Virtual Training school
Risk-based Meat Safety Assurance Systems focusing on risk categorisation of farms and abattoirs
June 13th – 16th, 2023

Official Veterinarians in Europe: a survey for the characterization of demographics and training needs for future Meat Safety Assurance System

Eduarda Gomes-Neves, Margarida F. Cardoso, Thomai Lazou, Brigita Hengl, Silvia Bonardi, Claudia Guldiman, Bojan Blagojevic, Sophia Johler

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RIBMINS

WG5 | Eduarda Gomes-Neves emneves@icbas.up.pt

U.PORTO
ICBAS INSTITUTO DE CIÊNCIAS BIOMÉDICAS ABEL SALAZAR
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Introduction

Official veterinarians (OVs) are veterinarians performing official controls for the national authorities

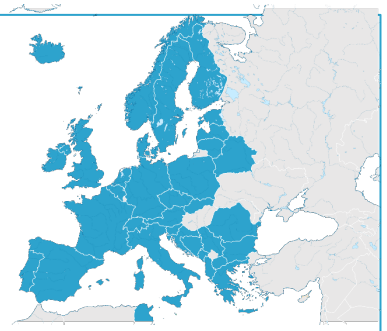
- EU New official controls Regulation (EU) 2017/625
- Risk-based meat inspection
- Risks managers (HEIs, FCI)
- Ongoing implementation of a modernized meat safety assurance system (MSAS)

Objectives

Characterize European OVs in terms of:

- Demographics
- Academic qualification, specialization, previous experience and specific training
- Experience and daily work
- Confidence in Visual & Risk-based Meat Inspection
- Satisfaction with the career
- Continuing education & Training activities and topics

Methods - Questionnaire



- Questionnaire design
- Target audience: OVs working in food control in Europe
- Ethics Committee approval: ICBAS-University of Porto, Portugal
- Pilot study anonymous online form
- 17 languages: Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, North Macedonian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, Turkish
- Online dissemination (RIBMINS participating countries, NCPs, CAs, FVE, ECVPH, professional networks)
- 1st December 21-31st March 2022

Methods - Statistical analysis

- SPSS version 28.0
- **Categorical** variables were described as **proportions**
- **Quantitative** variables were described as **mean ± standard deviation, minimum** and **maximum**
- **Score results** were described as **median** and the **interquartile range (IQR)**

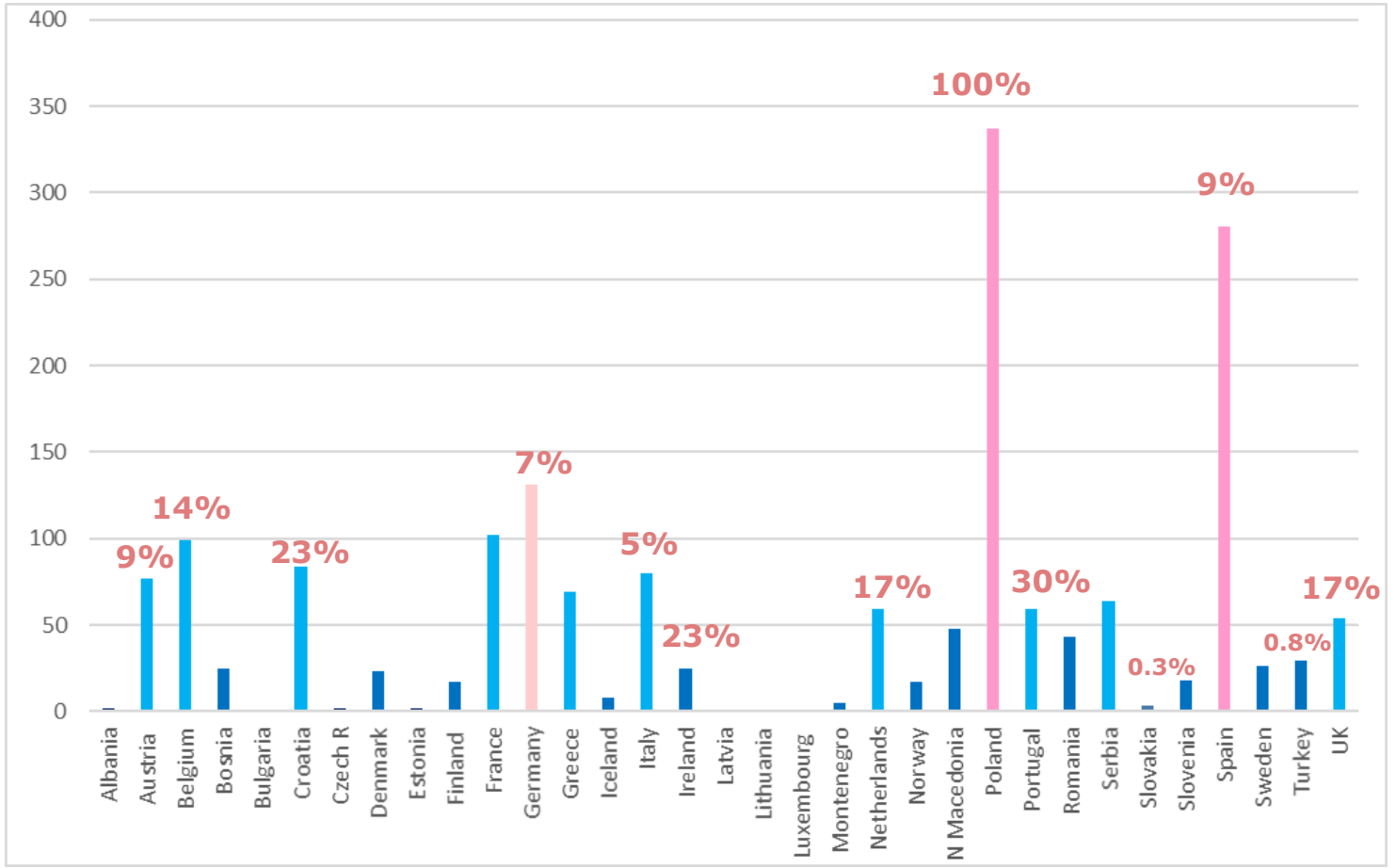
Results & Discussion

1.Demographic data

- **Country of work**

1,786 responses
30 Countries of work

17,338 OVs
(numbers from the CAs)

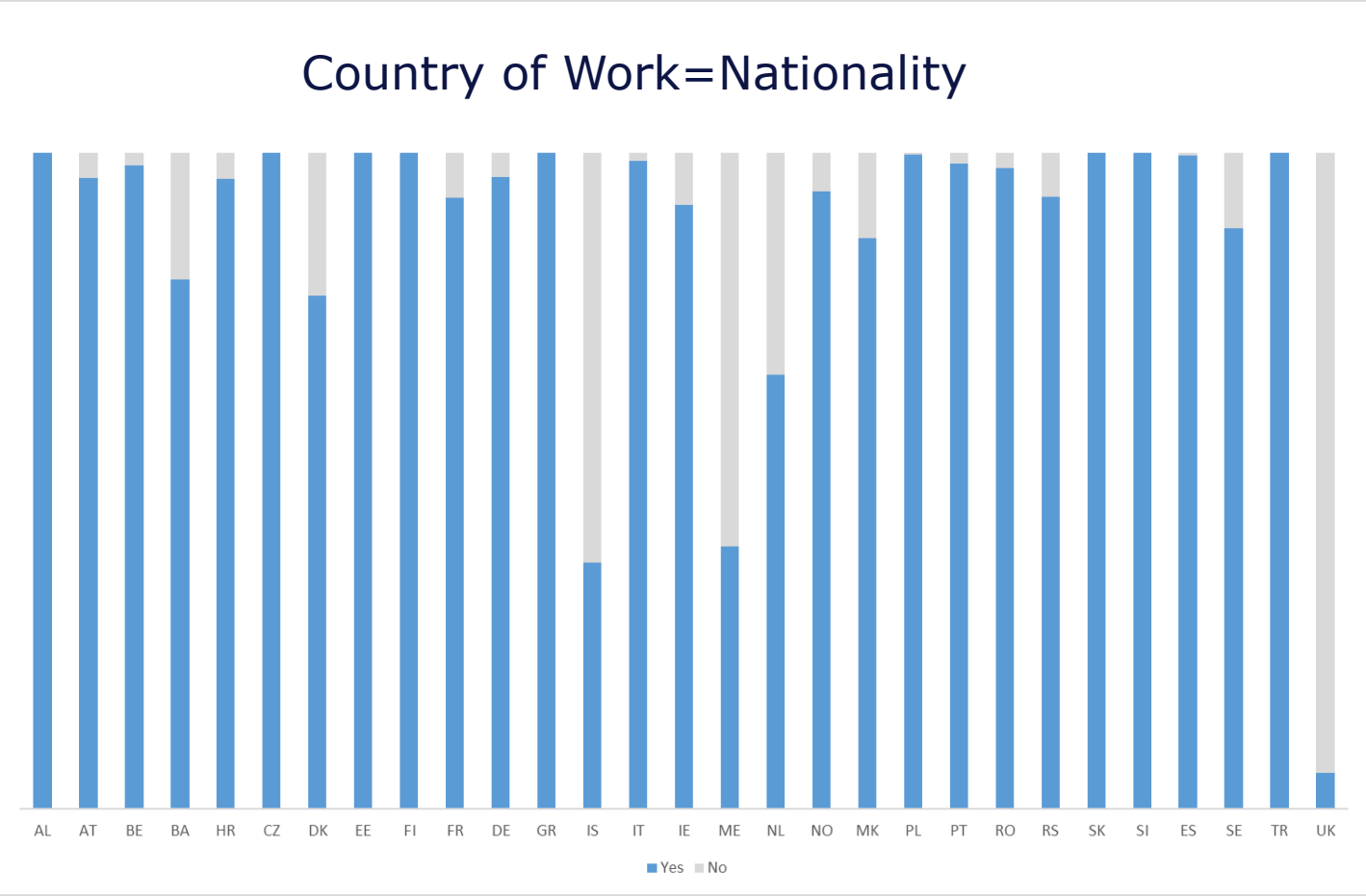


Results & Discussion

1.Demographic data

- **Country of work**
- **Nationality**

1,786 responses
30 Countries of work
33 Nationalities



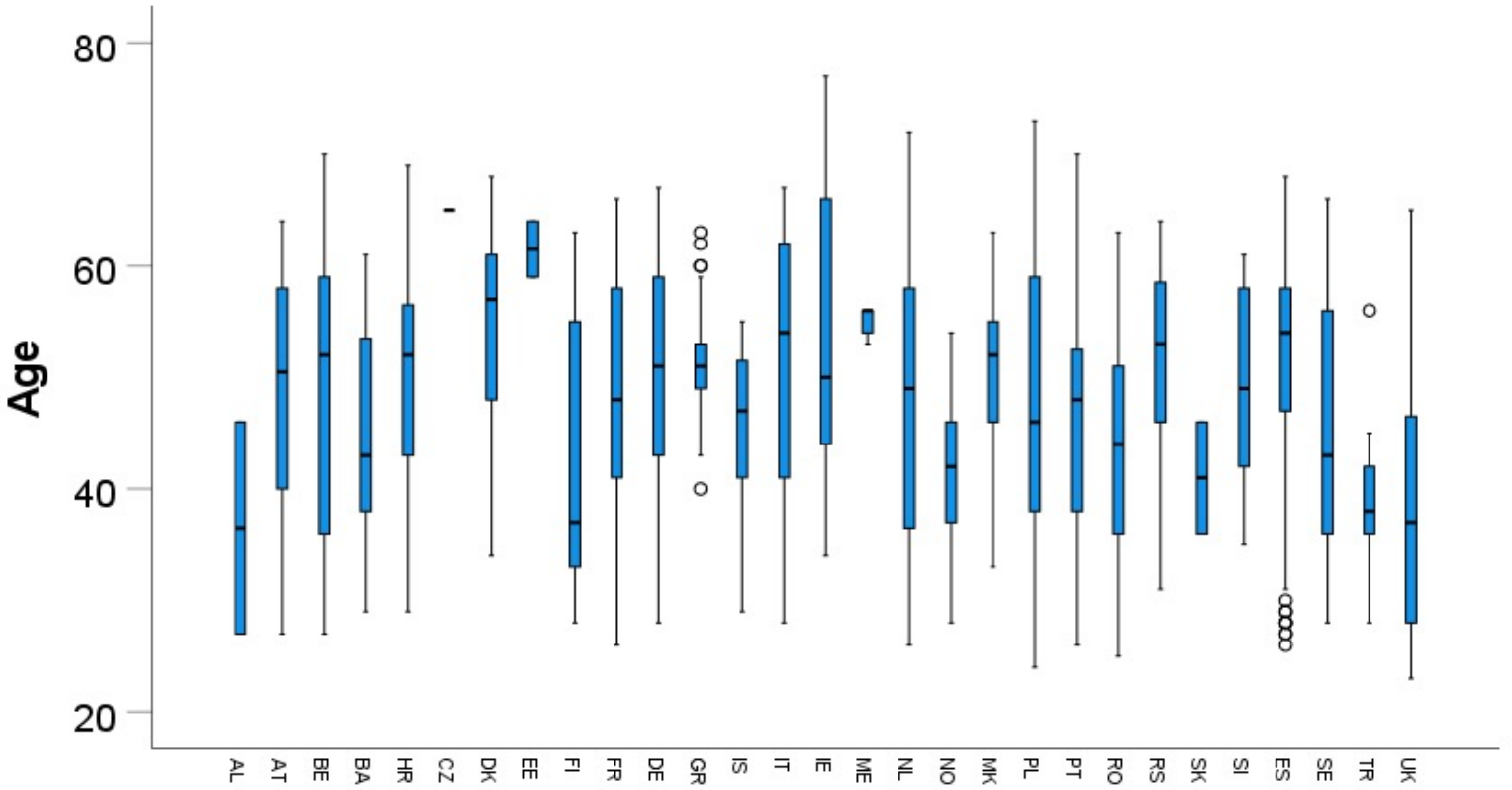
Results & Discussion

1.Demographic data

- **Year of Birth**

49 (min 23-max 77)

n= 16 ≤ 25
n= 16 ≥ 70



Results & Discussion

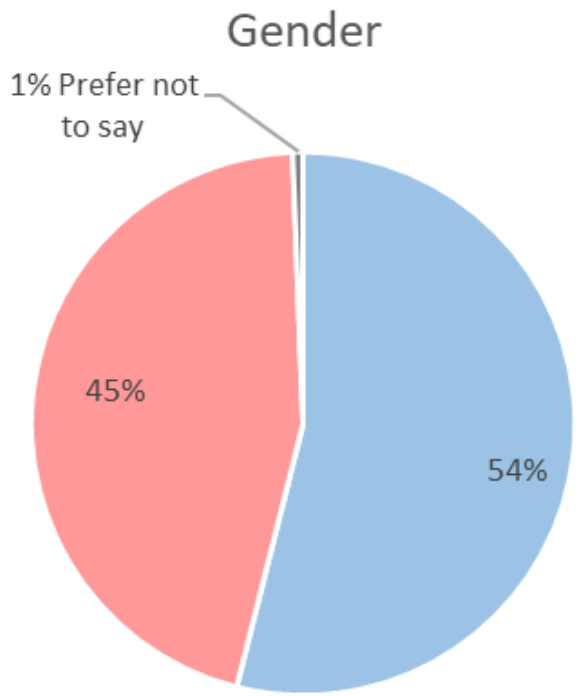
1.Demographic data

- **Gender**

82.4% Norway

24.1% Turkey

PT
RS
UK



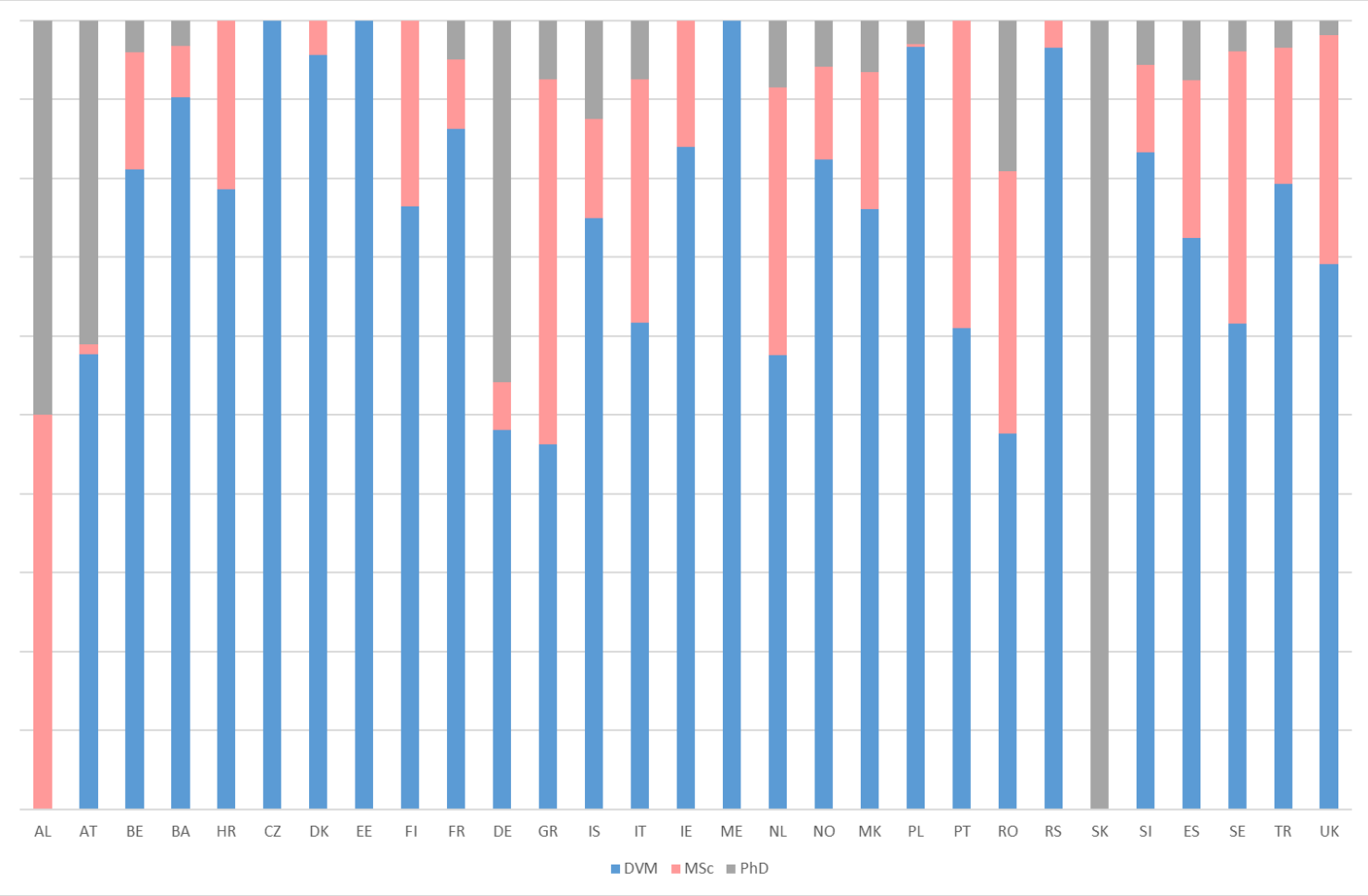
IT
ES
PL

Results & Discussion

2.Qualification data

- **Highest academic degree**

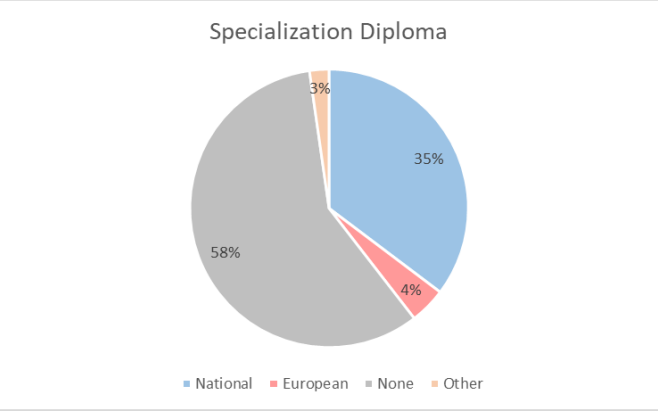
75% DVM
15% MSc
10% PhD

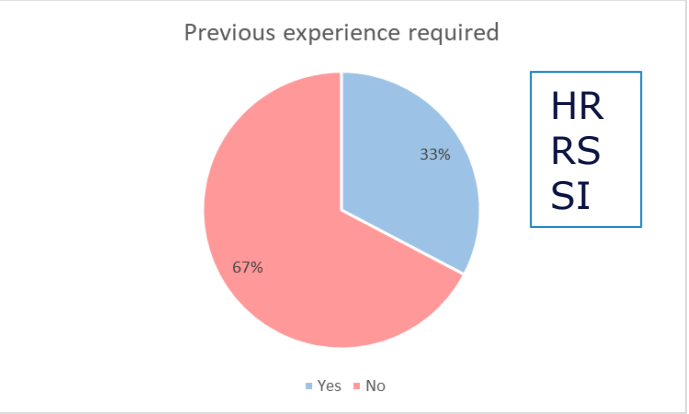


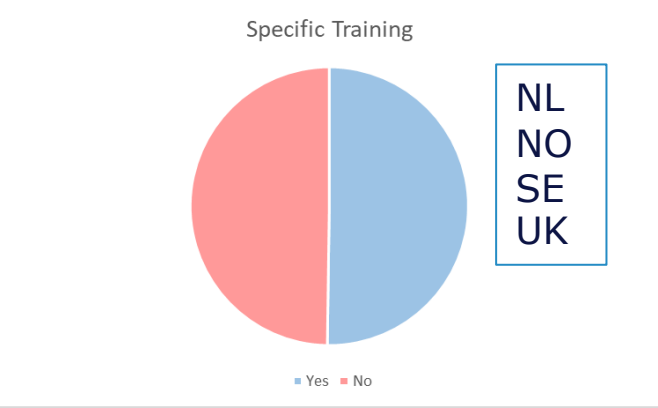
Results & Discussion

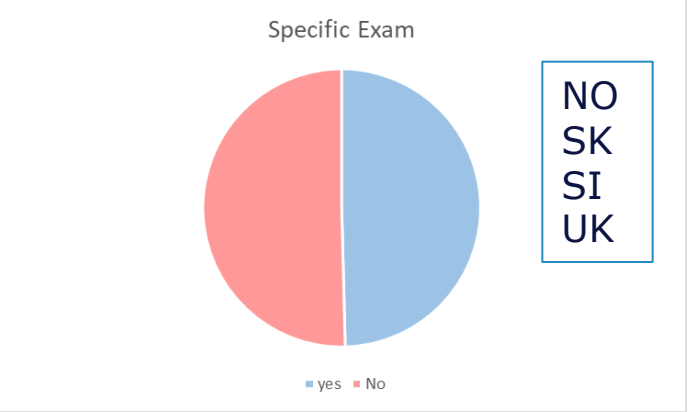
2.Qualification data

- Specialization
- Previous experience
- Specific Training
- Specific Exam





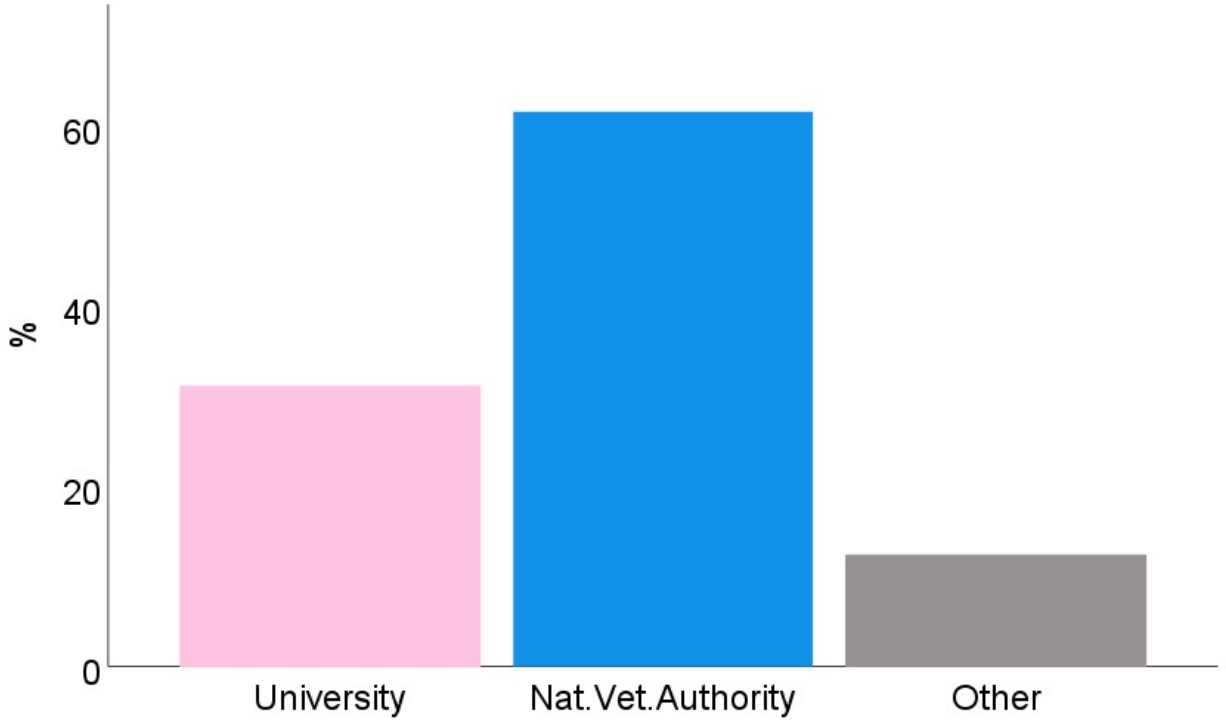




Results & Discussion

2.Qualification data

- **Specific Training**

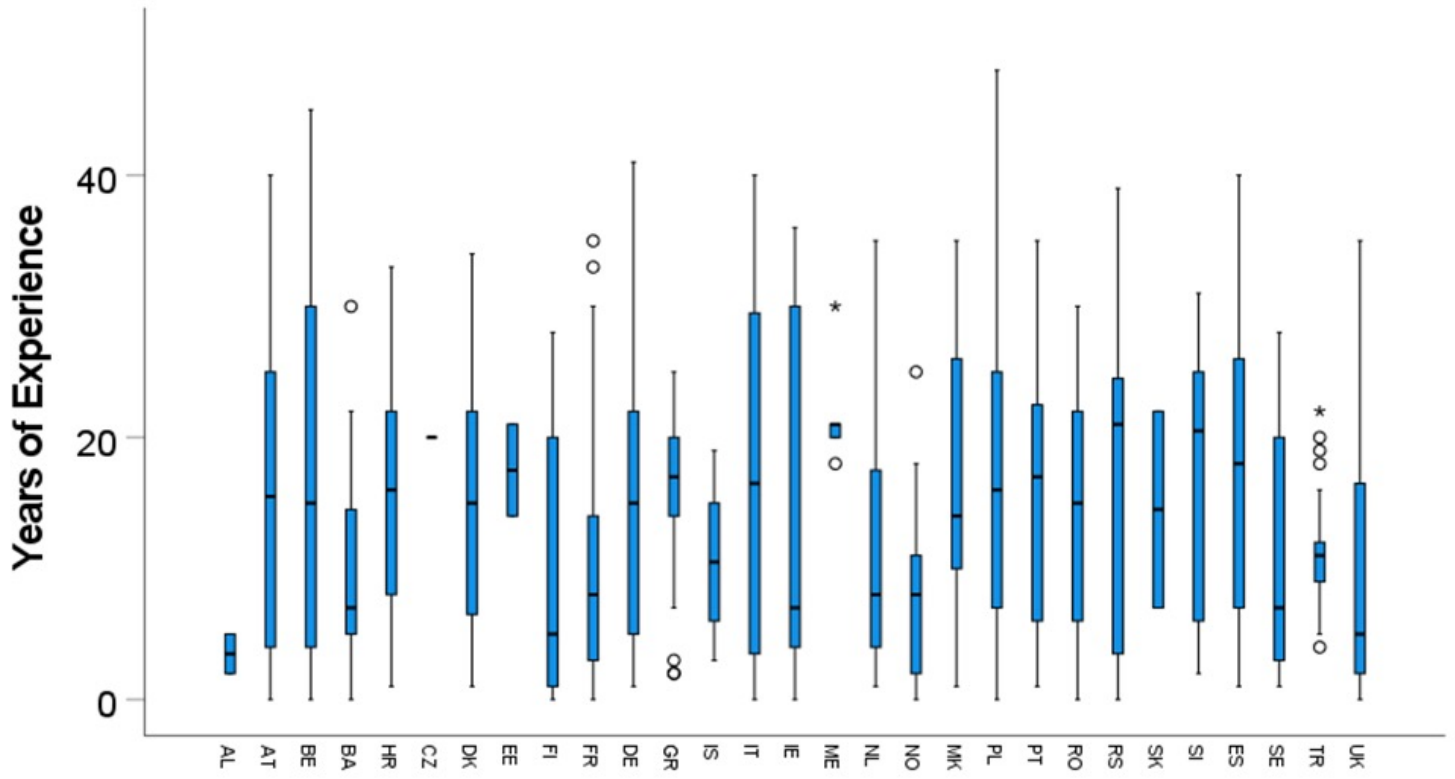


Results & Discussion

3.Work experience

- **Years of experience as an OV**

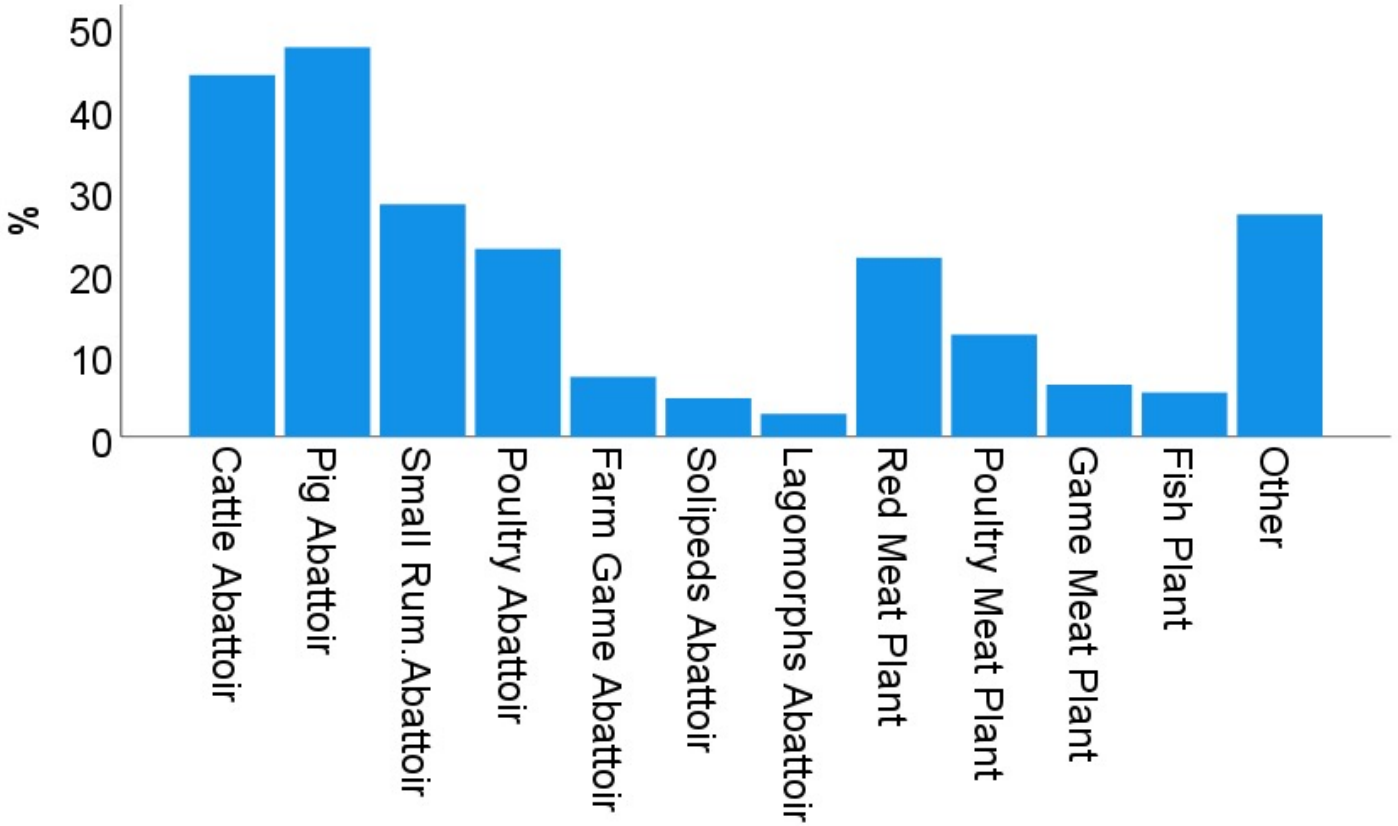
15 ± 10.6
(Mean±SD)



Results & Discussion

3.Work experience

- **Type of Establishment**



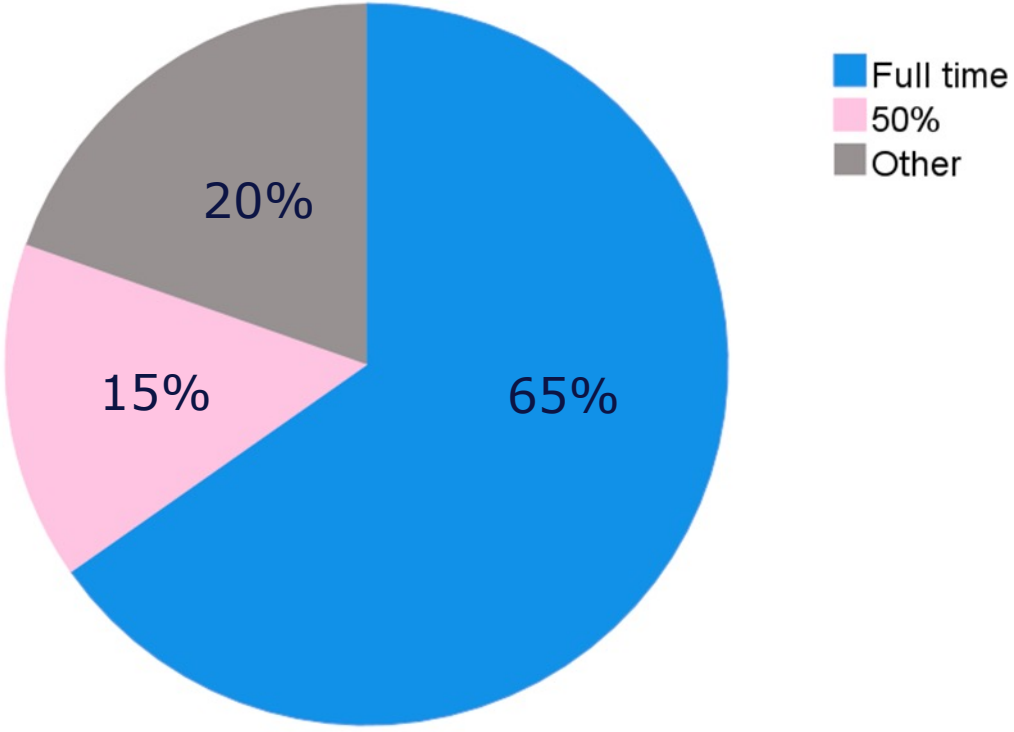
Other

Food Industry (Dairy, Egg)
Animal Control
Border/Airport
Restaurants, Supermarkets
Export Certification
Office; Laboratory…

Results & Discussion

4.Daily Work

- %Time OV tasks

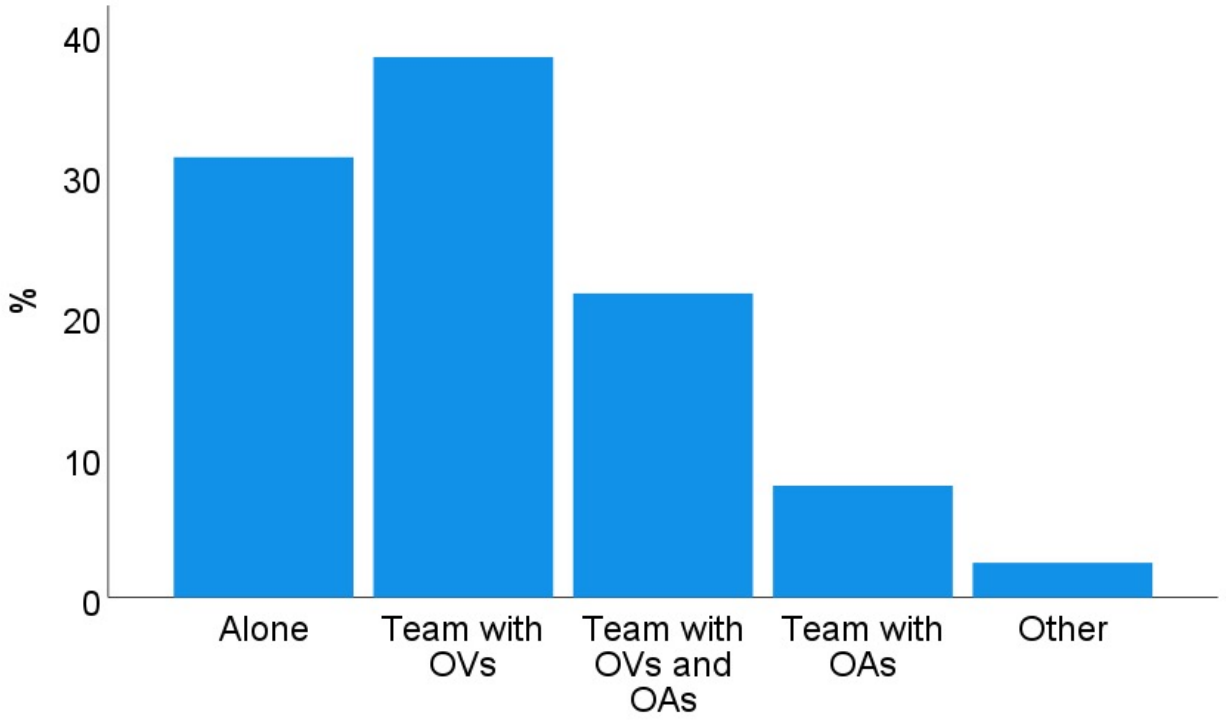


Results & Discussion

4.Daily Work

- **Alone/Team**

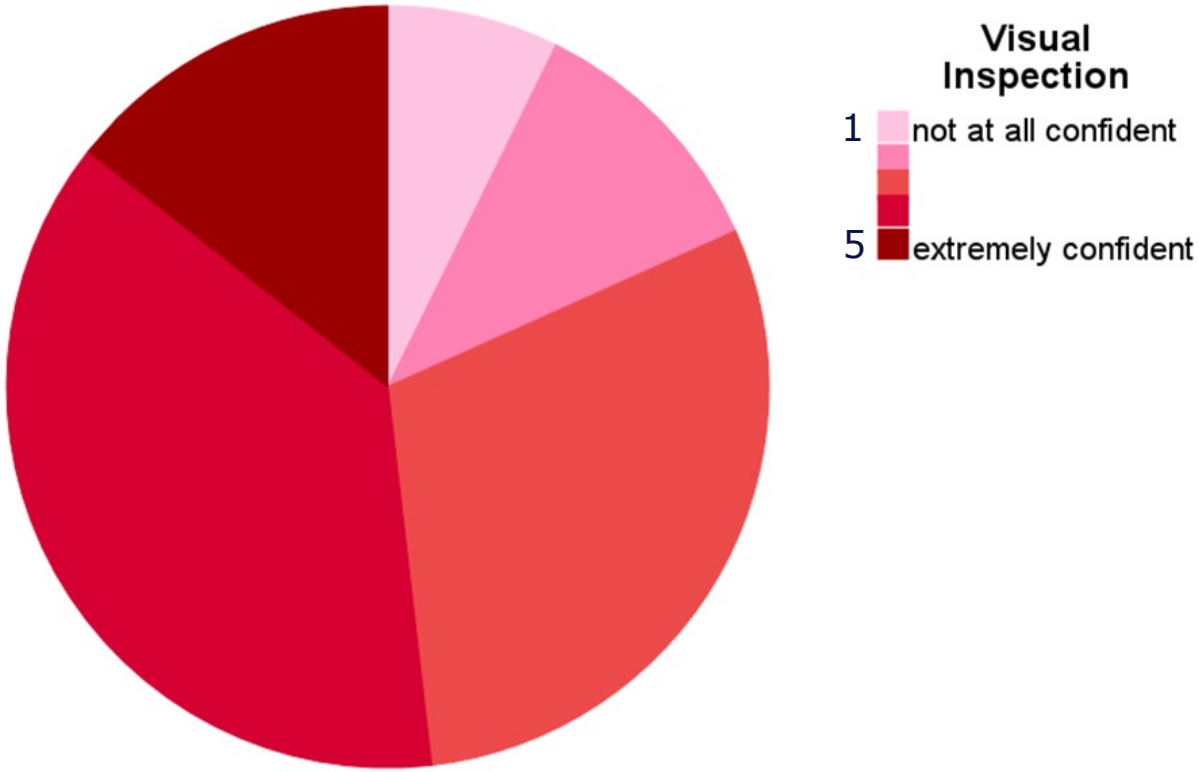
OA=Official Auxiliary



Results & Discussion

4.Daily Work

- **Confidence in VMI**



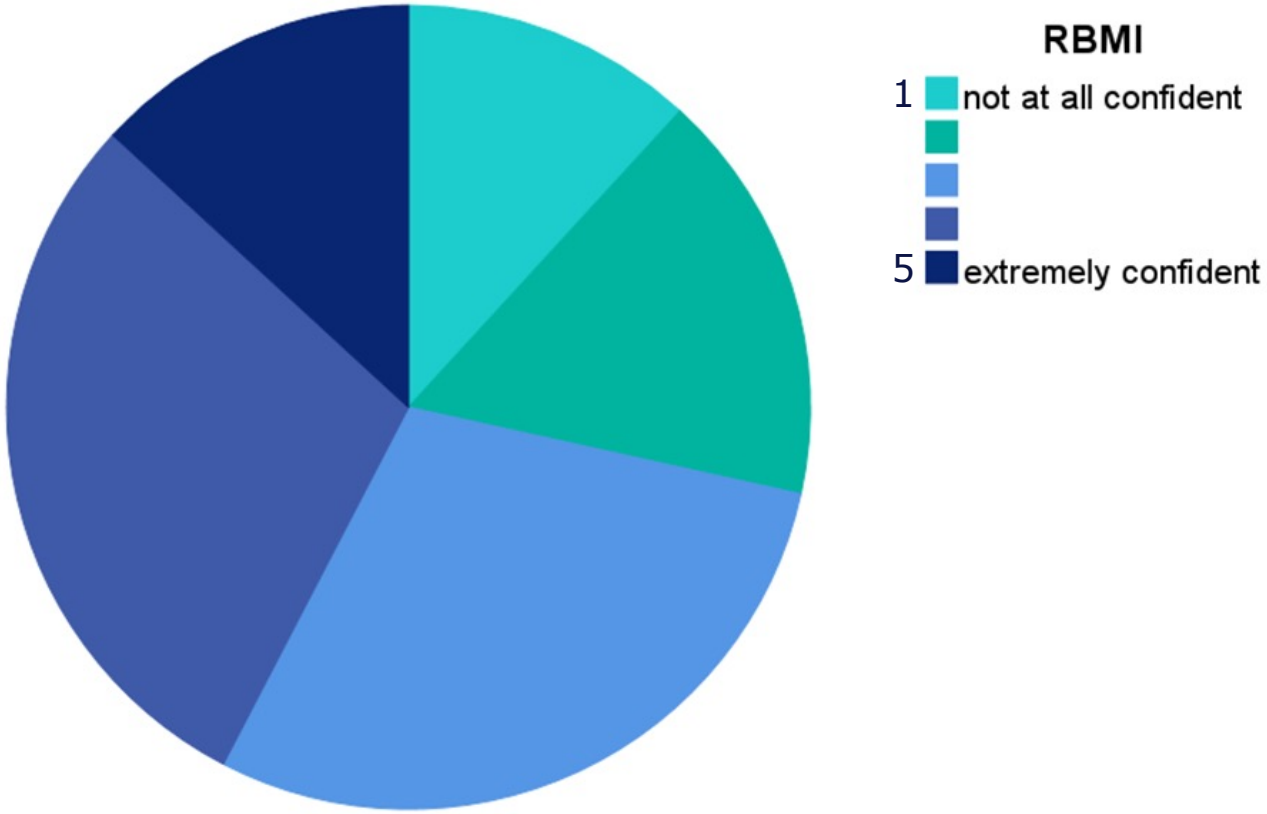
Mean±SD=3.41±1.09

Median (IQR) = 4 (3-4)

Results & Discussion

4.Daily Work

- **Confidence in RBMI**



Mean±SD=3.15±1.20

Median (IQR) = 3 (2-4)

Results & Discussion

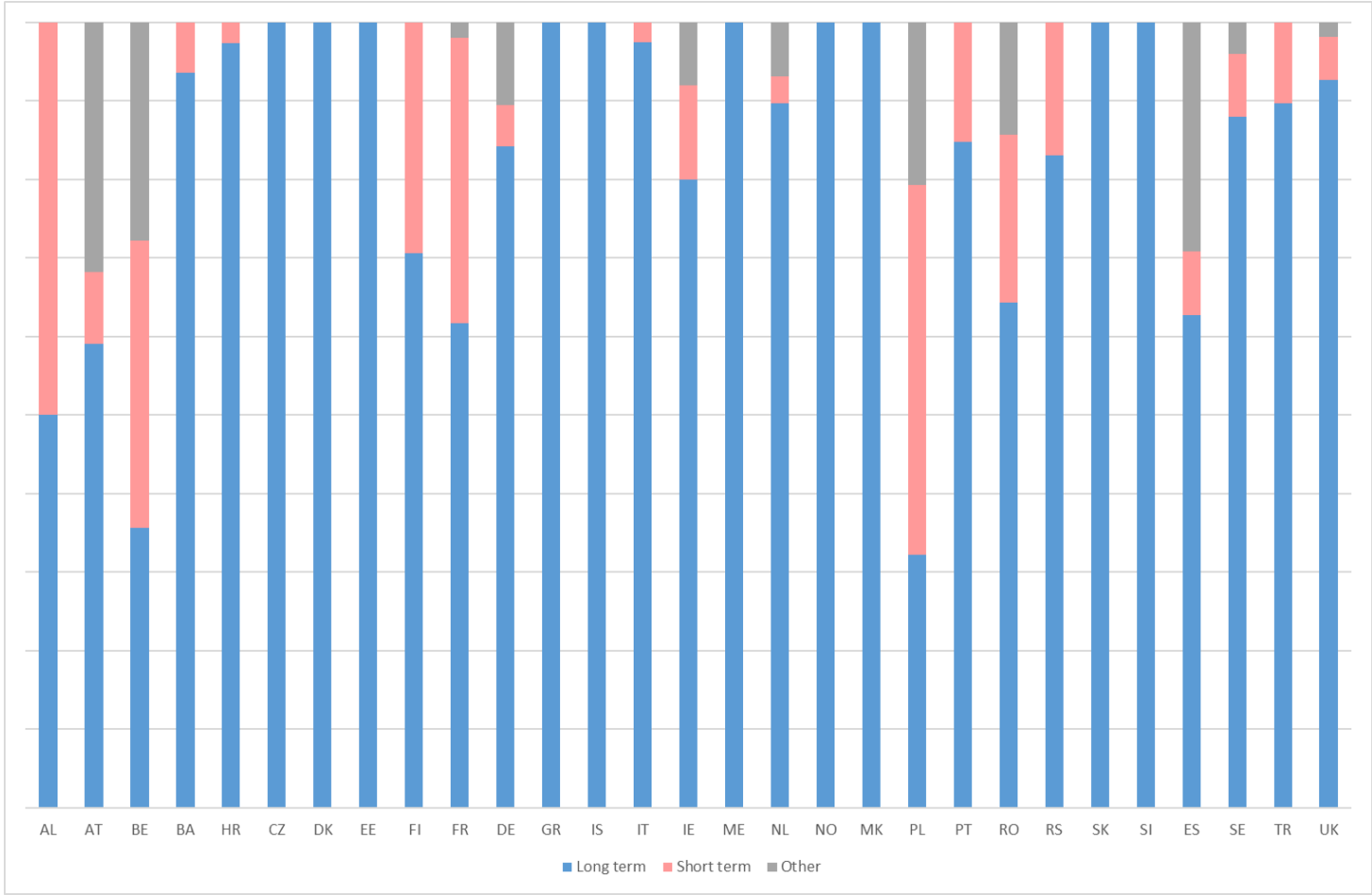
5.Employment situation

- **Type of contract**
- **Current employer**

38% Reg. Vet. Aut.

35% Nat. Vet. Aut.

24% Private Comp. or Agency



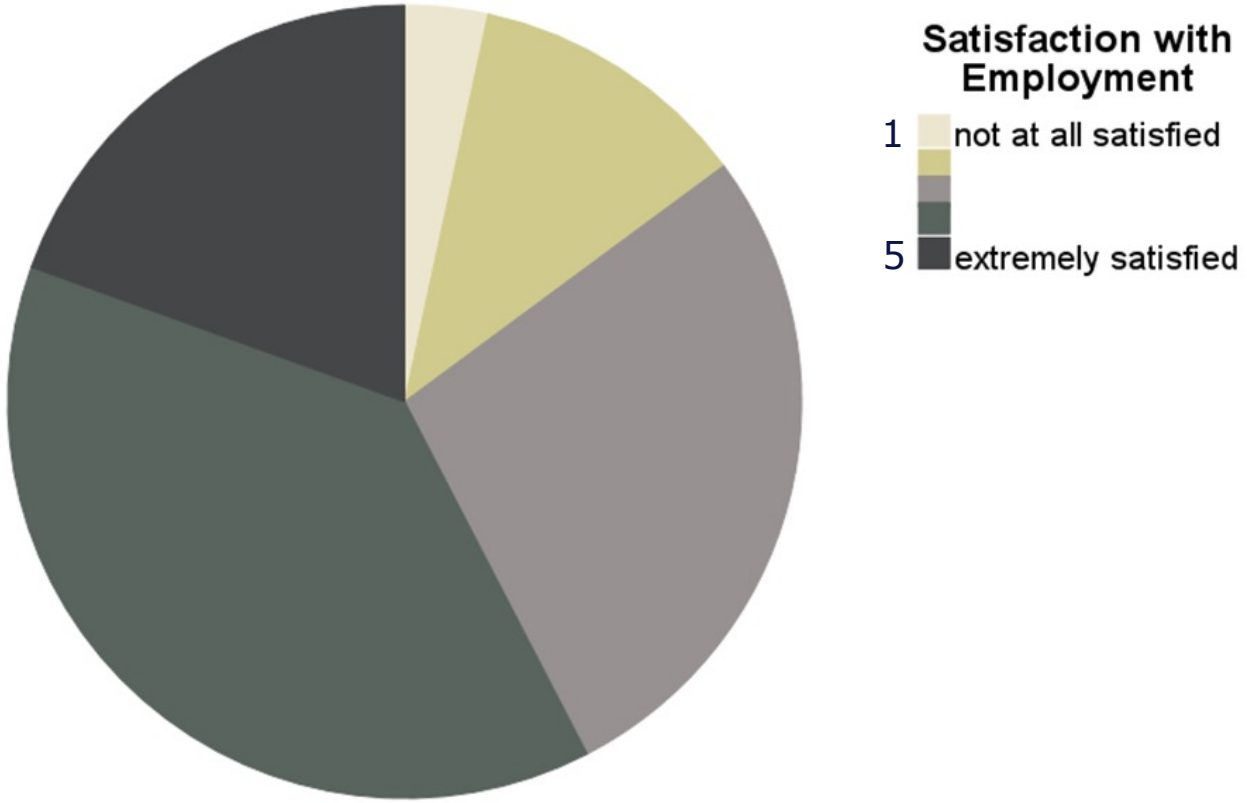
Results & Discussion

5.Employment situation

- **Satisfaction with the employment**

Mean±SD=3.59±1.03

Median (IQR) = 4 (3-4)



Results & Discussion

6.Continuing education

- **Frequency of training**
- **Entity responsible for training**
- **Experience as a trainer**
- **Preferred methodology**

70% Regular training

75% Nat. Vet. Authority

47% Never

61% On-site practical sessions

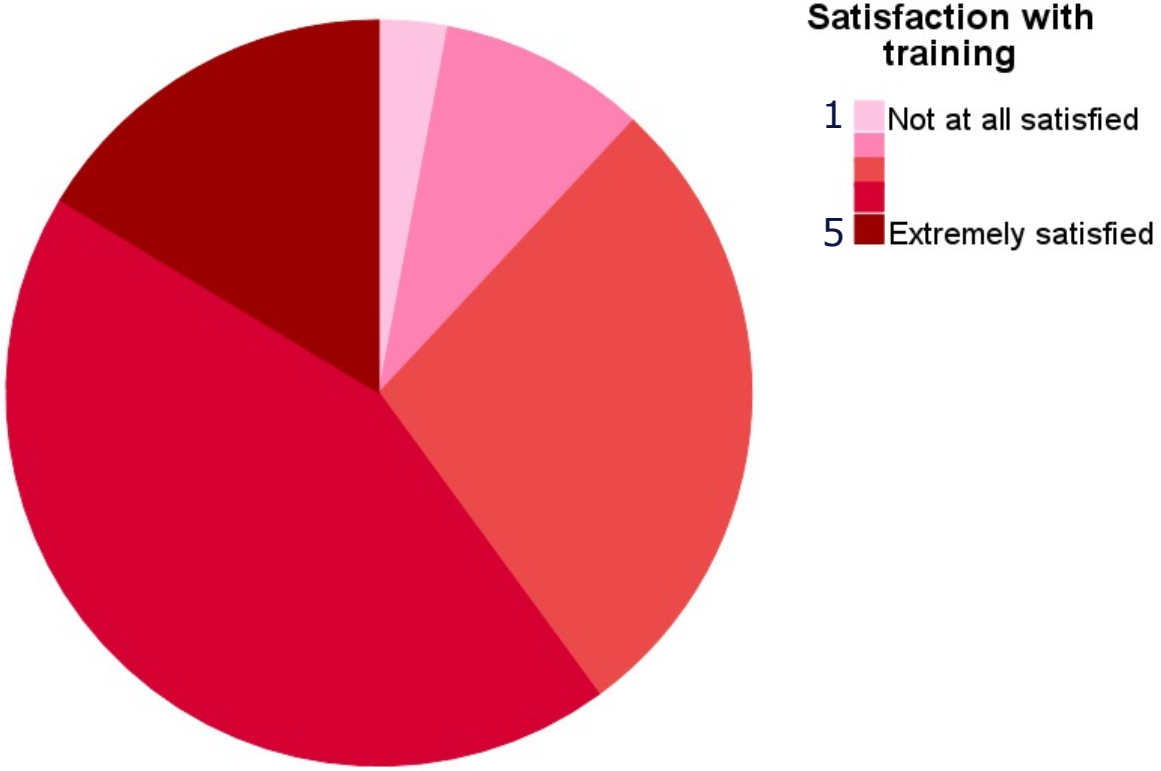
Results & Discussion

6.Continuing education

- **Satisfaction with training activities**

Mean±SD=3.61±0.96

Median (IQR) = 4 (3-4)

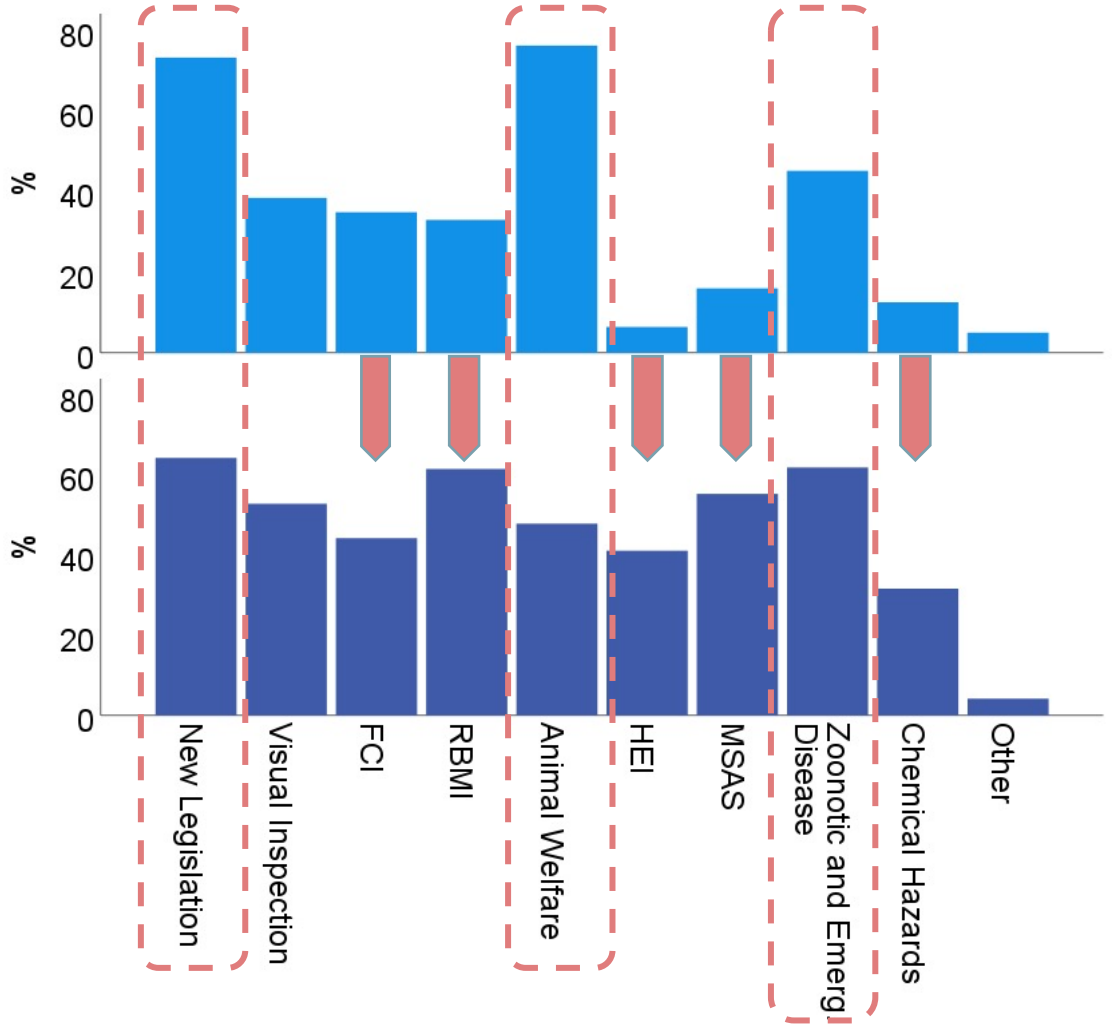


Results & Discussion

7.Training topics

- **Already approached in training**
- **Future training activities**

Other
Microbiological Criteria
AMR
Biosecurity; By-products
New technology in Food Industry
Administrative procedures; Certification



Results & Discussion

8.Final remarks and comments

- **8% (n=146)**

- **Spain 21%**
- **Germany 9%**
- **Poland, Croatia 8%**
- **Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Serbia 5%**
- **Austria, France 4%**
- **Others ≤ 1%**

1. Ethical & Professional concerns

- Animal Welfare & Transport (preserve small abattoirs; mobile slaughter)
- Concerns with the simplification of *ante mortem* inspection and VMI
- Scarcity of resources to support RBMI

2. Work Conditions and Career

- Need to hire more OVs and paying them better
- Low salaries for a job with hard conditions
- Concern with public health and occupational hazards
- Socially and professionally underestimated

3. Training

- Need for life-long learning to fulfil continuous job demands
- High motivation for training but not always available
- EU training (BTSF): problems with the English language and wrong translation

Conclusions

- The first characterization of OVs throughout Europe
- Highly qualified professional group
- Age: a matter of concern
- Diversity of previous training and experience requirements
- Wideness in terms of daily work
- RBMI: OVs don’t feel totally confident in the resources to support it

Conclusions

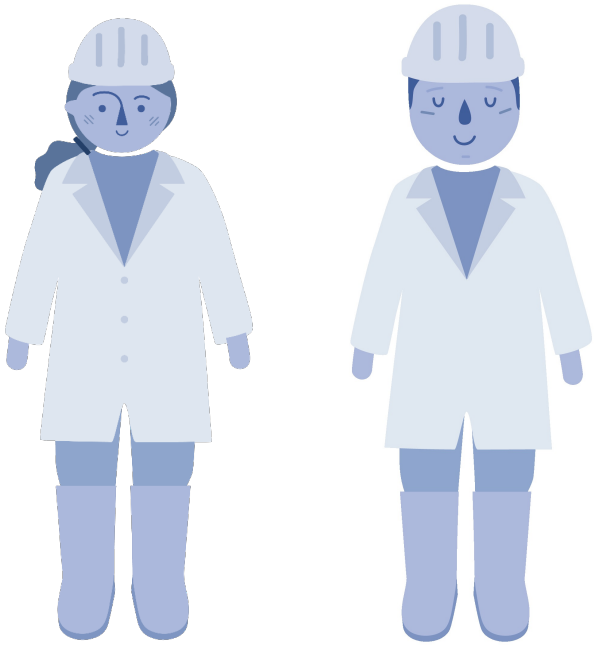
- Identification of preferred methodology for training and topics of interest
- OVs are not regular trainers and their experience and knowledge could be used in on-site practical training
- Considering topics pointed for future training this could benefit from more collaboration with the University/Academia

Perspectives

- Develop effective future training tools: online platform dynamic and updated repository of training materials
- Regular surveys to update training activities and needs

Gomes-Neves, E., Cardoso, M. F., Lazou, T., Hengl B., Bonardi, S.,Blagojevic, B., Guldiman, C., Johler, S. 2023.**Official veterinarians in Europe: questionnaire-based insights into demographics, work and training** (*submitted*)

WG5 Acknowledgements



Thank you!