

Your Voice on eGovernment 2010
Online Public Consultation
October – December 2005

Report
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1. Executive summary

From October to December 2005 an online public consultation was held via Your Voice (<http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/>) on future eGovernment policy towards 2010. In total, 403 respondents (citizens, public administrations and businesses covering all the European Union Member States and a number of countries from outside of the EU) answered questions about:

- inclusive eGovernment
- citizen involvement, participation and democracy
- high impact services
- efficient & effective eGovernment
- key enablers.

About 92% of the respondents agreed with the suggested **approach to focus eGovernment policy** on a small number of priorities with high impact.

The responses to the questionnaire strongly support objective-setting as formulated in the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Manchester Ministerial Conference on 24 November 2005.

Priority focuses for **inclusive eGovernment policy** towards 2010 were: the increase of the access and the use of public services by active promotion and more accessible solutions; the design of public policies and services by eGovernment in such a way, that no citizen and businesses risks being excluded; and a better access to market, tenders and business opportunities in the public sector to SMEs. The most significant main barriers to progress mentioned were: lack of interoperability; organisational barriers and the lack of ease of use. The preferred priority actions, according to the respondents include: proactive approach to be used by public administrations; training of public administrations, and exchange of good practices on inclusivity strategies and solutions at EU level.

Concerning **citizen involvement, participation and democracy**, there is in general the opinion (64%), that eParticipation and eVoting can help or most likely help closing the democratic deficit. As main barriers are mentioned: lack of trust and security, insufficient access to information and communication technologies and lack of leadership. Main actions should be providing of solutions for eParticipation by a choice of channels (e.g. TV, cell-phone...), exchange of experiences and solutions as well as the creation of awareness.

Citizens mobility and social security, citizens mobility in work and public eProcurement are the main **high impact services** on which eGovernment policy should focus by 2010. The respondents have seen as main barriers again the lack of interoperability, organisational barriers followed by national legislation. They recommended as main actions the exchanging of experience on technical and non-technical aspects, support by the structural funds and CIP and provision of incentives to share in developments of solutions.

In electronic public procurement, 50-99% public procurement take-up was mentioned most frequently as target by 2010. Main actions in this area should be harmonised electronic signatures to enable the replacement of paper documents and changes in national legislation.

In **efficient & effective eGovernment**, the most important objectives to be achieved by 2010 are stated to be improving the quality of services, based on user satisfaction and reducing the administrative burden for businesses and citizens. As main barriers, lack of interoperability,

organisational barriers and insufficient skills of the administration were identified. As main actions, good practice sharing, development of innovative and transformative eGovernment solutions at EU level as well as activities for stimulating the use of open standards and pooling software were recommended.

The European eGovernment policy should focus on electronic identification and authentication, good practice and solutions sharing and organisational change as **key enablers**. 88% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the use of national electronic identification schemes in secure and trustworthy transactions with eGovernment services in other Member States should be enabled. As main barriers in realising electronic identification & authentication for public services across borders were seen the lack of interoperability, national legislation and lack of awareness of benefits. The main actions should be: mutual recognition of electronic identities provided by Member States, a federated, multilevel e-Identity model, and a framework for interoperable electronic documents.

Changes in EU legislation do not play a strong role in the proposed actions in each of the areas.

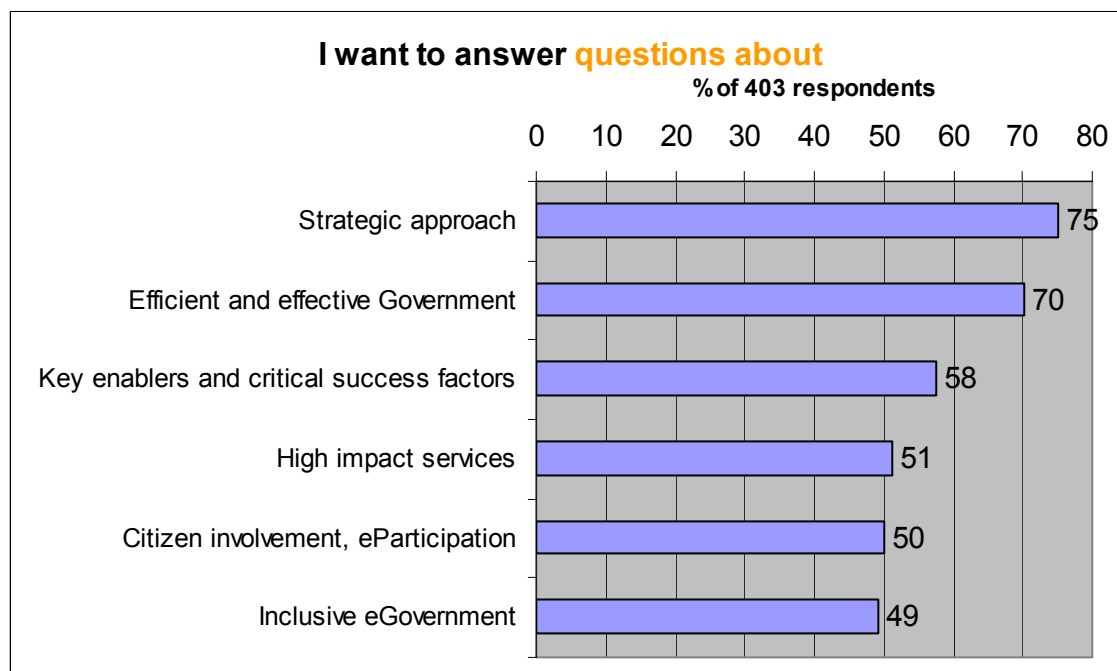
2. Introduction

Stakeholders of eGovernment in Europe had the opportunity to let their voice be heard on future eGovernment policy through an online consultation run from the 4th October to the 7th December 2005, at the website “Your Voice in Europe”.

3. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided in six different sections: Strategic approach, efficient and effective eGovernment, Key enablers and critical success factors, high impact services, inclusive eGovernment and citizen involvement. The respondents had the choice to answer the questions of their preferred areas.

Choice of questionnaire sections:

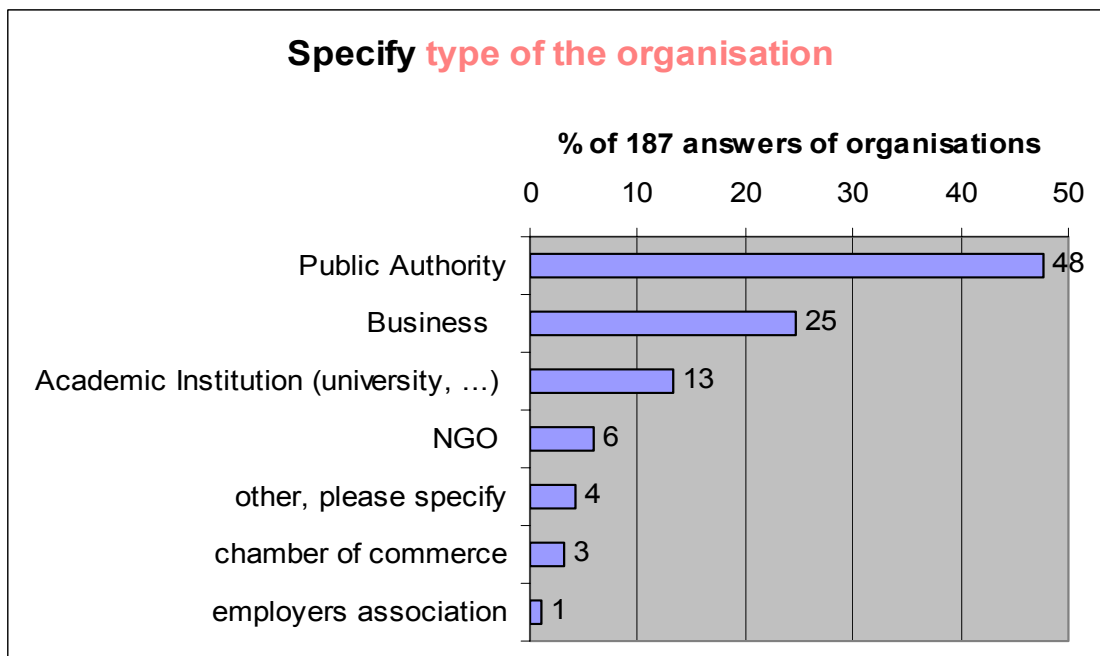
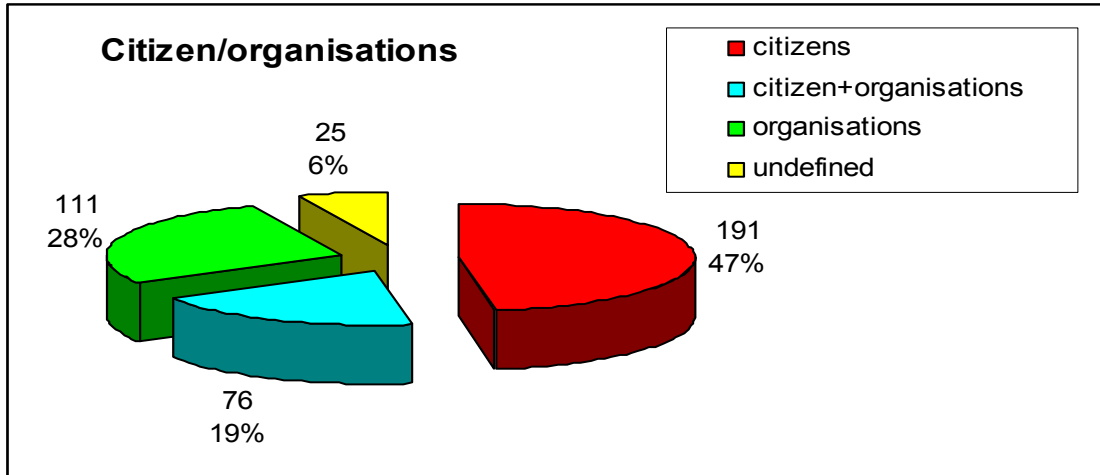


In general, the questions were about objectives, barriers and actions, which are to be taken to achieve the preferred objectives. Most of the questions allowed multiple answers, therefore the percentages of the results do not summarize to 100%. The percentages were calculated according to the respondents of the respective section (or subsection like public eProcurement or eIdentification).

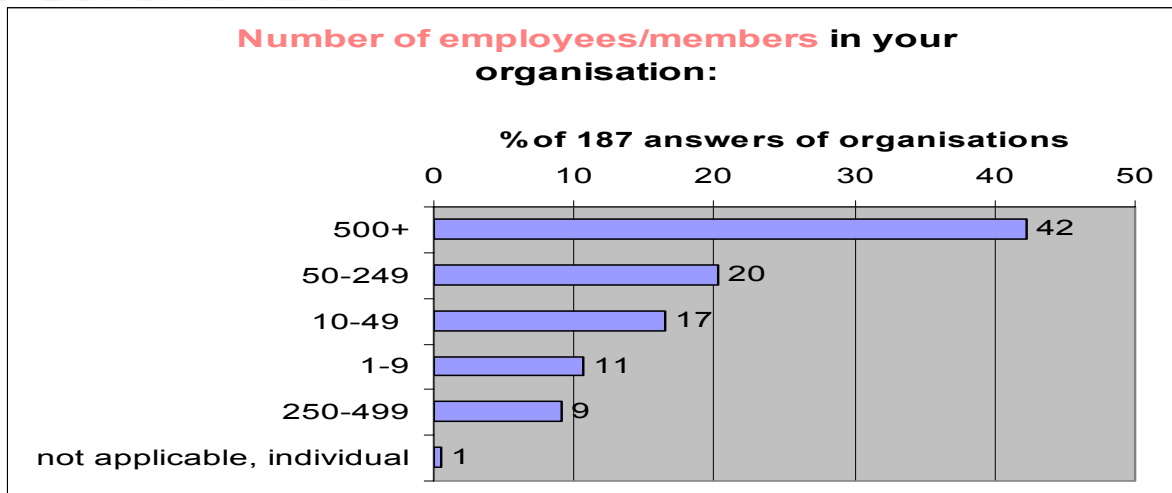
Apart from answering specific questions, it was also possible to give additional comments on each section and on the overall questionnaire in free text and to send longer contributions to the contact address of the consultation. The questionnaire was developed on the basis of the work of the eGovernment subgroup and the “Signpost Towards eGovernment 2010” paper and was tested by different stakeholders and Commission staff before going live. A public consultation meeting was also held on the 21st September 2005.

4. Respondents

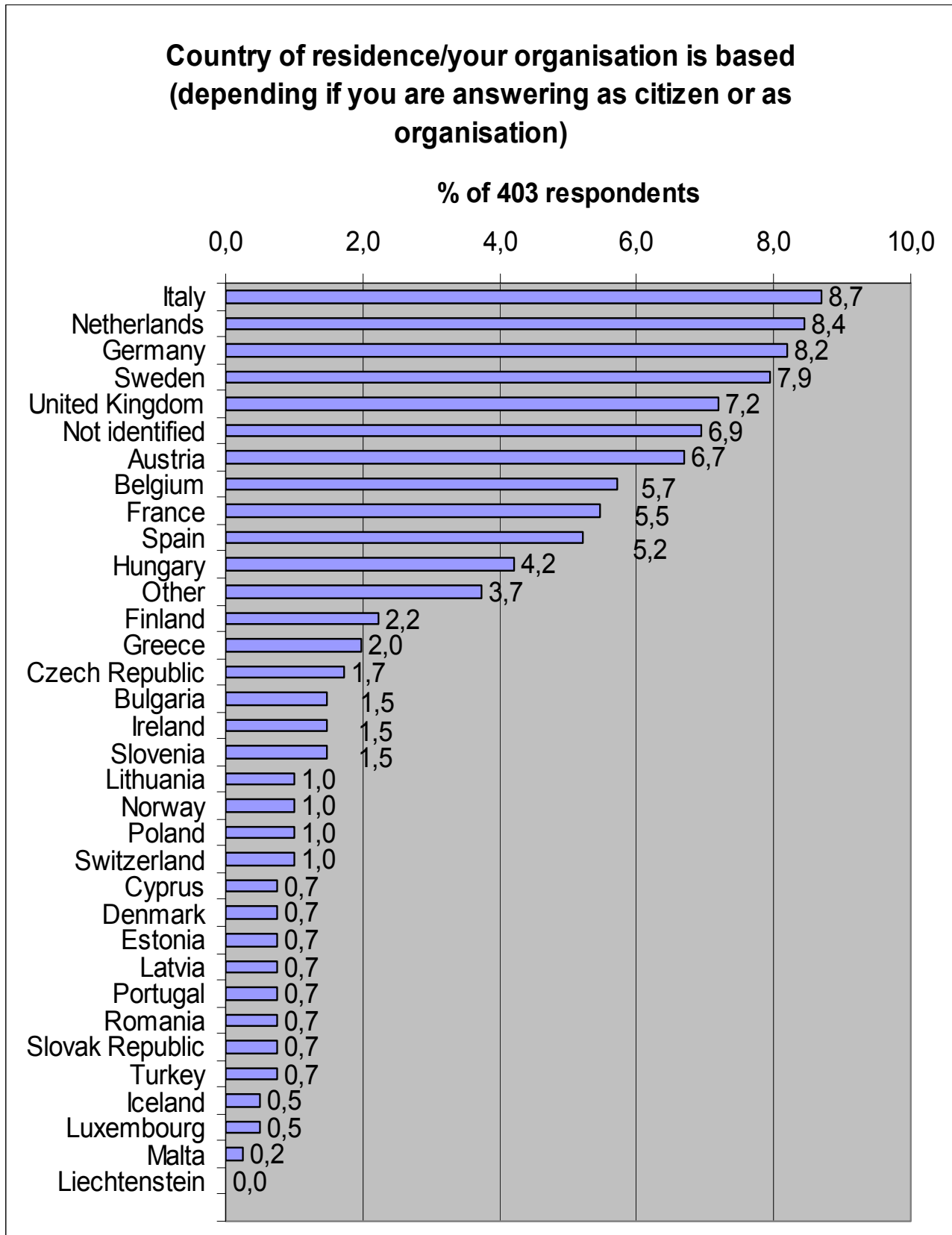
The questionnaire was publicly and anonymously accessible. In the first part, the role of respondent was identified. The questions were in general formulated for stakeholders, who are dealing with this area already for some time, rather than for the general public. Overall, there were 403 respondents. It was possible, to answer either in the role of a citizen or in the role of an organisation as well as in both roles. Nearly half of the respondents were citizens. Of the organisations responding nearly half were public authorities. The details of the replies are:



Among the 187 organisations were 89 public authorities (48%).



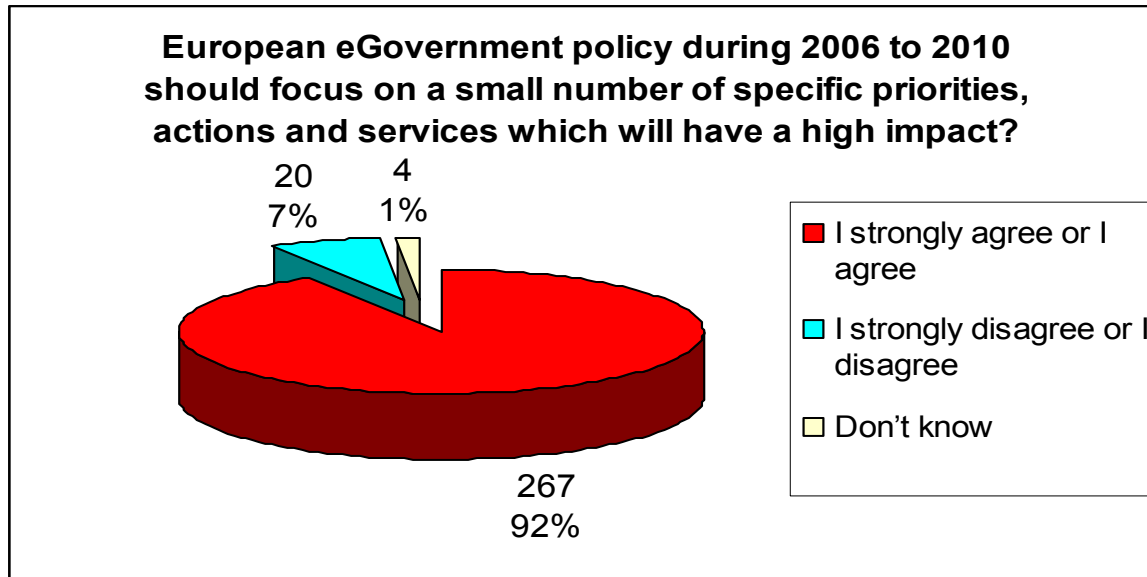
Among the 46 respondents of the business 72% have less than 250 employees.



The percentage of the contributions of different countries is shown above. Other includes e.g. United States, Argentina, Israel.

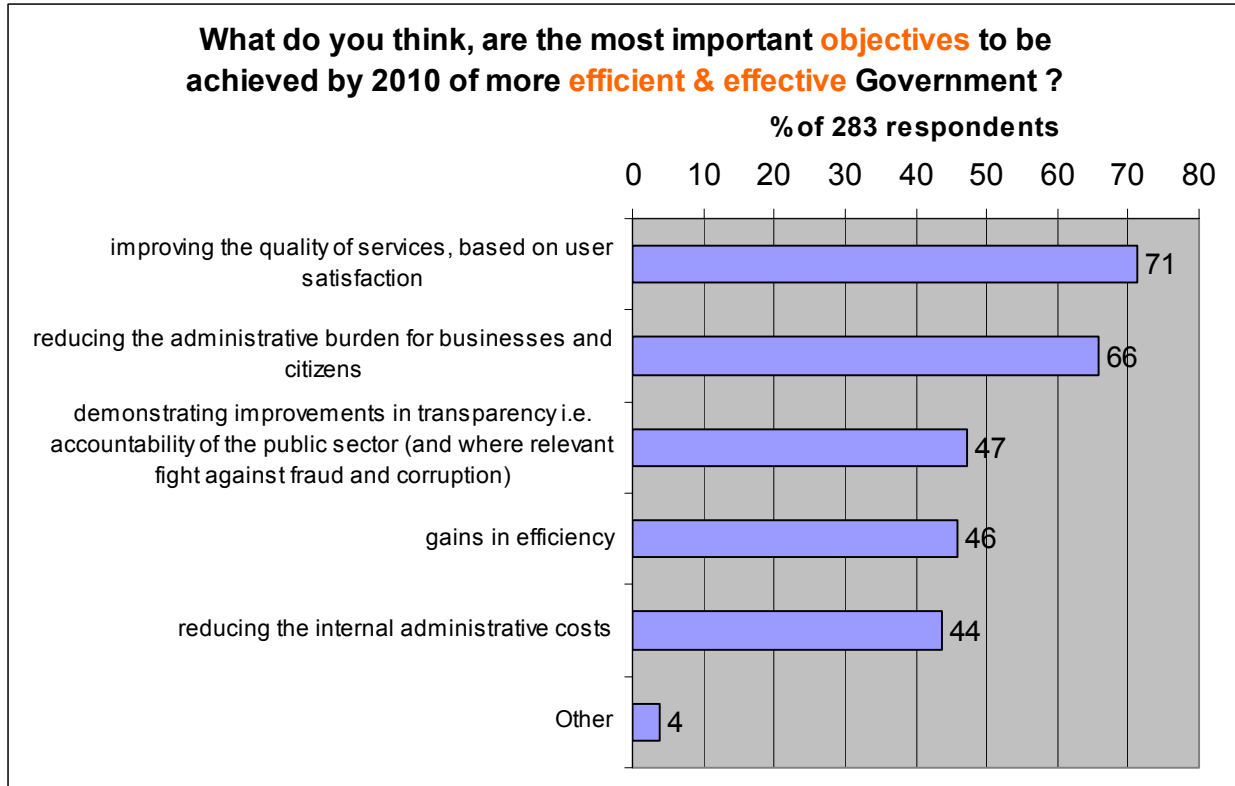
5. Strategic Approach

The respondents of the strategic approach section agreed in an overwhelming amount (about 92%) on a focussed approach to eGovernment, rather than a broad approach. The focus being on a small number of specific priorities, targets and actions that have a high impact.

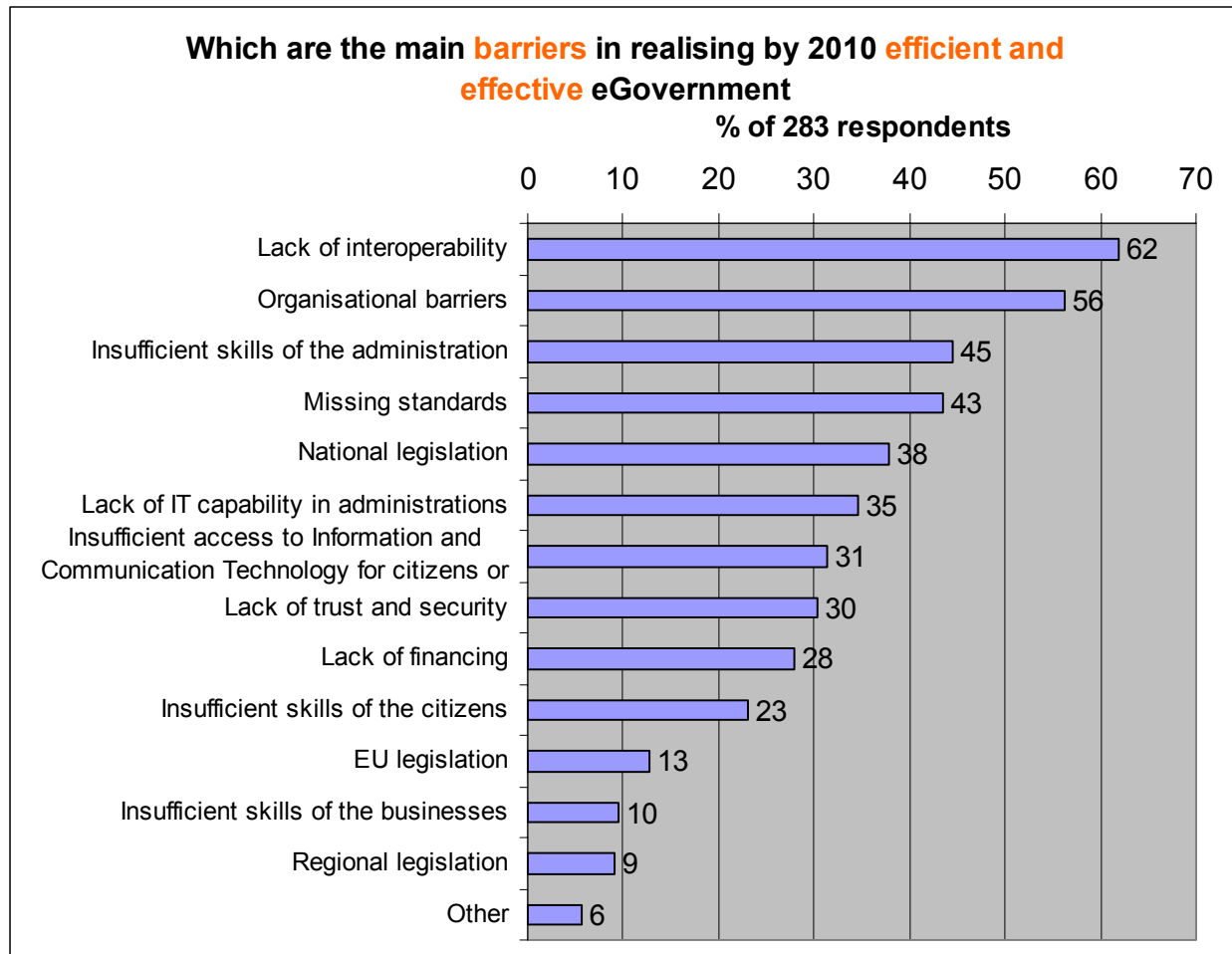


6. Efficient and effective Government

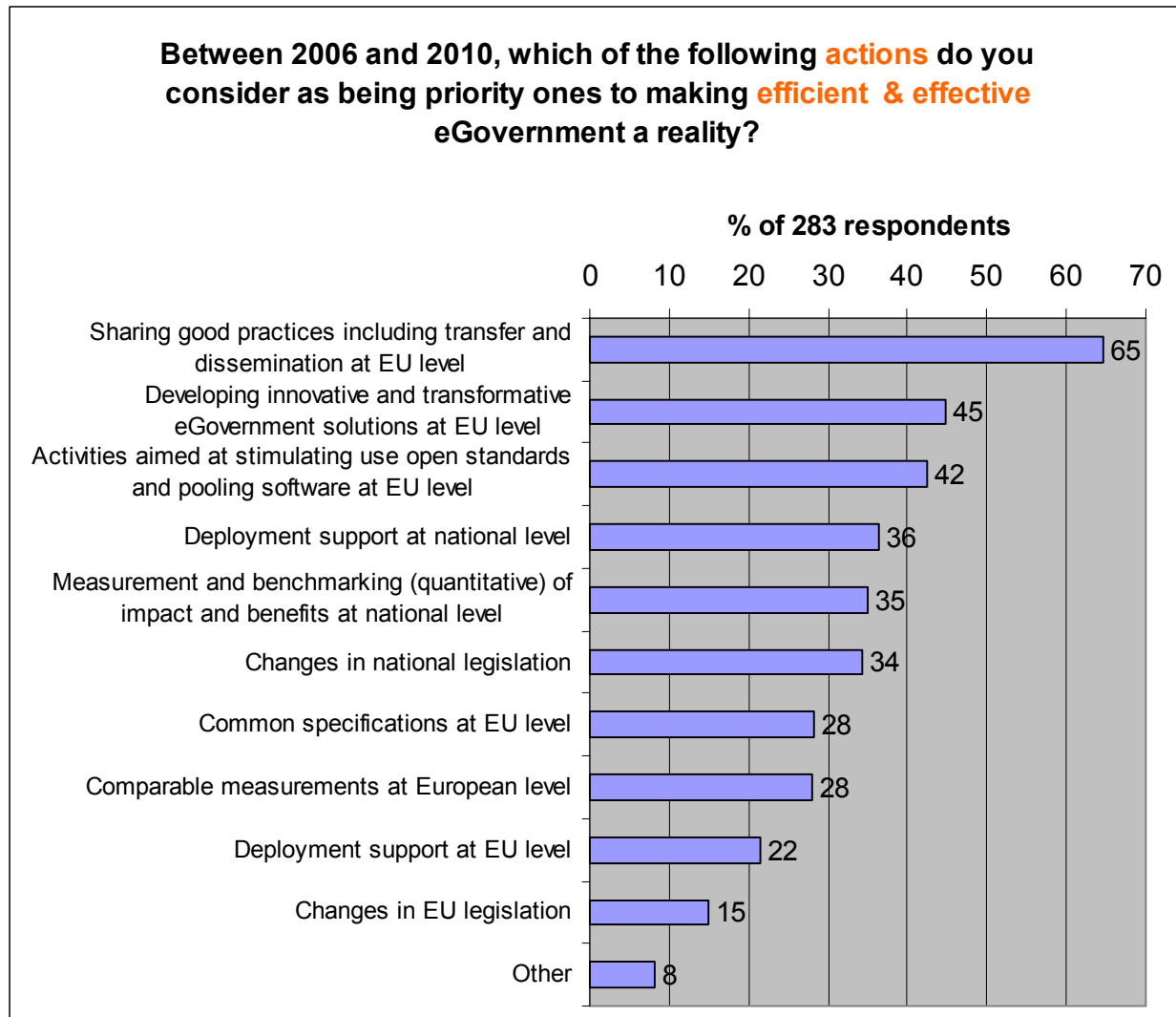
Regarding the objectives for a more Efficient and effective eGovernment by 2010, quality of services, based on user satisfaction as well as reducing the administrative burden, are considered as the highest priorities. It is interesting, that the reduction of the internal administrative costs was seen as the least important priority.



Lack of interoperability, organisational barriers and insufficient skills of the administration are considered as the most important barriers in achieving the objectives for more efficient and effective government. Nota bene: EU legislation ranks very low.



Most of the respondents had the opinion, that the actions should be undertaken at EU level and in particular good practice exchange and developing innovative solutions for efficient and effective government. Changes in EU legislation were considered to be the least important measure.



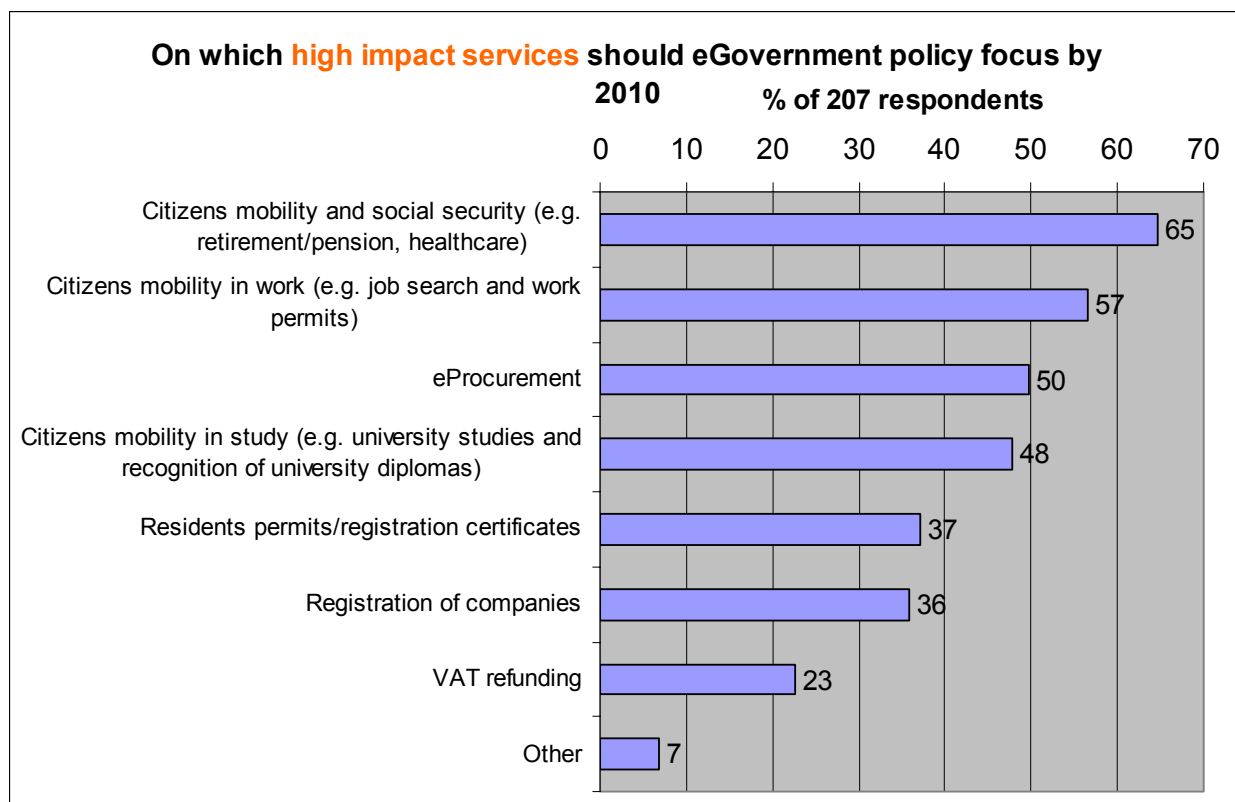
7. High impact services

High impact services and applications are those that, if taken up substantially, make a significant difference within Member States and across Europe. As an example of such a service, the economic impact of moving towards electronic public procurement is considerable, in terms of increasing efficiencies and reducing procurement costs, with estimates of savings some 5% of total procurement costs, which is about €75 billion p.a.

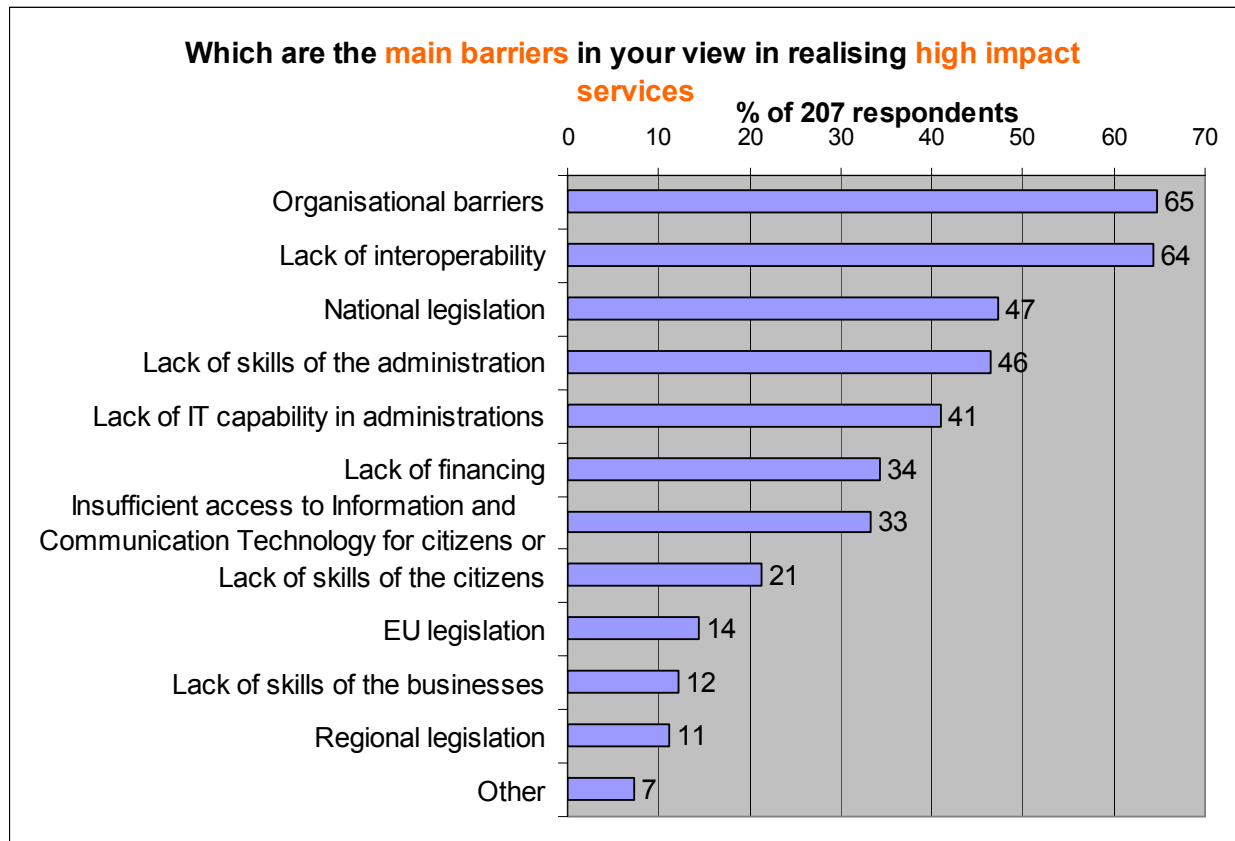
Similarly, services that increase and ease the ability of citizens to study, work and retire anywhere in Europe can help build on our natural diversity and thereby considerably support economic and social growth.

207 respondents answered questions in this section.

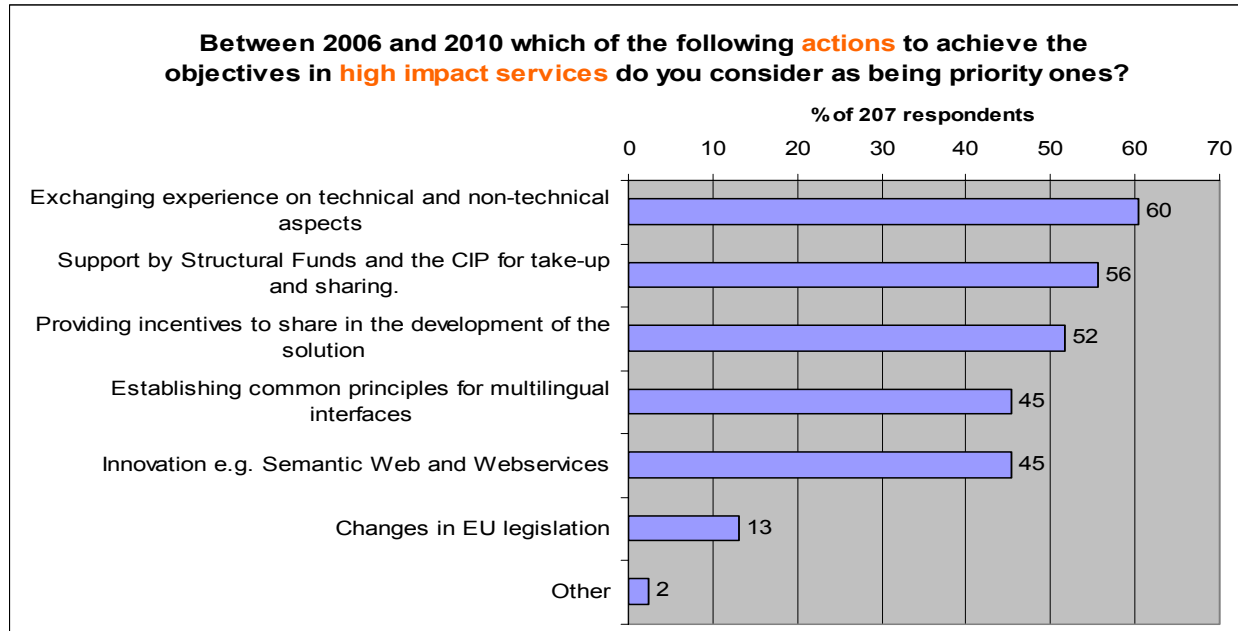
Most of the respondents selected that the eGovernment policy should focus on citizens mobility and social security, mobility in work and public eProcurement as the main high impact services. The respondents from businesses and public authorities considered public eProcurement as highest priority after citizen mobility and social security.



Again, organisational barriers and lack of interoperability are the barriers, mentioned by the largest number of respondents. Both national legislation and lack of skills of the administration are also relatively important barriers. And also again, it turned out, that EU legislation was among the least often mentioned barriers.

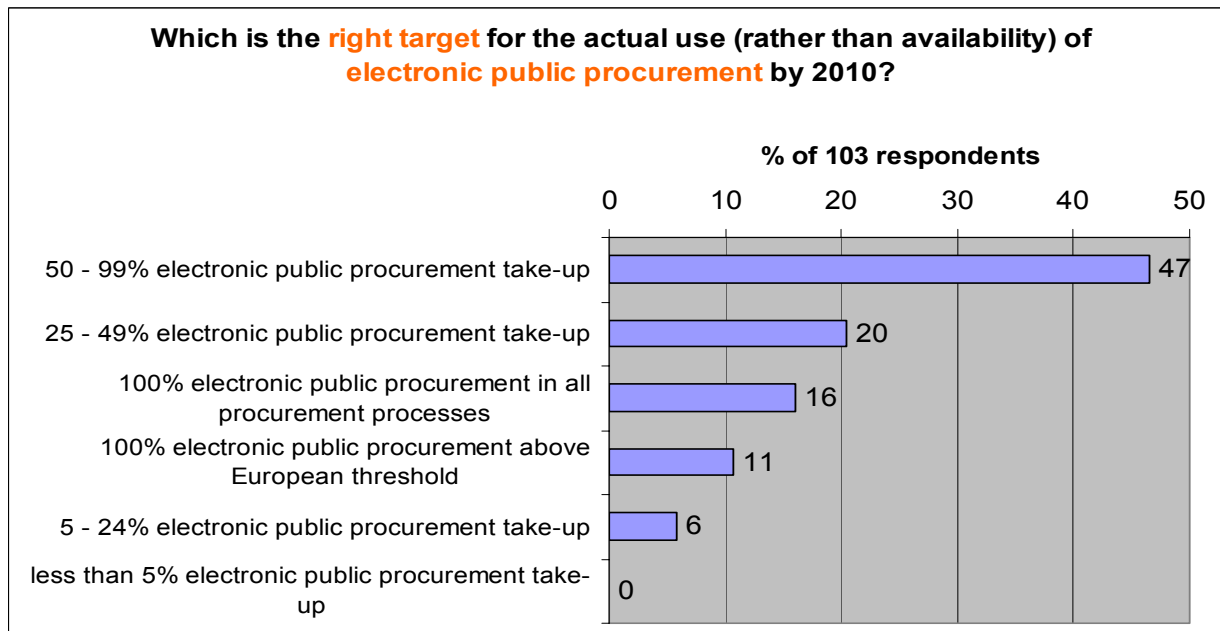


As most wanted actions for high impact services exchange of experience and projects supported by Structural Funds and the future Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme were mentioned.

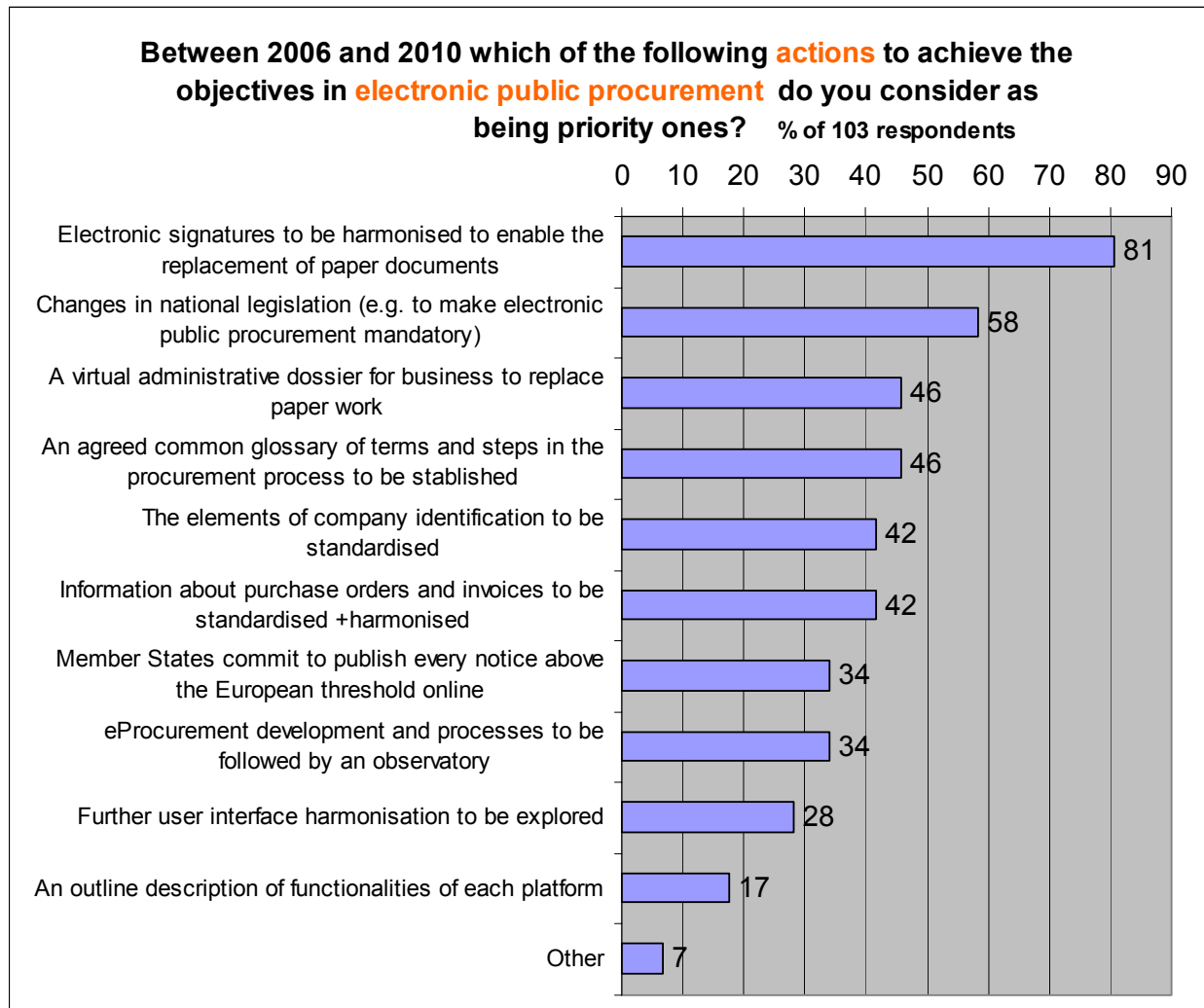


7.1 Special questions concerning eProcurement

Most of the respondents, who have chosen public eProcurement as high impact service, consider 50-99% as the right target for electronic procurement take-up by 2010.



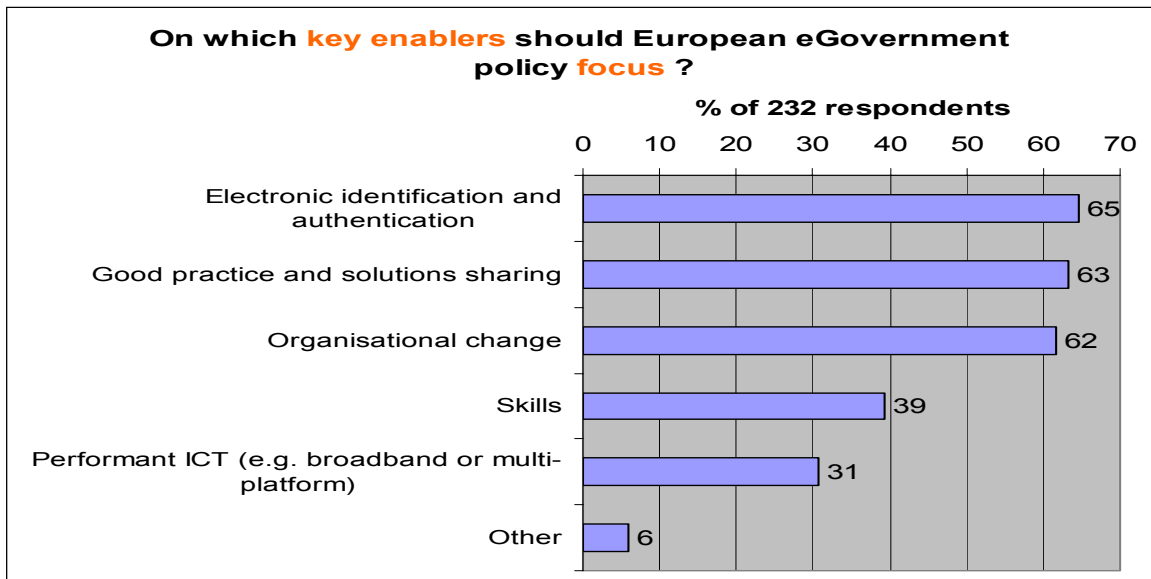
Most respondents considered harmonisation of electronic signatures as the priority action for public eProcurement. Remarkably, the second largest amount of answers regarding necessary actions concerns changes in national legislations.



8. Key enablers and critical success factors

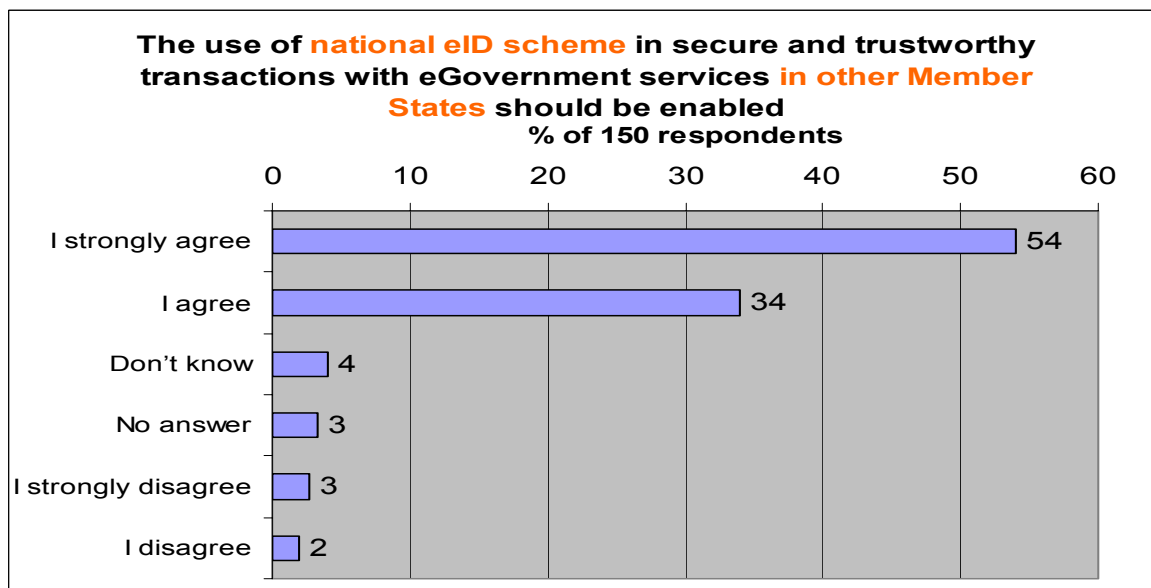
eGovernment can only achieve wide impact if key enablers are in place. The same happens in other sectors of the economy where infrastructure and sustained cooperation and skills are essential for the development of countries and economies, such as road and rail networks, passports etc

The most frequently mentioned key enablers were electronic identification and authentication good practice and solutions sharing and organisational change.

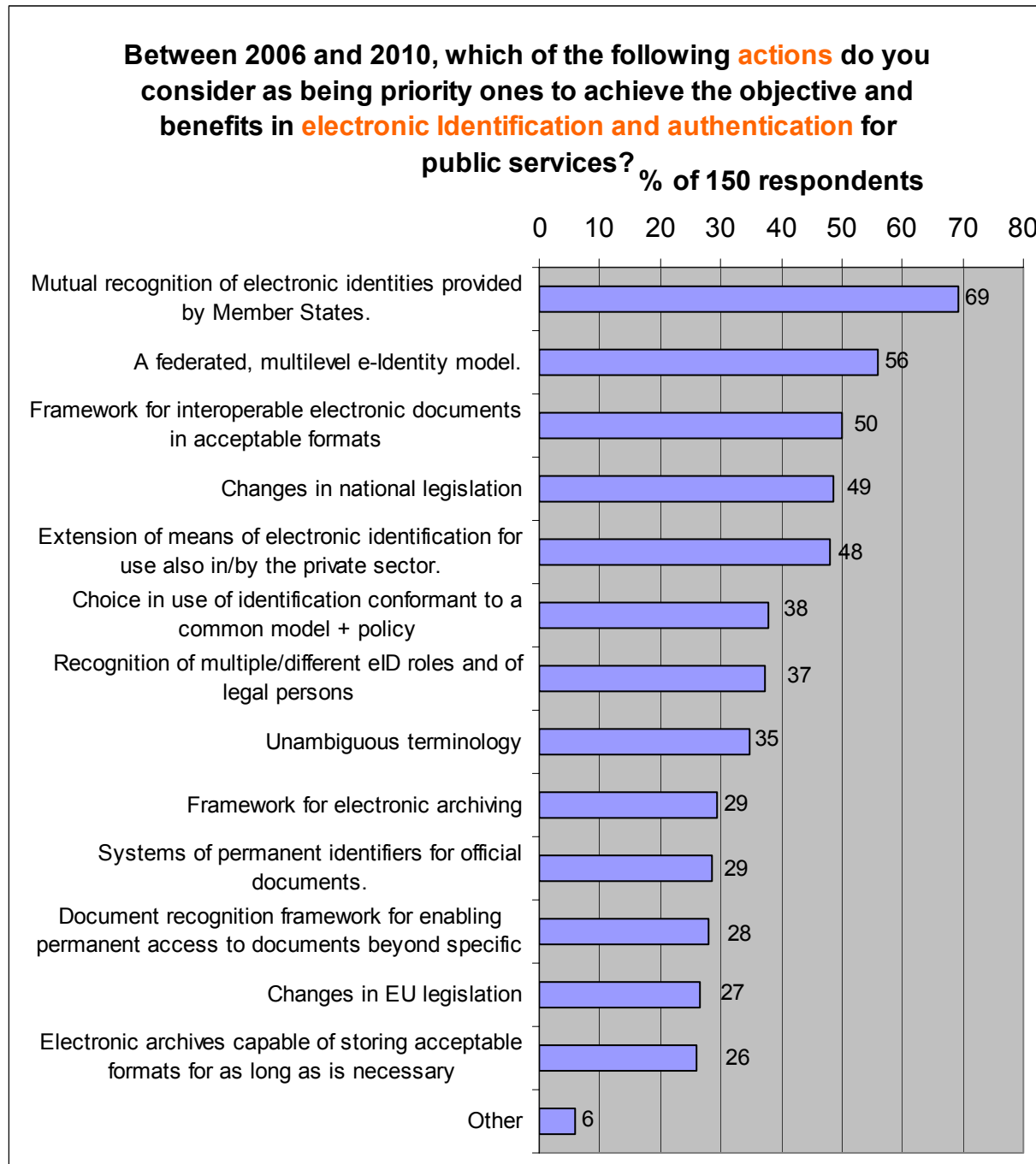


8.1 Special questions on electronic identification and authentication

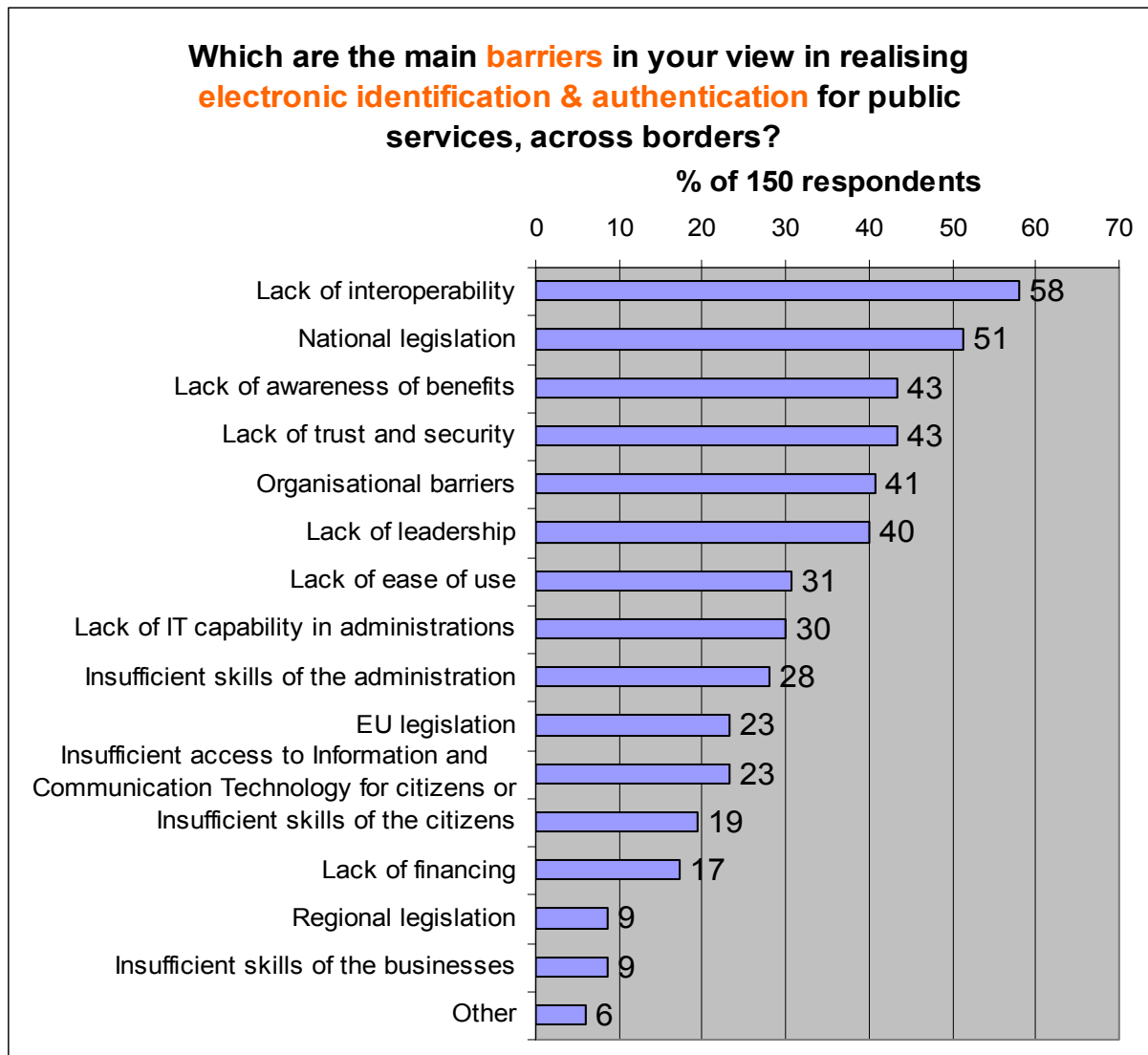
As regards electronic identification and authentication, rather than preferring a single European scheme, most of the respondents think, that the use of the national electronic identification schemes should be enabled in transactions with other Member States.



Consequently, the action which is considered by most of the respondents is that the mutual recognition of electronic identities should be provided by Member States.



Lacking interoperability was considered as the main barrier in the area of electronic identification and authentication. The second most important barrier was (still) national legislation. It is noteworthy that highly rated barriers are lack of awareness of benefits and lack of trust and security (whether perceived or real).



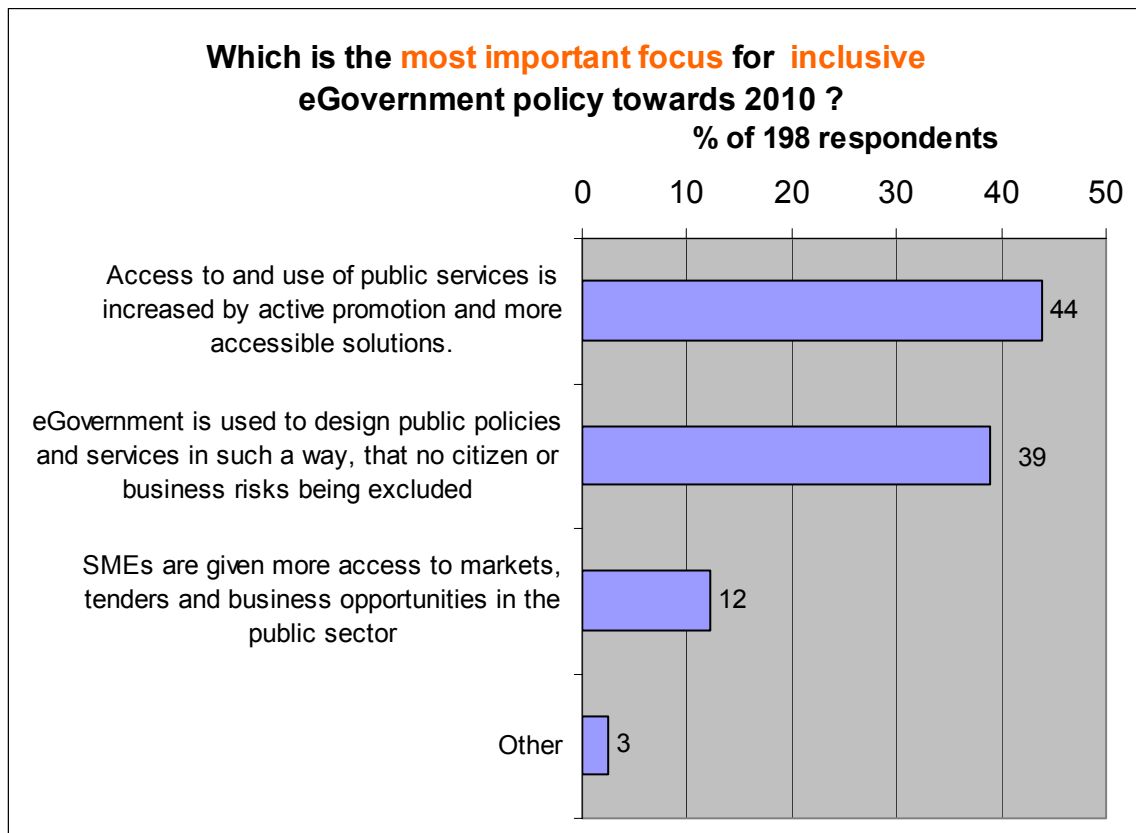
9. Inclusive eGovernment

There are two quite different dimensions to realising inclusion with eGovernment:

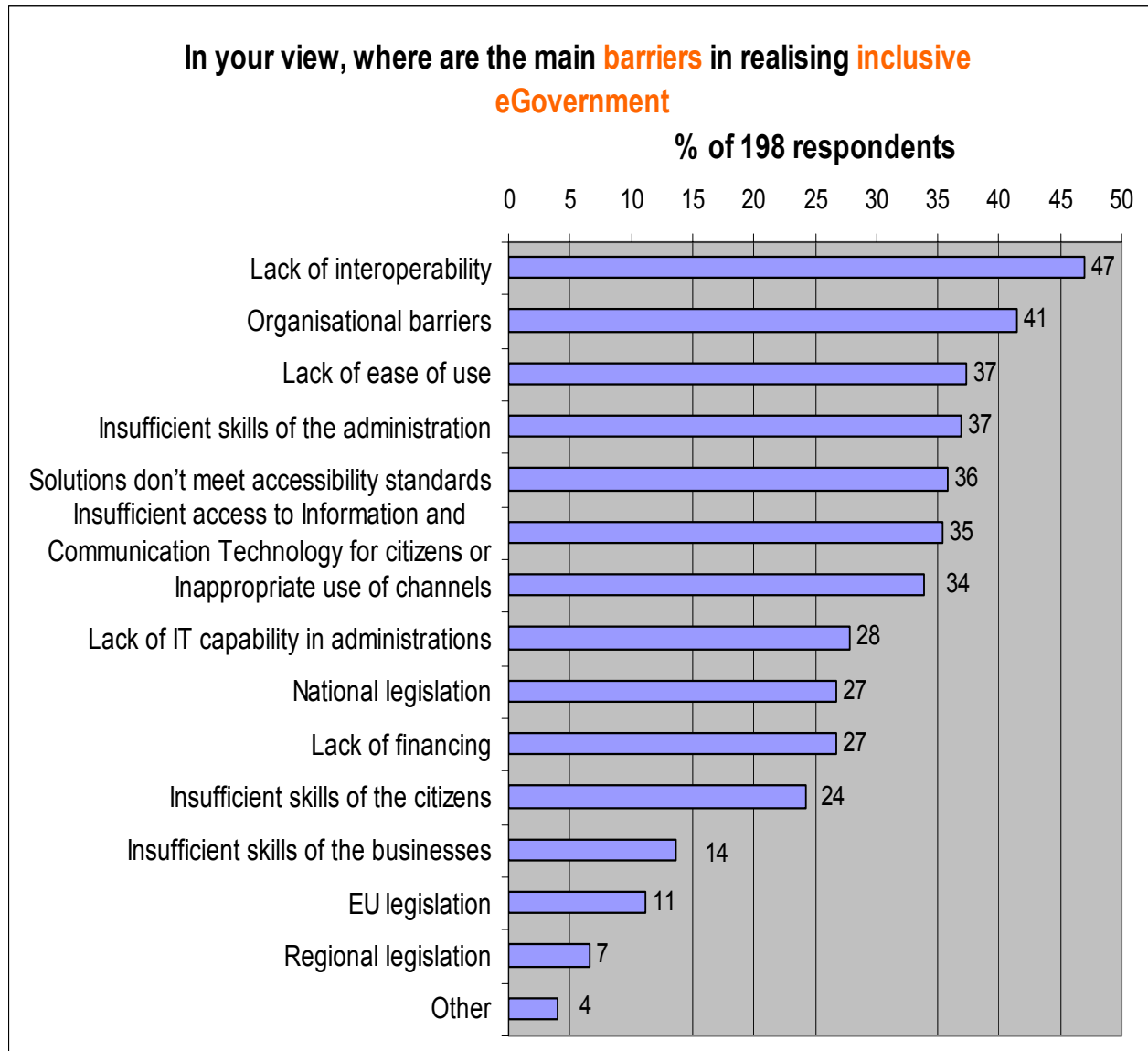
1. Digital inclusion in public services: ensuring that online public services are accessible and usable by all, avoiding digital exclusion through eGovernment;
2. Improving inclusion with the help of ICT in public services: pro-active improvement of inclusion through eGovernment.

The first focuses on the technical accessibility through well designed services using appropriate channels and satisfying critical accessibility standards, as well as education and promotion about the services. The second is more fundamental and potentially transformative for administrations, namely, using eGovernment to shape policies and services to reach out to people and organisations. Both dimensions contribute to the wider societal and economic inclusion agenda and help ensure that no citizen or business is left behind.

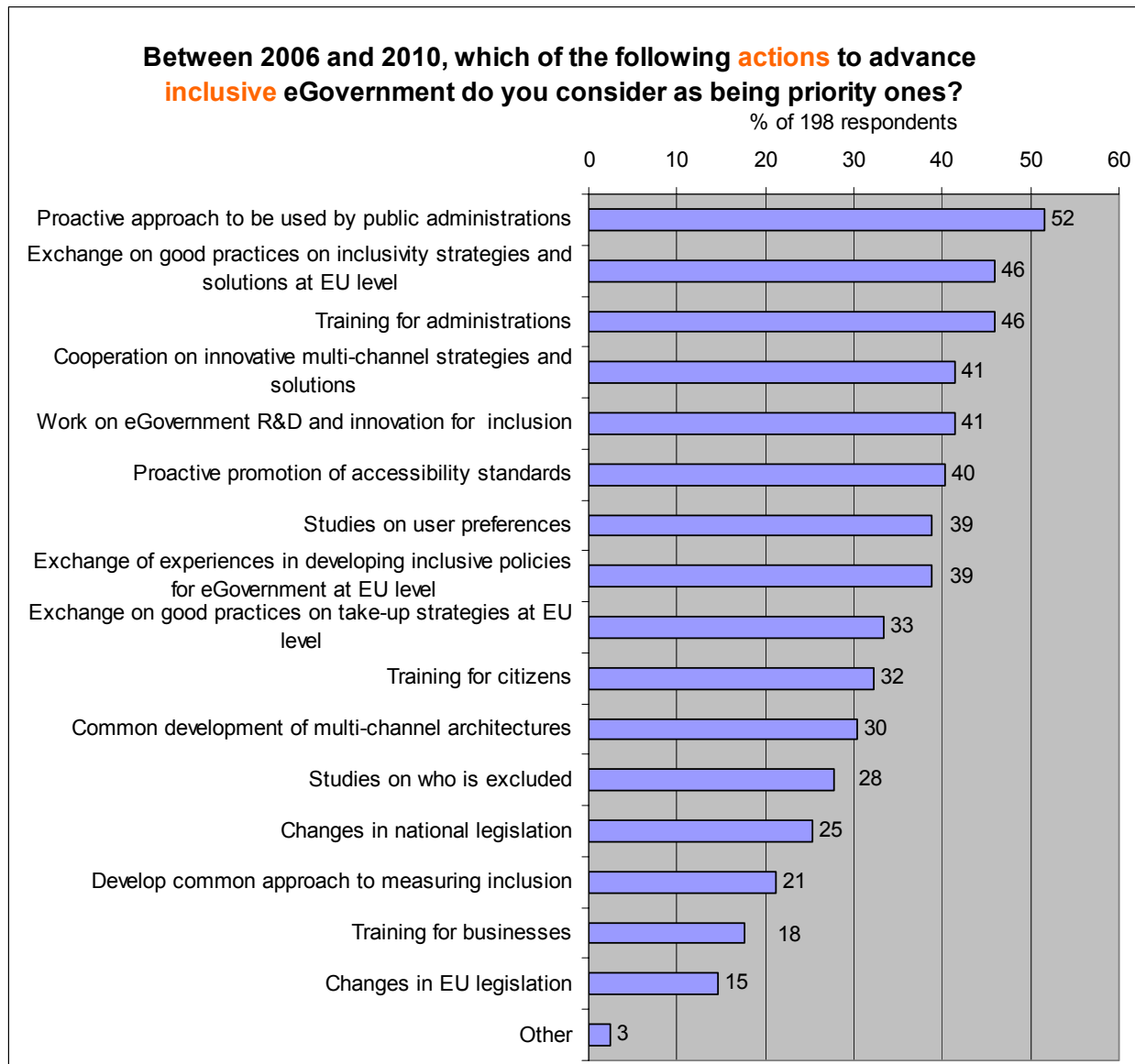
Active promotion and more accessible solutions is the most important focus in the opinion of the respondents, closely followed by inclusive policy design.



Also in this area there is nearly the same set of barriers mentioned as for other areas: lack of interoperability followed by organisational barriers. Interestingly, lack of ease of use and insufficient skills in the administration are also often mentioned.



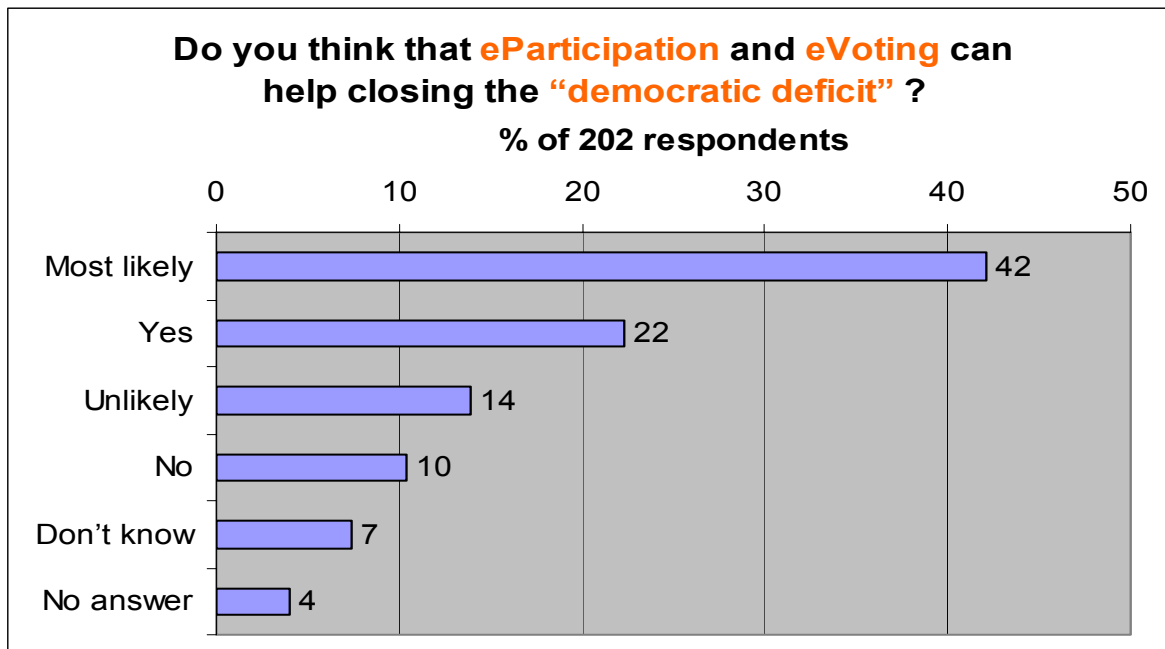
A proactive approach to be used by public administrations is mostly seen as important action, followed by the exchange of good practices and training for administrations.



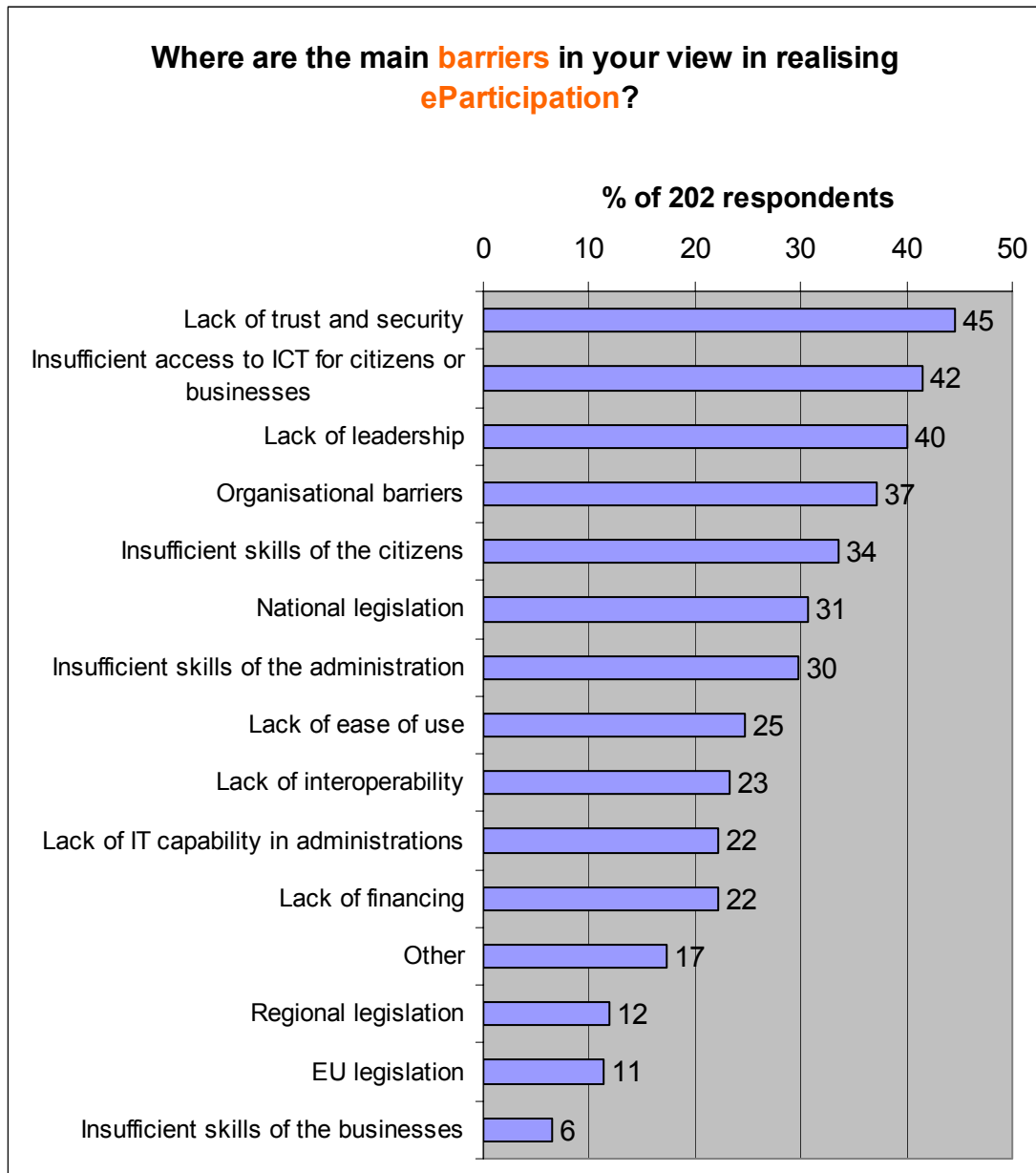
10. Citizen involvement, participation, democracy

eGovernment in Europe gives the unique possibility to make it possible for a population of some 450 million citizens to be involved in the democratic processes. This not just via e-voting, but also and at least as important, by the daily possibility to monitor and contribute to policy and decision making at all levels (local, national, European) i.e. eParticipation.

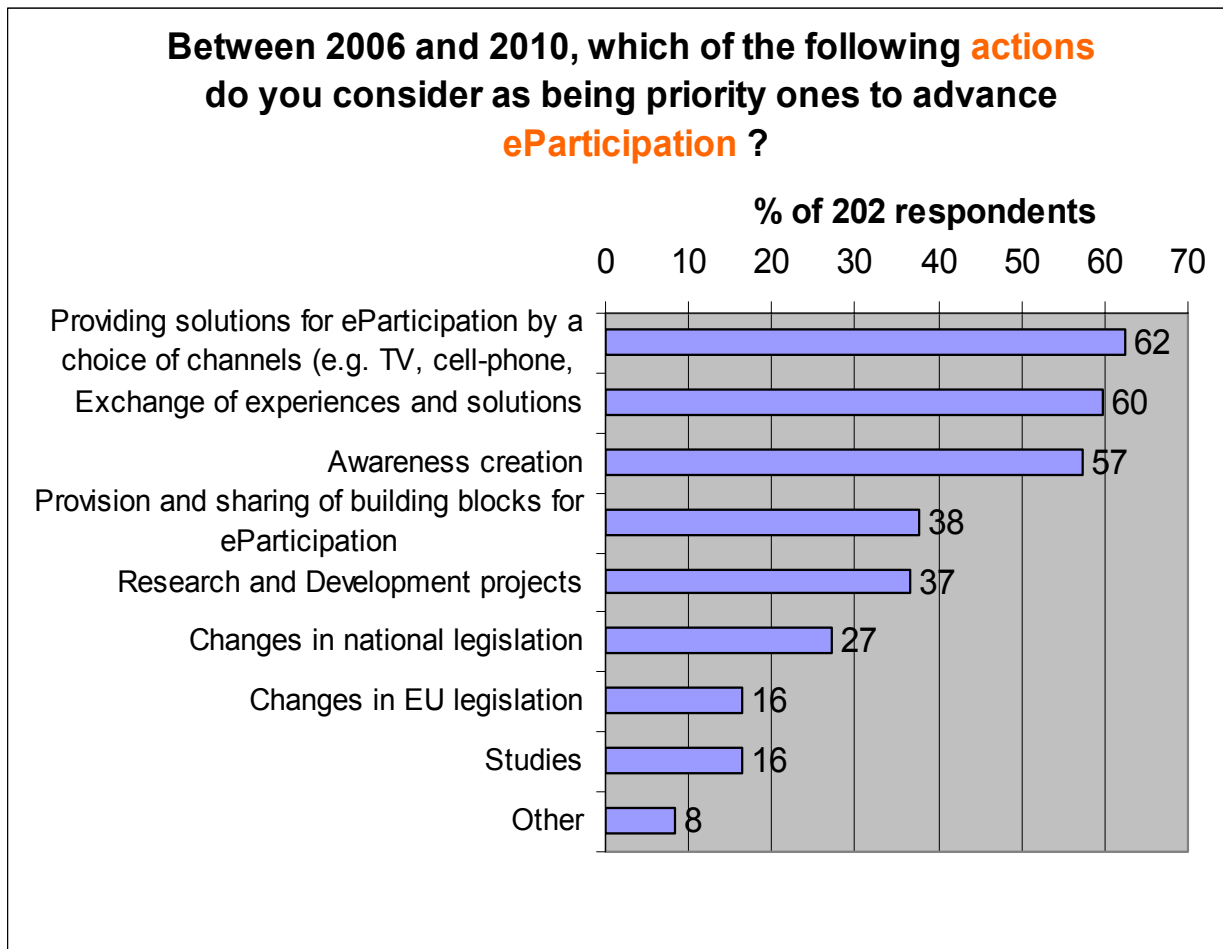
Respondents are optimistic about eDemocracy: 64% of the respondents expect, that the democratic deficit can be closed by eParticipation and eVoting.



The most frequently mentioned barriers to eParticipation (distinct from eVoting) were lack of trust and security, followed by insufficient access and lack of leadership. Again, legislation at EU level is among the least frequently mentioned barriers.



Remarkably, after multi-channel solutions and exchange of experiences, awareness creation is mentioned by 57% of the respondents.



11. Common observations

In nearly all of the sections (apart from citizen involvement), lack of interoperability and organisational barriers were seen most frequently as barriers in eGovernment. Legislation issues at EU and regional level were generally among the least mentioned barriers, Recommended actions often include exchange of experiences/good practices/solutions, and innovation/project support, but probably depending on the maturity of the area other actions come into play as well such as a proactive provision of solutions by administrations and awareness creation.

12. Additional comments to questions, sections and questionnaire

Apart from ticking specific boxes to choose among different answer-possibilities, respondents had also the choice to answer in free text. This possibility was given in different specific questions e.g. “Please specify 'other' high impact services”, in different sections as feedback to the whole section e.g. “Any other suggestions on efficient & effective Government?” as well as to the whole questionnaire “Any overall comment to the questionnaire?”. The available space in the questionnaire was limited, but the respondents had also the possibility to give further extensive comments per e-mail.

Overall there were very interesting additional contributions, which have been considered in the context of the eGovernment Action Plan. It would lead too far to mention all contributions in this report and any selection of specific ones would be an overemphasising and unfair to the others. The Commission services encourage interested parties to continue contributing to eGovernment policy at EU level and the eGovernment Action Plan. Please refer for this purpose to the eGovernment website: http://europa.eu.int/egovernment_research.

Thank you very much indeed for your valuable contributions.

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ICT for Citizens and Business Directorate
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