Press Release

Large majority of Europeans expect positive effects from innovation and favor cooperation

**A large majority of EU citizens expect innovation and technological progress to have a positive impact on their lives over the next 15 years.** **With the coronavirus crisis, the desire for more innovation has grown appreciably, particularly with regard to the healthcare and long-term care sectors, the fight against climate change, and education. At the same time, Europeans are keenly aware of the competition they face in key technologies coming from the United States and China. European citizens thus support greater cooperation within Europe.**

*Brussels, 12 November 2020.* A total of 69 percent of the EU’s population expects their lives to be positively affected over the next 15 years by innovation and technological progress, while only 18 percent expects such developments to have a negative impact. At the same time, Europeans recognize that they face intensifying international competition in fields shaped by innovation and technical invention. Most prominently, an overwhelming majority wants to see stronger cooperation between EU states. The desire to promote innovation in areas such as healthcare, particularly during the coronavirus epidemic, has once again increased significantly. These are the results found by eupinions, a pan-European survey of more than 12,000 EU citizens conducted on behalf of Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung.

**Positive expectations for mobility and health, concerns about jobs and data protection**

Europeans’ positive expectations associated with innovation are focused mainly within five thematic areas. When asked in which areas they expected to see progress or positive developments thanks to technological innovation over the next 15 years, 41 percent identified mobility and transport, while 39 percent cited the field of healthcare and long-term care. A total of 28 percent said they expected to see progress in energy supply, 27 percent identified the field of environmental protection or the fight against climate change, and another 26 percent specified the education sector. Only 8 percent said they did not expect to see innovation-driven progress in any area. Europeans are most likely to be concerned about innovation with regard to its impact on job creation or data-protection efforts. A total of 40 percent of respondents said they saw a possibility of negative effects on jobs. Similarly, 36 percent said they expected further progress to put their personal data at risk.

**Coronavirus crisis leads to new priorities**

The coronavirus crisis has also significantly strengthened the explicit desire that targeted support be provided for innovation, particularly within specific areas. In comparison to the year before the crisis, a greater share of Europeans today want to see support provided for innovation in the area of healthcare and long-term care (+14 percent), for the creation of jobs (+14 percent), in the fight against climate change (+6 percent), and in efforts to improve education (+7 percent).

In this regard, Europeans also appear aware that the continent is lagging behind its international competitors. For example, although a large majority of 66 percent of respondents indicated that EU countries were generally well-positioned with regard to innovative capacity, 52 percent of respondents said that the United States was leading Europe in the fields of artificial intelligence, big data and blockchain technology. Moreover, they consider China to be even more successful. Fully 59 percent of Europeans currently regard the People’s Republic of China as being more innovative than the EU. The proportion of respondents that sees Europe as trailing its competitors is similar across most EU states.

**More European cooperation**

Europeans apparently regard increased mutual cooperation as being a useful response to this issue. A total of 63 percent of Europeans – thus, nearly two-thirds – are in favor of stronger cooperation between EU countries in fostering innovation. By contrast, just 14 percent sees the current extent of cooperation as sufficient, while another 14 percent said that EU countries should cooperate less and look instead for national solutions. The desire for more European competition was expressed by a majority of at least 52 percent (the share recorded for participants from the Netherlands) in all 28 survey countries. Even in the United Kingdom, with its relatively high degree of skepticism toward the European Union, 55 percent of citizens said they would prefer more European-level cooperation in support of innovation. This desire has remained stable throughout Europe during the coronavirus crisis.

Brigitte Mohn, a member of the Bertelsmann Stiftung board of directors, sees the findings as a clear appeal to policymakers and the business sector: “Particularly in the area of innovation and the promotion of future technologies, we in Europe must cooperate with one another much more vigorously instead of seeking to go it alone on the national level. Enhancing our technological competitiveness while at the same time working to solve urgent societal problems requires ambitious innovation-policy goals and implementation mechanisms more efficient than those currently in place. Moreover, in the current crisis, we must not shy away from investment in innovation; rather, we need to invest more, in a countercyclical manner, in order to unlock future potential.”

**Additional information:**

The “European Opinion Survey on Popular Attitudes Toward Innovation” was carried out by Dalia Research on behalf of Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung (eupinions project) in August 2019. The survey was conducted in 28 EU member states, with a total of 12,263 participants. The survey sample reflects the EU’s current population distribution in terms of age (16–65 years), sex and region/country. In a follow-up survey conducted in June 2020, questions from the original survey were repeated in order to gauge the possible effects of the global coronavirus pandemic on Europeans’ opinions.

eupinions is an independent platform for European public opinion. They collect, analyse and comment on what the European public thinks about current political issues and megatrends. eupinions employs cutting-edge data collection techniques. Every quarter, they collect samples from each EU member state in 22 languages. The data meets the highest scientific standards and is representative with regard to age, gender, education and country/region. eupinions is a project of Bertelsmann Stiftung. The data is collected by Dalia Research.

Further information: <https://eupinions.eu/de/home>

The survey is part of the global research being conducted in association with the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020. The theme of the Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020 is “Fostering innovation. Unlocking potential.” It is looking for solutions that may enable Europe to generate technological change that benefits society. The Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020 is being awarded to Nechemia (“Chemi”) Peres, chairman of the Board of Directors of Israel’s Peres Center for Peace and Innovation. With this award, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is honoring the entrepreneur for his exceptional commitment to fostering innovation, which has benefited economic goals and the broader society in equal measure. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the award ceremony will be held in 2021.

About the Reinhard Mohn Prize:

The Reinhard Mohn Prize is given in memory of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's founder, Reinhard Mohn († October 2009). Since 2009, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has awarded the €200,000 prize to internationally renowned individuals who have played a key role in developing forward-looking solutions to social and political challenges. The prize is given based on a global search for innovative concepts and exemplary solutions to challenges that will have a decisive impact on Germany’s future.

For more information, visit: <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/en/our-projects/fostering-innovation>

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**About the Bertelsmann Stiftung: Inspiring people. Shaping the future.**

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to enabling social participation for everyone – politically, economically and culturally. The issues we address are education, democracy, Europe, health, values and the economy. In doing so, we focus on people, since only they can change the world and make it better. We share knowledge, promote expertise and develop solutions. A nonprofit foundation, the Bertelsmann Stiftung was established in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn. For more information, please visit: [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de)