



Use of Internet

Use of Internet Services by Citizens in the EU

Digital Agenda Scoreboard
2016

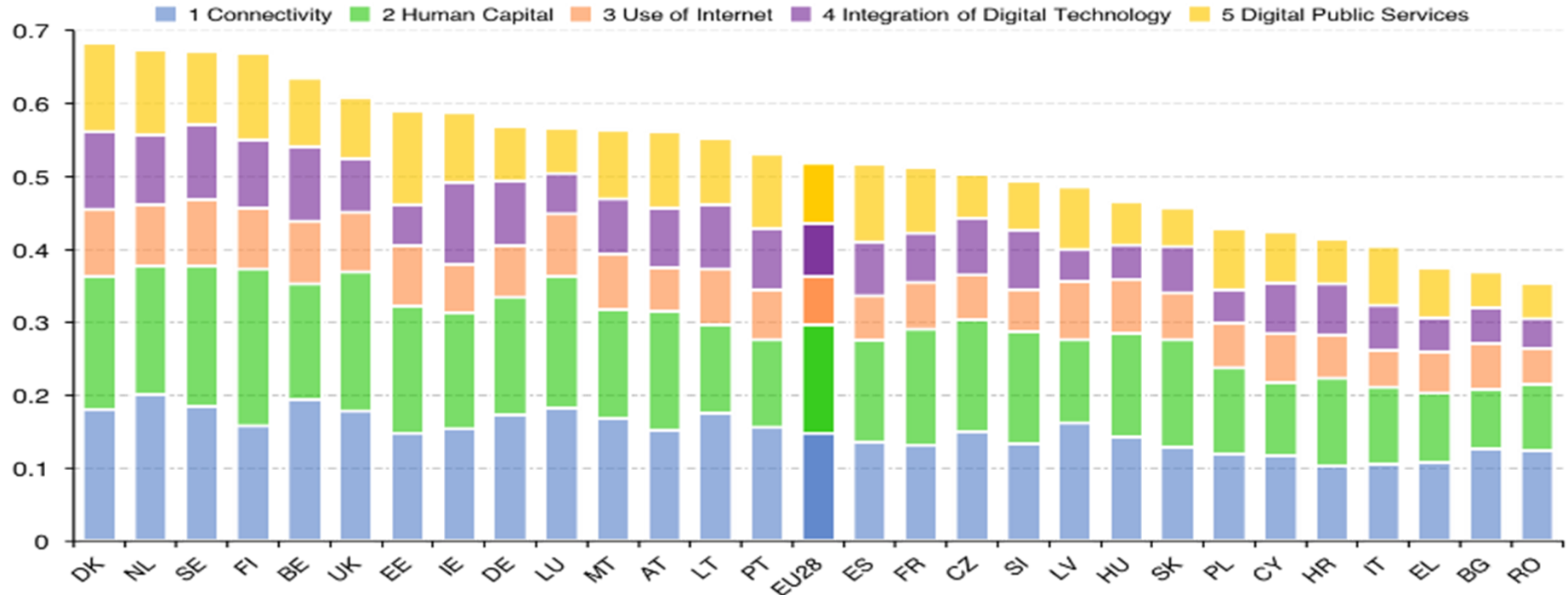
The Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) is a composite index that summarises relevant indicators on Europe's digital performance and tracks the evolution of EU Member States in digital competitiveness.

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

Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Italy are at the bottom of the list.

The five dimensions of the DESI

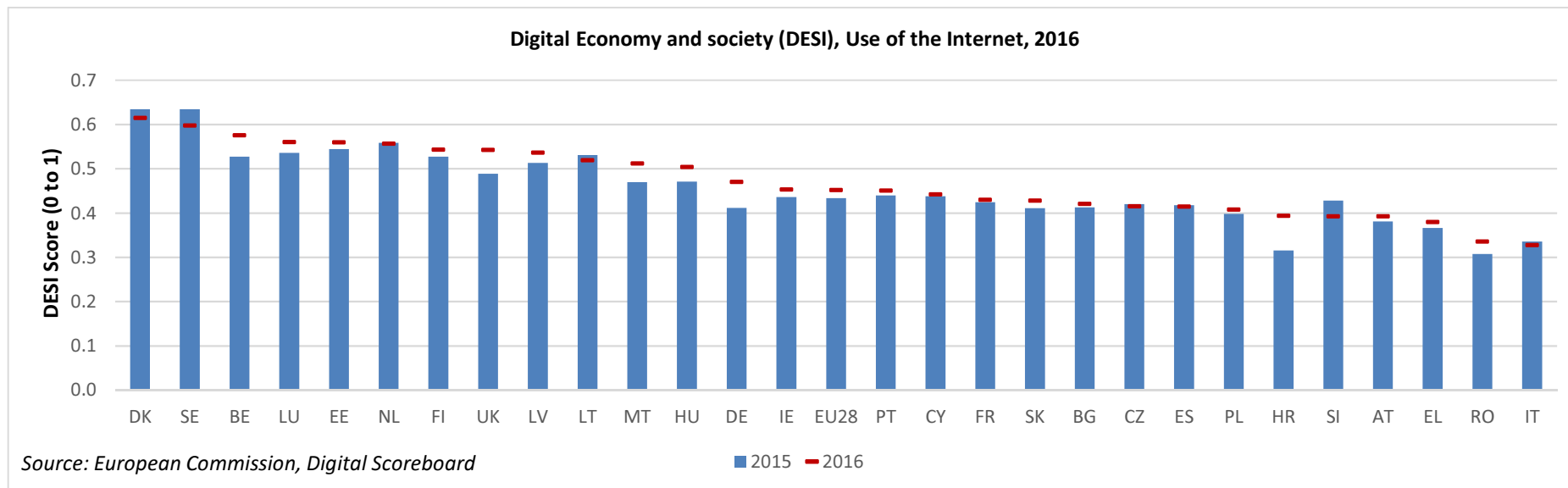
1 Connectivity	Fixed Broadband, Mobile Broadband, Broadband speed, and Affordability
2 Human Capital	Basic Skills and Usage, Advanced skills and Development
3 Use of Internet	Content, Communication and Transactions on line
4 Integration of Digital Technology	Business digitization and eCommerce
5 Digital Public Services	eGovernment



Use of Internet by EU citizens.

People in the EU engage in a **range of online activities** — they consume content, communicate, shop, use online banking services and much more. Such activities are captured in DESI dimension 3, on internet use. Denmark, Sweden and Belgium have the most active internet users, followed by Estonia, the Netherlands and Finland. However, **Croatia, Germany and the UK showed the biggest increase** in the DESI score. Denmark overtook Sweden to take first place. At the same time, both these countries actually saw a small decrease in their DESI score for Use of Internet. Croatia increased and climbed from 27th to 23rd position. Italy saw a small decrease and was overtaken by Romania and Croatia.

DESI – Use of Internet indicators	
News (% individuals aged 16-74)	68% (2015)
Music, videos and games (% individuals aged 16-74)	49% (2014)
Video on demand (% households that have a TV)	41% (2014)
Video calls (% individuals aged 16-74)	37% (2015)
Social networks (% individuals aged 16-74)	63% (2015)
Banking (% individuals aged 16-74)	57% (2015)
Shopping (% individuals aged 16-74)	65% (2015)



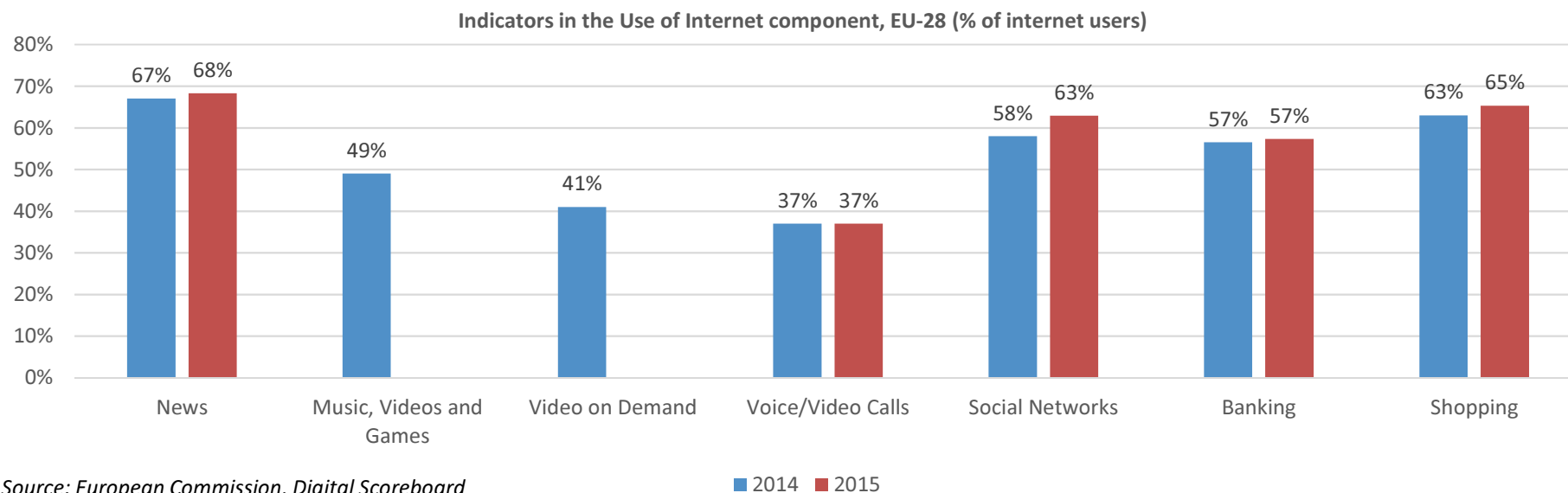
Overall slowdown in growth of **online activities**.

Between 2014 and 2015, progress in the different activities used as indicators in the Use of Internet dimension has been slow. The **biggest increase** was observed in the percentage of internet users active on social networks — 5 percentage points. All other indicators showed small or no increase at all for the European average. The Video on demand and Music, Videos and Games indicators were not collected in 2015.

Internet users in the EU are active in **obtaining content** online, with two thirds reporting reading news online in 2015 and nearly half downloading music, videos and games in 2014.

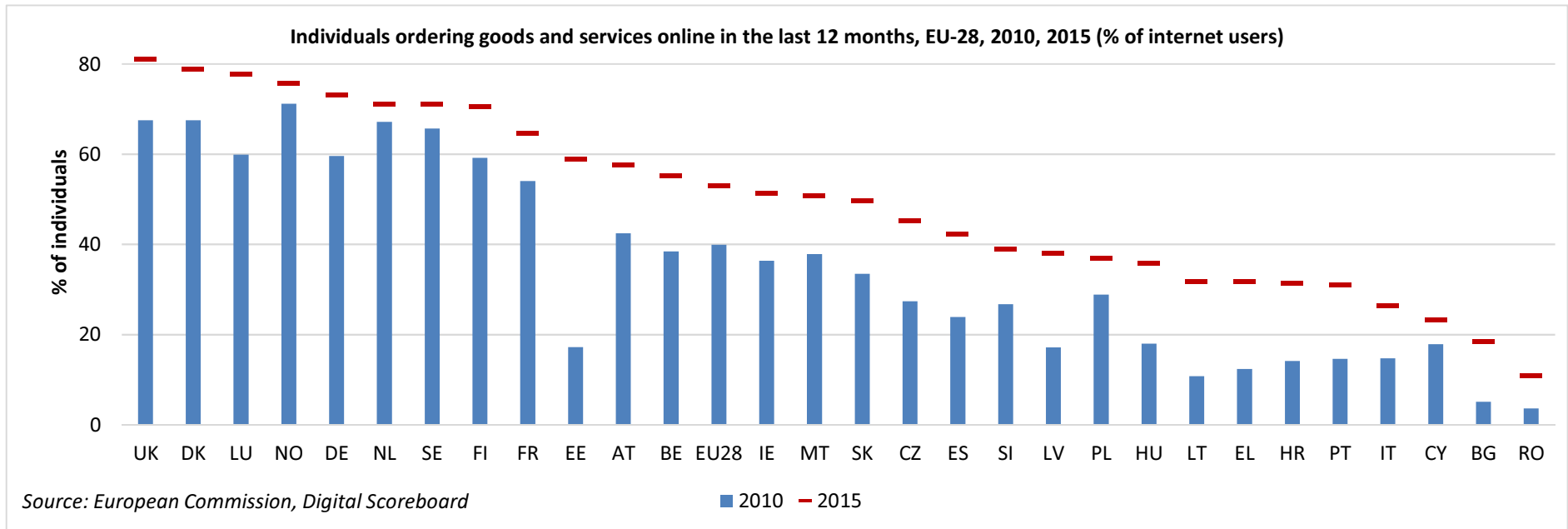
EU households are also using the internet to watch televised entertainment, both via video on demand and via IPTV.

EU citizens also use the internet for **communication**. More than one third of internet users place calls (video or audio) over the internet, and 63 % interact using social networks. For **online transactions**, users are keen on doing their banking activities online (57 %) and close to two thirds of them reported to have shopped online during 2014.



eCommerce: Individuals ordering goods and services online.

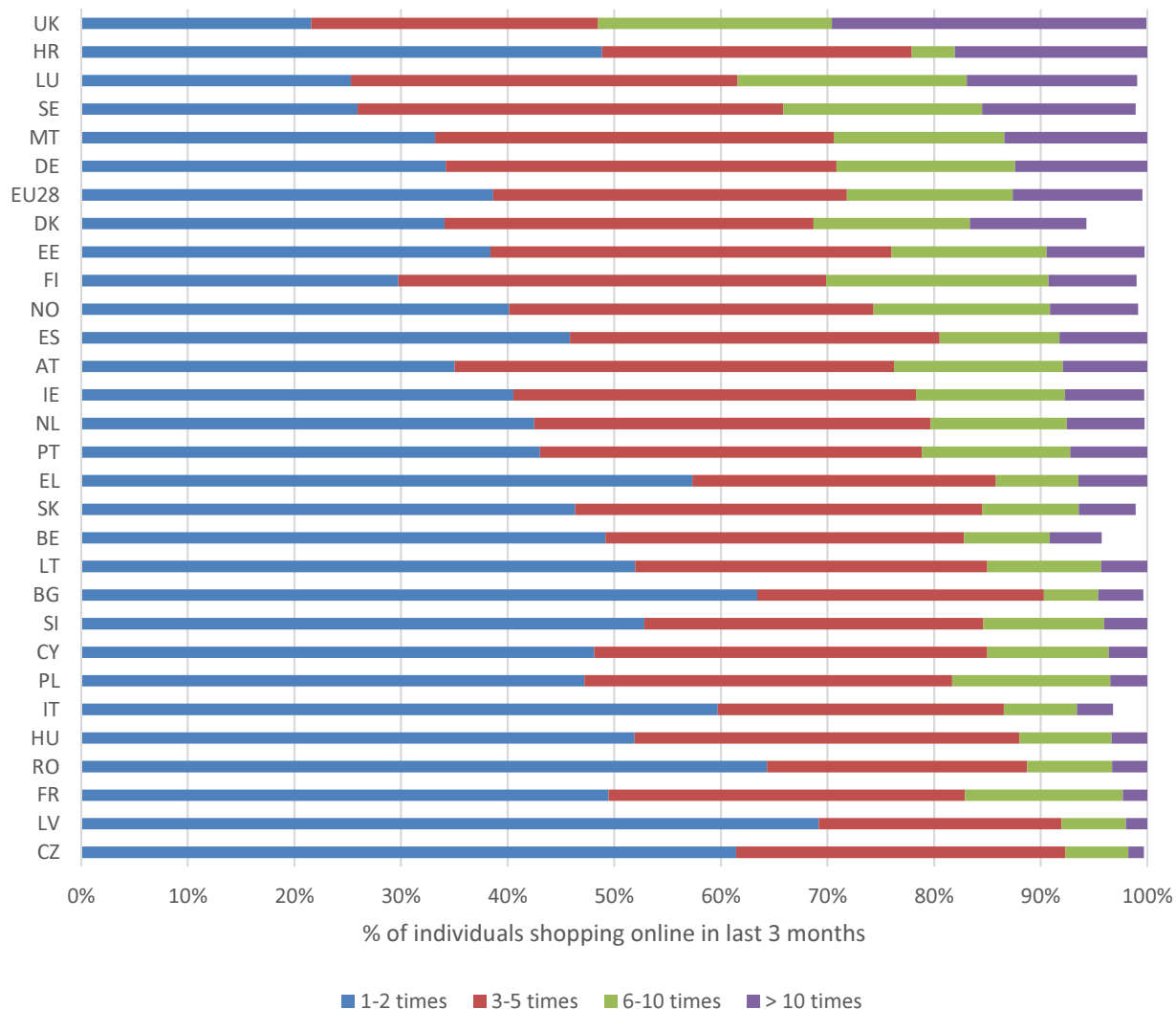
Over the last five years, the number of European citizens ordering goods and services online has increased by 13 percentage points, to 53 %. As with many other online activities, e-commerce is higher among younger and higher educated people. These groups also had higher growth over the last five years so other groups are not yet catching up. Countries where online shopping among citizens was less common in 2010 have seen higher growth rates over the last 5 years than the ones at already high levels. Still, even where levels were high in 2010, there has been an increase in the number of people shopping online. The big increase for Estonia is due to a change in methodology.



There has been a **small increase in the number of online purchases** over the Internet since 2009.

Most people (72%) did between 1 and 5 purchases/orders online over last three months at the time of the survey. Only 12% said that they did more than 10 purchases. The UK has the highest share of frequent online shoppers with 29% making more than 10 purchases, while in Latvia and the Czech Republic the figures are only 1 and 2% respectively. There has been small changes since 2009 and only few online shoppers do more frequent purchases today. In 2015, on average 39% of the online shoppers spent less than 100€, 40% spent 100-499€ and 19% spent more than 500€ online over the last three months. There has only been small changes in the money spent since 2009 as well.

Frequency of online purchases/orders online in the last 3 months, EU-28, 2015
(% of internet users buying online in last 3 months)



Source: Commission services based on Eurostat data

eCommerce: Barriers and problems.

People who did not buy anything online within the previous year most commonly said that they “preferred to shop in person, like to see the product, choose shops out of loyalty or act from force of habit”. This reason was given by 75 % of the non-online shoppers. Payment security concerns were a reason for 27 %, although only 3 % of e-shoppers encountered problems with fraud. Lack of trust — concerns about receiving or returning goods and complaints/redress — was given as reason not to shop by 19 %, although only 4 % of e-shoppers actually encountered problems that complaints and redress were difficult or no satisfactory response was received upon complaint.

Most common problems encountered while buying online, EU-28, 2015 (% e-shoppers)	share
Speed of delivery longer than indicated	16%
Technical failure	12%
Wrong or damaged good/services	8%
Difficulties finding information concerning guarantees, other legal rights	5%
Complaints and redress were difficult or no satisfactory response received after complaint	4%

Source: Eurostat

Most common reasons for not buying online, EU-28, 2015 (% people who did not buy in the last 12 months)	share
Prefer to shop in person, they like to see product, loyalty to shops or force of habit	75%
Payment security concerns	27%
Trust concerns about receiving or returning goods, complaint / redress concerns	19%
Lack the necessary skills	18%
Don't have a payment card	13%

eCommerce: **Barriers and problems.**

In 2015 70 % of online shoppers encountered no problems when buying goods or services online. Among those that did encounter problems, speed of delivery was the most common, given by 16 %. The 2015 DSM survey of online consumers ('Identifying the main cross border obstacles of the Digital Single Market and where they matter most', GfK for the European Commission, September 2015)

also revealed that for the 31 % of respondents who reported having had at least one problem with online purchases over the previous 12 months, the most common problem was with delivery (17 %: long delivery time). A series of problems with the product followed, such as its being of lower quality than advertised (15 %), being defective or the wrong product (14 % and 13 % respectively), or the product not being received at all (13 %).

The survey showed that the main consumer concerns about purchasing products online domestically were linked to: data protection and payment security (30 % of respondents were concerned that personal data may be misused and 26 % that payment details might be stolen) and consumer rights (fear of receiving wrong or damaged products (26 %), not finding it easy to replace or repair a faulty product (25 %) and not finding it easy to return a product they did not like and be reimbursed (22 %).

Internet users face a number of **security threats online**.

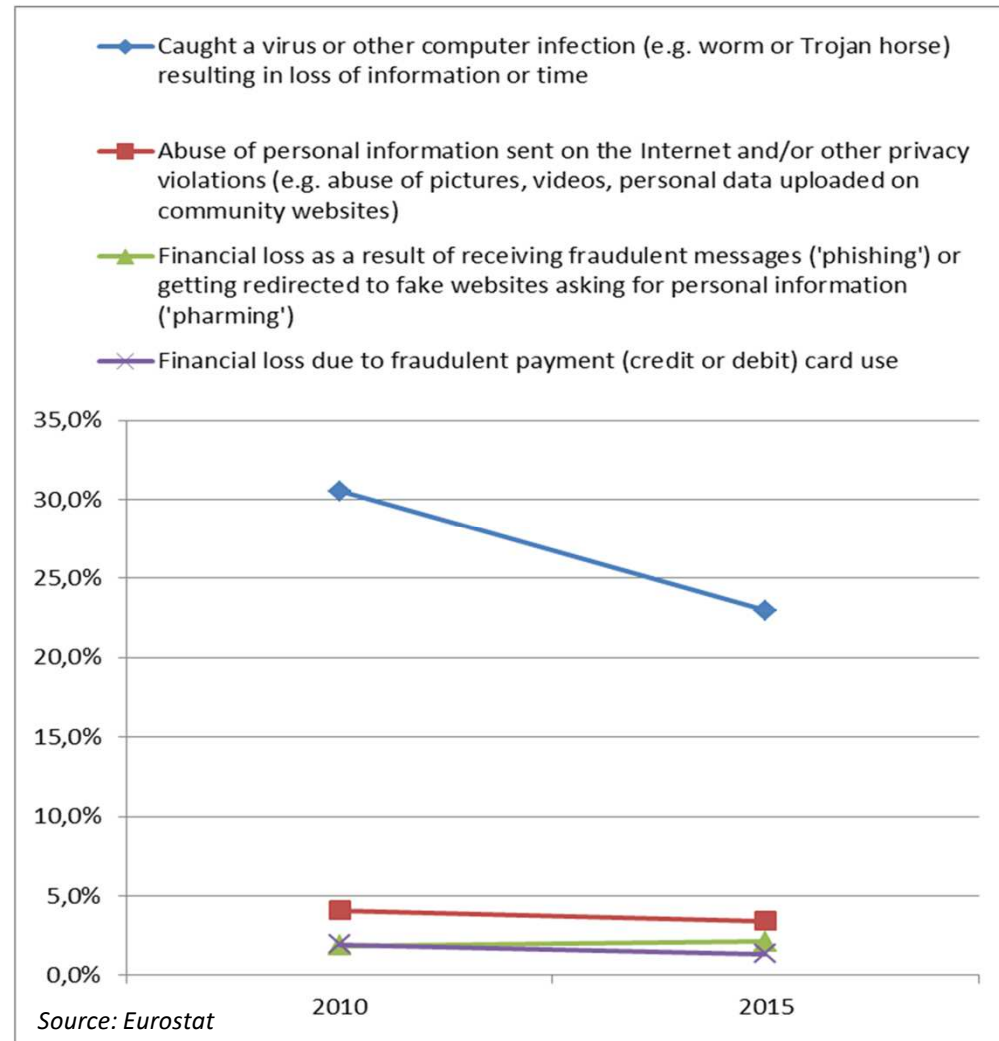
Internet users encounter a variety of security problems. For four of them we can see if the environment has changed in the last five years.

Over the period 2010-2015, the percentage of internet users experiencing any of the four security problems fell by 10 percentage points to 24 %. This was mainly due to fewer cases of damaging virus infections, at least those recognised by users.

Financial losses and abuse of personal information are rarer, but their gravity for victims can be important. They still happen, so it is natural that news of such cases raises concerns even among people who are not directly affected.

New forms of security threats have also appeared that are not yet monitored, like catfishing, ransomware and identity theft (see [ENISA Threat Landscape 2015](#))

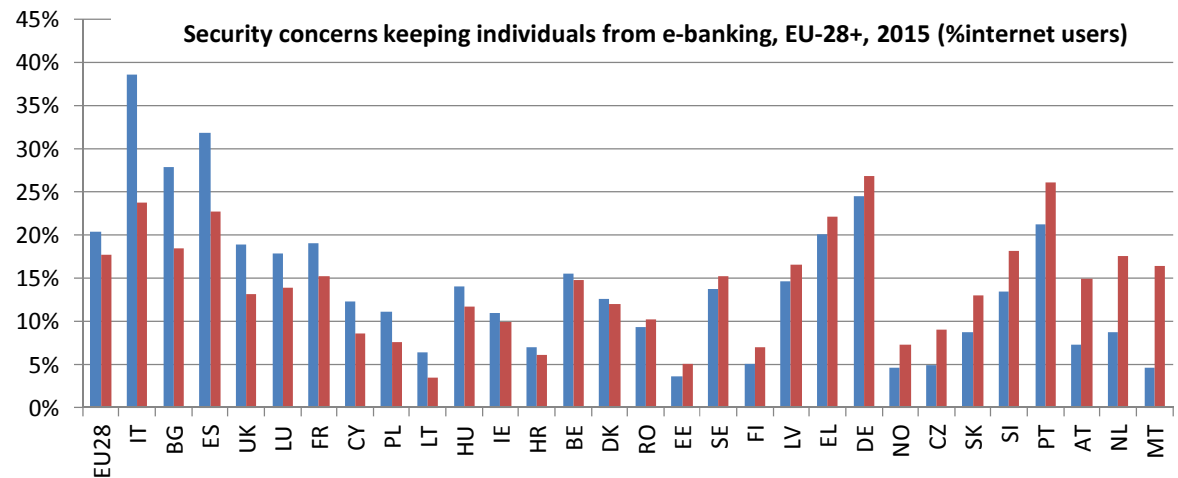
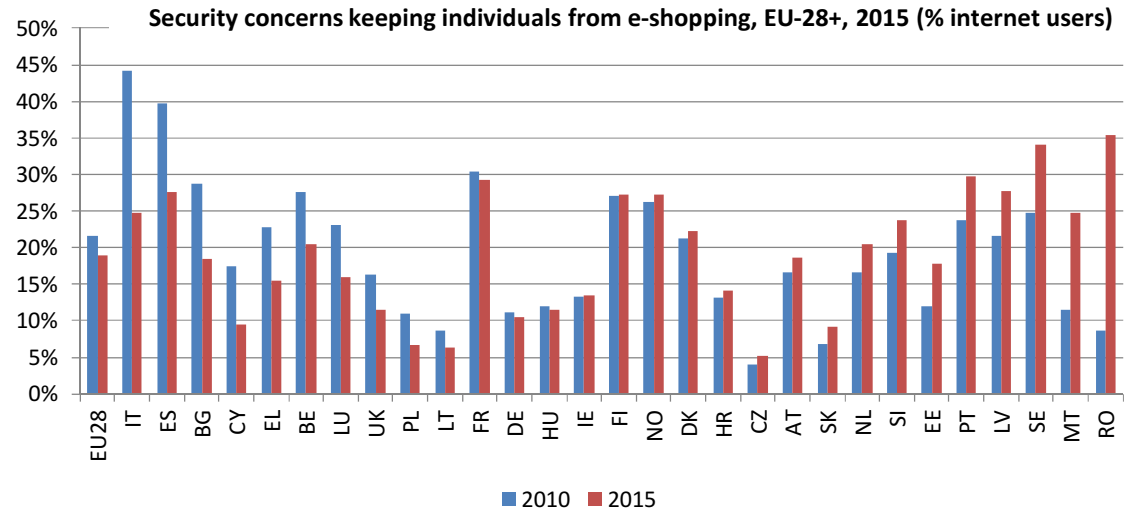
Individuals experiencing security problems online, EU-28, 2015 (% of internet users)



Security concerns continue to keep 1/5 of internet users away from online transactions (e-commerce and e-banking).

Over last five years, the share of internet users declaring that security concerns have limited or kept them away from basic online transactions has fallen somewhat, to just under 20 %. Such slow progress is challenging the construction of a true digital single market at EU level, However the situation varies greatly between EU Member States. Some, among the more reticent to trust online transactions, have made substantial progress: IT, ES, and BG. The left side of the charts below shows those countries with better progress since 2010.

DK, FR, FI, and NO experienced trust problems with e-commerce above the EU average, with no progress in the last five years. Mistrust in RO, MT, SE, LV and PT has risen sharply and is above the EU average (right side of the charts). MT, AT and NL seem to have seen a large drop in trust in online banking services.



Source: Eurostat

In some countries security concerns are keeping internet users away from e-commerce, while in others, they inspire more selective defensive behaviour.

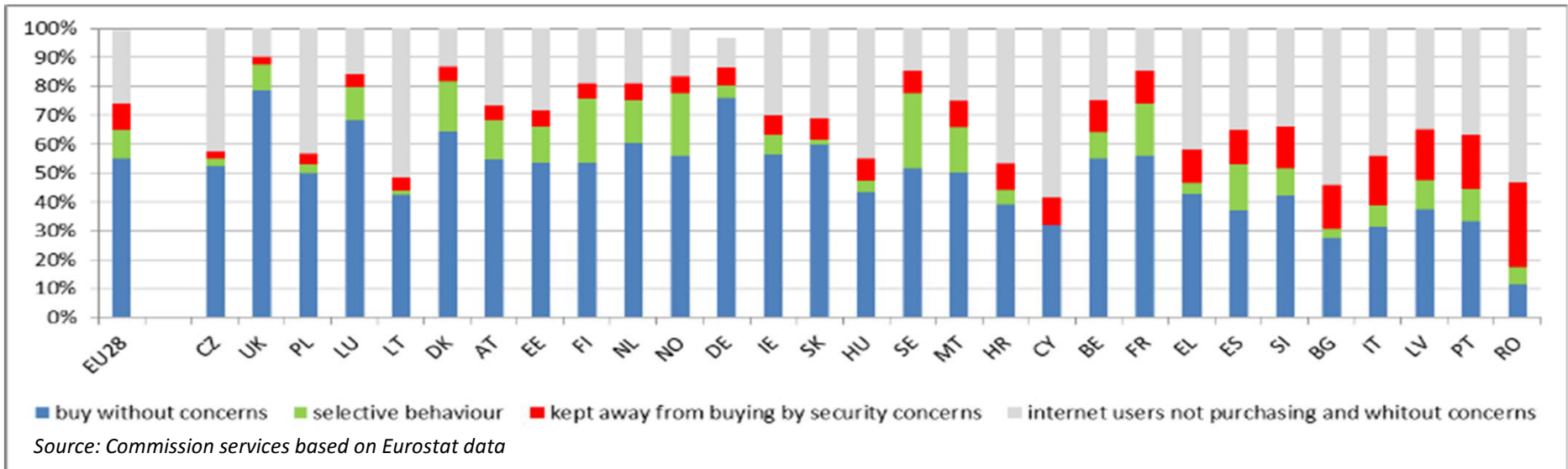
Internet users can be divided into four groups, according to whether they have purchased online (yes/no), and whether security concerns limited or kept them away from e-commerce (yes/no).

At EU level, 9 % of internet users (red segment) are completely deterred from buying online by their concerns. It is an important issue to address to develop the Digital Single Market, and in countries like PT and RO it involves 20 % or more persons.

For another 10 % of EU internet users (green segment), security concerns seem to simply limit shopping online. The phenomenon could be interpreted as depending on internet users' capacity to distinguish which websites do or do not deserve trust, and in which situations, such as when using public wifi, it is preferable not to conduct money transactions.

The countries where this selective defensive behaviour seems more developed are: SE, NO, FI, FR, DK, MT, ES and NL.

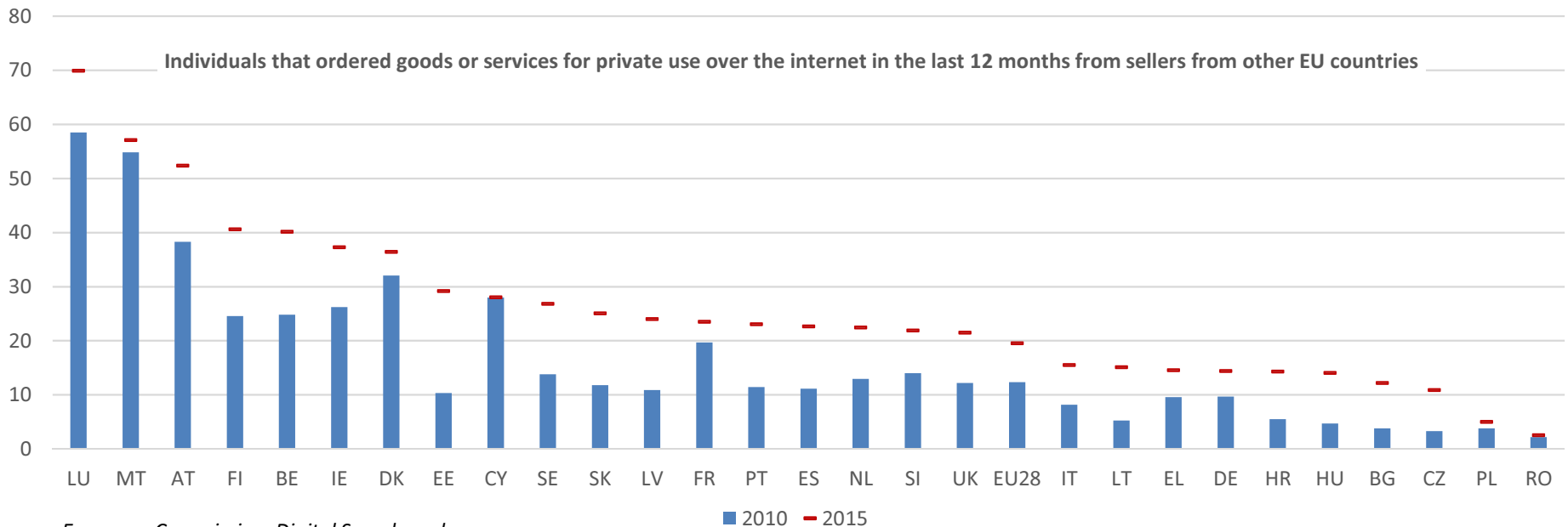
Security concerns and their impact on eCommerce, EU-28+, 2015 (% internet users)



eCommerce: Individuals **ordering cross-border** goods or services online.

While 53 % of citizens shop online, only 16 % engage in cross-border eCommerce. While cross-border online shopping is advancing, it is doing so rather slowly, having increased 7 percentage points over the last five years. The differences between Member States are quite big, ranging from Luxembourg, at 68 %, to Romania with under 2 % of people shopping online with sellers from other EU countries.

The 2015 survey of online consumers showed that, for cross-border purchases from other EU Member States, delivery costs (27 %), high return shipping costs (24 %) and long delivery times (23 %) are among the main consumer concerns. A large number of perceived obstacles relate to key consumer rights, such as return and replacement (getting a faulty product replaced or repaired, 20 %; returning a product consumers did not like and getting reimbursed, 20 %). Concerns related to redress were also frequently quoted, i.e. the difficulty of solving problems if something goes wrong (23 %).



Source: European Commission, Digital Scoreboard

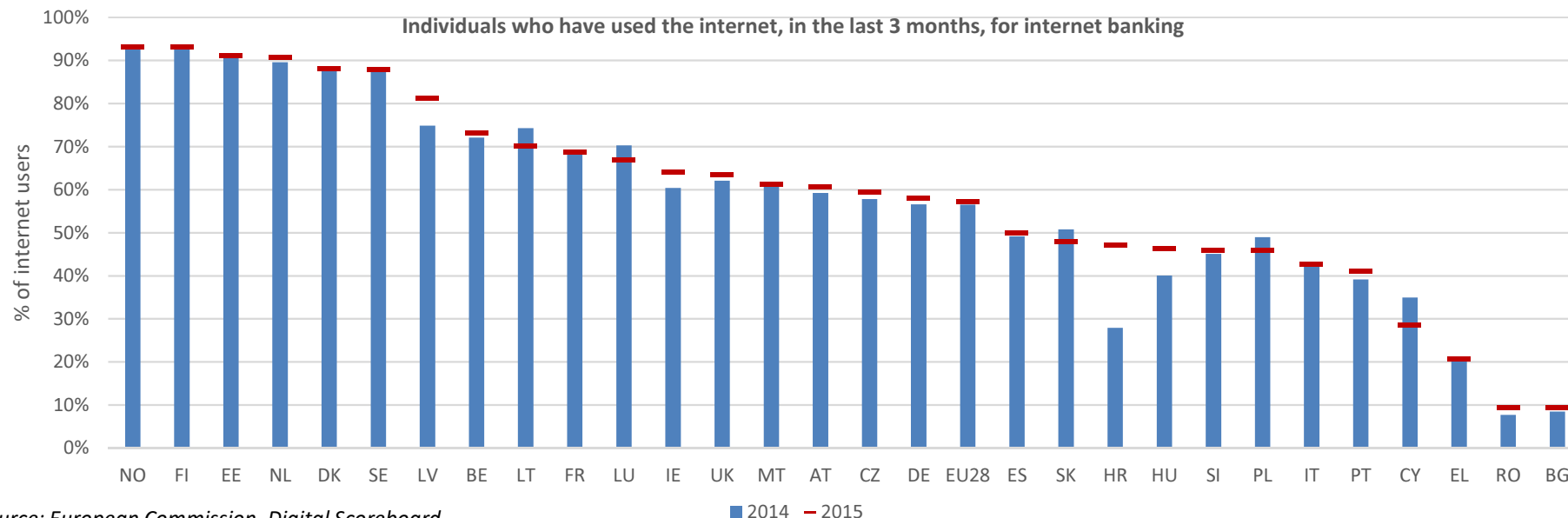
More than half of EU Internet users use online banking.

Online banking is a common activity among internet users. **More than half** of internet users in the EU **transact with their bank online**.

High shares of internet users doing online banking are recorded in **Finland (93 %)**, **Estonia and the Netherlands (91 % each)** for 2015. The differences between Member States are big, with **Bulgaria (9 %)** and **Romania (10 %)** having the lowest figures.

Concerning progress in the EU overall, **from 2010 to 2015 the percentage** of internet users doing online banking **increased slightly** from 52 % to 57 %. Between 2014 and 2015 there was no change.

Countries with high levels of online banking among internet users also tend to have high rates of eCommerce.



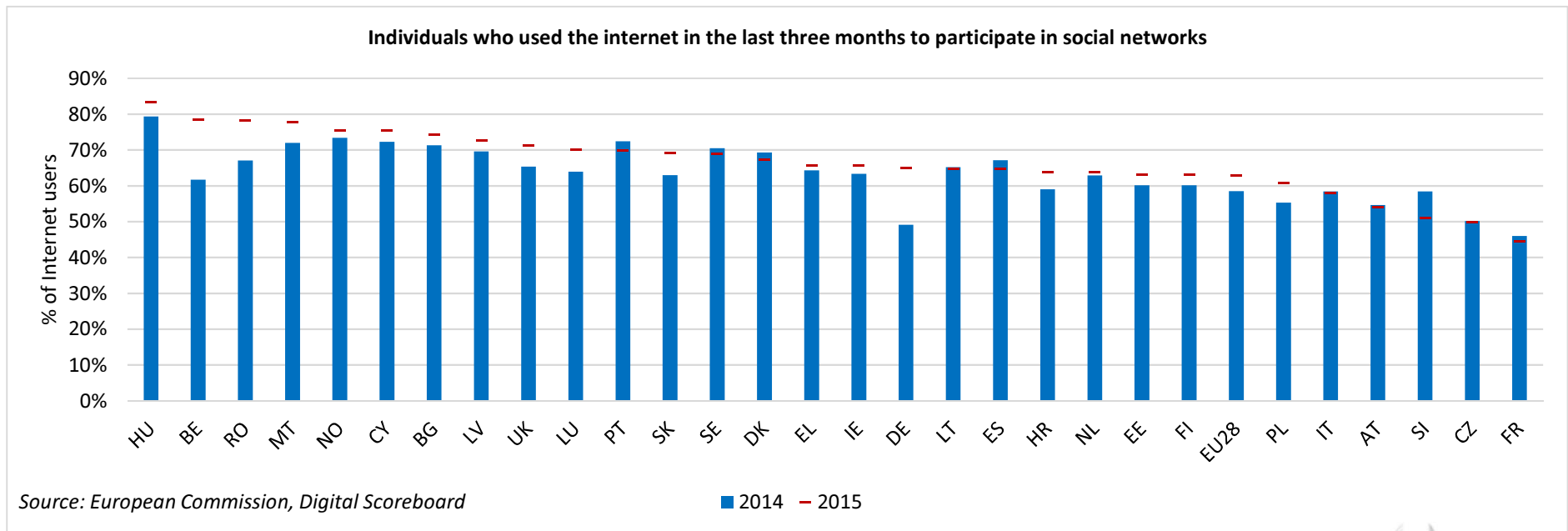
Source: European Commission, Digital Scoreboard

Participation in social networks online is still increasing.

Social networks have been around for some time and is a common and popular activity among internet users. In 2015, 63 % of internet users participated in social networks. Among 16- to 24-year-olds, the rate of users is close to saturation at 90 %, while the older age groups still see growth in the number of users. Participation in social networks online is an activity with a high frequency of use and all groups see growth in time spent on social networks. While Facebook is the dominant platform, there are several different choices. The higher the age, the more dominant Facebook is as the choice of network. Among younger people, other services are more frequently used.

The country with the biggest proportion of internet users on social networks is Hungary, with 83 %. Belgium, Malta and Romania follow with 78 % of users each.

Most European countries saw an increase in the number of social network users between 2014 and 2015. Belgium and Germany had big increases of 16 or 17 percentage points. Some countries saw small declines. France has the lowest share of users and has not seen any increase over the last four years. This was also the situation in Germany until a sudden increase in 2015.



The internet becomes **mobile**.

Mobile use of the internet in Europe really started to take off around 2010. Today 43 % of the population (aged 16-74 years) use their mobile phone to access the internet when they are away from home or work. Mobile internet increases the opportunity to access online services. Some countries like Finland and Sweden have seen steep growth over the last five years and are approaching 70 % of users. Yet, these countries still have high rates of growth.

If growth in use continues, mobile devices could be expected to overtake computers as the primary tool for accessing services and content online. There is of course a correlation between internet use in general and the use of internet on a mobile phone. Still, some countries have a higher rate of mobile users among their internet users than others. In Spain, 80 % of internet users are mobile, while in Cyprus the number is only 32 %.

