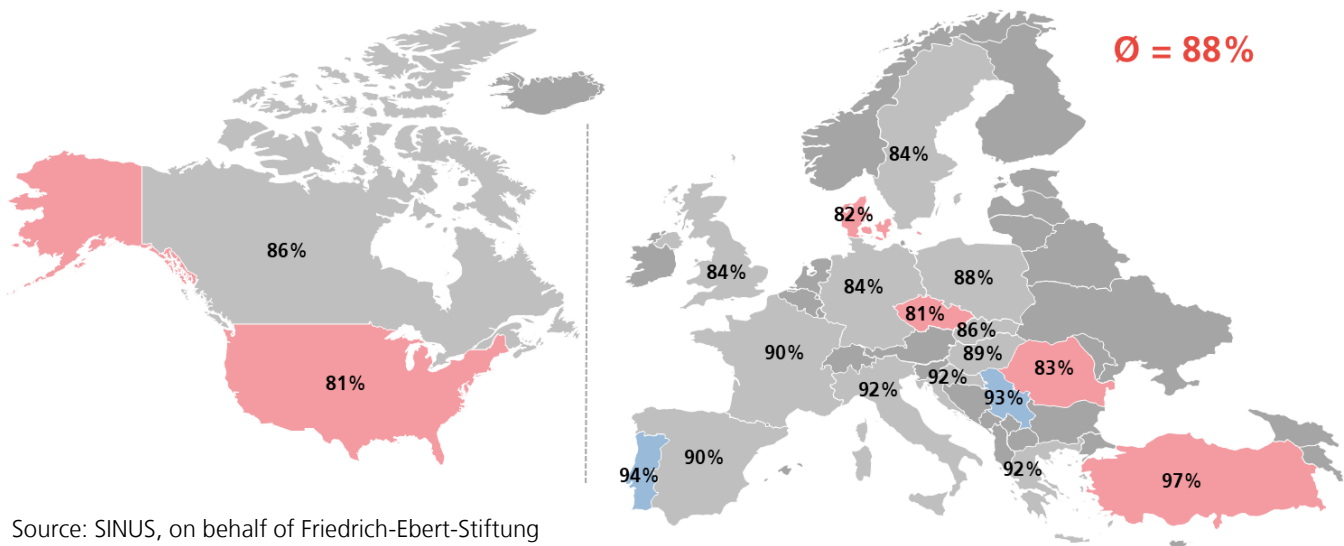


## Shaping climate neutral change in a socially just way

The results of the FES population survey in 19 countries show that climate policy is an important topic to citizens in Europe and North America. At the same time, the idea of a fundamental change in economic and lifestyle patterns is fueling growing fears of economic decline. There is no way around the issue of fair distribution of the burdens and costs of the transformation if we want to include skeptical or even hostile groups or limit their influence in the middle of society.

**I would be willing to do more for environmental and climate protection if the costs incurred were distributed in a socially fair manner.**  
**"Fully agree / Somewhat agree"**



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

### Clear mandate for social design

There are major concerns about the impact on the social balance. "Climate and environmental protection measures are socially unfair, as they place a particular burden on low-income earners" - 90% of respondents agree. The milieus with a lower socio-economic status agree significantly more often though.

Again, 90% agree with the statement that politicians must do much more to ensure that the changes to our economy and lifestyles are socially fair. This does not come cheaply: 87% of respondents agree that people on low incomes should receive more financial support if the costs of electricity, heating or mobility rise due to climate protection measures. These figures are highest in south-eastern Europe. Despite all the support for an ambitious climate policy, there is also great concern that social equity will fall behind. Incidentally, it is by no means only the lower status milieus that fear the loss of traditional lifestyles. Even in the middle class milieus, the restructuring is widely perceived as a threat to the standard of living achieved. This applies all the more where inequalities or unfavorable framework conditions are concentrated.

### 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

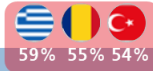
The full methodology report and reading examples are available as a download on our website.

The results of the study show that there is great agreement with the statement that politics must make change more socially just. What is noteworthy is that there is a difference between the different European countries. While in Italy only half of the respondents agrees that climate measures are socially unfair, in France 71% of respondents think so. This shows once again that the socially fair design of climate measures is important to be successful.



People with low incomes should receive more financial support if the cost of electricity, heating or mobility increases due to climate protection measures.

46%



Politicians must work harder to ensure the structuring of our economic system and way of living is socially just.

43%



We need a more consistent switch to renewable energies.

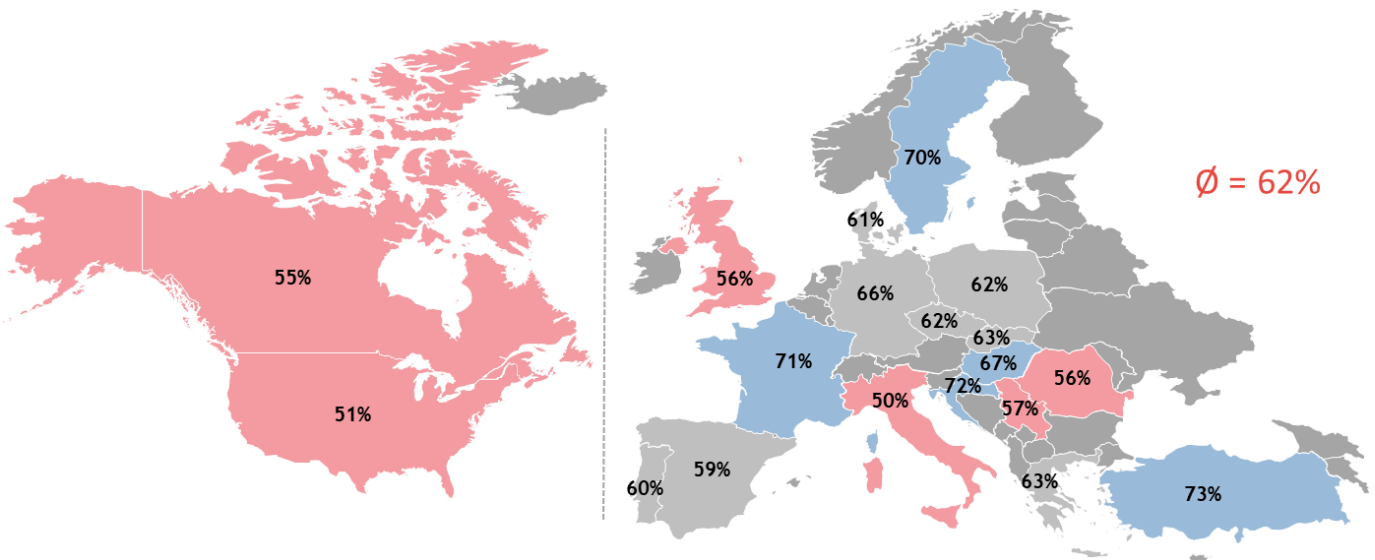
42%



There should be support programmes to help businesses switch to climate-friendly production processes and products.

40%

Measures to protect the climate and the environment are socially unjust, as they burden low-income earners in particular.  
"Fully agree / Somewhat agree"



Quelle: SINUS, im Auftrag der Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- In order to implement socially acceptable climate policy, the issue of **fair distribution** of burdens and costs is of central importance. This is the only way to overcome social barriers and minimize social conflicts.
- It is important to demand differentiated individual efforts. Well-off milieus generally cause significantly more emissions. The milieus of lower status are very aware of this fact. Accordingly, they closely monitor whether **financially stronger groups** and **educated elites** are actually **doing their fair share**.
- In order to prevent the impression that rural areas have to unilaterally shoulder the consequences and costs of the energy transition additionally support is needed: e.g. the expansion of renewable energies in urban regions could be promoted.

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung | Department International Cooperation

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