



European Perceptions of Climate Change

A Representative Survey in UK, Norway, France and Germany

This study surveyed for the very first time the in-depth, nationally representative opinions on climate change, climate policy and future energy options of over 4,000 members of the public in four countries which are central to climate policy and the efforts in Europe to construct a low carbon energy system of the future.

The study was co-ordinated by Cardiff University (project leader: professor Nick Pidgeon, School of Psychology) in collaboration with the University of Stuttgart in Germany, Institut Symlog in France, the University of Bergen and the Rokkan Centre in Norway, and Climate Outreach in the UK.

Key Findings

A key finding was that majorities in all four participating countries believe that climate change is happening, and there is broad support for a range of different policy measures to address it. In particular, the study found:

Climate Change Beliefs

The majority (over 80% in all 4 countries) believe that the world's climate is changing, and a similar proportion think that it is at least partly caused by human activity. Six in ten (60%) believe that we are already feeling the effects of climate change, and associate the main effects with disruption to weather in their country (more storms and floods, unpredictable weather, and hotter/dryer spells).

The Scientific Consensus

Only minority percentages (24% in Germany, 30% UK, 33% France, and 35% in Norway) believe that there is a strong scientific consensus on climate change.

Support for Key Policy Measures

At least two thirds support their country being part of the 2015 Paris international climate change agreement.

Majorities in all four countries support using public money to prepare now for the impacts of climate change, and to help developing nations cope with extreme weather.

Renewable energy (solar, offshore and onshore wind, and hydropower) remain the most popular energy sources in all countries, and majorities of 69% or over support using public money to subsidise renewable energy sources.

The Refugee Crisis in Europe and Future Migration.

For the very first time the survey probed beliefs about climate change and migration, a topic which had attracted some media comment during 2016 in the light of the European refugee crisis.

A clear majority in all four countries dispute that climate change is one of the causes of the high number of refugees coming to Europe.

However, 30% (in the UK), 37% (France), 39% (Germany) and 57% (in Norway) did think that climate change will lead to more migration to their country in the future.

Norwegian project team:

- Gisela Böhm, professor, University of Bergen (gisela.boehm@uib.no)
- Endre Tvinnereim, senior researcher, Uni Research Rokkan Center (Endre.Tvinnereim@uni.no)

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Further information:

- The survey report is available online at: <http://orca.cf.ac.uk/98660/7/EPCC.pdf>
- Twitter hashtag #EPCC17