

Canadians cautiously optimistic about accessing and influencing social programmes

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.

Canadians are most worried, in the short run, about making ends meet. 51% of Canadians say that struggling to meet daily expenses, despite working, is a top-three concern. Canadians also worry about becoming ill or disabled (48% list this as a top-three short-term risk) and losing a job (36%) in the next year or two.*

When looking beyond the next decade, pensions are by far the most common concern for Canadians, as they are in every country surveyed. 67% of people in Canada list "financial security in old age" as a top-three long-term risk, followed by worries that they will not do as well in life as their parents (46%) and ensuring the long-term care of family members (37%).*

Although just over one-third (34%) of Canadians feel they could easily access public benefits if they needed them, this is a higher level of confidence in benefit

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

accessibility than in all of the other countries surveyed (Fig. 1). Across countries, only 20% of respondents feel they could access benefits if needed.

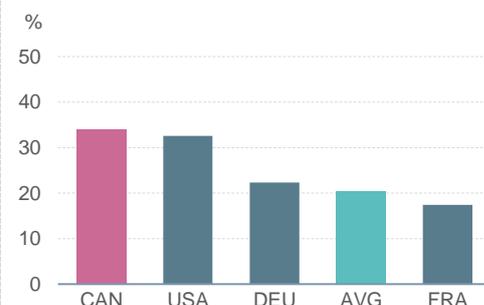
Canadians are also cautiously optimistic about their political voice, relative to people in other countries. 45% of Canadians feel the government does not incorporate their views (or the views of people like them) when designing or reforming public benefits – a lower level of scepticism than in every country except Norway (Fig. 2).

Most people in Canada want more support from their government. 57% say that government should do more to ensure their economic and social security, and only 5% say government should do less (Fig. 3).

There is also strong support for anti-poverty policies. **69% of Canadians say that the government should tax the rich more than it currently does in order to support the poor** – slightly above the cross-national average level of support for progressive redistribution

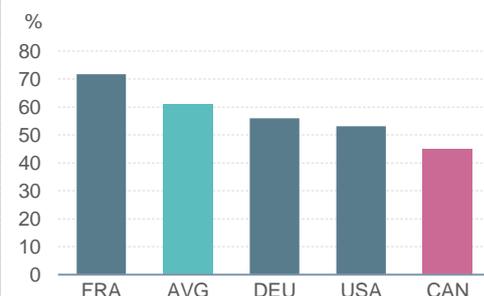
Given a range of policy areas, Canadians are most likely to want to invest in pensions: 45% of Canadians say they would increase spending on pensions, even if it means taxes will rise and some other programmes may be cut.

Fig. 1. Canadians are more positive about benefit access than many others



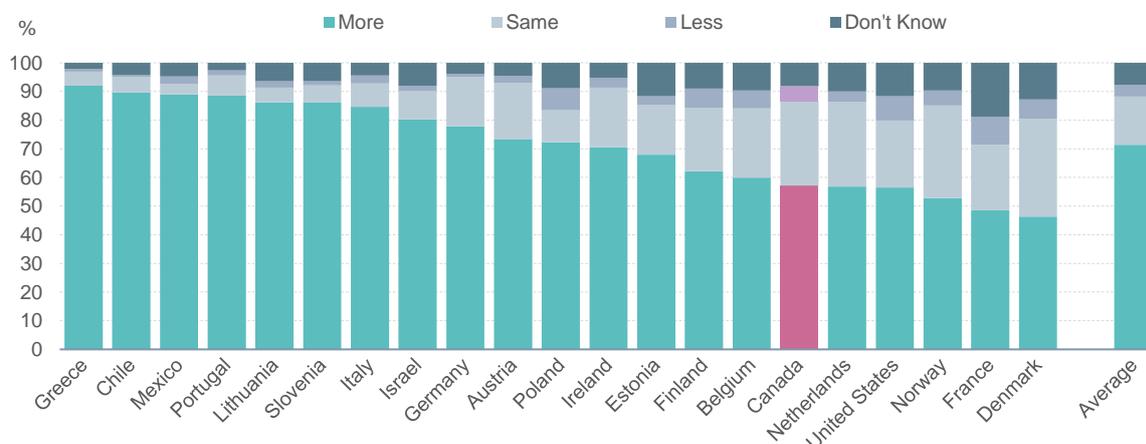
Note: Percent that agree (or strongly agree) with the statement "I think I could easily receive public benefits if I needed them."

Fig. 2. Canadians are less likely to feel ignored by government than people in other countries



Note: Percent that disagree (or strongly disagree) with the statement "I feel the government incorporates the views of people like me when designing or reforming public benefits."

Fig. 3. More than half of Canadians 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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