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Video interviewing on the European Social Survey

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ESRA Conference, July 2023

europeansocialsurvey.org

ESS is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC)



What we will cover...

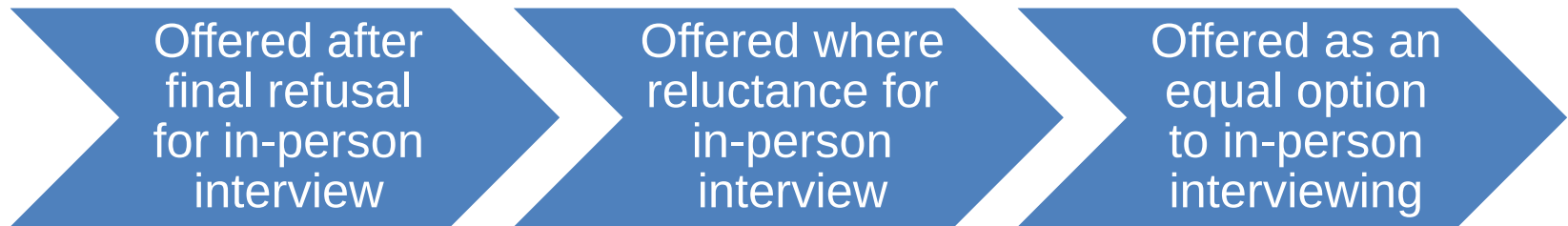
- Introduction to ESS and approach used for video interviewing
- Results
 - Prevalence of video interviewing
 - Interview experience and technical difficulties
 - Feedback from national teams
 - Sample composition
- Future reflections on video interviewing

Introduction to the European Social Survey (ESS)

- Cross-sectional, cross-national survey, carried out every two years
- Approx. 1 hour interview
- Face-to-face (in-person) fieldwork approach across all countries for first nine rounds of the survey
- Round 10 of ESS carried out between 2020 and 2022 – 31 countries participated in total
 - Face-to-face fieldwork in 22 countries
 - 9 countries switched to a self-completion approach (due to the pandemic)
- Option to add video interviews as a complementary option to in-person interviews at Round 10

The video interviewing approach

- Approach evolved over the round



- Two models for managing video interviews
 1. Establish specialised video interviewing team
 2. Enable all face-to-face interviewers to do video interviews
- National teams required to follow a central protocol outlining approach to video interviewing, though some variation between countries (e.g. on platforms used)

Key aspects of ESS's approach

No change in usual approach of contacting sample units

Limit on interviewer workload

Reminder calls in advance of appointments

Data Processing Agreement to cover use of platform

Interviewer pay / incentivisation to be consider

(Usually) two screens/ devices for interviewer – one with CAPI questionnaire and other for video call

Showcards to be screen-shared throughout interview

Respondent can use any internet-enabled device (larger screen if possible)

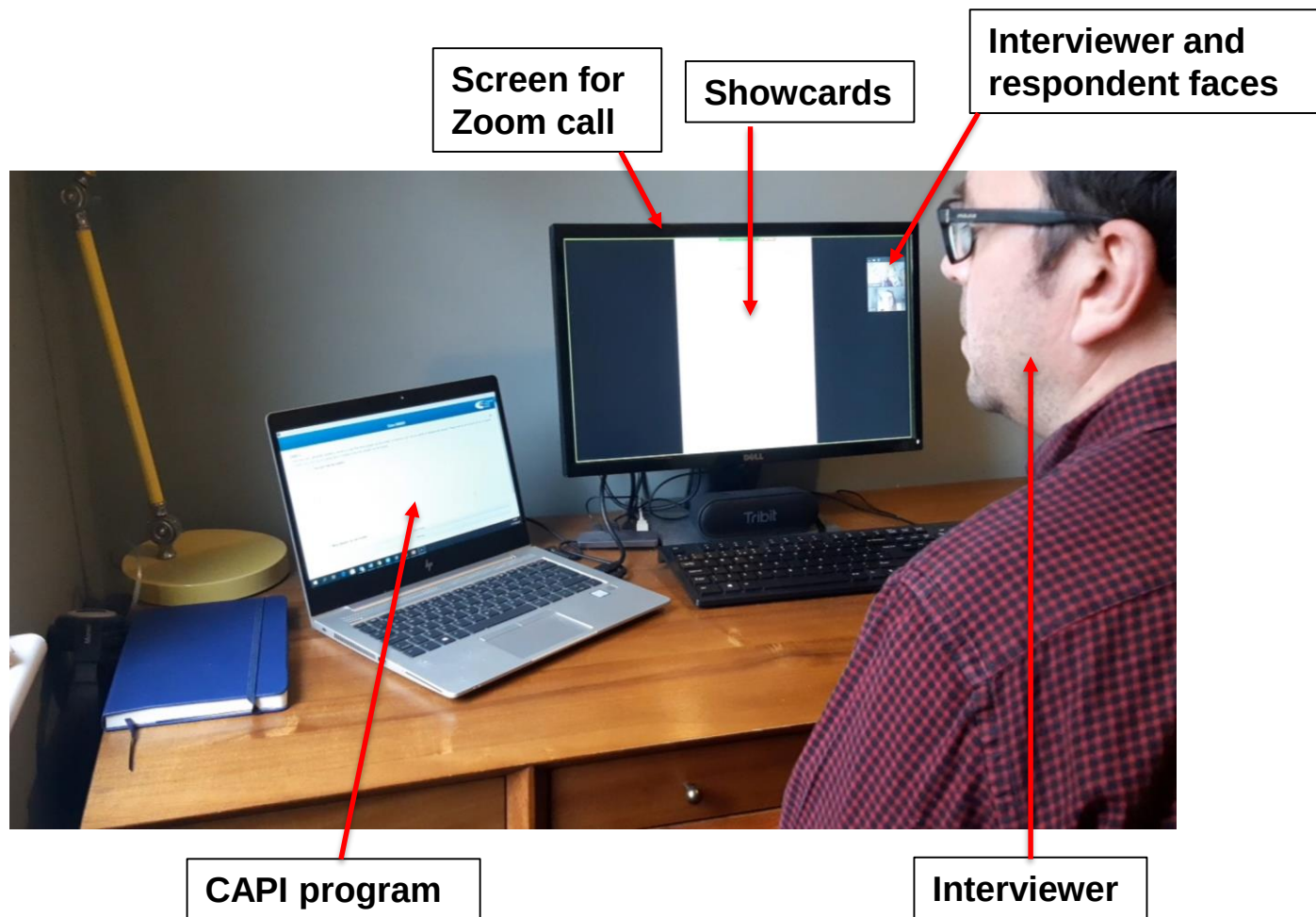
Interviews not to be recorded

Approach to be pre-tested

Interviewers to be briefed on approach prior to fieldwork

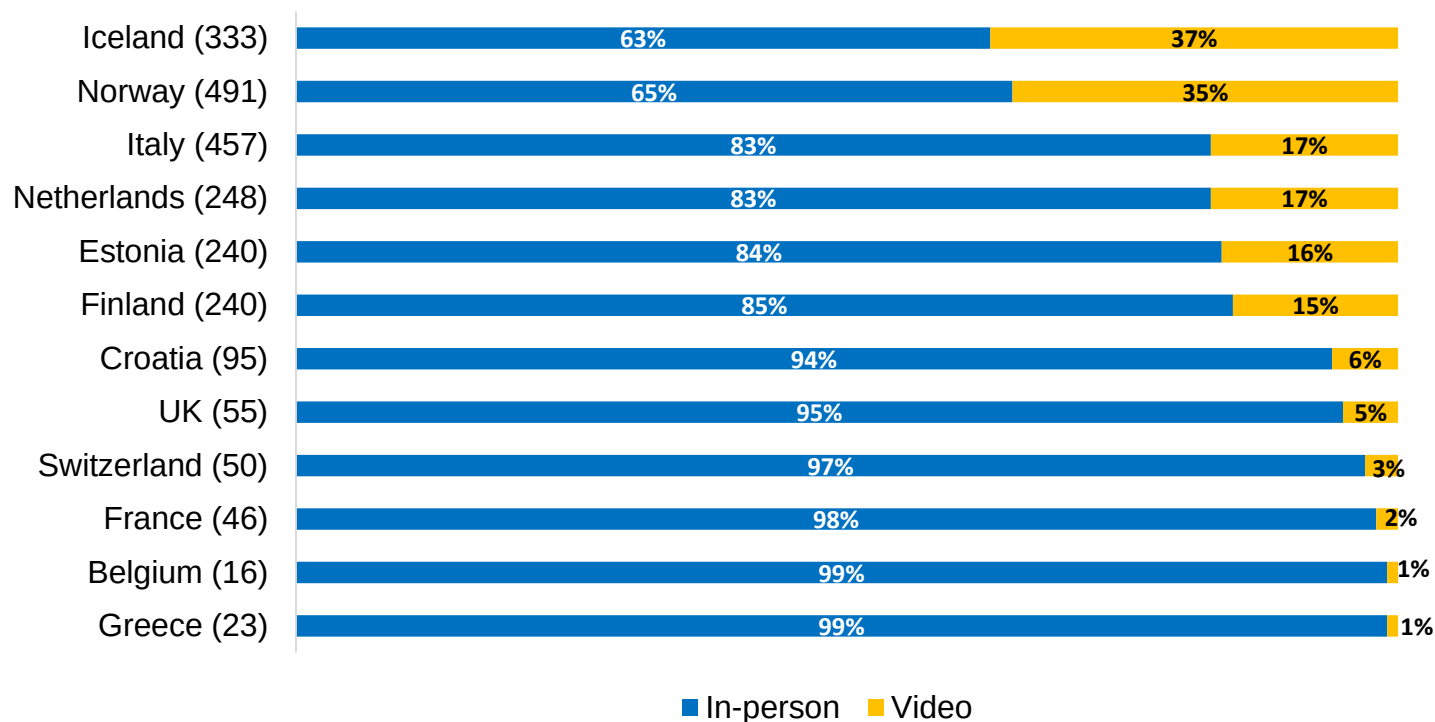
Video interviews to be back-checked

How it can work in practice...



Results

Proportion of interviews carried out by video

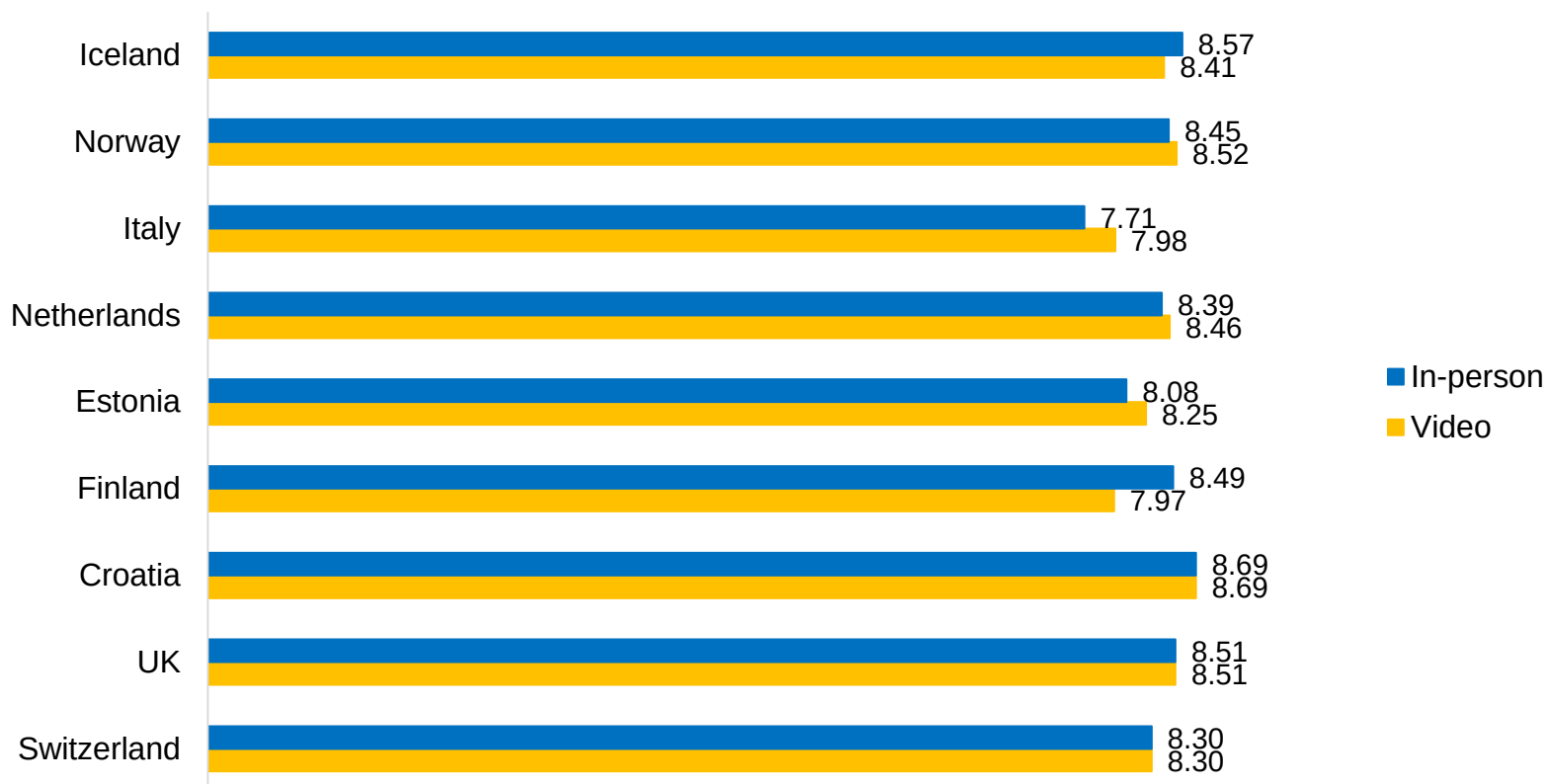


Number of video interviews per country shown in brackets after country name

5 other countries – Ireland, North Macedonia, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia achieved fewer than 1% of their total interviews by video (all below 10 interviews)

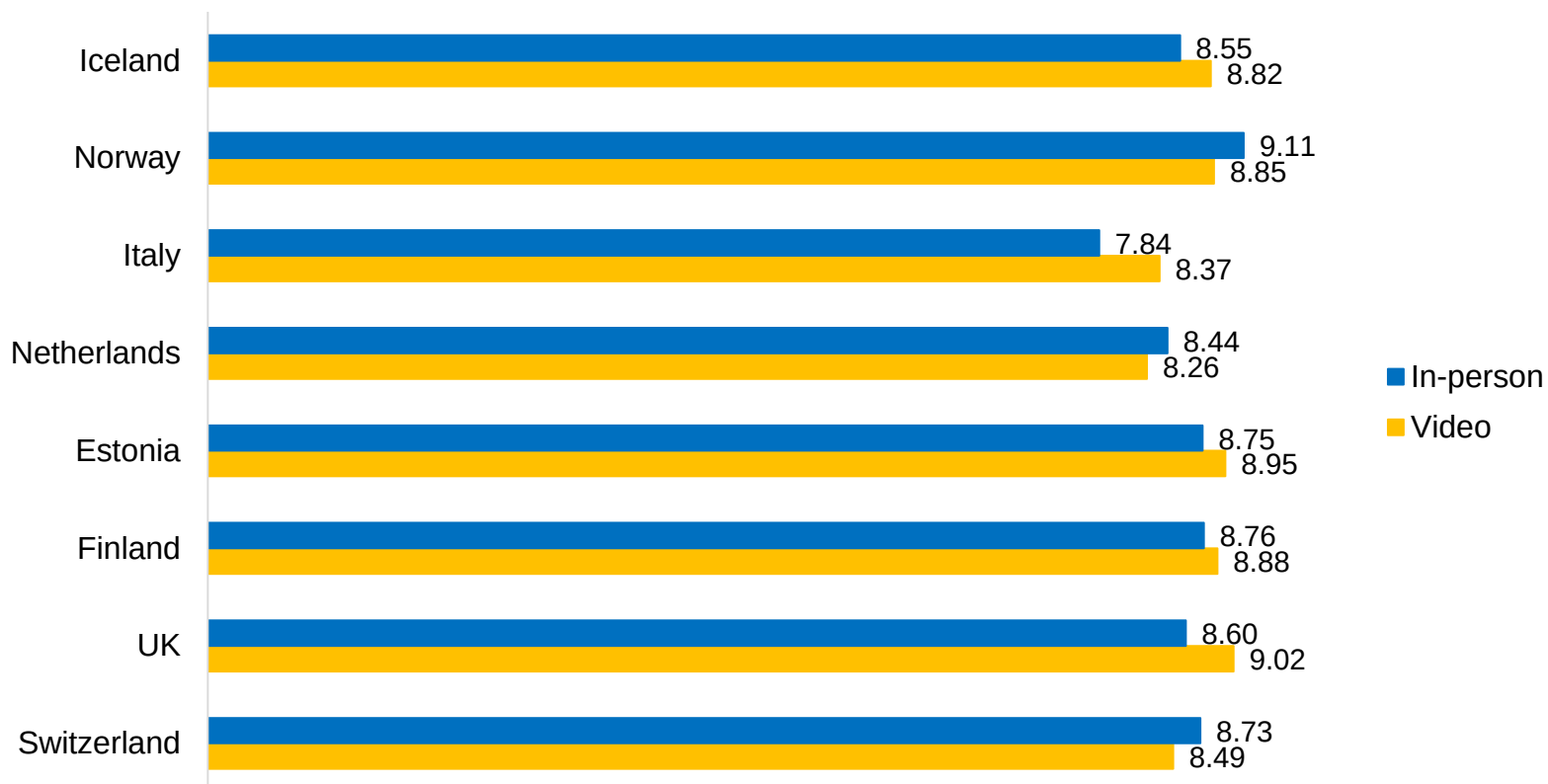
Respondent interview experience between modes

How would you rate the overall experience of taking part in this survey? Please answer on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is very negative and 10 is very positive.

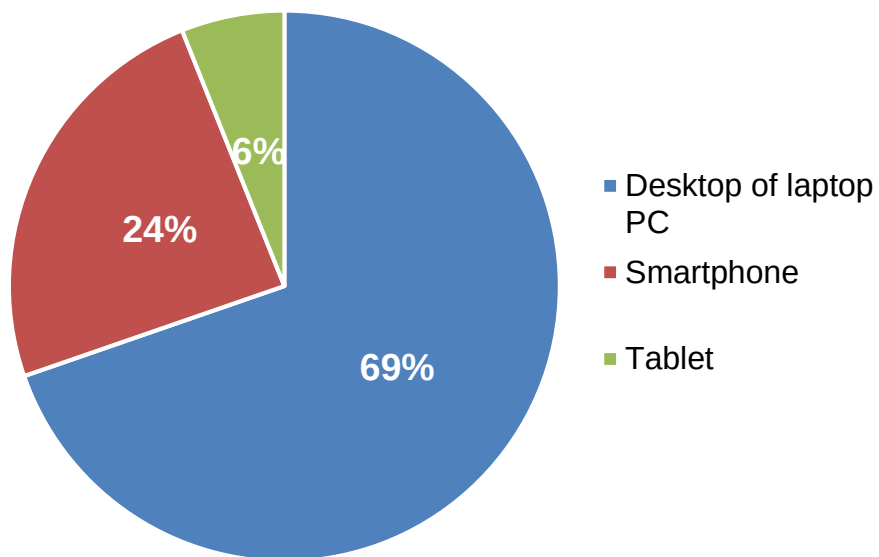


Interviewer experience between modes

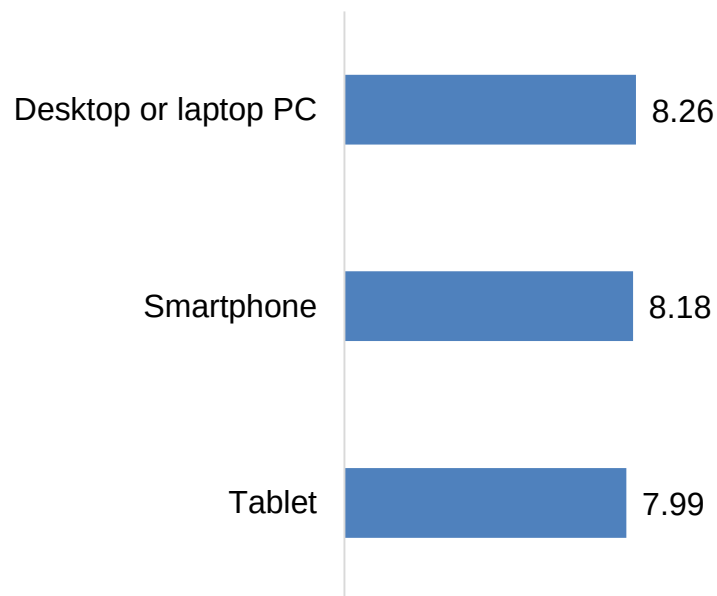
How would you rate the overall experience of conducting this interview? Please answer on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is very negative and 10 is very positive.



A quarter of respondents used a smartphone for the video call; no difference in reported interview experience

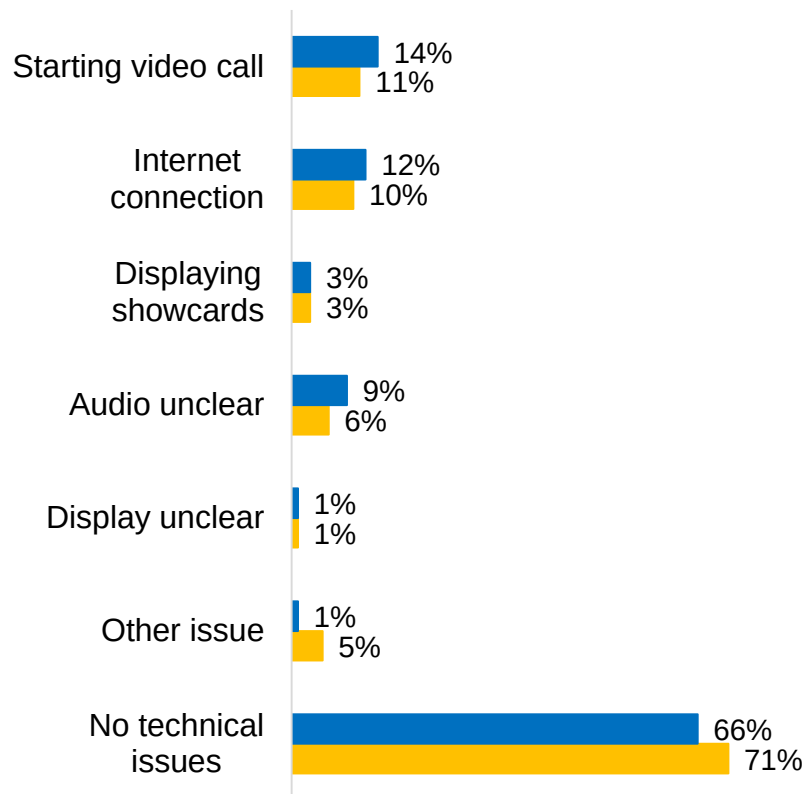


Average respondent interview experience score

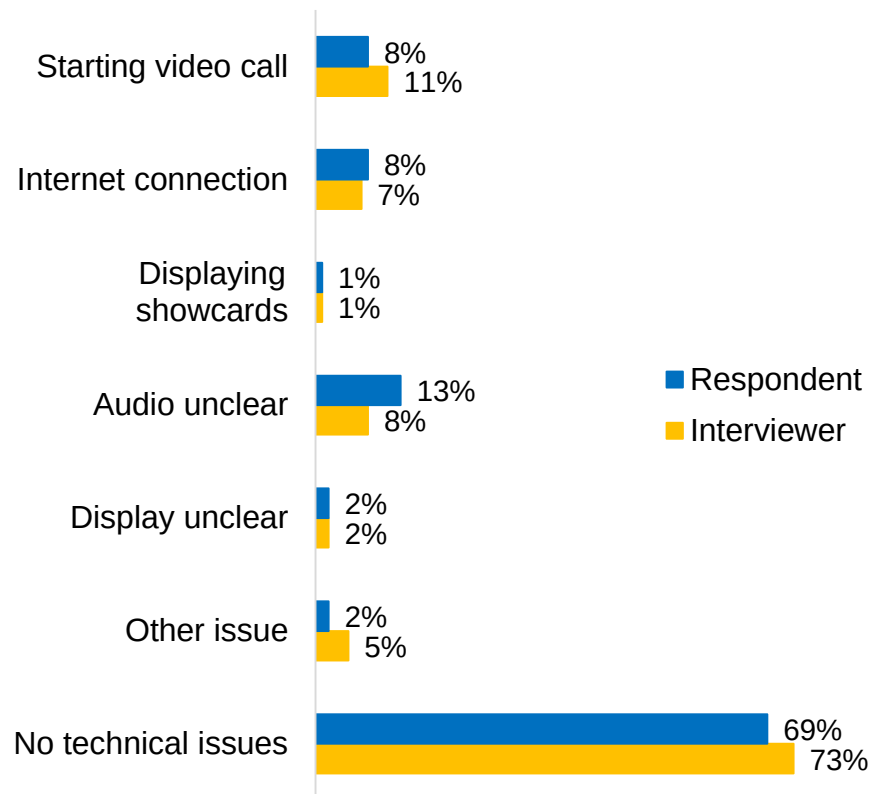


Experience of technical issues

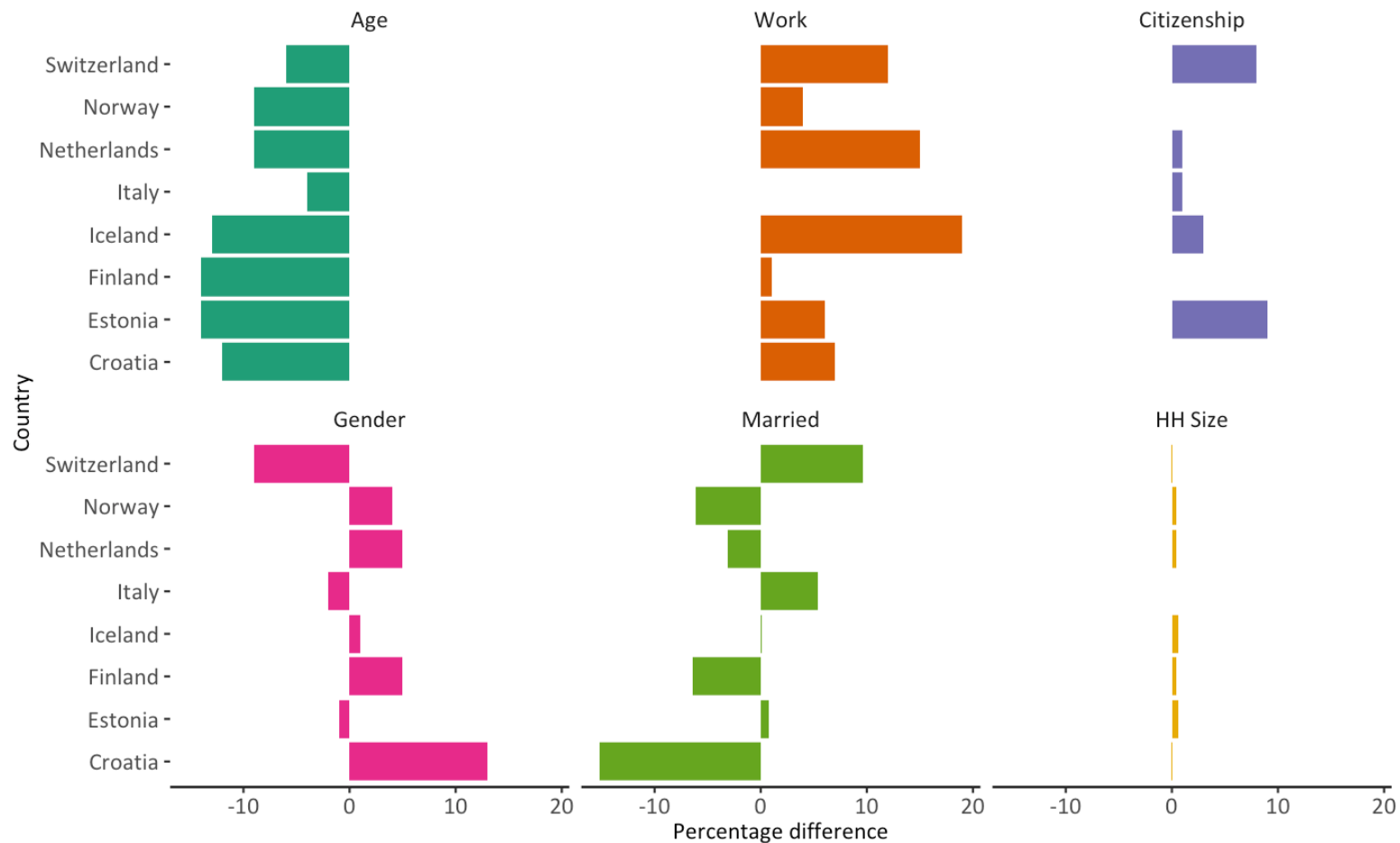
Estonia



Finland



Sample composition



Feedback from national teams (1)

- Short feedback survey sent to national teams to get further information on experience of video interviews (14 teams responded) - mixed reactions...

“This is a very effective way to increase response rate. Both interviewers and respondents were very happy to use it.”

“All in all, our experiences are very positive. Probably, all the video cases would have been refusals if there was not this option.”

“Overall, we are extremely happy with being able to offer respondents to take part in the survey through a video interview, and were pleasantly surprised with how many people of the older generation were willing to try this method.”

“It was burdensome to set-up and the training for interviewers took time to sort out. For the relatively small number of interviews achieved I am not sure it was worth it.”

“It turned out that choosing for video seems more like a convenient excuse for delayed refusal or later avoiding the contact... Given the scale of the additional commitment - in terms of cost/benefit ratio, the feasibility of including the video seems questionable.”

Feedback from national teams (2)

- 6 of the 14 national teams said they were more positive about the use of video interviewing than they were before the round (1 less positive, 7 no difference)
- 7 of the 14 teams said they would offer video interviewing again at ESS Round 11 (2 would not offer again; 5 undecided)
- Several lessons and possible improvements suggested by national teams for future use:
 - Importance of fully briefing interviewers on platform (to support troubleshooting)
 - Clearer guidance for respondents on how to join video call
 - Reduce risk of 'no-shows' (e.g. text message reminders)
 - Works best as an equal option to in-person interviewing rather than as a back-up
 - Consider how to reduce complexity of needing to use 2 devices
 - Importance of getting 'buy-in' from research agency

Future reflections

Reflections – and future of video interviewing

- Mixed experiences of video interviewing at ESS Round 10 – but promising results in some countries, especially given first attempt at approach
- Tends to be more successful in countries where initial phone contact can be made; success may also relate to buy-in from national teams/agencies
- Video interviewing being allowed for ESS Round 11 (currently in field) and adopted by several countries; can be offered as equal alternative to in-person interviewing
- Some uncertainty over large-scale viability of video interviewing for cross-sectional surveys where first contact made in-person; perhaps more promising for longitudinal studies or for cross-sectional surveys in countries where sample frames include phone numbers

Thank you!



Contact

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