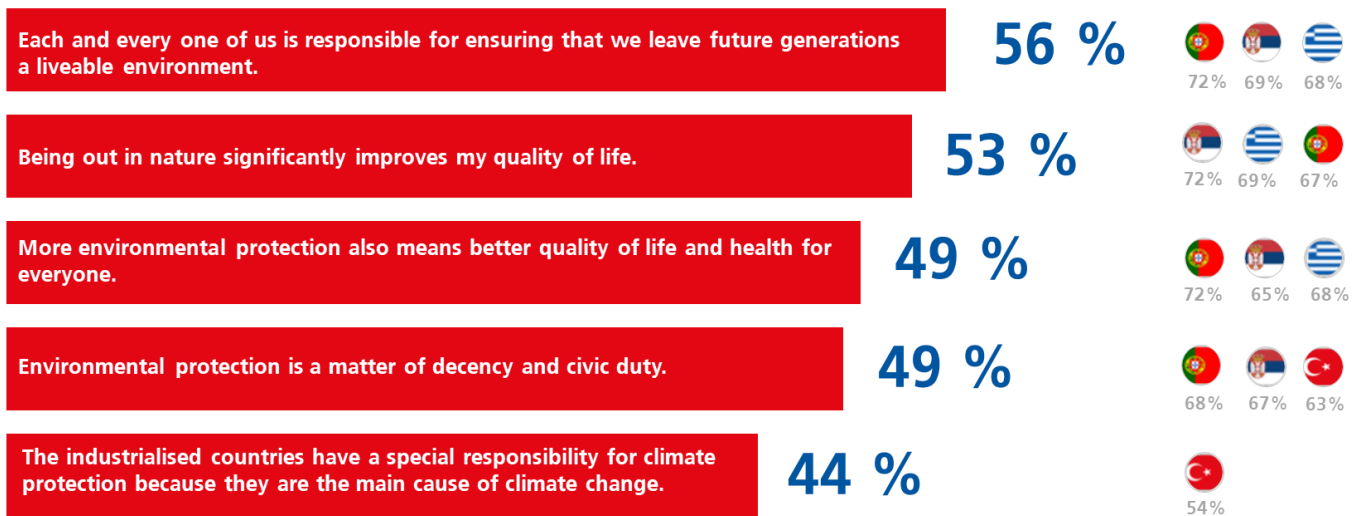


## Promoting the common good as well as personal quality of life

The results of the FES population survey in 19 countries on socio-ecological transformation show that, despite fundamental openness in some milieus, climate protection is primarily associated with the loss of the accustomed, positively perceived way of life. Large majorities of citizens can be won over if climate policy measures bring immediate individual value.

### The biggest motivators of climate and environmentally conscious behaviour



Source: SINUS, on behalf of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

The prevailing climate policy narrative is that emissions must be reduced, otherwise the world will become increasingly endangered. In practice, climate policy is primarily associated with sacrifice and the loss of familiar, positively perceived ways of life. This narrative is risky because it promotes fear and resistance. Politicians can only counter this by emphasizing the social benefits of a socio-ecological transformation and the positive consequences for the public good. A narrative of the benefits of a climate-neutral society is necessary. Approaches to this can also be developed on a milieu-specific basis: clean, green and livelier city centers; higher quality of life through less traffic, better health from less air pollution; more infrastructure for the mobility of older people, for example; better quality of locally produced food; intact nature for local recreation and as a cultural asset and as an opportunity to identify with one's homeland; inner-city green spaces as a contribution to climate adaptation and upgrading of urban real estate, etc..

### Create additional individual benefits

Connecting climate adaption with an increase in general life quality is key. Such an approach also leaves room for individual improvements. The milieus of lower social status are generally strongly oriented towards the question of what concrete measures will benefit them. Effective arguments for energy-saving behavior or the purchase of environmentally friendly appliances, for example, are cost savings, modernity and efficiency (e.g. lower utility costs through thermal insulation). This is all the more true when financial investments pay for themselves after a short time. Trade-off perceptions (e.g. "climate protection leads to economic damage and endangers jobs") must be reduced, doubts about the feasibility of necessary measures must be dispelled and - in addition to the public welfare aspects (see before) - direct additional individual benefits must be emphasized.

#### METHODOLOGY

- Standardised Online Survey in 19 countries from April till July 2023
- Resident population aged from 18 to 69 years
- Total sample size 22.823 people; min. 1.200 per country

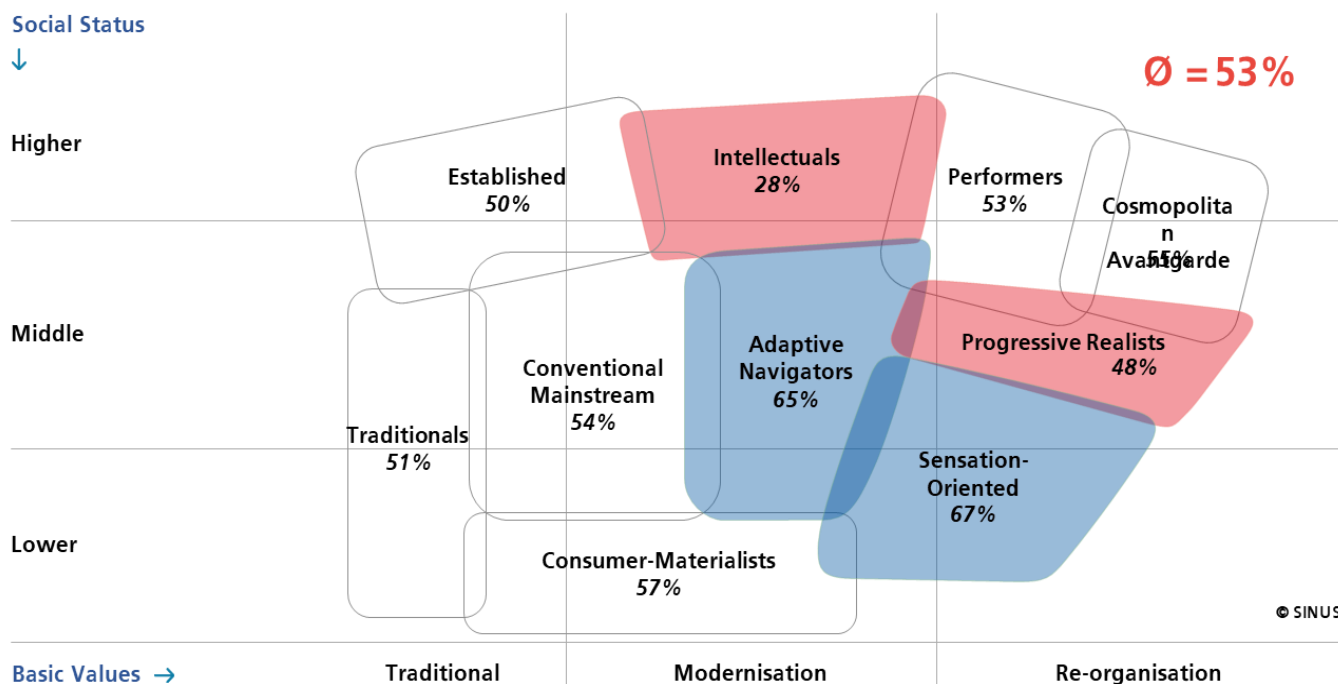
The full methodology report and reading examples are available as a download on our website.

## Maintain standard of living, improve quality of life

Our study shows: Climate policy measures are also supported by more skeptical milieus if they are compatible with life in a modern consumer society and offer direct additional individual benefits. If sustainability is possible at no extra cost and increases one's own quality of life instead of restricting it, these milieus are also receptive. It also has a positive effect if these new products are associated with a gain in prestige, for example in the case of ecological high-tech products and sustainable commodities like jewelry.

**I am only prepared to do something to protect the environment if my standard of living is not affected.**

*"Strongly agree / somewhat agree"*



Source: SINUS, on behalf of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Emphasize the **milieu-specific benefits** like, e.g:
  - Clean, green and revitalized inner cities for all citizens
  - Higher quality of living through less traffic, cleaner air and better health
  - Real estate appreciation and enhancing of the neighborhood through more livable cities
  - Improve mobility infrastructure to include all age groups
  - Intact nature for local recreation and as a cultural asset
- **Prestige gain** through ecological high-tech products and sustainable commodities.
- Creating space for **individual betterment, especially for lower milieus** through cost savings, modernity and efficiency.
- **Emphasize short-term profitability** of financial investments of upgrades and adaptations.
- **Reduce trade-off perceptions** and **focus on the gains** rather than the losses.
- Dispelling doubts about the feasibility of necessary measures by **planning** and **clear communication**.

**Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung** | Department International Cooperation

Contact at FES: Claudia Detsch, Director Competence Center for Climate and Social Justice  
 Claudia.Detsch@fes.de, Tel. +32 470 70 46034

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