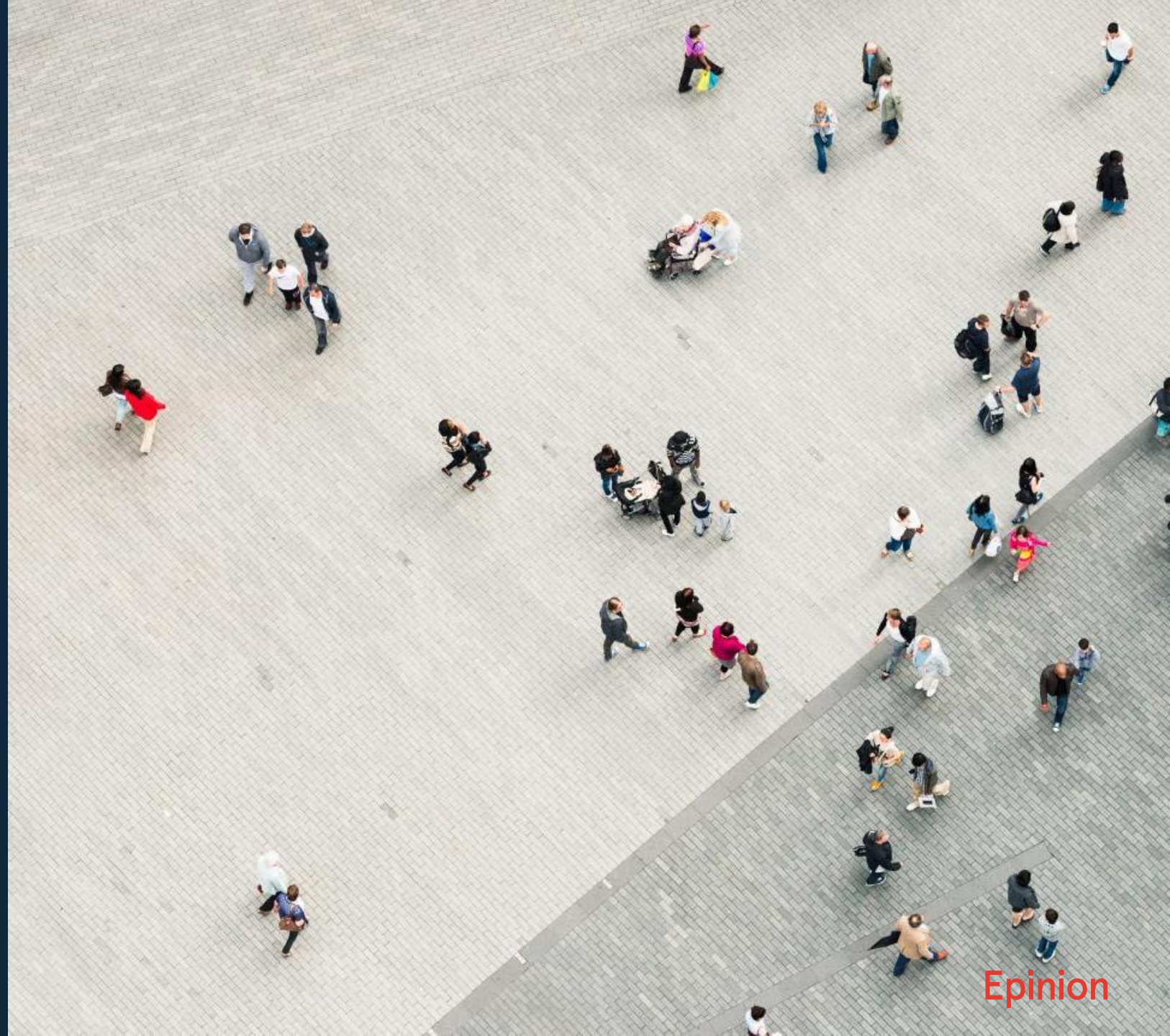


# A study on public support for childhood overweight and obesity prevention policies in 5 Nordic countries

- Nordic Cancer Union's project: Common actions for the prevention of overweight and obesity among children.

Danish Cancer Society, Norwegian Cancer Society, Swedish Cancer Society, Cancer Society of Finland & Icelandic Cancer Society

Epinion, November 2024



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# Background and purpose

# Public support for overweight and obesity prevention policies that benefit children and youth

## Situation

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- Four out of ten cancer cases can be prevented. This is why the Nordic Cancer Societies are working for the implementation of overweight and obesity prevention policies that will benefit children and youth.
- Overweight and obesity increase the risk of developing at least 15 types of cancer and other noncommunicable diseases.
- Children and youth living with overweight or obesity have a significantly higher risk of carrying these conditions into adulthood. Additionally, these conditions increase the risk of a broad range of consequences for physical, physiological, and mental health wellbeing.

## Complication

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- Universal policies covering the whole population are a key strategy for improving health among children and youth, as well as addressing risk factors for cancer and other noncommunicable diseases at the population level.
- To promote policies for preventing overweight and obesity among children, it is crucial to have a solid knowledge and a database covering citizen' attitudes towards and knowledge of such prevention policies.
- Currently, standardized data focused on supporting prevention policies aimed at preventing overweight and obesity in children and youth in the Nordic countries does not exist.

## Resolution

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- To provide a solid database of attitudes and knowledge on these aspects, Epinion has conducted a large, representative, quantitative survey that covers citizens' attitudes towards overweight and obesity prevention policies, responsibility for prevention, and knowledge about the consequences of overweight and obesity.
- The survey was conducted among 5,008 respondents across Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland.

# Executive summary

# The Nordic respondents are generally in favour of policies that contribute to the prevention of overweight and obesity among children and youth

1

## Across all five countries, there is strong support for policies that improve the affordability of healthy foods and promote opportunities for physical activity

More than 80 pct. of respondents in all the countries agree that it is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods like fruit and vegetables. In addition, there is strong support for legislation that promotes exercise and physical activity opportunities. For example, improving and expanding the physical environments (e.g., playgrounds, buildings, schools) to provide children with better opportunities to be active, play, and exercise is supported by at least 78 pct. of respondents in all countries.

2

## Across all countries, approximately half of respondents support legislation on marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages

Across all five countries, the highest support for legislation on the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages is found for a ban on the use of cartoon characters or celebrities on the packaging of unhealthy foods. Support for this legislation ranges from 55-62 pct. Strong support is also found for a ban on the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages on digital media, where at least 52 pct. agrees. Norwegian respondents display the highest support for all questions regarding marketing regulations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth.

3

## There is strong support for introducing overweight and obesity prevention policies in educational institutions

At least 75 pct. of citizens in all five countries have a positive attitude towards implementing prevention policies in educational institutions. Respondents are especially in favour of including healthy eating habits and physical activity as part of the primary school curriculum – at least 79 pct. of all respondents support this policy. Iceland shows highest support for the suggested policies in educational settings (87-95 pct.), while Denmark displays lowest levels of support (75-79 pct.).

4

## Overweight and obesity prevention among children and youth is primarily viewed as a responsibility of families rather than of decision-makers or commercial actors

Across all five countries, there is widespread agreement that responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth lies within the family (89-94 pct.). The food industry follows as the second most responsible actor in all countries (55-72 pct.). In all five countries, a majority places responsibility for the prevention of overweight and obesity among children and youth on the national parliaments, making it the third most responsible stakeholder (68-51 pct.).

5

## Nordic respondents associate overweight and obesity with an increased risk of a broad range of physical and mental health conditions, but awareness of the link between overweight and obesity and cancer is limited

Most of the Nordic respondents associate overweight and obesity with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes (79-87 pct.), cardiovascular diseases (74-91 pct.) and high cholesterol (72-81 pct.) as well as a reduced well-being and quality of life (70-83 pct.). However, awareness that being overweight and obese increase the risk of cancer ranges from only 28-43 pct. The highest level of awareness of this association is found in Iceland, while the lowest is found in Denmark.

# Attitudes towards policies for the prevention of childhood overweight and obesity

# Across all Nordic countries, respondents are positive towards prevention policies



## Most Nordic respondents are in favour of fiscal policies and policies that promote opportunities for physical activity

In all countries, almost half or more of the respondents are in favour of prevention policies, such as taxes on sweetened beverages and unhealthy foods as well as placement restrictions. Support is especially strong for legislation that promotes exercise and physical activity. This demonstrates an overall willingness to implement policies aimed at preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth.



## Support for policies involving bans is generally lower

Across all countries, there is lower support for policies that include restrictions and bans compared to other types of policies. This is true for restrictions on where unhealthy foods and beverages can be placed in grocery stores, support for removing unhealthy foods and beverages from public institutions, and banning multi-buy offers on unhealthy foods and beverages.



## Respondents are positive towards reduced VAT on healthy foods and nutrition labelling

Across all countries, more than 80 pct. of respondents are positive towards VAT reductions on healthy foods (e.g., fruits and vegetables). Respondents are also positive towards the implementation of a front-of-pack nutrition label that can help inform consumers about the healthiness of products (more than 60 pct. of respondents across all countries).



## Attitudes towards political prevention measures

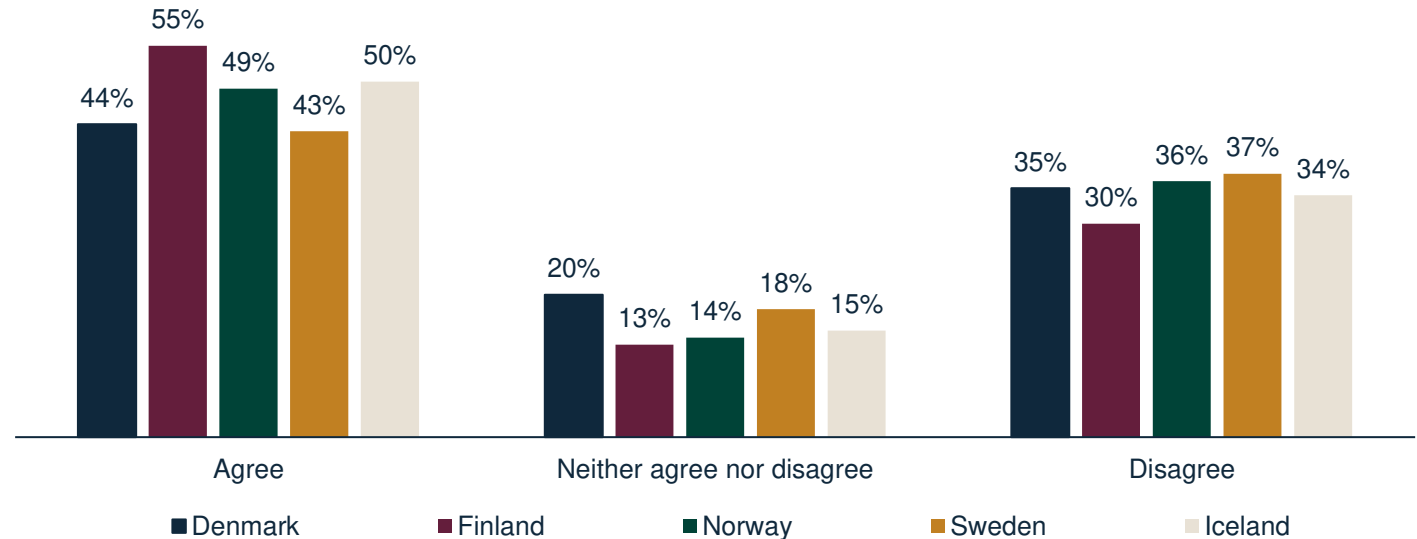
# Across all countries, approximately half of respondents believe that imposing taxes on sweetened beverages is a good idea to prevent overweight and obesity

Finish respondents are significantly more in favour of this legislation than respondents from other countries

It is a good idea to impose taxes on sweetened beverages (e.g., sodas, energy drinks, or juice) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.<sup>1</sup>

n=5008

- In all countries, most respondents agree that it is a good idea to tax sweetened beverages to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth (43-55 pct.). About one-third of all respondents across countries disagree (30-37 pct.).
- Support is highest in Finland, where 55 pct. agree that it is a good idea to tax sweetened beverages, while 30 pct. disagree.
- Respondents from Norway and Sweden display the highest levels of disagreement with this policy (respectively 36 and 37 pct.).



## Attitudes towards political prevention measures

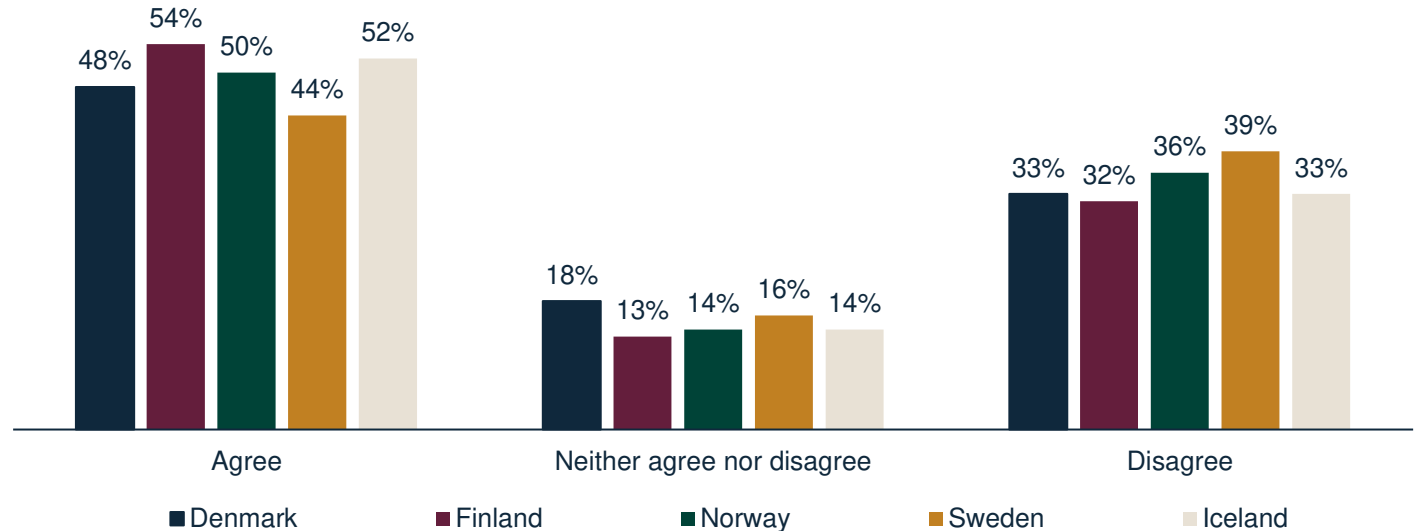
# About half of the respondents in each country agree that imposing taxes on unhealthy foods is a good idea to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth

### Sweden is the most divided country on the issue of imposing taxes on unhealthy foods

- The responses regarding taxing unhealthy foods are similar to those regarding sweetened beverages. While respondents are divided on this issue, the levels of agreement with this policy (44-54 pct.) are generally higher than the levels of disagreement (32-39 pct.).
- As with the taxation of sweetened beverages, most respondents from Finland agree that it is a good idea to tax unhealthy foods (54 pct.).
- Respondents from Norway and Sweden display the highest levels of disagreement (36 pct. in Norway and 39 pct. in Sweden).

### It is a good idea to impose taxes on unhealthy foods (e.g., candy, chips, and snacks that typically have high levels of sugar, fat, or salt) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.<sup>1</sup>

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Note: <sup>1</sup>The question was introduced as follows: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement... The response category "Agree" includes both "Agree" and "Mostly agree." The response category "Disagree" includes "Disagree" and "Mostly disagree". The category "Don't know" has been excluded from the graph.

## Attitudes towards political prevention measures

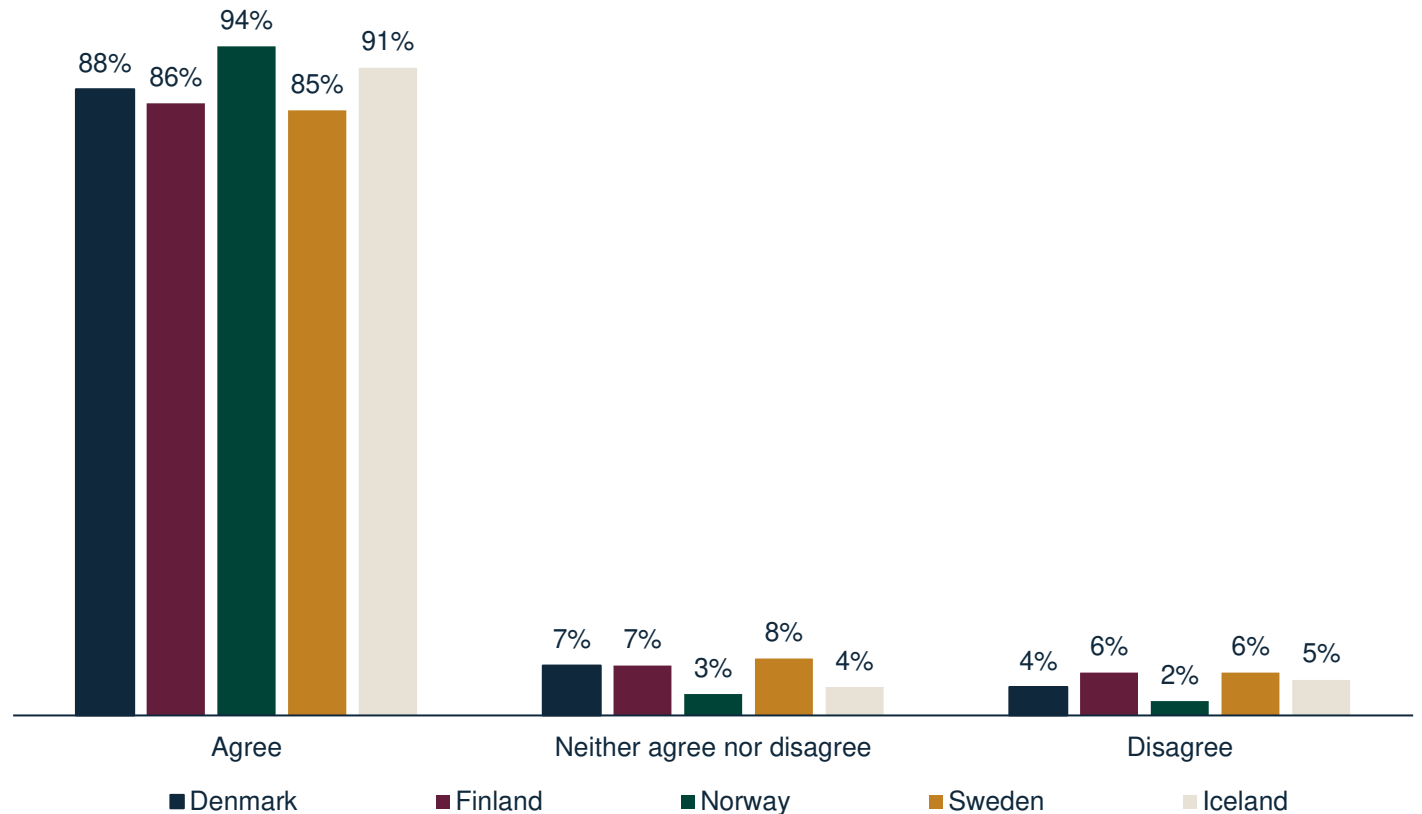
# Most respondents believe that it is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods to reduce their price and prevent overweight and obesity

### Few respondents in all countries believe that lowering VAT on healthy foods is a bad idea

- In all countries, at least 8 out of 10 respondents agree that lowering VAT on healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables, is a good idea to reduce their price and prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth.
- Lowering VAT on healthy foods is the most popular fiscal policy compared to taxing unhealthy foods and beverages (as shown in the previous two questions).
- Most respondents from Norway agree that it is a good idea to lower the VAT on healthy foods (94 pct.). The difference between Norway and the other countries is significant.

### It is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods (e.g., fruits or vegetables) to reduce their price and help prevent obesity among children and youth.<sup>1</sup>

n=5008



Note: <sup>1</sup>The question was introduced as follows: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement... The response category "Agree" includes both "Agree" and "Mostly agree." The response category "Disagree" includes "Disagree" and "Mostly disagree". The category "Don't know" has been excluded from the graph.

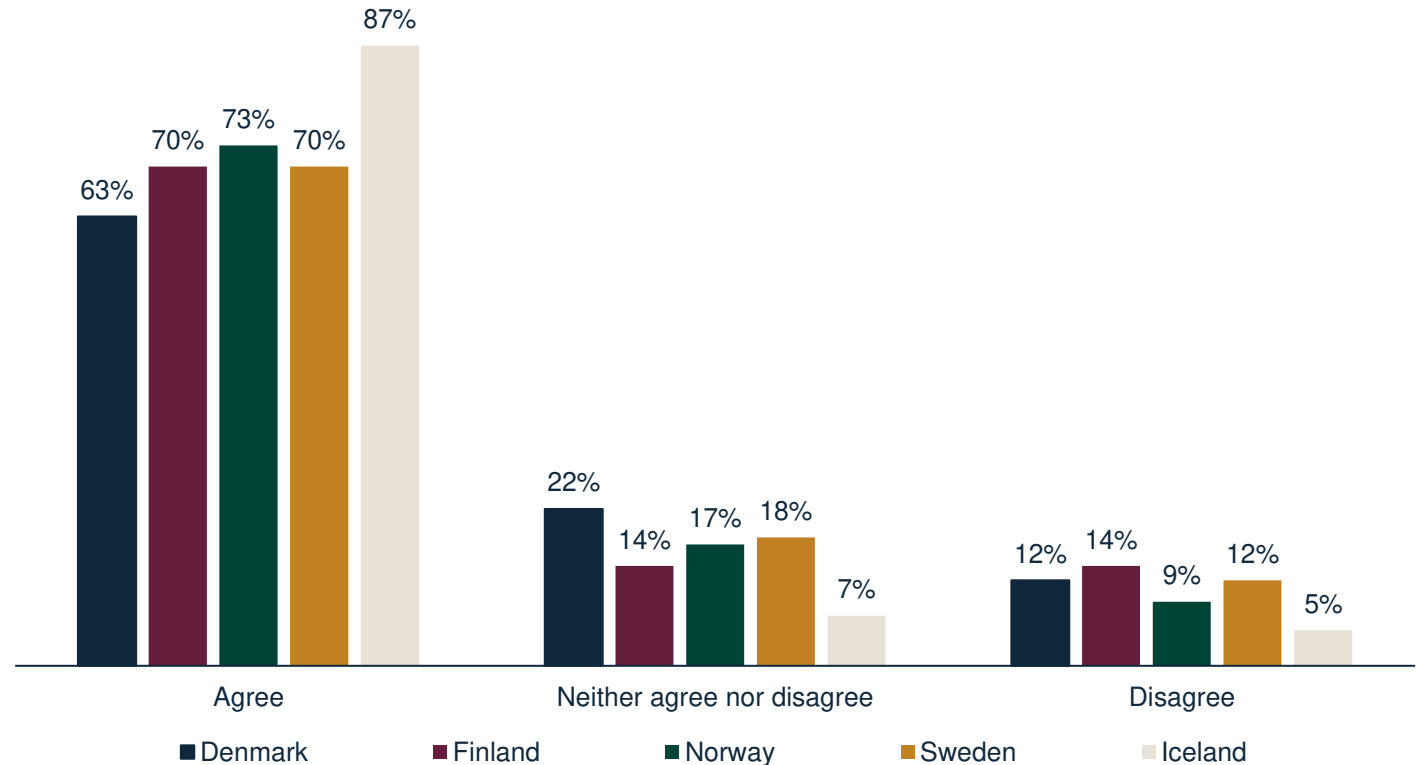
# Most respondents across all countries support introducing a mandatory front-of-pack nutrition label on packaged foods and beverages

## Most respondents from Iceland support the idea of a mandatory front-of-pack nutrition label

- The nordic respondents generally agree that it is a good idea to introduce a mandatory front-of-pack nutrition label on packaged foods and beverages, indicating how healthy or unhealthy a product is, to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth (63-87 pct.). Significantly more respondents from Iceland (87 pct.) agree on this.
- Fewest respondents from Denmark agree on introducing a mandatory front-of-pack label (63 pct.). Denmark also has the highest share of respondents who neither agree nor disagree (22 pct.).
- Finland, Norway and Sweden display similar levels of agreement at around 70 pct. (70 pct., 73 pct. and 70 pct.).

## To introduce a mandatory nutrition label on the front of all packaged food and beverages, indicating how healthy or unhealthy a product is.<sup>1</sup>

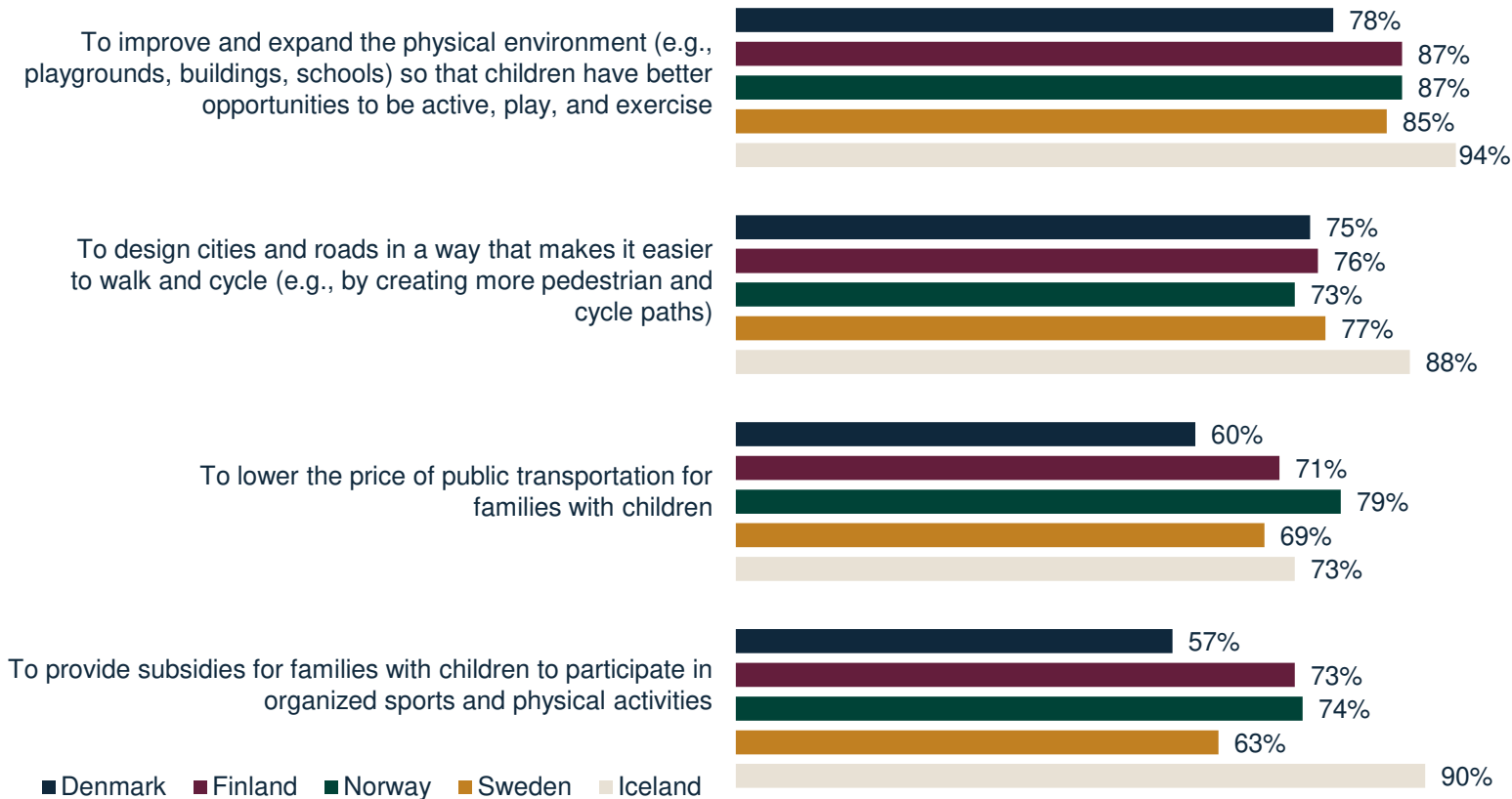
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# All countries favour policies that promote exercising and physical activity for children

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years? <sup>1</sup>

N = 5008



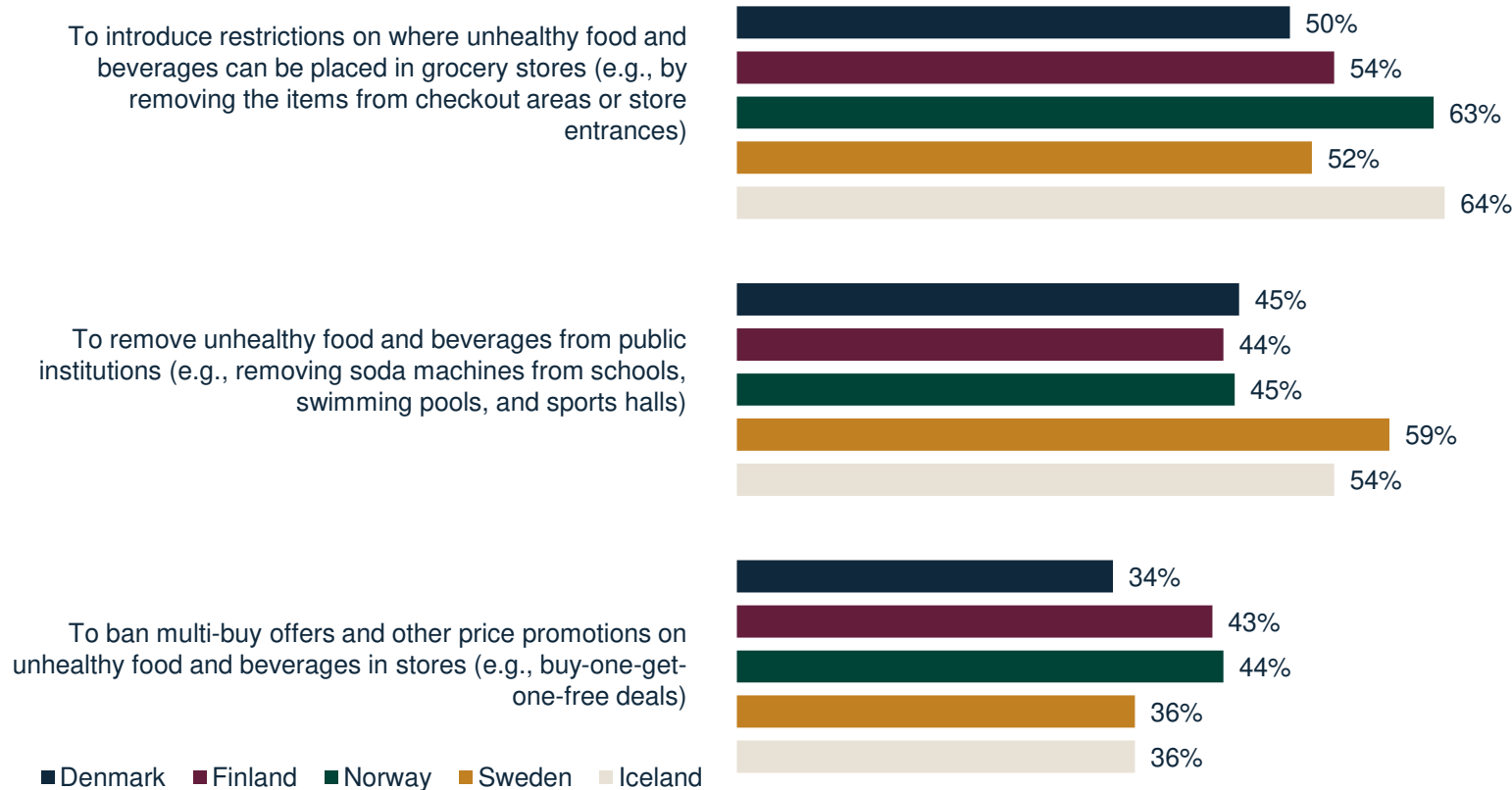
Most respondents prefer policies on the physical environment and infrastructure

- Improving the physical environment for children to increase their opportunities to be active, play, and exercise is the most widely supported policy across all countries (78-94 pct.). Most respondents from Iceland (94 pct.) and least respondents from Denmark (78 pct.) agree with this policy.
- Significantly more respondents from Iceland (88 pct.) agree that designing cities and roads to make walking and cycling easier is a good idea to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth compared to respondents from the other countries.
- Significantly more respondents from Norway (79 pct.) and Iceland (73 pct.) agree that it is a good idea to lower the prices of public transport for families with children compared to respondents from the other countries.
- In Iceland 90 pct. of respondents agree that it is a good idea to provide subsidies for families with children to participate in sports. The proportion of respondents that agree on this is significantly lower in the other countries (57-74 pct.).

# The Nordic respondents are less in favour of negative policies such as bans and restrictions, than positive policies such as lower prices and labelling

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years?<sup>1</sup>

N = 5008



Banning multi-buy offers and other price promotions is the proposal with the lowest support

- Respondents across all countries agree the least with policies focusing on restricting unhealthy food and beverages in public institutions or banning supermarket deals compared to all other policies suggested (agreement ranges from 34-59 pct.).
- Of the three policies displayed in the graph to the left, support is highest for introducing restrictions on where unhealthy food and beverages can be placed in grocery stores. This applies to respondents from all countries, but support is significantly higher in Iceland (64 pct.) and Norway (63 pct.) compared to the other countries (50-54 pct.).
- When it comes to removing unhealthy food and beverages from public institutions, support is highest among respondents from Sweden (59 pct.) and Iceland (54 pct.) whereas support is under 50 pct. among respondents from the other countries.
- Only about one-third of respondents in each country support banning multi-buy offers on unhealthy foods and beverages, making it the least supported proposal. Support is slightly higher in Finland and Norway (43-44 pct.).

# Attitudes towards legislation on marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages

# Across all countries, respondents display positive attitudes towards legislation that restricts the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages



## Norwegians express the strongest support for marketing restrictions

Most respondents from Norway are in favour of the suggested marketing restrictions and express the highest levels of agreement on all questions regarding marketing restrictions. Finnish respondents show the highest level of disagreement on these questions. However, agreement is still higher than disagreement for all proposed marketing restrictions across all countries.



## A large proportion of respondents answer neither agree nor disagree to implementing marketing restrictions

Across all countries, around 16-28 pct. of respondents answer that they neither agree nor disagree with implementing legislations that restrict the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages. This result might reflect that many respondents have not yet taken a position on their stance towards these policy tools.



## Lower support for banning the use of toys, coupons or competitions as part of children's menus

Across all countries, the least supported policy tool when it comes to marketing restrictions is banning the use of toys, coupons, or competitions as part of children's menus at fast food restaurants. On average, 43 pct. of respondents support such a ban. Support for this policy is highest in Norway with 48 pct. agreeing that such a ban is a good idea. Support is lowest in Iceland where 38 pct. agree.



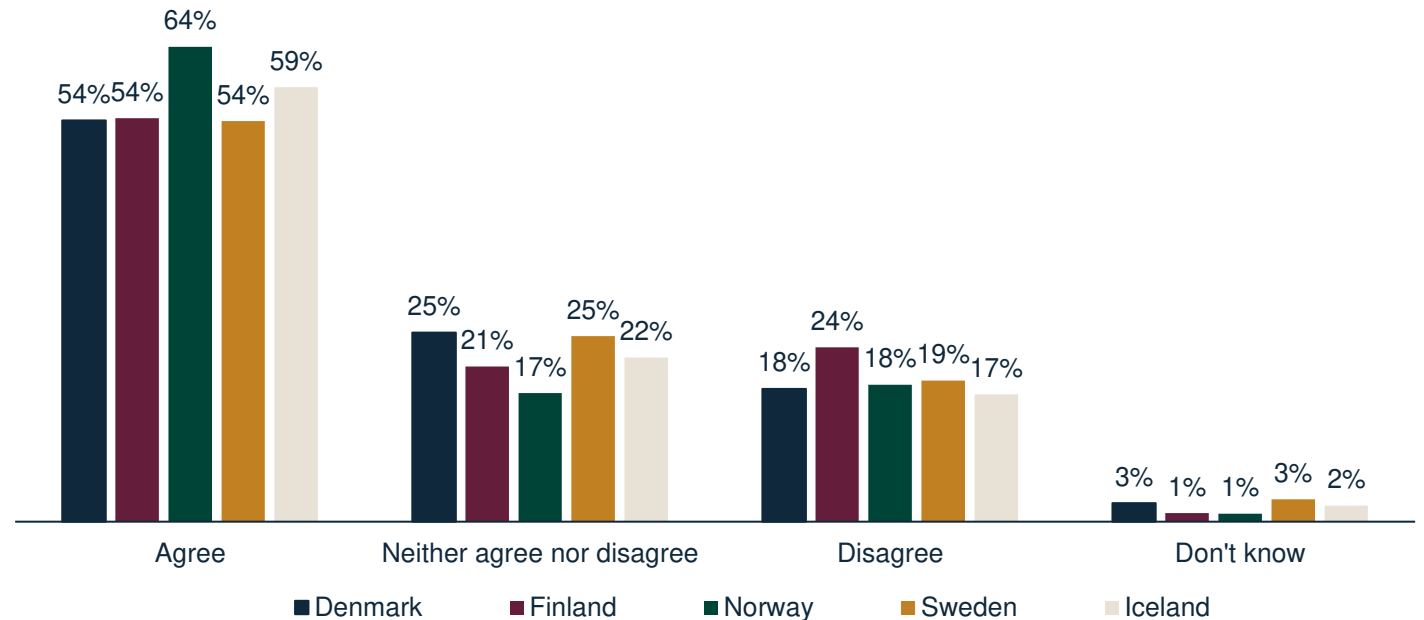
# More than half of the respondents in all countries express positive attitudes towards legislation that protects against advertisements and marketing of unhealthy food and beverages

## The most positive attitudes are found in Norway

- In all countries, more than half of the respondents agree that legislation should be implemented to protect children and individuals under 18 from advertisements and other marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages.
- Most respondents from Norway (64 pct.) and Iceland (59 pct.) agree that this policy is a good idea to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth.
- Between 17-24 pct. of all respondents disagree with implementing this type of legislation, and the same proportion neither agree nor disagree (17-25 pct.).

## Legislation that protects against advertisements and other marketing of unhealthy food and beverages<sup>1</sup>

n=5008



Note: <sup>1</sup>The question was introduced as follows: How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years of age? The response category "Agree" includes "Agree" and "Mostly agree." The response category "Disagree" includes "Disagree" and "Mostly disagree". The "Don't know" category has been excluded from the graph.

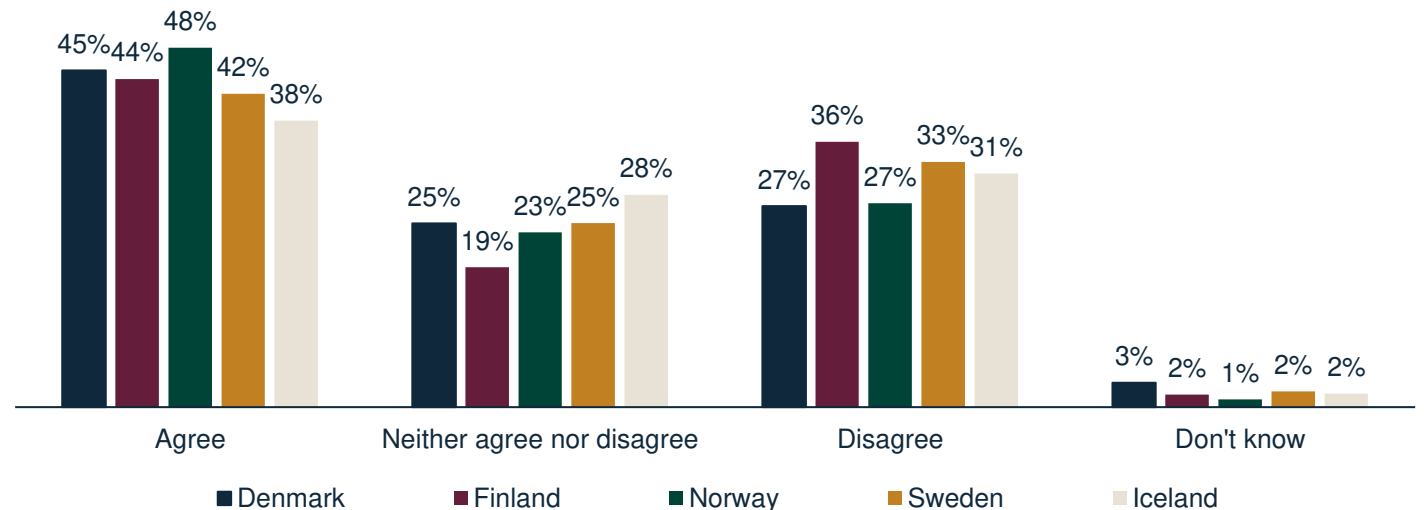
# The Nordic respondents are divided in their opinions on whether the use of toys, coupons or competitions as part of children's menus should be banned

## This especially applies to respondents from Iceland

- Most respondents across all countries believe that the use of toys, coupons, or competitions as part of children's menus at fast food restaurants should be banned (38-48 pct.).
- Most respondents from Norway (48 pct.) and Denmark (45 pct.) agree that such a ban is a good idea to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth. The support in Norway is significantly higher than in all the other countries.
- Most respondents from Finland disagree that introducing this kind of ban is a good idea (36 pct.).
- Across all countries, a relatively high percentage of respondents neither agree nor disagree with implementing a ban on the use of toys, coupons, or competitions as part of children's menus (19-28 pct.).

## A ban on the use of toys, coupons, or competitions as part of children's menus at, for example, fast food restaurants<sup>1</sup>

n=5008



Note: <sup>1</sup>The question was introduced as follows: How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years of age? The response category "Agree" includes "Agree" and "Mostly agree." The response category "Disagree" includes "Disagree" and "Mostly disagree". The "Don't know" category has been excluded from the graph.

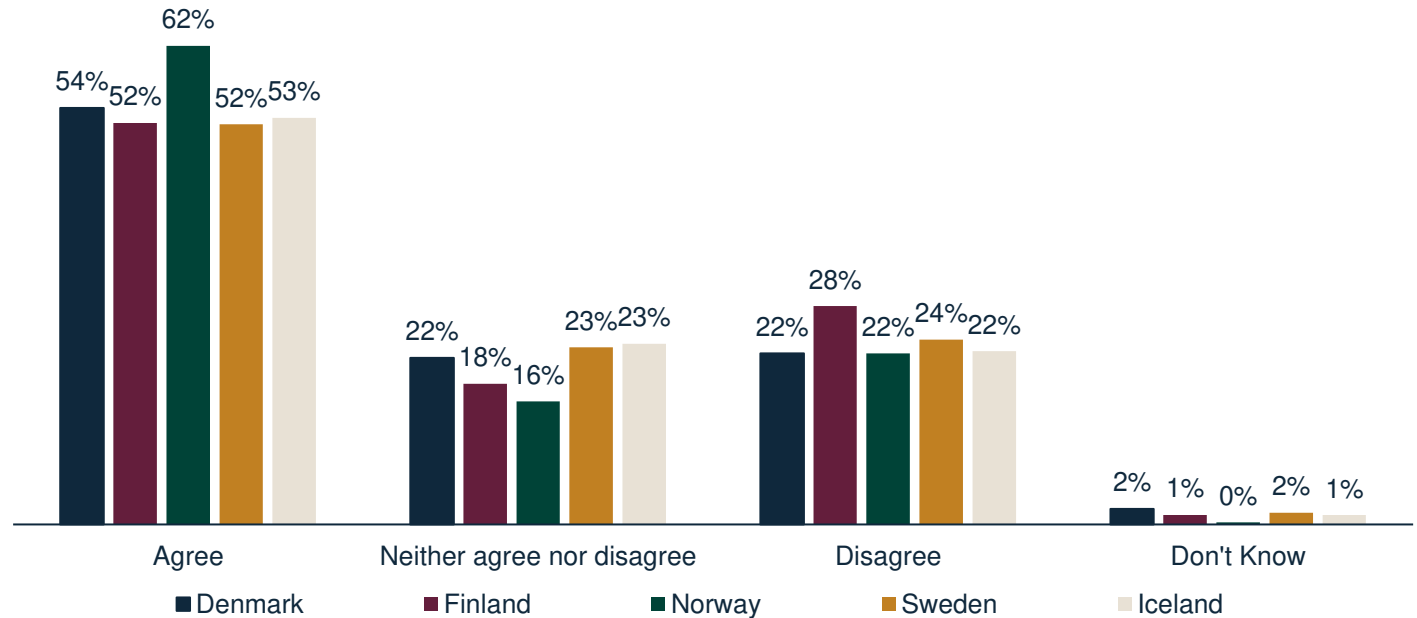
# More than half of the respondents in all countries agree that marketing of unhealthy food and beverages on digital media should be banned

## Respondents from Norway express greater support than respondents from other countries

- Respondents from all countries agree that a ban on marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages on digital media is a good idea to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth (52-62 pct). Most respondents from Norway agree on this (62 pct.).
- Between 22-28 pct. disagree that it is a good idea to ban marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages on digital media. Especially respondents from Finland (28 pct.) and Sweden (24 pct.) disagree.
- Between 16-23 pct. neither agree nor disagree.

## A ban on marketing of unhealthy food and beverages on digital media (e.g., social media, websites, and online games)<sup>1</sup>

n=5008



Note: <sup>1</sup>The question was introduced as follows: How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years of age? The response category "Agree" includes "Agree" and "Mostly agree." The response category "Disagree" includes "Disagree" and "Mostly disagree". The "Don't know" category has been excluded from the graph.

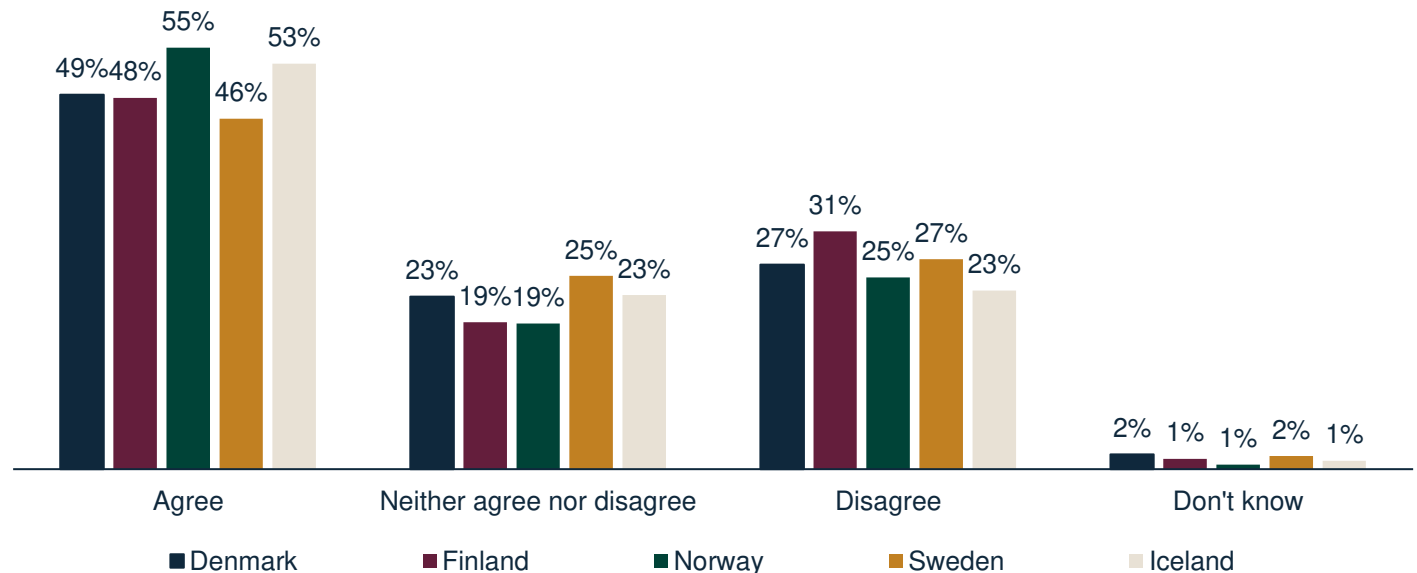
# Respondents in Norway and Iceland display the most positive attitudes towards a ban on outdoor advertisements of unhealthy food and beverages

## Finnish respondents disagree most with introducing this policy

- In Denmark, Finland and Sweden, slightly under half of the respondents agree that it is a good idea to ban outdoor advertisements of unhealthy foods and beverages to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth (46-49 pct). Most respondents from Norway (55 pct.) and Iceland (53 pct.) agree that it is a good idea.
- Around a quarter of all respondents across countries disagree that it is a good idea to ban outdoor advertisements of unhealthy foods and beverages (23-31 pct.). Across all suggested policies regarding marketing, the largest proportion of respondents who disagree is from Finland.
- 19-25 pct. neither agree nor disagree.

## A ban on outdoor advertisements (e.g., at bus stops and on billboards) of unhealthy food and beverages<sup>1</sup>

n=5008



20 Note: <sup>1</sup>The question was introduced as follows: How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years of age? The response category "Agree" includes "Agree" and "Mostly agree." The response category "Disagree" includes "Disagree" and "Mostly disagree". The "Don't know" category has been excluded from the graph.

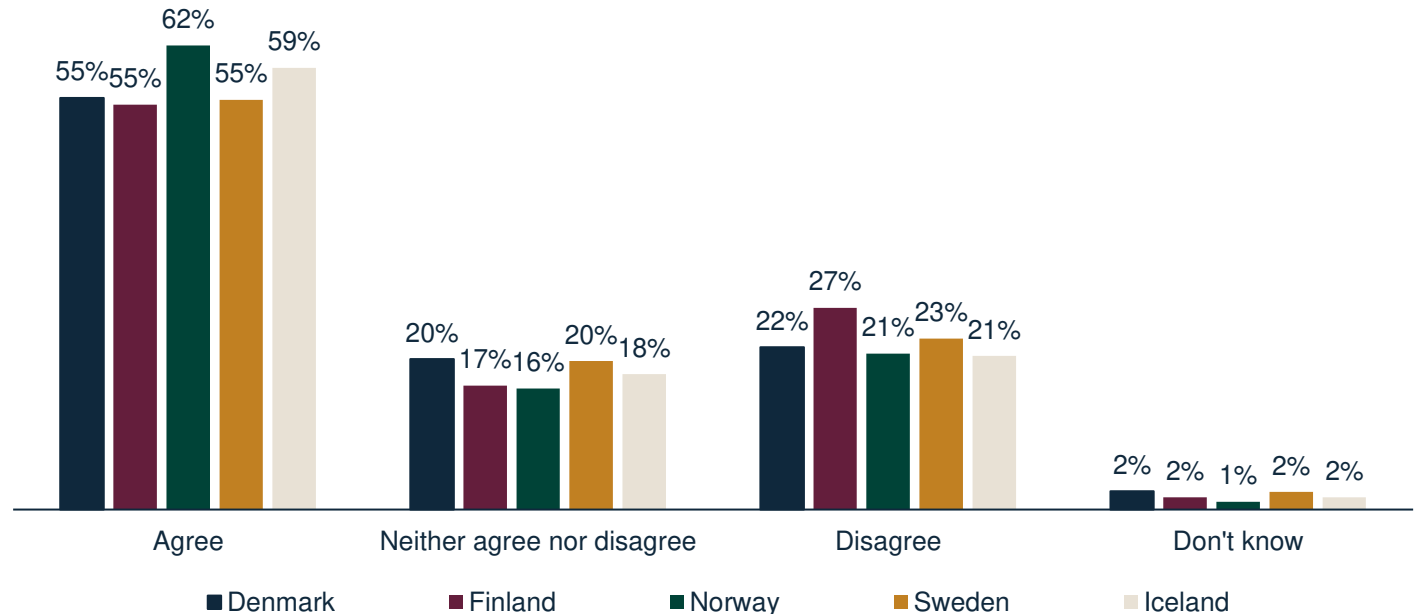
# At least 55 pct. of the respondents in all countries are in favour of banning the use of cartoon characters or celebrities on the packaging of unhealthy food and beverages

## The support is strongest in Norway

- Most respondents from Norway (62 pct.) and Iceland (59 pct.) agree that it is a good idea to ban the use of cartoon characters or celebrities on the packaging of unhealthy food and beverages to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth.
- Overall, there is strong support for introducing this policy. 55 pct. of the respondents from Denmark, Finland and Sweden agree that it is a good idea to ban the use of cartoon characters and celebrities on the packaging of unhealthy foods and beverages.
- 21-27 pct. disagree that it is a good idea while 16-20 pct. neither agree nor disagree.

## A ban on the use of cartoon characters or celebrities (e.g., sports stars, influencers, actors, etc.) on the packaging of unhealthy food and beverages<sup>1</sup>

n=5008



Note: <sup>1</sup>The question was introduced as follows: How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years of age? The response category "Agree" includes "Agree" and "Mostly agree." The response category "Disagree" includes "Disagree" and "Mostly disagree". The "Don't know" category has been excluded from the graph.

# Prevention policies in educational institutions

# Across all countries, respondents display positive attitudes towards overweight and obesity prevention policies in educational institutions



## The respondents highly support implementing policies that include healthy eating habits and physical activity as part of the school curriculum

The strongest support for this policy is found among respondents from Iceland, Finland and Norway (84-95 pct.). Most Swedish respondents also support this policy (84 pct.) but in Sweden support is higher for the proposal of introducing 45 minutes of physical activity as part of the school day (86 pct.). For all the investigated prevention policies in educational institutions, the lowest support is found in Denmark (75-79 pct.).



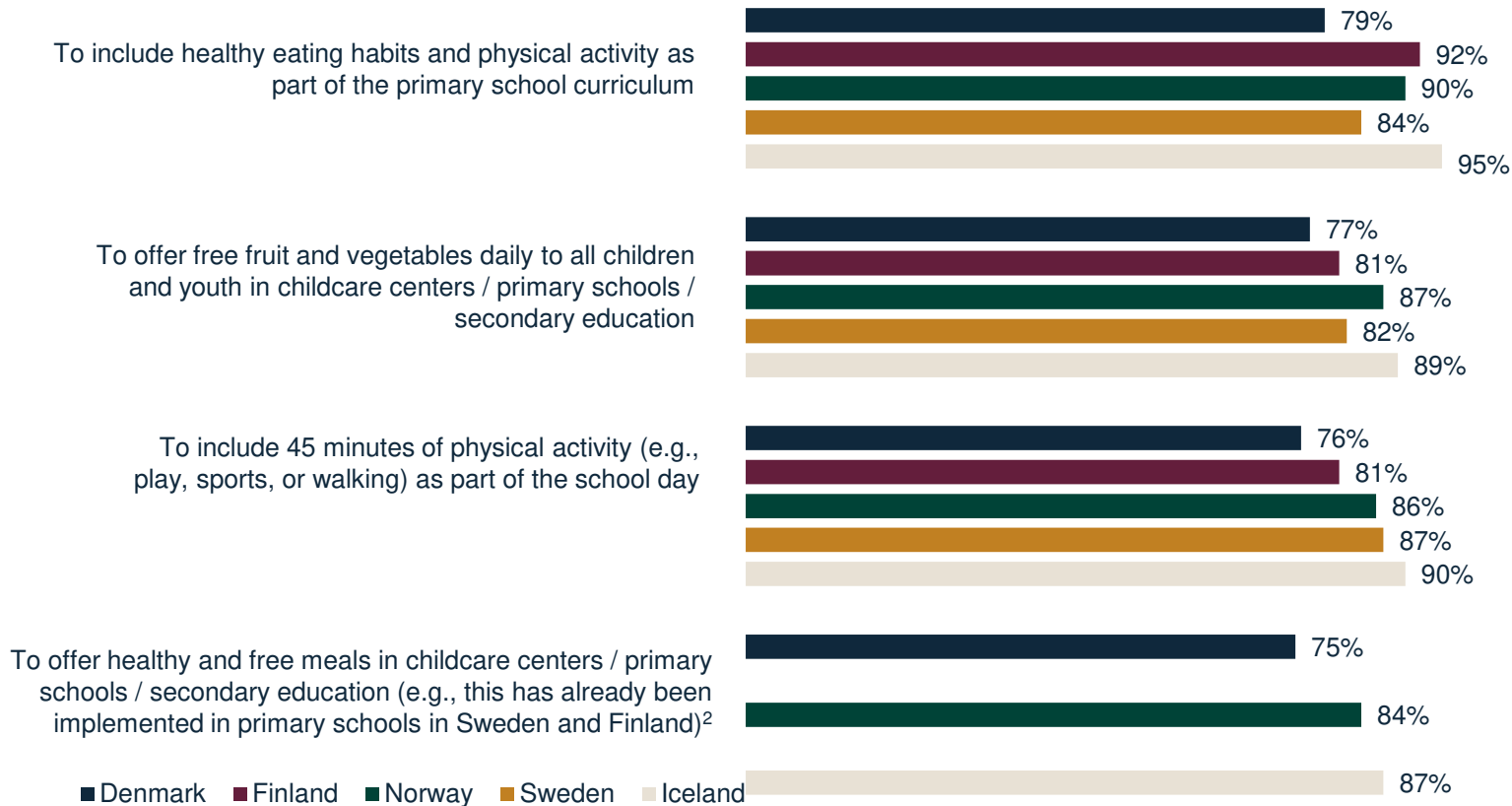
## Icelandic respondents display the highest level of support for policies in educational institutions

In Iceland, support for prevention policies in educational institutions ranges from 87 pct. for offering healthy free school meals to 95 pct. for including healthy eating habits and physical activity as part of the school curriculum. Contrarily, respondents from Denmark display the lowest support for policies in educational institutions (75-79 pct.).

# Respondents from all countries favour policies that promote healthy eating habits and physical activity among children and youth in schools

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?<sup>1</sup>

N = 5008



## Support is strongest in Iceland

- At least 75 pct. of the respondents from all countries support all four policies suggested for educational institutions. Respondents from Denmark display the lowest support for policies in educational institutions (75-79 pct.). However, all policies are still favoured by most respondents.
- Including healthy eating habits and physical activity as part of the primary school curriculum, is the most supported educational policy across all countries (84-95 pct.) except for Sweden.
- The highest support among Swedish respondents is for including 45 minutes of physical activity as part of the school day (87 pct.) – a policy that is widely supported by respondents from all countries (76-90 pct.).
- Respondents from Denmark, Norway and Iceland were asked about their support for introducing healthy and free meals in childcare centers and educational institutions, and most respondents from Iceland (87 pct.) and Norway (84 pct.) support this policy, while 75 pct. from Denmark support it.



# Responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth

# Preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth is seen as a responsibility of families, rather than of decision-makers or commercial actors



## Most Nordic respondents believe that responsibility for the prevention of overweight and obesity among children and youth lies within the family

Across all countries, most respondents perceive the responsibility of preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth as a family issue. This opinion is most widespread in Finland (94 pct.) and least widespread in Iceland and Denmark (89 pct.). However, the majority of respondents across all countries still place responsibility on the families. In all countries, fewest respondents place the responsibility for prevention of overweight and obesity among children and youth on the children/young person them-selves (21-46 pct.).



## Many respondents also place responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth on the parliament

Around half of the respondents from Denmark (51 pct.) and Finland (53 pct.) place a responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth on the parliament. Almost six out of ten (59 pct.) in Sweden and Iceland believe this, and most respondents from Norway also place the responsibility on the parliament (68 pct.).



## Responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth is placed on the food industry to a larger extent than on grocery stores

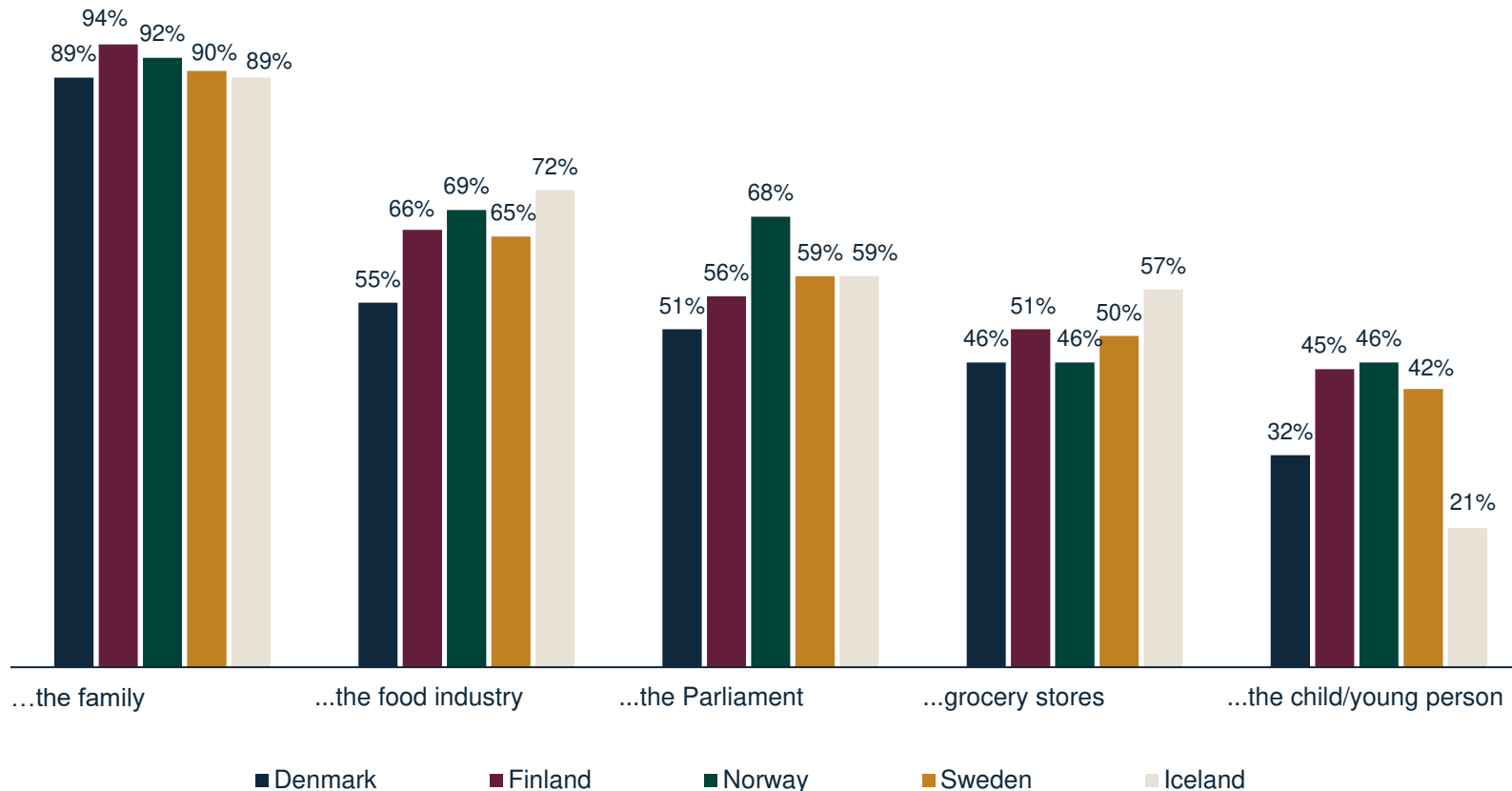
In Iceland 72 pct. place the responsibility for prevention on the food industry, whereas only 57 pct. place it on the grocery stores. A similar response pattern is found among respondents from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

## Responsibility for preventing overweight

# Most respondents believe that the responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth lies within the family

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years lies with...<sup>1</sup>

N = 5008



Least respondents place the responsibility for prevention on the child/youth – especially in Iceland

- Across all countries, most respondents place the responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth on the families (89-94 pct.).
- More than six out of ten respondents in all countries also believe that the food industry carries a responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth, except for Denmark (55 pct.). Most respondents from Iceland and Norway (72 pct. and 69 pct.) agree with the statement.
- More than half of respondents in each country also agree that parliaments carry a responsibility for preventing overweight and obesity among children and youth (51-68 pct.)
- The same goes for grocery stores, however a little less than half of people in Sweden and Denmark place the responsibility here (46 pct.).
- Across all countries fewest respondents place the responsibility on the child/youth (21-46 pct.).

27 Note: <sup>1</sup>The graph only includes “Agree” and “Mostly Agree.” The answer categories included examples: “...grocery stores, for example, by redesigning store layouts and eliminating promotions on unhealthy food and beverages”, “...the food industry, for example, through the development of healthier products and smaller portion sizes.” & “...the Parliament, for example, through price regulations that increase the cost of unhealthy food and beverages, decrease the price of healthy products (e.g., fruits and vegetables), or regulate the marketing to which children and youth are exposed.”.

Knowledge about the  
association between  
overweight and diseases or  
conditions

# The respondents have knowledge about that overweight increases the risk of various diseases and conditions, but knowledge about the link between overweight and cancer is limited



## Approximately 3 out of 10 respondents across all countries believe that overweight increases the risk of cancer

Fewer respondents from Denmark and Finland (28 pct.) believe that being overweight increases the risk of cancer. Most respondents from Iceland believe that overweight increases the risk of cancer (43 pct.), however, it is still less than half.



## Most respondents know that overweight and obesity increases the risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases

Most respondents associate being overweight with an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and high cholesterol. A large proportion also believe that being overweight can affect different mental health parameters negatively, such as general well-being, depression and loneliness.



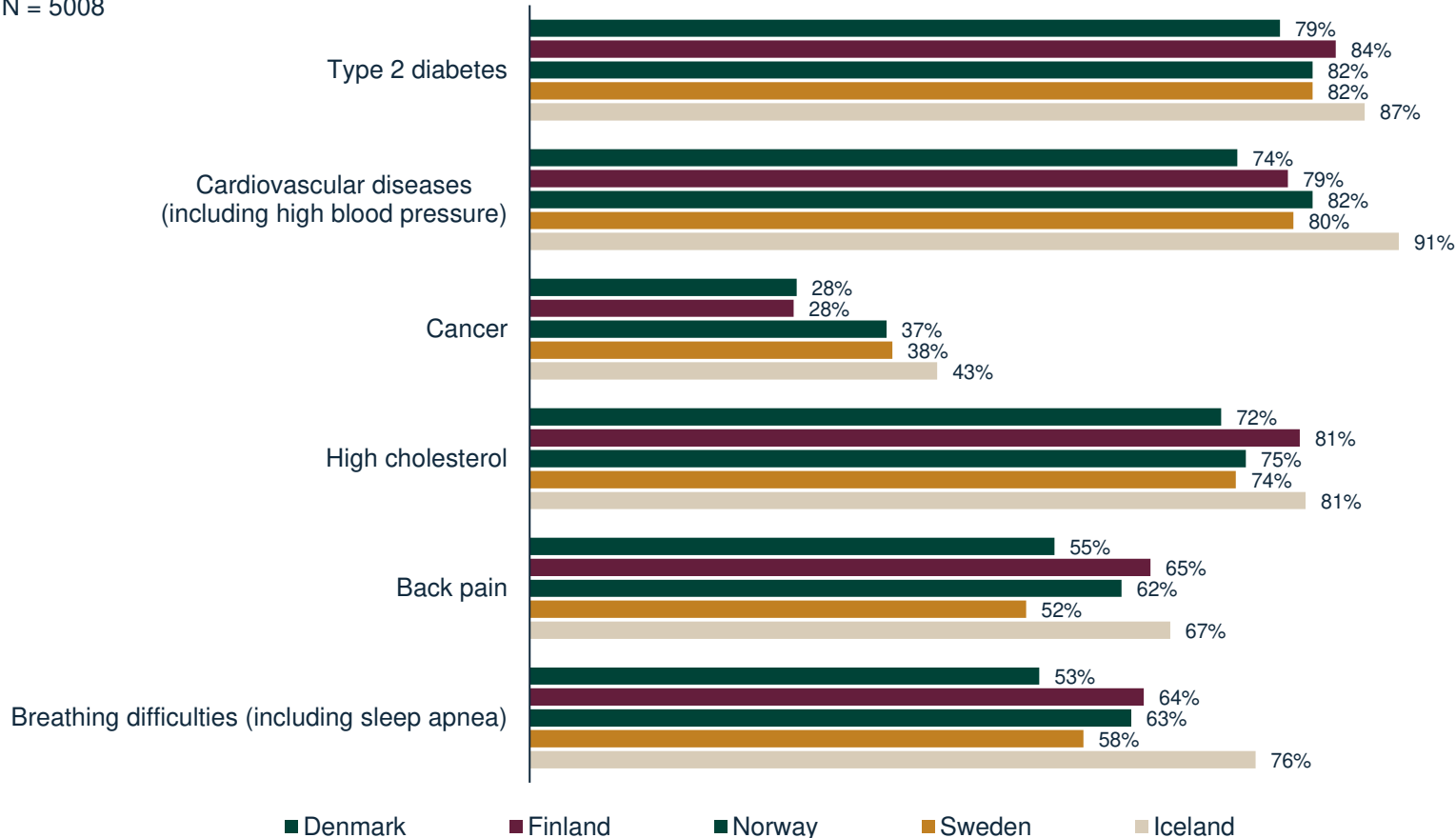
## Most respondents from Iceland associate overweight with an increased risk of the listed diseases and conditions

Most Icelandic respondents associate being overweight with the diseases and conditions presented in the survey. This especially applies to the proportion of respondents that believe that being overweight is associated with an increased risk of mental and social challenges. For example, 82 pct. of Icelandic citizens believe that overweight can increase the risk of depression and psychosocial challenges, whereas it is significantly lower in all other countries (51-66 pct.).

# Nordic respondents primarily associate overweight with noncommunicable diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases

Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?<sup>1</sup>

N = 5008



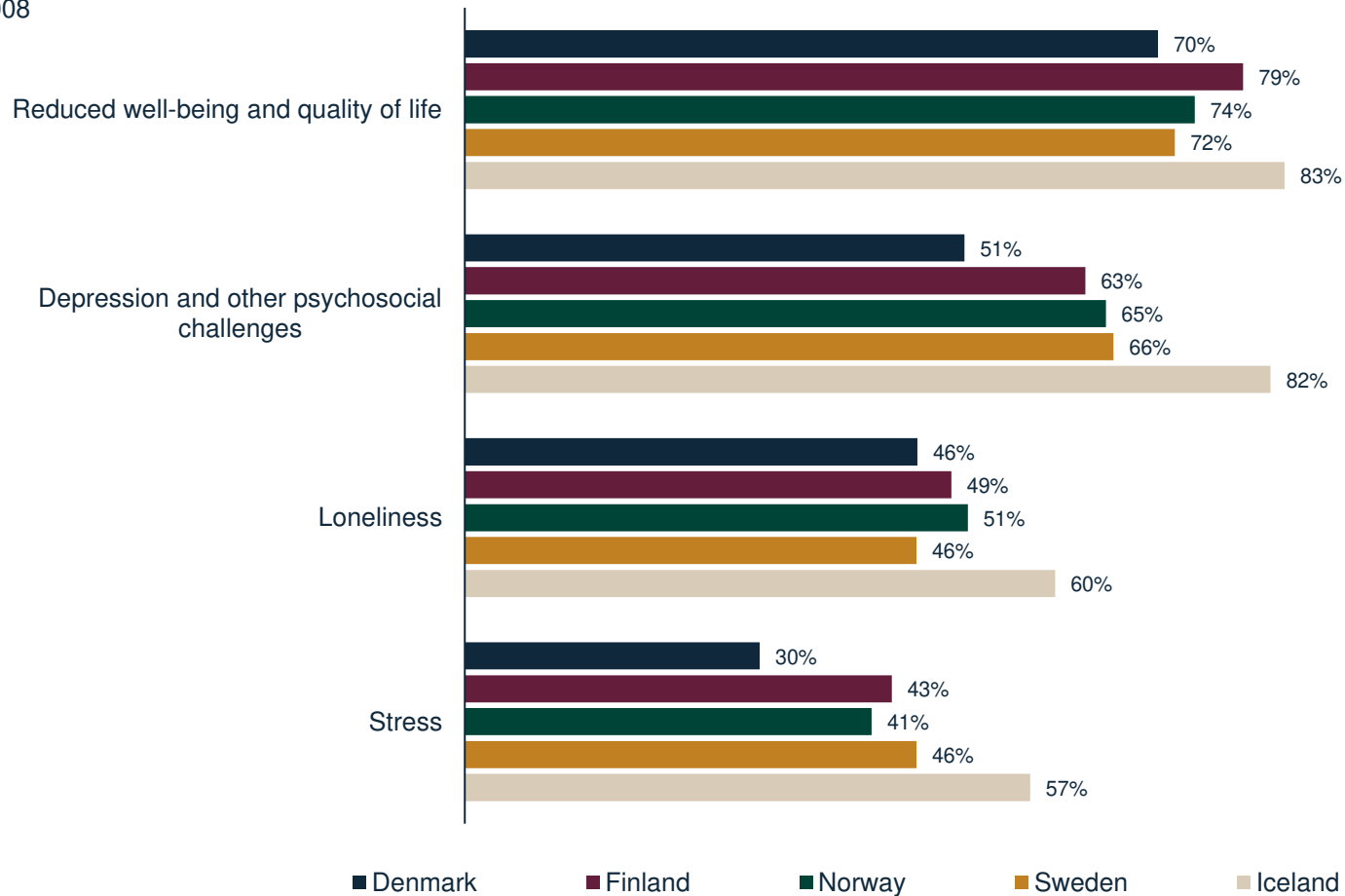
Respondents believe that overweight can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases but also to reduced well-being

- Most respondents from all countries associate being overweight with type 2 diabetes (79-84 pct.), except for Iceland (87 pct.). Most Icelandic respondents associate being overweight with cardiovascular diseases (91 pct.)
- Most respondents believe that being overweight increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, high cholesterol, back pain and breathing difficulties (53-91 pct.).
- Awareness of the association between being overweight and cancer is limited across respondents from all countries. In Denmark and Finland less than three out of ten respondents are aware of this. In Norway and Sweden this applies to 37 pct., while in Iceland awareness is 43 pct.

# But overweight is also believed to increase the risk of different mental well-being challenges

Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?<sup>1</sup>

N = 5008



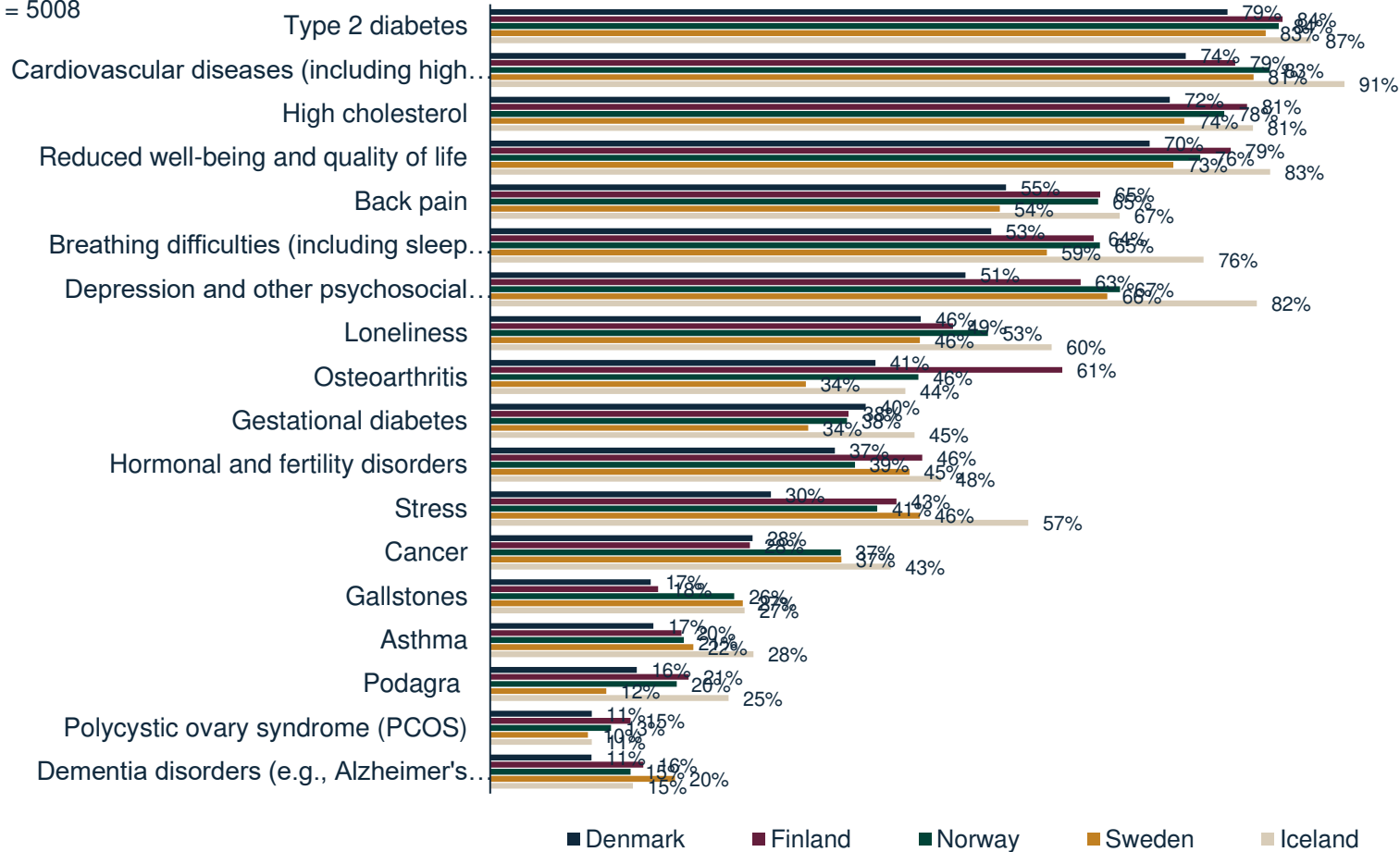
Icelandic respondents associate overweight with most of the diseases and conditions listed

- A significantly larger proportion of Icelandic respondents believe there is an association between overweight and diseases and conditions listed in the survey compared to respondents from other countries. This applies to all diseases and conditions listed in the survey, except for PCOS and loneliness.
- Many respondents across all countries believe that being overweight can increase the risk of different mental wellbeing challenges. For example, reduced well-being, quality of life, depression, and other psychosocial challenges are all ranked among the top 9 diseases associated with being overweight by respondents from all countries.
- Less than half of the respondents in all countries (except for Iceland) believe that being overweight can increase the risk of stress.

# Overweight and obesity are to a lower extent associated with diseases such as osteoarthritis, gestational diabetes and hormonal and fertility disorders

Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?<sup>1</sup>

N = 5008



The majority of respondents from Finland associate being overweight and obese with osteoarthritis

- Respondents from all countries associate being overweight least with gallstones, asthma, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and dementia disorders (10-28 pct.).



# Method and data

# The study has been conducted in six steps, from drafting the questionnaires to analyzing the data and reporting the results

## Questionnaire

- The Nordic Cancer Societies drafted the questionnaire, and Epinion suggested slight adjustments to the setup and wording of some questions.
- The Danish partner organisations in Sweden, Norway, and Finland supplied Epinion with translated versions of the questionnaires. The Icelandic partner organization also translated the questionnaire into Icelandic before handing it over to Gallup, which was responsible for the Icelandic data collection.

## Scripting of survey

- Epinion set up the questionnaires in Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish in a user-friendly format that can be answered on all devices (PC, tablet, smartphone).
- Gallup set up the questionnaire for Iceland.

## Quality assessment

- Epinion conducted a thorough manual quality check on all five questionnaires.
- The Danish Cancer Society received links to all five questionnaires, which they approved before distributing it to the respondents.
- Each partner organization furthermore approved the questionnaires in their respective languages.

## Data collection

- The team collected data between June 3rd and June 24th, 2024
- They closely monitored the data collection to ensure it reflected the population distributions of gender, age, region, and educational level in each of the five countries.
- Respondents in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland were recruited through the online panel Bilendi, while Gallup handled the data collection in Iceland.

## Data processing

- Epinion cleaned the data by filtering out speeders and flatliners. Speeders are respondents who take less than 40% of the median time within the panel to complete the survey. Flatliners are respondents who select "do not know" more than three standard deviations from the mean.
- The data is weighted based on gender, age, region, and education in each country and is nationally representative on these parameters.

## Data analysis

- After data processing, the analysis of the data from the five different countries is presented in this report.

## Distribution across background variables

# The demographic distributions in data reflect the populations in all countries

N = 5008

Variable	Denmark (N=1002)	Finland (N=1002)	Norway (N=1002)	Sweden (N=1002)	Iceland (N=1000)
<b>Gender</b>					
Men	485 (48 pct.)	477 (48 pct.)	428 (43 pct.)	479 (48 pct.)	489 (49 pct.)
Women	514 (51 pct.)	521 (52 pct.)	573 (57 pct.)	522 (52 pct.)	508 (51 pct.)
Other	3 (0 pct.)	4 (0 pct.)	1 (0 pct.)	1 (0 pct.)	3 (0 pct.)
<b>Age group</b>					
18-29	188 (19 pct.)	177 ( 18 pct.)	185 (18 pct.)	165 (16 pct.)	115 (12 pct.)
30-39	158 (16 pct.)	149 (15 pct.)	165 (16 pct.)	167 (17 pct.)	166 (17 pct.)
40-49	149 (15 pct.)	169 (17 pct.)	157 (16 pct.)	180 (18 pct.)	171 (17 pct.)
50-59	174 (17 pct.)	160 (16 pct.)	184 (18 pct.)	162 (16 pct.)	179 (18 pct.)
60-69	138 (14 pct.)	153 (15 pct.)	146 (15 pct.)	147 (15 pct.)	189 (19 pct.)
70+	195 (19 pct.)	194 (19 pct.)	165 (16 pct.)	181 (18 pct.)	180 (18 pct.)
<b>Educational level</b>					
Primary and secondary school	427 (43 pct.)	207 (21 pct.)	96 (10 pct.)	534 (53 pct.)	274 (28 pct.)
Vocational education and training	247 (25 pct.)	518 (52 pct.)	563 (56 pct.)	101 (10 pct.)	168 (17 pct.)
Academic education	328 (33 pct.)	271 (27 pct.)	343 (34 pct.)	367 (37 pct.)	549 (55 pct.)
Don't know	0 (0 pct.)	6 (1 pct.)	0 (0 pct.)	0 (0 pct.)	0 (0 pct.)
<b>Party vote</b>					
Left wing	422 (56 pct.)	359 (49 pct.)	314 (42 pct.)	359 (46 pct.)	393 (54 pct.)
Right wing	333 (44 pct.)	371 (51 pct.)	427 (58 pct.)	414 (54 pct.)	339 (46 pct.)

Values displayed show (N (pct.))

# Appendices

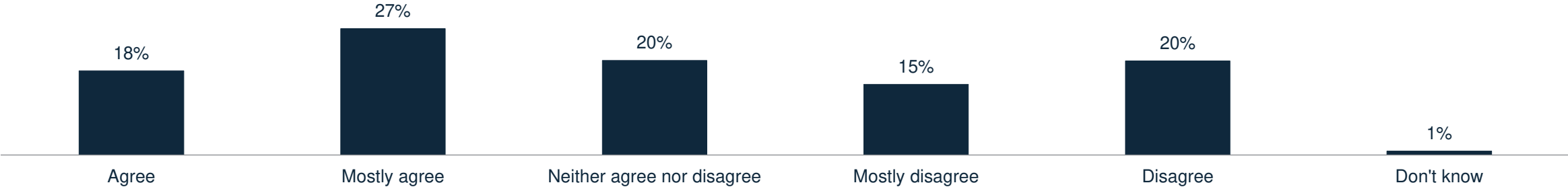
A table report showing all questions for the five countries crossed by relevant background variables can be provided by contacting Sofia Lourenço from The Danish Cancer Society on [soflou@cancer.dk](mailto:soflou@cancer.dk).

# Appendix - Denmark

This appendix contains information about the frequencies of all questions answered by respondents in Denmark.

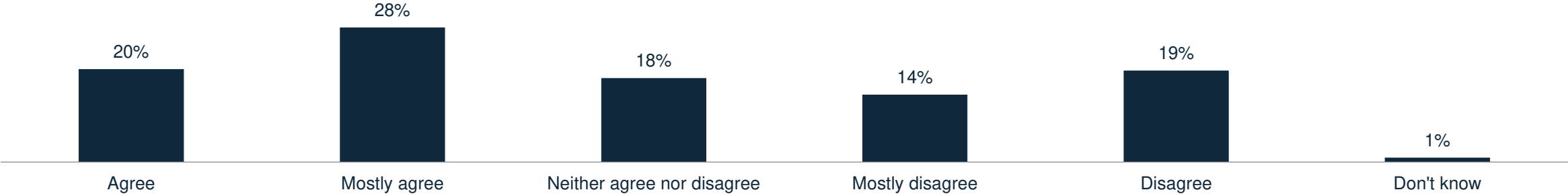
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?  
It is a good idea to impose taxes on sweetened beverages (e.g., sodas, energy drinks, or juice) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



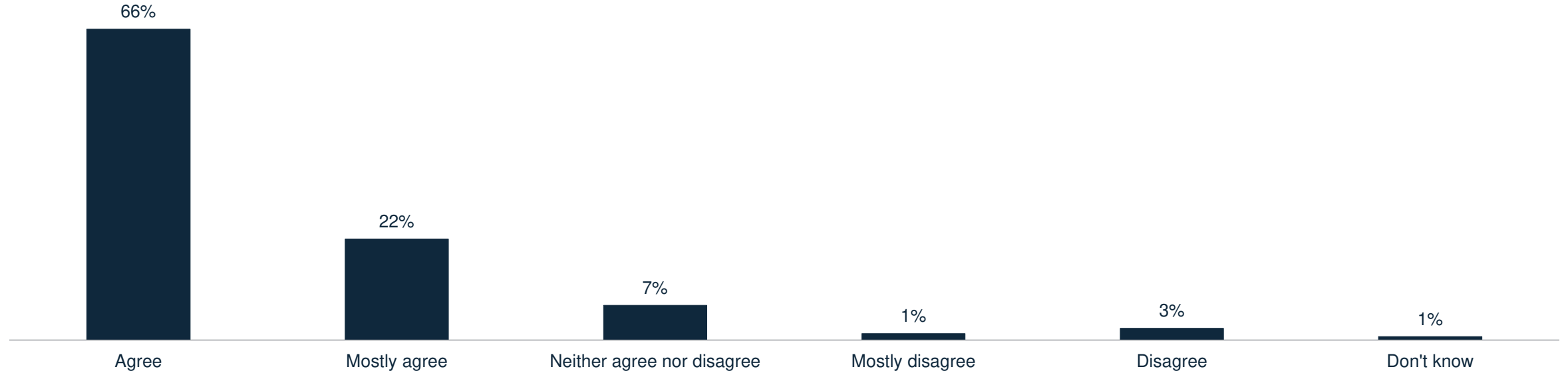
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on unhealthy foods (e.g., candy, chips, and snacks that typically have high levels of sugar, fat, or salt) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods (e.g., fruits or vegetables) to reduce their price and help prevent obesity among children and youth.

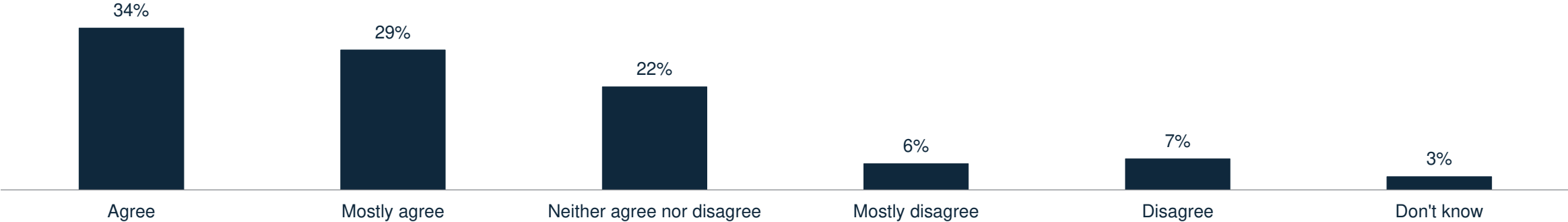
N=1002





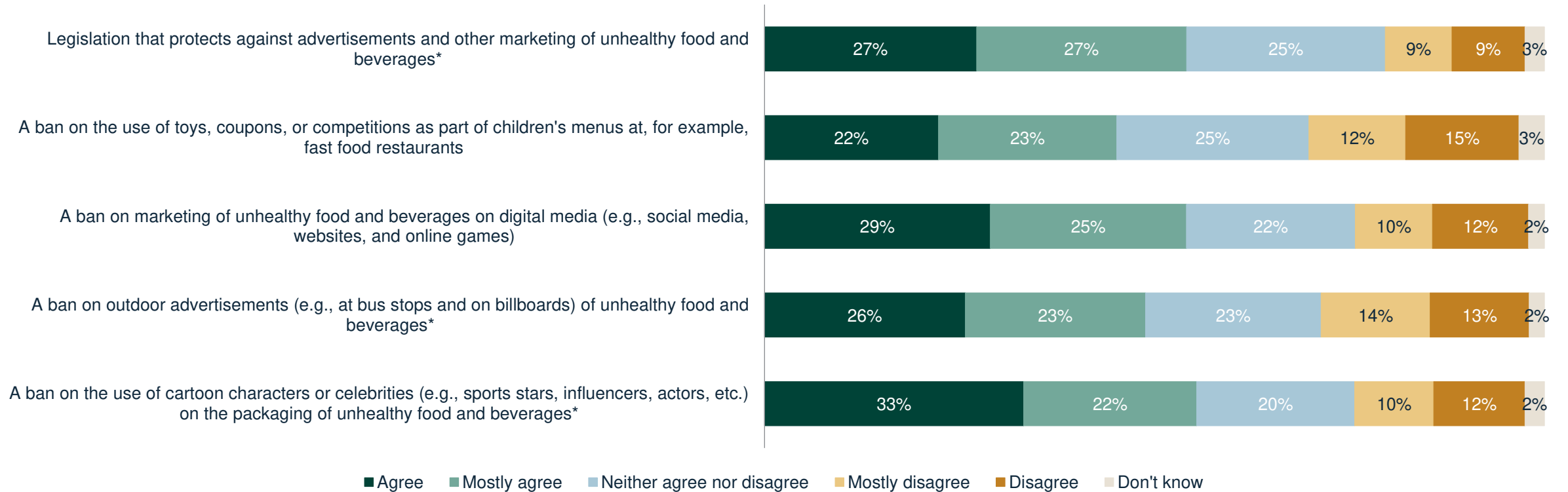
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? To introduce a mandatory nutrition label on the front of all packaged food and beverages, indicating how healthy or unhealthy a product is.

N=1002



How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years old?

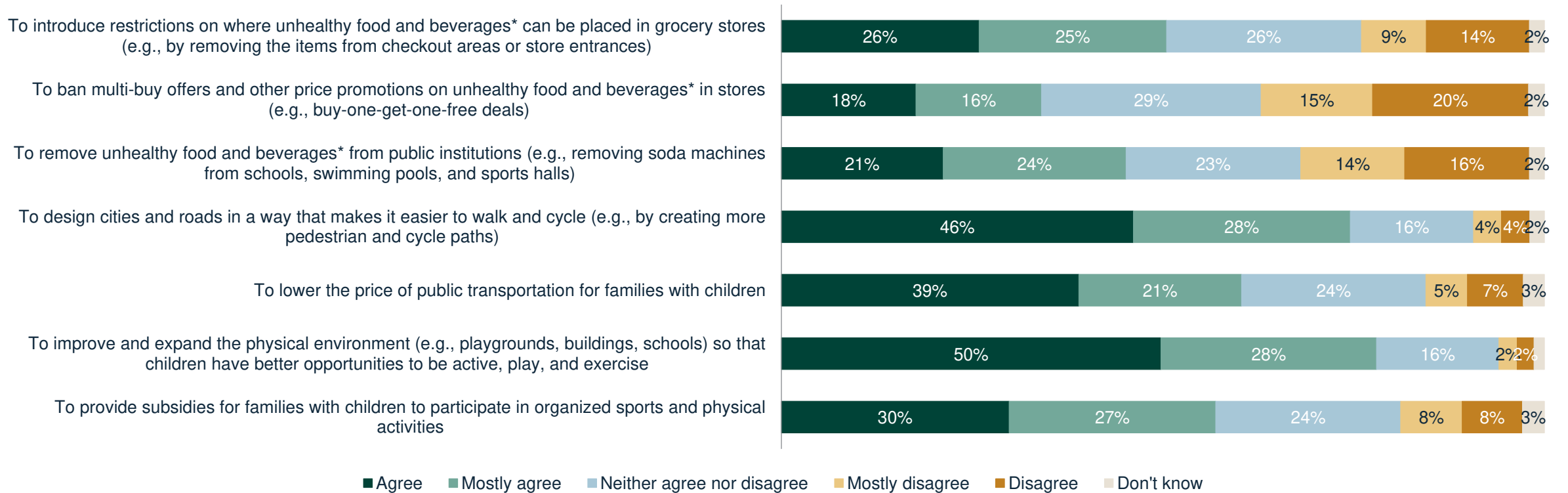
N=1002



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

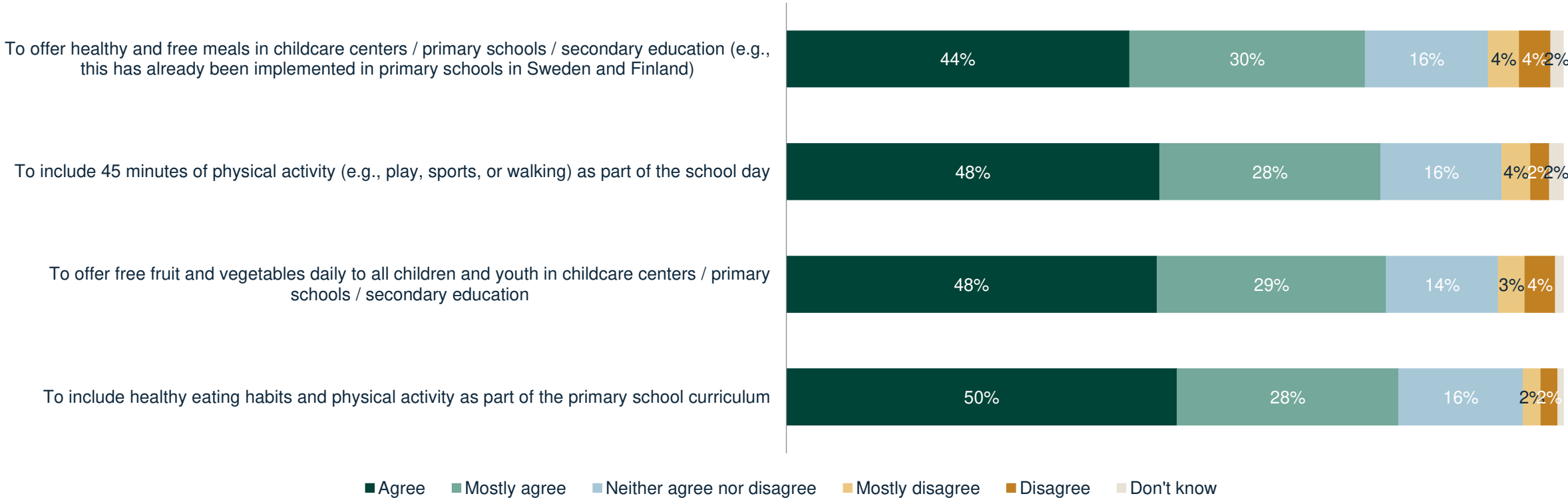
N=1002



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

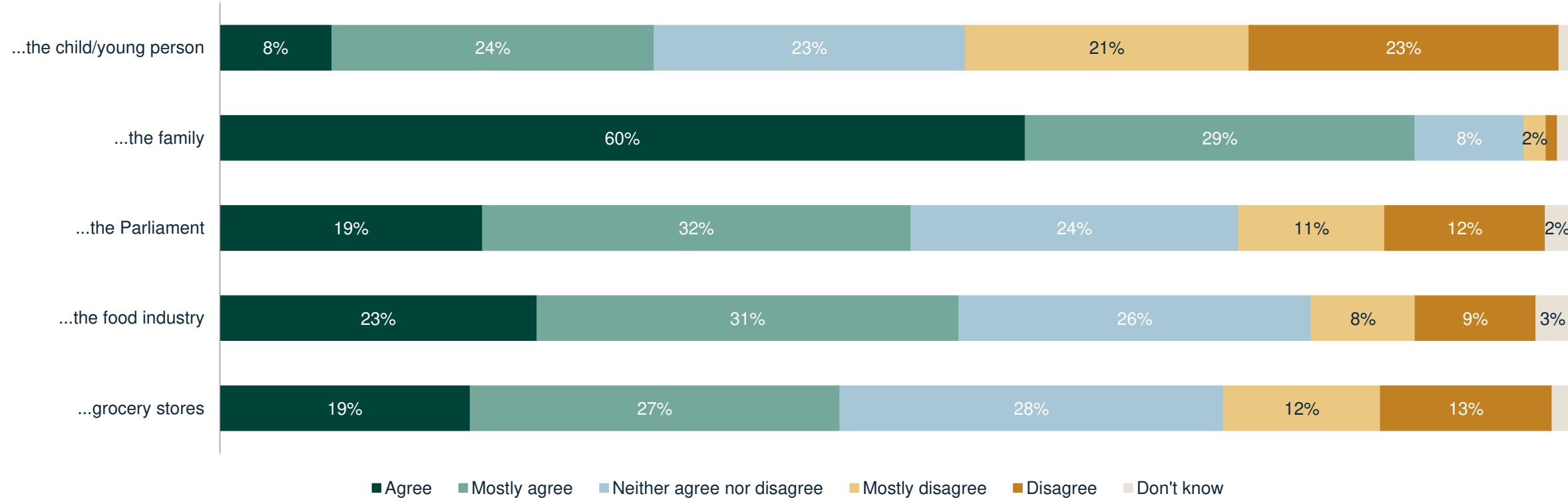
How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

N=1002



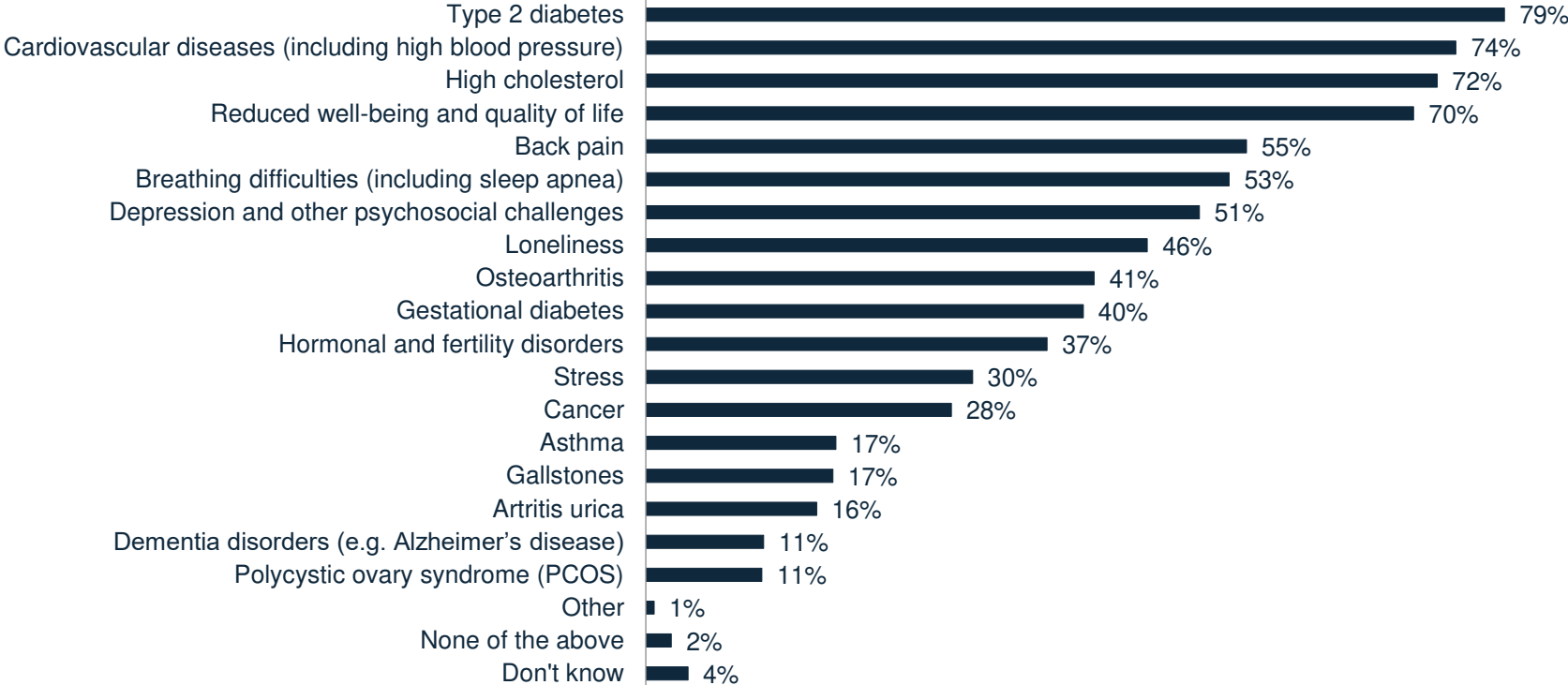
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The responsibility for preventing overweight and severe obesity among children and young people under the age of 18 lies with...

N=1002



Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?

N=1002

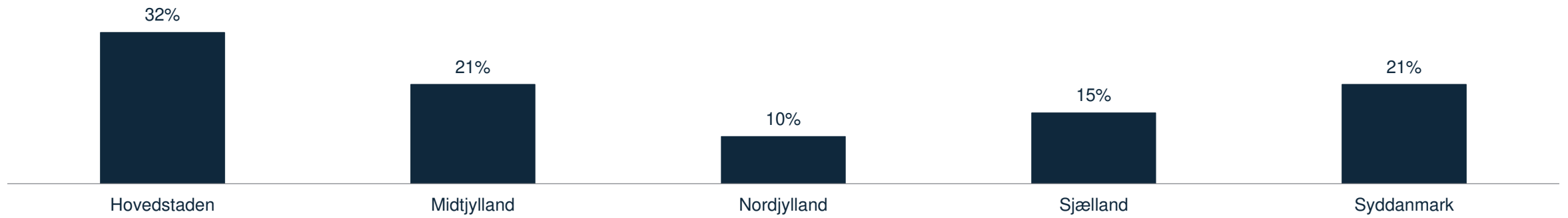


# Background variables - Denmark

Region

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N=1002





## Party vote

N=1002



Note: options include 1) A. Socialdemokraterne, 2) B. Radikale Venstre, 3) C. Det Konservative Folkeparti, 4) D) Miljøpartiet, 5) F. SF - Socialistisk Folkeparti, 6) I. Liberal Alliance, 7) M. Moderaterne, 8) O. Dansk Folkeparti, 9) V. Venstre, 10) Æ. Danmarksdemokraterne – Inger Støjberg, 11) Ø. Enhedslisten, 12) Å. Alternativet, 13) Andet parti/kandidat uden for partierne, 14) Ville ikke stemme, 15) Ville stemme blankt, 16) Har ikke stemmeret, 17) Vil ikke svare, 18) Ved ikke

Party vote (recoded)

---

N=749\*



Note: "Left wing" indicates the parties: *Socialdemokraterne*, *Radikale Venstre*, *SF – Socialistisk Folkeparti*, *Enhedslisten* and *Alternativet*. "Right wing" indicates the parties: *Det Konservative Folkeparti*, *Liberal Alliance*, *Moderaterne*, *Dansk Folkeparti*, *Venstre*, and *Danmarksdemokraterne – Inger Støjberg*. Even though the parties *Radikale Venstre* and *Moderaterne* could be identified as middle parties, they are coded in the wing, they are leaning towards.

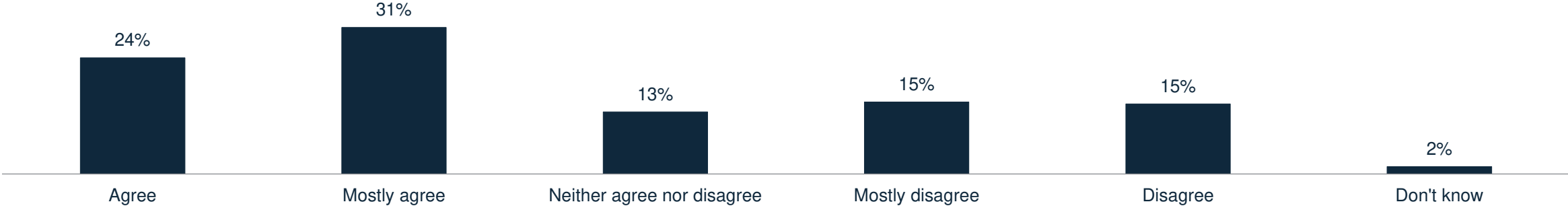
\*Respondents, who did not choose a specific party, are not included.

# Appendix - Finland

This appendix contains information about the frequencies of all questions answered by respondents in Finland.

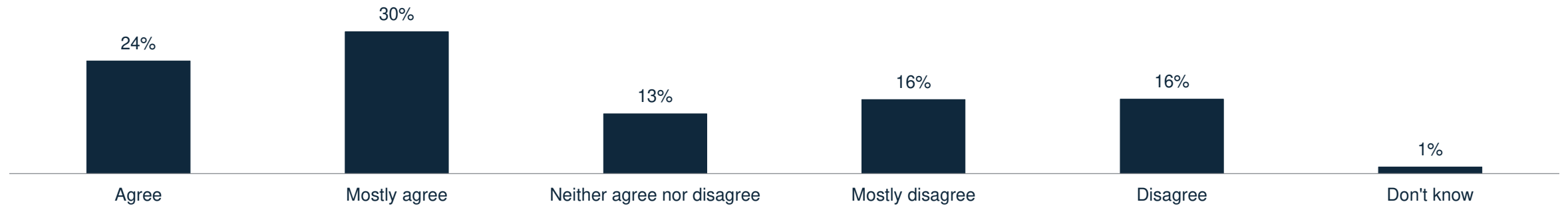
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on sweetened beverages (e.g., sodas, energy drinks, or juice) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on unhealthy foods (e.g., candy, chips, and snacks that typically have high levels of sugar, fat, or salt) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

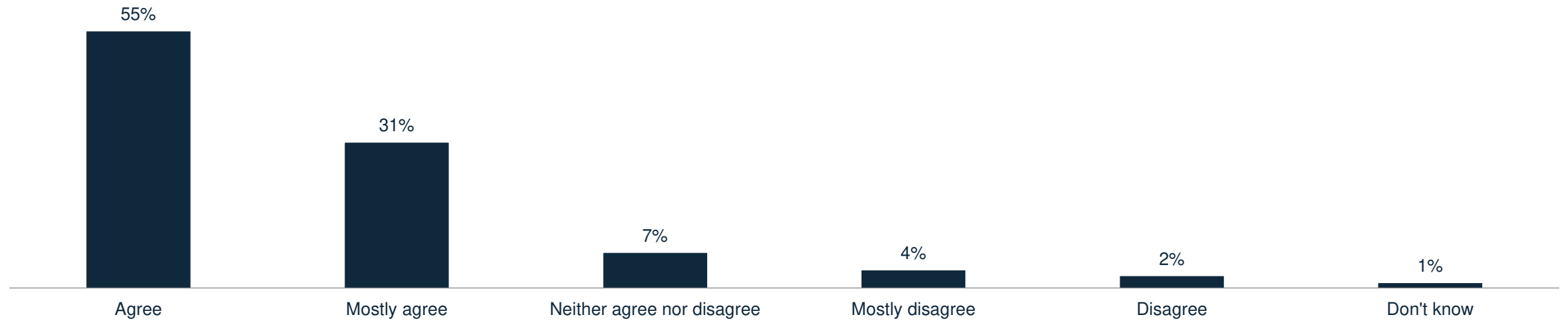
N=1002



How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods (e.g., fruits or vegetables) to reduce their price and help prevent obesity among children and youth.

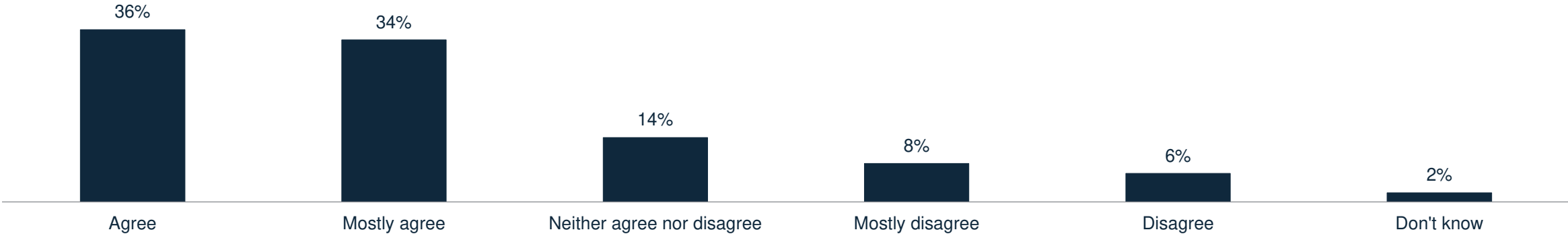
---

N=1002



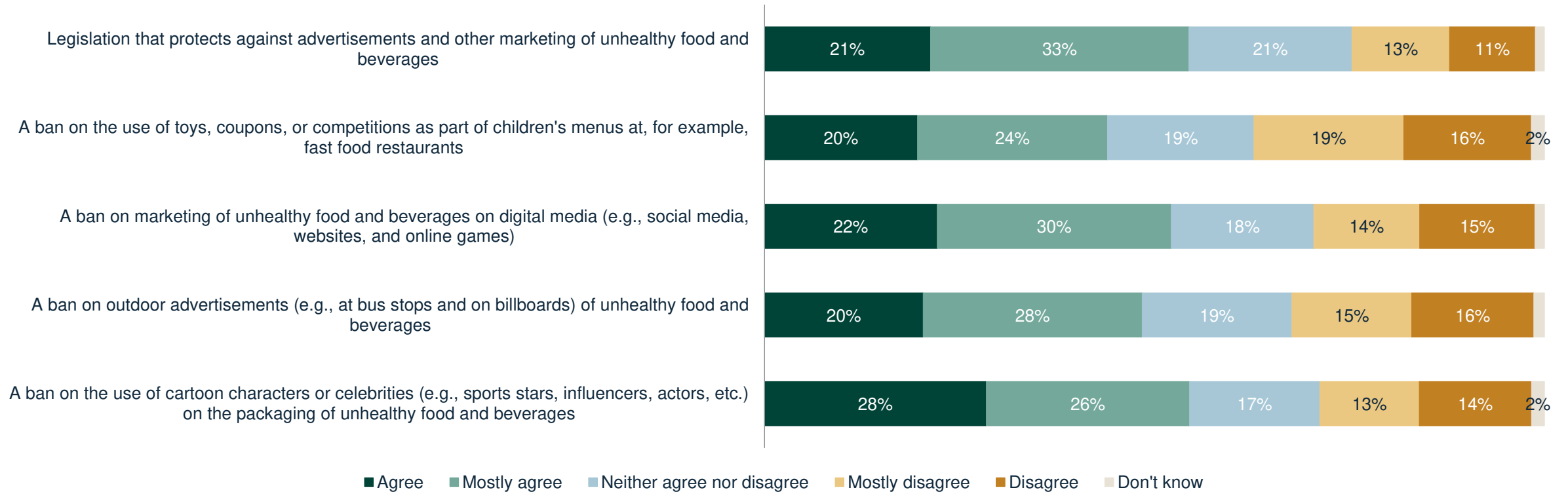
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? To introduce a mandatory nutrition label on the front of all packaged food and beverages, indicating how healthy or unhealthy a product is.

N=1002



How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years old?

N=1002

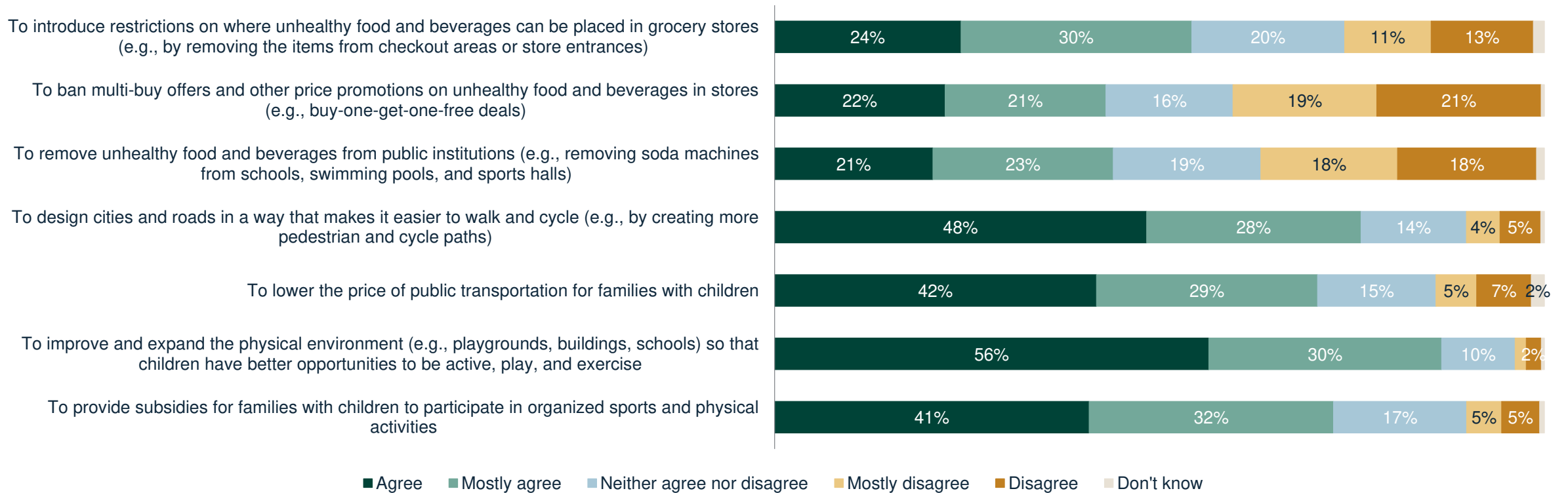


\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.



How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

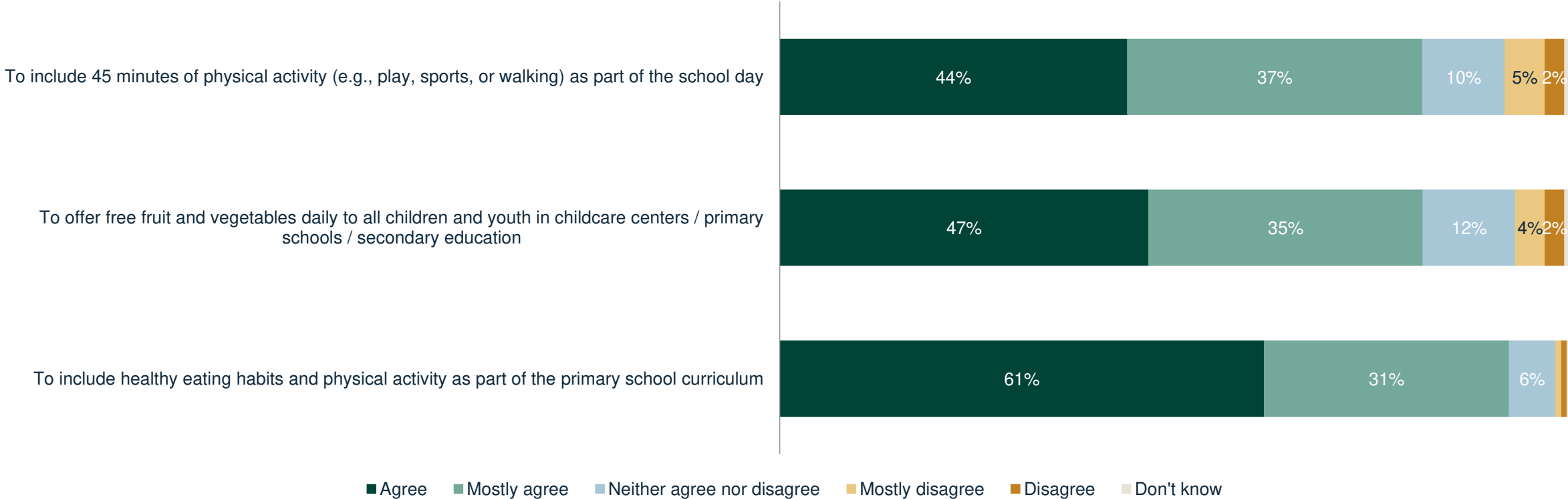
N=1002



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

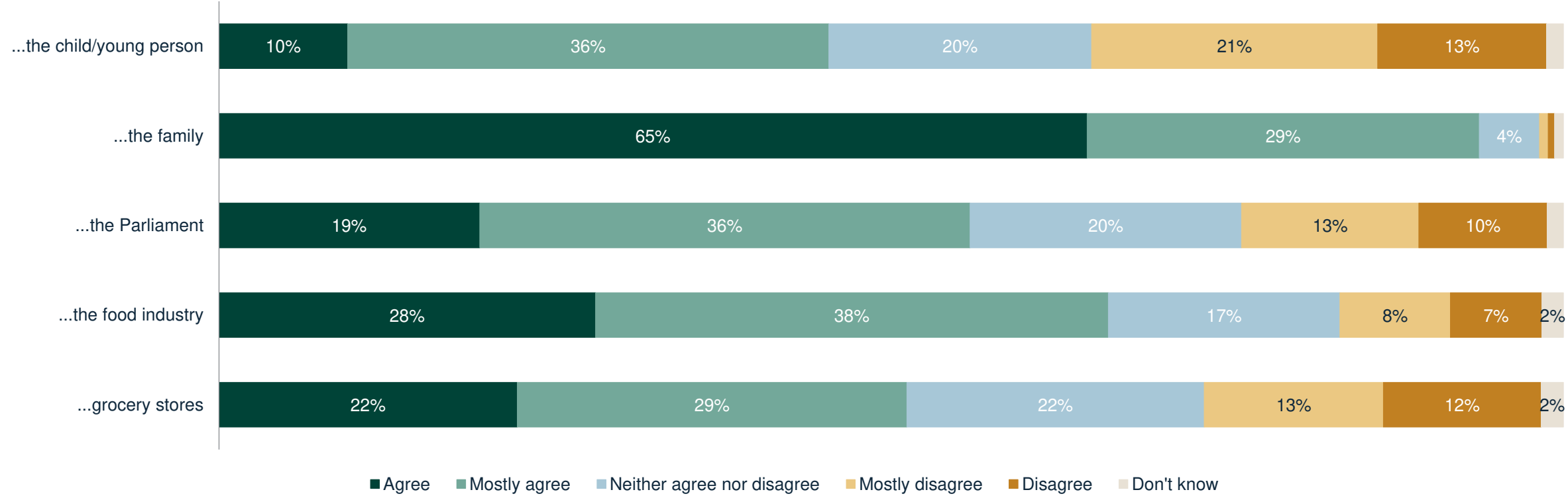
How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

N=1002



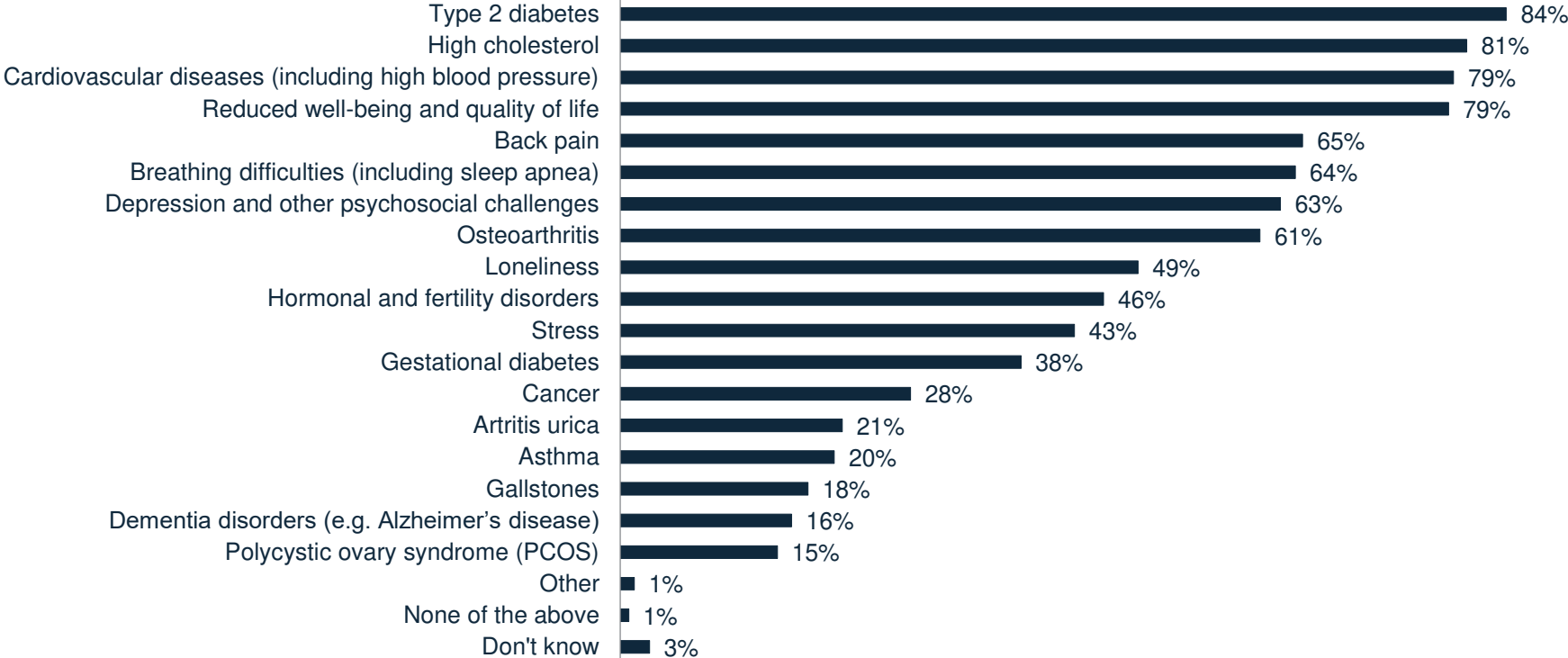
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The responsibility for preventing overweight and severe obesity among children and young people under the age of 18 lies with...

N=1002



Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?

N=1002

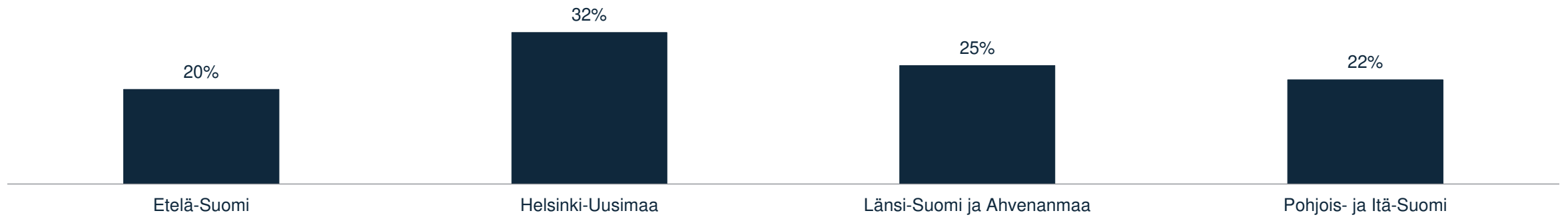


# Background variables - Finland

Region

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N=1002



## Party vote

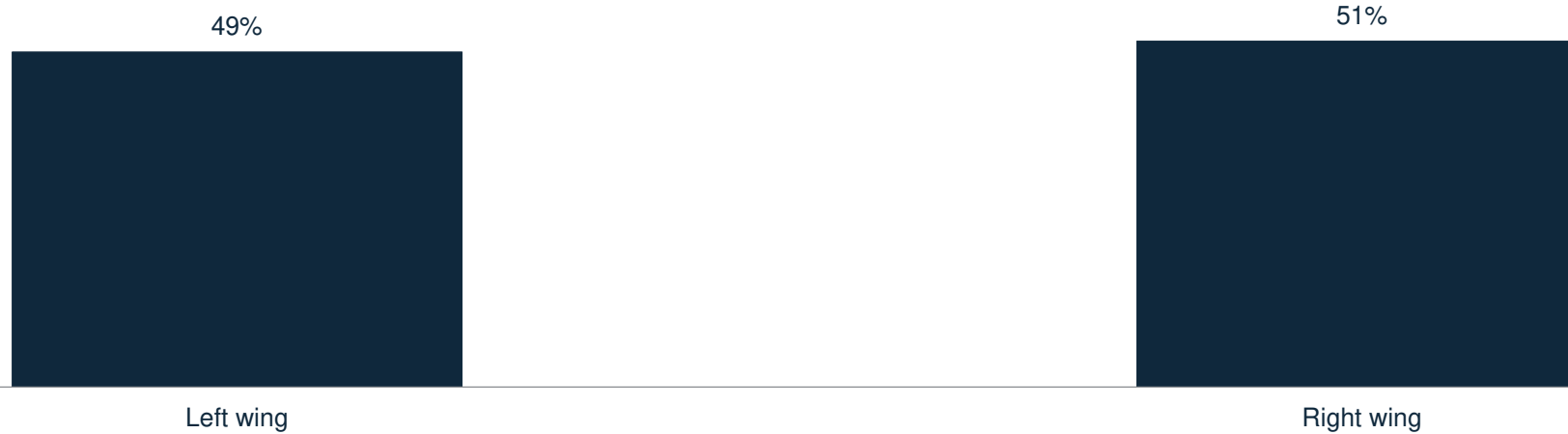
N=1002



Note: options include 1) Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue, 2) Suomen Keskusta, 3) Kansallinen Kokoomus, 4) Ruotsalainen kansanpuolue, 5) Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit, 6) Vihreä liitto, 7) Vasemmistoliitto, 8) Perussuomalaiset, 9) Muu puolue tai puolueiden ulkopuolinen ehdokas, 10) En äänestäisi, 11) Äänestäisin tyhjä, 12) Minulla ei ole äänestys-oikeutta, 13) En halua vastata, 14) En osaa sanoa

Party vote (recoded)

N=720\*



Note: "Left wing" includes the parties *Vasemmistoliitto*, *Suomen Sosiodemokraattinen puolue*, and *Vihreät*. "Right wing" includes the parties: *Kansallinen Kokoomus*, *Ruotsalainen kansanpuolue*, *Kristillisdemokraatit*, *Suomen Keskusta*, and *Perussuomalaiset*. Even though *Vihreät* and *Suomen Keskusta* could be identified as middle parties, they are coded in the wing, where they are leaning towards.  
\*Respondents, who did not choose a specific party, are not included.

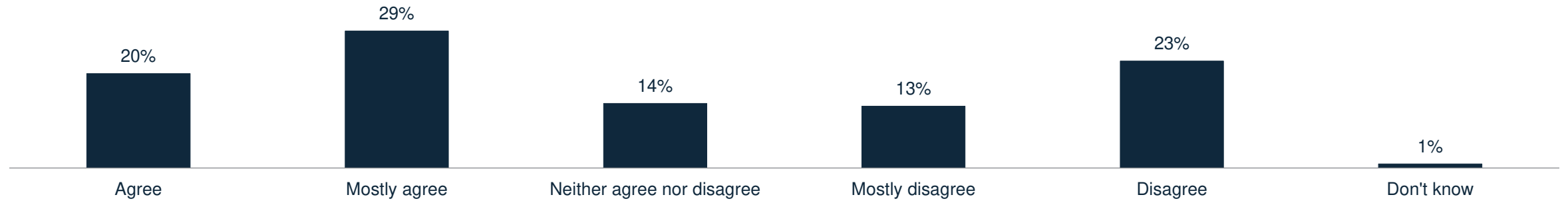


# Appendix - Norway

This appendix contains information about the frequencies of all questions answered by respondents in Norway.

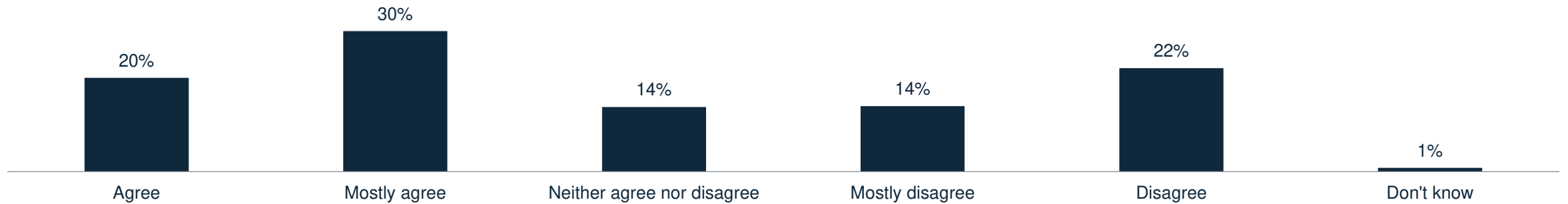
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on sweetened beverages (e.g., sodas, energy drinks, or juice) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



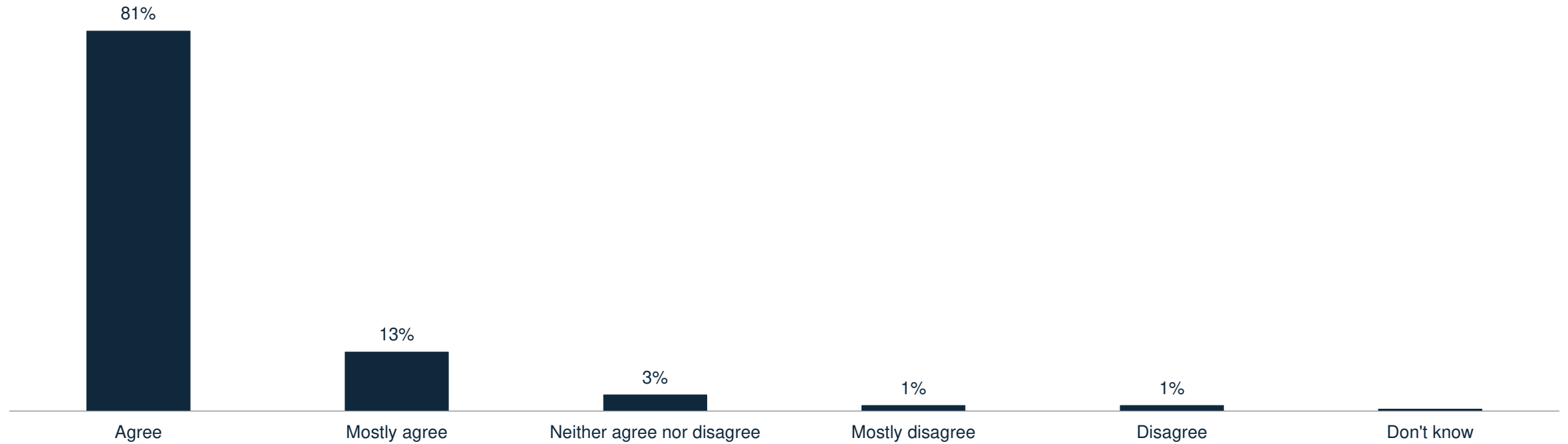
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on unhealthy foods (e.g., candy, chips, and snacks that typically have high levels of sugar, fat, or salt) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



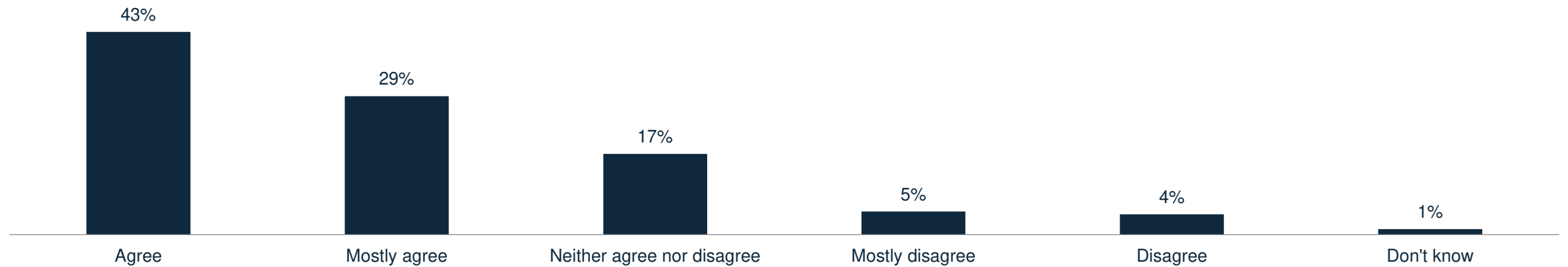
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods (e.g., fruits or vegetables) to reduce their price and help prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



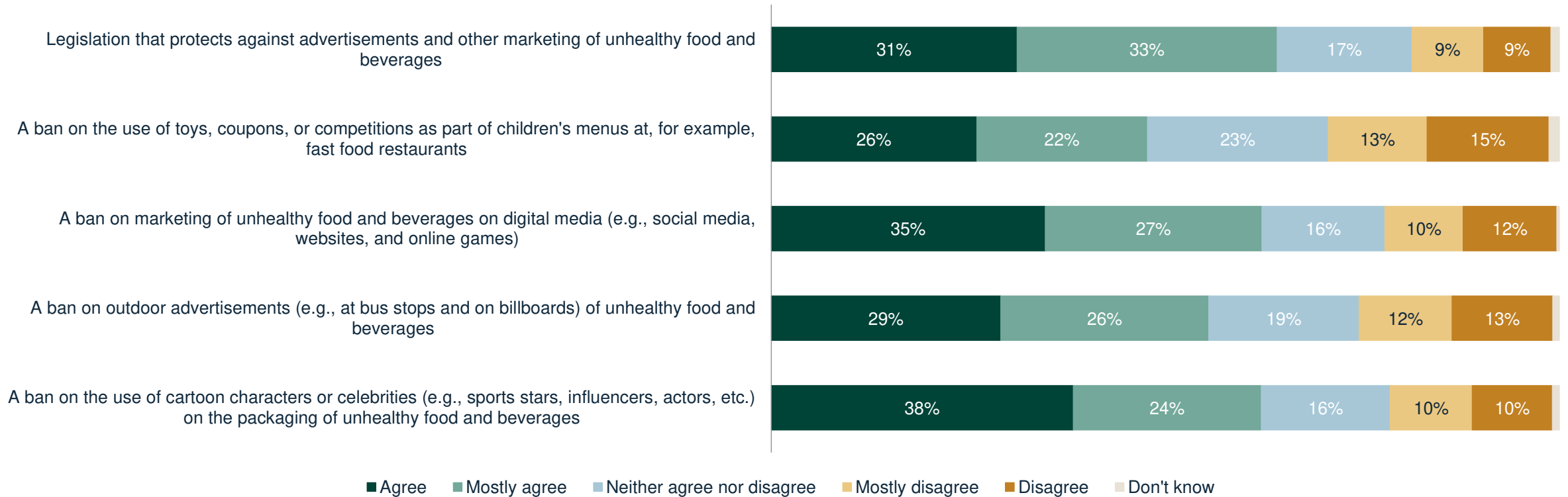
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? To introduce a mandatory nutrition label on the front of all packaged food and beverages, indicating how healthy or unhealthy a product is.

N=1002



How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years of age?

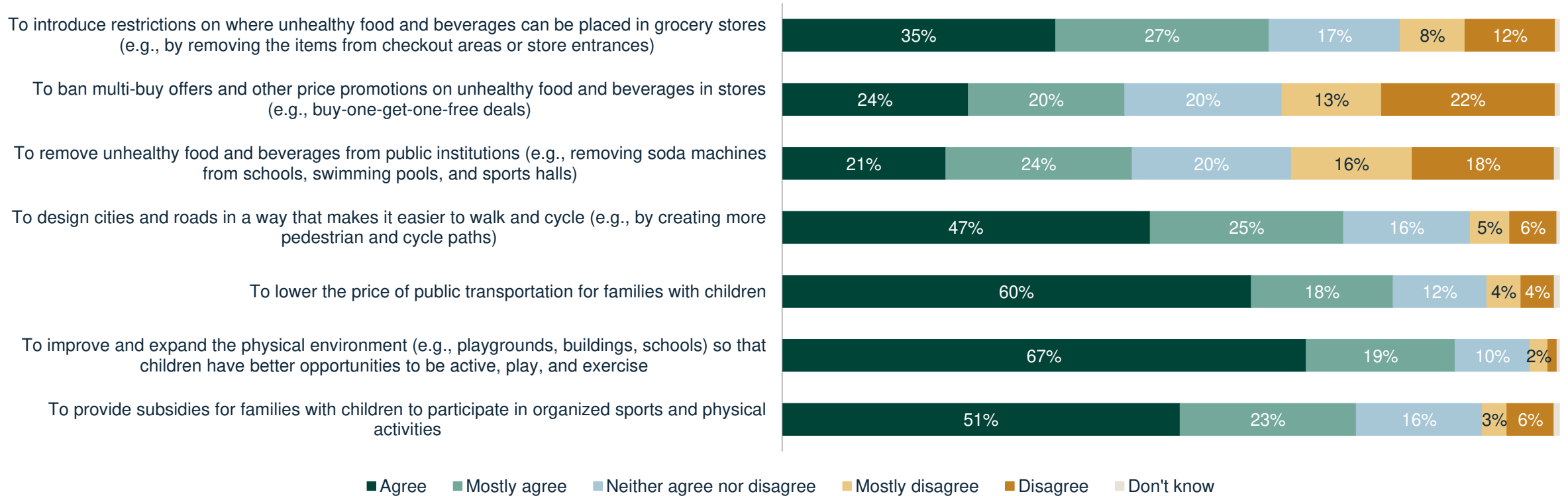
N=1002



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

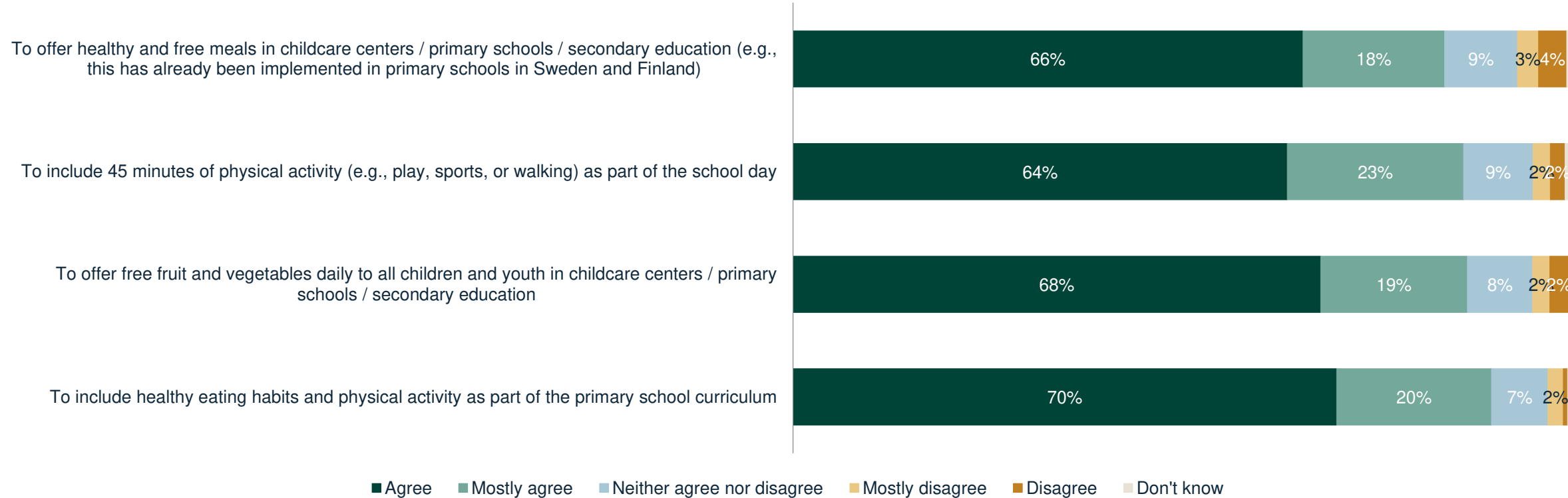
N=1002



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

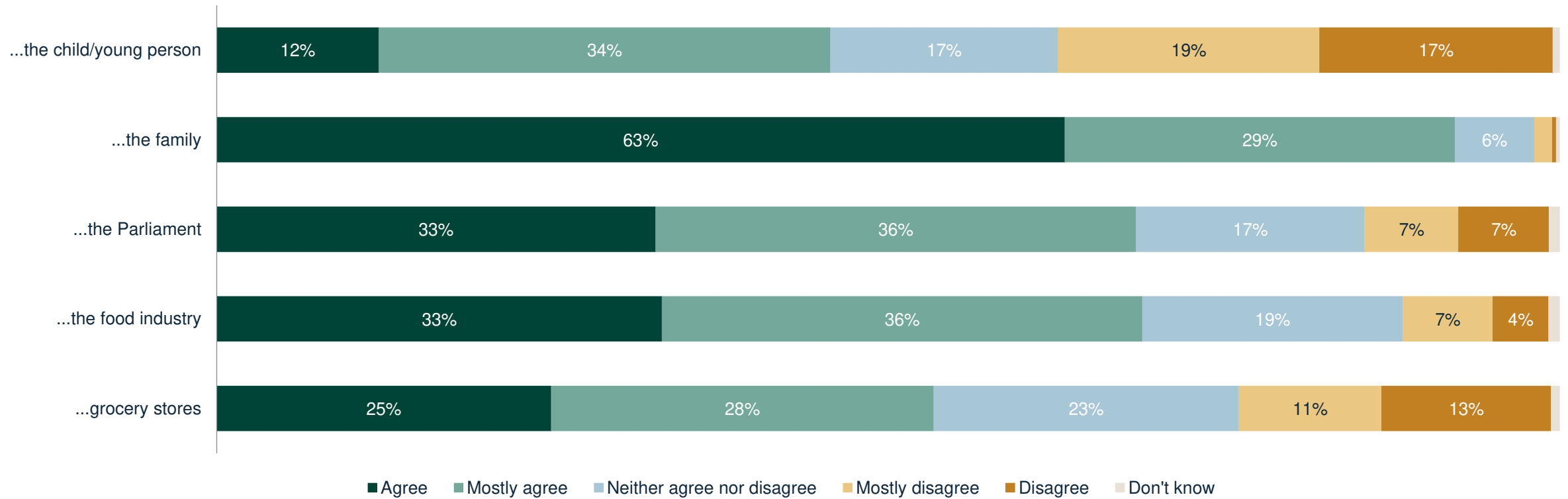
N=1002





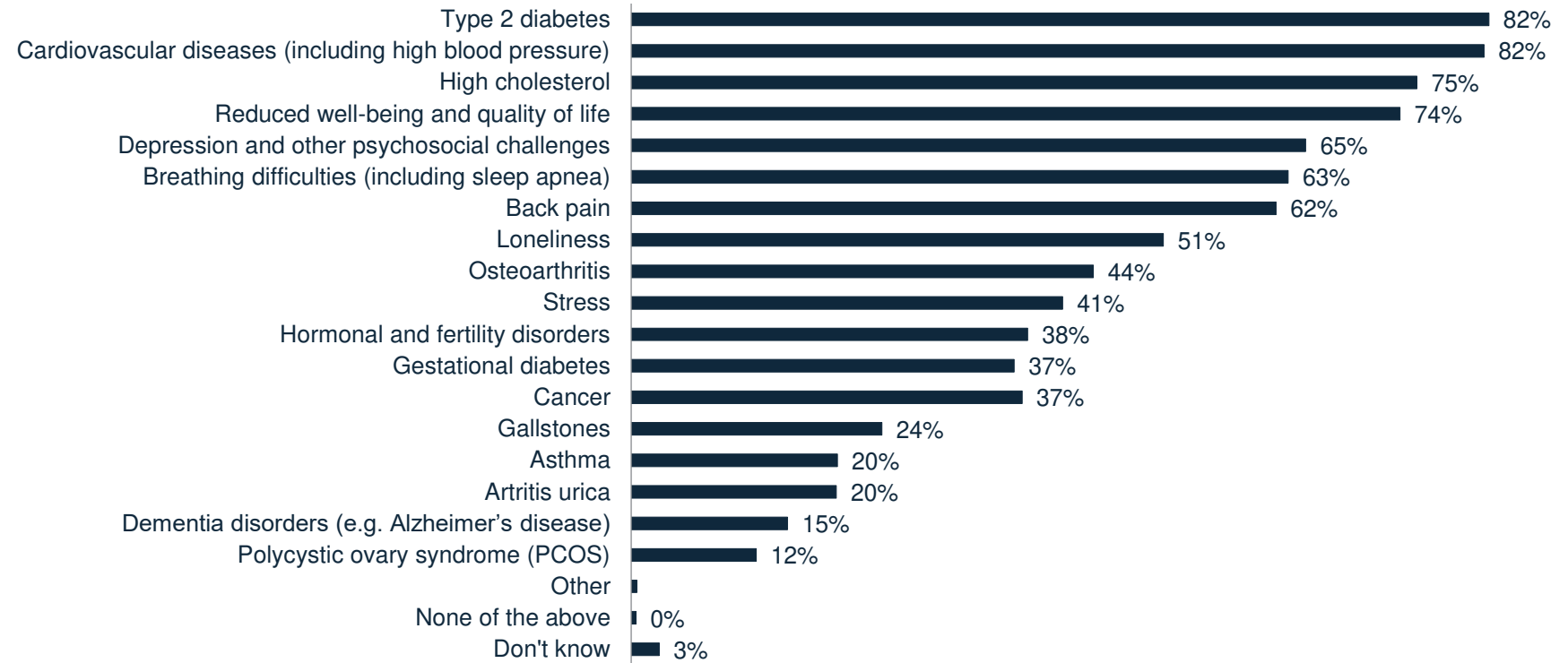
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The responsibility for preventing overweight and severe obesity among children and young people under the age of 18 lies with...

N=1002



Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?

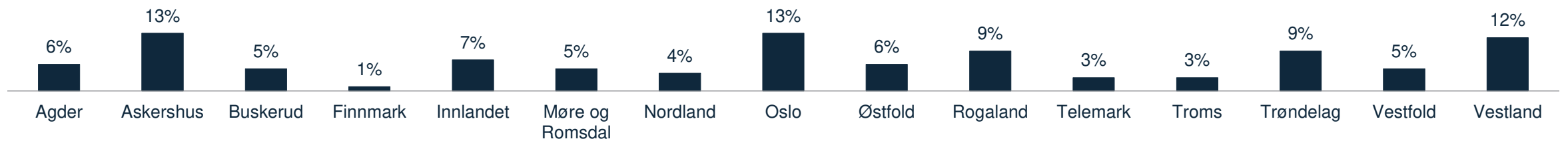
N=1002



# Background variables - Norway

Region

N=1002



Party vote

N=1002

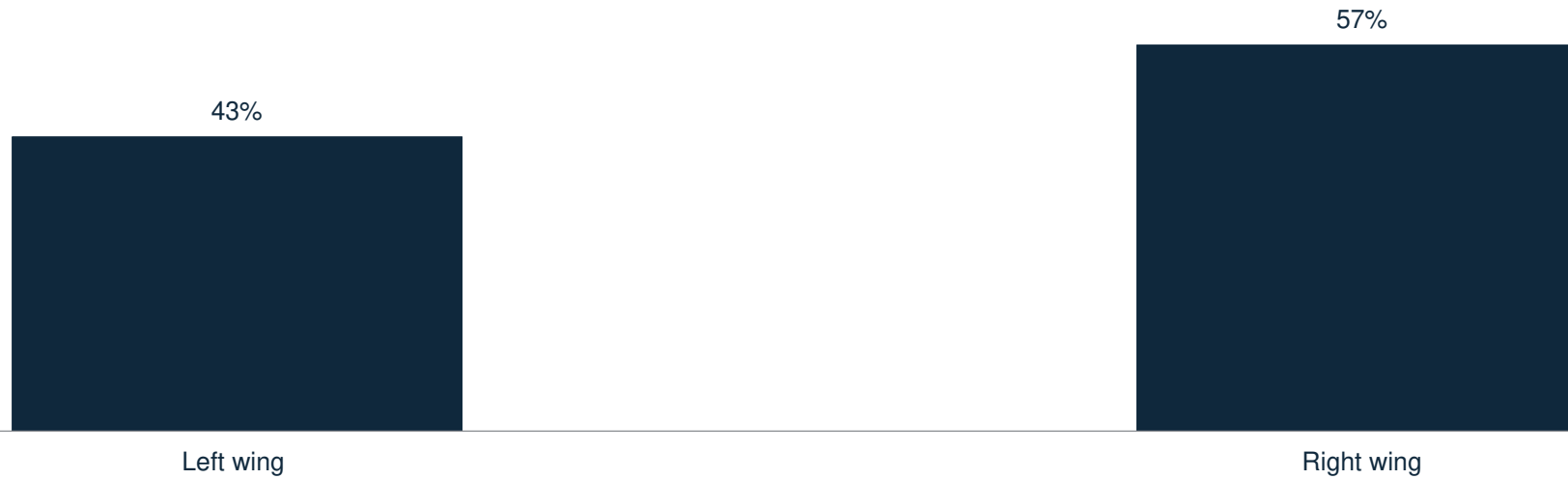


Note: options include 1) Arbeiderpartiet, ( \_2) Høyre, 3) Senterpartiet, 4) Fremskrittspartiet, 5) Venstre, 6) Sosialistisk venstreparti, 7) Rødt, 8) Kristelig Folkeparti, 9) Miljøpartiet de grønne, 10) Pasientfokus, 11) Annet parti/kandidat utenfor partiene, 12) Ville ikke stemme, 13) Ville stemme blankt, 14) Har ikke stemmerett, 15) Vil ikke svare, 16) Vet ikke

Party vote (recoded)

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N=717\*



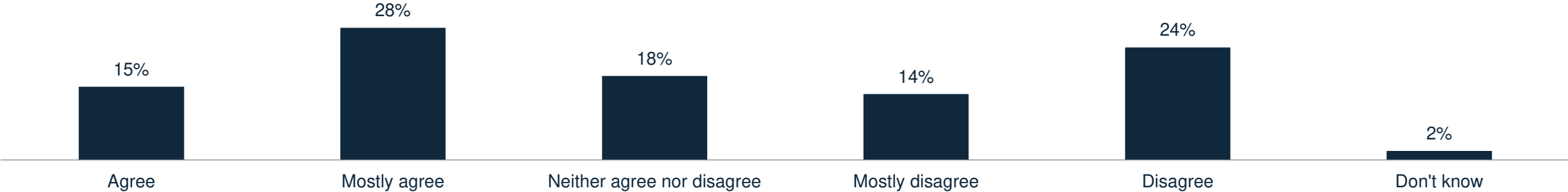
Note: "Left wing" includes the parties: *Arbeiderpartiet*, *Sosialistisk venstreparti*, *Rødt*, *Miljøpartiet de grønne*, *Senterpartiet*, and *Pasientfokus*. "Right wing" includes the parties: *Kristelig Folkeparti*, *Venstre*, *Høyre*, and *Fremskrittspartiet*. \*Respondents, who did not choose a specific party, are not included.

# Appendix - Sweden

This appendix contains information about the frequencies of all questions answered by respondents in Sweden.

How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on sweetened beverages (e.g., sodas, energy drinks, or juice) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

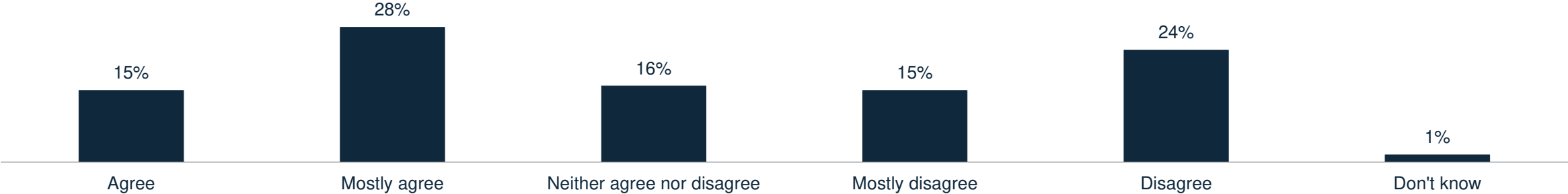
N=1002





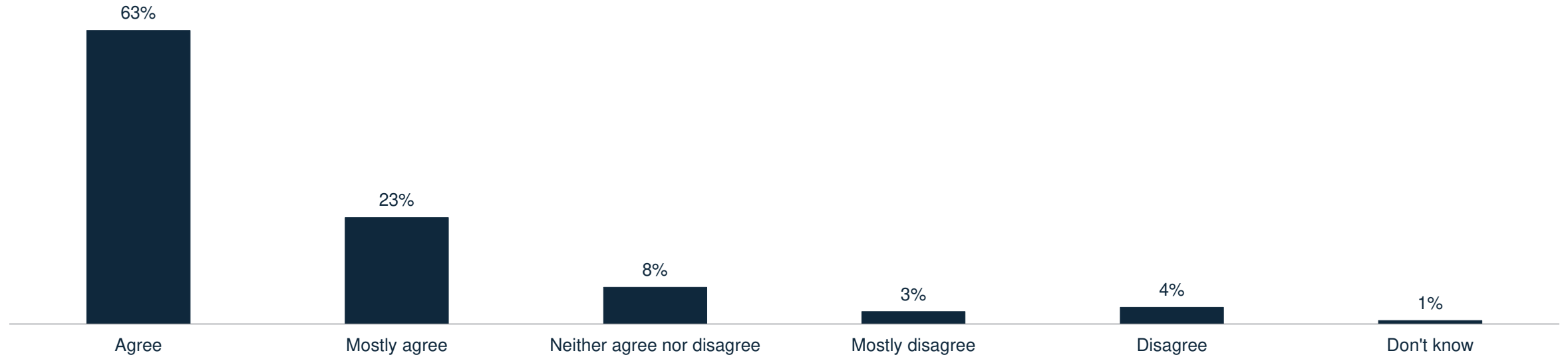
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on unhealthy foods (e.g., candy, chips, and snacks that typically have high levels of sugar, fat, or salt) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



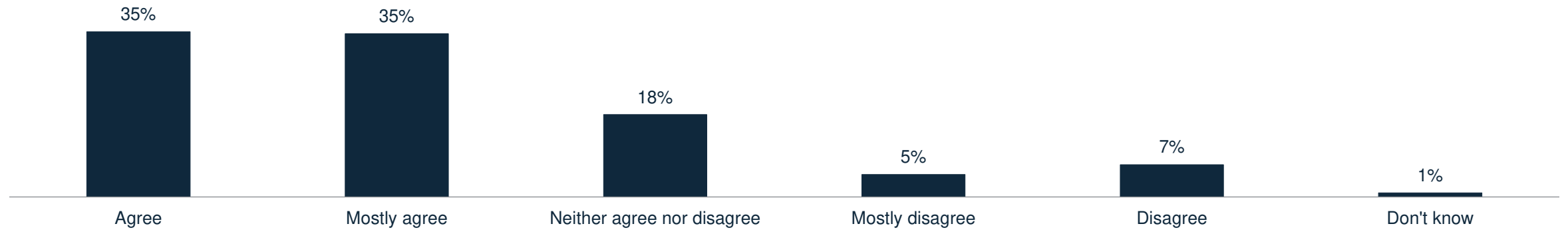
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods (e.g., fruits or vegetables) to reduce their price and help prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1002



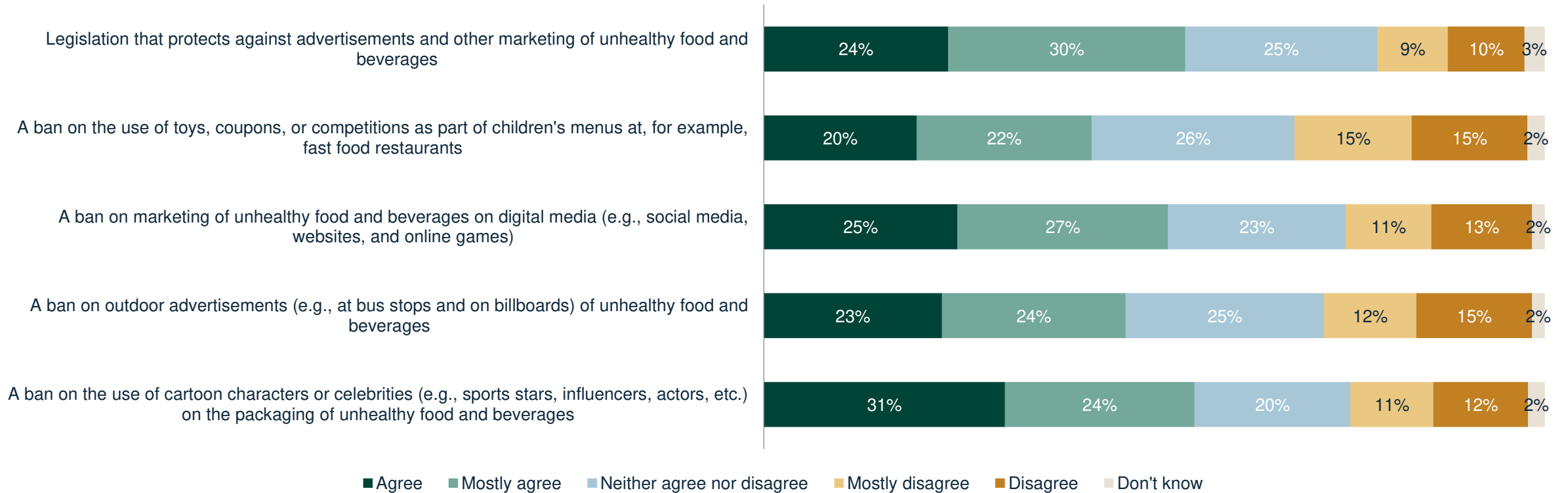
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? To introduce a mandatory nutrition label on the front of all packaged food and beverages, indicating how healthy or unhealthy a product is.

N=1002



How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years old?

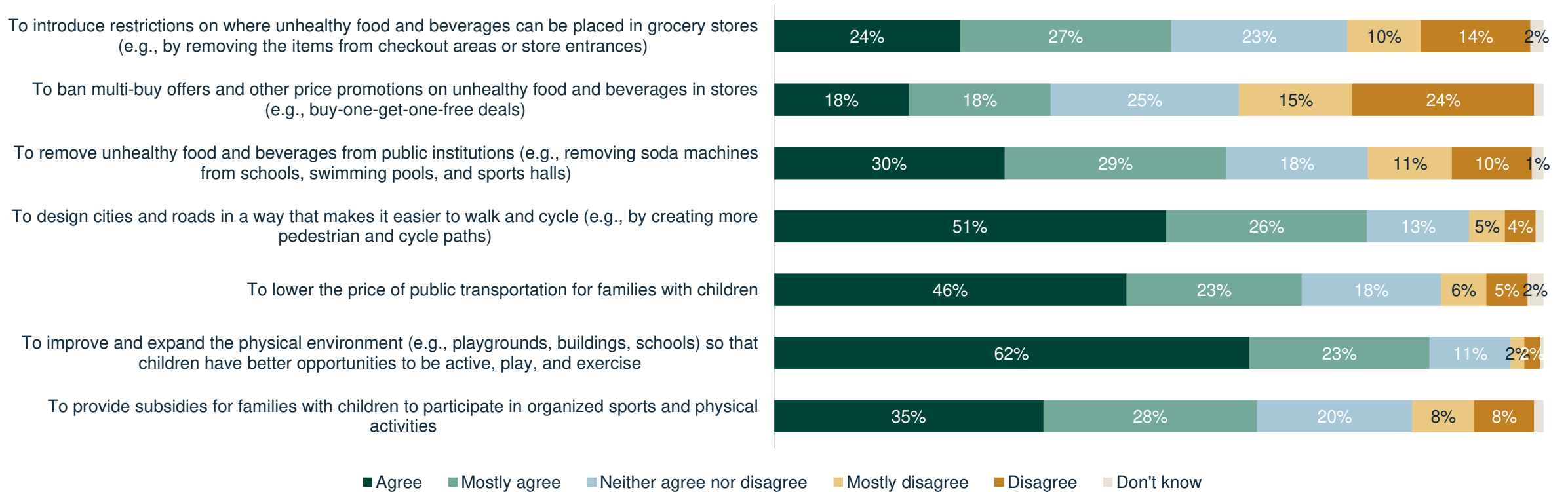
N=1002



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

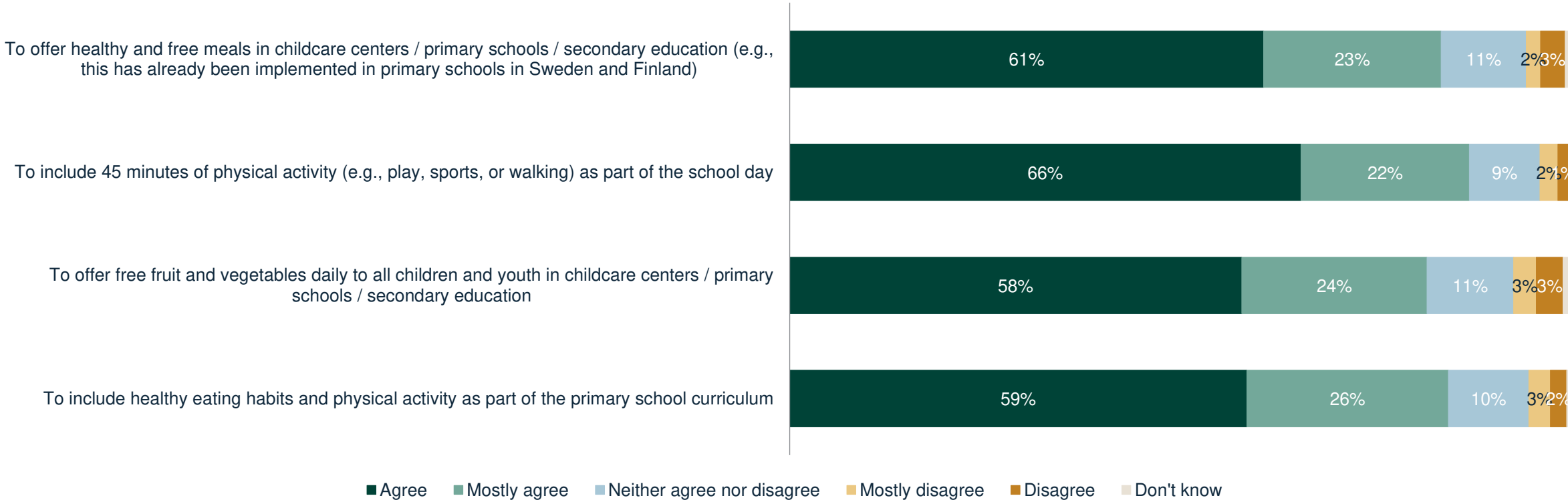
N=1002



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

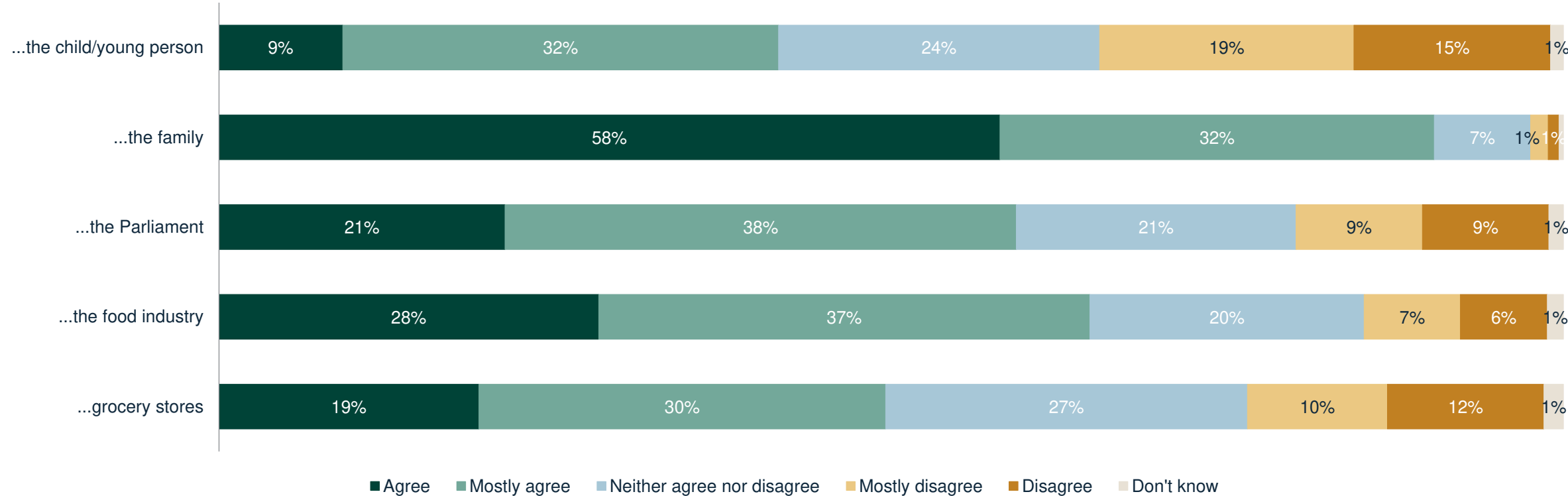
How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

N=1002



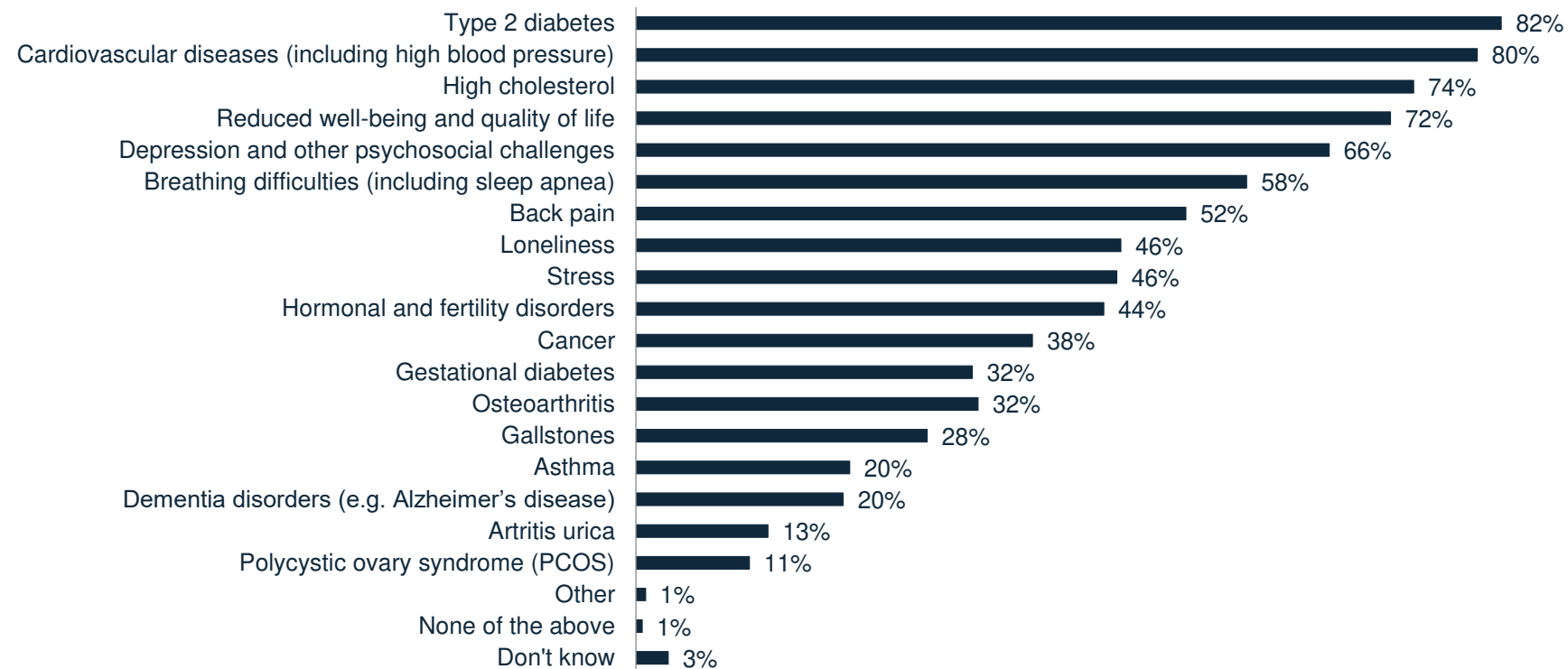
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The responsibility for preventing overweight and severe obesity among children and young people under the age of 18 lies with...

N=1002



## Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?

N=1002

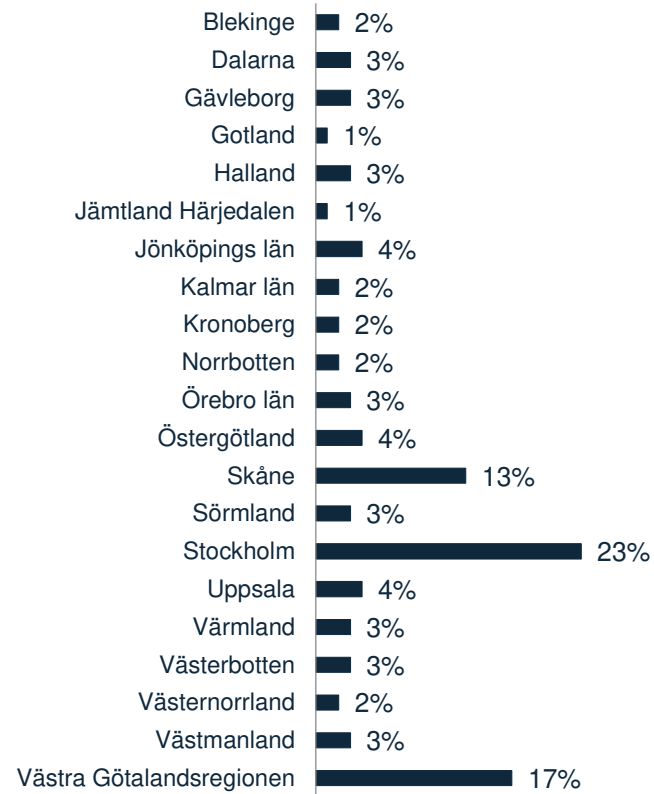




# Background variables - Sweden

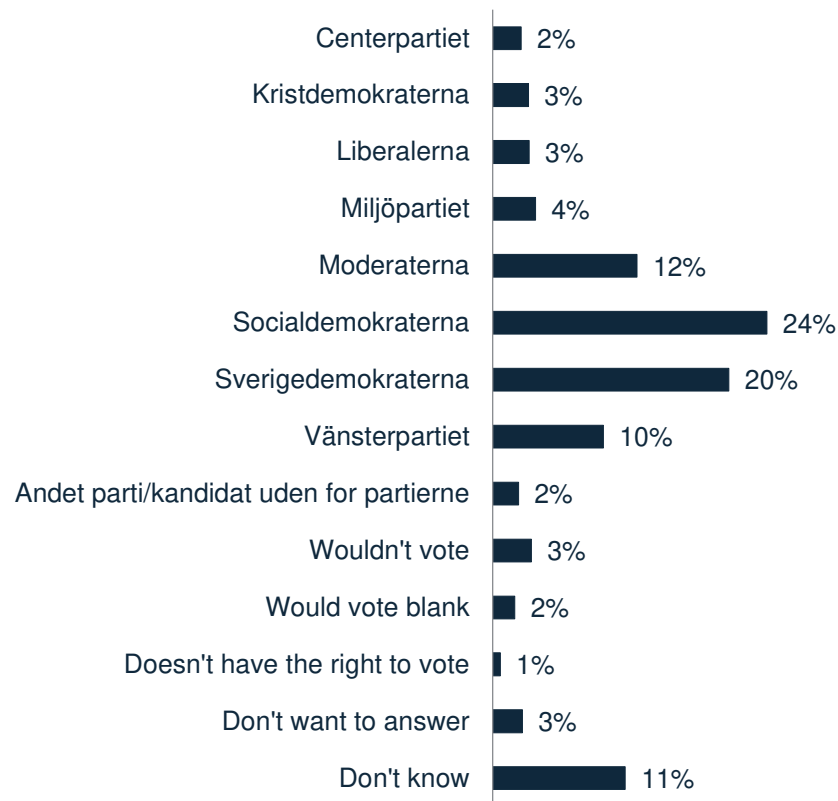
Region

N=1002



Party vote

N=1002



Note: Options include 1) A) Centerpartiet, 2) B) Kristdemokraterna, 3) C) Liberalerna, 4) D) Miljöpartiet, 5) E) Moderaterna, 6) F) Socialdemokraterna, 7) G) Sverigedemokraterna, 8) H) Vänsterpartiet, 9) Annat parti, 10) Skulle ej rösta, 11) Skulle rösta blankt, 12) Har inte rösträtt, 13) Vill ej uppge, 14) Vet inte

Party vote (recoded)

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N=786\*



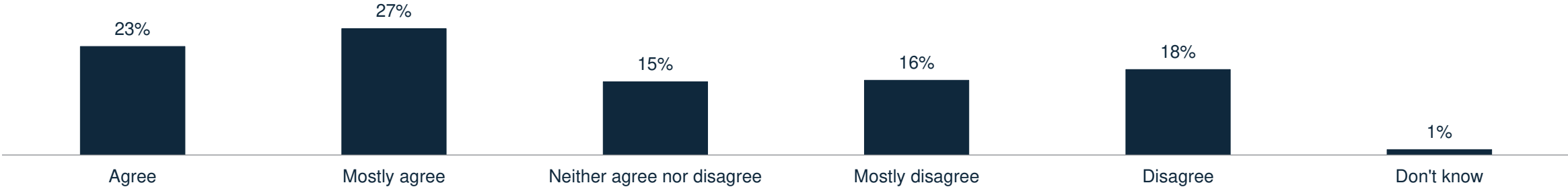
Note: "Left wing" includes the parties: *Vänsterpartiet*, *Socialdemokraterna*, and *Miljöpartiet*. "Right wing" includes the parties: *Moderaterna*, *Kristdemokraterna*, *Liberalerna*, *Centerpartiet*, and *Sverigedemokraterna*. Even though *Liberalerna* and *Centerpartiet* could be identified as middle parties, they are included in the "right wing"-block, as they lean more towards right wing than left wing.  
\*Respondents, who did not choose a specific party, are not included.

# Appendix - Iceland

This appendix contains information about the frequencies of all questions answered by respondents in Iceland.

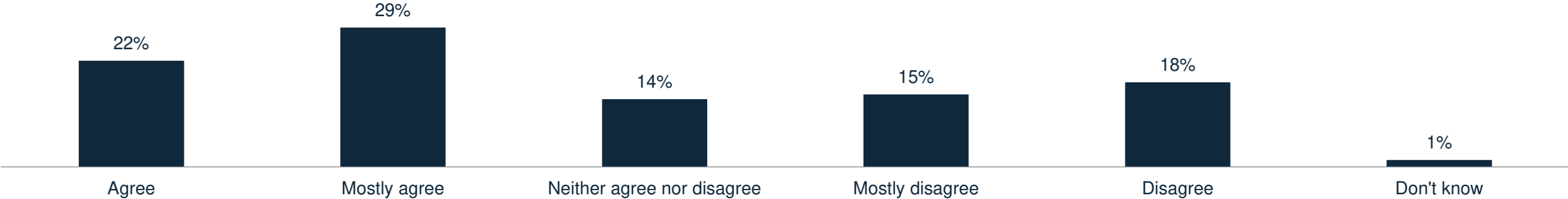
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on sweetened beverages (e.g., sodas, energy drinks, or juice) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1000



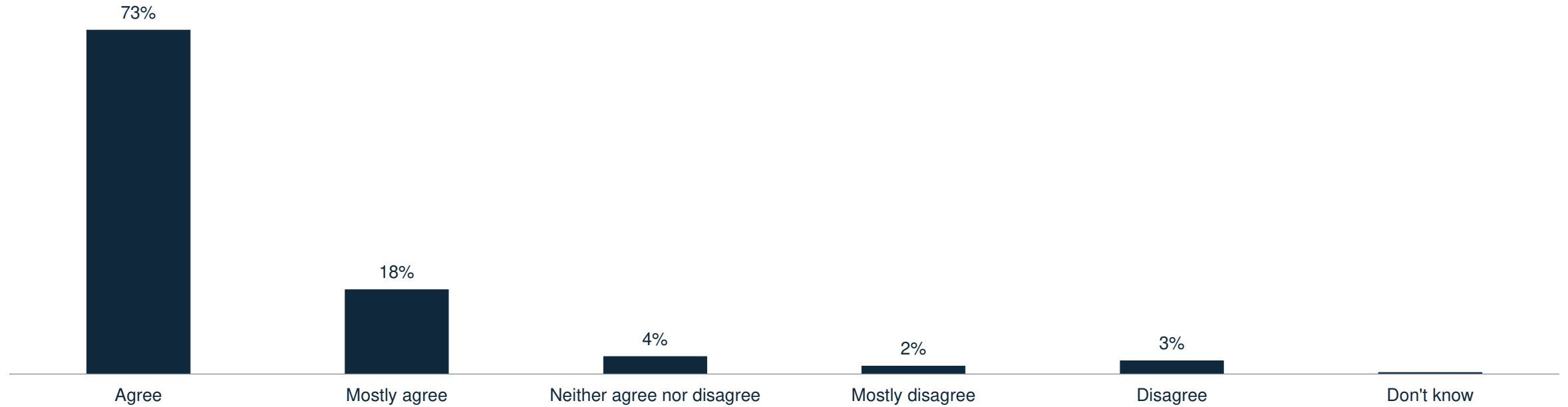
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to impose taxes on unhealthy foods (e.g., candy, chips, and snacks that typically have high levels of sugar, fat, or salt) to increase their price and prevent obesity among children and youth.

N=1000



How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? It is a good idea to lower VAT on healthy foods (e.g., fruits or vegetables) to reduce their price and help prevent obesity among children and youth.

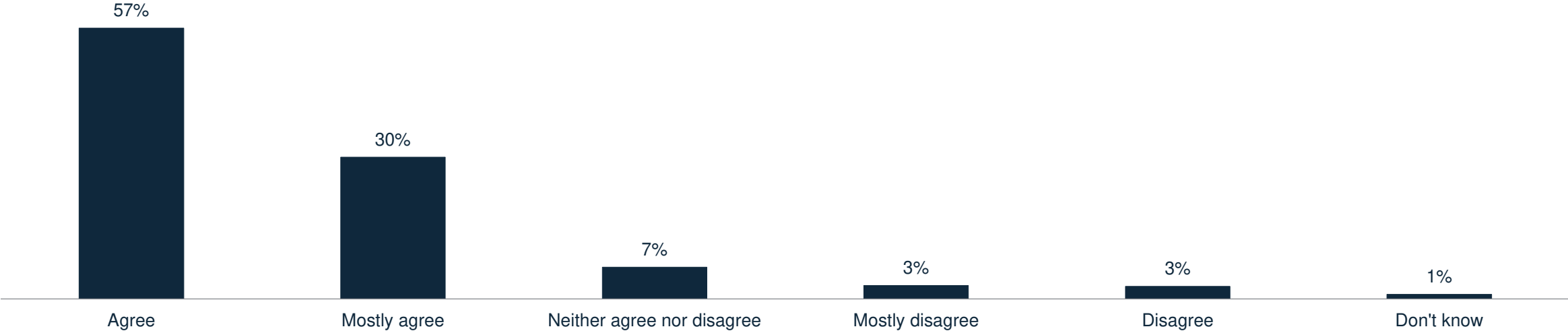
N=1000





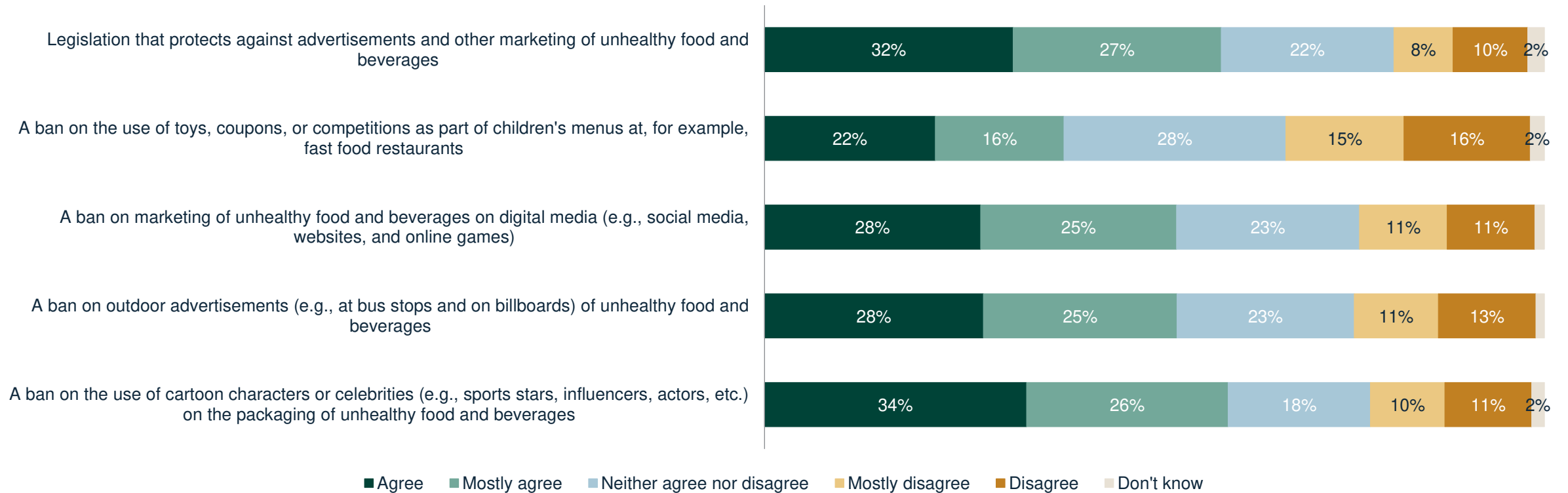
How much do you agree or disagree with the implementation of the following legislation to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old? To introduce a mandatory nutrition label on the front of all packaged food and beverages, indicating how healthy or unhealthy a product is.

N=1000



How much do you agree or disagree that the following legislation should be implemented to prevent overweight and obesity among children and adolescents under 18 years old?

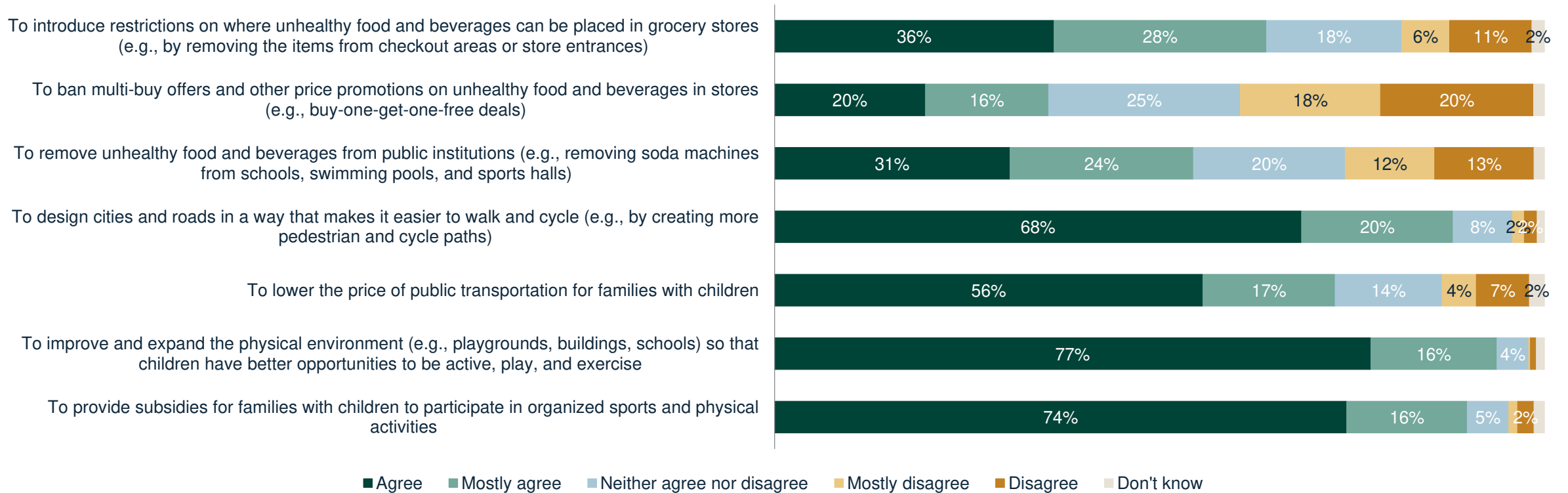
N=1000



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

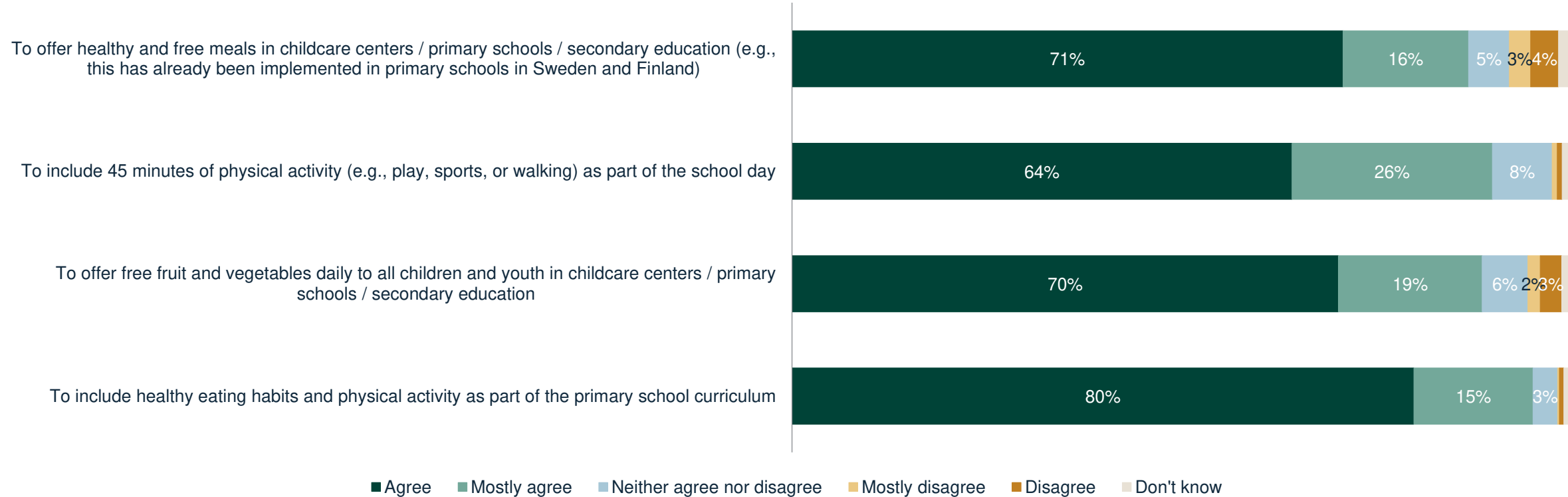
N=1000



\*Unhealthy food and drinks typically have a high content of fat, sugar or salt. It is e.g. sweets, chips, snacks, chocolate, cake, soft drinks, energy drinks, juice, iced tea or soft drinks.

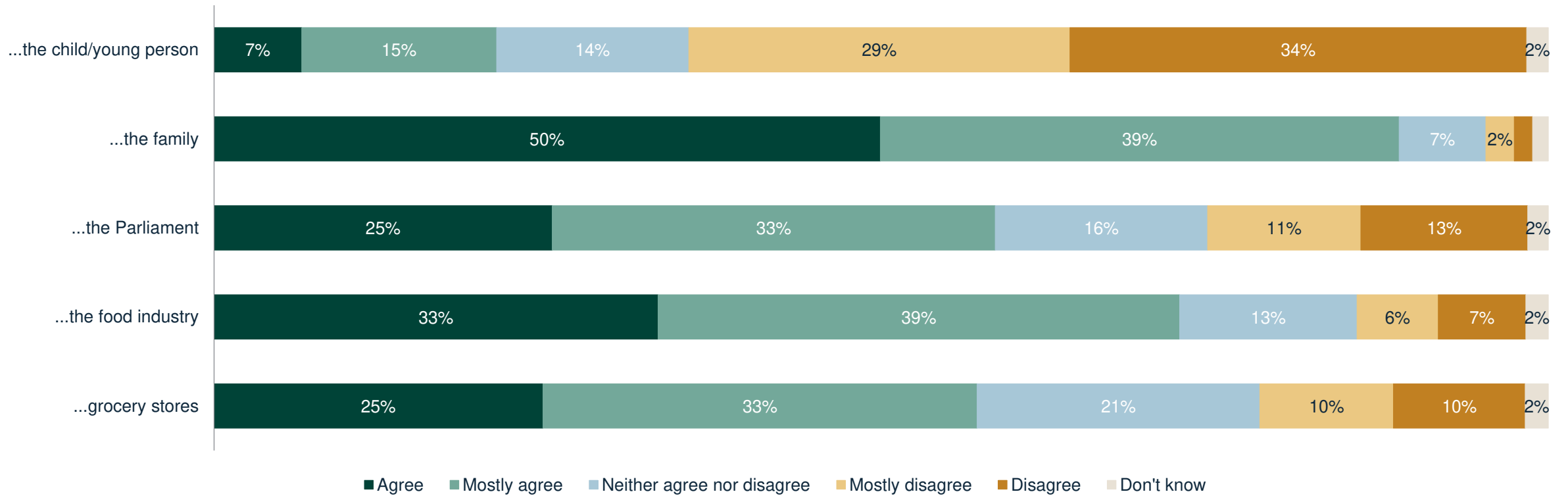
How much do you agree with the introduction of the following legislations to prevent overweight and obesity among children and youth under 18 years old?

N=1000



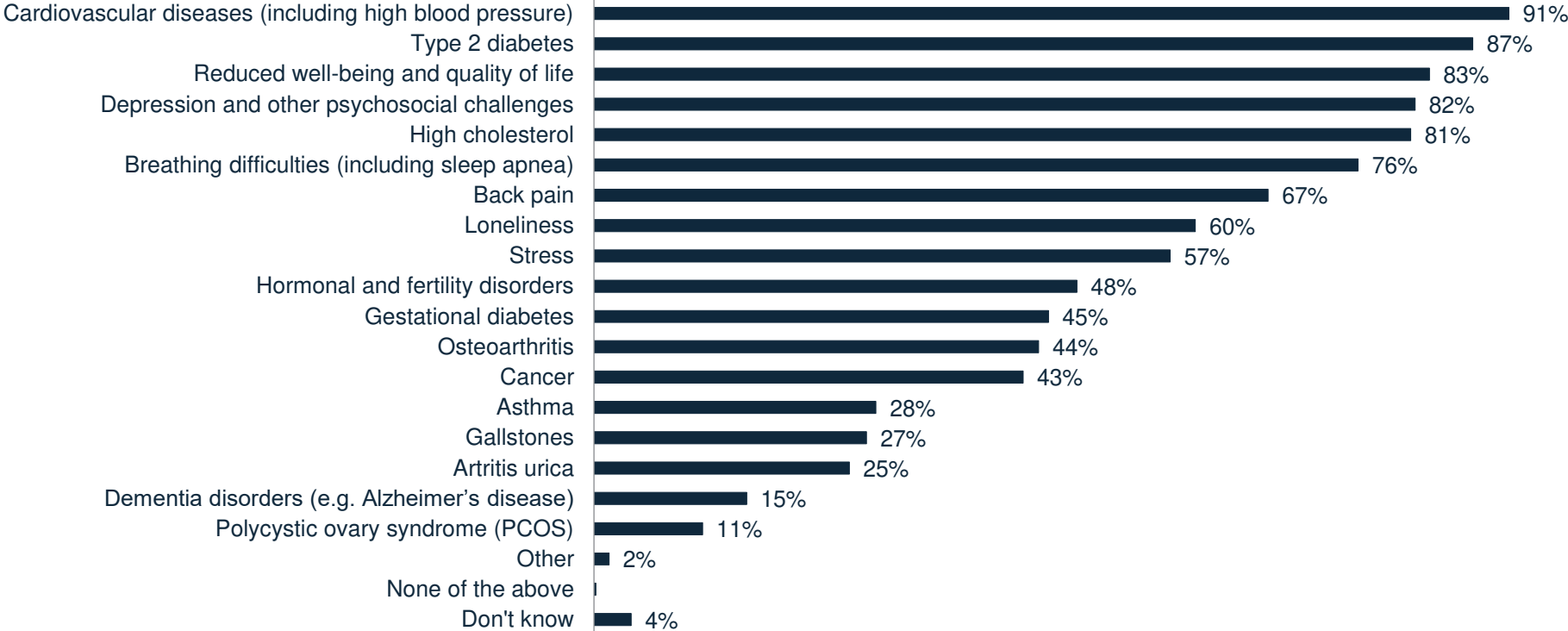
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? The responsibility for preventing overweight and severe obesity among children and young people under the age of 18 lies with...

N=1000



Which of the following diseases or conditions do you believe overweight can lead to?

N=1000

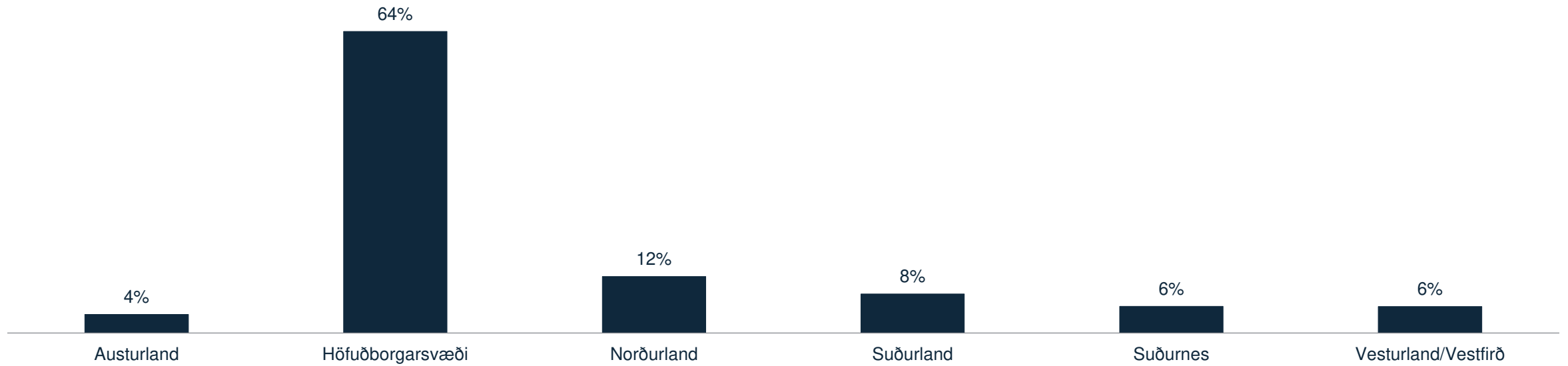


# Background variables - Iceland

Region

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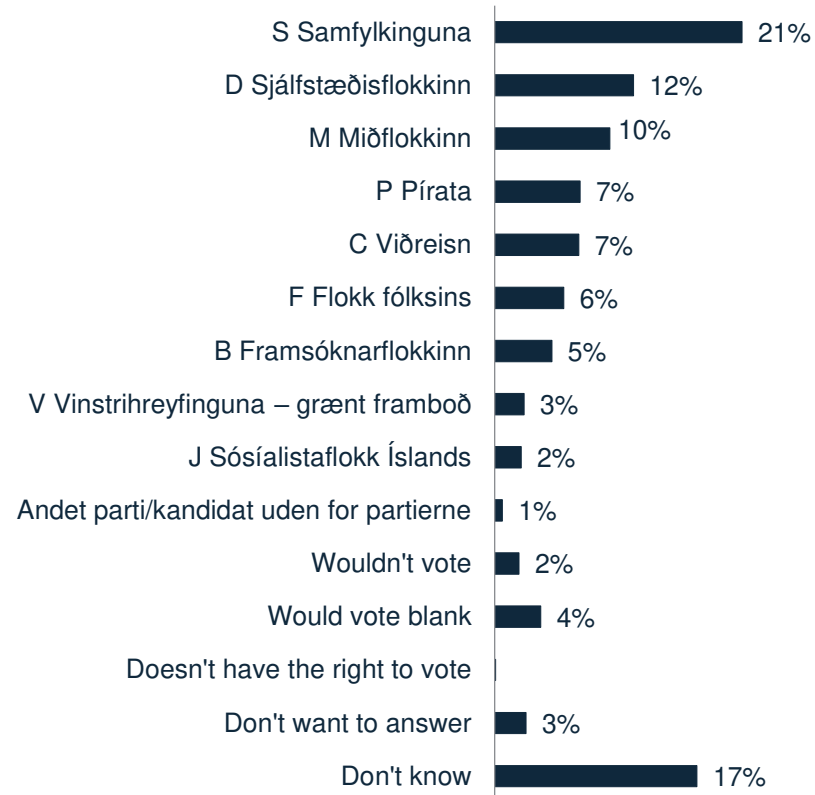
N=1000





## Party vote

N=1000



Note: options include 1) F Flokk fólksins, B Framsóknarflokkinn, 2) M Miðflokkinn, 3) P Pírata, 4) S Samfylkinguna, 5) D Sjálfstæðisflokkinn, 6) J Sósíalístaflokk Íslands, 7) C Viðreisn, 8) V Vinstrihreyfinguna – grænt framboð, 9) Annan flokk, 10) Myndi ekki kjósa, 11) Myndi skila auðu, 12) Hef ekki atkvæðisrétt, 13) Vil ekki svara, 14) Veit ekki,

Party vote (recoded)

N=740\*



Note: "Left wing" includes the parties: *Flokkur folksins*, *Vinstri graen*, *Piratar*, *Samfylkingin*, and *Sosialistaflokkur Icelands*. "Right wing" includes the parties: *Framsoknarflokkur*, *Sjalfstaedisflokkur*, *Vidreisn*, and *Midflokkur*. \*Respondents, who did not choose a specific party, are not included.

## **Epinion Copenhagen**

Ryesgade 3F

2200 Copenhagen N

Denmark

T: +45 87 30 95 00

E: [copenhagen@epinionglobal.com](mailto:copenhagen@epinionglobal.com)

[www.epinionglobal.com](http://www.epinionglobal.com)