



**Alone but connected? Digital (in)equalities in care work and generational relationships among older people living alone**

Quantitative analysis of national and EU datasets on ageing: data analysis

The project was supported by funding within the JPI MYBL from the Ministry of Education and Science of Latvia.



UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA

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# 1. Research background information

EQualCare aims to further understanding of, and policy development on, the intersections of digitalisation with intergenerational care work and care relationships of older people living alone, and to contribute to reducing inequalities through collaboration and co-design. EQualCare interrogates inequalities by gender, cultural and socio-economic background both between and within countries, with their very different demographics and policy backgrounds.

This report analyses available data and provides comparative context for the project. It focuses on the age group 60+ (or 60-74 in some cases) in Finland, Germany, Latvia and Sweden. Objectives of statistical analysis are:

- to provide robust evidence on the scale of care work and generational relationships for older people living alone;
- to include socio-economic indicators and attitudes to the use of (mobile) digital technologies.

The purpose of this report is to provide baseline information from quantitative data sets on the most important dimensions of ageing:

1. Quality of life;
2. Contacts outside household;
3. Living conditions;
4. Income;
5. Care work;
6. Health;
7. Digital technologies;
8. Training;
9. Discrimination.

In the report, this information is ordered by thematic blocks and not in the form of a single narrative, because the further purpose of using this information is to integrate it with the qualitative data.

## 2. Methodology

In order to obtain comparable and detailed background information related to the topic of the study, sources of indicators were selected primarily to ensure comparability between the countries involved in the study – Germany, Finland, Sweden and Latvia - as well as achieve a sufficient sample size for the target population – people aged over 60 and living alone. Therefore, the following data sources were analysed:

- General population structure information from the four countries state statistics (initial data from 2020; updated with data from 2022);
- Eurobarometer surveys for the time period of 2016-2019<sup>1</sup> – those often include questions on various aspects of digitization, with a series of questions being asked on a regular basis;
- During information update two Eurobarometer surveys from 2021 and 2022 were added – one of them had the same questions asked in 2019 (it provided a possibility for a comparison), another was focused on the topic of digital transformation, therefore allowing to give a more general view on the problems addressed in the study;
- SHARE surveys<sup>2</sup> – focused on the oldest population group and related problems; from the 7<sup>th</sup> wave of the survey includes all four countries represented in the study. In total, four survey waves are used – Wave 7, Wave 8, Corona Wave 1 and Corona Wave 2.

Eurobarometer surveys explore general aspects of the digitalisation and these questions were selected for analysis. As the sample in these surveys does not exceed 1,500 respondents, but usually - 1,000, the number of respondents of retirement age living alone seldom exceeded 200 respondents per country in one survey. Thus, in those cases where the questions were repeated in several surveys, data files were combined, which allowed to analyze the data set of each country in a more detail. For comparison of the national data without further detail, specific aspects of communication, digitization and health were selected.

SHARE longitudinal surveys most relate to the research topic. Its 7<sup>th</sup> wave was conducted in 2018, the 8<sup>th</sup> wave in 2020, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corona wave - in 2021. This is the most recent data, available for all four countries participating in the survey.

As not all questions related to the research topic were asked in one wave and for all respondents, it was decided to create a sample of respondents from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> waves

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/screen/home> ; <https://www.gesis.org/en/eurobarometer-data-service/home>

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.share-project.org/home0.html>

by selecting those respondents who answered the same questions, and then balance their proportions with weights. As a result two samples were created – one for questions which were asked to a smaller number of respondents (Sample 1) and the other for those asked to a larger part of respondents (Sample 2). Socio-demographic questions for countries that participated in the SHARE survey before the 7<sup>th</sup> wave – Germany and Sweden – were often retrieved from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> wave data, if they were not included in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> wave. However, this only applied to variables that were constant in all waves of the study.

A comparison between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corona wave questionnaires showed that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corona survey wave included questions about the use of the Internet, which allowed to analyse social contacts and health situation in relation to care. 1<sup>st</sup> Corona wave did not include most of these questions. Therefore, only data from the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of Corona, which became available in 2022, were used for the analysis.

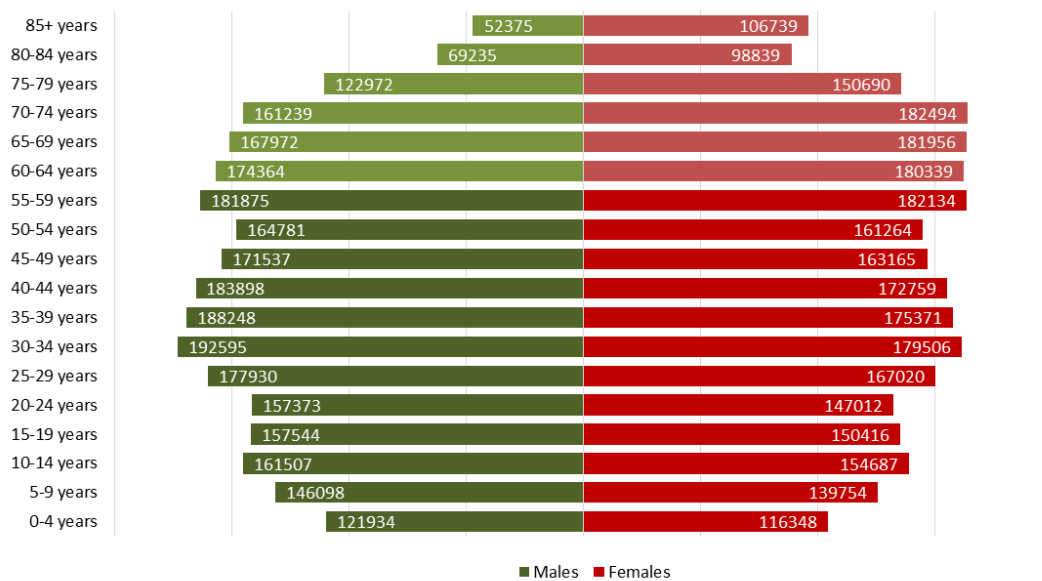
Representation of SHARE Sample 1 from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> waves at the national level for persons aged 60+ who live alone is as follows: 699 respondents from Germany; 817 respondents from Sweden; 228 respondents from Finland; 226 respondents from Latvia. Representation of SHARE Sample 2 from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> waves at the national level for persons aged 60+ who live alone is as follows: 797 respondents from Germany; 918 respondents from Sweden; 353 respondents from Finland; 495 respondents from Latvia. Representation of SHARE Corona 2<sup>nd</sup> wave at the national level for persons aged 60+ who live alone is as follows: 445 respondents from Germany; 265 respondents from Sweden; 255 respondents from Finland; 273 respondents from Latvia.



### 3. General statistics

The age-gender structure of the society of the countries involved in the study is different. The highest share of the 60+ generation in population is in **Finland** 30.6% in total. Men of this age group constitute 13.4% of the entire population, women – 16.2% (see Figure G.1). The generation, which is currently 60-74 years old are children of baby boom, so it is still quite numerous age group in the Finnish society. The gender ratio in Finland in the age group 60+ is equal. The differences in life expectancy between men and women are rather insignificant for the people aged 60-74, but in the age group 75+ it increases.

Figure G.1. Population structure of Finland, 2022



Source: Finnish state statistics<sup>3</sup>

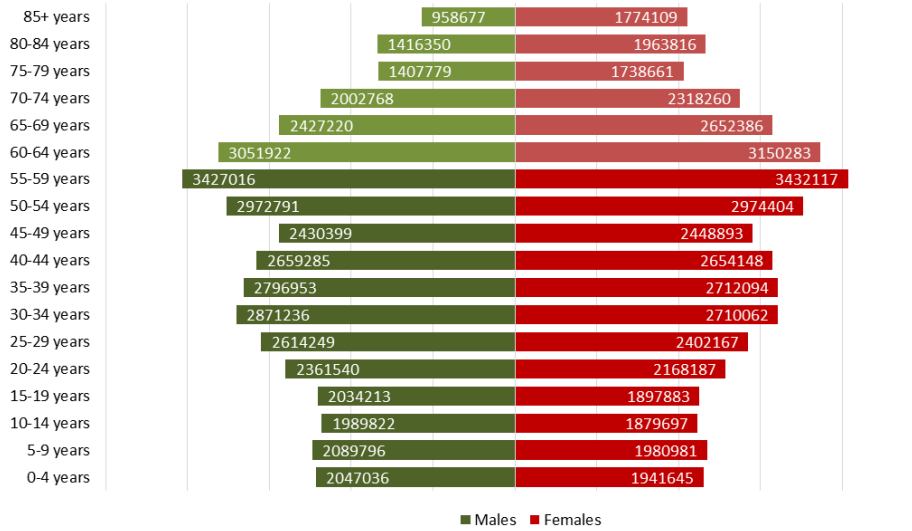
The structure of **German** society is quite evenly distributed with the exception of the generation aged 55-59 which is the largest age group in Germany (see Figure G.2). Men in age group 60+ constitute 13.4% of the entire population, women – 16.1%, what is little bit less than in Finland.

In **Latvia**, there is a significant gender disproportion in population above 60 years of age (see Figure G.3). Women in this age group constitute 17.9% of the entire

<sup>3</sup> See: [https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin\\_\\_vaerak/statfin\\_vaerak\\_pxt\\_11s3.px/](https://pxdata.stat.fi/PxWeb/pxweb/en/StatFin/StatFin__vaerak/statfin_vaerak_pxt_11s3.px/)

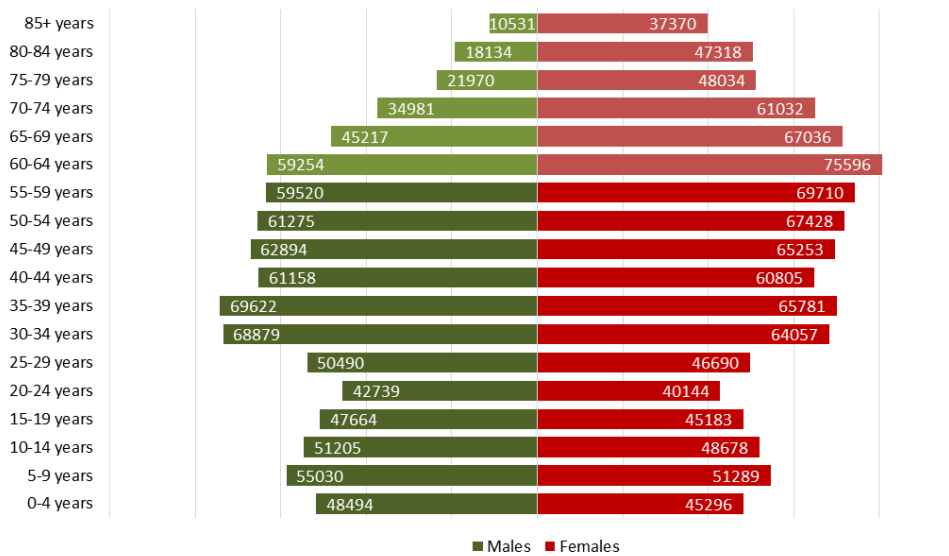
population, but men – 10.1%. The main reason for disparity is low life expectancy for men in Latvia.

Figure G.2. Population structure of Germany, 2022



Source: German state statistics<sup>4</sup>

Figure G.3. Population structure of Latvia, 2022



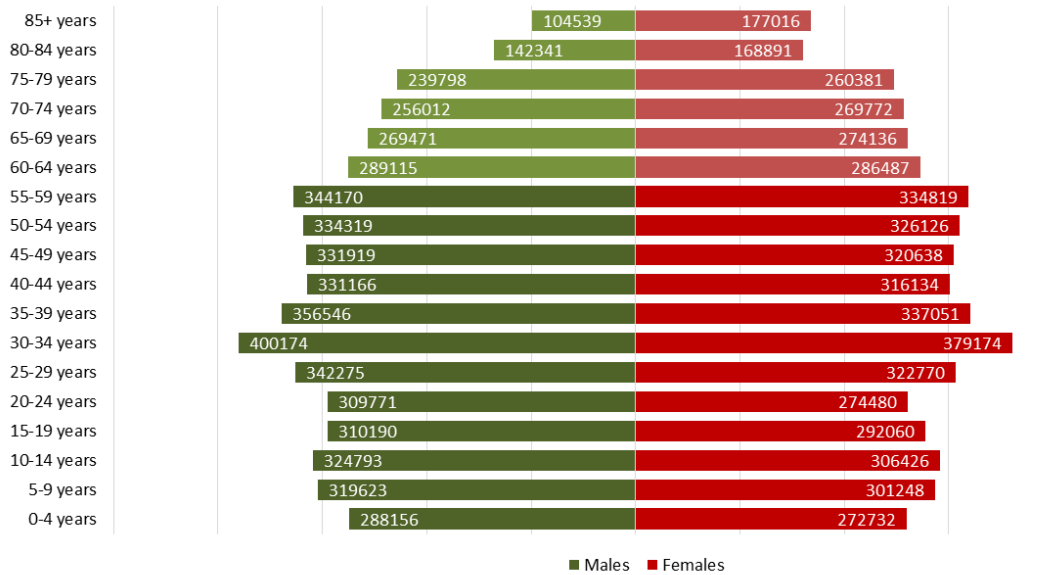
Source: Latvian state statistics<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www-genesis.destatis.de/genesis/online?operation=abrufabelleBearbeiten&levelindex=2&levelid=1698897777058&auswahloperation=abrufabelleAuspraegungAuswaehlen&auswahlverzeichnis=ordnungsstruktur&auswahlziel=werteabruf&code=12411-0013&auswahltext=&werteabruf=Werteabruf#abreadcrumb>

<sup>5</sup> See: [https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP\\_PUB/START\\_\\_POP\\_\\_IR\\_\\_IRD/IRD080/table/tableViewLayout1/](https://data.stat.gov.lv/pxweb/lv/OSP_PUB/START__POP__IR__IRD/IRD080/table/tableViewLayout1/)

The lowest share of the 60+ age group is in **Sweden**, because the spread of different generations in Swedish society is the most equal (see Figure G.4). Men in the 60+ age group constitute 12.4% of the entire society, women – 13.7%.

Figure G.4. Population structure of Sweden, 2022



Source: Swedish state statistics<sup>6</sup>

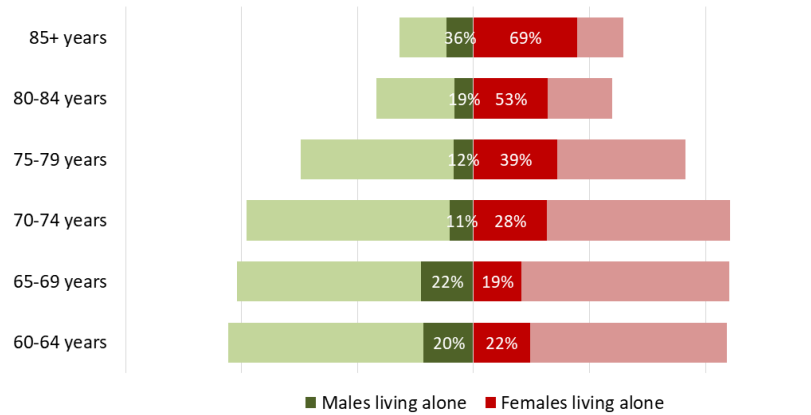
It is difficult to objectively determine the share of persons who live alone in each of the countries. In Figures G.5-G.8, the calculation is based on SHARE survey data. However, when calculations are made using other data sources, different results are obtained. Thus, 20.6% of the 60-66 year-old generation could live alone in Sweden according to SHARE data, but according to the Eurobarometer survey data - 39.6%. In other age groups, difference is also significant. Similar difference between SHARE and Eurobarometer data can be also found in Finland. There is less discrepancy in estimates in Latvian data, but in Germany the difference is insignificant – around 1.5%.

Researching the discrepancy, we looked into Swedish case. National *Statistics Sweden* also collects information on the share of persons living alone. Figure G.9 shows a comparison of data obtained from three different sources of information. The *Statistics Sweden* data are closer to the SHARE data, and positioned between the SHARE and Eurobarometer data estimates.

<sup>6</sup> See: [https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START\\_\\_BE\\_\\_BE0101\\_\\_BE0101A/FolkmandNov/table/tableViewLayout1/](https://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/en/ssd/START__BE__BE0101__BE0101A/FolkmandNov/table/tableViewLayout1/)

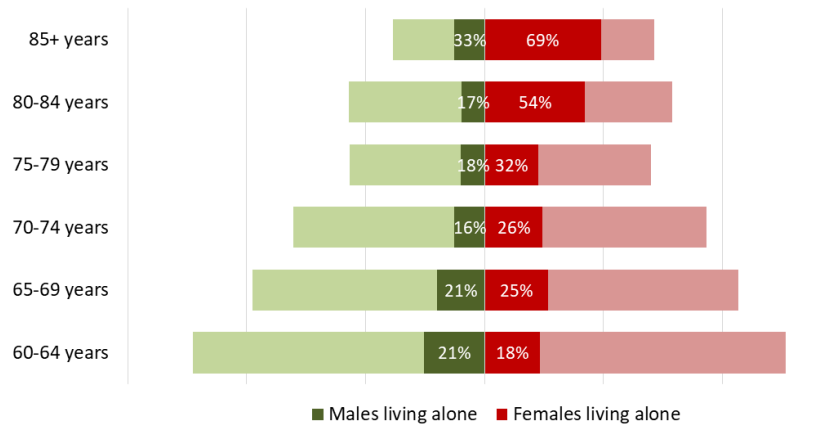


Figure G.5. Share of persons living alone by gender-age groups in Finland



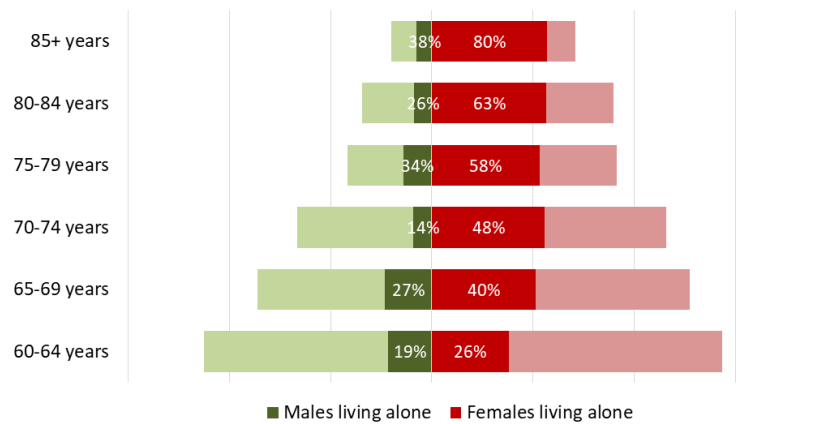
Source: Finnish state statistics (2022) and SHARE

Figure G.6. Share of persons living alone by gender-age groups in Germany



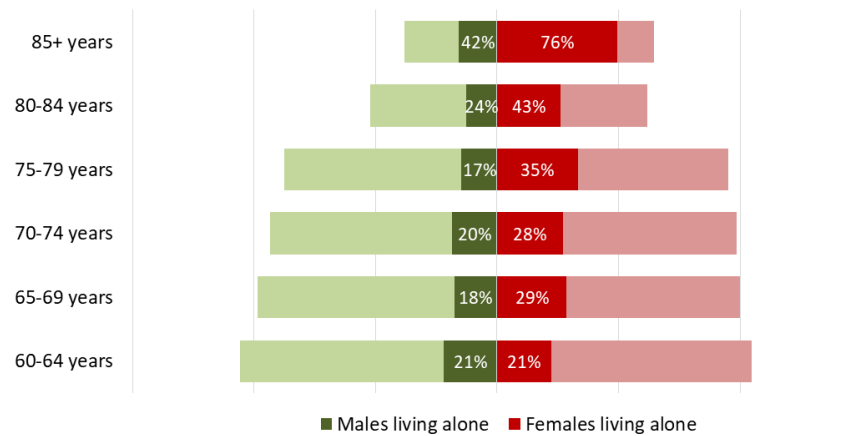
Source: German state statistics (2022) and SHARE

Figure G.7. Share of persons living alone by gender-age groups in Latvia



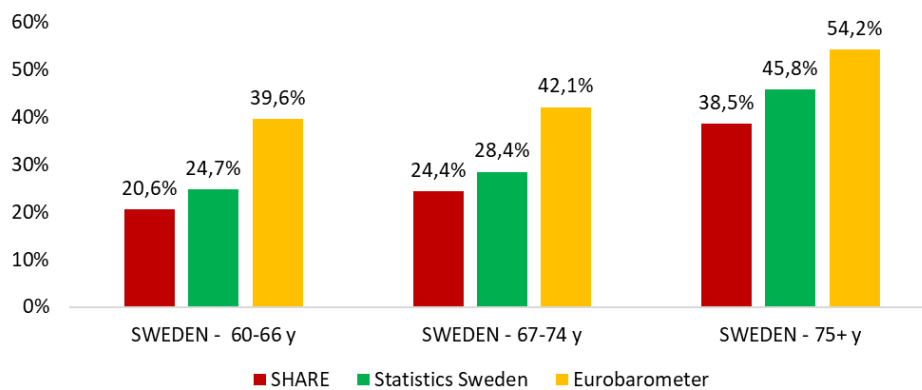
Source: Latvian state statistics (2022) and SHARE

Figure G.8. Share of persons living alone by gender-age groups in Sweden



Source: Swedish state statistics (2022) and SHARE

Figure G.9. Share of persons living alone by age groups in Sweden, comparing different data sources



The most likely explanation for the difference is the method by which survey respondents were selected for interviews. In Eurobarometer surveys, one respondent is selected per household. People living alone have a higher probability of being selected for the sample. The SHARE survey uses a different approach: in case several older people live in the household, all are surveyed, thus a probability of older people living in families to be sampled increases. National statistical organizations tend to use register data, so this information should be most accurate. As the statistical bureau in Latvia does not provide official data on this group of population, SHARE data are used for comparative purposes. SHARE or Eurobarometer data most likely does not provide very accurate data on the share of persons living alone but still allows characterise the experience of digitalization and care in this group.

## 4. Data analysis

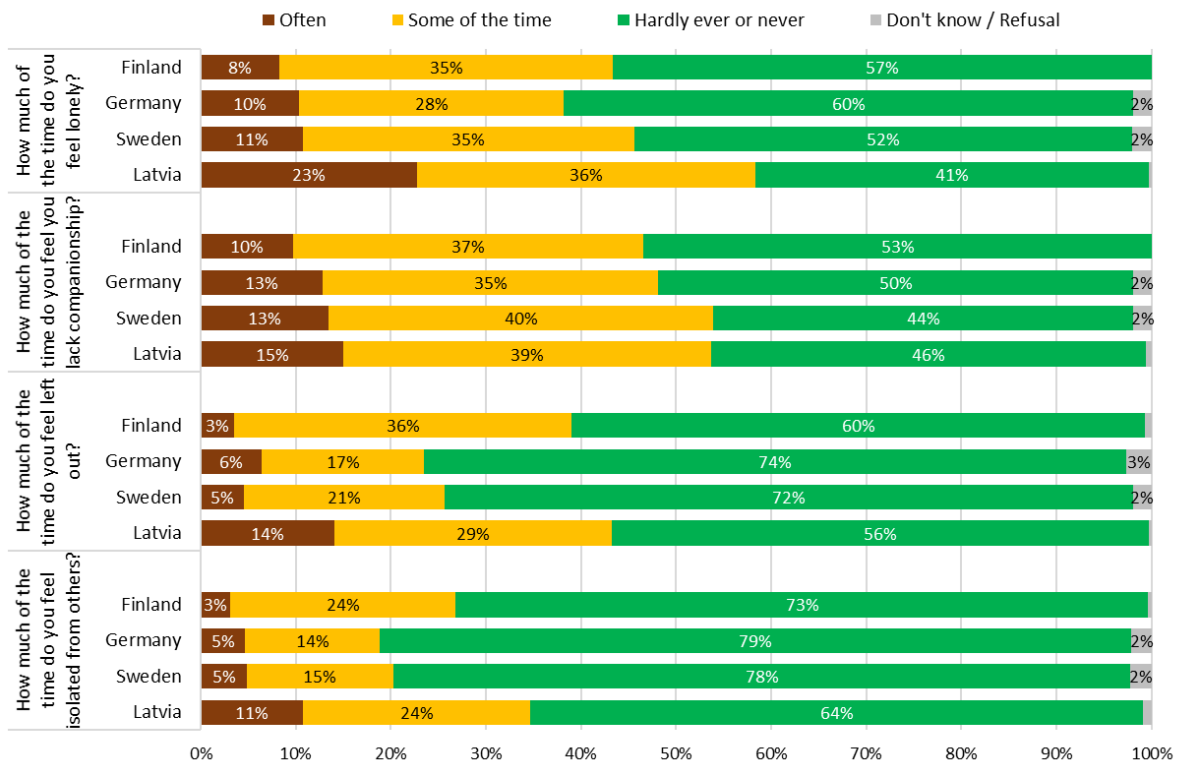
### 4.1. Quality of life

The SHARE study uses a series of different statements to measure people's feelings of loneliness:

- How much of the time do you feel lonely?
- How much of the time do you feel you lack companionship?
- How much of the time do you feel left out?
- How much of the time do you feel isolated from others?

The first two questions are answered positively most frequently (Figure 1.1). Older people from Latvia give positive answers here more often than respondents from other countries. However, when asked about the feeling of being left out and isolated a higher share of Finnish older respondents give positive answers. Older people in Latvia more often than their peers feel alone, isolated and experience lack of companionship. The answers of Swedish and German respondents do not differ much between each other and, compared to Finland and Latvia, older people there feel less lonely.

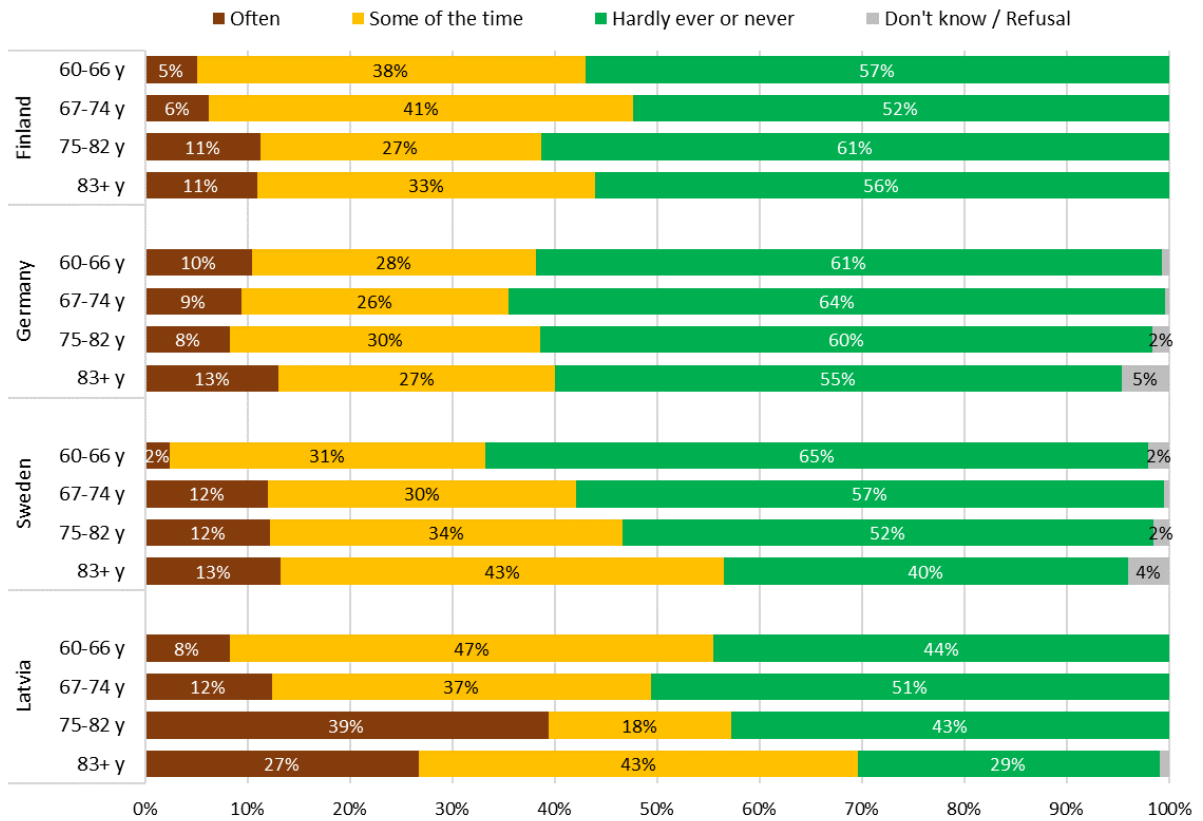
*Figure 1.1. Feeling lonely (different forms of measurement) in the age group 60+ comparing four countries*



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

For in-depth analysis, the first of the question was chosen (how much of the time do you feel lonely) as it best accumulates the main differences between countries in the answers to all four questions. The detailed spread of answers among age groups is provided in Figure 1.2.

*Figure 1.2. How much of the time do you feel lonely? – by country and age group*



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

With each subsequent age group, feeling of loneliness increases. It demonstrates a comparatively high share for older people in Latvia – more frequently than others they indicate that they "often" feel lonely. In other countries, fewer than 13% of respondents chose this answer, while in Latvia it reaches 39% in the age group 75 to 82 years. Correlation between age and loneliness can also be found in Sweden, while in Germany it is virtually absent.

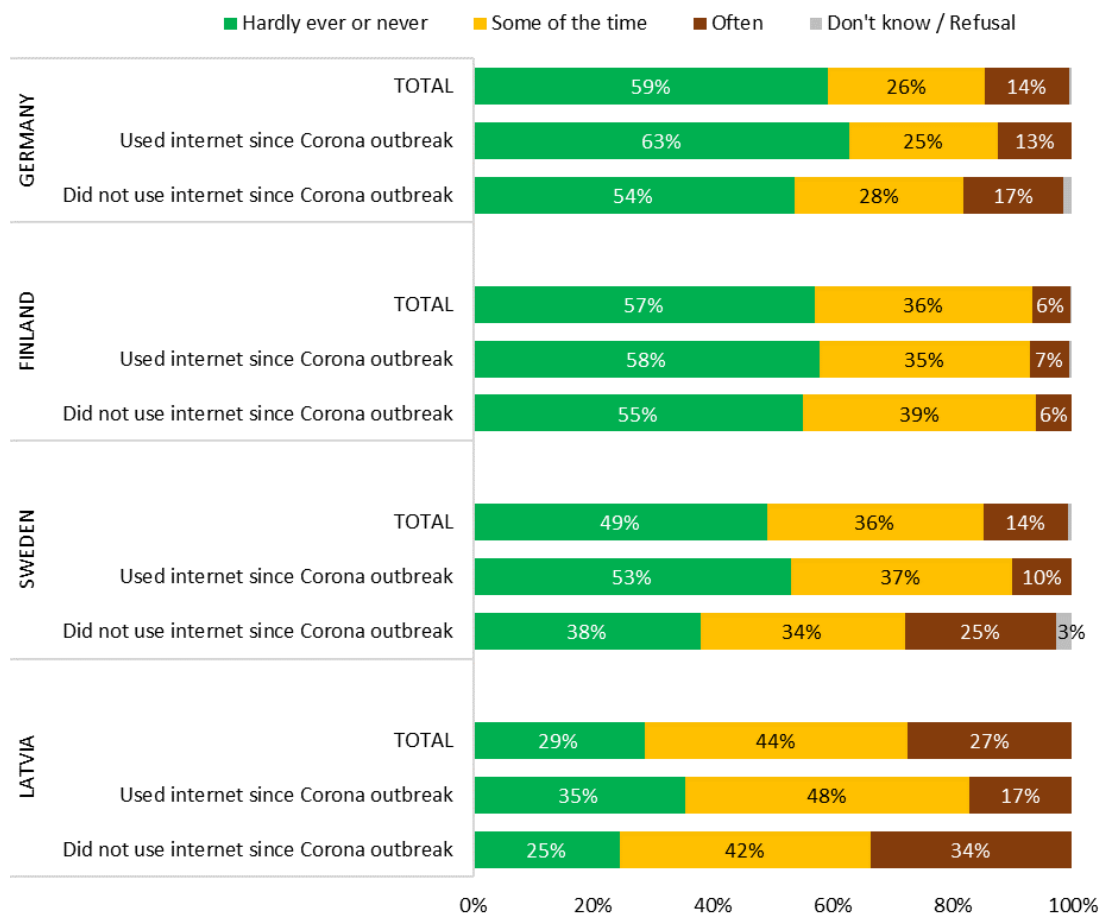
A differently worded question about whether older people felt lonely was also asked in the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of the SHARE Corona 2021 survey (see Figure 1.3). Also, the situation had changed as the survey was conducted at the time of lockdown and social distancing and older people were considered a risk group.

In this survey, the respondents from Latvia also most frequently pointed out that they felt lonely. In all four countries there is a correlation between loneliness and use the Internet since Covid-19 outbreak. It is more pronounced in Germany, Sweden and Latvia, and

less so in Finland. Respondents who have used the Internet less often reported about feeling lonely.

Respondents to the Corona survey were also asked to compare their feelings of loneliness during the second wave of Corona with those they had during the first wave (see Figure 1.4). The answers do not demonstrate a difference with the static measurement of loneliness. Comparing all four countries, the answers of Latvian respondents stand out – they more often claim that the feeling of loneliness has increased.

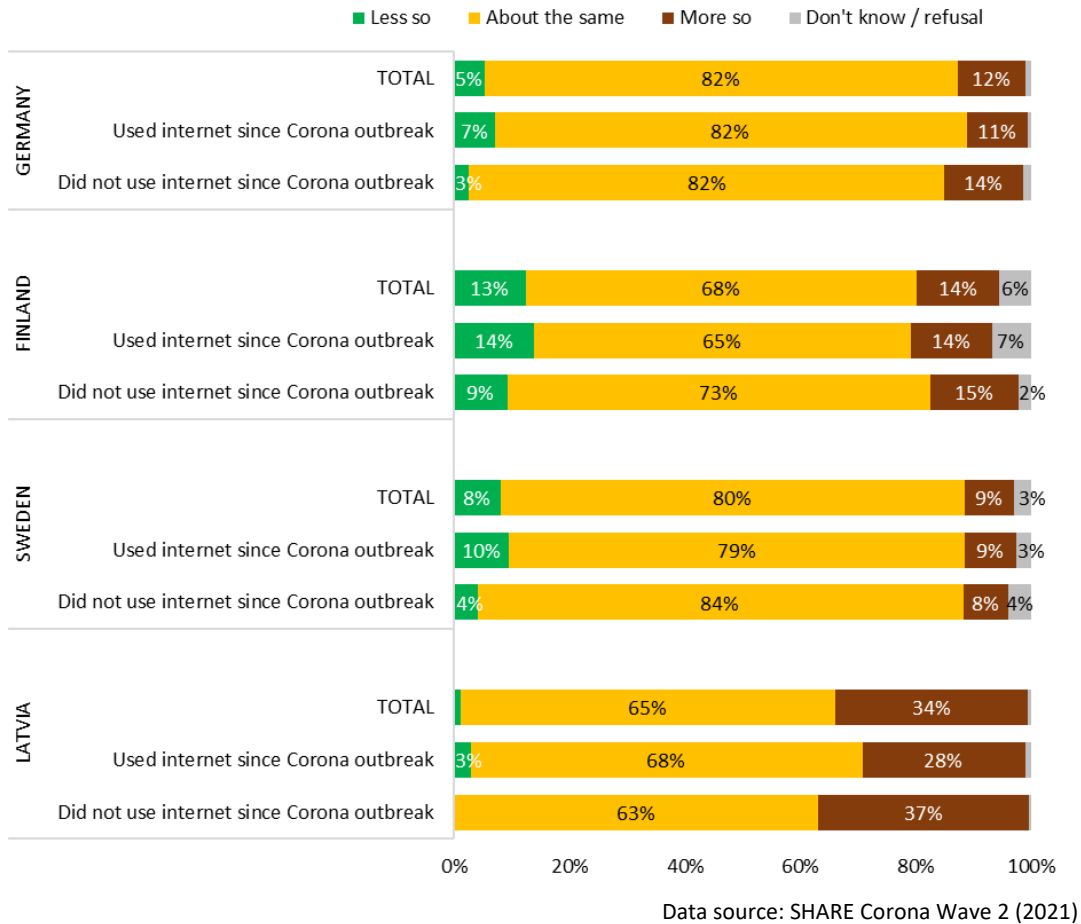
*Figure 1.3. How much of the time do you feel lonely? – by using internet since Corona outbreak*



Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Finns more often indicate a feeling of loneliness during the second Corona wave, while Swedes - less often. The difference could be explained by the different policies of these countries during the Covid-19 crisis and the fact that Finland was less affected by the first wave compared to the second one. Partly it could explain the share of answers of Latvian respondents – the second wave in Latvia was harder and Latvian older people could have felt lonelier during the second wave.

Figure 1.4. How much of the time do you feel lonely – has that been less so, about the same, or more so than during the first Corona wave? – by using internet since Corona outbreak



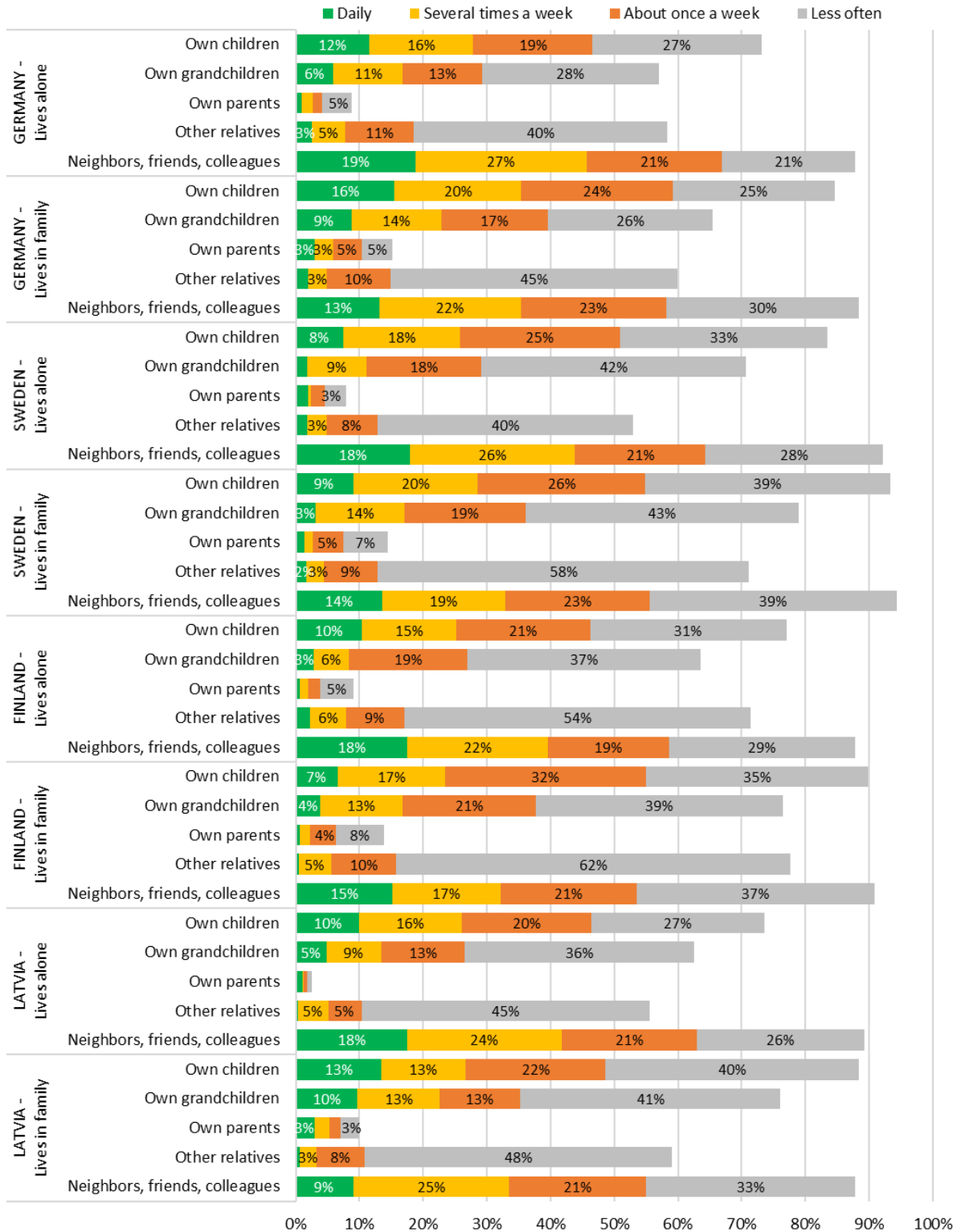
## 4.2. Contacts outside household

For people who live alone, contacts outside the family are important. The questions about them were asked only in the Corona second wave survey in 2021, so the context of the survey was specific and could depend on restrictions imposed during the pandemic.

In order to make a comparison, the figures (see Figure 2.1 and Figure 2.2) also include data on those older people who live in families. It is important that the question in both cases is about contacts outside the family).

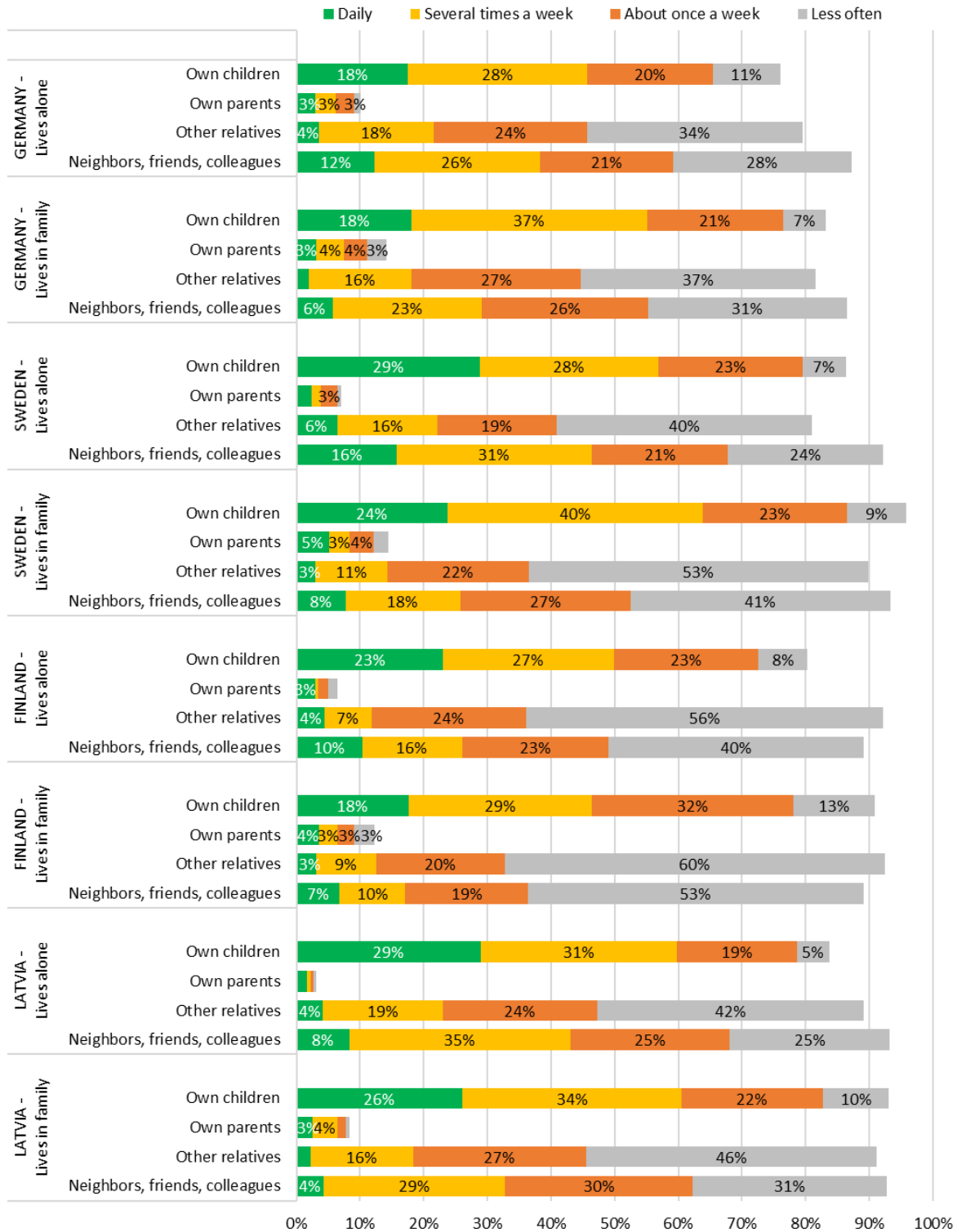


Figure 2.1. During the last three months, how often did you have personal contact, that is, face to face, with the following people from outside your home? – by living in family or alone



Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Figure 2.2. During the last three months, how often did you have contact by phone, email or any other electronic means with the following people from outside your home? – by living in family or alone



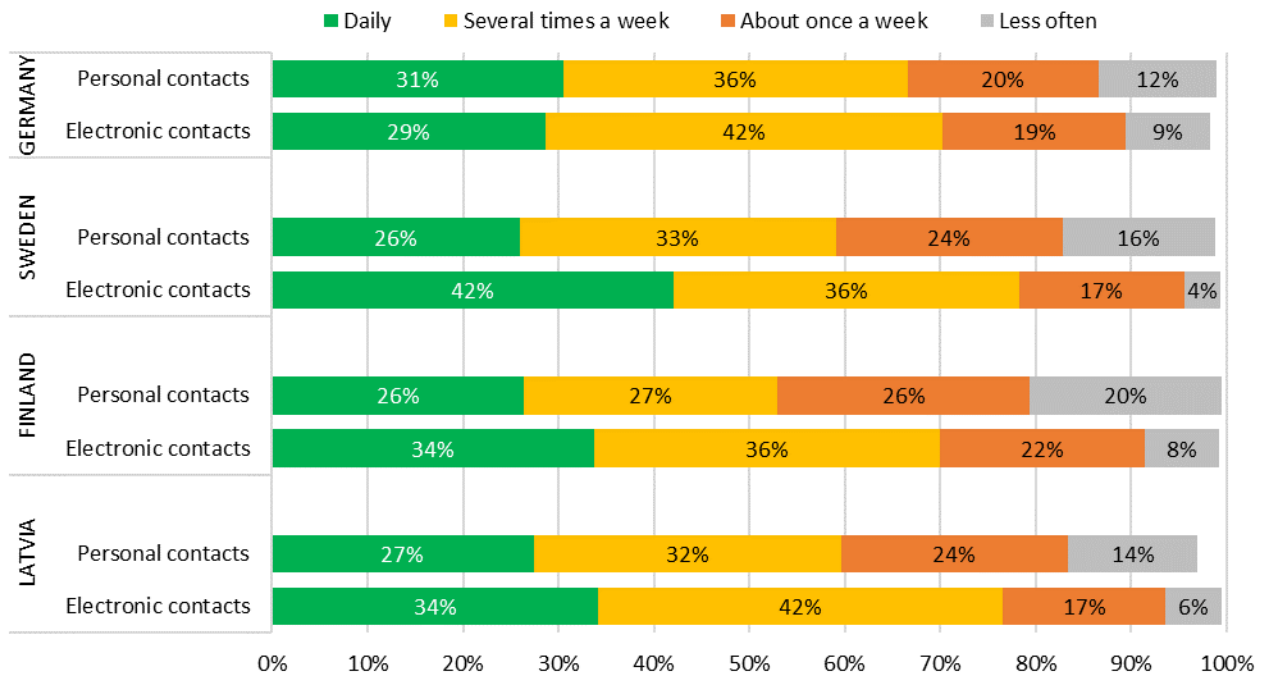
Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Those older people who live in families have had more frequent contacts in person with non-household relatives (children, grandchildren, parents). Most likely, this is related to the fact that non-household relatives visit not only the older people, but also other family members. Those older people who live alone have more frequent in person contacts with neighbours, friends and colleagues. Virtual (electronic) contacts in this group are less frequent compared to in-person ones.

Virtual contacts with children and parents are more common among older people living in families, but intensive contacts (every day) are more typical for those who live alone. Virtual contacts with neighbours, friends and colleagues, likewise as contacts in person with this group, are more frequent for those who live alone. Thus, it can be concluded that contacts with persons who are not relatives play an important role in the lives of older people living alone.

Germany is the only country where in-person and digital contacts of older people, who live alone, are balanced in daily routine (see Figure 2.3). In the other three countries virtual contacts were more frequent. In Sweden, older people more often than in other countries indicated that they had virtual contacts every day.

*Figure 2.3. During the last three months, how often did you have in-person contact / electronic contact with relatives, neighbours, friends, colleagues during last 3 months (with a person you contacted most frequently)?*



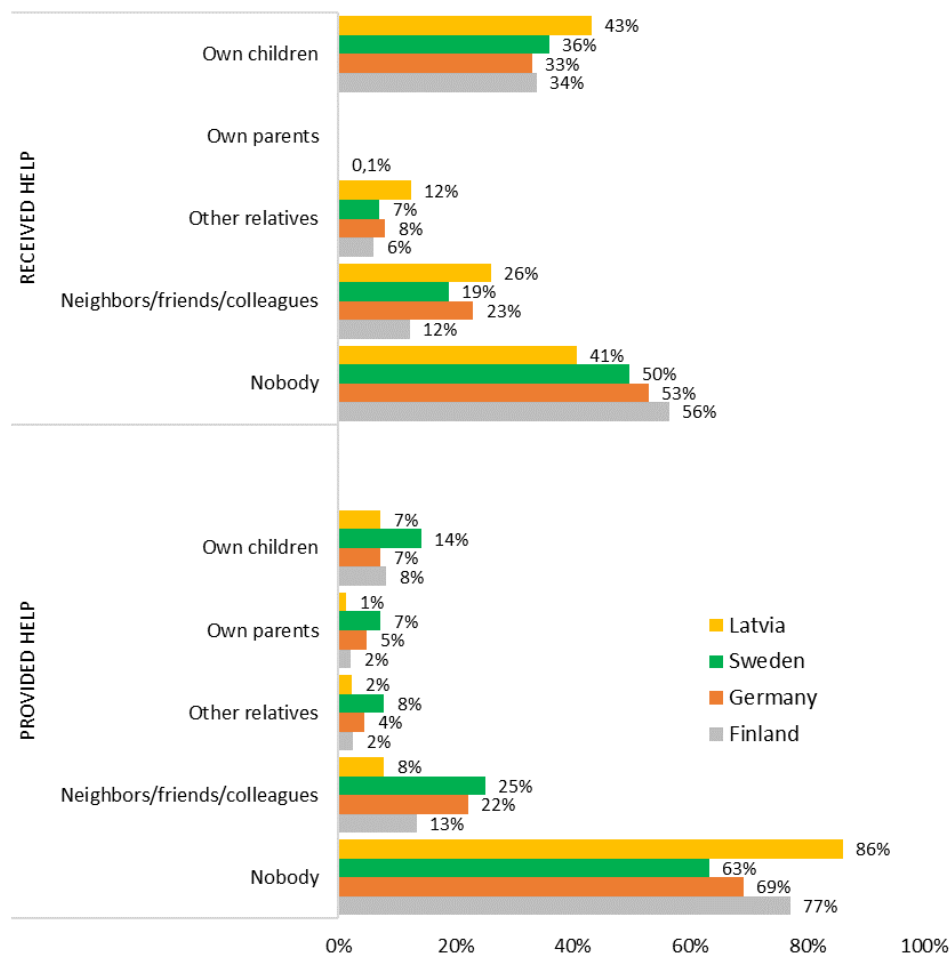
Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021) – persons living alone

One of the relatively common reasons associated with in-person contacts is getting help with obtaining necessities (see Figure 2.4). Usually, older people living alone receive this

kind of help rather than provide it, most often from their children, less often from neighbours, friends and colleagues, and even less often from other relatives. These tendencies are observed more often in Latvia than in other countries.

When looking at providing help with obtaining necessities, it is more often provided to neighbours, friends and colleagues, and less often to relatives. Older people Latvia less often acted as providers of help.

*Figure 2.4. Provided help to children, parents, other relatives or neighbours, friends, colleagues in obtaining necessities since outbreak of Corona / Received help from children, parents, other relatives or neighbours, friends, colleagues in obtaining necessities since outbreak of Corona*



Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021) – persons living alone

Older people living alone receive care in-person relatively seldom (see Figure 2.5). Most likely, it is related to the fact that the regular need for help also reduces an opportunity of living alone. Latvian older people who live alone receive care in-person more often than in other countries.

At the same time, older people offer in-person care to others relatively seldom. The exception is Swedish respondents offer it more often than their peers in other countries.

*Figure 2.5. Provided in-person care to children, parents, other relatives or neighbours, friends, colleagues since outbreak of Corona / Received regular home care by children, parents, other relatives or neighbours, friends, colleagues since outbreak of Corona*



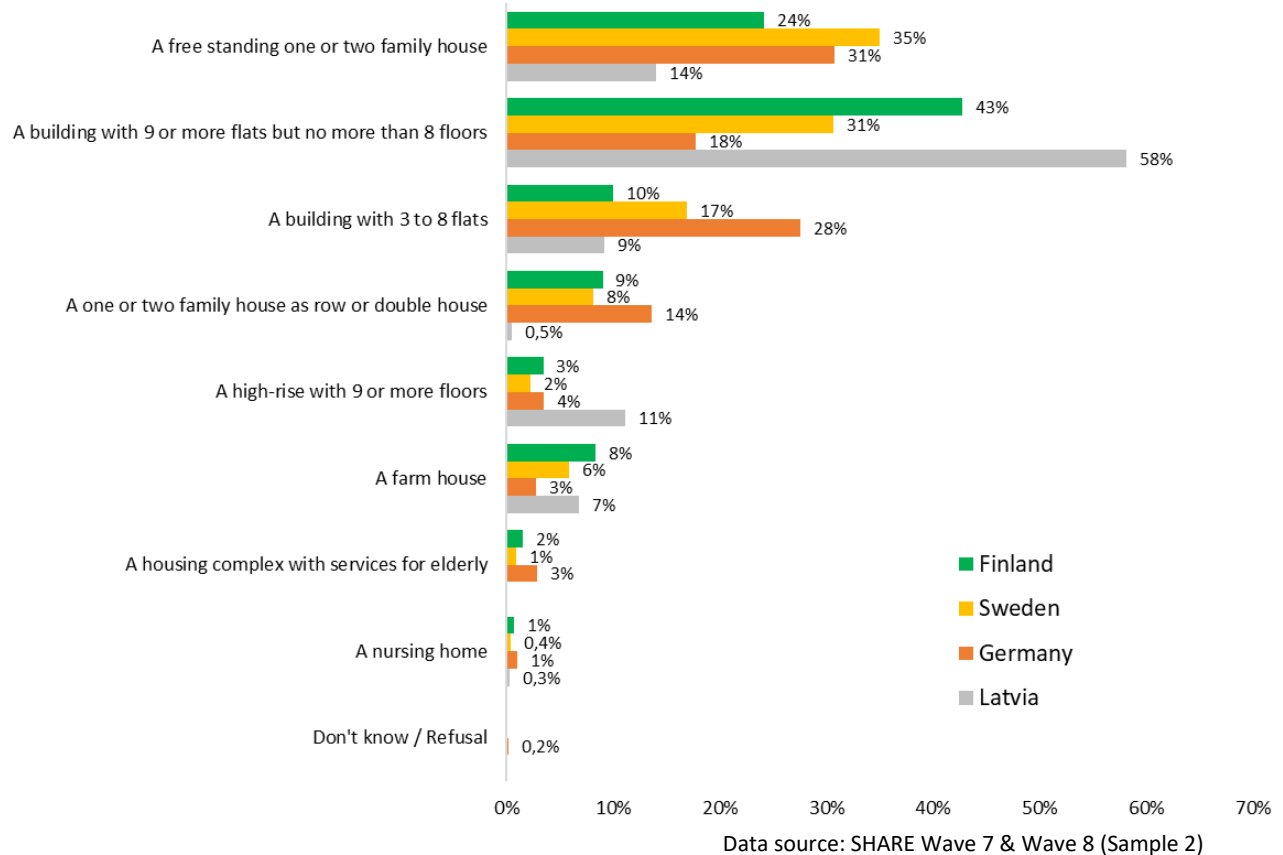
Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021) – persons living alone

### 4.3. Living conditions

The types of housing where older people live differ significantly between the countries involved in the study (see Figure 3.1). In Latvia, more than half (58%) of them live in multi-apartment houses, which are not higher than 8 floors, and another 11% – in multi-apartment houses with 9 or more floors. Also in Finland, almost half of older people live in apartment buildings. In Sweden, this type of residence is less common, while in Germany, less than a quarter of older people live in such homes.

In Germany, older people tend to live in 3-8 apartment houses and detached houses. More than a half of the older people in Sweden live in this type of housing. In Finland, older people tend to live in different types of housing and there is no single pattern.

*Figure 3.1. Type of building the household lives in*



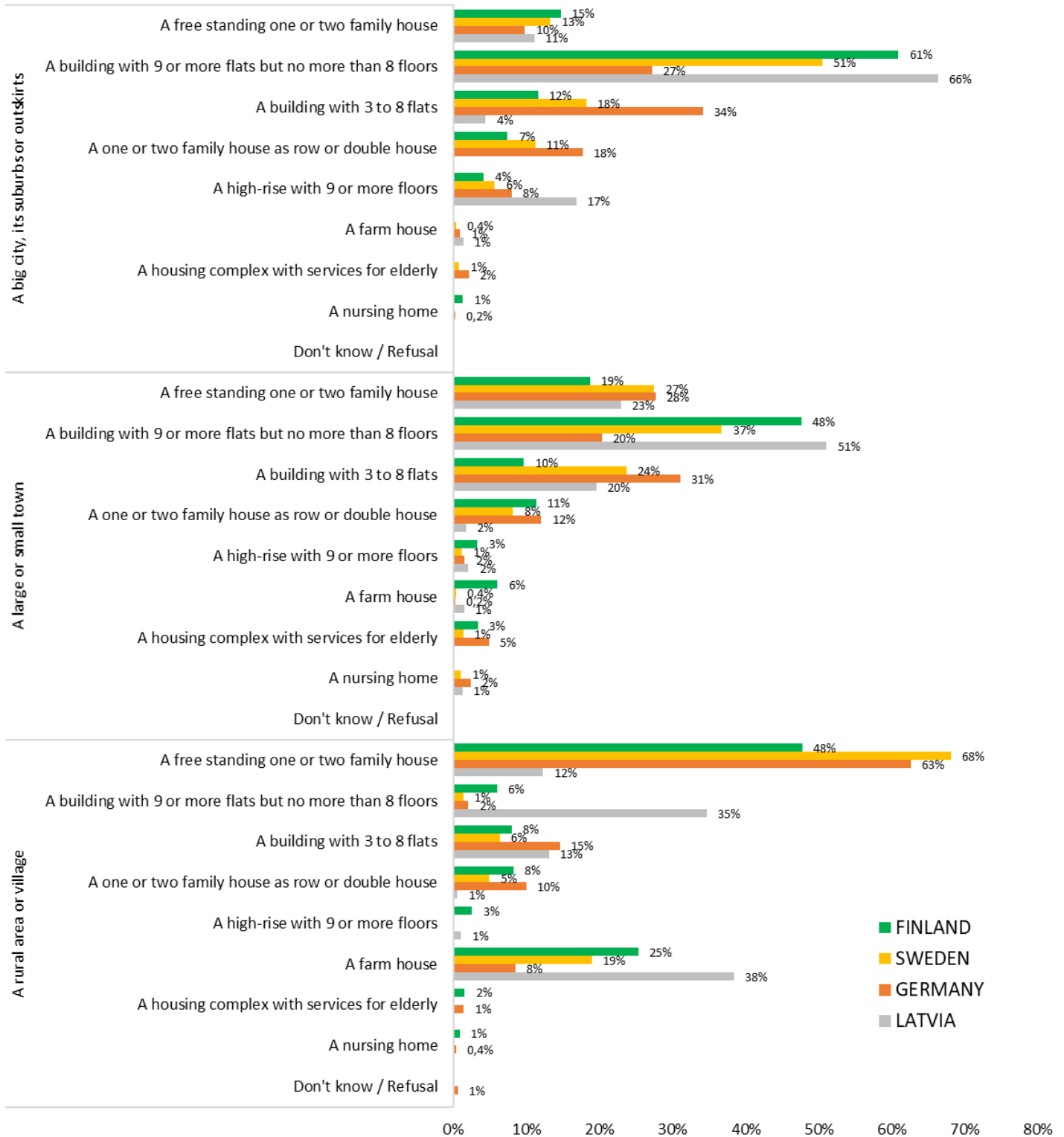
The types of housing differ significantly depending on the type of urban/rural settlement (see Figure 3.2). In the larger cities, housing types most significantly differ in Germany: there houses are generally smaller (3-8 apartments or less), compared to households in other countries. Large multi-apartment buildings with 9 or more floors as households for older people are more common in Latvian cities.

In smaller towns, older people dwell in single-family homes or houses with few apartments, and a few apartment buildings. This trend is present in all the countries included in the study.

Individual houses dominate in rural areas, but in Latvia those more often are detached farmhouses, while in the other countries – houses in small villages. In rural Latvia a third of older people also live in multi-apartment houses in village centres.



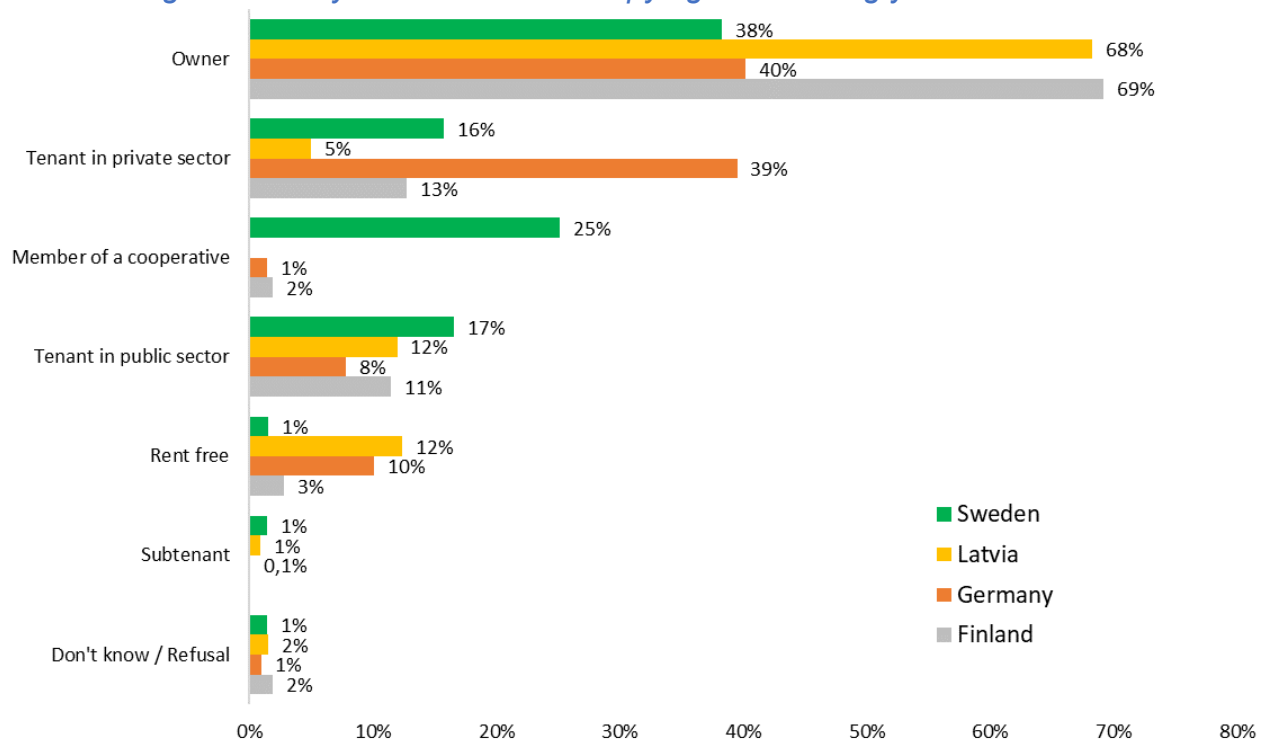
Figure 3.2. Type of building the household lives in – by type of settlement



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2)

Older people in Finland and Latvia more often own their home (see Figure 3.3). In Germany, renting the housing is significantly more common than in other countries. Housing cooperatives are common in Sweden, and housing is rented in the public sector there as well. In Latvia and Germany, around 10-12% of older people live in rent-free housing.

Figure 3.3. Is your household occupying the dwelling you live in as...



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

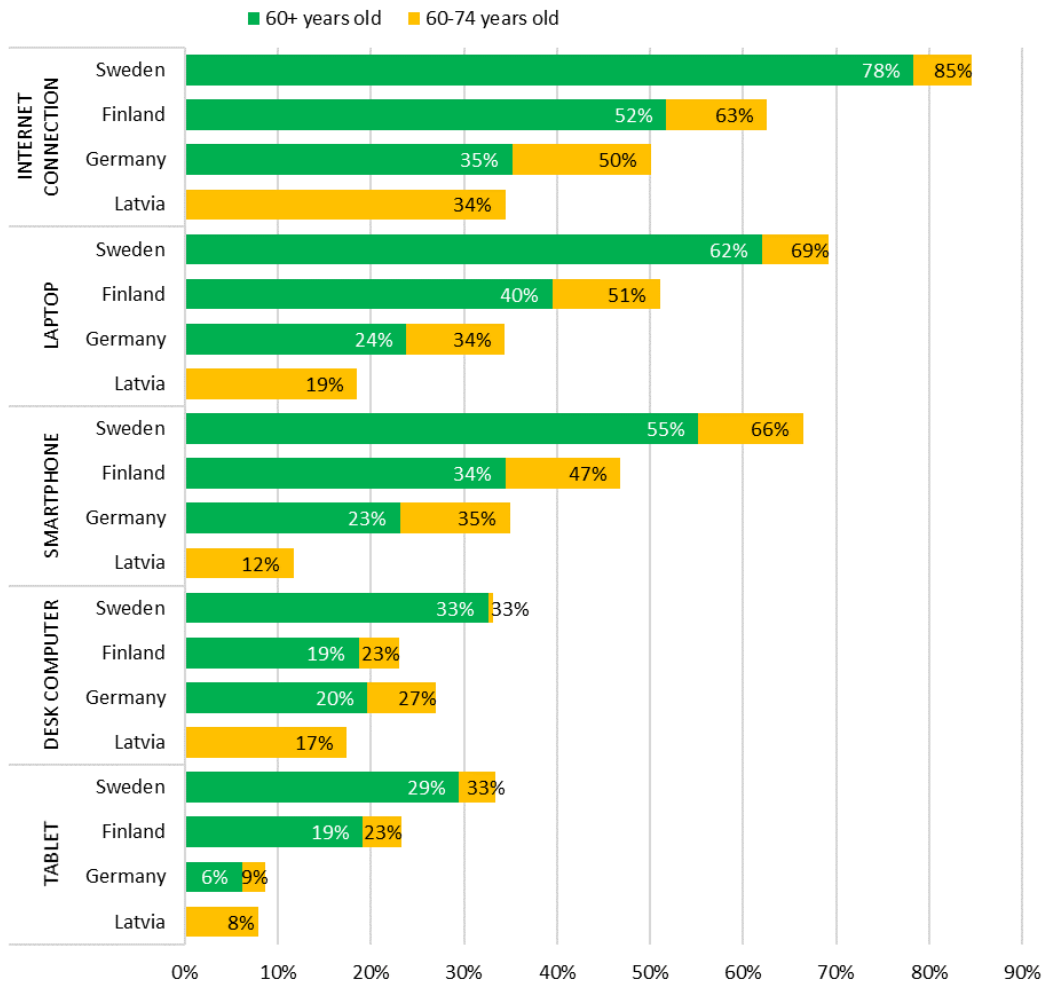
Living conditions in surveys are determined by possession of certain household items. This report focusses on items and opportunities related to digital communication.

Figure 3.4 shows the availability of various smart devices and Internet connection. Information is provided in the age groups 60+ years and 60-74 years. In Latvian case, data on the age group over 74 year is not available. In the age group 60-74 years, the availability of the devices and Internet connection is higher than in the whole age group 60+, so the data is compiled in a cumulative graph –age group 60+ years is marked in green, while the data in the age group 60-74 years is presented in orange as an extension of the respective bars.

The lowest accessibility of smart devices and Internet for older people can be found in Latvia. It is highest in Sweden, followed by Finland and then Germany. Desk computers are more common among older people in Germany than in Finland.

Desktop computers in Latvia and Germany among older people in the survey years (2016-2017) were used almost equally as laptops, while in Sweden and Finland the prevalence of laptops was significantly higher than that of desktop computers. The tablets had lowest prevalence among the devices.

Figure 3.4. Which of the following do you have? Age group 60-74

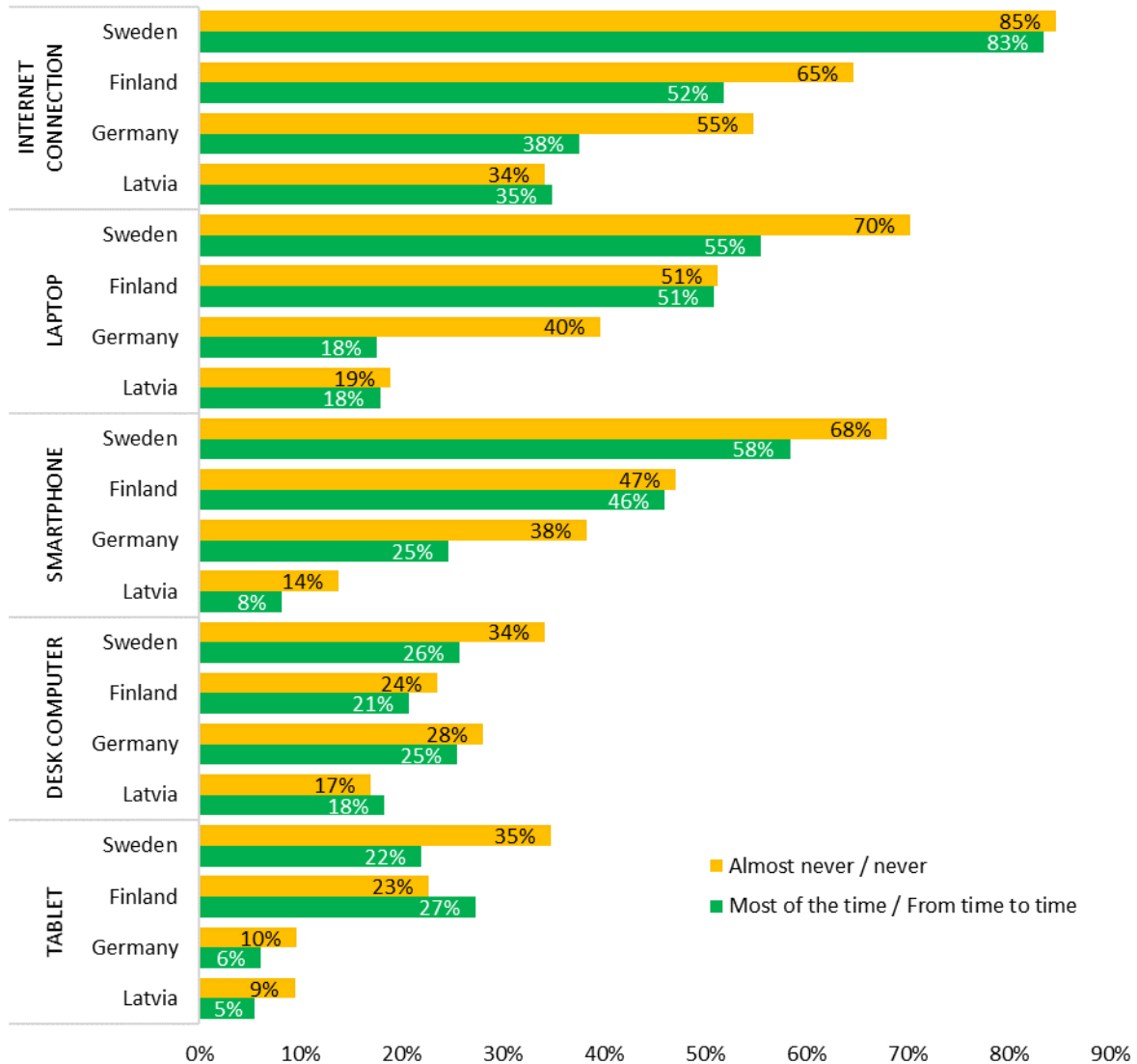


Data source: combined data file from Eurobarometer 85.1 (2016), Eurobarometer 87.1 (2017), Eurobarometer 87.2 (2017)  
No age group 60+ data for Latvia.

The availability of digital devices and services is closely related to the financial situation of respondents – those older people (in this case only the age group 60-74) who indicated that they sometimes or all the time have difficulties with paying bills, also have less access to laptops, smartphones and internet connection (see Figure 3.5). This situation differs among countries. In Sweden, there is difference in the availability devices, but not in the availability of the Internet connection. In Finland, there is no significant difference in availability of devices, but none in availability of the Internet connection. In Germany, the differences are significant in all categories except for desktop computers. There are

almost no significant differences in Latvia, except for smartphones, but the overall availability of all devices is lower than in the other countries.

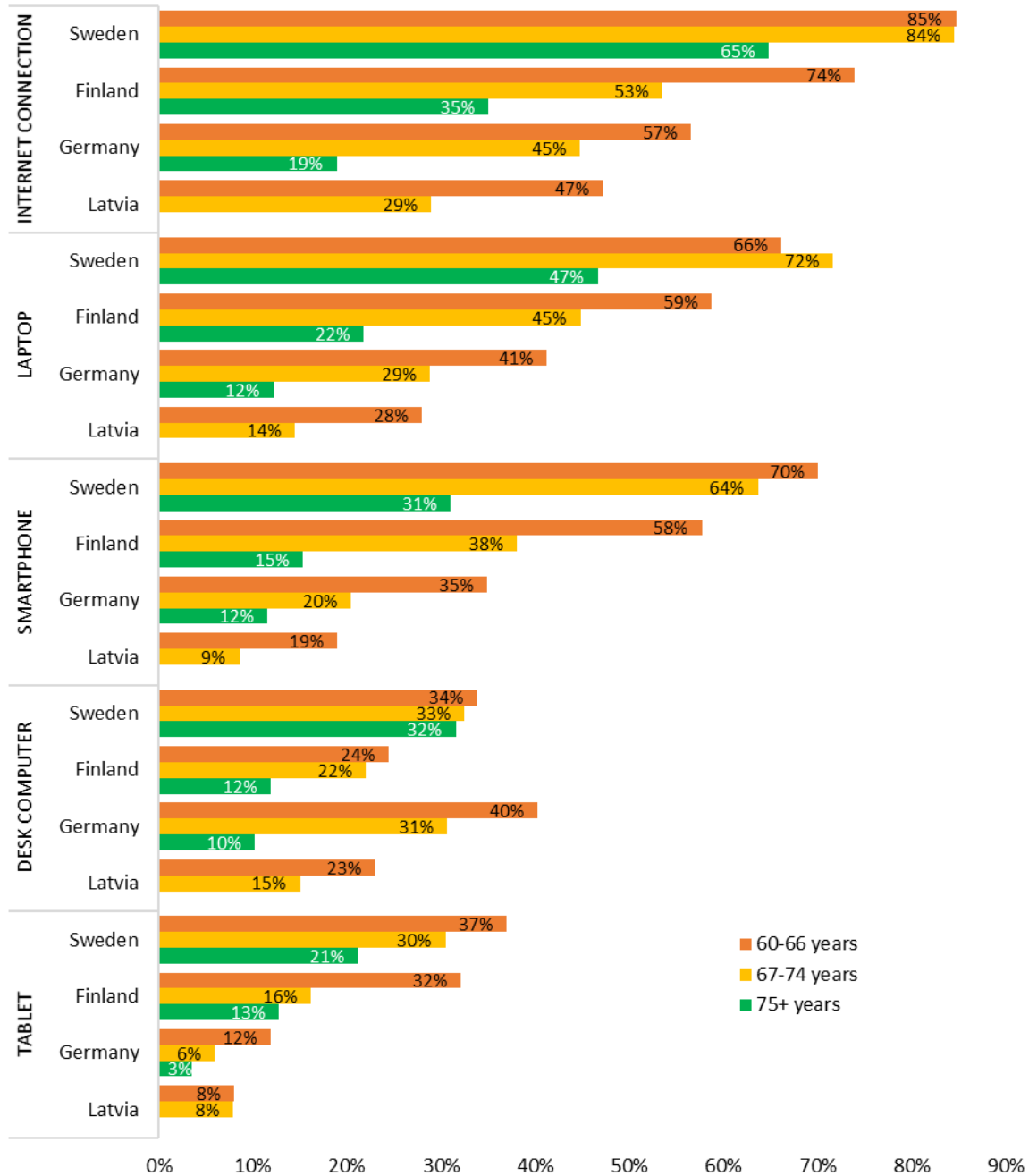
*Figure 3.5. Which of the following do you have? – by difficulties paying bills (most of the time, from time to time, almost never, never). Age group 60-74*



Data source: combined data file from Eurobarometer 85.1 (2016), Eurobarometer 87.1 (2017), Eurobarometer 87.2 (2017)

Differences between age groups are gradual – Internet connection and smart devices are most often available to the group aged up to 66 years, less so in the age group 67-74 years, and least to those older than 74 years (see Figure 3.6). In Sweden, the availability of Internet connection, laptops and smartphones differs little between the age groups 60-66 years and 67-74 years, but the availability of desktop computers is the same in all three age groups.

Figure 3.6. Which of the following do you have? – by age groups

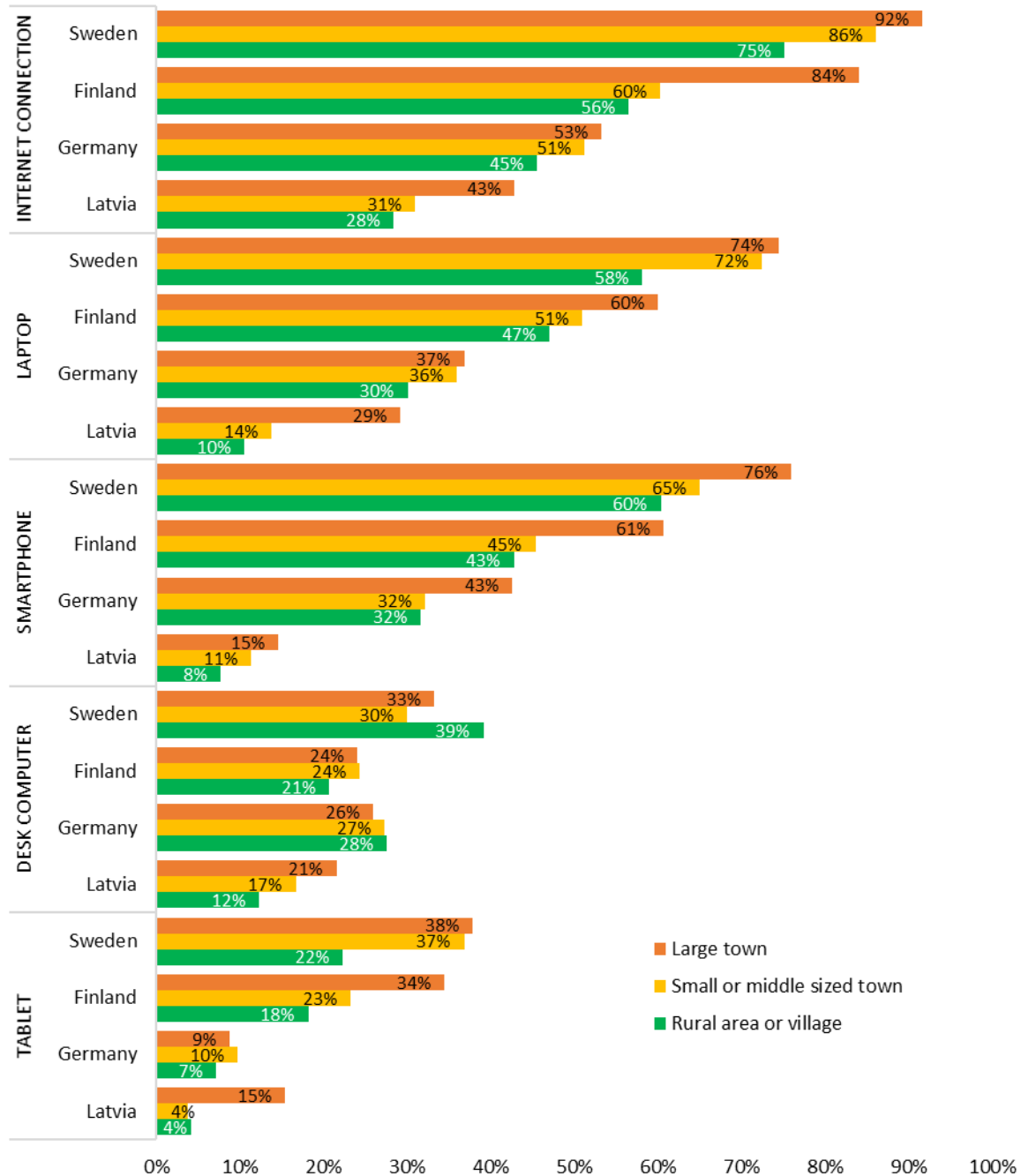


Data source: combined data file from Eurobarometer 85.1 (2016), Eurobarometer 87.1 (2017), Eurobarometer 87.2 (2017).  
No data on age group 75+ for Latvia

Analysing by the type of settlement, the Internet connection and relevant smart devices are most often available in large cities, less often – in medium and small towns, and less often – in rural areas (see Figure 3.7). However, in Germany these differences are significantly lower compared to the other countries. It can also be observed that in

Sweden and Germany desktop computers are even more accessible in rural areas than in cities.

Figure 3.7. Which of the following do you have? – by type of settlement. Age group 60-74



Data source: combined data file from Eurobarometer 85.1 (2016), Eurobarometer 87.1 (2017), Eurobarometer 87.2 (2017)

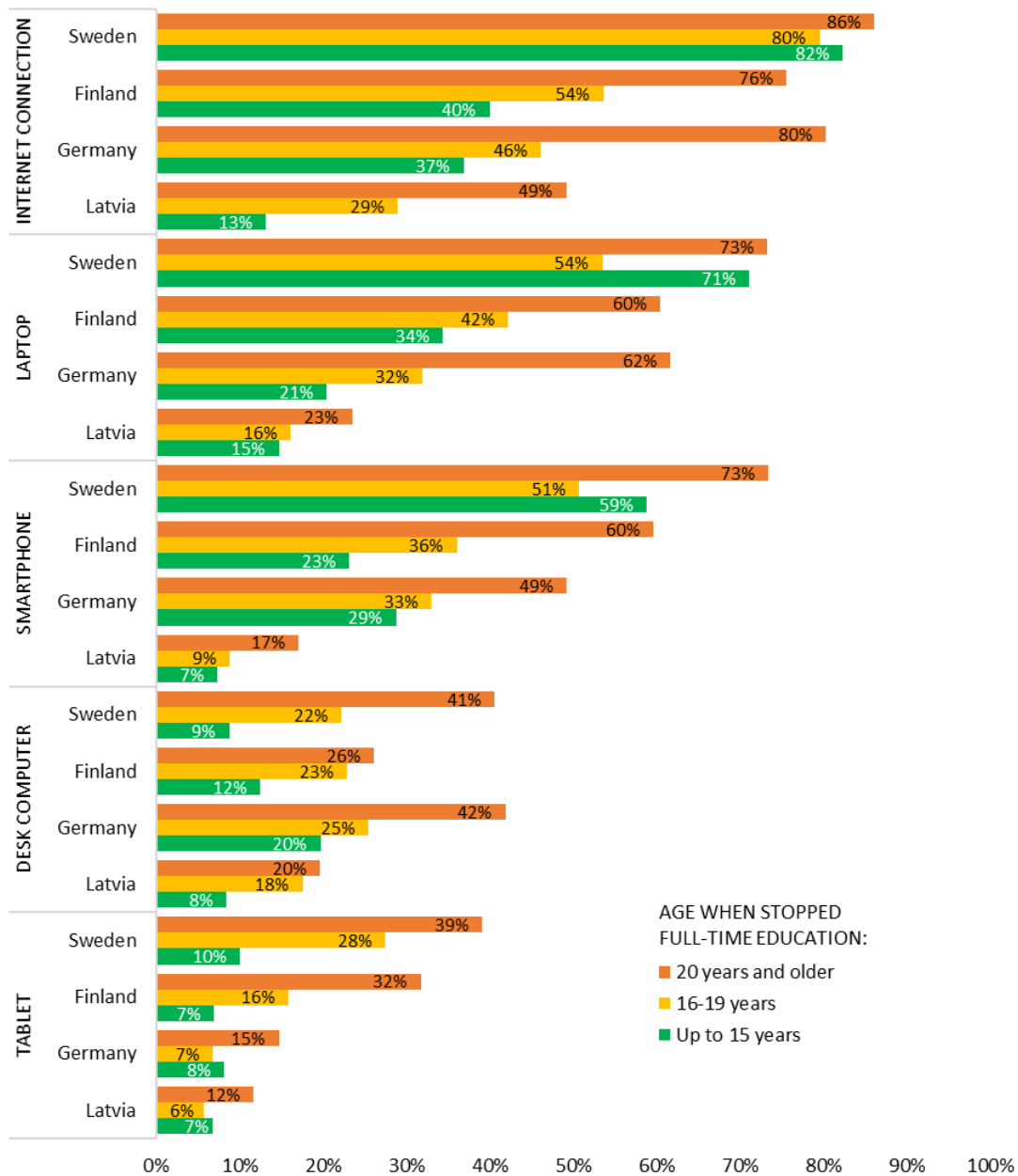
Level of education has impact on use of devices. Those older people with lower level of education have less availability to smart devices and Internet connection (see Figure 3.8).



It is different in Sweden – the availability of Internet connection there does not depend on level of education, while the availability of laptops and smartphones is still lower for those who stopped their education at the age of 16-19.

When evaluating these correlations, it should be taken into account that education and type of residence are related to each other – people with a lower level of education more often live in rural areas, while people with a higher level of education live in larger cities.

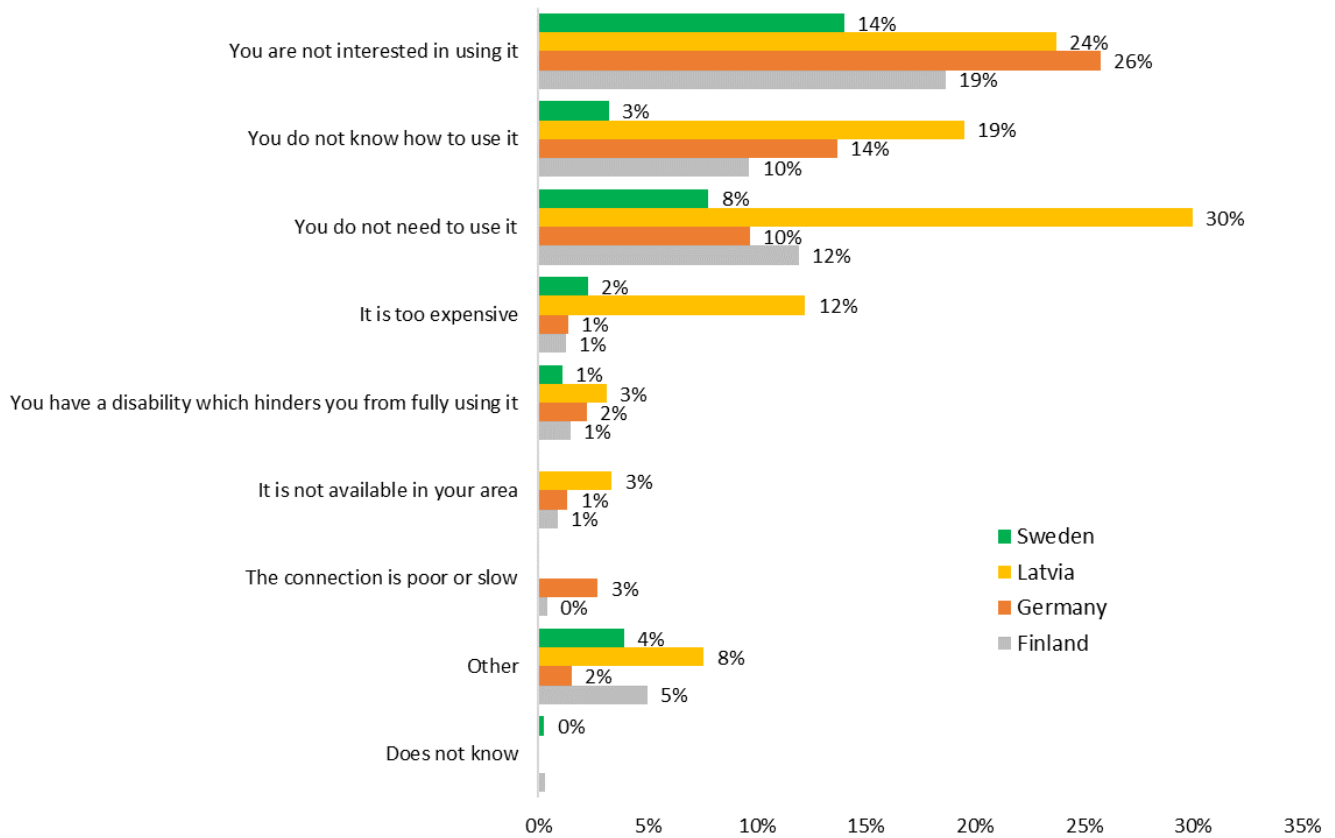
*Figure 3.8. Which of the following do you have? – by age when stopped education. Age group 60-74*



Data source: combined data file from Eurobarometer 85.1 (2016), Eurobarometer 87.1 (2017), Eurobarometer 87.2 (2017)

Looking at the self-estimated reasons why older people do not use the Internet, it can be found that the answers differ significantly among the countries (see Figure 3.9). In Sweden, older people most often pointed at a lack of interest, less often - to the fact that they did not feel the need for it, with other reasons mentioned less often. In Finland, the same reasons prevailed, but older people often admitted also that they did not know how to use the Internet. In Germany, the dominant answer was that there was no interest in using Internet, but it was also often mentioned that they did not know how to use it, or that it was not necessary. A different order of the reasons can be found in Latvia – most often, older people have indicated that they did not need the Internet, a little less often, that they were not interested in it, and even less often – that they did not know how to use it. It was also often stated in Latvia that using the Internet was too expensive.

*Figure 3.9. Which of the following reasons explains best why you do not use the Internet? Percentage from all the respondents (including those who use internet)*



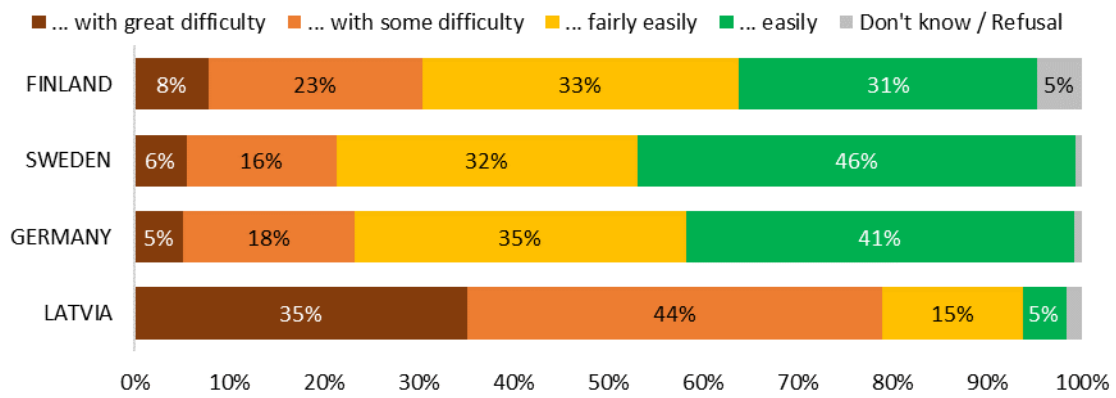
Data source: Flash Eurobarometer 477 (2019)

The three most frequently chosen answers – lack of interest, lack of knowledge and the fact that there is no need to use the Internet – overlap significantly.

## 4.4. Income

Respondents to the SHARE survey were asked if their household was able to make ends meet. The answers given by Latvian older people are significantly different from those in the other countries – about one third said that they made ends meet with great difficulty, but only 5% said that it is easy (see Figure 4.1). Swedish older people in almost half of the cases answered that it was easy. German older people chose this answer in 41% of the cases, and Finnish – in 31%. Finns chose the answer “with some difficulty” more often compared to Sweden and Germany.

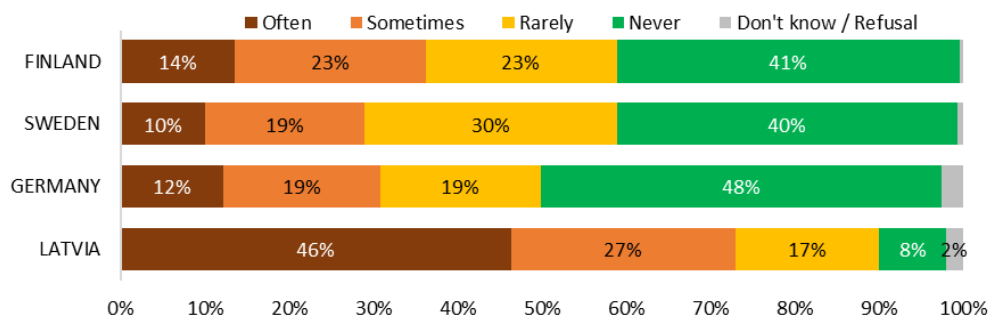
*Figure 4.1. Your household is able to make ends meet...*



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2)

The same survey also asked, whether a lack of money was stopping them from doing the things they wanted to do (see Figure 4.2). Again, Latvian answers here significantly differ from those in countries. Half of Latvian older people said that they experienced the lack of money often. Almost half of German respondents claimed that they never experienced this. Finns and Swedes claim experiencing the lack of money more often compared to Germany, with Finns having this experience slightly more often than Swedes.

*Figure 4.2. How often do you think that shortage of money stops you from doing the things you want to do?*



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2)

The average monetary income of older people differs significantly in the four countries (see Figure 4.3). It is highest in Finland, followed by Germany and Sweden, but is significantly lower in Latvia. There is a correlation between the level of income and lack of money for doing things respondents wanted to do.

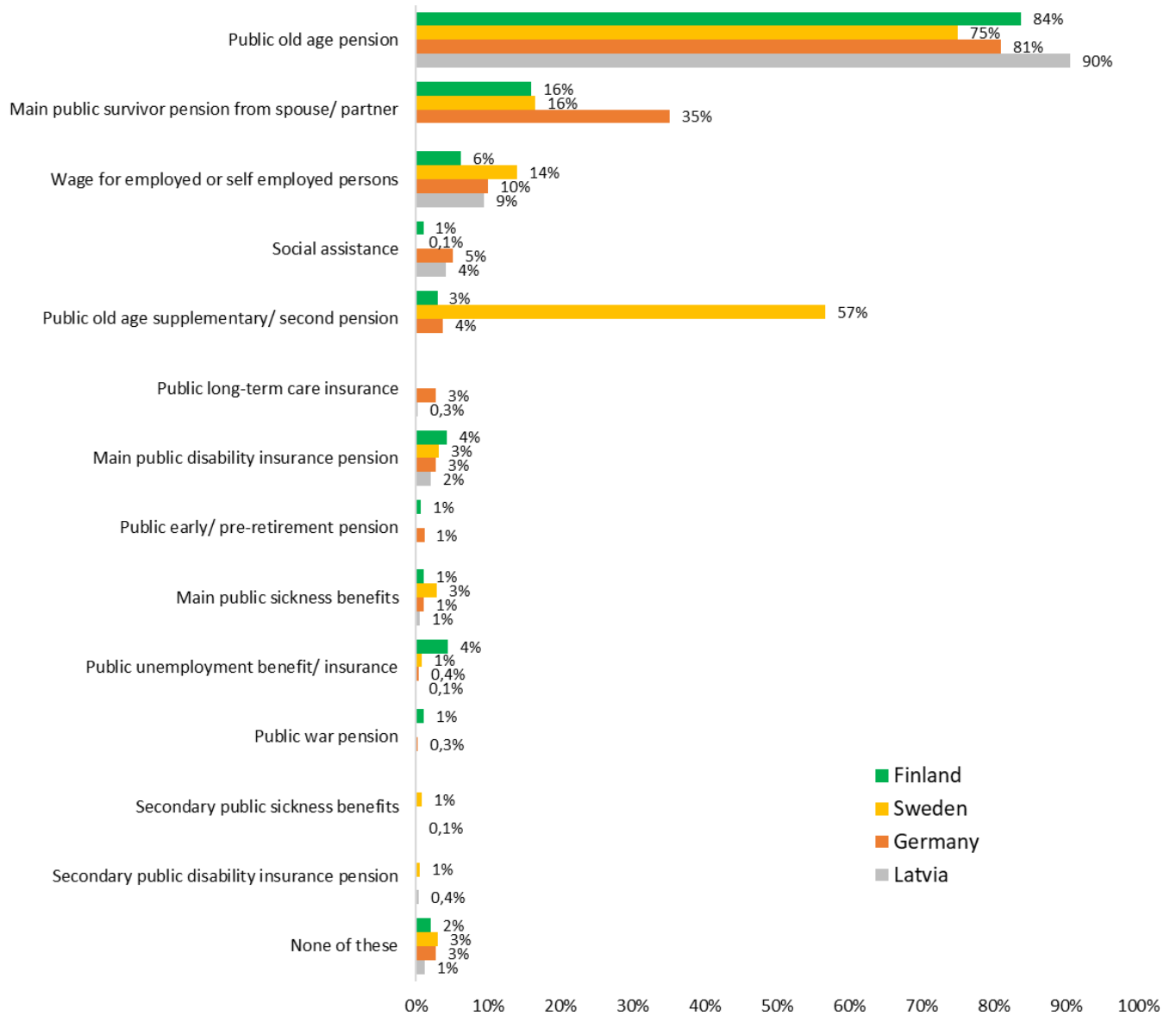
*Figure 4.3. How much was the overall income, after taxes and contributions, that your entire household had in an average month in [last] year? – averages by how often shortage of money stops from doing the things you want to do*



The main source of income for older people in all the countries is the old-age pension. 75% of 60+ years old Swedes, 81-90% respondents of the same age group in other countries receive old-age pension (see Figure 4.4). Direct comparison is problematic since the pension systems in the countries differ. In Sweden, more than half of elder people receive public old age supplementary/second pension. In Germany, one third of older people receive public survivor pension from spouse/partner, which is less popular in Sweden and Finland, but is absent in Latvia. 6-14% of 60+ group respondents in all countries are employed. Employment activity is highest in Sweden (14%) but lowest in Finland (6%).

Correlating the occupation status of older people with feeling the lack of money, it is higher for Latvian older people (see Figure 4.5). However, employed people in all countries chose the answer “rarely shortage of money stops from doing the things you want” more often compared to “never shortage of money stops from doing the things you want”.

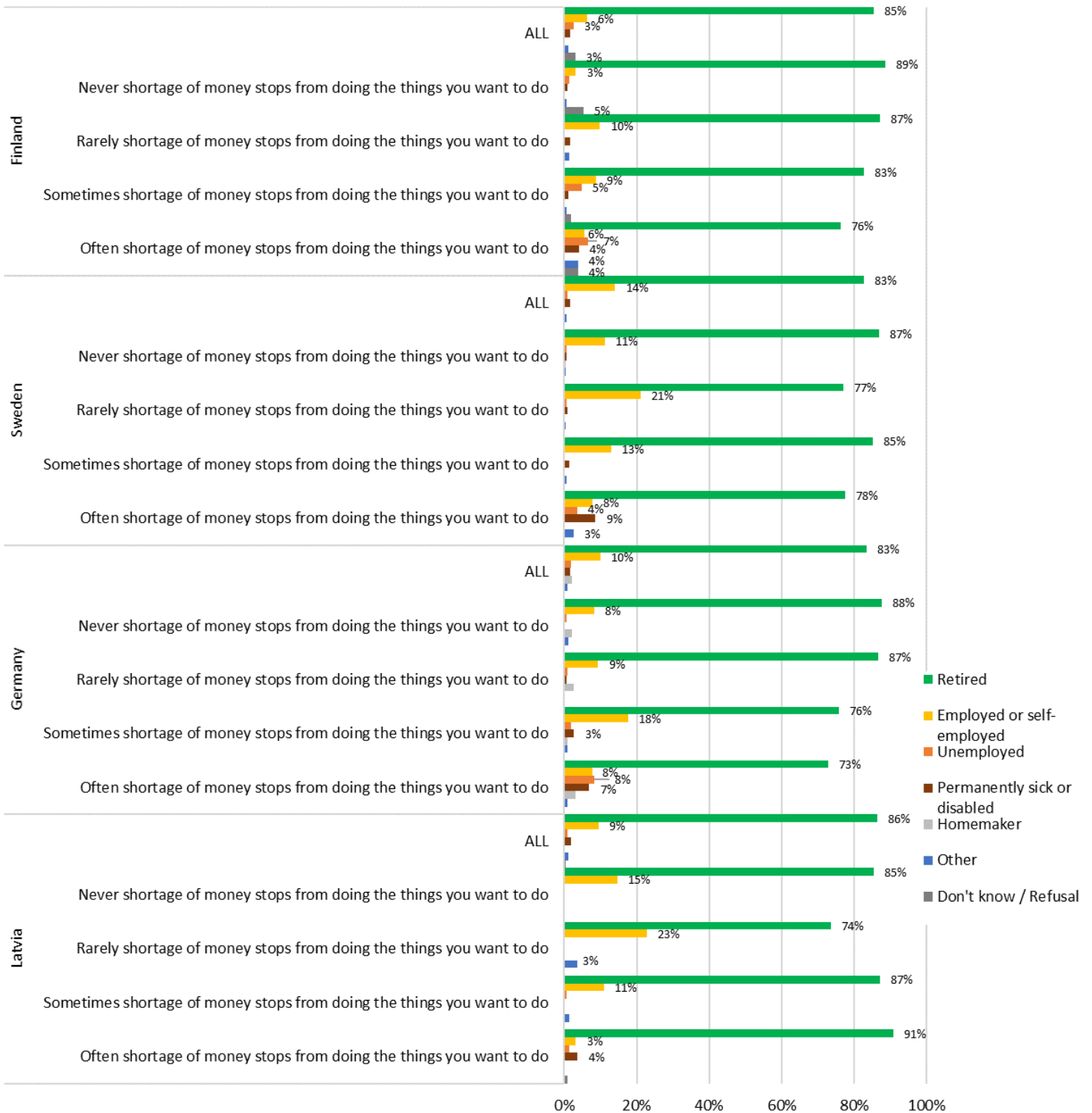
Figure 4.4. Have you received income from any of these sources in the [last] year? + Employed or self-employed (including working for family business)



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2)

To a significant extent in Latvia, but to a lesser extent in Finland, it can be observed that if a person has retired, the probability that the lack of money would the person prevent from doing the things they want is higher. This correlation is observed in Sweden, while in Germany the correlation is reverse. However, those older people who had a chronic illness or disability felt lack of money more other than other respondents in all countries.

Figure 4.5. In general, which of the following best describes your current employment situation? – by employment situation

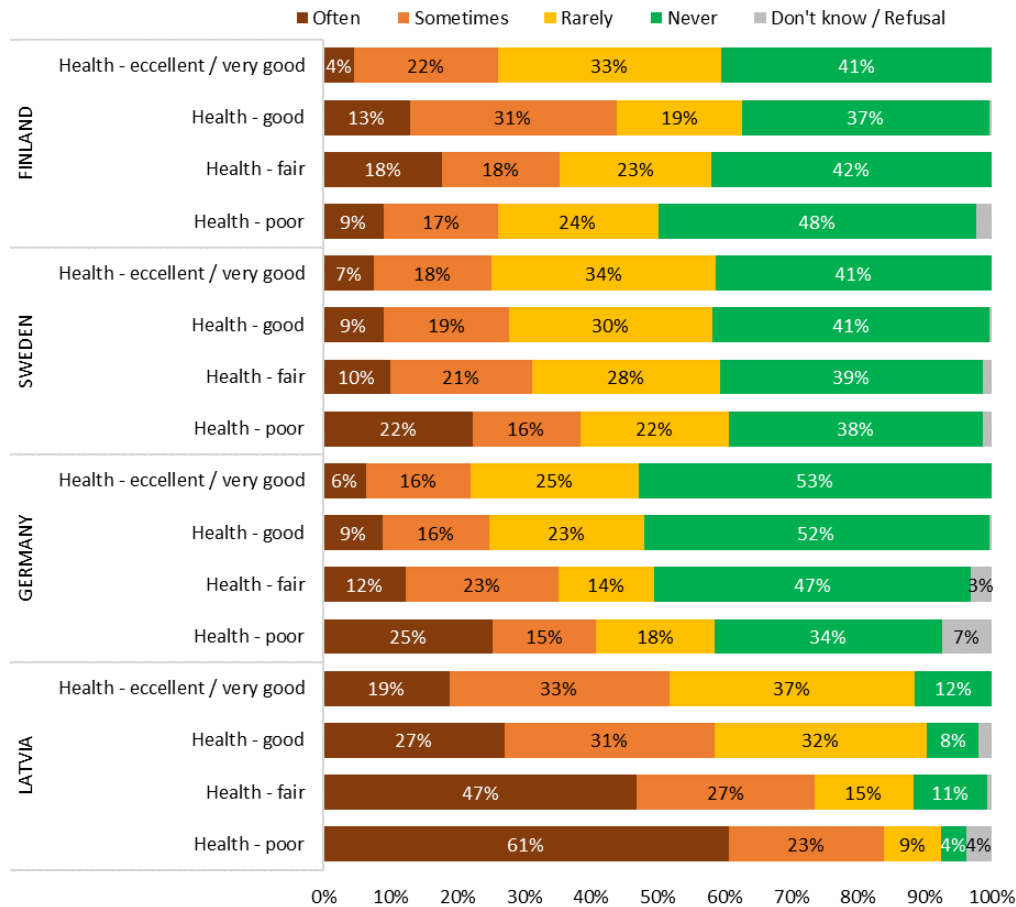


Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2)



There is a close correlation between the lack of money preventing one from doing things one liked with self-assessment of health (see Figure 4.6). It is most pronounced in Latvia.

*Figure 4.6. How often do you think that shortage of money stops you from doing the things you want to do? – by self-estimation of the health.*



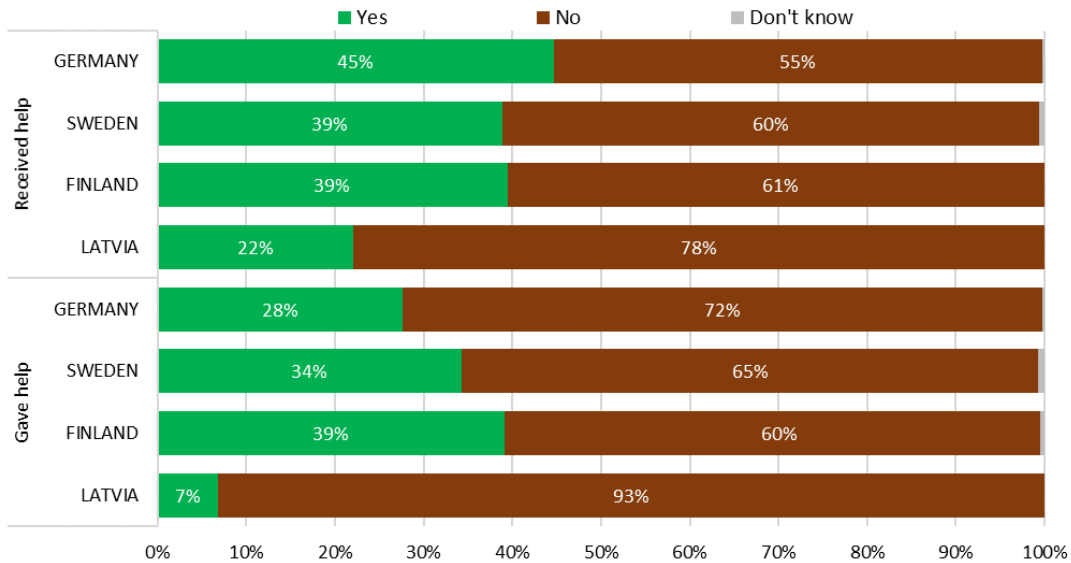
Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2)

Although health condition itself can partially hinder the implementation of one's wishes, health condition is also closely related to a worse financial situation and, therefore, more limited opportunities.

## 4.5. Care work

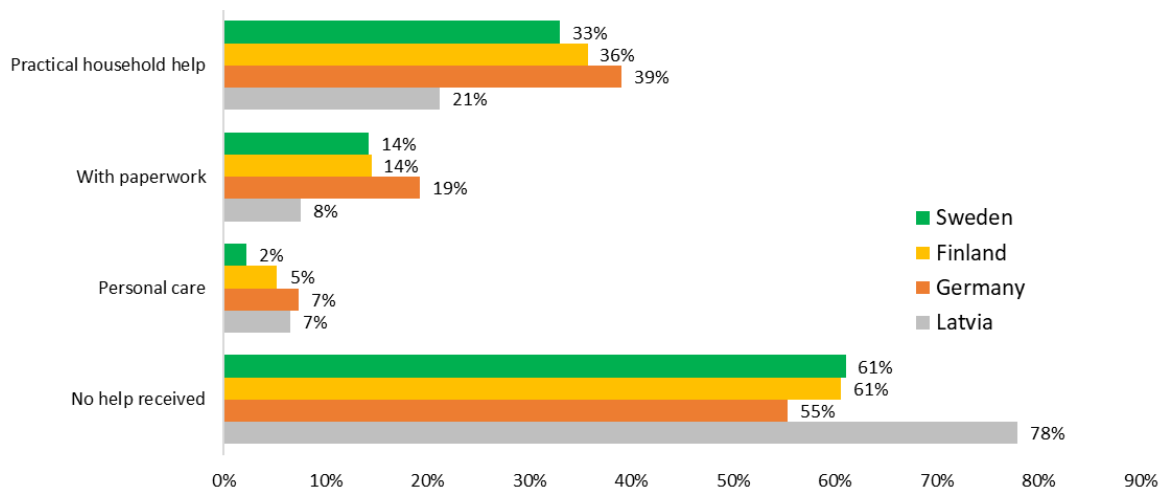
In general, older people receive help more often than they provide, however, the share of receiving and providing care is equal in Finland and it is close to equal in Sweden (see Figure 5.1). The difference in share of receiving and providing help is most significant in Germany and in Latvia. 45% of German older people claim receiving help. 39% of older generation Finns indicate that they have provided help. Older people in Latvia have both received and provided helpless often compared to other countries.

Figure 5.1. Thinking about the last twelve months, has any family member from outside the household, any friend or neighbour given you help? / In the last twelve months, have you given help to a family member from outside the household, a friend or neighbour?



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

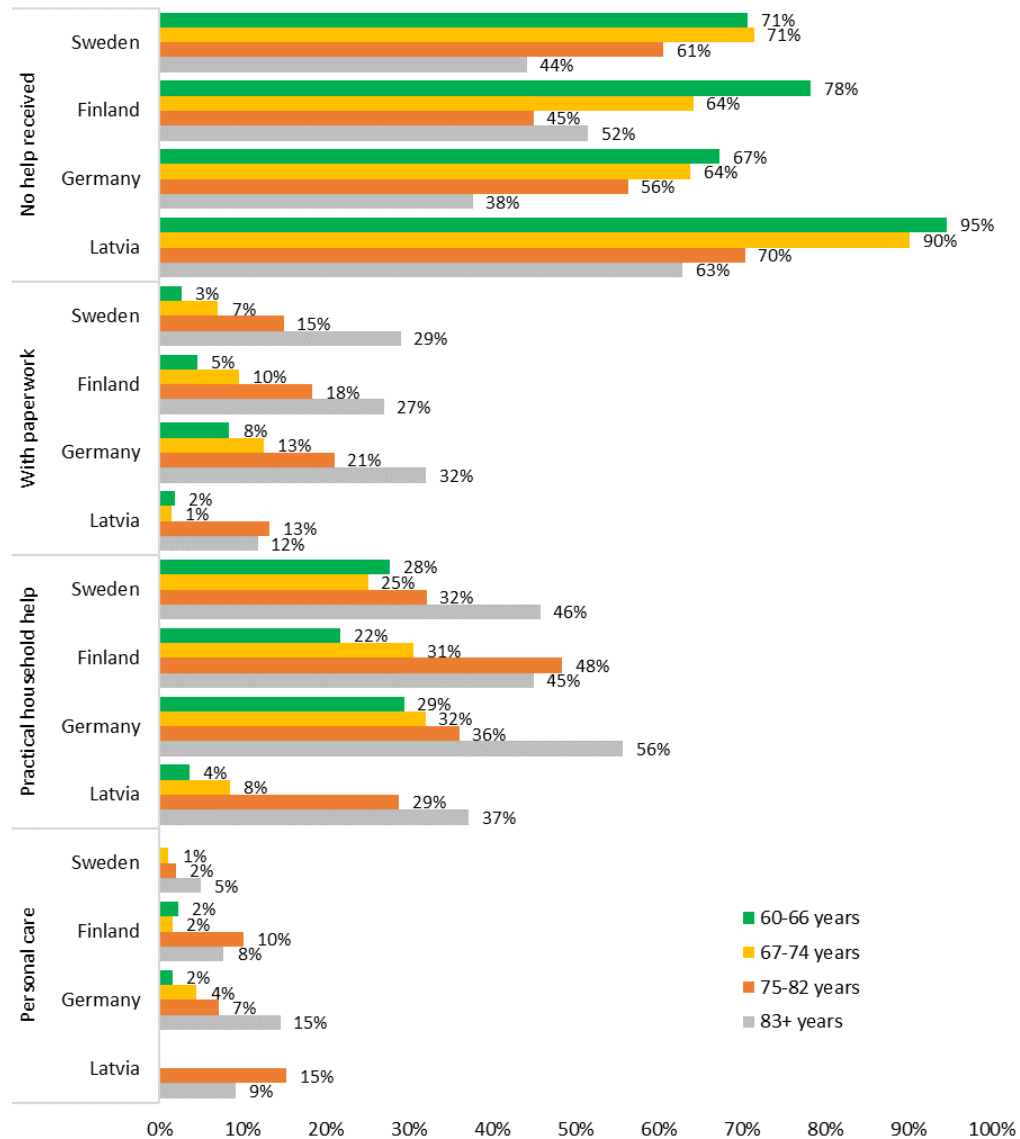
Figure 5.2. Type of help received from somebody



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Practical household assistance is most common form of help in all countries (see Figure 5.2). 45% of German older people have received some form of help which is highest share among the four countries. Only 22% of Latvian older people have received assistance, most popular form being practical household assistance.

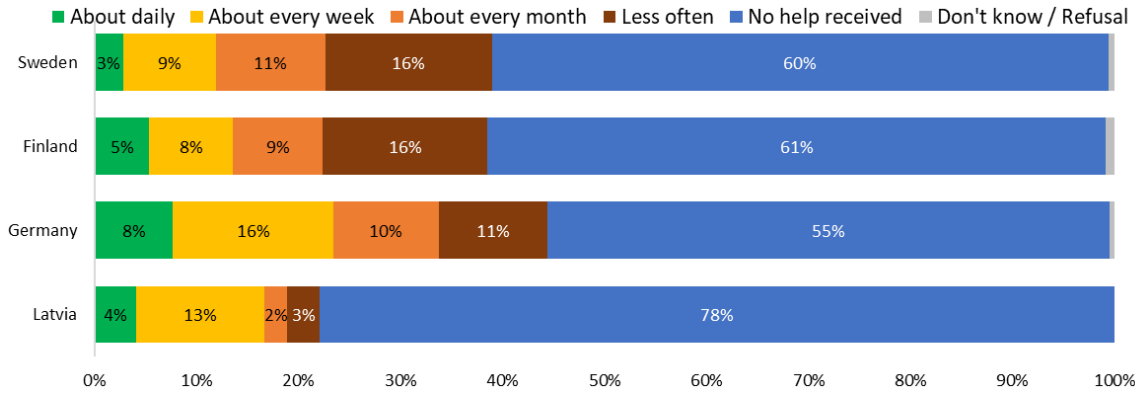
Figure 5.3. Type of help received from somebody – by age groups



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Older people up to the age of 66 usually do not receive help, but if they do, it is usually practical household help (see Figure 5.3). With age increasing, more help is received. However, help is less often received in age group 83+ years, compared to that of 75-82 years.

Figure 5.4. How often help is received (most frequent case)



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

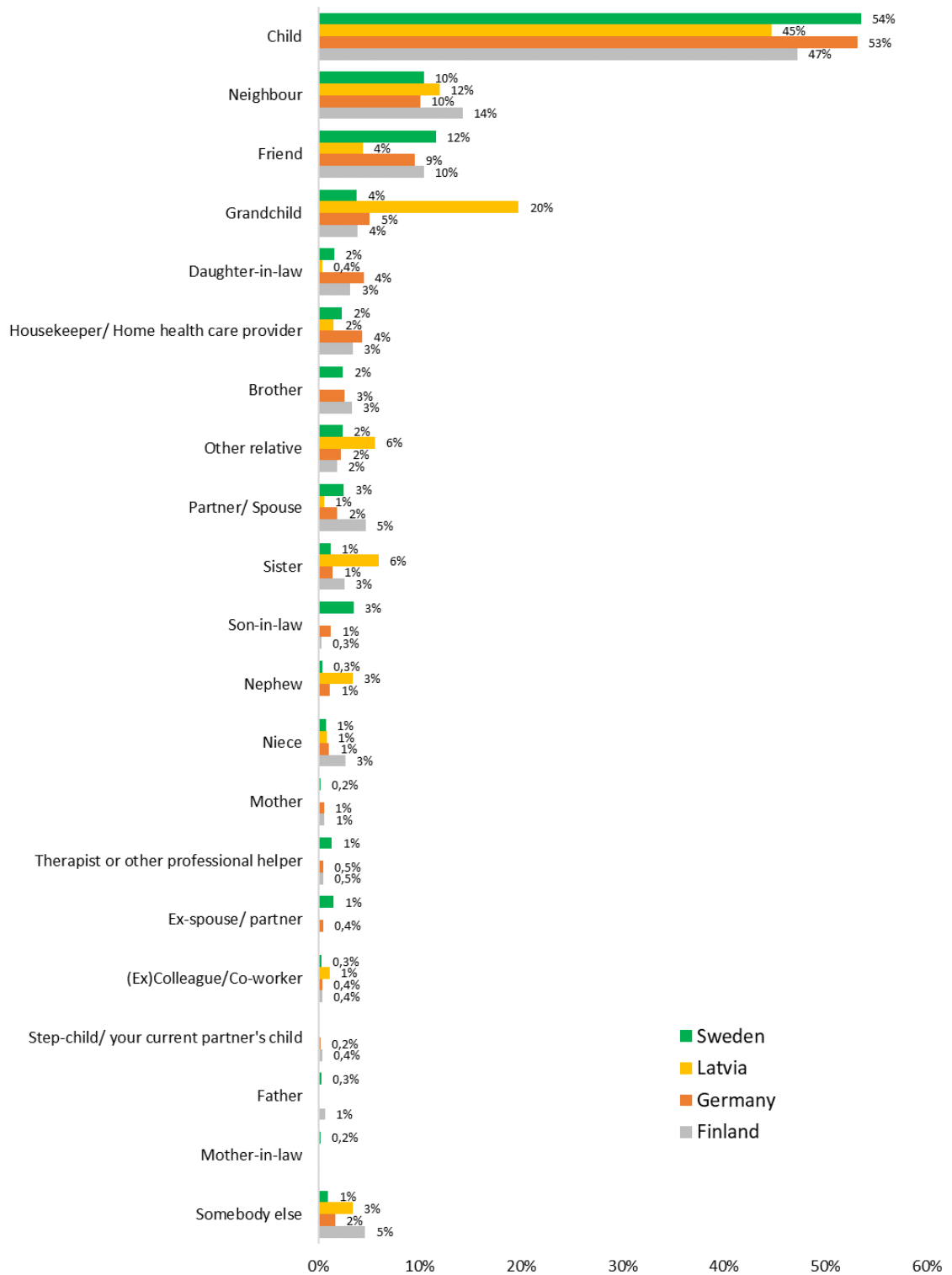
Comparing intensity of assistance provided, more than a third of recipients in Sweden and Finland have received with interval longer than a month (see Figure 5.4). Those Latvians, who claim receiving help, tend to receive it more intensively compared to other countries even their share among the age group is lowest. German older people have used daily and weekly help more often than in other countries.

Children of the older people are most frequent providers of help in all four countries (see Figure 5.5). The percentages here are calculated from the positive answers and in Latvian case the percentage base is low (as the share of receivers of help is lower). Also, one respondent could name up to three persons who did help him (including several children, etc.).

Latvian help provider structure most differs from that in other countries. Friends provide care less often and grandchildren more often compared to the pattern in other countries. Other relatives (sisters, nephews, or “other” relatives) were also mentioned relatively more often.

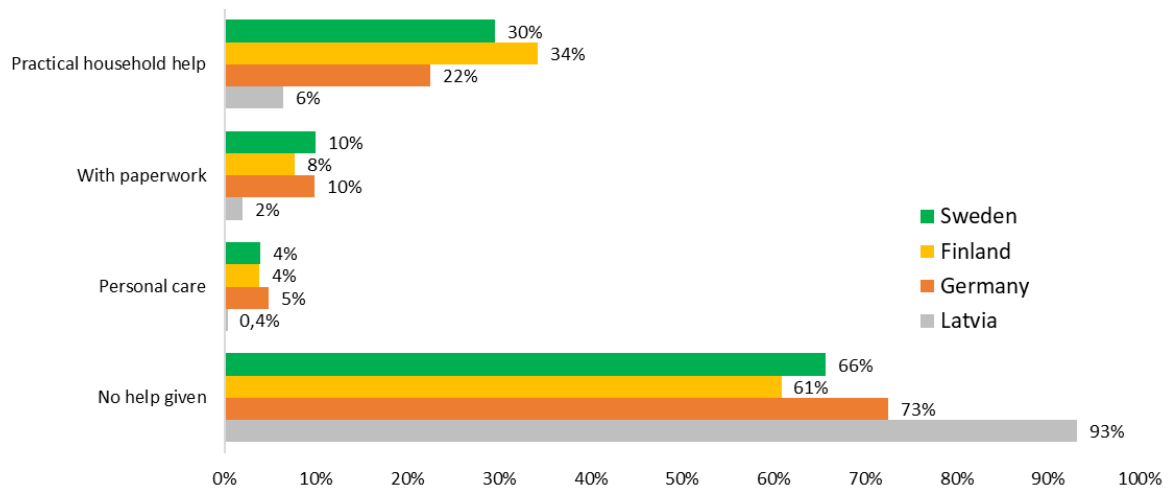
Looking at the provision of help to others, only 7% of older Latvians have provided help to anyone while the share of providers of help to others in Finland and Sweden is 39% and 34% respectively and 27% in Germany (see Figure 5.6). In this age group help is more often received than given but the structure of given and received help is similar – most often practical household assistance is mentioned.

Figure 5.5. Thinking about the last twelve months, has any family member from outside the household, any friend or neighbour given you help? (percentage of responses)



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Figure 5.6. Type of help given to somebody

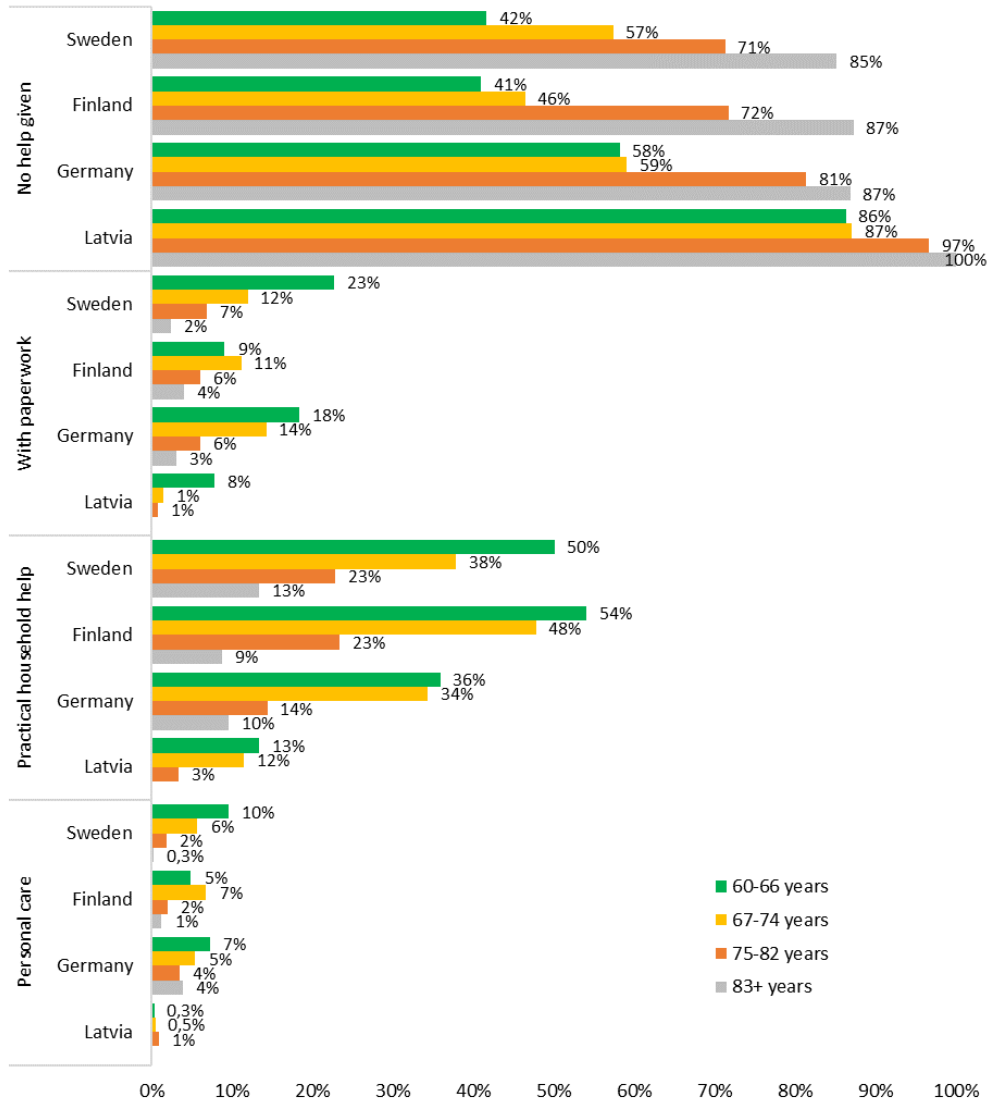


Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Higher the age, smaller the share of older people who have provided care (see Figure 5.7). Provision of in-person care in Germany is almost equally common in all age groups of the older people.

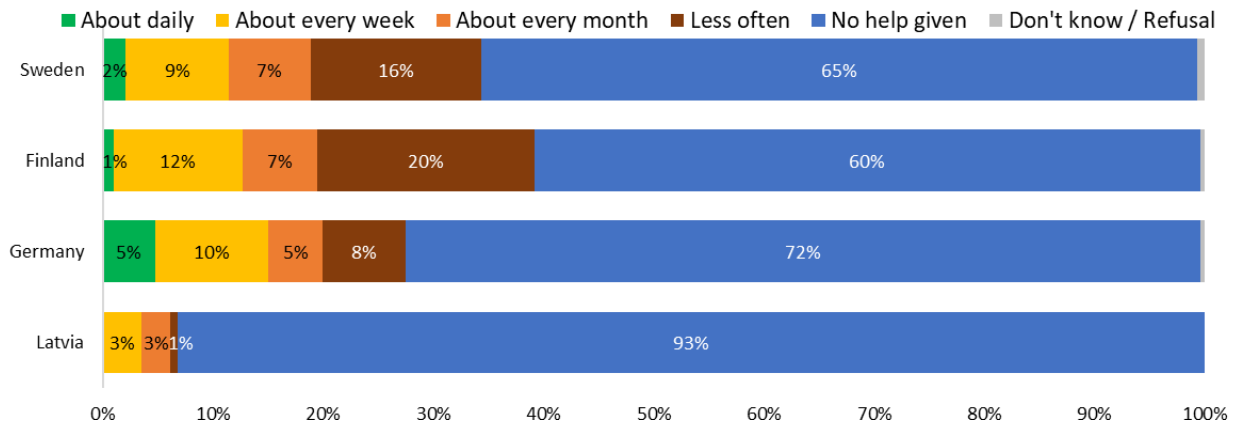
The frequency of providing help is highest in Germany – 5% of respondents have stated that they provide help every day (see Figure 5.8). At the same time, 16-20% of older people in Sweden and Finland mentioned that they provided help less often than once a month. This group is only 8% in Germany, thus, given the intensity, the total share of help provided in Sweden and Finland is higher than that in Germany. Latvians have not provided daily help, and there are significantly lower share of respondents indicating that the help is provided every week or every month.

Figure 5.7. Type of help given to somebody – by age groups



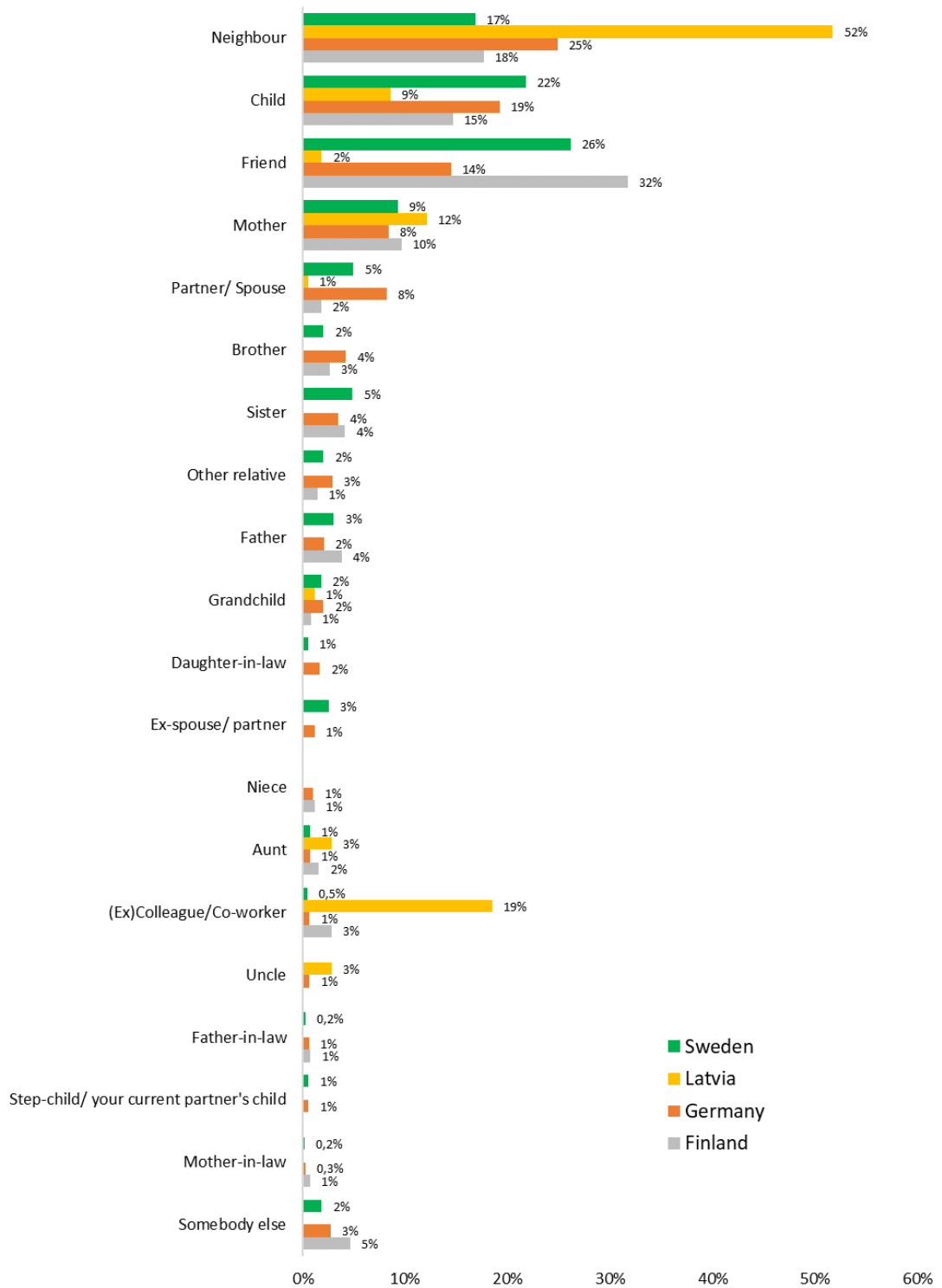
Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Figure 5.8. How often help is given (most frequent case)



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Figure 5.9. In the last twelve months, have you given any help to a family member from outside the household, a friend or neighbour? (percentage of responses)



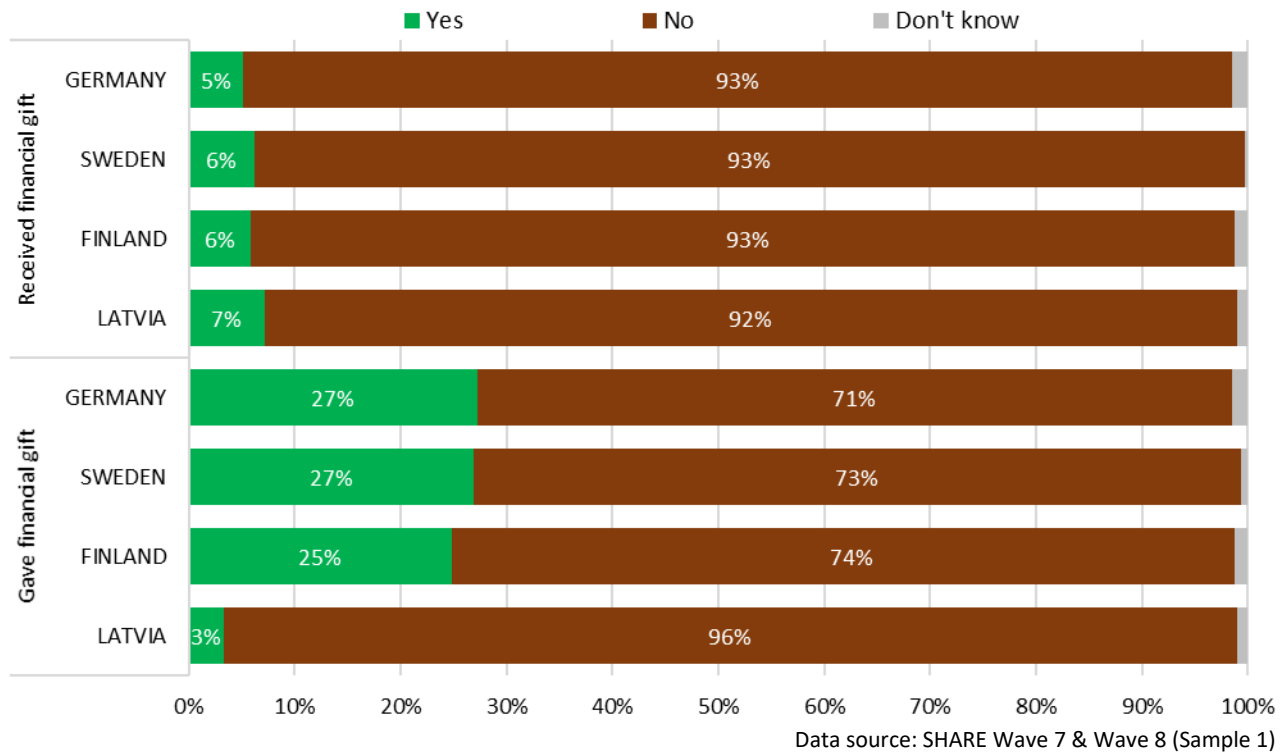
Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)



When evaluating whom the older people had helped (see Figure 5.9), the percentages are calculated from the answers provided.

Help is often provided to people who are not relatives – neighbours, friends. This makes providing help different from receiving it, where help providers are usually relatives of older people. Among relatives, help is most frequently given to children, as well as to mothers.

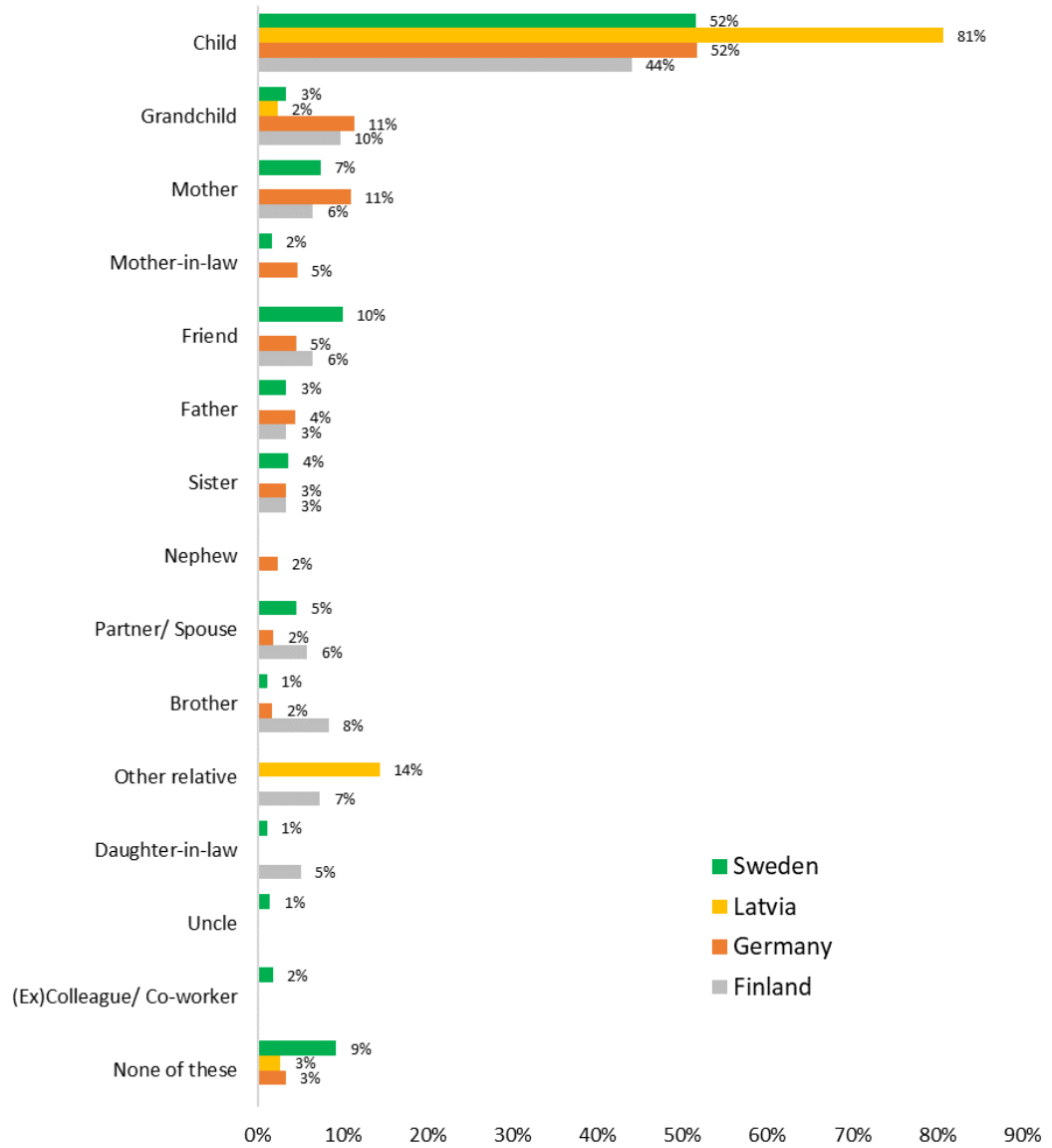
*Figure 5.10. Given financial gift EUR 250 or more in the last twelve months / Received financial gift of EUR 250 or more in the last twelve months*



Mutual help between older people and to others tends to be financial as well. Older people participating in the SHARE survey were asked whether they had given or received financial assistance exceeding EUR 250 in the last 12 months. Considering the income differences in the countries involved in the study, the importance of this amount differs significantly between Latvia and the other countries. Thus, in Latvia only 3% of older people have indicated that they had provided such amount of financial assistance to someone, while in the other countries this share was 25-27% (see Figure 5.10).

The share of older people who have received a similar amount of financial assistance does not differ much between the countries involved in the study and is around 5-7%.

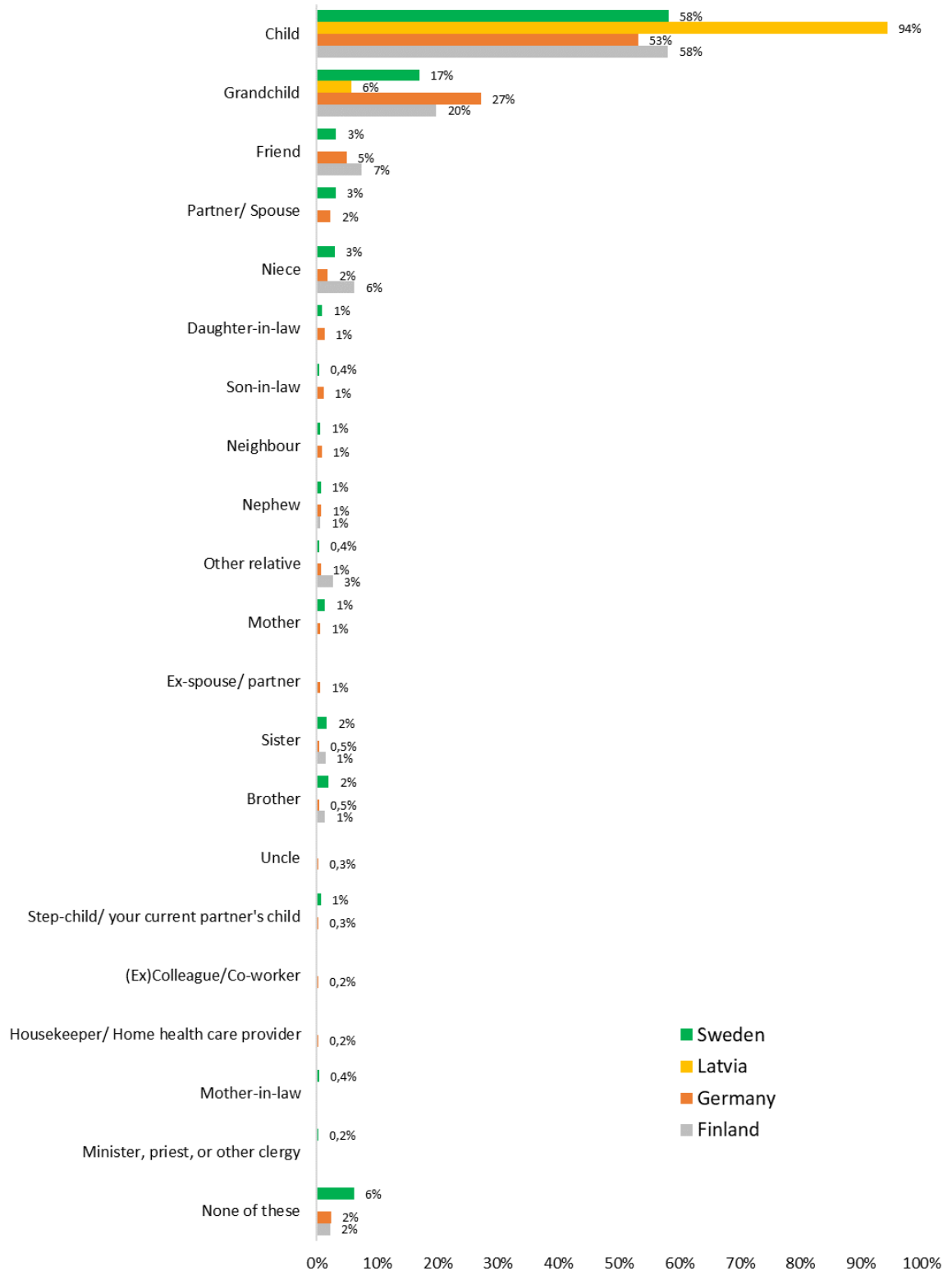
Figure 5.11. Received in the last 12 months a financial gift EUR 250 or more (percentage of responses) from:



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Persons who most often give monetary gifts to the older people and those who most often received them are the same - children, less often grandchildren (see Figures 5.11 and 5.12). Other relatives, as well as friends, are mentioned less frequently.

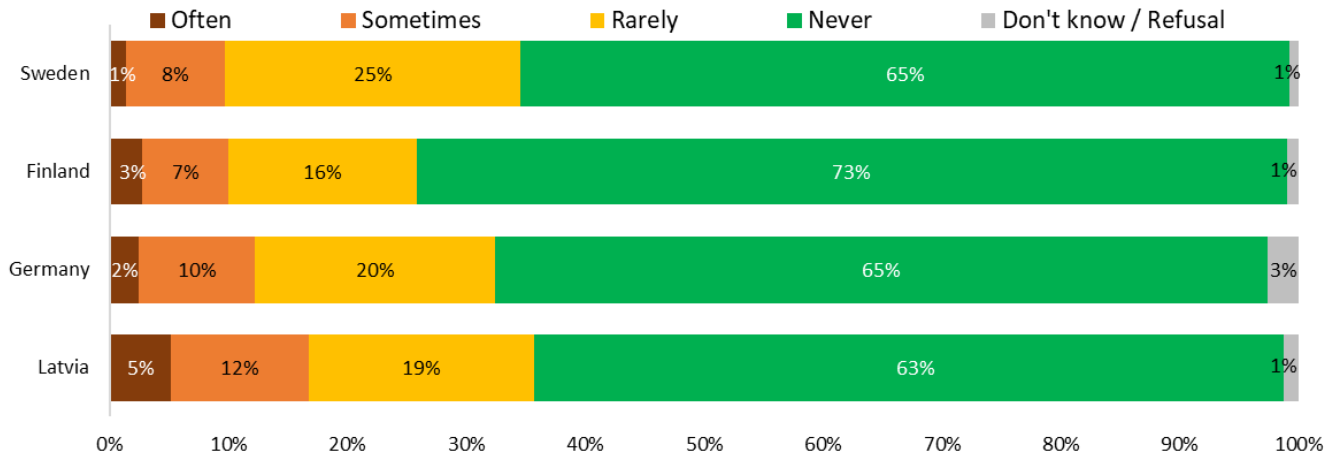
Figure 5.12. Given financial gift 250 or more in the last twelve months (percentage of responses) to:



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

To measure negative impact of family responsibilities, the SHARE survey included a question whether family responsibilities did prevent older people from doing what they want to do (see Figure 5.13). Latvian older people more often than their peers in other countries indicated that they had experienced this often or sometimes. For Finns and Swedes this problem was less relevant compared to the other three countries.

*Figure 5.13. How often do you think that family responsibilities prevent you from doing what you want to do?*

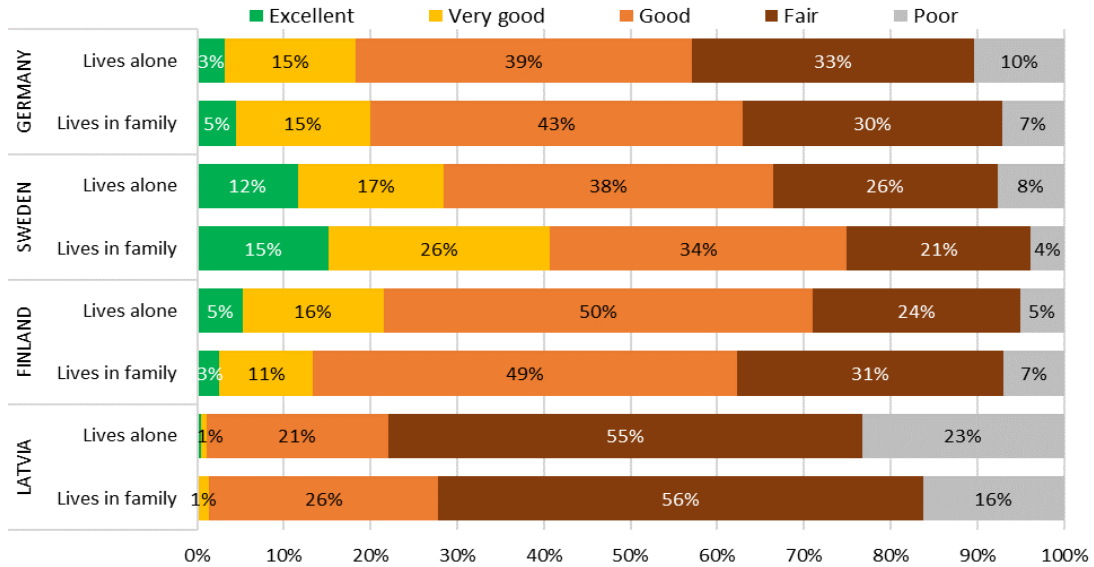


Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2)

## 4.6. Health

Comparing the self-assessment of health between older people living alone and in families, no significant differences can be found (see Figure 6.1). SHARE Corona Wave 2 survey data show that Germans, Swedes and Latvians living in families estimate their health slightly more positively compared to those living alone, while there is no difference among Finns. Older Swedes in average evaluate their health higher than older people living in other countries. Latvians are most sceptical about their health conditions.

Figure 6.1. Would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor? – by living in family or alone

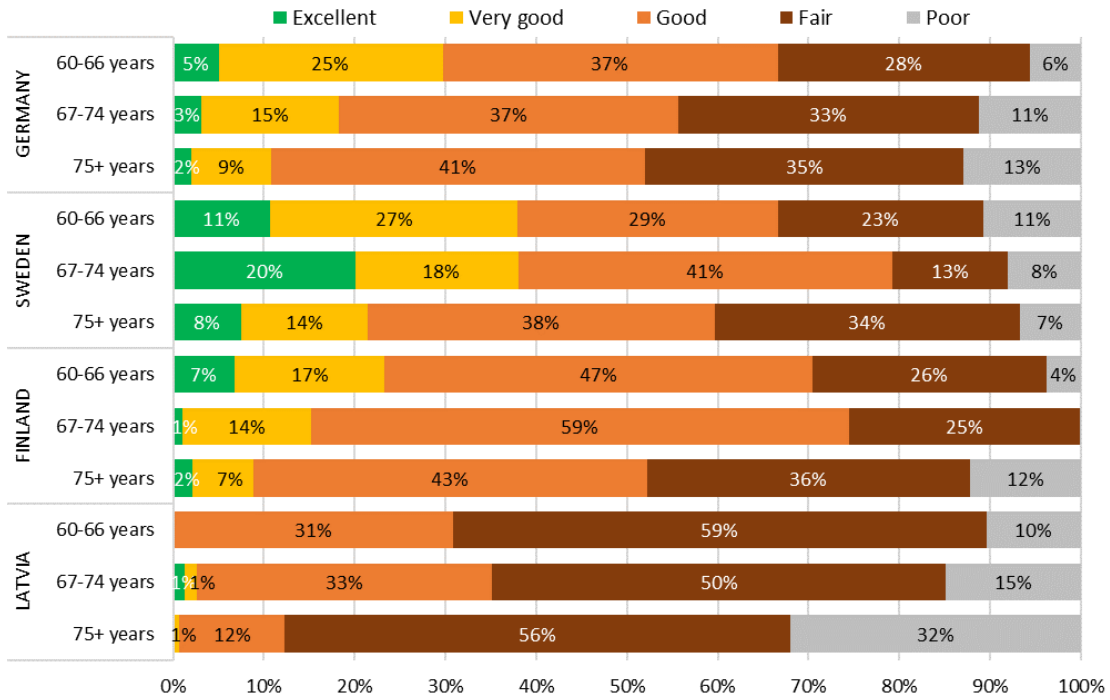


Data source: Share Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Self-assessment of health varies depending on age – negative evaluation increases with age (see Figure 6.2). This does not apply to Sweden, where the age group 67-74 years has the highest self-assessment of health in the group older people.

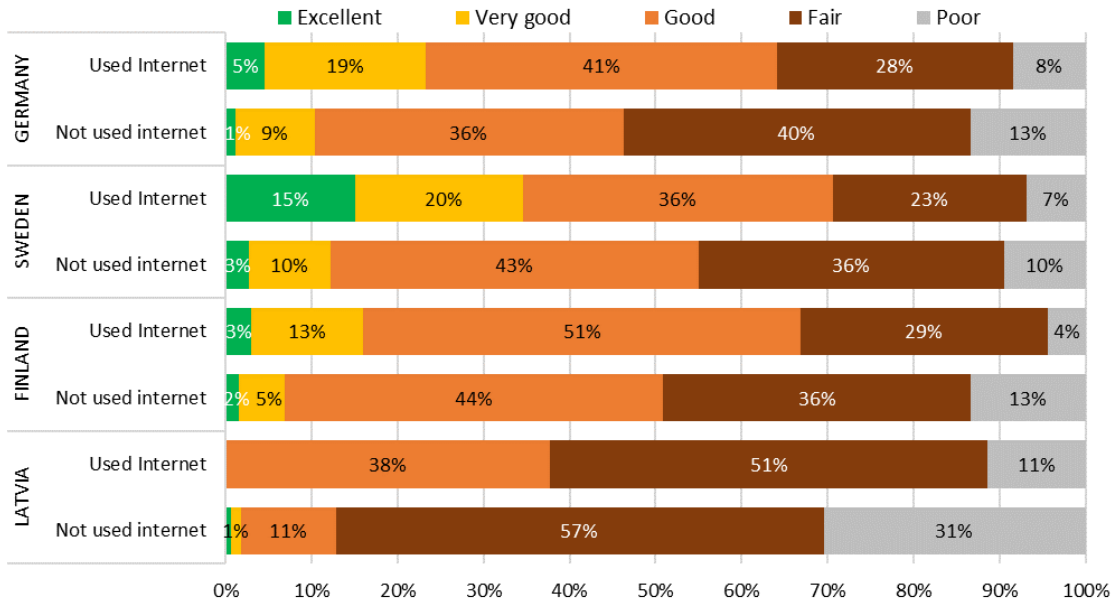
More older people use the Internet, higher is their self-assessment of health (see Figure 6.3). As the data were collected during the second wave of the coronavirus, the use of the Internet was related to acquisition of reliable information about the coronavirus and accessibility to the health care system.

Figure 6.2. Would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor? – by age groups



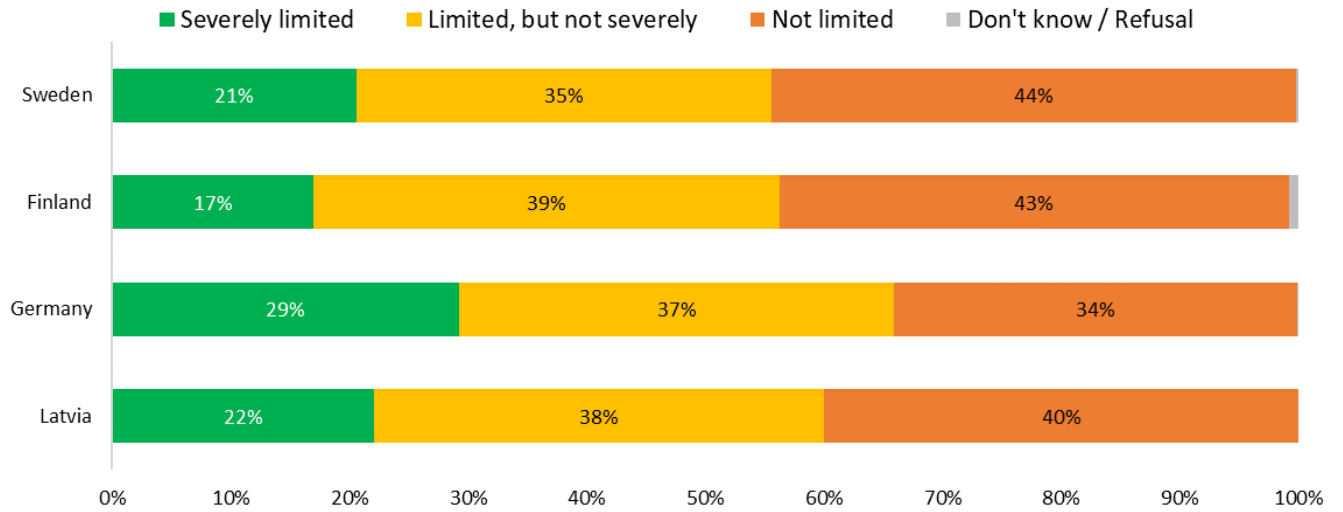
Data source: Share Corona Wave 2 (2021) – persons living alone

Figure 6.3. Would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor? – by internet usage



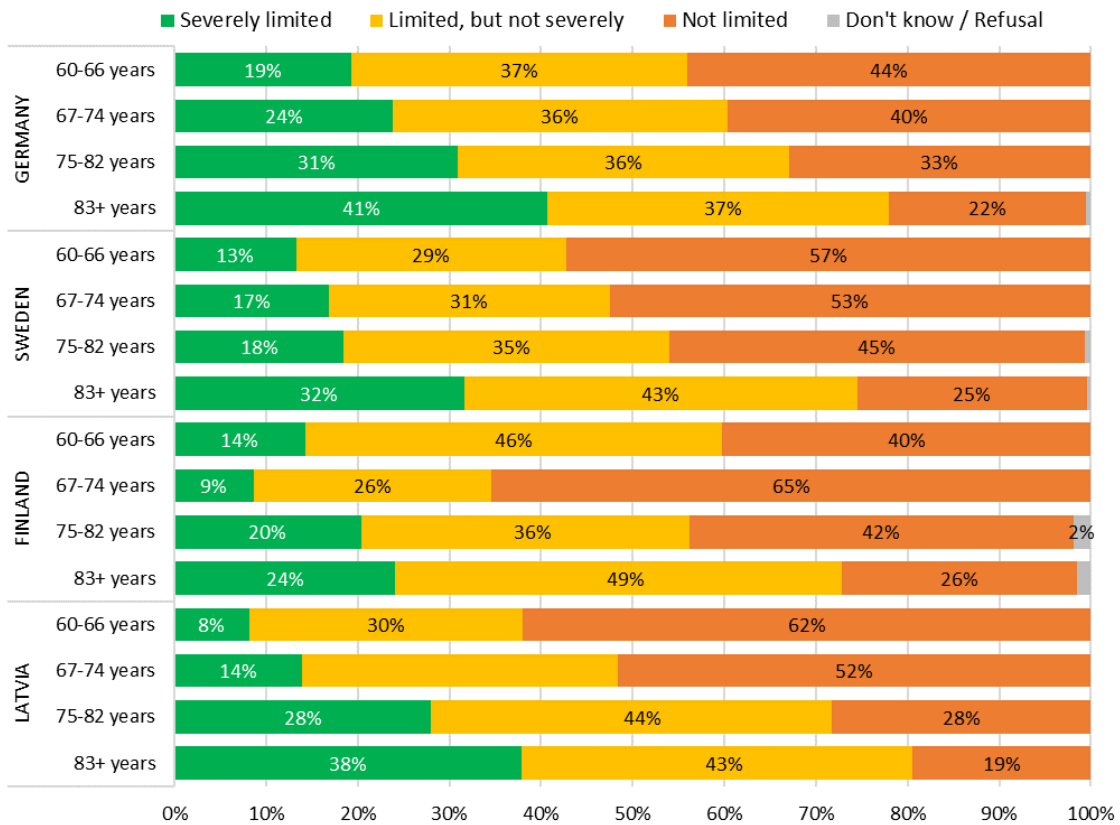
Data source: Share Corona Wave 2 (2021) – persons living alone

Figure 6.4. For the past six months at least, to what extent have you been limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do?



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2) – persons living alone

Figure 6.5. For the past six months at least, to what extent have you been limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do? – by age groups



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 2) – persons living alone

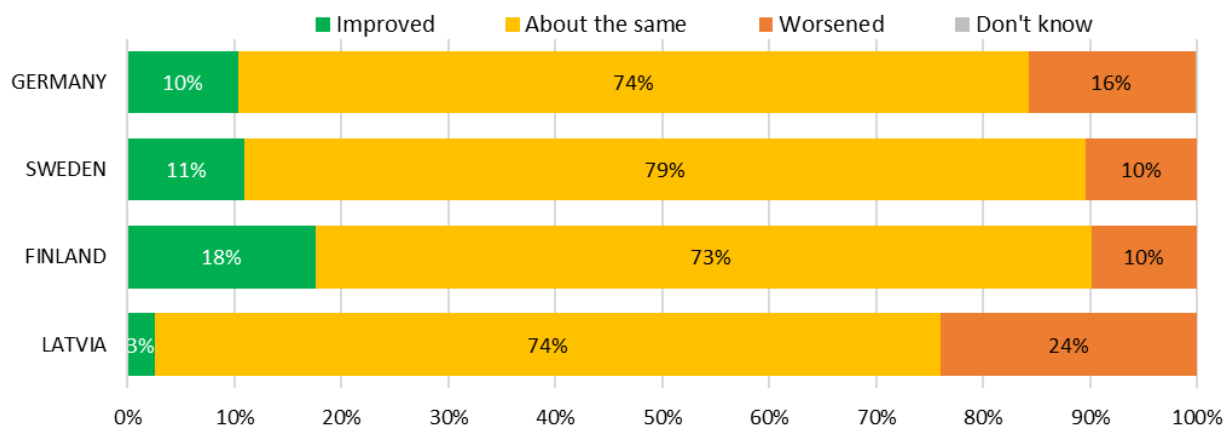
Several waves of the SHARE survey included a question to what extent health problems limited one’s daily activities (see Figure 6.4). When the question is formulated in this way, the answers of the older people of the four countries do not differ significantly. Germans comparatively more often indicate that their activities are limited.

There is a direct correlation between the age and the extent to which health problems limit daily activities – higher the age, more often older people living alone say that their health limits their usual activities (see Figure 6.5). The only exception from this correlation is the age group 67-74 years in Finland, which indicates that the state of health limits activities less frequently even compared to the age group 60-66 years.

The second wave of the SHARE Corona survey also inquired whether health had changed in the last three months. Health of older people could really deteriorate because of the corona virus, or lower accessibility of other health care services.

The fact that health has improved during the last three months was indicated more often by Finns but less often by Germans and Swedes, and only in a few cases by Latvians (see Figure 6.6). Latvian older people significantly more often claimed that their health has worsened in the last three months when compared to other countries. The differences between countries are not as significant as when they were asked about general health self-estimation.

*Figure 6.6. If you compare your health now to three months ago, would you say your health has improved, stayed about the same, or worsened?*

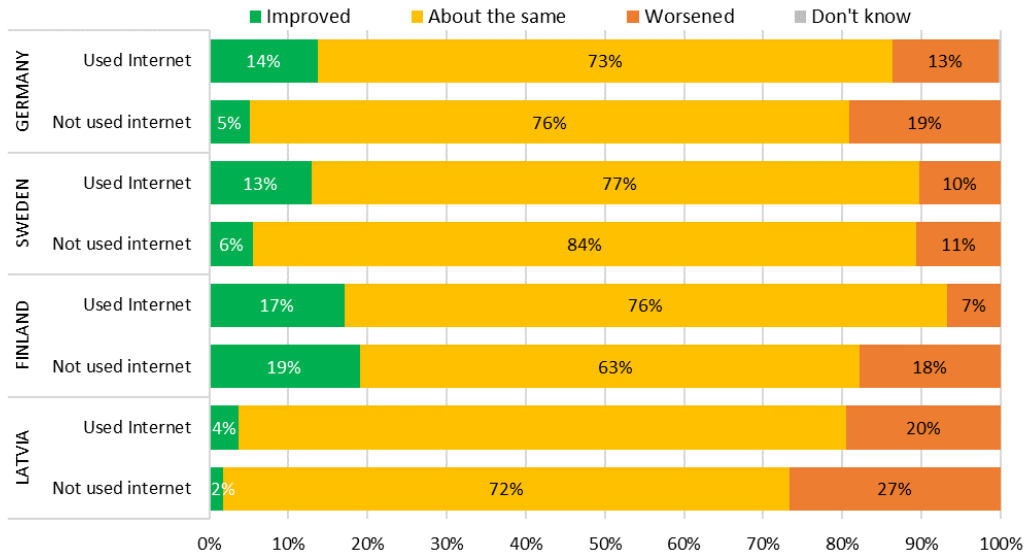


Data source: Share Corona Wave 2 (2021) – persons living alone

In all four countries, Internet use is positively correlates with good status of health (see Figure 6.7).



Figure 6.7. If you compare your health now to three months ago, would you say your health has improved, stayed about the same, or worsened? – by internet usage



Data source: Share Corona Wave 2 (2021) – persons living alone

Figure 6.8. In the last 12 months, how often have you used, if ever, health and care services provided online without having to go to the hospital or doctor's surgery (for example, by getting a prescription or a consultation online)? Age group 60-74



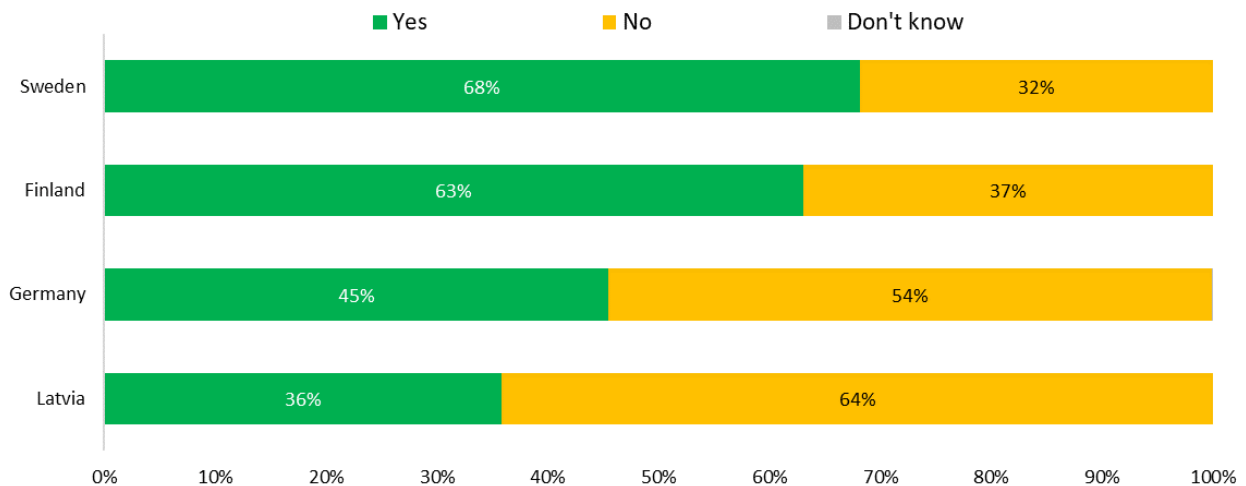
Data source: Eurobarometer 87.1 (2017) – persons living alone

A Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2017 explored how older people have used online opportunities to receive health care services (see Figure 6.8). Finnish older people used the online medical care services most actively, followed by Swedes, but Germans and Latvians were less active. In Finland and Sweden, younger age groups of 60+ used these services more often compared to older ones. Data might not be accurate today, as pandemics most probably has increased the use on online resources.

## 4.7. Digital technologies

The use of other digital technologies is closely related to the use of the Internet. In SHARE surveys, older people were asked of using Internet in the past 7 days (see Figure 7.1). Considerable majority of Swedes and Finns have used Internet (63-68%) while 45% of Germans and 36% of Latvians have done it.

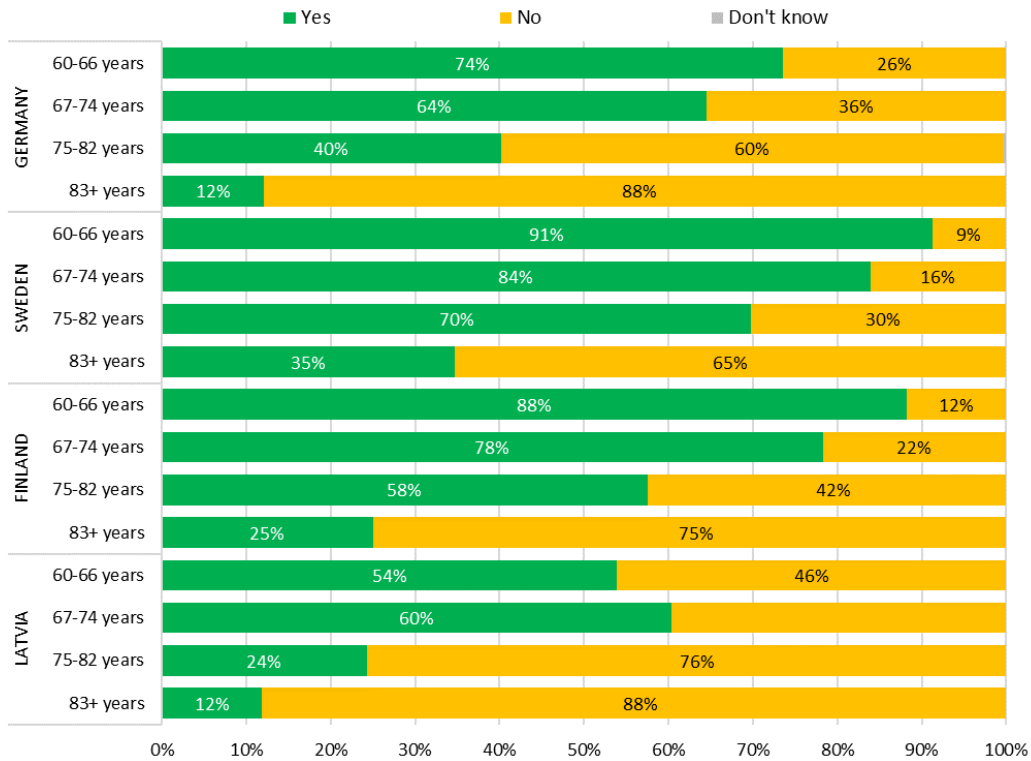
*Figure 7.1. During the past 7 days, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once?*



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

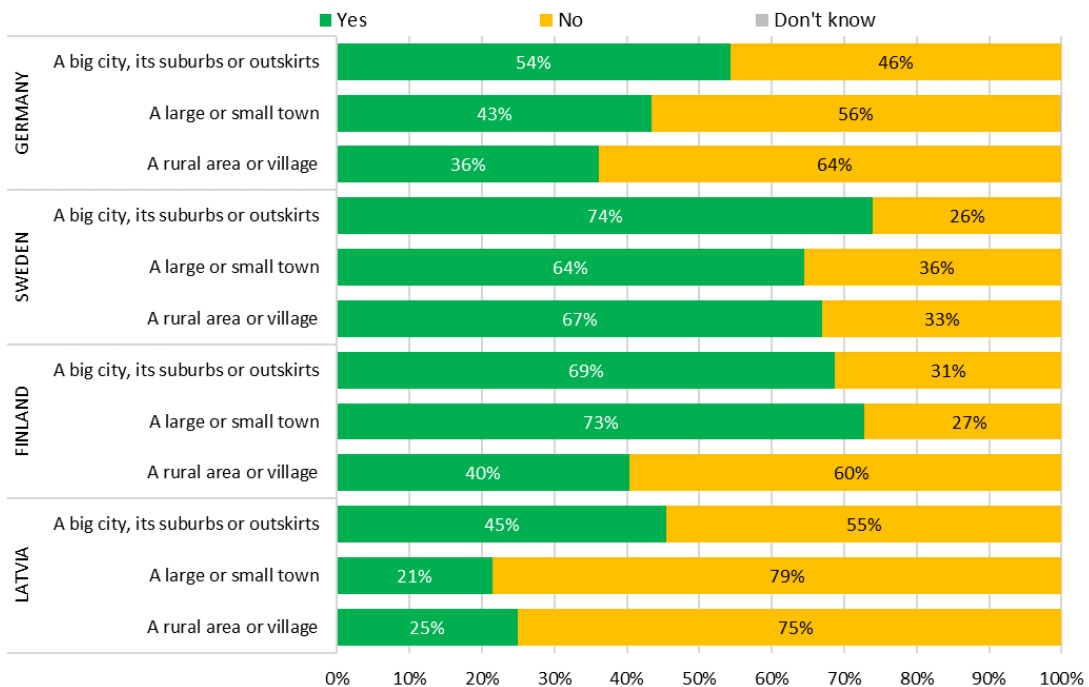
The use of the Internet in the last 7 days strongly correlates with the age of older people – for example, in Sweden 91% of respondents in age group 60-66 years had used the Internet in the last 7 days, while only 35% in age group 83+ (see Figure 7.2). In Finland this proportion was 88% and 25% respectively, in Germany - 74% and 12%. The situation is slightly different in Latvia – respondents in age group 60-66 years used the Internet more often than the age group 67-74 years ( 54% and 60%), but the share of Internet users in the older age groups is significantly lower, similarly to other four countries.

Figure 7.2. During the past 7 days, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once? – by age groups



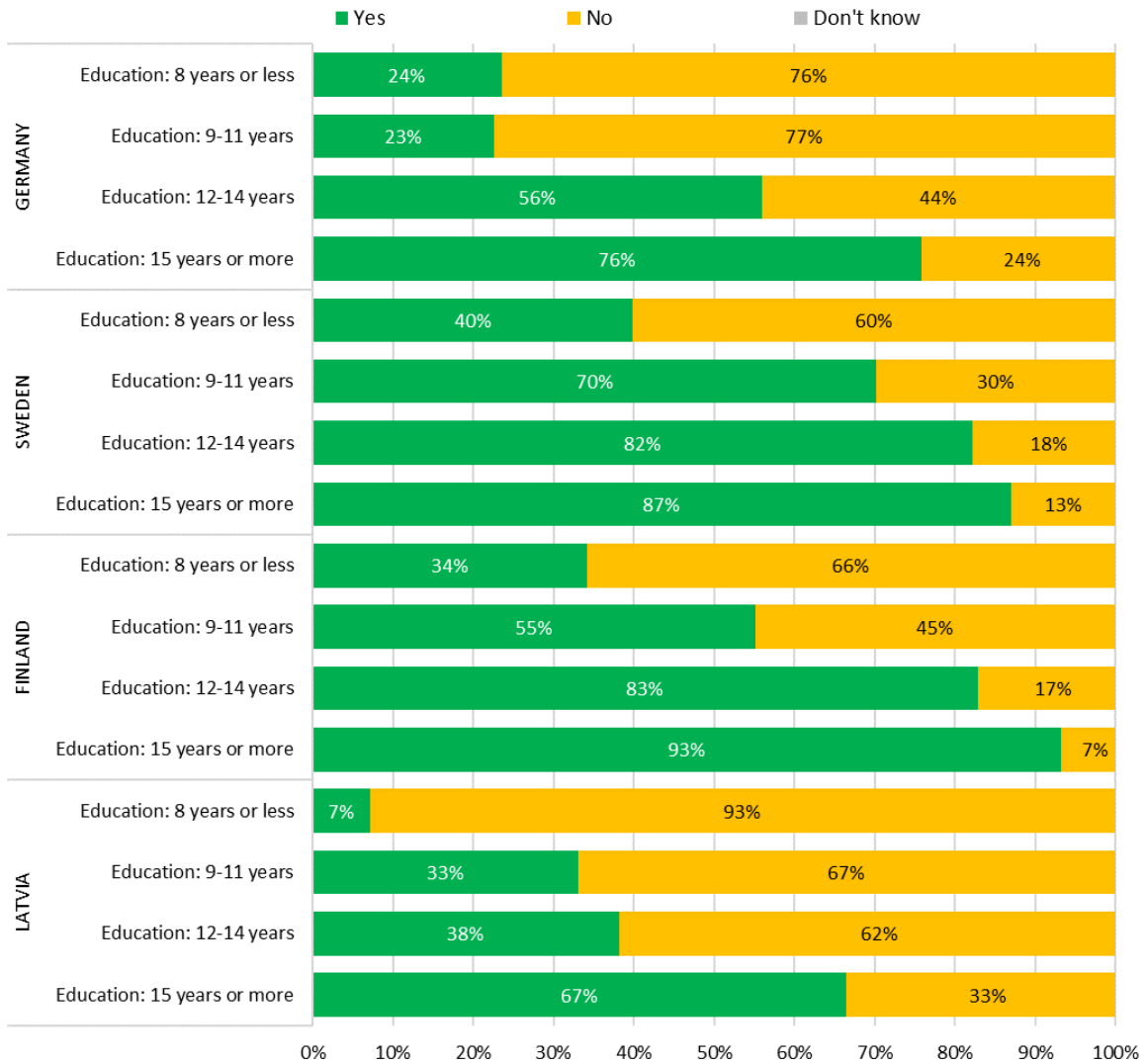
Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Figure 7.3. During the past 7 days, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once? – by type of settlement



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Figure 7.4. During the past 7 days, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once? – by years of education



Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

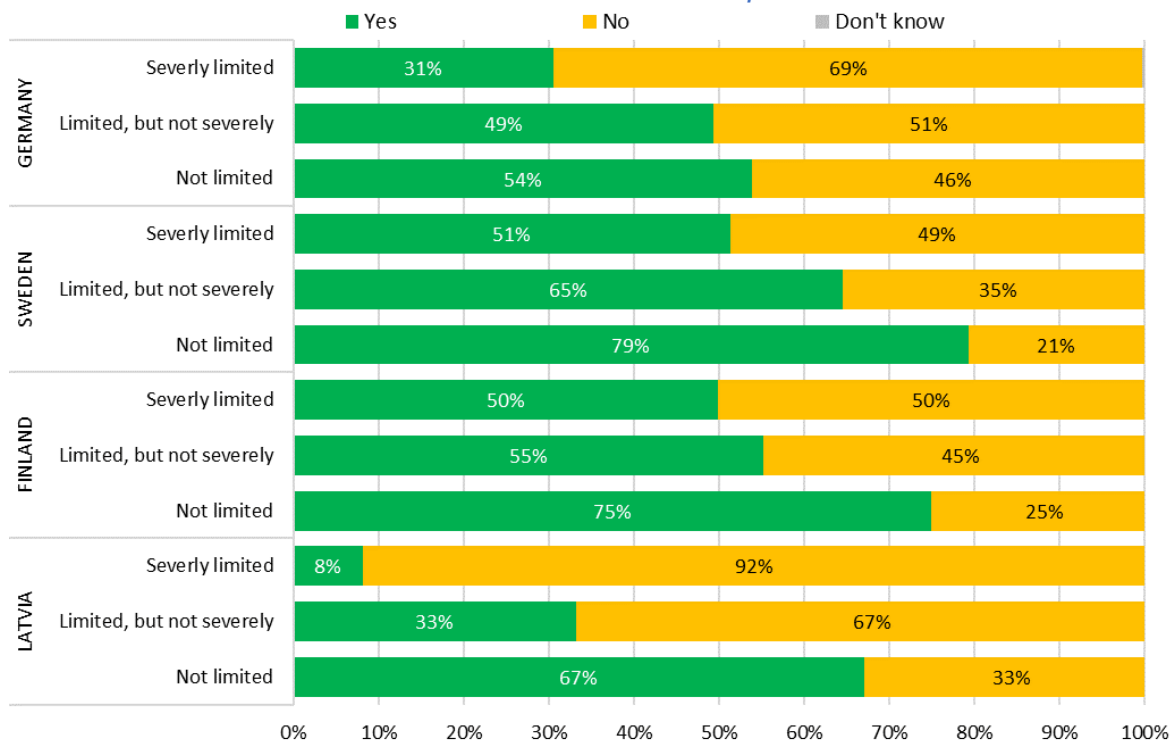
Correlation in use of Internet and type of settlement can also be observed, however, nature of the correlation is different among the countries (see Figure 7.3). Only in Germany the relationship is linear – larger share of older people who had used the Internet in the last 7 days is found in large cities, it gradually decreases in small towns and in rural areas. In Sweden and Latvia, there are no significant differences between use of Internet in small towns and rural areas, the share of Internet users is higher only in large cities. In Finland there are no significant differences in Internet use in larger cities and smaller towns. The share of those who have used the Internet in the last 7 days is lower only in rural areas.

Also, a correlation between use of Internet and years in formal education can be observed (see Figure 7.4). In Sweden and Finland, the correlation is linear. In Germany no significant differences in the use of the Internet between those who have spent 8 years or less in formal education and those who have spent 9-11 years– only 23-24% of both groups have used the Internet in the last 7 days. In Latvia, older people who have spent 8 years or less in formal education have used the Internet only in some cases (7%). The share of those who used the Internet in the last 7 days is similar among those who have spent 9-11 years and 12-14 years in school – 33% and 38%, respectively, which is a small difference, given that those who studied for 15 years or more it is 67%.

The use of the Internet in the last 7 days also correlates with answers to the question whether older people had limited activities because of a health problem (see Figure 7.5). The correlation is linear –more activity restrictions are experienced, higher is the share of older people have not used the Internet in the last 7 years. In Latvia, the difference is more significant than in other countries – only 8% of those whose activities were severely limited used the Internet, compared to those whose activities were not limited – 67%.

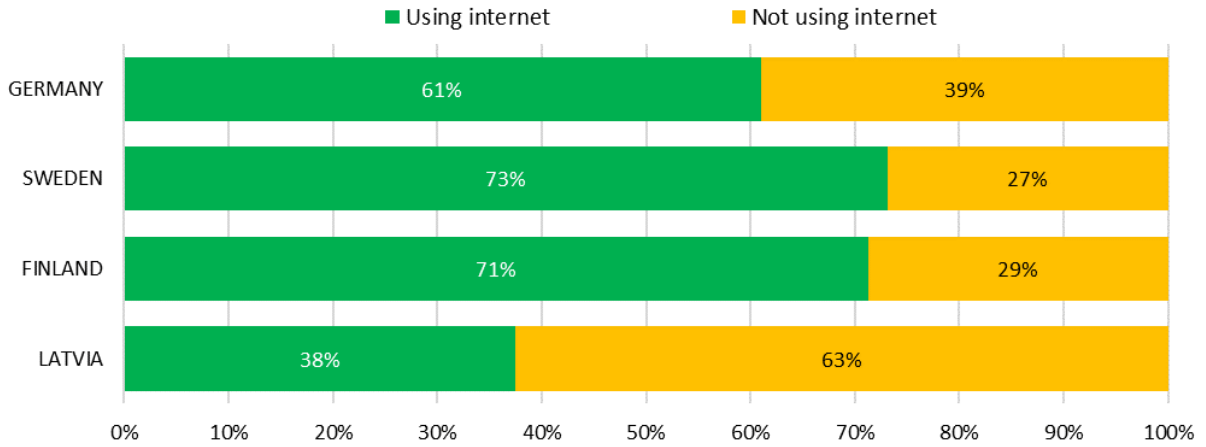
Age, place of residence, time spent in formal education, activity restrictions due to health problems variables also correlate with each other. From this set of variables, it is not possible to determine a primary cause.

*Figure 7.5. During the past 7 days, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once? – by limited activities because of a health problem*



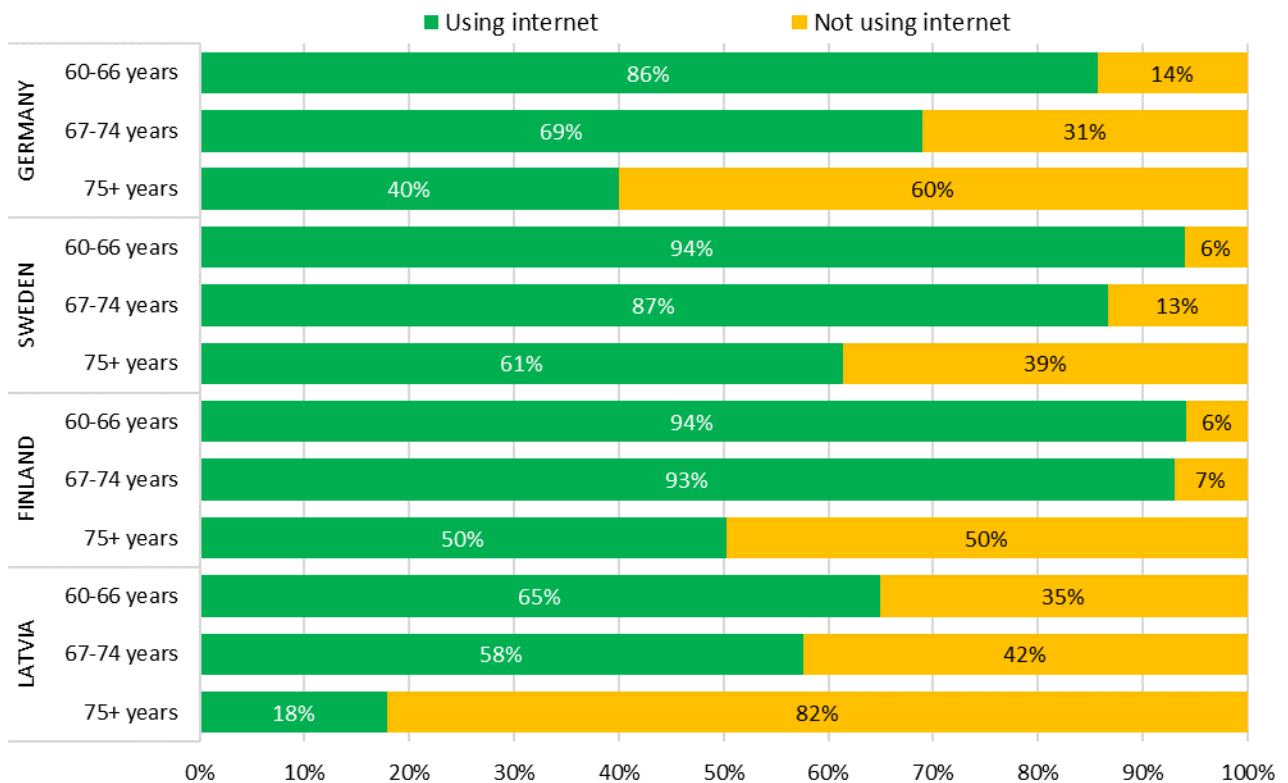
Data source: SHARE Wave 7 & Wave 8 (Sample 1)

Figure 7.6. Since the outbreak of Corona, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once?



Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Figure 7.7. Since the outbreak of Corona, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once? – by age groups

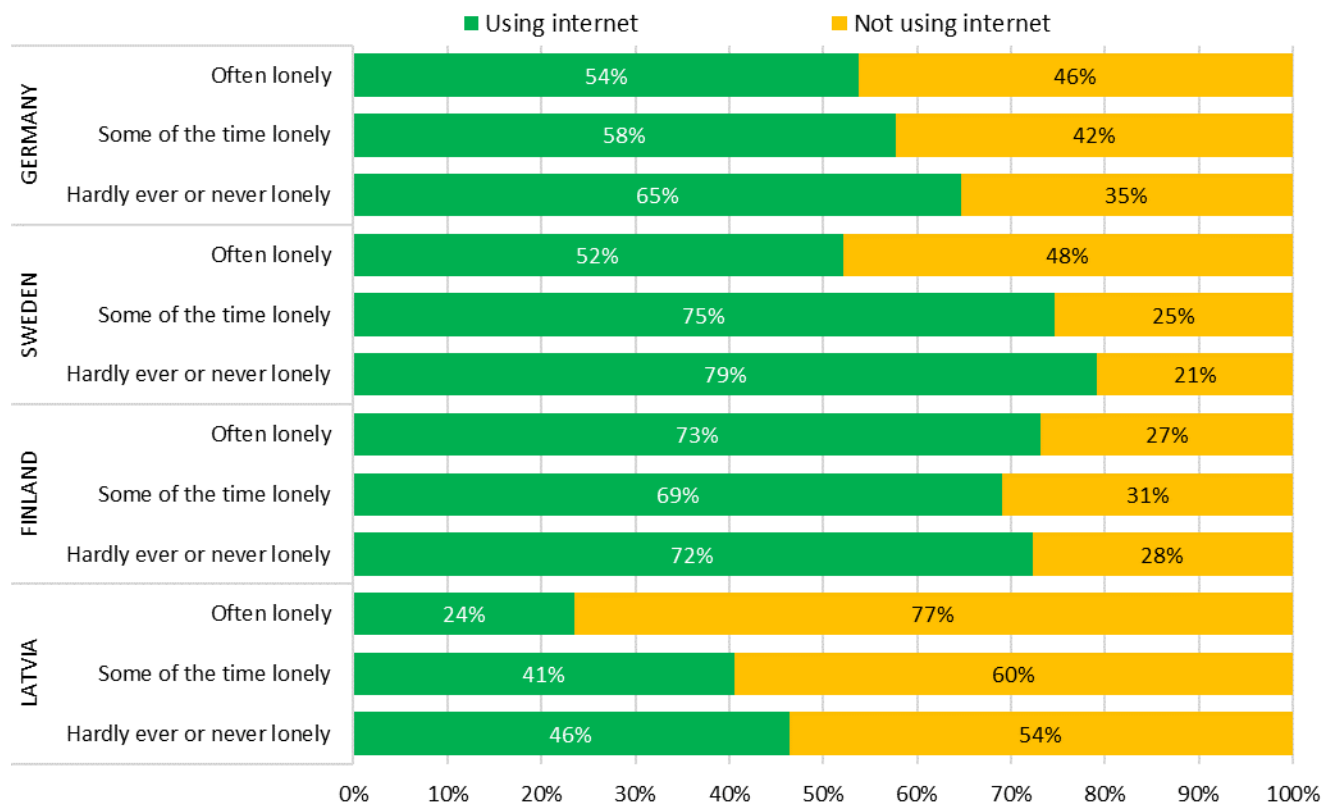


Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Data reviewed above come from older surveys, SHARE Corona second wave survey (2021) asked about the Internet use since the beginning of the pandemic (see Figure 7.6). The answers show a slightly higher percentage of Internet users among older people compared to previous surveys. This could be because the group has structurally changed with younger and more Internet literate people entering the group. Also, the question covers a longer period. More difference between the survey findings are observed in Germany - showing 15% increase but lowest in Latvia - 2%.

A similar tendency can also be observed in relation to age (see Figure 7.7). In Finland, Sweden, and Germany, there is an increase in the share of people who have used the Internet since the beginning of the pandemic, when compared to older data. It is most significant in the youngest group of German older people (60-66 years - 12% increase). In Latvia, age group 67-74 years demonstrate even lower share of Internet users (58% versus 60%). There is a 9% increase in the youngest age group of Latvian older people.

*Figure 7.8. Since the outbreak of Corona, have you used the Internet, for e-mailing, searching for information, making purchases, or for any other purpose at least once? – by feeling lonely*

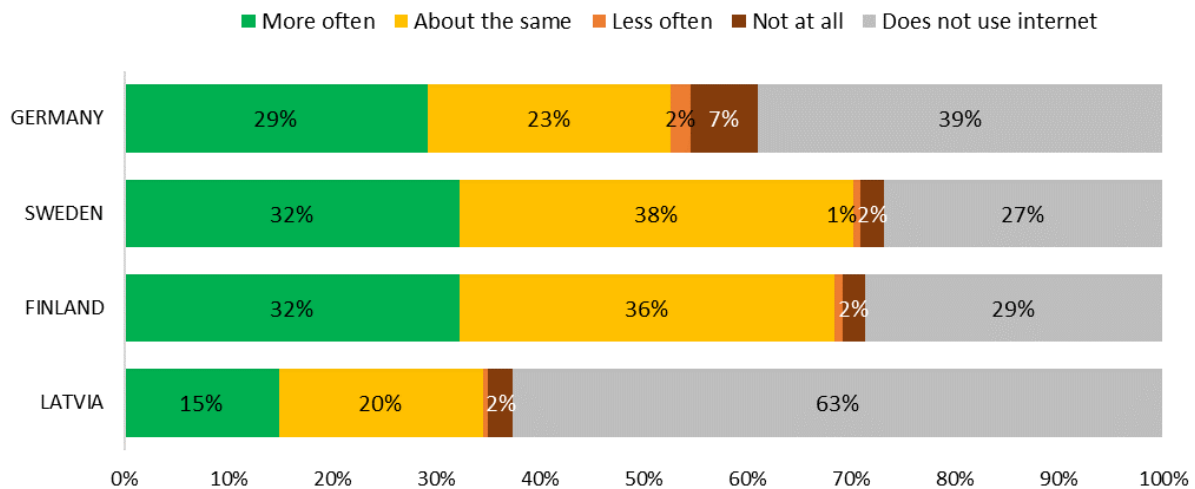


Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Internet use correlates with feelings of loneliness during the pandemic – Internet helps to reduce feeling of loneliness. This correlation is detected in Germany, Sweden and Latvia (see Figure 7.8). There is no correlation found in Finland.

Data show that the use of Internet among older people has slightly increased with the pandemic. In the SHARE Corona second wave survey, when respondents were asked about changes in the frequency of Internet use, 32% in Sweden and Finland, 29% in Germany and 15% in Latvia stated that they have used Internet more often, while only a small part of older people said that they used it less often (see Figure 7.9).

*Figure 7.9. Nowadays, many things can be done online, that is, via the Internet. Since the outbreak of Corona, have you used the Internet more often, about the same, less often, or not at all for the following online activities: searching for information on health-related issues; getting information about government services (most frequent online activity)?*



Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Evaluating the purpose for increased Internet use during pandemics, most popular answer in all countries is “Health-related issues” (see Figure 7.10). The second most frequent answer, in Sweden, Germany and Finland is “Buying/selling goods/services”, while in Latvia, although older people also indicated that they have used the Internet more often for such purposes, share in this answer is 4%. In Latvia managing finances is the most popular use of Internet compared to other purposes.

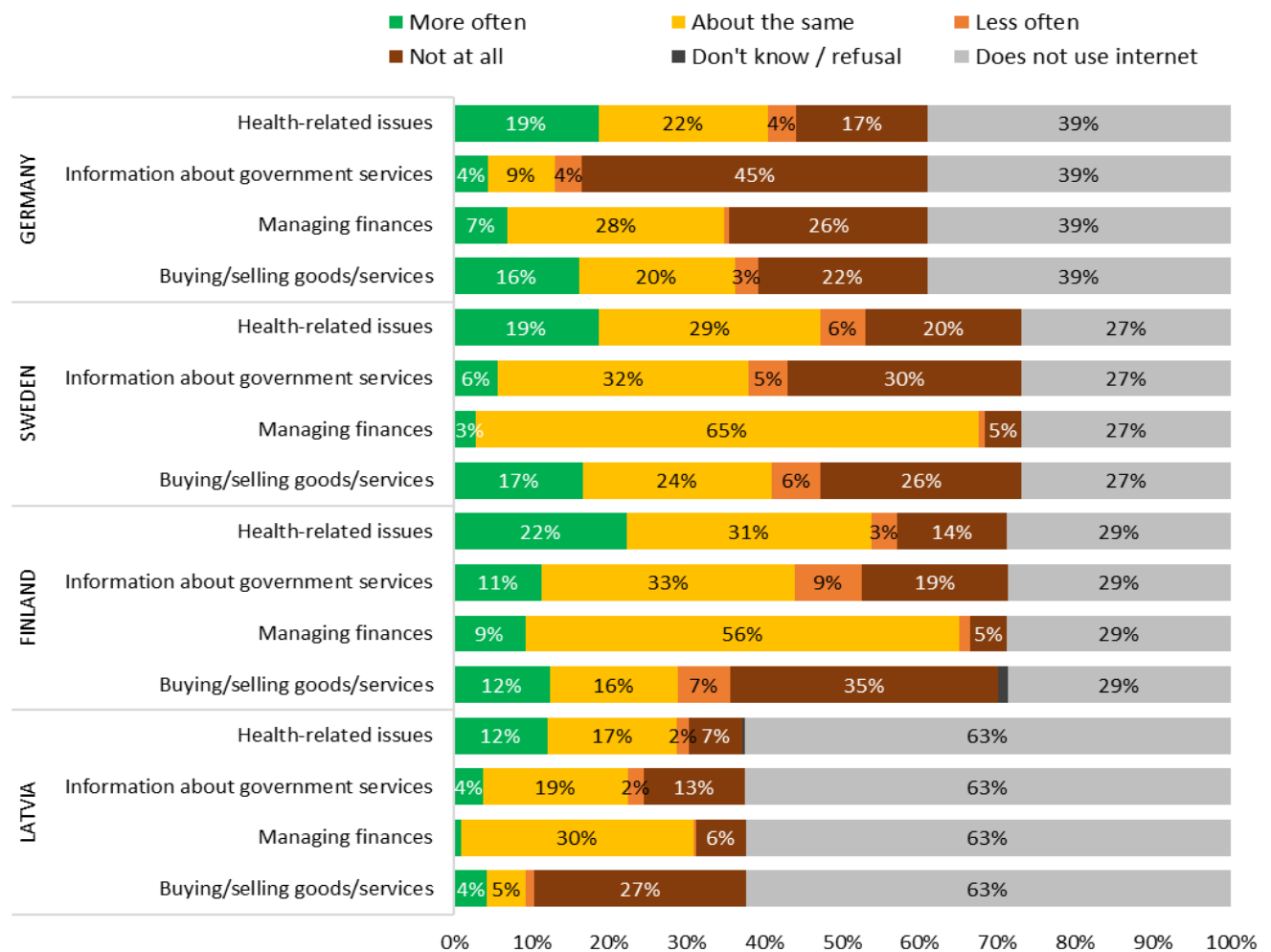
In the Eurobarometer 2018 survey respondents were asked what activities they did on the Internet and how often. The Figure 7.11 shows that social networks were popular among older people in Sweden and Finland, but not so popular in Latvia and Germany. Watching videos and listening to music are equally popular or more popular in Latvia and Germany than using social networks. Finland stands out with the popularity of diversity of



Internet activities among older people. Online shopping is considerably less popular activity in Latvia than in other three countries. Participating in collaborative economy is significantly more popular in Germany and Finland compared to Latvia and Sweden.

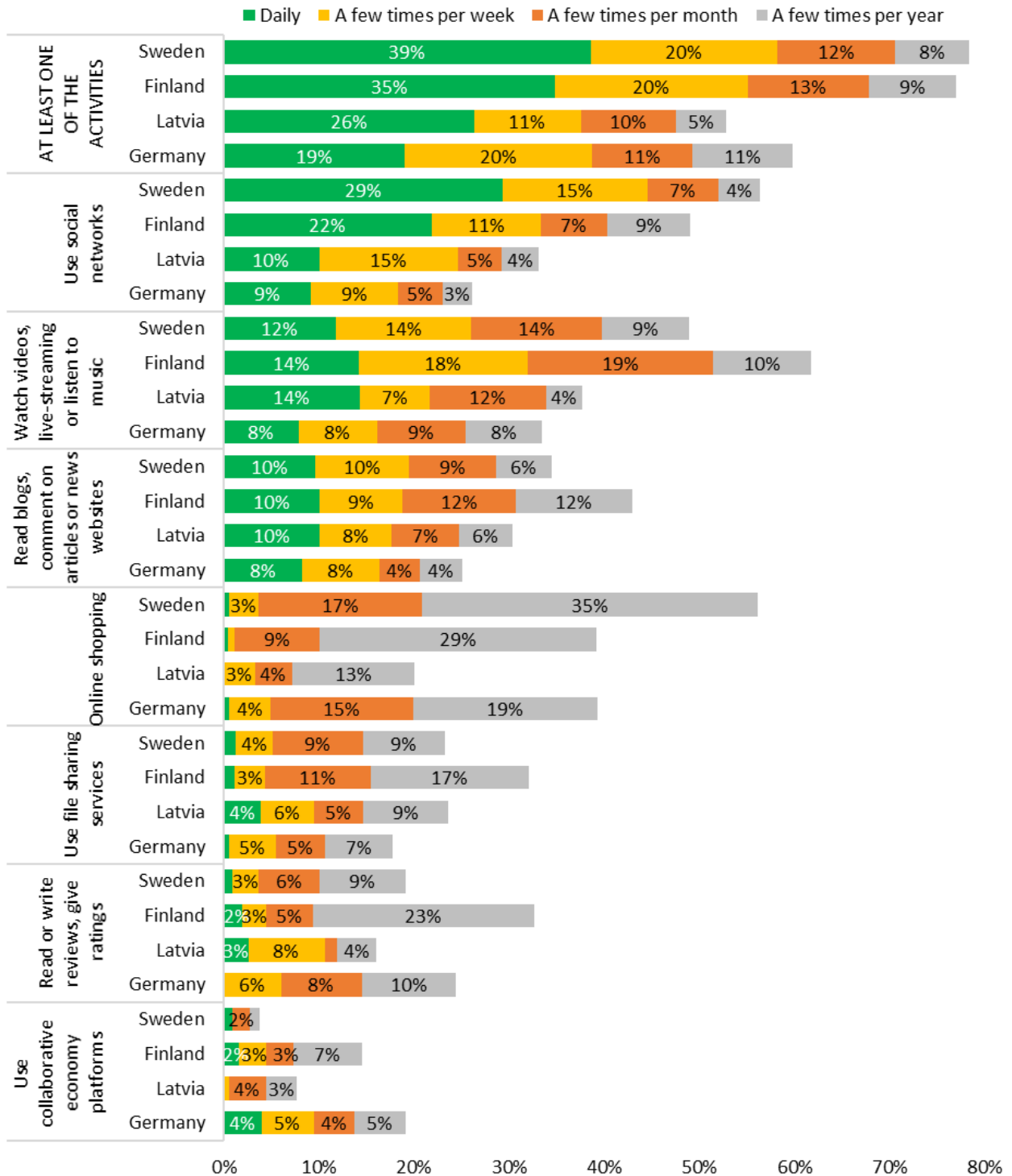
Another Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2017 asked about a wider range of activities, including those that did not involve direct use of the Internet (see Figure 7.12). Activities such as phone calls and SMS are more popular among older people in all countries compared to activities that require the use of the Internet. Germany stands out with the popularity of landline phones, which are less popular in Sweden, while in Finland and Latvia – used very seldom. In Finland and Sweden, compared to Latvia and Germany, instant messaging services are popular. According to this survey, the most popular Internet use activity in all four countries is sending and receiving e-mails.

*Figure 7.10. Nowadays, many things can be done online, that is, via the Internet. Since the outbreak of Corona, have you used the Internet more often, about the same, less often, or not at all for the following online activities: searching for information on health-related issues; getting information about government services?*



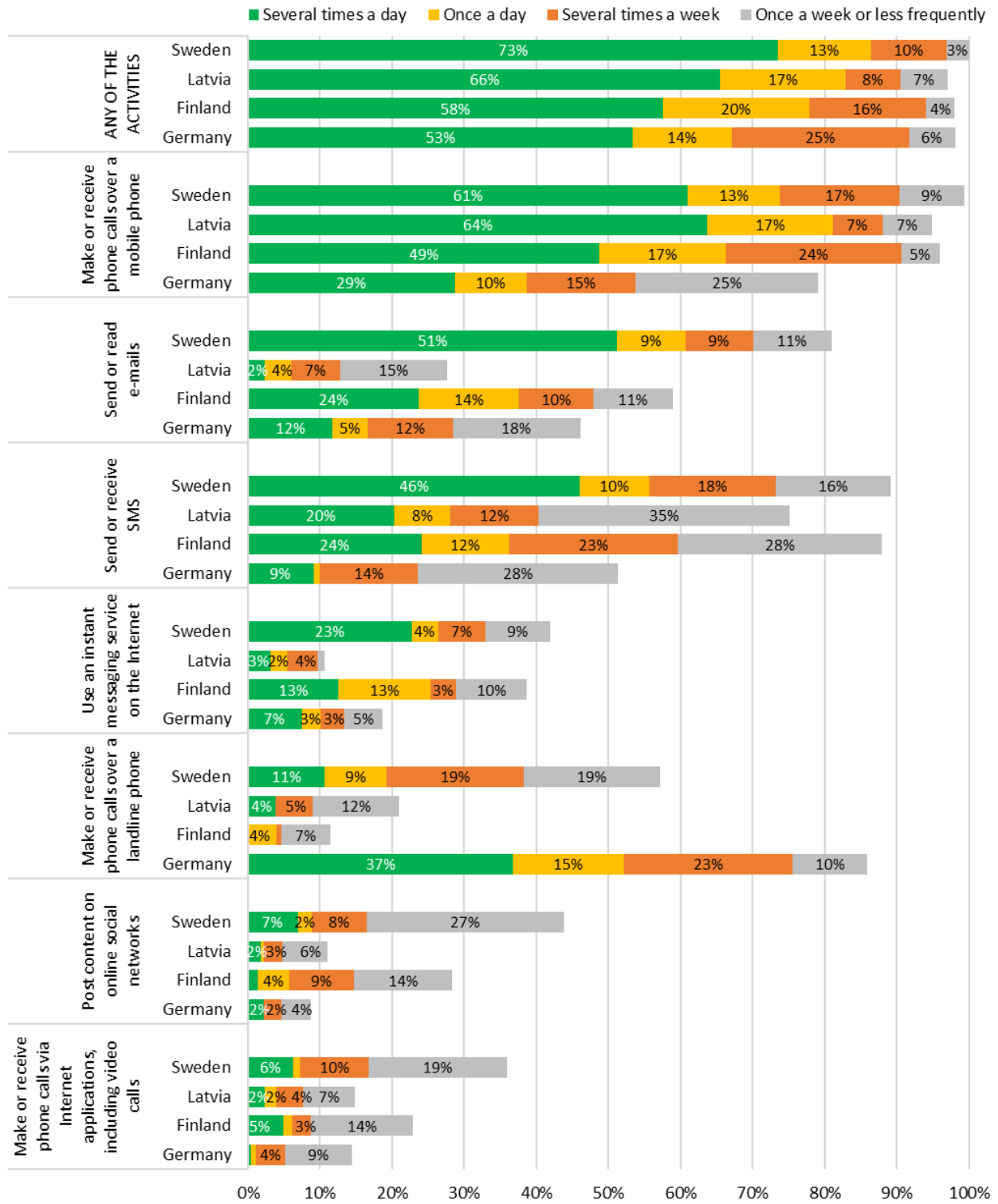
Data source: SHARE Corona Wave 2 (2021)

Figure 7.11. How often do you do the following?



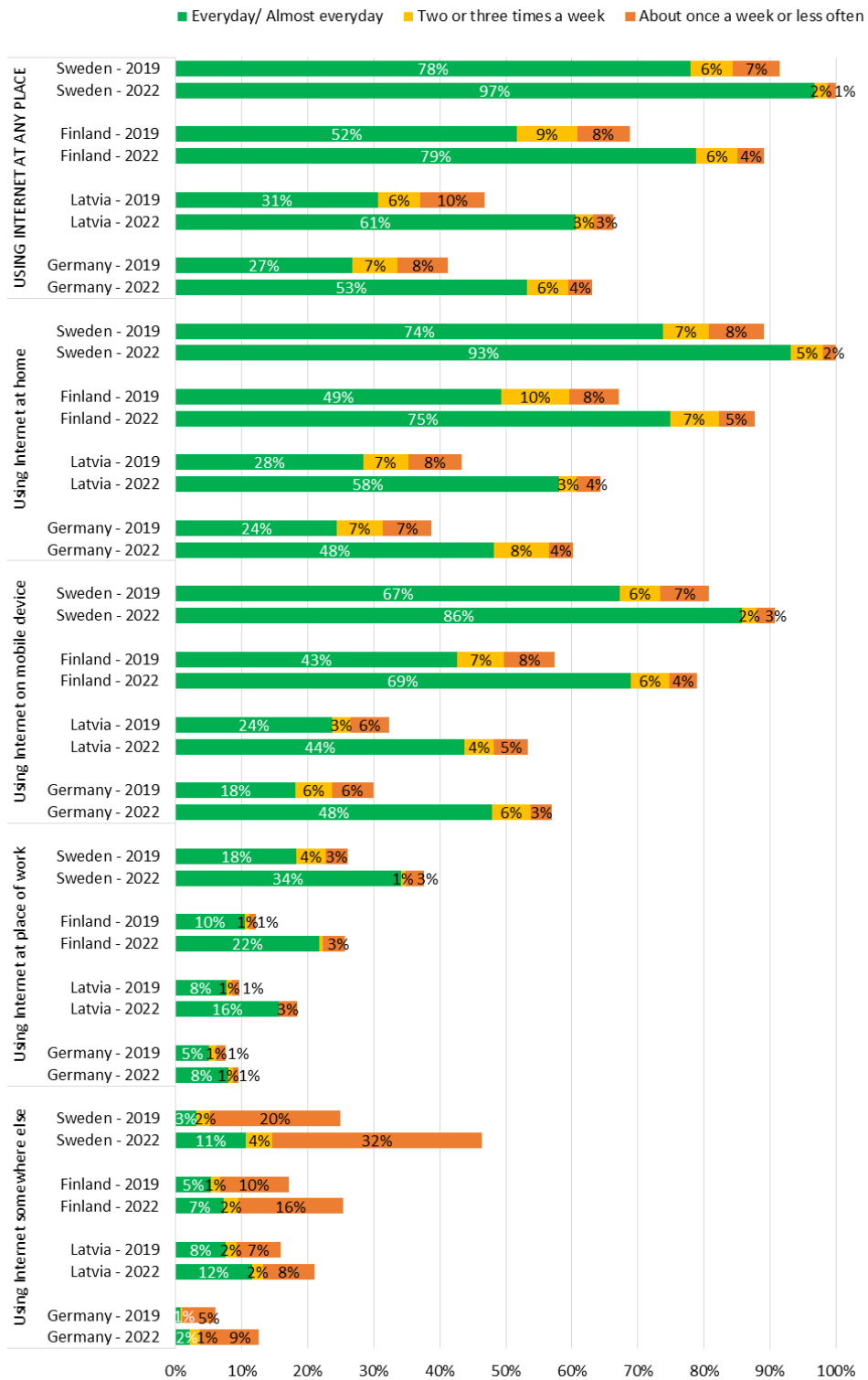
Data source: Flash Eurobarometer 469 (2018)

Figure 7.12. How often do you do the following?



Data source: Eurobarometer 87.2 (2017)

Figure 7.13. Internet usage by place (2019 and 2022 comparison)

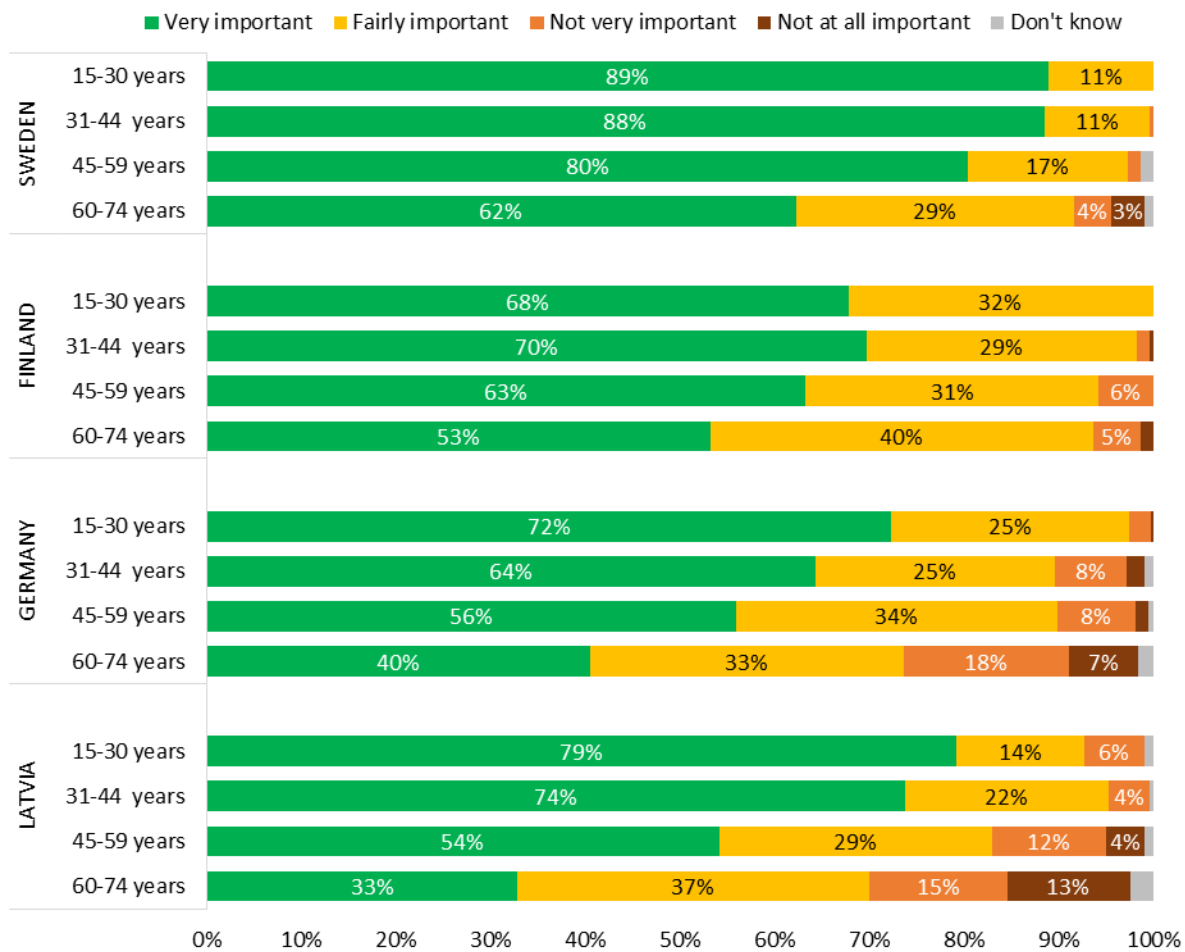


Data sources: merged file for 2019 (Eurobarometer 92.2; Eurobarometer 92.4); single file for 2022 (Eurobarometer 97.5)

Speaking about the place where older people use the Internet, home and on a mobile device prevail (see Figure 7.13). Significantly less often it is indicated that the Internet is used at work or in some other place.

Since identical questions were included in the Eurobarometer polls in 2022 as well, it is possible to compare the results. We can observe a significant increase in the use of the Internet among seniors in all the countries included in the study and in all the places asked about in the survey. According to 2022 data in Sweden, 97% of elderly people living alone use the Internet on a daily basis, in Finland – 79%, in Latvia – 61%, and in Germany – 53%. The significant increase compared to 2019 (about 20-30% more on a daily bases) may be due to the fact that there was a COVID-19 pandemic between the surveys, during which the use of the Internet for individuals living alone became significantly more important than before.

*Figure 7.14. How important do you think digital tools and the internet will be in your life by 2030? – all the society by age groups*



Data source: Eurobarometer 96.1 (2021)

It is important to see how different generations in society, not only seniors, see the perspective of digital technologies and themselves in relation to them. In 2021, in one of

the Eurobarometer surveys, respondents were asked how they see the role of digital devices and the Internet in their lives in 2030 (see Figure 7.14). Seniors' responses differ from those of other generations in the way that they see a significantly smaller role for digital technology. Some of them probably thought not only about digital technologies when answering, but about whether they will live until 2030, which could also have influenced the answers. However, only a few chose the answer "don't know".

Comparing the countries, it can be found that Finnish society gave the most homogeneous answers when comparing generations. In the case of Sweden, the answers of the older generation differ from other generations more than in Finland, however, in general, any of the generations see digital tools as more important in their lives in 2030, compared to the relevant generation in the other countries included in the study.

The answers of Latvia and Germany are more similar to each other – each generation older than the previous one expected that the role of digital technologies would be smaller in their lives by 2030. However, Latvia's answers are more heterogeneous. The younger generation is behind only the young people of Sweden in how important they see the role of digital technologies. The 31-44-year-old generation also predicts a greater role for these technologies compared to the Finnish and German respondents of the same age, while those in Latvia who are 45 years and older see the role of digital technologies in their lives as less important compared to the same age group in other countries. The responses of the elderly 60+ are particularly different.

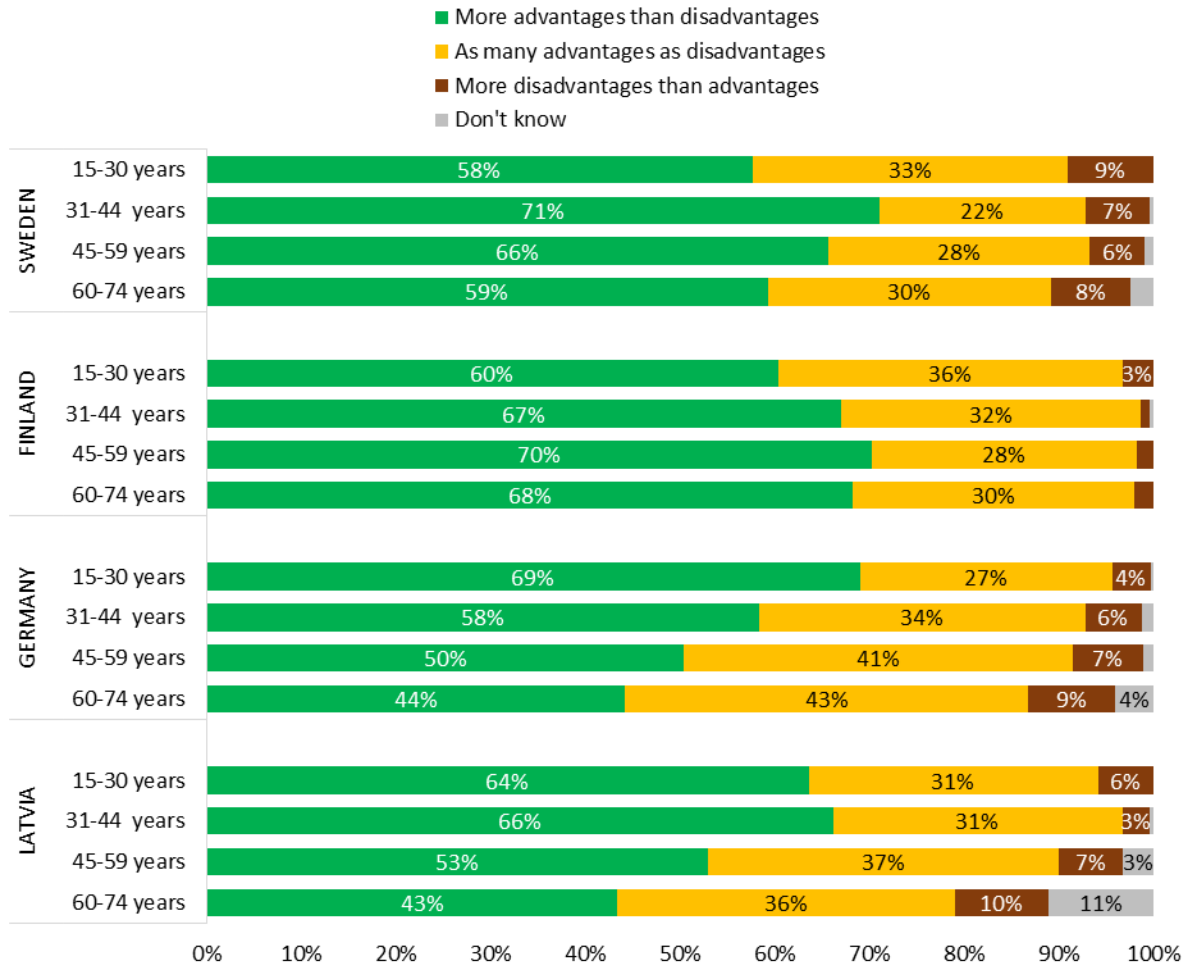
It is also important that the older generation of Latvia and Germany, compared to others, sees less potential advantages from digital technologies (see Figure 7.15). If in Sweden and Finland the middle generations predict more advantages, in Finland the responses of the generations are quite similar, then in Latvia and Germany, especially in Germany, it can be observed that the younger generations predict the most advantages while the older ones predict less. True, it is not the case that a large number of respondents predict significant disadvantages. Those who see fewer advantages are more likely to indicate that there will be as many advantages as disadvantages. However, the older generation in Latvia stands out with the largest proportion of "Don't know" answers (11%) and the largest number of those who think that there will be more disadvantages than advantages (10%).

The same survey asked to assess what concerns people see with the rise of digital tools and the role of the internet. Here we do not consider all the possible concerns included in the questionnaire, but only those that are most closely related to the topic of the study (see Figure 7.16).

In general, out of the four aspects we looked at, the respondents were most concerned about cybercrime. However, it can be noticed that in Sweden and Finland, the older generation was more concerned about it compared to others, while in Germany and

Latvia – less so. Most likely, we should talk about insufficient awareness of risks among the older generation in Latvia and Germany, as well as, possibly, too much concern about these risks in Sweden and Finland.

*Figure 7.15. When you imagine your life in 2030, do you think the use of digital tools and the internet will bring you more advantages or disadvantages? – all the society by age groups*

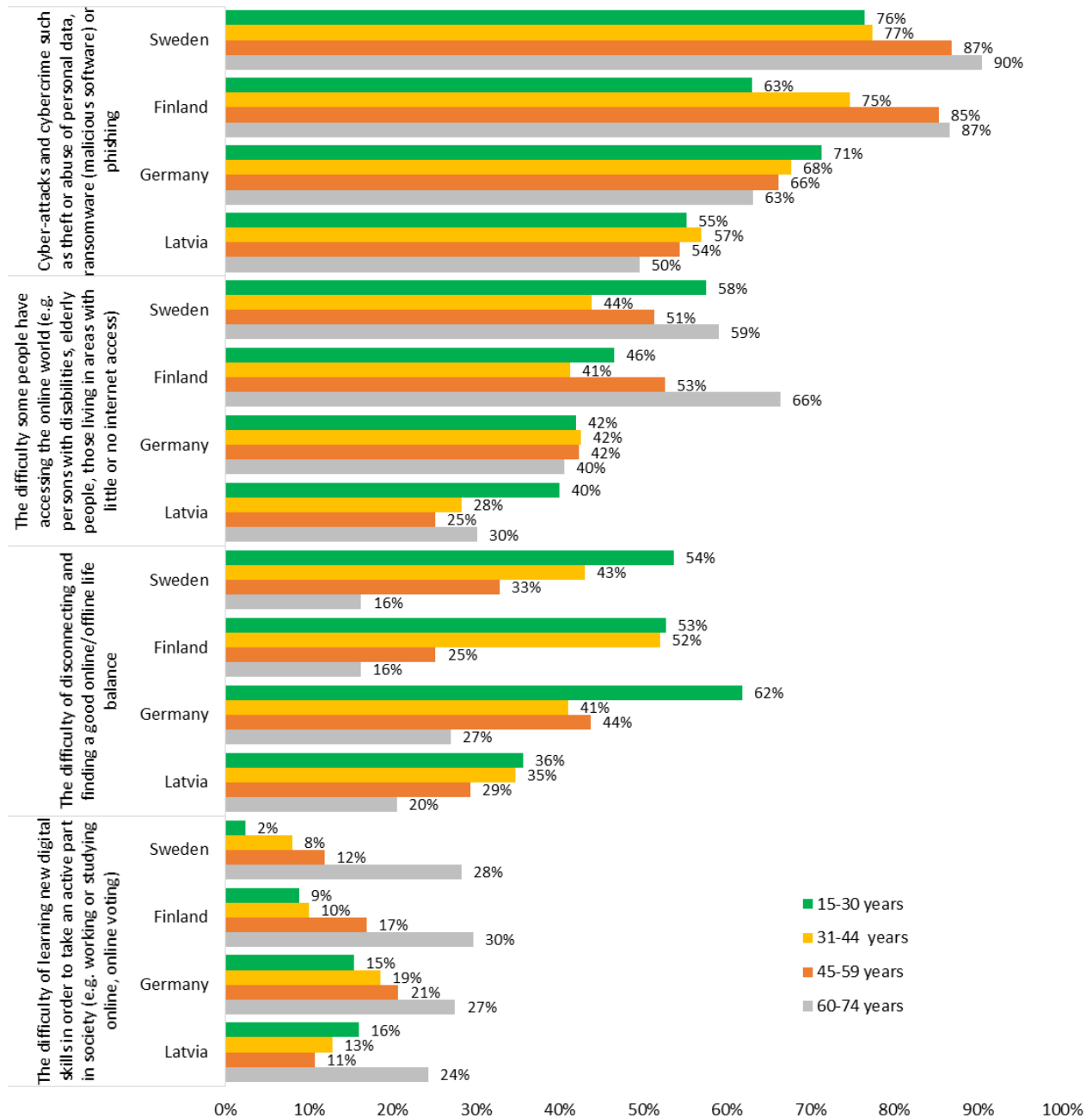


Data source: Eurobarometer 96.1 (2021)

The risk that a part of society (including the elderly, people with disabilities) might have problems accessing the digital world is also seen as a more significant problem in Sweden and Finland. Perhaps this is related to the more clear efforts in these countries to digitize their financial and service sectors. Moreover, the older generation in both countries is the most concerned. In fact, in Sweden, the younger respondents (15-30 years old) also was worried about this risk to an almost similar extent.

In Germany, the problem is seen to a lesser extent, and there are no real differences in the responses of different generations. In Latvia, only the younger generation is concerned about such risks to the same extent as the German society, while the other generations, including the older ones, see this as a problem much less frequently.

Figure 7.16. What worries you most about the increased role of digital tools and the internet in our society? – the attitude of all the society to several aspects by age groups



Data source: Eurobarometer 96.1 (2021)

The fear of what could happen if the internet was not available and the lack of a good online and offline life balance are much more relevant to the younger generation. However, these generational differences are less noticeable in Latvia compared to other countries. Comparing the older generation, in turn, can be found that in Sweden and Finland they see these risks as less significant compared to the same generation in Germany and Latvia.



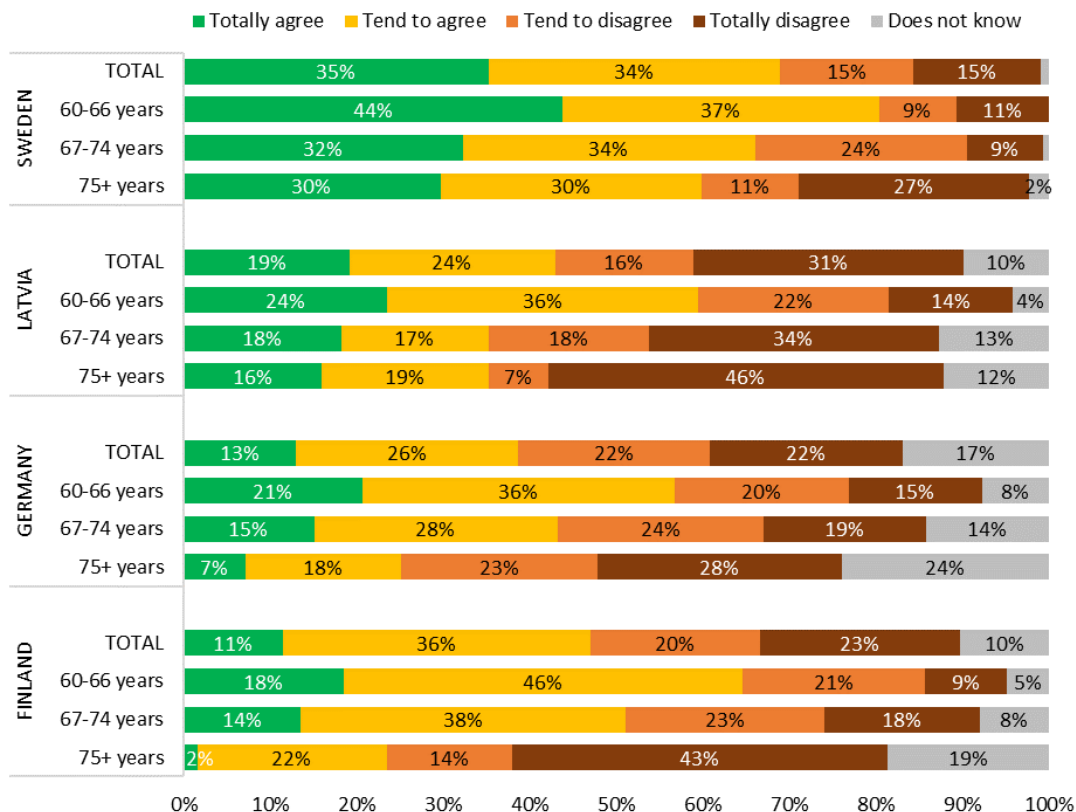
The need to acquire new digital skills is generally seen by the societies of the four countries as a much smaller risk. However, in this case, a very clear connection between generations and the awareness of this risk can be observed. In all countries, 24-30% of the representatives of the older generation indicated that they were concerned about such risk, while in the other generations there were fewer of those who mentioned it.

In Sweden, Finland and Germany the correlation is almost linear, in Latvia not so clearly. However, in all countries, if not being aware of this problem, there is a risk that the older generation will be step by step left behind the accelerating digitization "train", while the younger generations will not immediately notice it.

### 4.8. Training

Eurobarometer 2019 survey asked to rate their skills in using digital technologies (see Figure 8.1). When interpreting this data, it is important to note that it is a self-assessment. The Swedish older people rated their skills higher, while the Finns were most critical. The correlation between age and self-assessment of digital skills can be found in all four countries.

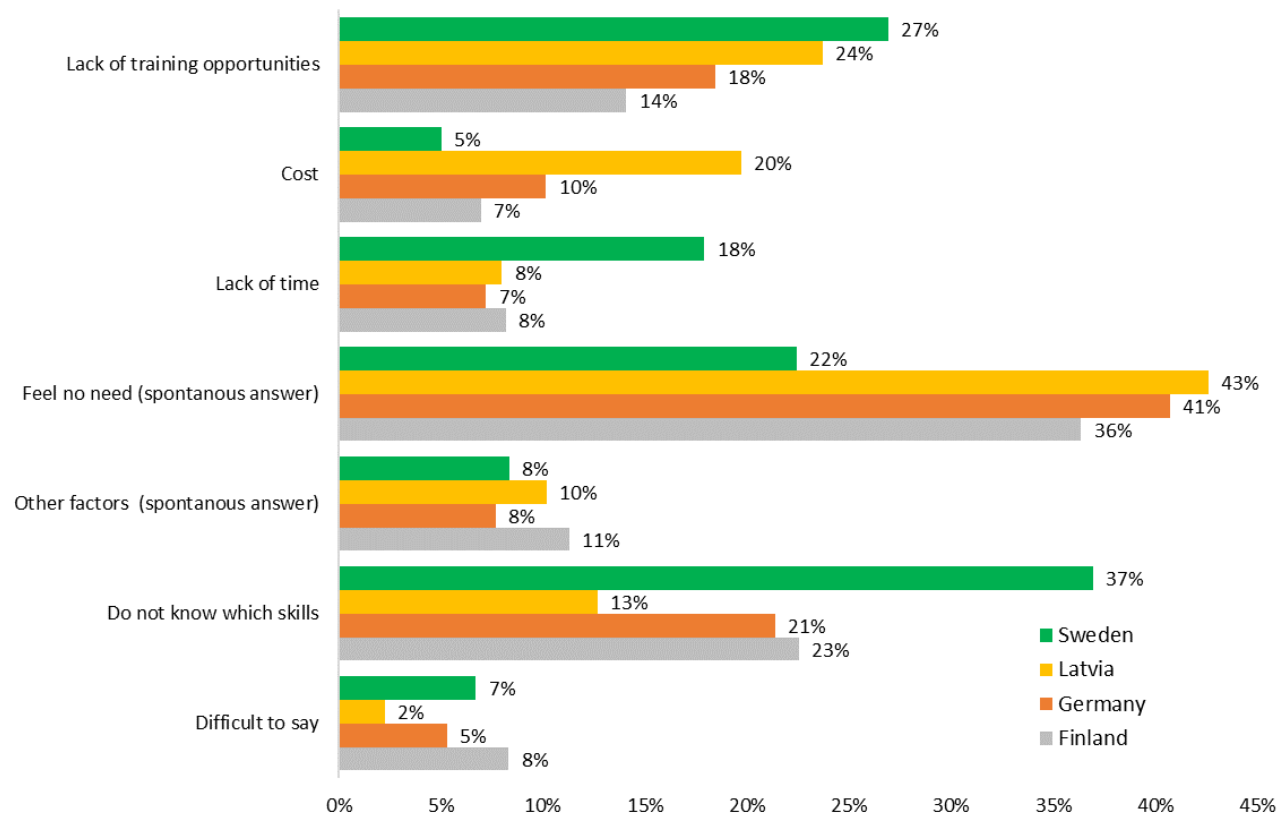
*Figure 8.1. Do you consider yourself to be sufficiently skilled in the use of digital technologies: in your daily life? – by age groups*



Data source: Eurobarometer 92.4 (2019)

Another Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2019 asked about main barriers to improving digital skills (see Figure 8.2). The most frequent answer (apart from Sweden) was a spontaneous statement that was not included in the questionnaire – they felt no need for it. The Swedish respondents chose the answer “do not know which skills” instead. Among other answers, the Swedish respondents relatively often indicated the lack of time, while the Latvian respondents – the costs.

*Figure 8.2. What do you consider are the main barriers to improving your digital skills?  
Percentage from all the respondents (including those who use internet)*

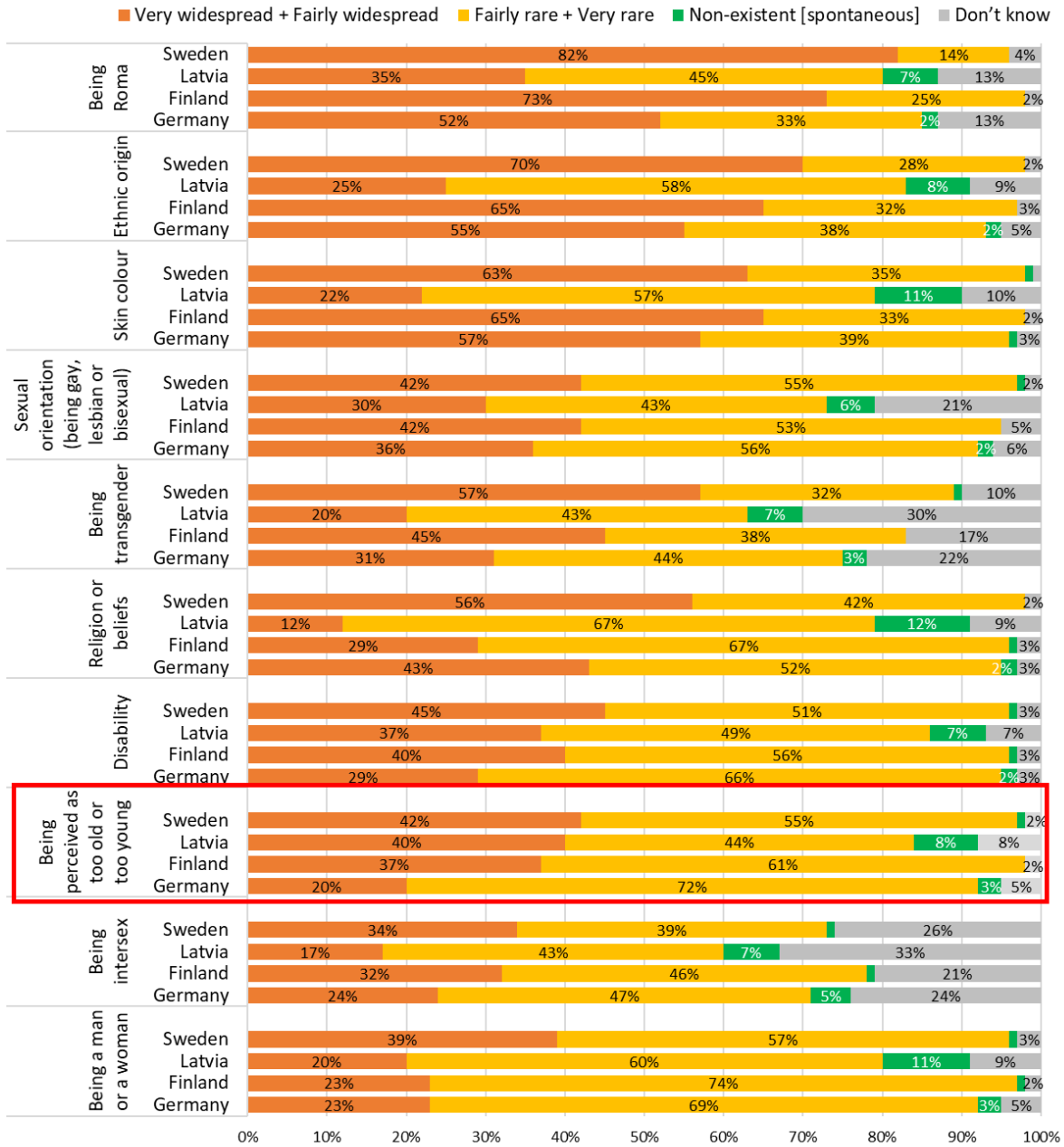


Data source: Flash Eurobarometer 477 (2019)

## 4.9. Discrimination

Discrimination is a complex phenomenon. A few questions are not enough to measure it. To gain a general insight, two questions were selected from Eurobarometer 2019 survey. In the first question, respondents (not only older people) were asked about different forms of discrimination – which of them and how often they have felt in their society (see Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1. For each of the following types of discrimination, could you please tell me whether, in your opinion, it is very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in [our country]?



Results from the published data: Eurobarometer 91.4 (2019)

Figure 9.2. Regardless of whether you are actually working or not, please tell me, using a scale from 1 to 10, how comfortable you would feel, if a colleague at work with whom you are in daily contact, belonged to each of the following groups? ‘1’ means that you would feel “not at all comfortable” and ‘10’ that you would feel “totally comfortable”.



Results from the published data: Eurobarometer 91.4 (2019)

Discrimination based on age (against a person who is too old or too young) is generally not named among the most significant forms of discrimination in the four countries, except for Latvia. In other countries, ethnic origin, skin colour, religious affiliation is indicated more often. In the case of Latvia, discrimination based on age is named as the most common – however, the context should be considered - Latvian respondents are generally much less likely to admit the existence of other forms of discrimination.

The second question was related to the willingness of the respondents (the general population, not only the older people) themselves to work together with people of different status, including the older people (see Figure 9.2). According to this criterion, other forms of discrimination are more widespread in the countries involved in the study – ethnicity, religious affiliation, sexual orientation - when compared to old age.

## 5. Conclusions

This report summarizes information that can be further used in the context of qualitative analysis – whether as a frame in which to place it, or as a more general explanation for results obtained from the qualitative part of the study. Therefore, only some of the most important conclusions of a general level are presented, while more detailed information on the interrelationships of various variables can be found in the relevant chapters of the report.

Correlations between older age and living alone can be found between several variables – education, place of residence, state of health, use of the Internet, age, feeling of loneliness. It is problematic to establish a root cause for these correlations. People living in rural areas generally have a lower level of education, have lower access to the Internet, and worse condition of health. Worse health condition can be explained by harder work, which in turn is associated with a lower level of education. The feeling of loneliness is more common among older persons.

There are also significant differences among the countries. Finland and Sweden have reached a very high level of digitisation (in Sweden it affects older people to a greater extent, in Finland – to a lesser), Germany has approached technologies and services in a more diversified and conservative way, while of Latvia, even though digital technologies and services as such are widely available, those seldom reach older people.

Latvian older people estimate their health most critically when compared to other countries. However, when it comes to the limitation of daily activities due to health problems, the differences among the countries are insignificant. Still life expectancy and quality of life of Latvian older people is objectively lower, but Latvian men have a particularly low life expectancy. Latvians also give or receive help less often.

## 6. Data sources

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