



EU challenges and priorities

Flash Eurobarometer 584

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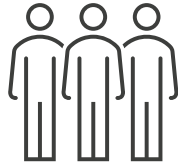
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Defence, including the future Security Strategy

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Methodology



The survey was conducted among a representative sample of the national population aged 15 and over in each of the 27 EU Member States. Around 1,000 interviews were carried out in each country, with 500 interviews in the smallest Member States.

In total, **25, 904** interviews were completed for the 27 EU Member States.

Results have been statistically weighted so that each Member State contributes to the EU27 aggregate in proportion to its actual share of the total EU population (i.e. countries with smaller populations have a correspondingly smaller weight in the overall EU results).



The representativeness of the sample was ensured using a stratified random sampling approach, using interlocking or marginal strata (quotas) on the following core dimensions: **gender, age groups and region of residence**.



The interviews were conducted via Online interviews (CAWI) from **19 to 24 June 2026**.

Please note that the questions are presented in this presentation in a thematic order, which does not necessarily follow the order in which they were asked in the questionnaire

Reminder 2025 and 2026

In this report, the '2025 reminders' and '2026 reminders' refer to two Flash Eurobarometer :

- FL569 "EU challenges and priorities", September 2025: survey conducted for the DG Communication; fieldwork 3 to 10 September 2025; conducted by Ipsos European Public Affairs. A total of 25, 893 interviews were carried out in the EU27.
- FL574 "The European Union in Defence and Space", January 2026: survey conducted for DG for Defence Industry and Space; fieldwork 5 to 12 January 2026; by Demoscopy. A total of 27, 292 interviews were carried out in the EU27.

Survey coverage - number of interviews per country

	EU	25,904		Latvia	1,010
	Belgium	1,039		Lithuania	1,005
	Bulgaria	1,007		Luxembourg	506
	Czechia	1,016		Hungary	1,030
	Denmark	1,015		Malta	512
	Germany	1,008		Netherlands	1,024
	Estonia	1,005		Austria	1,017
	Republic of Ireland	1,036		Poland	1,024
	Greece	1,008		Portugal	1,005
	Spain	1,005		Romania	1,014
	France	1,005		Slovenia	1,016
	Croatia	1,031		Slovakia	1,003
	Italy	1,009		Finland	1,024
	Cyprus	521		Sweden	1,009



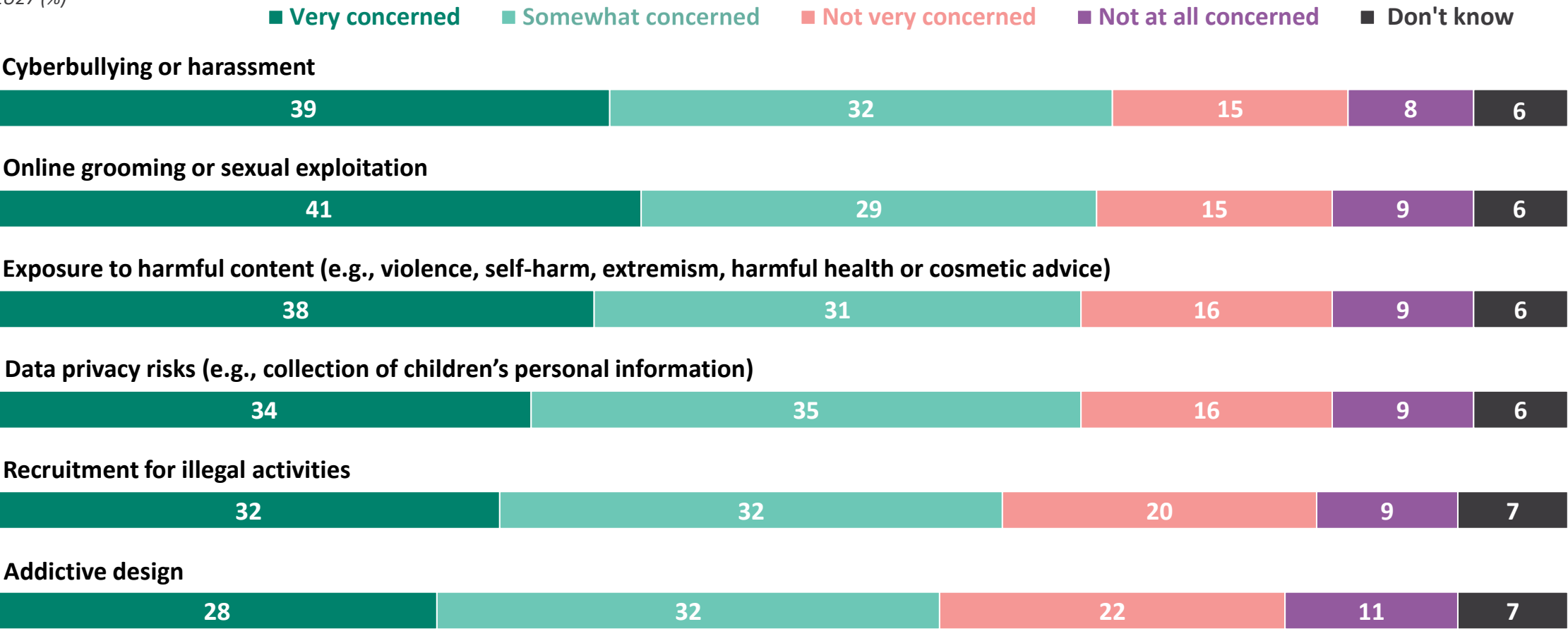
01

Social media and disinformation

Europeans are overwhelmingly concerned about all the risks children face on social media, led by cyberbullying (71%), grooming (70%) and exposure to harmful content (69%)

Q11 How concerned are you about the following risks children face on social media?

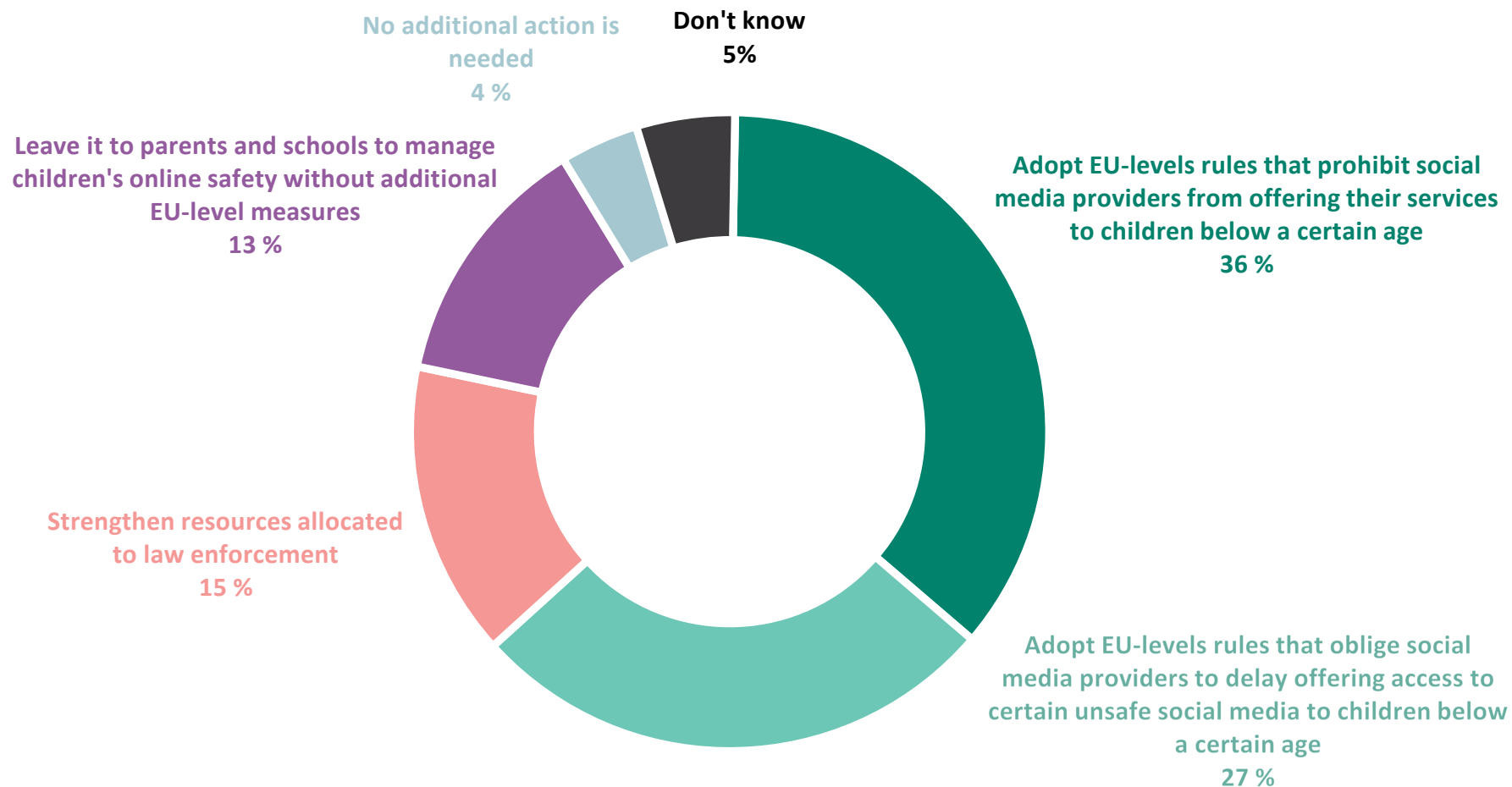
Base: EU27 (%)



Nearly two in three Europeans (63%) want EU rules restricting children's access to social media by age: no access to social media below a certain age (36%) or delayed access (27%)

Q12 The Digital Service Act (DSA) requires online platforms to protect children better from harms, which could result for example through cyberbullying, grooming, exposure to violent/extremist material, addictive design or so-called rabbit holes. In order to further strengthen the protection of children online, which one of the following actions do you think the EU should take?

Base: EU27 (%)



Exposure to questionable information online is very common: nearly six in ten Europeans come across unreliable (58%) or seemingly false (57%) content at least several times a week

Q13 In the past seven days, how often have you come across information online that you...

Base: EU27 (%)

■ Daily or almost every day ■ Several times a week ■ Less often ■ Never ■ Don't know

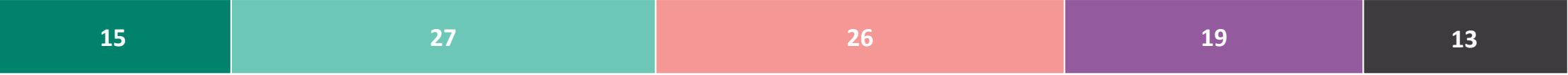
Were unsure whether it was reliable



Believed to be false or misleading



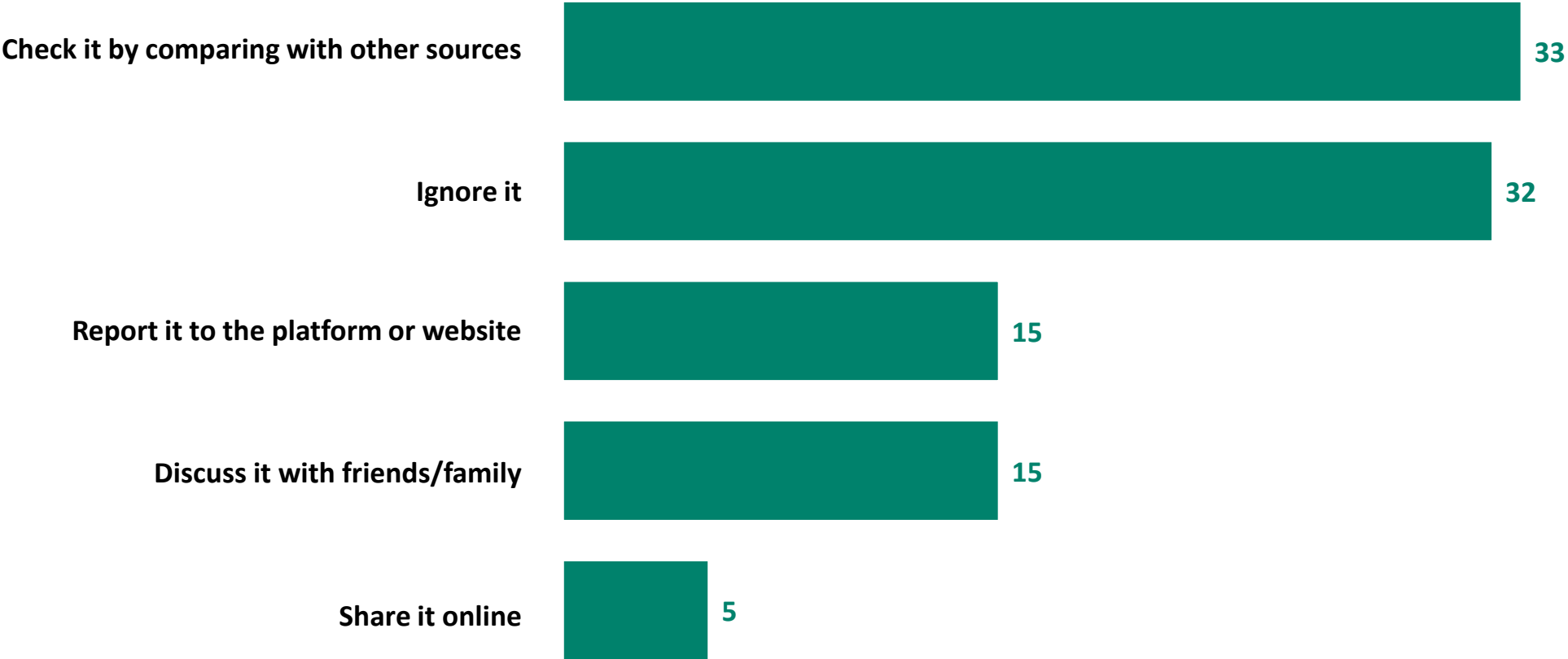
Believed may have been part of an attempt by a foreign country or organisation to influence your opinion



Faced with information they suspect is false, Europeans are split between checking it (33%) and ignoring it (32%), and very few share it (5%)

Q14 When you come across information online that you think might be false or misleading, what do you usually do? *[Multiple answers possible]*

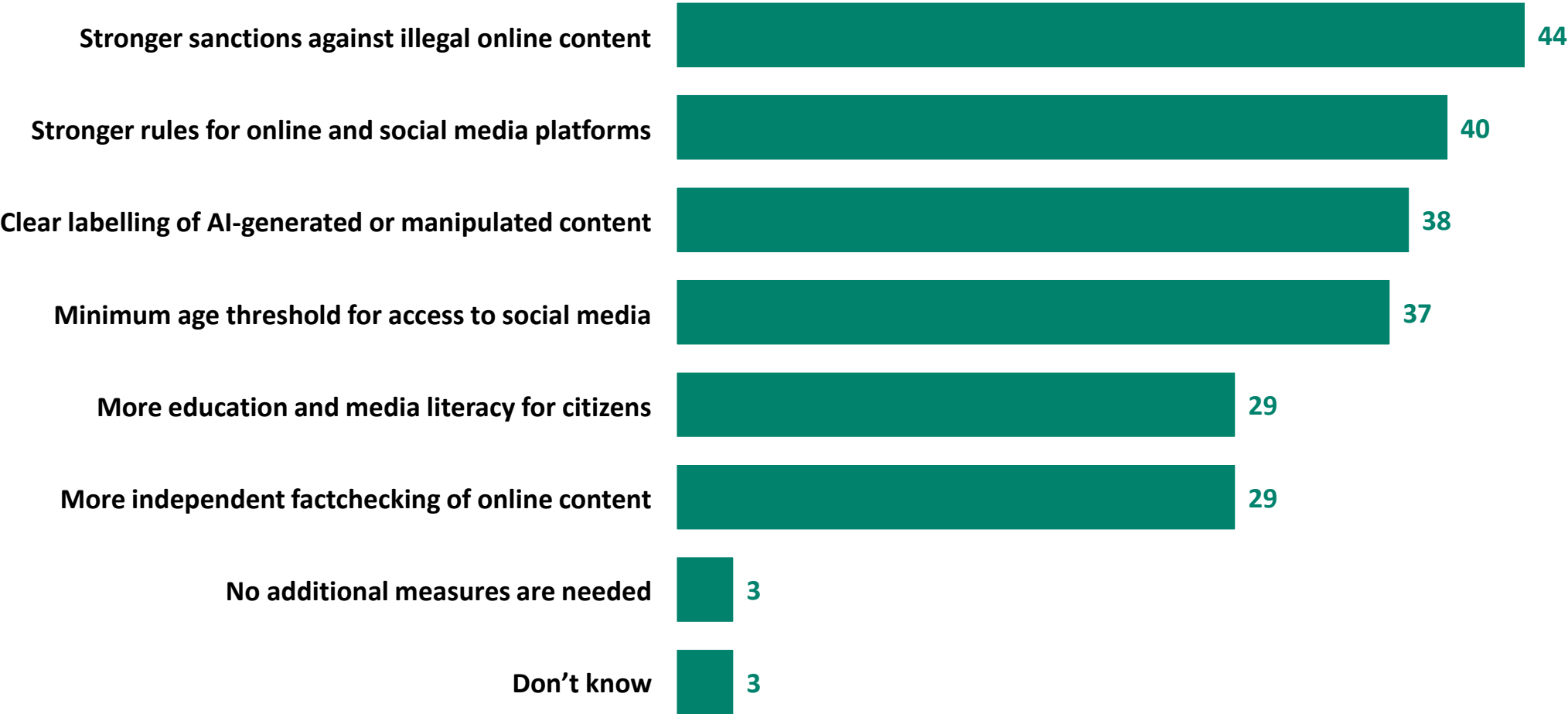
Base: EU27 (%)



To tackle disinformation, Europeans favour tougher, regulatory measures (sanctions 44%, stronger platform rules 40%) over education and fact-checking (29%)

Q15 Which of the following measures, if any, should be prioritised to reduce the negative impact of false or misleading information online? *[Multiple answers possible, maximum 2]*

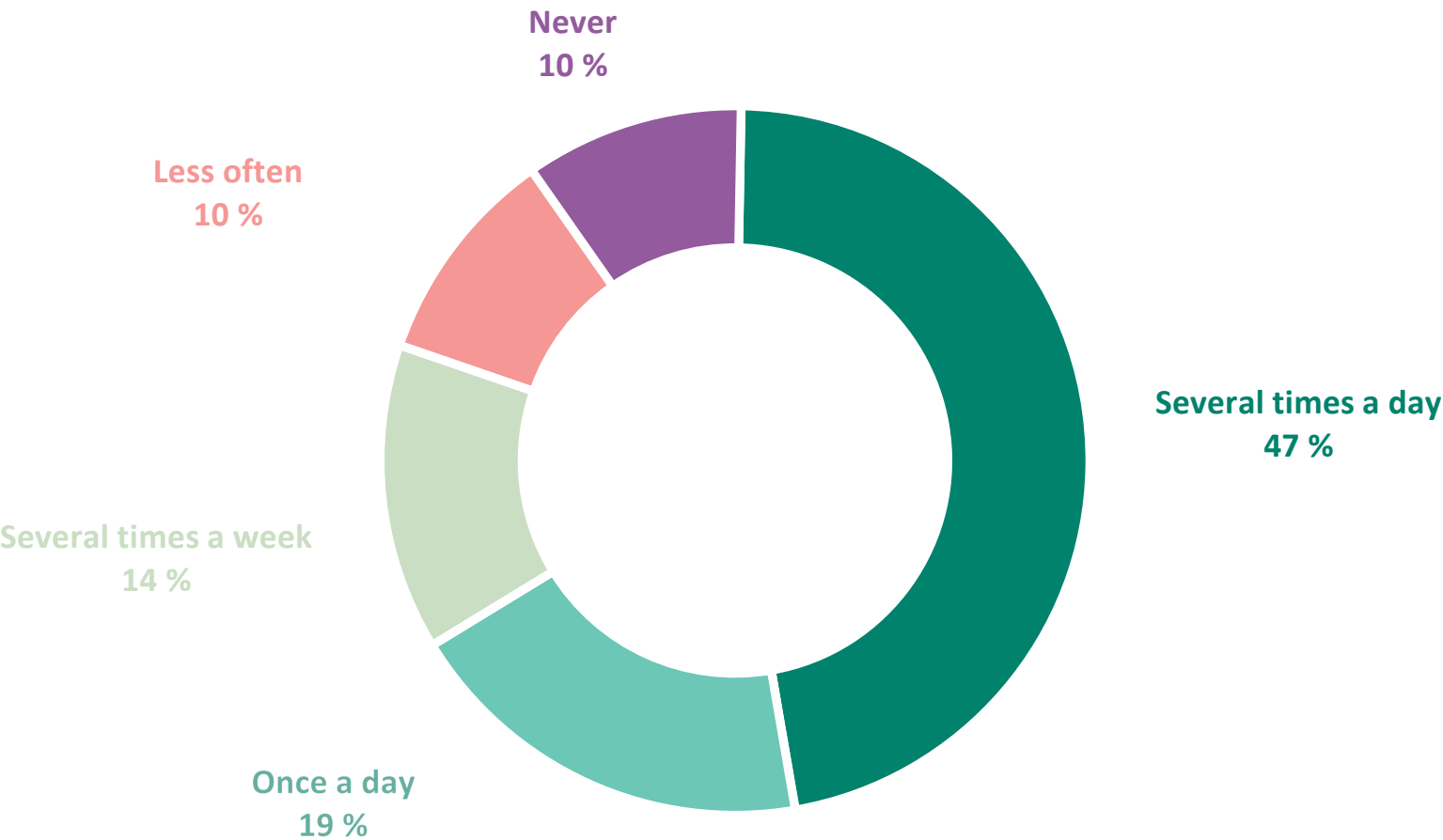
Base: EU27 (%)



Social media have become a daily news channel: two thirds of Europeans (66%) use them every day to get information on current affairs or politics

DX1 How often do you use social media platforms to get information about current affairs or political issues?

Base: EU27 (%)





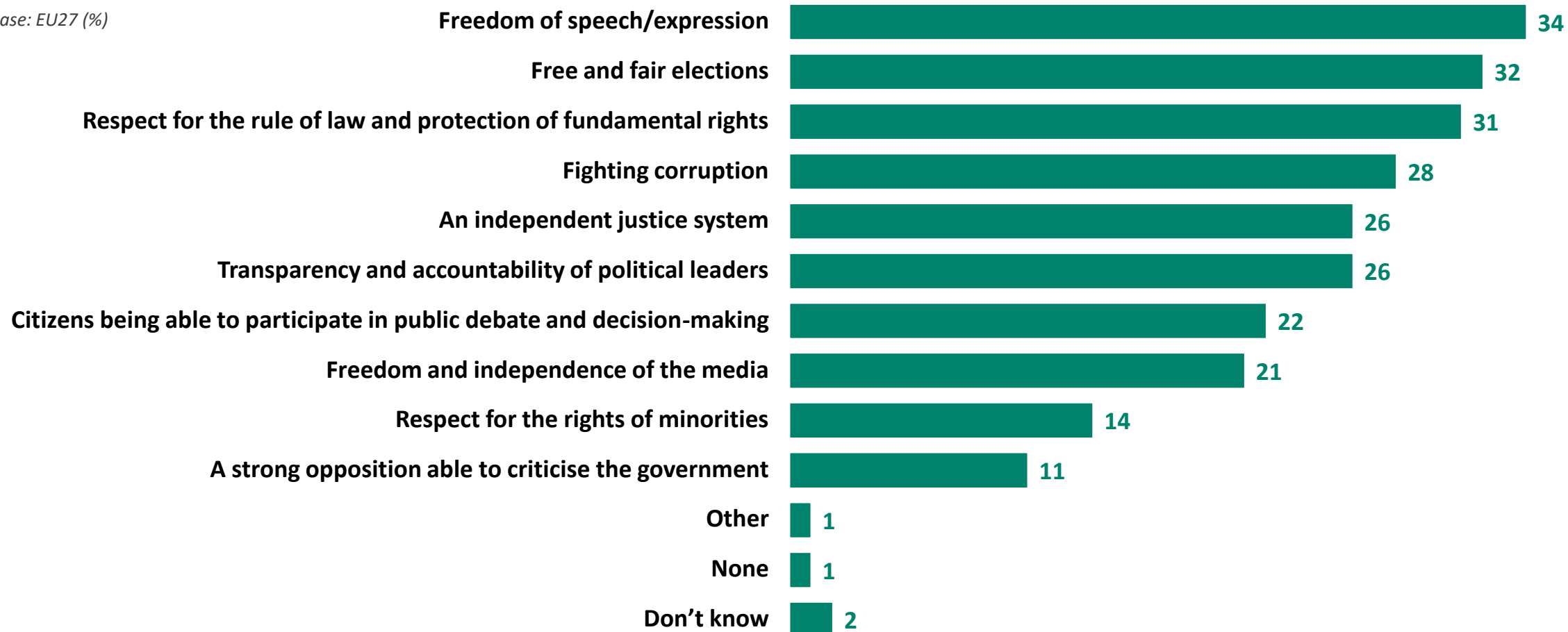
02

Democracy and rule of law in the EU

Close to a third of Europeans identify freedom of speech, free elections and the rule of law as pillars of democracy, while the rights of minorities and political opposition are found at the bottom of the list

Q3 In your opinion, which of the following are the most important elements of a democratic society? *[Multiple answers possible, maximum 3]*

Base: EU27 (%)



Views of what matters most in a democracy vary across the EU: freedoms and elections tend to prevail in the north-west, while fighting corruption weighs more heavily in the south and east

Q3 In your opinion, which of the following are the most important elements of a democratic society?

Base: EU27 (%)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Freedom of speech / expression	34	38	22	33	44	38	33	32	32	24	36	31	36	29	27	26	32	29	29	45	37	34	25	30	28	30	36	41
Free and fair elections	32	33	35	37	36	38	38	37	20	26	26	31	23	21	43	41	28	36	32	43	35	39	28	42	30	32	41	41
Respect for the rule of law and protection of fundamental rights	31	26	28	32	32	31	32	28	35	35	29	32	36	33	29	19	35	33	37	23	31	25	36	34	39	36	33	29
Fighting corruption	28	20	50	27	20	17	23	21	42	41	26	44	30	41	31	38	20	31	18	15	24	22	46	40	36	35	20	22
An independent justice system	26	27	38	25	27	25	24	26	37	31	21	39	22	24	20	20	23	34	26	28	30	34	23	26	28	27	31	21
Transparency and accountability of political leaders	26	25	25	25	22	19	28	31	32	35	29	28	29	38	22	35	31	28	32	21	20	22	37	24	26	22	21	20
Freedom and independence of the media	21	17	18	24	21	21	26	19	18	19	18	20	22	19	21	26	25	20	25	24	21	31	16	15	27	21	22	26
Citizens being able to participate in public debate and decision-making	22	21	29	19	22	23	29	24	24	20	25	26	22	23	21	25	30	16	24	21	20	20	20	18	27	20	23	24
Respect for the rights of minorities	14	14	5	6	12	14	13	16	10	11	17	8	19	17	10	6	22	11	19	11	11	12	15	9	9	10	12	11
A strong opposition able to criticise the government	11	14	9	8	11	15	15	16	13	10	11	11	8	17	14	12	19	8	21	14	9	11	8	10	8	9	11	10

Low High

Europeans are divided on respect for the rule of law: a slim majority are satisfied in their own country (51%), while opinion is evenly split at EU level (47% / 47%)

Q4 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the respect for the rule of law in...

Base: EU27 (%)

■ Very satisfied ■ Rather satisfied ■ Rather dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied ■ Don't know

(OUR COUNTRY)



The EU

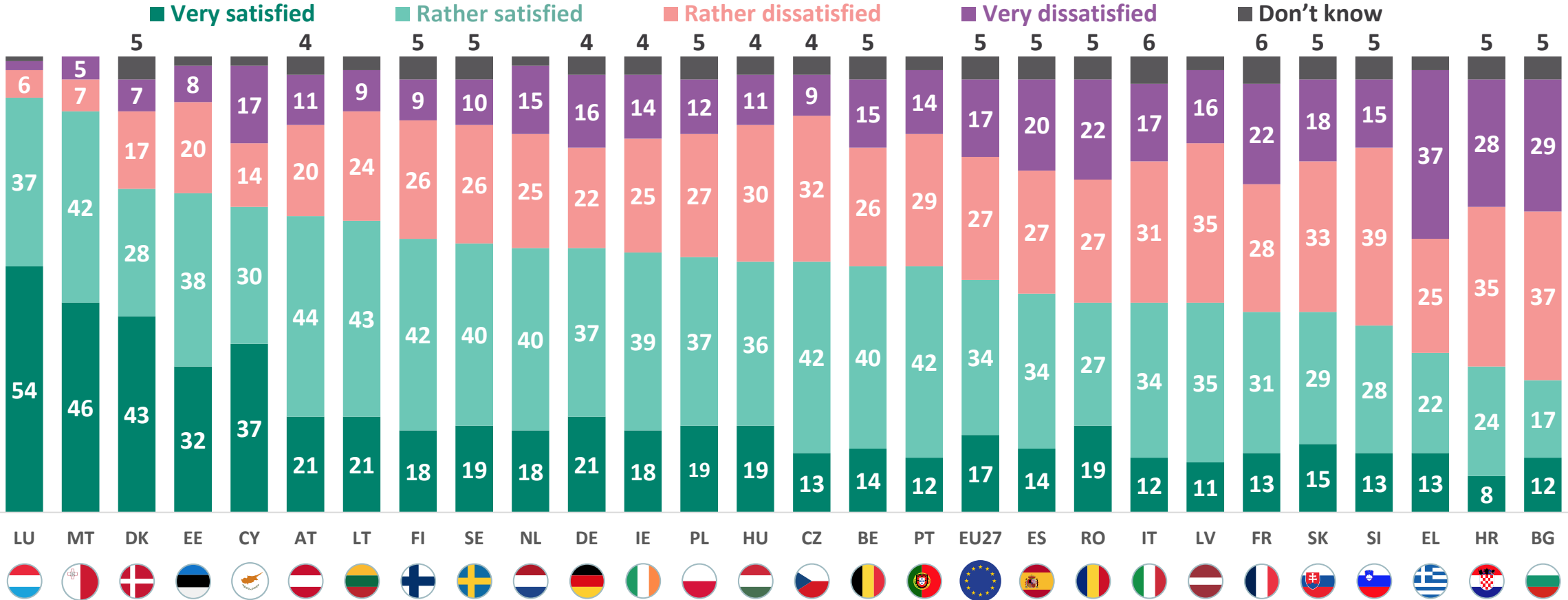


Respect for the rule of law in their country deeply divides Europeans: from 91% satisfied in Luxembourg to 29% in Bulgaria

Q4 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the respect for the rule of law in...

Base: EU27 (%)

(OUR COUNTRY)



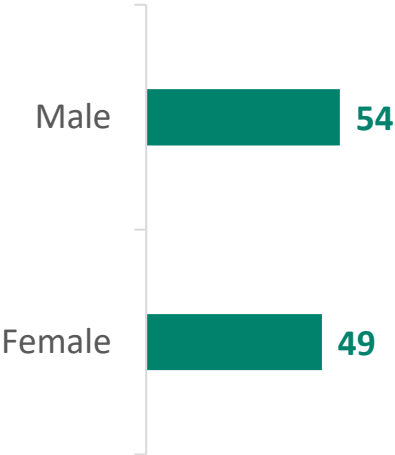
Satisfaction with the rule of law varies little across socio-demographic groups

Q4 Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the respect for the rule of law in...

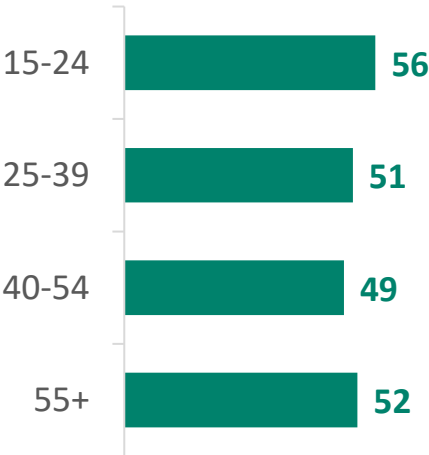
Base: EU27 (%)

‘(OUR COUNTRY) – Total Satisfied’

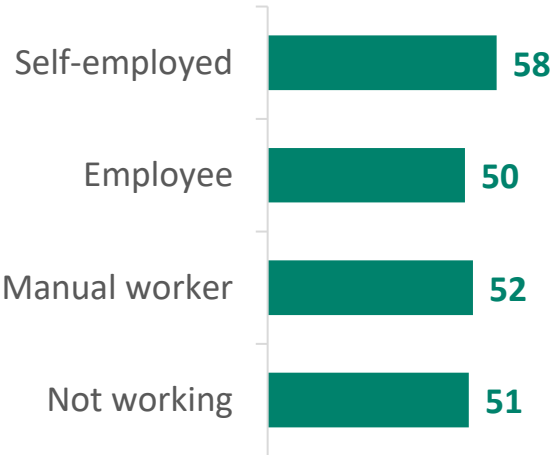
% by gender:



% by age:



% by occupation:



Beyond voting, Europeans doubt the effectiveness of citizen action to influence the EU: only direct citizen participation convinces, and only just (46%)

Q5 For each of the following actions, tell me whether you think it is effective or not in influencing political decision-making at the EU level beyond elections?

Base: EU27 (%)

■ **Very effective** ■ **Fairly effective** ■ **Not very effective** ■ **Not at all effective** ■ **Don't know**

Take part in more direct forms of citizen participation such as a European Citizens' Initiative



Participate in political movements, parties or unions



Boycott or buy certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons



Participate in a demonstration or another form of grassroots movement



Be a member of an association or a non-governmental organisation



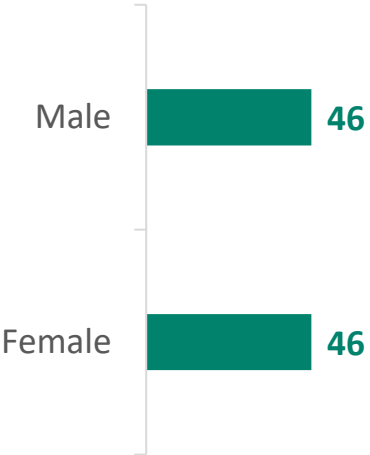
Younger people are more likely to think that taking part in more direct forms of citizen participation such as a European Citizens’ Initiative is effective in influencing the EU in political decision-making

Q5 For each of the following actions, tell me whether you think it is effective or not in influencing political decision-making at the EU level beyond elections?

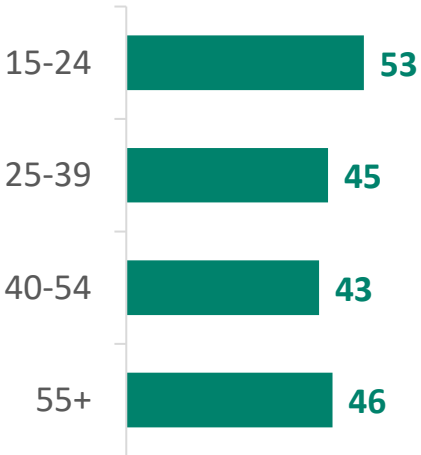
Base: EU27 (%)

‘Take part in more direct forms of citizen participation such as a European Citizens’ Initiative – Total effective’

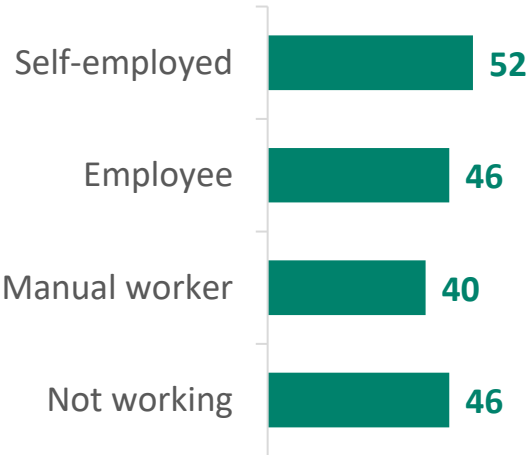
% by gender:



% by age:



% by occupation:





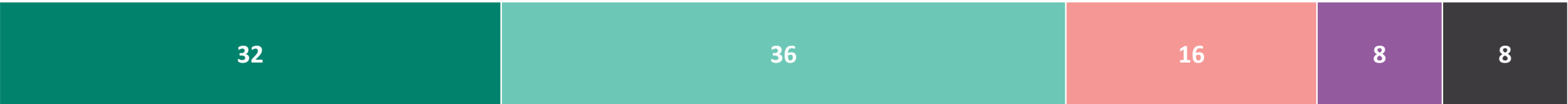
Europeans strongly support an autonomous European defence (68%), while the sense of insecurity about their own country is declining (52%, down 16 points)

Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: EU27 (%)

■ **Totally agree** ■ **Tend to agree** ■ **Tend to disagree** ■ **Totally disagree** ■ **Don't know**

The EU should strengthen its capacity to defend itself autonomously against potential external threats



The security of (OUR COUNTRY) is threatened



Reminder
January 2026

-8

-8

+6

+3

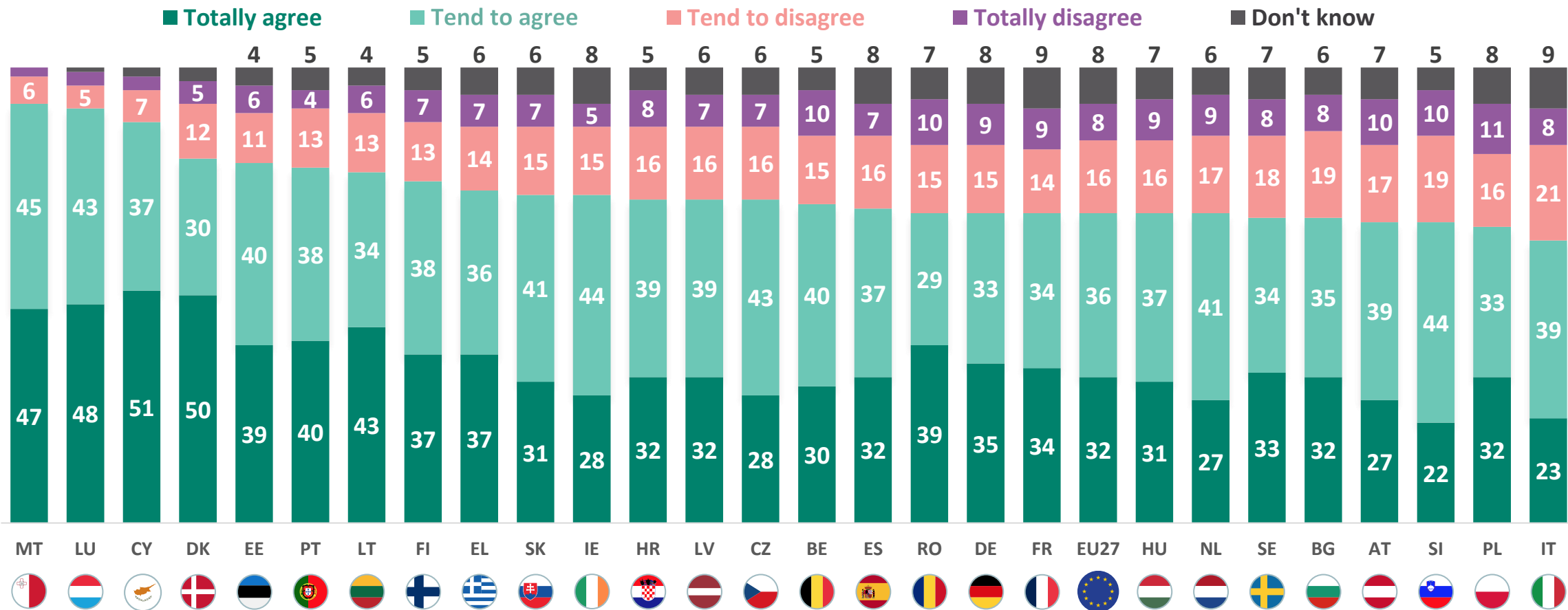
+7

Support for strengthening the EU's defence capacity is strong across all Member States, ranging from 62% in Italy to 92% in Malta

Q7 Given the current international context, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: EU27 (%)

The EU should strengthen its capacity to defend itself autonomously against potential external threats

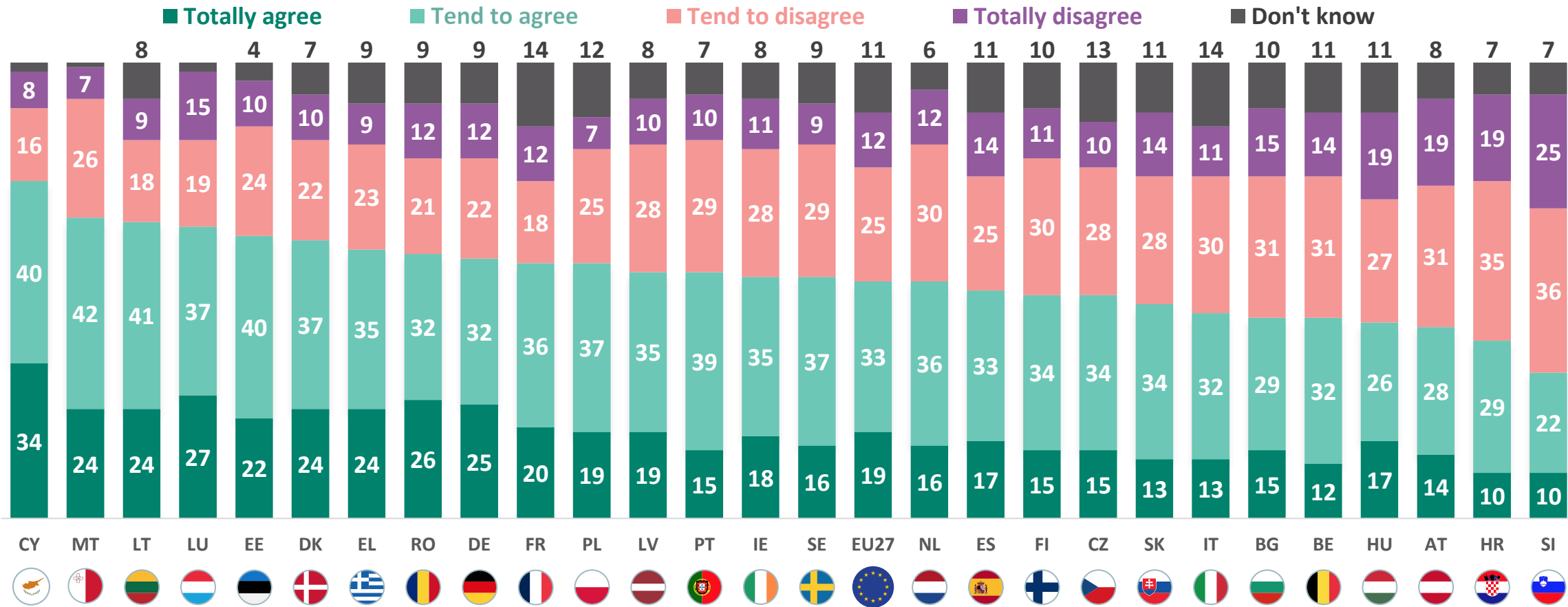


Whereas concern over national security is lower and more uneven, ranging from 74% in Cyprus to 32% in Slovenia

Q7 Given the current international context, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: EU27 (%)

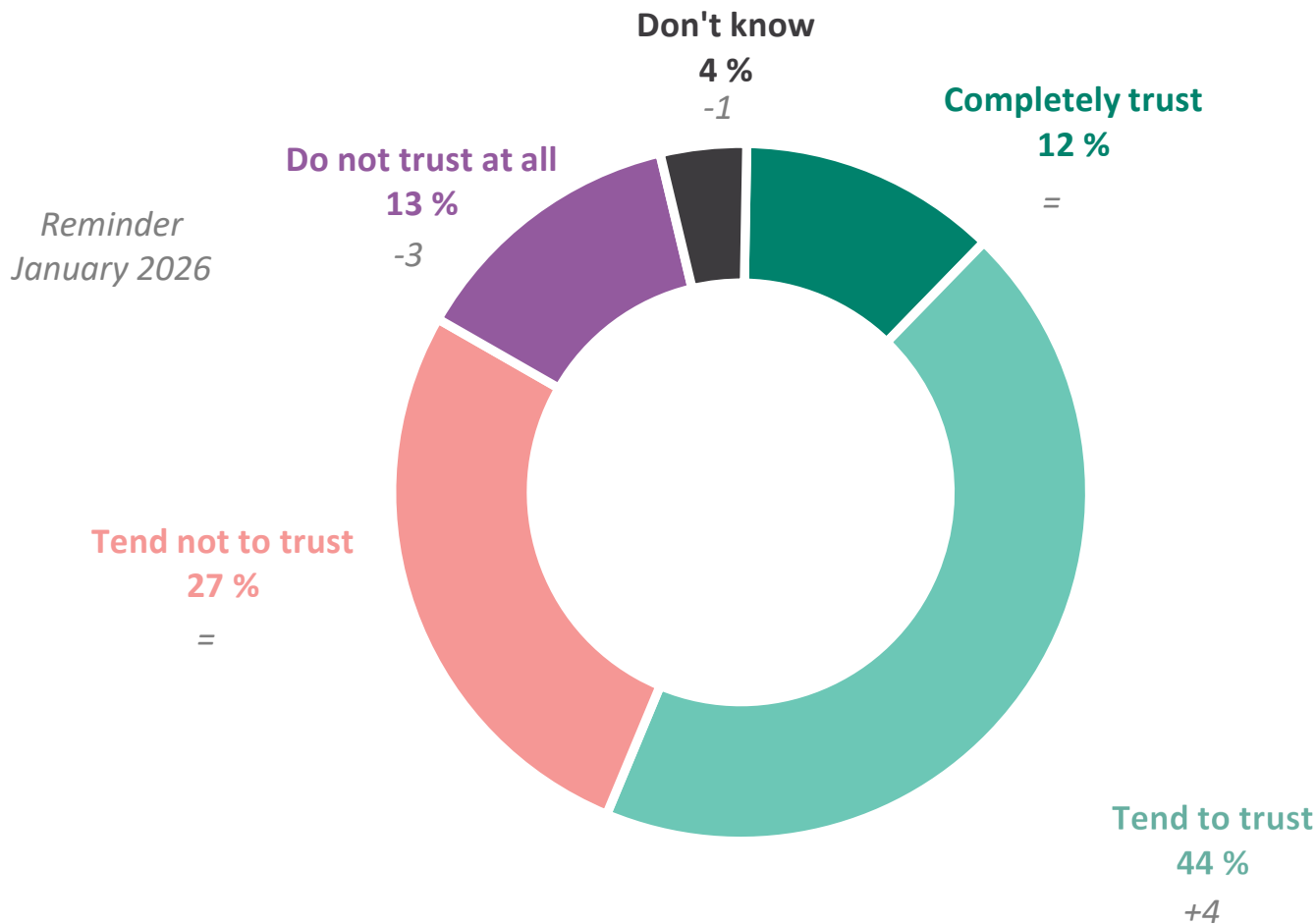
The security of (OUR COUNTRY) is threatened



A majority of Europeans (56%) trust the EU to strengthen security and defence, up 4 points

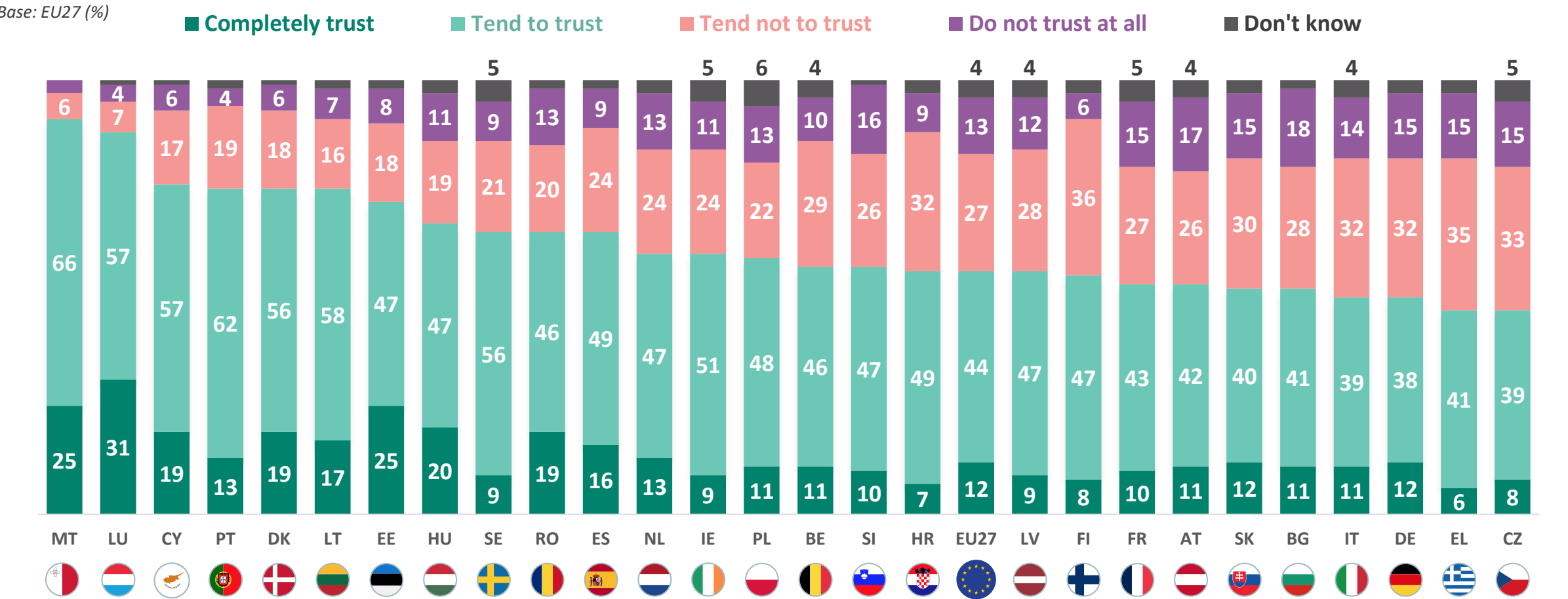
Q8 To what extent do you trust the European Union to strengthen security and defence in Europe and better protect its citizens?

Base: EU27 (%)



Held by a majority in almost all Member States, trust in the EU on security and defence tends to be somewhat lower in several of the largest economies (Germany, Italy, France)

Q8 To what extent do you trust the European Union to strengthen security and defence in Europe and better protect its citizens?



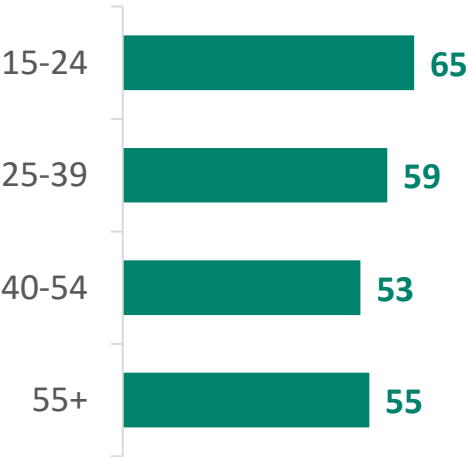
Trust in the EU on defence is markedly stronger among those under the age of 25 (65%)

Q8 To what extent do you trust the European Union to strengthen security and defence in Europe and better protect its citizens?

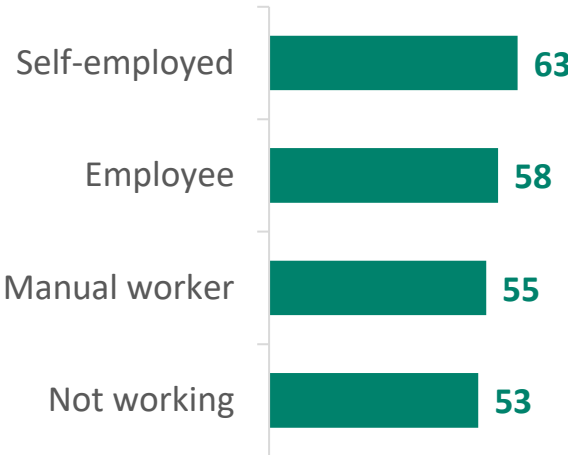
Base: EU27 (%)

‘Total trust’

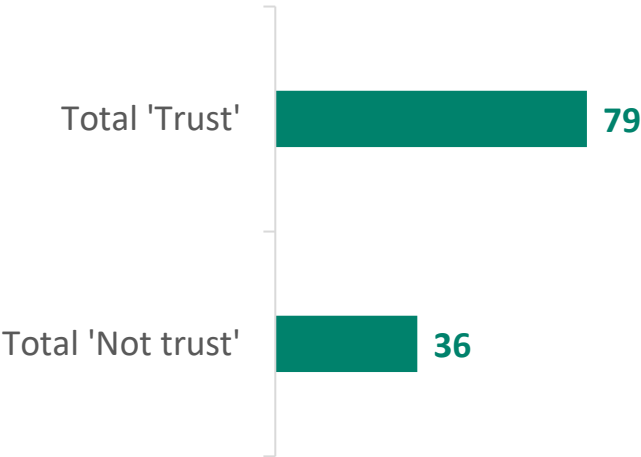
% by age:



% by occupation:



% by satisfaction with the respect of law in EU:





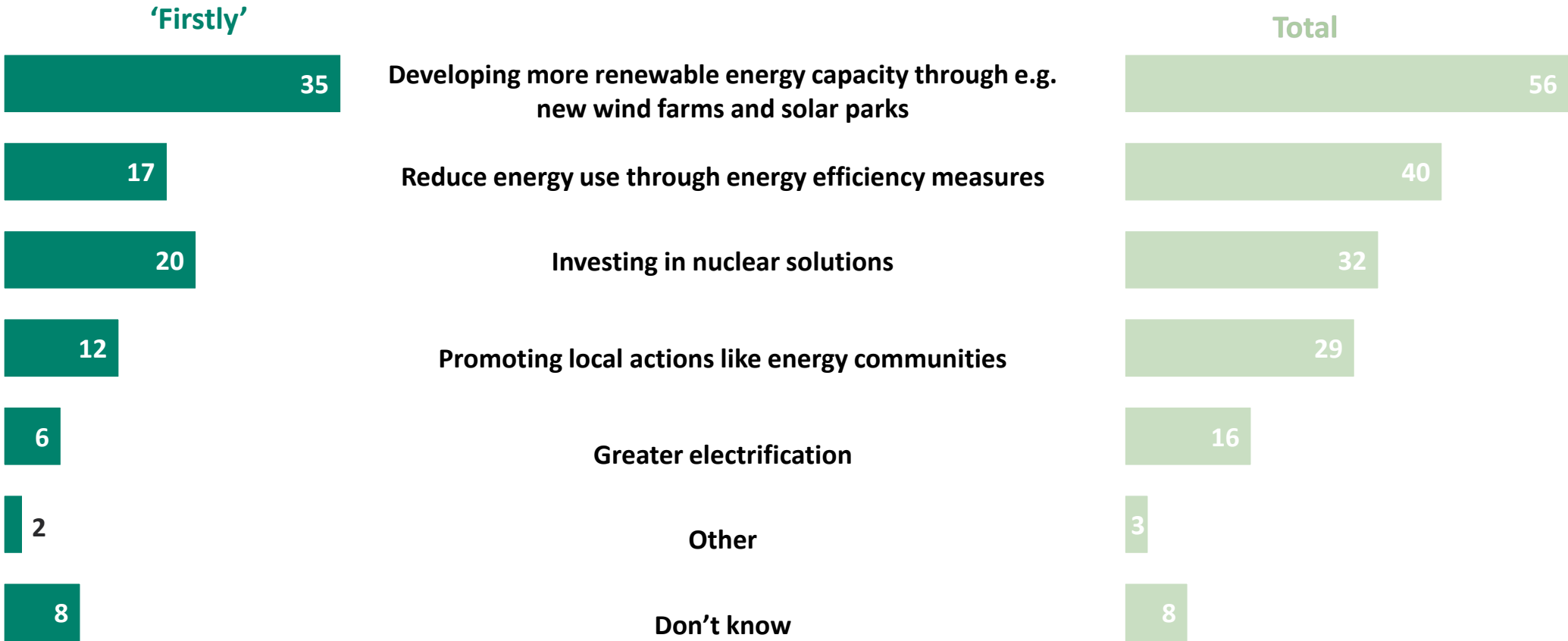
04

Energy crisis

Developing renewable energy stands out as the leading measure to move away from fossil fuels, mentioned by more than one European in two (56%)

Q9 In your view, what can help the EU to transition away from fossil fuels?

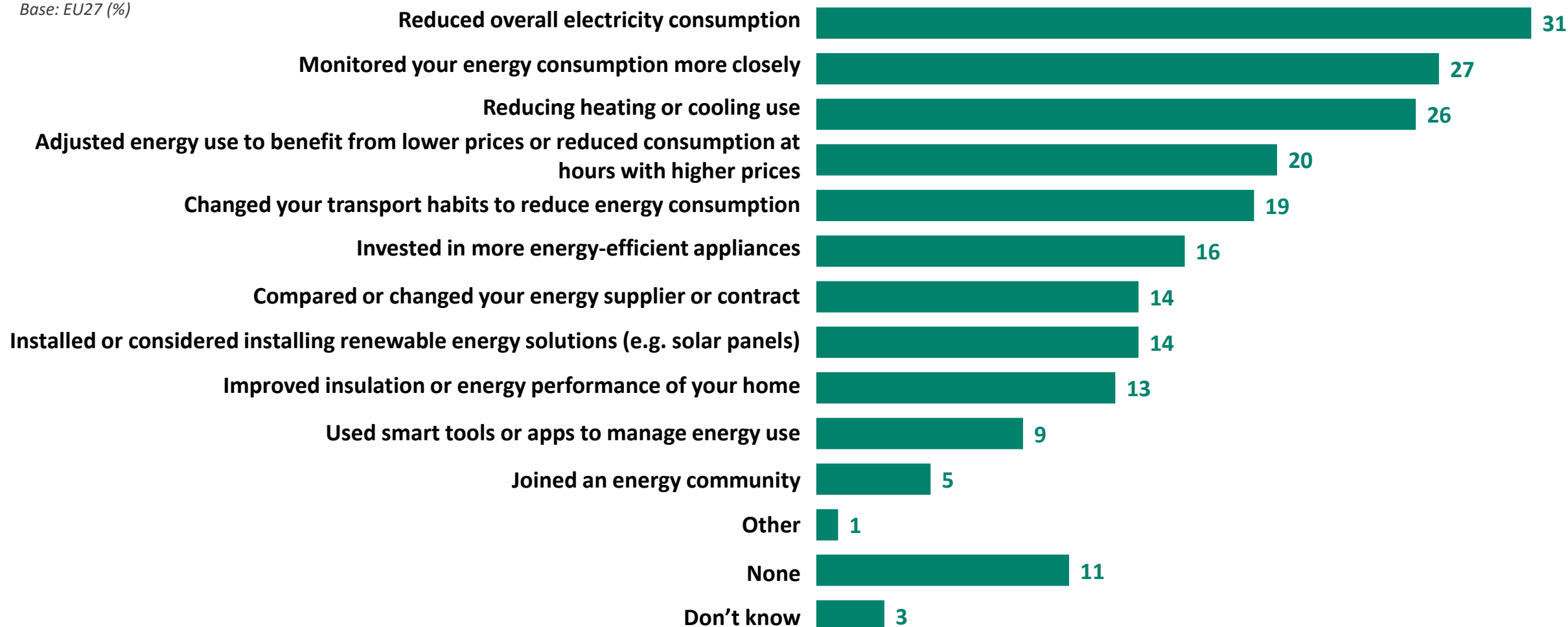
Base: EU27 (%)



Faced with rising energy prices, Europeans mainly cut their consumption (electricity 31%, heating 26%) rather than investing in structural solutions

Q10 Which, if any, of the following actions have you taken in response to the increase in energy prices following the beginning of the war in Iran (end of February 2026) in order to reduce your energy use more actively? You have... *[Multiple answers possible, maximum 3]*

Base: EU27 (%)



Key findings

1. For Europeans, the **cost of living remains the EU's top challenge** (39%), closely followed by the **war in Ukraine** (33%) and **irregular migration** (32%), with sharp national contrasts: Ireland stands out regarding the cost of living (70%) while Lithuania (54%) and Latvia (48%) are far more focused on the war in Ukraine.
2. A large majority of Europeans recognise **freedom of speech, free elections and the rule of law as the core pillars of democracy**, but satisfaction with how the rule of law is actually respected remains divided: a slim majority are satisfied in their own country (51%), and opinion splits evenly at EU level, ranging from 91% in Luxembourg to just 29% in Bulgaria.
3. Support for European economic sovereignty is broad and consistent: two thirds of Europeans back **greater EU trade diversification and closer cooperation between Member States in trade negotiations**, with the strongest backing in small open economies (Malta 93%, Luxembourg 92%) and more moderate support in larger ones (Germany and Italy 64%, France 63%).
4. A large majority of Member States think the **EU should strengthen its capacity to defend itself autonomously against external threats** (68% EU27 average), while concern over the security of one's own country is lower and more varied, reflecting a **clearer consensus on collective defence than on national-level threat perception**.
5. Renewable energy is seen as the EU's best lever to move away from fossil fuels (56%), yet faced with rising prices Europeans react mainly by cutting consumption (electricity 31%, heating 26%) rather than investing in structural solutions, while online, concerns about children's safety (cyberbullying 71%, grooming 70%) and disinformation exposure (58%) call for stronger regulation over education-based approaches.



Colophon

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