

Belgians more satisfied with health services than respondents in other OECD countries, and call for prioritised spending on pensions, health and long-term care

The OECD's cross-national Risks that Matter survey examines people's perceptions of social and economic risks and how well they feel their government reacts to their concerns. The survey polled a representative sample of 27 000 18-64 year-olds in 27 OECD countries to better understand what citizens want and need from social policy – particularly in the face of the cost-of-living crisis.

Short-term worries in Belgium revolve around finances and health; 63% worry about not being able to pay all expenses and make ends meet and 56% about becoming ill or disabled, compared to cross-national averages of 65% and 60%, respectively

Similar concerns are reflected in long-term worries, as Belgians worry about financial security in old age (71%), becoming ill or disabled (67%) and about accessing good-quality, accessible health care (62). In most areas these concerns are lower than in RTM countries on average (75%, 68% and 71%, respectively).

Thinking about current events, over 90% of Belgians are concerned about

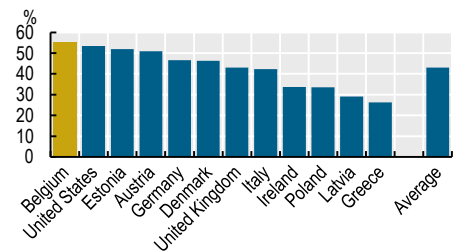
inflation and cost of living (Fig 1), even though Belgium had relatively high real-wage growth (OECD *Employment Outlook* 2023). Other common concerns include climate change (77%) and people needing mental health care not getting it (77%).

More than three-in-five respondents in Belgium want to prioritise spending on old-age pensions (67%), health (64%), and long-term care services for older people (62%). When asked whether they would spend 2% more of their own income in tax, priorities remain the same, but support is reduced by 38p.p., 27p.p. and 39p.p., respectively.

Satisfaction with public services is highest for health and education (50% or more), with levels above cross-national averages. In fact, respondents in Belgium are more satisfied with health services than in any other participating country (Fig 2).

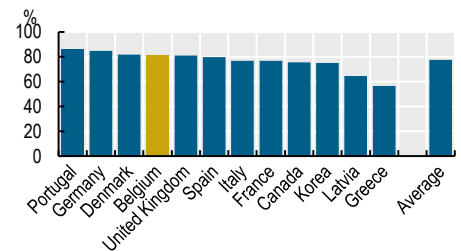
Among the 45% of Belgians who do not feel they can easily access public services (46% across RTM countries), a large majority (82%) report that they do not think the application process would be simple and quick (Fig 3).

Fig. 2. Proportion of respondents agreeing that they have access to good-quality and affordable health services if needed, by country, 2022



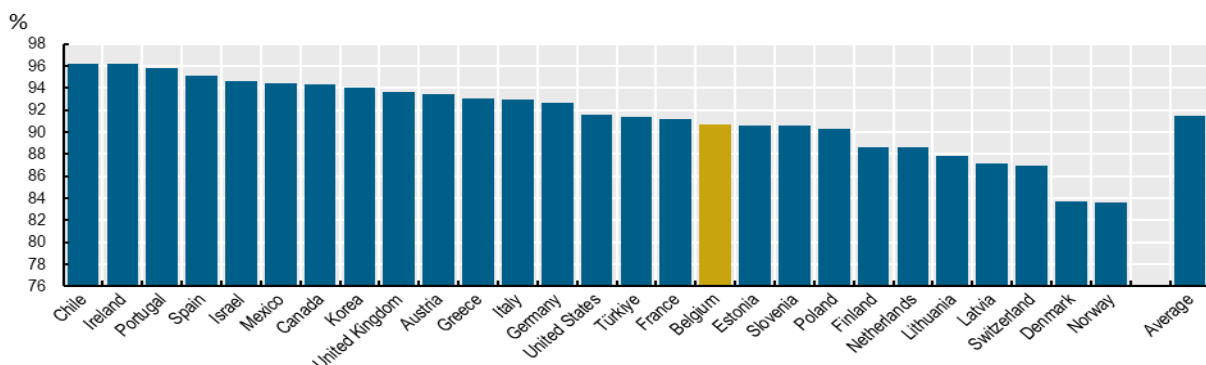
Source: OECD Risks that Matter Survey 2022, <http://oe.cd/rtm>.

Fig. 3. Proportion of respondents who report not thinking that the application process would be simple and quick, out of those who say that they would not easily access benefits, by country, 2022



Source: OECD Risks that Matter Survey 2022, <http://oe.cd/rtm>.

Fig. 1. Percent of respondents indicating they are “concerned” or “somewhat concerned” by inflation and cost of living, by country, 2022



Notes: Average refers to the unweighted average of the 27 OECD countries for which data are available. Respondents were asked about how concerned they were about statements regarding the national situation in their country. Respondents could choose between: “not at all concerned”, “not so concerned”, “somewhat concerned”, “very concerned”, or “can’t choose”. Data present the share of respondents who report “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned.” RTM data include respondents aged 18-64.

Source: OECD Risks that Matter Survey 2022, <http://oe.cd/rtm>.

The OECD Risks That Matter survey is a cross-national survey examining people's social and economic concerns, how well they think government responds to their needs and expectations, and what policies they would like to see in the future. The survey was conducted for the first time in 2018, to support the OECD Social Policy Ministerial, and subsequently in 2020. The 2022 survey, conducted in October-December 2022, draws on nationally representative samples in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States.