

# GAME OVER?

*Do not let Climate Change end game!*

**game on** | DON'T LET CLIMATE CHANGE  
END THE GAME!

 This project is funded  
by the European Union

Online focus group  
discussions with  
**48**  
respondents in 2021

Online focus group  
discussions with  
**41**  
respondents  
in 2023

**2610**  
online quantitative  
interviews in 2021

**2601**  
online quantitative  
Interviews in 2023

**ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE AND FOCUS  
GROUP SURVEYS in 8 Central and  
Eastern European countries**



For the best experience, please view in **Presentation Mode**.



*I was pessimistic before and I am even more now, when I see people not wanting to help Ukraine, they will not change anything for the sake of a higher purpose. (CZ, male, 36)*

# CONTENTS

01

KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

02

HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

03

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

04

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

05

ARE WE TAKING ACTIONS? WHAT?

06

WHERE DO WE GET INFORMATION?

07

APPENDIX



# KEY INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



# KEY INSIGHTS



**General perception of climate change has not changed since 2021: it is still viewed as a global threat that is irreversible but can be slowed down**



However, it is perceived as somewhat less abstract and more relevant than two years ago due to the increasing numbers of locally and regionally experienced extreme, unusual weather conditions, disasters and crises



Similarly to the 2021 results, primarily human activity is blamed for climate change, and fear of natural disasters is heading the list of perceived effects



Just like in the first phase, participants share the opinion that action needs to be taken on all levels, starting with governments and legislation – and all in all, education, legislation, corporate responsibility and even the role of media come before individual responsibility...



...however, in 2023 individuals feel less optimistic and hopeful, and some of them have even become passive and discouraged by the fact that no major actions and developments were seen in the past two years, and the whole topic is now neglected, pushed into the background by other topics and issues

# KEY INSIGHTS



## Perception of Climate Change, Level of Awareness and Involvement

Climate change is still acknowledged as a serious, real global threat, it has lately become more recent, urgent and relevant due to the extreme weather conditions and disasters in Europe, such as flood (in Italy, Germany), unpredictable and rapidly changing weather, summer heatwaves. It is viewed by many as relevant as a major challenge not only for future generations – our children and grandchildren – but also here and now.

Climate change is perceived as a phenomenon that cannot be reversed or stopped but can and should be slowed down.



## Perceived causes and effects

A large majority of respondents believe that human actions are the main contributor to climate change, and the energy and oil industries in particular are considered to be the most damaging to the climate.

Of all the impacts of climate change, it is the natural factors that are of greatest concern such as the increase in natural disasters and extreme and unpredictable weather conditions. In terms of gender in general, for almost all factors, the concerns are higher among women.



## Who is responsible and who should act?

The results show that strong action is needed, particularly at company and political level. Although the opinions of the young age group do not differ from the overall sample, the results differ by gender. While men are significantly more likely than average to emphasise the role of political organisations (even surpassing that of large companies), women believe that individuals have almost as much responsibility as governments and are much more likely to emphasise the role of environmental and civil society organisations.

Due to the recently experienced inactivity on all levels, especially on the part of politicians (due to having a different political agenda and lack of economic interest) and the media, high level of frustration was voiced together with the need for a system-level change.



## Who is taking actions? What steps are taken? How do people get info?

Education, legislation and corporate responsibility are viewed as the most important areas in the context of climate change.

In addition, individuals – even though many of them are currently discouraged by the above-described inactivity of their governments and the media - tend to be more and more responsible and open to make changes in order to reduce their ecological footprint – even though it is a rather slow, step by step process with several barriers to overcome.

# OUR RECOMMENDATIONS



## Communication platforms to raise awareness

- **For young people, SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES are significantly more popular when it comes to getting information about climate change.**
  - incl. FB, Instagram, YouTube, influencers
- Continuous **EDUCATION** at schools is important: collaboration between teachers, authorities and experts, focus on developing new habits
- **Providing SUPPORT on individual, local, global levels is necessary**
  - e.g., promotion of local initiatives / continue campaigns of companies, brands / NGO campaigns, etc.



## Message content and tone of voice

- High **awareness of the harmful, irreversible consequences** – showing **the connection between recent crises** (floods, heatwaves, unpredictable weather, water scarcity, even the war) in Europe **and impact on the environment** (cause and effect) in an objective way may also increase relevance and involvement
- Focus on **actions, positive outcomes** – show how **everyday actions** contribute to slowing down climate change / Even tiny steps matter; Communicate what concrete actions can be taken for the specific region, location
- Show how climate friendly choices may be **beneficial** for individuals, e.g., reduce financial expenses – **what the opportunities are**, and how much effort can actually be behind those opportunities: to **dispel fears** that being environmentally aware takes time, money and extra energy, and focus on the positive consequences. It is especially relevant in times of inflation, economic recession (such as in 2023), when many feel that their financial situation is getting worse, and they cannot always afford the most environmentally friendly solution
- Increase sense of belonging, acknowledgement, recognition and encouragement/reassurance of environmental-friendly behavior; convey the message that living green is hip, cool.



## Credibility of information

- Use public media and other trusted media to enhance credibility of information campaigns – and **increase media presence** of the topic of climate change, putting it back to the foreground
- Use NGOs and competent/popular and widely accepted/credible people/celebrities to **provide transparent information**
- Avoid presenting issues in too loud, tabloid style, and avoid very negative tone and exaggerations – it must be noted that the perceived credibility of media and willingness to consume information is lower versus 2021

# OUR RECOMMENDATIONS



## Individuals need leadership and support in the fight against climate change

- Raising awareness towards the importance of collaboration and acting on all levels is important, but not sufficient by itself: it should be made credible, encouraging and activating by showing/demonstrating achievements.
- People need to be given a sense of belonging and assurance to continue with their current involvement and to go even further than this.
- Recognition and encouragement of even the smallest steps in environmental-friendly behavior is the key, relying on a lead-by-example approach.



## Suggestions to change the current communication and make the topic more relevant to the target group, contributing to awareness-raising

- **First of all, it is necessary to bring the topic of climate change and the environment back into the foreground from the sideline**
- **Link consumption habits to concrete examples in communication of the actual impact of each activity on climate change:** both positive vs negative examples. E.g., if you did this today, you have contributed to protecting / accelerating climate change - emphasizing the role of the individual and bringing the seriousness of the problem closer to everyday life
- **Real time messages in posts on social media, making people more aware of the seriousness of the problem** - e.g., what is happening in a particular place at a particular moment and what the consequences are for all of us
- **Positive** news, e.g., achievements, civil cooperation, highlighting individual contributions etc. Further **how-to** tips for individuals for conscious behavior
- **Background information/pros and cons** and side-effects of actions that might seem green
- More focus should be on **solutions, actions**: “theory is enough, practice is needed”
- **More credible and relevant** info, e.g., shared opinions of proven environmentalists, and always include the sources of info and data, link between local and global effects
- **Easier to digest**/comprehensive/attractive forms of info/scientific topics would be preferred (incl. videos, funny images, animations, documentaries, podcasts, unusual ways of presentation).



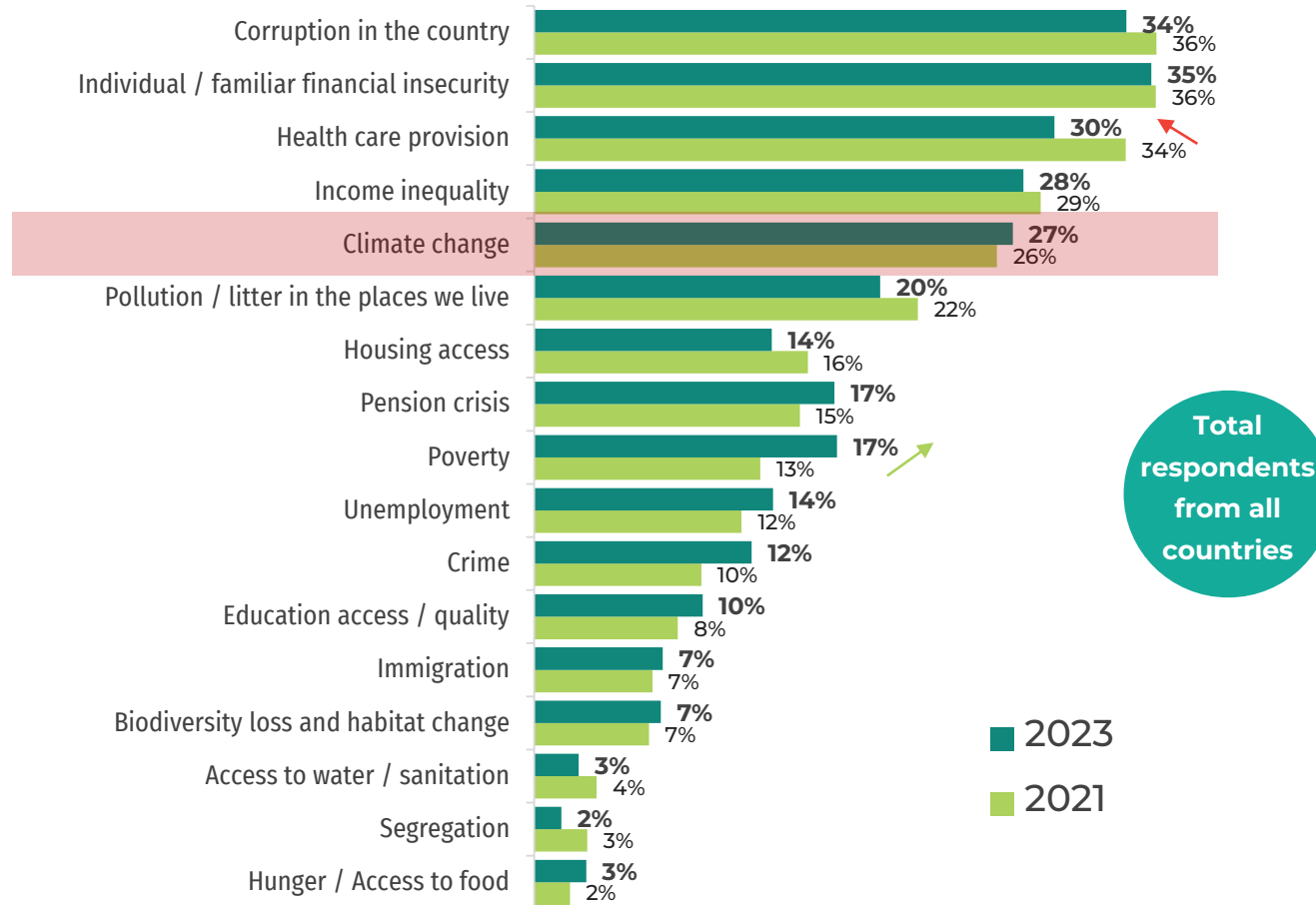
HOW BIG IS THE  
PROBLEM?





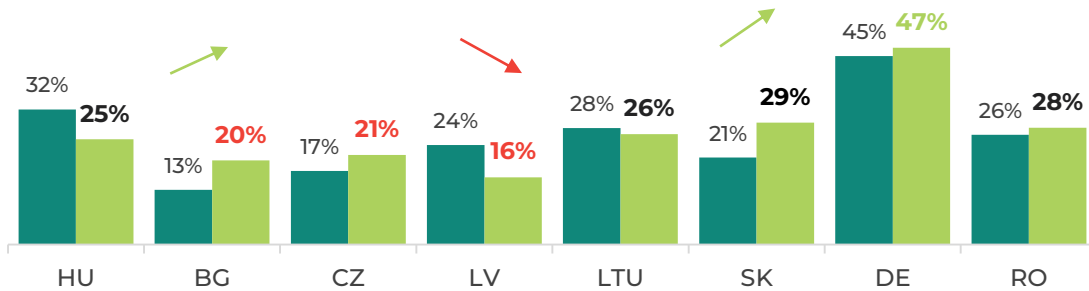
# CLIMATE CHANGE REMAINED THE 5TH BIGGEST ISSUE

## The most perceived problems today



# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COUNTRIES

(who perceive climate change as a major issue)



Among the countries surveyed, Germany continues to have the highest proportion of people who consider climate change to be one of the most important challenges facing the world today - in fact, it is the top priority over all other issues.

In Slovakia and Bulgaria, the proportion of people who recognise the importance of climate change has increased significantly, while in Latvia and Hungary it has decreased. While health care provision ranks first in Hungary, in Latvia it is the financial insecurity.

The topic of climate change was pushed into the background by the **war in Ukraine, inflation and related insecurity**; many view the war itself – besides being a geopolitical and humanitarian issue - also as an **environmental disaster**.



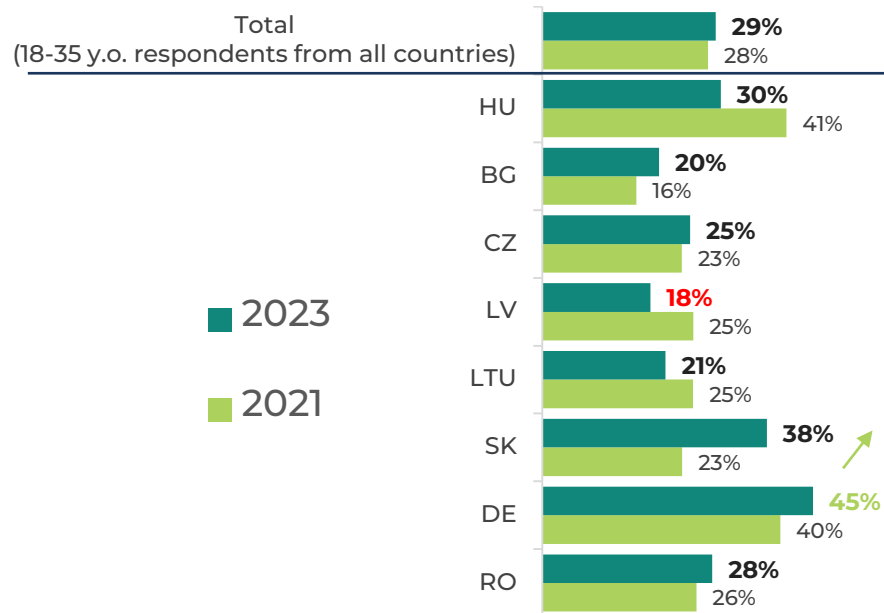
*'Two years ago, I was more optimistic that we might still have time... Today I think we are running out of time.'*  
(LT, female, 31)

*'Where they detonate bombs, whatever kind of tanks are rolling on the streets, it is not at all compatible with environmental protection.'*  
(HU, male, 37)

*'There's always been conflict and will be, so I think that the environment and climate change should not be put aside, just because the conflict's happening next door.'*  
(CZ, female, 20)

# FOCUSING ON THE 18-35 Y.O. PEOPLE

(who perceive climate change as a major issue)



There is also a significant increase in the proportion of 18–35-year-olds in Slovakia who consider climate change to be one of the most important problems of our time, while Latvia and Hungary show a larger decrease in this age group compared to the 2021 results.

There is no gender difference on this question in most countries in 2023, the only exception being Slovakia, where men rather than women think climate change is one of the biggest issue today (51% vs. 26%).

# FOCUSING ON THE 18-35 Y.O. PEOPLE

(who perceive climate change as a major issue)

## IN 2023, FIRST ASSOCIATIONS ARE MORE NEGATIVE, HOPELESSNESS AND DISAPPOINTMENT PREVAIL

Many respondents feel disappointed, skeptical and pessimistic because they have seen no actions and no change in the positive direction - but rather the opposite: governments and individuals care about the environment even less than before.

They think only huge, system-level changes and probably some innovations, upcoming new technologies would bring the desired results in slowing down climate change, which is attributed mainly to man-made actions, primarily consumption and industrial production.



*'Lately it is only us, individuals who care, from the big politics it has disappeared...before I could see some improvement, but now I do not.'* (HU, male, 37)

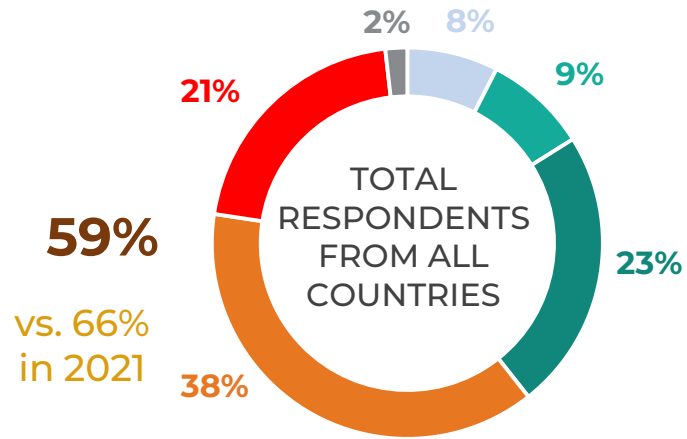
*'I am more pessimistic than I used to be, I think say half a billion people is trying while the other 7 billion is doing nothing to stop it.'* (CZ, male, 35)

*'If we wanted to do something about it, it would need an attitude change, starting mainly with ourselves, but it would also have to be followed up by a change in humanity's priorities, which is certainly not easy, and I don't think it is realistic.'* (SK, female, 35)

*'...theoretically every country, every government would have to start changing things, and we're not talking about little things like these crappy plastic lids, that really doesn't matter, but about things like marine pollution, the way energy is produced, that kind of thing. I think it's clear to everyone that that's where it has to start.'* (GER, female, 18)



# SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER CLIMATE CHANGE A REAL AND GLOBAL PROBLEM



## Climate change is ...

- ... not a real problem today.
- ... only a small problem today.
- ... a real problem today to some degree.
- ... a real and global problem today.
- ... a real and global existential crisis today.
- I don't know.

Apart from Germany, the proportion of people in all the countries surveyed who consider climate change to be a real, global problem has stagnated or even fallen - but Hungary is still the best performer.

Significant declines were recorded in Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, where gender attitudes have also softened, particularly among women.



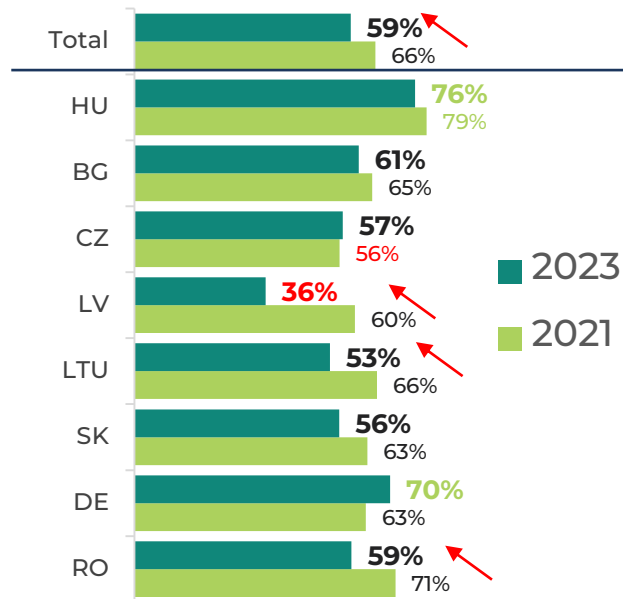
*'Personally, I feel it is just as important as two years ago, before this war.'*  
(HU, male 22)

*'The world should have made significant progress in those two years. But we have all gone backward in a big way. The energy crisis, the war, etc. Thoughts about climate change have completely taken a back seat. Unfortunately, the situation has worsened, as well as the perception...'*  
(LT, male, 37)

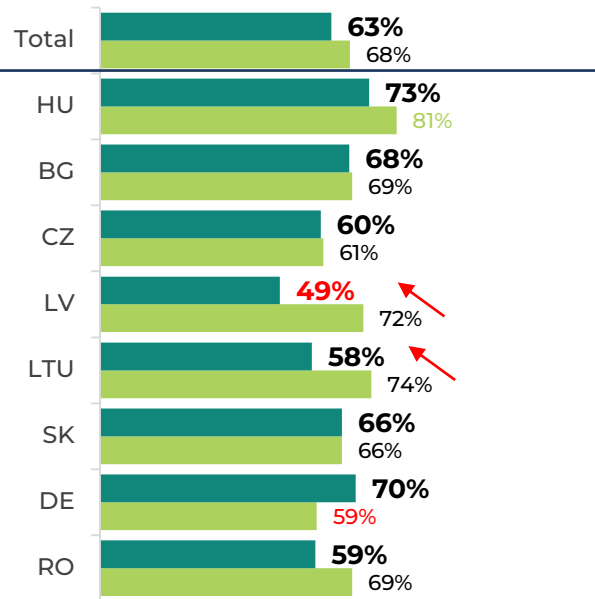
# SIGNIFICANT DECREASE IN THE PROPORTION OF PEOPLE WHO CONSIDER CLIMATE CHANGE A REAL AND GLOBAL PROBLEM

**Top2Box values: Climate change is a REAL AND GLOBAL PROBLEM / EXISTENTIAL CRISIS today**

## Differences between countries



## 18-35 y.o. respondents



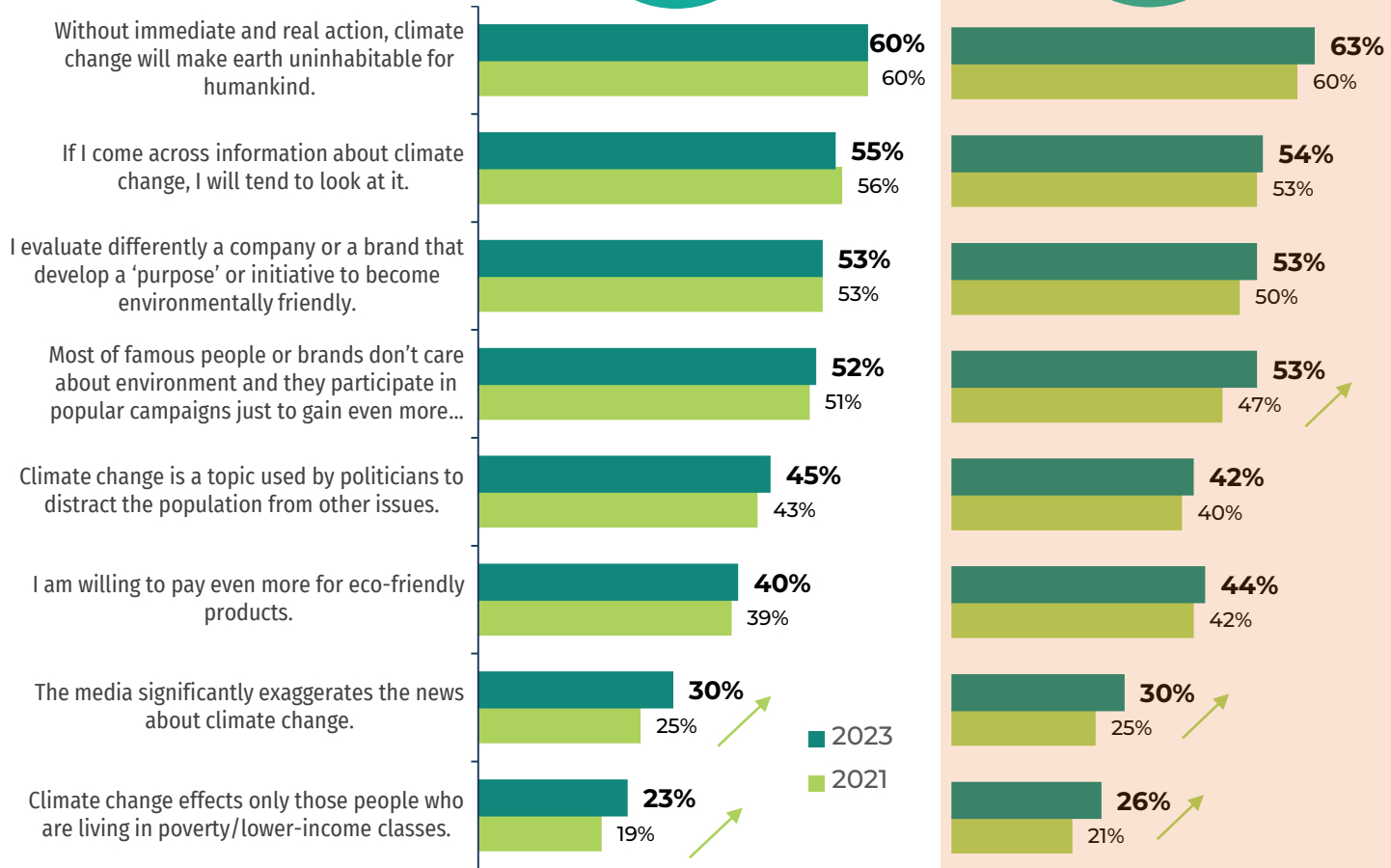
Based on the focus group discussions, the overall level of involvement and perceived importance of the topic among young people is the same or even higher versus 2021, amplified by recently experienced extreme weather conditions (flood, warm winter, summer heatwaves, weather rapidly changing) in Europe, but diminished by the worsening financial situation of individuals, high level of disappointment and the feeling of being powerless.

# MORE AND MORE PEOPLE THINK THE MEDIA IS EXAGGERATING CLIMATE CHANGE INFORMATION

**Top2Box values = rather or strongly agree with the given statement**

**Total respondents from all countries**

**18-35 y. o. respondents from all countries**



## Difference between countries in 2023 (total respondents)

LV: 41%, CZ: 51%, SK: 55%, DE: 56%  
RO: 68%, BG: 69%, HU: 76%

CZ: 31%, LV: 39%, SK: 44%, LTU: 51%  
HU: 67%, RO: 69%, BG: 74%

LV: 39%, CZ: 44%, DE: 44%  
HU: 62%, LTU: 62%, BG: 65%

DE: 42%, SK: 44%  
RO: 62%

SK: 35%, DE: 40%  
HU: 50%, RO: 52%, LV: 54%

LV: 29%, LTU: 32%, CZ: 33%, SK: 34%  
RO: 47%, HU: 50%, BG: 59%

HU: 21%  
RO: 41%

HU: 16%, CZ: 16%, SK: 20%  
RO: 36%

HOW BIG IS THE PROBLEM?

# DIFFERENT ATTITUDES BY GENDER

Top2Box values = rather or strongly agree with the given statement	TOTAL RESPONDENTS (from all countries)	MALES	FEMALES
Without immediate and real action, climate change will make earth uninhabitable for humankind	60%	56%	64%
If I come across information about climate change, I will tend to look at it	55%	52%	58%
I evaluate differently a company or a brand that develop a 'purpose' or initiative to become environmentally friendly	53%	50%	55%
Most of famous people / brands don't care about environment and they Participate in popular campaigns just to gain even more popularity or profit	52%	54%	50%
Climate change is a topic used by politicians to distract the population from other issues	45%	48% <i>vs.44%</i>	43%
I am willing to pay even more for eco-friendly products	40%	38%	43%
The media significantly exaggerates the news about climate change	30% <i>vs.25%</i>	35% <i>vs.30%</i>	25% <i>vs.20%</i>
Climate change effects only those people who are living in poverty/lower-income classes	23% <i>vs.19%</i>	25% <i>vs.21%</i>	21% <i>vs.17%</i>

For most of the statements, the results for 2023 show a similar picture to the survey 2 years earlier, with still the largest number of respondents - nearly two thirds - recognising the need for immediate and real action to avoid the negative impacts of climate change.

However, significantly more people think this year that the media exaggerates the news about climate change, and similarly, significantly more people think now that climate change only affects poorer people. On the latter two issues, Romanian respondents are the most strongly opinionated.

In terms of gender, the results show that women are more likely than men to press for real action on climate change and are more interested in the issue.

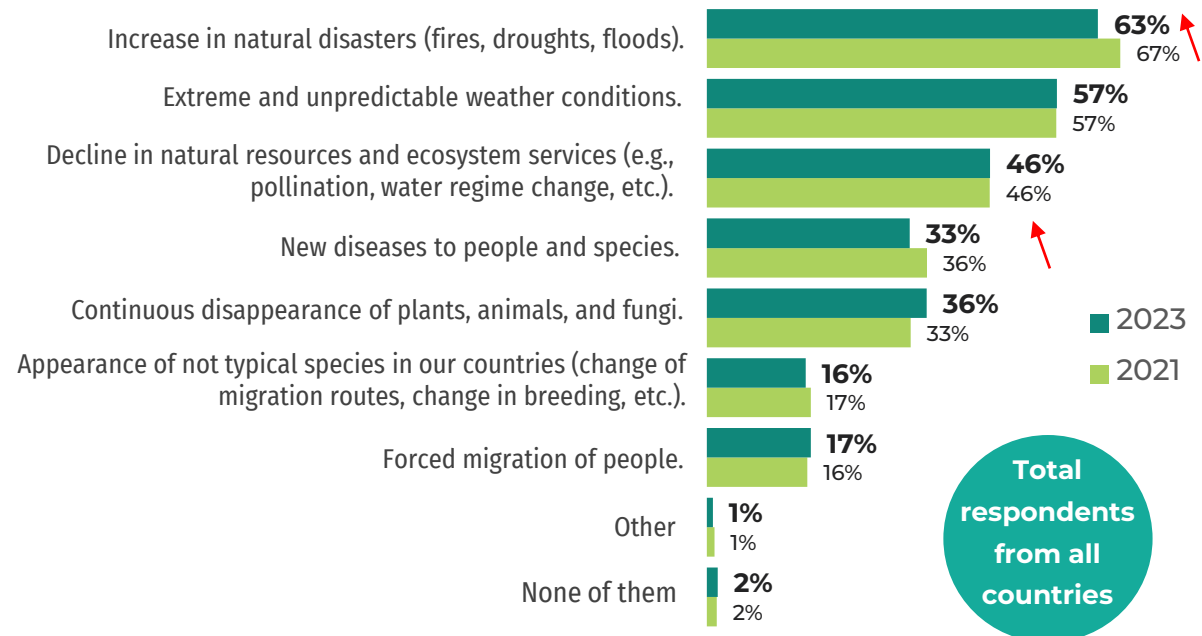
While the proportion of women who think the media exaggerate the news has also increased, overall, only a quarter of women hold this view, compared to more than a third of men.



WHAT ARE THE  
EFFECTS?



# NATURAL DISASTERS REMAIN THE BIGGEST FEAR OF CLIMATE CHANGE



WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

# NATURAL DISASTERS REMAIN THE BIGGEST FEAR OF CLIMATE CHANGE

## Main differences between countries – 2023 (%)

Total respondents	HU	BG	CZ	LV	LTU	SK	DE	RO
Increase in natural disasters	64	67	56↓	54↓	63	69	64	68
Extreme and unpredictable weather conditions	67	57	46	54	58	47	56	66
Decline in natural resources and ecosystem services	51	38	54	38	37↓	60	48	43
New diseases to people and species	24	52	26	45	34	31	22↓	33
Continuous disappearance of plants, animals, and fungi	29	34	42	29↑	36	33	42	38
Appearance of not typical species in our countries	17	12	17	25	19	15	13	13

18-35 y.o. respondents	HU	BG	CZ	LV	LTU	SK	DE	RO
Increase in natural disasters	58	60	66	57	63	70	64	63
Extreme and unpredictable weather conditions	57	51	44	48	62	38	46	55
Decline in natural resources and ecosystem services	56	37	55	39↓	40	66↑	45	47
New diseases to people and species	30	52	27	48	32	27	27	32
Continuous disappearance of plants, animals, and fungi	32	37	46	24	42	38	41	42
Appearance of not typical species in our countries	15	15	17	18	16	14	10	18

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

# CONCERNS HAVE NOT INCREASED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS

The quantitative results showed that of all the impacts of climate change, it is the natural factors that are of greatest concern.

New diseases were mentioned by a third of respondents this year, a significant decrease from 2021 data, most likely because while our previous data collection took place during the Covid pandemic, by 2023 it had completely disappeared from everyday life.

Overall, concerns about the effects of climate change have not increased over the past two years, and the order of factors has remained unchanged too.

Among the countries surveyed, Hungary was the only country where extreme and unpredictable weather conditions (rather than an increase in natural disasters) ranked first.

In Slovakia, the fear of a decline in natural resources and ecosystem services is much higher than average. This fear is even more pronounced in the 18-35 age group.

In terms of gender in general, for almost all factors, the concerns are higher among women, with the only exception being forced migration of people, mentioned by 20% of men compared to 15% of women.

The qualitative phase brought similar results in terms that natural disasters (flood, heatwaves, water supply, fires, ice caps melting...) and extreme and unpredictable weather (and rapid changes in weather) are heading the list of perceived consequences of climate change.

Concerns of focus group members have either remained the same or increased versus 2021: some examples for the latter are health related concerns stressed in Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania (mortality rate among young people, increased blood pressure, heart diseases due to hot weather, allergies, skin problems), together with fears of the consequences of migration of people due to the extreme heat in Eastern countries to the North, or psychological impacts stressed in Romania and Lithuania.

*'It's like four seasons in one day. You don't know what to expect.'*  
(RO, female, 24)



*'The climates shift...the weather goes crazy and it starts raining or snowing overnight...the fruits freeze and there will be no harvest. In fact, it affects a lot of things, prices go up and people suffer because of it.'* (HU, female, 27)

*'At times I noticed the draught, which is much discussed, that there's just a little rain and that there'll be water shortages... I have been noticing this for the two years...hot summers and not much rain.'* (CZ, male, 36)

*'Because of climate change, we will not be able to stop people from the East. It will be too hot for them, they will have to flee to survive, and Lithuania is not a densely populated country, so our identity could vanish and Lithuania as a country could vanish too.'* (LT, male, 37)

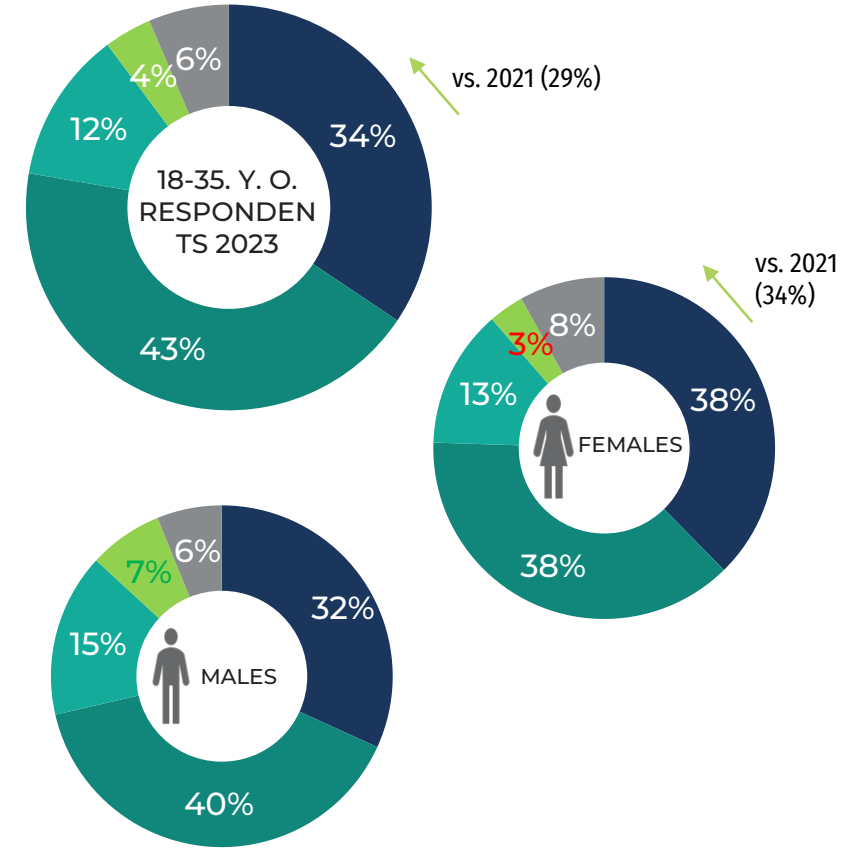
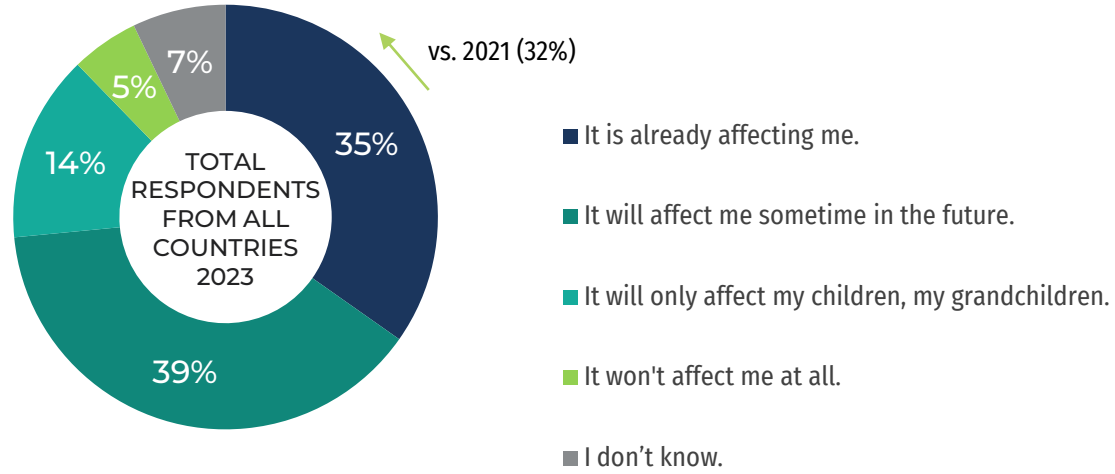
*'Temperature changes are very high and conditions are becoming more extreme, which is bad for people's health. Some people cannot cope with the heat, heart diseases are more frequent, mortality rates are increasing, even young people are dying.'* (LT, female, 27)

*'The body does not have enough time to adapt to the change in temperature, which has an impact on the immune system...the sudden changes during the day have an impact on the psyche...you don't even know what to plan and how, if you want to go on vacation.'* (RO, female, 36)

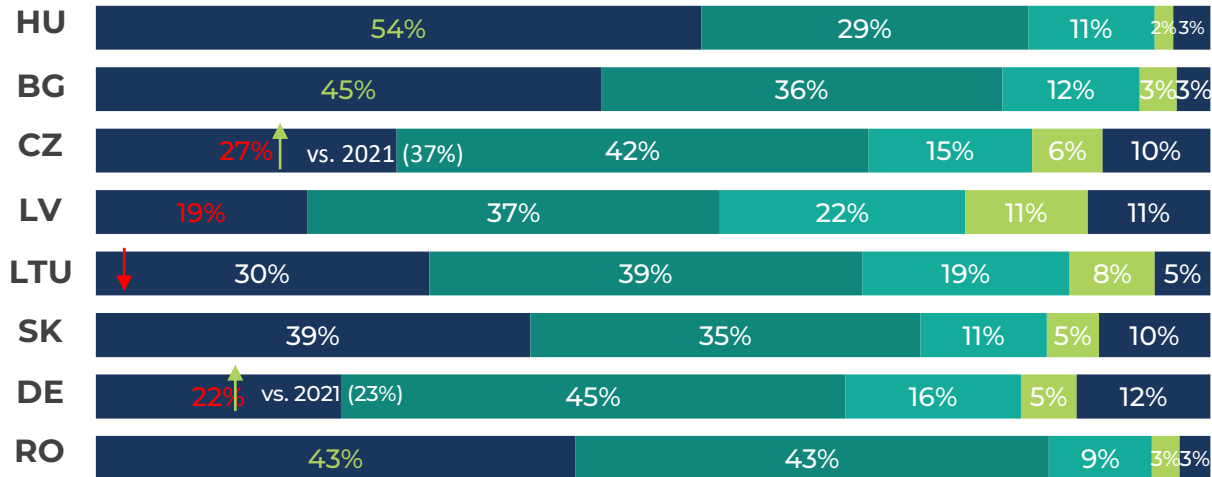
*'Of course, one notices that there are also many floods, now for example in Italy, like the one in Magdeburg before...The important thing is to be prepared for it.'* (GER, male, 36)



## Increased proportion of people who say they are already affected by climate change



## The increase is mainly due to Bulgarian and Slovak attitudes



Just under a fifth of respondents (19%) think that climate change will only affect them in later generations or will not affect them at all. This proportion is the highest for Latvians (33%), and the lowest for Hungarians and Romanians (12%).

7 percent of men think that climate change will not affect them at all, compared to just 3 percent of women. This difference is observed in all countries.

WHO IS  
RESPONSIBLE?



# MAN-MADE ACTIONS ARE THE MAIN CONTRIBUTOR TO CLIMATE CHANGE – BUT THE GAP WITH NATURAL ACTIONS HAS NARROWED



**74%**

77% (2021)

Total respondents from all countries

**49%**

45% (2021)

72% (2021) **70%**



MALES

↑ **48%** 44% (2021)

81% (2021) **78%**



FEMALES

↑ **51%** 47% (2021)

76% (2021) **76%**

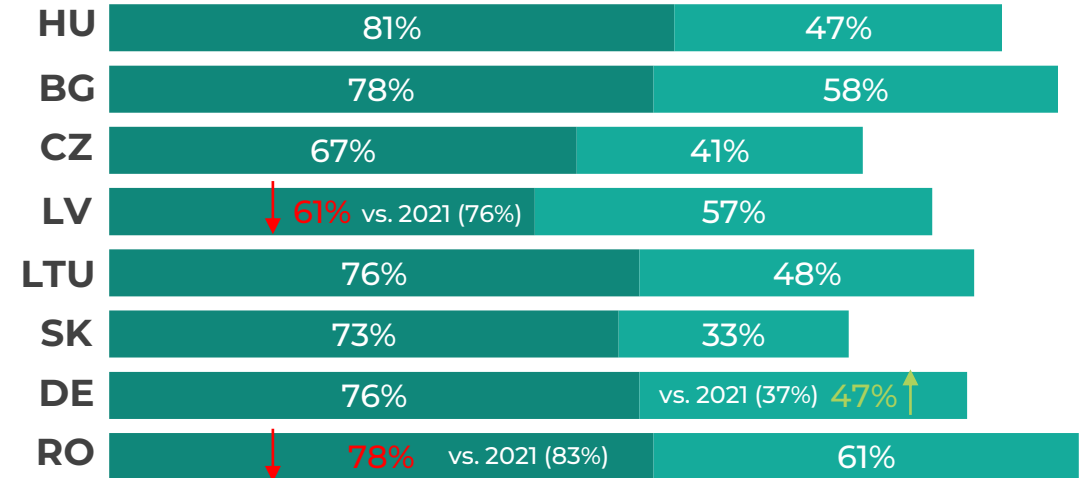
18-35 y.o.

↑ **49%** 41% (2021)

Rather **MAN-MADE ACTIONS** contribute to climate change

Rather **NATURE** contributes to climate change

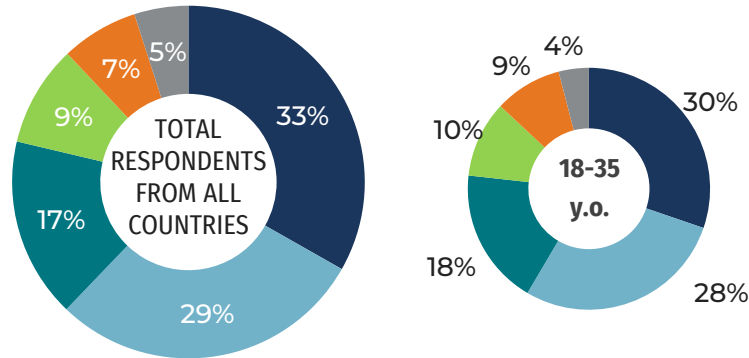
## Main differences between countries – 2023 (%)



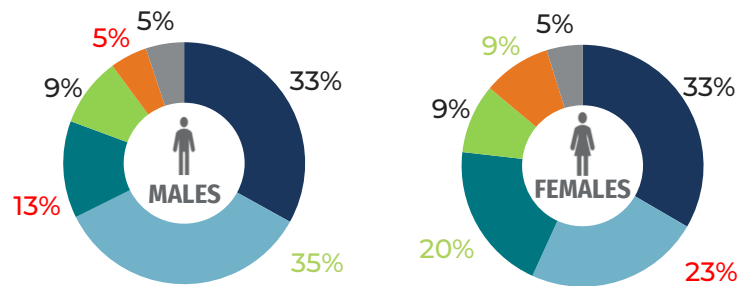
Three quarters of respondents think that man made actions rather or greatly contribute to the climate change, while almost the half mentioned the responsibility of the nature. 39% of respondents mentioned both options, meaning that they believe the two areas are equally responsible (vs. 37% in 2021). Women are more likely to associate the problem with man-made actions than men.

Man-made actions were mentioned the most in Hungary, while the responsibility of nature was emphasised the most in Romania, and Latvia. In Bulgaria, both sides have particularly high percentages. The smallest difference between the 2 sides is in Latvia, with only 4% difference between man-made and natural actions – due to a significant decrease in the proportion of people who mentioned man-made actions and a significant increase in the proportion of people who mentioned natural causes behind climate change.

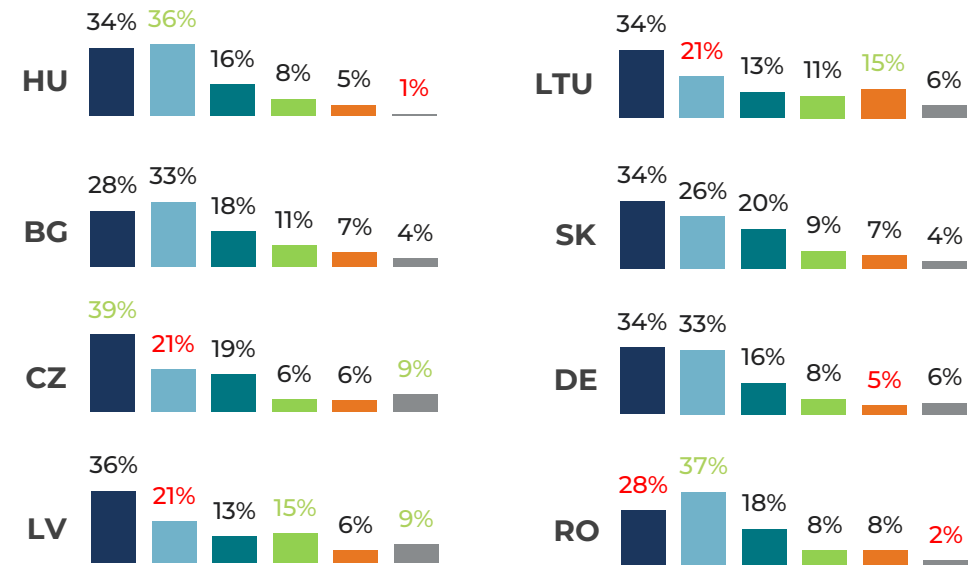
# ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN PRIMARILY AT THE CORPORATE AND POLITICAL LEVEL



- Big companies and industries
- Governments, political organizations
- Individuals
- International organizations (e.g. UN)
- Environmental, social, other civil organizations, lobby groups
- None of them



The 2023 results are almost identical to the 2021 results in each sub-group.



# ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN PRIMARILY AT THE CORPORATE AND POLITICAL LEVEL

Although the opinions of the young age group do not differ from the overall sample, the results differ by gender. While men are significantly more likely than average to emphasise the role of political organisations (even surpassing that of large companies), women believe that individuals have almost as much responsibility as governments, and are much more likely to emphasise the role of environmental and civil society organisations.

Political actors received the most mentions in Hungary, while the emphasis on large companies is most typical in the Czech Republic. The involvement of international organisations is most prominent in Latvia, while the environmental and civil society organisations in Lithuania. In the group discussion in SK the European Union was mentioned as having the highest impact.

Participants in all countries consistently listed the government and corporations as mainly responsible for initiating and driving actions, as individuals are often said to be less motivated (selfish and lazy) and less equipped to do so. Many respondents expressed their disappointment and frustration in their government for not doing anything - or even stopping previous support and activities due to lack of interest and a different political agenda, and companies acting mainly for good PR.

Based on the focus group discussions, young people would expect action plans, new laws and their effective reinforcement instead of empty promises, using climate change as an excuse, or pointless conferences held.



*'I would like the government to provide clarity on what the current climate change plan is, what the initiatives are. They take no steps, and they say nothing.'* (LT, male, 37)

*'In reality, there is no selective waste management in Hungary...it is a big deception. Our government does not give a shit about it... there is no profit on it.'* (HU, female, 27)

*'I think all big and even smaller companies act on their own interest to show off how environmentally conscious they are. It is like a competition, catching up with the others.'* (HU, female, 27)

*'I just have the feeling that this climate change is also being used as a political argument to simply push through a certain agenda, for example the nuclear phase-out...which is also very much under criticism, because nuclear power plants are actually very climate-friendly.'* (GER, male, 36)

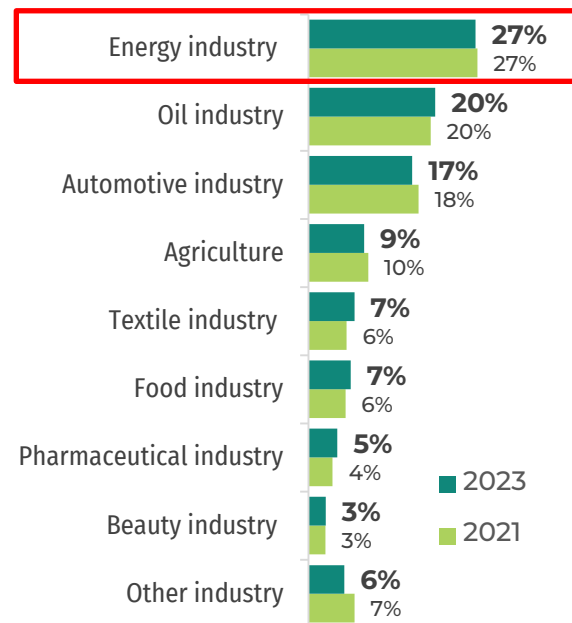


# ENERGY INDUSTRY IS STILL CONSIDERED THE MOST HARMFUL FOR THE CLIMATE

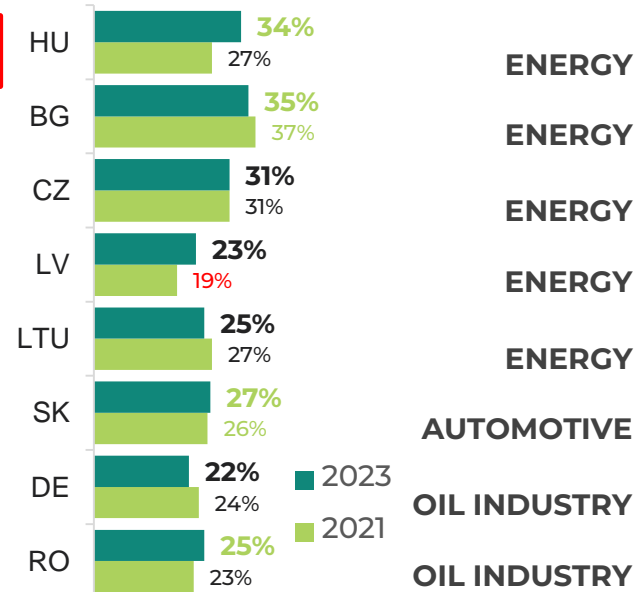
No change in respondents' view by 2023

The oil industry leads in germany and romania, while in slovakia it is the automotive industry

TOTAL RESPONDENTS FROM ALL COUNTRIES



THE MOST HARMFUL INDUSTRY PER COUNTRY



Most frequent mentions: wood, chemicals, tourism (shipping and air), construction, plastics, steel, metallurgical, aluminium industries

# ENERGY INDUSTRY IS STILL CONSIDERED THE MOST HARMFUL FOR THE CLIMATE

No change in respondents' view by 2023

Younger age groups and genders have similar views



*In almost all countries, the same sector is in first place in 2023 as in 2021. The only exception is Romania, where the energy sector was also the most responsible for climate change 2 years ago, but the 29% share of the energy sector has dropped significantly in 2023 (23%) . Instead, the share of the oil sector has increased.*

The qualitative phase reinforced - just like in 2021 - that climate change is mainly attributed to man's inappropriate actions: industrial production, too much consumption, in general the exhaustion of resources in the pursuit of profit. In addition, the planet being overpopulated and the war in Ukraine were listed as factors contributing to the environmental crisis, and there were a few mentions of natural causes as well.

*'It could be slowed down by producing as little as possible, if there was no demand for new products.'* (HU, male, 37)

*'Production, all those operating factories that pump a lot of bad things into the environment, and damaging both trees and nature and the ozone layer, then acid rain forms. That is what factories do...'* (LT, female, 27)

*'The best scenario is that through technical progress everything is somehow regulated, be it famines, droughts or even cold, no matter in what form, that one simply controls nature through technology.'* (GER, male, 22)

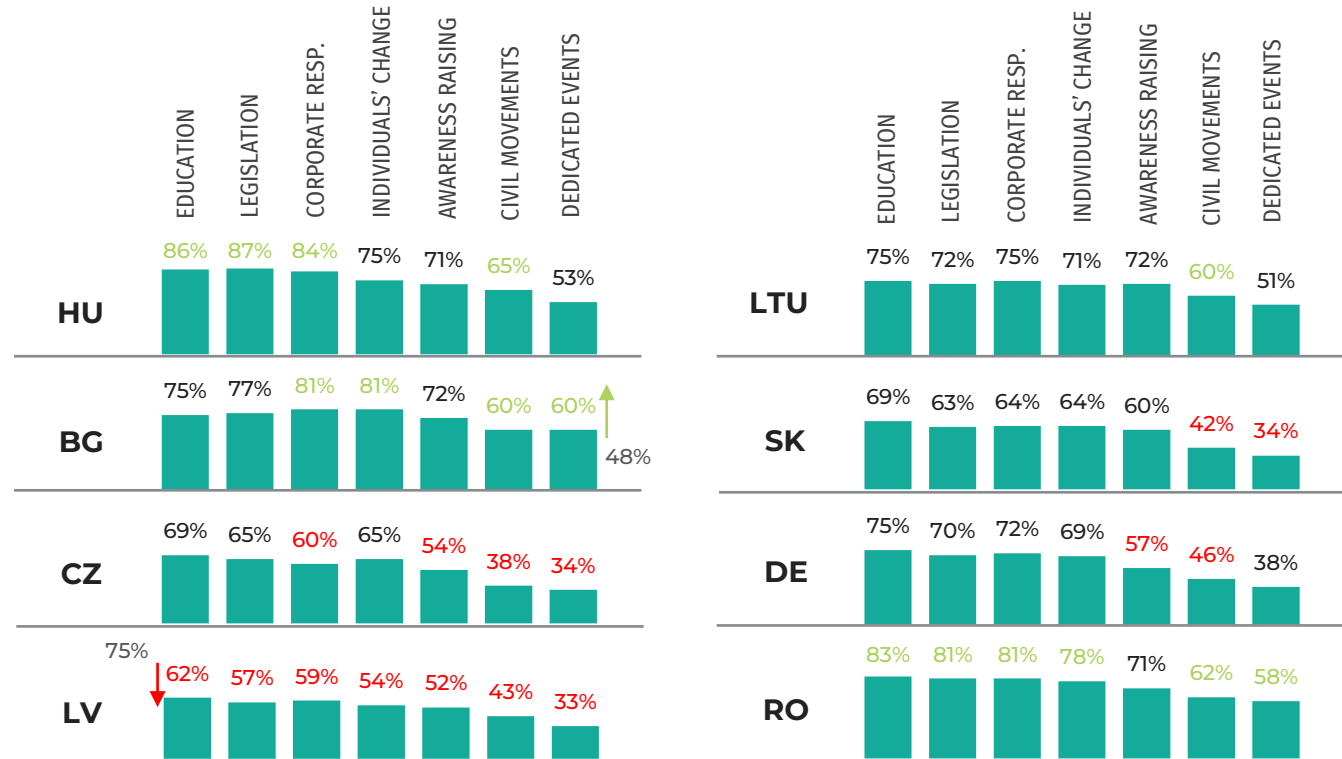
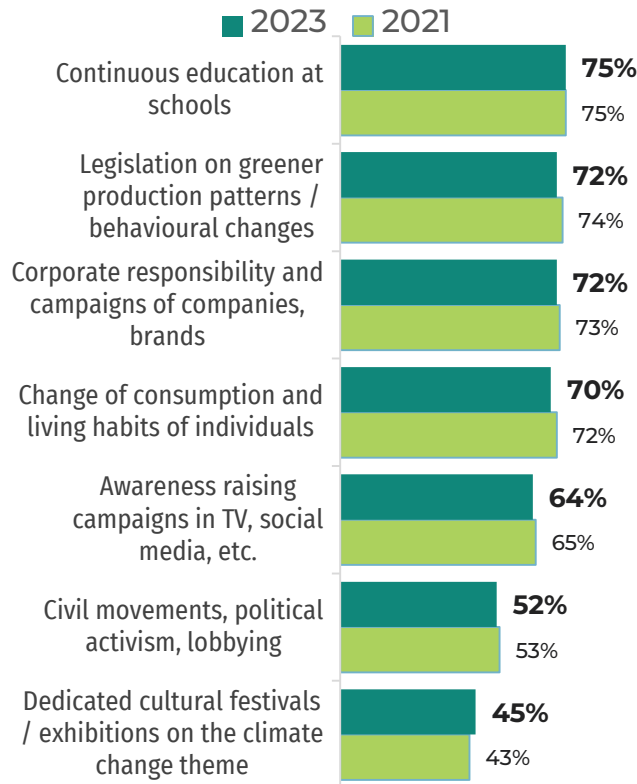
ARE WE TAKING  
ACTIONS? WHAT?



# EDUCATION, LEGISLATION AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY REMAINED THE TOP3 KEY ACTIONS

## TOTAL RESPONDENTS FROM ALL COUNTRIES

**Top2Box values = consider the given area to be rather or very important**



While the results by country are broadly similar in 2023 compared to 2 years ago, there are two cases where there is a significant change. One is in Bulgaria, where the importance of dedicated events in the fight against climate change was mentioned by 60% this year (vs. 48% in 2021), while in Latvia there is a significant drop in the proportion of people who say education is important (from 75% to 62%).

ARE WE TAKING ACTIONS? WHAT?

C8: How important do you think the following actions in tackling climate change, to raise awareness among the population on climate change?

2021: N=2610 | N=302 (HU); N=300 (BG); N=303 (CZ); N=300 (LV); N=300 (LTU); N=300 (SK); N=402 (DE); N=403 (RO)

2023: N=2601 | N=300 (HU); N=300 (BG); N=300 (CZ); N=300 (LV); N=301 (LTU); N=300 (SK); N=400 (DE); N=400 (RO)

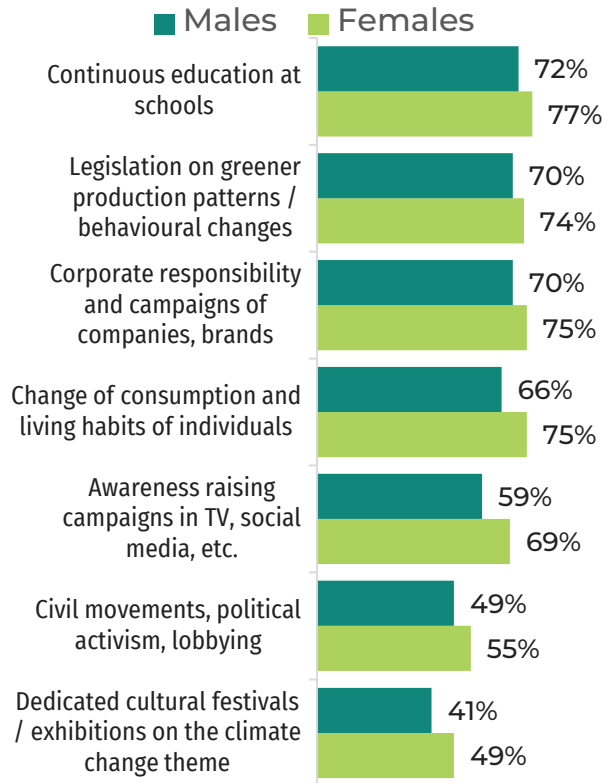
Significant difference vs. 2021 ↓ ↑

Significant difference vs. total (xx% / xx%)



# EDUCATION, LEGISLATION AND CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY REMAINED THE TOP3 KEY ACTIONS

## MALE and FEMALE RESPONDENTS FROM ALL COUNTRIES 2023

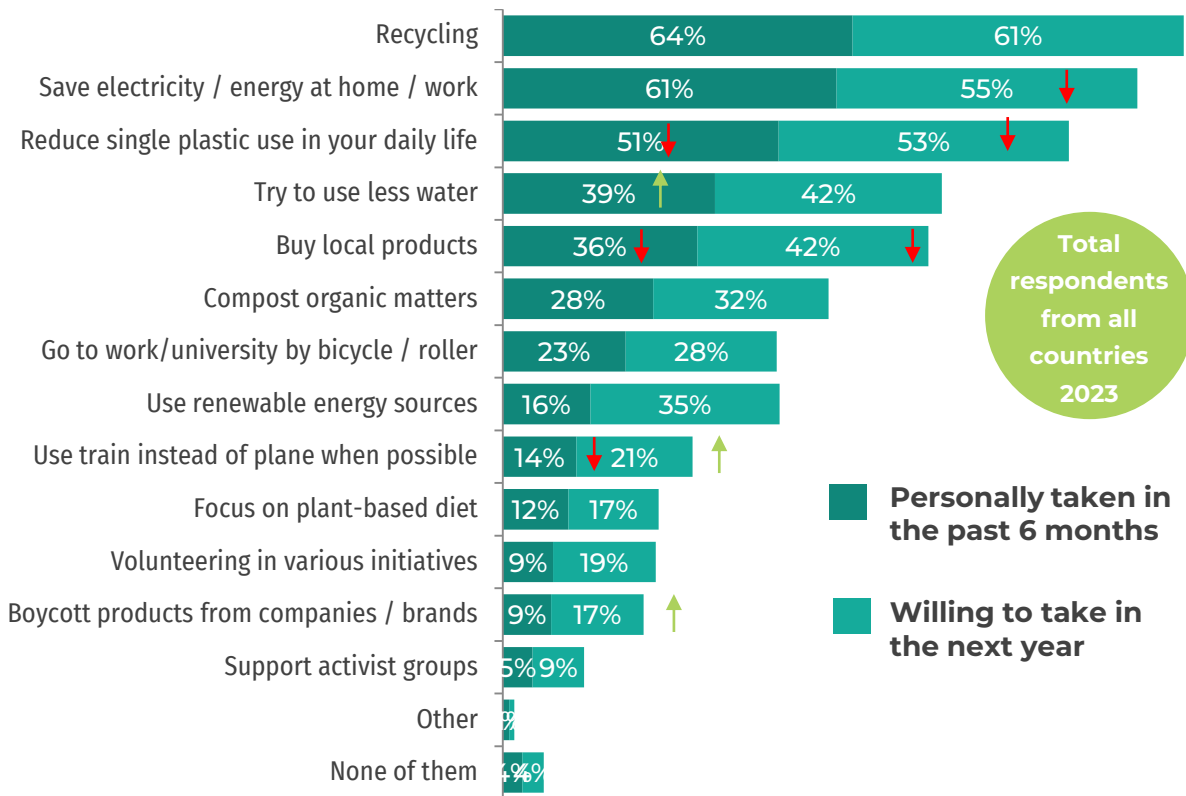


The results show that women are more likely than men to emphasise the importance of the certain activities. This gender gap, which is observed within the overall sample, holds true for almost all countries as well.





# RECYCLING AND ENERGY SAVING REMAIN THE TWO MOST POPULAR PERSONAL ACTIONS TO MITIGATE CLIMATE CHANGE



Compared to the 2021 results, a significantly lower proportion of respondents mentioned reducing the usage of single plastic in their daily lives in 2023, but half of respondents still do so, whether in the recent past or in the future. In contrast, the use of less water was significantly more frequently mentioned this year, as was the boycotting of certain products, which is now the case for 1 in 10 respondents.

Although a third of respondents said they would use renewable energy in the near future in 2021, the proportion of those who have done so in the last six months has fallen below 20% again this year - but 35% are again optimistic about the future.

In terms of both past and future actions, Hungarians and Germans are more represented than average for most actions.

## Difference between males and females (2023)

While 56% of women said they had reduced the use of single plastics in their daily lives, only 45% of men said they had done so. The balance is similarly tilted towards women when it comes to plant-based diets, with 14 percent of women following this compared to 10 percent of men.

## Preferences of the 18-35 y.o. age group (2023)

Young people are significantly less likely than average to say that they try to save energy (55%) and buy local products (30%), while they are much more likely to use alternative modes of transport (26%), and support activist groups (9%).



# INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS IN 2023

## How do respondents reduce their ecological footprint?

The majority of respondents reported that they have **continued** doing the same things as two years ago to protect the environment; mainly **recycling** was mentioned as activity, and as well as the area where most development and improvement was observed. In addition, **avoiding disposable plastic, and energy saving** (especially because of rising prices) were also frequently mentioned, followed by a long list of activities, such as buying used clothes, using electric bike or car, driving less and using public transport or walking instead, saving energy, reduced use of chemical ingredients, buying XL size or no packaging, growing fruits and vegetable/keeping chicken, minimizing consumption – and a few mentions of planting forests, signing petitions and cleaning, waste collecting campaigns were made.



*'I have started to use rail services a lot. As a sustainable travel club is created...you can see how much you save each time...I have saved 52 kilos of CO2 during my travels. It is a good feeling and encourages a better attitude towards climate change...'* (LT, female, 18)

*'I still cycle a lot. I fight with my neighbors who throw litter next to the bin. I am reducing consumption...'* (LT, male, 37)

*'I try to avoid disposable plastic, use my own bags whenever possible, and recently I tried using rewashable sanitary pads...'* (CZ, female, 20)

*'Every family was given an extra selective trash bin...it is very good, everything is being transported from home, no need to use the selective island...and I have a compost bin at the backyard, too.'* (HU, male, 37)

*'I try to shop consciously, and to plan my shopping. I don't shop impulsively; I don't want to throw food away.'* (RO, female, 35)

# INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS IN 2023

## How do respondents reduce their ecological footprint?

### Barriers to actions in 2023

Besides some (still valid) aspects such as laziness, selfishness, sticking with old habits and passivity experienced from people surrounding responsible citizens, and lack of time and guidance – an **increased level of discouragement, pessimism and overall lower motivation** can be observed due to:

- Lack of interest and willingness to act by the **government, politicians** putting their own agenda and economic interest in the first place
- The negative financial and psychological **impacts of the war, the current uncertain economic (recession, inflation) and political situation**
- In some cases, due to **changes in individual situation** (e.g. buying a new house, birth of first child) respondents' financial circumstances have become worse; students are especially vulnerable
- **German** respondents are especially pessimistic, hopeless and tired; they have the impression that climate activists are portrayed negatively in the media, and demonstrations have not had the desired outcome; also large companies are only addressed in the context of greenwashing
- In the **Czech** Republic, growing skepticism is observed regarding the power of **international institutions**, especially UN – as it is not able to stop the conflict in Ukraine
- In **Hungary**, lack of support from the government for alternative energy investments (solar panels, wind turbines) and for education were mentioned
- **Lithuanian** respondents are very anxious about their future and talk about the fragility of life



*'As a father, I naturally try to be a role model for my children...The problem is that I don't see any real role models anymore, neither in politics nor in other areas...If you look at our government, you see that they block each other...those who are in positions of power... they just don't use their possibilities in the direction that something happens.'* (GER, male, 37)

*'People need to be guided...In the North-European countries they invest in making people smarter and more knowledgeable...in our country they want people to be less conscious, it is the interest of the upper circles, but not good for the environment...'* (HU, female, 27)

*'In Romania, much more severe punitive measures would be needed, because people are not sufficiently educated on environmental issues to change their behavior on their own.'* (RO, female, 24)

*'Being greener and living greener is of course great and it would help a lot if everyone got more and more involved, but at the moment when the prices are just so high I don't think it's possible for everyone'* (SK, female, 18)



WHERE DO WE GET  
INFORMATION?

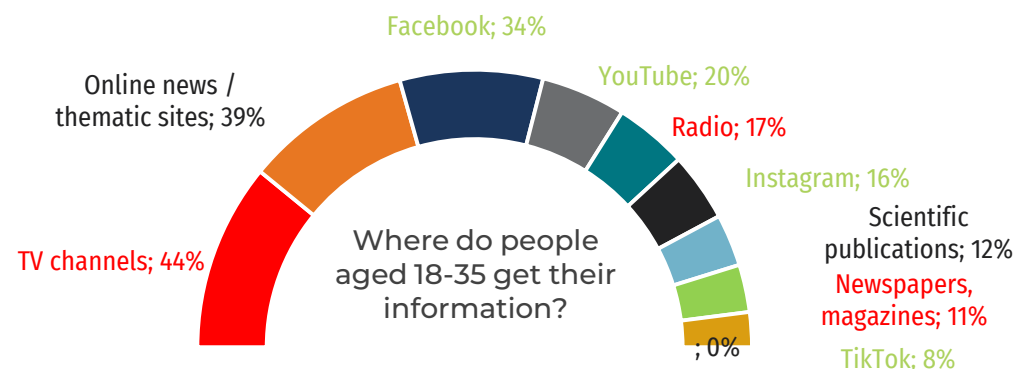
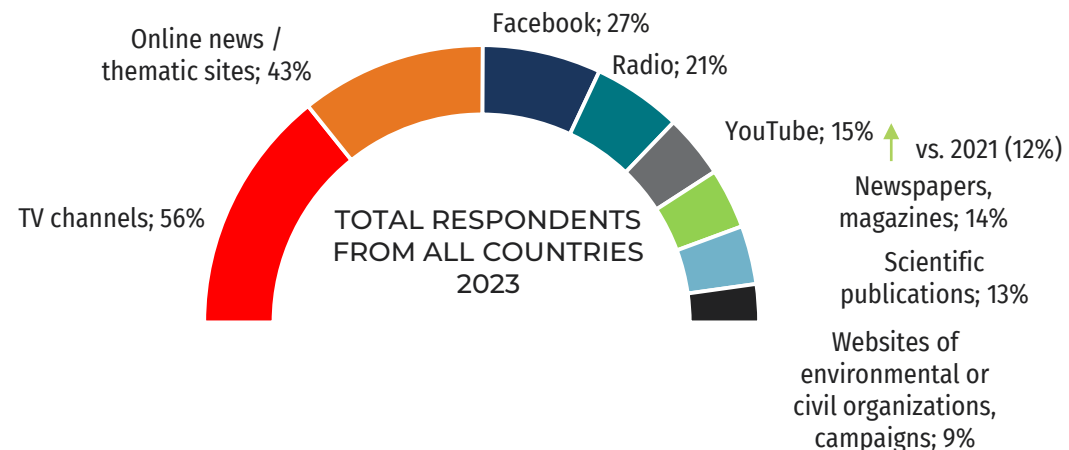


# WE CONTINUE TO GATHER INFORMATION MAINLY FROM TV PROGRAMMES, AS OPPOSED TO PROFESSIONAL SOURCES

- Online news / thematic portals overtake TV channels in **Hungary** (64% vs. 46%).
- In **Bulgaria**, TV channels (75%) and Facebook (38%) were mentioned the most often among the countries.
- YouTube's largest share is in **Latvia** (24%).
- Of the countries surveyed, Instagram and Podcasts were the most frequently mentioned in **Slovakia** (11-12%)
- Newspapers / magazines were the most mentioned in **Germany** (28%), while Facebook is considered as a less relevant source (12%).
- Online forums, blogs are mostly visited in **Romania** (11%), while newspapers and magazines are the least popular source of information on climate change (6%).
- Only YouTube has seen a significant increase in its share compared to 2021

Online forums, blogs, podcasts, professional events, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, Twitter, and websites of international and governmental organizations were mentioned by less than 7% of respondents.

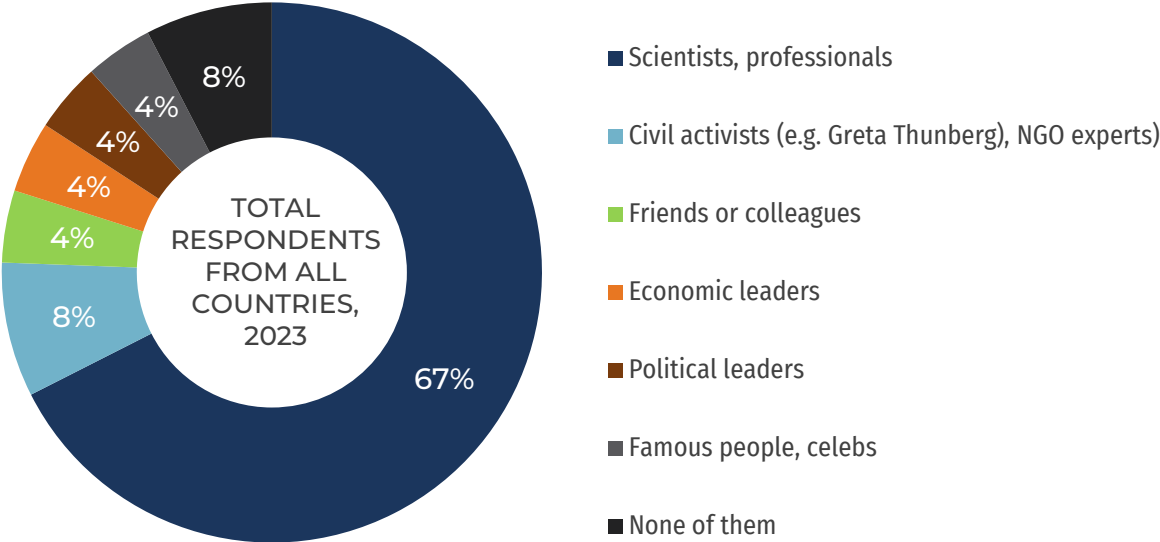
Social networking sites are significantly more popular when it comes to information on climate change. For women, Facebook and Instagram are even more important.





# NO SOURCE MORE CREDIBLE THAN SCIENTISTS / PROFESSIONALS

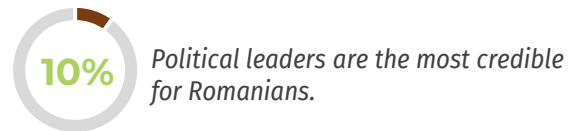
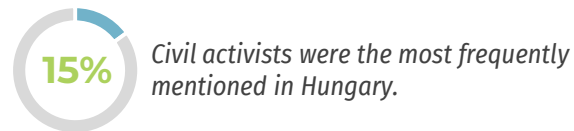
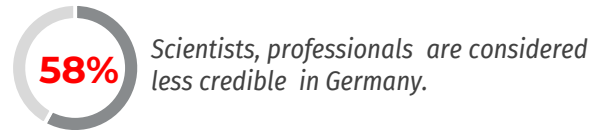
Although professional sources are not typical in information gathering about climate change, credible information, whether from TV or online portals, is when it is provided by a scientist. The results have not changed in this respect since 2021



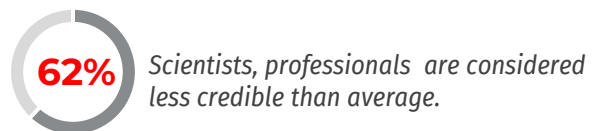
The 2023 results are almost identical to the 2021 results (in each sub-group as well).

# NO SOURCE MORE CREDIBLE THAN SCIENTISTS / PROFESSIONALS

## Differences by countries (2023)



## 18-35 y.o. age group (2023)



There is relatively broad agreement between males and females in terms of this question.

## Reduced credibility of the media in 2023

Even though TV and news portals are generally trusted, **credibility issues** have come up more strongly in 2023; trust in the mass media is overall decreased because of **fake news, distortions, superficial, polarizing and negative content**. It is especially apparent in the Czech Republic, where a higher sensitivity to the credibility of information was reported due to disinformation campaigns, a growing scene which denies climate change, and more negative news on the topic – for instance by portraying the extreme action of the environmental activists – was found; and in Germany, where the willingness to consume information has decreased, people feel that they are flooded with negative information and polarizing discussions.



*'...disaster photos, look what is happening in Italy. But they do not write about the reasons.'*  
(HU, female, 33)

*'Nowadays in most cases there is a brutal title even for a smaller issue, and this way people will click on such content less and less often, because they cannot make a difference.'* (HU, male, 22)

*'Social media, I no longer use, because that has pulled me down psychologically so much, you just get hit with so much shit there...'*  
(GER, male, 22)

# RAISING AWARENESS AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN 2023

**Educational institutions** (and teaching children from an early age, probably starting in kindergarten) and the **media** were constantly listed as playing the **main role** not only in raising awareness, but also in the popularization of the topic, together with educating people – and also in fighting disinformation (especially in CZ, GER), and bringing the topic of climate change into the foreground again, after being pushed into the background (mainly by the war in Ukraine and its consequences).

In addition, the role of the **government and politicians, corporations, civil organizations and individuals** (the latter by showing good example in the first place) were also consistently discussed by respondents. Many positive examples were listed on different levels (local initiatives, recycling, CSR e.g. by Lidl, Ikea, Kaufland).



*'It is very great that sustainable development policy and climate change are already being integrated into the school curriculum...so we can give the government a plus for that'.  
(LT, female, 31)*

*'One of my acquaintances lives here in a neighboring village and there is a new initiative called 'Let's collect the trash together', they went out to the Danube bank with their children and then they collected the trash there...'  
(HU, female, 33)*

*"In 2021, I mentioned "Fridays For Future" but in Lithuania, it has been reduced, there are other portals like "Tvari Lietuva" – a Delfi's initiative, a new thing. They also have "River Clean" – it is trying so hard, it looks like it is about something to happen but no, nothing..."  
(LT, female, 31)*

*'I also miss informative advertisements that would teach the viewers, it would be good to let people know where to put different types of waste, by just a short interesting video.'  
(HU, male, 37)*

# RAISING AWARENESS AND THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN 2023

## Lower media presence: the topic of climate change has taken a back seat since 2021

Similarly to the findings in 2021, respondents **do not tend to proactively look for information** on climate change in 2023, either - however, they come across related information less frequently, as in most of the countries involved in the research **the topic of climate change has been sidelined.**

The vast majority still has a clear preference to **online sources of information**, especially **online news portals, as they are evaluated as credible.** Social media (FB, TikTok, Instagram) was also mentioned but their perceived level of credibility is much lower. Short videos are said to be more efficient than longer documentaries.



*'I have noticed that two years ago one did not even have to think very hard because then there were more articles, excerpts, analyses on the same portals, explaining concisely what could happen...I used to see that line about climate change on the BBC or Euronews, but now it is just war and war... Now I do not get the information I used to get.'* (LT, male, 37)

*'Social media mainly...but you can hardly hear anything about climate change these days, as other things are in the foreground, at least in Europe...'* (HU, female, 27)

*'I do not actively search for information, rather when I come across an article, a tweet or somewhere in the discussion for an opinion, then I look for information because I am interested in it and want to learn more about it. But I don't actively seek'* (CZ, male, 35)

*"I get information from the internet and children's books, I read books about existential problems with my child. Children's books address various issues and present the information in a very accessible way."* (RO, female, 36)

*'News portals, broadcasts, I watch more TV3 news when they talk about some events, some pollution, some good things that have changed. I trust these news.'* (LV, female, 23)

# APPENDIX





# BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

## Background & objective

Climate change is undoubtedly one of the most serious global challenges today, which will increasingly impact the younger generation in the coming decades.

That is why CEEWeb planned to conduct a second survey in 2023, focusing on how climate change impacts all life on Earth and how our choices affect the ecosystems in order to capitalize on the strong synergies in an emotional, life-centred communication campaign.

The evaluation of the survey was compared with the results of the 2021 survey to see how the understanding of the public, and especially the young (18-35 years old) generation, has changed after about one and a half years.

The aim of the 'Game Over?' project is to support the multi-dimensional and cross-country campaign of CEEWeb for Biodiversity with identifying the most appropriate messages and channels for communication actions.



## Methodology

The research was conducted in 8 countries: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia.

Date: October-November 2021 AND May-June 2023

**Qualitative module:** online focus group discussions

- 1 FGD in each country
- Length: 120 minutes, via MS Teams platform
- Sample size: 3-6 respondents in each group
- Target group: youth audience, 16-35 y.o. people, with a good mix of age and gender - discussions with the same participants as in 2021, at least 4 persons in each group/country, no new recruits
- Minor change in discussion guide: prompting on recent war in Ukraine, and media's responsibility in raising awareness regarding climate change, main focus on changes versus 2021

**Quantitative module:** same online survey in 2021 / 2023

- Length: 6-8 minutes long questionnaire on Ipsos online panel
- Sample size: N=300 self-completed questionnaires per country, exception of Germany and Romania where N=400 cases were collected
- Target group: 18-65 y.o. people, representative sample by age, gender, region

The results of the research help to assess the knowledge, awareness, sensitivity, and concerns of people per country in relation to climate change and ecosystem decline, identifying the most appropriate messages and channels for communication actions.

# DETAILS ON PERCEPTIONS THE WAR IN UKRAINE IN THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

## GERMANY

All participants describe that they felt affected by the war, and that climate protection has taken a back seat due to the war. It was pointed out that the suffering of the people in Ukraine is not comparable to the worries of 'us', others, while others think the war in Ukraine is one war among many others that only gets so much attention because it is taking place in Europe.

It was also stated that the war is politically taken as an argument, just like climate change, to push political agendas, and the government and the society were only half-heartedly concerned with climate protection, since they are willing to buy dirty energy from abroad, without any outcry.

## HUNGARY

The war is seen as having negative impact on environmental protection both directly by destroying the environment, and indirectly by occupying the news and pushing the topic of climate change into the background. Politicians taking advantage of the war was also pointed out.

*'It is shocking to me that there are grain fields lying as wasteland...they cannot be used at all in the next 50 years...and forests are destroyed...and for rebuilding everything resources will be taken from nature.'* (HU, male, 37)

*'Politics is taking advantage of the war by linking it to price increases, exaggerating the help given to refugees, or even by connecting it to the state of healthcare.'* (HU, female, 33)

## CZECH REPUBLIC

War in Ukraine has dominated public discussion and further polarized society, there's growing pessimism about action against climate change, but also some hope. For some the war in Ukraine and geopolitical concerns are currently felt as more urgent than the climate change. All agree the Russian aggression against Ukraine is unacceptable and needs to be stopped. They see many people are not willing to help Ukraine, thus, they will not be willing help the planet, either. In addition, they note that the UN is not able to effectively deal with the conflict in Ukraine, thus, it cannot deal with such a complex issue with so many clashing interests and positions as the climate change. It is also pointed out, that focusing on ending the war makes sense in the broader environmental perspective: the war comes with enormous environmental costs (blow up of the gas pipeline, Russia's burning gas supplies, emissions of military vehicles, aircrafts and missiles, polluting of land with chemicals from exploded bombs and missiles, radiation threats, etc.).

Some are, however, more optimistic and they see positive developments: overall, the topic of sustainability and environment protection is more present in media and public debate...and is also seen around, e.g. companies going "green". The conflict in Ukraine is seen as an opportunity to move to more sustainable economy.

*'How much emissions produces a tank? We're trying to comply with strict emission regulations in Europe, but an enormous polluting happens there, I read that missiles leave large amounts of toxic material in soil and so on...'* (CZ, male, 35)

*'I think there's more discussion compared to 2021, but not always a positive one, as we discussed the activists, they are more visible in the media than what to do to avoid the crisis.'* (CZ, female, 20)

# DETAILS ON PERCEPTIONS THE WAR IN UKRAINE IN THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

## SLOVAKIA

The war in Ukraine has resulted in an intensification of industries (e.g. transport, arms industry) that are seen as key contributors to climate change problems. The war in Ukraine has been perceived as a problem that has a negative impact on both a micro (the population of Ukraine and other countries) and macro level in terms of security, environmental destruction and, not least, climate change. On the personal (micro) level it is tied to inflation, prices of consumer goods, energy, fuel, which have been identified as those that worsen the quality of life in Slovakia..

*'It certainly does have huge impact, when you consider the option, in which the whole country will be destroyed, a lot of weapons are used in that war, vehicles, aircraft - fuel is burned, weapons production, cars...the planet is suffering from this' (SK, female, 18)*

*'It also has a macroeconomic impact, Russia as a supplier of gas, which is considered less harmful than coal, has ripped away, but the energy demand is still the same and more coal has started to be burned - so emissions have increased...' (SK, male, 33)*

Compared to 2021, respondents felt that communication around climate change and its impact went into the background, priority and primary interest (in Slovakia because of common border with Ukraine) was given to the war conflict. This low flow of information thus results in not enough attention being paid to this topic - lower awareness and poor engagement of people, governments, organizations...

## ROMANIA

The Ukrainian war and effects of high inflation rates upon the insecurities of life in general have much greater impact on how people relate to the outer world than climate change.

Romanians felt some negative effects of the war, such as the drastic increase in prices (food prices have increased, as have utility and fuel prices), psychological effects, including panic at the beginning of the war, and feeling uncertain about the future, many of them thinking of leaving the country. The Romanians empathized with the Ukrainians, some of them had relatives or friends there that they were worried about. Effects on the environment were also mentioned: bombs, missiles and all the arsenal used in the war produced a high degree of pollution, especially for neighboring countries. Overall, climate change is viewed as having strong long-term effects, so participants attach greater importance to it, and it remains the biggest environmental problem.

*'Weapons used in war have a negative impact on the environment, not only in Ukraine, but also in the region.' (RO, female, 36)*

*'The war in Ukraine has had a Europe-wide impact on the way member countries produce energy, as some coal-fired power plants have reopened due to the shutdown of Russian gas exports.' (RO, male, 33)*

*'Rockets, bombs affect the ozone layer.' (RO, male, 23)*

## BULGARIA


The aftermath of the war in Ukraine is primarily evident in the swift escalation of product prices, resulting in a strain on wages that have not been raised. They also observe a notable surge in fuel prices. Moreover, they express heightened concerns about the national political landscape, emphasizing the multitude of elections and the substantial amount of money being invested in them. The overall precariousness of the situation causes them significant worry. In their opinion, the extent of destruction caused by the war would inevitably impact the environment. They believe that the usage of bombs and rockets would have adverse effects on pollution and the overall state of the environment. Additionally, the substantial amount of fuel consumed by military equipment further contributes to pollution. They anticipate that the repercussions of the war will continue to be felt in the future. There was a concern that the development of the technologies and Chat GPT particularly is scarier, a thing to worry about, compared to the war.

# DETAILS ON PERCEPTIONS THE WAR IN UKRAINE IN THE INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

## LATVIA

In general, the events in Ukraine affected young people, at first there was fear, ignorance. Then and now, the impact is felt in the price hike that everyone felt. The war in Ukraine also affects the climate.

Young people noticed that only when the war started in Ukraine, other countries began to think about their energy independence




*'In connection with the conflicts in Ukraine - the energy crisis, that nevertheless nuclear electricity is counted among green energy. On the one hand, it is good, it is cleaner in terms of emissions to the atmosphere, it provides more stability in the electricity market, the risks are a little with their safety.'*  
(Latvia, male, 32)

## LITHUANIA

As a result, there is a growing reflection on the fragility of life and the future of the country/state in the broadest sense. The main value today is to enjoy life, to "be here and now", to be in nature more, to spend time with dear people, because tomorrow may simply not come-exist.

The war in Ukraine strengthened the negativity more and made people lose their sense of security, and it causes even worse, irreparable damage to nature, the climate. The level of pollution (air, water, land) is increasing, the damage which will not be visible immediately but will have strong negative consequences in the long term. It threatens not only the lives of the population of Ukraine but other countries as well, and more broadly – the existence of the planet. Fear of World War III or a nuclear war that could lead to the extinction of humanity is expressed; Everyone's (ordinary people, mass media, government and etc.) attention is focused on war, while climate change is forgotten



*'How much fossil fuel is burned in war. The war machines alone that need to be fueled, these are huge quantities that are burned and eventually emitted into the air, which causes the greenhouse effect... The other thing is that man has forgotten the diplomatic way. Both sides do not think about the environment, how they are polluting it.'* (LT, male, 18)

*'It may be a bit difficult to think about pollution and climate because what difference does it make if we saved the climate but would not have our country. War is a very big threat. And what Ukraine is doing now is defending at least the whole Europe...all these things mentioned by the colleagues, regarding transport, that in general old equipment is used, which is particularly polluting, those tanks, old cars and so on... It will be seen very clearly in the pictures of the ozone layer from space, the pictures of the hot spot in Ukraine will be seen very clearly. And because of the bombs, and because of the overall fact that a war is going on, and firstly, how it affects people, democracy, and so on, and secondly, how much it damages nature, it is sad and terrible.'* (LT, female, 27)



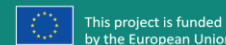
# ABOUT THE GAME ON! PROJECT



The project **'Game on! Don't let climate change end the game'** is an initiative of a consortium of 10 partners from 8 Central and Eastern European countries to activate the global youth and react to the existential threat climate change represents for the future of humankind. The project has been made possible thanks to the co-financing of the Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) mechanism. The Consortium strongly believes in the energized, strong will of younger generations to push forth for the urgent systemic change required to overcome the challenges posed by climate change. Thus, the project strives to activate this energy all across the region and the globe through a 'gamification' approach to initially tackle three core areas: Biodiversity Conservation, Adaptation and Mitigation, and Climate Justice.

Therefore, we have started developing different products — from geocaching games and board games to museum exhibitions and theater plays — to help raise awareness on the problems of and solutions to climate change, as well as to push the massive mobilization of people to demand and make the changes we need. This is the Climate Game for our survival. We must win it.

**game on** | DON'T LET CLIMATE CHANGE  
END THE GAME!







**game on** | DON'T LET CLIMATE CHANGE  
END THE GAME!



[climategame.eu](https://climategame.eu)

[Communication@climategame.eu](mailto:Communication@climategame.eu)

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union.

Its contents are the sole responsibility of CEEweb for Biodiversity and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.