



ELECTORAL REFORM SERVICES

Survey of Trade Union General Secretaries

Unions21

March 2009

The survey covered

- Assessment of the economic climate
- Impact on unions and their members
- Unions' priorities
- Government's handling of the economic situation

Methodology

- General secretaries from 131 independent trades unions were invited to participate in the survey
- A representative sample of 69 responded
- Fieldwork conducted between 4 February and 3 March 2009

Sample profile: Respondents representative of independent trade unions
 Half of all TUC affiliated unions participated in the survey

	Survey Universe	Respondents
Base	131	69
	%	%
Size:		
Up to 2,499	47	46
2,500- 4,999	13	16
5000 - 9,999	8	10
10,000+	33	28
TUC affiliated:		
Yes	40	39
No	60	61
Sector:		
Mostly private	na	61
Mostly public	na	29
Both	na	5

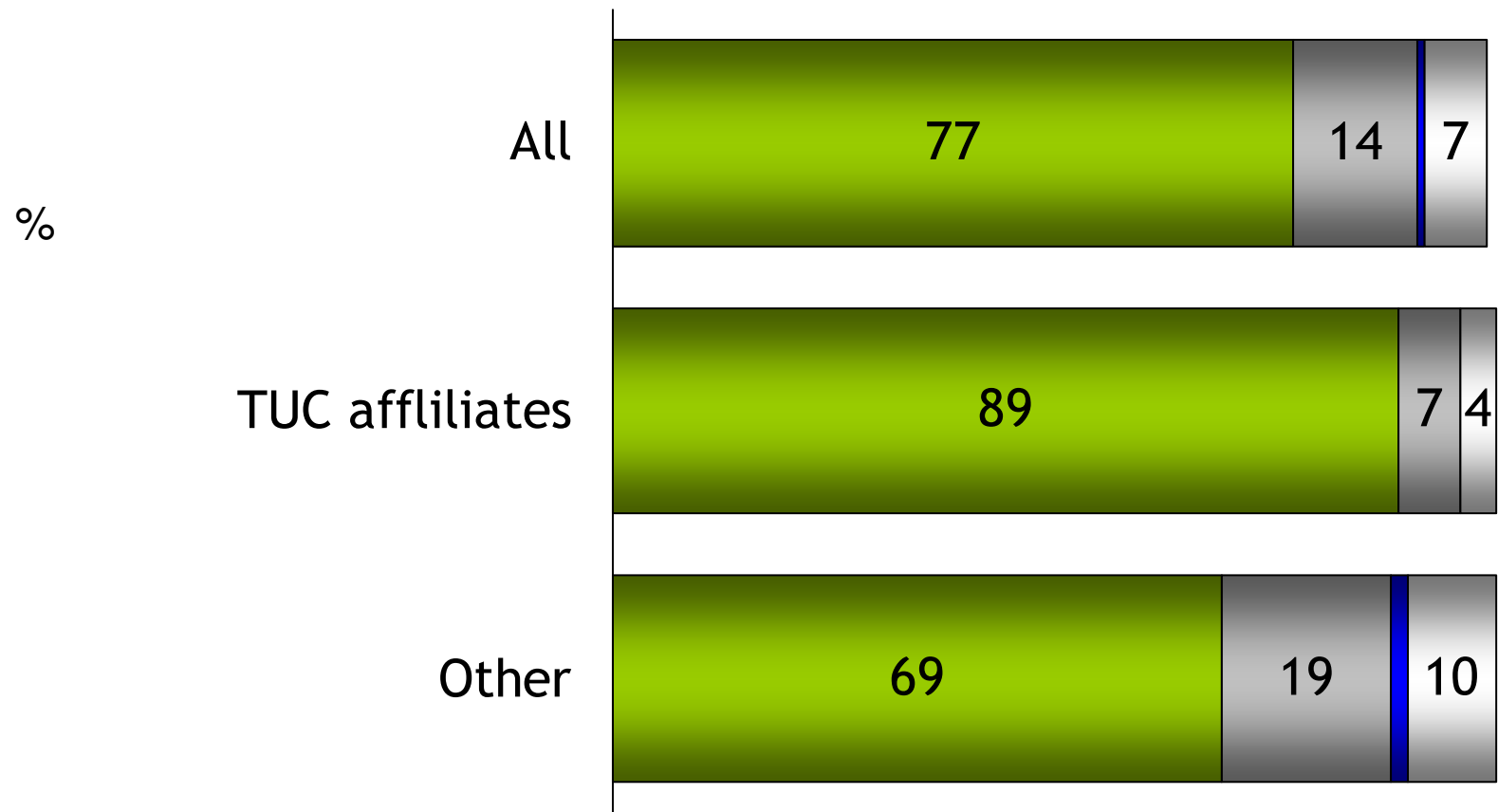


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The Economic Climate

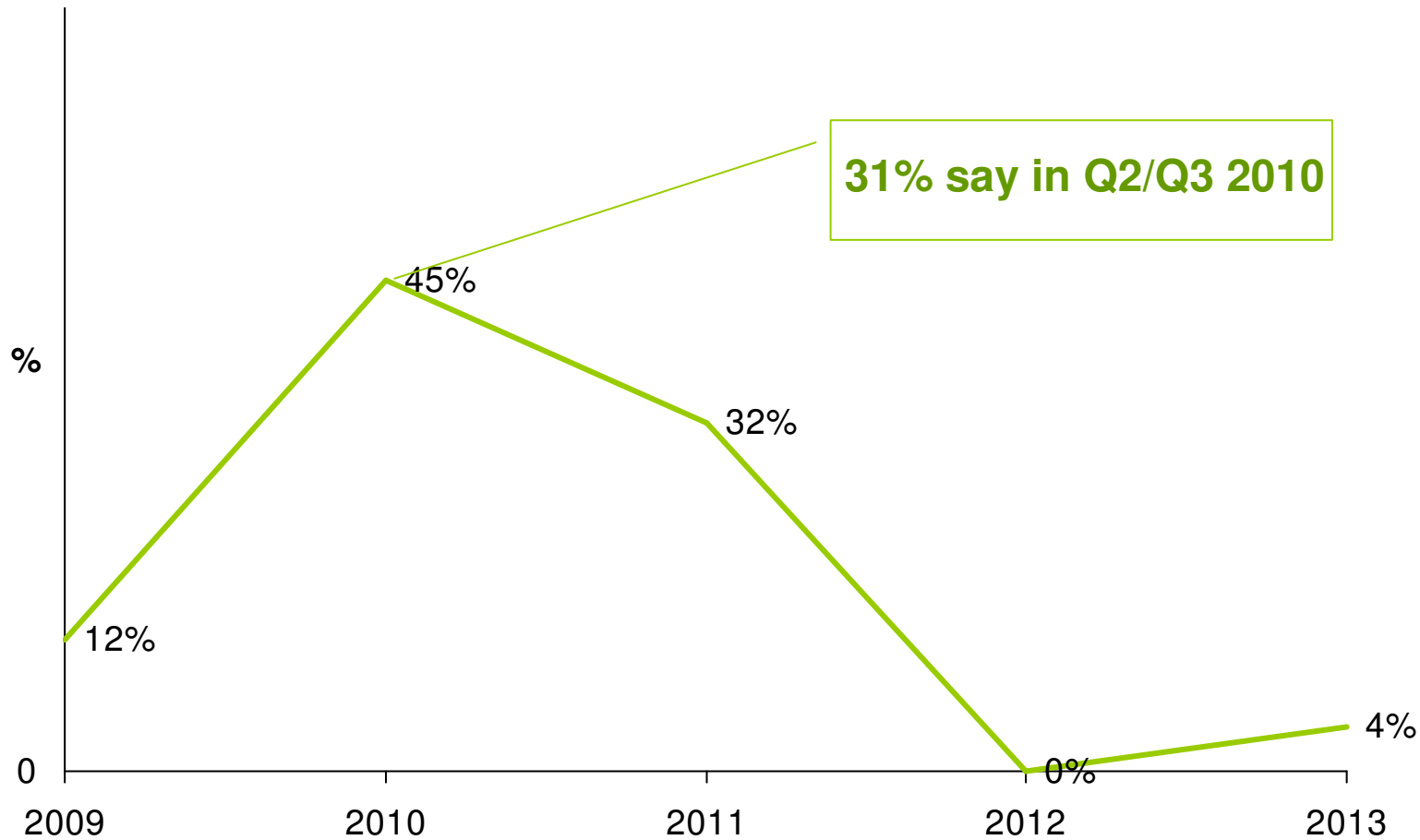
Three-quarters of union leaders said this recession was more severe than ones we have had in the recent past
TUC affiliates more likely to say more severe

■ More severe ■ Same ■ Less severe ■ Not answered



Q: How does this recession compare with ones we have had in the recent past? Would you say it is...
 Base: All general secretaries (69) TUC affiliates (27) others (42)

Nearly half of union leaders say economic climate will not improve until 2010



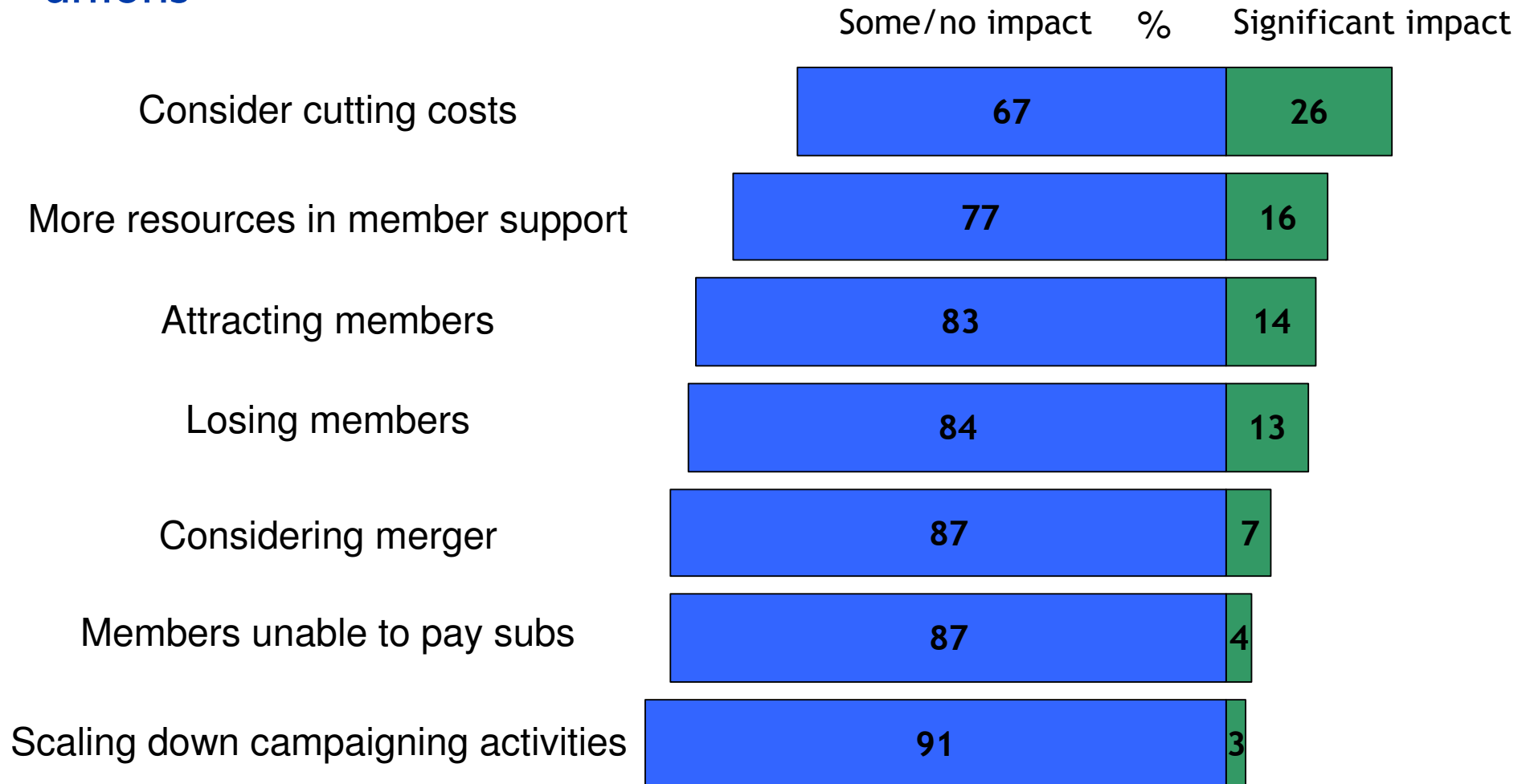
Q: When do you think the economic climate will improve?
Base: All general secretaries (69)



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Impact on unions and their members

The economic climate has not had a significant impact on unions

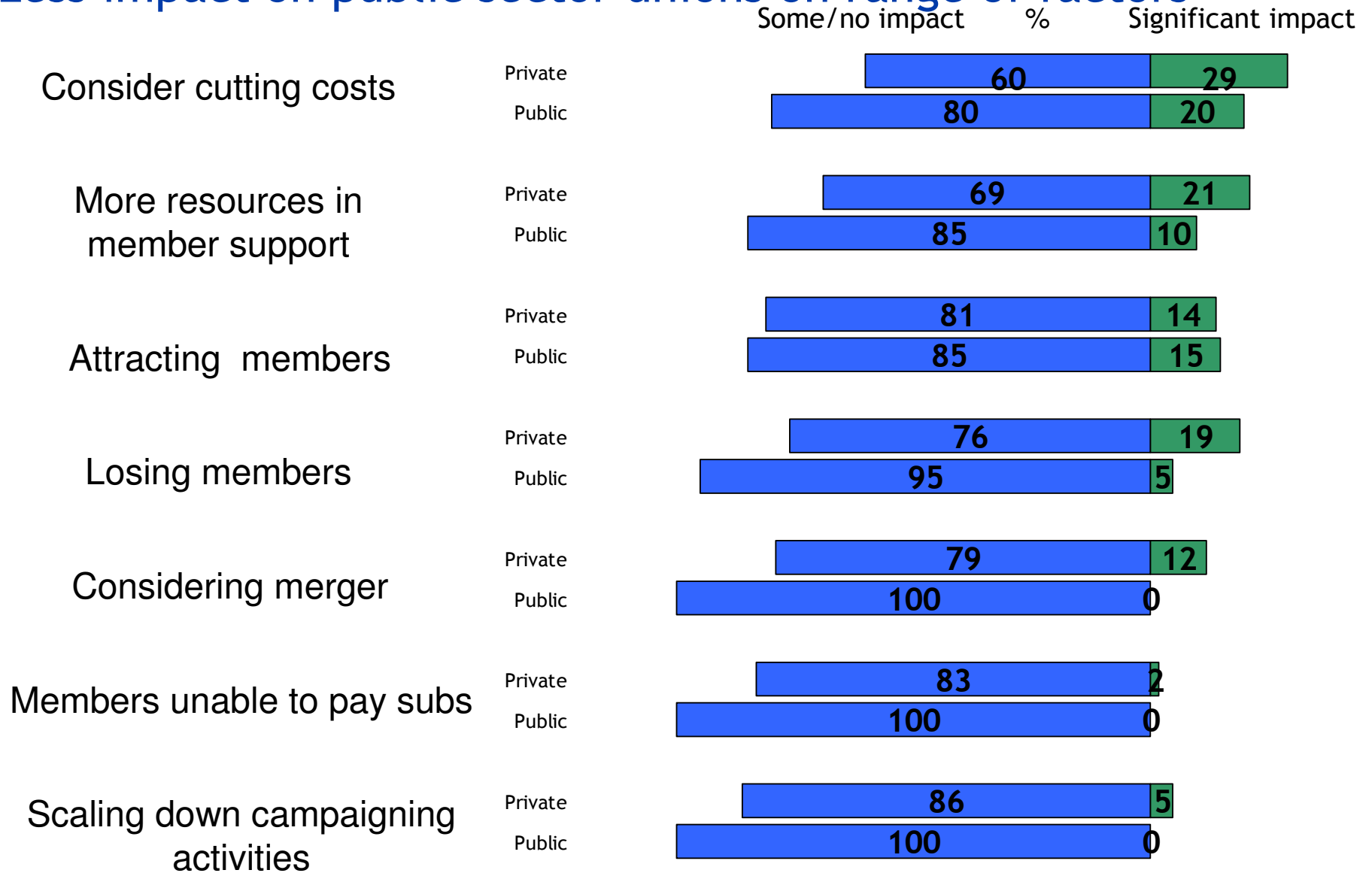


Q: How much impact has the current economic climate had on your union with regard to....

A: very significant impact, fairly significant impact, some impact, little or no impact

Base: All general secretaries (69)

Less impact on public sector unions on range of factors



Q: How much impact has the current economic climate had on your union with regard to....

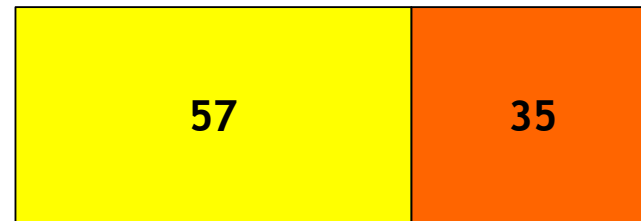
A: very significant impact, fairly significant impact, some impact, little or no impact

Base: All general secretaries (69) private sector (42) public sector (20)

One third of unions say members asked to accept lower pay rises, face redundancies

Some/no impact % Significant impact

Members asked to accept lower pay rises



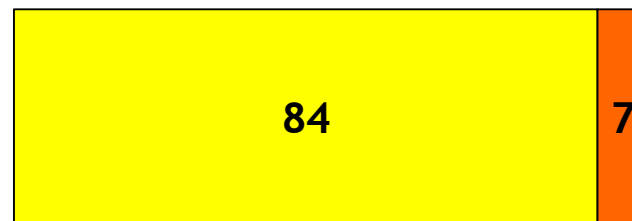
Members facing redundancy



Members asked to accept changes to conditions of employment



Members asked to accept pay cuts



Q: How much impact has the current economic climate had on your members with regard to....

A: very significant impact, fairly significant impact, some impact, little or no impact

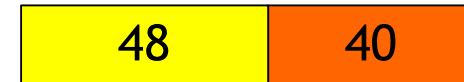
Base: All general secretaries (69)

Nearly half of private sector unions said members facing redundancy

Some/no impact % Significant impact

Members asked to accept lower pay rises

Private



Public



Members facing redundancy

Private

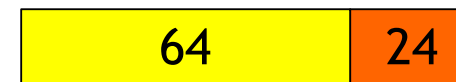


Public

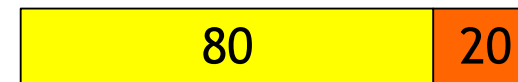


Members asked to accept changes to conditions of employment

Private



Public



Members asked to accept pay cuts

Private



Public



Q: How much impact has the current economic climate had on your members with regard to....

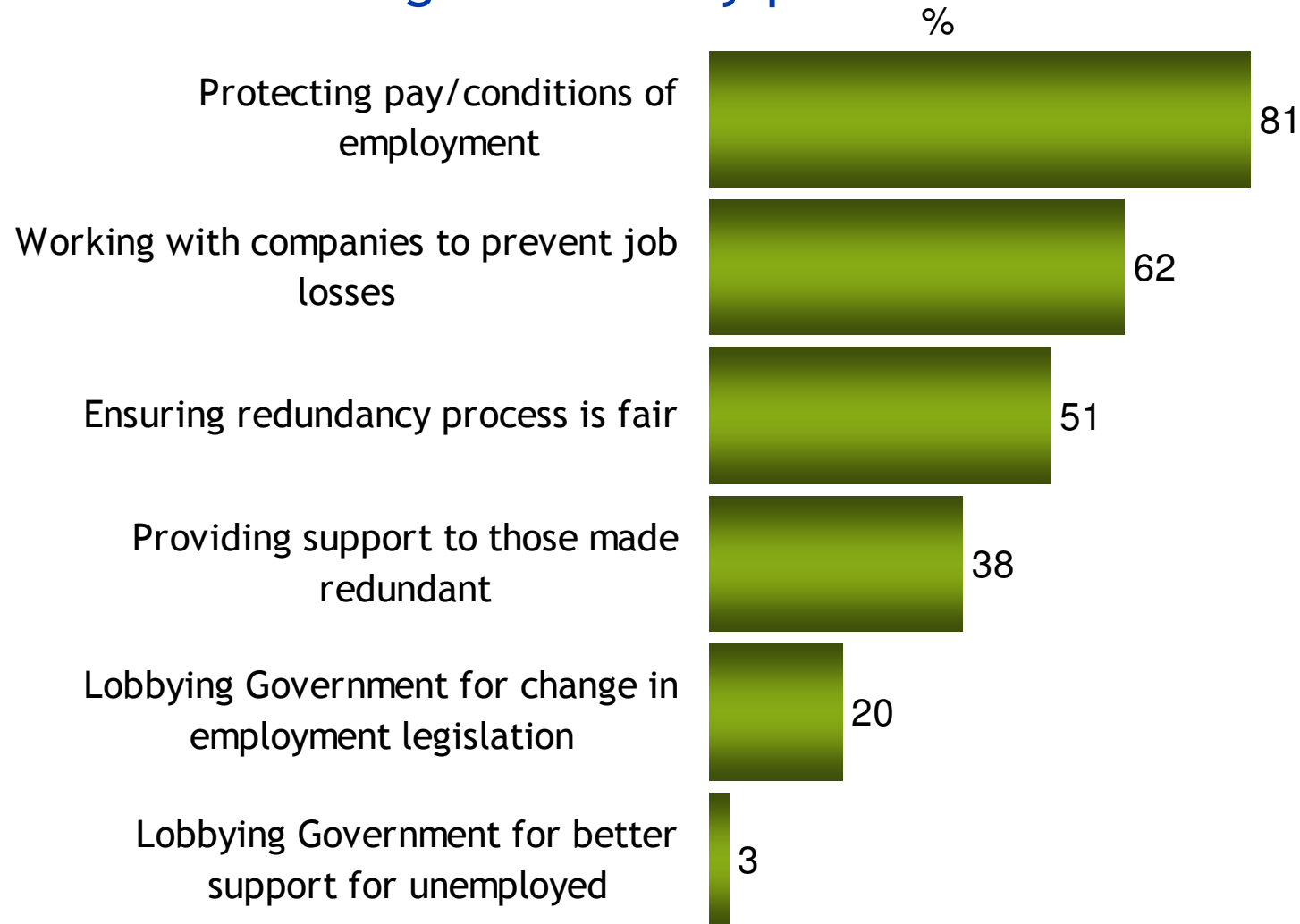
A: very significant impact, fairly significant impact, some impact, little or no impact

Base: All general secretaries (69)



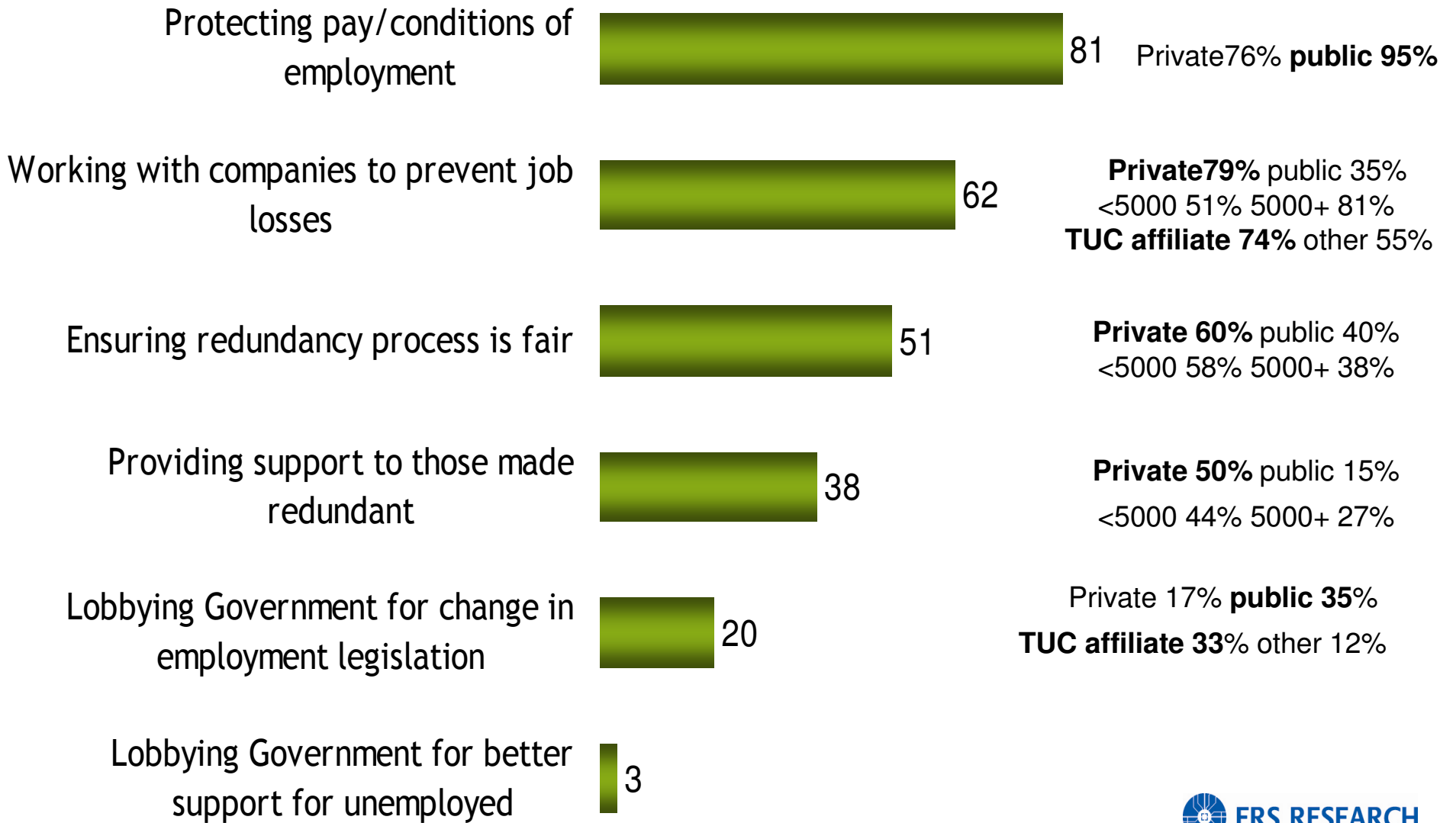
Unions' priorities

Unions' three main priorities are protecting pay/conditions of employment, working with companies to prevent job losses and ensuring redundancy process is fair



Q Which of these are your unions priorities at this time? Select three
Base: All general secretaries (69)

Private sector unions focusing on redundancies; public sector on pay/conditions of employment. TUC affiliates also on lobbying Government on employment legislation %



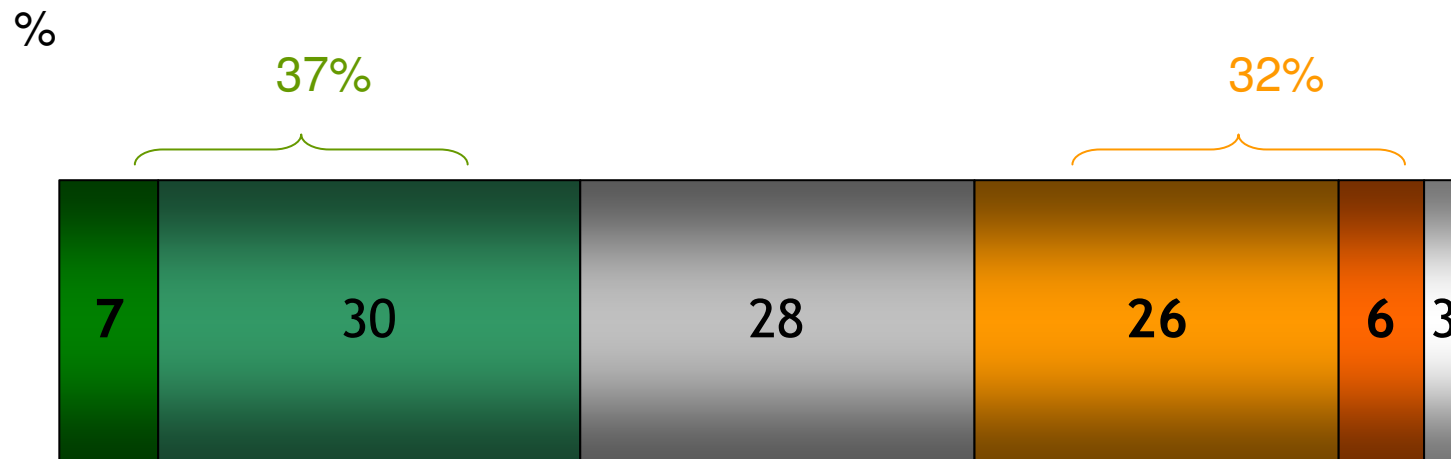
Q Which of these are your unions priorities at this time? Select three

Base: All general secretaries (69) private (42) public (20) <5000 (43) 5000+ (26) TUC affiliate (27) not (42)

Opinion divided on Government handling of the economic situation

Larger unions and TUC affiliates rate Government higher than others

■ Very good ■ Good ■ Neither good nor poor ■ Poor ■ Very poor ■ Not answered



Q; How would you rate the Government's handling of the economic situation?
Base: All general secretaries (69)



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Summary

Summary

- Three quarters said this recession was more severe than ones we have had in the recent past
- Nearly half of union leaders said the economic climate will not improve until 2010
- The main impact on unions has been to consider cutting costs, mentioned by a quarter. At this point public sector unions less impacted by economic situation
- A third said members had been asked to accept lower pay rises, similar proportion said members facing redundancy. Private sector unions impacted more by redundancies
- Unions' main priority was to protect members pay and working conditions, mentioned by eight in 10. Private sector unions more concerned with issues around redundancies; public sector with protecting pay/conditions
- Opinion of Government handling of the economic situation is divided. Around one third say it was good; one third say it was poor



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Technical Appendix

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- Survey universe defined as all national trades unions listed by the Certification Officer as at 31 March 2008. Federations were excluded
- Letters were sent to 131 general secretaries asking them to complete an online survey. Two paper questionnaires were sent as reminders
- 69 responded; 53% response rate. Those responding were representative of survey universe
- 44 completed by paper, 25 online
- Fieldwork conducted between 4 February and 3 March 2009

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