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Angus Brendan MacNeil MP
Chair of the International Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
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15 September 2021

Dear Mr MacNeil

I am pleased to share with you and the International Trade Committee the findings of Which?'s latest consumer research on trade, building on the National Trade Conversation that we undertook last year.

As part of this research, we surveyed over 3,000 UK adults to find out how the public feels about the UK's trade negotiations and what consumers want to see prioritised in future trade deals. I attach the full slide pack of findings for the Committee, please feel free to use these findings publicly if you should so wish.

As you will see, we found that the public felt the Government was not providing enough information on trade negotiations and some were concerned their interests were not being represented in trade deals.

These findings demonstrate the need for clearer communication from the Government about how trade deals are negotiated, and what these agreements will mean for people in the UK. Which? believes the Government should include a consumer chapter in future trade deals which will reinforce the importance of addressing consumers' interests throughout the rest of the agreement and within specific chapters.

I hope this research is helpful to the work of the Committee. This is part of our ongoing consumer research programme which is focused on understanding consumers' views on trade.

We would be very happy to deliver a briefing session for the committee on our consumer trade research and what we have found about consumers' views to date. Please don't hesitate to let me know if this would be of interest and we can liaise with the committee clerk to arrange this.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "S. Davies".

Sue Davies
Head of Consumer Rights and Food Policy

Which? trade survey

JUNE 2021

Introduction

Which? have an ongoing programme of consumer research looking at attitudes and expectations of UK trade policy. The National Trade Conversation established this programme of work in summer 2020, a large scale deliberative project where we spoke to nearly 100 consumers to get their views on their priorities for future trade deals. Further information on our work on trade is available [here](#). Results of this survey were published in a press release on the 13 August available [here](#).

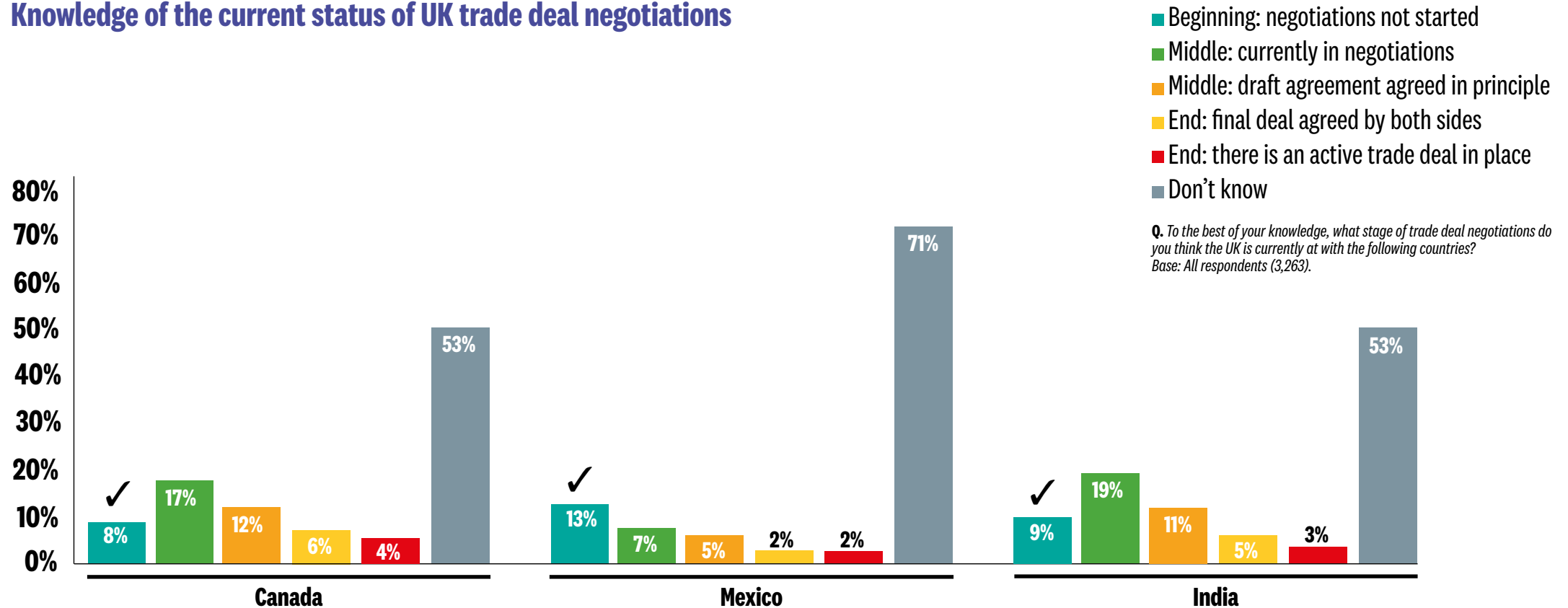
Methodology

Yonder, on behalf of Which?, surveyed 3,263 UK adults online between 23 and 24 June 2021. Data was weighted to be representative of the UK population by age, gender, region, social grade, tenure and work status.

We boosted the number of respondents from the devolved nations to ensure we had a minimum (500+) sample for each.

Many consumers are unaware of the current status of future UK trade deal negotiations

Knowledge of the current status of UK trade deal negotiations



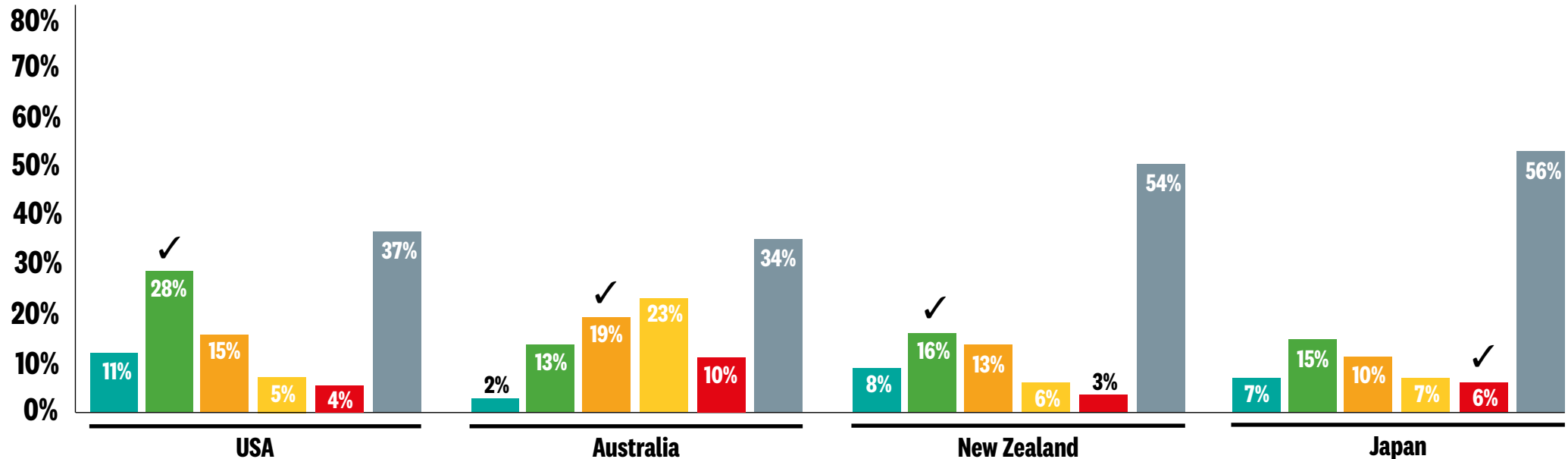
Consumers were more likely to correctly identify the status of the UK-USA deal than others

Knowledge of the current status of UK trade deal negotiations

- Beginning: negotiations not started
- Middle: currently in negotiations
- Middle: draft agreement agreed in principle
- End: final deal agreed by both sides

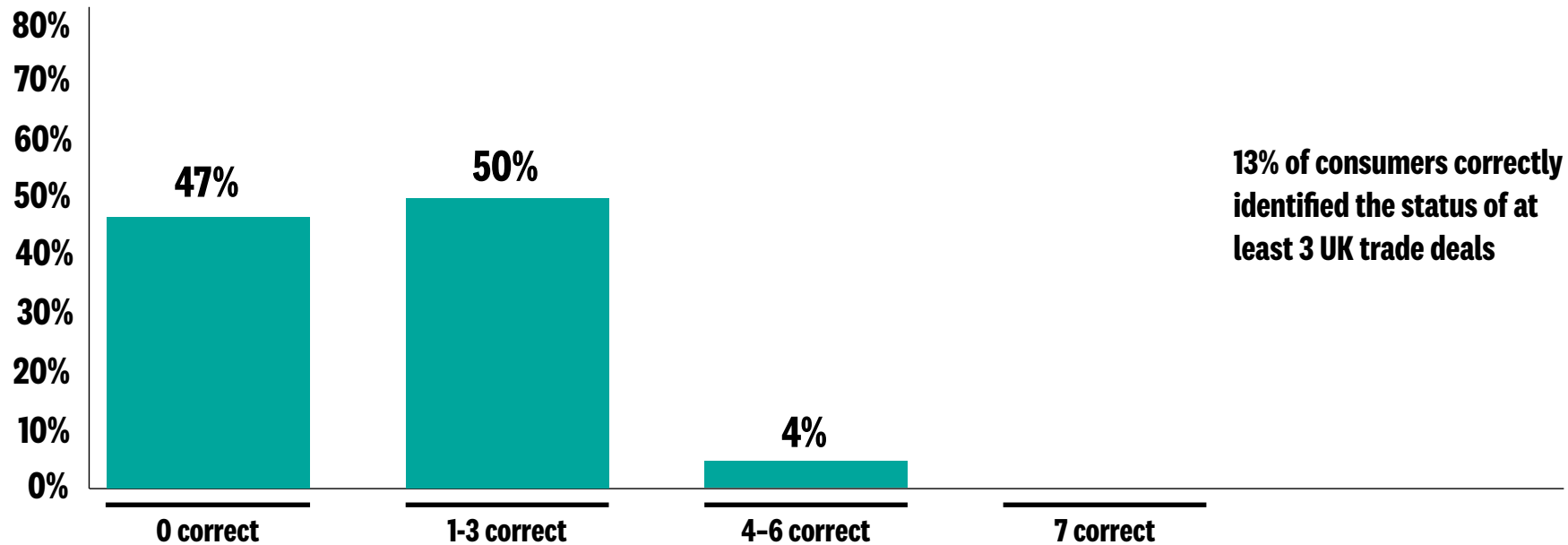
- End: there is an active trade deal in place
- Don't know

Q. To the best of your knowledge, what stage of trade deal negotiations do you think the UK is currently at with the following countries?
Base: All respondents (3,263).



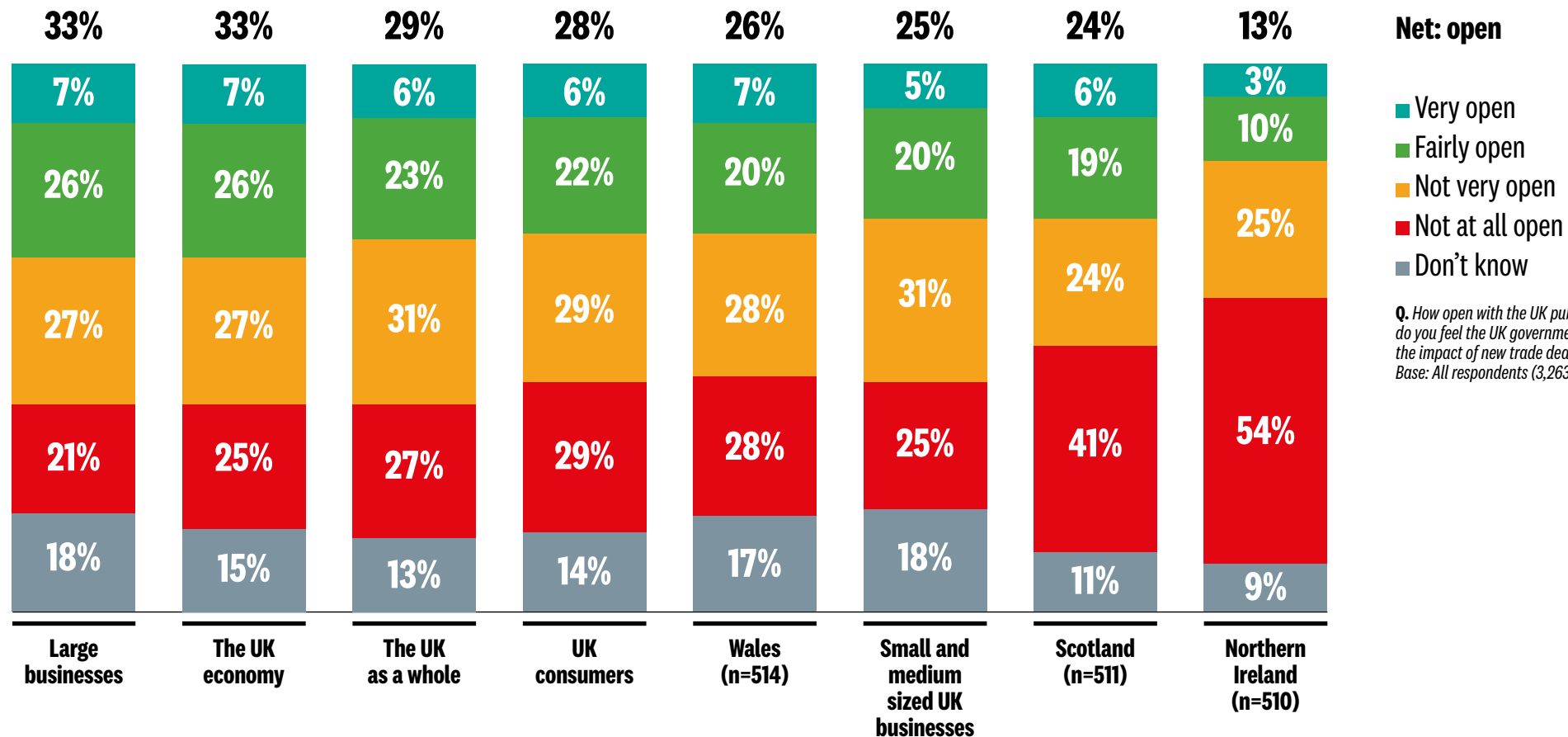
Only 13% of consumers correctly identified the status of 3 or more trade deal negotiations

Knowledge of the current status of UK trade deals - % of correct answers



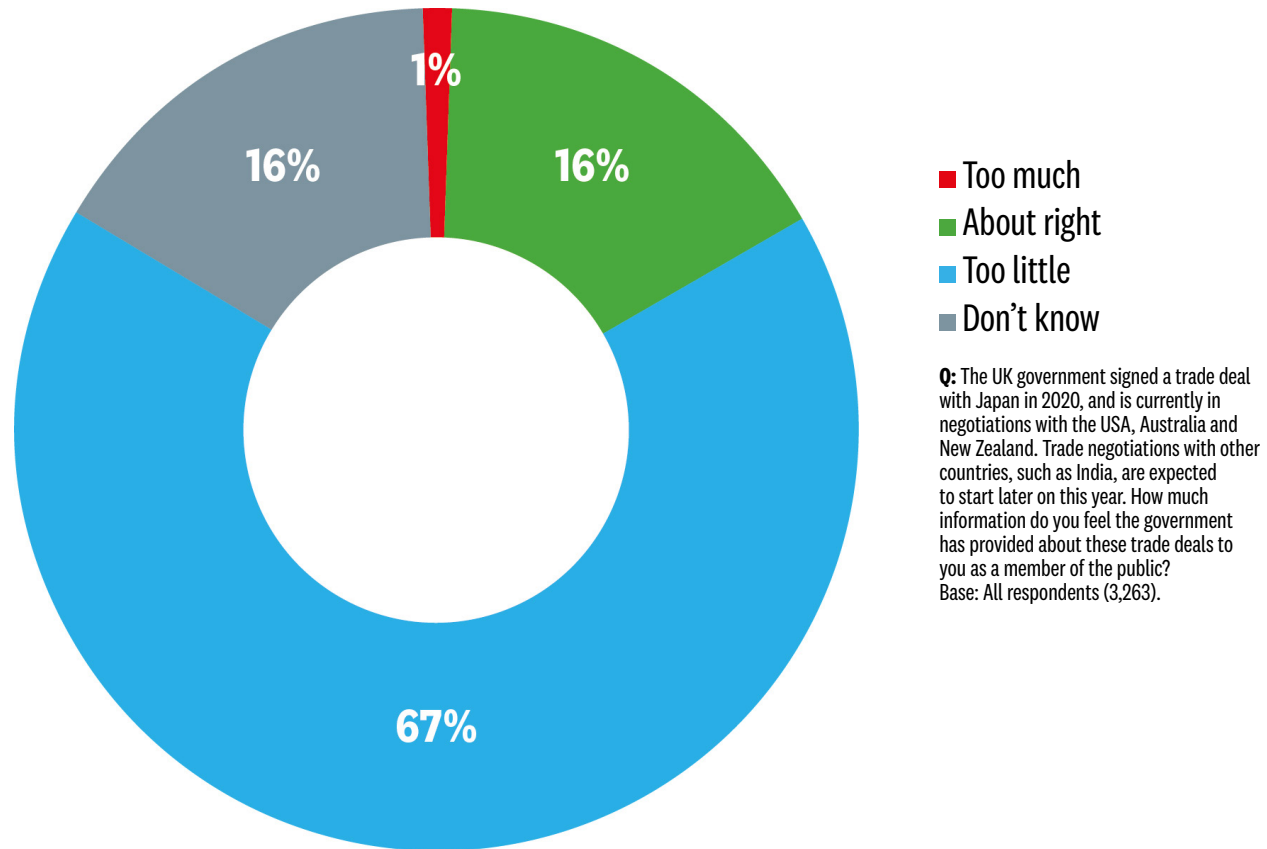
Q. To the best of your knowledge, what stage of trade deal negotiations do you think the UK is currently at with the following countries? Base: All respondents (3,263).

Relatively small proportions of consumers felt the UK Government is open about the impact of trade deals on a wide range of stakeholders, including consumers



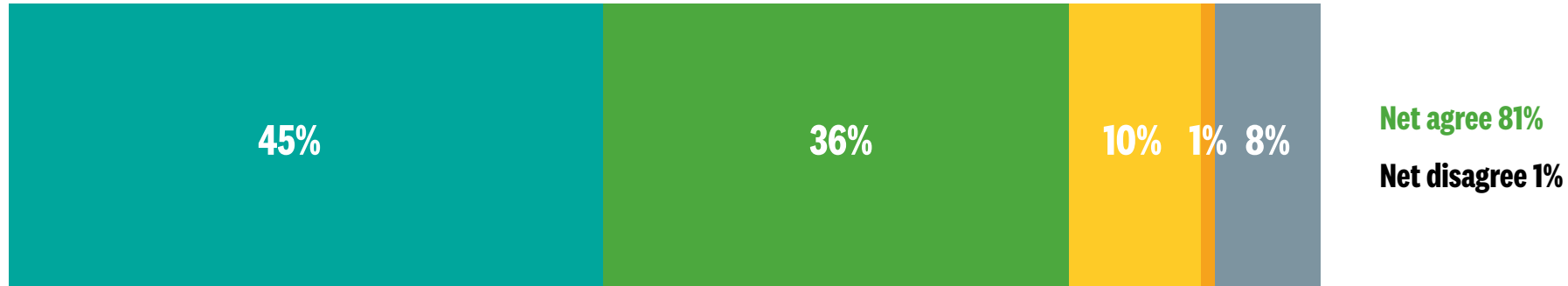
Two thirds of consumers felt the public receive too little information from the government regarding trade deals

Consumers opinion on the level of trade information given to the public



8 in 10 (81%) consumers agreed there should be a consumer chapter in trade deals

Importance of trade deals containing a section on consumer interests

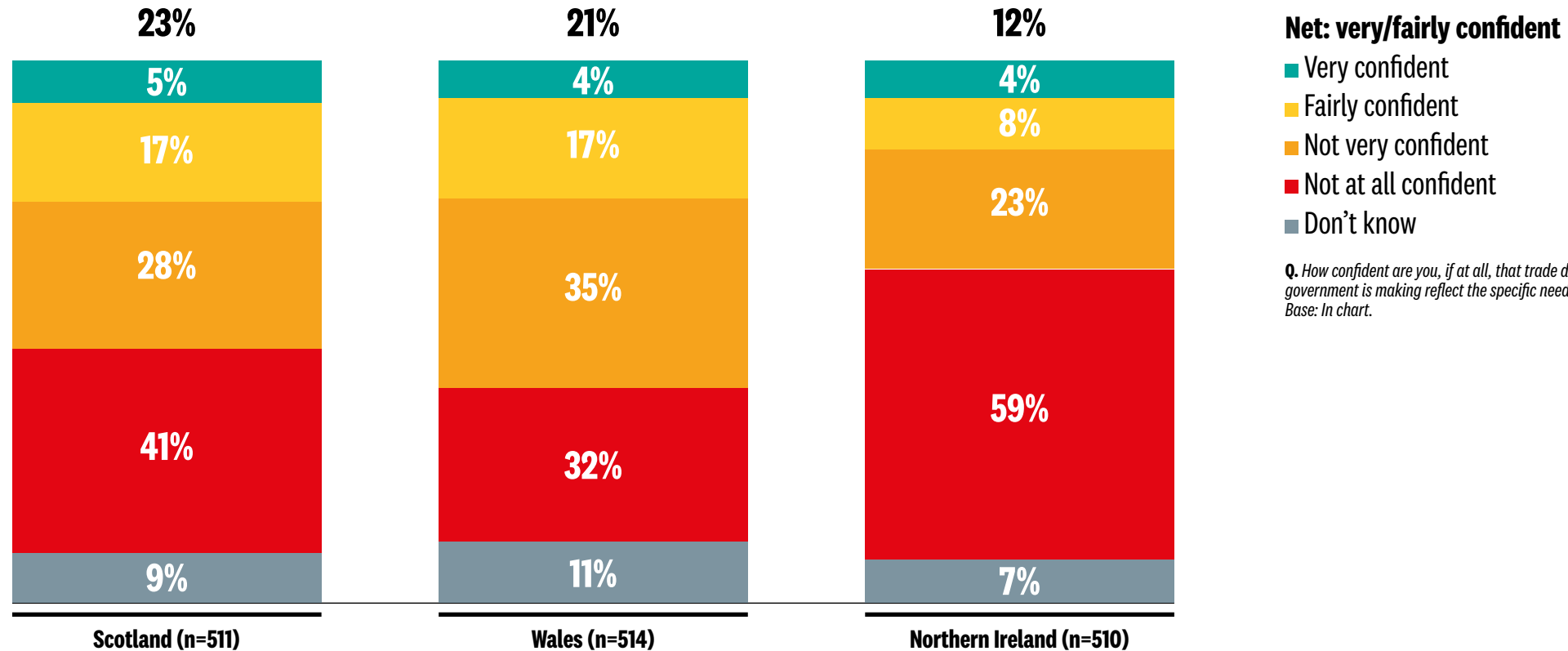


■ Strongly agree ■ Tend to agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Tend to disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

Q. The trade deal negotiated with Japan included a specific section emphasising aspects relating to supporting small and medium sized UK businesses.
Thinking about future deals that will be negotiated by the UK, to what extent do you agree with the idea that there should be a specific section within trade deals that emphasises supporting consumers' interests?
Base: All respondents (3,263)

There were low levels of consumer confidence within the devolved nations that their specific needs would be met

Consumer perceptions of how trade deals reflect the needs of the devolved nations



Consumers felt it was important that future trade deals do not reduce the level of data and digital protection – with over half (63%) suggesting it is very important

Importance of maintaining data and digital protection for UK consumers

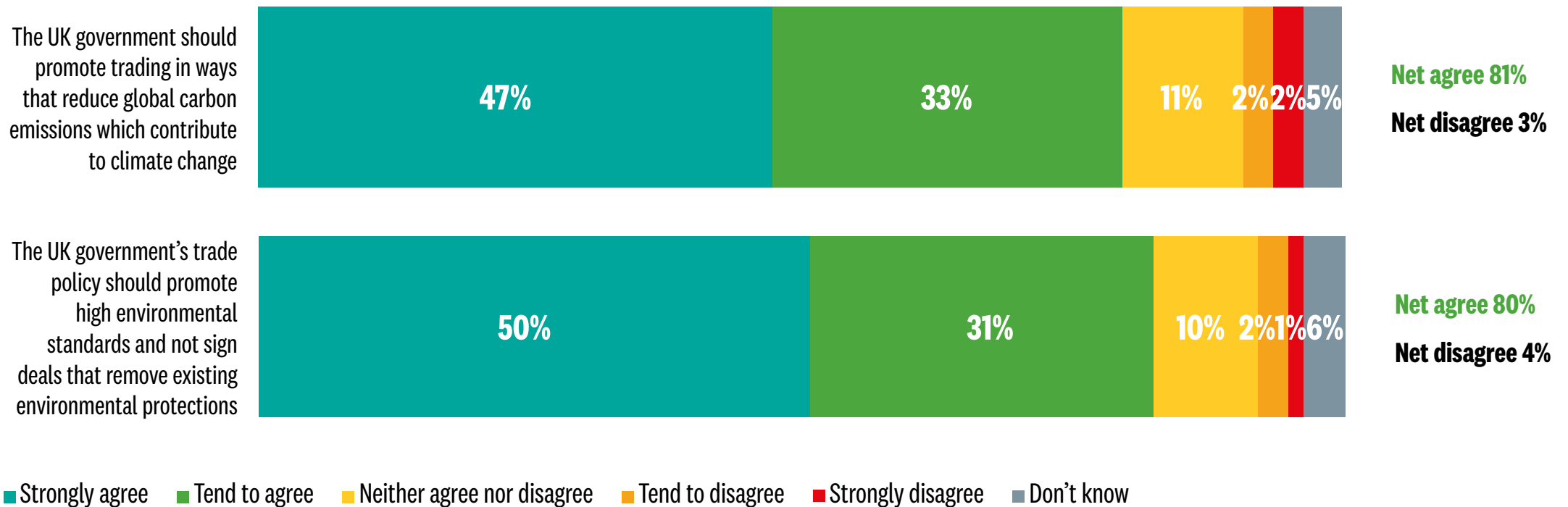


■ Very important ■ Fairly important ■ Not very important ■ Not at all important ■ Don't know

Q. The internet is now an increasingly important part of consumers' lives, with many transactions taking place with companies and organisations outside of the UK (e.g. shopping websites based elsewhere). Through trade deals, some countries want to make it as easy as possible to share data across borders, which might require changes to the way consumer data and digital activity is protected. How important, if at all, do you think it is that any future trade deals do not reduce the level of data and digital protection for UK consumers? Base: All respondents (3,263).

It is important for the majority of consumers that environmental protections are included in trade deals

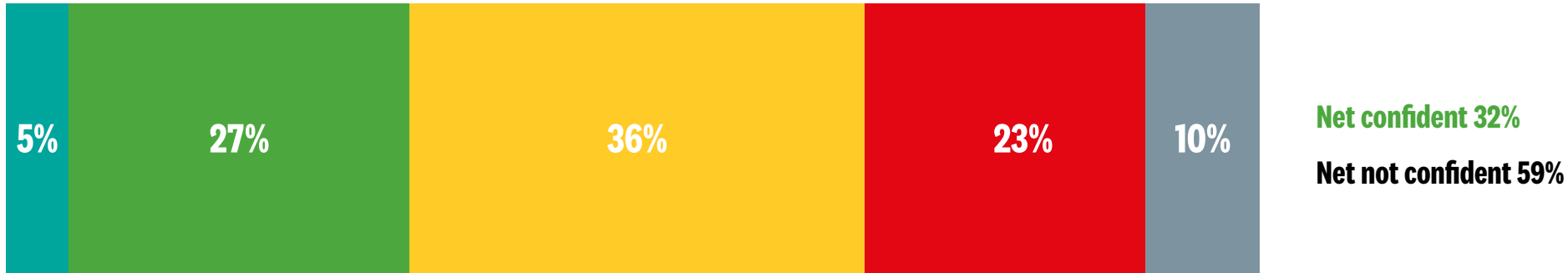
Importance of trade deals protecting the environment



Q. Trade deals have the potential to impact the environment in both positive and negative ways. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
 Base: All respondents (3,263).

More than half of consumers (59%) lacked confidence in the government prioritising environment protections

Perceptions of the UK government prioritising environmental protections

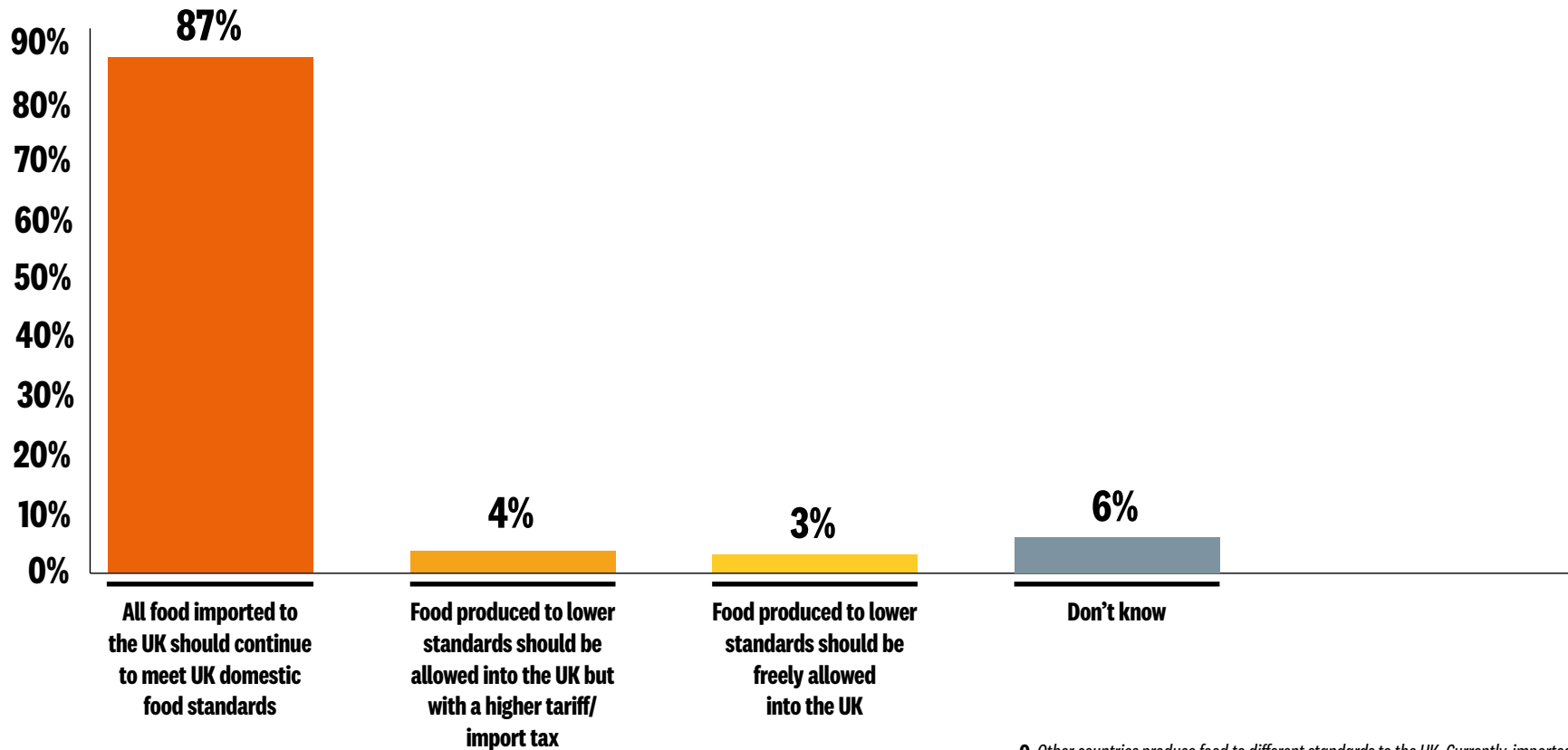


■ Very confident ■ Fairly confident ■ Not very confident ■ Not at all confident ■ Don't know

Q. How confident, if at all, are you that the UK government will prioritise environmental protections as part of trade deals?
Base: All respondents (3,263)

9 in 10 (87%) consumers felt all food imported should align with current UK domestic food standards

Consumer view on dual tariff system for food imports



Q. Other countries produce food to different standards to the UK. Currently, imported food generally has to meet the same standards as food that is produced in the UK. New trade deals could potentially bring in more imported foods produced to lower standards providing competition for UK produced food, by being cheaper. Which of the following best describes what food you think should be available in the UK? Base: All respondents (3,263).