

Press Release

New technologies: India and China see enormous potential - Europeans more sceptical

- **Representative survey on behalf of the Vodafone Institute comparing technology acceptance in Europe, India, China and the USA**
- **People in India and China see greater potential for digitisation**
- **Greatest benefits seen as saving resources and improved transport**
- **Summit on digitisation with Angela Merkel in February 2019**

Berlin, 25.10.2018 – A study conducted by the opinion research institute Ipsos on behalf of the Vodafone Institute has found that Europeans are generally less optimistic about digitisation and future technologies than people in Asia.

The study of 9,000 people in nine countries examines the differences in attitudes towards the digitisation of societies and perceptions of the benefits it will bring as countries move towards becoming Gigabit Societies. The findings constitute one of the largest cross-continental studies of technology acceptance against the background of digitisation.

Attitudes towards digitisation

The majority of people surveyed have a positive attitude towards digitisation. However, there are large regional differences. Nations in Western Europe and the USA are far less optimistic about the benefits that digitisation can bring (around 50 percent) than nations such as China, India or Bulgaria (around 80 percent).

According to respondents, the greatest benefit of digitisation is the potential to save resources through the use of smart systems and improve mobility through smart traffic systems. 48 percent of respondents said cyber attacks are the greatest danger associated with new technologies and 63 percent fear that new technologies could lead to people being controlled by machines.

Gender-specific differences

While there are very few differences in the way men and women view digitisation in China and India, in Europe the study found that women are far less optimistic about the adoption of new technologies than men. In Germany, for example, 55 percent of the men surveyed see digitisation as "very positive" or "positive", but only 41 percent of the women surveyed see it as positive. In the USA, the difference amounts to 19 percentage points (64 percent positive attitude among men, 45 percent positive attitude among women).

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"People and Society" forms the first part of the Vodafone Institute's research into technology acceptance. The second part "Industry", which looks at business sentiments towards new technologies will be published in November. The third part "Governance" will focus on policy maker views and will be published parallel to the Digitising Europe Summit on "The Future of Made in Europe" taking place on 19 February 2019 in Berlin. The Summit, which will include an address by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, will provide a platform for debate amongst high-ranking representatives from business and politics for an EU vision for the digital age.

Comments on the study:

Prof. Luciano Floridi, Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, University of Oxford

The best policies and innovation strategies are always evidence-based and the survey offers some very helpful and indispensable information in order to gain a better view of people's attitudes and hence of what needs to be done so that digital innovation can meet justified expectations, address reasonable concerns, and fulfil realistic hopes.

Prof. Christoph Igel, Principal Researcher, German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence:

We are experiencing a fundamental change as a result of digitalisation. In Europe, this is accompanied by fears of automation or job loss. You don't have this basic fear in large parts of Asia. On the contrary, digitalisation has created many jobs in the first place. Accordingly, people are optimistic about the future.

Inger Paus, Managing Director, Vodafone Institute:

Our study shows that many Europeans see the supposedly secure status quo threatened. The Western industrial nations have apparently lost their belief in progress. Politics and business must clearly demonstrate that digitisation has the potential to improve society in the long term. If we do not finally take this path more courageously, the feeling to lag behind can quickly become a reality.

Lifeng Liu, CEO, Ipsos China:

Technology infrastructure and systems used to be very poor in Asia. As a result, people in the Asian market feel that there are higher gains from accepting new technology. People are also more willing to embrace governmental policies. For example, China has become a cashless country where everybody uses mobile payment and mobile money transfer. It's convenient for small businesses but also for everyday life. Travelling for instance gets easier through using mobile payments. Overall people in Asia are enjoying the benefits of digitisation.

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Parijat Chakraborty, *Executive Director, Public Affairs, Ipsos India:*

Indians are very adaptive to new technologies now. Mobile companies and other ecosystem partners have done a phenomenal job by introducing affordable technology to address many challenges of everyday life. The majority of Indians did not have access to even landline phones a decade ago but they find a host of technology in their hands today. A new and progressive world is suddenly opening in front of them. The recent demonetisation in India has also forced the common people to adopt a lot of technologies for financial transactions. All these are making Indians open to experiment with newer technologies.

Vodafone Institute for Society and Communications

The Institute is Vodafone's thinktank. We explore the potentials and responsible use of digital technologies for innovation, growth and sustainable social impact. Through research and events, we provide thought-leadership and offer a platform for dialogue between business, academia and politics.

We are committed to improving access to technology for all parts of society and thus develop and support on-the-ground projects for female empowerment and digital education. The wide-ranging expertise of the Advisory Board members reflects the Institute's intention to act as a cross-sectoral platform.

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