SURVEY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION WITH THE RETAIL DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS

PRODUCT MARKET REPORT

MEAT

BY

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for

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Health & Consumer Protection

Directorate - General

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1. Preliminary note

The objective of this report is to present the main findings of the survey for the market for **Meat**. It details consumers' satisfaction with various aspects of this market.

The first level of analysis aims to describe consumers' feelings about the market and about elements that constitute their retailers' services as well as the problems encountered when purchasing its products.

For each question asked in the questionnaire, a chart presents the results at EU and country level. When relevant, we also highlight the differences by distribution channel and socio-demographic profile of the respondent.

The main indicator used in the analysis (which is widely admitted amongst the research experts' community) is the percentage of satisfied and dissatisfied consumers, based on the scores given on a scale from 1 to 10. "Satisfied" are those who gave a satisfaction score of 8 to 10; "dissatisfied" are those who gave a score of 1 to 4. For the clarity of the analysis, we do not show the 'neutral' consumers (scores 5-7) on the charts or those who could not give an answer to the question ("don't know"). This is why the figures shown in most of the charts do not add up to 100%. If there are particularly large proportions of Don't know answers this is however mentioned in the text.

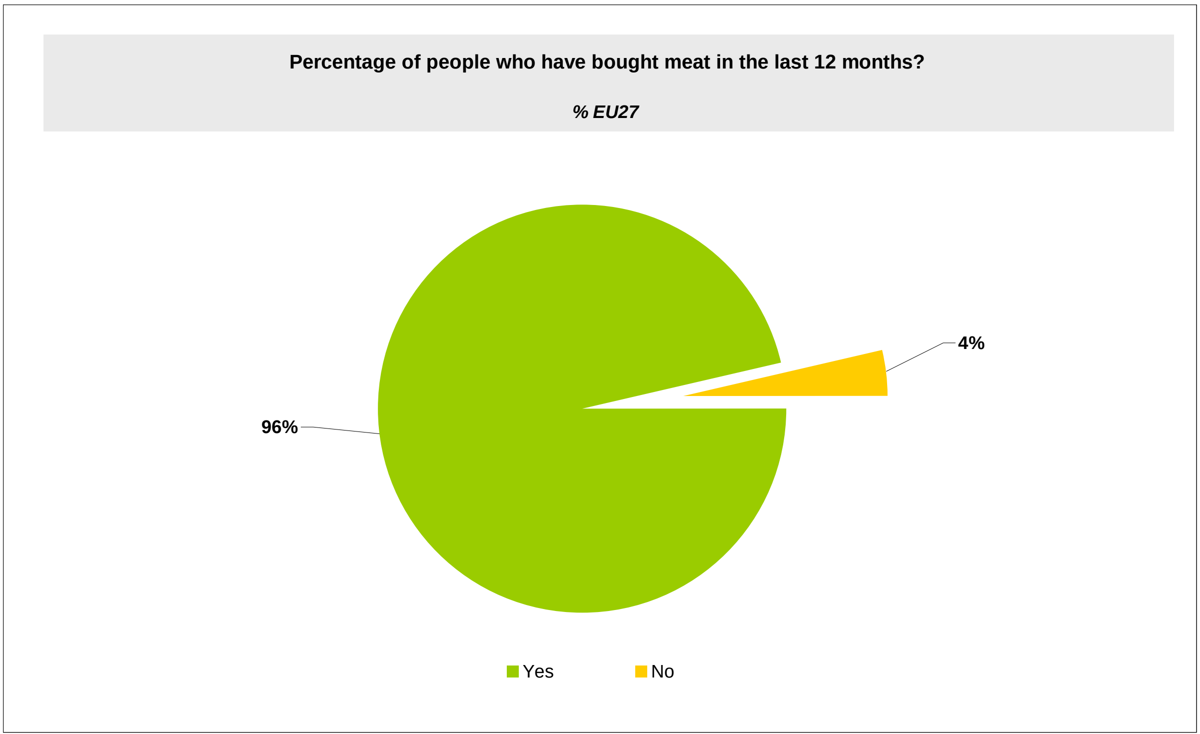
The second level of analysis presented in this report shows the interaction of key satisfaction indicators so as to explain consumers' overall satisfaction.

For more information, the reader will find the overall report, country reports and full results of the survey as well as a methodological note on DG SANCO web site:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/cons_satisfaction_en.htm

2. Product bought by consumers in the last 12 months

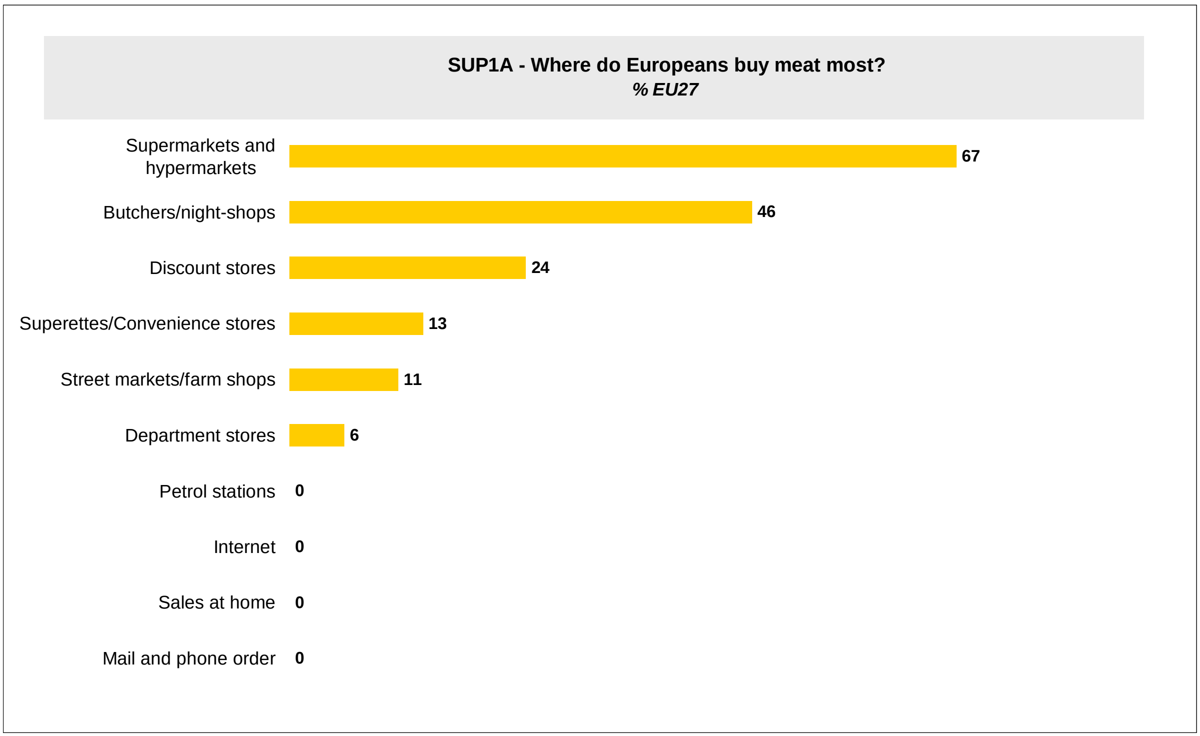
Figure 1 – Product bought by consumers in the last 12 months



96% of consumers in the EU27 have bought meat in the last 12 months.

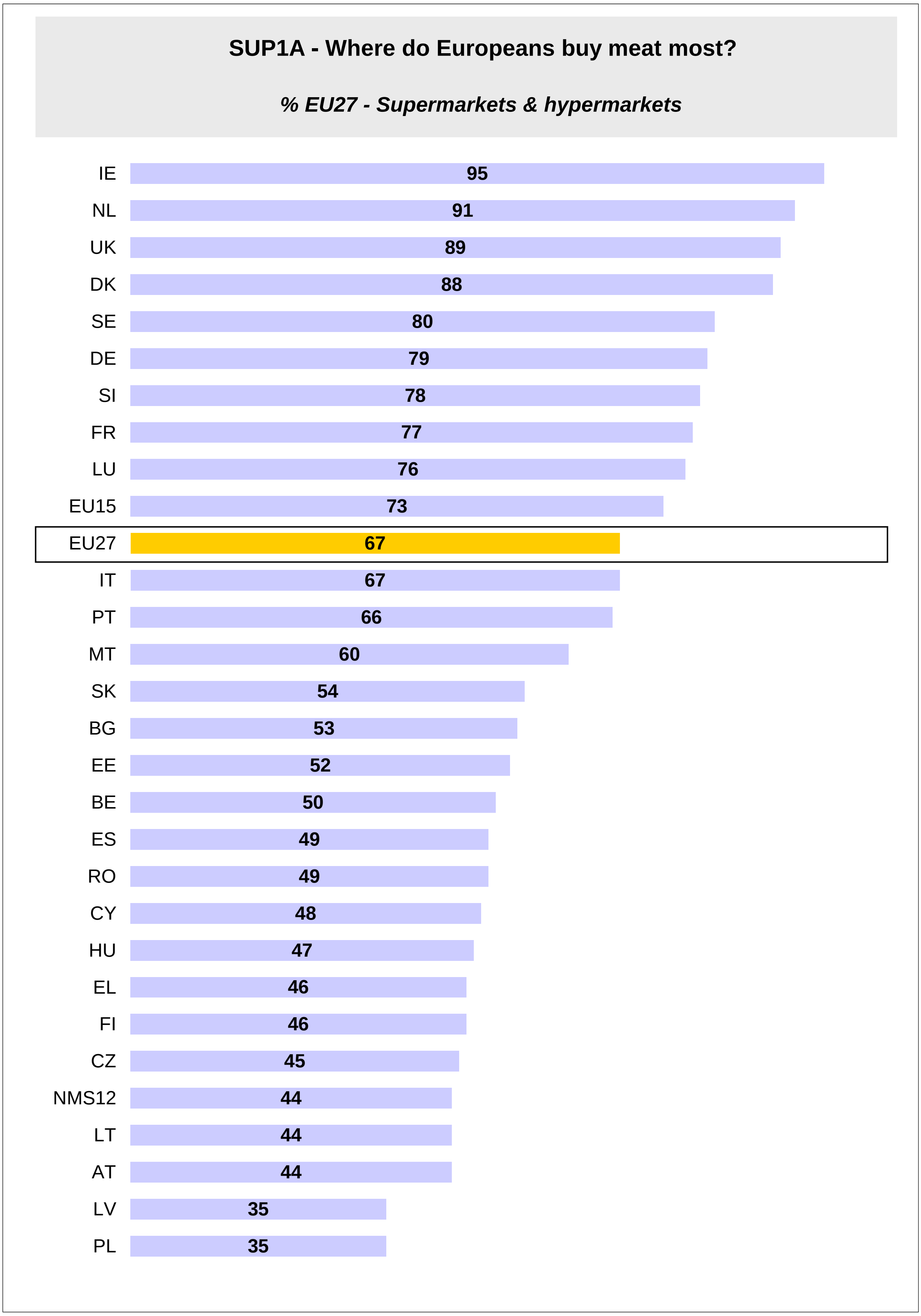
3. Distribution channels used

Figure 2 – Distribution channels mostly used (% EU27)



Respondents were asked to indicate where they have bought meat most (i.e. usual places). They could indicate several answers. From the results it appears that meat is mostly purchased at supermarkets and hypermarkets. Nearly a half of consumers has also bought it in a butcher's or night-shops. A quarter has bought it in discount stores.

Figure 3 – Distribution channels mostly used: Supermarkets & hypermarkets (% by country)



It is in supermarkets and hypermarkets where consumers are most likely to buy meat. This is the case for more than 9 consumers in 10 in Ireland and the Netherlands. They are closely followed by the British (89%), Danes (88%), Swedes (80%), Germans (79%), Slovenes (78%), French people (77%) and people in Luxembourg (76%).

On the other side of the spectrum, we find mostly New Member States: Poland and Latvia (35% each), Austria (44%), Lithuania (44%) and Czech Republic (45%).

In Latvia, people would tend to buy meat in butcher's and night-shops (51%) or in superettes or convenience stores (52%). In addition, more than 9 Greeks consumers in 10 buy meat in butcher's and night-shops (against the EU27 average of 46%). They are closely followed by the consumers from Malta (87% against the EU27 average of 46%).

In Finland (63% against the EU27 average of 13%) and in Slovakia (60%), people would tend to buy meat in superettes or convenience stores.

Discount stores rank third among places where Europeans buy meat. In Denmark, 67% of consumers buy meat in discount stores (against the EU27 average of 24%).

Figure 4 - Distribution channels mostly used: Butchers/night-shops (% by country)

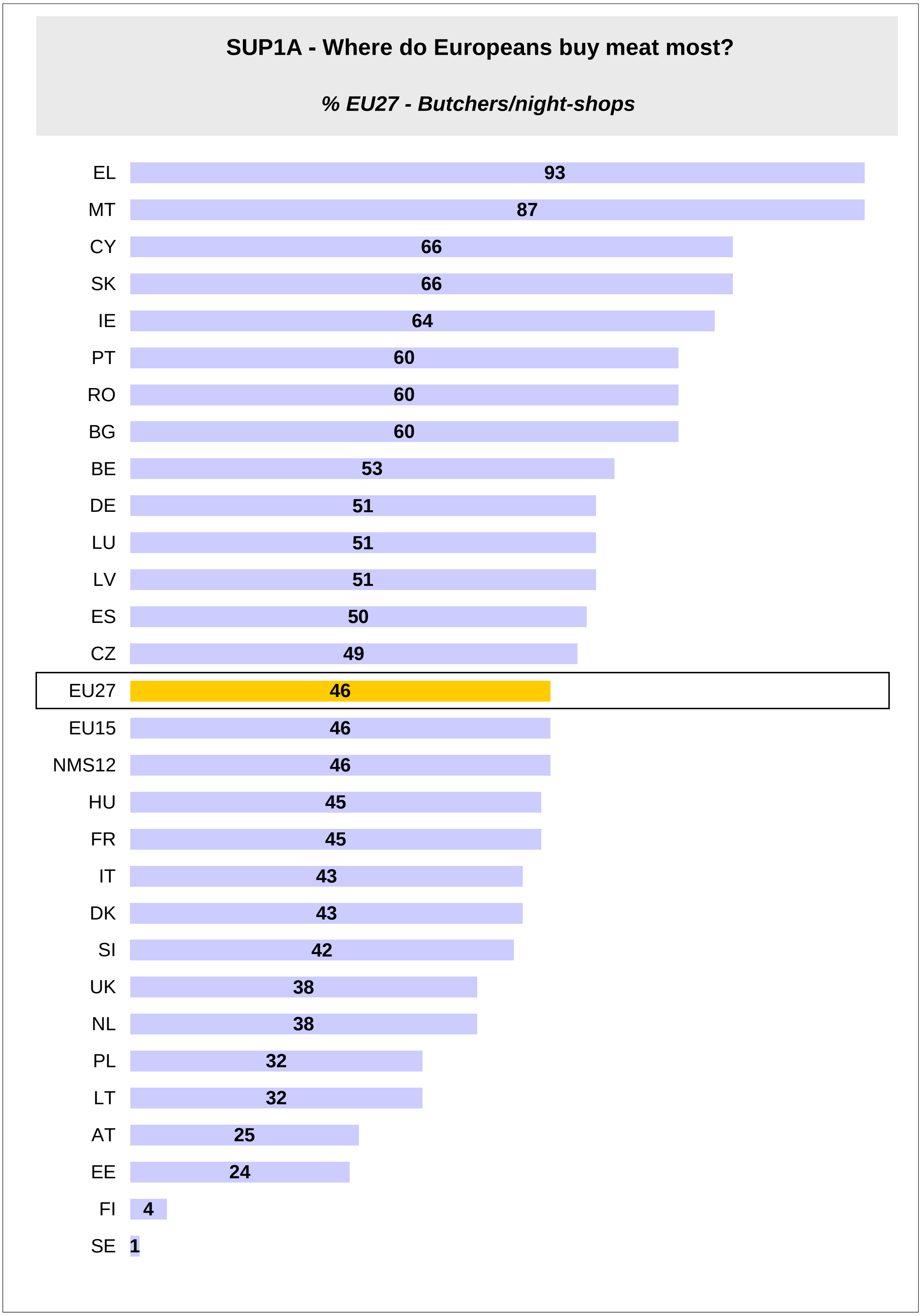
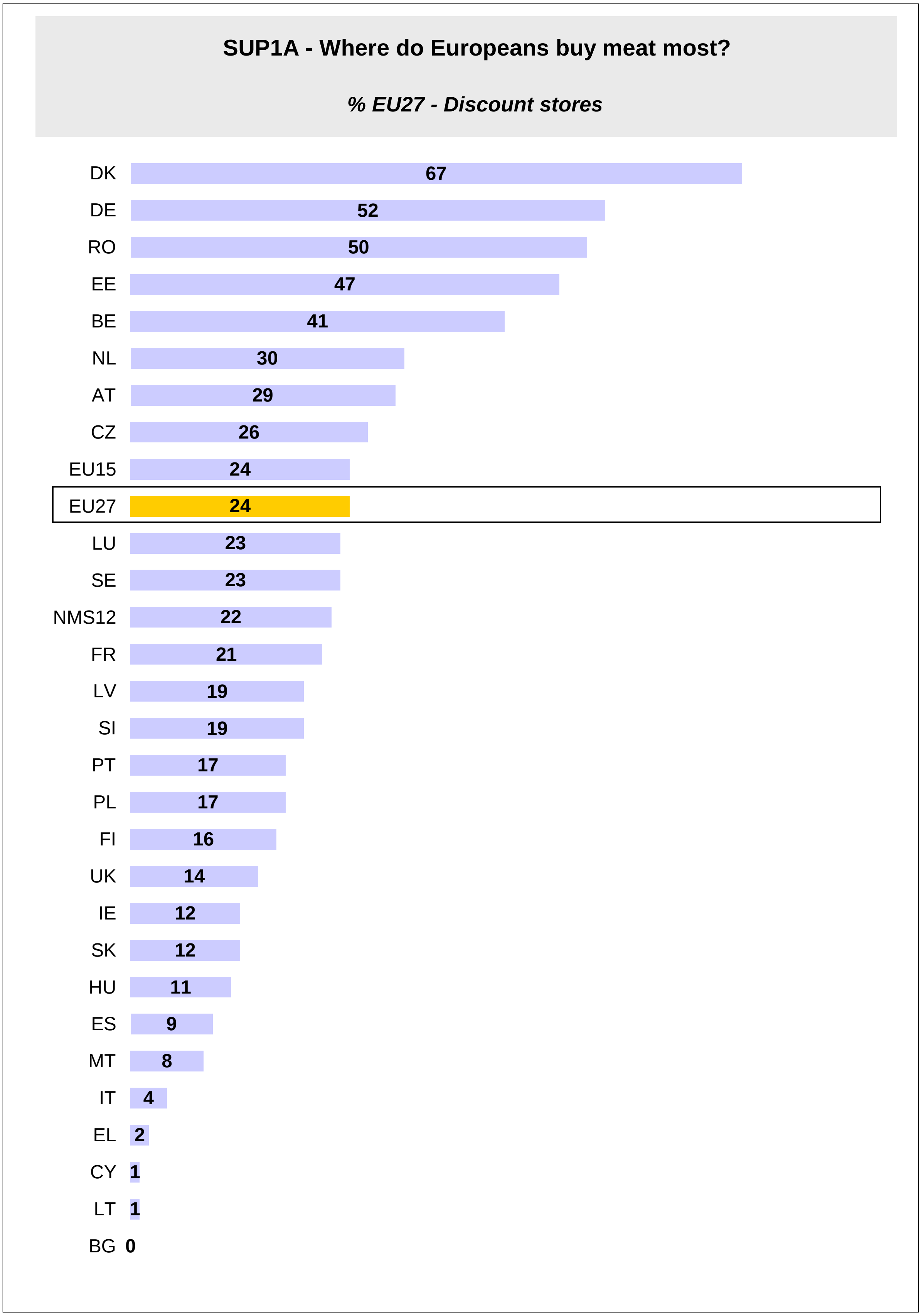
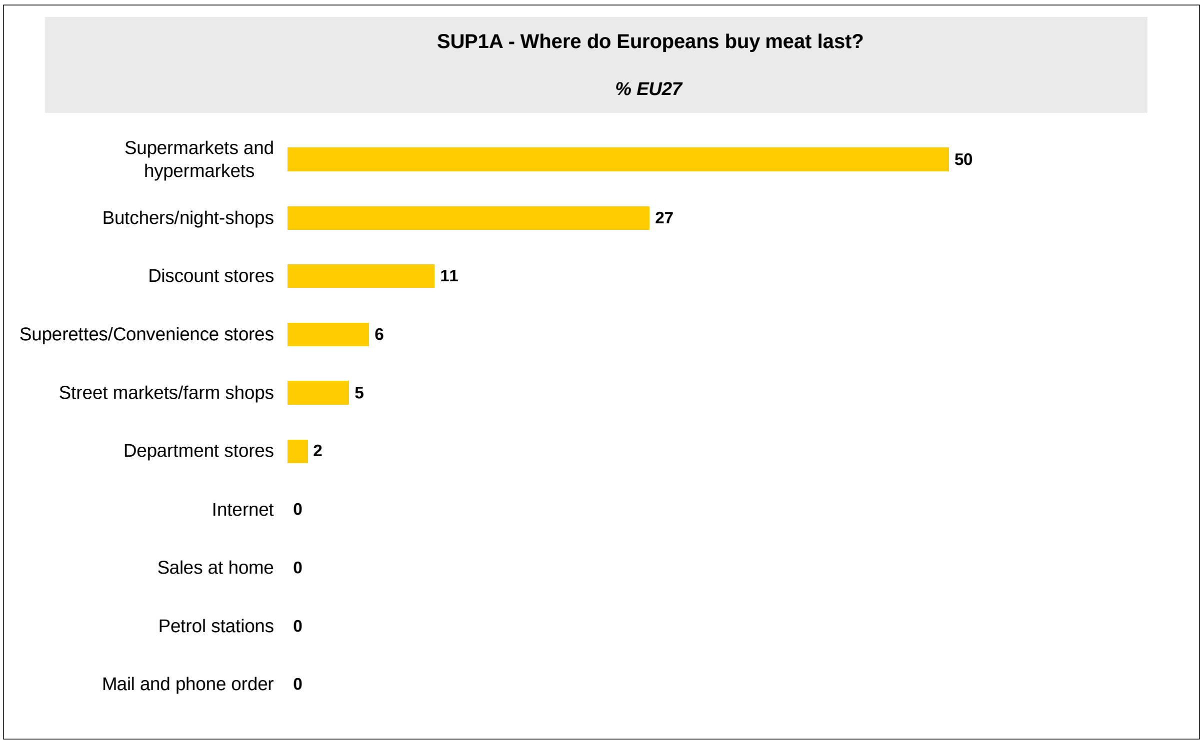


Figure 5 - Distribution channels mostly used: Discount stores (% by country)



Consumers were also asked to indicate the place (i.e. only one answer) where they last bought meat. One in two consumers mentioned supermarkets and hypermarkets, as shown in the following chart.

Figure 6 – Distribution channel used last (% EU27)



Consumers were then asked to evaluate the product market on different dimensions, based on their last purchase experience. Results are shown in the following chapters.

Chapter 2 – Overall satisfaction

1. Overall satisfaction with the retailer

1.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Almost 8 EU consumers in 10 are satisfied with their retailer when it comes to buying meat. Consumers from the New Member States tend to be slightly more satisfied with their retailer than those in the former EU15.

The proportion of consumers who are dissatisfied is marginal, whether in the EU15 or in the NMS12.

1.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

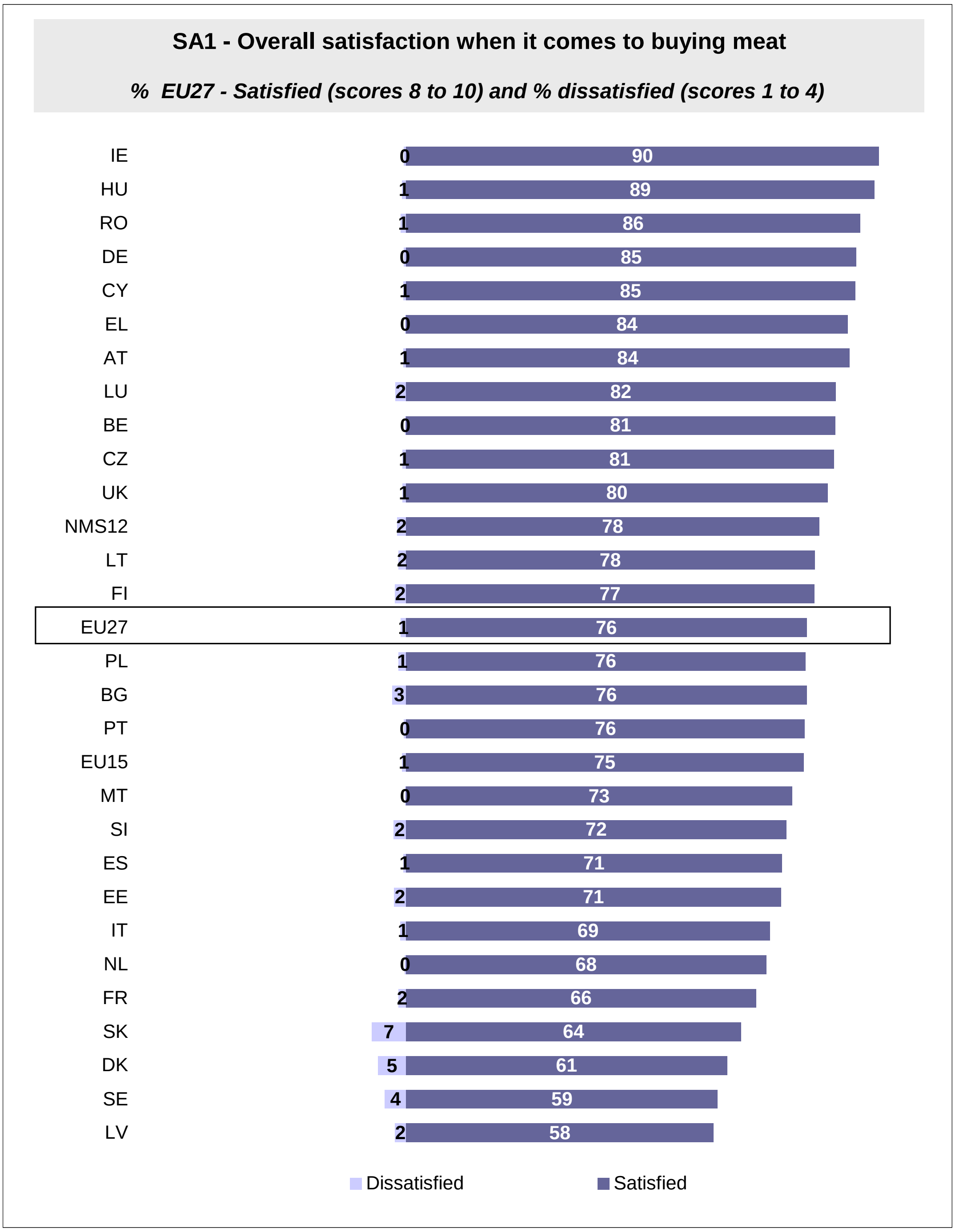
Those who purchase meat in butcher's and night-shops seem to be the most satisfied (84%) with their retailer. Although a majority of consumers (67%) mostly buy these products in super/hypermarkets, they are less satisfied than the average with them (72% against the EU global average satisfaction of 76%).

1.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

The most satisfied with their retailers are the Irish people (90%), Hungarians (89%), Romanians (86%) and Germans (85%) whereas the least satisfied consumers are found in Latvia (58%) and Sweden (59%).

Results are shown in the following chart.

Figure 7 - Overall satisfaction with retailer (% by country)



1.4. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Results broken down by socio-demographic variables do not show significant differences, except for students who seem slightly less satisfied than the others with their retailers.

2. Value for money of products

2.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Overall, EU consumers seem to be satisfied with their retailer's prices/quality when it comes to meat (66% satisfied). Satisfaction is marked among consumers from the new Member States (72% satisfied compared to 64% in EU15). Very few people are dissatisfied whether in the EU15 or in the NMS12 (2% on average).

2.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Consumers who buy meat in discount stores and on street markets/ in farm shops are the most satisfied with the value for money offered by their retailer (71% satisfied against an EU average of 66%). The least satisfied are those who buy these products in department stores (59%). It is noteworthy also that while consumers are most likely to buy meat products in supermarkets and hypermarkets, they are relatively less satisfied with the value of money these retailers offer.

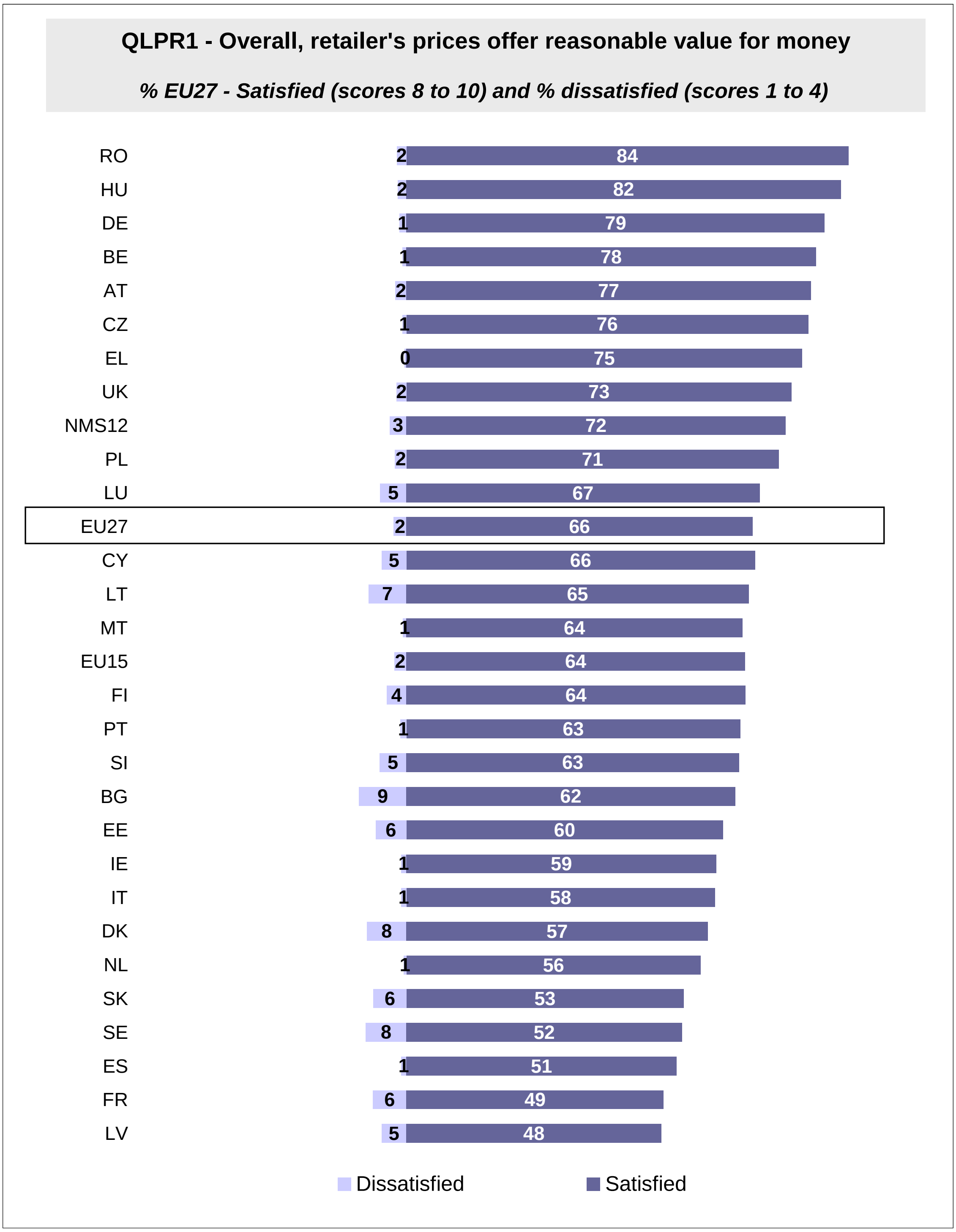
2.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

The following consumers are more satisfied than the average with their retailer's prices/quality when it comes to meat: Romanians (84%), Hungarians (82%), Germans (79%), Belgians (78%), Austrians (77%), Czechs (76%), Greeks (75%), British (73%), Poles (71%) and people from Luxembourg (67%).

In two countries, the proportion of consumers who are satisfied with their retailer's prices/quality is below 50%. This is the case in France (49%) and Latvia (48%).

It is also interesting to note the higher proportion of dissatisfied consumers (compared to the EU27 average of 2%) in Bulgaria (9%), Denmark and Sweden (8% each).

Figure 8 – Overall price and quality (% by country)



2.4. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

There are non significant differences between the socio-demographic categories but it can be noted that satisfaction tends to increase with the age of the consumer.

3. Quality of services

3.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Overall, EU consumers seem to be satisfied with the quality of services offered by their retailer when it comes to meat (74% satisfied). Consumers from the new Member States tend to be more satisfied (77% satisfied) than the others (74% in the EU15). Very few people are dissatisfied whether in the EU15 or in the NMS12 (1% in the EU27).

3.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

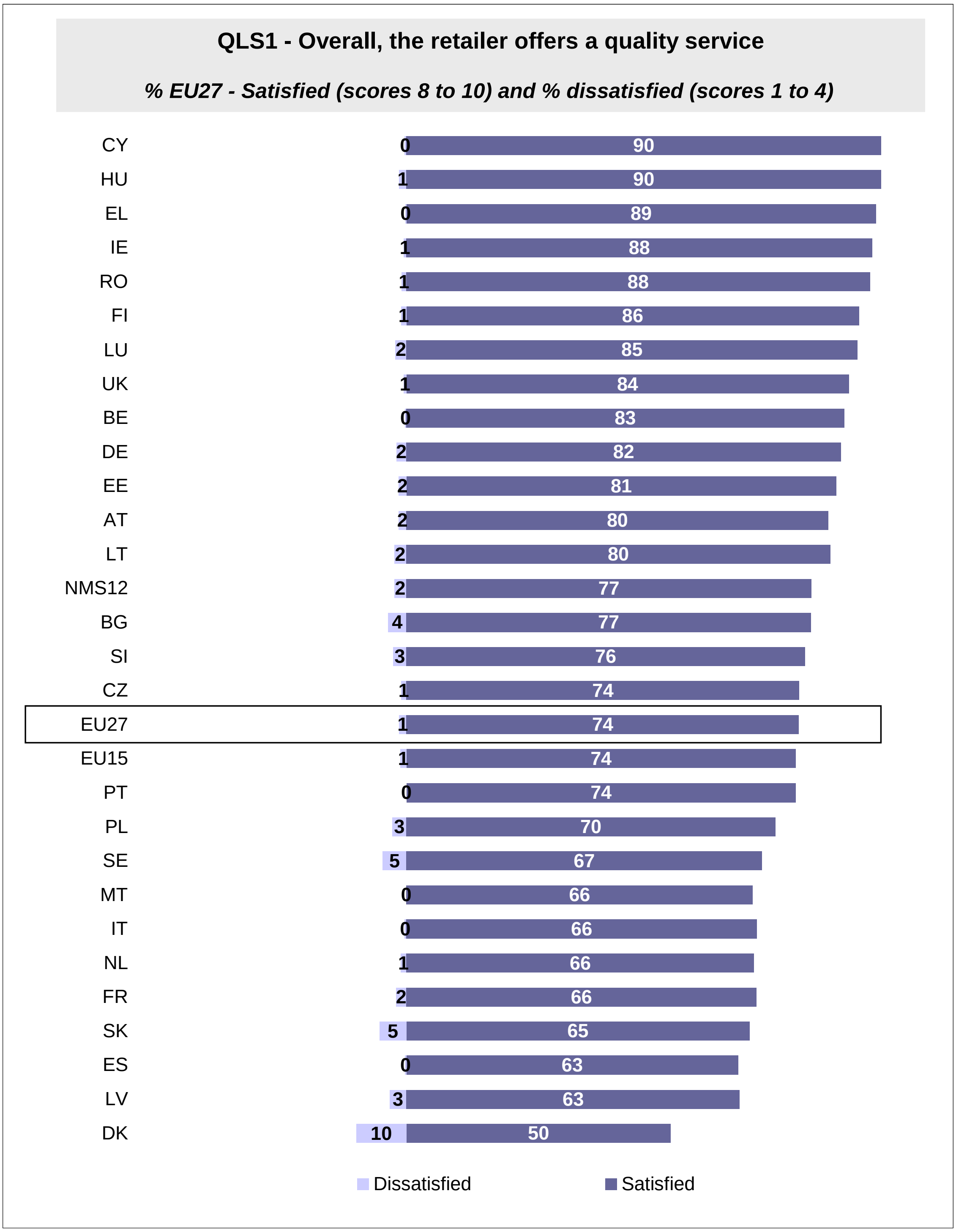
Those who purchase meat in butcher and night-shops seem to be more satisfied (82%) with the quality of services offered by their retailer than those who purchase these products through other channels of distribution, particularly discount stores (66%). 72% are satisfied with the quality of service offered in supermarkets and hypermarkets.

3.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

In most EU Member States, consumers are quite satisfied with the quality of services offered by their retailer, particularly in Cyprus (90%), Hungary (90%), Greece (89%), Ireland (88%), Romania (88%), Finland (86%), Luxembourg (85%), UK (84%), Belgium (83%), Germany (82%), Estonia (81%), Austria and Lithuania (80% each). On the other side of the spectrum we find Denmark where only 50% said they are satisfied with the quality of service offered by their retailer. In this country, 10% of consumers said they are dissatisfied (against an EU average of 1%).

Results are shown in the following chart.

Figure 9 – Overall quality service (% by country)



3.4. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Women tend to be slightly more satisfied than men when it comes to evaluating the quality of services offered by their retailer. In addition, the older the consumer, the more satisfied they are. Students seem to be the least satisfied.

4. Respect of consumer protection rules

4.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Overall, consumers think that their retailer is trustworthy and adheres to the rules set in place to protect consumers (69%). In the New Member States, more than 7 in 10 think so, whereas they are almost 7 in 10 in the EU15.

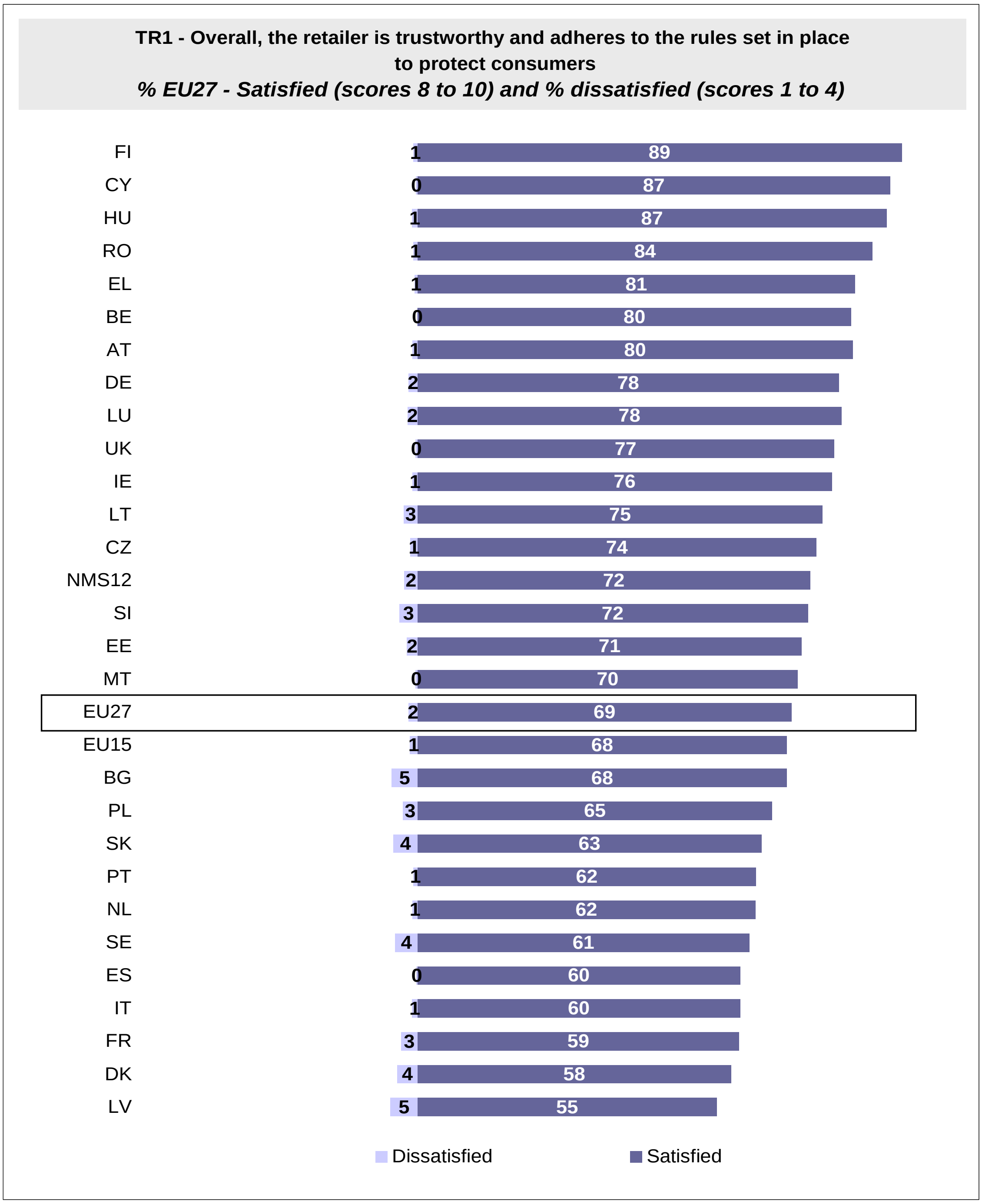
4.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Those who purchase meat in butcher's and night-shops are more inclined than the others to think that their retailer is trustworthy and adheres to the rules set in place to protect consumers (76% against 64% of those who usually buy these products in discount stores and 65% of those who shop in supermarkets and hypermarkets).

4.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

In each country, at least 55% of consumers think that their retailer is trustworthy and adheres to the rules set in place to protect them. In Finland, almost 9 in 10 consumers are of this view. On the other side of the spectrum we find Latvia, Denmark and France with less than 6 consumers in 10.

Figure 10 – Overall trust (% by country)



4.4. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

No big differences are observed when looking at the results broken down by socio-demographic characteristics. As observed previously, the older the consumer is, the more satisfied with the retailer they are. Students seem to be the least satisfied with the way their retailer comply with consumer protection rules.

5. Satisfaction with market

5.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Overall, EU consumers seem to be satisfied with the market for meat (66% satisfied). As already observed, consumers from the new Member States tend to be more satisfied (70% satisfied) than the others (65% in the EU15). Very few people are dissatisfied whether in the EU15 or in the NMS12 (3% on average).

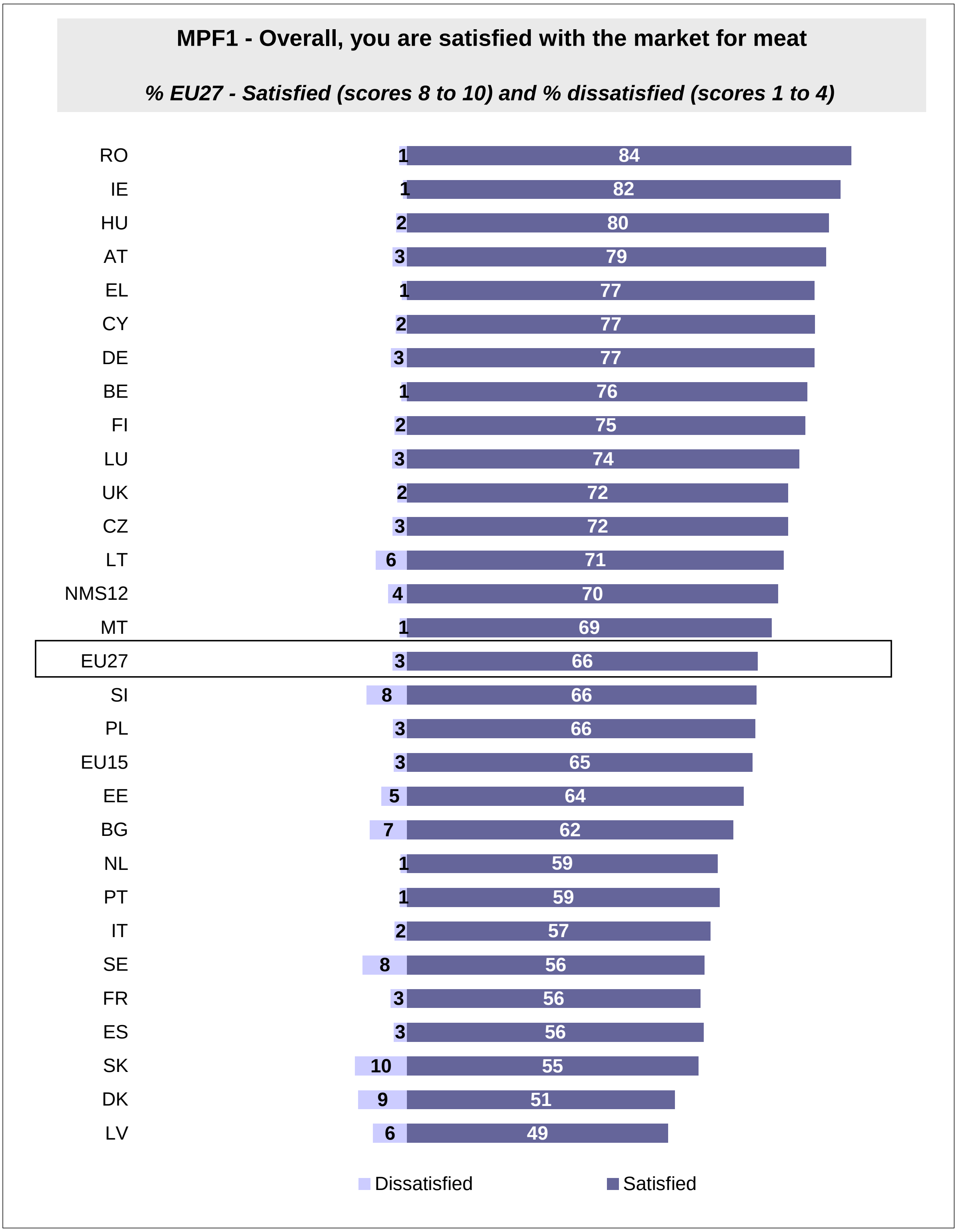
5.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Consumers who generally purchase meat in street markets, in farm shops, in butcher's and night-shops give a more positive evaluation of the market in general (70% satisfied against an EU average of 66%) than those who purchase these products through other distribution channels.

5.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

In most of the EU27 Member States, more than 6 consumers in 10 are satisfied with the market for meat. The most satisfied consumers are found in Romania, Ireland and Hungary, (at least 80% satisfied consumers). They are followed by the Austrians (79%), the Greeks (77%), the Cypriots (77%), the Germans (77%), the Belgians (76%), the Finns (75%), the consumers from Luxembourg (74%), the British (72%), the Czech (72%) and the consumers from Lithuania (71%). On the other hand, Latvia is the only country where less than 50% of people said they were satisfied with the market. In Slovakia and Denmark, the proportion of dissatisfied consumers is higher than the average (10% and 9% against 3% in the EU27) although it is rather low.

Figure 11 – Overall satisfaction with the market (% by country)



5.4. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

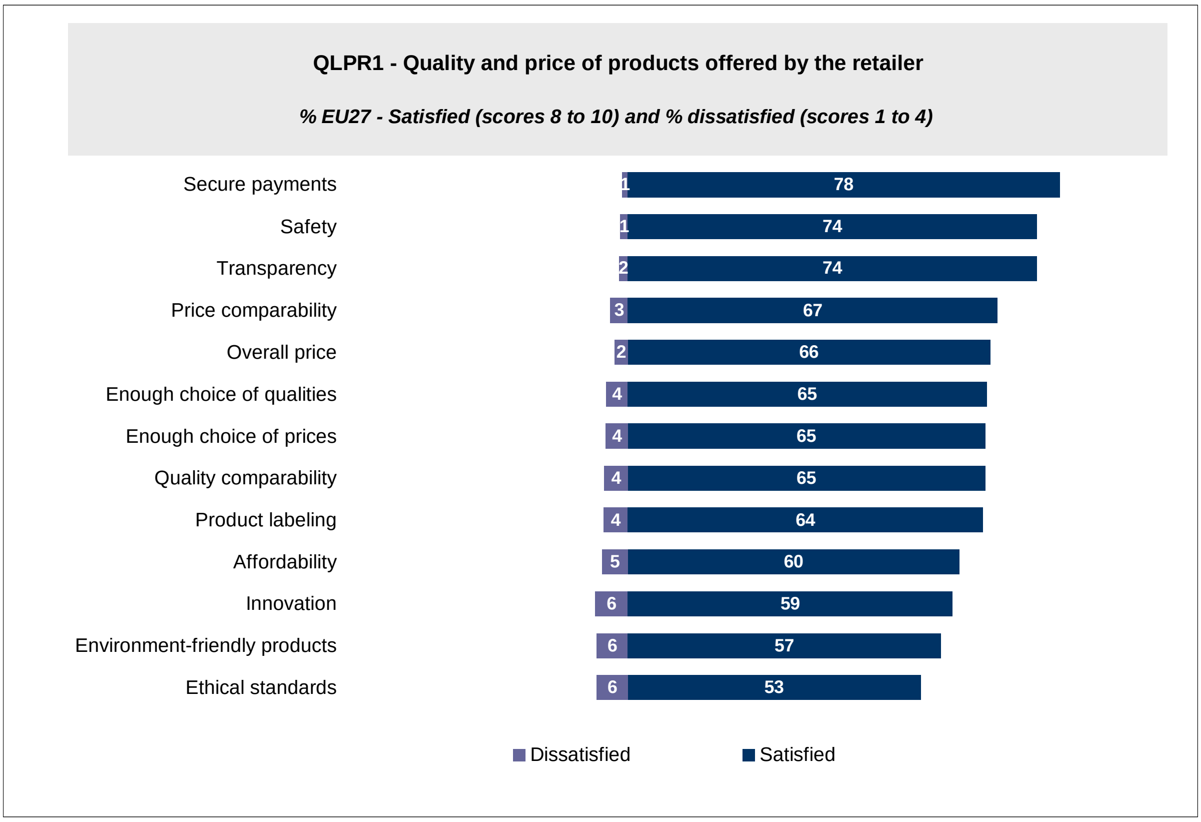
Women tend to be slightly more satisfied than men when it comes to evaluating the market for meat. Satisfaction tends to increase with the age. The least satisfied are to be found among students.

Chapter 3 – Detailed results

1. Quality and price of products

1.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 12 – Overall quality and price of products (% EU27)



Speaking of quality and prices of meat offered by their retailer, more than 7 consumers in 10 said they were particularly satisfied with:

- Modes of payments, i.e. the retailer offers easy and safe ways to pay for their products
- Safety of products
- Price transparency, i.e. prices are clear and accurate so that consumers know exactly what they are going to pay, before they buy the product.

On the other hand, 53% think their retailer offers a wide enough choice of products that have been produced according to specific ethical standards (e.g. "fair trade", animal welfare, etc.).

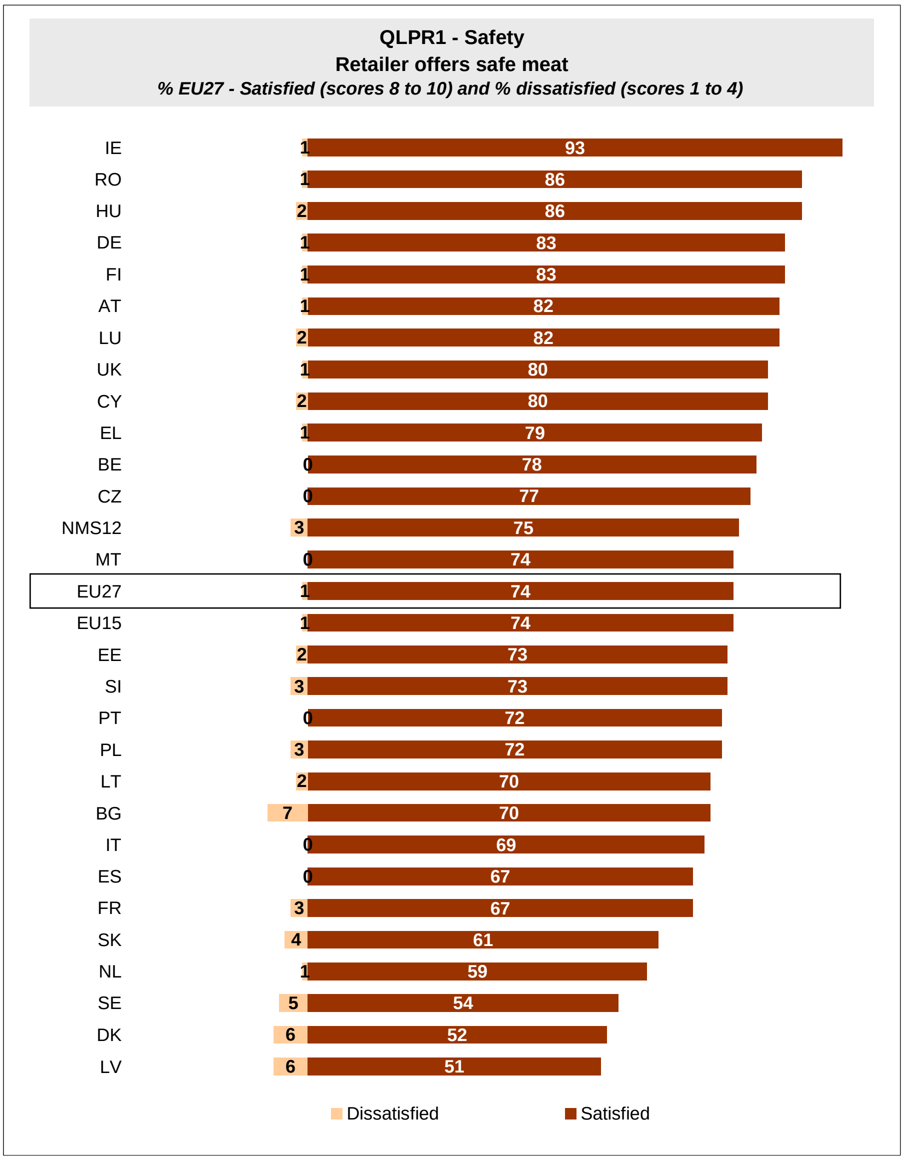
1.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Consumers who usually buy meat in department stores tend to be less satisfied than the others with the value for money offered by their retailers. This observation is also true when looking at consumers' satisfaction with each component of price/quality in discount stores. The only exception is "affordability": consumers think that products sold in discount stores are more affordable than elsewhere.

1.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

A) SAFETY

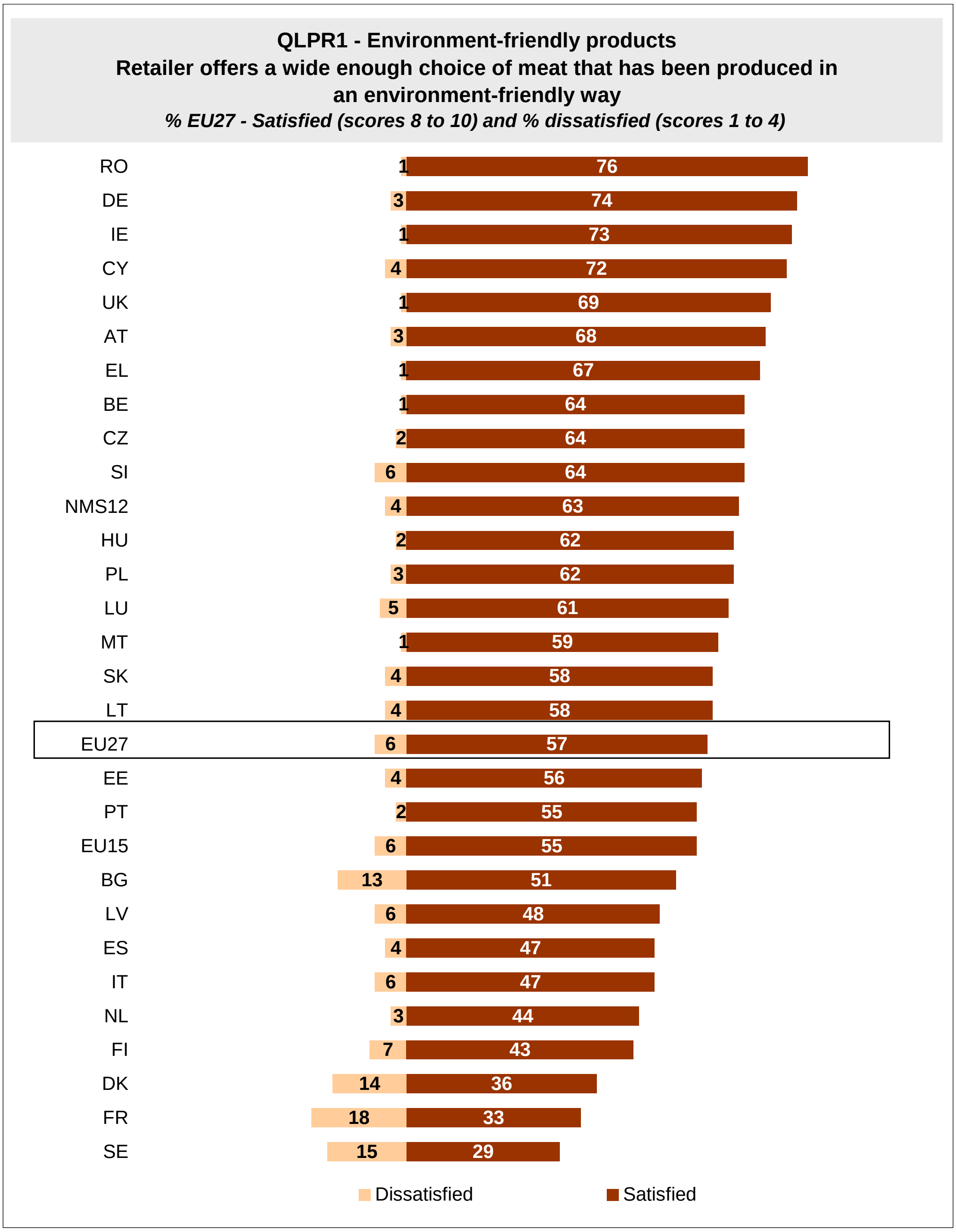
Figure 13 – Overall quality and price of products: Safety (% by country)



On average, more than 7 consumers in 10 believe that the meat offered by their retailer is safe. This is particularly the case in Ireland (93% satisfied consumers). On the other end of the spectrum, just above half of consumers in Latvia, Denmark and Sweden are of this view.

B) ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

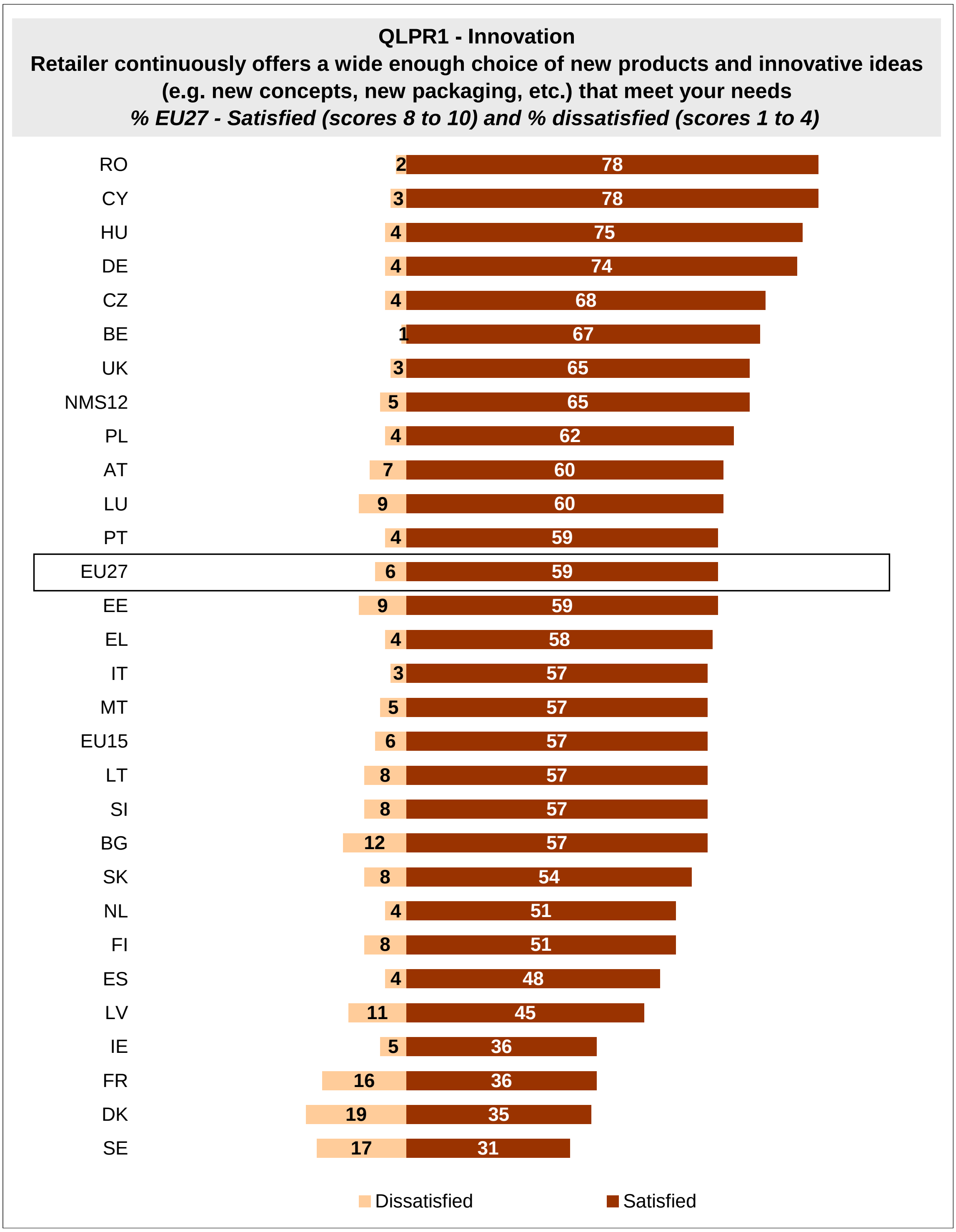
Figure 14 – Overall quality and price of products: Environment-friendly products (% by country)



In Sweden, France, Denmark and Bulgaria consumers are more dissatisfied than the average (6%) with the supply of meat that has been produced in an environmentally friendly way. It is also interesting to note the high proportion of people who could not answer the question in some countries ("don't know"), compared to an EU average of 9%. It is especially the case of Hungary (26%), Denmark (24%), Estonia (24%), Sweden (24%) and Malta (20%).

C) INNOVATION

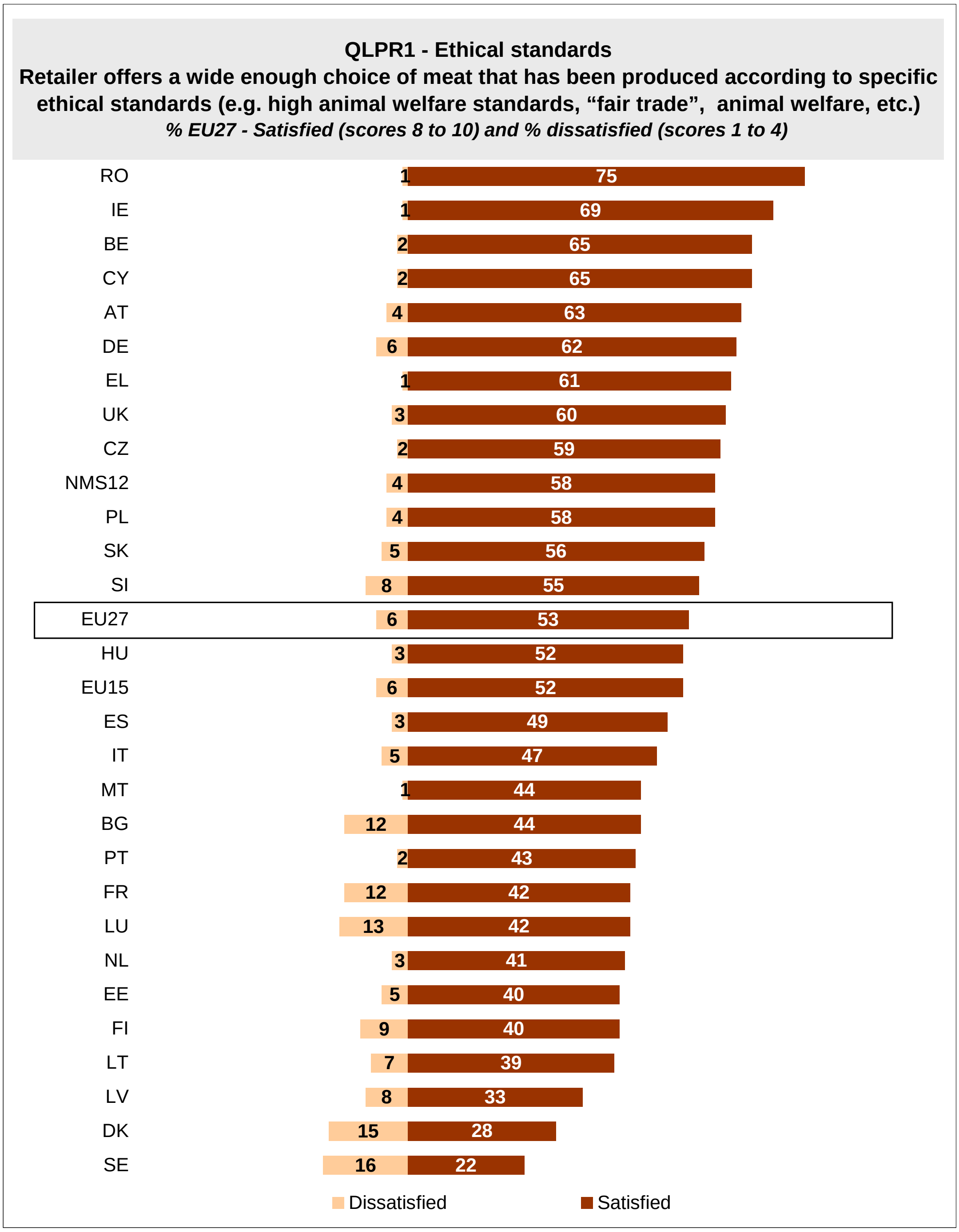
Figure 15 – Overall quality and price of products: Innovation (% by country)



Almost one fifth of consumers in Denmark (against an EU average of 6%) do not think that their retailer offers enough innovative ideas and concepts that meet their needs. To a lesser extent, this is also the case for 17% of Swedes, 16% of consumers in France, 12% of Bulgarians and 11% of Latvians.

D) ETHICAL STANDARDS

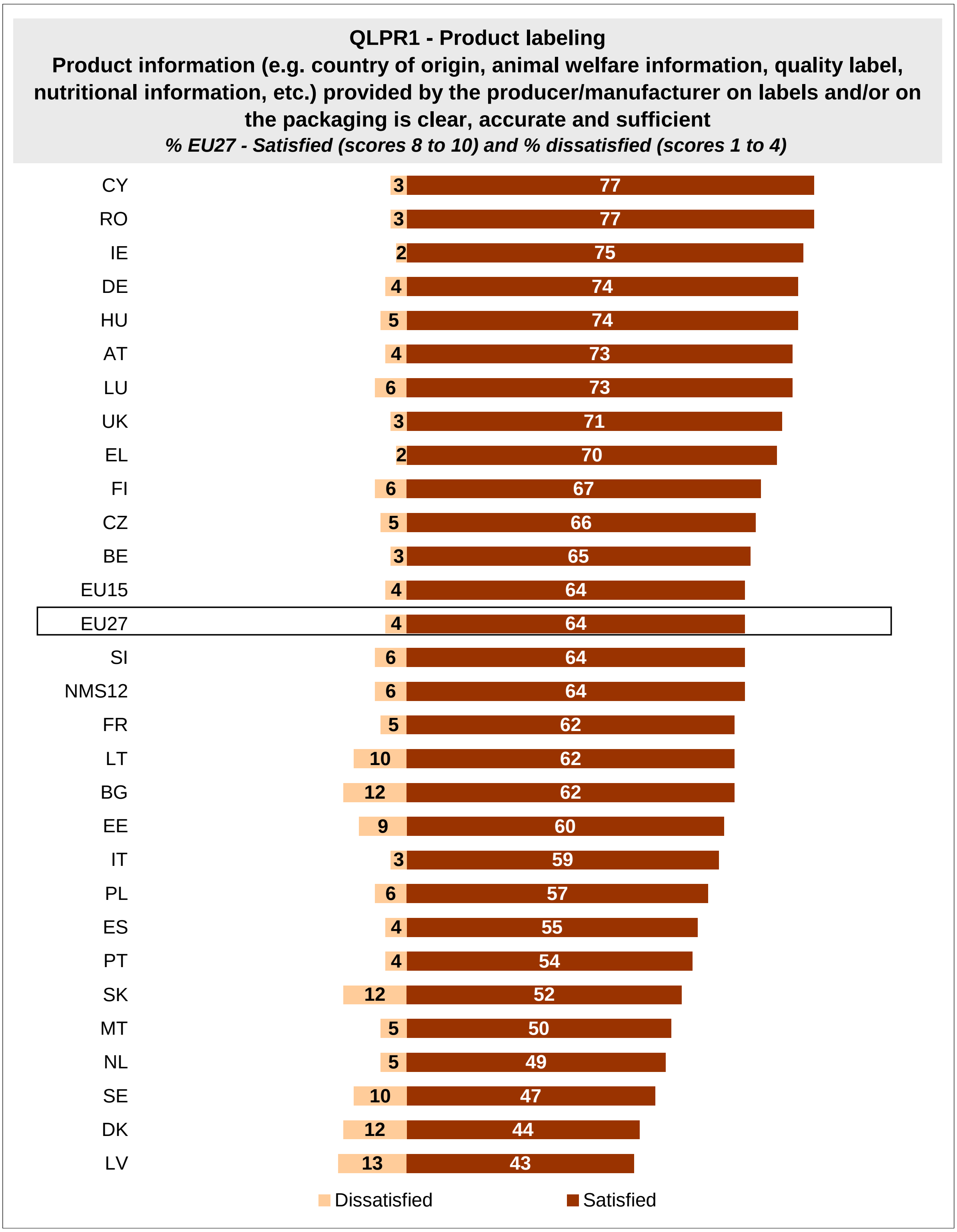
Figure 16 – Overall quality and price of products: Ethical standards (% by country)



Compliance with ethical standards of production is also a source of dissatisfaction for some consumers. This is particularly the case in Sweden (16%), Denmark (15%), Luxembourg (13%), France (12%) and Bulgaria (12%), compared to an EU average of 6%. However, consumers across the EU had difficulties with evaluating their retailer on this criterion. In particular, we find a high proportion of "Don't know" (compared to an EU average of 14%) in Estonia (49%), Denmark (36%), Hungary (36%), Latvia (35%), Malta (33%), Sweden (33%), Lithuania (30%), Luxembourg (30%), Portugal (26%) and the Netherlands (26%).

E) PRODUCT LABELING

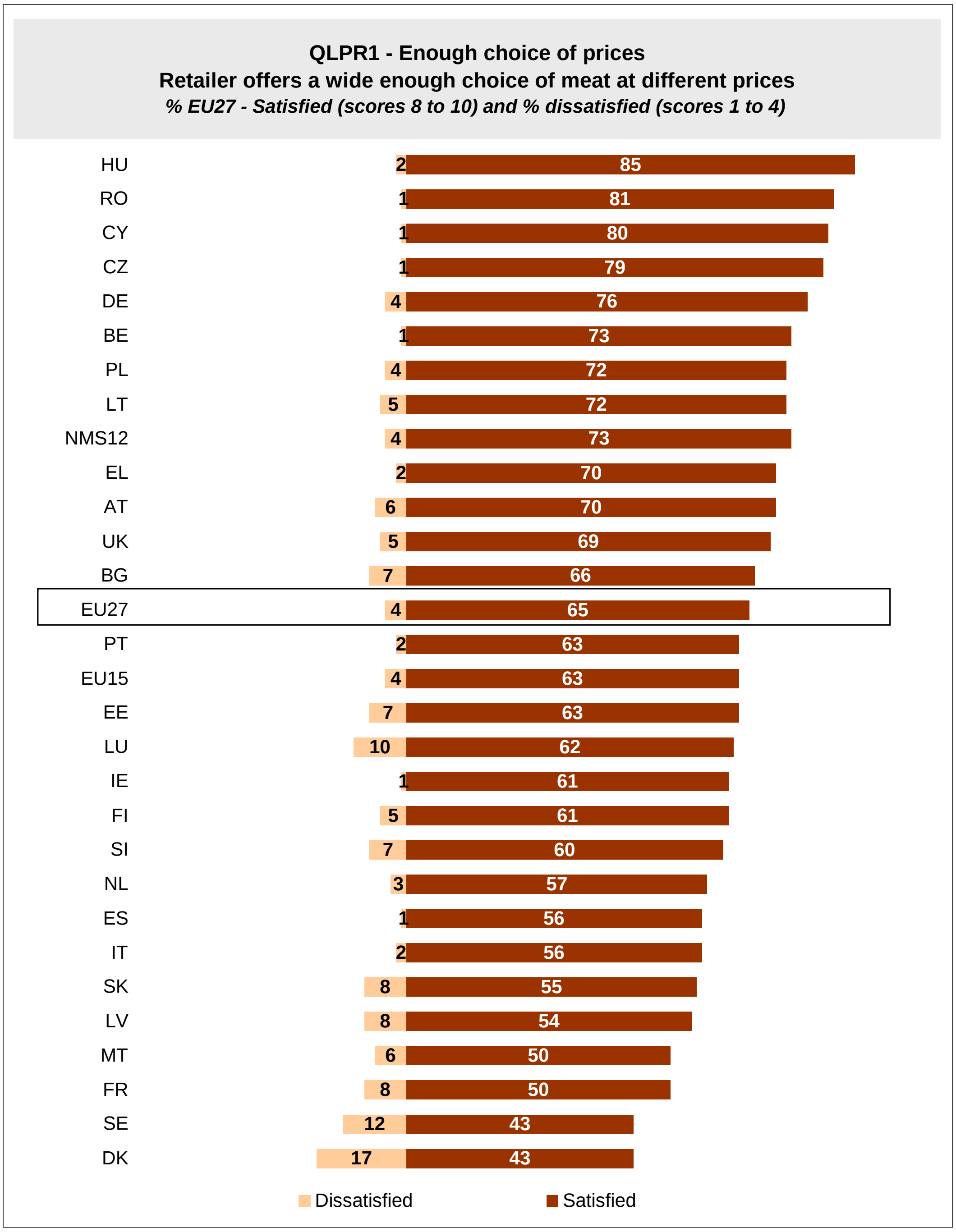
Figure 17 – Overall quality and price of products: Product labeling (% by country)



More than 1 consumer in 10 in Latvia, Denmark, Slovakia and Bulgaria (against an EU average of 4%) is dissatisfied with product labeling at their retailer. However, this is not a problem for around 3 consumers in 4 in Cyprus, Romania and Ireland.

F) ENOUGH CHOICE OF PRICES

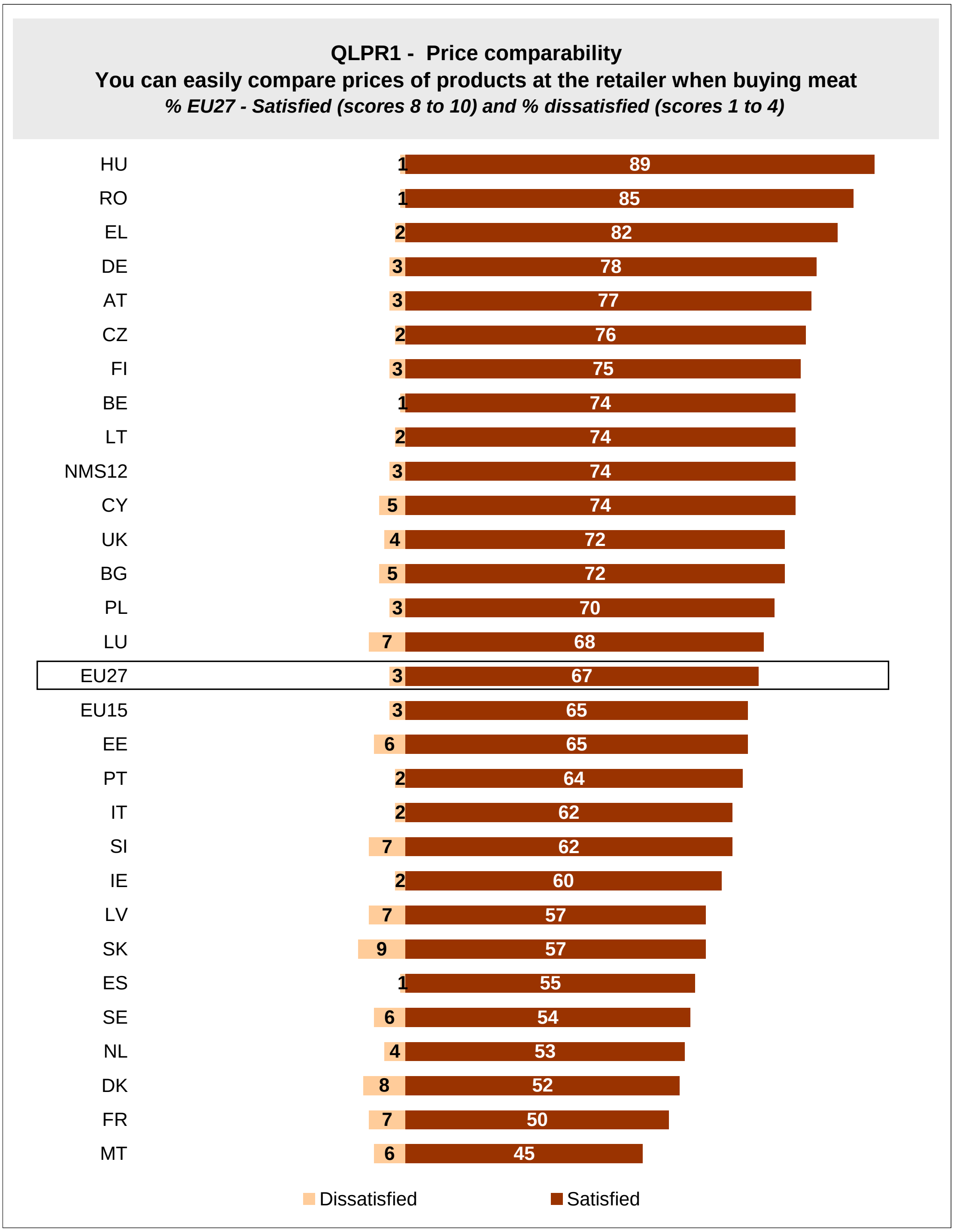
Figure 18 – Overall quality and price of products: enough choice of prices (% by country)



More than 8 consumers in 10 in Hungary and Romania (against an EU average of 65%) are satisfied with the choice of prices offered by their retailer. This is also the case of more than 7 consumers in 10 in the Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, Poland and Latvia. On the other side of the spectrum, we find Denmark and Sweden with less than 50% satisfied consumers. In Denmark, almost one fifth is even dissatisfied with the choice of prices offered by their retailer (against an EU average of 4%). Other countries with particularly high proportion of dissatisfied consumers compared to the EU average are Sweden (12%) and Luxembourg (10%).

G) PRICE COMPARABILITY

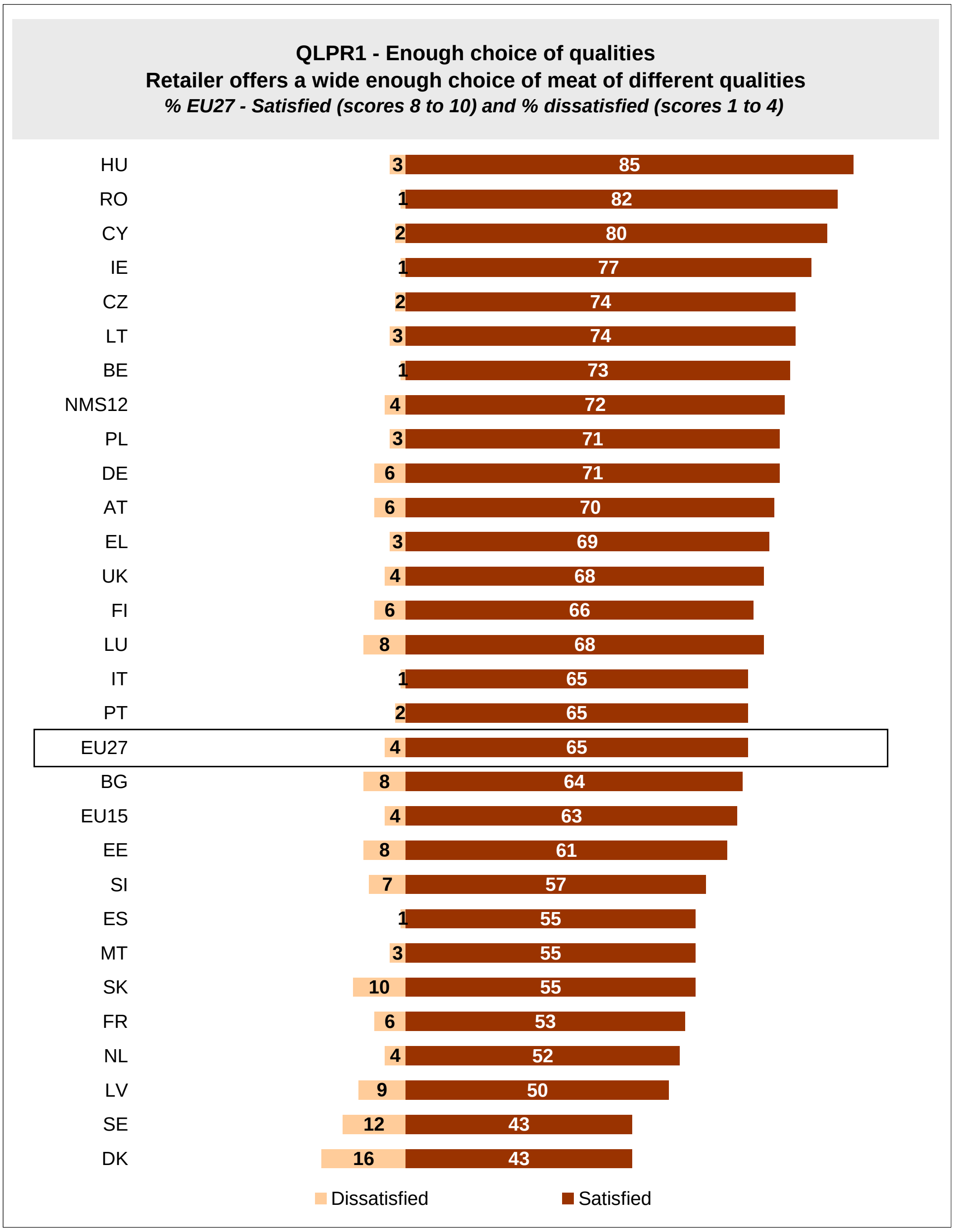
Figure 19 – Overall quality and price of products: price comparability (% by country)



In all but one EU Member States, a majority of consumers are satisfied when it comes to the price comparability. The most satisfied consumers are found in Hungary, Romania, and Greece (more than 8 consumers in 10). The only exception is Malta, with only 45% satisfied consumers. It is also interesting to note the relatively high proportion of dissatisfied consumers (compared to an EU average of 3%) in Slovakia (9%), Denmark (8%), France, Latvia, Slovenia and Luxembourg (7% each).

H) ENOUGH CHOICE OF QUALITIES

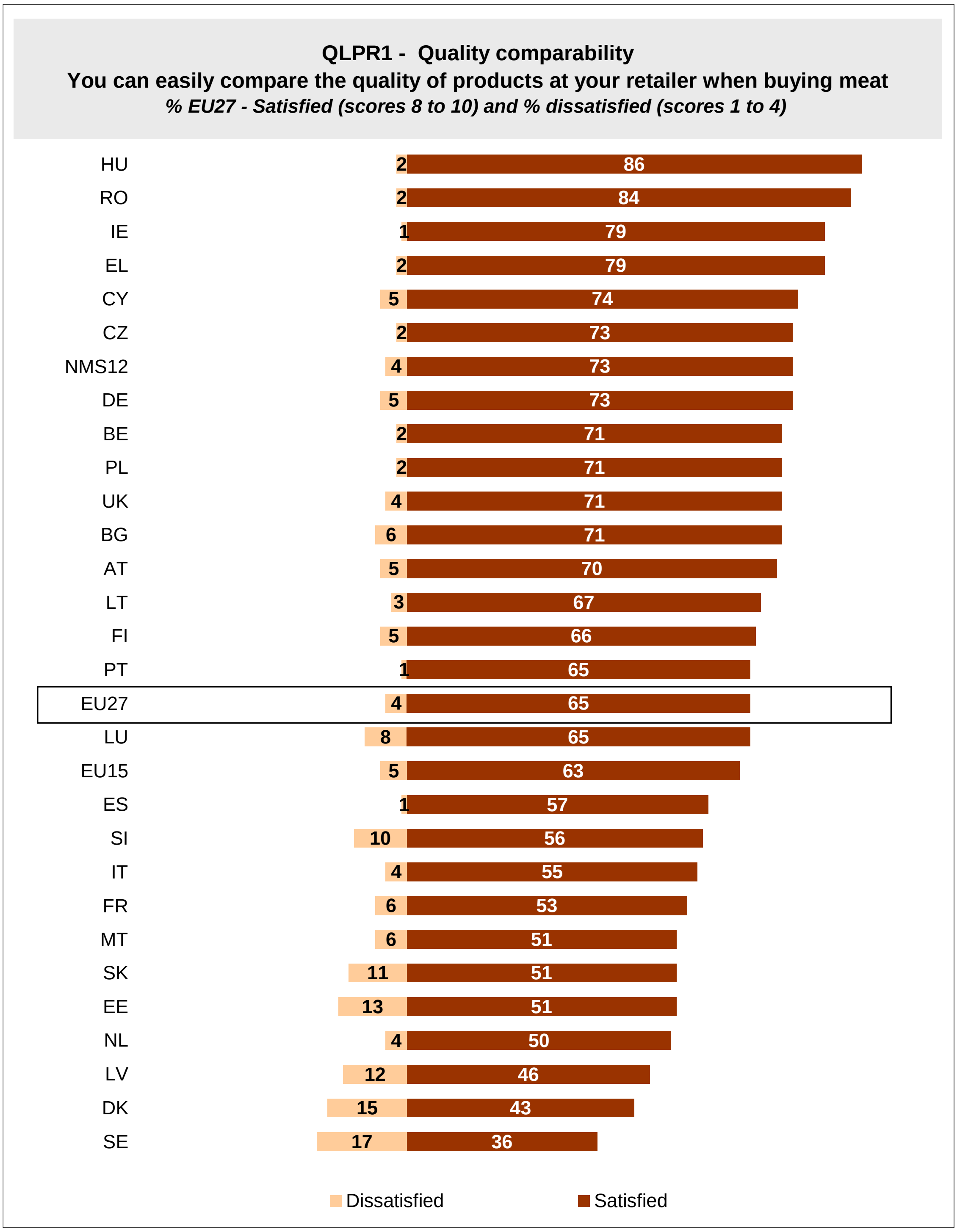
Figure 20 – Overall quality and price of products: enough choice of qualities (% by country)



More than 8 consumers in 10 in Hungary and Romania (against an EU average of 65%) are satisfied with the choice of qualities offered by their retailer. Answers patterns are quite similar to what was observed for "enough choice of prices" with Denmark and Sweden having not only the lowest proportions of satisfied consumers but also the highest segments of dissatisfied respondents.

I) QUALITY COMPARABILITY

Figure 21 – Overall quality and price of products: quality comparability (% by country)



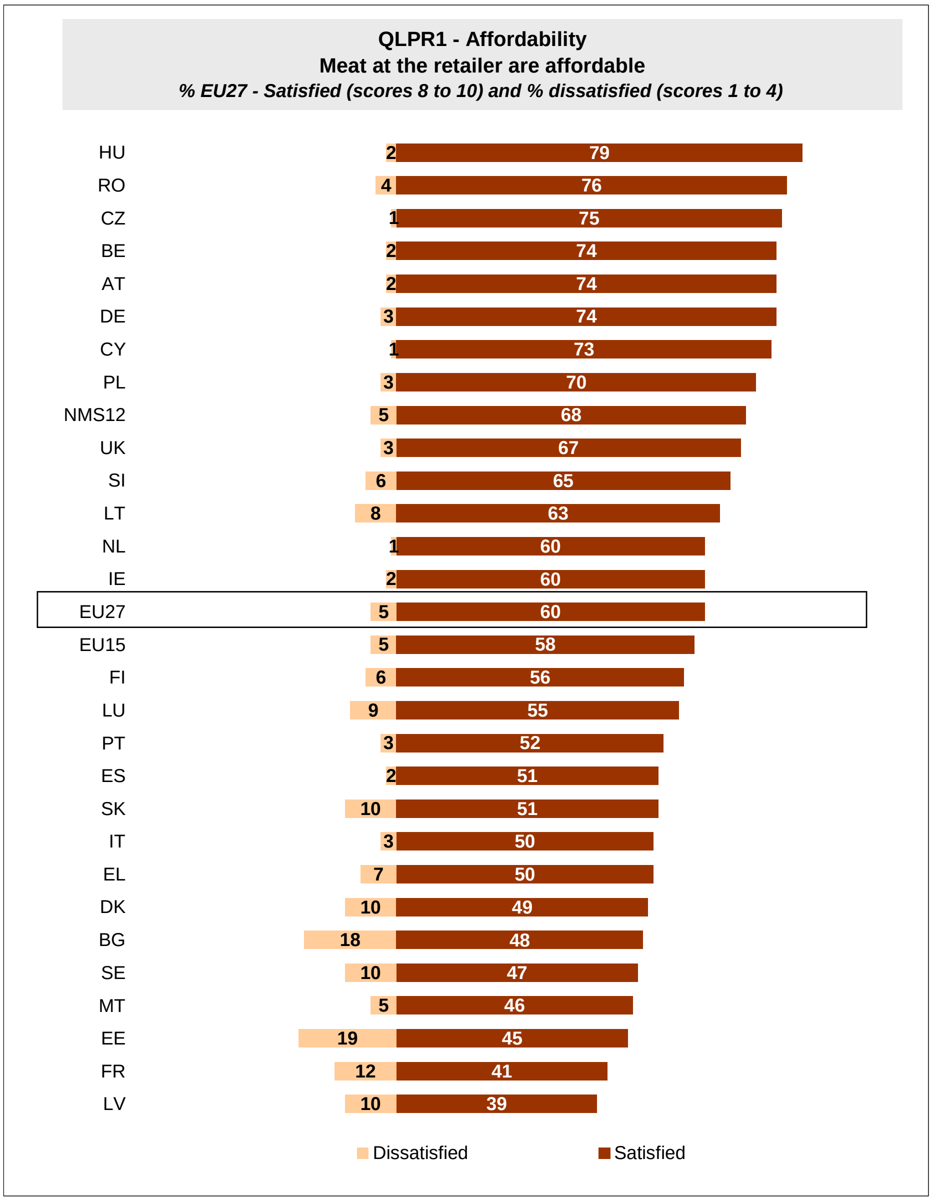
Except the Swedes (36%), the Danes (43%) and the Latvians (46%), a majority of consumers are satisfied when it comes to the quality comparability. The most satisfied consumers are found in Hungary (86%), Romania (84%), Ireland and Greece (79% each). It is also interesting to note the relatively high proportion of dissatisfied consumers (compared to an EU average of 4%) in Sweden (17%), Denmark (15%), Estonia (13%), Latvia (12%) and Slovakia (11%).

J) SECURE PAYMENTS

In all the EU Member States, the absolute majority of consumers are satisfied with modes of payments offered by the retailers. In Hungary and Finland, this is the case of 9 consumers in 10. They are closely followed by consumers in Austria, Romania and Germany. At the other side of the spectrum we find Ireland and Spain with 59% satisfied consumers.

K) AFFORDABILITY

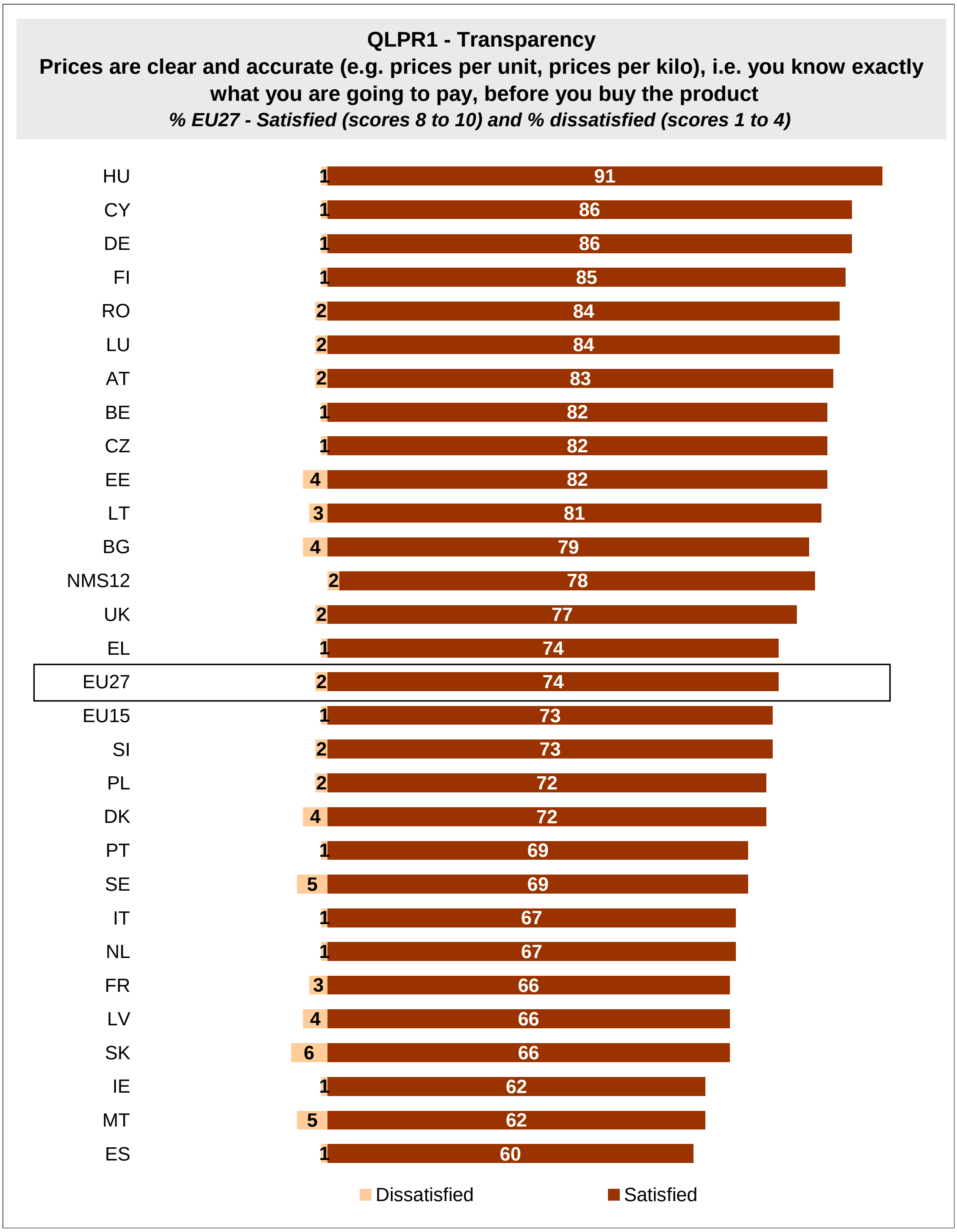
Figure 22 – Overall quality and price of products: affordability (% by country)



Meat is affordable for almost 8 consumers in 10 in Hungary and more than 7 consumers in 10 in Romania, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Austria, Denmark and Cyprus. However, 19% of consumers in Estonia, 18% in Bulgaria, 12% in France and 10% in Latvia, Sweden, Denmark and Slovakia do not think that their retailer's products are affordable (compared to an EU average of 5%).

L) TRANSPARENCY

Figure 23 – Overall quality and price of products: transparency (% by country)



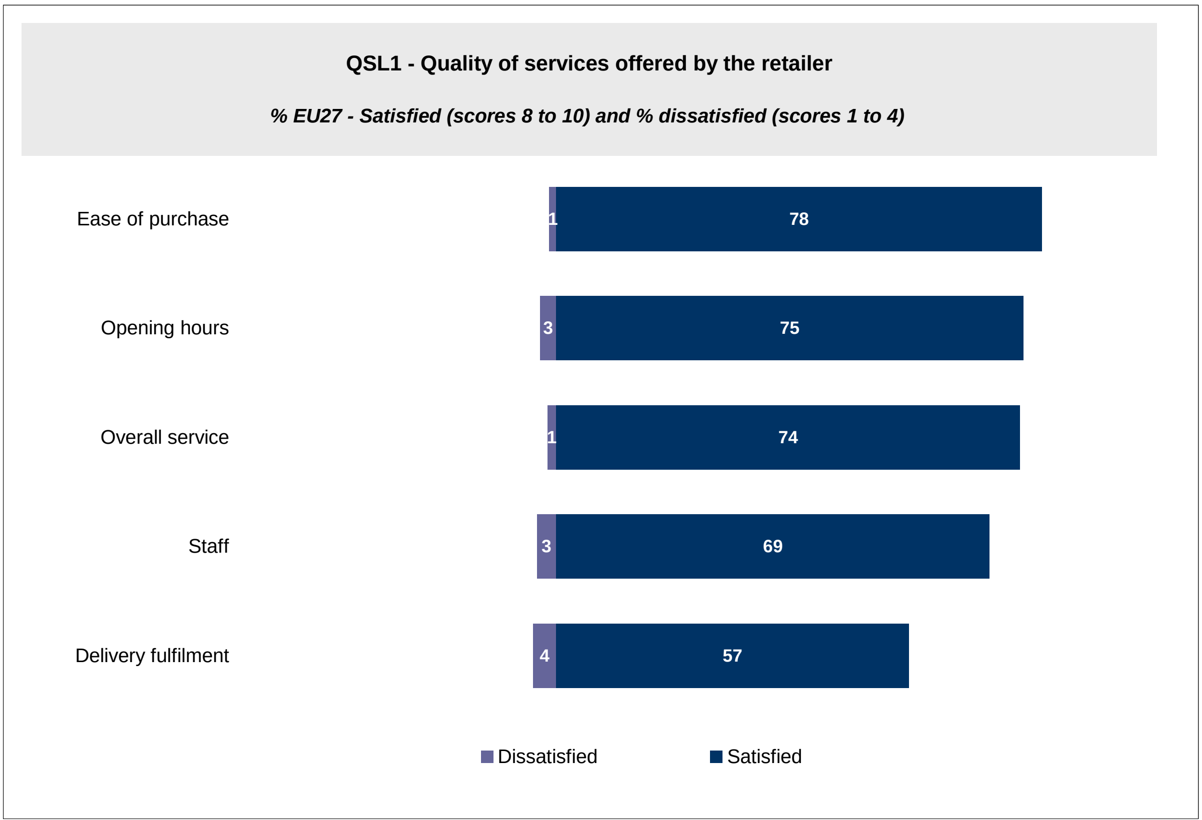
For 3 consumers in 4 in the EU, prices are clear and accurate. This is particularly the case in Hungary where for more than 90% of consumers are satisfied with this aspect. Spain, Malta and Ireland are at the bottom of the list with less than 65% satisfied consumers.

However, it is interesting to note the globally low proportion of dissatisfied consumers (never more than 6%).

2. Quality of services

2.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 24 – Quality of services (% EU27)



More than 7 consumers in 10 are satisfied with the quality of services offered by their retailer. The elements with which consumers are the most satisfied are:

- Ease of purchase, i.e. it is quick and easy to find the product they want at their retailer (78% satisfied);
- Opening hours, i.e. they can do their shopping when it is convenient for them (75% satisfied).

2.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

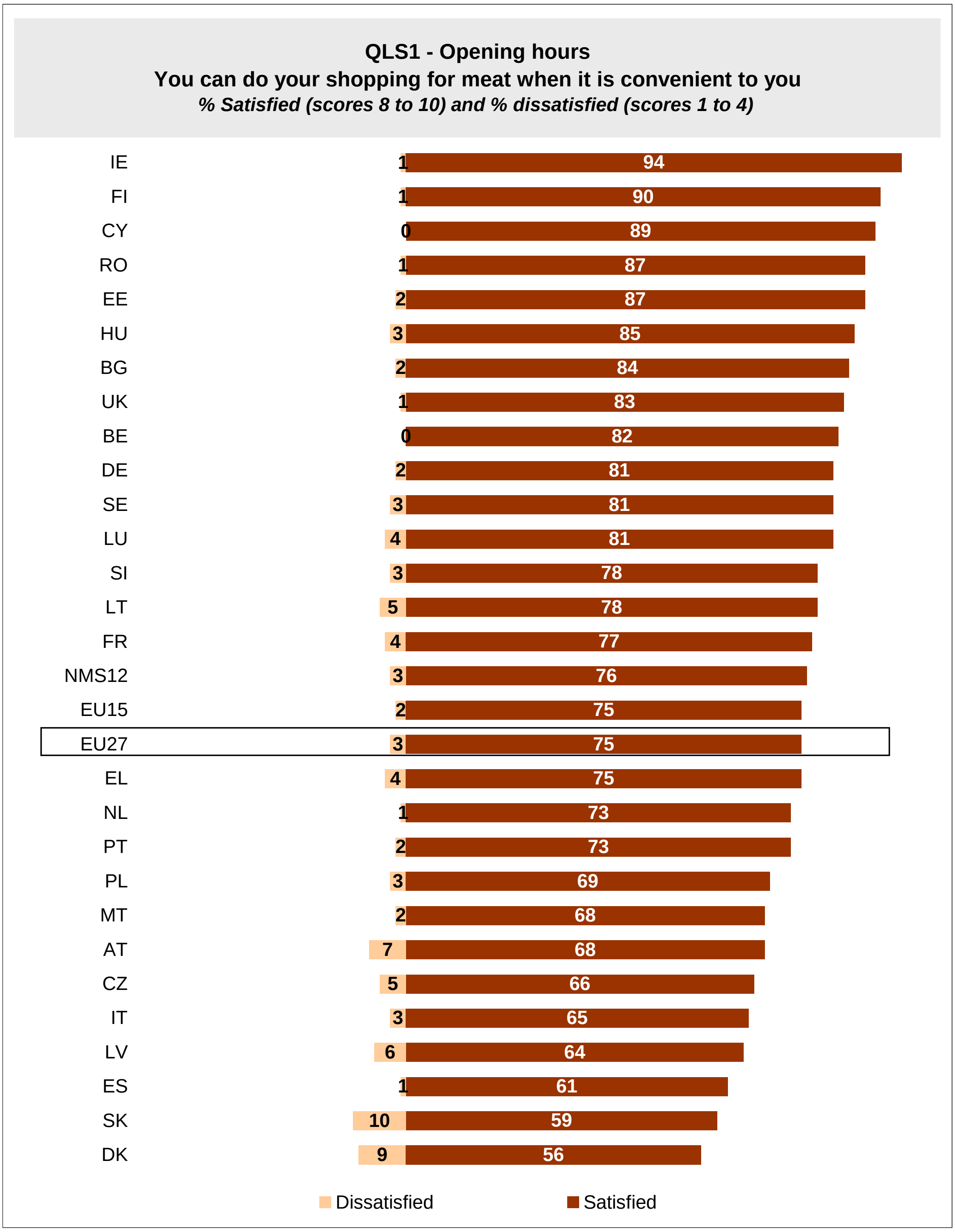
Consumers tend to think that department stores and super/hypermarkets (80% each) have more convenient opening hours than street markets/farm shops and butcher and night-shops (66% each). However, the latter have a more helpful and knowledgeable staff according to 82% of consumers (against 55% for discount stores and 65% for super/hypermarkets).

There is no significant difference in the results by distribution channel when speaking of ease of purchase.

2.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

A) OPENING HOURS

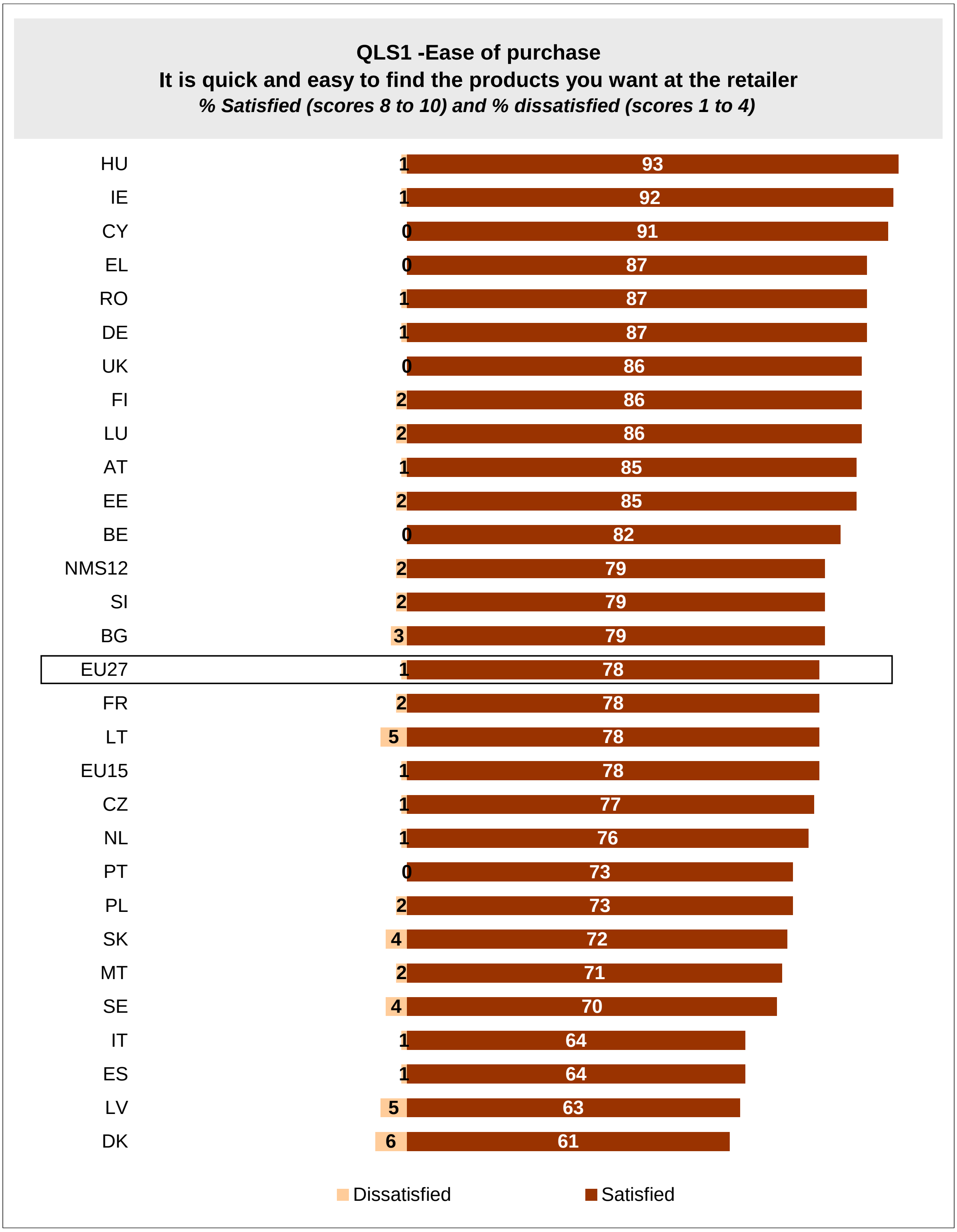
Figure 25 – Quality of services: opening hours (% by country)



In all EU Member States at least 50% of people are satisfied with the opening hours of their retailer. In Ireland and Finland, they are 90% or more. On the other hand, there are less than 60% satisfied consumers in Denmark (56%) and Slovakia (59%), where around 10% of consumers are dissatisfied (against an EU average of 3%).

B) EASE OF PURCHASE

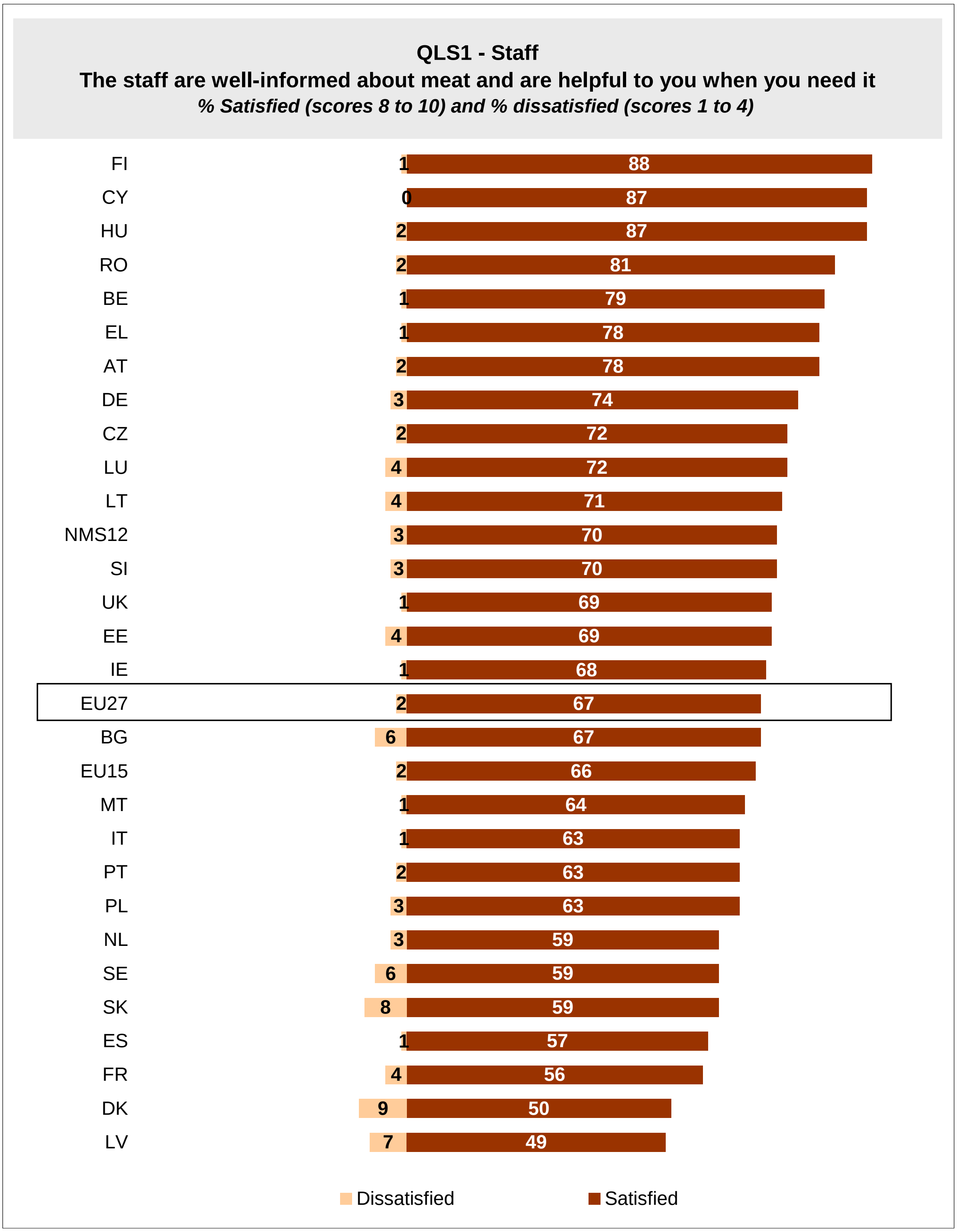
Figure 26 – Quality of services: ease of purchase (% by country)



At least 6 consumers in 10 think that it is quick and easy to find the product they want at their retailer. In Hungary, Ireland and Cyprus they are more than 90% to think so.

C) STAFF

Figure 27 – Quality of services: staff (% by country)



Latvia is the only country where less than 50% of consumers are satisfied with their retailer's staff. It is closely followed by Denmark (50%), where 9% of consumers are dissatisfied (against an EU average of 2%).

D) DELIVERY FULFILMENT

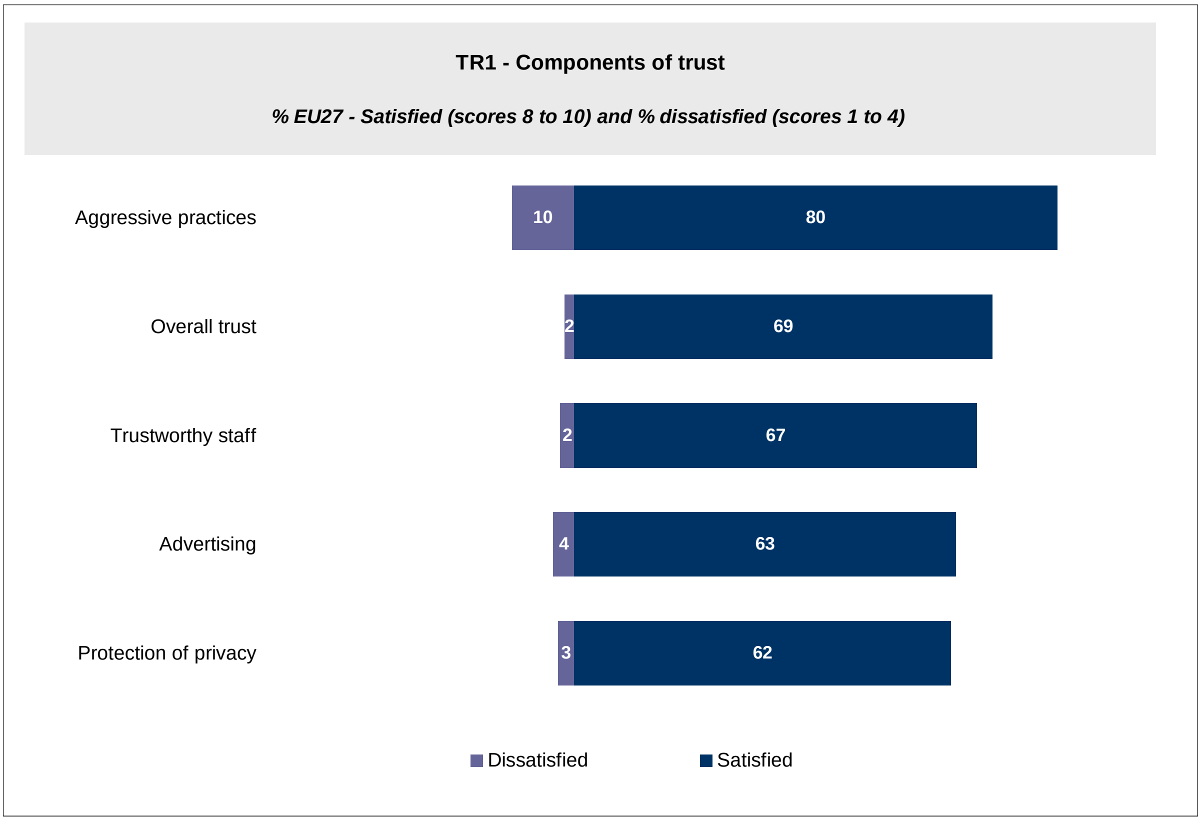
Delivery fulfilment is not a key issue[1] in this market for consumers. One fifth of them could not say whether they agree or disagree with the fact that products are delivered according to the purchase order.

[1] The lack of delivery services could in itself drive some dissatisfaction - this is particularly the case in Lithuania (24%), Bulgaria (11%) and Latvia (10%) against an EU average of 4% - but this survey's aim has primarily been to get consumers experiences with the actual markets rather than hypothetical evaluations of services of products not available to them.

3. Trust

3.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 28 – Trust (% EU27)



Overall, almost 7 consumers in 10 trust their retailer when buying meat. The most satisfying element that contributes to this trust is the fact that retailers do not resort to aggressive selling practices. Indeed, 8 consumers in 10 have not felt unduly coerced or pressurized buy their retailer to buy meat. However, at the same time we can observe a large share of dissatisfied people.

To a lesser extent, people also think that:

- Their retailer's staff is trustworthy
- Advertising does not deceive, mislead or omit relevant information
- Their privacy is protected.

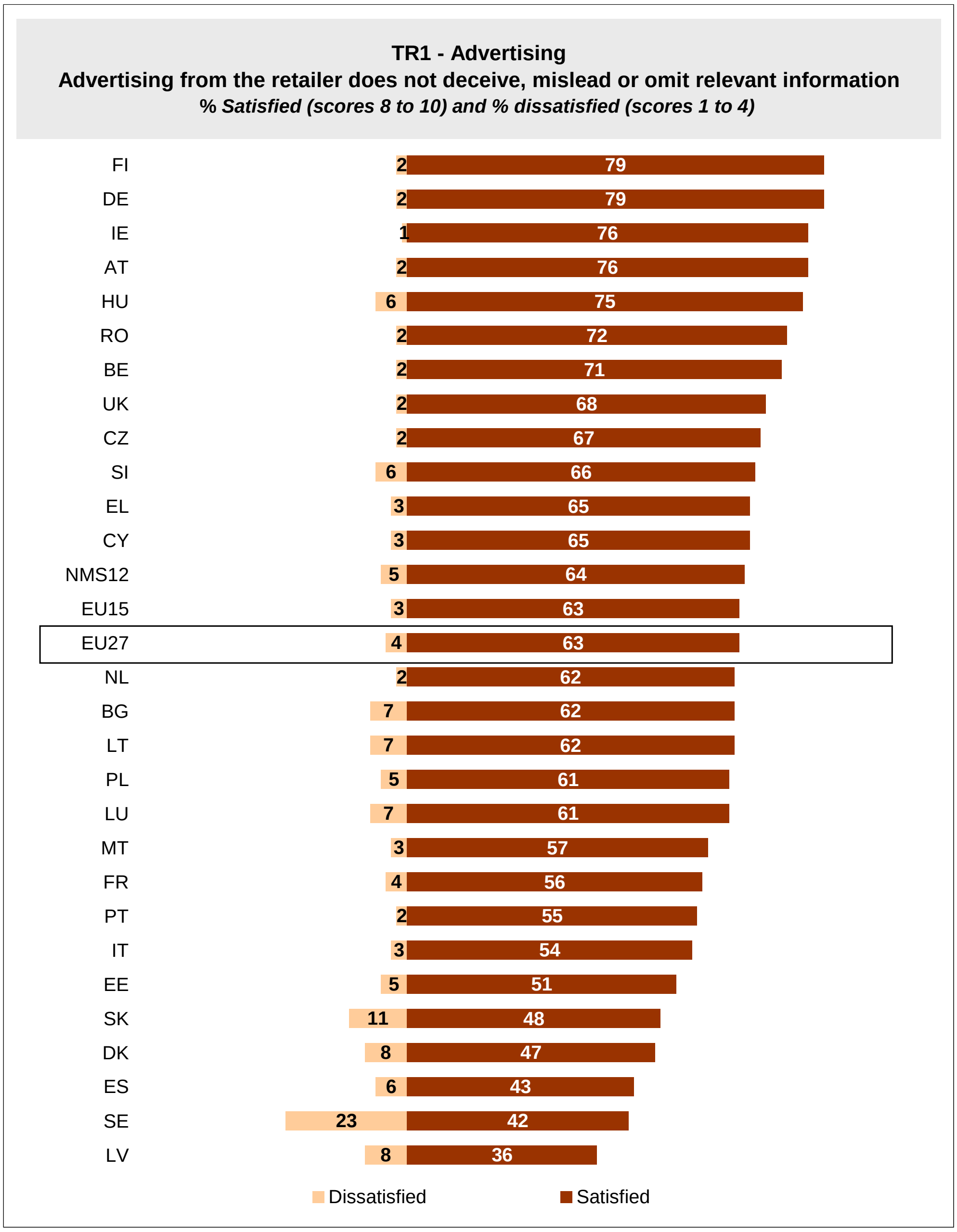
3.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Consumers tend to trust their retailer's staff more and feel that their privacy is better protected when purchasing meat in butcher's and night-shops and on street markets/ in farm shops than in discount stores and super/hypermarkets (probably due to loyalty cards, etc.). However, consumers are less satisfied with commercial practices used in street markets/ in farm shops (74%) than in other retailers (80% satisfied), i.e. they are more likely to say that they have encountered aggressive practices while purchasing meat (15% against an EU average of 10%).

3.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

A) ADVERTISING

Figure 29 – Trust: Advertising (% country)



In general, EU consumers tend to think that advertising from their retailer do not deceive, mislead or omit relevant information. This is particularly the case of Finns, Germans (79% each), Irish people, Austrians (76% each) and Hungarians (75%). However, they are less than 40% to think so in Latvia. In addition, in Sweden more than a fifth of consumers are dissatisfied with the advertising from their retailer (against an EU average of 4%), followed by 11% of Slovakian consumers.

It is also interesting to note the high proportion of "Don't know" answers (compared to an EU average of 7%) especially in Estonia (26%) and in Latvia (19%).

B) PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

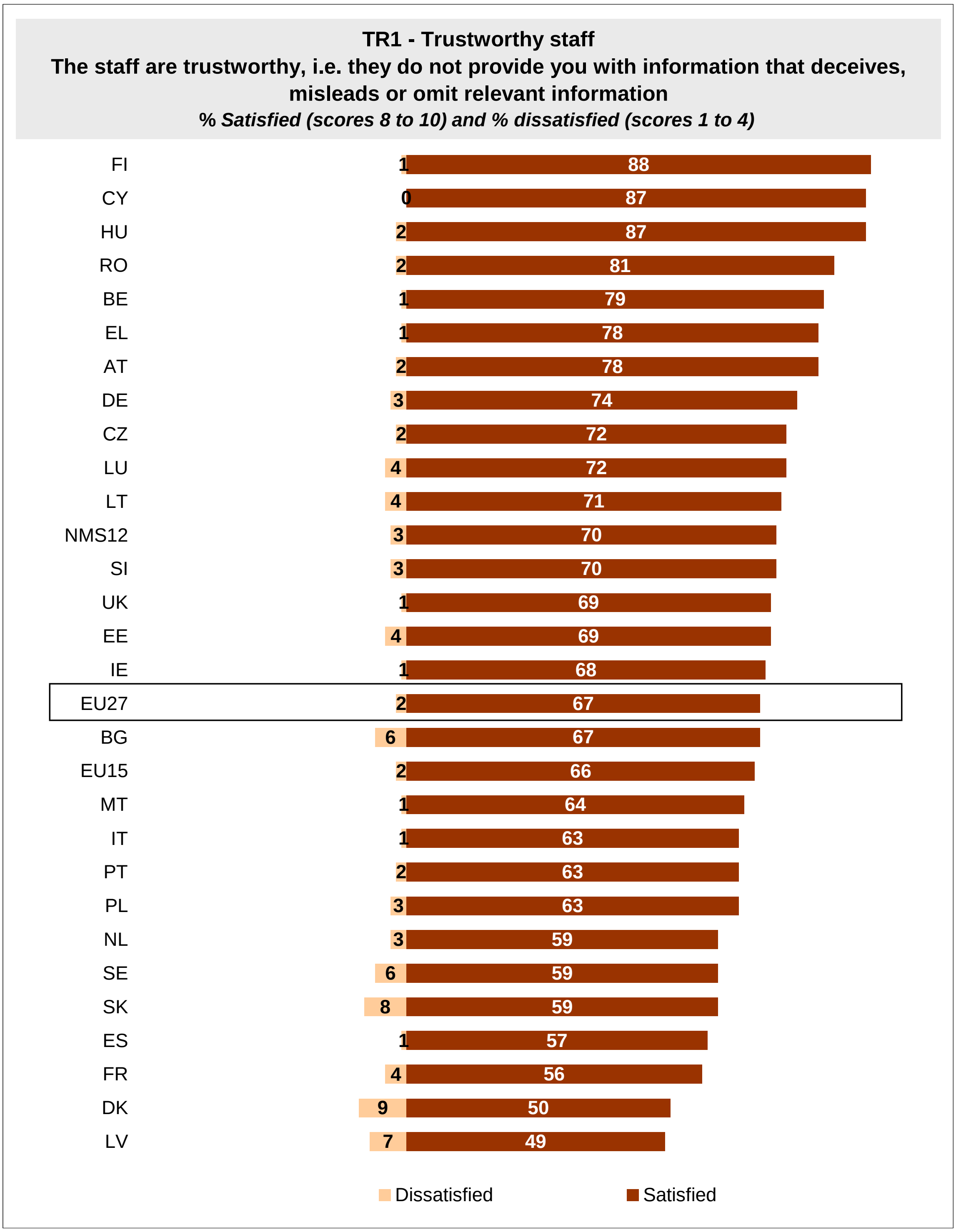
Overall, consumers feel that their privacy is protected on the market for meat in almost all the countries. The only exception is Spain where less than 50% of consumers are satisfied with the way their retailer use their personal information. Here again, we observe relatively high proportions of “Don’t know” answers: 12% at EU level, with a peak in Denmark and in Sweden (26% each). This suggests that consumer protection is not an issue in this market.

C) AGGRESSIVE PRACTICES

Although selling practices do not seem to be a problem for a great majority of consumers in the EU, it is interesting to note the relatively high proportion of dissatisfied consumers (compared to an EU average of 10%) in Italy (23%), Poland (21%), Czech Republic (21%), Spain (17%), Romania (16%), Slovakia (15%) and Belgium (14%).

D) TRUSTWORTHY STAFF

Figure 30 – Trust: trustworthy staff (% country)

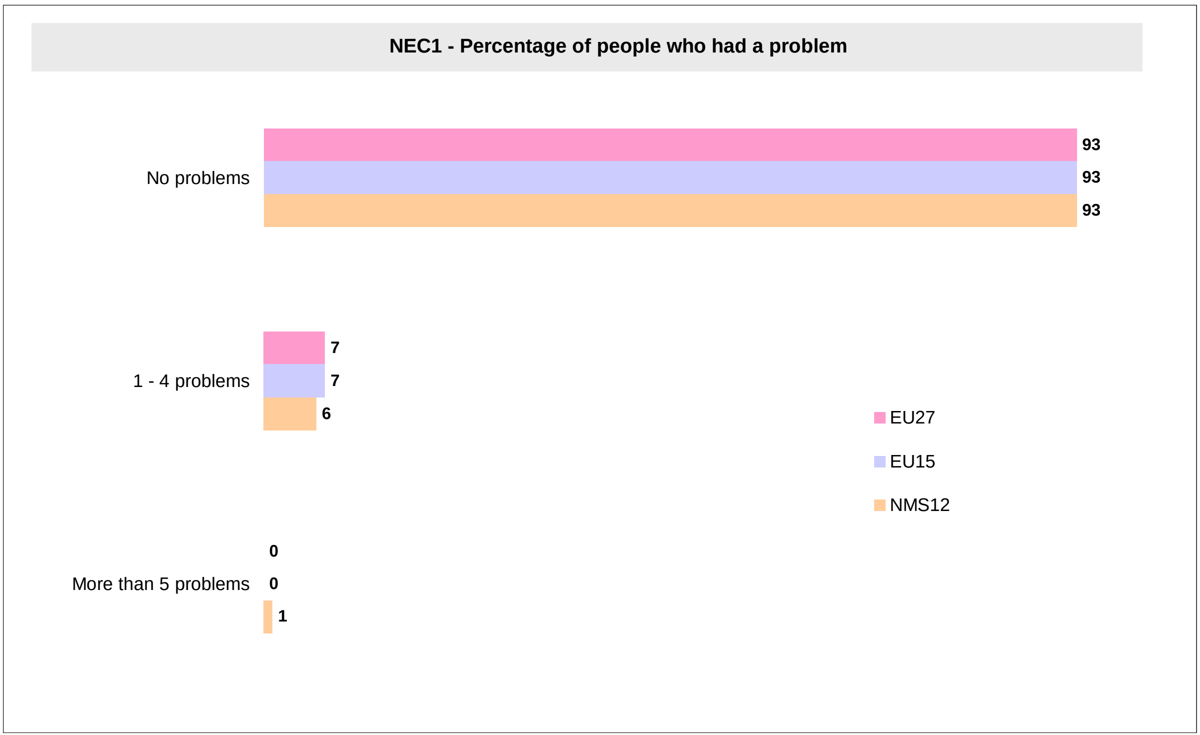


Overall, more than 2 consumers in 3 trust their retailer's staff. In Latvia and Denmark this is only the case of 1 on 2 consumers.

4. Negative experiences

4.1. NUMBER OF PROBLEMS

Figure 31 – Number of problems with the product



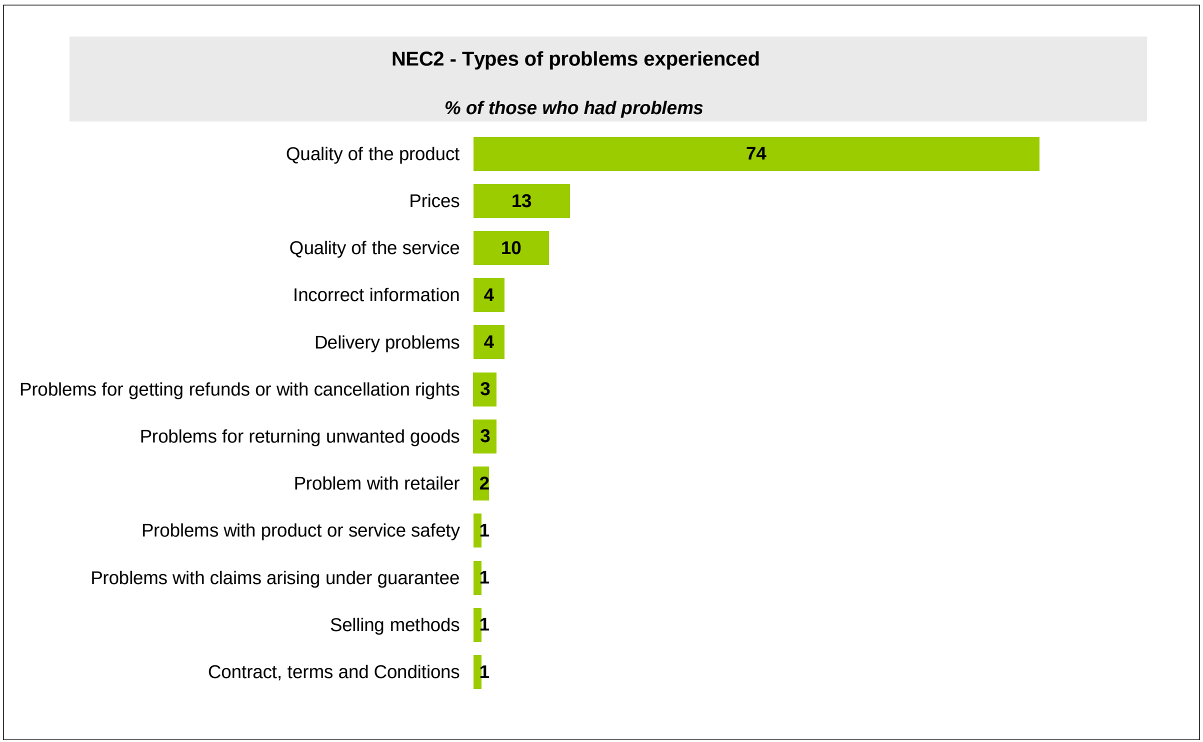
Only 7% consumers in the EU27 have experienced problems when purchasing meat in the last 12 months. In the new Member States and in the EU15 they are 6% to say so.

Furthermore, among those who have encountered problems, 69% have experienced this only once in the course of the year.

4.2. TYPES OF PROBLEMS

A) OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 32 – Types of problems experienced with the product (% of those who had problems)



The type of problems consumers experienced most often concerns the quality of products (e.g. freshness). Price of products (e.g. too high, not indicated, wrong advertised price, etc.) comes second but it only concerns 13% of people who had problems.

Consumers who experienced problems when buying meat in super/hypermarkets are more likely than the others to have experienced problems regarding the quality of products (78% against 74% of those who had problems).

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

Small sample sizes by Member State do not allow a reliable analysis at country level.

4.3. COMPLAINTS HANDLING

A) OVERALL RESULTS

In general, consumers tend to communicate their problem or discuss it with a representative of their retailer, especially in the EU15 (73% against 53% in the NMS12).

For almost 8 EU consumers in 10, the problem was solved and the solution brought by the retailer was satisfactory. This is especially the case for consumers in the EU15 (79%) while, in the NMS12, a satisfying solution was reached for 64% of consumers. Consequently, very few take further actions against the retailer (5% of consumer in the EU27).

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

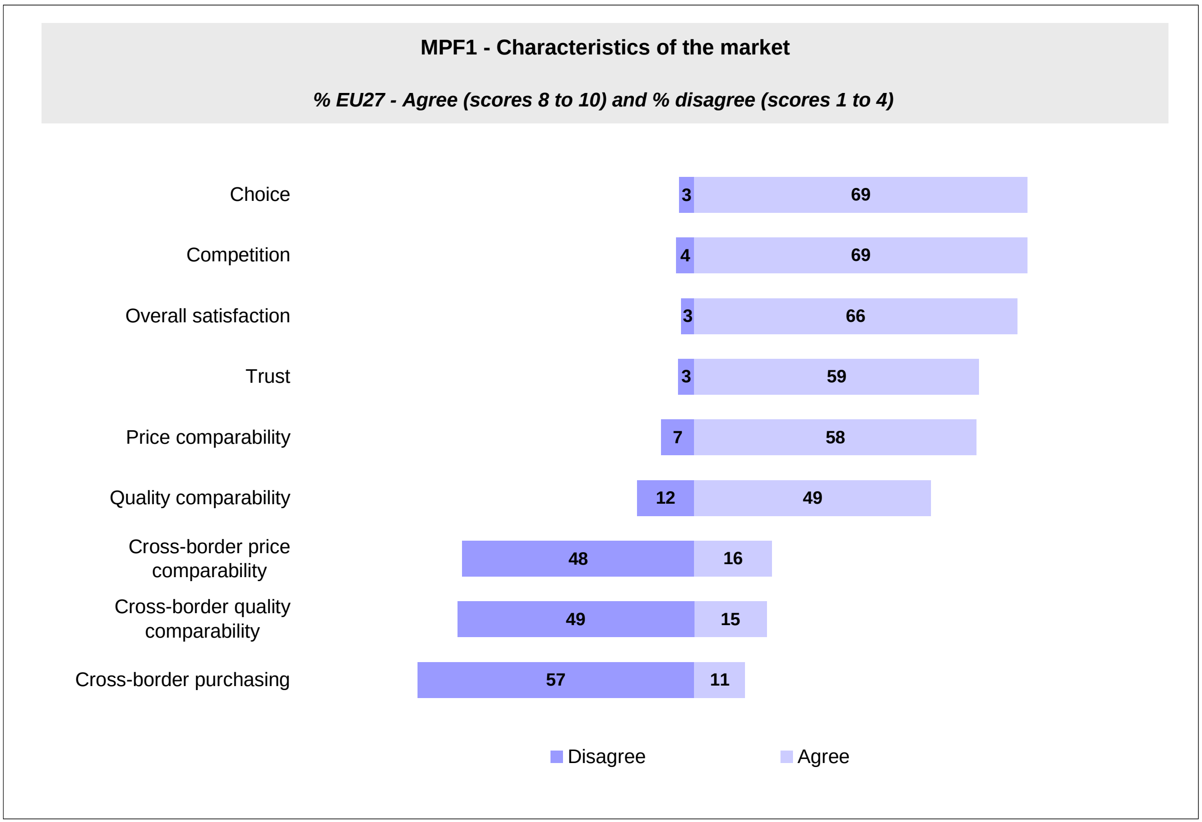
Again, bases at country level are small and a comparative analysis between the Member States cannot be carried out. Overall, it can be however said that the general pattern observed at the EU level applies to most countries: a substantial proportion of consumers tend to turn back to the retailer in case of a problem and they are generally satisfied with the way the retailer handles their complaint.

5. Market factors and commitment

5.1. SATISFACTION WITH THE MARKET

A) OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 33 – Satisfaction with the market characteristics (% EU27)



Overall, consumers are satisfied with the market for meat. They are mostly satisfied with:

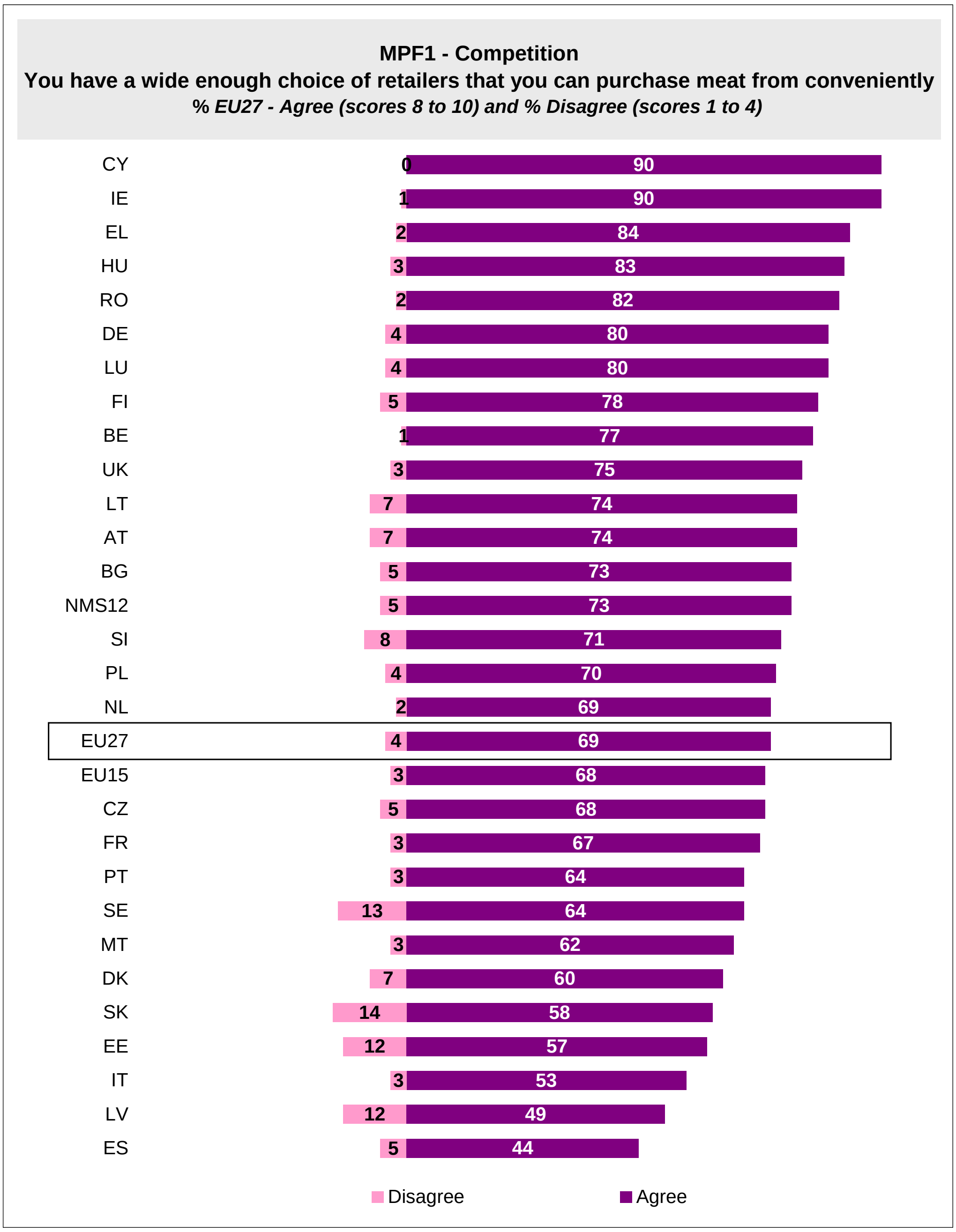
- The choice of meat, i.e. the products they want are available
- The competition on the market, i.e. there is a wide enough choice of retailers where they can purchase meat conveniently.

However, almost 60% think cross-border purchasing is not worthwhile. A little less than 50% think also that cross-boarder price and quality comparability is difficult. It should be noted that for these statements levels of 'don't know' answers are much higher than for the other statements.

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

1. Competition

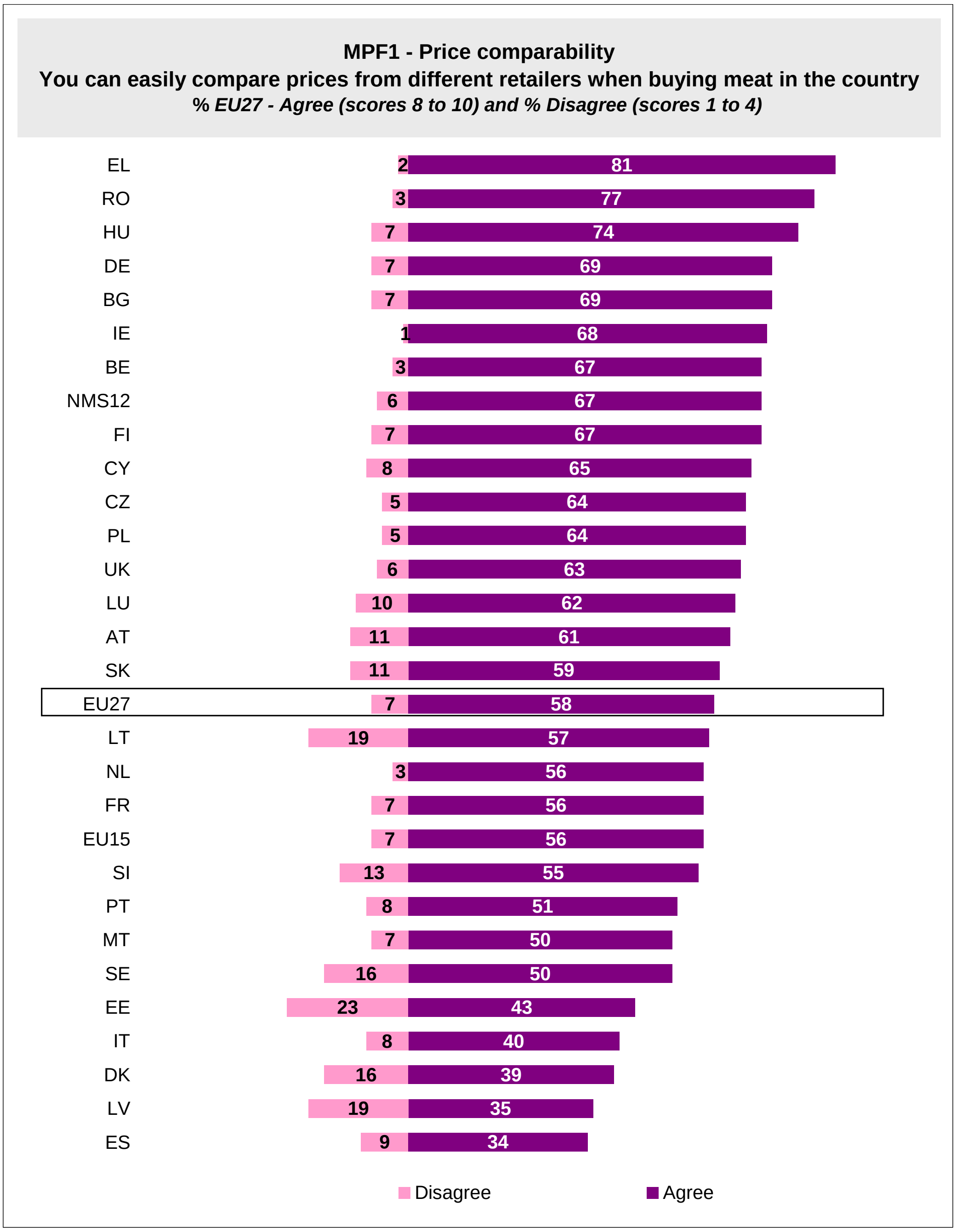
Figure 34 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: competition (% by country)



Almost 7 EU consumers in 10 are satisfied with the choice of retailers available on the market for meat. The most satisfied are Cypriots and Irish people (90% each). On the other side of the spectrum, we find Spaniards (44%), Latvians (49%) and Italians (53%). In addition, more than 10% (against an EU average of 4%) of consumers in Slovakia, Sweden, Latvia and Estonia are dissatisfied with the competition available on the market.

2. Price comparability

Figure 35 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: price comparability (% by country)



A majority of EU consumers are satisfied with the possibility offered by the market to compare prices from different retailers, especially in Greece (81%). The least satisfied are Spaniards (34%), Latvians (35%), Danes (39%), Italians (40%) and Estonians (43%). In addition, we can observe high proportions of dissatisfied consumers (compared to an EU average of 7%) particularly in the three Baltic countries: Estonia (23%), Lithuania and Latvia (19% each). To a lesser extent, dissatisfied consumers are also found in Sweden (16%), Denmark (16%) and Slovenia (13%).

Denmark is also the country where we find the highest proportion of people who could not give an answer to the question (12% of "Don't know" against an EU average of 2%).

3. Cross-border price comparability

From the survey results it appears that cross-border price comparability is difficult to evaluate for a relatively high proportion of people in many countries. Whereas for the EU the average proportion of “Don’t know” answers is 14%, it goes up to 36% in Denmark, 27% in Malta, 25% in Portugal and in Sweden, 24% in the Netherlands and 22% in the UK.

In addition, most of those who gave an answer to this question think that cross-border price comparability is difficult (48% against 16% of consumers who think it is easy). Consumers in Ireland (84%) and Greece (72%) are the least likely to find it easy while it is only in Romania where more consumers find cross-border price comparisons easy (37%) than difficult (28%).

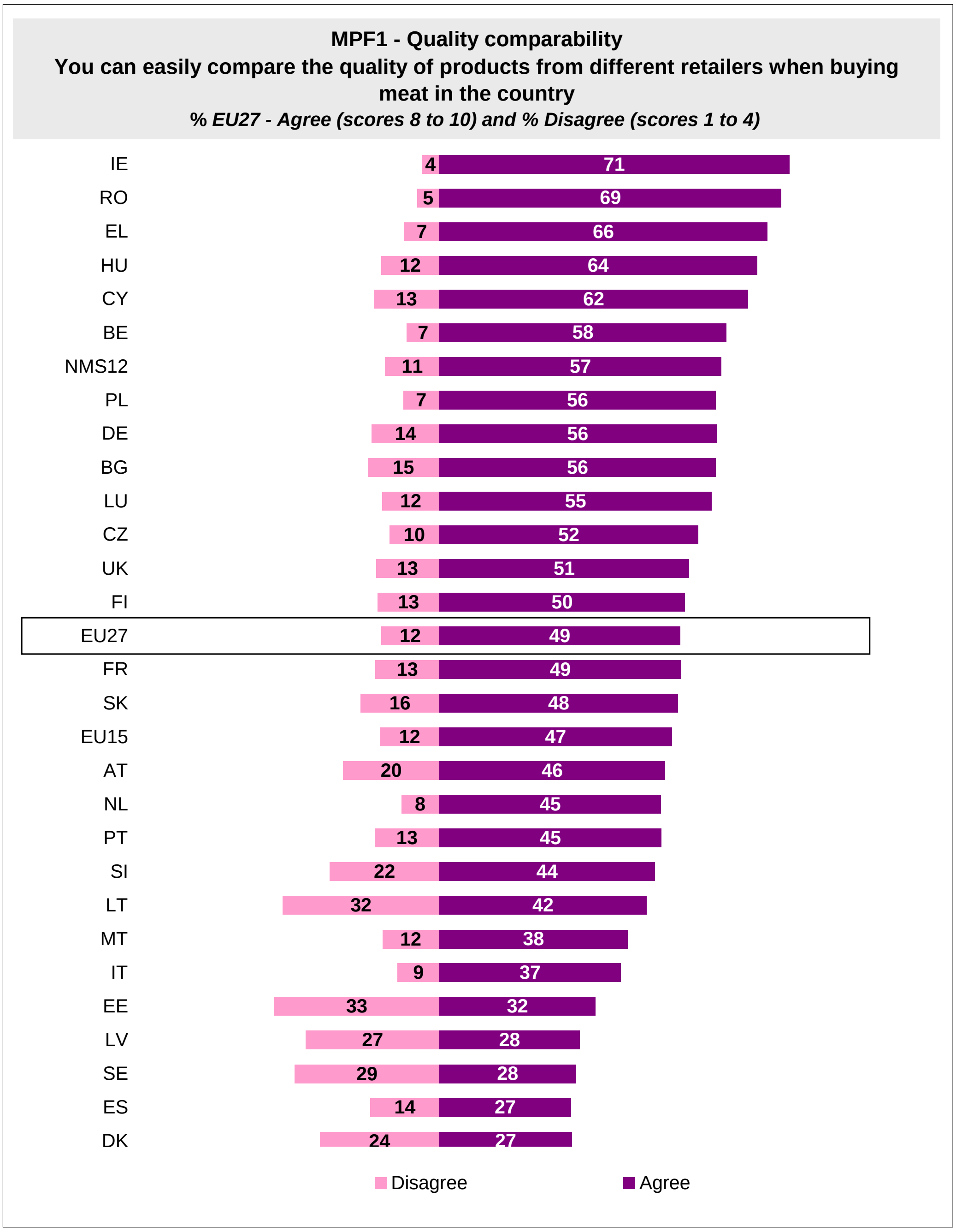
4. Cross-border quality comparability

Cross-border quality comparability is not easy either for a majority of consumers. In addition, we can observe high proportions of “Don’t know” anwers (15% on average), with a peak in Denmark (36%).

Overall, we can observe similar national answer patterns as shown above for cross-border price comparability.

5. Quality comparability

Figure 36 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Quality comparability (% by country)

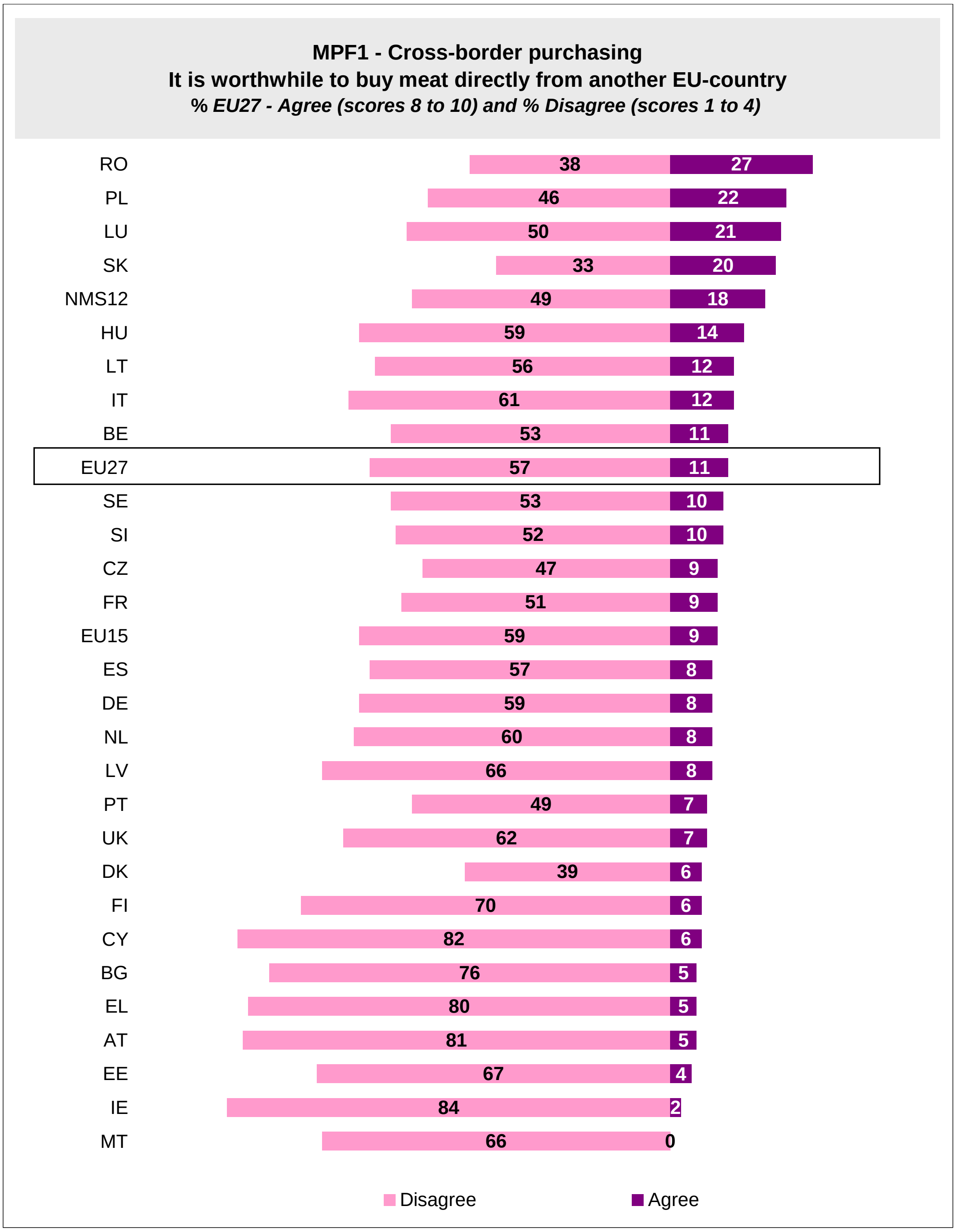


49% of EU consumers think it is easy to compare the quality of products from different retailers. 12% have the opposite opinion.

Quality comparability seems to be a problem particularly for consumers in Estonia and Lithuania (more than 30% dissatisfied consumers) and, to a lesser extent, in Sweden (29%), Latvia (27%), Denmark (24%), Slovenia (22%) and Austria (20%).

6. Cross-border purchasing

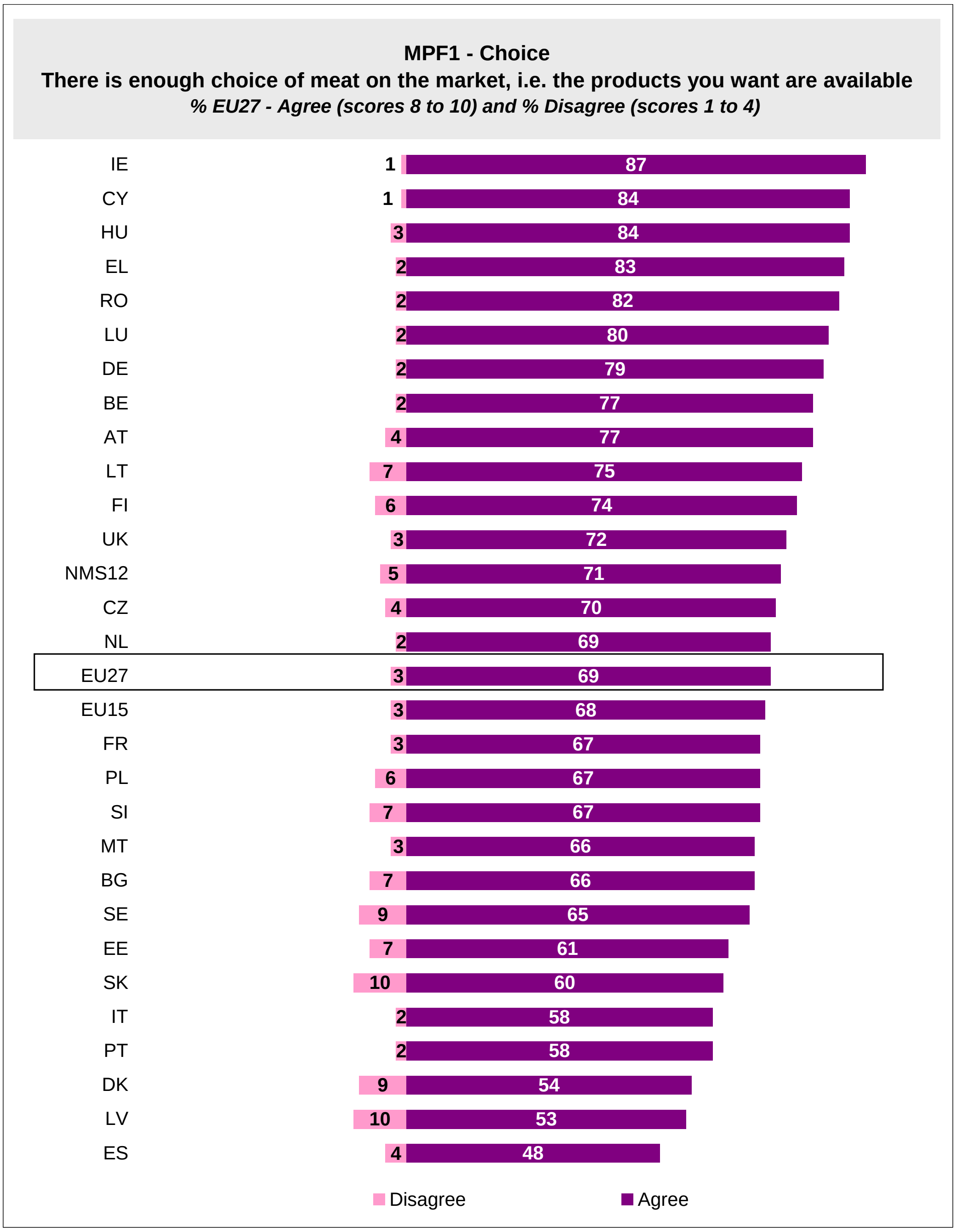
Figure 37 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Cross-border purchasing (% by country)



A great majority of EU consumers think that it is not worthwhile to buy meat from another EU country. However, more than a quarter of Romanians and more than a fifth of consumers in Poland and Luxembourg think it is worthy to purchase meat cross-border. In addition, this question is difficult to answer for 17% of EU consumers, especially for Danes (43%), Slovaks (32%), the Portuguese (29%), Swedes (26%), the Czech people (26%) and Estonians (24%).

7. Choice

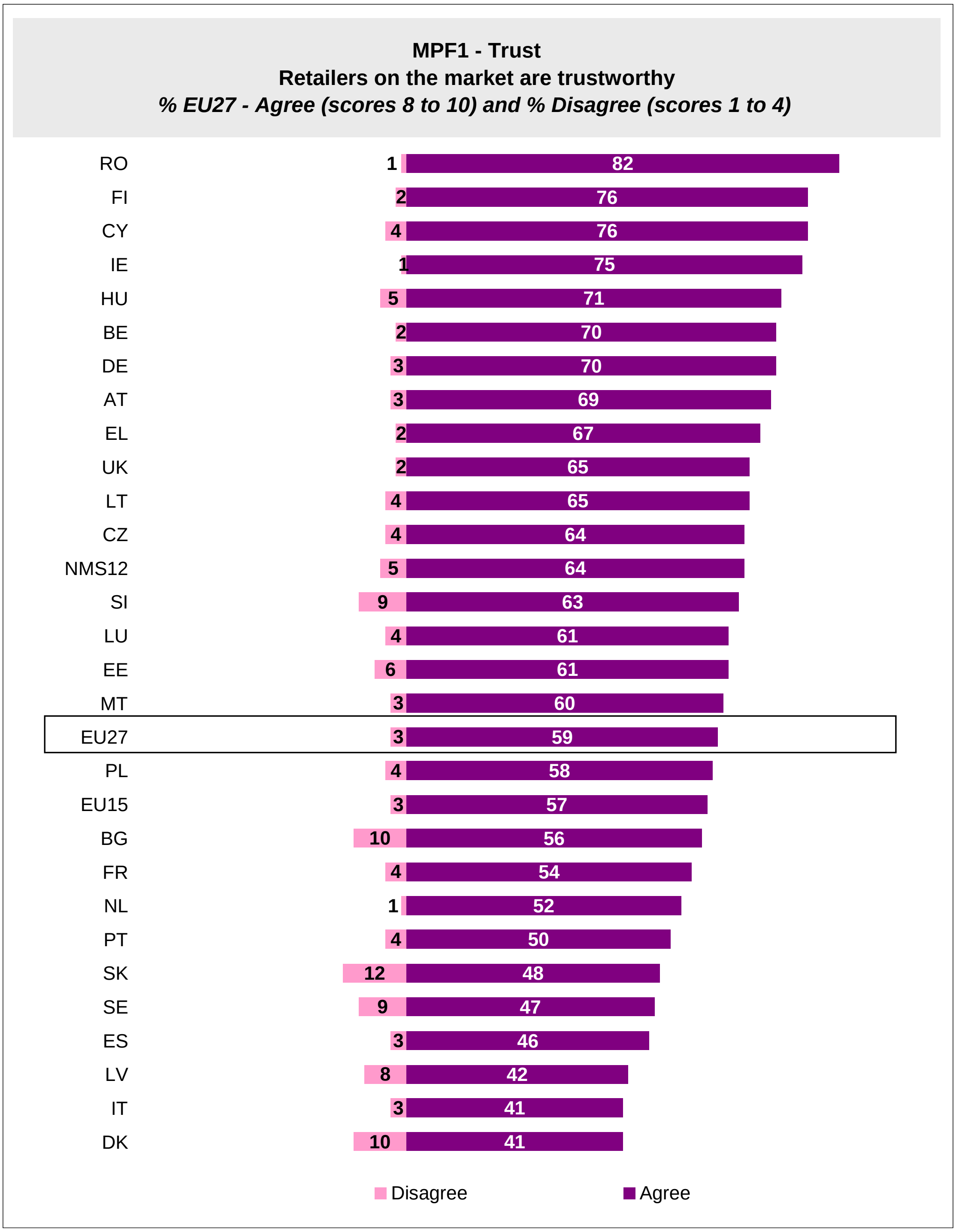
Figure 38 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: choice (% by country)



There is enough choice of meat on the market, according to almost 7 Europeans in 10. The Irish, Cypriots, Hungarians, Greeks, Romanians and people of Luxembourg are the most satisfied (80% and more). On the other side of the spectrum we find Spain with only 48% satisfied consumers.

8. Trust

Figure 39 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: trust (% by country)



Retailers on the market for meat are trustworthy, according to almost 6 Europeans in 10. The most satisfied consumers are Romanians (82%), Finns, Cypriots (76% each) and Irish people (75%) whereas the least satisfied are Danes (41%), Italians (41%), Latvians (42%), Spaniards (46%), Swedish (47%) and Slovakian people (48%).

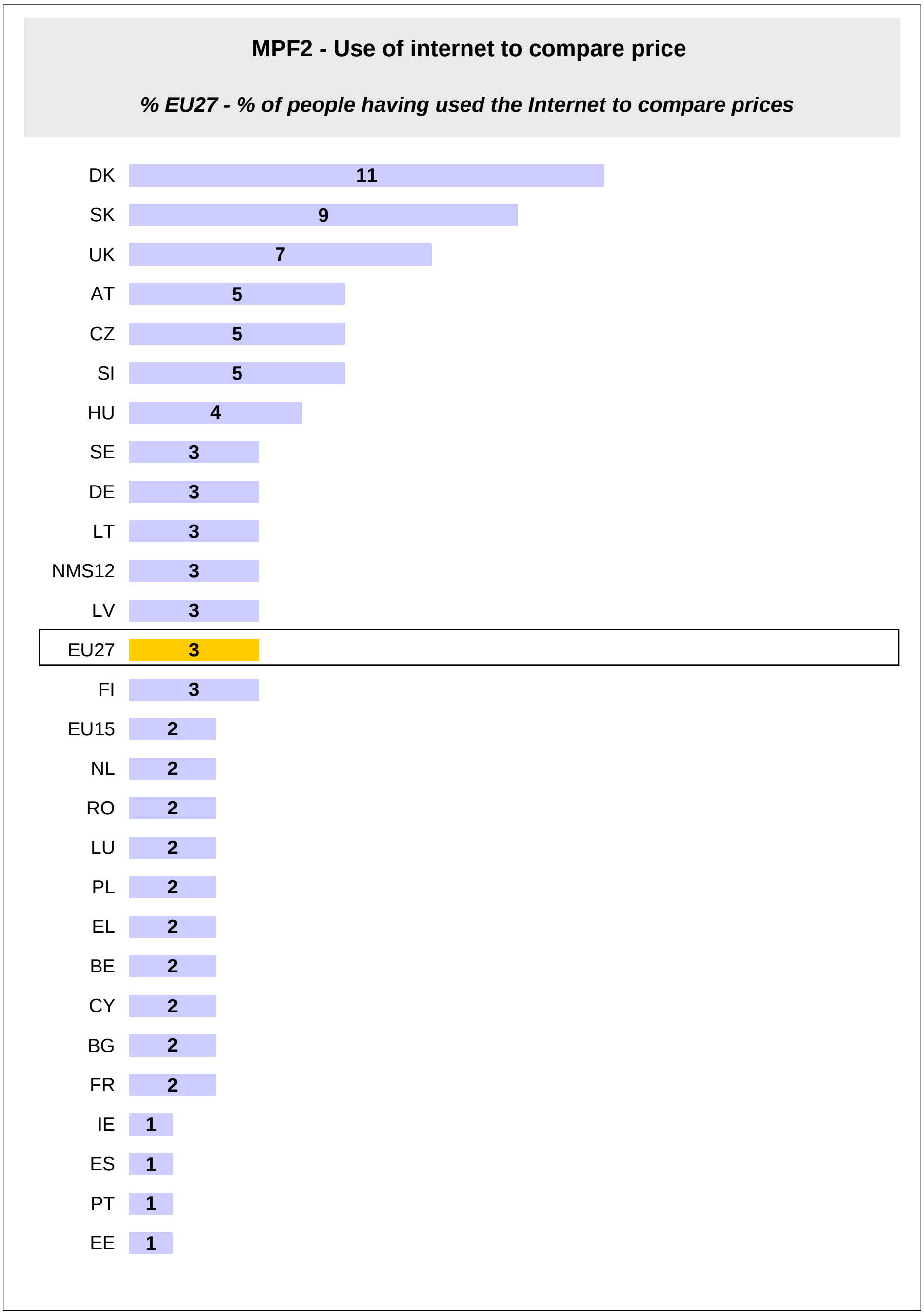
5.2. PRICE COMPARISON ON THE INTERNET

A) OVERALL RESULTS

Only 3% of EU consumers have used the Internet to compare prices of meat. There are no significant differences in the results broken down by distribution channel.

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

Figure 40 – Use of internet to compare price (% by country)



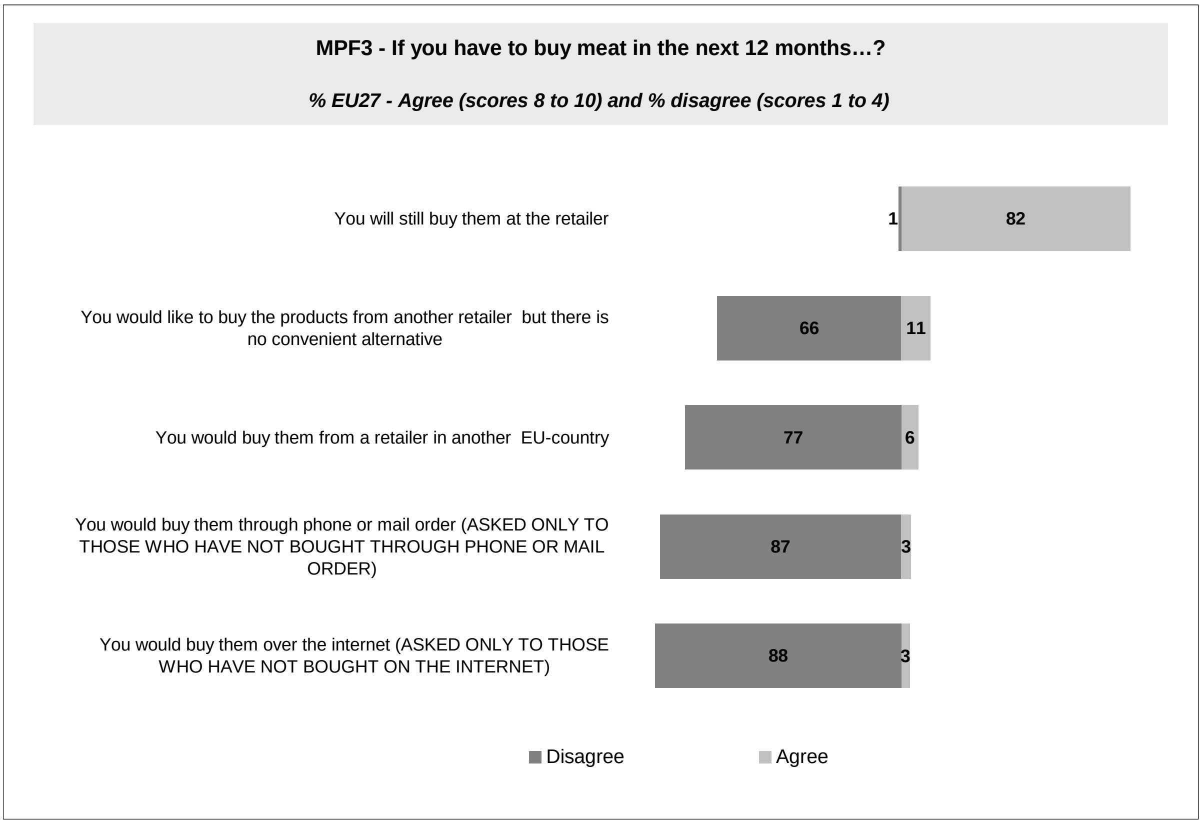
Although very few consumers have used the Internet to compare prices of meat, they are 11% in Denmark, 9% in Slovakia and 7% in the UK (against an EU27 average of 3%).

5.3. COMMITMENT

A) OVERALL RESULTS

In addition to the evaluation of consumers' past experience, the survey also explored their possible future purchase behaviour when it comes to meat. To do so, respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 10, the extent to which they agree with each of the 5 following statements listed on the chart below.

Figure 41 – Commitment in the next 12 months



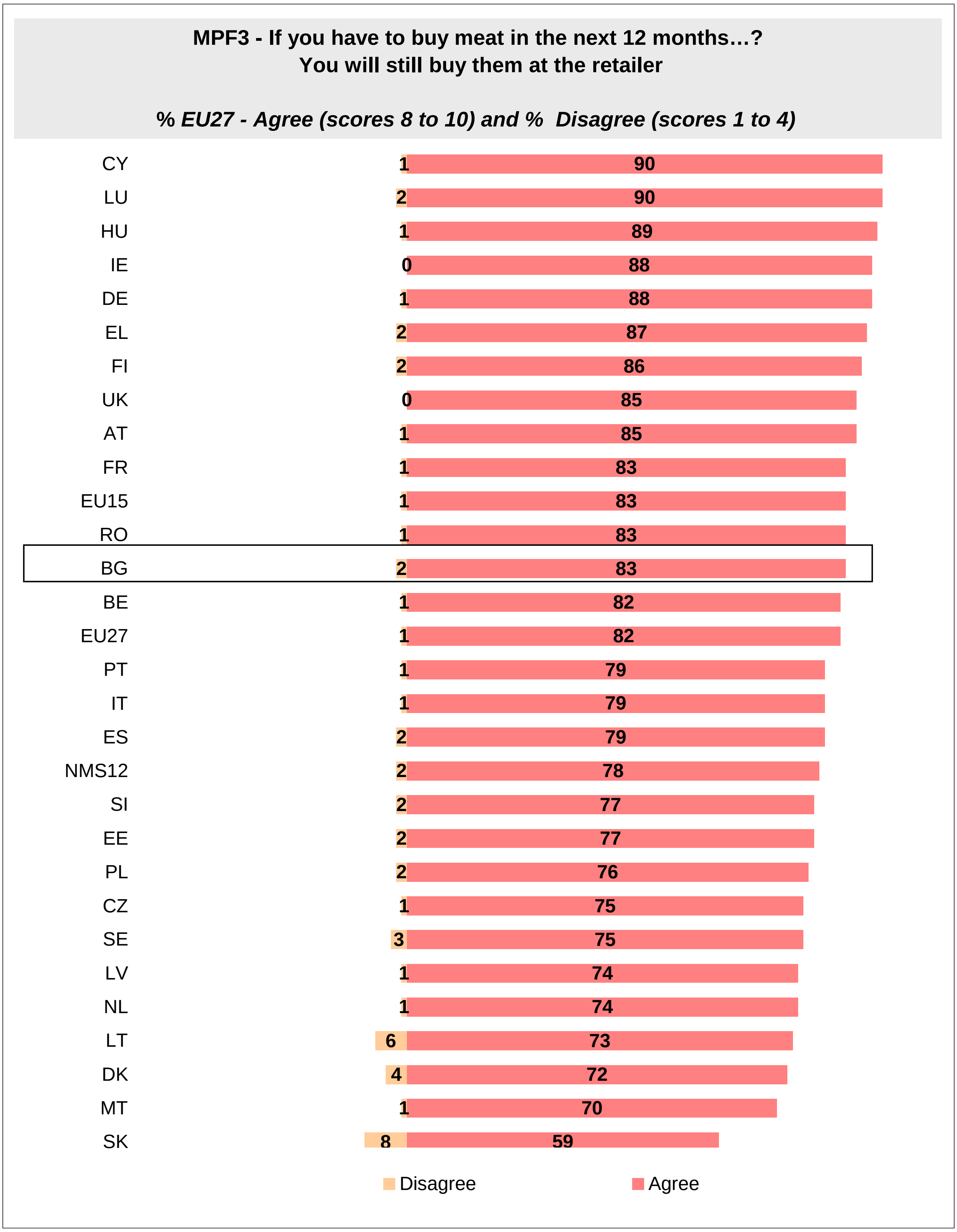
8 European consumers in 10 do not intend to change retailer when it comes to buying meat.

In addition, only 3% of those who have not yet bought meat on the Internet (more than 99% of consumers) will do so in a near future. A similar observation can be done when looking at purchase through mail/phone order.

Only 6% of consumers would consider purchasing meat in another EU country either.

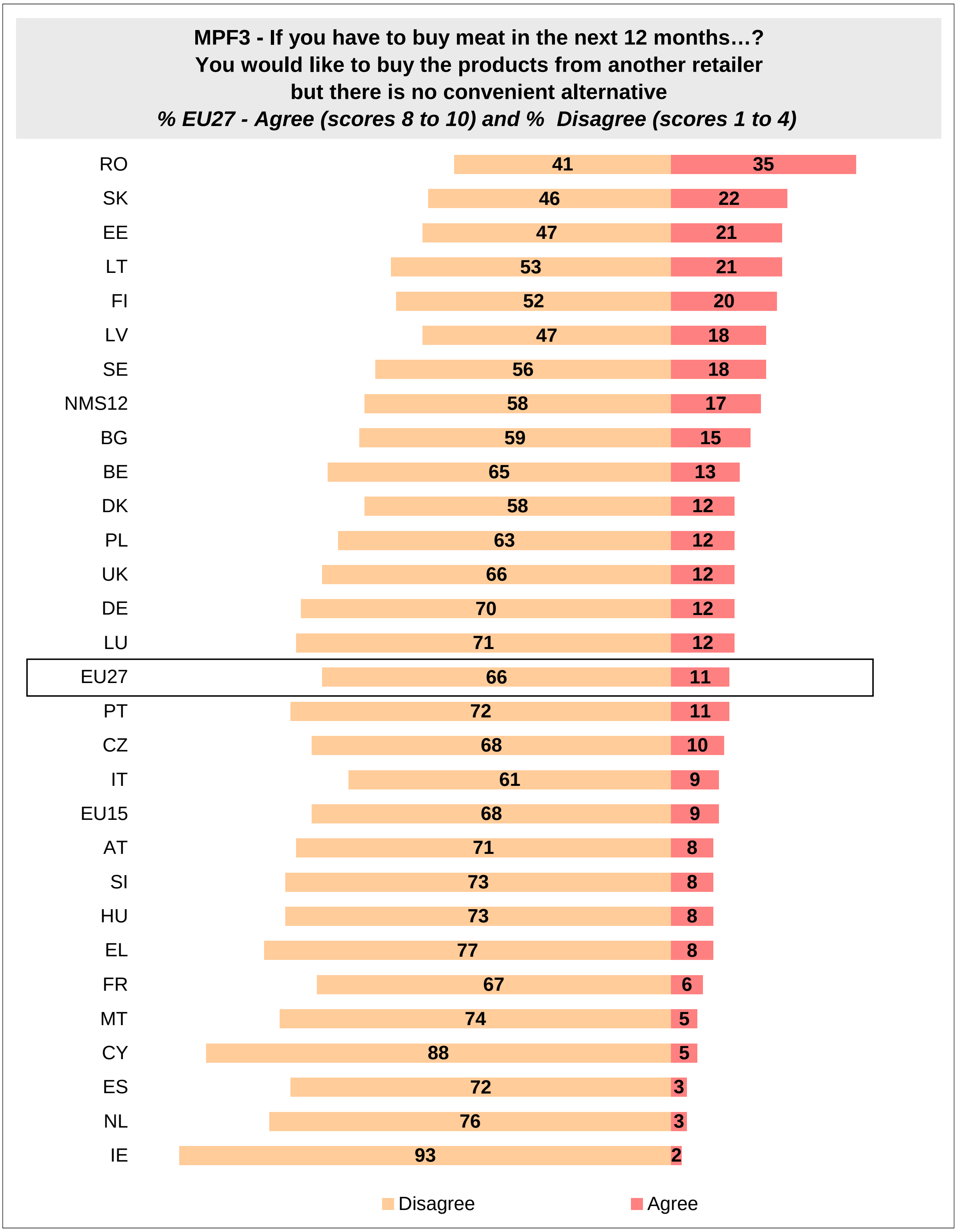
B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

Figure 42 – Commitment in the next 12 months to still buy at the retailer (by country)



Commitment to one retailer is quite high in all EU countries, especially in Cyprus and Luxembourg, but relatively low in Slovakia (59%).

Figure 43 – Alternatives (by country)



More than one third of Romanians would like to buy meat from another retailer but they feel there is no convenient alternative. To a lesser extent, this is the opinion of more than one fifth of Slovakian people, Estonians and Lithuanians.

Chapter 4 – Priority actions

1. What matters most to consumers?

1.1. SHORT NOTE ON THE MODEL

The **statistical model** which has been specifically built for DG SANCO offers a range of possible added-value analysis and allows especially to explain the contribution of observed variables to overall satisfaction. This allows us to determine, for each product market, the elements that matter most to consumers.

The satisfaction model uses two types of variables:

- Driving factors, i.e. variables explaining satisfaction: Price/quality – Service – Trust. The construct 'Price/quality' represents all items that enable consumers to evaluate the value for money offered by the retailer. 'Service' includes all the items associated with the quality of service. 'Trust' includes all the items that influence the level of trust towards the retailer.
- Performance indicators: variables that are a consequence of satisfaction, i.e. commitment – complaints

The model allows explaining the level of overall satisfaction observed for a given sector with the help of the above-mentioned variables. In other words, the model indicates the level of contribution made by each variable to overall satisfaction. This contribution is calculated through a regression analysis, which determines the weight of each variable. These weights can take a value ranging from 0 to 1. The more a weight is close to 1, the more the variable is contributing to overall satisfaction, or, in other words, the more this variable matters to consumers.

For example, if the regression coefficients are the following: 0.4 (price), 0.35 (service) and 0.25 (trust). This means that price is the variable that contributes to satisfaction most, i.e. this is the most important element for consumers when evaluating a product market.

The construct 'Market factor' being highly correlated (coefficient varying between 0.6 and 0.8) with Price/Quality, Service and Trust, we will exclude it from the regression equation. This enables to isolate the individual effect of Price/Quality, Service and Trust on the overall satisfaction.

1.2. REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS (WEIGHTS)

The calculated regression coefficients/ weights for the market for meat are the following:

PRICE/QUALITY	SERVICE	TRUST
0.21	0.30	0.32

This means that the **quality of service** (and its components) and **Trust** are the elements that matter more to consumers than price/quality.

1.3. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The correlation coefficients of Commitment and Complaints with Satisfaction are the following:

COMMITMENT	COMPLAINTS
0.54	- 0.21

Satisfaction has a relatively strong positive impact on consumers' commitment to their retailer. The correlation coefficient shows that satisfaction explains commitment to a fair extent (54%). In other words, consumers who are satisfied are less likely to switch to another retailer.

On the other hand, there is not a strong statistical correlation between Satisfaction and Complaints. This means that low satisfaction does not result directly to more complaints.

2. Two-dimensional analysis

The **two-dimensional analysis** is one of the most common approaches to be carried out on consumer satisfaction data and helps in the presentation of the final results. The aim of this analysis is to summarise the **opportunities for action** (i.e. areas where the market does not perform so well and where actions to change the situation are needed in order to improve consumer satisfaction) and **areas where no action is needed** (i.e. areas where the market performs well and where no action is required), on a simple mapping system that takes into account:

- **the proportion of satisfied consumers with each components of Price / Quality, Service and Trust**;
- **the regression coefficients / weights of the 3 drivers of satisfaction** (Price/Quality, Service and Trust). As mentioned before, these coefficients express **the relative importance** (contribution) of each of these 3 drivers in the overall satisfaction. The regression weight can have a value ranging from 0 to 1.

This mapping system is particularly useful in providing a visual representation of **priority areas for improvement** for the European Commission and DG SANCO to take into account.

The diagram on the next page shows the areas where priority actions are needed to improve consumers' satisfaction with **the market for meat**.

Average[2]: 66.92%

Importance +

Satisfaction -

Priority actions

TRUSTWORTHY STAFF

66,5%

ADVERTISING

63,0%

PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

62,1%

Ideal situation

(AGGRESSIVE PRACTICES 7

9,7%[4])

OVERALL TRUST 6

9,0%

EASE OF PURCHASE 7

7,8%

Low importance area

OVERALL PRICE 65,

6%

CHOICE OF QUALITIES 65,

0%

CHOICE OF PRICES 64,

7%

QUALITY COMPARABILITY 64,

7%

PRODUCT LABELING 64,

3%

AFFORDABILITY 60,

0%

INNOVATION 58,

8%

ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS 56,

7%

ETHICAL STANDARDS 53,

0%

Long term actions

SECURE PAYMENTS 78,2

%

SAFETY 74,1

%

TRANSPARENCY 74,1

%

PRICE COMPARABILITY 66,9

%

Satisfaction +

Importance –

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

2 Average proportion of satisfied consumers on all items relating to the 3 drivers of satisfaction i.e. Price/quality, Service and Trust.

3 Consumers appear to be the least satisfied with “delivery fulfillment”. This is why it appears in the upper left quadrant. However, the high proportions of “don’t know” answers suggest that a large share of consumers have not been delivered meat. Therefore this element of service should not be considered as a priority action as such.

4 Although satisfaction with this element is far above the average (which justifies its position in the “ideal situation quadrant”), results show a significant proportion of dissatisfied consumers (12% on average). Improvement in this area is thus needed.

On average, 66,9% of consumers are satisfied with all aspects relating to Price/Quality, Service and Trust.

The highest overall satisfaction levels are recorded for the quality of service (70,6%) while this figure is 68% for trust and 65% for price/quality.

It can be thus said that while consumers place relatively more importance on aspects related to trust and the quality of service, they are at the same time relatively more satisfied with the performance of the market for meat in these respects than they are concerning price/quality.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST

TRUST

When it comes to the market for meat, trust matters the most to consumers. When focusing on the components of this dimension, it can be seen that overall they are satisfied with the market in this respect, particularly concerning the existence of aggressive practices in purchasing situation, i.e. few respondents encounter these types of problems. However, seeing the large share of consumers have felt unduly coerced or pressurized to buy products on this market, improvement in this field is needed.

The other aspects of trust that leave space for improvement are the perceived trustworthiness of staff, plausible advertising and protection of privacy of customers.

SERVICE

Consumers are the most satisfied with the quality of service in the market for meat and they simultaneously place a relatively high importance on it. Consequently, for most aspects of the service, the situation is ideal, i.e. consumers are satisfied with the ways important components of service are dealt with, including ease of purchase, opening hours and staff.

PRICE/QUALITY

Regardless of the fact that price/quality aspects have less weight when it comes to consumers' satisfaction with the market, they should no be ignored particularly that satisfaction levels for some variables are significantly lower than the average satisfaction, namely innovation, environmentally friendly products and ethical standards which all refer to a need of a sufficient diversity of products in the market.

At the same time, high satisfaction in secure payments, safety of products and transparent pricing should be maintained in order to keep the market satisfaction stable. Actions focused on this dimension are however secondary to those concerning trust and service issues.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering these observations, the following are potential areas in which the market for meat could be improved:

- Increasing consumers' confidence in the protection of their privacy by having staff that is knowledgeable of consumer protection issues as well as improving the quality of advertising.
- Better protect consumers against aggressive selling practices.

On the other hand, the positive elements of the market that must be maintained are:

- The ease of the purchasing process in terms of opening hours, easy availability of products that are safe in retailers as well as offering secure ways for payment and transparent pricing.