



# The Dutch Alcohol Interlock Programme: The rise and fall of a promising road safety measure

Safe & Sober Talk,

Alcohol Interlocks: Towards a European approach for the fight against drink driving?

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# Scope of the problem

- Drink driving is a serious road safety issue
- A lot of measures have been taken in the past decades and this has led to a cultural shift: drink driving is not accepted any more.
- However, there is a group of heavy drinking offenders that are less affected by the traditional measures.
- The alcohol interlock programme (AIP) is an effective measure for this group of hardcore drink driving offenders.

# Knowledge & guidelines AIP

- Practical guidelines exist on how to set up an AIP.
- Inclusion of rehabilitation elements and strong enforcement will increase AIP the effectiveness.
- It is important to start with a pilot before introduction and include an evaluation after introduction to adjust the programme where needed. This requires some kind of flexibility in the process.

**Houwing, S. (2016). Alcohol interlocks and drink dring rehabilitation in European Union. Best practice and guidelines for member states. ETSC, Brussels.**

# Dutch experience: Preparing the AIP

- Administrative law construction: Judges were not consulted
- No rehabilitation measure combined with AIP
- Ministry of Health left AIP working group
- Costs AIP mostly recouped from offenders (5000€)
- Context: Existing system of both administrative law and criminal law procedures for alcohol offenders

# Characteristics Dutch AIP

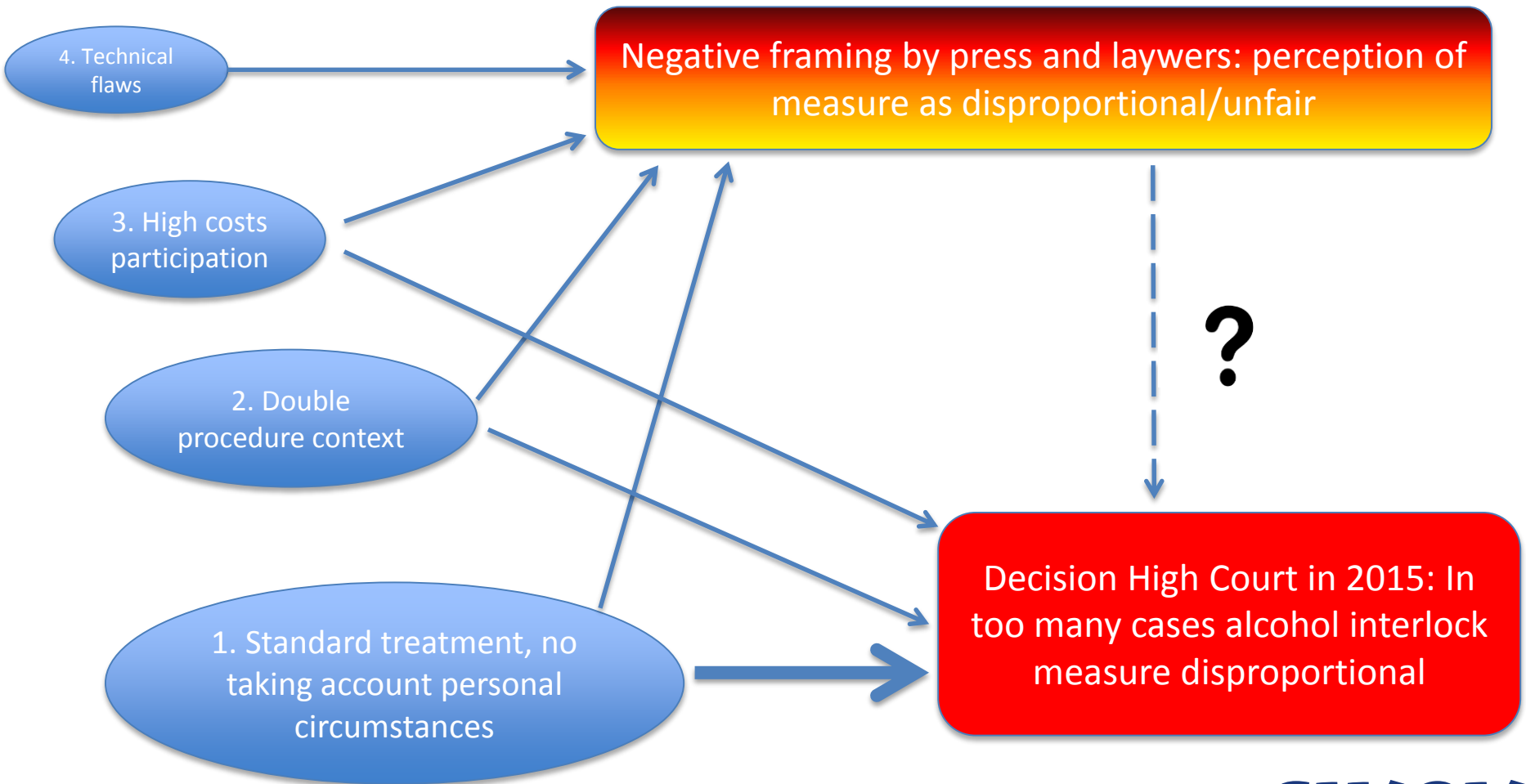
- Introduced December 2011, under administrative law
- Choice: 5 year licence withdrawal or participation AIP
- Target group: first offenders BAC between 1.3-1.8 g/l and recidivists (second offence BAC limit  $\geq 0.8$  g/l.)
- Length program: 24 months.
- A fail test in the last 6 months of the programme led to 6 month extension
- Costs per individual participant: 5000 €

# 2014 evaluation

- The evaluation on four elements:
  - participation rates;
  - the experience of the stakeholders;
  - the relationship of the AIP to criminal law;
  - the effects on road safety.
- Of the 10.500 offenders eligible for the AIP, 48% participated. 8% of the participants quit the AIP before it ended. Of the participants who started before July 2012, 86% finished the programme. 14% of the participants had their participation extended by 6 months.
- Most participants (75% or more) were satisfied with the motivational course and the use of the alcohol interlock device.
- In around 0.1% of cases, attempts of fraud or sabotage were detected.
- Recommendation to investigate coordination of administrative and criminal law procedures

# What-went-wrong-diagram

*In blue: the friction points; in yellow/red: the negative outcomes*





# Lessons of the Dutch AIP-experience?

- Select all main stakeholders and keep them on board!
  - What if the stakeholders/representatives from the judicial power had been involved in the design phase of AIP? What if they have had the possibility to look at the design and stress their concerns in advance?
  - What if the Ministry of Health was kept on board?
- Positive framing of measure!
  - What if the programme would be more promoted as a rehabilitation possibility instead of a punishment?
  - What if politicians and press knew more about the issues and the programmes?
  - What if drivers knew more about the programme in advance?

# New future for the Dutch AIP

- In October 2016 the Dutch Parliament decided that the Dutch AIP should return and that if the costs would be too high for offenders, the government should pay for the costs of the programme.
- Luckily the Netherlands gets a second chance of making a proven effective measure a success.
- The pillars of the AIP-measure should be built stronger. And this can only be achieved when there is a joint effort of all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Health.

# Thank you for your attention!

