Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment

Fieldwork: 13 April – 8 May 2011

This survey was conducted by TNS opinion & social at the request of the Directorate-General for the Environment. It was coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Research and Speechwriting” Unit).

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.
MAIN FINDINGS

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY, ENVIRONMENT AND GROWTH: 83% of people believe that better use of resources can lead to economic growth; 77% of people believe that protection of the environment can do the same (up from 66% in 2009).

CITIZENS AND THE ENVIRONMENT: 72% of Europeans (compared to 75% in 2007) are willing to pay more for products which are specifically environmentally friendly. However, 69% of them believe that they are not doing enough to use natural resources efficiently.

THE EU AND THE ENVIRONMENT: 64% of people believe that actions should be taken at a European level.

INFORMATION: 60% of the respondents think that they are “well-informed” about environmental issues (up from 55% in 2007).
A. Methodology
A. Methodology

Special Eurobarometer 365 – EB75.2

- Survey conducted face-to-face
- Fieldwork: 13 April – 8 May 2011
- Population: representative sample of population 15+
- Coverage: European Union 27 Member States
- Number of interviews: 26,825
- This survey was carried out for the European Commission (requested by the Directorate-General for the Environment and coordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Research and Speechwriting” Unit)).
B. Agenda
B. Agenda

1. Environment and Resource Efficiency
2. General perceptions of the environment
3. Environment in citizens’ lives
4. Environment in EU public life, decision making and economy
5. Information about the environment
1. Environment and Resource Efficiency
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The protection of the environment can boost economic growth in the EU

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
1.1 Environment and Resource Efficiency

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

The efficient use of natural resources can boost economic growth in the EU

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
2. General perceptions of the environment
When people talk about "the environment", which of the following do you think of first?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- Protecting nature: 17%
- The state of the environment our children will inherit: 14%
- Pollution in towns and cities: 22%
- Climate change: 19%
- Green and pleasant landscapes: 13%
- Man-made disasters (oil spills and industrial accidents, etc.): 8%
- The quality of life where you live: 9%
- Earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters: 6%
- Using up natural resources: 6%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- None (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- Don't know: 1%
2.1 General associations with the environment

When people talk about “the environment”, which of the following do you think of first? And then?  
(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

SPLIT A

- Protecting nature: 47%
- The state of the environment our children will inherit: 41%
- Climate change: 40%
- Pollution in towns and cities: 39%
- Man-made disasters such as oil spills and industrial accidents: 39%
- The quality of life where you live: 33%
- Using up natural resources: 31%
- Green and pleasant landscapes: 28%
- Earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters: 26%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 2%
- None (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- Don’t know: 1%

SPLIT B

- The state of the environment our children will inherit: 45%
- Pollution in towns and cities: 42%
- Man-made disasters such as oil spills and industrial accidents: 41%
- Climate change: 41%
- The quality of life where you live: 37%
- Using up natural resources: 34%
- Green and pleasant landscapes: 31%
- Earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters: 28%
- Protecting biodiversity: 20%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 2%
- None (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- Don’t know: 1%

Half of the sample (split A) was read “protecting nature” while the other half (split B) was read “protecting biodiversity”.

EU27

EUROSARBOMETER
2.2 Main environmental concerns

From the following list, please pick the five main environmental issues that you are worried about.

(MAX. 5 ANSWERS)
2.2 Main environmental concerns – Man-made disasters

Question: From the following list, please pick the five main environmental issues that you are worried about. (MAX. 5 ANSWERS)

Answers: Man-made disasters (oil spills and industrial accidents, etc.)
2.2 Main environmental concerns – Water pollution

Question: From the following list, please pick the five main environmental issues that you are worried about. (MAX. 5 ANSWERS)

Answers: Water pollution (seas, rivers, lakes and underground sources)
3. Environment in citizens’ lives
3.1.1 Personal importance of environmental protection

How important is protecting the environment to you personally?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
Environmental problems have a direct effect on your daily life

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.
Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

As an individual, you can play a role in protecting the environment in (OUR COUNTRY)

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Total 'Agree'</th>
<th>Total 'Disagree'</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CY</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BE</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU27</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ES</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HU</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LT</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CZ</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

The big polluters (corporations and industry) should be mainly responsible for protecting the environment

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
3.2.1 Actions taken for environmental reasons

Have you done any of the following during the past month for environmental reasons? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

- Separated most of your waste for recycling: 59%
- Cut down your energy consumption (e.g., turning down air conditioning or heating, not leaving appliances on stand-by, buying energy saving light bulbs, buying energy efficient appliances): 47%
- Cut down your water consumption (e.g., not leaving water running when washing the dishes or taking a shower, etc.): 37%
- Reduced the consumption of disposable items (plastic bags, certain kind of packaging, etc.): 37%
- Chosen a more environmentally friendly way of traveling (by foot, bicycle, public transport): 30%
- Chosen locally produced products or groceries: 28%
- Used your car less: 20%
- Bought environmentally friendly products marked with an environmental label: 17%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- None (SPONTANEOUS): 9%
- Don't know: 2%

(EUROBAROMETER)
3.2.1 Actions taken for environmental reasons – Separated most of your waste for recycling

Question: Have you done any of the following during the past month for environmental reasons?

Answers: Separated most of your waste for recycling
3.2.2 Actions seen as priorities for citizens

In your opinion, which of these should be the top-three priorities for (NATIONALITY) citizens in their daily life to protect the environment? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

- Sort waste so that it can be recycled: 59%
- Reduce your home energy consumption (lightening, heating, household appliances): 48%
- Use public transport as much as possible instead of using your own car: 37%
- Reduce waste by buying more selectively and avoiding over-packaged products: 32%
- Buy more local products while avoiding products that come from far away: 26%
- Purchase ecologically friendly products for your daily needs: 23%
- Replace your car with a more energy efficient one, even if it is smaller or more expensive: 18%
- Consider environmental aspects when you make large expenditures (e.g., traveling, buying a car, heating systems, build a house etc): 15%
- Pay a little more in taxes to help protect the environment: 3%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 0%
- None (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- Don't know: 4%

EB75.2 Apr.-May 2011
EB68.2 Nov.-Dec. 2007
3.3.1 Intention to buy environmentally friendly products

Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with the following statement: You are ready to buy environmentally friendly products even if they cost a little bit more.

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
3.3.1 Intention to buy environmentally friendly products

Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with the following statement: You are ready to buy environmentally friendly products even if they cost a little bit more.

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
3.3.2 Information about green labelling

Do you think that current labels on products allow you to identify those products that are genuinely environmentally friendly?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- Total 'Yes'
- Total 'No'
- Don't know

Inner pie: EB68.2 Nov.-Dec. 2007
Outer pie: EB75.2 Apr.-May 2011
3.3.2 Information about green labelling

Do you think that current labels on products allow you to identify those products that are genuinely environmentally friendly? (ONE ANSWER ONLY)
3.4 Which actor is viewed as most active to use natural resources efficiently?

In your opinion, are each of the following currently doing too much, doing about the right amount, or not doing enough to use natural resources efficiently?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- **Citizens themselves**: 2% doing too much, 25% doing about the right amount, 69% not doing enough, 4% don't know.
- **The European Union**: 3% doing too much, 22% doing about the right amount, 63% not doing enough, 12% don't know.
- **The (NATIONALITY) Government**: 2% doing too much, 20% doing about the right amount, 72% not doing enough, 6% don't know.
- **Corporations and industry**: 2% doing too much, 14% doing about the right amount, 79% not doing enough, 5% don't know.
3.4.1 Citizens themselves

In your opinion, are each of the following currently doing too much, doing about the right amount, or not doing enough to use natural resources efficiently? Citizens themselves

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
3.4.2 The European Union

In your opinion, are each of the following currently doing too much, doing about the right amount, or not doing enough to use natural resources efficiently? The European Union (ONE ANSWER ONLY)
4. Environment in EU public life, decision making and economy
4.1. Factors influencing citizens’ quality of life

In your opinion, to what extent do the following factors influence your "quality of life"?

**Economic factors**
- 85% think it influences it, 14% don't think it influences it, 1% don't know.

**State of the environment**
- 77% think it influences it, 22% don't think it influences it, 1% don't know.

**Social factors**
- 75% think it influences it, 23% don't think it influences it, 2% don't know.

---

**Sources:**
- EB75.2 Apr.-May 2011
- EB68.2 Nov.-Dec. 2007

**EU27**
4.1.1 The environment and quality of life

Question: In your opinion, to what extent do the following factors influence your "quality of life"?

Option: State of the environment

Answers: Total "influence"
4.1.2 Evaluating progress

Which of the following ways of evaluating progress in (OUR COUNTRY) do you think is the best? National progress should be evaluated based…

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
4.2.1 Most effective ways of tackling environmental problems – Introducing heavier fines for offenders

Question: In your opinion, which of the following would be the most effective way(s) of tackling environmental problems?

Answers: Introducing heavier fines for offenders

Map Legend:
- 40% - 100%
- 33% - 39%
- 0% - 32%
4.2.2 Green procurement

In your opinion, which of the following would be the most effective way(s) of tackling environmental problems? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)

Half of the sample (split A) was read “environmentally friendly procurement” while the other half (split B) was read “green public procurement”.

- Environmentally friendly procurement over simple cost considerations
- Cost effective solutions over environmentally friendly considerations
- Neither (SPONTANEOUS)
- Don’t know

EU27
4.3.1 Preferred level of decision making

When it comes to protecting the environment, do you think that decisions should be made by the (NATIONALITY) Government or made jointly within the EU?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

European environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment in (OUR COUNTRY)

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
4.3.2 Views on actions at EU level

Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

The EU should assist non-EU countries to improve their environmental standards

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
4.3.2 Views on actions at EU level

Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

EU funding should be allocated more to support environmentally friendly activities and developments

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
5. Information about the environment
5.1 Level of feeling informed

In general, do you consider that you are very well, fairly well, fairly badly or very badly informed about environmental issues? (ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- Total 'Well informed': 38%
- Total 'Badly informed': 42%
- Don't know: 55%

Inner pie: EB68.2 Nov.-Dec. 2007
Outer pie: EB75.2 Apr.-May 2011
In general, do you consider that you are very well, fairly well, fairly badly or very badly informed about environmental issues?

(ONE ANSWER ONLY)
5.2 Topics on which European citizens lack information

From the following list, please tell me the five main issues about which you feel you lack information in particular.
(MAX. 5 ANSWERS)

- The impact on our health of chemicals used in everyday products: 40%
- The use of genetically modified organisms in farming: 37%
- Agricultural pollution (use of pesticides, fertilizers, etc.): 29%
- Water pollution (seas, rivers, lakes and underground sources): 28%
- Depletion of natural resources: 27%
- Loss of biodiversity (extinction of species, loss of wildlife and habitats): 27%
- Man-made disasters (oil spills and industrial accidents, etc.): 22%
- Growing waste: 21%
- Air pollution: 21%
- Climate change: 20%
- Noise pollution: 15%
- Our consumption habits: 15%
- Natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, etc.): 13%
- Impact of current transport modes (more cars, more motorways, more air traffic, etc.): 13%
- Urban problems (traffic jams, pollution, lack of green spaces, etc.): 13%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- None (SPONTANEOUS): 5%
- Don't know: 3%
5.3.1 Used sources of information

From the following list, which are your three main sources of information about the environment? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

- Television news: 73%
- Newspapers: 41%
- The Internet and social medias: 31%
- Films and documentaries on television: 29%
- The radio: 23%
- Conversations with relatives, family, friends, neighbours, colleagues: 16%
- Magazines: 13%
- Publications, brochures, information materials: 8%
- Books: 6%
- Events (conferences, fairs, exhibitions, festivals, etc.): 4%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 3%
- You are not interested in the environment (SPONTANEOUS): 0%
- Don’t know: 1%
5.3.1 Used sources of information – The Internet and social medias

Question: From the following list, which are your three main sources of information about the environment?

Answers: The Internet and social medias

Map Legend
- 35% - 100%
- 28% - 34%
- 0% - 27%
5.3.2 Trusted sources of information

From the following list, who do you trust most when it comes to environmental issues?
(MAX. 5 ANSWERS)

- Scientists: 40%
- Environmental protection associations (Green Peace, WWF, etc.): 37%
- Television: 29%
- Consumer associations and other citizens’ organisations: 21%
- Newspapers: 16%
- International organisations (United Nations, etc.): 15%
- The internet and social medias: 15%
- Teachers at school or university: 14%
- Relatives\ family\ neighbours; friends\ colleagues: 12%
- The radio: 10%
- European Union: 9%
- Political parties standing for environment (Greens, etc.): 9%
- Regional\ local government: 8%
- National Government: 7%
- Companies: 3%
- Trade unions: 3%
- Other (SPONTANEOUS): 1%
- None (SPONTANEOUS): 7%
- Don’t know: 3%