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REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY OF 7,000 PEOPLE IN 7 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

## FROM SUSPICION TO TRUST: HOW PEOPLE JUDGE THE CURRENT COVID-19 SITUATION

**How much do people trust the new normal? A representative study headed by the Hamburg Center for Health Economics (HCHE) at Universität Hamburg shows that only 44.4% of those surveyed in Europe condone the speed with which coronavirus-related restrictions were lifted.**

Throughout Europe, many people seem to feel that lockdown restrictions were eased too quickly; in Germany, 36% of those surveyed agree. This is the second-highest percentage among the European populations surveyed, with the United Kingdom taking the lead at 45%. In contrast, here in Germany, 14% surveyed believe that the return to normality is too slow. However, only 4% currently believe that restrictions were not necessary at all.

A look at the large and especially affected German states of Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, and North-Rhine Westphalia reveals that fewer people surveyed in Bavaria (27%) and Baden-Württemberg (32%) feel that lockdown restrictions were eased too quickly, while the percentage in North-Rhine Westphalia (41%) lies above the national average.

### Realizing protective measures in everyday life

When asked whether people feel sufficiently protected in restaurants, places of worship, fitness studios, hairdressers and barber shops, or doctors' offices, the results were fairly uniform: there is a great deal of skepticism about places of worship and



fitness studios, whereas doctors' offices, followed by supermarkets and then hairdressers and barber shops, cause the least amount of anxiety. Even if the basic tendencies are the same in all of the countries where the survey was conducted, it is still clear that there is less trust in the United Kingdom, which is most strongly affected by COVID-19, than in the other countries.

In Germany, every second person surveyed doubts that places of worship (53%) and fitness studios (50%) provide enough protection against infection. By comparison, only 1 in 4 have concerns about going to a hairdresser or barber shop. Restaurants (38%) and public transportation (44%) are mediate concerns. There is more trust with regard to food retail and the health sector—that is, areas that have not been subject to closures. Customers generally trust bakeries and large supermarkets. Only 1 in 4 of those surveyed fear that hygiene and distancing regulations have not been properly implemented.

Those surveyed most trust doctors' offices and hospitals: only 11% and 12%, respectively, have little or no trust. "Hospitals' concerns that emergency patients will not seek treatment due to fear of contracting COVID-19 appear unfounded for now," said Prof. Dr. Jonas Schreyögg, scientific director of the Hamburg Center for Health Economics (HCHE).

### **Economic and financial concerns decrease**

In comparison to the first survey in April, Germans are less worried now about the financial and economic impact of the pandemic. The biggest development is related to health care: only 29% currently worry about overburden—in April, twice as many had this concern.

### **About the study**

The study looked at participants' attitudes, concerns, and self-confidence with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was conducted online as a representative population sample on the basis of region, gender, age, and level of education in 7 European countries (Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, and United Kingdom) with more than 7,000 surveyed per wave. The first wave of field research was conducted between 2 and 15 April 2020; the second wave was conducted between 9 and 22 June 2020. Roughly 60% of those surveyed in the first wave also took part in the second wave; the remaining sample consists of new survey subjects in order to ensure the representative nature of the study.

The survey is a cooperation project between the Hamburg Center for Health Economics at Universität Hamburg, the Nova School of Business and Economics (Portugal), Bocconi University (Italy), and Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands). Universität Hamburg funds the project from resources granted in the Excellence Strategy.

See the [HCHE web page](#) for the results of this wave.



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