



Briefing

JANUARY
2014

Citizens' polls data - United Kingdom

Break-out facts

- 94% of British people believe protecting the environment is important to them personally.
- 96% of British people believe we have to halt biodiversity loss because it is a moral obligation and 94% believes our well-being and quality of life depends on it.
- 90% of British people believe they themselves or their children will be affected by biodiversity loss.
- 88% of British people believe Europe should allocate more financial resources to nature protection in Europe, and 92% believes the EU should increase the areas where nature is protected.
- 91% of British people do not think it is acceptable to blindly destroy nature protection areas in Europe such as Natura 2000 for economic development.
- Only 19% of British people believe their vote counts in Europe and only 25% tends to trust the European Parliament.
- The British people believes that exiting the current financial and economic crisis sustainably by using less natural resources and emitting less greenhouse gas (63%) is just as important as making the EU's industrial base more competitive (62%) to exit the crisis.
- 73% of the British people believe protecting the environment can boost economic growth and 84% believes that more efficient use of our natural resources can boost economic growth.

Note: all the figures as quoted below have been taken from Eurobarometers available and should always be referenced to. Rephrased sentences (as done in the break-out facts) should always be checked against the original data to avoid any misinterpretations.

General

- 94% believes protecting the environment is important to them personally¹.
- 40% agrees that concerns about the environment are exaggerated².
- 67% agrees European environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment in their country³.

Biodiversity

- 51% has heard of the term 'biodiversity' and knows what it means, while 36% heard of it but does not know what it means. 12% has never heard of the term 'biodiversity'⁴.
- 43% feels informed about the loss of biodiversity, while 57% does not⁵.
- 96% agree we have to halt the loss of biodiversity because it is a moral obligation, 94% agrees we have to halt the loss of biodiversity because our well-being and quality of life is based upon nature and biodiversity, 88% believes we have to halt the loss of biodiversity because it is indispensable for the production of goods such as food, fuel and medicines, 73% believes we have to halt biodiversity because Europe will get poorer economically as a consequence of the loss of biodiversity, and 86% believes we have to halt biodiversity loss because it is essential in tackling climate change⁶.
- 9% thinks biodiversity loss won't have an effect on them personally or on their children, 41% thinks it will have an effect on their children, 34% thinks it will have an effect on them later on, and 15% is already affected by the loss of biodiversity⁷.
- In order to protect biodiversity 92% agree that Europe should increase the areas where nature is protected in Europe, 87% agree that Europe should create financial rewards for nature conservation, 91% believes Europe should make subsidies to sectors like agriculture or fisheries also take account of biodiversity, and 88% agrees that Europe should allocate more financial resources to nature protection in Europe⁸.
- 28% have heard of the Natura 2000 network, and 9% know what it is. 71% have never heard of it⁹.
- 4% thinks it is acceptable to damage or destroy nature protection areas such as Natura 2000 for economic development, 46% thinks this should be prohibited, and 45% thinks this is only acceptable for projects of major public interest and if damage is fully compensated for¹⁰.
- 21% of people are a member of an organisation working to protect nature and biodiversity¹¹.

Water

- 40% feels well informed about problems facing groundwater, lakes, rivers and coastal waters in their country, 58% doesn't feel well informed¹².
- 44% believes water quality problems are a serious problem in their country, 73% believes floods are a serious problem, and 70% find droughts/overconsumption of water a serious problem¹³.
- 71% is concerned that overuse of water in agriculture has an impact on the quality and quantity of water, 80% is concerned that pesticides and fertilizers in agriculture has an impact, 57% is concerned energy production has an impact, and 63% is concerned that shipping has an impact¹⁴.
- 71% believes all water users should be charged for the volume of water they use, and 43% believes there should be measures to offset possible negative social effects following from this¹⁵.
- 10% believes the EU its current measures are enough to address water problems in Europe¹⁶.

Agriculture

- 87% believe agriculture is beneficial for the environment and 85% believes agriculture contributes to the beauty of the countryside¹⁷.

Resource efficiency

- 80,4% believes Europe could be more efficient in the use of its natural resources¹⁸.
- 84% believes the efficient use of natural resources can boost economic growth in the EU¹⁹.

Climate change

- 49% believes climate change is a very serious problem and 31% believes it is a fairly serious problem²⁰.
- 71% believes fighting climate change and using energy more efficiently can boost the economy and jobs in the EU²¹.

Economy

- 83% believes companies should be obliged to publish reports on their overall environmental performance and the environmental performance of their products²².
- 16% believes national progress should be evaluated based mostly on economic criteria (such as GDP), 56% believes it should be evaluated based equally on social, environmental and economic criteria and 18% believes it should be based mostly on social and environmental criteria²³.
- 73% believes the protection of the environment can boost economic growth in the EU²⁴.
- 88% agrees that the big polluters (corporations and industry) should be mainly responsible for protecting the environment²⁵.
- 63% believes that it is important that the EU supports an economy that uses less natural resources and emits less greenhouse gas to exit the present financial and economic crisis, and 62% believes it is important to help the EU's industrial base to be more competitive by promoting entrepreneurship and developing new skills²⁶.
- 93% of SMEs is complying with environmental legislation and only 1% is not because of difficulties²⁷.
- 47% of SMEs is already, or contemplating to go beyond the requirements of environmental legislation and 46% does not want to go beyond the requirements²⁸.
- For 65% of SMEs, resource efficiency actions either had no impact (31%) or decreased production costs (34%). For 21% it increased production costs²⁹.
- 74% is satisfied with their return on investments made on resource efficiency, while 5% is dissatisfied³⁰.
- 70% of SMEs spends less than 5% of their annual turnover on resource efficiency actions³¹.
- 79% is satisfied with the level of public support for resource efficiency actions³².
- 19% had difficulties when trying to set up resource efficiency actions with the cost of environmental actions, 14% with the complexity of administrative or legal procedures, and 13% had difficulties to adapt legislation to their company³³.

Democracy

- In the past 2 years, 26% of citizens has expressed their views on public issues with their elected representative at local/regional level, 15% with their elected representative at national level, 4% with their elected representative at EU level, 36% expressed their view online, and 53% signed a petition (online or paper)³⁴.
- 83% tends not to trust political parties³⁵.
- 78% agrees that the EU generates too much red tape³⁶.
- Only 25% tends to trust the European Parliament³⁷.
- Only 19% believes their voice counts in the EU³⁸.

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- ¹ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Flash Eurobarometer 365 (Attitudes of European Citizens Towards the Environment)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 126.
- ² European Commission, Brussels DG Communication COMM A2 'Research and Speechwriting' (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 367 (Attitudes of Europeans towards building the single market for green products)*. p. 149.
- ³ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Flash Eurobarometer 365 (Attitudes of European Citizens Towards the Environment)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 175.
- ⁴ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 105.
- ⁵ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 106.
- ⁶ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 112-116.
- ⁷ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 120.
- ⁸ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 128-131.
- ⁹ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 134.
- ¹⁰ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 140.
- ¹¹ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 379 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards the Issue of Biodiversity, wave 3)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 144.
- ¹² European Commission, Brussels DG Communication COMM A2 'Research and Speechwriting' (2012): *Flash Eurobarometer 344 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards Water-related Issues)*. p. 113.
- ¹³ European Commission, Brussels DG Communication COMM A2 'Research and Speechwriting' (2012): *Flash Eurobarometer 344 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards Water-related Issues)*. p. 116-118.
- ¹⁴ European Commission, Brussels DG Communication COMM A2 'Research and Speechwriting' (2012): *Flash Eurobarometer 344 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards Water-related Issues)*. p. 123-127.
- ¹⁵ European Commission, Brussels DG Communication COMM A2 'Research and Speechwriting' (2012): *Flash Eurobarometer 344 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards Water-related Issues)*. p. 132.
- ¹⁶ European Commission, Brussels DG Communication COMM A2 'Research and Speechwriting' (2012): *Flash Eurobarometer 344 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards Water-related Issues)*. p. 140.
- ¹⁷ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Special Eurobarometer 389 (Europeans' Attitudes Towards Food Security, Food Quality, and the Countryside)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 72-75.
- ¹⁸ European Commission (2011): *Flash Eurobarometer 316 (Attitudes of Europeans Towards Resource Efficiency)*. The GALLUP Organisation, Brussels. p. 38.
- ¹⁹ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Flash Eurobarometer 365 (Attitudes of European Citizens Towards the Environment)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 156.
- ²⁰ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Special Eurobarometer 372 (Climate Change)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 74.
- ²¹ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Special Eurobarometer 372 (Climate Change)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 77.
- ²² European Commission, Brussels DG Communication COMM A2 'Research and Speechwriting' (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 367 (Attitudes of Europeans towards building the single market for green products)*. p. 164.
- ²³ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Flash Eurobarometer 365 (Attitudes of European Citizens Towards the Environment)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 151.
- ²⁴ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Flash Eurobarometer 365 (Attitudes of European Citizens Towards the Environment)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 155.
- ²⁵ European Commission, Brussels (2011): *Flash Eurobarometer 365 (Attitudes of European Citizens Towards the Environment)*. TNS Political & Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 164.
- ²⁶ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Eurobarometer 79.4 (2013)*. TNS Opinion, Brussels [producer]. Tables of Results, p. 112-115.
- ²⁷ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 381 (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 160-161.
- ²⁸ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 381 (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 160-161.
- ²⁹ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 381 (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 210.
- ³⁰ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 381 (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 215-216.
- ³¹ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 381 (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 214.
- ³² European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 381 (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 241.

³³ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 381 (SMEs, resource efficiency and green markets)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 243-244.

³⁴ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Flash Eurobarometer 373 (Europeans' Engagement in Participatory Democracy)*. TNS Political and Social, Brussels [producer]. p. 58.

³⁵ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Eurobarometer 79.4 (2013)*. TNS Opinion, Brussels [producer]. *Tables of Results*, p. 41.

³⁶ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Eurobarometer 79.4 (2013)*. TNS Opinion, Brussels [producer]. *Tables of Results*, p. 59.

³⁷ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Eurobarometer 79.4 (2013)*. TNS Opinion, Brussels [producer]. *Tables of Results*, p. 72.

³⁸ European Commission, Brussels (2013): *Eurobarometer 79.4 (2013)*. TNS Opinion, Brussels [producer]. *Tables of Results*, p. 91.