PERLSI- IO1: REPORT FOR SLOVENIA, 2022

Slovenia

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1. SURVEY

In 2022, 516 people answered the survey for the general public (which had the same questions as the survey in 2021).
The survey was conducted using Google Forms. The link was distributed via email, and Facebook.
The survey was open from 22 May to 21 June.

1.1. Results (and discussion)

1.1.1 Gender

As seen in Figure 1, 81% of the respondents declared themselves female and 19% of the respondents declared themselves male. (This could be due to dominantly female structure of professionals working with people with additional needs in sectors such as education or social services. Interestingly, the percentages were almost identical in 2021, with 82% of female respondents and 18% of male respondents.)
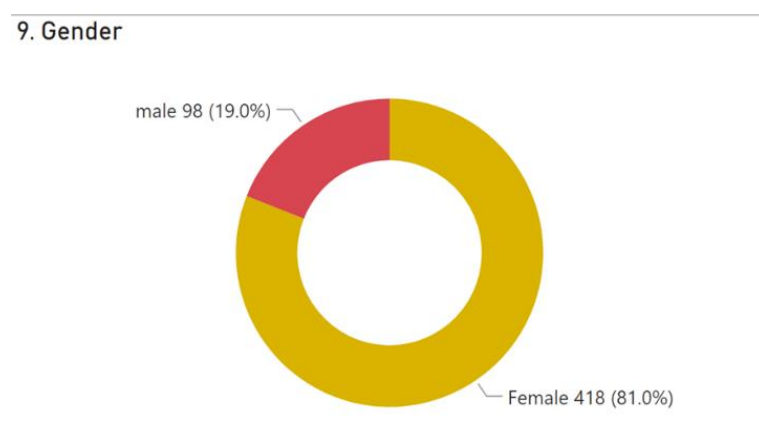

Figure 1

1.1.2 Age

As seen in Figure 2, most respondents were in the age group from 40 to 49 years. (The distribution in 2022 is comparable to the distribution in 2021.) The youngest respondent was 20 and the oldest respondent was 79.
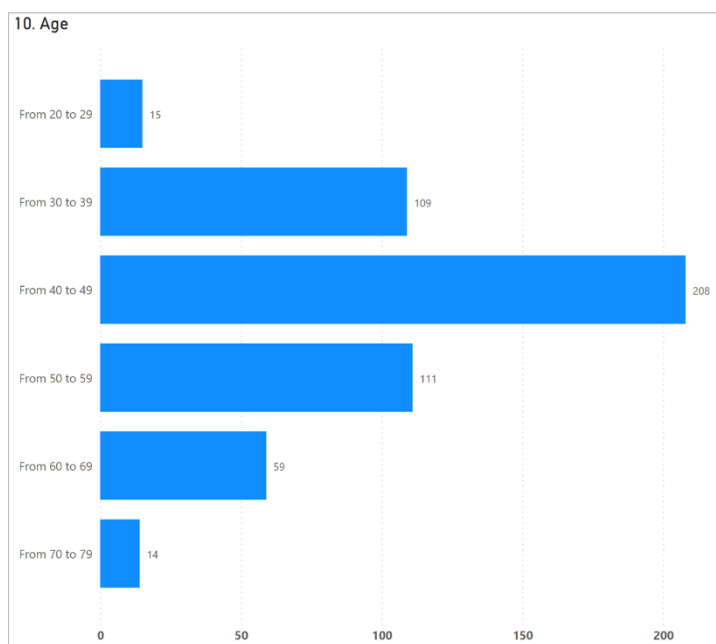
Figure 2

1.1.3 Regions

Most respondents, as shown in Figure 3, came from Carinthia region, followed by Central Slovenia regions. Those 2 regions were dominating in the 2021 survey also. (Zavod RISA is in the Carinthia region that is why likely the number of respondents is high – anomaly due to local coverage. Central Slovenia is however the largest region.)
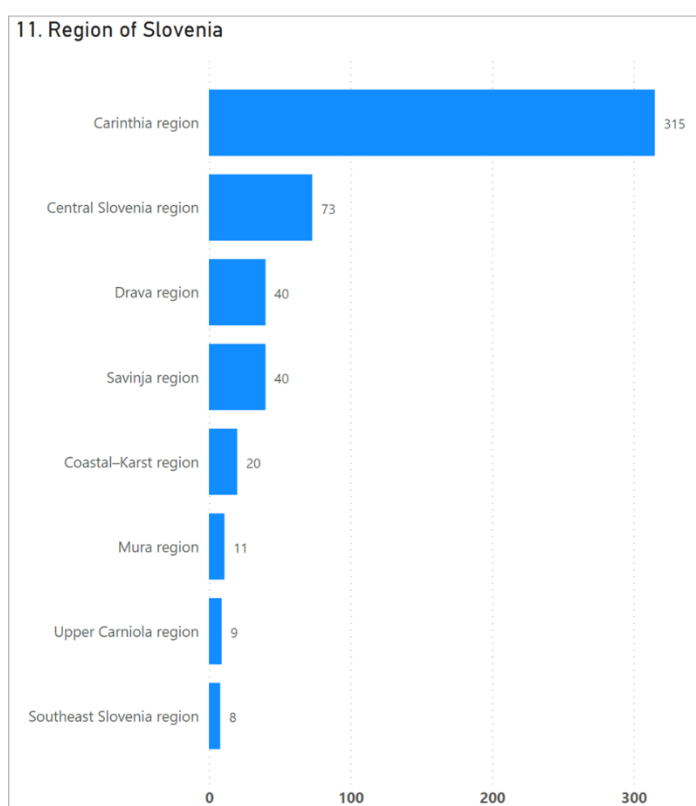

Figure 3

1.1.4 Nationality

As seen in Figure 4, 97% of respondents declared themselves Slovene and almost 3% preferred not to answer.
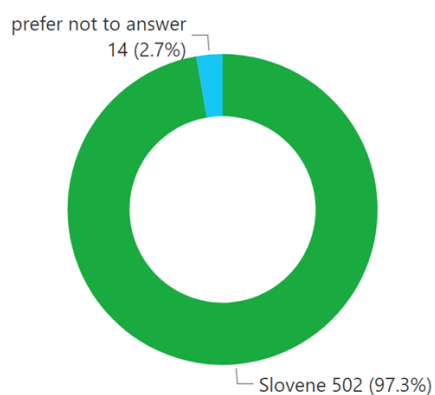
14. Nationality

Figure 4

1.1.5 Habitable area

As seen in Figure 5, the biggest number of respondents live in towns, followed by countryside and large cities.
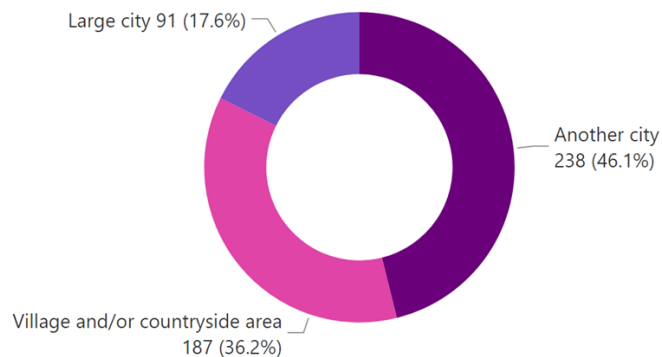
12. The type of a habitable territory

Figure 5

1.1.6 Education

As seen in Figure 6, 71% of the respondents finished higher education, 26% general secondary or vocational education and the remaining percentage lower level of education.
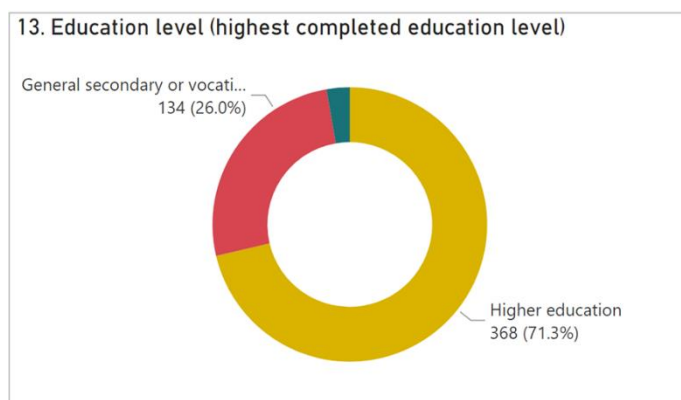
13. Education level (highest completed education level)

General secondary or vocati...
134 (26.0%)

Higher education
368 (71.3%)

Figure 6

1.1.7 Occupation

As seen in Figure 7, most of the respondents are labourers, workers, professionals. This is followed by the status of a pensioner (12%) and a free-lancer (3%). (As compared to the 2021 survey, there was significantly less students and the workers/labourers dominated heavily compared to other groups in 2022.)

15. Occupation

Free-lancer
15 (2.9%)

Pensioner (any group)
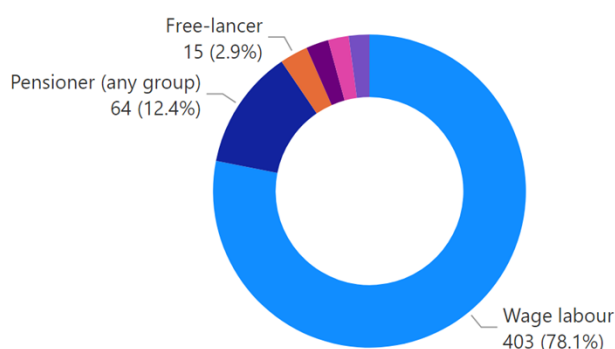64 (12.4%)

Wage labour
403 (78.1%)

Figure 7

1.1.8 Target groups of Easy language

The respondents stated groups of people which, in their opinion, benefit from Easy language. The respondents were enabled to select several answers. The most common answer was, as seen in Figure 8, people with intellectual disabilities, people with dyslexia, people who suffered brain injury or stroke and every member of the society. (The distribution of the answers is quite even.)
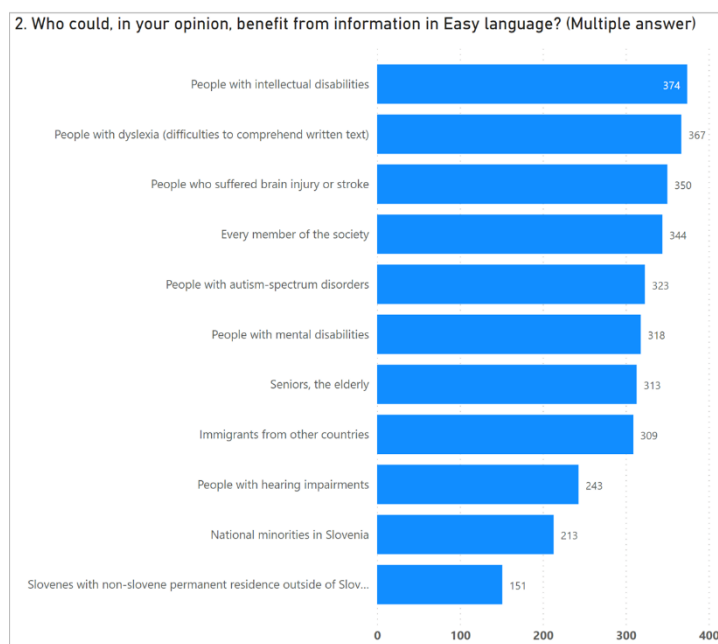
Figure 8

1.1.9 Previous knowledge of Easy language

(Surprisingly) only 2% of the respondents answered they have not heard of Easy language before. (This anomaly (?) could be possibly attributed to the fact that most respondents come from the Carinthia region/local coverage and are possibly followers of the Zavod RISA Facebook page and the Lahko je brati Facebook page). The distribution of the responses of people who have used Easy language before or only heard about it before, is relatively even, as seen in Figure 9.
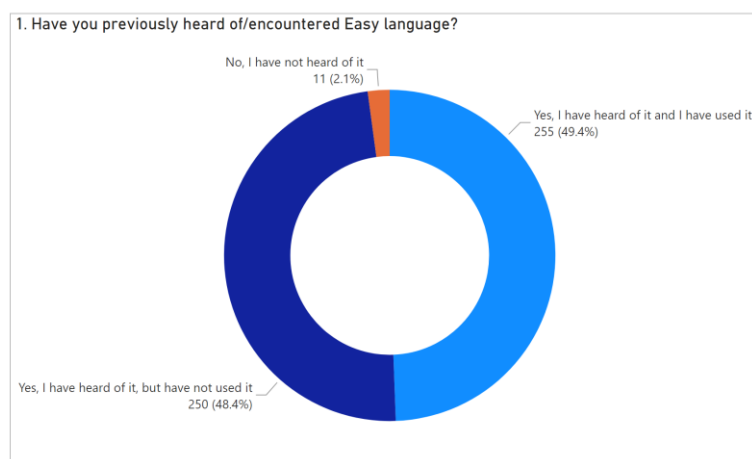

Figure 9

1.1.10 Difficulties comprehending information

As seen in Figure 10, approx. 1/4 of the respondents expressed never having difficulties comprehending complex information. 3/4 of the respondents had this difficulty (most often) sometimes or often. (The results in 2021 were roughly similar, with less people answering they always understood information in 2021.)
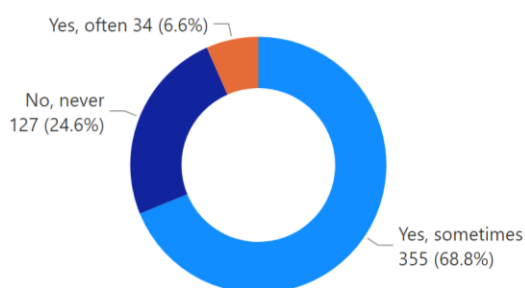
Figure 10

1.1.11 Eliminating difficulties

(The same as in 2021) most of the respondents searched for clarifying information using the internet search engines, followed by asking other people for help. All answers are visible from Figure 11:
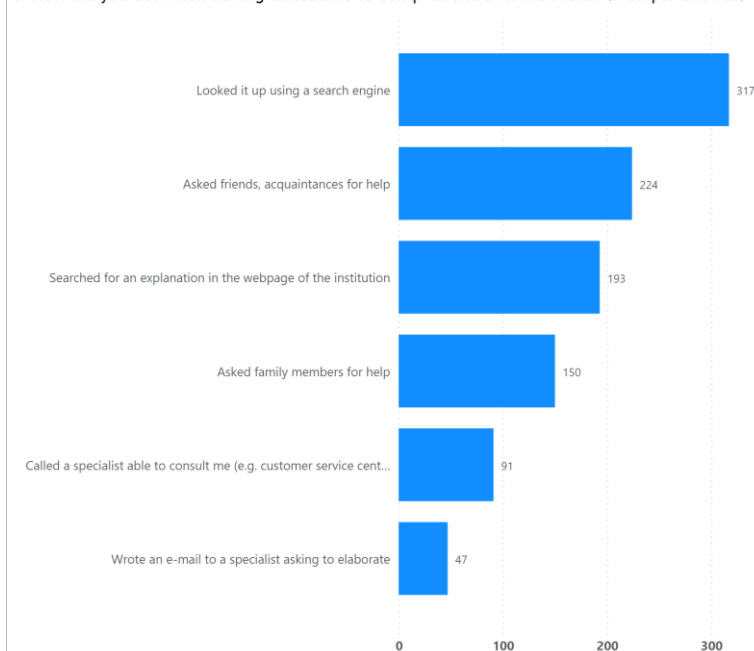

Figure 11

1.1.12 Type of difficult information

The respondents were asked which type of information seemed most difficult for them to understand. The respondents from found (the same as in 2021) governmental information the most problematic. All the answers can be seen in Figure 12:
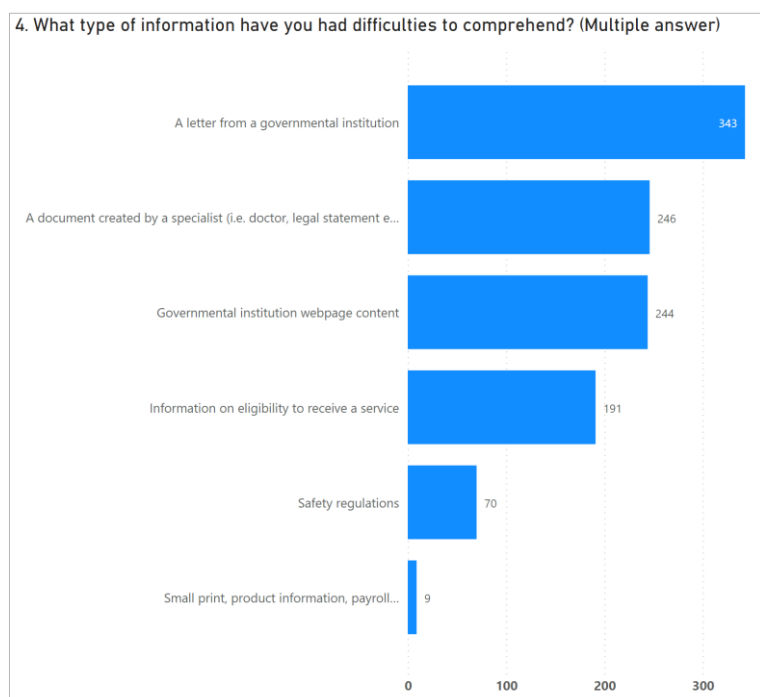
Figure 12

1.1.13 Statements/assessments

The survey included questions that predicted evaluations of 4 different statements. The survey had a 5-level scale of responses, varying from uncertain (0) to 4 (strongly agree).

Respondents agreed most with the statement that the governmental institutions should always communicate with the public in Easy language (median: 3,4).

The statement ''Situations when I find it difficult to understand a text make me feel silly,'' had a median of 3.

The statement ''I would feel uncomfortable knowing that information is specifically tailored for me in Easy language,'' had a median of 1,8.

And the statement of gladness that the information would be tailored specifically to the person had a median of 2,6.

The results are visually presented in Figure 13.
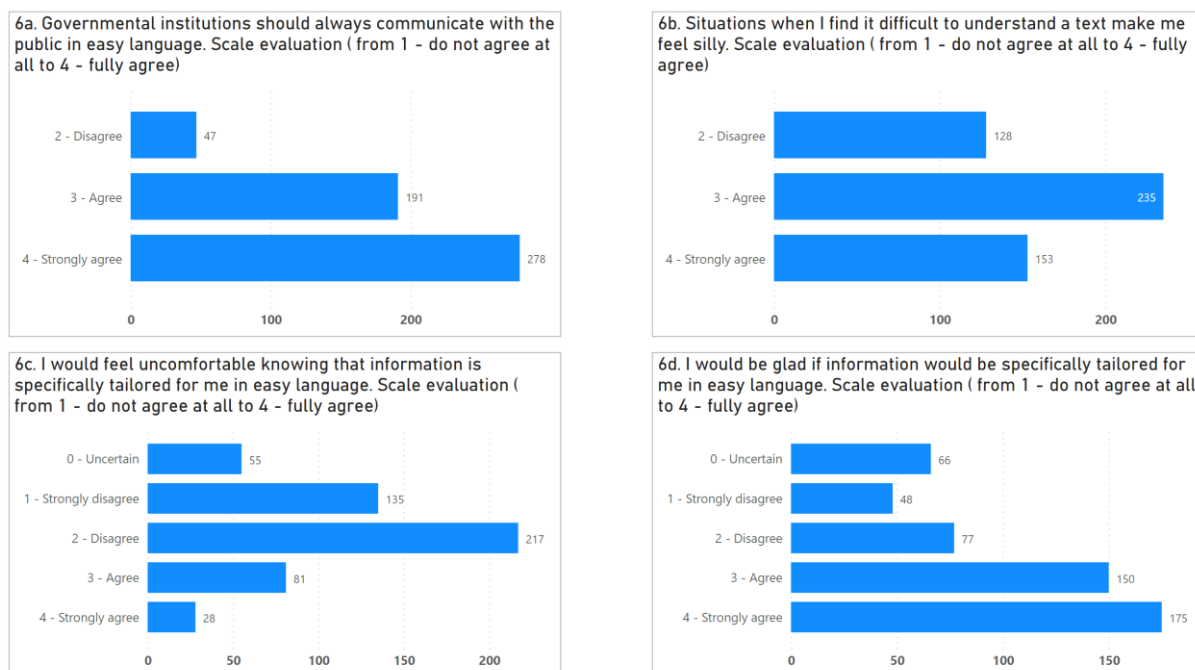
Figure 13

1.1.14 Demonstrated knowledge

Using the same 5-level scale (0-4) as in 1.1.13, the respondents demonstrated their knowledge of Easy language facts.
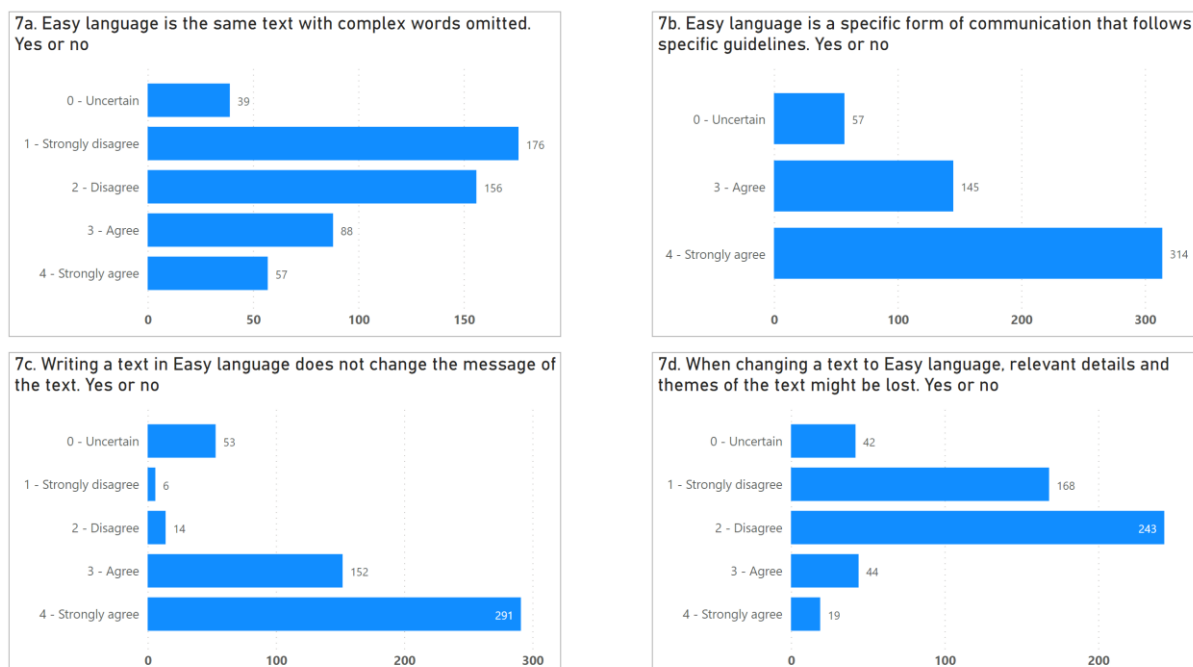
The results are presented in Figures 14 and 15.
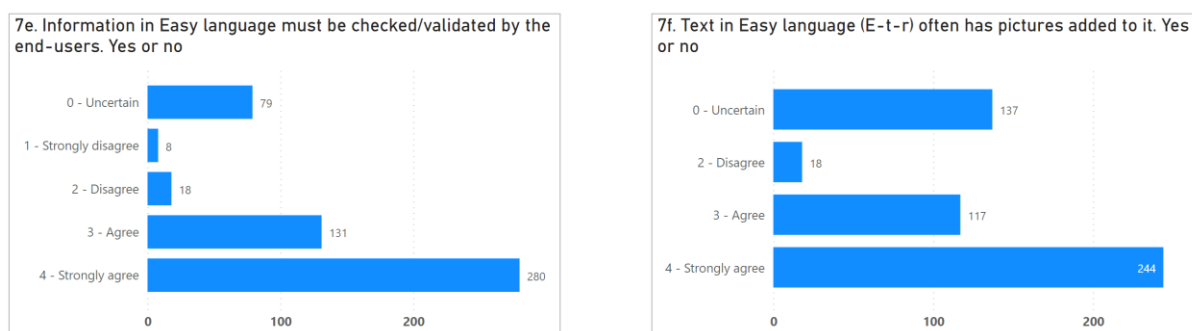

Figure 14

Figure 15

1.1.15 Educational value of the survey

Finally, the survey asked the respondents whether they thought they gained better knowledge on Easy language through the survey. As seen in Figure 16, 33% of the respondents said they gained better knowledge on Easy language through the survey (good 30% in 2021). 27% disagreed (almost 25% in 2021). Almost 31% (good 25% in 2021) of the respondents said they remembered that they had already used Easy language. The rest were uncertain. The results are seen in Figure 16.
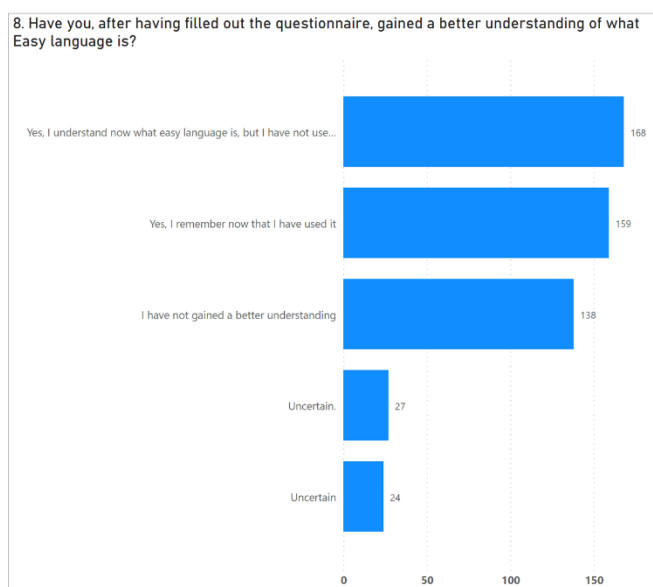
Figure 16

2. FOCUS GROUPS

2.1 Target groups of Easy languages

14 people, 8 women and 6 men aged 22 – 57 with diagnosis of either intellectual disability or brain injury participated in the focus group.
The focus group met online (Microsoft Teams) on 15 and 16 June 2022. 2 coordinators (1 male, 1 female) worked with the participants.

2.1.1 Summary of the most important findings

Most of the members of the focus group has heard about Easy language. (The topic of education soon arose. A couple of members expressed ambition for further education which they thought was impossible or hard because of the system they found themselves in.)

Almost all members of the focus group would like to see more Easy language information available. They justified their position by stating that:
- People need information to be more confident, take care of themselves, decide for themselves.
- It is fair/right to have information.
- The law says people have right to information.
- People have the right to hear and understand news.
- People have the right to understand doctor.
- Not all people understand everything.

Media that provides the participants with information are diverse. Almost everyone watches TV and reads books (or brochures, etc.), many use internet, listen to radio, and read newspapers.

The participants provided wide range of areas for application of Easy language:
- Doctor. Medicine instructions. Pharmacy.
- Municipality. Administration. Politics/parliament.
- Shops. Hotels.
- Instructions for building furniture.
- Bus/train (traffic- timetables, directions, signs, maps).
- Schools: textbooks, workbooks.
- Newspaper.
- Fiction books.
- Centres for social work.
- ATM.
- News.
- Post office.
- Commercial services: price lists, menus, catalogues, signs, opening hours...
- Manuals/handbooks.

Detailed data for this is part of the report is in document: **PERLSI- IO1: Focus group results 2022; Target group (Slovenia).**

2.2 Professionals

9 professionals, 7 women and 2 men aged 29 – 62 (working with children, teens and adults with intellectual disability, adults with brain injury, elderly, children, and teens who are deaf or hard of hearing, adult immigrants, and general population) participated in the focus group.
The focus group met online (Microsoft Teams) on 7 June 2022.

2.2.1 Summary of the most important findings

The need for Easy language is generally profound.

In schools, textbooks and teaching materials should be in Easy language, for adults from all target groups forms and instructions, news, health information and information on rights and duties, e.g., should be in Easy language (all information that is needed in everyday life).

The focus group confirmed that tailored-adapted information is important pointed out the lack of directions and guidelines for spoken communication in Easy language.

The focus group assessed the situation and needs in Slovenia:
- Not all people with intellectual disabilities (or mental health difficulties) can vote as the authorities believe they are not capable of understanding what the elections are about. One of the problems is the information is hard to understand.
- Erasmus+ project myPart brought a handbook on rights and elections in Easy language.
- Different Ministries (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Health are mentioned) should be responsible for implementation of Easy language in Slovenia and command the production of information in Easy language, providing resources for the administration and other organizations to do so.
- The available trainings and seminars are good, the presenters and instructors from Zavod RISA are very engaged and motivating.
- Handbooks Lahko je brati are good, standards and examples are clear and useful.
- There is not yet enough information and training for some of the levels of Easy Slovene (levels 1 and 2 – much needed for people with severe disabilities).
- In public, Easy language is still not ''mainstream'', it should be discussed more (on radio, TV, etc.). Generally, more people know and work with Easy language.
- Generally, awareness has been increasing during last 2, 3 years but the motivation for learning of the principles and implementation of Easy language depends on individuals.
- Among the workplaces that the focus group members come from, no place has explicit instructions from the superiors to develop, produce and use information in Easy language. Organisations' managements vary in their receptiveness to Easy language, and so does each individual employee. Typically, pairs or small groups of motivated individuals form within organizations and work on this cause.
-The end-users who partake in the production of Easy language information, are always excited about it.
- The public authorities still only have solo projects/examples of good practice. It could be said that Easy language is perceived as a ''good will'' or ''the extra mile'' that is provided to people and is not considered as a fundamental right.
-The right to Slovene sign language and language of people with deafblindness written into Constitution is mentioned, while other ways of communicating, including Easy language, are left out.

-During the pandemic, the press conferences for citizens were translated into Slovene sign language. The national broadcaster does have written news in easier language on the internet (portal Enostavno), which is positive.
-Zavod RISA is also mentioned as being the top promoter of Easy language in Slovenia.

The group listed the following ideas:
- Change of legislation is needed/Easy language and other forms of adapted communication should be written into the Constitution, too.
- In public administration and organizations that provide service for the target groups of Easy language, workers should be trained for production of information in Easy language. Bigger organizations should employ ''communicators'' – experts for communicating with people with special communicating needs.
- The government should allocate resources for service providers and publishers to produce information in Easy language.

- Different Ministries (Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities; Ministry of Education, Science and Sport; Ministry of Culture; Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Health are mentioned) should be responsible for implementation of Easy language in Slovenia and command the production of information in Easy language, providing resources for the administration and other organizations to do so.

- National media (TV, radio, internet, print) campaign would be good. The existing ambassadors of Easy language and people who need Easy language could be faces of that campaign.

Detailed data for this part of the report is in document: **PERLSI- IO1: Focus group results 2022; Professionals (Slovenia).**

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SOLUTION AND IMPACT

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