

Belgians worry about economic insecurity, but believe they receive their fair share of public benefits

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 25000 people aged 18 to 64 years old in 25 OECD countries to understand better what citizens want and need from social policy – particularly in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like many other countries in the Risks That Matter survey, the risk of illness and disability is a top worry in the short run, held by a majority (61%) of Belgian respondents. Nearly three-quarters of respondents cite falling ill or becoming disabled as a risk they are somewhat or very concerned about in the longer run, too, i.e. beyond the next decade.

These results arise in a broader context of perceived economic insecurity. Three-quarters of Belgian respondents believe that their country's economic situation is worse or much worse than it was in 2019 (Fig. 2), and nearly 60% are somewhat or very concerned about their own household's finances and overall social and

economic well-being when looking ahead to 2022.

In the face of this insecurity, Belgians are somewhat sceptical of government support getting them through financial troubles. However, respondents in Belgium are more positive than respondents in many other countries (Fig. 1). Nearly four out of ten Belgians have confidence that the government would sufficiently support them through financial troubles, versus 31% in France, even though Belgium offered a job retention scheme during the pandemic that paid a lower wage replacement rate than France, up to a lower ceiling (€2100 monthly), and the enrolment of dependent workers in Belgium's scheme in April-May 2020 was lower than in France.

Cross-nationally, 42% of respondents say that they do not get the fair share of benefits they deserve, given the taxes and social contributions they pay (Fig. 3). Similar to 2018, Belgium was one of the countries where respondents were *least* likely to perceive this kind of unfairness. Only about 20% of Belgian respondents say they do not get their fair share of benefits, and 46% say that they *do* get their fair share, based on the taxes and social contributions they pay.

Fig. 1. Percent of respondents indicating they are somewhat confident or very confident in different sources providing support in case of financial trouble

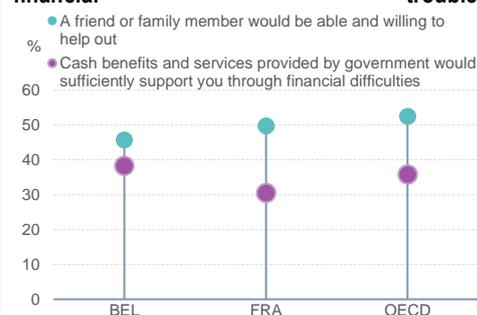


Fig. 2. Share of respondents who say that their country's economic situation is worse or much worse than it was in 2019

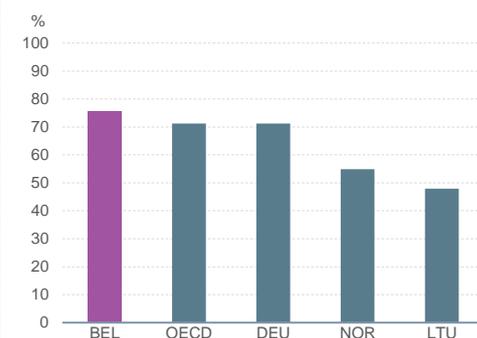
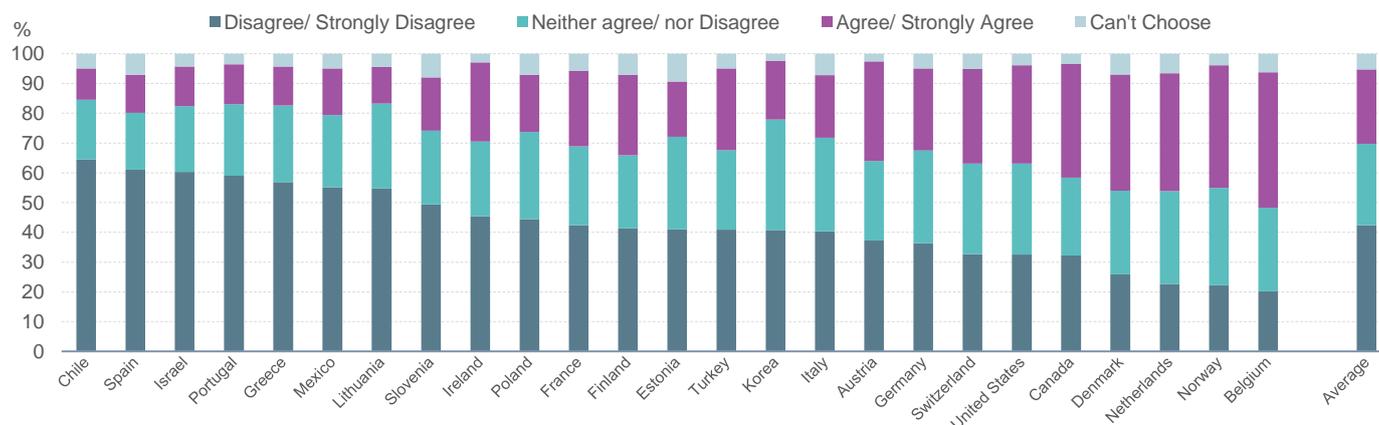


Fig. 3. Belgians most likely to feel that they receive their fair share of public benefits, given the taxes and social contributions they pay



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement "I feel that I receive a fair share of public benefits, given the taxes and social contributions I pay". Possible response options were "strongly disagree", "disagree", "neither agree nor disagree", "agree" and "strongly agree". Respondents could also choose "can't choose".

Source: OECD Secretariat estimates based on the OECD Risks That Matter 2020 survey, <https://www.oecd.org/social/risks-that-matter.htm>

The OECD Risks that Matter (RTM) 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. The 2020 survey, conducted in September-October 2020, draws on nationally-representative samples in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.