



CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS CROSS-BORDER TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

2018

Technical Report

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E-mail: JUST-03@ec.europa.eu

*European Commission
B-1000 Brussels*

Consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer protection 2018

Technical Report

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1. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

This section details the methodology implemented for the survey, from the survey design to the data collection.

1.1. Coordination

Snezha Kazakova, the Contract Project Manager, assigned 3 key roles within the central coordination team to ensure ease and efficiency in communications and coordination throughout the execution of the survey on consumers' attitudes towards cross-border trade and consumer-related issues 2018. As Deputy Project Manager, Simon Quaschnig had key roles in the overall management of the project, being the main point of contact with the Contracting Authority as well as ensuring a smooth project flow within GfK SSR and its network. Nancy Heremans took up a leading role in the coordination of the national teams. Any quality concerns were discussed internally with Kim De Cuyper, the assigned Quality Manager.



1.2. Target population

The target population includes all people aged 18 and above, resident in the country surveyed and having sufficient command of (one of) the respective national language(s) to answer the questionnaire. In addition, only people living in private households are interviewed, excluding prisoners, residents of retirement homes, etc. which are difficult to contact in a telephone survey.

Sample sizes were set at 1000 consumers per country in most of the EU countries and Norway. In Luxembourg, Cyprus, Malta and Iceland, the target was 500 consumers per country. No quota was set for socio-demographic variables, but the overall sample intake was monitored daily, to follow up on the overall composition of the sample on gender, age, region and the possession of a mobile and/or a fixed phone in accordance with the sampling approach adopted.

1.3. Interviewing method

Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) was used as the preferred survey method because of the high overall telephone penetration in the EU28 countries, Iceland and Norway ensured the representativeness of the results. Interviewers conducted the survey at national level using a central programme recording directly all survey answers and storing them in one location.

1.4. Languages of interviewing

Interviews were conducted in 28 languages: the 24 official European Union languages, Luxembourgish, Russian, Icelandic and Norwegian.

Language	Country
Bulgarian	Bulgaria
Croatian	Croatia
Czech	Czech Republic
Danish	Denmark
Dutch	Belgium
	Netherlands
English	Ireland
	Malta
	United Kingdom
Estonian	Estonia
Finnish	Finland
French	Belgium
	France
	Luxembourg
German	Germany
	Austria
	Luxembourg
Greek	Greek
	Cyprus
Hungarian	Hungary
Icelandic	Iceland
Irish	Ireland
Italian	Italy
Latvian	Latvia
Lithuanian	Lithuania
Luxembourgish	Luxembourg
Maltese	Malta
Norwegian	Norway
Polish	Poland
Portuguese	Portugal
Romanian	Romania
Russian	Estonia
	Latvia
Slovak	Slovakia
Slovene	Slovenia
Spanish	Spain
Swedish	Sweden
	Finland

1.5. Sampling frames, sample sizes and sampling design

The sampling approach was identical to the one used for the Consumer Survey conducted in 2016 and the Market Monitoring Survey conducted in 2017. The survey took place in the EU28 Member States as well as Iceland and Norway. The target population includes all

people aged 18 and above, resident in the country surveyed and having sufficient command of (one of) the respective national language(s) to answer the questionnaire. In addition, we only select persons "living in private households", excluding prisoners, as well as residents of retirement homes, etc. who are difficult to contact in a telephone survey.

In every country, a random sample representative of the national population aged 18 or over was drawn, i.e. each person belonging to the target universe had a chance to participate in the survey. For some countries, suitable telephone number register(s) are available for both fixed and mobile lines, whilst for other countries only register(s) for either fixed or mobile lines can be used or even no register exists at all. In case no register was available, RDD¹-numbers were generated. The following variables for stratification were used: gender, age, region and level of urbanisation, as far as the information was available in the sample frame(s).

A dual sampling frame was introduced:

- **Mobile sample:** potential respondents within a given country that can be reached via a mobile line (regardless of whether they can also be reached via a fixed line). As such, this sample includes respondents from both the mobile only and mixed population.

$$\% \text{ Mobile sample} = \frac{\text{Proportion of mobile lines}}{\text{Total population of phone numbers}} = \frac{M + MF}{(M + MF) + (F + MF)}$$

- **Fixed sample:** potential respondents within a given country that can be reached via a fixed line (regardless of whether they can also be reached via mobile line). As such, this sample includes respondents from both the fixed line only and mixed population.

$$\% \text{ Fixed line sample} = \frac{\text{Proportion of fixed lines}}{\text{Total population of phone numbers}} = \frac{F + MF}{(M + MF) + (F + MF)}$$

F = fixed only; M = mobile only; and MF = mobile and fixed

For example, Germany was set to have the following proportions in the study: 83% mixed, 9% fixed only, 8% mobile only. Therefore the local teams composed a gross sample of 50% fixed numbers, defined as: $((83\%+9\%)/(83\%+9\%)+(83\%+8\%))$ and 50% mobile numbers $((83\%+8\%)/(83\%+9\%)+(83\%+8\%))$.

To further guarantee the representativeness of the sample, the time of calling was predominantly weekday evenings, with interviewing before only authorised upon specific request with a motivated rationale. In case of interviews conducted during the weekend or appointments set up upon respondent request, calls could take place all day long. Also, the birthday rule question was included for landlines to ensure a random selection procedure and minimise potential bias related to the person who would answer the call.

No quota was set for socio-demographic variables such as gender or age. However, during fieldwork the overall sample intake was monitored daily, to follow up on the overall composition of the sample on gender, age, region and the possession of a mobile and/or a fixed phone in accordance with the sampling approach adopted.

¹ Random Digit Dialling. With RDD, software is used to generate new telephone numbers, starting from a list of starting numbers. New telephone numbers are created and used by adding and subtracting digits in the existing telephone number. The composition of the starting number is important here for obtaining sufficient geographical spread.

1.6. Questionnaire translation and scripting

Because the core questionnaire remained the same compared to the 2016 wave, no additional questionnaire development and translations were needed. The Consumer Survey 2016 questionnaire has been translated and reviewed by professional translators. The translation has also been reviewed by national experts.

The unchanged master questionnaire was approved by the Contracting Authority during the kick-off meeting. All routings and changes were tested by the central coordination team. After this check, each national agency tested the script entirely in their respective languages.

1.7. Pilot

Following approval of the translated scripts, the scripted questionnaire was piloted in all participating fieldwork countries by the members of the GfK SSR Network. The pilot took place between 13 and 19 March 2016. The aim of this pilot was to test that the survey questionnaire, translation and script are all appropriate and correct, before the survey is run on a full scale. Since the same questionnaire has already been piloted in the previous wave of the Consumer Survey (i.e. Consumer Survey 2016) and thorough tests of the translations and script have been conducted, no substantial problems were expected. However, given that the surveys are conducted with a 2-year interval and a new supplier was appointed for the Baltic countries (Norstat), a pilot was seen as a valuable step for the preparation before the survey is run on a full scale.

This pilot survey consisted of at least **30 interviews per country**, using the CATI script that will be used in the fully launched survey. This way, the fieldwork tools could be fully tested in a 'live' environment. In order to ensure that the survey tools were tested with a range of respondent types per country, we aimed for a spread of respondents according to age, gender and education level. Table 2 below outlines the targets that were set per country in the piloting phase. Since the survey is based on the natural fall-out principle, no exact quotas can be set.

Table 1. Pilot study quotas

Criterion	Targets per country
Gender	Min. 10 male
	Min. 10 female
Age	Min. 7 aged 18-34
	Min. 7 aged 35-54
	Min. 7 aged 55+
Level of Education	Min. 7 low level
	Min. 7 medium level
	Min. 7 high level

Overall, the pilot surveys were conducted successfully, and no issues were indicated regarding the script or questionnaire. GfK SSR also checked the data and contact data for inconsistencies, such as irregular calling hours and distribution across mobile and fixed numbers. Two small issues at agency-level were detected. In Iceland, all calls were done on the *mobile sample* (100% mobile), while in Malta only *fixed sample* (100% fixed) were called. This was caused by a wrong dialler programming but has been fixed immediately after the pilot test. It is important to note that in Finland generally a very low percentage of fixed number completes is expected.

Since no further issues were observed, which could interfere with the data quality during field, GfK SSR fully launched the main stage of fieldwork in all participating countries as originally planned (except for Germany, France, Greece and Luxembourg; see section 3.1). As proposed, the pilot data of all countries for which no issues were detected were included in the main sample. The interviews were conducted without boosting certain questions. Exceptions were Iceland and Malta, for the reasons outlined above. In addition, the interviews in Cyprus were excluded due to very short interview times and an additional briefing was performed to guarantee a qualitative fieldwork.

The tables below present the completed interviews per country, age group and education level. The pilot targets were not reached for all gender (only in Iceland), age and education subgroups in all countries. In particular, respondents in the youngest age group and those with low education were problematic to reach in some countries.

Table 2. Number of pilot interviews per country

Country	Number of completed interviews
Belgium	31
Denmark	30
Germany	32
Greece	31
Spain	30
Finland	30
France	30
Ireland	32
Italy	30
Luxembourg	30
Netherlands	32
Austria	34
Portugal	31
Sweden	30
United Kingdom	33
Bulgaria	41
Cyprus	31
Czech Republic	31
Estonia	30
Hungary	33
Latvia	30
Lithuania	31
Malta	36
Poland	30
Romania	38
Slovakia	32
Slovenia	32
Iceland	30
Croatia	30
Norway	30
Total	951

Table 3. Number of pilot interviews per country by gender and age groups

	Gender		Age		
	Male	Female	18-34 years	35-54 years	55+ years
Belgium	21	10	7	15	9
Denmark	11	19	6	12	12
Germany	16	16	4	18	10
Greece	19	12	6	18	7
Spain	16	14	6	13	11
Finland	18	12	5	10	15
France	15	15	8	7	15
Ireland	19	13	13	11	8
Italy	16	14	4	13	13
Luxembourg	12	18	8	16	6
Netherlands	18	14	5	13	14
Austria	17	17	10	16	8
Portugal	15	16	5	11	15
Sweden	14	16	6	4	20
United Kingdom	12	21	10	17	6
Bulgaria	18	23	4	18	19
Cyprus	14	17	14	8	9
Czech Republic	13	18	3	7	21
Estonia	12	18	4	9	17
Hungary	17	16	8	10	15
Latvia	16	14	9	8	13
Lithuania	20	11	10	13	8
Malta	12	24	5	8	23
Poland	14	16	7	10	13
Romania	14	24	9	18	11
Slovakia	11	21	3	13	16
Slovenia	19	13	7	8	17
Iceland	28	2	15	15	0
Croatia	13	17	8	5	17
Norway	16	14	7	8	15
Total	476	475	216	352	383

Table 4. Number of pilot interviews per country by education level groups

	Education level		
	Low (ISCED 0-2)	Medium (ISCED 3-4)	High (ISCED 5-8)
Belgium	3	16	10
Denmark	3	16	11
Germany	3	19	10
Greece	1	9	19
Spain	6	13	11
Finland	8	13	9
France	1	11	17
Ireland	1	23	7
Italy	5	12	13
Luxembourg	3	18	9
Netherlands	5	11	14
Austria	4	25	5
Portugal	14	10	7
Sweden	5	14	11
United Kingdom	1	21	11
Bulgaria	2	18	21
Cyprus	2	14	15
Czech Republic	1	21	9
Estonia	0	21	9
Hungary	1	20	12
Latvia	0	18	12
Lithuania	1	9	20
Malta	23	5	7
Poland	0	21	9
Romania	9	20	9
Slovakia	0	20	12
Slovenia	1	18	13
Iceland	7	13	10
Croatia	5	15	10
Norway	2	12	16
Total	117	476	348

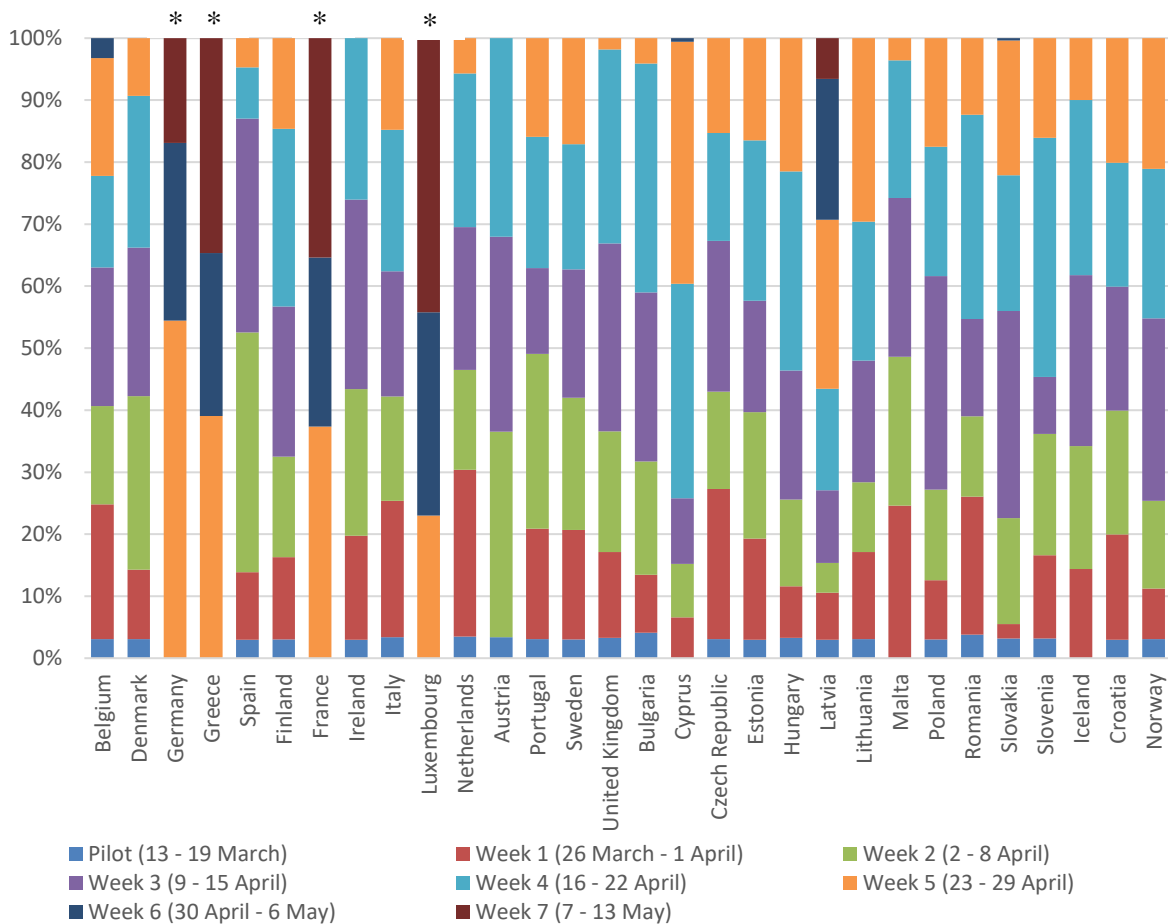
1.8. Fieldwork

Compared to the previous wave of the Consumer Survey in 2016, a fieldwork period of 5 weeks (instead of 4 weeks) was planned to account for the Easter and Orthodox Easter² holidays. The main fieldwork launched as initially outlined in the Inception Report on 26 March 2018 and continued without interruption until 30 April 2018. In Latvia, fieldwork took somewhat longer than expected and was finished on 8 May. In Germany, France, Greece and Luxembourg, the fieldwork started only on 23 April 2018, after approval of the new suppliers, and was finished by 11 May 2018.

Figure 1 presents an overview of the proportion of completed interviews (of the total target) per week per country, while Figure 2 provides an overview of the number of completed interviews per day during the main fieldwork period. In Table 5, the end date of the fieldwork in each country is presented.

Even though field providers in all countries were thoroughly briefed that no interviewing should take place on Sundays, we noticed two instances where this was done (Netherlands on 15/04; Cyprus on 29/4), resulting in respectively 30 and 47 interviews that day. The issue was immediately picked up by our field coordinators and did not occur again for the rest of the field.

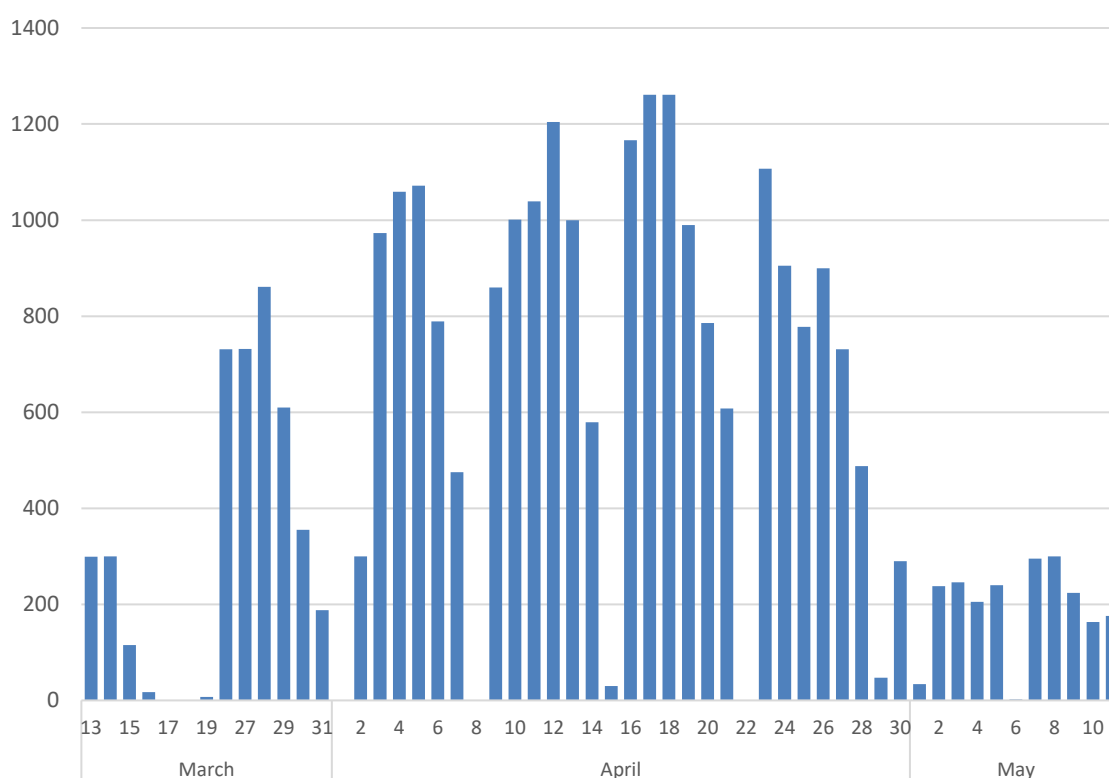
Figure 1. Proportion of completed interviews per week



Note: * Countries with a late fieldwork

² Applicable for Poland, Romania, Cyprus and Greece

Figure 2. Number of completed interviews per day (overall sample)



In all 30 countries a total of 28,037 interviews were realised of which 26,532 were completed within the EU28 and 25,532 in the EU27 (without the UK). Detailed information about the number of interviews achieved and the fieldwork end date per country is shown in the table below.

Table 5. Number of market interviews and fieldwork dates per country

Country	# interviews	Population 18+	Fieldwork end
Belgium	1,003	9,045,263	30 April 2018
Denmark	1,001	4,579,404	28 April 2018
Germany	1,006	69,036,182	08 May 2018
Greece	1,001	8,882,705	11 May 2018
Spain	1,001	38,158,734	26 April 2018
Finland	1,000	4,430,577	28 April 2018
France	1,001	52,156,972	11 May 2018
Ireland	1,002	3,589,713	21 April 2018
Italy	1,000	50,661,105	28 April 2018
Luxembourg	500	474,912	11 May 2018
Netherlands	1,000	13,675,184	24 April 2018
Austria	1,002	7,246,380	21 April 2018
Portugal	1,000	8,525,158	27 April 2018
Sweden	1,000	7,916,765	28 April 2018
United Kingdom	1,000	51,883,867	23 April 2018
Bulgaria	1,002	5,907,151	23 April 2018
Cyprus	500	686,714	30 April 2018
Czech Republic	1,000	8,657,174	27 April 2018
Estonia	1,001	1,065,730	27 April 2018
Hungary	1,000	8,082,094	27 April 2018
Latvia	1,004	1,593,437	08 May 2018
Lithuania	1,004	2,337,228	28 April 2018

Malta	500	381,81	23 April 2018
Poland	1,000	31,121,719	27 April 2018
Romania	1,002	15,940,596	26 April 2018
Slovakia	1,000	4,431,829	30 April 2018
Slovenia	1,001	1,701,421	26 April 2018
Croatia	1,001	3,422,450	28 April 2018
Iceland	500	258,526	27 April 2018
Norway	1,005	4,126,321	27 April 2018
EU28	26,532	415,592,274	
EU27 (without UK)	25,532	363,708,407	
TOTAL	28,037	419,977,121	

1.9. Response rate improvement measures

Consistent with what has been done for the 2016 wave of the Consumer Survey, a range of measures helped us to minimise non-response for the survey:

- The pilot and the implementation of the pilot feedback further ensured the quality of the questionnaire, both in terms of content and technical aspects. The pilot also helped to prepare the fieldwork agencies and flag any issues in an early stage.
- In-depth briefing sessions were organised to brief the fieldwork managers of all local agencies. These briefings included detailed information about specific questions in the survey that required special attention.
- Interviewers all followed thorough briefings on the survey in addition to generic interviewer trainings and were instructed on how to minimise the non-response rate.

2. ANALYTICAL METHODOLOGY

This section presents the methodology used for the data processing, weighting and estimation of the standard errors.

2.1. Data cleaning, processing and validation

All data processing and analyses were centralised at GfK SSR in order to ensure the quality of the data and analyses. The need for data editing was minimised by the preliminary measures implemented during the fieldwork, such as automatic controls on the responses and warnings on the screen for the interviewers to prevent incorrect answers being stored.

The main stage of the data cleaning process consists of thorough quality controls on the data, including consistency and missing answers checks. Following the data cleaning stage, the raw data were processed for the analysis and reporting stages. The specific indicators and all breaks were computed in advance in order to produce the various data files required for the analysis.

2.2. Weighting

The weighting process consists of the following two steps:

- Post-stratification weight, taking into account age, gender, phone type and design weight
- Factor representing the population distribution across countries

A post-stratification and design weight approach was applied, incorporating the “telephone ownership” dimension identical to the weighting approach used for the Market Monitoring Survey in 2017.

2.3. Trend data

GfK SSR has access to the trend results, more specifically the micro-data and data tables provided by the Contracting Authority. GfK SSR created a single SPSS file, containing all data from the previous waves and the 2018 data. This single SPSS file will serve as a single basis for all analyses conducted as it will allow full control over the data and will increase the efficiency with which GfK SSR is able to respond to specific requests from the Contracting Authority regarding trend data.

There are some noticeable differences between the waves, which need to be considered when calculating trends. While the results for the 2018 data are based on a weighting including gender, age and phone ownership (see discussion below), the 2016 weighting was only based on age and gender. In addition, while both the Consumer Survey 2016 and 2018 have been conducted with a target population of 18+ years, the Consumer Surveys 2014 and earlier are based on a sample of 15+ years.

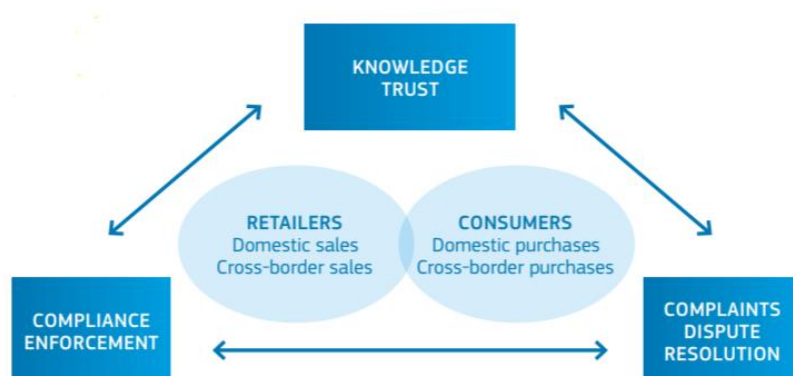
When comparing years with different approaches (in terms of weighting or target group), the used data definition will be based on the common denominator between both years. For example, because weighting on phone ownership was not possible for the 2016 wave, we will weight the 2018 data only on age, gender and population for comparisons with the 2016 data (i.e. using the definition of the prior wave). In contrast, since 2016, the respondents were at least 18 years old, while in the years before, respondents of 15+ years were included. For comparisons between 2016 and 2014, the 2014 has been reweighted based on age and gender distributions to include only the responses of 18+ respondents (i.e. using the definition of the later wave). When comparing 2014 data to previous waves, the original weight will be used based on the 15+ population distribution. The difference in sampling will be clearly communicated when trend results are reported. In summary, the following weighting procedures will be used to calculate the results presented in the final report, additional analyses, and country profiles:

- **2018 results:** Population, gender & age weighting (18+), phone ownership weighting
- **2018-2016 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (18+)
- **2016-2014 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (18+)
- **2014-2012 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (15+)
- **2012-2011 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (15+)
- **2011-2010 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (15+)
- **2010-2009 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (15+)
- **2009-2008 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (15+)
- **2008-2006 trend comparisons:** Population, gender & age weighting (15+)

2.4. Computation of derived indicators

As the questionnaire of the Consumer Survey has remained identical to the 2016 wave, the same derived indicators (or 'composite indicators') were computed than in 2016. As such, the derived indicators are in accordance with the results presented in the Consumer Conditions Scoreboard 2017 and will service as the core variables of interest in the Final Report structure. In summary, they are based on three pillars used in the Scoreboard: **Knowledge and Trust**, **Compliance and Enforcement**, and **Complaints and Dispute Resolution**.

Figure 3. Framework for measuring consumer conditions (*Source: Consumer Scoreboard 2017³*)



GfK has computed the composite indicators in accordance with the guidelines supplied and provided the syntax outlining the computations to the Contracting Authority. No issues were faced during the computations.

³ European Commission, Consumer conditions scoreboard 2017: consumers at the helm in the single market; available via: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/consumer-conditions-scoreboard-consumers-home-single-market-2017-edition_en

2.5. Estimation of standard errors and statistical significance

The most common formula for the calculation of the standard error was applied: the standard deviation divided by the square root of the sample size (SD/\sqrt{n}). The same formula was used for the Consumer Survey 2016 and the Market Monitoring Survey 2017.

Significance testing will be done by using the same formulas as for the Consumer Survey 2016/Market Monitoring Survey 2017: The formula for proportions/percentages is based on the percentages ($p1$ and $p2$) and sample sizes ($n1$ and $n2$), whilst the formula for means is based on the means ($m1$ and $m2$), sample sizes ($n1$ and $n2$) and standard deviations ($std1$ and $std2$). The correct formula will be selected as needed.

$$t = \frac{p1 - p2}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{p1*(1-p1)}{n1} + \frac{p2*(1-p2)}{n2} \right]}} \quad t = \frac{m1 - m2}{\sqrt{\left[\frac{std1^2}{n1} + \frac{std2^2}{n2} \right]}}$$

3. RESPONSE RATES

The following distinctions were made regarding the response information:

- Eligible units (belonging to the target population)
 - Full responses
 - Only partial responses
 - Non-response
- Non-responding units with unknown eligibility
- Non-eligible units (not belonging to the target population)

Response rates were then computed using the by AAPOR⁴ defined calculations:

- $RR1 = \frac{I}{(I+P)+(R+NC+O)+(UH+UO)}$
- $RR1 = \frac{(I+P)}{(I+P)+(R+NC+O)+(UH+UO)}$
- $RR3 = \frac{I}{(I+P)+(R+NC+O)+e(UH+UO)}$
- $RR4 = \frac{(I+P)}{(I+P)+(R+NC+O)+e(UH+UO)}$

RR = Response rate; I = Complete interview; P = Partial interview; R = Refusal and break-off; NC = Non-contact; UH = Unknown if household/occupied housing unit; UO = Unknown, other

In RR3 and RR4, an estimate e is introduced, which is the estimated proportion of cases of unknown eligibility that are eligible⁵. The default estimate was used in the calculated response rates. This estimate is based on the proportion of eligible respondents among all contacts in the sample for which a status was obtained.

Whereas only completed contacts are considered as interviews in RR1 and RR3, RR2 and RR4 also count partial interviews in the numerator.

⁴ American Association for Public Opinion Research

⁵ AAPOR Response Rate Calculator in Excel, accessible via <http://www.aapor.org/AAPORKentico/Education-Resources/For-Researchers/Poll-Survey-FAQ/Response-Rates-An-Overview.aspx>

The three response rates per country are listed in the table below.

Country	Response rate			
	RR1	RR2	RR3	RR4
Belgium	6%	6%	5%	6%
Bulgaria	19%	19%	20%	25%
Czech Republic	4%	8%	3%	8%
Denmark	13%	15%	16%	15%
Germany	1%	1%	1%	2%
Estonia	15%	17%	45%	17%
Ireland	5%	5%	4%	6%
Greece	5%	5%	4%	13%
Spain	4%	4%	4%	4%
France	4%	4%	3%	4%
Croatia	5%	6%	52%	6%
Italy	5%	6%	4%	6%
Cyprus	16%	16%	16%	17%
Latvia	9%	11%	37%	11%
Lithuania	7%	9%	35%	9%
Luxembourg	1%	1%	1%	7%
Hungary	17%	17%	21%	18%
Malta	23%	24%	31%	27%
Netherlands	5%	5%	4%	6%
Austria	1%	1%	1%	2%
Poland	1%	2%	1%	2%
Portugal	6%	7%	6%	13%
Romania	4%	5%	5%	5%
Slovenia	4%	4%	3%	4%
Slovakia	15%	19%	42%	19%
Finland	13%	13%	15%	14%
Sweden	9%	10%	12%	10%
Iceland	32%	42%	37%	42%
Norway	5%	6%	9%	7%
United Kingdom	3%	3%	2%	3%

Similar to the previous wave of the Consumer Survey, the high response rates are observed in Iceland and Malta, but also Bulgaria, Hungary and Cyprus show relatively high response rates. In contrast, Austria, Luxembourg, Poland and the United Kingdom recorded the lowest response rates.

By estimating the amount of eligible contacts amongst those with unknown eligibility, as done in RR3 and RR4, response rates increase in some countries. Looking at RR3, response rates increase especially in Estonia, Croatia, Latvia, Malta and Slovakia.

Furthermore, RR4 shows that a relatively high proportion of interviews were only partially completed in Bulgaria, Greece and Portugal. Those countries benefit from also including partial interviews in the numerator.

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