

Irish people want more public support for housing, finances in old age

The OECD's new cross-national survey, *Risks That Matter*, examines people's perceptions of social and economic risks and their views on how well government reacts to their concerns. The survey polled a representative sample of 22 000 adults in 21 OECD countries in 2018 in an effort to understand better what citizens want and need from social policy.

In the short run, Irish people worry about falling ill and making ends meet. 52% of the Irish list "becoming ill or disabled" as a top-three risk in the next year or two. Another top-three risk is worrying about meeting all expenses despite working. 50%* of Irish people list this as a top-three risk, just above the cross-national average of 47%.

When looking beyond the next decade, pensions are by far the most common concern for Irish people. 70% of the Irish list "financial security in old age" as a top-three risk – in line with the cross-national average of 72% (Fig. 1). **Social mobility, too, is a major concern.** 49% of Irish people worry that they will not do as well as their parents did in life, and 48% worry that their children will not do as well as they have.*

Irish people are relatively satisfied with social protection when compared with respondents in other countries, but there is still room for improvement. Only 32% of Irish people feel they could easily access

*Values exceed 100% because respondents could select up to three answers.

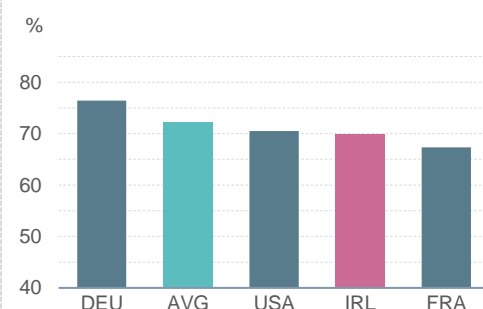
public benefits if they needed them – a low share, certainly, but a higher level of optimism than the cross-national average of 20%. About half of Irish people (51%) feel the government does *not* incorporate the views of people like them when designing/reforming public benefits; across countries, an average of 61% feel excluded.

When presented with a range of policy options, **Irish people are most likely to identify better health care (61%), better pensions (46%), and more affordable housing (41%)* as the public supports they need most to feel more economically secure.**

Most Irish people are willing to pay for investments in these policy areas. 52% of Irish people agree that government should make housing more affordable, even if it means that taxes rise (Fig. 2). 45% call for greater spending on pensions, even if it means taxes rise and other programmes may be cut. **In these and other policy areas, the Irish are more likely than people in other countries to say that they are willing to pay more in taxes to receive better public services and benefits.**

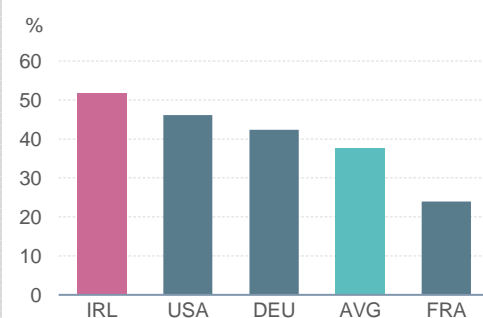
As in almost every other surveyed country, people in Ireland are counting on government to support them. 71% of Irish people say that they want government to do more to safeguard their economic and social security (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1. As in most countries, many Irish people are worried about financial security in old age



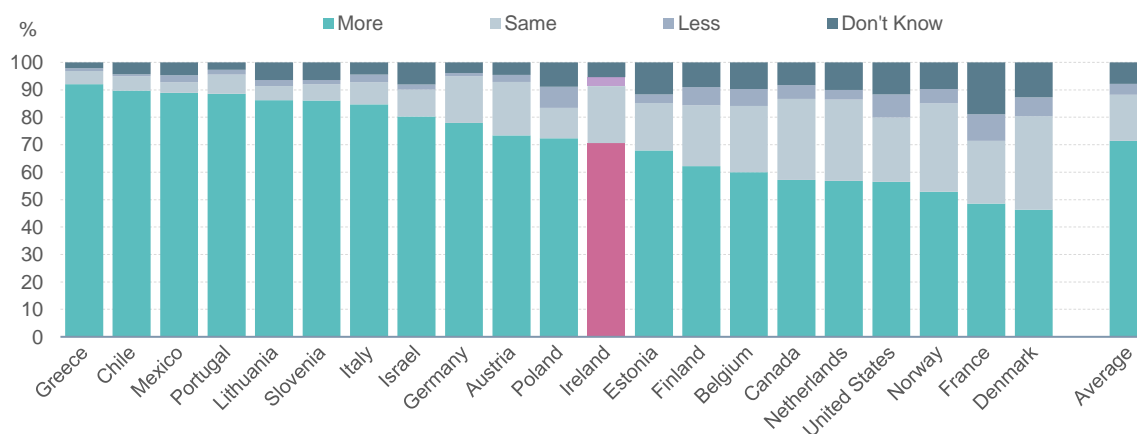
Note: Percent listing "Being financially secure in old-age" as one of the top-three greatest long-term risks to themselves or their immediate family.

Fig. 2. Many people in Ireland back increased public spending on housing



Note: Percent that agree (or strongly agree) that "Government should make housing more affordable, even if it means that taxes rise."

Fig. 3. More than two-thirds of Irish people want government to do more to safeguard their economic and social security



Note: Distribution of responses to the question "Do you think the government should be doing less, more, or the same to ensure your economic and social security?"

Source: OECD (2019), *Main Findings from the 2018 OECD Risks that Matter Survey*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

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Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.