

PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING *at a glance*

in the time of COVID-19

September 2020



With this newsletter, DG Communication's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit wishes to inform you on relevant and fresh public opinion insights and analysis from both EU level and the Member States. Every month we draw on available and published surveys, social media monitoring and the analysis of our team in close collaboration with other services within DG COMM, specifically Parliament's Liaison Office in all Member States.

The present publication provides a brief overview of relevant multi-country surveys as well as a selection of key findings from different Member States.

The current edition of the newsletter contains:

- A short analytical **summary** on main results and insights from across the EU
- A collection of **multi-national surveys** published in September and presenting public opinion on the Covid-19 pandemic
- A selection of **national surveys** on citizens' **attitudes toward the corona** crisis, and in particular their **views on the vaccine**, as well as on their **trust in public institutions**.

One main theme standing out in our selection is the public's attitude towards the expected Covid-19 **vaccine**. Developing and deploying an effective and safe vaccine against the virus is indeed the most likely permanent solution to stop the pandemic. To this end, the Commission has proposed an EU vaccines strategy against COVID-19.

Last week MEPs debated ways to secure a quick and safe supply of COVID-19 vaccines on with representatives of pharmaceutical companies, research, and civil society. MEPs highlighted the challenge of ensuring that vaccines are available as soon as possible, while at the same time building public trust in vaccination.

We welcome all comments and input to our work. If you want to know more about what the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit can do for you in this time of crisis, please contact:

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ANALYTICAL SUMMARY

Three recurring topics in this month's selection of polls are EU citizens' attitudes regarding:

- **a vaccine against Covid-19**
- **trust in public institutions in the fight against the pandemic**
- **general attitudes towards coronavirus**

In many countries, most respondents would get the vaccination against Covid-19, if it were available. This is the case in Denmark, Spain (both 70%), Sweden (57%), Italy (54%), Germany (50%), France (46%) and in 74% of respondents who participated in an Ipsos survey conducted in 27 countries on behalf of the World Economic Forum. However, as the latter study shows, most respondents (59%) do not expect this to be an option before the end of 2020. Moreover, in Sweden support for the vaccination has lost 9 pp since July, while in Poland only 39% of respondents would take it.

Trust in the EU increased between April and July, according to an online survey conducted by Eurofound. It went up in 13 EU countries, with largest increases recorded in Spain and Italy. According to the same study, trust in national government decreased in the same period. This is also a result emerging from national polls: In Denmark, for example, respondents now view the government's coronavirus direction as less effective, more costly and more difficult to follow. In Greece, a majority is satisfied with the government's way of handling the pandemic although this is significantly less than in May (61%, -23 pp), while in Portugal, close to 61% do not believe in a good management of the European recovery funds. In Sweden, trust in the government's Covid-19 strategy has gone up from 56% to 60% since July.

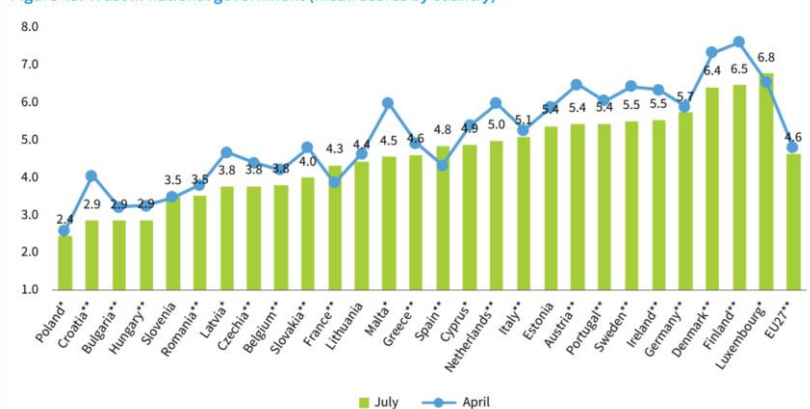
Concerns about the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic are on the rise again in most EU countries. In Estonia, concerns increased from 17% in July to 55% in September, while in Greece this share has increased by 22 pp since June. Respondents in France put the health crisis at the top of their list of concerns (49%) and argue that climate change is an even bigger priority in this context (39%). In fact, results of the Ipsos survey show that 86% of people want to see a more equitable and sustainable world after the pandemic, while according to another study run in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Poland, respondents see economic recovery programs as an opportunity to shift norms on climate, tax and wages. Finally, in the "Homo Covidus" survey conducted in Germany, France, Italy and Poland, over 60% of respondents in all countries are afraid the pandemic will trigger a global crisis. Around half of all respondents agree that it will cause most of life's everyday affairs to move online.

MULTI-COUNTRY SURVEYS

Living, working and Covid-19

Eurofound's e-survey aims to capture the **far-reaching implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the labour market, working conditions and quality of life across the EU**. Two rounds of this unique survey have been carried out to date, allowing for comparison between the first round in April, when most Member States were in lockdown, and the second round in July, when society and economies were slowly re-opening. (...)

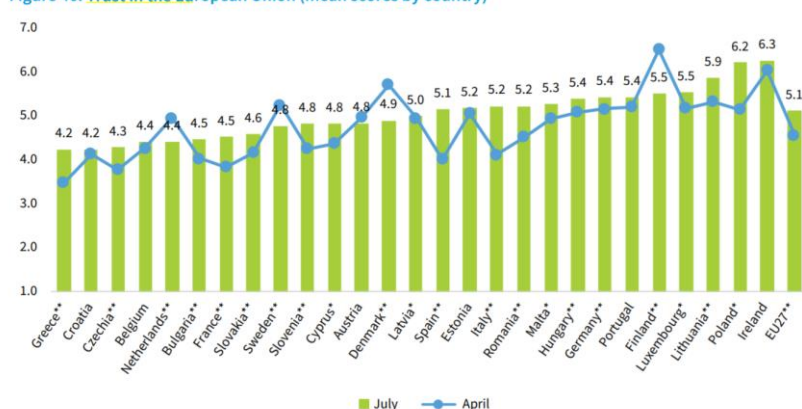
Figure 45: Trust in national government (mean scores by country)



Notes: The survey question was: 'Please answer on a scale of 1-10 how much you personally trust each of the following institutions' 1 - Do not trust at all; 10 - Trust completely. * Low reliability in July in Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Poland. ** Statistically significant change ($p=0.05$).

(...) **Trust in national governments** was higher in April than in July, whereas in July **trust in the EU** was higher than three months before. Trust in the EU among respondents went up in 13 Member States: the largest increases were recorded in Italy and Spain, two countries that were hard hit by the pandemic, and where respondents may have been more inclined to look beyond their national government for support.

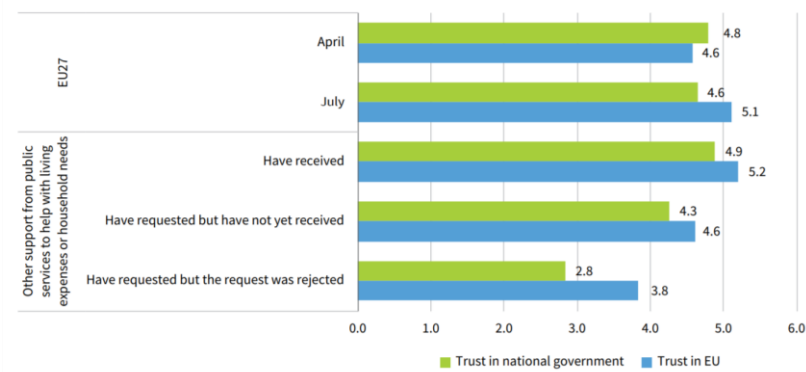
Figure 46: Trust in the European Union (mean scores by country)



Notes: The survey question was: 'Please answer on a scale of 1-10 how much you personally trust each of the following institutions? 1 - Do not trust at all; 10 - Trust completely. * Low reliability in July in Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Poland. ** Statistically significant change ($p=0.05$).

(...) Trust in both the national government and the EU is significantly higher among respondents who received financial support during the COVID-19 pandemic than it is among respondents whose request for support was rejected.

Figure 47: Trust in national government and EU, by public support received (April and July 2020), EU27 (%)



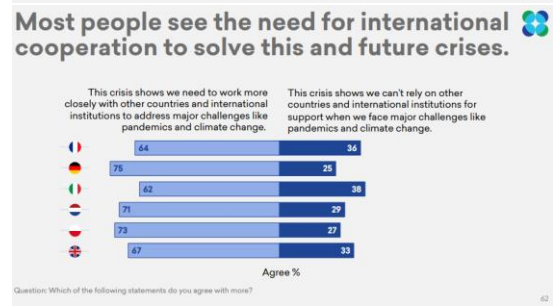
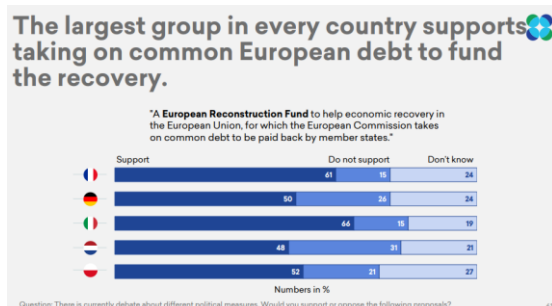
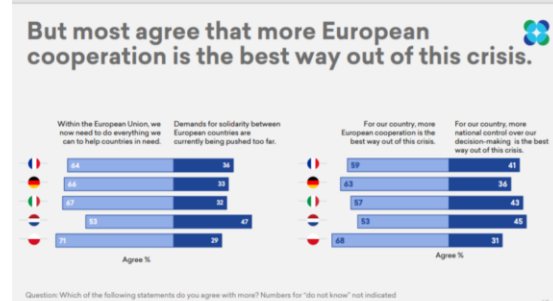
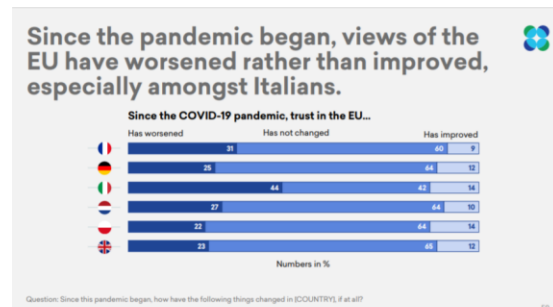
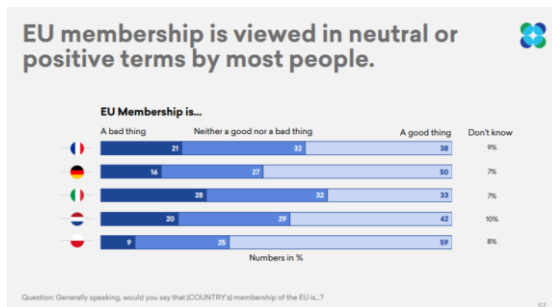
[Images source](#)

The New Normal?

The New Normal? is a new 7-country report drawing from a survey of 14,000 people on the impact of COVID-19 on **trust, social cohesion, democracy and expectations for an uncertain future** in the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, The Netherlands and Poland. (...)

Key findings

- Looking at populations through the lens of More in Common's national segmentations, the **disengaged or 'Invisibles' segments** have felt more isolation, loneliness and a **lack of support throughout COVID-19** - an early warning signal for the vulnerabilities authoritarian populists might exploit as the economic crisis deepens.
- In most countries, nine out of ten people are respecting public health guidelines on face masks and social distancing. But in all countries, public perceptions exaggerate the extent to which other people are not following the rules, with the French and British public in particular holding wildly inaccurate views. These **misperceptions are contributing to an erosion of social trust**.
- People in the US, UK, France and Poland feel deeply **disappointed by their governments' handling of the crisis** so far, while Germans and Dutch feel pride.
- As a result, **confidence in the government's ability** to tackle future crises is **low** everywhere except for Germany and the Netherlands.
- While there is **disappointment with the EU's handling of COVID-19**, majorities still see its **relevance and support European and multilateral cooperation** over 'go-it-alone' approaches -- including taking on common debt within the EU.
- The changes to our lives since the onset of the pandemic have re-connected people with nature, and re-awakened people to the way human activity affects the environment. This has translated into climate issues becoming more salient, reflected in **broad support for policies like a Green Deal**.
- People see **economic recovery programs as an opportunity** to shift norms on climate, tax and wages.



[Images source](#)

International Cooperation Welcomed Across 14 Advanced Economies

A Pew Research Center survey of 14,276 people across 14 countries in Europe, North America and the Asia-Pacific region, conducted in summer 2020, finds that many believe **greater global cooperation could have reduced the human toll from COVID-19**. The same poll reveals strong support for taking the interests of other countries into account even if this requires compromise. These findings are in line with a pre-coronavirus 2019 Pew Research Center survey in 12 of the same 14 countries that showed robust **public support for the idea of nations cooperating**, rather than competing, on the world stage.

Views of the economy have turned sharply negative in many countries amid COVID-19

Public attitudes about the economy have turned bleak in much of the world as the coronavirus outbreak continues to affect daily life, according to the Pew Research Center survey. (...) Overall, a median of only 31% of adults across the surveyed nations assess their country's current economic situation as good, while 68% say conditions are bad. (...) **In Europe, attitudes are mixed.** Generally, Northern Europeans surveyed have more positive assessments, with a majority of Danes, Swedes and Dutch rating their country's economic condition positively. Germans are split (51% good, 47% bad). In the rest of the European countries surveyed – Belgium, the UK, France, Spain and Italy – large majorities rate economic conditions negatively.

Majority favours social progress over economic growth in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic

A recent Ipsos survey in partnership with the Social Progress Imperative indicates that a majority across countries hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic want **social progress – rather than economic growth** – to be at the fore as the crisis continues and once it ends.

Conducted among a random sample of over 10,000 adults from 13 countries, the survey finds that **seven in ten are prioritising the health and well-being of the population over GDP**, and more than half want improved social outcomes to remain a priority even after the pandemic is over.

Though **young** people are least likely to suffer severe cases of the virus and most likely to experience negative consequences as a result of the pandemic's economic impact, the survey found that the **youngest respondents were the most likely to report prioritising social progress**.

An overwhelming majority of people want real change after COVID-19

A survey of nearly 21,000 adults in 28 countries, conducted by the World Economic Forum and Ipsos, found that **86% of people want to see a more equitable and sustainable world after the pandemic**.

(...) The results show "a profound and widespread desire for change rather than a return to how things were before the COVID-19 pandemic", Ipsos said. "Around the world, people yearn for significant change rather than a return to a pre-COVID normal."

Countries where the preference to return to the way things were before the pandemic is strongest include among others **Germany** (22%) and the **Netherlands** (21%).

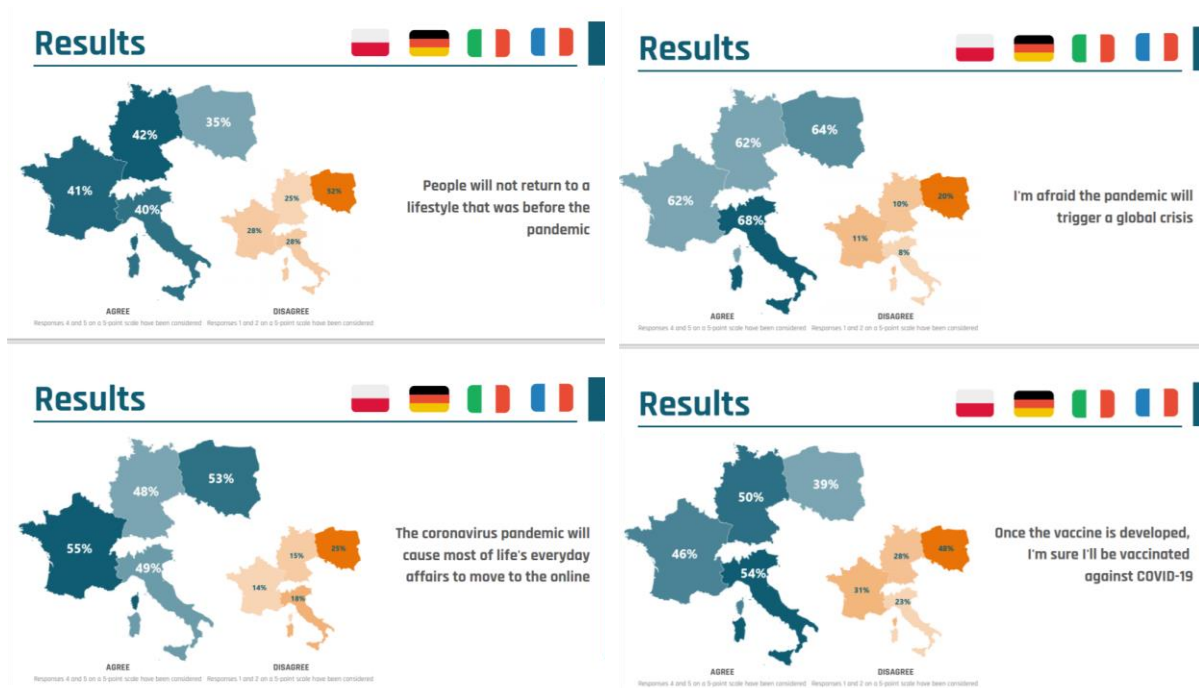
Three in four adults globally say they'd get a vaccine for COVID-19

In the summer Ipsos survey of nearly 20,000 adults from 27 countries worldwide, conducted on behalf of the World Economic Forum, 74% say they would get a vaccine for COVID-19 if it were available. However, 59% do not expect this will be an option before the end of this year. The reason most commonly given by those who would not get a vaccine is worry about side effects (56%) followed by doubt about its effectiveness (29%). (...)

The countries where Covid-19 vaccination intent is lowest are: Russia (54%), **Poland (56%)**, **Hungary (56%)**, and **France (59%)**.

Homo Covidus

The survey, conducted between 26/08 and 5/09, was carried out in Germany, France, Italy and Poland by national institutes associated in the European Network Independent Research Institutes.



[Images source](#)

COVID-19 Barometer

Kantar's COVID-19 Barometer has been exploring how people are feeling and acting around the world since the start of the pandemic. (...). The latest data explores **six distinct consumer tribes, defined by levels of worry, information consumption, adherence to rules and government trust**. The Coronavirus Tribes can help marketers to reshape their messaging, consumer experiences, and even their innovation plans and drive recovery.



From Impact to Recovery

PUBLIC is Kantar's new periodical journal offering insights, analysis, case studies, fresh perspective and global expertise on specific public policy topics, from both our own experts and high-profile public policy makers. This first edition 'From Impact to Recovery' focuses on **COVID-19 and the citizen response**.

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Czech Republic

Public Opinions on the Czech Republic's Membership in the European Union

- **Less than two-fifths** of Czech citizens (38%) are satisfied **with their country's** membership in the EU, a **quarter (25%) are dissatisfied**.
- Compared to the survey conducted last year (April 2019) satisfaction levels did not change significantly.
- Almost two-fifths of citizens (37%) feel **proud of their European citizenship**.
- Less than three-fifths (58%) of the population at least sometimes feel that they are not only Czech citizens, but also EU citizens.
- With regard to their country's EU membership, Czech citizens appreciate most the opportunities to study, work and live in other EU countries.

Evaluation of European integration

- The Czech public believes that the EU mostly applies the values of **democracy and cooperation** (64% in both cases), at least the values of justice (45%) and equality (39%).
- Approximately two thirds (67%) of the Czech public believe that the **European integration is positive** from an ecological point of view, 66% of the public evaluates **defence as benefit**.
- More than three-fifths (62%) of the public rate the European integration as beneficial for the economy.

Denmark

Report: Danes more sceptical about coronavirus direction

CPH post online, 24/09/2020

(...) The report, compiled by researchers from Aarhus University, has concluded that the Danes view the **government coronavirus direction as less effective, more costly and more difficult to adhere to**.

(...) While the Danes still believe the recommendations to be important, the data reveals several changes in mentality, including scepticism about the health authority's ability to act, doubtfulness about the effectiveness of some measures, and concerns about the rising costs associated with following their lead. The report is based on a survey of 500 people every day over the period between May 13 and September 20.

"We can see the lowest number of people actually feeling that they know how to act as a citizen in connection with the coronavirus," said Petersen, referring to the 'social bubble' confusion involving State Serum Institute (SSI) representative Kåre Mølbak at the government press conference last week. Two days later, the Sundhedsstyrelsen health authority said Mølbak's statement was not official advice and underlined that the Danes should take direction from the authority and not SSI.

One in five in Denmark unsure over Covid-19 vaccination

The Local, 18/09/2020

A recent survey showed that 70 percent of people in Denmark would take vaccination against Covid-19 once one becomes available, but one in ten said they would not. The remainder said they were currently unsure about whether they would want a coronavirus vaccine, according to the poll conducted by Epinion for national broadcaster DR. (...) Specifically, the poll asked people in **Denmark** whether they would say 'yes' or 'no' to a coronavirus vaccine should one be approved by the country's health authorities. **69.4 percent responded that they would say 'yes' to a vaccine, 11.2 percent said 'no' and 18.4 percent said 'don't know'. One percent preferred not to answer.** (...)

The poll was conducted in the first week of September and 1,003 Danes over the age of 18 were asked, DR writes.

Estonia

Survey: Perceived threat of coronavirus intensifies among people of Estonia

BNS, 24/09/2020

While just 17 percent of Estonian people deemed the situation regarding the spread of the coronavirus critical in July, in August the figure had risen to 37 percent and in September to 55 percent, it appears from a survey commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and carried out by pollster Turu-uuringute AS.

Support by Estonian people to seeing current measures continued is high, and 34 percent of the respondents said the measures should be tightened. 30 percent opined that acute crisis is over but it is important to stay vigilant and adhere to safety measures. (...)

Finland

More than a quarter of Finns feel that the epidemic situation has had a negative effect on their mental health

STTEN, 10 September 2020

Problems seem to have increased, especially among young people and women. More than one in four Finns feels that the exception period of the coronavirus epidemic has had a negative effect on their own mental health, according to a **survey** commissioned by the Finnish Mental Health Association. Impaired mental health and suicidal thoughts are highlighted in the **survey**, especially among young people and women.

France

Fractures françaises : face aux crises qui frappent le pays, un besoin de protection plus fort que jamais

Le moral des Français reste en berne en cette année 2020 : 78% d'entre eux estiment que « la France est en déclin » (5+ points), le plus haut niveau depuis 2017 et l'arrivée au pouvoir d'Emmanuel Macron. Toutefois, un Français sur deux (51%) estime aussi que ce déclin « n'est pas irréversible », signe que ce pessimisme n'est pas absolu.

Cet état d'esprit sombre s'explique par les crises successives qui ont frappé la société française au cours des dernières années. Crise sanitaire, en premier lieu : 49% des Français citent « l'épidémie de Covid-19 » parmi leurs principaux sujets de préoccupation...

Changement climatique

Deux Français sur cinq estiment que, dans le contexte actuel de crise sanitaire, **la lutte contre le changement climatique est devenue encore plus prioritaire (39%)**. Cette proportion est deux fois supérieure à celle des Français jugeant que cette lutte est aujourd'hui moins prioritaire (20%). 41% pensent qu'elle n'est ni plus ni moins prioritaire.

Germany

Germans are more afraid of Trump than the Covid-19 pandemic

The study asks respondents to rank 22 risks and threats from the one they are most afraid of, to the one they are least afraid of. The biggest fear of the German people, it turns out, is "a more dangerous world caused by the policies of US President Trump" with **53% of respondents stating that they are very afraid of this prospect**. Meanwhile, the fear of a serious illness or infection with the coronavirus only ranked 17th on Germans' greatest fears with only about a third (32%) of respondents being very afraid of this.

ZDF Politbarometer: Refugee admission from Moria controversial

In recent months, the "Corona" issue has completely dominated the political agenda. Even now it leads the list of the most important problems in Germany with 56 percent (August: 71 percent), followed by the **topic of refugees and asylum, which has now risen** to 35 percent (August: 11 percent).

After the fire in the Greek refugee camp Moria, the reception of refugees from Greece is under discussion. 43 percent think that Germany should in any case take in a larger number of refugees from Moria. On the other hand, 46 percent think that Germany should only do so if other EU countries also participate, and nine percent are against any admission of these refugees (the remainder 100 percent here and in the following "do not know"). [...]

Only eleven percent of all respondents find the currently applicable state protective measures exaggerated, 69 percent consider them to be just right and 18 percent would even like to see more extensive measures. [...]

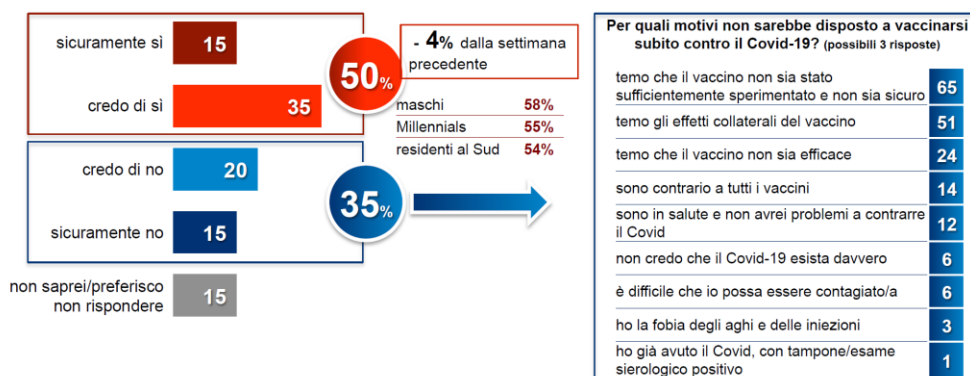
[Should Germany take in more refugees from Moria? - Certainly 43%/ Only if other EU member states do the same 46%/ Not at all 9%]



Italy

Metà degli italiani si vaccinerebbe contro il Covid-19. A frenare i dubbi sulla sicurezza del vaccino

Se entro il 2020 potesse ottenere il vaccino anti-Covid, sarebbe disposto a vaccinarsi subito?



NOTA INFORMATIVA: valori espressi in %. Date di esecuzione: 9 – 11 settembre 2020. Metodo di rilevazione: sondaggio CATI-CAMI-CAWI su un campione rappresentativo nazionale di 800 soggetti maggiorenni.

Tutti i diritti riservati

Greece

Pulse poll 21-23 September for newschannel SkyTV

How worried are you due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

- Very worried 40%
- Quite worried 26%
- Rather worried 17%

NB: Very worried + Quite worried: +22p p.p. compared to June 2020

MRB poll for Star TV, 21-23 September 2020

Greek government response to the pandemic assessed as:

- Good / very good 51.2%
- Bad / Very bad 44.7%

Alco poll for OpenTV, 14-16 September 2020

Are you satisfied with the government handling of the Covid-19 pandemic?

- Yes: 61% (-23 points compared to May)
- No 32% (+15pts compared to May)
- N/A 7% (+6 pts compared to May)

Opinion poll for Proto Thema newspaper, 7-10 September 2020

Do you agree with those who argue Covid-19 does not actually exist and forms part of a suspicious international conspiracy?

- Yes 9%
- Probably so 8%
- Probably not 8%
- No 73%

Do you believe that with the measures taken by the government, and with all of us respecting some basic prevention rules, the pandemic will be dealt with efficiently?

- Yes 36%
- Probably so 36%
- Probably not 10%
- No 13%

Have you personally felt pressure on your revenue (or the one of your household) due to the consequences of the pandemic?

- Yes 42%
- To some extent 17%
- Not so much 10%
- No 30%

Are you optimistic that it will be possible to contain recession / unemployment in the coming months?

- Very optimistic 4%
- Reasonably optimistic 23%
- A little bit 39%
- Not at all 30%

Latvia

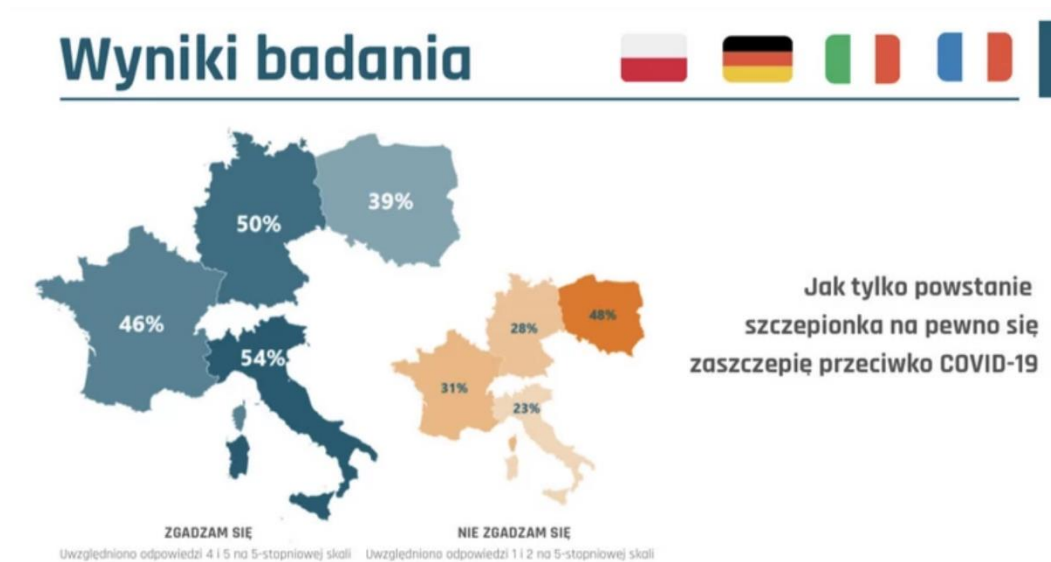
75% of the population believe that the Covid-19 crisis has united society

(...) Although a large majority of the population in the survey (75%) agreed that the health crisis had united people and were happy to support emergency services (doctors, police officers, etc.) and fellow humans who were having difficulty during the emergency, however 55% said they primarily thought of themselves because the situation was unclear.

Poland

Poles sceptical about the coronavirus vaccine

48 percent Poles interviewed declare that they will not be vaccinated against the virus causing COVID-19 disease after the vaccine is created - according to a study conducted by the IBRiS institute. (...)



"As soon as a vaccine is created, I will certainly get vaccinated against COVID-19" - almost half of the interviewed Poles (48 percent) do not agree with this thesis:

Portugal

The Portuguese are sceptical regarding the use of European funds

According to a Jornal de Negócios/CMTV survey, **60.6% of the Portuguese do not believe in a good management of the European recovery funds**. 27% of the respondents are confident in a good implementation of the funds, 42% consider that the funds bring **no benefits for the country** and 7.3% do not have an opinion on the matter. The debate on the proper use of the European recovery funds has been at the centre of public discussion with many asking for a transparent process. The Portuguese government assures that the country will be able to make good use of the funds.

Prime Minister most trusted to manage the EU funds

The poll conducted by Intercampus for Correio da Manhã and Jornal de Negócios asked who is the most trusted politician to run MFF and EU recovery funds for Portugal. PM António Costa is considered the best person to manage EU funds for Portugal by 34%, followed by Rui Rio (PSD, EPP) with 22%.

Slovenia

Poll shows people not very concerned about coronavirus

The share of respondents who are **not concerned by the new coronavirus spreading** rose from 13.3% in March to 27.2% in September.

The share of those who are **fairly concerned decreased** to almost 30% compared to March, when the share was 38%, and the share of those who are quite concerned dropped from 31.2% to 22.1%.

The share of those who are **very concerned rose slightly**, from 17.5% to 20%, but that did not change the overall situation. (...)

People also no longer seem to find government-imposed restrictive measures justified. If as many as 70% of respondents **assessed government measures** as appropriate in March, and a record 75% in April, this **percentage dropped** to under 45% in September. (...)

An interesting twist happened with those who deem government measures inadequate. While in March just over 16% thought the authorities should do more to fight the virus, in April and May virtually nobody thought so, but this month 21.2% of the respondents said more measures would be required.

Spain

30% of Spaniards have doubts about being vaccinated against Covid-19, poll reveals

According to a **survey** from the Carlos III Health Institute, **42% of respondents believe the worst of the pandemic is still to come**. Not all Spaniards would get vaccinated against Covid-19 if the option was available. That's according to the results of a study from the Carlos III Health Institute published on Tuesday. According to the national **survey, 30% of respondents expressed doubts about whether they would be vaccinated against the coronavirus, compared to 70% who replied they would do so**.

The study also looked at the public's perception on different issues related to the pandemic: 64% said they were worried or very worried about the coronavirus crisis; 42% replied that the worst was still to come; and 80% agreed with the mandatory use of face masks in public spaces. One in four participants replied that the pandemic was affecting their emotional state.

On the issue of coronavirus vaccination, the **survey** asked participants to rate on a scale of one to five to what extent they agreed with the following statement: "If a vaccine against the coronavirus was available and it was prescribed to me, I would take it." According to the results, **49% of respondents indicated five, meaning they were in total agreement**; 21% chose four; 18% three; 5.6% two; and 6.8% one, meaning they totally disagreed with having a vaccine. (...)

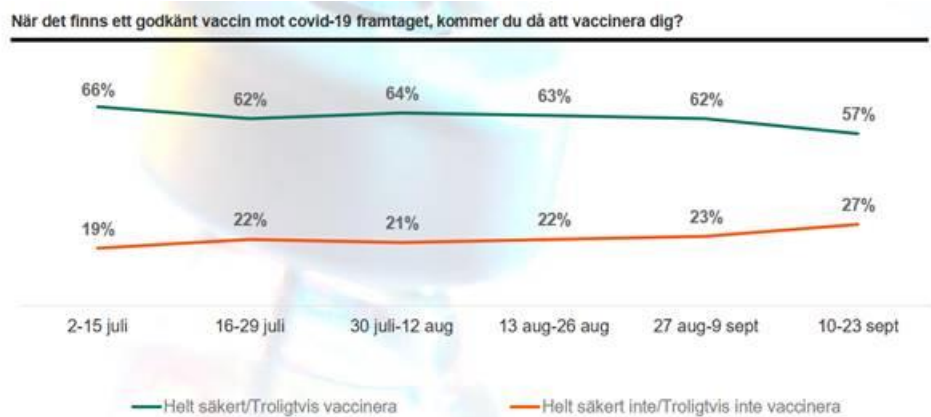
According to the poll, 32% of respondents said they were "extremely" **worried about the pandemic**; 32% were "very" worried; 25% were "quite" worried, 10% "a little" worried; and 0.5% "not at all."

There was also concern about the **future**, with 42% replying that the worst of the pandemic was still to come. Another 34% said the worst had passed and 23% said that Spain was currently experiencing the **most challenging moment of the crisis**. One in four participants replied that the pandemic was affecting their emotional state. The survey showed that respondents were **most concerned**, in this order, about losing a loved one, people not wearing face masks, health services becoming overwhelmed and a new lockdown.

(...) The survey also asked about the Spanish government's **tracking app**, Radar Covid. According to the results, 59% of participants were willing to download it.

Sweden

Decreasing support for vaccination against COVID-19



Legend: Green- will take vaccine; Red- will probably not take the vaccine

6 in 10 trust the governments COVID-Strategy



Worry about the consequences of the crises is going down

