

# The value of Human Biomonitoring to assess chemical exposure and support policies: perceptions of the European population



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**Key findings:** Overall the majority of the respondents considers that Human Biomonitoring should be used as a tool to evaluate the populations' chemical exposure, to study its health impacts and to support the development of health policies.

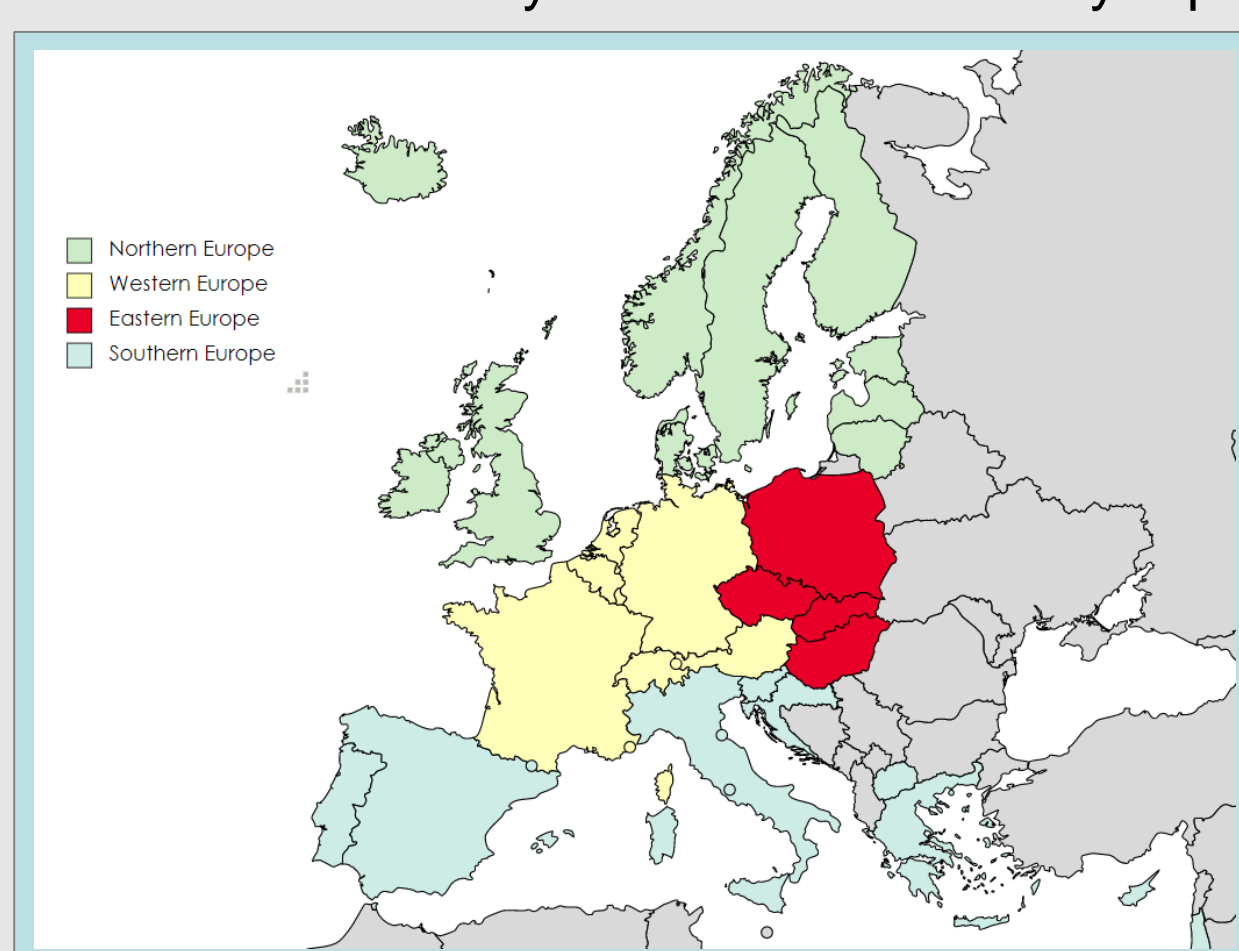
## Background

- The **success of human biomonitoring (HBM) surveys** is highly dependent on the **cooperation and engagement** of the individuals being sampled.
- In the context of the **European Human Biomonitoring Initiative, HBM4EU** ([www.hbm4eu.eu](http://www.hbm4eu.eu)), an **online citizen survey** was conducted in Europe to gain **insights into the perceptions of the population about HBM and exposure to chemicals**.



## Materials and Methods

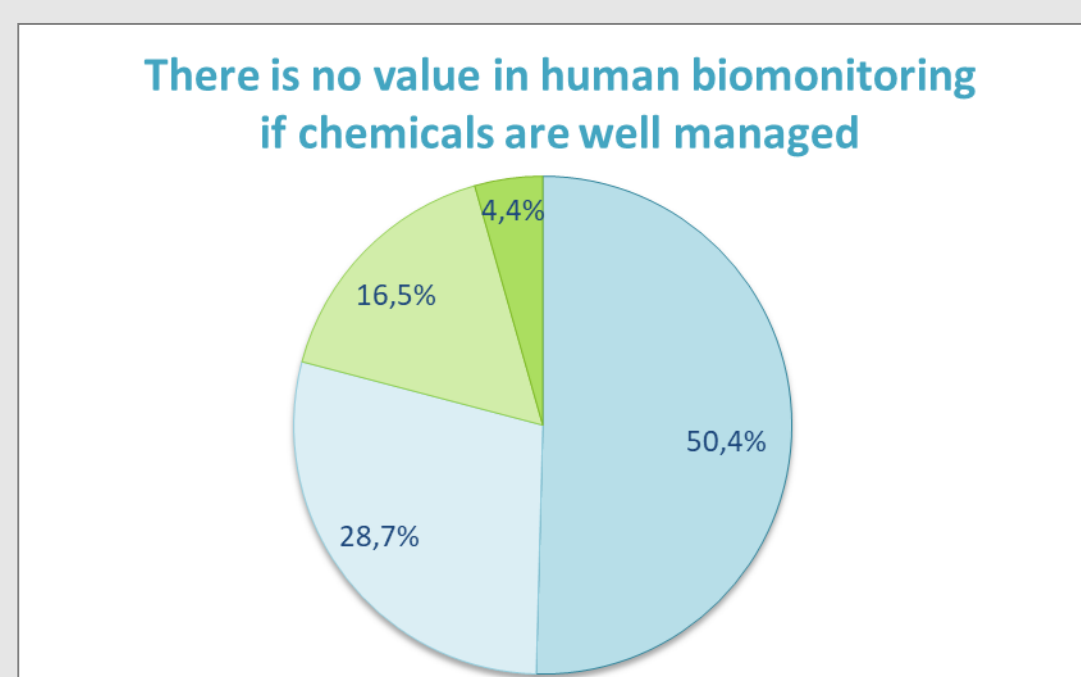
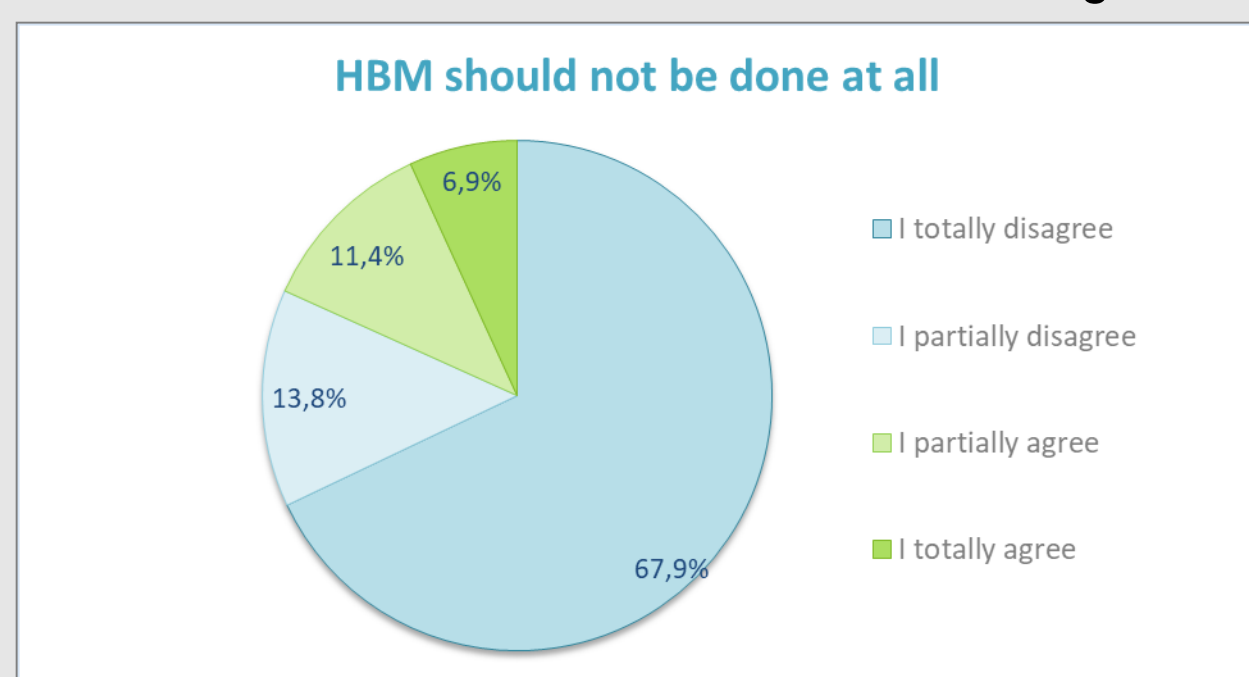
The survey was undertaken between September 2020 and February 2021 and was available in the languages of all 30 HBM4EU-participating countries (EU, associated countries, Israel) through the HBM4EU website. Dissemination was done by the HBM4EU country representatives (National Hub Contact Points).



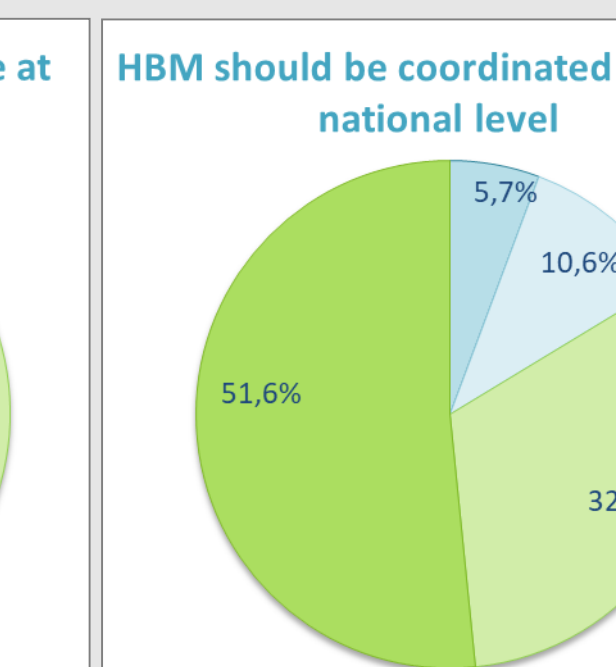
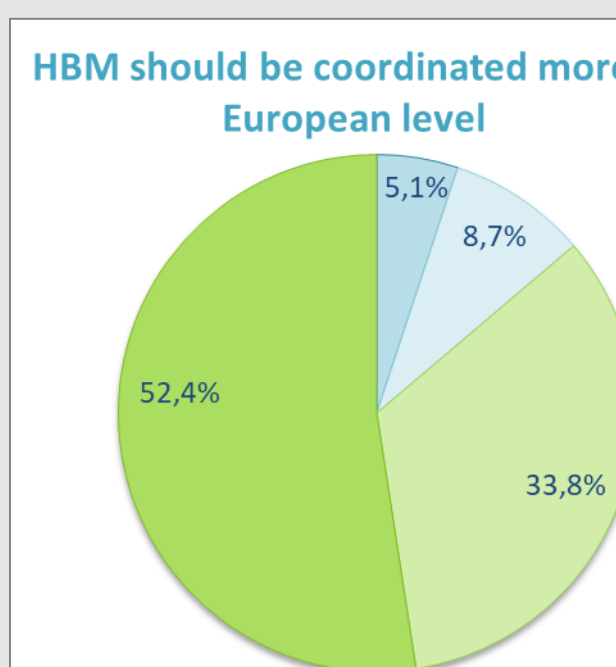
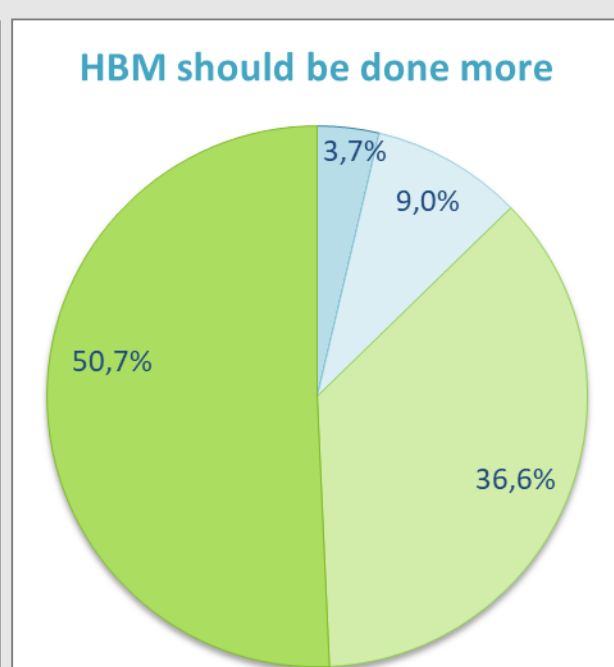
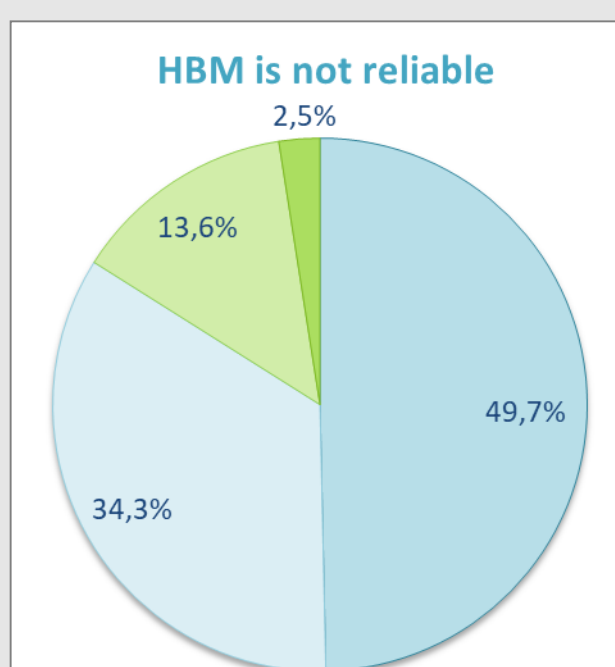
## Results

Responses were received from 5391 participants. Around half were 35-54 years old and the majority were female (63.3%), with higher education (73.6%) and employed (73.6%).

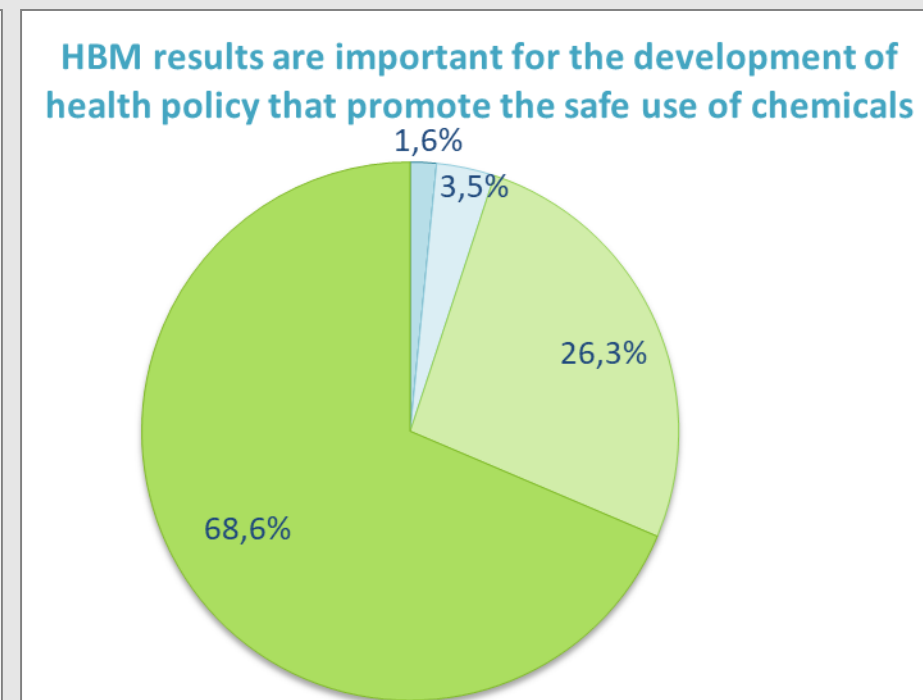
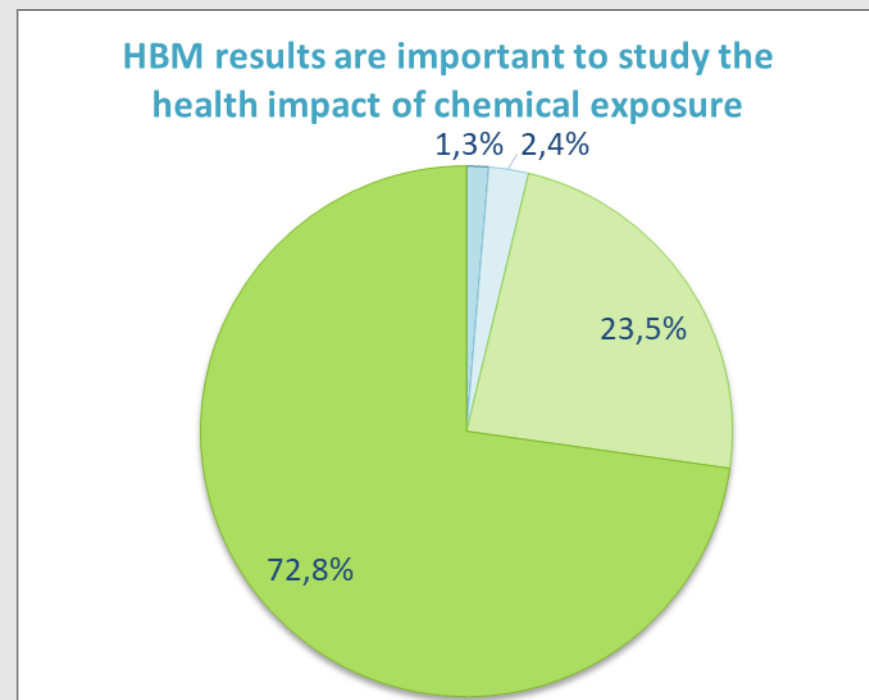
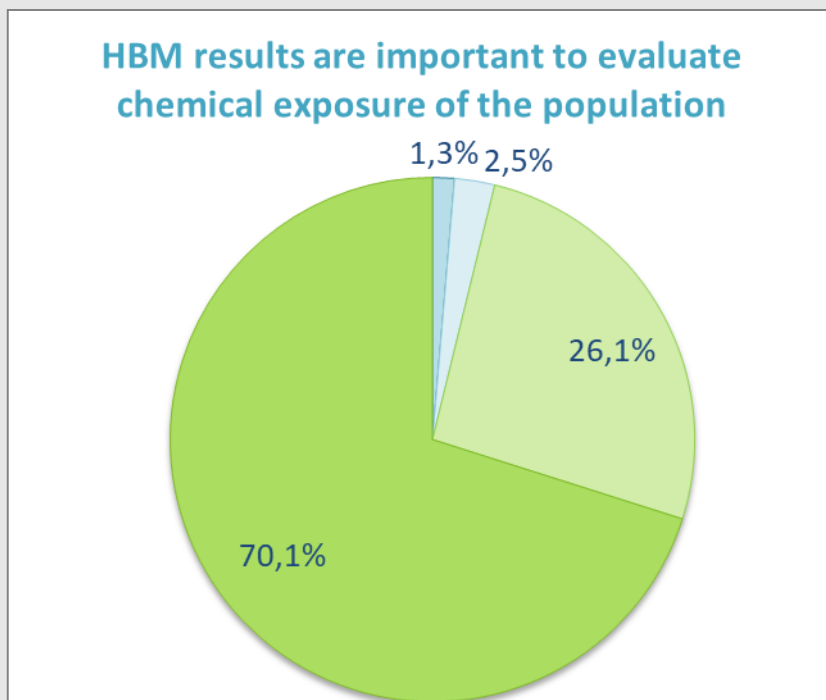
Concerning the perception of the respondents on HBM, the majority considers it should be done (81.7%), even if the chemicals are considered well managed.



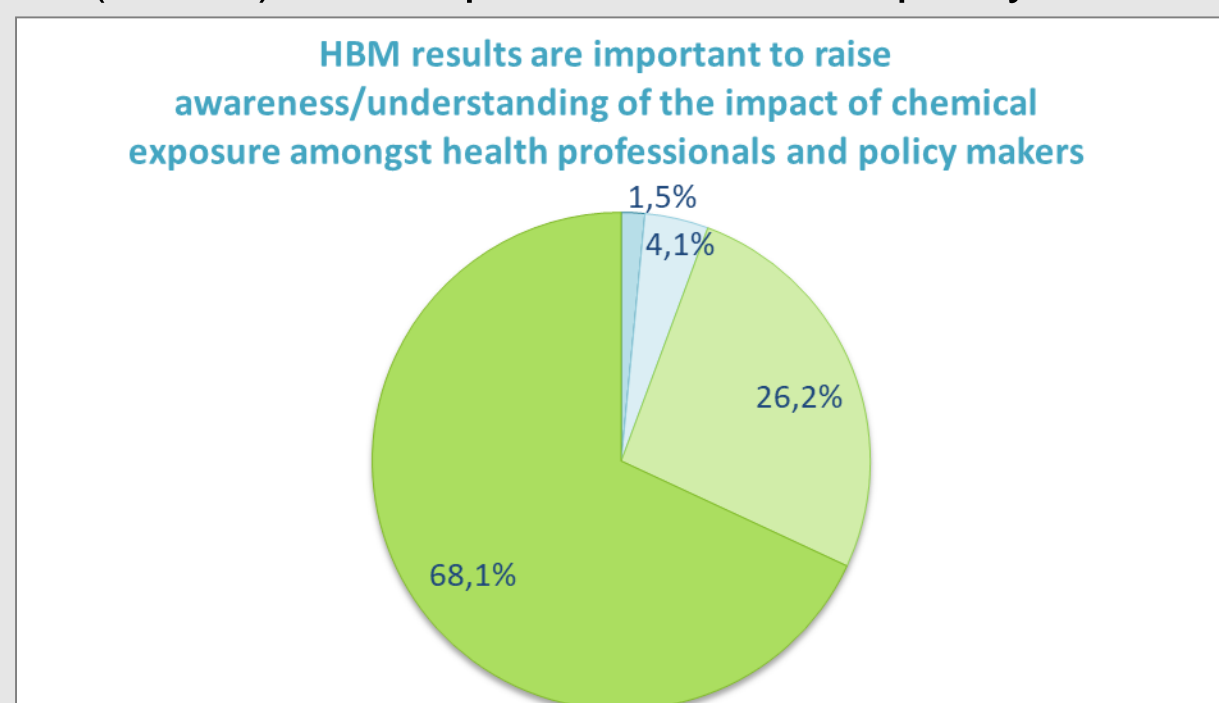
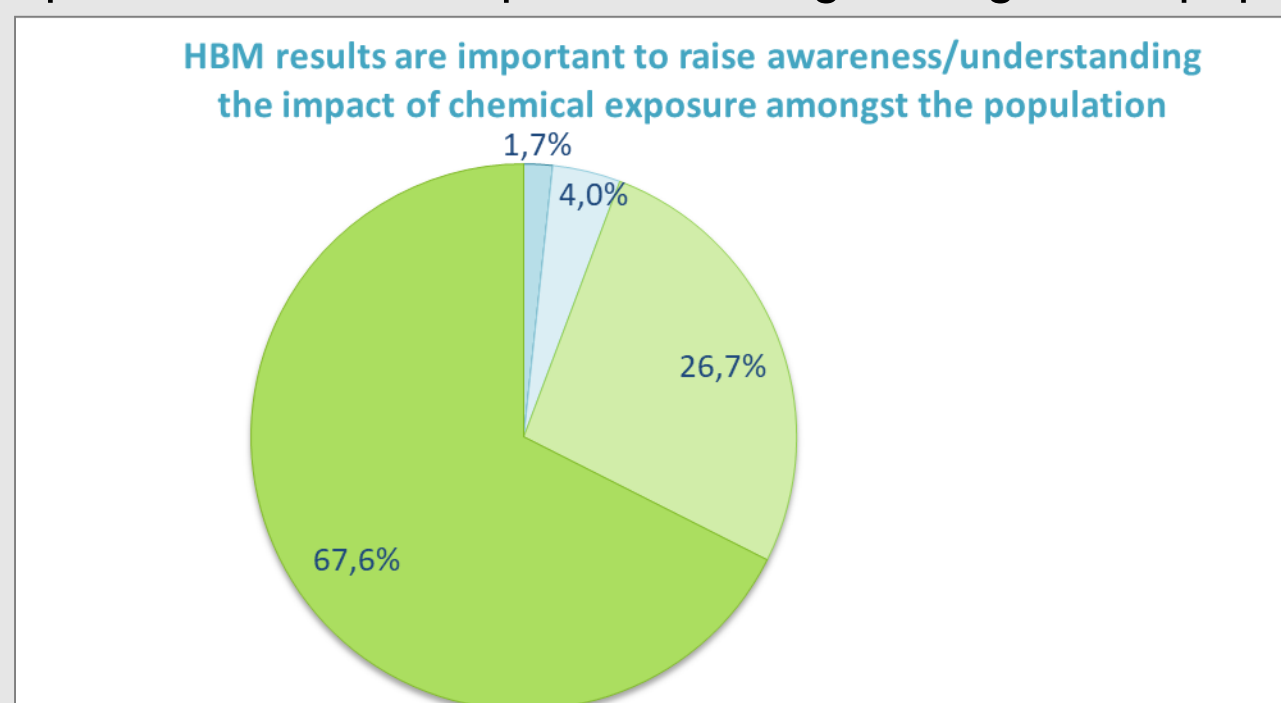
Most participants consider it a reliable method (84.0%) that should be performed more often (87.3%) and be more coordinated either at a European level (86.2%) or at a national level (83.7%).



The large majority of the respondents thinks that HBM results are important to evaluate the chemical exposure of the population (96.2%), to study the health impact of chemical exposure (96.3%) and to support the development of health policies (94.9%).



Respondents also consider HBM results highly relevant to raise awareness and promote understanding of the impact of chemical exposure amongst the general population (94.3%), health professionals and policy makers.



## Conclusions

The use of HBM as a tool to assess human exposure to chemicals, allowing its management and health protection, was well perceived by respondents across Europe. Furthermore, the need for more studies conducted in a coordinated way was indicated. Future work should comprise population groups less represented in the present work and should also attempt to understand how perceptions change over time.

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European Commission

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**References:** Revised report on national needs, objectives of a long-term HBM4EU inventory of funding mechanisms and recommendations for a sustainable HBM initiative in Europe and its organisation. HBM4EU, 06/2021.