

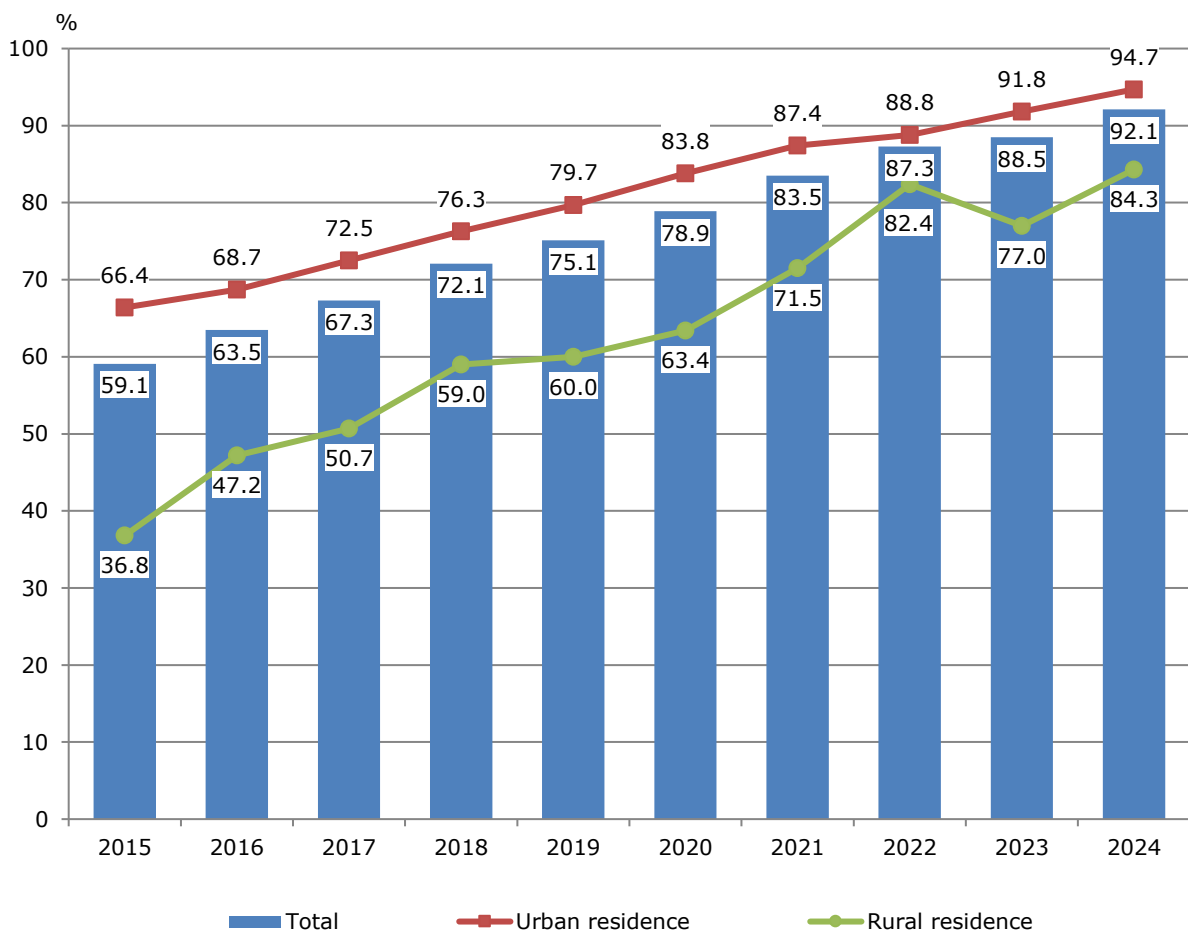


INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) USAGE IN HOUSEHOLDS AND BY INDIVIDUALS IN 2024

Internet access

In 2024, 92.1% of the households in Bulgaria had internet access at home. The trend of annual growth of the relative share of households with internet access continued and the relative share increased by 3.6 percentage points compared to the previous year. 94.7% of the households living in urban areas had internet access and for those resided in rural areas the relative share was 84.3%. Over a ten-year period, the disparity by place of residence decreased significantly - from 29.6 to 10.4 percentage points.

Figure 1. Share of households with internet access by place of residence



The highest relative share of households with internet access was found in Yugozapaden region (95.5%), while the lowest relative share was observed in Yugoiztochen region -

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88.6%. The households with children used the global network more actively as 98.4% of them had internet connection, compared to 89.9% of the households without children.

Table 1. Share of households with internet access by statistical region and by household type in 2024

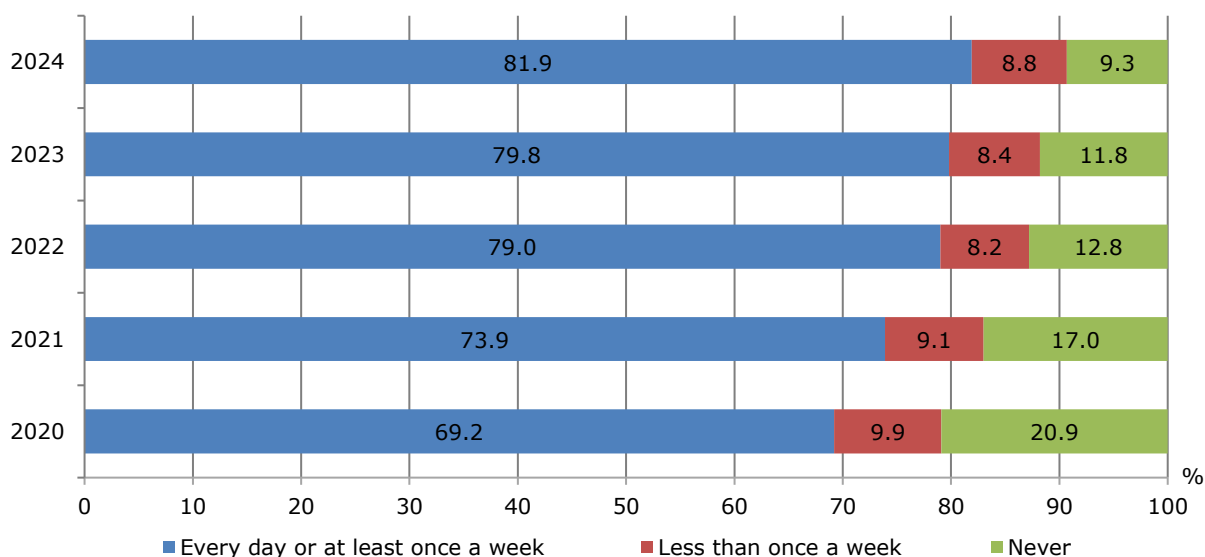
	(Per cent)		
	Total	Households with children	Households without children
Total	92.1	98.4	89.9
Statistical region			
Severozapaden	89.2	95.8	87.6
Severen tsentralen	92.8	98.5	90.9
Severoiztochen	89.9	98.3	87.0
Yugoiztochen	88.6	96.6	85.3
Yugozapaden	95.5	99.5	94.1
Yuzhen tsentralen	91.7	98.8	88.8

The main reason for not having access to the internet at home was the lack of internet skills (3.6%), and 3.5% of the households indicated that they did not need internet (the internet was not useful, interesting, etc.). Access costs (equipment, subscription, etc.) were too high for 1.2% of the households.

Use of the internet

In 2024, 81.9% of the **individuals aged between 16 and 74 years** used the internet every day or at least once a week at any location (home, work or other places). The share of people who had never surfed the internet decreased to 9.3%.

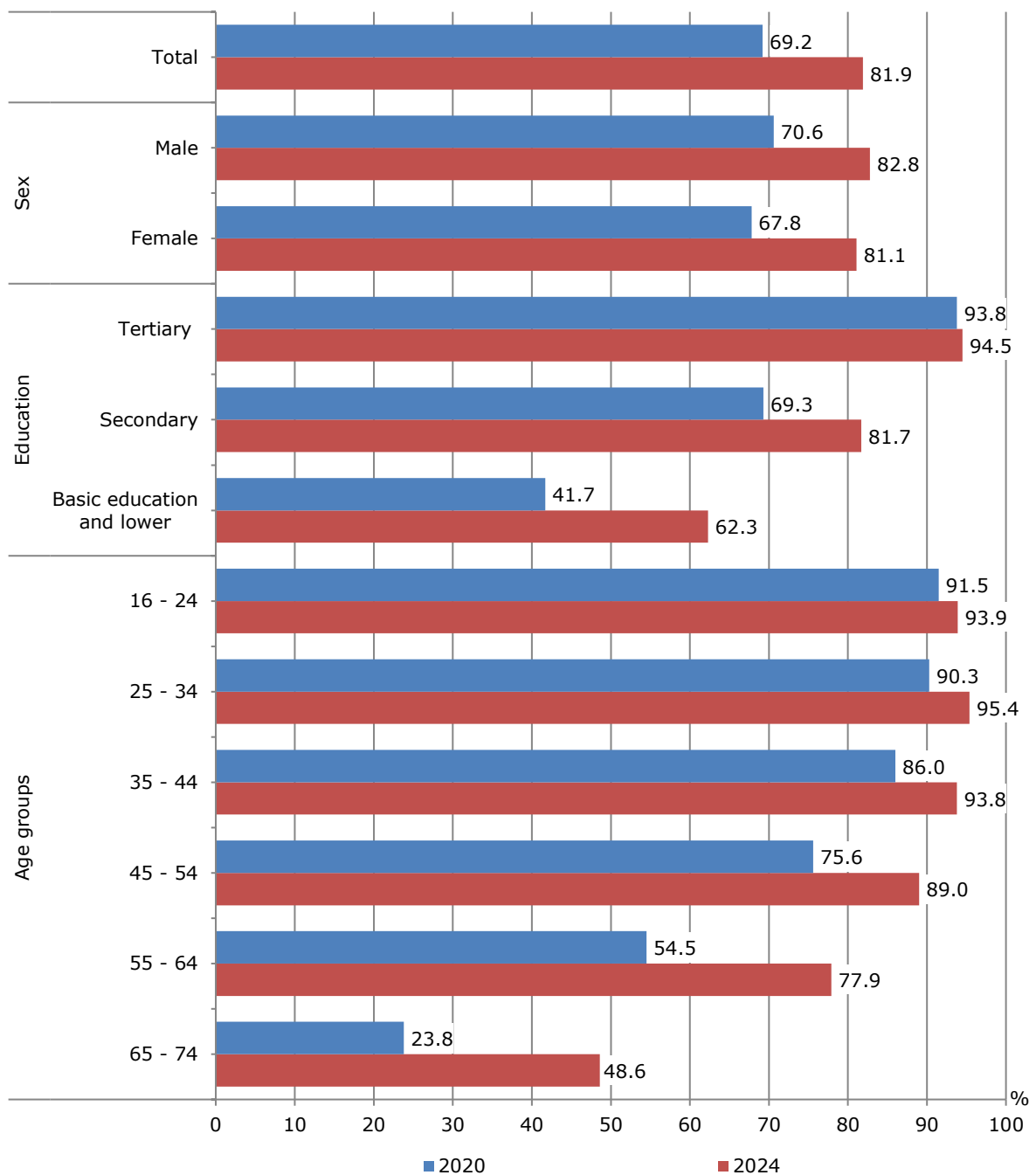
Figure 2. Distribution of individuals by frequency of internet usage



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The most active users of the internet were the students (96.7%) and the individuals with tertiary education - 94.5%, as well as young people in the age groups 16 - 24 and 25 - 34 years, 93.9% and 95.4%, respectively. More and more elderly people took advantage of the opportunities provided by the global network, and over a five-year period the relative share of individuals aged 65 - 74 who surfed regularly had more than doubled.

Figure 3. Share of individuals regularly using the internet (every day or at least once a week) by sex, education and age



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The internet was used mostly for communication by the individuals as 71.4% of them carried out phone or video calls (using applications such as Viber, WhatsApp, Skype, FaceTime, Messenger, Snapchat, Zoom, MS Teams, Webex), 65.0% participated in social networks (Facebook, X, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) and 64.9% used instant messaging (using applications such as Viber, WhatsApp, Messenger, Snapchat, Skype, Discord, Telegram). The largest gender divide was observed among people who searched health-related information online, as 47.4% of women used the global network for this purpose, compared to 32.0% of men.

Table 2. Share of individuals by purpose of internet usage and by sex in 2024

Purposes	(Per cent)		
	Total	Male	Female
Communication			
Making calls (including video calls) over the internet	71.4	71.6	71.2
Participating in social networks	65.0	64.1	65.8
Using instant messaging, i.e. exchanging messages	64.9	64.9	64.9
Sending / receiving e-mails	48.3	48.0	48.6
Access to information			
Finding information about goods or services	61.9	61.2	62.4
Reading online news sites/ newspapers/ news magazines	52.4	52.4	52.3
Civic and political participation			
Expressing opinions on civic or political issues on websites or in social media	19.8	19.6	19.9
Taking part in online consultations or voting to define civic or political issues	8.7	8.2	9.2
Entertainment			
Listening to music or downloading music	43.3	46.2	40.5
Watching video on demand from commercial services	32.8	34.0	31.7
Watching internet streamed TV (live or catch-up) from TV broadcasters	27.5	29.7	25.3
Playing or downloading games	15.8	19.5	12.2
Watching video content from sharing services	11.7	12.6	10.8
Listening to podcasts or downloading podcasts	10.8	10.9	10.7
eHealth			
Seeking health-related information	39.8	32.0	47.4
Accessing personal health records online	19.5	15.3	23.5
Making an appointment with a practitioner via a website or app	17.6	12.9	22.1
Using other health services via a website or app instead of having to go to the hospital or visit a doctor	6.6	5.2	7.9
Other on-line services			
Internet banking	31.3	30.5	32.2
Selling of goods or services via a website or app	12.7	13.9	11.5
Doing an online course	6.9	6.4	7.5

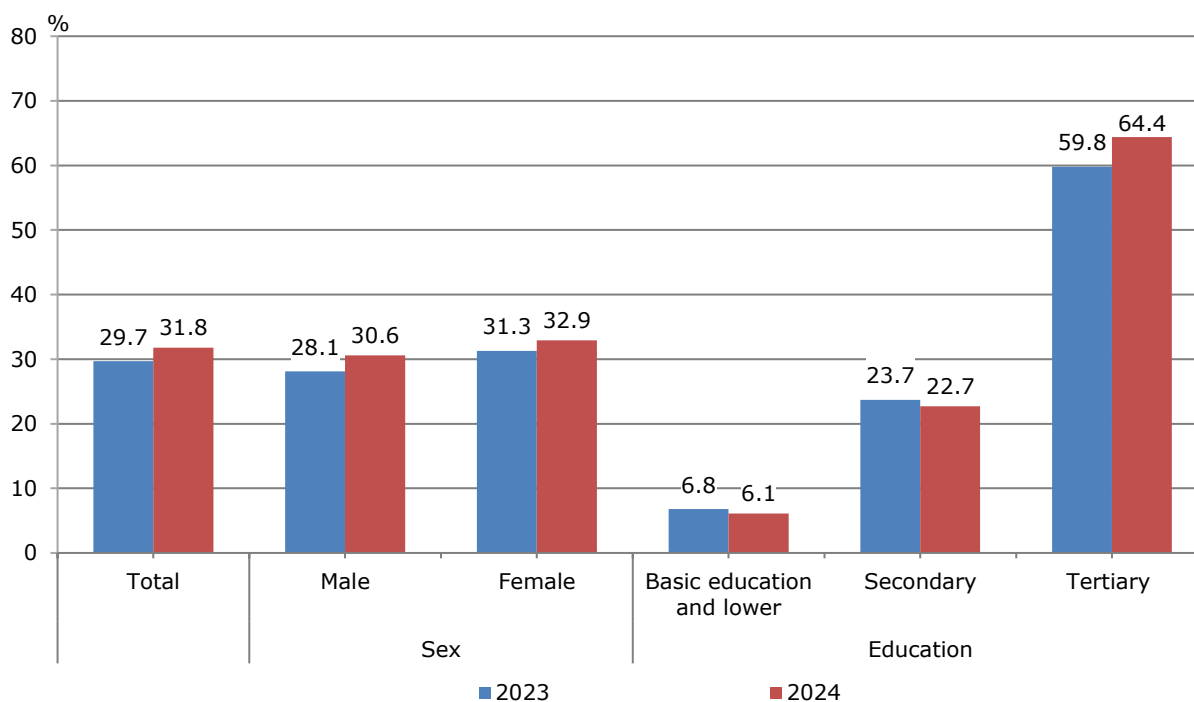
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E-government

In 2024, 31.8%¹ of the individuals used the global network for interaction with public authorities or public services. Compared to the previous year, the relative share increased by 2.1 percentage points.

People with tertiary education used e-government services more often (64.4%), compared to only 6.1% of people with basic education and lower. By age, the highest relative share of individuals who interacted with public authorities or public services was observed in the age group 35 - 44 (45.5%), and the lowest among those aged 65 - 74 (12.0%). Females were more active than males in the use of online services offered by the public authorities or public services - 32.9% and 30.6%, respectively.

Figure 4. Share of individuals who interacted with public authorities or public services by sex and education

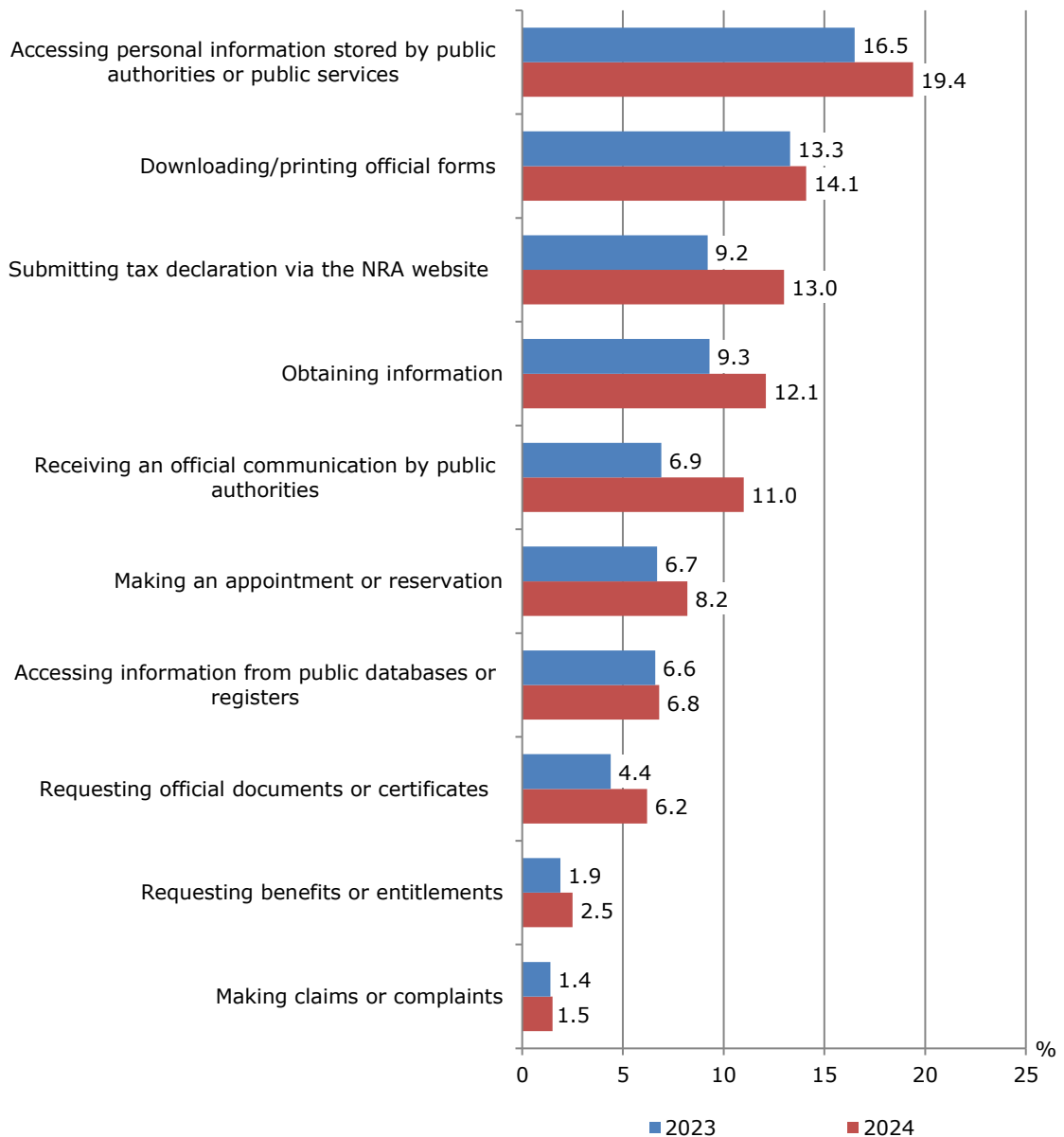


The Bulgarian citizens most often used e-government to access personal information stored by public authorities or public services - 19.4%. Least people (1.5%) made complaints or claims online (Figure 5).

¹ The relative share were calculated on the basis of individuals who interacted with public authorities or public services over the internet in the last 12 months before the interview.

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Figure 5. Share of individuals who interacted with public authorities or public services by purposes



When using the e-government, citizens most often encountered technical problems of public authorities' websites or apps (19.9%¹), and 12.1% reported that these websites were difficult to use, the wording was not clear and the procedures were not well explained. 4.9% encountered problems related to the use of electronic identification when requesting a service by public authorities or public services.

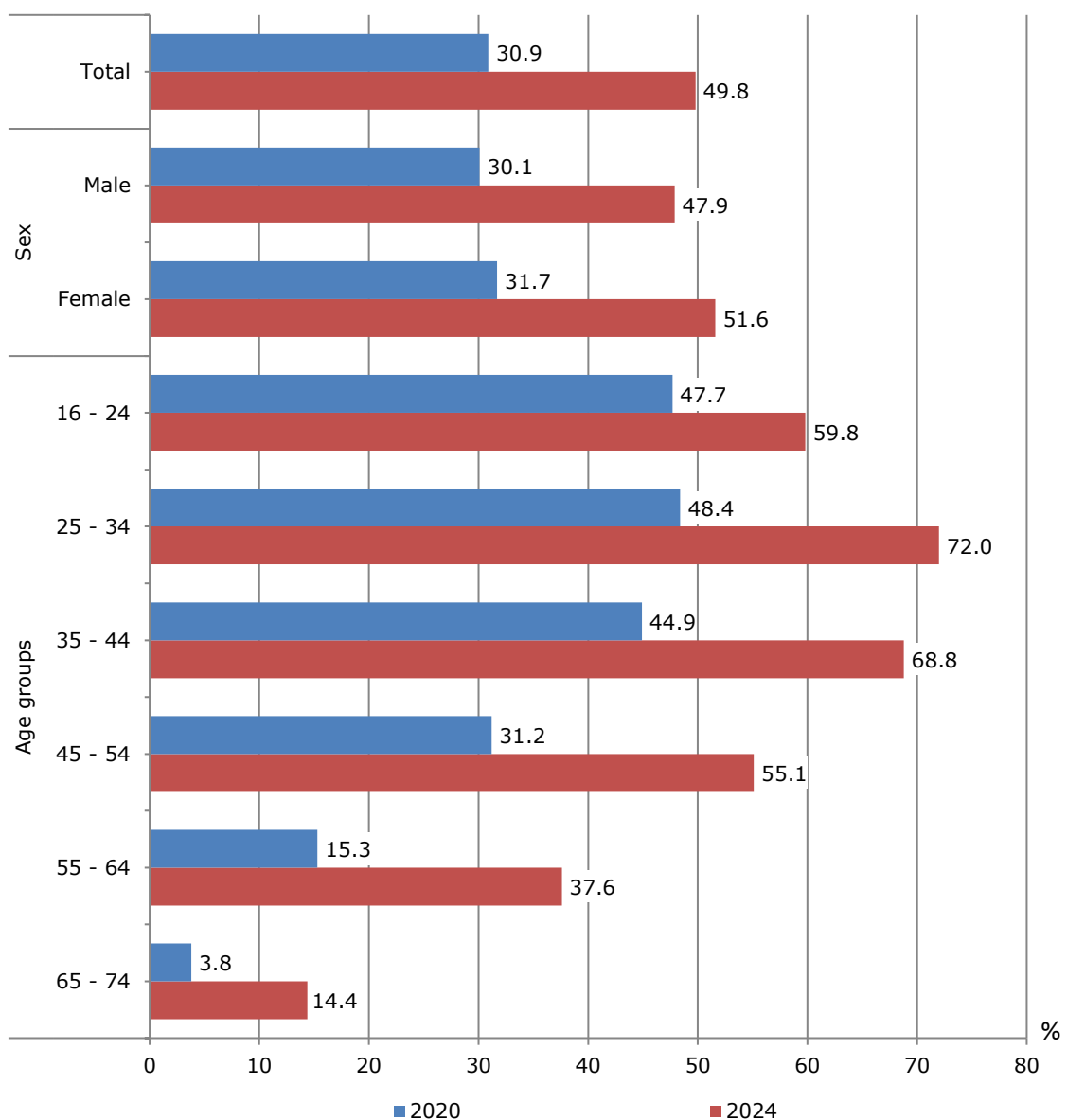
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Electronic commerce (e-commerce)

In 2024, 49.8%¹ of the individuals bought goods or services for private use over the internet, and over a five-year period this relative share increased with 18.9 percentage points. Females were more active in online shopping than males - 51.6% and 47.9%, respectively. The most active in internet shopping were the people with tertiary education with a relative share of 74.2%, as well as people in the age group 25 - 34 years (72.0%).

Figure 6. Share of individuals who bought goods or services over the internet by sex and age



¹ The relative shares were calculated on the basis of individuals who bought goods or services in the last 12 months before the interview.

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The highest relative share of online shoppers was found in Yugozapaden and Severen tsentralen regions - 59.7% and 52.4%, respectively, while the lowest relative share was observed in Yugoiztochen region - 39.3%. Significant disparity in the use of e-commerce was observed by place of residence, with 54.3% of individuals living in urban areas who shopped online, compared to 36.9% of those resided in rural areas.

Table 3. Share of individuals who bought goods or services over the internet by statistical region and by place of residence in 2024

	(Per cent)		
	Total	Urban	Rural
Total	49.8	54.3	36.9
Statistical region			
Severozapaden	41.2	48.4	27.8
Severen tsentralen	52.4	56.6	43.6
Severoiztochen	51.6	57.6	33.7
Yugoiztochen	39.3	43.4	28.4
Yugozapaden	59.7	62.0	47.7
Yuzhen tsentralen	43.5	46.9	36.8

Internet shoppers most frequently bought:

- clothes, shoes or accessories - 78.9%¹;
- accommodation (from hotels, travel agencies, tour operators) - 38.0%;
- transport services (e.g. local bus, train, flight tickets, taxi ride) - 34.8%;
- cosmetics, beauty or wellness products - 32.7%;
- sports goods (excluding sports clothing) - 32.7%;
- deliveries from restaurants, fast-food chains, catering services - 32.0%;
- tickets to cultural or other events - 29.3%;
- subscriptions to the internet or mobile phone connections - 24.8%;
- consumer electronics or household appliances - 20.8%;
- computers, tablets, mobile phones or accessories - 20.7%.

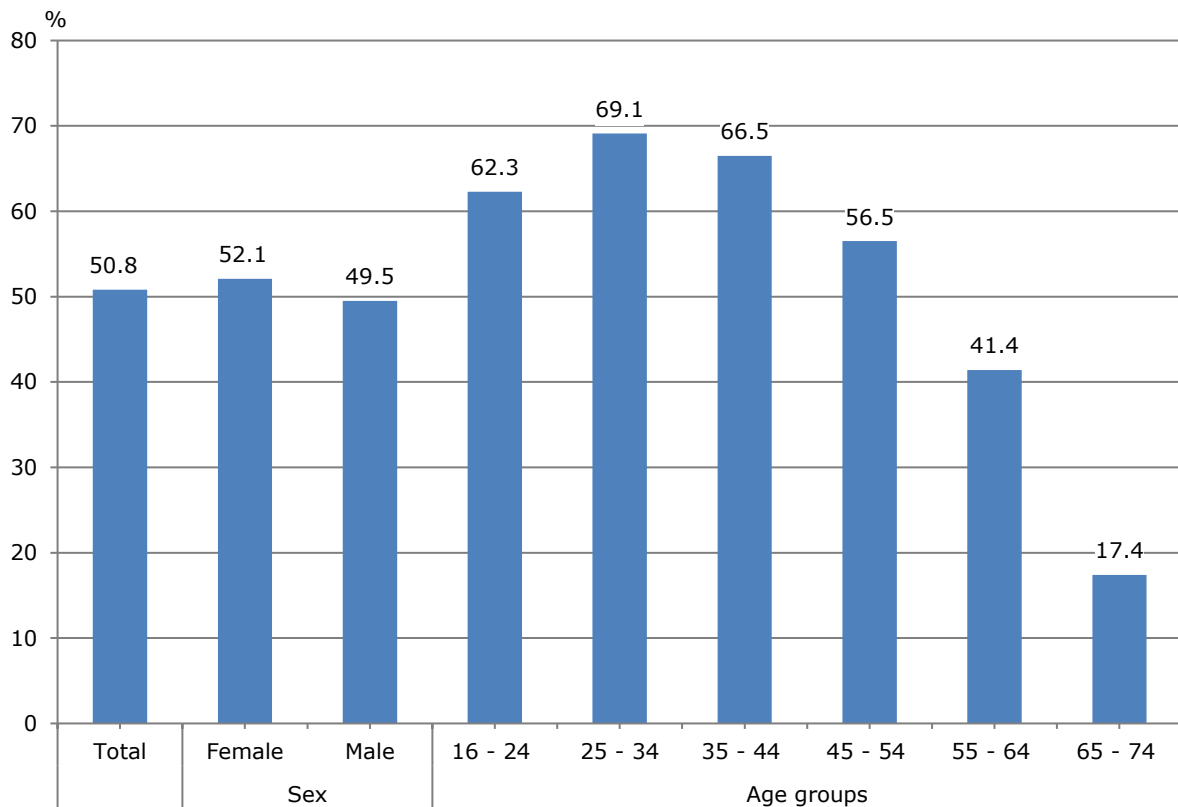
Internet of Things (IoT)

In 2024, 50.8% of the individuals used internet-connected smart devices or systems for private purposes. The most active were those with tertiary education (75.6%), as well as the people aged between 25 and 34 years - 69.1%. Males used internet-connected devices or systems more than females - 52.1% and 49.5%, respectively (Figure 7).

¹ The relative shares were calculated on the basis of individuals who bought goods or services in the last three months before the interview.

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Figure 7. Share of individuals who used internet-connected devices or systems for private purposes by sex and by age in 2024



The most frequently used internet-connected device was the smart TV, which was used by 45.1% of the people in their daily lives, and 25.4% had a smart watch or a fitness band. Internet-connected home appliances such as robot vacuums, fridges, ovens, coffee machines, etc. were used by 6.5% of the people.

The main reasons why individuals did not use internet-connected devices or systems were:

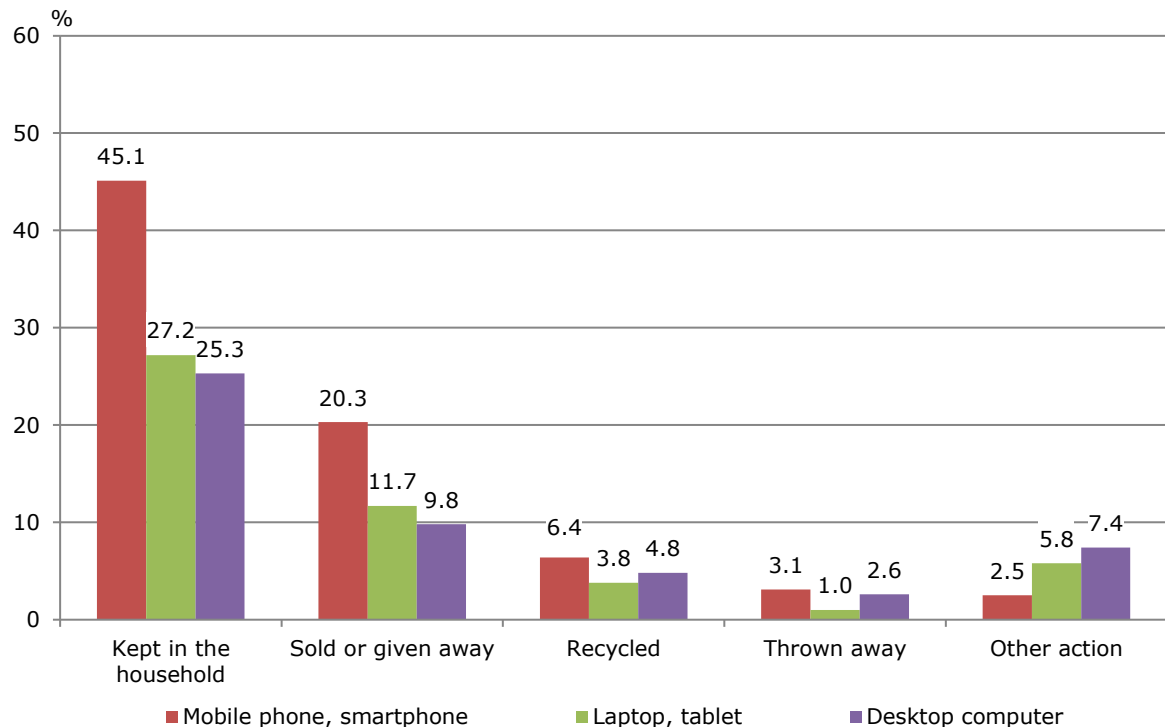
- no need - 38.8%;
- costs too high - 11.9%;
- didn't know that such devices and systems exist - 5.7%;
- lack of skills to use those devices or systems - 5.0%.

Green ICT

In 2024, almost half of the people (45.1%) kept their old mobile phone or smartphone in their household, and 20.3% sold or gave the device to someone else. 6.4% of individuals disposed of the phones that they no longer use in electronic waste collection and recycling, and 3.1% threw them away without recycling (Figure 8).

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Figure 8. Share of individuals by methods of disposing of electronic devices no longer in use in 2024



When people purchased a mobile phone, smartphone, tablet or desktop computer, the 'green' aspects that were considered important were:

- energy efficiency of the device - 8.2%;
- possibility to extend the life span by buying extra guarantee - 6.5%;
- eco-design - 4.1%;
- take-back scheme offered by manufacturer or seller - 3.8%.

However, for the majority of users (68.4%) the determining purchasing factor remained the price, and for 50.9% the brand, design or size were important. The technical characteristics (hard drive characteristics, processor speed) of the device were significant for 39.2% of the people.

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Methodological notes

The survey on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in households and by individuals is a part of the European statistical programme and has been carried out in Bulgaria according to the Commission implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/1484. The survey was jointly financed by the NSI and the European Commission under a signed agreement between the two institutions. The main purpose of the survey was to obtain reliable and comparable data, which reflect the dissemination and usage of ICT at national and European level.

The statistical units are households and individuals. The population of households consists of **all private households and their members in the age group 16 to 74 years**. In the period April - June 2024, 4 091 randomly selected households and 8 275 individuals were surveyed. The survey was conducted by face-to-face interview, carried out by NSI staff. The 2024 questionnaire comprised several modules, which collect information about availability and use of the internet in households and by individuals, e-government, e-commerce, internet of things, green ICT, as well as questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics of the households and individuals. The data collected during the survey refer to three periods: to the moment of the survey, to the last three months before the survey or the last 12 months before the survey.

The **Internet of Things** (IoT) refers to the use of internet-connected devices or systems (often called smart devices) that can also be connected to each other and can be monitored or remotely controlled via the internet.

More information and data from surveys on Information and Communications Technologies usage in households and by individuals in 2024 can be found at NSI's website (<http://www.nsi.bg/en/node/6096>) and in Information System 'Infostat' (https://infostat.nsi.bg/infostat/pages/module.jsf?x_2=240&lang=en).