

# Use of Internet Services

**The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)** is a composite index that summarises relevant indicators on Europe's digital performance and tracks the progress of EU Member States in digital competitiveness.

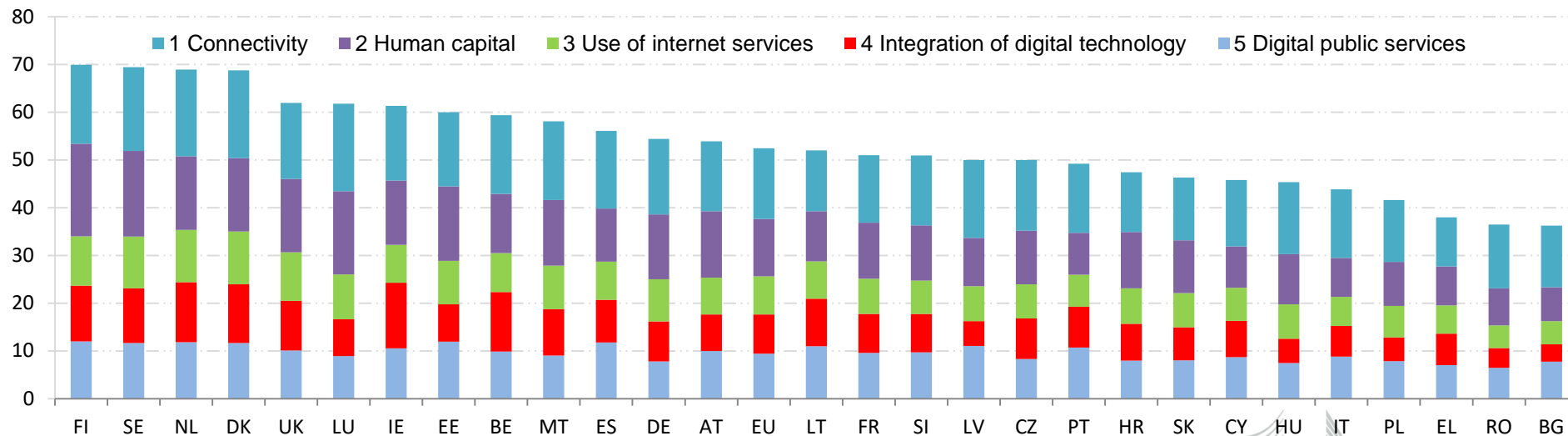
Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark, have the most advanced digital economies in the EU followed by the UK, Luxembourg, Ireland and Estonia.

Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Poland have the lowest scores on the index.

#### The five dimensions of the DESI

1 Connectivity	Fixed broadband, mobile broadband, fast and ultrafast broadband and prices
2 Human capital	Internet user skills and advanced skills
3 Use of internet	Citizens' use of internet services and online transactions
4 Integration of digital technology	Business digitisation and e-commerce
5 Digital public services	e-Government and e-health

#### Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2019



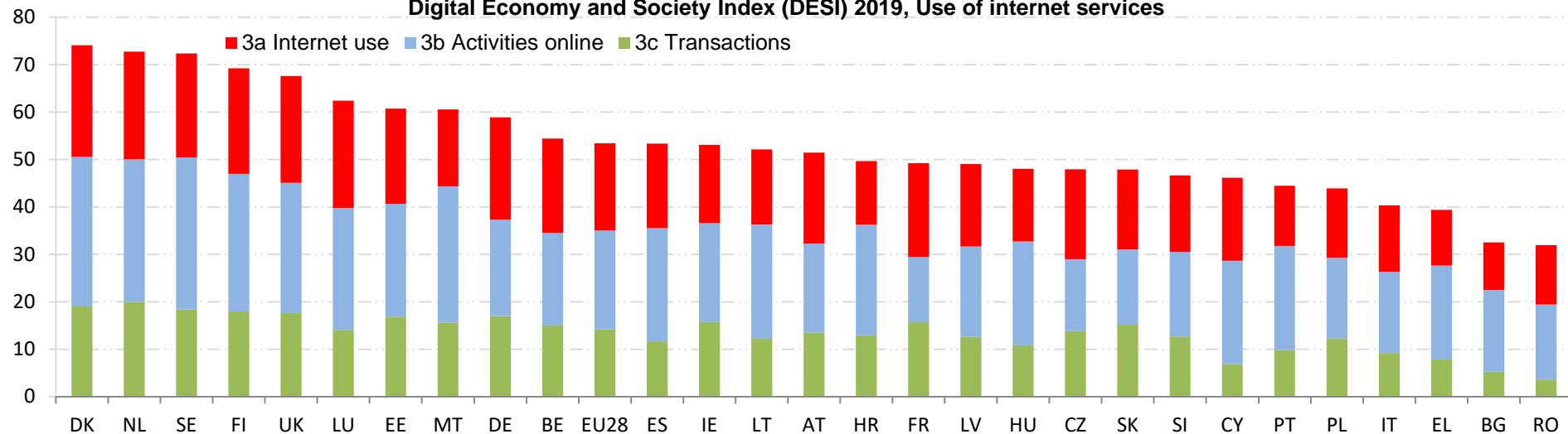
Source: DESI 2019, European Commission

## There are still large disparities across EU Member States regarding the **use of internet services**.

People in the EU engage in a range of online activities — they actively use the internet to get news, browse social networks, communicate, shop, use online banking services and much more. Such activities are captured in DESI's Use of internet services dimension. Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland have the most active internet users, followed by the UK, Luxembourg, Estonia and Malta. Romania, Bulgaria and Greece are, by comparison, the least active.

Ireland and Lithuania are the Member States that have registered the largest improvement in this dimension compared with the previous edition (4 percentage points) closely followed by the UK, Italy, Croatia and Greece, also making significant progress in comparison to results of DESI 2018.

**Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) 2019, Use of internet services**



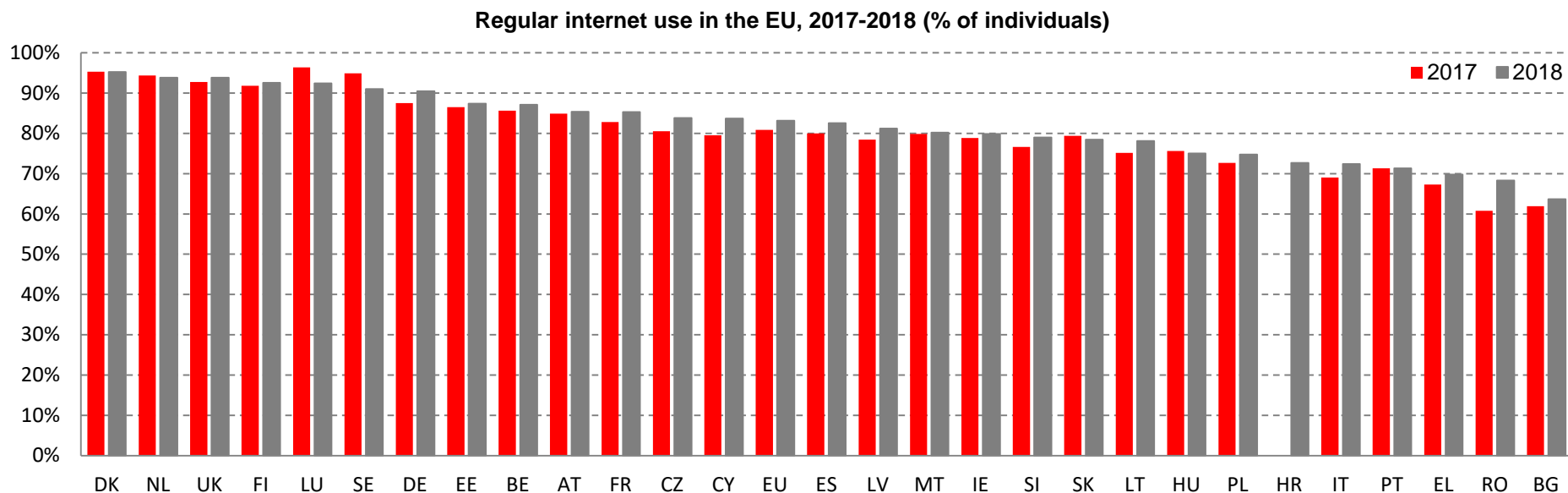
Source: DESI 2019, European Commission

The differences in **regular internet use** shrank further in 2018. However, in some Member States, over a third of the population still does not regularly go online.

In Member States such as Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK and Finland, the vast majority of the population uses the internet at least once a week. The countries in the process of catching up with these top-performing Member States, such as Germany, Estonia, Belgium and Austria saw further improvements in this respect in 2018.

Spain, Latvia and Malta also made significant progress and now stand very close to the EU average. Noteworthy increases were also recorded in both Romania (+ 8 percentage points compared with 2017) and Cyprus (+ 4 percentage points).

31 % of Romanians and 36 % of Bulgarians still do not go regularly online. The largest number of internet users are young individuals (97 % for 16-24 year olds) and those who have a high-level of formal education (97 %).

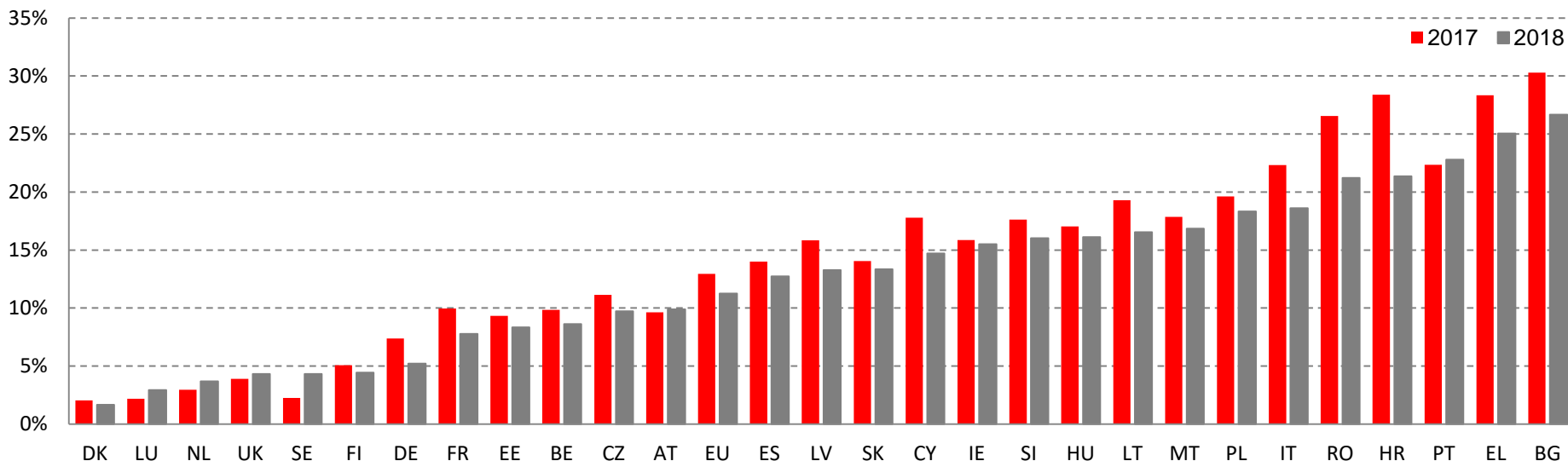


Source: Eurostat

The **share of people in the EU who have never gone online** decreased again in 2018, although the current share of 11 % warrants further actions. Despite convergent trends, large disparities remain across Member States.

The share of people in the EU not using the internet fell in nearly all Member States in 2018. Still every 10th European has never used the internet. Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the UK, Sweden and Finland are countries where the share is even below 5 %. The share is still significantly large in Bulgaria (27 %), Greece (25 %), Portugal (23 %), Croatia and Romania (both 21 %). The Members States with the largest reductions were Croatia with a drop of 7 percentage points, Romania with a drop of 5 percentage points, and Italy and Bulgaria, both with a drop of 4 percentage points. People with low education levels or on low incomes, as well as the elderly, the retired or the inactive tend to use the internet comparatively less.

Individuals who never used the internet, 2017-2018 (% of individuals)



Source: Eurostat

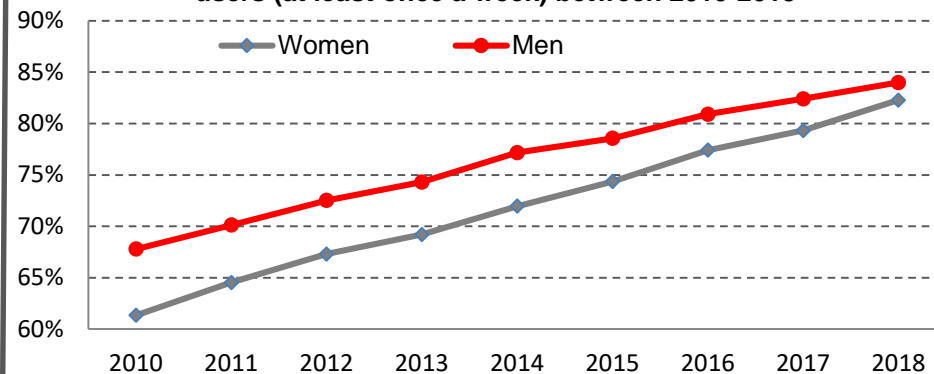
83 % of people in the EU **go online at least weekly**. A gender gap persists but it is narrowing. The elderly and those with low education levels or on low incomes continue to be at risk of digital exclusion.

In 2018, 83 % of Europeans used the internet at least weekly and about 76 % daily or almost every day, compared with 81 % and 72 % respectively a year earlier.

Proportionately, men use the internet more than women do (at least weekly: 84 % against 82 %; daily or almost: 75 % against 77 %), although the difference is narrowing.

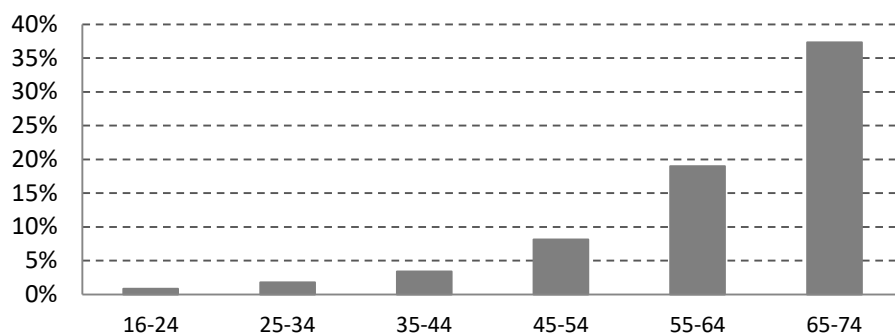
The gender gap persists but continues to narrow, reaching 1.7 % in 2018 against 6.4 % in 2010.

**Gender gap between individuals who are regular internet users (at least once a week) between 2010-2018**



Source: Eurostat

**Individuals who have never used the internet by age, 2018**



Source: Eurostat

89 % of households in the EU have internet access but the share of individuals who have never used the internet is still significant. It is the highest among 65-74 year olds (37 %), while among 16-24 it is less than 1 %.

Similar proportions are seen based on the education level – 27 % of individuals with no or a low-level of education and 1 % of individuals with a high-level of formal education. People from these groups continue to be at a high risk of digital exclusion.

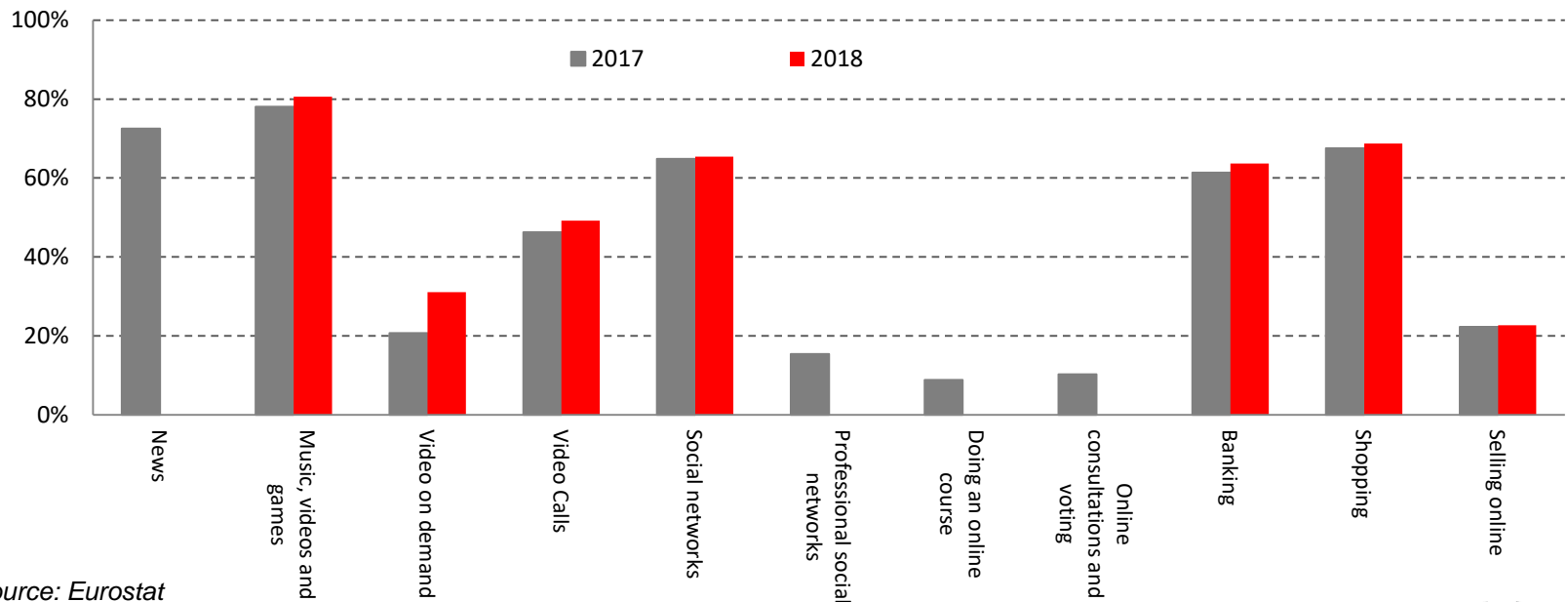
## Growth in the **use of online services** is generally slow, although use of the internet for video on demand picked up significantly in 2018.

As in the previous edition of DESI, annual variation in the different activities considered in the Use of internet services dimension has been limited. The percentage of people using the internet for video calls, banking, music videos and games increased moderately (about 3 percentage points in each). The largest increase was in use of the internet for video on demand, where the share of users went from 21 % in 2016 to 31 % in 2018.

Reading news online is second the most popular activity performed by internet users. Shopping and participating on social networks are also very popular. While doing an online course is among the least popular activities online, it is relatively widespread in Sweden and Finland with 18 % and 17 % of internet users participating in these in 2017.

It is also not that common for users to participate in professional social networks, create professional profiles, or create content and post it online.

Use of internet services in the EU, 2017-2018, selected indicators (% of internet users)



Source: Eurostat

## Almost every **third internet user (31 %)** watched video on demand in 2018.

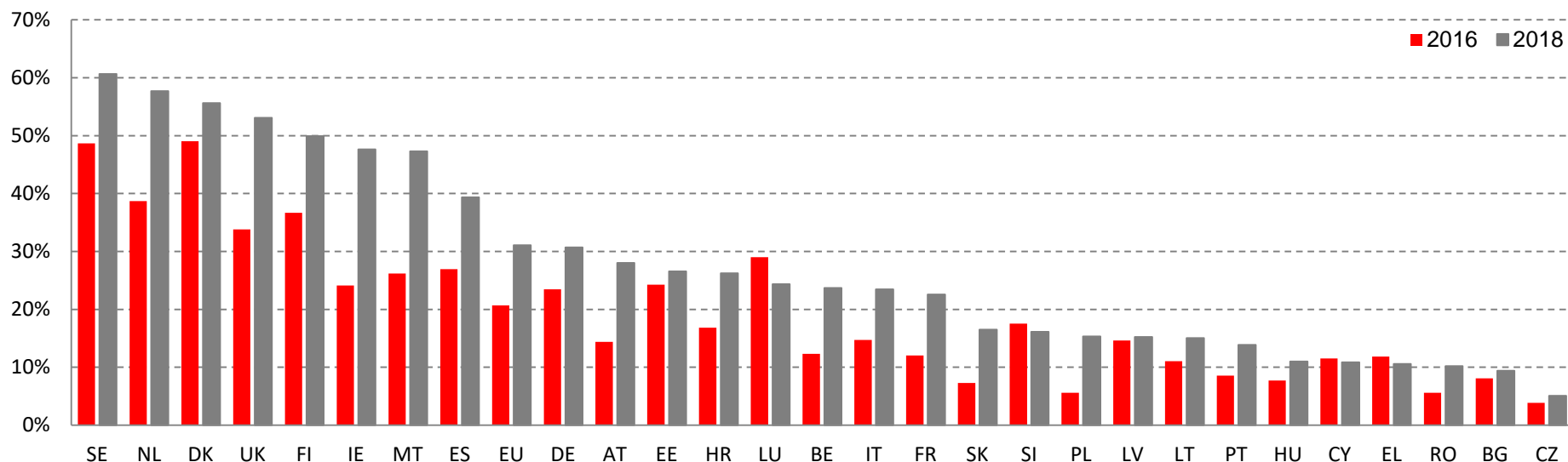
In 2018, 31 % of internet users watched video on demand (21 % in 2016). Among 16-24 year olds, the share of users watching video on demand reached 51 %, whereas this figure was 25 % for the 45-54 year olds, 17% for the 55-64 year olds and 11 % for 65-74 year olds.

The countries with the largest proportion of internet users who watched video on demand (above 50%) were Sweden (61 %), the Netherlands (58%), Denmark (56 %) and the UK (53 %). Czechia (5 %), Bulgaria (9 %), Romania (10%), Greece, Hungary and Cyprus (11 % each) had the lowest proportion.

Among female internet users there was an increase of 11 percentage points between 2016 (18 %) and 2018 (29 %). A similar trend was observed for male internet users with an increase of 10 percentage points from 23 % in 2016 to 33 % in 2018.

The largest increases in the proportion of internet users watching video on demand were registered in Ireland (24 percentage points) followed by Malta (21 percentage points).

Individuals watching video on demand, 2016-2018 (% of internet users)



Source: Eurostat



## Participation in online social networks increased moderately in the EU in 2018, reaching 65 % of internet users.

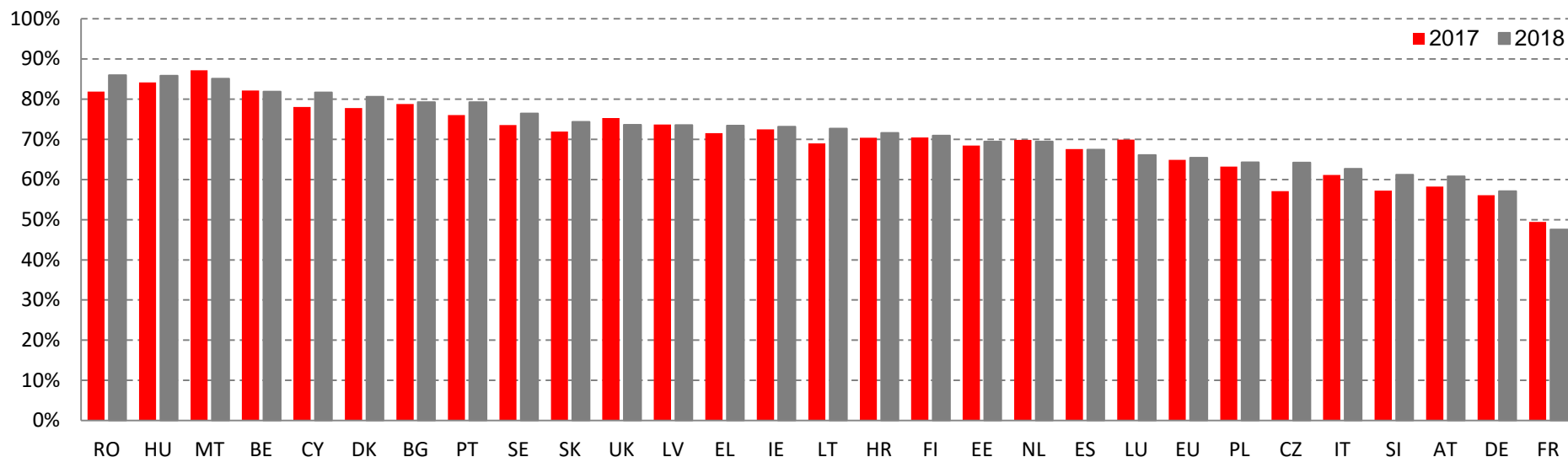
In 2018, 65 % of internet users participated in social networks. Among 16-24-year olds, the proportion of users participating in social networks reached close to 90 %, whereas this figure was 57 % for 45-54 year olds.

The countries with the largest proportion of internet users participating in social networks were Romania and Hungary (86 %), followed by Malta (85 %), and Belgium and Cyprus (both 82 %).

The largest increases in the proportion of internet users participating in social networks between 2017 and 2018 were registered in Czechia (7 percentage points) followed by Romania and Slovenia (4 percentage points each).

France had the lowest proportion of users (48 %), followed by Germany (57 %), and Austria and Slovenia (both 61 %).

Participation in social networks, 2017-2018 (% of internet users)



Source: Eurostat

## Participation in online professional social networks is still very low in the EU, oscillating at around 15 % of internet users in 2017.

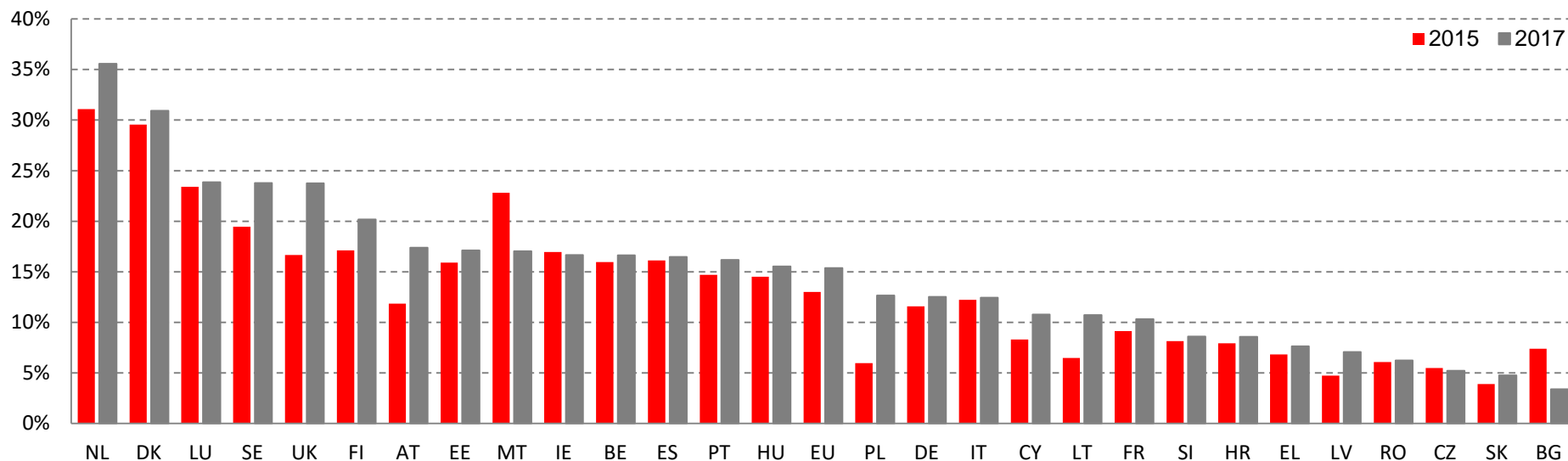
In 2017, 15 % of internet users participated in professional social networks, a small increase (2 percentage points) from 2015.

The countries with the largest proportion of internet users using professional social networks were the Netherlands and Denmark (36 % and 31 %), followed by Luxembourg, Sweden and the UK (reaching 24 %).

Bulgaria had the lowest proportion of users (3 %), followed by Slovakia (5 %).

The largest increases in the proportion of internet users participating in professional social networks between 2015 and 2017 were registered in the UK (7 percentage points) followed by Poland (7 %) and Austria (6 %).

Participation in professional social networks, 2015-2017 (% of internet users)



Source: Eurostat

## The upward trend in e-commerce continued in 2018, with around 69 % of EU internet users now shopping online.

In 2018, 69 % of internet users ordered goods and services online and 23 % of individuals sold goods or services online, using, among other means, online auctions.

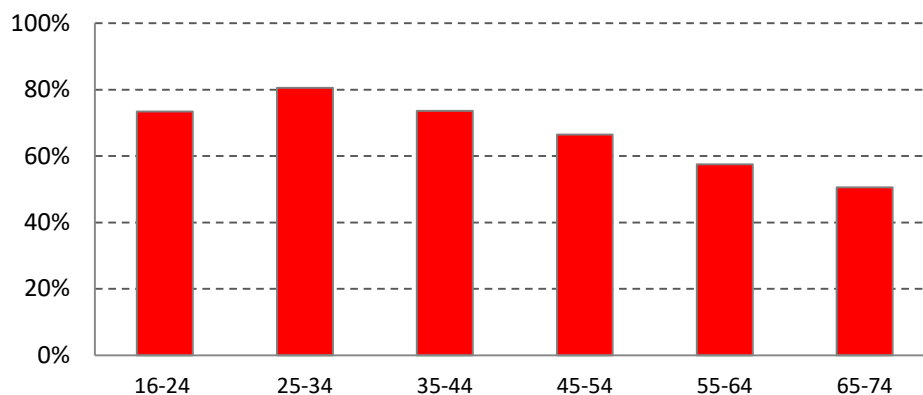
e-Commerce varies considerably across EU Member States. In 2018, 87 % of internet users in the UK shopped online compared to only 26 % in Romania.

The largest annual increase in the proportion of internet users engaging in e-commerce was in Ireland (5 percentage points).

e-Commerce is affected by age, level of education and employment situation. There was a slightly higher share of men shopping online than women (69 % and 68 % respectively).

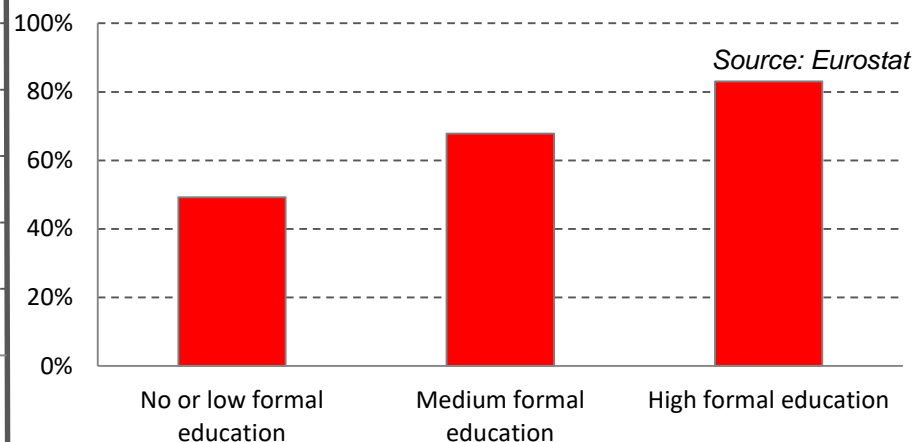
Young people make up the most active age group of online shoppers is (81 % of 25-34-year-olds); while the proportion of internet users with a higher level of education shopping online (83 %) is 34 percentage points higher than those with lower-level formal education. Employees and the self-employed (75 %) together with the students (70 %) are very active online shoppers.

**Individuals buying online by age groups, 2018**



Source: Eurostat

**Individuals buying online by education levels, 2018**



Source: Eurostat

## The most popular **goods and services purchased** in 2018 were clothes and sport goods, followed by travel accommodation services and household goods.

In 2018, the most popular categories of goods and services purchased online in the EU were clothes and sport goods (64 % of online buyers), travel and holiday accommodation (53 %), household goods (45 %), tickets for events (39 %), and books, magazines and newspapers (32 %).

Fewer than one in five purchases were for telecommunication services (20 %), computer hardware (17 %), medicines (14 %) and e-learning material (7 %).

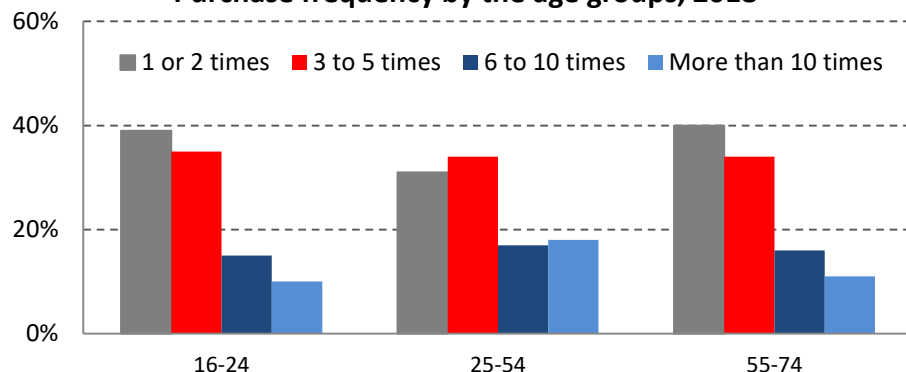
Online shoppers aged 16-24 and 25-54 favoured clothes and sports goods in their online purchases (72 % and 67 % respectively).

Among people aged 16-24 almost every third purchase was either computer software (31 %), films and music (29 %) or electronic equipment (26 %).

People aged 25-54 were the most frequent buyers of household goods (50 %), tickets for events (41 %), food or groceries (28 %) and telecommunication services (20 %).

The older (55-74) age group took the lead in buying books, magazines and newspapers (34 %), medicines (19 %), and travel and holiday accommodation (55 %), which was also popular among those aged 25-54 (55 %).

**Purchase frequency by the age groups, 2018**



Source: Eurostat

41 % of online shoppers claimed to have spent between EUR 100 and EUR 499 on online purchases over the previous three-month period. Every 10th person aged 25-54 spent more than EUR 1000. Among 16-24 year-olds the small value purchases (between EUR 50 and EUR 100) are the most common (27 %).

People aged 25-54, in turn, tend to make more frequent purchases: every third person purchased between 3 to 5 times (34 %), 17 % of online shoppers in this group bought online 6-10 times and 18 % even more than 10 times in 2018.

## Only 36 % of online shoppers ordered cross-border goods and services from other EU countries in 2018.

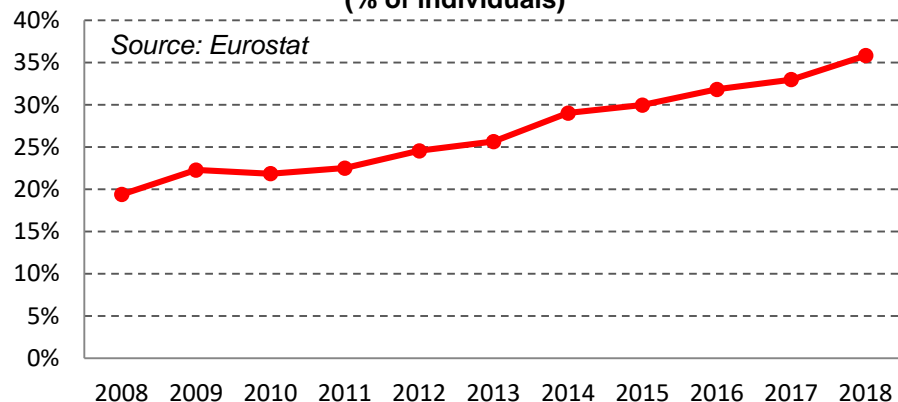
In 2018, although 69 % of internet users in the EU shopped online, cross-border online shopping is advancing more slowly. Among online shoppers, 36 % made online purchases from sellers in other EU countries and 26 % from sellers in non-EU countries in 2018, compared with 25 % and 13 % respectively in 2012.

Among online shoppers, who made purchases over 2018, 88 % bought goods or services from national sellers. There was an increase in purchases from sellers in other EU countries (from 30 % in 2015 to 36 % in 2018) and from sellers outside the EU (from 37 % in 2015 to 46 % in 2018).

The extent of cross-border e-commerce differs substantially between Member States, as it ranges from 3 % of internet users in Romania and 7 % in Poland to 61 % in Luxembourg and 59 % in Malta.

A number of factors including country size and language influence buying goods and services from other EU Member States. For example, Luxembourg, Malta and Austria, which have relatively small home markets and have strong language connections with other large European countries, have higher shares of cross-border e-commerce.

**Individuals ordering goods or services cross border, 2018**  
(% of individuals)



Among internet users who made cross border purchases in 2017, 80 % bought or ordered tangible goods such as: electronics, clothes, toys, food, groceries, books, and CDs/DVDs.

Lower proportions of internet users booked online travel, accommodation or made holiday arrangements (34 %).

Only 16 % bought or ordered other services, such as e-tickets for events (sport events, concerts or other entertainment events) or telecommunication services (subscription of telephone services, SIM cards).

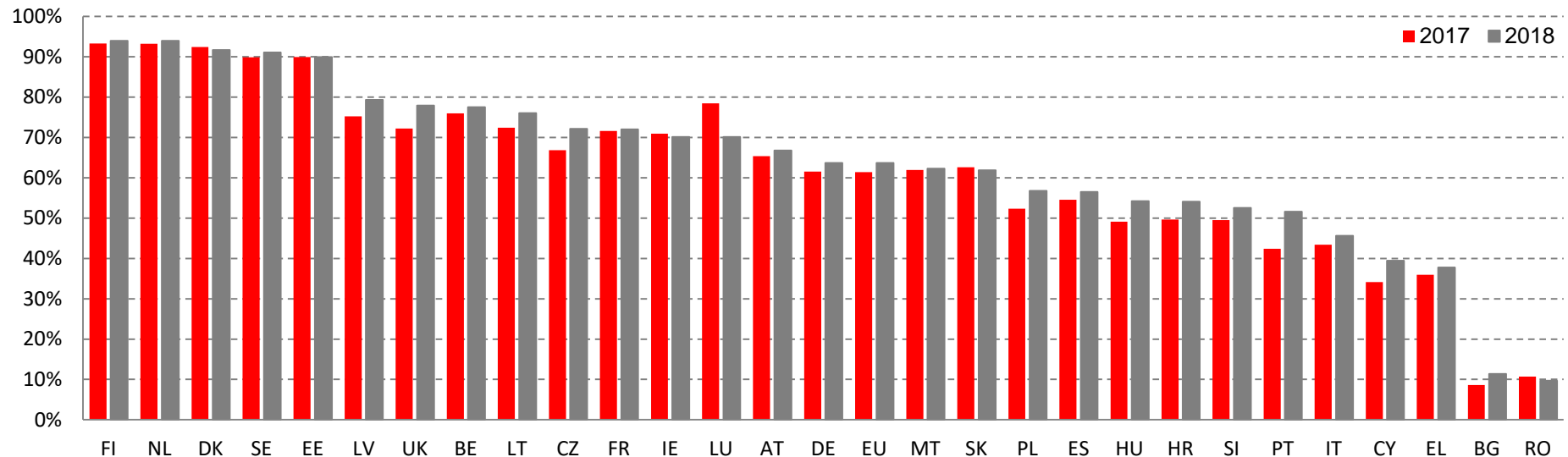
64 % of EU internet users used **online banking in 2018**, although a large majority of them still do not in a number of Member States.

Online banking is a relatively common activity among internet users in the EU. 64 % used internet banking in 2018, a 3 percentage points annual increase from 2017.

In 2018, high shares of internet users doing online banking were recorded in the Netherlands and Finland (both 94 %), Denmark (92 %) and Sweden (91 %) in 2018. Large differences remain across Member States, with Romania (10 %) and Bulgaria (11 %) having the lowest shares. The highest increase in 2018 was observed in Portugal.

Among individuals with a high-level of formal education the share reached 80 %, while it was half of that for individuals with no or low formal education (41 %). Among 25-34 year olds, the share reached 75 %, and 70 % for 35-44 year olds.

Individuals who used internet banking in previous 3 months (% of internet users), 2017-2018



Source: Eurostat

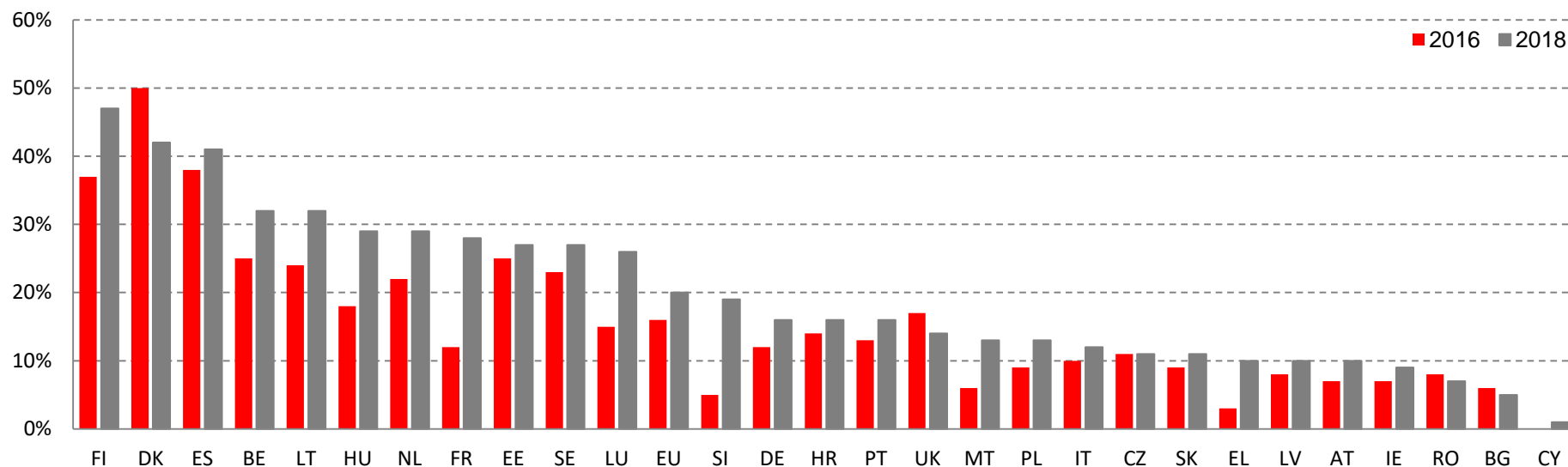
## Seeking health information on the internet is widespread, but only one-fifth of EU internet users made an online appointment with practitioner in 2018.

Using the internet to seek health-related information is widespread across the EU. 60 % of EU internet users, sought out health-related information online in 2018, with the Netherlands (76 %), Hungary and Finland (both 74 %) having the highest share.

On average, only 20 % of EU internet users went online to make an appointment with a practitioner in 2018. Across the EU Member States, this figure ranges from over 47 % in Finland and 42 % in Denmark to 1 % in Cyprus and 5 % in Bulgaria.

From 2016, the biggest increase was observed in France (16 percentage points) and Slovenia (14 percentage points). Denmark and the UK were two countries where the highest drop between 2016 and 2018 was observed (8 percentage points drop for Denmark and 3 percentage points drop for UK).

Making an appointment with a practitioner via website, 2016-2018 (% of internet users)



Source: Eurostat