Press Release

Three-quarters of Spaniards expect positive effects from innovation and favor European cooperation

**Spanish citizens are more optimistic toward innovation and technical progress, for example through digital transformation, than are Europeans as a whole. At the same time, they are clearly aware of international competition in key technological fields, particularly from the United States and China. Over the next 15 years, they expect to see positive effects especially in the areas of mobility, long-term care and efforts to battle climate change. They express a desire for more European cooperation and greater support for innovation in the areas of job creation, healthcare and the education sector, particularly in light of the coronavirus pandemic.**

*Brussels, 12 November 2020 -* A large majority of Spaniards expect innovation and technological progress to have primarily positive effects on their personal lives in the years to come, for example thanks to increasing digitalization. In this regard, they display a more optimistic attitude toward innovation than do Europeans as a whole. At the same time, they recognize that there is strong international competition within cutting-edge technological fields. They are comparatively pessimistic when assessing their own country’s innovative capacity. Moreover, they are concerned about the effect of innovation on jobs and the protection of personal data. These are the findings of a pan-European survey of more than 12,000 citizens in 28 European countries, including 1,082 adults in Spain, conducted on behalf of Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung.

**Positive effects expected for mobility and healthcare, concerns about jobs and data protection.**

According to the study, 76 percent of Spaniards expect innovation to produce a primarily positive impact within their personal lives. A total of 18 percent expect very positive effects. Only 13 percent instead fears negative effects, of which only three percent expect very negative outcomes. Thus, Spanish citizens are significantly more optimistic in their expectations for the future than their counterparts in most other EU countries, and in comparison to the average across Europe as a whole.

Spaniards most frequently expect innovation to produce positive effects over the next 15 years in the areas of healthcare and long-term care, with 42 percent of the population holding this opinion. A total of 41 percent of Spanish respondents said they anticipated improvements in the area of mobility and transport, with 28 percent feeling this way about energy supply, 27 percent about the education sector, and 26 percent about environmental protection and the fight against climate change. Only seven percent of Spain’s population said they expected no positive effects in any of the fields.

In turn, residents of Spain are less likely than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe to anticipate negative effects from innovation. Members of this population show the greatest fear of negative effects with regard to job creation, with 41 percent expressing this concern. A total of 36 percent sees threats with regard to the protection of personal data, while 24 percent anticipates risks to environmental projection, and 20 percent in the area of defense and security.

A comparison between surveys taken in 2019 and 2020 shows that the desire for more innovation in specific areas has again risen substantially over the course of the coronavirus crisis. For example, 66 percent of all Spaniards want to see more support for innovation in the areas of job creation (+17%), with 63 percent holding the same opinion for healthcare and long-term care (+ 17%), 42 percent for the fight against climate change (+7%), and 31 percent for efforts to improve education (+10%).

**Intensifying international competition**

In this regard, Spaniards also appear aware of their own country’s level of development, and regard Europe as lagging behind its international competitors. A small group of only 23 percent said they believed EU counties are in general poorly positioned in international comparison. In direct comparison, however, for example in the areas of artificial intelligence, big data and blockchain technology, 48 percent – nearly half – said that the United States was more advanced than European countries. An even greater share of 65 percent said the People’s Republic of China was ahead of Europe in these areas.

With regard to national performance, Spaniards rated their own country rather poorly. A total of 49 percent said that in international comparison, Spain performs fairly poorly or even very poorly with regard to technological innovation. By contrast, 37 percent sees Spain as exhibiting a fairly good performance level, while 10 percent regards the country as having very good innovative capacity. This self-assessment is thus lower than the average across Europe as a whole. In particular, Spanish respondents rated the political and economic framework conditions for innovation in their country at a level significantly lower than the pan-European average. For example, 56 percent of Spanish respondents indicated that their national framework conditions were bad or very bad, as compared to 42 percent of respondents across all of Europe.

**More European cooperation**

In response to these issues, 72 percent of Spanish respondents said they were in favor of increased cooperation between EU countries on the issue of innovation, while 10 percent said current levels of cooperation were already sufficient, and just eight percent said they would instead prefer more national initiatives. This desire for more cooperation has not diminished over the course of the coronavirus crisis. Indeed, Spaniards show more support for EU-level cooperation than do their counterparts in most other EU counties.

Brigitte Mohn, a member of the Bertelsmann Stiftung board of directors, sees the findings as a clear appeal to policymakers and the business sector: “Particularly in the area of innovation and the promotion of cutting-edge technologies, we in Europe must cooperate with one another much more vigorously instead of seeking to go it alone on the national level. Enhancing our technological competitiveness while at the same time working to solve urgent societal problems requires ambitious innovation-policy goals and implementation mechanisms more efficient than those currently in place. Moreover, in the current crisis, we must not shy away from investment in innovation; rather, we need to invest more, in a countercyclical manner, in order to unlock future potential.”

Additional information:

The “European Opinion Survey on Popular Attitudes Toward Innovation” was carried out by Dalia Research on behalf of Germany’s Bertelsmann Stiftung (eupinions project) in August 2019. The survey was conducted in 28 EU member states, with a total of 12,263 participants. The survey sample reflects the EU’s current population distribution in terms of age (16–65 years), sex and region/country. In a follow-up survey conducted in June 2020, questions from the original survey were repeated in order to gauge the possible effects of the global coronavirus pandemic on Europeans’ opinions.

eupinions is an independent platform for European public opinion. They collect, analyse and comment on what the European public thinks about current political issues and megatrends. eupinions employs cutting-edge data collection techniques. Every quarter, they collect samples from each EU member state in 22 languages. The data meets the highest scientific standards and is representative with regard to age, gender, education and country/region. eupinions is a project of Bertelsmann Stiftung. The data is collected by Dalia Research.

Further information: <https://eupinions.eu/de/home>

The survey is part of the global research being conducted in association with the Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020. The theme of the Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020 is “Fostering innovation. Unlocking potential.” It is looking for solutions that may enable Europe to generate technological change that benefits society. The Reinhard Mohn Prize 2020 is being awarded to Nechemia (“Chemi”) Peres, chairman of the Board of Directors of Israel’s Peres Center for Peace and Innovation. With this award, the Bertelsmann Stiftung is honoring the entrepreneur for his exceptional commitment to fostering innovation, which has benefited economic goals and the broader society in equal measure. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the award ceremony will be held in 2021.

About the Reinhard Mohn Prize:

The Reinhard Mohn Prize is given in memory of the Bertelsmann Stiftung's founder, Reinhard Mohn († October 2009). Since 2009, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has awarded the €200,000 prize to internationally renowned individuals who have played a key role in developing forward-looking solutions to social and political challenges. The prize is given based on a global search for innovative concepts and exemplary solutions to challenges that will have a decisive impact on Germany’s future.

For more information, visit: [www.reinhard-mohn-preis.de](http://www.reinhard-mohn-preis.de)

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**About the Bertelsmann Stiftung: Inspiring people. Shaping the future.**

The Bertelsmann Stiftung is committed to enabling social participation for everyone – politically, economically and culturally The issues we address are education, democracy, Europe, health, values and the economy. In doing so, we focus on people, since only they can change the world and make it better. We share knowledge, promote expertise and develop solutions. A nonprofit foundation, the Bertelsmann Stiftung was established in 1977 by Reinhard Mohn. For more information, please visit: [www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de](http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de)