



CEDEFOP

European Centre
for the Development
of Vocational Training



Skills and jobs

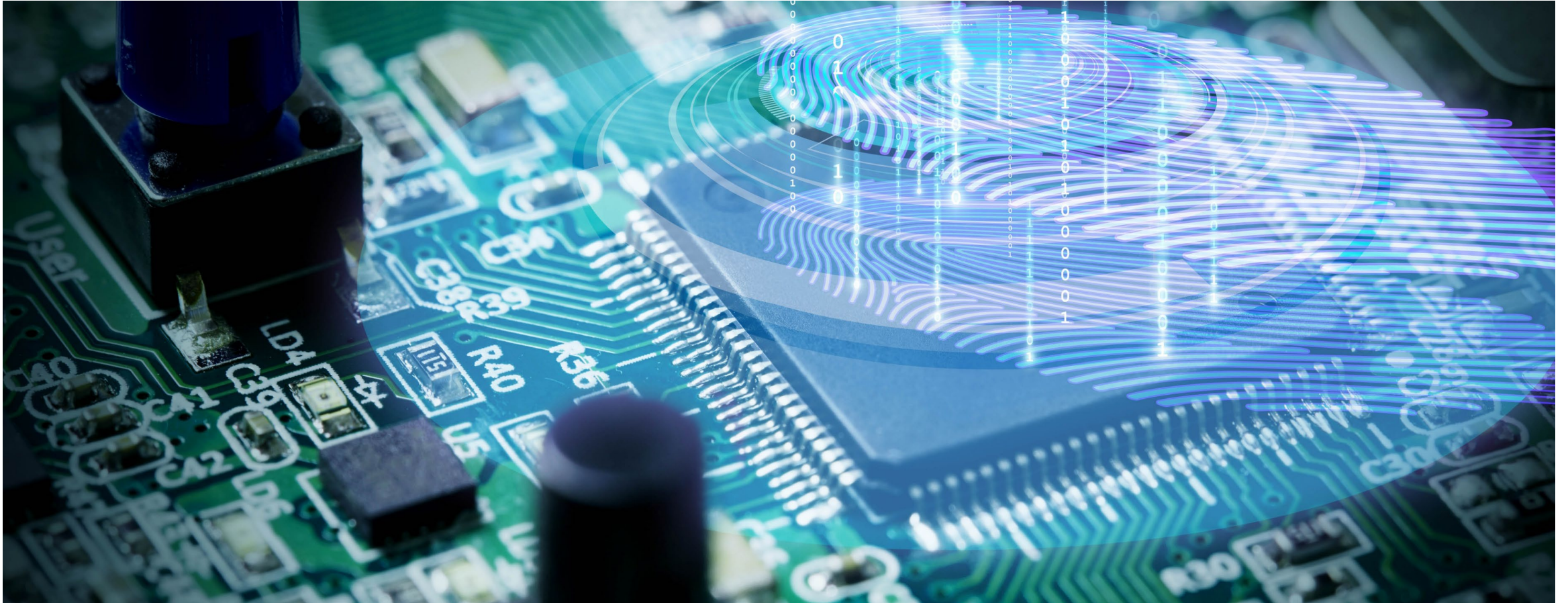
How SMEs go digital

Jasper van Loo (Department coordinator at Cedefop)
Franz Eiffe (Research manager at Eurofound)

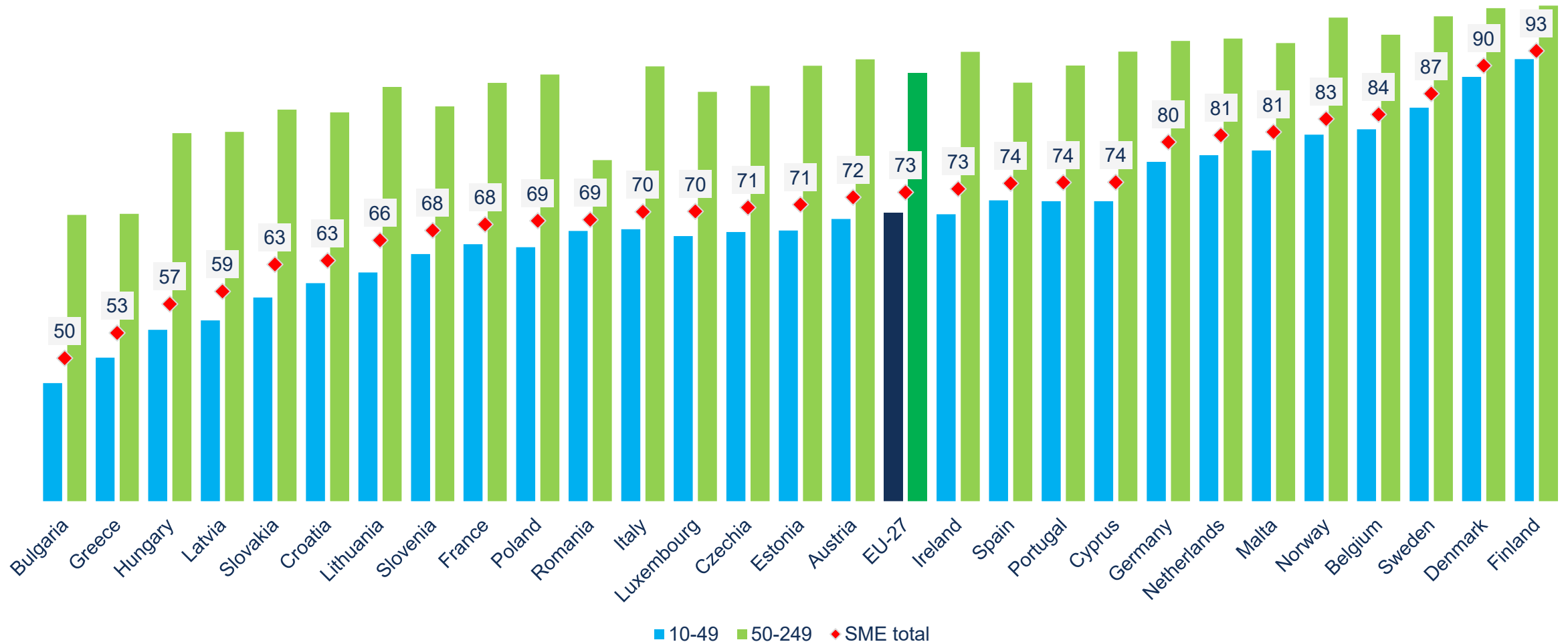
Cedefop virtual get-together December 2, 2025



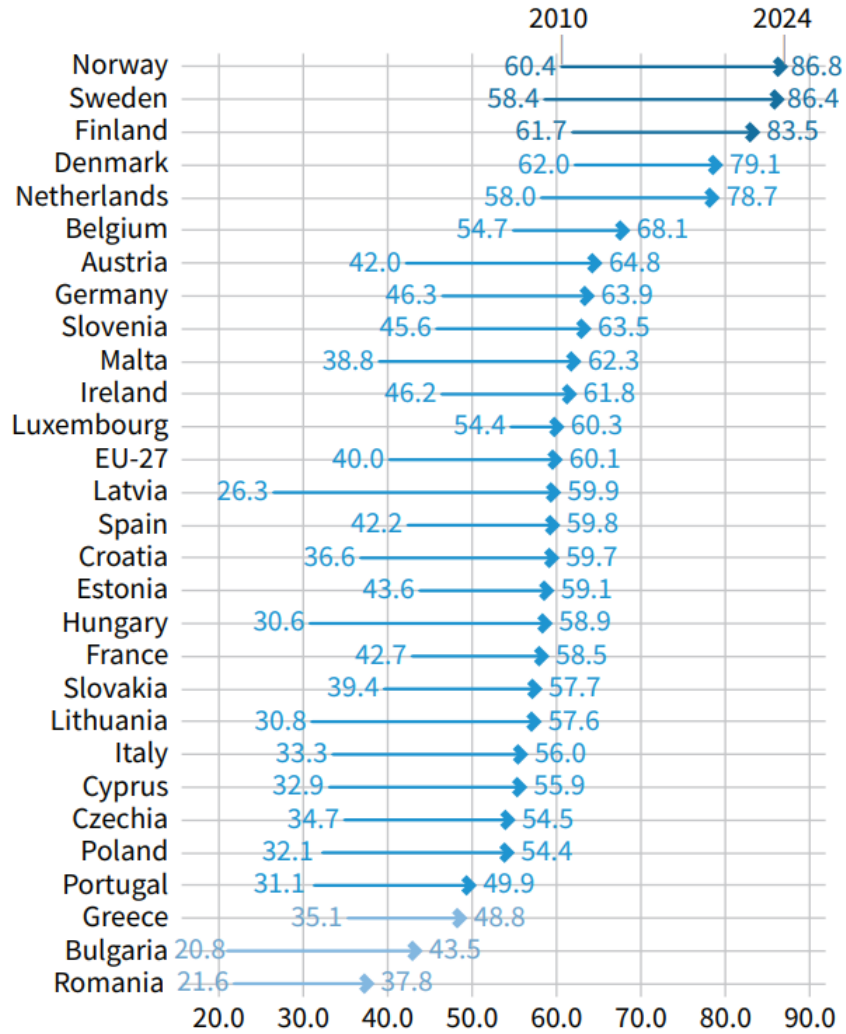
Digitalisation in SMEs – what do the numbers show?



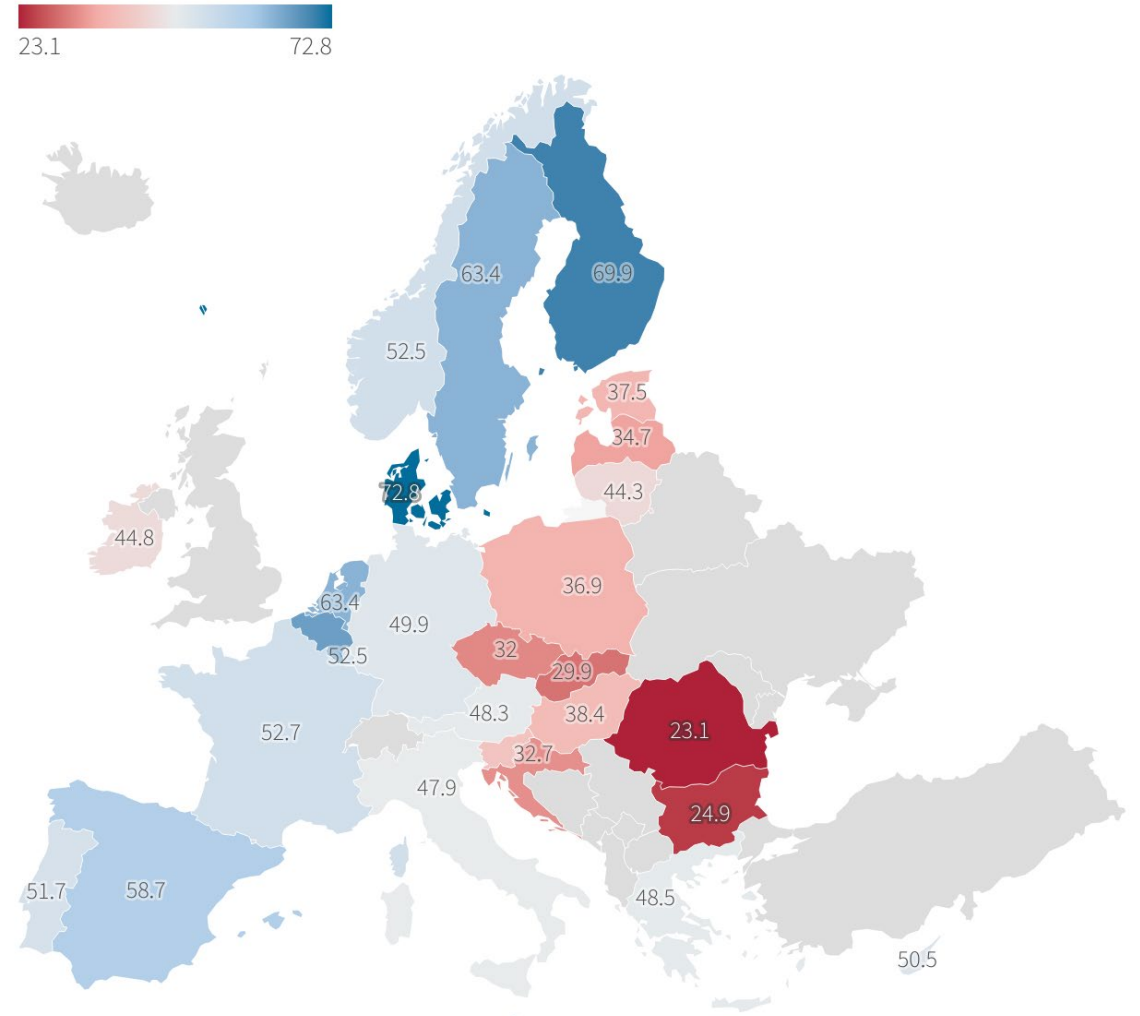
Basic level of digital intensity in 2024 (% of SMEs)



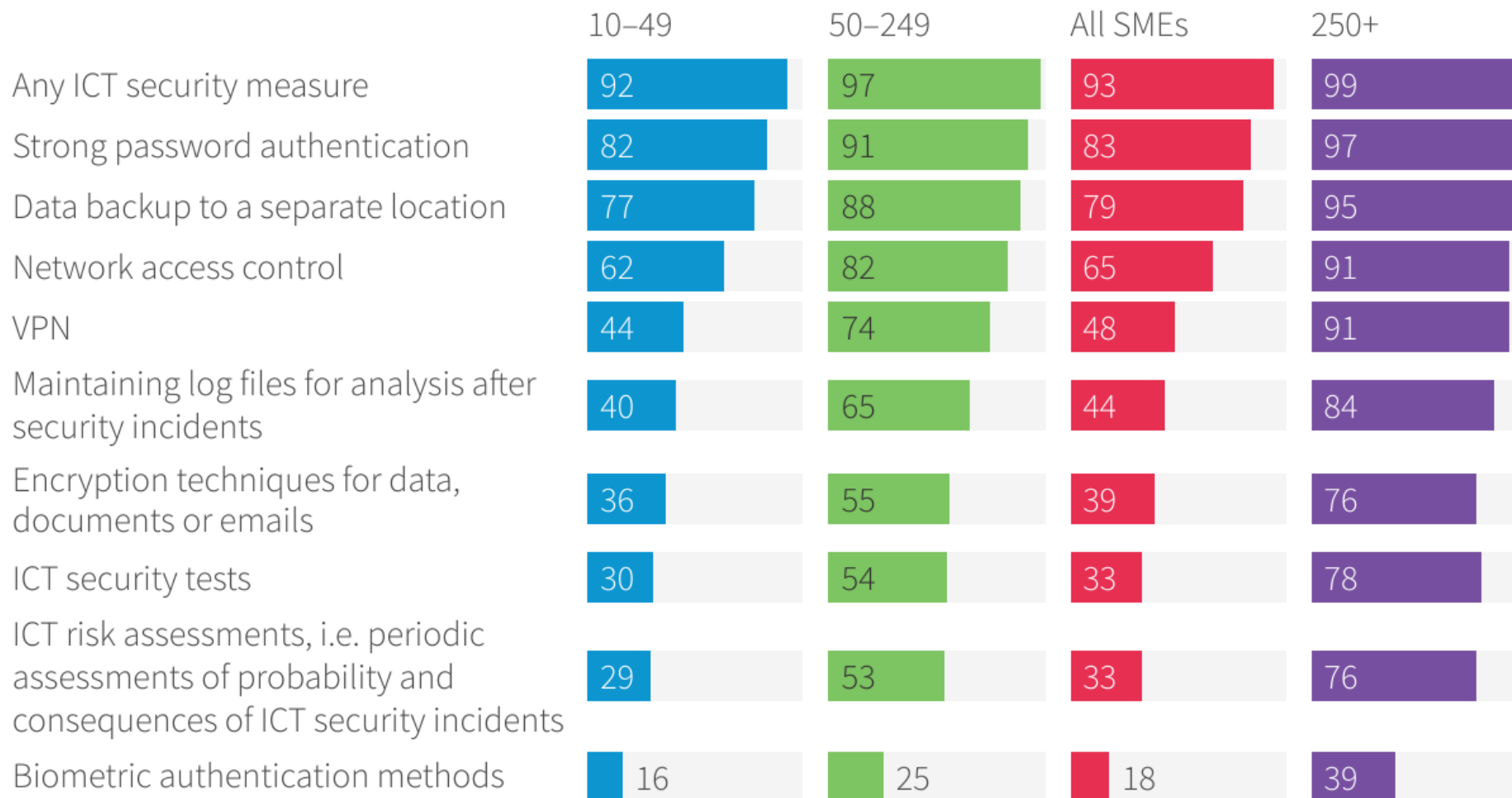
Use of computers and the internet by employees in SMEs (% , 2010-24)



E-business adoption rates in 2024 (% of SMEs)

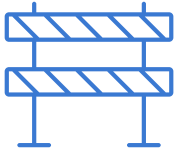


ICT security measures in 2024 (% by enterprise size)

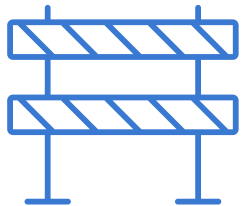


Barriers to digitalisation, AI adoption, and online sales

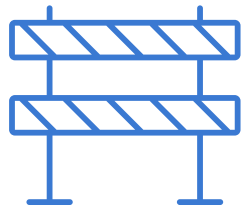
Narrow/
Standard AI



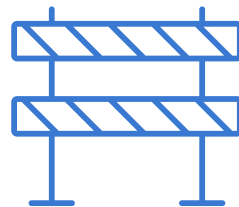
Low awareness
of benefits



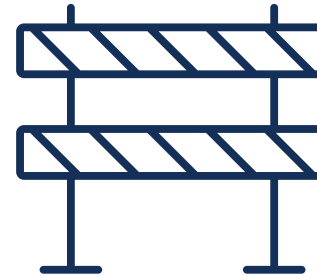
Local markets



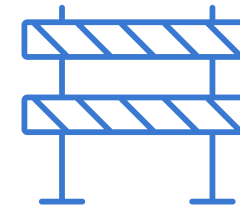
Reluctant
customers



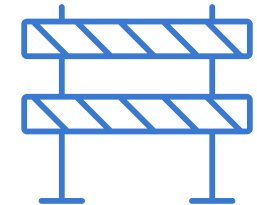
Digital skills
gaps



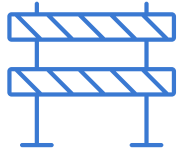
Digitalisation at
process level



Fragmentation/
Outside of networks



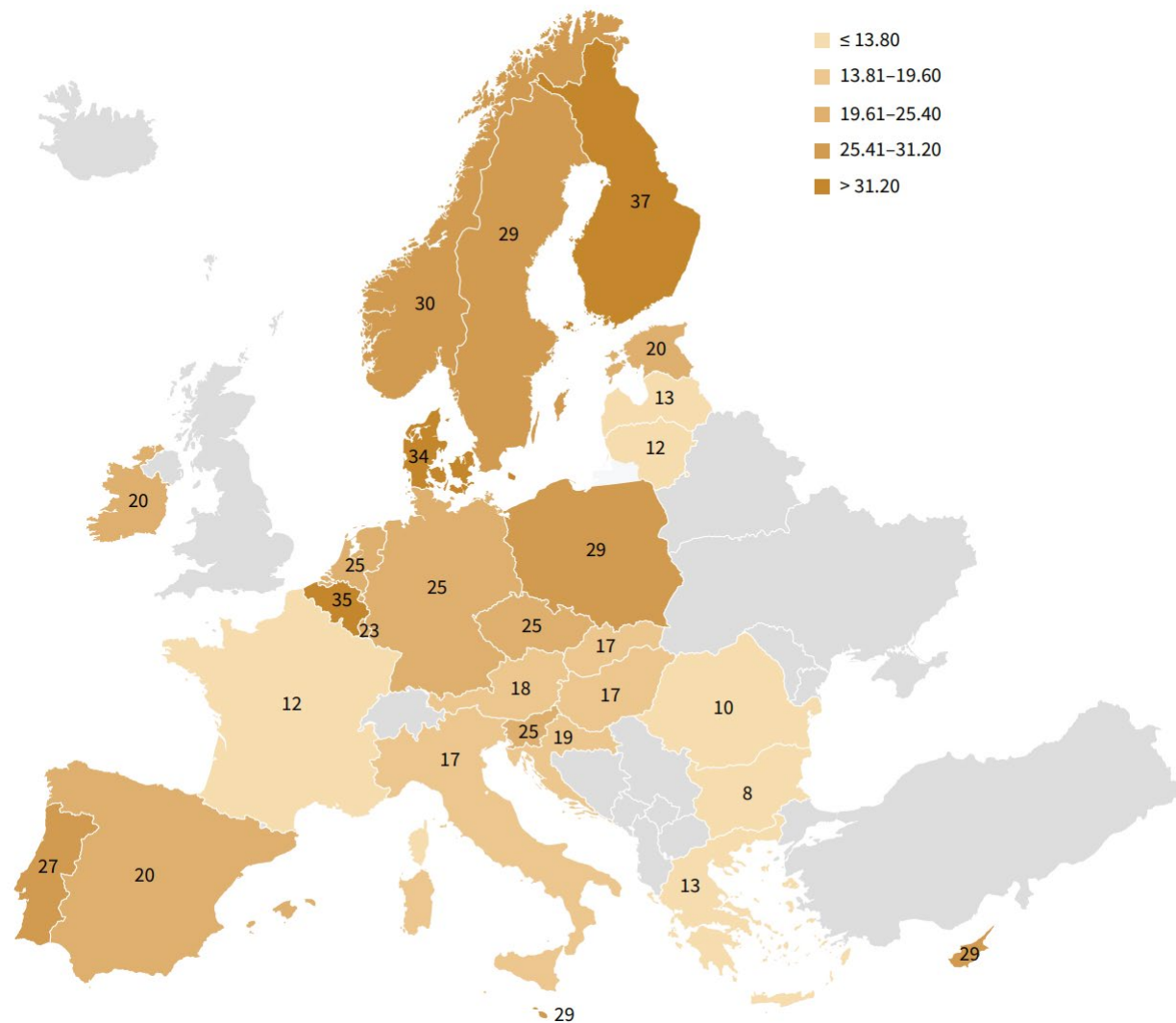
Funding and
red tape



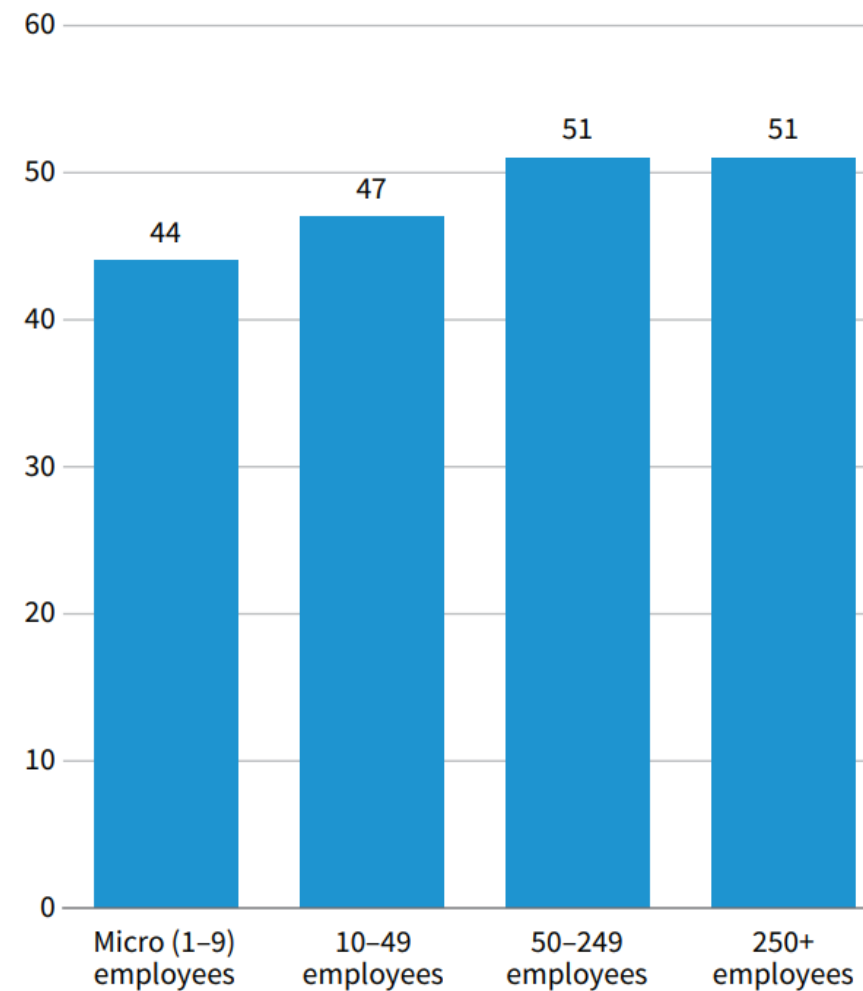
Digital skills training in SMEs



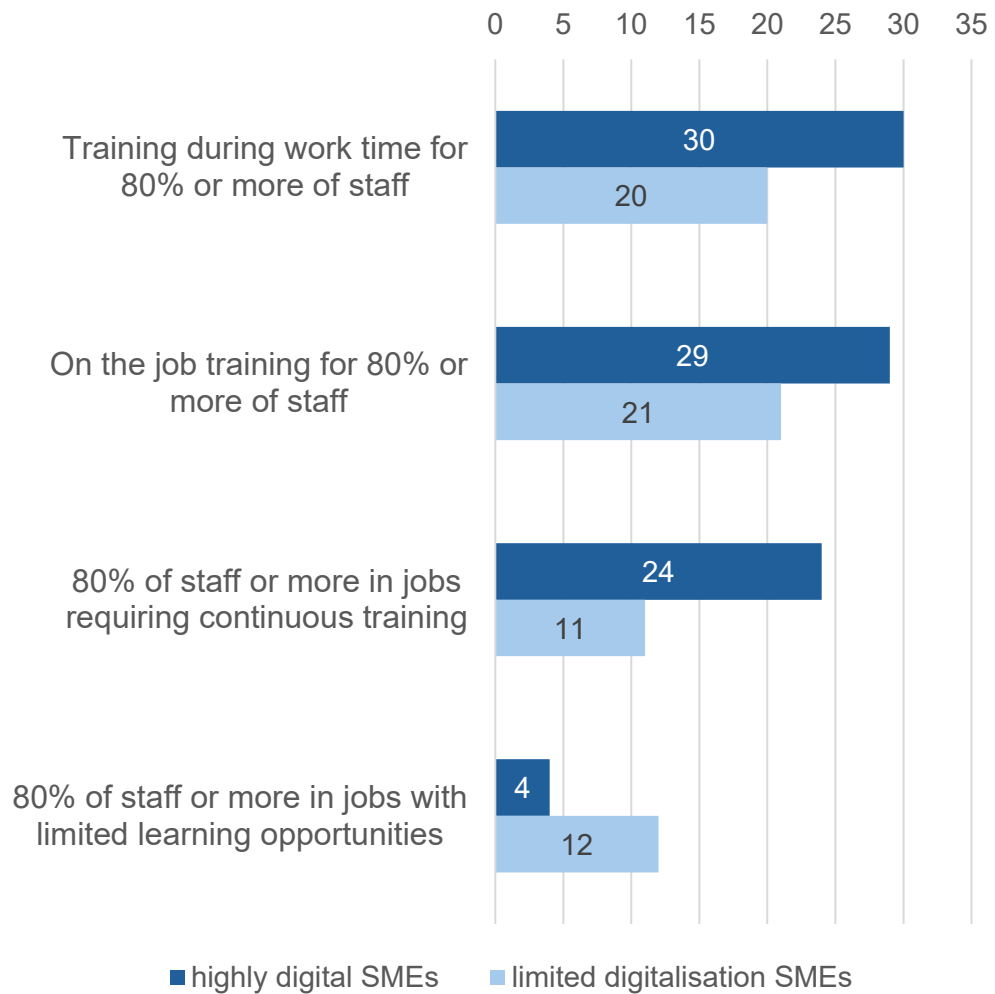
SMEs providing training to staff to develop ICT skills, EU-27 and Norway, 2024 (%)



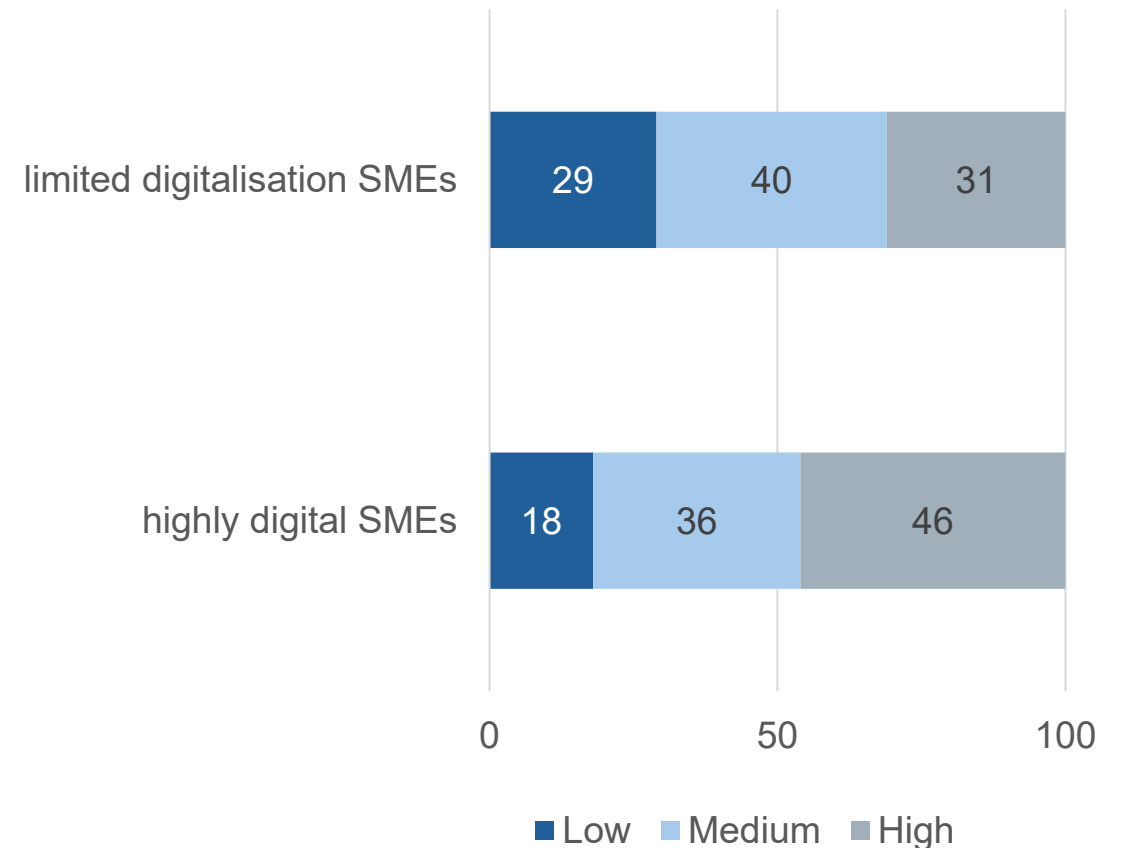
Trained adult workers participating in digital skills training in SMEs, EU-27, 2021 (%)



Training and jobs in high- and low-digital SMEs (% of SMEs)



Perceived importance of training in high and low-digital SMEs (% of SMEs)



Securing digital skills in SMEs

Challenges

- Shortages and high costs of ICT professionals
- Rural areas more impacted
- Salary differences with big firms
- Business management's lack of openness and limited digital savviness
- reskilling towards a profound transformation of professional identity.
- Double cost when staff train externally
- limited availability of training programmes specifically designed for entrepreneurs

Opportunities

- Skills-based migration programmes (e.g. CZ)
- EU Open digital maturity assessment tool and national tools (e.g. LU, FI, FR)
- Vouchers, training funds, grants, tax credits
- Digital maturity funding (e.g. ES), RRP funded programmes, programmes for managers
- Leveraging on-the-job training as the most practical and effective method for arranging learning opportunities for SMEs
- Mentoring and reverse mentoring
- network-based structure to enhance effectiveness of upskilling and reskilling efforts (e.g. FR, IE)
- Partnerships with larger companies

Job quality and digitalisation



Three groups of “digital workplaces”

1. Digital tools and collaboration (D&C)

- Collaborative tools,
- Remote meetings,
- Automatic task allocation

% of workers

33

2. Work automation and monitoring (A&M)

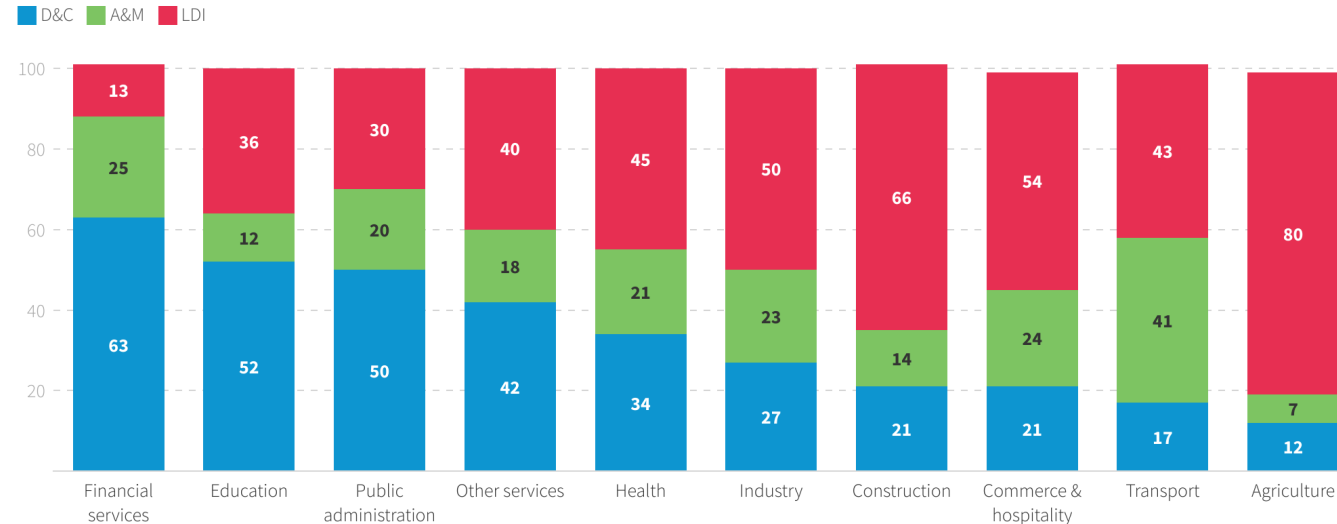
- Automated allocation of working time
- Automated performance monitoring
- High computer use

21

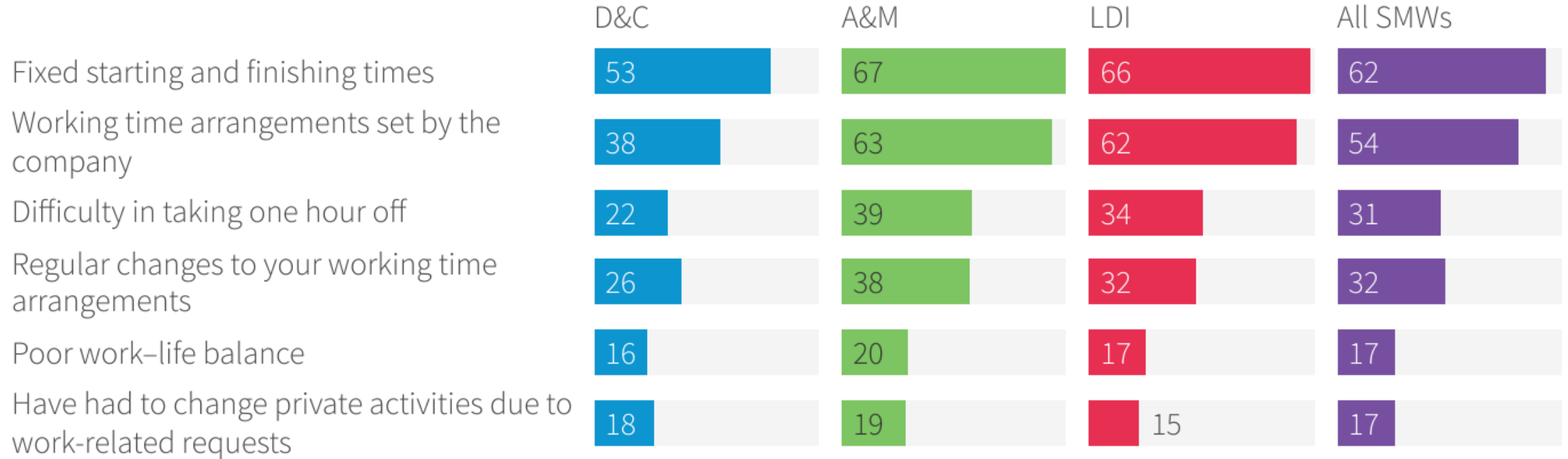
3. Low digital intensity (LDI)

- Low degree of digitalisation
- Less likely to use advanced digital technologies

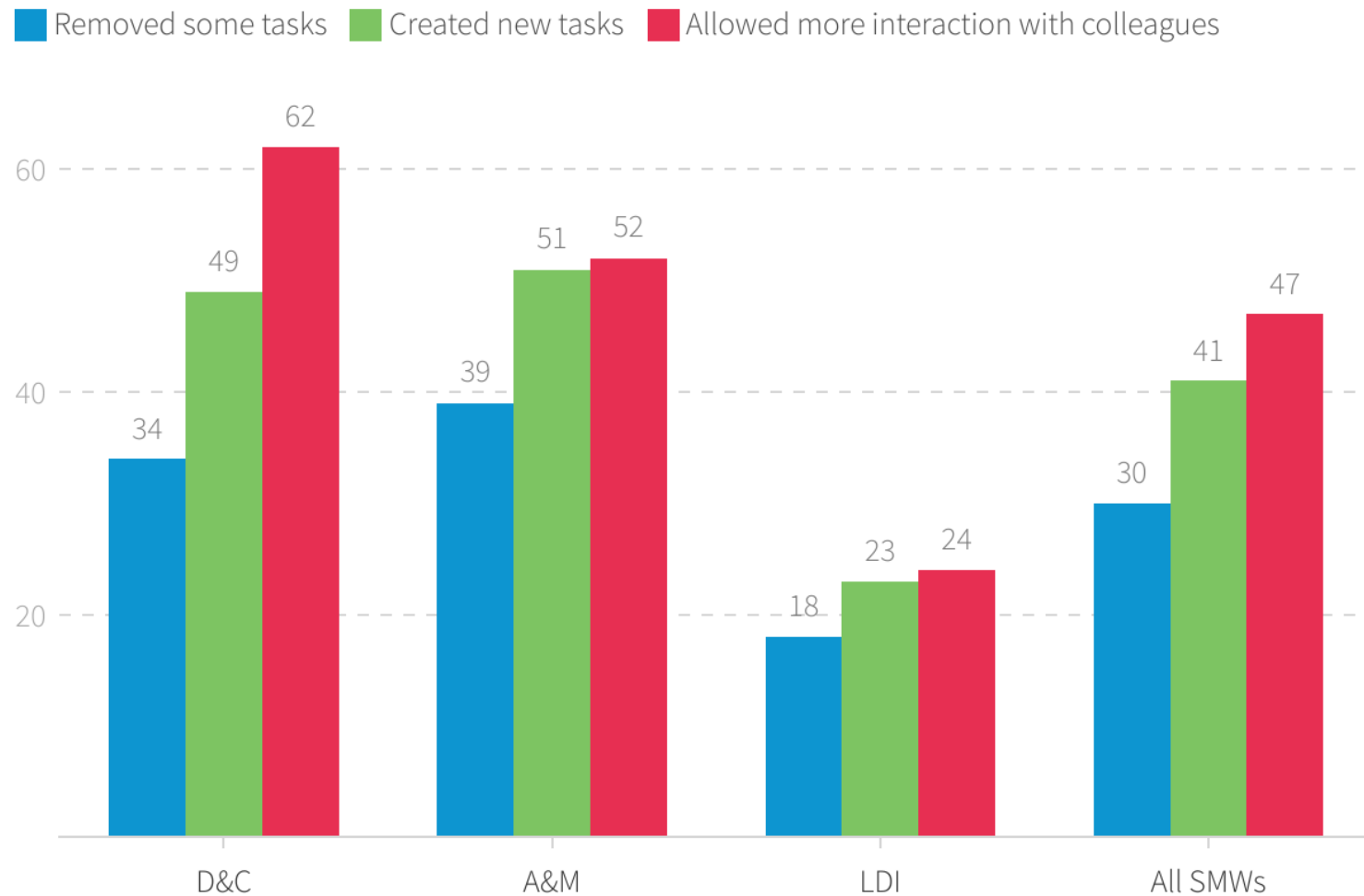
47



Working time arrangements and flexibility



Technology impact



Source: Eurofound, EWCS 2024



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Skills and jobs

How SMEs go digital

Thank you!





- Leverages Eurostat, Eurofound and Cedefop data about digitalisation and SMEs
- Insights from **over 80 interviews** with SME organisations, government representatives, research organisations, training providers and trade unions



Policy pointers and key-take aways

Reactive digitalisation → need to train and support owners, leaders and managers to build strategic vision

RRF miss SME needs → require targeted, low-bureaucracy schemes → SME organisations are key channels for successful policies

Weak monitoring/ evaluation culture → too much focus on spending, not outcomes → need stronger impact evaluation