

**STRENGTH
2FOOD**

FOOD QUALITY
FOR SUSTAINABILITY
AND HEALTH

H2020 Strength2Food project evidence on consumer evaluation and use of PDO and PGI logos

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Eurobarometer views versus use in decisions

Eurobarometer evidence ([European Commission, 2020](#)) suggests widespread support for the principles underlying GIs:

81% of EU citizens believe that having a specific label ensuring *the quality of the product* is very or fairly important in their decision to buy food products

82% of EU citizens believe that respecting *local tradition and "know-how"* is very or fairly important in their decision to buy food products

81% of EU citizens believe that *coming from a geographical area that they know* is very or fairly important in their decision to buy food products

However, both Strength2Food quantitative survey ([Hartmann et al. 2019a](#)) and ethnographic ([Amilien et al. 2018](#)) evidence that use of PDO/PGI logos in consumer decision making is limited. For example, only 17% and 24% say they take into account PDO and PGI labels when grocery shopping, respectively. Gap between values and behaviour



What is needed for consumers to use a label in their decision making?

1. **Recognition / easily recognisable**
2. **Understanding of attributes behind the label / easy to understand, so can make an informed choice**
3. **Perceived value of those attributes (tangible, intangible benefits)**
4. **Trustworthiness (deliver on promises)**



Strength2Food survey evidence on label recognition, understanding and trustworthiness ([Hartmann et al. 2019a](#))

4 EU Labels



PDO (Protected Designation of Origin):



PGI (Protected Geographical Indication):



TSG (Traditional Speciality Guaranteed):



Organic



Recognition and Use

14 National/Regional Labels



France



Germany



Hungary



Italy



UK



Norway



Serbia

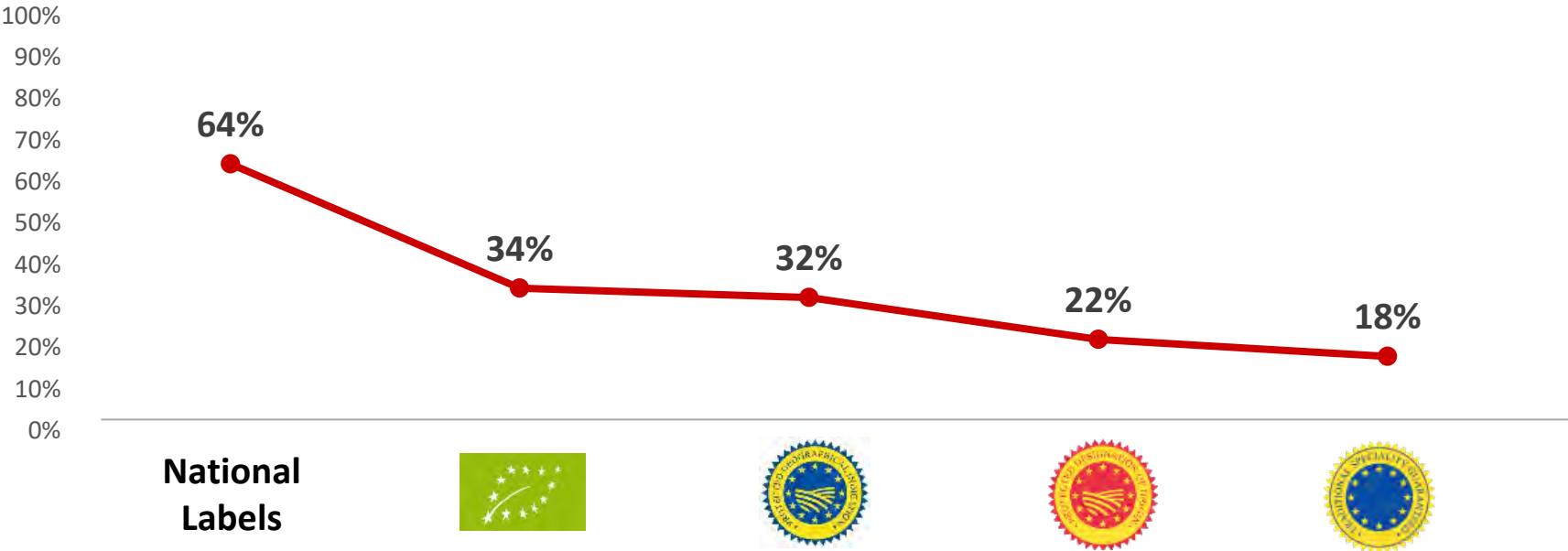


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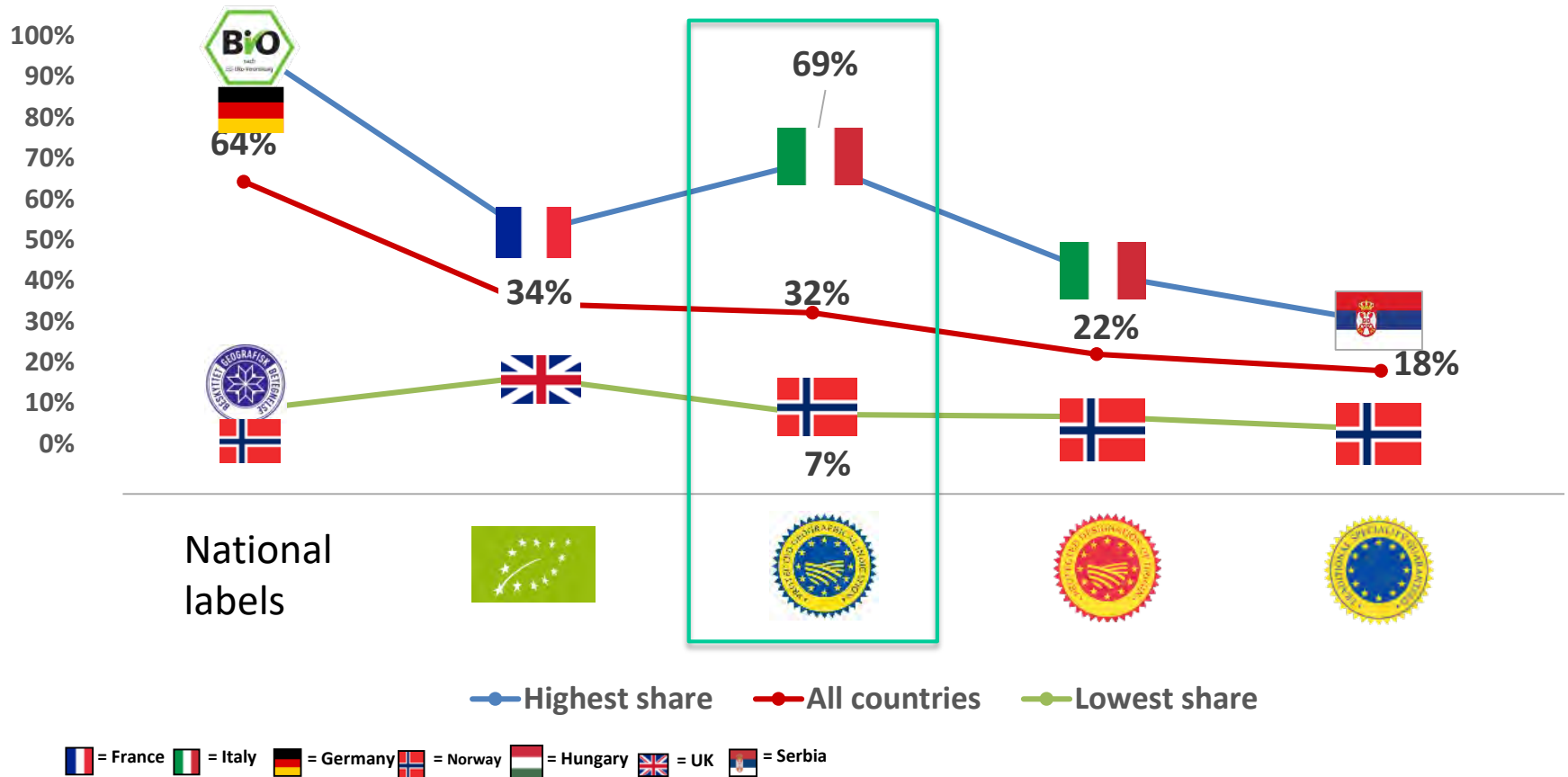


Low Overall Recognition of EU Food Quality Labels Compared to National Labels



Source: [Hartmann et al. 2019a](#)

Considerable Differences in Recognition of Labels by Country



Source: [Hartmann et al. 2019a](#)

Understanding of PDO/PGI labels very low

Tested by asking respondents to separate out a group of true and false statements relating to PDO and PGI labels ([Hartmann et al. 2019a](#)).

Considerable confusion between PDO and PGI. Majority think the PDO criteria defines the PGI label

Only a small minority (12% to 21%, depending on country) knows that PGI is an EU label. Only 5% to 15%, depending on country, understand PGI independent registration separate from producer and retailer. Similar picture for PDO.

Better but not great understanding of PDO/PGI amongst those who recognise and use the logos.



PDO/PGI versus national labels

Overall, PDO and PGI labels, have low consumer-based brand equity.

For whole sample – moderate evaluation of PDO/PGI logos in terms of label attractiveness, ease of understanding, clarity, trustworthiness.

More positive evaluations when considering only those who recognise and use label.

National organic and other national food quality labels (e.g. RSPCA Assured in UK) have substantially higher level of recognition and trust. More likely also to pay attention to these national labels when grocery shopping.

Important to understand therefore that low label recognition and use not inevitable.



What should be done to address the problems in consumer recognition, understanding and use of PDO/PGI?

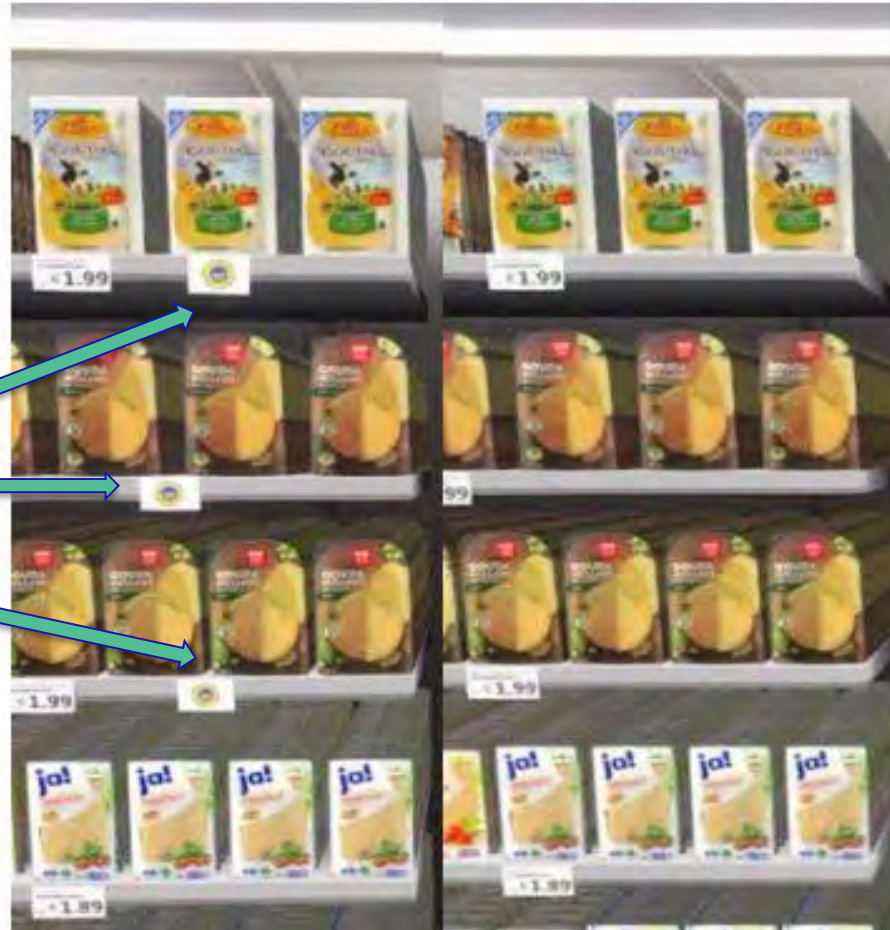
Would relaxation of rules on size of logos / placing help?

Is label modification warranted?



Experiment manipulating display of PDO/PGI labels in virtual supermarket ([Hartmann et al. 2019b](#))

Treatment Group
Half of the sample went through a supermarket where PDO/PGI logos were displayed on shelves.



Control Group
Half of the sample went through the otherwise same supermarket but PDO/PGI logos were NOT displayed on shelves.

Results of experiment manipulating display of PDO/PGI labels in virtual supermarket

For cheese, no significant differences in purchase between the treatment and control groups (holds for all 3 countries)

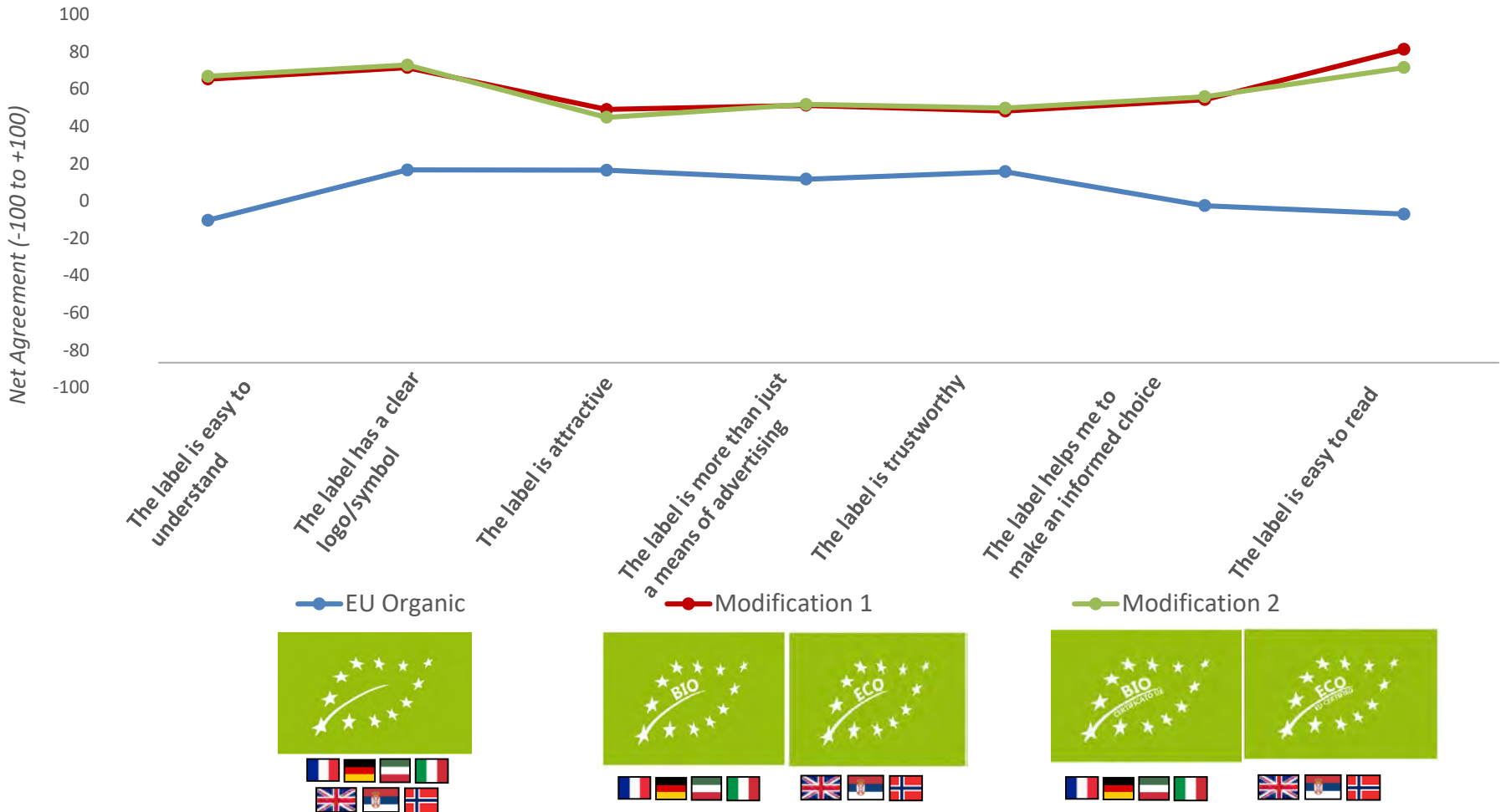
Same pattern for cured ham

Between treatment and control groups, no significant differences in trust or understanding of PDO/PGI

Key message: size of PDO/PGI logos is of secondary importance if consumers do not understand or recognise them



Modification of the EU organic green leaf improves consumer understanding, perception and trust ([Hartmann et al. 2019c](#))



PDO/PGI logos: ethnographic findings ([Amilien et al. 2018](#)).

Consider single consumer facing logo for PDO/PGI/TSG or framework, especially given widespread consumer confusion and label proliferation – Norway experience

Important that the logo gives intuitive understanding of important elements (ensuring the quality of the product, respecting local tradition, coming from a known geographical area).

At present PDO/PGI labels are not intuitive or self-explanatory, (especially colours)



Indicator evidence regarding economic, social and environmental impacts of PDO/PGI products

Collectively, substantial economic and social benefits to producers and rural communities

However, at individual PDO/PGI level, high variability in outcomes. Difficult therefore to make a standard appeal based on economic, social and environmental outcomes of PDO/PGI ([Arfini and Bellassen, 2019](#))

Rather than making claims for PDO/PGI which overreach, and could be counterproductive, better to promote attributes which are integral to schemes and valued by consumers as evidenced in Eurobarometer 2020

Positioning in terms of a *curated collection of quality regional foods* rather than standardisation.



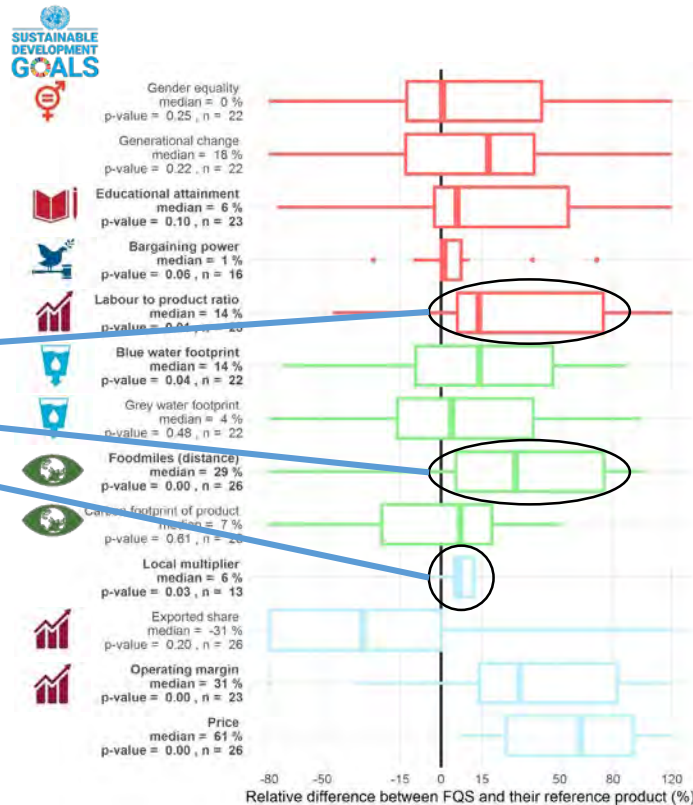
What claims could be made to consumers regarding PDO/PGI labels?

Other benefits linked to variable outcomes could be worth associating to *specific products* where relevant

(e.g. low water pollution for Krk olive oil or Kalocsai paprika, higher educational attainment and generational balance for Kastoria and Zagora apples, bargaining power equity for Ternasco de Aragon, Parmigiano Reggiano and Comté, ...)



Link with geographical territory at scheme level gives consumers *authenticity and origin* (stops hollowing out, good for local multiplier, employment preservation)



Source: Bellassen et al. (submitted)



What should be changed to encourage more producers to use PDO/PGI logos?



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Improving producer engagement with PDO/PGI

Evidence from Poland (Majewski et al., forthcoming):

- For many GIs, benefits do not outweigh costs, with lack of financial return to producers.
- Producers willing to engage if PDO/PGI have value to consumers and hence aid higher margins. Producer engagement pulled by greater consumer value of PDO/PGI.
- Consortia development focused often on governance and specification issues, reflecting the nature of administration agencies and their expertise. However, also need business and marketing plans for economic sustainability, which should be integrated into new GI application process.



Further information

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- ❖ YouTube: [via SciFoodHealth](https://www.youtube.com/via_SciFoodHealth)

Thank You!



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