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Living and working in Europe – Building on the past, shaping the future

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

The tripartite EU agency providing knowledge to assist in the development of better social, employment and work-related policies

AI and robotics in the EU: prevalence, perceptions, and company practices

Sara Riso

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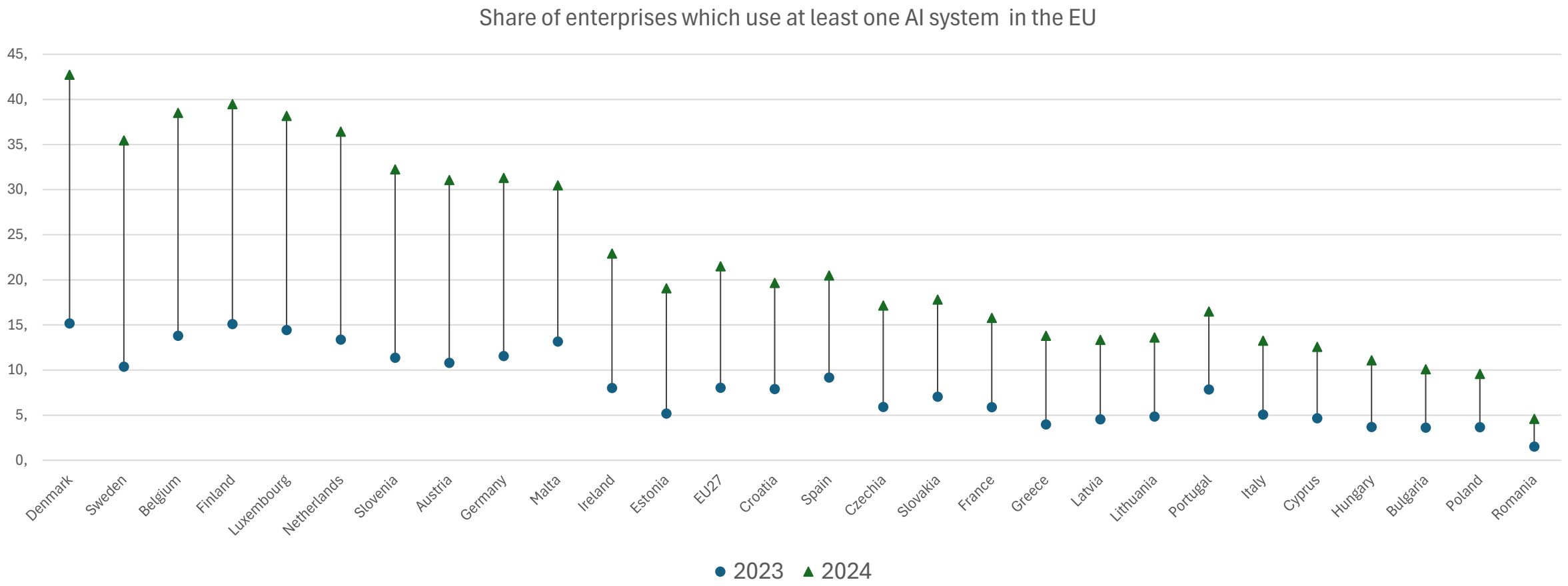
AI is becoming more widespread in the EU



Source: Own calculations, Eurostat ICT survey.

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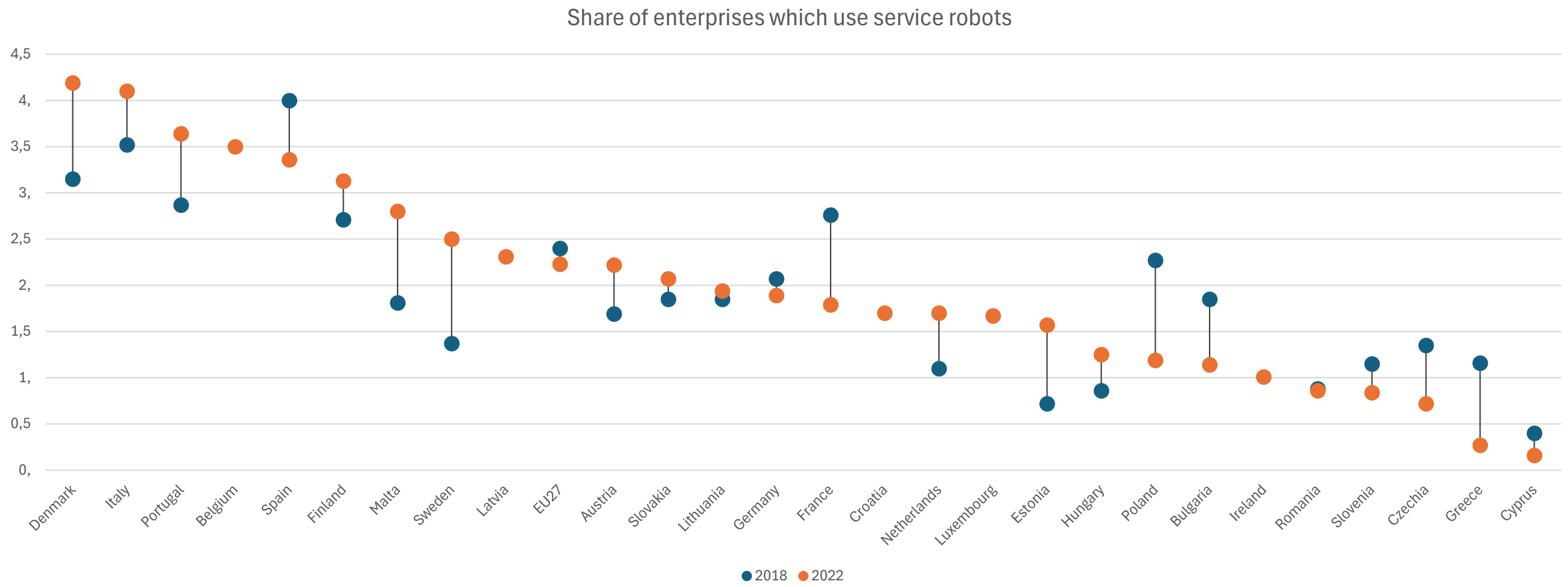
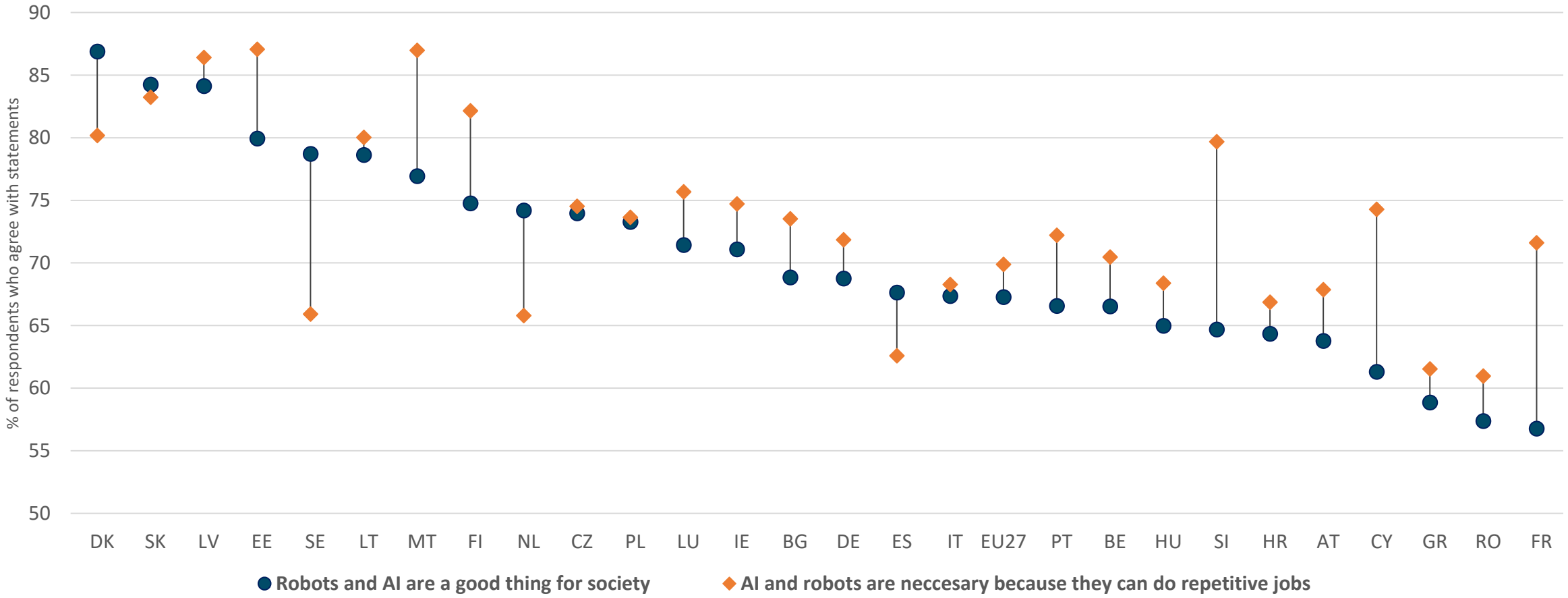
…while the use of service robots is stagnating



Source: Own calculations, Eurostat ICT survey.

Robots and AI generally perceived positively in the EU



Source: Own calculations, Eurobarometer Survey 554.

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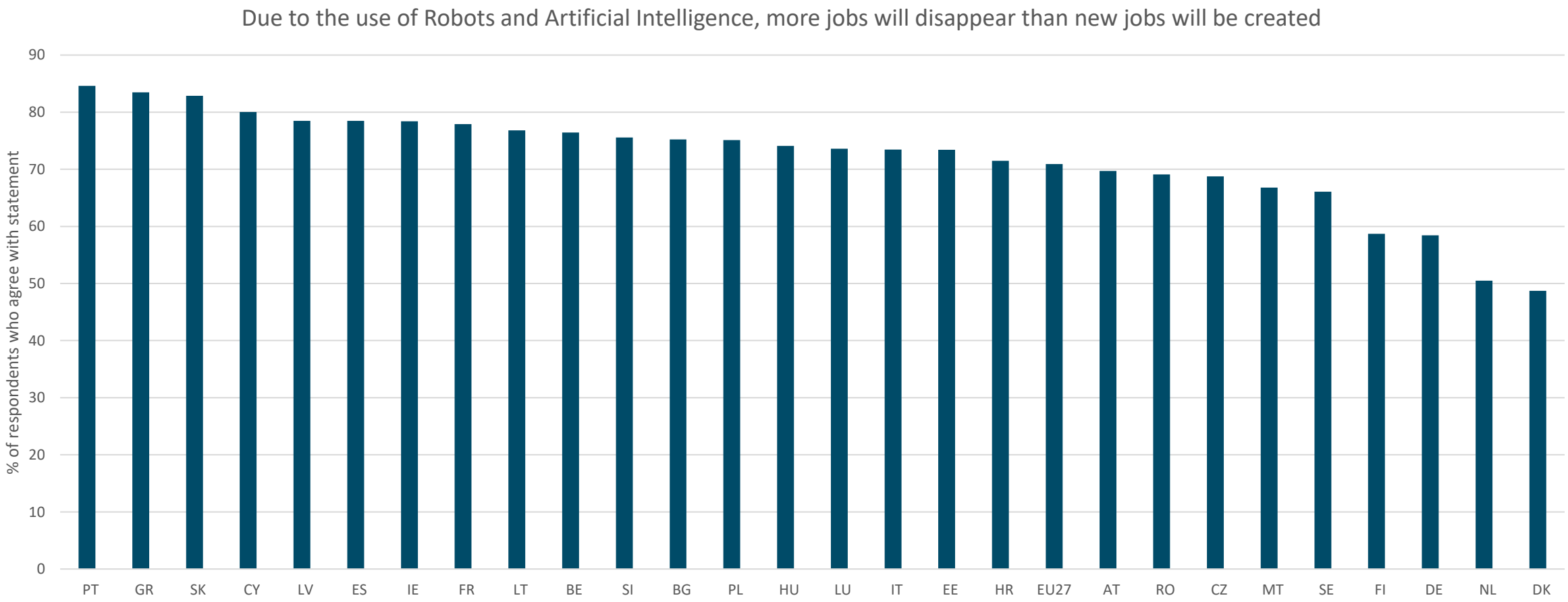
Fears of job loss as a result of robots and AI remain



Source: Own calculations, Eurobarometer Survey 554.

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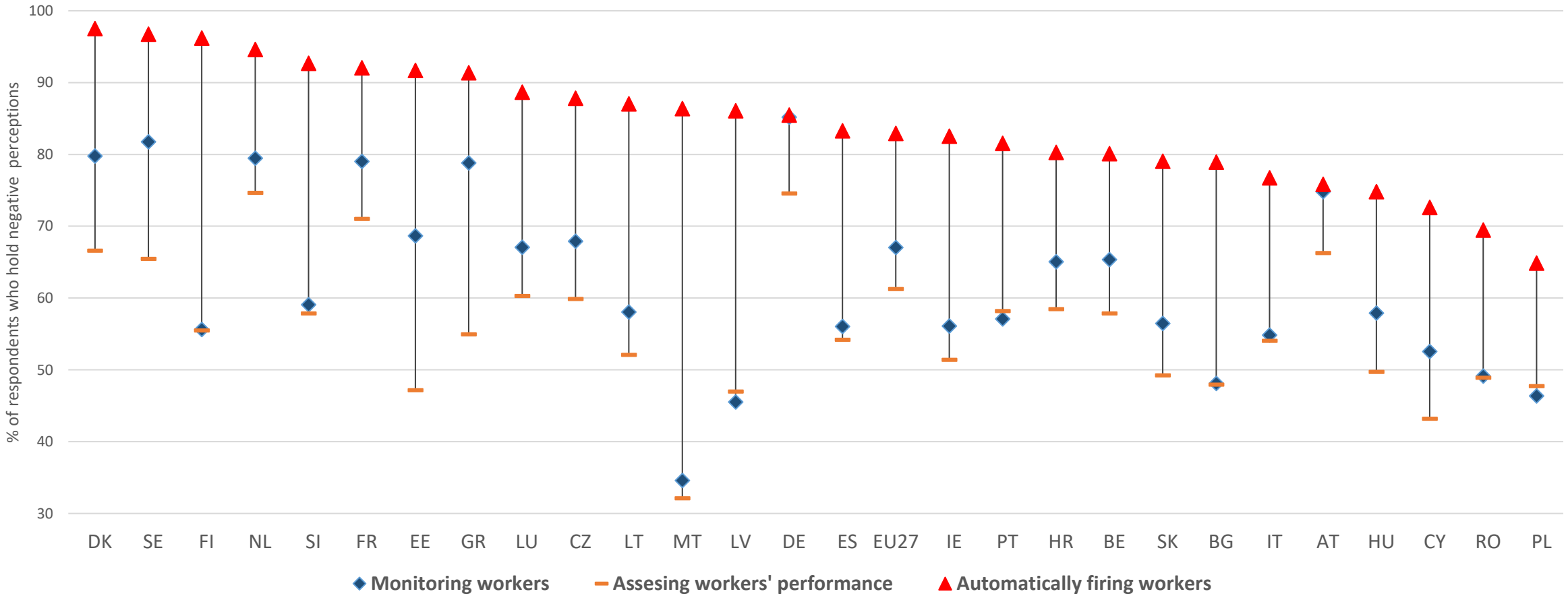
Negative perceptions about AI for intrusive purposes



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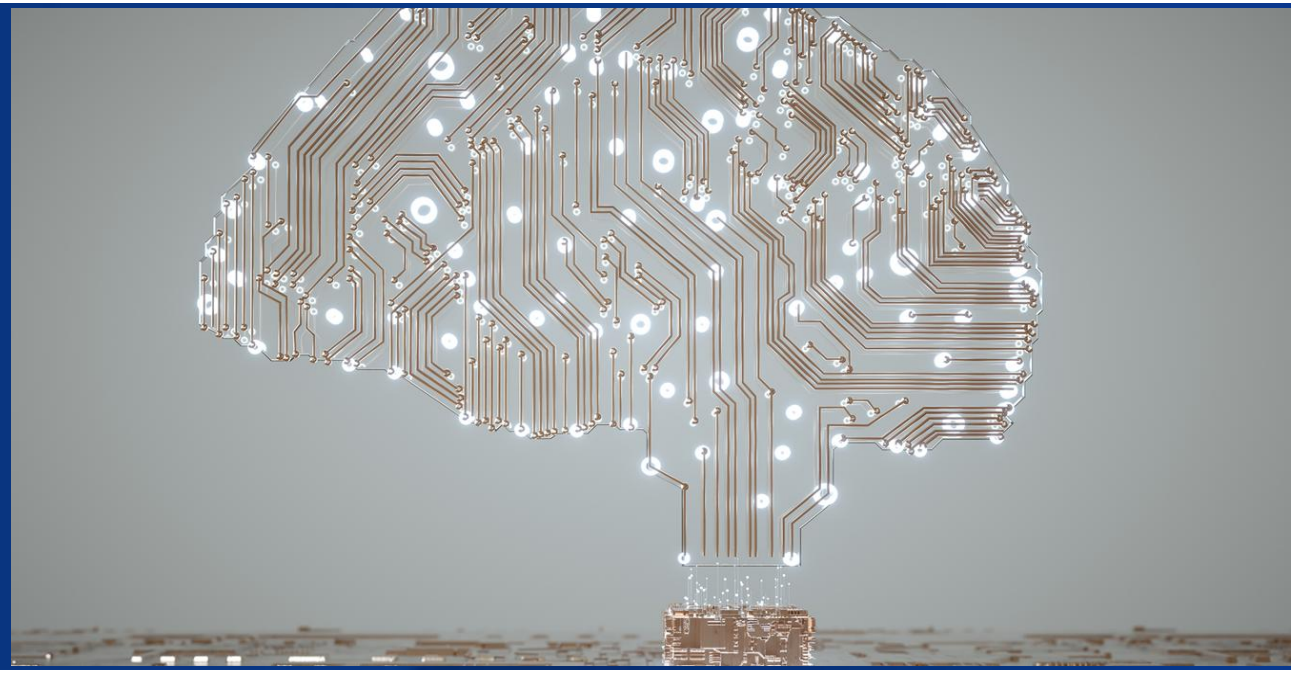
Job quality & AI use
Insights from case studies



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What is job quality? And why is it important?

Physical environment
Posture-related (ergonomic)
Ambient (vibration, noise temperature)
Biological and chemical

Social environment
Adverse social behaviour
Social support
Management quality

Work intensity
Quantitative demands
Pace determinants and interdependency
Emotional demands

Skills and discretion
Cognitive dimension
Decision latitude
Organisational participation
Training

Working time quality
Duration
Atypical working time
Working time arrangements
Flexibility

Prospects
Employment status
Career prospects
Job security
Downsizing

Earnings

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Job transformation rather than destruction…

Automated warehouse

For operators:

- Tasks simplification (cognitive underload & skills underutilisation)
- Physical demands remain
- Training: focus on safe technology use

For managers:

- Greater reliance on data-driven decision-making and system

* Employment levels the same as in non automated warehouses

Job transformation rather than destruction…

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* Employment levels the same as in non automated warehouses

Highly automated manufacturing site

For shopfloor workers:
- Increased job complexity, high cognitive load
- Training: on-the-job, narrowly focused on specific technologies

* Employment levels unchanged after relocation to new high-tech facility

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Job (re) design: different approaches from case studies

- Top-down job redesign: Management-led initiatives that selectively automate tasks to maintain critical human oversight.

- Bottom-up job crafting: Worker-led adjustments using AI to offload tedious tasks, though overdependence on automation may risk skill loss.

- Job co-design and job (re)design via co-determination

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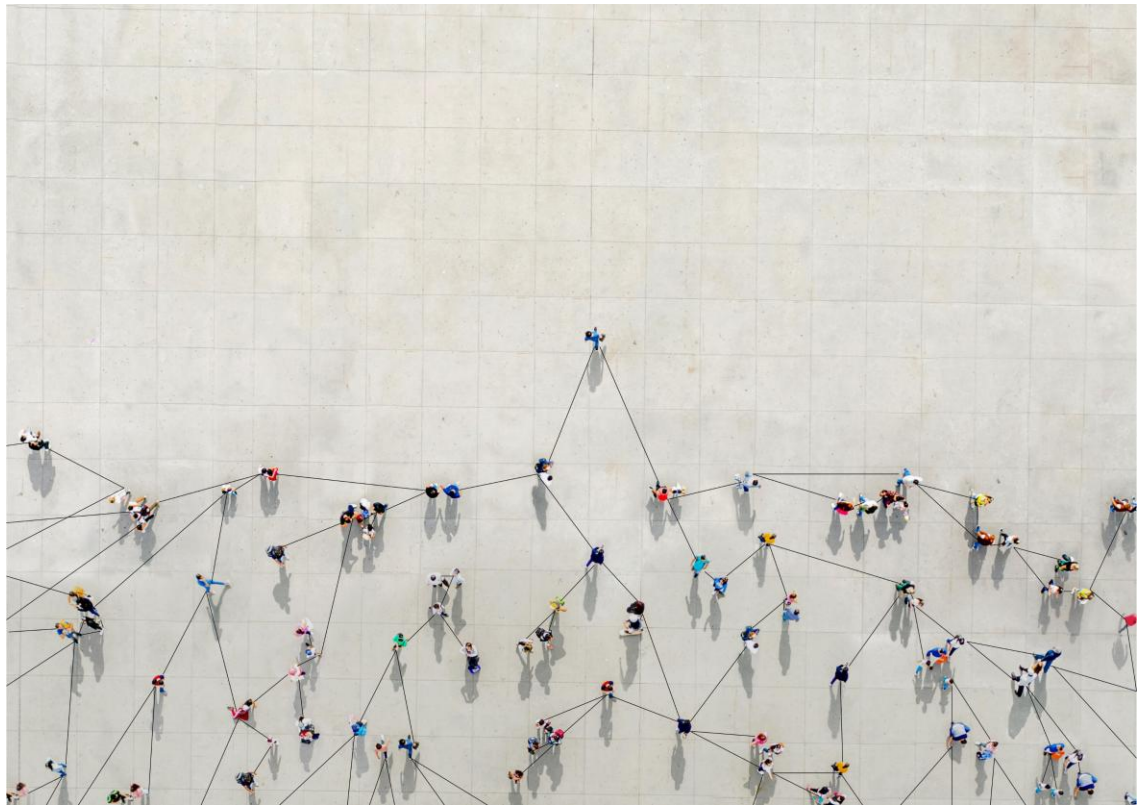
What’s holding us back?



1. Need to rethink the way training and reskilling is organised and delivered.
2. Greater emphasis needed on job redesign strategies.
3. Limited worker involvement.
4. No ethical thinking and human centricity in technology design and implementation.

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Looking ahead: new Eurofound research on AI

- 2024 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)
  - new indicators: wearables, cobots, gen AI, collaborative work platforms, algorithmic management, …
- Secondary analysis on algorithmic management and impact on job quality
- Case studies on algorithmic management

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