

ANNUAL ECONOMIC SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP IN EUROPE – 2007

INTRODUCTION TO COUNTRY FILES

Employee ownership is progressing faster and stronger across Europe than anyone could expect. This is a quick and recent new development in most European countries. However, some countries began earlier while others dawdled on the way (see [Graph 1](#)). Considering recent trends, employee ownership is going to double within the next 5-10 years, from 8.2 millions employee owners now to 16 millions, from 26.2% of all employees in large European companies now to 40-50%, and capitalisation held by employees going to raise from 2.35% now to 4 - 4.5%. This is the main conclusion of the economic survey of employee ownership in the European countries in year 2007. This survey is based on information about each of all large European companies – which also means a similar information for each of all European countries. Furthermore, it is based on information given by companies themselves in Annual Reports – which means a quick information and a high quality. The full version of this Annual Survey is available at the European Federation of Employee Share Ownership.

BELGIUM (BE)

Compared to other European countries, employee ownership looks underdeveloped in Belgium, with a low democratisation rate, and an ineffective legislation being an obstacle to broad based employee share plans.

Considering the global percentage of capital held by employees (1,63%), Belgium is far below the European average (2.35%), the half of Ireland (3.25%) - see [Graph 2](#).

Only 75% of Belgian large companies have some employee share ownership – compared to 100% in Ireland – Belgium is here number 18 compared to other European countries, while compared to the first 15 countries of the European Union, only Luxemburg, Greece, Austria and Germany have a lowest position ([Graph 3](#)).

Only 36% of Belgian large companies have "broad based" employee share plans (all-employee plans) - compared with 51.2% in Europe and 84% in France ([Graph 4](#)).

Not too bad for dynamics: 27% of Belgian large companies launched new employee share plans in 2006/7 – compared with 29% in average for all European countries, but 44% in Denmark ([Graph 5](#)).

Yet Belgium was one of the first European countries whose large companies launched employee share plans. The average date of Belgian first employee share plans was 1997, just after UK and France ([Graph 6](#)).

Belgium appears also to be high considering stock options. 80% of Belgian large companies have stock option plans – compared with 65.6% for all European countries – Belgium is here number 4 after Ireland, UK and Finland ([Graph 7](#)).

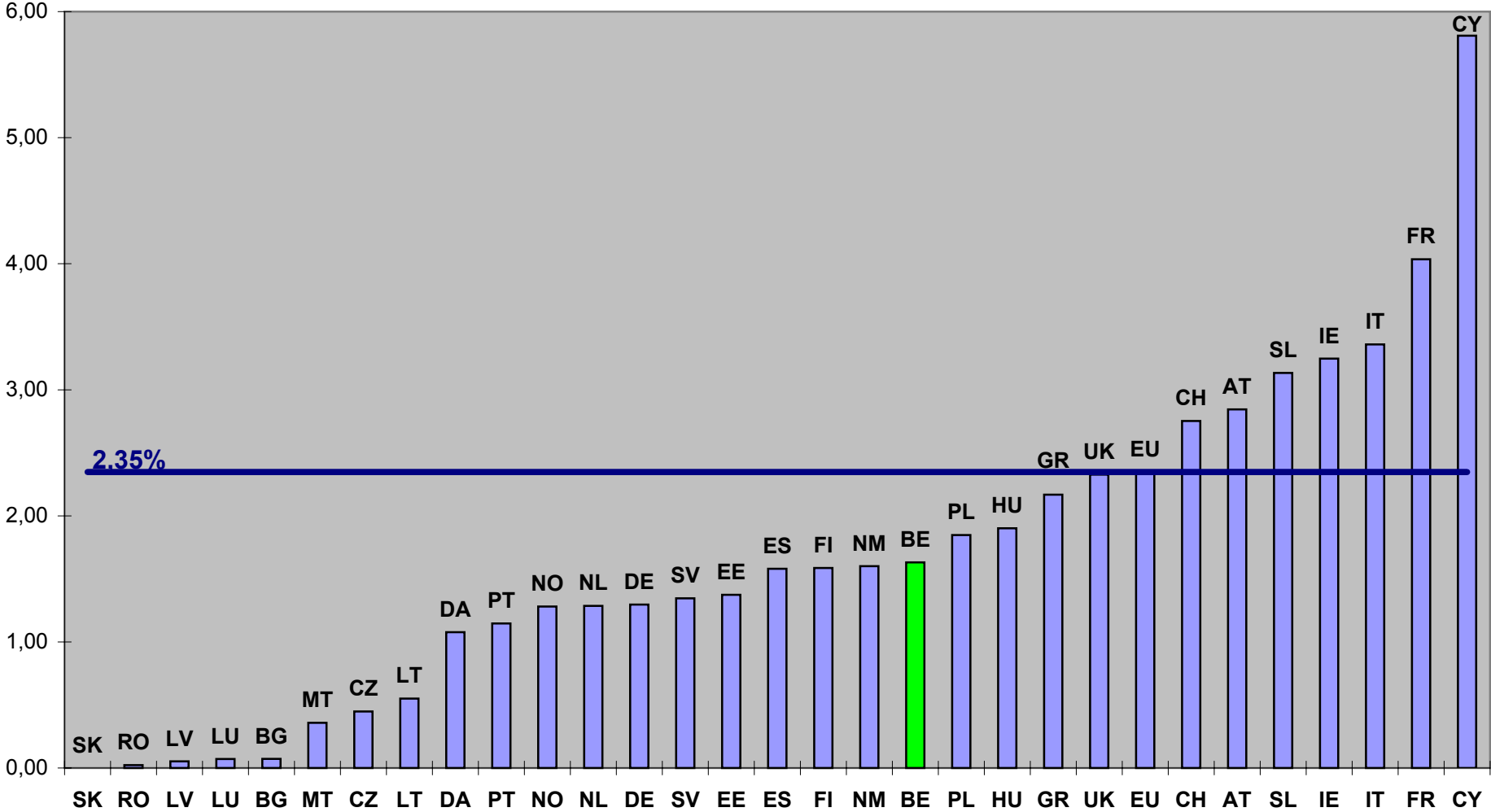
As a consequence, Belgium seems low for the proportion of employee owners amongst all employees: It is only 19% compared to 26.2% in Europe and 40% in France ([Graph 8](#)).

Belgium seems also very low regarding companies having significant employee ownership: Only 34% of large Belgian companies have "significant" employee ownership compared to 50.2% in Europe and 70% in France ([Graph 9](#)).

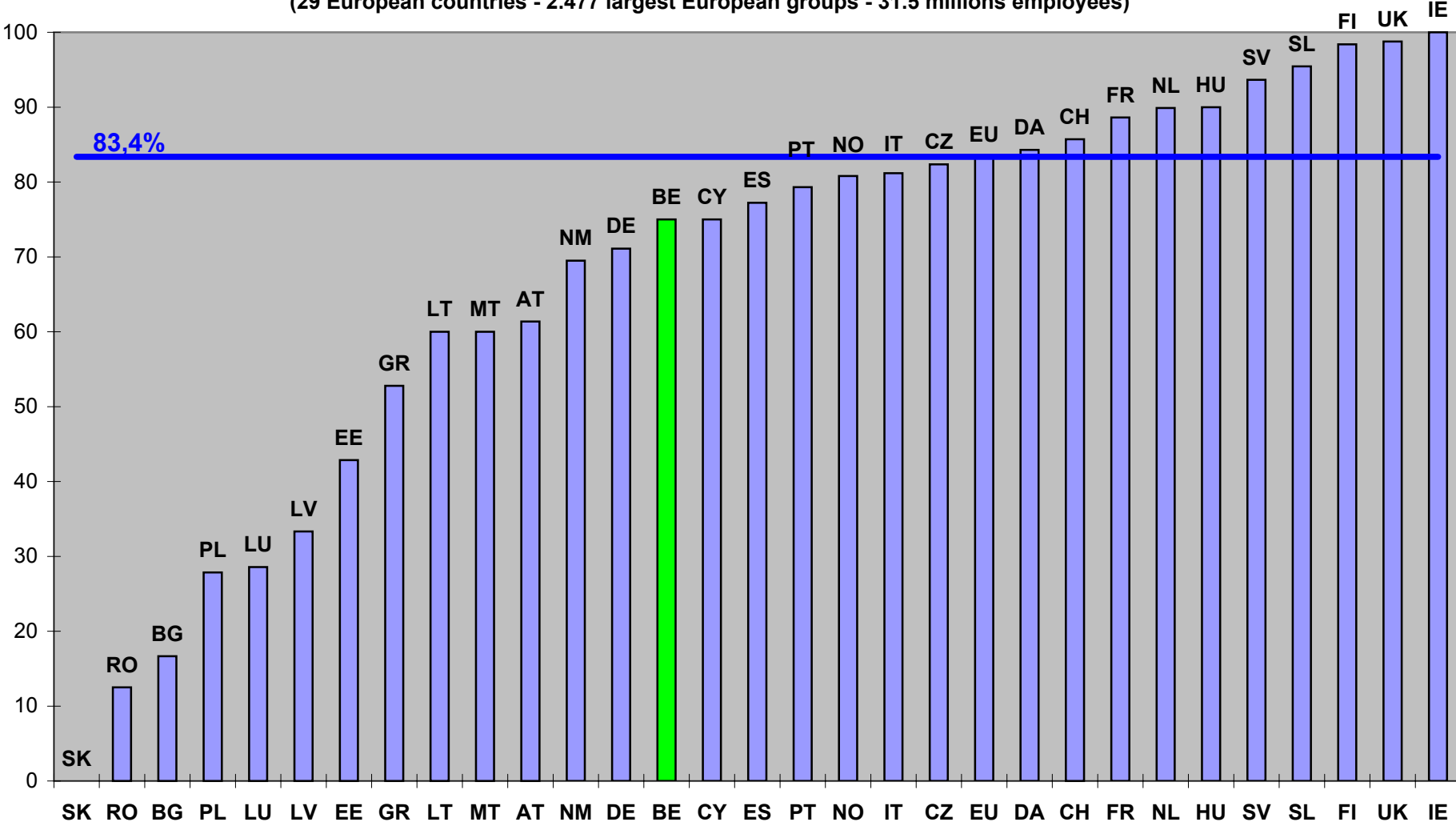
It is obvious that large Belgian companies had the intention to promote employee share plans for a long time. However, they used stock options (Belgian legislation on stock options being quite effective) much more than other employee share plans, - and singularly much more than broad based employee share purchase plans (Belgian legislation being still ineffective in this case).

% CAPITAL HELD BY EMPLOYEES in 2006/7

(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)

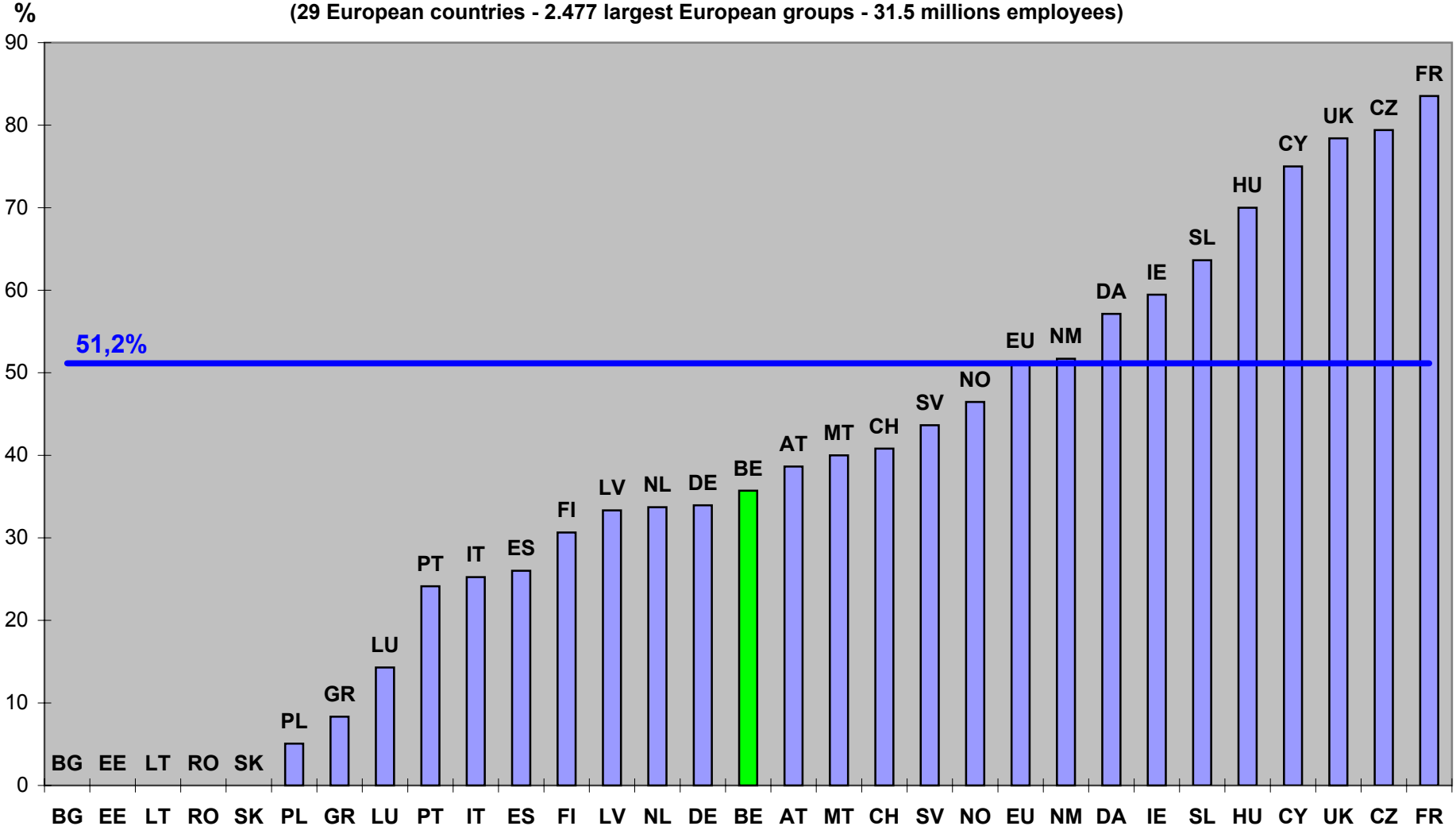


% EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP
in 2006/7
(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)



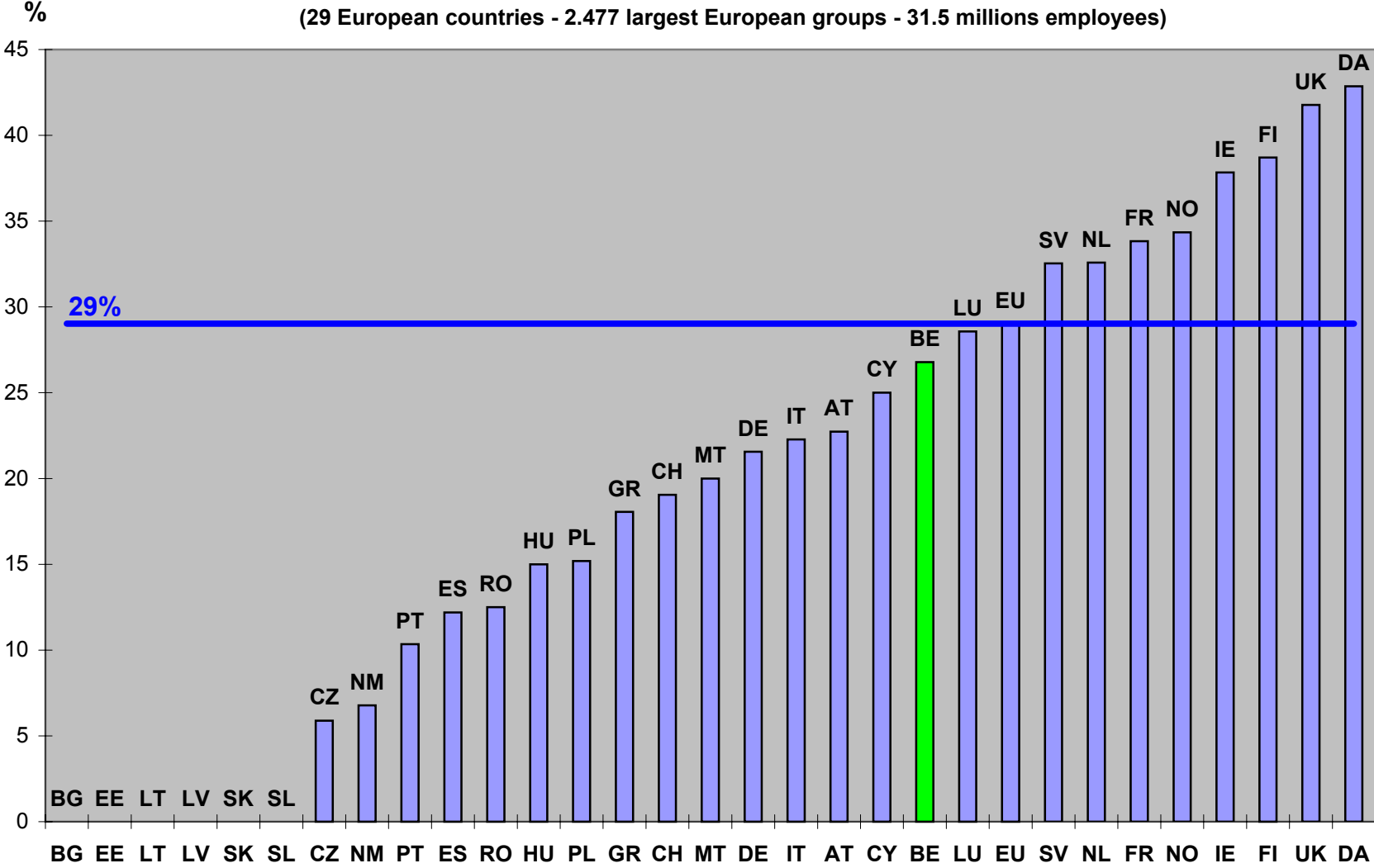
% EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING BROAD BASED EMPLOYEE SHARE PLANS in 2006/7

(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)



% EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING LAUNCHED NEW EMPLOYEE SHARE PLANS in 2006/7

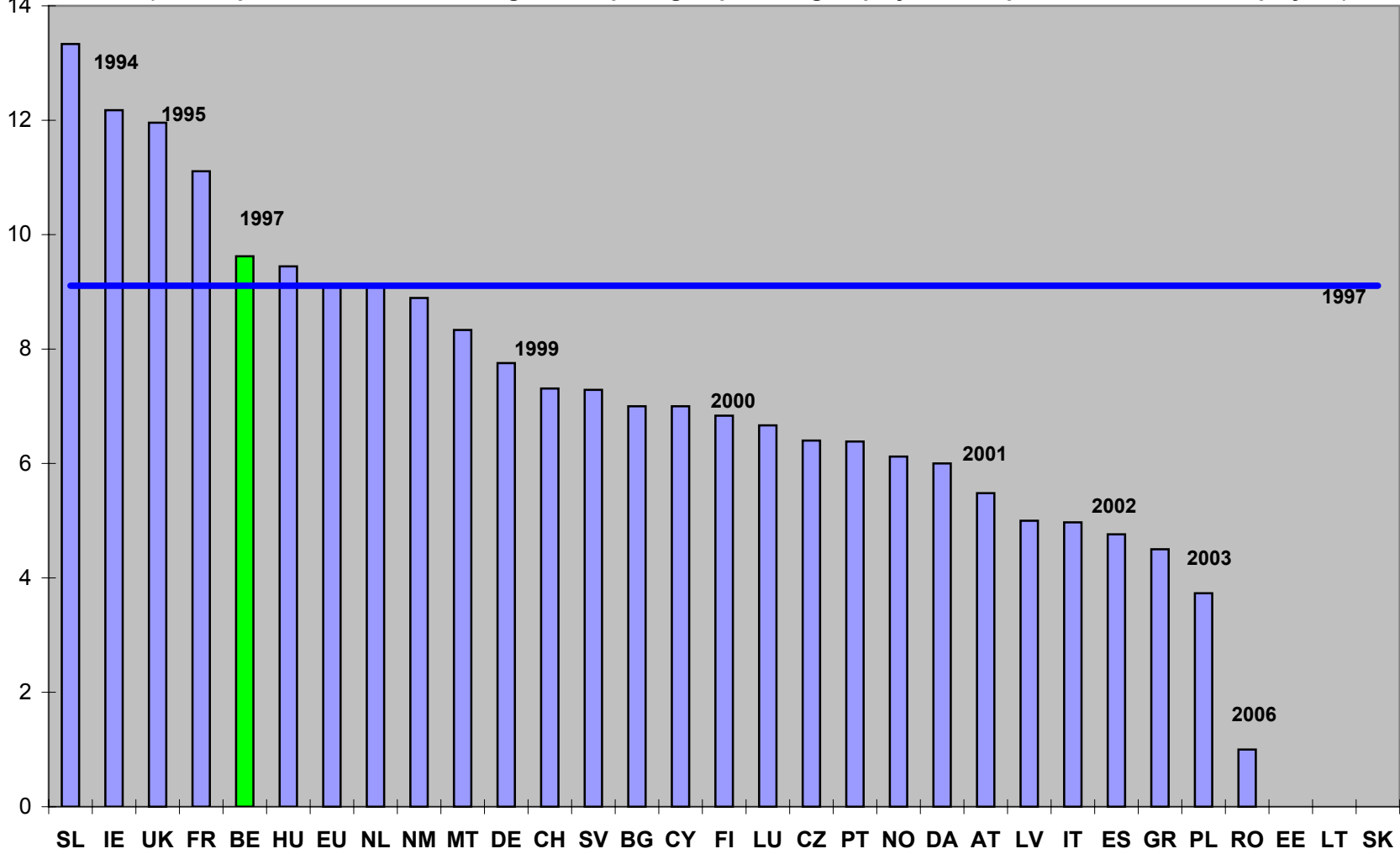
(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)



WHEN DID THEY LAUNCH THEIR FIRST EMPLOYEE SHARE PLAN ? (average of all listed groups)

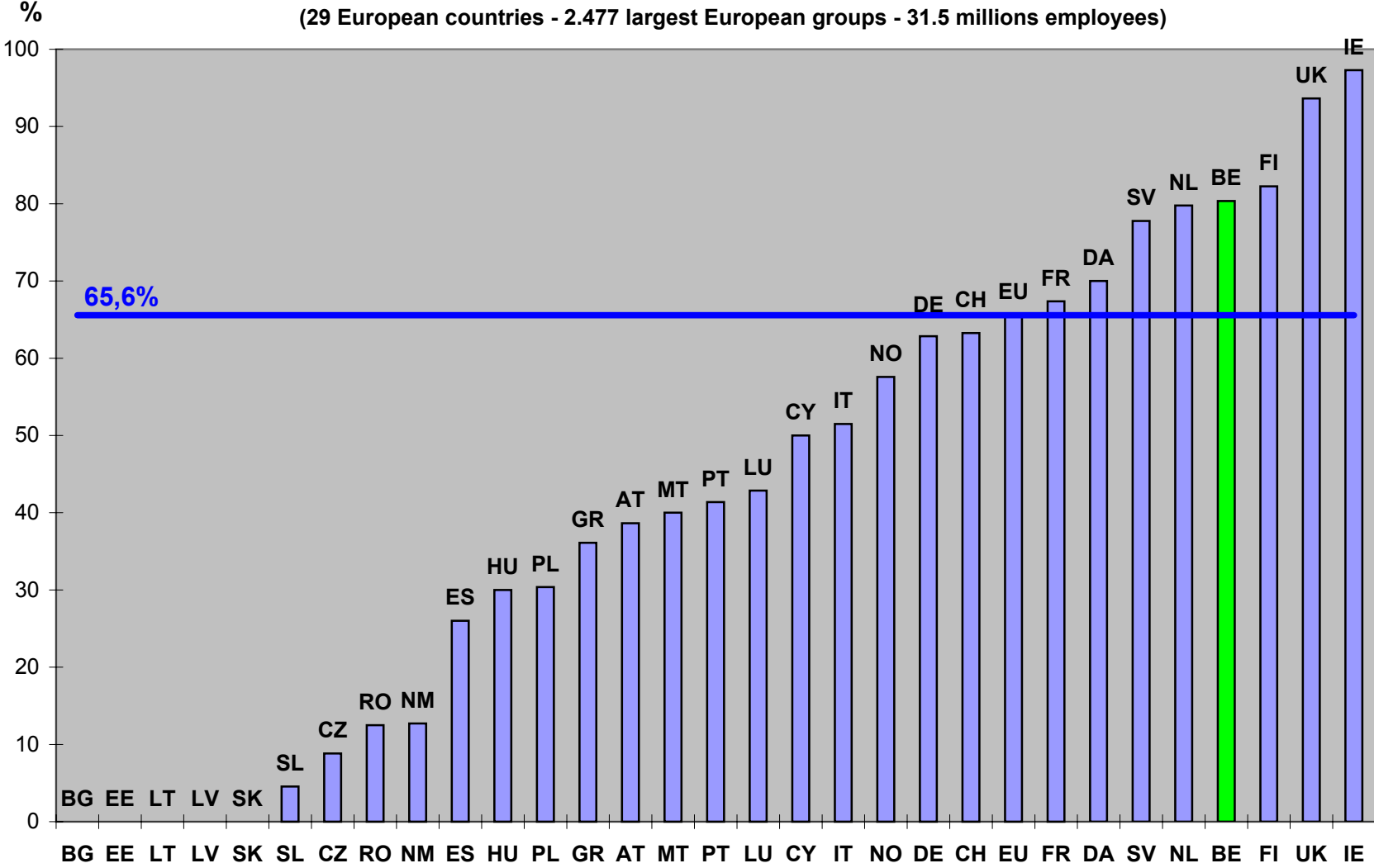
Number
of years

(29 European countries - 1.787 largest European groups having employee share plans - 28,7 millions employees)



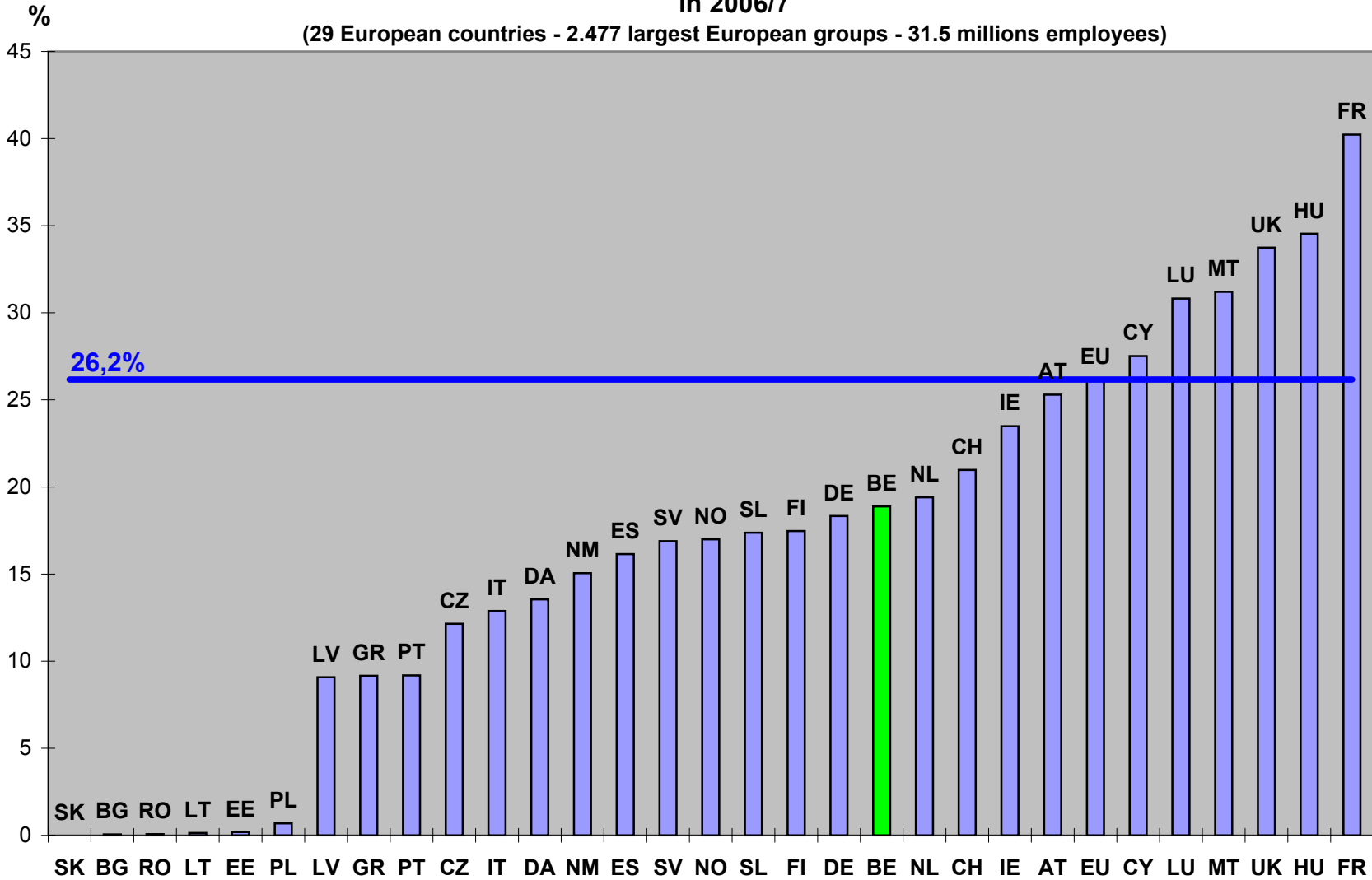
% EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING STOCK OPTION PLANS in 2006/7

(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)



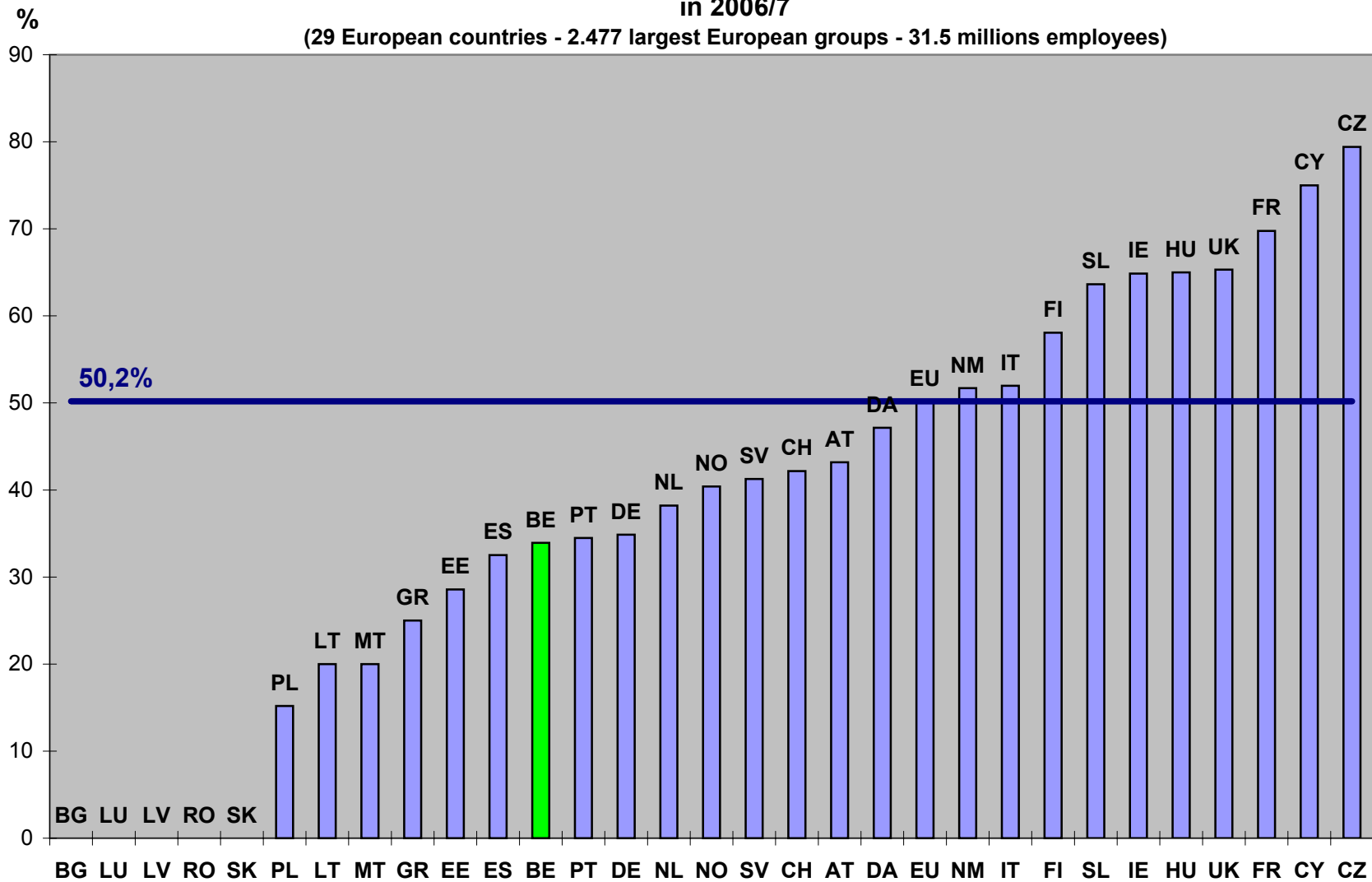
% EMPLOYEE OWNERS AMONGST ALL EMPLOYEES in 2006/7

(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)



**% EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING "SIGNIFICANT" EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP (EO>1%)
in 2006/7**

(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)



CAPITAL HELD BY EMPLOYEES: EXECUTIVES AND NON-EXECUTIVES SHARES in 2006/7

(29 European countries - 2.477 largest European groups - 31.5 millions employees)

