



Obs'COP 2021

INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATORY ON CLIMATE AND PUBLIC OPINION

The barometer on how climate change is perceived in 30 countries

Despite the increase in extreme climate events, citizen mobilization for climate change is not growing

Paris, December 16, 2021 – A key player in the energy sector on an international level that has committed to the goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050, EDF presents the findings of an opinion study of groundbreaking scope conducted for the 3rd consecutive year by Ipsos in 30 countries¹ across five continents, covering two-thirds of the world's population and featuring the biggest CO2 producers. Every year, EDF publishes an international status report on opinions, knowledge, expectations and levels of engagement in relation to climate change, as matter for reflection and to contribute to the constructive search for solutions for the future.

>> The findings are freely accessible at www.edf.fr/observatoire <<

1. Despite the increased number of climate events in 2021, climate skepticism has tended to grow

- While it was thought that the world's population would be increasingly convinced of the existence of climate change caused by human activity – and 66% are indeed convinced of this – instead we are seeing a **growth in climate skepticism**: 31% in 2019, 32% in 2020 and 34% in 2021².
- Nevertheless, 77% of the planet's inhabitants believe that they are **already seeing the effects of climate change in their region**, notably in the countries of the South, with heatwaves being the phenomenon most often observed (along with a disruption of the seasons in Europe).
- The climate issue still features among the priorities in terms of environment-related fears, and **more than two-thirds of the world's population feel concerned** (72%), across all generations. In fact, 30% of people feel angry and 26% feel demoralized according to the findings.
- However, the survey reveals other findings that **put these findings into perspective**:
 - The climate shares the sense of ecological emergency with **other environmental threats** (the waste issue for 46%, air pollution for 40%).
 - In some of the most populated countries, a large share of the population think that **climate change won't just have negative consequences** (53% in China, 45% in India, 48% in Nigeria).
 - Some climate skeptics (32%) don't feel that they are seeing the effects of climate change in their region, compared to only 11% among those who are convinced.

¹ Methodology: selection of countries based on their CO2 emissions in tons per year, according to their geographic location, their exemplariness in the fight against climate change and their socio-economic model: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA. Representative samples of the population of between 500 and 1000 people per country; quota method. Fieldwork conducted online between August 30 and September 21, 2021.

² A reminder that climate skeptics as we define them in the survey are individuals who reject the very reality of climate change (9%) and those who, while not denying its existence, believe that it is not caused by human activity (25%), i.e. 34% of the population questioned.

2. Purchasing power and poverty have once again become key issues, a pro-environment turnaround in the economy is still desirable

- The tone of current concerns is economic and social. The question of the **cost of living** moves up to first place this year in terms of concerns in the 30 countries questioned (52%, +5 points), **on a par with Covid**, which drops 7 points³. Poverty ranks 3rd (47%, +2 points) and the healthcare system 4th (43%).
- **The environment is not downgraded:** in 5th position at 41%, it cannot compete with concerns that are closer to everyday life, but it surpasses unemployment and crime.
- A small majority of 50% on a global scale claim to be favorable to giving **priority to the environment over growth and employment**, whereas 35% would make the opposite choice and 15% did not comment.
- Opting for the environment is more common among more affluent and educated people. Contrary to common belief, **young people are not more pro-environment or in favor of degrowth than their elders** on an international scale, although the under-25s are a little more so in Europe.
- One of the reasons explaining the relative support for giving priority to the environment is the impression that the **environment does not destroy jobs**: only 23% of respondents on a global scale are afraid of this outcome. In Europe, opinions are more divided: 47% of Norwegians, 35% of Germans and 33% of Swedes expressed this fear.

3. Actions in favor of the climate are still not very effective and changing life styles is proving difficult

- There is no consensus on the idea that **a mere change in life styles** would help fight climate change: it is shared by one out of two inhabitants of the planet (51%) and has tended to drop back in the past 2 years (-2 points since 2019).
- For 69% of the world's population, the levers for resolving climate problems are still primarily a matter for governments. Consumers **feel that they are taking action on their own level (50%) and only 45% think that it is up to them to take action.**
- Globally, people are already carrying out a number of actions on an everyday basis: 40% carry out four actions or more systematically, 67% two or more. But it turns out that the actions most commonly taken – sorting waste, purchasing only seasonal fruits and vegetables, reducing packaging – are not the ones that would be most effective in fighting climate change.
- A lack of information is probably responsible for this. While the public are able to correctly identify (at a rate of over 80%) CO₂ emissions resulting from industry, electric power plants running on fossil fuels, transportation and deforestation, they are less convinced about the impact of heating and air conditioning (65%, of which 21% “a lot”). As for the role played by agriculture and digital tech, these seem less important (respectively 45% and 42%).
- On an international scale, measures targeting cars are the ones with the **lowest acceptability**, especially in Europe. For example, 46% of Europeans think that banning the sale of all new cars running on gasoline or diesel in the next 15 years is acceptable, c.f. 58% internationally.
- Likewise, **measures with a financial impact are less readily accepted**: a carbon tax (52%), but also taxes on air travel tickets (48%).
- **Three measures** are acceptable to two-thirds of respondents on the other hand:
 - an ecotax on polluting cars (63%);
 - a ban on short-haul flights when rail travel is an alternative (65%);
 - obliging homeowners to insulate their homes (61%).

³ The survey was mainly carried out in September, before the start of the 5th Covid wave.

4. Electricity production: do everything possible to replace fossil fuels

- Worldwide, **the reception given to renewable energies as a source of electricity is very consensual** (between 70% and 90% according to technologies). At the other end of the spectrum, **coal** is accepted by only 25% of the world's population.
- **Nuclear power and gas are in an intermediate situation:** small majorities (respectively 51% and 49%) disapprove of their use, but 39% of respondents approve of using each of these energies.
- When it comes to needing to build gas or nuclear-powered power plants **“to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”**, opinions become positive with a score of over 60%.

For Alexandre Perra, Executive Director in charge of Innovation, Corporate Responsibility and Strategy at EDF:

“This study of groundbreaking scope conducted by Ipsos shows how perception of climate change is evolving. It also shows how much the challenge – one that is at the very core of EDF’s reason for being – of reconciling protection of the planet, economic development and individual well-being, is a debatable topic in our societies which have perspectives that sometimes differ from one geographical area to another. While most of the people questioned claim to know how to fight climate change, the actions that must be implemented on an everyday basis to efficiently fight CO2 emissions are not always clearly identified. That’s why EDF is raising awareness among its employees and customers using digital tools and collective intelligence actions such as the Climate Fresk to measure their carbon impact and adopt the right gestures. Alongside the central role played by the corporate world, citizen mobilization is an essential factor in fighting climate change that will enable us to achieve a fair and inclusive energy transition.”

According to Brice Teinturier, Executive Managing Director of Ipsos France: “For the 3rd consecutive year, the Observatory has served as a remarkable tool for understanding and taking action in the fight against climate change. This year it has brought a few surprises: firstly, and despite the increased number of extreme climate events, the share of climate skeptics has increased on a global scale, showing that there is no systematic link between the occurrence of these events and awareness of the human origin of climate change or even of its very existence. Next, and contrary to what is commonly believed, the under-25s attribute no more priority to the environment than their elders do on a global level, and it would be wrong to describe them as an angrier generation.”

About IPSOS

A marketing research leader in France and an expert on consumer, citizen and employee behaviors, Ipsos operates in all business sectors. Our experts have been assisting advertisers, decision-makers and institutions with their marketing strategies, HR issues, communications positionings and public opinion challenges since 1975.

At Ipsos, we are passionately curious about individuals, markets, brands and society. We help our clients navigate their way faster and more easily through a radically changing world. We provide them with the inspiration they need to make strategic decisions. We are Game Changers.

About EDF

One of the key players in energy transition, the EDF group is an integrated energy company, active in all aspects of the industry: the production, transport, distribution, negotiation and sale of energy and energy-related services. An international leader in low-carbon energies, the Group has developed a diversified production mix based mainly on nuclear and renewable (including hydraulic) energy and is investing in new technologies to accompany the energy transition. EDF’s reason for being is to build a carbon-neutral energy future that reconciles protection of the planet, well-being and development, thanks to electricity and to innovative solutions and services. The Group supplies energy and services to around 37.9 million clients ⁽¹⁾, 28.7 million of them in France⁽²⁾. In 2020, it generated consolidated sales of 69.0 billion euros. EDF is listed on the Paris Stock Exchange.

(1) Since 2018, clients have been calculated by delivery site; one client may have two delivery sites: one for electricity and another for gas.

(2) Including ES (Électricité de Strasbourg).

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