



Public Consultation

in the context of a Fitness Check of the EU
legislation with regard to Endocrine Disruptors

Factual Summary Report



EUR 30170 EN

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) is the European Commission's science and knowledge service and provides evidence-based scientific support to the European policymaking process. This report has been produced by the JRC to provide a brief factual overview of the public consultation conducted in context of the Fitness Check of EU legislation pertaining to Endocrine Disruptors. The results and summary presented do not imply a policy position of the European Commission. Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use that might be made of this publication.

Contact information

Name: European Commission, Joint Research Centre (JRC), Chemical Safety and Alternative Methods Unit (F3)

Address: via E. Fermi 2749, I-21027 Ispra (VA), Italy

Email: JRC-F3-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu

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PART 1.
Introduction

Introduction

The European Commission is taking a cross-cutting look at the approach to the assessment and management of endocrine disruptors (EDs) in a broad range of legislation through what is described as a Fitness Check¹. The goal is to analyse the coherence of the different approaches to this topic, identify possible gaps and synergies, and assess their collective impact on human health and the environment.

Public consultation is an essential component of the Fitness Check. It aims at gathering inputs from citizens to ensure that views from all interested parties are considered in the evaluation. This ED Fitness Check includes three consultations, a public consultation (designed from a citizen's perspective) a stakeholder consultation (designed for stakeholders and experts) and a consultation to collect the views of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The aims of this public consultation targeting the **general public** were:

- To assess public concerns and needs with respect to endocrine disruptors in the EU.
- To evaluate to what extent current EU legislation meets the concerns and needs of citizens.
- To identify opportunities for improvement in the way endocrine disruptors are assessed, managed and potential risks communicated.

The consultation was conducted through the European Commission's 'Have your Say' Better Regulation webportal and was open from 16/12/2019 to 09/03/2020.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/2142-Fitness-Check-on-endocrine-disruptors>

This summary report provides a brief factual overview of the replies received, with information on the respondents as well as the number of responses and range of opinions. The replies gathered through the consultation will help the European Commission to understand the views and perceptions of the general public on the issue of endocrine disruptors and will make an important contribution to the Fitness Check of the current legislation. A more detailed analysis of the responses to all three consultations will be published in a synopsis report at the end of the process.

This document should be regarded solely as a summary of the contributions made by respondents to the public consultation on the Fitness Check of the EU legislation on endocrine disruptors. It cannot in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the European Commission or its services.

PART 2.

Who responded to the survey

Respondents

A total of 474 respondents provided an answer, of which 90% are EU citizens, 3% are academic/research institutions and 2% non-governmental organisations.

As regards the origin of the respondents participating to the survey, we received most answers from France (40%), Germany (17%), Spain (14%), Belgium (5%) and Finland (5%).

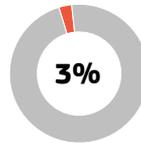
Public consultation on endocrine disruptors



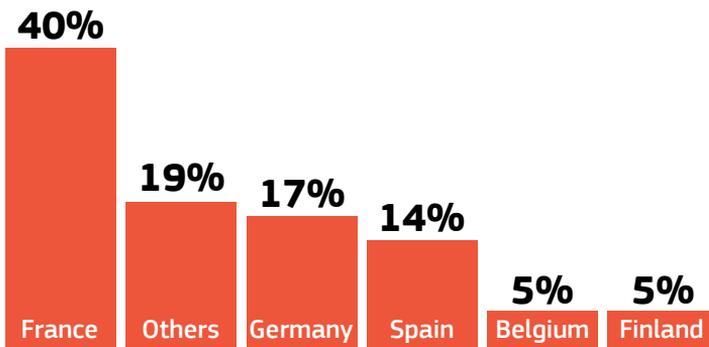
EU citizens



academic/research institutions



non-governmental organisations



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PART 3.

What did the respondents say?

Information on endocrine disruptors

A majority of the respondents consider themselves to be very well informed (14%) or reasonably well informed (49%) about endocrine disruptors, as opposed to feeling poorly informed (31%) or not informed at all (6%).

The main sources of information on endocrine disruptors used by the respondents are specialised scientific sources (246), general news coverage (222), social media (178), education and training sources (131) and other sources (118).

A majority of the respondents feel informed about the decisions made in the EU with regard to endocrine disruptors (11% very well informed; 57% somewhat informed). A minority (21%) do not feel informed, but trust regulators to keep them safe, while 11% replied that they do not know.

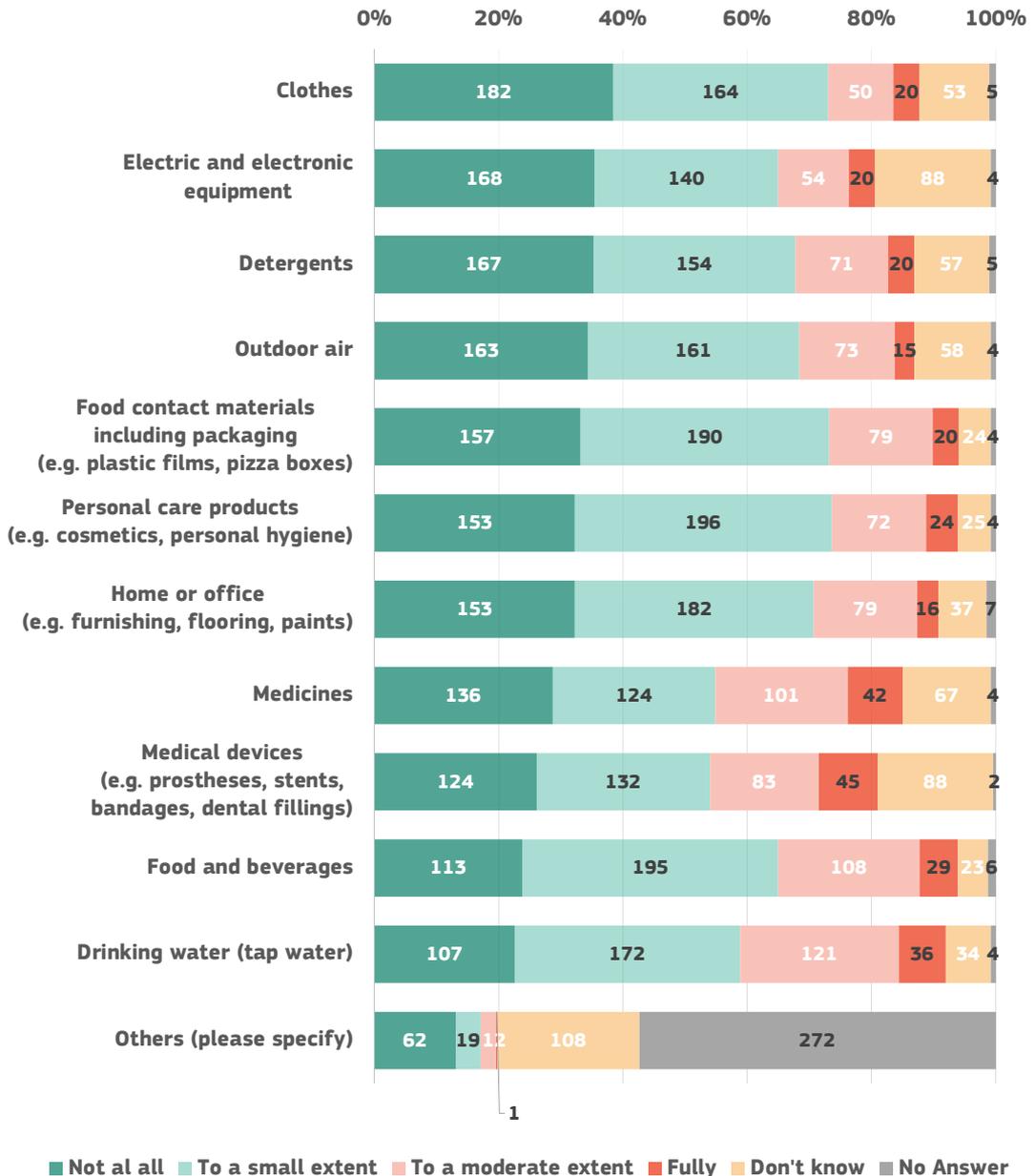
Fifty-four percent of the respondents do not think that the effects on endocrine disruptors on public health and the environment are understood and 38% think the effects are understood to a certain extent as opposed to 5% that think effects are not understood.

Effectiveness of EU laws

As presented in the next figure, the majority of respondents (58% to 73%) considered that EU laws did not protect them at all or only to a small extent from exposure to endocrine disruptors across all of the potential exposure sources listed in the survey. The four exposure sources where respondents consider that EU laws protect them the least are clothing, electric and electronic equipment, detergents and outdoor air.

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IN YOUR OPINION, TO WHICH EXTENT DO EU LAWS PROTECT YOU FROM EXPOSURE TO ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS THROUGH:

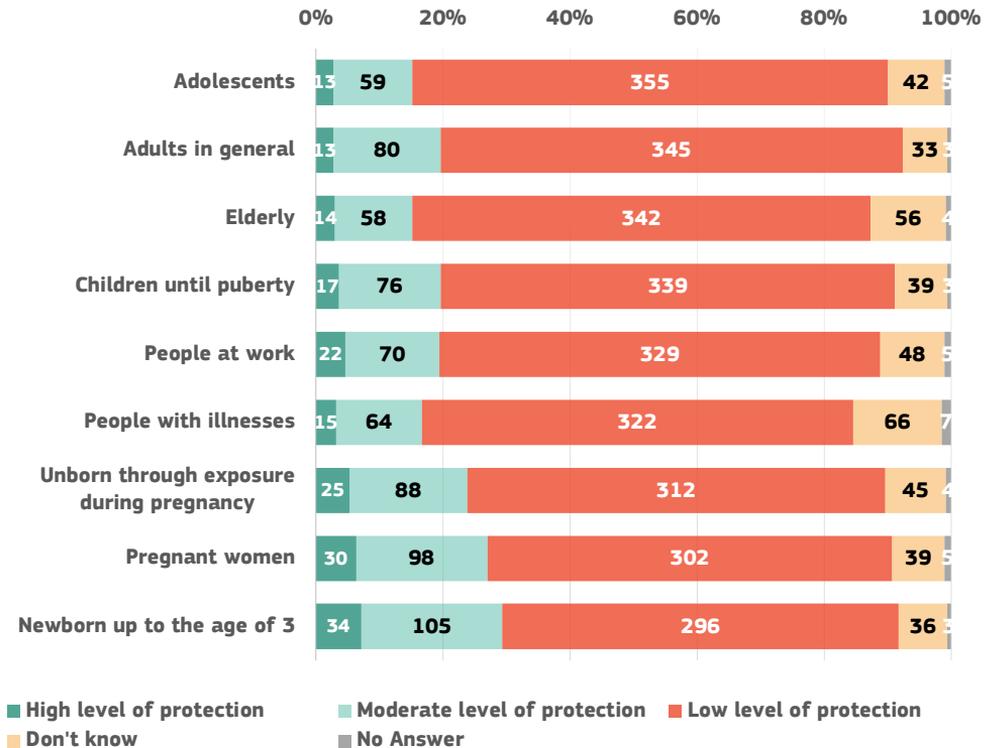


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Sixty-one percent of the respondents consider that they are less protected by EU laws from endocrine disruptors than from other toxic chemicals, such as carcinogenic or mutagenic substances, or substances toxic to reproduction with 20% considering that they are protected to the same extent.

As presented in the figure below, in general, over 60% of respondents consider that EU laws offer a low level of protection for one or more life stages with the highest number of respondents concerned about adolescents (75%) and the lowest numbers concerned about pregnant women, foetuses and newborns (62% to 66%).

THE ENDOCRINE (HORMONAL) SYSTEM CONTROLS A LARGE NUMBER OF PROCESSES IN THE BODY THROUGHOUT LIFE FROM EARLY STAGES SUCH AS EMBRYONIC DEVELOPMENT AND PUBERTY, TO LATER ONES SUCH AS REPRODUCTIVE LIFE AND OLD AGE. CONSIDERING DIFFERENT LIFE STAGES, IN YOUR OPINION HOW WELL DO EU LAWS PROTECT CITIZENS FROM EFFECTS OF ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS?



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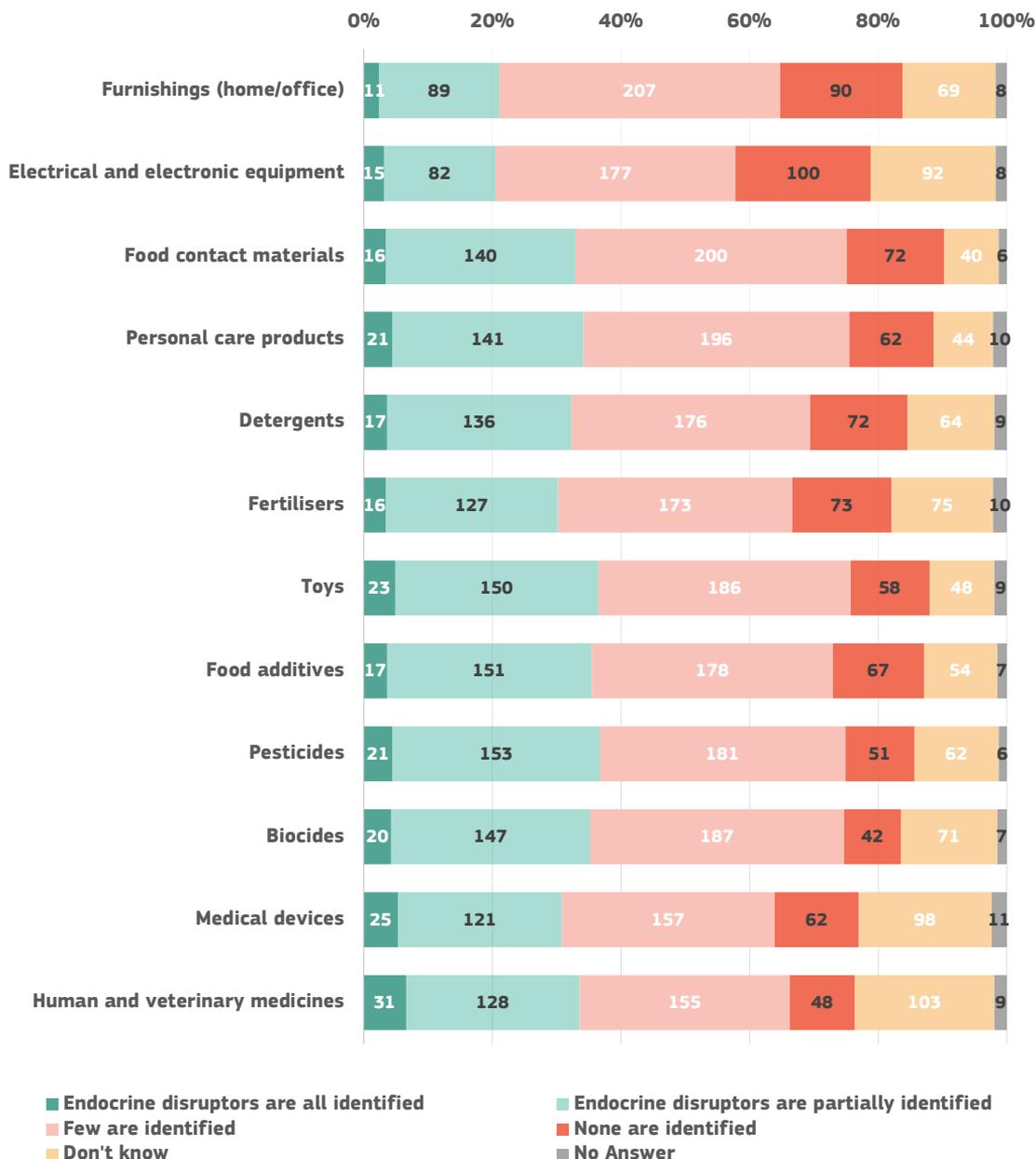
Ninety-three percent of respondents believe that endocrine disruptors contribute to a large or moderate extent to some human diseases or health conditions such as infertility, cancer or obesity.

From 72% to 81% of respondents consider that EU laws offer a low level of protection for wildlife such as insects, including bees and other pollinators (81%), fish and amphibians (80%), other invertebrates, such as snails, shrimps or worms (79%), birds and reptiles (76%), mammals (74%) and plants (72%).

A majority of respondents expressed the view that the EU should have the same approach or the same approach to the extent possible across regulatory sectors for both identifying endocrine disruptors (86%) and managing the risks of exposure to endocrine disruptors (84%).

Many of the respondents are of the opinion that endocrine disruptors are insufficiently identified across a range of sectors, particularly in furnishing and electrical and electronic equipment (see next figure).

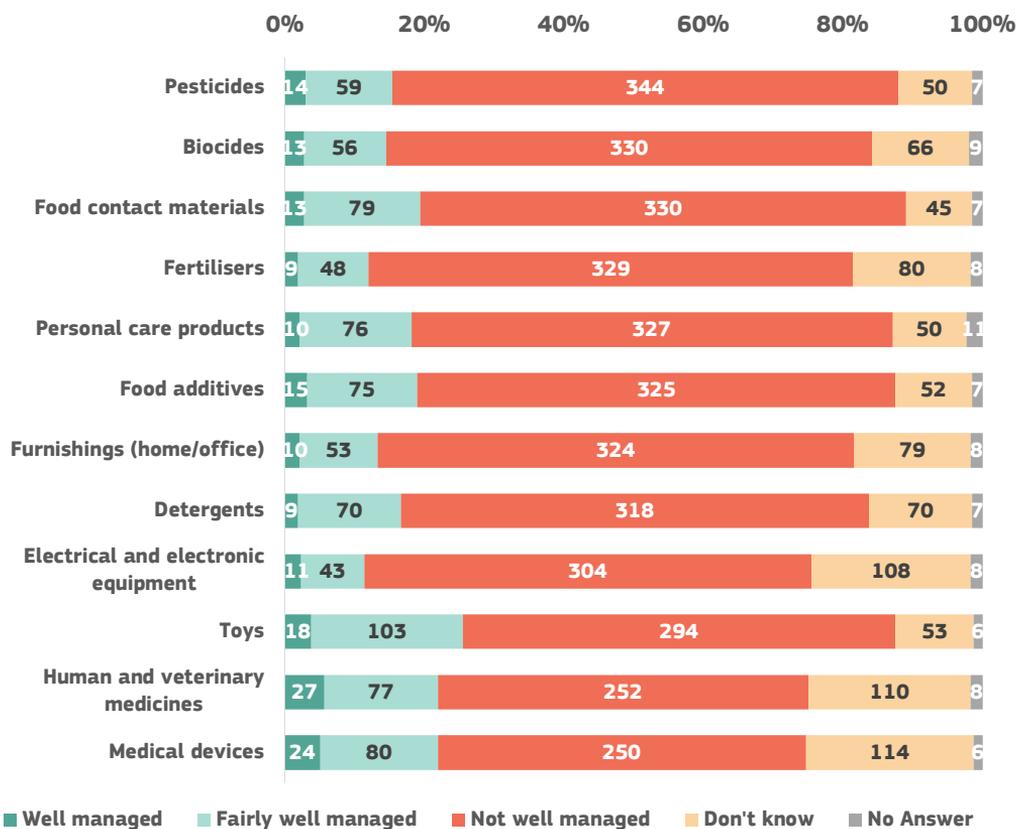
IN YOUR OPINION, TO WHICH EXTENT DO EU LAWS ALLOW FOR IDENTIFICATION OF ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTORS?



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As presented in the figure below, the majority of respondents are also of the opinion that EU laws insufficiently manage the risks linked to endocrine disruptors across all sectors. For example, the number of respondents considering that endocrine disruptors are not well managed in the pesticide sector is 73% compared with 15% who think endocrine disruptors are well managed or fairly well managed and 12% who do not know or did not reply. For medical devices, 53% of respondents consider that endocrine disruptors are not well managed compared with 22% who think that they are well managed or fairly well managed and 25% who do not know or did not reply.

IN YOUR OPINION, TO WHICH EXTENT DO EU LAWS MANAGE THE RISKS TO ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS IN THE FOLLOWING SECTORS?



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Regulatory testing and animal welfare

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents think that animal testing for endocrine disrupting properties in the EU is insufficiently minimised, whereas 28% consider animal testing to be fully minimised (5%) or minimised to the extent possible (23%). Thirty-five percent replied that they do not know.

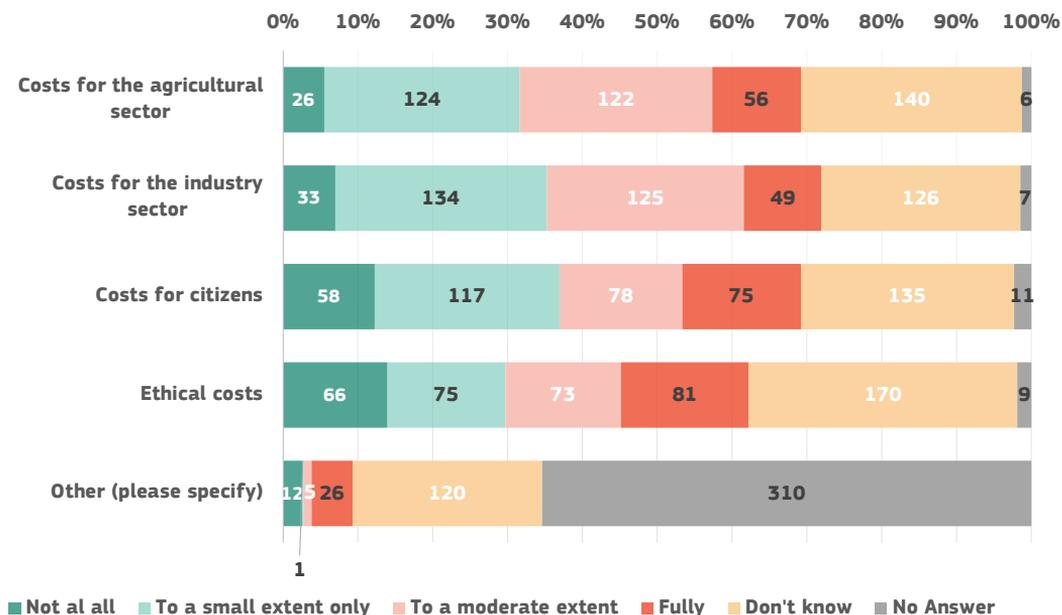
Efficiency of EU laws

Forty-four percent of the respondents consider that the costs (e.g. time, resources, use of laboratory animals) of EU laws on endocrine disruptors are proportionate for the benefits accrued compared with 26% who consider costs are only to a small extent or not at all proportionate. Thirty percent replied that they do not know.

In general, the respondents consider that EU laws on endocrine disruptors generate slightly more costs for the agricultural and industrial sectors compared with costs to citizens or ethical costs (see next figure).

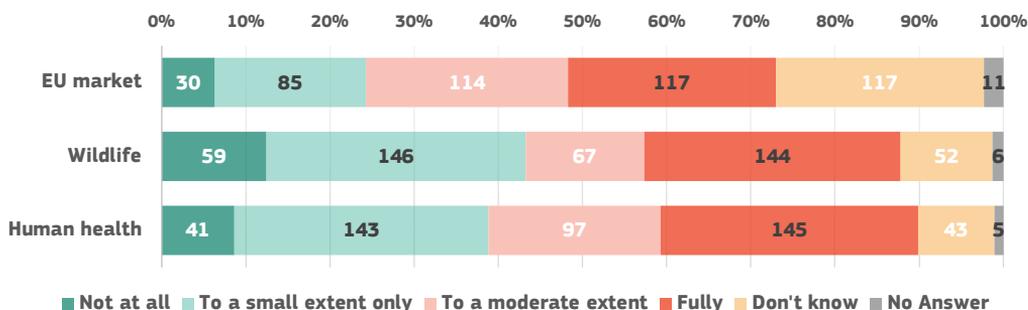
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IN YOUR OPINION, TO WHICH EXTENT DO EU LAWS ON ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS GENERATE:



As illustrated in the figure below, EU laws on endocrine disruptors are believed to generate benefits for the EU market by about half of the respondents (49% agree fully or to a moderate extent, while 24% agree to a small extent or don't agree at all and 27% don't know or didn't reply). Opinion is also divided on the extent to which EU laws on endocrine disruptors are seen to benefit human health and wildlife.

IN YOUR OPINION, TO WHICH EXTENT DO EU LAWS ON ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS GENERATE BENEFITS FOR:



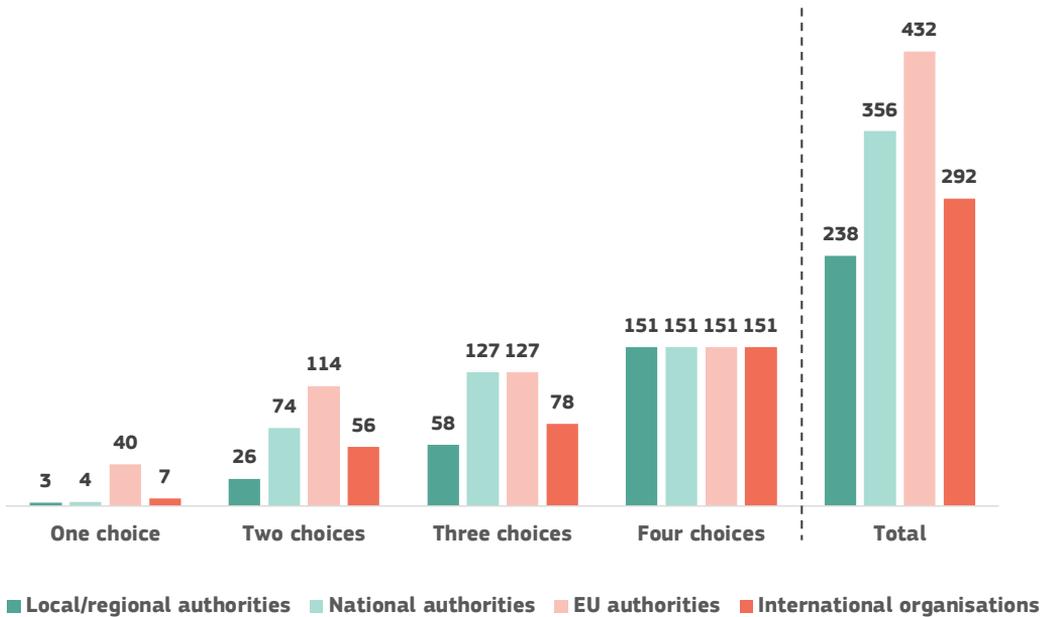
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Added value of EU laws

In terms of which bodies should regulate to protect people and wildlife from harm caused by endocrine disruptors, most respondents expressed the view that this should be done by EU authorities (432), and many respondents considered that national authorities (356), international organisations (292) and local/regional authorities (238) should act.

For this question, the numbers of respondents are given, rather the percentage values, since it was possible to select more than one option. The breakdown of responses (based on the number of choices chosen by respondents) is given in the following diagram.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHO SHOULD REGULATE TO PROTECT PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE FROM HARM CAUSED BY ENDOCRINE DISRUPTORS?



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Relevance of EU laws

In terms of areas where the EU needs to significantly step up its efforts, the respondents prioritised as follows: reducing exposure of humans (88%), reducing exposure to wildlife (84%), identifying endocrine disruptors (80%), and adopting a coherent approach to identification and management of endocrine disruptors (79%). Fewer respondents consider that a lot of efforts are needed by the EU to reduce the burdens and costs to business (30%).

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