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International Research Additives

foodwatch 

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▶ 1 Test Design

Testdesign



Fieldwork

Germany	22.-26.08.2024
Italy	22.-25.08.2024
Spain	22.-25.08.2024
Austria	22.-26.08.2024
Belgium	22.-26.08.2024
France	22.-26.08.2024
Netherlands	22.-26.08.2024



Target Group & Sample

- National representative (18+) for Germany, Italy, Spain, Austria, Belgium, France and Netherlands
- Quotas on age, gender and region for each country



Sample Sizes

Germany	n = 1.015
Italy	n = 1.052
Spain	n = 1.055
Austria	n = 1.053
Belgium	n = 1.052
France	n = 1.050
Netherlands	n = 1.053

Content of the survey



Food additives in general

- Presence of food additives - Information level
- Influence of additives for purchase
- Avoided additives
- Ways of information
- Bans on food additives

Sweeteners

- Frequency of consumption of sweeteners
- Reasons for consuming sweeteners
- Risks of sweeteners
- Benefits of sweeteners

Aspartame

- Consumption of aspartame
- Future consumption of aspartame
- Bans and regulations

2 Management Summary

Summary

Food additives in general

- ▶ Overall, the **presence of additives** in food **influences** purchasing behaviour, though more than half of the respondents **don't feel well informed** about **additives** in foods and beverages. The most popular way to recognize additives are the E-numbers.
- ▶ Information on the safety of additives and their effects on health is also **perceived as inadequate in an international comparison**. Spaniards (76%) and Belgians (72%) feel least informed, Germans (34%) and Italians (35%) feel best informed.
- ▶ When it comes to the possible health risks of food additives, **respondents** across all countries **agree** that **additives should be banned** until their safety is guaranteed, though agreement is stronger in France, Italy and Spain. Belgians and the Dutch are more in favour of informing than banning.

All in all, consumers in Italy, France and Spain are more sceptical towards additives. On the other hand, consumers in the Netherlands and Belgium pay less attention thereto.

Sweeteners

- ▶ Sweeteners are popular in all countries: **60%** and **75%** of respondents use **sweeteners** at least now and then.
- ▶ **Lowest** consumption in **Italy, highest** (daily) in the **Netherlands** (30%), **Belgium** (27%) and **Spain** (22%).
- ▶ **Main reasons** for sweetener consumption are **sugar avoidance** and because they are in general **inevitable**.
- ▶ Consumers in **Germany, Spain, Austria** and **France** see (very) **high health risks** in sweeteners (>30%). **Italians** tend to rate the **health risks** as **moderate**.
- ▶ In line with risk perception, **no** (major) **benefits** seen across all countries.

Despite the regular consumption of sweeteners in all countries, the perceived health risks outweigh the benefits. Tendency is stronger in Italy, Spain and Austria.

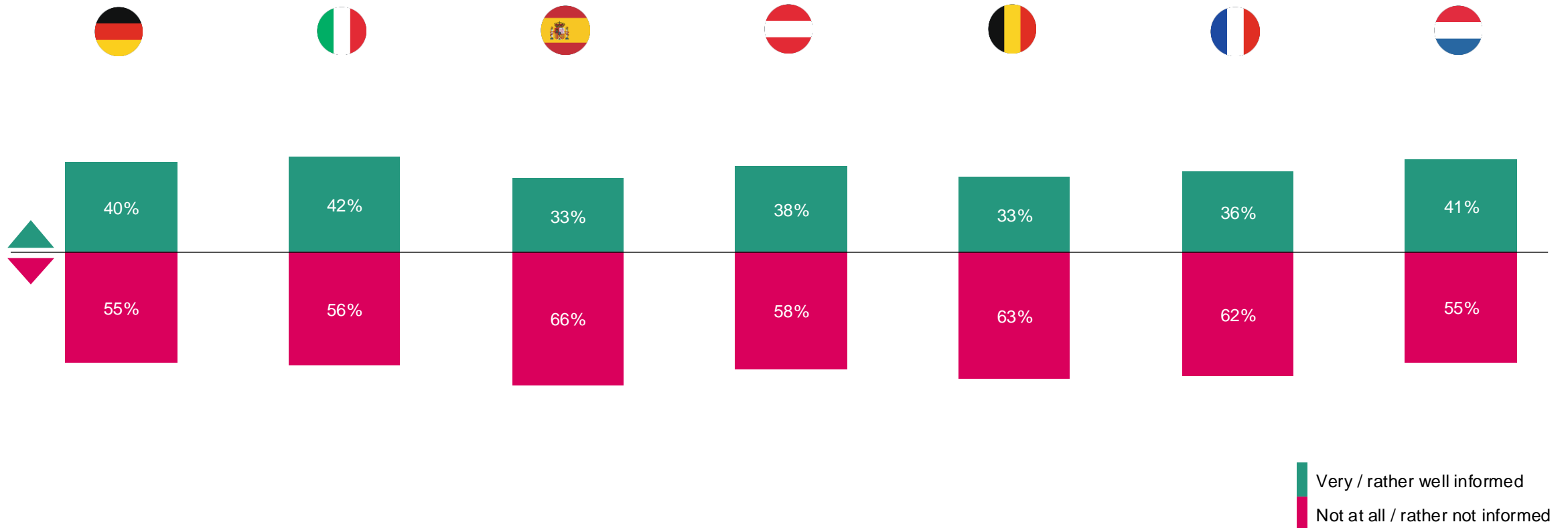
Aspartame

- ▶ Consumption of aspartame differs from country to country: **more frequently** consumed in **Belgium, the Netherlands** and **Spain, least frequently** in **France, Germany** and **Italy**.
- ▶ The information on **WHO IARC classification** of aspartame shows a **direct impact** on future aspartame consumption in all countries: vast majority would **avoid** such products. Least impact observed in Belgium and the Netherlands.
- ▶ Further on, the **majority of respondents** agree that **aspartame should be banned** from food as a precautionary measure.
- ▶ A **re-evaluation of aspartame safety, based on the WHO IARC classification, is welcomed** by the majority of respondents in all countries.
- ▶ Opinions are more divided when it comes to a governmental public support of an aspartame ban: consumers in **Spain, Italy** and **France** are particularly **in favour**, while people in the **Netherlands, Belgium** and **Austria** are more **reserved**.

▶ **3 Food additives in general**

Overall, respondents in all countries are rather poorly informed. Spanish respondents feel least informed, followed by respondents in Belgium and France.

Presence of food additives - Information level

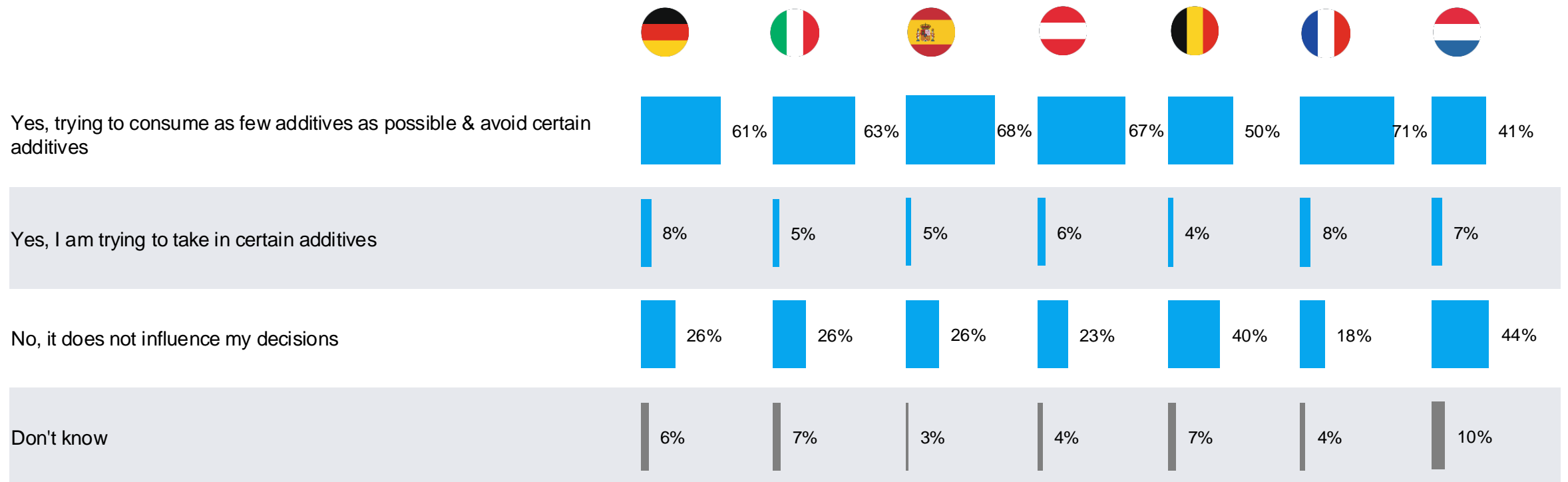


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: How well informed do you feel about the presence of additives in the food products and beverages that you consume in your daily life? | Shown are T2B and B2B, fallback option is not shown.

Compared to other countries, the French tend to avoid or try to eat as few additives as possible. In Belgium and the Netherlands, food additives have the least influence on food purchasing decisions.

Influence of additives for purchase

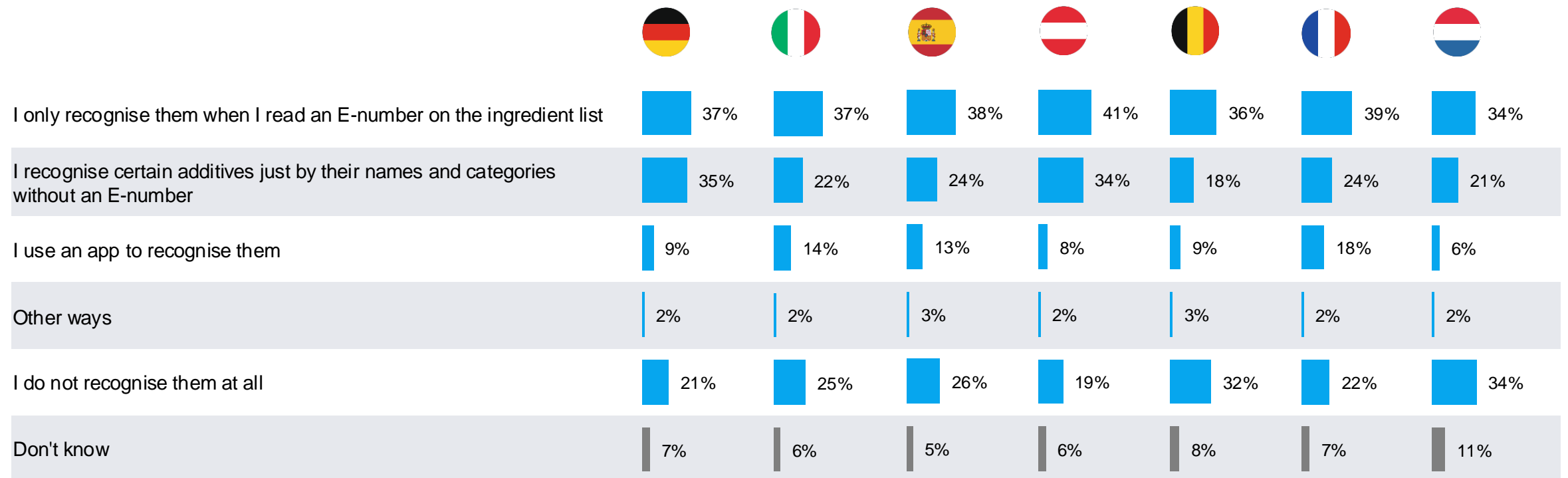


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: Does the presence of additives in food and beverages influence your decisions when buying food?

Overall, the most common way to identify additives in food is by looking at the E-numbers on the ingredients list. Additives are least recognised in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Ways of information

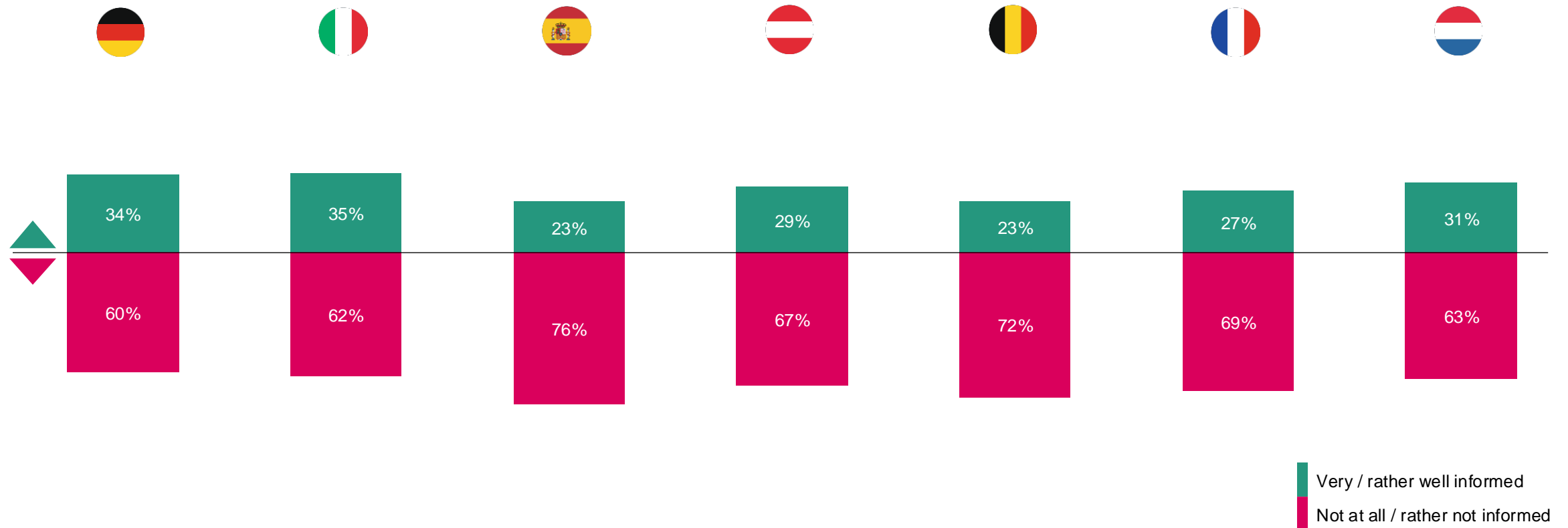


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: How do you get information about the presence of additives in your food and beverages?

Majority does not feel well informed about the safety of food additives and their effects on health. Lowest scores were observed in Spain and the Netherlands.

Safety of food additives - Information level

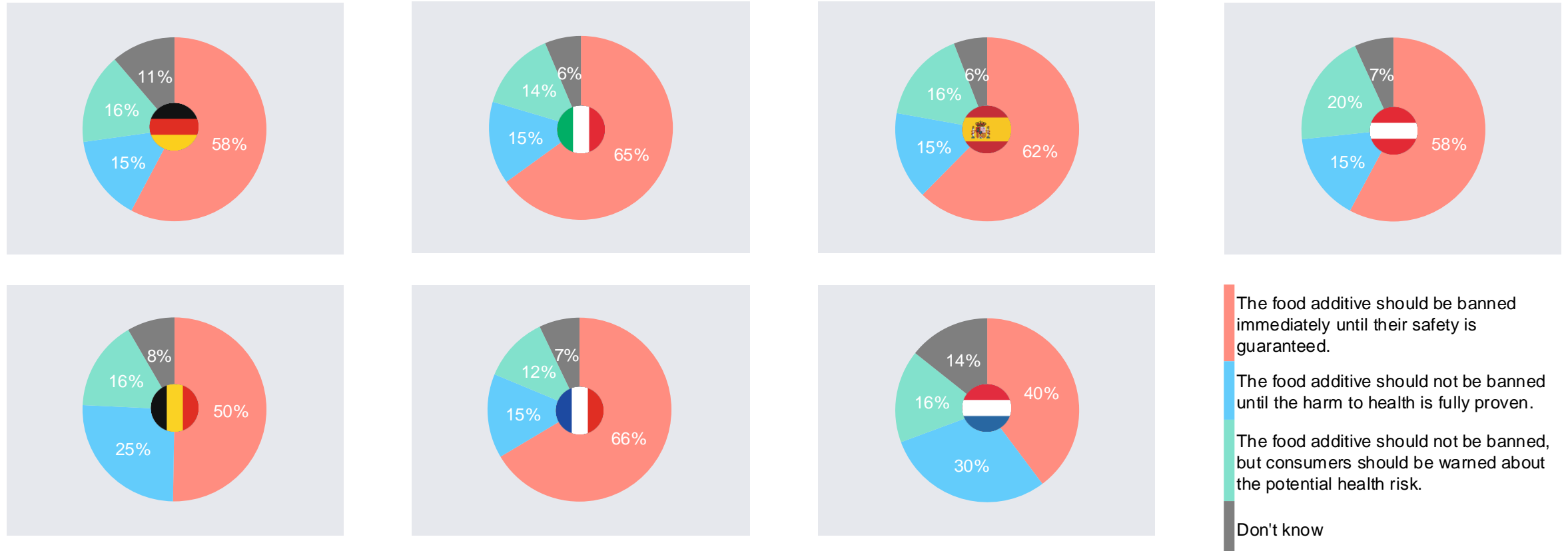


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: How well informed do you feel about the safety of additives that are used in food products and beverages of daily life and their impacts on your health? | Shown are T2B and B2B, fallback option is not shown.

Nearly two thirds of the Italian, Spanish and French respondents are in favour of food additives ban until their safety is assured. Least critical are the Dutch.

Bans on food additives



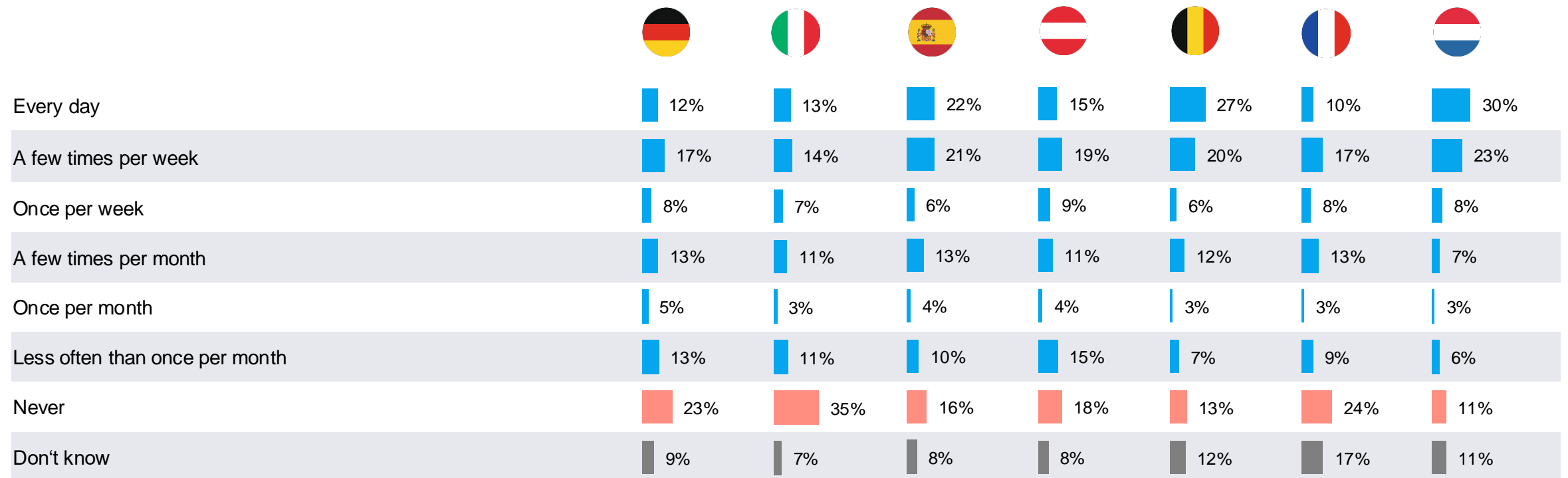
Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: Please imagine the following situation: A new independent scientific research by a renowned research institute comes out indicating a possible health risk for consumers about a food additive approved on the EU market. In your opinion, which would be the best approach in a situation such as this?

▶ 4 Sweeteners

Highest sweetener consumption in Belgium and the Netherlands. More than one in three Italians does not consume any sweeteners at all.

Consumption of sweeteners – Frequency

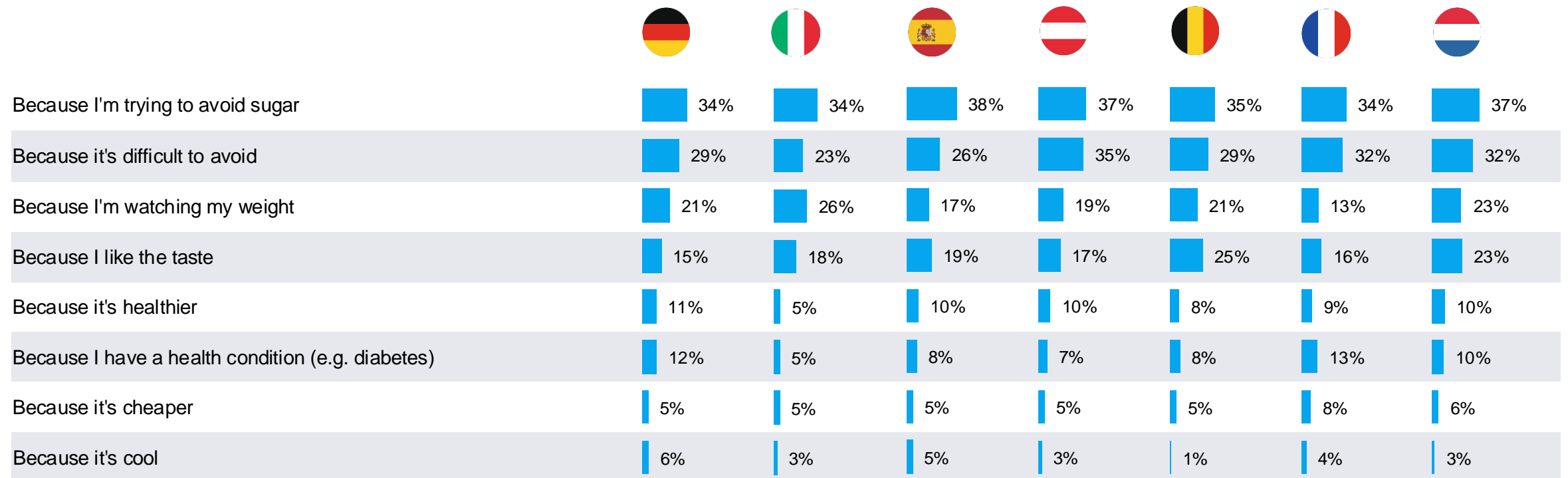


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: How often do you consume sweeteners?

Main consumption driver for sweeteners is the avoidance of sugar. The omnipresence of sweeteners makes them even more hard to avoid.

Reasons for consuming sweeteners

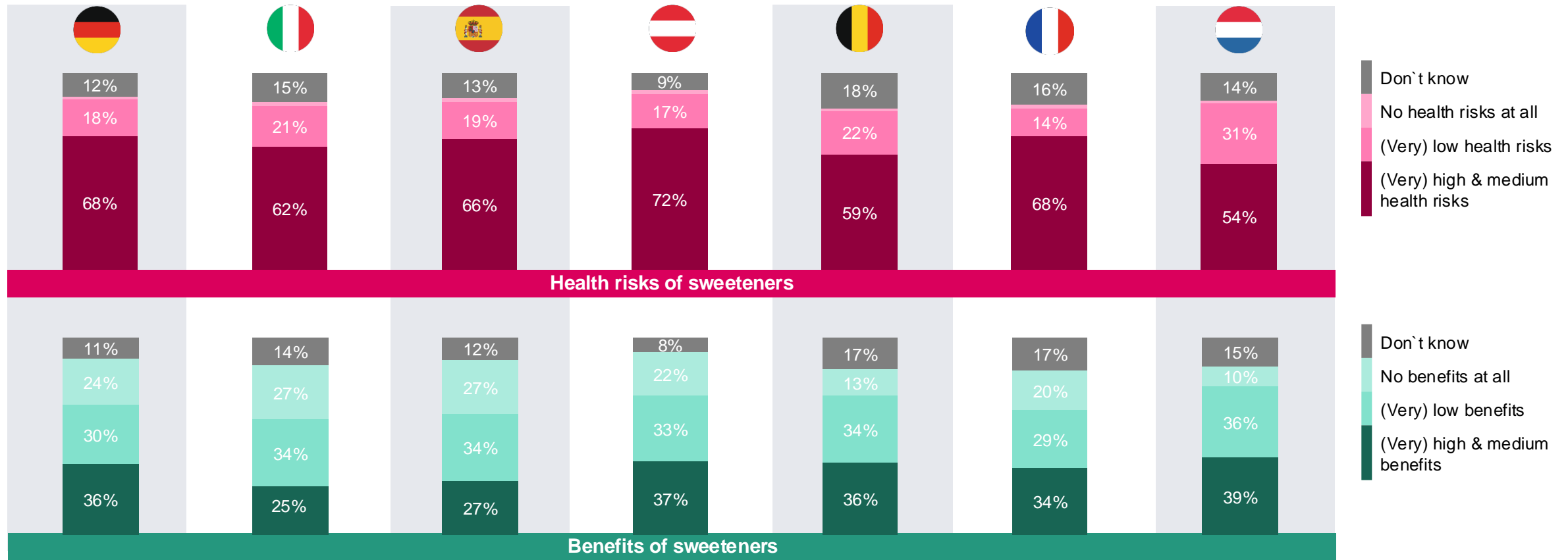


Base: Respondents, who consume sweeteners, Germany (n=684), Italy (n=617), Spain (n=801), Austria (n=775), Belgium (n=784), France (n=623), Netherlands (n=816)

Question: For which of the following reasons do you consume products with sweeteners (e.g. soft drinks, low-calorie yogurts, chewing gums, candies, or sauces)? Sorted in descending order by overall rating.

The French, Austrian and Germans believe that sweeteners in food consist a high health risk. Comparatively fewer health risks perceived by Belgians and the Dutch.

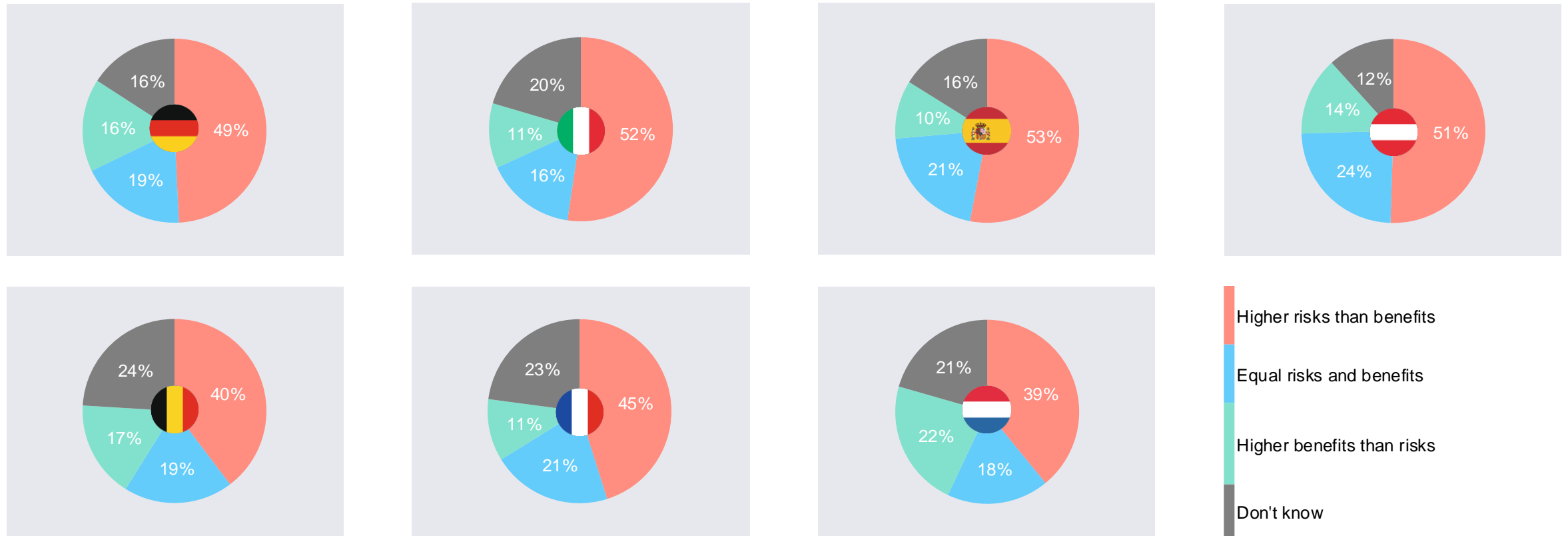
Health risks & benefits of sweeteners



Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)
 Question: How do you estimate the health risks of sweeteners in food products and beverages? | How do you estimate the benefits of sweeteners in food products and beverages? Values <3% not depicted

Nearly every second respondent considers sweeteners rather as health risk than added benefit. Most positive attitude (higher benefits than risks) observed in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Health risks of sweeteners compared to benefits of sweeteners



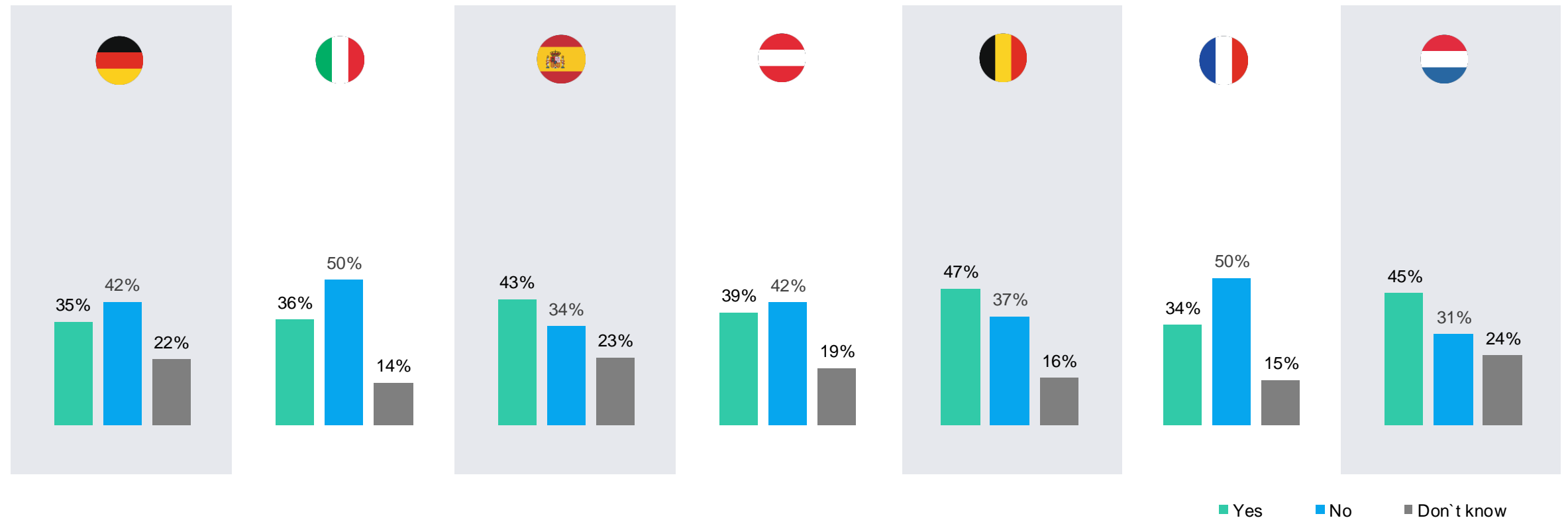
Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: How do you estimate the health risks of sweeteners in food products and beverages? | How do you estimate the benefits of sweeteners in food products and beverages?

▶ 5 Aspartame

Highest aspartame consumption in products in Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands. On the other hand, every second Italian and French avoids aspartame.

Consumption of aspartame

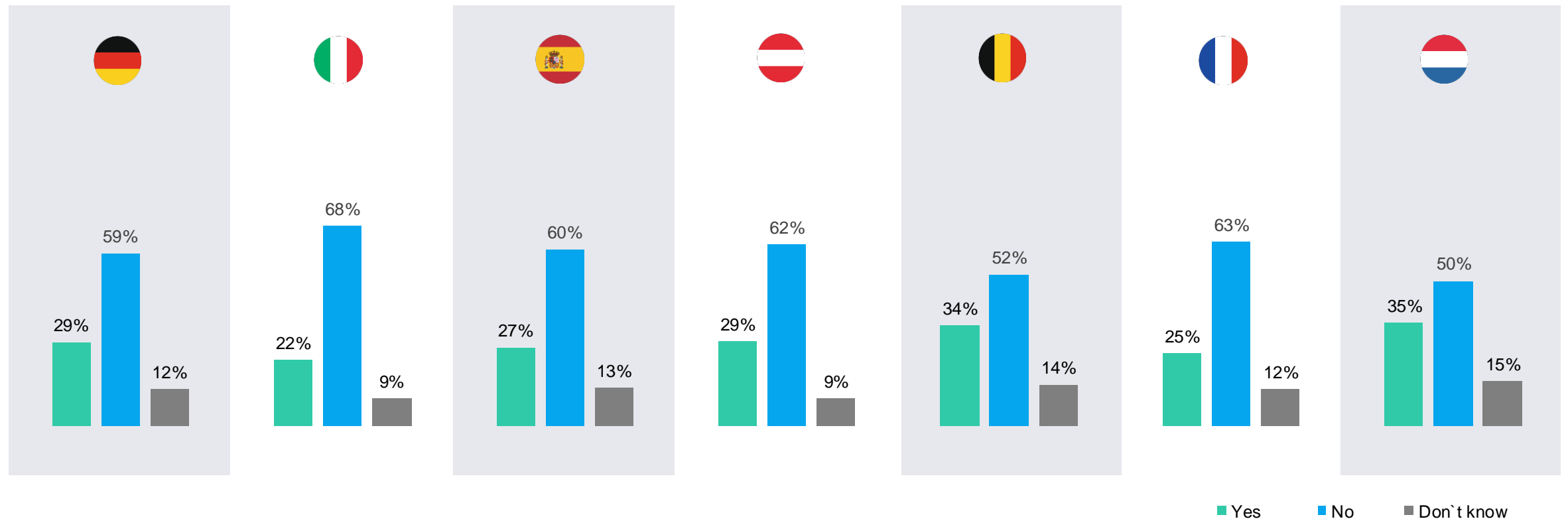


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: Aspartame is a synthetic additive used as a sweetener in products like <+>country specific examples<+>. In the EU it is used in more than 2.500 products. Do you consume products with aspartame?

After information about the WHO IARC classification of aspartame, majority would consider avoiding it in the future. Still, at least every fifth will continue using aspartame.

Future consumption of aspartame

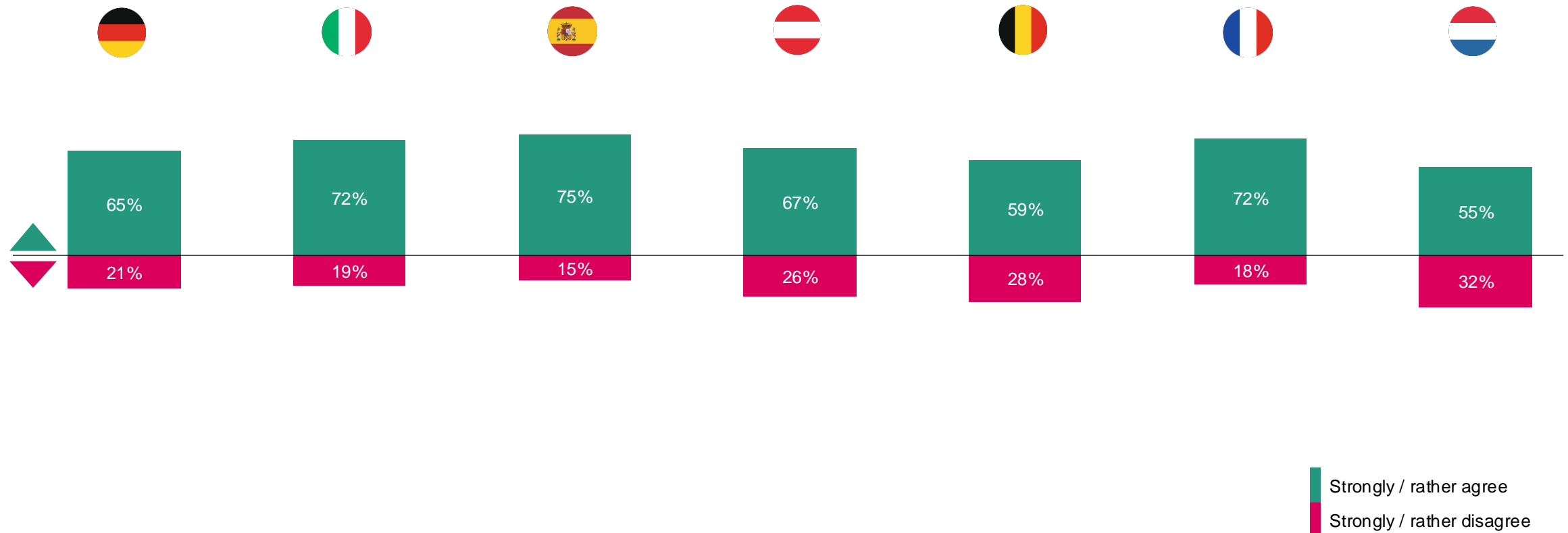


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: Would you consider consuming products with aspartame in the future?

Strongest approval of a precautional aspartame ban from food in Spain, Italy and France. The Dutch and Belgians are less likely to agree with such a ban.

Bans and regulations statements - Aspartame should be banned from foods as a precautionary measure.

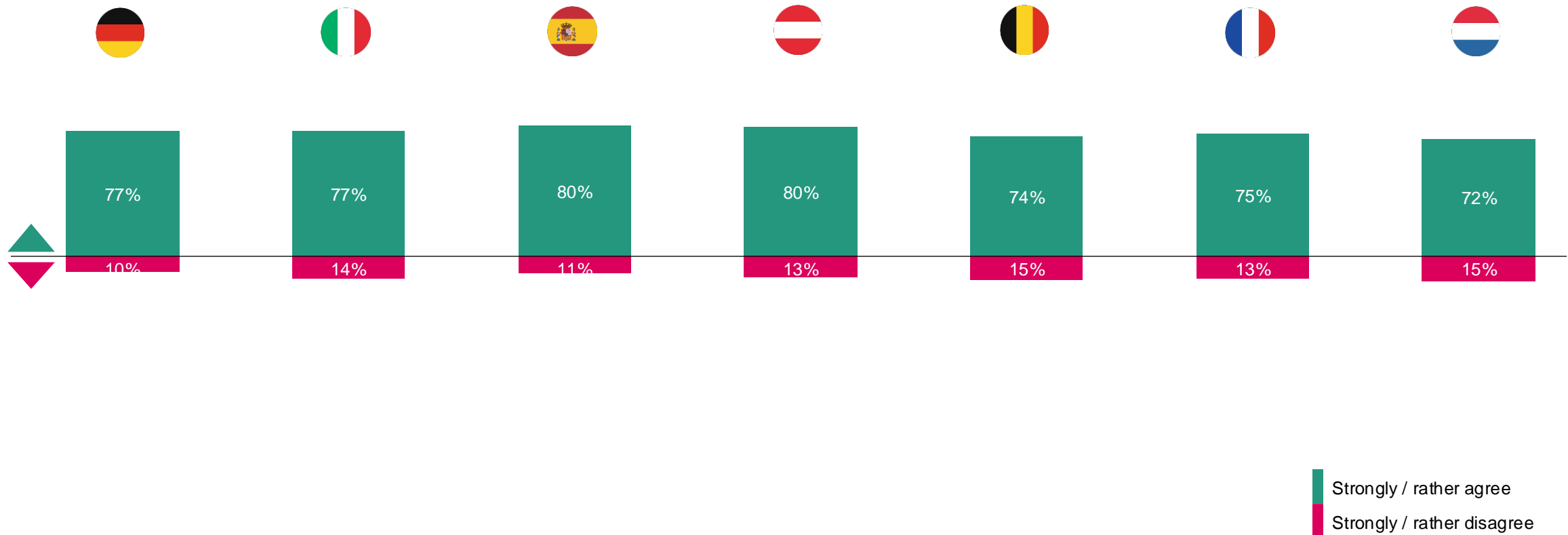


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - Aspartame should be banned from foods as a precautionary measure. | Shown are T2B and B2B, fallback option is not shown

A re-evaluation of aspartame safety, based on the WHO IARC classification, is welcomed by the majority in all countries.

Bans and regulations statements - The safety of aspartame should be re-evaluated based on the WHO IARC classification.

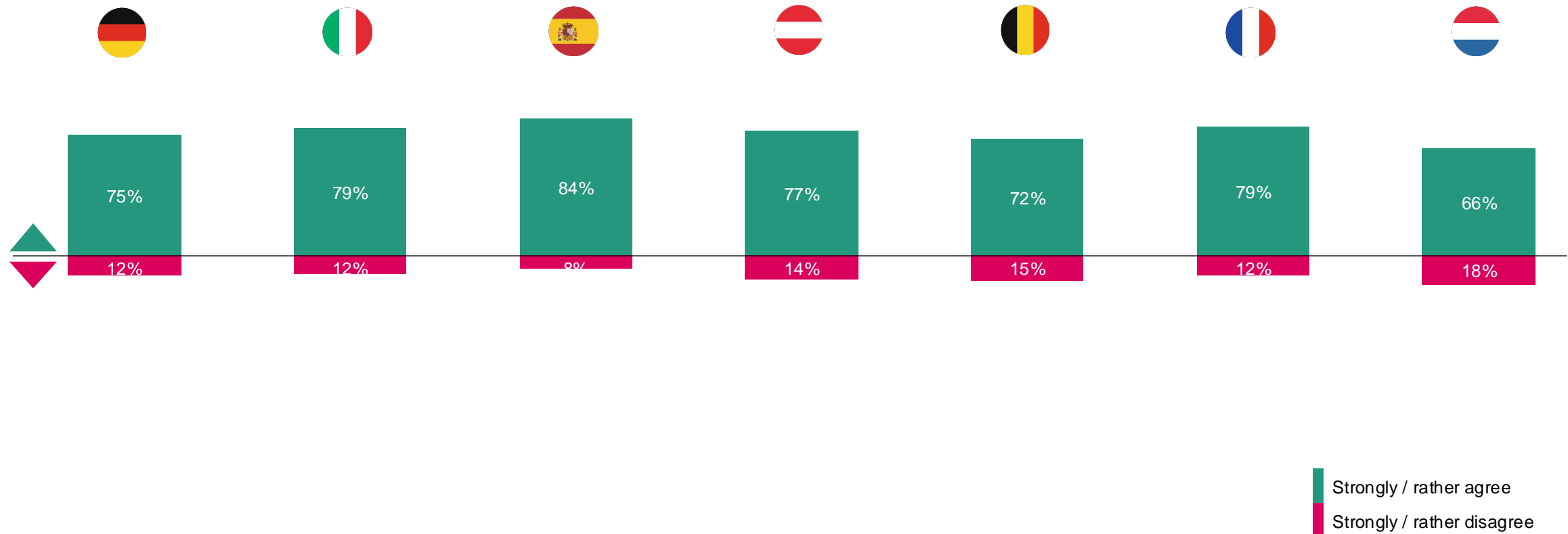


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - The safety of aspartame should be re-evaluated based on the WHO IARC classification. | Shown are T2B and B2B, fallback option is not shown

Consumers in Spain are mostly in favour of an EU review on the authorisation system for food additives, though overall score is high in all countries. Lowest level of agreement in the Netherlands.

Bans and regulations statements - The EU Commission should revise the EU authorization system for additives in food.

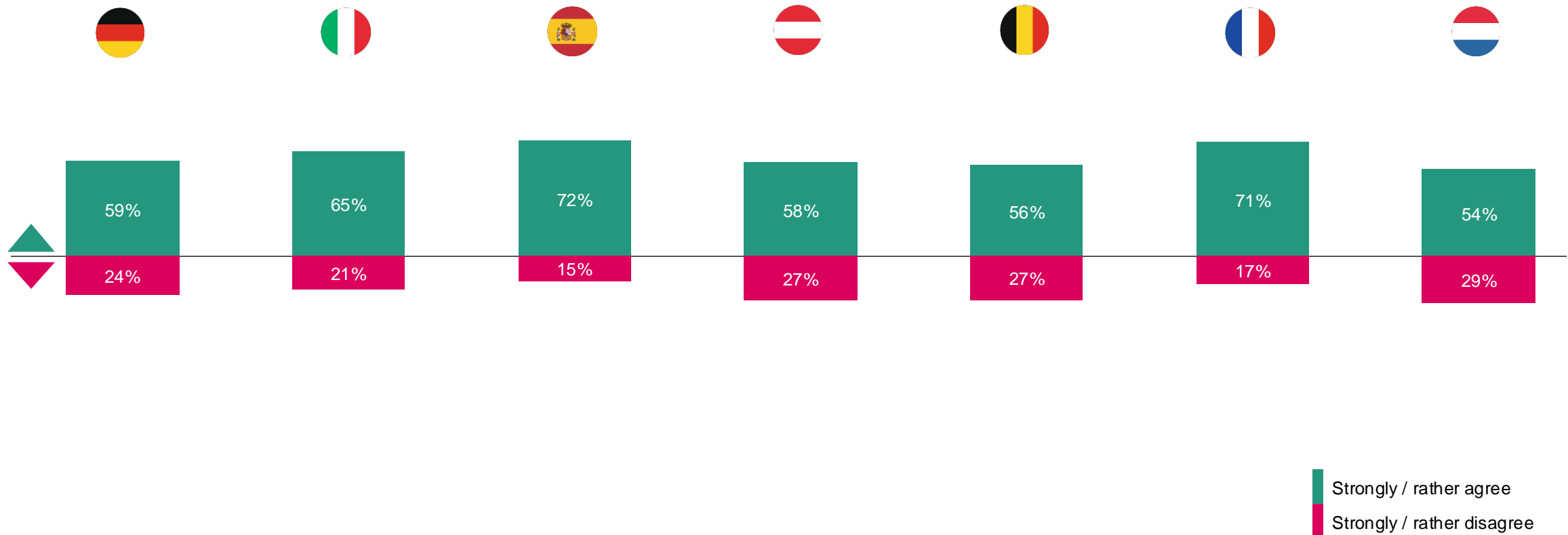


Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - The EU Commission should revise the EU authorization system for additives in food. | Shown are T2B and B2B, fallback option is not shown

Highest agreement on a governmental support of an aspartame ban in Spain (72%) and France (71%), followed by Italy (65%).

Bans and regulations statements - The government of my country should publicly support a ban on aspartame.



Base: All respondents, Germany (n=1015), Italy (n=1052), Spain (n=1055), Austria (n=1053), Belgium (n=1052), France (n=1050), Netherlands (n=1053)

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - The government of my country should publicly support a ban on aspartame. I Shown are T2B and B2B, fallback option is not shown