

Germans worry about pensions, want government to do more

The OECD's new cross-national survey, *Risks That Matter*, examines people's perceptions of social and economic risks and their views on how well government reacts to their concerns.

The survey polled a representative sample of 22 000 adults in 21 countries in April 2018 in an effort to understand better what citizens want and need from social policy.

Germans are most worried, in the short run, about becoming ill or disabled. This is the top concern in most other surveyed countries, too. 51% of Germans list illness or disability as a top-three risk in the next couple of years. The next most frequently cited worries were crime or violence (47%) and struggling to make ends meet (43%).*

When looking beyond the next decade, pensions are by far the most common concern for Germans. 76% of people in Germany list "financial security in old age" as a top-three risk.

In the face of these concerns, people have little confidence in government and in their ability to access public support. **About half (52%) of Germans feel that they would not be able to access public benefits easily if they needed them.**

Most Germans feel they have weak

*Values exceed 100% because respondents could select up to three answers.

influence over public policy. Only 18% agree or strongly agree with the statement "The government incorporates the views of people like me when designing/reforming public benefits."

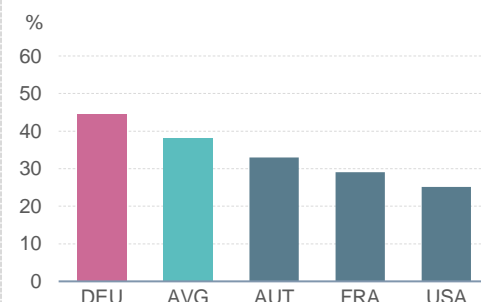
Most people in Germany want more support from their government. Nearly four out of five people (78%) say government should do more to ensure their economic and social security (Fig. 3).

Reflecting German concerns about old-age security, the area with strongest support for greater expenditure is pensions. 45% of Germans say they would be willing to contribute an extra 2% of their income in taxes and contributions to improve the provision of pensions (Fig. 1). This is higher than the cross-country average of 38%.

30% of Germans say they would contribute more in tax for better long-term care for the elderly, and 31% say they would pay more for better health care.

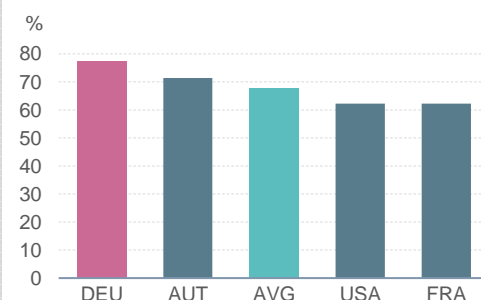
There is also strong support for anti-poverty policies. **77% of Germans say that the government should tax the rich more than it currently does in order to support the poor** – one of the highest levels of support for progressive redistribution across countries (Fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Many Germans would be prepared to pay more in taxes for better pensions



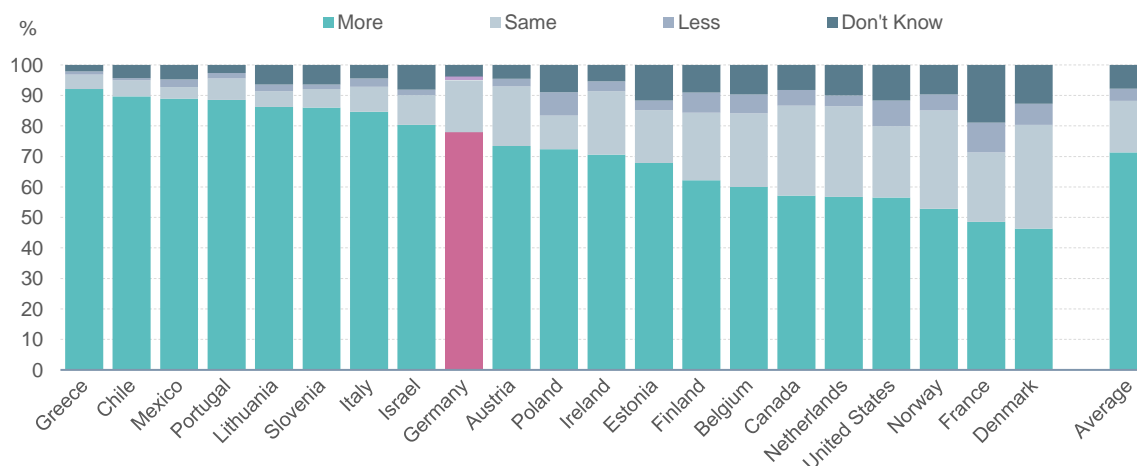
Note: Percent saying they would be "be willing to pay an additional 2% of your income in taxes/social contributions to benefit from better provision of and access to pensions."

Fig. 2. Large numbers of Germans back increasing taxes for the rich to support the poor



Note: Percent responding yes (or definitely yes) to the question "Should the government tax the rich more than they currently do in order to support the poor?"

Fig. 3. More than three-quarters of Germans want government to do more to safeguard their economic and social security



Note: Distribution of responses to the question "Do you think the government should be doing less, more, or the same to ensure your economic and social security?"

Source: OECD (2019), *Main Findings from the 2018 OECD Risks that Matter Survey*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Contacts: Monika Queisser (monika.queisser@oecd.org); Valerie Frey (valerie.frey@oecd.org); Chris Clarke (chris.clarke@oecd.org)
Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.