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Territorial co-operation, urban actions and outermost regions
Urban actions

Survey on perceptions of quality of life in 75 European cities

June 2007

The content of this brochure does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the institutions of the European Union. This survey has been contracted to Gallup-Hungary in the context of a Framework Contract with DG Communication (European Commission). It complements the work which is carried out in the context of the European Urban Audit.

For more information

www.urbanaudit.org

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>

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(statistical questions)

This leaflet presents the results of the Urban Audit Perception Survey. This survey was conducted in November 2006 to measure the local perceptions of quality of life in 75 cities in the EU27, Croatia and Turkey. The survey was conducted by Gallup Hungary as a Flash/Eurobarometer survey. In each city, 500 randomly selected individuals were contacted. The respondents were taken from all parts of the cities. They were asked 23 questions about the quality of life in their city.

Answers to the general questions about satisfaction to live in one's own city are relatively uniformly positive. However, answers to specific questions express much more diverse feelings including some strong dissatisfaction. For example, in many cities, it is not easy to find a good job. And it is difficult to find good housing at a reasonable price.

The first graph of this leaflet shows the general consensus on the overall high satisfaction with the quality of life in their city. It then comments nine graphs¹ on issues for which the residents in the 75 cities had widely diverging opinions: (1) employment opportunities, (2) housing costs, (3) integration of foreigners (4) air pollution, (5) public transport, (6) green spaces and parks, (7) feeling safe, (8) satisfaction with health services (hospitals), (9) city spending its resources in a responsible way. The annex presents all the results in a table format for all 23 questions in the survey.

Data will be made available through the Urban Audit section of the Eurostat website (<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>). The data deserve further analysis as well as further interpretation by city managers. The questions can be classified into two groups based on the consensus found in, among the cities

For a first set of questions, there are no significant differences between most of the cities. It is the case for questions on the satisfaction with the quality of schools, doctors, sports, cinemas and cultural facilities. People's opinions are also relatively similar across Europe on questions dealing with Internet access or addressing the perception of being safe within neighbourhoods.

For a second set of questions, there are important discrepancies between opinions of residents of different cities. It is the case for perceptions of air pollution or noise as problems, and for satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding services such as green spaces and parks, public transport, hospitals. Strong differences may also be observed on questions related to housing, job finding or perception of the city as safe.

The enclosed graphs are mostly related to this second group of results.

Correlation appears between some of the answers, as detailed in the concluding part of this leaflet. Cities that are judged in a satisfactory way on an issue tend to be judged in a positive way on other related issues.

Some questions may have a slightly different meaning when translated into the 20 languages used. In addition, some questions may not be relevant in all cities, which may explain the high percentage of "no reply" for certain questions in some cities.

¹ Cities in all graphs are ranked according to positive replies minus negative replies divided by all respondents who agreed or disagreed, i.e. excluding respondents who didn't reply or didn't know.

The Urban Audit Perception Survey was launched to complement the data from the main Urban Audit exercise. The Urban Audit has collected over 250 indicators on the quality of life in 258 European Cities in the EU27 and 26 cities in Turkey. Currently, the Urban Audit is being updated for 335 cities in the EU27. In addition, Norway, Switzerland and Croatia will also contribute data for their main cities.

In this Perception Survey, all capitals were included and in the larger Member States one to six more cities were added. As a result the following 75 cities were selected:

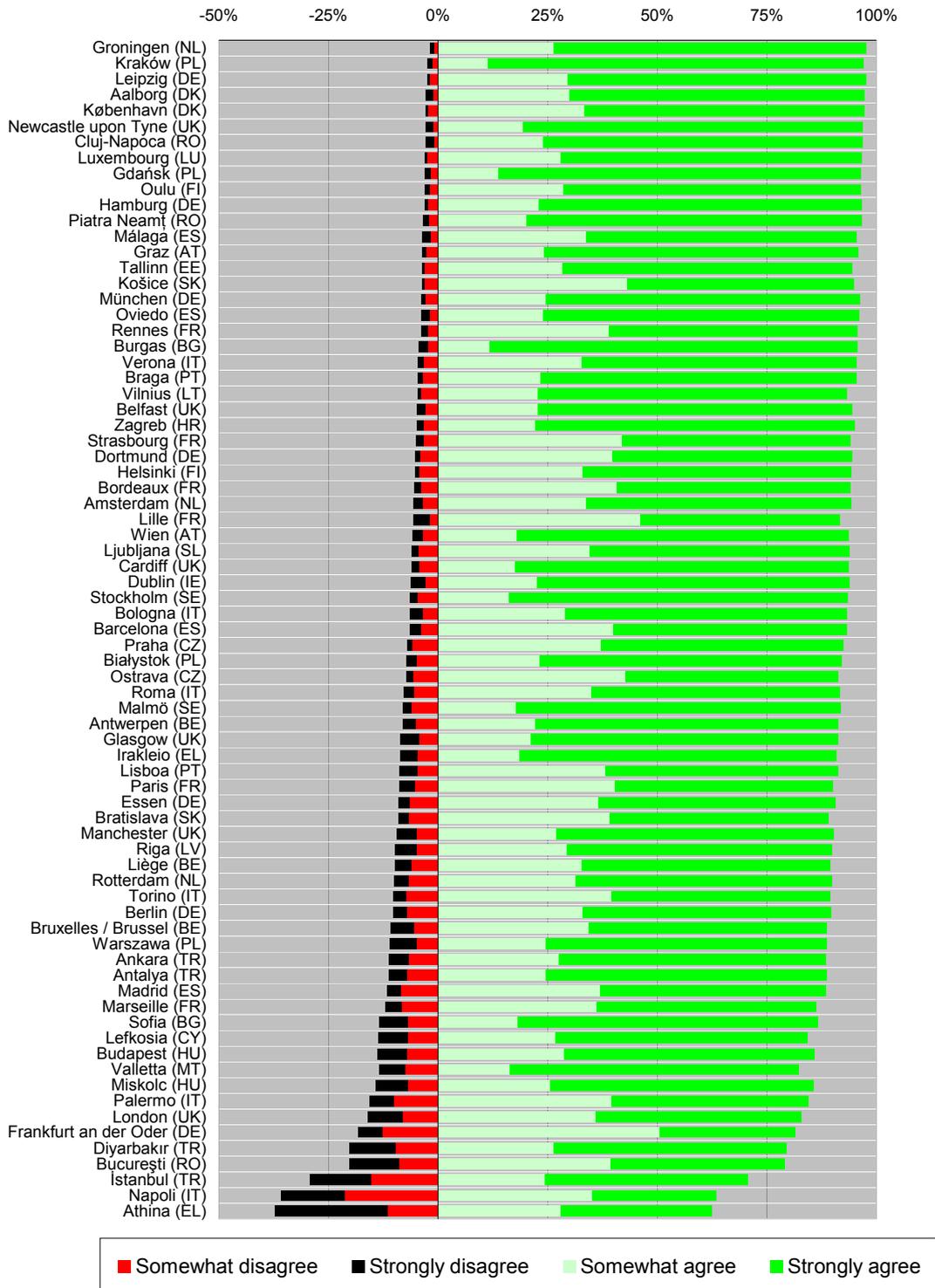
Country	City	Country	City
België/Belgique	Antwerpen	Lietuva	Vilnius
	Brussel	Luxembourg (G.D.)	Luxembourg
	Liège	Magyarország	Budapest
Bulgaria	Burgas		Miskolc
	Sofia	Malta	Valletta
Česká Republika	Ostrava	Nederland	Amsterdam
	Praha		Groningen
Danmark	Aalborg		Rotterdam
	København	Österreich	Graz
Deutschland	Berlin		Wien
	Dortmund	Polska	Białystok
	Essen		Gdańsk
	Frankfurt an der Oder		Kraków
	Hamburg		Warszawa
	Leipzig	Portugal	Braga
	München		Lisboa
Eesti	Tallinn	România	Bucureşti
Éire/Ireland	Dublin		Cluj-Napoca
Elláda	Athina		Piatra Neamţ
	Irakleio	Slovenija	Ljubljana
España	Barcelona	Slovensko	Bratislava
	Madrid		Kosice
	Málaga	Suomi/Finland	Helsinki
	Oviedo		Oulu
France	Bordeaux	Sverige	Malmö
	Lille		Stockholm
	Marseille	United Kingdom	Belfast
	Paris		Cardiff
	Rennes		Glasgow
Italia	Strasbourg		London
	Bologna		Manchester
	Napoli		Newcastle
	Palermo	Hrvatska	Zagreb
	Roma	Türkiye	Ankara
	Torino		Antalya
Verona		Diyarbakır	
Kypros / Kibris	Lefkosia		İstanbul
Latvija	Riga		

The graphs, which follow, provide an overview of results of ten questions which provide maps of contrasted opinions. The overall results are annexed.

Satisfaction to live in one's city

This survey shows that most citizens are satisfied to live in their city. In most cities, 75% to 97% of interviewees in a city somewhat or strongly agree with the statement below.

You are satisfied to live in this city

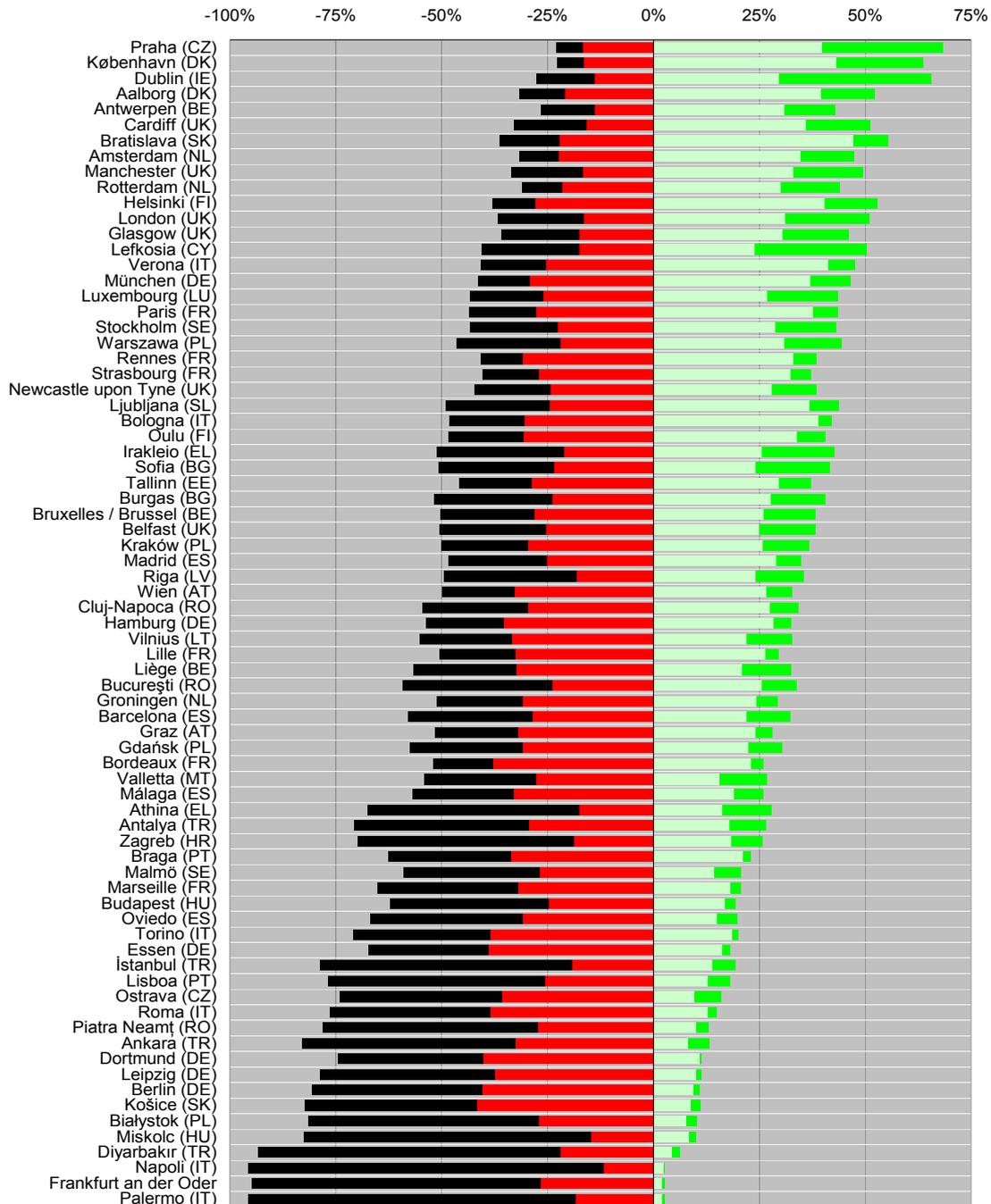


Employment opportunities

Despite the concentration of jobs in cities, “to find a good job” is not an easy process, though the overall perception has improved since 2004 in most of the 31 cities in the EU15 which are covered by the first Urban Audit Perception Survey.

In some cities the population is very positive about the opportunities for finding a job. This is especially the case in Prague, Copenhagen and Dublin where more than 70% of those who reply, agree it is easy to find a job. In 54 cities, a majority of respondents disagreed with the statement that a good job is easy to find. In a few cities, this statement was almost universally and strongly rejected.

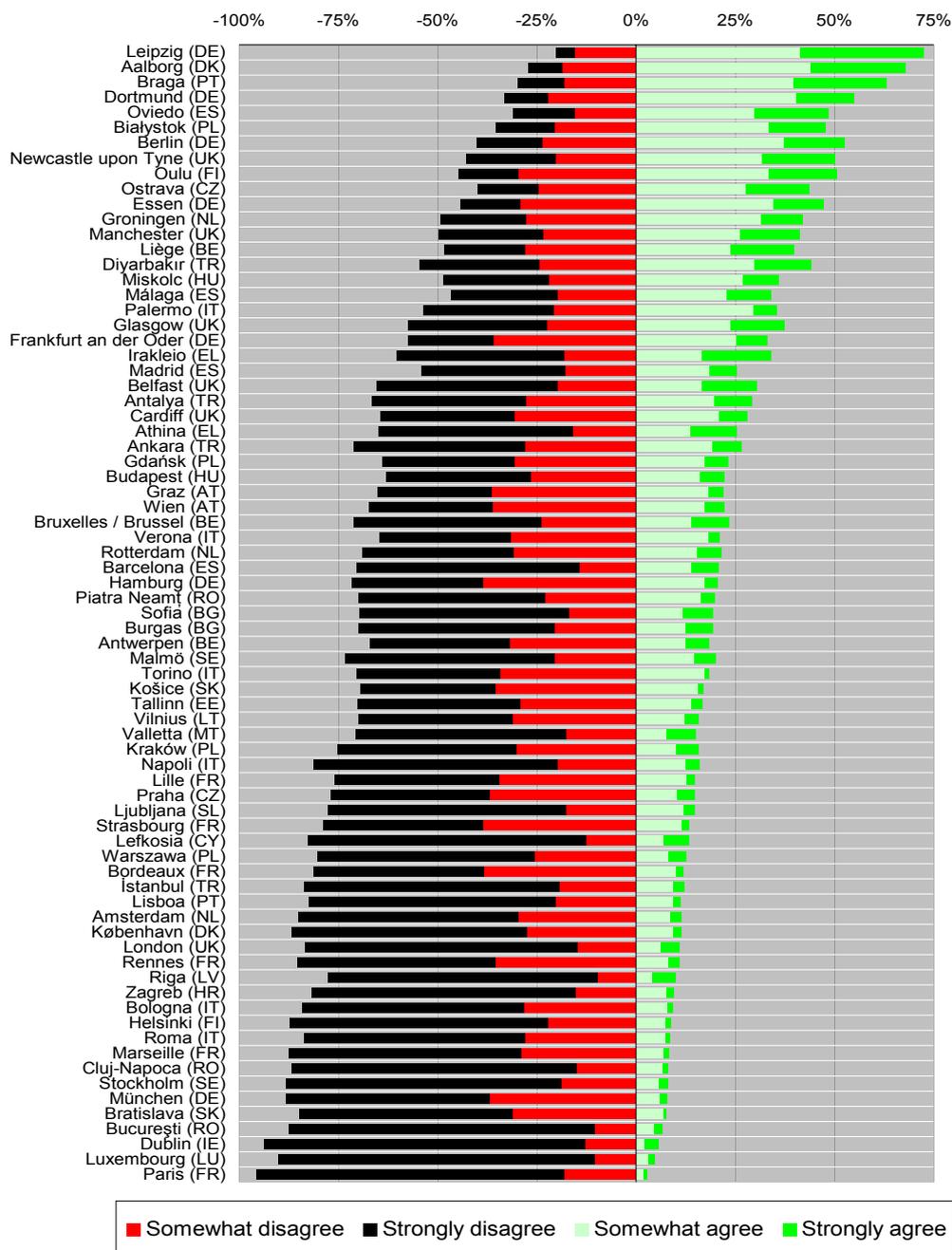
It is easy to find a good job



Housing

Given the steep increase of housing prices in many countries in the EU and especially in cities, it comes as no surprise that only 27% of the respondents agree that it is easy to find a good housing at a reasonable price. In eleven cities more people agree that “*it is easy to find a good quality house at a reasonable price*” than those who disagree. The only capital among these cities was Berlin. Among the thirteen cities where more than 90% of the respondents disagree, there are nine capitals. The five cities with the highest share of respondents disagreeing were Paris, Luxembourg, Dublin, Bucharest and Bratislava.

It is easy to find good housing at a reasonable price

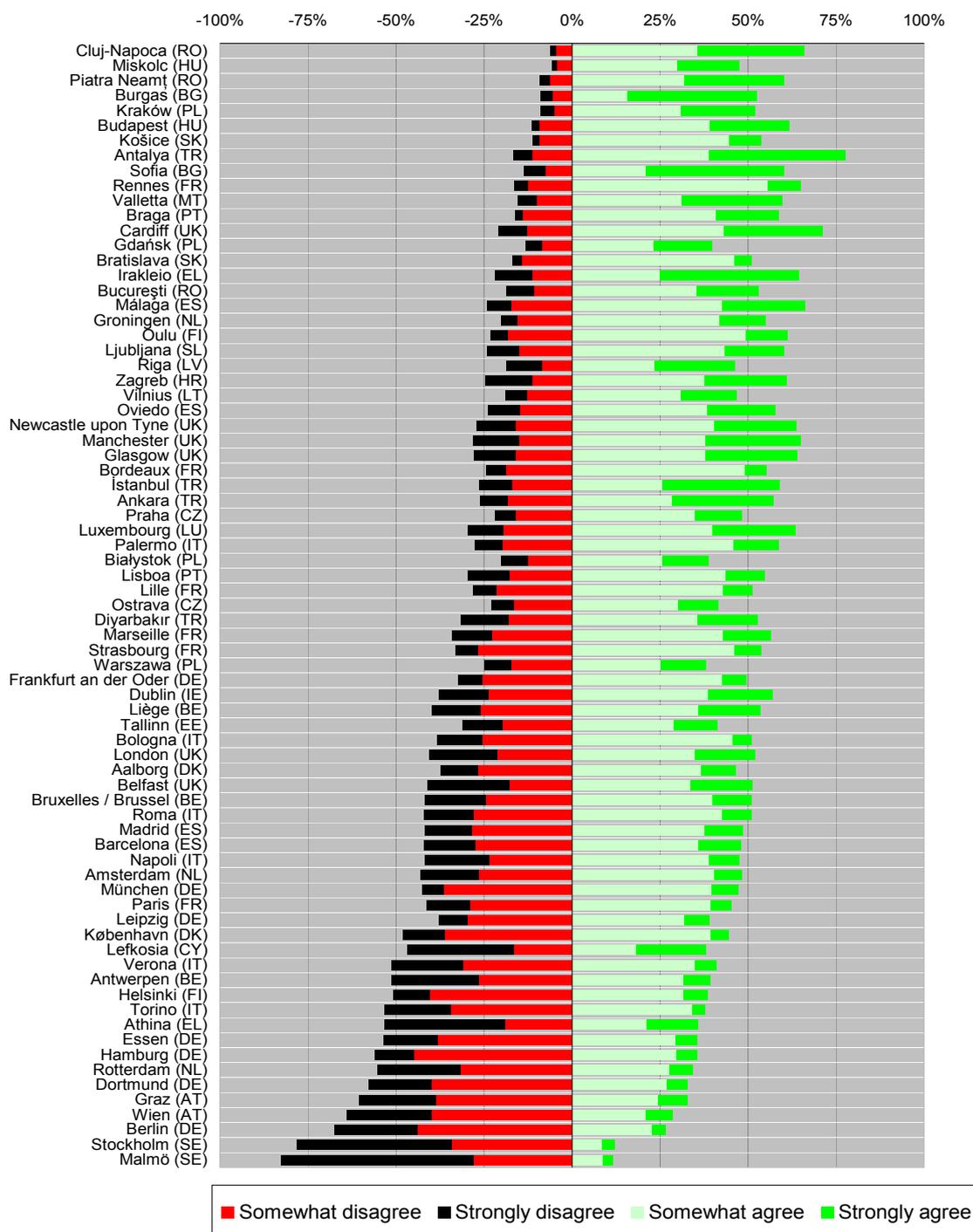


Integration

Overall, in 59 cities (out of 75), more respondents agree than disagree that “foreigners are well integrated”. The top five cities with the most respondents disagreeing that foreigners in their city are well-integrated are Malmo, Stockholm, Berlin, Wien and Graz.

In most of the new Member States’ cities, the non-answer rate is quite high, from 20% to 47%, showing a lower concern for this question or the fact that many of these cities have very low shares of foreign residents.

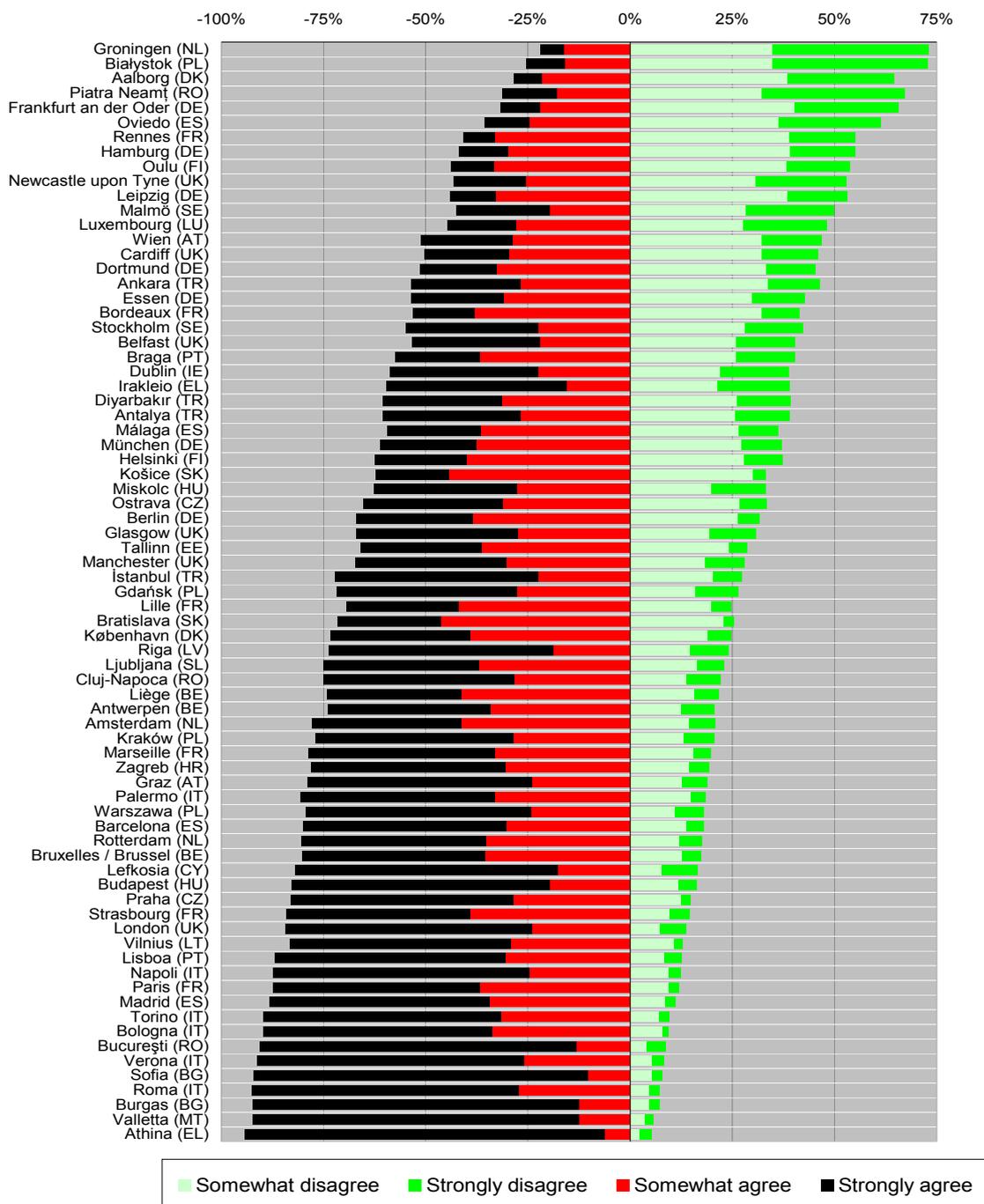
Foreigners are well integrated



Air Pollution

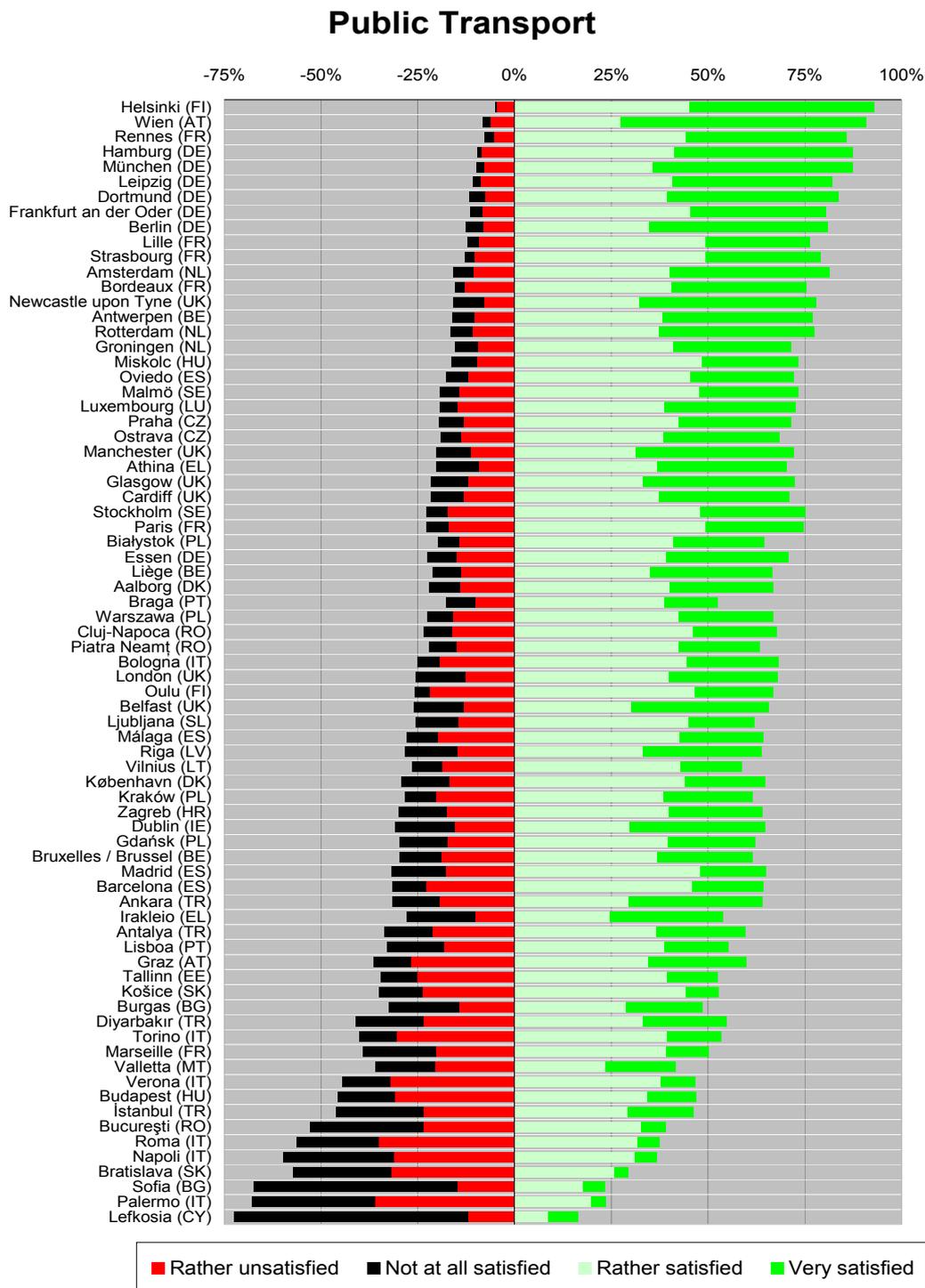
The perception of air pollution differs widely between cities. In some cities, three out of four respondents do not identify air pollution as such a problem whereas in others almost all the respondents think it is a big problem. Typically, in Southern cities and in large cities, respondents agree the statement that “*air pollution is a big problem*”, while in Northern cities, especially the smaller ones, few respondents agree with this statement. Overall, 69% of the respondents agreed. In 62 cities the majority agree it is a big problem, including all surveyed capitals, except Luxembourg.

Air pollution is a big problem



Quality of Public Transport

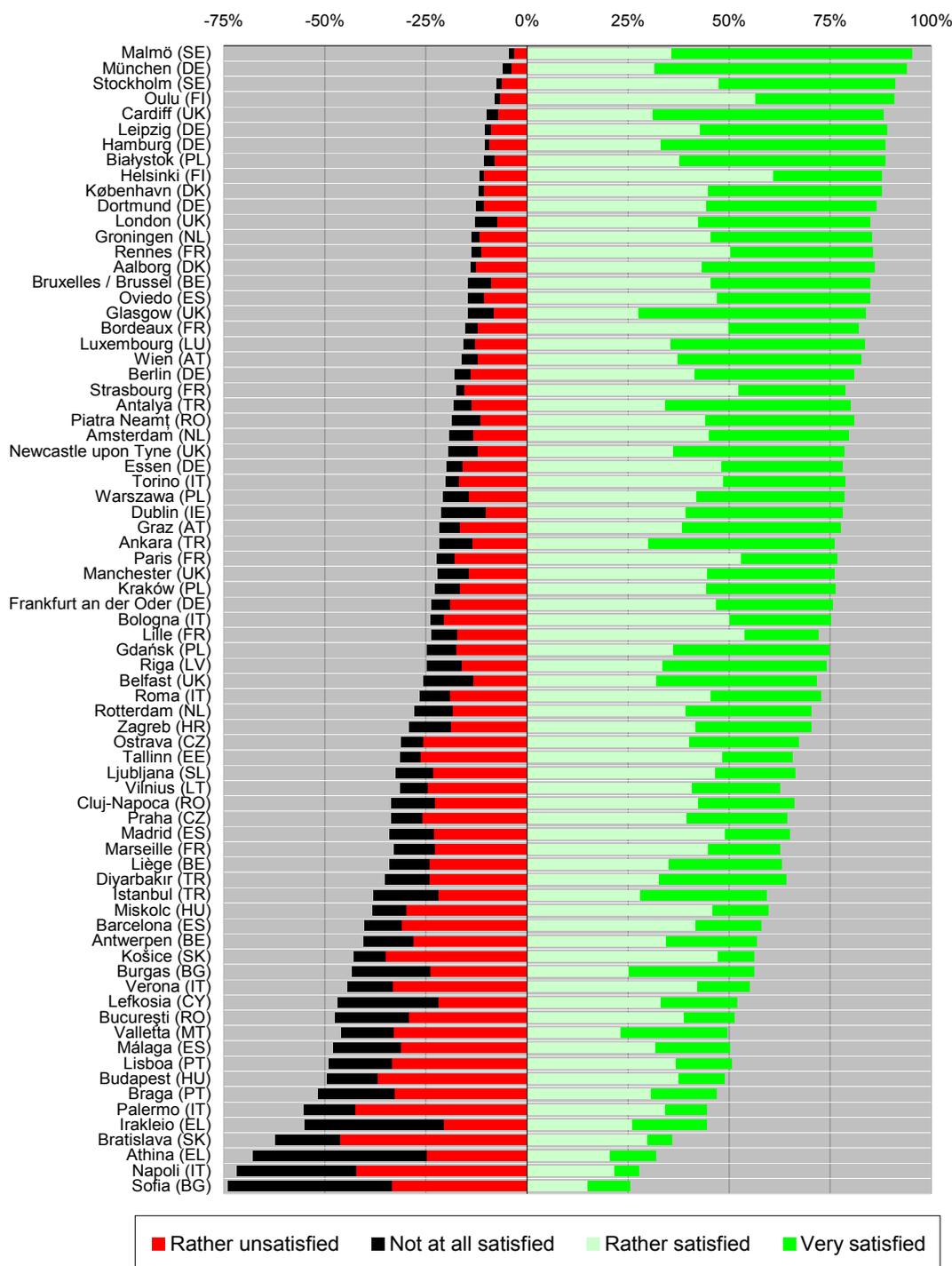
Satisfaction with public transport was generally quite high. In 68 cities, the majority of the respondents are satisfied with “Public transport in the city, for example the bus, tram or metro”. However, in some Southern cities and in some capital cities of new Member States there is less satisfaction. The results in this graph are in line with the 2004 opinion survey, already conducted in 31 of the 75 surveyed cities: Helsinki, Wien, Rennes were already in the top five, in terms of positive opinion. Several German cities are also in the top ten.



Green spaces and public parks

At a first glance, it seems that the positive and negative opinion follow a North-South divide, as more than 75% of respondents express a positive opinion in several cities in Northern Europe. However, results do not show clear correlation with the geographic location nor with the size of the city. In eight surveyed capitals, 40% or more of respondents express their non-satisfaction with “Green spaces such as public parks and gardens”.

Green spaces such as public parks and gardens

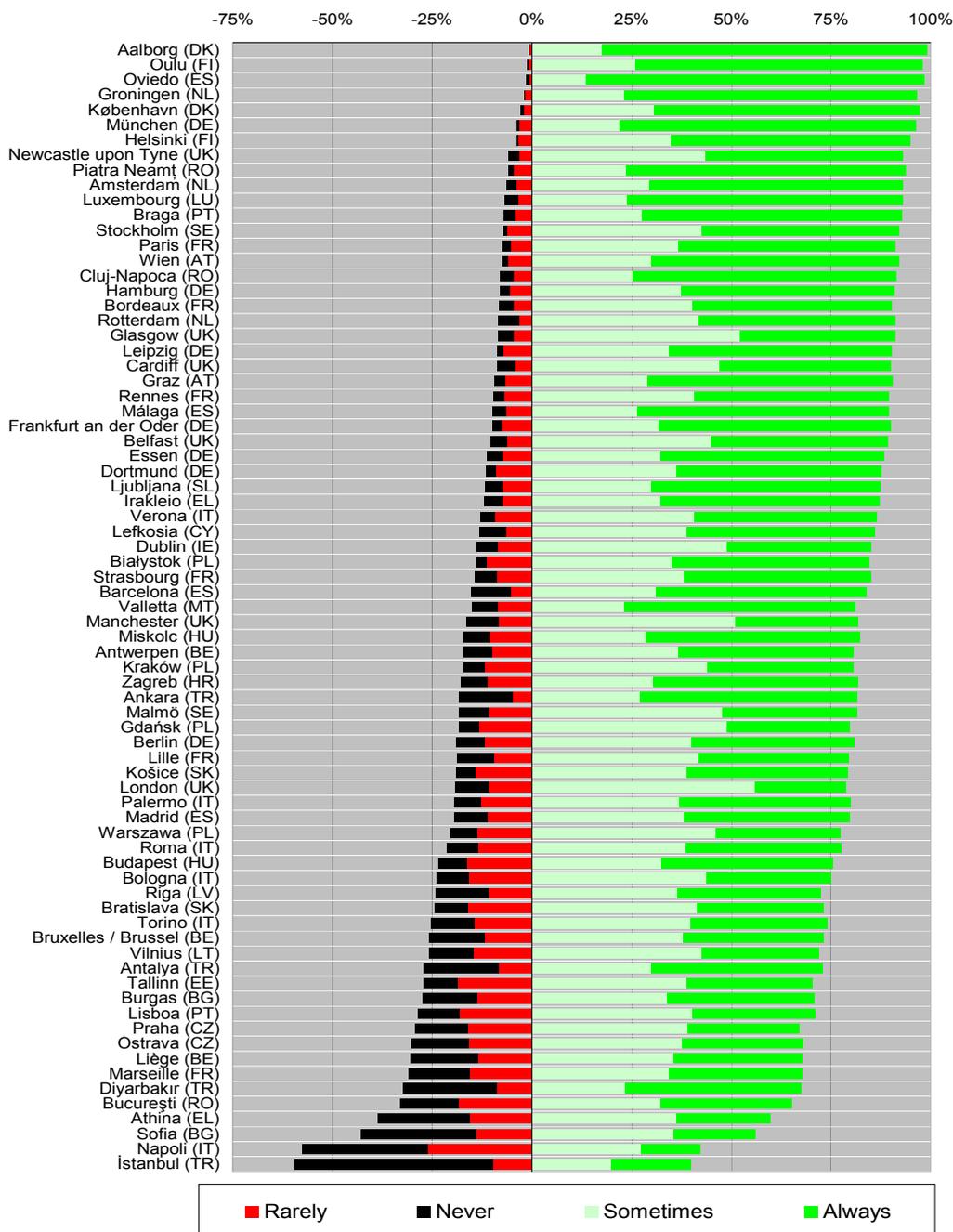


Feeling safe

Citizens from the Nordic countries' cities tend to feel safe with an average of 97% of respondents in Danish, Finnish and Swedish cities, who “*sometimes or always feel safe in their cities*”. In other countries, the feelings differ more between cities.

In most surveyed cities of the new Member States, 69% to 88% of people agree with the statement. On a less positive side, over 25% respondents never feel safe in nineteen cities, including two cities where negative opinions are over 50%.

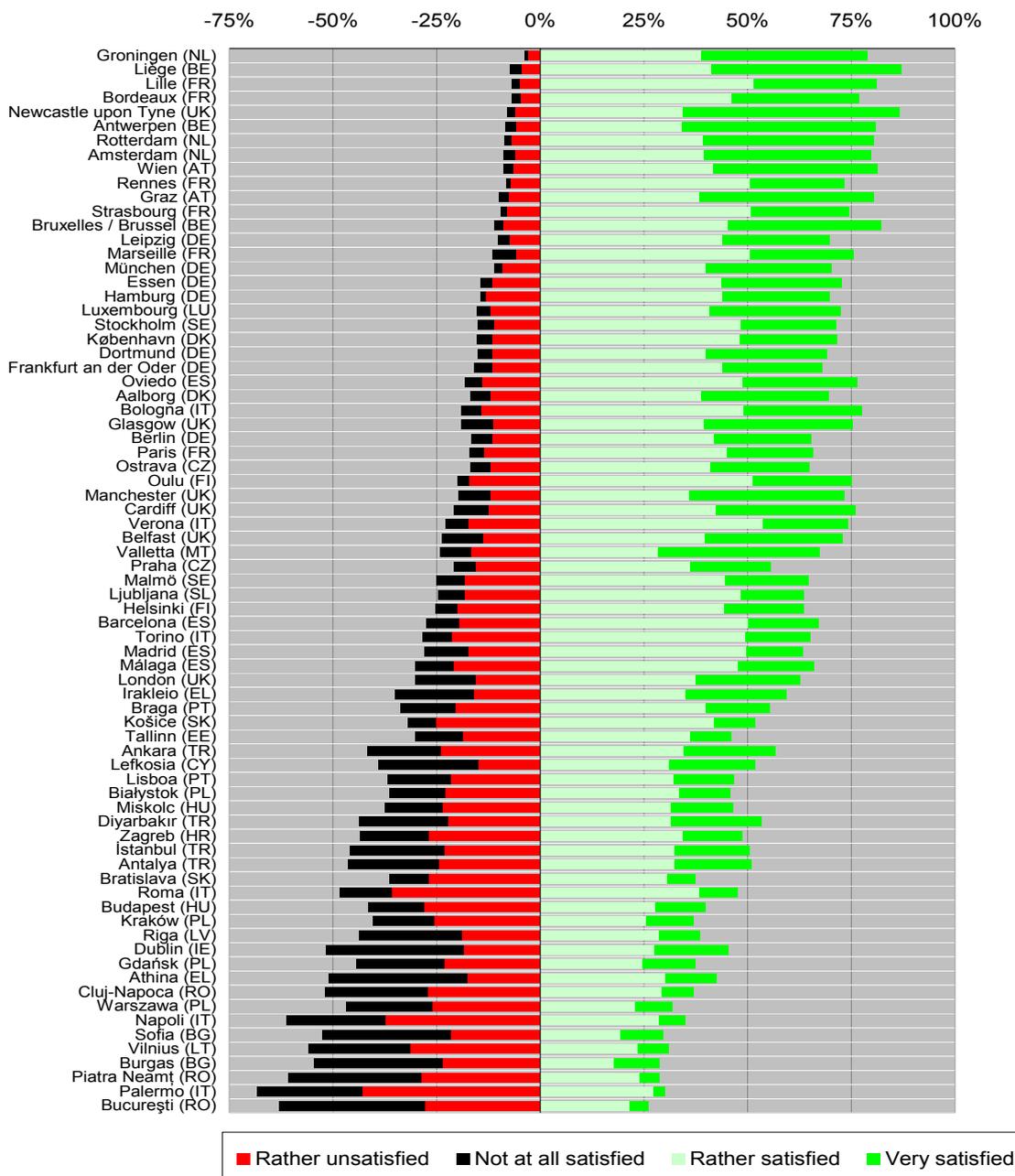
You feel safe in this city



Hospitals

In 59 cities out of 75, more respondents state that they are “*very satisfied or rather satisfied with health care services offered by hospitals*”, while, in the remaining 16 cities, a majority expresses its slight or strong dissatisfaction with these services. Some high scores may be recorded: 87% satisfaction rate in Liege and Newcastle for example. However, in 26 cities more than 40% express their dissatisfaction with these services and, among these cities are 14 capitals.

Health care services offered by hospitals

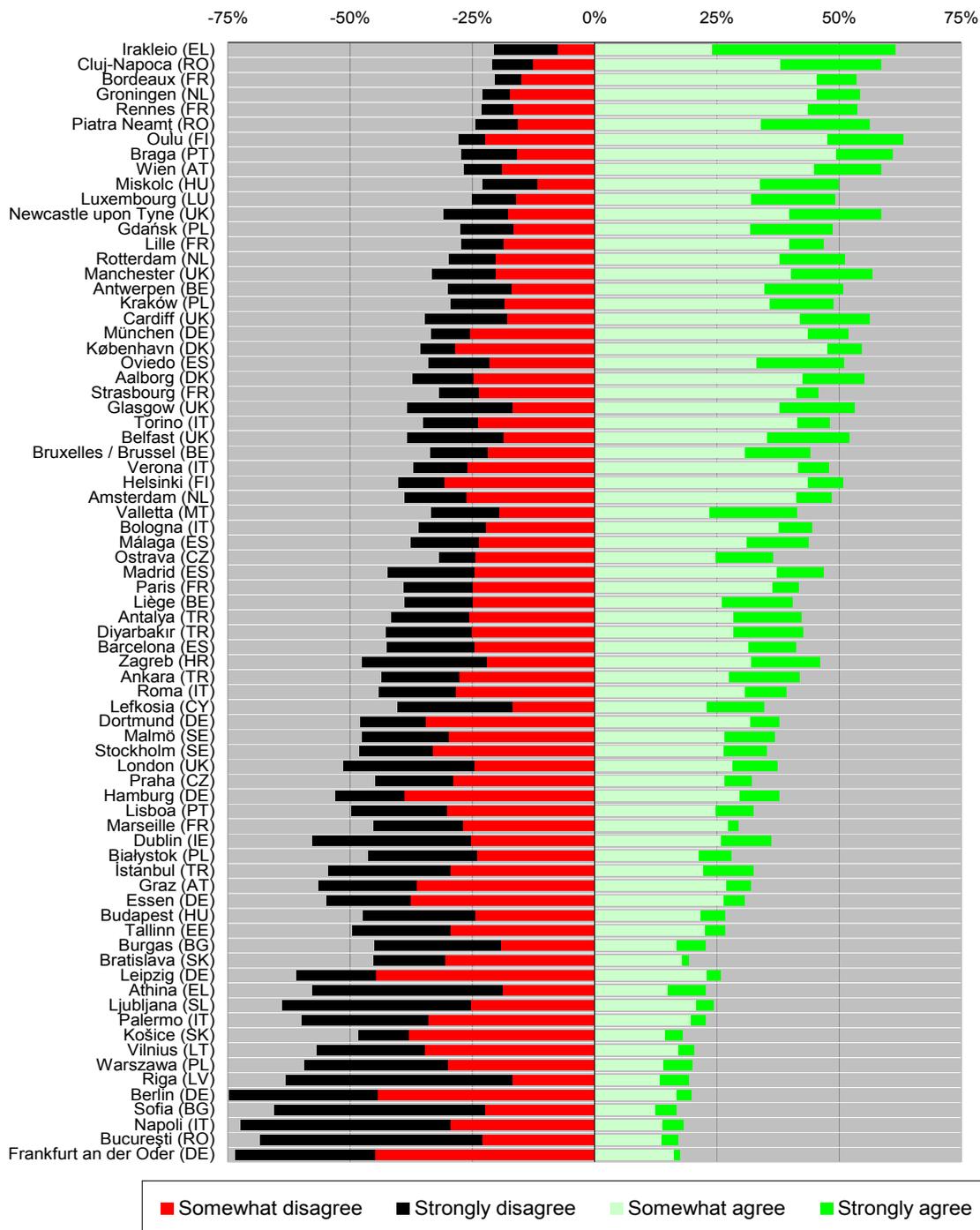


Cities spend their resources in a responsible way

Answers to this question show very mixed results. This may be due to a lack of transparency in management and expenditure.

In a majority of cities (40 cities), most respondents think that their city “spends its resources in a responsible way”. In 24 cities, the opposite results may be found with more than 60% of people who “somewhat or strongly disagree”. There is a 18% average of no-reply to this question, which may be due to the relatively low level of responsibilities at city level in several countries.

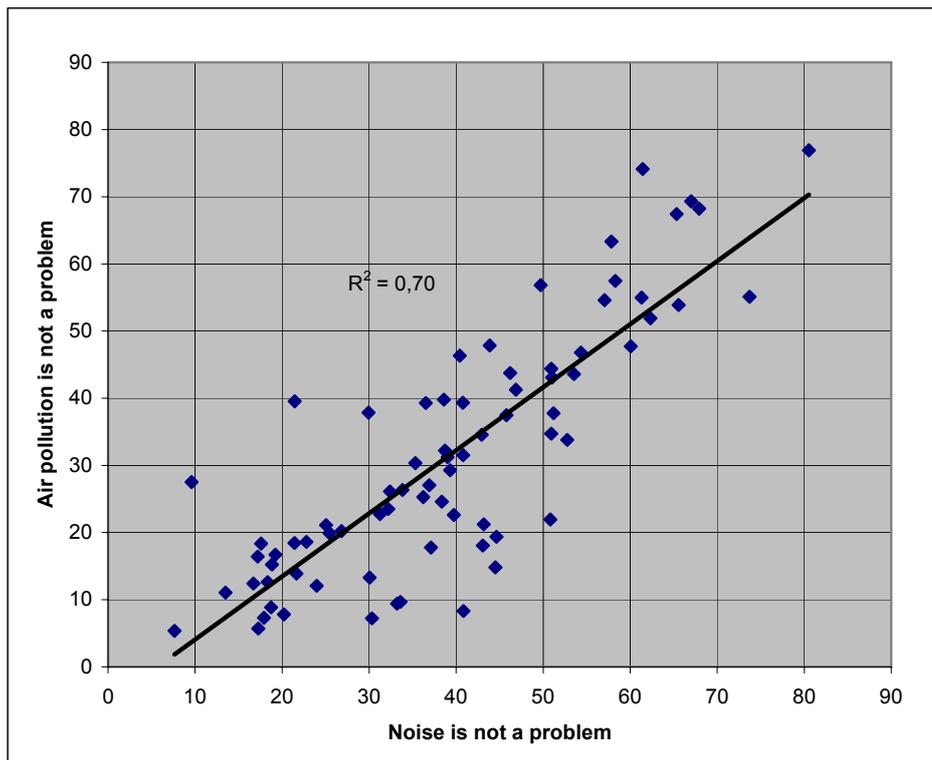
This city spends its resources in a responsible way



CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERCEPTIONS

Some correlations between answers per city are quite strong. For example, in cities where a majority of people think that the city is managed in a responsible way, they also express their satisfaction with the way services are delivered “*When you contact administrative services of [CITY], they help you efficiently*”, and vice-versa. They also have a positive opinion of health care services and a positive expectation on their city's future.

Those who find air pollution is not a problem in their city also usually consider noise as not being a problem in their city. In the graph below, most cities are in the lower left side of the graph, with less than 50% respondents thinking that noise or pollution are not problem issues.



In the first Urban Audit Perception Survey in 2004, a correlation is found between the positive perception of job opportunities and a negative perception of the cost of housing. This relation is confirmed by the current expanded perception survey. As employment opportunities fluctuate year-by-year and housing costs change more slowly this correlation is not extremely strong. Still in all but one of the 19 cities where the majority of the respondents have a positive view of job opportunities, respondents have a negative view of availability of good quality housing at reasonable cost.

Comparisons with the 2004 Perception Survey

Compared to 2004, when this survey was carried out in 31 cities in the EU15, the average results of the 31 already surveyed cities are relatively stable, which shows that the survey can be used with confidence.

As in 2004, four demographic questions are included to verify that a balanced sample of city residents has been obtained. The results are weighed to accurately reflect the

demographic make-up of each city². There is a greater sample in each location, with an increase from 300 to 500 interviews per city.

On most questions, there has not been much change in the average rate of positive and negative answers, except on one question:

- On “*It is easy to find a job*”, cities have seen a moderate improvement in the perception of employment opportunities, with an average answer rate from 32% to 41% of people strongly or somewhat agreeing.

Though the average is stable, changes may be found in cities' replies to specific questions.

Complementing the Urban Audit Perception Survey with other sources of information

With respect to some issues at stake, it is worth confronting the Perception survey's results with data issued from other sources. For example, on integration data, the Urban Audit has shown that non-nationals are heavily concentrated in cities, especially in capitals and large cities. But it has also shown that the share of non-nationals varies substantially between cities with cities in Romania and Bulgaria which have almost no non-nationals to certain cities in Austria, Belgium, France and Germany, where between one in three and one in six residents are non-nationals.

In 2005, a labour force survey showed that non-nationals from outside the EU25 had considerably lower employment rates and far higher unemployment rates in most Member States. This is likely to influence the perception of the integration of these non-nationals from outside the EU25.

For any further information

For more information on the Urban Audit please consult www.urbanaudit.org or write to urban-audit@ec.europa.eu.

Annexe: Overall results

² The 95% confidence interval is between 1.9% and 4.4%, depending on the distribution of the answers. The more skewed the distribution, the smaller the confidence interval. For example, if 90% of the respondents agree that they feel safe in their city, the confidence interval is 1.9%. If the share is 50%, the interval is 4.4%. This means that an 8.8 percentage point difference or more between the results of two cities is 95% certain to be significant. Differences of less than 3.8 percentage points are statistically not significant.