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**Cities of the future: consumers’ perception and expectations about AI in their post-covid urban life**

**Brussels *– 29 November 2021 –*** Euroconsumers reveals the results of a survey carried out in Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Brazil in order to identify the trends in consumers’ expectations, concerns, and opportunities related to new technologies and AI as solutions to urban problems in the post-covid era. The survey also shows cities remain attractive despite the pandemic.

Cities remain attractive as a place to live in despite the covid pandemic

11% of professionally active EU respondents (6% of Brazilians) moved during the pandemic, only 12% of which moved to a rural area. Asked if they were likely to move to another area in the next three years, only 10% (EU) said they were very likely to, amongst which only 14% said this would be to a rural area and 25% to a semi-urban area. Therefore cities remain attractive to most. When asked what they value most when choosing a place to live, nowadays and before the pandemic, respondents in all countries find that the **importance of access to health care services, doctors and hospitals, but also having access to high speed internet connection and network coverage has increased.**

With regards to their working lives, 63% of professionally active EU respondents are not currently working remotely at all. However, of workers whose job can be done remotely 71% stated it’s somewhat to very likely they will telework in the next three years.

Consumers see AI as opportunity for cities

**EU consumers overall find AI useful to improve life in the city**, whether it be for controlling city lighting more efficiently (86%), optimising public transport (85%) and waste collection (84%), managing city traffic (84%) or identifying criminals and missing persons (79%). These numbers are even higher in Brazil.

Although at present, most consumers think AI has only little, or somewhat of a presence, in their day-to-day life, this increases significantly when asked what they perceive the situation will be within 3 and 10 years. **62% of respondents living or working in an urban area in the EU, and 80% in Brazil, expect it to be very present in their day-to-day lives within a decade.**

However, 35% of EU respondents living or working in an urban area also agree with the statement “the implementation of AI-based technology will lead to significant job cuts in various sectors”, while only 22% agree with the statement “the implementation of AI-based technology will create significant demand for new job positions”. Figures are similar in Brazil with 39% and 21% respectively.

Lack of knowledge about AI and distrust in government’s ability to regulate them

55% (EU) and 39% (BR) think consumers should be better informed when they are dealing with an automatic decision system. Moreover, very few consumers believe current legislation is adequate to efficiently regulate AI-based activities (EU: 14 %), or even trust [national] authorities to exert effective control over AI organizations and companies (EU: 18 %). Therefore, **while consumers are welcoming of the idea of AI in a city context, to build trust in AI, a strong regulatory framework needs to be created and implemented.**

More to be unveiled at the Euroconsumers International Forum on 2nd December

AI cities and the future of urban life in Europe will be discussed at Euroconsumers’ [International Forum on the 2nd December](https://www.euroconsumers.org/activities/euroconsumers-2021-international-forum-kicks-off-on-the-2nd-december), with policy-makers and representatives from European smart cities. Our survey results will provide plenty to discuss.

“The majority of the global population live in cities,” said **Marco Pierani, Director of Public Affairs & Media Relations at Euroconsumers**. “And this number will only grow. That is why AI will be crucial for the efficient management of our urban spaces, and making them healthier, safer, and more sustainable places to live. These surveys should serve as a basis for identifying what is needed from policy-makers to bring the promise of AI in cities.”

“Consumers have a healthy trust in AI to deliver innovation and improve how our cities work,” said **Els Bruggeman, Head of Policy and Enforcement at Euroconsumers.** “But as technology becomes more prevalent, and important, in our urban lives, continued consumer trust will be vital. That’s why a robust legal framework is needed to reassure consumers that their data, privacy and security will be strongly protected.”

**Note on methodology**

The surveys were conducted by Euroconsumers’ Statistical Surveys Department from 11 to 19 October 2021 in the countries Euroconsumers operate i.e. Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Spain as well as Brazil, where the survey focused on two major cities: São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. An online sample of approximately 1.000 adults (from 18 to 74) was surveyed in each country. The sample was a-priori stratified and a-posteriori weighted in order to guarantee that survey data are into line with each national population, for gender, age, geographical area and educational level (gender, age and city size for Brazil).

**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.