

For Immediate Release

3 February 2021

Media Contact:

Will Hummel

william.hummel@boldtpartners.com

Time for Transparency: COVID-19 Vaccination in Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Spain

Euroconsumers' survey finds that citizens need more information about the possible side effects and authorisation process of the COVID-19 vaccines to take the jab; National authorities, EU and pharmaceutical companies need to be transparent about the vaccines contracts.

Brussels - Euroconsumers' today announced the results of a survey on how adults in Belgium, Italy, Portugal and Spain feel about COVID-19 vaccination.¹ The survey, conducted between 15 - 21 January 2021, found that although a majority of respondents understand the importance of vaccines and feel that they are overall informed about the vaccines, there are lingering concerns about both potential side effects and the overall development and authorisation process that impacts the willingness among some respondents to get vaccinated. Additionally, some respondents expressed concern about the lack of transparency between their respective member states and pharmaceutical companies around the purchasing of vaccines.

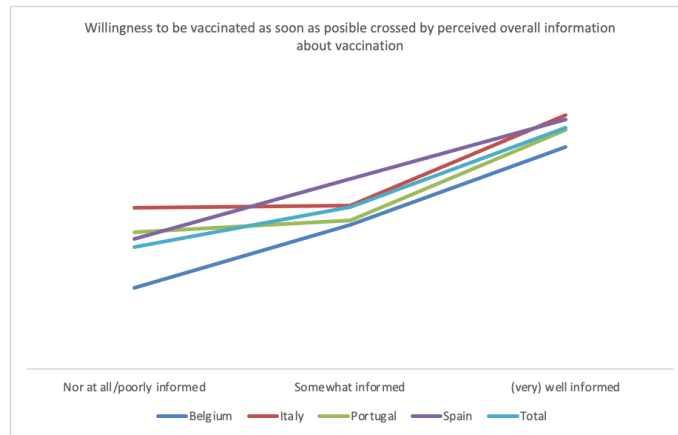
“More information and transparency is key in order to guarantee consumers' trust and run a successful vaccination campaign. Especially when it comes to possible side effects, the development and the approval process, member states, the European Union and Big Pharma need to step up” said **Els Bruggeman, Head of Policy and Enforcement at Euroconsumers**. “Transparency on the vaccines contracts is part of this much needed quest for trust, even more given the recent trouble with AstraZeneca. Secretive contracts, unclear price setting and ongoing supply and delivery issues cause direct detriment to consumers and cannot be accepted. Consumers have contributed significantly to the development, production and purchase of these vaccines, they are entitled to know the full picture.

Consumers understand the importance

While roughly seven out of ten respondents think that national economies will not recover and social distancing will continue until 2022, a **large majority of respondents believe that vaccinations will be very important to restart economic** (68%) and **social life** (72%), **reduce the burden on public health systems** (75%), and are important to protect others (70%). Additionally, 77% of respondents noted they were willing to be vaccinated. Those

¹ The sample size is 4015 people. The results can be considered as representative trends of the national populations in the 4 countries (18-74 years old)

respondents who were willing to be vaccinated also had a higher expectation of the vaccines' positive impact on economic and social recovery. But even more importantly, **the perception of being overall informed about the vaccines has a direct influence on the willingness to get the job.**



BUT there is resistance

However, among the **77% of respondents who are willing to be vaccinated**, 29% indicate they would still like to wait a bit to see the effects on others. Additionally, 12% of respondents have doubts about being vaccinated and 11% said they would not be willing to be vaccinated at all. Moreover, **9% of respondents said they would not even be vaccinated if it was mandatory.**

The **main reasons for this resistance** included: **being afraid of possible side effects** of the vaccine (64%); **not belonging to a high-risk group** (34%); and **not trusting the process for making/approving** the vaccine (29%). Conversely, respondents who have been impacted by COVID-19 (e.g. those who have lost close relatives/friends to the virus) showed more willingness to be vaccinated immediately (56%) vs. those who don't have such experience (47%).

Belgium was the most skeptical country towards vaccination, with 32% of the Belgians not willing to get vaccinated and/or not sure about it vs. Italy 17%; Portugal 23% and Spain 18%.

Transparency for vaccines contracts

Less than one-third of the respondents believe that governments and pharmaceutical companies have been transparent in relation to the process followed for purchasing the vaccines. Additionally, half of respondents believe that pharmaceutical companies should not be able to make profit on COVID vaccines, and should be liable for possible problems with the vaccines (66%).

##

About Euroconsumers

Gathering five national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people, Euroconsumers is the world's leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalised services and defence of consumer's rights. We work closely together with Consumers International to ensure consumers are safe, that markets are fair and benefit from honest relations with businesses and authorities. Our European member groups are also part of the umbrella network of BEUC, the European Consumer Organisation. Together we advocate for EU policies that benefit consumers in their daily lives.

