

The consumer survey of the European Commission shows the effects of the global pandemic and an increase in environmental consciousness

17 March 2021, Budapest – The European Commission surveyed the experiences of consumers in 23 economic sectors during the COVID-19 pandemic. European consumers shop online more and try to buy local goods as much as possible. In addition, they are making ‘greener’ decisions, which mean they are willing to pay more for environmentally-friendly products.

The comprehensive survey organised by the European Commission [in the last quarter of 2020 assessed](#) consumer behaviour and experiences in the Member States of the European Community. The Commission published the [key results](#) of the assessment, which was based on a targeted survey of 23 economic sectors and Eurostat data, providing insight into the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on European households.

The pandemic resulted in significant changes in consumer behaviour across Europe. The prevalence of online shopping increased: 71% of consumers ordered goods online in 2020. A somewhat lower proportion of Hungarian consumers took advantage of the opportunities offered by online shopping (62%) and they are less trustful of both Hungarian and foreign web stores than the European average. In addition, 81% of people shopped at locations closer to their home and showed strong support for local undertakings, which is true for Hungarian consumers as well (76%) based on the survey.

However, the results of the research also showed the economic effects of the pandemic. On average, 38% of Europeans worried about paying the bills in the following month (although the difference in this figure was rather significant between the individual Member States) and 42% delayed their more significant shopping decisions to a later date. The latter was particularly true in the case of Hungarian respondents: 57% of Hungarian consumers decided to put off large expenses.

On the positive side, the results show that the majority of consumers is aware of the environmental effect of their shopping decisions; 2/3 opted to buy more environmentally-friendly products even if they cost more. The good news is that the commitment of Hungarian consumers to environmental consciousness is not significantly behind the European average.

The results of the survey will be discussed within the framework of the European Consumer Summit, which began on Monday and was organised by the Commission together with Portugal, which currently holds the presidency of the European Council. The research can serve as a foundation for future measures aimed at ensuring that consumers, that is the 195 million households representing more than half of the GDP of the European Community, can contribute to the recovery of the economy following the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the transition to an environmentally friendly and digital economy as much as possible.

[Further information is available](#) about the survey on the website of the European Commission.