

Obs'COP 2024

Climate and Public Opinions
International Observatory



Obs'COP 2024: the climate emergency is losing ground to economic concerns

Paris, November 13, 2024 - Ipsos and EDF have published the 6th edition of the Climate and Public Opinions International Observatory. This major survey, conducted among a sample of 23 500 people in 30 countries, represents an international status report on opinions, knowledge, expectations and levels of engagement in relation to climate change. With economic issues now prevailing over environmental ones, especially in France, the study reveals a drop in concern about the climate, while skepticism is on the rise internationally.

1/ In France and worldwide, the environment deprioritized, and decreasing concern about climate change

- With economic prospects worsening in Europe and Asia, people are more concerned about supporting economic growth, to the detriment of environmental issues. In fact, when faced with the dilemma of whether to prioritize the environment or growth and jobs, a relative majority of respondents in our international survey admittedly continue to prioritize the environment, but that choice is declining (46%, -7 points in 6 years) in favor of giving priority to economic growth (38%, +4 points in 6 years). **France** is no exception to the rule: in 6 years, prioritizing economic growth has gained 10 points, while prioritizing the environment has dropped by 7 points.
- Climate change has an important place among the subjects of most concern worldwide (ranks 2nd) and in France (ranks 4th). However, **the level of concern it generates has dropped back over the past three years on a global scale (40% “very concerned,” -3 points)**. In France, the level of concern has also dropped, going from 35% to 29% in 3 years, within a context where geopolitical and economic tension is the predominant concern. Armed conflicts thus rank second in concerns among Europeans (50%), after the cost of living (57%).

2/ Although climate skepticism persists within the population, the French are apparently not very sensitive to “climate fake news.”

- **While 9 out of 10 French people agree that climate change is a reality** (90% agree that we are experiencing a change in climate, +1), **one third of the population are still “climate skeptics”** (33%, -2), **in other words they continue to dispute the existence of climate change** (10%, =), **or doubt that human activity is the main cause** (23%, -2). On a global scale, the findings are more concerning since they suggest a consistent increase in skepticism: +7 points in 6 years.
- When it comes to any climate fake news that may be circulating, especially on social media, (for example the notion that scientists are minimizing the sun’s influence on climate warming, or that a 2-3-degree increase in the average temperature would have no serious consequences on our lives), **the French are generally less sensitive to these distorted truths** than the rest of the world. One **exception however concerns the carbon footprint of electric vehicles**: while studies show that over its entire life cycle, including production, usage and recycling, an electric vehicle emits between 2 and 6 times fewer greenhouse gases than a gas-powered vehicle¹, 71% of the French population think that electric vehicles are just as harmful to the climate as gas-powered models (cf. 50% of the world population). The French are not the only ones to dispute the ecological advantage of electric cars

¹ https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/documents/21211_VraiFaux-Vehicules-electriques-1.pdf

either: the argument is also well supported among the Czechs (67%), Belgians (66%), Poles (62%) and Germans (60%).

3/ In order to limit climate change, much is expected of governments and the corporate world

- **The call to action to limit climate change is mainly directed at governments (70% globally, 69% in France).** Next, although quite far behind, come consumers themselves (41% globally, cf. 51% in France) then corporations (just 35% globally, but 58% in France). **So France stands out through a greater focus on corporate environmental responsibility.**
- The French take a tough view of the actions conducted until now: fewer than 40% think that companies, the government or the local authorities are taking effective action.
- An illustration of this dissatisfaction: when it comes to preparing France for the consequences of climate change, **fewer than one third of the population (31%) feel that adaptation measures have been implemented by the government or local authorities.** This finding lags well behind the average for other countries in the world (45%), but is close to the European average (36%), whereas **one out of five French people (22%) believe that they will be forced to move in the next 10 years** as a result of climate change (15% in Europe).

4/ Questioning lifestyles: an increasingly ineffective demand

- Because they feel that they are already doing their fair share, **people seem less and less willing to change and adapt their lifestyle (45%, -8 points in 6 years).** The alternative, in other words relying on scientific and technological progress, does not yet have majority support (34%), since 21% choose neither of these two solutions. However, this reliance on technology has progressed in the past 6 years (+5 points) and is already supported by a majority in China in particular (46%).
- Although a - small - majority (51%) of French people continue to adapt their lifestyle, compared to 26% who prefer the technological solution, these figures are evolving: the lifestyle lever has dropped 13 points in 6 years, whereas the techno-solutionist option has progressed by 10 points. So the French are gradually aligning with the rest of the world's population in being less and less supportive of a demand doubtless perceived as unfair and guilt-inducing.
- The ineffectiveness of that demand is evident in the fact that **the efforts made by French people on a day-to-day basis have dropped in the past two years in almost all areas**, especially as concerns car use (31% systematically avoid it or almost whenever possible, -6 points) or air travel (32% systematically avoid it or almost whenever possible, -4 points). However, the French are still among the top of the class of the 30 countries surveyed, with more frequent habits in terms of energy sobriety in particular.
- When it comes to the government policies that could be adopted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, **the French still massively reject any policies that would involve new taxes further restricting their purchasing power, particularly as concerns their vehicles:** only 26% would view setting up urban tollbooths at the entrance to large cities as acceptable (=), and 32% when it comes to making CO₂-producing energies such as gas and gasoline more expensive (+3). A particular point to be noted in relation to the future of gas-powered cars, a ban on their sale by 2035 is deemed less and less acceptable in France (34% acceptability, -7 points in 4 years), but the same applies in all European countries (European average 37%, -9 points).

The observatory's complete findings can be found at: www.edf.fr/observatoire

About this survey

Ipsos survey for EDF conducted between August 27th and October 1st, 2024, among 23 500 individuals questioned in 30 countries: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States. Survey conducted among representative samples of the population aged 16 and over in each country. Quota method applied in relation to gender, age, profession, region and agglomeration category. In France, 1000 individuals representative of the French population aged 16 and over were questioned.

About EDF

A key player in energy transition, the EDF group is an integrated energy company, operating in all sector areas: production, distribution, trading, and the sale of energy and energy services. An international leader in low-carbon energies with decarbonized production of 434 TWh ⁽¹⁾, the Group has developed a diversified production mix based mainly on nuclear and renewable energy (including hydraulic) and is investing in new technologies to accompany the energy transition. EDF's goal is to *build a carbon-neutral energy future that combines protection of the planet, well-being and development, through electricity and innovative solutions and services*. The Group supplies power and services to around 40.9 million customers ⁽²⁾ and achieved sales of 139.7 billion euros in 2023.

(1) cf. [URD 2023 d'EDF](#), sections 1.2.3, 1.3.2 and 3.1

(2) Customers are counted by delivery site; one customer may have two delivery sites.

Media contact

service-de-presse@edf.fr / 01 40 42 46 37

Please only print this document if necessary.

EDF SA
22-30 avenue de Wagram
75382 Paris cedex 08 - France
Capital de 2 084 365 041 euros
552 081 317 R.C.S. Paris
www.edf.fr

Contacts

Media:
service-de-presse@edf.fr / 01 40 42 46 37
Analysts & Investors:
edf-irteam@edf.fr