6 The way forward: Reinforcing democracy and trust in democratic governance

The governance challenges found in the Trust Survey are compounded by newer threats facing democracies today, such as mis-information and disinformation, inequalities in political voice and participation, and uncertainty about governments' abilities to address long-term and global challenges in a rapidly changing world. These threats to democracy affect governments' abilities to confront the major issues of today and tomorrow. This chapter presents results on people's perceptions of their ability to participate meaningfully in democratic political processes, their perceptions of special interests' influence on policy makers, and their beliefs in governments' ability to commit to difficult, intergenerational reforms that require upfront investments today. The chapter also presents an overview of news media sources used across countries.

# Key findings and areas for attention

The strength of democratic institutions and norms in OECD democracies depends on continuous efforts to reinforce the link between citizens and their public institutions. Although the OECD Trust Survey illustrates that citizens have reasonable confidence in governments' reliability, it also shows that governments face scepticism about their responsiveness and openness to citizen needs and the integrity of policy processes, and that vulnerable groups have – often understandably – low levels of confidence in their government. Democratic processes, in short, need some further investments if we are to reap the increasingly important gains of democratic government, including higher levels of social and economic well-being, more inclusive growth, personal liberties, access to justice, and peace.

- Few people feel they can participate meaningfully in democratic political processes, and almost half (47.8%), on average across countries, perceive that elected and appointed officials may be captured by special interests. This is a call to action for governments to address higher expectations from citizens on democratic processes. Governments may want to consider, for example, enhanced initiatives to further public integrity and ethical behaviour, upgrading systems to fight undue influence in policy making, promoting transparency in lobbying, and reforms to strengthen the representation of collective interests and remove barriers to collective action.

- Related to this, misinformation and disinformation present growing risks of fuelling mistrust and disengagement. Around four out of ten (41.4%) respondents say they do not trust the news media, and more and more people turn to social media for their news. New governance models are needed to ensure healthy information ecosystems that can support democratic debate.

- OECD countries face difficulties in securing confidence that government can address global and intergenerational challenges. While on average in the OECD about half of respondents think that governments should prioritise climate change, only 35.5% of people are confident that countries will succeed in reducing their country's contribution to climate change. Those who feel their government can capably address long-term, global, and often intergenerational issues like climate change are more likely to trust their government, and those who trust government are more likely to believe such policy solutions are possible. The virtuous cycle between trust and democratic governance is even more important when designing policies for the future. Governments must constantly improve the effectiveness and reliability of programmes and policies – to build confidence in future-oriented reforms – but also develop better ways of *communicating* the importance of global and intergenerational co-operation for better policy outcomes.

Box 6.1. Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy in OECD countries

The upcoming 2022 Global Forum and Ministerial meeting on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy is organised under the guidance of the OECD Public Governance Committee and the Chairmanship of Luxembourg, with Colombia, France, Lithuania and the United States as vice-chairs. The Ministerial will focus on three core pillars representing challenges for OECD democracies: improving public governance responses to mis- and disinformation; improving representation and participation in public life and citizen-focused public services; and embracing the global responsibilities of public institutions.

These governance challenges are overlaid by two horizontal themes: embedding and prioritising climate change, and harnessing digitalisation for better democratic governance.
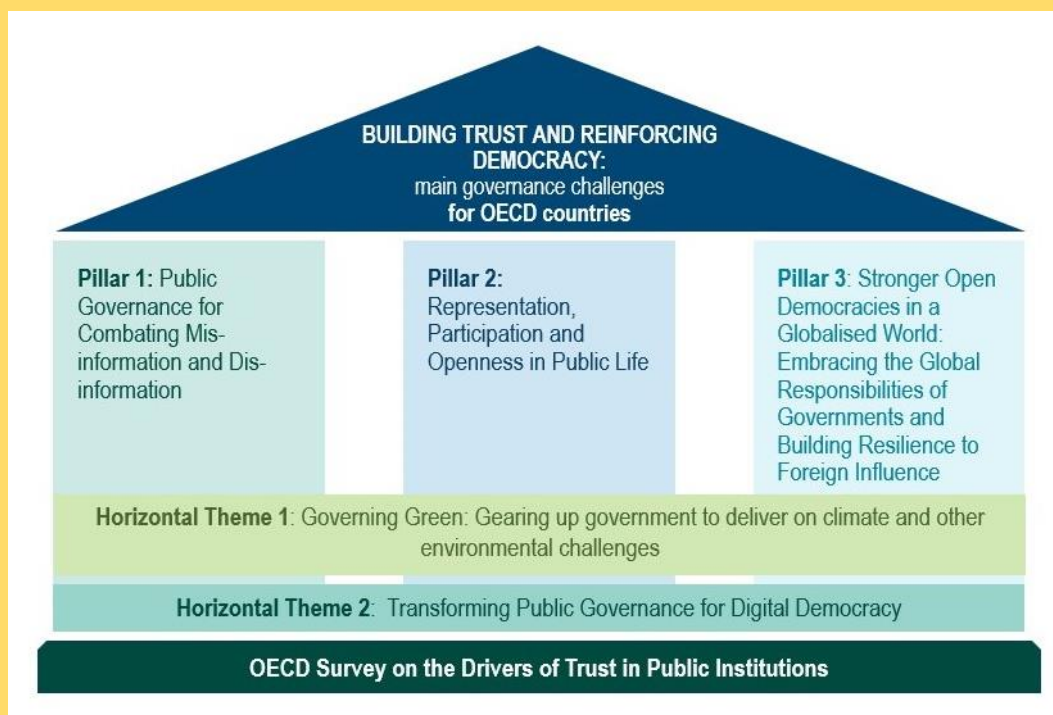
Source: 2022 OECD Global Forum and Ministerial Meeting on Reinforcing Democracy

6.1. FEW FEEL THEY HAVE POLITICAL VOICE, AND MANY DOUBT ELECTED OFFICIALS' INTEGRITY

A fundamental feature of democracy is the concept of political voice – the idea that people have equal opportunities to express opinions and preferences in such a way as to be represented in government decision making. Yet very few people feel that the political system in their country lets them have a say in what the government does, and many feel that their elected leaders may be captured by special interests in lieu of representing the people.

6.1.1. Just one quarter of respondents report that their political system gives them a say

On average across countries, only 30.2% of people say the political system in their country allows people like them to have a say in what government does. Indeed, in eleven countries a majority of respondents say they are *not* confident that they have a say in government decisions (Figure 6.1).

These findings on political voice aligns with the negative perceptions of public service responsiveness to people's feedback (Chapter 4) and views of few opportunities to influence policy making (Chapter 5), and it corresponds with results found elsewhere on perceptions of weak political voice (OECD, 2021[1]; OECD, 2021[2]). This lack of political voice is also related to low levels of confidence in one's own ability to engage politically: on average across countries, only 42% of respondents say they feel confident in their own ability to participate in politics.

Figure 6.1. Half of respondents say the political system does not let them have a say in government decision making

Share of respondents reporting different levels of confidence that the political system lets them have a say in government decision making (0-10 scale), 2021
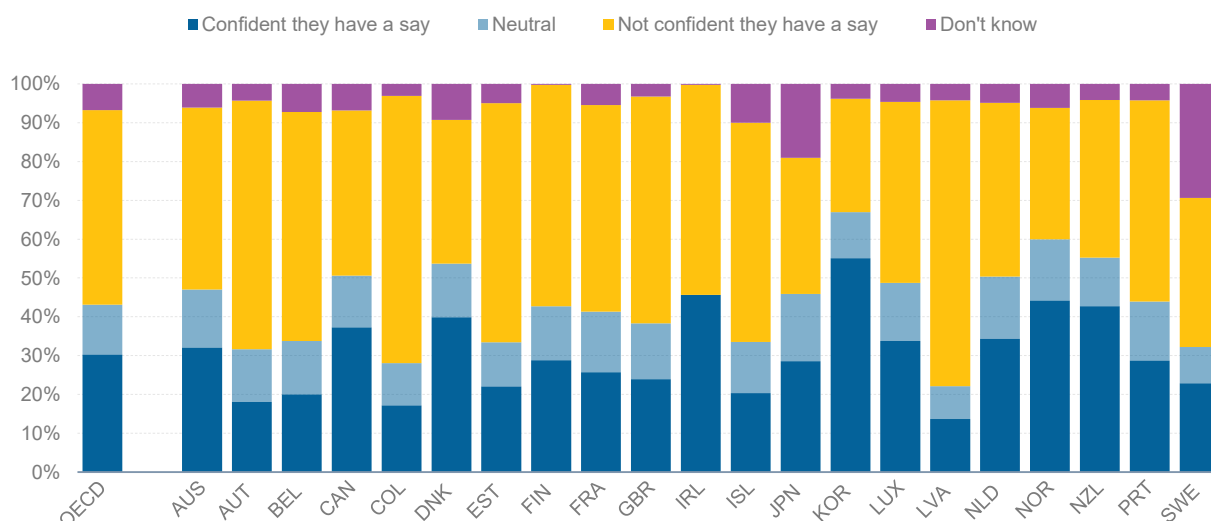
Note: Figure presents the within-country distributions of responses to the question "How much would you say the political system in your country allows people like you to have a say in what the government does?". The "Confident" proportion is the aggregation of responses from 6-10 on the scale; "neutral" is equal to a response of 5; "Not confident" is the aggregation of responses from 0-4; and "Don't know" was a separate answer choice. "OECD" presents the unweighted average of responses across countries. In Norway and Finland, the question was formulated in a slightly different way. Mexico is excluded from the figure as the data are not available. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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These levels of political efficacy have important implications for the strength of representative democracy. People who feel they can influence political processes are more likely to be engaged in pro-democratic political activities like voting, contacting a politician, working for a political party, or posting political content online. In contrast, people who are disengaged and feel they lack political voice are more likely to "exit" the democratic process, behave cynically and engage in forms of participation that are outside of the system, e.g. boycotts (Prats and Meunier, 2021[3]) or violence.

These perceptions are important, as participation is a cornerstone of a well-functioning democracy. Political participation strengthens democracies both at the individual and systemic levels: when people actively engage, they develop stronger democratic values and civic skills, and at the same time provide legitimacy to the system. In turn, participation and trust are mutually reinforcing (Putnam, 2000[4]). Civic-minded citizens are found to participate more and have higher levels of trust than passive people (Almond and Verba, 1963[5]; Brehm and Rahn, 1997[6]) Conversely, as participation encourages the sense of having a stake in collective endeavours and builds trust, lack of participation is associated with lower levels of trust (Parvin, 2018[7]). In fact, trust can be considered as a prerequisite of political action, and is related to higher levels of different forms of participation, such as being part of elections (Grönlund and Setälä, 2007[8]), signing a petition (Lee and Schachter, 2018[9]), contacting government officials or being part of political parties (Hooghe and Marien, 2013[10]).

On average, almost 80% of respondents to the OECD Trust Survey say[11] that they voted in their country's last national election and 51.3% for local elections. Other forms of political participation, such as signing petitions also online (35.8%), posting or forwarding political content on social media (17.4%), contacting a politician (14%) are less frequent. Of interest, 28% of respondents declare not having taken part in any form of political participation. Cross-nationally, trust in the national legislature is positively associated with voting rates (OECD, 2021[1]).

Further reflecting inequalities in political voice and representation, there is also tremendous variation within countries in political activity. In representative democracies, the primary form of representation in public decision making is derived from elections and voting – yet certain demographics and population groups tend to participate less in elections and remain significantly underrepresented in elected bodies and, consequently, policy making. Lack of representation and low levels of trust in national legislatures usually go together with lower levels of accountability, corroding the basis of democracy and resulting in policies which are less responsive to the interests of a broad public.

Results from the Trust Survey find, for example, that older people are far more likely to vote than younger people. This result holds across all countries, and in many cases the difference is striking (Figure 6.2). Related to this, young people also have considerably lower levels of trust in government – though the direction of causality surely runs in both directions (Chapter 3). Given that young people show a particularly strong motivation to address global challenges such as climate change and rising inequality, there is a need to strengthen their political participation and representation in public institutions (OECD, 2022[11]).

Figure 6.2. Older people are much more likely to vote in national elections

Share of respondents who reported having voted in the last national election, by age group, 2021
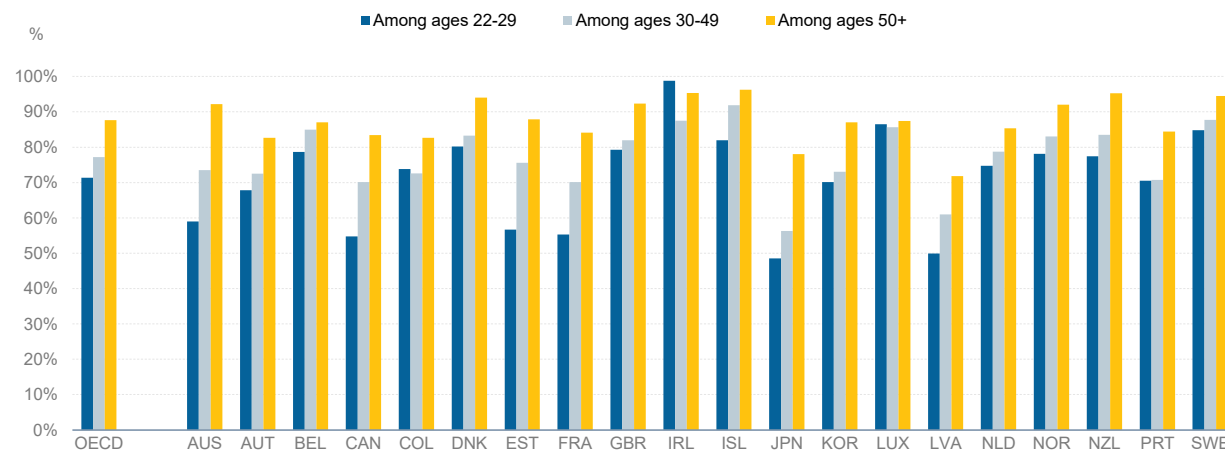
Note: Figure presents the share of respondents who reported that they voted in the last national election, by age group. Age is grouped in 3 categories: 22-29 years old, 30-49 years old, and 50 and over. "OECD" presents the unweighted average of responses across countries. Mexico and Finland are excluded from this figure as the data are not available. This figure diverges from the traditional OECD definition of youths, used elsewhere in this report (18 to 29), as the youngest ages in this grouping may not have been legally eligible to vote in their last national election. Setting a minimum age of 22 therefore presents a higher share of people who had voting eligibility and enhances comparability. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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6.1.2. There is a widespread scepticism of the integrity of high-level political officials

In addition to feeling like they do not have opportunities to influence policies and be heard, many respondents question the integrity of elected and appointed officials and whether they fairly represent the will of the people.

The widespread lack of political voice, and feelings of vulnerability and exclusion, go together with a general perception that special interests exert oversized influence in government. This perception of low integrity in the public sector can influence perceptions of the overall trustworthiness of the government (OECD, 2017[12]).

On average across countries, 47.8% of respondents say it is likely that a high-level political official would grant a political favour in exchange for the offer of the prospect of a well-

paid job in the private sector. This, in turn, may bias officials' decision making away from most people's interests and lead to inefficient policy outcomes.

Indeed, less than one-third of respondents (30.4%) are confident that a high-level political official would refuse such an offer. Norway is the only country in which the share of respondents believing in the ethical behaviour of high-level officials is higher than the share of sceptical respondents.

These findings align with the monitoring of the implementation of OECD Recommendation on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying. 39% of legislators in OECD countries declared that they had no concrete guidelines, for instance on how to behave when they are offered gifts and benefits, and there is a need to develop and strengthen integrity standards to guide interactions between public officials and different stakeholders (OECD, 2021[13]).

Figure 6.3. Almost half of respondents predict that a high-level political official would grant a political favour in exchange for the offer of a well-paid private sector job

Share of respondents who indicate that an elected or appointed official would accept or refuse the offer of a well-paid private sector job in exchange for a political favour (on a 0-10 scale), unweighted OECD average, 2021

- Likely refuses to grant political favour
- Neutral
- Likely accepts granting political favour
- Don't know
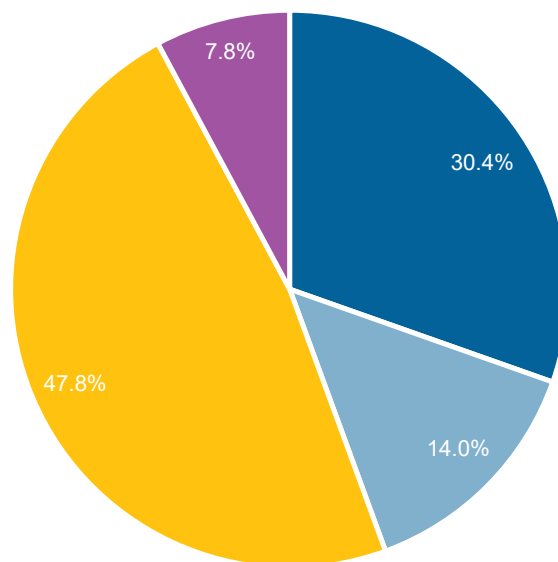
Note: Figure presents the unweighted OECD average of responses to the question "If a high-level politician were offered the prospect of a well-paid job in the private sector in exchange for a political favour, how likely or unlikely do you think it is that they would refuse it?". The "Likely accepts undue influence" proportion is the aggregation of responses from 6-10 on the scale; "neutral" is equal to a response of 5; "Likely refuses undue influence" is the aggregation of responses from 0-4; and "Don't know" was a separate answer choice. "OECD" presents the unweighted average across countries. Mexico and New Zealand are excluded from this figure as respondents were not asked about trust in the national government. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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People who feel their political and government institutions do not treat them fairly may become cynical and distrust their government. Institutions can lessen this distrust. Countries' efforts to give people effective voice and strengthen the representation of collective interests, and reforms aimed at reducing undue influence and removing barriers to collective action, can help.

6.2. RELIABLE INFORMATION IS CRUCIAL FOR TRUST – BUT THE RELIABILITY OF NEWS SOURCES IS CHANGING

Access to accurate information is a key component of democracy and a foundation of

trust. This information may be provided by government, by a free and protected press, and/or by other stakeholders. The occurrence of misinformation and disinformation fuel distrust, threatening the functioning of democracies and making effective governance harder (OECD, 2021[14]). People are increasingly worried that false or fake information is being used as a weapon (Edelman, 2022[15]).

While the OECD Trust Survey cannot estimate the prevalence of mis/disinformation, it can identify the prevalence of different news sources and how they may relate to people's trust in public institutions. Across countries, on average, television is the most common source from which people receive information about politics and

current events, followed by newspapers (including online ones). News consumption is fairly high, with two-thirds of respondents on average saying they watch television news at least once a week.

Yet it is important to note that these news sources are operating in an environment of high scepticism towards the media. Only 38.8% of respondents, on average across countries, say that they trust the news media. This is the second-lowest level of trust found across the nine

institutions measured in the Trust Survey (Chapter 2).

After television and newspaper, the third most common news source, on average, is social media. 45% of respondents reporting that they get news from social media at least once a week and this percentage is up to 57.8% among young people. This average conceals considerable cross-national variation. Social media is a regular news source for about 60% of respondents in Colombia, Iceland and Latvia (Figure 6.4).

Figure 6.4. Television, newspapers and social media are the most common news sources

Share of respondents selecting each of the following medium as a weekly source of information about politics and current events, 2021
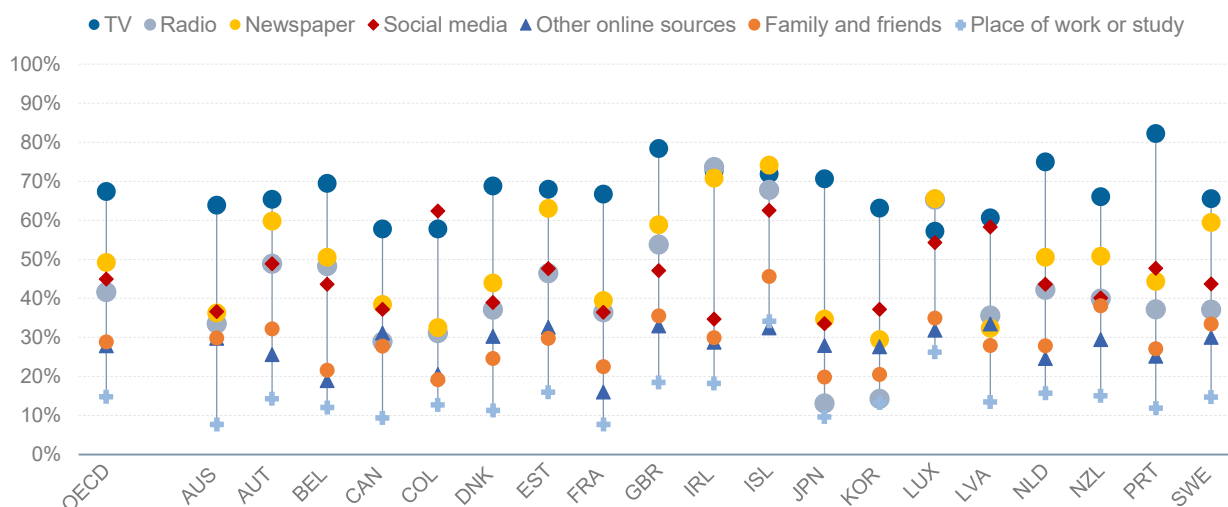
Note: Figure presents the share of responses to the following question: "From which of the following sources do you get information about politics and current affairs at least once per week?", among television, radio, newspaper/magazines (including online), online social media, other online sources, family/friends, place of work or study, none of the above, prefer not to say. Respondents could select more than one answer choice. "OECD" presents the unweighted average of responses across countries. Finland, Mexico and Norway are excluded from this figure as the data are not available. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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The relationship between news source and trust in government is not clear cut, and it is not well-estimated cross-nationally. Nevertheless, Trust Survey data suggest that countries with relatively higher levels of newspaper consumption have higher levels of trust in government institutions. Conversely, countries with relatively higher levels of news obtained via social media tend do less well on levels of trust in government. (Television has a slightly positive correlation with institutional trust, but the relationship is less strong than newspapers.)

There are many potential causal mechanisms at play in the relationship between social media and distrust, such as age or education, but the quality of information shared on social media is a likely factor. Social media platforms may facilitate the spread of emotional and polarising content (Smith, 2019[16]; Allcott, 2020[17]) and have a tendency to bias information, build and strengthen echo chambers (Cinelli, 2021[18]), limit exposure to diversity and reinforce polarisation (Klein and Robinson, 2019[19]) – all of which can lead to disengagement, more radical feelings and distrust.

Figure 6.5. Newspaper readership is slightly more positively correlated with trust in government than news from social media

Share of respondents trusting the national government vis-à-vis the share obtaining news at least once a week from newspapers (including online newspapers) (Panel A) and the share obtaining news at least once a week from social media (Panel B), 2021

Panel A. Newspapers and Trust

Panel B.Social media and Trust
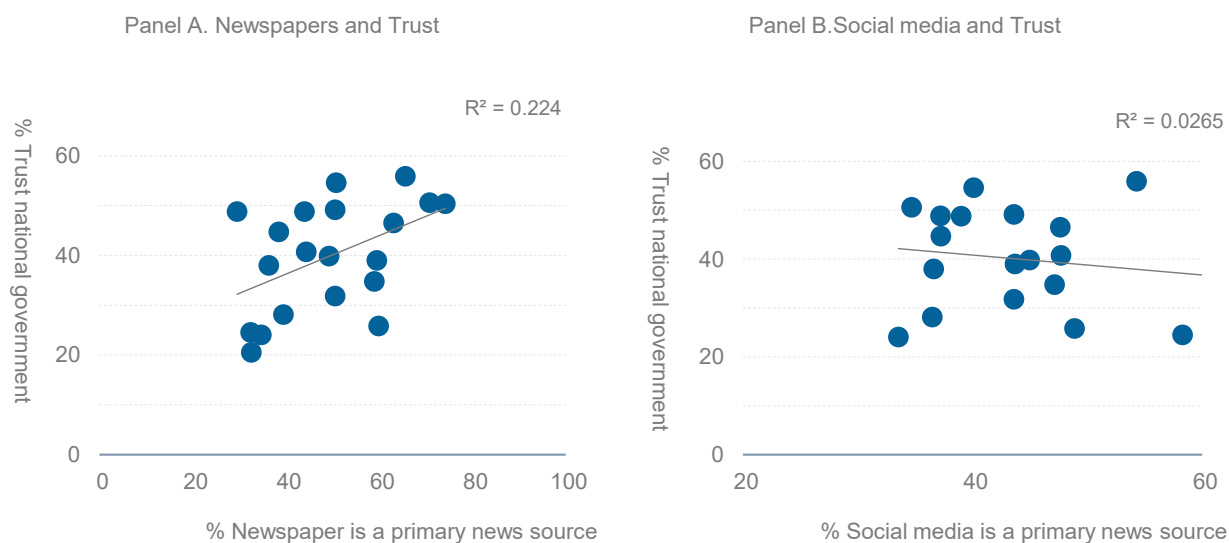
Note: Scatterplots present the share of respondents who read newspapers as a weekly news sources (Panel A) and the share of respondents who use social media as a weekly news source (Panel B), versus the share of respondents who report that they trust the national government. Finland, Mexico and Norway are excluded from this figure as the data on news sources consumption are not available. New Zealand here shows trust in civil service as respondents were not asked about trust in the national government (note that trust in civil service on average tends to be higher than trust in national government). For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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Within countries, too, partisanship plays a role in the degree to which people trust the news media, suggesting polarisation in where people get their information. In all but three countries (Norway, Denmark and United Kingdom), people who voted for the party/parties controlling parliament or congress are more likely to trust the news media. On average across countries, the partisan gap in trust in media is about 10 percentage points. This corresponds with findings in other surveys that people are more likely to consider media to be a "dividing" force in society than a unifying one (Edelman, 2022[15]).

6.3. LOOKING AHEAD: IMPROVING GOVERNMENT CAPACITY TO SUPPORT REFORMS FOR THE FUTURE, INCLUDING CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION

To tackle major, long-run societal challenges like climate change, inequalities, fiscal sustainability and digitalisation, governments will need to build trust and support for intergenerational redistribution – i.e., investing "upfront" in policies with long-term payoffs. This requires credible policy commitments and public confidence in the effectiveness of policy choices, since the main beneficiaries of such policies will be future generations. Such a commitment is a challenge for all governments, even those perceived as the most trustworthy.
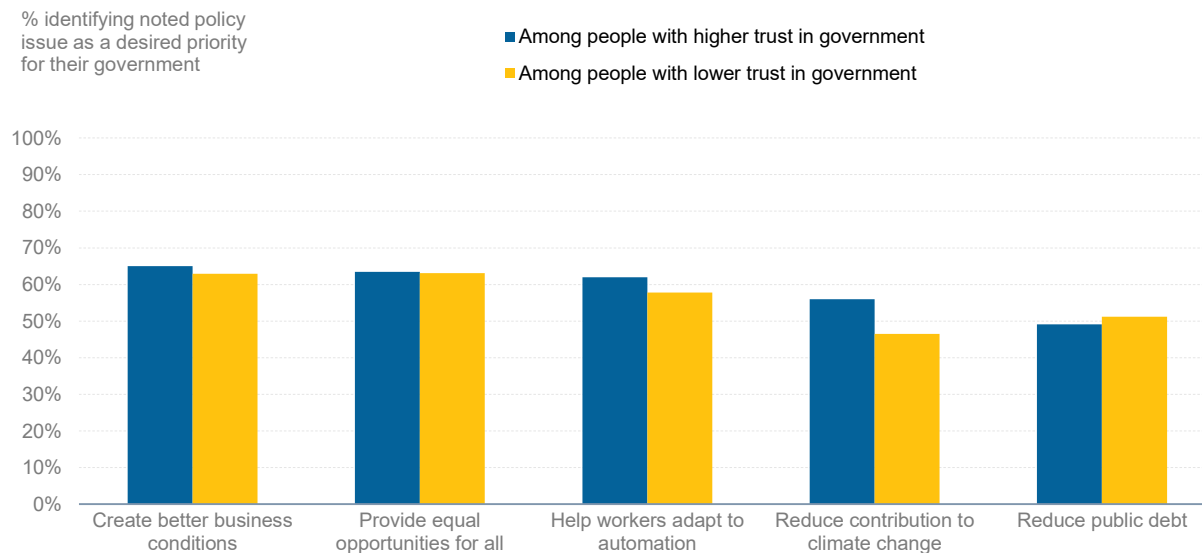
6.3.1. Policy priorities for the future

Trust Survey respondents were asked the degree to which their governments should prioritise different policies from a list of five policy areas: ensuring equal opportunities for all, helping workers adapt to automation, reducing the country's contribution to climate change, reducing public debt, and creating better business conditions. Across countries, the top priorities are improving business conditions and creating equal opportunities. Over 60% of respondents, on average across countries, say governments should prioritise these issues. Another 49.8% want their government to prioritise reducing their country's contribution to climate change.

There are slight differences in desires for government to commit when looking at people with low trust versus high trust in government. In all but one policy area (reducing public debt), people who trust their national government are more likely to call for the government to prioritise these forward-looking issues than people who do not (Figure 6.6). This suggests that respondents might be incorporating perceptions of government capacity when thinking ahead about what governments can do to target long-term challenges.

Percent of respondents that want their government to prioritise specific policy issues more (as opposed to "About the same" or "Less"), by their level of trust in national government, unweighted OECD average, 2021

% identifying noted policy issue as a desired priority for their government

■ Among people with higher trust in government
■ Among people with lower trust in government

Note: Figure presents the unweighted OECD average of the share of respondents reporting "more" or "a lot more" in response to the following question: "On the following issues, do you think the government should be prioritising them a lot less / less / about the same / more / a lot more?" in reference to the policy priorities of providing equal opportunities for all, helping workers to adapt to automation and new technologies, reducing contribution to climate change, reducing public debt, and creating the conditions for businesses to thrive. Trust levels present the aggregations of people who trust/don't trust the national government, equal to the values of responses 6-10 and 0-4 respectively on the response scale of the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely, how much do you trust each of the following? The national government". Finland, New Zealand and Norway are excluded from this figure as the data are not available. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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In addition to differences driven by levels of trust, the Trust Survey reveals important age-related differences in issues that have intergenerational consequences. Younger people in almost all countries are more likely to prioritise action on climate change than older people (Figure 6.7). At the same time, young people have consistently lower levels of trust in government (Chapter 3), suggesting a lack of confidence among youths that governments will invest in policies that benefit them.

Figure 6.7. Younger people are more likely to want action on climate change as a policy priority

Difference between the percentage of young (18- to 29-year-olds) respondents who want their government to "do more" to reduce their country's contribution to climate change minus the percentage of older (age 50 and over) respondents who want more action to reduce climate change, expressed in percentage points, 2021
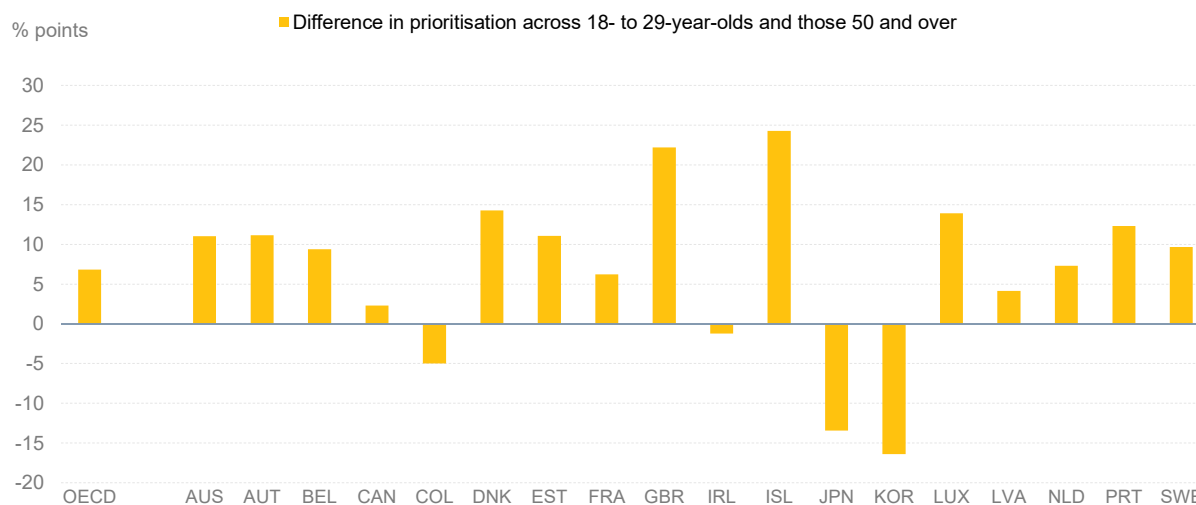
Note: Figure presents the difference in the within-country distributions of young respondents' minus older respondents' responses to the question "On the following issues, do you think the government should be prioritising them more, about the same, or less? Reducing [country's] contribution to climate change", grouped by age group. The Figure shows aggregation of responses "A lot more" and "More", for people aged 18-29 minus people aged 50 and above. Other response choices not shown here were "About the same", "Less" and "A lot less". "OECD" presents the unweighted average of responses across countries. Finland, Mexico, Norway and New Zealand are excluded from this figure as the data are not available. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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6.3.2. Can governments competently commit to future-oriented reforms, including those addressing climate change?

Trust in government is both a driver and an outcome of beliefs about whether a government will commit and capably respond to global and intergenerational challenges. The way policies are designed and implemented – in other words, governance – can influence the trustworthiness of public institutions and thus expectations of future behaviour (Ben-Ner and Halldorsson, 2010[20]; Johnson and Mislin, 2011[21]).

While improving business conditions and reducing inequality are commonly-cited preferences, addressing climate change is a less commonly-cited policy priority. Perhaps related to this, people are fairly sceptical that governments actually can address climate change. On average in the OECD, about half (50.4%) of respondents think that governments should prioritise climate change. Part of the issue may be that people are unwilling to accept the costs; addressing climate change requires both immediate and long-lasting sacrifices in exchange for a crucially important but diffuse long-run payoff.

But another likely factor is a government's perceived competence. People may not be confident that public institutions are competent and reliable enough to deliver policies effectively, and for long enough, to generate benefits. Indeed, on average only 35.5% of people are confident that countries will succeed in reducing their country's contribution to climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In other words, while half of people think that climate change is a serious issue for governments, just over a third believe that countries will actually meet the targets (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8. Half of respondents think their government should prioritise actions to reduce climate change, but only about one-third have confidence in their country's ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Share of respondents who say government should prioritise reducing country's contribution to climate change and share of respondents who have confidence in their country's ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 2021
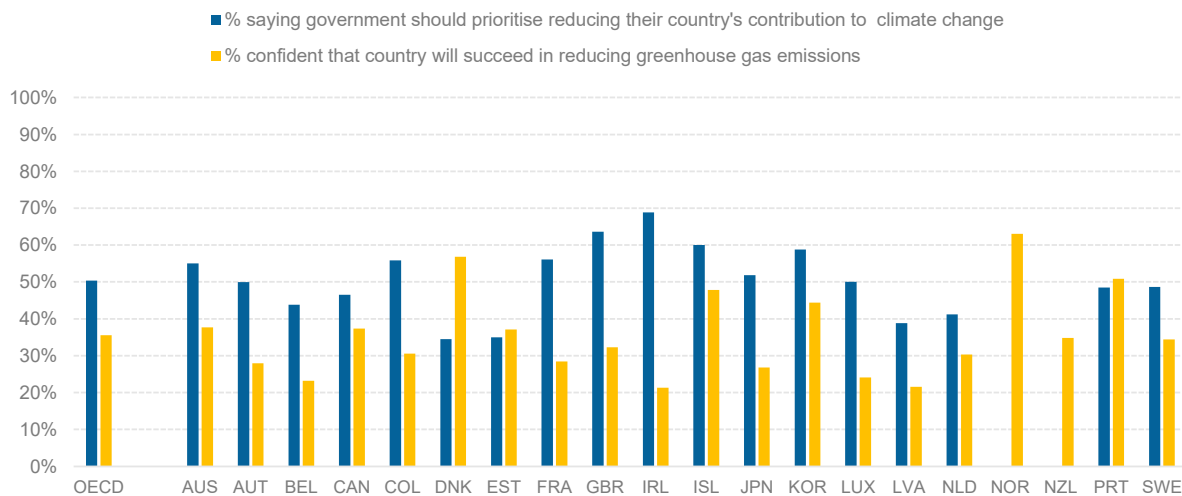
Note: Figure presents the average share of respondents to the questions "On reducing your country contribution to climate change, do you think the government should be prioritising a lot more, more, about the same, less, or a lot less?". The "more" share in the figure is the aggregation of the responses choices "a lot more" and "more". Respondents were asked "How confident are you that your country will succeed in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the next 10 years?" The "confident" share is the aggregation of response choices "somewhat confident" and "very confident". "OECD" presents the unweighted average of responses across countries. Finland, Mexico, New Zealand and Norway are excluded (or partially excluded) from this figure as comparable data were not available. For more detailed information on the survey questionnaire and processes in specific countries, please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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Cross-nationally, high levels of confidence in a government's ability to commit to addressing climate change are positively correlated with trust in government (Figure 6.9). Analysis from the OECD Trust Survey finds that people's confidence that the country will reduce greenhouse gas emissions has a statistically significant, positive relationship with trust in national government and, to a less extent, local government and civil service (Chapter 2). In other words, investing in public governance to deliver more effective policies to fight climate change may pay off in securing more credibility and trust in government. This relationship holds within countries, too; those who are confident that their government can credibly commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions are more likely to trust their government.

Figure 6.9. Countries that are seen as more competent in the fight against climate change also benefit from higher levels of trust in government

Share of respondents that are confident that their country will succeed in reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the next 10 years (x-axis) and the share who trust their national government (y-axis), 2021
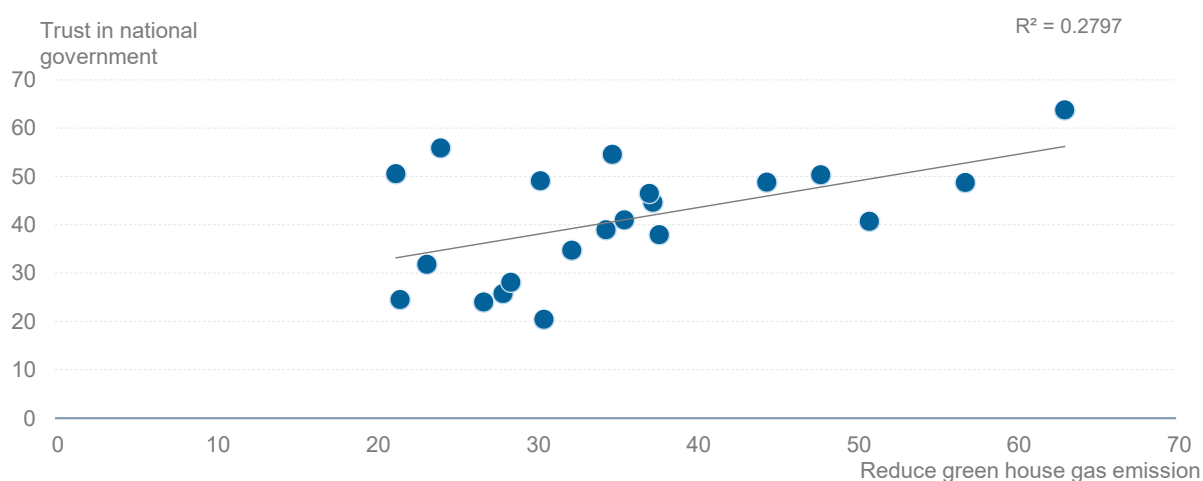
Note: This scatterplot presents the share of "trust" responses to the question "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely, how much do you trust each of the following? The national government", equal to the values of responses 6-10 on the response scale, on the y-axis. The x-axis presents the share of "confident" responses to the question "How confident are you that [country] will succeed in reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the next 10 years?". The "confident" response is the aggregation of responses "somewhat confident" and "completely confident". "OECD" presents the unweighted average of responses across countries. Finland is excluded as the results on confidence were not available, and Mexico is excluded due to lack of data on both questions. New Zealand here shows trust in civil service as respondents were not asked about trust in the national government (note that trust in civil service on average tends to be higher than trust in national government). For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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Some challenges require more than a reliable and responsive national government – they require the involvement of other actors and partners. On average across countries, people are most likely to express interest in global co-operation to address issues like climate change, terrorism, and pandemic preparation (Figure 6.10). Yet there is still relatively low public support for global co-operation to target these issues; around half of respondents call on governments to work together to address climate change. This is similar to the relatively low levels of public support for *national* governments to address climate change (Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.10. Respondents most likely to support global co-operation to resolve challenges like climate change, terrorism and pandemic preparation

Share of respondents picking each of the following options as one of their top priorities for global co-operation, unweighted OECD average, 2021
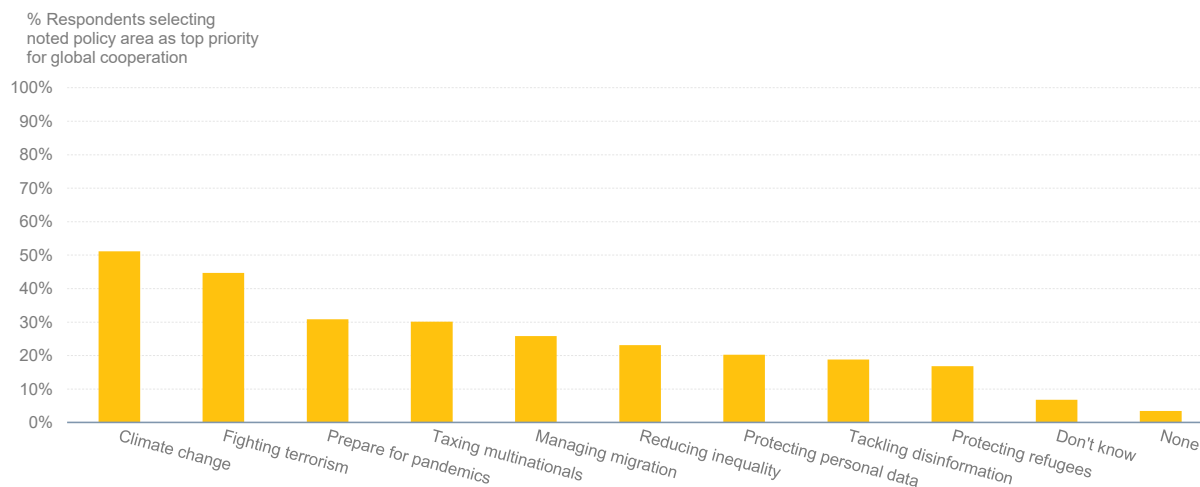
Note: Figure presents the unweighted OECD average share of responses to the question "Which of the following issues do you think are best addressed by working with other countries than by your country alone? Please choose your top three issues for global co-operation." Response choices options are indicated in the x-axis. Finland, Mexico and Norway are excluded from this figure as data are not available. For more detailed information please find the survey method document at http://oe.cd/trust.
Source: OECD Trust Survey (http://oe.cd/trust)

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When asked about how to co-operate globally, the most popular response – "joining forces with other governments internationally" – was selected by 43.4% of respondents, on average cross-nationally. The next three most commonly selected answer choices – engaging citizens on global issues, strengthening co-ordination across government offices, and strengthening the country's role in international institutions – were selected by fewer than one in three respondents.

As the risks associated with climate change become ever more urgent – and as costs increase for diffuse, long-term payoffs – governments must do better in communicating to the public the benefits of co-operation to tackle these challenges. These kinds of issues can only be resolved through global co-operation.

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NOTE

[11] Respondents to surveys often overreport their voting behaviour. Overreporting one's voting history has long been a problem in survey research and is often explained by memory failure or social desirability (i.e. a respondent recalls that they did not vote, but claims to have voted to align with some perceived social good) (Belli et al., 1999[24]) (McAllister and Quinlan, 2021[22]). A cursory comparison of voting rates in the OECD Trust Survey versus a database of national administrative data (IDEA, 2022[23]) suggest that overreporting in the Trust Survey was more prevalent in some countries (e.g. Canada, Iceland and Ireland) than others. The results presented here therefore focus on within-country variation, which may be less likely to suffer from systematic bias, though both within-country and across-country variation merit additional analysis.
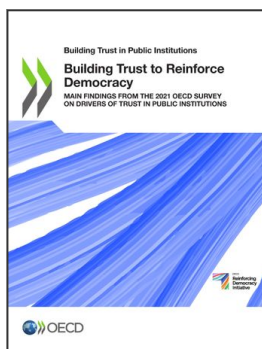
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