

Inflation and energy prices force six in ten Belgians to cut daily expenses

A new ING survey on a representative panel shows that nine in ten Belgians are reducing their energy consumption and six in ten are even saving on daily expenses. Over the next six months, they plan to step up their efforts. Online spending is also under pressure, even more so than in other countries. This will adversely impact economic activity



High inflation prompts six in ten Belgians to save on daily expenses

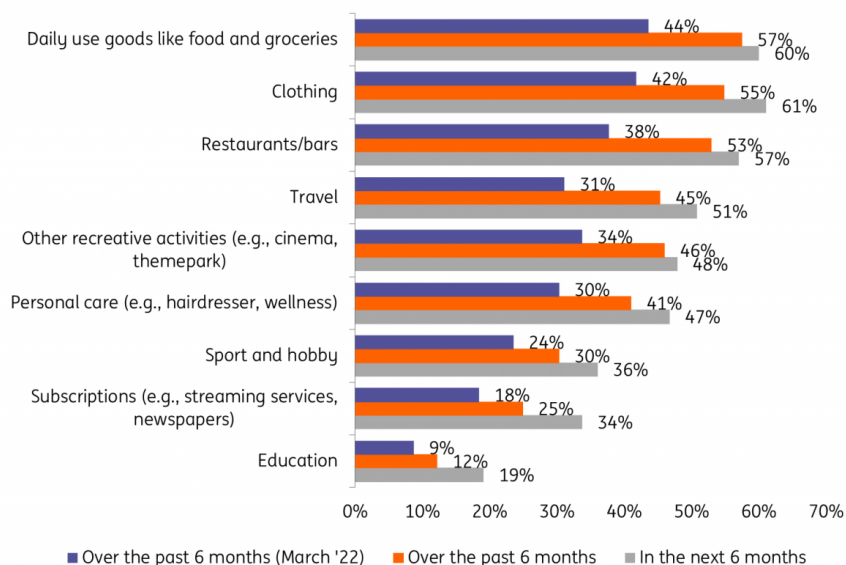
Belgians are looking for savings to cope with the rising cost of living. An international ING survey, conducted in early November in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Romania, Poland, Turkey and Spain, shows that almost six in ten Belgians are saving on fresh food and groceries (see chart 1). A slight majority of Belgians also cut their clothing expenses. The Belgian urge to save is also slightly higher than in Germany for most product categories. While in Belgium, 58% already save on daily expenses, in Germany this is 'only' 50%. Remarkably, about half of Belgians also cut back on their spending on catering, travel and leisure activities, sectors that benefited greatly from the end of

the pandemic.

Compared to the results of the same survey in [March 2022](#), the number of households cutting back on their consumption has risen sharply. In addition, many households plan to reduce their spending further in the coming months. While this was only 44% in March, 57% of Belgians say they are already saving on daily expenses and 60% expect to do so in the next six months.

More and more Belgians are cutting back on their spending

Due to rising prices, I try to save on... (% of respondents)



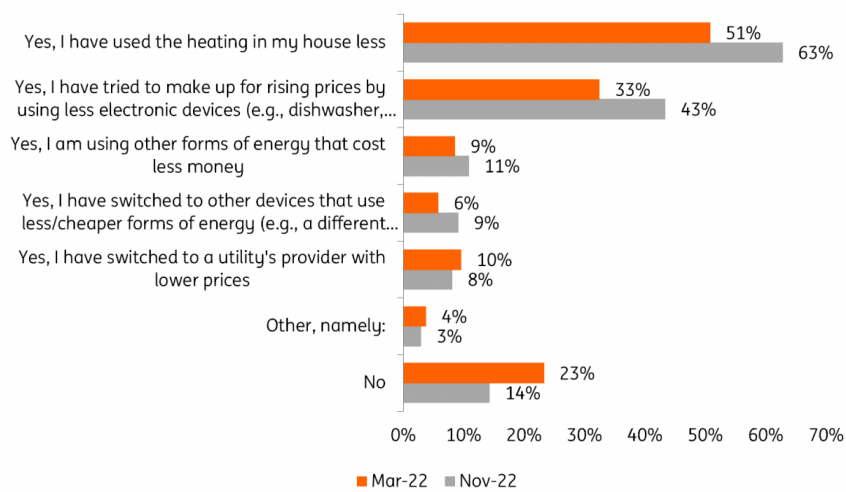
Source: ING consumer survey November 2022

Four in ten Belgians see energy bill more than doubling in last six months

The extreme caution of households is obviously due to the energy crisis. According to the survey, the energy bill has more than doubled for four out of ten Belgians over the last six months. For almost one in ten, it has increased more than fivefold. In this context, the number of households taking measures to save energy and try to reduce the impact of the price increase has risen sharply, from 77% in March to 86% today. More than six out of ten Belgians say they are cutting back on heating, while four out of ten respondents say they are more economical with the use of electrical appliances, such as dishwashers (see chart 2).

Six in ten Belgians turn down heating

In what ways do you try to reduce your energy bills? (% of respondents)



Source: ING consumer survey November 2022

Decline in online purchases for all spending categories

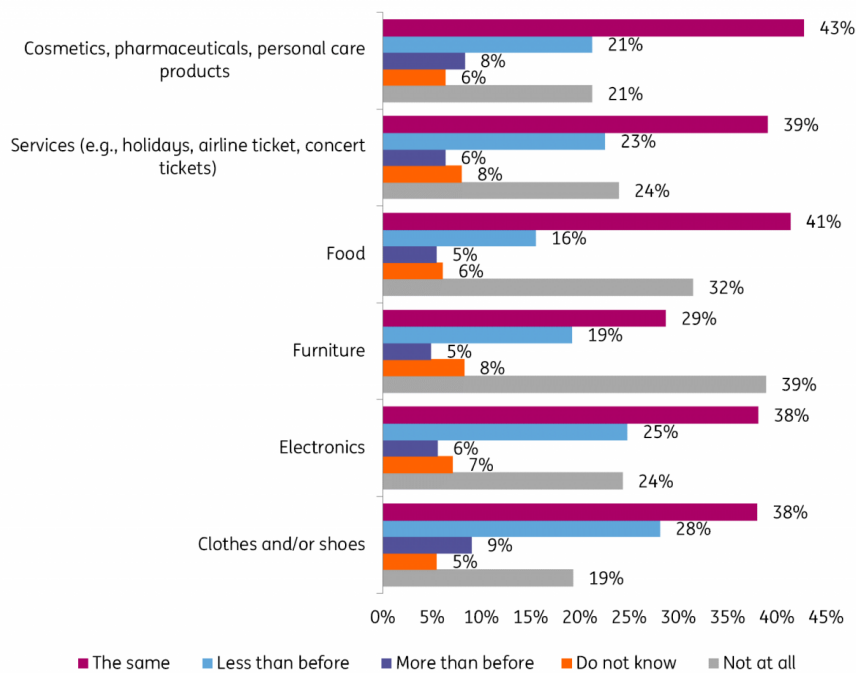
During the pandemic, Belgians appeared to be very active online shoppers, but the unusually sharp increase during the pandemic seems to be normalising somewhat. Almost a quarter (23%) of respondents say they have been buying online less often since the end of the pandemic, compared to only 15% who say they are buying online more often. When asked whether they expect to spend more online during the holidays than last year, one in four Belgians (25%) said they would spend less.

The survey results show that the decline is mainly due to a general deterioration in the economic climate and not to consumers buying more in physical shops since the relaxation of health restrictions. Indeed, the percentage of respondents saying they spend relatively more in physical shops than online (21%) is balanced by the percentage saying they buy relatively more online than in physical shops (23%).

Moreover, a significant proportion of the households also say they plan to further reduce their online purchases in the coming year. For instance, only 9% of respondents plan to buy more clothes online in the coming year, while 28% plan to buy less (see chart 3). Although the decline seems stronger for electronics and clothing, the trend is clearly felt across all product categories. It is therefore likely that the decline in online spending will be widespread in the coming months. No sector seems to be able to escape the economic downturn.

Lots of families plan to further cut online budgets next year

Do you plan to purchase more online in the coming months (% of respondents)?



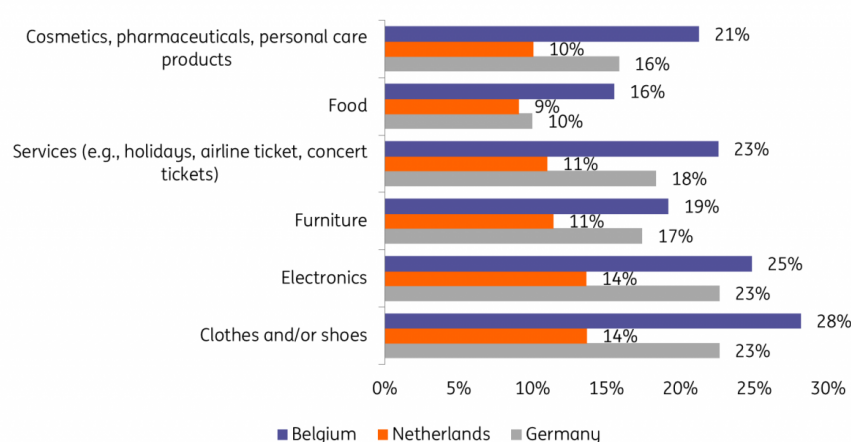
Source: ING Consumer Survey November 2022

Belgians are much more cautious than their neighbours when it comes to budgeting

The share of households planning to reduce their online spending is significantly higher in Belgium than in the Netherlands and Germany, and this is true for almost all product categories (see chart 4). While, for example, 28% of Belgian respondents said they would like to buy fewer clothes and shoes online, this is only 14% in the Netherlands and 23% in Germany. Although Belgians' purchasing power is much better protected compared to other eurozone countries thanks to the automatic indexation of wages, the crisis seems to have a greater impact on consumption patterns in Belgium than in other countries. Belgians seem much more cautious and willing to economise more to get through this difficult period.

More Belgians cut online budget than neighbouring countries

Do you plan to buy less online in the coming months (% of respondents)?



Source: ING Consumer Survey November 2022

Belgian economy dives into the red

Belgians are massively looking to save money to cope with the rising cost of living. This will have an impact on economic growth in Belgium. The Belgian economy has already contracted slightly (-0.1%) in the third quarter, and this is expected to continue in the coming quarters. We expect economic growth to be negative in 2023.

The full study is available in [Dutch](#) and [French](#).

Author

Olivia Grace

Editor

olivia.grace@ing.com

Julian Geib

Junior Economist, Global Trade

julian.geib@ing.de

Zoltán Homolya

Economic research trainee

zoltan.homolya@ing.com

Amrita Naik Nimbalkar

Economist, Global Macro

amrita.naik.nimbalkar@ing.com

Mateusz Sutowicz

Senior Economist, Poland

mateusz.sutowicz@ing.pl

Alissa Lefebre

Economist

alissa.lefebvre@ing.com

Deepali Bhargava

Regional Head of Research, Asia-Pacific

Deepali.Bhargava@ing.com

Ruben Dewitte

Economist

+32495364780

ruben.dewitte@ing.com

Kinga Havasi

Economic research trainee

kinga.havasi@ing.com

Marten van Garderen

Consumer Economist, Netherlands

marten.van.garderen@ing.com

David Havrlant

Chief Economist, Czech Republic

420 770 321 486

david.havrlant@ing.com

Sander Burgers

Senior Economist, Dutch Housing

sander.burgers@ing.com

Lynn Song

Chief Economist, Greater China

lynn.song@ing.com

Michiel Tukker

Senior UK & Eurozone Rates Strategist

michiel.tukker@ing.com

Michal Rubaszek

Senior Economist, Poland

michal.rubaszek@ing.pl

This is a test author

Stefan Posea

Economist, Romania

tiberiu-stefan.posea@ing.com

Marine Leleux

Sector Strategist, Financials

marine.leleux2@ing.com

Jesse Norcross

Senior Sector Strategist, Real Estate

jesse.norcross@ing.com

Teise Stellema

Research Assistant, Energy Transition

teise.stellema@ing.com

Diederik Stadig

Senior Economist, Healthcare & Technology

diederik.stadig@ing.com

Diogo Gouveia

Sector Economist

diogo.duarte.vieira.de.gouveia@ing.com

Marine Leleux

Sector Strategist, Financials

marine.leleux2@ing.com

Ewa Manthey

Commodities Strategist

ewa.manthey@ing.com

ING Analysts

James Wilson

EM Sovereign Strategist

James.wilson@ing.com

Sophie Smith

Digital Editor

sophie.smith@ing.com

Frantisek Taborsky

EMEA FX & FI Strategist

frantisek.taborsky@ing.com

Adam Antoniak

Senior Economist, Poland

adam.antoniak@ing.pl

Min Joo Kang

Senior Economist, South Korea and Japan
min.joo.kang@ing.com

Coco Zhang
ESG Research
coco.zhang@ing.com

Jan Frederik Slijkerman
Senior Sector Strategist, TMT
jan.frederik.slijkerman@ing.com

Katinka Jongkind
Senior Economist, Services and Leisure
Katinka.Jongkind@ing.com

Marina Le Blanc
Sector Strategist, Financials
Marina.Le.Blanc@ing.com

Samuel Abettan
Junior Economist
samuel.abettan@ing.com

Franziska Biehl
Senior Economist, Germany
Franziska.Marie.Biehl@ing.de

Rebecca Byrne
Deputy Global Head of Editorial and Supervisory Analyst
rebecca.byrne@ing.com

Mirjam Bani
Sector Economist, Commercial Real Estate & Public Sector (Netherlands)
mirjam.bani@ing.com

Timothy Rahill
Credit Strategist
timothy.rahill@ing.com

Leszek Kasek
Senior Economist, Poland
leszek.kasek@ing.pl

Antoine Bouvet
Head of European Rates Strategy
antoine.bouvet@ing.com

Jeroen van den Broek

Global Head of Sector Research
jeroen.van.den.broek@ing.com

Edse Dantuma
Senior Sector Economist, Industry and Healthcare
edse.dantuma@ing.com

Francesco Pesole
FX Strategist
francesco.pesole@ing.com

Rico Luman
Senior Sector Economist, Transport and Logistics
Rico.Luman@ing.com

Jurjen Witteveen
Sector Economist
jurjen.witteveen@ing.com

Dmitry Dolgin
Chief Economist, CIS
dmitry.dolgin@ing.de

Nicholas Mapa
Senior Economist, Philippines
nicholas.antonio.mapa@asia.ing.com

Egor Fedorov
Senior Credit Analyst
egor.fedorov@ing.com

Sebastian Franke
Consumer Economist
sebastian.franke@ing.de

Gerben Hieminga
Senior Sector Economist, Energy
gerben.hieminga@ing.com

Nadège Tillier
Head of Corporate Sector Strategy
nadege.tillier@ing.com

Charlotte de Montpellier
Senior Economist, France and Switzerland
charlotte.de.montpellier@ing.com

Laura Straeter

Behavioural Scientist
+31(0)611172684
laura.Straeter@ing.com

Valentin Tataru
Chief Economist, Romania
valentin.tataru@ing.com

James Smith
Developed Markets Economist, UK
james.smith@ing.com

Suvi Platerink Kosonen
Senior Sector Strategist, Financials
suvi.platerink-kosonen@ing.com

Thijs Geijer
Senior Sector Economist, Food & Agri
thijs.geijer@ing.com

Maurice van Sante
Senior Economist Construction & Team Lead Sectors
maurice.van.sante@ing.com

Marcel Klok
Senior Economist, Netherlands
marcel.klok@ing.com

Paolo Pizzoli
Senior Economist, Italy, Greece
paolo.pizzoli@ing.com

Marieke Blom
Chief Economist and Global Head of Research
marieke.blom@ing.com

Raoul Leering
Senior Macro Economist
raoul.leering@ing.com

Maarten Leen
Head of Global IFRS9 ME Scenarios
maarten.leen@ing.com

Maureen Schuller
Head of Financials Sector Strategy
Maureen.Schuller@ing.com

Warren Patterson

Head of Commodities Strategy

Warren.Patterson@ing.com

Rafal Benecki

Chief Economist, Poland

rafal.benecki@ing.pl

Philippe Ledent

Senior Economist, Belgium, Luxembourg

philippe.ledent@ing.com

Peter Virovacz

Chief Economist, Hungary

peter.virovacz@ing.com

Inga Fechner

Senior Economist, Global Trade

inga.fechner@ing.de

Dimitry Fleming

Senior Data Analyst, Netherlands

Dimitry.Fleming@ing.com

Ciprian Dascalu

Chief Economist, Romania

+40 31 406 8990

ciprian.dascalu@ing.com

Muhammet Mercan

Chief Economist, Turkey

muhammet.mercan@ingbank.com.tr

Iris Pang

Chief Economist, Greater China

iris.pang@asia.ing.com

Sophie Freeman

Writer, Group Research

+44 20 7767 6209

Sophie.Freeman@uk.ing.com

Padhraic Garvey, CFA

Regional Head of Research, Americas

padhraic.garvey@ing.com

James Knightley

Chief International Economist, US

james.knightley@ing.com

Tim Condon

Asia Chief Economist
+65 6232-6020

Martin van Vliet

Senior Interest Rate Strategist
+31 20 563 8801
martin.van.vliet@ing.com

Karol Pogorzelski

Senior Economist, Poland
Karol.Pogorzelski@ing.pl

Carsten Brzeski

Global Head of Macro
carsten.brzeski@ing.de

Viraj Patel

Foreign Exchange Strategist
+44 20 7767 6405
viraj.patel@ing.com

Owen Thomas

Global Head of Editorial Content
+44 (0) 207 767 5331
owen.thomas@ing.com

Bert Colijn

Chief Economist, Netherlands
bert.colijn@ing.com

Peter Vanden Houte

Chief Economist, Belgium, Luxembourg, Eurozone
peter.vandenhoute@ing.com

Benjamin Schroeder

Senior Rates Strategist
benjamin.schroeder@ing.com

Chris Turner

Global Head of Markets and Regional Head of Research for UK & CEE
chris.turner@ing.com

Gustavo Rangel

Chief Economist, LATAM
+1 646 424 6464

gustavo.rangel@ing.com

Carlo Cocuzzo

Economist, Digital Finance

+44 20 7767 5306

carlo.cocuzzo@ing.com