

Living, working and COVID-19



Eurofound's e-survey *Living, working and COVID-19* captures the experience of living and working in the EU throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

About the survey

Three rounds of this unique e-survey have been carried out and adapted as the pandemic evolved.



Job loss during pandemic

10% of respondents who had been employed before the pandemic were unemployed in spring 2021



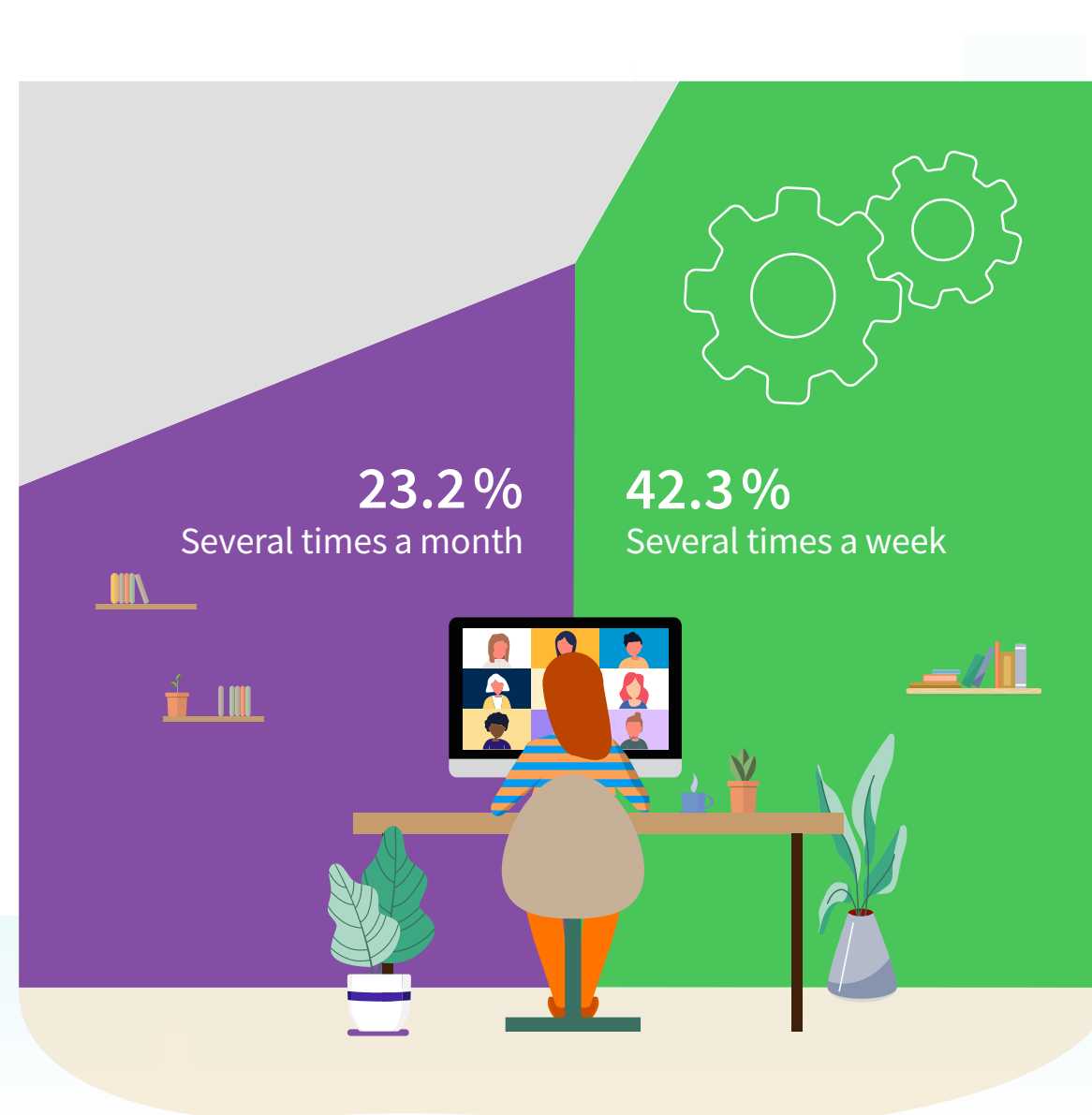
Men who lost their job during the pandemic were **more likely to be still unemployed in spring 2021** than in summer 2020 (10% vs 8%). There was no increase recorded for women.

Young people aged 18–29 were most likely to have lost their job, with 17% unemployed in spring 2021 compared with 9% among those aged 30 or over.

Preference for hybrid working arrangements

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teleworking surged across all countries due to enforced workplace closures. In July 2020, 34% of employees worked exclusively from home.

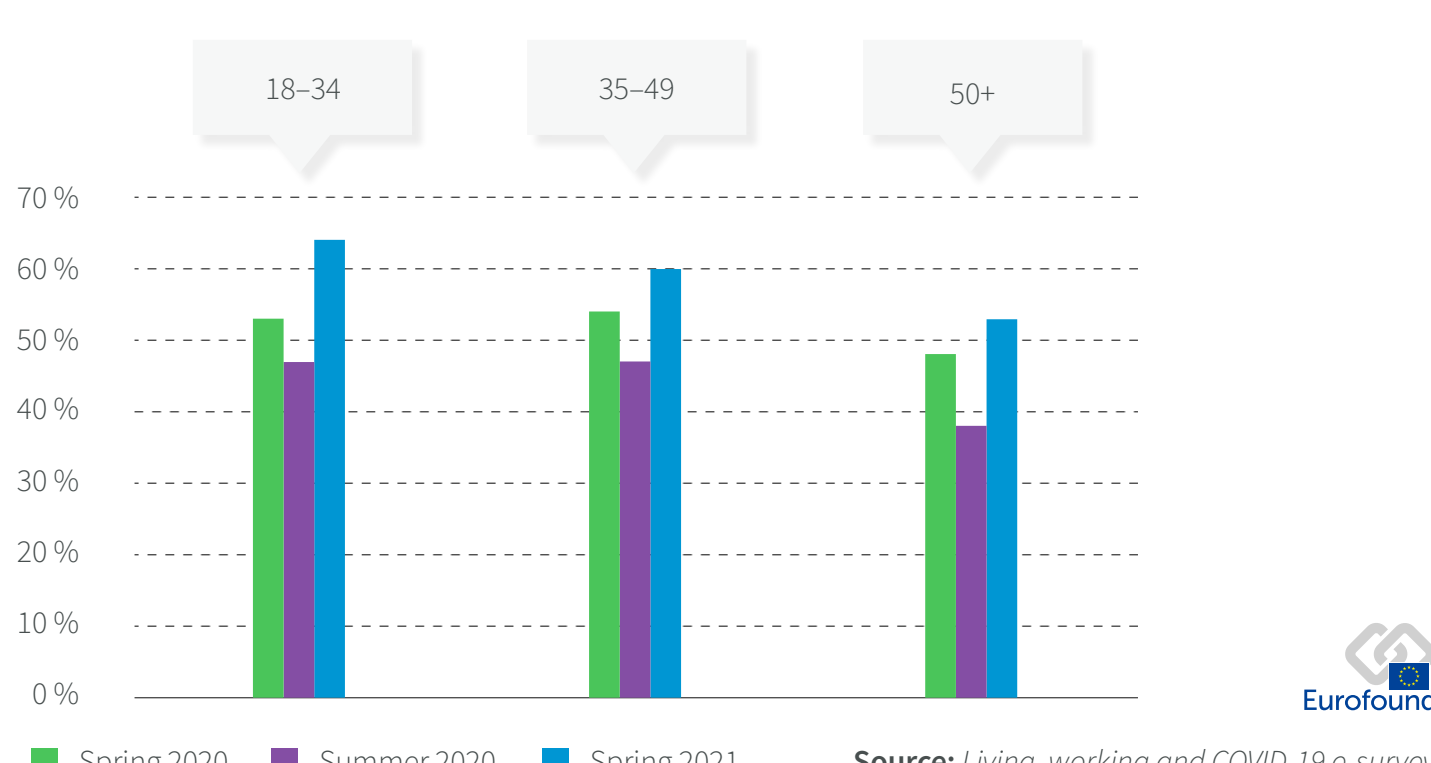
Two-thirds of those employees who have teleworked partially or exclusively during COVID-19 would prefer a regular hybrid working arrangement if there are no restrictions in place.



Fall in mental well-being across all social groups

By spring 2021, mental well-being had reached the lowest level recorded throughout the pandemic across all age groups. This is especially prominent among young people and those who have lost their job.

The highest increase in loneliness was recorded for women over 50 (30% in spring 2021 versus 18% in summer 2020).



Rise in financial inequality

Existing inequalities are widening because of the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups. Difficulties in making ends meet increased significantly among those already in a precarious situation.

Utility bills are a problem for 4 out of 10 unemployed respondents.

In spring 2021, more respondents reported being behind with their utility bills, telephone, mobile and internet payments than in summer 2020. The proportion of respondents reporting payment problems is higher among the unemployed – 77% of this group are classified as financially fragile.

Declining satisfaction with pandemic support measures

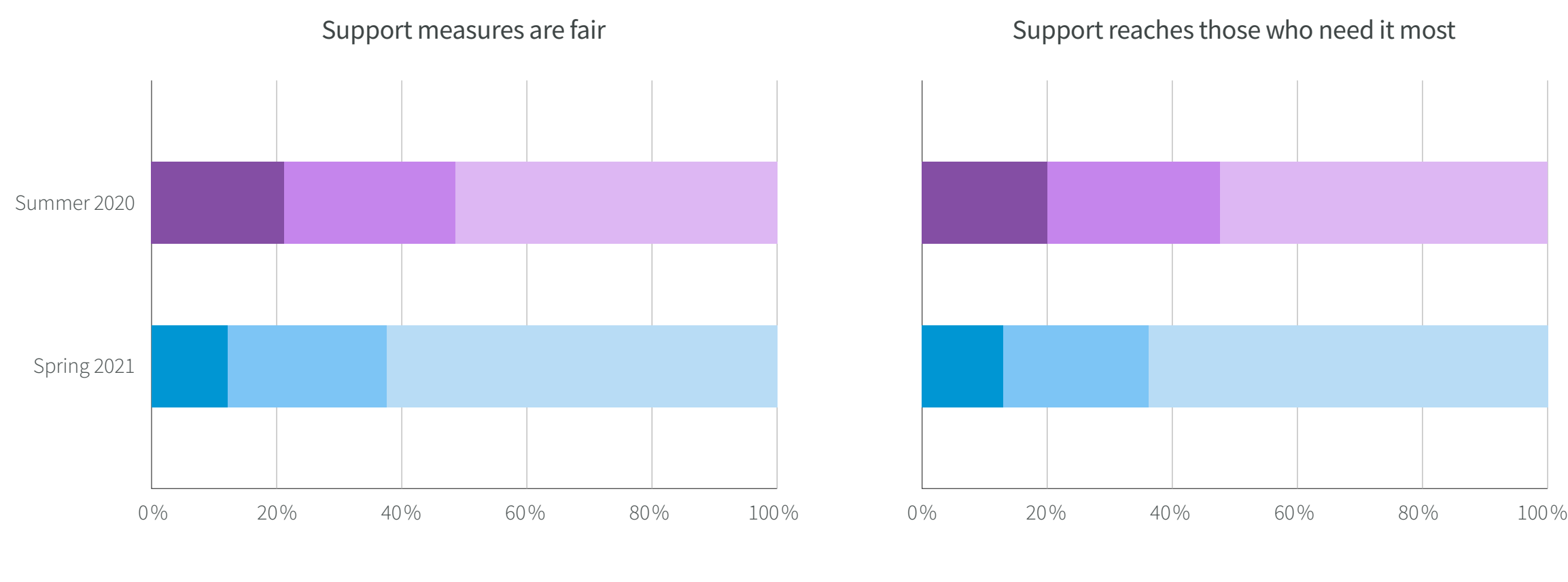


Citizens' satisfaction with crisis support measures has declined dramatically, with only 12% feeling support measures were fair in spring 2021, down from 22% in summer 2020.

Those who felt obtaining support was easy and efficient fell from 16% in summer 2020 to 10% in spring 2021. Close to 1 in 10 respondents have had a request for financial support rejected.

Support measures are fair

Support reaches those who need it most



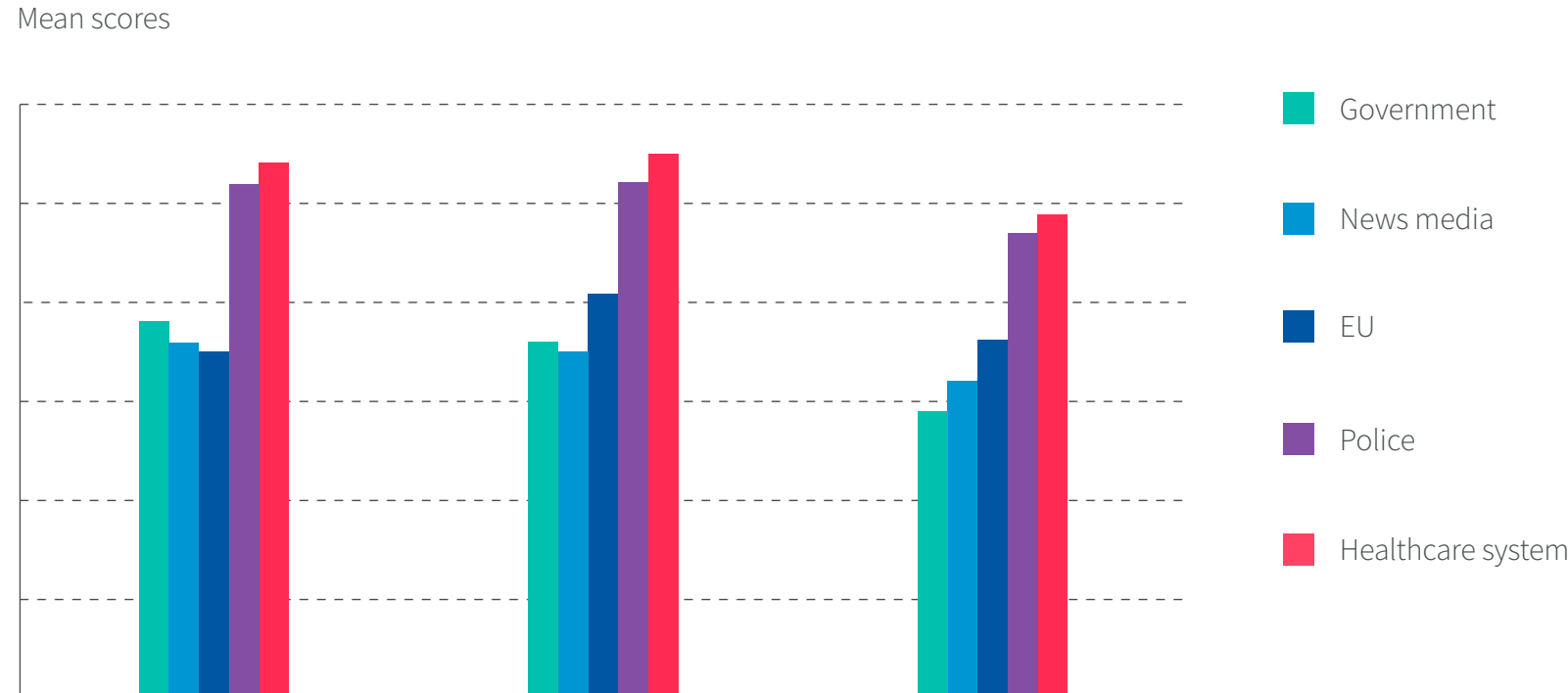
Sharp decline in trust in national governments

Trust in institutions has plummeted, especially trust in national governments which fell from 4.6 in summer 2020 to 3.9 in spring 2021.

Trust in national governments across all Member States sank below levels recorded at the start of the pandemic.

Trust in the EU also fell but remains higher than trust in national governments.

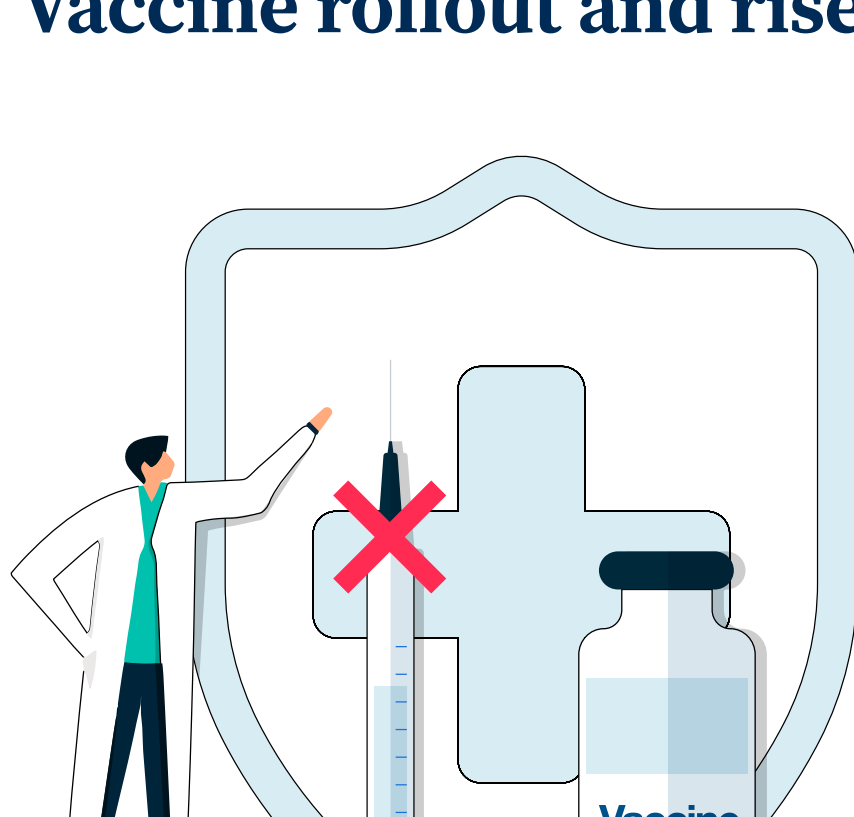
Trust in institutions in the EU
Mean scores



Note: Scale of 1–10, where 1 = Do not trust at all and 10 = Trust completely.



Vaccine rollout and rise in vaccine hesitancy



25% women

29% men

In spring 2021, over a quarter of people living in the EU indicated a hesitancy towards the COVID-19 vaccine, with men more hesitant (29%) than women (25%).

Unemployed people (39%), those with a long-term illness or disability (39%) and full-time homemakers (33%) are more vaccine hesitant than people in employment (26%) or people who are retired (23%).

Vaccine hesitancy is also strongly associated with low levels of trust, with countries that register low levels of trust in their governments registering higher levels of vaccine hesitancy.

When social media is the primary source of news, vaccine hesitancy surges to 40%, compared to 18% among those who use traditional news sources as their primary source of information.

Understanding and addressing people's needs in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis will be essential in order to restore their trust in governments and in the European Union project. This could be the basis for a convincing discussion within the framework of the ambitious Future of Europe Conference, the year-long democracy exercise involving all Europeans in shaping the future direction of the bloc formally launched on 9 May 2021.



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