

A satellite map of Europe and surrounding regions, showing landmasses, oceans, and major water bodies like the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. The map is used as a background for the title text.

# **BBVA Foundation European Values Survey**

**II**

## **Values and attitudes in Europe regarding the private sphere**

**Fundación  
BBVA**

Department of Social Studies and Public Opinion

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- The BBVA Foundation's 2019 European Values Survey examines a broad set of values and attitudes held by the adult population of five European countries: Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Spain. The values and attitudes considered address both the public (politics, economics, the media, and trust in institutions and professional groups) and private domains (personal satisfaction, trust in different sets of people, feeling of control over personal outcomes, religion, ethics, abortion, euthanasia, new forms of coupledness and parenthood and attitudes to science and the environment).
- This presentation confines itself to selected aspects of the private sphere. A comparative analysis of these values and attitudes identifies commonalities and differences across and within the five societies by reference to age, sex, educational level, religiosity and declared political orientation.
- Empirical information was gathered through a survey of a representative sample of 1,500 people aged 18 and over in each of the European Union's top five most populated countries.

- The fieldwork was carried out by Ipsos between April and July 2019. The design and analysis of the study data are the work of the BBVA Foundation Department of Social Studies and Public Opinion.
- Values operate as a kind of “cognitive, preferential and normative GPS” that helps individuals navigate their way around complex issues and situations on which a majority have only limited information, aiding them in their decision-making: they help identify or “signal” what is “good” (regarded as valuable) and “right” (which individual and institutional behaviours are obligatory, and which permitted or forbidden). This is a “soft” and “latent” (rather than explicit) universe, but one that is effective and stable.
- At different times there may exist an alignment or dissonance, a state of compatibility or inconsistency (open or latent) between the dominant values and attitudes of a given society and that same society’s institutional and regulatory framework. Social and political change is in large part driven by the interaction between institutions, policies and the public’s perceptions, values and attitudes (antecedents of conduct). In democratic, plural societies, the dominant values and attitudes tend to coexist and, occasionally, clash with the specific worldviews of certain (“minority”) groups with their own sub-cultures.

- The map of a society's cultural "intangibles" – values and attitudes – is fairly stable in its main contours. Changes tend to unfold slowly, the product of fragmentary and cumulative processes, though they may also be driven by exceptional events (crises) or the emergence of new information of singular importance, visibility and reach.
- In these times of globalization and real-time communications networks, a society's values and attitudes can be shaped over a short time frame by "tipping points" (events, protests, movements...) arising in other geographical areas.
- The values and attitudes of the average individual exhibit meaningful (non-random) affinities and clusters, albeit not to the extent of conforming a structured, all-encompassing ideology with more or less defined doctrinal sources, of the kind found solely among "elites".

- This survey of values and attitudes with regard to issues falling within the private sphere is of an essentially descriptive nature, identifying the characteristics of Spain that stand out most in comparison to the other four European countries in mid-2019 and, for selected indicators, considering how they have varied over the last ten years. Three main strands:

**Satisfaction, personal control and trust**

- Personal satisfaction
- Perception of personal control over life outcomes
- Beliefs about factors influencing social position
- Personal trust

**Beliefs, religiosity and ethical principles**

- Religious membership and religiosity
- Views on the role of religion and contribution of Christianity
- Ethical principles and their application

**Life paths and acceptance of conducts subject to moral controversy**

- Perception of life paths and personal realisation
- The situation of women
- Euthanasia and abortion
- New forms of partner relations and parenthood



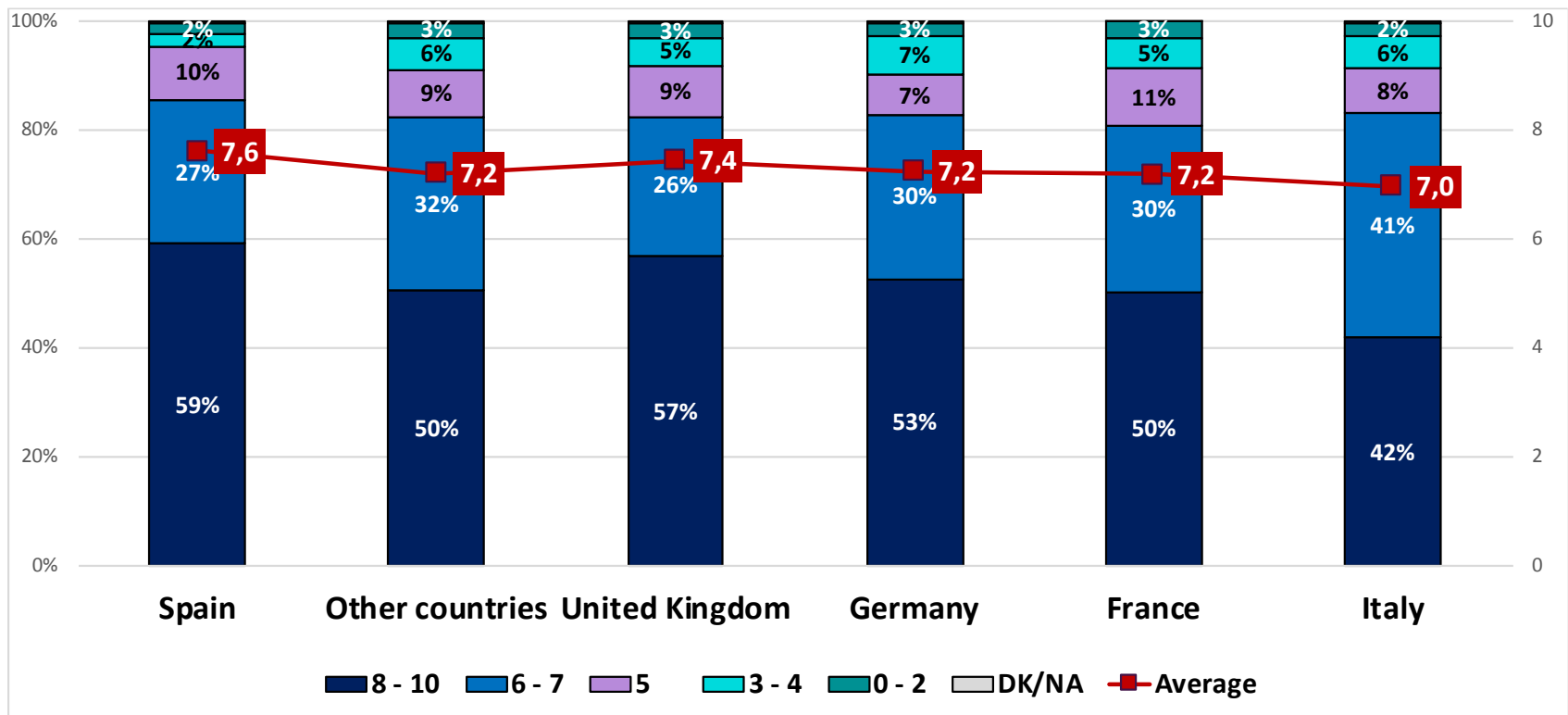
A satellite map of Europe and surrounding regions. A blue callout box with a white circle on its left side is positioned over the British Isles. A curved blue line extends from the bottom of the callout box towards the Mediterranean Sea.

## Satisfaction, personal control and trust

- **Personal satisfaction**
- **Perception of personal control over life outcomes**
- **Beliefs about the factors influencing social position**
- **Personal trust**

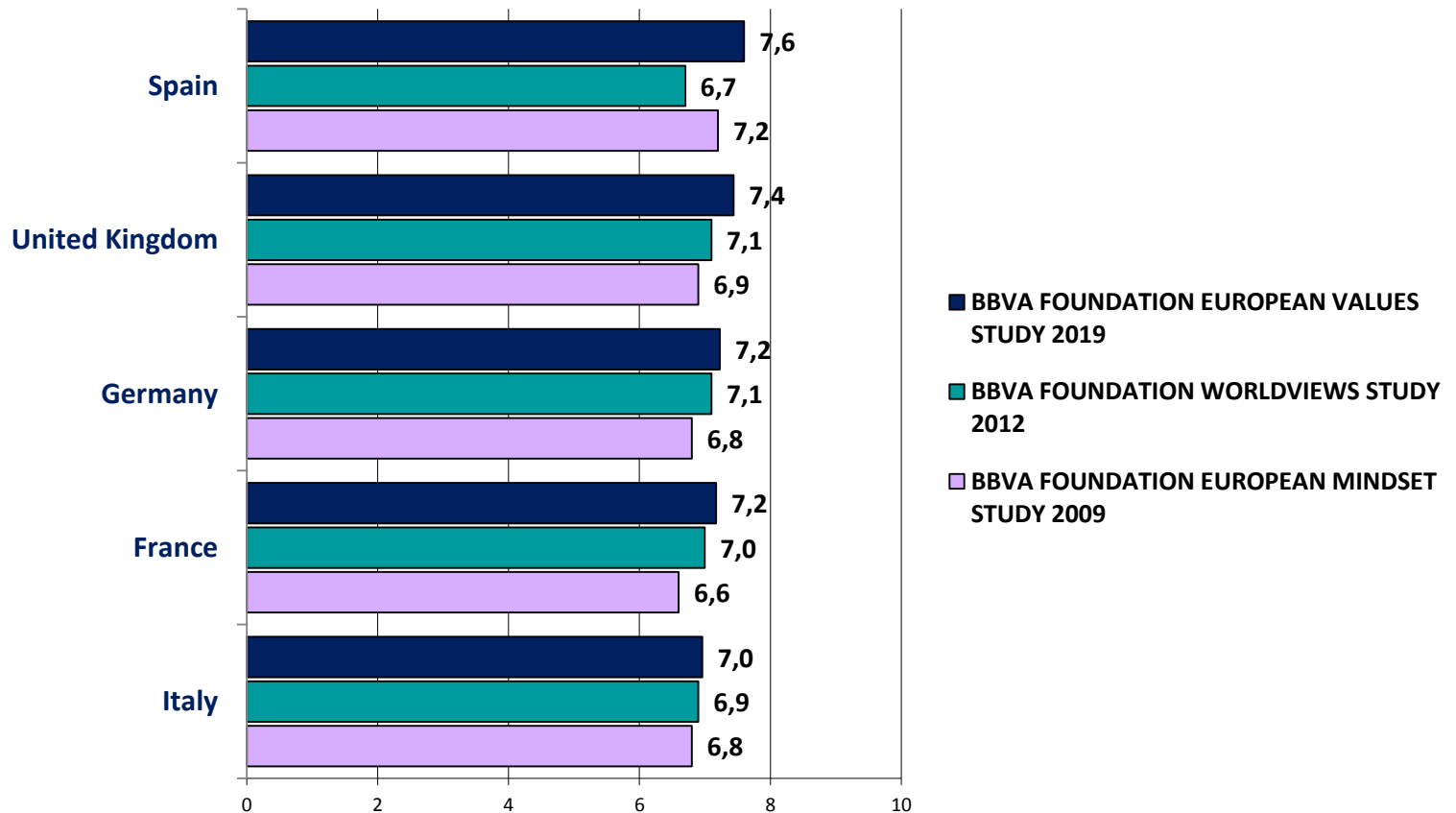
- Personal satisfaction runs high in all the survey countries (averages of 7 and more on a scale from 0 to 10). Leading the table is Spain, with average satisfaction readings of 7.6, and almost 60% of respondents assigning maximum scores (8, 9 and 10).

**“How satisfied are you with your life at the moment?”** Distribution and average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you are completely dissatisfied and 10 means you are completely satisfied. Base: all cases



- All countries exhibit higher levels of general satisfaction compared to 2012 and 2009. In Spain, specifically, average scores in 2019 are almost a full point higher than in the 2012 survey.

**“How satisfied are you with your life at the moment?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you are completely dissatisfied and 10 means you are completely satisfied. Base: all cases





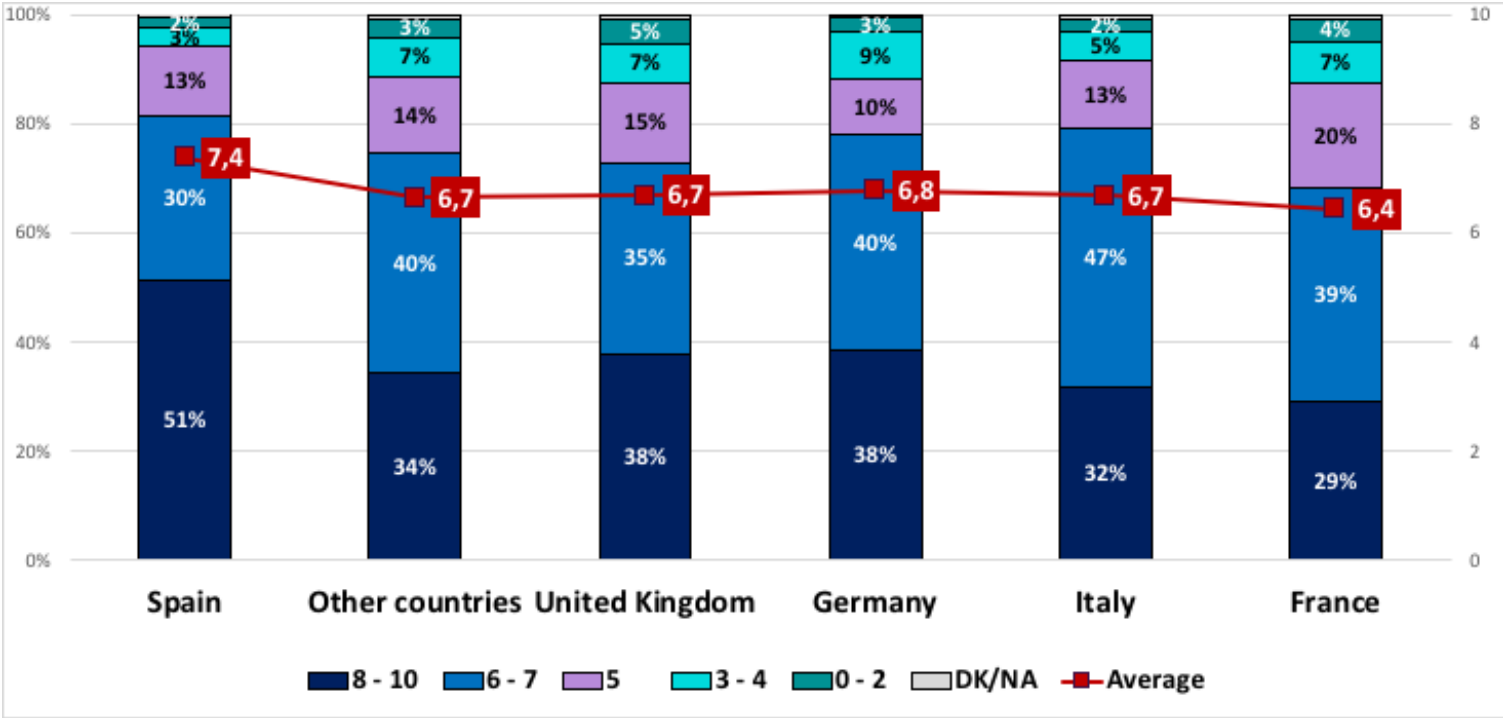
- This high degree of personal satisfaction is common to all social segments and groups, but rises slightly among young people and those with more years of education.

**“How satisfied are you with your life at the moment?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means you are completely dissatisfied and 10 means you are completely satisfied. Base: all cases



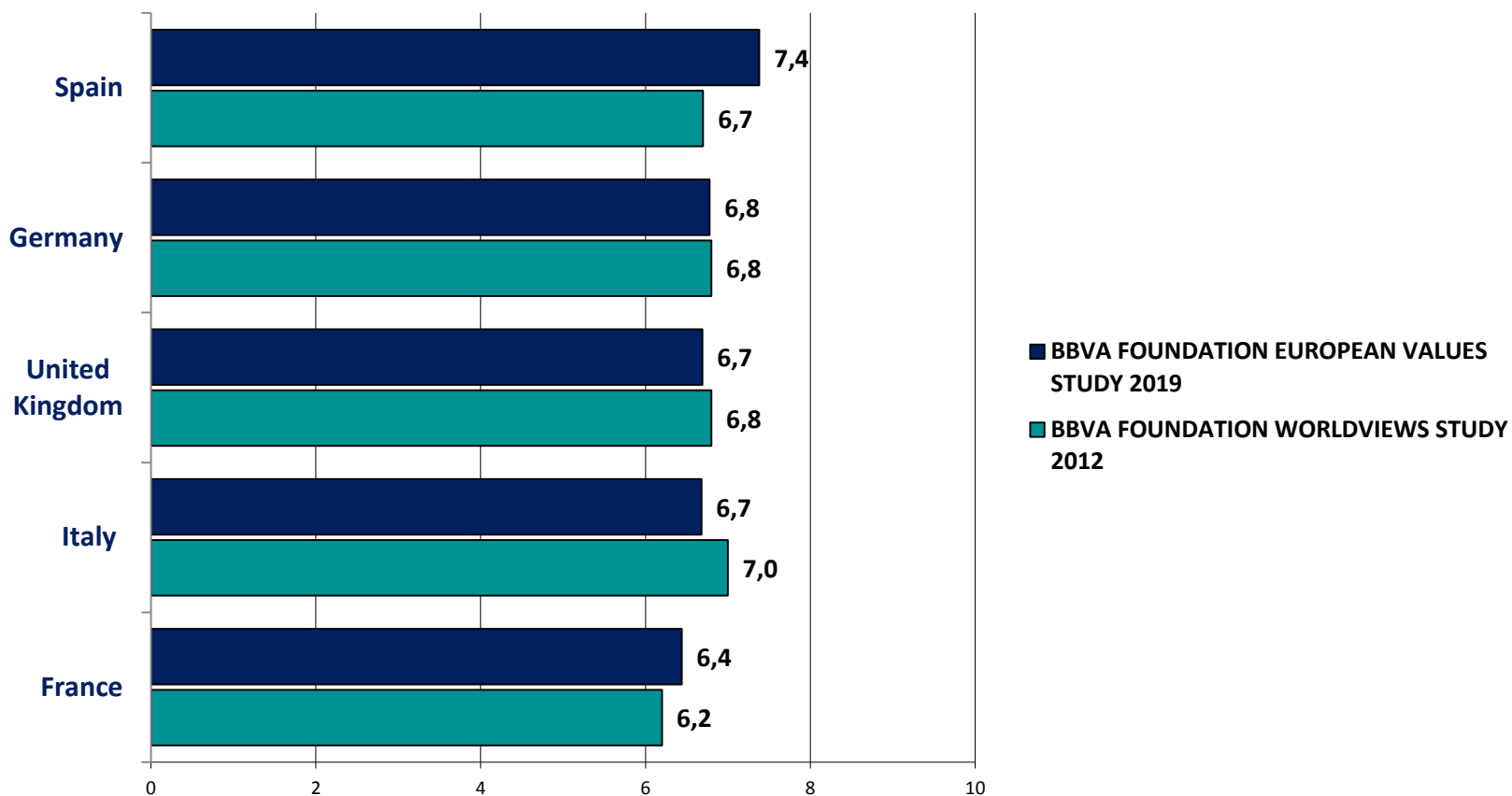
- Citizens express a strong sense of freedom and control (“locus of control”) over how their lives develop. The Spanish are the most convinced of enjoying control and freedom of choice over outcomes in their lives (7.4 against the 6.7 average of the remaining countries).

“Some people think they have complete freedom of choice and control over how their lives develop, that is, they believe that what happens to them depends mainly on themselves, while others think they have no such freedom of choice or control, that is, they believe that what happens to them depends mainly on other people or external forces.” Please use a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means “no freedom of choice and control at all” and 10 means “a great deal of freedom of choice and control” to indicate how much freedom of choice and control you think you have over how your life develops. Distribution and average on a scale from 0 to 10. Base: all cases.



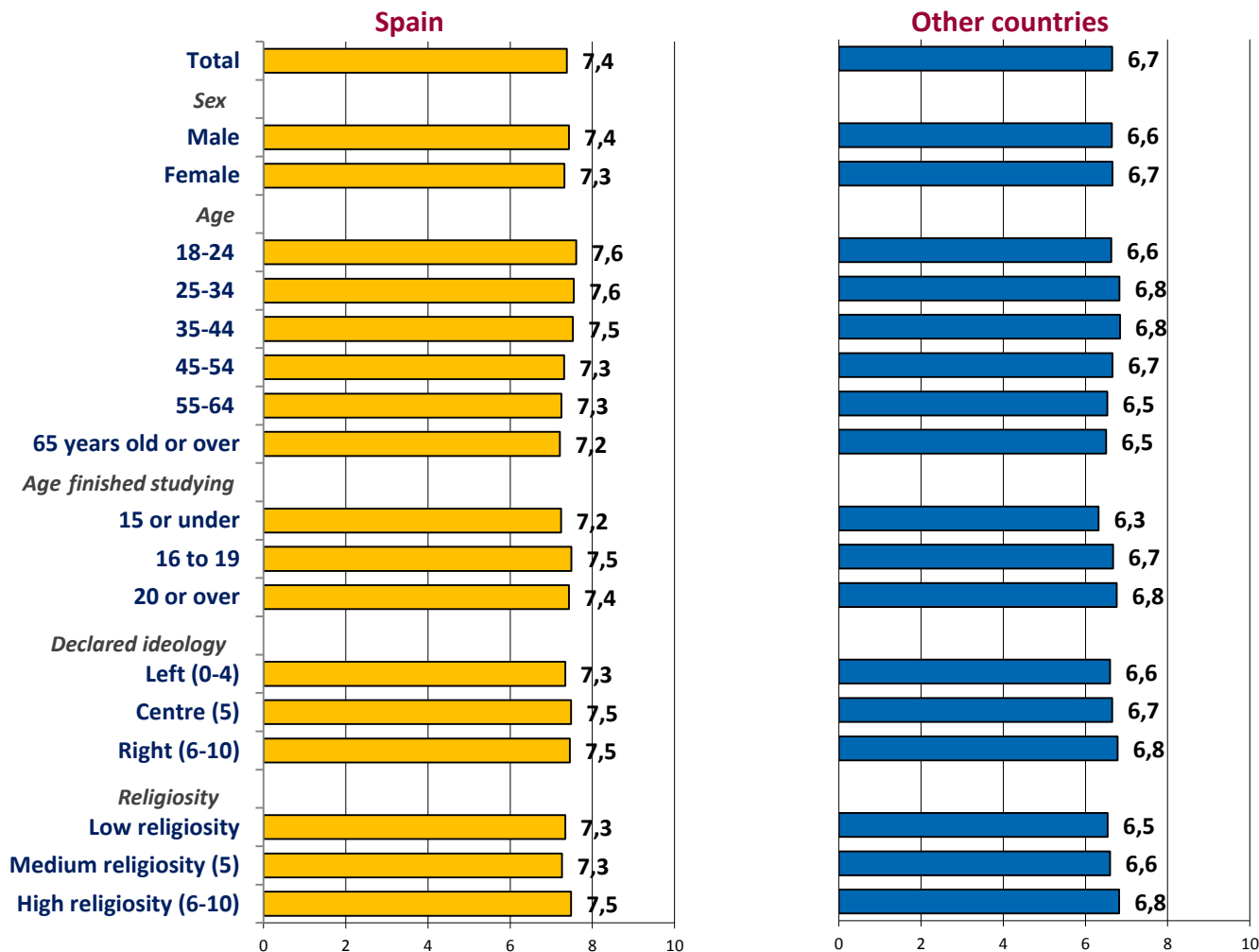
- Generally, no major changes in how citizens see their ability to direct their own lives. Only in Spain do we find a small advance in this perception with respect to 2012.

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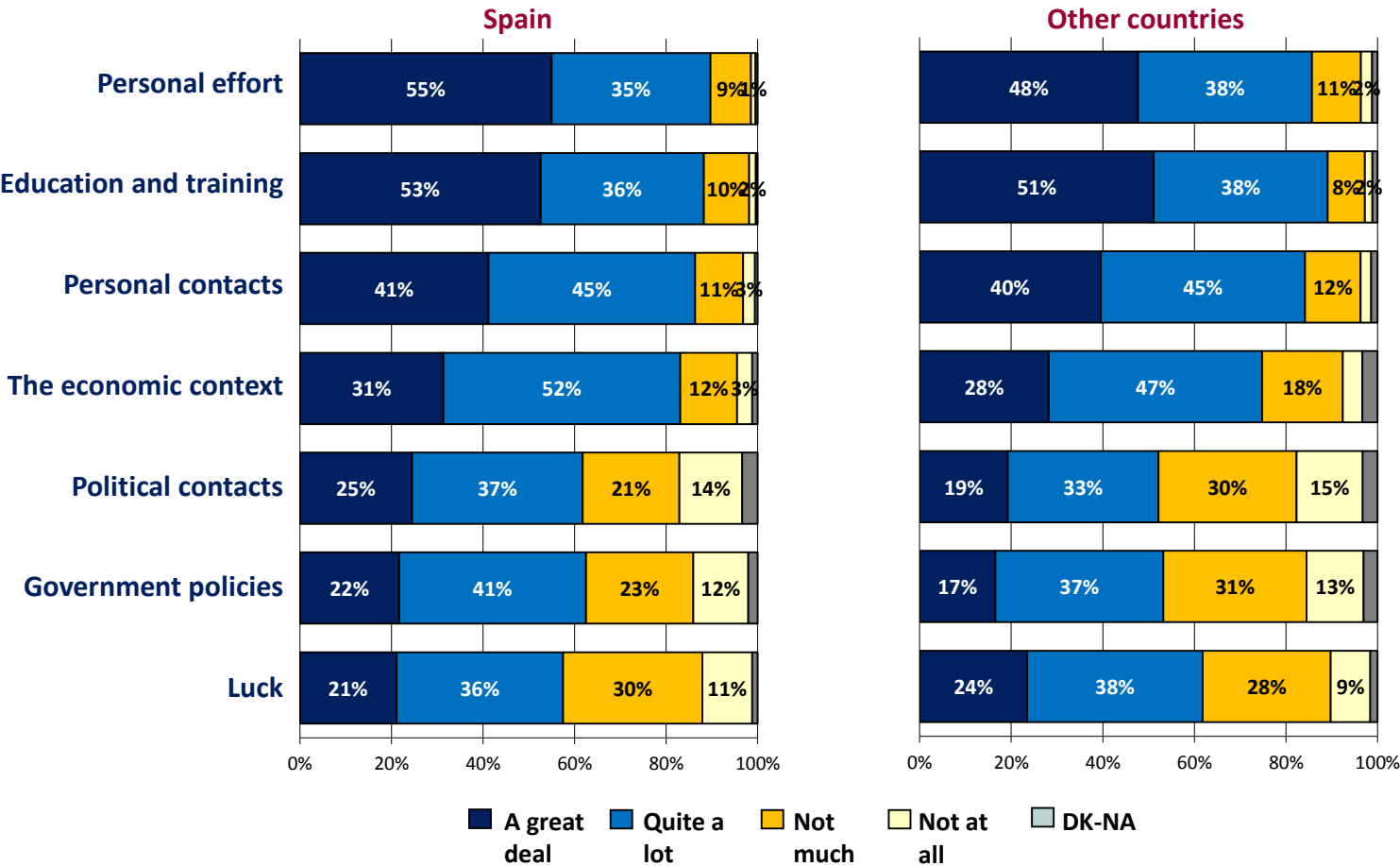
- The perception of personal control over life's outcomes shows little variation across social segments.

“Some people think they have complete freedom of choice and control over how their lives develop, that is, they believe that what happens to them depends mainly on themselves, while others think they have no such freedom of choice or control, that is, they believe that what happens to them depends mainly on other people or external forces.” Please use a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means “no freedom of choice and control at all” and 10 means “a great deal of freedom of choice and control” to indicate how much freedom of choice and control you think you have over how your life develops. Average on a scale from 0 to 10. Base: all cases.



- For a majority, the factors most influencing the position an individual can attain are personal effort and education and training, followed by personal contacts. Citizens grant less (though significant) importance to factors beyond people’s personal influence such as luck or government policies. In between, they cite the economic context and political contacts.

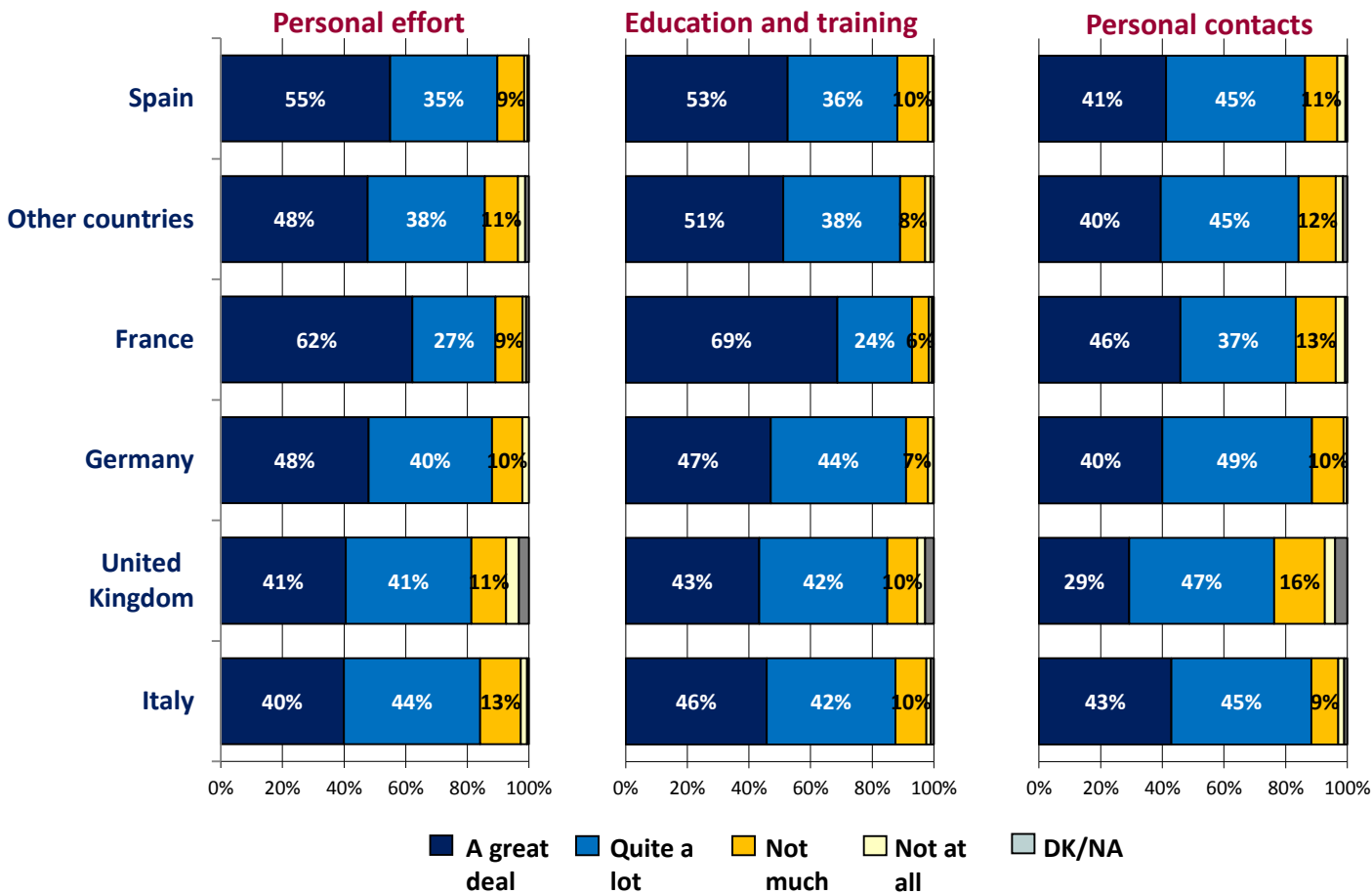
“How much do you think the following factors influence the social position attained by people in (COUNTRY)?” Base: all cases





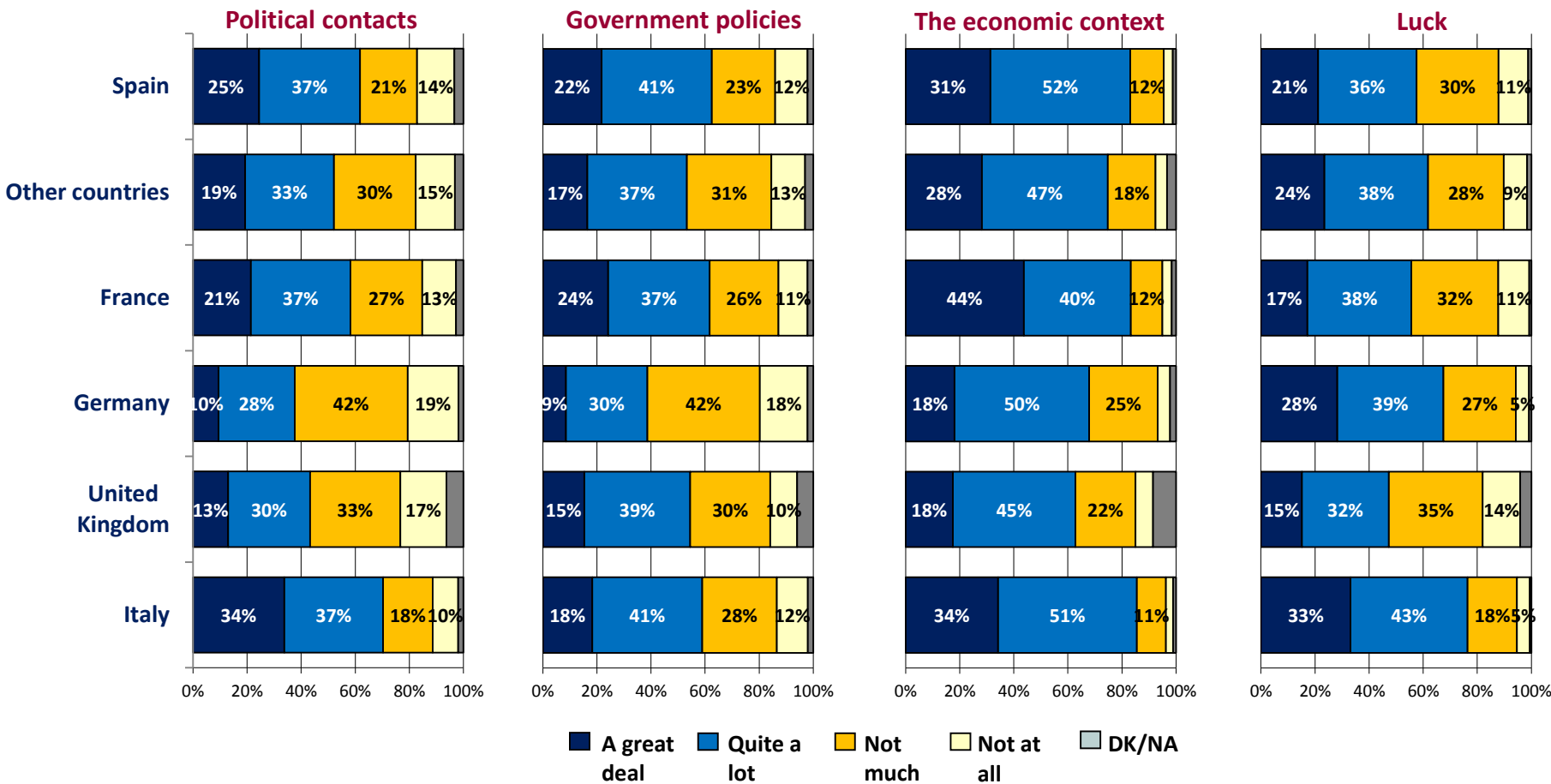
- The French stand out for the greater-than-average influence they ascribe to three factors: personal effort, education and training and personal contacts. Next come the Spanish, hovering close to the average, with the British and Italians least convinced.

“How much do you think the following factors influence the social position attained by people in (COUNTRY)? Do they influence it a great deal, quite a lot, not much or not at all?” Base: all cases



- The Spanish, Italians and French attach above-average importance to factors like government policies, the economic context and political contacts. The Italians and Germans are the likeliest to believe that luck plays an important part.

“How much do you think the following factors influence the social position attained by people in (COUNTRY)? Do they influence it a great deal, quite a lot, not much or not at all?” Base: all cases



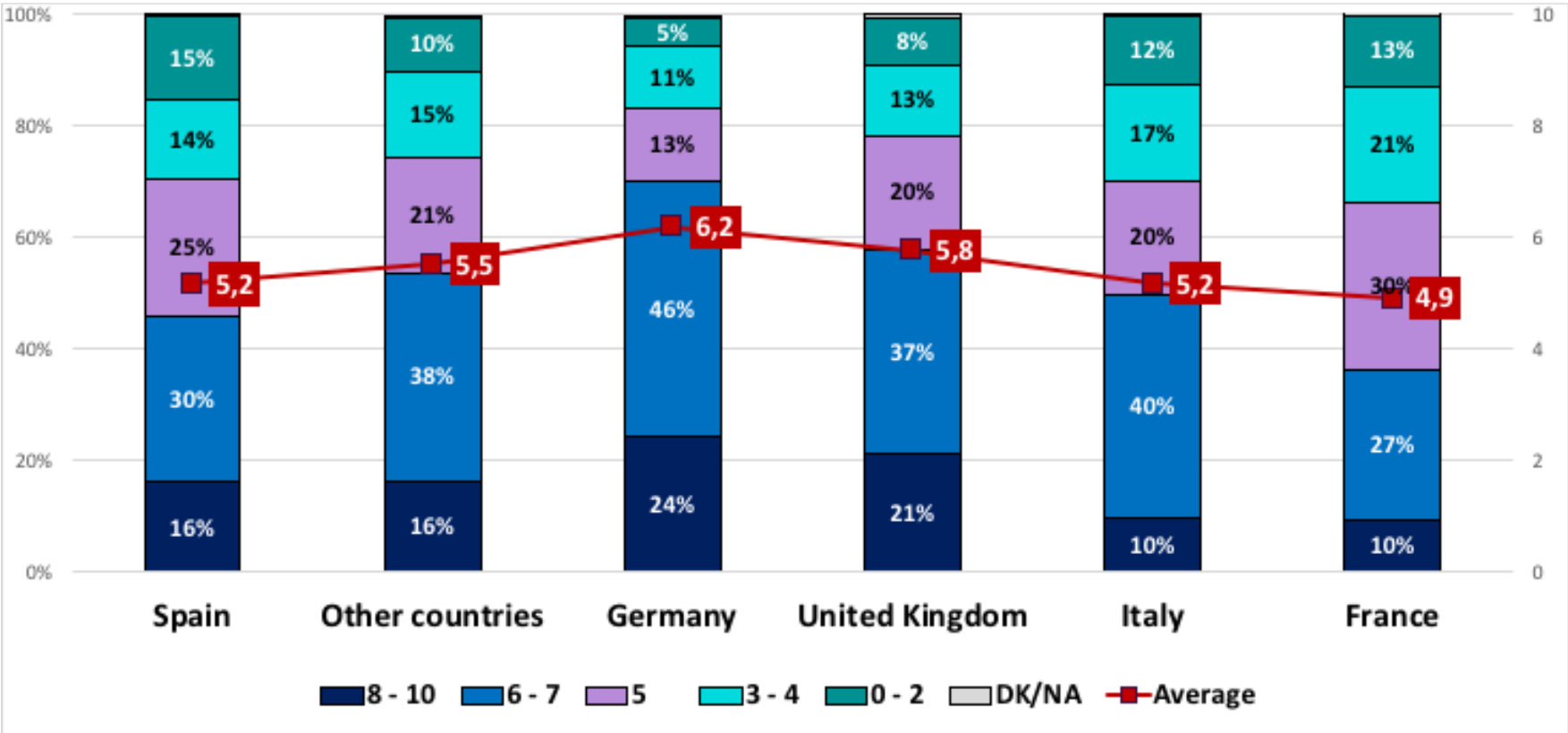
- The Spanish, Italians and French rank the economic context and government policies higher than do their counterparts in Germany and the United Kingdom.
- The Italians stand out for attaching more importance than remaining countries to political contacts and luck.

**“How much do you think the following factors influence the social position attained by people in (COUNTRY)? Do they influence it a great deal, quite a lot, not much or not at all?” Percentage answering “a great deal + quite a lot”** Base: all cases

	Spain	Other countries	France	Germany	Italy	United Kingdom
Personal effort	90%	86%	89%	88%	84%	81%
Education and training	88%	89%	93%	91%	88%	85%
Personal contacts	86%	84%	83%	89%	88%	76%
The economic context	83%	75%	83%	68%	86%	63%
Government policies	63%	53%	62%	39%	59%	55%
Political contacts	62%	52%	58%	38%	70%	43%
Luck	57%	62%	56%	68%	76%	47%

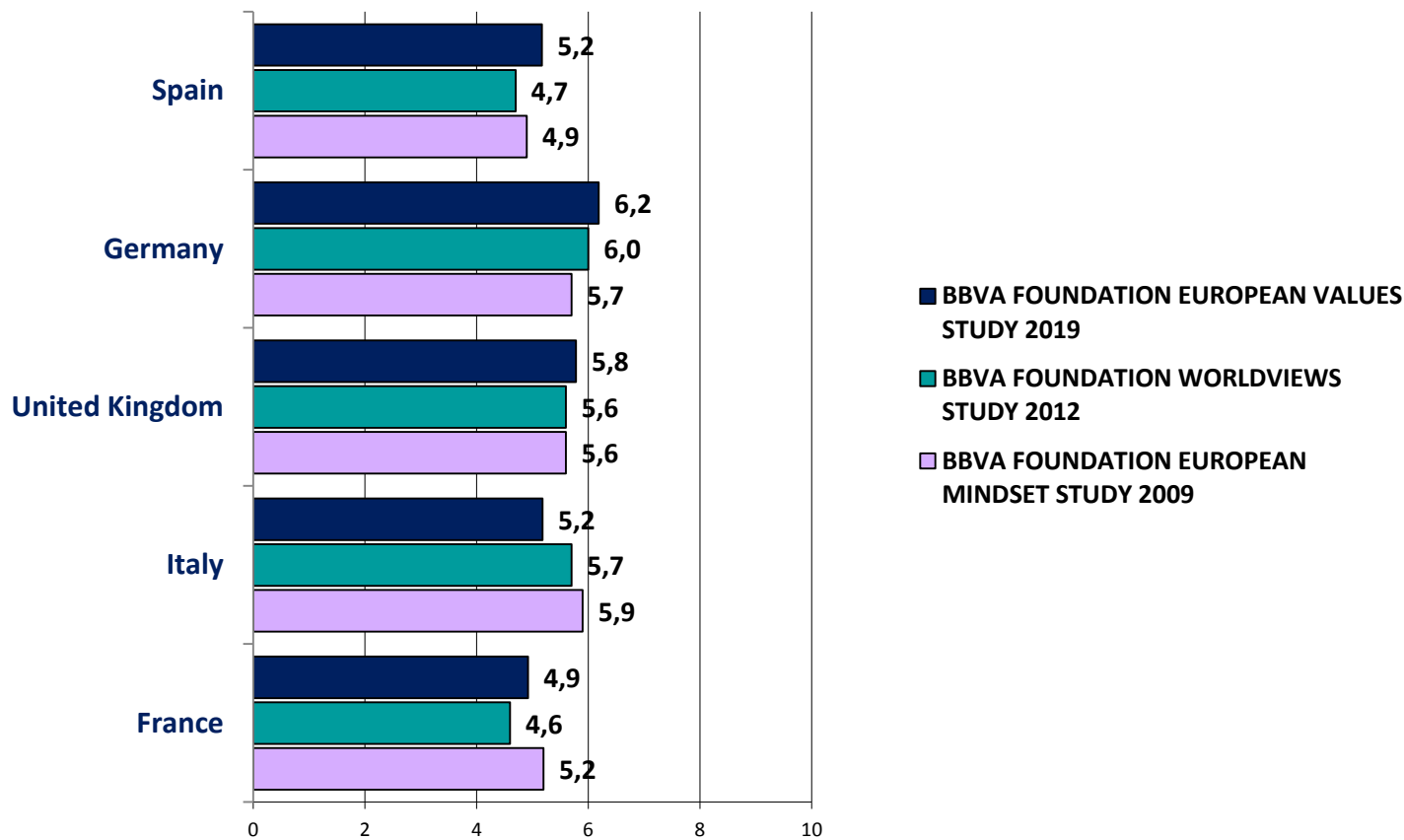
- Interpersonal trust stands around the mid-point on the scale across the survey countries, albeit with some variation: the highest scores correspond to Germany, followed by the United Kingdom, with France bringing up the rear.
- Spain and Italy occupy an intermediate position. The least trusting segment is largest in Spain, ahead of France and Italy.

**“On the whole, would you say most people can or cannot be trusted?”** Distribution and average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that the majority of people “cannot be trusted at all” and 10 means that the majority of people “can be trusted completely”. Base: all cases.



- Interpersonal trust has climbed slightly in Spain with respect to 2012 and 2009, and in 2019 edged just above the mid-point on the scale. Germany too has seen an advance in this variable in the past ten years.
- In Italy, conversely, average trust in “the majority of people” decreased in the period.

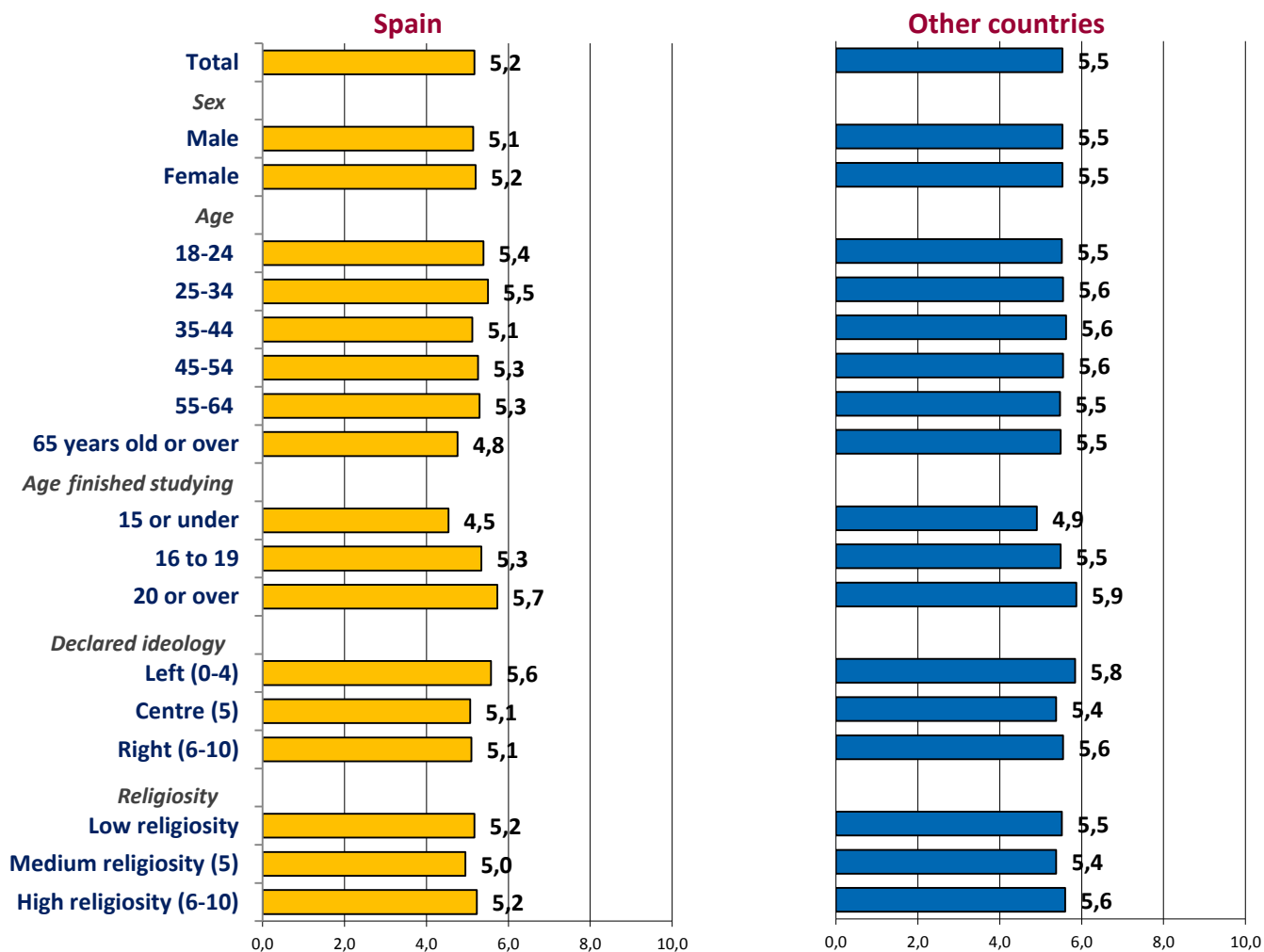
**“On the whole, would you say most people can or cannot be trusted?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that the majority of people “cannot be trusted at all” and 10 means that the majority of people “can be trusted completely”. Base: all cases.





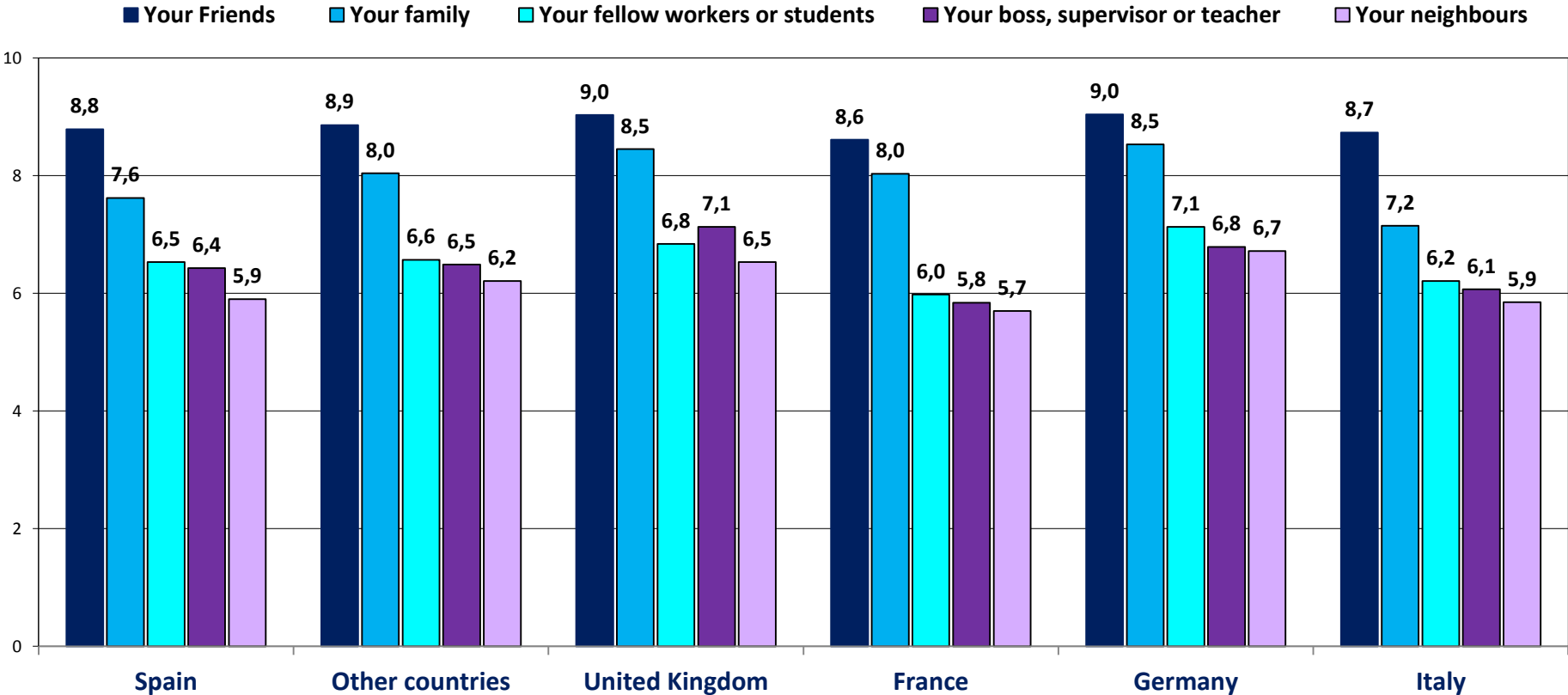
- Both in Spain and the other four countries, trust in the majority of people tends to increase with educational level.
- Differences by age, gender and other variables are minor only.

**“On the whole, would you say most people can or cannot be trusted?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that the majority of people “cannot be trusted at all” and 10 means that the majority of people “can be trusted completely”. Base: all cases.



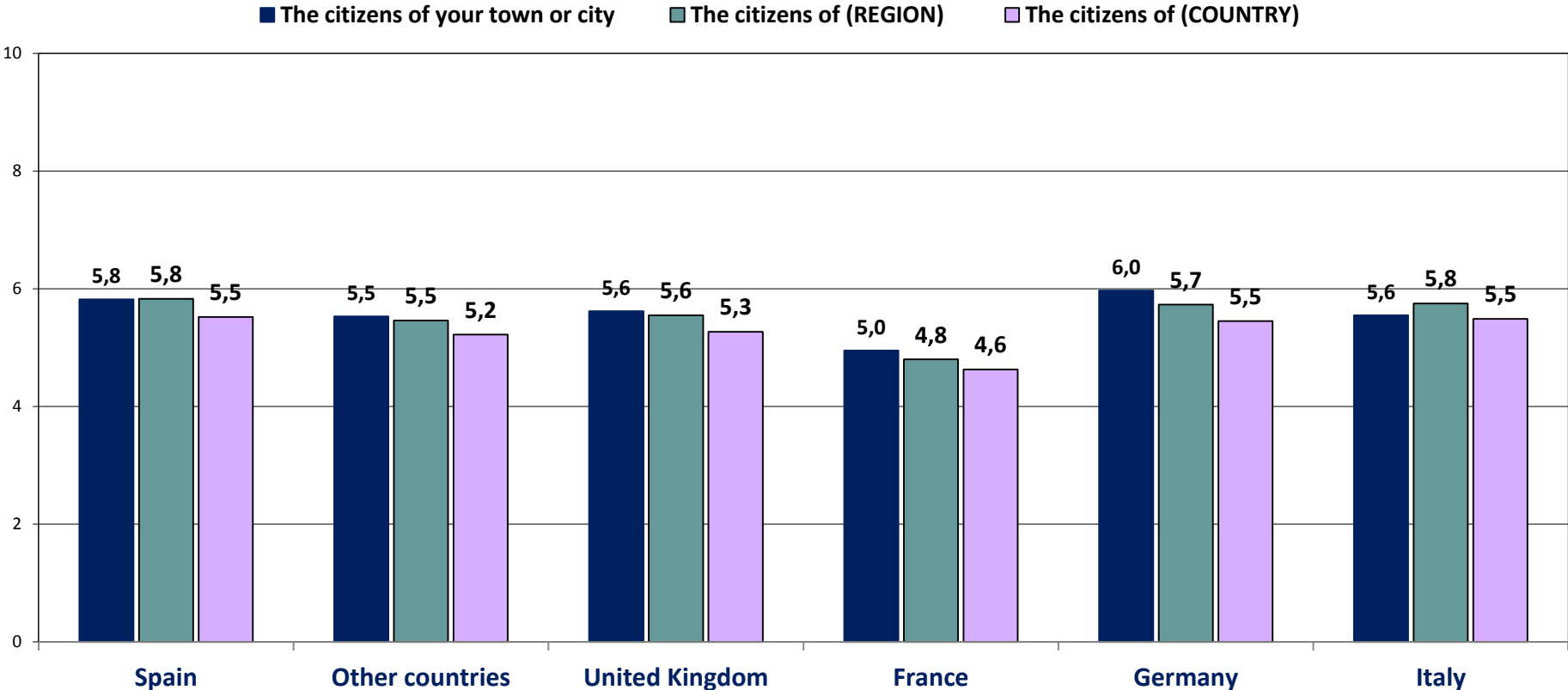
- Degree of closeness is a predictor of trust, which diminishes as we move outwards from immediate to more distant circles. Trust in the family is almost absolute (averages of around 9 points on a scale from 0 to 10), with friends (7 to 8.5 points) in second place. Some way behind, although still scoring high (around 6 points), come fellow workers or students, bosses or teachers and neighbours.

“How much do you trust the following groups and persons?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means “you do not trust them at all” and 10 means “you trust them completely”. Base: all cases



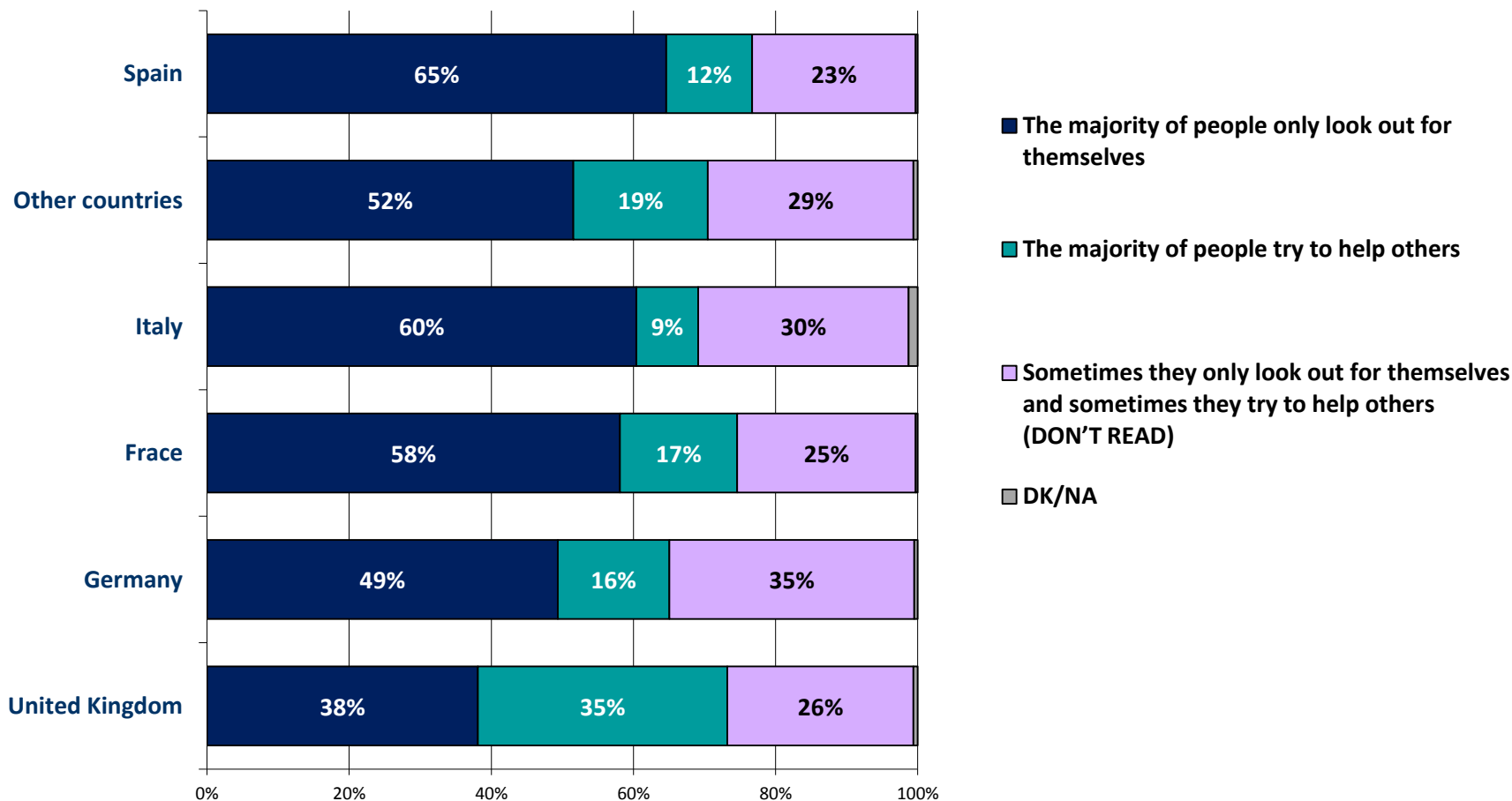
- Trust levels tend to decline beyond the radius of those known personally, with small variations as a function of proximity (your own town, region and country). In any case, scores stand above the 5-point threshold in four out of the five countries.

“How much do you trust the following groups and persons?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means “you do not trust them at all” and 10 means “you trust them completely”. Base: all cases



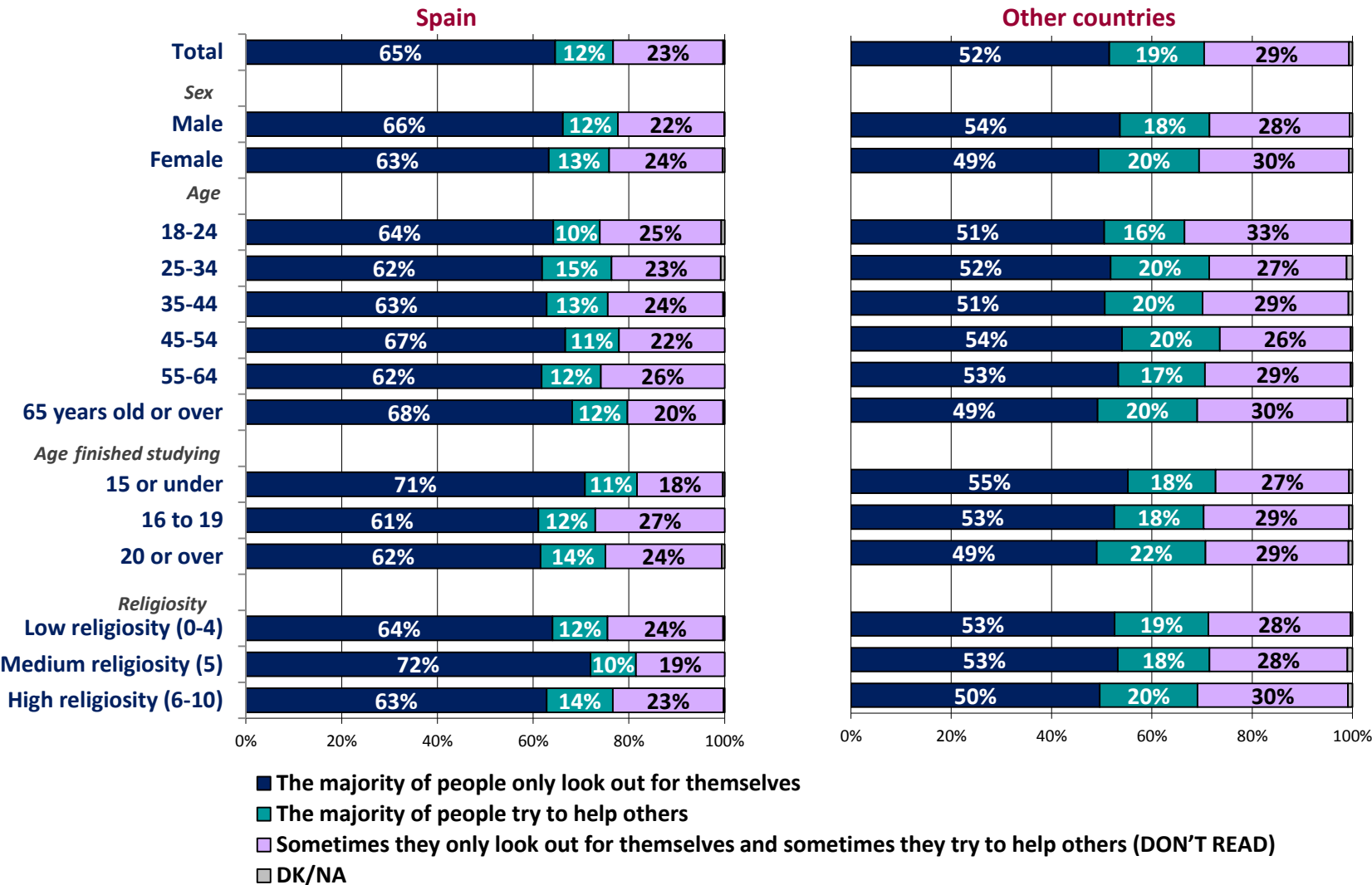
- Belief about what drives people does not preclude trust in the same. The prevailing perception is that of an individual pursuing their own interest rather than altruistically seeking to help others.
- While the image of the individual looking out only for themselves dominates in Spain, Italy and France, in the United Kingdom an almost equal proportion believe that most people try to help others. In Germany, meantime, over a third of respondents think people are guided in their actions by both considerations.

“Which of these statements do you agree with most?” Base: all cases



- The idea that “the majority of people only look out for themselves” wins out in every segment, but stands slightly higher among those of a lower educational level in both Spain and the other four countries on average.

“Which of these statements do you agree with most?” Base: all cases





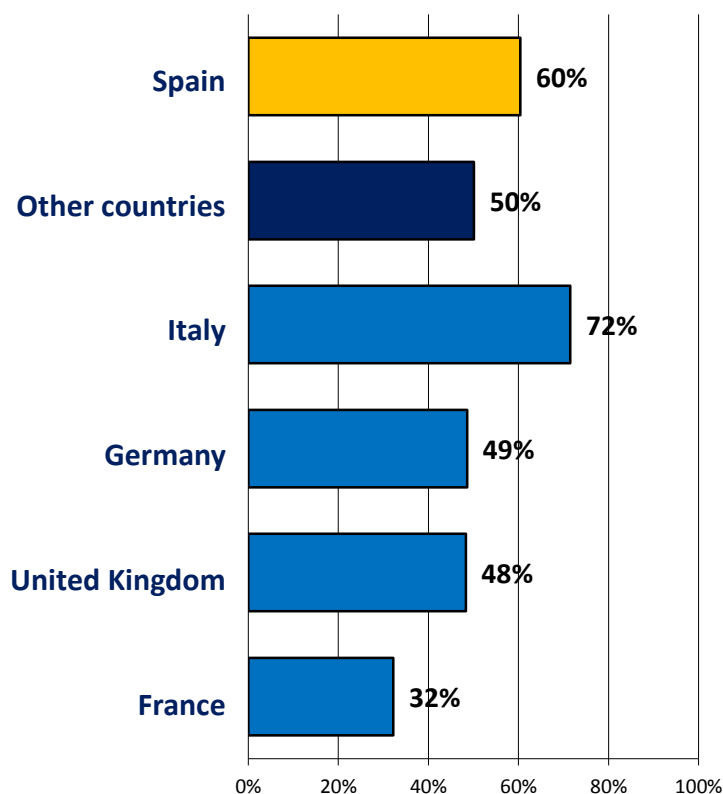


## **Beliefs, religiosity and ethical principles**

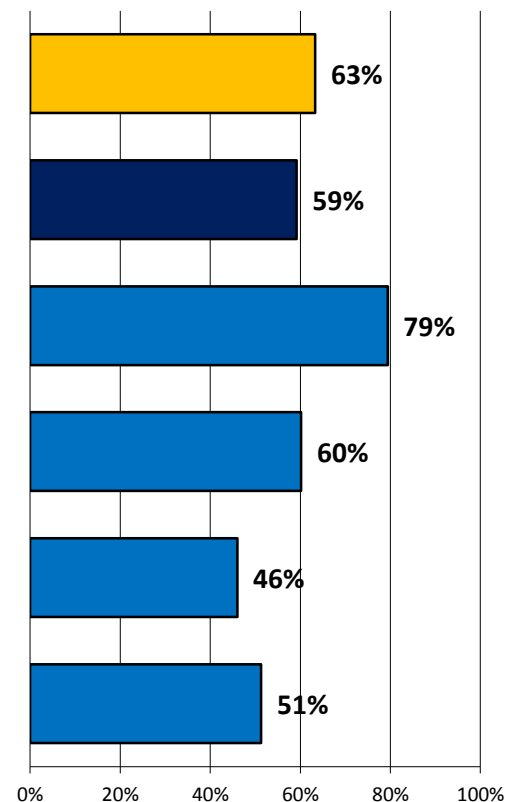
- **Religious membership and religiosity**
- **Views on the role of religion and the contribution of Christianity**
- **Ethical principles and their application**

- An absolute or relative majority in every country but France say they believe in God or a higher being that created the universe. This view is shared by an ample majority in Italy, followed by Spain, compared to a bare third of the population in France. Also, majorities or relative majorities in every country claim to belong to a religion, with membership highest in Italy and lowest in the United Kingdom and France.
- Although these indicators are related, the overlap is by no means complete. In France and Germany, religious membership considerably exceeds belief in God, while the same dimensions match more closely in Spain and the United Kingdom.

**“Do you believe there is a God or a higher being that created the universe?”** Base: all cases

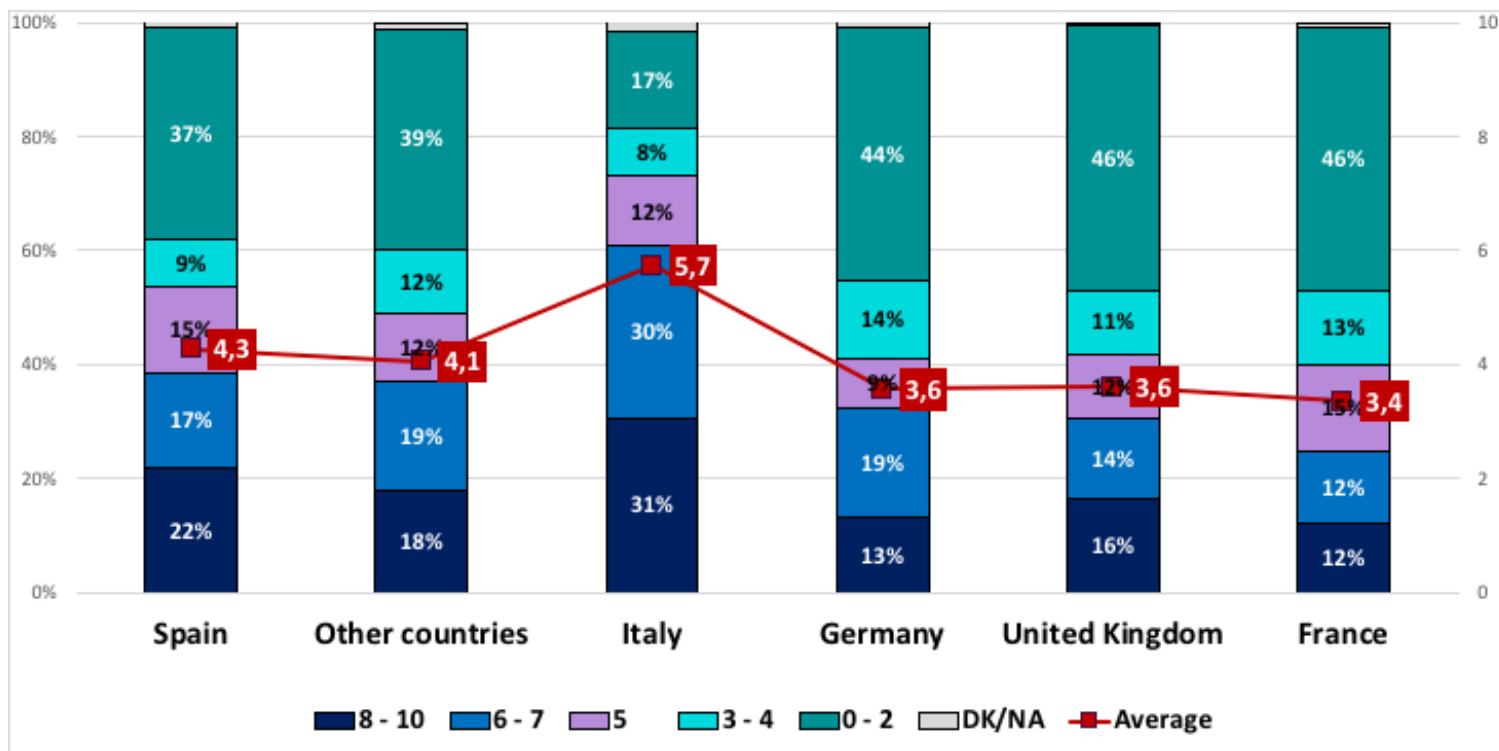


**“And do you belong to some religion?”** Base: all cases



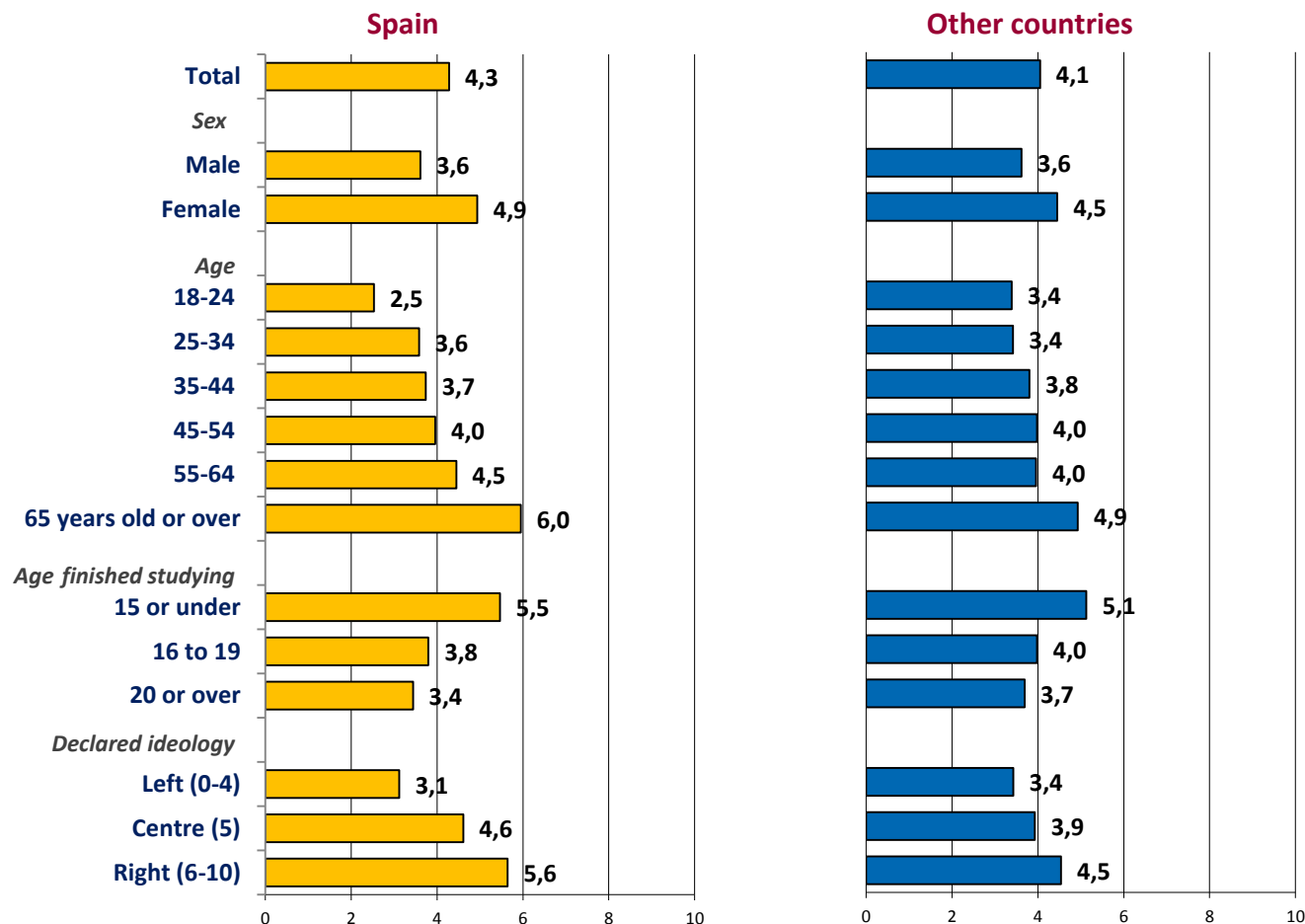
- Religiosity falls within the medium-low interval in all countries except Italy, with levels at their lowest in France, the United Kingdom and Germany.
- A relative majority in every country except Italy locate themselves at the bottom end of the religiosity scale (0, 1 and 2 on a scale from 0 to 10)

“How would you describe yourself? Please use a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you are “not at all religious” and 10 means that you are “very religious”. Distribution and average on a scale from 0 to 10. Base: all cases.



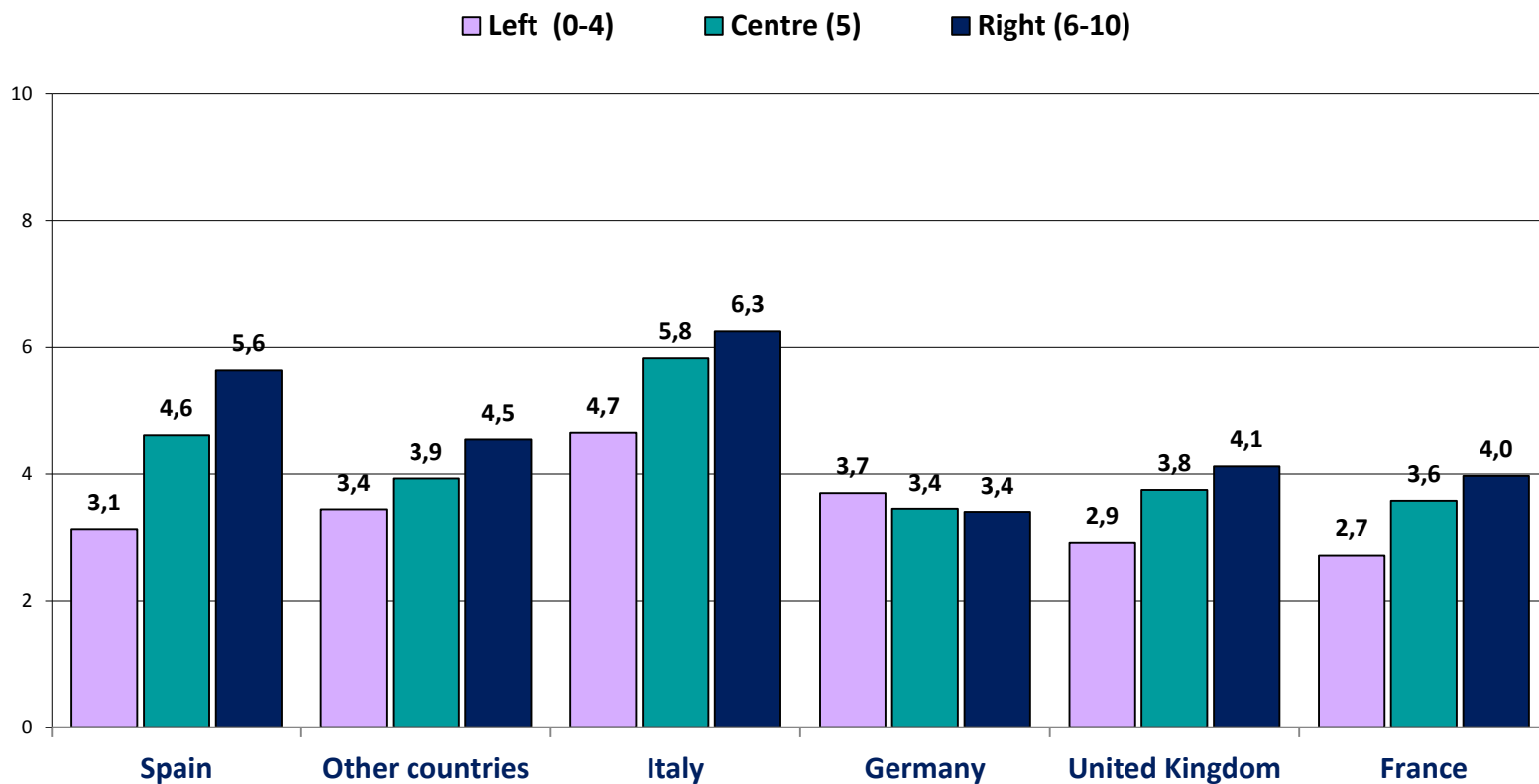
- In Spain and the other four countries on average, religiosity stands higher among women and those defining themselves as politically on the right, as well as rising with age and diminishing with years of study. In Spain, the differences between segments by age, educational level and political orientation are more significant than across the remaining countries.

“How would you describe yourself? Please use a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you are “not at all religious” and 10 means that you are “very religious”. Average on a scale from 0 to 10. Base: all cases.



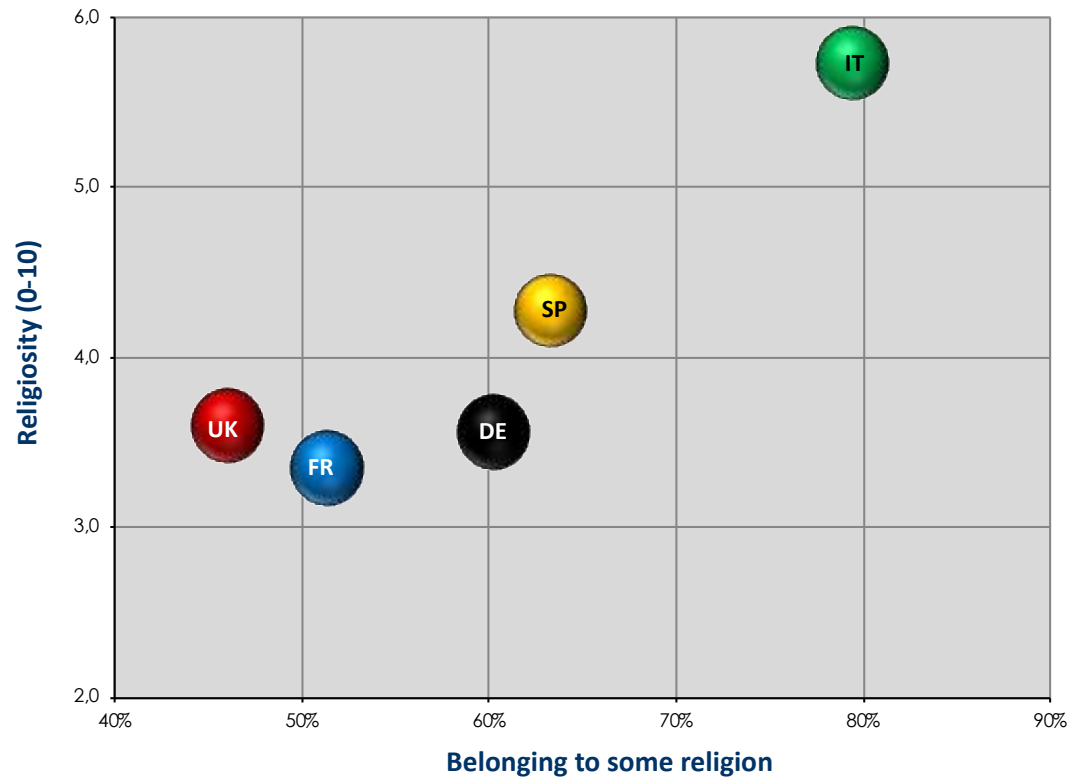
- In Spain and remaining countries, with the exception of Germany, political ideology is a clear predictor of degree of religiosity.
- Strikingly in Spain and Italy, and more moderately in the United Kingdom and France, religiosity is higher among those declaredly on the right or in the centre than those identifying as on the left.

“How would you describe yourself? Please use a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you are “not at all religious” and 10 means that you are “very religious”. Average on a scale from 0 to 10. Base: all cases.



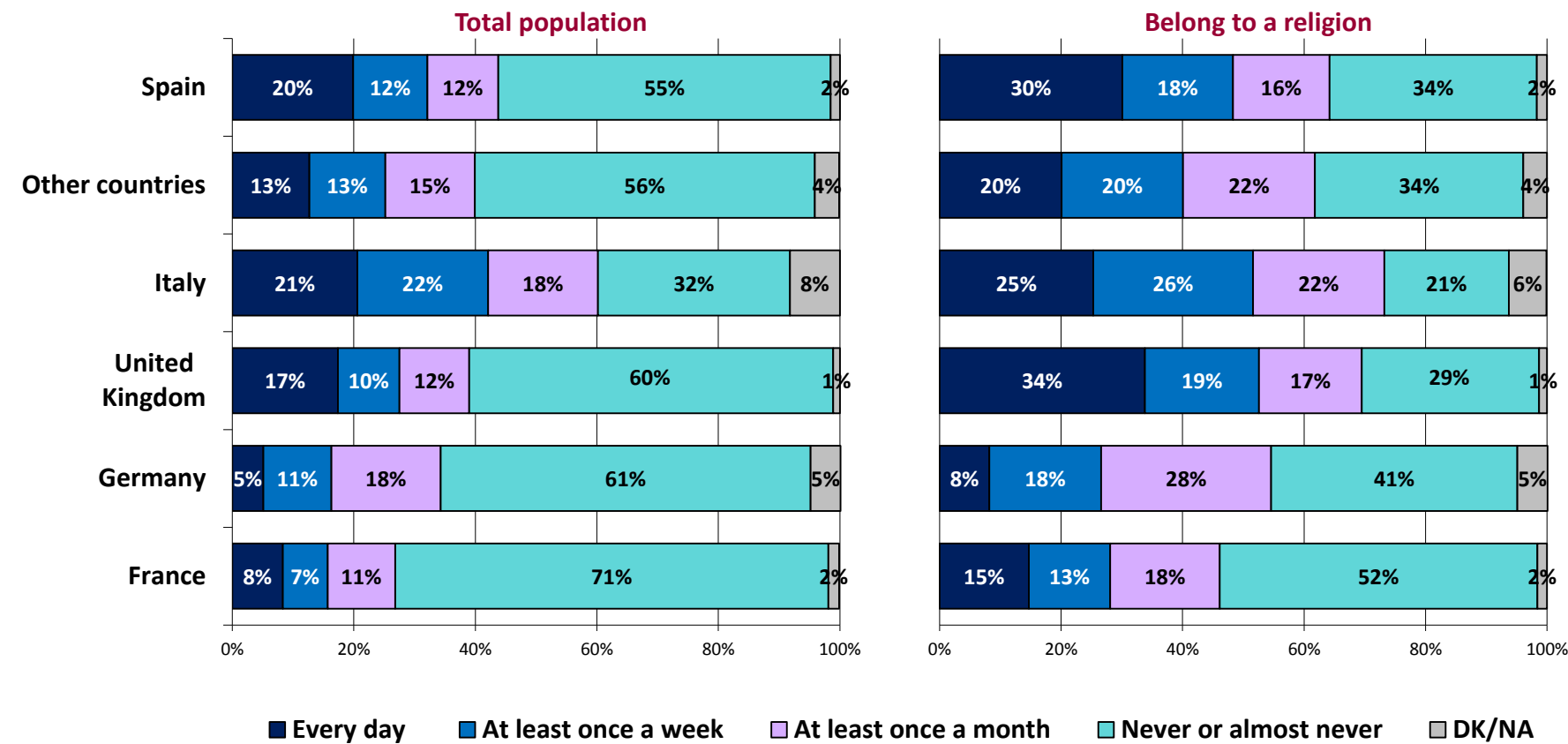


- Although a majority in almost every country belong to some religion, the differences are marked. Religiosity levels, meantime, tend to the lower end of the scale.
- Italy is the outlier in this respect, scoring notably higher by both religious membership and degree of religiosity.



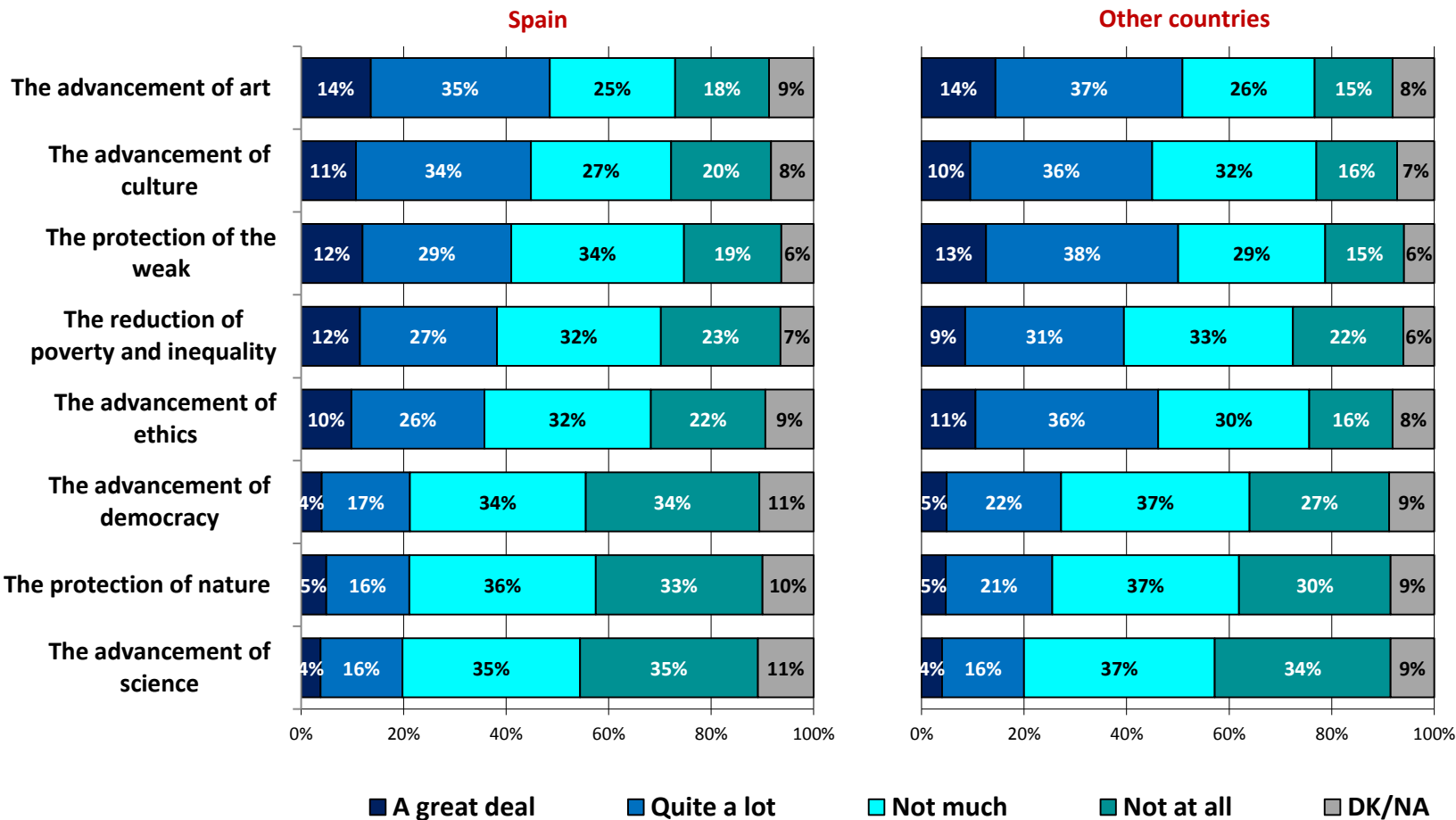
- A majority in every country except Italy say they do not pray at all. This habit is most frequent among the Italians, followed by the Spanish.
- Among those belonging to some religion, a majority of the French and relative majority of Germans never pray at all.

“How often do you pray, if you do so at all?” Base: all cases



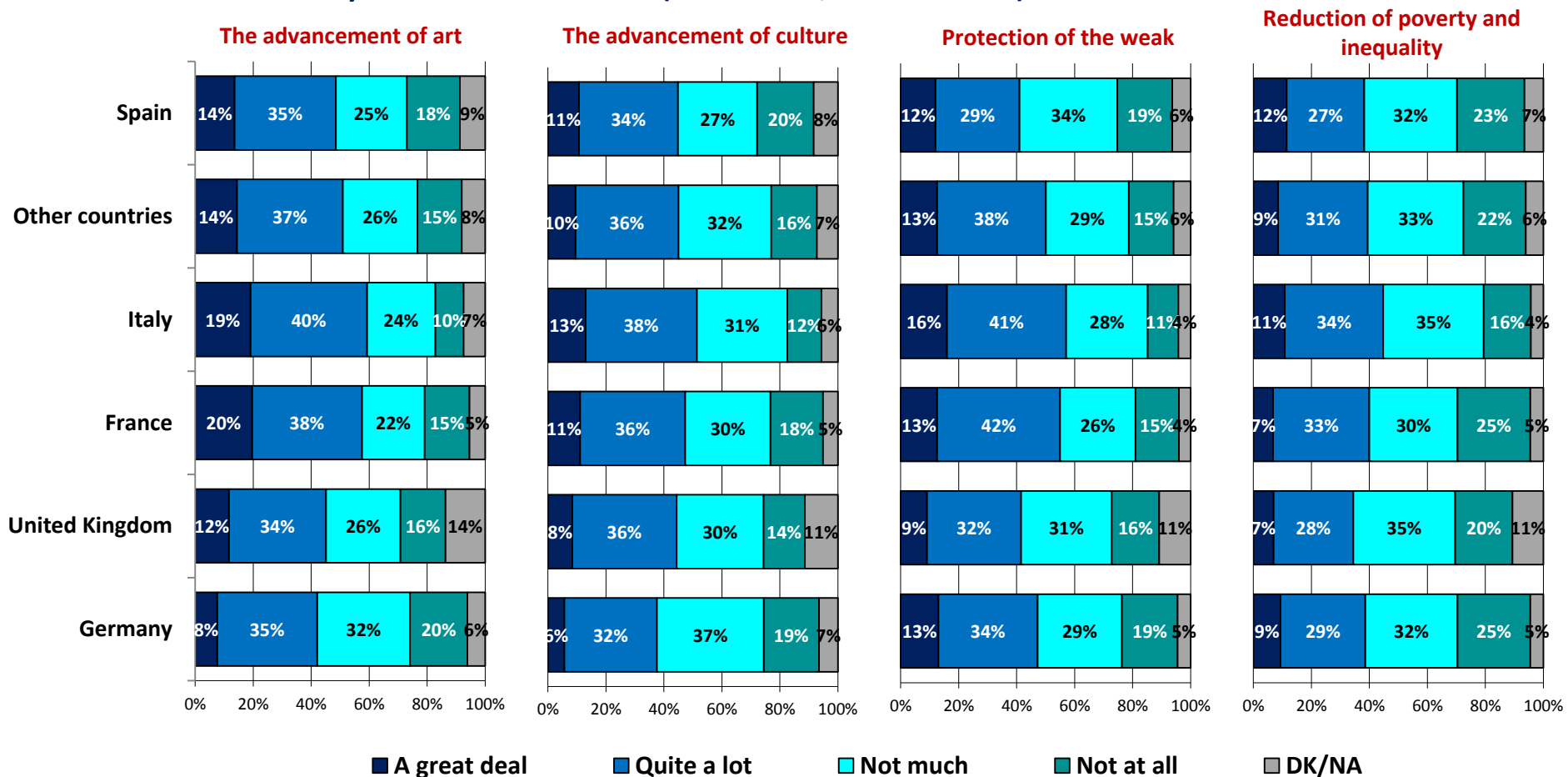
- Christianity's greatest contribution is deemed to reside in the advancement of art, where a majority or relative majority believe it has contributed a great deal or quite a lot. Another significant proportion believe that it has contributed to the advancement of culture. Respondents are less convinced that it has furthered the protection of the weak, the alleviation of poverty and inequality and the advancement of ethics, and only a minority see it as having contributed to the advancement of democracy, the protection of nature or the advancement of science.

**"How much do you think CHRISTIANITY (Catholicism, Protestantism) has contributed to..."** Base: all cases



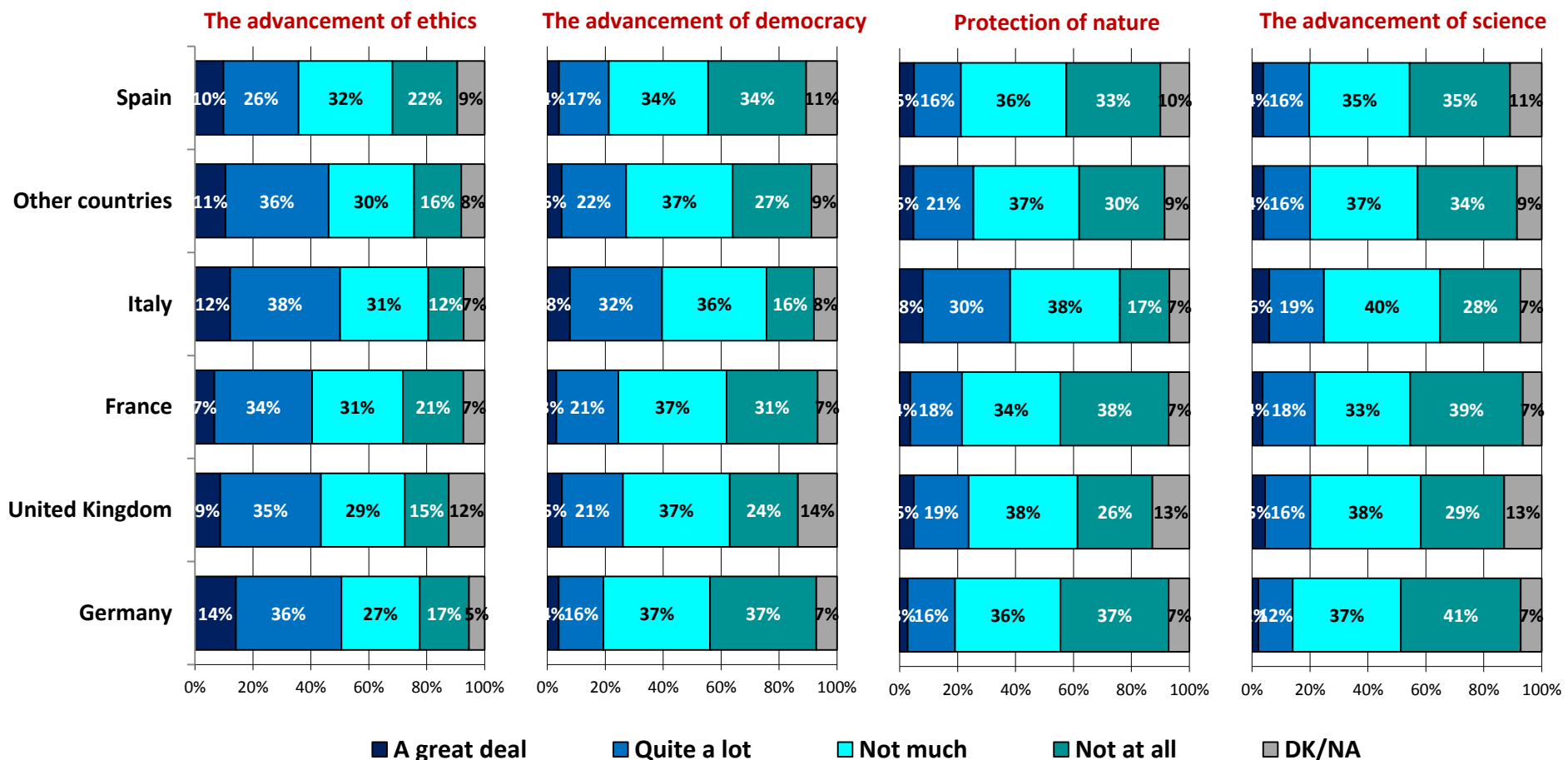
- The Italians are the most vehement about Christianity's contribution to the advancement of art and culture, the protection of the weak and the reduction of poverty and inequality, while the French too underline its role in the advancement of art and protection of the weak.
- The Spanish stand below the average of the other four countries in their perception of Christianity's role in protecting the weak.

“How much do you think CHRISTIANITY (Catholicism, Protestantism) has contributed to...” Base: all cases



- The Italians are again to the fore in defending Christianity's contribution to the advancement of ethics. The Germans too rank it high by this measure, while the Spanish are the least likely to ascribe it this role.
- Although the Italians are the first to affirm that Christianity has furthered the advance of democracy, the protection of nature and the advancement of science, this is not a majority view, with only a small percentage convinced of its role in the advancement of science.

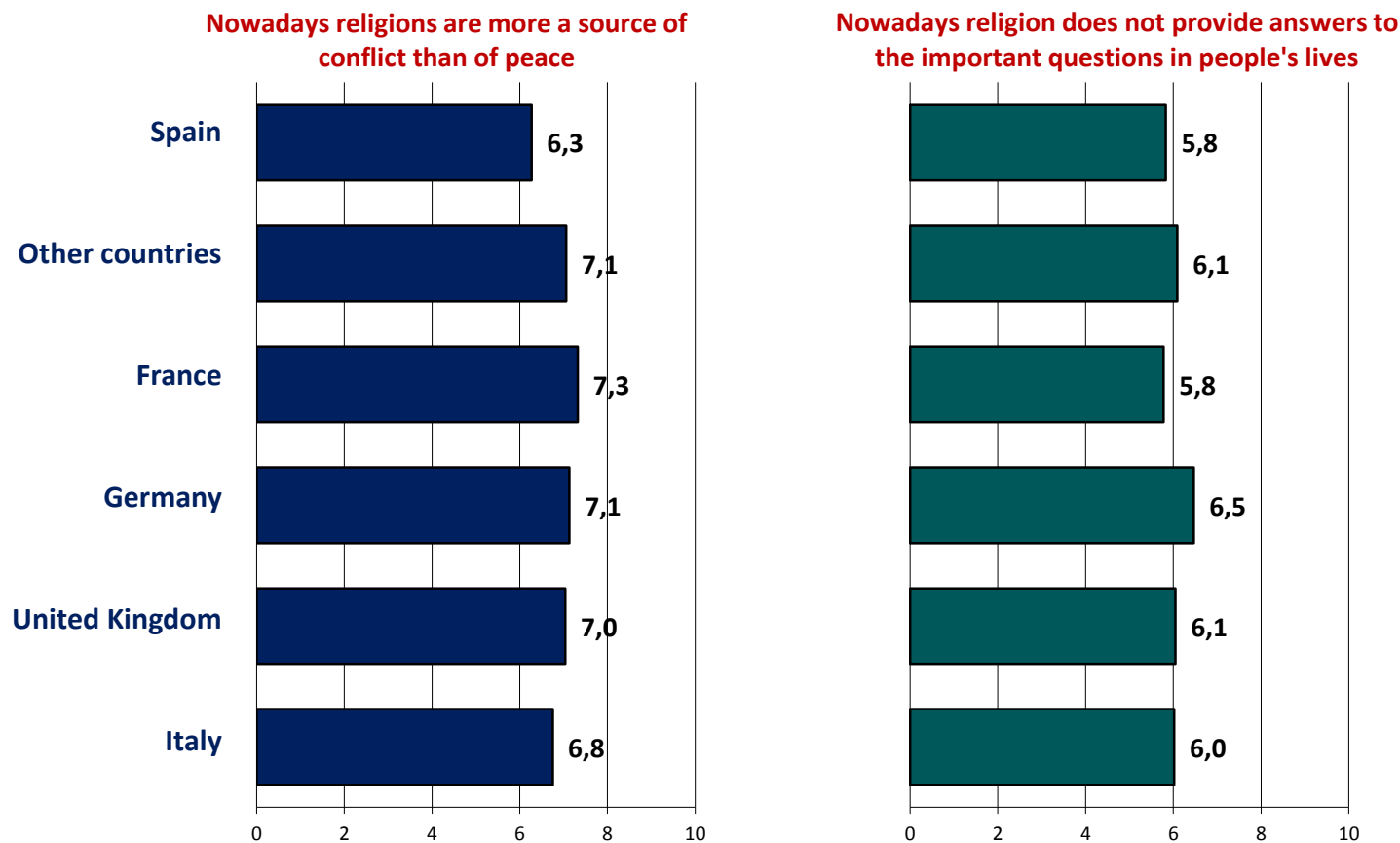
**"How much do you think CHRISTIANITY (Catholicism, Protestantism) has contributed to..."** Base: all cases



- The prevailing view is that religions nowadays are more a source of conflict than of peace.
- There is also a broad consensus to the effect that religion nowadays does not provide answers to the important questions in people's lives.

**“Could you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”**

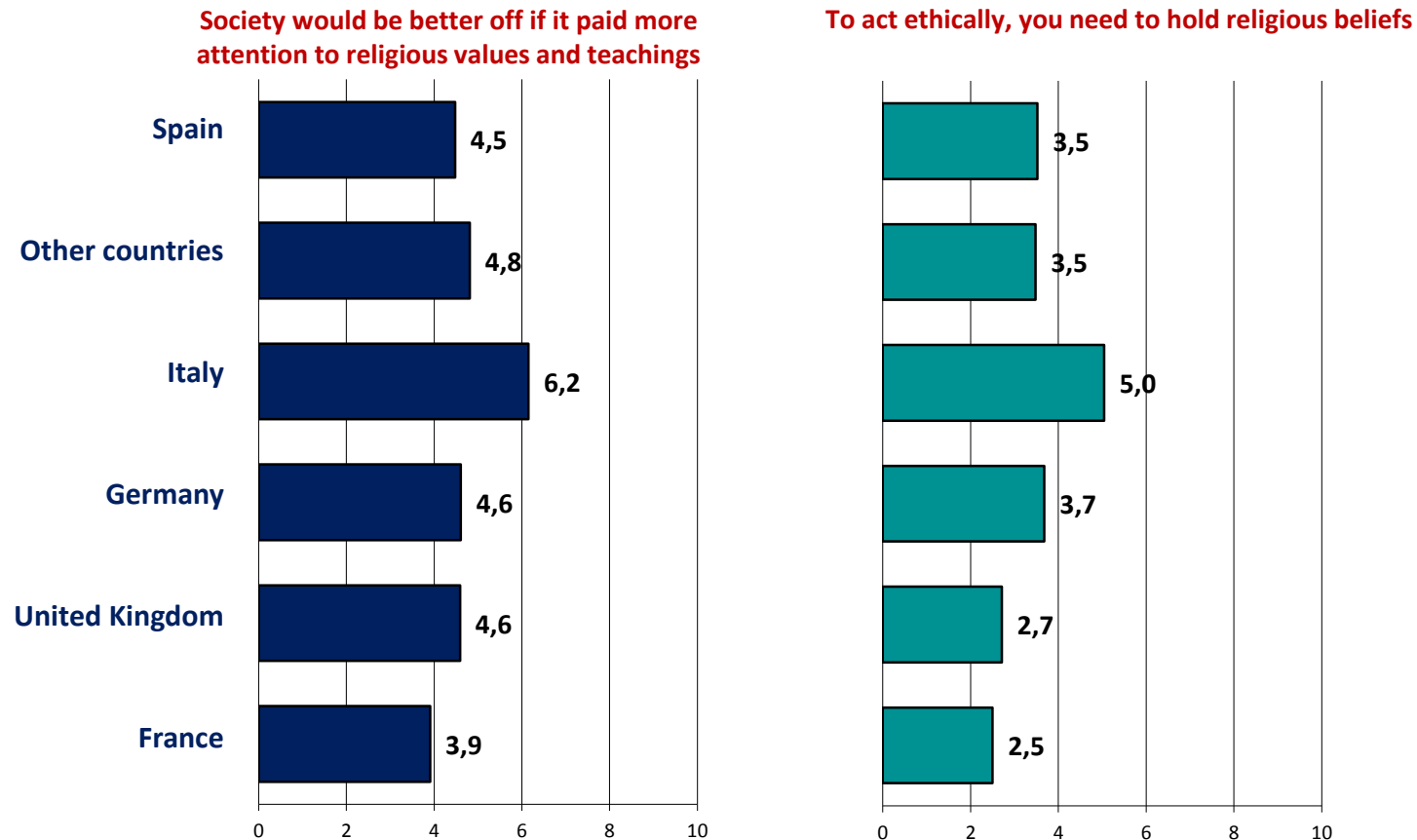
Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”.



- With the exception of Italy, citizens tend to be skeptical about the benefits to society of paying greater attention to religious values and teachings.
- Only a minority in every country except Italy perceive a correlation between ethics and religion.

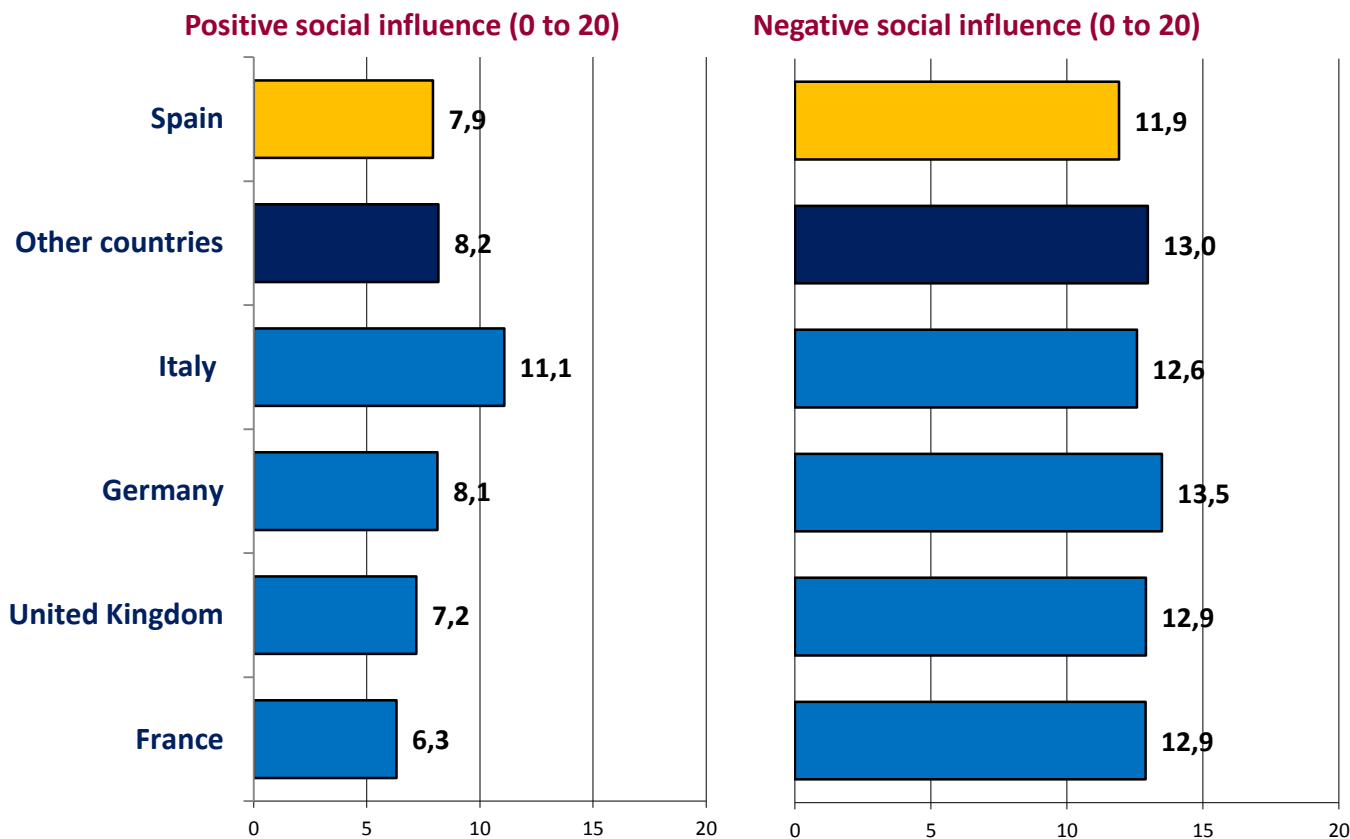
**“Could you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”**

Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”.



- From the aggregate indicator of religion's social influence, we can see that citizens see more negatives than positives in how religion operates in today's societies.
- Only in Italy does the belief in its positive influence exceed the mid-point on the scale.

### Summated scale of religion's positive and negative social influence



The scale of positive social influence comprises the following items each rated on an agreement scale from 0 to 10: Society would be better off if it paid more attention to religious values and teachings; To act ethically, you need to hold religious beliefs.

The scale of negative social influence comprises the following items, likewise rated on an agreement scale from 0 to 10 : Nowadays religions are more a source of conflict than of peace; Nowadays religion does not provide answers to the important questions in people's lives.

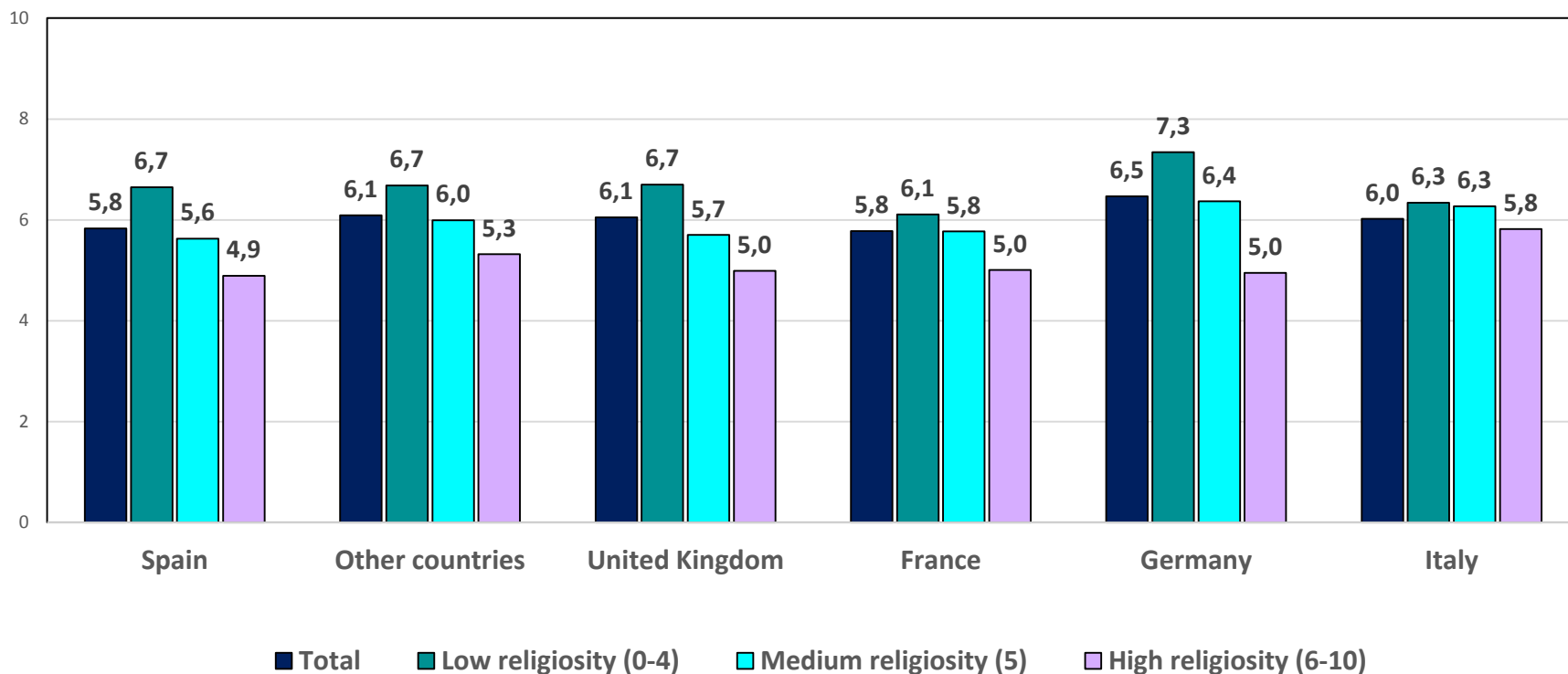


- The idea that religion nowadays does not provide answers to the important questions in people's lives finds significantly stronger support among those of low religiosity, tailing off among those expressing a high degree of religiosity.

**“Could you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”**

Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”.

**Nowadays religion does not provide answers to the important questions in people's lives**

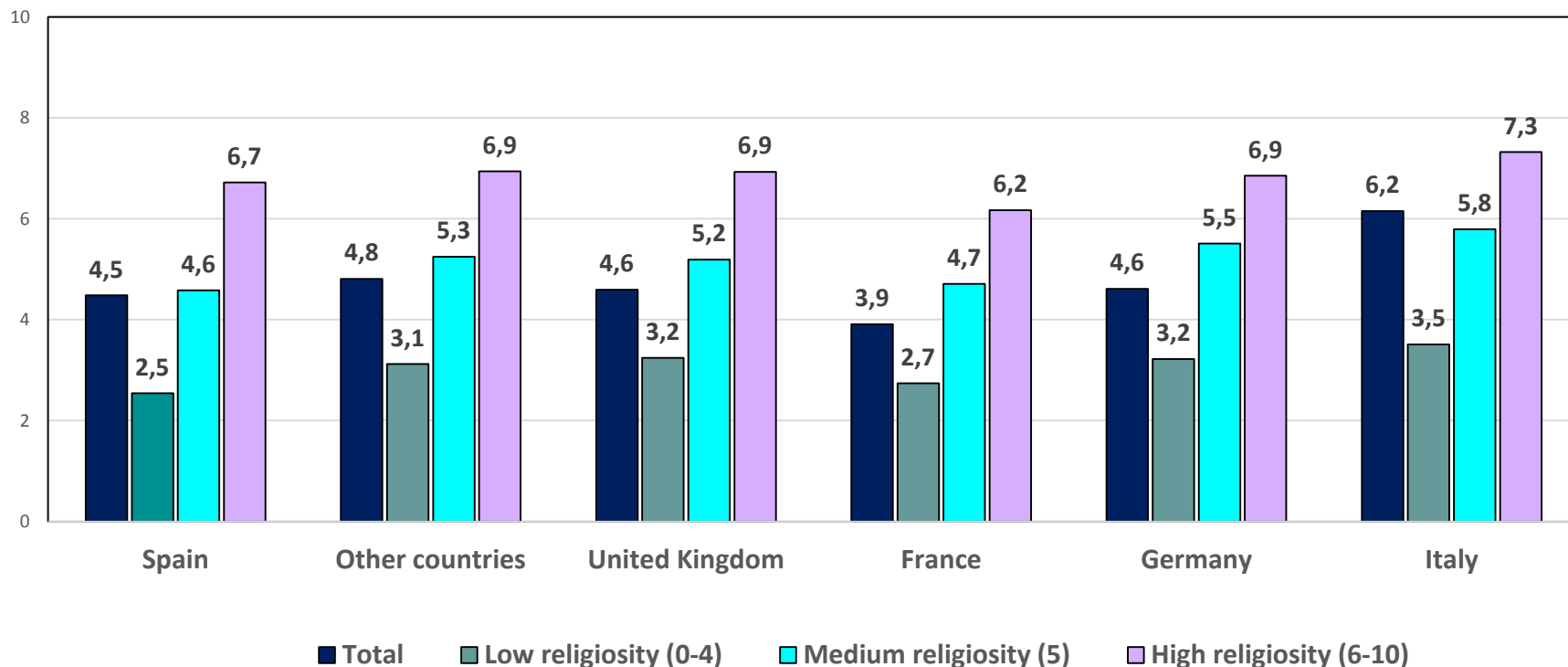


- In the five countries, a large majority of those declaring high religiosity affirm that society would be better off if it paid more attention to religious values and teachings. This consensus stands in contrast to the low religiosity group who clearly deny any link between religion and social wellbeing. Among those in the medium religiosity bracket opinions are more divided, with disagreement winning out in Spain and France versus agreement elsewhere.

**“Could you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”**

Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”.

**Society would be better off if it paid more attention to religious values and teachings**

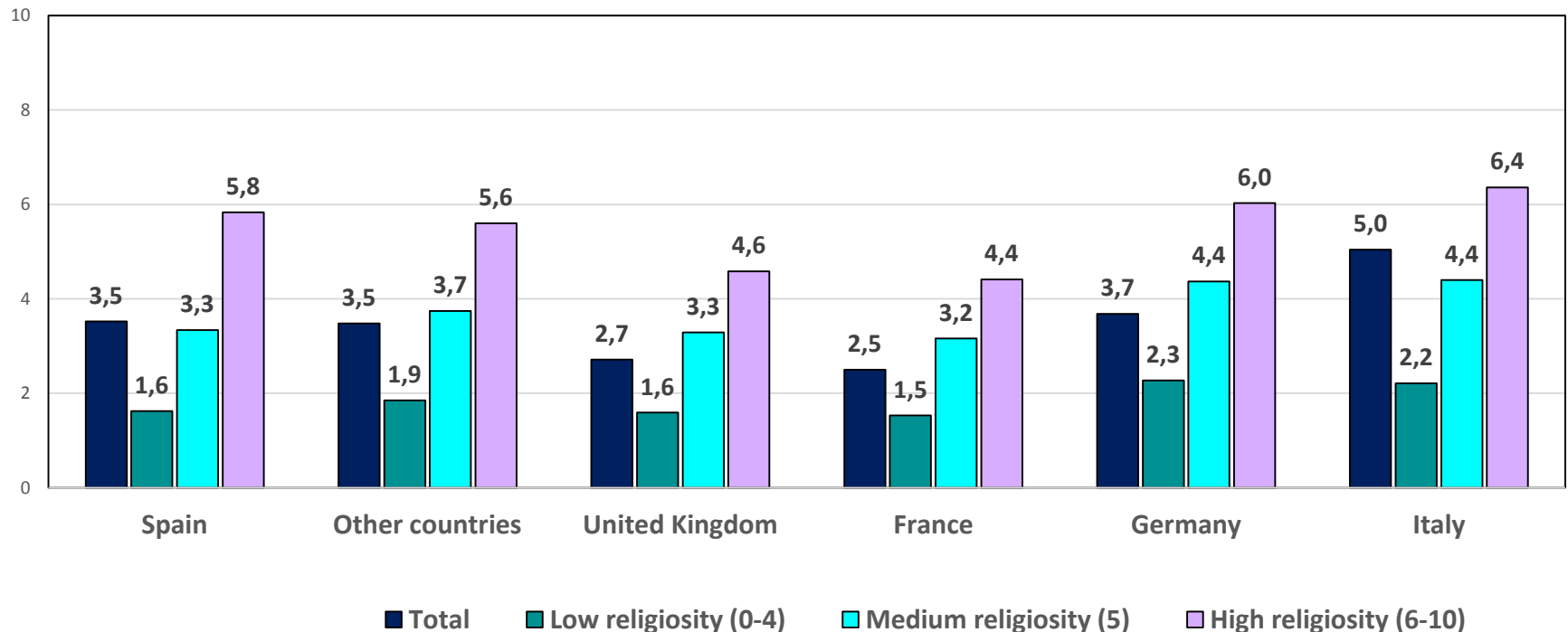


- Degree of religiosity is a fundamental variable in perceptions of the link between religion and ethics. In all countries, those declaring low levels of religiosity roundly reject the ethics-religion linkage, with rejection also expressed by those in the medium religiosity bracket.
- Among those of high religiosity, agreement that such a link exists wins out in Italy, Germany and Spain.

**“Could you please tell me how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?”**

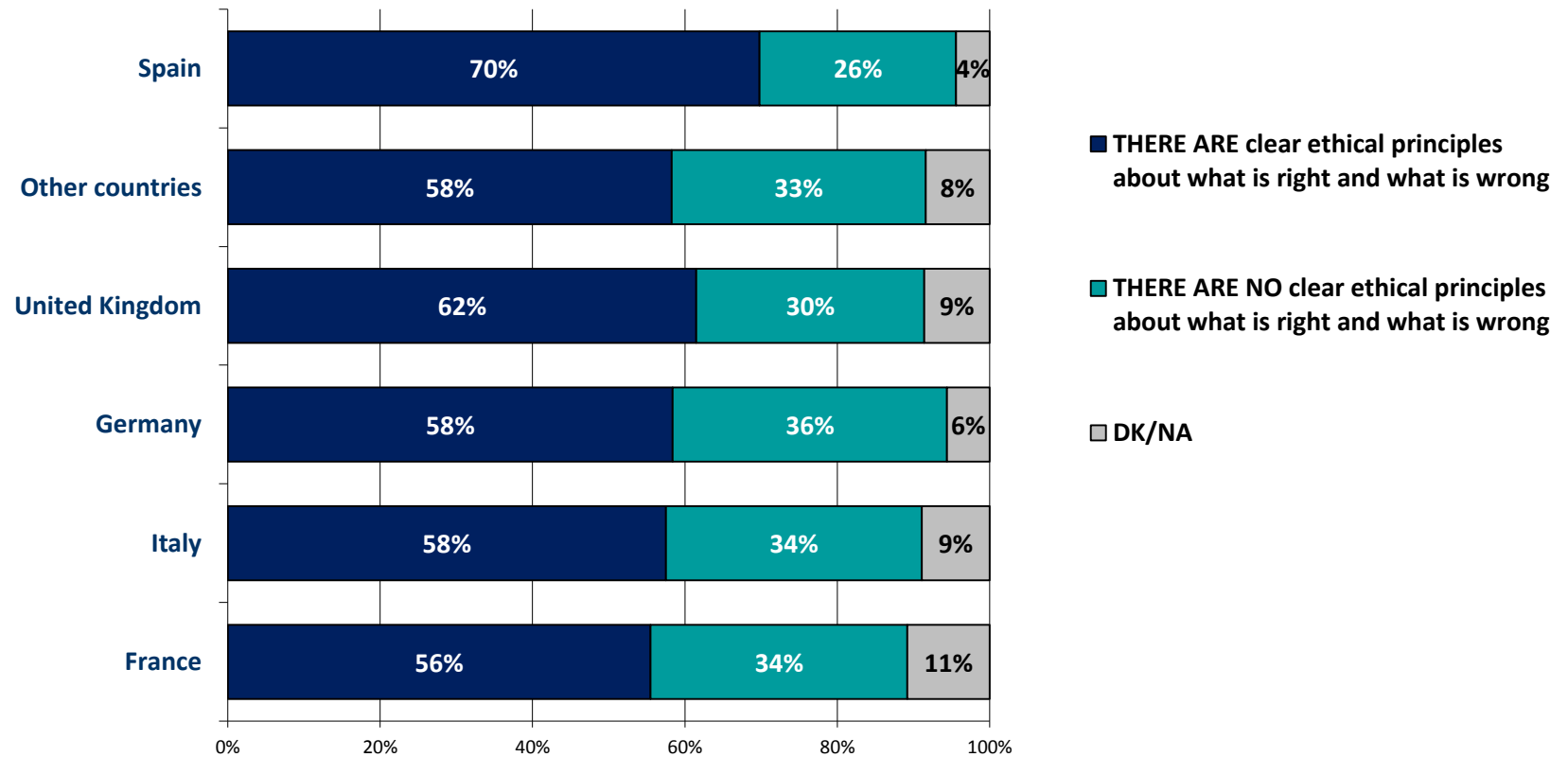
Average on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”.

**To act ethically, you need to hold religious beliefs**



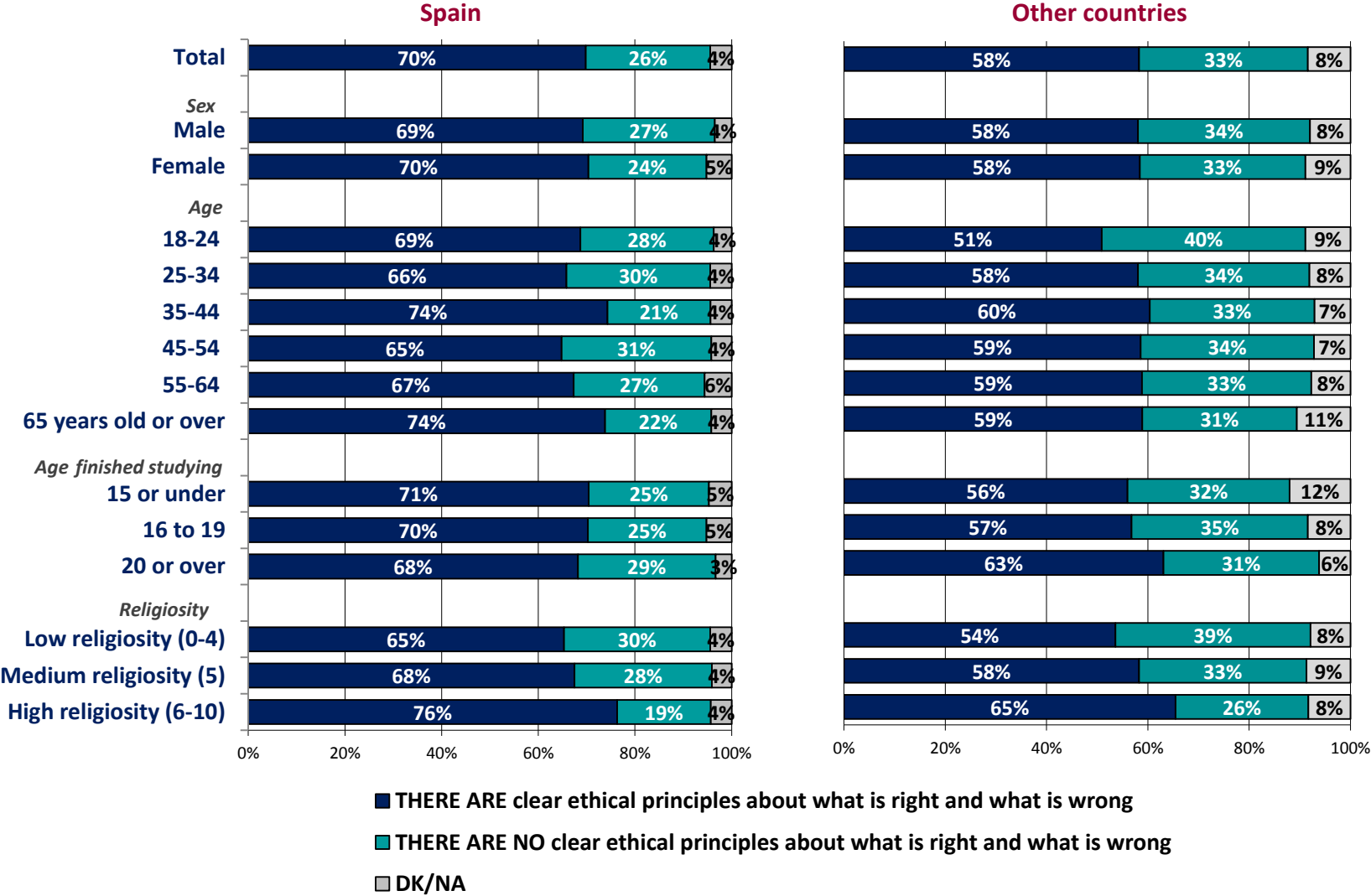
- Consensus in all countries, most markedly Spain, to the effect that there are ethical principles about what is right and what is wrong.

“Which of these two views do you agree with more?” Base: all cases



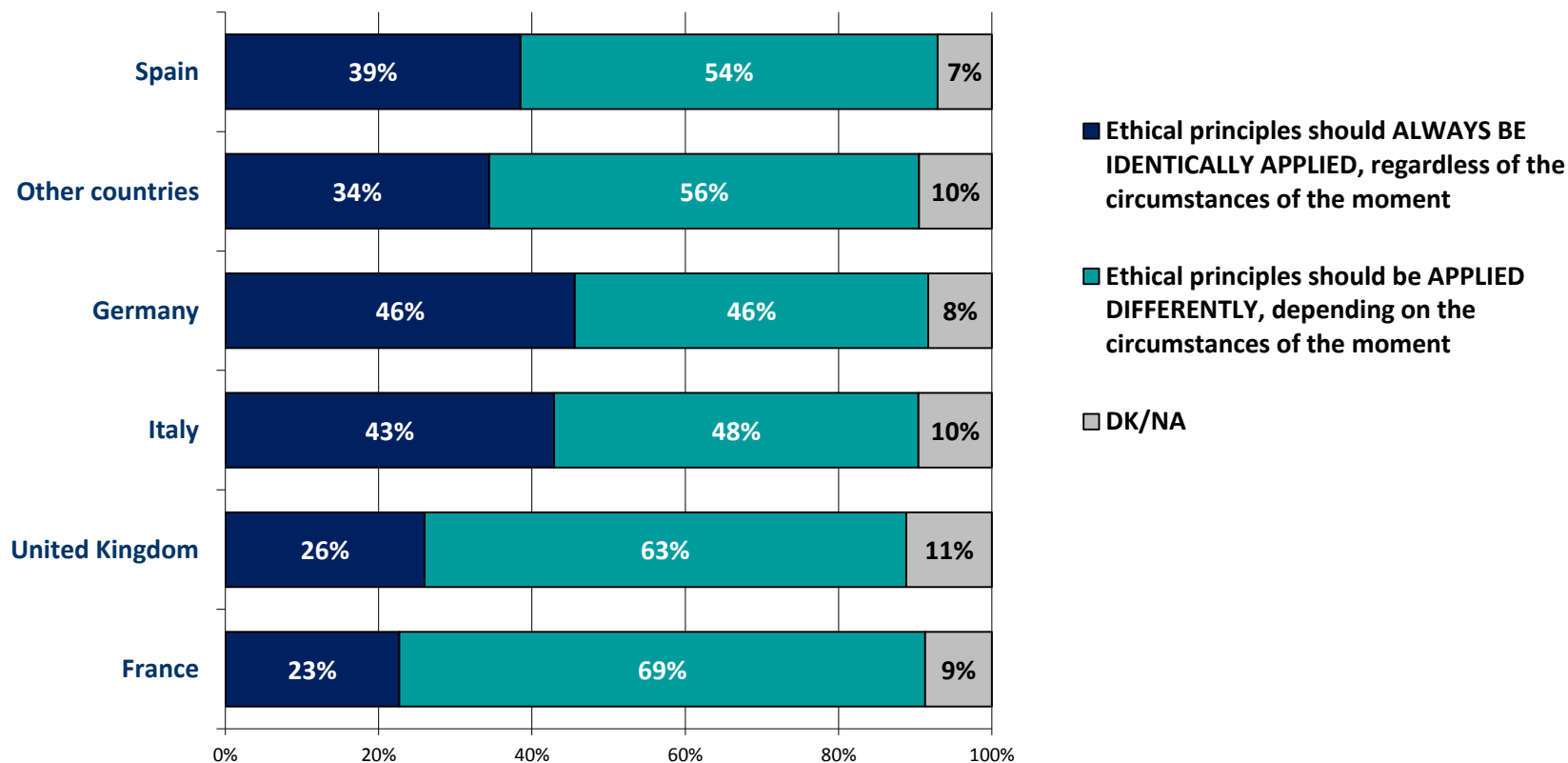
- All segments in all survey countries concur that there are clear ethical principles, with Spain registering the widest margin of support. Agreement on this point extends to all levels of religiosity, but is strongest among those in the high religiosity bracket.

“Which of these two views do you agree with more?” Base: all cases



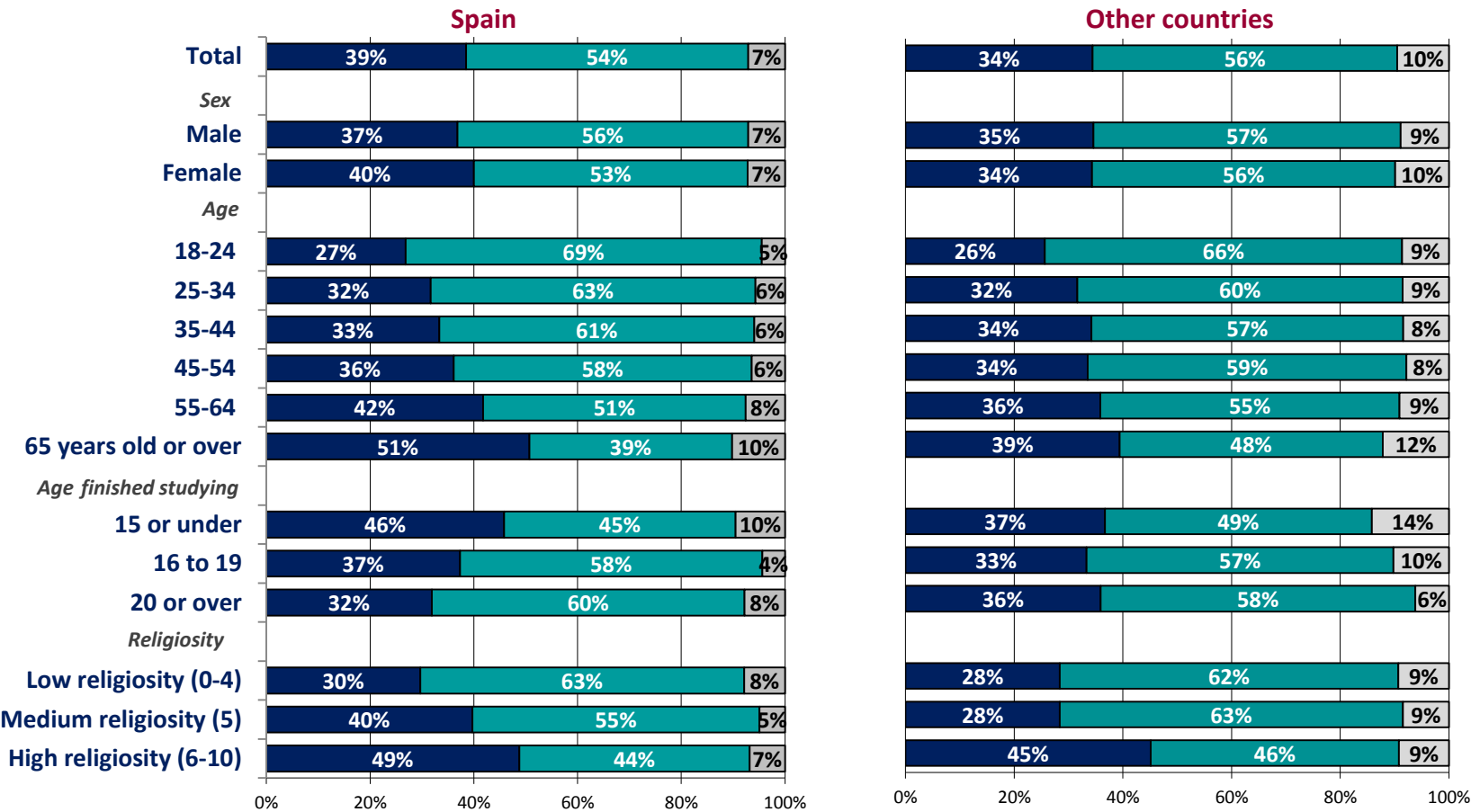
- More division of views both between and within countries on whether ethical principles should always be identically applied or applied differently in accordance with the circumstances of the moment. A majority in France and the United Kingdom, followed by Spain, pick the option of selectively applying them according to the moment, while the Germans and Italians fall more equally on both sides of the divide.

“Which of these two views do you agree with more?” Base: all cases



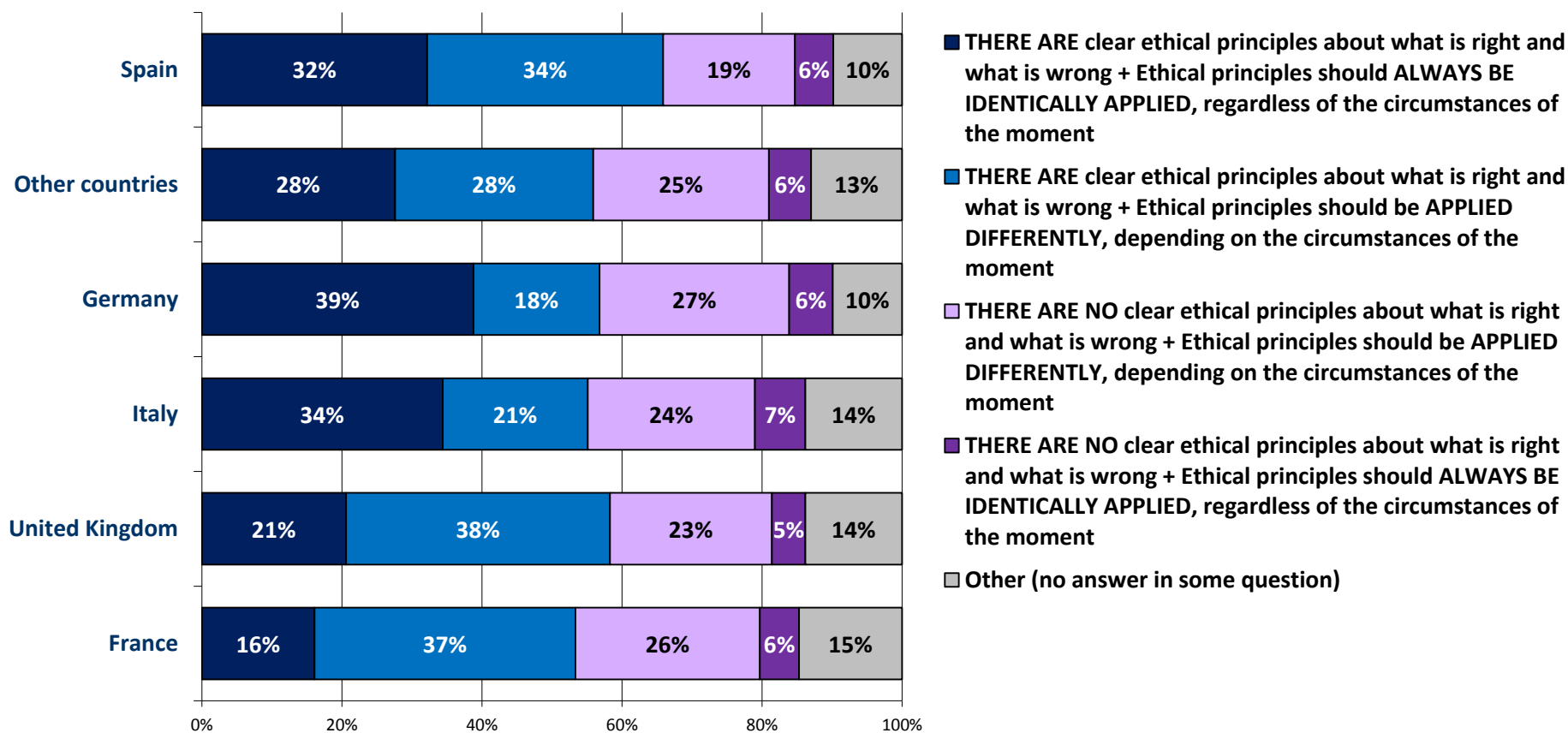
- Both in Spain and in the other four counties on average, the preference for a more flexible approach to applying ethical principles reduces significantly with age and degree of religiosity, while increasing significantly with educational level.

“Which of these two statements do you agree with more?” Base: all cases



■ Ethical principles should ALWAYS BE IDENTICALLY APPLIED, regardless of the circumstances of the moment  
■ Ethical principles should be APPLIED DIFFERENTLY, depending on the circumstances of the moment  
■ DK/NA

Segmentation by views on the existence and application of ethical principles. Base: all cases





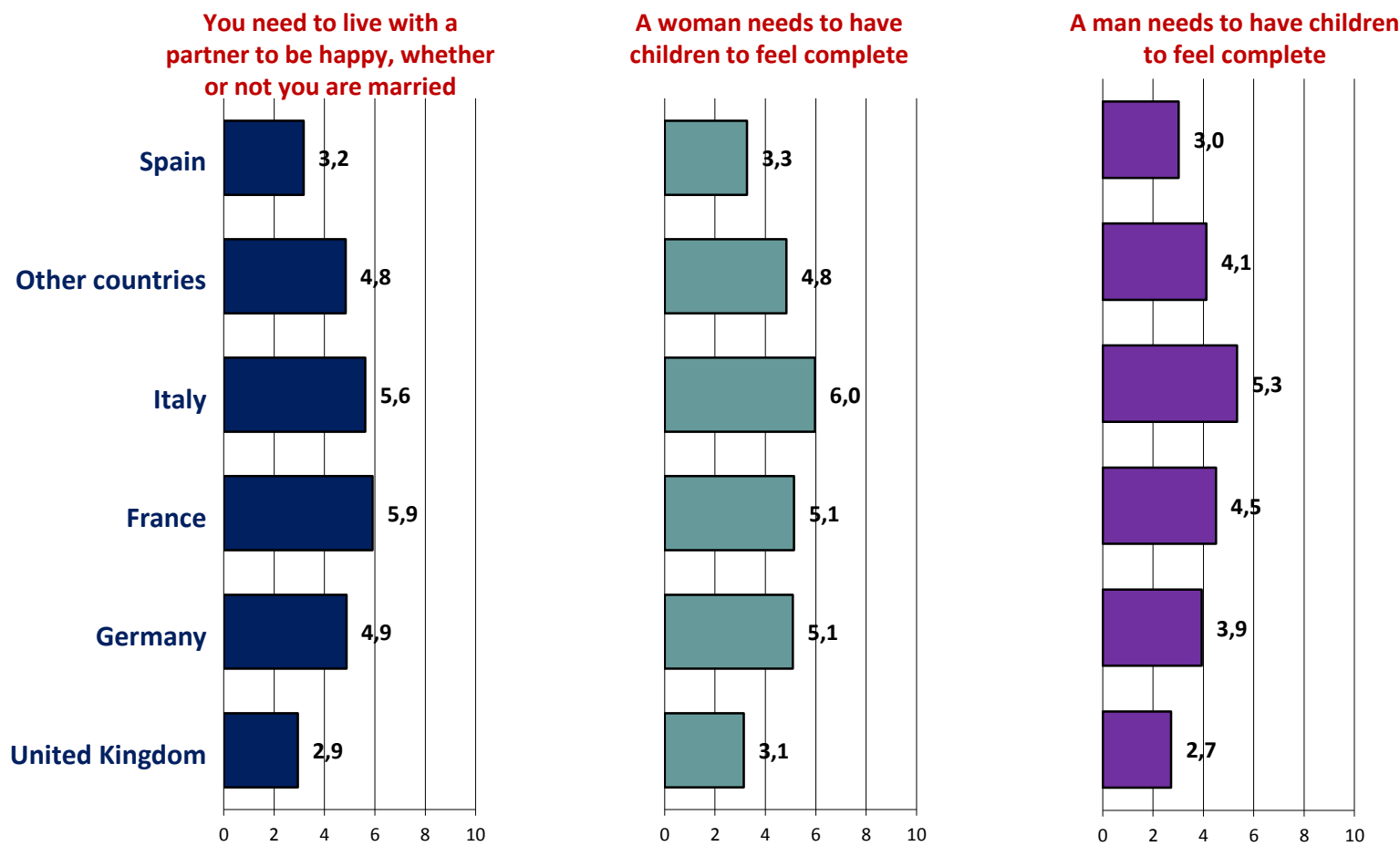


## Life paths and acceptance of conducts subject to moral controversy

- Perception of life paths and personal realisation
- The situation of women
- Acceptance of euthanasia and abortion
- Acceptance of new forms of partner relations and parenthood

- Divergence on whether personal fulfilment depends on living with a partner or having children.
- The Spanish and British strongly reject this proposition, while the Italians, at the other extreme, view these life paths as an important part of personal realisation.
- In a majority of countries, there is stronger agreement with a link existing between motherhood and personal realisation (the majority view in Italy, France and Germany) than in the case of fatherhood (majority support in Italy alone).

**“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”. Base: all cases



- Compared to 2012, agreement with the view that a woman needs to have children to feel complete has diminished in Spain, France and the United Kingdom; a trend likewise observable with regard to men and fatherhood.

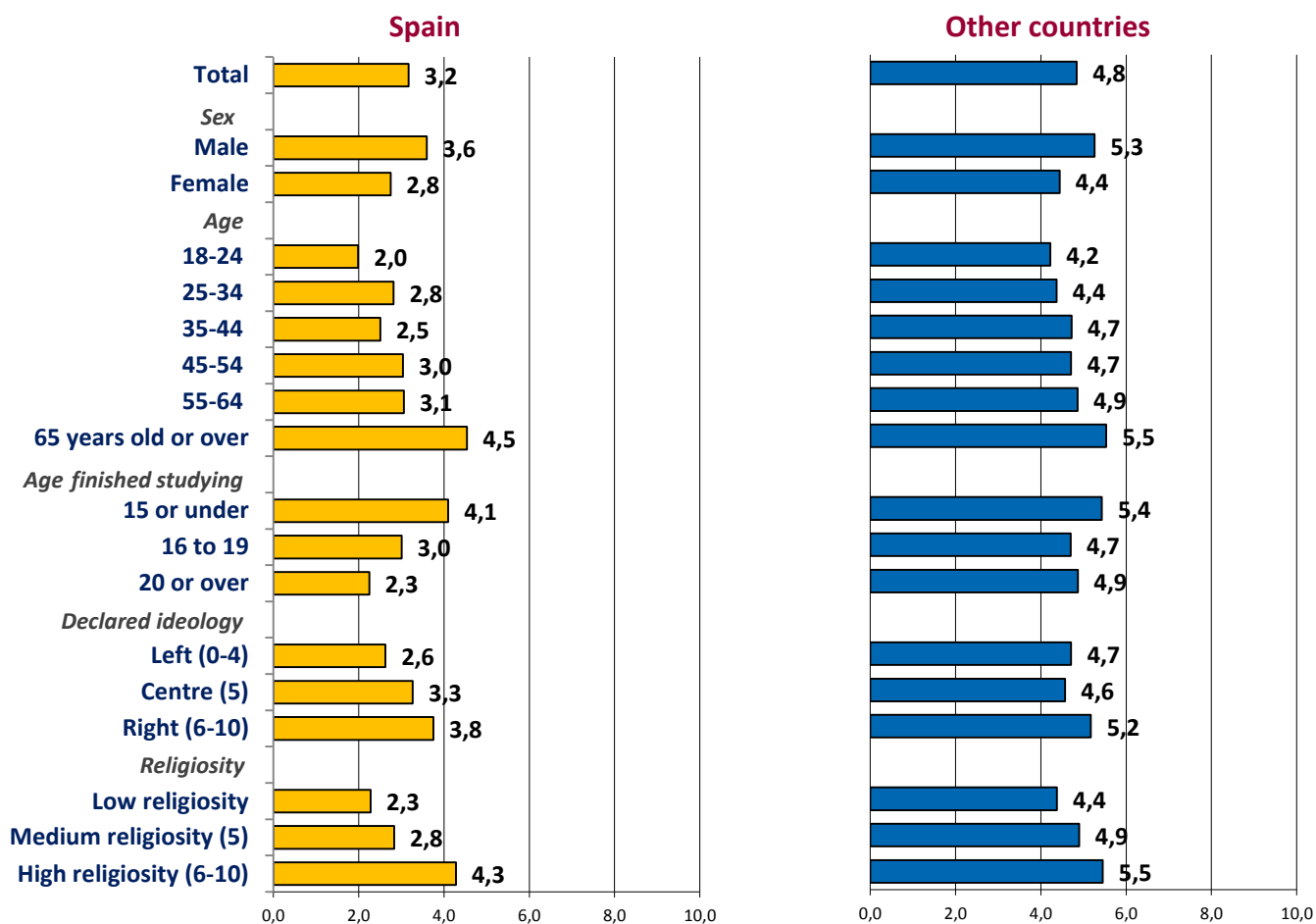
**“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”. Base: all cases



- Both in Spain and the other four countries on average, the assertion that “you need to live with a partner to be happy” finds more support among men than women, as well as among older age groups, those declaredly on the right and those in the high religiosity bracket. Agreement, conversely, tends to decrease with educational level. Note that no segment in Spain exceeds the agreement threshold by this measure.

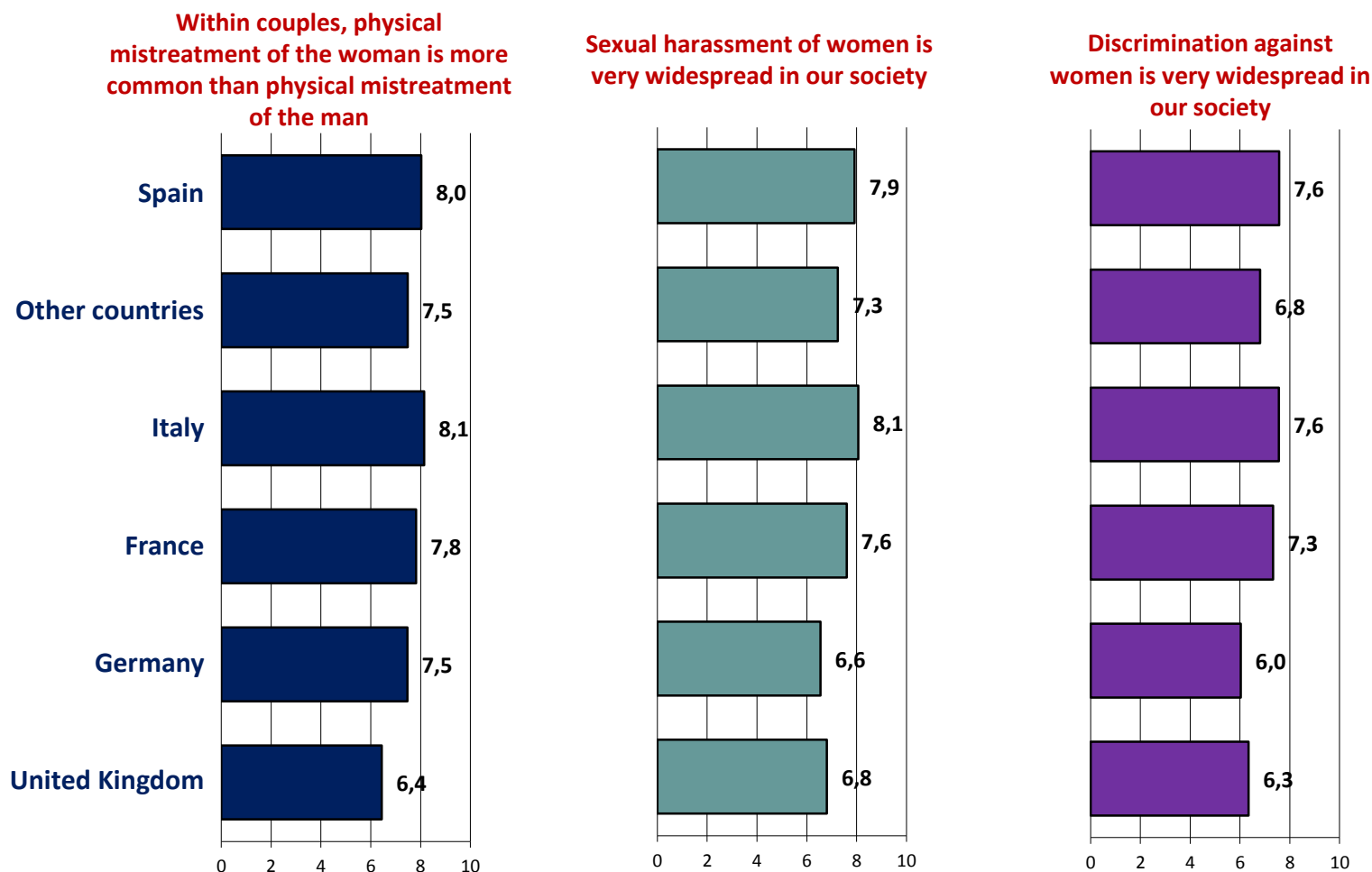
““To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”. Base: all cases

You need to live with a partner to be happy, whether or not you are married



- Broad consensus in all societies that women face widespread discrimination and sexual harassment. Also that the physical mistreatment of women within couples is more common than the physical mistreatment of men.

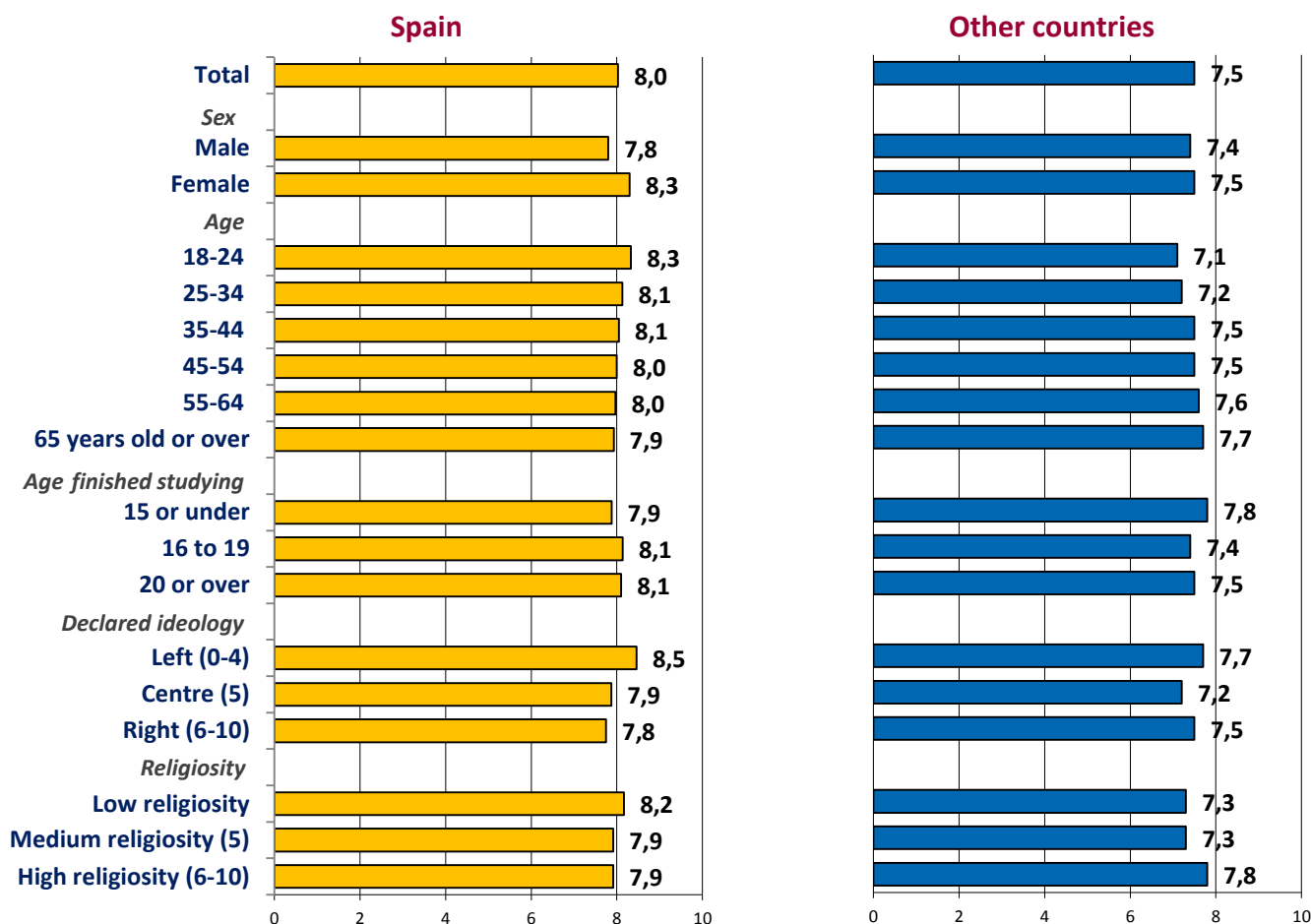
**“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”. Base: all cases



- A large majority in every group, with only negligible differences, concurs that physical mistreatment of women within the couple is more common than physical mistreatment of men.

**“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”. Base: all cases

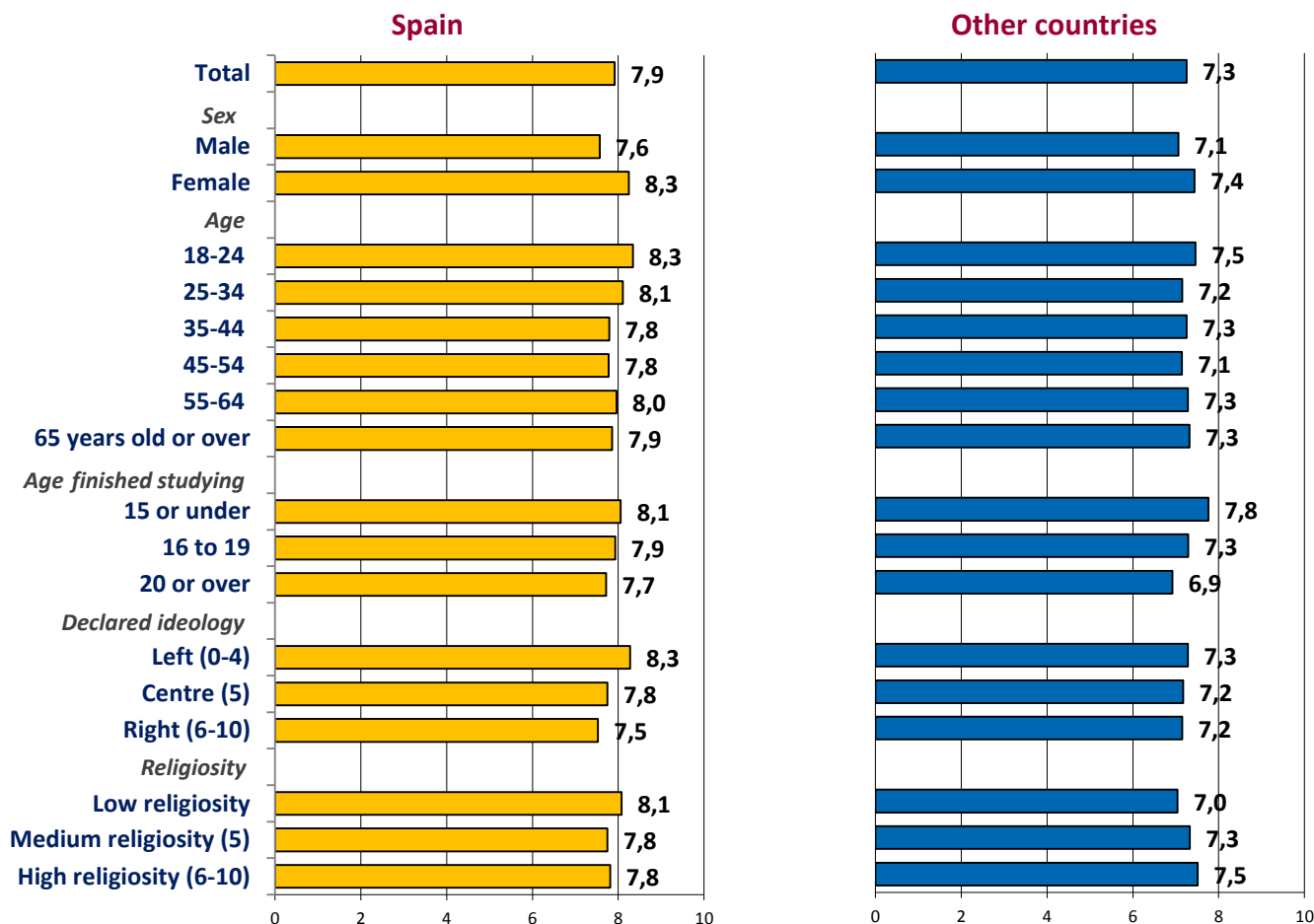
**Within couples, physical mistreatment of the woman is more common than physical mistreatment of the man**



- Ample consensus across every segment regarding the extent of the sexual harassment faced by today's women. In Spain, this perception is especially heightened among women, young people and those positioning themselves on the political left.

**“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”. Base: all cases

**Sexual harassment of women is very widespread in our society**

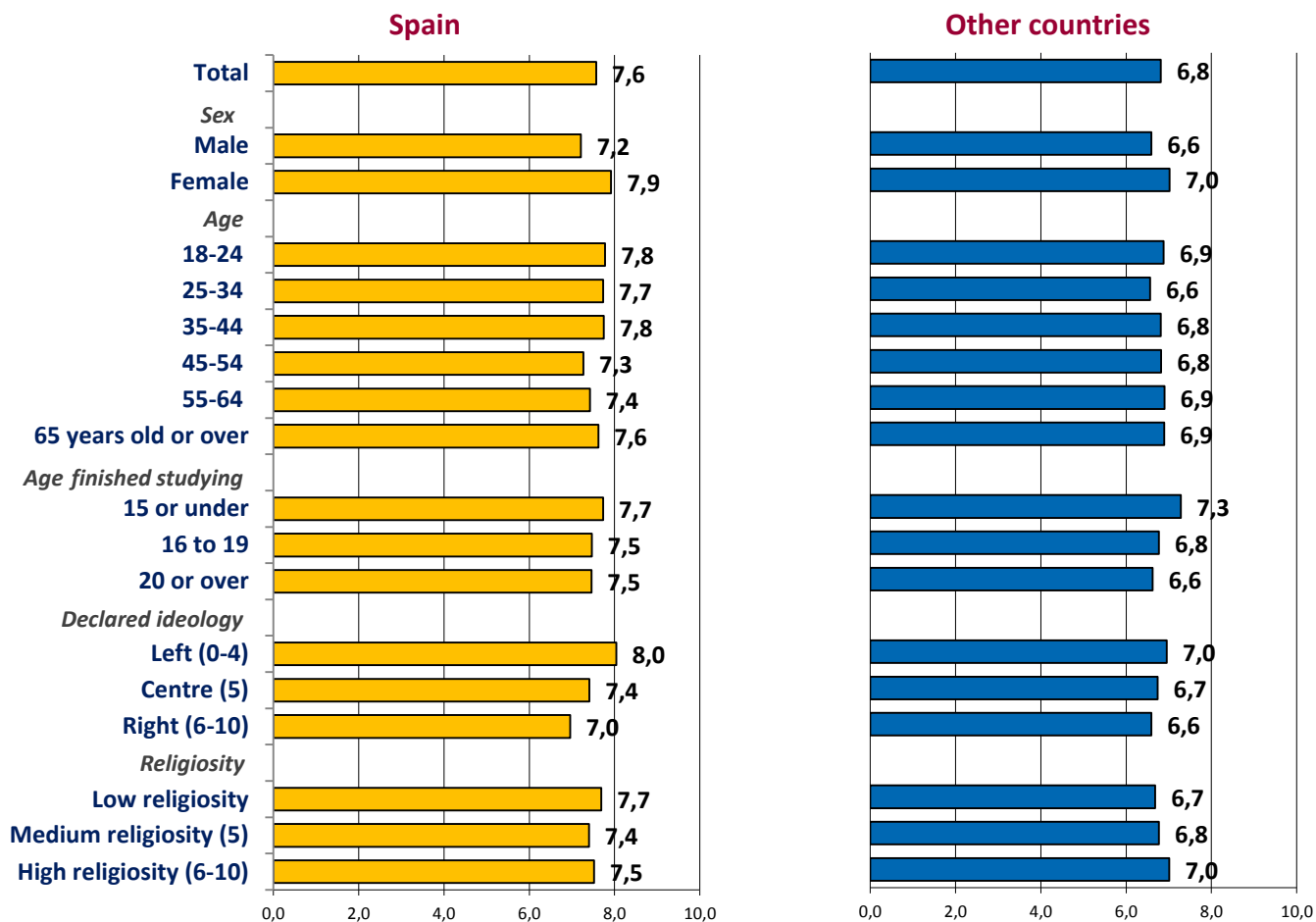




- The view that “discrimination against women is very widespread” cuts across all population segments. That said, it finds slightly wider support, both in Spain and across the other four countries, among women, those with the fewest years of study and those positioning themselves on the left.

“To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following sentences?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means that you “completely disagree” and 10 that you “completely agree”. Base: all cases

**Discrimination against women is very widespread in our society**

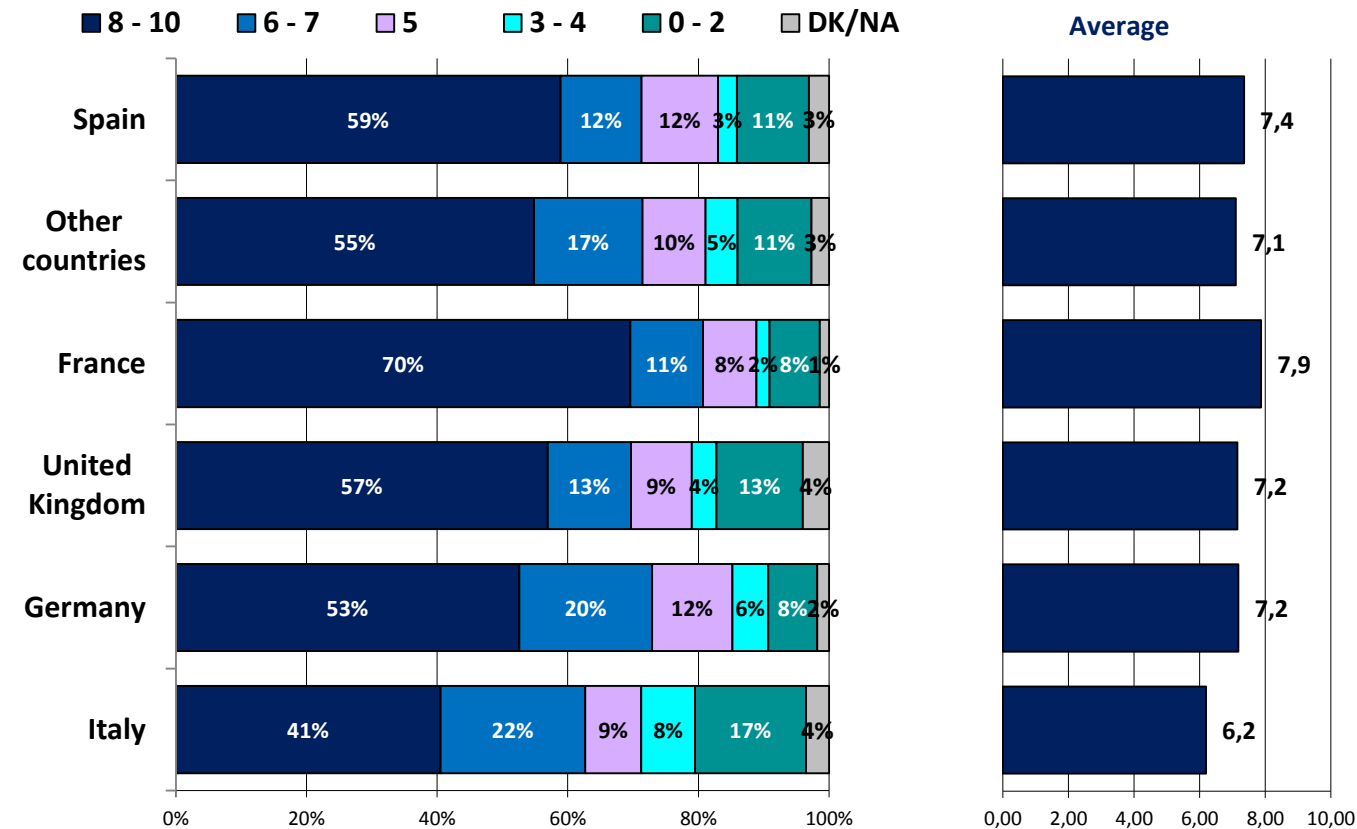




- Citizens in all the survey countries see euthanasia as acceptable in the terminal stages of a disease.
- The distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 shows that a majority in four countries and a relative majority in Italy locate themselves at the extreme of most agreement (scores of 8 to 10). Agreement is strongest of all in France.

“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

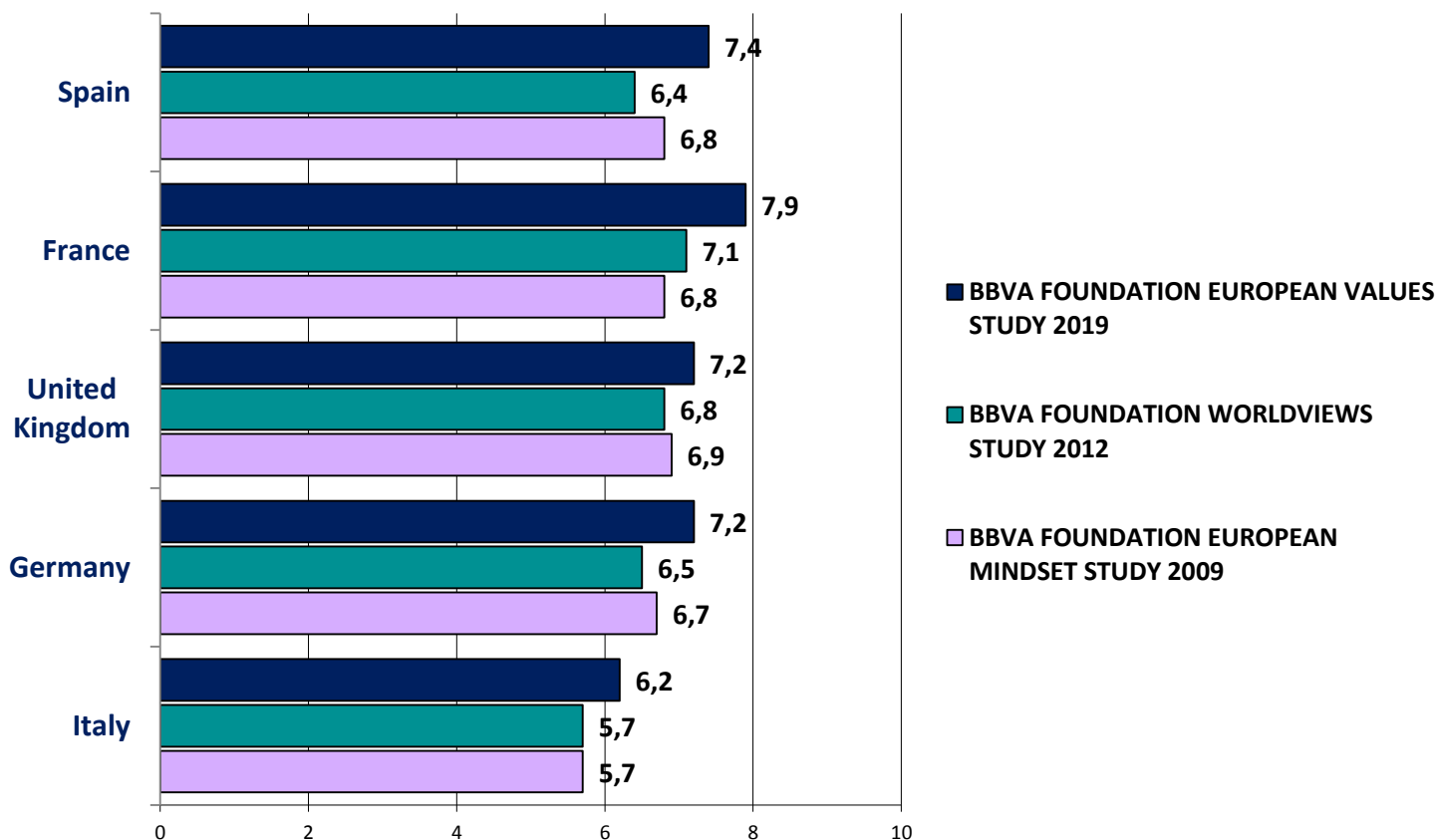
Euthanasia, that is, giving medical help to accelerate the death of terminally ill people who have an incurable disease and have affirmed that they do not wish to go on living



- Acceptance of euthanasia has grown in every country compared to 2009 and 2012 (by between 0.5 and one full point). Although the acceptance threshold was already exceeded in previous value surveys, by 2019 average support was higher than seven points in four countries, and six points in Italy.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

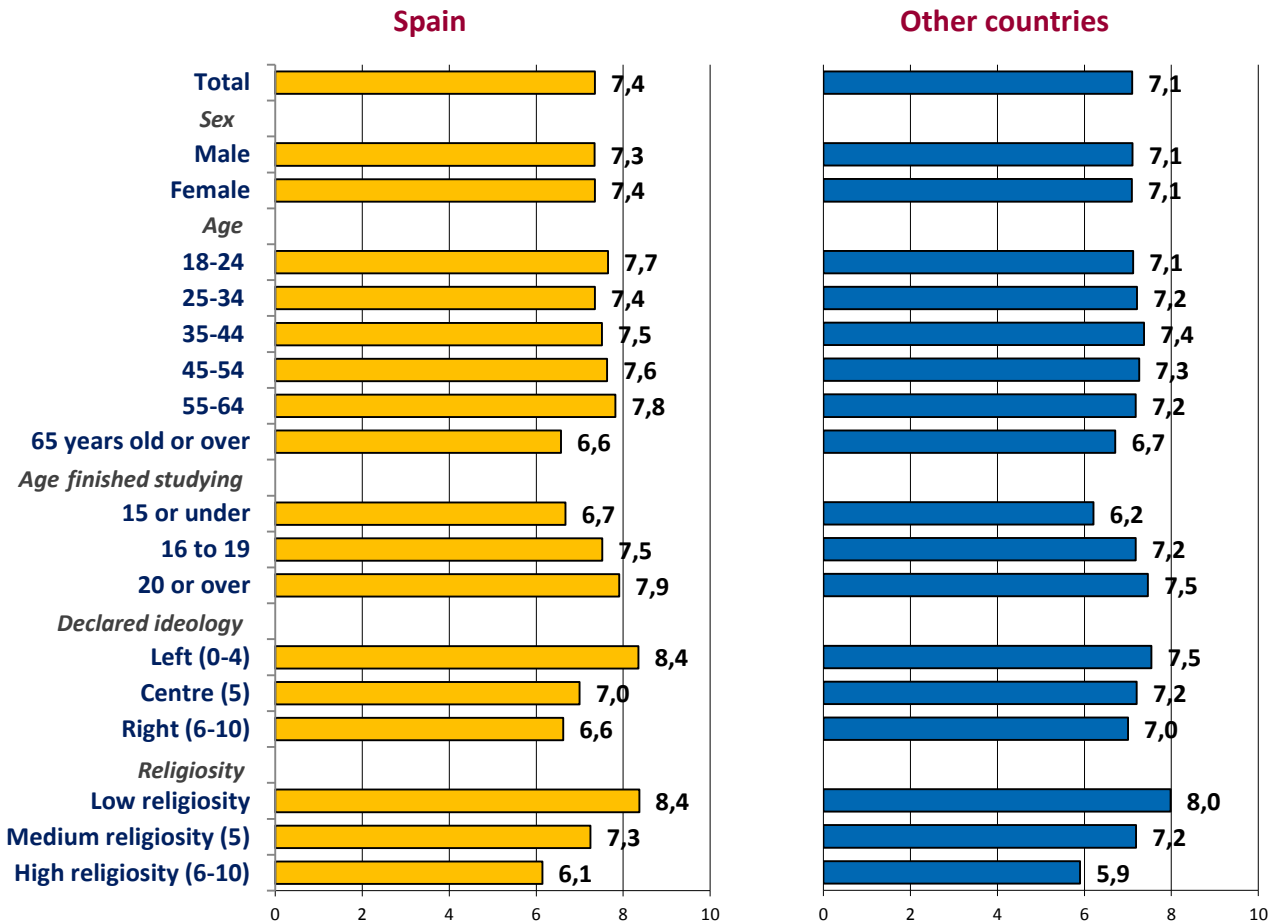
**Euthanasia, that is, giving medical help to accelerate the death of terminally ill people who have an incurable disease and have affirmed that they do not wish to go on living**



- Acceptance of euthanasia runs very high across all segments, tending to increase among those with more years of study, those declaredly on the left and those expressing a low level of religiosity.

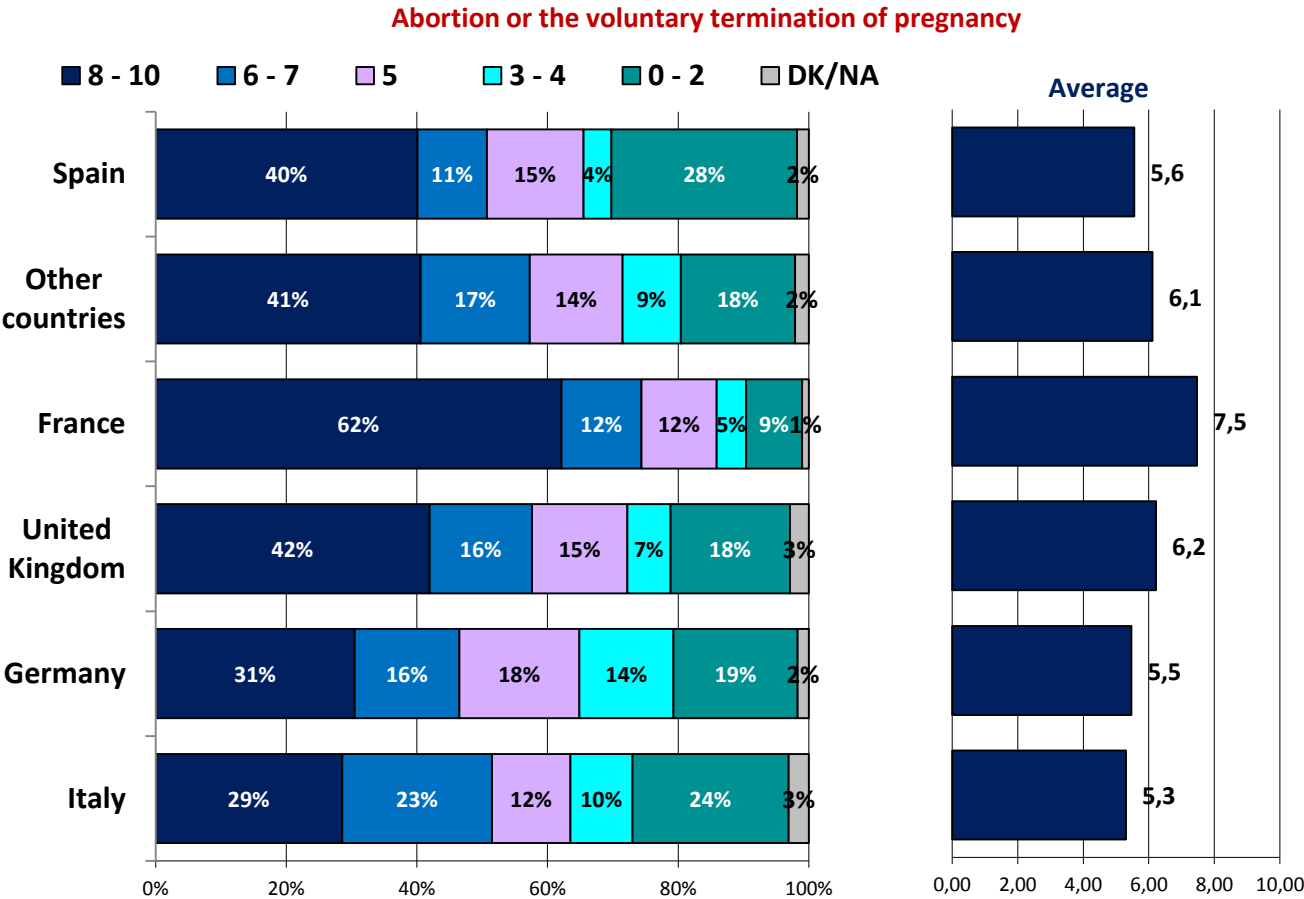
“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

Euthanasia, that is, giving medical help to accelerate the death of terminally ill people who have an incurable disease and have affirmed that they do not wish to go on living



- In the case of abortion, acceptance also wins out though by a rather smaller margin. Support is particularly strong in France, followed by the United Kingdom.
- A majority in France and a relative majority in other countries – larger in the United Kingdom and Spain and smaller in Germany and Italy – express strong acceptance of the practice (scores 8 to 10). In Spain, a significant percentage (28%) locate themselves at the extreme of most rejection (0 to 2).

“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

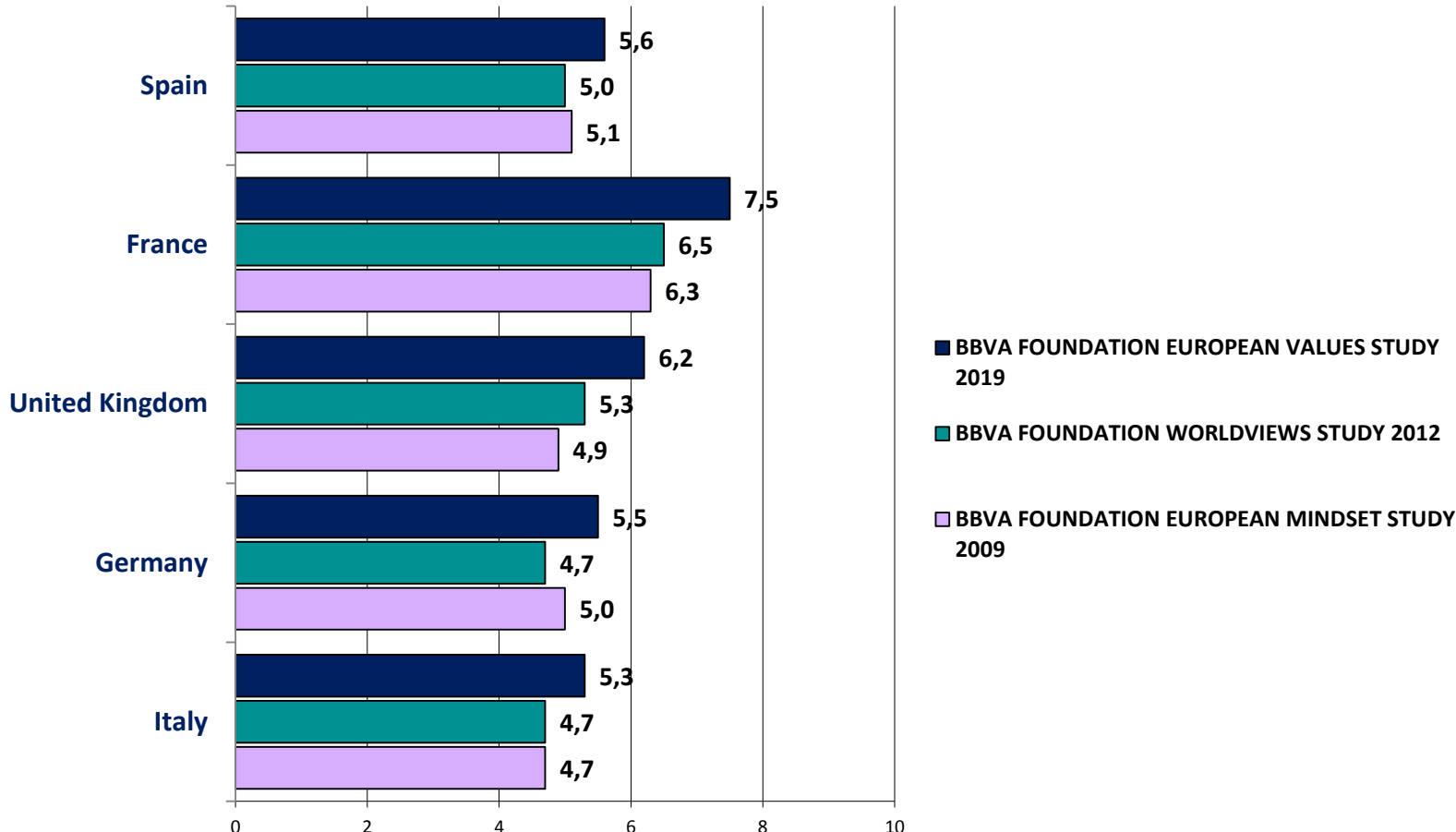


- Acceptance of abortion has gained ground in every country over the past ten years. In Italy and Germany, the 2019 increase lifts acceptance scores above the 5-point threshold.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”**

Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

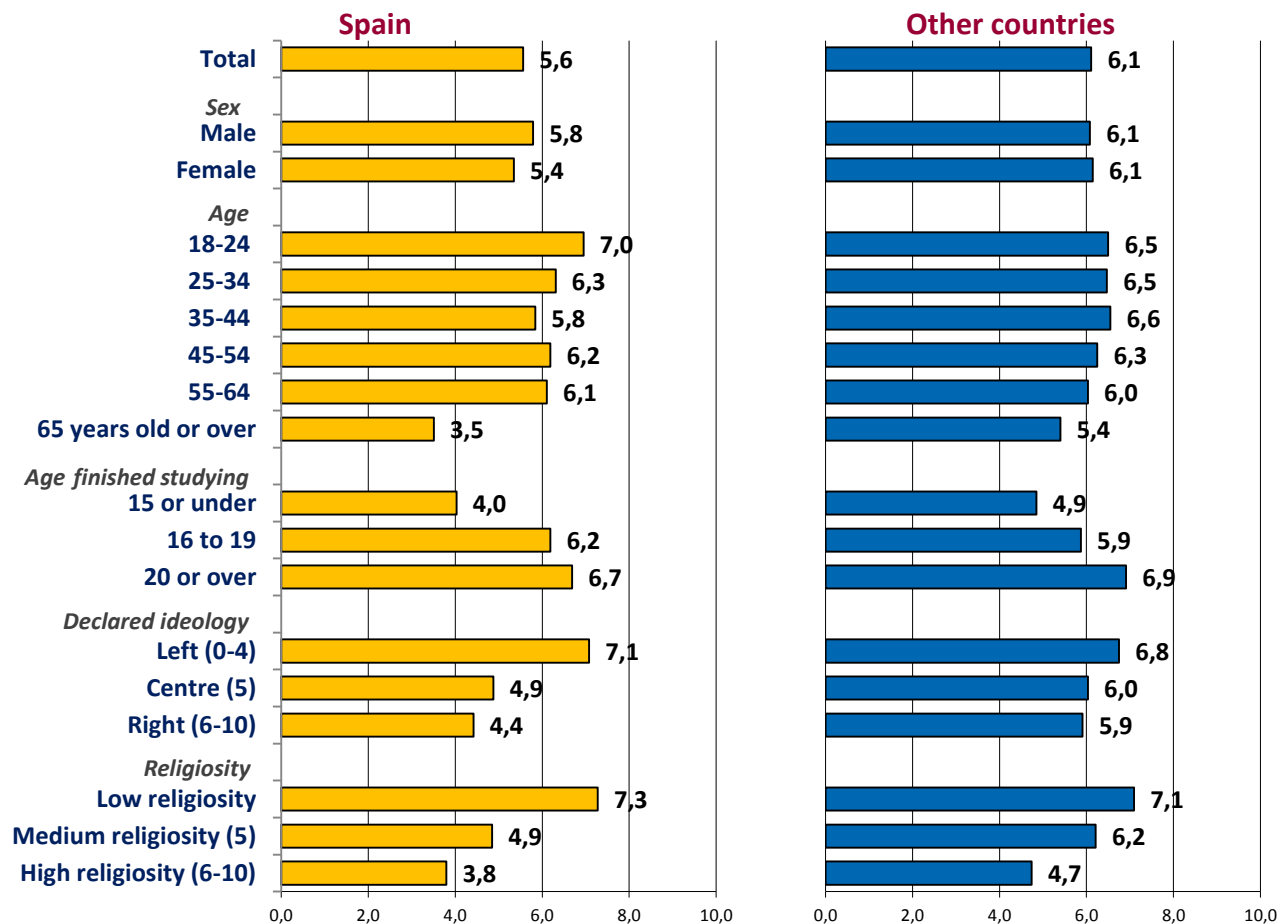
**Abortion or the voluntary termination of pregnancy**



- Acceptance of abortion varies significantly with educational level (increasing with years of study), declared political orientation (higher among those on the left), and declared religiosity (higher among those in the low religiosity bracket). In Spain, abortion falls short of the acceptance threshold among adults aged 65 or over, those with fewest years of education, those positioning themselves politically to the right and centre, and those expressing a medium or, more so, high level of religiosity.

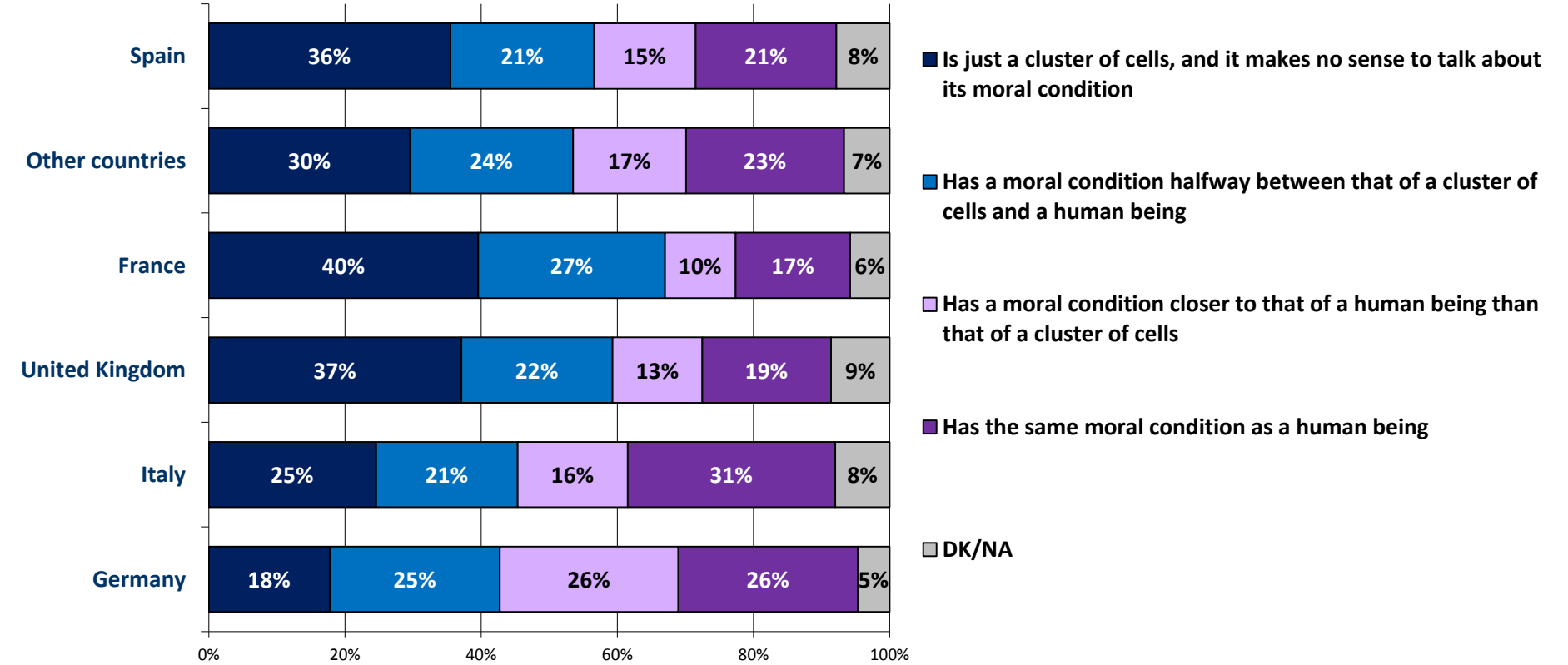
“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

**Abortion or the voluntary termination of pregnancy**



- Division of opinions regarding the moral status of the embryo. In France, the United Kingdom and Spain, over a third consider the embryo to be a cluster of cells with no moral condition, ahead of those who see it as having a moral condition halfway between a cluster of cells and a human being.
- Italians and Germans show a greater disparity of viewpoints, with a majority or relative majority regarding the embryo's moral status as closer or identical to that of a human being.

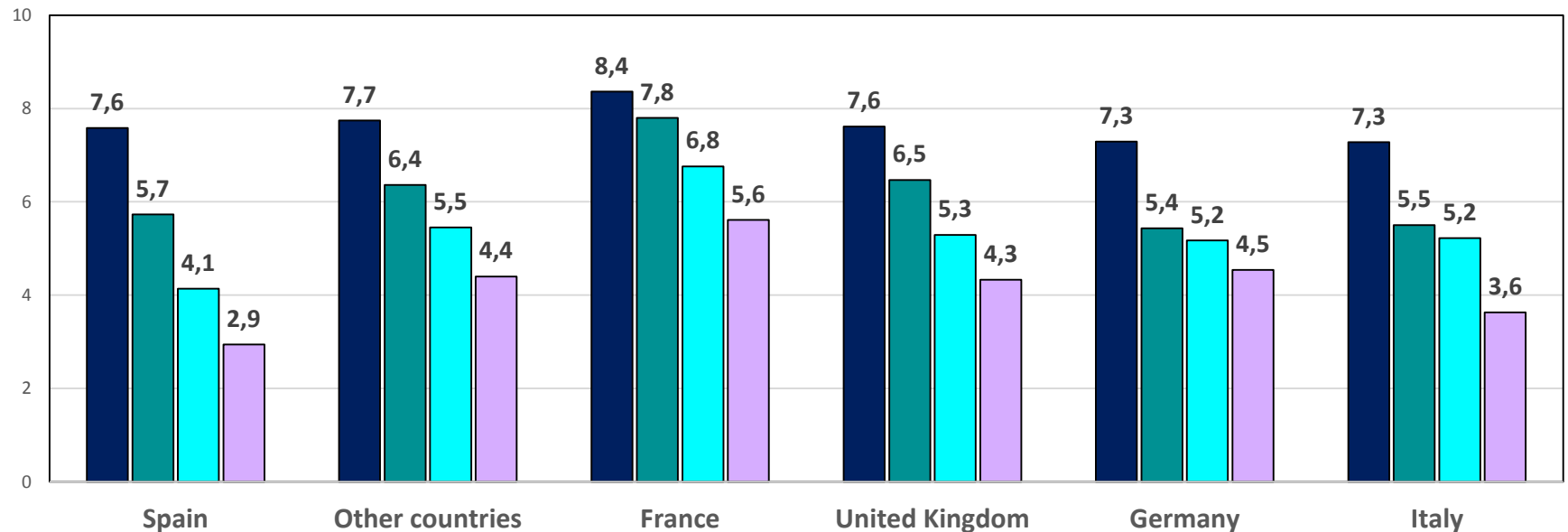
“Can you please tell me which of the following statements you agree with most?” Base: all cases



- Strong linkage between view of the embryo and acceptance of abortion that transcends national boundaries.
- With the exception of France, those who see it as having the same moral condition as a human being are against the termination of pregnancy, while those who see it as a cluster of cells, halfway between a cluster of cells and a human being, or closer to a human being tend to accept abortion in the same order of intensity. Spaniards who consider the embryo to have a moral condition closer to that of a human being show themselves opposed to abortion.

**Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?"** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is "completely unacceptable" and 10 means you think it is "completely acceptable". Base: all cases

**Abortion or the voluntary termination of pregnancy**

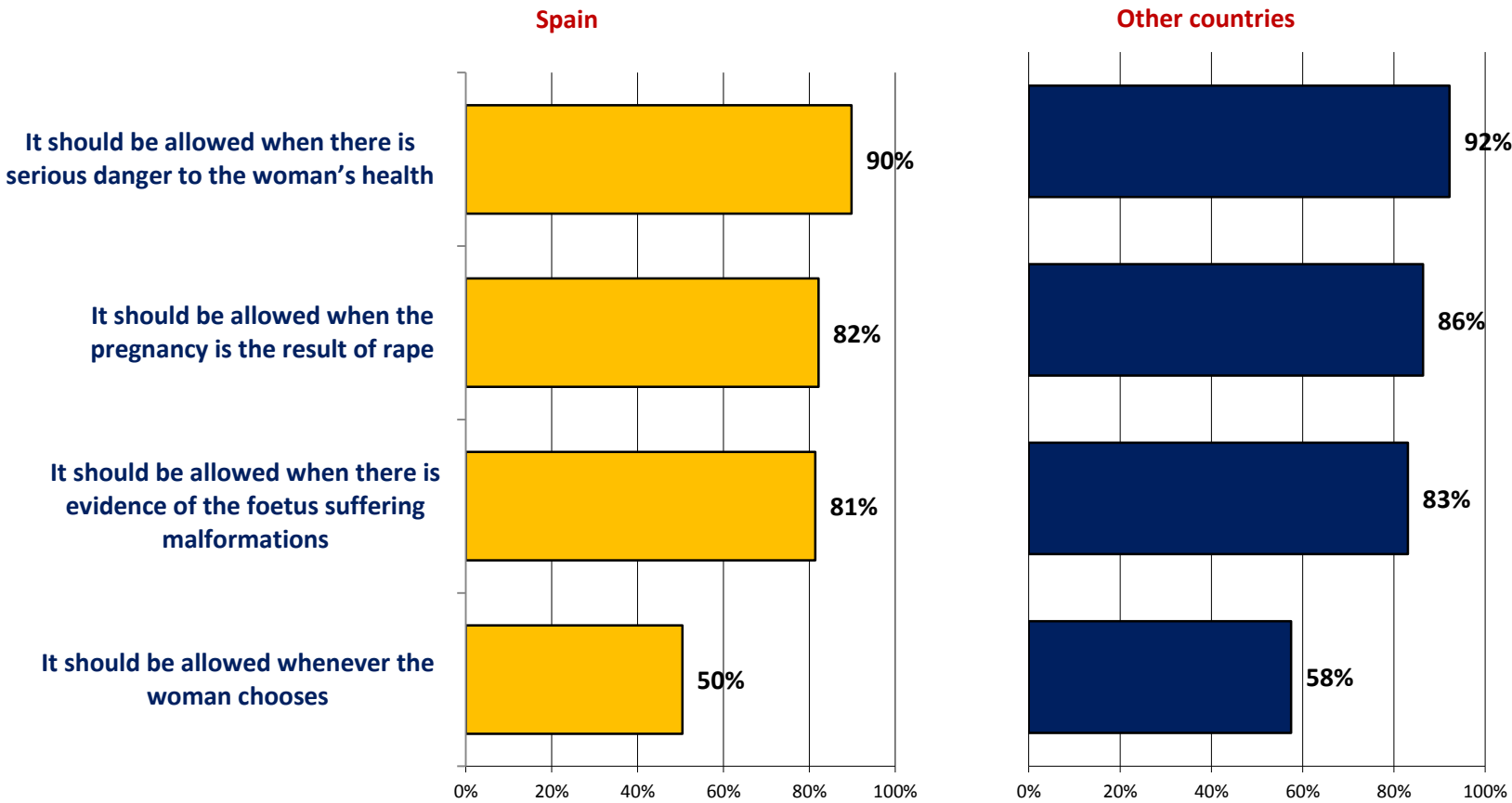


- Is just a cluster of cells, and it makes no sense to talk about its moral condition
- Has a moral condition halfway between that of a cluster of cells and a human being
- Has a moral condition closer to that of a human being than that of a cluster of cells
- Has the same moral condition as a human being



- Termination of pregnancy is widely accepted (over 80%) in the first three months of pregnancy, in cases of serious danger to the woman’s health, rape or foetal malformation. A smaller majority also accept that the woman should be able to have an abortion if she so wishes, with Spain in this case trailing the average of the other four countries.

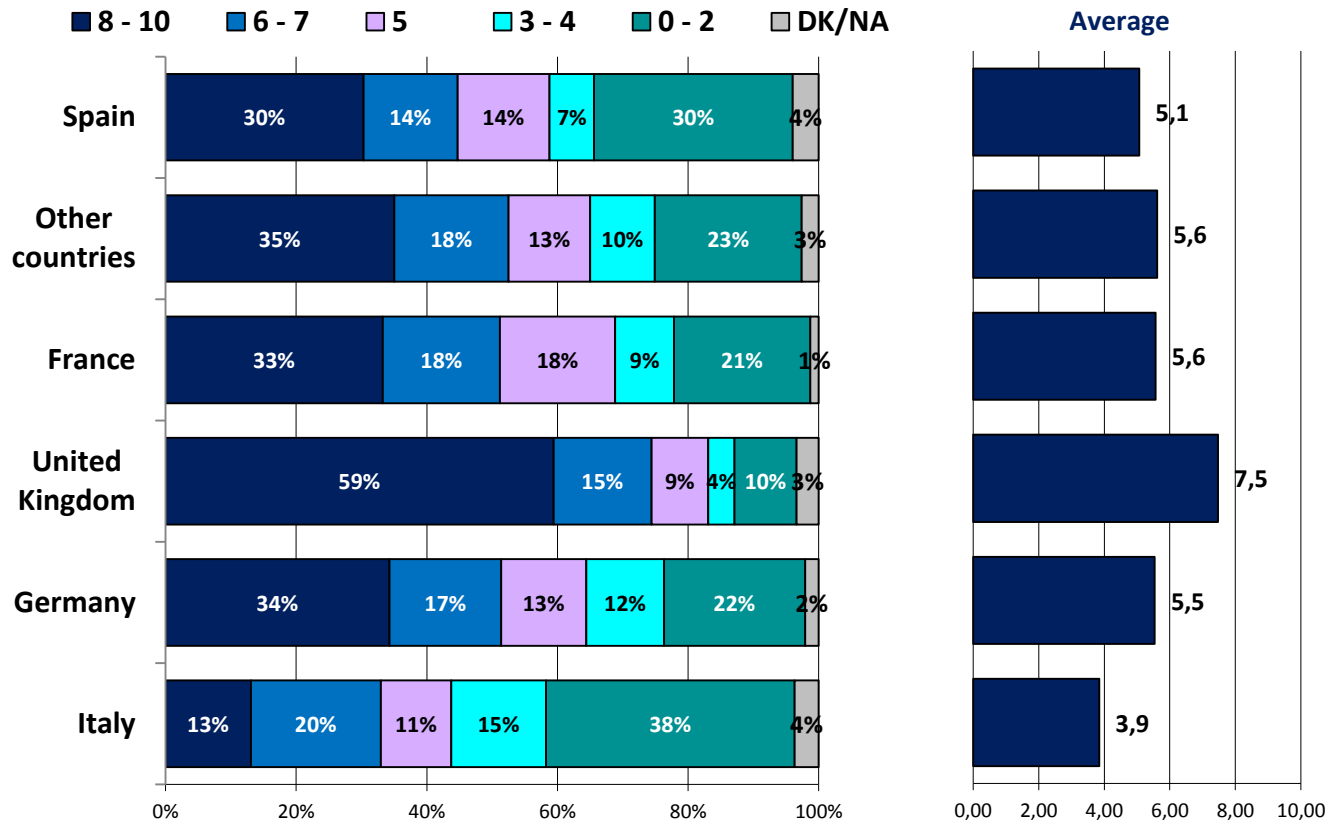
“I would like you to tell me whether you agree or disagree with each of the opinions I read out about the termination of a pregnancy when the foetus is under three months old.” Percentage answering “agree”. Base: all cases



- Surrogate motherhood divides opinion sharply both between and within countries. Amply accepted in the United Kingdom, where a large majority assign it maximum acceptance scores (8 to 10), it is also considered acceptable by relative majorities in France, Germany and Spain. In Italy, conversely, it is widely rejected.
- In Spain, opinions on this point are sharply polarised, with the same percentage (30%) expressing complete acceptance and outright rejection.

Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?" Distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is "completely unacceptable" and 10 means you think it is "completely acceptable". Base: all cases

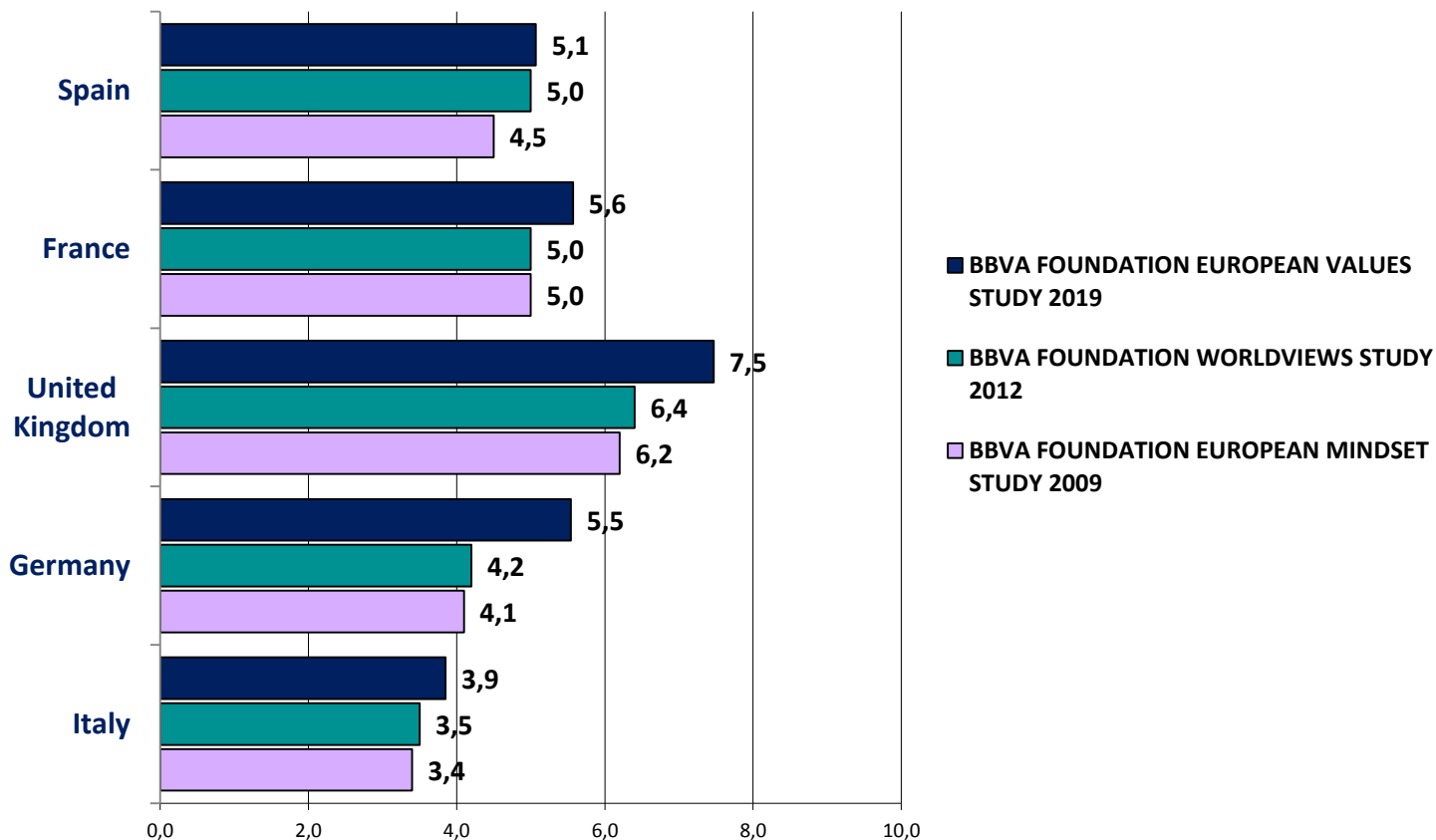
Having a baby through a surrogate mother, that is, a woman who offers to carry the baby in her womb



- On a time series basis, acceptance of surrogacy has increased across the board with respect to 2009 and 2012, with Germany in particular transitioning to the acceptance zone.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

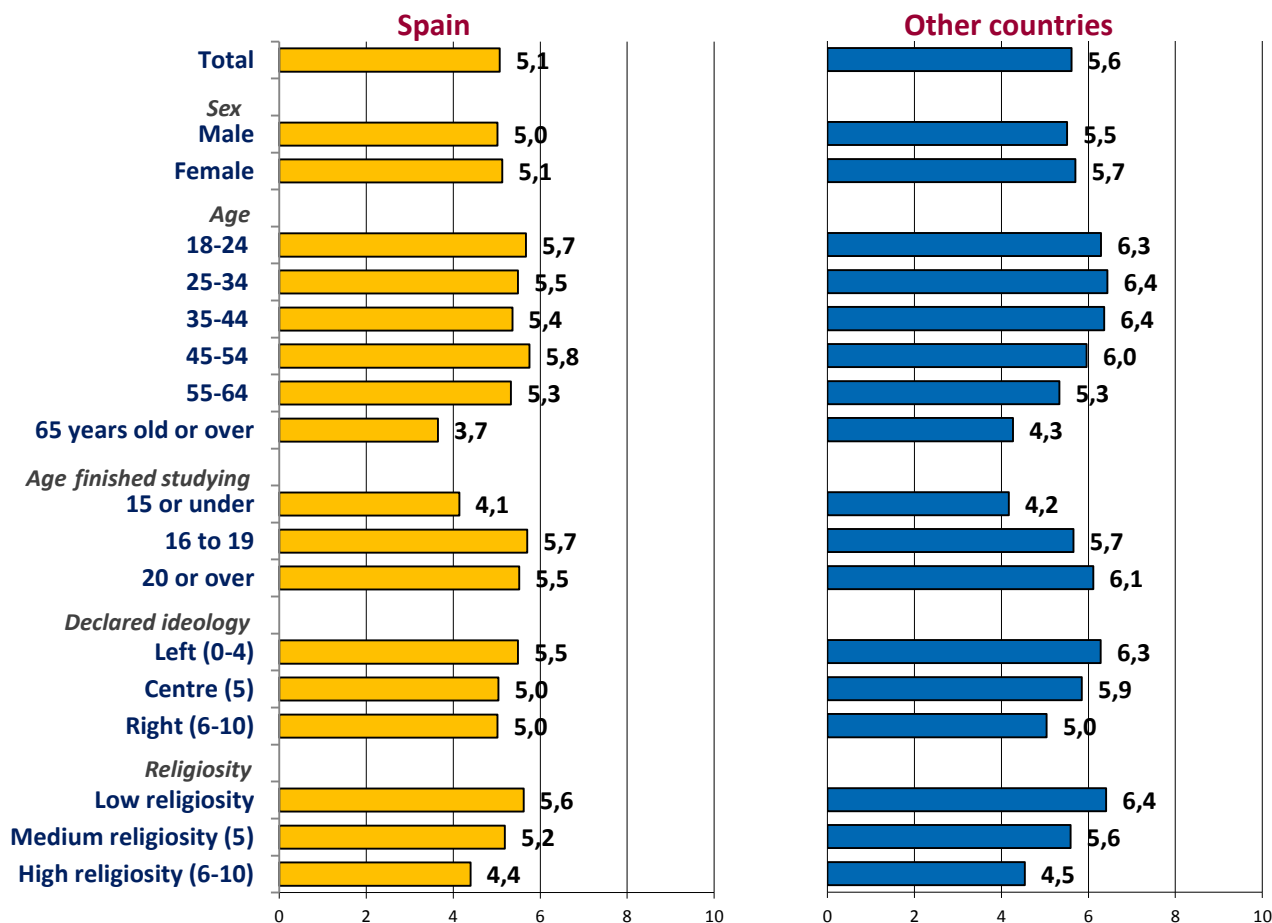
**Having a baby through a surrogate mother, that is, a woman who offers to carry the baby in her womb**



- Both in Spain and the other four countries on average, surrogacy is rejected by the 65 and over age group, those with fewest years of education and those declaring high religiosity.

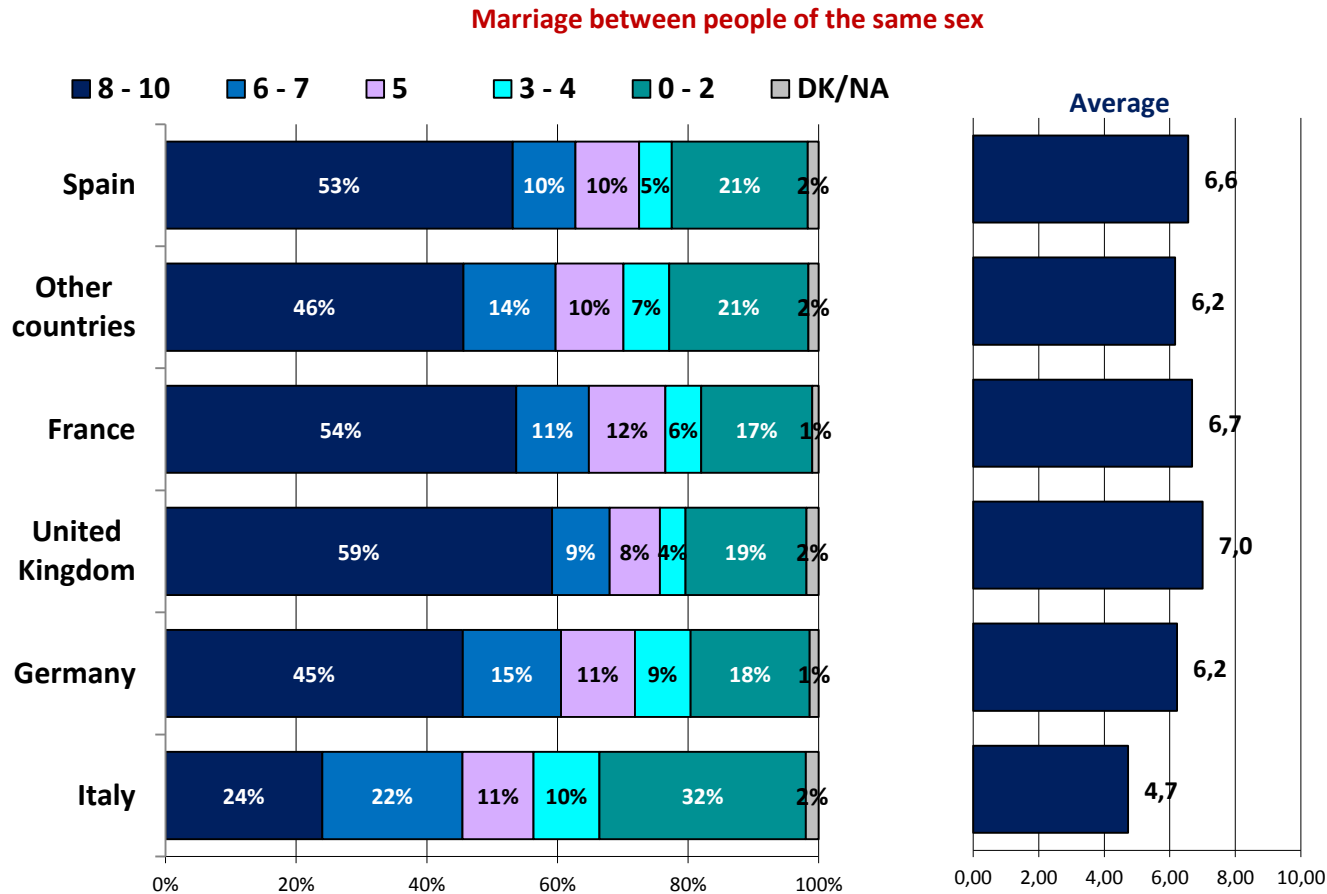
**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

**Having a baby through a surrogate mother, that is, a woman who offers to carry the baby in her womb**



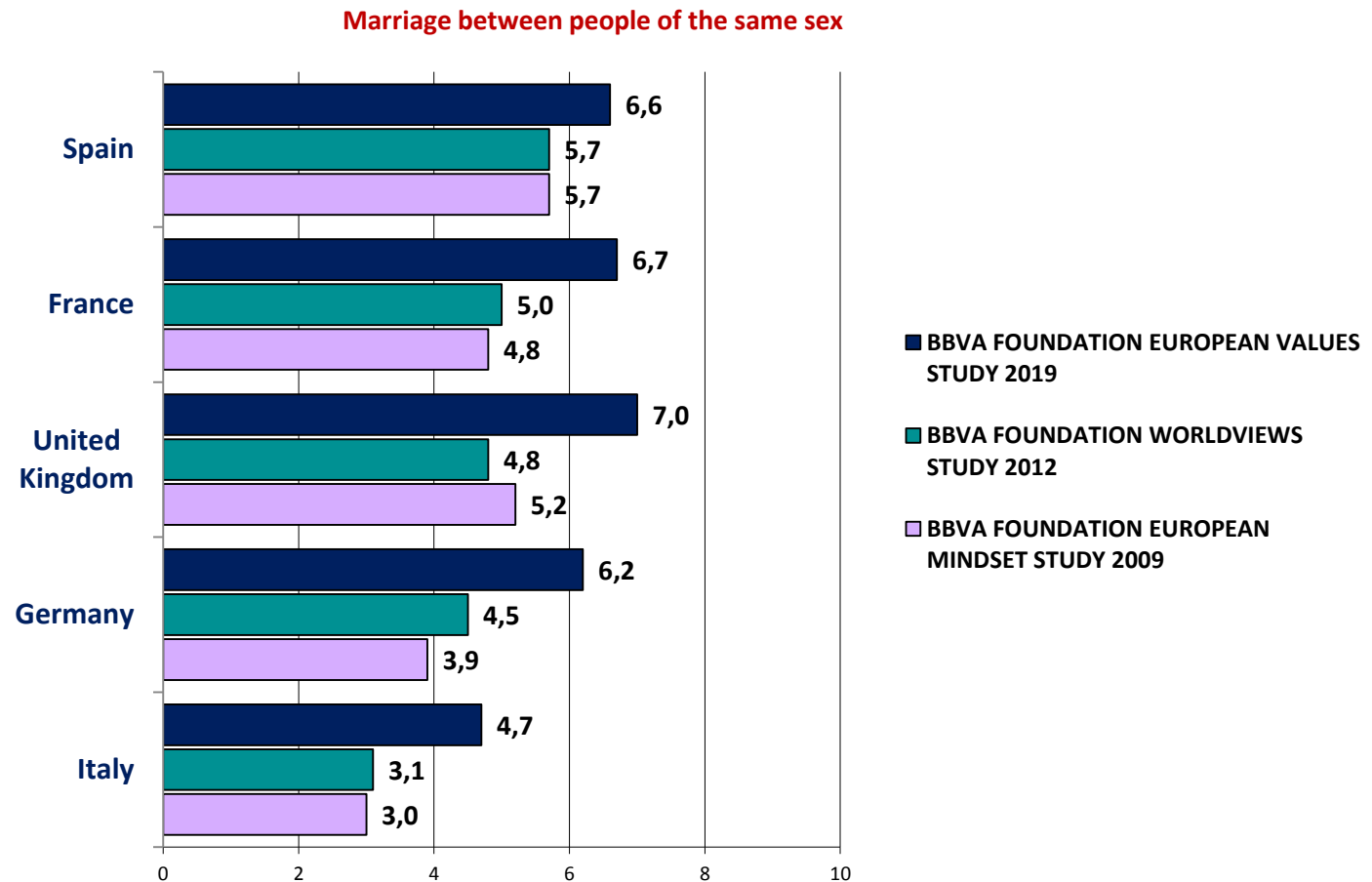
- An ample majority in all countries except Italy express acceptance of same-sex marriage, with majorities in the United Kingdom, France and Spain, and a relative majority in Germany at the top end of the acceptance scale (scores of 8 to 10).
- In Italy, conversely, the population is more evenly split between those who see it as acceptable and those opposed, although extreme rejection (0 to 2) wins out over maximum acceptance (8 to 10).

Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases



- Every country has undergone a significant shift in attitudes to same-sex marriage, with acceptance scores from one to two points higher than in 2012 and 2009.

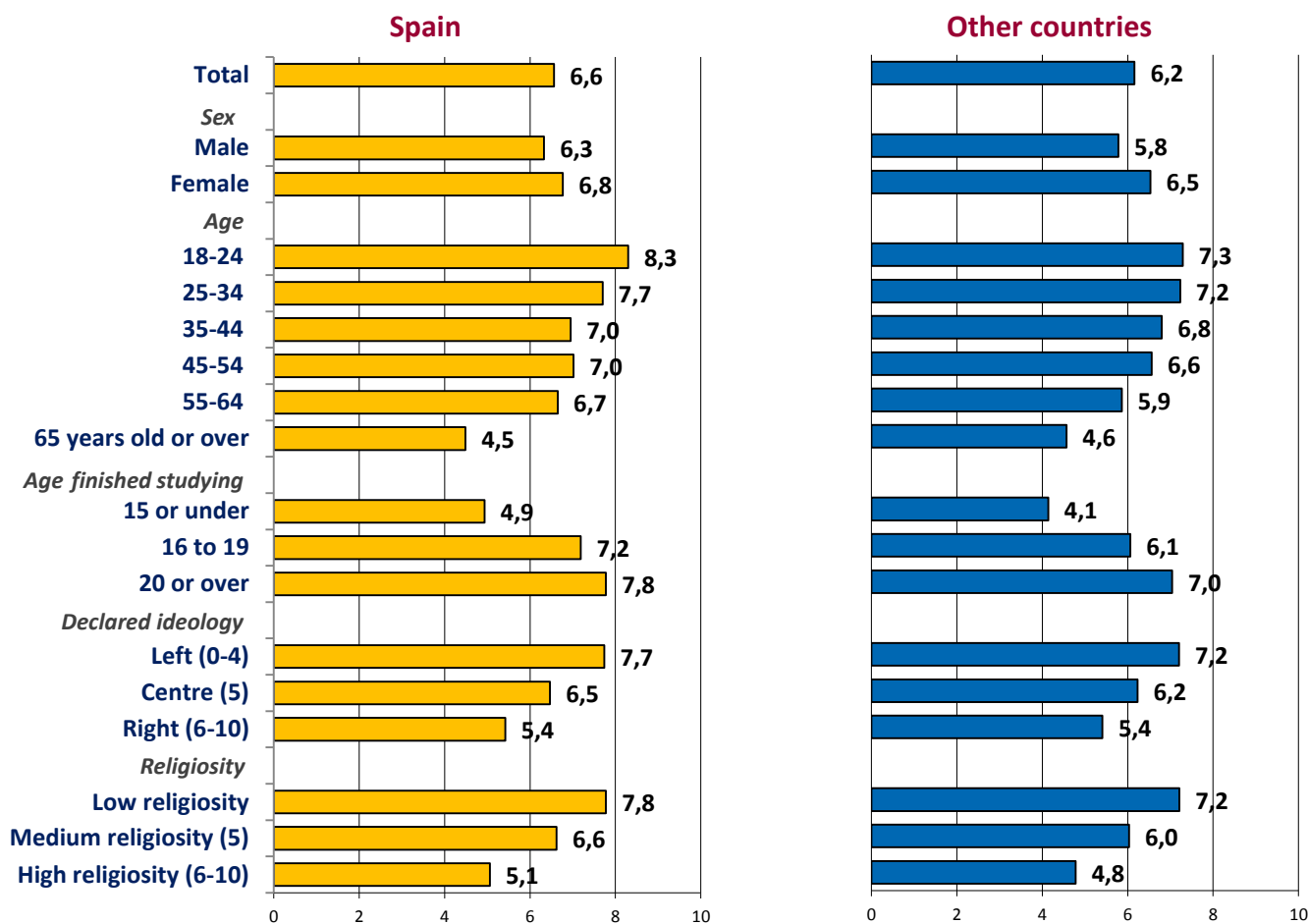
**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases



- Acceptance of same-sex marriage differs widely by segment, with age, educational level, political orientation and religiosity all influential factors. Levels of acceptance are also higher among women.

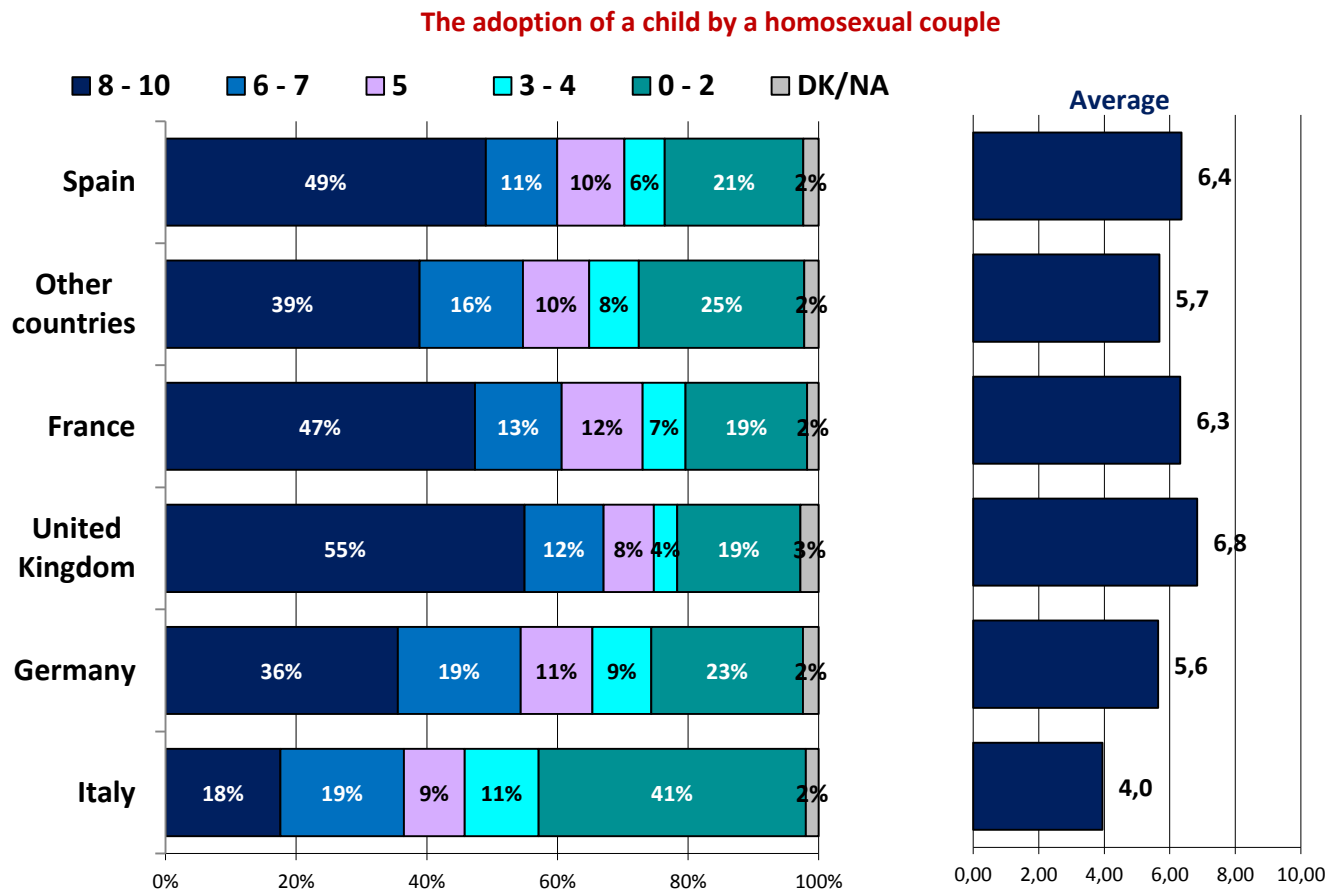
“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

Marriage between people of the same sex



- Majorities in every country except Italy accept adoption of children by homosexual couples, with the British to the fore, followed by the Spanish and the French. A majority of Italians, however, declare themselves against. While a majority or relative majority in all countries (less so Germany) are strongly accepting of this practice (scores of 8 to 10), Italy again bucks the trend with a relative majority at the extreme of outright rejection (0 to 2).

“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

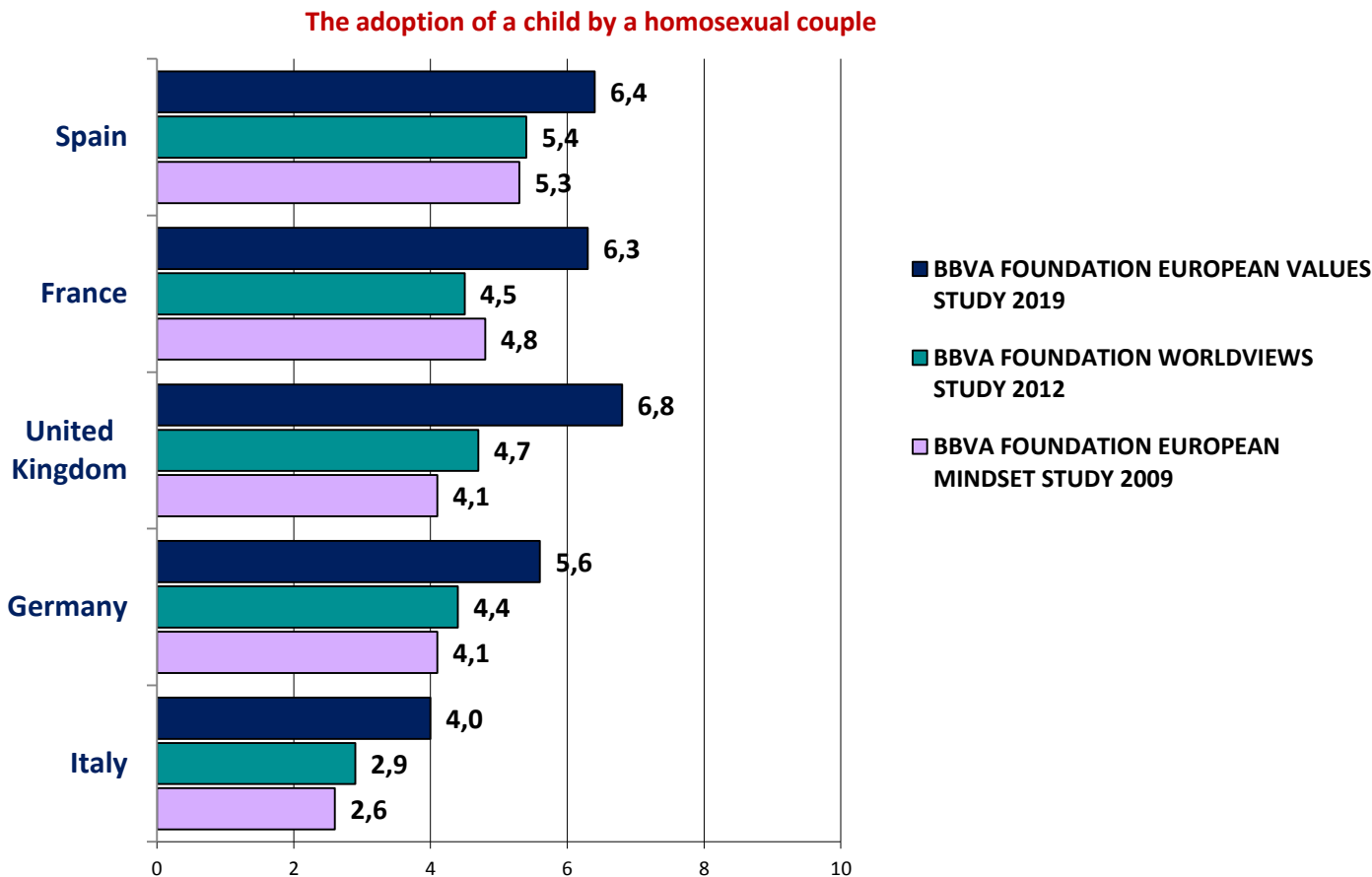




- Acceptance of the adoption of children by homosexual couples has also advanced significantly in the last ten years. While in 2009 the acceptance threshold was only passed in Spain, it is now also exceeded in France, the United Kingdom and Germany.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”**

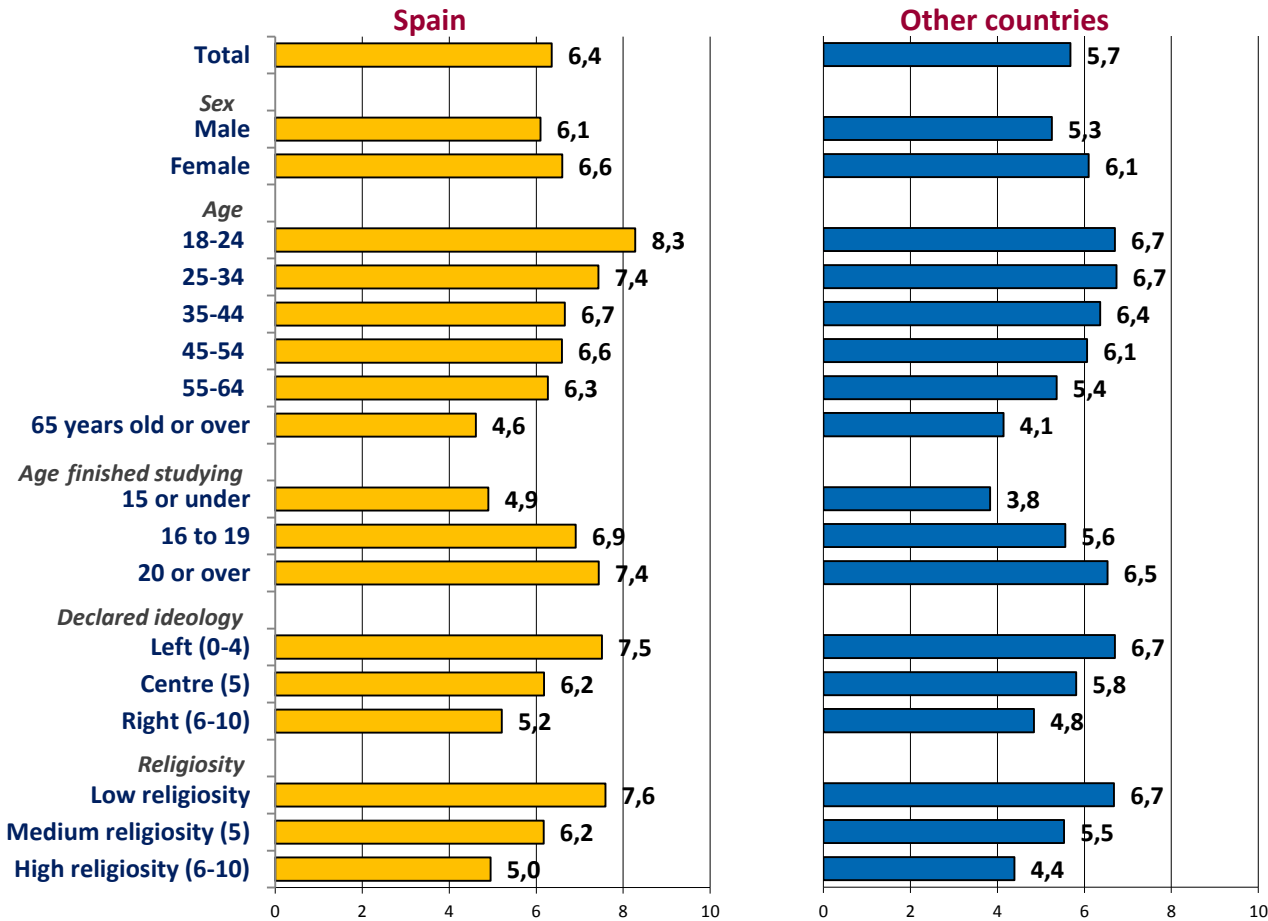
Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases



- Acceptance of the adoption of a child by homosexual couples rises sharply among younger age groups (18-24 and 25-34), those with university studies, those on the left and those of low religiosity.

“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?” Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

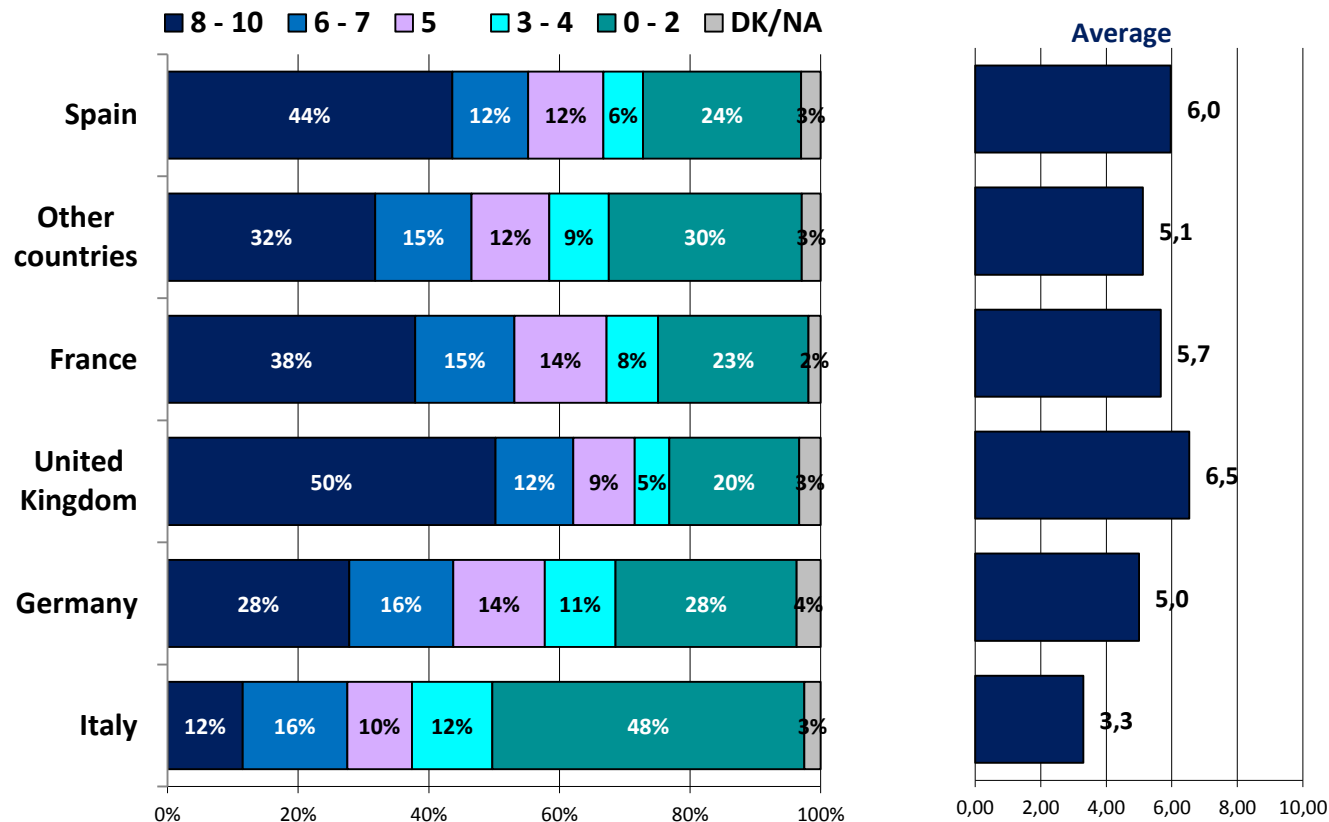
The adoption of a child by a homosexual couple



- The conception of a child by homosexual couples meets with majority acceptance in the United Kingdom, Spain and France, while in Germany there is a more even split between those accepting and those against. Italy lags considerably behind the European average with a large majority in the rejection zone, and almost half the population vigorously opposed.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”** Distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

## Conception of a child by homosexual couples using sperm or egg donors

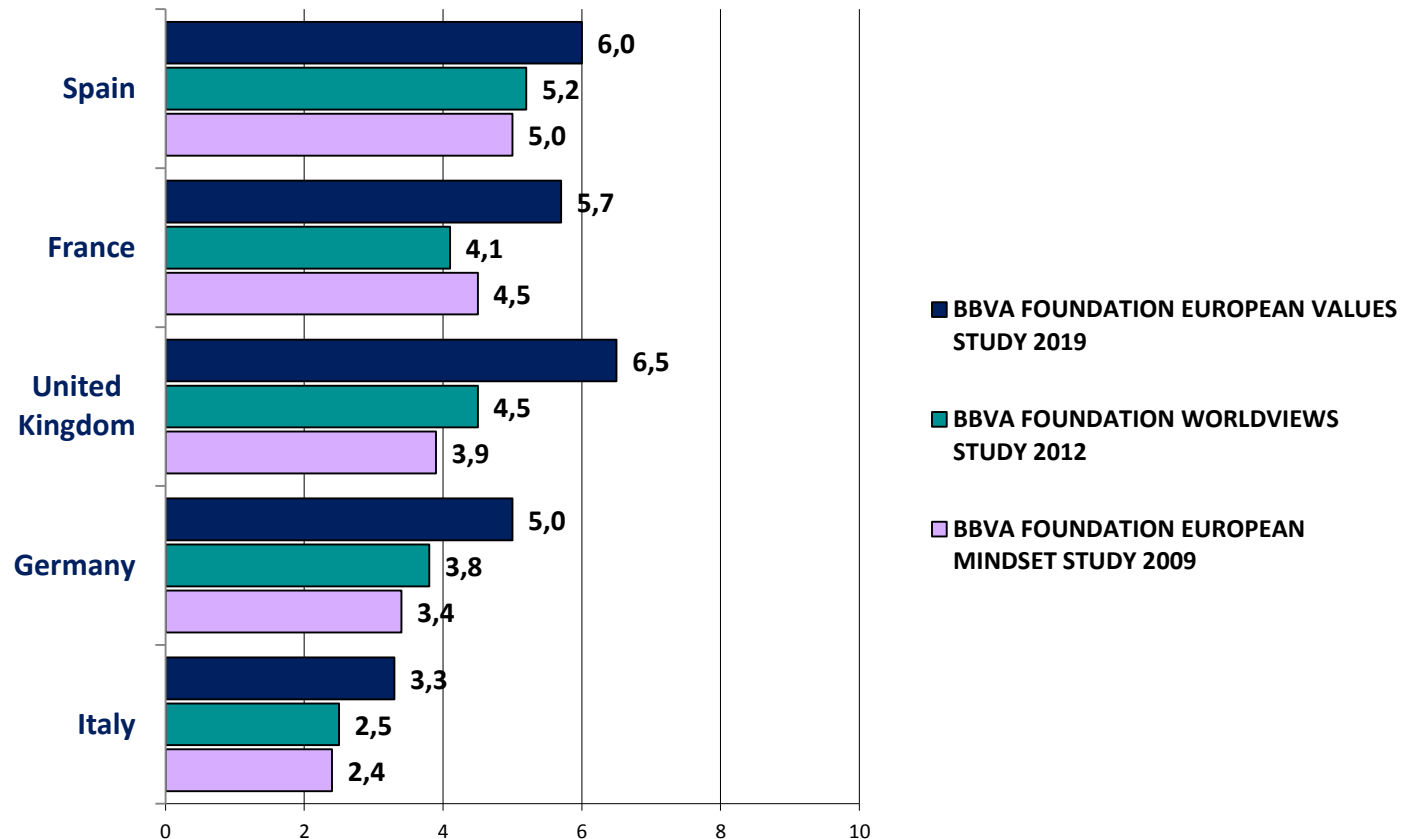


- A highly significant change in acceptance of homosexual couples conceiving a child is apparent in every country. In the United Kingdom, Germany and France, opinion has shifted from majority rejection of this practice to majority acceptance.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”**

Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

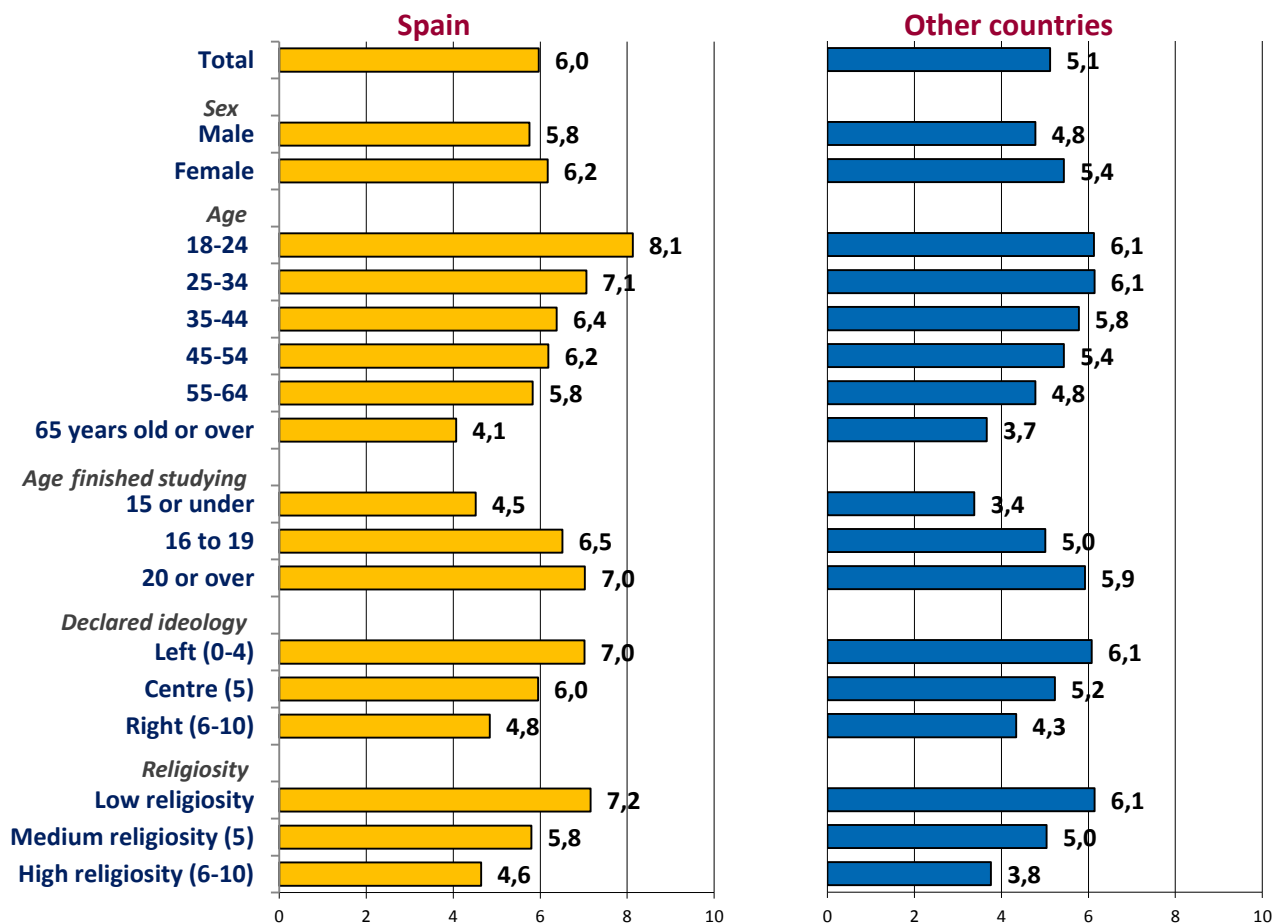
**Conception of a child by homosexual couples using sperm or egg donors**



- Acceptance of the conception of a child by homosexual couples is significantly higher among younger age groups (18-24 and 25-34), those with university studies, those on the left and those of low religiosity.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”** Average on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

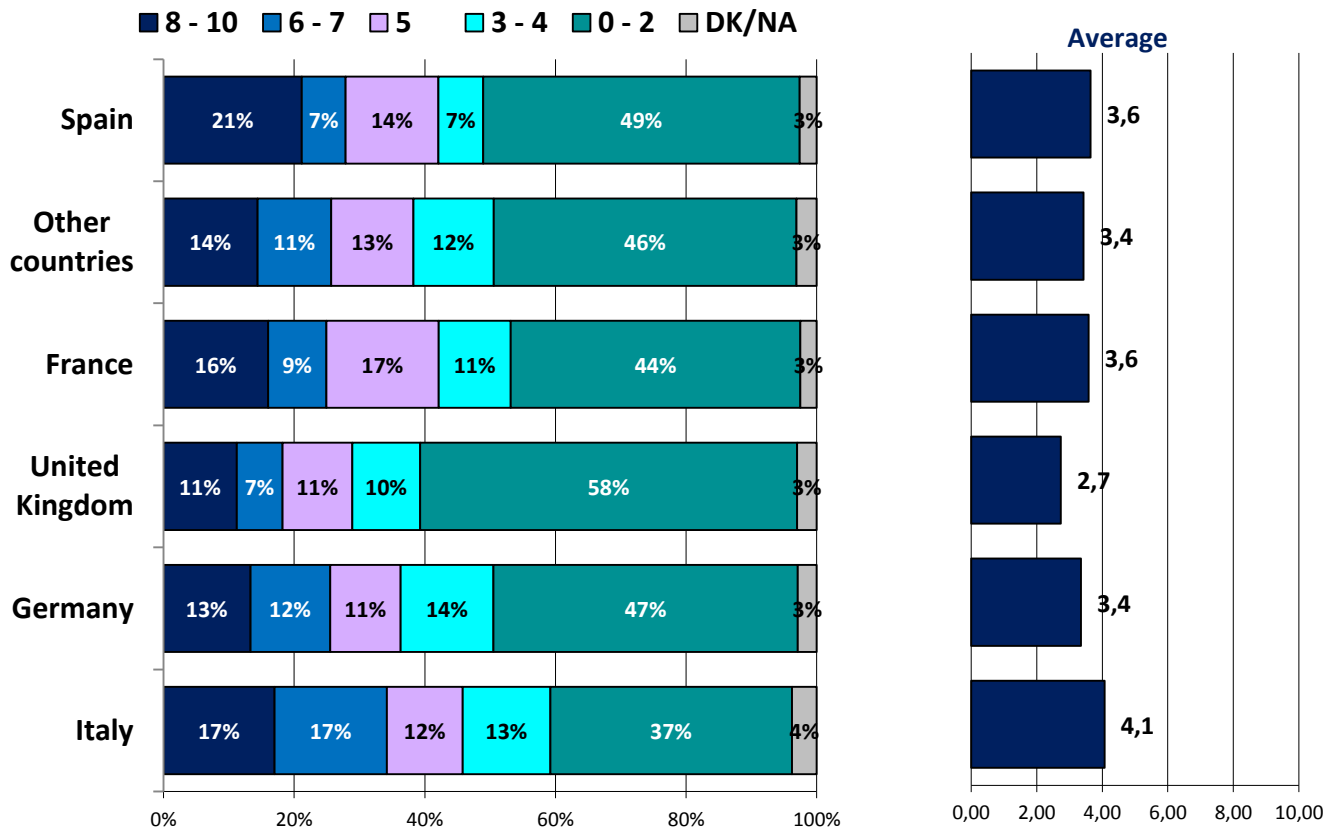
**Conception of a child by homosexual couples using sperm or egg donors**



- Rejection of infidelity is both firm and widespread in all survey countries. In this case, a majority or relative majority in every society stands at the lowest extreme of the acceptance scale (0 to 2), with this segment largest in the United Kingdom and smallest in Italy.

**“Do you think each of the situations or behaviours I am going to read out to you is acceptable or not?”** Distribution on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means you think the situation or behaviour is “completely unacceptable” and 10 means you think it is “completely acceptable”. Base: all cases

**Having sexual relations outside the couple**





## Conclusions



- Citizens in all survey counties express a high degree of satisfaction with their personal lives and feel they have considerable control over how their lives develop.
- The Spanish score particularly high in both personal satisfaction and perception of personal control, with improvement in both indicators with respect to 2012.
- Maximum trust is reserved for the family, though friends too are accorded high trust scores.
- Taking a broad look at interpersonal trust (beyond respondents' immediate circle) we can distinguish two sets of countries:

**Spanish, French and Italians:**

Lower level of interpersonal trust and a less altruistic perception of the individual (seen as looking out exclusively for themselves). They attach most importance to factors like the economic context and government policies in determining the social position a person can achieve.

**Germans and British:**

Higher level of interpersonal trust (in the majority of people) and a less selfish perception of the individual. They attach least importance to government policies and political contacts in determining the social position a person can achieve.



## THE ROLE OF RELIGION

### Shared views:

- Nowadays religions are more a source of conflict than of peace
- Nowadays religion does not provide answers to the important questions in people's lives

### Views shared by four countries except Italy:

- Dissent from the idea that society would be better if it paid more attention to religious values
- Rejection of any link between having religious beliefs and behaving in an ethical manner

## ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

### Shared views:

- Across-the-board consensus regarding the existence of ethical principles about what is right and what is wrong

### Divergence in the application of ethical principles:

- France and the United Kingdom, followed by Spain: greater flexibility in the application of ethical principles (which should be applied differently, depending on the circumstances of the moment)
- Germany and Italy: more division of opinion (whether they should be identically vs. selectively applied).

### Shared views:

- Consensus to the effect that sexual harassment, physical mistreatment and discrimination against women are widespread in our society.
- Acceptance of euthanasia and also, though less so, abortion.
- In all countries except Italy, citizens are accepting of new forms of coupledness and parenthood (same-sex marriage, adoption and conception by homosexual couples). Acceptance of all these practices has advanced with respect to 2012.
- Sexual relations outside the couple are considered unacceptable.

### New forms of coupledness and parenthood

Italy

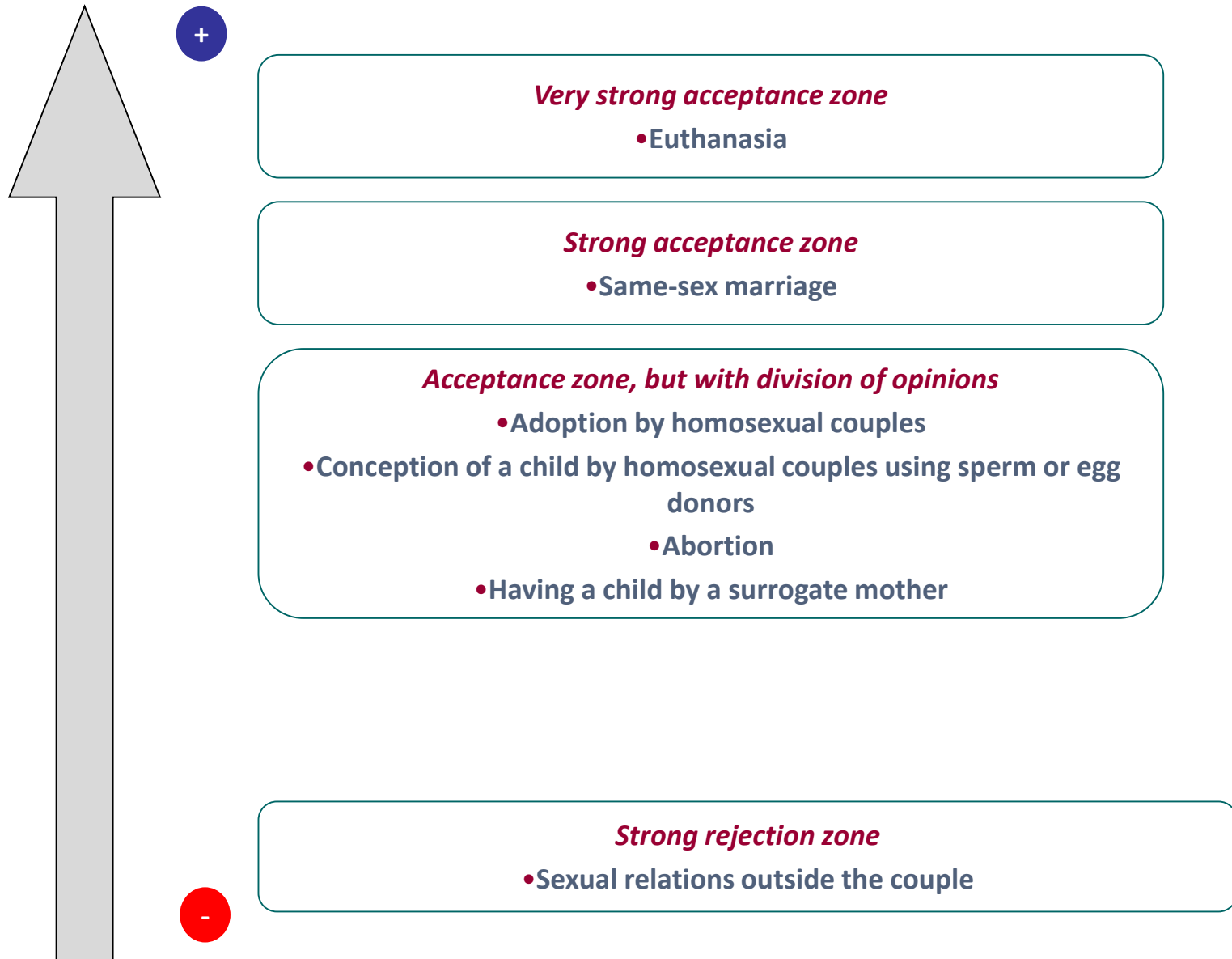
Germany

France

Spain

United  
Kingdom

- They believe that living with a partner and having children are pre-requisites for happiness and personal realisation
- Low acceptance of same-sex marriage, the adoption or conception of a child by homosexual couples, and having a child by a surrogate mother
- They do not see having a partner or having children as necessary pre-conditions for a happy and fulfilled life.
- Strong acceptance of same-sex marriage, the adoption or conception of a child by homosexual couples, and having a child by a surrogate mother



## TECHNICAL NOTES

- **Geographical scope of the study:** Germany, Spain, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom.
- **Universe:** in each country, the general population aged 18 and over.
- **Method:** administered face-to-face interview in the home.
- **Sample size and distribution:** 1,500 cases in each of the 5 countries. Multistage sample distribution stratified by region (NUTS classification or equivalent)/size of habitat, with primary units selected by lot at municipal level. Individuals randomly selected.
- **Sampling error:** The estimated sampling error is +/- 2.6% in each country for a confidence level of 95.5% and in the worst-case scenario ( $p=q=0.5$ ).
- **Survey period:** April to July 2019
- **Weighting:** Total European results are arrived at by weighting each country's data according to its population weight in the universe of European countries surveyed.
- **Fieldwork:** coordinated and executed by the IPSOS network.
- **Study design and analysis:** BBVA Foundation Department of Social Studies and Public Opinion.