



Flash Eurobarometer 379

ATTITUDES TOWARDS BIODIVERSITY

SUMMARY

Fieldwork: June 2013

Publication: November 2013

This survey has been requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication.

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.

Flash Eurobarometer 379 - TNS Political & Social

Flash Eurobarometer 379

Attitudes towards biodiversity

Conducted by TNS Political & Social at the request of
the European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication
(DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit)

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INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) is committed to the protection of “biodiversity”, or the diversity of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems. Although the EU has been legislating on biodiversity since the 1970s, biodiversity loss has accelerated both in the EU and globally in recent years. Biodiversity loss is an enormous challenge in the EU, with around one in four species currently threatened with extinction and 88% of fish stocks over-exploited or significantly depleted.

In May 2011, the European Commission adopted an ambitious strategy to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the EU by 2020. There are six main targets, and 20 actions to help Europe reach its goal: ensuring the full implementation of EU nature legislation, better protection for ecosystems, more sustainable agriculture and forestry, better management of fish stocks, controls on invasive species, and a larger EU contribution to averting global biodiversity loss.¹ The Habitats and Birds Directives are a core element of this strategy, including the European network of nature protection areas – known as the Natura 2000 Network. The network currently contains over 26,000 terrestrial and marine sites, making it the largest coordinated network in the world, covering almost a fifth of the EU's land area and substantial parts of the surrounding seas.²

With this in mind, this Flash Eurobarometer survey asked EU citizens to clarify how familiar they are with the term biodiversity and with the concept of biodiversity loss. The survey also dealt with the following aspects relating to biodiversity loss:

- The level to which EU citizens feel informed about biodiversity issues
- Europeans' perceptions of the major threats to biodiversity
- Perceptions of the seriousness of biodiversity loss at domestic, European and global levels
- Awareness of the Natura 2000 network and perceptions of the most important roles of nature protection areas
- Views on why preserving biodiversity is important, and what EU measures and personal measures can be taken to prevent the loss of biodiversity

This Flash Eurobarometer survey is part of a trend survey. The results of the previous survey waves were published in 2010 and 2007 – Flash Eurobarometers No 290 and 219, and the current report presents comparative data between the three waves.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/index_en.htm

This survey was carried out by TNS Political & Social network in the then 27 Member States of the European Union and Croatia between the 26th and 28th of June 2013. Some 25,537 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed via telephone (landline and mobile phone) in their mother tongue on behalf of the European Commission, DG Environment.

The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit).³ A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted by the Institutes within the TNS Political & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and confidence intervals.⁴

Note: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

ABBREVIATIONS

BE	Belgium	LT	Lithuania
BG	Bulgaria	LU	Luxembourg
CZ	Czech Republic	HU	Hungary
DK	Denmark	MT	Malta
DE	Germany	NL	The Netherlands
EE	Estonia	AT	Austria
EL	Greece	PL	Poland
ES	Spain	PT	Portugal
FR	France	RO	Romania
IE	Ireland	SI	Slovenia
IT	Italy	SK	Slovakia
CY	Republic of Cyprus*	FI	Finland
LV	Latvia	SE	Sweden
		UK	The United Kingdom
HR	Croatia		
		EU27	European Union – 27 Member States

* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the 'acquis communautaire' has been suspended in the part of the country which is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the 'CY' category and in the EU27 average.

* * * * *

We wish to thank the people throughout Europe who have given their time to take part in this survey. Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

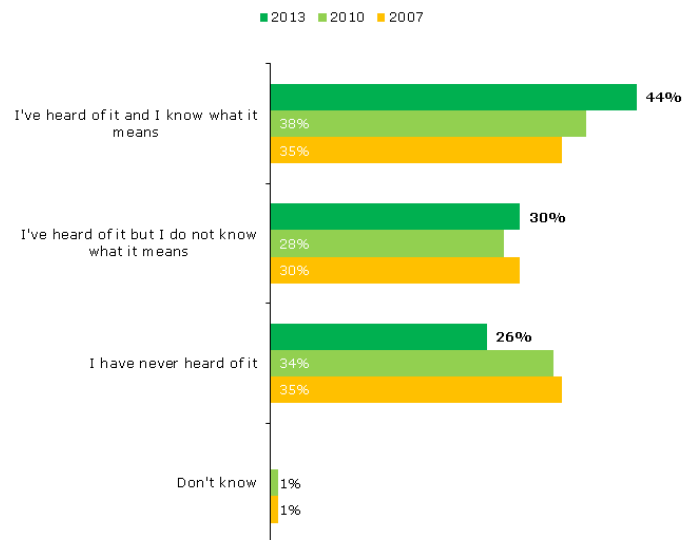
⁴ The results tables are included in the annex. It should be noted that the total of the percentages in the tables of this report may exceed 100% when the respondent has the possibility of giving several answers to the question.

I. WHAT IS "BIODIVERSITY LOSS"?

Familiarity with the term "biodiversity" has increased in 18 Member States compared with the previous survey in 2010.

Across the EU, slightly less than half of Europeans have heard of the term "biodiversity" and know what it means (44%). Three in ten have heard of it but don't know what it means (30%) and slightly more than a quarter have never heard of it (26%).

Familiarity with the term 'biodiversity', 2007-2013

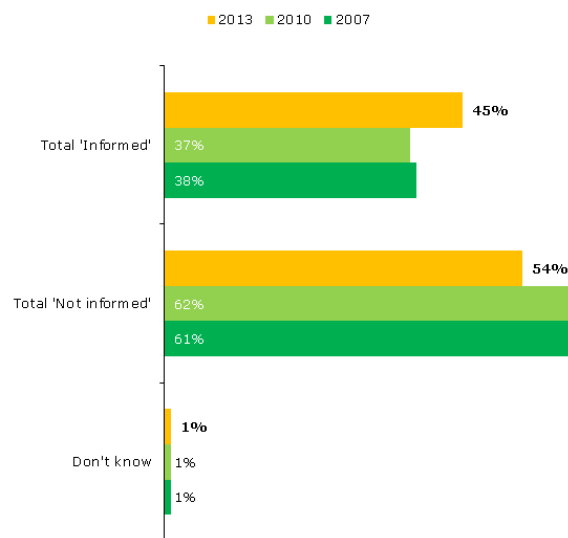


Q1. Have you ever heard of the term 'biodiversity'?
Base: all respondents; % EU27

Europeans are fairly evenly split on how informed they are about biodiversity loss. Slightly less than half of them feel informed (45%) and slightly more than half feel that they are not informed (54%).

This represents an increase in the proportion of citizens who feel informed across the EU compared with previous surveys. The proportion of respondents who say that they feel informed has increased by eight percentage points since 2010 and the proportion who feel that they are not informed has fallen by the same amount.

Being informed about biodiversity loss



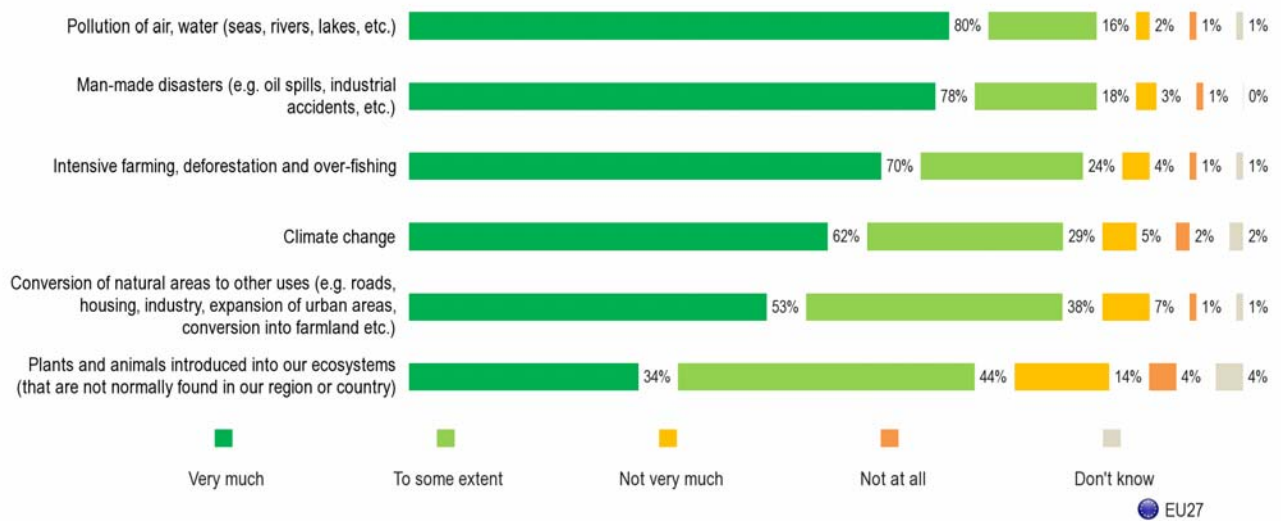
Q2. How informed do you feel about the loss of biodiversity?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

II. THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY

Across the EU, more than nine in ten respondents think that pollution of air and water (96%), man-made disasters (96%), intensive farming, deforestation and over-fishing (94%), climate change (91%) and conversion of natural areas to other uses (91%) threaten diversity at least to some extent.

Slightly fewer Europeans think that plants and animals introduced into our ecosystems threaten biodiversity (78%).

Q7. For each of the aspects from the following list, please tell me if you think it threatens biodiversity...

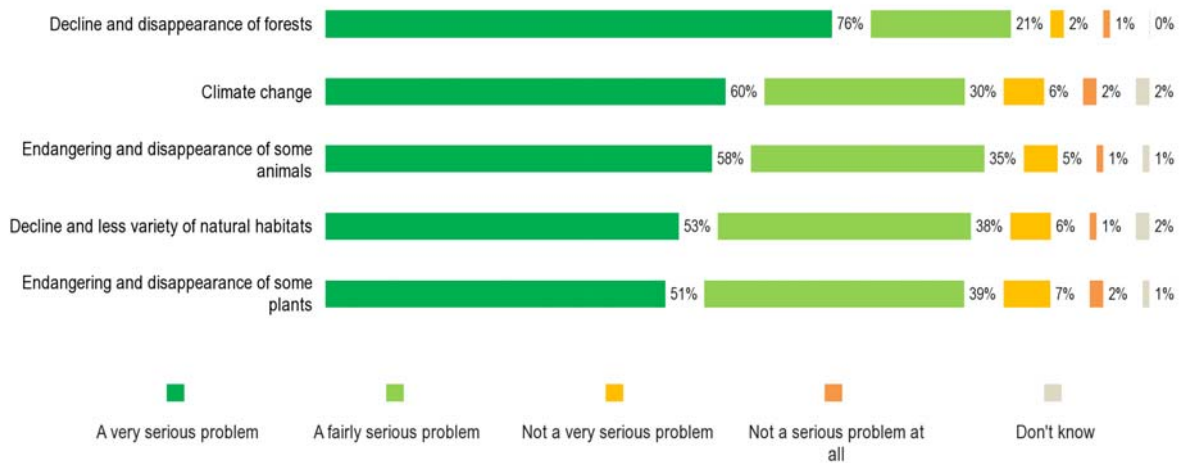


III. THE SERIOUSNESS OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Nine in ten Europeans believe that the decline of forests, climate change, the endangering and disappearance of animals, the decline of natural habitats and the endangering of some plants are all serious problems.

Respondents were asked how serious a problem they consider different aspects of biodiversity loss to be. At least nine out of ten believe that the decline and disappearance of forests (97%), climate change (90%), the endangering and disappearance of some animals (93%), the decline and loss of variety of natural habitats (91%) and the endangering and disappearance of some plants (90%) are all serious problems.

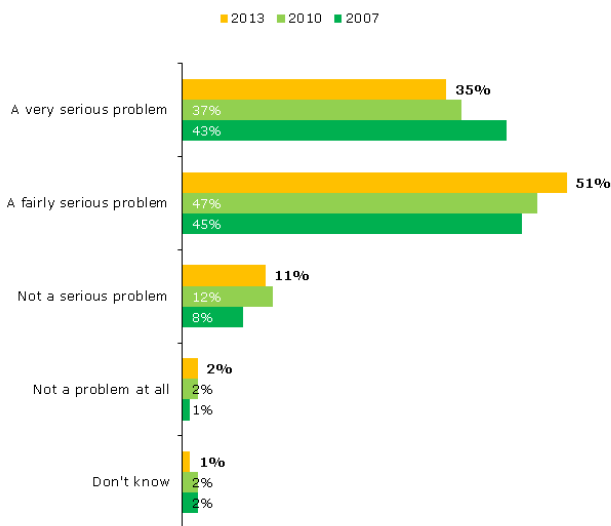
Q3. For each of the following effects of biodiversity loss, can you tell me if it is in your opinion...



EU27

The proportion of Europeans who believe that biodiversity loss in their home country is a very serious problem has declined compared with previous surveys. Currently, around a third of respondents believe biodiversity loss is a very serious problem in their own country (35%), down from 2010 (37%) and 2007 (43%).

Seriousness of biodiversity loss in respondents' country

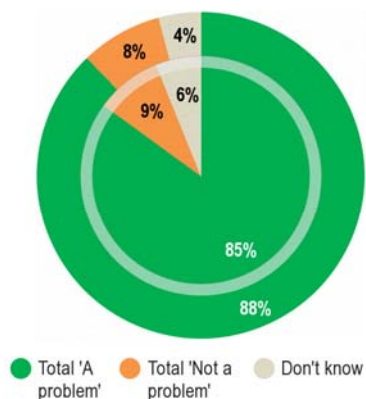


Q5. In your opinion, how serious is the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems? It is...
Base: all respondents, % EU27

In this survey, roughly nine in ten respondents (88%) believe that the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems in Europe is a problem. This represents a three percentage point increase over the previous survey in 2010 (85%).

Q5.2. In your opinion, how serious is the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems? It is...

In Europe

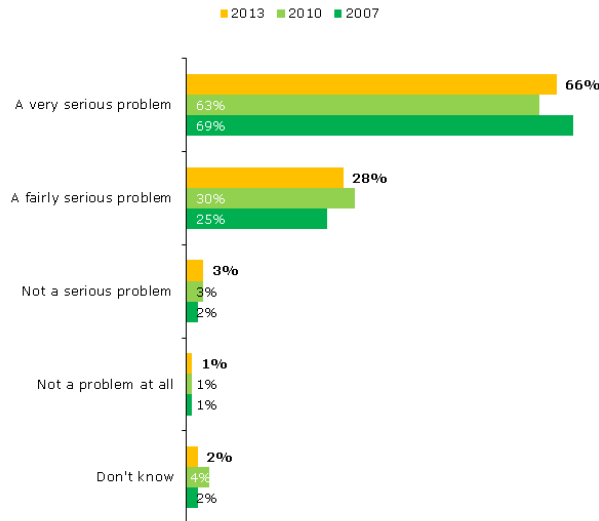


Inner pie : FL290 Feb. 2010
Outer pie : FL379 June 2013

EU27

Two thirds of Europeans think that biodiversity loss at a global level is a very serious problem (66%), while three in ten believe that it is a fairly serious problem (28%). Just 3% of Europeans think that it is not a serious problem and only 1% believe that it is not a problem at all.

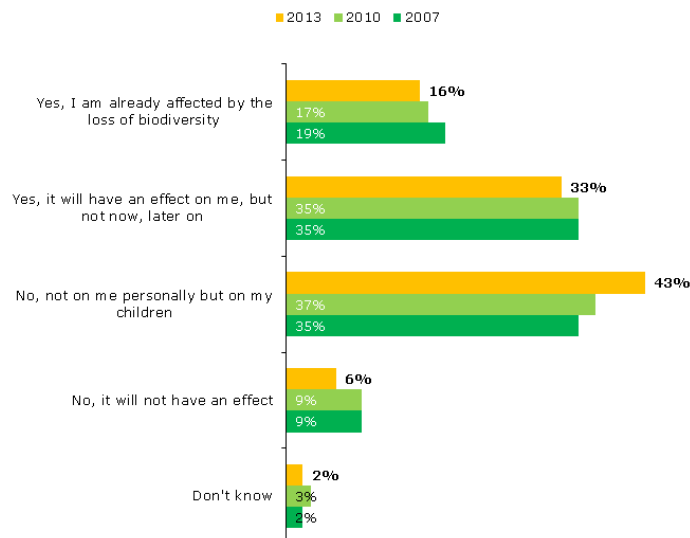
Seriousness of biodiversity loss at a global level



Q5. In your opinion, how serious is the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems? It is...
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Europeans generally think that biodiversity will have an impact on them or their children, but only a minority think that it is already affecting them. Fewer than one in five respondents say that they are already affected by loss of biodiversity (16%).

Impact of biodiversity loss



Q6. Do you think that the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, will have an impact on you personally?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

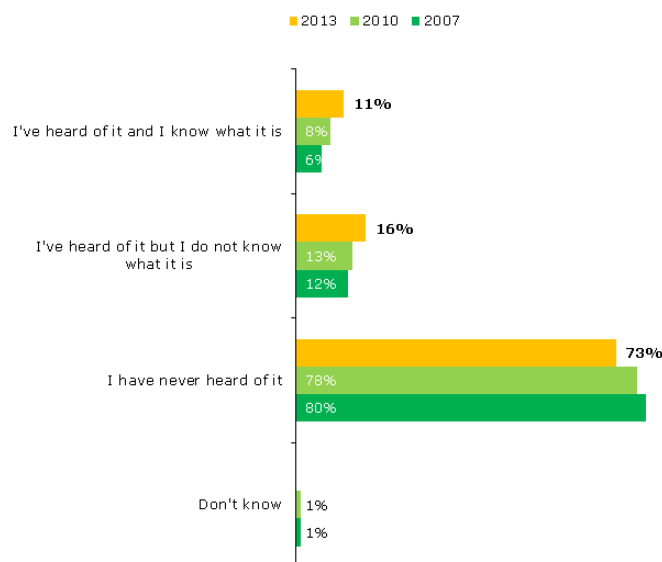
IV. NATURA 2000 AND KEY ROLES OF NATURE PROTECTION AREAS

Despite the centrality of Natura 2000 to EU biodiversity policy, awareness of the Natura 2000 network is relatively low in Europe. Around three quarters of respondents have never heard of it (73%), although this represents a slight improvement over previous survey waves. Eight in ten respondents had not heard of the Natura 2000 network in 2010 (78%) or in 2007 (80%).

Only one in ten respondents (11%) has heard of the Natura 2000 network and knows what it is, a slight increase over the surveys in 2010 (8%) and 2007 (6%).

Fewer than one in five respondents (16%) has heard of Natura 2000 but does not know what it is. Again, this is a slight increase over 2010 (13%) and 2007 (12%).

Awareness of the Natura 2000 network, 2007-2013

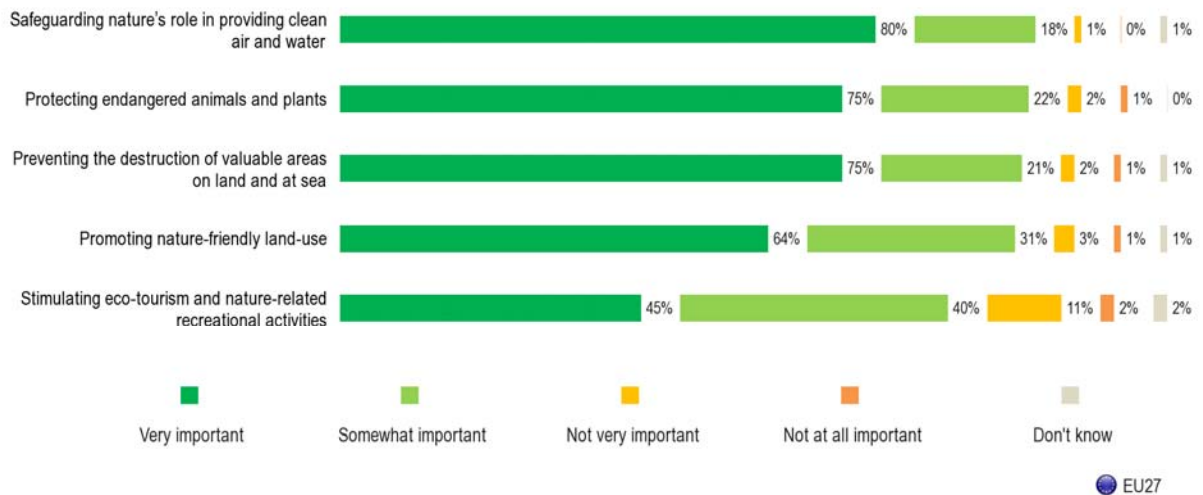


Q9. Have you heard of the Natura 2000 network?
Base: all respondents, % by country

The belief that nature protection areas such as Natura 2000 have an important part to play in helping to provide clean air and water is nearly universal in Europe (98%), and almost all Europeans believe that protecting endangered animals and plants (97%) and preventing the destruction of valuable areas on land and at sea (96%) are important roles of nature protection areas.

A significant majority of respondents in all EU countries believe that the role of nature protection areas in preventing the destruction of valuable areas on land and at sea is important (ranging from 99% to 83%).

Q10. Natura 2000 is a network of more than 26 000 nature protection areas all over the EU. How important do you think the following roles of such nature protection areas are?

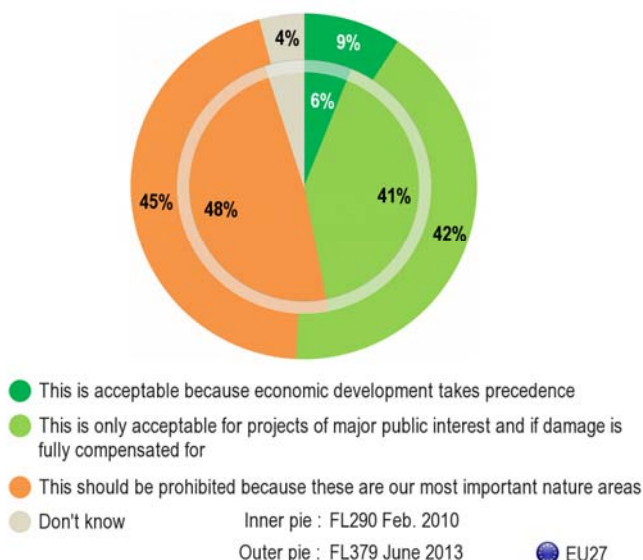


Slightly less than half of Europeans (45%) believe that it should be prohibited for economic development to result in damage or destruction of nature protection areas because these are our most important nature areas. There has been a three percentage point decrease in the proportion of Europeans who hold this view compared with the previous survey in 2010 (48%).

Four in ten Europeans believe that it is only acceptable for economic development to result in damage or destruction of nature protection areas if the projects are of major public interest and if the damage is compensated for (42%), a one percentage point increase since 2010 (41%).

Around one in ten Europeans (9%) believe that it is acceptable for economic development to result in damage or destruction of nature protection areas because economic development takes precedence, a three percentage point increase since 2010 (6%).

Q11. Sometimes economic development results in damage or destruction of nature protection areas, such as Natura 2000. Which of the following statements come closest to your opinion?



V. RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

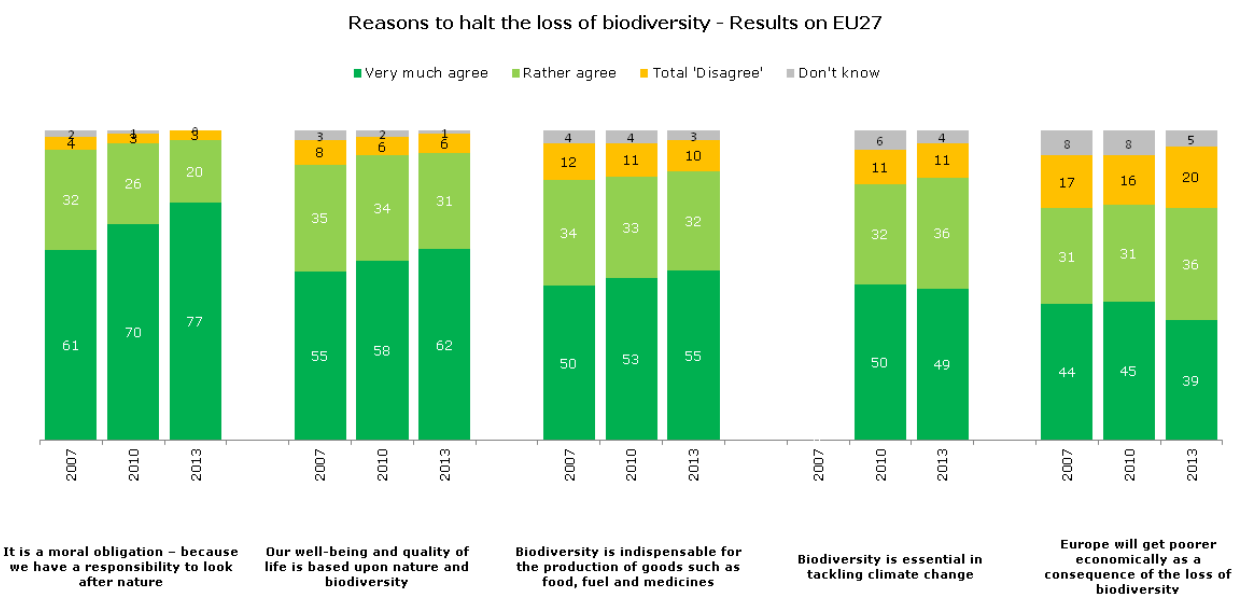
Nearly all Europeans agree (97%), and three quarters very much agree (77%), that it is important to halt biodiversity loss because it is a moral obligation.

Nine out of ten Europeans agree (93%), and six out of ten very much agree (62%), that it is important to halt biodiversity loss because our well-being and quality of life is based upon nature and biodiversity.

More than eight out of ten Europeans agree (87%), and a majority very much agree (55%), that it is important to halt biodiversity loss because biodiversity is indispensable for the production of goods such as food, fuel and medicines.

Over eight in ten Europeans agree (85%), and nearly half very much agree (49%), that biodiversity is essential in tackling climate change.

While three quarters of Europeans agree (75%) that it is important to halt biodiversity loss because Europe will get poorer economically due to the loss of biodiversity, the proportion of respondents who very much agree with this statement (39%) is smaller than for any other reason.



Q4. I will read some statements to you about why it might be important to halt the loss of biodiversity. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with them:

Base: all respondents, % EU27

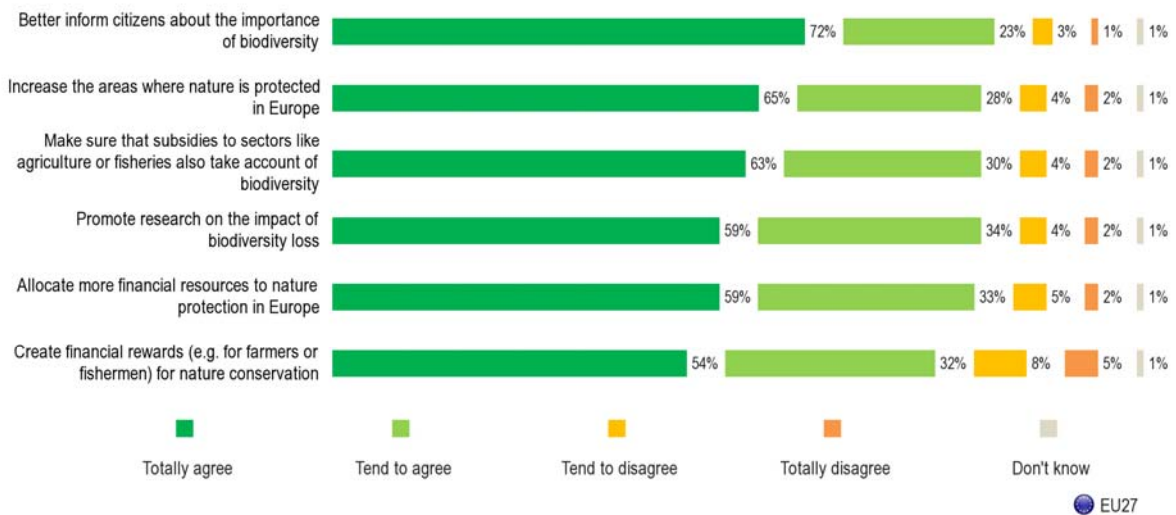
Roughly three quarters of Europeans totally agree that the EU should better inform citizens about the importance of biodiversity (72%).

Approximately two thirds of Europeans totally agree that the EU should increase the areas where nature is protected in Europe (65%).

Around six in ten Europeans totally agree that the EU should ensure that subsidies to sectors like agriculture and fisheries also take account of biodiversity (63%), that the EU should promote research on the impact of biodiversity loss (59%), or that the EU should allocate more financial resources to nature protection in Europe (59%).

More than half of Europeans (54%) also totally agree that the EU should create financial rewards for farmers or fishermen for nature conservation.

Q8. In order to protect biodiversity please tell me if you agree or disagree that the EU should take each of the following measures...



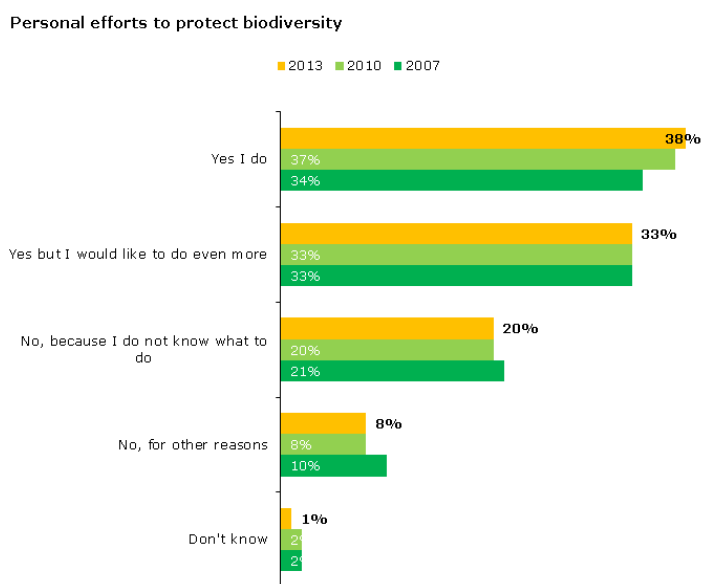
Roughly four in ten respondents (38%) say that they make a personal effort to protect biodiversity, a proportion that has increased slightly compared with 2010 (37%) and 2007 (34%).

The proportion of respondents who say that they make a personal effort to protect biodiversity, but that they would like to do even more, has remained stable across all three survey waves (33%).

One in five respondents (20%) say that they do not make a personal effort to protect biodiversity because they do not know what to do. The proportion of respondents with this opinion has remained stable compared with 2010 (20%) and has decreased by one percentage point compared with 2007 (21%).

Fewer than one in ten respondents (8%) say that they do not make a personal effort to protect biodiversity for reasons other than being uninformed about what actions to take. This proportion has remained stable compared with 2010 (8%) and has decreased by two percentage points compared with 2007 (10%).

Taking these results together, more than half of respondents would like to be doing more to protect biodiversity (53%), either because they want to do more or because they do not currently know what to do to protect biodiversity. This shows that many Europeans would potentially be willing to do more to protect biodiversity if given the opportunity.

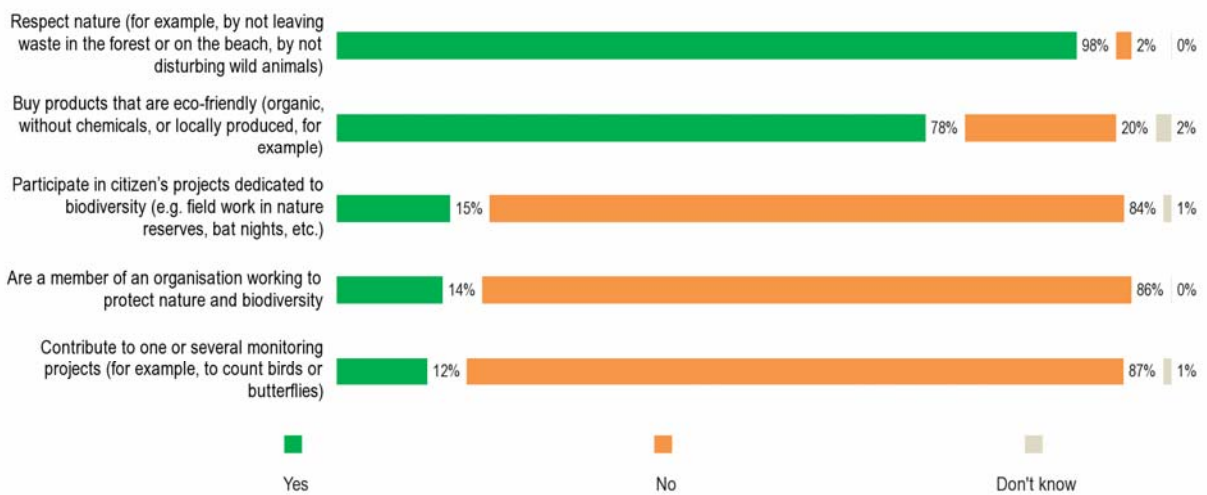


Q12. Would you say that you personally make an effort to protect biodiversity?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Almost all Europeans (98%) say that they respect nature by, for example, not leaving waste on the forest or on the beach. This was by far the most common action that Europeans take personally to protect against biodiversity loss.

Roughly eight in ten Europeans (78%) say that they buy eco-friendly products, such as those that are organic or locally produced. Fewer than one in five Europeans (15%) participate in citizens' projects dedicated to biodiversity, such as fieldwork in nature reserves. A similar proportion (14%) are members of citizens' organisations dedicated to biodiversity, while 12% say they contribute to one or several monitoring projects, such as projects that count birds or butterflies.

Q13. For each of the following , please tell me whether or not you do it?



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

FLASH EUROBAROMETER 379

"Attitudes towards biodiversity"

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 26th and 28th of June 2013, TNS Political & Social, a consortium created between TNS political & social, TNS UK and TNS opinion, carried out the survey FLASH EUROBAROMETER 379 about "Attitudes towards biodiversity".

This survey has been requested by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Environment. It is a general public survey co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit). The FLASH EUROBAROMETER 379 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 27 Member States and Croatia and aged 15 years and over. All interviews were carried using the TNS e-Call center (our centralized CATI system). In every country respondents were called both on fixed lines and mobile phones. The basic sample design applied in all states is multi-stage random (probability). In each household, the respondent was drawn at random following the "last birthday rule".

TNS has developed its own RDD sample generation capabilities based on using contact telephone numbers from responders to random probability or random location face to face surveys, such as Eurobarometer, as seed numbers. The approach works because the seed number identifies a working block of telephone numbers and reduces the volume of numbers generated that will be ineffective. The seed numbers are stratified by NUTS2 region and urbanisation to approximate a geographically representative sample. From each seed number the required sample of numbers are generated by randomly replacing the last two digits. The sample is then screened against business databases in order to exclude as many of these numbers as possible before going into field. This approach is consistent across all countries.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Statistical Margins due to the sampling process (at the 95% level of confidence)											
<i>various sample sizes are in rows</i>						<i>various observed results are in columns</i>					
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
N=1000	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,5	2,7	2,8	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,1	N=1000
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	

ABBR.	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15+
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	8.939.546
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.001	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	6.537.510
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa s.r.o	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	9.012.443
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup A/S	1.001	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	4.561.264
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	64.336.389
EE	Estonia	TNS Emor	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	945.733
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.001	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	8.693.566
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia S.A	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	39.127.930
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.002	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	47.756.439
IE	Ireland	IMS Millward Brown	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	3.522.000
IT	Italy	TNS ITALIA	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	51.862.391
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	CYMAR	501	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	660.400
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	1.447.866
LT	Lithuania	TNS LT	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	2.829.740
LU	Luxembourg	TNS Dimarso	502	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	404.907
HU	Hungary	TNS Hoffmann Kft	1.006	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	8.320.614
MT	Malta	MISCO International Ltd	500	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	335.476
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.005	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	13.371.980
AT	Austria	TNS Austria	1.001	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	7.009.827
PL	Poland	TNS Polska	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	32.413.735
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	8.080.915
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.007	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	18.246.731
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.003	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	1.759.701
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA Slovakia	1.001	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	4.549.956
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.003	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	4.440.004
SE	Sweden	TNS SIFO	1.000	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	7.791.240
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.003	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	51.848.010
TOTAL EU27			25.537	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	408,806,313
HR	Croatia	HENDAL	1.011	26/06/2013	28/06/2013	3.749.400
TOTAL			26.555	16/09/2013	18/09/2013	412.555.713