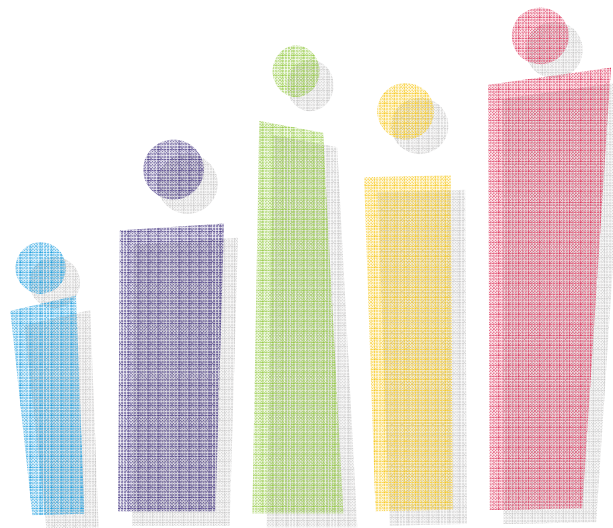




# Risk Issues

## Europeans' Views



EUROBAROMETER

# Outline

- **Objective**
- **Methodology**
- **Risk perceptions**
- **Views on public authorities' action**
- **Sources of Information**

# Objective

- Assess how consumers in the EU perceive health-related risks and in particular food safety.
  - Identify key concerns with respect to food safety
  - Assess consumers' views regarding action of public authorities
  - Assess consumers' trust in key information sources
- Eurobarometer jointly commissioned by EFSA and DG SANCO



# Methodology

**Fieldwork:** September 2<sup>nd</sup> – October 6<sup>th</sup> 2005

**Countries covered:** 25 Member States

**Target group:** In each Member State, national and other EU citizens aged 15+

**Methodology:** Face-to-face interviews conducted in peoples' homes

**Number of interviews:** 24,643 interviews conducted by TNS Opinion & Social network

## Main findings: Food Safety

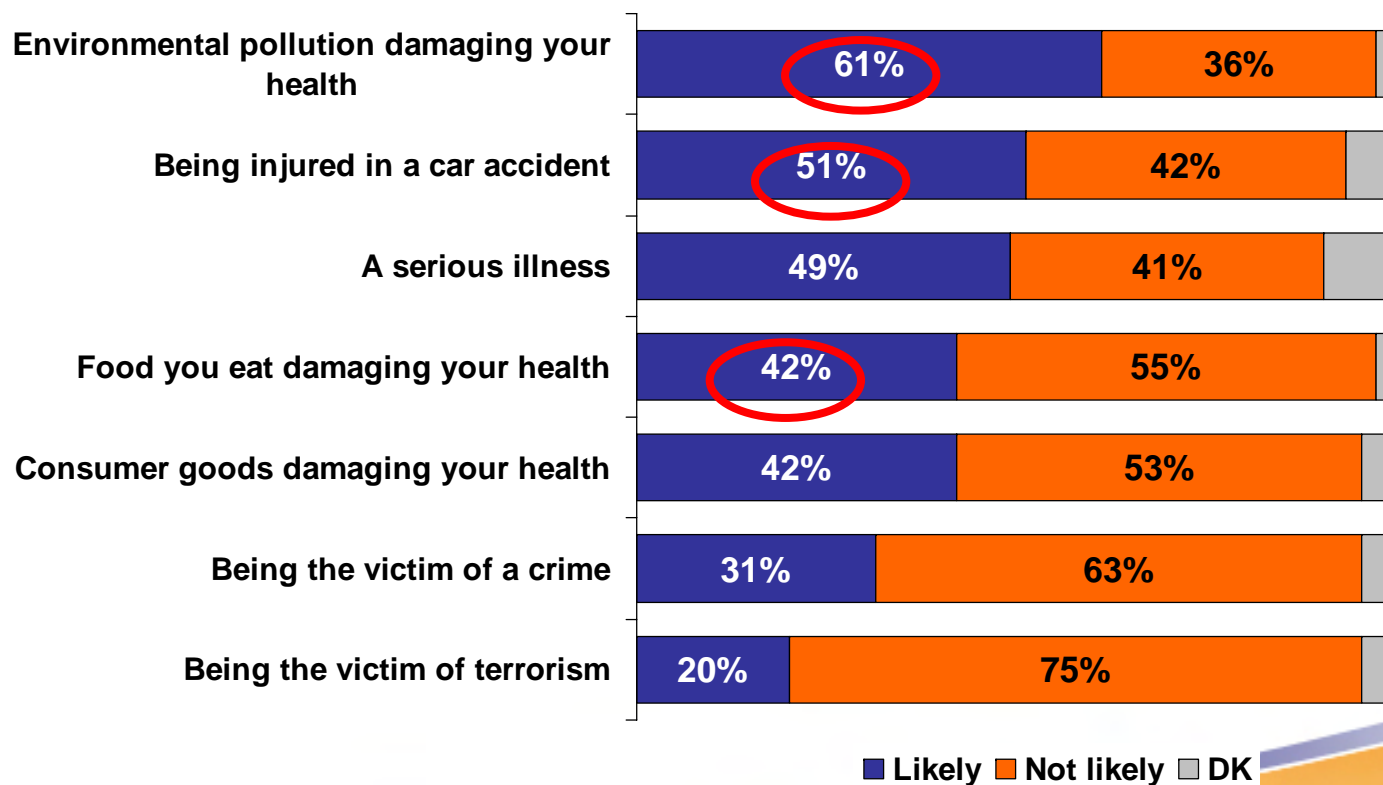
- Consumer perception of food is positive; food safety not top-of-mind
- Major food crises of past (eg BSE, dioxins) not cited by consumers as being top concerns today
- High level of awareness re EU food safety regulations (> 60%)
- Opinions divided re progress made in food safety (country differences)
- Overall, public authorities' actions judged appropriate, in particular:
  - **Decisions re food risks are science-based ( nearly 6 out of 10)**
  - **Information re food risks (1 out of 2)**
- Need for impactful risk communications:
  - **Over 40% who hear of food risks in media either ignore story or worry and do nothing**

# Risk perceptions

- **Risks in general**
- **Association with food**
- **Attitudes to food purchasing**
- **Food-related risks**
- **National concerns about food**



























## Risks in general

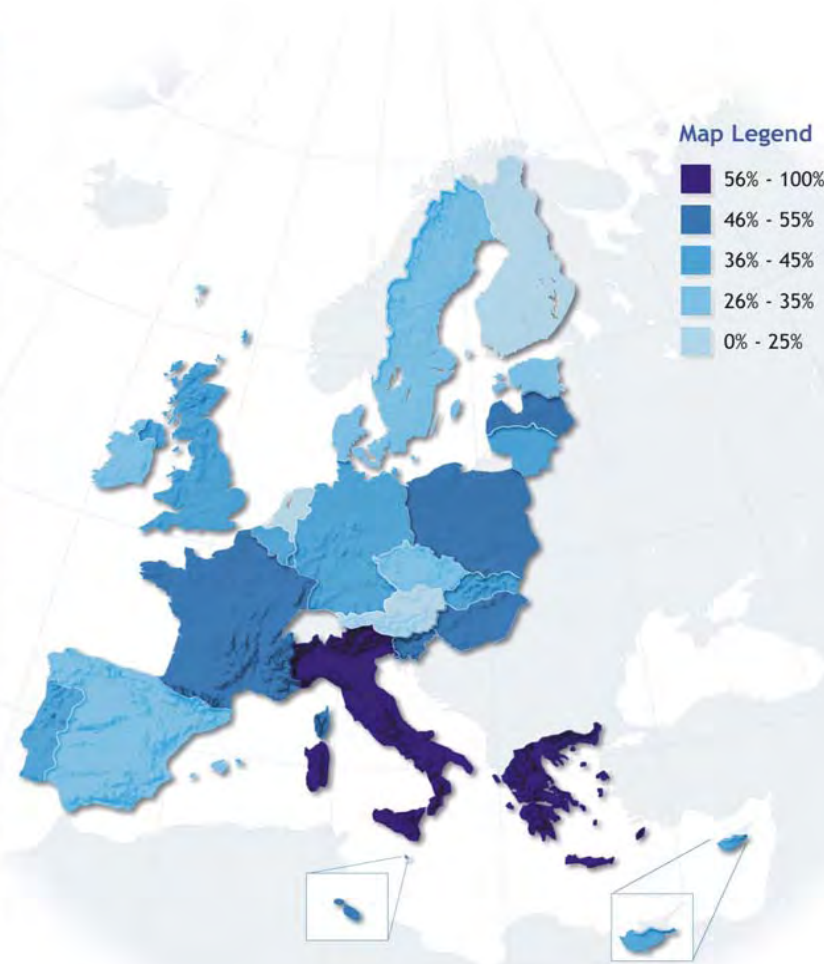
**Question:** I will read out a list of potential risks. For each of them please tell me how likely you think they are to happen to you personally.





## « The food you eat damaging your health »

Country Results		
	Greece	67%
	Italy	62%
	Hungary	54%
	Malta	53%
	Latvia	51%
	Poland	50%
	Slovenia	49%
	France	48%
	Cyprus	45%
	Belgium	44%
	Luxembourg	44%
	Portugal	43%
	Lithuania	43%
	European Union (25)	42%
	United Kingdom	41%
	Germany	37%
	Slovakia	36%
	Ireland	35%
	Sweden	30%
	Denmark	29%
	Czech Republic	29%
	Estonia	29%
	Spain	27%
	The Netherlands	25%
	Finland	20%
	Austria	17%

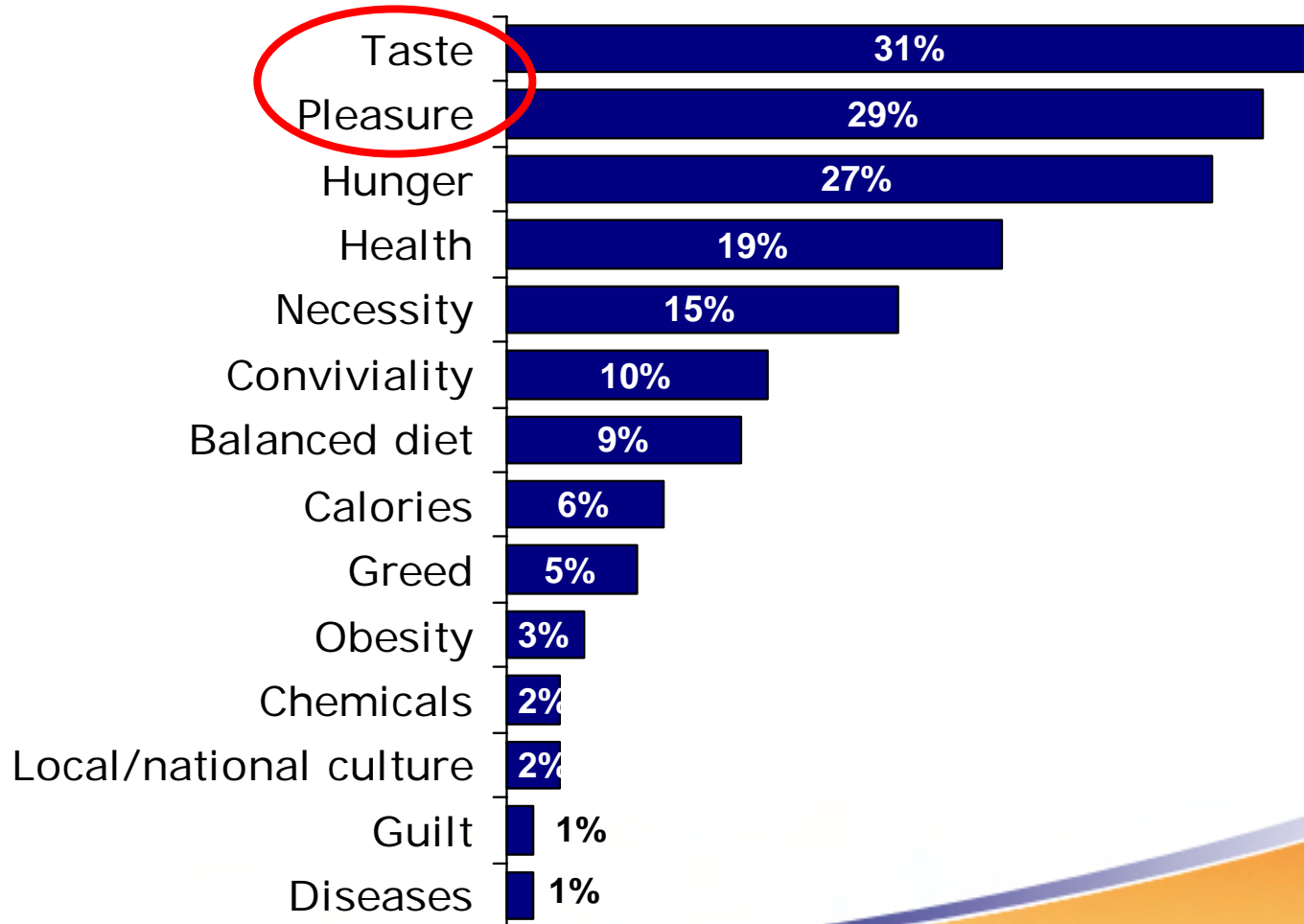




# Risk perceptions

## Association with food - spontaneous

**Question:** When thinking about food, what words first come to mind?  
(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) %EU



# Risk perceptions

## Attitudes to Food Purchasing

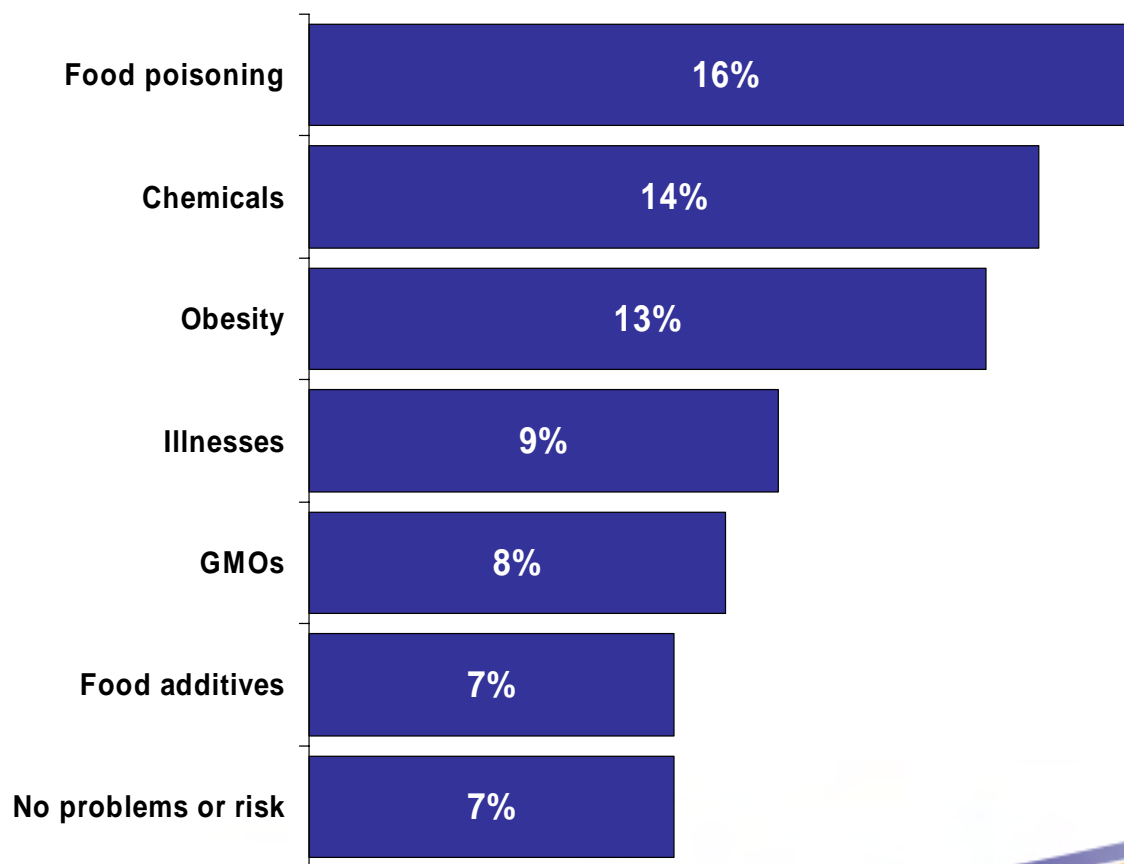
**Question:** When you go shopping for food, what would you say are the most important factors that influence your choice?



# Risk perceptions

## Food-related risks - spontaneous

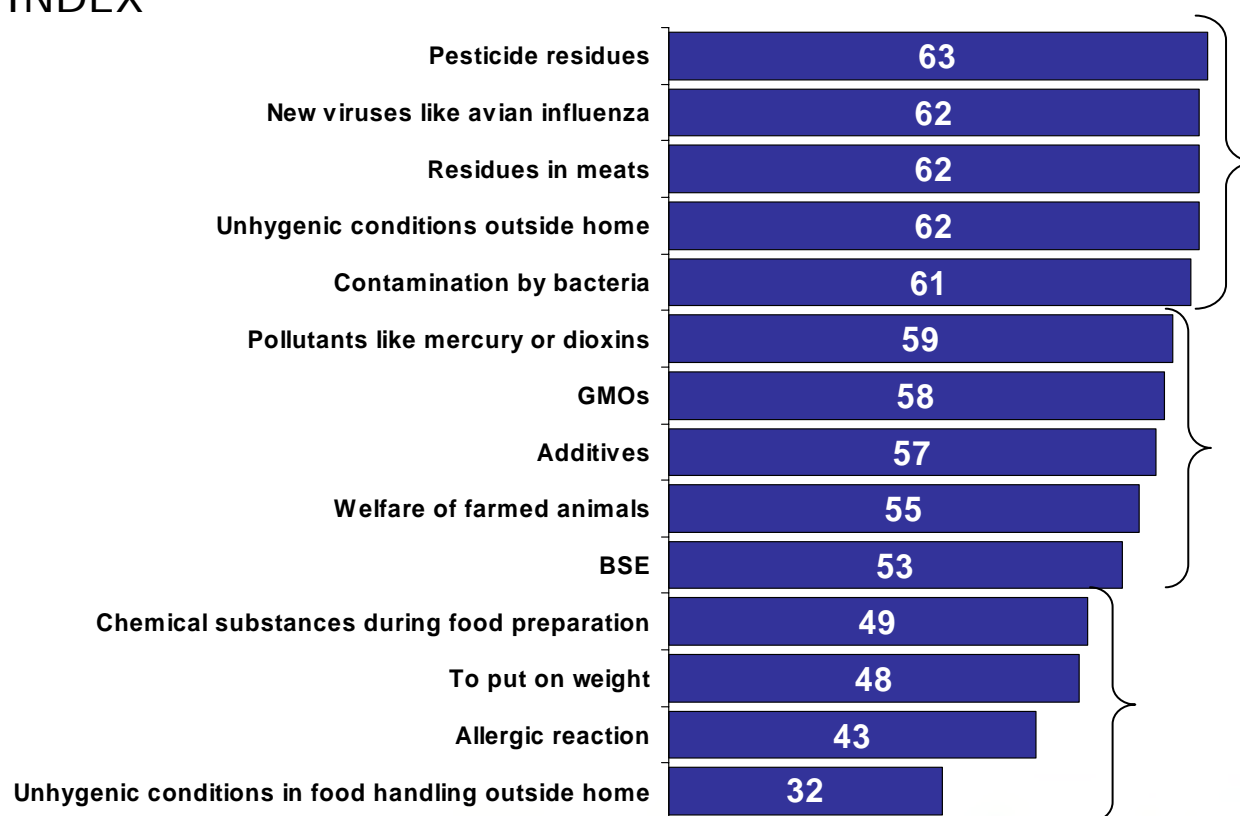
**Question:** What are all the things that come to mind when thinking about possible problems or risks associated with food?



# Risk perceptions

## Food-related risks - prompted

**Question:** For each of the following issues, please tell me if you are very worried, fairly worried, not very worried or not at all worried by it? AVERAGE WORRY "INDEX"



+ 100=very worried, +67=fairly worried, +33=not very worried, 0=not at all worried (DK responses omitted)

# Risk perceptions





Question: For each of the following issues, please tell me if you are very worried, fairly worried, not very worried or not at all worried by it?

Answers: **WORRIED**

## Pesticide residues in fruit, vegetables or cereals

	Greece	87%
	Italy	86%
	Hungary	80%
	France	76%
	Portugal	76%
	Slovenia	75%
	European Union (25)	71%
	Germany	69%
	Spain	63%
	Finland	59%

## Residues in meats like antibiotics or hormones

	Cyprus	88%
	Greece	87%
	European Union (25)	68%
	Belgium	66%







## New viruses like avian influenza

	Malta	84%
	Latvia	75%
	European Union (25)	66%
	The Netherlands	53%



## Contamination by bacteria like salmonella in eggs or listeria in cheese

	Czech Republic	75%
	Luxembourg	75%
	Slovakia	72%
	European Union (25)	65%

## Unhygienic conditions in food handling outside home like in food processing plants, shops or restaurants

	Poland	82%
	United Kingdom	75%
	Denmark	71%
	European Union (25)	69%
	Ireland	69%
	Spain	63%




## Additives like colours, preservatives or flavourings used in food or drinks

	Lithuania	79%
	Estonia	65%
	European Union (25)	61%



## Genetically modified products in food or drinks

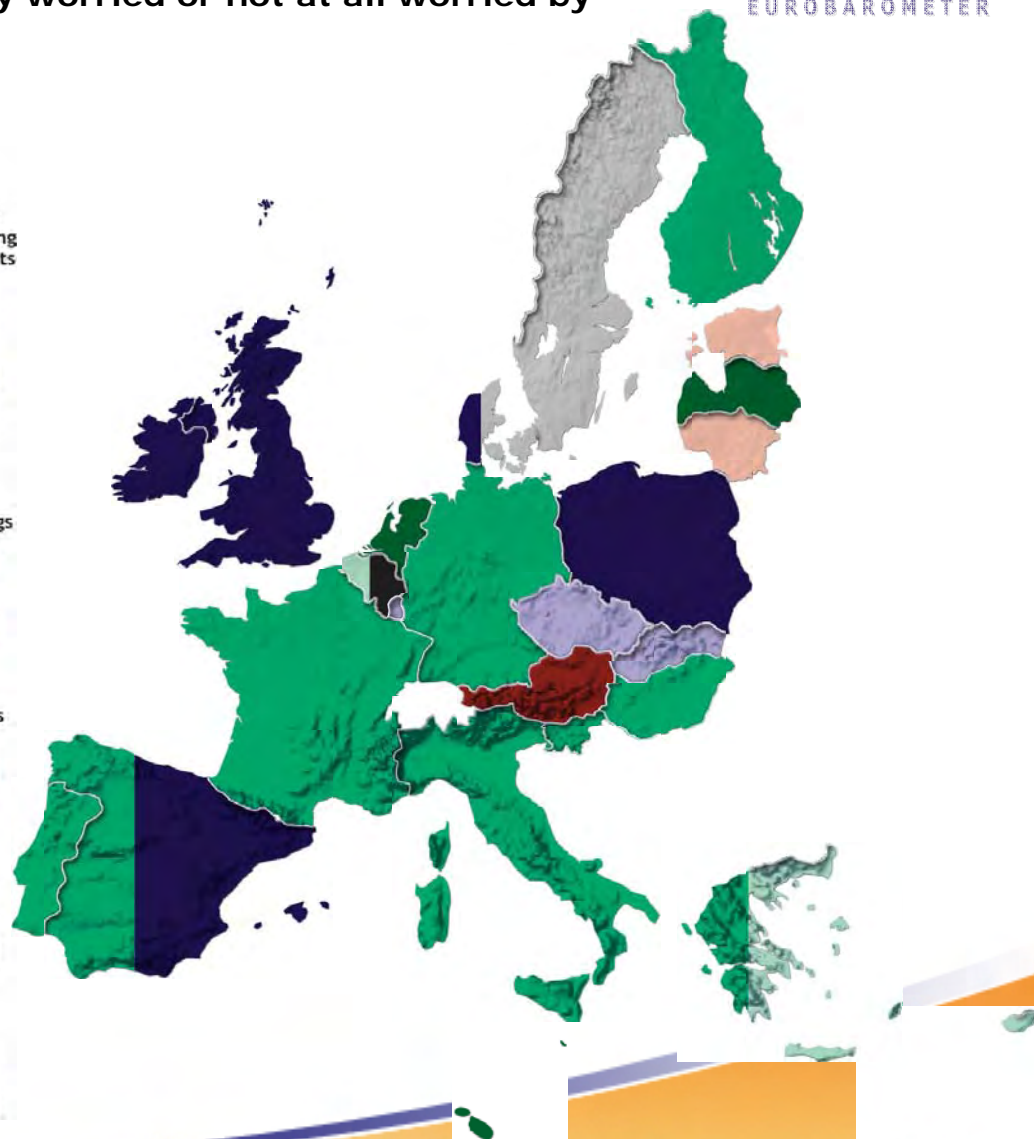
	Austria	69%
	European Union (25)	62%

## The welfare of farmed animals

	Denmark	71%
	Sweden	67%
	European Union (25)	60%

## Pollutants like mercury or dioxins

	Belgium	66%
	European Union (25)	63%



## **Risk perceptions**

- **Awareness of EU regulations**
- **Citizens' health as a priority**
- **Food-related actions - laws**
- **Level of action**
- **Evolution in food safety**

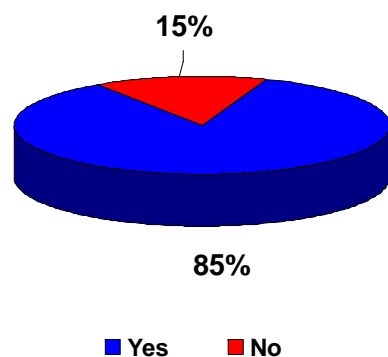


# Risk perceptions

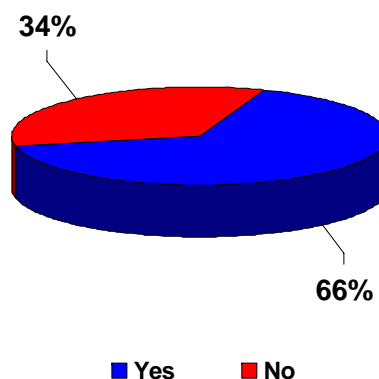
## Awareness of EU regulations

**Question:** For each of the following items, have you ever heard about any European Union regulations?

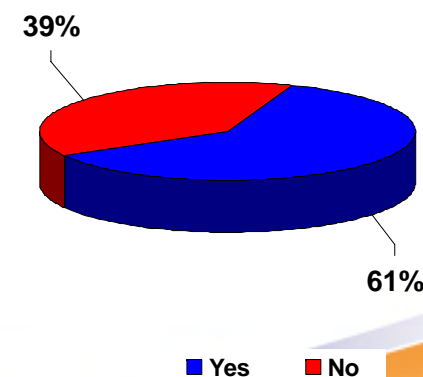
### HEALTH WARNINGS ON CIGARETTE PACKS



### CONSUMER RIGHTS

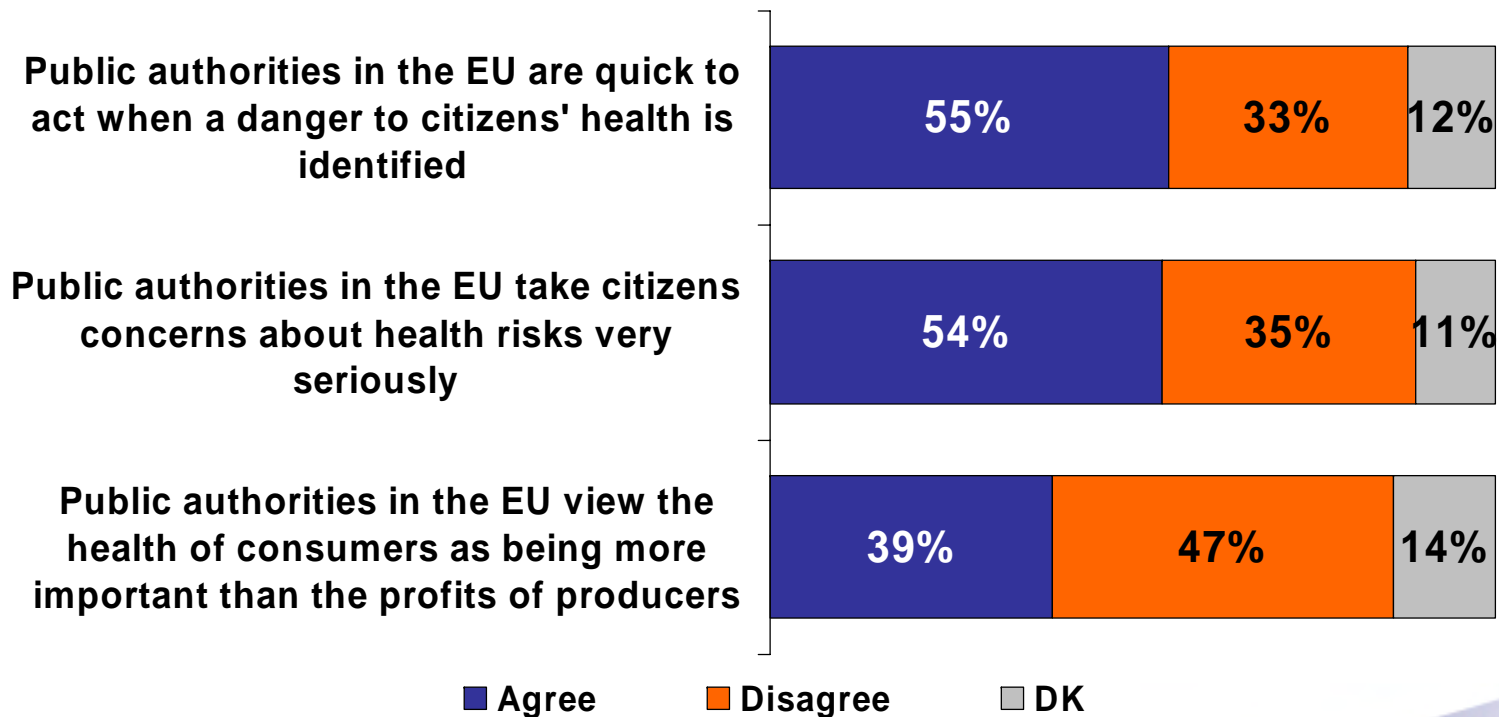


### FOOD SAFETY



## Citizens' health as a priority

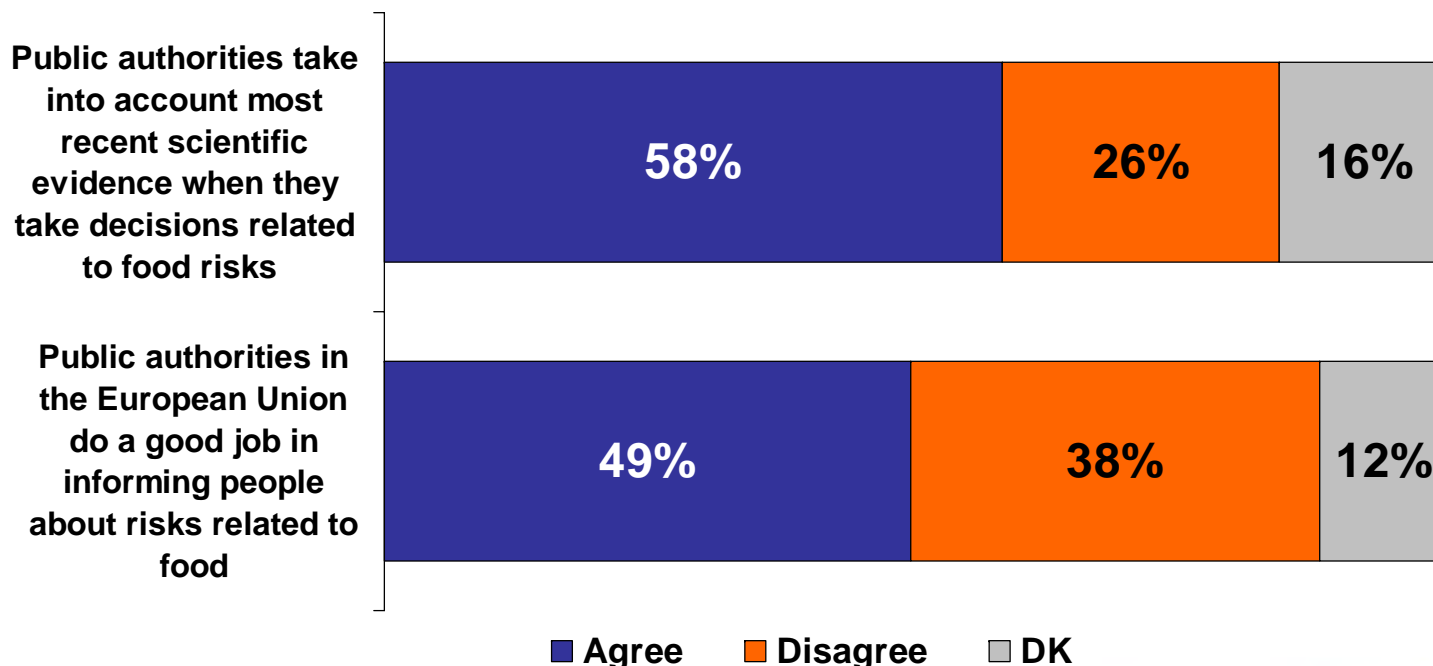
**Question:** For each of the following statements, would you say that you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, totally disagree?



# Public authorities' action

## Food-related actions

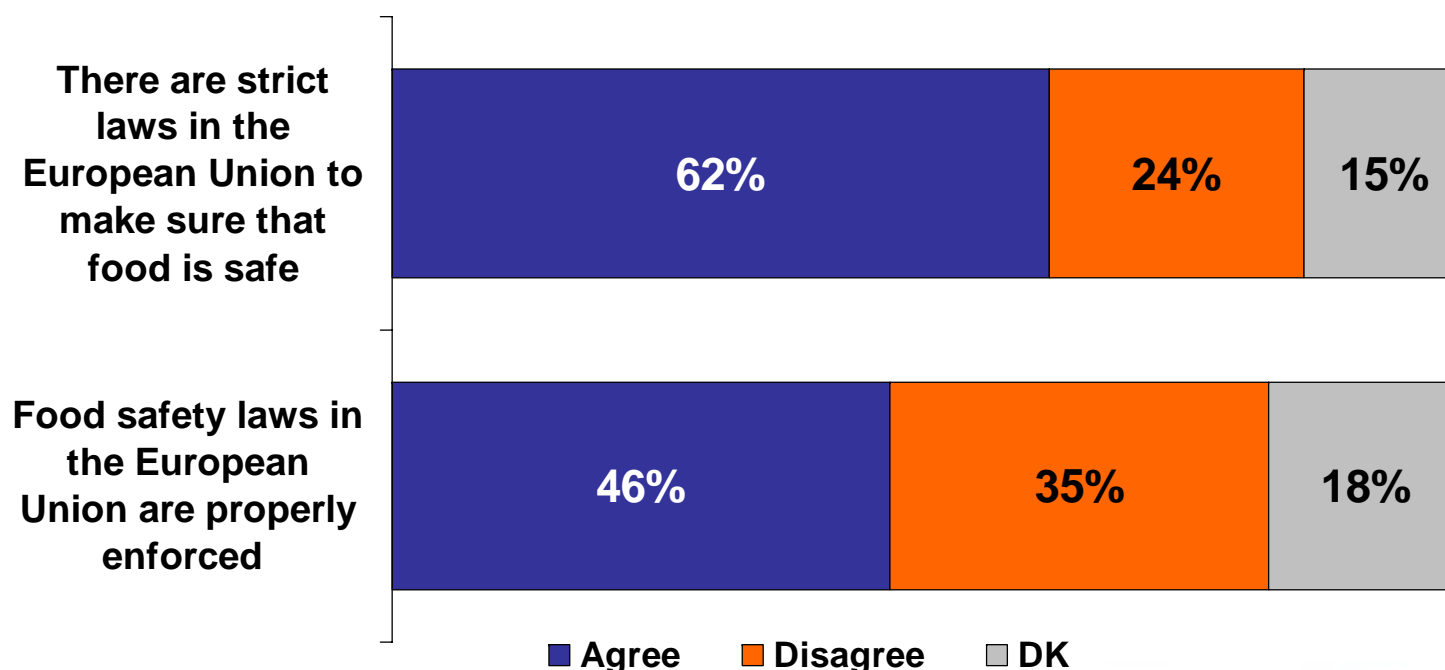
**Question:** For each of the following statements, would you say that you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, totally disagree?



## Public authorities' action

### Food-related actions - laws

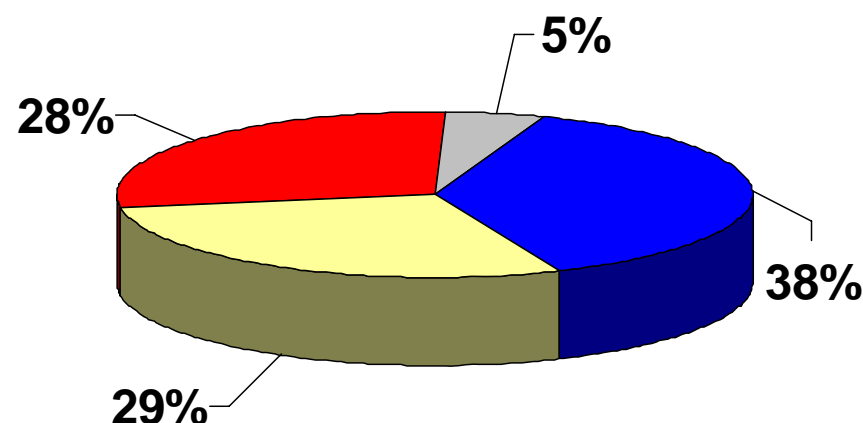
**Question:** For each of the following statements, would you say that you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, totally disagree?



# Public authorities' action

## Evolution in Food Safety

**Question:** Compared to ten years ago, would you say that, overall, food safety has improved, stayed about the same or has gotten worse?



















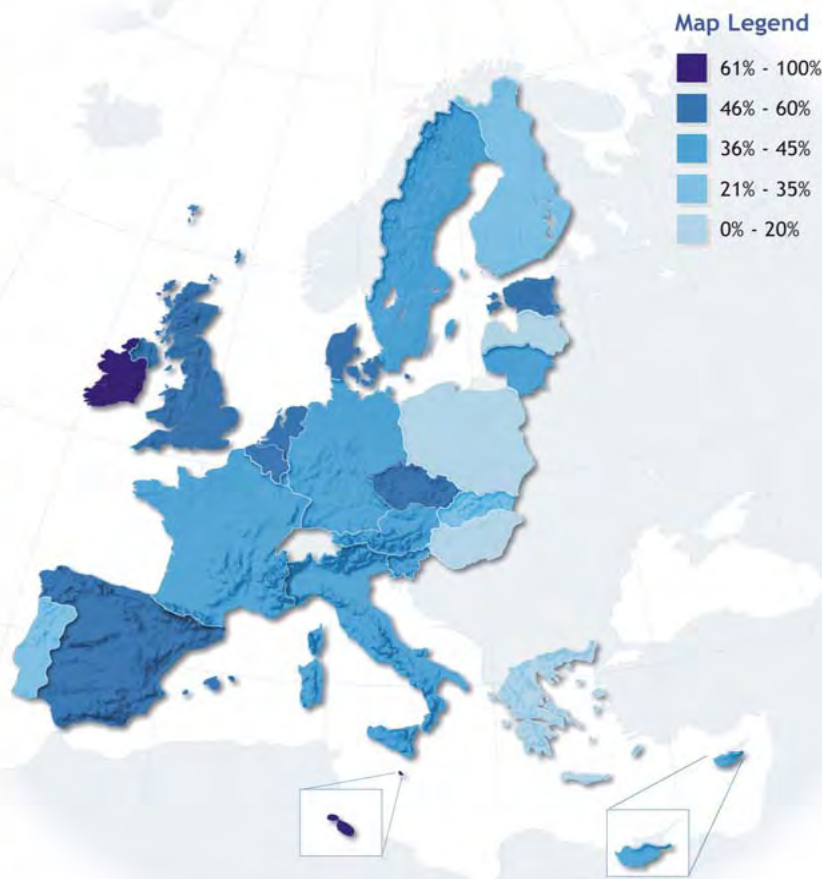
■ Has improved  
■ Has worsened

■ Stayed about the same  
■ DK

# Evolution in Food Safety

Results : « improved »

Country Results		
	Malta	74%
	Ireland	67%
	The Netherlands	52%
	Estonia	50%
	Czech Republic	49%
	Belgium	47%
	Denmark	47%
	Spain	47%
	United Kingdom	47%
	Lithuania	44%
	Slovenia	42%
	Luxembourg	40%
	Austria	40%
	Cyprus	40%
	European Union (25)	38%
	France	38%
	Italy	38%
	Sweden	38%
	Germany	37%
	Finland	34%
	Portugal	33%
	Slovakia	28%
	Hungary	20%
	Greece	16%
	Poland	16%
	Latvia	5%

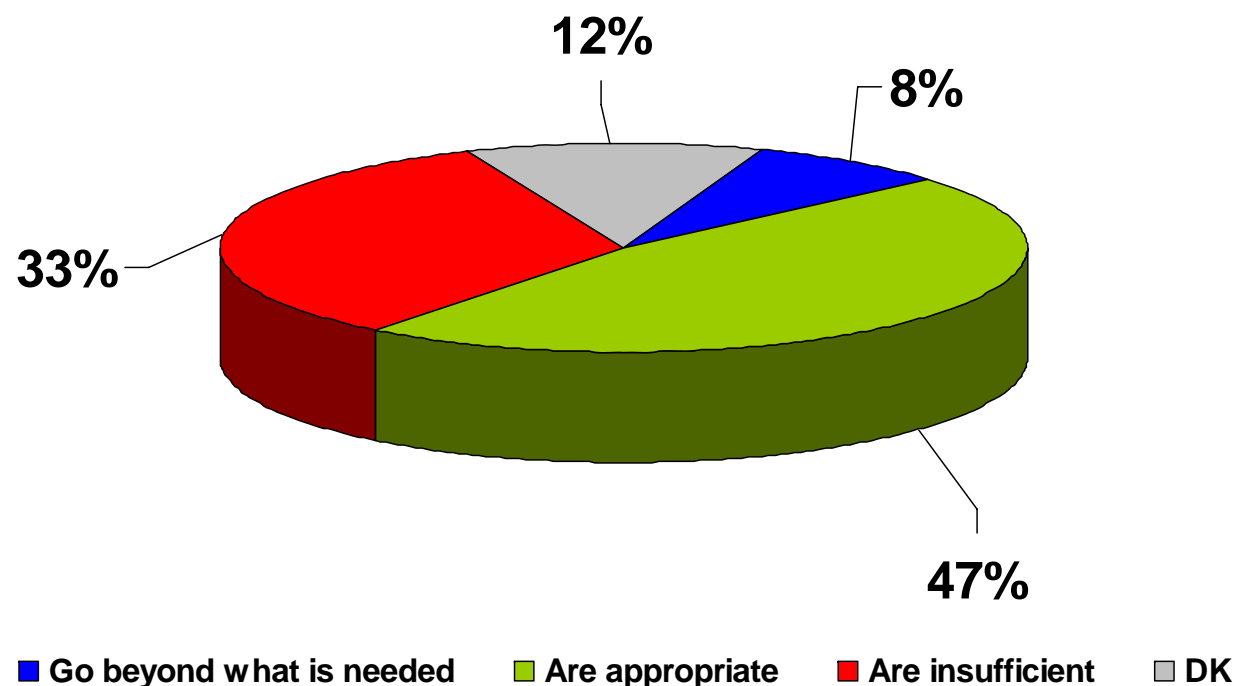




# Public authorities' action

## Level of action

**Question:** Would you say that usually public authorities' actions in the European Union with regards to food safety risks...?



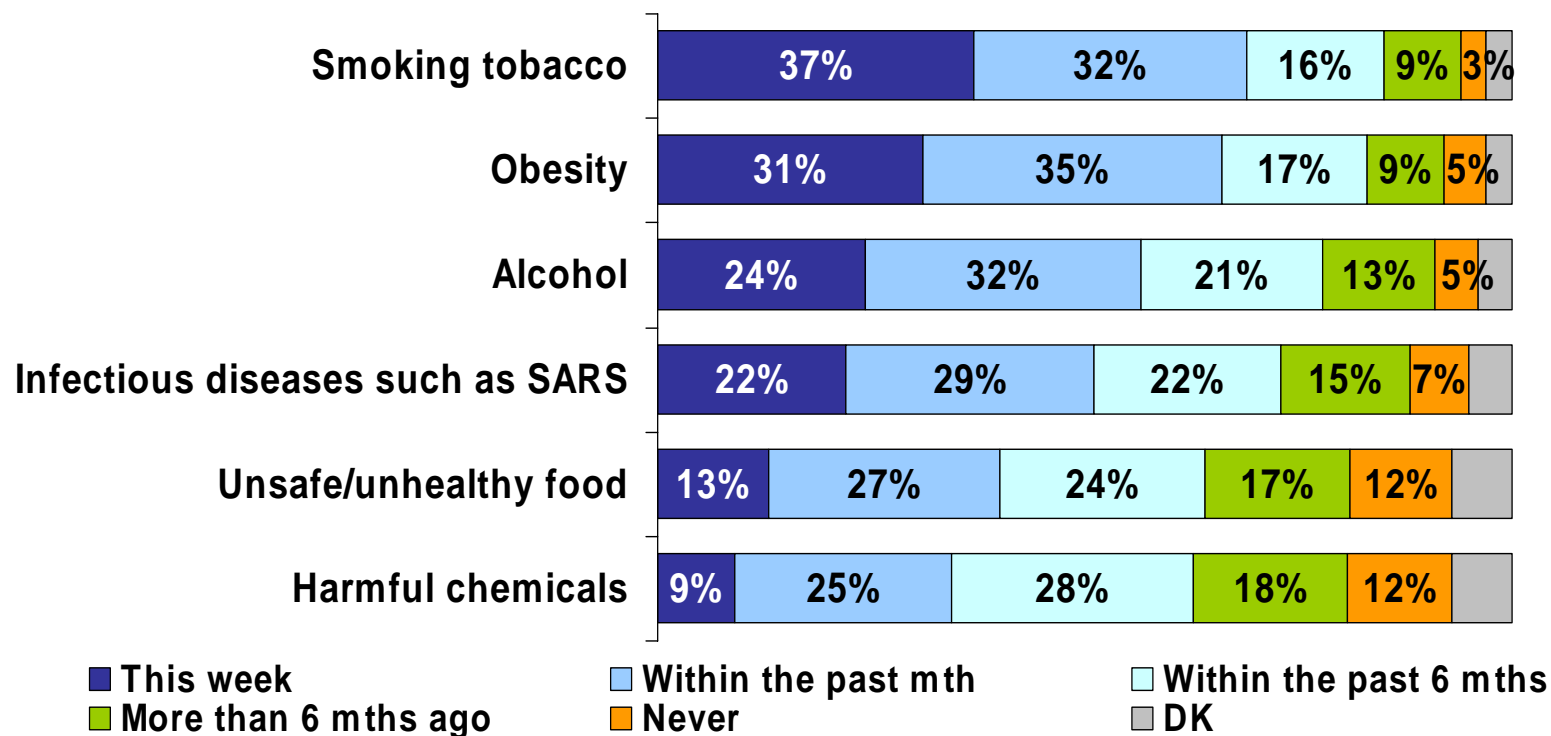
# Sources of Information

- **Media exposure to health risks**
- **Reaction to story**
- **Preferred sources**

# Sources of Information

## Media exposure to health risks

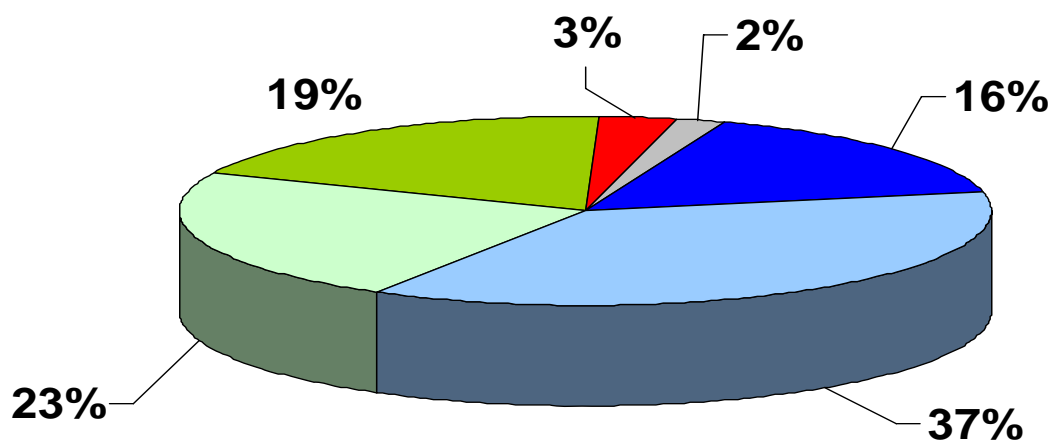
**Question:** Please tell me how recently you have heard or seen something in the media about the following health risks.



# Sources of Information

## Reaction to story

**Question:** Please tell me how you reacted to the last story you heard about a type of food being unsafe or bad for your health.

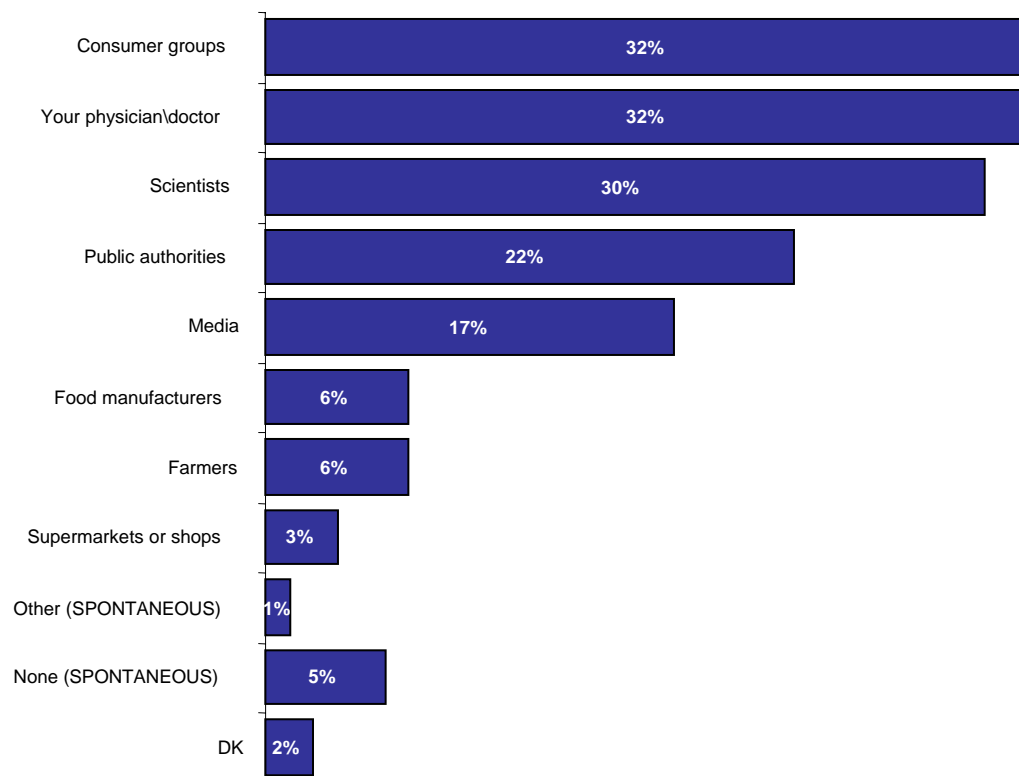


- You have permanently changed your eating habits
- You avoided the food mentioned in the story only for a while
- You got worried about the problem but finally you did nothing about it
- You have ignored the story
- Other
- DK

# Sources of Information

## Preferred sources

**Question:** Suppose a serious food risk were found in fish or chicken. Who would you trust the most to inform you about this risk?



# Conclusion

- **Europeans are worried about health-related risks**
- **Food has positive connotations of taste and pleasure and concerns regarding health and food safety are not top-of-mind**
- **Consumers identify a wide range of concerns and tend to worry most about factors which are beyond their control**
- **Clearly identifiable groups are more liable to worry about risks**
- **In order to be effective, communication on risks may need to be tailored to meet specific needs of target audiences**
- **Public authorities should seek to engage and involve consumers' most trusted information sources**





# Thank you !