

Analysis of the 2014 and 2011 Eurobarometer Surveys

Attitudes of European Citizens towards the Environment

This report presents a summary of comparisons between the 2014 and 2011 Special Eurobarometer surveys on public attitudes towards the environment¹²³⁴. Answers to a selection of questions are presented for the EU as a whole, the UK and Scotland, to enable comparisons to be made between these different geographic areas and over time.

These comparisons provide the background context against which the evaluation of the effectiveness of [Scotland's Environment Web](#) in engaging the public in actions to monitor and improve the environment will be made.

The surveys in both 2014 and 2011 took place in April and May, with the table below showing the numbers of face to face interviews in each year.

	Number Interviewed	
	2014	2011
Scotland ¹	111	111
UK	1306	1317
EU	27998	26825

¹The numbers interviewed in Scotland are too low to allow statistically reliable comparisons, so qualitative comparisons with the UK and EU responses are presented for purely illustrative purposes, and should be treated with caution.

All survey data were kindly provided by TNS Opinion and Social, who conducted the surveys in most EU member states both in 2014 and 2011. Analysis of the results presented in this report is purely by Scotland's Environment Web, and therefore does not necessarily reflect the views of TNS, the EU or individual member states.

All figures are presented as percentages.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_416_en.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_416_fact_uk_en.pdf

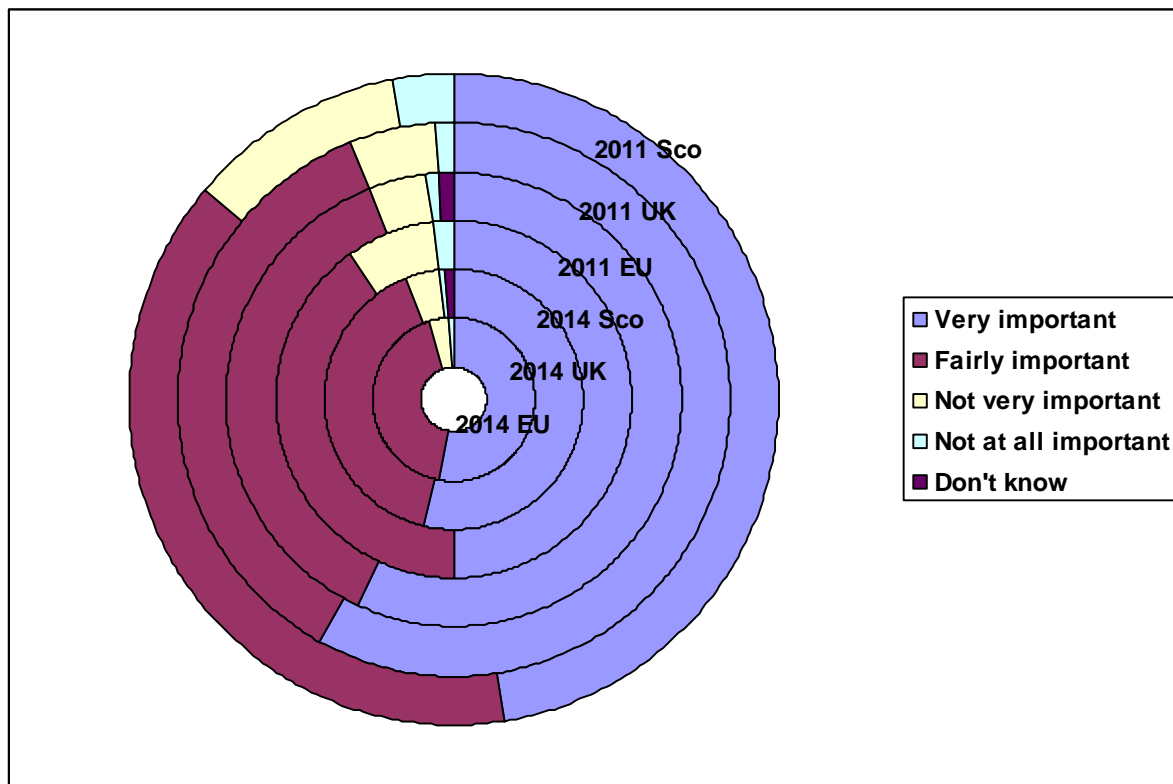
³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_365_en.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_365_fact_uk_en.pdf

Europeans and their concerns about the environment

Qn.1 How important is protecting the environment to you personally?

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Very important	53	54	50	57	58	48
Fairly important	42	40	40	37	36	39
Not very important	4	4	8	4	5	11
Not at all important	1	1	2	1	1	3
Don't know	0	1	0	1	0	0



The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

Protection of the environment is clearly important to the vast majority of those interviewed, and this perceived importance has not diminished significantly between 2011 and 2014. Combined figures for 'very' important and 'fairly' important are a little lower for Scotland than the UK and EU, but still stand at about 90%.

Qn.2 From the following list, please pick the five main environmental issues you are worried about

Issue	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Man made disasters ¹	-	-	-	41	34	36
Natural disasters ¹	-	-	-	31	26	28
Climate change ¹	-	-	-	34	36	25
GMOs ¹	-	-	-	22	15	16
Impact of current transport modes ¹	-	-	-	15	19	14
Growing amount of waste	43	48	48	37	36	31
Air pollution	56	52	44	37	29	22
Impact on our health of chemicals	43	34	41	35	29	33
Water pollution	50	39	38	43	32	34
Agricultural pollution	29	19	26	26	18	11
Loss or extinction of species / habitats	26	30	25	22	22	27
Urban problems	23	31	21	17	25	16
Spread of INNS ²	11	15	21	-	-	-
Depletion of natural resources	36	29	19	31	33	37
Shortage of drinking water ²	27	18	17	-	-	-
Land take ²	15	26	17	-	-	-
Noise pollution	15	20	13	8	12	10
Our consumption habits	24	16	10	20	20	14
Other	1	2	6	1	4	8
None	1	5	6	1	1	1
Soil degradation ²	13	5	5	-	-	-
Don't know	0	1	4	-	1	0

¹issue listed in 2011 only, ²issue listed in 2014 only

Comparisons between 2014 and 2011 are not straightforward, as the list of issues used in each year differs significantly.

In 2014, air pollution, water pollution, the growing amount of waste and the impact of chemicals on health featured in the top five issues of concern in the EU, UK and Scotland.

In 2011 the answers were more mixed, but water pollution and waste still featured in the top 5 in all three geographic areas, and the impact of chemicals featured in the top 5 in the EU and Scotland. The depletion of natural resources featured in the top 5 in the UK and Scotland, but only appeared in the top 5 at EU level in 2014.

Air pollution only featured in the top 5 at EU level in 2011 (in fourth place), but appeared in the top 2 in all three geographic areas in 2014. This may indicate that air pollution is assuming greater prominence as an issue across the EU.

Climate change only featured in the top 5 in the UK in 2011, being mentioned as a concern by between a quarter and a third of respondents. The issue was not included in the list in 2014.

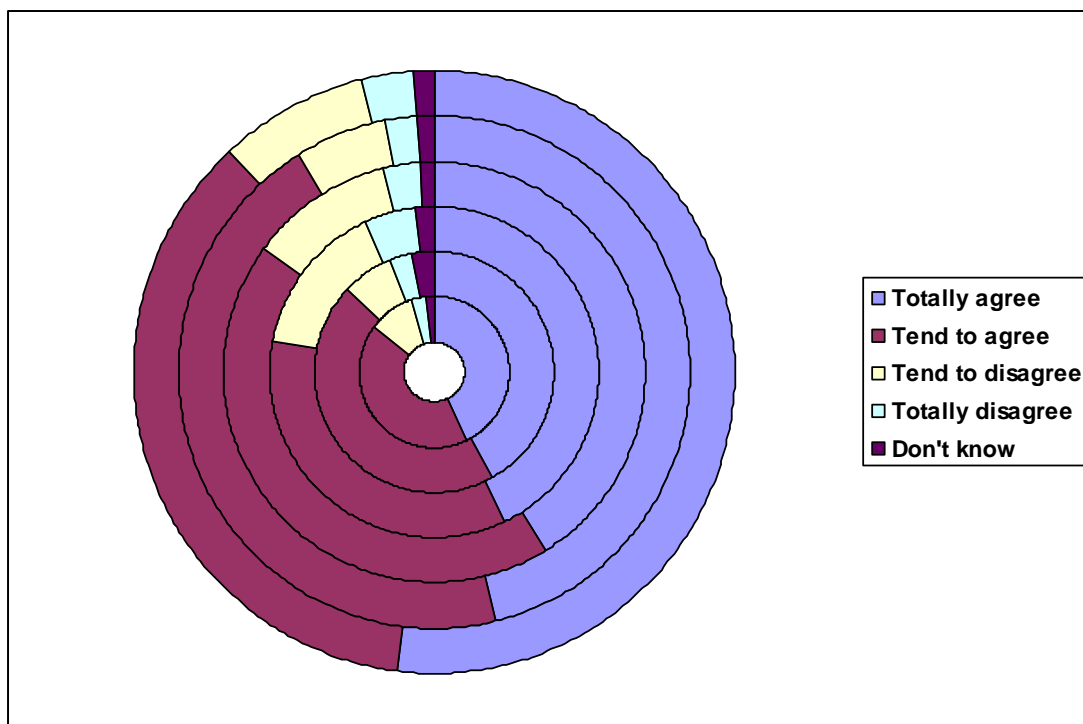
Man made disasters featured in the top 5 in all three geographic areas in 2011, but again the issue was not listed in 2014.

Amongst the [key messages](#) in the 2014 report on the State of Scotland's Environment, air pollution (particularly in urban areas), climate change, threats to species and habitats, and nutrient pollution in freshwaters are highlighted as areas of concern. There is therefore some overlap with the concerns of citizens in the EU, UK and Scotland as expressed in these surveys, but not complete agreement. For example, the impact of chemicals on health seems to be a more significant and growing concern for citizens than climate change. This may reflect the fact that climate change is considered to be a global issue, of less immediacy in people's lives.

Behaviour regarding the environment

Qn13.1 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement – As an individual you can play a role in protecting the environment in (OUR COUNTRY)

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	43	42	43	41	46	52
Tend to agree	42	45	35	44	45	36
Tend to disagree	10	7	15	11	6	8
Totally disagree	3	3	5	3	2	3
Don't know	2	3	2	1	1	1

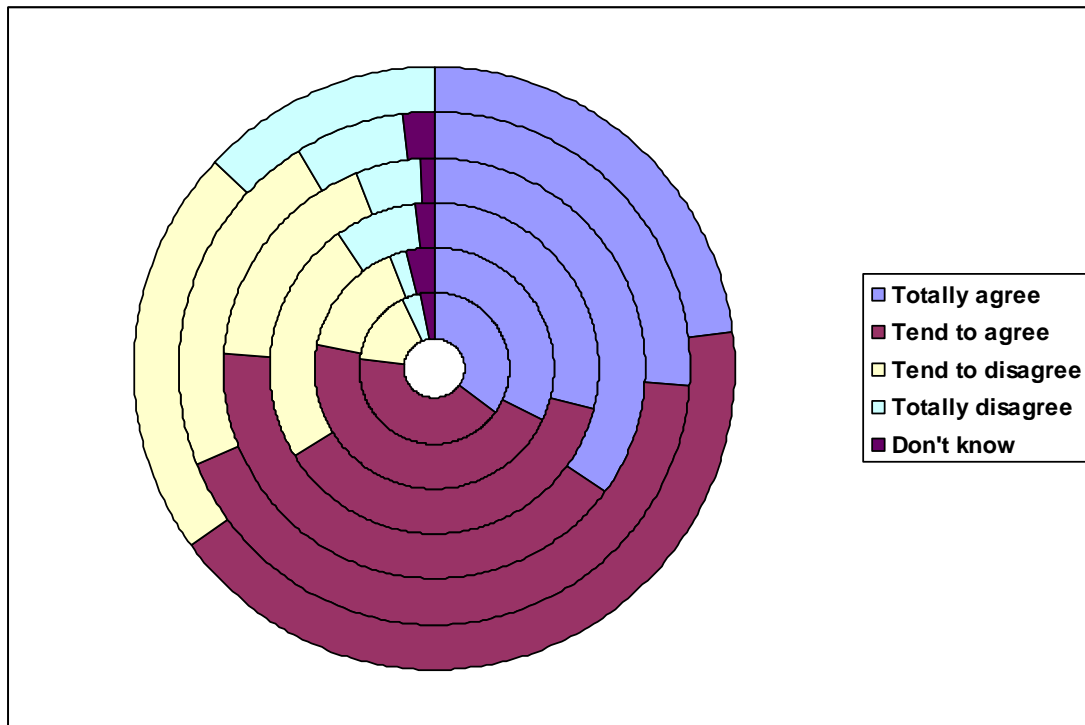


The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

A clear majority of respondents agreed that they had a role to play as an individual in protecting the environment in their country. Combined figures for 'totally agree' and 'tend to agree' were either the same or slightly down in all three geographic areas in 2014 compared to 2011. Combined figures for Scotland in 2014 were somewhat lower than for the UK and EU, but were still approaching 80%.

Qn13.3 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement – Environmental issues have a direct effect on your daily life

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	35	32	29	35	26	23
Tend to agree	42	46	37	41	43	42
Tend to disagree	16	16	24	18	22	22
Totally disagree	4	2	8	5	7	13
Don't know	3	4	2	1	2	0



The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

Again, a clear majority of respondents agreed that environmental issues had a direct effect on their daily lives. There were no major changes between 2011 and 2014. A higher proportion of respondents across the EU were in total agreement than were in the UK and Scotland.

Combined figures for 'totally agree' and 'tend to agree' were lower in Scotland than they were in the UK and EU for both 2014 and 2011, but still accounted for two thirds of responses.

Current behaviour and expected priorities regarding the environment

Qn.11 Have you done any of the following for environmental reasons in the past month?

Action	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Separated most of your waste for recycling	72	79	71	62	79	83
Reduced waste e.g. by avoiding over-packaged products and buying products with a longer life	33	40	43	35	44	37
Cut down your energy consumption	52	56	41	54	52	43
Cut down your water consumption	37	36	31	42	37	25
Chosen a more environmentally friendly way of traveling	35	38	27	32	37	28
Chosen local products	35	29	26	30	31	26
Used your car less	20	21	23	18	25	12
Bought environmentally friendly products	21	22	15	20	21	17
None	4	5	10	7	5	5
Don't know	0	1	0	1	1	0
Other	1	1	0	-	0	0

Separating waste for recycling was the top response across the board in both 2014 and 2011.

Cutting down energy consumption was the second biggest response in every instance except for Scotland in 2014, when it was placed third.

Reducing waste by avoiding over-packaged products or buying products with a longer life was also a common response, featuring in the top 3 in both the UK and Scotland in 2014 and 2011, and in the top 4 in the EU in 2011.

Choosing a more environmentally friendly way of travelling featured in the top 5 responses across the board, generally being placed fourth or fifth in each geographic area.

Cutting down water consumption featured in the top 3 EU responses in both 2014 and 2011, whereas this action was placed fourth or fifth in the UK and Scotland. This probably reflects the fact that water resources are more of a concern in Southern EU states.

Qn.12 In your opinion, which of these should be the top three priorities for people in (OUR COUNTRY) in their daily life to protect the environment?

Priority	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Pay a little more in taxes to help protect the environment ¹	-	-	-	3	4	5
Use public transport as much as possible instead of using your own car	39	41	45	36	41	40
Sort waste so that it can be recycled	54	44	44	60	60	65
Reduce food waste through smarter purchasing, storage, preparation and use of leftovers ²	33	45	41	-	-	-
Reduce your home energy consumption (lighting, heating, household appliances)	39	40	34	47	45	48
Reduce waste e.g. by avoiding over-packaged products and buying products with a longer life	24	24	22	32	31	28
Buy more local products and avoid products that come from far away	22	20	22	28	25	24
Purchase environmentally friendly products for your daily needs	22	16	14	26	13	13
Replace your car with a more energy efficient one, even if it is smaller or more expensive	13	15	13	15	18	19
Reduce water consumption at home ²	14	10	9	-	-	-
Consider environmental aspects when you make large purchases	11	9	6	15	11	10
Don't know	1	3	4	1	4	1
None	1	1	0	-	1	2
Other	1	0	0	-	0	2

¹priority listed in 2011 only, ²priority listed in 2014 only

Again, the sorting of waste for recycling featured highly, being placed top in all three geographic areas in 2011 and top or second in 2014.

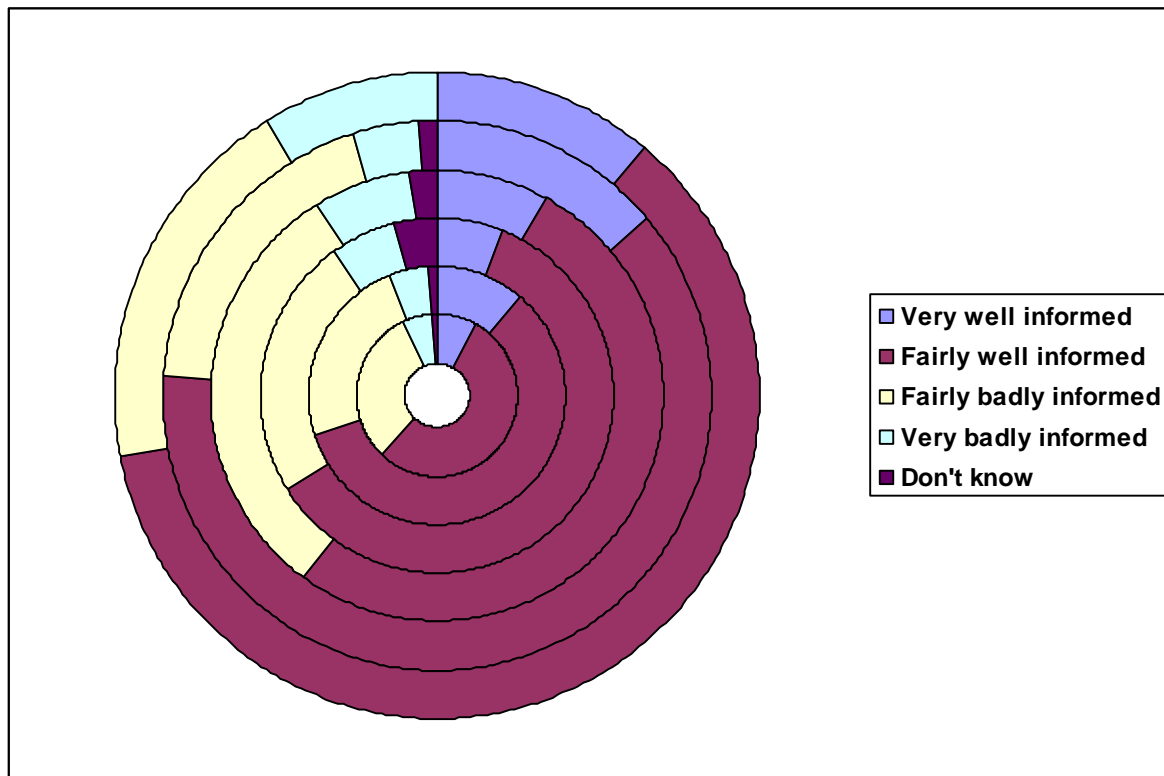
Reducing home energy consumption and increasing the use of public transport always featured in the top 3 priorities.

Reduction of food waste featured in the top 3 in the UK and Scotland in 2014, but this was not listed as an activity in the 2011 survey.

Information about environmental issues

Qn.3 In general, do you consider that you are very well, fairly well, fairly badly or very badly informed about environmental issues?

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Very well informed	8	11	6	8	14	11
Fairly well informed	54	59	60	52	63	61
Fairly badly informed	31	24	24	31	19	19
Very badly informed	6	5	6	7	4	9
Don't know	1	1	4	2	1	0



The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

Most respondents (between half and two thirds) considered themselves to be fairly well informed about environmental issues.

However, a significant proportion of respondents (between a quarter and a third in 2014) considered themselves to be fairly badly informed.

A slightly higher proportion of respondents across the EU considered themselves to be fairly badly informed in comparison to both the UK and Scotland. This was the case in 2011 and 2014.

The combined figures for 'very well' and 'fairly well' informed dropped slightly between 2011 and 2014 in the UK and Scotland, bringing them more into line with the combined responses for the EU as a whole.

Qn.4 From the following list, please pick the five main issues about which you feel you most particularly lack information

Issue	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
GMOs ¹	-	-	-	40	31	29
Man made disasters ¹	-	-	-	23	16	18
Impact of current transport modes ¹	-	-	-	14	12	13
Climate change ¹	-	-	-	21	16	11
Natural disasters ¹	-	-	-	13	10	7
Impact on our health of chemicals	39	33	33	42	38	46
Air pollution	27	25	29	22	19	14
Growing amount of waste	23	25	25	21	20	8
Agricultural pollution	28	26	23	30	26	27
Water pollution	28	24	23	29	23	25
Urban problems	15	17	22	12	12	10
Land take ²	20	18	21	-	-	-
Depletion of natural resources	28	21	20	27	21	18
Loss or extinction of species / habitats	25	16	18	28	19	17
Spread of INNS ²	28	25	17	-	-	-
Soil degradation ²	29	24	15	-	-	-
Shortage of drinking water ²	22	19	14	-	-	-
Noise pollution	17	18	14	14	15	9
Our consumption habits	15	16	14	14	15	10
Don't know	2	7	13	2	5	3
None	4	9	8	-	11	15
Other	1	1	1	-	0	0

¹issue listed in 2011 only, ²issue listed in 2014 only

Comparisons between 2014 and 2011 are not straightforward, as the list of issues used in each year differs significantly.

The impact on health of chemicals featured across the board as the top issue about which respondents felt they particularly lacked information. This was the case in 2011 and 2014, and may reflect the fact that this is one of the main issues about which EU citizens are worried (see responses to Qn. 2).

Other issues that featured in the top 5 issues in all three geographic areas in both 2011 and 2014 were agricultural pollution and water pollution (the prominence of water pollution is of interest as the Water Framework Directive provides one of the most comprehensive environmental reporting mechanisms in Europe).

The depletion of natural resources featured in the top 5 in the UK and Scotland in 2011, but had dropped out of the top 5 in 2014.

Air pollution did not feature in any top 5 in 2011, but was in the top 5 in both the UK and Scotland in 2014. This may tie in with the increasing prominence of air pollution as an issue about which people are worried (see responses to Qn. 2).

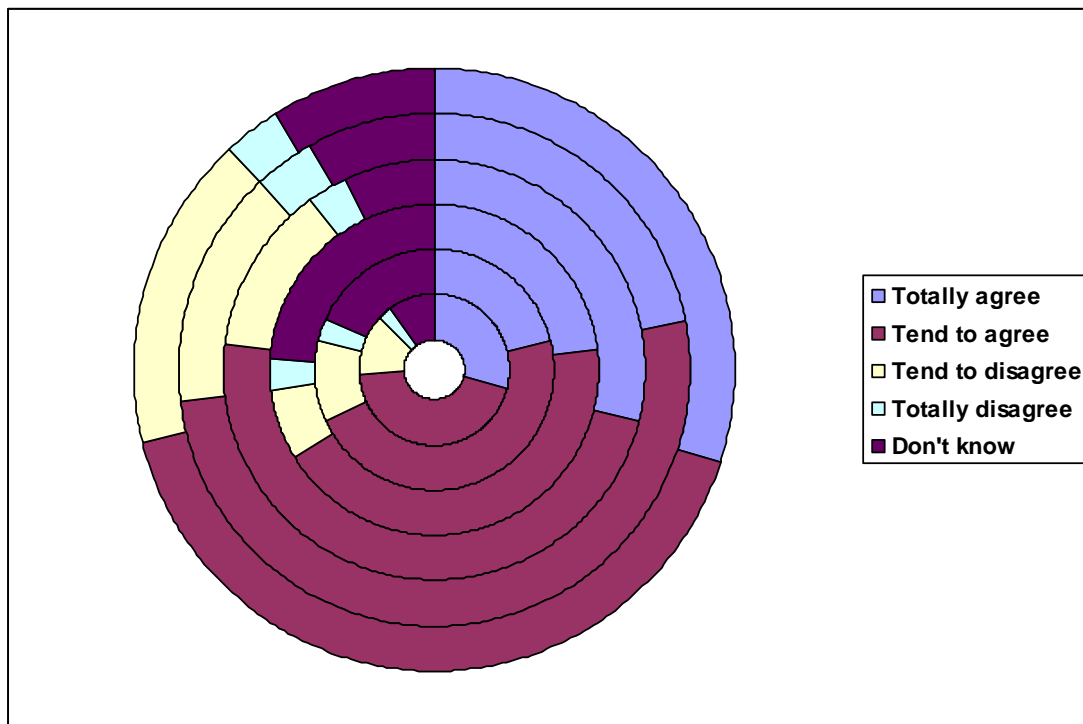
In 2011, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) featured in second place across the three geographic areas, but this issue was not included in the list for the 2014 survey.

Conversely, the spread of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) featured in the top 5 in both the EU and UK in 2014, but this issue was not included in the list for the 2011 survey.

A strong perceived relationship between the environment and the economy

Qn.9.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement, the protection of the environment can boost economic growth in the EU?

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	29	21	23	29	22	30
Tend to agree	45	47	43	48	51	41
Tend to disagree	13	11	7	13	15	17
Totally disagree	3	3	3	3	4	3
Don't know	10	18	24	7	8	9



The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

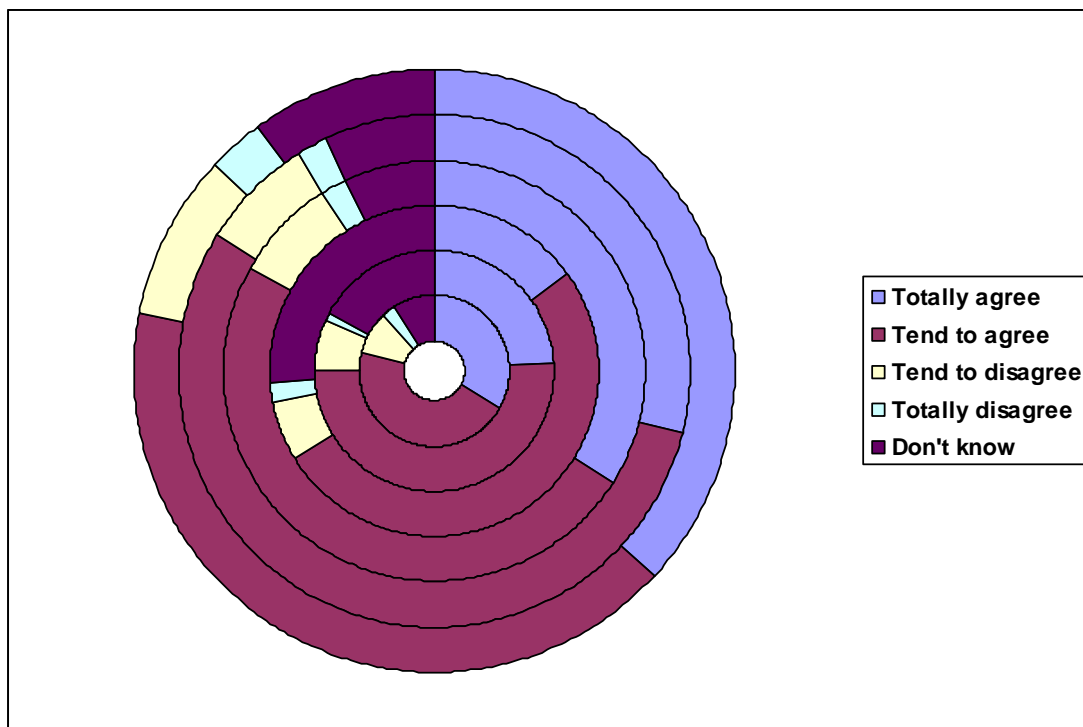
A clear majority of respondents either totally agreed or tended to agree that protection of the environment could boost economic growth in the EU, which is of interest given the difficult economic conditions that have been experienced across the EU in recent years.

Agreement with the statement was slightly stronger across the EU than in the UK or Scotland and slightly stronger in 2011 than in 2014.

A significant number of respondents said they didn't know whether they agreed with the statement in 2014, particularly in Scotland, although the result for Scotland should be treated with caution given the small number of respondents.

Qn.9.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement, the efficient use of natural resources can boost economic growth in the EU?

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	33	24	15	34	29	37
Tend to agree	46	51	51	49	55	41
Tend to disagree	9	7	6	8	7	9
Totally disagree	3	1	2	2	2	3
Don't know	9	17	26	7	7	10



The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

Again, a clear majority of respondents either totally agreed or tended to agree that the efficient use of natural resources could boost economic growth in the EU.

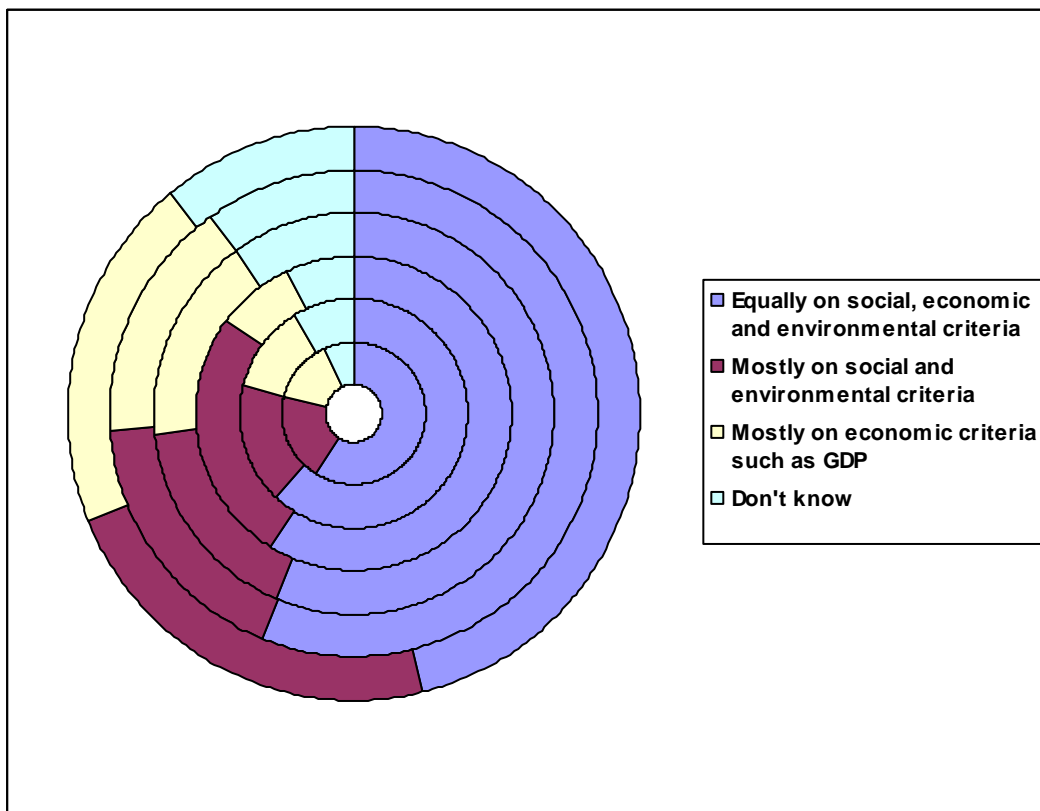
Responses followed a similar pattern to those for question 9.1 (see above), in that agreement with the statement was slightly stronger in 2011 than in 2014, with the number of 'don't know' responses increasing in the second survey.

The numbers in total agreement showed a decline across the board between 2011 and 2014, with a particularly marked decline in Scotland. This corresponds with a general weakening in agreement with the statement between the two surveys, and an increase in uncertainty.

Shared responsibility to protect the environment

Qn.7 On which of the following criteria do you think measurement of progress in (OUR COUNTRY) should be based?

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Equally on social, economic and environmental criteria	59	62	59	57	56	46
Mostly on social and environmental criteria	20	17	26	17	18	23
Mostly on economic criteria such as GDP	14	12	8	17	16	20
Don't know	7	9	7	10	10	11



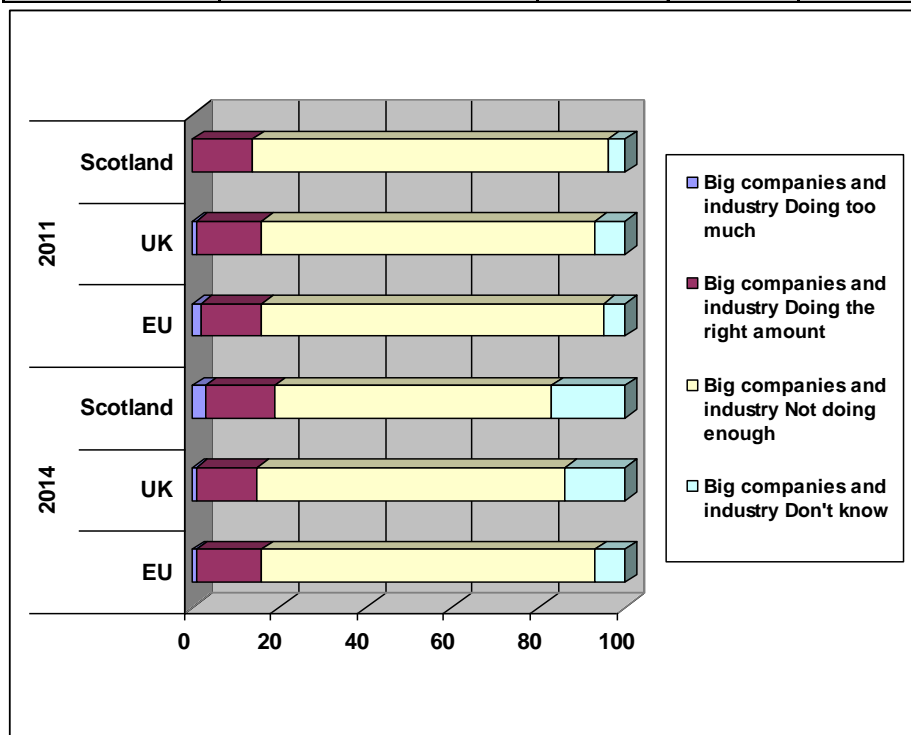
The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

A majority of respondents favoured measures of progress being based equally on social, economic and environmental criteria, there being few differences between 2011 and 2014, except in Scotland.

The next most popular response was to base measures of progress mostly on social and environmental criteria, with only a minority favouring measures being based mainly on economic criteria such as GDP.

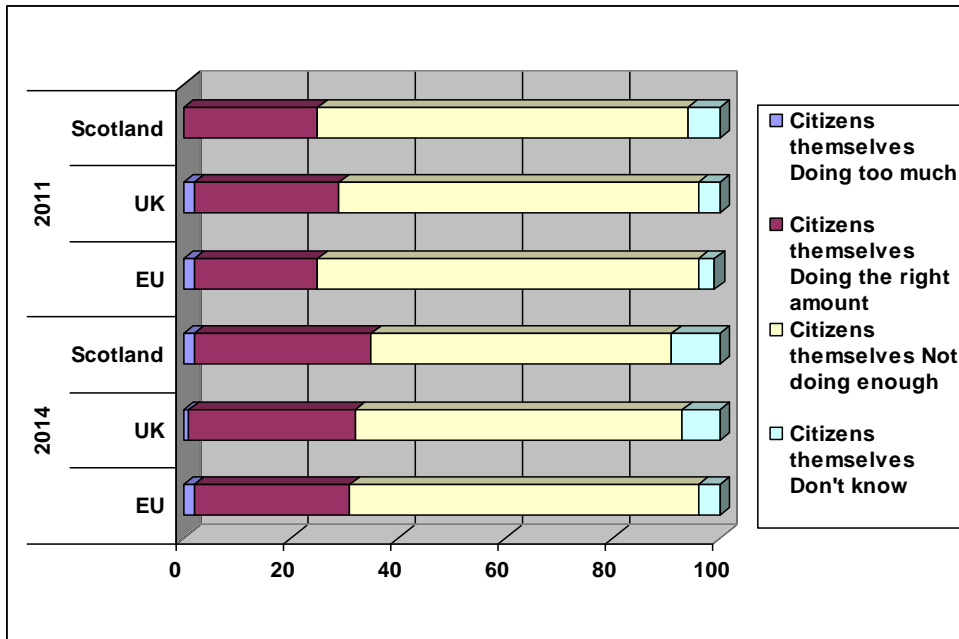
Qn.16 In your opinion, is each of the following doing too much, doing about the right amount, or not doing enough to protect the environment?

		2014			2011		
		EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Big companies and industry	Doing too much	1	1	3	2	1	0
	Doing the right amount	15	14	16	14	15	14
	Not doing enough	77	71	64	79	77	82
	Don't know	7	14	17	5	7	4
Citizens themselves	Doing too much	2	1	2	2	2	0
	Doing the right amount	29	31	33	23	27	25
	Not doing enough	65	61	56	71	67	69
	Don't know	4	7	9	3	5	6
The national government	Doing too much	1	1	2	2	2	1
	Doing the right amount	21	24	26	20	24	18
	Not doing enough	70	64	54	72	66	68
	Don't know	8	11	18	6	8	13
The European Union	Doing too much	3	3	4	3	4	0
	Doing the right amount	23	19	24	26	19	17
	Not doing enough	56	48	36	59	60	61
	Don't know	18	30	36	12	18	22
Your city, town or village	Doing too much	2	1	4	-	-	-
	Doing the right amount	43	45	43	-	-	-
	Not doing enough	48	42	38	-	-	-
	Don't know	7	12	15	-	-	-
Your region	Doing too much	1	1	0	-	-	-
	Doing the right amount	37	40	41	-	-	-
	Not doing enough	50	42	40	-	-	-
	Don't know	12	17	19	-	-	-

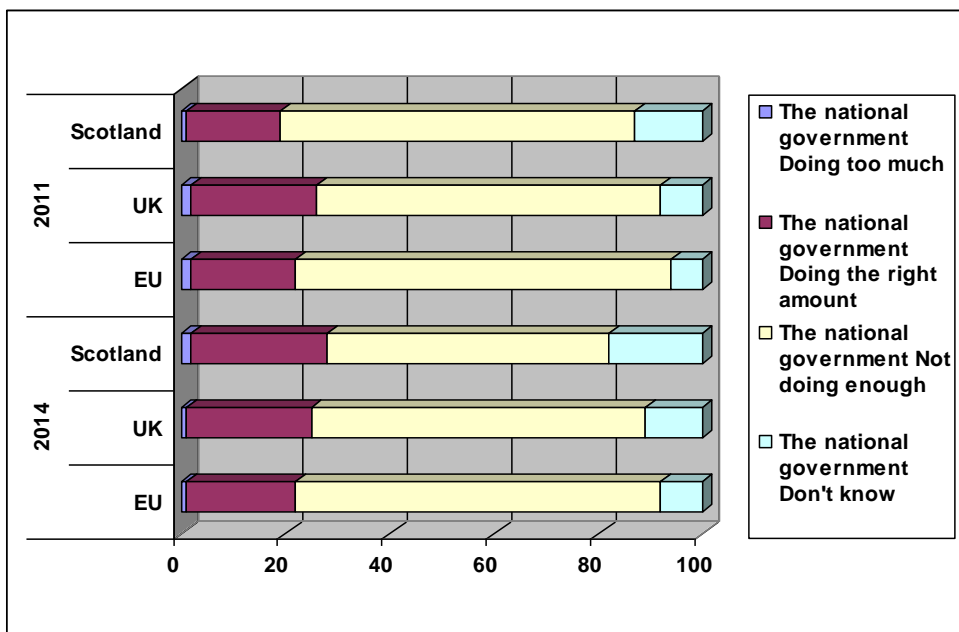


A large majority of respondents across the board felt that big companies and industry were not doing enough to protect the environment. Typically about 15% felt that they were doing the right amount, and very few respondents felt they were doing too much.

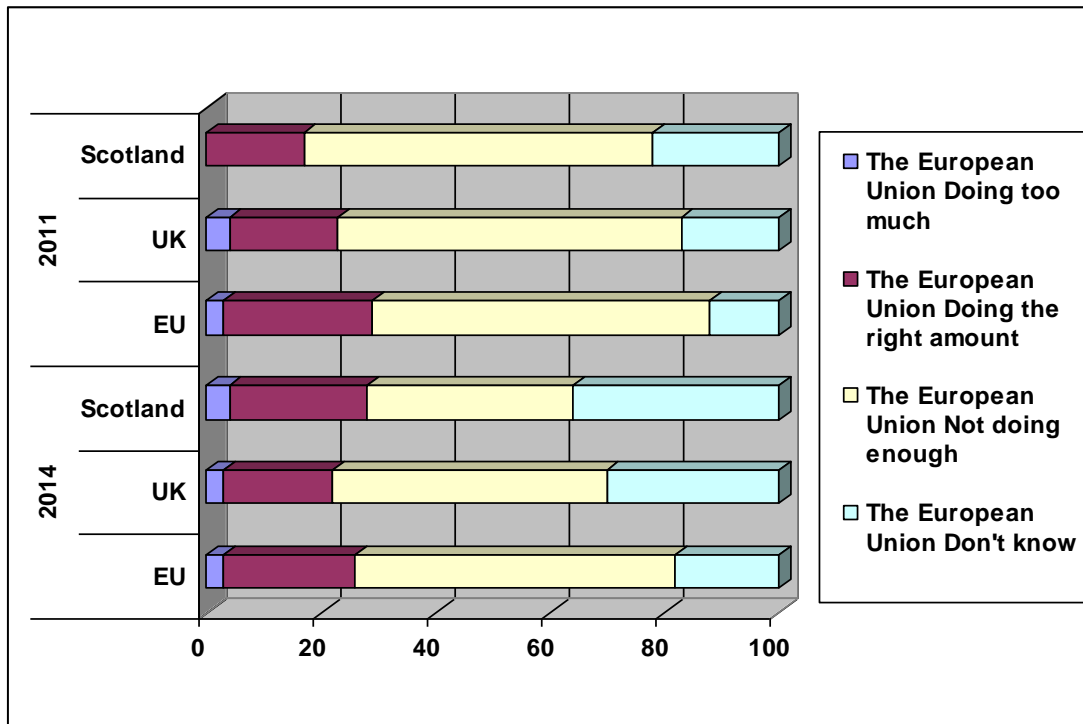
The number of 'don't know' responses increased significantly in the UK and Scotland between 2011 and 2014.



As with big companies and industry, a majority of respondents felt that citizens themselves were not doing enough to protect the environment, although more respondents felt that citizens were doing the right amount compared to big companies and industry. Again, very few respondents felt that citizens were doing too much to protect the environment.



Responses for the national government followed a similar pattern to those for citizens themselves, with more respondents feeling that the government was doing the right amount to protect the environment compared to big companies and industry, but a majority still feeling that their government was not doing enough.



In most instances, the majority of respondents felt that the EU was not doing enough to protect the environment. Notable exceptions were in the UK and Scotland in 2014, when around a third of respondents said they didn't know whether or not the EU was doing enough. This is one of the highest rates of 'don't know' responses in both the 2011 and 2014 surveys, and may reflect a lack of awareness of the role of the EU in the UK as a whole and Scotland.

As with citizens and national governments, the EU fared better than big companies and industry in the number of respondents who felt that it was doing the right amount to protect the environment.

The most effective ways of tackling environmental problems

Qn.17 In your opinion, which of the following would be the two most effective way(s) of tackling environmental problems?

Action	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Using natural resources more efficiently ¹	-	-	-	24	34	35
Providing more information on environmental issues	31	39	47	26	32	26
Introducing heavier fines for offenders	40	37	35	36	32	33
Ensuring better enforcement of existing environmental legislation	30	27	31	25	17	13
Ensuring higher financial incentives (e.g. tax breaks, subsidies) to industry, business and citizens who protect the environment	33	30	26	28	26	26
Introducing or increasing taxation on environmentally damaging activities	18	16	17	15	10	5
Introducing stricter environmental legislation	25	19	14	26	18	18
Don't know	2	4	4	-	5	5
Other	1	1	0	-	1	0
None	1	1	0	-	1	1

¹option listed in 2011 only

Introducing heavier fines for offenders featured in the top two responses across the board in 2011 and 2014.

Provision of more information on environmental issues was the top answer in both the UK and Scotland in 2014. This option was placed third in these countries in 2011, when the top response was using natural resources more efficiently. This option, however, was not listed in the 2014 survey.

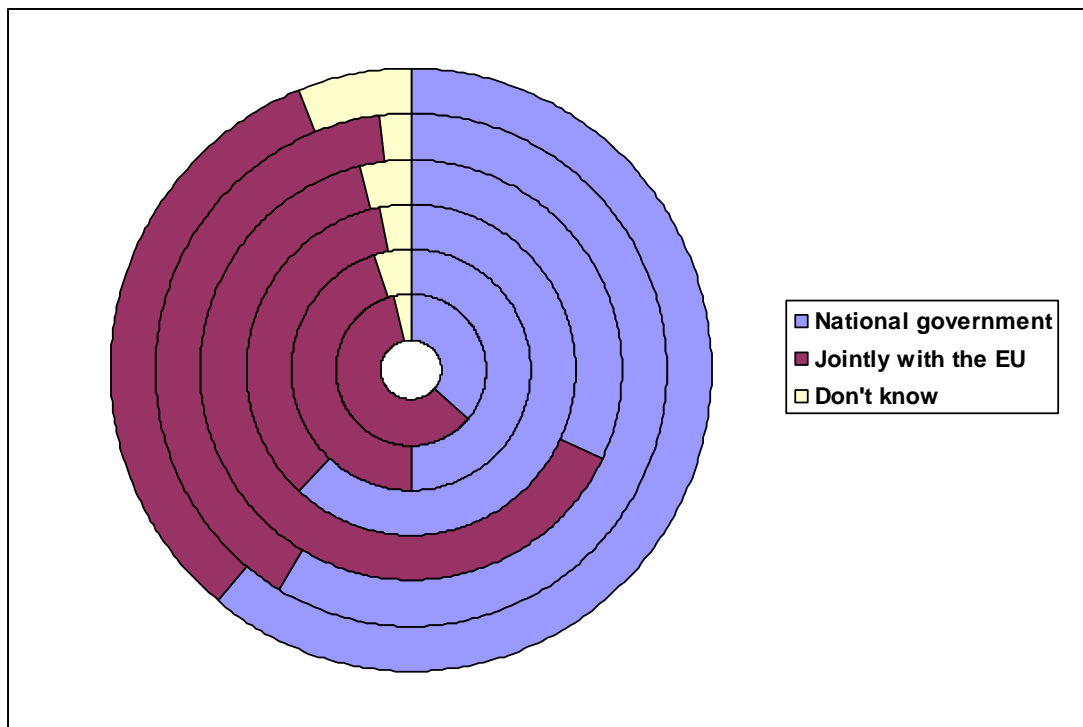
The provision of financial incentives (e.g. tax breaks or subsidies) for measures to protect the environment was the second most popular option across the EU in 2011 and 2014.

Increased use of taxation was the least popular option.

The role of the EU in protecting the environment

Qn.15 When it comes to protecting the environment, do you think that decisions should be made by the (NATIONALITY) government or made jointly with the EU?

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
National government	36	50	62	32	58	61
Jointly with the EU	60	45	35	64	39	33
Don't know	4	5	3	4	2	6



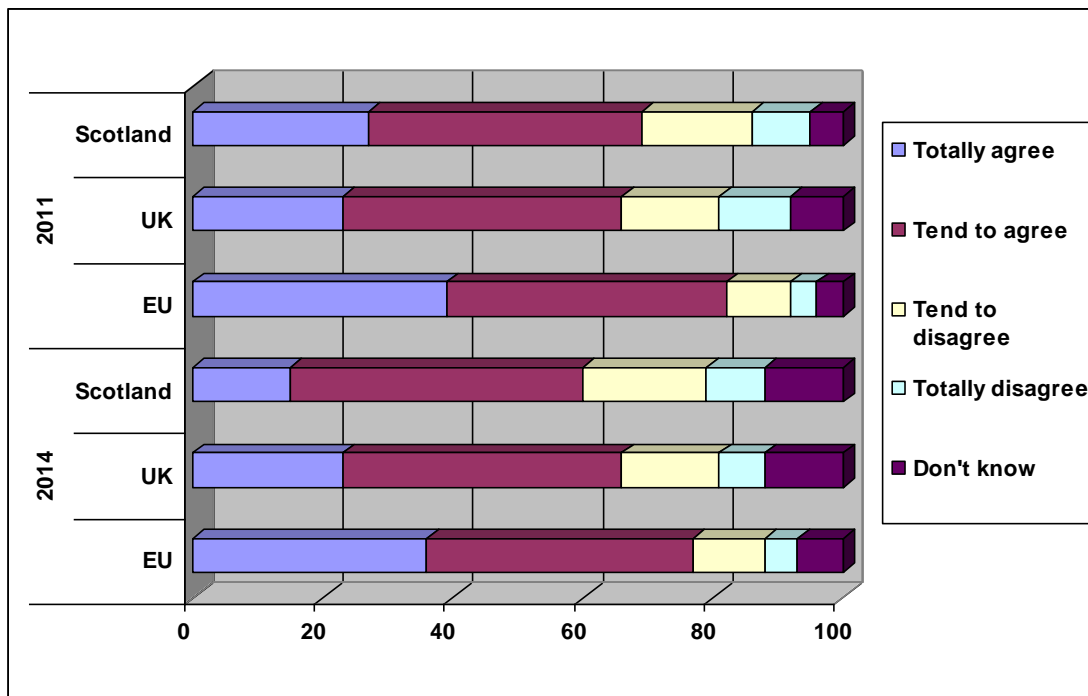
The inner three rings show results for 2014 (EU, UK, Sco), the outer three rings for 2011

In the UK and Scotland, a majority of respondents thought that decisions on protecting the environment should be made by the national government.

Across the EU, a majority thought that decisions on protecting the environment should be made jointly with the EU.

Qn.18.1 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: European environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment in (OUR COUNTRY)

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	36	23	15	39	23	27
Tend to agree	41	43	45	43	43	42
Tend to disagree	11	15	19	10	15	17
Totally disagree	5	7	9	4	11	9
Don't know	7	12	12	5	8	7

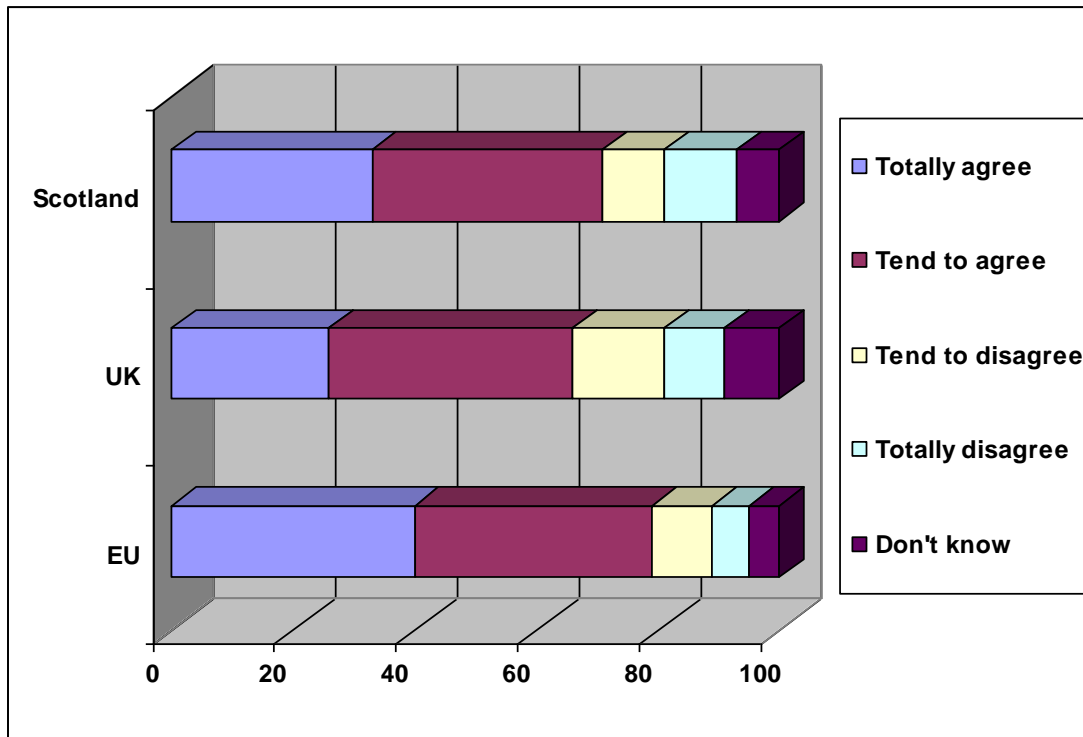


A clear majority of respondents either totally agreed or tended to agree that European legislation was necessary for protecting the environment, although total agreement was somewhat weaker in the UK and Scotland than in the EU as a whole.

In general, levels of agreement in 2014 were slightly down on those in 2011.

Qn.18.2 The EU should be able to check that environmental laws are being applied correctly in (OUR COUNTRY)

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	40	26	33	-	-	-
Tend to agree	39	40	38	-	-	-
Tend to disagree	10	15	10	-	-	-
Totally disagree	6	10	12	-	-	-
Don't know	5	9	7	-	-	-

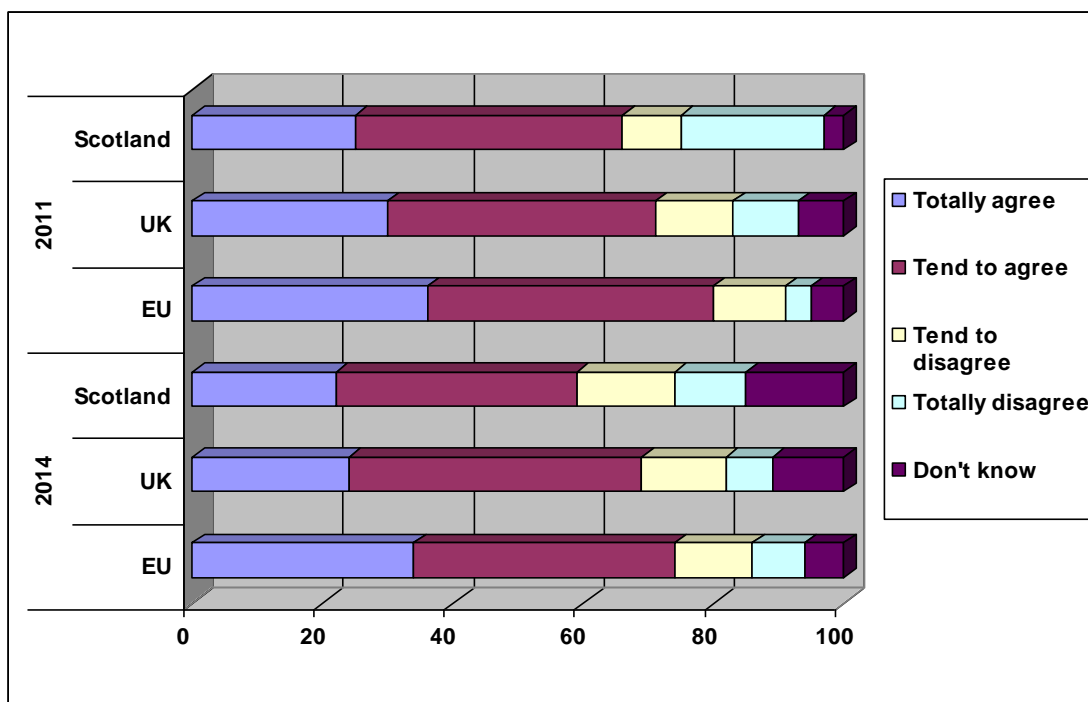


A majority of respondents either totally agreed or tended to agree that the EU should be able to check that environmental laws are being applied correctly in nation states, with agreement being somewhat stronger across the EU than in the UK or Scotland.

This question wasn't asked in the 2011 survey so temporal trends cannot be assessed.

Qn.18.3 The EU should assist non-EU countries to improve their environmental standards

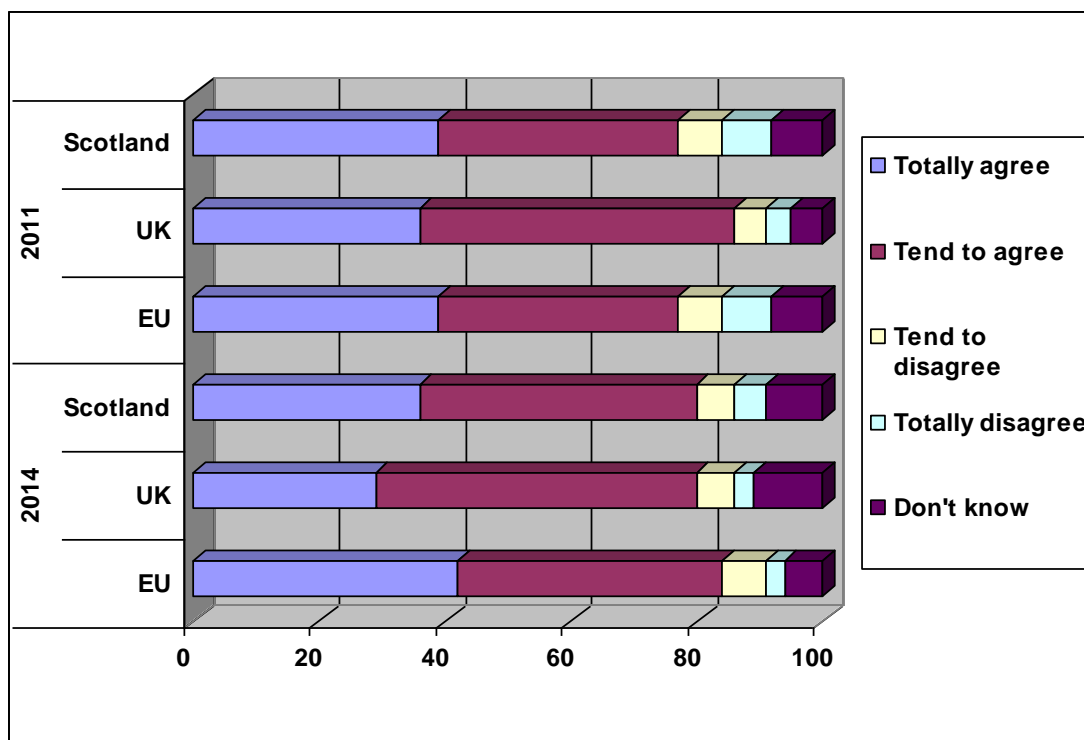
	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	34	24	22	36	30	25
Tend to agree	40	45	37	44	41	41
Tend to disagree	12	13	15	11	12	9
Totally disagree	8	7	11	4	10	22
Don't know	6	11	15	5	7	3



A majority of respondents agreed that the EU should assist non-EU countries in improving their environmental standards. Once more, agreement was somewhat stronger across the EU than in the UK or Scotland, and agreement weakened slightly between 2011 and 2014.

Qn.18.4 More EU funding should be allocated to supporting environmentally friendly activities

	2014			2011		
	EU	UK	Scotland	EU	UK	Scotland
Totally agree	42	29	36	39	36	39
Tend to agree	42	51	44	38	50	38
Tend to disagree	7	6	6	7	5	7
Totally disagree	3	3	5	8	4	8
Don't know	6	11	9	8	5	8



There was strong agreement that more EU funding should be allocated to supporting environmentally friendly activities, with around 80% either totally agreeing or tending to agree with this statement, across the board in both 2011 and 2014.

Summary of key points

The two surveys presented little evidence of significant shifts in the attitudes of EU, UK or Scottish citizens towards the environment between 2011 and 2014.

Protection of the environment was clearly an issue of importance to the majority of survey respondents.

Air pollution, water pollution, the growing amount of waste and the impact of chemicals on health featured prominently as issues of concern in the EU, UK and Scotland. There is some evidence that air pollution has increased as an issue of concern between 2011 and 2014.

Climate change was mentioned as an issue of concern by around a quarter to a third of respondents in 2011, which made it a notable issue but by no means prominent at the top of the list. The issue was not included in the list of options for the 2014 survey.

Amongst the [key messages](#) in the 2014 report on the State of Scotland's Environment, air pollution (particularly in urban areas), climate change, threats to species and habitats, and nutrient pollution in freshwaters are highlighted as areas of concern. There is therefore some overlap with the concerns of citizens in the EU, UK and Scotland as expressed in these surveys, but not complete agreement. For example, the impact of chemicals on health seems to be a more significant and growing concern for citizens than climate change. This may reflect the fact that climate change is considered to be a global issue, of less immediacy in people's lives.

A clear majority of respondents agreed that they had a role to play in protecting the environment.

Amongst activities undertaken recently for environmental reasons, recycling, reducing energy consumption, choosing more environmentally friendly modes of transport and reducing waste all featured prominently with respondents.

In terms of what respondents considered should be the top priorities in daily life to protect the environment, recycling, reducing energy use, using public transport and reducing food waste all featured prominently.

Most respondents considered themselves to be fairly well informed about environmental issues, but between a quarter and a third considered themselves to be fairly badly informed.

The impact on health of chemicals is an issue about which survey respondents clearly feel they lack information, and this also features on the list of environmental concerns.

Agricultural pollution and water pollution also featured as issues about which respondents felt they lacked information, and air pollution seemed to increase in prominence between 2011 and 2014, which may tie in with responses about environmental concerns.

There was widespread agreement that protection of the environment can boost economic growth in the EU.

Similarly, there was widespread agreement that the efficient use of natural resources can boost economic growth in the EU.

A majority of respondents thought that measures of progress should be based equally on social, environmental and economic criteria, with only a minority favouring measures being based mainly on economic criteria such as GDP.

Respondents clearly indicated that big companies and industry, individual citizens, national governments and the EU all needed to do more to protect the environment. Very few respondents felt that too much was being done by anyone to protect the environment, and big companies and industry were the ones that most respondents felt were not doing enough.

Introduction of heavier fines, use of financial incentives and provision of better information were seen to be the most effective ways of tackling environmental problems.

Across the EU, a majority of respondents indicated that decisions on protecting the environment should be made jointly by national governments and the EU, where as a majority in both the UK and Scotland felt that decisions should be made by the national government.

There was general agreement that European environmental legislation is necessary to protect the environment, that the EU should be able to check that environmental laws are being applied correctly in member states, and that the EU should assist non-EU countries in improving environmental standards, but agreement was slightly weaker in the UK and Scotland than in the EU as a whole.

There was strong agreement that more EU funding should be allocated to supporting environmentally friendly activities.

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