

GLOBAL ADVERTISING REGULATION

Insights from the ICAS Survey on legislative developments in 2026 and key advertising developments in the outdoor sector



JANUARY 2026



OVERVIEW

Summary of findings from a targeted survey of ICAS members in key global markets*:

- Overview of key regulatory themes shaping the advertising landscape, based on 2025 and 2026 survey results
 - Overview of key sensitive issues across key markets
 - Specific considerations for outdoor advertising
- ICAS & ICAS Global Think Tank activities

*Countries that participated in the survey: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, India, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Romania, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.



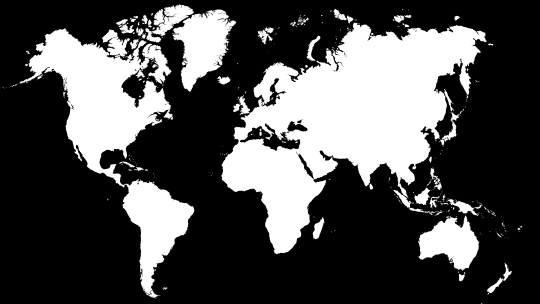
Introducing ICAS

Founded in 2016, ICAS brings together ad standards bodies / Self-Regulatory Organizations (SROs) and industry stakeholders from across the world.

We are a global network of dedicated experts and organizations working together to advance responsible advertising and to develop common solutions to the evolving challenges facing the advertising industry today.

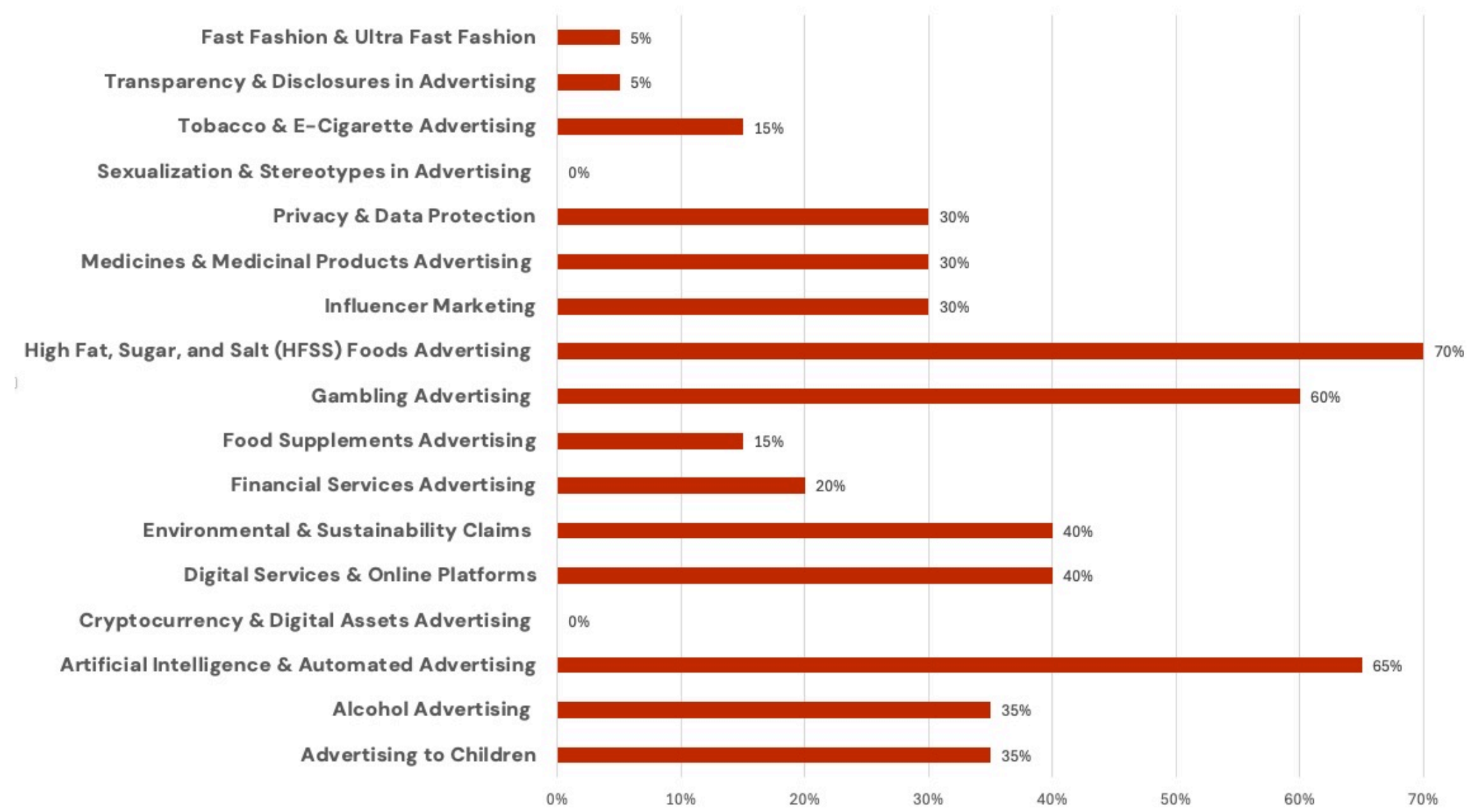
In 2024 we launched our new hub for forward-looking debate and research on responsible advertising: the ICAS Global Think Tank.





ICAS 2026 SURVEY

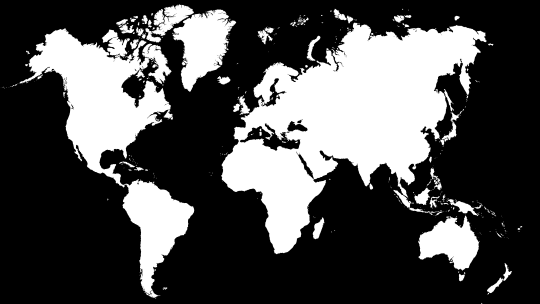
What are the **key legislative or regulatory developments** in your country?



Top 5 legislative or regulatory developments in 2026 in 20 key ICAS markets*

- 1 **HFSS Foods Advertising / LHF (70%)**
- 2 **AI and Automated Advertising (65%)**
- 3 **Gambling Advertising (60%)**
- 4 **Digital Services / Online Platforms (40%)**
- 5 **Environmental & Sustainability Claims (40%)**

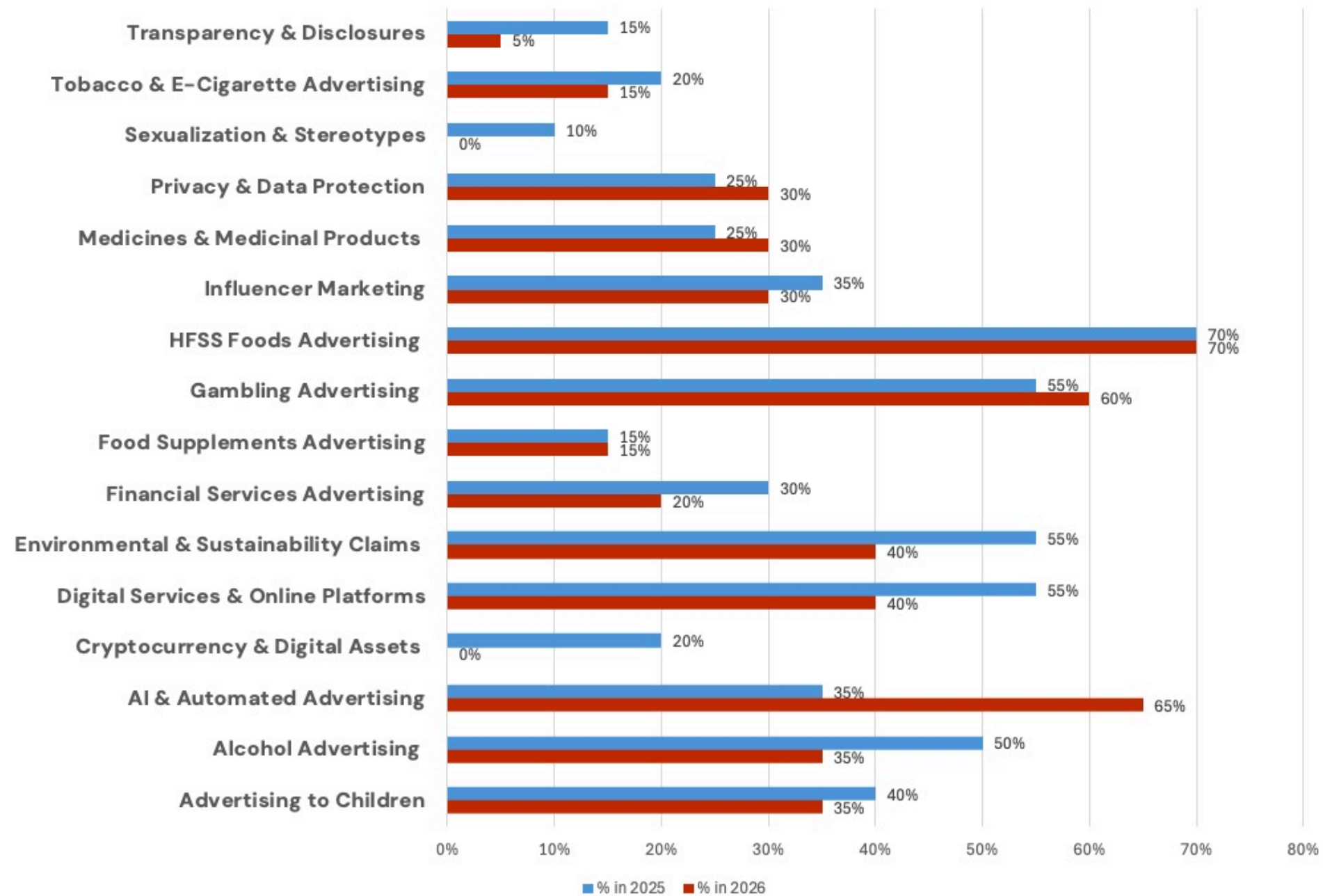
*Source: ICAS Survey 2026. Findings are based on 20 responses from SROs representing key ICAS markets across all regions.



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Comparative data*

Legislative and Regulatory Developments in 2025 and in 2026



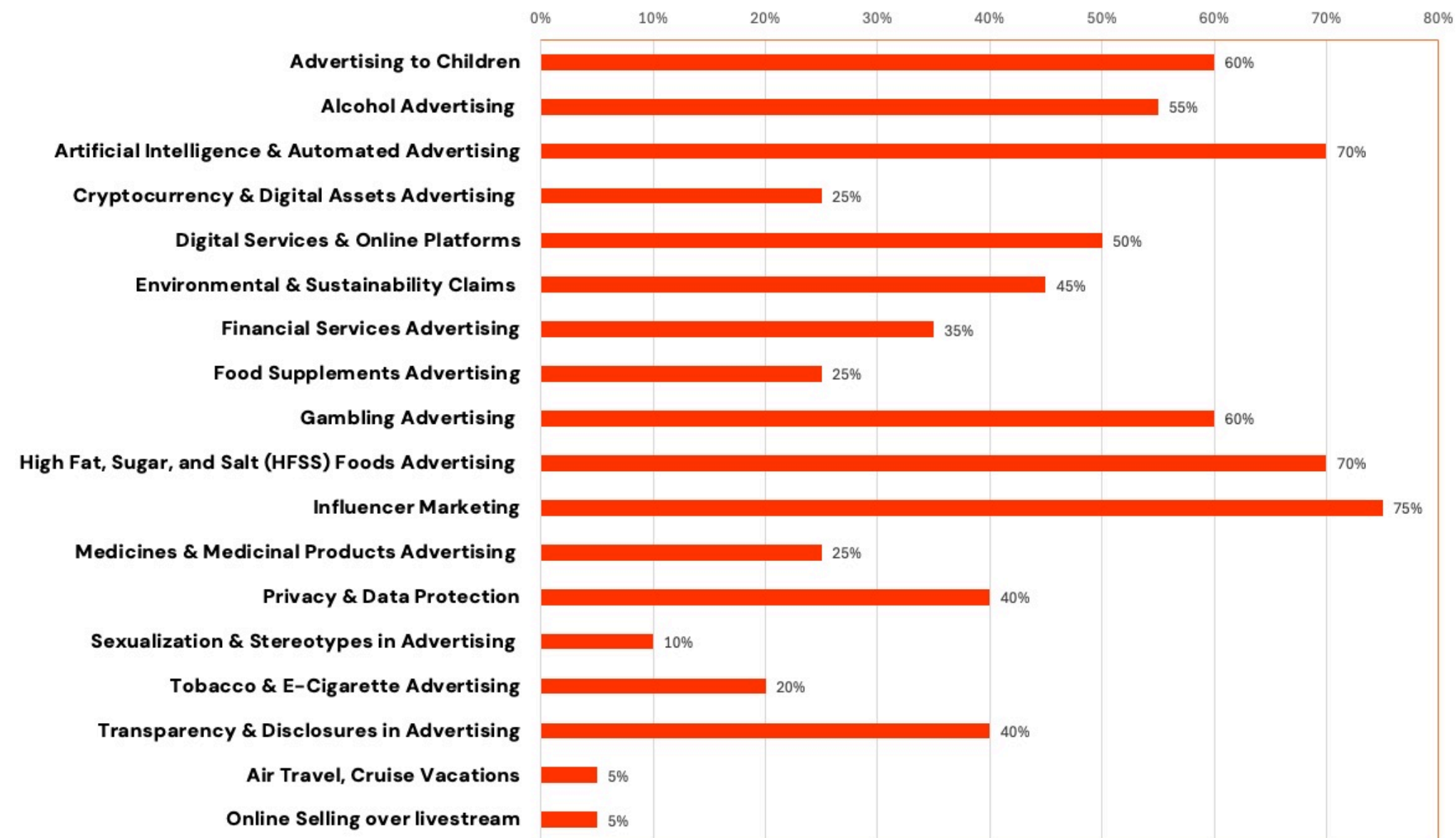
Key findings:

- 1 HFSS Foods Advertising / Less healthy food advertising have remained the top regulatory issue (70% of markets)**
- 2 Regulation of AI and automation now in 65% of markets (from 35% in 2025)**
- 3 Gambling advertising remains a top issue (in 55% of markets in 2025 and in 60% of markets in 2026)**

*Source: ICAS Survey 2025 and 2026. Findings are based on 20 responses from SROs representing key ICAS markets across all regions.

ICAS 2026 SURVEY

What are the **key sensitive issues** in your country?

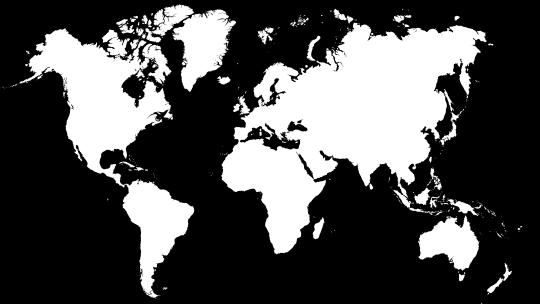


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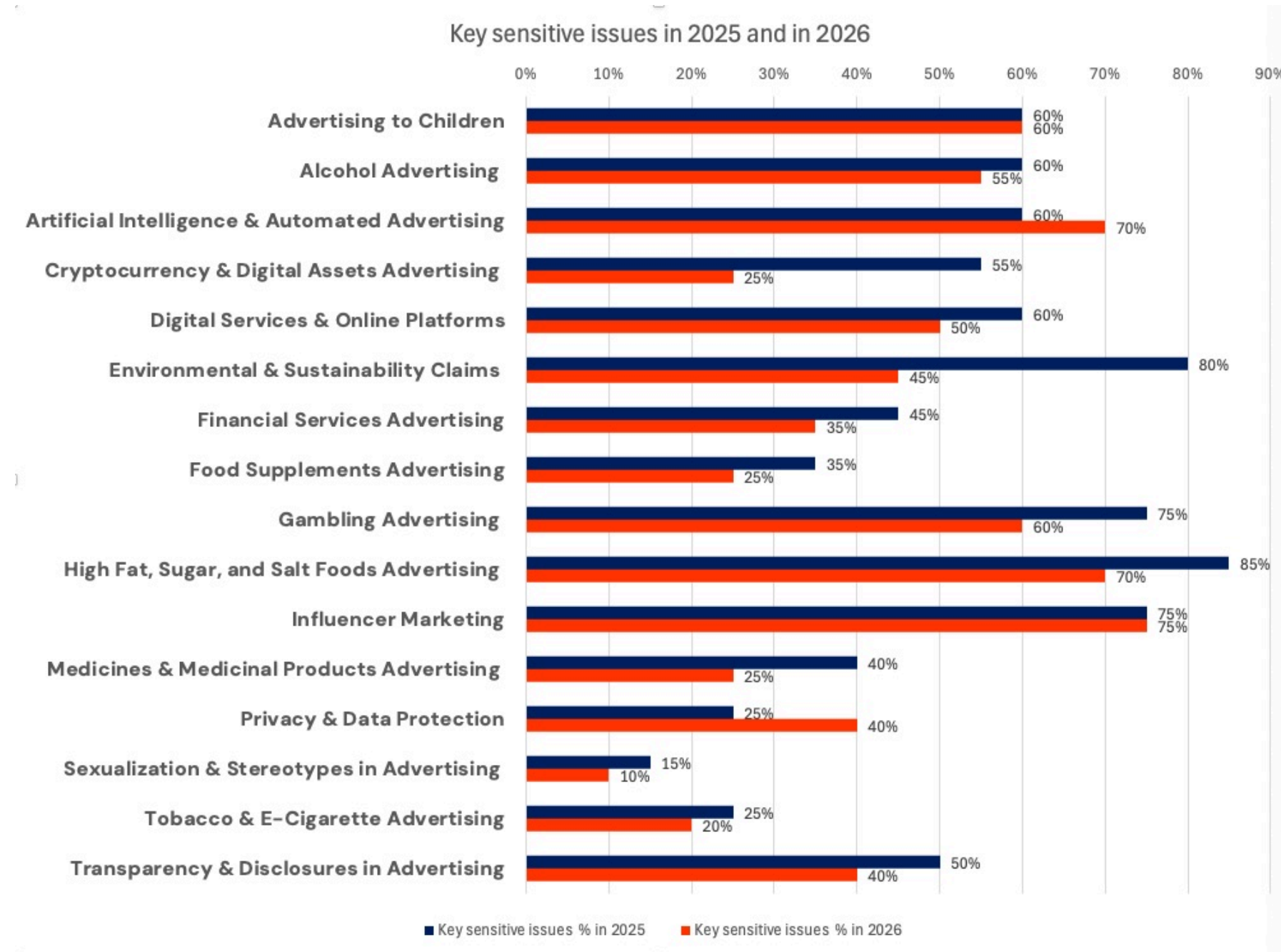
Top 10 sensitive issues in key ICAS member countries in 2026*:

- 1 Influencer Marketing (75%)
- 2 HFSS Foods Advertising (70%)
- 3 AI and automated advertising (70%)
- 4 Gambling Advertising (60%)
- 5 Advertising to Children (60%)
- 6 Alcohol Advertising (55%)
- 7 Digital Services / Online Platforms (50%)
- 8 Environmental & sustainability claims (45%)
- 9 Privacy and data protection (40%)
- 10 Transparency and Disclosures in Advertising (40%)



KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Comparative data*



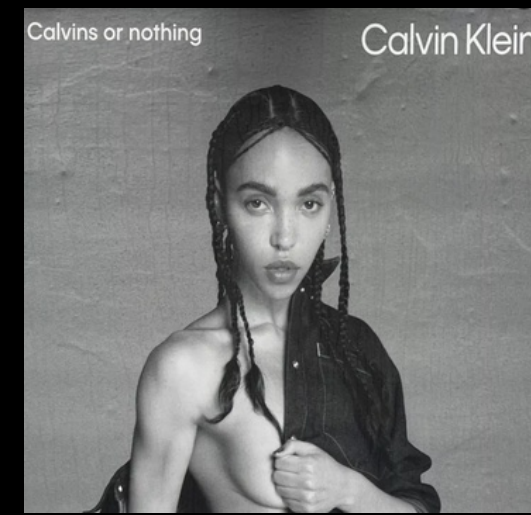
Key findings:

- 1 Influencer marketing remains a top sensitive issue, while areas such as environmental and sustainability advertising and advertising for crypto-assets are seen as less critical.
- 2 Growing concern: AI and automation as well as privacy and data protection.
- 3 HFSS advertising, alcohol advertising and advertising to children remain high on the agenda.

*Source: ICAS Survey 2025 and 2026. Findings are based on 20 responses from SROs representing key ICAS markets across all regions.

CONSIDERATIONS: OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

- **Public visibility & placement challenges:**
 - The public, unavoidable nature of OOH advertising increases sensitivity around harm and offence compared with other media.
 - The lack of audience targeting creates heightened risk for certain content (e.g. horror films or age-restricted ads), making placement rules critical.
 - Nudity or sexual content, offensive language, stereotypes, and material that may cause fear or distress are more likely to be considered irresponsible in public space.
- **Impact of regulated categories:** Restrictions on HFSS/less healthy foods, gambling, alcohol and similar categories can disproportionately affect OOH due to its general-audience exposure.
- **Disclosure and legibility:** Mandatory qualifications must be prominent and readable at a reasonable distance; the risk associated with “small print” is amplified in poster formats.
- **Risk of over-regulation:** In addition to national rules, local authorities may impose their own bans or restrictions on OOH advertising, increasing complexity and fragmentation.



Unilever rapped by ASA over Ben & Jerry's display ads

By Helen Gilbert | 19 June 2019 | 3 min read



Two posters for Moophoria Light were displayed close to a secondary school and a primary school

Unilever UK has been rapped by the advertising watchdog for displaying two ads for Ben & Jerry's ice cream near to a school.

Children's Food Campaign (Sustain) complained that the two ads, seen in March, were for a product that was high in fat, salt or sugar (HFSS) and directed at children.

Amsterdam to ban meat and fossil fuel outdoor advertising

January 23, 2026



Photo: Dutch News

Amsterdam has become the latest Dutch city to vote to ban adverts for fossil fuels and meat products in public spaces.

ICAS ACTIVITIES



Strengthening self-regulation globally:

We bring together ad standards bodies and the industry to promote effective and credible SR. Through horizon scanning, analysis and member surveys, we strive to identify emerging regulatory trends early, helping SROs and industry prepare and adapt.

Global Guidance on Influencer Marketing

April 2025

WFA World Federation of Advertisers | ifba INTERNATIONAL FOOD & BEVERAGE ALLIANCE | icas International Council for Ad Self-Regulation

Global Roadmap

for setting standards for the advertising of HFSS food and non-alcoholic beverages

Supporting high standards in practice:

We develop global guidance / roadmaps for SROs and/or the advertising industry on key topics such as influencer marketing, environmental claims, HFSS foods and the labeling of AI generated content (upcoming).

ICAS GLOBAL THINK TANK

A NEW GLOBAL SPACE FOR AD SELF-REGULATION-RELATED ENGAGEMENT, THINKING, RESEARCH AND OPEN AND HONEST CONVERSATION

OUR PURPOSE

Independent by **Nature**. Diverse by **Design**.
Innovative by **Purpose**.

The ICAS Global Think Tank is a first-of-its-kind, inclusive platform for advertising and self-regulation, created to lead in times of rapid change — such as the rise of AI and evolving societal expectations. Built to anticipate rather than react, it begins with open discussion and ends by informing the standards that shape advertising practices worldwide.

ICAS Global Think Tank:

In September 2024, we launched a new platform to help us address the most pressing challenges facing the advertising sector, generating insights that support evidence-based policymaking, strengthen advertising standards, and deliver positive outcomes for people and communities worldwide.

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What started with tobacco, alcohol and HFSS is now widening to gambling, fossil fuelled activities (airlines, cars, energy), fast fashion and ultra fast fashion. The license to advertise is at stake and it fuels the cultural divide. We need to answer this in a nuanced and balanced way. Not confrontational but shared goals and objectives reached with different means. Banning ads wont solve the problems; showing attractive alternatives does.

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ICAS member feedback / 2026 survey





Thank You!

Do you have questions about ICAS, Ad Self-Regulation or the ICAS Global Think Tank?

Visit: <https://icas.global>

Contact: sibylle.stanciu@icas.global

