



## How to communicate the added value of biodiverse vegetables?

Claudia Meier ([claudia.meier@fibl.org](mailto:claudia.meier@fibl.org)); Bernadette Oehen ([bernadette.oehen@fibl.org](mailto:bernadette.oehen@fibl.org))

Results from the EU funded project DIVERSIFOOD  
Biofach 2019

Nürnberg, February 2019

# Background



# Study design

## Method:

- Representative online survey in the LINK and Norstat Internet-Panel in Switzerland, France, Spain and Italy

## Field work:

- August 10th to August 21st 2017

## Sample sizes:

- $n = 500/\text{country}$

## Recruitment criteria:

- Internet access, aged 18 to 69, (co-)responsible for food shopping, eating vegetables

# Research question I

Which product attributes are most important for consumers when they buy vegetables in a supermarket?

Which product attributes to focus on in the communication with consumers?

→ Supermarket setting because people are most familiar with this purchase channel

# Results I – Importance of attributes

	Total	CH	FR	ESP	IT
Good taste	High	High	High	High	High
Produced in your region	High	High	High	Medium	High
Produced in your country	High	High	High	Medium	High
Impeccable and fresh appearance	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Organic or pesticide free	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Good price	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Traditional, old variety	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Special or unfamiliar colour	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Special or unfamiliar shape or size	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

# Results I – Importance of attributes

	Total	CH	FR	ESP	IT
Good taste	High	High	High	High	High
Produced in your region	High	High	High	Medium	High
Produced in your country	High	High	High	Medium	High
Impeccable and fresh appearance	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Organic or pesticide free	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Good price	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Traditional, old variety	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Special or unfamiliar colour	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Special or unfamiliar shape or size	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

# Results I – Importance of attributes

	Total	CH	FR	ESP	IT
Good taste	High	High	High	High	High
Produced in your region	High	High	High	Medium	High
Produced in your country	High	High	High	Medium	High
Impeccable and fresh appearance	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Organic or pesticide free	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Good price	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Traditional, old variety	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Special or unfamiliar colour	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Special or unfamiliar shape or size	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

## Research question 2

How much do consumers value that

- biodiverse vegetables come from diversified agroecological systems,
- where the breeding and multiplying of seeds is again in the hands of farmers,
- resulting in a diverse food offer?



## Results 2 – Diversifood label

### Information treatment (including pictures):

*«Our food chain is characterized by an ongoing concentration and standardization on all levels and a concomitant loss in diversity. [...]*

*It is our aim to counteract this concentration process and increase the diversity of our food chain.*

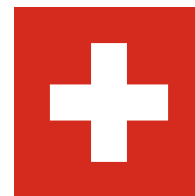
*Nowadays, the breeding and multiplying of seeds is to a large extent in the hands of a small number of large multinational firms who develop so-called industrial varieties.*

*In the future the breeding and multiplying of seeds shall again be in the hands of farmers who would develop so-called «farmers' varieties».*

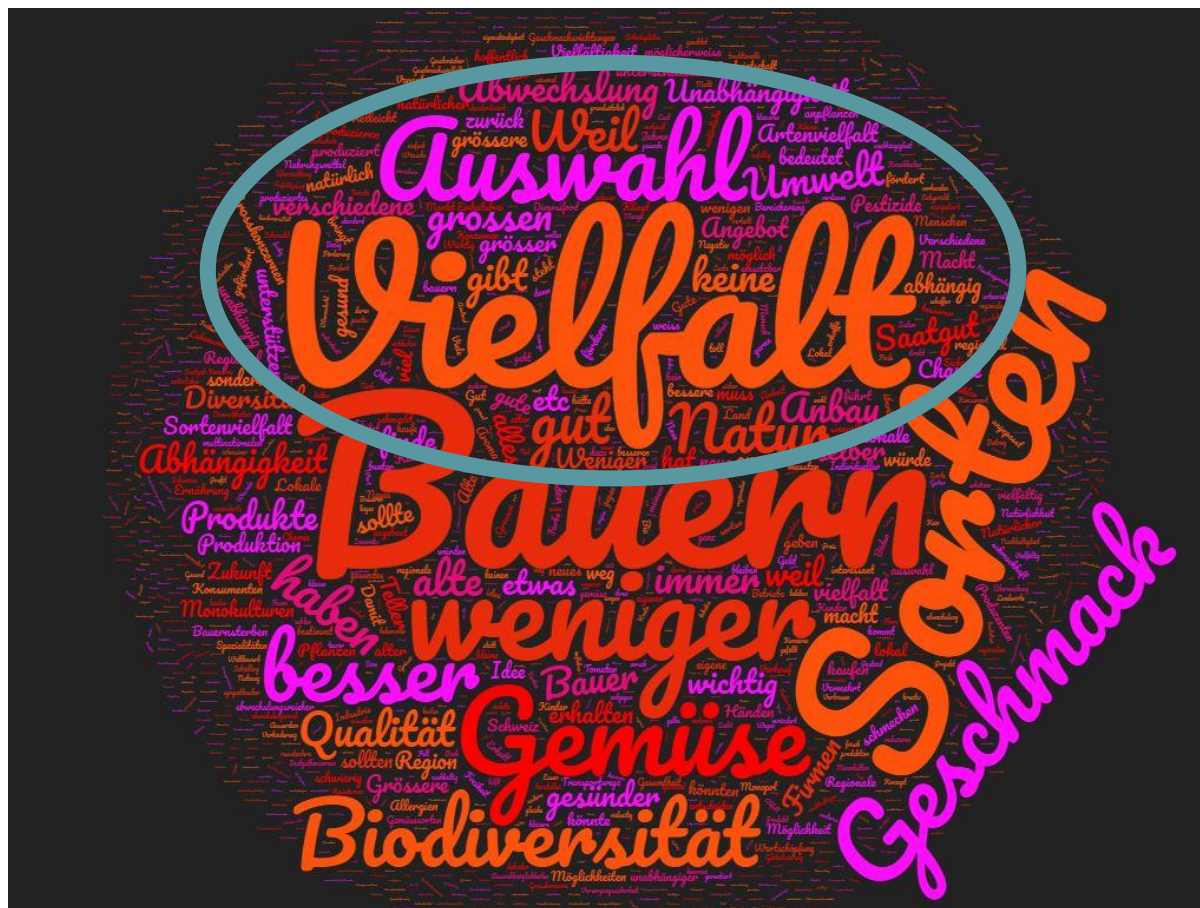
*As a result this would lead to more diverse, locally adapted, healthy and tasty products, so-called «Diversifood»»*

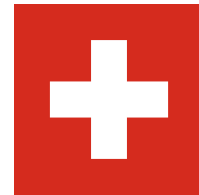
## Results 2 – Diversifood label

- On average 73% of the consumers like this idea and another 14% like it but have some objections.
- In Switzerland, France and Spain a corresponding «Diversifood» label would have a **high importance** and in Italy **medium** importance for consumers when buying vegetables in a supermarket.
- On average, consumers are willing to pay 10% to 20% more for tomatoes with a «Diversifood» label in a supermarket.

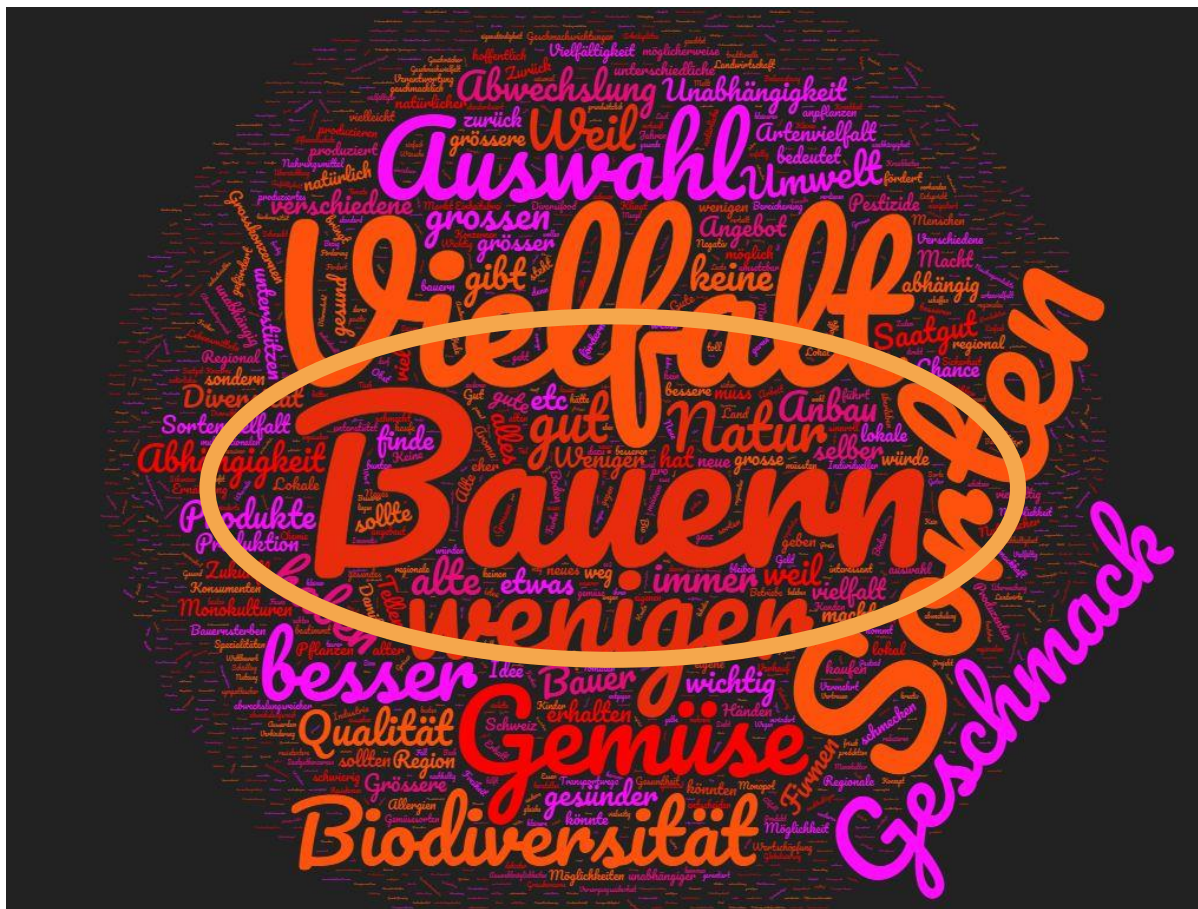


## Results 2 – Diversifood label



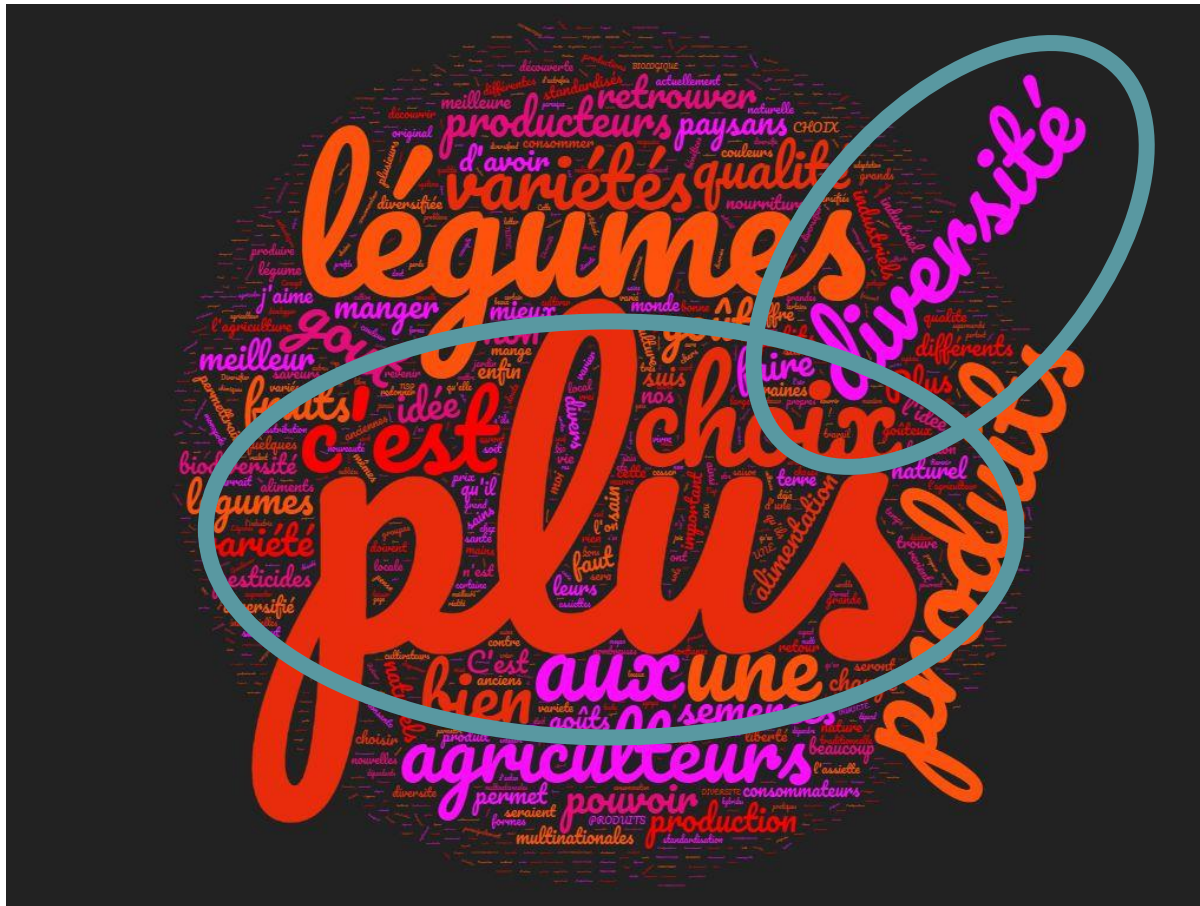
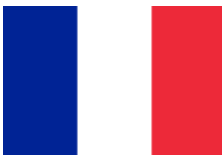


# Results 2 – Diversifood label

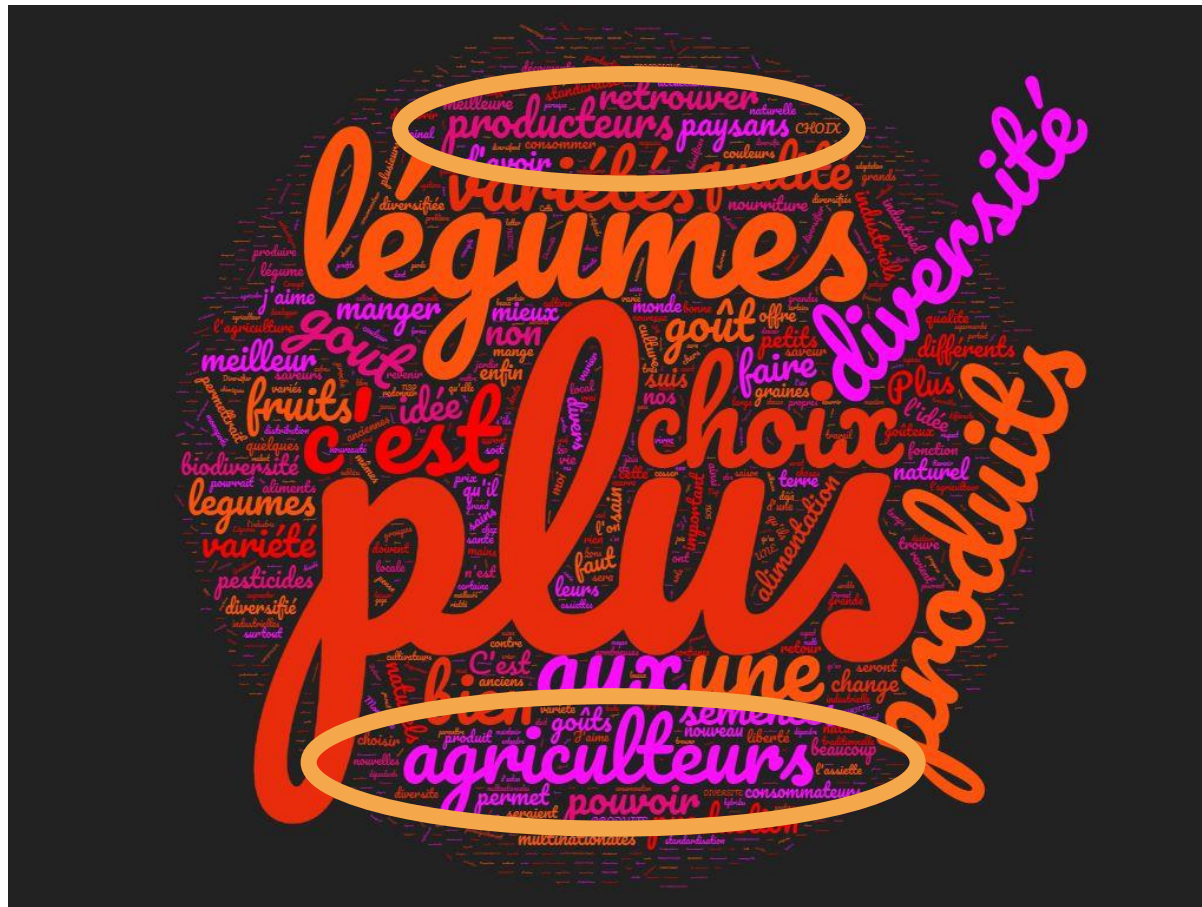
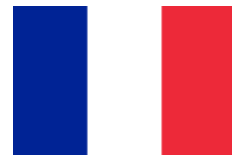




## Results 2 – Diversifood label

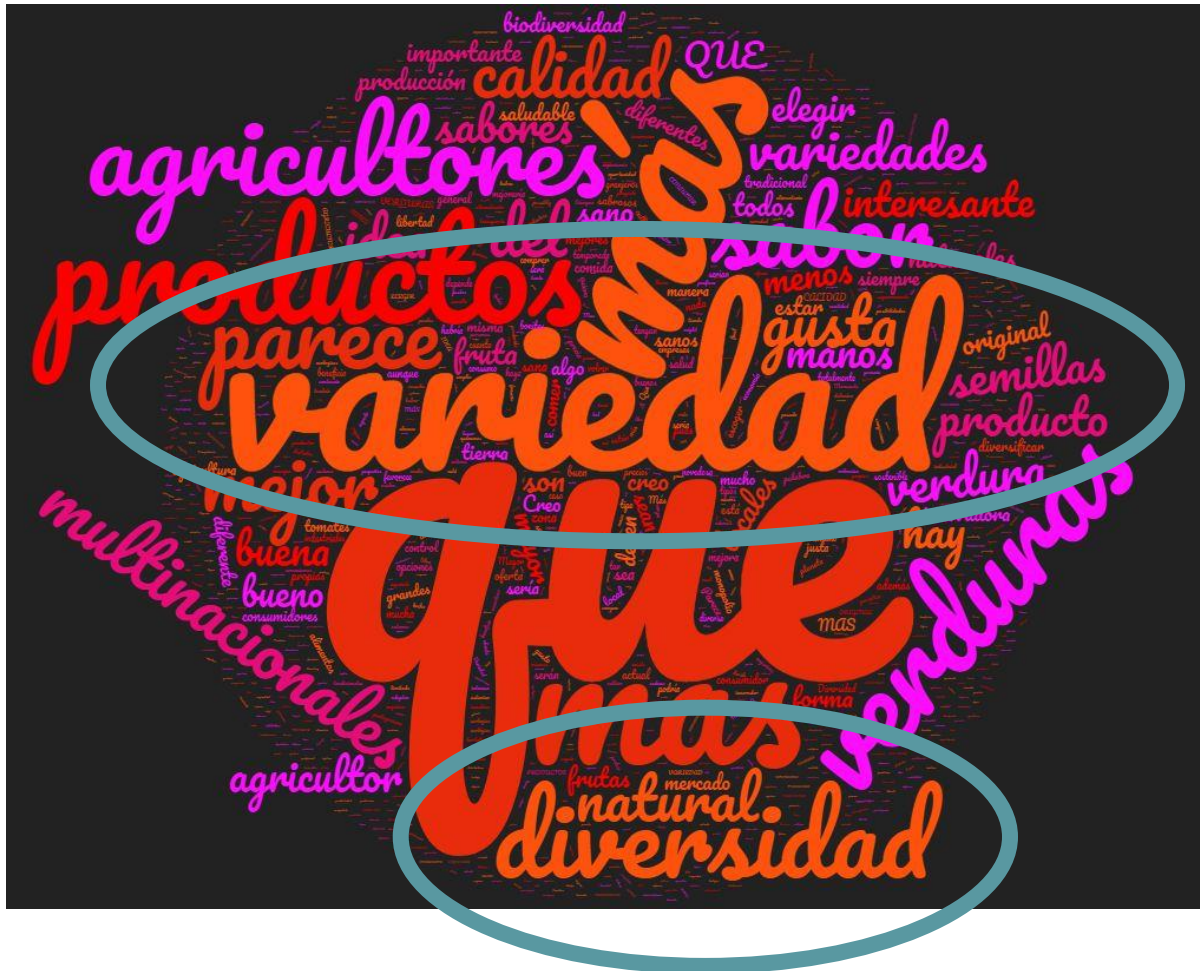


# Results 2 – Diversifood label





## Results 2 – Diversifood label



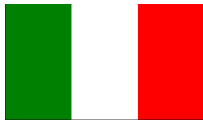




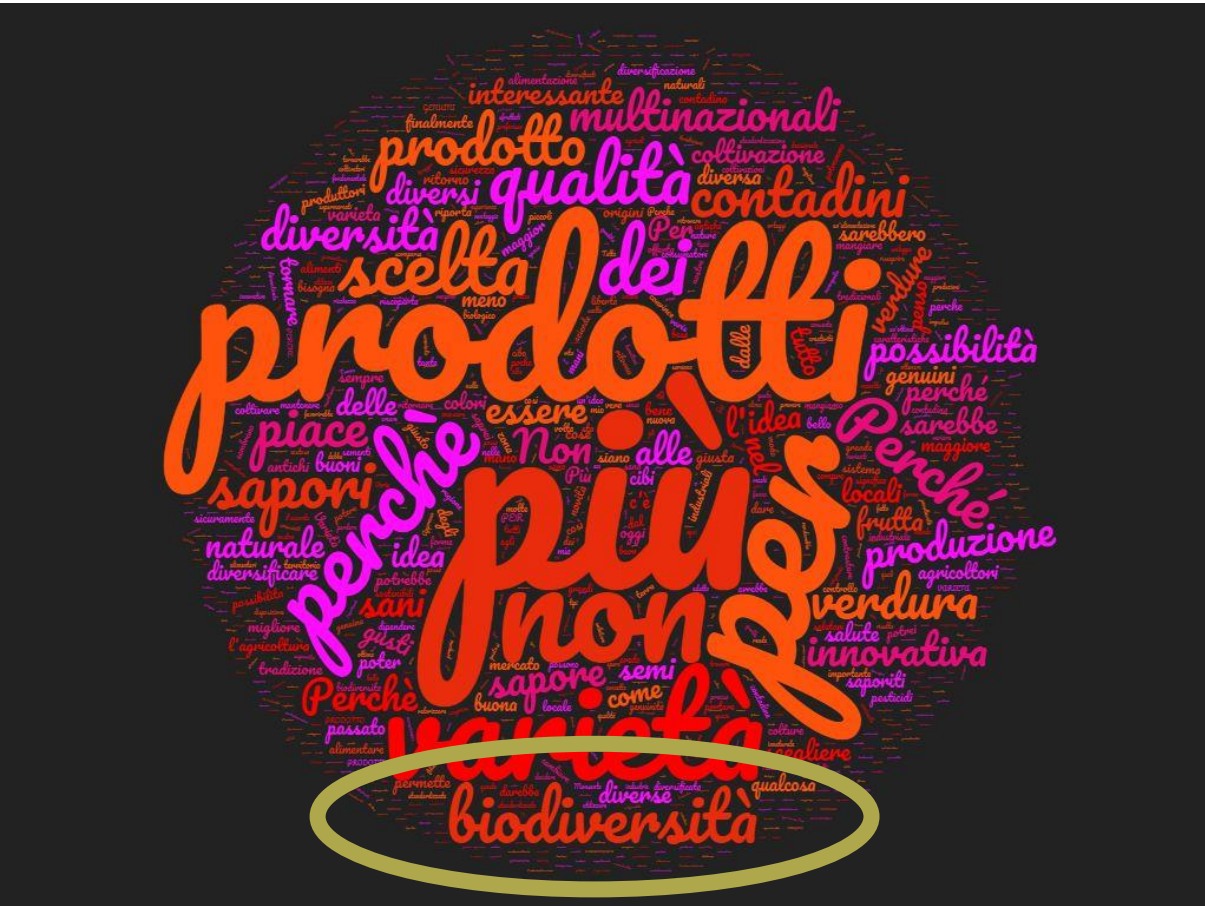
## Results 2 – Diversifood label







# Results 2 – Diversifood label





## Results 2 – Diversifood label

More **diversity**  
(of food, taste/ flavours)

More **biodiversity**

Empowerment of **farmers**  
(more independence,  
freedom, autonomy)

# Conclusions

- In Switzerland, France and Italy communication should focus on taste and provenance, be it regional or national.
- In Spain communication should focus on taste and appearance.
- The majority of consumers like the idea of a label for biodiverse products coming from diversified agroecological systems where the breeding and multiplying of seeds is again in the hands of farmers.
- Label communication should focus on diversity of food and taste, biodiversity and farmers' empowerment.

# Thank you for your attention!



Claudia Meier

[claudia.meier@fibl.org](mailto:claudia.meier@fibl.org)

Bernadette Oehen

[bernadette.oehen@fibl.org](mailto:bernadette.oehen@fibl.org)

# Appendix



# Results – Willingness to pay more for diversifood



# Results – Willingness to pay more for diversifood

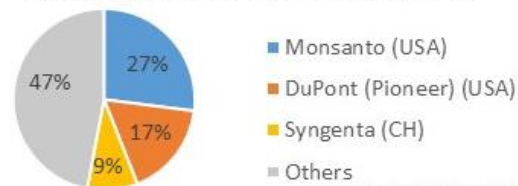
## Information treatment

Our **food chain** is characterized by an **ongoing concentration and standardization on all levels** and a concomitant **loss in diversity**:

1

At the beginning of the food chain are a **small number of large multinational seed companies** who develop homogeneous, industrial varieties for major crops.

Global market share of top 3 seed companies:



Quelle: ETC Group 2011



2

These industrial varieties are cultivated by a **decreasing number of farmers** on **increasingly monotonous agricultural landscapes**.



3

The result is a **highly standardized offer of fruits and vegetables** that is displayed by a **few large grocery stores**.



Regarding the importance of diversity for the resilience, health and productivity of a system, **this development is highly alarming**, both for current and future generations.

# Results – Willingness to pay more for diversifood Information treatment

It is our aim to **counteract this concentration process** and **increase the diversity** of our food chain.

*How it is now:*

**Nowadays**, the breeding and multiplying of seeds is to a large extent in the hands of a small number of large multinational firms who develop so-called '**industrial varieties**'.

*Our idea:*

**In the future** the breeding and multiplying of seeds shall again be in the hands of farmers who would develop so-called '**farmers' varieties**'.

As a result, this would lead to more diverse, locally adapted, healthy and tasty products, so-called '**diversifood**':



DIVERSIFOOD



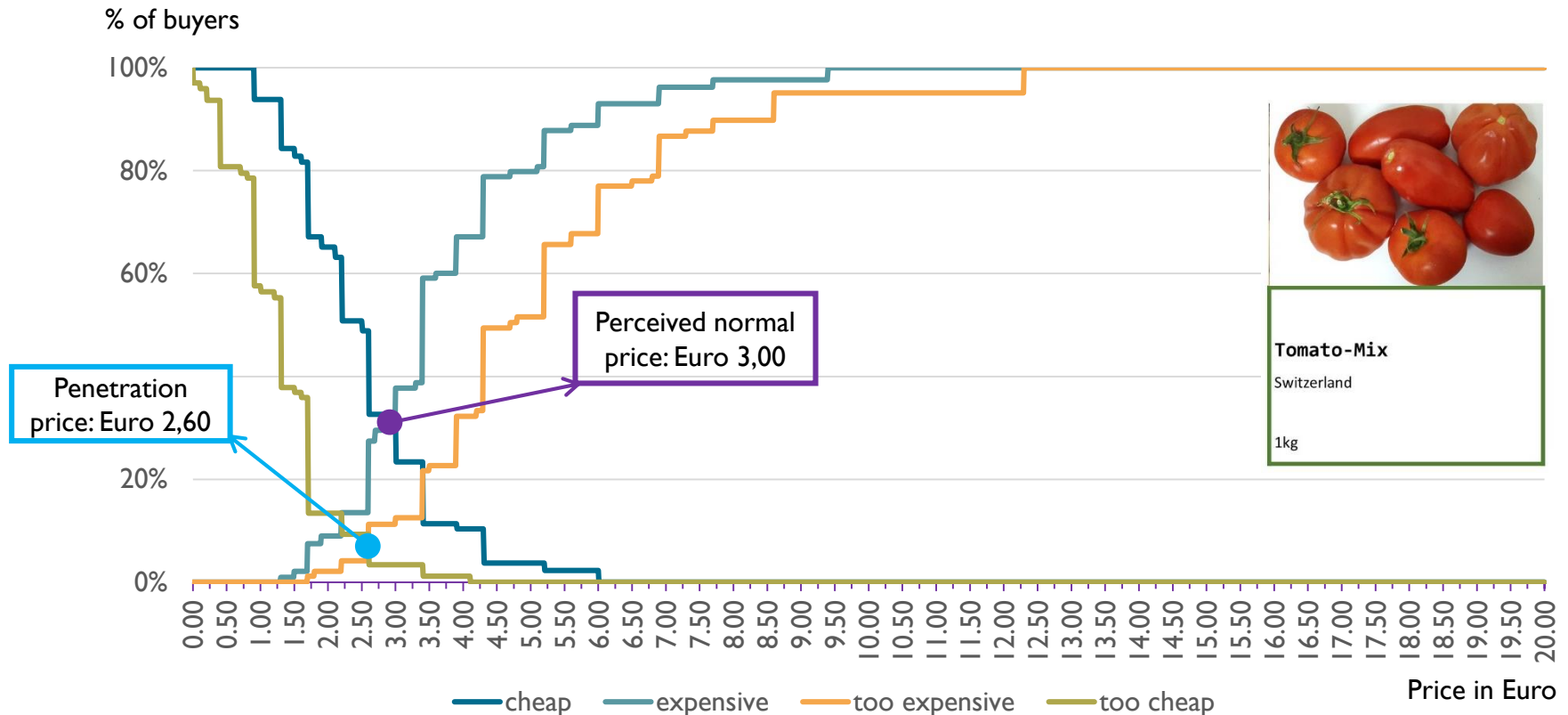
# Results – Willingness to pay more for diversifood

## Price Sensitivity Meter: Four price points

- **penetration price:** the price where the highest market penetration can be expected
- **perceived normal price:** the price the target group expects for a product of good quality
- **point of marginal inexpensiveness:** the lowest acceptable price threshold that can be used for a product → A price below this threshold could result in a damage to the brand image and loss of credibility.
- **point of marginal expensiveness:** the highest acceptable price threshold that can be used for a product → A price above this threshold would widely be regarded as unacceptable. It is just above the point for premium pricing.

# Willingness to pay for 1kg of mixed CH tomatoes (1/2)

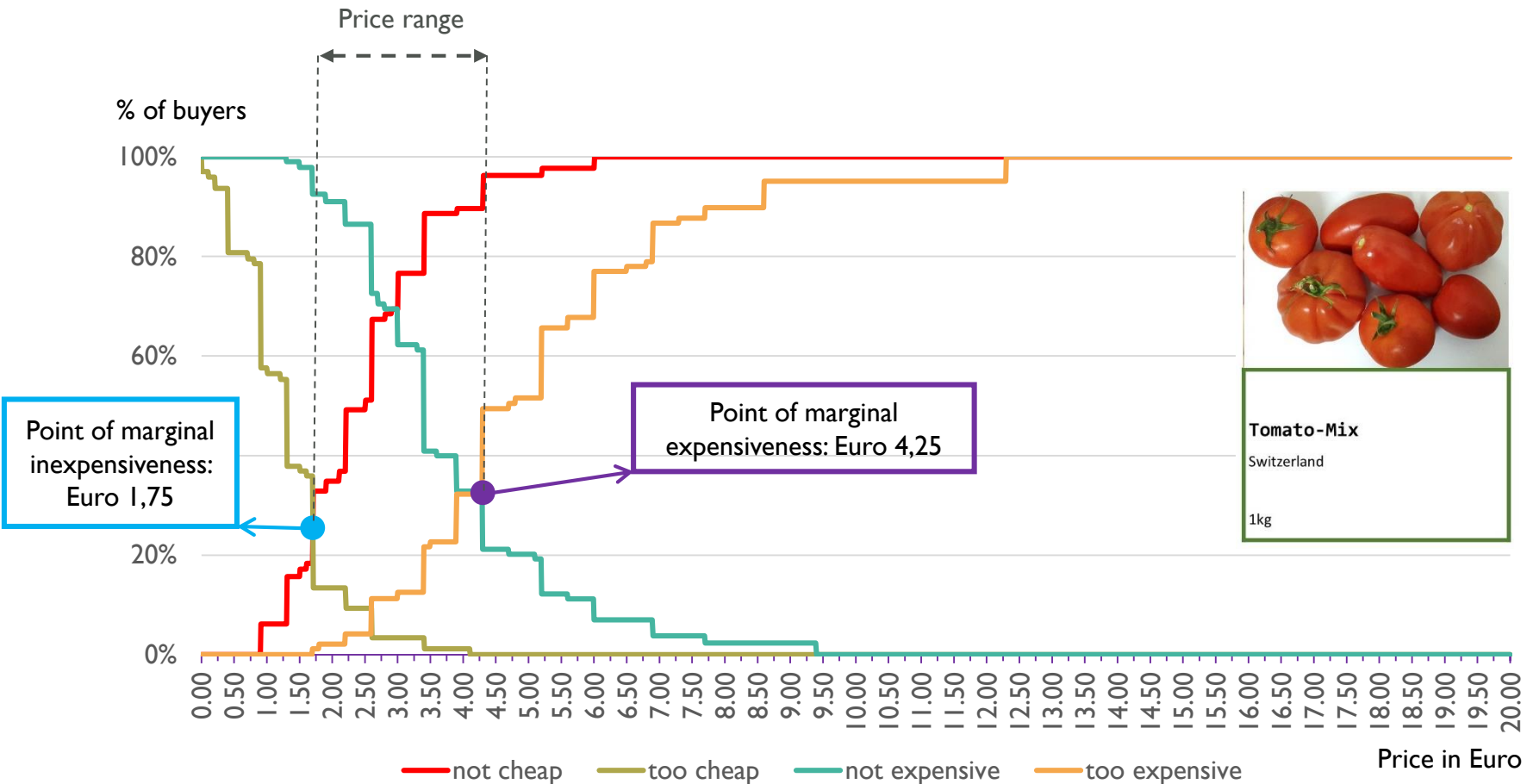
## Penetration price / perceived normal price



F130C: At what price per kilogram would you say: "These tomatoes are cheap/ expensive/ too expensive/ too cheap.?"; Price Sensitivity Meter (PSM); filter: consumes tomatoes and prefers offer 1 (see picture); [n = 91]

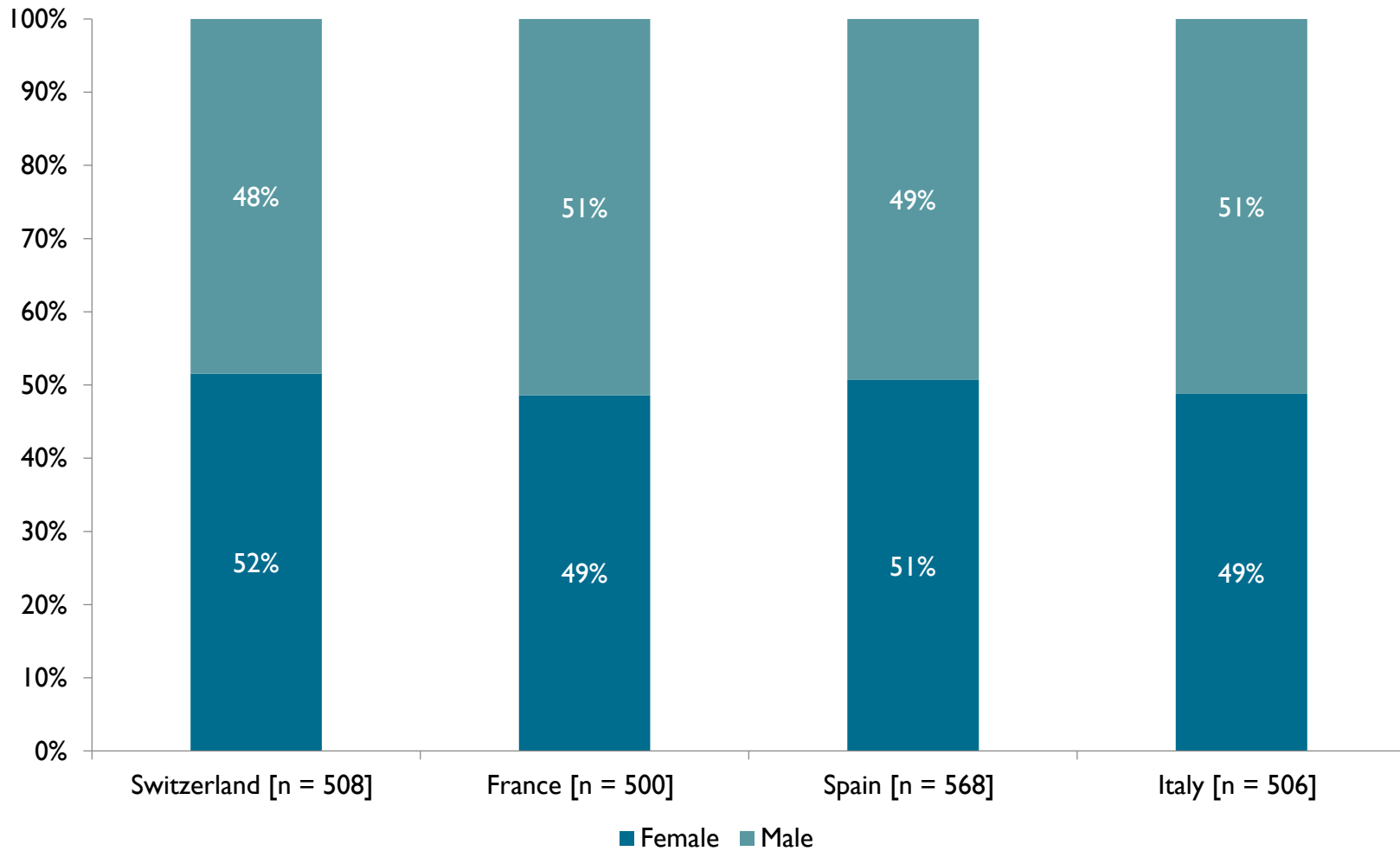
# Willingness to pay for 1kg of mixed CH tomatoes (2/2)

## Price range



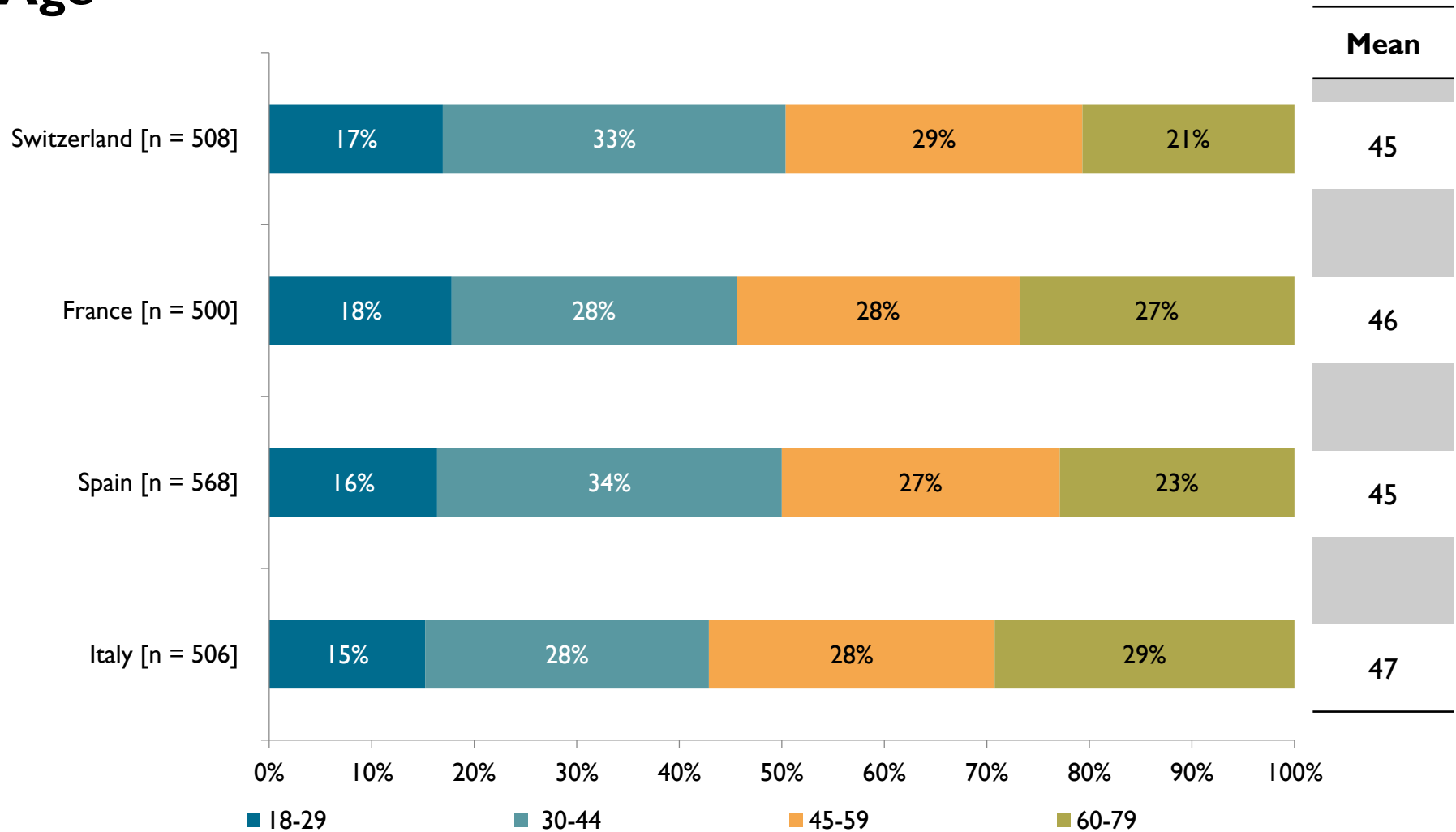
F130C: At what price per kilogram would you say: "These tomatoes are cheap/ expensive/ too expensive/ too cheap."; Price Sensitivity Meter (PSM); filter: consumes tomatoes and prefers offer 1 (see picture); [n = 91]

# Gender



F410: Please indicate your gender.; single punch question

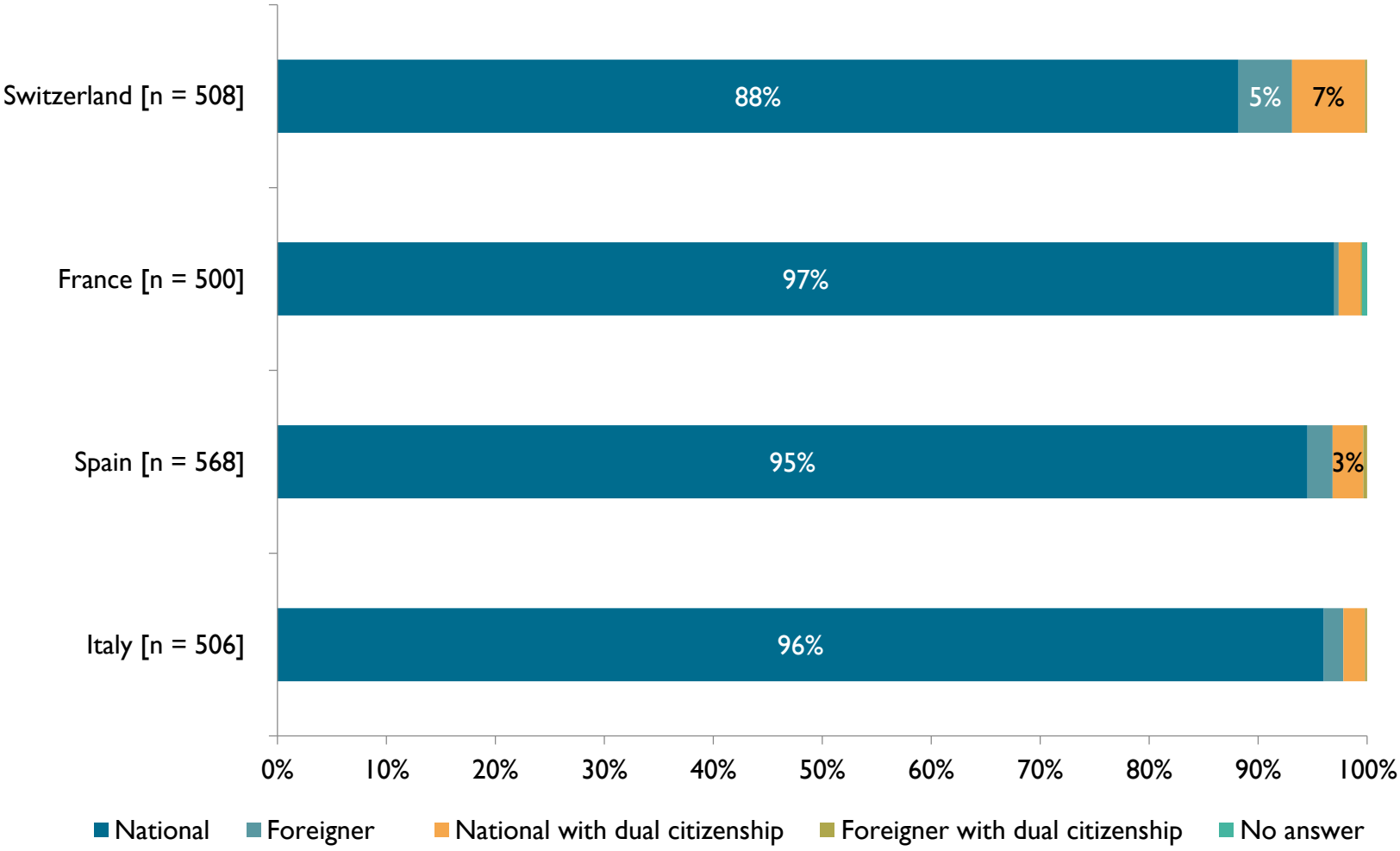
# Age



S05:What is your age?; numeric question

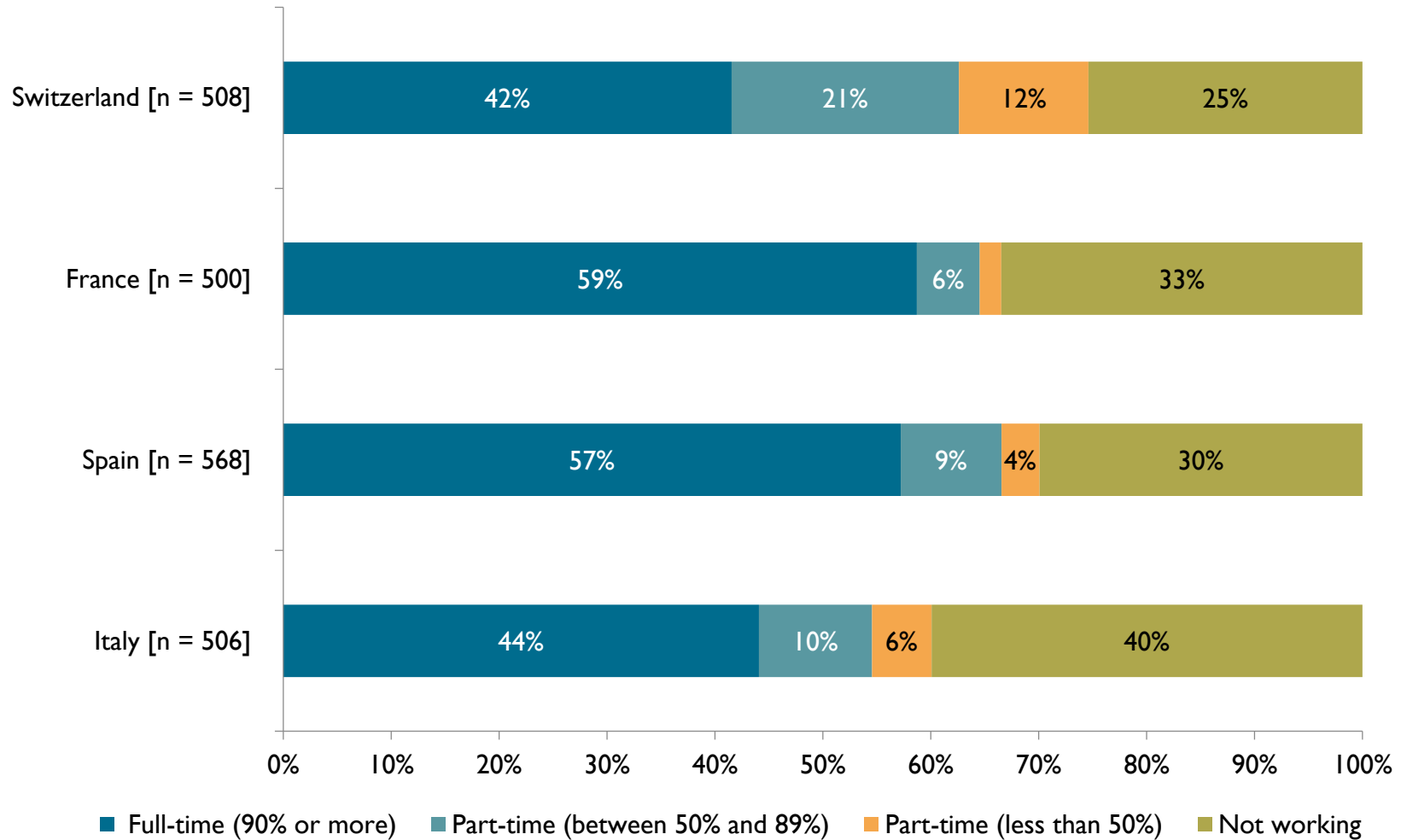


# Nationality



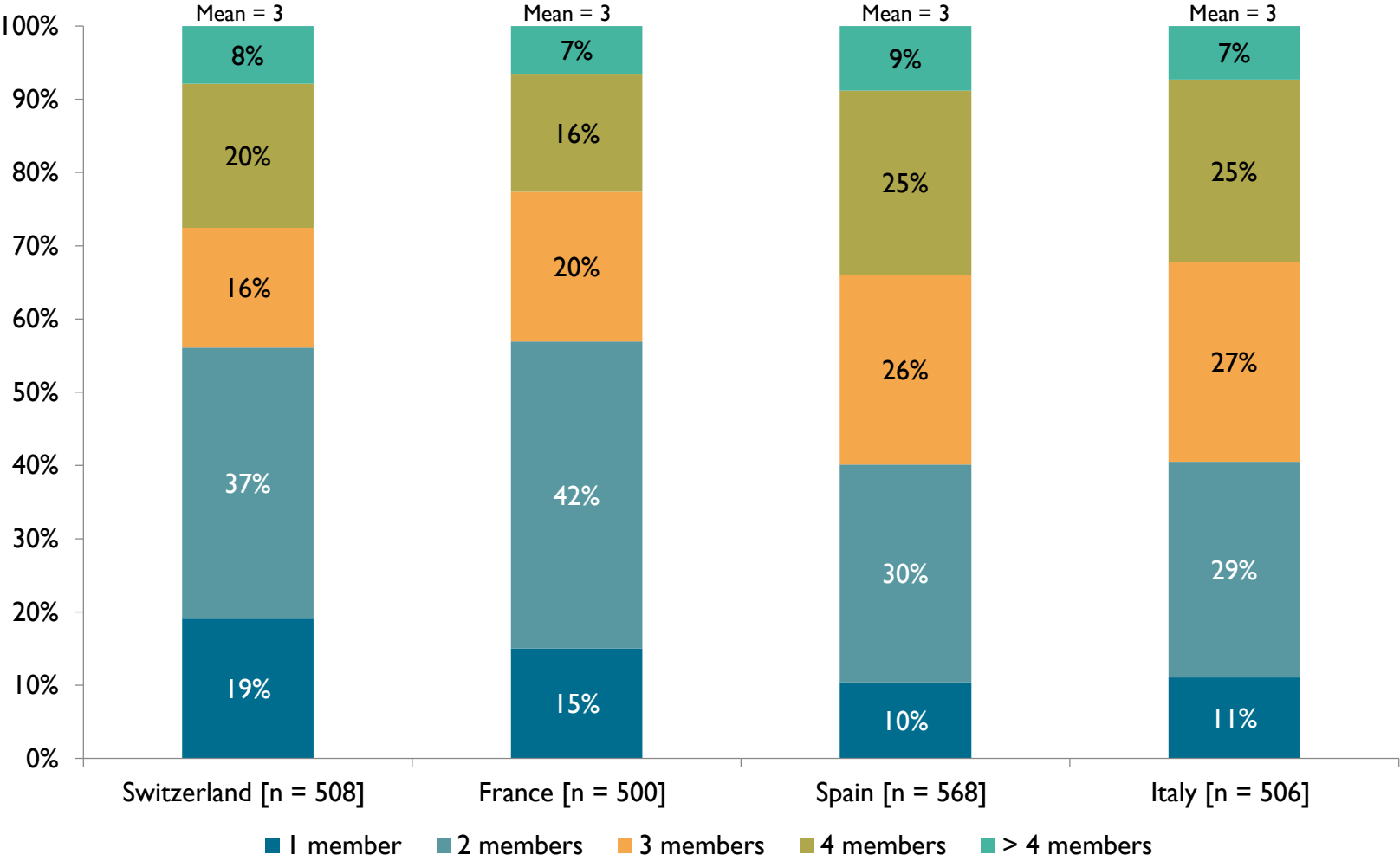
F420: Are you national, of a foreign nationality or a dual citizen?; single punch question; shares < 3% percentage numbers are not displayed

# Employment



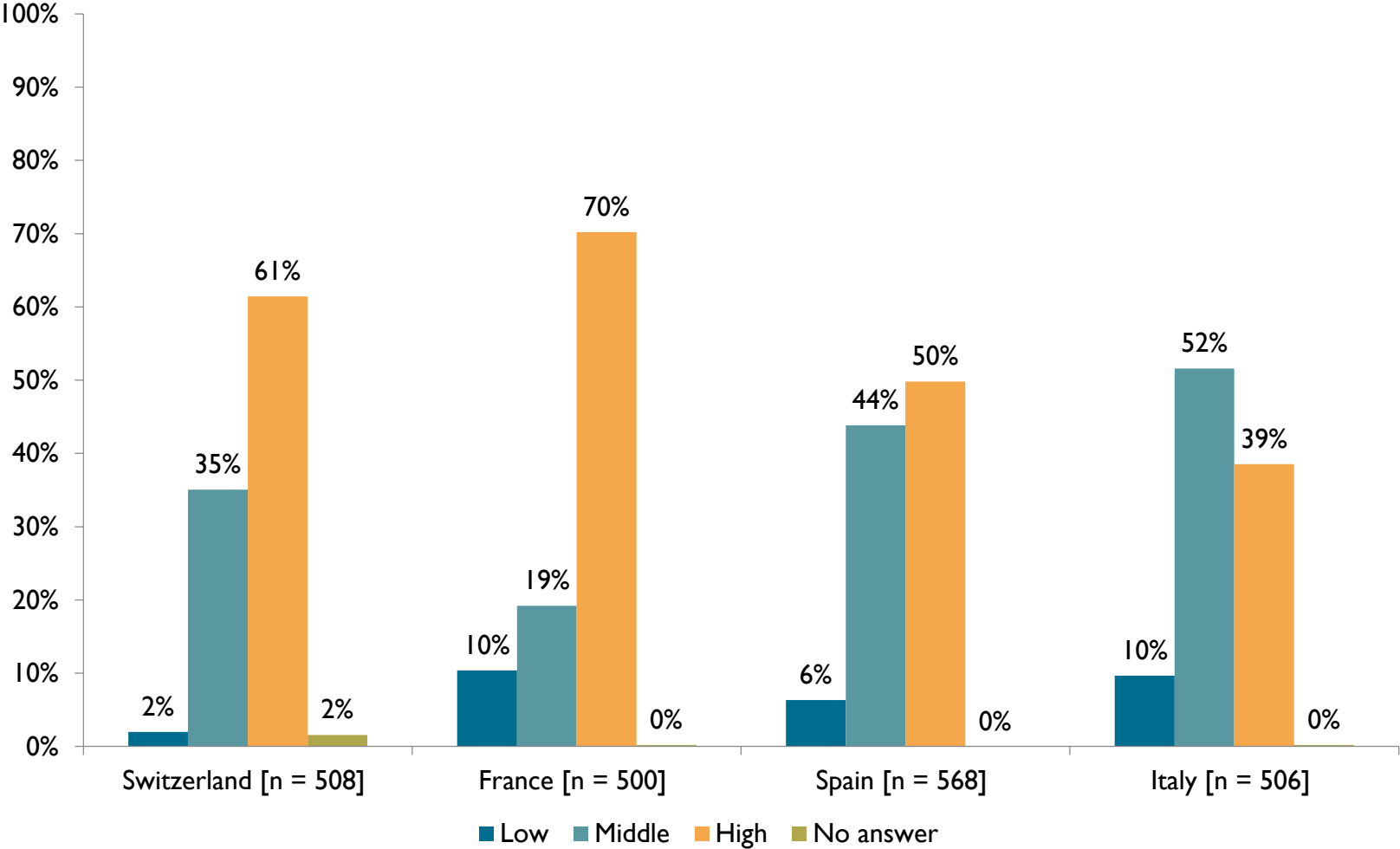
F430: Do you work full-time, part-time or are you not working?; single punch question; shares < 3% percentage numbers are not displayed

# Household size



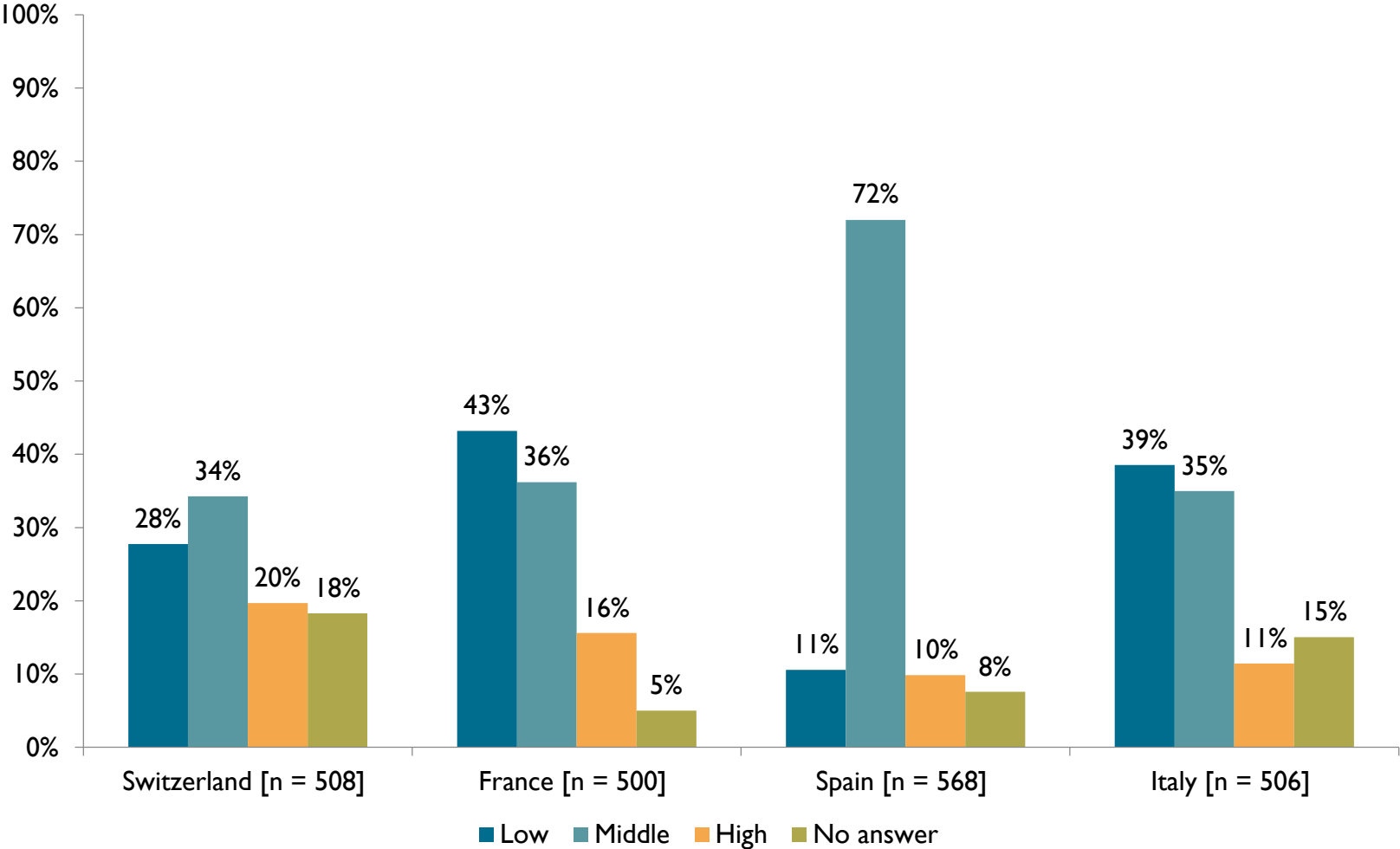
F440: How many people live in your household (including you)?; numeric question

# Education



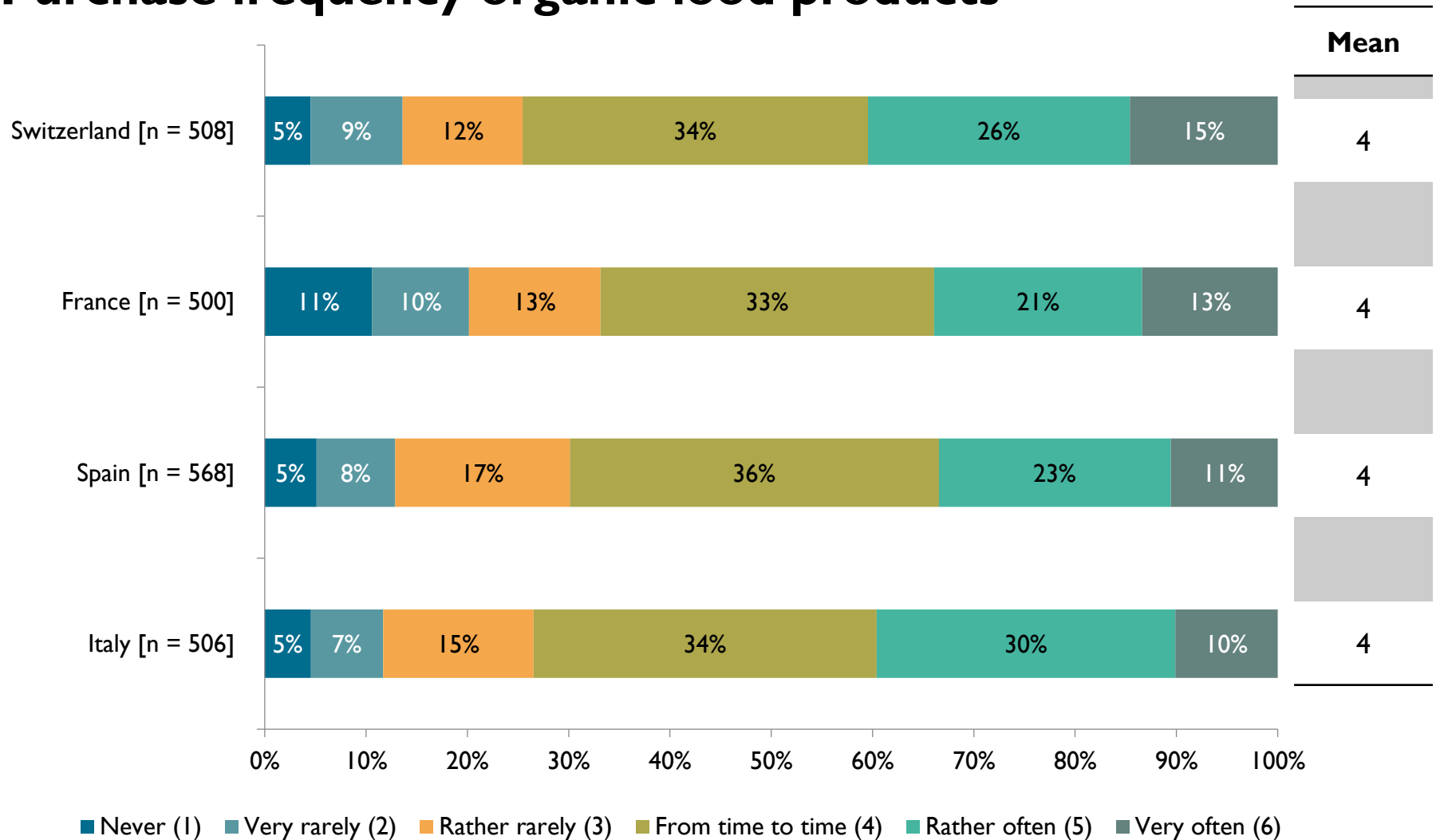
F460: Which is your highest completed level of education?; single punch question (categories have been aggregated for the sake of comparison between countries)

# Income



F470: What is your monthly gross income?; single punch question; categories have been aggregated for the sake of comparison between countries

# Purchase frequency organic food products



F490: How often do you purchase organic food products?; single punch question