

A traditional End of Year GIA poll, conducted between October and December 2023 covering 44 countries globally, finds the world is divided in belief that the threat from COVID-19 was exaggerated.

Data shows 45% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement *'I believe the threat from the Coronavirus was exaggerated'*, compared to 33% who disagree or strongly disagree, and further 18% who lean in neither direction.

When interrogating the global data, significant differences are found within and between global regions.

Despite having some of the highest reported deaths¹, countries in Eastern and Southeastern Europe are the most likely to agree the threat was exaggerated – Bosnia and Herzegovina (75%), Kosovo (71%), Azerbaijan (68%), Romania (66%) and Georgia (65%) among the most likely.

Previous research indicates that countries across Europe have suffered a significant decrease in perceptions of vaccines as *'important'* post-pandemic², building on the narrative that the seriousness of public health is being de-emphasized across the region.

Previous research also points to negative perceptions of the national government from people in this region, with a majority having experienced their government to be a dividing force during the COVID-19 pandemic³. With governments spearheading the COVID-19 pandemic response, impaired trust may be impacting public perceptions about the seriousness of the COVID-19 threat.

The Middle East (47%) also show high levels of agreement that the threat from COVID-19 was exaggerated. War torn countries – Afghanistan (62%), Iraq (59%) and Syria (57%), where there is a significant threat to life – are the most likely countries in the region to agree the threat was exaggerated.

Significant differences exist between countries surveyed in Africa, with agreement as high as 59% in Kenya while only 32% in Nigeria. Previous research highlights countries in Africa were huge targets of mis/disinformation campaigns about the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, 3 in 10 (28%) people across 7 countries in Africa (including Kenya and Nigeria) believed rumors the pandemic was a planned event by foreign actors⁴, likely influencing levels of perceived exaggeration.

¹ Coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths worldwide per one million population as of July 13, 2022, by country: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1104709/coronavirus-deaths-worldwide-per-million-inhabitants/>

² Vaccine Confidence Project *'State of Vaccine Confidence in the EU, 2022'*: <https://www.vaccineconfidence.org/our-work/reports/state-of-vaccine-confidence-in-eu-2022/>

³ Global Listening Project findings on COVID-19 experience and trusted voices during times of crisis (2023): <https://global-listening.org/societal-preparedness-insights/>

⁴ Vaccine Confidence Project, *Africa CDC Working Group: Wave 2 reports (2022)*: <https://www.vaccineconfidence.org/our-work/reports/africa-cdc-working-group-wave-2-reports/>

The same research also points to threats that were considered more poignant at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as Malaria and lack of access to food and clear water. Like findings from the Middle East, where other significant threats exist, countries appear more likely to agree the threat from COVID-19 was exaggerated.

Lastly, countries in Western Europe, North America and Latin America are the most likely to *disagree* that the threat from COVID-19 was exaggerated. Spain (61%), Mexico (57%), UK (49%), Germany (48%), USA (47%), Canada (47%) and Portugal (46%) are the highest. All of these largely populous countries suffered a high death rate and a large volume of confirmed cases⁵. With so many people being exposed to the devastating impacts of COVID-19, it is no wonder they are less likely to believe the threat was exaggerated.

Kancho Stoychev, president of GIA:

“The first global shutdown in human history implemented after the spread of the COVID virus in 2019 still divides the public opinion. Four years later the total number of confirmed cases is seven hundred million or less than 10% of the global population and the total death toll accredited to that disease is seven million or one percent of all registered infected. The official global death rate per thousand statistics do not show peak levels in 2020 and 2021 /7.612 and 7.645 respectively/ compared to 10 years ago (2011 – 7.818 and 2023 – 7.711). Nevertheless, a majority in most of the developed world still believes that the dangers from COVID-19 are not exaggerated, while in the vast part of the other world a majority believes the opposite. Why? Most probably the answer is related to the power of media and propaganda in the Western world.”

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⁵ Coronavirus (COVID-19) deaths worldwide per one million population as of July 13, 2022, by country: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1104709/coronavirus-deaths-worldwide-per-million-inhabitants/>

Methodology:

The Gallup International End of Year Survey (EoY) is an annual tradition initiated by and designed under the chairmanship of Dr. George Gallup in 1977. The survey is conducted every year since then. This year it was carried out in 44 countries around the world.

Sample Size and Mode of Fieldwork:

A total of 43 922 persons were interviewed globally. In each country a representative sample of around 1000 men and women was interviewed during October-December 2023 either face to face, via telephone or online.

The margin of error for the survey is between +3-5% at 95% confidence level.

About Gallup International

Gallup International Association (GIA) is the leading global independent association in market research and polling.

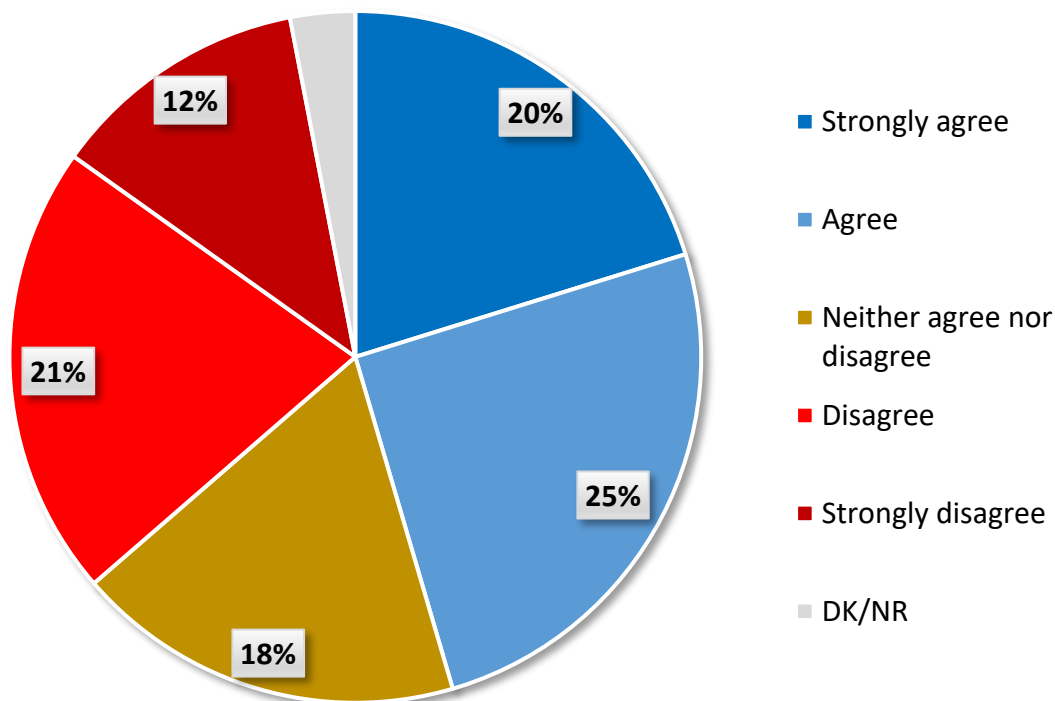
For 75 years Gallup International members have demonstrated their expert ability to conduct multi-country surveys on a comparable basis and deliver the highest quality. Our more than 100 members and partners are leading national institutes with a profound local knowledge of research methods and techniques, statistical sources, customs, and culture differences of its own country and carefully selected by the Association Board. With only one member agency per country, members work together daily to share knowledge, new research techniques and tools, as well as to provide the most appropriate solutions to international research projects and service our clients to the best of our abilities.

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COVID-19

Thinking specifically about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"I believe the threat from the Coronavirus is exaggerated"



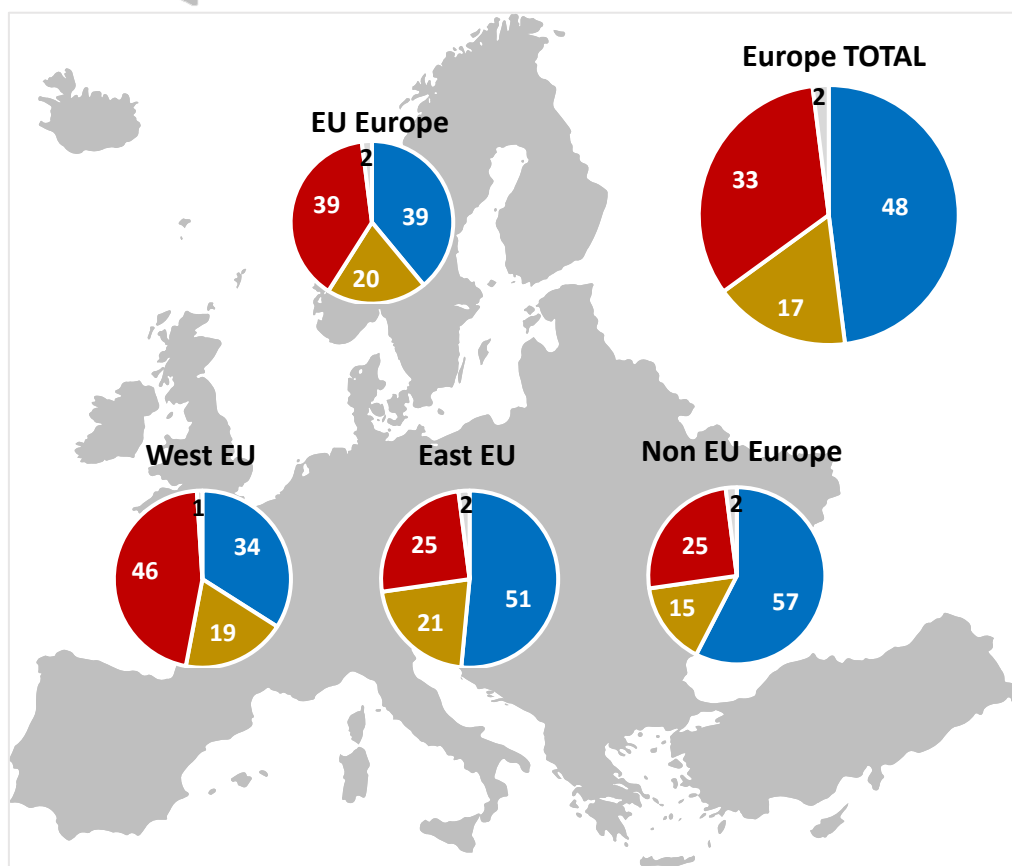
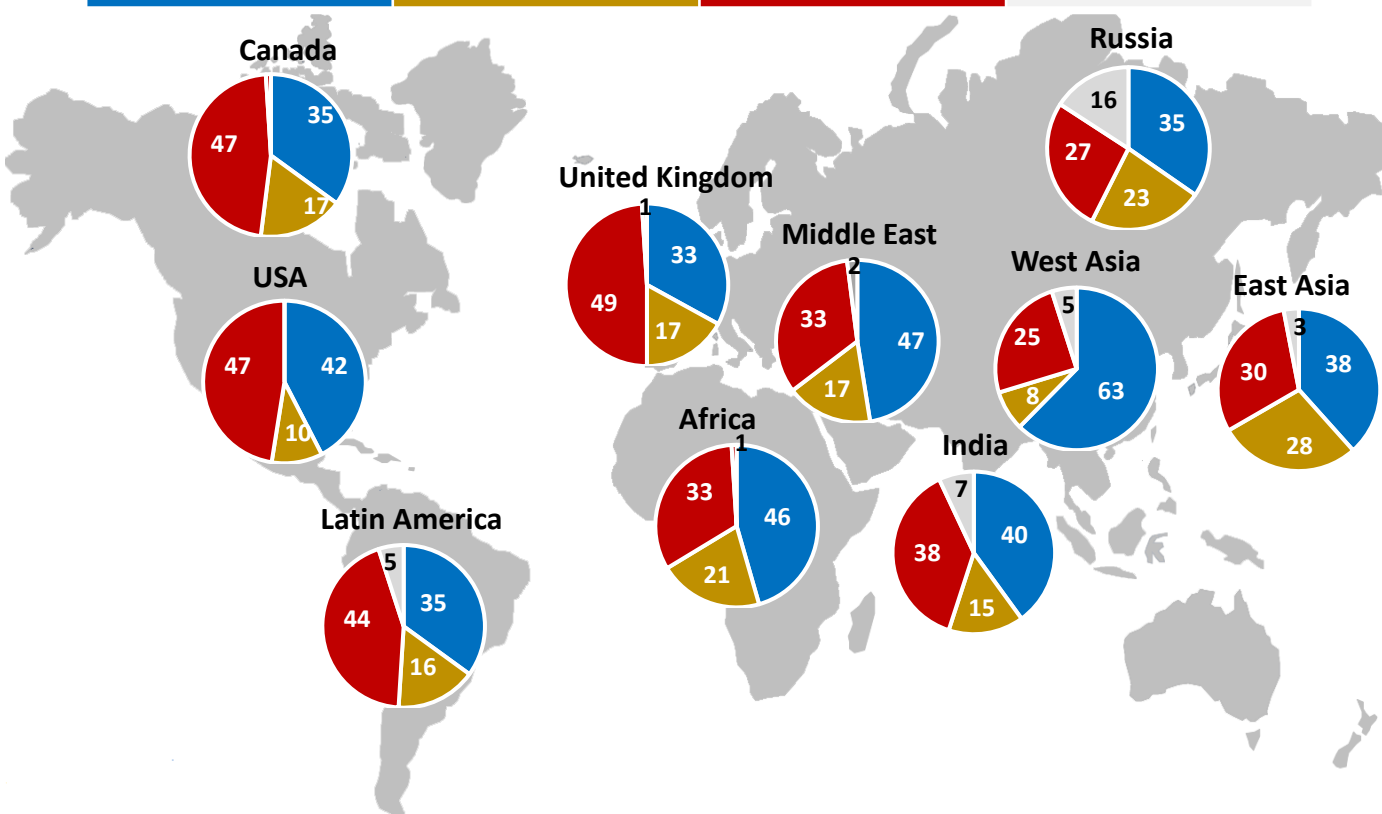
TOP 5 AGREE (Strongly Agree + Agree)	TOP 5 DISAGREE (Strongly Disagree + Disagree)
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: 75%	SPAIN: 61%
KOSOVO: 71%	MEXICO: 57%
AZERBAIJAN: 68%	SWEDEN: 55%
ROMANIA: 66%	UK: 49%
GEORGIA: 65%	GERMANY: 48%

Minor deviations due to rounding are possible

COVID-19

Thinking specifically about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

"I believe the threat from the Coronavirus is exaggerated?"



Definitions:

Agree = Strongly agree + Agree

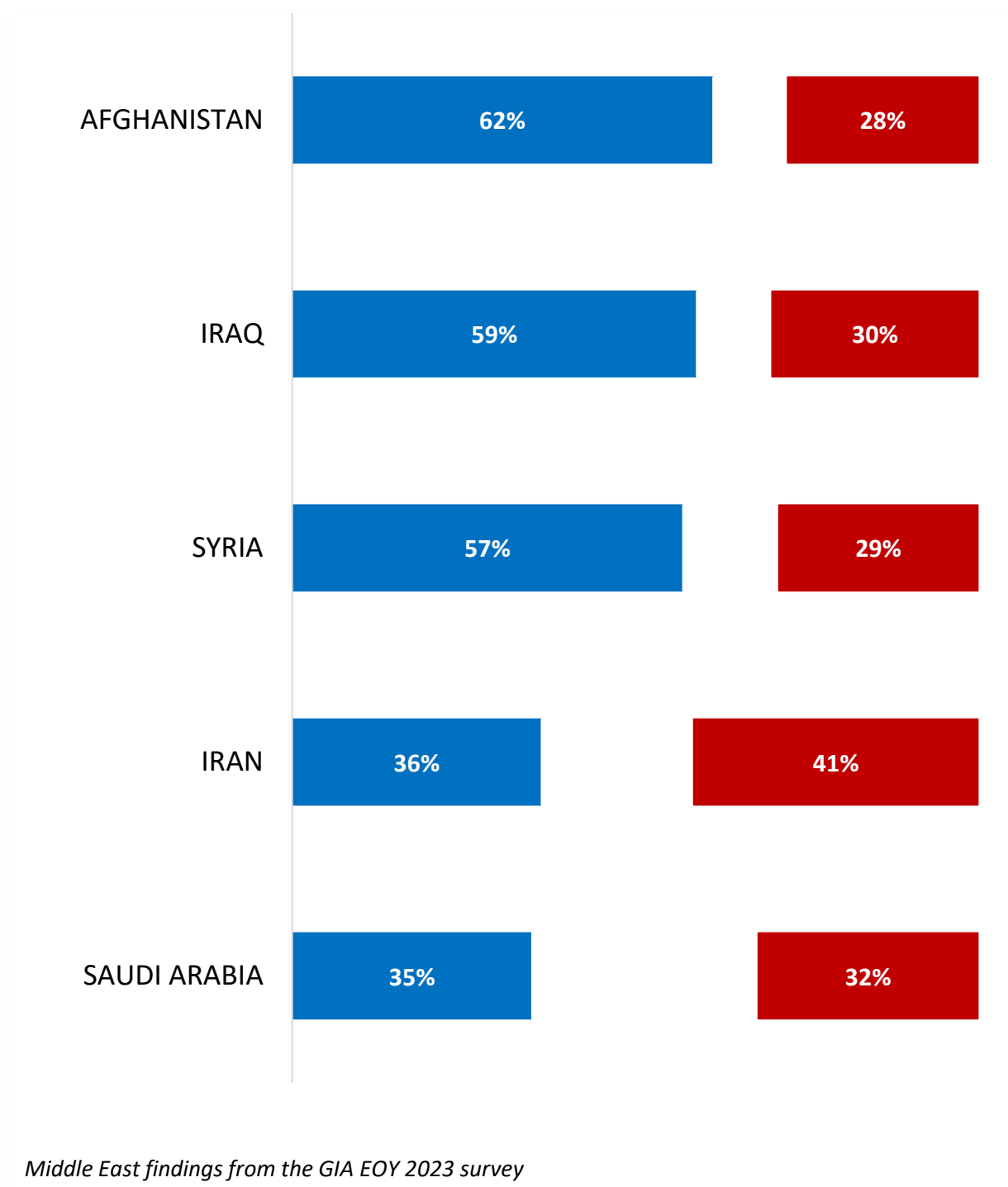
Disagree = Strongly disagree + Disagree

Minor deviations due to rounding are possible

COVID-19

Thinking about COVID-19, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"I believe the threat from the coronavirus was exaggerated"?

Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	DK/NR
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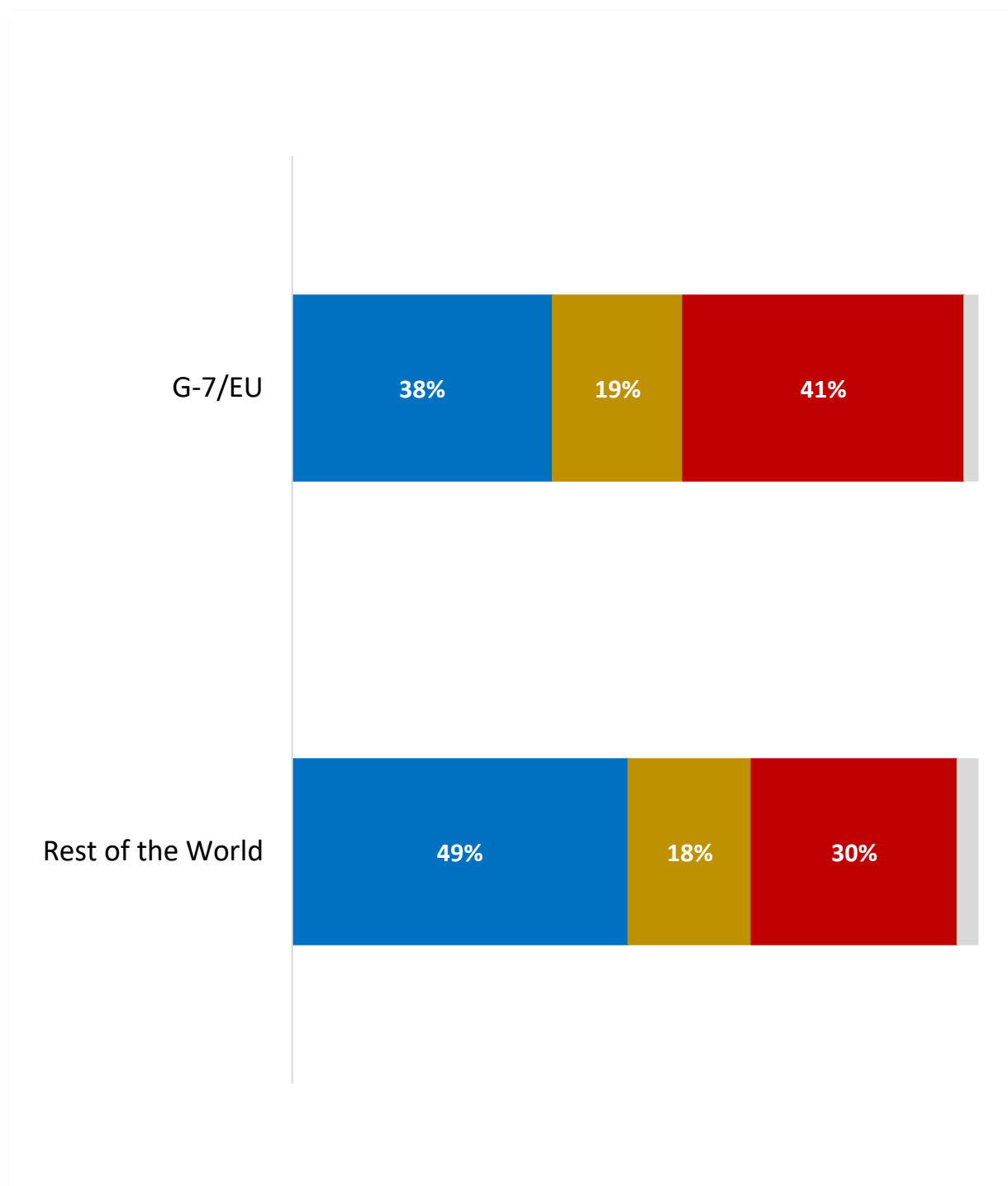
Definitions:

Agree = Strongly agree + Agree

Disagree = Strongly disagree + Disagree

G-7/EU VS. REST OF THE WORLD

Thinking about COVID-19, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"I believe the threat from the coronavirus was exaggerated"?



Definitions:

Agree = Strongly agree + Agree

Disagree = Strongly disagree + Disagree

Minor deviations due to rounding are possible

COVID-19

Thinking about COVID-19, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *"I believe the threat from the coronavirus was exaggerated"?*

(Countries presented in alphabetical order)

Country	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	DK/NR
Global Average	20%	25%	18%	21%	12%	3%
AFGHANISTAN	27%	35%	6%	17%	11%	5%
ALBANIA	6%	42%	20%	24%	8%	1%
ARGENTINA	14%	22%	20%	20%	18%	7%
ARMENIA	42%	18%	13%	10%	16%	1%
AUSTRIA	25%	20%	18%	21%	14%	1%
AZERBAIJAN	44%	24%	15%	5%	7%	4%
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	40%	35%	12%	10%	2%	1%
BULGARIA	20%	24%	24%	19%	9%	4%
CANADA	16%	19%	17%	23%	24%	1%
ECUADOR	12%	28%	20%	24%	9%	7%
GEORGIA	41%	24%	10%	19%	3%	3%
GERMANY	15%	17%	18%	27%	21%	2%
HONG KONG	9%	23%	27%	31%	8%	2%
INDIA	16%	24%	15%	14%	24%	7%
INDONESIA	25%	34%	24%	11%	2%	3%
IRAN	8%	28%	20%	34%	7%	2%
IRAQ	33%	26%	11%	16%	14%	*
ITALY	13%	28%	30%	19%	10%	*
JAPAN	7%	22%	25%	23%	13%	9%

Minor deviations due to rounding are possible

COVID-19

Thinking about COVID-19, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement:
"I believe the threat from the coronavirus was exaggerated"?

(Countries presented in alphabetical order)

Country	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	DK/NR
KAZAKHSTAN	38%	21%	10%	13%	10%	8%
KENYA	32%	27%	11%	14%	15%	2%
KOSOVO	34%	37%	5%	16%	3%	5%
NORTH MACEDONIA	22%	33%	24%	15%	4%	3%
MALAYSIA	16%	28%	33%	15%	7%	1%
MEXICO	7%	24%	10%	39%	18%	2%
MOLDOVA	34%	25%	11%	16%	12%	3%
NIGERIA	10%	22%	32%	24%	12%	*
PAKISTAN	43%	20%	4%	12%	17%	3%
PHILIPPINES	18%	31%	23%	22%	3%	3%
POLAND	16%	27%	21%	23%	10%	2%
PORTUGAL	12%	24%	17%	30%	16%	1%
ROMANIA	33%	33%	18%	12%	3%	1%
RUSSIA	16%	19%	23%	20%	7%	16%
SAUDI ARABIA	13%	22%	25%	25%	7%	8%
SERBIA	12%	23%	27%	25%	12%	1%
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	3%	25%	33%	32%	5%	2%
SPAIN	10%	15%	13%	34%	27%	1%
SWEDEN	10%	15%	19%	21%	34%	2%
SWITZERLAND	20%	24%	19%	23%	12%	2%
SYRIA	18%	39%	14%	17%	12%	*
THAILAND	10%	31%	26%	25%	5%	2%
UKRAINE	26%	27%	16%	17%	13%	2%
UK	13%	20%	17%	23%	26%	1%
USA	23%	19%	10%	19%	28%	*

Minor deviations due to rounding are possible

Gallup International Association (GIA) End of Year 2024 Survey - Participants

Country	Vendor Company	Sample size	Method	Fieldwork	Universe
AFGHANISTAN	ACSOR	1120	CATI	09-11.12.2023	National, 18+
ALBANIA	Index Kosova	635	F2F	03-05.11.2023	National, 18+
ARGENTINA	Voices!	1035	CAWI	01-06.11.2023	National, 18+
ARMENIA	MPG LLC	1100	CATI	30.10-04.11.2023	National, 18+
AUSTRIA	Das Österreichische Gallup Institut GmbH	1000	CATI	14-18.11.2023	National, 16+
AZERBAIJAN	SIAR Research and Consulting Group	500	Telephone	01-18.10.2023	National, 18+
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	Kantar Mareco Index Bosnia	1000	Online & CATI	30.11-12.12.2023	National, 18+
BULGARIA	Gallup International Balkan	806	F2F	07-14.11.2023	National, 18+
CANADA	Survey Monkey	1062	CAWI	01.12.2023	National, 18+
ECUADOR	CEDATOS	550	F2F	10-14.12.2023	National, 18+
GEORGIA	GORBI	1033 / 991	F2F	30.09-24.10.2023	National, 18+
GERMANY	GIA	1000	CATI	04-11.12.2023	National, 18+
HONG KONG	CGS-worldwide	500	CAWI	30.11-06.12.2023	National, 18+
INDIA	Convergent	1035	F2F	27.11-09.12.2023	18+, 10 biggest cities
INDONESIA	DEKA	540	F2F	01-15.12.2023	18+, 6 Big Cities
IRAN	Iran Sanjesh	1003	CATI	04.12.2023	National, 18+
IRAQ	IIACSS	1385	F2F	11.11-20.12.2023	National, 18-71
ITALY	DOXA	1003	F2F	02-14.12.2023	National, 18+
JAPAN	Nippon Research Center	1156	F2F	30.11-13.12.2023	National, 18-79
KAZAKHSTAN	BISAM Central Asia	1000	F2F	10.10-15.11.2023	Urban, 18+
KENYA	Infinite Insight Ltd.	1065	CATI	01-11.11.2023	National, 18+
KOSOVO	Index Kosova	1123	CATI	19.10-06.11.2023	National, 18+
MALAYSIA	Central Force	1000	CAWI	07-12.12.2023	National, 18+

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Gallup International Association (GIA) End of Year 2024 Survey – Participants (contd.)

MEXICO	De las Heras Demotecnia	1026	CATI	11-15.12.2023	National, 18+
MOLDOVA	CBS-Research Moldova	1001	CATI	December 2023	National, 18+
NIGERIA	Market Trends International	1000	CATI	30.10-01.12.2023	National, 18+
NORTH MACEDONIA	BRIMA	1202	F2F	01-21.12.2023	National, 18+
PAKISTAN	Gallup Pakistan	1000	CATI	04-16.10.2023	National, 18+
PERU	Datum Internacional	1207	F2F	01-06.12.2023	National, 18+
PHILIPPINES	Philippine Survey Research Center	1000	F2F	25.11-13.12.2023	National, 18-65
POLAND	Mareco Polska	1002	CATI	02-23.10.2023	National, 18+
PORTUGAL	Intercampus	1000	CAWI	12.11-06.12.2023	National, 18-65
ROMANIA	Centrul pentru Studiarea Opiniei si Pietei (CSOP)	1000	CAWI	17.10-04.12.2023	National, 18-64
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Be Media Consultant	1200	CAWI	24-30.11.2023	18+, Cities 100k+
SAUDI ARABIA	Saudi Center for Opinion Polling	1036	CATI	21-26.11.2023	National, 18+
SERBIA	TMG Insights Serbia	1007	F2F	15.11-04.12.2023	National, 18+
REPUBLIC OF KOREA	Gallup Korea	1550	F2F	02.11-04.12.2023	National, 19+
SPAIN	Sigmados	1019	CAWI	21-25.11.2023	National, 18+
SWEDEN	Novus	1095	CAWI	01-11.12.2023	National, 18+
SWITZERLAND	Gallup AG Switzerland	1000	CATI	05-13.12.2023	National, 18+
SYRIA	Syrian & Levant Market Compass	1057	*	December 2023	National, 18+
THAILAND	Infosearch	1000	F2F	24.11-10.12.2023	National, 18+
UK	ORB International	1000	Online	December 2023	National, 18+
UKRAINE	Rating Group	1000	CATI	22-23.11.2023	National, 18+
USA	Survey Monkey	1118	CAWI	04.12.2023	National, 18+