

## Press Release Germany I 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update

### Between hope & worries: The balance after the crisis year is split

- **Front-runner:** The government remains the most trusted institution in Germany, losing trust only slightly compared to January 2021
- **Vote of no confidence:** Germans express their mistrust in the EU – trust drops in another 8 out of 14 countries compared to before the pandemic
- **Traumatized:** 65% of Germans say they are still mentally in a kind of "pandemic mode"; 59% believe increased mental health problems will be among the worst negative consequences of the pandemic

**Frankfurt am Main, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021.** Fake news about the coronavirus, discussions about vaccine distribution and disagreement about measures and opening steps: Spring 2021 continued to be overshadowed by the Corona crisis for all institutions. The institutions that Germans trust in these uncertain times has not changed significantly in recent months. Although the government in particular has lost some of its trust, it remains the institution that Germans trust most. This is shown by the current data of the Edelman Trust Barometer 2021 Spring Update: A World in Trauma. In it, Edelman surveyed 16,800+ people in 14 markets about their trust between 30 April and 11 May 2021.

Compared to the Edelman Trust Barometer 2021, which was published in January, the Spring Update shows: among Germans, the government at 55% (-4 %pc; global: 56%, +1 %pc) and companies at 54% (+/-0 %pc; global: 62%, +2 %pc) did not gain further trust in the spring. Nevertheless, confidence in Germany, which has basically risen during the pandemic, is still significantly higher than before the global crisis was declared. While the government – followed by companies – remains the most trusted institution, the media (53%; +1 %pc; global: 51%, +1 %pc) and NGOs (47%; +1 %pc; global: 58%, +1 %pc) are close behind.

"There is a big difference in the perception of institutional trust between the informed public and the general public, which is particularly worrying for companies," says Christiane Schulz, CEO of Edelman in Germany. While the informed public expresses the greatest trust in companies at 73% compared to the other institutions, the general public only gives them a neutral rating of 52%. This is where the biggest trust gap is, at 21 percentage points. For the government (12 percentage points), the media (10 percentage points) and NGOs (13 percentage points), the trust gap is much smaller overall.

### Pointing the way to the EU: German trust has fallen sharply

But it is not only among institutions here at home that the Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update shows a downward trend in trust. Germans' trust in the institutions of the EU has declined significantly. A decline seen globally in 9 out of 14 countries surveyed compared to before the pandemic. At 46% (- 5 percentage points), this is particularly dramatic in Germany. While Germans were still neutral towards the EU in January, they express their distrust of the EU only five months later.

### **Fears cloud outlook for normality**

Despite the initial successes in fighting the pandemic, people are still worried. Globally, as well as in this country, 65% of respondents say they are still mentally in a kind of pandemic mode, worrying about their safety and that they are waiting for things to get better.

This uncertainty is illustrated by the following responses to the question about which activities vaccinated and non-vaccinated people feel safe doing: About half of the general population (52%) feel safe shopping in shops in this country. Among the vaccinated, the figure is slightly higher (60 %). However, shopping is far ahead of going to work (29% general population; 29% vaccinated) and sending children to school (24% general population; 29% vaccinated).

The answers to the question about the most negative consequences of the pandemic are also worrying: 59% of the respondents in Germany (globally: 55%) believe that there will be an increase in mental illness. Another 54% say that it will not be possible to return to lost jobs (global: 55%).

### **Innovation and orientation: seizing opportunities from the crisis**

Looking to the future, only just over half of the respondents in this country (51%; globally: 64%) say that – as bad as the pandemic is – the crisis will lead to important innovations and changes for the better: how we live, work and interact with each other. On the other hand, 49% (globally: 36%) agree that the pandemic will not provide positive impetus, but rather divide society and use up resources that could have been used to solve other social problems. In terms of the positive changes that respondents in Germany expect, better preparation for future pandemics (56%; globally: 55%), improvements in the health system (51%; globally: 57%) and greater attention to climate change (38%; globally: 37%) come before innovations in the world of work (34%; globally: 47%) and accelerated development of technologies (33%; globally: 39%).

For all institutions, the main challenge now is to seize the opportunity and respond to people's needs and concerns in an ongoing period of uncertainty. The key is consistent and transparent communication that reduces fears and addresses all people.

### **2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update: A World in Trauma**

The 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Spring Update: A World in Trauma is an update to the 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer. The survey was conducted by Edelman Data & Intelligence (DxI) between April 30 and May 11, 2021 and sampled more than 16,800 respondents in 14 markets: Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, S. Africa, S. Korea, UAE, UK, and U.S. 1,200 people were surveyed in each market, 100 of which were informed public. All informed public respondents met the following criteria: aged 25-64, college-educated; household income in the top quartile for their age in their country; read or watch business/news media at least several times a week; follow public policy issues in the news at least several times a week. For more information, visit <https://www.edelman.com/research/trust-2021-spring-update>

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