

# *The eInclusion dimension:*

Ensuring equal access to  
"services of public interest"  
for all

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# The issues of concern

- Digital divides:
  - First order (online vs. not online)
  - Second order (getting real benefits online)
  
- At-risk groups:
  - Low income / in poverty
  - Low education
  - Unemployed
  - Disabled
  - Older people
  - Ethnic minorities
  - Disadvantaged areas
  - Etc.
  
- Challenge – ensure equal access to services of public interest for all:
  - Those online
  - Those not online



# The scope of “services of public interest”

- **Publicly provided** services only?
- Services **of public interest** (government, health, education).....  
.....even if provided by private sector?
- Other services of significant public (consumer) interest.....  
e.g. **commercial services** that are *only* available online,  
services offering *cheaper* prices online etc.?



# Themes

- Access / affordability
- Digital literacy
- eAccessibility
- Usability
- Second order digital divides
- Continued (and equal) access to services of public interest
- eDemocracy



# 1. Access / affordability



- Most Member States have introduced some measures
- PIAPs most common, with varying forms and levels of coverage
- Financial subsidies for home computer purchase and / or Internet connection in some countries, with varying approaches
- Only a few countries have financial supports targeted directly towards those at most (financial) risk
- Access to broadband is also on the agenda in some countries; US initiatives for low income groups are of interest in this regard
- Cost / affordability issues vary significantly across the EU25
- Different approaches may be warranted, depending on the national context

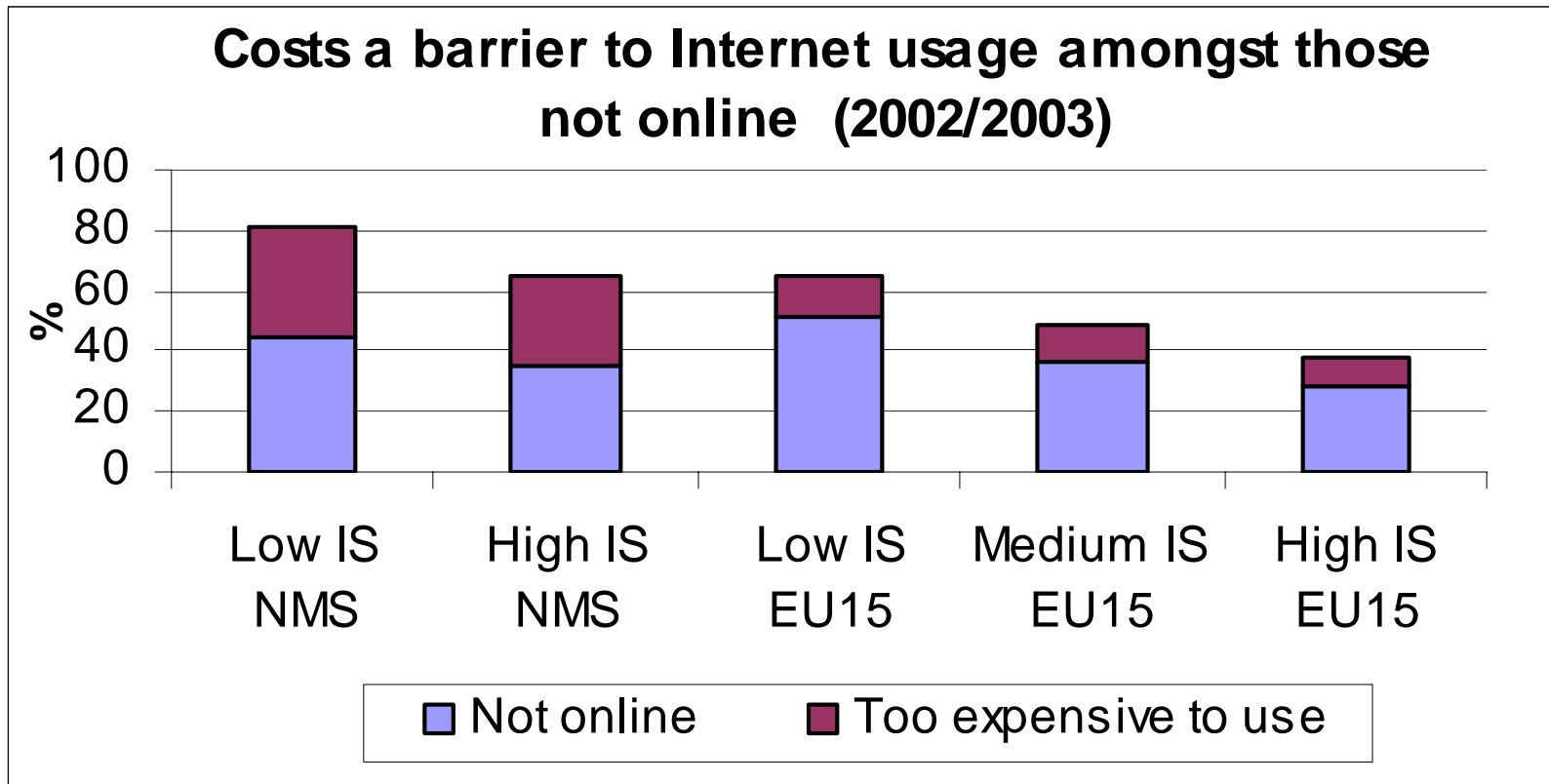


# Typology of EU countries

Low IS NMS	LV, LT, HU, PL, SK, MT, CY (BG, RO)
High IS NMS	CZ, EE, SL
Low IS EU15	EL, ES, FR, IT, PT
Medium IS EU15	BE, DE, IE, LU, AT
High IS EU15	DK, NL, FI, SE, UK



## Cost Barriers - a lot higher in NMS

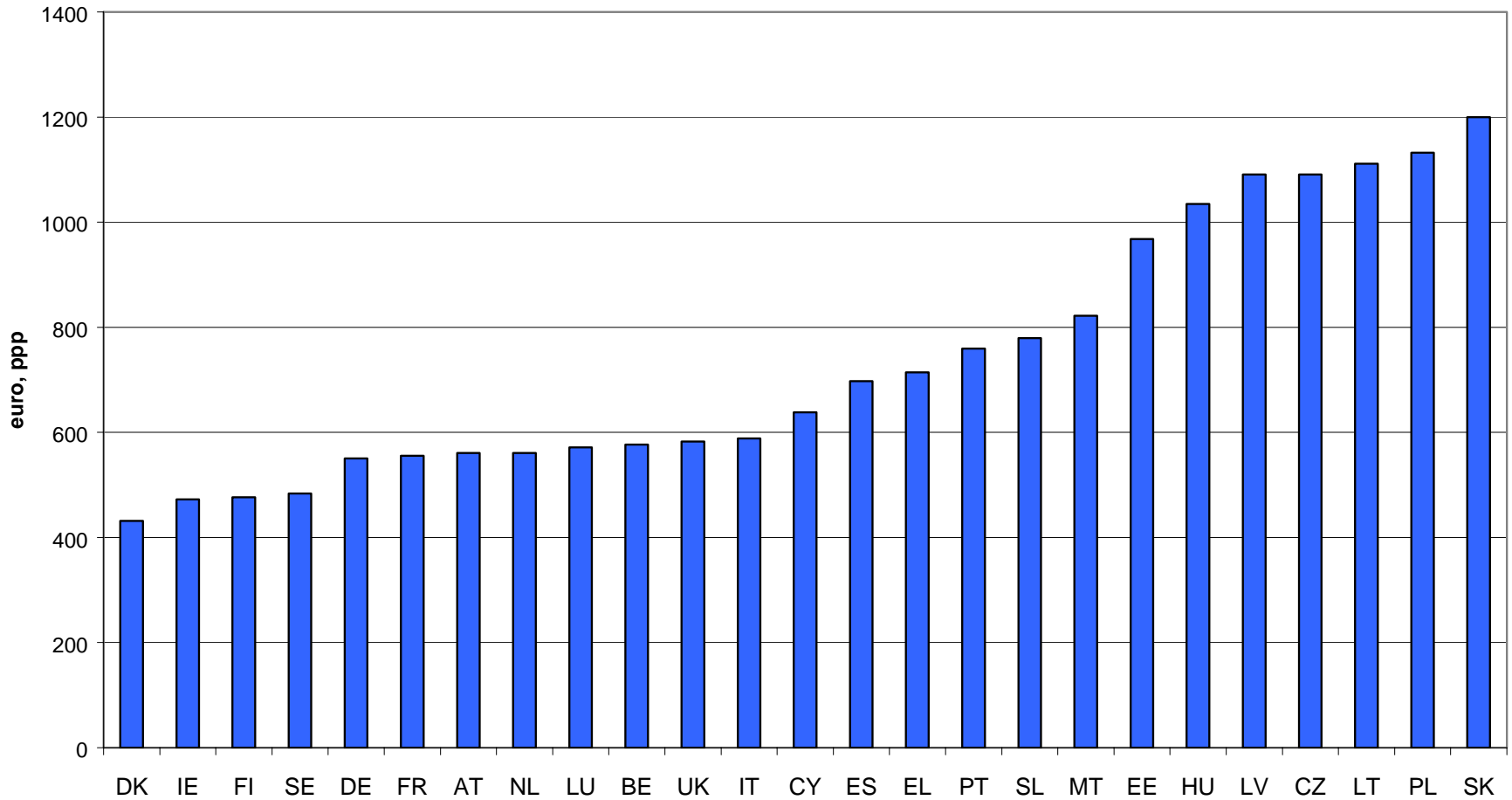


Source: SIBIS



# PCs - relatively much more expensive in NMS

Relative cost of 600 euro PC, ppp

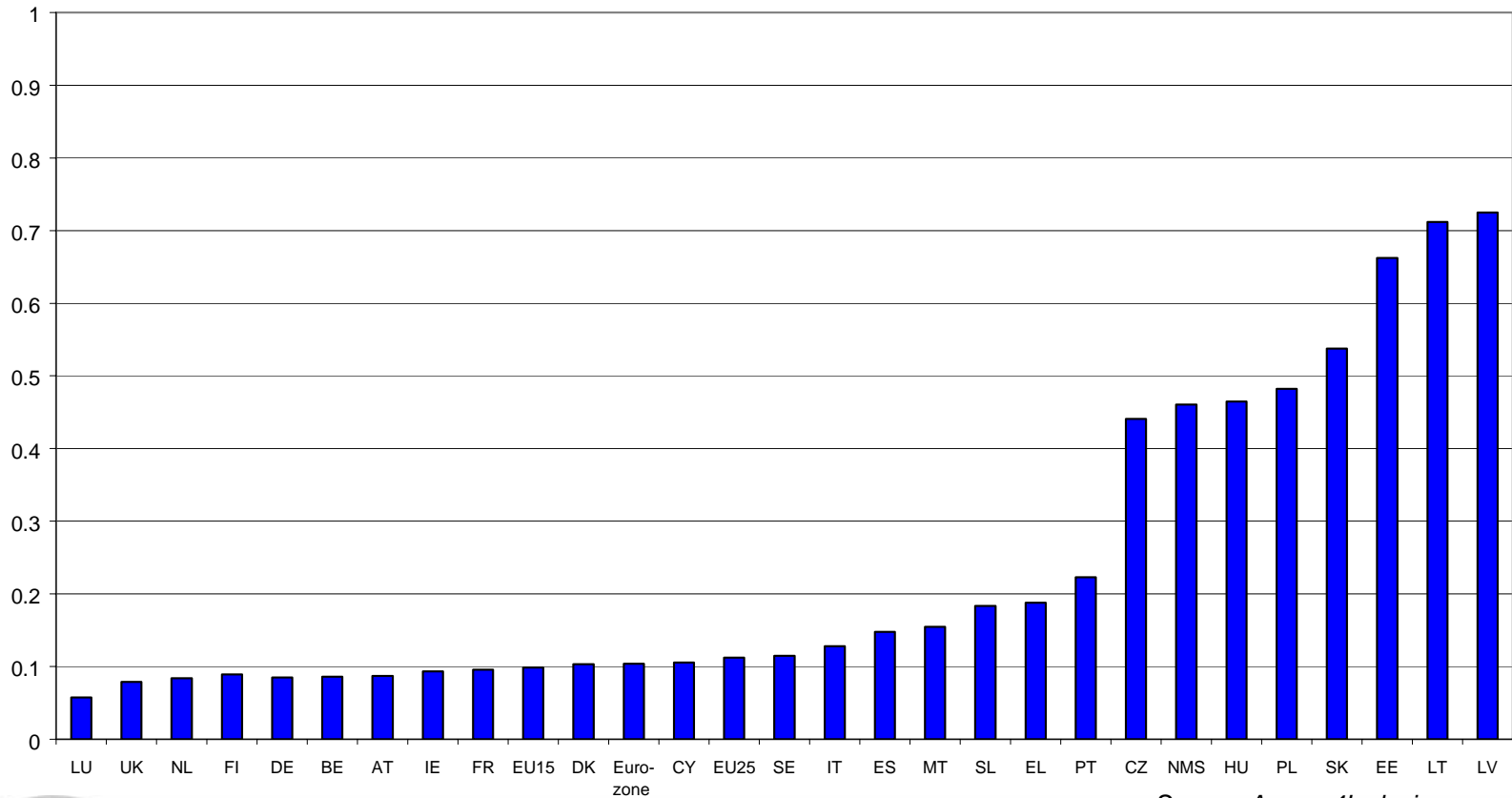


Source: Access4Inclusion



# PC costs for those at risk of Poverty - more than half of annual income in some NMS!

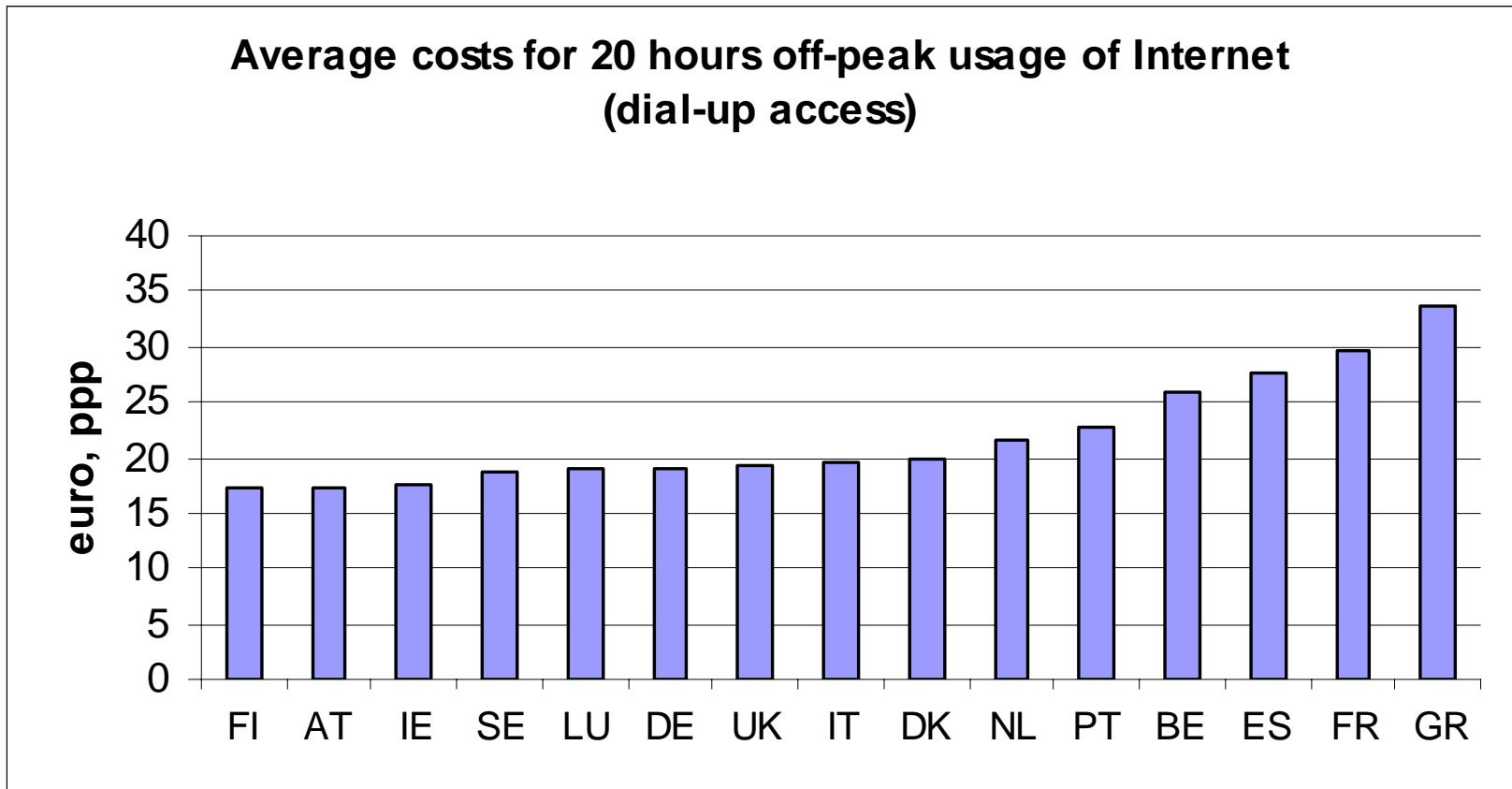
Cost of a computer as a ratio of poverty threshold (60% of median) in 2001, PPS



Source: Access4Inclusion



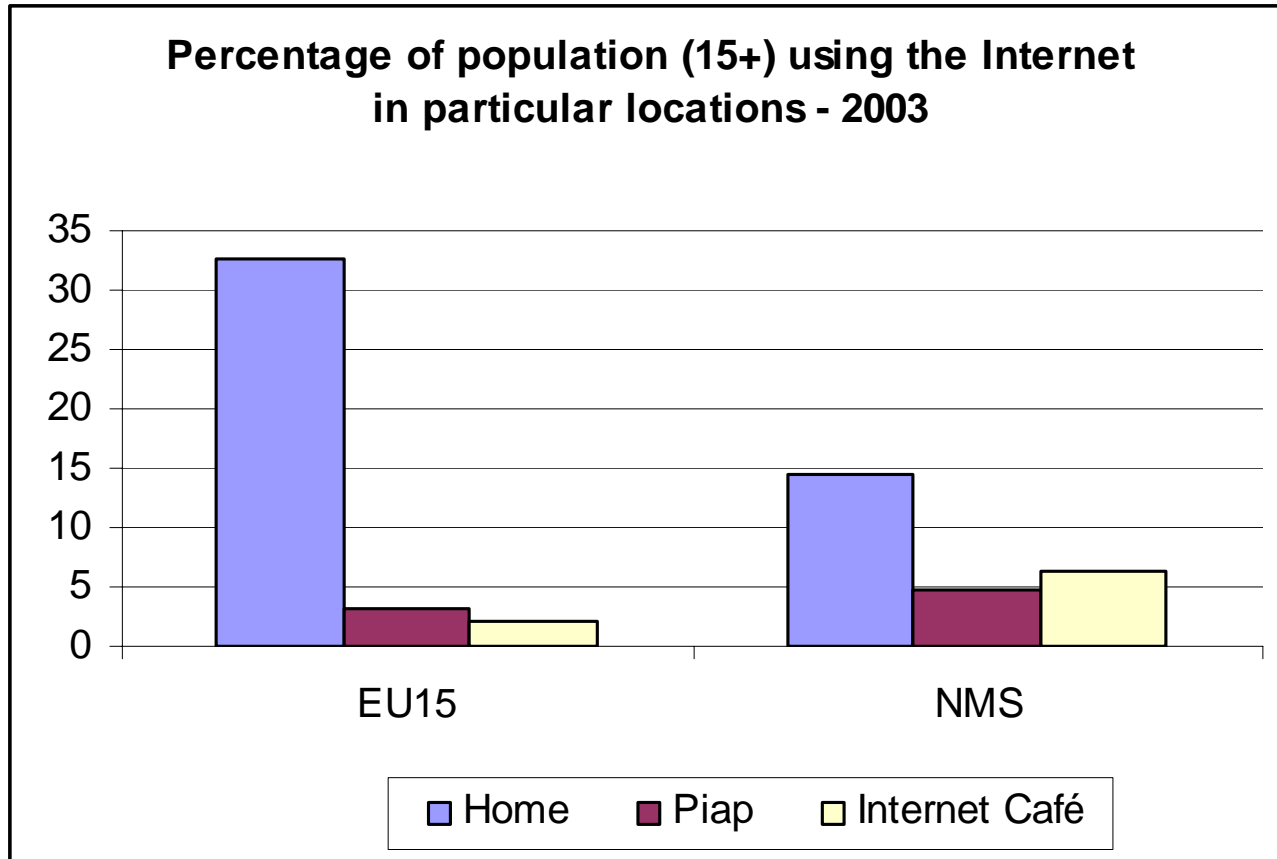
# Internet usage costs - vary within and between countries



Source: Teligen / EC



## More significant in NMS



Source: Eurobarometer



## 2. Digital literacy

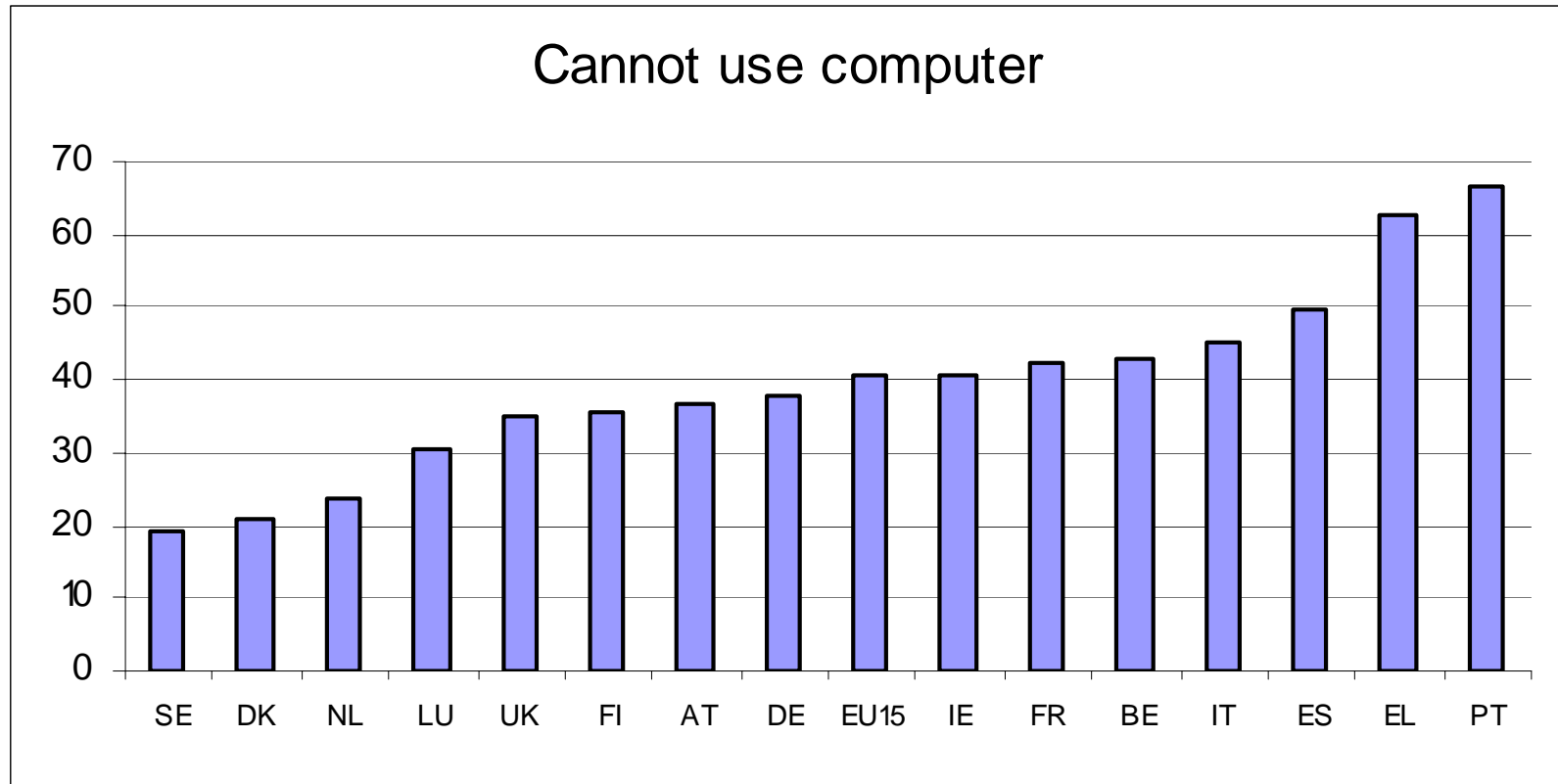


# Overview

- Most Member States have introduced some measures
- Approaches vary considerably, from nation-wide to local
- Some but not all countries have substantial efforts to target at-risk groups
- ECDL-based approaches are prominent in some but not all countries
- Access to ICTs in schools varies considerably between and within Member States, access is often lower for disadvantaged children
- Levels of ICT literacy of the population vary between and within Member States, a lot lower for disadvantaged and other at-risk groups



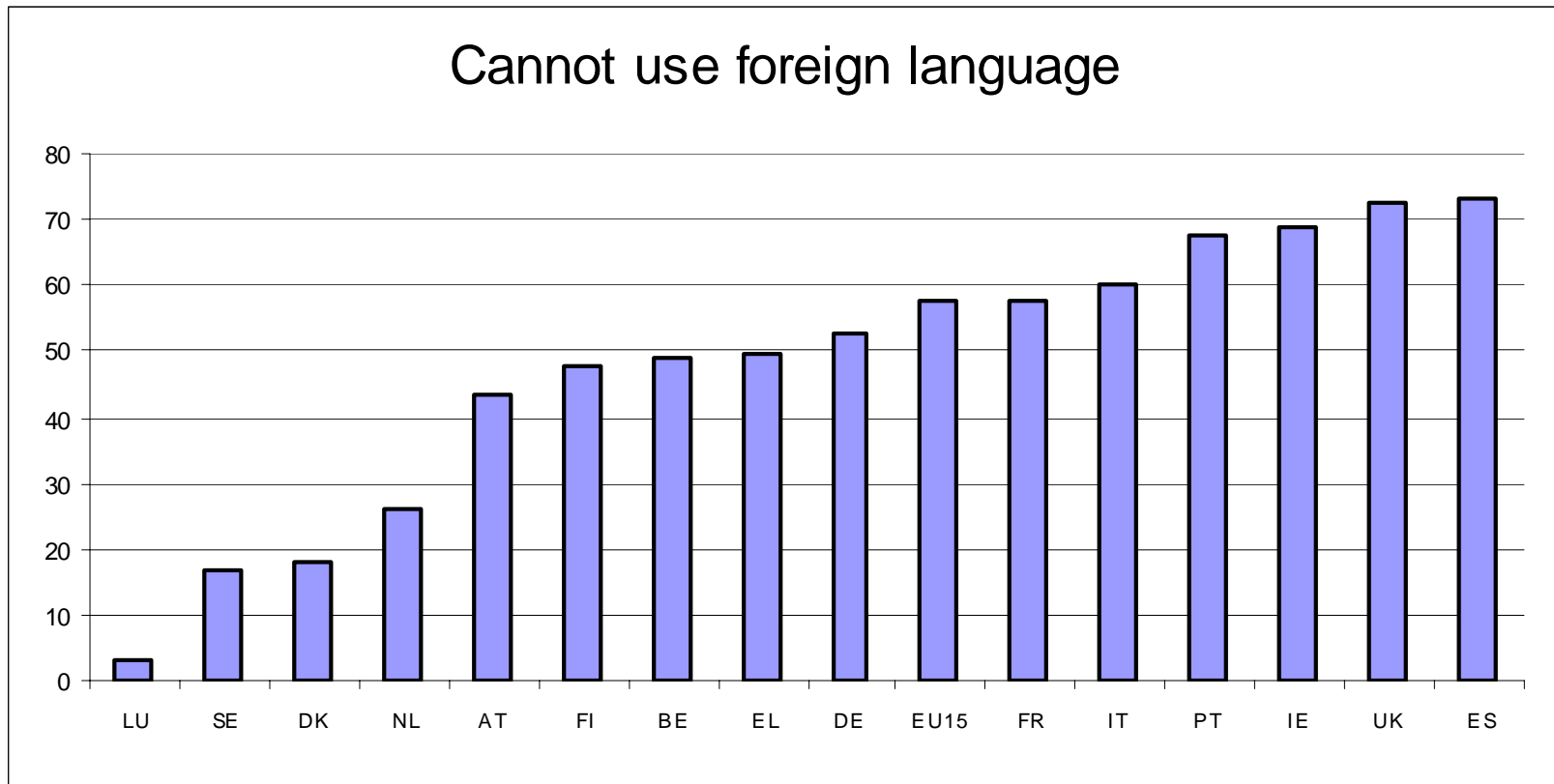
# 40% of EU15 adults cannot use a computer, with wide variations across countries



Source: CEDEFOP



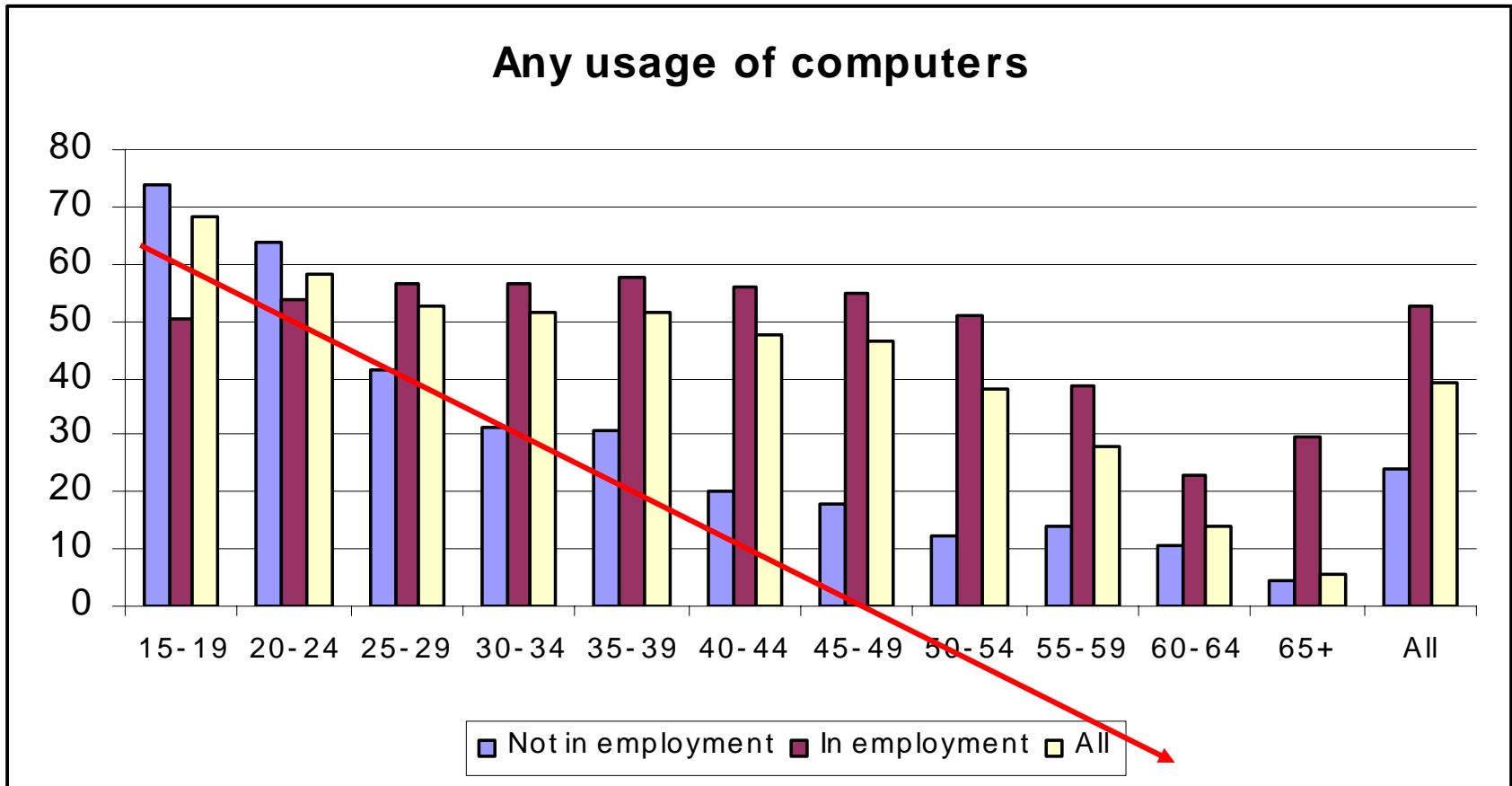
## Nearly 60% of EU15 adults cannot use a foreign language, with wide variations across countries



Source: CEDEFOP



# Skill gaps highest amongst older age groups outside the workforce



Source: Eurobarometer

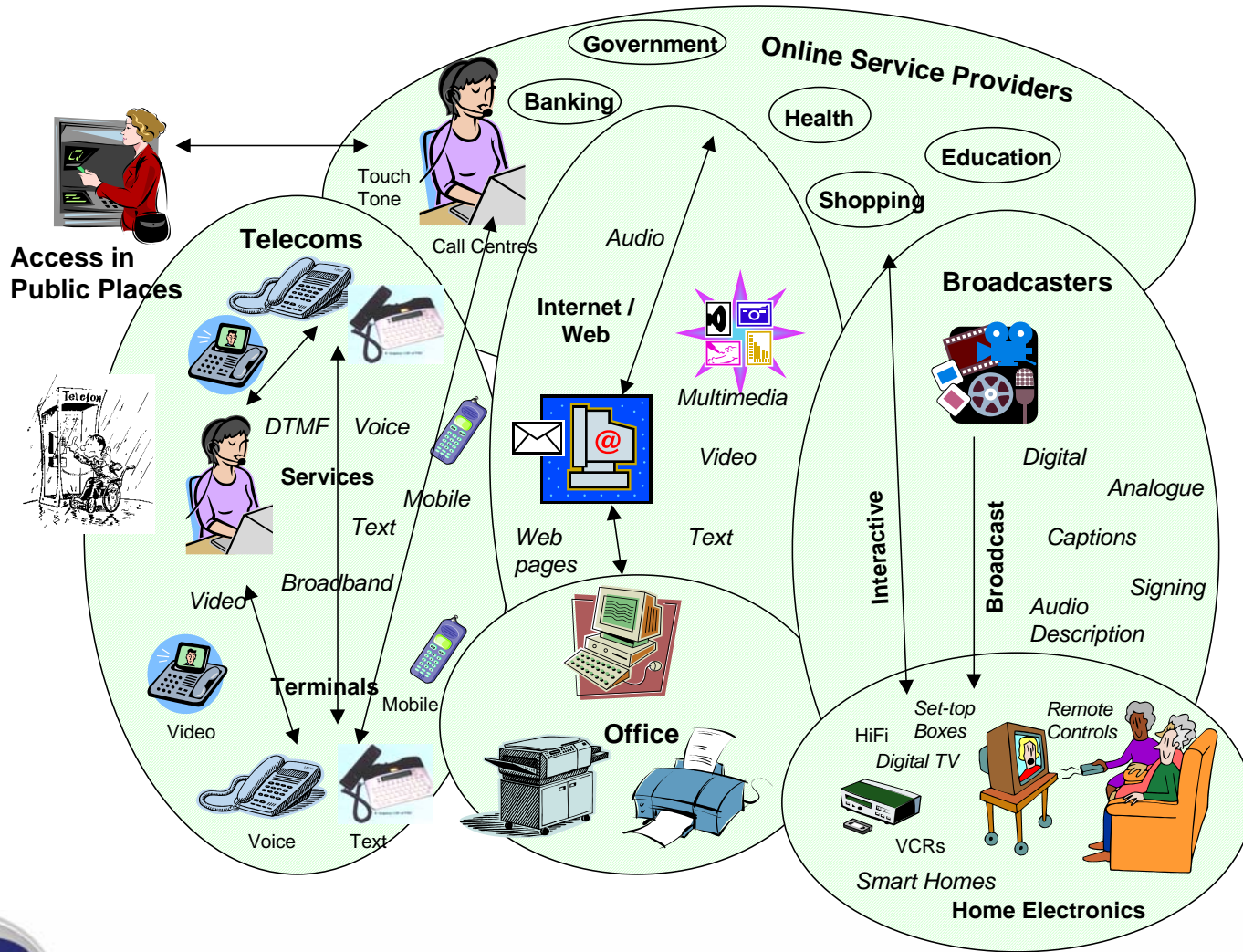


# 3. Accessibility

- Meeting the needs of people with disabilities
- Also helps to make online services more usable for others (*Design for All*)
- Many dimensions:
  - Web sites (WAI – W3C)
  - Digital TV
  - Mobile phones
  - Public kiosks
  - Call centres
  - etc.



# Relevant ISTs and value chains



- There is a lot of activity across Europe:
  - Accessibility of *public web sites* is on the agenda in most countries, although efforts and outcomes vary so far
  - Some countries are addressing accessibility in other ways – *standards, public procurement* and so on
  
- A lot of variability in the level of effort and types of approach across the Member States
  
- Needs to be addressed mostly through standard / universal approaches
  
- Needs continued and reinforced attention at EU and Member State level
  - Strong implementation by Member States of the relevant *EU Directives* (Public Procurement, Universal Service) and *Council Decisions* (Public Web sites)



## 4. eService Usability

- Not much attention within eInclusion (or social inclusion) measures, nor in eGovernment-related activities more generally
  
- Some relevant activity in some Member States:
  - One-stop-shop and “life events” structures in portals
  - Plain language
  - Multi-lingual
  - Attention to usability in design
  
- Needs a lot more attention at EU and Member State level

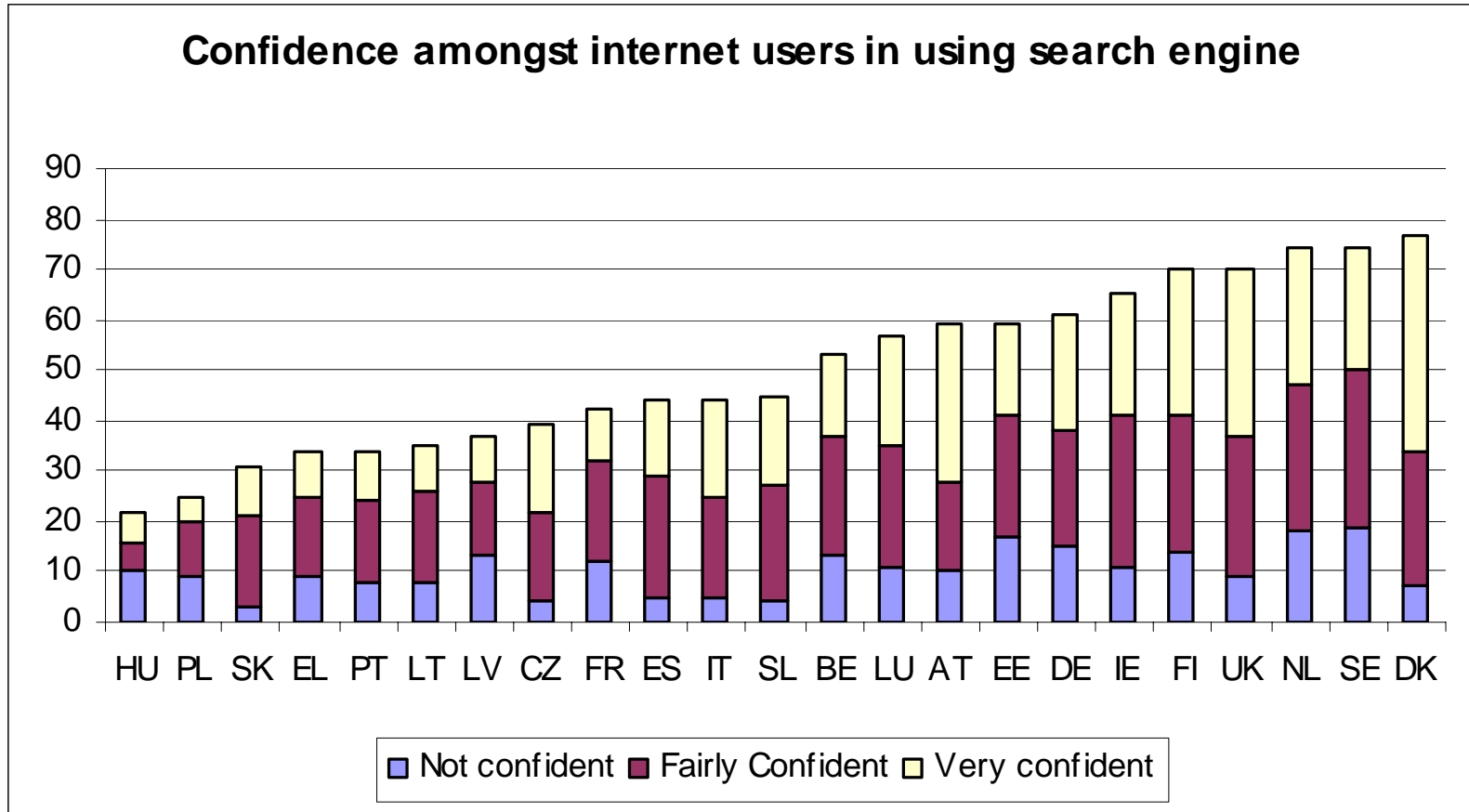


## 5. Second order digital divides

- Not much attention within eInclusion (or social inclusion) measures
- Not much evidence of concerted efforts to ensure those at-risk get real practical benefits from the Internet
- Are some examples, for example, online job-seeking for unemployed
- Are substantial differences in online skills across and within Member States
- Needs more (focused) attention at EU and Member State levels



# Confidence in using search engine

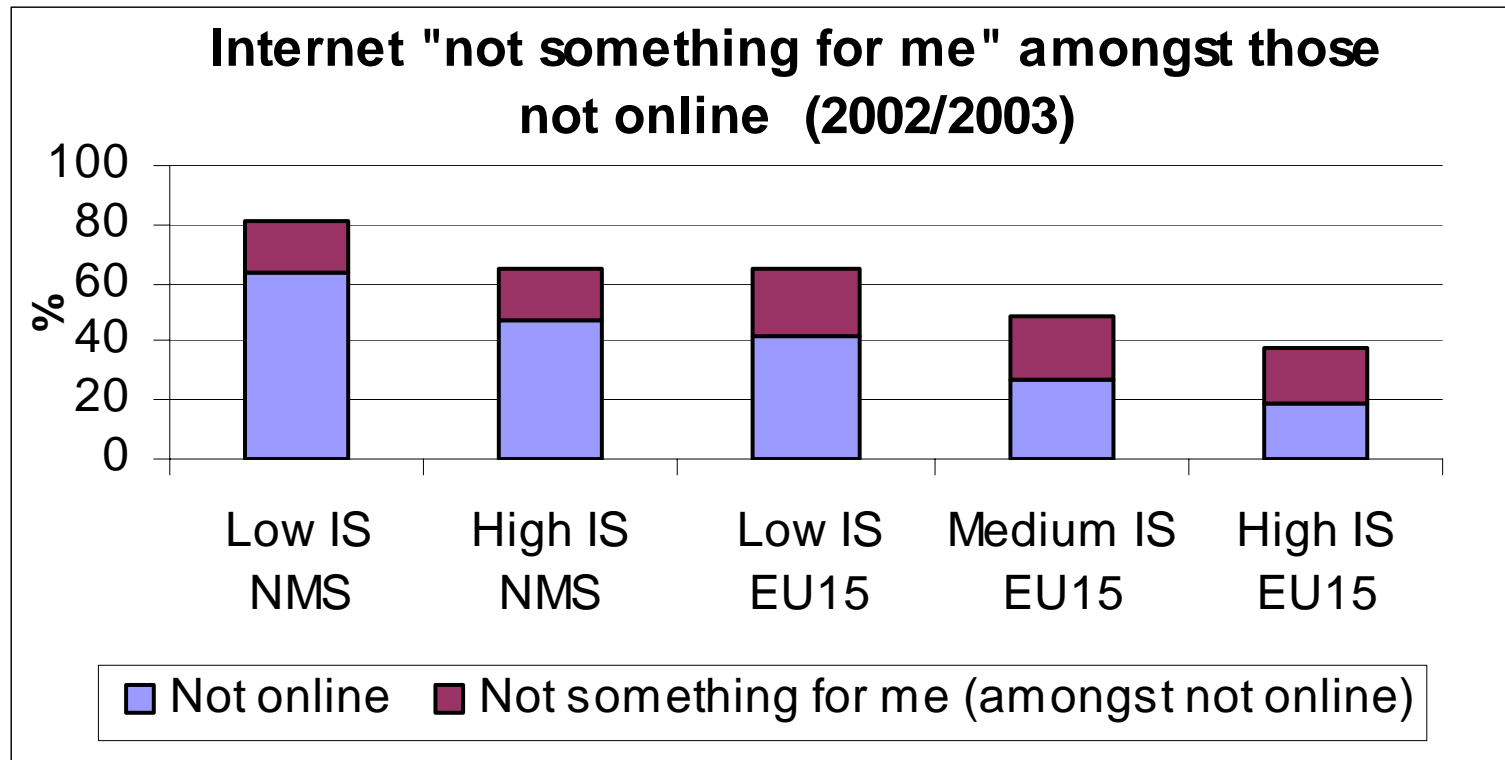


## 6. Continued (and equal) access to services of public interest (for non-Internet users)

- Not much attention within eInclusion (or social inclusion) measures, nor in eGovernment-related activities more generally
  
- Some relevant activity in some Member States:
  - Use cheaper / more widely available platforms (Digital TV and SMS)
  - Maintenance / improvement of more traditional channels (face-to-face, phone)
  
- Not much evidence of efforts to ensure that at-risk groups are in position to avail of the consumer benefits (cheaper goods and services online, more information for informed choice)

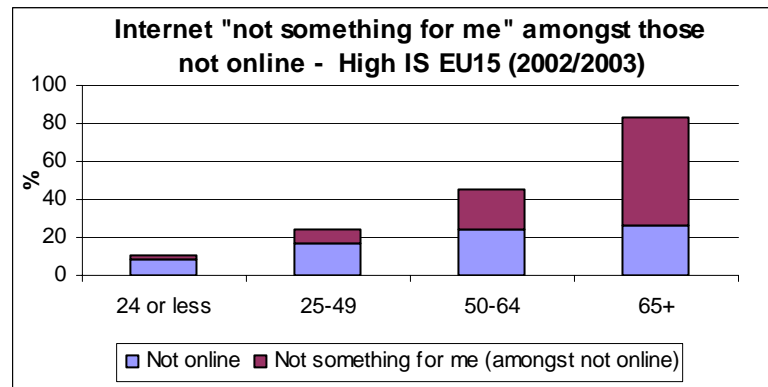
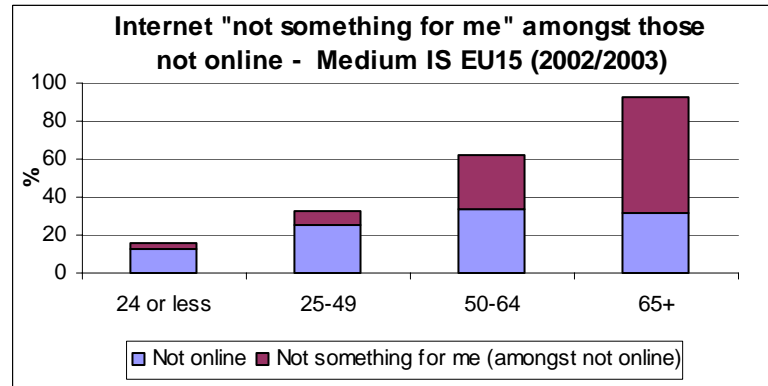
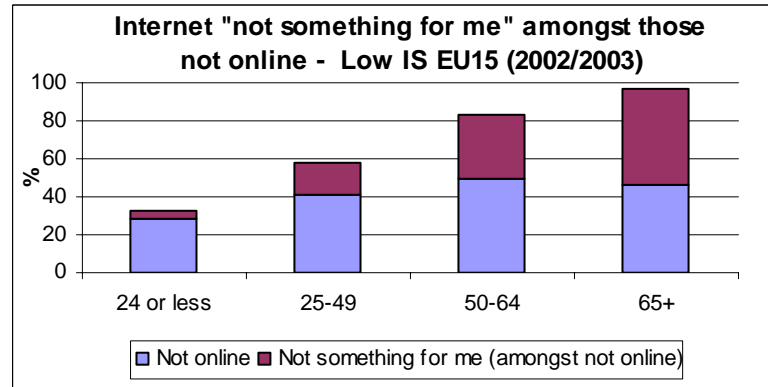
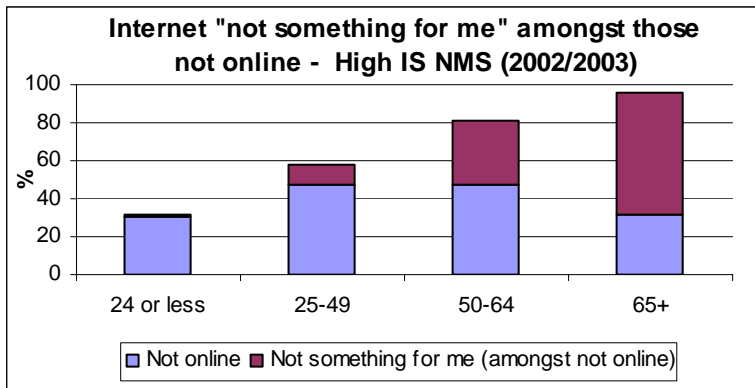
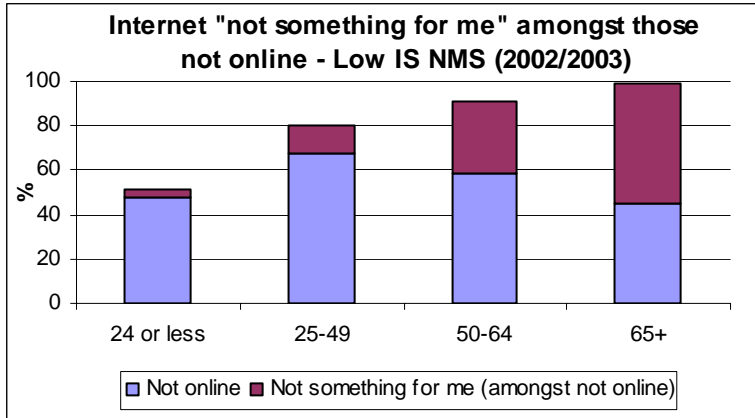


## Some (will remain) not interested



## Older people have lower usage and are least interested

### NMS





# 7. eDemocracy

- Initiatives on this theme only identified in a small number of countries
- Quite a lot of attention in a few countries (e.g. UK, Italy)
- Types of measure included:
  - Making democratic processes more visible and interactive (e.g. live webcasts of council meetings)
  - Encouragement of active citizenship, including engagement of at-risk groups in policy formulation (e.g. SMS polling)



# Thank You!

