

THE CORONAVIRUS: A VAST SCARED MAJORITY AROUND THE WORLD

according to the snap poll by Gallup International Association

A majority of people express worries for themselves and their loved ones in relation to the Coronavirus. About three-quarters say they are even ready to sacrifice some of their human rights if that helps. Most nations stand behind their governments in this battle. At the same time, however, almost half of the respondents agree that the coronavirus threat may be exaggerated. People around the world do not know what to expect in the weeks to come - bad or good – bad prospects seem a bit clearer. They do not know either if the spread of this virus is a deliberate affair, but they seem to believe it is not. Meanwhile, they take action.

This is the result of the unique snap poll held by the world's leading Gallup International Association in the context of Covid-19 situation, which involved almost than 25,000 people in 28 countries around the world. These included the United States, Russia and India, some of the most affected countries - Italy, Republic of Korea, Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, etc., as well as many other countries on different continents. Polling in the countries mentioned was completed just yesterday. The GIA snap poll on the COVID-19 continues in a dozen more countries, so there is going to be an updated press-release within a few days. As the situation is rapidly changing, we immediately release all finished poll results.

The Germans and the Swiss, as well as the citizens of Afghanistan, remain relatively cold-blooded with rather equal proportions of fear and courage. Peak values, as expected, turn out to be in Italy - a total of 90% more or less afraid of the infection. Public attitudes in Indonesia look the same as those in Italy (or even more hectic).

People of Austria seem to be the most satisfied with the reaction of their state authorities - with 88% expressing different approval of their government measures, India (83%), Palestine (80%), the Netherlands (79%), etc.

The least satisfied with their government are in Thailand - 76% there rather or completely disagree with the statement that their authorities are doing well in the current situation. Japan occupies the second place with 62% satisfied with state measures and 23% not satisfied. The United States have 42% satisfied with state measures and 46% dissatisfied. Germany is near - where 47% of the respondents believe that state measures are adequate, but 44% express of the opposite opinion.

Satisfaction with government measures seems to have less to do with the number of people infected, but with the prospects in each particular society. Italian society (72% assessing positively their government), for example, is among the most satisfied with the government, the Austrian one seems even

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more supporting, and so on. Apparently, the more affected or threatened a country is, the most instinctive solidarity with government efforts is to be found.

The Balkan peoples are the ones which predominantly find the danger is exaggerated - a total of 73% think so in Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia and 72% - in Bulgaria. As one could easily expect, the French, Dutch, Austrians, Italians, etc. share the opposite stance - with over a 70% majority that do not find any exaggeration.

The number of officially declared infected per capita in a specific country clearly plays a significant role in this regard.

Believing in the threat or not, the majority of people express clear willingness to even temporarily sacrifice some of their rights if this helps preventing the spread of the infection. A total of about three quarters of the population of the surveyed countries worldwide are more likely to be deprived of their liberties until the threat of Covid-19 is gone.

The highest levels of readiness in this regard are reported in Austria (95%), N. Macedonia (94%) and the Netherlands (91%).

This indicator reveals a virtual unanimity among the countries surveyed with some exceptions for Japan (49% ready versus 32% not ready and the rest hesitating) and USA (45% ready versus 38% not ready and the rest hesitating). Cultural context in Japan, continuing deep political division of American society, and perhaps the strong democratic traditions in this country could be part of the explanation – these are part of the hypothetical predictors.

There is no clear image of what is to be expected over the month to come. UK residents are the greatest pessimists (82% think the worst is ahead), accompanied by people of the Netherlands (77%), France (70%) and Austria (68%).

The residents of Azerbaijan (83% of them believe the worst is over), Kazakhstan (73%), Turkey (63%), Armenia (61%), India (60%), etc. are much more optimistic.

Probably, official data on infection spread for most of these countries also play some role - showing a relatively low number of COVID cases per capita. Apparently, influence by specific cultural background could be a plausible predictor as well.

The most popular measures to limit the infection worldwide include more frequent hand washing, use of hand sanitizer, limiting direct social contacts. 9% have not taken any action so far. Percentages exceed one hundred as respondents gave more than one response.

However, lots of respondents are still not determined to stay home. This share is most serious in Turkey (89%), Pakistan (80%) and Afghanistan (66%).

14% declare taking tighter self-quarantining measures.

Medical masks and gloves prove to be less popular as precaution measures. Lack of masks and gloves on the markets or distrust in their efficacy could be the reason for rather rare usage. Residents of countries where the threat is considered to be exaggerated tend to use masks and gloves to a lesser extent.

The belief prevails that the virus has emerged naturally. Among the supporters of deliberate contagion theory are, for example, Bulgaria (58%), Armenia (56%), Macedonia (53%) and Ecuador (52%).

Residents of Pakistan (majority of 72% think the infection is a natural process), Germany (59%), Afghanistan (58%), United Kingdom (58%), Thailand (58%), USA (56%), etc. are more likely to believe in the natural origin of the virus.

In general, perhaps, older Western democracies share less trust when it comes to the theory that someone created and spread the virus intentionally.

Kancho Stoychev, President of GIA:

“Generally disgraced political elites are gaining new credit of confidence at what is seen as a beginning of a global crisis without recent precedent. “Alone” starts to be replaced by “together”, “close” is substituted by “remote”, “global” is dissolved to “national” again and the miracles of the almighty market evaporates gradually while at the same time the big government is coming back behind the corner. The big question for all democratic societies is the faith of libertarian dogma of human rights. It seems that the sacrifices people across the world undertook in the last hundreds of years in their fight to get these human rights guaranteed are now sacrificed - a vast scared majority is ready to loose personal freedom in exchange to safety which might be illusionary.

Although the end of the crisis is not yet clearly visible and the overall damages are not yet calculable, the end of the “golden consumerist pandemic” seems to be close and the free choice utopia over. “No more party” seems to be the short term message but the meaning of “party” and the meaning of “short” are not yet defined.”

MINOR DEVIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE – DUE TO STANDARD ROUNDING PROCEDURES

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Methodology:

The Gallup International snap poll was conducted in 28 countries around the world. In each country a representative sample of men and women was interviewed over the last two weeks either face to face, via telephone or online. The margin of error for the survey is between +3-5% at 95% confidence level.

Coverage:

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BULGARIA

SWITZERLAND

GERMANY

USA

ARMENIA

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TURKEY

THAILAND

ITALY

PAKISTAN

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