

Boosting response and minimising selection bias – recent experiments carried out in a push to web survey across Europe

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Outline

- Brief background to the Fundamental Rights Pilot Survey
- Experiments – overview, designs, findings
- Ipsos' main conclusions

Background



Fundamental Rights Pilot Survey

- Client / Sponsor = The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- **Random probability push-to-web survey** – across EU-28
- n=500 cases per country; 14,000 overall
- Mix of sample frames: individual registers, address registers, enumeration - *email addresses not available*
- Postal invite & 2 reminders with a link to an online questionnaire – *instructions on who should complete the survey*
- 5 Euro conditional incentive
- 25 minute web questionnaire, mobile-first design; CAPI/CASI follow-up non-respondents

Overview of experiments



Overview of experiments

- Aim 1: Maximise response:
 - 2 different **visual designs** for the survey branding (EU-28)
 - inclusion of **unconditional incentive** (branded pen) in the invitation letter (3 countries using address samples)

- Aim 2: Minimise selection bias:
 - alternative **methods for selecting respondents** within households (18 countries, address samples)

Experiment 1 – Visual design



Design

- Four different **design themes** developed by Ipsos; FRA selected 2 for testing
- Aim to see which design would generate the highest **response rate** to the survey with a view to adopting that in the main survey
- In each country - half of the sample randomly assigned to "Prestige"; half to "Campaign"
- Incorporated into **all the online survey materials** - the invitation and reminder letters; online survey landing page; actual web survey pages and materials used exclusively in the CAPI/CASI stage (postcards)

Campaign and Prestige designs

- "Campaign":



- "Prestige":



Example login page - campaign

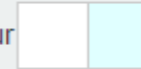
text size

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Welcome to the survey "Your rights – tell us what matters to you!". This is being conducted on behalf of the Fundamental Rights Agency. Your views and experiences are very important to us.

Please enter the login code from your invitation letter to start the survey.

You can complete this survey on a desktop, laptop, tablet or smartphone. If at any point you wish to stop the survey and start again later you will be able to do this.

We advise you to use the same device if you stop the survey and return to it later.

Next

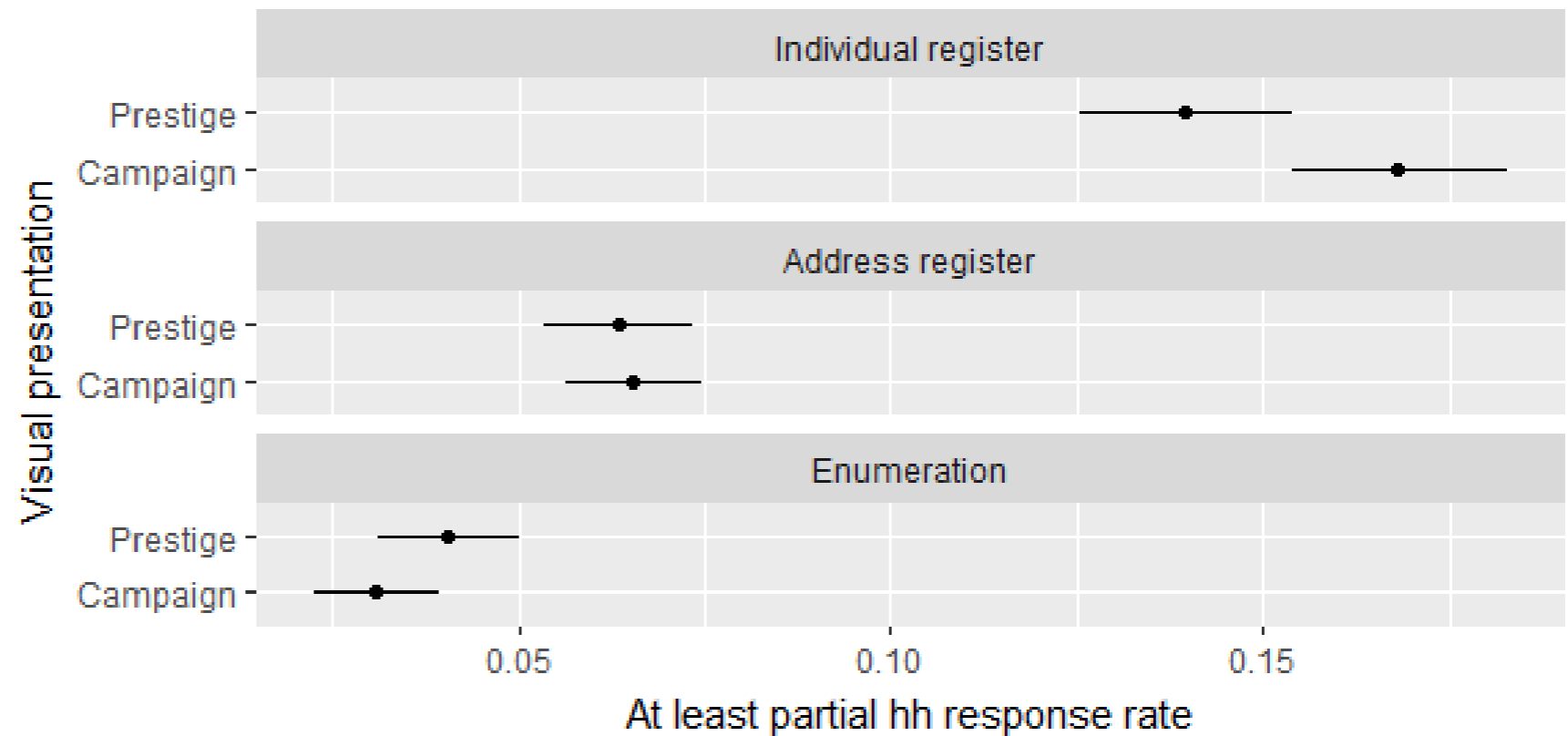
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Findings and recommendations

- “Campaign” achieved a higher **overall login rate** and **household response rate**, but only significant in individual register countries
- Recommend “Campaign” design in main survey, anticipate higher response rate for individual register countries of 1-2 percentage points

HH participation rate by visual design and frame type

Campaign has significant higher participation for individual frame countries



Experiment 2 - Pens



Design

- Aim to test the impact on the response rate of **unconditional incentive**
- Branded pen chosen (logo & web address) – designed to overcome issue that **letters addressed generically** more likely to be discarded as junk-mail
- Included with invitation letter for random half of the sample in three countries (Belgium, Lithuania, Portugal) – pens tailored to each visual design
- Included in addition to standard conditional incentive – offered to all

Findings

- No significant differences on **login rate** and **household response rate**, either overall or within any of the three participating countries
- No effect on the response rate and so should not be retained in the main survey.

Experiment 3 – Respondent selection



Context

- Previous research highlighted **difficulties** with asking a household to randomly select a single individual
- At present - not clear which **respondent selection approach** is most effective on push to web survey
- Options –
 - last/next adult to celebrate their birthday – simple instruction but large proportion do not follow it (ESS mixed mode study - 2012)
 - all eligible adults – avoids selection bias but encourages fraud (UK Community Life Survey (2014/2015))
 - up to 2 eligible adults – minimises self-selection bias; reduction in respondent fraud (The UK Active Lives Survey (2016))

Experiment with 3 conditions

One-step approach

- 1 **Letter:** Up to 2 (or 3) people aged 16 or older (2/3 logins provided)

Two-step approach

1. **Letter:** Any person aged 16 or older (1 login provided)
2. **Online:** If more than one person aged 16+, at end of questionnaire:
 - 2 (a) Respondent asked to select any (one/two) person aged 16+ to take part (household's own choice)
 - 3 (b) Online random selection of another (one/two) person aged 16 or older

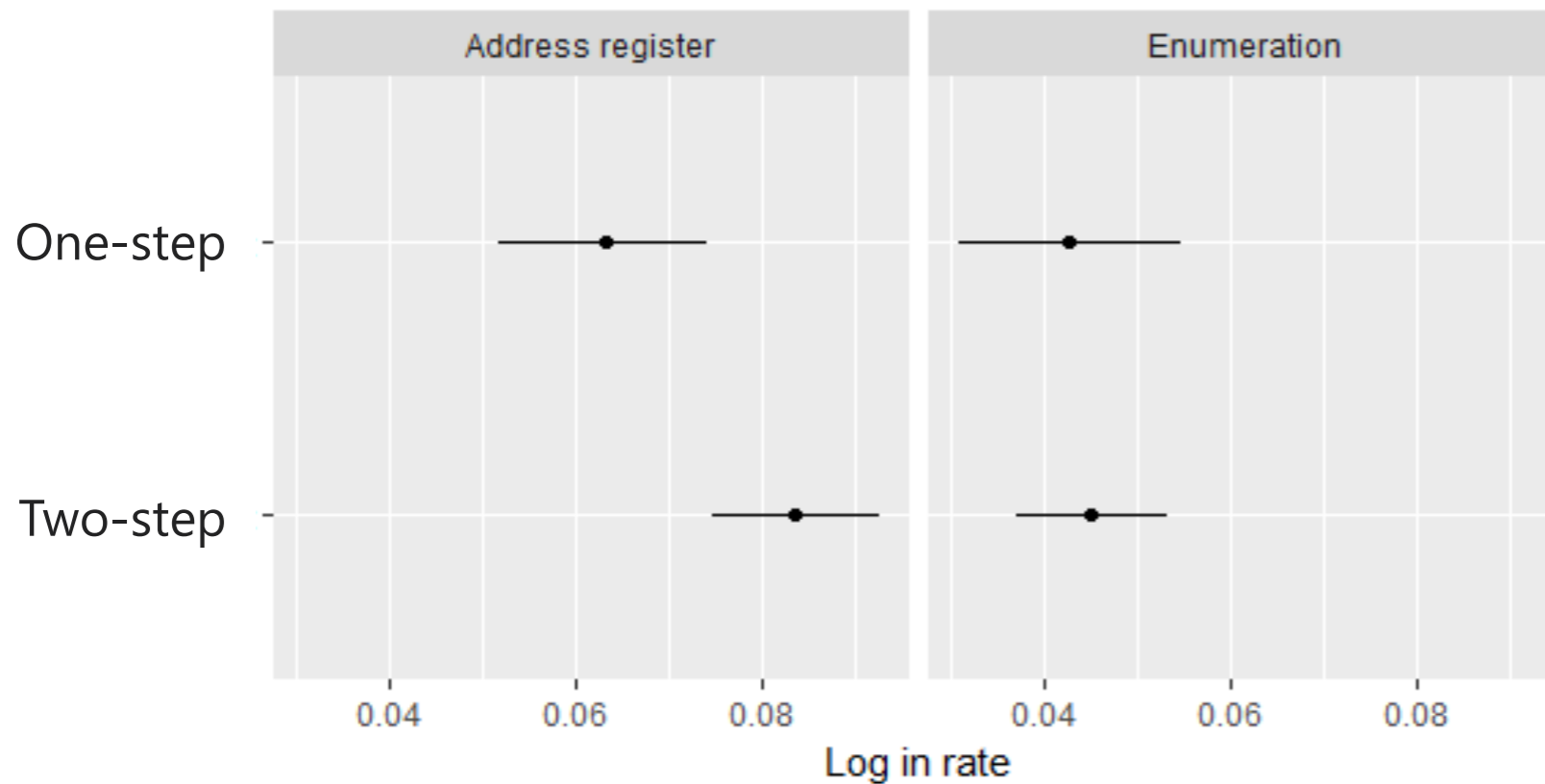
Analysis

- Outcomes:
 - Login rate
 - Individual response rate (in responding households)
 - Self-reported household size
- Differentiate by frame type
 - Address register: $n = 10 \text{ countries} \times 167 = 1,670$
 - Enumeration sample: $n = 8 \text{ countries} \times 167 = 1,336$

Login rate significantly higher for two-step approach in address register countries

Log in rate by selection method and register type

We see a difference for countries with address registers



6.5% for one-step

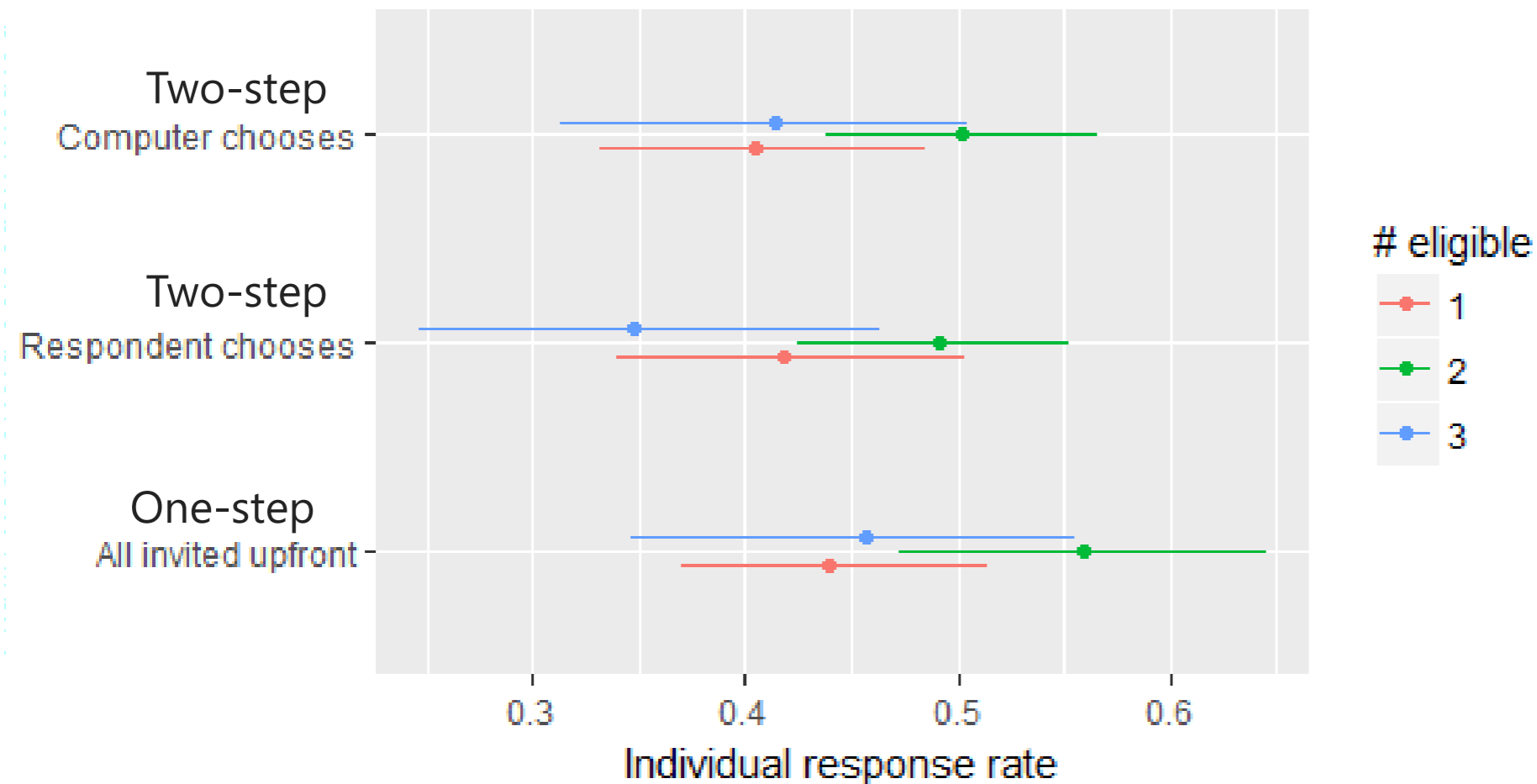
8.4% for two-step

$p=0.02$

No significant differences on individual response rate

Individual response rate by selection method and number of eligible resp.

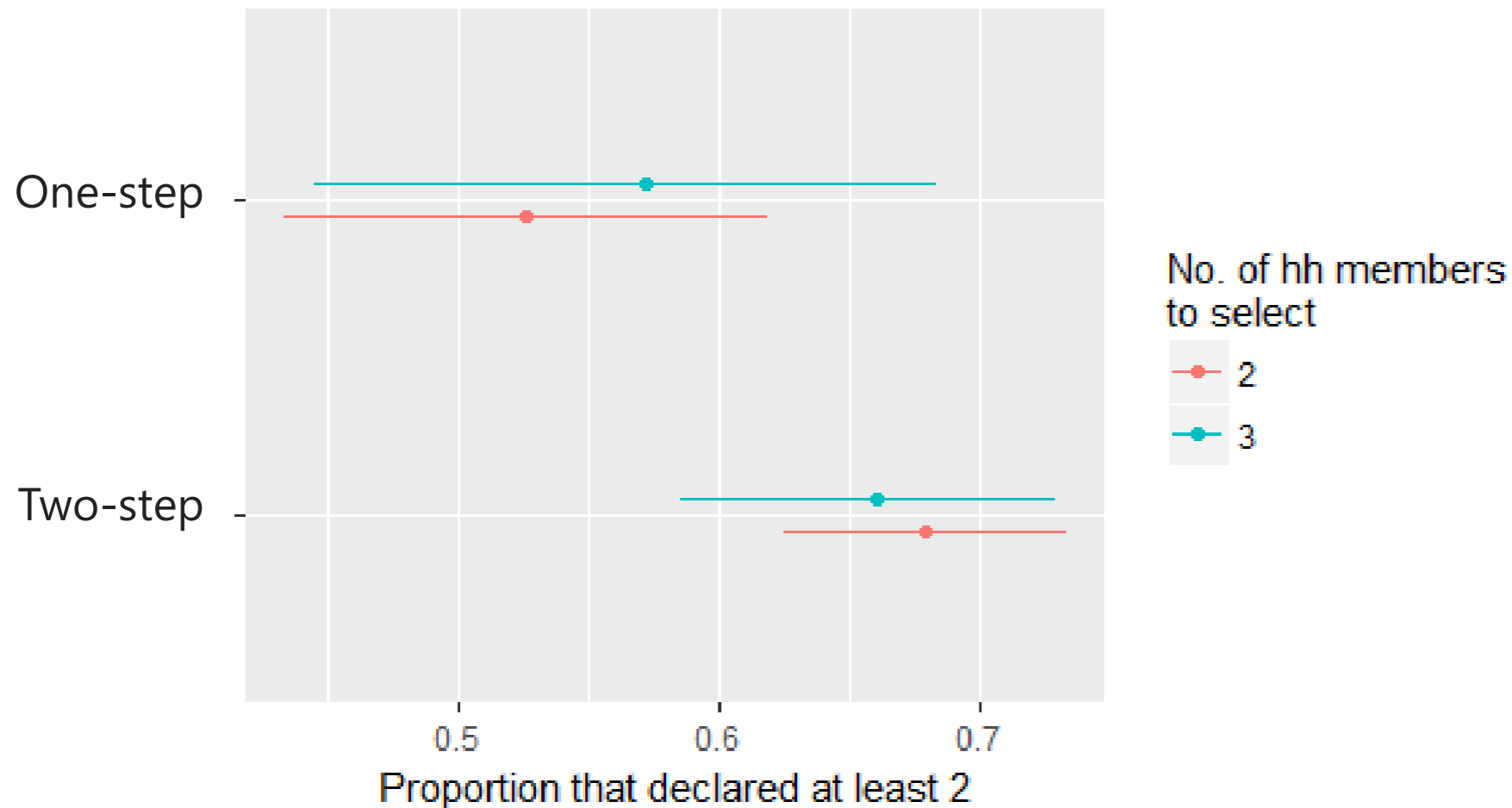
No significant differences



Two-step approach more likely to report additional household members

Proportion that declared at least 2

Significantly higher for one-step, both overall and for two-respondent countries



Findings

These results suggest a preference for the two-step approach with online selection of 2nd (and 3rd).

- Higher household login and response rates with **two-step approach** in address register countries
- Some suggestion of **under-reporting** of household members with one-step approach
- **No evidence of non-compliance** with two-stage approach with online selection of 2nd (and 3rd) respondent

Findings

However, low online response rates at the household and individual level remain an issue.

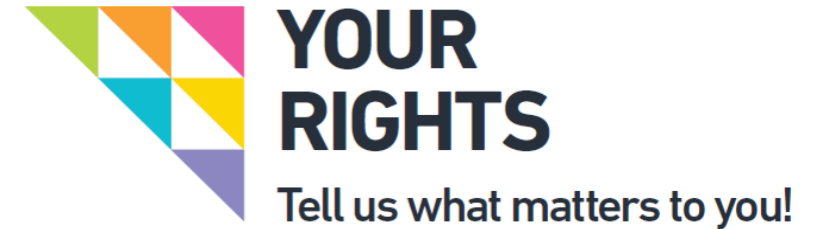
- Household level response rates ranged from 1% in Cyprus, Greece, Spain and Portugal to 13% in Latvia.
- Individual response rates within responding households ranged from 33% in Cyprus, Greece and Portugal to 56% in the Czech Republic, Ireland and the UK.

Main conclusions



Main conclusions

- No evidence of added value of unconditional incentive
- “Campaign” visual design can increase individual register country response rates 1-2 % points
- For address registers: two-step approach with online random selection of a 2nd (and 3rd) respondent preferable – but need to address low response rates
- Improve recruitment procedures (for 2nd/3rd person) of two-step approach (e.g. mention incentive at recruitment stage)



Questions?

Thank you!

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