

“Capacity Building and Strengthening Institutional Arrangement”

Subcomponent Awareness Building

“Available tools to assess and to evaluate environmental awareness (part.1): presentation of results regarding environmental surveys carried out by European Union”

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1) Introduction (I)

The possibility to assess and analyse perceptions and the opinions of citizens regarding the protection of the environment is important to spread environmental awareness towards population

In this context, the social science can be a valid support, providing methodological and operative tools which can permit to assess and to evaluate citizen's opinions, in particular by means of questionnaires concerning environmental issues

In fact, before starting environmental campaigns on specific environmental topics (e.g. air pollution), it is important to understand people feeling about these problems and what they think about environmental issues

1) Introduction (II)

In the last years, environmental public Institutions at international and national level have started to utilise tools as questionnaires in order to prepare awareness campaigns on specific environmental problems, based on the public opinion perceptions

Besides, the results obtained by questionnaires on environmental issues can provide important data to compare and analyse environmental situations and problems in different Countries

In the following slides 2 surveys with questionnaires are presented, about the protection of the environment, developed at European level

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (I)

Since 1973, the European Commission has been monitoring the people’s opinions and attitude in the Member States with “Eurobarometer” surveys

The surveys developed by Eurobarometer concerning main topics such as health, protection of the environment, culture, information technology, public safety, defence, etc..

In this context, the DG-Environment promoted in 2002 an environmental survey named “Attitudes of Europeans towards the Environment”, to study citizen’s opinion regarding the importance of the environment for a good life quality and environmental policies

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (II)

The survey, carried out in the 15 Member States of the European Union was divided into 3 thematic areas, such as: :

- 1) European citizens' perception of the environment
- 2) Environmental information
- 3) Individual actions for the environment and public policies

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (III)

Regarding the methodology adopted, these steps were followed:

1) The questionnaire was structured in 12 questions addressed to the 3 thematic areas defined (European citizens' perception of the environment, Environmental information, Individual actions for the environment and public policies)

2) The sample was defined at 2 level. A first level all European population was divided in metropolitan, urban and rural areas. At second level, from each groups people were drawn in a random way. The total sample was composed by 16.000 persons

3) The questionnaire was administered simultaneously by interviews face-to-face in people's home in every Countries

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (IV)

The main results come out by the survey are :

- 90% of Europeans believe that environmental concerns should be taken into account in decision making in fields such as the economy and employment market
- water pollution, man-made disasters (oil spills, industrial accidents etc), climate change and air pollution are the four environmental problems that worry most people
- the majority feel well informed about environmental issues, but there is still 1/3 who feel badly informed
- Tv, newspapers and documentaries are main sources of environmental information

Some of the questions and results of this survey are presented in the following graphs

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (V)

1. *Pollution in towns and cities*
2. *Green and pleasant landscapes*
3. *Earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters*
4. *Protecting nature*
5. *The state of the environment our children will inherit*
6. *The quality of life where I live*
7. *The responsibility of the individuals for improving the environment*
8. *Using up natural resources to provide a comfortable way of life*
9. *None of these (SPONTANEOUS)*
10. *DK*

Question: “When people talk about ‘environment’ which of the following do you think of first?”

COUNTRIES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
D	27	12	8	25	12	9	4	1	2	1
DK	16	10	4	28	23	7	8	2	2	1
D WEST	13	7	19	26	18	5	10	2	1	1
D TOTAL	12	7	18	27	17	5	10	2	1	1
D OST	11	10	17	30	13	6	9	2	1	2
GR	27	15	9	24	15	4	5	1	1	0
E	32	15	6	26	8	6	4	2	1	1
F	22	7	7	30	12	11	9	1	1	0
IRL	31	12	4	17	13	13	5	2	1	2
I	38	11	5	21	9	7	6	1	1	1
L	15	13	8	25	14	8	13	1	3	0
NL	26	18	5	15	14	4	7	8	3	1
A	15	20	12	17	17	13	4	1	2	1
P	43	8	6	16	6	5	5	1	2	7
FIN	6	22	4	18	20	18	3	5	1	3
S	12	23	7	17	32	6	8	5	1	1
UK TOTAL	31	12	4	12	19	13	4	2	1	2
EU15	25	11	9	22	14	8	7	2	1	1

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment”(VI)

What words and images Europeans associate with the word “environment”?

More than 25% associate “pollution in towns and cities” with environment

This answer is more frequently chosen in the southern European countries :
Portugal (43%), Italy (38%), Spain (32%)

At second place there is ‘Protecting nature’ chosen by 22% of Europeans

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: "Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment" (VII)

“At present, are you very worried, fairly worried, not very worried or not at all worried about the following topics?”

PROPOSITIONS	EU15
Nuclear power and radioactive waste	50
Disasters caused by industrial activities	45
Air pollution	44
Natural disasters	43
Pollution of tap water	43
Pollution of underground water	43
Pollution of the seas and coasts	42
Pollution of rivers and lakes	42
The progressive elimination of tropical rain forests	41
Destruction of the ozone layer	39
Climate change	39
The use of other chemical products	38
The extinction of animals and plants species	37
Industrial waste management	37
The use of pesticides	36
Using up natural resources that cannot be easily replaced	35
Pollution from farming	31
The use of genetically modified organisms	30
Acid rain	29
Domestic and urban waste management	22
Urban problems (traffic, public transport, green spaces, etc.)	21
Environmentally friendly consumption habits	18
Noise	18
Hunting and shooting	17
Damage caused by tourism	17

This scale shows as the nuclear power and industrial disasters are the problems who most worry European people

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (VIII)

With the results obtained with the questionnaire, it's also possible to develop a range from the most worried country to the least worried country about environmental situation:

<u>Countries most worried</u>	Greece	58
	Luxembourg	44
	Italy	44
	Portugal	41
	France	41
	UK	32
	Austria	31
	Germany	30
	Denmark	30
	Spain	26
	Ireland	26
	Belgium	26
	Sweden	25
Finland	24	
The Netherlands	21	
		<u>Countries less worried</u>

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (IX)

% of answers “Very worried” in 1999 and in 2002

PROPOSITIONS	1999	2002	Discrepancy
Air pollution	35	44	+ 9
Natural disasters	22	43	+ 21
Pollution of the seas and coasts	32	42	+ 10
Pollution of rivers and lakes	27	42	+ 15
The progressive elimination of tropical rain forests	39	41	+ 3
The extinction of animals and plant species ²	27	37	+ 10
Industrial waste management	35	37	+ 2
Urban problems (traffic, public transport, green spaces, etc.) ³	23	21	-2
Hunting and shooting	15	17	+ 2
Damage caused by tourism	10	17	+ 7

From the comparison to 1999 from 2002, appears that the level of worrying about environmental damage has increased in Europe, particularly in the case of “natural disaster”

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (X)

Question: “For each of these topics, can you tell me if you feel very well, fairly well, fairly badly or very badly informed?”

	UE15
PROPOSITIONS	
Natural disasters	64
Air pollution	53
Climate change	53
Urban problems (traffic, public transport, green spaces, etc.)	52
Destruction of the ozone layer	52
Domestic and urban waste management	49
Pollution of the seas and coasts	48
Environmentally friendly consumption habits	46
The extinction of animals and plants species	46
Pollution of rivers and lakes	46

Europeans feel well informed about natural disasters (64%), air pollution and climate change (both 53%)

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (XI)

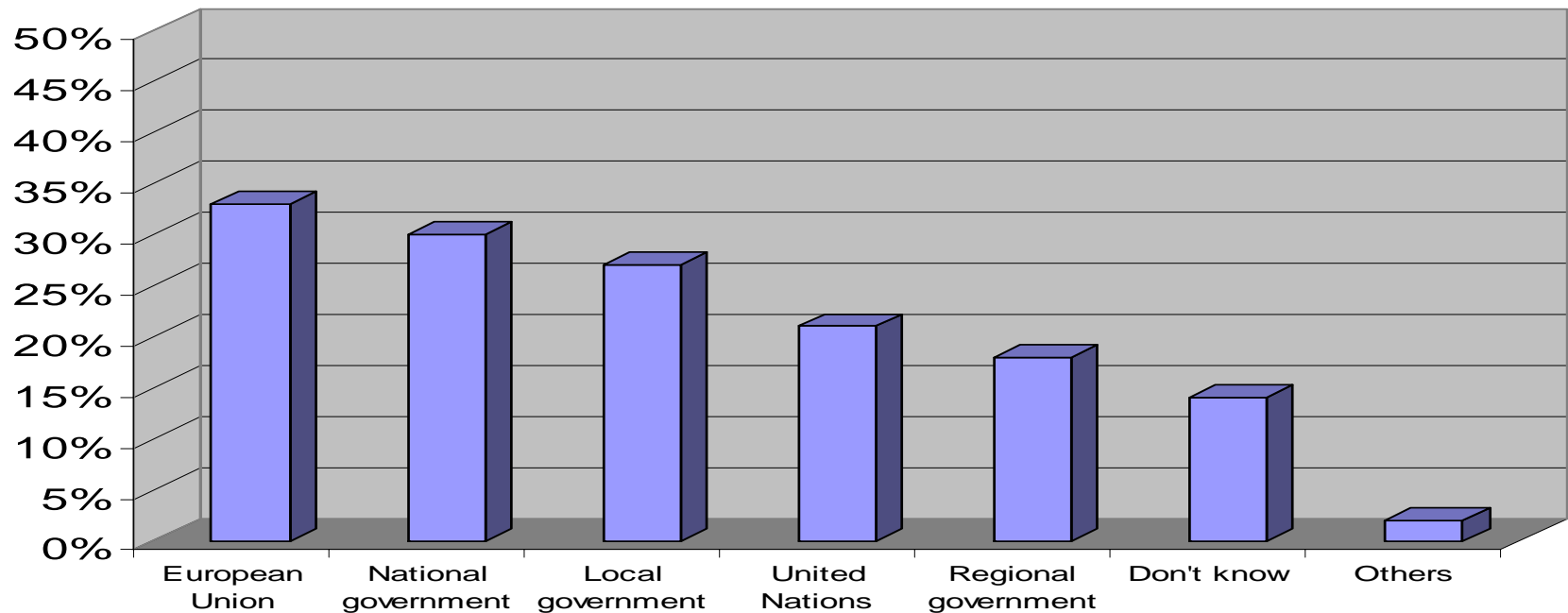
Question: “Who do you trust when it comes to environmental issues?”

PROPOSITIONS	EU15
Environmental protection associations	48
Scientists	35
Consumer associations and others citizens' organisations	23
Television	18
European Union	13
National government	12
Teachers at school or university	12
Regional / local government	11
Political parties standing for environment (Greens, etc.)	10
Newspapers	9
Family/neighbours/friends/colleagues	7
None of them (SPONTANEOUS)	7
DK	6
The radio	4
Trade Unions	2
Companies	1

Environmental Protection Associations and scientists have the highest level of trust among the Europeans when environmental problems happen

2) Survey 1: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E15) towards the Environment” (XII)

Question: “Which level do you think is the best for taking decisions about protecting the environment?” (2 answers possible)



A third of Europeans see the European Union as "the best level for taking decisions about protecting the environment". The choice of "national government" (30%) is followed by local government (27%), then comes the United Nations

3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (I)

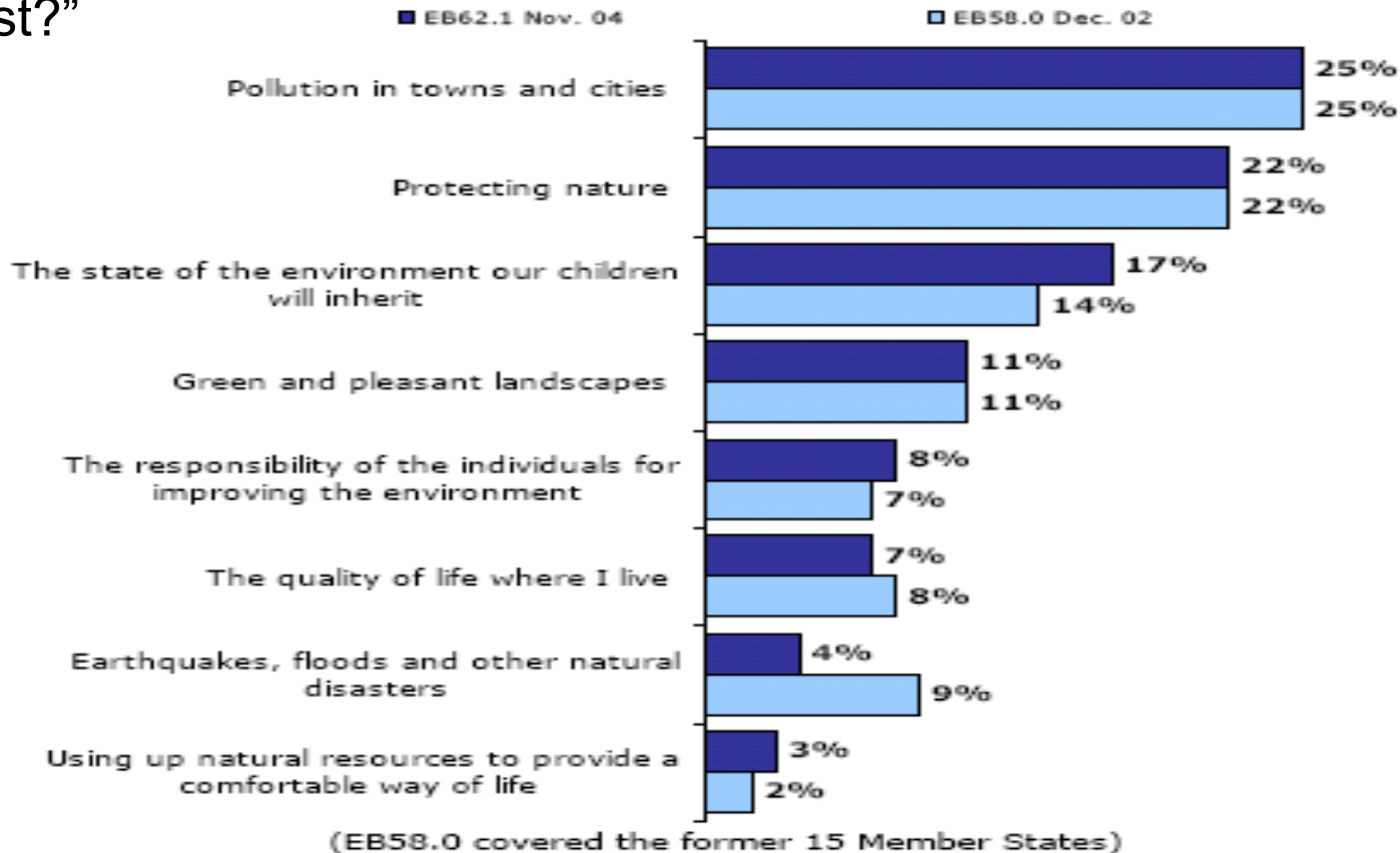
In 2004 the DG-Environment with Eurobarometer promoted another survey to assess Europeans opinions towards environment. In comparison with the same survey carried out in 2002, the target population were all the Europeans of the 25 countries, included new members of E.U.

More than 25.000 people were interviewed in this second survey, in which the questionnaire used in the previously survey was modified, nevertheless it is possible to compare the 2002 and 2004 results for some questions.

In the following slides are presented some of the questions and results of this survey

3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (II)

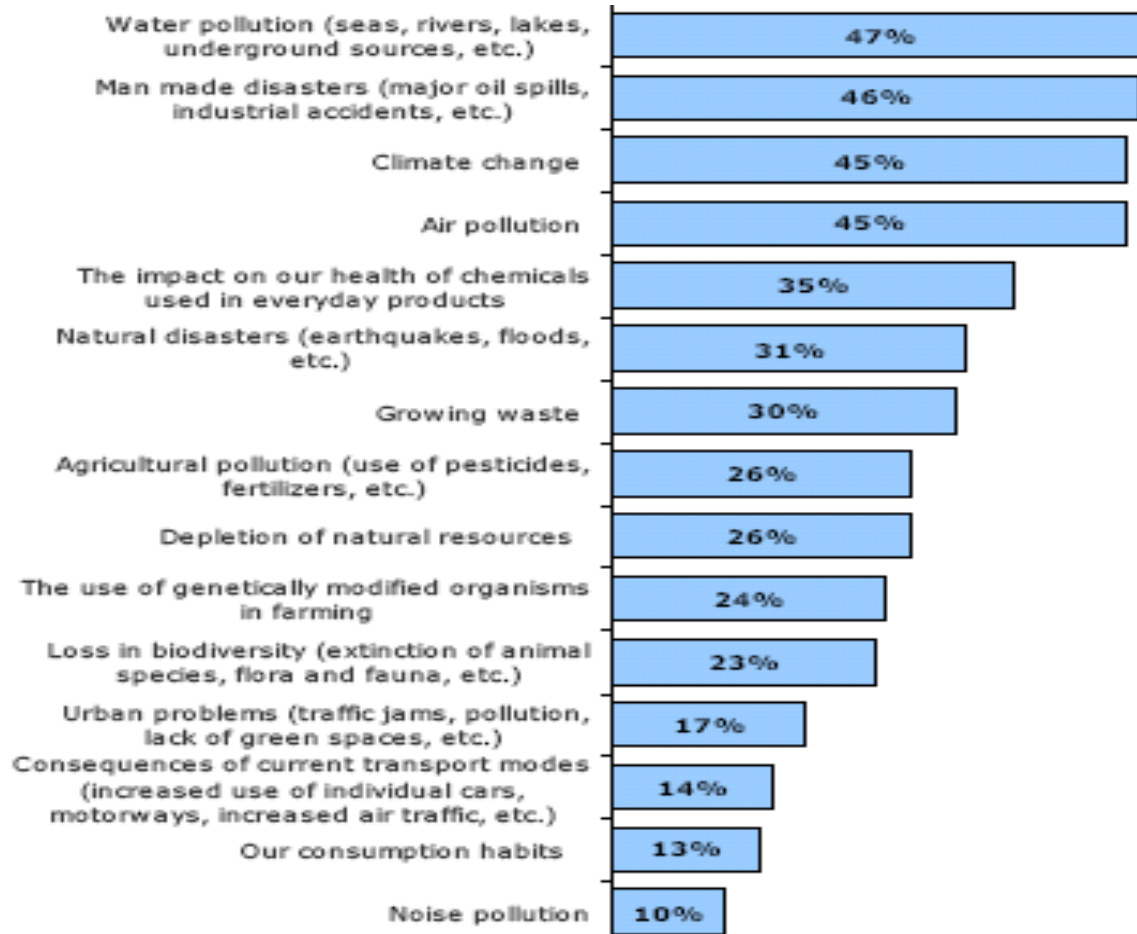
Question: “When people talk about ‘Environment’, which of the following do you think of first?”



Comparing with the survey of 2002, ‘pollution in town’ is still the most imagine linked with the ‘Environment’

3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (III)

Question: “From the following list, please tell the five main environmental issues that you are worried about?”



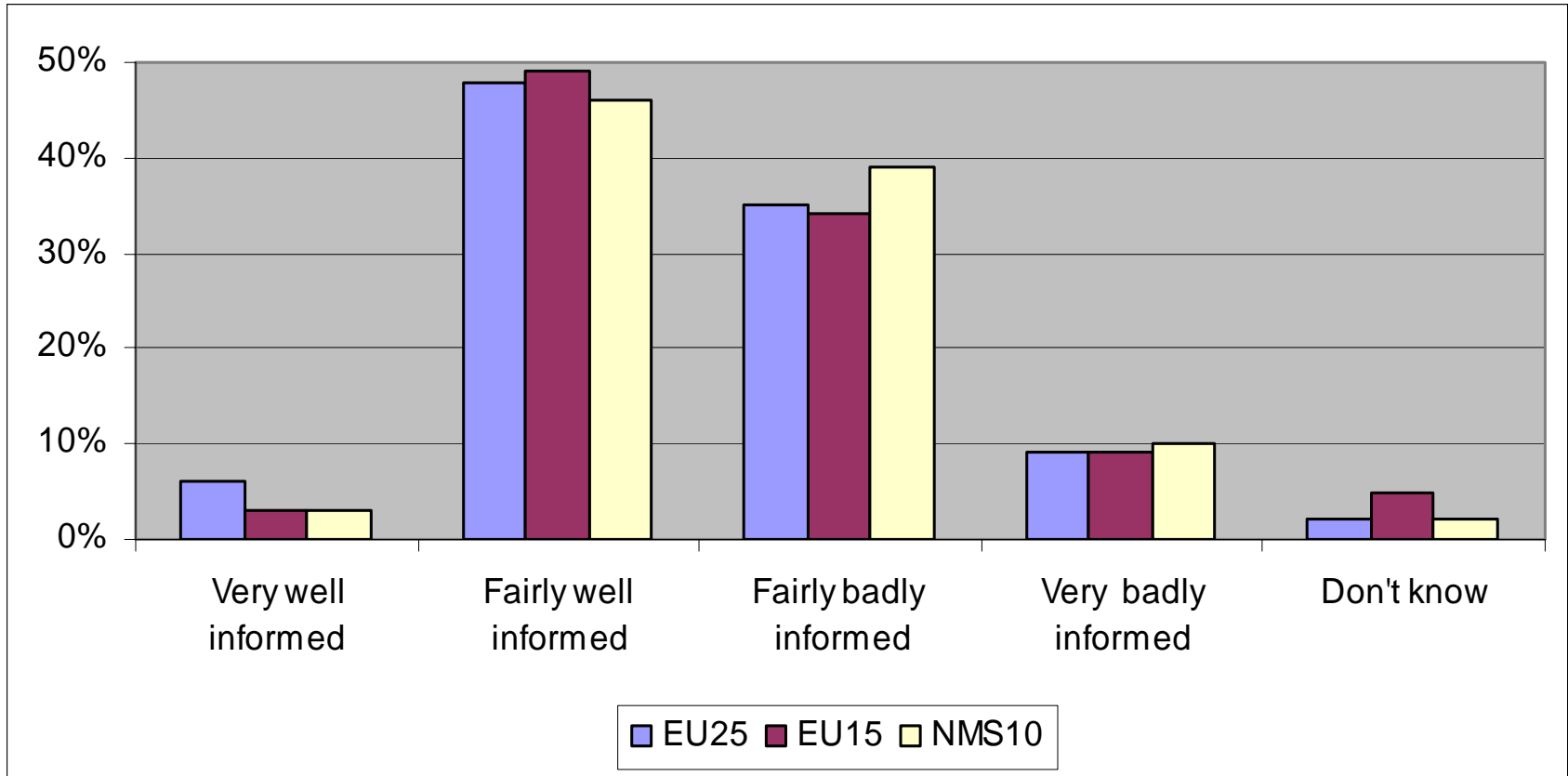
3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (IV)

The results show that four environmental issues concern most Europeans and these are :



3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (V)

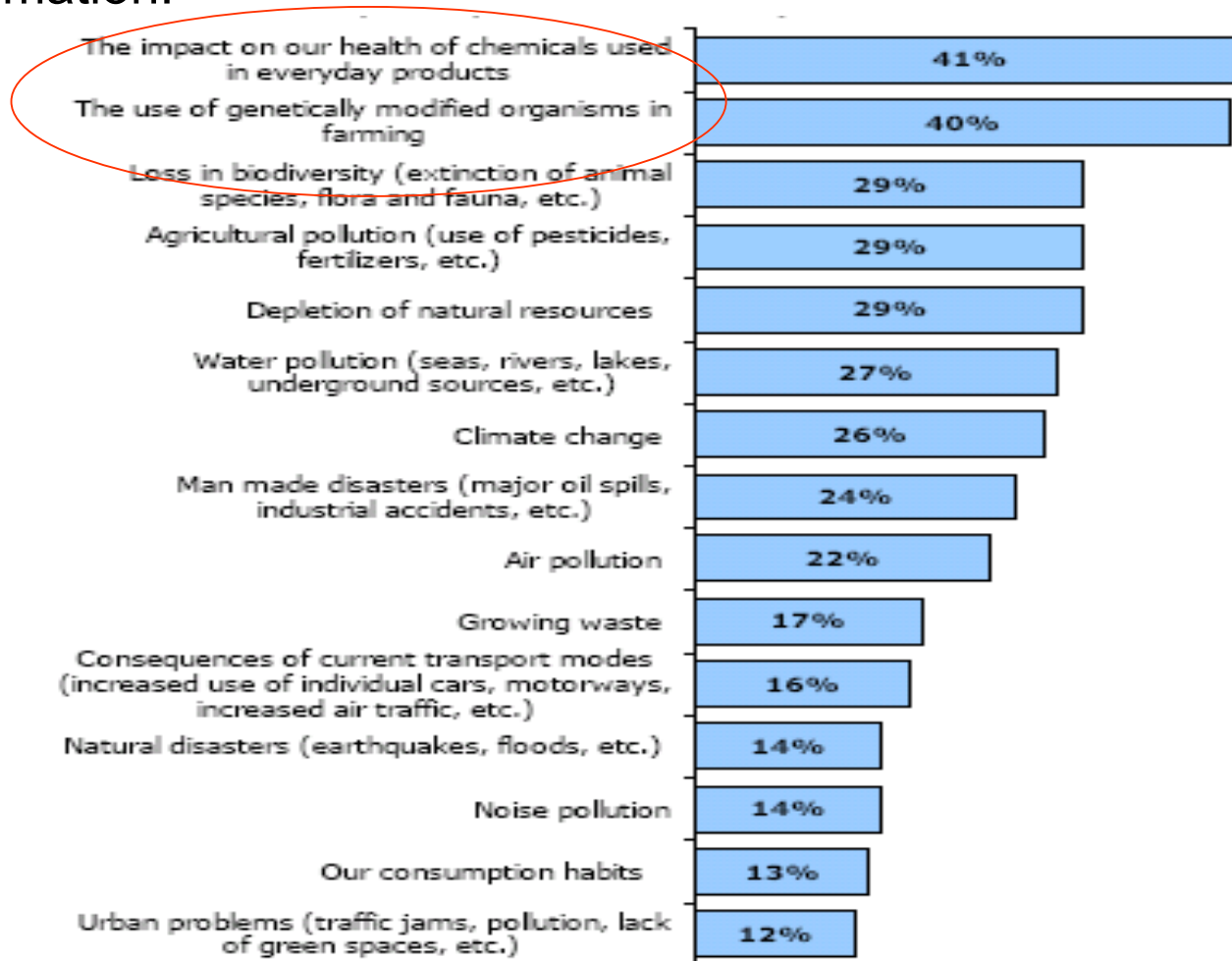
Question: “In general, how do you feel about environmental issues?”



Regarding environmental information, 1/3 of Europeans feel not very informed about environmental issues

3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (VI)

Question: “From the following list, tell the 5 main issues which you feel lack of information:”



3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (VII)

Europeans want to be more informed about the following issues:



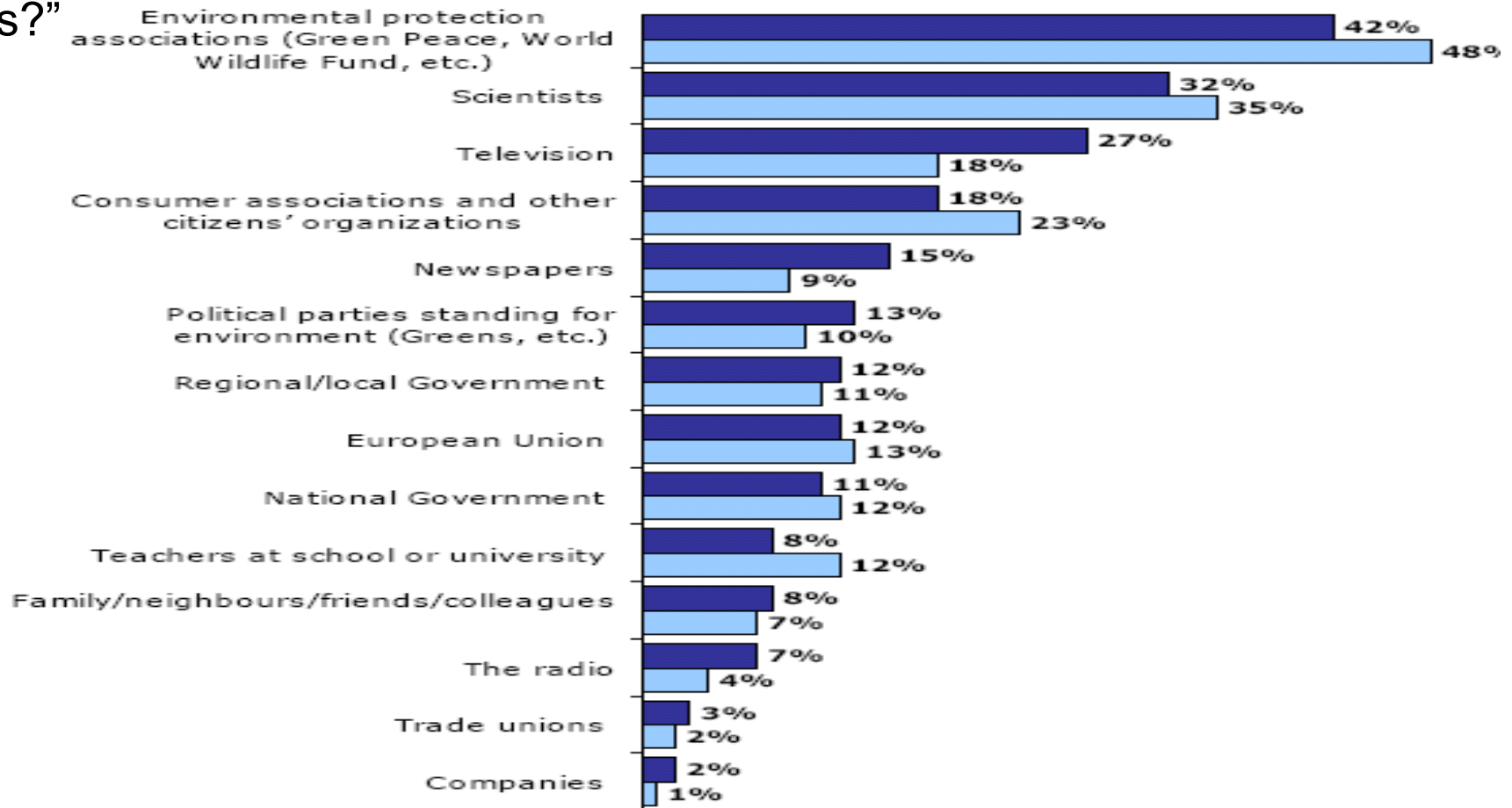
Chemicals impacts on human health



OGM
(organism genetically modified)

3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (VIII)

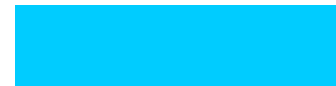
“From the following list, who do you trust most when it comes to environmental issues?”



Eurobarometer 2004



Eurobarometer 2002



3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (IX)

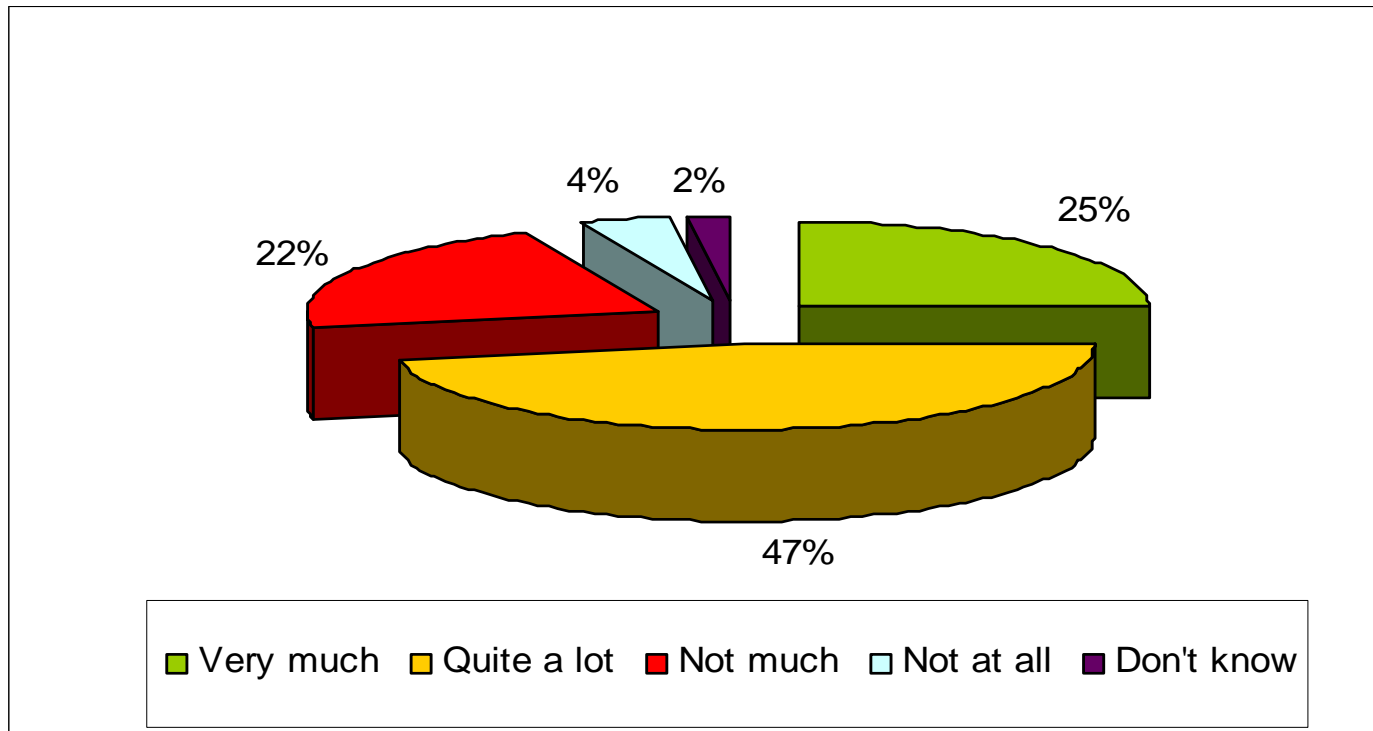
Comparing these results with the survey carried out in 2002, still environmental protection associations and scientists are the most subjects who people trust

The results show also a considerable rise in the score obtained by media : trust in “Television” increased by 9 points % compared to the last survey and “Newspapers” of 6 points %

A socio-demographic analysis reveals also that older citizens tend to trust less in the top two categories (environmental protection associations and scientists) while subjects with higher education levels tend to trust these two groups much more.

3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (X)



























Question: “In your opinion, in which measure does the state of environment influence your ‘quality of life’ ?”

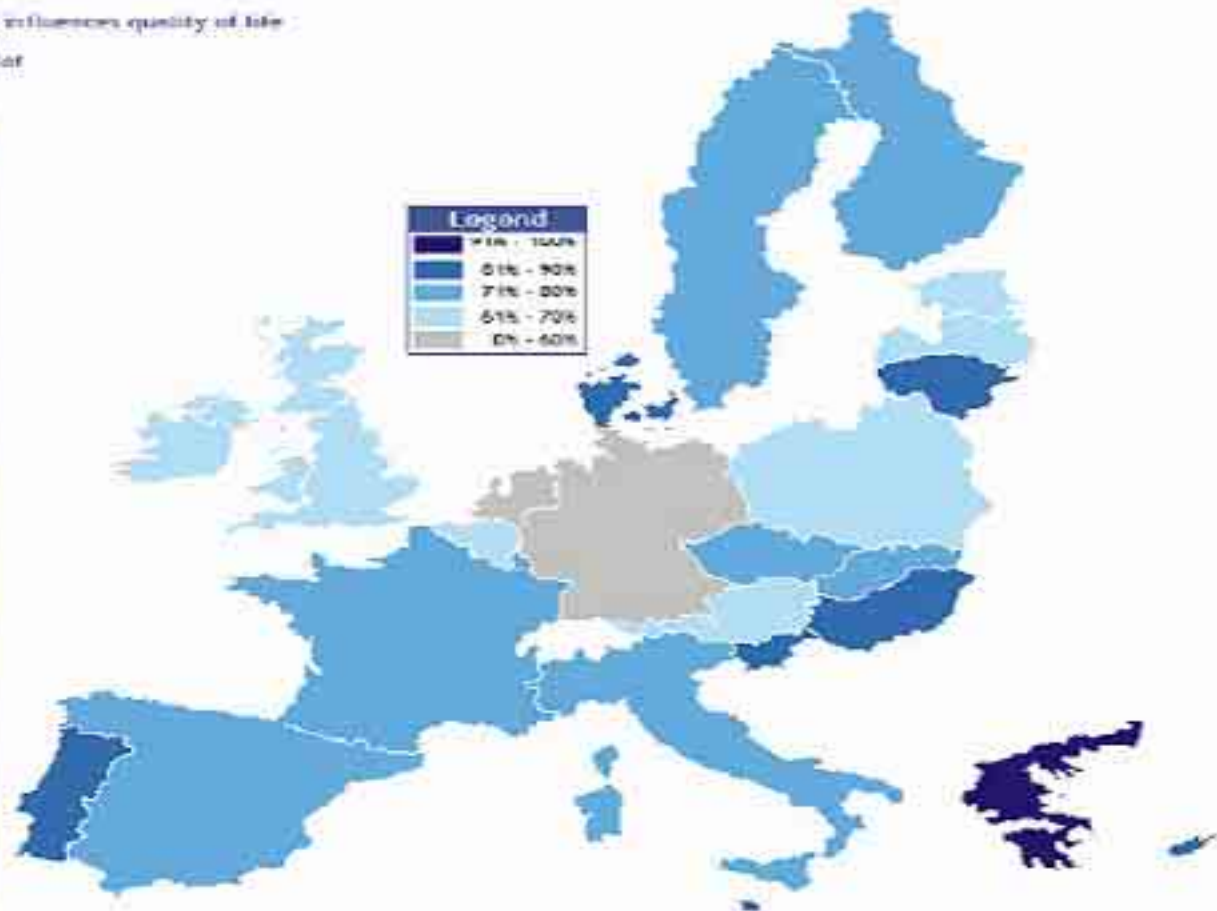


More than 70% of Europeans (people who answered ‘very much’ and ‘quite a lot’) think that the state of environment influence their quality of life

3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (XI)

“The State of the environment” influences quality of life
Answers: Very much – Quite a lot

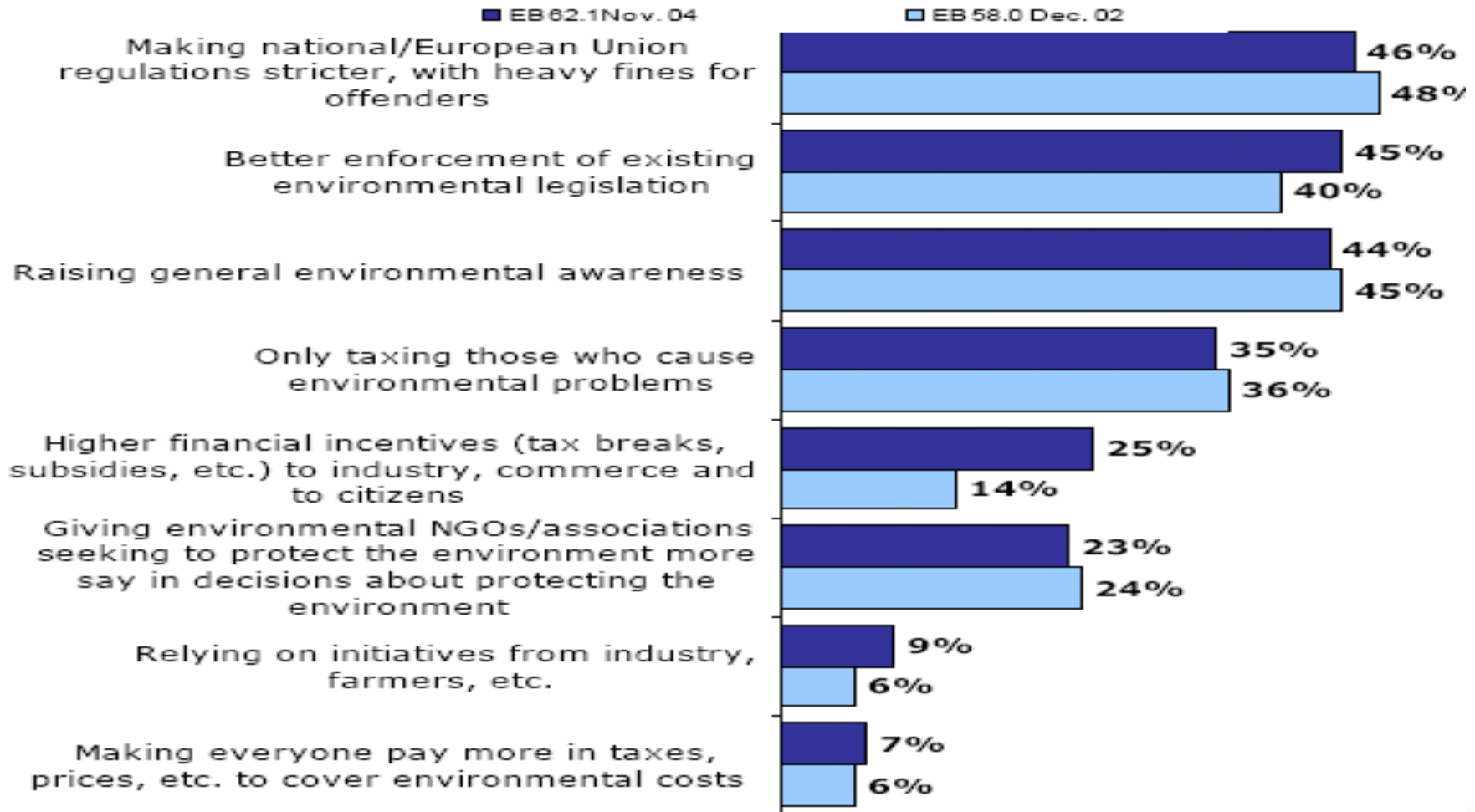
Country Results		
	Greece	94%
	Denmark	88%
	Malta	80%
	Lithuania	84%
	Cyprus	81%
	Portugal	82%
	Hungary	64%
	Slovenia	81%
	Luxembourg	80%
	Italy	79%
	Finland	78%
	France	76%
	Sweden	76%
	Czech Republic	75%
	Spain	74%
	Slovakia	73%
	EU	72%
	Ireland	70%
	Poland	70%
	Estonia	69%
	United Kingdom	68%
	Belgium	68%
	Latvia	64%
	Austria	63%
	Germany	60%
	The Netherlands	60%



The map shows the different attitudes of Europeans about how much the state of environment influences their life

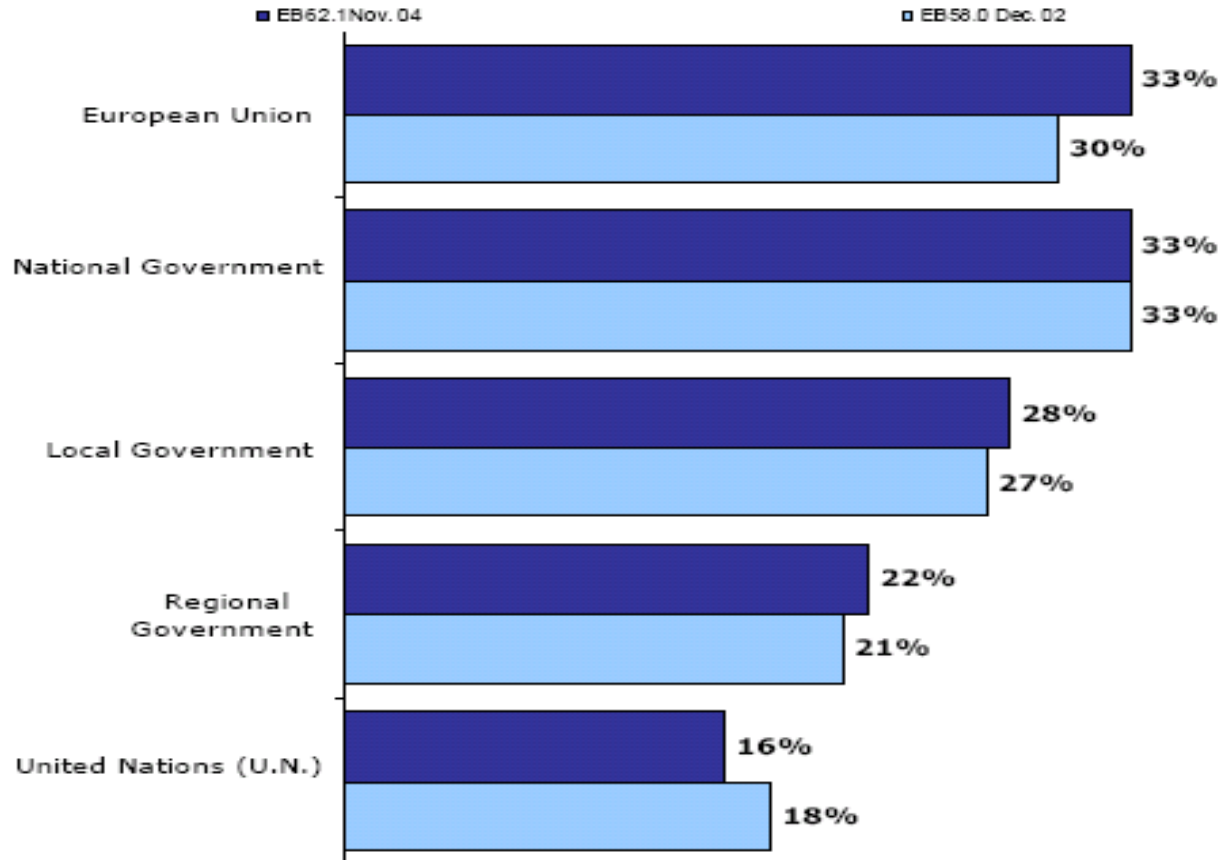
3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (XII)

Question: “In your opinion, which of the following actions could solve effectively environmental problems?” (max 3 answers)



3) Survey 2: Eurobarometer – EU: “Attitudes of Europeans (E25) towards the Environment” (XIII)

Question: "Which level do you think is the most effective for taking decisions about protecting the environment?"



European Union it is considered the most effective level to take decision regarding environmental protection

4. Conclusions

These examples of surveys show some very interesting trends, such as the worrying for environmental problems (with special regards for air pollution and natural disaster) and the necessity for people to have more information about environmental protection issues

The capacity to assess and to evaluate citizens' perceptions and their opinions about environmental issues with operative tools, such as questionnaires, can provide some interesting inputs to develop strategies and activities concerning the environmental protection awareness

All these elements could be considered useful for environmental Institutions as well as the procedures and tools that can be implemented to start environmental campaigns, with the target to spread environmental awareness towards population