**Press Release Germany | 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust and Health**

**Under pressure: Trust in the health sector put to the test**

* **Volatile sentiment:** The boost in trust that the health sector received at the beginning of the pandemic has been used up. Opinion is divided on whether the health system is well-equipped enough to deal with future major health crises.
* **'Infodemic' fuels mistrust:** 43% of Germans say they are concerned that science is being used to support a political agenda.
* **Key factor trust:** Higher trust in the healthcare ecosystem enables acceptance of public health measures despite restrictions on personal freedoms.

**Frankfurt am Main, 13 April 2022.** It is now more than two years since the WHO declared Covid-19 a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. In that time, the world, community feeling, and trust in institutions have changed. Trust levels in the health sector are volatile, health recommendations are under scrutiny, and the views of vaccinated and unvaccinated people are divided. This is shown in the latest data from the Edelman Trust Barometer 2022 Special-Report: Trust and Health. In it, Edelman surveyed 10,000 people across 10 markets (Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, South Korea, the UK and the U.S.) about the impact of trust on health.

The figures show that trust in the health sector and companies operating in this sector is under scrutiny from several sides. For example, among Germans, healthcare companies have lost the high level of trust that was reached at the beginning of the pandemic (May 2020: 72%) (March 2022: 60%). It turns out that German respondents are split on whether the German health system is well equipped to handle major health crises – only 50% of them say the pandemic has increased their confidence in this. **'Infodemic' for relevant health information**

Looking back over the past five years, however, it is clear that the decline in trust and confidence in the health system cannot be attributed solely to the pandemic. In January 2017, 76% of those surveyed in Germany said they felt confident in their ability to find answers to questions about health care and make informed decisions for themselves and their families. As it stands now, 65% agree with this statement.

A major challenge that continues to fuel this trend is the ongoing 'infodemic'**.** The difficulty in solving the information problem is that many people are not being reached. Less than half (44%) of German respondents say they consume health-related information from major news organisations, companies or influencers on a weekly or more frequent basis," says Nils Giese, Managing Director Healthcare.

The differences in information behaviour and trust in various sources also become clear when looking at vaccinated and unvaccinated people across the nine-market global average. Fully vaccinated people state that they rely most on their doctor as a source for information and advice on vaccinations, followed by the recommendations of national health experts. The unvaccinated – specifically, those who choose not to be vaccinated – tell a different story. They rely the most on internet research, followed by the consultation of family and friends. In fact, their third-most popular source of information is “no one” – they are more likely to report relying on no information that asking their doctor for advice.

One possible factor for the significant difference in information-seeking between the vaccinated and unvaccinated could be the concern that science is being politicised. 43% of Germans say they are concerned that medical science is being used to support a political agenda.

**Trust as a critical factor**

The importance of trust in the health ecosystem and its influence on both public and personal health behaviour is shown clearly by German respondents. Those with lower trust in the health ecosystem are significantly less likely to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19. 92% of respondents who are fully vaccinated have higher trust in the health ecosystem, while 68% have lower trust. A similar picture emerges among respondents who have had a routine check-up in the past year in this country, with a 17-point gap between those who have higher trust and those who have lower trust in the health ecosystem.

Trust is also shown to be crucial when it comes to support for and compliance with public health measures. 61% of Germans with higher trust in the health ecosystem agree that arguments for personal freedom regarding health decisions do not apply if other people's health is endangered as a result, while majority of those with lower trust think no one should be forced to engage in any health-protecting behaviors they don’t want to do. The same picture emerges for the acceptance that scientific advances can lead to changes in expert recommendations. Of those in this country with higher trust in the health ecosystem, 79% assume that new recommendations are likely to be better than the old ones because health experts have learned more, while less than half of those with lower trust assume this.

"The Edelman Trust Barometer 2022 Special Report: Trust and Health shows that trust tips the scales when it comes to acceptance of public health policies and decisions. Those who have a higher level of trust in the health ecosystem are more likely to participate in health-promoting behaviours such as preventive health care and are more willing to restrict their freedoms for the sake of health protection," explains Nils Giese.

**Holistic approach needed to overcome trust gap**

The impact that the actions of healthcare companies have on the industry and the entire healthcare ecosystem is clearly shown by the latest findings of the Special Report. 73% of respondents in this country say that it is important to earning/keeping their trust that healthcare companies work to build and maintain trust in the country’s health system.

"For companies in the health sector, this means they need to know their role and how they can meaningfully bring their strengths to the entire ecosystem. In order for this to succeed, not just with one part of society, the existing trust gap must be overcome. It’s no longer enough to just drive a strategy and look at the information channels and interests of a target group. It’s crucial that health companies and other institutions understand the importance of the different voices and influencers and apply the right approach to reach as many as possible," says Nils Giese.

**About the Edelman Trust Barometer 2022 Special Report: Trust and Health**The Edelman Trust Barometer 2022 Special Report: Trust and Health online survey involved 10,000 respondents across 10 markets (Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, South Korea, the UK and the U.S.), with data reflecting the national population of each country and representative by age, region and gender. In the U.S., an oversample of respondents from different racial and ethnic communities was also conducted. All data was collected through an online survey from 10-18 February 2022. For more information, please visit <https://www.edelman.com/trust-barometer>