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Support for legal status of abortion growing in Latin America while softening in Western Europe

27-country survey finds nearly half say abortion should be permitted whenever a woman wants one, and one quarter say it should be allowed only in certain circumstances

New York, NY, September 17, 2021 — On average, seven in ten adults across 27 countries recently surveyed by Ipsos say abortion should be permitted — 46% whenever a woman decides she wants one and 24% in certain circumstances, such as in case of rape. Only one in six say abortion should not be permitted — 5% under no circumstances whatsoever and 12% except if a woman’s life is in danger. The survey of 20,003 adults under the age of 75 was conducted on Ipsos’ Global Advisor online platform between June 25 and July 9, 2021.

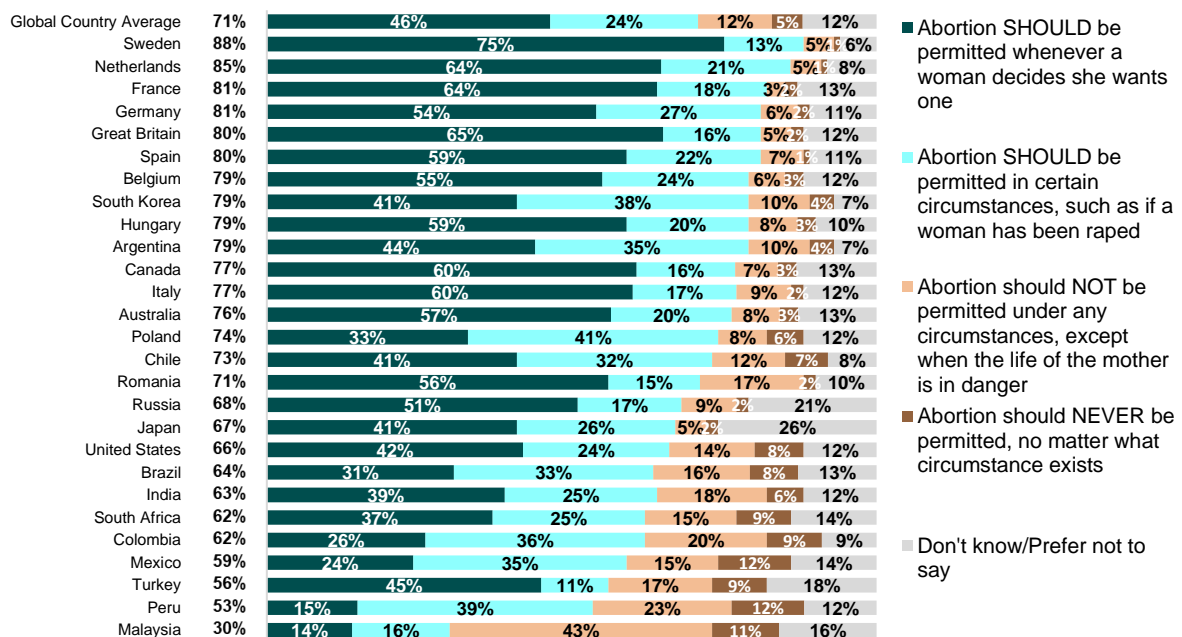
Since 2014, when Ipsos started measuring opinion about the legal status of abortion across the world annually, support for it has been steady in aggregate: it averages 71% across 27 countries today, compared to 72% across 22 countries seven years ago. Views on abortion continue to vary widely across countries and regions. However, this year’s survey highlights significant gains in some countries in the level of support for legalizing abortion, balanced by a softening in other countries.

Total % SHOULD be permitted	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	Change since 2014
Global Country Average*	71	70	70	70	72	75	72	72	-1
Argentina	79	72	71	74	66	66	65	64	15
Australia	76	78	75	74	77	77	75	77	-1
Belgium	79	87	87	83	87	90	85	85	-6
Brazil	64	53	61	57	50	57	52	53	11
Canada	77	77	74	77	77	79	74	76	1
Chile	73	68	-	71	75	73	71	65	8
Colombia	62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
France	81	84	86	84	86	90	88	90	-9
Germany	81	76	82	77	84	84	83	85	-4
Great Britain	80	83	84	76	82	86	84	85	-5
Hungary	79	78	78	81	84	83	77	79	0
India	63	63	64	64	68	70	63	61	2
Italy	77	70	73	73	71	74	74	73	4
Japan	67	66	65	62	60	65	67	67	0
Malaysia	30	24	28	27	-	-	-	-	-
Mexico	59	64	62	59	57	58	49	51	8
Netherlands	85	83	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peru	53	48	50	53	49	53	-	-	-
Poland	74	69	74	71	-	-	-	-	-
Romania	71	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Russia	68	69	65	65	66	62	65	59	9
South Africa	62	64	80	84	80	80	77	74	-12
South Korea	79	79	61	56	58	71	56	59	20
Spain	80	83	84	80	83	86	86	88	-8
Sweden	88	88	84	88	87	93	87	91	-3
Turkey	56	56	58	64	63	72	68	71	-15
United States	66	64	68	68	68	69	68	64	2

* All countries listed in this table that were surveyed that year

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The most notable increases since 2014 in the total percentage of adults saying abortion should be permitted are seen in South Korea (+20 points to 79%), throughout Latin America — Argentina (+15 to 79%), Brazil (+11 to 64%), Chile (+8 to 73%), and Mexico (+8 to 59%) — and in Russia (+9 to 68%). Conversely, pro-abortion sentiment has declined in Turkey (-15 to 56%), South Africa (-12 to 62%), and four Western European countries — France (-9 to 81%), Spain (-8 to 80%), Belgium (-6 to 79%), and Great Britain (-5 to 80%).



The view that abortion should be permitted *at least* under certain circumstances is held by a majority of adults surveyed in each of the 27 countries surveyed, with the sole exception of Malaysia (30%). Among them, 13 countries show a majority saying abortion should be permitted whenever a woman decides she wants one — Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Russia, and nine of the 10 European Union member states surveyed. In another eight countries – Argentina, Chile, India, Japan, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, and the United States – a plurality agree.

Those who, instead, say that abortion should be permitted in certain circumstances, such as when a woman has been raped, are not a majority in any country, but they are a plurality in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Poland, and Peru — all predominantly Catholic countries.

In Malaysia, the prevailing view is that abortion should not be permitted, except when the life of the mother is in danger.



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In nearly every country, women are generally more likely than men to say that abortion should be permitted whenever a woman wants one — 50% vs. 43%, on average across the 27 countries. The gender gap is highest in Turkey (26 points), Russia (16), Argentina (15), Canada (13), South Korea (13), and Poland (12).

Pro-abortion sentiment is also more prevalent among those with a higher level of education. Support being higher among those aged 50 and older than it is among younger adults is a reflection of the fact that the population of countries where overall support for abortion is highest (e.g., Western Europe) tends to be older.

About the Study

These are the results of a 27-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform. Ipsos interviewed a total of 20,003 adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Turkey, and 16-74 in 22 other markets between June 25 and July 9, 2021.

The sample consists of approximately 1,000 individuals in each of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals in each of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and Turkey.

The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, and the U.S. can be taken as representative of these countries' general adult population under the age of 75.

The samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more "connected" segment of their population.

The data is weighted so that each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the 'difference' appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of don't know or not stated responses.

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll of 1,000 accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of 500 accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos's use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

Nicolas Boyon
Senior Vice President, Public Affairs, U.S.
Nicolas.Boyon@ipsos.com

Kate Silverstein
Media Relations Specialist, Public Affairs, U.S.
Kate.Silverstein@ipsos.com

About Ipsos

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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

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