

ANALYSIS OF APRIL 2011 EUROBAROMETER SURVEY DATA

Attitudes To The Natural Environment

TNS UK Limited

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Scotland's Environment Website

Annex:

Analysis of April 2011 Eurobarometer Survey Data
Attitudes to the Natural Environment

Report for the Scottish
Environmental Protection Agency



Analysis of Eurobarometer 75.2 – April/May 2011 - Attitudes towards the environment

The following provides a summary of the results of the interviews conducted across Europe in the April/May 2011 wave of Eurobarometer. Results are shown for the full 26,825 interviews conducted across Europe, the 1,280 interviews conducted in the UK and the 111 interviews conducted in Scotland.

While 48% of Scots rate protection of the environment as 'very important', this is a lower proportion than recorded across the UK or Europe as a whole.

Qb1 How important is protecting the environment to you personally?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Very important	48%	58%	60%
Fairly important	39%	36%	35%
Not very important	11%	5%	4%
Not at all important	3%	1%	1%

In Scotland and across the wider UK, the largest proportion of people associated the words 'the environment' with climate change. Also, 9% of Scots associated the environment with the quality of life where they live. By comparison these words are associated with a wider range of concepts across Europe.

Qb2 When people talk about "the environment", which of the following do you think of first?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Climate change	11%	11%	6%
The quality of life where you live	9%	6%	5%
The state of the environment our children will inherit	6%	7%	7%
Green and pleasant landscapes	5%	3%	6%
Protecting nature	5%	5%	9%
Using up natural resources	5%	5%	3%
Pollution in towns and cities	4%	7%	6%
Man-made disasters	3%	3%	4%
Earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters	0%	3%	3%

The greatest environmental concerns amongst Scots were the depletion of natural resources, man-made disasters, water pollution and the impact on our health of chemicals. Compared to the UK population as a whole, residents of Scotland appear to be less concerned about climate change, air pollution, urban problems or agricultural pollution. Across Europe as a whole, concern is greater in relation to man-made and natural disasters and agricultural pollution.

Qb3 the following list, please pick the five main environmental issues that you are worried about.

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Depletion of natural resources	37%	33%	31%
Man-made disasters	36%	34%	41%
Water pollution	34%	32%	43%
The impact on our health of chemicals	33%	29%	35%
Growing waste	31%	36%	37%
Natural disasters	28%	26%	31%
Loss of biodiversity	27%	22%	22%
Climate change	25%	36%	34%
Air pollution	22%	29%	37%
The use of genetically modified organisms in farming	16%	15%	22%
Urban problems	16%	25%	17%
Our consumption habits	14%	20%	20%
Impact of current transport modes	14%	19%	15%
Agricultural pollution	11%	18%	26%
Noise pollution	10%	12%	8%
None (SPONTANEOUS)	8%	4%	1%
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	1%	1%	1%

Overall 72% of residents of Scotland stated that they were either very or fairly well informed about environmental issues. This is lower than the average across the UK as a whole (77%). By comparison a larger proportion of European state that they are fairly badly informed.

Qb4 In general, do you consider that you are very well, fairly well, fairly badly or very badly informed about environmental issues?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Very well informed	11%	14%	8%
Fairly well informed	61%	63%	52%
Fairly badly informed	19%	19%	31%
Very badly informed	9%	4%	7%
DK	0%	1%	2%

Of the list of subjects shown to respondents, the largest proportions of residents of Scotland stated that they felt that there was a lack of information regarding the impacts of chemicals on health, the use of genetically modified organisms in farming, agricultural pollution and water pollution.

Qb5 From the following list, please tell me the five main issues about which you feel you lack information in particular.

	Scotland	UK	Europe
The impact on our health of chemicals	46%	38%	42%
The use of genetically modified organisms in farming	29%	31%	40%
Agricultural pollution	27%	26%	30%
Water pollution	25%	23%	29%
Depletion of natural resources	18%	21%	27%
Man-made disasters	18%	16%	23%
Loss of biodiversity	17%	19%	28%
Air pollution	14%	19%	22%
Impact of current transport modes	13%	12%	14%
Climate change	11%	16%	21%
Our consumption habits	10%	15%	14%
Urban problems	10%	12%	12%
Noise pollution	9%	15%	14%
Growing waste	8%	20%	21%
Natural disasters (earthquakes, floods, etc.)	7%	10%	13%
DK	3%	5%	2%

The majority of residents of Scotland stated that they obtained information about the environment from the television news and newspapers. Just over a third used the internet and social media (35%). Compared to the UK average, residents of Scotland were more likely to obtain information from newspapers but less likely to obtain information from the radio. Europeans were more likely to source information from films and documentaries or magazines.

Qb6 From the following list, which are your three main sources of information about the environment?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Television news	78%	74%	74%
Newspapers	69%	56%	42%
The Internet and social media	35%	35%	33%
Films and documentaries on television	24%	21%	30%
Conversations with relatives/ family/ friends	13%	11%	16%
The radio	5%	25%	24%
Books	5%	7%	5%
Publications/ brochures/ information materials	4%	6%	9%
Magazines	3%	9%	12%
Events (conferences, fairs/ exhibitions, festivals)	0%	2%	3%

Over two in five residents of Scotland (43%) stated that they trust scientists the most when it comes to environmental issues, 26% trust what they see on television the most and 18% trust what they read in newspapers the most. Notably 16% of respondents stated that they did not trust any of the sources listed, a much higher proportion than recorded across Europe as a whole (6%).

Qb7 From the following list, who do you trust most when it comes to environmental issues?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Scientists	43%	38%	44%
Television	26%	25%	32%
Newspapers	18%	16%	16%
None	16%	13%	6%
Environmental protection associations	15%	22%	39%
The Internet and social media	10%	14%	16%
Relatives/ family/ neighbours/ friends/ colleagues	8%	9%	13%
The radio	8%	10%	11%
National Government	7%	7%	8%
International organisations (United Nations, etc.)	7%	12%	17%
Consumer associations and other citizens' organisations	5%	9%	19%
Teachers at school or university	5%	11%	15%
Regional/ local government	3%	5%	7%
European Union	2%	3%	11%
Trade unions	2%	3%	3%
Political parties standing for environment	1%	5%	11%
Companies	0%	2%	2%

As shown below, when asked how national progress should be evaluated, almost a quarter of Scots selected 'mostly on social and environmental criteria' (23%) while 20% selected 'mostly on economic criteria'. Most of the remainder felt that these criteria should be considered equally.

Qb7 Which of the following ways of evaluating progress in the UK do you think is the best? National progress should be evaluated based ...

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Mostly on economic criteria, such as GDP	20%	16%	17%
Equally on social and environmental and economic criteria	46%	56%	57%
Mostly on social and environmental criteria	23%	18%	17%
DK	11%	10%	10%

As shown below, as in the wider UK population, Scots were most likely to consider that the economy has the greatest impact on their quality of life (35% very much).

Qb8 In your opinion, to what extent do the following factors influence your "quality of life"?

a) The Environment	Scotland	UK	Europe
Very much	19%	22%	33%
Quite a lot	48%	51%	46%
Not much	23%	22%	18%
Not at all	10%	4%	3%
b) The Economy	Scotland	UK	
Very much	35%	34%	46%
Quite a lot	36%	47%	42%
Not much	24%	16%	10%
Not at all	4%	3%	2%
c) Social factors	Scotland	UK	
Very much	20%	23%	37%
Quite a lot	41%	47%	43%
Not much	32%	24%	16%
Not at all	6%	3%	2%

Residents of Scotland were more likely than the UK average to totally agree with both of the statements below suggesting greater levels of belief in the link between environmental protection and boosting economic growth. The responses provided by Scots were similar to those recorded across Europe as a whole.

Qb10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

		Scotland	UK	Europe
<i>The protection of the environment can boost economic growth in the EU</i>	Totally agree	30%	22%	30%
	Tend to agree	41%	51%	46%
	Tend to disagree	17%	15%	13%
	Totally disagree	3%	4%	3%
	DK	9%	8%	7%

		Scotland	UK	Europe
<i>The efficient use of natural resources can boost economic growth in the EU</i>	Totally agree	37%	29%	36%
	Tend to agree	41%	55%	48%
	Tend to disagree	9%	7%	8%
	Totally disagree	3%	3%	2%
	DK	10%	7%	6%

While a fifth of Scots residents totally agreed that they would be prepared to pay a bit more for environmentally friendly products (21%) almost as many totally disagreed (17%). Agreement with this statement was lower in Scotland than across the UK or Europe as a whole.

Qb11 Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with the following statement.

		Scotland	UK	Europe
<i>You are ready to buy environmentally friendly products even if they cost a little bit more.</i>	Totally agree	21%	22%	25%
	Tend to agree	43%	52%	47%
	Tend to disagree	17%	16%	17%
	Totally disagree	17%	8%	8%
	DK	2%	2%	3%

83% of residents of Scotland had separated most of their waste for recycling during the previous month, a slightly higher proportion than across the UK as a whole (79%) and significantly higher than the European average. However less than half had undertaken each of the other activities asked about and Scots residents were less likely than the UK average to have cut down on energy or water consumption or to have chosen more environmentally friendly ways to travel.

Qb12 Have you done any of the following during the past month for environmental reasons?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Separated most of your waste for recycling	83%	79%	62%
Cut down your energy consumption	43%	52%	54%
Reduced the consumption of disposable items	37%	44%	35%
Chosen a more environmentally friendly way of travelling	28%	37%	32%
Chosen locally produced products or groceries	26%	31%	30%
Cut down your water consumption	25%	37%	42%
Bought environmentally friendly products	17%	21%	20%
Used your car less	12%	25%	18%
None (SPONTANEOUS)	5%	5%	7%
DK	0%	1%	1%

Around two-thirds of residents of Scotland (65%) selected sorting waste so it can be recycled as one of the top three priorities for UK citizens to protect the environment. The other actions selected most often were reducing home energy consumption (48%) and using public transport as much as possible (40%).

Qb13 In your opinion, which of these should be the top-three priorities for UK citizens in their daily life to protect the environment?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Sort waste so that it can be recycled	65%	60%	60%
Reduce your home energy consumption	48%	45%	47%
Use public transport as much as possible	40%	41%	36%
Reduce waste by buying more selectively	28%	31%	32%
Buy more local products	24%	25%	28%
Replace your car with a more energy efficient one	19%	18%	15%
Purchase ecologically friendly products	13%	13%	26%
Consider environmental aspects when you make large purchases	10%	11%	15%
Pay a little more in taxes to help protect the environment	5%	4%	3%
DK	1%	4%	1%

When asked their levels of agreement with the following statements, around half of Scots totally agreed that they could play a role in protecting the environment in the UK (53%) while a larger proportion (63%) totally agreed that corporations and industry should be mainly responsible for protecting the environment. Just under a quarter totally agreed that environmental problems have a direct impact on their daily life.

Compared to the overall UK averages, Scots were more likely to believe that corporations and industry should be responsible for protecting the environment but less likely to feel that environmental problems affected their daily life.

Qb14 Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

		Scotland	UK	Europe
As an individual, you can play a role in protecting the environment in the UK	Totally agree	52%	46%	41%
	Tend to agree	36%	45%	44%
	Tend to disagree	8%	6%	11%
	Totally disagree	3%	2%	3%
	DK	1%	1%	1%
The big polluters (corporations and industry) should be mainly responsible for protecting the environment	Totally agree	63%	53%	63%
	Tend to agree	25%	36%	29%
	Tend to disagree	7%	7%	5%
	Totally disagree	4%	3%	1%
	DK	1%	2%	1%
Environmental problems have a direct effect on your daily life	Totally agree	23%	26%	36%
	Tend to agree	42%	43%	41%
	Tend to disagree	22%	22%	18%
	Totally disagree	13%	7%	4%
	DK	0%	2%	1%

Similarly to the UK average, around 3 in 5 Scots residents believed that decisions regarding protecting the environment should be made by the UK Government rather than jointly within the EU. Europeans were much more likely to believe that decisions should be made jointly within the EU.

Qb16 When it comes to protecting the environment, do you think that decisions should be made by your National Government or made jointly within the EU?

	Scotland	TOTAL	Europe
National Government	61%	58%	34%
Jointly within the EU	33%	39%	63%
DK	6%	2%	3%

As shown below, most residents of Scotland felt that each of the groups asked about were not doing enough to use natural resources efficiently. Most notably, 82% of the population felt that corporations and industry are not doing enough, a higher proportion than recorded across the UK or Europe as a whole.

Qb17 In your opinion, are each of the following currently doing too much, doing about the right amount, or not doing enough to use natural resources efficiently?

		Scotland	UK	Europe
Corporations and industry	Doing too much	0%	1%	2%
	Doing about the right amount	14%	15%	14%
	Not doing enough	82%	77%	79%
	DK	4%	7%	5%
Citizens themselves	Doing too much	0%	2%	2%
	Doing about the right amount	25%	27%	23%
	Not doing enough	69%	67%	71%
	DK	6%	5%	3%
Your national Government	Doing too much	1%	2%	2%
	Doing about the right amount	18%	24%	20%
	Not doing enough	68%	66%	72%
	DK	13%	8%	6%
The European Union	Doing too much	0%	4%	3%
	Doing about the right amount	17%	19%	26%
	Not doing enough	61%	60%	59%
	DK	22%	18%	12%

Residents of Scotland were most likely to believe that using natural resources more efficiently and introducing heavier fines for offenders were the most effective ways of tackling environmental problems.

Qb18 In your opinion, which of the following would be the most effective way(s) of tackling environmental problems?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Using natural resources more efficiently	35%	34%	24%
Introducing heavier fines for offenders	33%	32%	36%
Providing more information on environmental issues	26%	32%	26%
Ensuring higher financial incentives (e.g. tax breaks)	26%	26%	28%
Introducing stricter environmental legislation	18%	18%	26%
Ensuring better enforcement of existing environmental legislation	13%	17%	25%
Introducing or increasing taxation on environmentally damaging activities	5%	10%	15%

While around two-fifths of residents of Scotland totally agree that more EU money should be allocated to support environmentally friendly activities (39%), fewer agree so strongly that more European legislation is needed to protect the environment or that the EU should assist non-EU countries to improve environmental standards. In general Europeans were more likely to agree with all of the statements than residents of the UK or Scotland.

Qb19 Please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

		Scotland	UK	Europe
<i>European environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment in the UK</i>	Totally agree	27%	23%	39%
	Tend to agree	42%	43%	43%
	Tend to disagree	17%	15%	10%
	Totally disagree	9%	11%	4%
	DK	7%	8%	5%
<i>The EU should assist non-EU countries to improve their environmental standards</i>	Totally agree	25%	30%	36%
	Tend to agree	41%	41%	44%
	Tend to disagree	9%	12%	11%
	Totally disagree	22%	10%	4%
	DK	3%	7%	5%
<i>EU funding should be allocated more to support environmentally friendly activities and developments</i>	Totally agree	39%	36%	44%
	Tend to agree	38%	50%	45%
	Tend to disagree	7%	5%	5%
	Totally disagree	8%	4%	1%
	DK	8%	5%	4%

Views on the clarity of labelling on environmentally friendly products were varied.

Qb20 Do you think that current labels on products allow you to identify those products that are genuinely environmentally friendly?

	Scotland	UK	Europe
Yes, certainly	14%	12%	10%
Yes, to some extent	36%	42%	38%
No, not really	33%	31%	33%
No, not at all	11%	11%	16%
DK	7%	4%	4%