

Swiss are relatively satisfied with social service provision, but economic insecurity is an oft-cited concern

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.

While Swiss respondents feel more economically secure and more satisfied with social service provision than respondents in most other OECD countries, the Swiss are not worry-free. Household financial security is the most oft-cited concern in Switzerland in both the short run and the long run. 51% of Swiss RTM respondents are worried about not being able to pay all expenses and make ends meet in the next year or two (Fig. 1), and nearly seven out of ten (69%) worry about not being financially secure in old age.

In spite of their financial worries, Swiss respondents are more confident in their governments' ability to support them through financial difficulties than are respondents elsewhere in the OECD. On average across countries, only 28% of RTM respondents say they think their

government would (or does) provide adequate income support in the event of unemployment, compared to 41% in Switzerland. And fewer than 40% of Swiss respondents say that they feel they would *not* be able to access public services and benefits if they needed them, compared to 48% cross-nationally.

When looking at specific issue areas, public safety (or policing) is the most favourably viewed social service in Switzerland. Nearly six out of ten respondents say that there are good-quality public safety services. A slim majority of respondents in Switzerland also agree or strongly agree with having good access to healthcare – a noteworthy outcome considering the health exigencies of the pandemic and the stressors facing healthcare providers in this period.

When asked in what issue areas they would like government to do more, Swiss respondents point to pensions. Bearing in mind the taxes they might have to pay and the benefits they might receive, nearly six out of ten Swiss respondents say government should spend more on pensions (Fig. 3). And while half of Swiss respondents say they would like government to do more to ensure their economic and social security, this is far below the cross-national average of 68%.

Fig. 1. Percent identifying 'not being able to pay all expenses and make ends meet' as the top short-term risk to themselves or their family

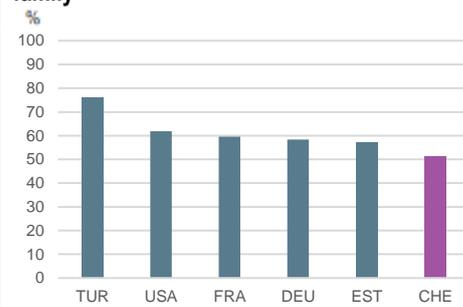


Fig. 2. Half of Swiss respondents want government to do more to ensure their economic and social security

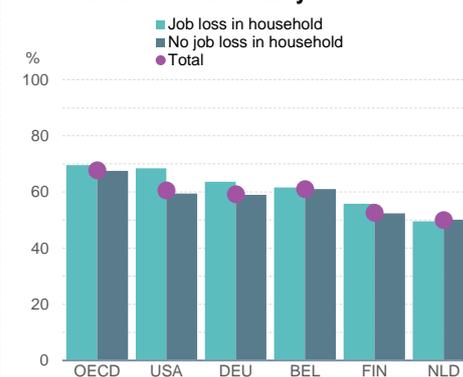
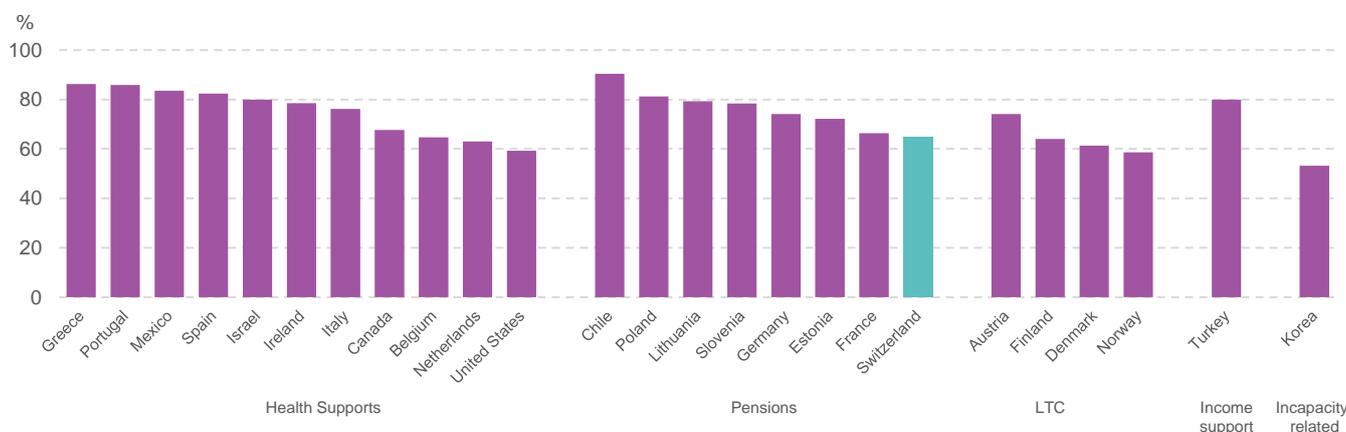


Fig. 3. Swiss respondents are most willing to pay more in taxes to get better pensions



Note: Respondents were asked whether they would like to see less, the same, or more government spending in different social policy areas, given the taxes they might have to pay and the benefits they and their family might receive. Possible response options were "spend much less", "spend less", "spend the same as now", "spend more" and "spend much more". Respondents could also choose "none" or "can't choose". Figure presents the issue with the greatest share of respondents indicating willingness to pay, per country. The full list of responses was family supports, education services and supports, employment supports, unemployment supports, income supports, housing supports, health supports, incapacity-related supports, pensions, long-term services for the elderly, public safety, none, and don't know. Long-term care is abbreviated as LTC.

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 perceptions of the social and economic risks they face and how well they think their government addresses those risks. The survey was conducted for the first time in two waves in the spring and autumn of 2018. The 2020 survey, conducted in September-October 2020, draws on a representative sample of over 25 000 people aged 18 to 64 years old in 25 OECD countries: 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. Respondents were asked about their 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.