

Attitudes of Europeans towards the issue of biodiversity

Summary Wave 2

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This survey was requested by the Directorate General Environment, and coordinated by Directorate General 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 #290

Attitudes of Europeans towards the issue of biodiversity *Wave 2*

Conducted by
The Gallup Organisation, Hungary
upon the request of Directorate General
Environment



EUROBAROMETER

Survey co-ordinated by
Directorate General Communication

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THE GALLUP ORGANISATION

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Introduction

The European Union (EU) is committed to the protection of “biological diversity”, i.e. the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems¹. The EU has been legislating on biodiversity since the 1970s and is committed to implementing the *Convention on Biological Diversity*. The 2006 Biodiversity Communication on *Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond: Sustaining ecosystem services for human wellbeing* contained an Action Plan which aimed to pull together actors and resources at EU and national levels to implement the necessary actions.

In April 2009, in Athens, the European Commission announced that substantial progress had been made, most notably in the development of the *Natura 2000* network of protected areas; at that time, they covered 17% of EU territory. The Athens conference set out key priorities for the future: these included the development of a more forceful vision as to why biodiversity matters, the need to protect entire ecosystems and the identification of new funding mechanisms. On January 19, 2010, the Commission marked the opening of the International Year of Biodiversity with a paper setting out post-2010 options for biodiversity policy.

With this in mind, this Flash Eurobarometer survey on “Attitudes towards biodiversity” (N° 290), requested by DG Environment, asked EU citizens to clarify how familiar they were 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
- opinions about the major causes of biodiversity loss
- perceived seriousness of biodiversity loss at domestic, European and global levels
- expected impact of biodiversity loss
- opinions on why it is important to stop biodiversity loss
- views about measures the EU should take to protect biodiversity
- personal efforts being taken to preserve biodiversity
- awareness of the *Natura 2000* network
- perceptions about the most important roles of nature protection areas.

This Flash Eurobarometer survey on “Attitudes towards biodiversity” is part of a trend survey. The results of previous wave were published in 2007 – Flash Eurobarometer N°219². The current report presents comparative data between the two waves.

The survey’s fieldwork was carried out between 8 and 12 February 2010. Over 27,000 randomly selected citizens, aged 15 years and above, were interviewed in the EU’s 27 Member States. Interviews were predominantly carried out via fixed telephone, approximately 1,000 in each of the Member States.

To correct sampling disparities, a post-stratification weighting of the results was implemented, based on important socio-demographic variables. More details on survey methodology are included in the Annex of this report.

Note that due to rounding, the percentages shown in the charts and tables do not always add up exactly to the totals mentioned in the text.

¹ Source: Article 2 of the Convention on Biological Diversity

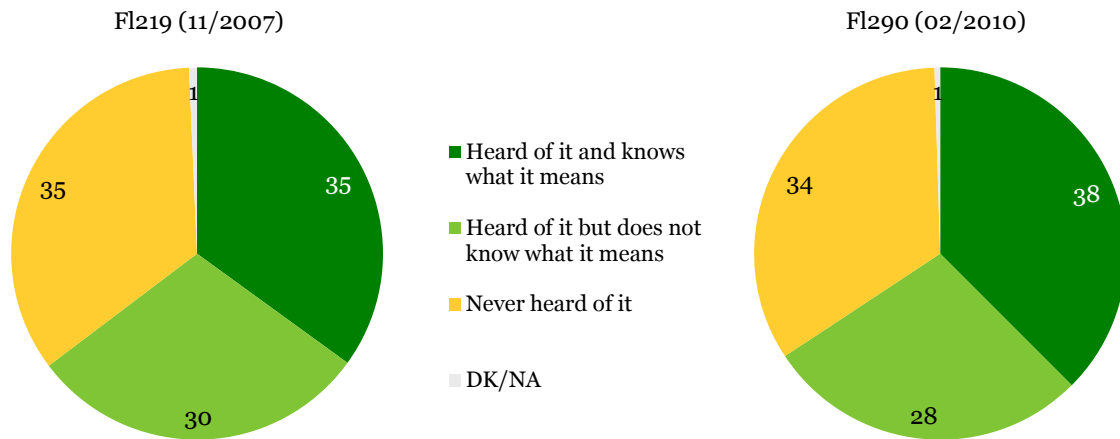
² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_219_en.pdf

1. What is “biodiversity loss”?

1.1 Familiarity with the term “biodiversity”

Two-thirds of EU citizens were familiar with the term “biodiversity”: 38% said they knew the meaning of the term (a three percentage point increase compared to 2007) and 28% stated they had heard of the term but did not know its meaning.

Familiarity with the term “biodiversity”, 2007-2010



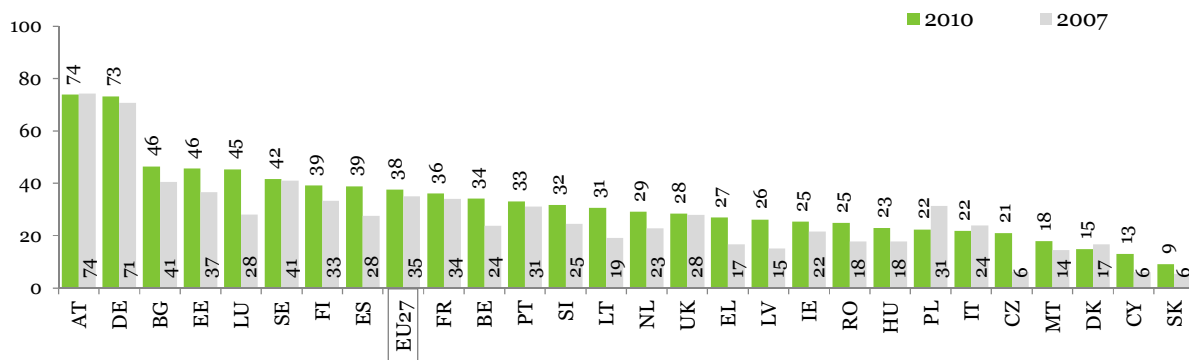
Q1 (2010). Have you ever heard the term “biodiversity”?
 Q1 (2007). Are you aware of the term “biodiversity”?
 Base: all respondents, % EU27

Country variations

As in 2007, *biodiversity* awareness levels were the highest in Germany and Austria (88% and 87%, respectively); furthermore, almost three-quarters of Germans and Austrians had not only heard about the term, but also said that they knew its meaning (73%-74%). An overall high level of familiarity with the term *biodiversity* was also observed in Estonia (79%), France (78%), Sweden and Bulgaria (both 77%); however, the proportion of interviewees who also knew the meaning of the term was between 36% and 46% in those countries.

A comparison between the 2007 and 2010 results showed that, in 12 of the 27 EU Member States, the proportion of respondents who had never heard about the term *biodiversity* has decreased by at least five percentage points.

Familiarity with the term “biodiversity”, 2007-2010



Q1 (2010). Have you ever heard the term “biodiversity”?
 Q1 (2007). Are you aware of the term “biodiversity”?
 Base: all respondents, % of “Heard of it and knows what it means”, by country

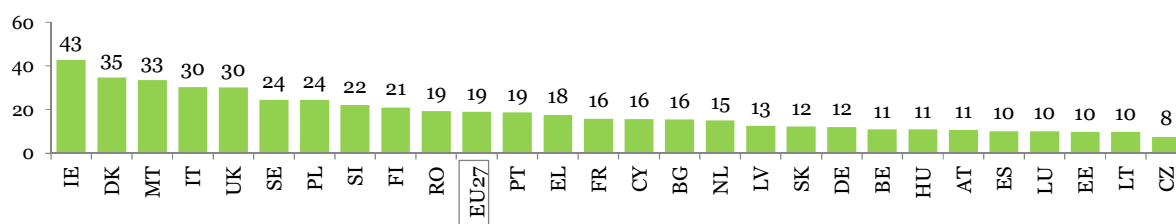
1.2 Meaning of the term “biodiversity loss”

When the term *biodiversity* was explained, a majority of EU citizens were able to define the meaning of *biodiversity loss* in their own words, and a large number of them were even able to mention several aspects of this multidimensional term. On average, only about one-fifth (19%) of respondents could not explain the meaning of biodiversity loss.

Czech respondents were the most capable of defining what biodiversity loss meant: only 8% of Czechs were unable to give an answer. In Lithuania, Estonia, Luxembourg and Spain, 10% of respondents could not define biodiversity loss.

Meaning of “biodiversity loss”

“Don’t know” answers



Q2. Can you please tell me what the phrase “loss of biodiversity” means to you?

Base: all respondents, % by country

How EU citizens defined biodiversity loss

As mentioned, *biodiversity* and *biodiversity loss* are both multidimensional concepts. Nevertheless, the general public understood the latter to be primarily a species-focused concept. In this survey (and in the one of 2007), the largest group of respondents gave an answer that was coded as relating to the loss of species: 43% said that biodiversity loss meant that certain animals and plants were disappearing or would disappear and 19% said it meant that certain animals and plants were or would be endangered.

Country variations

In most Member States, the largest group of respondents said that biodiversity loss meant **the loss of species**; the smallest group of interviewees mentioned something relating to the consequences of biodiversity loss, such as economic problems and the loss of material wealth or a decreasing potential for producing medicines, food and fuel. Similar conclusions were drawn in the 2007 survey.

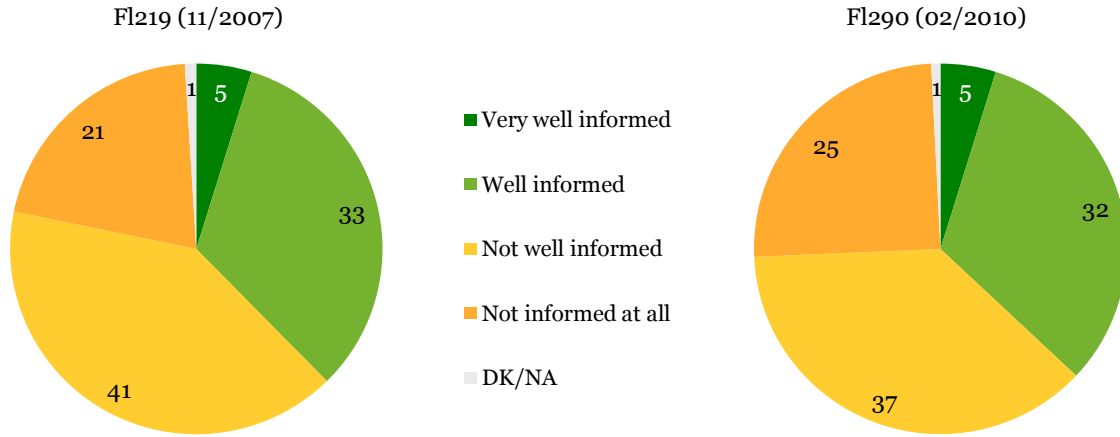
The proportion of respondents who said that biodiversity loss meant that certain animals and plants were disappearing, or would disappear, ranged from 23% in Ireland to 65% in Austria. Similarly, the proportion saying that it meant that certain animals and plants were, or would become, endangered, ranged from 10% Greece to 47% in Belgium.

1.3 How informed do EU citizens feel about biodiversity loss?

As noted in section 1.1, 62% of EU citizens did not know the exact meaning of the term *biodiversity* or had never heard of the term. Accordingly, a minority of EU citizens felt informed about *biodiversity loss*: 32% of respondents felt *well informed* and 5% said they felt *very well informed*. These results were unchanged compared to 2007.

Roughly 6 in 10 EU citizens considered themselves not well informed about biodiversity loss: 37% stated they were *not well informed* and 25% reported that they were *not informed at all* about the topic. A comparison between the 2007 and 2010 results showed that respondents in the current survey were more likely to feel *not informed at all* (25% vs. 21% in 2007), rather than *not well informed* (37% vs. 41% in 2007) about biodiversity loss.

Being informed about biodiversity loss, 2007-2010



Q3. How informed do you feel about the loss of biodiversity?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Country variations

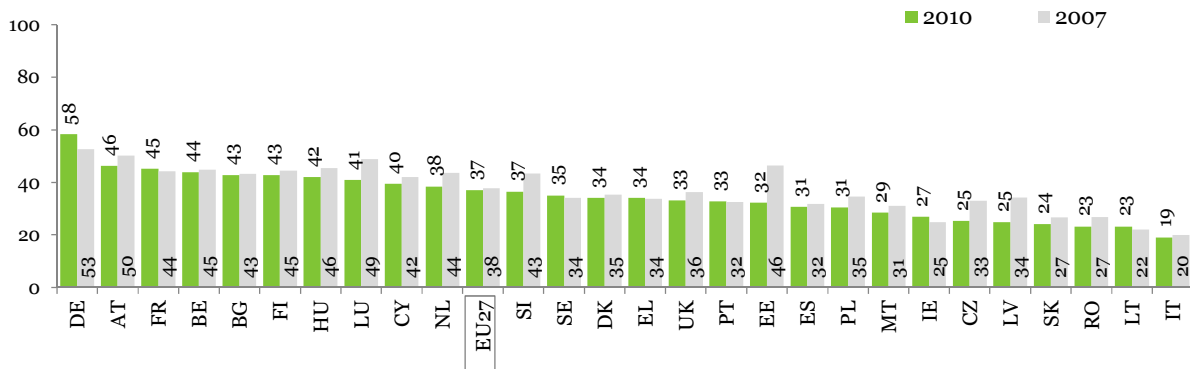
Respondents in Germany and Austria were not only the most knowledgeable about biodiversity, they were also the most likely to feel well informed about biodiversity loss: 59% of Germans and 46% of Austrians felt *well informed* about the topic (8% and 6%, respectively, felt *very well informed*). Germany’s result in the latest survey represented an increase compared to 2007 (+5 percentage points); in Austria, however, a small decrease was measured in the proportion who felt well informed. In Italy, on the other hand, just 19% of respondents felt well informed about biodiversity loss and 81% did not consider themselves well informed about the topic.

Feeling informed about biodiversity loss – a comparison between 2007 and 2010

Although many Member States have seen an increase, from 2007 to 2010, in the proportion of respondents who knew the meaning of the term *biodiversity*, a comparison across the two surveys tended to show minor differences in the proportion of respondents who felt well informed about *biodiversity loss*.

Some countries have even seen a decrease in the proportion of interviewees who felt well informed about biodiversity loss. Estonia has seen the largest decrease in the proportion of respondents who felt well informed about the topic: from 46% in 2007 to 32% in 2010 (-14 percentage points). The proportion of those who considered themselves well informed has also decreased by more than five percentage points in Latvia (-9 percentage points), the Czech Republic and Luxembourg (both -8), the Netherlands and Slovenia (both -6).

Being informed about biodiversity loss, 2007-2010

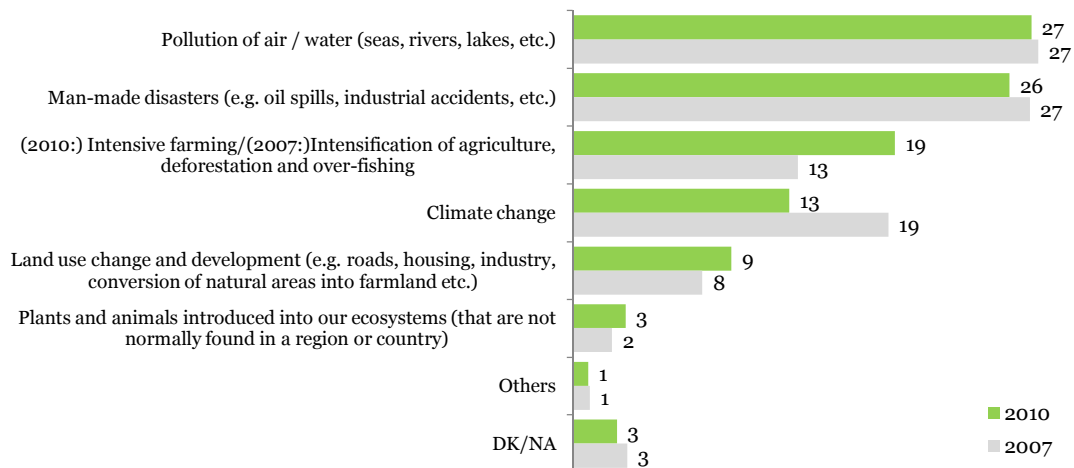


Q3. How informed do you feel about the loss of biodiversity?
Base: all respondents
% “Very well informed” and “Well informed”, by country

2. Biodiversity threats

Biodiversity loss occurs due to intensive agricultural production systems, over-exploitation of forests, oceans, rivers, lakes and soils, construction and development, invasion of alien species, pollution and global climate change. As in the previous wave, respondents were asked to select what they considered to be the most important threat: more than a quarter of EU citizens (27%) thought that this was air and water pollution. A similar proportion (26%) mentioned man-made disasters, such as oil spills.

Most important threats to biodiversity, 2007-2010



Q7. I will read out a list to you. Please tell me, from the following list, what threatens biodiversity the MOST?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Comparing the results of the current survey with those of 2007, it was noted that respondents in the current survey were less likely to select climate change as the main reason for biodiversity loss (13% vs. 19% in 2007), but they were more likely to mention intensive farming, deforestation and over-fishing (19% vs. 13% in 2007). It should, nevertheless, be noted that the latter item was formulated differently in the two surveys (“intensification of farming” in 2007 and “intensive farming” in 2010).

Country variations

The proportion of respondents who selected **water and air pollution** as the main threats to biodiversity ranged from 15% in Belgium to 39% in Poland and Romania. Similarly, the proportion who mentioned **man-made disasters** (such as oil spills or industrial accidents) was just 13%-14% in Finland, Ireland and the UK, but reached 51% in Cyprus.

As in the previous wave of this survey, water and air pollution and man-made disasters were selected as the two most important threats to biodiversity in most Member States (20 out of 27). Nonetheless, some countries have seen a large increase or decrease in the proportion of respondents who selected these threats as the most important ones. For example, in 2007, 30% of Belgians named water and air pollution as the most important threat to biodiversity; however, in 2010, this proportion has decreased to 15% (-15 percentage points). The proportion of Belgians who selected man-made disasters, on the other hand, has increased from 20% in 2007 to 32% in 2010 (+12 percentage points).

The combination of **intensive farming, deforestation and over-fishing** was selected as the most important threat to biodiversity by a fifth, or more, respondents in the Netherlands (31%), the UK (29%), Germany (26%), France (25%), Sweden, Denmark and Ireland (all 23%), Austria (21%) and Finland (20%). In 2007, there were five countries where more than a quarter of respondents selected **climate change** as the main threat to biodiversity; in 2010, this proportion was below 25% in all countries.

3. Biodiversity loss – seriousness of the problem

3.1 Domestic, European and global biodiversity issues

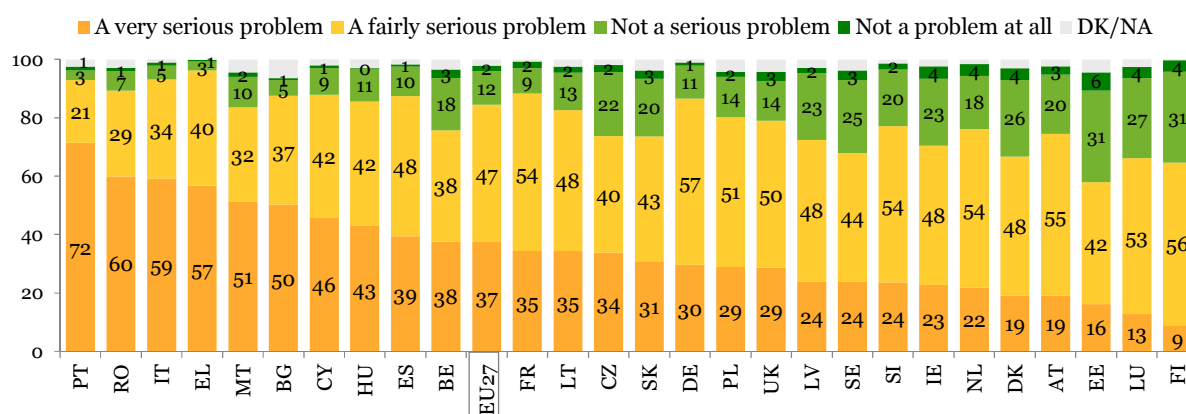
Predominately, the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems were seen as serious problems by EU citizens: more than 8 in 10 felt that biodiversity loss was a *very* or *fairly* serious problem at national, European and global levels.

Comparing the results of the current survey with those seen in 2007³, it was noted that respondents were now somewhat less likely to think that biodiversity loss was a serious problem in their country. This decrease in perceptions about the seriousness of biodiversity loss as a domestic problem was the most notable for the “very serious” responses which decreased from 43% in 2007 to 37% in 2010 (-6 percentage points). The overall proportion of respondents who thought that biodiversity was a serious global problem (i.e. the sum of *very* and *fairly* serious responses) was unchanged in the two surveys.

Biodiversity loss as a domestic problem

Individual results in Member States showed large variations in citizens’ perceptions regarding the seriousness of biodiversity loss in their own country. The total proportion of respondents who said that biodiversity loss was a serious domestic problem (i.e. the sum of *very* and *fairly* serious responses) ranged from 58% in Estonia to 97% in Greece. Furthermore, the proportion reporting that it was a *very* serious problem ranged from 9% in Finland to 72% in Portugal.

Seriousness of biodiversity loss in respondents’ country



Q5. How serious is the decline and possible extinction of animal species, flora and fauna, natural habitats and ecosystems in [COUNTRY]? And how serious is the problem in Europe? Finally, how serious is the problem globally?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Seriousness of biodiversity loss in Europe

As for the results concerning the seriousness of biodiversity loss in their own country, a majority of respondents in Portugal (75%), Italy (62%), Greece and Romania (both 52%) reported that biodiversity loss was a *very* serious problem in Europe. This view was also supported by 54% of Cypriots and 52% of Hungarians. In most of these countries, not more than 5% of respondents said that biodiversity loss in Europe was not a serious problem or that it was not a problem at all.

Seriousness of biodiversity loss at a global level

As in the previous wave of this survey, in all Member States, respondents were more likely to consider global biodiversity loss to be a *very* serious problem than they were to say the same about the issue at a national or European level. The proportions of respondents who considered biodiversity loss to be a *very* serious global problem ranged from 46% in Estonia to 82% in Portugal. Across almost all

³ The question about the seriousness of biodiversity loss at a European level was not included in the 2007 survey.

countries, not more than 1 in 20 respondents doubted whether biodiversity loss was a serious global problem.

Seriousness of biodiversity loss – a comparison between 2007 and 2010

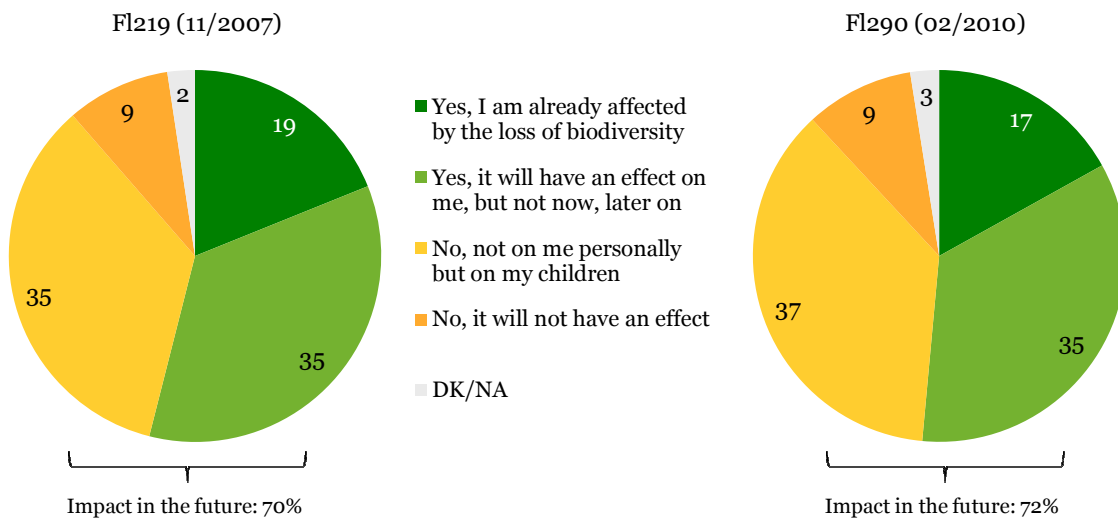
The EU-wide results showed a decrease in the proportion of respondents who said that biodiversity loss was a *very* serious problem in their country (from 43% in 2007 to 37% in 2010; -6 percentage points); a similar, or greater, decrease was observed in more than half of the individual countries. For example, in 2007, 44% of Polish respondents felt that biodiversity loss was a *very* serious problem in their country; in 2010, however, this proportion has decreased to 29% (-15 percentage points). Other countries that have seen a decrease included Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Sweden (between -11 and -13 percentage points).

Poland has not only seen the largest decrease in the proportion of respondents who said that biodiversity loss was a *very* serious problem in their country, but also the largest decrease in the proportion who said the same about global biodiversity loss: 47% in 2010 compared to 68% in 2007 (-21 percentage points). It was not only in Poland, but also in about half of the countries surveyed, that respondents were now less likely to say that biodiversity loss was a *very* serious global problem.

3.2 Personally affected by biodiversity loss

In terms of being affected by biodiversity loss, most EU citizens saw no immediate personal impact. A sixth of respondents (17%) said they had already been affected by biodiversity loss, compared to almost three-quarters (72%) who thought that it would have an impact in the future. More precisely, 35% of respondents expected biodiversity loss to have an impact in the near future (they expected to be affected personally) and 37% said that their children, rather than themselves, would feel its consequences.

Impact of biodiversity loss, 2007-2010



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

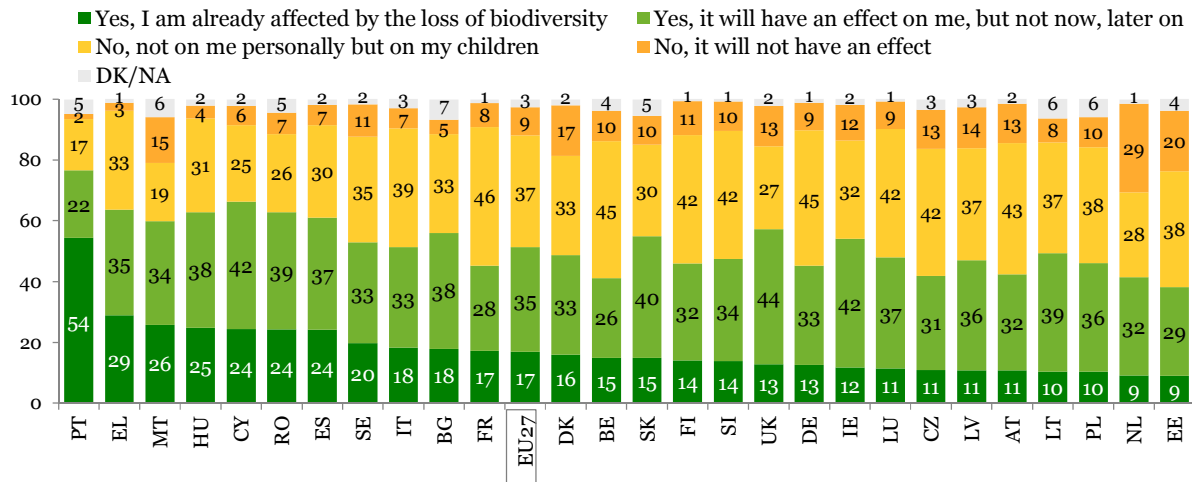
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Country variations

Portuguese respondents stood out from the pack with a slim majority (54%) who said they were already being personally affected by the extinction of flora and fauna and roughly a fifth (22%) who foresaw themselves being affected by biodiversity loss in the near future. In Greece, Malta, Hungary, Cyprus, Romania and Spain, at least 6 in 10 respondents said they would be – or were already – personally affected by the extinction of flora and fauna. However, compared to the Portuguese, only half as many respondents in these countries said the latter – i.e. that they were already being

personally affected by biodiversity loss: 24% in Spain, Romania and Cyprus, 25% in Hungary, 26% in Malta and 29% in Greece.

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, % by country

Impact of biodiversity loss – a comparison between 2007 and 2010

Comparing 2007 and 2010 results showed not much change in most countries in the proportion of respondents who doubted if biodiversity loss would have any effect. In Estonia and Latvia, however, respondents were not only more likely to expect a future impact, rather than an immediate personal effect, they were also more likely in 2010 to think that an impoverishment of flora and fauna would have no impact at all (Estonia: 13% in 2007 vs. 20% in 2010; Latvia: 8% in 2007 vs. 14% in 2010).

4. Recognising the importance of protecting biodiversity

4.1 A multitude of reasons why biodiversity conservation is important

EU citizens were aware of the multitude of reasons why the conservation of biodiversity was important. Respondents seemed to see the conservation of biodiversity, first and foremost, as a moral obligation: 70% of them *very much* agreed with this concept and 26% agreed to a lesser extent. Secondly, almost 6 in 10 (58%) interviewees *very much* agreed, and 34% *rather* agreed, that it was important to halt biodiversity loss because citizens’ well-being and quality of life depended on this.

Slightly lower proportions of respondents agreed that the conservation of biodiversity was important because it was indispensable for the production of goods, such as food, fuel and medicines (86%, in total, agreed), because biodiversity was essential to tackle climate change (82%) or because biodiversity loss would have economic consequences for Europe (76%).

Country variations

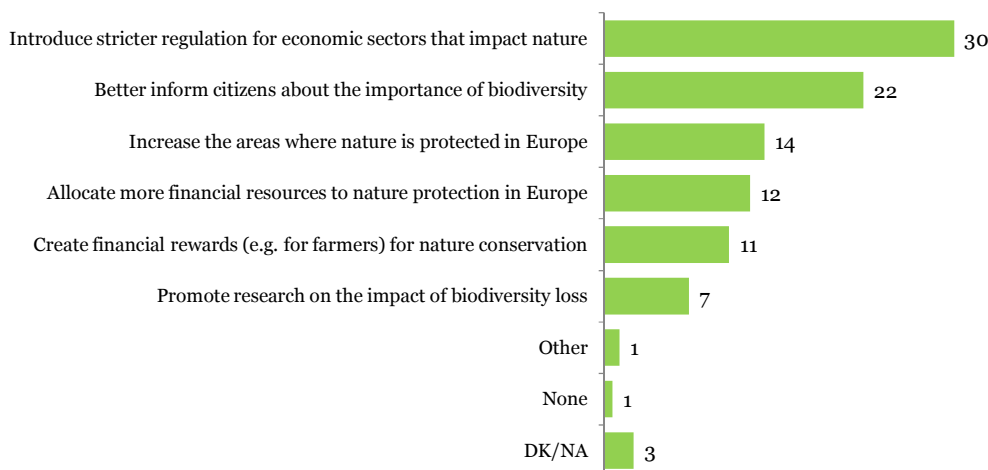
Respondents in Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta seemed to be the most convinced that the protection of biodiversity was important; they were among the most likely to *very much* agree with each of the above-mentioned statements why the issue was important.

A comparison with the previous survey results showed that, also in 2007, Cyprus, Greece and Malta were consistently found among the countries where respondents appeared to be the most convinced that halting biodiversity was important for a multitude of reasons. Italy’s results in 2007, on the other hand, were below the EU average for most statements; in 2010, however, the country joined Cyprus, Greece and Malta at the higher end of the distributions.

4.2 What measure should the EU take to protect biodiversity?

When asked which measure the EU should prioritise in order to protect biodiversity, the largest proportion of EU citizens (30%) selected introducing stricter regulation for economic sectors that had an impact on nature. Somewhat more than a fifth (22%) of respondents indicated that the EU should focus on providing citizens with better information about the importance of biodiversity.

What measures should the EU take – as a priority – to protect biodiversity?



Q8. What measure to protect biodiversity should the European Union take as a priority?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

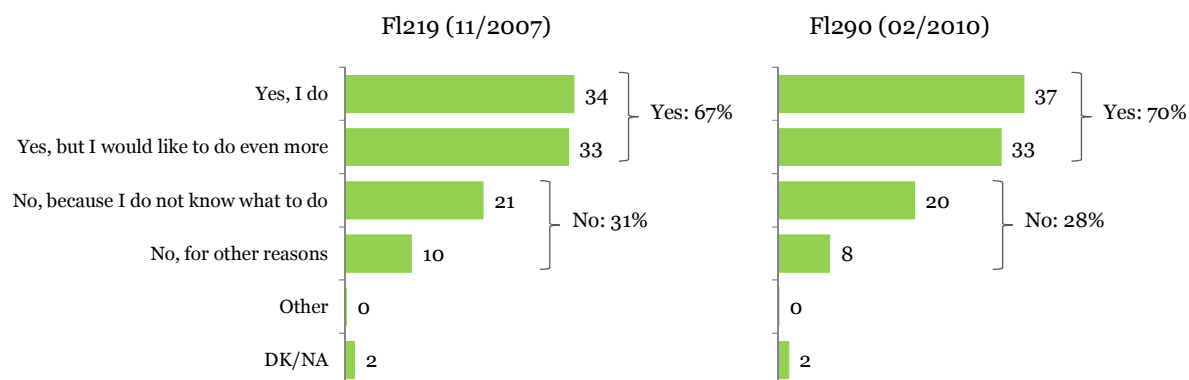
Country variations

Hungarians somewhat stood out from the pack with 48% who said that the EU should – as a priority – **introduce stricter regulation for economic sectors that had an impact on nature**. Other countries where a high proportion of respondents selected this measure were Slovenia and France (both 37%), Germany and Latvia (both 35%). The proportion of respondents who answered that the EU should make it a priority to **provide better information to citizens about the importance of biodiversity** ranged from roughly one in eight in Bulgaria and Latvia (both 12%) to three times as many respondents in Cyprus (36%).

4.3 Personal efforts to help preserve biodiversity

A majority (70%) of EU citizens said they personally made some efforts to protect biodiversity; roughly half of these respondents (i.e. replying “yes”) said they would be willing to do even more in order to counteract biodiversity loss (this group represented 33% of all respondents).

Personal efforts to protect biodiversity, 2007-2010



Q12(2010)/Q10(2007). Would you say that you personally make an effort to protect biodiversity?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

More than a quarter (28%) said that they were not making any attempts to protect biodiversity. However, most of these respondents said this was because they did not know what to do to stop biodiversity loss (70% of those replying “no” or 20% of all respondents).

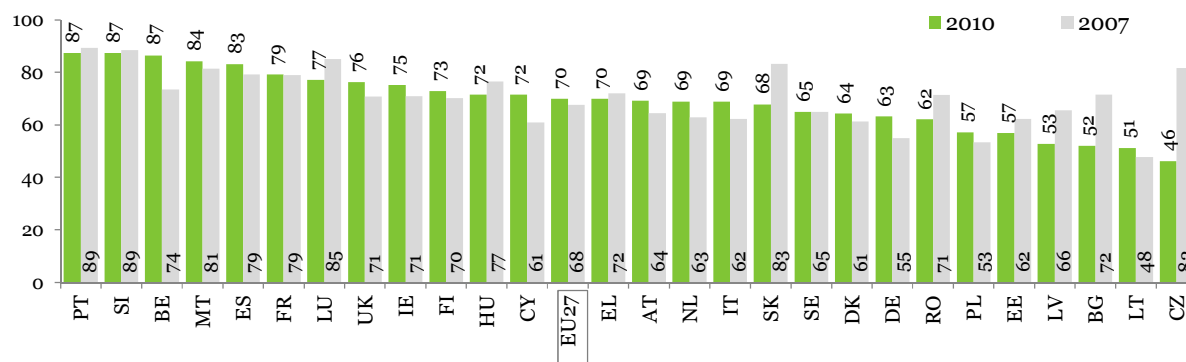
Country variations

As in 2007, the country specific results indicated that respondents in Portugal and Slovenia were the most committed to the conservation of biodiversity; in these countries, 87% of respondents said they were making efforts in this regard. In 2007, 74% of Belgian respondents said they were making active efforts to slow down biodiversity loss; in 2010, this proportion has increased to 87% (+13 percentage points) – as such, Belgium has now joined Portugal and Slovenia at the top of the country ranking.

Lithuania, on the other hand, was again found close to the bottom of the country ranking with 51% of respondents who were personally making some efforts to slow down biodiversity loss (from 48% in 2007). In the current survey, however, Lithuania has been joined by the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Latvia; these countries have seen significant decreases in the proportion of respondents who said they were making efforts in this regard (the Czech Republic: from 82% in 2007 to 46% in 2010; Bulgaria: from 72% to 52%; Latvia: from 66% to 53%).

Personal efforts to protect biodiversity, 2007-2010

“Yes” answers



Q12(2010)/Q10(2007). Would you say that you personally make an effort to protect biodiversity?

Base: all respondents

% “Yes, I do” and “Yes but I would like to do even more”, by country

Focusing on those respondents who declared that they were willing to do even more for biodiversity conservation than they were currently doing showed that almost half of respondents in Spain and Cyprus gave such a response (both 49%). The provision of more information on how respondents could help protect biodiversity would be most welcome in the Czech Republic; interviewees from this country were the most likely to report that they were not making any efforts to protect biodiversity because they did not know what actions to take (37%). This view was also voiced by 33% of Lithuanians and 29%-30% of Bulgarians, Latvians and Estonians.

5. Natura 2000 and key roles of nature protection areas

5.1 Awareness of the Natura 2000 network

Results showed that EU citizens have remained relatively unfamiliar with *Natura 2000* – an EU-wide network of nature protection areas⁴: almost 8 in 10 had never heard of it (78% vs. 80% in 2007). EU citizens who were familiar with *Natura 2000* did not necessarily know its actual meaning: 13% said they had heard of the network but did not know exactly what it was. Less than a tenth (8%) stated that they had heard of the *Natura 2000* network and that they also knew what it represented.

⁴ *Natura 2000* was established under the 1992 *Habitats Directive* and the 1979 *Birds Directive* with the aim of ensuring the long-term protection of Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats.

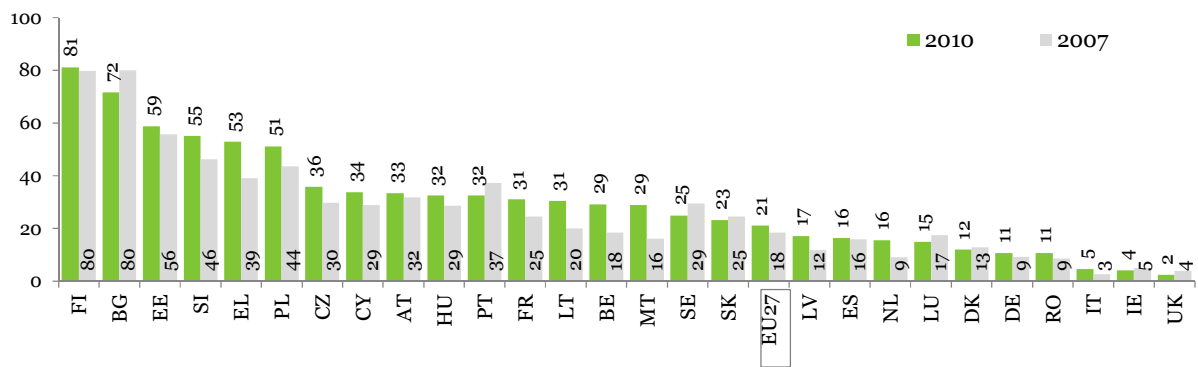
Country variations

Once again, awareness levels of the *Natura 2000* network differed markedly between countries. The proportion of respondents who said they had never heard of the term *Natura 2000* ranged from 19% in Finland to 96%-97% in Ireland and the UK. Awareness of the *Natura 2000* network was highest among Finnish and Bulgarian respondents. Roughly 4 in 10 (41%) Finnish interviewees said they knew what the network represented and a similar proportion (40%) had simply heard of the network without knowing details. The corresponding proportions for Bulgaria were 38% and 34%.

Awareness of the *Natura 2000* network – a comparison between 2007 and 2010

In terms of awareness of the *Natura 2000* network, there was virtually no difference in the EU-wide results for 2007 and 2010; this observation was also correct for roughly half of the individual country results. In nine countries, however, the proportion of respondents who had heard about *Natura 2000* has increased by more than five percentage points; this increase was the largest in Greece (+14 percentage points) and Malta (+13 percentage points).

Awareness of the *Natura 2000* network, 2007-2010



Q9(2010)/Q8(2007). Have you heard of the *Natura 2000* network?

Base: all respondents

% "Heard of it and knows what it is" and "Heard of it but does not know what it is", by country

5.2 Most important roles of nature protection areas

When asked about the key roles of nature protection areas, such as *Natura 2000* sites, a slim majority (53%) of EU citizens selected the protection of endangered animals and plants as one of the two most important roles of such sites. More than 4 in 10 (43%) respondents mentioned stopping the destruction of valuable areas of land and sea and a somewhat lower proportion (38%) referred to the key role of nature protection areas in safeguarding nature's role in providing clean air and water.

Country variations

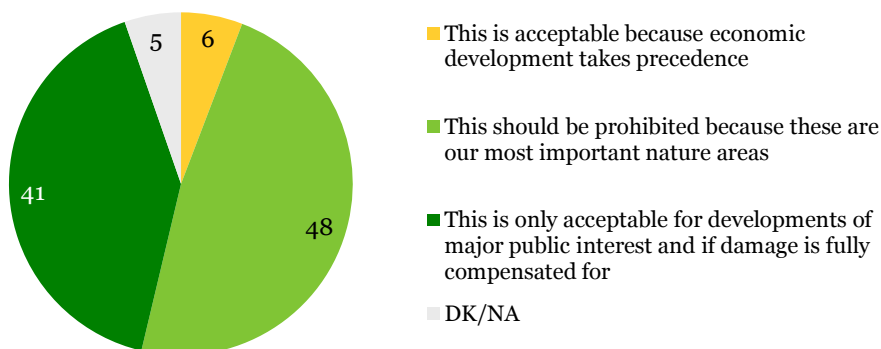
The proportion of respondents who said that **protecting endangered animals and plants** was one of the two most important roles of nature protection areas (such as *Natura 2000* sites) ranged from 39% in Malta to 67% in Luxembourg. As for the EU-wide results, this role of nature protection areas was selected by the largest proportion of respondents in 19 Member States.

As noted above, in many Member States, a relative majority of respondents selected the protection of endangered animals and plants as a key role of nature protection areas; in Finland, Denmark, Sweden and the UK, on the other hand, the largest proportion of respondents identified **stopping the destruction of valuable areas of land and sea** as one of two most important roles of such areas (between 50% and 56%). In Germany, 52% of respondents saw stopping the destruction of such valuable areas as a key role of nature protection areas; however, in Belgium and Italy, just 3 in 10 respondents selected this response (30%-31%).

5.3 The impact of economic development on nature protection areas

Economic development may result in damage or destruction of nature protection areas, such as those included in the *Natura 2000* network. A minority (6%) of EU citizens felt that this was acceptable because economic development should take precedence. In sharp contrast, roughly half (48%) of EU citizens thought that economic development resulting in damage or destruction of nature protection areas should be prohibited because of the importance of such nature areas. Finally, 41% took a more moderate stance by agreeing that that economic development resulting in damage or destruction of nature protection areas would be acceptable for developments of major public interest, if that damage to nature was fully compensated for in some way.

The impact of economic development on nature protection areas



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

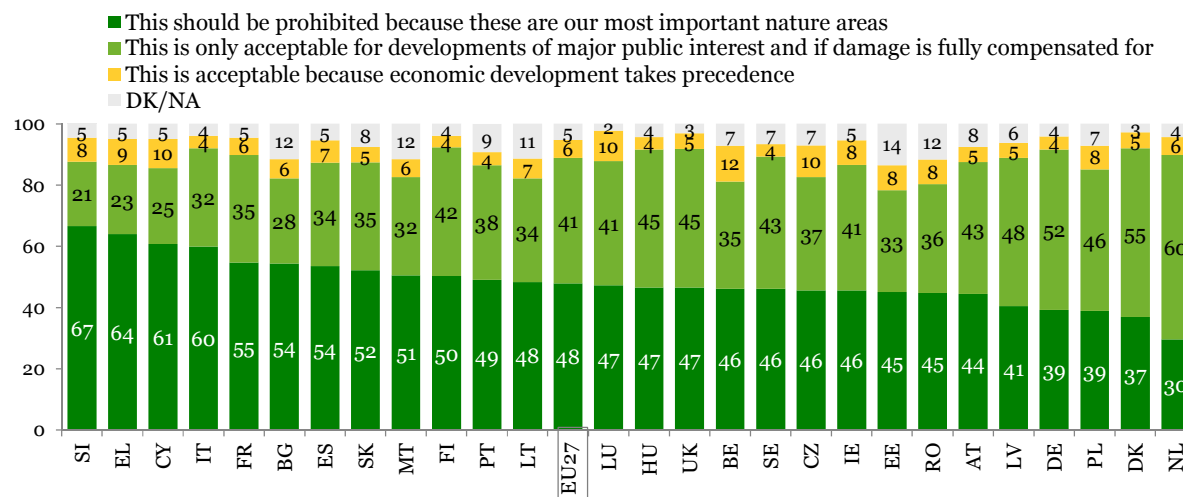
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Country variations

The proportion of respondents who said that that economic development resulting in damage or destruction of nature protection areas should be prohibited because of the importance of such nature areas ranged from 30% in the Netherlands to 67% in Slovenia. Italy, Cyprus and Greece were close to Slovenia, with at least 6 in 10 respondents who supported this opinion (60%-64%).

Conversely, the proportion of respondents who said that such developments would be acceptable when a major public interest was served, if the damage to nature was fully compensated for, ranged from 21% in Slovenia to 60% in the Netherlands. In addition to the Netherlands, more than half of respondents accepted this view in Denmark and Germany (55% and 52%, respectively).

The impact of economic development on nature protection areas



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

Base: all respondents, % by country