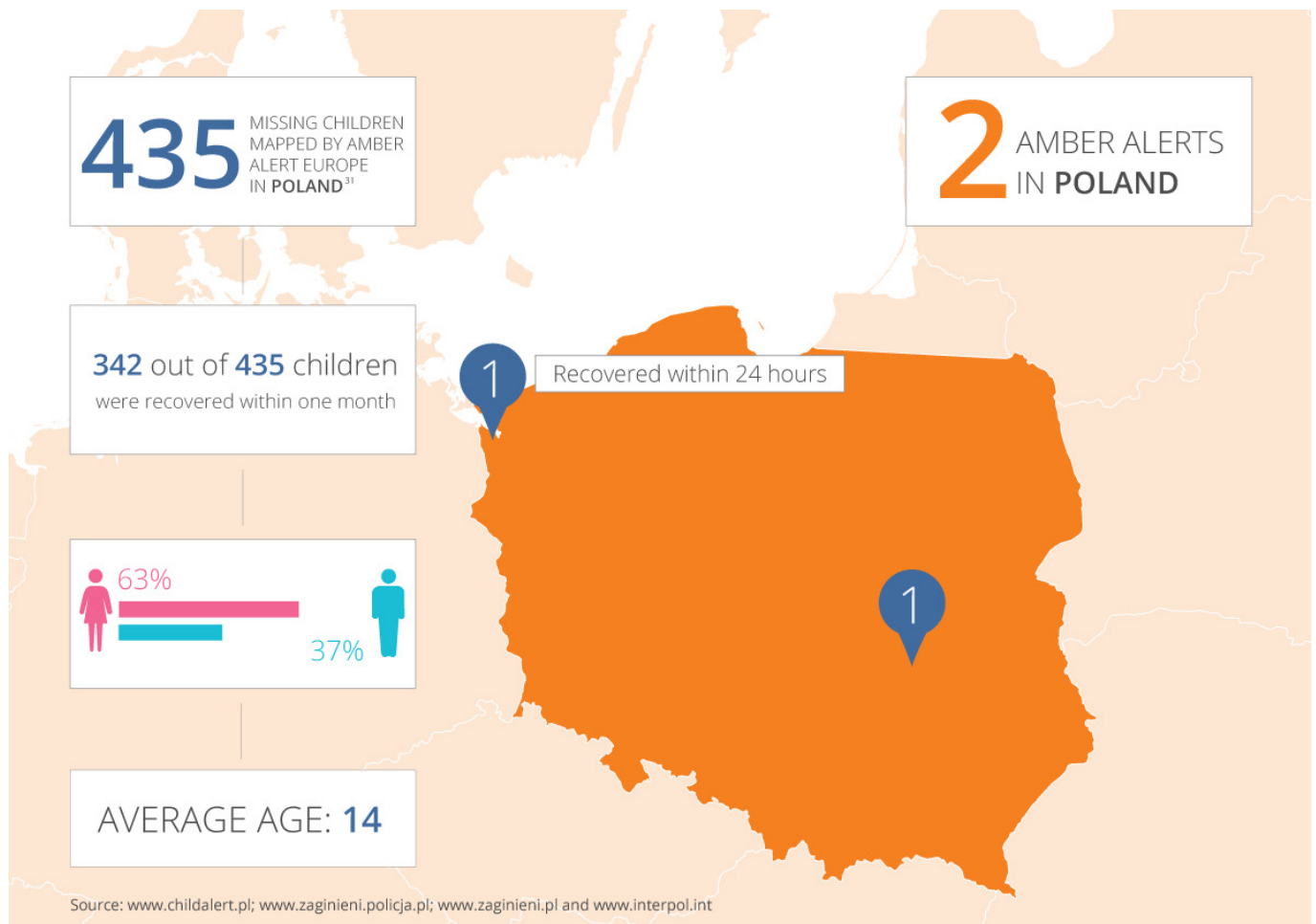
- Average age: 13 years old;
- 68 percent of the cases concerned girls (n=50), 32 percent involved boys (n=24);
- 72 of the 74 missing children were recovered within one month (97%).

³⁰ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.amberalert.nl. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

A stylized, light blue map of Europe is visible in the background of the dark blue cover. The map shows the outlines of the major landmasses and countries.

20

Poland



AMBER Alerts (Child Alert)

In April 2015 the Polish Police issued an AMBER Alert for a 10-year-old girl from Szczecin, Poland, close to the German border. The girl was successfully recovered within 24 hours after the AMBER Alert was issued. In this case, the Polish Police closely cooperated with the German Police. This case demonstrates the importance for cross border cooperation on endangered missing children cases.

In November 2015, the Polish Police issued an AMBER Alert for a 3-year-old boy from Radom, Poland. The child was abducted in front of his house. At the time the AMBER Alert was withdrawn, the boy was still missing. The boy was found in December.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Poland:

- Missing minor is under 18
- Justified suspicion that the child's life or health is directly threatened, or the disappearance circumstances may be linked to a crime of abduction
- Written permission of the parent or legal carer for publication of the communication
- Justified conviction that the AMBER Alert would be a real support in search
- Collected data is sufficient to prepare the communication

Polish AMBER Alerts are displayed and issued across the country on TV, radio, email, social media and digital screens.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert

Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 435 missing children that were reported by law enforcement in Poland in 2015.³¹

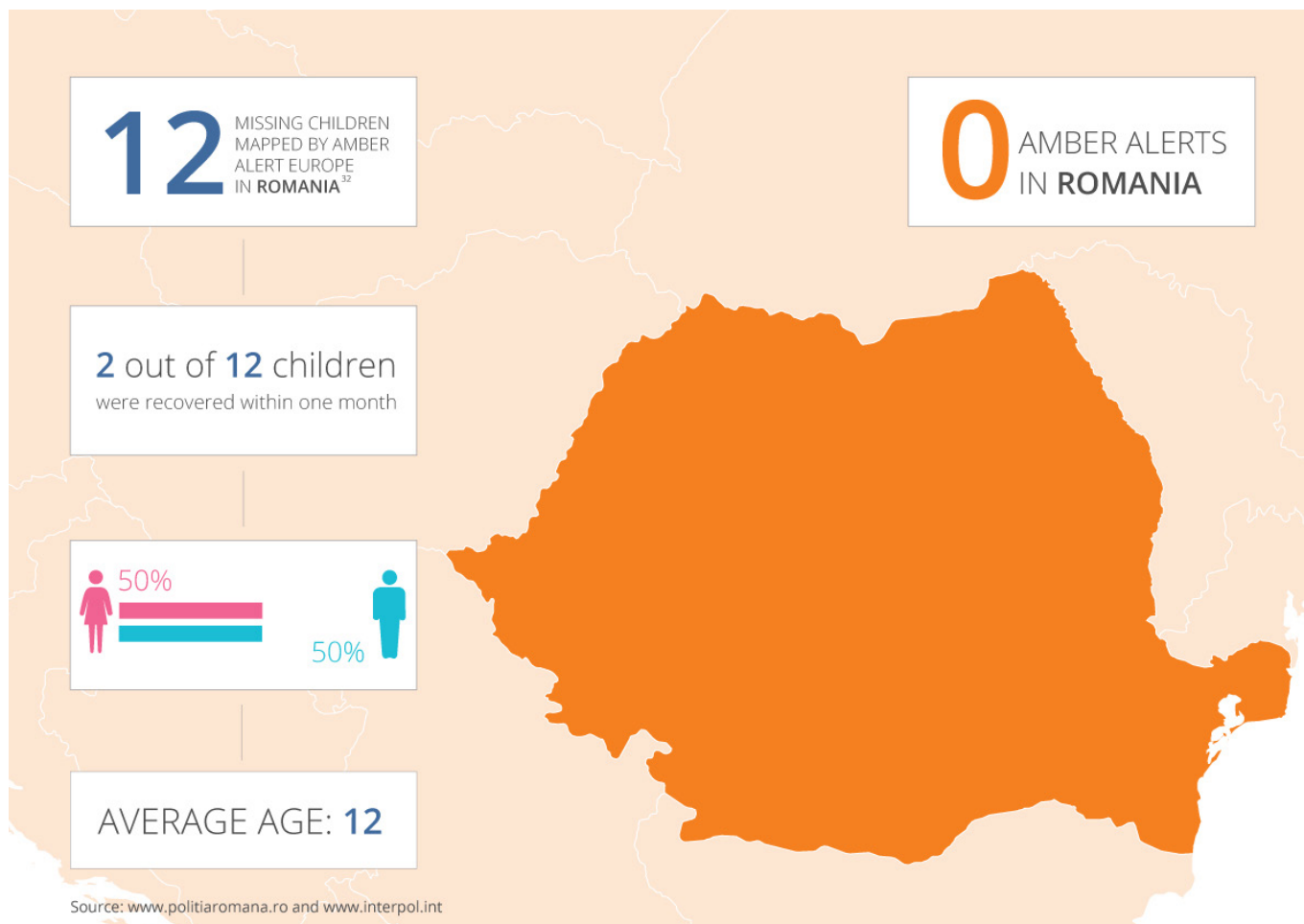
- Average age: 14 years old;
- 63 percent of the missing children concerned girls (n=276), 37 percent of cases involved boys; (n=159);
- 79% of the children was recovered within one month (n=342).

³¹ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.childalert.pl; www.zaginieni.policja.pl; www.zaginieni.pl and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).



21

Romania



AMBER Alerts (Alertă Răpire Copil)

Although Romania has an AMBER Alert system in place, there were no alerts issued in 2015.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Romania:

- The missing person must be under 18
- The missing person has to be been kidnapped in the presence of a witnesses
- The life of the child is in imminent danger, or there is fear he/ she will be seriously injured
- There is sufficient information available to enable the public to assist the police in locating the child

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

TV radio, SMS, billboards, information screens, email, banners on websites.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

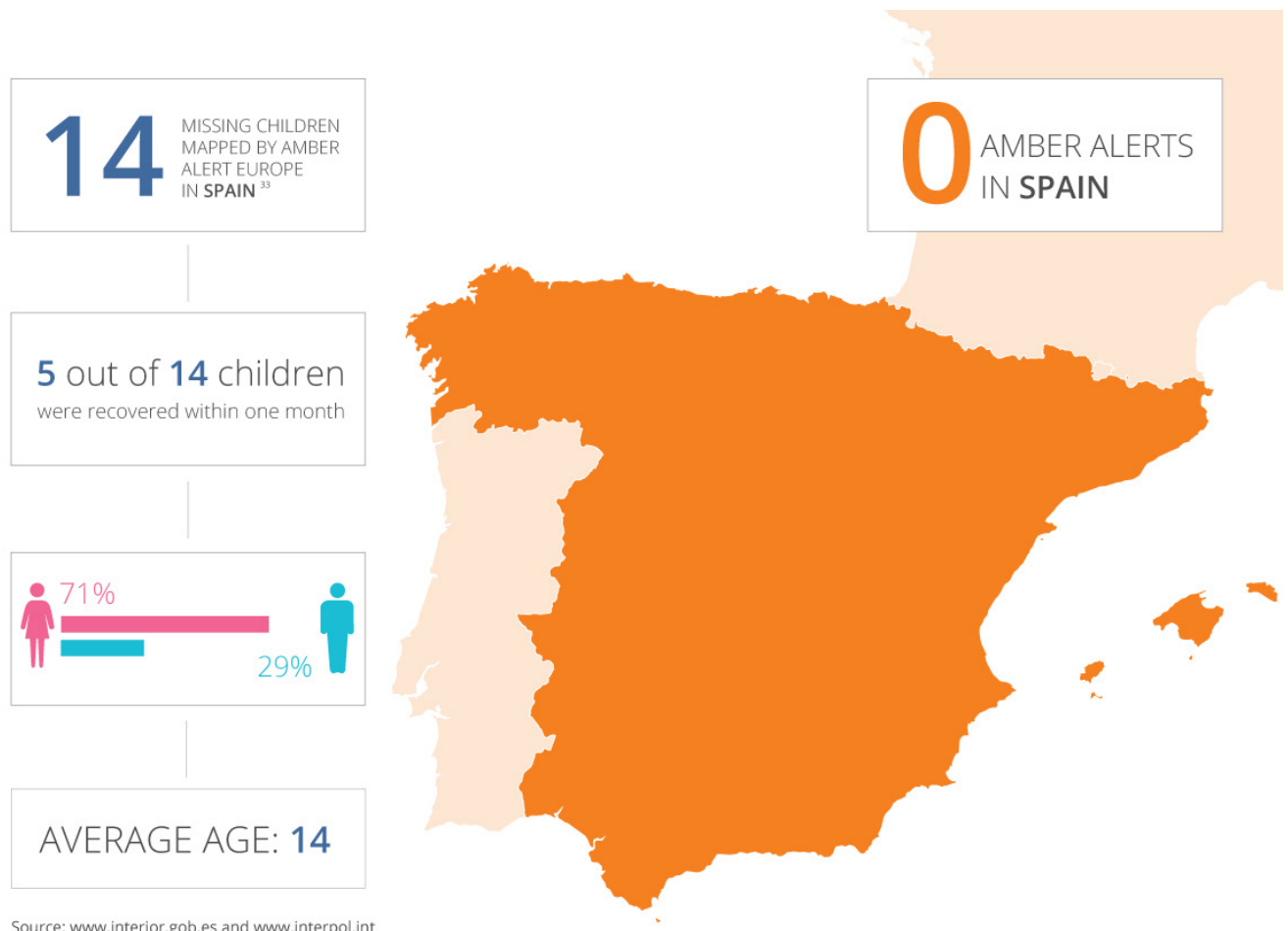
AMBER Alert Europe mapped 12 children that were reported missing by law enforcement in Romania.³²

- Average age: 12 years old;
- 50 percent of the cases involved girls (n=6), 50 percent concerned boys (n=6);
- 2 children were recovered within one month (17%).

³² Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.politiaromana.ro and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

22

Spain



AMBER Alerts (Alerta Menor Desaparecido)

Although Spain has an AMBER Alert system in place, Spanish law enforcement did not issue any AMBER alerts in 2015. Moreover, the system has never been used before.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Spain:

- The child is under 18 years;
- The child's disappearance has been previously classified as high risk (according to the Instruction 1/2009 of the Ministry of Security)
- There are reasonable indications that the disappearance has been forced
- The police investigators believe the missing child is in imminent danger and assume that activation of the alert system serves the needs of the investigation

- There is sufficient information about the missing child available which will contribute to a positive result on the cooperation of the public
- Permission of the parent or legal carer for publication of the communication

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

The alert message is distributed by the Ministry of the Interior to the media, organizations, public and private entities who have signed an official cooperation agreement. For example: radio, TV, press (print and online), highway signs, large screens on airports, bus, railway and metro stations.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In 2015, AMBER Alert Europe mapped 14 children that were reported missing by Spanish police mandated organisations.³³

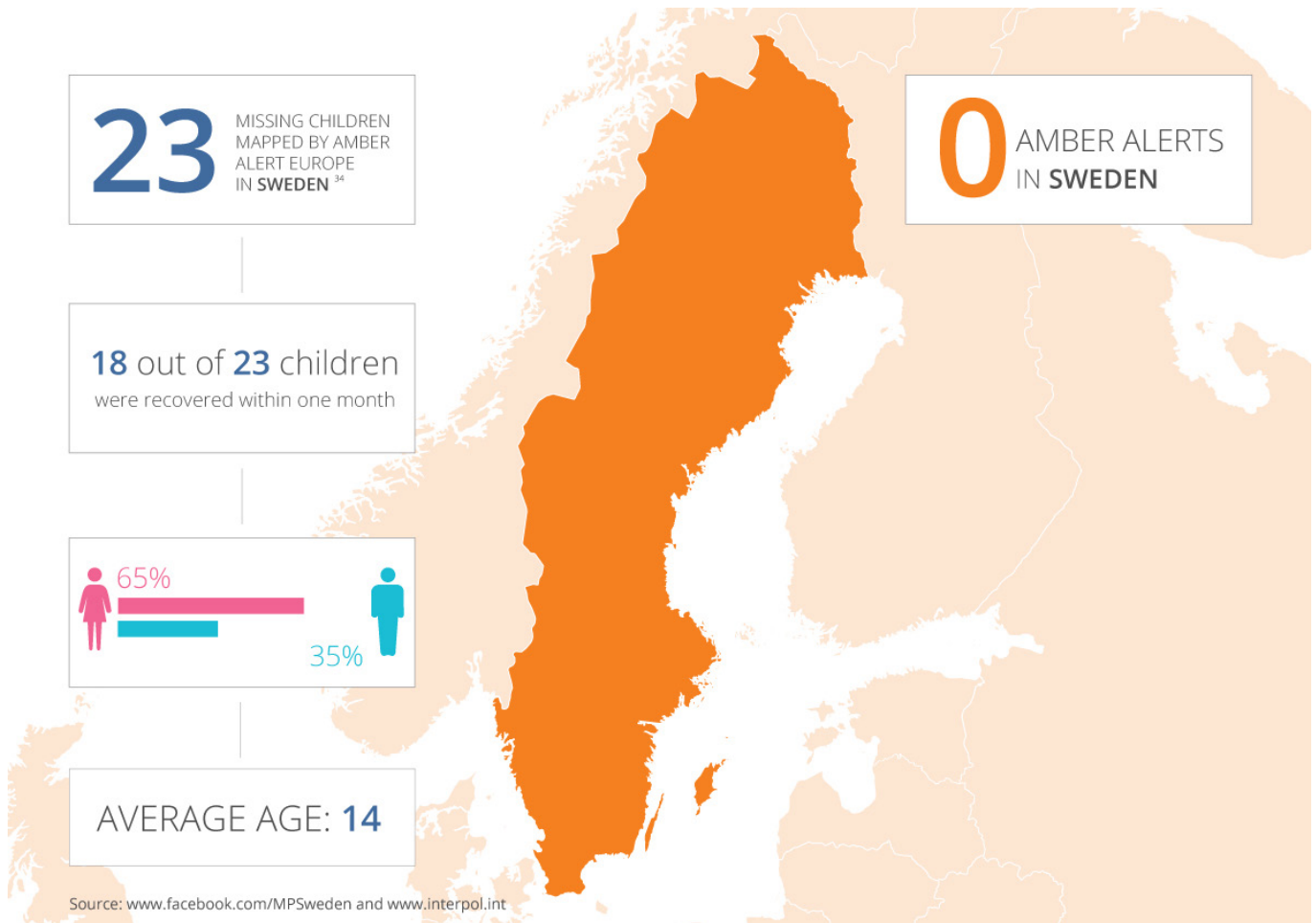
- Average age: 14 years old;
- 71 percent of the cases concerned girls (n=10);
- 36 percent of the Spanish missing children were recovered within one month (n=5).

³³ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.interior.gob.es and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).



23

Sweden



AMBER Alerts

Sweden does not have an AMBER Alert system in place, hence no AMBER Alerts were issued.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

Information on 23 missing Swedish children was mapped by AMBER Alert Europe.³⁴

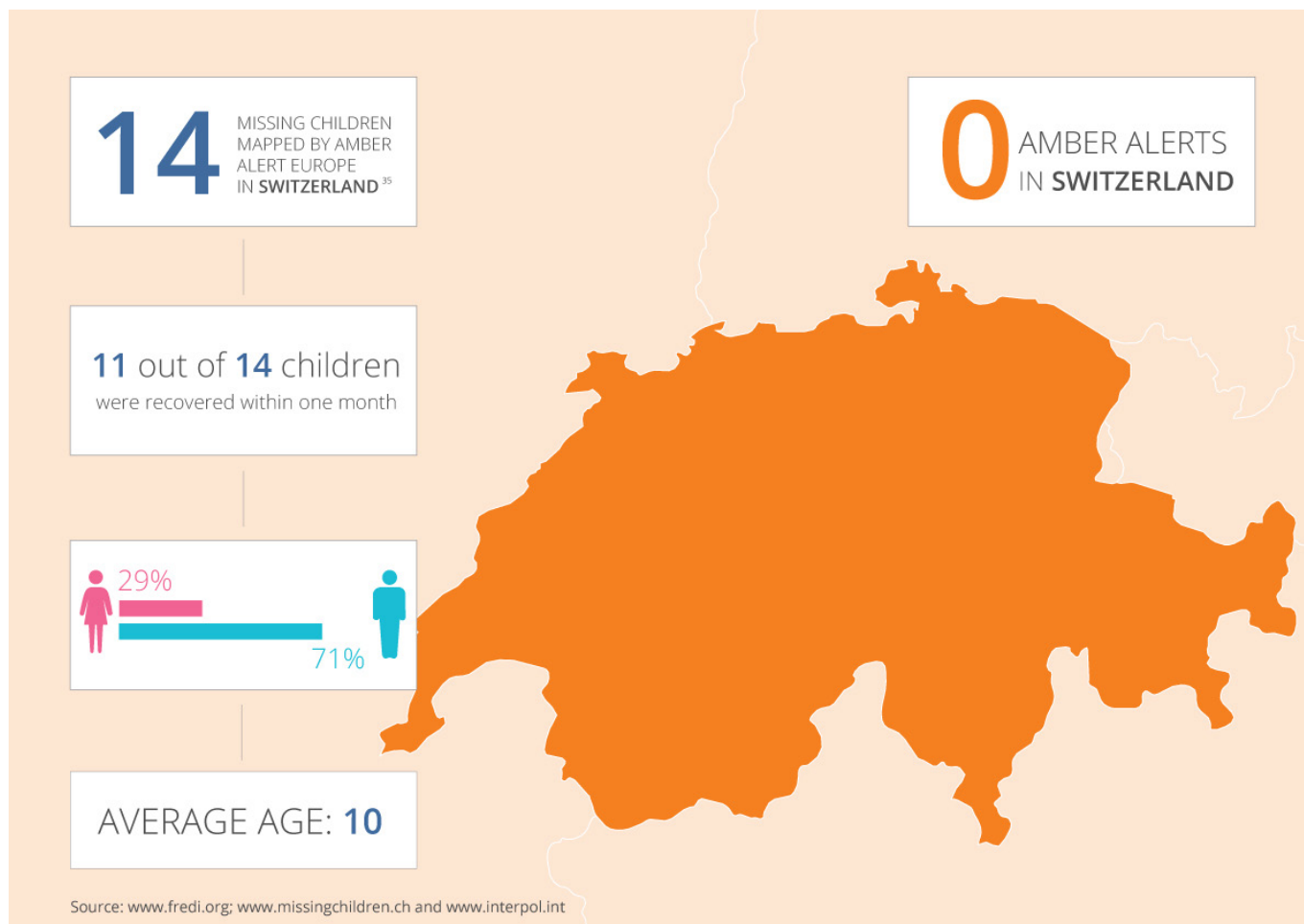
- Average age: 14 years old;
- 65 percent of the cases concerned girls (n=15), 35 percent involved boys (n=8);
- 18 children were recovered within one month (78%).

³⁴ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.facebook.com/MPSweden and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).



24

Switzerland



AMBER Alerts (Alerte Enlèvement)

Although Switzerland has an AMBER Alert system in place, there were no alerts issued in 2015.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in Switzerland:

- Strong suspicion or evidence that an abduction of a minor has taken place;
- Physical, sexual or mental integrity of the abducted is at risk;
- Enough information available to increase the chance to localize the perpetrator and/or the victim by issuing an alert;
- At least one person with parental powers or legal guardianship agrees on issue of alert.

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

A Swiss AMBER Alert is issued via radio, television, text messages, billboards on airports, railways and through advertisement providers.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 14 children that were reported missing by Swiss law enforcement.³⁵

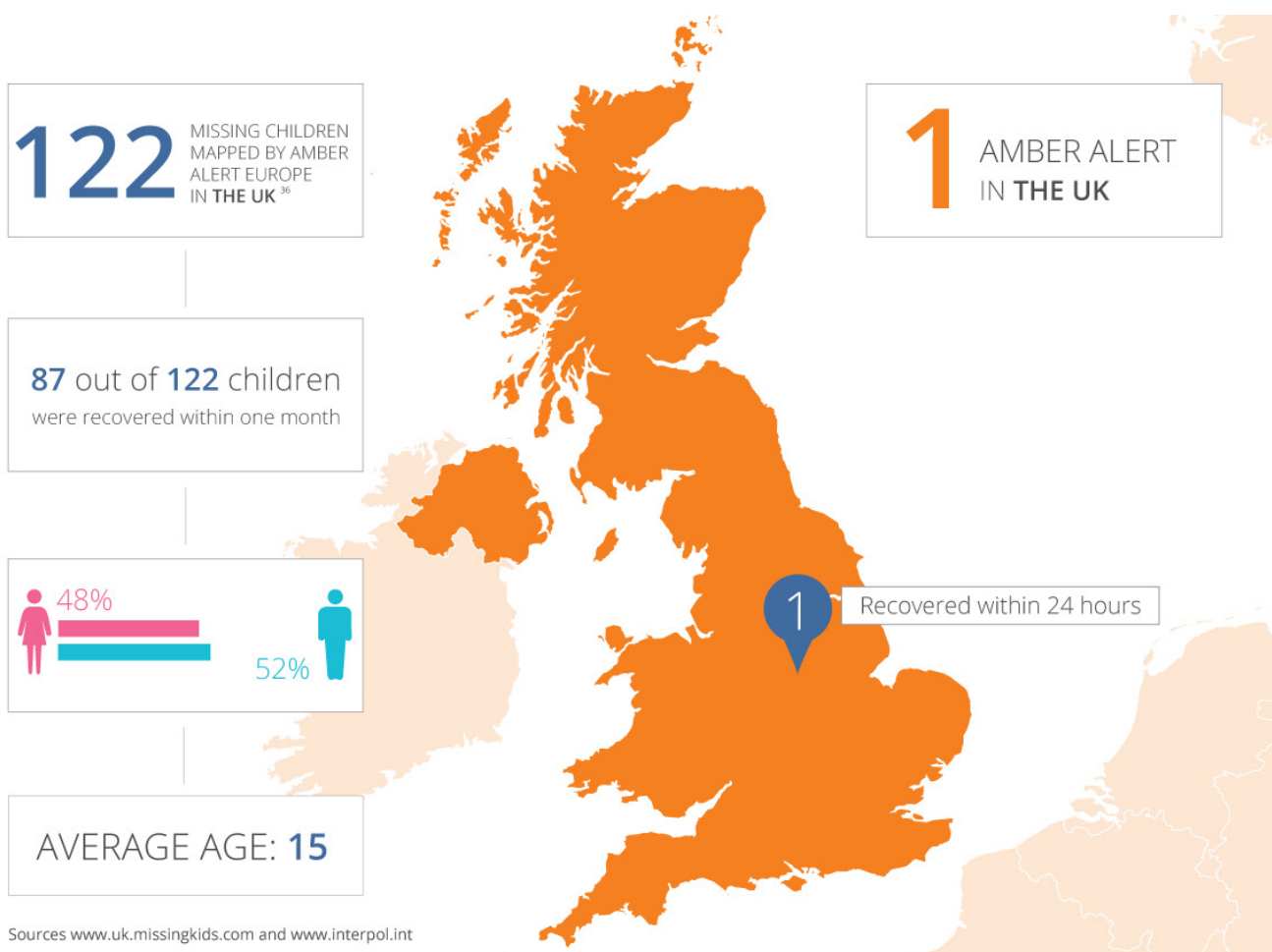
- Average age: 10 years old;
- The Swiss cases involved 71 percent boys (n=10), 29 percent girls (n=4);
- 11 children were recovered within one month (79%).

³⁵ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.fredi.org; www.missingchildren.ch and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).



25

The United Kingdom



AMBER Alerts (Child Rescue Alert)

In 2015, one AMBER Alert was issued for a 14-year-old girl from Chilwell. She was safely recovered within 24 hours.

The criteria for launching an AMBER Alert in the United Kingdom:

- The child is apparently under 18 years old;
- There is a perception that the child is in imminent danger of serious harm or death;
- There is sufficient information available to enable the public to assist police in locating the child.

Technical Tools available for dissemination:

Automated dissemination via social, digital and internet media plus SMS, which can be local, regional or national.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

In 2015, AMBER Alert Europe mapped 122 missing children cases that were reported by UK law enforcement.³⁶

- Average age: 15 years old;
- 52 percent of the cases involved boys (n=63), 48 percent involved girls (n=59);
- 87 children were recovered within one month (71%).

³⁶ Information on missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe which was made publicly available by official sources from law enforcement or other police mandated organisations on www.uk.missingkids.com and www.interpol.int. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate).

26

Conclusion

26.1 Main findings

With this report AMBER Alert Europe aims to emphasise the importance of AMBER Alert mechanisms and to enrich the discussion about the differences between member states responses to missing children. Therefore AMBER Alert Europe collected statistics in two areas: 1) AMBER Alerts and 2) missing children publicised by law enforcement and police mandated organisations on their websites. While the data collected at 2 is not representative of the true missing children numbers, it does illustrate the disparity between countries in how they record and publicise them.

AMBER Alerts

- In 2015, 29 AMBER Alerts were issued in 8 European countries: Czech Republic, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, France, Cyprus, Ireland and the United Kingdom;
- The AMBER Alerts involved 30 children;
- Most cases involved boys (66%); The average age of missing children for which an AMBER Alert was issued is 10 years old;
- 96 percent of the children were safely recovered, 89 percent even within 24 hours.

Missing children mapped by AMBER Alert Europe

AMBER Alert Europe mapped 1848 missing children in 2015, which is a sample of data publicised by law enforcement and police mandated organisations in Europe (as listed in annex A). However, the data does not contain all missing children publicised by law enforcement or police mandated organisations. Therefore it must be clear that the report does not give

any indications of the total number of missing children in Europe or specific member states.

The criteria used by law enforcement and police mandated organisations to publicise information on missing children cases vary per country. Also, the number of children reported as missing will be considerable higher than those who are given publicity. This is because, thankfully, the vast majority of missing children are found quickly, not every case is suitable for publicity and of those that are publicised, not all are put on a website (often because other means of publicity are more appropriate). A very small percentage of those missing children cases will be suitable for an AMBER Alert, which is why an effective triage process to assess risk is essential and recommended by AMBER Alert Europe. For more information on risk assessment, see articles and videos on our website.

Next steps

This report emphasises the need for more consistency in the way that missing children are responded to as it is currently a lottery depending on which country they go missing in as to how this is dealt with. Therefore, AMBER Alert Europe calls for more consistency and clearness to save more missing children.



A

Annex A: sources

Sources used by AMBER Alert Europe to map missing children:

www.interpol.int

www.bmi.gv.at

www.facebook.com/oesterreichfindeteuch

www.politie.be

www.childfocus.be

www.nestali.hr

www.nestaladjeca.hr

www.childalert.org.cy

www.policie.cz

www.116000enfantsdisparus.fr

www.initiative-vermisste-kinder.de

www.hamogelo.gr

www.police.hu

<http://ie.missingkids.com>

www.internationalmissingchild.org

www.vp.gov.lv

www.police.public.lu

www.116000.lu

www.amberalert.nl

www.childalert.pl

www.zaginieni.policja.pl

www.zaginieni.pl

www.politiaromana.ro

www.interior.gob.es

www.facebook.com/MPSweden

www.fredi.org

www.missingchildren.ch

www.uk.missingkids.com

