



Obs'COP 2023: Climate Change: World Opinion Faces up to Contradictions

Paris, 23rd of November 2023 - As a major stakeholder in the global energy sector and committed to carbon neutrality by 2050, EDF presents the results of an opinion survey conducted for the 5th consecutive year by Ipsos in 29 countries¹ on five continents, making up two-thirds of the world's population and including the largest CO₂ emitters. Every year, EDF conducts an international survey of opinions, knowledge, expectations and commitment levels with regard to climate change, to support reflection on the subject and contribute to the constructive search for future solutions.

The results are freely available on: <https://www.edf.fr/en/the-edf-group/climate-and-public-opinions-international-observatory>

1/ Exposed to the worst effects of climate change, emerging countries are more preoccupied than Western countries

- **Extreme heat and heatwaves are making their mark around the world**
Climate events are perceived very uniformly: extreme heat is felt by 63% of the world's population (and by at least 50% in most countries). Lack of difference between the seasons is the second most widely shared sign (41%). **The French are particularly affected by heatwaves and droughts**, which hit hard in 2022 and 2023. With 72% mentioning hot weather, in France the situation seems similar to that in Spain (73%), Morocco (73%) and Turkey (78%).
- **These events are a sure sign of climate change**
80% of people interviewed believe that the phenomena occurring in their country are increasingly caused or aggravated by climate change, with 43% answering "yes, absolutely". This certainty is very high in South America (66%).
- **The countries most vulnerable to climate-related disasters are the most worried**
43% of the world's population is very preoccupied by climate change: this is not a majority, but it is still a very high proportion, which has not changed since 2022. This concern is closely correlated with the objective vulnerability of countries to the effects of climate change²: concern is high in countries where populations are witnessing an increasing number of climate-related disasters that have lasting effects on infrastructure, human life and the economy (e.g. Brazil, Colombia, India, Indonesia, etc.).
- **30% of the planet's inhabitants says they are anxious**
When interviewees qualify their feelings by choosing from a selection of 6 words, ranging from serenity to anxiety, 30% said they felt anxious, a very high level of emotion. This does not correlate with the country's level of vulnerability but is more of an individual response. At comparable levels of vulnerability, anxiety is very high in Indonesia and Japan, but lower in Chile and Brazil. Finally, contrary to popular belief, climate anxiety is felt far less in Europe than elsewhere (19%, and 21% in France), and not only young people are most anxious. However, older people do feel less anxious.

¹ Methodology: countries are selected based on their CO₂ emissions measured in tonnes per year, based on their geographic location, on their exemplariness in fighting climate change and on their economic and social model: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States. Representative samples of between 500 and 1,000 people per country; quota method. Fieldwork conducted by internet between 16/08 and 02/10/23. Due to the geopolitical context, results for Russia are not available this year.

² As measured by the Global Climate Risk Index (GCRI) calculated by the NGO GermanWatch. See: <https://www.germanwatch.org/en/19777>

2/ The environment and climate are seen as priority issues in developed countries, although they compete with other priorities in southern-hemisphere countries

- When defining the place that the environment and climate occupy relative to other issues in various countries, the situation is the opposite of what we measure in terms of concern and perceived impact.
- **In Europe, North America and even Asia**, people continue to place the environment in their top 5 concerns, despite the inflationary crisis and pressure from social, security and migration issues. Similarly, in these countries, the fight against climate change is seen as the top priority (compared to other forms of pollution, for example).
- **In southern-hemisphere countries**, the environment definitely has a more negative impact on daily life than in the northern hemisphere, as a result of infrastructure and the population's standard of living. Nevertheless, unemployment, crime and corruption are the main causes of unease. The environment remains a secondary concern. The same applies to the climate, whose consequences may be dramatic, but which competes with pollution, seen as more urgent to deal with for the moment.

3/ Faced with current disasters, around one third of the population is still in denial or sceptical

- **Following four years of growth, climate scepticism has levelled off**
Climate scepticism is stagnating rather than falling: 36% (-1 / 2022) of the world's population still disputes the human origin of climate change. Once again, it is just as present in vulnerable countries as in more resilient ones; populations in countries dependent on fossil fuels often refuse to place the blame on mankind. Perhaps it is no longer so essential to be alarmed when it is perceived to have little effect on people's environmental behaviour. This year, climate scepticism rose quite sharply in Canada and Italy, but fell in Saudi Arabia and in Scandinavia. In France, it also fell (35%, -2 pts).
- **Four out of ten of the world's inhabitants put the future effects of climate change into perspective**
While few people in the world believe that global warming will generate mainly positive consequences (3%), 27% think they will be both positive and negative, and 11% don't answer the question. That amounts to 41% who believe that the effects will not only be negative. The scale of these responses is surprising in highly vulnerable countries such as India, Australia, Indonesia and South Africa (> 40%). In France, relativism is both higher than in the rest of the world (48%) and on the rise (+3 pts vs. 2021).

4/ Fear of having to leave home and dealing with climate migration

- **In the countries in the southern hemisphere, and particularly along the equator, the fear of being forced to move because of climate change is very present:** it affects more than half the population. In some countries, a very large majority of the population feel concerned: 66% of Indians, 62% of Egyptians, 57% of Indonesians. This fear also exists in some countries in the northern hemisphere, but at much lower levels: in Italy, Spain, the United States and France, more than 20% have imagined this scenario. It should also be noted that in France, 8% feel sure that they will soon no longer be able to live where they currently do.
- **However, the prospect of the arrival of large numbers of climate migrants** seems likely for many, particularly in countries already feeling the pressure (Turkey, Spain, Italy) or expecting large numbers of internally displaced people (such as India). The French are among the most certain: 32%, much higher than the Spanish (26%) or the Italians (25%).

5/ Despite a growing reluctance to give up their lifestyle, citizen-consumers are attempting to change their habits

- **Calls for people to change their lifestyles are reaching their limits**

People who believe that this solution is preferable to relying on technology have fallen from 53% to 46% over five years. France remains more favourable to changes in individual habits (52%). People also believe that the key to saving the planet lies in the hands of governments, and far less in the hands of individual citizens.

- **Nevertheless, they increasingly declare that they are making efforts to consume in a more environmentally-friendly way**, especially by travelling less by car. Europe has been forced to adopt energy sobriety, but this seems to be becoming the norm. France appears to be at the forefront of this movement, and in limiting car use. However, consumer information needs to be clearer, to encourage consumers to prioritize their efforts on effective levers for decarbonization.

6/ Climate policy: governments' room for manoeuvre is shrinking

- **Government climate inaction is less criticized than five years ago**

56% of those interviewed believe that their governments are taking action (compared to 48% in 2019). However, local authorities (on the front line when dealing with weather disasters) have really come to the fore on the climate scene: +14 points of visibility in 5 years!

- **The acceptability of climate policies, particularly when they restrict individual freedoms, is the real black mark in this study**

- In countries with a high GDP in particular, policies aimed at restricting the cost or freedom of car travel are categorically rejected. The only openings concern banning short-haul flights and implementing an ecological penalty. A carbon tax on energy remains out of the question, particularly in Europe, given the cost-of-living crisis affecting all economies.
- Some decisions on infrastructure are acceptable in many countries, including France: **not building any more airports or motorways** is a decision that could be envisaged in Europe, but also in India, China, Korea, Turkey, etc.
- On the other hand, the idea that we should “**densify cities by limiting the number of single-family homes in favour of apartment blocks**” gives rise to very different reactions depending on the country: well accepted in India, China, Indonesia, Africa and the Middle East, it is rejected in Europe (and consequently in France), and in Japan and Korea.
- The other side of climate policy (concerning **adaptation to change**) is not very visible to the global public, except in a few countries that seem to be pioneers and are mainly located in Asia.
- In the energy sector, the only real change is in nuclear power, which continues to make a comeback, particularly in Europe.

About EDF

As a major player in energy transition, the EDF Group is an integrated energy company active in all businesses: generation, transmission, distribution, energy trading, energy sales and energy services. EDF group is a world leader in low-carbon energy, having developed a diverse production mix based mainly on nuclear and renewable energy (including hydropower). It is also investing in new technologies to support energy transition. EDF's raison d'être is to build a net zero energy future with electricity and innovative solutions and services, to help save the planet and drive well-being and economic development. The Group is involved in supplying energy and services to approximately 40.3 million customers (1), of whom 30.3 million in France (2). It generated consolidated sales of €143.5 billion in 2022.

(1) Customers are counted per delivery site. A customer can have two delivery points: one for electricity and another one for gas.

(2) Including ÉS (Électricité de Strasbourg) and SEI.

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