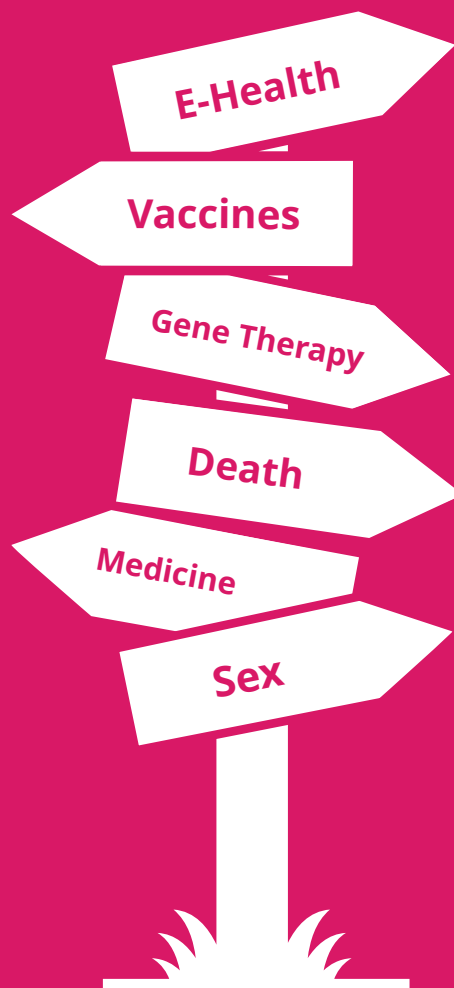


# STADA

## HEALTH REPORT 2020

**Do All Roads Lead to Health?**  
How Europe Moves Towards the Future

Incl.  
Corona  
Special



## 1. Editorial



STADA cares for people's health as a trustful partner. That is and will always be our purpose. Even in these turbulent times, we have ensured the continuous production and provision of

important pharmaceuticals as a trusted partner and at the same time, put the safety of our employees at the forefront. The COVID-19 crisis has once more made us aware that health is the ultimate basis of our lives. It has also changed our understanding of healthcare: the esteem of medical professionals is growing. Openness for digital medicine is increasing – for example in terms of remote treatments via webcam.

With the Health Report, we accompany the society on their way to the future of health. Every year, the reports provide all partners in the healthcare system with a reliable basis for identifying trends and making new decisions. At the same time, we raise public awareness for important issues of the future and inform about knowledge gaps.

What we learn in times of the coronavirus:

Doctors, pharmacists and the nursing staff are doing an incredible job. Appreciation for their work has grown significantly. It has also become clear to more and more people how crucial high-quality drugs are for our health. During the crisis, a significant part of the population is satisfied with the healthcare system in their own country. However, we must not neglect those who feel left alone and thus lose their faith in the healthcare system. Education and agility are in high demand and with the STADA Health Report, we wish to contribute to it.

A glimpse into the report:

The coronavirus has definitely reminded us once again that

health is our most important good above all else. This holds true across all countries. However, people experience differences in medicine and the healthcare system.

Our STADA Health Report 2020 impressively confirms that. This year, in its sixth edition, we have once again expanded the analysis and added another three countries. This brings the representative database to a total of 24,000 people from twelve European countries – Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom – providing a wealth of insights into the differences in knowledge and attitudes between the countries. A breadth, such that it would have to be unparalleled in a European health study. Thus, the STADA Health Report is becoming more and more of an indicator of what society and politics require of medicine and the healthcare system.

Once again, the central topic in this year's edition of the STADA Health Report is "The future of health". What is striking here is that openness to digital medicine and innovative methods has increased overall compared to the previous year. Still, we must reassure those who are concerned about the abuse of data security or do not yet feel at ease with the digital world. Our study also reveals that in some areas, personal contact is more important than ostensible convenience. The majority of Europeans prefer to receive their drugs from the local pharmacy, for example. At the same time, online pharmacies gain in importance.

I am pleased that we are now able to present the exciting results of the STADA Health Report 2020 and am looking forward to the discussions it initiates.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Goldschmidt', written in a cursive style.

Peter Goldschmidt  
Chairman of the Executive Board/CEO

## 2. Point of Departure, Objectives and Methodology



**24,087**  
respondents between the ages of 18 and 99 from 12 European countries

**Feb – Mar 2020**  
inquiry period of online survey

**Topic**  
The Way to the Future of Health

**Initiator**  
STADA Arzneimittel AG in cooperation with Kantar

The second international STADA Health Report 2020 was created in troubled times. From the end of February onwards, the coronavirus spread increasingly within Europe. It has made us, once again, aware of the importance of our health and our healthcare systems.

With the progressive spread of the coronavirus in Europe, our survey was implemented in an unprecedented situation. Some countries participating in the survey were particularly affected by the virus. This is an exceptional situation, especially since the field phase of the trial took place in February and March in most countries. The questionnaire was already finalised at the beginning of January when there was not a trace of the coronavirus in Europe yet.

We therefore launched an additional survey during the field phase which was conducted in April in six participating countries. What were people particularly concerned with at that time? How did the healthcare systems in these countries perform during the crisis? What do they expect from the future after corona? We have dedicated an extra chapter to this and other results at the end of this report.

### The future of health – #futureofyourhealth

In further chapters, the STADA Health Report deals with the meta-topic “Future of Health” – #futureofyourhealth again. It is all about the digitisation of medicine, innovations, genetic modifications and polypills. In addition, the personal future plays a major role again. In this year’s study, we asked Europeans intensively about their views on death.

An unpleasant trend, that has emerged in recent years, is an increase of sexual diseases in Europe. Therefore, the issues of sex and sexually transmitted diseases have also been approached. For the first time, we also included the STADA Future Index, where we revisited selected questions from the previous report in order to trace changes in opinions and perceptions over time.

The past reports have repeatedly shown that our knowledge influences our actions. As “health” does not only concern ourselves, but also the people who are important to us, it is a very emotional topic. That is why we added a new field of vision to the study. By asking questions on “thinking and talking” we wanted to find out what people think about health issues and whether they talk about them – and if they do so: with whom?

### A brief review

The idea to undertake a cross-national study arose from the German STADA Health Report, which challenged the “health literacy” of Germans from 2014 to 2018. When initiating the first international STADA Health Report last year, we wanted to find out more about the knowledge base of Europeans concerning health. Furthermore, we were interested in how much they know about technical innovations. On the issue “Future of Health” we interviewed people aged 18 to 99 in nine countries and asked them to express their opinions on robotic surgery, genetic tests, biosensors and webcam treatments, but also on burnout and nutrition. The results were fascinating.

### Sample and methodology 2020

Like in previous years, once again the consulting and market research agency Kantar conducted the survey. Between February and March, the survey was carried out in an online study in the following twelve countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Finland, Austria and Switzerland took part for the first time this year.

Per country, about 2,000 people were interviewed. This results in a total of 24,087 respondents aged between 18 and 99, representative of age, gender and region. The questionnaire was divided into seven topic blocks, in which questions on the areas of “knowledge”, “thinking and talking” and “doing” were asked:

### STADA’s Future Index, Digitised medicine, Vaccination and immunity, Death and dying, Innovations, Everyday illnesses, Sex and health

The questionnaire, which is basically uniform for all countries, comprises 30 questions. Only where there are different legal bases, for example, is it adapted to the specific country (e.g. online pharmacies). In addition, each country had the opportunity to put up to three supplementary questions to their own population.

This year’s report is supplemented by a chapter that classifies the results of our additional survey on the coronavirus. The survey that ran from 23 to 27 April in Germany, Italy, Russia, Serbia, Spain and the United Kingdom was also conducted by Kantar. A total of 6,269 people took part in the Corona Survey, representative of age, gender and region.

## 3. Executive Summary



### STADA's Future Index

- 74 percent of Europeans are satisfied with their own healthcare system. Top scores in Switzerland, Austria and Belgium (above 90 percent each). Dissatisfaction in Eastern European countries like Poland, Serbia and Russia (all below 40 percent).
- Compared to the previous year, the trust in conventional medicine is growing slightly across Europe: 70 percent of the respondents trust conventional medicine, compared to 64 percent in the previous year.
- The openness towards telemedicine and treatments via webcam has risen significantly compared to 2019. Seven in ten Europeans are open to an examination via webcam.



### Digitised Medicine

- Overall, trust in the digitisation of medicine is increasing all over Europe: 40 percent would use a health app, for example, that transmits all relevant data directly to their doctor. Germans, the British and Belgians are rather sceptical.
- Local pharmacies enjoy a high level of confidence amongst respondents: Four in five prefer to receive their drugs from their local pharmacist (collection or delivery) instead of a mail order pharmacy.
- Personal interaction with the pharmacy staff is particularly important. However, Germany has the greatest confidence in mail order pharmacies – despite being rather sceptical about digitisation otherwise.



### Vaccination and Immunity

- Only 43 percent of respondents know that antibiotics can exclusively be used against bacteria.
- 32 percent wrongly believe they also help fight viruses, 21 percent assume they are effective against fungi and 4 percent against tumours.
- Gaps in knowledge were also revealed regarding vaccinations. Only one in five people know that vaccines are available against all of the following: measles, hepatitis A/B, chicken pox, HPV. Italians are most knowledgeable with 34 percent identifying the correct answers.
- 82 percent of respondents support compulsory vaccinations. Switzerland, Austria and Russia are their strongest opponents (about 30 percent each). Spain (94 percent), Finland (89 percent) and Italy (88 percent) strongly support such a proposal.



### Death and Dying

- 68 percent of Europeans are in favour of active euthanasia. Germans (78 percent), Austrians (77 percent), the Finnish and French (76 percent each) are especially outspoken about this.
- Greater disapproval for active euthanasia in Eastern Europe: In Russia, 44 percent oppose the concept, together with 46 percent of Polish and 58 percent of Serbian respondents. For many, religion plays a decisive role.
- How openly do Europeans talk about death? The British prefer to keep their thoughts to themselves, as 44 percent do not address the topic, the same holds true for Russia and Serbia with similar scores. The general rule: The older the respondents, the more reserved they are.



### Innovations

- Europe is united in death: Only 16 percent could imagine living eternally, were it medically possible. No country scores above 18 percent on the scale of “lust for eternal life”. No other question produced more agreement among the participating countries.
- The number of people aware of the medical conditions favoured by genetic predisposition is worrying. With osteoporosis, only 22 percent know that it can be caused by disposition. If more people were aware of this, the number of preventive screenings might increase for people with an affected relative.
- The enthusiasm for genetic alteration to avoid a hypothetical disease lies at 51 percent for Europeans. With 63 percent, the Spanish are particularly open to the idea.



### Everyday Illnesses

- Sleep problems have become a common disease. Still, only one in three Europeans are willing to take sleeping pills. At 50 percent, the Finns are most open to it. Across Europe, 26 percent are – unjustifiably – afraid of developing an addiction.
- Going to work with a cold? “Absolutely”, say over 80 percent of Europeans. Spain, France and Italy (roughly 90 percent of the working population) are at the top of the list. The Finns act more responsibly, as “only” 59 percent of them would show up to work if they are sick. Quite possibly, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased future sensibility for the risk of infections, resulting in more people staying at home if they have a sniffle.
- When taking medication, 61 percent of respondents read the instruction leaflet. The Finns, who look at it most frequently (70 percent), are generally also the most knowledgeable about everyday illnesses.



### Sex and Health

- Only 82 percent of all respondents know that sexually transmitted diseases can be spread through anal intercourse. A mere 70 percent are aware this can occur during oral sex: A truly alarming result.
- Just as shocking: Only 39 percent have ever been tested for STDs. This also applies to single people: 62 percent of them have never been tested for sexually transmitted diseases.
- Talking about sex? 70 percent of Europeans do. The frequency of intercourse is at the top of their list. 30 percent have talked to others about STDs. All in all: The younger the respondents, the more openly they talk about sex.

# The European City of Health

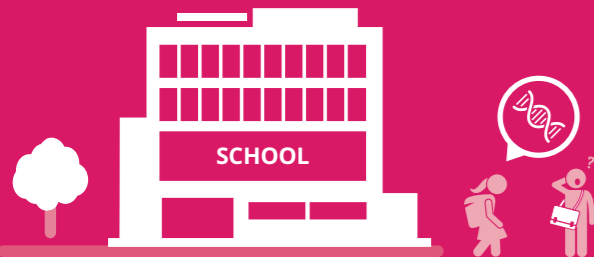
 24,087 respondents\*  Twelve countries\*

What does Europe think about key questions of health? How open are Europeans towards innovation in the future? What are they afraid of? What do they and what do they not talk about? The City of Health reveals it.

**76%** of Polish people are afraid of antibiotic-resistant germs.  
(European average: 66%)



**36%** of the British have no idea which diseases can be enhanced by genes.  
(European average: 20%)



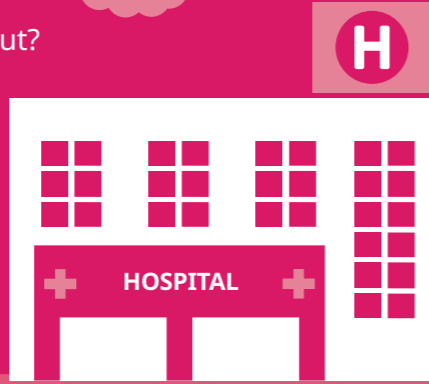
Only **38%** of the Austrian population would take a hypothetical polypill to prevent diseases.  
(European average: 50%)



**85%** of Finnish people trust classical conventional medicine.  
(European average: 70%)



**92%** of the Swiss are happy with their healthcare system.  
(European average: 74%)



**94%** of the Spanish are in favour of compulsory vaccinations.  
(European average: 82%)



**74%** of Italians become intimate with their partner despite having a cold.  
(European average: 60%)



**40%** of Belgians categorically never talk about sex.  
(European average: 30%)



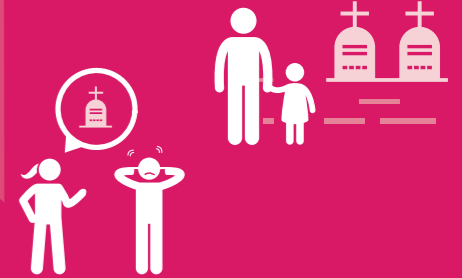
**39%** of Germans completely trust online mail order pharmacies.  
(European average: 21%)



**40%** of the French put special emphasis on personal contact with the pharmacy team – also when ordering.  
(European average: 30%)



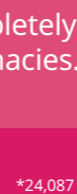
Only **42%** of Serbs can imagine availing themselves of active euthanasia.  
(European average: 68%)



**32%** of Russians categorically rule out talking about death.  
(European average: 19%)



**40%** of Belgians categorically never talk about sex.  
(European average: 30%)



\*24,087 respondents from twelve countries: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland and the UK. Inquiry period of online survey: February through March 2020. Conducted by Kantar on behalf of STADA Arzneimittel AG.



## 4. Analysis and Results

### 4.1 STADA's Future Index

#### Openness towards telemedicine increases enormously

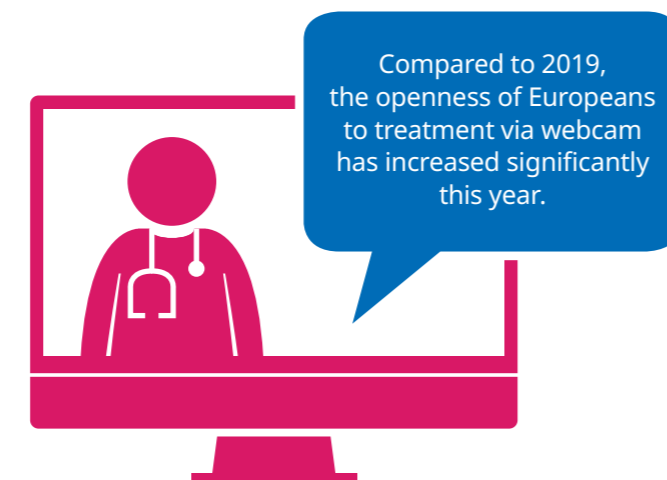
What will our healthcare system look like in 10, 20, 50 or even 100 years? According to over 24,000 Europeans, who we surveyed in our representative study, it will not look much different from today. After all, three quarters are satisfied with the current healthcare system. The highest satisfaction can be found amongst the Swiss: 92 percent of them are very satisfied or satisfied. Top ratings also prevail in Austria and Belgium (91 percent each). Predominantly dissatisfied respondents can only be found in three of the European countries surveyed: In Poland, only 38 percent are satisfied, 37 percent in Serbia and 34 percent in Russia. This also reflects the social gap in these regions, where apparently only one third do not seem to suffer from an expandable healthcare system.

The Europeans surveyed also mostly agree on what tomorrow's medicine will look like. The majority, 70 percent, trust conventional medicine. In comparison: last year, this applied to 64 percent. Thus, the trust in traditional medicine is growing. The greatest trust prevails in Finland (85 percent), the UK (84 percent) and Spain (82 percent). Whilst Finland was not part of the survey last year, in both UK and Spain trust had increased from 76 percent in each case. However, the openness to alternative treatments such as homeopathy and acupuncture is above-average in Serbia (35 percent), Austria (24 percent) and Switzerland (23 percent).

It also becomes apparent that conventional medicine and treatment via webcam are not mutually exclusive. Seven in ten Europeans would agree to receive treatment via webcam, which corresponds to the proportion that trusts in conventional medicine. Compared to the previous year, this is a definite increase (54 percent in 2019). It seems that the media's educational work on this matter is starting to bear fruit. Measures like webcam treatments for minor ailments we could resort to in times of coronavirus because they released capa-

cities in doctors' offices and reduced the risk of infection, have probably also contributed to this. With 82 percent, the approval in Spain has increased in comparison to the previous year (61 percent), making them the frontrunner in terms of agreement to a treatment via webcam. In Italy (79 percent, increase by 28 percent) and Belgium (58 percent, increase by 21 percent) remote treatment is also gaining more and more popularity – in Belgium, however, it remains at a fairly low level. With a particularly high satisfaction with the healthcare system, Belgium is a special case: An above-average confidence in

#### Willingness for webcam treatment increased enormously.



In 2019, **54%** of the respondents were in favour of a webcam treatment.

In 2020, **70%** of the respondents are in favour of a webcam treatment.

conventional medicine (77 percent), but – despite the increase – still relatively broad scepticism concerning webcam treatment. 28 percent of Belgians admit that receiving treatment this way would make them “feel weird”. Belgian women are especially hesitant with 33 percent (Europe: 20 percent). This applies to only 23 percent of men in the country (Europe: 16 percent).

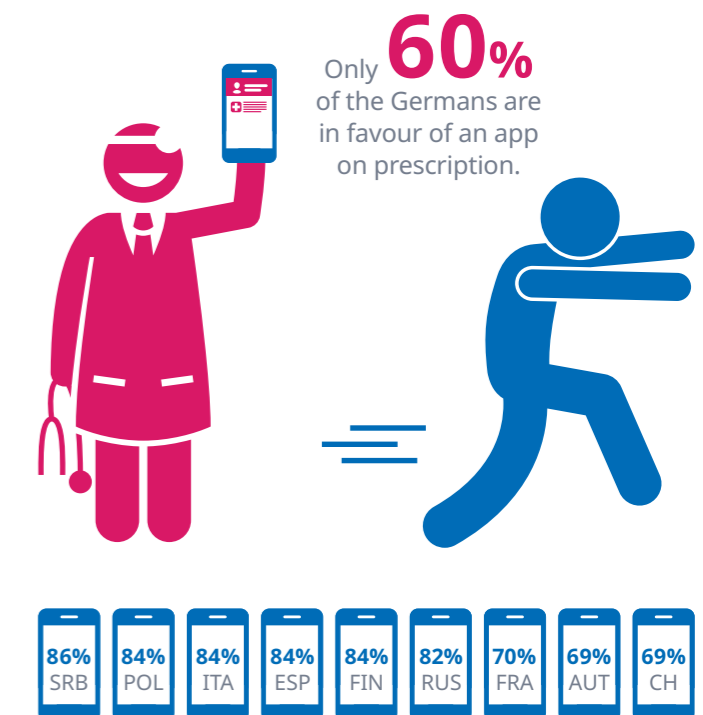
### 4.2 Health in Bits & Bytes

#### Medicine 4.0: Digitised Health

The topic of “digitisation in the health sector” is quite a sensitive issue. Data privacy is considered one of the highest goods, especially since the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect. Therefore, there is still a lot of potential in digitised medicine. Compared to 2019, the STADA Health Report shows an overall greater openness to digital medicine. For example, 40 percent of Europeans would use a health app on their smartphone which transmits the most important data directly to their doctor in order to save the time required for a check-up. Especially in the extensive regions of Finland and Russia, this is the most important argument in favour of such an app (49 percent each). Italians see the main benefit in being able to continuously keep an eye on their own health and react directly to deterioration (42 percent) – regardless of their age. Germans are a hard nut to crack for physicians and data protection specialists: 17 percent are worried about the safety of their data (Europe: 11 percent), 28 percent do not believe such an app could add any value to their life. There is also a great deal of mistrust in Belgium and the UK, where the rejection increases with age.

The Germans and British are also particularly opposed to the digitisation of previously analogue health data. While many of the Europeans surveyed approve of a digital appointment reminder (56 percent), the doctor's letter (53 percent) and the Certificate of Vaccination (52 percent), scepticism is exceptionally high in Germany – due to fears about data security – and in the UK, because there is little demand for such digital inventions (16 percent). The Serbs, however, have a different view on this matter: For them, it is particularly important (73 percent) that the medical report can be easily forwarded to a specialist, for instance. Having a digital record of all relevant health data was in great demand in Russia (73 percent), while 69 percent of people in Finland

**App on prescription? Germany is rather sceptical.** Europe can get used to the idea of an app on prescription. Some countries are a little less open-minded: UK (65%), Belgium (68%) and especially Germany:



were in favour of a digital version of the Certificate of Vaccination. For the Spanish, an appointment reminder (67 percent) would be the main benefit of digitised health data. In Russia, Finland and Spain, therefore, the convenience factor of digitised health plays a major role.

#### Local pharmacies enjoy high confidence

People in almost all the participating countries trust their local pharmacist. Even though the online world already dominates many industries, drug delivery remains hard terrain to conquer: The majority of Europeans trust their local pharmacist when they fill a prescription. Four out of five would like to exclusively receive their drugs personally via their pharmacist or the pharmacy courier. 40 percent have no knowledge as to whether they can even purchase prescription drugs through online or mail order pharmacies in their country – and apparently there is no reason for them to further look into the

# 74%

are satisfied with their healthcare system.

# 80%

want to exclusively receive their drugs from the local pharmacy courier.

# 66%

of Europeans are concerned about antibiotic-resistant germs.

subject. The majority appreciate the personal interaction with the pharmacist or are afraid of being sent counterfeit drugs from a faceless mail order company.

Personal interaction with the local pharmacist is especially important in France (40 percent). The Spanish have more trust in delivery by pharmacy courier than an internet shop (30 percent). One in three Europeans is afraid of counterfeit products and their possible impact on their health. The underlying reason could be that there have been a number of such cases in recent years which have sensitised the population. In Germany, a country with a rather rigorous control system and relatively few known cases, only one in four is afraid of counterfeit drugs. Overall, Germans have the highest trust in mail order pharmacies (39 percent).

### 4.3 Vaccination and Antibiotics: Caught Between Obligation and Panic

#### Significant gaps in knowledge and need for information

In recent years, antibiotics and resistant germs have become an increasingly covered topic by mass media. It is hence all the more surprising that a significant number of people have limited knowledge about the subject, which could leave them open to risk. 73 percent are aware that antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections, however, only 43 percent know that this is their sole purpose. Instead, two thirds of respondents think they can also be useful against other pathogens – 32 percent believe they can help to fend off viruses, 21 percent believe the same for fungi and 4 percent for tumours. 5 percent wrongfully think they help fight all of the above. An additional 7 percent have no idea at all.

Out of all Europeans, Polish respondents raise the greatest concern about antibiotic-resistant germs (76 percent – 10 percent above European average). In Switzerland, half the population is convinced that antibiotics are often prescribed prematurely and too frequently (51 percent). However great the fear, it was not compelling enough to get educated on the topic. Information is required badly across countries and social strata. The proper use of antibiotics leaves most Europeans baffled. 70 percent are aware of the harmful consequences of beer when taking antibiotics, 28 percent know about citric juices, 25 percent about milk. One in four people

#### Dangerous superficial knowledge about antibiotics.



Just **43%** of the Europeans know that antibiotics only help against bacteria.



The knowledge of Serbs (54%) and Austrians (53%) is above average.

wrongly think coffee can have a harmful impact as well. Only 2 percent know all the correct answers. In France, the range is particularly wide: The French know best about citric juices (42 percent), but underestimate the influence beer can have on the effect of antibiotics. Increased knowledge about the medication ought to make countless antibiotic-therapies more successful and overall effective. In turn, this might aid in reducing the risk of antibiotic-resistant germs in the long run.

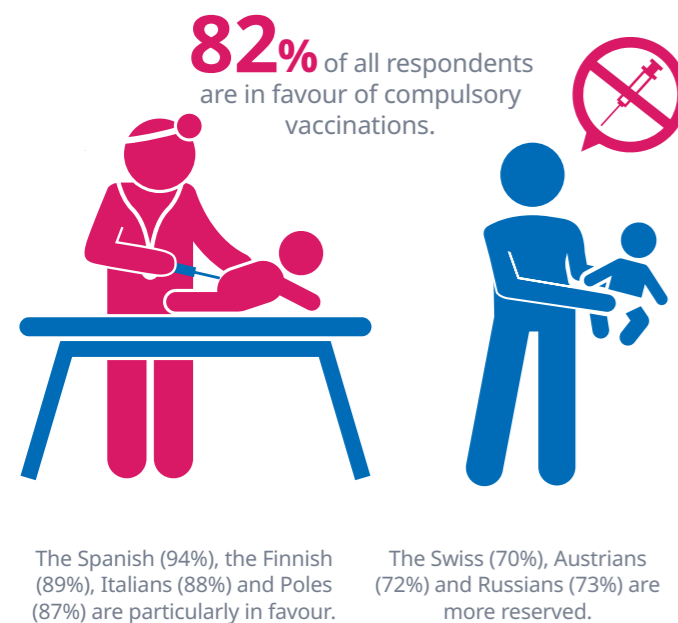
#### Does coronavirus increase vaccination advocacy?

The theme of “vaccination” is also marked by significant gaps in knowledge and misconceptions, especially surrounding the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine, which protects against certain types of HPV that can lead to genital warts or cancer. 83 percent have heard of the measles vaccine. The vaccine against hepatitis A/B is known to 70 percent, 69 percent are aware of the one against chicken pox. Far fewer people, a mere 46 percent,

are familiar with the HPV vaccine. Only one in five Europeans (22 percent) know against which conditions they can be vaccinated. Serbian (11 percent) and Russian respondents (12 percent) score rather poorly, Italians however do outstandingly well (34 percent). No wonder, perhaps, that the former two countries hardly ever check their vaccination record or have misplaced it permanently.

The vaccination record does not seem to be all that popular in general. One in two respondents admit to having no recollection as to when they last checked their vaccination status or where they put the document in the first place. Only one in ten Europeans check it every three months. Germany makes the top of the list with one in five people inspecting their vaccination record on a quarterly basis. Some health-

### Europe demands compulsory vaccination.



care policy makers believe mandatory vaccinations could be a solution. A strongly emotional trigger topic, for it lets social health protection and personal responsibility collide. Across Europe, 82 percent are in favour of compulsory vaccinations. In countries without regulations on vaccination such as Austria or Switzerland, such a proposal is met with the utmost opposition. "Patronisation" is among the main counterargu-

ments, along with „fear of side effects“. In Spain (94 percent) and Finland (89 percent) the majority of the population would welcome this decision, though at least one in two people from either country are at a loss as to when they last checked their vaccination status or where they can even find their vaccination record. Countries with mandatory vaccination guidelines like Belgium, France and Italy are torn: Belgians and Italians are overall less bothered than the French.

A magic formula to help convince the majority of the population of the sensibility of vaccinations does not seem to exist. Perhaps the discussions surrounding a possible vaccine against COVID-19 might sway one or two anti-vaxxers, though.

### 4.4 Death: a Taboo Subject?

#### Euthanasia – yes or no?

In addition to compulsory vaccinations, active euthanasia is another controversial and emotionally charged topic of discussion. One in ten respondents flatly reject the idea for religious reasons. Fewer than one in two Europeans (43 percent) are familiar with the correct definition of the term: a third party, for instance a doctor, causing the death of a person who expressly wishes to die. Depending on the level of support provided to the person affected, some countries differentiate between "active euthanasia", "passive euthanasia" and "physician-assisted suicide". Out of all countries surveyed, only Belgian law permits active euthanasia. In Poland, Russia, Serbia, Spain and the UK euthanasia of all kinds is prohibited. In other regions, some types of passive or indirect euthanasia or assisted suicide are permissible. Italian legislation on this topic is unclear. However, this does not affect how knowledgeable people are in this area: In Poland, Serbia and Spain euthanasia is illegal and awareness of the correct definition is below-average. Russia and the UK also prohibit euthanasia, but people are very well informed – the same goes for Austria, Switzerland and Germany, where euthanasia is at least partially permitted. In Belgium only one in three people are aware of the legitimate definition. Complete authorisation thus does not automatically lead to increased engagement with the topic at hand.

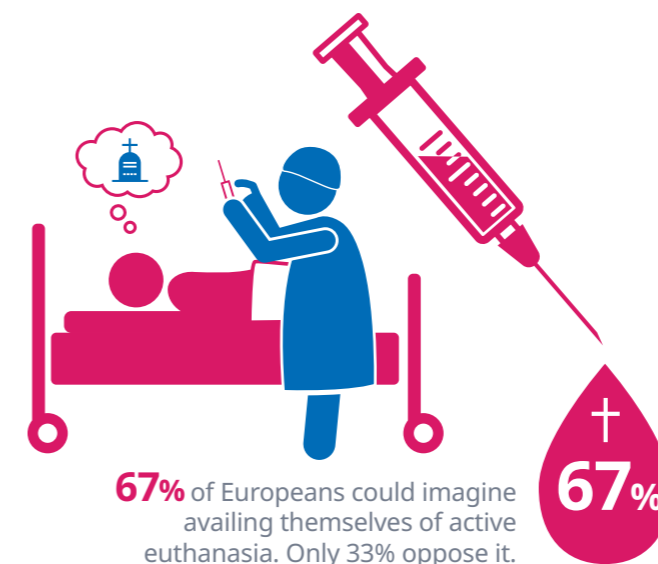
With age, the level of knowledge about active euthanasia increases: While only 39 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds chose the appropriate definition, 43 percent of 35- to 49-year-olds and 44 percent among 50- to 99-year-olds were able to identify it.

#### Openness to active euthanasia increases with awareness

It appears people who have looked into the topic and hence acquired the corresponding knowledge are also more willing to avail themselves of active euthanasia, should they ever suffer from a terminal disease or constant agony. In Germany and Austria, where respondents appear well-informed on the subject, 78 percent and 77 percent respectively are open to the idea (Europe: 68 percent). In Serbia, where most people have not dealt with the subject, only 42 percent can imagine taking advantage of active euthanasia. For most Serbs, death is generally considered a taboo topic: One in two (47 percent) say they have never spoken to a third party about death.

Similarly, neither have 55 percent of Russians and 44 percent of British respondents. The average European prefers to keep conversations about death largely within the immediate family (44 percent) – rather than confiding in their partner (32 percent) or doctor (5 percent). Interestingly, women are more willing to open up to close relatives compared to men (51 vs 37 percent). Both sexes discuss death equally frequently with their partner (32 percent). 42 percent of men have never talked about death at all in contrast to a mere 33 percent of women. Surprisingly, with each generation, a gradual shift in attitudes towards talking about death can

### Europeans in favour of active euthanasia.



be observed: 89 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds have talked to family, their partner or doctor about it. Among 35- to 49-year-olds, this goes for 83 percent, but only 76 percent of 50- to 99-year-olds.

Opening up to others about death is one thing – while private reflection is another. Apparently, some prefer pondering on it alone, like the Serbs. An above-average 68 percent of them are aware of the single biggest killer in Europe – cardiovascular disease (Europe: 62 percent). France, Poland, Belgium and the UK are less well aware – but all of them, apart from the British, are willing to discuss death with others.

### 4.5 The Medicine of Tomorrow

#### Europe is awaiting the "magic pill"

The majority of Europeans have talked to a third party about death. In addition, most of them would be willing to avail themselves of active euthanasia. But to live eternally? Not an option for most people. No other topic evoked more unison among the countries surveyed: Only 16 percent of respondents would like to live for ever. Not a single country scored an approval rate above 18 percent. To 41 percent the idea of eternal life is nothing but "hocus-pocus" as it is. In Italy, this goes for close to one in two people. Russia has the highest percentage of people who believe that eternal life will one day be possible (19 percent). But even if that were the case, only 17 percent of Russians would want to live forever. And: The older the respondents, the less appealing they find eternal life. Perhaps there is some truth in the famous Hollywood quote "Dying is the day worth living for" after all.

Some explanation – at least subconsciously – could be found in the fear of additional ailments that accompany old age, together with a currently unsatisfactory healthcare system. Diseases in old age do cause problems for people, after all. Hence, the majority of Europeans are very approving of medical advances in this field: Europe is practically waiting for the "magic pill" to cure them from the discomforts of old age. One in two people would be willing to take such a "polypill", a type of medication that combines a number of active ingredients. It is particularly appealing to people with diagnosed cardiovascular disease (23 percent), the single biggest killer in Europe. Russians (65 percent) and the Polish (64 percent) are the most open to the polypill, two population groups that



# 50%

of Europeans would take a polypill to cure them from the discomforts of old age.

# 78%

of the respondents do not know that osteoporosis is favoured by genetics.

# 55%

of Europeans do not know that alcohol can cause sleeping disorders.

include the highest percentage of people dissatisfied with their health care system. The biggest opponents of the polypill can be found in Austria and Switzerland – two countries whose population is most satisfied with the existing healthcare system. This implies that the lower the healthcare system is ranked the more people yearn for innovative medication.

### Scepticism about genetic modification

In addition to age, our genetic makeup has a crucial impact on our health. This has been revealed and continues to be supported by research time and time again. Should this not be reason enough to look for hereditary conditions if predispositions exist in the family? Since this realisation has not established itself among the general public, it rarely happens. Very few Europeans know which medical conditions are hereditary. More than half of them know the same

applies for cardiovascular disease (55 percent) and breast cancer (54 percent). Unbeknownst to many, this also applies to osteoporosis (22 percent), Parkinson's disease (38 percent), arthrosis (21 percent) and depression (27). Only 1 in 20 respondents knew all correct answers. For diseases like osteoporosis, early diagnoses and therapy could help avoid a serious progression of the condition.

In addition, there is a significant scepticism about genetic treatments: In a hypothetical scenario, only half of the respondents would agree to an alteration of their genes to escape a definite illness detected by means of a gene test. Spanish respondents are most open to such a procedure (63 percent), the Swiss are the most reluctant (43 percent). In Switzerland, one in four people would hope the disease that was detected failed to break out.

In conclusion: Many respondents underestimate the impact of genes on their health. If their role was clearer, perhaps the number of preventive screenings would increase together with the willingness to undergo genetic treatment.

### Half of the Europeans are sceptical about genetic modifications.

You could avoid a disease in the future with a gene modification. Sounds good? Just about half of all Europeans think so.



### 4.6 Of Sniffles and Sleeping Pills

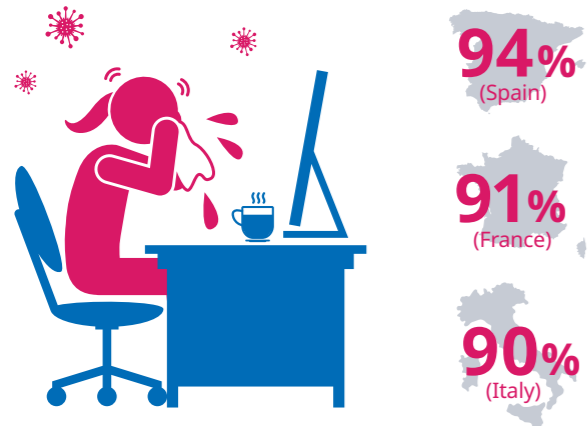
#### Negligent behaviour regarding colds and sleeping disorders

Some Europeans show a certain carelessness when it comes to everyday illnesses. 61 percent read the instruction leaflet that comes with their medication. This applies to Finns (70 percent) and Austrians (69 percent) particularly frequently, however, only to 45 percent of the French. More than eight out of ten European employees go to work even if they have a cold. One third state that a sniffle will not keep them out of the office. An additional eleven percent either do not want to let their colleagues down, or consider themselves indispensable in the workplace. ("There is simply too much to do.") Spanish employees could not care less about a cold as they show up at work regardless (94 percent), followed by the French (91 percent) and Italians (90 percent).

Interestingly, in the previous year one in two people from these countries claimed they had already suffered from burnout or had been close to having one before. Things look very different in Finland where only 59 percent go into work with a cold – exemplary behaviour from a health perspective. It is quite possible that the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe has

## Southern Europeans care less about colds

The Spanish, French and Italians go to work most frequently despite having a cold.



4 out of 5 European employees go to work despite having a cold.



increased sensibility for infections and more and more people will #stayathome when they feel a cold coming on.

A certain nonchalance and lack of awareness was also observed concerning sleeping disorders: 90 percent of Europeans know that they are caused by stress. The majority are unaware that depression (73 percent) as well as jet lag and shift work (68 percent) are also possible triggers. The fact that alcohol can also impair sleep quality is known to a minority of 45 percent. Only one in five Europeans (22 percent) can identify all four possible causes of sleep disorders.

### Bananas disturb a healthy sleep?

Finland is the number one frontrunner: 55 percent of them know all the correct answers and are the most open to taking sleeping aids (50 percent vs 33 percent European average). This comes as no surprise as the sun hardly sets at all at the height of summer – not ideal conditions for a good night's

sleep. Oddly enough, one in five people in Britain, Germany and Austria believe that the consumption of foods such as bananas could also have a negative impact on sleep quality.

The ignorance surrounding the topics is amplified by the fact that sleeping disorders have become a common problem. According to a 2015 international study conducted by the Swiss School of Public Health among 50-year-olds, at least one in six suffer from sleeping problems, in some countries like Spain, Germany and Belgium more than 25 percent of the population are affected, in France and Poland almost 30 percent.<sup>1</sup> These figures correspond to the share of respondents willing to take a sleeping aid: 33 percent of Europeans. However, it seems most do not entertain this thought until the issue becomes palpable and it is too late to nip chronic sleeping problems in the bud. One in four Europeans are – and generally speaking, unjustifiably so – afraid of becoming addicted to sleeping pills, especially the French (33 percent).

## 4.7 Sex as a Health Hazard?

### Fatal ignorance regarding sexually transmitted diseases

What came to light in other areas of the STADA Health Report 2020 can also be confirmed for sex and health: Europeans know too little about sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Evidently, awareness-campaigns conducted across Europe have been unable to yield satisfactory results so far. In the worst case, this can have fateful consequences and lead to serious venereal diseases. A mere 39 percent of Europeans have ever been tested for STDs and only 10 percent continue to get tested regularly. 34 percent find such testing unnecessary. 62 percent of single people have never been tested at all – a truly disquieting figure, especially assuming that single people tend to change sexual partners more frequently. Russians are the European poster child: 69 percent of them have been tested for sexually transmitted diseases at least once.

The lack of knowledge regarding routes of infection is also a cause for concern: While 90 percent of Europeans know that vaginal intercourse can cause an infection with STDs, anal (82 percent) and oral intercourse (70 percent) are markedly less associated with a risk of infection. Only 22 percent are aware that kissing can cause an infection. Germans and Austrians (29 percent each) perceive kissing as a potentially hazardous act most frequently, closely followed by the Swiss and British

(26 percent each). The vast majority of respondents (82 percent) are aware that sex can promote healthier sleep. Its additional benefit of preventing cardiovascular disease is only known to 41 percent. Only a quarter of Europeans understand that sex can counter obesity, and just 9 percent checked all the right answers. The Belgians turned out to be the least knowledgeable in this field, while the Polish and Russians know best – on an overall low level. Other nations overrated the positive effects of sex on their health: One in ten Serbs erroneously believe that sex can ease asthma and bronchitis.

### Hesitancy in Poland

Here, too, a certain carelessness with one's own health and that of the partner was revealed: Six out of ten Europeans get intimate with their partner even if they have a cold. Half of them (31 percent) explain that they kiss their partner, the other half (30 percent) admit to sleeping with them regardless of a cold. One in four finds it unpleasant to get intimate when a partner has a cold. An additional 16 percent fear catching whatever their partner has and thus refrain from physical action.

Overall, Italians and Spaniards turn out to be the most carefree – similarly to going to work with a cold, people in Poland tend to be very cautious. Simultaneously, the most significant gaps in knowledge regarding the different infection routes for STDs were found among Polish respondents. 39 percent of them (Europe: 30 percent) do not know that STDs can be transmitted through oral intercourse, the same goes for 31 percent (Europe: 18 percent) regarding anal sex. Only 13 percent are conscious of the dangers of kissing (Europe: 22 percent). However, exaggerated prudery or tabooing of the subject do not seem to be the root of the problem, as only 22 percent of Poles never talk to their partner or friends about sex – a figure well below the European average (30 percent).

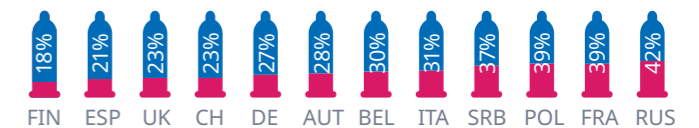
The desire to talk about sex in general is also largely present in other countries. Almost half of Europeans talk to their partner or friends about the frequency of sex (49 percent). Contraception is a topic of discussion for 41 percent. Lack of sexual desire (33 percent) and STDs (30 percent) are addressed less frequently. One in five people also confide in others about erectile dysfunction. The British and Belgians stray farthest from the European average: More than half of Brits (52 percent) do not talk about intimate topics, in Belgium this applies to 40 percent. The opposite is the case in Spain and Serbia, where matters of sex are a taboo for only one in five people. Overall, however, gender and age differences can be observed: In

comparison to men, women talk about contraception (48 vs 35 percent), lack of sexual desire (36 vs 30 percent) and STDs (33 vs 26 percent) more often. The older the respondents, the more apprehensive they feel about talking sex topics: 40 percent of 50- to 99-year-olds do not talk about sex. This holds true for a mere 18 percent of 18- to 34-year-olds. Parallels in the openness towards the topics "sex" and "death" can thus be observed.

## Dangerous gaps in knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases.



3 out of 10 Europeans do not know that they can be infected with sexually transmitted diseases during oral sex. Positive exception: especially Finland. "Only" 18% of the Finnish are unaware of this.



Only 39% of all respondents have already been tested for a sexually transmitted disease.



<sup>1</sup> Straat, Vera & Bracke, Piet. (2015). How well does Europe sleep? A cross-national study of sleep problems in European older adults. International journal of public health, 60, 643-650. 10.1007/s00038-015-0682-y.

# Corona Special

Europe during the pandemic



6,269 respondents aged 16 to 64 years\*



Online survey conducted by Kantar: 23 – 27 April 2020



In Germany, Italy, Russia\*, Serbia\*, Spain and UK.

## Satisfaction with the healthcare system and acknowledgement for medical staff



**61%** are satisfied with the own healthcare system during the corona crisis.



**15%** are unsatisfied with the own healthcare system.



**44%** of all respondents have greater respect for the work of doctors and nursing staff now.

## Pessimistic outlook



**36%** believe that the corona pandemic will cause a financial crisis.



**29%** believe that pandemics like this will occur more frequently in the future, which e. g. will have an impact on our freedom of travel.



## How Does the Corona Pandemic Change the View on Health?

### Growing appreciation for medical staff

The coronavirus has changed our view on the topic of "health". Three out of four people surveyed in Germany, Italy, Russia, Serbia, Spain and the UK would subscribe to that. This applies to all areas of the healthcare system. If the coronavirus has had any positive effect at all, it is the altered views on medicine and the healthcare system in general: Above all, 44 percent of the respondents now have a newfound appreciation for the work of doctors and nursing staff. This growing recognition is particularly evident in regions that have suffered greatly from the coronavirus: In Italy and Spain, this applies to more than half of the population. One in four Europeans are more aware of the importance of good medication, and 15 percent have become more appreciative of the work of pharmaceutical companies.

However, people who feel left alone and neglected should not be ignored. Up to 16 percent (as in Russia) have completely lost faith in their healthcare system in times of the coronavirus (9 percent across all countries surveyed). This is particularly true in regions where trust in healthcare was already fragile. On the one hand, this more frequently applies to people who live alone, singles and divorcees, for example in Russia, and on the other hand – as in Italy – to people who live under one roof with children and parents or grandparents in older age groups, and are therefore in particular need of help. 10 percent want to rely more on self-medication in the future. The Spanish are especially fond of this idea, with 20 percent of respondents claiming they would do so.

### Positive impression of the healthcare system

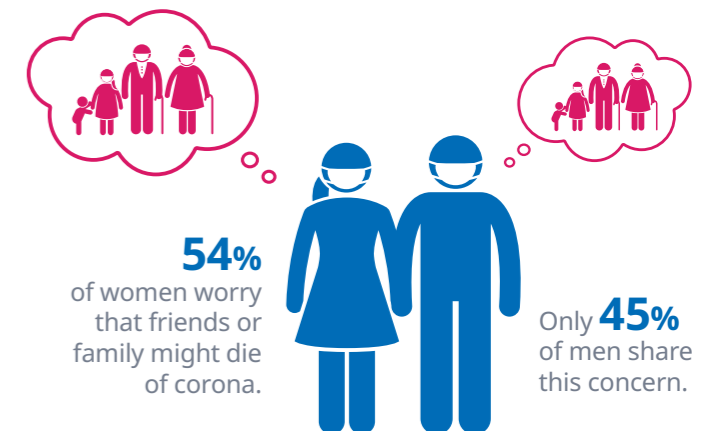
The basic evaluation of the individual healthcare system during the crisis is rather positive. 61 percent of respondents are satisfied with it, another 24 percent are "neutral" in their assessment and only 15 percent have a negative impression of their healthcare system. The overall positive impression is particularly strong among the Spanish with 75 percent, the British (74 percent), Germans (67 percent) and Italians (66 percent).

And while more than half of people in Serbia have been satisfied with their healthcare system during the crisis, this goes down to 31 percent in Russia – in both countries, dissatisfaction with the individual healthcare system is also quite common in other respects.\*

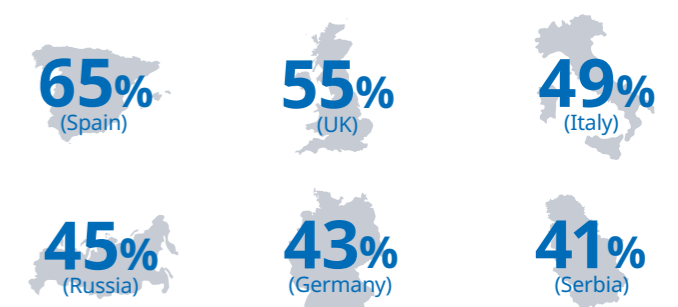
### "Where is the vaccine?"

In the six countries surveyed during the corona pandemic, people have three main fears: They are worried that they are still waiting for a vaccine (42 percent). They are concerned about their friends and family (50 percent). They dread losing their job (40 percent). In Germany and Italy (a country with compulsory vaccinations), the hope for the arrival of a vaccine in the near future dominates: About one in two is longing for it. In these two countries, openness and knowledge regarding vaccinations are already very high, Germans also check their vaccination record more regularly than the European average.\* Secondly, they worry about their loved ones during the pandemic. Among the Spanish (65 percent) and British (55 percent), the fear that friends or family members might die is paramount.

### Women are more worried about their loved ones than men.



### Compared to other countries, the Spanish worry most about their loved ones.



\*aged 16 to 54 in Russia and Serbia

In principle, more Europeans are concerned about the health of their loved ones than about their own. While one in two Europeans thinks primarily of family and friends, only 30 percent worry about themselves. This phenomenon applies across sexes, but more so to women than men. Overall, this could be linked to the fact that many respondents do not belong to the publicly discussed “risk group” due to their age, but are close to people from this same group – for example their own parents or grandparents. This increases the fear for loved ones and reduces the fear for oneself. Another explanation for the discrepancy: It quite simply sounds more noble to worry about others. And which country is least concerned? In general, it turns out that the Serbs are most fearless during the corona pandemic: One in six says they are not worried at all. Only one in fourteen Europeans say that, in Italy and Spain a barely measurable 2 percent.

In Russia, the greatest fear is economically based. 53 percent of Russians are afraid to lose their job due to the corona crisis if the economy were to collapse. To a similar extent, this applies only to Italy (48 percent) and Spain (46 percent), two countries that were already economically challenged before the corona pandemic. In comparison, only 27 percent of Serbs and 32 percent of Germans and British people are afraid of economic consequences and becoming unemployed – Brexit or not.

#### **Can the coronavirus improve how we treat each other?**

The fears caused by the pandemic are also reflected in our foresight: Overall, the share of pessimists (36 percent) who already see dramatic consequences on the horizon for the second half of 2020, such as a financial crisis, outweighs the share of optimists (20 percent). In Russia, four in six respondents are pessimistic in terms of what the future holds, the same holds true for Spain and Germany, especially for people over 50 years of age. Only in Serbia do more people consider positive rather than negative effects possible, for example how people treat each other – here, again, the “fearless Serbs” reveal themselves.

What stands out overall is the high share of insecure people: in the UK, this is the case for one out of four respondents. Some people therefore hardly dare to predict what the world will look like in post-corona times. Considering the plurality of opinions even among experienced politicians and scientist, who can blame them?

#### **Local pharmacy remains first choice**

The medium that has benefited most from the pandemic is the internet. During the crisis, it is primarily used to gather information and to receive treatment from the doctor via webcam. This is particularly true for Spain, a country where the online-affinity is already above-average\*: here, 28 percent are open to a webcam treatment during corona times, one out of four Spanish respondents consult “Dr Google” about medical issues. Apart from that, 37 percent of all respondents confirm that their online and shopping patterns have not changed at all during the corona crisis.

Local pharmacies are not noticeably suffering from the corona-related internet boom. Only a minority of the people surveyed started ordering their drugs online during the crisis – merely 7 percent among all respondents. The majority have not changed their buying behaviour or continue to trust their local pharmacy with personal consultation. A lesson for a number of people: In the future, some would like to build up a certain stock of necessary medications, among them numerous chronic patients with permanent medication, for certain. In Russia, one in five is planning to abide by this.

#### **A critical look at global medical supplies**

How come people now attribute more value to stocking up their medicine cabinet? 33 percent consider the dependence on foreign markets such as China or India for pharmaceutical production irresponsible. At least 25 percent disapprove when it comes to vitally important drugs. They demand such medicines be produced in their own or neighbouring European countries. This opinion is particularly prevalent in Spain and Germany. However, only a minority is willing to pay more: 15 percent across Europe, 22 percent in Spain, 18 percent in Germany and Italy, 15 percent in the UK and 10 percent in Russia and Serbia are ready to spend a little more. So far, there still is a gaping void separating demands and the willingness to make sacrifices across countries.

\*information derived from main study

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