

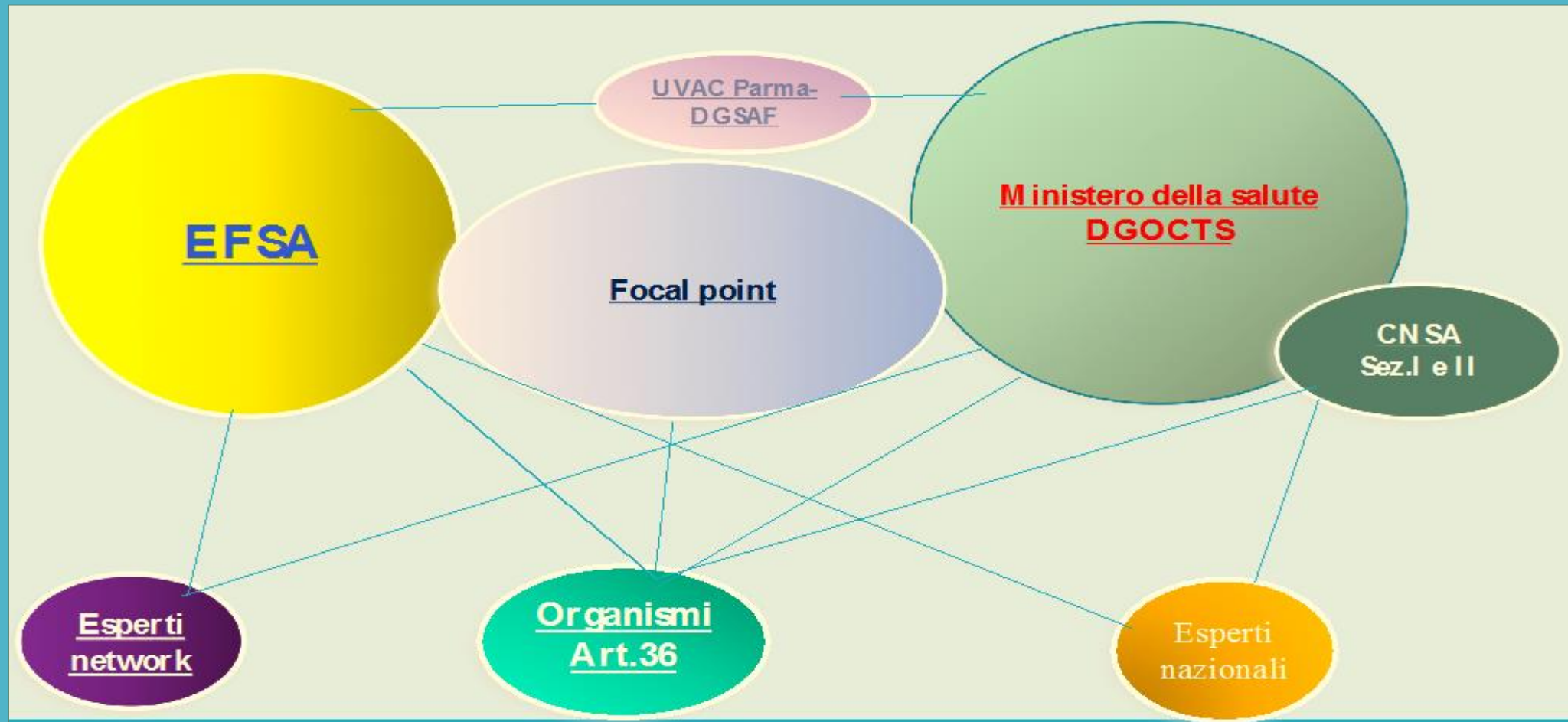
General Directorate for Collegial  
Bodies for Health Protection

# The involvement of civil society in risk communication

September 2018



DGOCTS (**General Directorate for Collegial Bodies for Health Protection**) of the Ministry of Health has the role of Reference Authority for EFSA in Italy. Covering this role, it acts with the contribution of the national Focal Point, established within the Italian Health Institute, and availing itself of the UVAC of Parma, as a territorial contact point.



The DGOCTS also coordinates the activities of the National Committee for Food Safety (CNSA), consisting of two sections:

## CNSA

### **Section I Food safety**

Autonomous body, 13 experts appointed by the MoH, performing technical-scientific advice to risk managers (central and regional administrations) as for food safety in the context of multi-annual programming.

### **Section II Advisory section for consumer associations and producers**

Composed by Representatives of the MoH, Consumer and Producer Associations, Ministries of Economic Development, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture and State-Regions Conference. Public institutions and associations address food safety issues, in order to facilitate the exchange of information and to increase the awareness and the ability of the citizens in view of a correct food supply and a conscious food consumption.

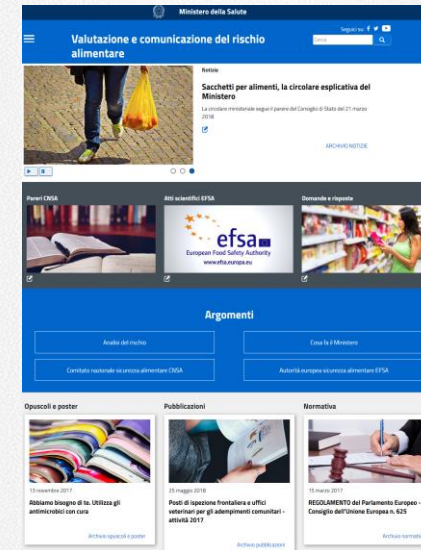


*Within the Advisory Section in Sept. 2017 has been drawn up the guidance document:*

*"The risks in food safety: Why, how and what is important to communicate" launching the message "propose communication instead of following it" and preparing a risk communication plan "in peacetime" aimed to set up information activities for consumers and producers.*

As far as the **"how"**, the document highlights the need to strengthen and make the Ministry of Health Portal more "friendly"

...



As far as the **"what"**, issued a Questionnaire to the members of the Advisory Section to deepen the information needs of civil society as for risk communication in food safety.



# Two recent initiatives by the DGCTOS:



## Survey for the Advisory Section of the CNSA Consumer and Producer Associations on Food Safety

edited by: B. Alessandrini<sup>1</sup>, C. Ciccarese<sup>1</sup>, S. D'Albenzio<sup>1</sup>, O. Pinto<sup>2</sup>, L. Valeri<sup>1</sup>, R. Valentini<sup>2</sup>, D. Rodorigo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>National Reference Center for Epidemiology and Risk Analysis, Experimental Zooprophyllactic Institute of Abruzzo and Molise; <sup>2</sup>General Directorate for Collegial Bodies for Health Protection, Ministry of Health

Aimed to:

1. develop the knowledge, expectations and methods of communication expressed by stakeholders through the perception of their representatives;
2. Identify the significant elements for the definition of possible areas of development for implementing effective risk communication initiatives and build “ad hoc” strategies based on the reference targets



---

**Corso di formazione**

**La comunicazione del rischio  
in sanità e benessere animale e  
sicurezza alimentare**

Roma, Ministero della Salute,  
22-23 Febbraio 2018 *Sala A325*  
28 Febbraio – 1-8 e 9 Marzo 2018 *Sala Niglio e Sala Bellani*

**Beneficiari**

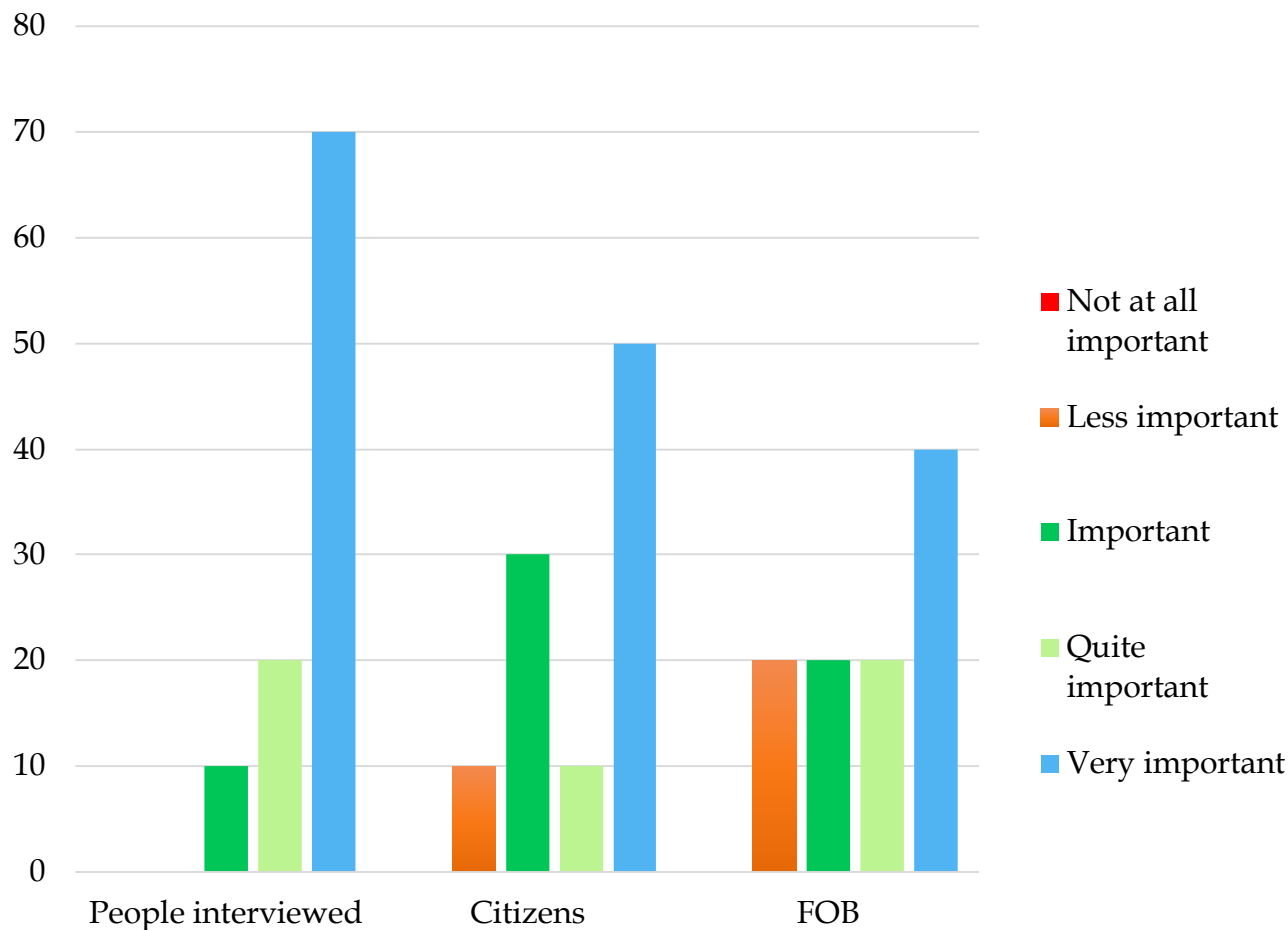
Il corso è destinato al personale del Ministero della Salute in servizio presso il Segretariato generale dello stesso Ministero e nelle direzioni generali della sanità animale e dei farmaci veterinari; per l'igiene e la sicurezza degli alimenti e la nutrizione; degli organi collegiali per la tutela della salute; della comunicazione e dei rapporti europei e internazionali; della prevenzione sanitaria.

Training sessions targeted to central and local public Services dealing with food safety delivered by the use of different teaching methods, including: lectures given by journalists and communication experts, including an EFSA representative; a round table with the participation of representatives of consumer and producer associations and food bloggers; individual and group exercises.

# Survey's tool: questionnaire

## Results Section 1

### Risk communication: general considerations, value attributed to RCo



#### *Risk communication...*

...ensures an adequate and correct information to citizens

...makes possible the risk awareness and the implementation of effective food safety measures

...strengthen the FBO operators competitiveness

...favors the communication aspects that affect the food supply chain, production and food distribution

...protects the citizens/consumers' health

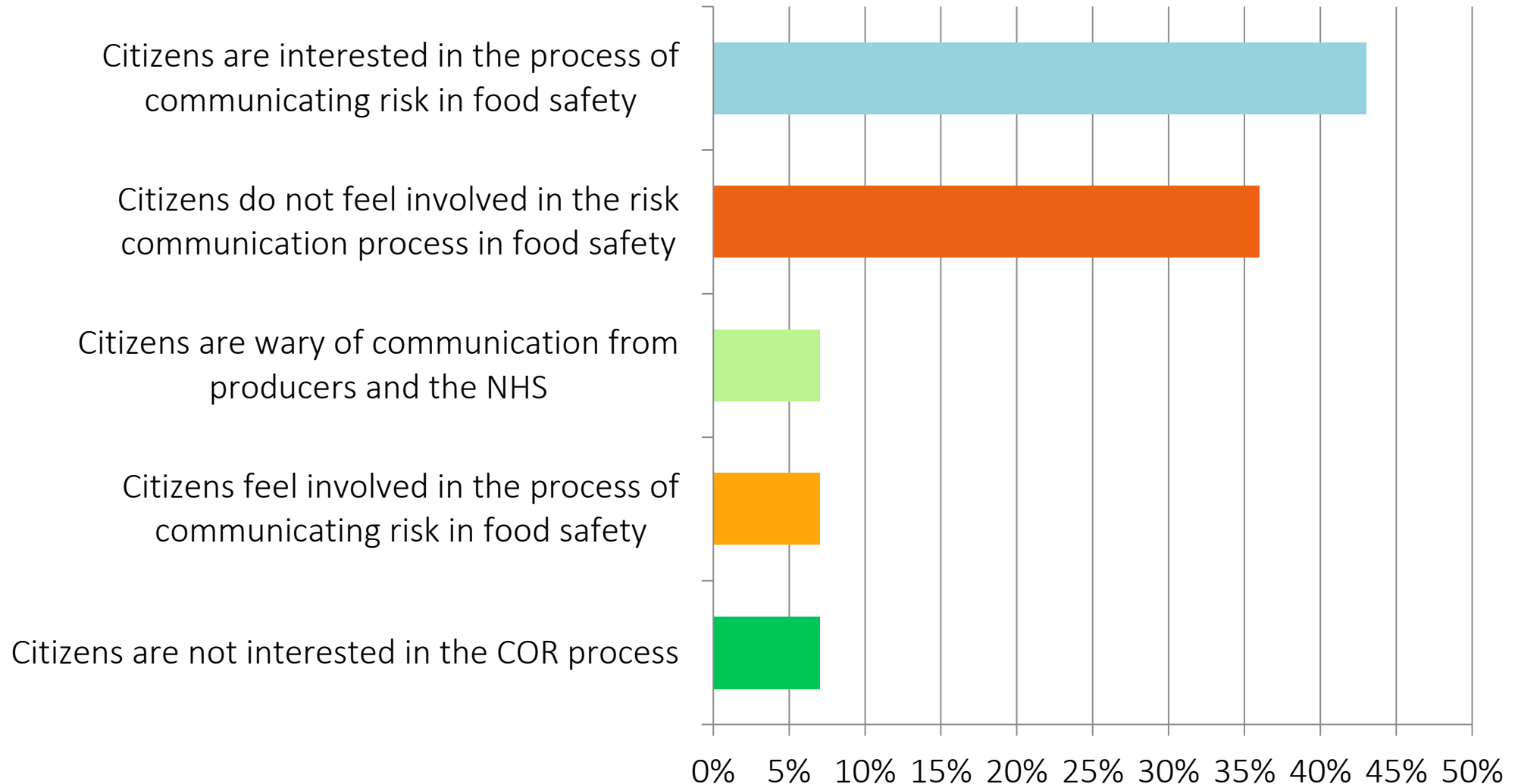
...increases the confidence to the Institutions

... promotes consumer awareness which is crucial for risk management that, despite official controls, is never equal to 0

# Survey's tool: questionnaire

## Results Section 1: Risk communication

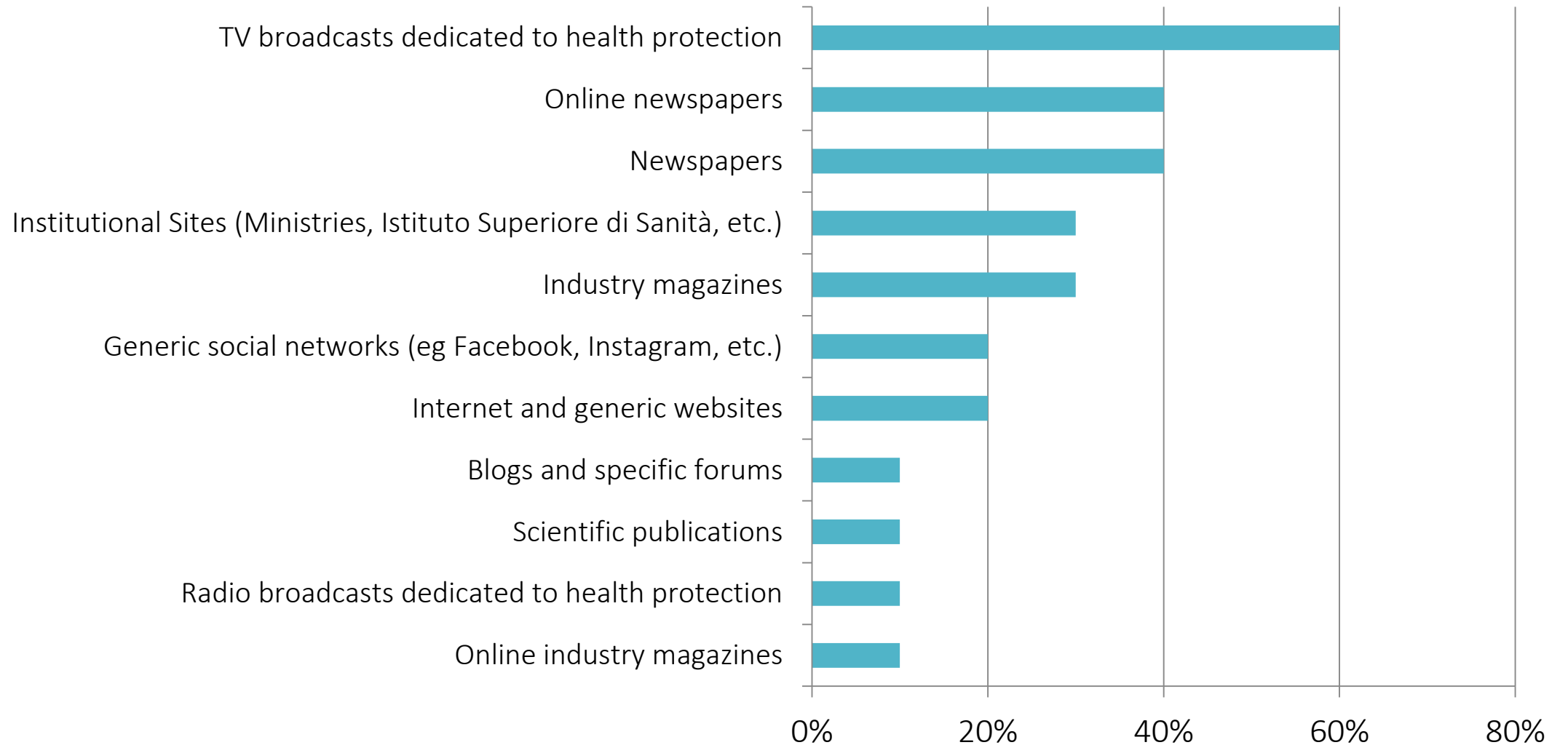
### Citizens' attitude towards the RCo system in food safety, according to respondents



# Survey's tool: questionnaire

Results Section 2: Information tools

## Information tools used by stakeholders





# Survey's tool: questionnaire

Results Section 3: Experience within the Advisory Section

Matching the needs of stakeholders



## How to intercept the needs of stakeholders...

Creating institutional communication campaigns, thematic channels 'FOOD' that transmit documentaries or TV series focusing on priority themes

Creating the comparison with ad hoc working groups for the themes of priority interest

Pursuing the circularity of information between the various subjects

Continuing to stimulate a confrontation and a transparent discussion as has happened so far

Making programs in schools

By monitoring incorrect information

Creating forums activated on institutional sites

Setting concrete and measurable objectives

Streamlining processes

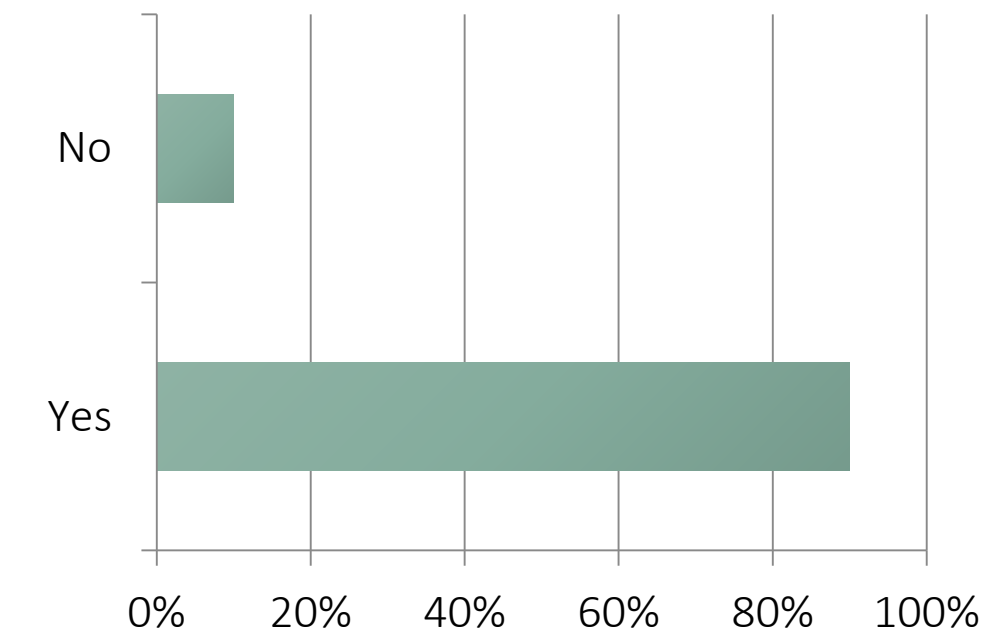
# Survey's tool: questionnaire

Results Section 3: Experience within the Advisory Section

Fake news

'DID YOU HAVE TO MANAGE FAKE NEWS'?

HOW?



How to manage Fake News?	
Spreading reliable and correct communications through the media	30%
Spreading reliable and correct communications through institutional sites	20%
Intervening straight on the authors	20%
By consultation of the experts	10%
Reports have been issued to the Antitrust Authority	10%
Fake news has been ignored	10%

# Survey's tool: questionnaire

Results Section 4: Future development

## Proposals for a goals monitoring system



### How to monitor the goals?

Testing first communication campaigns on a smaller sample to measure its effect and only then propose it to the general public

Involving and making the components more responsible

Stimulating a greater participation of consumer associations in communication campaigns

Structuring sample surveys to verify the effect of communication campaigns

Reformulating the objectives so that they can be measured through indicators

Considering the notifications on the national system of communicable diseases with food (FBD) in the monitoring system among the indicators

Reducing alarmist information on the media



# Conclusions

## Themes to be explored

Consumer responsibility and critical capacity

Transparent communication

Scientific uncertainty

Reliability of the institutional system in the Risk communication

Scientific source of information

## Expected results in the short and medium term

Programs to raise awareness in schools on food safety issues also in relation to food waste

Sharing associations and institutions of public awareness campaigns on food safety issues

Applications (App) for smartphones dedicated to food safety

Billboarding dedicated to food safety to be affixed to points of sale and supply of food

Spots on TV

Active participation of the components

Planning for measurable objectives through indicators

Elaboration of synthetic and shared documents among the components

Thanks for the attention

