

# Press release – EU citizens want more competences for the EU to deal with crises like COVID-19



Conducted at the end of April 2020, nearly seven out of ten respondents (69%) want a stronger role for the EU in fighting this crisis. In parallel, almost six out of ten respondents are dissatisfied with the **solidarity shown between EU Member States** during the pandemic. While 74% of respondents have heard about **measures or actions initiated by the EU** to respond to the pandemic, only 42% of them are satisfied with these measures so far.

## **The EU should improve common tools to face crises such as Covid-19**

Around two-thirds of respondents (69%) agree that **“the EU should have more competences to deal with crises such as the Coronavirus pandemic”**. Less than a quarter of respondents (22%) disagree with this statement. Agreement is highest in Portugal and Ireland, and lowest in Czechia and Sweden.

In responding to the pandemic, European citizens wanted the EU to focus primarily on ensuring sufficient medical supplies for all EU Member States, on allocating research funds to develop a vaccine, direct financial support

to Member States and improving scientific co-operation between Member States.

### **Call to revive European solidarity in times of crisis**

This strong call for more EU competences and a more robustly coordinated EU response goes hand in hand with the dissatisfaction expressed by a majority of respondents as concerns the **solidarity between EU Member States** in fighting the Coronavirus pandemic: 57% are unhappy with the current state of solidarity, including 22% who are 'not at all' satisfied. Only a third of respondents (34%) are satisfied, with the highest returns in Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Portugal. Respondents from Italy, Spain and Greece are among the most dissatisfied, followed by citizens from Austria, Belgium and Sweden.

### **EU measures taken are known, but considered not enough**

Three out of four respondents across all countries surveyed say they have **heard, seen or read about EU measures** to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic; a third of respondents (33%) also know what these measures are. At the same time around half (52%) of those who know about EU action in this crisis say they are **not satisfied with the measures taken so far**. Only 42% are satisfied, most of all in Ireland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland. The degree of dissatisfaction is highest in Italy, Spain and Greece, and quite high in Austria and Bulgaria.

### **Six out of ten citizens have experienced personal financial difficulties**

A clear majority of respondents (58%) stated in the survey that they have experienced **financial difficulties in their own personal life** since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. Such problems include a loss of income (30%), unemployment or partial unemployment (23%), using personal savings sooner than planned (21%), difficulties paying rent, bills or bank loans (14%) as well as difficulties having proper and decent-quality meals (9%). One in ten said that they have had to ask family or friends for financial help, while 3% of respondents faced bankruptcy.

Overall, respondents in Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Spain are most likely to have experienced financial problems, while those in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Austria are least likely to report problems. Indeed, in the latter countries, more than half of respondents have not experienced any of these financial problems: 66% in Denmark, 57% in the Netherlands, 54% in Finland and 53% in Sweden.

### **Note to Editors:**

The survey was conducted online by Kantar between 23 April and 1 May 2020, among 21,804 respondents in 21 EU Member States (not covered: Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta and Luxembourg ). The survey was limited to respondents aged between 16 and 64 (16-54 in Bulgaria, Czechia, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia). Representativeness at the national level is ensured by quotas on gender, age, and region. The total average results are weighted according to the size of

the population of each country surveyed.

The full results of the survey, including national and sociodemographic data tables, will be published by the European Parliament beginning of June 2020.