

Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment



Results for United Kingdom

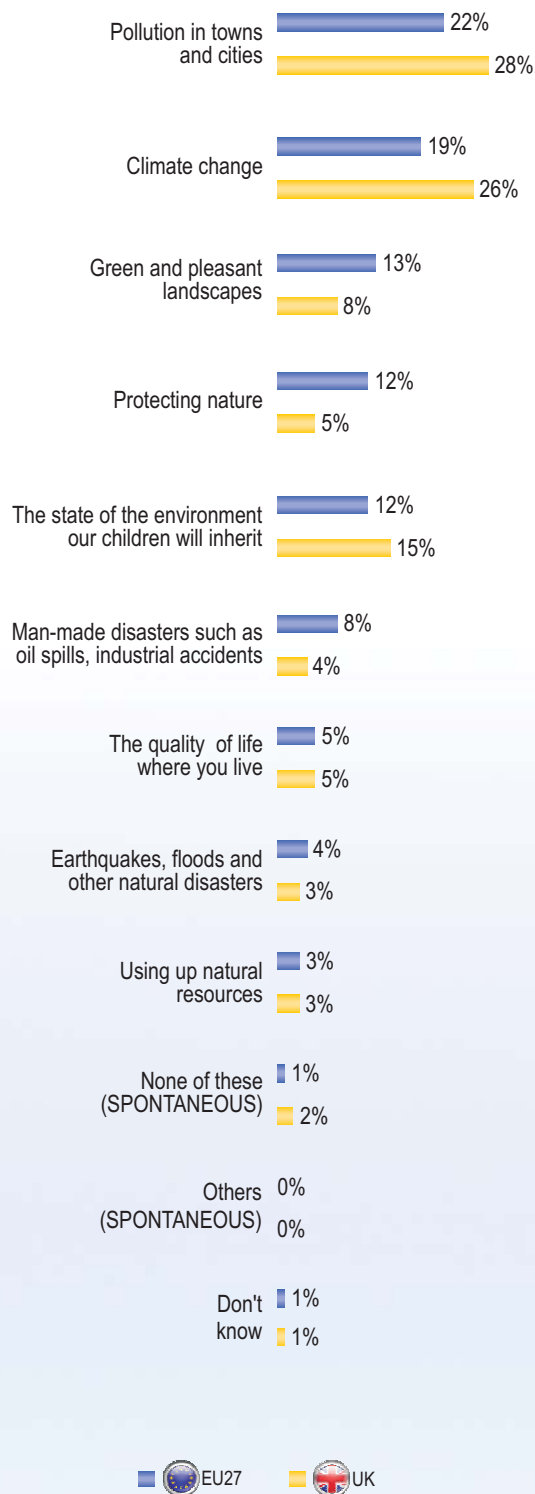
Fieldwork: 9th November - 4th December 2007

Publication: March 2008

This survey reveals that Europeans are increasingly concerned about the environment, but still reluctant to take individual action to protect it



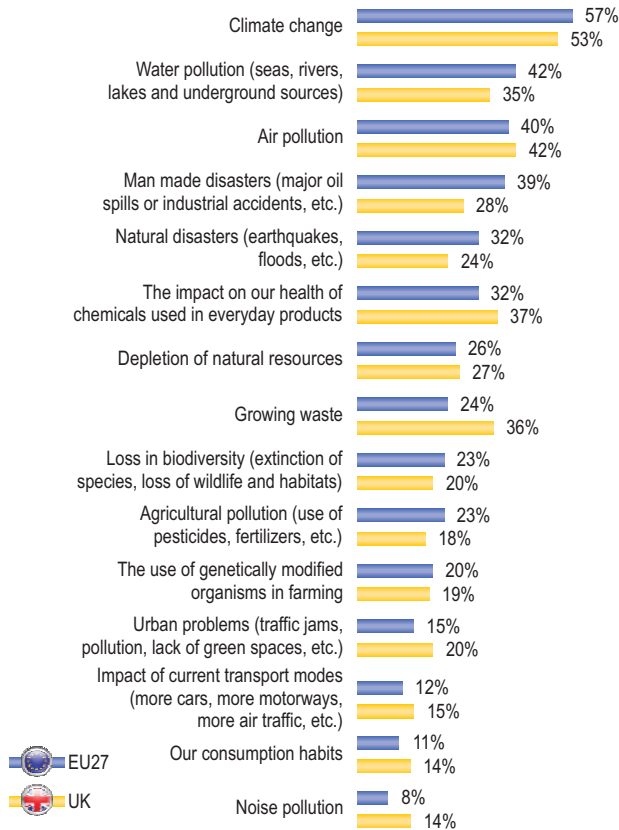
Q. When people talk about "the environment", which of the following do you think of first?



UK citizens are most likely to associate "the environment" with urban pollution and more likely to do so than the average European. Climate change also figures at an above average level in UK conceptions of the environment. On the other hand, relative to Europeans in general, UK respondents are less likely to link the environment with green and pleasant landscapes and protecting nature.

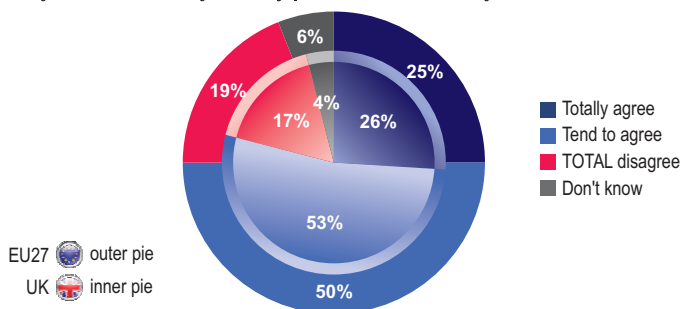
1. Environment in citizens' lives

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



The environmental issue which worries UK citizens the most is climate change although, compared to the EU figures, this is selected by a below average proportion of UK respondents. UK respondents are also relatively less likely to mention water pollution, disasters (either natural or man-made) and agricultural pollution. On the other hand, they are relatively more likely to worry about the health impacts of chemicals in everyday products, urban problems and noise pollution and to a greater extent growing waste.

Q. 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?



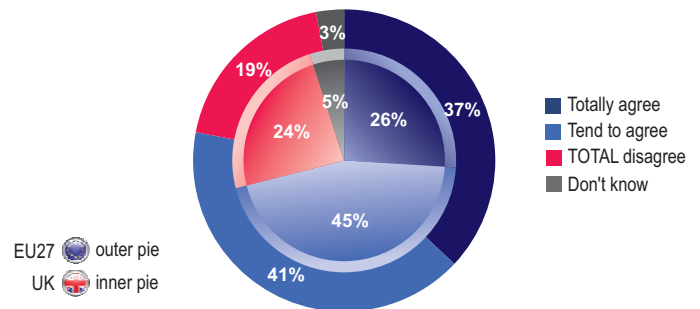
Total Agree

	Education (End of)			
	15-	16-19	20+	Still Studying
EU27	65%	76%	84%	79%
UK	72%	80%	86%	74%

The majority of UK respondents agree that they would be prepared to buy environmentally friendly products, even if they are slightly more expensive. The same is true of respondents across the EU to a slightly lesser extent than it is in the UK. In both the EU and the UK, the people who have spent the most time in education are the most likely to give a positive answer – with this being linked to the fact they are more likely to have higher incomes.

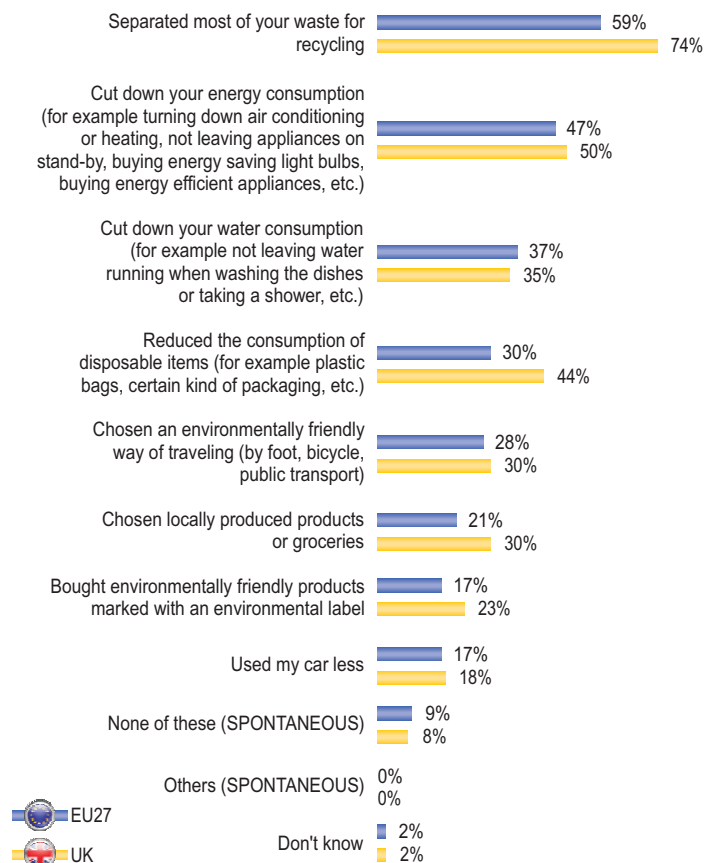
Q. For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree...?

Option: Environmental problems have a direct effect on your daily life



A majority of UK citizens say that they experience the direct effects of environmental problems in their daily lives, although the UK figure is slightly lower than that for the EU. Around 1 in 4 UK citizens do not feel direct effects, with this proportion being higher than the EU average.

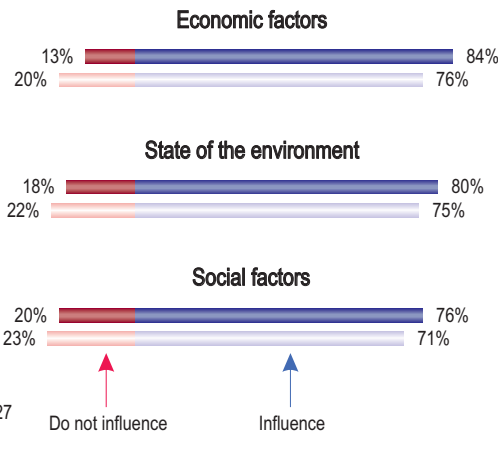
Q. Have you done any of the following during the past month for environmental reasons?



As in the EU altogether, the vast majority of UK respondents have taken concrete steps with the environment in mind: very few give the spontaneous answer that they did not take any environmentally friendly action in the month leading up to the survey. People living in the UK are avid recyclers: almost three-quarters separate waste for this purpose – a much higher proportion than seen in results for the EU. Citizens of the UK are also relatively more likely to reduce their consumption of disposable items, choose locally produced products and groceries and buy environmentally friendly products.

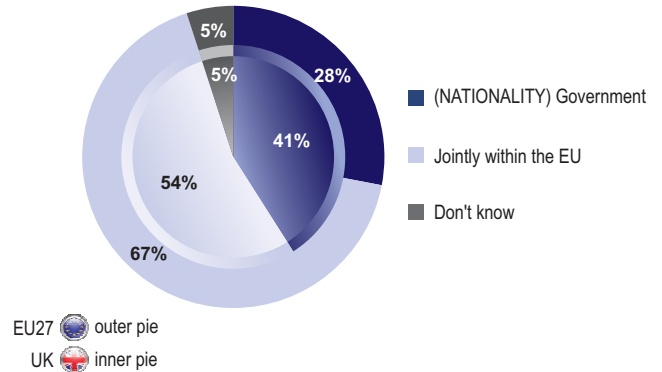
2. Environment in public life and decision making

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



Compared to Europeans as a whole, a lower share of UK citizens think that the environment influences their quality of life. The same is true of economic and social factors. However, all three are still seen as being influential by strong majorities of UK respondents.

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



As in the EU as a whole, a majority of UK citizens believe that when it comes to protecting the environment decisions should be made jointly within the EU. However a considerable minority think this should be the preserve of the national government, with this figure higher than the EU average.

Q. For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree...?

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



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

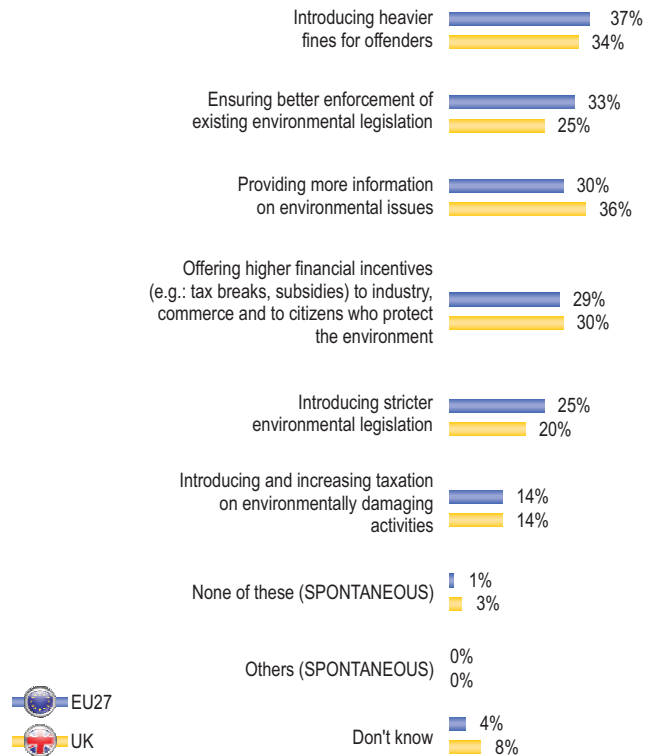


The EU should allocate more money to the protection of environment, even if this means that less money is spent on other areas.



There is strong support in the UK for European environmental policies whether that is in terms of common European legislation, the EU's help for non-EU countries and higher budget shares for environmental protection in the EU. At the same time these levels of support are somewhat lower than those seen in the EU as a whole.

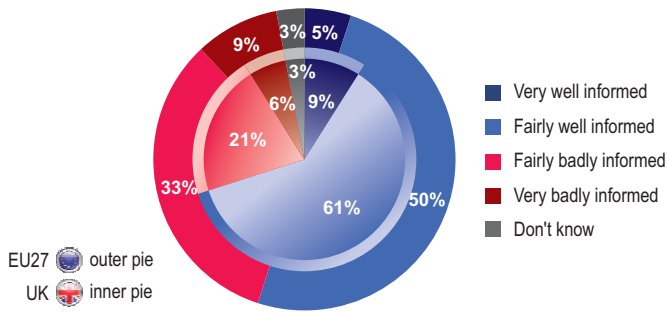
Q. In your opinion, which of the following would be the most effective way(s) of tackling environmental problems?



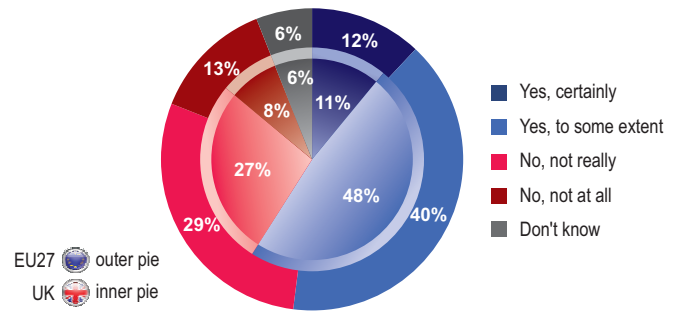
For the UK public, the most effective way of tackling environmental problems is by providing more information on environmental issues. It is notable that, relative to the average EU citizen, those in the UK are less likely to see the solution as lying in legislation – whether that is in the better enforcement of existing laws or the introduction of more stringent legislation.

3. Information about the environment

Q. In general, how informed do you feel about environmental issues?



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



Total Informed

	Gender	
	Male	Female
EU27	57%	53%
UK	71%	70%

	Age			
	15-24	25-39	40-54	55+
EU27	54%	57%	57%	54%
UK	67%	70%	74%	70%

	Education (End of)			
	15-	16-19	20+	Still Studying
EU27	44%	54%	68%	61%
UK	65%	68%	80%	88%

Total Yes

	Gender	
	Male	Female
EU27	50%	52%
UK	55%	61%

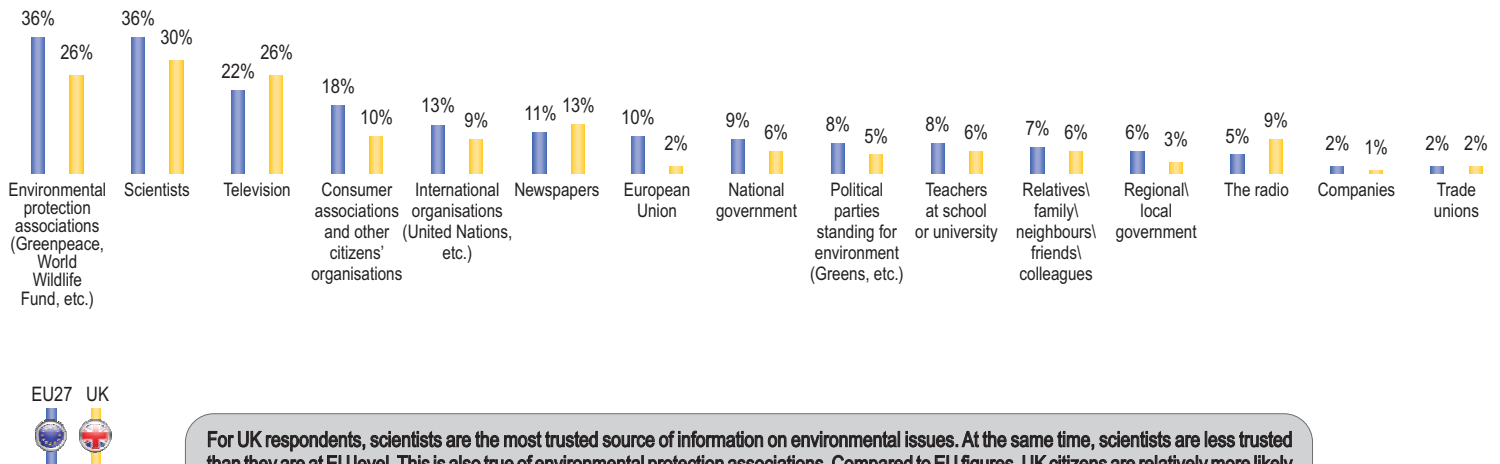
	Age			
	15-24	25-39	40-54	55+
EU27	56%	56%	51%	46%
UK	63%	63%	56%	55%

	Education (End of)			
	15-	16-19	20+	Still Studying
EU27	46%	53%	54%	56%
UK	57%	59%	59%	61%

7 in 10 UK citizens feel well informed about environmental issues, a higher proportion than in the EU as a whole. In the EU as a whole, men are more likely to be informed than women but this distinction does not exist in the UK. In the UK the most informed age group is the 40-54 bracket and the least informed is the 15-24 group. UK respondents educated to the age of 20 or above are especially well informed.

The majority of UK citizens say that current labelling allows them to identify environmentally friendly products, with this proportion being somewhat higher than the result for the EU. UK citizens who are female and young are the most likely to be able to identify products. In the UK education is not a determining factor, despite the fact that it is at EU level.

Q. From the following list, who do you trust most when it comes to environmental issues?



For UK respondents, scientists are the most trusted source of information on environmental issues. At the same time, scientists are less trusted than they are at EU level. This is also true of environmental protection associations. Compared to EU figures, UK citizens are relatively more likely to trust media sources – either in the form of television or the radio. These differences are not large however.