

## French people worry about pensions and accessing public benefits

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 OECD countries in spring 2018.

**In France, in the short run, people are most worried about becoming ill or disabled.** 61% of French people name "illness or disability" as one of their top-three worries in the next year or two. Worries about struggling to make ends meet (51%) and concerns about crime or violence (42%)\* were the next most oft-cited short-term risks in France.

**In the long run, French people are most worried about their pensions – a result similar to that found in all other surveyed countries.** 67% of people in France list financial security in old age as a top-three concern when looking beyond the next decade, just below the survey average of 72%.

Similar to other countries, many French people doubt their ability to access government support. **17% of French people think that they could easily access public benefits if they needed**

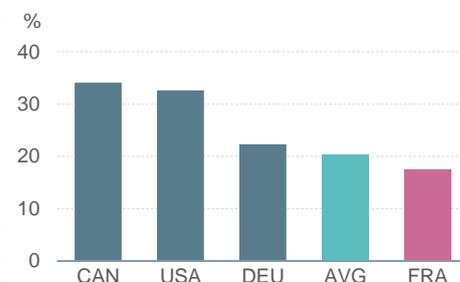
them (Fig. 1), compared to a cross-country average of 20%. French people feel this way even as France has one of the largest social safety nets in the world (both in per capita spending and as a percentage of GDP).

The French also feel they have little influence over public policy. 72% of French people believe that the government does not incorporate the views of people like them when designing public benefits, similar to results in other surveyed countries. About half of French people want the government to do more to ensure their economic and social security (Fig. 3).

When asked what would make them feel more economically secure, **French people are most likely to cite pensions (60%) (Fig. 2), better healthcare (41%), and better public safety (34%)\* as one of their top-three policy priorities. Yet there is a reluctance to pay for these supports**, as half of French people say they would not pay an extra 2% of their income in taxes and contributions to improve any of the public benefits or services listed in the survey.

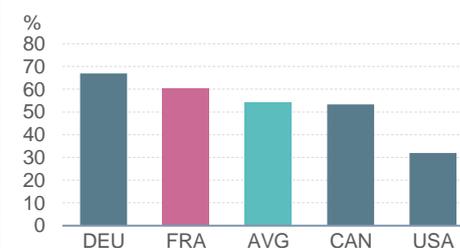
\*Values exceed 100% because respondents could select up to three answers.

**Fig. 1. Few people in France believe they could easily access public benefits if needed**



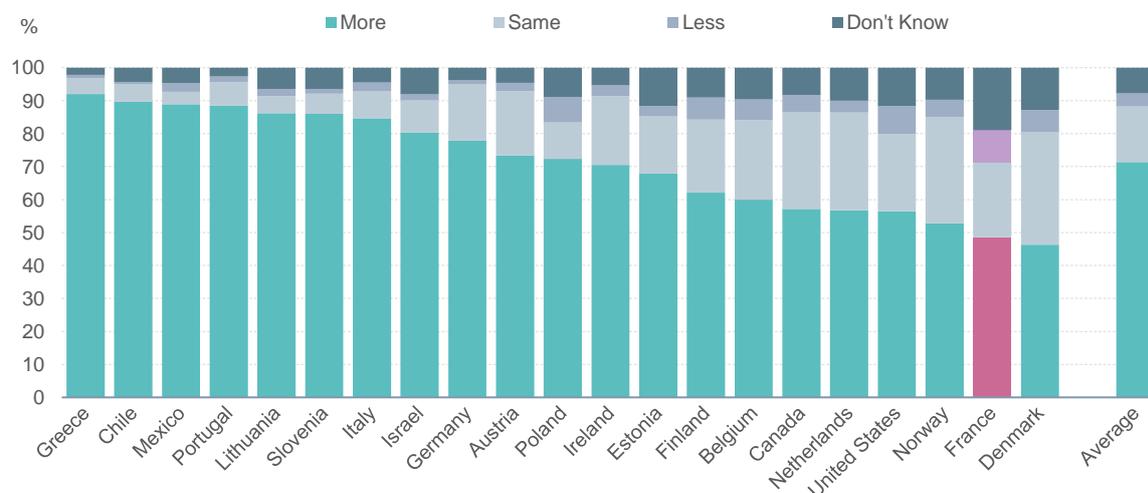
Note: Percent that agree (or strongly agree) with the statement "I think I could easily receive public benefits if I needed them."

**Fig. 2. Better pensions are a priority for many people in France**



Note: Percent listing "Better pensions" as one of the top-three supports they would need most from government to make them and their family feel more economically secure.

**Fig. 3. About half of people in France want the 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.

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