

## Report on the survey of environmental awareness and behavior of Polish residents 2022

### Executive Summary

#### Introduction

Tracking research has been carried out since 2011, and thanks to its cyclical nature, we can follow the dynamics of changes taking place in the awareness and behavior of ecological inhabitants of Poland. It is currently the seventh edition of the survey.

Awareness is understood as the knowledge and interest of the inhabitants of Poland in the field of the natural environment and its protection. On the other hand, behaviors are all actions that anyone can take to positively influence the state of the environment.

The collected results are a valuable source of information for the Ministry of Climate and Environment, as well as for other entities, which include public institutions, non-governmental organizations, companies, and citizens themselves.

The study was divided into six areas (blocks) in terms of the specificity of the problem discussed:

- The biggest challenges for Poland and the problems of the natural environment
- The natural environment and its protection
- Air quality
- Waste management
- Climate change
- Individual actions and consumer behavior supporting environmental protection

The tracking study of ecological awareness and behavior was carried out on November 3 – 17 2022 using the CATI technique, i.e. computer assisted telephone interviews. The interview time was around 16 minutes.

The nationwide sample of respondents aged 15 and over was selected randomly and is representative in terms of demographic variables such as: gender, age and place of residence (size of town and region). The maximum estimation error for a random sample of 1000 people is +/- 3.1%.

## 1. Executive summary

### 1.1. The biggest challenges for Poland and the problems of the natural environment

- ✓ According to the respondents, Poland has the most problems to be solved in the areas of: health protection (52%), education and upbringing (31%) and the judiciary (30%). At the same time, the judiciary in this year's edition achieved the highest increase in the number of responses (+ 24%) compared to 2020. This proves that Poles are more aware of this problem and expresses their concerns about the negative consequences of the current situation.
- ✓ The result of the war in Ukraine is a significant increase in the indications of problems with energy security. This area, with the result of almost 30%, was placed on the 4th place, recording an increase by 21%.
- ✓ The biggest decrease compared to 2022 was recorded in the problem of environmental protection (24%) - a decrease by 28%. As a result of the current threats resulting from the political situation, the issue of environmental protection has been indicated as much less priority.
- ✓ In the case of environmental problems, the biggest problems are air pollution, the problem of garbage and water pollution, and low water resources.

### 1.2. The natural environment and its protection

- ✓ Since 2011, the inhabitants of Poland have had a better opinion of the current state of the environment in their neighborhood than in the country in general.
- ✓ Among the most frequently mentioned reasons why Poles want to protect the environment is concern for future generations and care for human health.
- ✓ The state of the environment depends primarily on the activity of each of us (62%), and then on good legal regulations (36%) and the recognition by our society of environmental issues as an important problem (33%).
- ✓ The most important source of information on the natural environment is the Internet (74%) and television (52%).
- ✓ Everyone is individually responsible for shaping ecological attitudes and behavior (44%), but a large role should also be played by the school (38%), central authorities (31%), the family (31%) and local authorities (22%).

### 1.3. Air quality

- ✓ Respondents identified high emissions from factories as the most important cause of air pollution in Poland. Although this reason was ranked first in this year's edition of the survey, its importance is decreasing from year to year. The second reason for the pollution was the emission from individual sources, i.e. domestic stoves.
- ✓ 36% of Poles use a connection to the heating network. Results similar to those in 2020 were obtained by gas heating (29%) and coal (15%).
- ✓ 38% of people currently using coal or briquette plan to change their furnace to a more ecological source of energy. People who do not plan to change



(54%) justify their decision primarily with the high costs of such an investment.

- ✓ Poles express the opinion that in order to improve air quality, old coal stoves should be replaced with low-emission stoves and renewable energy sources should be used.

#### 1.4. Waste management

- ✓ Rubbish is regularly segregated by 96% of Poland's inhabitants, which indicates that the result from the previous survey is maintained. The percentage of people who do not separate their waste in any way decreased to 1%. The obtained result may result from both the introduced general obligation to segregate waste, as well as the increasing habituation to this method of waste management.
- ✓ People who do not segregate rubbish believe that there is no room for segregating waste at home (55%). The second place was taken by the lack of faith that waste will be recycled - its importance has increased significantly since the previous measurement, where it was ranked last.
- ✓ Over one third (38%) of respondents positively assess the current waste management system in Poland. Compared to the previous measurement, the structure of responses has changed somewhat - the percentage of people in extreme categories has decreased in favor of the rather good and rather bad categories.
- ✓ The percentage of people who declare that waste management will improve over the next 20 years has slightly decreased (54% in 2022 vs. 58% in 2020). The least satisfied group are the oldest respondents (60+ / retirees, pensioners). This group is also the least positive when it comes to potential changes in the future.

#### 1.5. Climate change

- ✓ Climate change is an important problem for 91% of respondents. An upward trend was maintained in the percentage of people considering this issue as very important (2022: 73% vs. 2020: 68% vs. 2018: 39%).
- ✓ According to the respondents, actions to minimize the adverse effects of climate change should be undertaken primarily by each of us (60%) and the central government (53%). It was followed by international institutions (21%) and local government authorities (19%).
- ✓ Half of the respondents (50%) believe that Poland should now reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Overall, 83% of Poland's residents were in favor of reducing gas, regardless of time (less by 11 pp than in 2020).
- ✓ The TOP3 reasons justifying the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions include: better living conditions for future generations (41%), harmful effects on human health (31%), harmful effects on the environment (22%).
- ✓ Almost half of the people who declared no need to reduce greenhouse gases justified their opinion with the fact that, compared to other countries,



emissions in Poland are not high (49%). Another reason was the unnoticeable benefits and too high costs (17% each).

### 1.6. Individual actions and consumer behavior supporting environmental and climate protection

- ✓ In the case of assessing statements regarding individual actions supporting environmental protection, the respondents pay the most attention to reducing water consumption (93%).
- ✓ Most respondents feel that they do not waste food (75%). They can also accept the additional cost of choosing ecological solutions (72%) and use public transport or a bicycle if possible (67%).
- ✓ 95% of Polish residents declare that they save energy at home. The most frequently indicated methods of saving it are: putting out lights in unused rooms, using energy-saving light sources or purchasing energy-saving household appliances. They have not changed compared to the measurement in 2020.
- ✓ One-third of respondents declare that they plan additional measures to increase energy efficiency. This result is 3 pp higher than in the previous wave and the highest so far recorded.
- ✓ Two thirds of the respondents are willing to use clean energy, even if it would entail higher costs. This is a result of 12 pp. lower compared to the measurement in 2020. Also 12 pp lower interest would be willing to pay more than 20% more for it.