LITHUANIA

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Lithuanians worry about economic insecurity and call for more social protection

The OECD's cross-national Risks that Matter survey examines people's perceptions of social and economic risks and how well they feel their government reacts to their concerns. The survey polled a representative sample of 25000 people aged 18 to 64 years old in 25 OECD countries to understand better what citizens want and need from social policy – particularly in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nearly three-quarters of Lithuanians are generally worried about their household's finances and overall economic and social security when looking forward to 2022, above the OECD average of 67%. When asked about specific perceived social and economic risks, becoming ill or disabled is the concern most often-cited by Lithuanians in the short term. In the long term, the primary concern is financial security in old age.

This sense of insecurity at the household level, across countries, likely reflects the widely-held understanding that national economies had deteriorated from 2019 to 2020 during the pandemic. A majority of respondents in every country except Lithuania (Fig. 1) report that their country's economic situation had worsened during the pandemic (in Lithuania, 47.9% say it has worsened). Interestingly, the OECD also projects that Lithuania will be one of the first countries to recover at the macroeconomic level (OECD Economic Outlook 2021).

Across countries, women are about six percentage points more likely to report feeling insecure about their household's finances than men do. This gender gap is widest in Lithuania, where the difference between men's and women's perceptions are around ten percentage points (Fig. 2).

In the face of these challenges, Lithuanians are calling for a greater degree of social protection. 78% of respondents in Lithuania say they want government to do more to ensure their economic and social security (Fig. 3). Likely reflecting the gender gap in risk perceptions, women are also more likely than men to call for more public intervention.

Respondents express a willingness to pay more in taxes to bolster some social programmes. Spending more on pensions, in particular, is widely supported: almost 80% of Lithuanians say they would pay more in taxes (generally) to benefit from better pensions. The share willing to pay drops to 49% when respondents are primed to consider a specific price tag (2% of income in taxes and contributions), but this is still fairly widespread support for greater contributions to benefit from better pensions – and well above the OECD average of 42%.

Fig. 1. Percent of respondents in 2020 who say that their country's economic situation is worse or much worse than it was in 2019

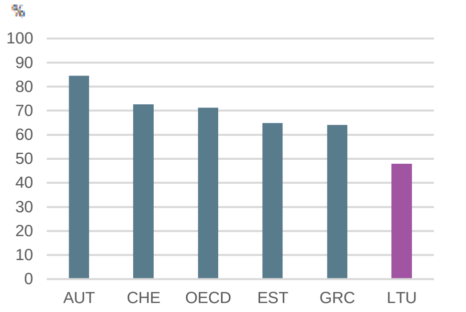


Fig. 2. Percent of respondents who are somewhat or "very" concerned about their household's finances and overall social and economic well-being over the next year or two, by gender

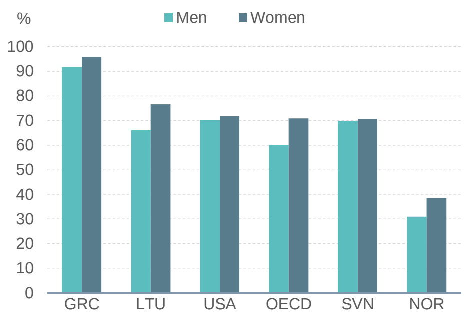
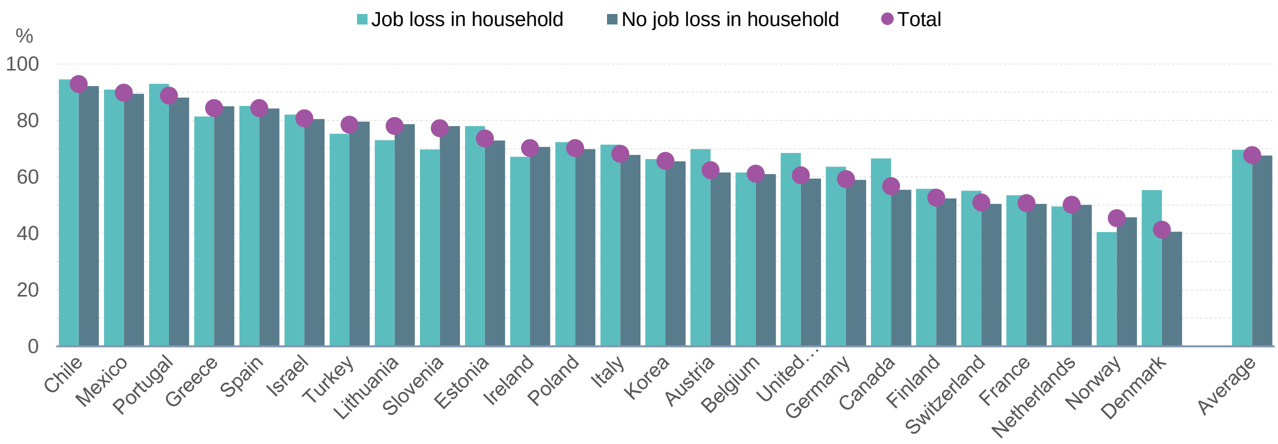


Fig. 3. Nearly eight out of ten Lithuanians want government to do more to ensure their economic and social security



Note: Percent of respondents responding "more" or "much more" when asked "Do you think the government should be doing less, about the same, or more to ensure your economic and social security and well-being?", by reported experience of job loss in the household since the start of the pandemic, 2020. Source: OECD Secretariat estimates based on the OECD Risks That Matter 2020 survey, https://www.oecd.org/social/risks-that-matter.htm

The **OECD Risks that Matter (RTM)** survey is a cross-national survey examining people's social and economic concerns, how well they think government responds to their needs and expectations, and what policies they would like to see in the future. The survey was conducted for the first time in 2018 to support the OECD Social Policy Ministerial. The 2020 survey, conducted in September-October 2020, draws on nationally-representative samples in Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States.