



SURVEY ON CONSUMER SATISFACTION WITH THE RETAIL DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS

PRODUCT MARKET REPORT

NEW MOTOR VEHICLES

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 **New Motor Vehicles**. 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.

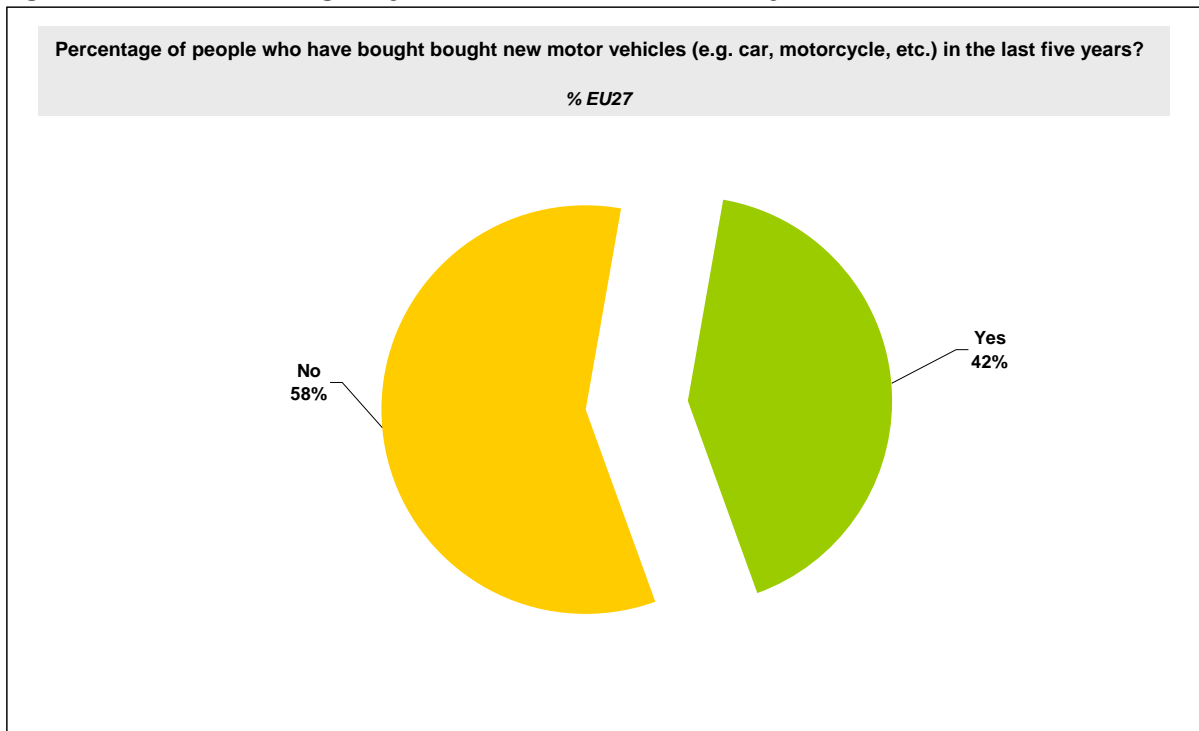
The second level of analysis presented in this report shows the interaction of key satisfaction indicators so as to explain consumers' overall satisfaction.

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](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/strategy/cons_satisfaction_en.htm)

2. Product bought by consumers in the last five years

Figure 1 – Product bought by consumers in the last five years

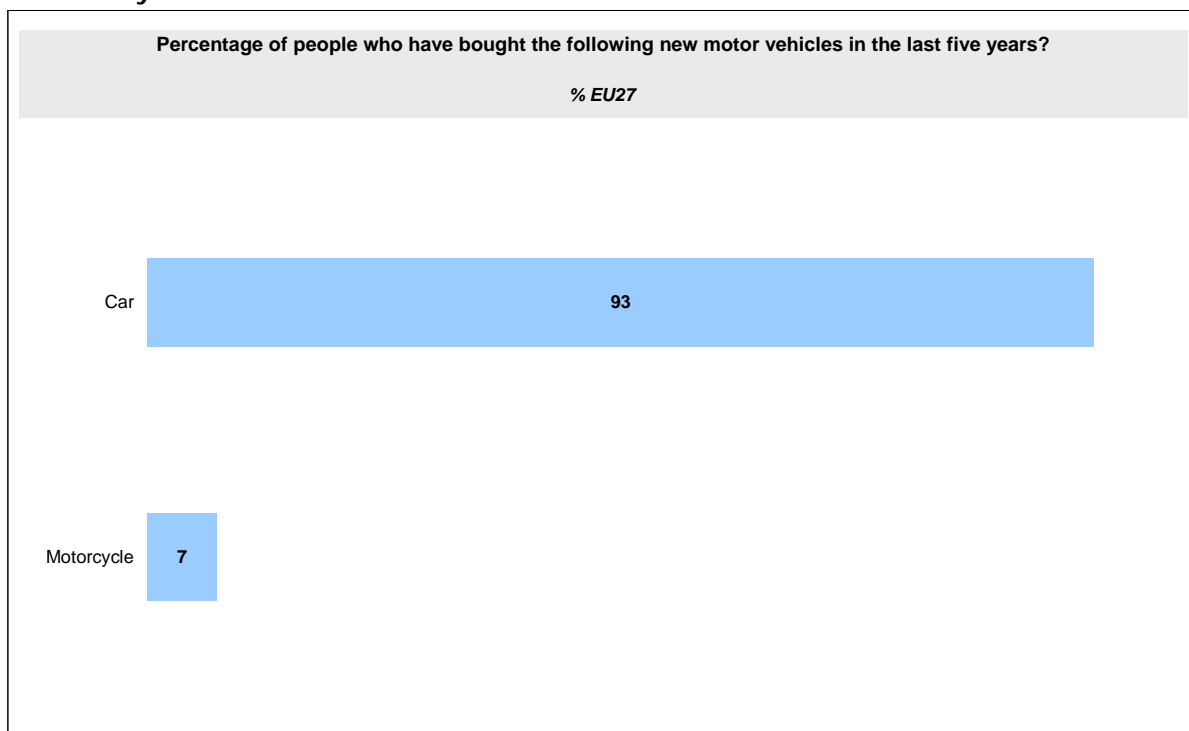


58% of consumers in the EU27 have bought new motor vehicles in the last 5 years.

The detail of products bought during the period of reference is shown in the following chart.

3. Type of new motor vehicles bought by consumers in the last 5 years

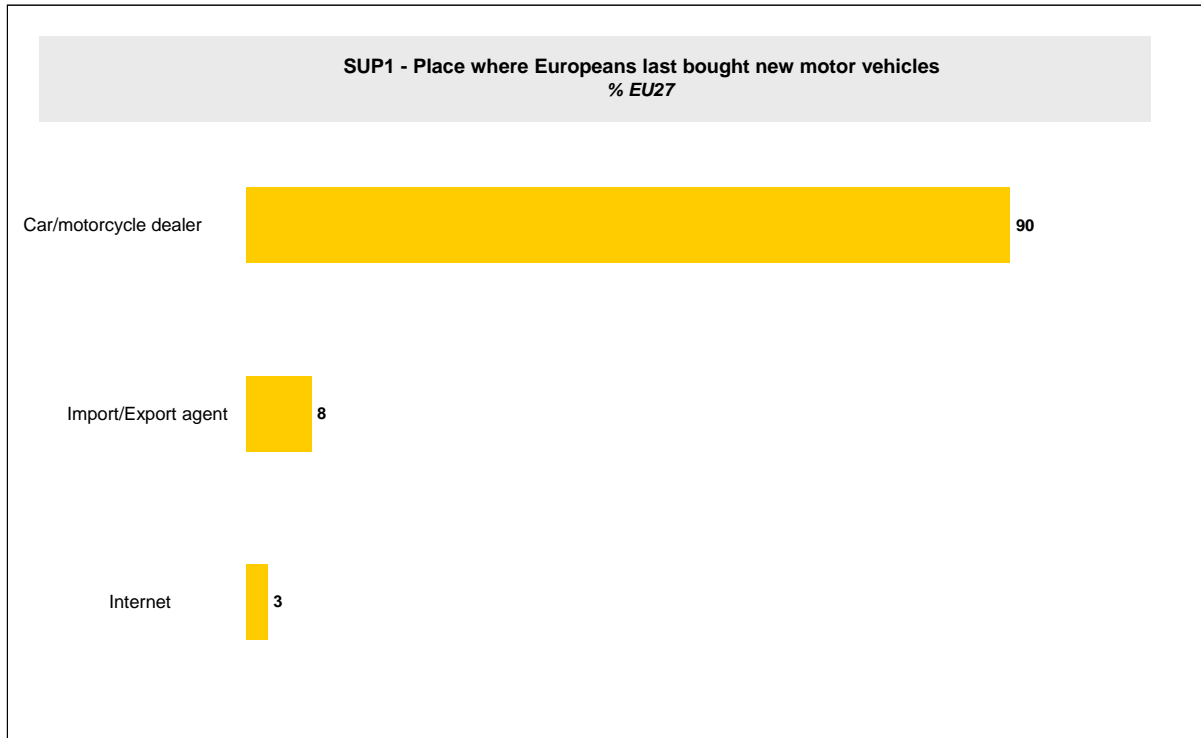
Figure 2 – Percentage of people who have bought the following new motor vehicles in the last 5 years



More than 9 in 10 European consumers bought a car in the last five years, whereas they are only 7% to have bought a motorcycle.

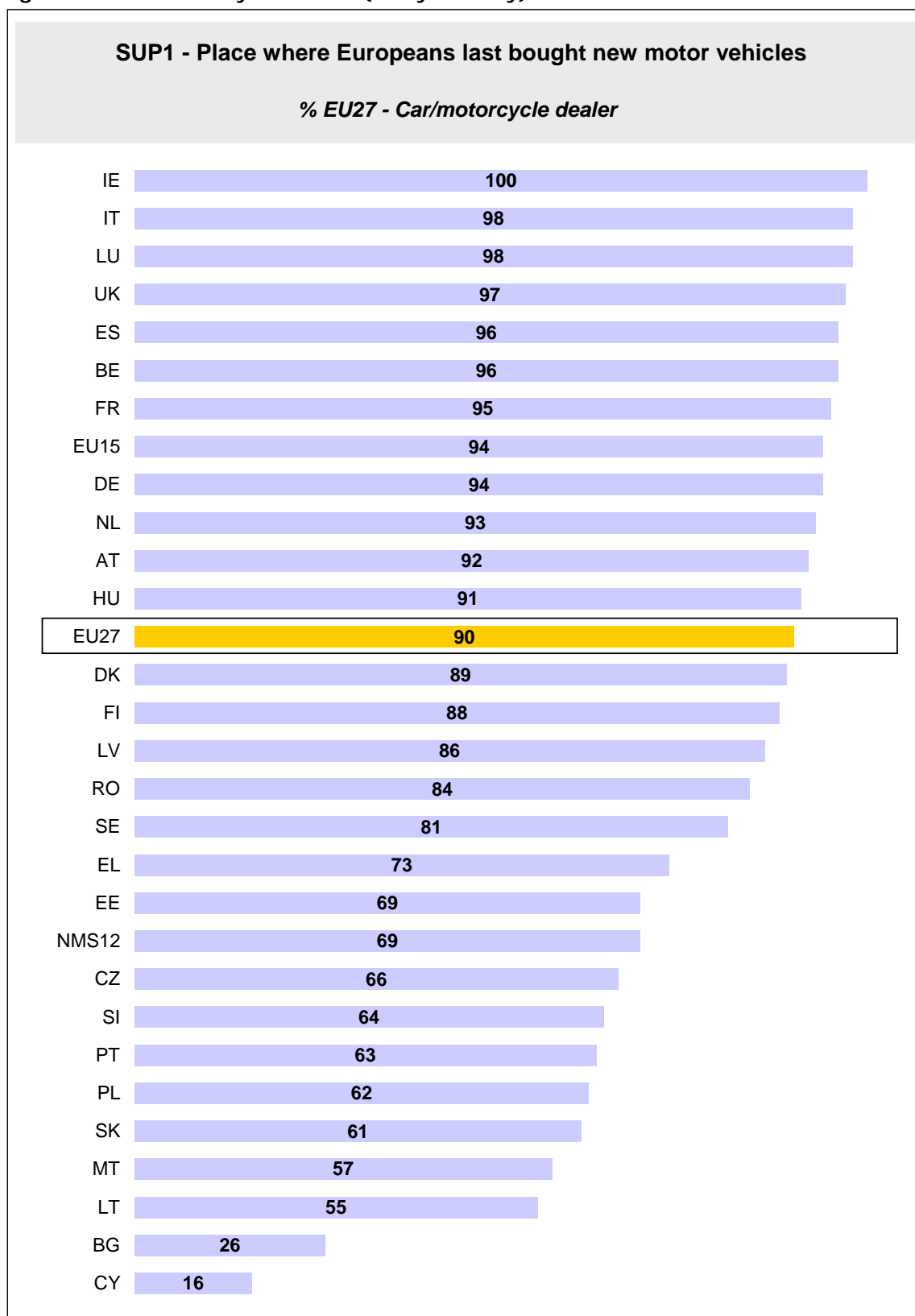
4. Distribution channels used

Figure 3 – Distribution channels used (% EU27)



Respondents were asked to indicate where they last bought new motor vehicles. From the results it appears that new motor vehicles are purchased in car or motorcycle dealers (90%). Only 8% of European consumers bought them via an import/export agent and 3% on the Internet.

Figure 4 –Car/motorcycle dealer (% by country)



9 European consumers in 10 are most likely to buy new motor vehicles at car or motorcycle dealers. 99.9% do so in Ireland. However, this is the case for only 16% of consumers in Cyprus and for 26% of consumers in Bulgaria.

In those countries, people tend to buy their new motor vehicles in import/export agents (84% in Cyprus and 71% in Bulgaria against an EU average of 8%). To a lesser extent this is also the case in Malta (43%), Portugal (37%), Slovenia and Slovakia (34% each).

Purchasing new motor vehicles on the Internet is relatively frequent in Sweden (17% against an EU average of 3%)

Figure 5 – Import/Export agent (% by country)

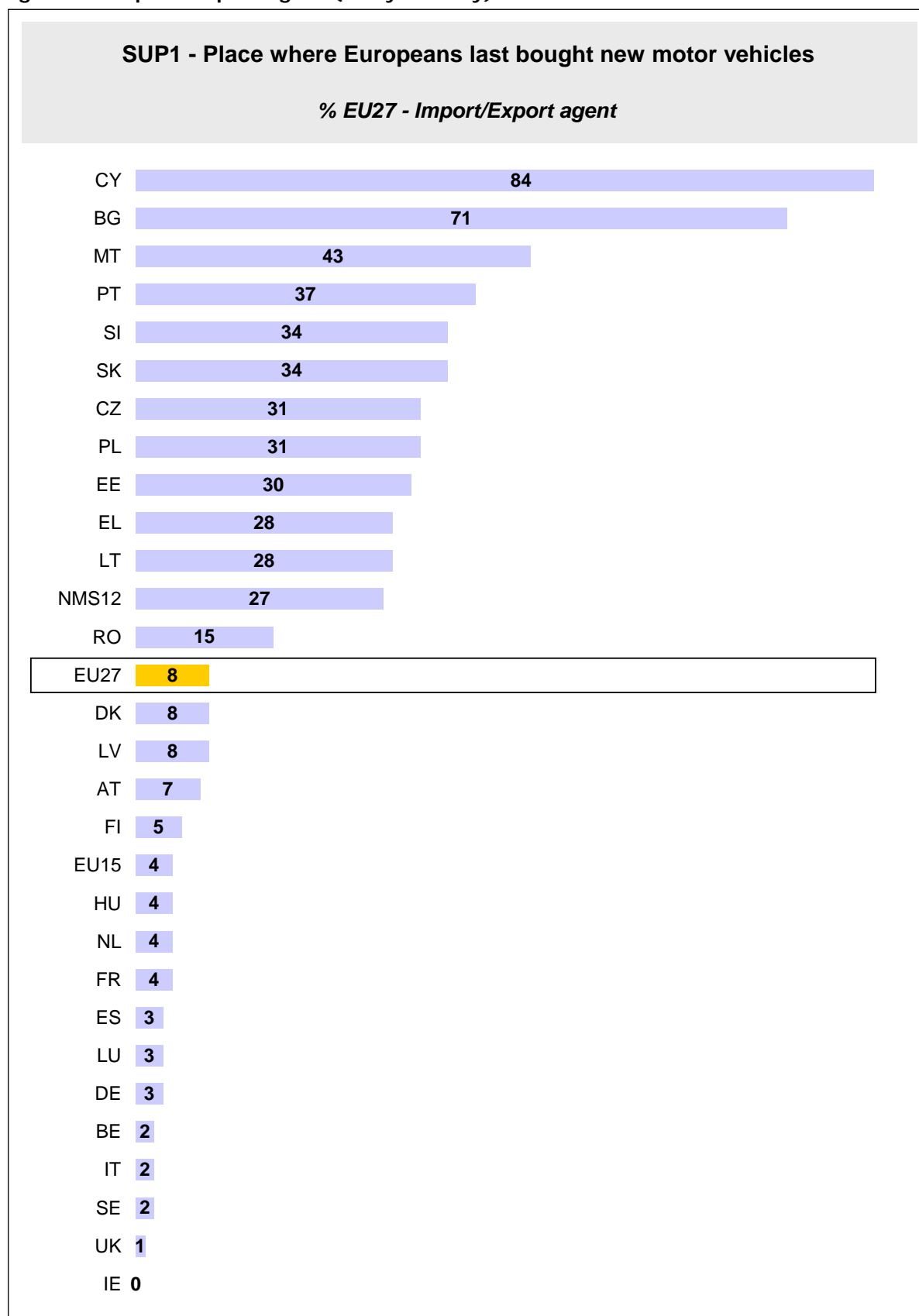
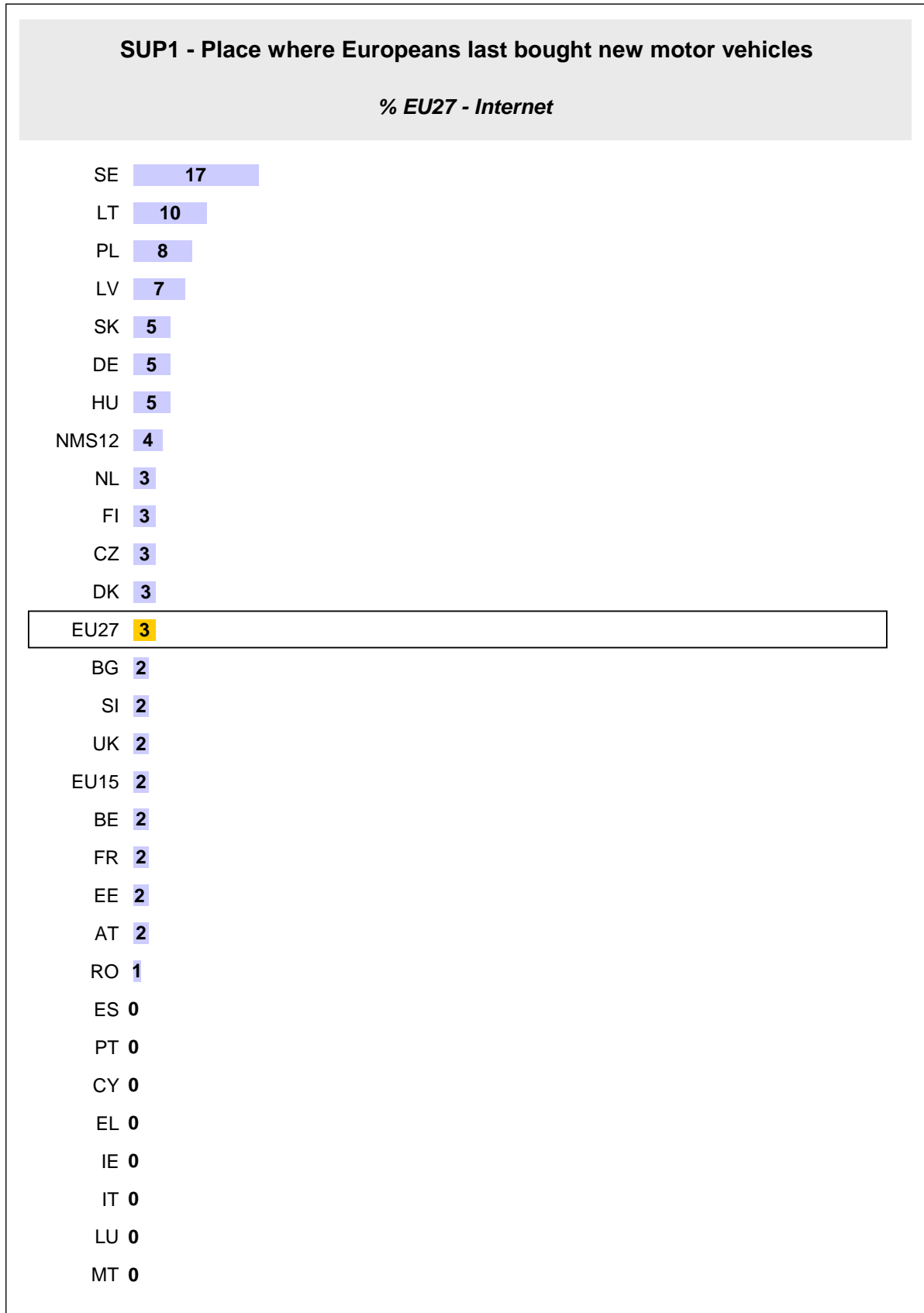


Figure 6 –Internet (% by country)



Chapter 2 – Overall satisfaction

1. Overall satisfaction with the retailer

1.1. OVERALL RESULTS

8 EU consumers in 10 are satisfied with their retailer when it comes to buy new motor vehicles.

The proportion of consumers who are dissatisfied is marginal (just the EU27 average).

1.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

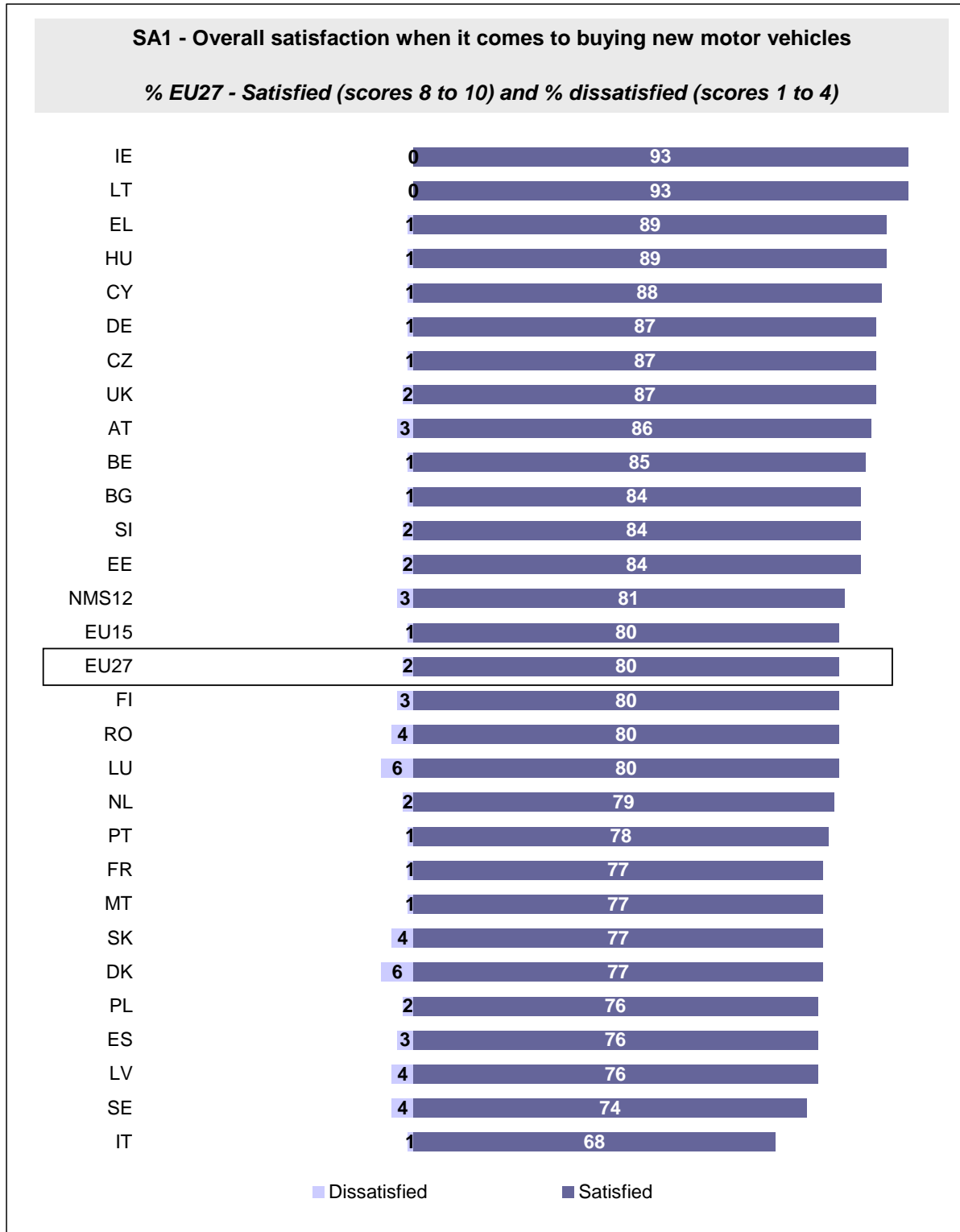
There is not significant difference in the results by distribution channel when speaking of overall satisfaction.

1.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

In every EU Member State, at least two thirds of consumers are satisfied with their retailer when it comes to buying new motor vehicles. This is especially the case for 93% of Irish and Latvian consumers, whereas the least satisfied consumers are found in Italy (68%). The proportion of dissatisfied consumers is marginal across countries (never more than 6% and an EU average of 2%).

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 variable show that satisfaction increases with the age of the respondent. Women are also slightly more satisfied than men.

2. Value for money of products

2.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Overall, EU consumers seem to be satisfied with the price/quality offered by their retailer when it comes to new motor vehicles (65% satisfied consumers). Satisfaction is clearly marked among consumers from the new Member States (74% satisfied consumers compared to 63% in the EU15). Very few people are dissatisfied (3% on average).

2.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Consumers who buy new motor vehicles on the Internet are slightly more satisfied (68.7%) with the value for money offered by their retailer than those who buy them at car/motorcycle dealers (64.5%).

2.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

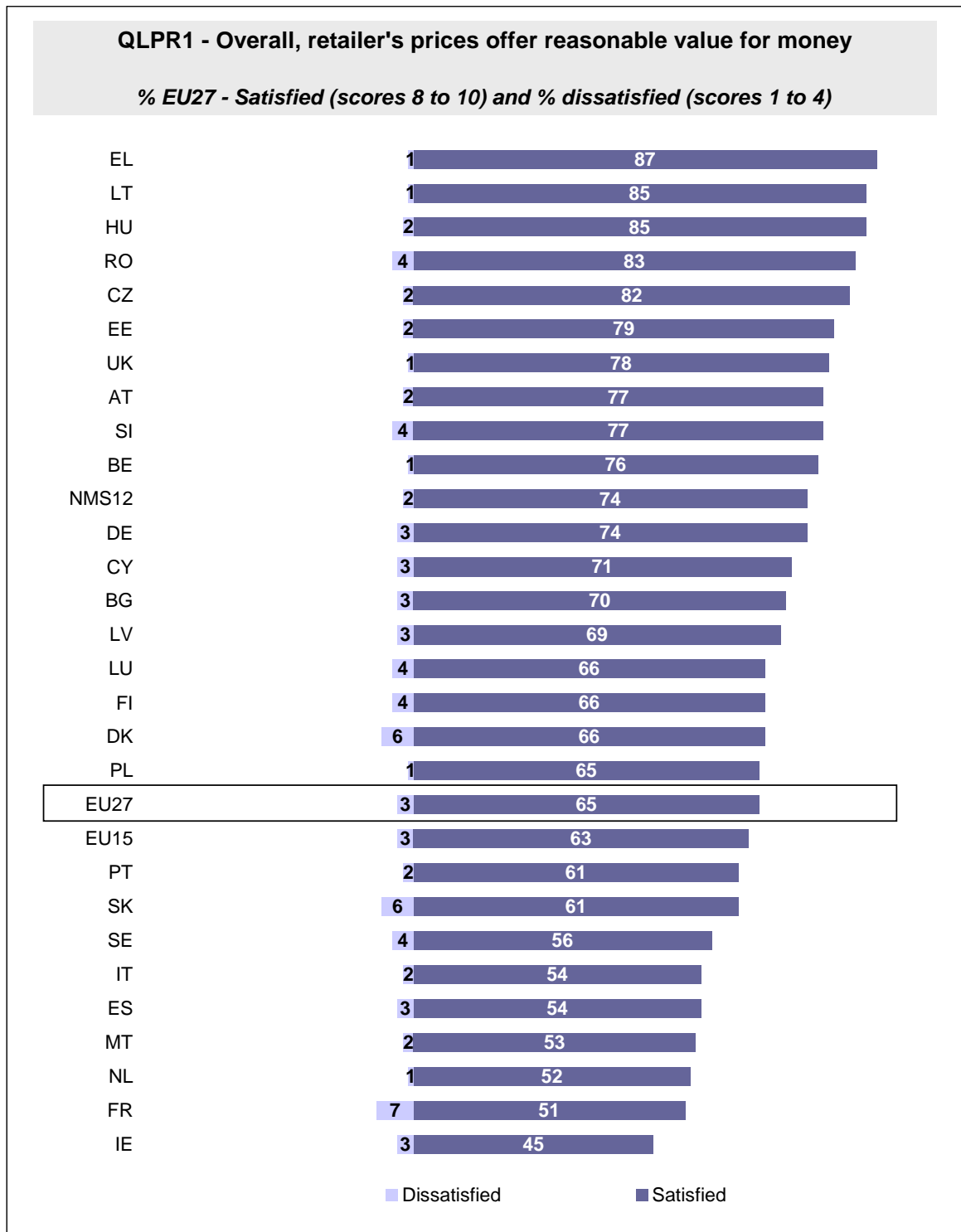
In the following countries, at least 8 consumers in 10 are satisfied with the value for money offered by their retailer when it comes to new motor vehicles: Greece (87%), Lithuania, Hungary (85%), Romania (83%) and Czech Republic (82%).

Ireland is the only country where less than 50% of consumers is satisfied with their retailer's prices/quality (45% satisfied consumers).

It is also interesting to note the relatively low proportion of dissatisfied consumers: the highest proportion is to be found in France (7% against an EU average of 3%).

Results are shown in the following chart.

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



2.4. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Students and self-employed tend to be less satisfied than other socio-economic profiles when it comes to evaluate their retailer's prices of new motor vehicles. In addition, dissatisfaction is clearly marked among unemployed persons (10%).

3. Quality of services

3.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Overall, 3 EU consumers in 4 seem to be satisfied with the quality of services offered by their retailer when it comes to new motor vehicles. Very few people are dissatisfied (2% in the EU27).

3.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

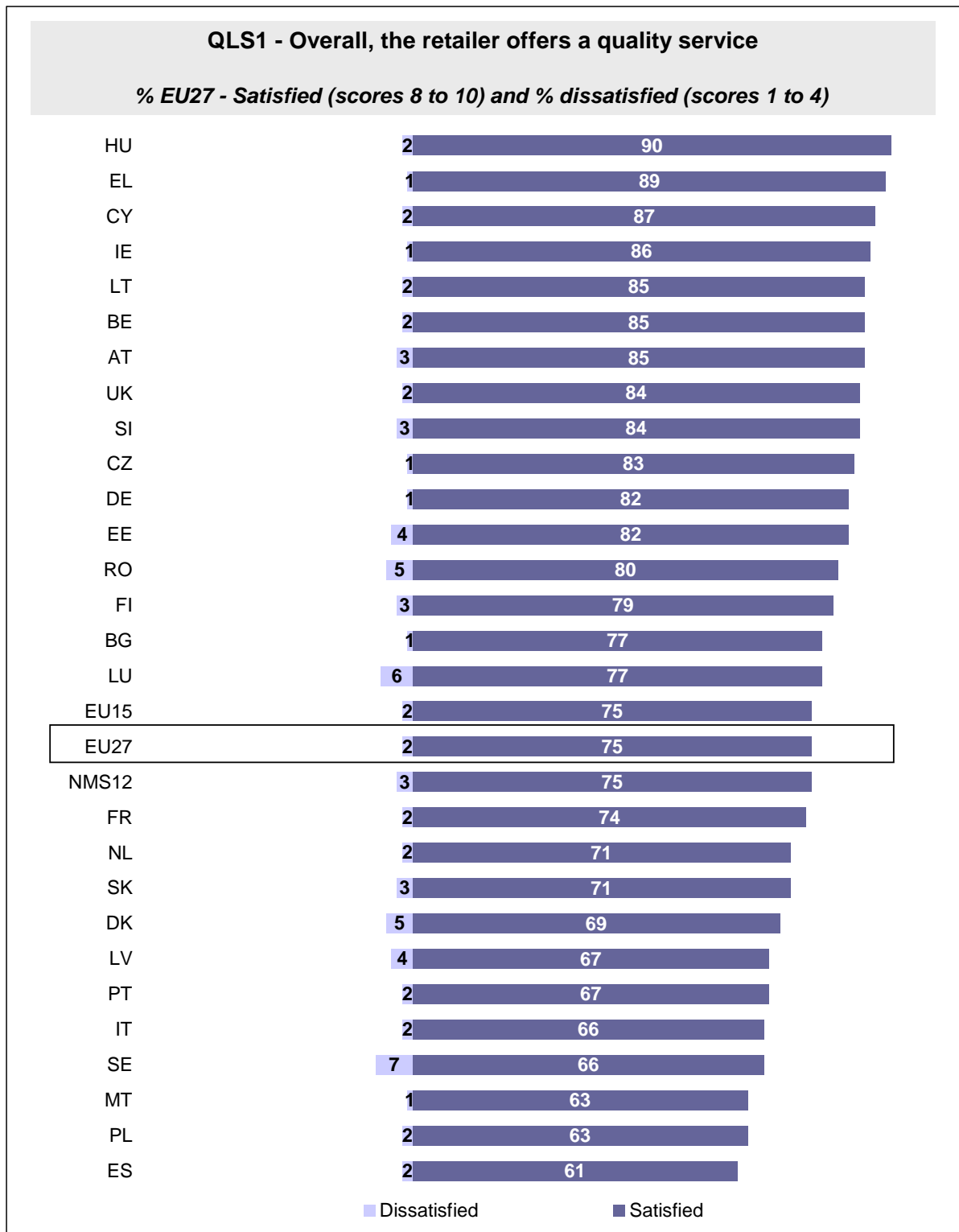
Those who purchase new motor vehicles in car/motorcycle dealers (76%) seem to be more satisfied with the quality of service offered by their retailer than those who purchase these products through other channels of distribution, particularly on the Internet (62.6%).

3.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

In all EU Member States, at least 60% of consumers are satisfied with the quality of services offered by their retailer, particularly in Hungary (90%) and Greece (89%). On the other side of the spectrum, the only countries where less than two thirds of consumers are satisfied with the quality of service are Spain (61%), Poland and Malta (63% each). It is also interesting to note the low proportion of dissatisfied consumers (never above 7%).

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 more satisfied than men when it comes to evaluate the quality of services offered by their retailer. In addition, the older the consumer is the more satisfied. As previously observed, 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 them. In the New Member States more consumers than in the EU15 to think so (74% against 68%).

4.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

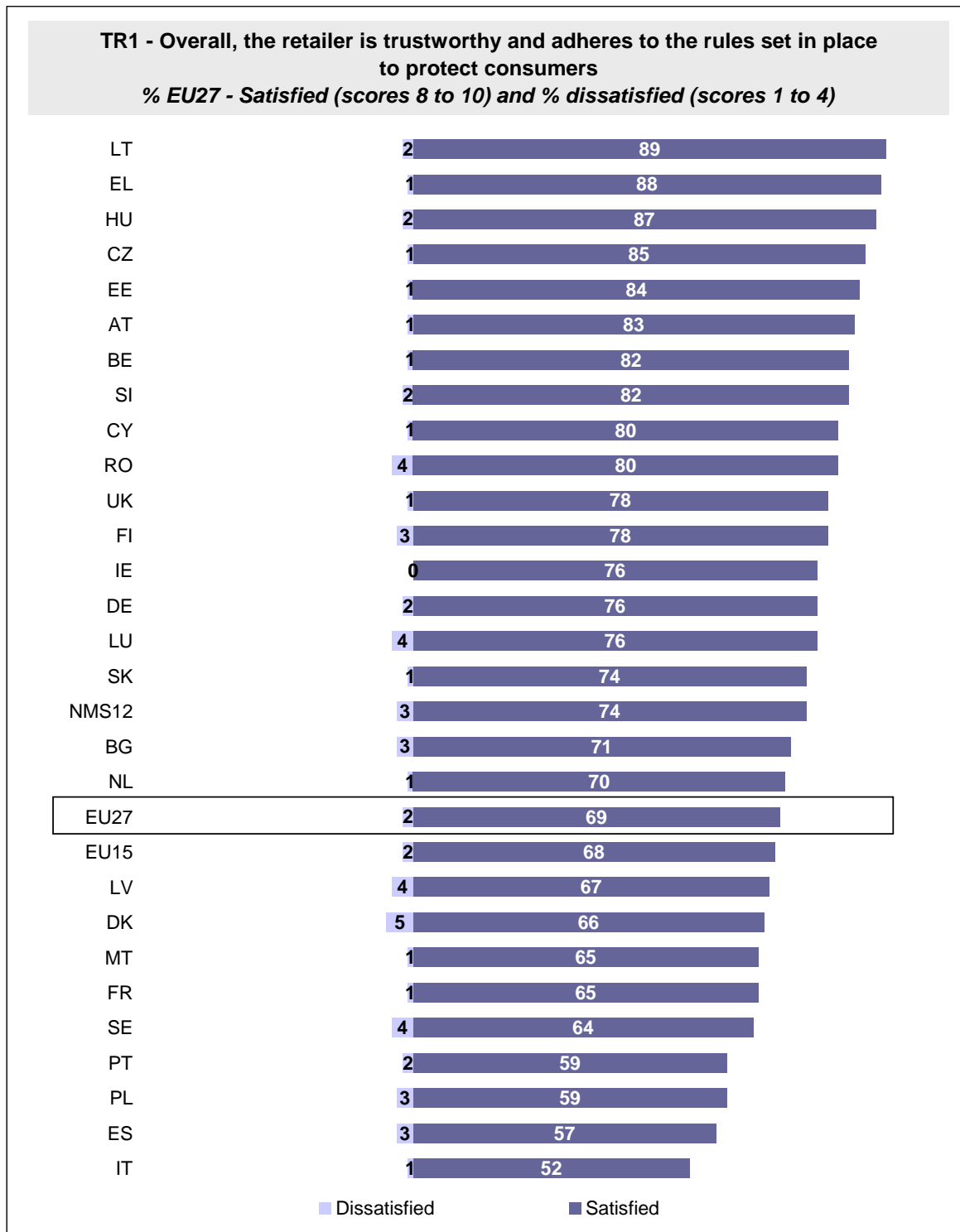
Those who purchase new motor vehicles on the Internet are less inclined than the others, especially those who buy these products in car/motorcycle dealers, to think their retailer is trustworthy and adheres to rules set in place to protect consumers (50% satisfied against 69%).

4.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

In all EU countries, at least one in two consumers think that their retailer is trustworthy and adheres to the rules set in place to protect them. In Lithuania and Greece, almost 9 in 10 consumers are of this view. On the other side of the spectrum, we find Italy (52%), Spain (57%), Poland and Portugal (59%).

Results are shown in the following chart.

Figure 10 – Overall trust (% by country)



4.3. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

No big differences are observed when looking the results broken down by socio-demographic characteristics. As observed previously, the older the consumer is the more satisfied with the retailer. 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 new motor vehicles (67% satisfied). As already observed, consumers from the new Member States tend to be slightly more satisfied (71% satisfied) than the others (66% in the EU15). Very few people are dissatisfied (2% on average).

5.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

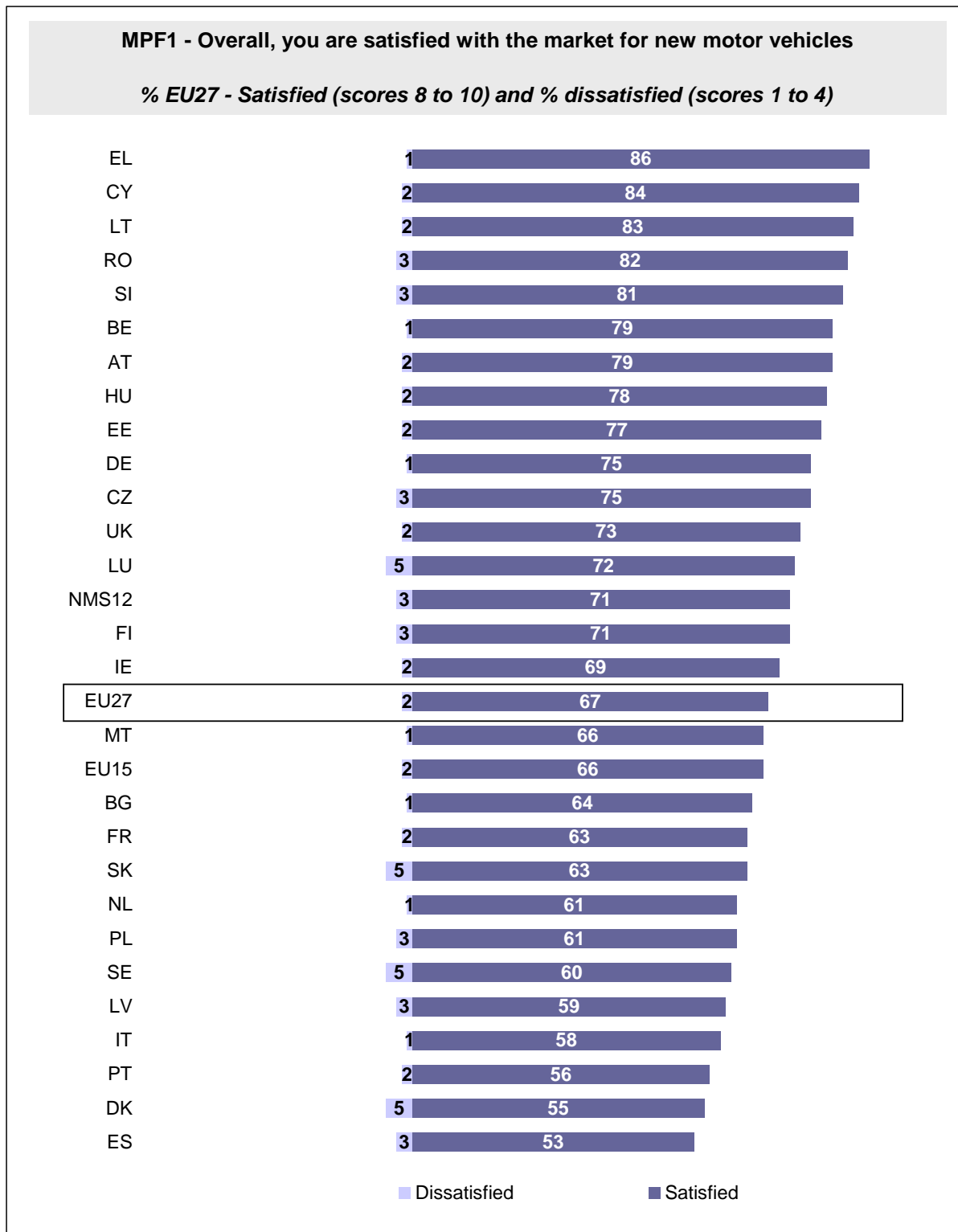
Consumers who generally purchase new motor vehicles on the Internet (69.7%) and in car/motorcycle dealers (67.4%) give a more positive evaluation of the market in general than those who purchase these products through import/export agents (63%).

5.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

In all EU27 Member States, more than 5 consumers in 10 are satisfied with the market for new motor vehicles. The most satisfied consumers are found in Greece, Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia (81% and more), whereas the least satisfied are found in Spain (53%), Denmark (55%) and Portugal (56%).

Results are shown in the following chart.

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



5.3. DIFFERENCES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

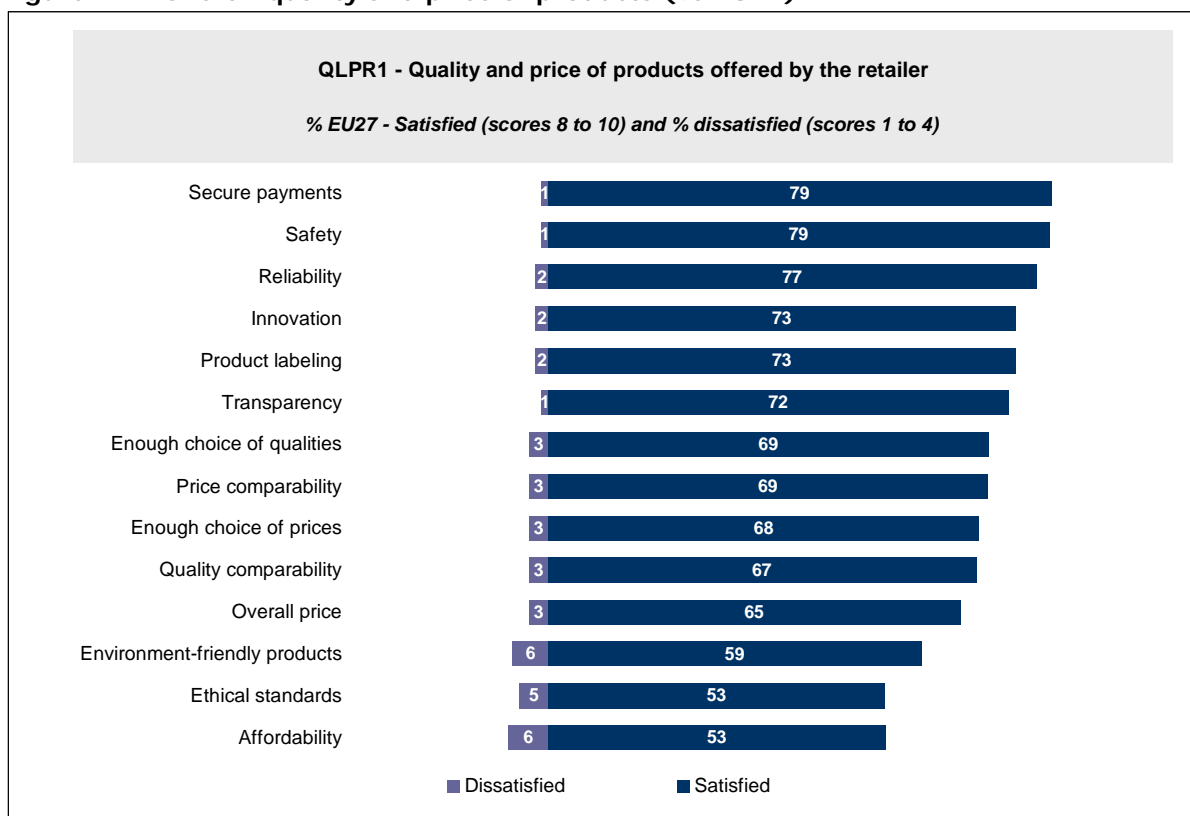
Results broken down by socio-economic profile show that satisfaction tends to increase with the age. The least satisfied are to be found among students (55%).

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 new motor vehicles offered by their retailer, almost 8 consumers in 10 said they were satisfied with:

- Modes of payments i.e. the retailer offers easy and safe ways to pay for their products
- Safety of products
- Reliability i.e. the product they bought works well and for a reasonable period of time.

On the other hand, only 53% of EU consumers think their retailer is affordable and the same percentage thinks there is a wide enough choice of products that have been produced according to specific ethical standards (e.g. produced without the use of child labour, etc.). In addition, less than 6 EU consumers in 10 thinks their retailer offers a wide enough choice of cars/motorcycles that have been produced in an environment-friendly way and/or that allows them to reduce their energy consumption.

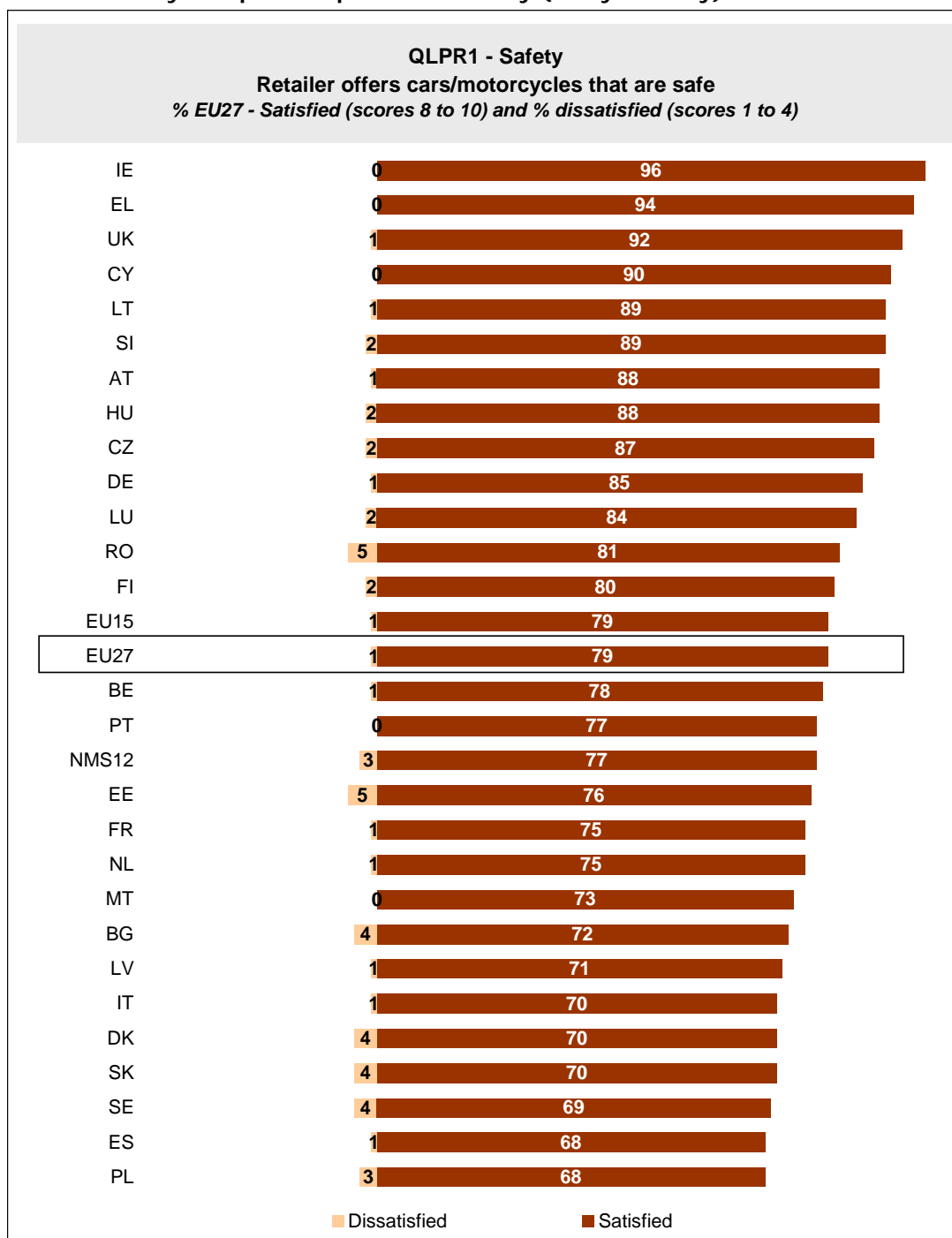
1.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Consumers who purchase new motor vehicles on the Internet are slightly more satisfied than others with the most of the elements that constitute the price/quality offered by their retailer. Exceptions to this pattern are, among other things, secure payments, quality comparability, reliability and ethical standards. Concerning these issues consumers who purchase new motor vehicles in car/motorcycle dealers are among the most satisfied respondents.

1.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

A) SAFETY

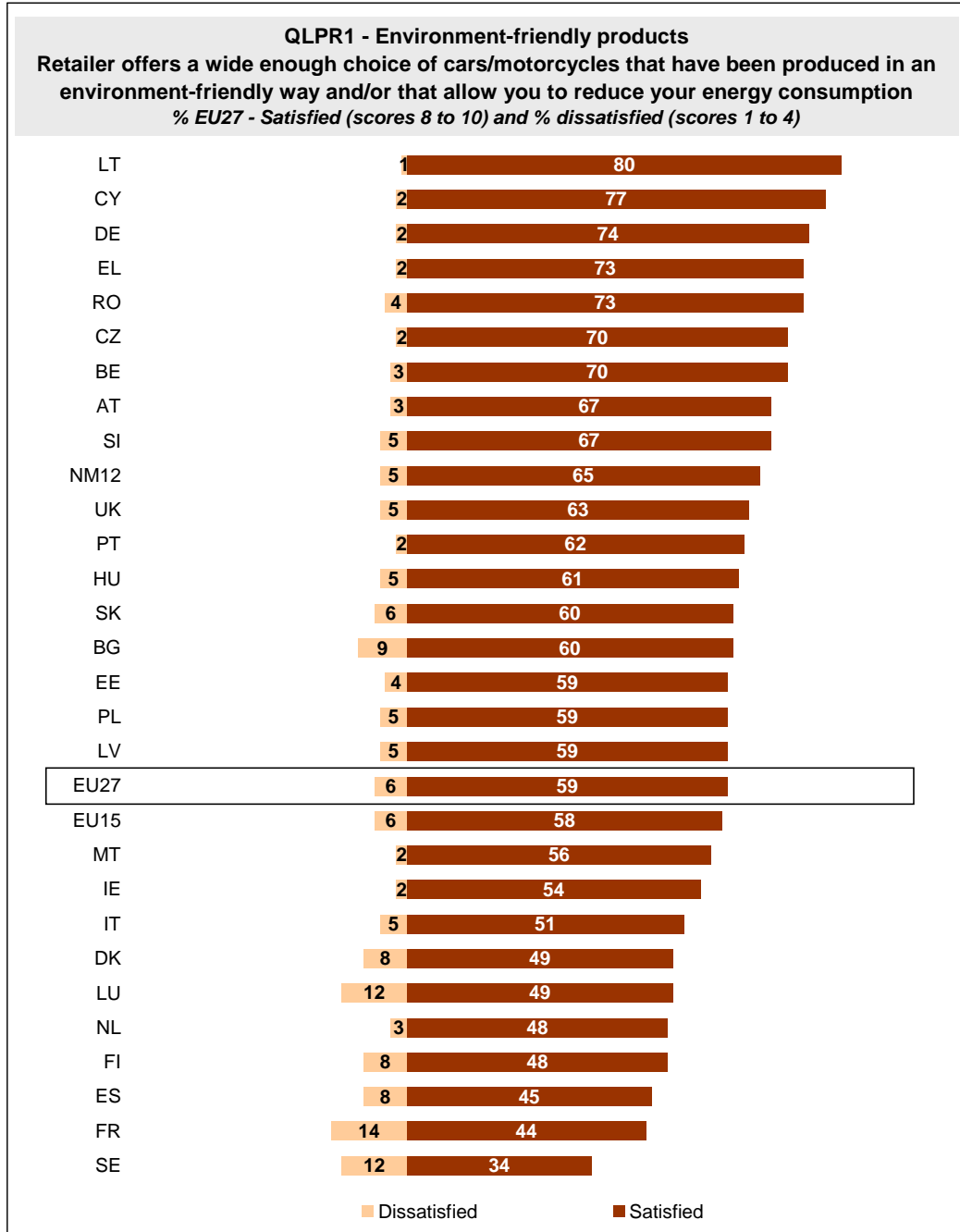
Figure 13 – Quality and price of products: Safety (% by country)



In all EU Member States, more than two thirds of consumers believe that new motor vehicles offered by their retailer are safe. This is particularly the case in Ireland (96%), Greece (94%) and the UK (92%). On the other side of the spectrum, less than 7 in 10 Swedes, Spaniards and Poles are of this view.

B) ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS

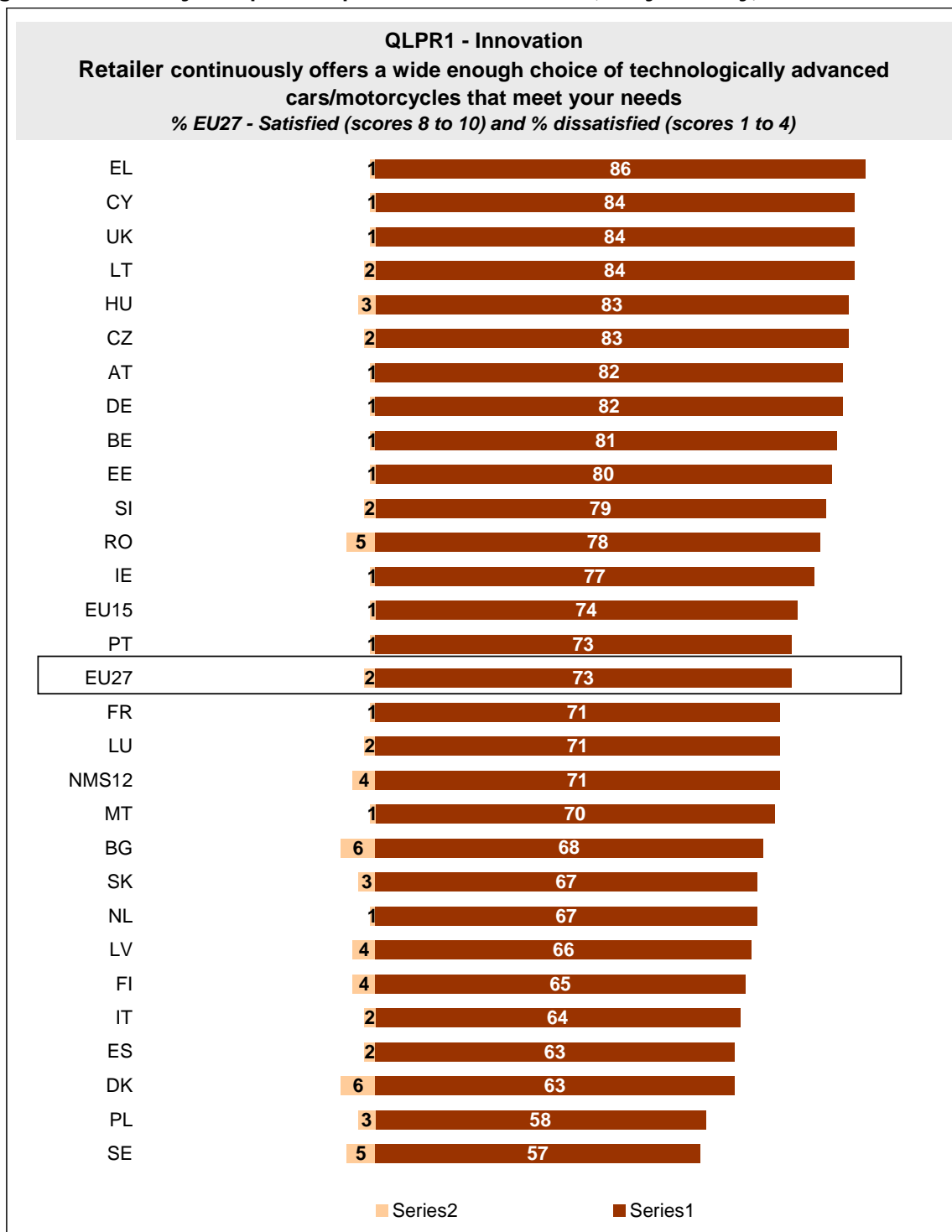
Figure 14 – Quality and price of products: Environment-friendly products (% by country)



A majority of consumers is satisfied with the supply of new motor vehicles that have been produced in an environment-friendly way. This is especially the case of 80% of Lithuanians, 77% of Cypriots, 74% of Germans and 73% of Greeks and of Romanians. The lowest level of satisfaction is recorded in Sweden (34%). It is also important to note the high proportion of dissatisfied consumers in some countries (14% in France and 12% in Sweden and in Luxembourg) and the proportion of people who could not answer the question (“don’t know”) compared to an EU average of 6% (27% in Sweden and 25% in Hungary).

C) INNOVATION

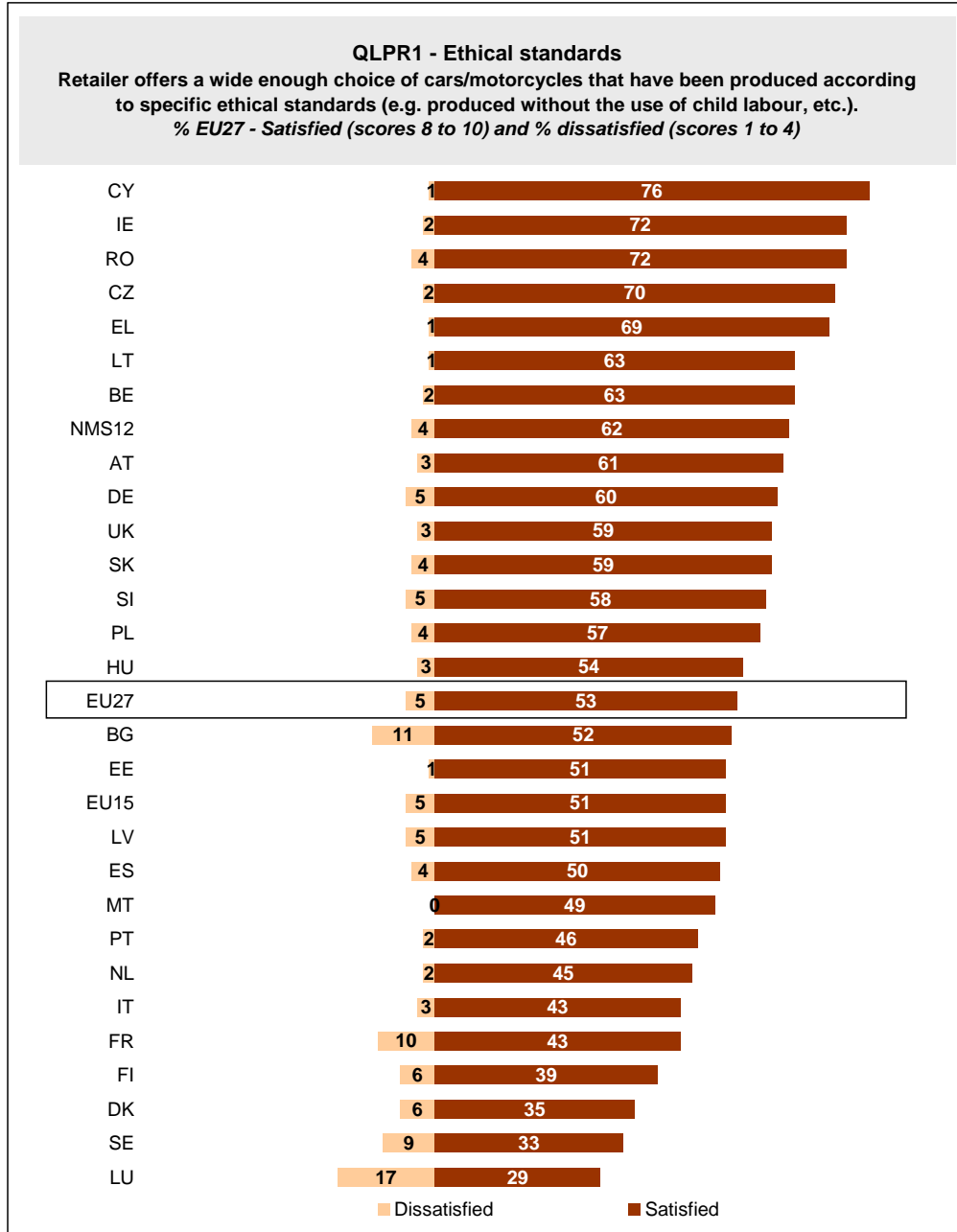
Figure 15 – Quality and price of products: Innovation (% by country)



Three in four EU consumers are satisfied with the choice of technologically advanced new motor vehicles offered by their retailer. In turn, less than 60% of Swedes and Poles are satisfied. It is also interesting to note the relatively high proportions of “don’t know” (compared to an EU average of 1%) in Sweden (15%), Slovakia (13%) and Finland (11%).

D) ETHICAL STANDARDS

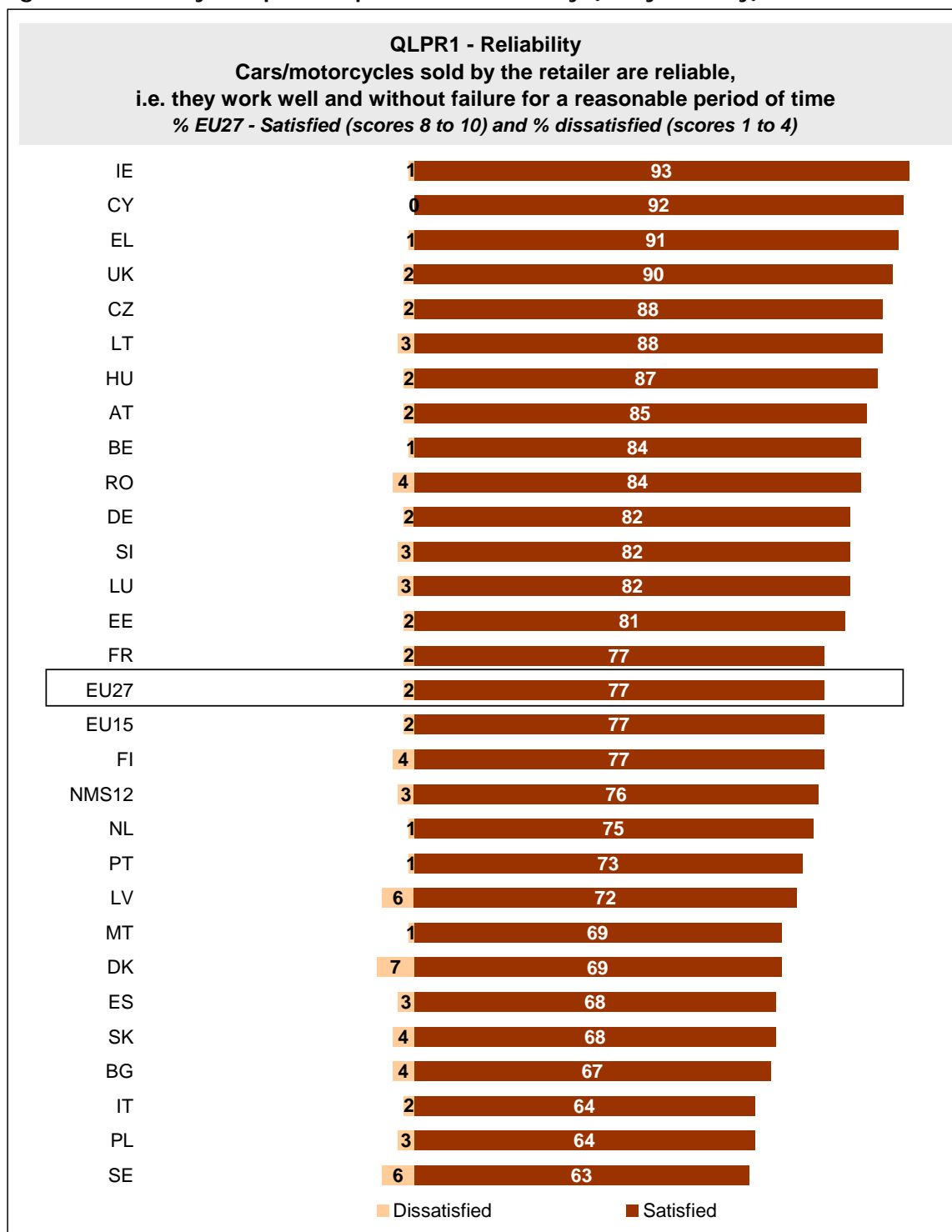
Figure 16 – Quality and price of products: Ethical standards (% by country)



Satisfaction with the choice of products that are produced according to certain ethical standards varies strongly between countries. At the top of the list we find 76% of Cypriots, 72% of Irish people and Romanians, 70% of Czechs and 69% of Greeks whereas the least satisfied are found Luxembourg (29%), Sweden (33%), Denmark (35%) and Finland (39%). The highest levels of dissatisfaction are observed in Luxembourg (17%), Bulgaria (11%), France (10%) and Sweden (9%). Furthermore, a relatively high proportion of consumers across the EU could not evaluate their retailer on this criterion. In particular, we find high levels of “don’t know” (compared to an EU average of 18%) in Denmark (44%), Sweden (43%), Estonia (39%), Hungary, Malta, Portugal (34% each) and Finland (32%).

E) RELIABILITY

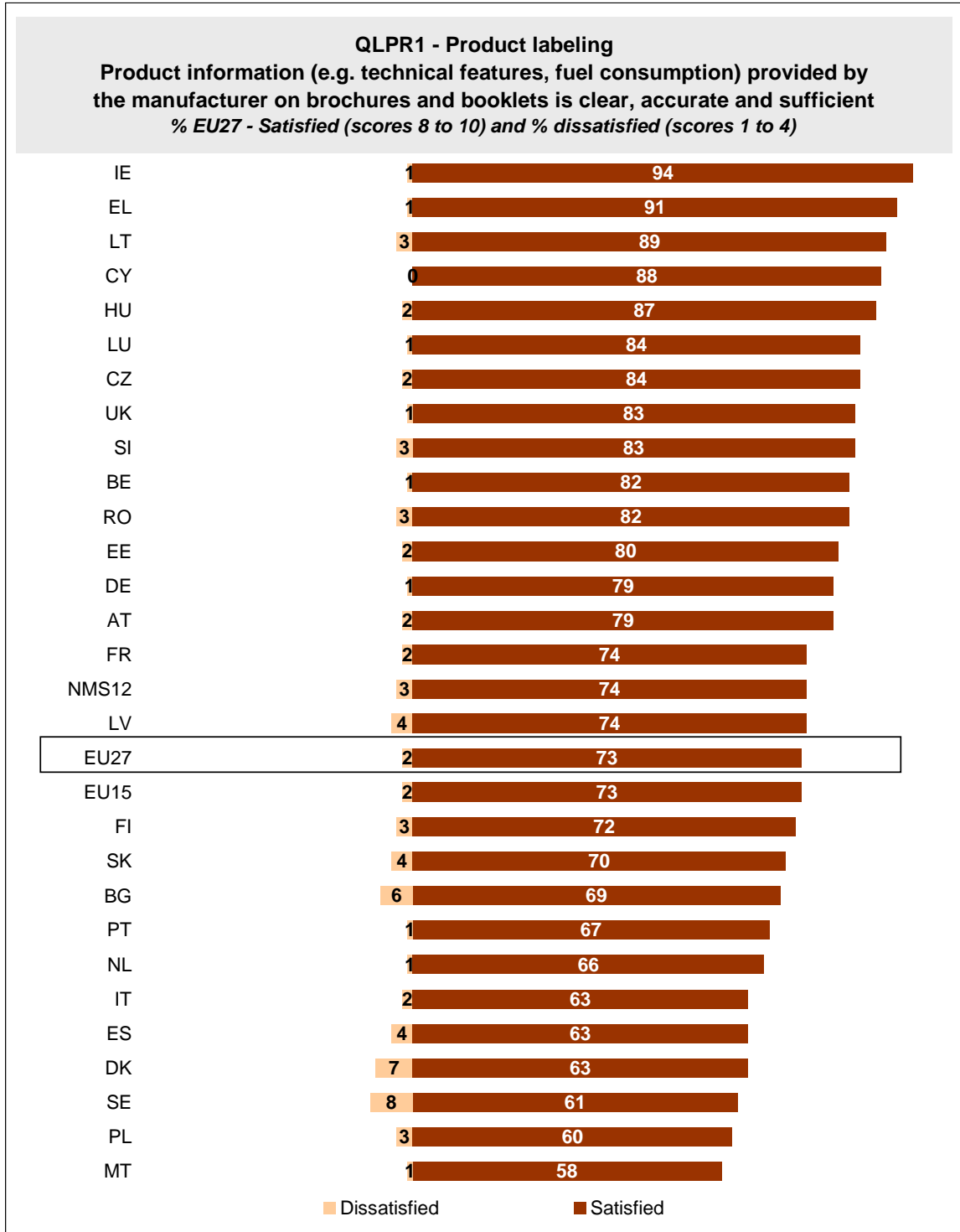
Figure 17– Quality and price of products: Reliability (% by country)



More than 9 in 10 Irish people, Cypriots and Greeks (against an EU average of 77%) are satisfied with the reliability of new motor vehicles offered by their retailer. On the other side of the spectrum, we find consumers in Sweden (63%), Poland and Italy (64% each). It is also interesting to note the very low proportions of dissatisfied consumers (2%).

F) PRODUCT LABELING

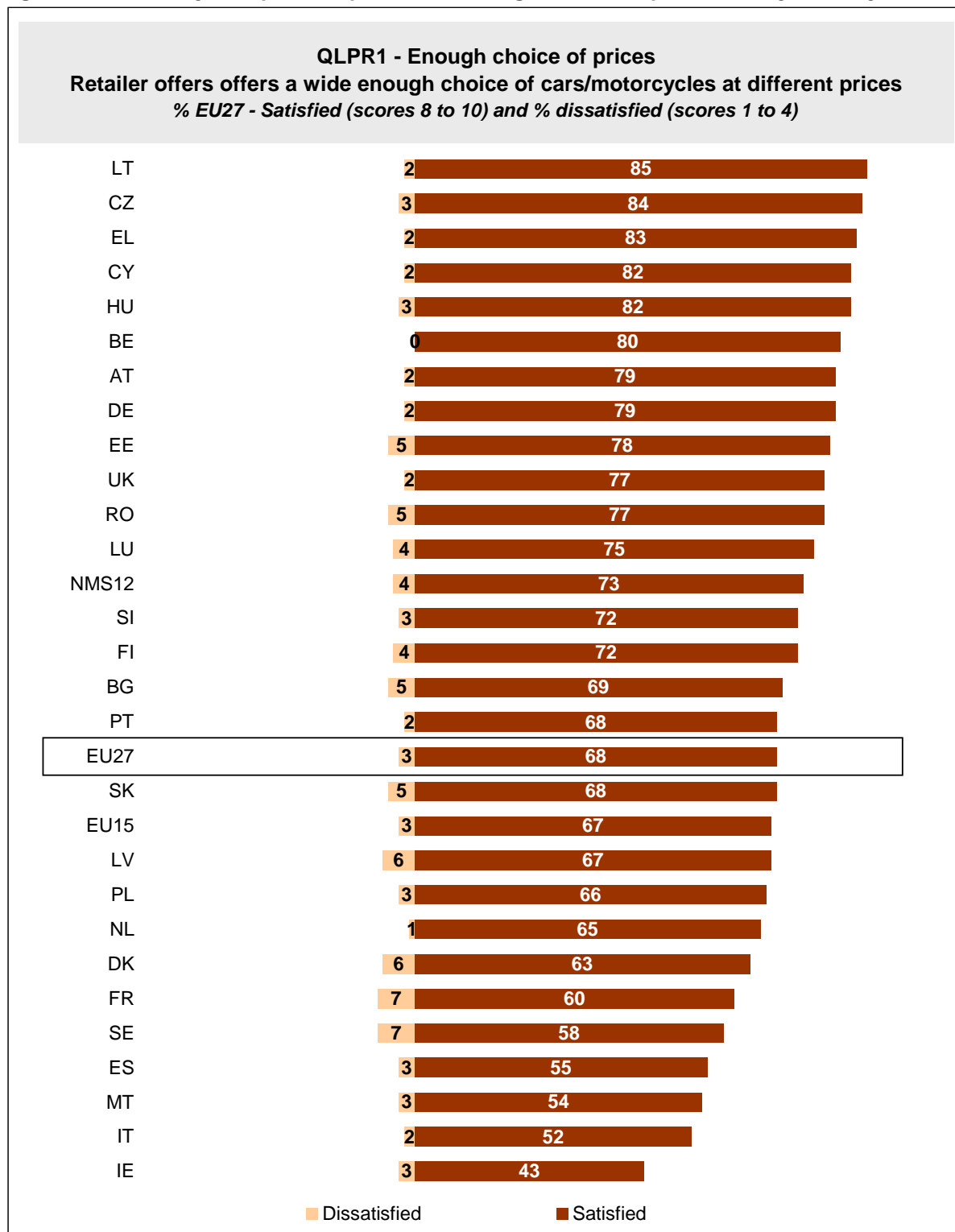
Figure 18 – Quality and price of products: Product labeling (% by country)



More than 7 consumers in 10 in the EU27 are satisfied with product labeling. The most satisfied are Irish people (94%) and Greeks (91%). The least satisfied are found in Malta (58%), Poland (60%), Sweden (61%), Denmark, Spain and Italy (63% each).

G) ENOUGH CHOICE OF PRICES

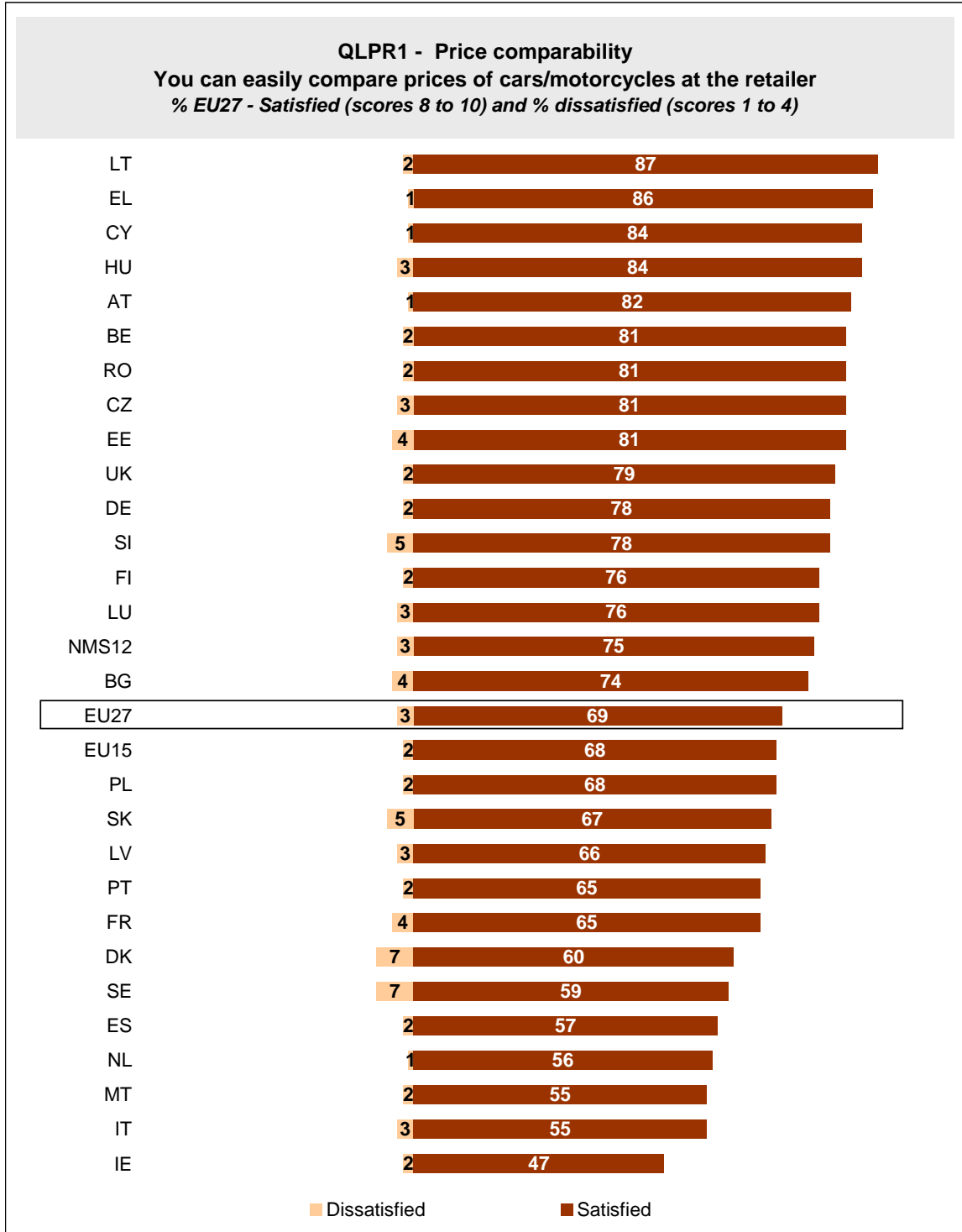
Figure 19 – Quality and price of products: enough choice of prices (% by country)



A great a majority of consumers is satisfied with the choice of prices offered by their retailer. More than 8 EU consumers in 10 are satisfied in Lithuania, Czech Republic, Greece, Cyprus and (against an EU average of 68%), while they are only 43% in Ireland.

H) PRICE COMPARABILITY

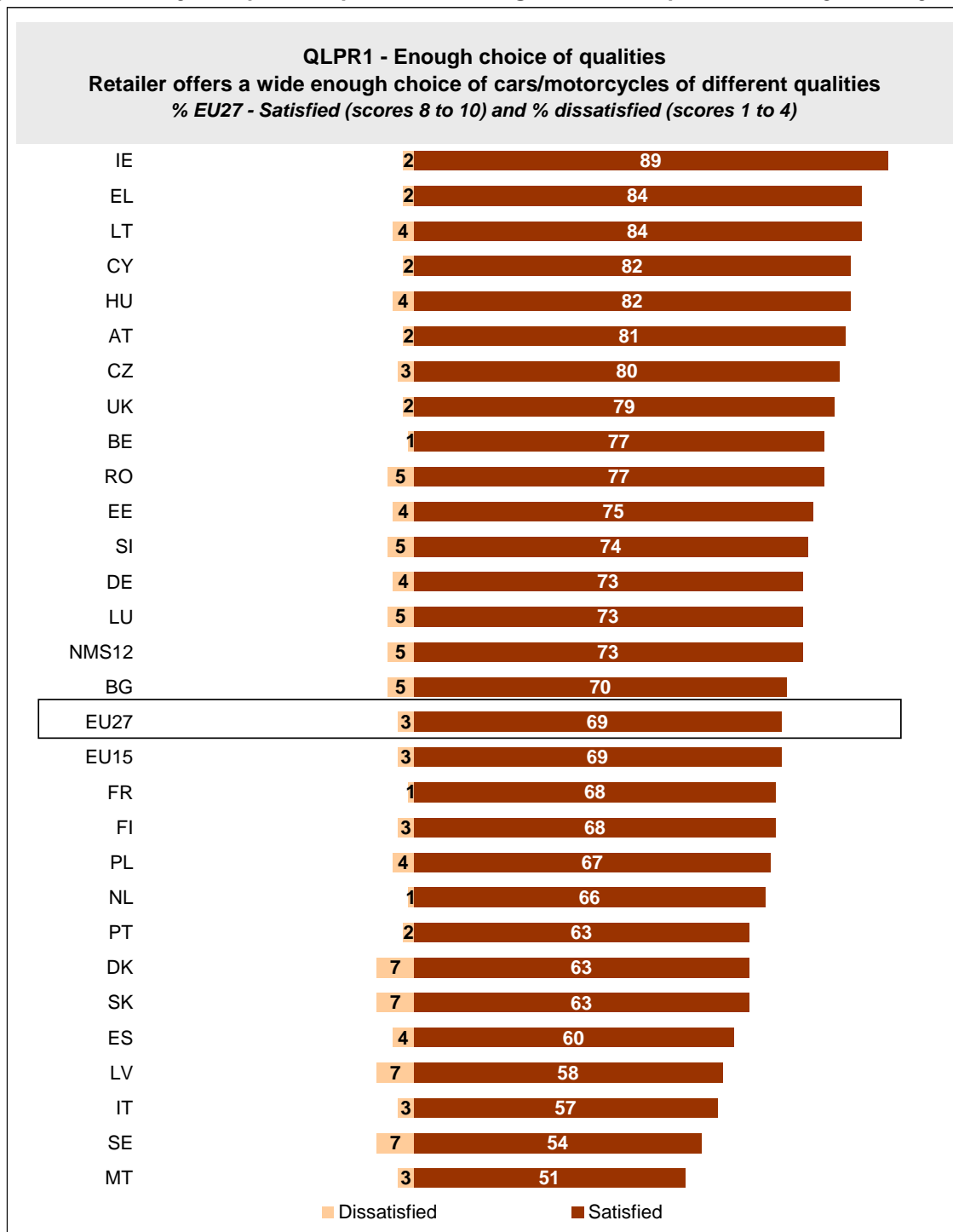
Figure 20 – Quality and price of products: price comparability (% by country)



A majority of consumers are satisfied when it comes to price comparability. The most satisfied consumers are found in Lithuania, Greece, Cyprus and Hungary whereas the least satisfied are found in Ireland (47%), Italy, Malta (55% each), the Netherlands (56%), Spain (57%), Sweden (59%) and Denmark (60%).

I) ENOUGH CHOICE OF QUALITIES

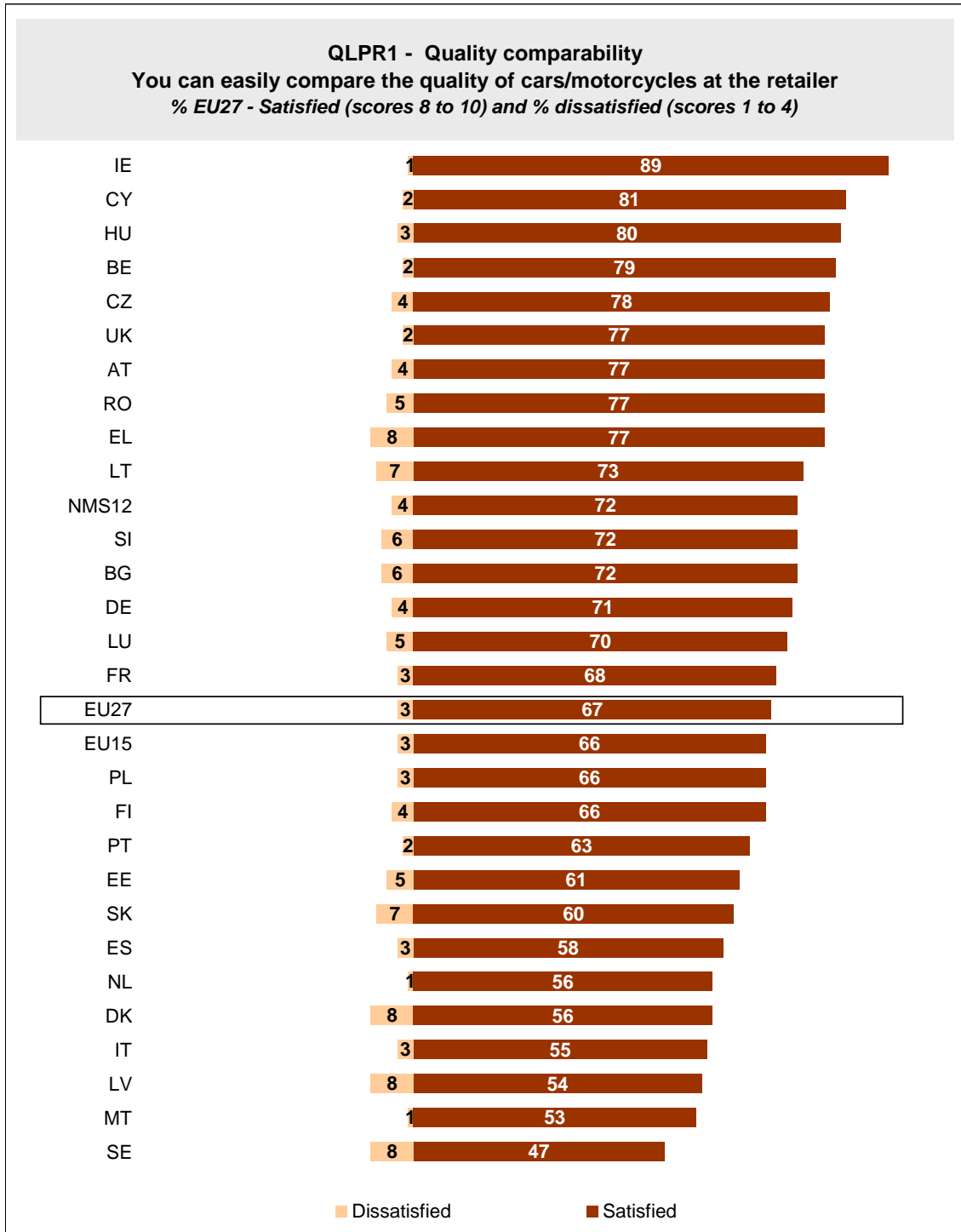
Figure 21 – Quality and price of products: enough choice of qualities (% by country)



Irish consumers are the most satisfied with the choice of qualities offered by their retailer. Conversely, consumers in Malta, Sweden, Italy and Latvia are the least satisfied (less than 60%).

J) QUALITY COMPARABILITY

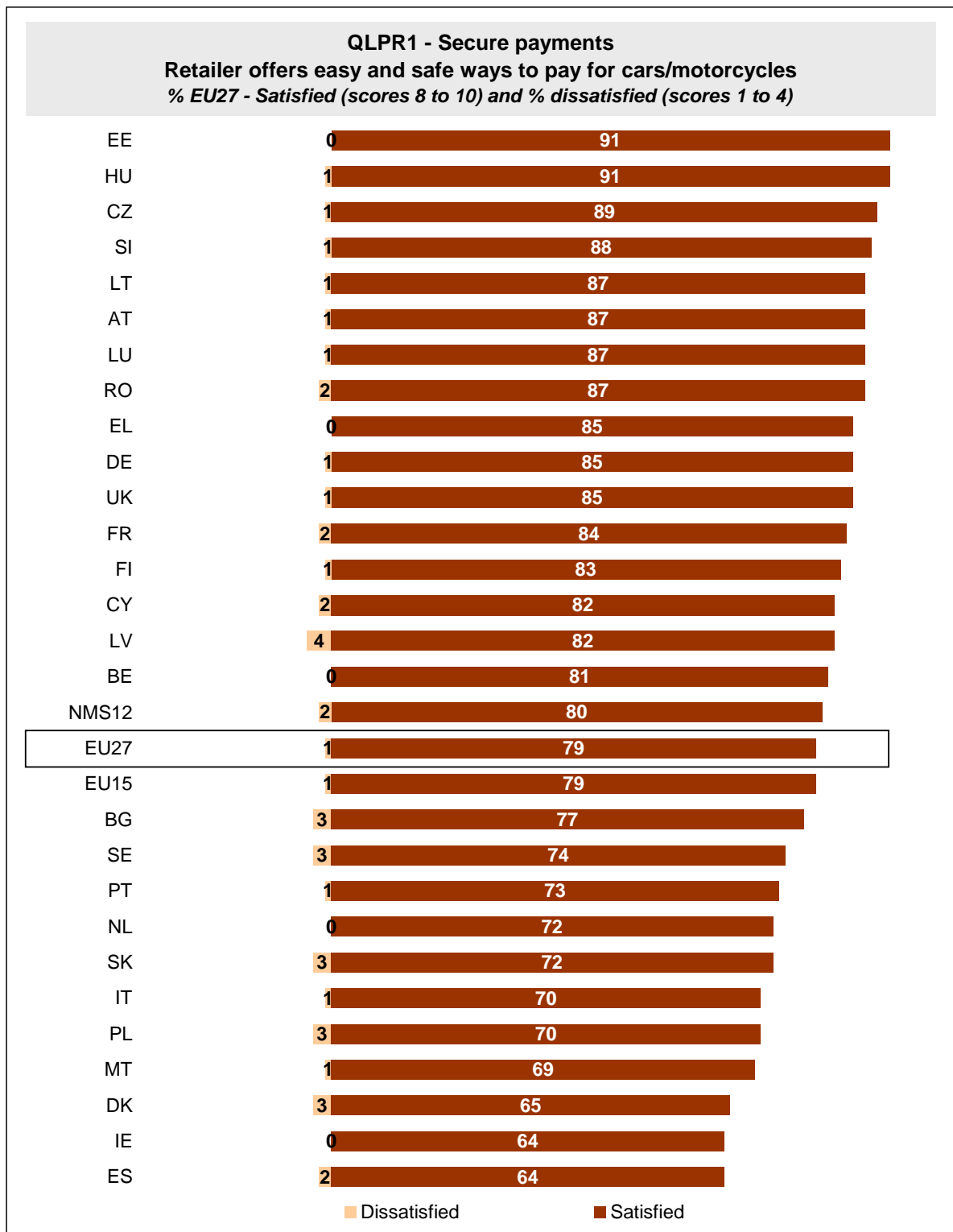
Figure 22 – Quality and price of products: quality comparability (% by country)



The absolute majority of consumers in every country, except Sweden, is satisfied when it comes to quality comparability. The most satisfied consumers are found in Ireland (89%). It is also interesting to note the relatively high proportion of “don’t know” answers (compared to an EU average of 2%) in Sweden, Estonia (13% each), Slovakia (12%) and Denmark (10%).

K) SECURE PAYMENTS

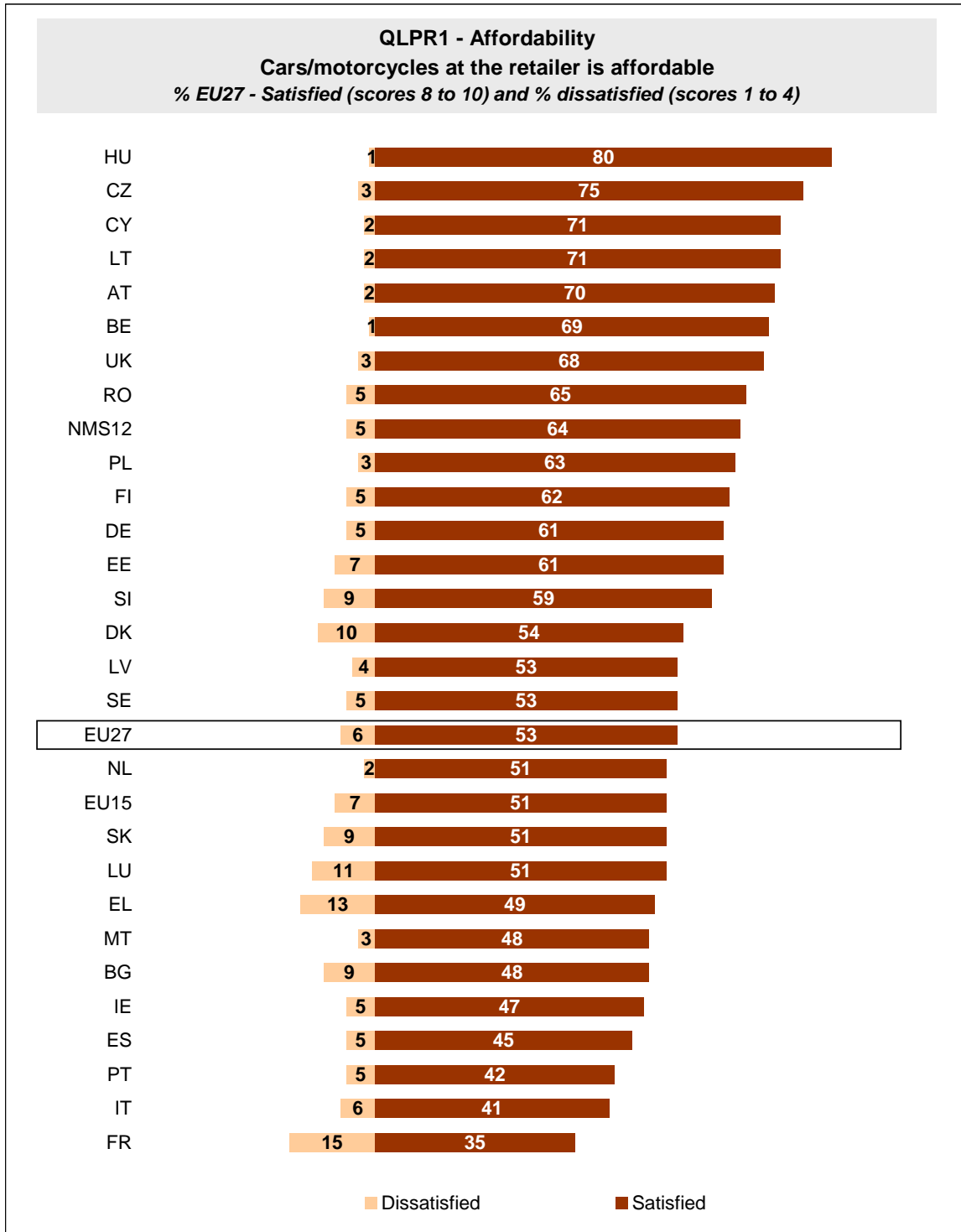
Figure 23 – Quality and price of products: secure payments (% by country)



In every EU Member State, at least 6 in 10 consumers are satisfied with the modes of payments offered by their retailer. The most satisfied respondents are found in Estonia and in Hungary (91% each), while the Spaniards, the Irish people, the Danes and the Maltese are among the least satisfied (less than 70% satisfied).

L) AFFORDABILITY

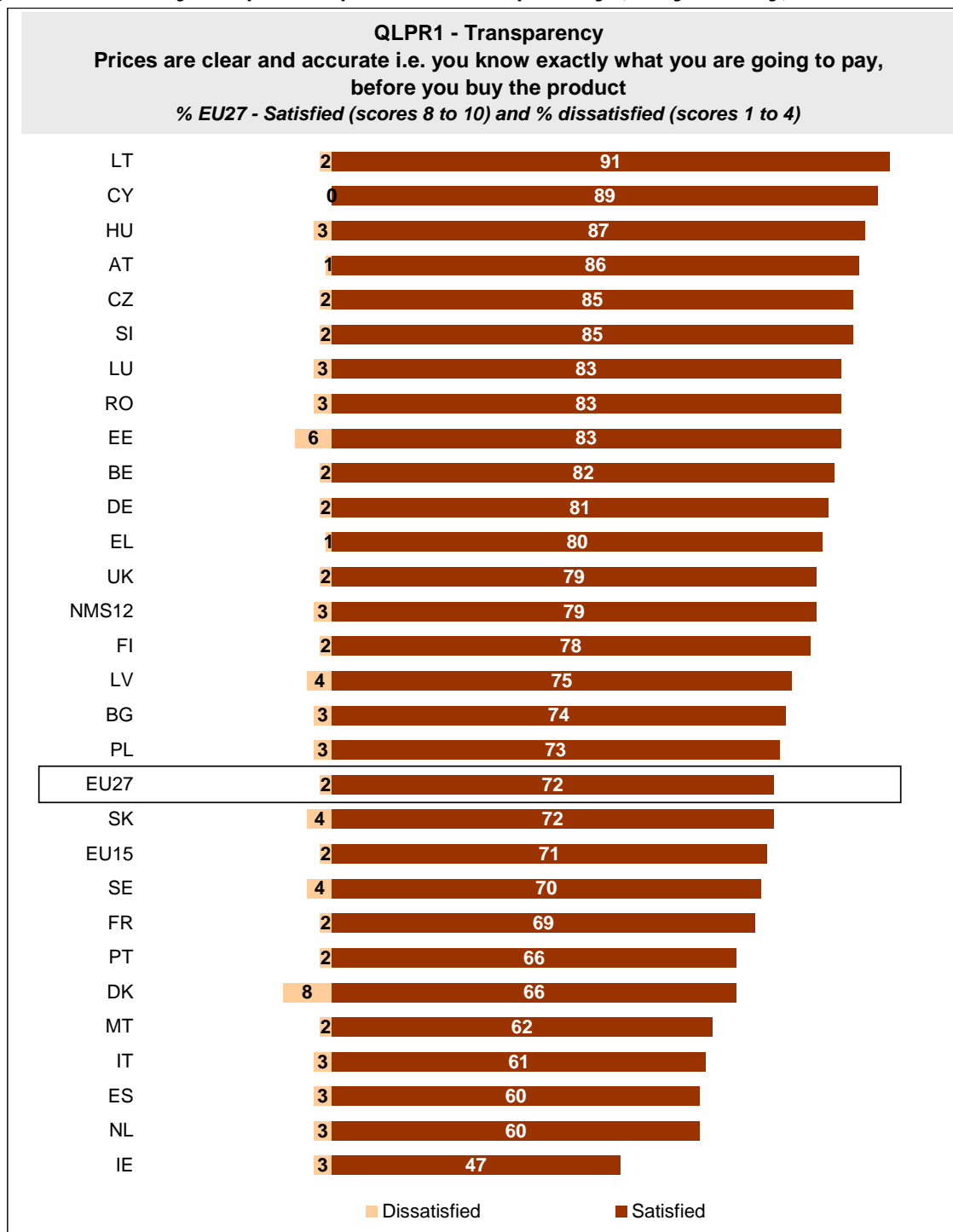
Figure 24 – Quality and price of products: affordability (% by country)



The opinions about the affordability of new motor vehicles vary a lot between the EU countries: while 80% of Hungarians and 75% of Czechs are satisfied, only 35% of French consumers share that feeling. In France, 15% also are dissatisfied (against an EU average of 6%). 13% of Greeks, 11% of people of Luxembourg and 10% of Danes are also dissatisfied.

M) TRANSPARENCY

Figure 25 – Quality and price of products: transparency (% by country)

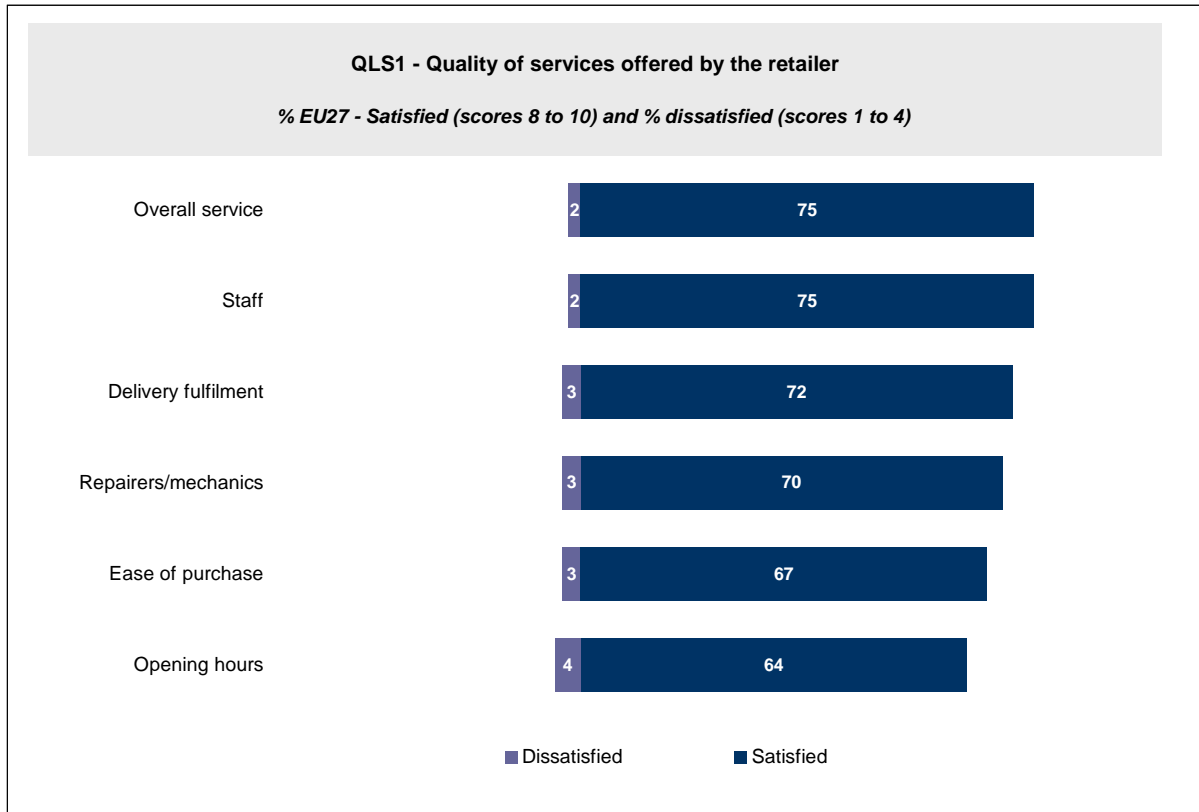


For more than 7 consumers in 10 in the EU, prices are clear and accurate. This is particularly the case of more than 85% of consumers in Lithuania, Cyprus, Hungary and Austria. The only country where less than 60% of consumers declare themselves satisfied is Ireland (47%). It is interesting to note the low proportion of dissatisfied consumers across the countries: except Denmark (8%) and Estonia (6%), there are never more than 6% of dissatisfied consumers and the EU average is of only 2%.

2. QUALITY OF SERVICES

2.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 26 – Quality of services



As mentioned before, 3 consumers in 4 are satisfied with the quality of services offered by their retailer. The elements with which consumers are the most satisfied are:

- Staff i.e. they are well-informed about the product and are helpful to consumers when they need it (75% satisfied);
- Delivery fulfillment i.e. products are delivered according to the purchase order; consumers get the right product within the agreed deadline.

2.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

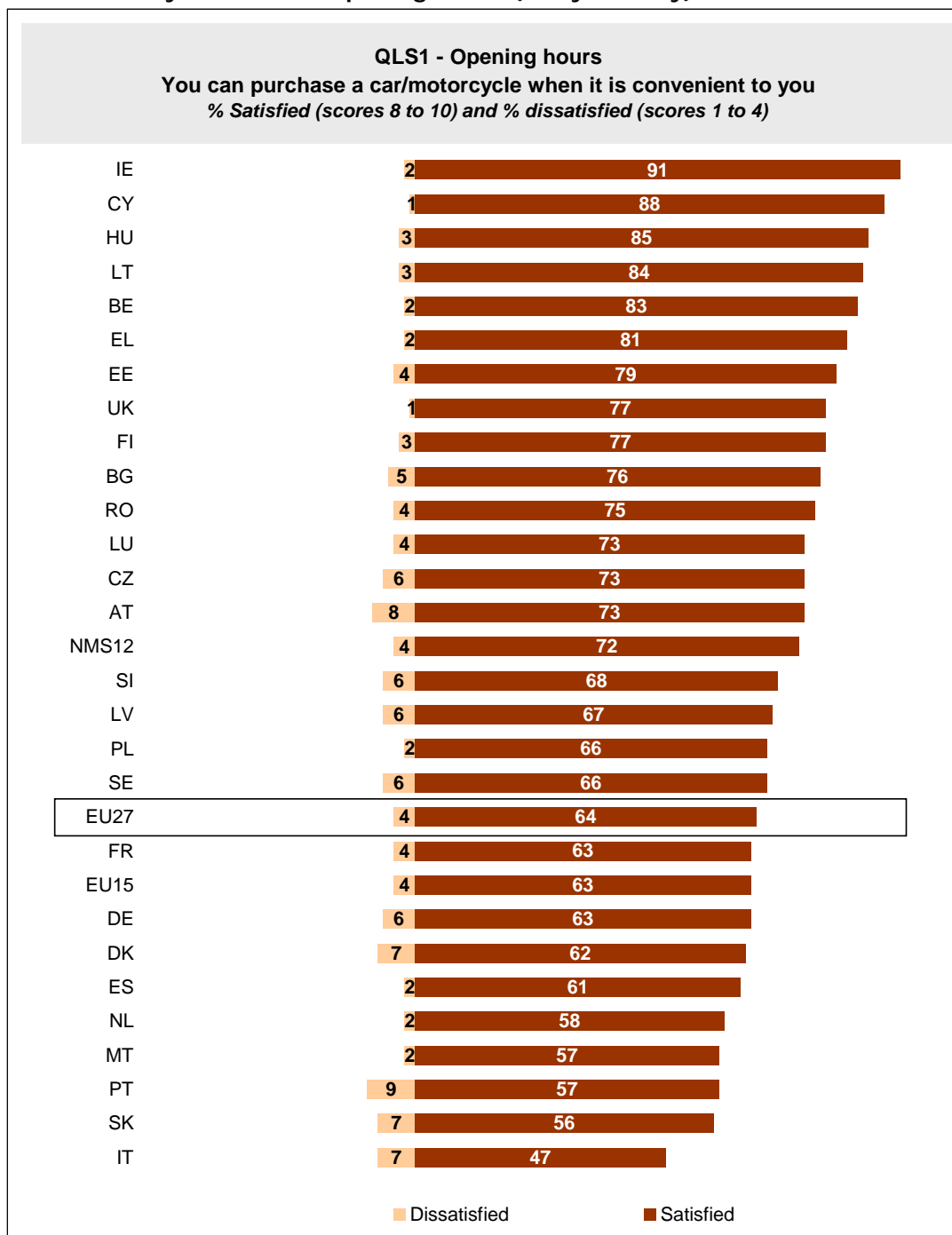
Consumers tend to think that car/motorcycle dealers have the most helpful and knowledgeable staff. On the other hand, consumers can purchase new motor vehicles on the internet when it is most convenient for them (72% against an EU average of 64%).

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

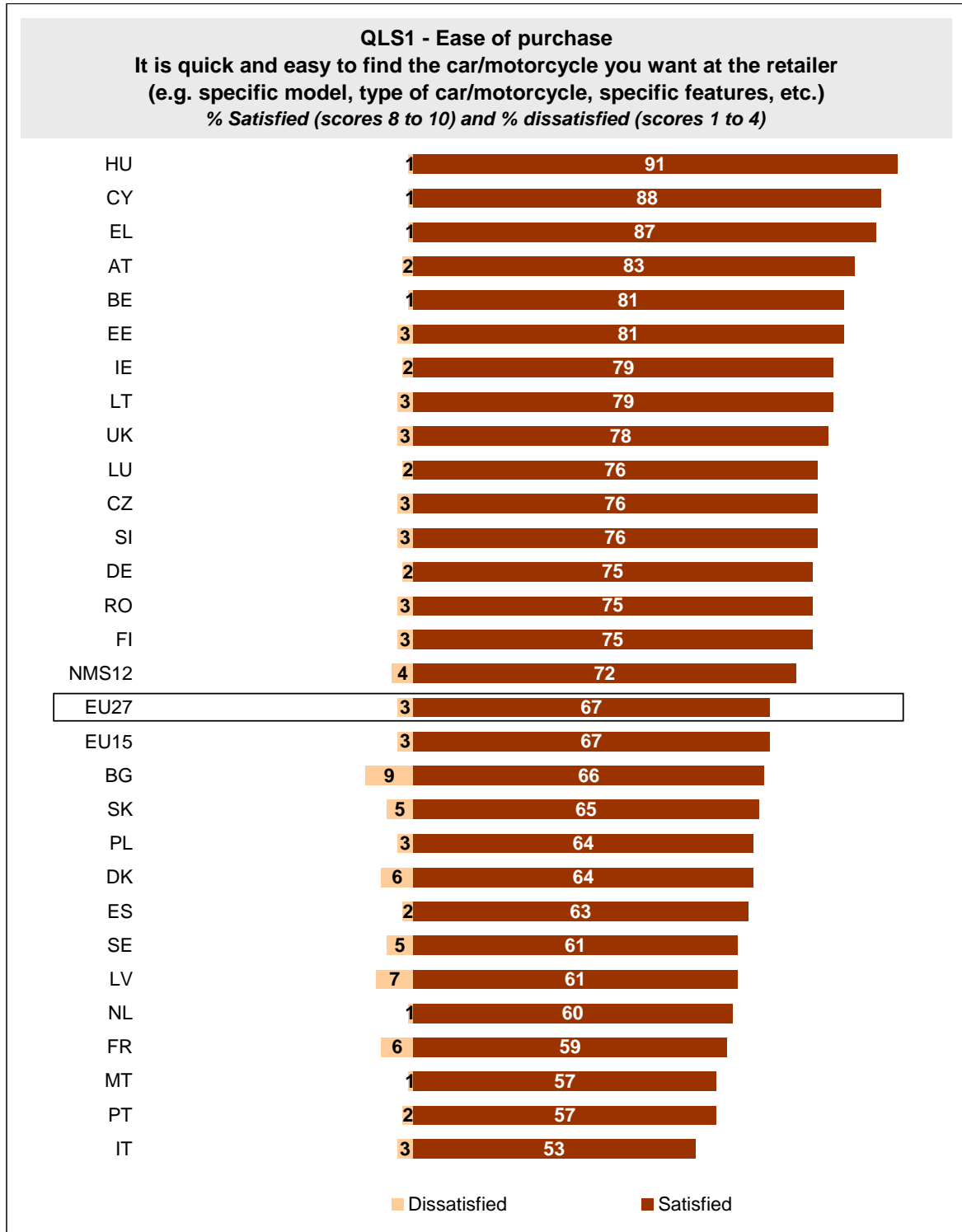
Figure 27 – Quality of services: opening hours (% by country)



An absolute majority of consumers are satisfied with the opening hours of their retailer, especially in Ireland (91%). However in Italy, only 47% are satisfied.

B) EASE OF PURCHASE

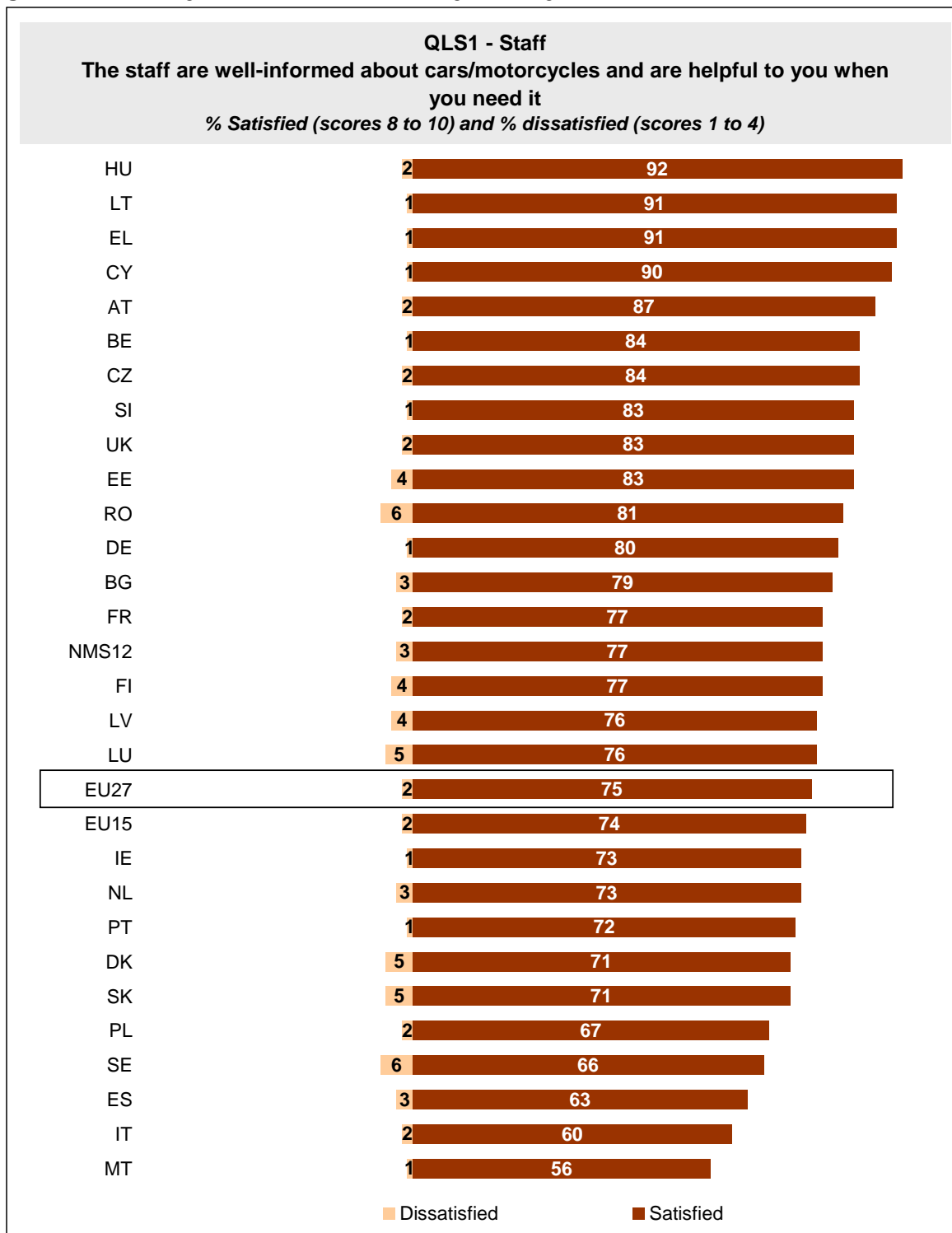
Figure 28 – Quality of services: ease of purchase (% by country)



In all EU countries, a majority of consumers think that it is quick and easy to find the product they want at their retailer. 91% of Hungarian consumers share this view, whereas less than 60% in Italy, Portugal, Malta and France do so.

C) STAFF

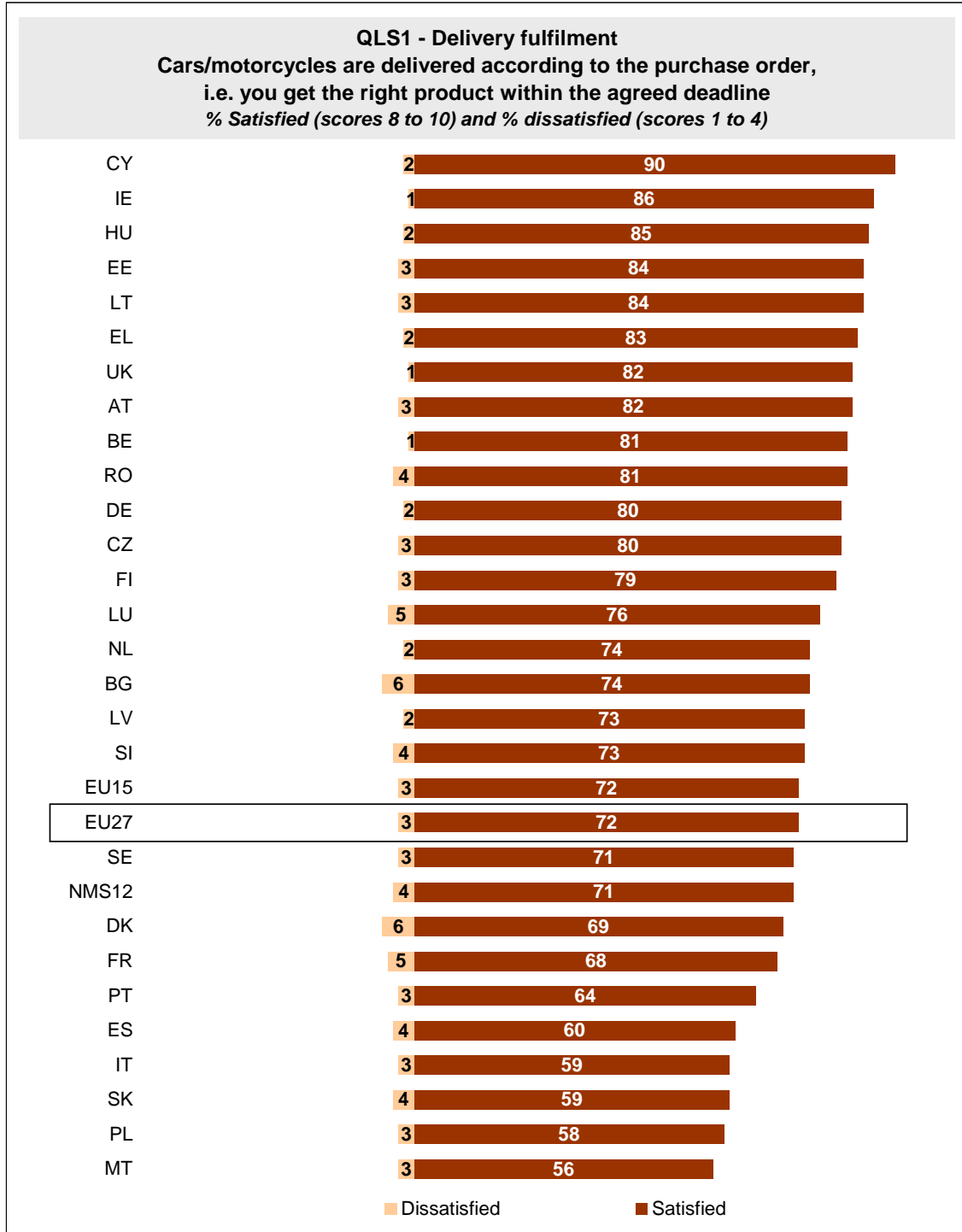
Figure 29 – Quality of services: staff (% by country)



Malta is the only country where less than 60% of people are satisfied with their retailer’s staff. On the other side of the spectrum, 90% or more Hungarians, Lithuanians, Greeks and Cypriots are satisfied with their retailer’s staff. Very few consumers are dissatisfied (2% on average).

D) DELIVERY FULFILMENT

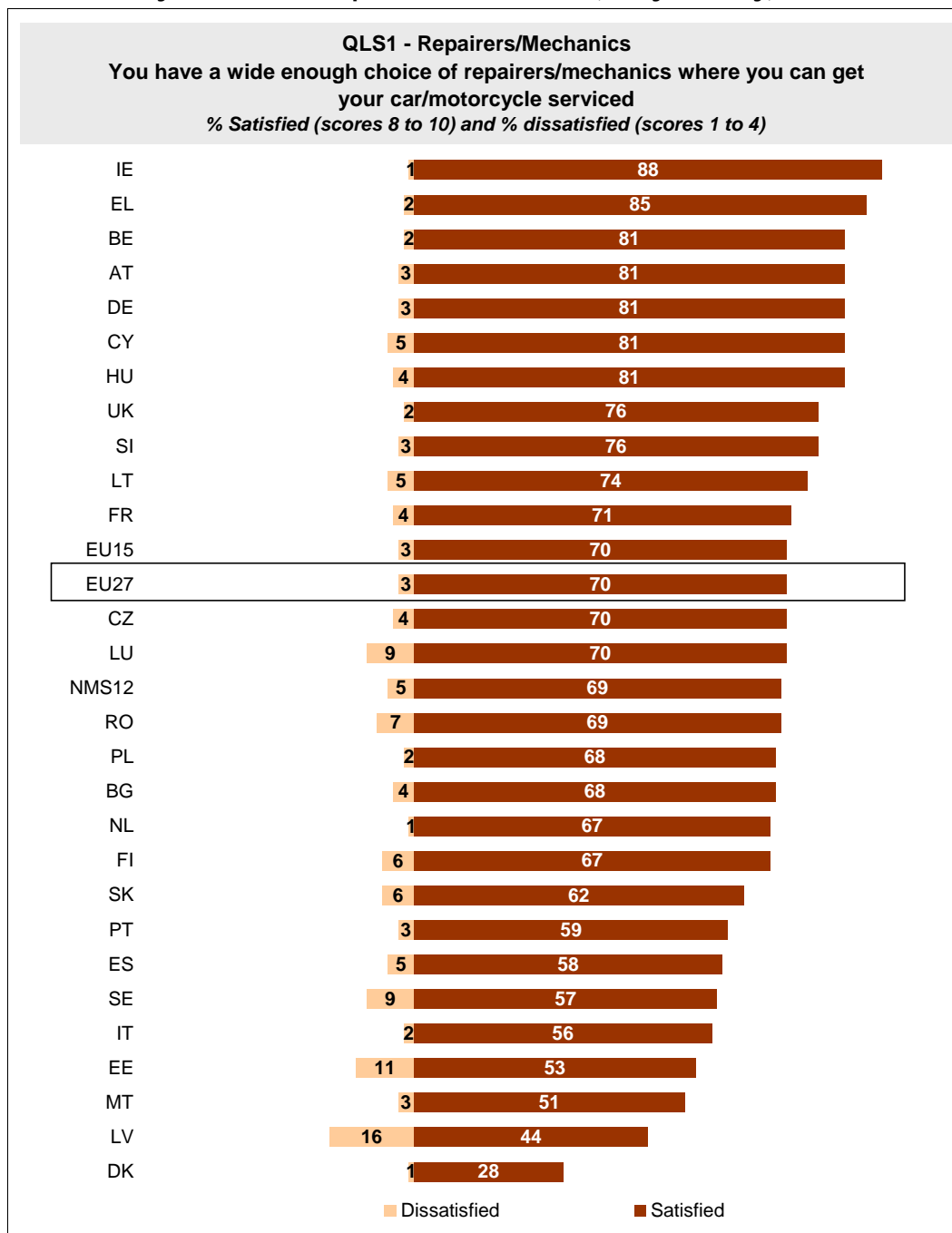
Figure 30 – Quality of services: delivery fulfilment (% by country)



Delivery of products according to the purchase order is satisfactory for more than 7 EU consumers in 10. This is particularly the case in Cyprus (90%), but less so in Malta (56%), Poland (58%), Slovakia (59%), Italy (59%) and Spain (60%). While dissatisfaction scores are low (3% on average), a high proportion of “don’t know” is observed in Slovakia (22% against an EU average of 2%).

E) REPAIRERS/MECHANICS

Figure 31 – Quality of services: repairers/mechanics (% by country)

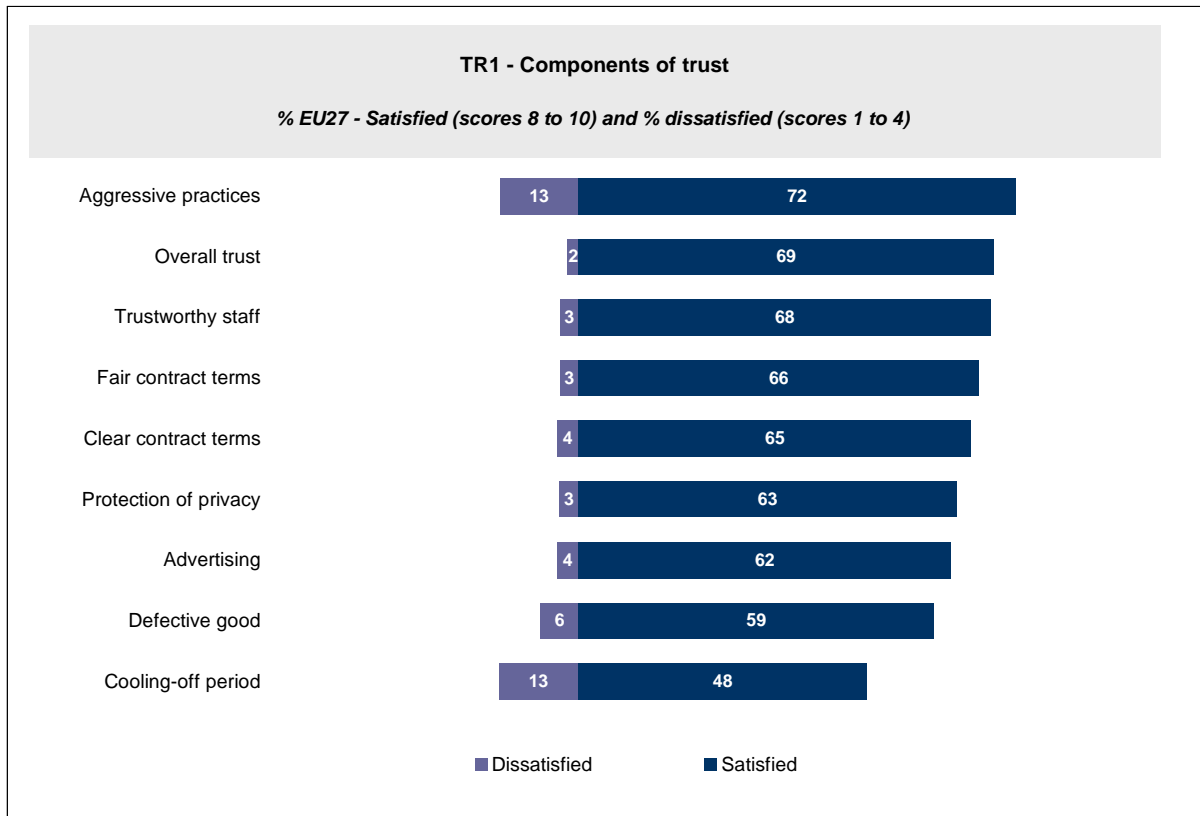


7 EU consumers in 10 are satisfied with the choice of repairers/mechanics where they can get their car/motorcycle serviced. But important differences can be observed across countries: while more than 80% of consumers are satisfied in Ireland, Greece, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Cyprus and Hungary, they are less than 30% of Danes. This low proportion can be explained by the large proportion of “don’t know” (65.4%). The proportion of satisfied consumers is relatively low in Latvia (44%). In this country we also find the highest proportion of dissatisfied consumers (16% against an EU average of 3%).

3. Trust

3.1. OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 32 - Trust



Overall, 7 consumers in 10 trust their retailer when it comes to the purchase of new motor vehicles. The most satisfying elements that contribute to this trust are:

- The staff provides accurate and trustworthy information;
- The fairness of contract terms;
- The clearness of contract terms.

Although 72% of consumers are also satisfied with the absence of aggressive selling practices, a significant share of people have a different opinion (13% dissatisfied).

In addition, less than half of EU consumers who bought their new motor vehicles on the Internet trust that their retailer would let them use their right to return the goods within the cooling-off period.

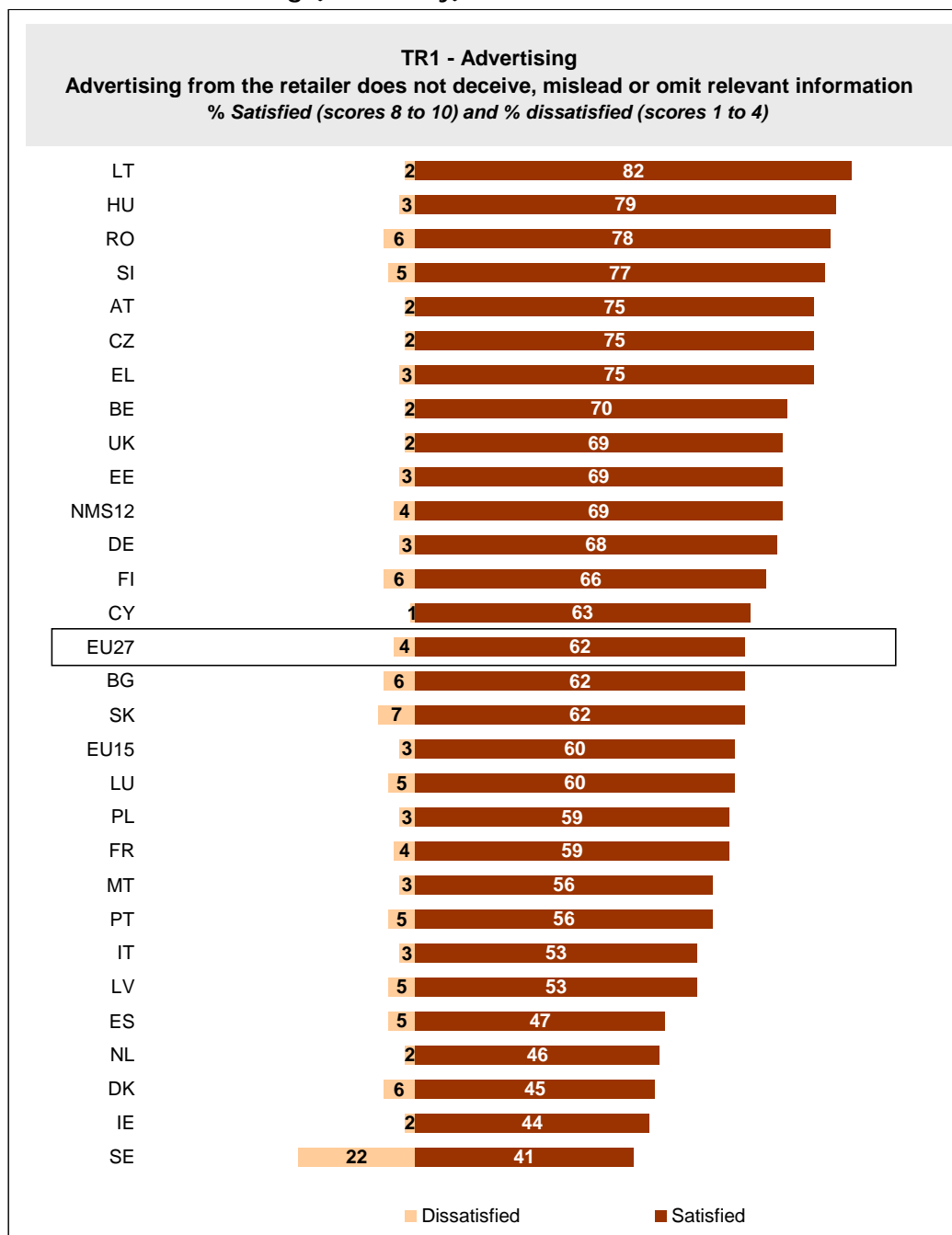
3.2. DIFFERENCES BY DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

Overall, consumers tend to trust car/motorcycle dealers most, especially when it comes to protection of privacy, the staff and defective products.

3.3. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

A) ADVERTISING

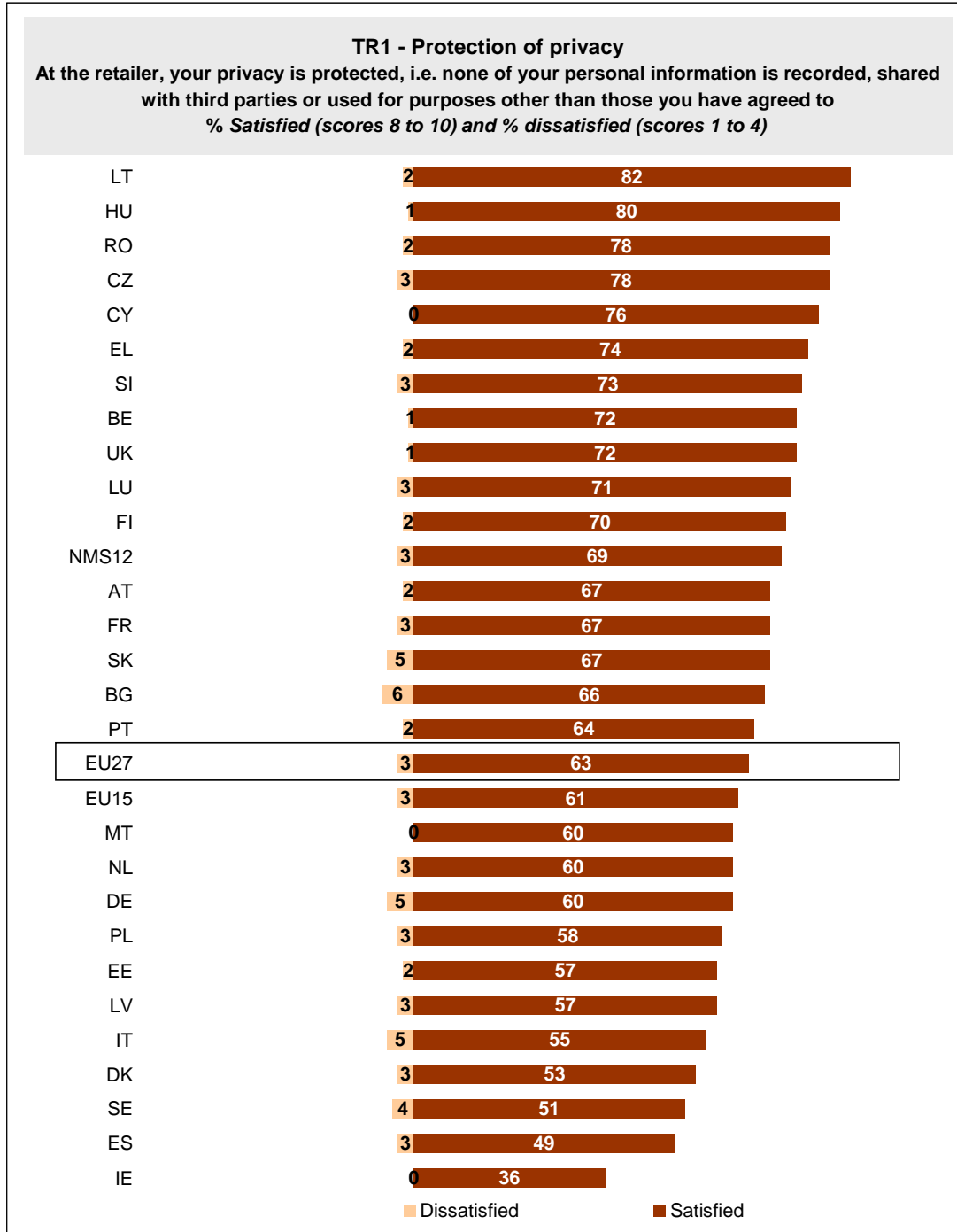
Figure 33 – Trust: Advertising (% country)



In general, EU consumers tend to think that advertising from their retailer does not deceive, mislead or omit relevant information. This is particularly the case of Latvians (82%), Hungarians (79%), Romanians (78%) and Slovenes (77%). However, they are less than 50% in Spain, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland and Sweden. In the latter, more than one fifth is dissatisfied (against an EU average of 4%). It is also interesting to note the relatively high proportion of “Don’t know” (compared to the EU average of 5%) in Denmark (26%), Sweden (17%), Cyprus (16%) and Luxembourg (15%).

B) PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

Figure 34 – Trust: protection of privacy (% country)



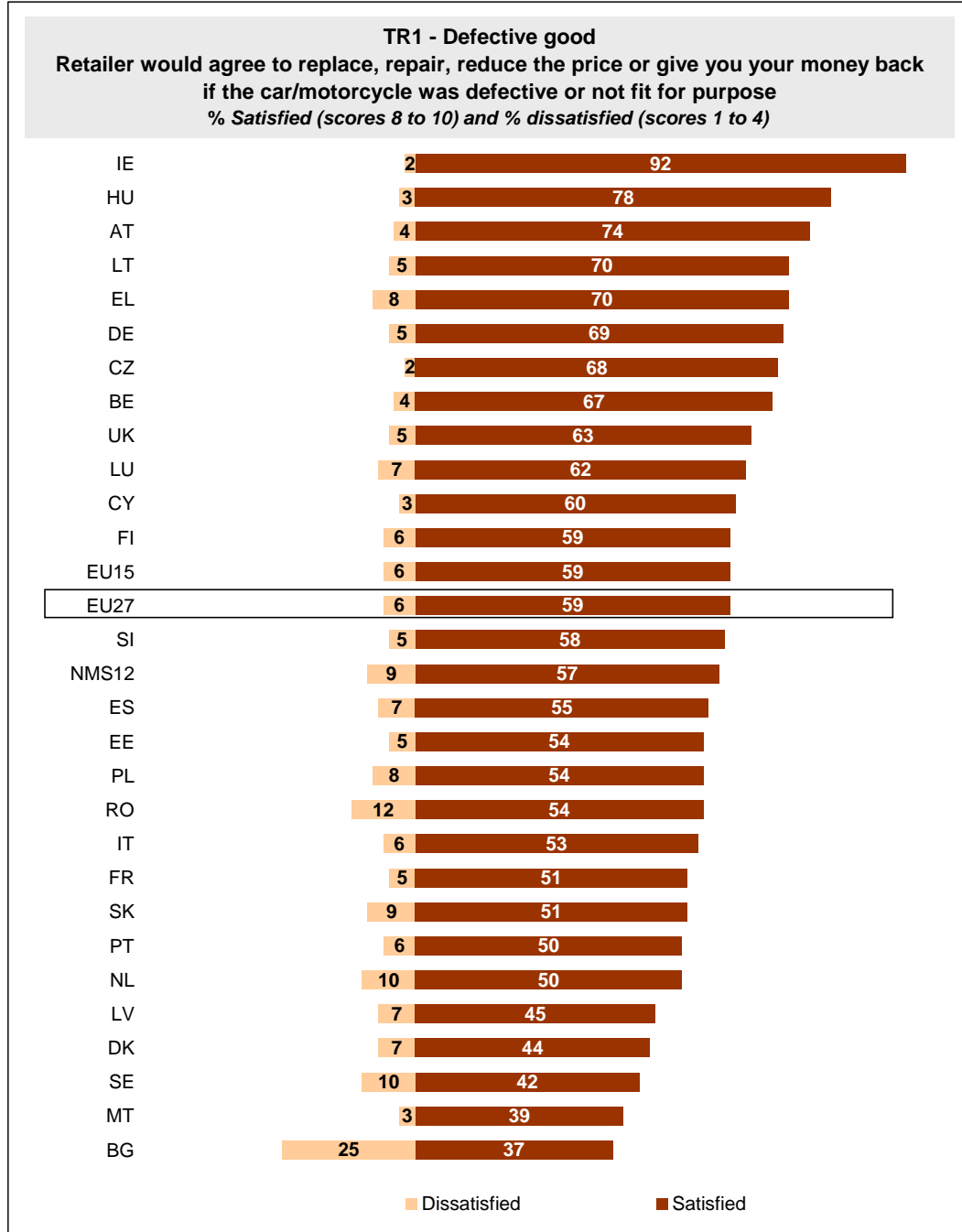
Overall, consumers are satisfied with the way their privacy is protected on the market. The only exception is Ireland, where only 36% of consumers are satisfied. Here again, we observe relatively high proportions of “Don’t know”: 11% at EU level, with peaks in Sweden (34%), Estonia (31%) and Denmark (30%).

C) COOLING-OFF PERIOD

This question was only asked those who had purchased new motor vehicles via the Internet. Consequently, the low sample sizes by country (<10 in most countries) do not allow further statistical analysis.

D) DEFECTIVE GOOD

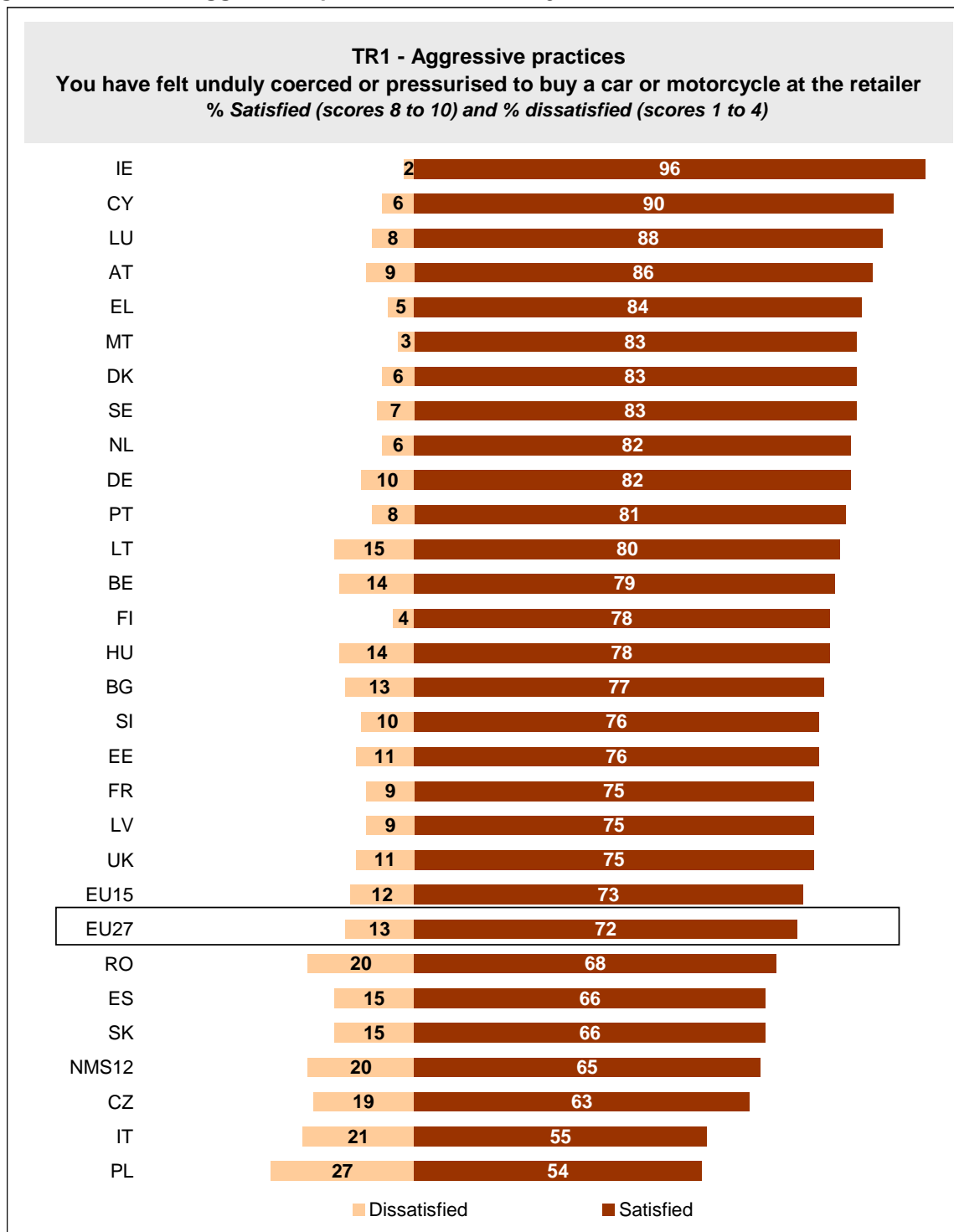
Figure 35 – Trust: Defective good (% country)



In 22 EU countries, a majority of consumers trust that their retailer would agree to replace, repair, reduce the price or give them their money back if the good was defective or not fit for purpose. The only exceptions are Latvia, Denmark, Sweden, Malta and Bulgaria where less than 50% trust their retailer in this respect. In Bulgaria 25% of consumers do not trust that their retailer would agree to replace, repair, reduce the price or give them their money back if the good was defective or not fit for purpose (against an EU average of 6%). Here again, we observe relatively high proportions of “Don’t know” answers (against an EU average of 8.9%) in Sweden (35%), Denmark (32%) and Estonia (29%).

E) AGGRESSIVE PRACTICES

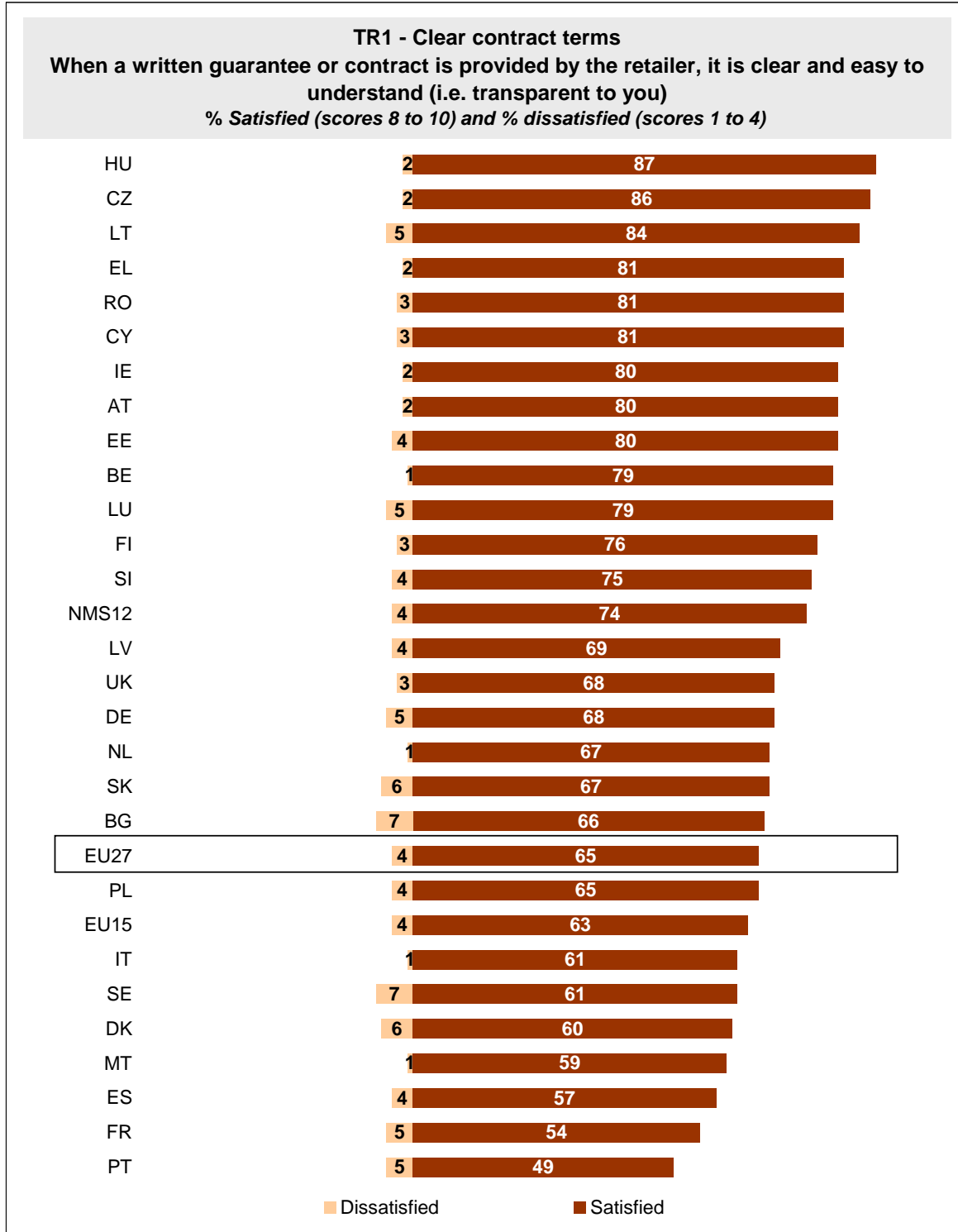
Figure 36 – Trust: Aggressive practices (% country)



Although in general selling practices do not seem to be a problem for more than 7 EU consumers in 10, we can observe high proportion of dissatisfied consumers (13% in the EU27) in Poland (27%), Italy (21%), Romania (20%) and Czech Republic (19%). This points out a segmented market where most consumers do not experience any trouble but a comparably large group actually feels unduly coerced or pressurized.

F) CLEAR CONTRACT TERMS

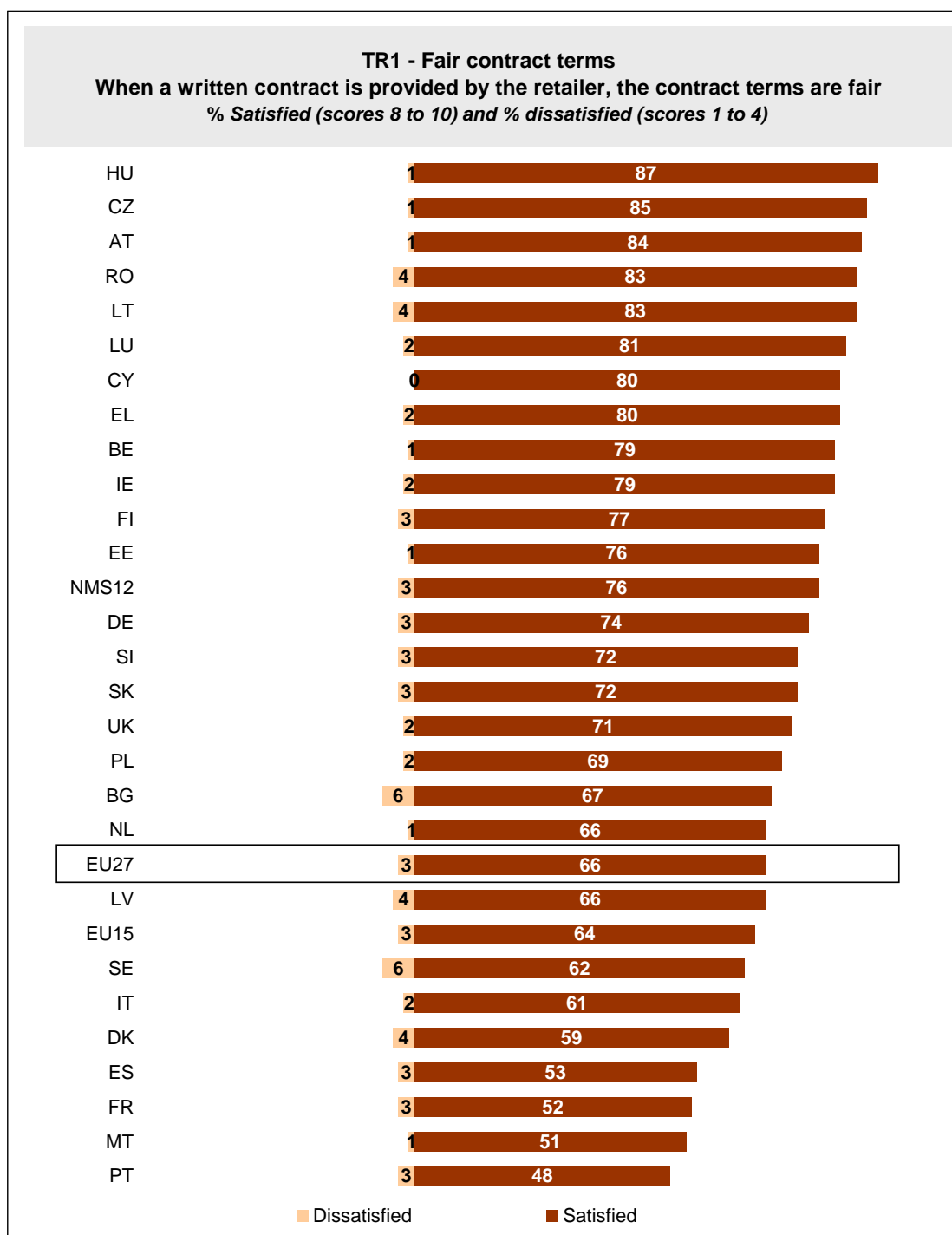
Figure 37 – Trust: Clear contract terms (% country)



Overall consumers are satisfied with the clarity of the contract terms provided by their retailer when it comes to purchasing new motor vehicles. At the top of the list, we find Hungary (87%), Czech Republic (86%) and Lithuania (83%) whereas less than 6 consumers in 10 in Portugal (49%), France (54%), Spain (57%) and Malta (59%) are satisfied.

G) FAIR CONTRACT TERMS

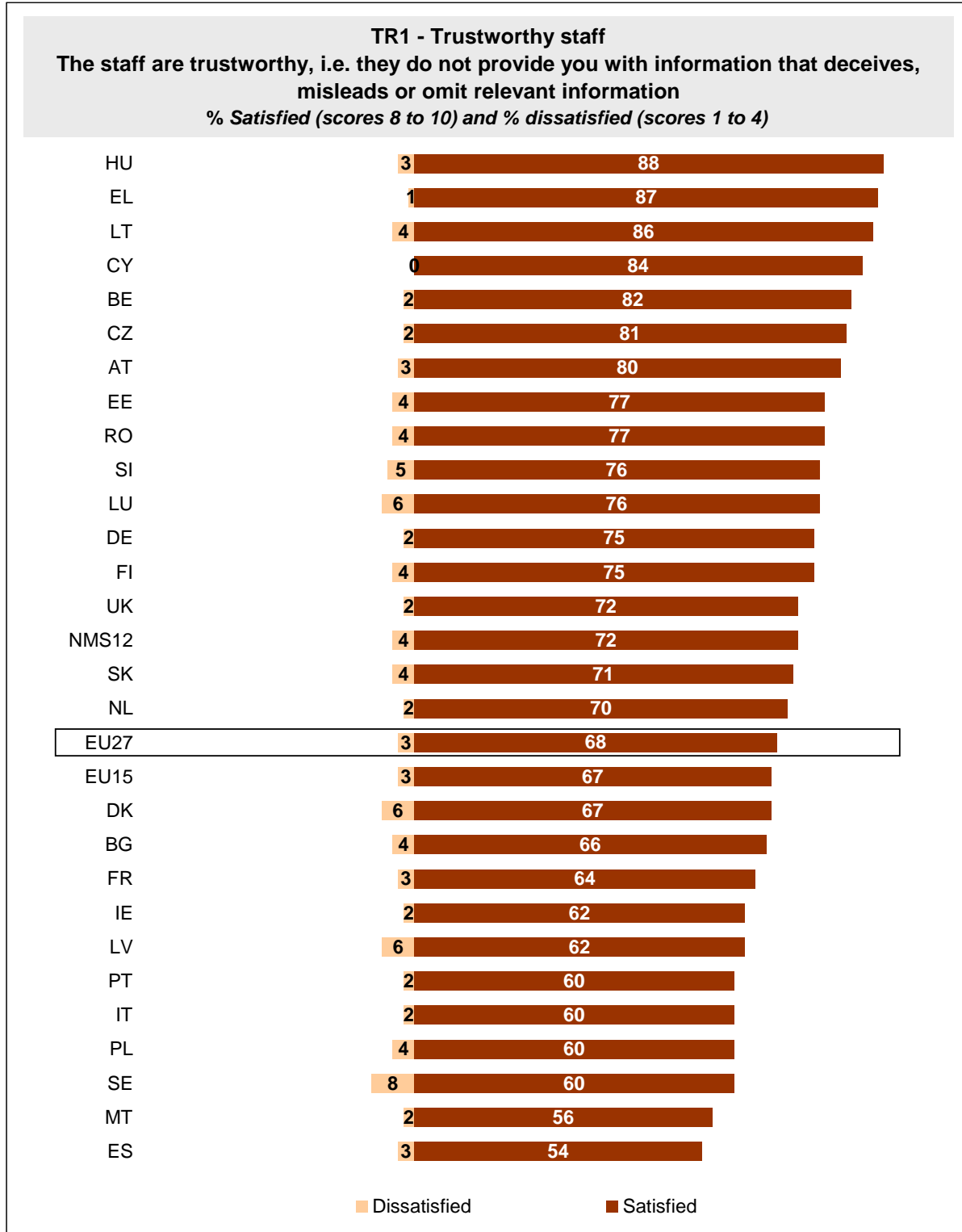
Figure 38 – Trust: Fair contract terms (% country)



Two in three EU consumers are satisfied when it comes to the fairness of the contract provided by their retailer. At the top of the list we find Hungary (87%). Conversely, the least satisfied are consumers in Portugal (48%).

H) TRUSTWORTHY STAFF

Figure 39 – Trust: trustworthy staff (% country)

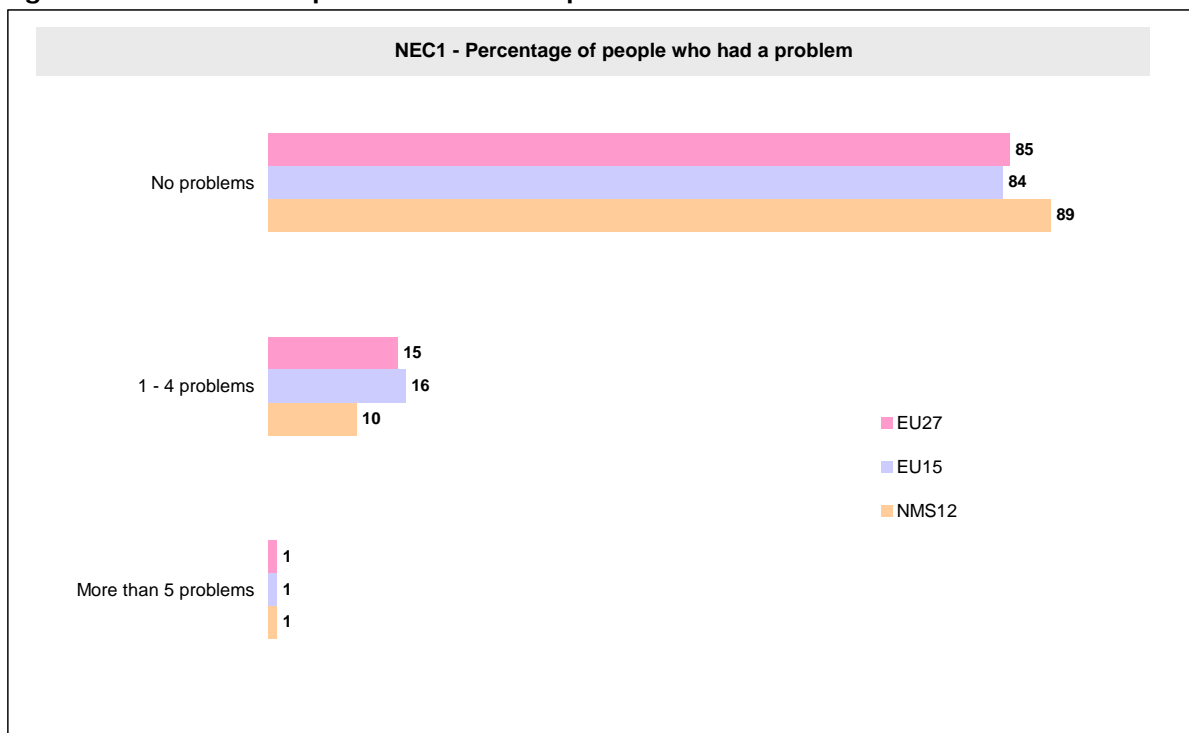


Overall, almost 7 consumers in 10 trust their retailer's staff. Hungarians, Greeks and Lithuanians express are the most satisfied (86% and more). However, there are only 54% of Spaniards and 56% of Maltese to share this view.

4. Negative experiences

4.1. NUMBER OF PROBLEMS

Figure 40 – Number of problems with the product



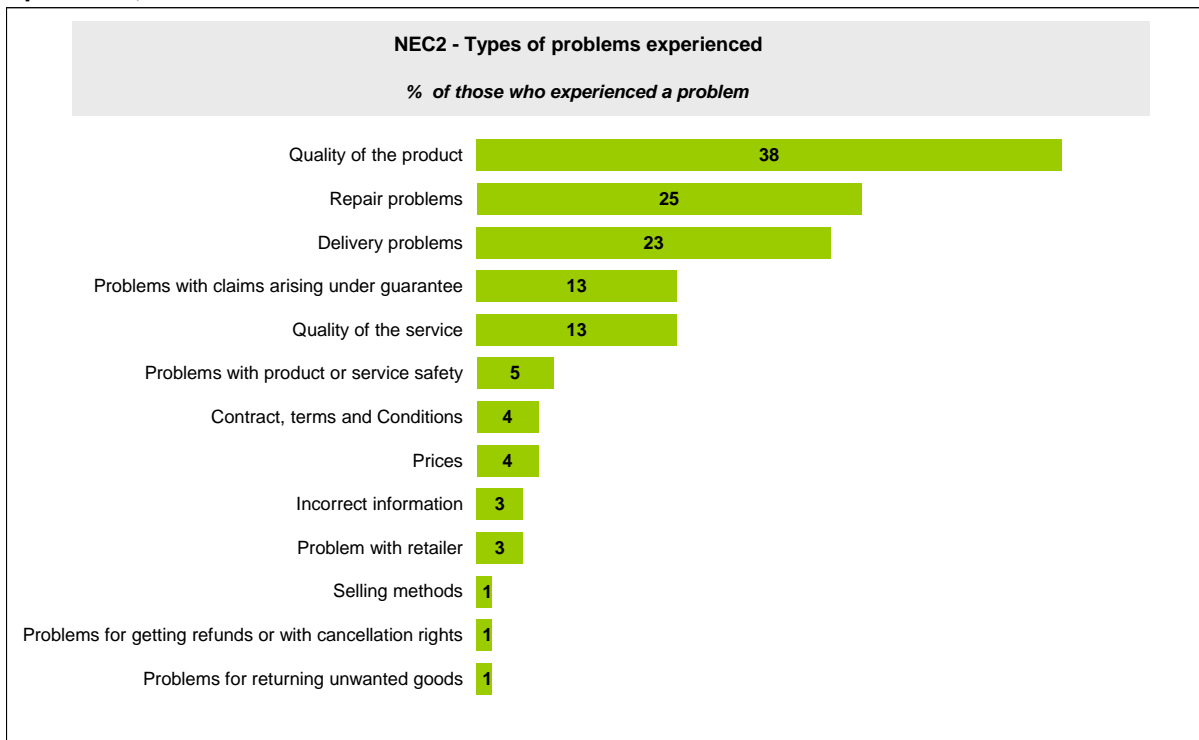
15% consumers in the EU27 have experienced problems when purchasing new motor vehicles in the last 5 years. Consumers in the new Member States are slightly less likely experience a problem than those in the EU15.

There are no significant differences in the results by distribution channel when speaking of experienced problems.

4.2. TYPES OF PROBLEMS

A) OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 41 – Types of problems experienced with the product (% EU27 of those who had a problem)



The main type of problem experienced is related to the quality of products (38% of those who had a problem). Following quality problems, come repair and delivery problems (respectively 23% and 25% of those who had a problem).

Delivery problems are more common among those who have purchased from import/export agents (34% of those who had a problem) than on the Internet (16%). Repair problems are more likely observed among those who bought from car/motorcycle dealers (26%) than anywhere else. However, problems with prices are more likely to be reported by consumers who purchased on the internet (13% of consumers) than at car/motorcycle dealers (4%).

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

Poles, Portuguese and Swedes are most likely to experience problems. The quality of product seems to be the most common type of problem across the countries but due to the small bases at country level, further analysis by the type of problem cannot be carried out.

4.3. COMPLAINTS HANDLING

A) OVERALL RESULTS

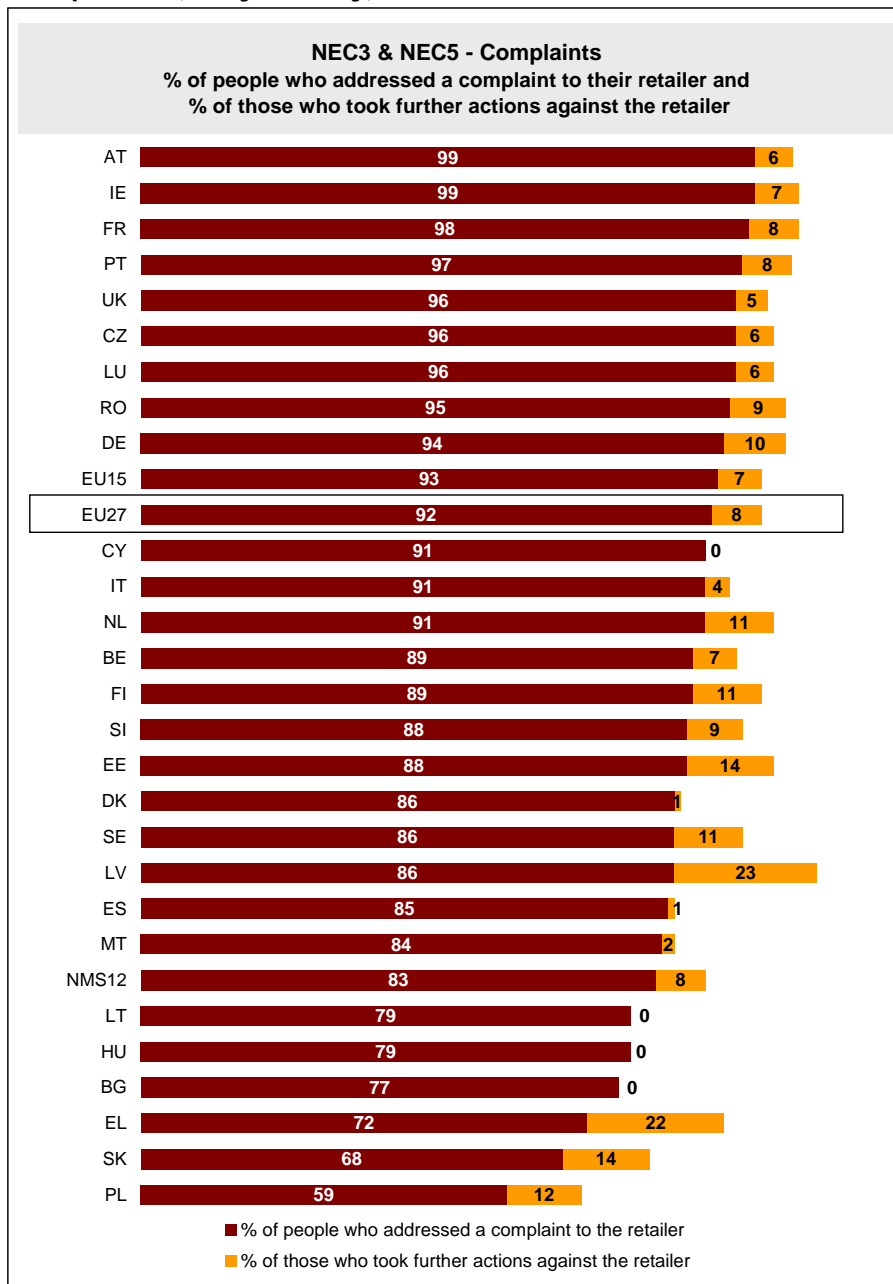
In general, those consumers who have experienced problems tend to communicate or discuss it with a representative of their retailer (92%), especially in the EU15 (93% against 83% in the NMS12). Most of consumers are satisfied with the way their retailer dealt with their complaints (64%) and, consequently, relatively few took further actions (6%).

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

Consumers who said that they have experienced problems with their retailer were asked to indicate whether they have addressed a complaint to their retailer. They were also asked to say whether they took further actions. Results of these two questions are combined in the following chart¹

¹ As a consequence, some results may add up to more than 100%.

Figure 42 – Complaints (% by country)



As can be seen in the chart above, in all Member States except Poland, Slovakia and Greece, at least three in four consumers who have had problems tend to address a complaint to their retailer.

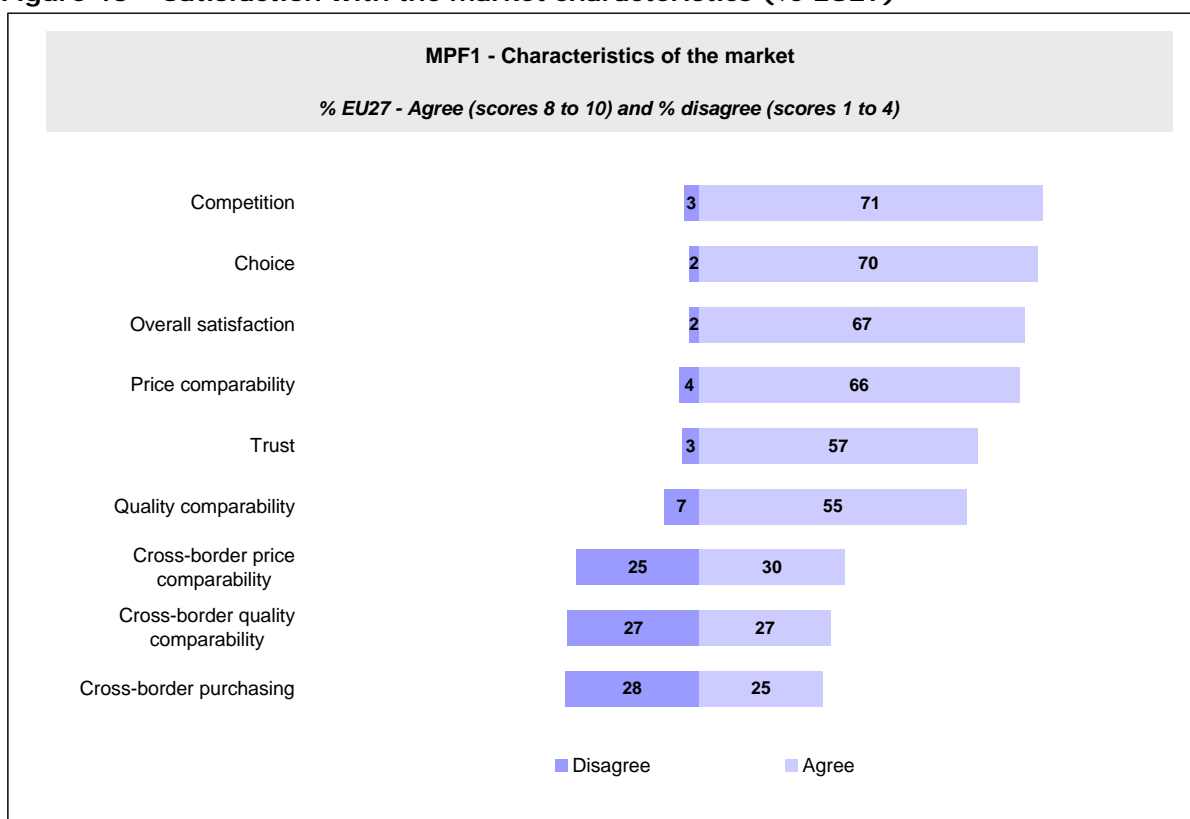
The small sample sizes do not allow a country-by-country analysis of how complaints are handled by the retailer.

5. Market factors and commitment

5.1. SATISFACTION WITH THE MARKET

A) OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 43 – Satisfaction with the market characteristics (% EU27)



Overall, consumers are satisfied with the market for new motor vehicles. They are mostly satisfied with:

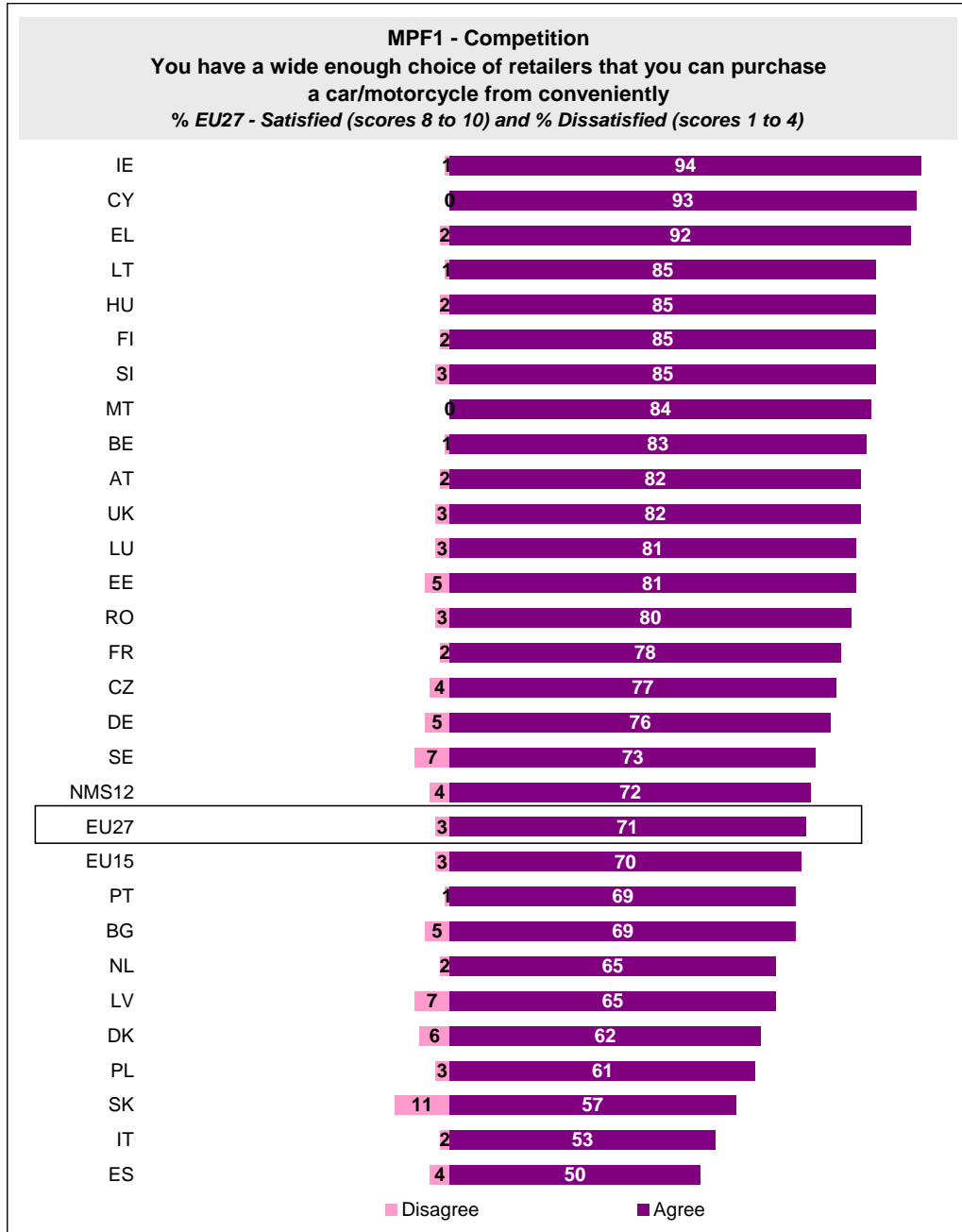
- The competition on the market, i.e. there is a wide enough choice of retailers that they can purchase new motor vehicles from conveniently;
- The choice of new motor vehicles, i.e. the products they want are available;
- The price comparability, i.e. consumers can easily compare prices from different retailers when buying a car/motorcycle in the country.

However, more than a quarter of consumers do not think cross-border purchasing is worthwhile. In addition, a similar proportion thinks that cross-border quality comparability and cross-border price comparability are difficult.

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

1. Competition

Figure 44 – Satisfaction with the market characteristics: competition (% by country)



A little more than 7 EU consumers in 10 are satisfied with the choice of retailers available on the market. The most satisfied are Irish people, Cypriots and Greeks (92% and more). On the other side of the spectrum we find Spaniards (50%), Italians (53%) and Slovaks (57%). In addition, 11% of Slovaks (against an EU average of 3%) declare themselves dissatisfied with the competition in the market.

2. Price comparability

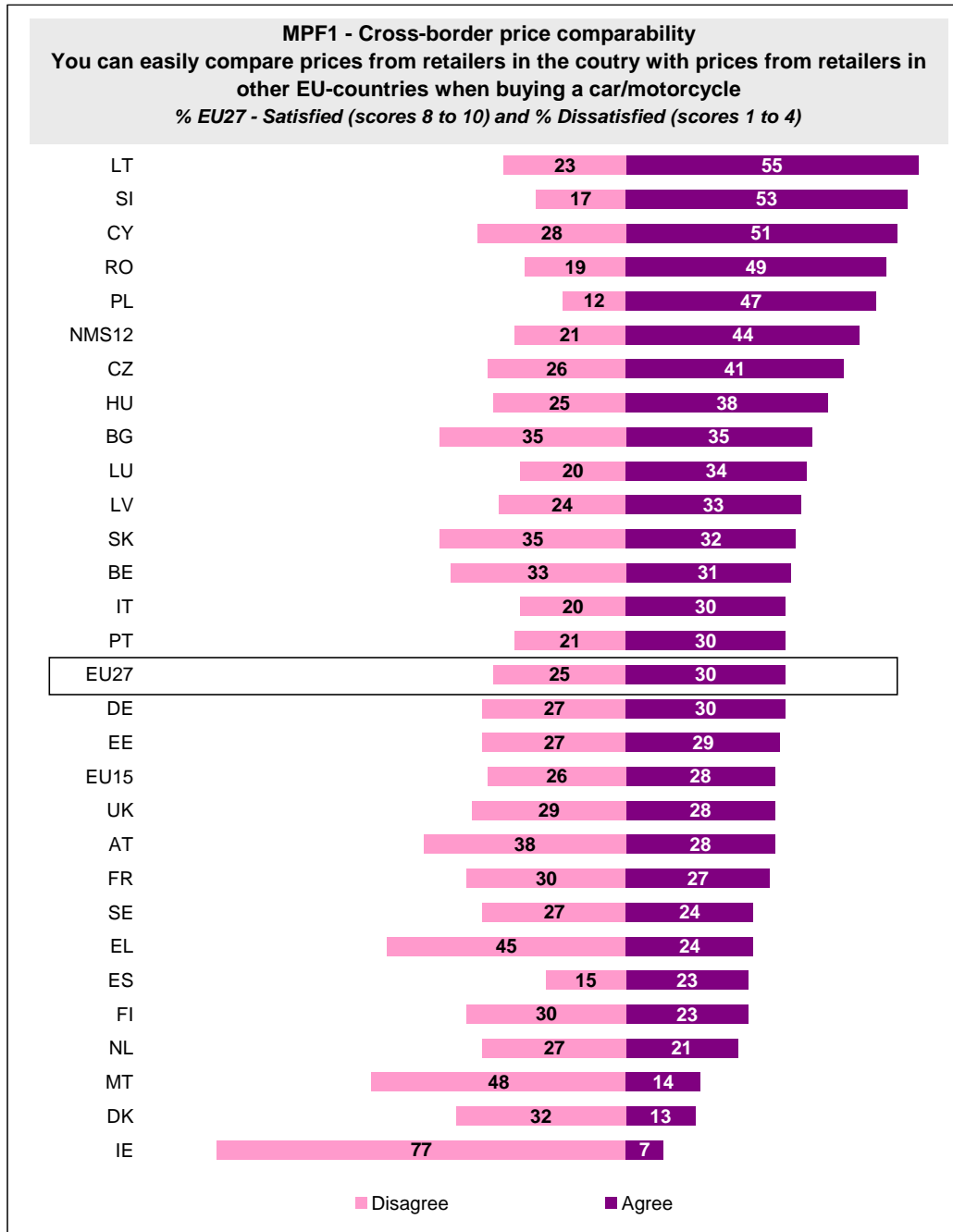
Figure 45 – Satisfaction with the markets characteristics: price comparability (% by country)



Two in three EU consumers are satisfied with the possibility to compare prices from different retailers, but important differences can be observed between countries. While more than 9 in 10 Greek consumers are satisfied with price comparability, less 5 in 10 share this view in Spain and Denmark. The highest levels of dissatisfaction are observed in Denmark, Slovakia and Latvia (10% each against an EU average of 4%).

3. Cross-border price comparability

Figure 46 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Cross-border price comparability (% by country)

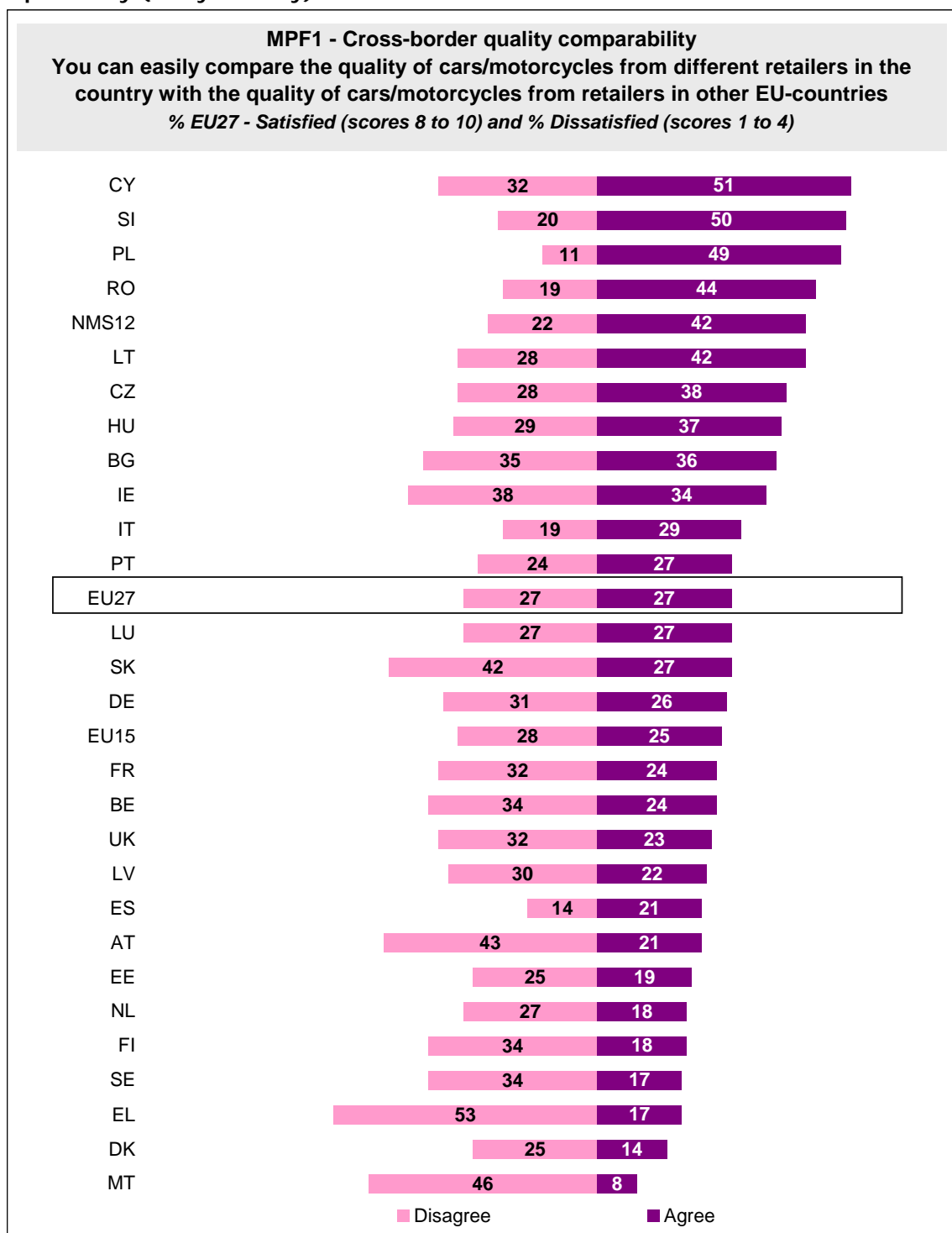


From the survey results it appears that cross-border price comparability is difficult to evaluate for a relatively high proportion of people in many countries. Whereas for the EU countries taken together the average proportion of “Don’t know” is 11%, it goes up to 36% in Denmark, 32% in Sweden, 27% in Estonia and 24% in the Netherlands.

A relatively high proportion of people who gave an answer to this question think that cross-border price comparability is not easy (25%), especially in Ireland (77%) and, to a lesser extent, in Malta (48%) and Greece (45%).

4. Cross-border quality comparability

Figure 47 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Cross-border quality comparability (% by country)



Cross-border quality comparability is not easy either for a majority of consumers. In addition, we can observe high proportions of "Don't know" (12% on average), with peaks in Denmark (39%), Sweden (33%) and Estonia (31%). It is again in Cyprus, Slovenia and Poland that a larger share of the population thinks that cross-border quality comparability is easy.

5. Quality comparability

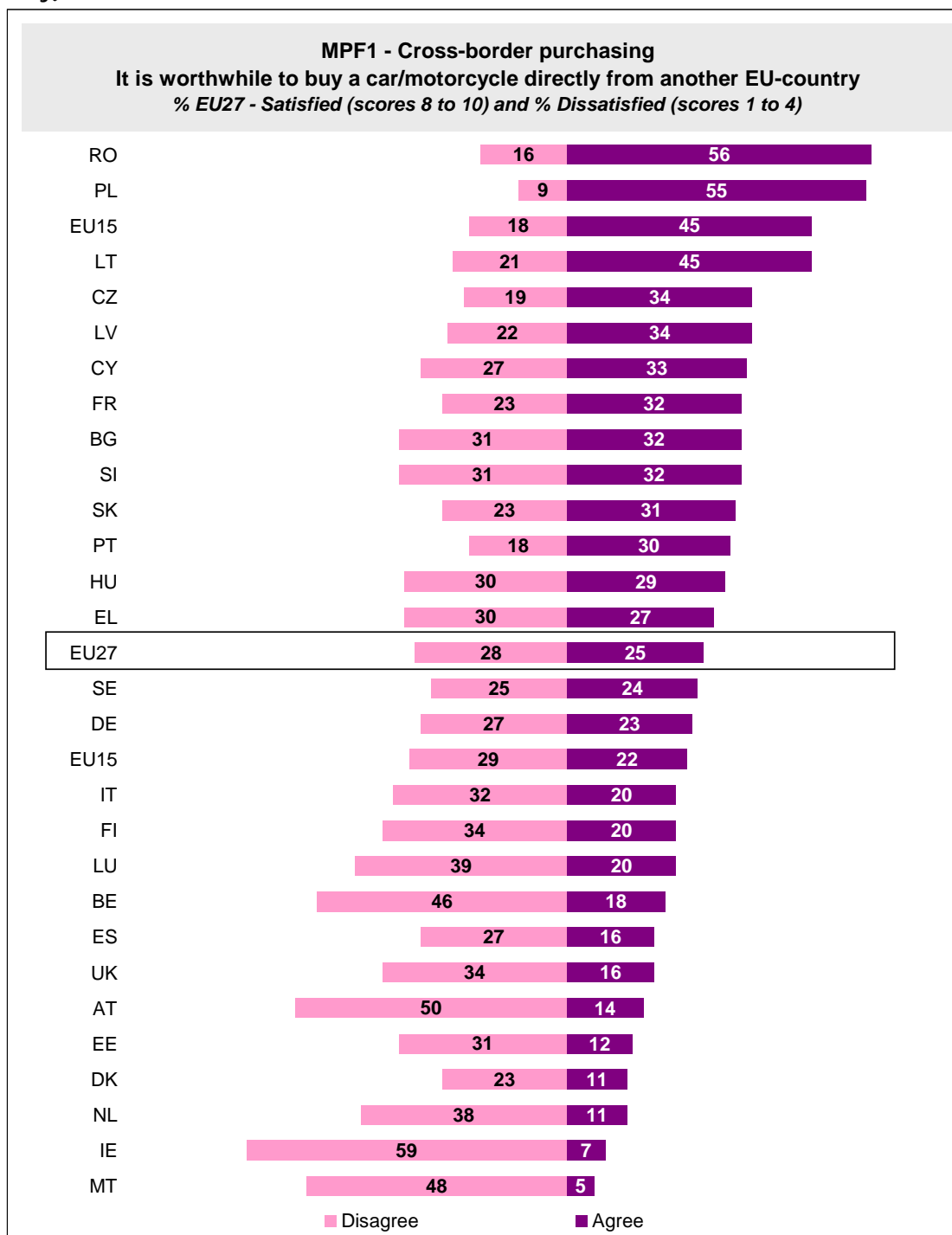
Figure 48 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Quality comparability (% by country)



A small majority (55%) of EU consumers thinks it is easy to compare the quality of products from different retailers. This is especially the case in Ireland (83%) and Cyprus (79%). It is interesting to note the relatively high proportion of consumers who think it is difficult to compare the quality of products from different retailers: they are 18% in Sweden, 15% in Lithuania and 14% in Latvia and Slovakia.

6. Cross-border purchasing

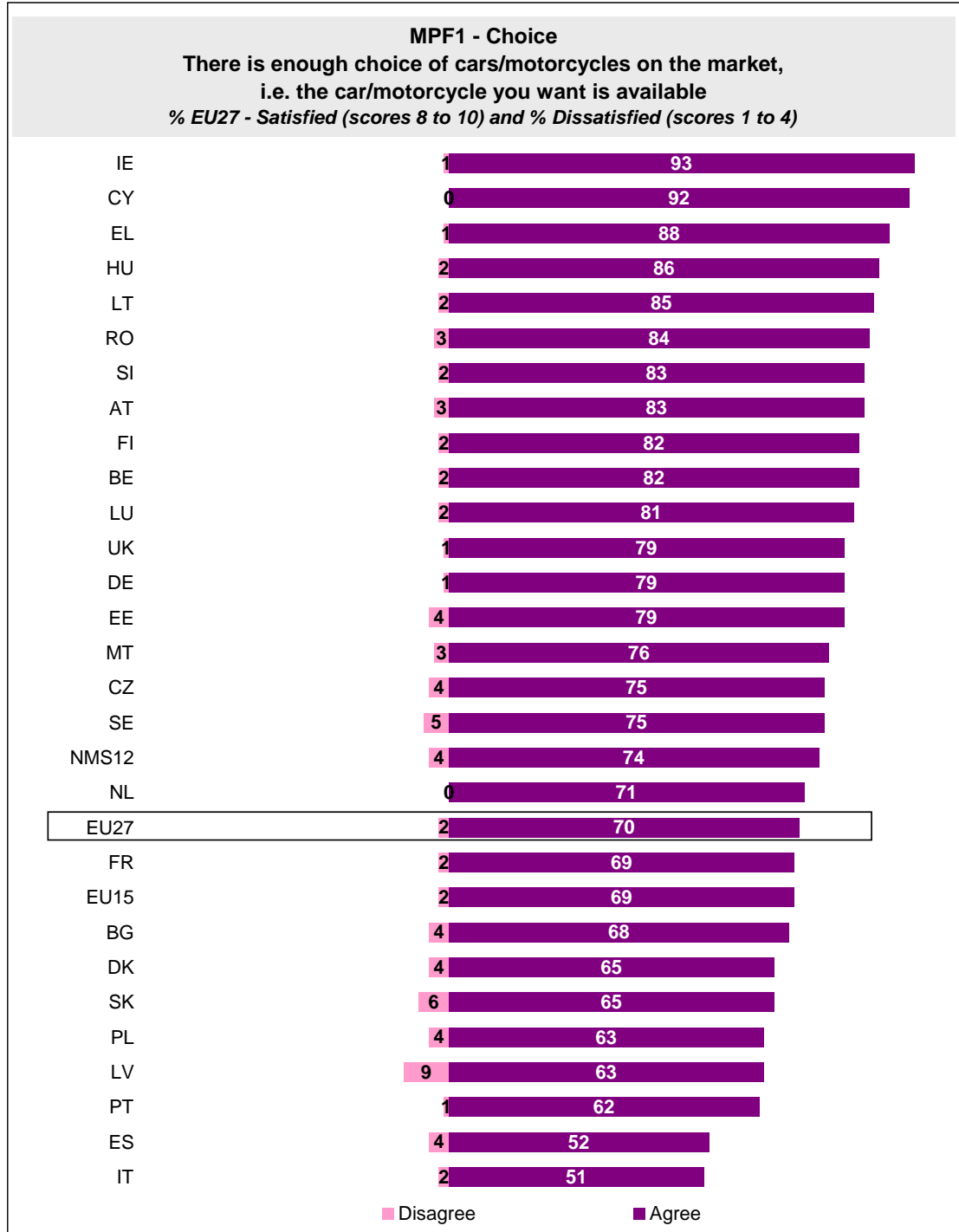
Figure 49 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Cross-border purchasing (% by country)



Almost 3 European consumers in 10 think it is not worthwhile to buy new motor vehicles from another EU country. However, more than 5 in 10 Romanians and Poles and 45% of Lithuanian consumers have a different opinion. In addition, this question seems difficult to answer for 49% of Danes, 39% of Estonians, 30% of Swedes and 27% of Slovaks.

7. Choice

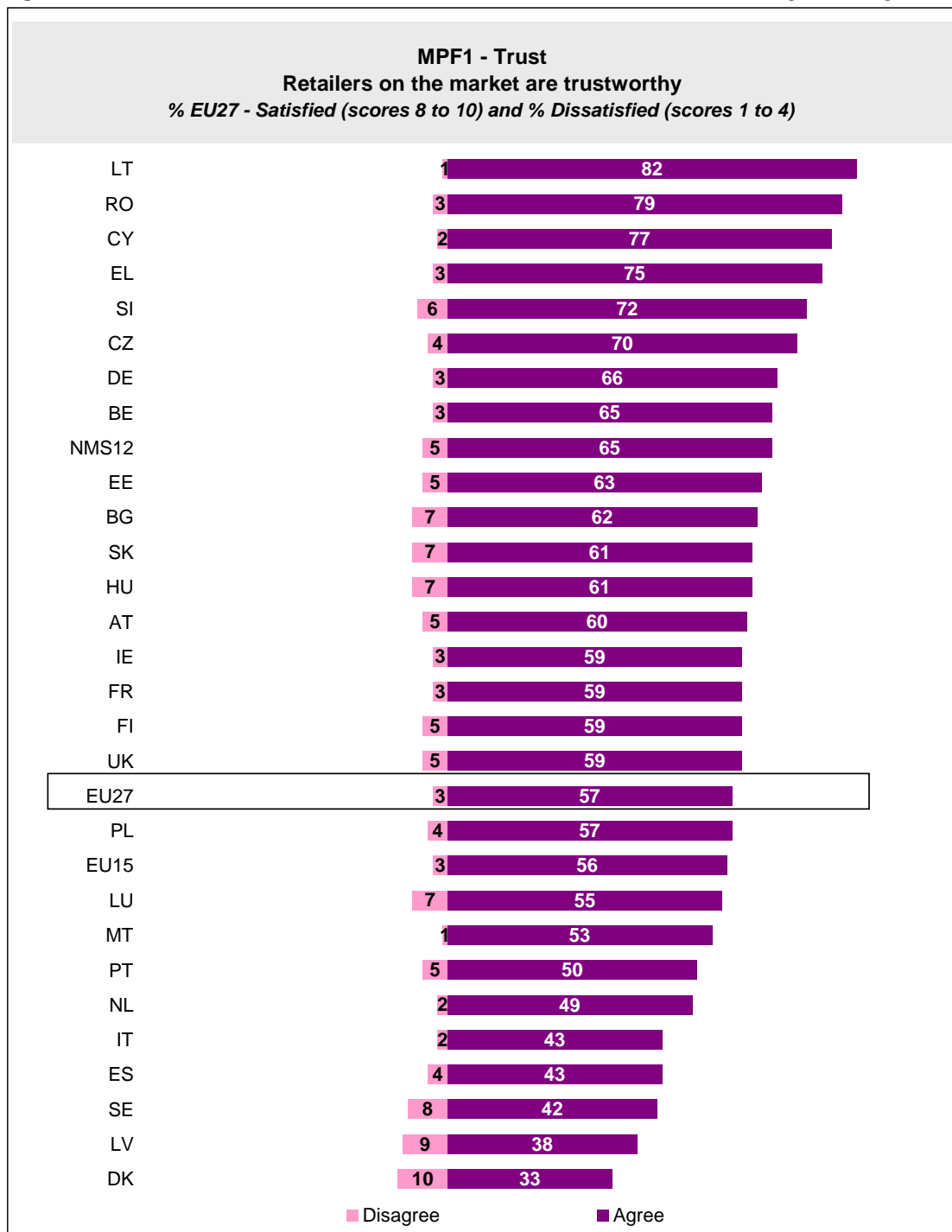
Figure 50 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Choice (% by country)



There is enough choice of new motor vehicles on the market, according to 7 Europeans in 10. The most satisfied consumers are to be found in Ireland, Cyprus and Greece, whereas Italy and Spain are the only countries where less than 6 in 10 consumers are satisfied with this market characteristic. Dissatisfaction levels are low across the countries and the highest figure, 9%, is observed in Latvia (against an EU average of 2%).

8. Trust

Figure 51 - Satisfaction with the market characteristics: Trust (% by country)



Retailers on the market for new motor vehicles are trustworthy, according to almost 6 EU consumers in 10. The most satisfied consumers are found in Lithuania, Romania, Cyprus and Greece whereas the least satisfied respondents are found in Denmark, Latvia, Sweden, Spain and Italy. Low dissatisfaction rates (EU27 average of 3%) and of “don’t know” answers (EU27 average of 2%) can also be observed.

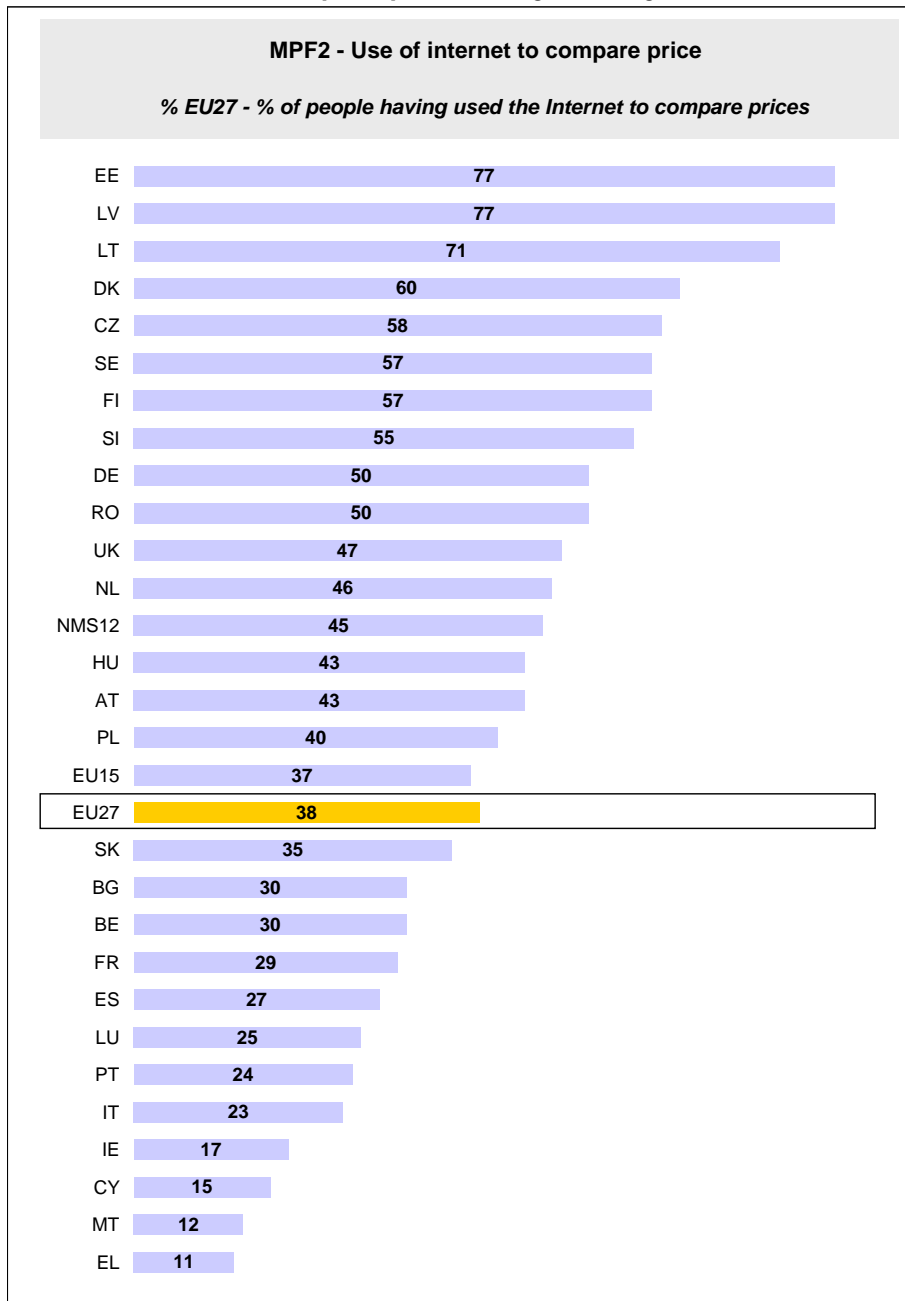
5.2. PRICE COMPARISON ON THE INTERNET

A) OVERALL RESULTS

38% of EU consumers have used the Internet to compare prices of new motor vehicles. Not surprisingly, those who have bought a car or motorcycle on the Internet are most likely to use this channel to compare prices (83%).

B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

Figure 52 – Use of internet to compare price (% by country)

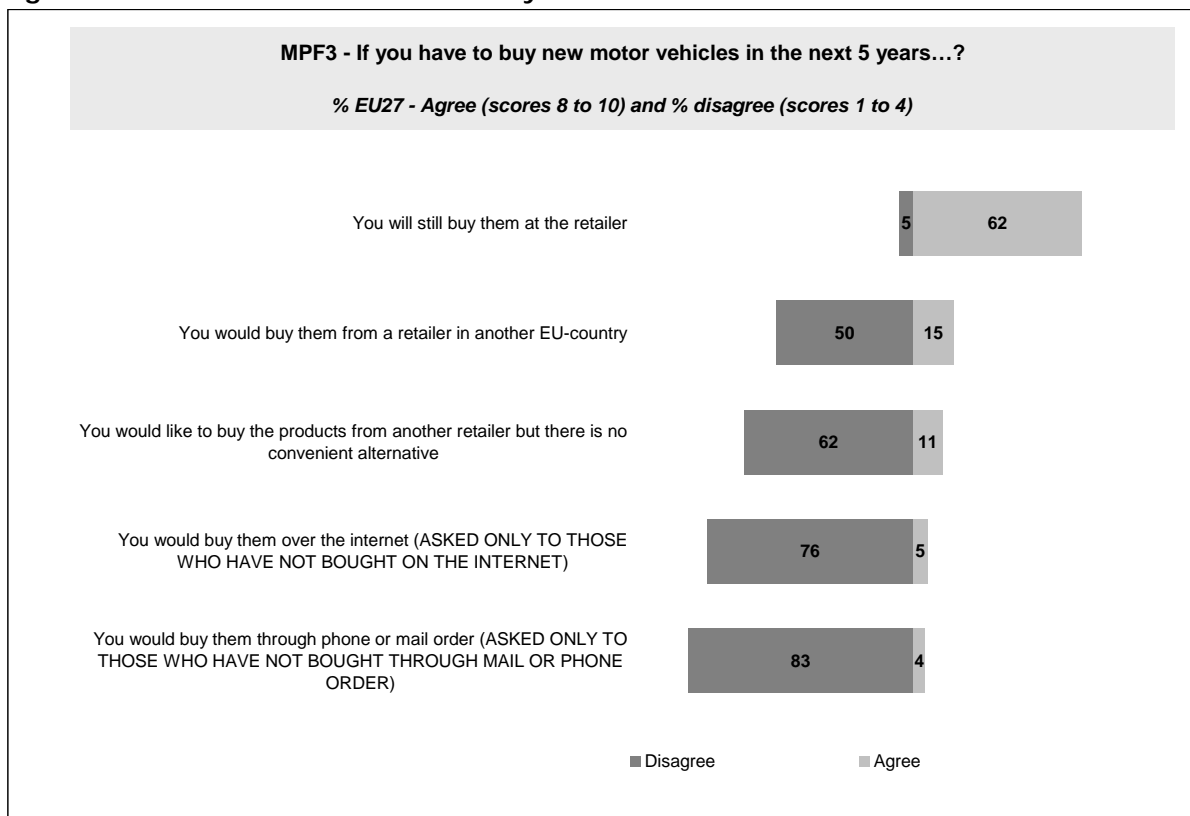


Although there are more than 7 in 10 consumers in all three Baltic countries to have used the Internet to compare prices of new motor vehicles, less than 20% have done so in Greece, Malta, Cyprus and Ireland.

5.3. COMMITMENT

A) OVERALL RESULTS

Figure 53 – Commitment in the next 5 years

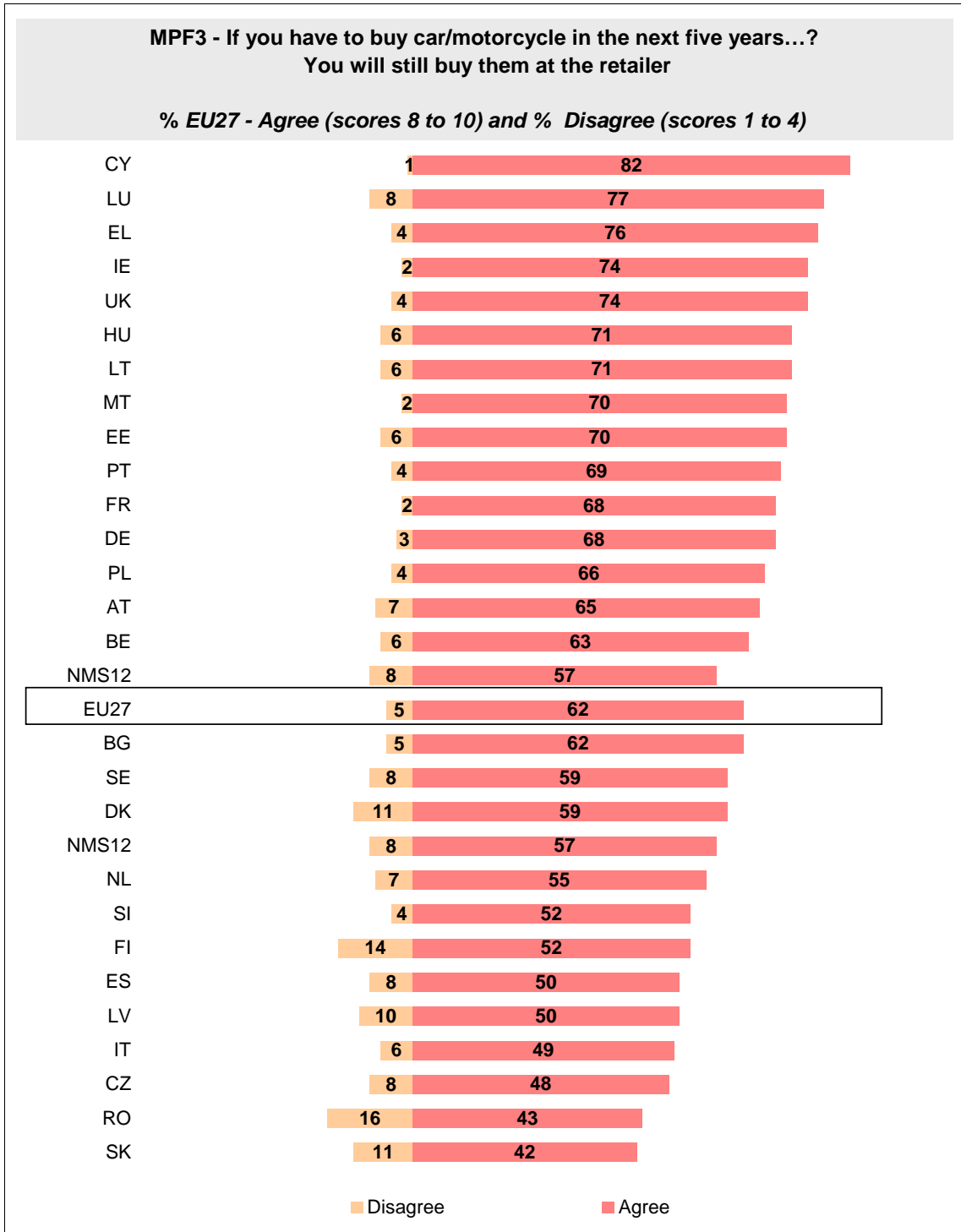


More than 6 European consumers in 10 do not intend to change retailer when it comes to buy new motor vehicles. 11% would be willing to do so but they feel that there is no convenient alternative.

More than 3 consumers in 4 would not buy new motor vehicles over the Internet or through phone/mail order and just one in two consumer would not consider purchasing them in another EU country either.

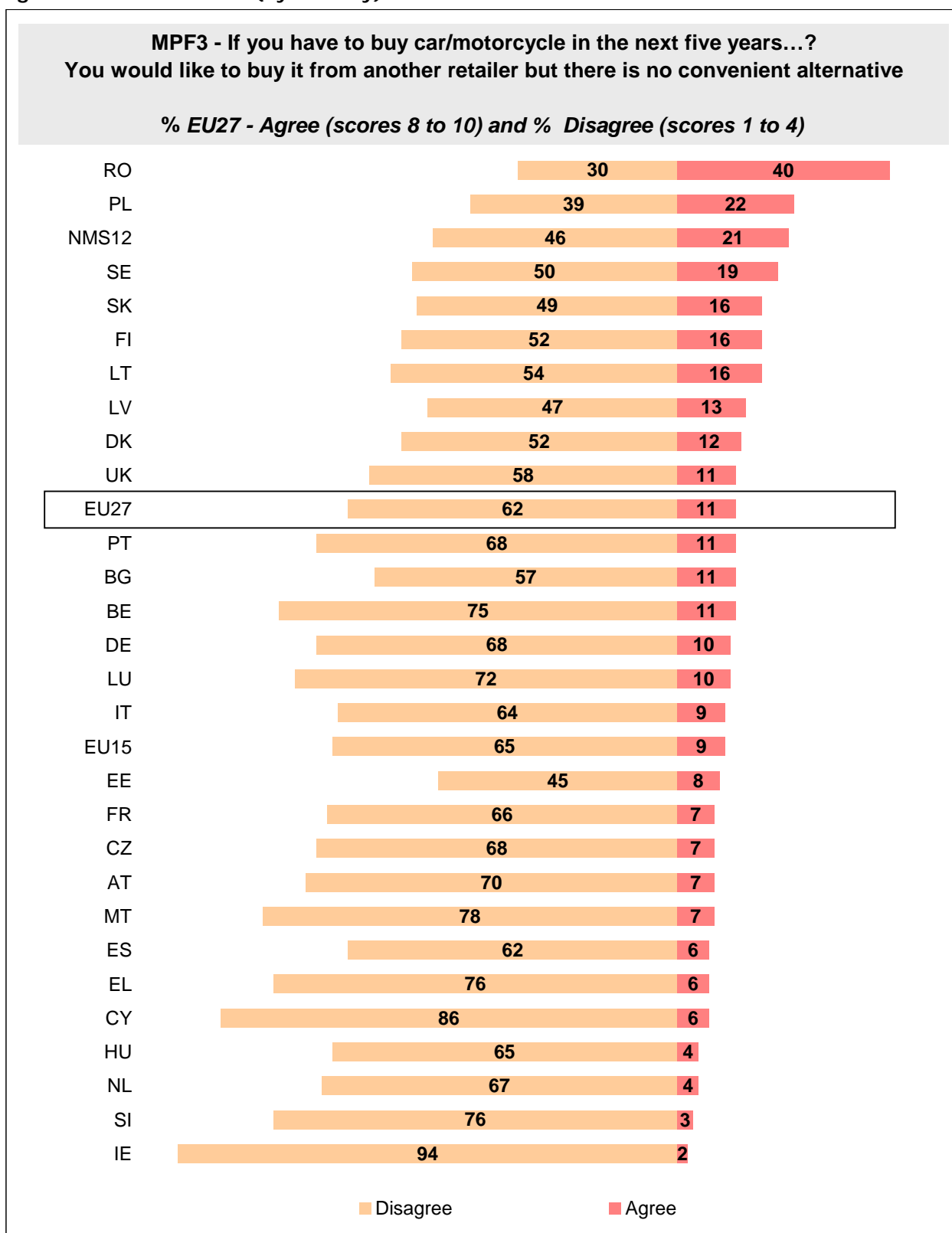
B) DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES

Figure 54 – Commitment in the next 5 years to still buy at the retailer (by country)



Commitment to one's retailer is quite high in all EU countries, especially in Cyprus (82%), but relatively low in Slovakia (42%) and Romania (43%). The least committed consumers are those who have bought new motor vehicles through import/export agents (55% against an EU average of 62%).

Figure 55 – Alternatives (by country)



A high proportion of Romanian consumers (40%) would like to buy their new motor vehicles from another retailer but they feel there is no convenient alternative. To a lesser extent, this is the opinion shared by 22% of Poles and 19% of Swedes.

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 us to explain in particular the contribution of observed variables to overall satisfaction, i.e. 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 - Market factors. 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. 'Market factors' includes items that are relevant to competition in the market, comparability across retailers, choice, etc.
- Performance indicators: variables that are a consequence of satisfaction, i.e. commitment – complaints

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/Quality), 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 WEIGHTS

The calculated regression weights for the market for new motor vehicles are the following:

PRICE/QUALITY	SERVICE	TRUST
0,11	0,40	0,28

Markedly above the other dimensions, **the quality of service** contributes the most to the overall satisfaction. Trust issues also have an undisputable impact whereas the influence of price/quality aspects is quite weak.

1.3. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

COMMITMENT	COMPLAINTS
0,50	-0,32

Satisfaction has a relative positive impact on consumers' commitment to their retailer. The correlation coefficient shows that satisfaction explains commitment to a fair extent (50%). In other words, consumers who are satisfied are less likely to switch to another retailer.

Moreover, consumers' satisfaction seems also to have a reasonable impact on their likelihood of filing complaints against their retailer.

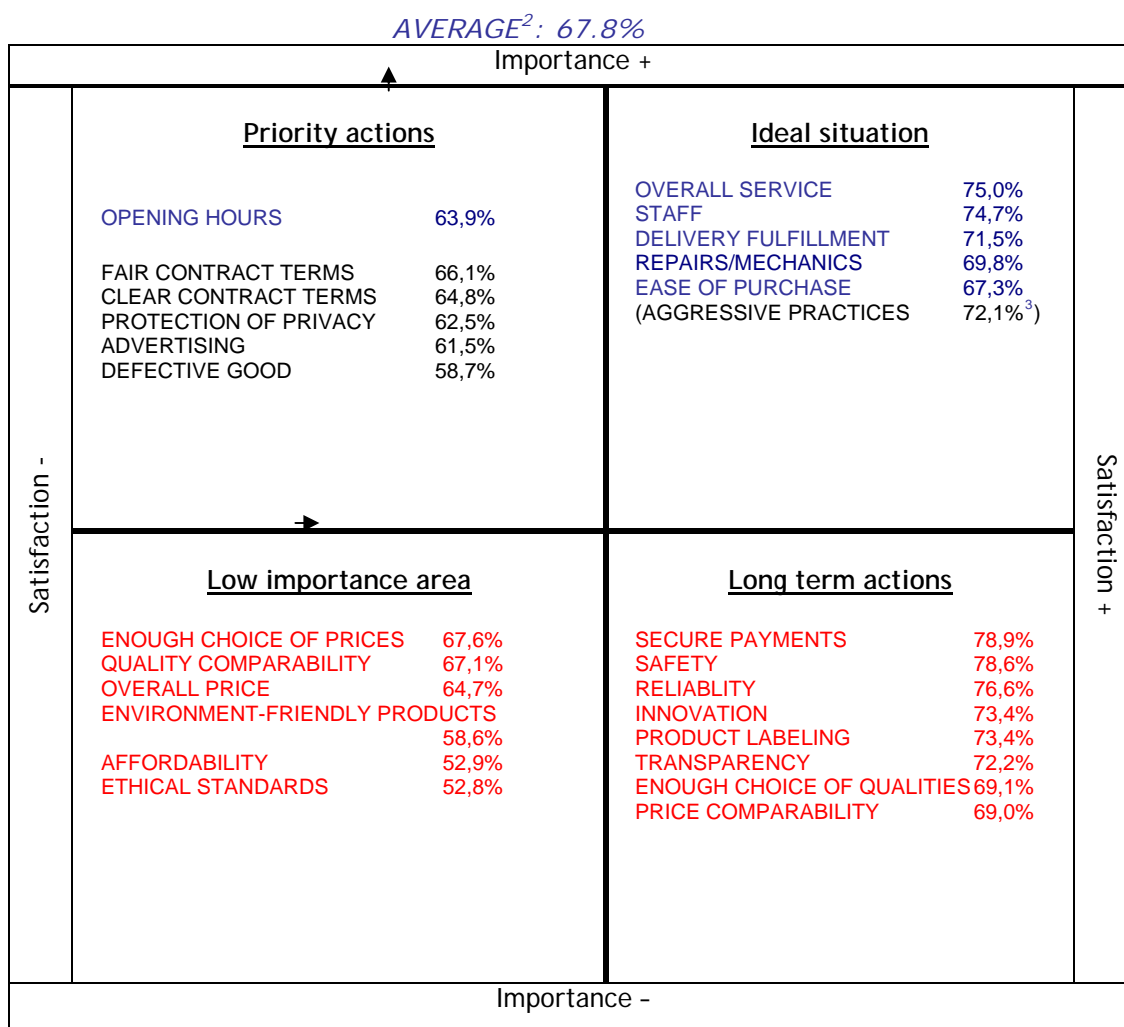
2. Two-dimensional analysis

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 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 new motor vehicles.



OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

On average, 67.8% of consumers are satisfied with all aspects relating to Price/Quality, Service and Trust.

Concerning the three dimensions used in the model, they are most satisfied with the quality of service (70.4%), followed by price/quality issues (68.2%). Aspects of trust receive a relatively lower score for overall satisfaction (65.3%).

It can be therefore said that overall, the market for new motor vehicles appears to be performing well, given that consumers are the most satisfied with the quality of service which at the same time contributes the most to the levels of overall satisfaction. At the same time, particularly aspects of trust leave space for improvements.

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

³ 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 (13% on average). Improvement in this area is thus needed.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTEREST

SERVICE

European consumers are highly satisfied with the professionalism of the staff as well as the delivery fulfillment when they are purchasing new motor vehicles. Also availability of repairers/mechanics and opening hours are rated close to the average level of satisfaction but an eye should be kept on both aspects since these are the weakest of the indicators in the ideal situation quadrant.

TRUST

In general, aspects of trust form the largest set of issues that should be considered as areas of priority actions. In particular, actions should focus on improving consumers' trust in retailers when it comes to repair, replace, reduce the price or give money back if the good is defective or not fit for purpose. Advertising and protection of privacy are also two elements that need priority actions.

PRICE/QUALITY

Even if price/quality aspects are not seen as important contributors to overall satisfaction as variables of the other two dimensions, they constitute a firm basis for the overall satisfaction with the market for new motor vehicles. Consumers are particularly satisfied with secure payments, as well as the safety and reliable of the new motor vehicles. Consequently, the high performance on these variables should be maintained in the long-term in order to keep up the performance of the market.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the observations presented above, the following can be seen as potential areas in which the market for new motor vehicles:

- Improving the ease of purchase process in order to improve this aspect of the quality of service;
- Ensuring that the complaints concerning defective products are dealt with effectively and timely so consumers can trust their retailer to do so in any case.
- Better protect consumers against aggressive selling practices.

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

- The high quality of the products in terms of safety and reliability.