

Only Global Disaster Will Bring Environmental Action

Contributed by TNS
Wednesday, 06 July 2005
Last Updated Wednesday, 06 July 2005

ONLY GLOBAL DISASTER WILL BRING ABOUT MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION – SURVEY FINDINGS

LONDON, 29 JUNE 05. Some seven out of ten people in Europe¹ agreed that “it will take a man-made environmental catastrophe with global consequences” before society and the government takes any serious action on environmental issues. This figure increases to eight out of ten people (79 per cent) in the UK, according to a European online research study conducted by TNS and published today.

The research, carried out on TNS 6th dimension European Access Panel, asked respondents their views on a number of environmental issues. Significantly with the forthcoming G8 summit focusing heavily on pollution and climate change, some 59 per cent of those surveyed think that tough government legislation at an international level to seriously restrict the environmental impact of the world’s largest polluters will make the greatest difference to environmental problems globally. Almost three quarters of people in Germany were supportive of international legislation (73 per cent) compared to just 50 per cent of respondents in Italy.

At the same time, across all those countries surveyed, just nine per cent of respondents say that national action to restrict the environmental impact of businesses would have the most significant results, while 14 per cent believe that greater responsibility taken by individuals to reduce their own environmental impact would make the most considerable improvements.

Encouragingly, people were optimistic that it was not too late to make a difference, with 65 per cent across Europe agreeing that if we act now we can reverse the damage and make the world a safe place to live 50 years from now. This was highest among people in France (71 per cent) and lowest in the Netherlands (51 per cent). Just six per cent of people in Europe feel that “environmental threats have been over-hyped by the media and the threat is not as great as we think”, while only nine per cent believe it is now too late for us to act.

¹ Those countries surveyed in the study were the UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, Italy and Spain.

In terms of addressing environmental issues, there was a notable consistency in opinion, with the majority of respondents across all countries citing either “reduction in pollution” or “investment in renewable resources” as key focus areas. 7 out of ten people (31 per cent) surveyed called for their government to put the greatest emphasis on investing in renewable energy. This rose to 38 per cent among people in Germany. Just 10 per cent of all respondents said their governments should focus on recycling domestic and business waste, this was highest among people in Britain (17 per cent) and lowest in Germany (4 per cent). A further 10 per cent of those surveyed say efforts should be targeted at improving energy efficiency in homes and businesses.

Q: Which of the following environmental issues do you think your government should put the most emphasis on? (Choose one statement only)

	EU	UK	Fr	Ger	Net	It	Sp
Recycling domestic and business waste	10%	17%	12%	4%	7%	14%	5%
Improving energy efficiency in homes and businesses	10%	11%	5%	12%	13%	10%	7%
Green travel and improved public transport schemes	11%	13%	7%	6%	14%	19%	9%
Reducing pollution	26%	20%	28%	31%	21%	21%	32%
Investing in energy production from renewable sources	31%	26%	27%	38%	32%	32%	33%
Preserving the countryside	10%	10%	20%	6%	10%	2%	13%
Don’t know / none of the above	2%	3%	2%	4%	3%	1%	1%

Key: EU – European average of the six countries surveyed; FR - France; Ger - Germany; Net - Netherlands; IT - Italy; Sp - Spain

When asked to rate the environmental performance of the country in which they live, some 29 per cent of people surveyed rate it as “poor”. This was highest among people in Italy (59 per cent) and lowest in the Netherlands (10 per cent) and Germany (11 per cent). A quarter of people in Britain rate the UK’s environmental performance as “poor”, compared to 13 per cent who think it is “good”.

Chris Eynon, Managing Director of TNS Public Services, commented: “Clearly environmental threats are of real concern to people across Europe and an issue which a significant majority think will not be addressed until a global environmental catastrophe occurs. While people accept the scale of the problem, many, it seems, feel powerless to address this and expect initiatives to be delivered by the international community, rather than by legislation from their own governments, or action from the business community.

“A wider understanding of the issues relating to climate change and the environment seem evident as a result of increased media coverage and public awareness campaigns. However, it appears the European community is not

convinced about how change will be achieved and expects the international community to pull together to drive developments in the future.

“In Britain, renewables are viewed by more than a quarter of people as the solution for the future and the government has suggested that significant investment in wind power will take place. However, recent reports have asked the government to move away from focusing only on wind power driven solutions and consider alternatives such as clean coal and nuclear power. In addition, carbon storage or “sequestration” has recently been put high on the government’s agenda as a possible long-term solution for managing carbon dioxide emissions. How the government decides to approach this issue and where funding is directed in the future remains to be seen.”

The research was undertaken in March 2005. 1,000 people aged 16 and over in each of the six countries surveyed: UK, France, Germany, Spain, Netherlands and Italy.

About TNS 6th Dimension:

TNS launched 6thdimension in Spring 2005. The service is built upon a managed, permission-based online access panel and is operational in Europe, Asia Pacific and the US. 6thdimension enables clients to understand consumers’ behavioural relationships with brands and services, in order to anticipate their needs. The service is key to providing TNS client with the 'sixth sense of business'.

About TNS:

TNS is a market information group. We are the world’s largest custom research company and a leading provider of social and political polling. We are also a major supplier of consumer panel, TV audience measurement and media intelligence services.

TNS operates a global network spanning 70 countries and employs over 13,000 people. We provide market information and measurement, together with insights and analysis, to local and multinational organisations. We combine our specialist sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of new product development, motivational research, brand and advertising research and stakeholder management to bring our clients up-to-the minute, internationally consistent information.

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