



The use of plastic carrier bags in Europe

Existing situation and challenges



13th June 2014: 2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE on Sustainable Solid Waste Management
Maria Kasidoni, Unit of Environmental Science & Technology National Technical University of Athens



Environmental problem targeted

The same properties that have made plastic carrier bags commercially successful –low weight and resistance to degradation– have also contributed to their proliferation in the environment; since they escape waste management streams and accumulate in natural habitats, especially in the marine environment. Many of the impacts of plastic littering are of a transboundary and global nature, especially in water courses and the marine environment.

Packaging and packaging waste: reduction of the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags.

Amending Directive 94/62/EC

- No EU legislation/policy specifically targeting plastic carrier bags, until 2011.
- On 4th November 2013, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Directive to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic bags in the EU. The proposal amends the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC).
- Obligation for all Member States to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic carrier bags.
- Transposition of the Directive into national law 12 months after its entry into force.



Evidence gathering regarding the use of plastic carrier bags

- Existing legislation
- Voluntary initiatives
- Economic measures (tax, fee, levy etc)
- Plastic carrier bag consumption
- Plastic carrier bag incineration
- Plastic carrier bag in landfills
- Littering rate of HDPE bags
- Littering rate of LDPE bags



Results & discussion



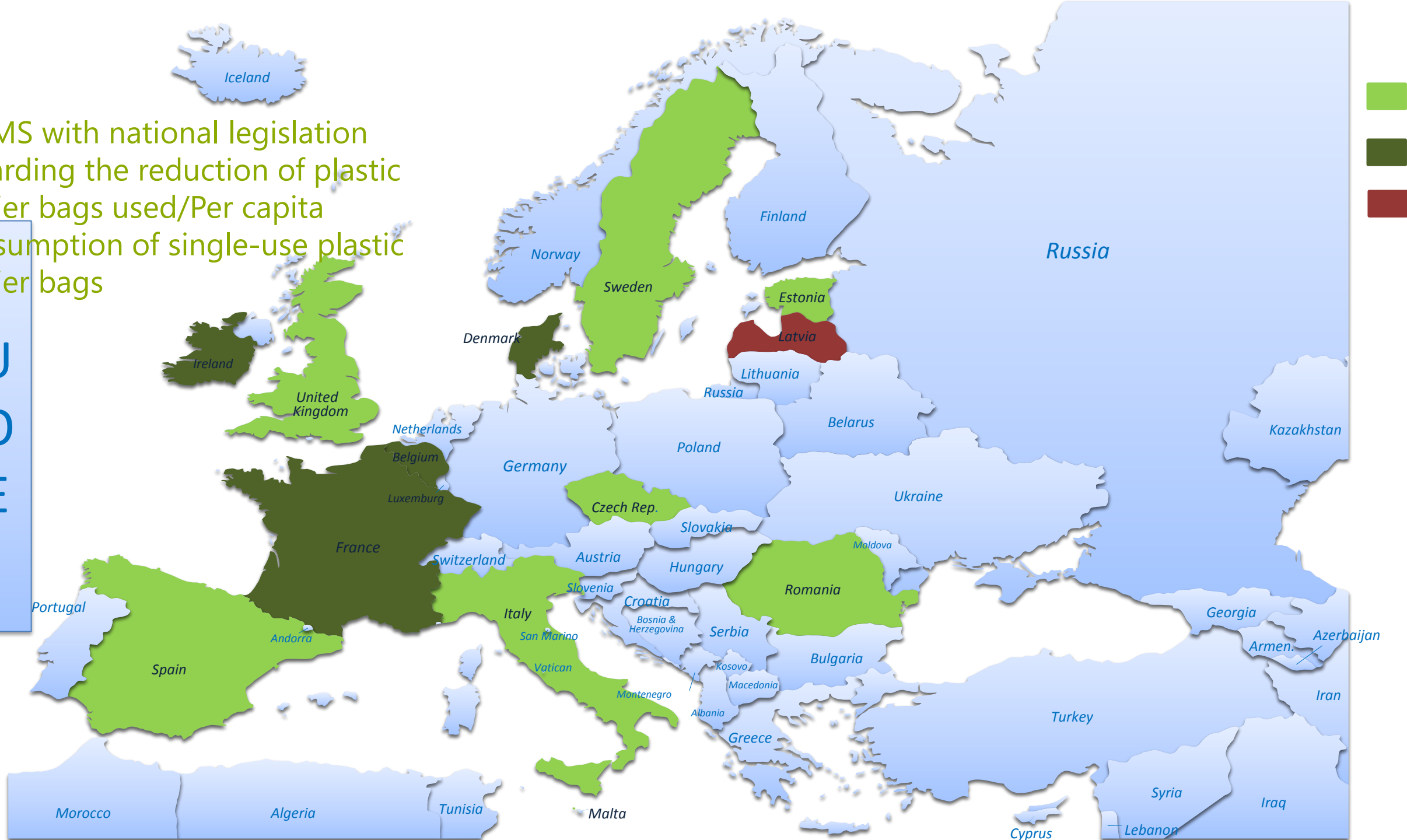


Existing or planned legislation to avoid the use of plastic carrier bags in the EU Member-States

EU
RO
PE

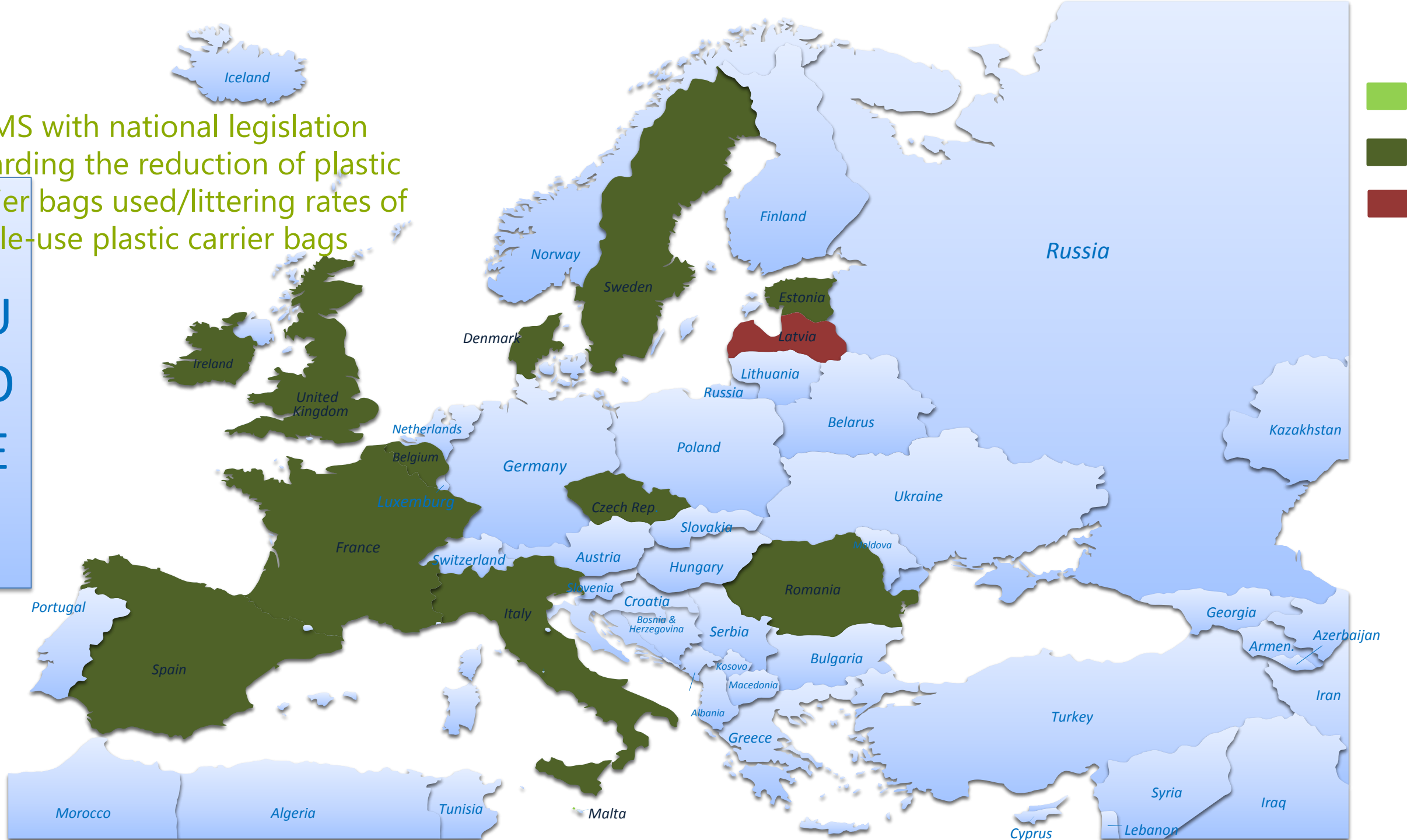


EUROPE



EU MS with national legislation
regarding the reduction of plastic
carrier bags used/littering rates of
single-use plastic carrier bags

EU
RO
PE





Voluntary initiatives regarding the reduction of plastic carrier bags used in the EU Member-States

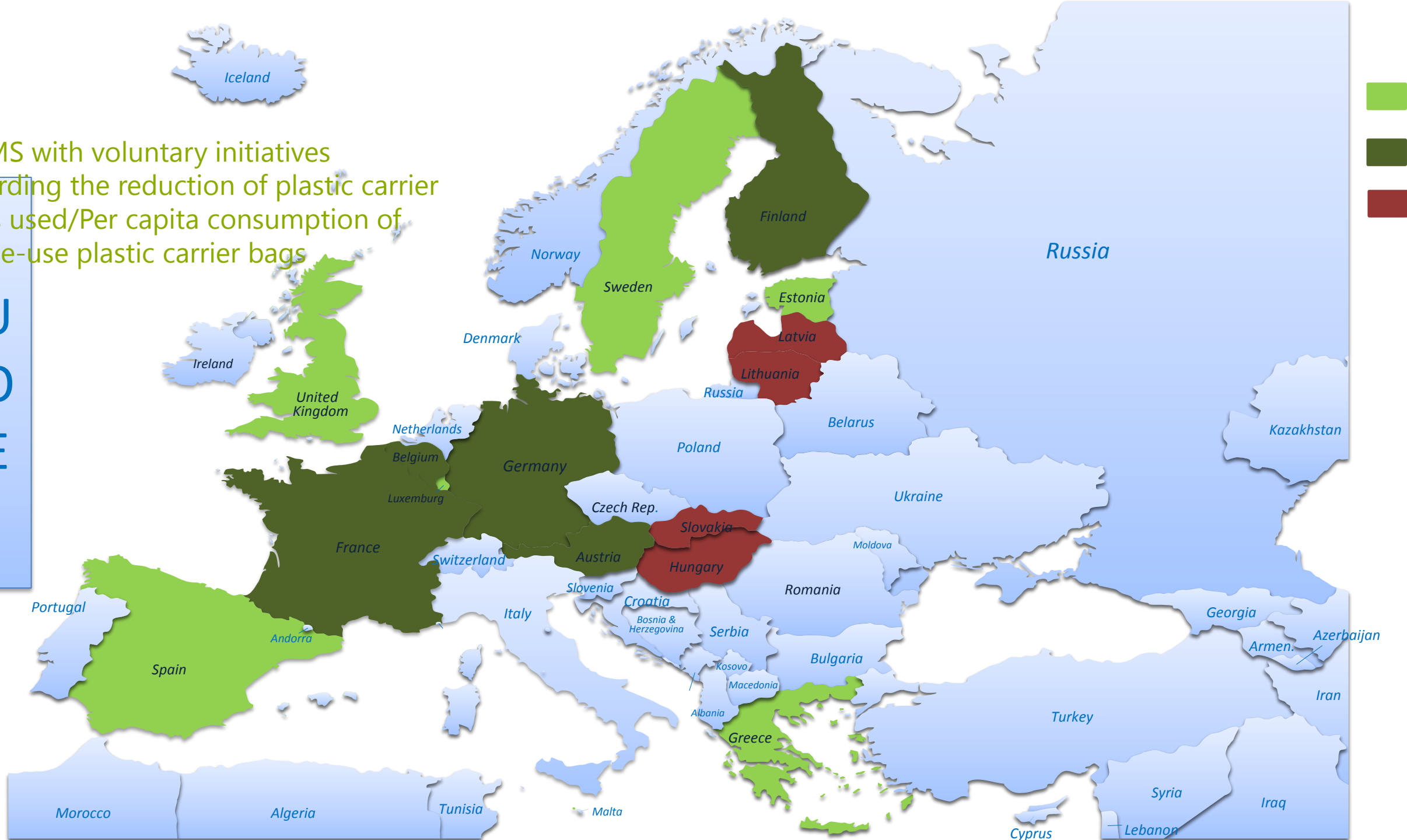
Voluntary initiatives

EU
RO
PE

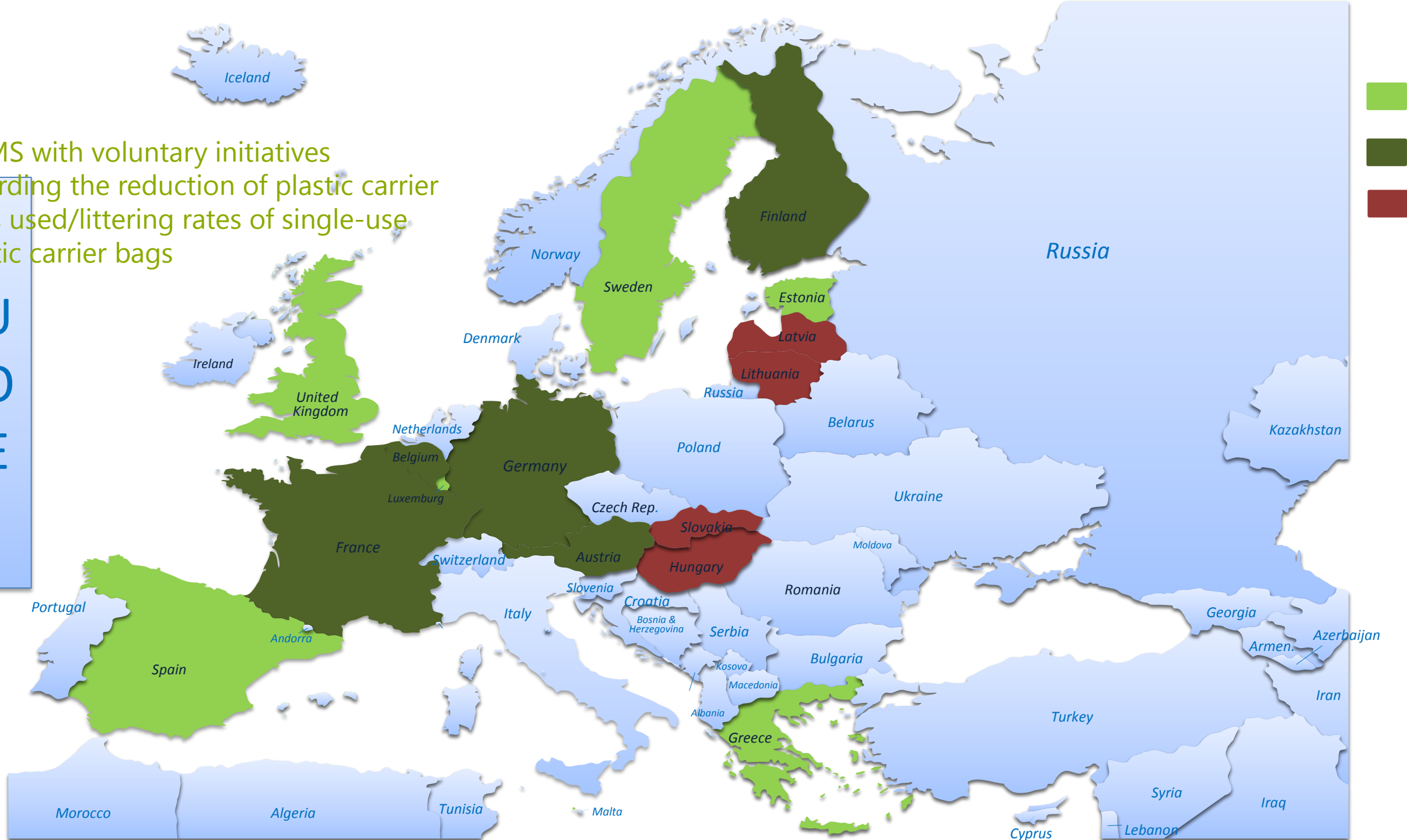


EU MS with voluntary initiatives
regarding the reduction of plastic carrier
bags used/Per capita consumption of
single-use plastic carrier bags

EU
RO
PE



EU
RO
PE





Use of economic measures for the reduction of plastic carrier bags used in the EU Member-States

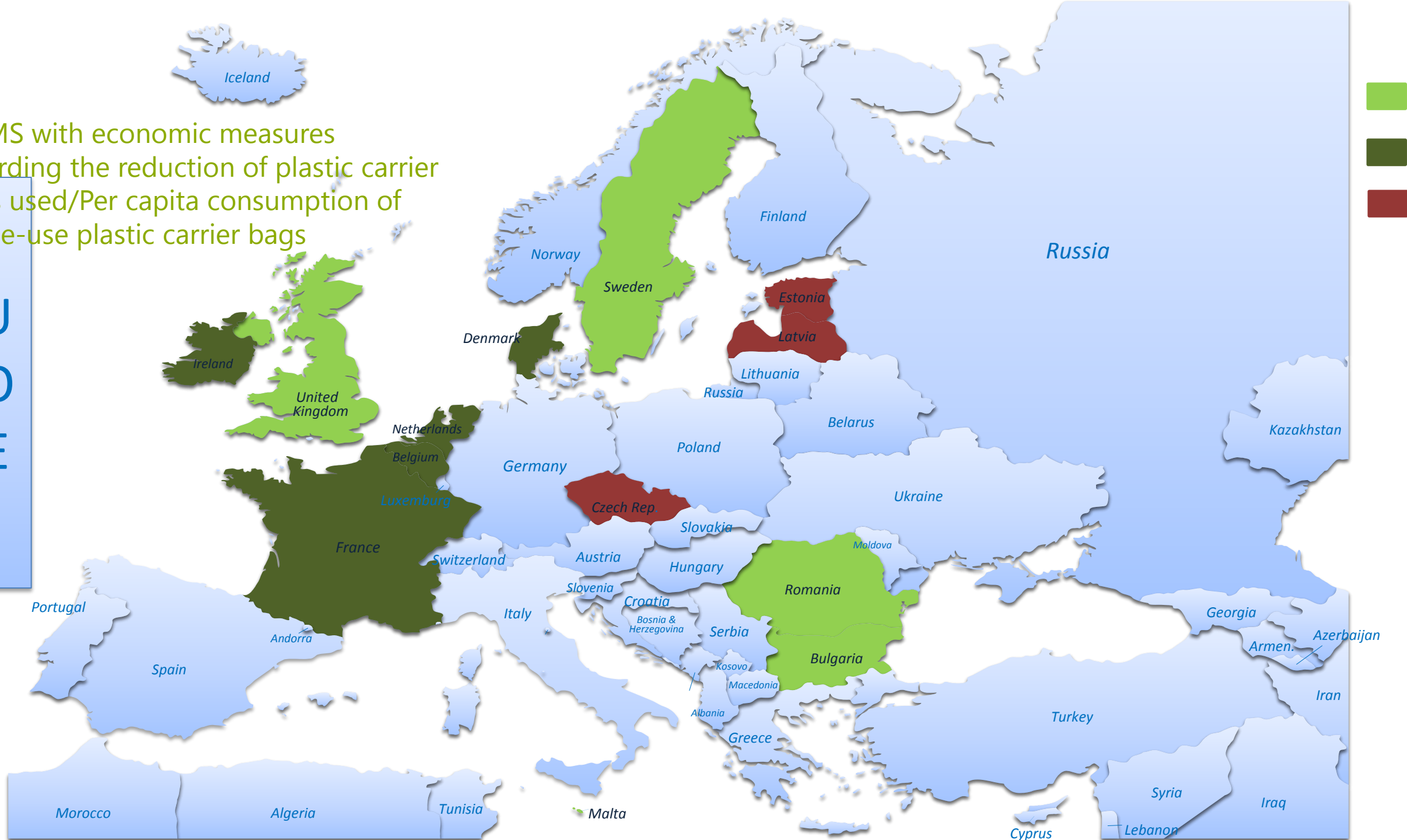
EU
RO
PE

Economic measures



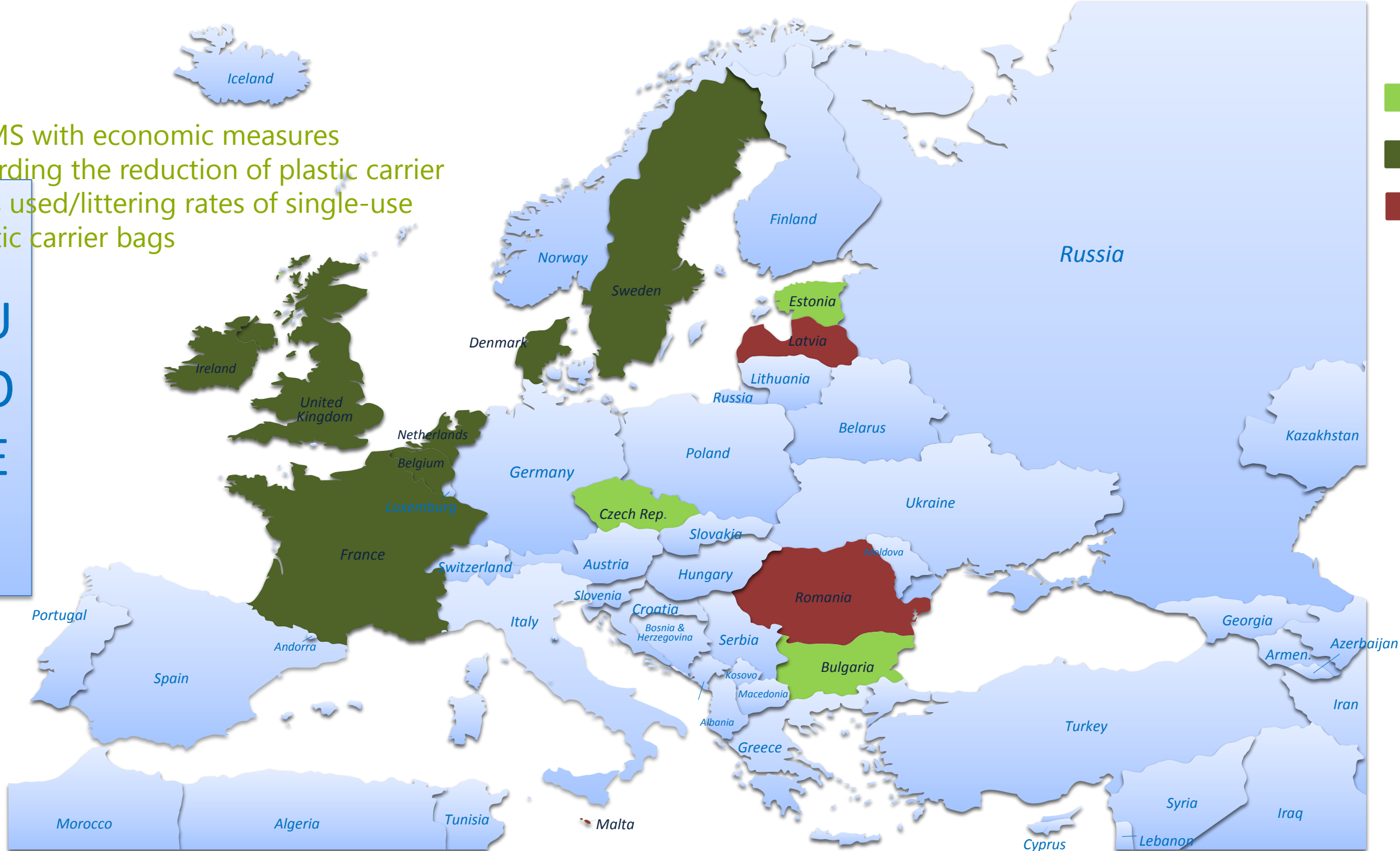
EU MS with economic measures
regarding the reduction of plastic carrier
bags used/Per capita consumption of
single-use plastic carrier bags

EU
RO
PE



EU MS with economic measures
regarding the reduction of plastic carrier
bags used/littering rates of single-use
plastic carrier bags

EU
RO
PE





Existing situation regarding the use of plastic carrier bags

- Voluntary initiatives are the first step for many EU MS in order to reduce the use of plastic carrier bags
- Economic measures are included in the legislation for the reduction of the use of plastic carrier bags
- Implementation of legislation has so far the most promising results regarding the plastic bag consumption
- Economic measures did not have the expected results regarding the plastic bag consumption
- Implementation of legislation has reduced litter impacts effectively.
- Voluntary initiatives have contributed the least to the plastic bag littering rates reduction

