



1.1 Trust in the healthcare system, scored on a 1-10 scale (S-30)

1.1.1 Documentation sheet

Description	Mean level of trust in the healthcare system
Calculation	Mean level of trust in the healthcare system on a scale of 1-10, with 1 “Do not trust at all” and 10 “Trust completely”.
Rationale	Trust in the healthcare system is related to system responsiveness and accountability and agency, which are outcomes of good governance. Trust is important for a performant health system because it supports the cooperation of different actors in the system and across sectors that is required to improve health. ¹ At an institutional level, the population’s trust in healthcare providers and decision makers may influence health-seeking behaviors, in turn affecting accessibility and utilisation of services. ² Low levels of public trust are not only a risk for health system legitimacy, but can also harm population health. Evidence has shown that trust in the healthcare system is associated with better health-related outcomes, such as health-related quality of life, patient satisfaction, and therapy compliance. ³ The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of trust, as discordant and conflicting information made the public health response more difficult. Support and compliance with measures to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 were highly dependent on trust in the healthcare system. ⁴ In addition, populations, communities, and civil society were largely left out during governments’ COVID-19 responses; yet, inclusive dialogue initiatives are crucial to building trust and policy adherence. ⁵
Primary data source	Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey (Eurofound)
Technical definitions	Individuals aged 18 years and over participated in the online survey. Respondents had to answer on a scale of 1-10 to the question “how much you personally trust each of the following institutions: The healthcare system”, with 1 labelled as “Do not trust at all” and 10 as “Trust completely”.
Limitations	Data on trust in the healthcare system were only available at three points in time during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely in April/May 2020, June/July 2020 and February/March 2021. Trust levels in the healthcare system may not be representative of levels before the pandemic nor of current trust levels. The sample of participants who participated in the e-survey might not be nationally representative as snowballing and advertisements on social media were used to recruit respondents. Data were only available at the national level, which might not reflect variations in trust in the healthcare system at the regional level or across different population groups.
International comparability	The “Living, working and COVID-19” e-survey collected data in the 27 EU countries. While the EU-27 average level of trust in the healthcare system is weighted, the EU-14 average is unweighted. In Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta, data for the period June/July 2020 have low reliability. In Luxembourg, data for the period February/March 2021 have low reliability.
Performance dimensions	Sustainability
Related indicators	Perceived likelihood that government would be prepared for the next pandemic (R-13)
Reviewer	Kira Koch (WHO)



Results

In Belgium, the mean level of trust in the healthcare system was 6.7 in April/May 2020, 7.0 in June/July 2020 and decreased to 6.3 in February/March 2021 (see Table 1 and Figure 1). The mean level of trust in

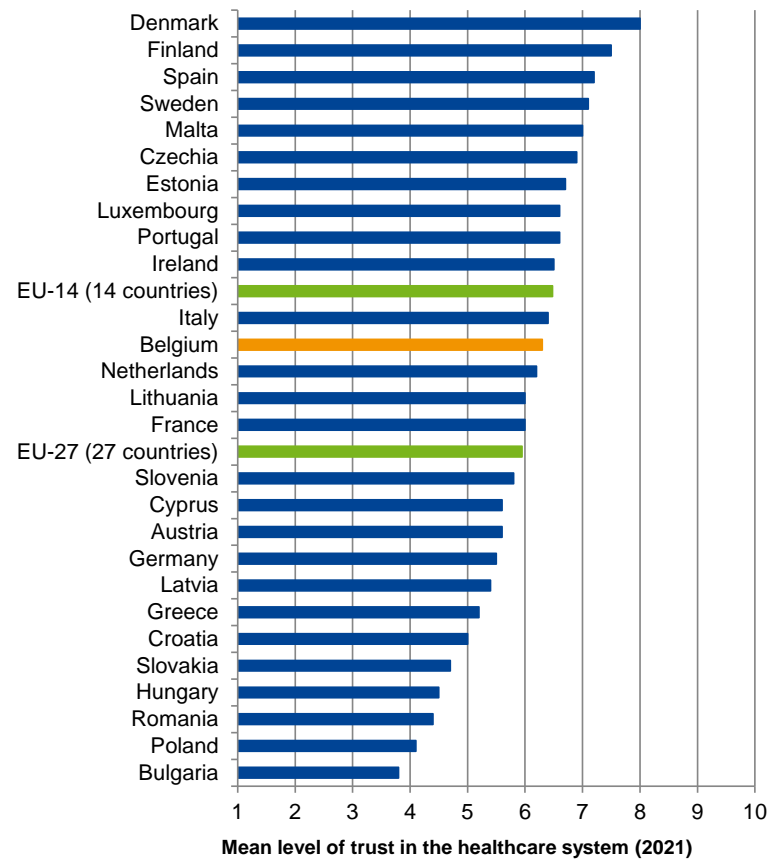
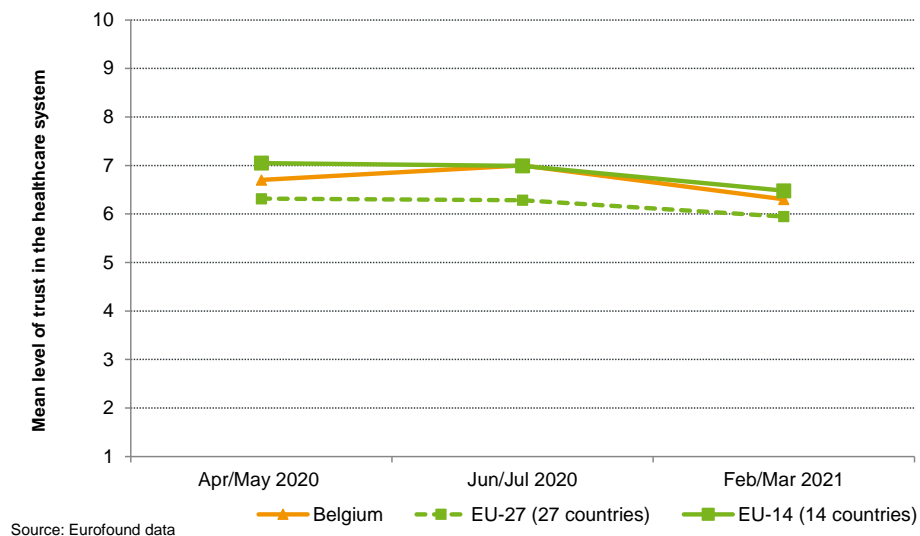
the healthcare system in Belgium was lower than the EU-14 average in April/May 2020 (7.1) and February/March 2021 (6.5) and equal to the EU-14 average in June/July 2020 (7.0). Nevertheless, the mean level of trust in the healthcare system in Belgium was higher than the EU-27 average during the three time points. The EU-27 and EU-14 average levels also decreased between April/May 2020 and February/March 2021.

Table 1 - Mean level of trust in the healthcare system (2020-2021)

	April/May 2020	June/July 2020	February/March 2021
Belgium	6.7	7.0	6.3
EU-14 (14 countries)	7.1	7.0	6.5
EU-27 (27 countries)	6.3	6.3	5.9



Figure 1 – Mean level of trust in the healthcare system (2020-2021): international comparison





Key points

- **The mean level of trust in the healthcare system in Belgium increased from 6.7 to 7.0 between April/May 2020 and June/July 2020 and then decreased to 6.3 in February/March 2021.**
- **The mean level of trust in Belgium was lower than or equal to the EU-14 average level between June/July 2020 and February/March 2021 but it remained higher than the EU-27 average levels.**

References

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