

World Consumer Rights Day

What's working and what's holding back sustainability

This World Consumer Rights's Day we are shining a light on the steps that consumers have taken towards sustainable living. **Consumers need to be empowered to make sustainable choices and push markets to improve.** In our recent survey, we asked consumers in Belgium, Italy, Spain and Portugal what sustainable habits they have already implemented as part of the just transition, the challenges that are holding them back from fully embracing sustainability.

What actions

do

consumers
take?



Energy

- 86% hang clothes to dry
- 79% reduce the use of the heating system
- 78% use energy efficient appliances
- 60% insulate their home



Product

- 81% keep their appliances for longer
- 76% keep their tech devices for longer
- 72% opt for local products
- 78% buy less



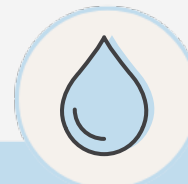
Mobility

- 56% practice eco-driving
- 53% use public transport



Food

- 87% eat seasonal foods
- 52% eat organic foods



Water/Nature Action

- 84% save water

The results speak for themselves: **Over 83% have already changed habits to combat climate change.** It is clear that many consumers are already doing their part.

What's holding back sustainable lifestyles?



Money is a major roadblock when it comes to making sustainable choices



For example, 50% of consumers surveyed have not and are not planning to use an electric car. **But why?**

- 62% of consumers say it's too costly to change more habits.
- 50% say they lack financial support to implement the changes
- 30% find the benefits of adopting green habits weren't worth the cost

It gets even more interesting when you look at the responses from consumers who are not worried about the impact of climate change.

For example, over half of **Belgian consumers** who are not worried about climate change say the benefits of **adopting sustainable habits aren't worth the expense**. **Lack of financial support/subsidies** was the main reason given by the same group of consumers in **both Spain and Portugal**.

If we want to ensure everyone is working towards a sustainable future, we need an affordable, just transition.

What do consumers suggest?

Consumers were sceptical about their **own governments' actions** to support adaptation to climate change, with over **half finding them ineffective**. But opinions were split when it came to the **EU: 39% found EU's actions beneficial while 33% felt the exact opposite**.



- Almost 2 in 3 consumers surveyed believe **households should benefit from (higher) subsidies** to acquire an electric car
- Just over 3/4 of respondents agree that the **European train network needs to be developed** and promoted as an alternative for short-distance flights
- 87% support further investment in **improving the public transport network** to increase its use



- Over half of those surveyed believe that **it should be mandatory to reduce energy usage** to mitigate climate change.
- 77% agree that **fast fashion should be discouraged** by imposing requirements for textiles that make them last longer, easier to repair and recyclable.
- 3/4 of those surveyed would support a **special tax regime for energy-efficient/climate-friendly construction and housing projects**

Methodology

The survey was done in parallel in Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Spain from mid-September until mid-November 2024. A total of 4.205 consumers aged between 18 and 74 years were surveyed. The results were weighted to be representative of the national population in each country, in terms of age, gender, region, and education level.

About Euroconsumers

Gathering five national consumer organizations and giving voice to a total of more than 1.5 million people in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Brazil, Euroconsumers is the world's leading consumer cluster in innovative information, personalized services, and defense of consumer rights. Our European member organizations are part of the umbrella network of BEUC, the European Consumer Organization. Together, we advocate for EU policies that benefit consumers in their daily lives.