

Romanian Citizens' Attitudes and Opinions over the Course of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract — The recent Covid-19 pandemic affects all states of the world, in terms of public health, but as well financially and socially, affecting public systems such as health, education and areas such as social, cultural and financial economics. Based on these considerations, the purpose of this article is to investigate the attitudes and opinions of Romanian citizens regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. The objectives of the study are to analyze the relationship between the health of the citizens and the economic situation during the Covid-19 pandemic, the measures taken by the national government regarding the fight against the pandemic, but also the measures taken at the level of the European Union regarding the fight against the pandemic. In order to achieve the formulated objectives, information and data was taken from the Eurobarometer - Public opinion in the EU in time of the coronavirus crisis, those being representative for the 28 member states of the European Union and comprising 21804 interviewees. In Romania, the sample included 1017 interviews conducted online between 23.04-01.05.2020 by Kantar. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistical methods. This study brings something new to the scientific community: the investigation of citizens even during a global pandemic and the fact that it reflects accurately their attitude and opinion in this regard.

Keywords— health, pandemic, Covid 19, attitude, economy.

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic represents the most disruptive pandemic in the contemporary period. The first strike was recorded in December 2019, when a new virus (SARS-CoV-2) emerged, sparking an epidemic of acute respiratory syndrome (COVID-19) in humans, centered in Wuhan, China (Zhou et al 2020).

This new virus has spread throughout the world ever since and was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11. By the end of September 2020, there have been reported a number of 35,848,254 cases of COVID-19 (in accordance with the applied case definitions and testing strategies in the affected countries), 5,605,508 cases from Europe and 1,048,181 deaths (ECDC 2020).

This situation has strongly affected all countries of the world in various aspects: economic, social and educational. (Boldureanu D. 2017, Boldureanu G. 2020, Mocanu 2020).

The EU has been working to stop the spread of the coronavirus, support national health systems, protect and save lives, as well as count the socio-economic impact of the pandemic at both national and EU level (Zalc 2020).

II. DATABASE AND METHODS

The study was carried out between 23.04.2020-01.05.2020 by the company Kantar on a representative sample of 1017 people that were interviewed online. The sample consisted of Romanian citizens aged 16-54. The representativeness at national level is ensured by quotas on gender, age, region and social class. The main characteristics of the sample are shown in table 1:

TABLE I. THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Total	1017
Gender	
Male	498
Female	519
Age	
16-24	153
25-34	257
35-44	316
45-54	291
Region	
North West/Center	259
North East/South East	307
South/Bucharest	282
South West/West	169
Social Class	
High	233
Mid	555
Low	229
Working status	
Working	771
Non Working	221

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

The aim of the study is to analyze the opinion and attitude of Romanian citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic. For the beginning was analyzed the scientific literature on the impact

of the Covid 19 pandemic on citizens, then was determined the objectives of the study.

O1. Analysis the relationship between the health of the citizens and the economic situation during the Covid-19 pandemic;

O2. Analysis of the measures taken by the national government regarding the fight against the pandemic;

O3. Analysis of the measures taken at the level of the European Union regarding the fight against the pandemic.

For the analysis of the results was used descriptive statistics analysis.

III. RESULTS

O1. Analysis the relationship between the health of the citizens and the economic situation during the Covid-19 pandemic

At the question “Where do you position yourself between these two statements regarding the consequences of the restriction measures in your country?”, the results are show in table 2:

TABLE II. HEALTH BENEFITS VERSUS ECONOMIC DAMAGE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

	Number	Percent
1 - The health benefits are greater than the economic damage (1)	229	22.5
2 (2)	219	21.5
3 (3)	231	22.7
4 (4)	161	15.8
5 (5)	88	8.7
6 - The economic damage is greater than the health benefits (6)	39	3.8
Don't know/Not applicable	51	5.0
Total	1017	100.0

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

Most of the respondents (22,5%) are agree that the health benefits are greater than the economic damage (1st opinion) and only 3.8% think that the economic damage is greater than the health benefits (6th opinion).

Summarizing all percentages for health benefits and economic damage during the Covid-19 pandemic, a high number of respondents (66,7%) consider that the health benefits of restriction measures in the country (score between 1 and 3) are greater than economic damage (28,3%), score between 4 and 6.

Compared to other European countries, Romania is among the countries that appreciate more the health benefits offered compared to economic problems during the Covid-19

pandemic. From this point of view, our country highly appreciates a good level of health.

TABLE III. HOW SUMMARIZING THE OPINION OF HEALTH BENEFITS VERSUS ECONOMIC DAMAGE

	Number	Percent
Net : 1-3	678	66.7
Net : 4-6	288	28.3
Don't know/Not applicable	51	5.0
Total	1017	100.0

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

Detailing the analysis in several subgroups (gender, age, region, social class and working status) the situation is presented in table 4:

TABLE IV. THE SUMMARIZING THE OPINION OF HEALTH BENEFITS VERSUS ECONOMIC DAMAGE ON DIFFEERENT GROUPS

	Net : 1-3	Net : 4-6	Don't know/ Not applicable
Total	66.7	28.3	5.0
Gender			
Male	65.8	30.0	4.2
Female	67.5	28.6	5.9
Age			
16-24	67.7	27.2	5.2
25-34	63.8	30.6	5.6
35-44	65.5	30.2	4.3
45-54	69.9	24.9	5.2
Region			
North	69.9	26.1	4.0
West/Center			
North East/South East	61.7	33.2	5.1
South/Bucharest	70.3	24.9	4.8
South West/West	65.0	28.7	6.4
Social Class			
High	67.0	29.1	3.9
Mid	68.8	27.4	3.8
Low	61.4	29.8	8.8
Working status			
Working	66.8	28.8	4.4
Non Working	68.8	26.0	5.4

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

We then notice that the people most interested in health benefits are those of the female sex (67.5%), from the age groups 34-54 years (69.9%), from the South / Bucharest region (70.3%), middle class (68.8%) and non-working (68.8%).

O2. Analysis of the measures taken by the national government regarding the fight against the pandemic.

At the question “How satisfied or not are you with the measures your government has taken so far against the coronavirus pandemic?“, the answers can be found in the table 5:

TABLE V. HOW SATISFIED OR NOT ARE YOU WITH THE MEASURES YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN SO FAR AGAINST THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC?

	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	98	9.6
Fairly satisfied	428	42.1
Not very satisfied	341	33.5
Not at all satisfied	126	12.4
Don't know/Not applicable	24	2.4
Total, of which	1017	100.0
Net : Satisfied	527	51.8
Net : Not satisfied	466	45.8

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

Overall, only a little over half of respondents (51.8%) are satisfied with the measures taken by the government in the fight against coronavirus compared to 45.8% who declare their dissatisfaction. The percentages do not differ significantly between the two options, which denote a division and an extreme polarization of the Romanian society.

By groups the situation is as follows:

TABLE VI. HOW DO YOU ASSESS THE ACTIVITY AND INVOLVEMENT OF THE DOCTOR/THERAPIST IN ESTABLISHING THE DIAGNOSIS?

	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Don't know/ Not applicable
Total	51.8	46.8	2.4
Gender			
Male	54.1	43.9	2.0
Female	49.4	47.9	2.7
Age			
16-24	54.6	42.8	2.6
25-34	45.5	51.1	3.4
35-44	51.8	45.2	3.0
45-54	55.8	43.5	0.7
Region			
North	49.0	47.4	3.6
West/Center			
North East/South East	52.0	45.7	2.3
South/Bucharest	54.8	43.7	1.5
South West/West	50.7	47.0	2.3
Social Class			
High	54.9	43.0	2.1
Mid	52.3	45.5	2.2
Low			
Working status			
Working			
Non Working			

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

The people most satisfied with the measures taken by the government are: males (54.1%), from the age group 45-54 years (55.8%), the South / Bucharest region (54.8%), from a high social class (54.9%) and who have is working (52.9%).

Another question “Still thinking about the coronavirus pandemic, how concerned you are about each of the following?” are analyzed in table 7:

TABLE VII. STILL THINKING ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?

	How this might affect my own health	How this might affect the health of family and friends
Very satisfied	22.1%	29.7%
Fairly satisfied	42.0%	43.7%
Not very satisfied	24.2%	17.9%
Not at all satisfied	10.1%	7.0%
Don't know/Not applicable	1.6%	1.7%
Total, of which	100.0	100.0
Net : Satisfied	64.1%	73.4%
Net : Not satisfied	34.3%	24.9%

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

The majority of respondents are very affected by the possible negative effects on their own health (64.1%), but, especially, on the health of family or friends (73.4%).

O3 Analysis of the measures taken at the level of the European Union regarding the fight against the pandemic.

Another question in this objective concerns “How satisfied or not are you with the solidarity between EU Member States in fighting the Coronavirus pandemic?”

TABLE VIII. HOW SATISFIED OR NOT ARE YOU WITH THE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES IN FIGHTING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	68	6.7
Fairly satisfied	351	34.5
Not very satisfied	383	37.7
Not at all satisfied	155	15.2
Don't know/Not applicable	60	5.9
Total, of which	1017	100.0
Net : Satisfied	64.1%	73.4%
Net : Not satisfied	34.3%	24.9%

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

It should be noted that most respondents (52.9%) are not satisfied with the solidarity between the states of the European

Union, even a percentage of 37.7 % people who are not at all satisfied.

By groups, the analysis is as follows in Table 9:

TABLE IX. HOW SATISFIED OR NOT ARE YOU WITH THE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN EU MEMBER STATES IN FIGHTING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC BY GROUPS

	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Don't know/ Not applicable
Total	41.2	52.9	4.9
Gender			
Male	39.6	55.9	4.5
Female	42.8	49.8	7.4
Age			
16-24	55.3	34.9	9.8
25-34	41.4	53.7	4.9
35-44	36.9	56.9	6.2
45-54	37.1	58.7	4.2
Region			
North West/Center	44.0	50.8	5.2
North East/South East	36.8	57.7	5.5
South/Bucharest	39.4	55.0	5.6
South West/West	46.8	45.4	7.8
Social Class			
High	35.9	59.5	4.6
Mid	41.1	53.5	5.4
Low	46.6	45.1	8.3
Working status			
Working	40.6	54.6	4.8
Non Working	44.4	47.9	7.7

Source: Own calculations based on the Eurobarometer *Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis*, Brussels: Directorate-General for Communication of the European Parliament, 2020

The population not satisfied with the solidarity between EU Member States in fighting the pandemic Coronavirus are males (55.9 %), in the age group 35-44 years (56.9 %), in the North East / South East region (57.7%), from middle class (53.5%) and working (54.6%).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusions of the research are as follows:

- a high number of respondents (66,7%) consider that the health benefits of restriction measures in the country (score between 1 and 3) are greater than economic damage (score between 4 and 6) in percentage of 28,3%;

- the people most satisfied with the measures taken by the government are: males (54.1%), from the age group 45-54 years (55.8%), the South / Bucharest region (54.8%), from a high social class (54.9%) and who have is working (52.9%); --- who are working.

- the population not satisfied with the solidarity between EU Member States in fighting the pandemic Coronavirus are males (55.9 %), in the age group 35-44 years (56.9 %), in the North East / South East region (57.7%), from middle class (53.5%) and working (54.6%).

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