



Flash Eurobarometer 532

# Protection of children against online sexual abuse

Survey requested by the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Migration and Home  
Affairs and coordinated by the Directorate-  
General for Communication

Fieldwork  
**28/6-4/7/2023**  
Fieldwork conducted by  
Ipsos European Public Affairs

# Technical note

Survey requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs and coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication

Fieldwork conducted by Ipsos European Public Affairs

## Methodology

- The survey was conducted via computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI), using Ipsos online panels and their partner network. A share of respondents in Luxembourg and Malta was recruited via social media networks.
- Fieldwork: from 28 June to 4 July 2023
- Target population: EU citizens, 18 years and over
- Coverage: EU27
- Number of interviews: 26 270
- Sample size per country: 500 in LU, CY, MT; 1000 in all other countries

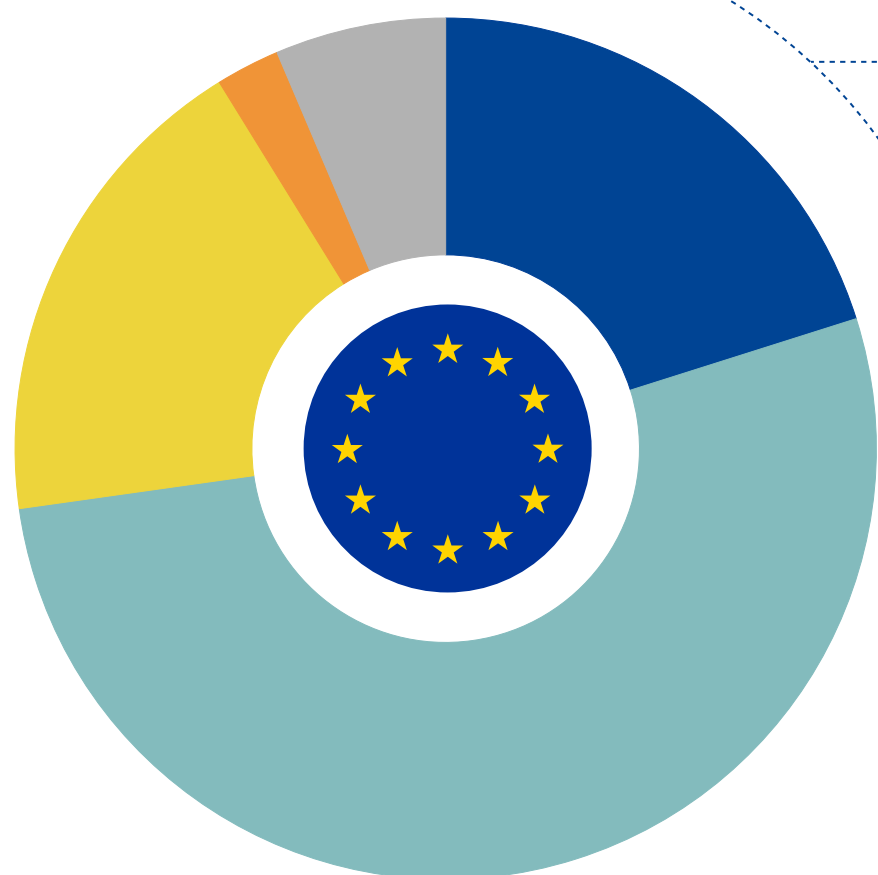
## Presentation of survey data

- Survey data are **weighted** to marginal age, gender, activity status and region population distributions using *rim* weighting. The EU27 averages are weighted according to the size of the 18+ population of each country.  
*Note:* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Q1

How widespread do you think the problem of online child sexual abuse is in [YOUR COUNTRY]?

EU27 average



- **20%** Very widespread
- **53%** Fairly widespread
- **18%** Rather rare
- **2%** Very rare
- **6%** Prefer not to answer/Don't know

Occupation (%)

Self-employed	22	50	20	6
Employee	19	53	20	6
Manual worker	20	51	21	6
Not working	21	54	16	8



Gender (%)

Male	15	51	24	7
Female	25	54	13	6



Age (%)

18-24	21	53	18	6
25-39	21	51	20	6
40-54	21	51	20	6
55+	19	55	17	8



Education (age when completed) (%)

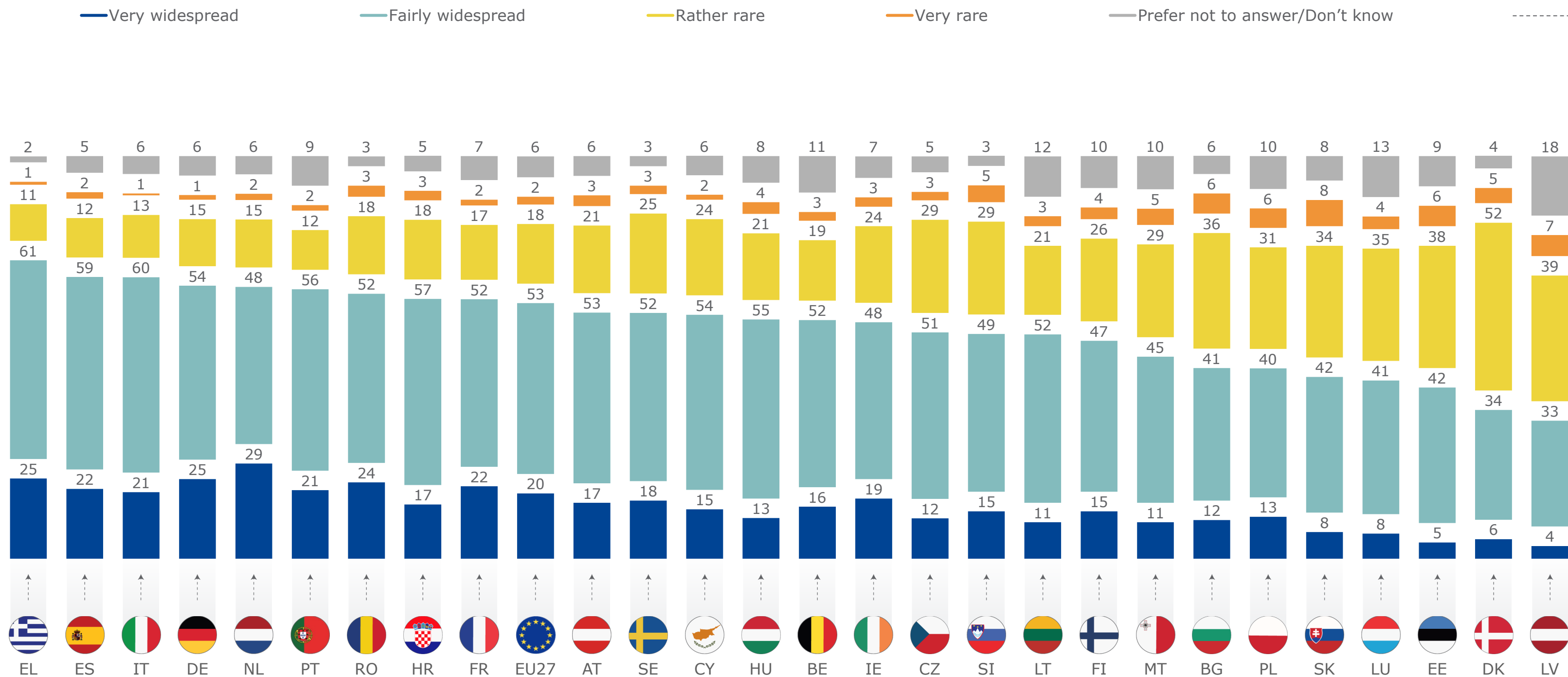
Up to 15 years	28	54	11	6
16-19 years	22	54	16	6
20+ years	18	52	22	6
Still studying	21	52	19	6



Data labels not shown for 5% or under

Q1

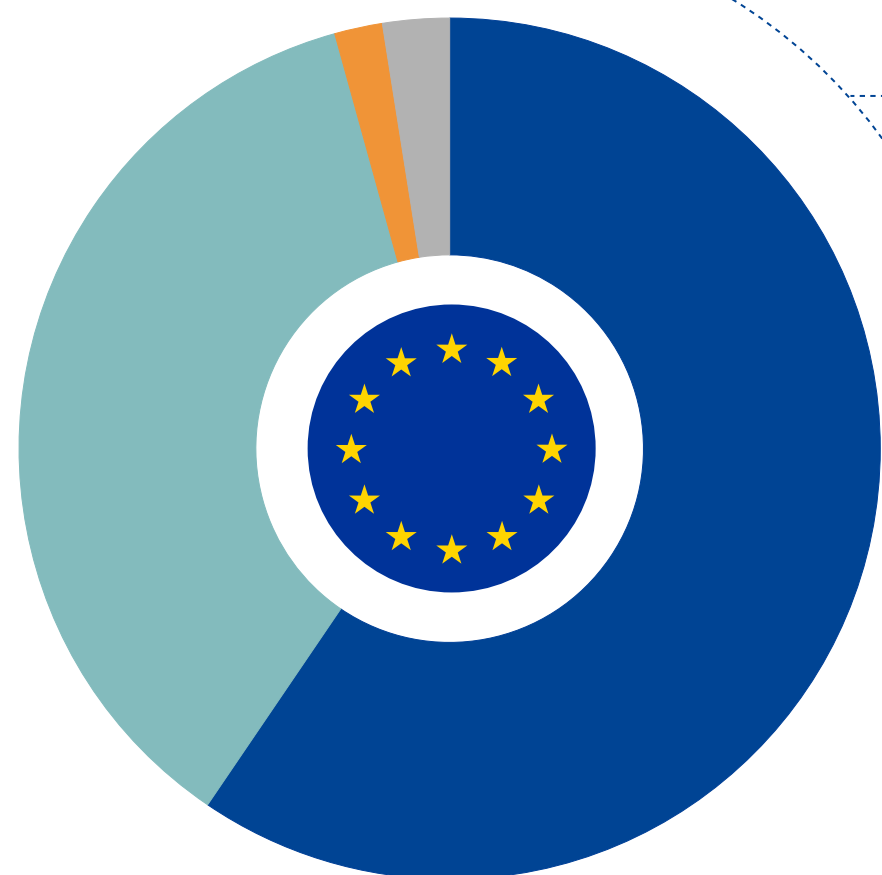
How widespread do you think the problem of online child sexual abuse is in [YOUR COUNTRY]?



Q2

Which one, if any, of the following statements comes closest to your view?

EU27 average



60%

The ability to detect child abuse is more important than the right to online privacy

36%

The right to online privacy and the ability to detect child abuse are both equally important

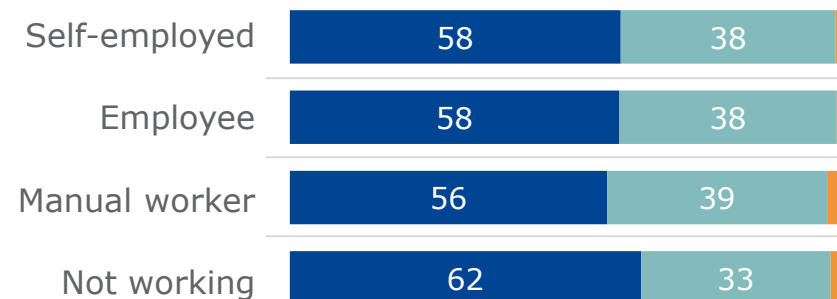
2%

The right to online privacy is more important than the ability to detect child abuse

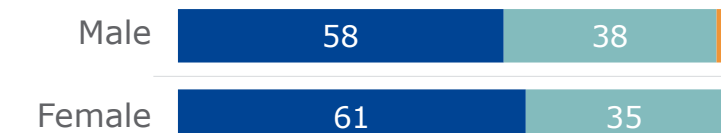
3%

Prefer not to answer/Don't know

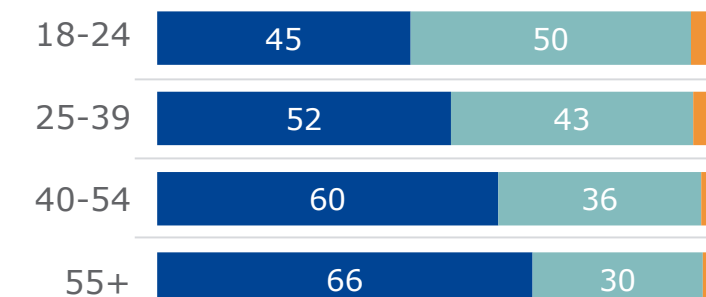
Occupation (%)



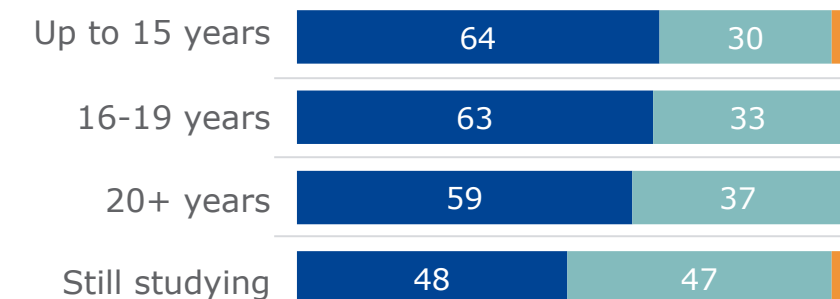
Gender (%)



Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for 5% or under

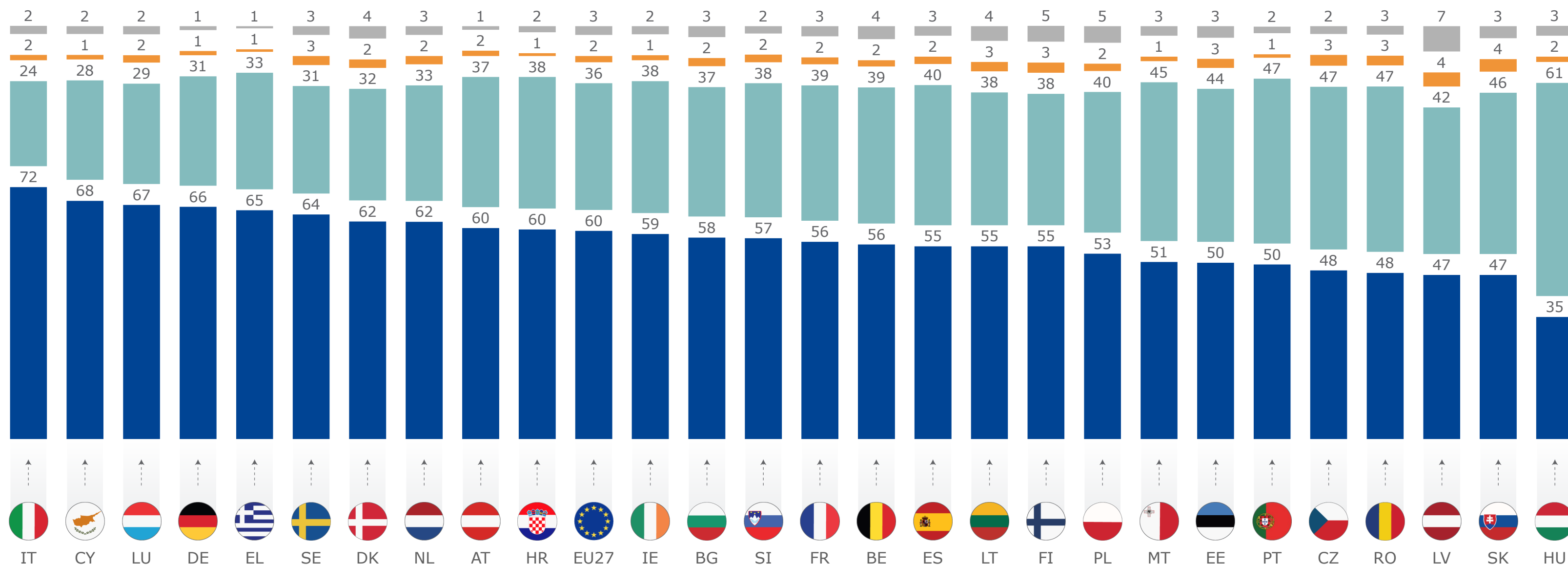
Q2

Which one, if any, of the following statements comes closest to your view?



- The ability to detect child abuse is more important than the right to online privacy
- The right to online privacy is more important than the ability to detect child abuse

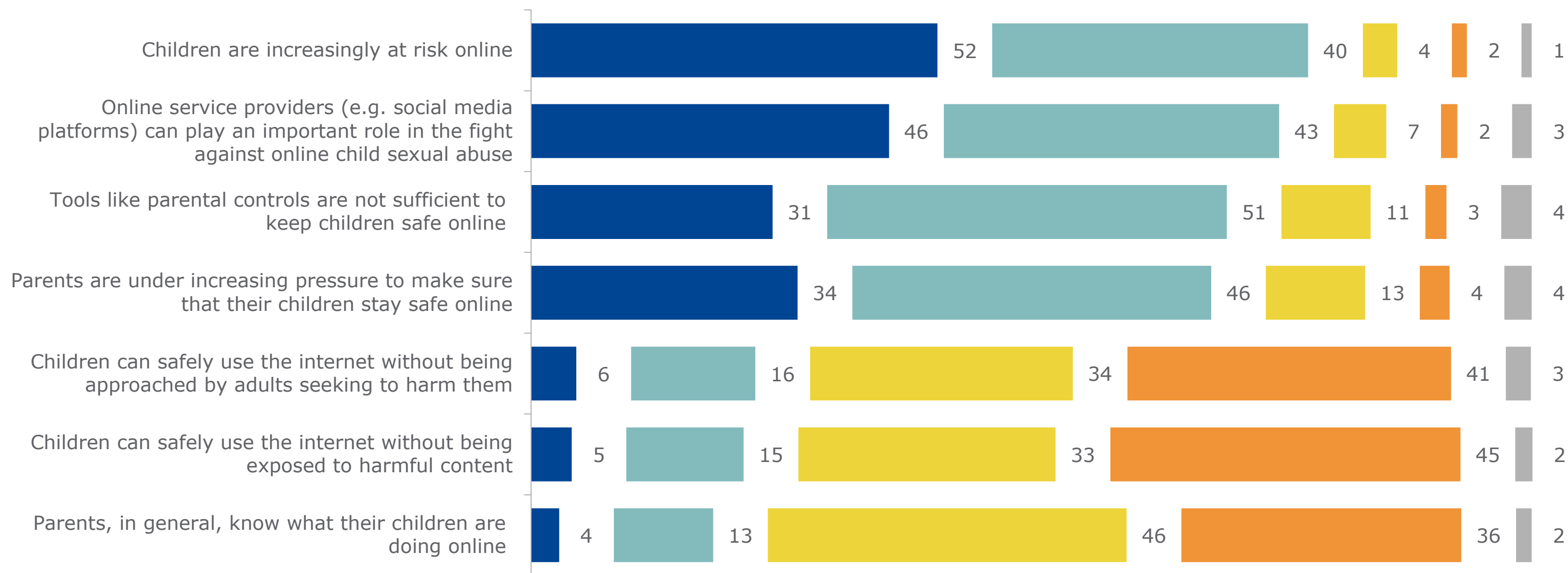
- The right to online privacy and the ability to detect child abuse are both equally important
- Prefer not to answer/Don't know





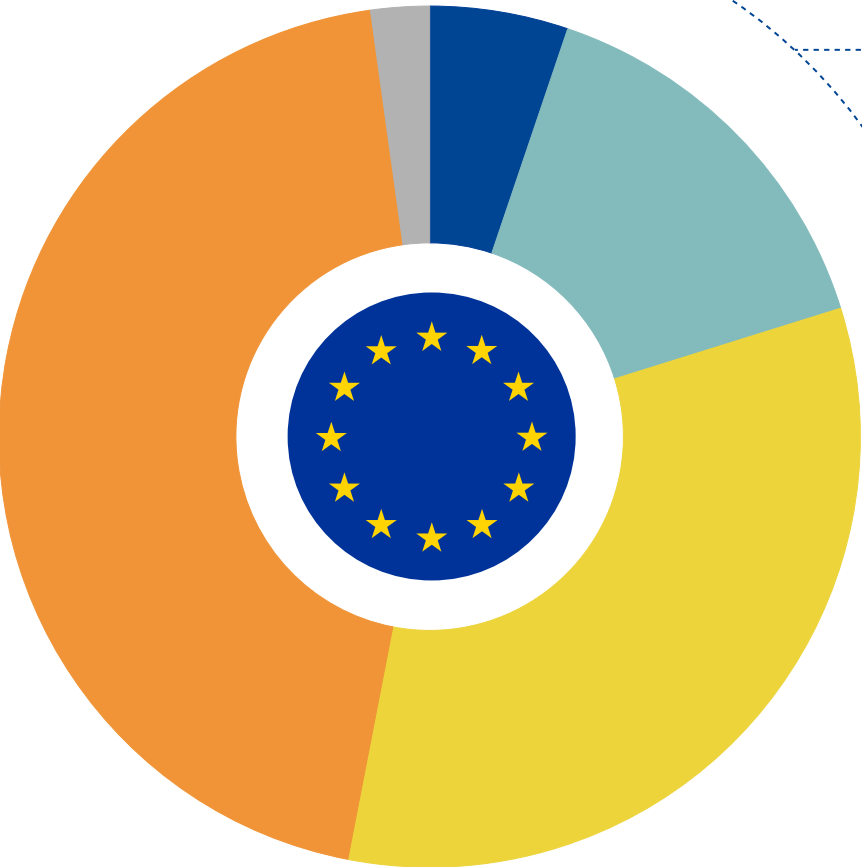
# Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Strongly agree Rather agree Rather disagree Strongly disagree Prefer not to answer/Don't know



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Children can safely use the internet without being exposed to harmful content*

EU27 average



5% Strongly agree

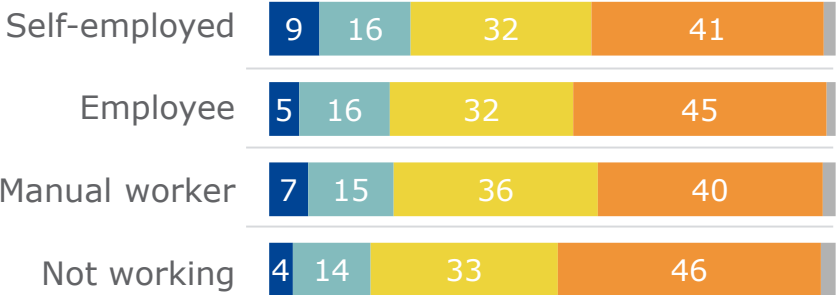
15% Rather agree

33% Rather disagree

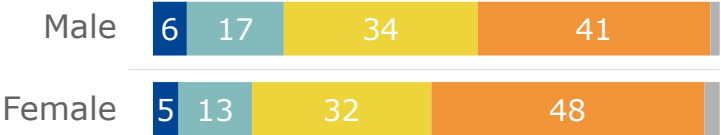
45% Strongly disagree

2% Prefer not to answer/Don't know

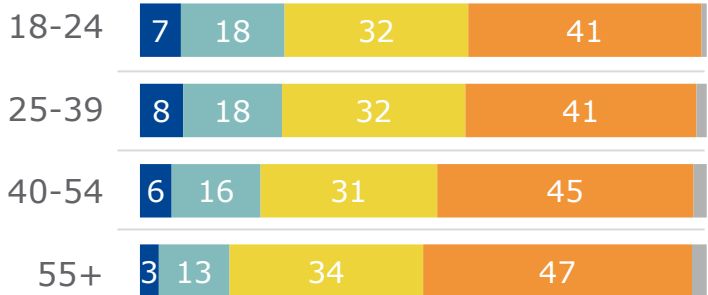
Occupation (%)



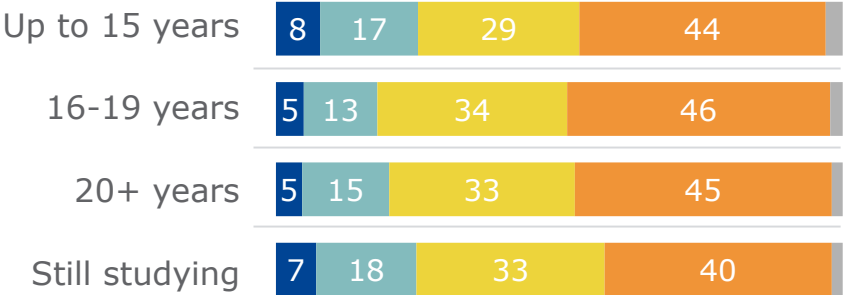
Gender (%)



Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for Prefer not to answer/Don't know



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

*Children can safely use the internet without being exposed to harmful content*



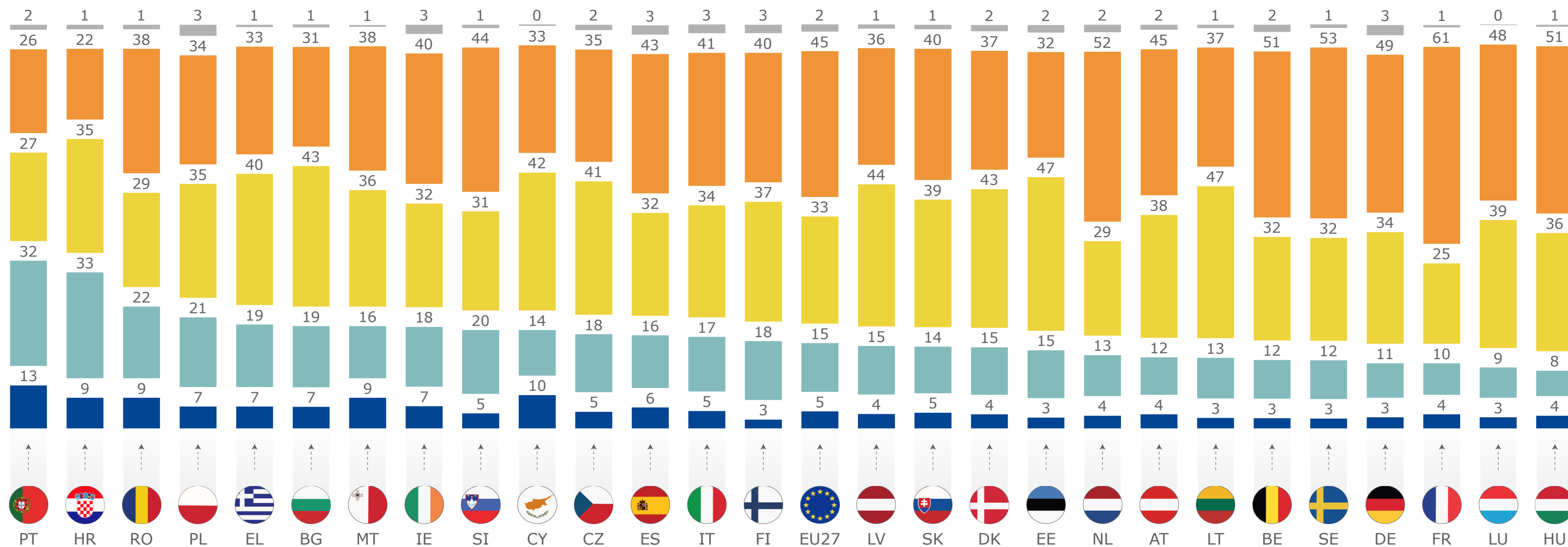
— Strongly agree

— Rather agree

— Rather disagree

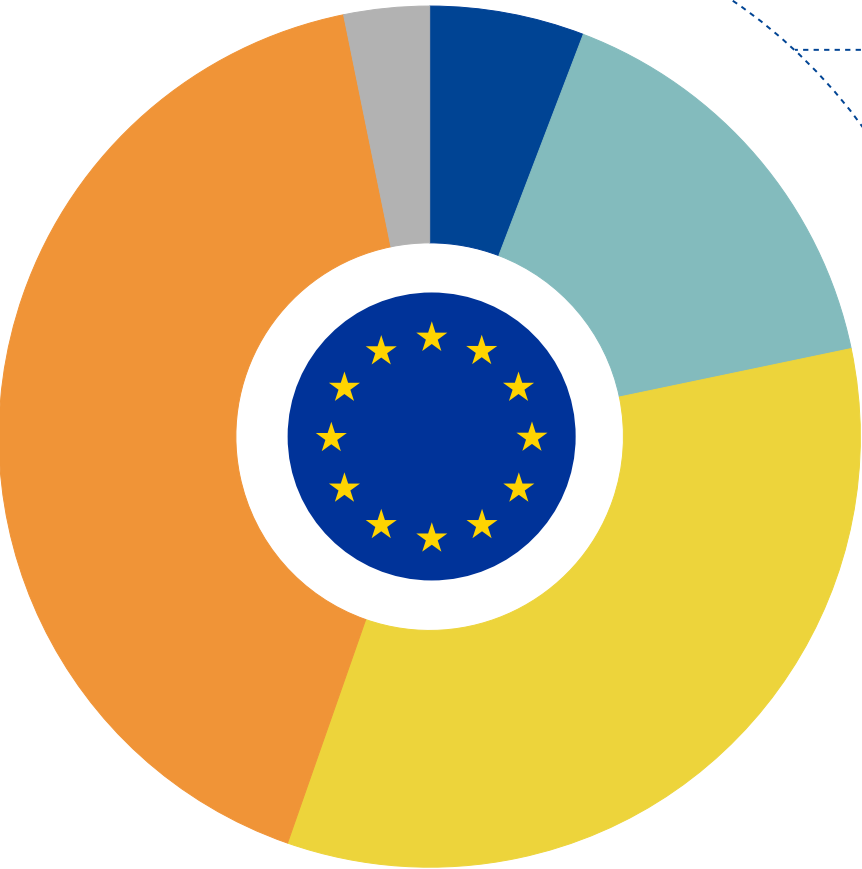
— Strongly disagree

— Prefer not to answer/Don't know



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Children can safely use the internet without being approached by adults seeking to harm them*

EU27 average



- 6% Strongly agree
- 16% Rather agree
- 34% Rather disagree
- 41% Strongly disagree
- 3% Prefer not to answer/Don't know

Occupation (%)

Self-employed	9	16	32	39
Employee	6	18	33	40
Manual worker	6	20	35	36
Not working	5	14	34	44



Gender (%)

Male	6	19	36	36
Female	5	13	32	46



Age (%)

18-24	9	20	32	36
25-39	9	20	33	36
40-54	6	17	33	41
55+	4	12	35	46



Education (age when completed) (%)

Up to 15 years	10	18	27	43
16-19 years	5	13	36	44
20+ years	5	17	34	41
Still studying	8	21	33	33

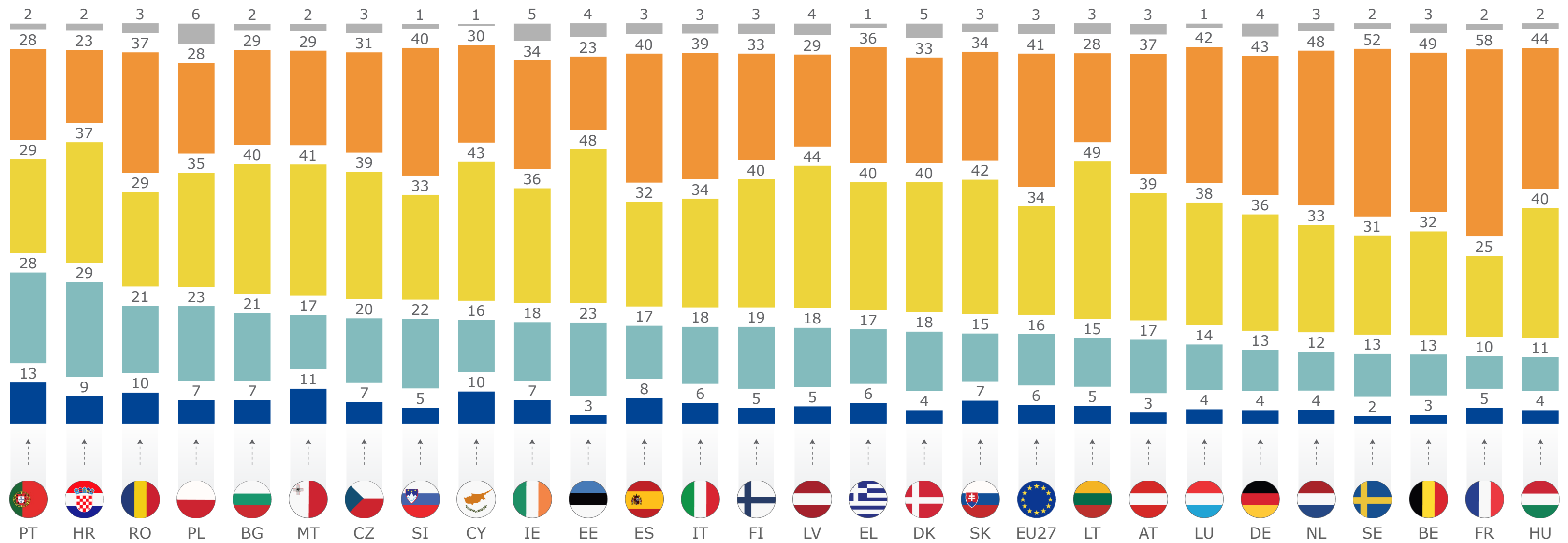


Data labels not shown for Prefer not to answer/Don't know

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Children can safely use the internet without being approached by adults seeking to harm them*

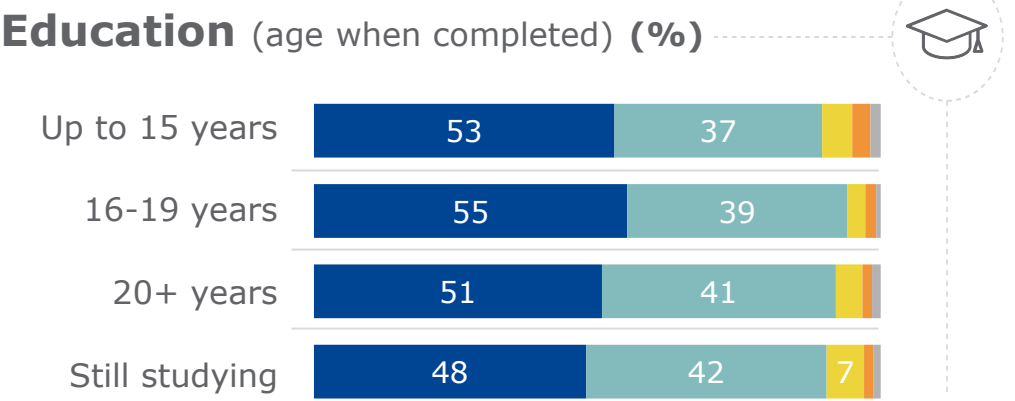
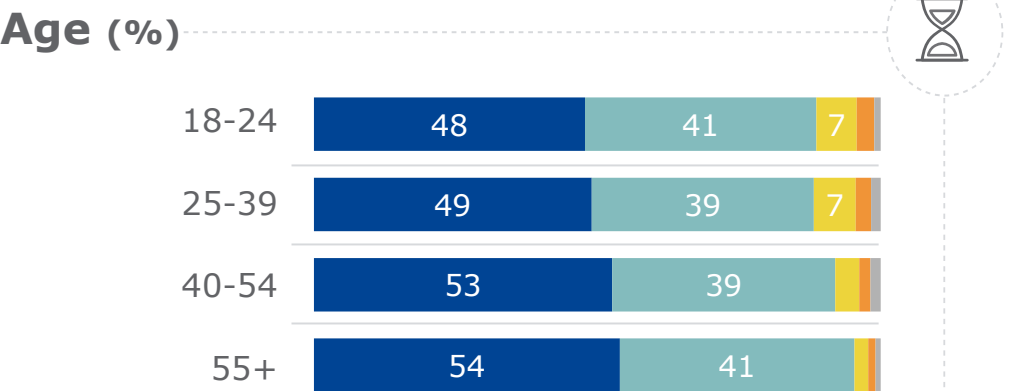
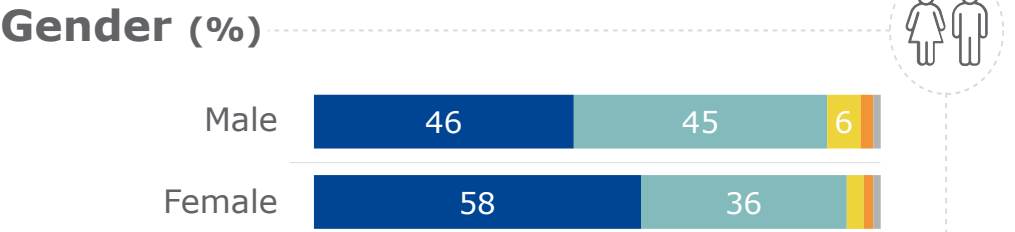
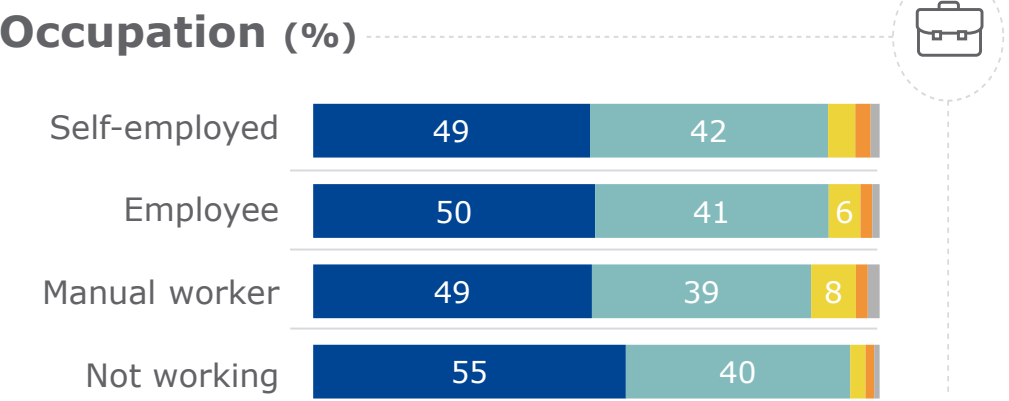
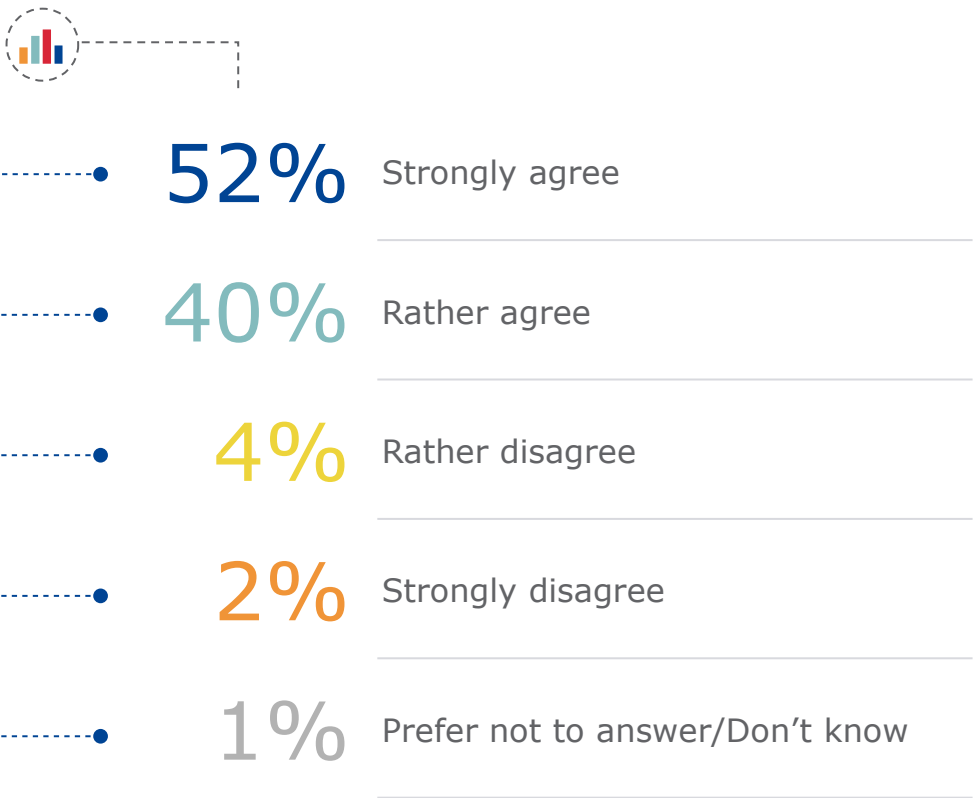
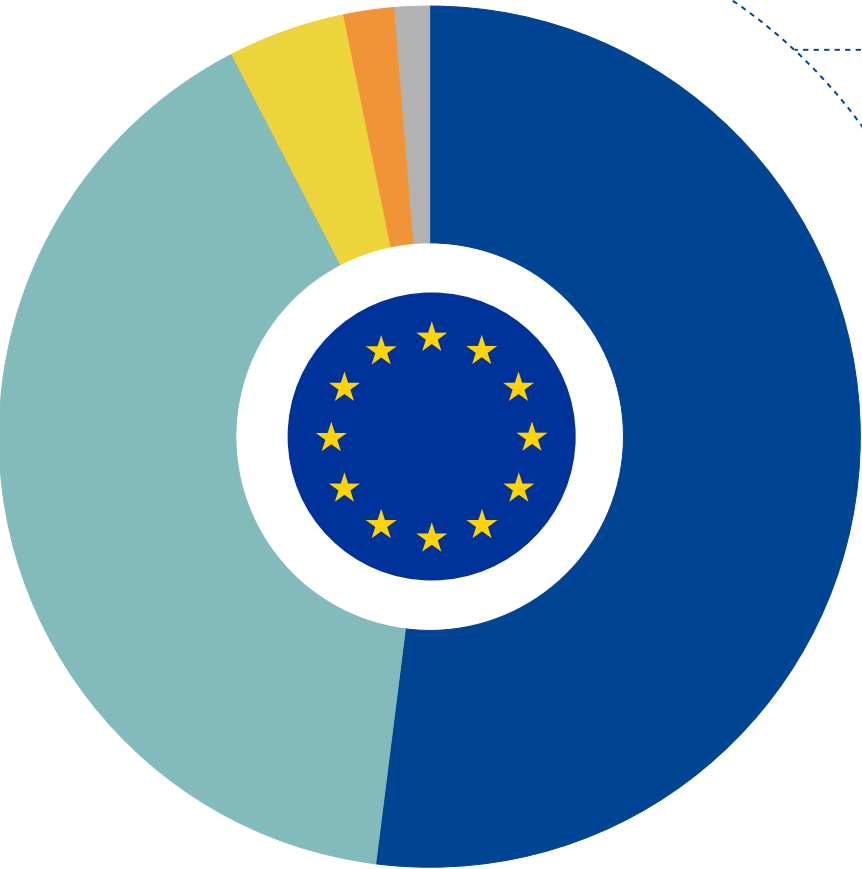


Strongly agree      Rather agree      Rather disagree      Strongly disagree      Prefer not to answer/Don't know



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Children are increasingly at risk online*

EU27 average

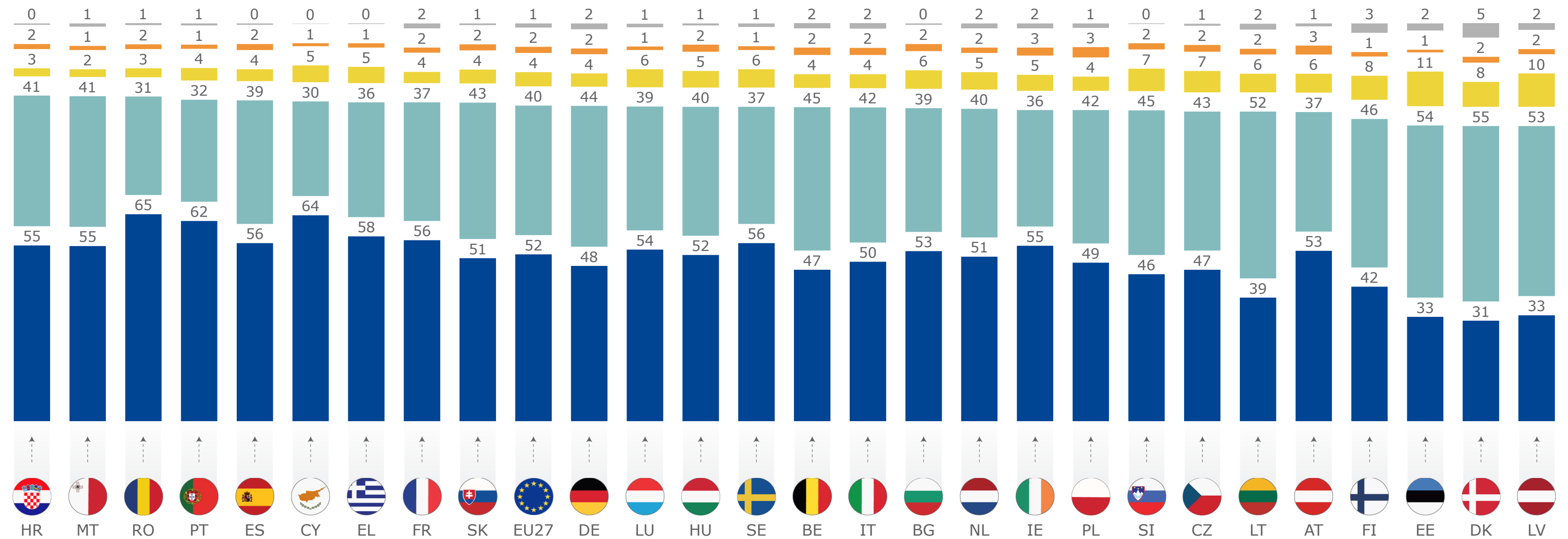


Data labels not shown for 5% or under

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Children are increasingly at risk online*

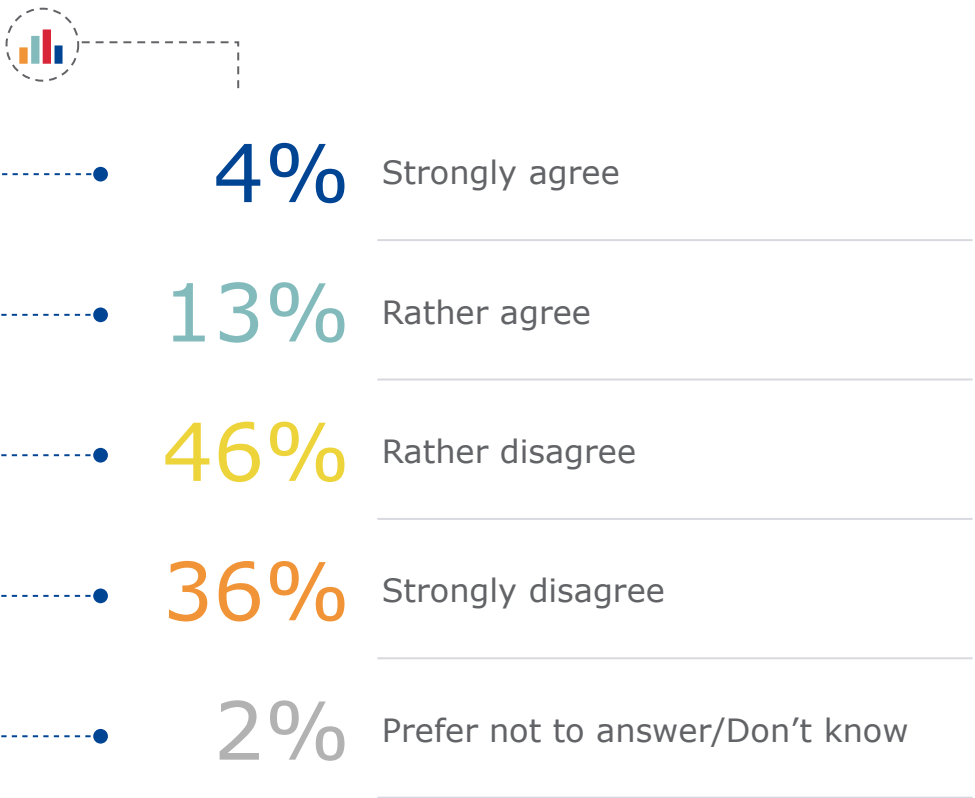
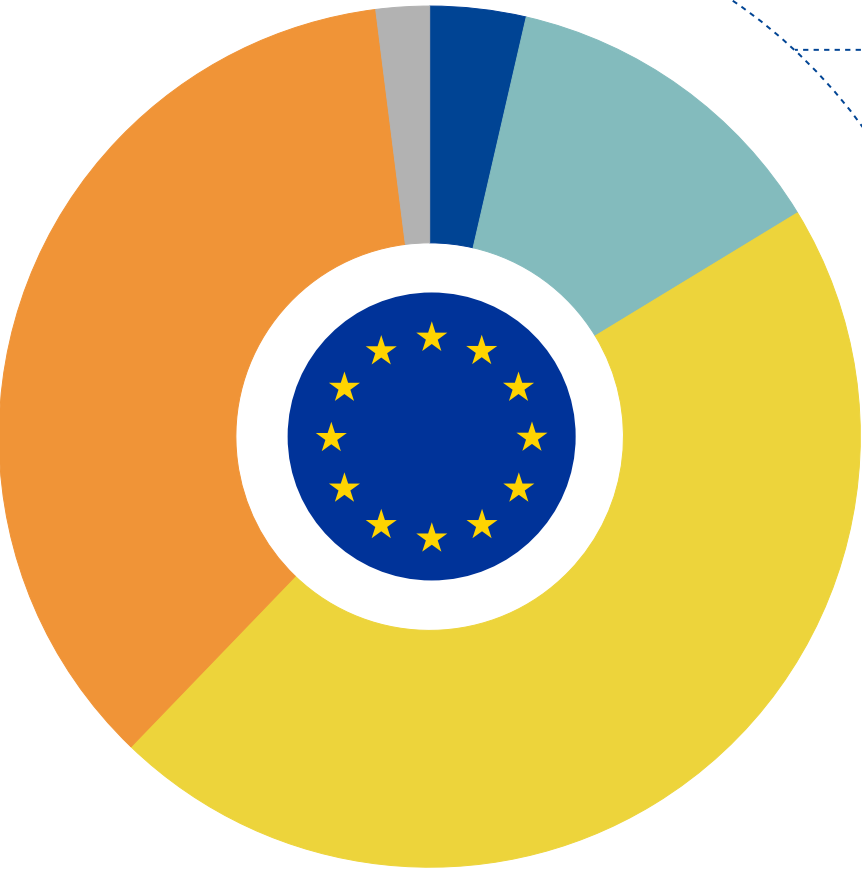


Strongly agree      Rather agree      Rather disagree      Strongly disagree      Prefer not to answer/Don't know

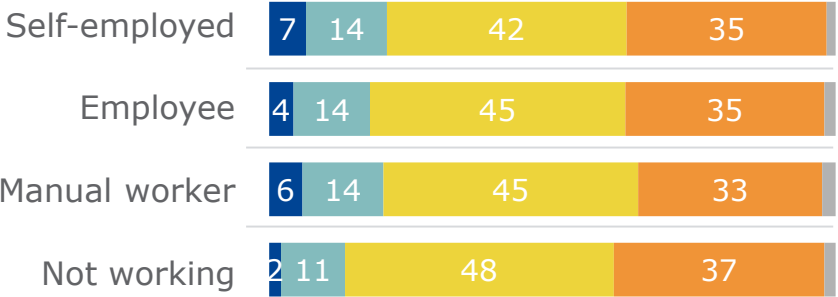


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Parents, in general, know what their children are doing online*

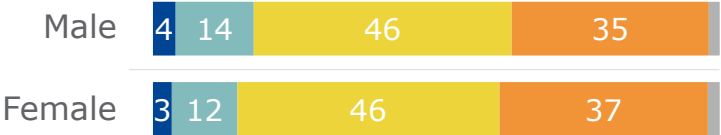
EU27 average



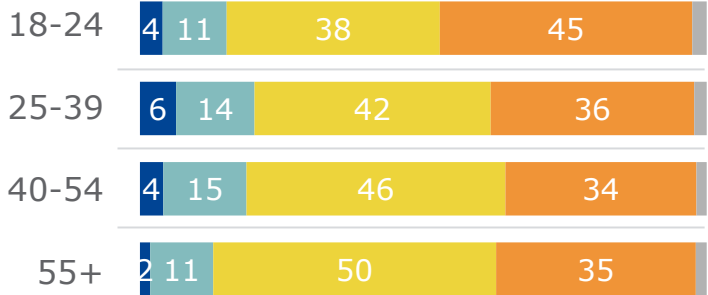
Occupation (%)



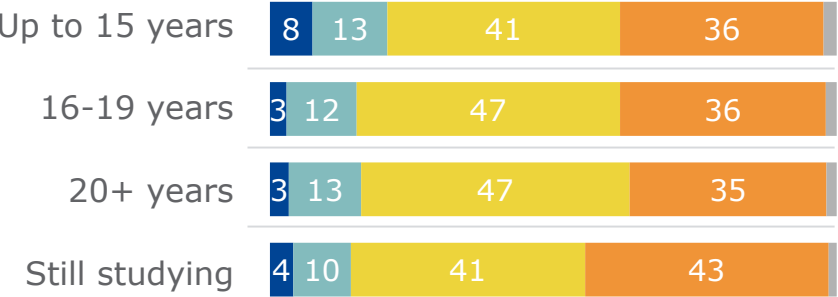
Gender (%)



Age (%)



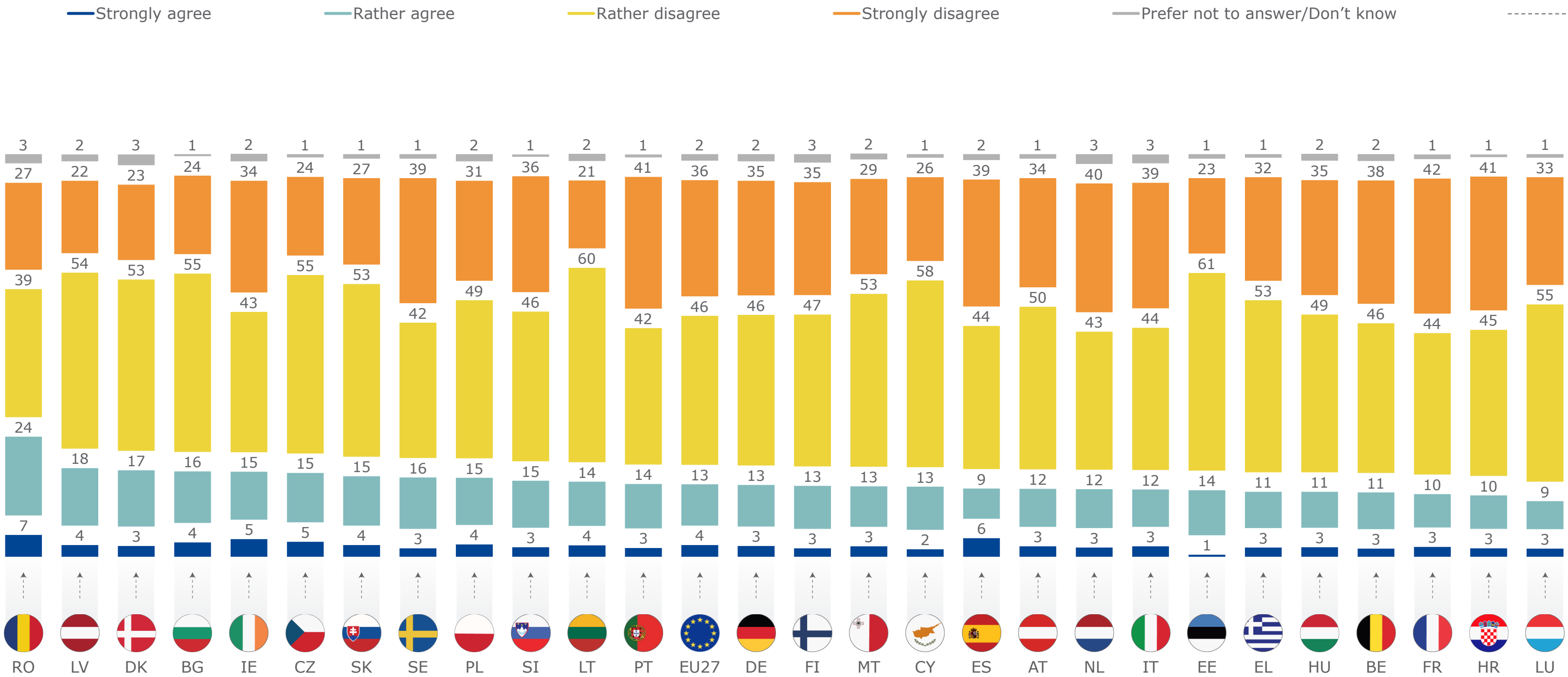
Education (age when completed) (%)



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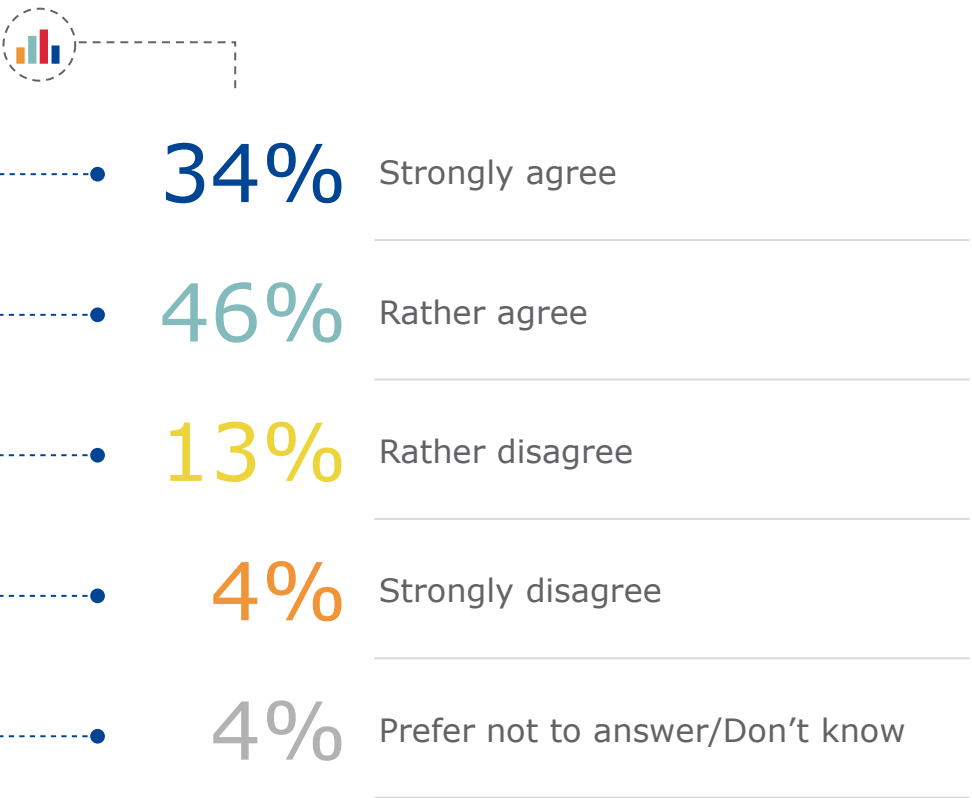
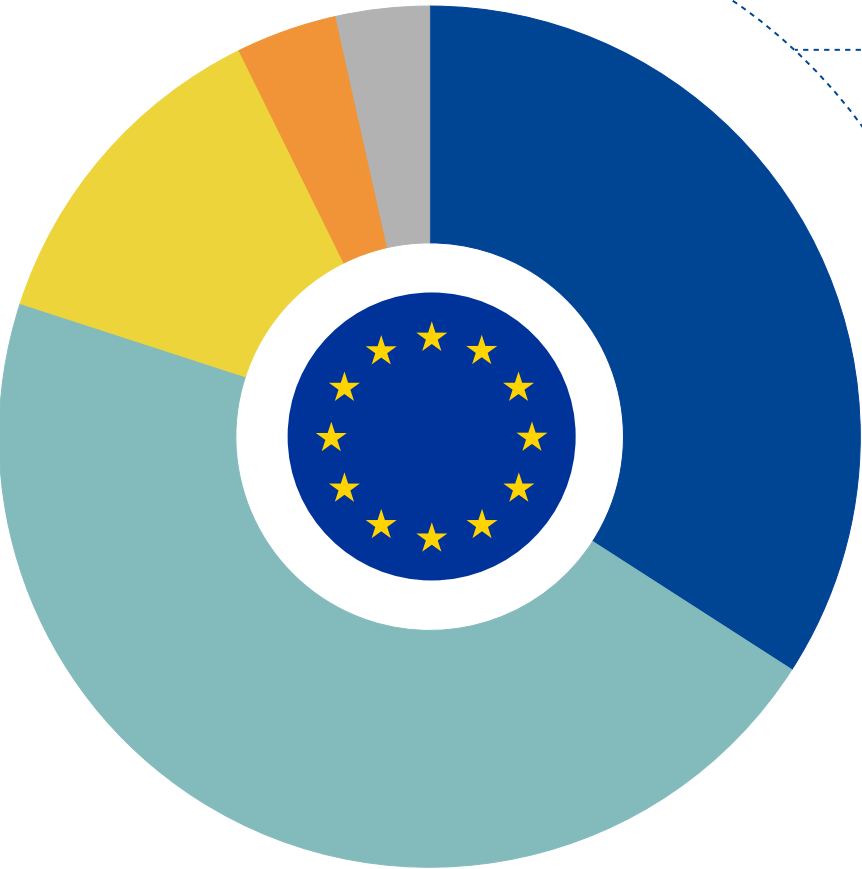


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Parents, in general, know what their children are doing online*

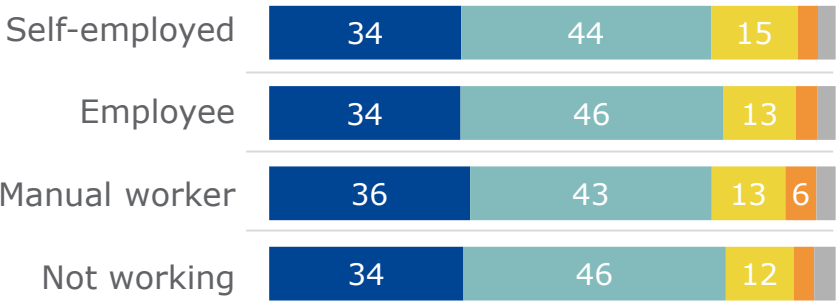


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Parents are under increasing pressure to make sure that their children stay safe online*

EU27 average



Occupation (%)

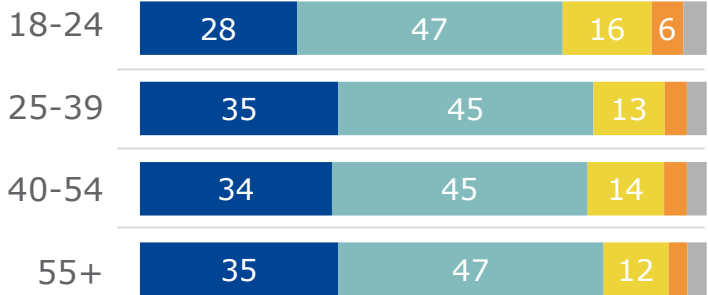


Data labels not shown for 5% or under

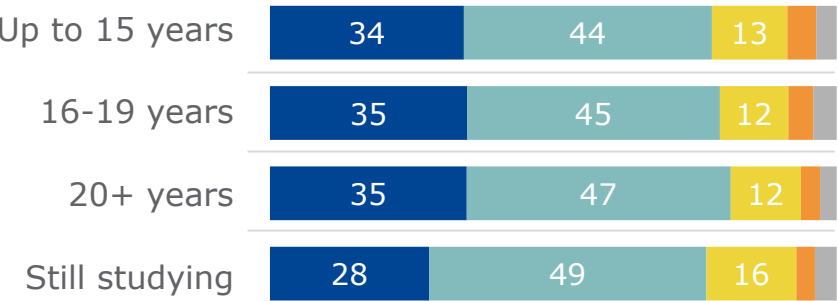
Gender (%)



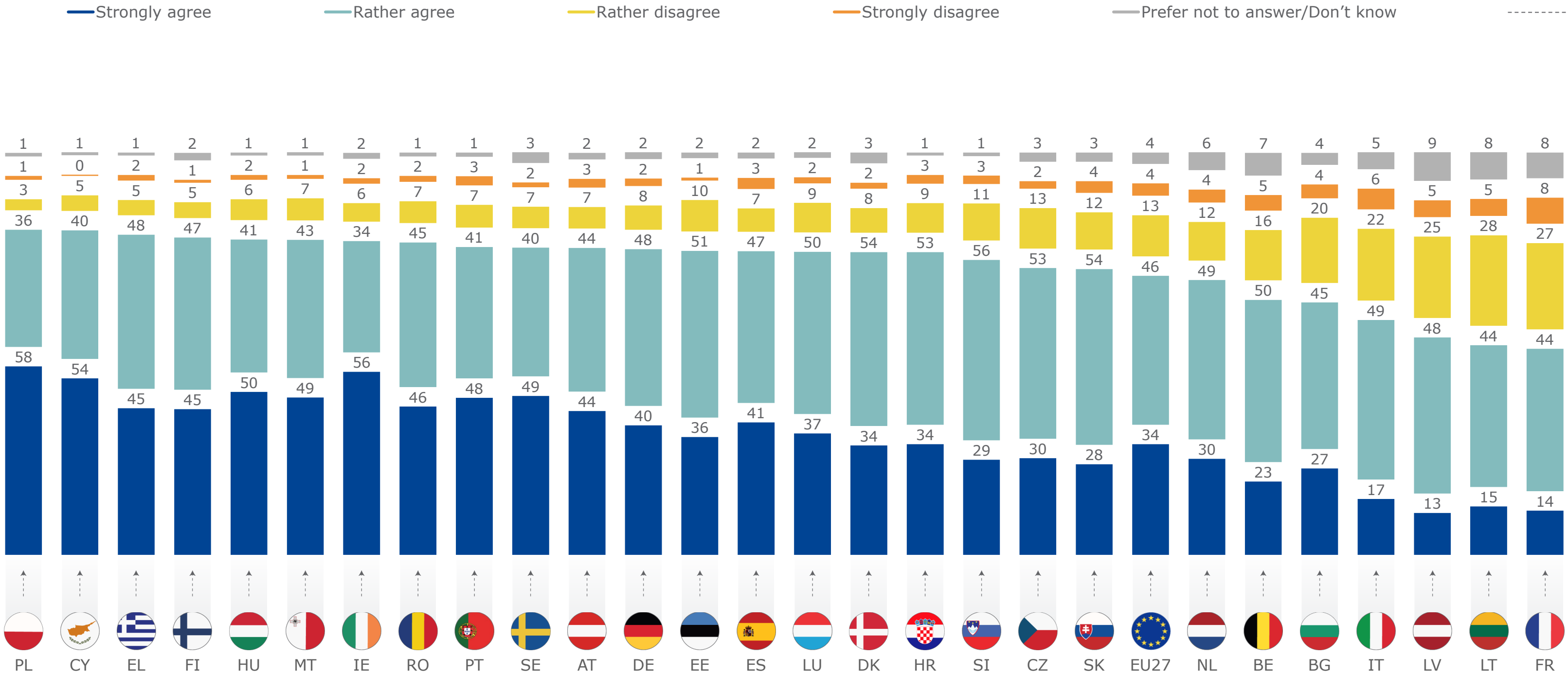
Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)

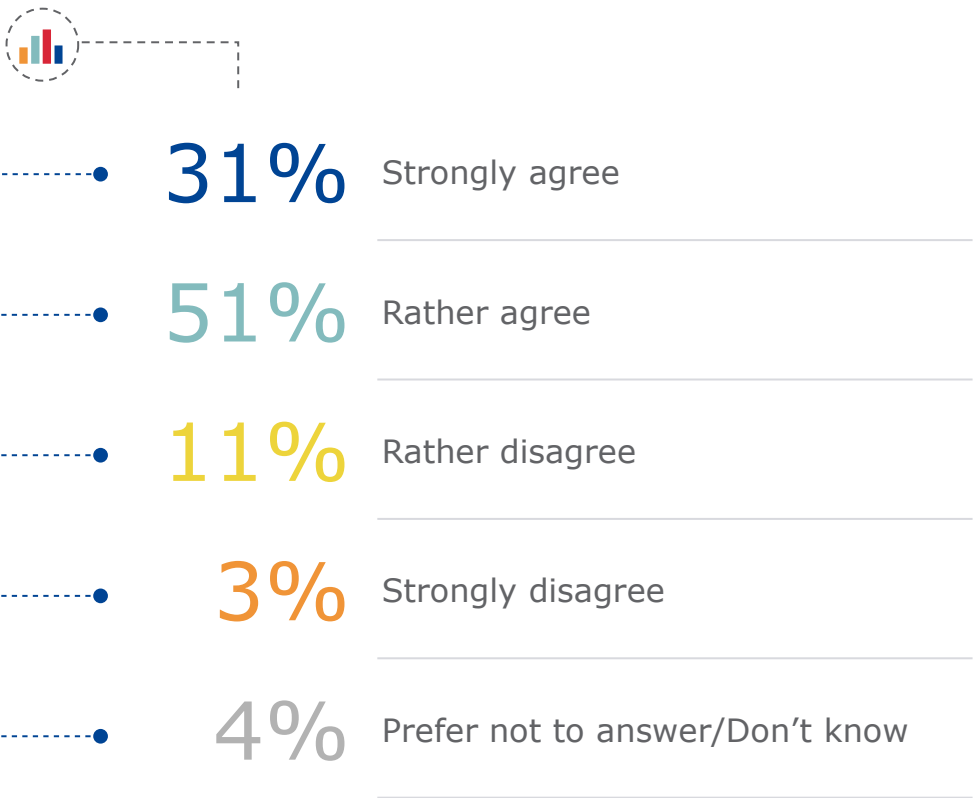
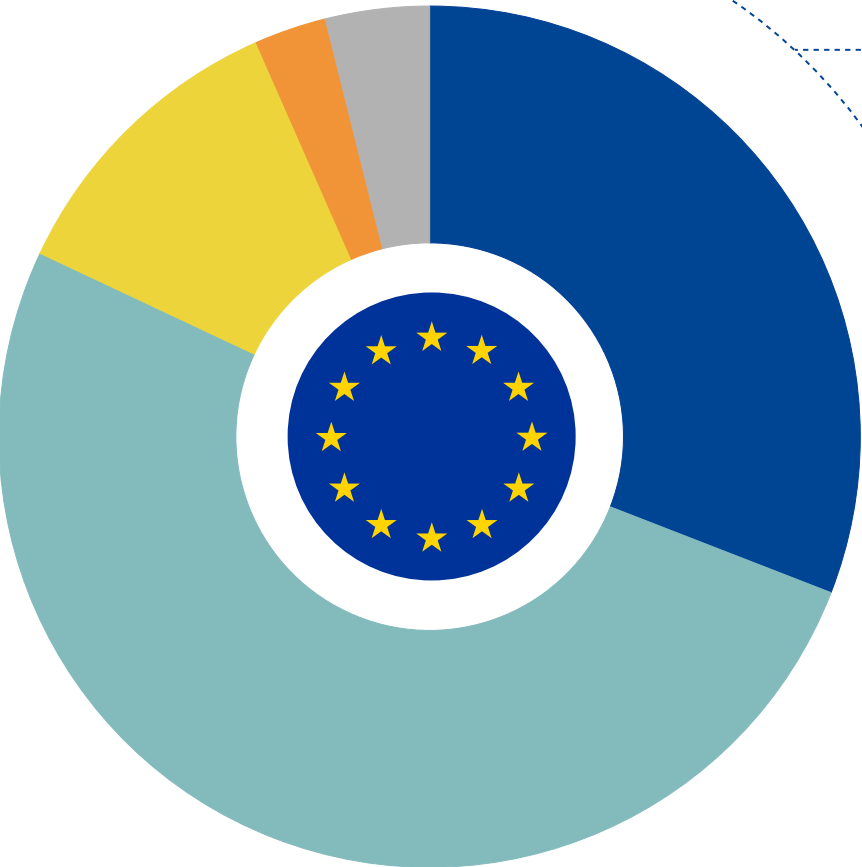


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Parents are under increasing pressure to make sure that their children stay safe online*

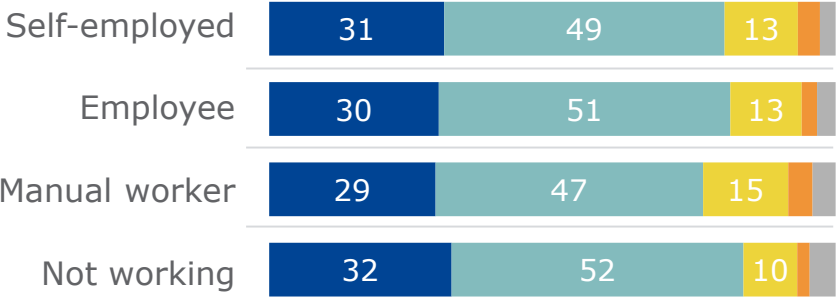


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Tools like parental controls are not sufficient to keep children safe online*

EU27 average



Occupation (%)

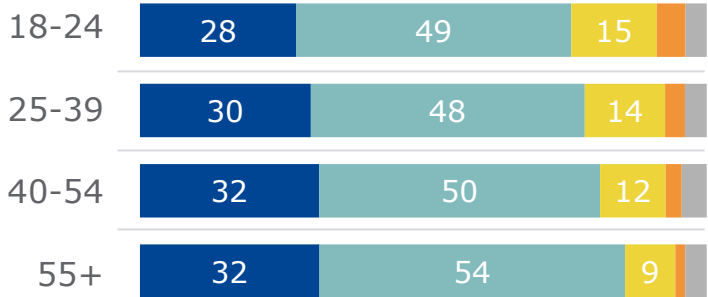


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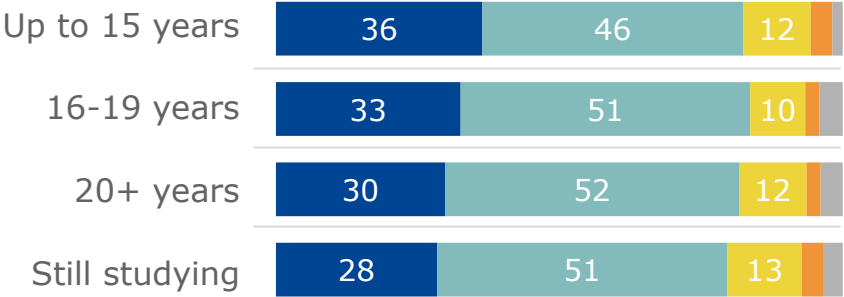
Gender (%)



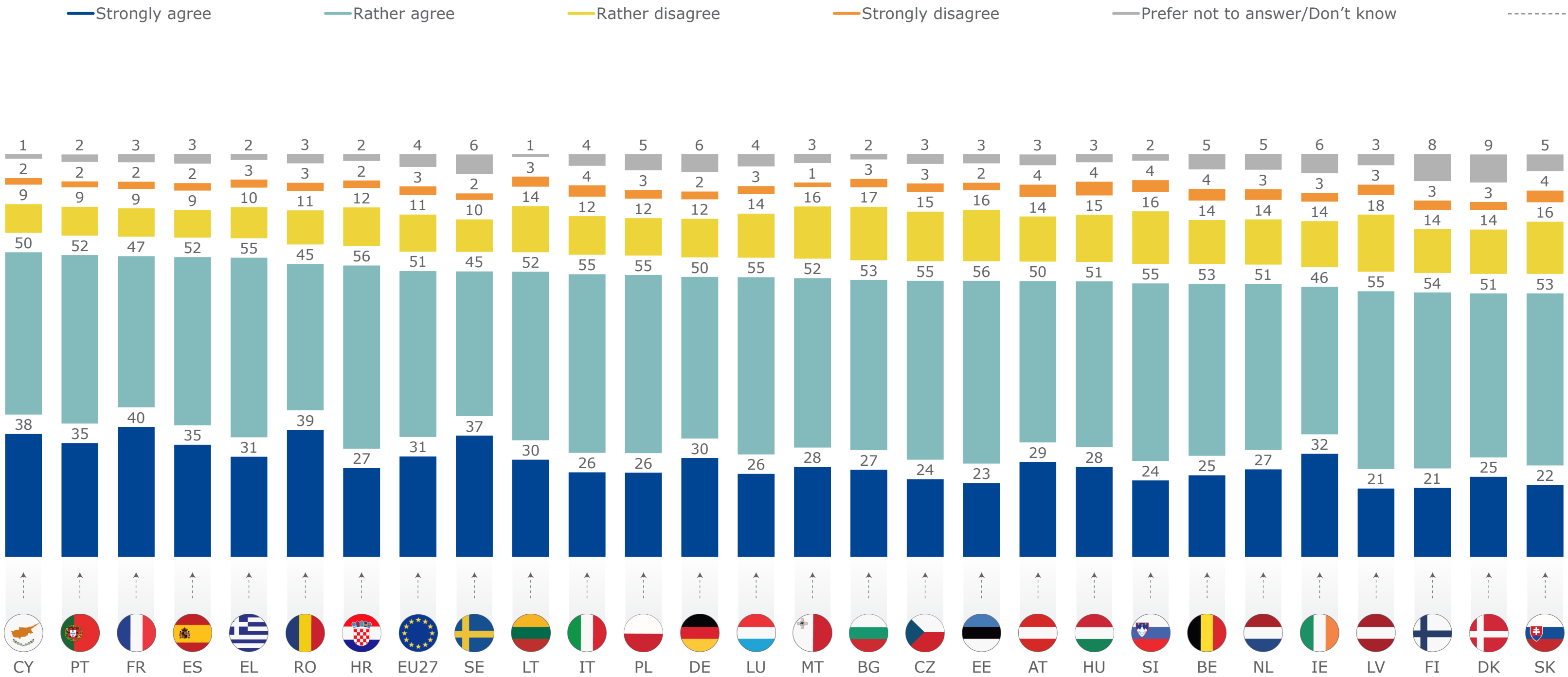
Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)

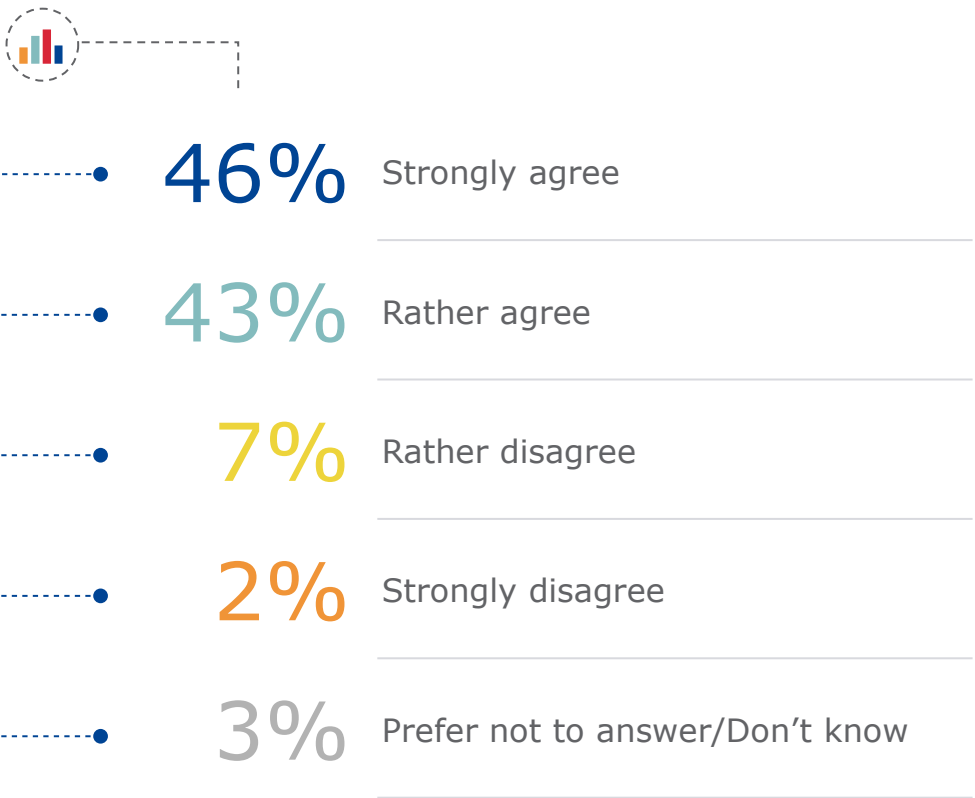
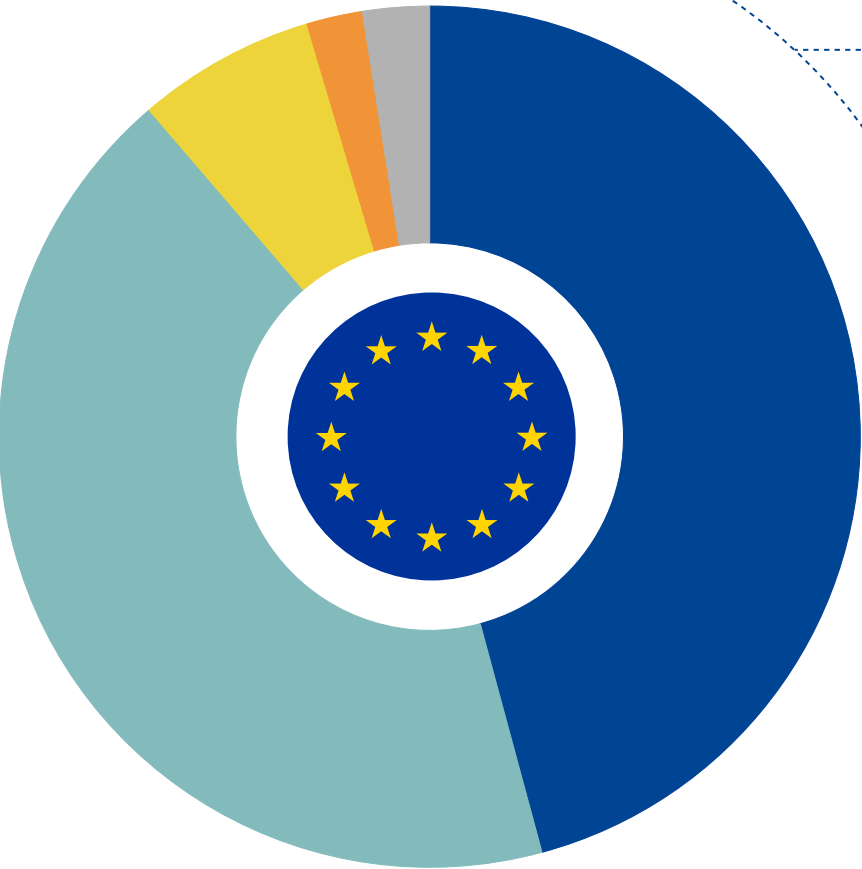


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Tools like parental controls are not sufficient to keep children safe online*

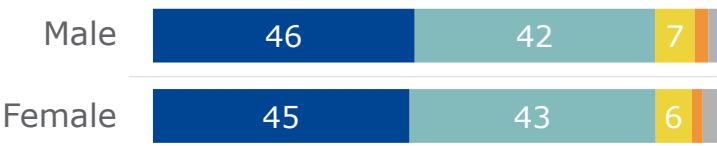


To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Online service providers (e.g. social media platforms) can play an important role in the fight against online child sexual abuse*

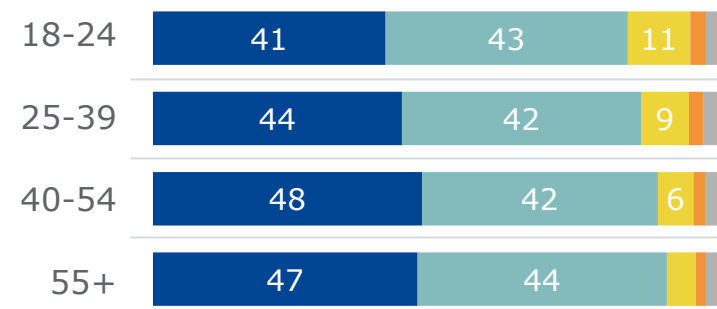
EU27 average



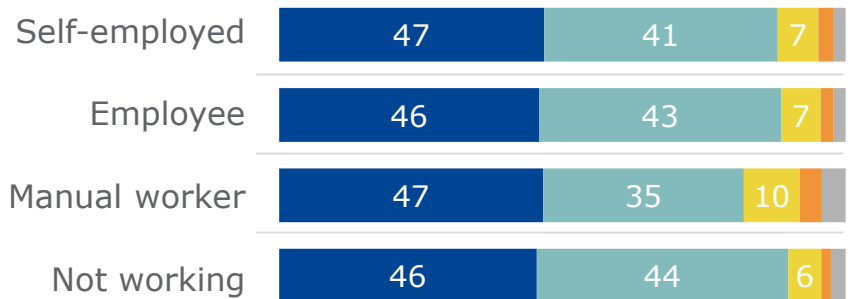
Gender (%)



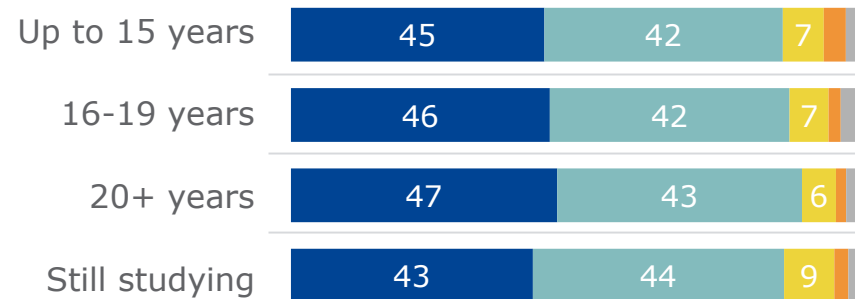
Age (%)



Occupation (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)



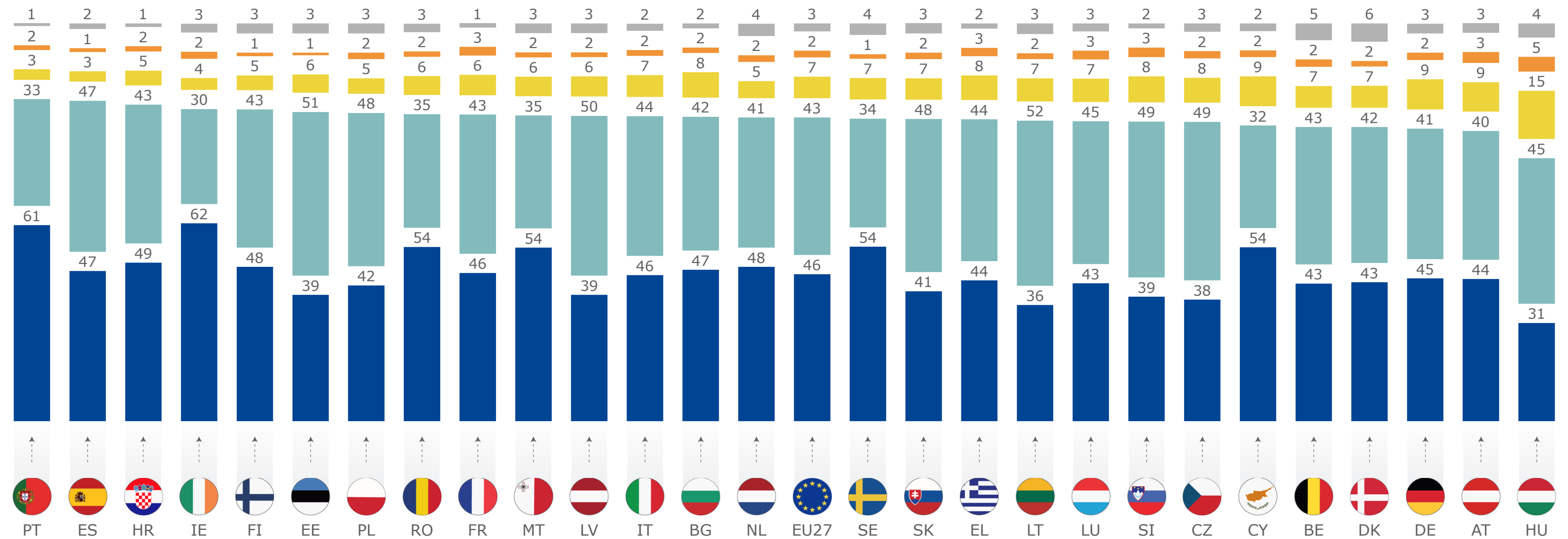
Data labels not shown for 5% or under



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Online service providers (e.g. social media platforms) can play an important role in the fight against online child sexual abuse*



Strongly agree      Rather agree      Rather disagree      Strongly disagree      Prefer not to answer/Don't know



Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



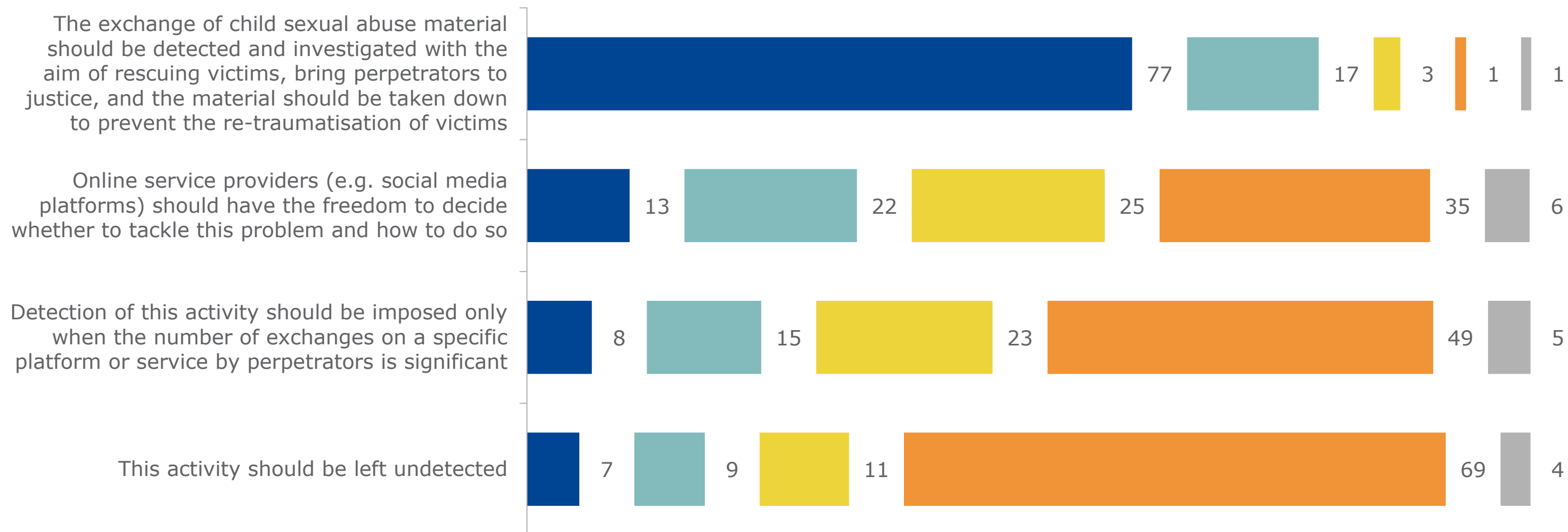
— Strongly agree

— Rather agree

— Rather disagree

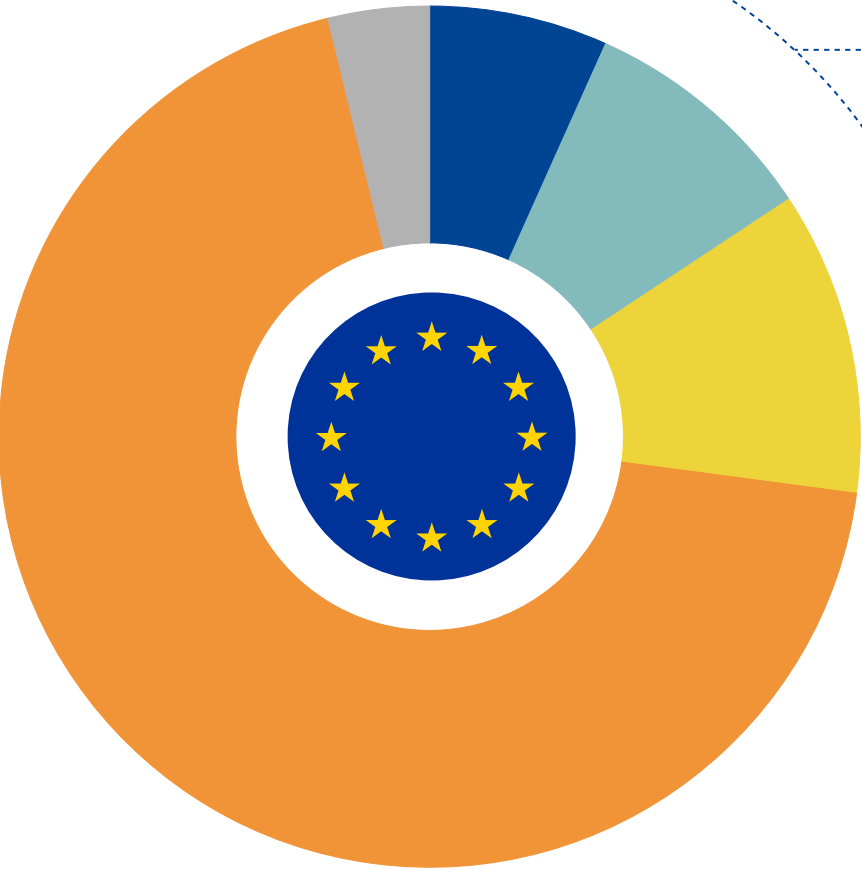
— Strongly disagree

— Prefer not to answer/Don't know



Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*This activity should be left undetected*

EU27 average



7% Strongly agree

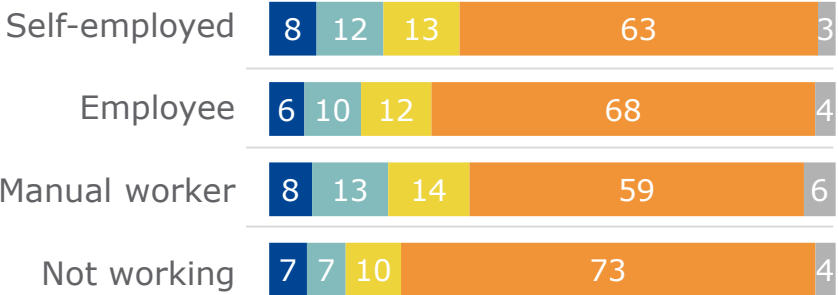
9% Rather agree

11% Rather disagree

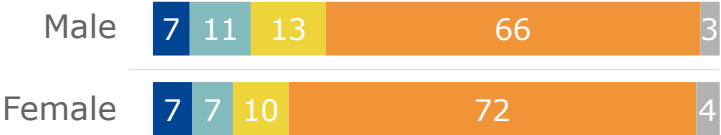
69% Strongly disagree

4% Prefer not to answer/Don't know

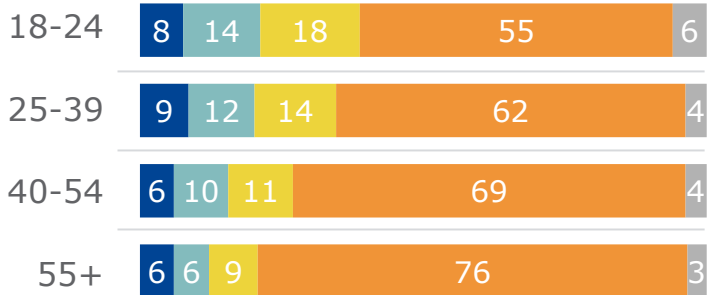
Occupation (%)



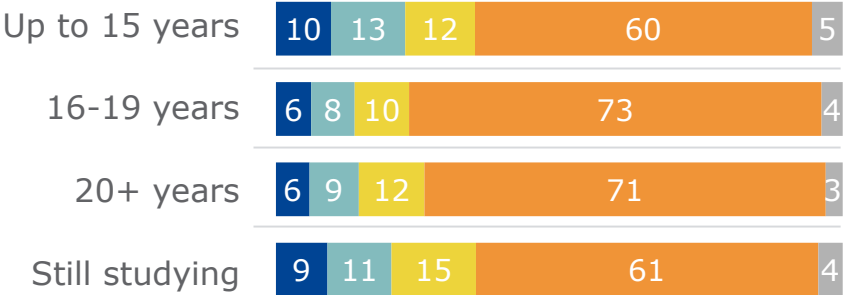
Gender (%)



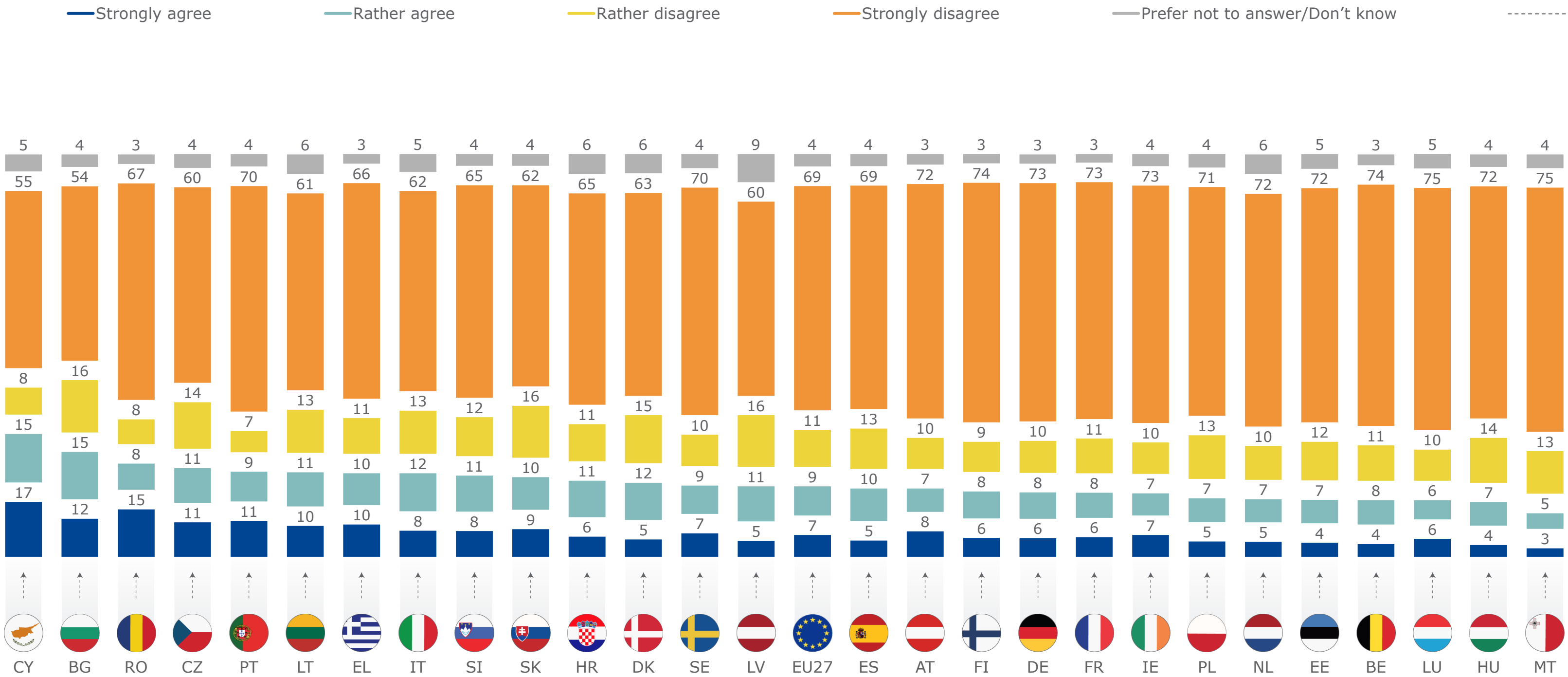
Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)

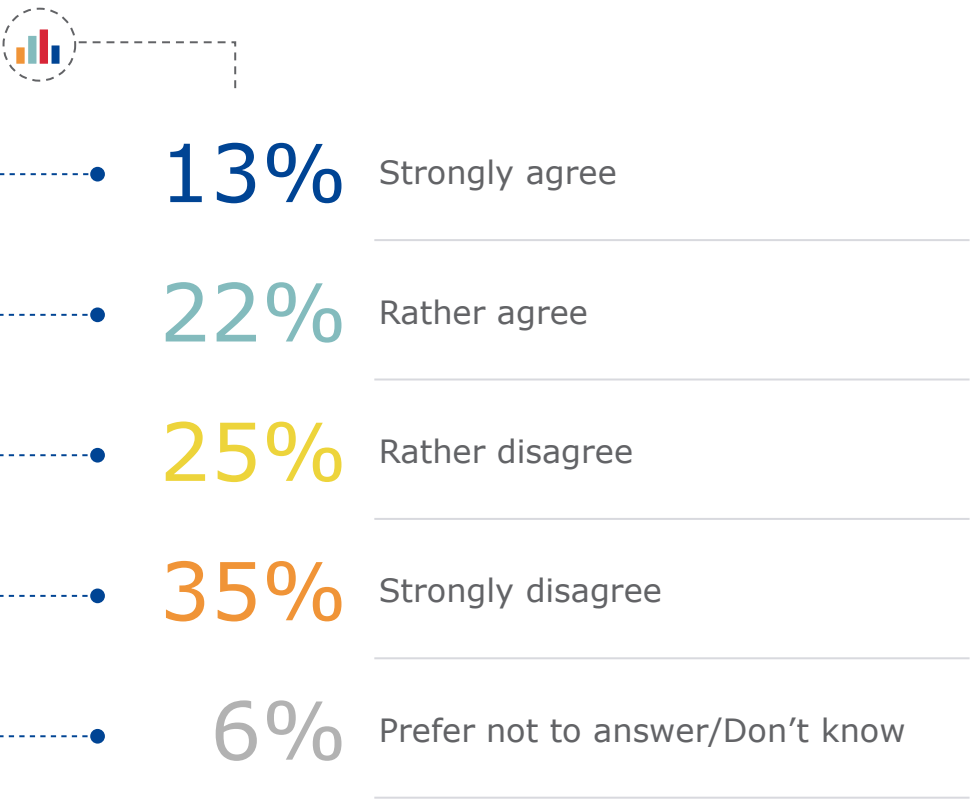
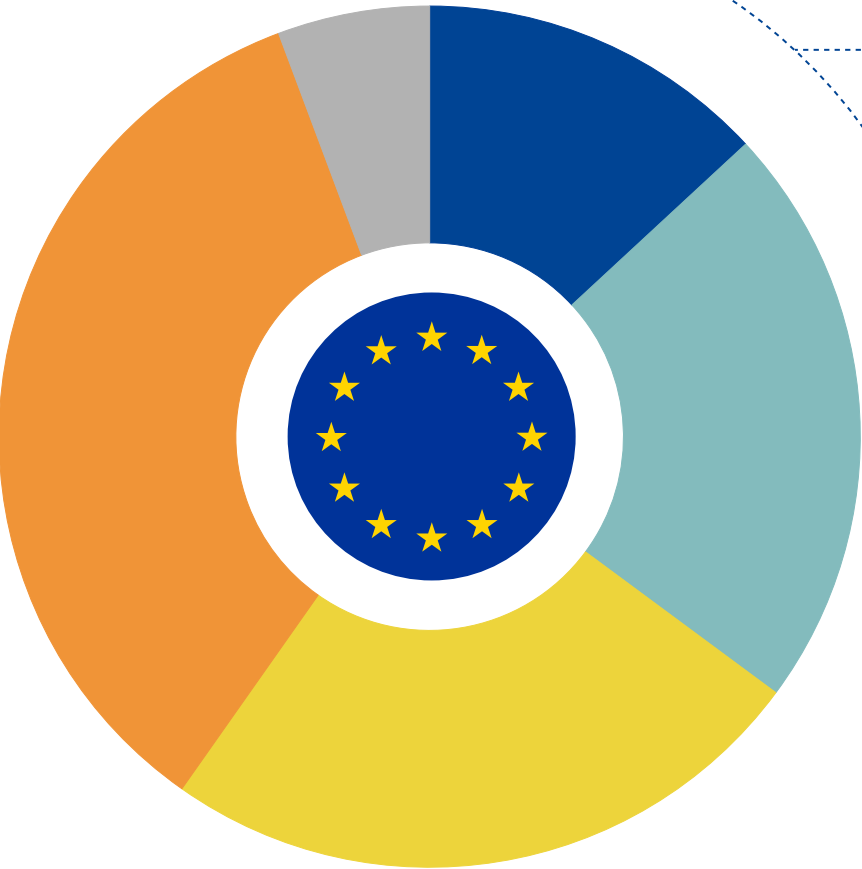


Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*This activity should be left undetected*

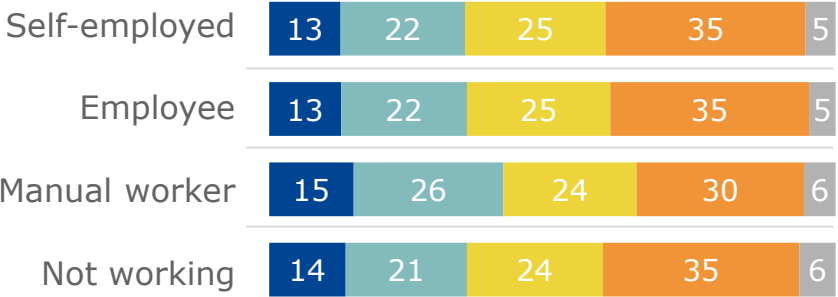


Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Online service providers (e.g. social media platforms) should have the freedom to decide whether to tackle this problem and how to do so*

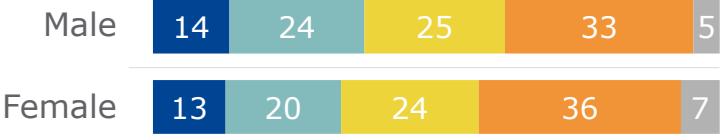
EU27 average



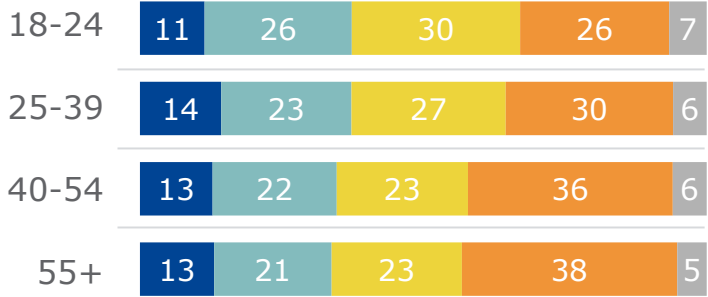
Occupation (%)



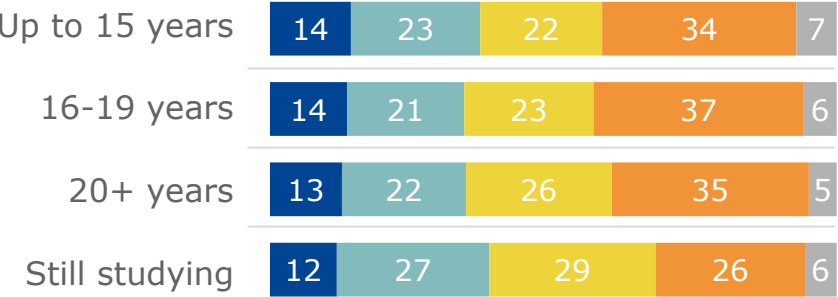
Gender (%)



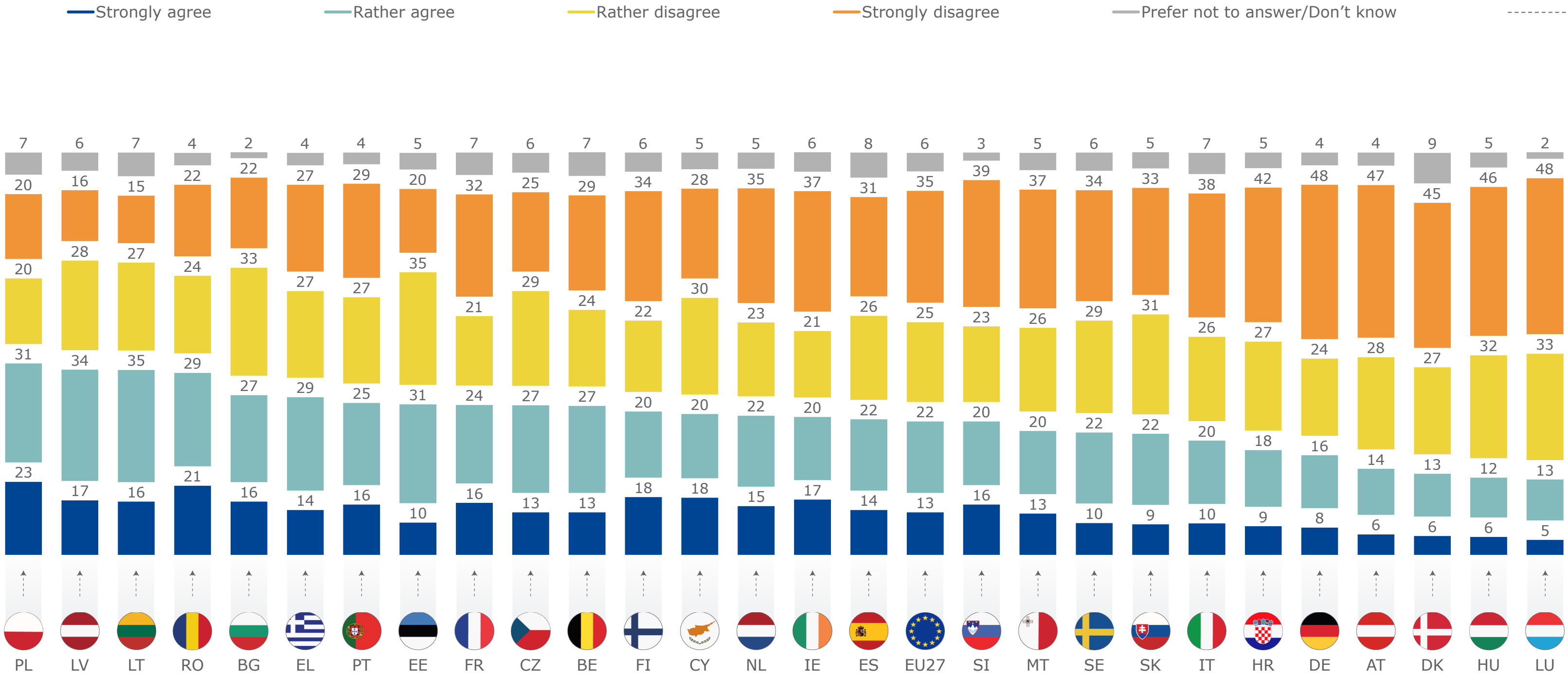
Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)



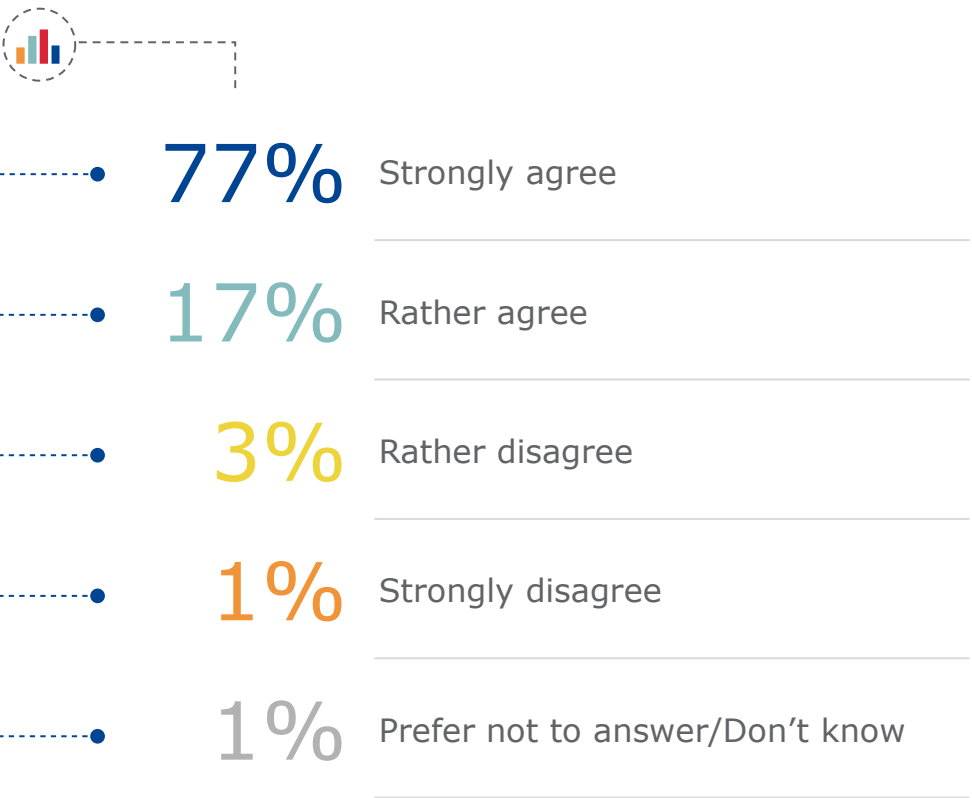
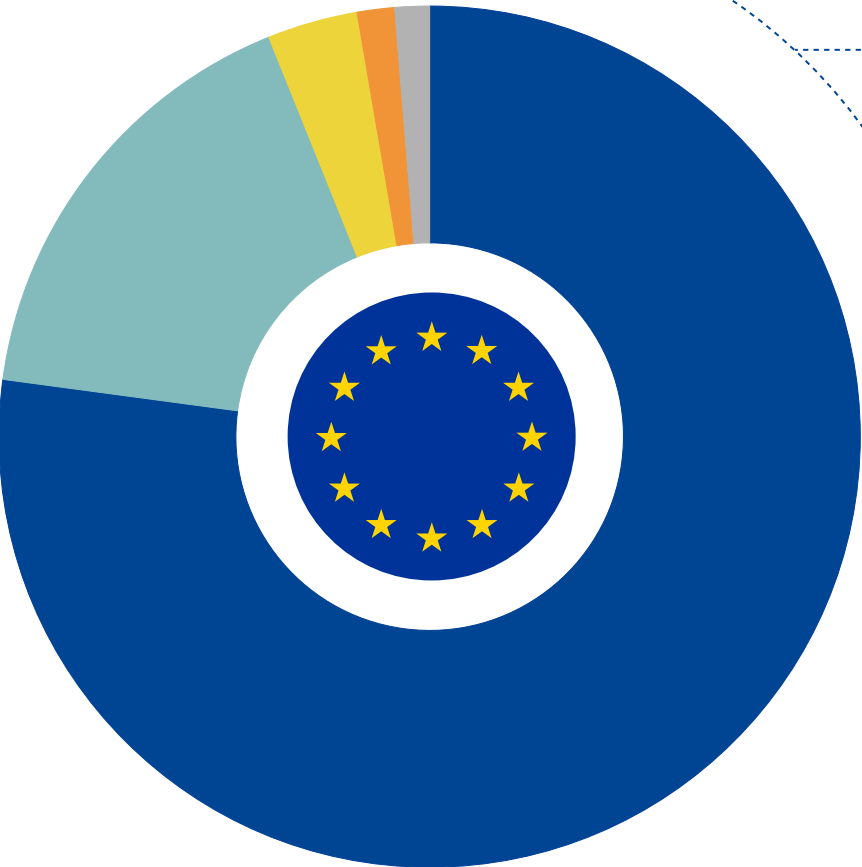
Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Online service providers (e.g. social media platforms) should have the freedom to decide whether to tackle this problem and how to do so*



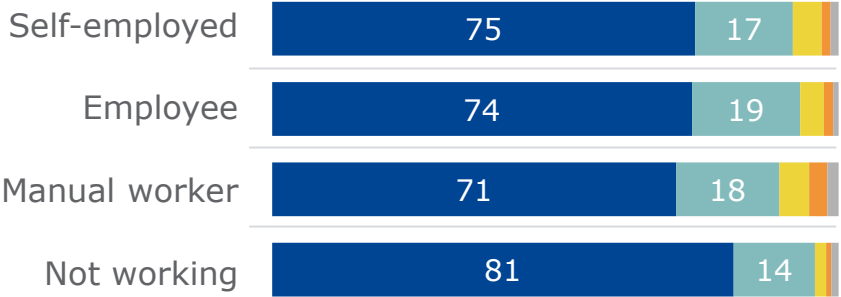


Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*The exchange of child sexual abuse material should be detected and investigated with the aim of rescuing victims, bring perpetrators to justice, and the material should be taken down to prevent the re-traumatisation of victims*

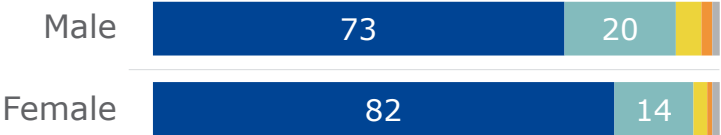
EU27 average



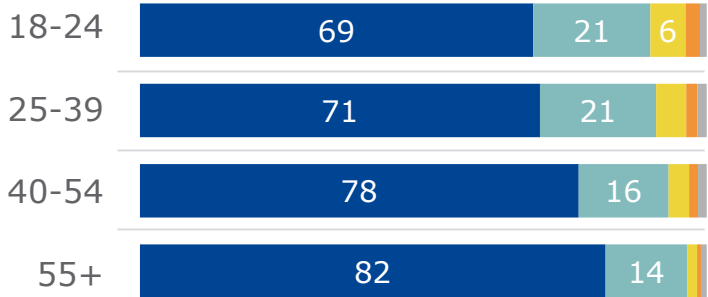
Occupation (%)



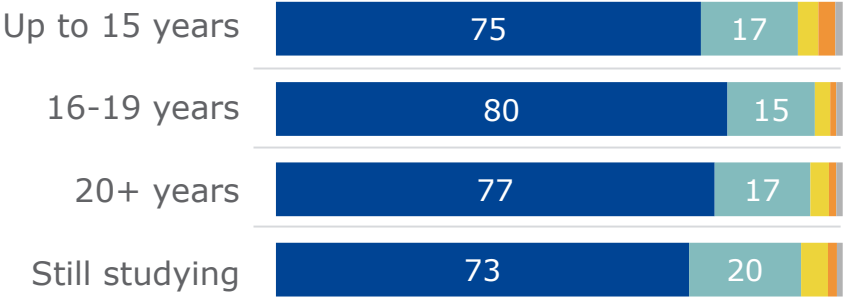
Gender (%)



Age (%)



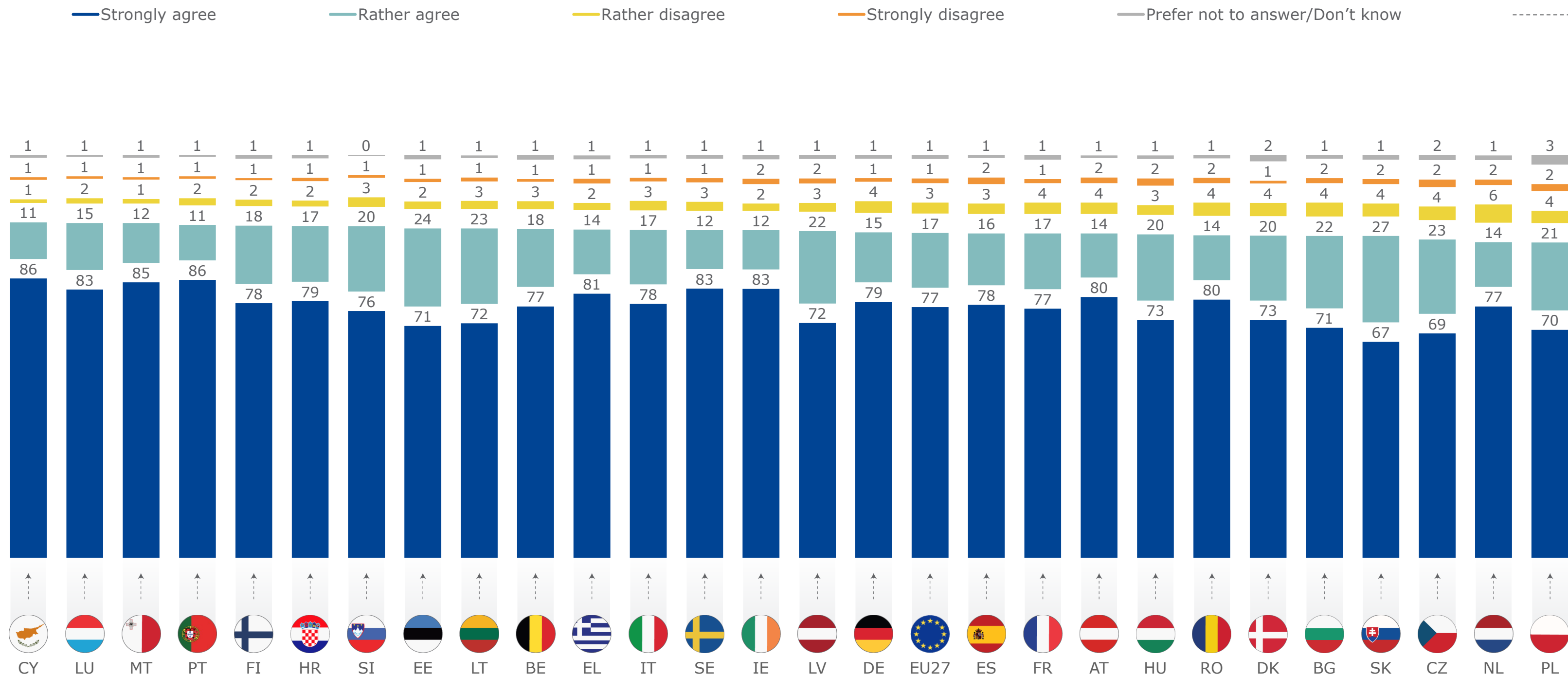
Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for 5% or under

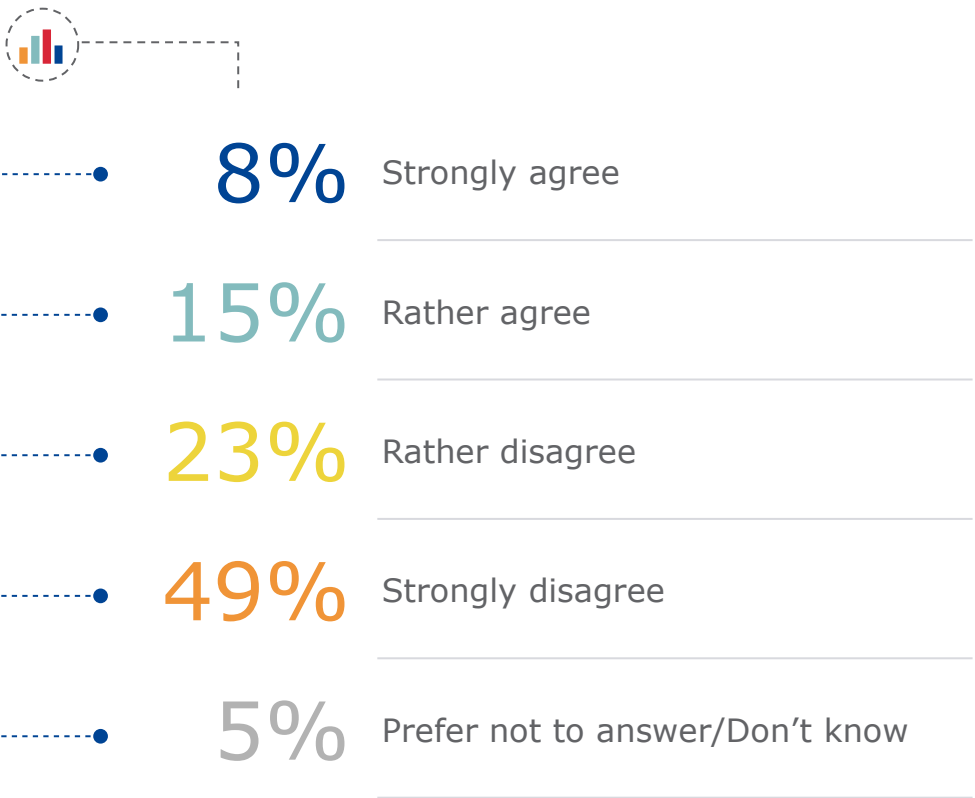
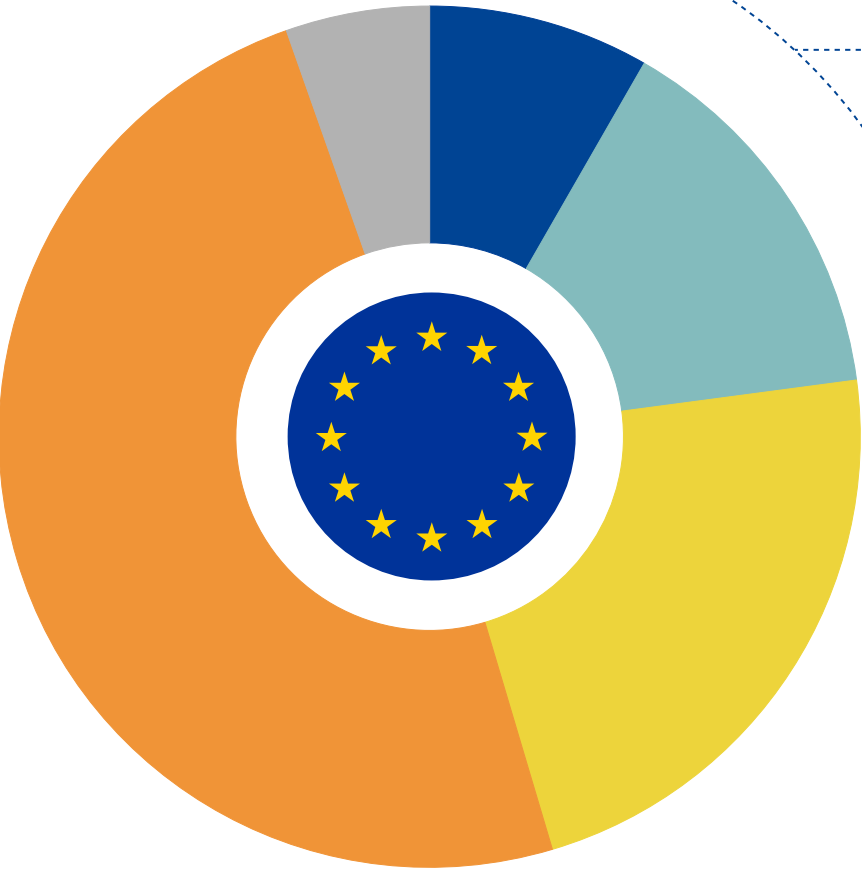
Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

*The exchange of child sexual abuse material should be detected and investigated with the aim of rescuing victims, bring perpetrators to justice, and the material should be taken down to prevent the re-traumatisation of victims*

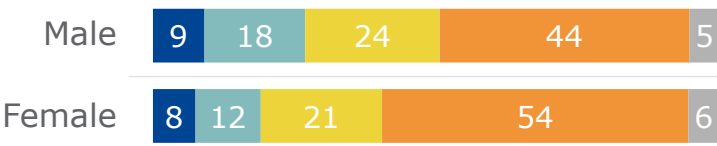


Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
*Detection of this activity should be imposed only when the number of exchanges on a specific platform or service by perpetrators is significant*

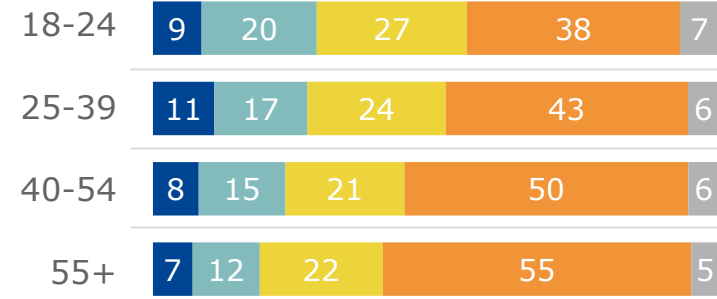
EU27 average



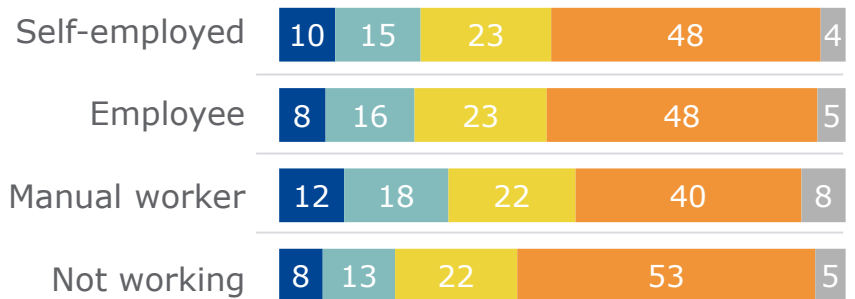
Gender (%)



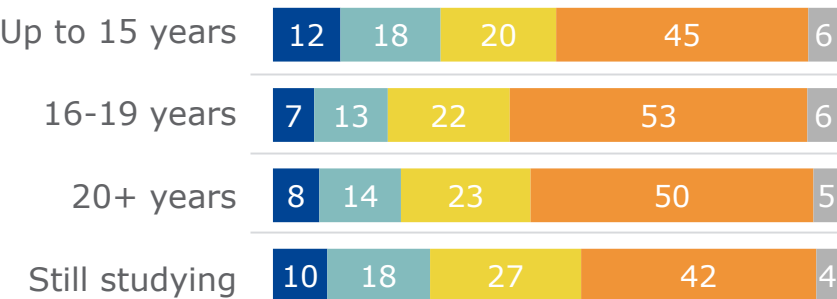
Age (%)



Occupation (%)

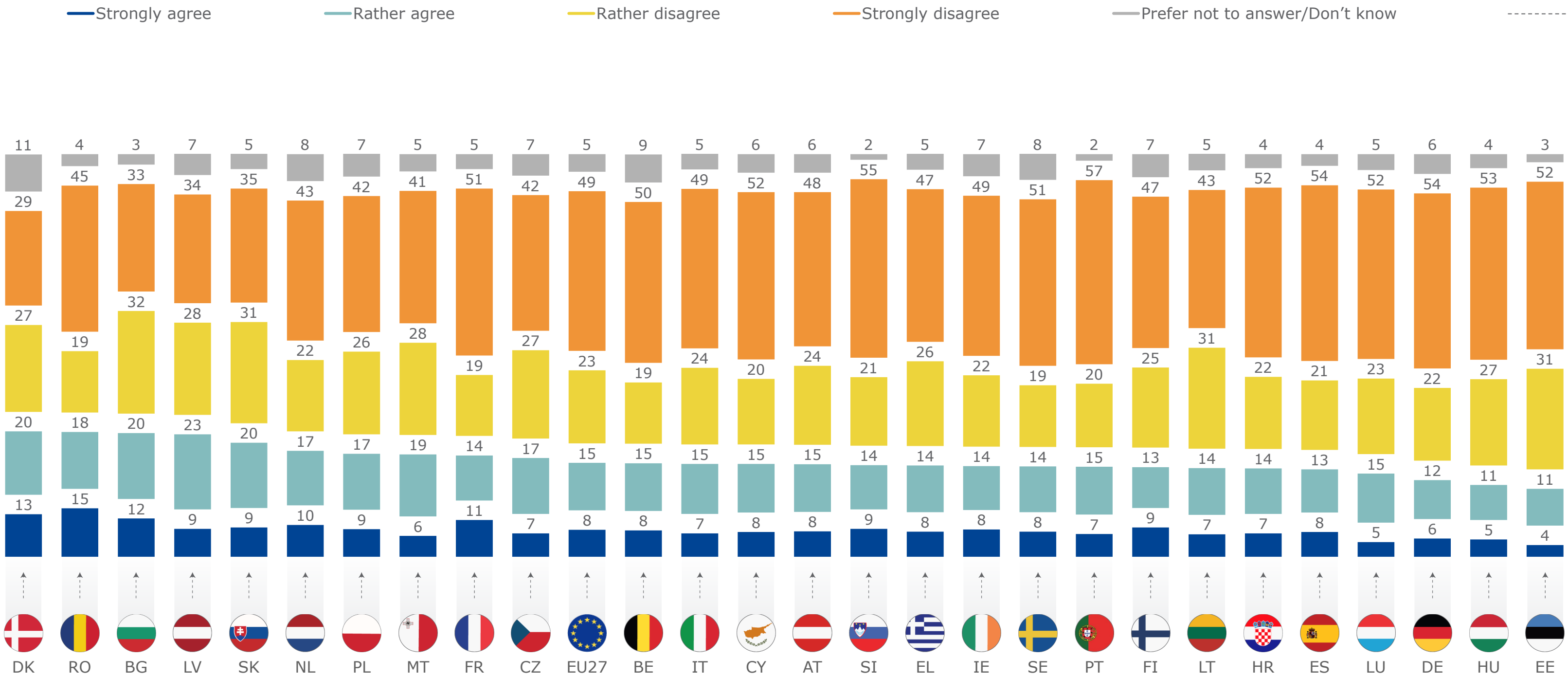


Education (age when completed) (%)



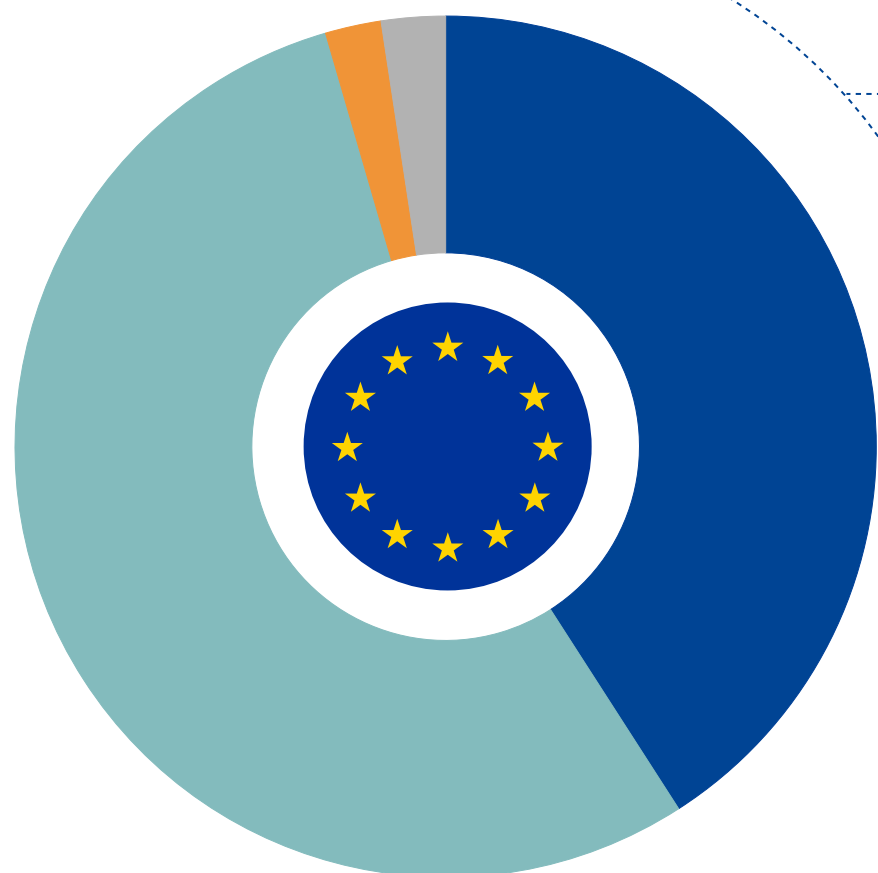
Perpetrators increasingly exchange child sexual abuse material (e.g. photos, videos) online among themselves.  
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

*Detection of this activity should be imposed only when the number of exchanges on a specific platform or service by perpetrators is significant*



Online service providers (e.g. social media platforms) can currently use several safety measures, including a combination of automated technology tools and human oversight, to detect and report sexual abuse of children, helping to rescue victims and bring perpetrators to justice. Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

## EU27 average



Online service providers  
(e.g. social media platforms)...

41%

...should be able to take voluntary actions to detect, remove and report online child sexual abuse

55%

...should, under certain circumstances, be obliged by law to detect, remove and report online child sexual abuse

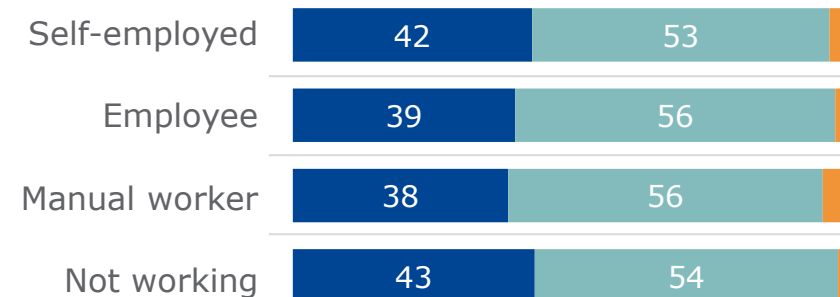
2%

...should not detect, remove and report online child sexual abuse

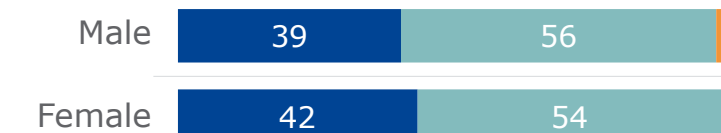
2%

Prefer not to answer/Don't know

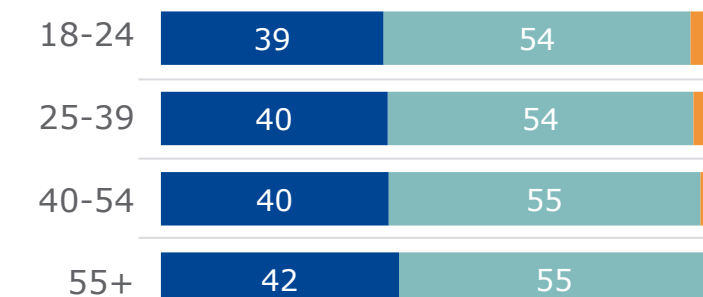
## Occupation (%)



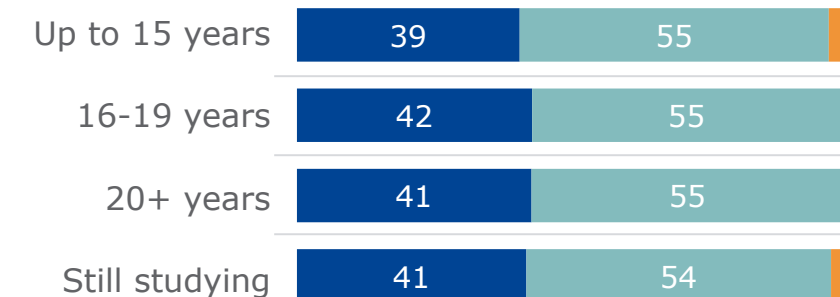
## Gender (%)



## Age (%)

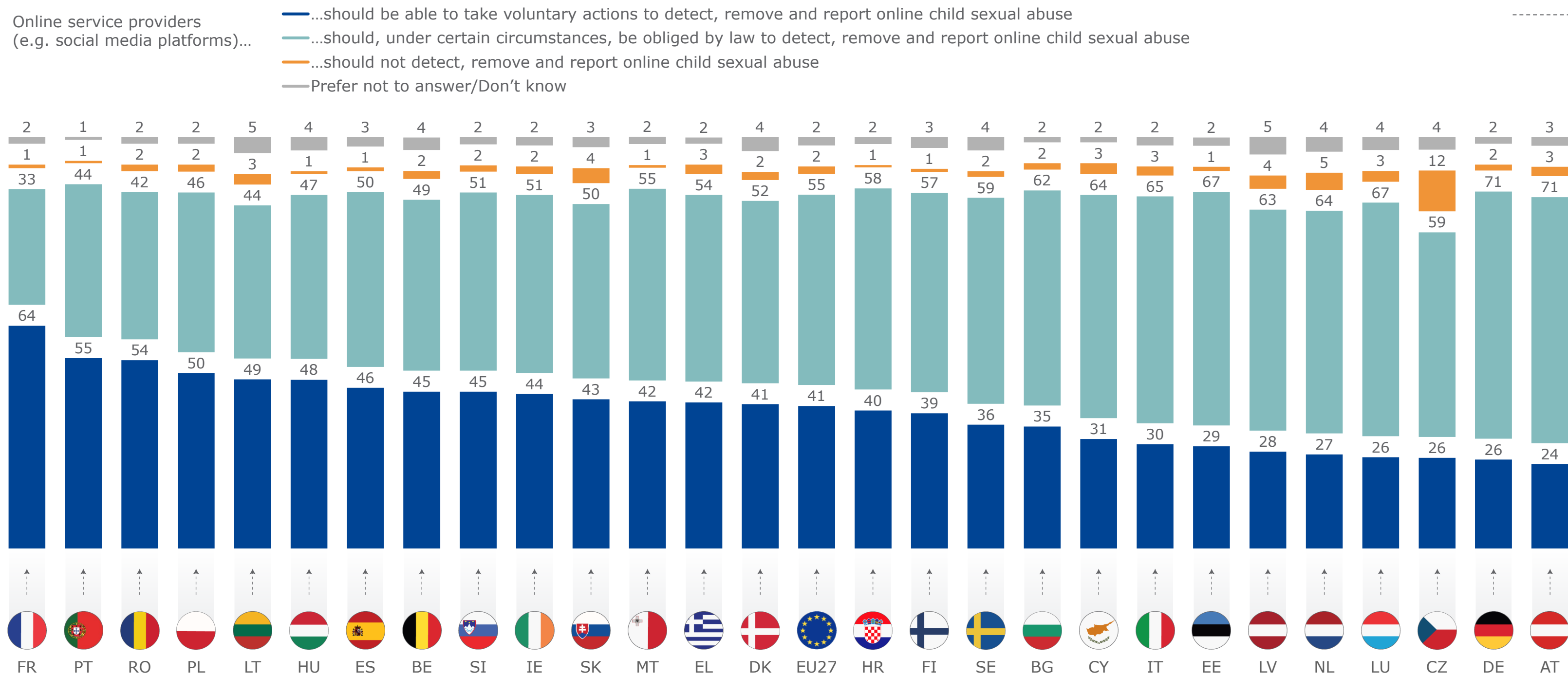


## Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for 5% or under

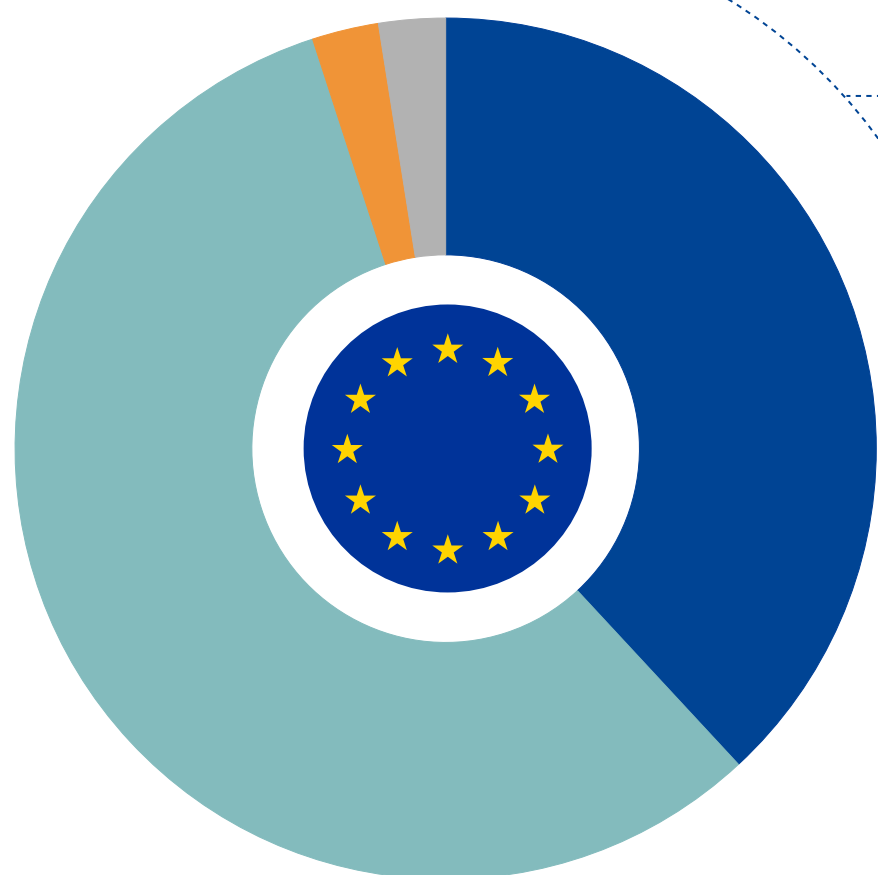
Online service providers (e.g. social media platforms) can currently use several safety measures, including a combination of automated technology tools and human oversight, to detect and report sexual abuse of children, helping to rescue victims and bring perpetrators to justice. Which of the following statements is closest to your view?





At the moment, due to the voluntary nature of the current temporary legislation, only a small number of service providers detect, remove and report online sexual abuse on their platforms, while a significant number take no action. With that in mind, which of the following statements is closest to your view?

EU27 average



Online service providers  
(e.g. social media platforms)...

38%

... should be able to take voluntary actions to prevent, detect, remove and report online child sexual abuse

57%

... should, under certain circumstances, be obliged by law to prevent, detect, remove and report online child sexual abuse

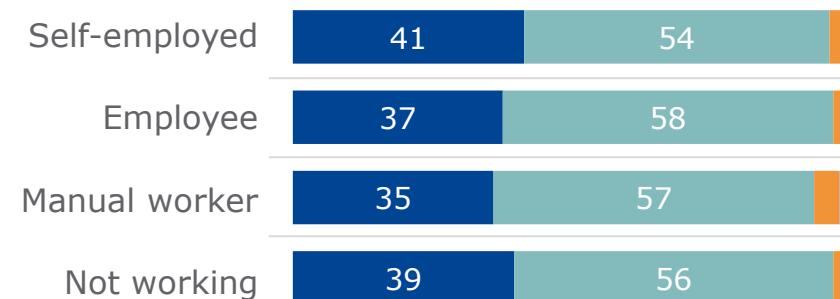
3%

...should not prevent, detect, remove and report online child sexual abuse

3%

Prefer not to answer/Don't know

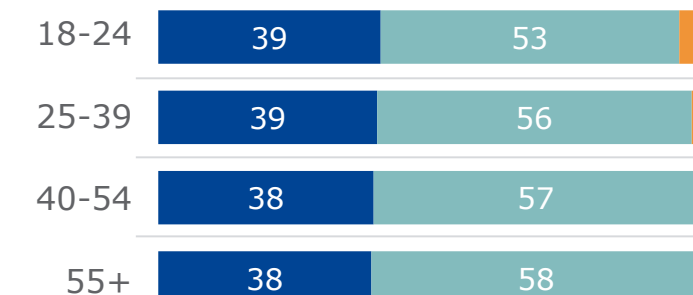
Occupation (%)



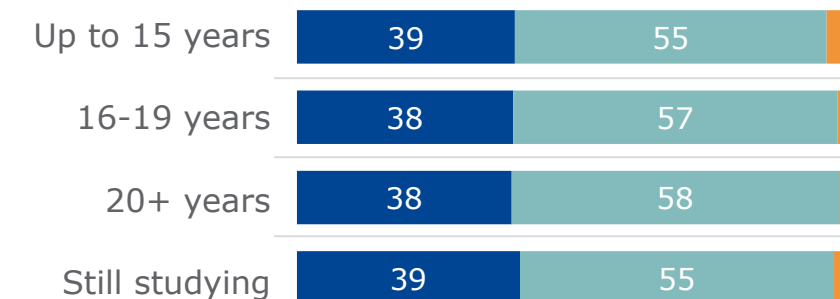
Gender (%)



Age (%)

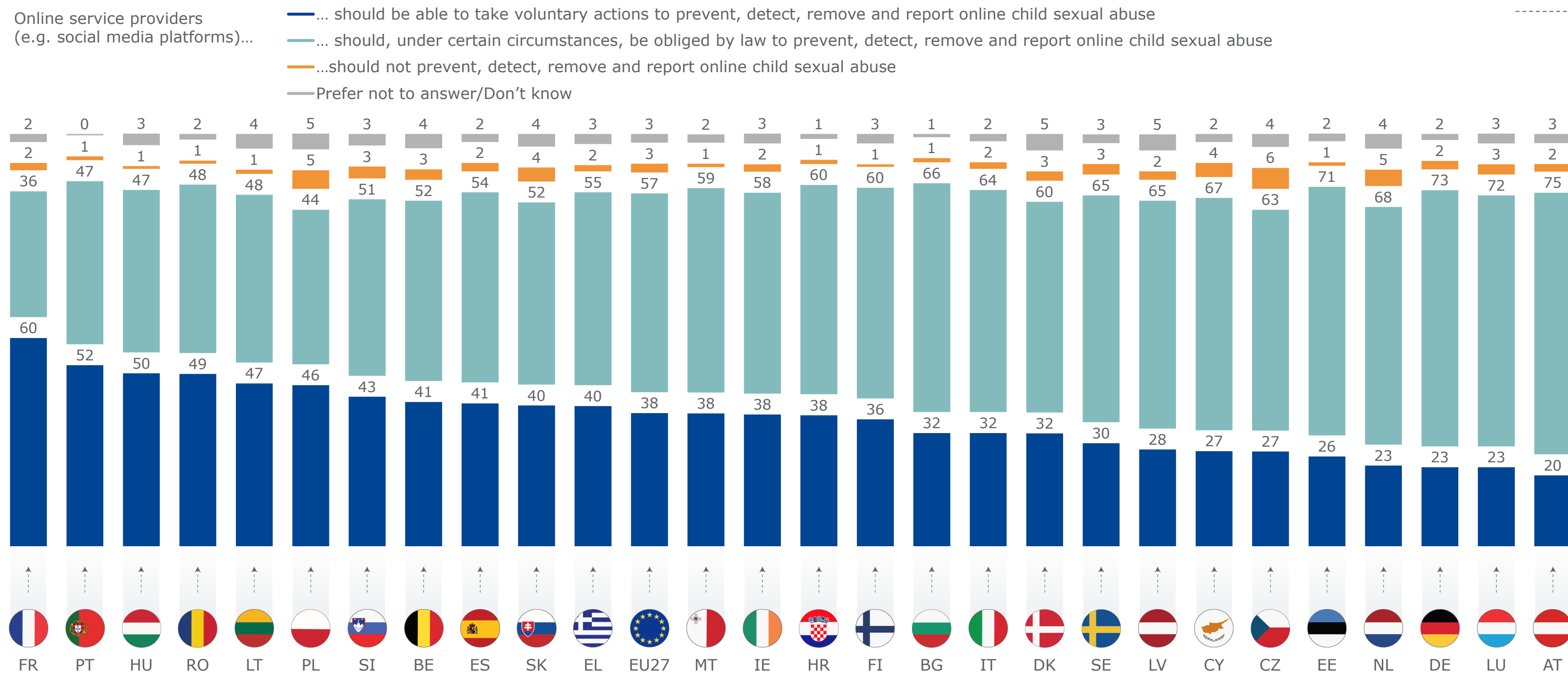


Education (age when completed) (%)



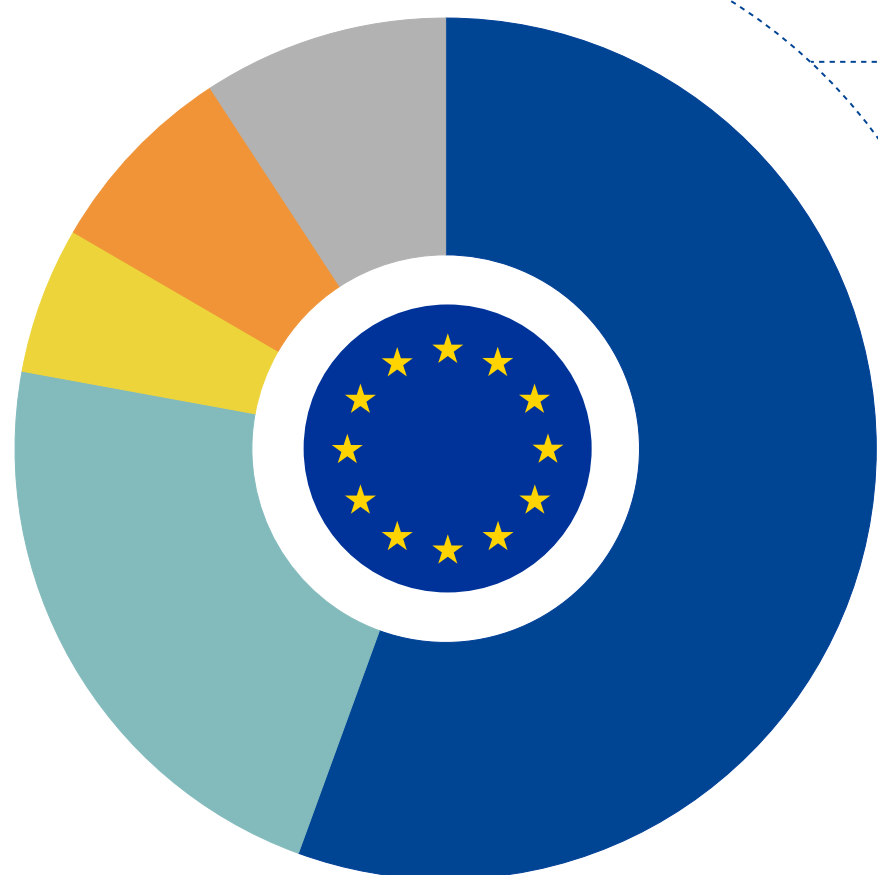
Data labels not shown for 5% or under

At the moment, due to the voluntary nature of the current temporary legislation, only a small number of service providers detect, remove and report online sexual abuse on their platforms, while a significant number take no action. With that in mind, which of the following statements is closest to your view?



On 3 August 2024, the EU law that allows online service providers to voluntarily detect and report online child sexual abuse will expire. The EU has proposed a new law that would oblige online service providers to prevent child sexual abuse from happening on their services. If prevention fails, and in case of significant risk of child sexual abuse, the service provider could be temporarily obliged to detect and report online child sexual abuse. If this new legislation is not agreed upon by August 2024, the detection of online child sexual abuse in online exchanges – voluntary or not – becomes illegal. With that in mind, to what extent would you support or oppose this proposed law?

## EU27 average



- **56%** Strongly support
- **22%** Tend to support
- **6%** Tend to oppose
- **7%** Strongly oppose
- **9%** Prefer not to answer/Don't know

## Occupation (%)

Self-employed	55	22	6	9	7
Employee	54	25	6	7	8
Manual worker	46	26	9	9	10
Not working	58	20	4	8	10



## Gender (%)

Male	53	26	6	7	8
Female	57	19	5	8	11



## Age (%)

18-24	41	33	9	6	11
25-39	48	28	7	8	10
40-54	57	22	6	7	9
55+	62	17	4	8	9

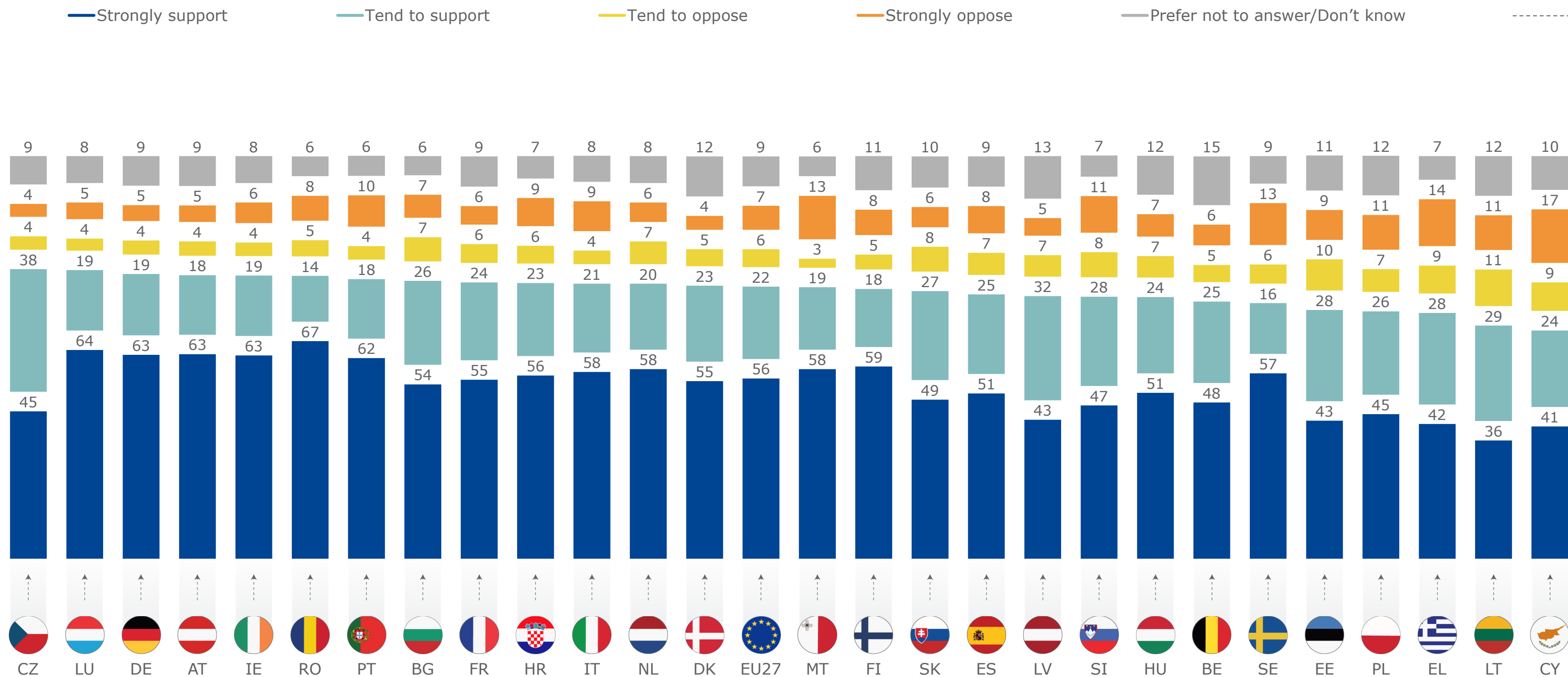


## Education (age when completed) (%)

Up to 15 years	55	21	8	7	9
16-19 years	59	20	4	7	10
20+ years	57	22	6	8	8
Still studying	44	31	8	7	9



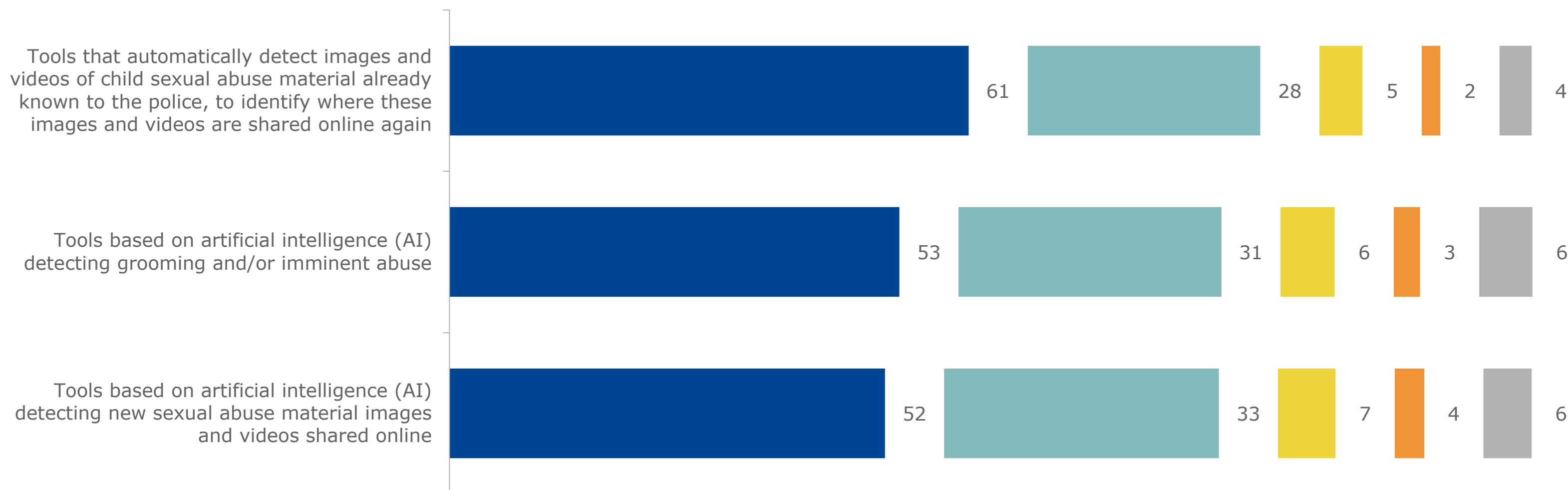
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Online services providers can use various tools, including a combination of automated technology tools and human oversight, to detect child sexual abuse online. These tools may interfere to a different extent with the privacy of the users. To what extent would you support or oppose the detection of child sexual abuse by online service providers via...



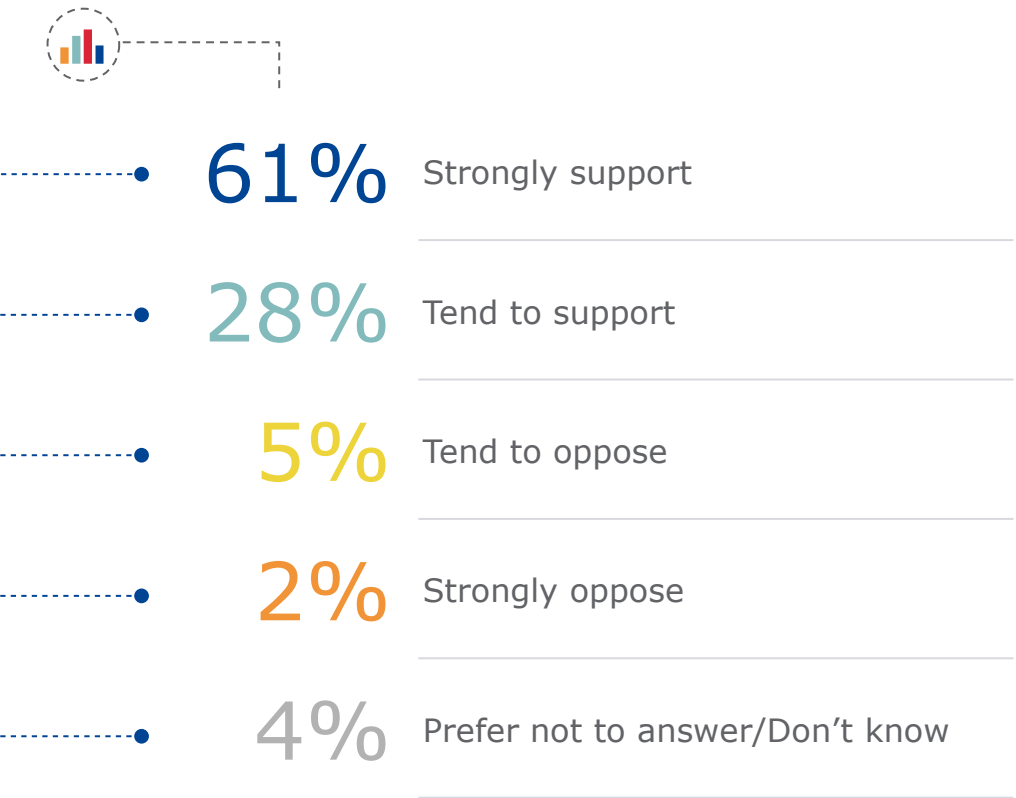
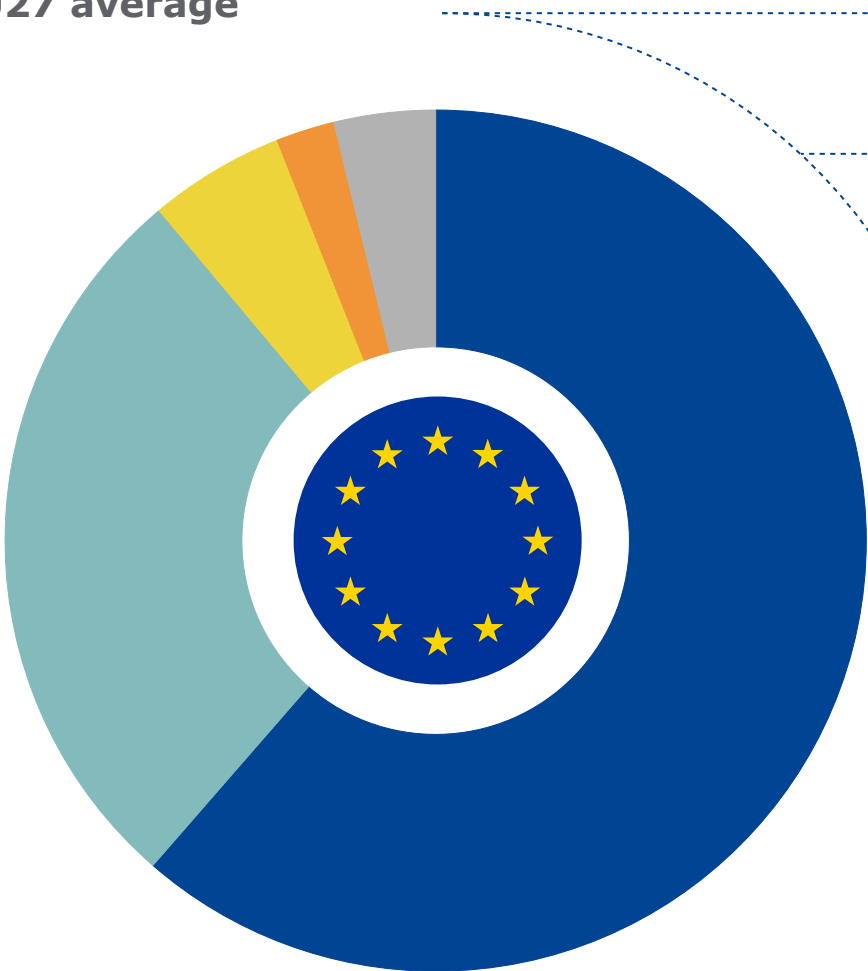
— Strongly support — Tend to support — Tend to oppose — Strongly oppose — Prefer not to answer/Don't know



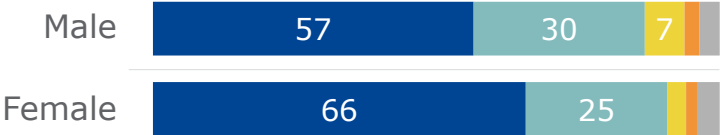
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*Tools that automatically detect images and videos of child sexual abuse material already known to the police, to identify where these images and videos are shared online again*

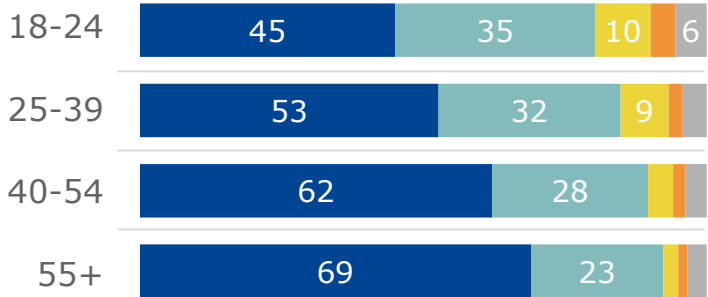
EU27 average



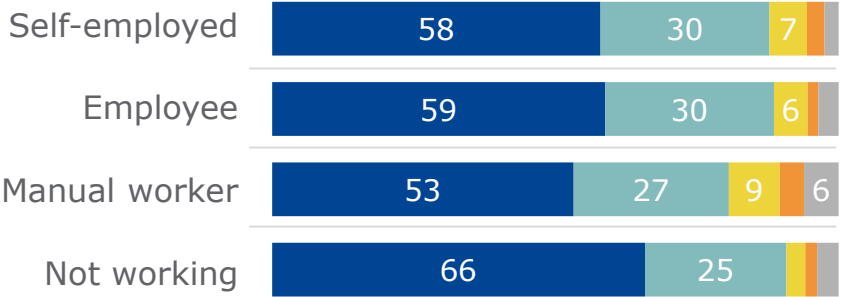
Gender (%)



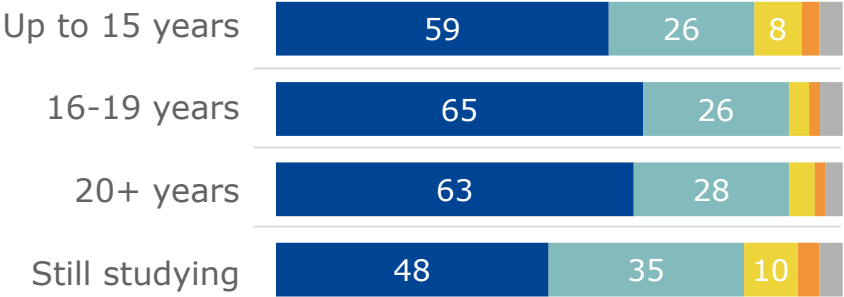
Age (%)



Occupation (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)

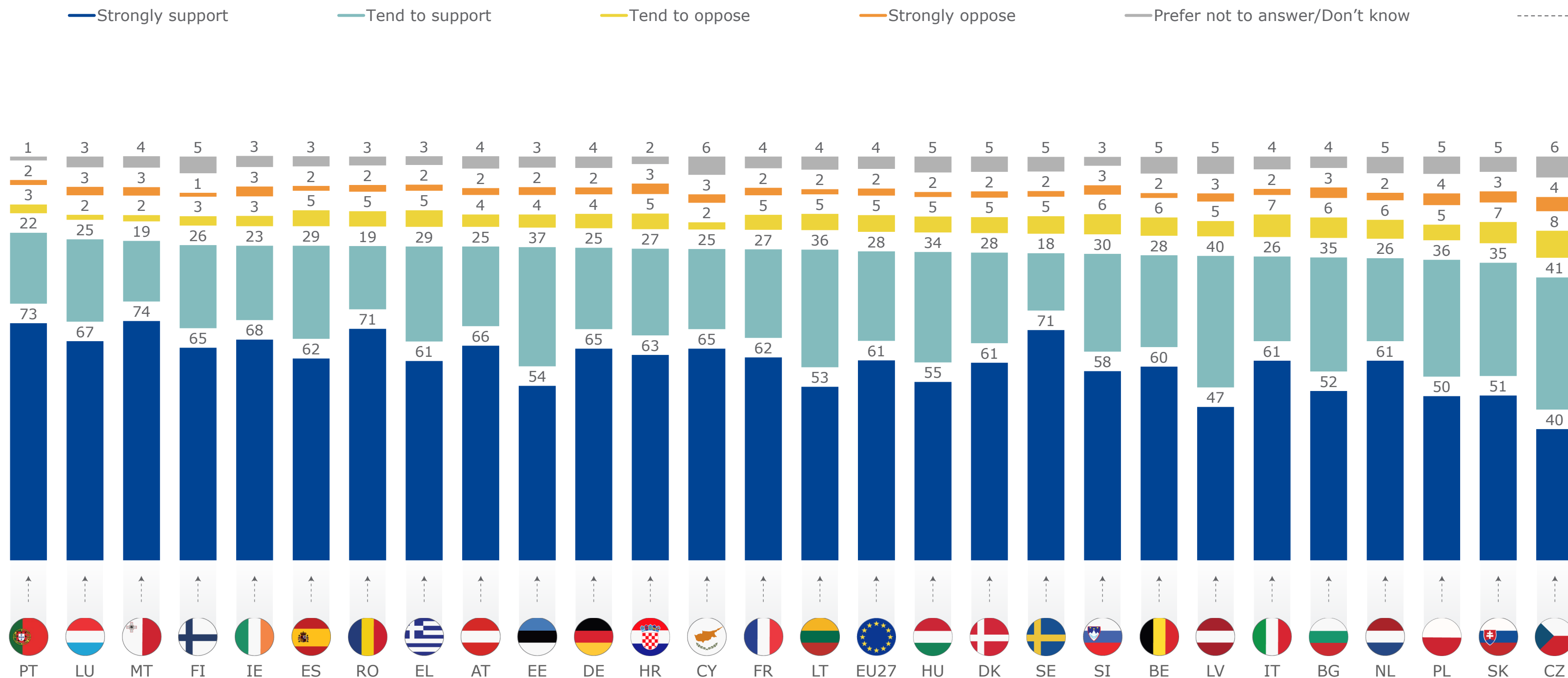


Data labels not shown for 5% or under

Q8\_1

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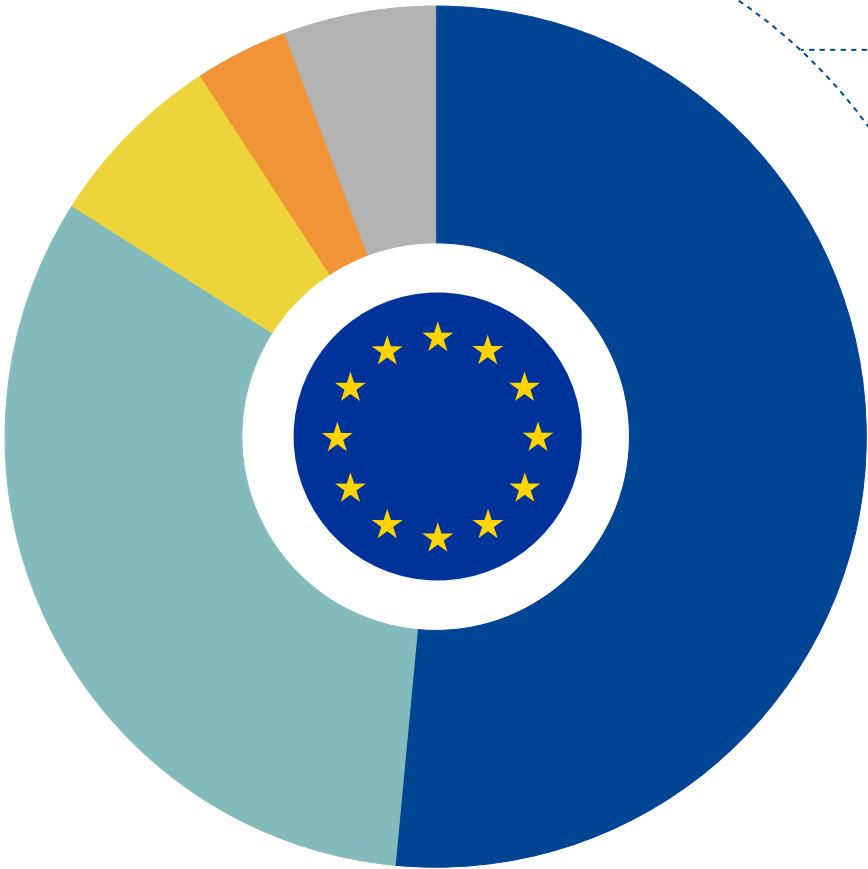




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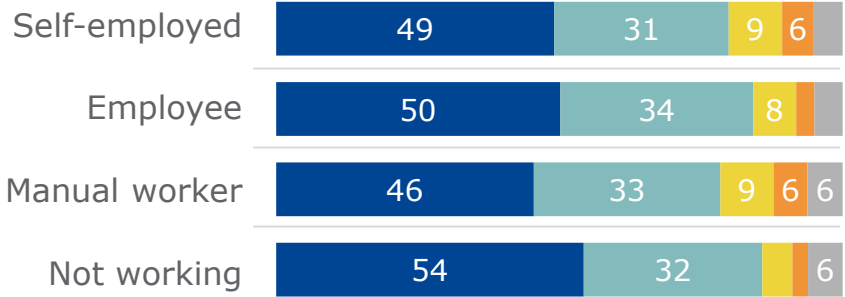
*Tools based on artificial intelligence (AI) detecting new sexual abuse material images and videos shared online*

EU27 average

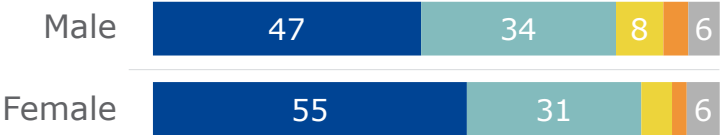


- 52% Strongly support
- 33% Tend to support
- 7% Tend to oppose
- 4% Strongly oppose
- 6% Prefer not to answer/Don't know

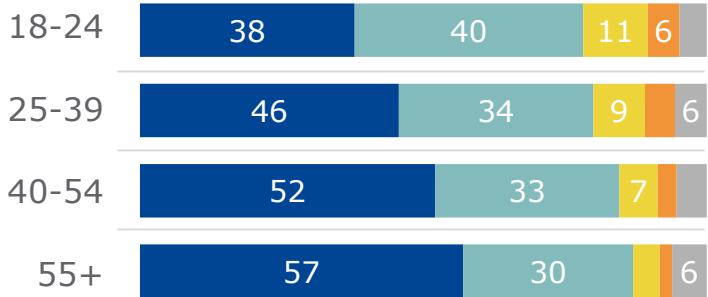
Occupation (%)



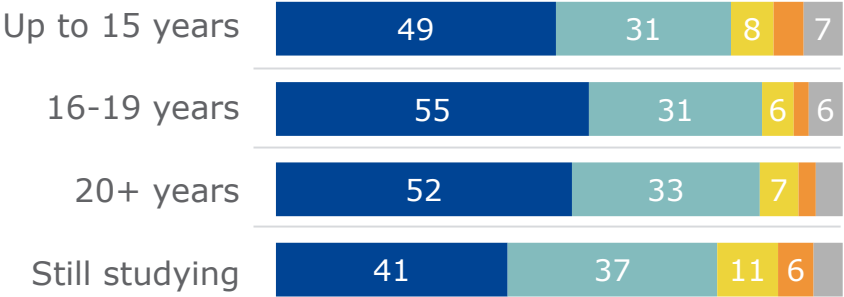
Gender (%)



Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)

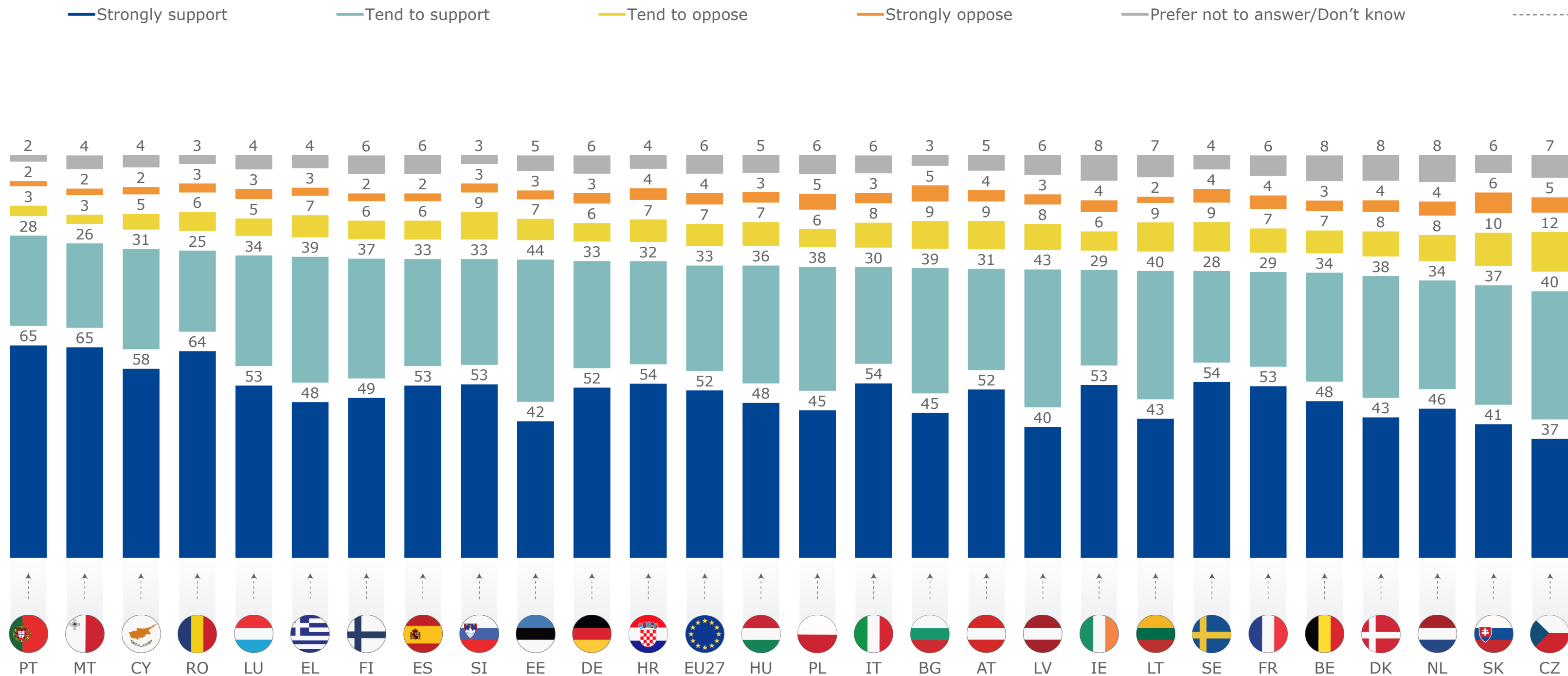


Data labels not shown for 5% or under



Online services providers can use various tools, including a combination of automated technology tools and human oversight, to detect child sexual abuse online. These tools may interfere to a different extent with the privacy of the users. To what extent would you support or oppose the detection of child sexual abuse by online service providers via...

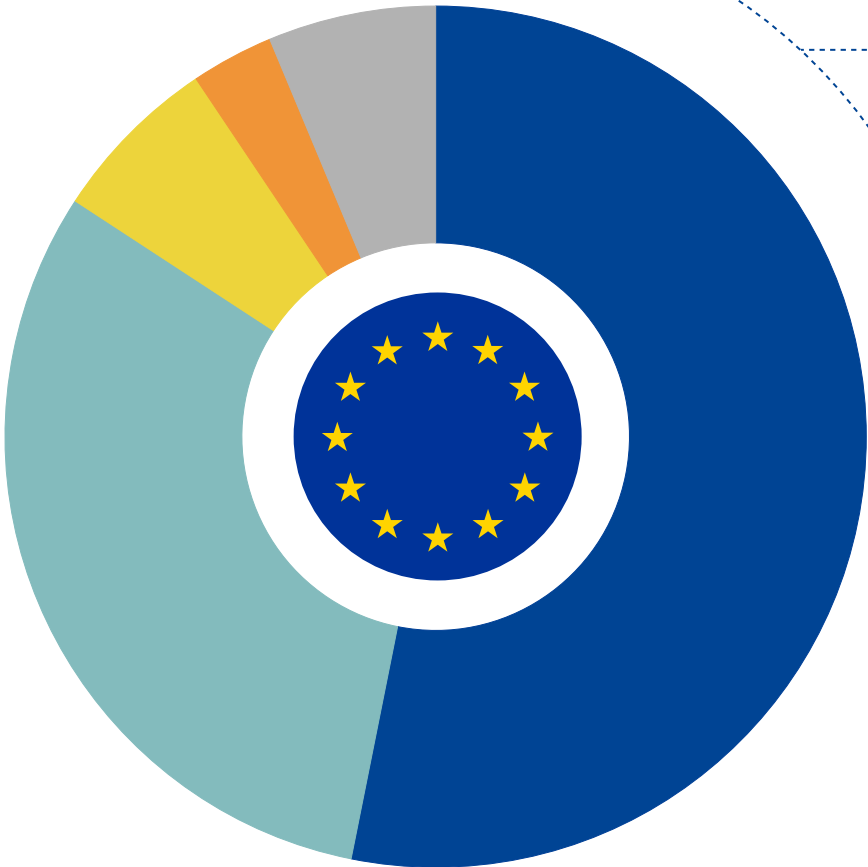
*Tools based on artificial intelligence (AI) detecting new sexual abuse material images and videos shared online*



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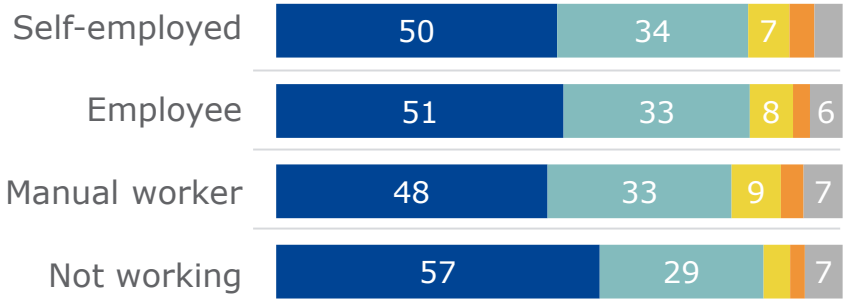
*Tools based on artificial intelligence (AI) detecting grooming and/or imminent abuse*

EU27 average

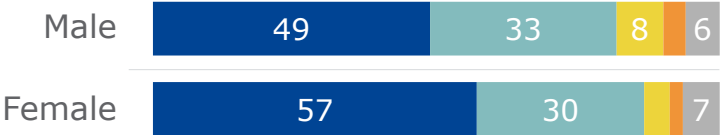


- 53% Strongly support
- 31% Tend to support
- 6% Tend to oppose
- 3% Strongly oppose
- 6% Prefer not to answer/Don't know

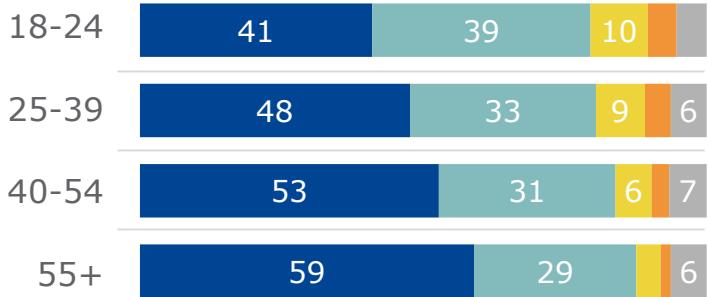
Occupation (%)



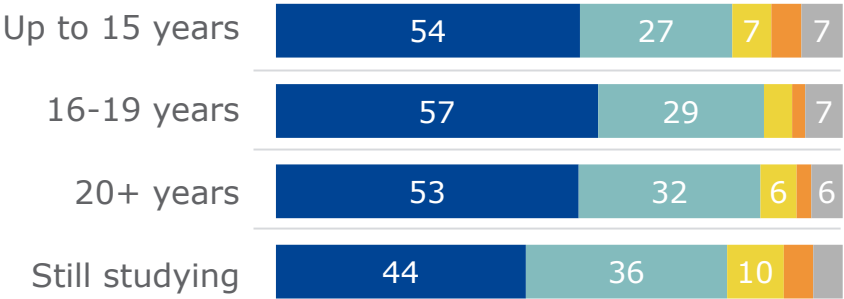
Gender (%)



Age (%)



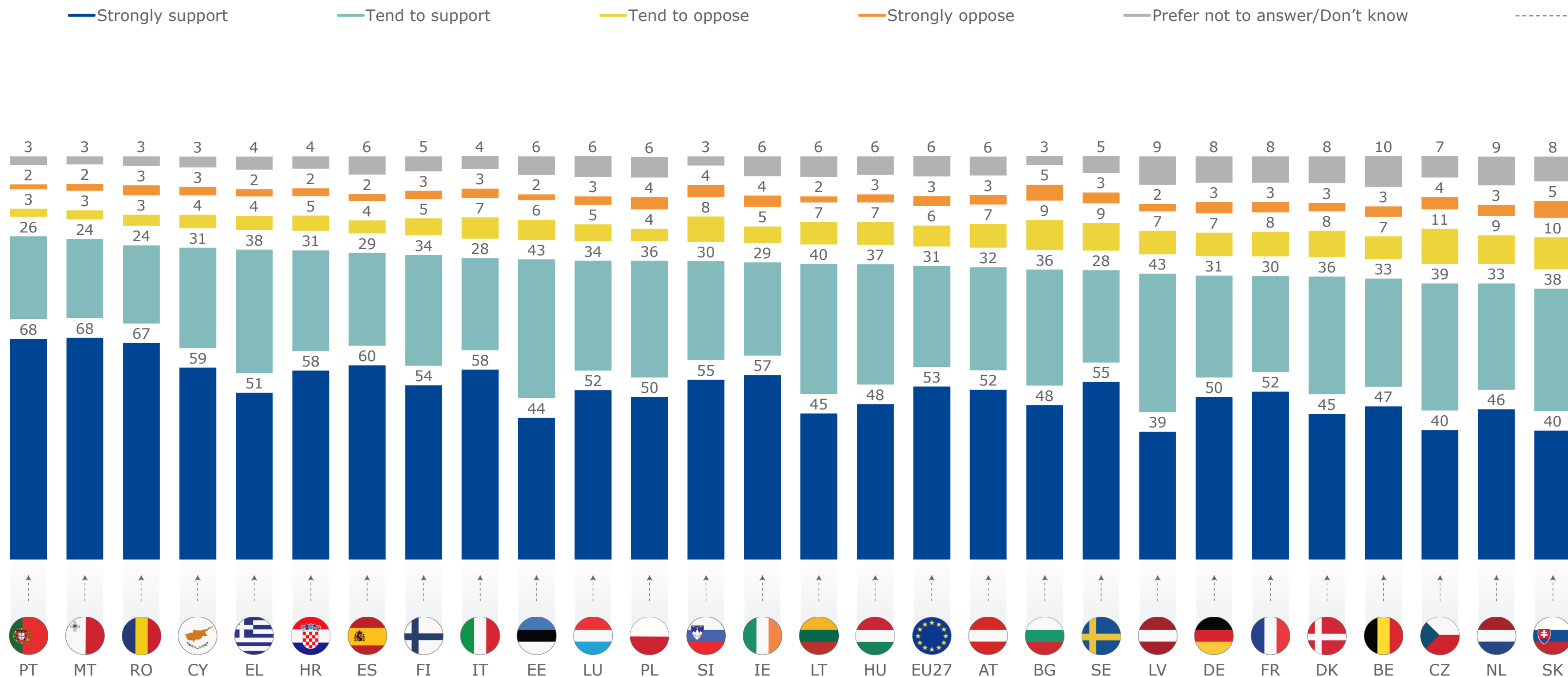
Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for 5% or under

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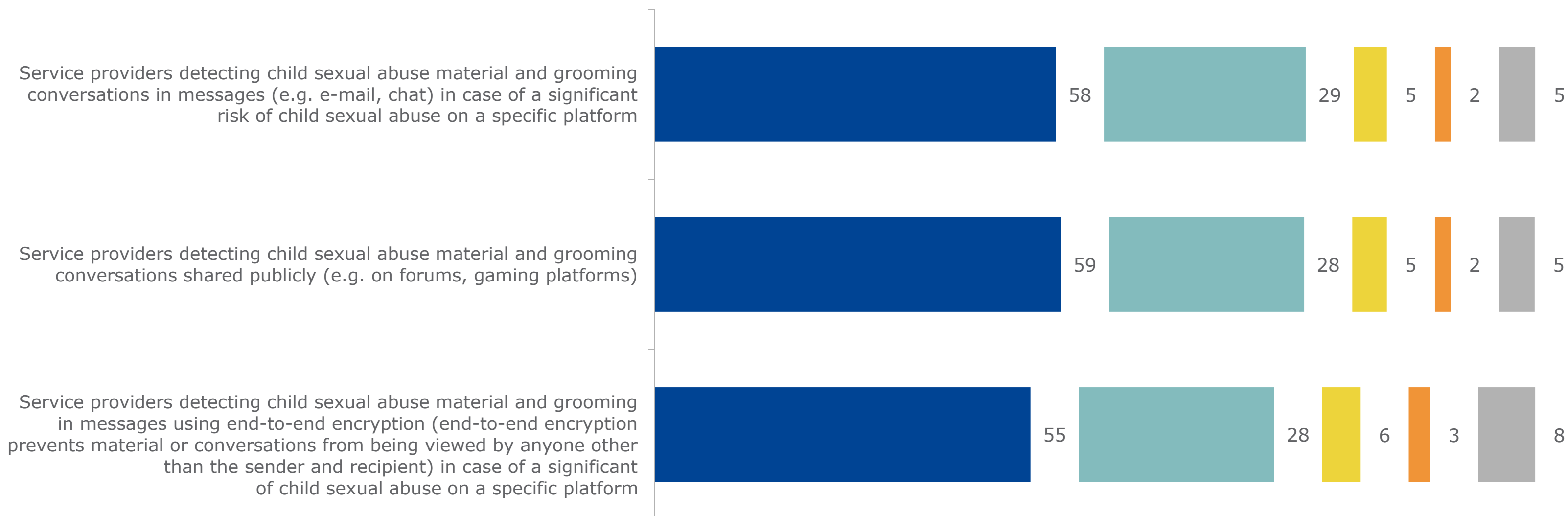
*Tools based on artificial intelligence (AI) detecting grooming and/or imminent abuse*



Last year, service providers sent 1.5 million reports of child sexual abuse online stemming from the EU. Over one million of these reports - 70 per cent – came from online messages, email and chat, the rest from other sources, such as social media and gaming platforms. To what extent would you support or oppose the following?



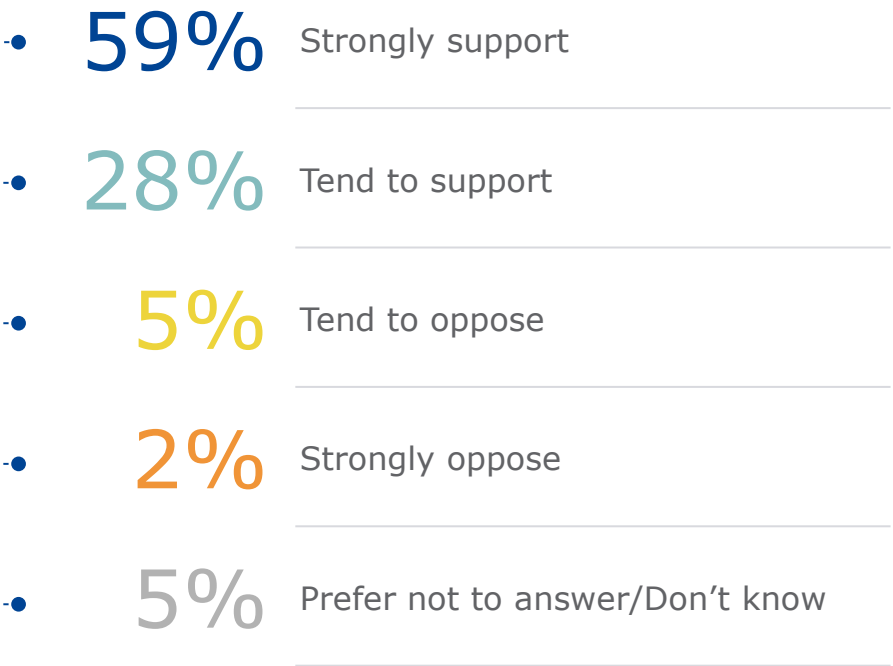
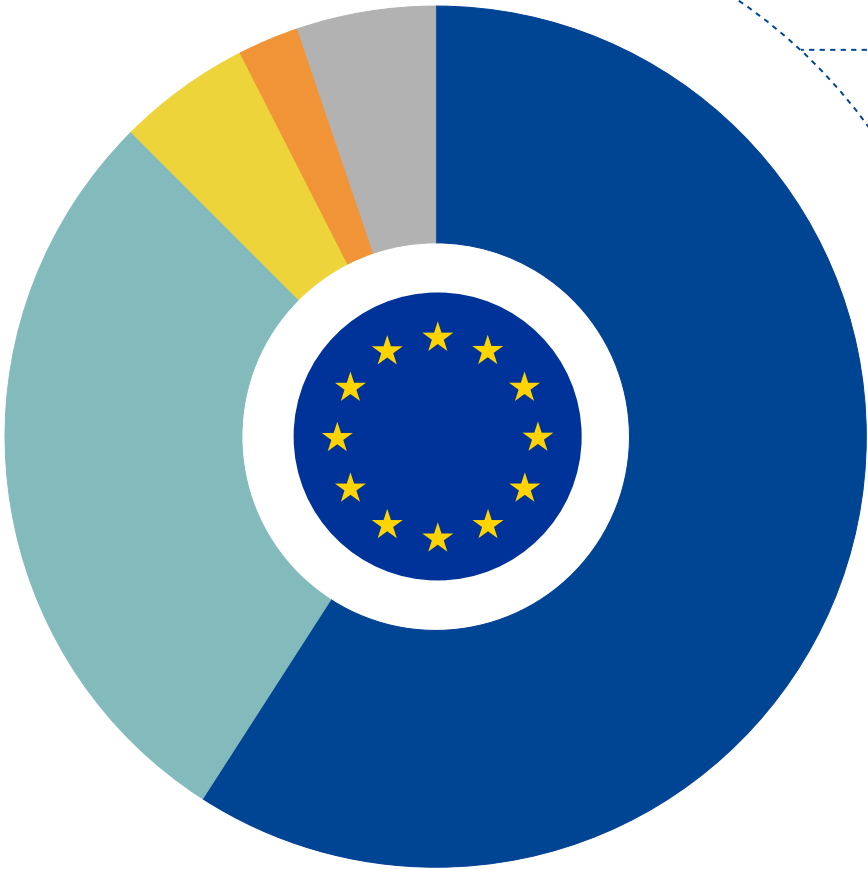
— Strongly support — Tend to support — Tend to oppose — Strongly oppose — Prefer not to answer/Don't know



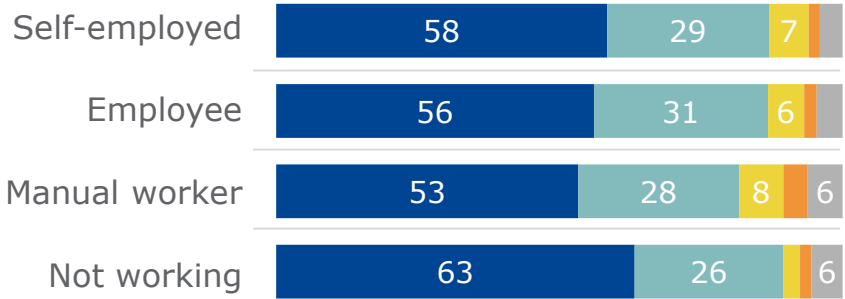
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*Service providers detecting child sexual abuse material and grooming conversations shared publicly (e.g. on forums, gaming platforms)*

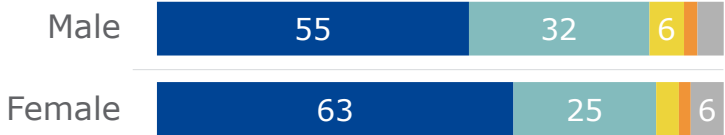
EU27 average



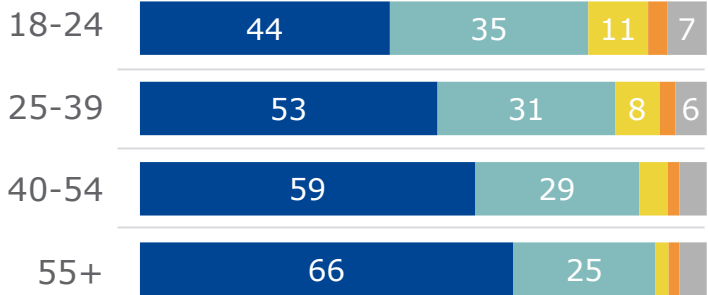
Occupation (%)



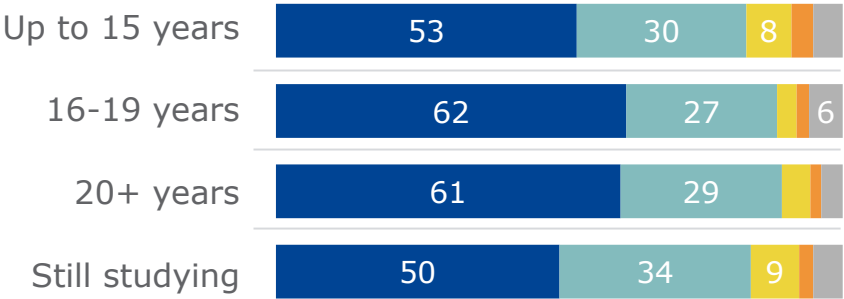
Gender (%)



Age (%)



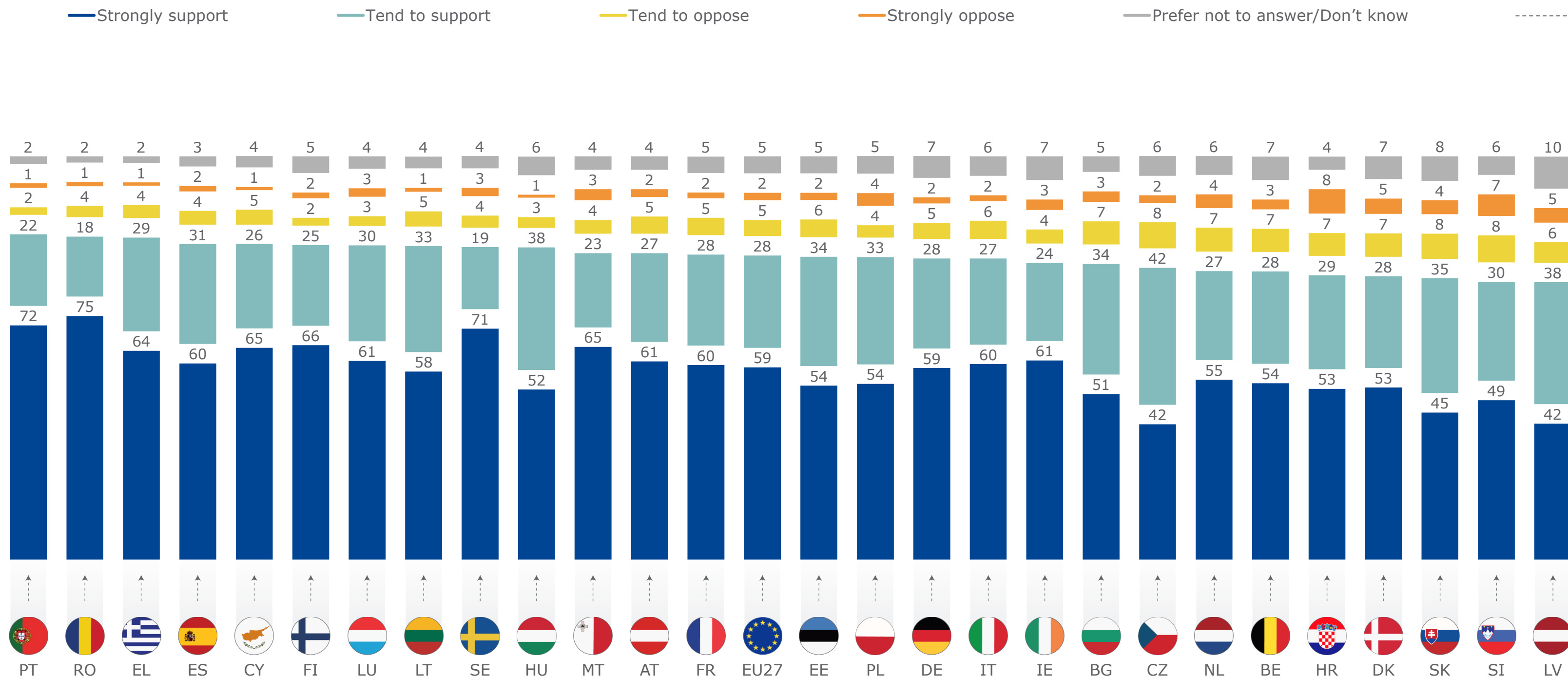
Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for 5% or under

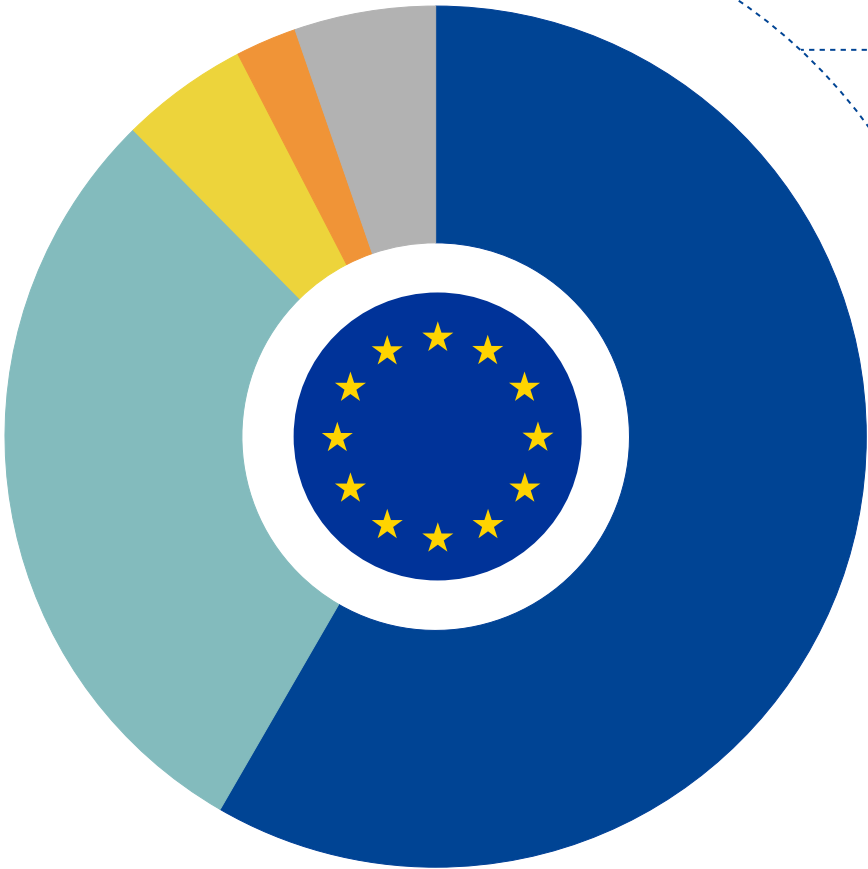
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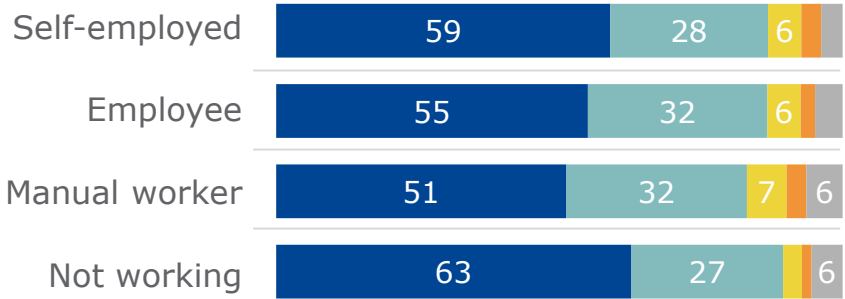
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*Service providers detecting child sexual abuse material and grooming conversations in messages (e.g. e-mail, chat) in case of a significant risk of child sexual abuse on a specific platform*

EU27 average

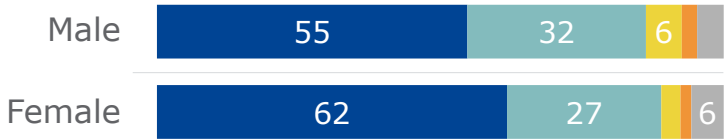


- 58% Strongly support
- 29% Tend to support
- 5% Tend to oppose
- 2% Strongly oppose
- 5% Prefer not to answer/Don't know

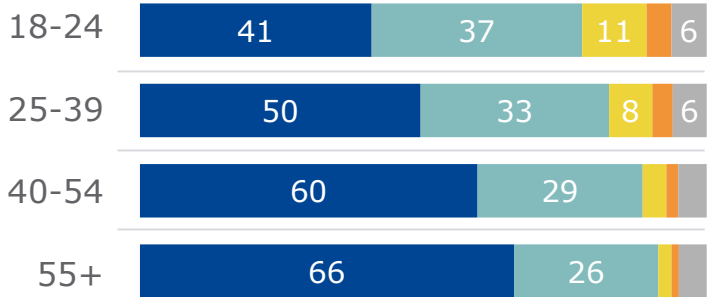
Occupation (%)



Gender (%)



Age (%)



Education (age when completed) (%)

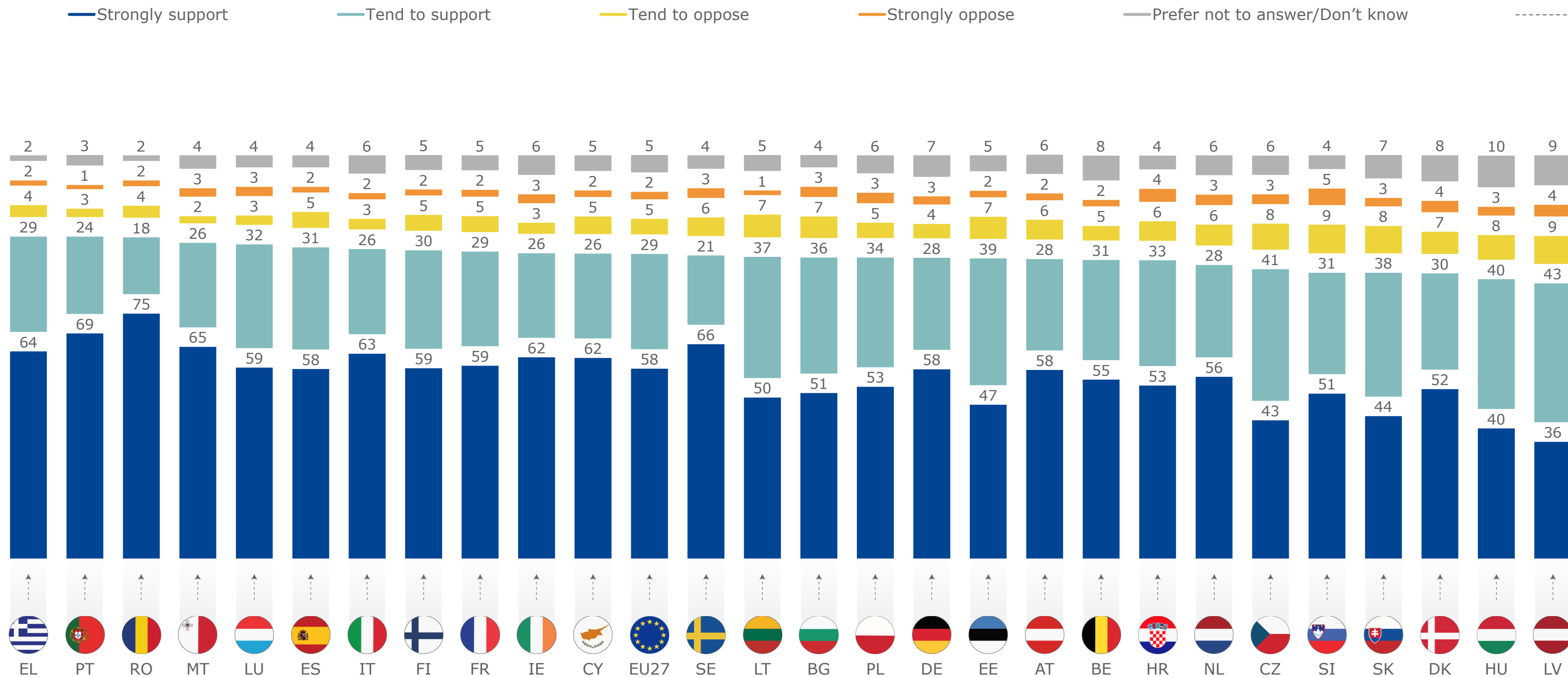


Data labels not shown for 5% or under



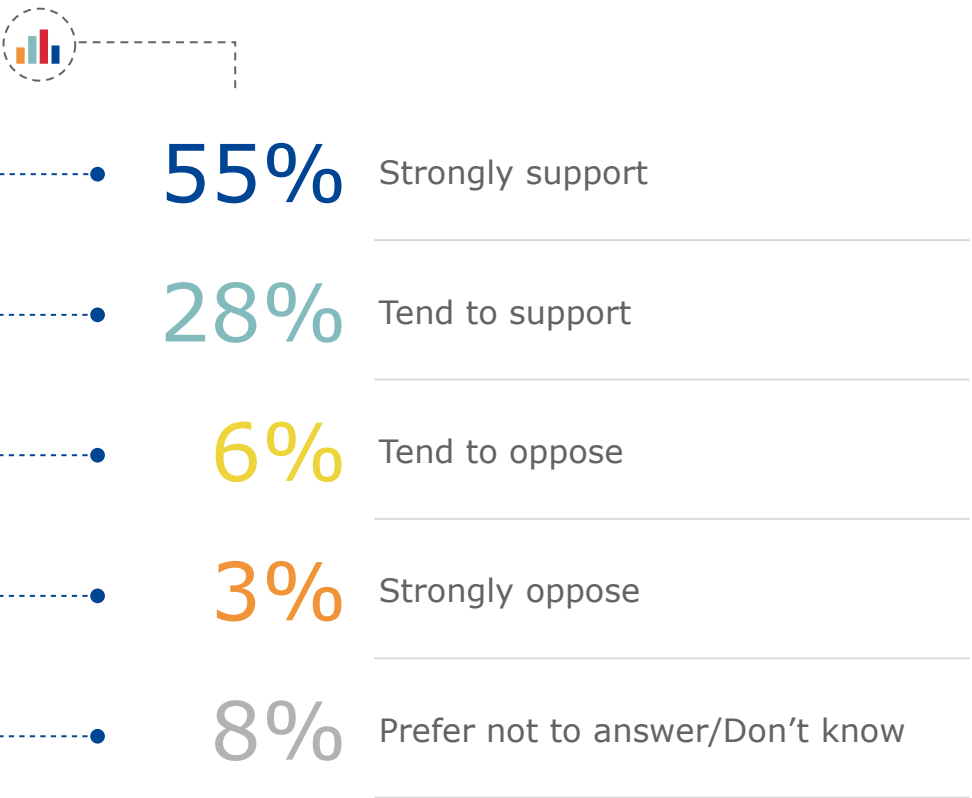
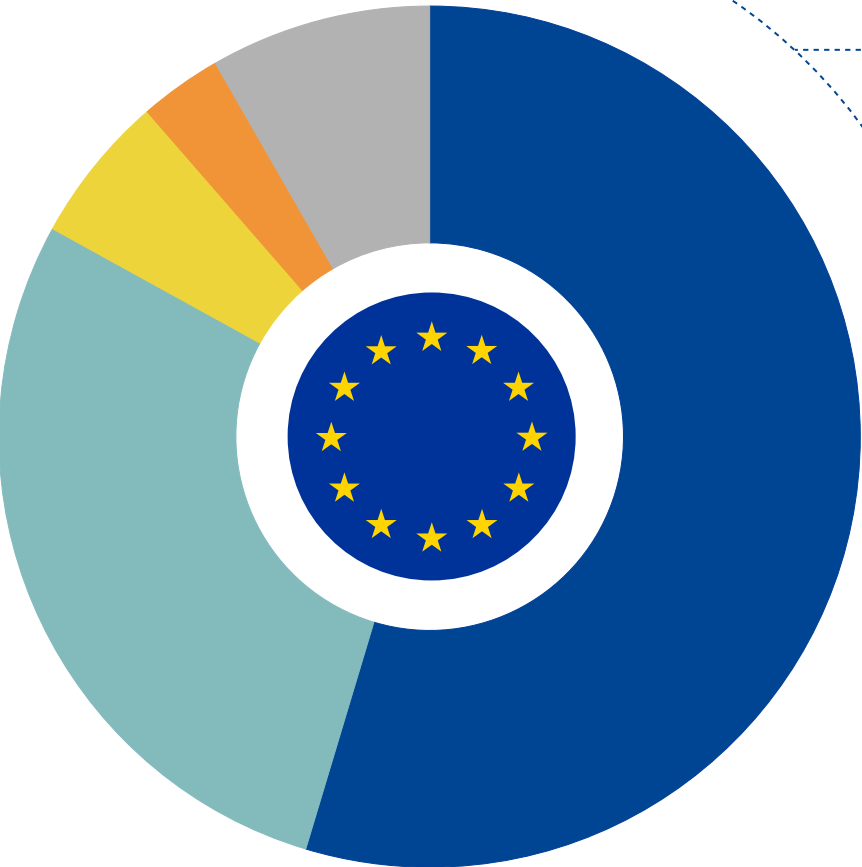
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*Service providers detecting child sexual abuse material and grooming conversations in messages (e.g. e-mail, chat) in case of a significant risk of child sexual abuse on a specific platform*

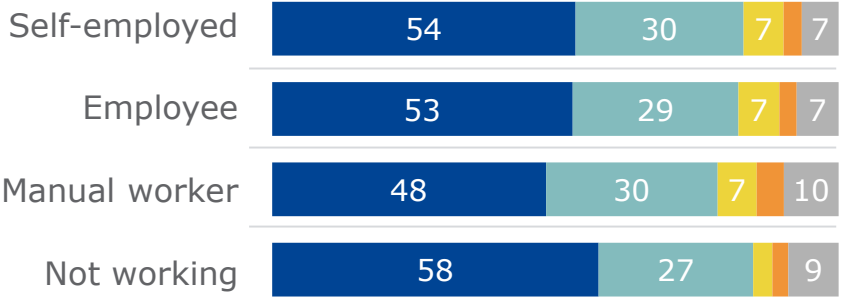


Last year, service providers sent 1.5 million reports of child sexual abuse online stemming from the EU. Over one million of these reports - 70 per cent – came from online messages, email and chat, the rest from other sources, such as social media and gaming platforms. To what extent would you support or oppose the following?  
*Service providers detecting child sexual abuse material and grooming in messages using end-to-end encryption (end-to-end encryption prevents material or conversations from being viewed by anyone other than the sender and recipient) in case of a significant risk of child sexual abuse on a specific platform*

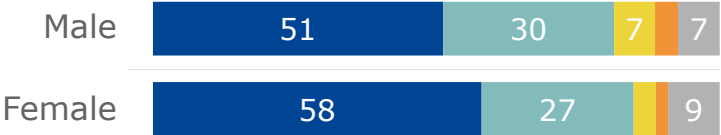
EU27 average



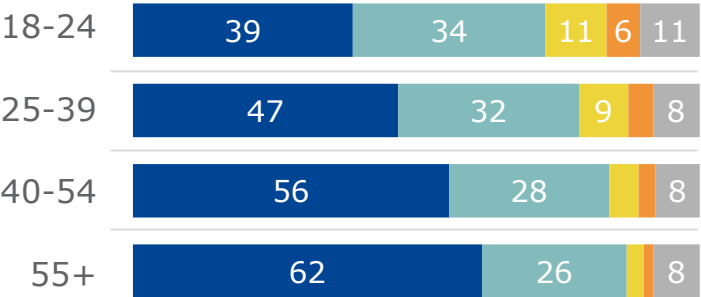
Occupation (%)



Gender (%)



Age (%)



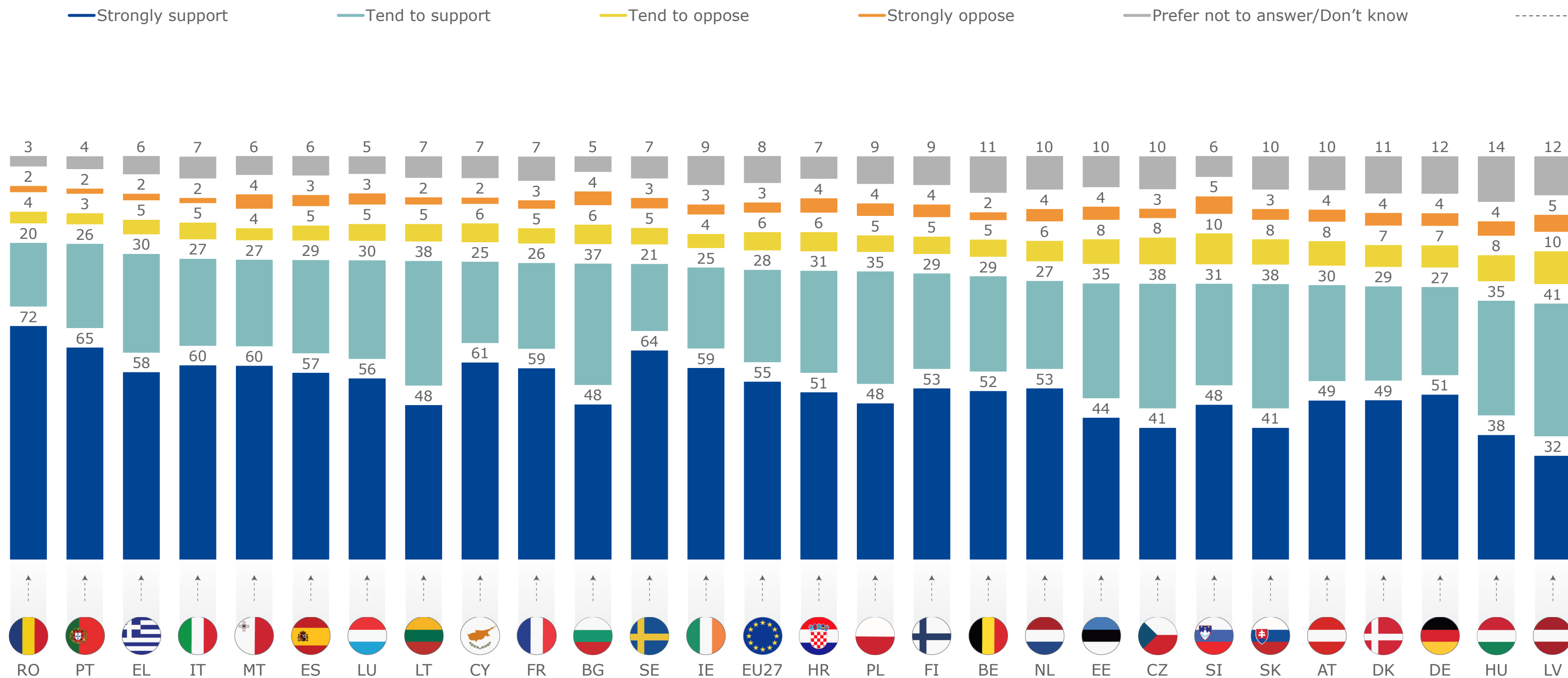
Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for 5% or under

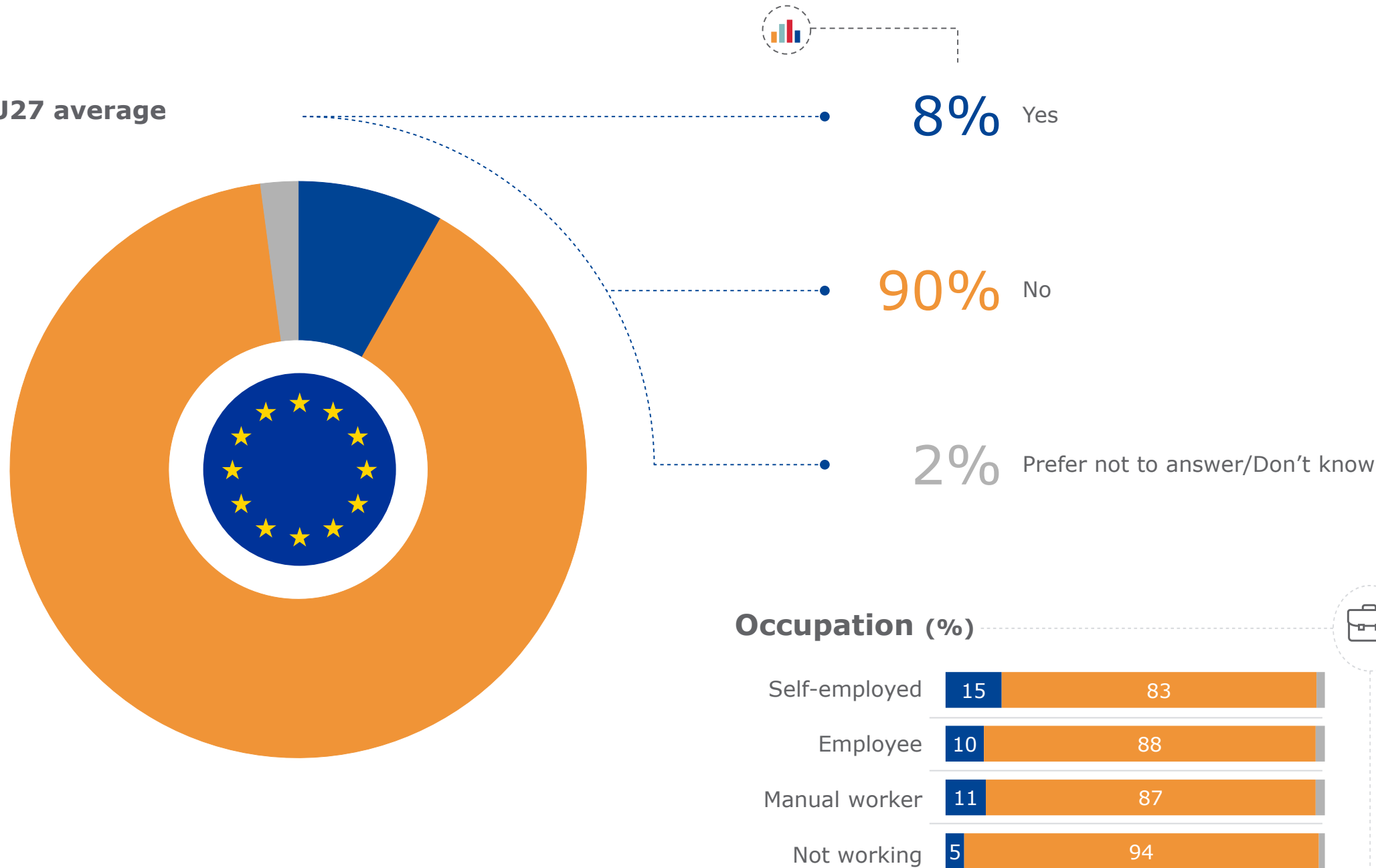
Last year, service providers sent 1.5 million reports of child sexual abuse online stemming from the EU. Over one million of these reports - 70 per cent – came from online messages, email and chat, the rest from other sources, such as social media and gaming platforms. To what extent would you support or oppose the following?

*Service providers detecting child sexual abuse material and grooming in messages using end-to-end encryption (end-to-end encryption prevents material or conversations from being viewed by anyone other than the sender and recipient) in case of a significant risk of child sexual abuse on a specific platform*



Do you know of a child who has been a victim of online child sexual abuse (e.g. having images and videos of their abuse shared online or being groomed)?

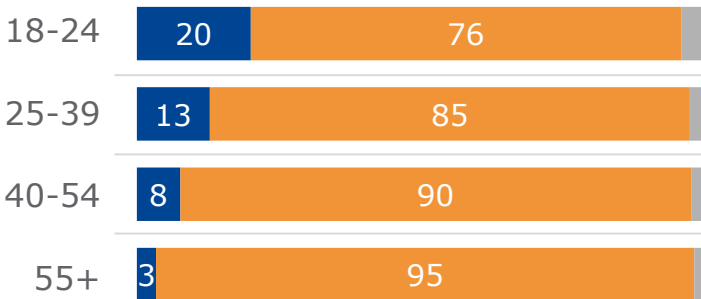
EU27 average



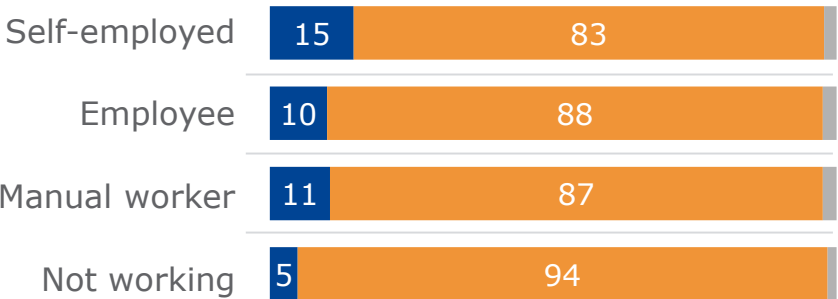
Gender (%)



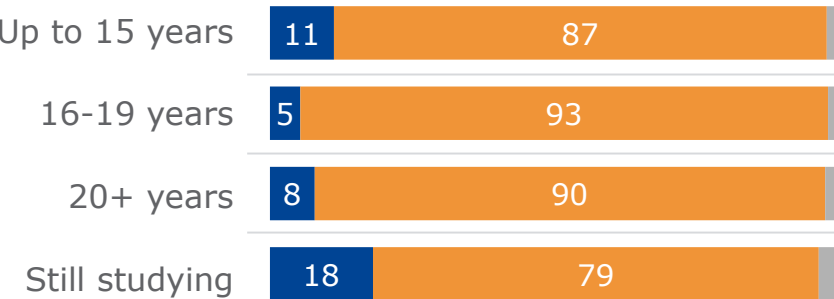
Age (%)



Occupation (%)



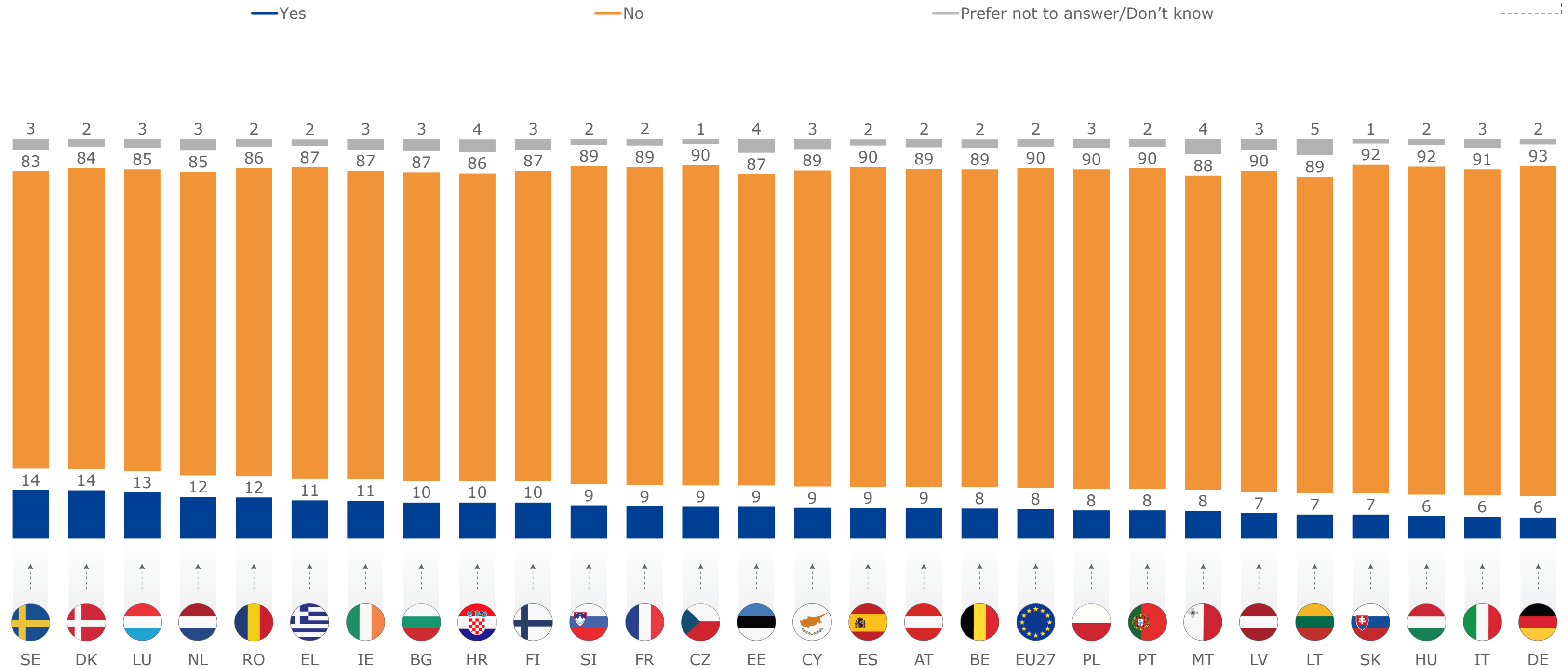
Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for Prefer not to answer/Don't know

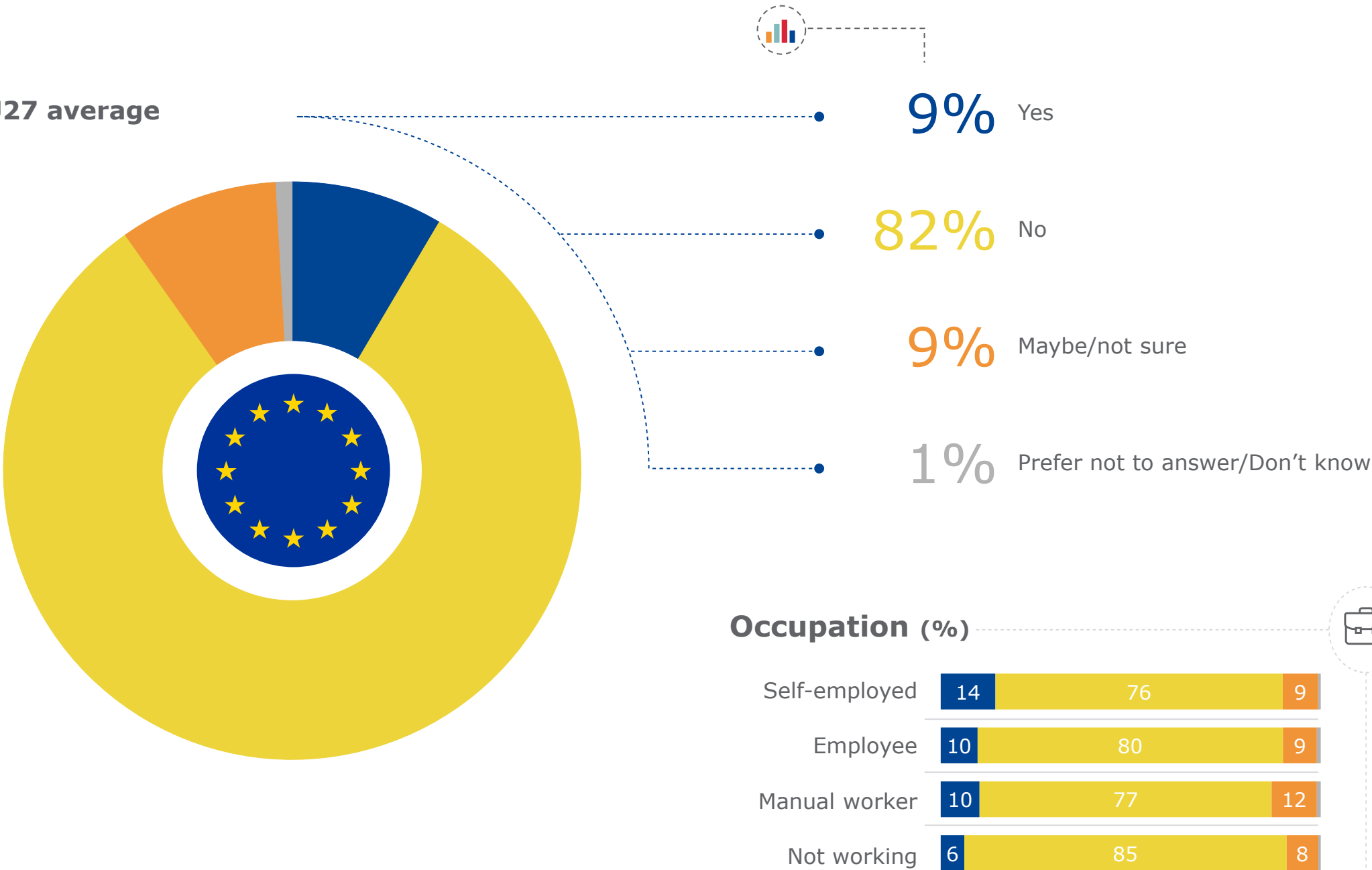
Q10

Do you know of a child who has been a victim of online child sexual abuse (e.g. having images and videos of their abuse shared online or being groomed)?

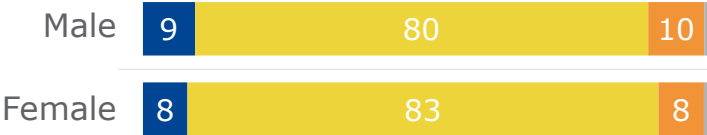


Have you ever come across or been exposed to child sexual abuse material online (e.g. pictures and videos, grooming activities)?

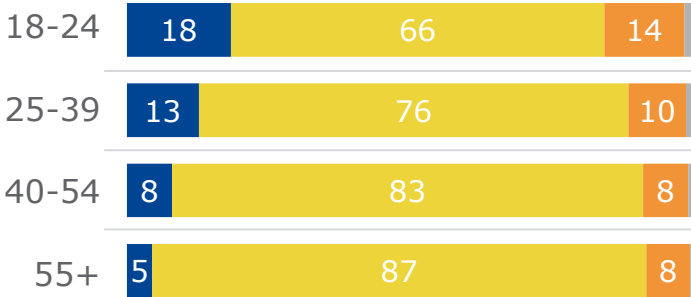
EU27 average



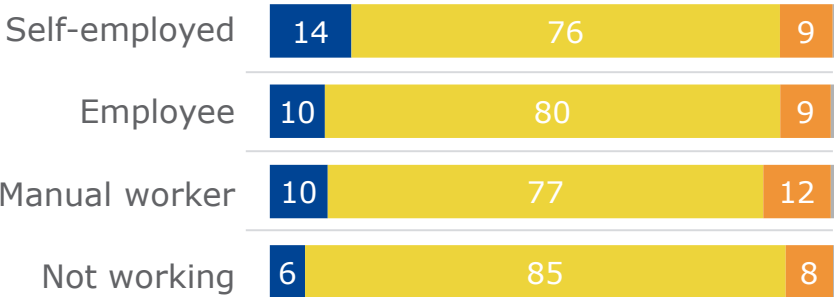
Gender (%)



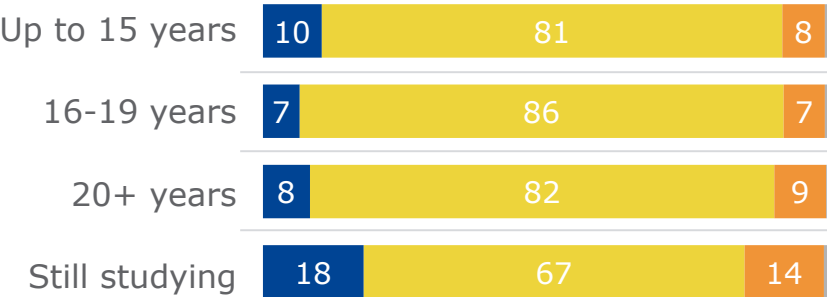
Age (%)



Occupation (%)



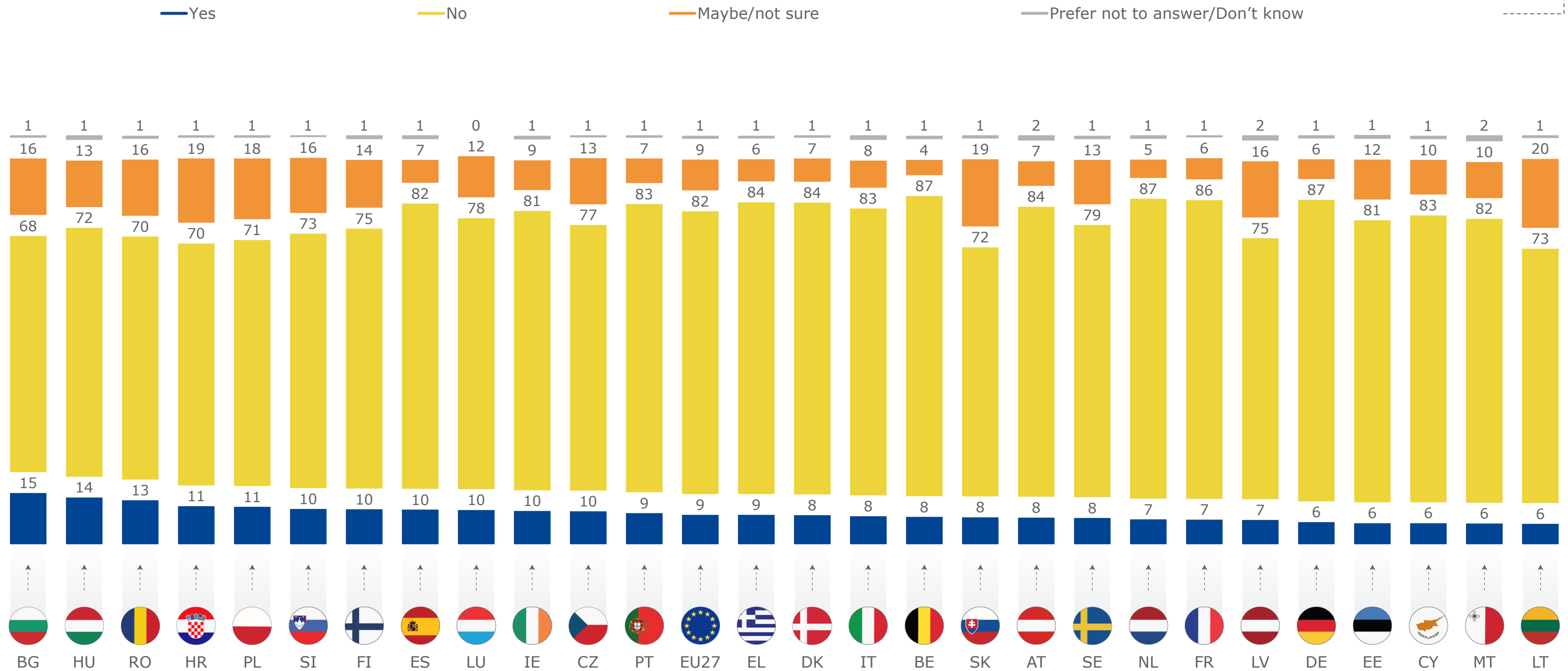
Education (age when completed) (%)



Data labels not shown for Prefer not to answer/Don't know

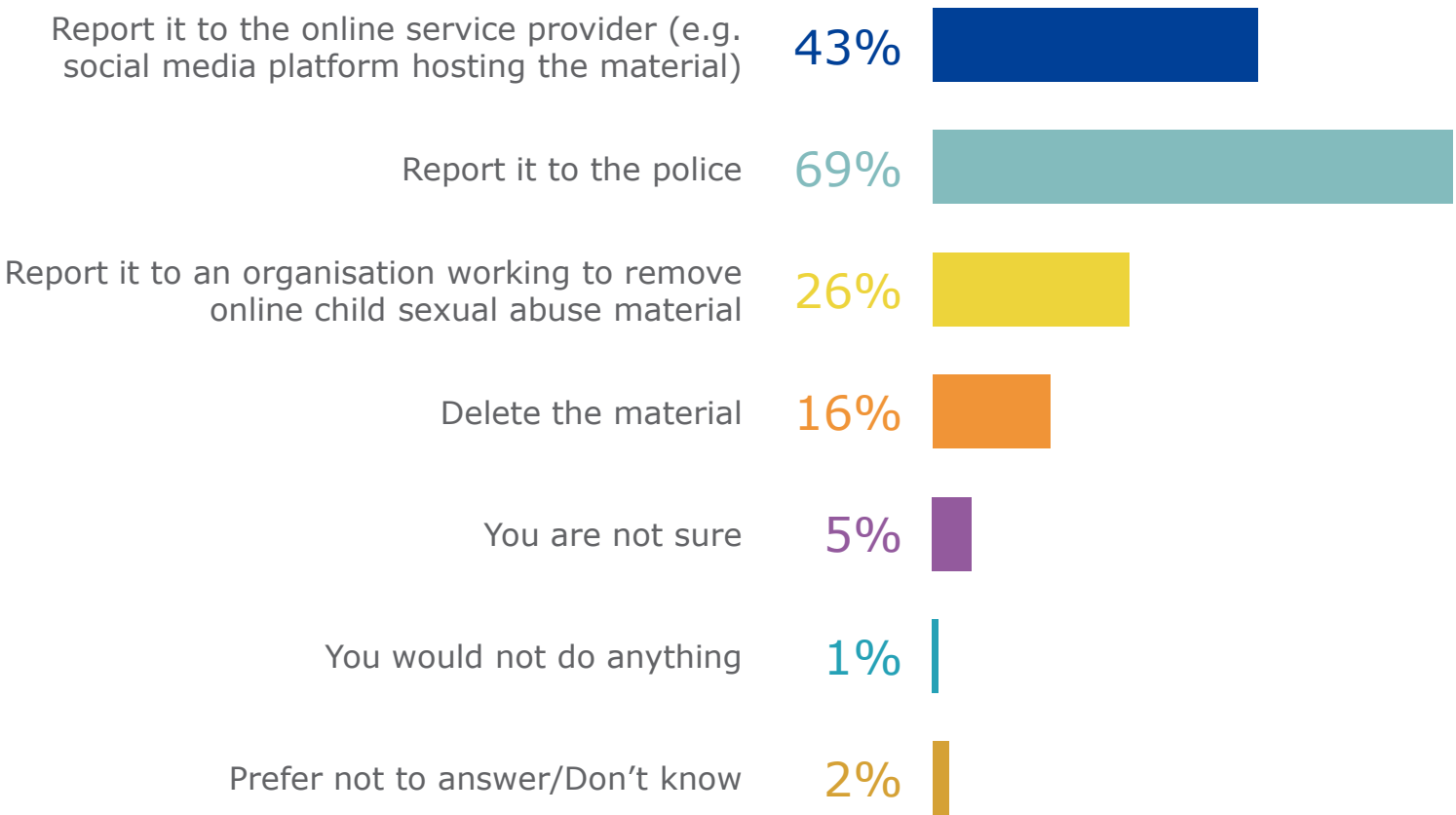
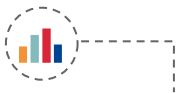
Q11

Have you ever come across or been exposed to child sexual abuse material online (e.g. pictures and videos, grooming activities)?





What would you do if you came across child sexual abuse material online? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS]



Occupation (%)

Self-employed	46	67	31	17	5	1	1
Employee	47	69	28	16	5	1	2
Manual worker	43	67	26	13	8	1	2
Not working	40	71	24	15	5	1	2



Gender (%)

Male	42	66	26	19	6	1	2
Female	45	73	26	13	5	0	2



Age (%)

18-24	57	50	31	26	5	1	2
25-39	52	62	30	16	6	1	2
40-54	45	71	26	14	6	1	2
55+	35	77	24	14	4	1	2































Education (age when completed) (%)

Up to 15 years	36	70	24	16	5	1	1
16-19 years	42	74	27	15	5	1	2
20+ years	44	70	27	15	6	1	2
Still studying	55	51	28	24	5	1	1



Q12

What would you do if you came across child sexual abuse material online? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS]

	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
																												
Report it to the online service provider (e.g. social media platform hosting the material)	43	40	49	34	44	44	31	55	31	35	54	50	38	33	36	35	45	51	45	45	45	37	55	51	41	41	46	43
Report it to the police	69	63	59	59	78	78	68	68	78	75	66	60	67	77	50	60	77	60	66	66	76	65	71	63	64	47	64	71
Report it to an organisation working to remove online child sexual abuse material	26	28	34	17	28	30	31	36	33	17	35	25	18	25	22	31	23	28	28	36	35	21	23	26	32	20	24	26
Delete the material	16	14	12	10	14	16	9	19	10	13	22	12	18	11	10	13	12	9	17	22	18	14	18	9	11	13	13	10
You are not sure	5	9	6	13	5	4	11	6	3	5	4	6	3	5	16	7	4	4	7	7	3	8	3	8	6	11	8	10
You would not do anything	1	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1
Prefer not to answer/Don't know	2	3	2	2	1	2	1	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	2	5	1	5	2	4	1	3	1	1	3	4	2	2

Most-frequently mentioned response