

## **ANNUAL ECONOMIC SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP IN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN 2008**

### **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](#)). The new Annual Survey for year 2008 shows that employee ownership declined a bit on the threshold of the financial crisis, from 283.3 to 240.2 billion Euro (-15.2%). However, this was still much more than the 206.2 billion one year before. As a percentage, employees' share stabilized on 2.63% in the capital ownership structure. Considering recent trends, employee ownership is going to double within the next 5-10 years, from 9.1 million employee owners now to 16 millions, from 28.2% of all employees in large European companies now to 40-50%, and capitalisation held by employees going to raise from 2.63% now to 4-5%. This is the main conclusion of the economic survey of employee ownership in the European countries in year 2008. 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.

### **ITALY (IT)**

Compared to other European countries, employee ownership seems quite well positioned in Italy. However this is firstly due, for a significant part, to workers' cooperatives and, secondly, to top executives' holdings in a number of large Italian companies.

Considering the global percentage of capital held by employees in large companies, Italy seems even high with 2.81% compared to 2.63% in Europe ([Graph 2](#)). When large workers' cooperatives are excluded, Italy declines to 2.22%, lower than Europe. Large Italian workers' cooperatives appear here globally for 0.59% - quite comparable to Mondragon Corporacion Cooperativa in Spain which is for 0.68%. On the other hand, top executives hold 1.89% of the 2.22% - which means that non-executive employees hold no more than 0.33% in large Italian companies. This positions Italy in last position when compared to the 15 first Member States of the European Union, and at number 20 compared to the 29 European countries in this survey.

However 81% of large Italian companies have some employee share ownership – not far from the European average of 85.1% - but well far below the 100% in Ireland or Finland ([Graph 3](#)).

Also, only 25% of Italian large companies have "broad-based" employee share plans (all-employee plans) - compared to 51.9% in Europe and 86% in France ([Graph 4](#)).

Dynamics are also very low: 17% of large Italian companies launched new employee share plans in 2007/8 – compared with 36.6% in Europe and 53% in Belgium or 52% in Denmark ([Graph 5](#)).

When they exist, employee share plans appear to be very recent compared to many other European countries. Large Irish companies launched their first employee share plan in 1995 on average, and Europe in 1998 – it was only in 2002 in Italy ([Graph 6](#)).

Italy is also low regarding stock options: 52% of large Italian companies have stock option plans – compared with 64.6% in Europe and 97% in Ireland ([Graph 7](#)).

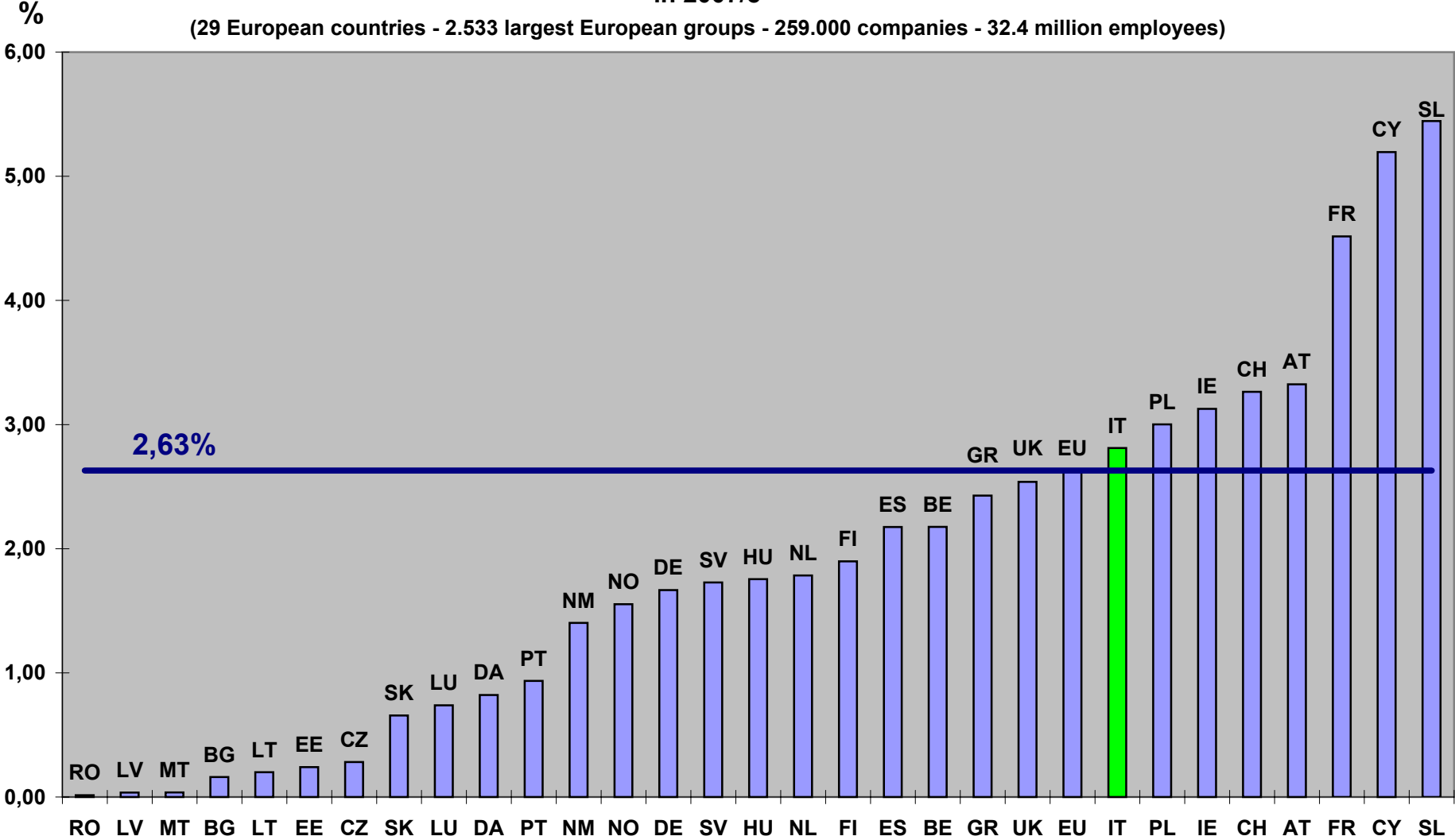
As a consequence, Italy is very low regarding the proportion of employee owners amongst all employees: It is 12% in Italy (even including workers' cooperatives !) compared to 28.2% in Europe and 46% in France ([Graph 8](#)). This is one of the lowest democratisation ratios in Europe.

Finally, 53% of all large Italian companies have "significant" employee ownership, compared to 53.9% in Europe and 75% in France ([Graph 9](#)). However, this is largely due to the large Italian workers' cooperatives; without them, Italy falls back to 43%.



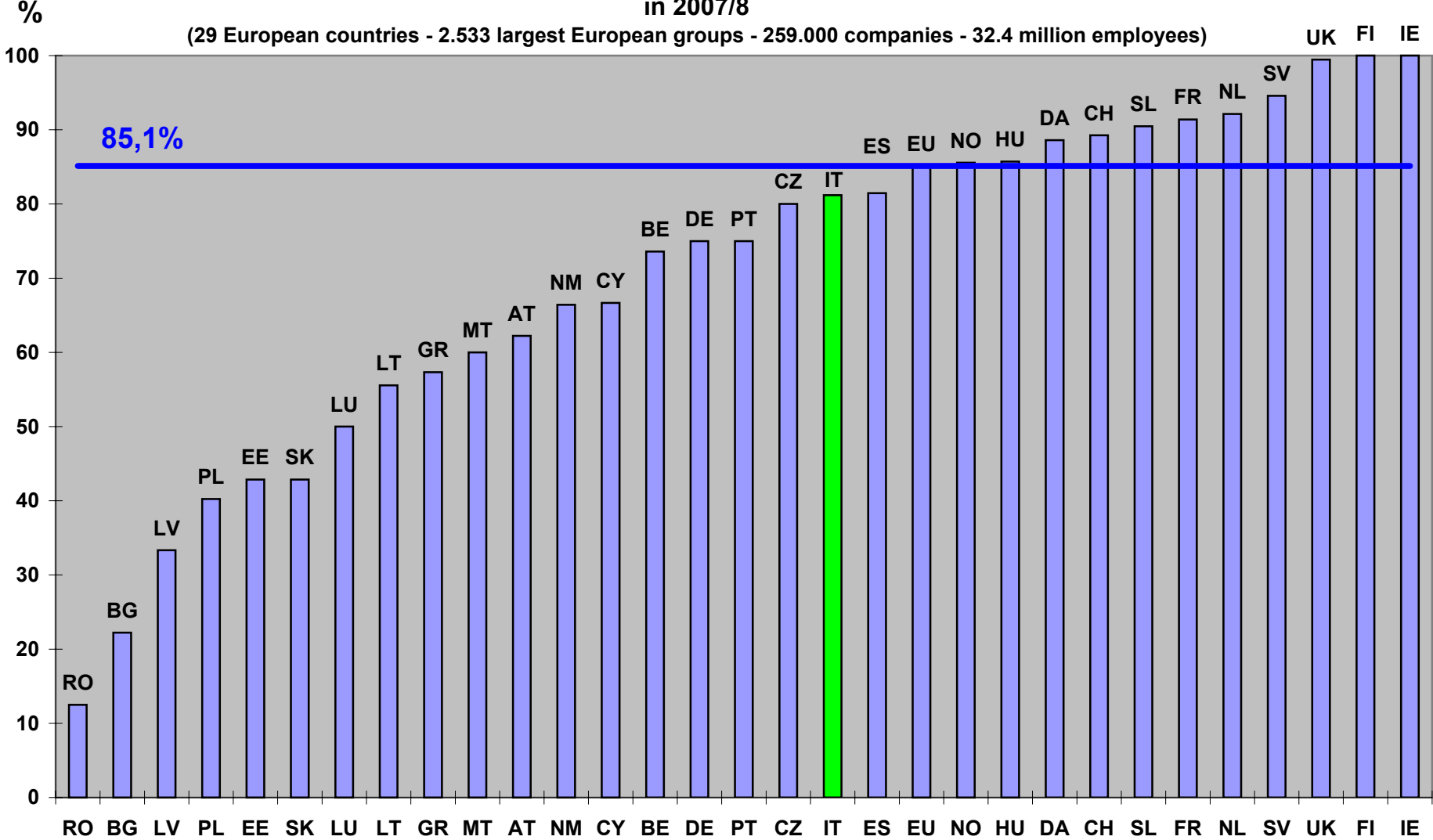
### % CAPITAL HELD BY EMPLOYEES IN EUROPEAN COMPANIES in 2007/8

(29 European countries - 2.533 largest European groups - 259.000 companies - 32.4 million employees)



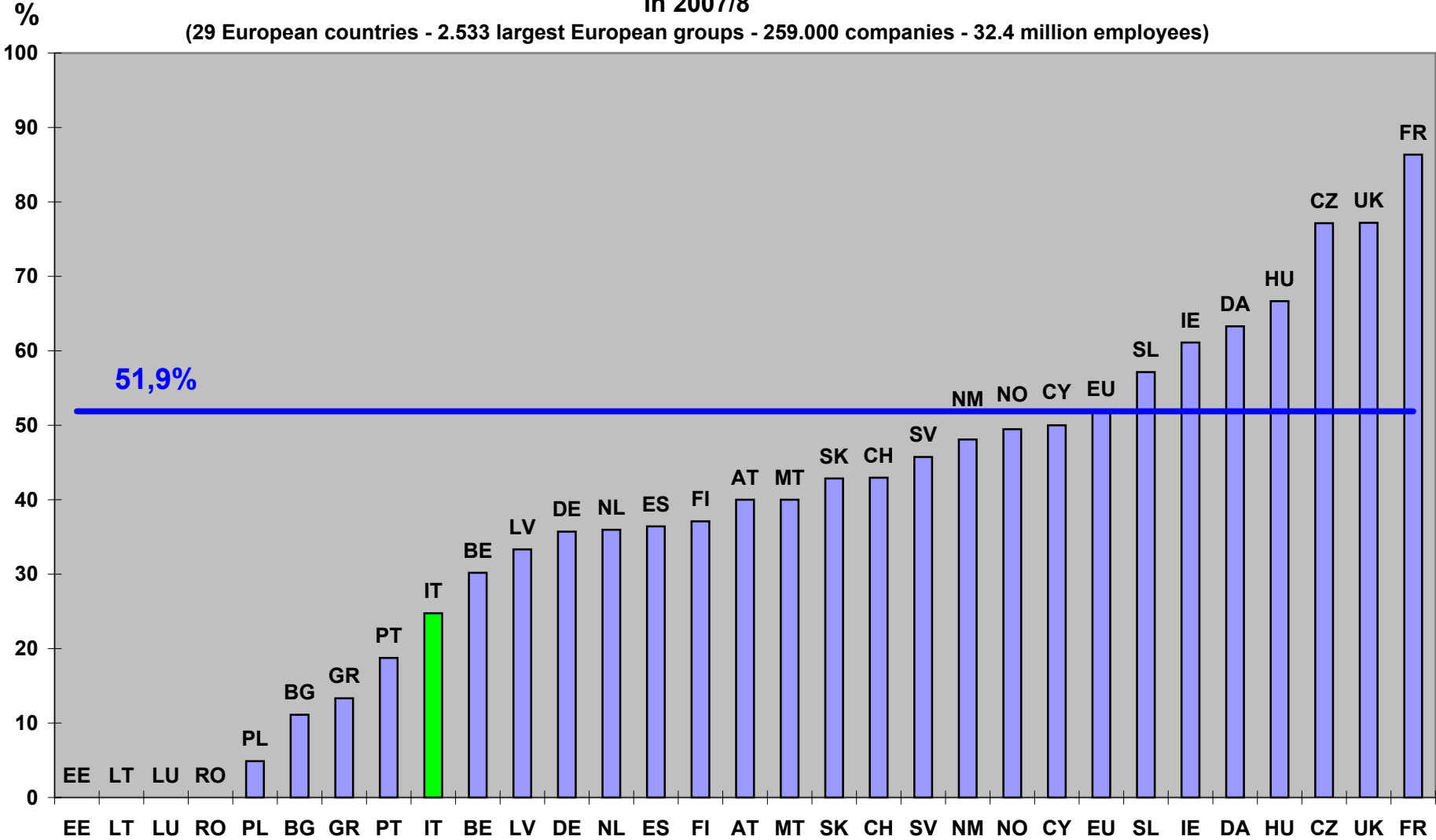
### % EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP in 2007/8

(29 European countries - 2.533 largest European groups - 259.000 companies - 32.4 million employees)



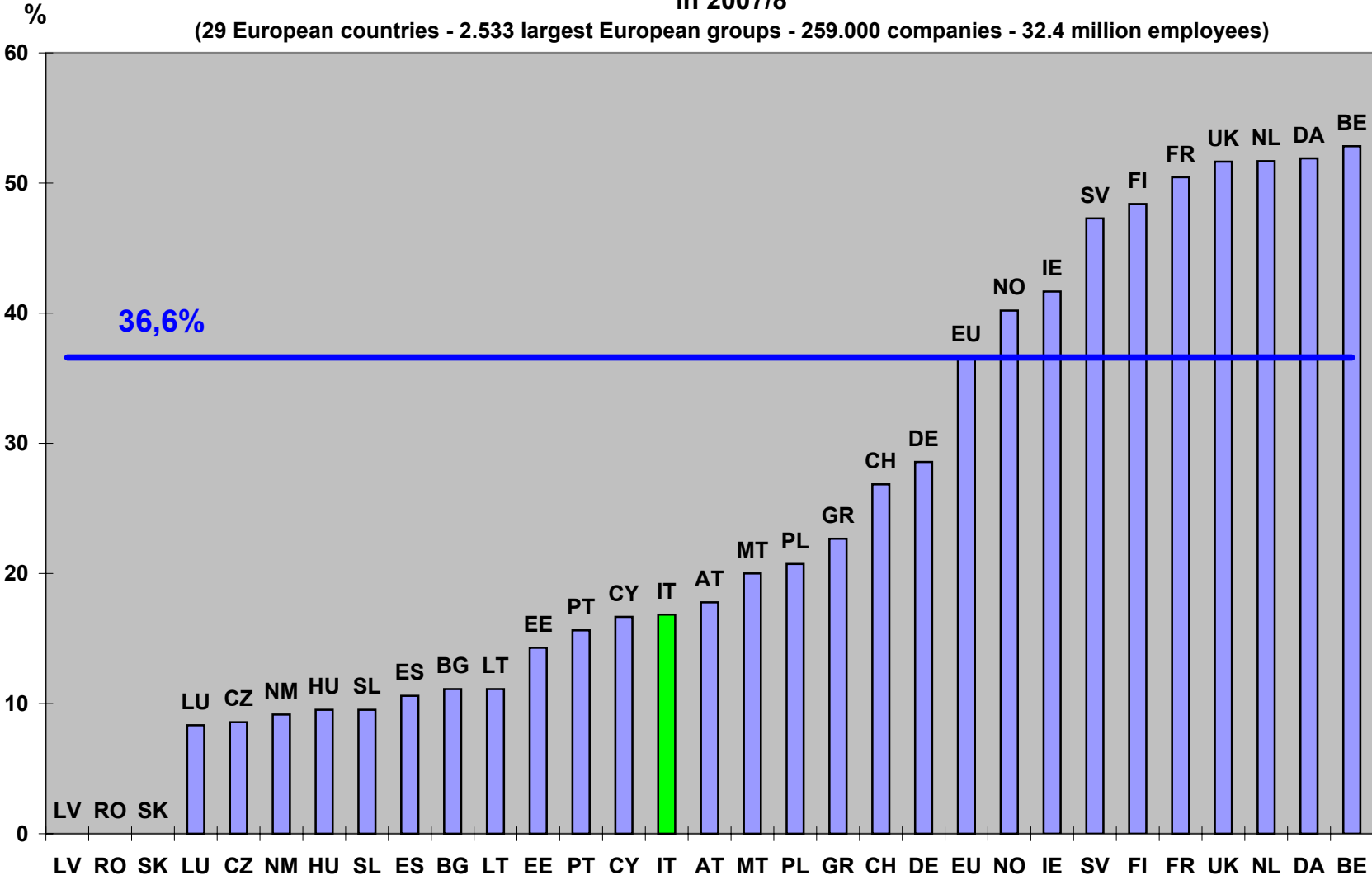
### % EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING BROAD-BASED EMPLOYEE SHARE PLANS in 2007/8

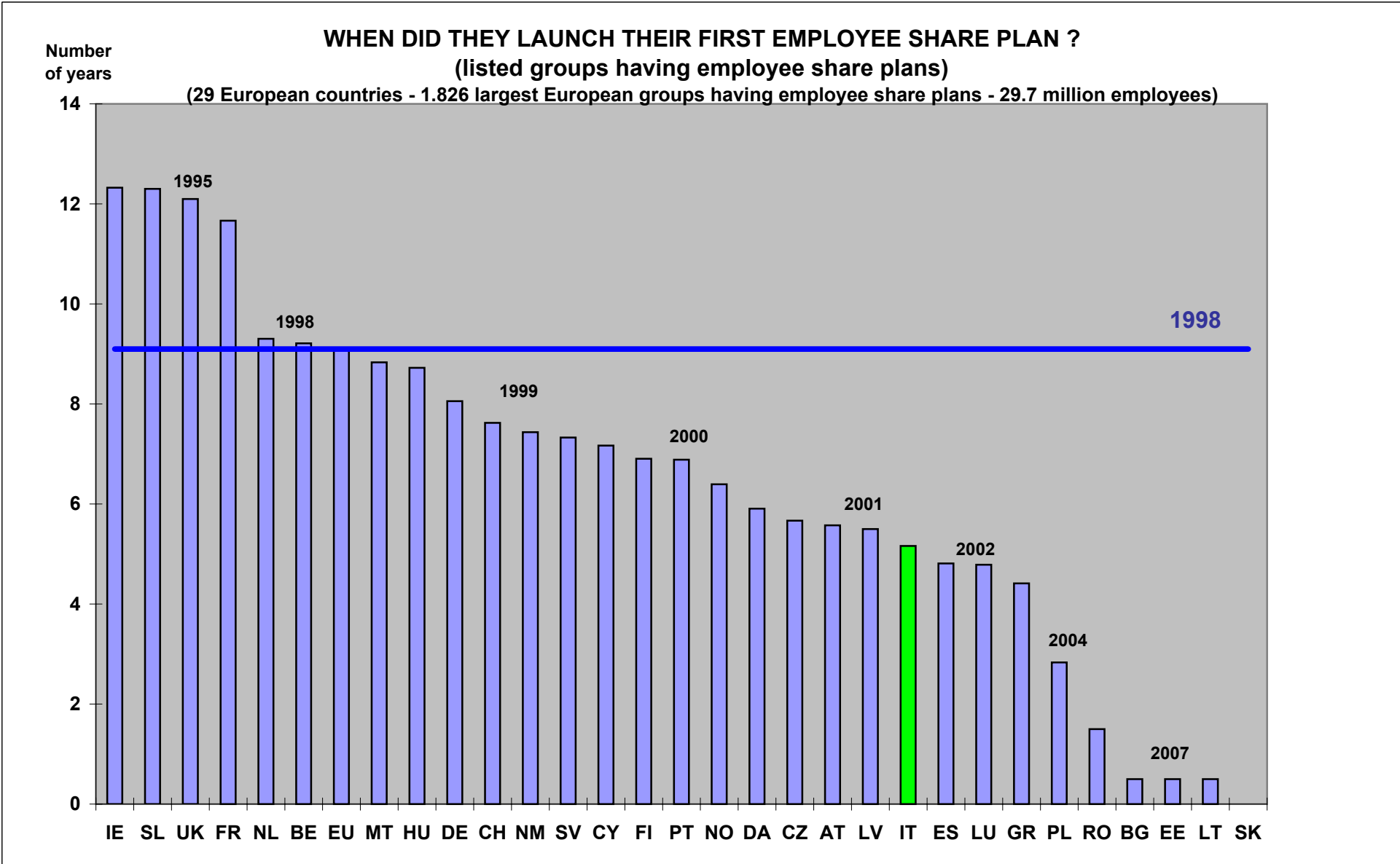
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### % EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING LAUNCHED NEW EMPLOYEE SHARE PLANS in 2007/8

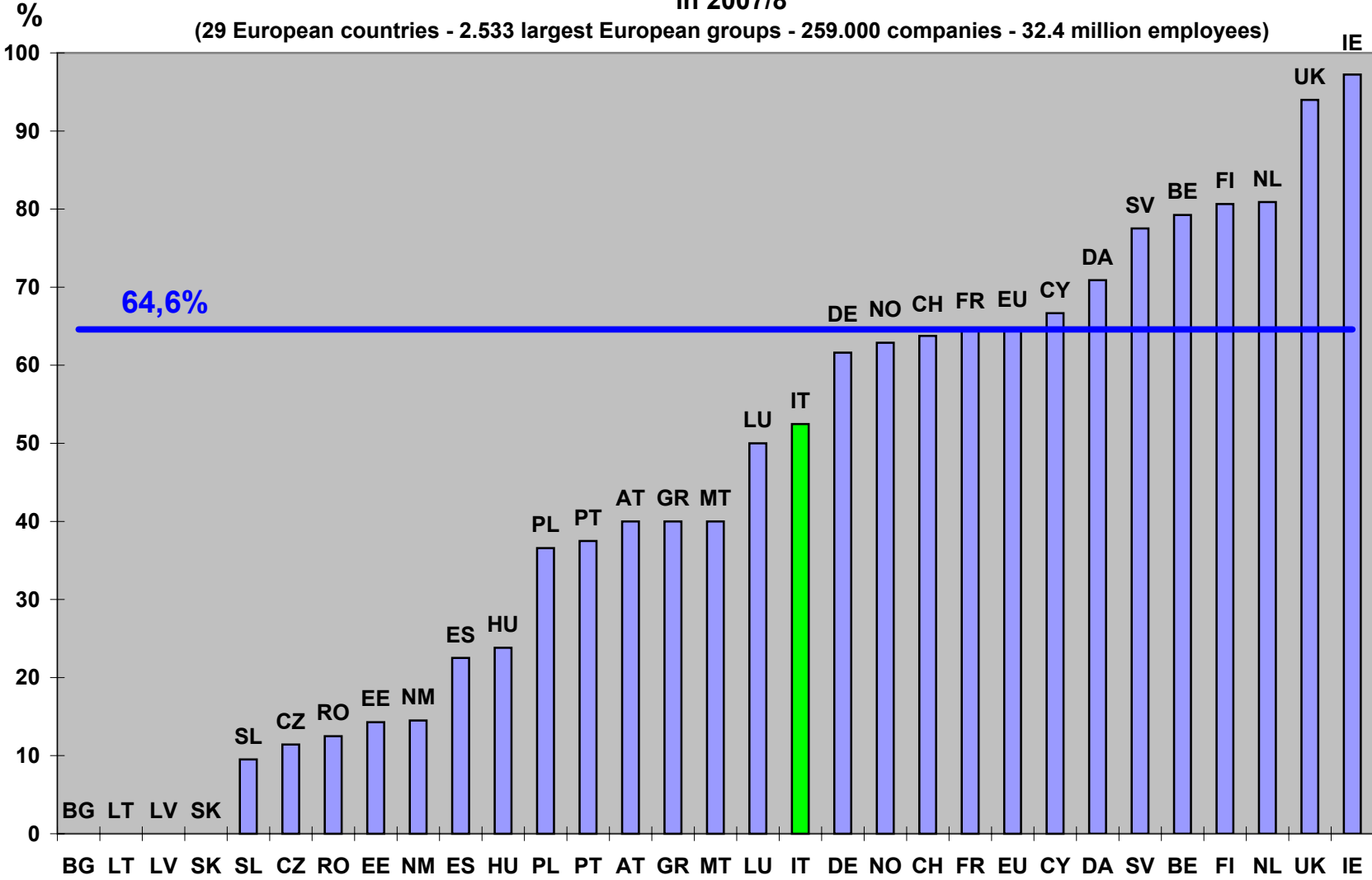
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### % EUROPEAN GROUPS HAVING STOCK OPTION PLANS in 2007/8

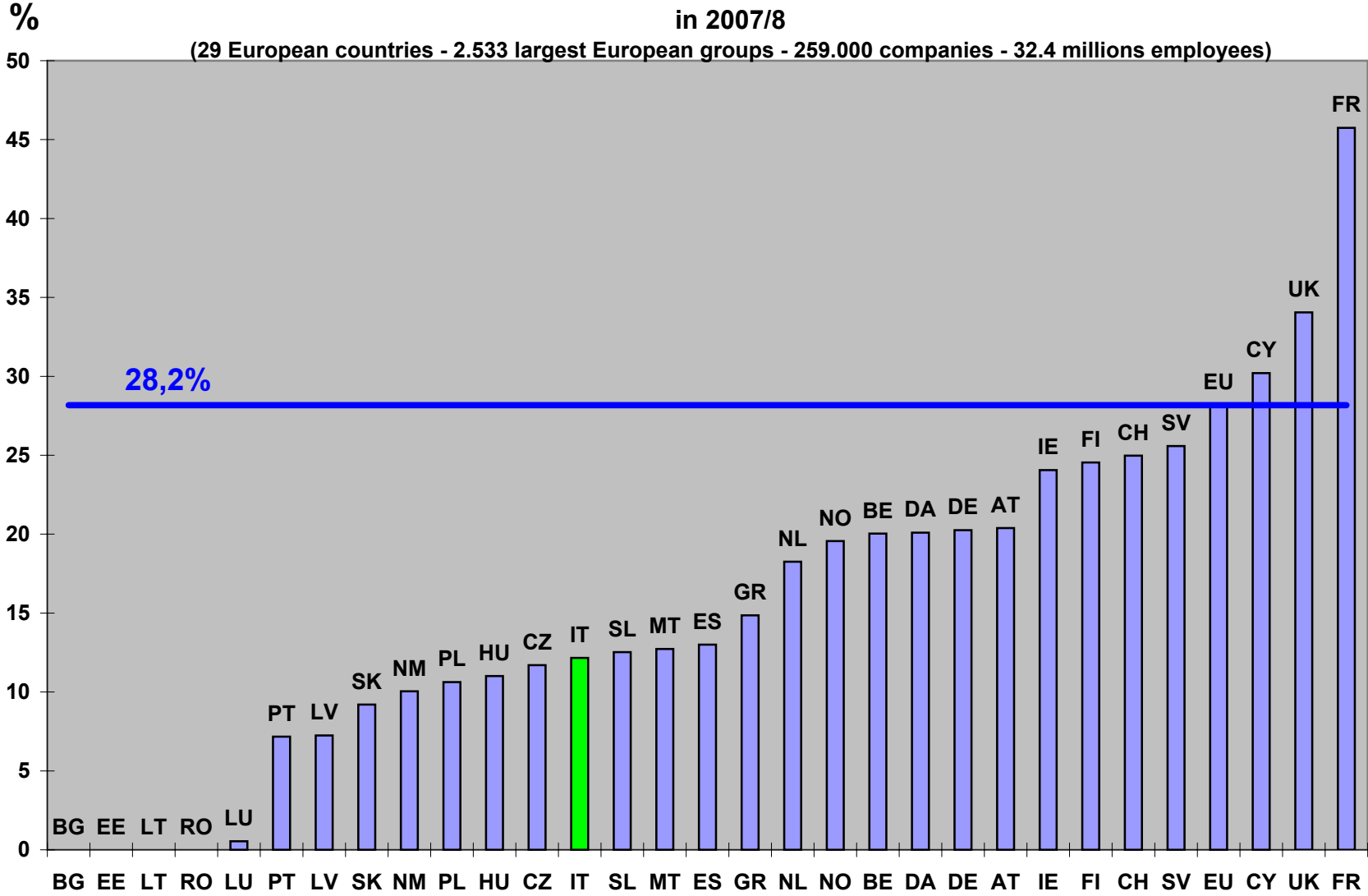
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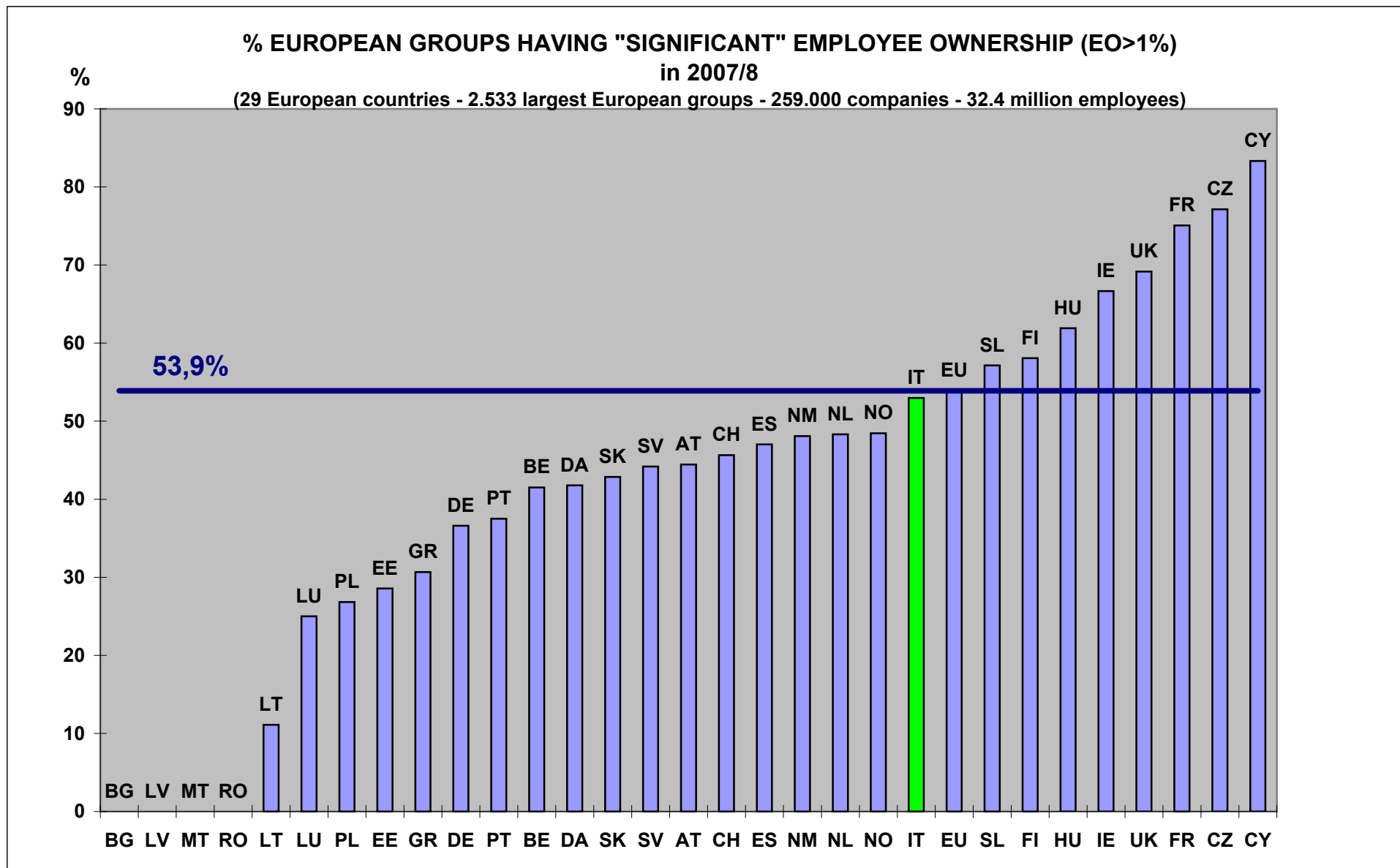




### % EMPLOYEE OWNERS AMONGST ALL EMPLOYEES in 2007/8

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**CAPITAL HELD BY EMPLOYEES: EXECUTIVES' AND NON-EXECUTIVES' SHARES**  
in 2007/8

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