

European Youth and Climate Change

A Community Baseline



Three in four European young people consider **climate change a priority**. But does that mean that they have the **right tools** to address the issue?



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Individual action

Background

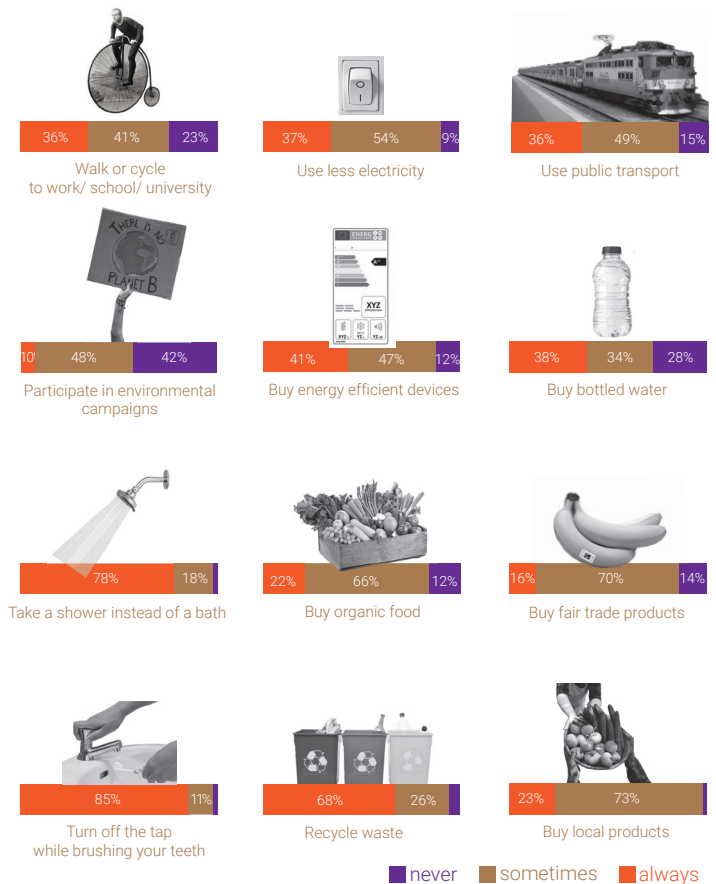
The project *People and Planet: A Common Destiny* aims to mobilise youth citizens and glocal (global + local) authorities in the fight against climate change in 8 EU Member States (Germany, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Spain) and Cape Verde between 2020 and 2024.

This factsheet represents the key findings drawn from a baseline survey answered by European Young Citizens in 2021.

The most common pro-environmental activity among EU young people relates to water saving, since 85% of the participants always turn off the tap while brushing their teeth, and 78% state that they always take showers instead of baths. Waste recycling is also a significant action (68%).

The sustainability-related practice that fewest people regularly adopt is participation in environmental campaigns, as 42% admit never having taken part in such initiatives.

Sustainable consumption is a topic that still divides participants, with 73% saying that they only sometimes buy local, a figure which falls to 70% and 66% for fair trade and organic products, respectively.



Base: All respondents (N= 2645)

Chart 2.1. Baseline survey results. **Individual action. Daily activities. Average**

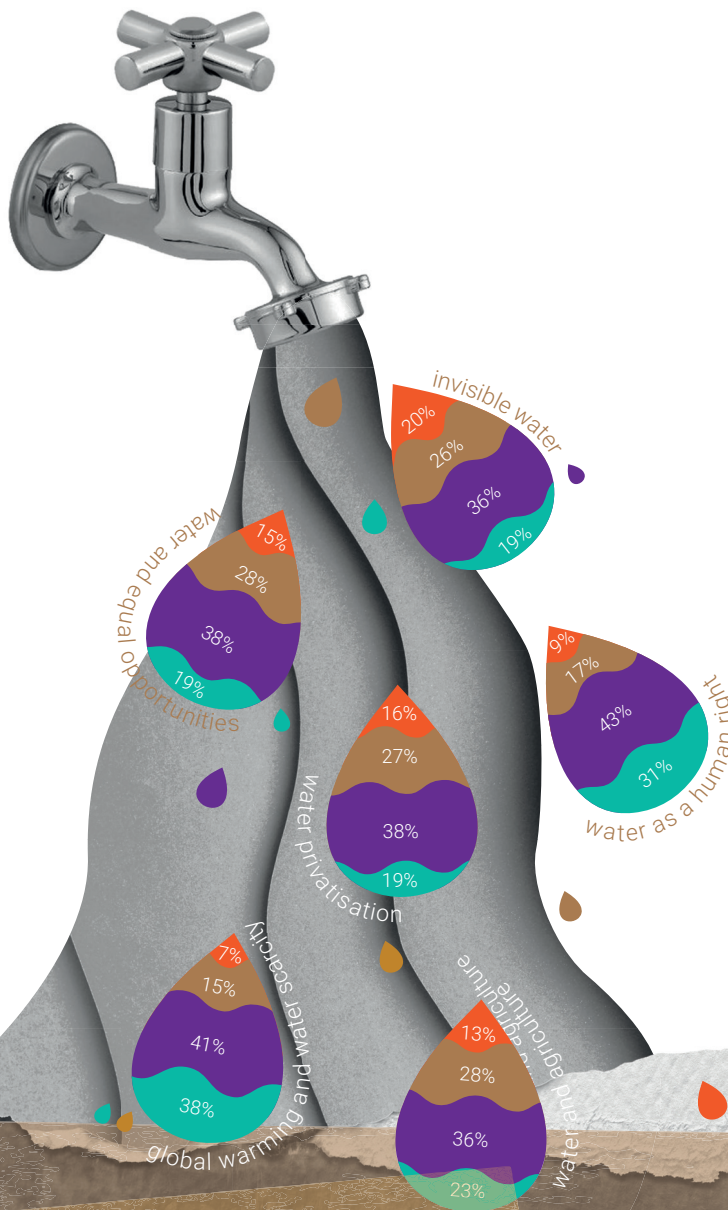


Base: All respondents (N= 3338)

Chart 2.2. Baseline survey results.

Individual action. Actions in the last 3 years

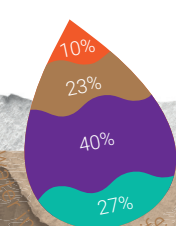
Regarding public activities related to climate issues, the most favoured are political actions, like signing online petitions (61%), voting in elections (60%) or sharing political and civic posts on social media (56%). This contrasts with physical activism, such as taking part in public events and protests (39%) or voluntary activities (38%).



EU youth are active overall in addressing climate action as a common topic of discussion. Global warming and water scarcity are topics that are frequently present in conversations (78%), followed by water as a human right (74%). However, some technical aspects are less likely to be addressed, such as invisible water (55%), or water privatisation and equal opportunities (57%). This is indicative of how European youth are aware of the importance of water scarcity, but not so conscious of the importance of hidden water in their daily lives.

- Very unlikely
- Unlikely
- Likely
- Very Likely

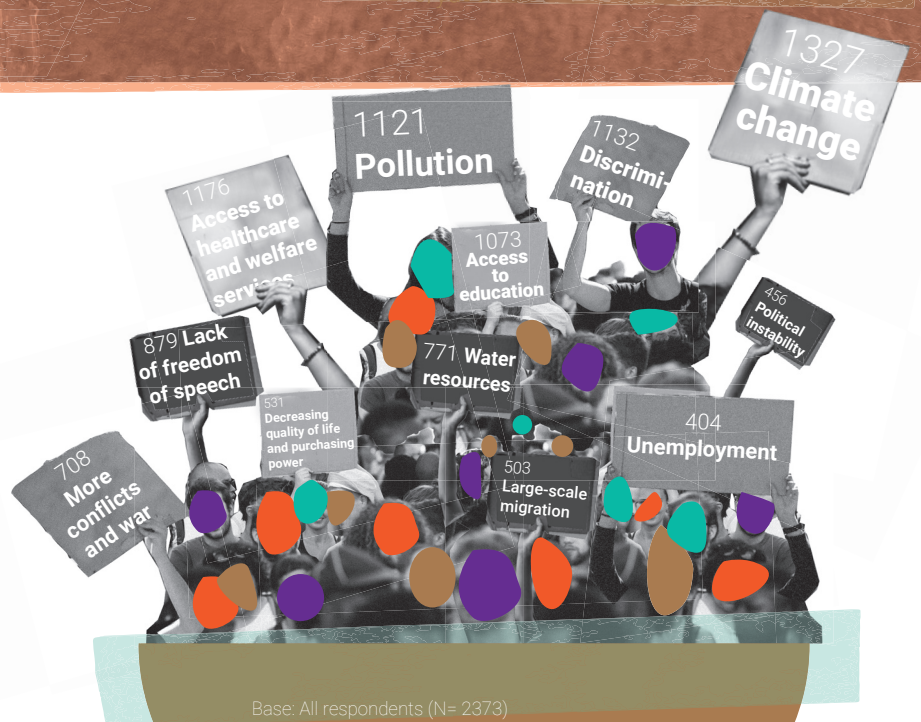
Base: All respondents (N= 2632)
 Chart 2.3. Baseline survey results.
Individual action. Discussing climate change with those closest to you



Despite the connection between global warming and water scarcity, both issues rank differently in European youth advocacy interests: climate change is the advocacy topic that most interests participants, while only about half identify water resources as an advocacy interest.

Other high-ranking issues include discrimination and pollution.

Unemployment, political instability, large scale migration, and decreasing quality of life and purchasing power are among the topics of least interest to participants, with around four times fewer mentions.



Base: All respondents (N= 2373)
 Chart 2.4. Baseline survey results.
Individual action. Advocacy interests

Knowledge and perception about climate change

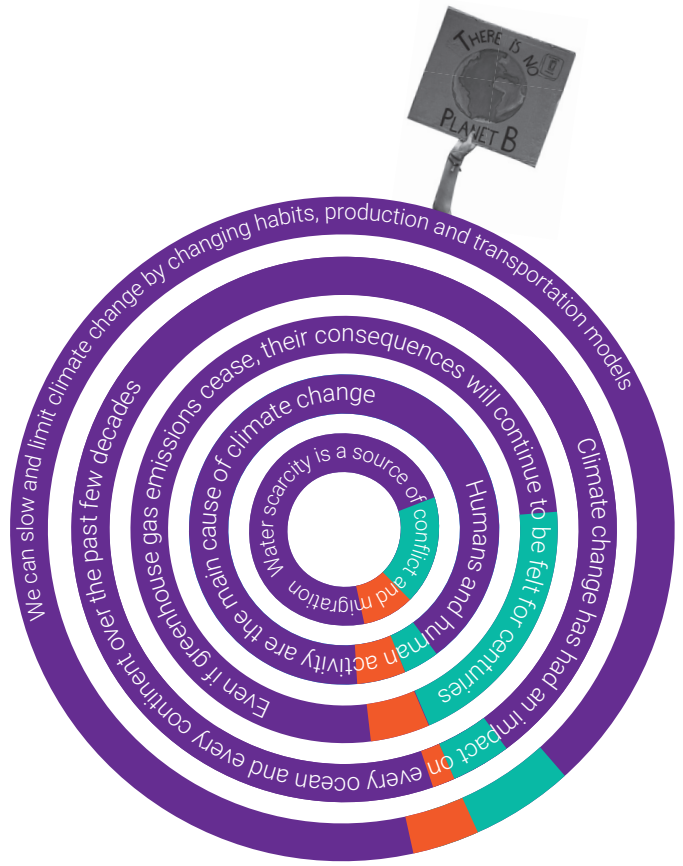


European youth have significant knowledge of the impact of climate change on the planet and society. 92% also believe that we can mitigate the effects of climate change by changing our lifestyle.

Even in the less unanimous topics, such as greenhouse emissions having lasting consequences even after being drastically reduced, young people are more likely to acknowledge that they do not know whether it is true (20%) than say it is false (4%).

At a personal level, three in four participants expressed concern regarding air pollution, followed by rising temperatures (67%), drought and forest fires (65% each). When asked about the impact of these consequences at global level, concern from respondents increases dramatically. Rising temperatures (89%) and air pollution (88%) are of highest importance, followed closely by forest fires, floods, drought and soil degradation (87%).

This difference in figures for personal and global impact may indicate that, while young people already feel the impact of climate change, they are even more aware of the effect it is already having on people and places around the world.



● true ● false ● don't know

Base: All respondents (N= 2946)

Chart 3.1. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about Climate Change. Statements concerning climate change. Average**

Chart 3.2.1. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about climate change. Climate change impact in your own life and the people closest to you**

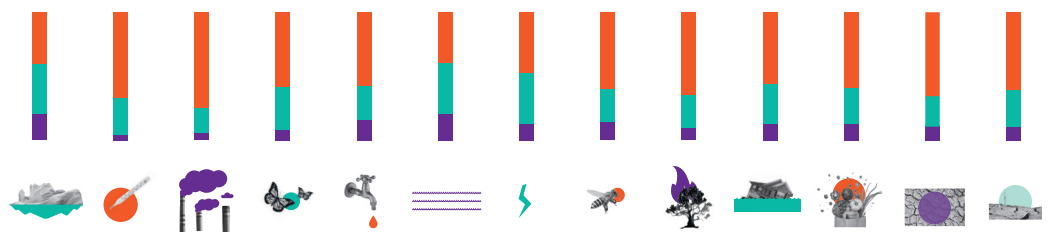


Chart 3.2.2. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about climate change. Climate change impact in your country**

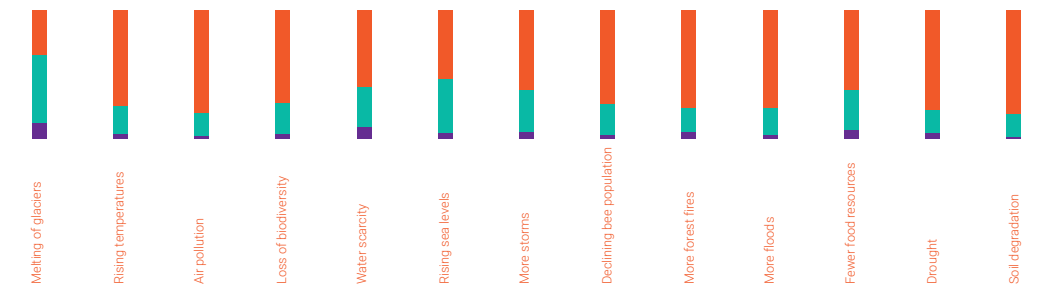
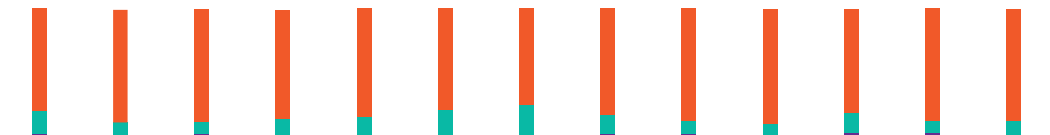


Chart 3.2.3. Baseline survey results. **Perceptions about climate change. Global climate change impact**



Base: All respondents (N= 2886)

■ yes, a major impact ■ yes, a minor impact ■ no, no impact

Policy awareness and action



European youth seem to be reasonably familiar with international climate agreements, with 7 in 10 that confirming they know of international initiatives to reduce climate change. This percentage drops to 57% when asked about national environmental policies. This may be indicative of the active targeting of children and younger citizens by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the reach of European climate programmes.

According to the participants in the survey, environmental organisations are best equipped to fight climate change, followed by international organisations and European institutions.

On the other hand, business and industries, and individuals and families are the agents that European young citizens identify as being least equipped, which may signal some degree of helplessness felt by young people interested in combating climate change.

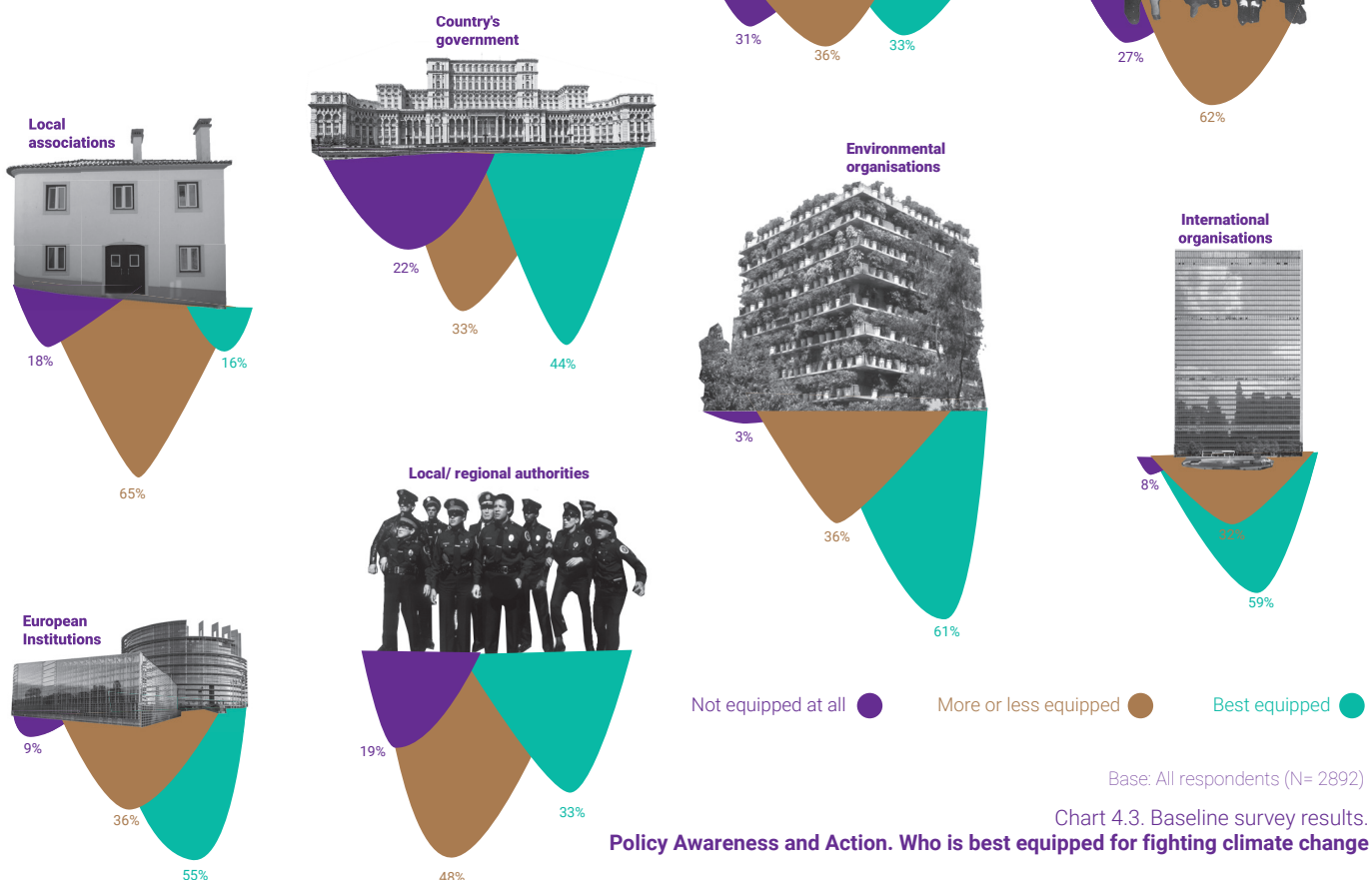


Base: All respondents (N= 2637)

Chart 4.1. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action. Participants' knowledge about global policies or initiatives to reduce climate change**



Chart 4.2. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action. Participants' knowledge about environmental policies in your country**

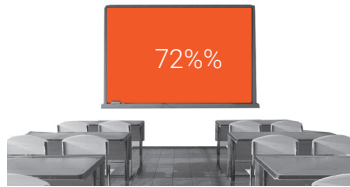


Base: All respondents (N= 2892)

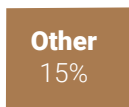
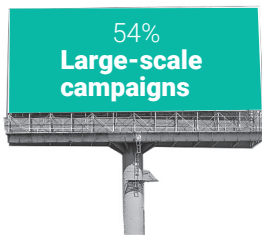
Chart 4.3. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action. Who is best equipped for fighting climate change**

What can be done?

To mobilize people to act regarding climate change, the most common idea revolves around education and school curricula (72%). Fines and penalties (61%) and large-scale campaigns (54%) are the other options gathering support from more than half the respondents.



Through education and school curricula



Base: All respondents (N= 2899)

Chart 4.4. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action.** What would motivate people to act on climate change
Multiple answers possible



Participatory or community-based funding projects



Facilities for meetings and activities



Financial support



Participation in decision and policy-making through general committees



Participation in decision and policy-making through special youth committees



Young people are not interested in these means of support



Capacity building and networking events

Base: All respondents (N= 2566)

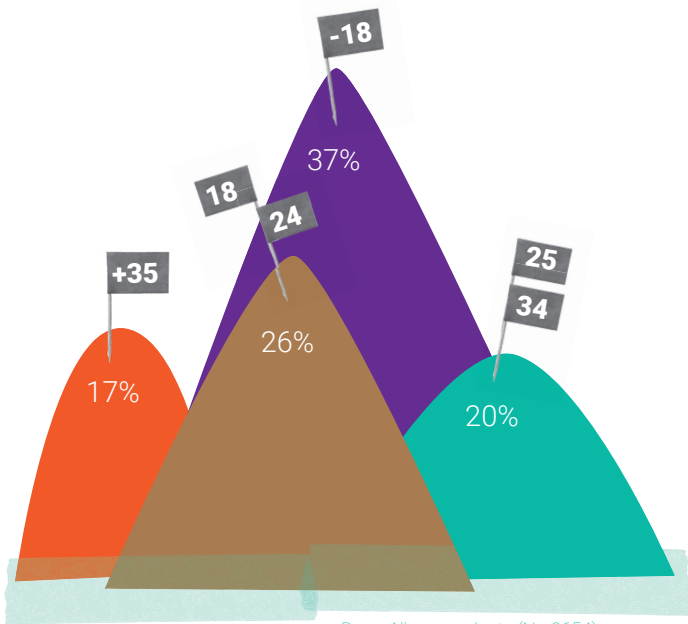
Chart 4.5. Baseline survey results. **Policy Awareness and Action.** How can local authorities support young people's sustainability campaigns and other sustainable activities
Multiple answers possible

Regarding ways to support young people's sustainability activities, the most common answer relates to financial support and participatory or community-based funding projects, being mentioned by more than two thirds of participants. Participants also identify several different ways to support active participation by young people, such as facilities for meetings and activities, and participation in decision and policymaking through special youth committees.

Survey respondents also provided advocacy suggestions. All countries, without exception, highlighted the need for effective communication, for example, clear, relatable and straightforward transmission of information, to be understood by anyone, regardless of their experience. Quality education in and outside school ranks second among participants' suggestions.



Demographic characteristics of survey participants

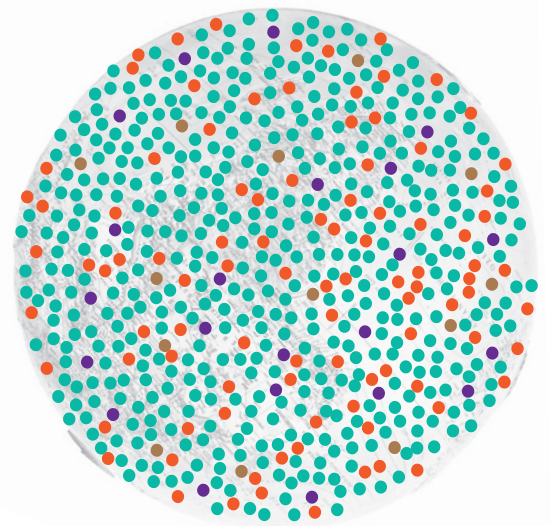


Base: All respondents (N= 3654)

Chart 1.2. Baseline survey results.

Demographic characteristics of survey participants. Age

Most of the sample (87.1%) were aged under 35. The most common age group was 18 to 24 years (39%), followed by the under 18s (29%).



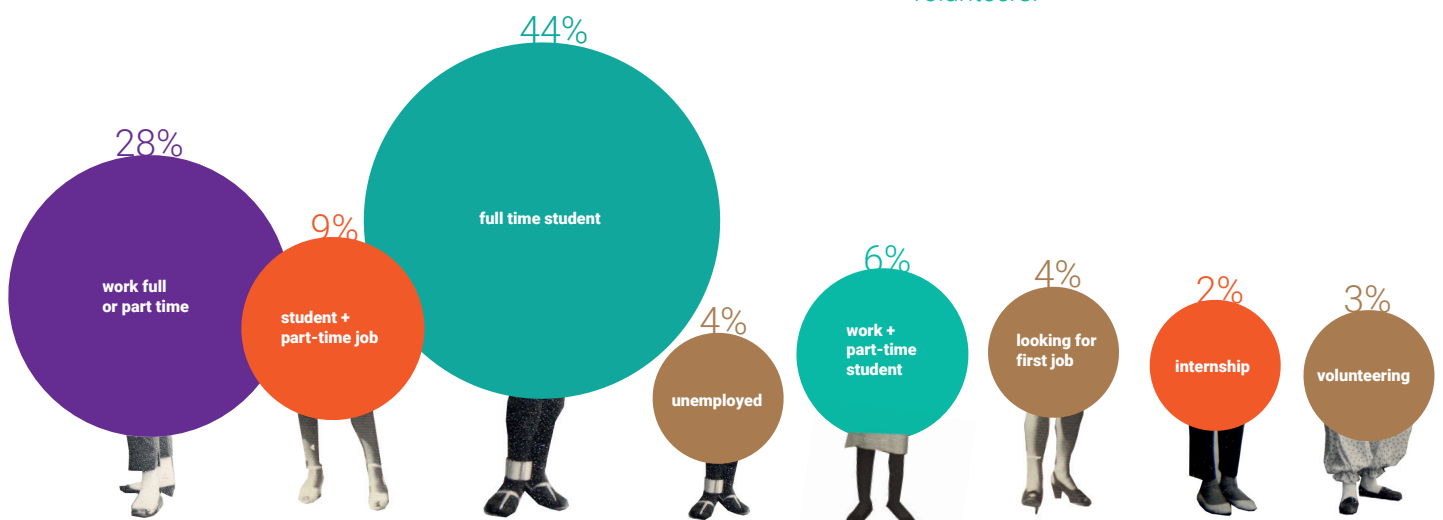
- male 26%
- female 71%
- non-binary 2%
- genderfluid or unlabeled 1%

Base: All respondents (N= 3671)

Chart 1.1. Baseline survey results.
Demographic characteristics of survey participants. Gender

Most of the survey participants were female (65%), 32% were male, and 3% were non-binary, genderfluid or unlabelled.

Around 2 in each 5 were students, the same fraction were workers, and most of the remaining answers were from volunteers.



Base: All respondents (N= 3226)

Chart 1.3. Baseline survey results.
Demographic characteristics of survey participants. Main occupation

Useful resources



Useful resources for individual action

IRELAND

Comhairle na nÓg:
Youth Councils for Leadership
<https://www.comhairlenanog.ie/>

STAND:
Organisation for University
and College Students
to take action on climate
<https://stand.ie/>

Eco-UNESCO:
Ireland's Environmental Education
and Youth Organisation
<https://ecounesco.ie/>

SPAIN

Instituto de la Juventud
www.injuve.es

Dirección Xeral de Xuventude,
Participación e Voluntariado
<http://xuventude.xunta.es>

Centro de Extensión Universitaria
e Divulgación Ambiental de Galicia
www.ceida.org

ADEGA - Enerxía e cambio climático
<https://adega.gal/info.php?sec=30&idioma=gl>

Cómo ahorrar agua en casa
<https://www.ocu.org/alimentacion/agua/consejos/a-horro-de-agua-como-lograrlo>

Climate tips (CE)
https://ec.europa.eu/clima/citizens/climate-tips_es

GERMANY

77 climate protection tips for individuals in the German language
<https://www.nabu.de/umwelt-und-ressourcen/klima-und-luft/klimawandel/06740.html>

The Voluntary Ecological Year is a voluntary service in nature and environmental protection in Germany. Young people between 16 and 27 years old can complete it
<https://foej.de/foej-2/>

Background information on climate change and migration from finep
<https://finep.org/finep-macht-projekte/hochschule-und-globale-nachhaltigkeit/linkliste-klima-und-migration/>

Signing petitions that can have an impact on regional, national or European policies

Participate in local or regional youth (climate) councils

Youth participation service unit Germany
<https://www.servicestelle-jugendbeteiligung.de/>

Voting in local, regional, national and European elections

ROMANIA

<http://www.mmediu.ro/articol/tipuri-de-masuri/1402>

<https://foodwastecombat.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Ghidul-anti-risipa-Food-Waste-Combat-2020-Web.pdf>

<https://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/recipes>

<https://foodstory.ro/eveniment/totul-despre-depozit-area-corecta-a-fructelor-si-legumelor-cum-rezista-si-cat-timp>

<http://foodwaste.ro/tips-and-tricks-pentru-produse-alimentare/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp0GmcUH9Us&list=PL7516851DD70EFF7F&index=406>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC06E-wuf8aj2DD7uAulnzgtg/featured>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLge_CZ0Tvs

PORTUGAL

Youth Participatory Budgeting Portugal
<https://ipdj.gov.pt/orcamento-participativo-jovem>

<https://www.edp.pt/particulares/planeta-zero/artigos-dicas-de-sustentabilidade/desperdicio-zero/como-poupar-e-reutilizar-agua-em-casa/>

<https://ipdj.gov.pt/70-j%C3%A1>

<https://www.wilder.pt/naturalistas/cinco-medidas-que-pode-tomar-em-portugal-para-combater-as-alteracoes-climaticas/>

Climate tips (europa.eu)
<https://jovens.parlamento.pt/Paginas/default.aspx>

ITALY

WeWorld Petition on Climate Change
<https://climateofchange.info/participate/petition/>

Extinction Rebellion Petition on Citizens Assemblies
<https://extinctionrebellion.it/assemblee-cittadine/&>
<https://www.politicpercaso.it/>

Useful resources and information about climate change

POLAND

The River Sisters
<https://www.facebook.com/Siostry-Rzeki-1772150046238916>

and the Save the Rivers Coalition
<https://www.facebook.com/RatujmyRzeki>

are a community of women and men activists who call attention to the social value of clean and natural rivers.

Members of these groups organize demonstrations, defend water from degradation, take the names of Polish rivers and loudly manifest their independence and wildness.

They demonstrate against building artificial barriers and regulating or fencing rivers. Additionally, they educate and conduct workshops on environmental issues.

REOWNED POLISH SPECIALISTS

Prof. Szymon Malinowski
Founder and editor of the website "Nauka o klimacie"
<https://naukaoklimacie.pl/>

One of the most prominent figures in the Polish discourse on climate change. An expert and authority in this field.

Marcin Popkiewicz
Co-founder of the website "Nauka o klimacie" and co-author of the same name book. Polish science journalist and science popularizer specializing in climate science and energy.

Szymon Bujalski
Polish journalist for climate who talks about the climate crisis, ecology, environmental protection, and veganism
<https://www.facebook.com/SzymonBujalskiDziennikarz/>

THE NETHERLANDS

Urgenda reduction target for GHG emissions achieved in 2020
<https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/news/2022/06/urgenda-reduction-target-for-ghg-emissions-achieved-in-2020>

Environmental Data Compendium
<https://www.clo.nl/en>

National Inventory Submissions 2021
<https://unfccc.int/ghg-inventories-annex-i-parties/2021>

Klimaataakkoord
<https://www.klimaataakkoord.nl/>

PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
<https://www.pbl.nl/en>

Monitor Klimaatebeleid 2021
<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/publicaties/2021/10/28/monitor-klimaatebeleid-2021>

Useful resources for community action

SPAIN

Consejo de la Juventud de España
www.cje.org

Alianza por la Juventud
<https://alianzaporlajuventud.es>

Parlamento Joven de Navarra
<https://parlamentojoven.com>

Evento Europeo de la Juventud
<https://european-youth-event.euoparl.europa.eu/es>

Proxecto Ríos
<https://proxectorios.org>

Pacto das Alcaldías para o Clima e a Enerxía
<https://pactodosalcaldes.gal>

Cambio Climático en Galicia
<https://cambioclimatico.xunta.gal>

Contributions of Participatory Budgeting to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation
www.oidp.net/docs/repo/doc792.pdf

PORTUGAL

Youth Participatory Budgeting Portugal
<https://ipdj.gov.pt/orcamento-participativo-jovem>

<https://jovens.parlamento.pt/Paginas/default.aspx>

<https://ipdj.gov.pt/apoio-e-financiamento-jovem>

<https://salvaroclima.pt/dia-global-de-acao-climatica-25-de-setembro-de-2020/manifesto-dia-global-de-acao-climatica/>

<https://www.facebook.com/climaterealityportugal/>

<https://www.climaximo.pt/>

<https://ipdj.gov.pt/>

Ação Climática
Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

Ação climática
CASA DO IMPACTO (scml.pt)
ODSlocal

ITALY

<https://www.acquabenecomune.org/chi-siamo/storia>

<https://extinctionrebellion.it/unisciti-a-noi/>

<https://fridaysforfutureitalia.it/>

<https://youth4climate.live/>

IRELAND

National Youth Assembly on Climate
<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-children-equality-disability-integration-and-youth/>

Citizen's Assembly Support the recommendations made by the Assembly to the Government on Climate Change
<https://citizensassembly.ie/en/>

Public Participation Network, Environmental Pillar work to address climate issues at the local level
<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-informations/a58b8-community-groups-public-participation-networks/>

Climate Action Plan, Annex of Actions 2021
file:///C:/Users/jen/Downloads/207876_ab5e4b34-e381-4ee7-acf3-1e59e1a1b57d.pdf

GERMANY

Activist groups
Fridays for Future, Parents for Future, Scientists for Future.

Only Germany
Extinction Rebellion, Ende Gelände, RobinWood, German Zero, Transition Town

Environmental NGO's
Greenpeace, Germany Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND) and the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union Germany (NABU)

Join NGOs that engage in water topics, such as Viva con Agua
<https://www.vivaconagua.org/>

Fight climate change by drinking tap water
The German non-profit association a tip: tap advises organisations, companies or municipalities on switching from bottled to tap water
<https://atiptap.org/projekte/wasserwende/>

Participate in the movement of Blue Communities
<https://canadians.org/bluecommunities>

Participate in Community Supported Agriculture

ROMANIA

<http://mmediu.ro/categorie/strategia-nationala-privind-schimbarile-climatice-rezumato>

http://www.mmediu.ro/app/webroot/uploads/files/2015-12-04_Planul_national_de_actiune_2016-2020%282%29.pdf

<http://www.mmediu.ro/articol/riscurile-schimbarelor-climatice-si-beneficiile-masurilor-de-combatare-a-acestora/1404>

<http://www.mmediu.ro/articol/adaptarea-asc/1403>

<http://www.mmediu.ro/articol/tipuri-de-masuri/1402>

<http://www.mmediu.ro/categorie/pachet-energie-schimbari-climatice/88>

<https://www.worldbank.org/ro/country/romania/brief/romania-climate-change-and-low-carbon-green-growth-program>

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/296921468298795648/pdf/955960ROMANIAN0391419B0A110romanian.pdf>

<https://www.meteoromania.ro/clima/adaptarea-la-schimbarile-climatice/>

<https://www.climatechangepost.com/romania/>

<https://www.presidency.ro/ro/media/comunicate-de-presa/ansarea-in-dezbatare-publica-a-raportului-educatia-privind-schimbarile-climatice-si-mediul-in-scoli-sustenabile-elaborat-de-grupul-de-lucru-pe-tema-educatiei-cu-privire-la-schimbarea-climatice-si-mediul-infiintat-la-nivelul-administratiei-prezidentiale>

<http://madr.ro/docs/dezvoltare-rurala/rndr/buletin-tematice/PT40.pdf>

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ro/policies/food-losses-waste/>



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www.mapadasideias.pt
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