

Press release

Children drive growing household interest in sustainability despite COVID-19

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Julia Richter
Public Relations
T +49 911 395 4440
public.relations@gfk.com

Sustainability becomes truly mainstream as 42 percent of EU households say they are affected by environmental problems

Nuremberg, September 24, 2020 – The latest research from GfK shows that shoppers are increasingly changing their behavior as a result of their concerns about the environment. Four in 10 (42 percent) of European households say they are personally affected by environmental problems. In Europe, it is children that are the most persuasive in influencing household shopping behavior, and both manufacturers and retailers need to address this younger generation's concerns if they are to remain relevant.

When it comes to attitudes to sustainability, more than one in three households in Europe has stopped purchasing services and/or products because of their impact on the environment or society. In other words, sustainability and caring for the planet has become – in some countries it is already – a mainstream consumer concern. No brand can afford to ignore it.

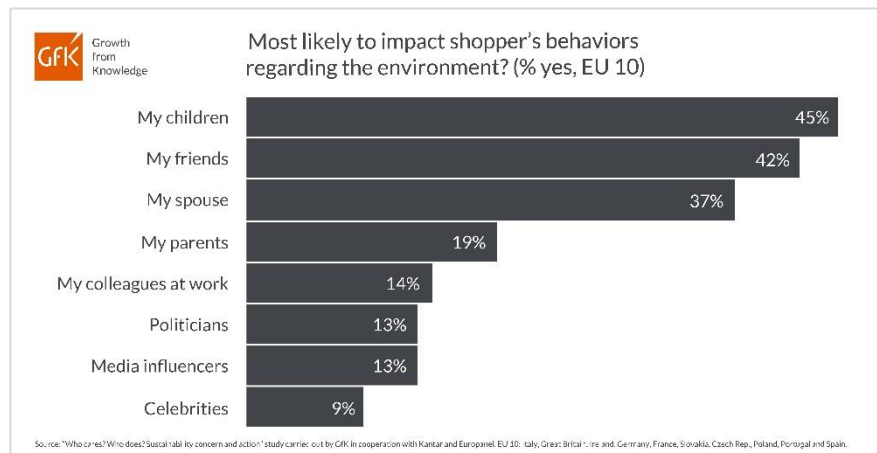
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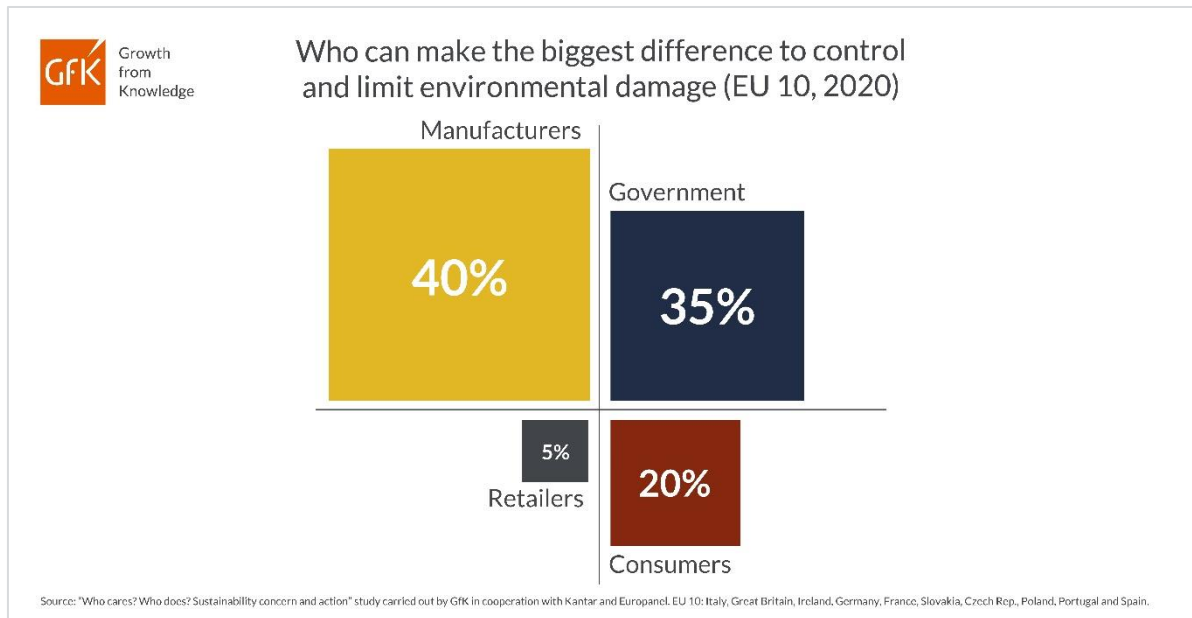
In 2019 when this survey started, the environment was of particular concern to the young, and "Fridays for Future" demonstrations amongst youth were sweeping the globe. In 2020, as consumers locked down and

faced the threat of a global pandemic from their homes, it seemed that the environment might fall off our agendas, but instead, it has remained at the top of many household agendas. It's the younger members of our families that are having the most influence on family shopping trends. In Europe, household managers are influenced in their behavior primarily by their children (45 percent), followed by their nearest and dearest: friends (42 percent), spouse (37 percent) and parents (19 percent). They may be young, but children are more persuasive than politicians (14 percent), media influencers (13 percent) and celebrities (9 percent).

Consumers believe their shopping behavior can make a difference

The 2020 data shows that shoppers increasingly believe that their buying behavior can make a positive difference to the environment. At 40 percent, manufacturers are still regarded as being able to have the biggest impact on the control and limitation of environmental damage, followed by governments at 35 percent. At only 5 percent, retailers are the least responsible.

Three out of 10 households make sure items they buy are not wrapped in plastic. In the era of COVID-19, when hygiene standards can save lives, it is all the more remarkable that so many consumers want to avoid packaging waste, and this is reflected in their shopping behavior.



As Jan-Fredrik Stahlbock, Consumer Insights expert at GfK says: "The proportion of the shoppers who actively avoid plastic waste does differ widely across the countries in this latest study. However, it is evident that eco-active shoppers – those who feel responsible and are making active steps to reduce their plastic waste – are everywhere, and their numbers are growing in some countries at double-digit rates. Manufacturers need to stay ahead of the game and clearly differentiate which measures to prioritize. Retailer need to recognize that shoppers are actively



looking for solutions - not offering them would be fatal in the medium and long term. So it's also an important category management task.”

Ends

Notes to editor

The findings stated in this press release are based on research carried out by GfK in cooperation with Kantar and Europanel in 19 countries worldwide. In this press release we focus on 10 of those markets specifically: Italy, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, France, Slovakia, Czech Rep., Poland, Portugal and Spain. Please source all information to GfK.

[Please find a sample report](#) of the study “Who Cares? Who does? Sustainability Concern and Action” with more information about the survey results and options to receive individual analysis. For more information, don't hesitate to contact our experts:

- Jan-Fredrik Stahlbock, Global Director Advanced Solutions, jan-fredrik.stahlbock@gfk.com
- Martin Schlottmann, Global Director Advanced Solutions, martin.schlottmann@gfk.com

Press contact: Julia Richter, T +49 911 395 4440, public.relations@gfk.com

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