

FIRST EDITION OF THE WOMEN'S FORUM OPINION POLL:

In the midst of an unprecedented health, social and economic crisis, gender equality remains an important issue in G7 countries.

The first **Women's Forum opinion poll** (conducted among citizens of **G7 countries**^[1]) makes it possible to compare the general public's perception with the reality shown by the figures. This ground-breaking survey was driven by the Women's Forum's ambition to be a reference point not only on gender issues, but also on sectors where women suffer most prejudice, despite their involvement being crucial in these areas: **climate, business, the jobs of tomorrow, artificial intelligence, health**. The survey will be carried out every year in order to measure progress in these areas.

Initiated by **AXA, BNP Paribas and Publicis**, it will be unveiled at the opening of the Women's Forum Global Meeting which is taking place on **17–19 November 2020**.

Anne Gabrielle Heilbronner, Member of the Management Board at Publicis Groupe, says: *"To overcome the remaining barriers to equality between men and women, we must face the stereotypes and gender gaps that persist in public opinion. The goal of the Women's Forum barometer is to offer baseline indicators for deciding where and how to act on the obstacles that continue to hold women back. And at a time when there is little consensus on social issues, this first edition of the Barometer shows that all the populations of G7 countries are united on the priority that equality between men and women should be given"*

This first edition reveals a number of surprises—both good and bad—and provides concrete and effective courses of action. The considerable sensitivity to gender equality shown by the general public incites prompt action to ensure that women are no longer the collateral damage of COVID-19, but rather the drivers of a successful recovery.

"The Women's Forum Barometer shows that the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated gender inequality around the world. But awareness of the issue varies by country. While 47% of those surveyed in France are convinced that discrimination against women must be treated as an urgent priority to recover from the pandemic and the resulting economic crisis, only 26% of those surveyed in Germany and 17% in Japan share this conviction. There is therefore a two-fold imperative to act collectively to react and build a more inclusive society," said **Ulrike Decoene**, AXA Head of communications, brand & corporate responsibility

'At a time when the health crisis is shaking up our society and reminding us how equal we are all, commitment to gender equality appears to be self evident. Even though our society and many companies have evolved, the findings of this barometer show us how far we have to go in eliminating the inequalities that remain. At BNP Paribas, for several years, we have pursued policies - recruitment, salary, career management or more generally inclusion - to prevent discrimination and ensure the right balance in terms of gender equality or the right path to achieve it, at every level of the company.' Added **Sofia Merlo**, Head of Group Human Resources and member of BNP Paribas' Executive Committee.

More than half of the G7 population accepts the pre-existing misconceptions perpetuating gender inequality.

For example, 53% of men and women believe that **reconciling family and work life is not possible**. 70% even accept that women have to sacrifice part of their family life to have a successful career!

Another striking assertion common to many is that almost 40% of respondents believe that **men and women have different brains — that men have greater aptitude in science and women in the literary field**. It is no surprise, then, that 32% of women and girls have been told that they are **not scientifically minded**.

The implications? That **46% of women** said they have not sought **new job responsibilities** for fear that they **would not have enough time** to get everything done. Nearly 80% of women admit that they are too **tired and stressed** from all the tasks they have to face in a day. Not to mention the 57% of women who feel **physically and mentally exhausted**.

The COVID-19 health crisis, a situation that is adversely affecting women.

What's more, 73% of women are **scared about the future** (compared to 63% of men) and 49% of women stated that they are **not taking enough time to stay healthy** (compared to 43% of men).

Since the onset of the pandemic, 43% of women state that they have **lost self-confidence**, compared to 33% of men. Finally, one more alarming observation about their **health**: 59% of women have experienced **burn-out, anxiety and/or depression** since the beginning of the pandemic, compared to 46% of men.

Despite these stereotypes, the majority of respondents confirm that they are aware that gender inequalities exist in the workplace.

High level of awareness about inequality: 69% of respondents said that women with the same skills and experience **do not have access to the same salary**.

Similarly, 67% of respondents (men and women) believe that women have less access to **executive board and senior management positions** within large companies (73% of women and 61% of men).

For the future, hope: The vast majority of respondents said that women are making a major positive contribution in shaping the world of tomorrow.

Responses were very consistent: Women and men of all ages, from across all socio-professional categories and across all living situations, want to see gender inequalities reduced as a significant priority and that concrete measures are taken in the five key areas below:

Economy:

More than 7 in 10 people believe that if women had **the same opportunities as men**, it would have a **positive impact** on society as a whole, including on employment and economic growth.

Climate:

Similarly, the general public claims that educating women about energy transition would be a step forward in achieving a positive social impact for all. In fact, **84%** of respondents **are convinced** that investing more in education for women is a definite lever for effectively combatting climate change.

STEM and Artificial Intelligence:

A very high proportion of respondents (77%) believe that the increased presence of women in STEM would lead to **better economic performance and that artificial intelligence applications would be of greater benefit to everyone.**

Education would be a powerful driver for 69% of respondents, who are in favour of a target of at least **40% of women in the science and technology sectors.**

Business:

The vast majority of those who took part in the survey (84%) believe that **specific policies need to be implemented** to give women more access to **public and private capital for their entrepreneurial projects.**

Health:

A better understanding of women's specific health problems is one of the measures also widely endorsed by 85% of respondents. Similarly, 85% want to see us make progress in better understanding **mental health issues** affecting women.

**For 91% of all respondents (and 96% of French respondents),
reducing gender inequality is important and a high priority.**

This underpins the work being done by the Women's Forum, who wrote to G7 leaders earlier this autumn to share strong recommendations that are widely endorsed by the general public. The opinion poll therefore complements the various initiatives carried out by the Women's Forum, such as CEO Champions, Rising Talents and Daring Circles, all of which nourish its work and reinforce its role as a stimulus for the world's major economic and political decision-makers, particularly the G7.

Media contact:

delphine.marcais@womens-forum.com Tel.: +33681690270

[Link to the Global Meeting 2020 programme.](#)

About the Women's Forum: The Women's Forum for the Economy & Society—part of the Publicis Group—is a leading international platform dedicated to highlighting women's voices on the world's major global economic, environmental, social and societal issues concerning all of humankind. Headquartered in Paris, France, the Women's Forum is committed to women's leadership and progress throughout the year, running a series of initiatives such as Daring Circles, CEO Champions and Rising Talents, in collaboration with the support of corporate partners, institutional and academic partners, researchers, scientists, experts and non-governmental organisations.

i To carry out this survey, Ipsos surveyed 3500 citizens from G7 countries, based on a representative sample of the country's population aged 18 and over in each of the seven countries in the G7 (quota sampling). The survey was carried out online from 17 to 31 August 2020