

EU VOTES FOR FARMED ANIMALS

ANALYSIS OF EU PARLIAMENT VOTES, 2019-2023

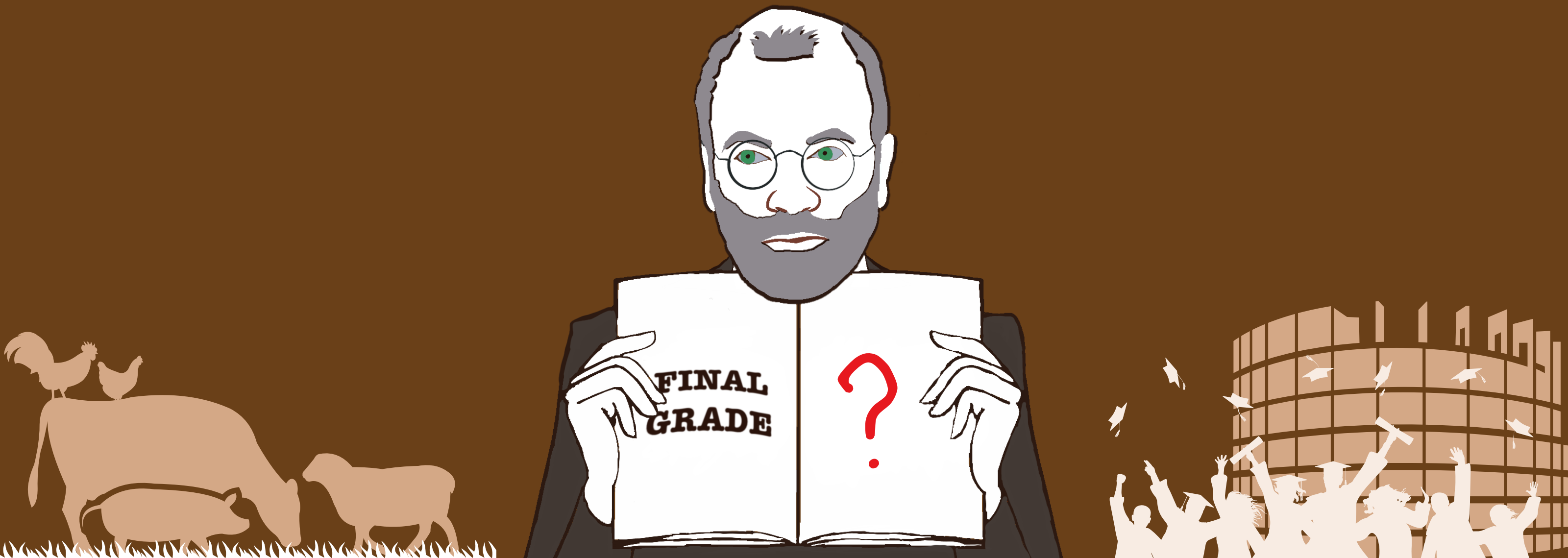


Table of Contents

Introduction 3

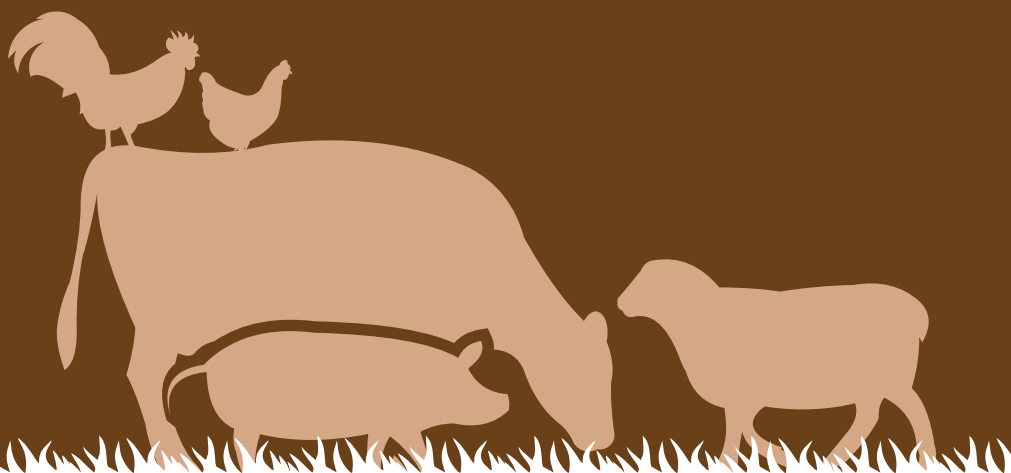
Abbreviations 6

EU-level analysis 7

Analysis of national parties 10

Methodology 37

13 October 2023



Introduction

As the current term of the European Parliament is wrapping up, we are taking stock of the votes of political groups regarding legislation aimed at improving the welfare of farmed animals. The findings indicate that the center-right political group the European People's Party (EPP) and other groups on the right side of the political spectrum consistently vote against proposals to improve the welfare of farmed animals, despite strong public support for the cause.

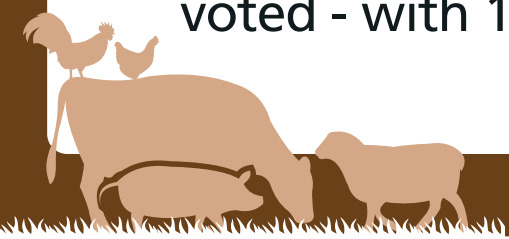
Methodology

Our analysis focused on 16 votes since 2019, during the current Parliamentary term, and we gave each of the 702 MEPs a score from 0% to 100% based on how they voted - with 100% indicating highest support for

farmed animals. The votes covered a broad range of issues - caged farming, animal transport, EU farm subsidies, factory farming, alternatives to animal products, foie gras production, chick culling and other files concerning farmed animals - be it terrestrial or aquatic.

Findings

The greens and the left (Greens/EFA and The Left) vote consistently in support of measures to improve the welfare of farmed animals. The most resistant is the EPP group, which has lately positioned itself as a farmers' party, together with political groups on the right side of the political spectrum - the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and Identity and Democracy (ID).



MEPs ignore citizens' opinions

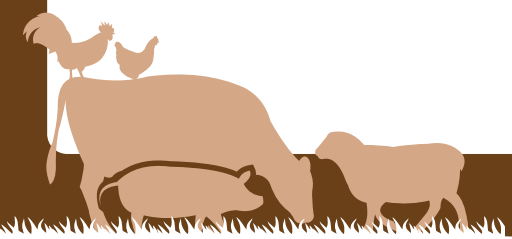
While eight out of ten Europeans believe that the welfare of farmed animals should be better protected (Eurobarometer, 2016), our data-driven analysis shows a clear disconnect between what citizens ask for and how MEPs vote.

Out of the 10,265 individual votes analysed, only four out of ten votes were for higher welfare of farmed animals during this political term. In some political groups, such as the EPP, the situation is dire - only two out of ten votes from EPP MEPs meet citizen expectations!

Political background

In September 2023, the Financial Times reported the EU is considering dropping its plans for stricter animal welfare measures, amidst a coordinated right-wing backlash against the block's environmental regulations.

The European Commission, under the leadership of Ursula von der Leyen, who belongs to the EPP family, is the EU institution that proposes new laws. However, serious delays now threaten the reform of the animal welfare laws - dubbed 'animal welfare revolution'.



End the Cage Age

The Commission has made an unprecedented commitment to prohibit cages in farming in response to a referendum-like action by 1.4 million citizens - the 'End the Cage Age' European Citizens' Initiative. This was the first such commitment since the EU introduced the democracy tool over ten years ago. If the Commission goes back on its word, it would undermine efforts to strengthen EU democracy.

In the EU, every year about 300 million farmed animals still spend all or part of their lives in cages, pens or stalls, causing great suffering. Laying hens and rabbits, for example, are confined to spaces about

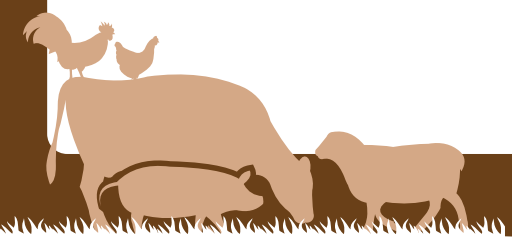
the size of an A4 sheet of paper. Adult female pigs have to spend nearly half of every year inside crates, in which they cannot even turn around.

The factory farming lobby

In late June, an investigation by Politico and Lighthouse Reports revealed that the factory farming lobby in Brussels has a deep-rooted influence on the EU decision-making process.

The industry lobby has recently resorted to fearmongering using faulty economic analyses in order to stop the Commission from keeping its commitment to propose a ban on caged farming.

13 October 2023



Abbreviations

European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)

European Parliament (EP)

European People's Party (EPP)

Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)

Identity and Democracy (ID)

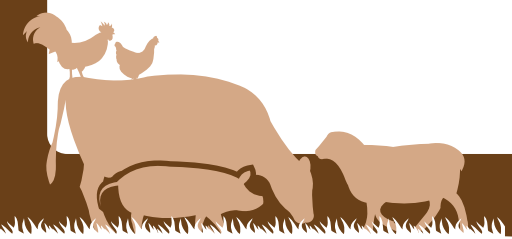
Member of the European Parliament (MEP)

Non-attached (NI)

Renew Europe (Renew)

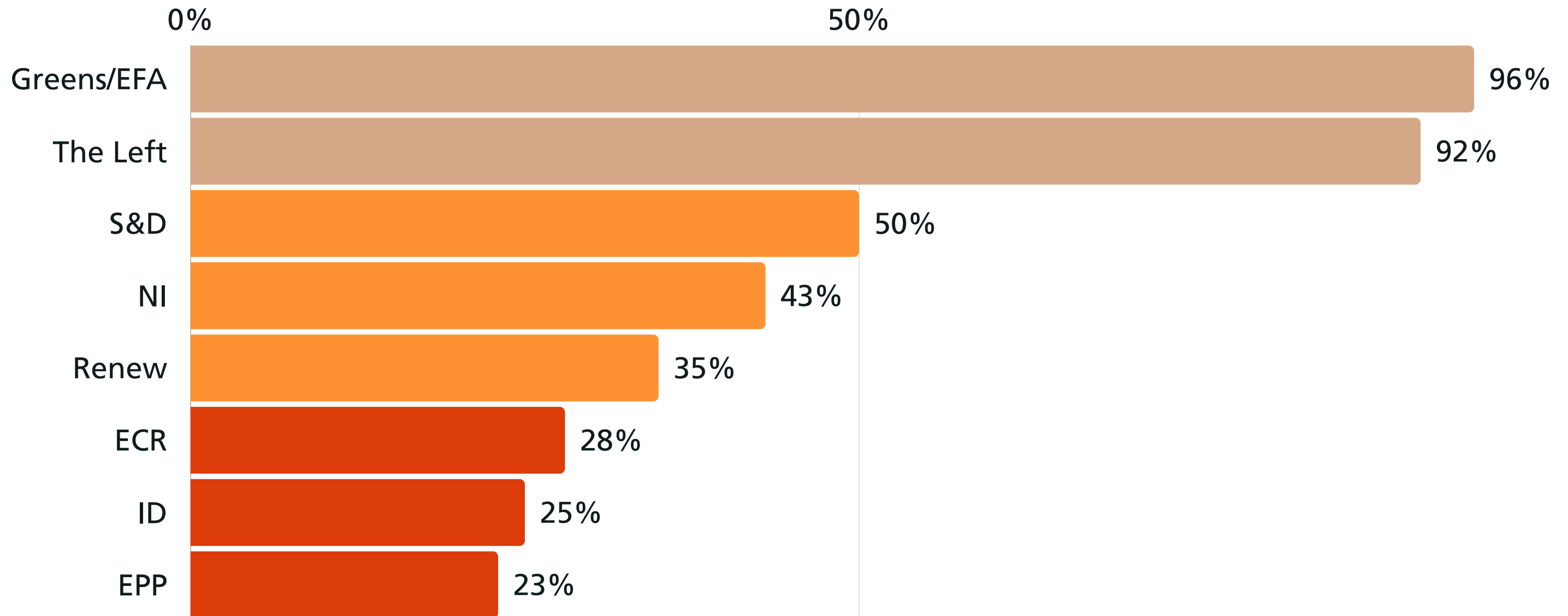
Socialists & Democrats (S&D)

The Left group in the European Parliament - GUE/NGL (The Left)



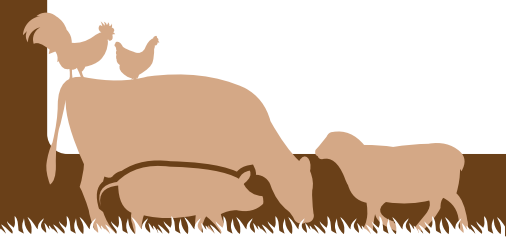


MEP score for farmed animals, voting by EP group



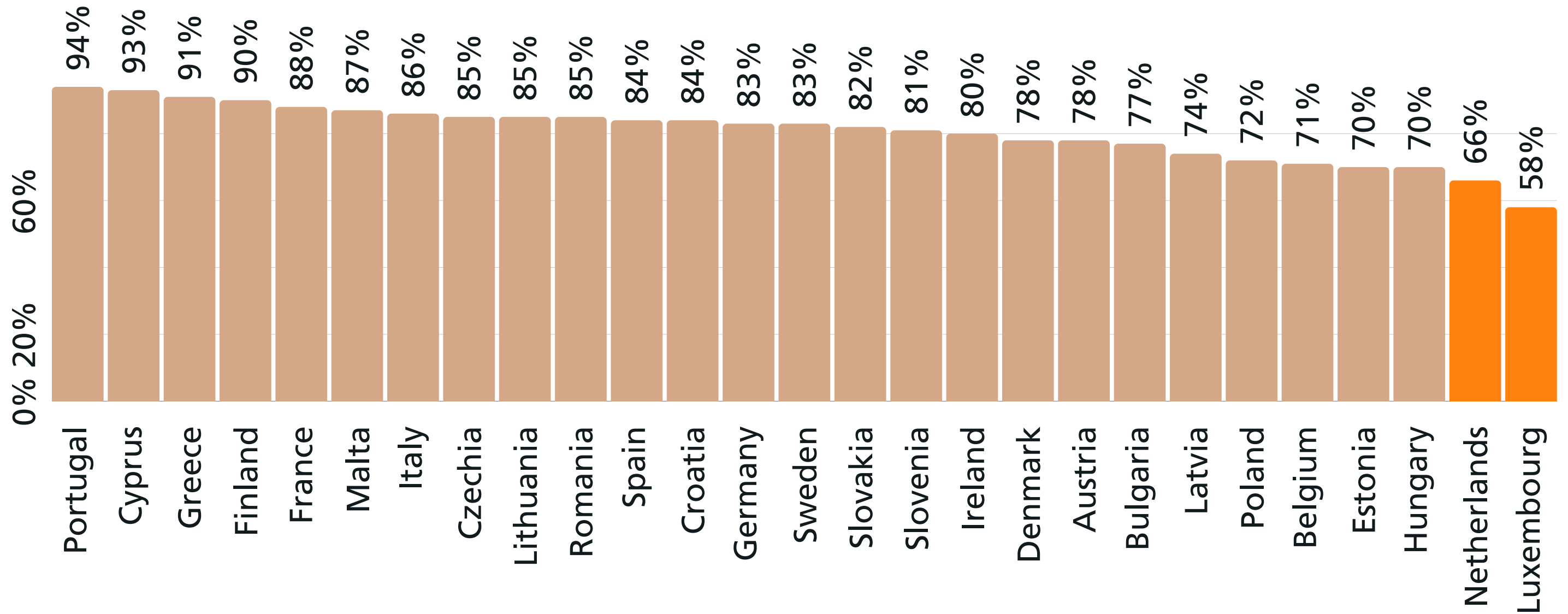
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Source: Compassion in World Farming, 2023. Dataset: <https://bit.ly/48yfHGf>





Share of citizens who believe the welfare of farmed animals should be better protected, by country

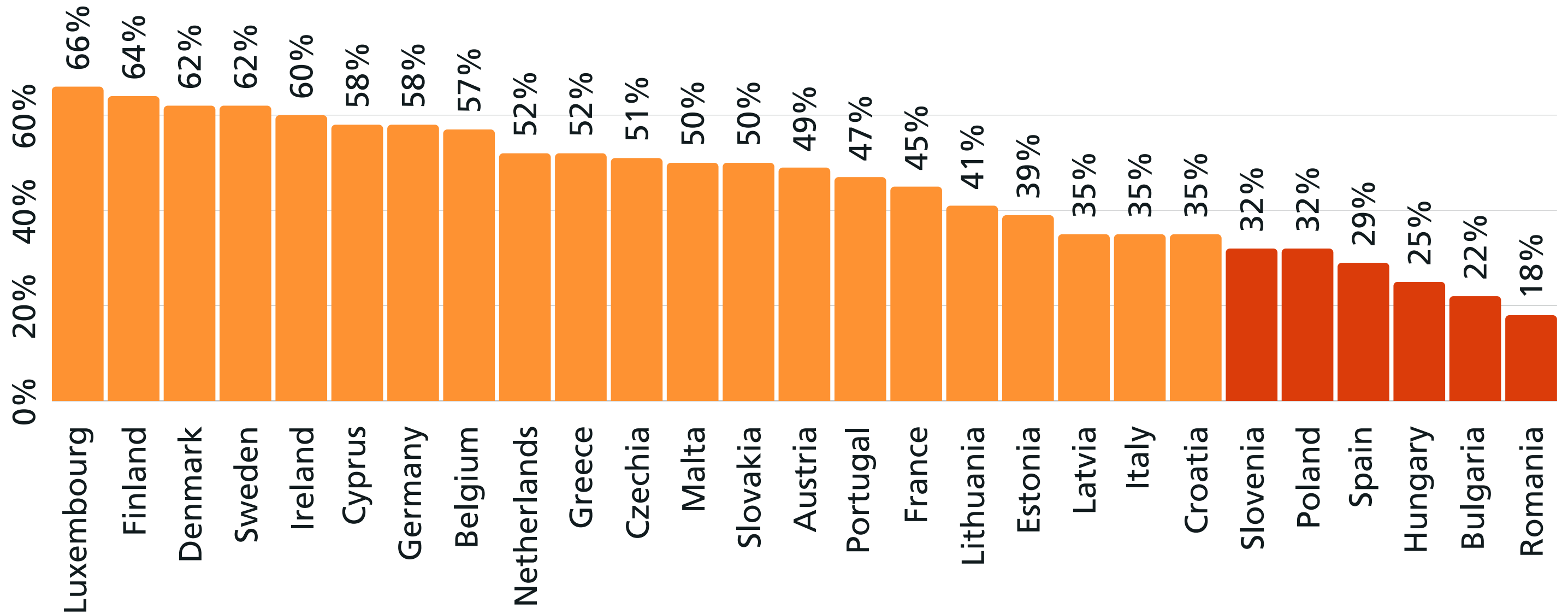


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Source: Special Eurobarometer 442 (2016), QB3

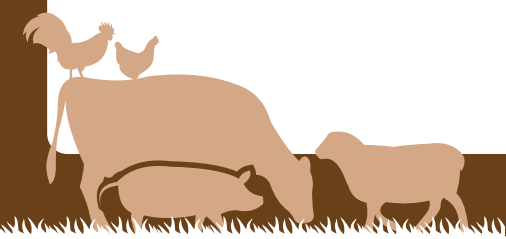


MEP score for farmed animals, voting by country



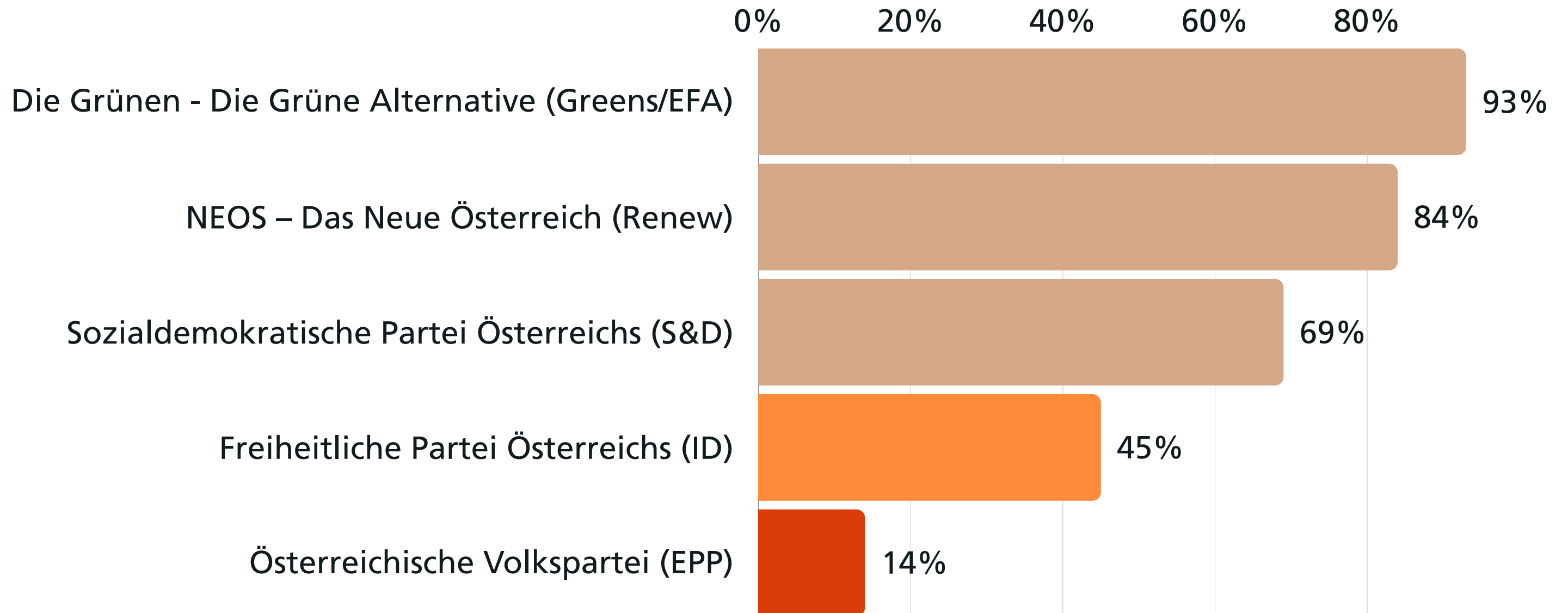
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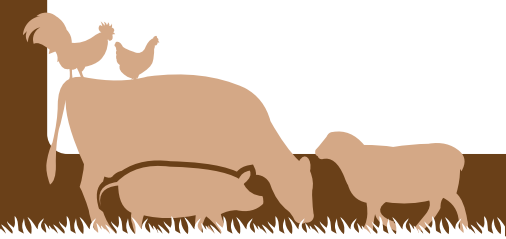


Austria: MEP score for farmed animals



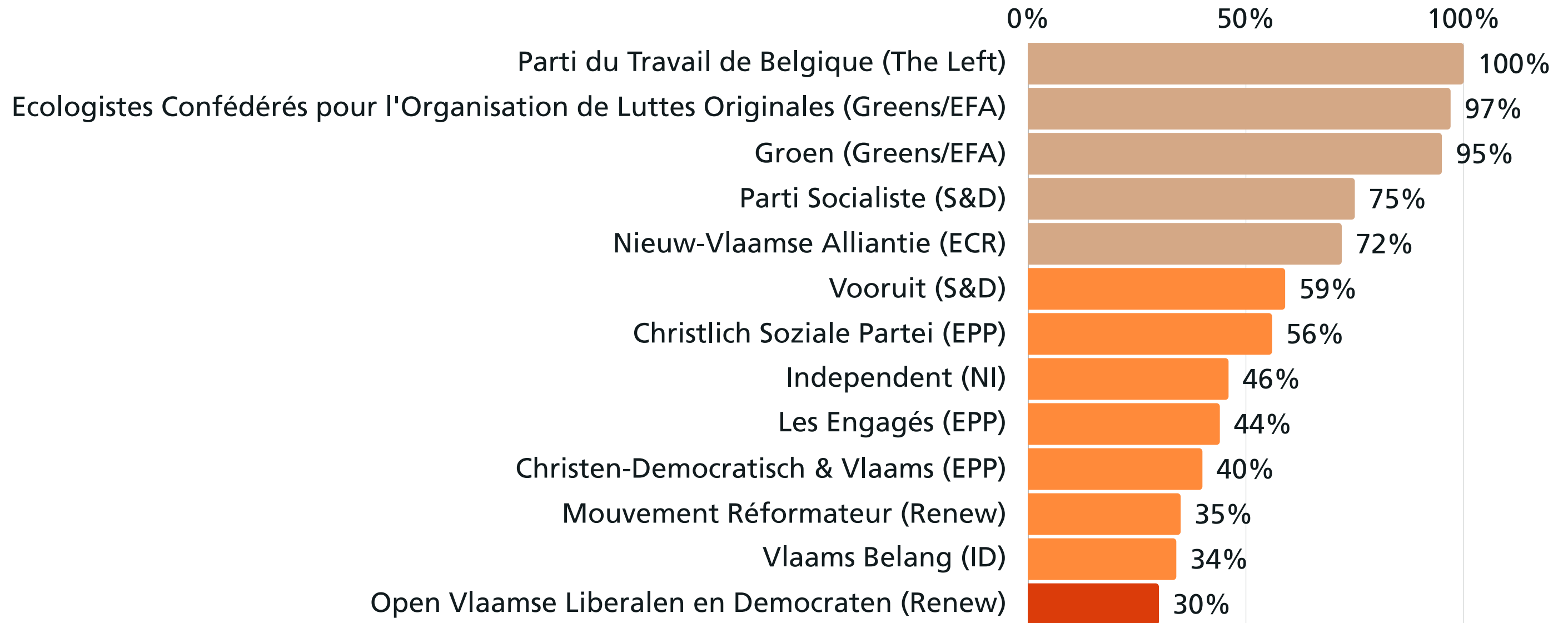
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Belgium: MEP score for farmed animals

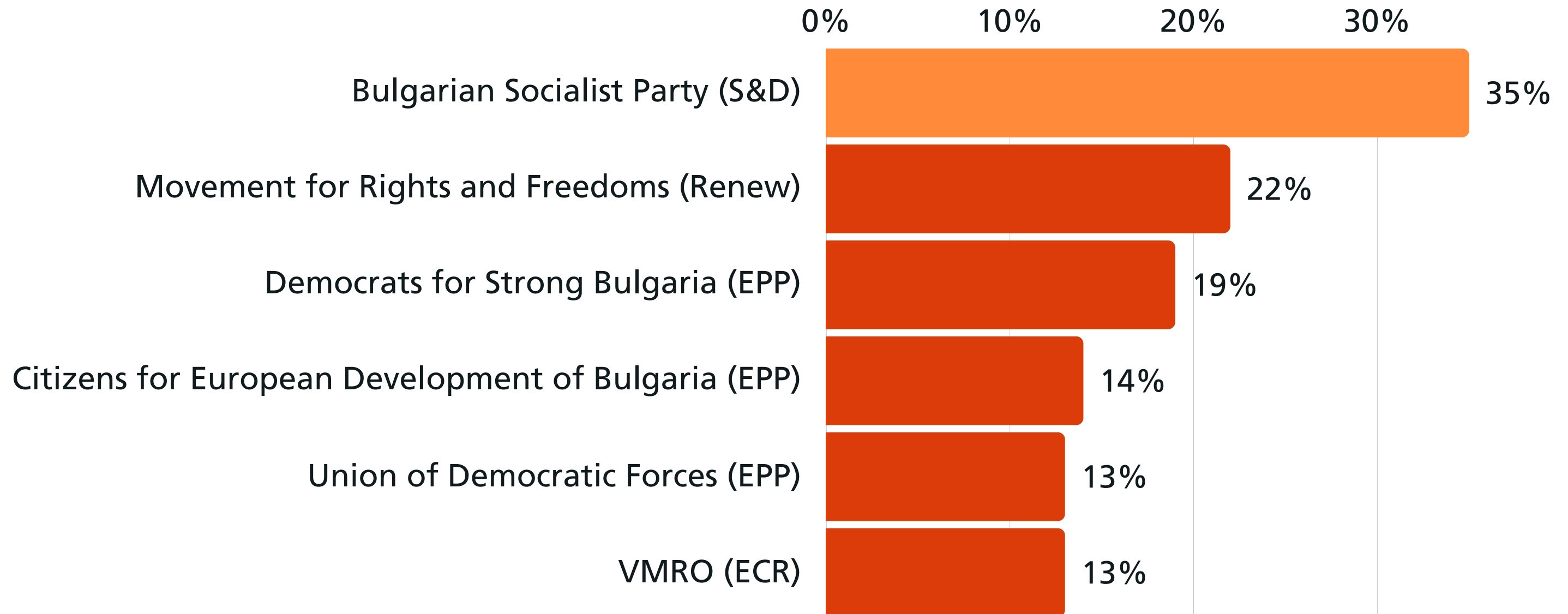


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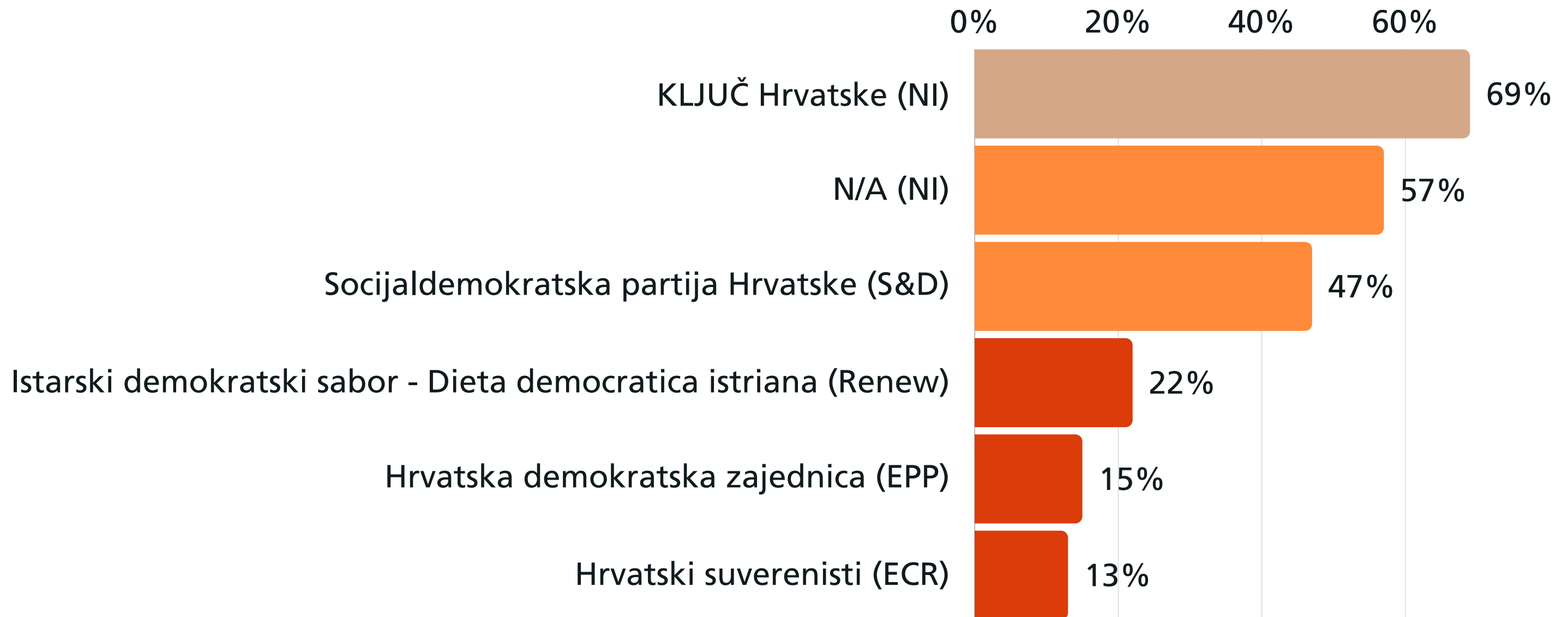
Bulgaria: MEP score for farmed animals



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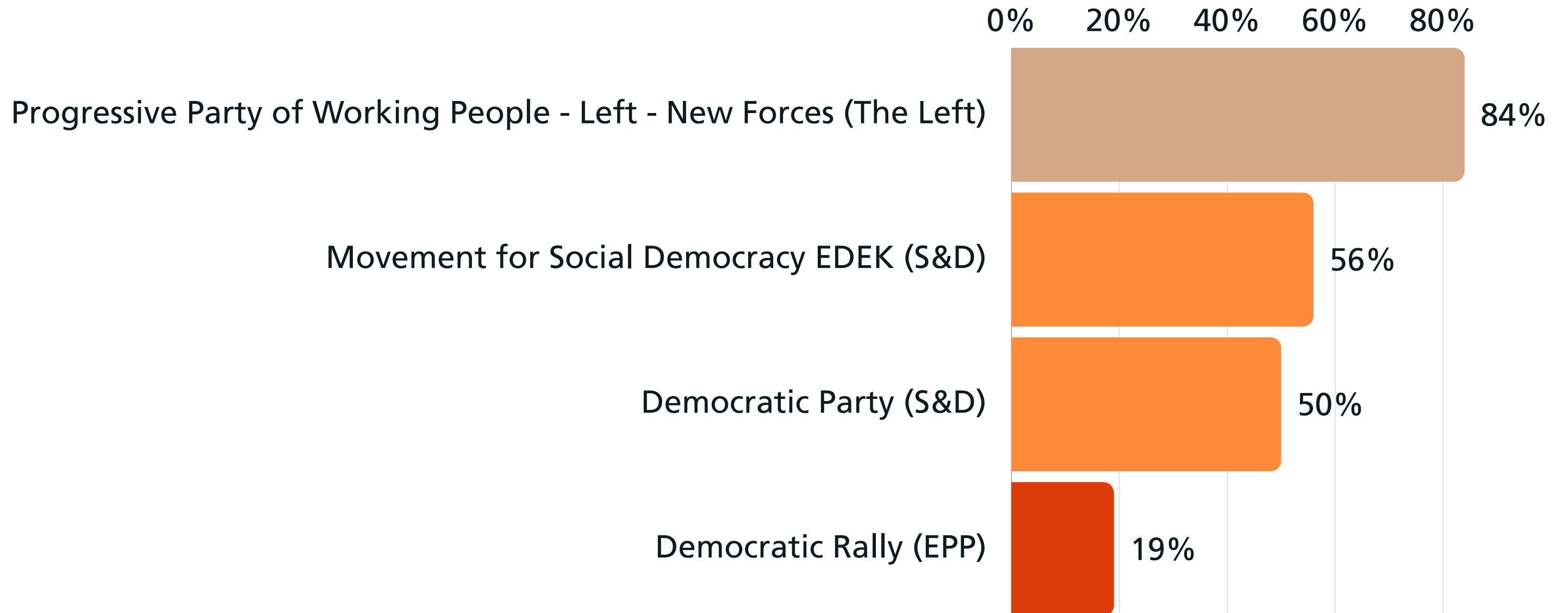
Croatia: MEP score for farmed animals



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Cyprus: MEP score for farmed animals

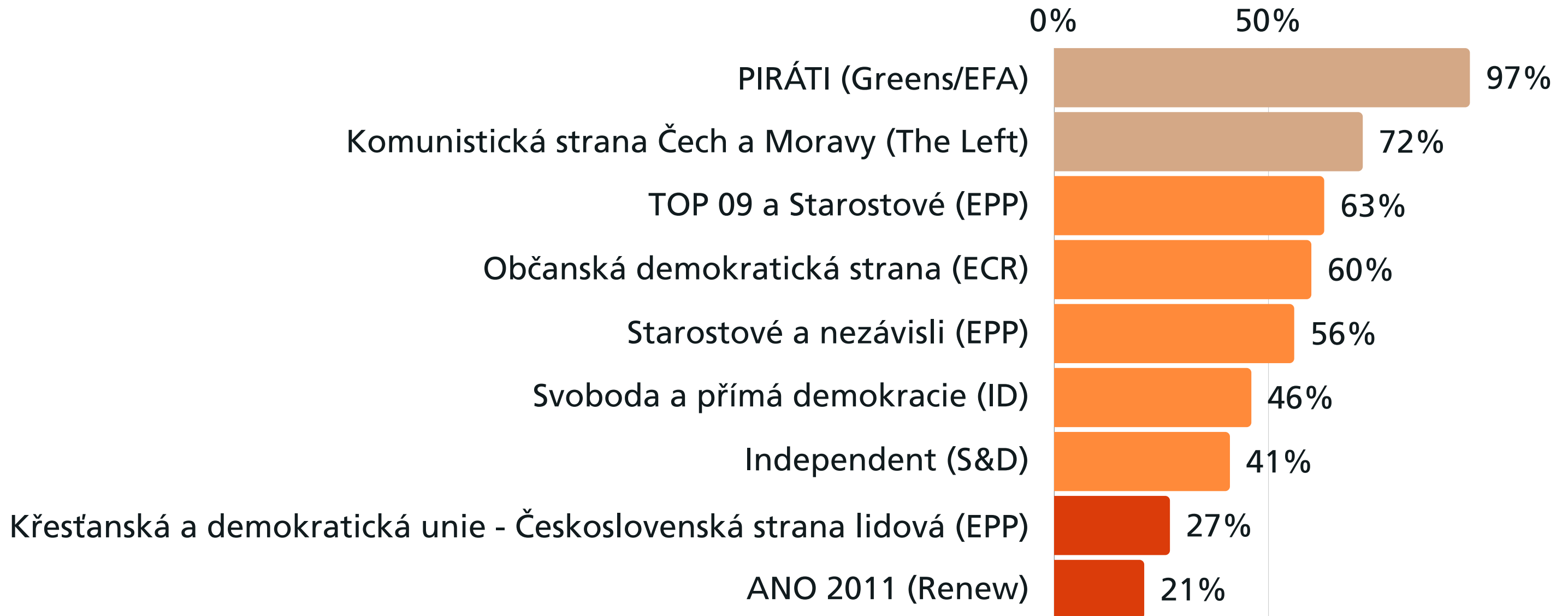


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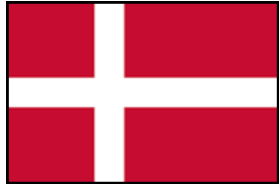
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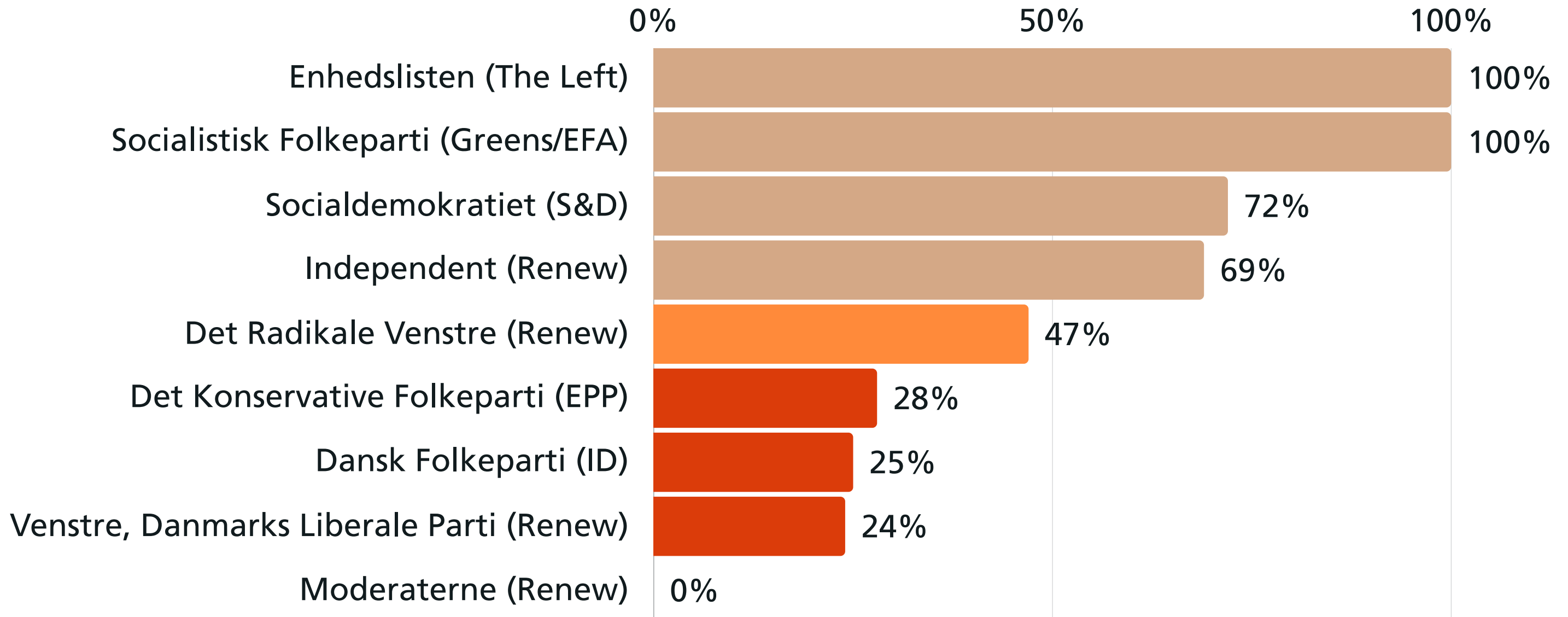
Czechia: MEP score for farmed animals



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Denmark: MEP score for farmed animals

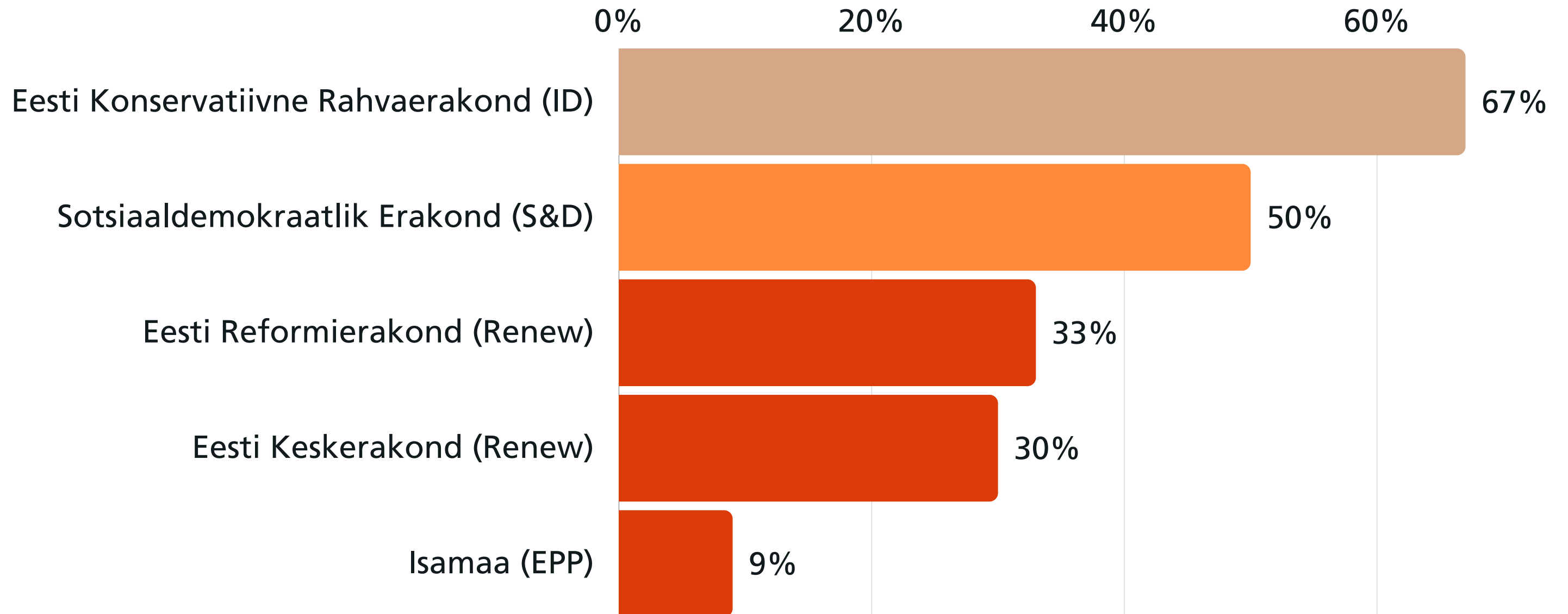


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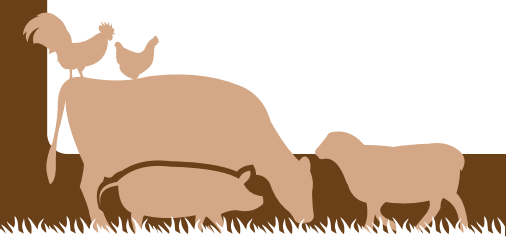


Estonia: MEP score for farmed animals



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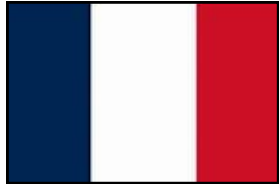




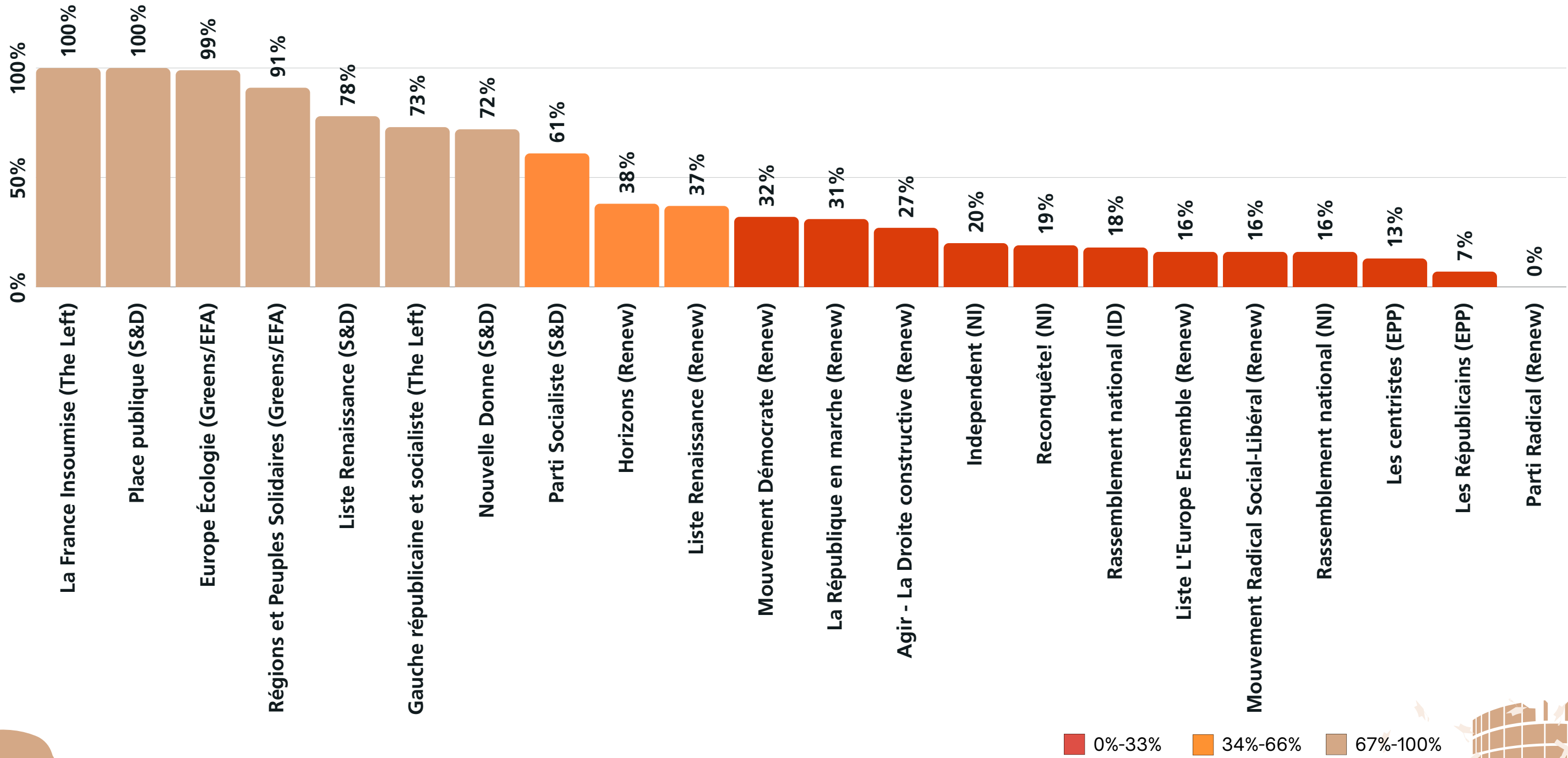
Finland: MEP score for farmed animals



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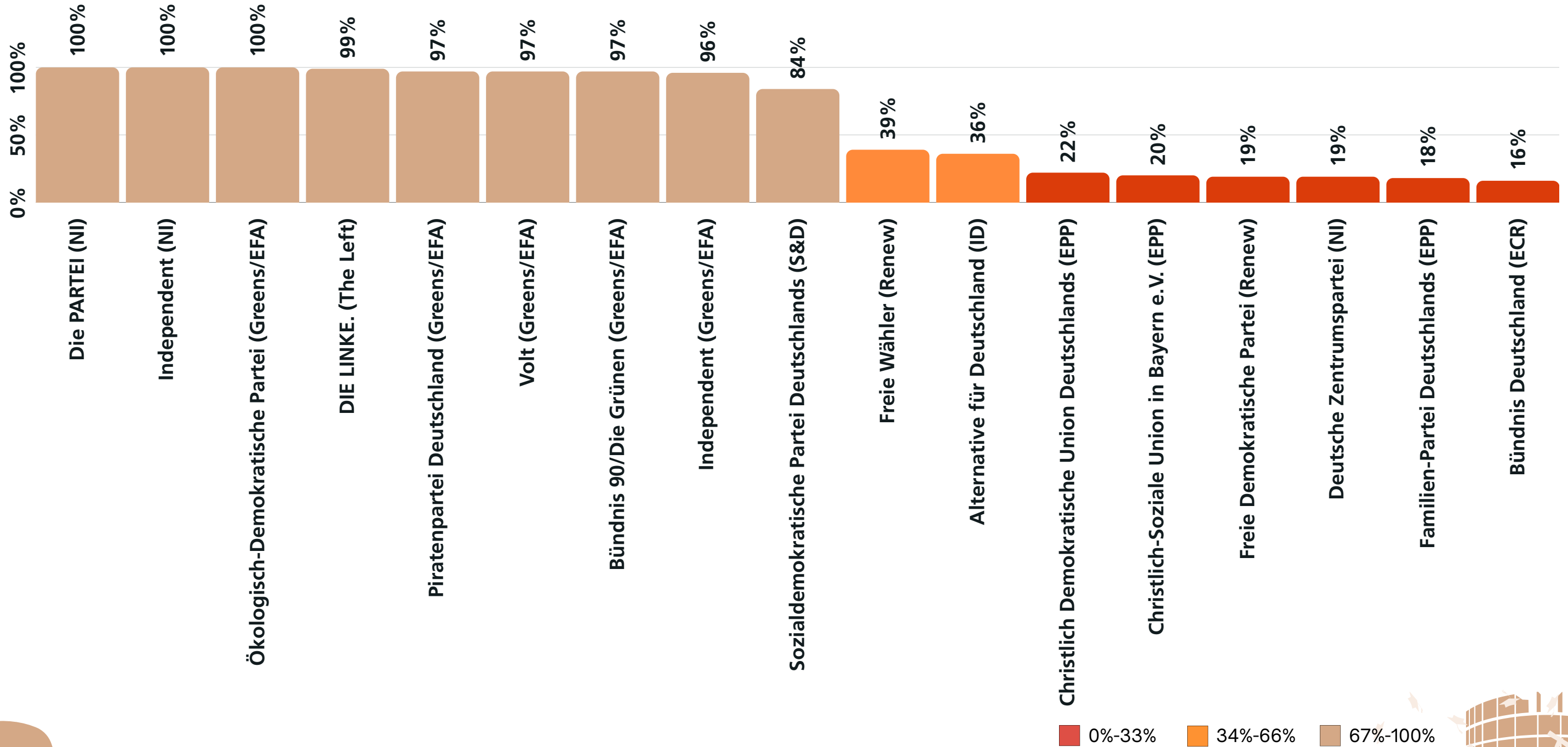
France: MEP score for farmed animals



Source: Compassion in World Farming, 2023. Dataset: <https://bit.ly/48yfHGf>



Germany: MEP score for farmed animals

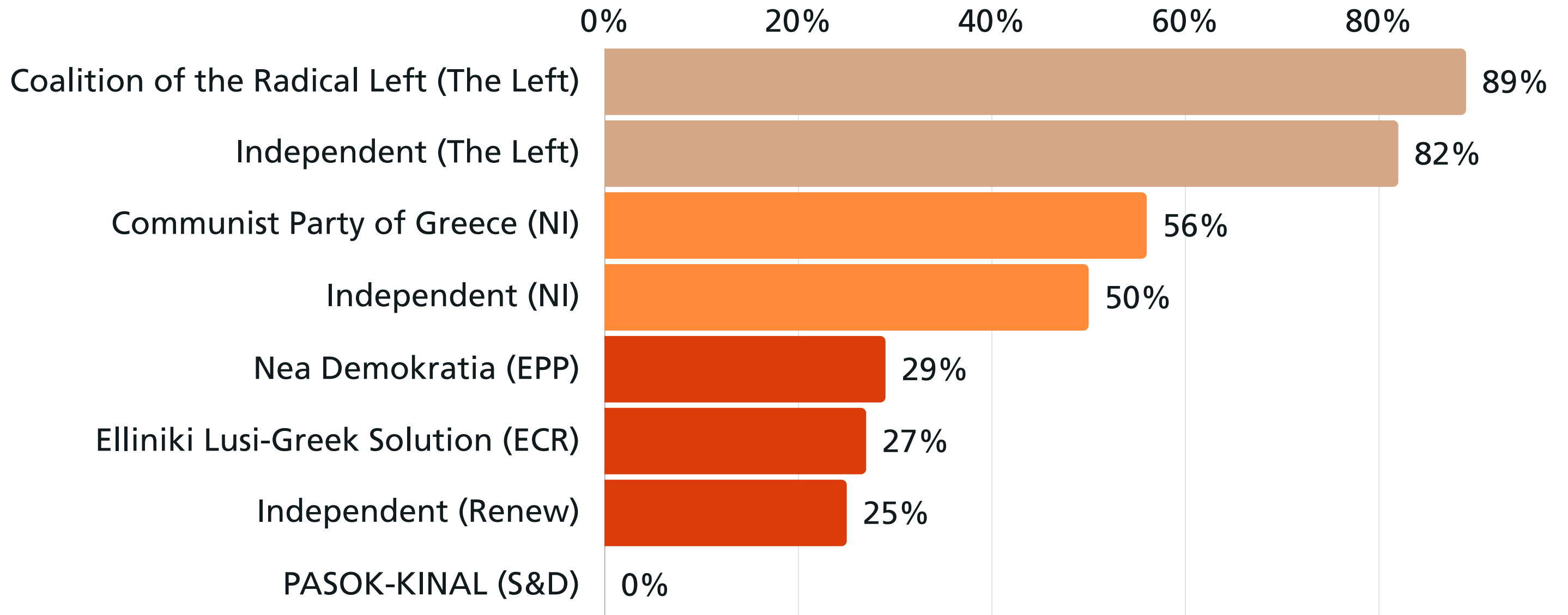


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Greece: MEP score for farmed animals

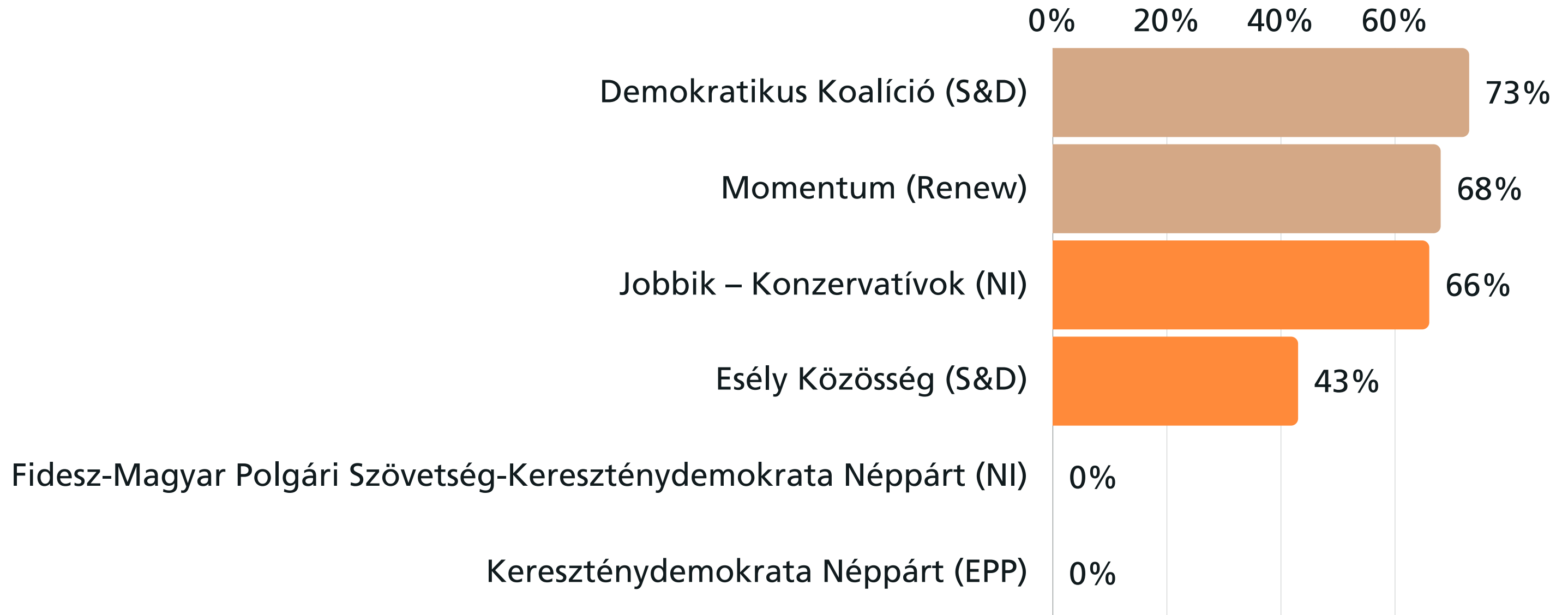


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Hungary: MEP score for farmed animals

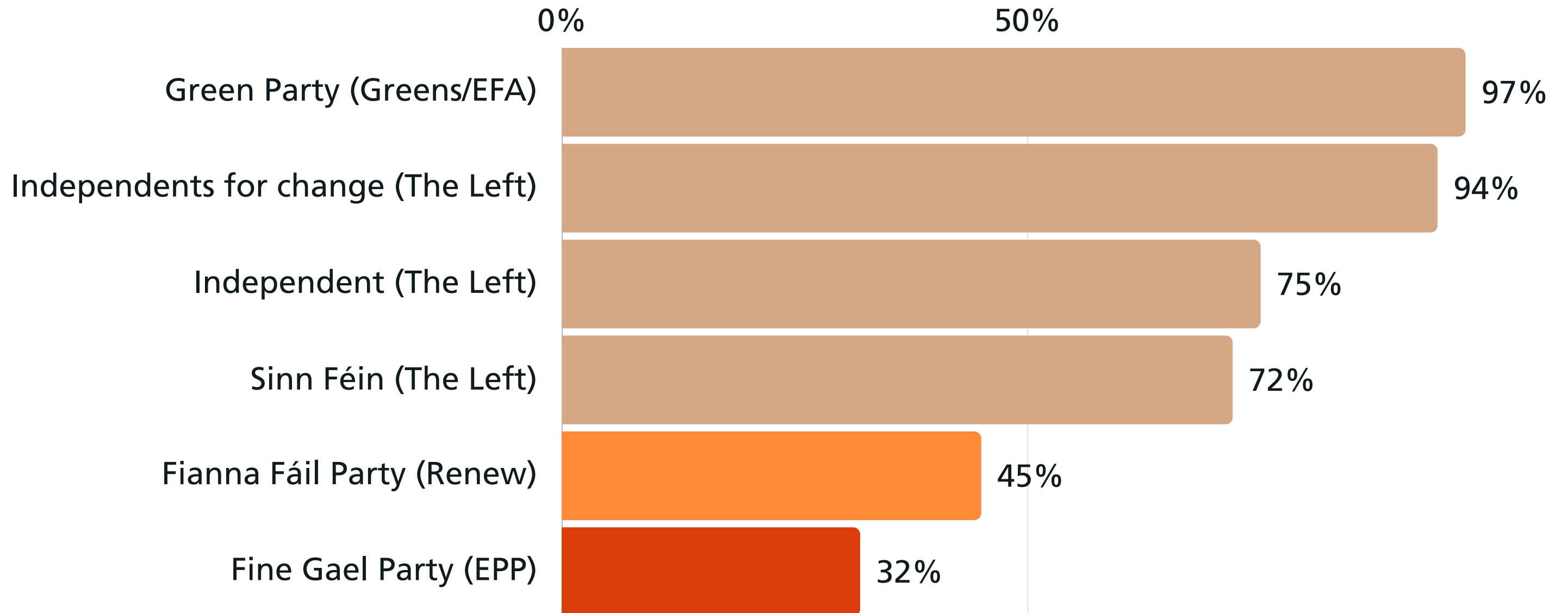


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Ireland: MEP score for farmed animals

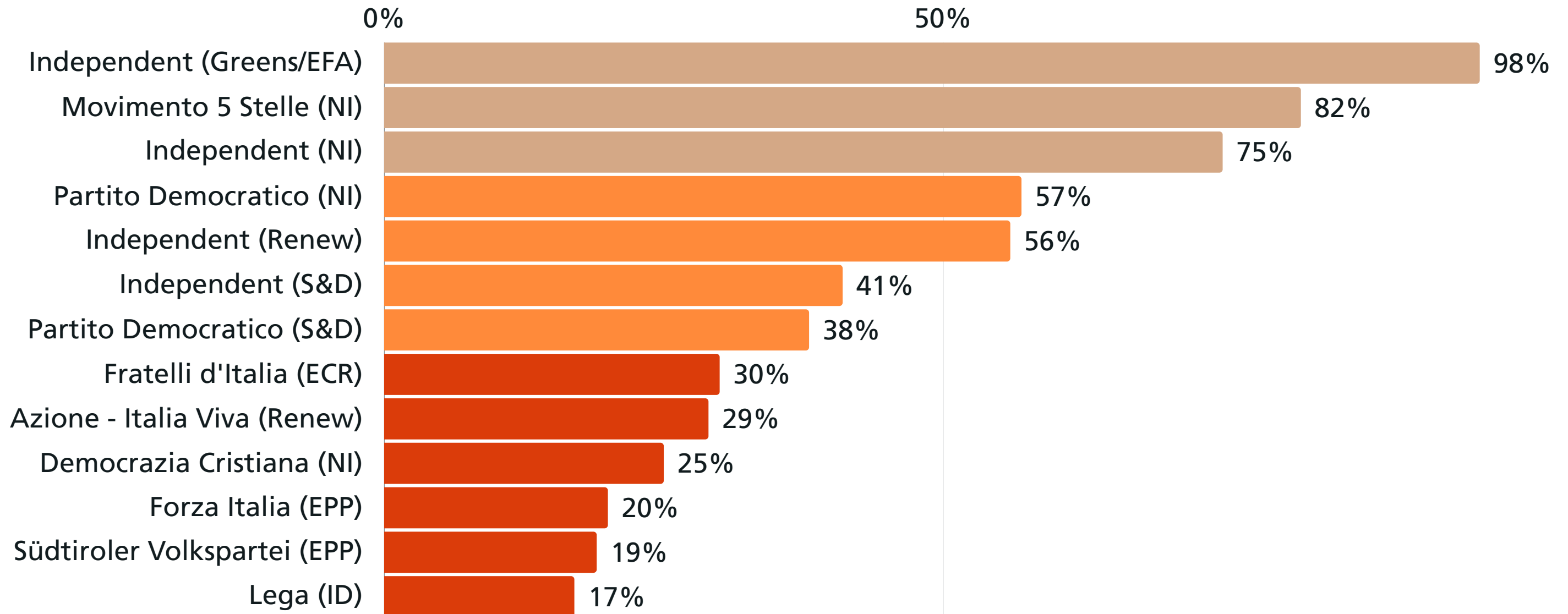


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Italy: MEP score for farmed animals



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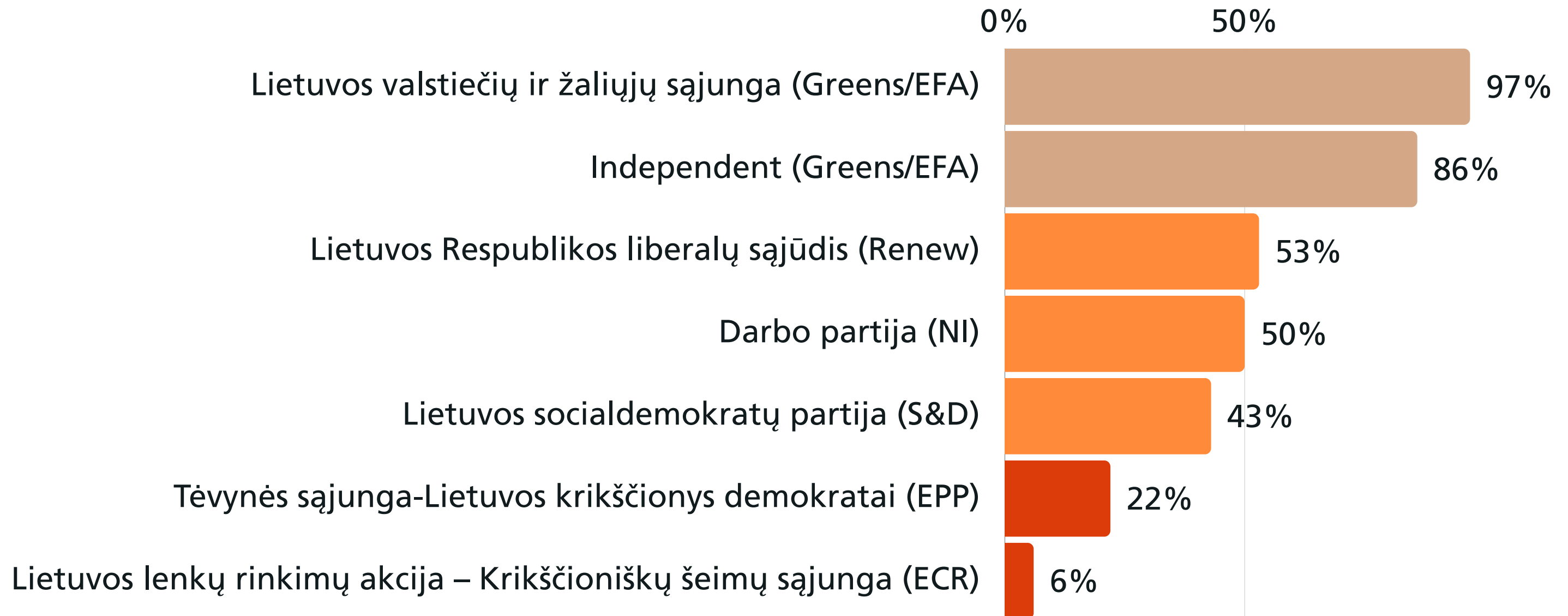
Latvia: MEP score for farmed animals



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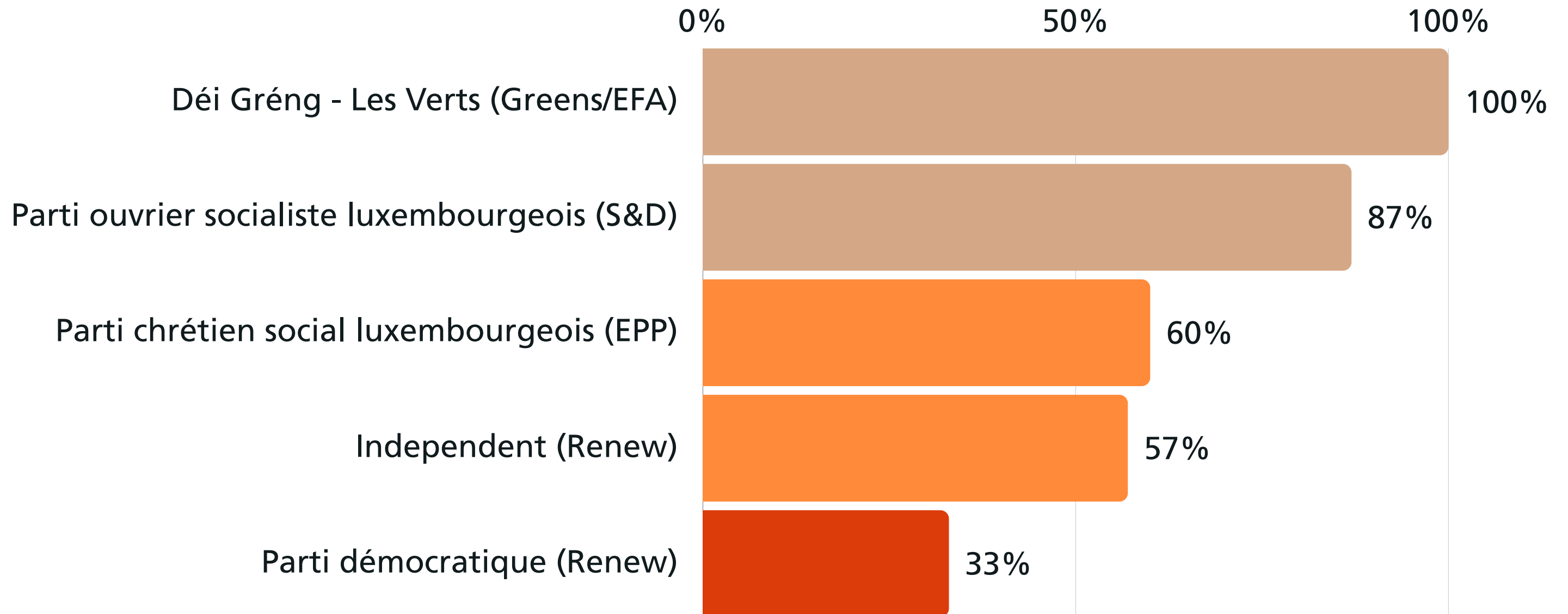
Lithuania: MEP score for farmed animals



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Luxembourg: MEP score for farmed animals

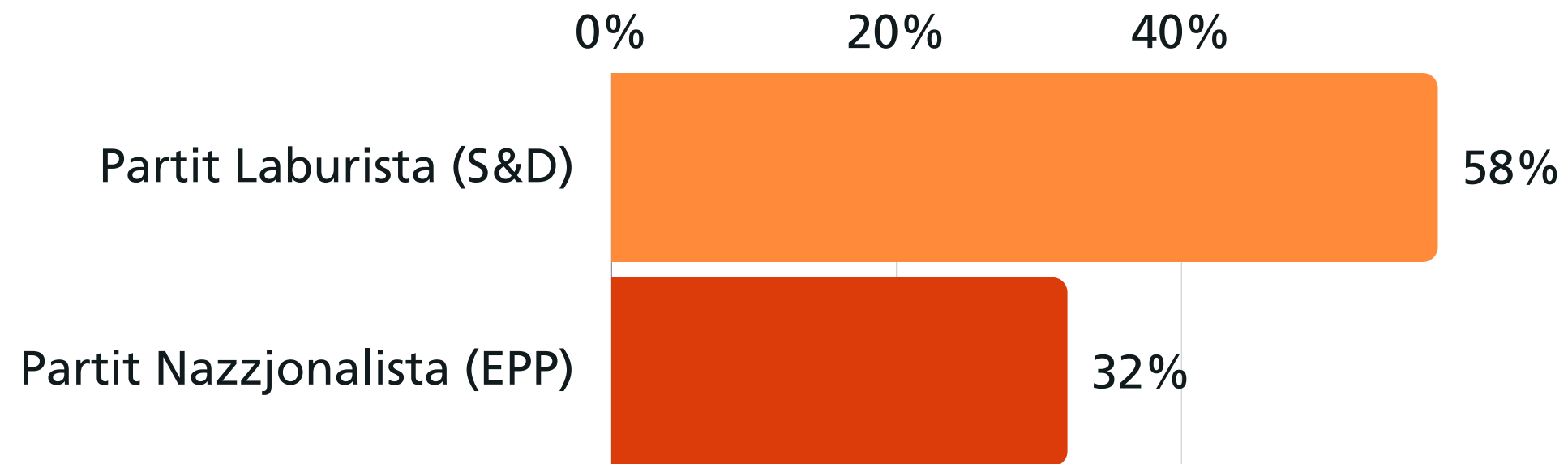


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Malta: MEP score for farmed animals

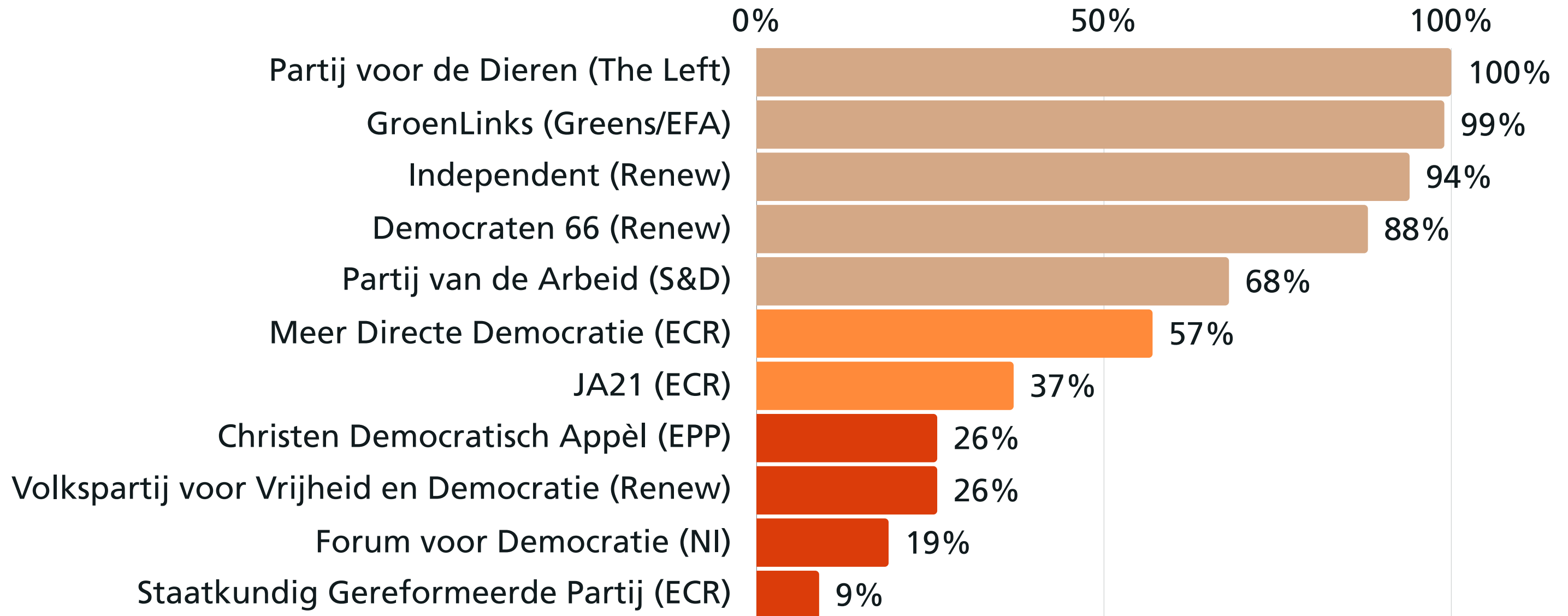


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Source: Compassion in World Farming, 2023. Dataset: <https://bit.ly/48yfHGf>



Netherlands: MEP score for farmed animals

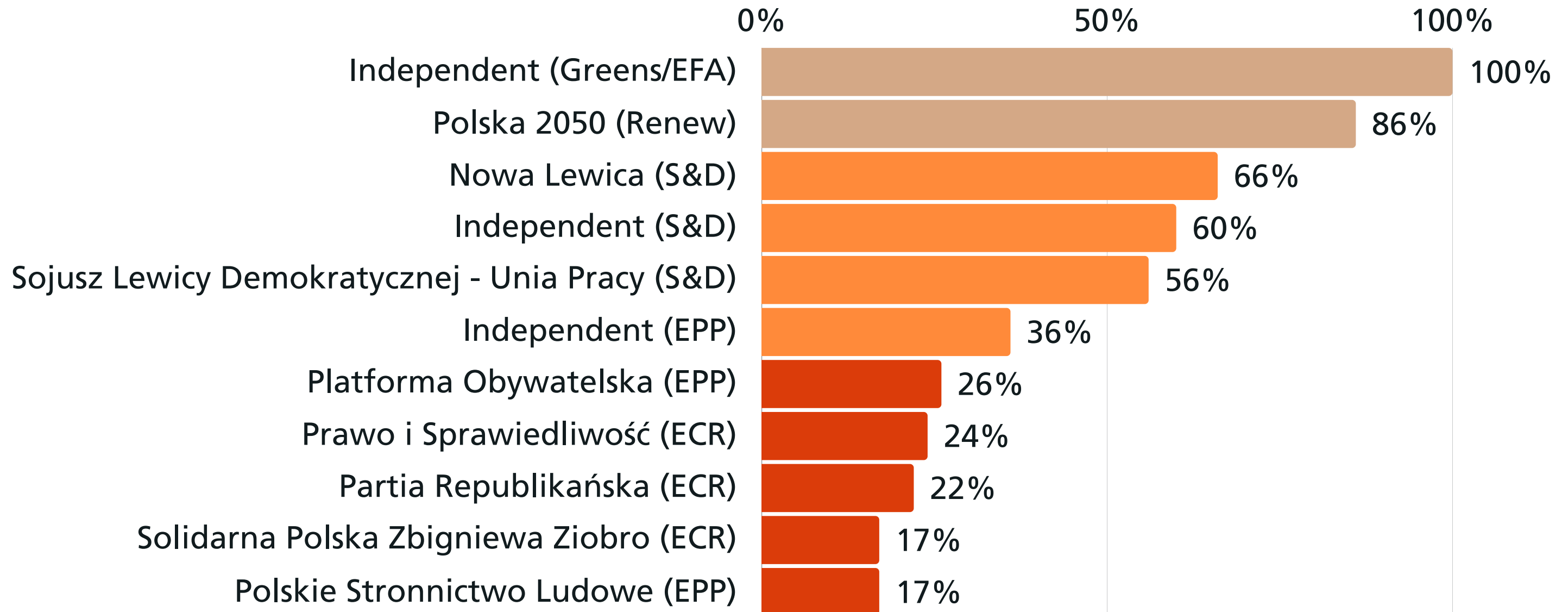


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Source: Compassion in World Farming, 2023. Dataset: <https://bit.ly/48yfHGf>



Poland: MEP score for farmed animals

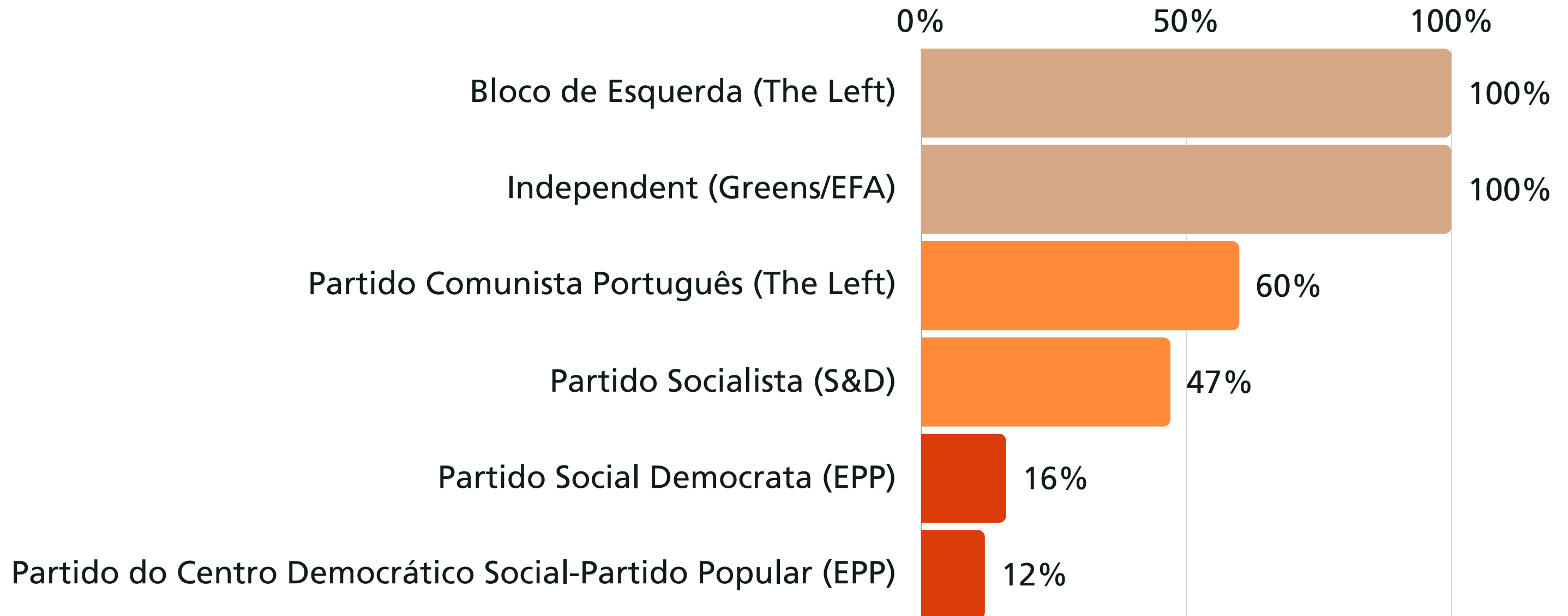


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Source: Compassion in World Farming, 2023. Dataset: <https://bit.ly/48yfHGf>

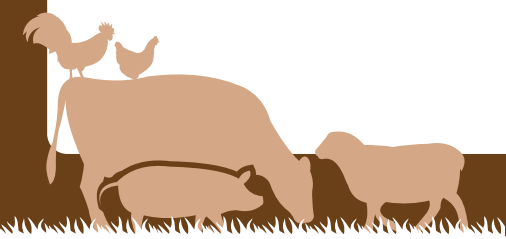


Portugal: MEP score for farmed animals



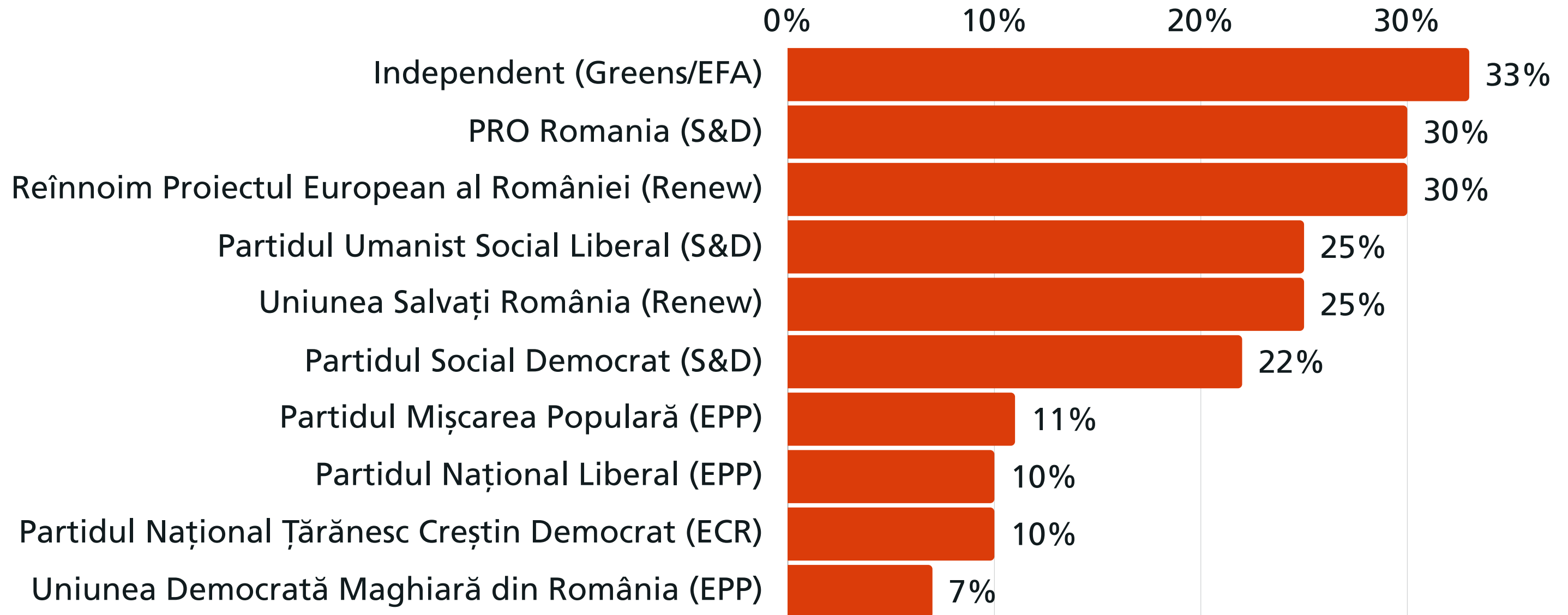
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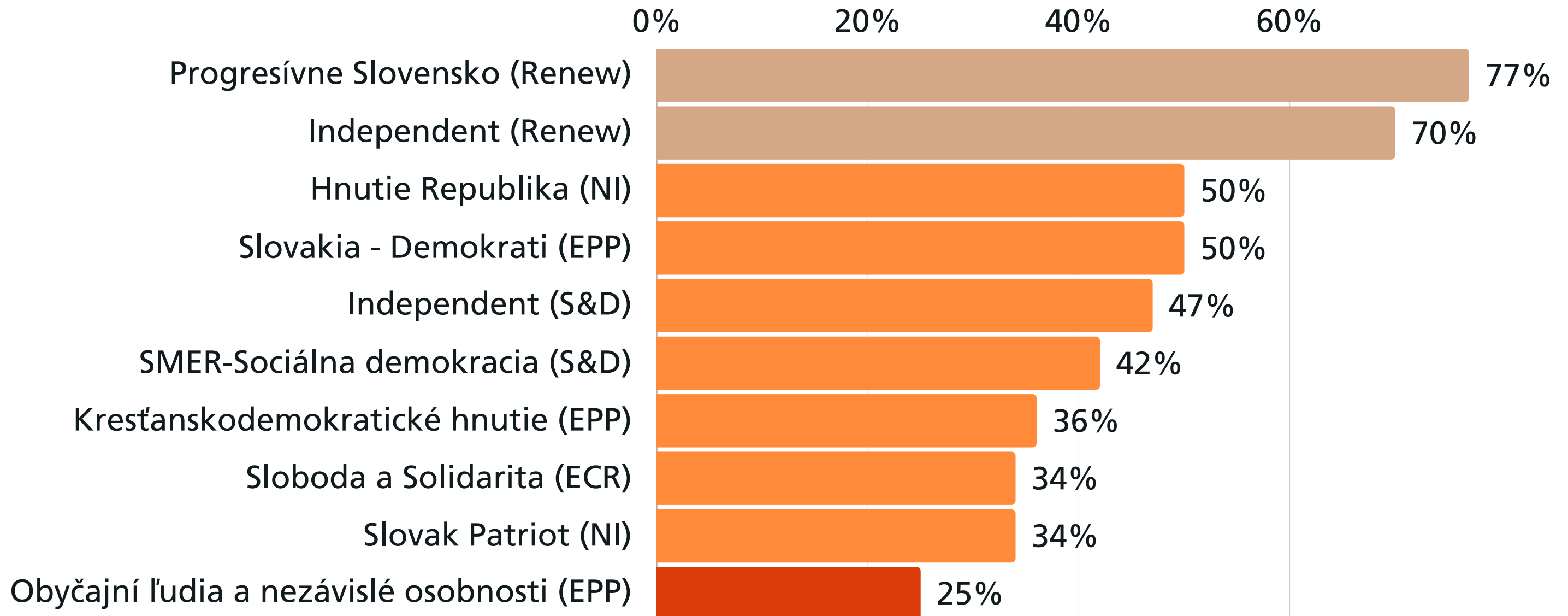
Romania: MEP score for farmed animals



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Slovakia: MEP score for farmed animals

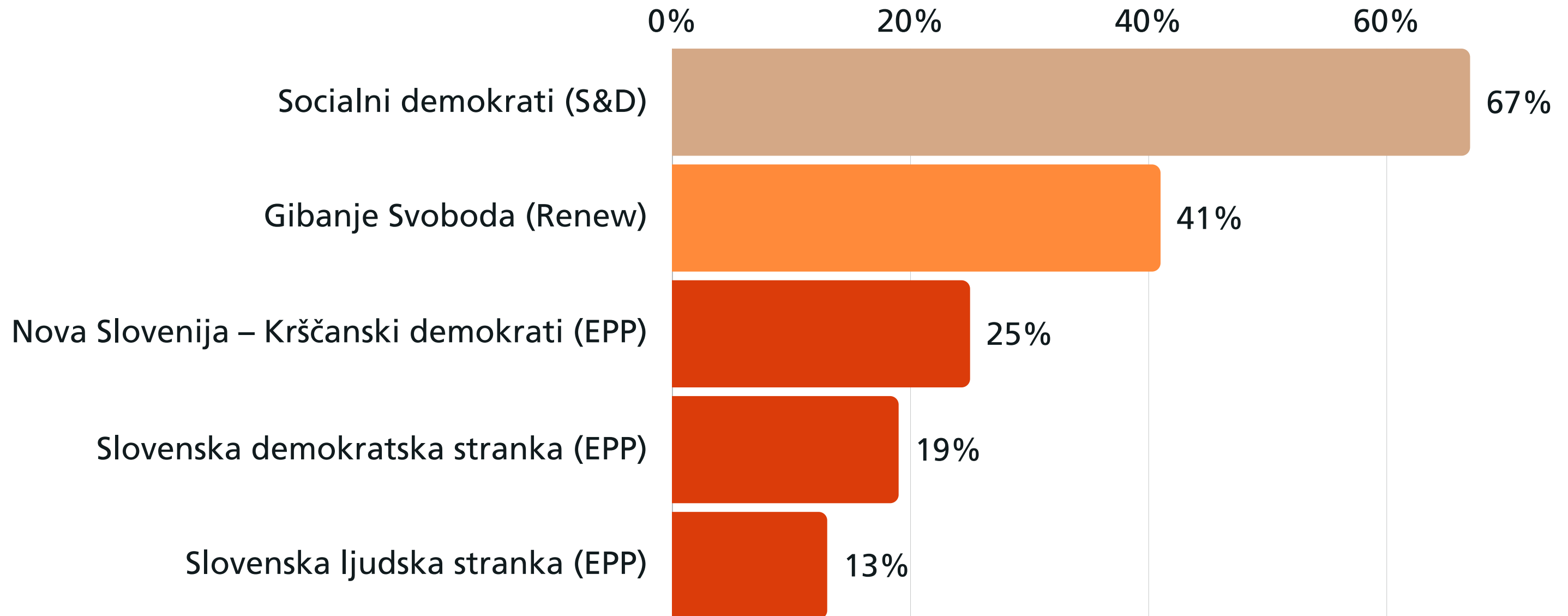


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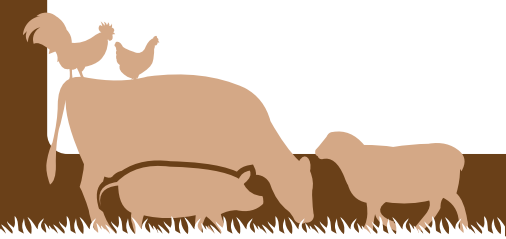


Slovenia: MEP score for farmed animals



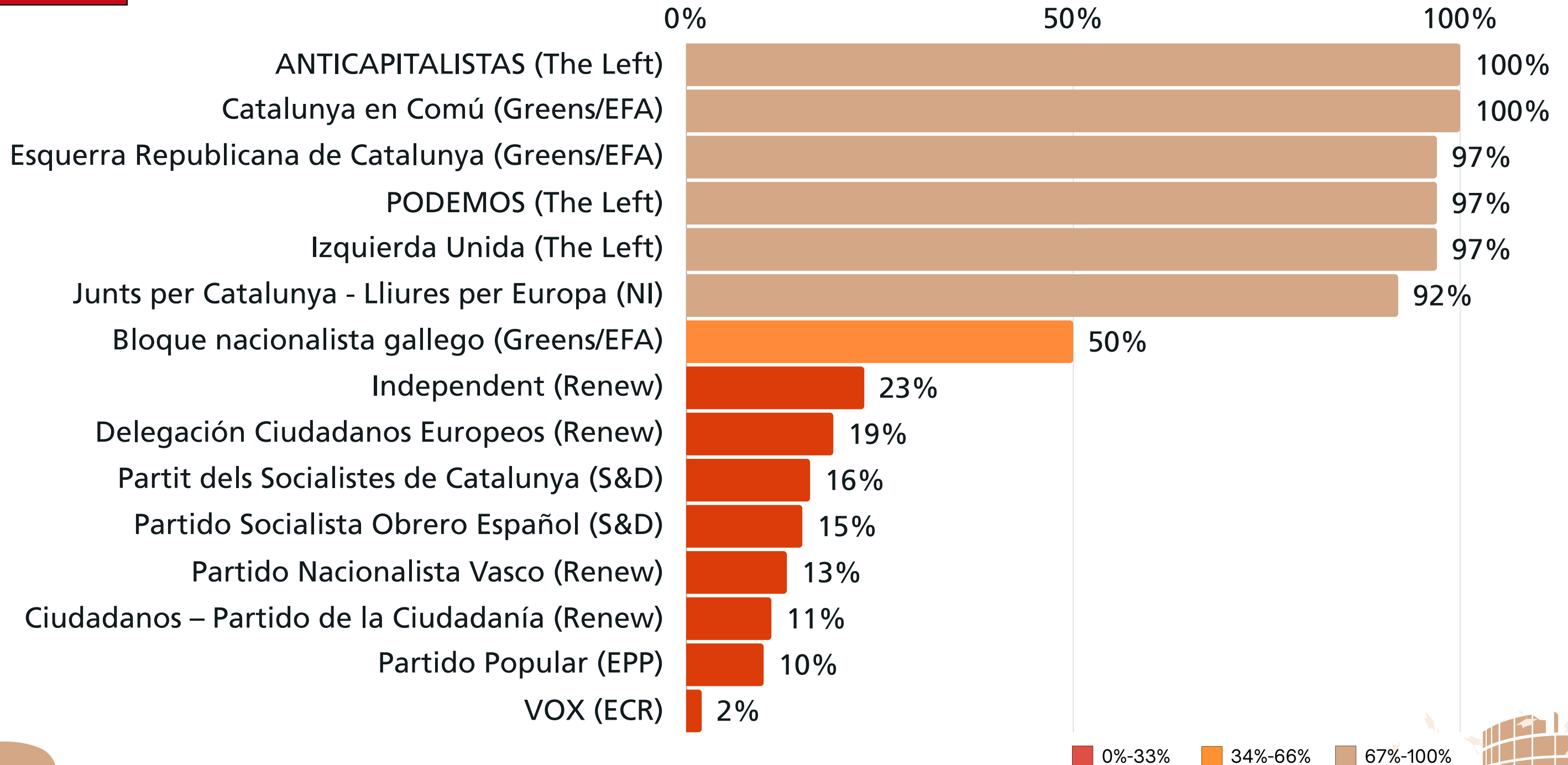
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Source: Compassion in World Farming, 2023. Dataset: <https://bit.ly/48yfHGf>





Spain: MEP score for farmed animals

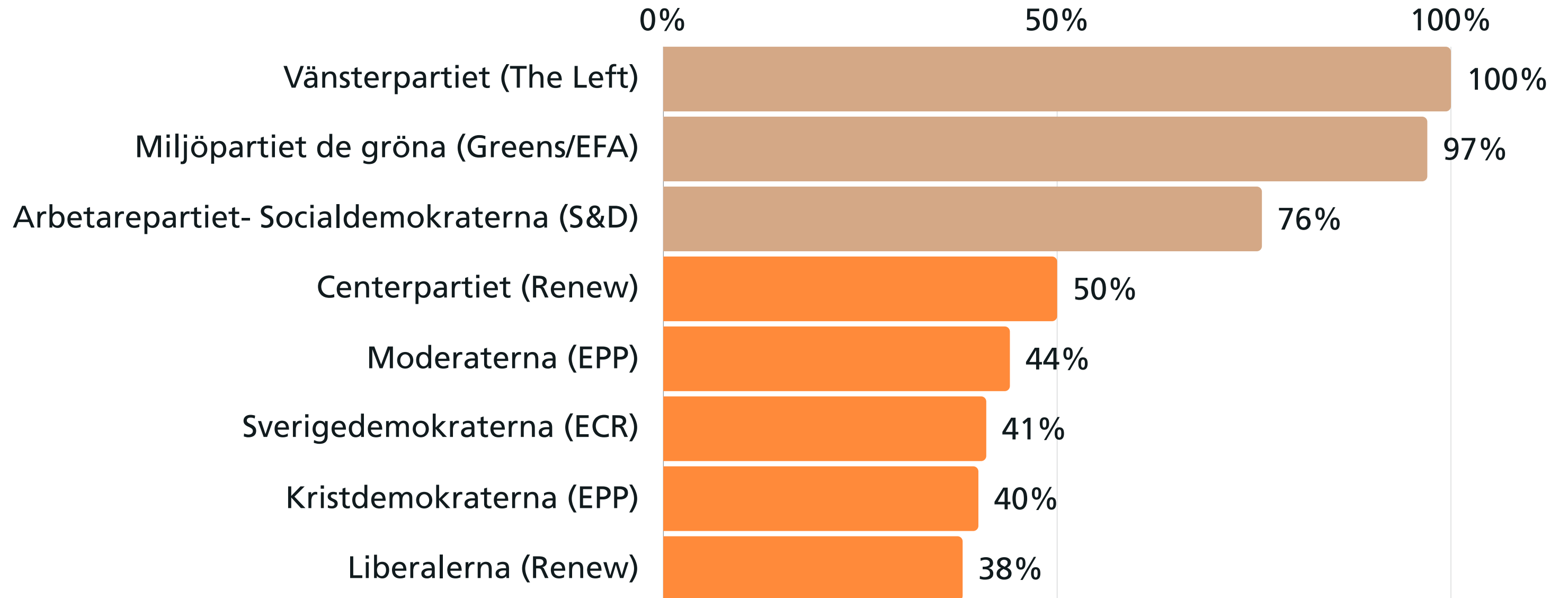


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Source: Compassion in World Farming, 2023. Dataset: <https://bit.ly/48yfHGf>



Sweden: MEP score for farmed animals



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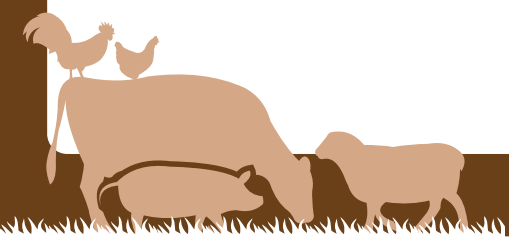
Methodology

We analysed 16 key votes related to farmed animals since 2019, during this political term, until 3 September 2023. This included votes on EU farm subsidies and related marketing rules (the Common Agricultural Policy package), the 'End the Cage Age' Resolution adopted by an overwhelming majority of MEPs, amendments related to animal transport, aquatic animals, foie gras production, chick culling, pollution from factory farming and EU funds for school meals.

A broad range of votes over a number of years were analysed in order to have a robust sample of how MEPs voted during this legislative term, and produce a more comprehensive analysis, avoiding cherry-picking votes during moments when citizens

encouraged MEPs to make the right decision. You will notice that in June 2021 the Parliament supported a call for a ban on force-feeding, while the following February MEPs failed to do so. We have included both votes to ensure a more accurate depiction of MEPs' voting record.

MEPs received two points every time they voted for animals, one point when they abstained and no points when they did not support these progressive measures. No penalties were given for not being present at the vote. Incoming MEPs' voting record is shorter and does not include all relevant votes. All data in this analysis are the official data from the European Parliament's website.



1. No basic subsidies for factory farms

In October 2020, MEPs failed to prevent EU taxpayers' money from funding factory farms through so-called 'basic payments' to farmers. See [vote 274](#) on Amendments [813PC2=](#) [906=](#) [1215=](#) [1348=](#) to [COM\(2018\)0392 - C8-0248/2018 - 2018/0216\(COD\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

2. No special EU funds for factory farms

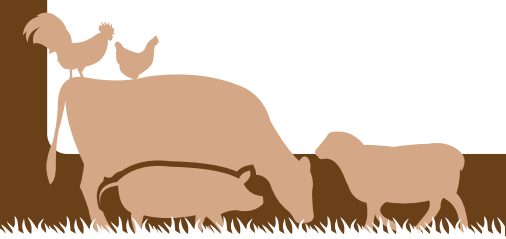
In October 2020, MEPs also failed to prevent production from factory farms to be subsidized through so-called 'coupled support'. See [vote 320](#) on amendments [921=](#) [1228=](#) [1352=](#) to [COM\(2018\)0392 - C8-0248/2018 - 2018/0216\(COD\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

3. Notorious 'veggie burger ban'

In October 2020, MEPs voted against an amendment to ban the use of meat denominations for plant-based alternatives, such as burgers. See [vote 66](#) on [amendment 165](#) to [COM\(2018\)0394-C8-0246/2018-2018/0218\(COD\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

4. Censor plant-based milks

In October 2020, MEPs voted to ban plant-based alternatives from imitating dairy packaging, labelling and advertising (dropped in later negotiations). See [vote 13](#) on [amendment 171](#) to [COM\(2018\)0394-C8-0246/2018-2018/0218\(COD\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).



5. Improve fish welfare

In January 2021, MEPs voted against an amendment which recognised that fish are sentient beings and called on the EU to develop and implement gentler methods of capture, landing and slaughter of fish. See [vote 6](#) on [amendment 1](#) to [2019/2162\(INI\)](#).

6. Ban boiling lobsters alive

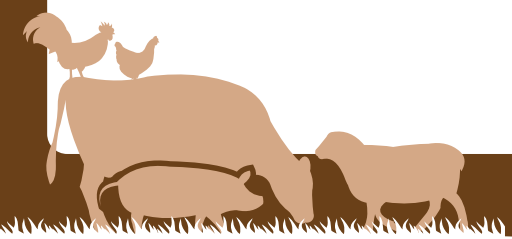
In January 2021, MEPs voted against an amendment calling to protect the welfare of marine invertebrates, such as crab and lobster, and calling to prohibit boiling them alive. See [vote 7](#) on [Amendment 2](#) to [2019/2162\(INI\)](#).

7. End the Cage Age

In June 2021, MEPs voted on a Resolution on the European Citizens' Initiative 'End the Cage Age', where they showed overwhelming support for an EU ban on caged farming. See [vote 178](#) on [2021/2633\(RSP\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

8. Ban force-feeding (2021)

In the same 'End the Cage Age' Resolution from June 2021, MEPs also asked to ban the cruel force-feeding of ducks and geese for the production of foie gras. See [vote 128](#) on [amendment 15](#) to [2021/2633\(RSP\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).



9. Higher animal welfare standards

In October 2021, MEPs voted on a Resolution on the Commission's food strategy, Farm to Fork, calling again for a ban on caged farming and for higher animal welfare standards. See [vote 137](#) on [2020/2260\(INI\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

10. Ban long-distance animal exports

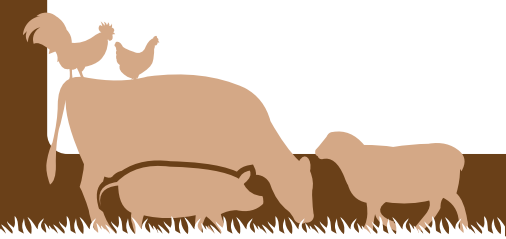
In January 2022, during a vote on animal transport, MEPs rejected a key amendment calling for an end to cruel long-distance transport of live animals to third countries. See [vote 88](#) on [amendment 24/REV](#) to [2021/2736\(RSP\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

11. Transport of pregnant animals

In the same recommendations on animal transport of January 2022, MEPs rejected calls for strict rules on transport of pregnant animals. See [vote 74](#) on [amendment 20/REV](#) to [2021/2736\(RSP\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

12. Implementation of welfare laws

In February 2022, MEPs adopted a weak report with recommendations on the implementation of EU animal welfare legislation, which failed to recognise the serious shortcoming of existing laws. See [vote 235](#) on [2020/2085\(INI\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).



13. Ban force-feeding (2022)

In the same recommendations on the implementation of animal welfare laws, MEPs rejected an amendment calling for a foie gras ban - in contradiction to their vote the previous year. See [vote 60](#) on [amendment 11](#) to [2020/2085\(INI\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

14. Ban chick culling

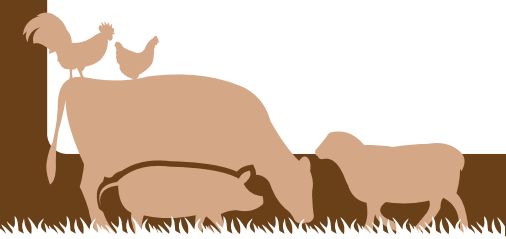
In the same recommendations on the implementation of animal welfare laws, MEPs rejected an amendment calling for an EU-level ban on the systematic killing of male chicks. See [vote 64](#) on [amendment 12](#) to [2020/2085\(INI\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

15. Fund plant-based milks in schools

In May 2023, the Parliament rejected an amendment that called for plant based drinks and legumes to be funded by the EU scheme subsidising school meals. See [vote 19](#) on [amendment 3](#) to [2021/2205\(INI\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).

16. Welfare rules for industrial farms

In July 2023, MEPs failed to adopt animal welfare requirements for factory farms as part of the EU's revision of industrial pollution rules. See [vote 26](#) on [amendment 264](#) to [COM\(2022\)0156-C9-0144/2022-2022/0104\(COD\)](#). More about the vote [here](#).





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Compassion in World Farming is an international organisation campaigning to end all factory farming practices.

Our office in Brussels works to strengthen legislation and enforcement on farmed animal welfare and sustainable food systems, with a particular focus on the European Union.

13 October 2023

