

Europeans' attitudes towards the issue of sustainable consumption and production

Summary

Fieldwork: April 2009

Publication: July 2009

This survey was requested by the Directorate-General for the Environment and coordinated 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 EB Series #256

Europeans' attitudes towards the issue of sustainable consumption and production

Conducted by
The Gallup Organisation, Hungary
at the request of the Directorate-General for the
Environment



EUROBAROMETER

Survey 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.

THE GALLUP ORGANISATION

Contents

Introduction	4
Main findings	5
1. Influence of environmental impact on consumption habits.....	7
1.1 Actions with the greatest impact on solving environmental problems.....	7
1.2 The environmental impact of products bought or used	8
1.2.1 Awareness about the environmental impact of products bought or used.....	8
1.2.2 Environmental impact as a deciding factor when buying products	8
1.3 Buying energy-efficient products.....	9
2. Ecolabelling – general perceptions.....	11
2.1 Importance of ecolabelling in purchasing decisions	11
2.2 Information provided on environmental labels	12
2.3 Support for mandatory carbon footprint labels	12
3. The EU Ecolabel	13
4. Claims by producers and companies on environmental performance	14
4.1 Claims by producers about the environmental performance of their products	14
4.2 Companies’ environmental and social performance reporting.....	14
5. A voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for retailers.....	16
6. Promotion of environmentally-friendly products.....	17
6.1 Retailers’ role in promoting environmentally-friendly products.....	17
6.2 Taxation to promote environmentally-friendly products	17

Introduction

Sustainable development is a key objective of the European Union which aims to continually improve the quality of life and well-being for present and future generations. The action plan on *sustainable consumption and production* and *sustainable industrial policy* presented by the Commission in July 2008¹ are important in driving forward this objective.

The Flash Eurobarometer “*Europeans’ attitudes towards the issue of sustainable consumption and production*” (Flash N° 256) was conducted in order to examine EU citizens’ knowledge and levels of concern about sustainable consumption and production. In detail, the survey examined:

- citizens’ awareness of the environmental impact of products bought or used
- environmental impact and energy efficiency as deciding factors when buying products
- the importance of ecolabelling in purchasing decisions
- citizens’ preference for the information provided on environmental labels – including a product’s carbon footprint
- citizens’ awareness of the EU Ecolabel and its *Flower* logo
- the trust in the claims made by producers about the environmental performance of their products and trust in companies’ environmental and social performance reporting
- citizens’ support for a voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for retailers
- the preferred ways of promoting environmentally-friendly products – the retailers’ role and taxation systems.

The fieldwork for this Flash Eurobarometer was conducted between 21 and 25 April 2009. Over 26,500 randomly-selected citizens, aged 15 and over, were interviewed in the 27 EU Member States and Croatia. The interviews were predominantly carried out via fixed-line telephone, reaching approximately 1,000 EU citizens in each country (in Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta the targeted size was 500). Parts of the interviews in Austria, Finland, Italy, Portugal and Spain were conducted over mobile telephones. Due to the relatively low fixed-line telephone coverage in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, 300 individuals were sampled and interviewed on a face-to-face basis.

To correct for sampling disparities, a post-stratification weighting of the results was implemented, based on key socio-demographic variables.

¹ Ibid.

Main findings

Influence of environmental impact on consumption habits

- EU citizens were most likely to select minimising waste and recycling as the actions having the greatest impact on solving environmental problems (selected by 30%); they were somewhat less likely to believe that buying products produced by eco-friendly methods or energy-efficient home appliances would have the greatest impact (selected by 21% and 19%, respectively).
- A slim majority (55%) of EU citizens claimed that when buying or using products they are – generally – fully aware or know about the most significant impacts of these products on the environment. In Cyprus, Lithuania and Bulgaria, however, around 6 in 10 respondents said they know little or nothing about such impacts.
- Slightly more than 8 in 10 EU citizens felt that a product’s impact on the environment is an important element when deciding which products to buy (34% “very important” and 49% “rather important”); only 4% said this is not important at all.
- Although a large majority of respondents in all EU Member States and Croatia said that a product’s impact on the environment is important in their purchasing decisions, in only three Member States did more than half say that this aspect is very important: Greece (58%), Cyprus (57%) and Italy (54%).
- Almost 6 in 10 interviewees rated environmental impact as more important than a product’s brand name in terms of influencing their product purchasing decisions. Nevertheless, only a minority rated environmental impact as more important than a product’s quality or price (7% and 19%, respectively).
- A large majority of respondents in all countries in this study said they often, or always, take energy-efficiency into consideration when buying products that use electricity or fuel – ranging from 59% in Cyprus to 85% in Germany.

Ecolabelling – general perceptions

- Almost half of EU citizens said that ecolabelling plays an important role in their purchasing decisions; the proportion saying this is important ranged from 22% in the Czech Republic to 64% in Greece.
- EU citizens were the most likely to say that the most important information on environmental labels is whether it is possible to recycle or reuse a product. Information about the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions released by a product – i.e. the carbon footprint – was considered to be the least important (selected by 10%, compared to 38% for “recycle and reuse”).
- Support for introducing a mandatory label indicating a product’s carbon footprint ranged from 47% in the Czech Republic – the only country where less than half of respondents were in favour of such labelling – to 9 in 10 respondents in Croatia and Greece.

The EU Ecolabel

- Almost 4 in 10 EU citizens in the survey had seen the EU Ecolabel, or had heard about it; nevertheless, only roughly a fifth (19%) said they have also bought products bearing the label.
- Awareness of the EU Ecolabel was the highest in Lithuania, Denmark and Estonia (between 49% and 51%) and the lowest in the UK, Italy and Sweden (between 26% and 31%).

Producers' and companies' claims about environmental performance

- EU citizens were divided in their opinions as to whether they trust producers' claims about the environmental performance of their own products: 49% said they trust such claims and 48% did not trust them.
- Respondents in the Netherlands and Bulgaria stood out from the pack with, respectively, the highest and lowest proportions saying they trust producers' claims about the environmental performance of their products (78% in the Netherlands vs. 26% in Bulgaria).
- While 3 in 10 EU citizens said they trust companies' own environmental and social performance reporting, a considerably higher proportion (47%) said they do not trust companies' reports on this topic.
- Trust in companies' environmental and social performance reporting was the highest in Portugal and Malta (52% and 47%, respectively), but was – once again – lowest in Bulgaria (13%). Polish interviewees most frequently said that companies' reports on their environmental and social performance are of no interest to them (42% compared to an EU average of 19%).

A voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for retailers

- Four out of 10 EU citizens agreed that it is a good idea to develop a voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for EU retailers. A similar proportion, nevertheless, thought that binding legislations would be more effective.
- Only a minority of respondents in all EU Member States – and Croatia – thought that a voluntary environmental “code of conduct” is not needed as retailers already do a lot for the environment (ranging from 3% in Bulgaria to 17% in Finland).

Promotion of environmentally-friendly products

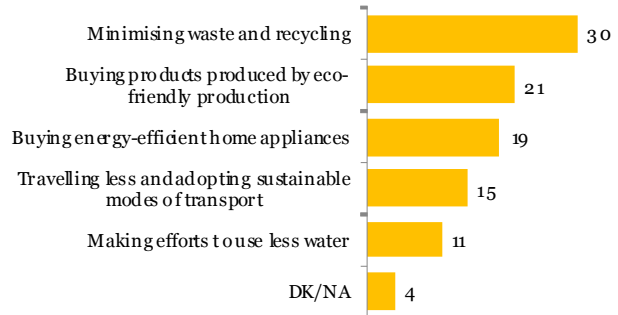
- Around 3 in 10 EU citizens answered that the best way for retailers to promote environmentally-friendly products is to provide better information to consumers.
- Roughly half of EU citizens thought that retailers should promote environmentally-friendly products by increasing their visibility on store shelves (selected by 25%) or by having a green corner dedicated to eco-friendly products (24%).
- Unsurprisingly, in all countries in the survey, a taxation system – to promote eco-friendly products – based on reducing taxes for more environmentally-friendly products received more support than a system based on increasing taxes for environmentally-damaging products.
- Nevertheless, in almost half of the countries surveyed, at least half of interviewees answered that the best taxation system to promote environmentally-friendly products would be to reduce taxation for the more environmentally-friendly products, in combination with increasing taxes for environmentally-damaging products; British, Irish and Slovene respondents were the most likely to select this response (65%, 59% and 58%, respectively).
- Only 4% of EU citizens spontaneously said that introducing a taxation system to promote eco-friendly products is not a good idea.

1. Influence of environmental impact on consumption habits

1.1 Actions with the greatest impact on solving environmental problems

EU citizens were most likely to select minimising waste and recycling as the actions having the greatest impact on solving environmental problems (selected by 30%); they were somewhat less likely to believe that buying products produced by eco-friendly methods or energy-efficient home appliances would have the greatest impact (selected by 21% and 19%, respectively).

Actions with the greatest impact on solving environmental problems



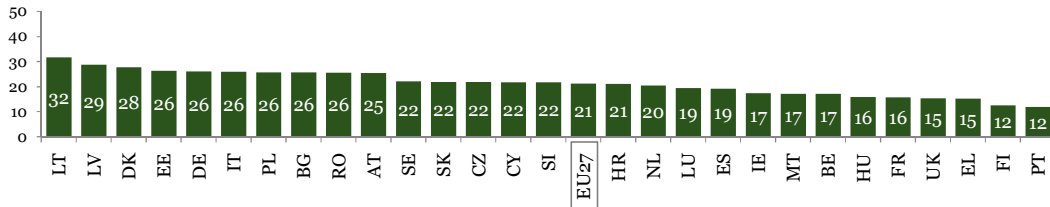
Q8. In your opinion, which one of the following actions would have the highest impact on solving environmental problems?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Only 15% of interviewees answered that adopting sustainable modes of transport and travelling less frequently are the most important actions to solve environmental problems and 11% mentioned making efforts to use less water as the action with the greatest impact.

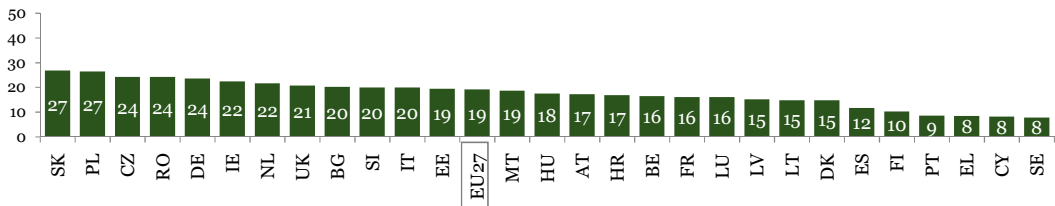
While roughly a third (32%) of Lithuanians and almost 3 in 10 Latvians (29%) and Danes (28%) thought that **buying products manufactured with eco-friendly methods** would have the greatest impact on solving environmental problems; only slightly more than a tenth of Portuguese and Finnish respondents shared this opinion (both 12%)².

The proportion of respondents who believed that **buying energy-efficient home appliances** would have the greatest impact ranged from less than a tenth in Sweden, Cyprus, Greece and Portugal (8%-9%) to slightly more than a quarter in Slovakia and Poland (both 27%).

Actions with the greatest impact on solving environmental problems:
Buying products produced by eco-friendly production



Buying energy-efficient home appliances



Q8. In your opinion, which one of the following actions would have the highest impact on solving environmental problems?
Base: all respondents, % by country

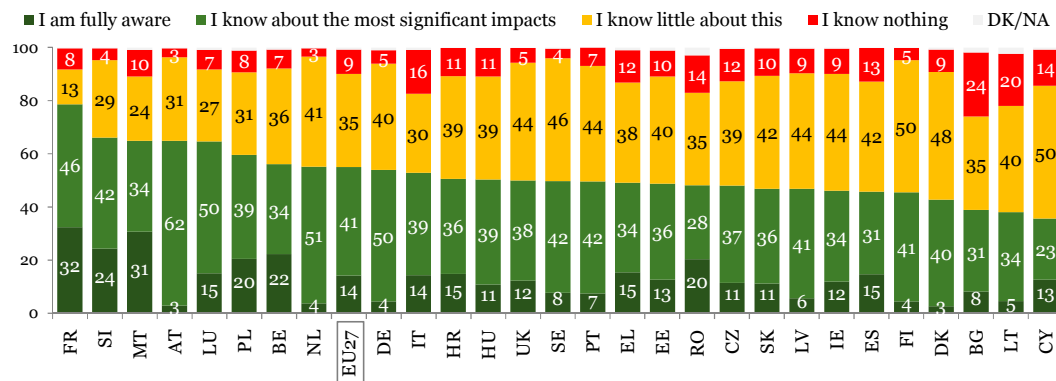
² Country charts in this report show the results for each of the 27 EU Member States and for the candidate country Croatia. The “EU27” results present the average result for the 27 EU Member States (without Croatia) – taking into account differences in population size across the individual Member States.

1.2 The environmental impact of products bought or used

1.2.1 Awareness about the environmental impact of products bought or used

A slim majority (55%) of EU citizens claimed that, when buying or using products, they are – generally – *fully aware* or *know about the most significant impacts* of these products on the environment. In Cyprus, Lithuania and Bulgaria, however, around 6 in 10 respondents said they know *little* – or *nothing* – about such impacts (64%, 60% and 59%, respectively).

Awareness about the environmental impact of products bought or used



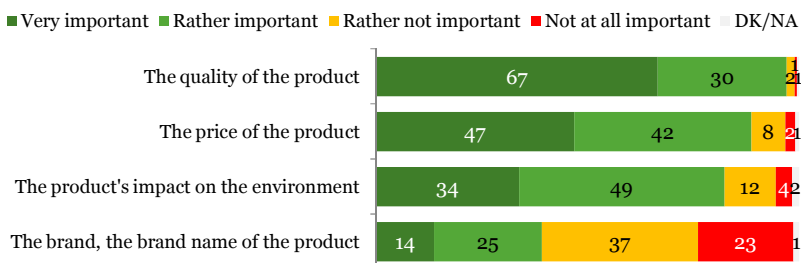
Q1. In general, how much do you know about the environmental impact of the products you buy and use?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Older respondents, those with higher levels of education, self-employed respondents, employees and city dwellers more frequently said they are generally aware of the impact on the environment of the products they buy or use. For example, two-thirds of those with the highest level of education said they are *at least* aware of the most significant environmental impacts of the products they buy or use, compared to only 41% of respondents with the lowest level of education.

1.2.2 Environmental impact as a deciding factor when buying products

Slightly more than 8 in 10 EU citizens answered that a product's impact on the environment is an important element when deciding which products to buy (49% "rather important" and 34% "very important"); only 4% said this is *not important at all*.

Importance of various aspects of products when deciding which ones to buy



Q2. How important are the following aspects when making a decision on which products to buy? Very important, rather important, rather not important, not at all important?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

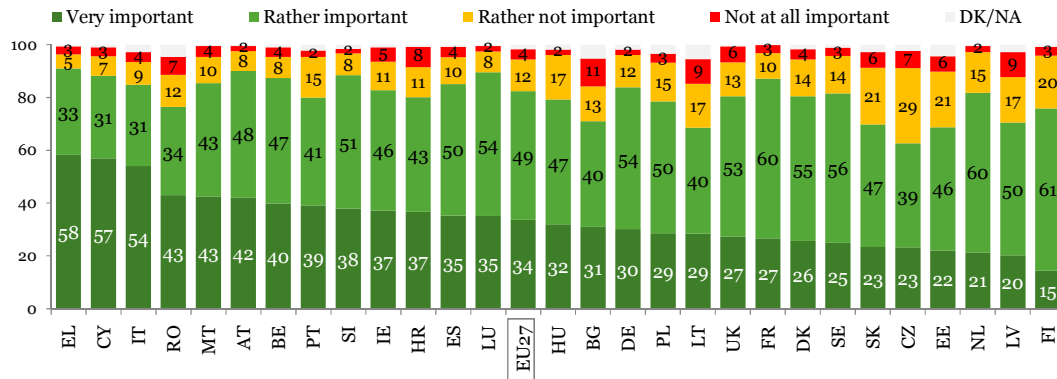
A product's impact on the environment was viewed as more important than the brand, or brand name, of a product: only 39% of EU citizens answered that a product's brand name is an important element when making buying decisions (25% "rather important" and 14% "very important").

The environmental impact, nevertheless, appeared to be somewhat less important than a product's quality or price: virtually all respondents said that that quality is an important element when buying

something and 89% said the same about the price of a product. Furthermore, two-thirds answered that the former aspect is *very* important and almost one in two (47%) said the same about the latter.

A large majority of respondents in all EU Member States and Croatia said that a **product’s impact on the environment** is important when making decisions on which products to buy: the proportion of “very” and “rather important” responses ranged from 62% in the Czech Republic to 91% in Greece. Nevertheless, in only three Member States did more than half of respondents say that this aspect is *very* important in their purchasing decisions: Greece (58%), Cyprus (57%) and Italy (54%).

Importance of a product’s impact on the environment



Q2. How important are the following aspects when making a decision on what products to buy? Very important, rather important, rather not important, not at all important? Base: all respondents, % by country

A product’s environmental impact was perceived as being more important in purchasing decisions by respondents who are generally more aware of the impact on the environment of products they buy or use. For example, while 55% of respondents who are *fully aware* of the environmental impact of the products they buy or use also said that this aspect is also *very* important in their purchasing decisions, this proportion decreased to 27% for those admitting knowing *nothing* about the impact on the environment of the products they buy and use.

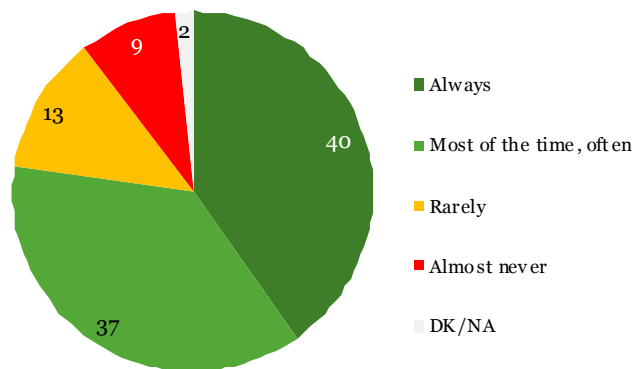
Women, older respondents, those with the lowest levels of education and self-employed respondents appeared to be more likely than EU citizens on average to state that a product’s impact on the environment is a *very* important element when deciding which products to buy: for example, while 42% of over 54 year-olds said that a product’s environmental impact is *very* important, this proportion decreased to 24% for 15-24 year-olds. The differences in the perceived importance, nevertheless, diminished when looking at the sum of “very” and “rather important” responses.

1.3 Buying energy-efficient products

A large majority of respondents in all countries in this study said they often, or always, take energy-efficiency into consideration when buying products that use electricity or fuel – ranging from 59% in Cyprus to 85% in Germany.

Only slightly more than a fifth of EU citizens said they *almost never* or only *rarely* take energy efficiency into account when buying products that use fuel or electricity (9% “almost never” and 13% “rarely”). In Cyprus, Bulgaria, Greece and

Impact of energy efficiency on purchasing decisions



Q12. When buying products that use electricity (like TVs or computers) or fuel (boilers, cars), do you take into account how energy efficient they are? Base: all respondents, % EU27

Latvia, on the other hand, at least twice as many respondents *rarely*, or *almost never*, consider energy efficiency when making purchasing decisions.

The impact of energy efficiency on purchasing decisions is larger for respondents who are generally more aware of the environmental impact of the products they buy or use. The attention paid to energy efficiency also increased with age, educational level and the occupational status of respondents. A quarter of respondents with the lowest level of education said they *rarely* or *almost never* consider energy efficiency when making purchasing decisions. This proportion decreased to 15% for those with the highest level of education.

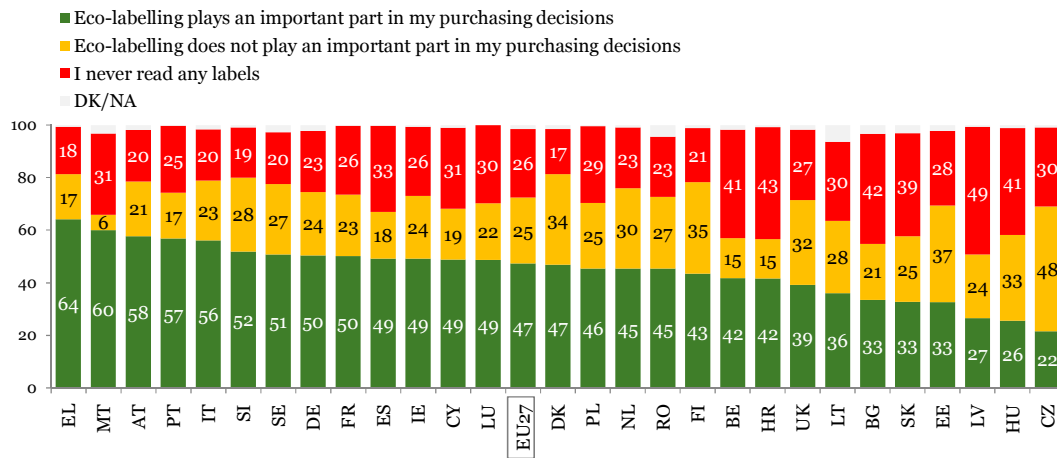
2. Ecolabelling – general perceptions

2.1 Importance of ecolabelling in purchasing decisions

Almost half of EU citizens said that ecolabelling plays an important role in their purchasing decisions; the proportion saying this is important ranged from 22% in the Czech Republic to 64% in Greece.

A quarter of interviewees answered that ecolabels are not important when making decisions on which products to buy and a similar proportion (26%) said they never pay attention to labels. Czech respondents were the most likely to say that ecolabels are not important in their purchasing decisions (48%), while Latvians were the most likely to say that they do not read labels when making decisions on which products to buy (49%).

Importance of eco-labels in purchasing decisions



Q3. Some products have an eco-label which certifies that they are environmentally-friendly. Which statement characterises you the best?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Ecolabelling was seen to play a more important role in the purchasing decisions of those respondents:

- with a higher level of awareness about the environmental impact of the products they buy or use,
- who said that a product’s environmental impact is important when making purchasing decisions, and/or
- who always, or at least often take energy efficiency into account when making purchasing decisions.

For example, while 57% of respondents who *always* take energy efficiency into account when buying products that use fuel or electricity said that ecolabels are an important aid in their purchasing decisions, this proportion decreased to 23% of those who *almost never* consider energy efficiency.

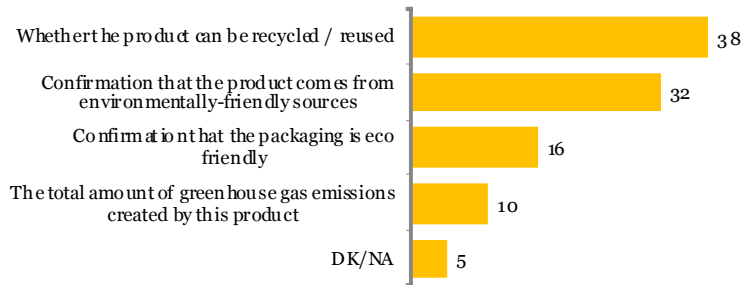
Ecolabelling also plays a more important role in purchasing decisions of women, the over 39 year-olds, those with the highest level of education and the self-employed. For example, while 55% of self-employed respondents said that ecolabels are important when making decisions on which products to buy, only 43% of manual workers shared this opinion.

2.2 Information provided on environmental labels

Almost 4 in 10 EU citizens (38%) thought that whether a product can be recycled or reused is the most important information that an environmental label should contain. The second most important piece of information provided on an environmental label – in the view of EU citizens – is a confirmation that the product comes from environmentally-friendly sources (selected by 32% of respondents).

EU citizens were less likely to think that the most important information on environmental labels is that the packaging is eco-friendly (selected by 16%) or the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions released by the product – i.e. the carbon footprint (10%).

Most important information on environmental labels



Q4. Environmental labels should be concise. From the list I am going to read you what environmental information is the most important that a label should contain?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

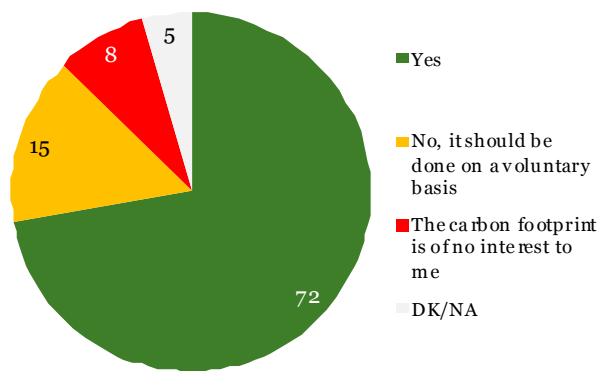
Respondents who pay more attention to ecolabels when making purchasing decisions

were less likely than their counterparts to answer that whether a product could be recycled or reused is the most important information that an environmental label should contain, and they appeared to be more interested in the confirmation that the product comes from eco-friendly sources (37% vs. 29% for those who said that ecolabels are not important and 25% for those who never read labels).

2.3 Support for mandatory carbon footprint labels

Support for introducing a mandatory label indicating a product's carbon footprint ranged from 47% in the Czech Republic – the only country where less than half of respondents were in favour of such labelling – to 9 in 10 respondents in Greece and Croatia.

Should a label indicating a product's carbon footprint be mandatory?



Q5. Should a label indicating the carbon footprint of a product be mandatory in the future?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Finnish respondents were the most likely to prefer a *voluntary* labelling system (36%). Czech respondents, on the other hand, were the most likely to answer that a product's carbon footprint is of no interest to them (22%). In all other countries, not more than one in six respondents selected this response (ranging from 2% in Spain to 17% in Lithuania).

Respondents who said that ecolabels play an important role when making purchasing decisions were more likely than their counterparts to think that a label indicating a product's carbon footprint should be mandatory in the future (82% vs.

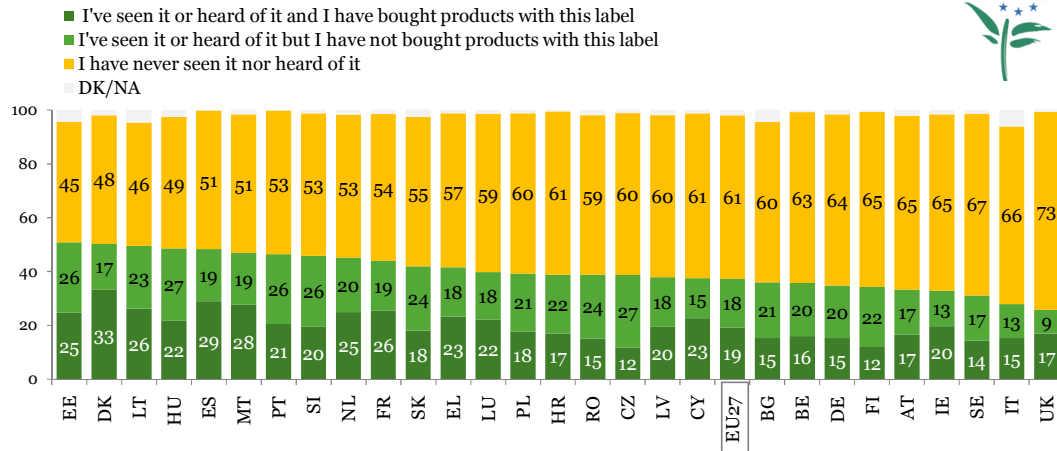
63%-65%). Respondents who said that ecolabelling does not play an important role in their purchasing decisions were the most likely to prefer a *voluntary* labelling system, while those who never read labels most frequently said that a product's carbon footprint does not interest them.

3. The EU Ecolabel

Roughly 6 in 10 (61%) EU citizens, interviewed in the survey, admitted never having seen – or heard of – the EU Ecolabel, with its *Flower* logo. Awareness of the EU Ecolabel was low in most of the individual countries surveyed; in only two countries did roughly half of the interviewees say that they have seen – or heard about – the EU Ecolabel: Estonia (51%) and Denmark (50%).

At least a quarter of respondents in Denmark (33%), Spain (29%), Malta (28%), Lithuania and France (both 26%), the Netherlands and Estonia (both 25%) said they have seen the EU Ecolabel, or have heard about it, and have also bought products bearing the *Flower*. Although Hungary, Portugal and Slovenia were close to the above-mentioned countries in terms of awareness about the EU Ecolabel, respondents in these countries were less likely to have actually bought products bearing the label.

Awareness of the *Flower*, the symbol of the EU Eco-label



Q9. Are you aware of the *Flower*, the symbol of the EU Eco-label?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Respondents with a higher level of awareness about the environmental impact of the products they buy or use and those who pay more attention to a product’s environmental impact, energy efficiency and/or ecolabels when making purchasing decisions were not only more likely than their counterparts to answer that they have seen – or heard about – the EU Ecolabel, but were also the most likely to have actually bought products bearing this label.

Similarly, the 25-54 year-olds, those with the highest level of education, self-employed respondents and employees were more likely than their counterparts to have seen – or heard about – the EU Ecolabel, and to have actually bought products bearing this label. For example, while 23% of both employees and self-employed respondents said they have seen the EU ecolabel, or have heard about it, and have also bought products bearing the *Flower*, this proportion was only 17% for manual workers and non-working respondents.

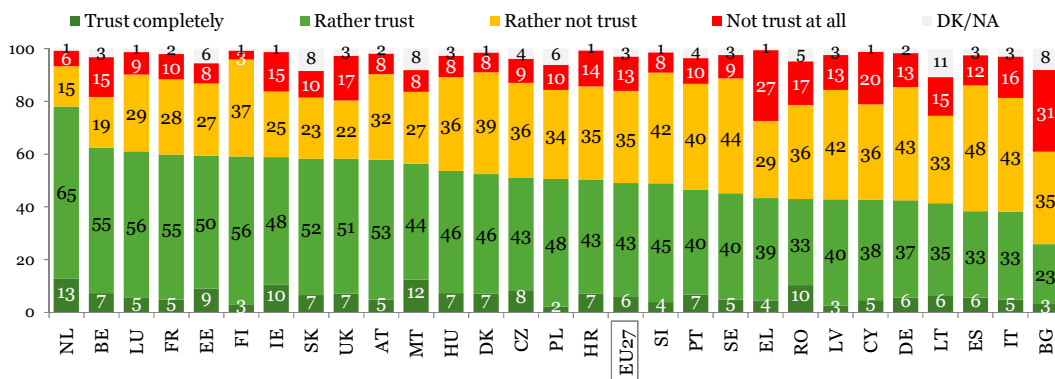
4. Claims by producers and companies about the environmental performance of their products

4.1 Producers' claims about their products' environmental performance

Only a minority of respondents in all EU Member States – and Croatia – said they *completely* trust producers' claims about the environmental performance of their products (ranging from 2% in Poland to 13% in the Netherlands). Nevertheless a majority of respondents in 14 Member States said they *rather* or *completely* trust producers' environmental claims.

Respondents in the Netherlands and Bulgaria stood out from the pack with, respectively, the highest and lowest proportions of respondents saying they *rather* or *completely* trust producers' claims about the environmental performance of their own products (78% in the Netherlands vs. 26% in Bulgaria).

Trust in producers' claims about the environmental performance of their own products



Q10. How much do you trust producers' claims about the environmental performance of their own products?
Base: all respondents, % by country

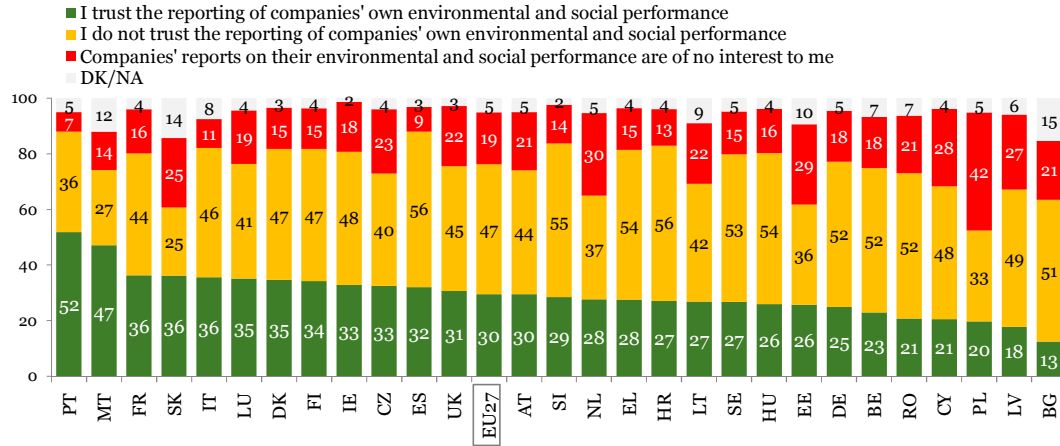
Respondents who said that ecolabelling plays an important role when making decisions on which products to buy and those who have seen – or heard about – the EU Ecolabel were the most likely to say that they trust producers' claims about the environmental performance of their products. Trust in producers' claims about the environmental performance of their products also appeared to increase with the importance attached to a product's environmental impact when making purchasing decisions; this relationship, however, was not linear.

Women, younger respondents (and those still in education), those with higher levels of education, employees and manual workers were also more likely than their counterparts to say they trust producers' environmental claims. For example, a slim majority (52%) of women said they *completely* or *rather* trust producers on this topic while only 46% of men said the same.

4.2 Companies' environmental and social performance reporting

While 3 in 10 EU citizens said they trust companies' own environmental and social performance reporting, a considerably higher proportion (47%) said they do not trust companies' reports on this topic. Roughly a fifth (19%) of interviewees said that companies' reports on their environmental and social performance do not interest them.

Trust in companies’ environmental and social performance reporting



Q11. Which statement best reflects your view on current reporting by companies of their own environmental and social performance:
Base: all respondents, % by country

Trust in companies’ environmental and social performance reporting was the highest in Portugal and Malta (52% and 47%, respectively), but was – once again – lowest in Bulgaria (13%). Polish interviewees most frequently said that companies’ reports on their environmental and social performance are of no interest to them (42% compared to an EU average of 19%).

Trust in companies’ reports on environmental and social performance was the highest among those who pay more attention to ecolabels or a product’s environmental impact when making purchasing decisions and those who have seen – or heard about – the EU Ecolabel. For example, only 26% of those who have never seen – or heard about – the EU Ecolabel said they trust companies’ reports on this topic (and 47% said the opposite), while 40% of those who have bought products bearing the EU label said they trust such reports (and 45% expressed distrust).

Trust (vs. distrust) was also higher among 15-24 year-olds and those still in education. For example, slightly over a third (34%) of the 15-24 year-olds said they trust companies’ reports on this topic, and only 36% said the opposite (i.e. that they do not trust such reports). By comparison, only 26% of over 54 year-olds expressed trust in companies’ reports on environmental and social performance and almost twice as many expressed distrust (49%).

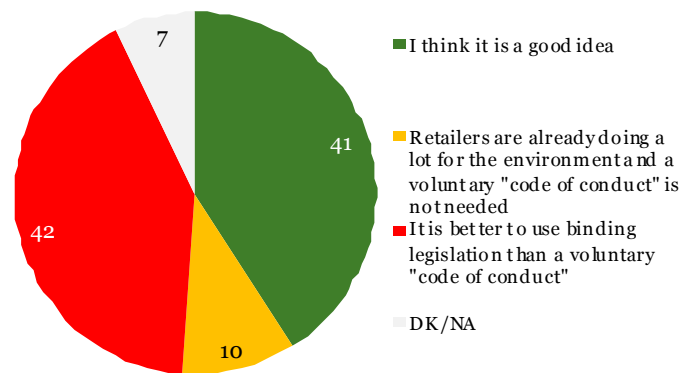
5. A voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for retailers

Roughly 4 in 10 EU citizens agreed that it is a good idea to develop a voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for retailers in the EU – ranging from 21% in Malta to 57% in Romania. A similar proportion, nevertheless, thought that binding legislation would be more effective than a voluntary “code of conduct” – ranging from 31% in Romania to 62% in Malta.

Only a minority of respondents in all individual Member States – and Croatia – thought that a voluntary environmental “code of conduct” is not needed as retailers are already doing a lot for the environment (ranging from 3% in Bulgaria to 17% in Finland).

Women, younger respondents, those still in education and manual workers were the most likely to agree that it is a good idea to develop a voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for EU retailers. For example, around half (49%) of 15-24 year-olds expressed support for a voluntary environmental “code of conduct”, compared to only 38% of the over 54 year-olds. Men, the 40-54 year-olds, respondents with higher levels of education, self-employed respondents, employees and city dwellers, on the other hand, thought that binding legislation would be more effective than a voluntary environmental “code of conduct”.

Opinions about a voluntary environmental “code of conduct” for retailers



Qt3. It has been proposed by the EU that retailers develop a voluntary environmental code of conduct. Which opinion is closer to your view?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

6. Promotion of environmentally-friendly products

6.1 Retailers’ role in promoting environmentally-friendly products

Around 3 in 10 (31%) EU citizens answered that the best way for retailers to promote eco-friendly products is to provide better information to consumers.

Approximately half of EU citizens thought that retailers should promote environmentally-friendly products in their stores: by increasing the

visibility of these products on store shelves (25%) or by having a green corner dedicated to such products (24%). Almost a fifth (18%) of interviewees felt that regular promotions focusing on environmentally-friendly products would be the best way to promote green purchasing.

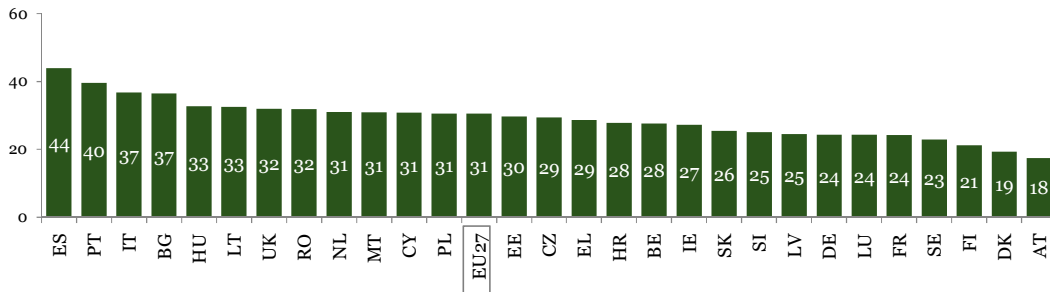
Best way for retailers to promote environmentally-friendly products



Q6. How can retailers best contribute to promoting environmentally-friendly products? Base: all respondents, % EU27

The proportion of respondents saying that **the provision of better information to consumers** is the best way for retailers to promote environmentally-friendly products ranged from less than a fifth in Austria and Denmark (18% and 19%, respectively) to at least 4 in 10 respondents in Portugal and Spain (40% and 44%, respectively).

Best way for retailers to promote environmentally-friendly products:
Provide better information to consumers



Q6. How can retailers best contribute to promoting environmentally friendly products? Base: all respondents, % by country

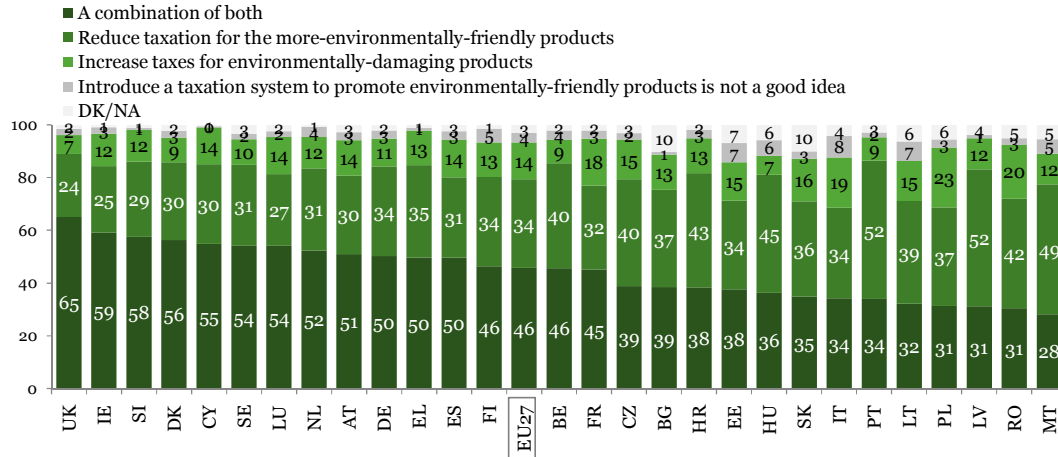
6.2 Taxation to promote environmentally-friendly products

Almost half (46%) of EU citizens thought that any changes in taxation to promote environmentally-friendly products should lead to a reduction of taxes on such products, combined with increasing taxes on environmentally-damaging products. Roughly a third (34%) were more in favour of limiting a change in the taxation system to reducing taxes for the more environmentally-friendly products, while 14% would only increase taxes on environmentally-damaging products.

In almost half of the countries surveyed, at least half of interviewees answered that the best taxation system to promote environmentally-friendly products is to reduce taxation on these products, in combination with increasing taxes for environmentally-damaging products; with British, Irish and Slovene respondents being the most likely to select this response (65%, 59% and 58%, respectively).

Unsurprisingly, in all of the countries surveyed, a taxation system based on *reducing taxes* for the more environmentally-friendly products received more support than a system based on *increasing taxes* for environmentally-damaging products: support for the former ranged from 68%³ in Poland and Italy to 89% in the UK, while support for the latter ranged from 40%⁴ in Malta to 72% in the UK.

Best type of taxation system to promote environmentally-friendly products



Q7. What type of taxation system should public authorities consider using in order to promote environmentally friendly products?

Base: all respondents, % by country

Some socio-demographic groups – women, respondents under 55 years of age, those with higher levels of education, employees, self-employed respondents and metropolitan residents – were more in favour of system that combined a tax decrease for environmentally-friendly products and a tax increase for environmentally-damaging products; their counterparts favoured limiting a change in the taxation system to either reducing taxes for the more environmentally-friendly products or increasing taxes for eco-damaging products – but they did not want to combine these approaches.

³ This figure for Poland is derived from 37% of Poles who wanted to reduce taxes for the more environmentally-friendly products, and 31% who wanted to do this in combination with increasing taxes for environmentally-damaging ones.

⁴ This figure is derived from 12% who wanted to increase taxes for environmentally-damaging products, and 28% who wanted to do this in combination with decreasing taxes for the more environmentally-friendly ones.