

Trust in green claims

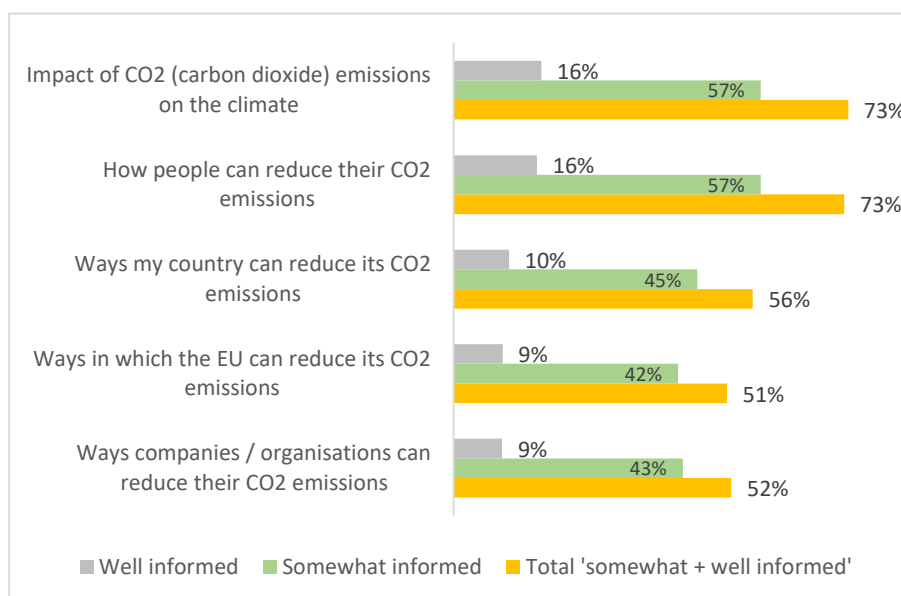
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES – October 2023

The survey was about consumer views and experiences with green claims and more specifically with carbon claims, as well as their perceptions related to false/unverified claims (“greenwashing”).

Results reported in this summary concern the European sample collected in 12 countries: Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. The original tables and graphs which are referred to can be found in the consolidated report made for ICRT in October 2023.

Data used for compiling this summary are based on nationally representative samples but cannot be considered representative for the full European population because not all European countries are represented and because the weighting procedure was done at the country level, not at European level.

Information and environmental concerns



Most respondents in the European sample declare to be **‘somewhat or well’ informed** about the impact from CO2 (73%) and their own capacity to reduce emissions (73%).

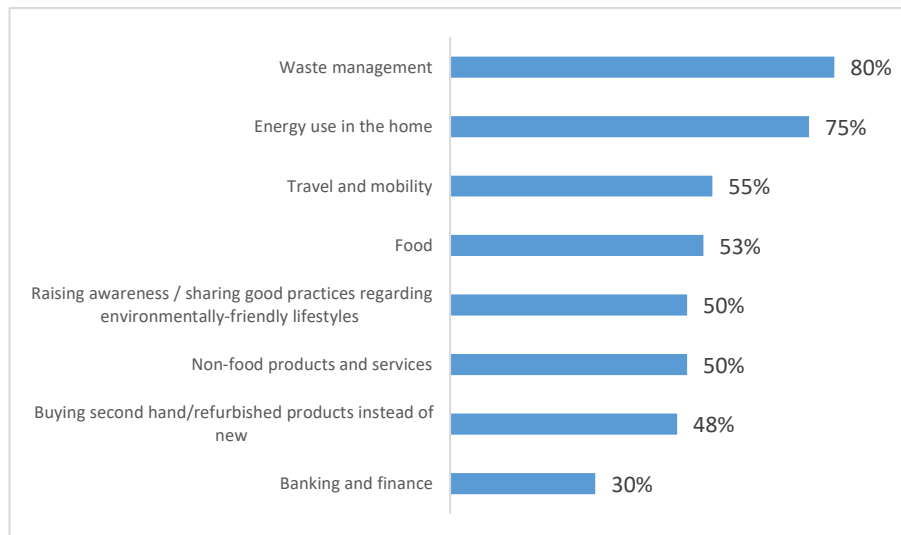
On the other hand, at least 4 in 10 are ‘not or poorly informed’ regarding ways companies / organisations, their country, or the EU can reduce their CO2 emissions. (T.12)

78% of respondents are concerned about the planet’s overall condition, and news about climate change makes half of the European sample’s respondents anxious. On the positive side, **79% try to live in an environmentally friendly way**. While 56% are confident that science & technology will provide solutions to tackle climate change, 30% believe that news about climate change is often exaggerated. (T.17)

About 3 in 5 respondents in the European sample (58%) take **few to some actions** across the 8 areas presented in the survey (T.20).

Just 7% take **some to a lot** of actions in all 8 areas (T.23)

The areas' order of importance within respondents who take **some to a lot of actions** is shown in opposite graph (T.21).



Interest and experience with green claims and labels

25% look often to very often for **environmental information** when shopping for products or services (T.24). At full population level, **61% consider partly** such information when deciding which product or service to buy, while **15%** take it **a lot** into consideration. (T.26)



- 63% **noticed at least once carbon claims / labels** (34% more than twice). (T.27)
- 40% happen to have a **correct idea about 'carbon neutrality'**. However, confusion reigns since most respondents either had no idea or gave the wrong answer about the five assertions presented (T.31).

Trust in green claims and labels





First, the survey reveals a lack of knowledge and misconceptions that undermine trust:

- **Two in three** respondents in the European sample (69%) report to be **poorly or not informed at all about the requirements** companies must follow to use green claims / labels (T.33).
- Nearly **one third** (31%) doesn't know / is **not sure about the verification** status of green claims / labels.
- 23% believes claims / labels have been **verified by a public authority**, while this is not always the case (T.34).

Regarding **trust in the verification** of green claims and labels: 36% of respondents have a (very) high **trust in public authorities** to verify green claims / labels, while 27% have a (very) high **trust in private organisations** (G.154).

Information plays a role: respondents who feel more informed about requirements companies must follow to use green claims / labels have a higher trust in public authorities related to verification (T.157 / T.161).






The table below presents data merging responses from participating **European countries** for ISO type I ecolabels.

Have you ever seen?		Do you know what it means?		Do you trust?	
LABELS	% within gen. population	% within consumers who have seen it		% within consumers who have seen it	
Ecolabel AT/BE/CZ/DK/HU/IT/NL/NO/PT/SI/SP 	29%	no	38%	(very) low trust	14%
		yes	62%	medium trust	35%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	38%
				No opinion	13%
				Total	100%
Nordic Ecolabel AT/CZ/DK/NO/SE 	41%	no	28%	(very) low trust	15%
		yes	72%	medium trust	28%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	47%
				No opinion	10%
				Total	100.0%
Blaue Engel AT/CZ/IT 	19%	no	50%	(very) low trust	20%
		yes	50%	medium trust	36%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	29%
				No opinion	15%
				Total	100.0%
Ecolabel Austria AT 	46%	no	47%	(very) low trust	17%
		yes	53%	medium trust	42%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	33%
				No opinion	8%
				Total	100.0%

Base Col. 4-6: Respondents who have seen the label – weighted

T-test: **Green**: above the average – **White**: in line with the average - **Grey**: below the average

Concerning the **carbon labels** : the table below presents data merging responses from participating **European countries** for carbon labels selected in at least two countries.

Have you ever seen?		Do you know what it means?		Do you trust?	
LABELS	% within gen. population	% within consumers who have seen it		% within consumers who have seen it	
CARBON TRUST AT/BE/CZ/DK/NO/PT/SE/SP 	14%	no	44%	(very) low trust	17%
		yes	56%	medium trust	28%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	33%
				No opinion	22%
				Total	100%
CARBON NEUTRAL PRODUCT AT/CZ/HU/NL/PT/SI 	16%	no	41%	(very) low trust	21%
		yes	59%	medium trust	36%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	27%
				No opinion	16%
				Total	100%
CO2 NEUTRAL BE/NL/NO/SE/SI 	21%	no	38%	(very) low trust	21%
		yes	62%	medium trust	30%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	31%
				No opinion	18%
				Total	100%
CARBON NEUTRAL CERTIFIED PT/SP 	15%	no	33%	(very) low trust	8%
		yes	67%	medium trust	29%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	53%
				No opinion	10%
				Total	100%
CARBON NEUTRAL (SPA WATER) BE/NL 	12%	no	51%	(very) low trust	19%
		yes	49%	medium trust	26%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	31%
				No opinion	24%
				Total	100%

Base Col. 4-6: Respondents who have seen the label – weighted

T-test: **Green**: above the average – **White**: in line with the average - **Grey**: below the average

The table below presents the trust level resulting from aggregated results of the 4 'ISO type I Ecolabels' compared to the trust level resulting from aggregated results of the 5 'Carbon labels' (see above).

	Labels ISO I		Carbon labels		Total	
	Count	Col N %	Count	Col N %	Count	Col N %
(very) low trust	862	15.0%	601	18.6%	1463	16.3%
medium trust	1895	33.0%	981	30.3%	2876	32.1%
(very) high trust	2288	39.9%	1039	32.1%	3327	37.1%
no opinion	690	12.0%	612	18.9%	1302	14.5%
Total	5735	100.0%	3233	100.0%	8968	100.0%

Base: Respondents who have seen each of the considered labels – weighted

About trust in **carbon claims**: the table below presents data merging responses from participating **European countries** for carbon claims selected in at least two countries.

Have you ever seen?		Do you know what it means?		Do you trust?	
CLAIMS	% within gen. population	% within consumers who have seen it		% within consumers who have seen it	
CARBON / CO ₂ NEUTRAL (100% CARBON NEUTRAL) AT/BE/CZ/DK/HU/IT/NL/ NO/PT/SI/SP	38%	no	17%	(very) low trust	29%
		yes	83%	medium trust	37%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	28%
				No opinion	6%
				Total	100%
CLIMATE-FRIENDLY / CLIMATE-POSITIVE AT/CZ/DK/HU/NO	35%	no	14%	(very) low trust	33%
		yes	86%	medium trust	33%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	29%
				No opinion	5%
				Total	100%
NO CO ₂ EMISSIONS / ZERO EMISSIONS BE/DK/IT/NL/SI	40%	no	12%	(very) low trust	23%
		yes	88%	medium trust	36%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	35%
				No opinion	6%
				Total	100%
LOW CARBON FOOTPRINT CZ/SE	38%	no	14%	(very) low trust	29%
		yes	86%	medium trust	44%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	21%
				No opinion	6%
				Total	100%
CO ₂ 100% COMPENSATED BE/NL/SE	29%	no	23%	(very) low trust	30%
		yes	77%	medium trust	37%
		Total	100%	(very) high trust	24%
				No opinion	9%
				Total	100%
LOW CO ₂ EMISSIONS PT/SE	47%	no	10%	(very) low trust	19%
		yes	90%	medium trust	48%
		Total	100.0%	(very) high trust	29%
				No opinion	4%
				Total	100%

Base Col. 4-9: Respondents who have seen the claim – weighted

The table below presents the trust level resulting from aggregated results of the 5 ‘Carbon labels’ in pictures compared to the trust level resulting from aggregated results of the 6 ‘Carbon claims’ in text form (see above).

	Carbon labels		Carbon claims		Total	
	Count	Col N %	Count	Col N %	Count	Col N %
(very) low trust	601	18.6%	2625	27.4%	3226	25.2%
medium trust	981	30.3%	3611	37.7%	4592	35.9%
(very) high trust	1039	32.1%	2762	28.8%	3801	29.7%
no opinion	612	18.9%	576	6.0%	1188	9.3%
Total	3233	100.0%	9573	100.0%	12806	100.0%

Base: Respondents who have seen each of the considered labels or claims – weighted

Greenwashing

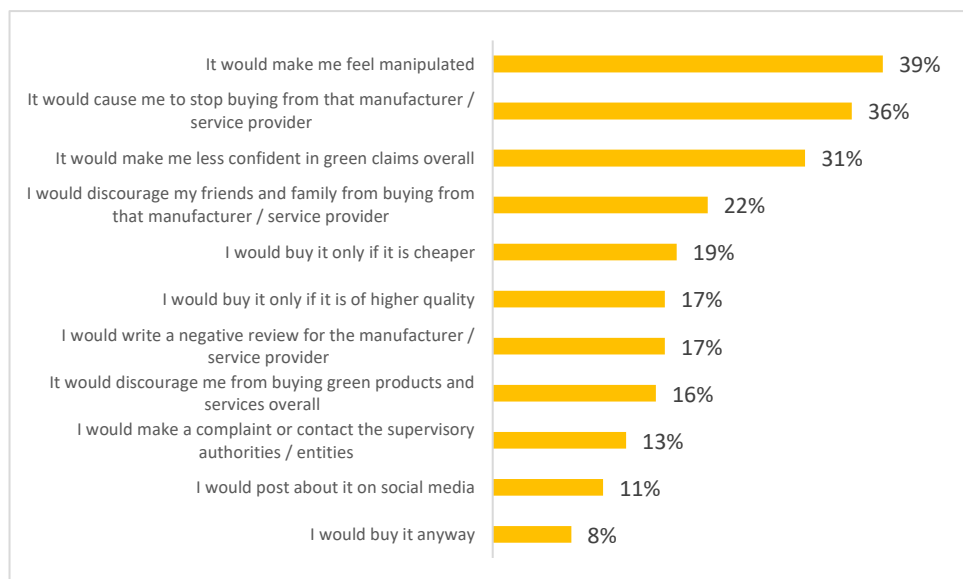
65% report to be **able to distinguish** between false/unverified and true/verified green claims, displayed on products and services or in advertisements. (T.165)



- Within respondents who feel they can make the distinction, **53% report to have noticed at least once greenwashing** when buying certain products or services during the last 12 months (T.168).
- Within the **general population, 32%** report to have **noticed greenwashing** at least once (T.169).

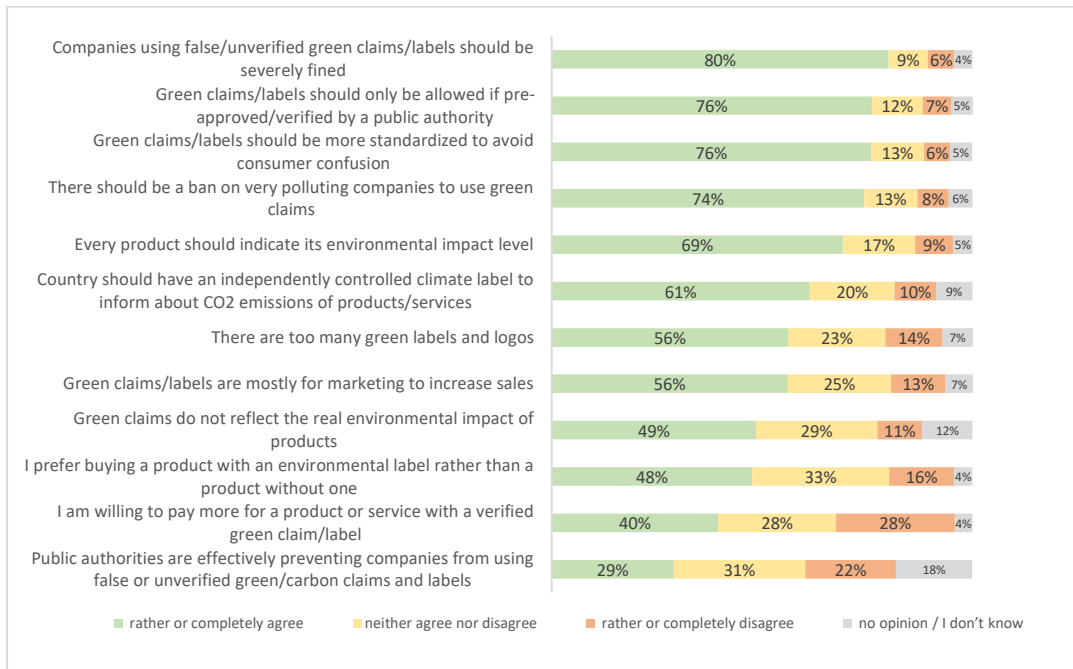
The top-3 **information sources** used to detect such greenwashing includes ‘my own assessment / previous experience’, consumer organisations, and institutional / public information. (T.167)

How would the surveyed European respondents **react after learning** that a product or service they intended to purchase was displaying false/unverified green claims (T.171)?

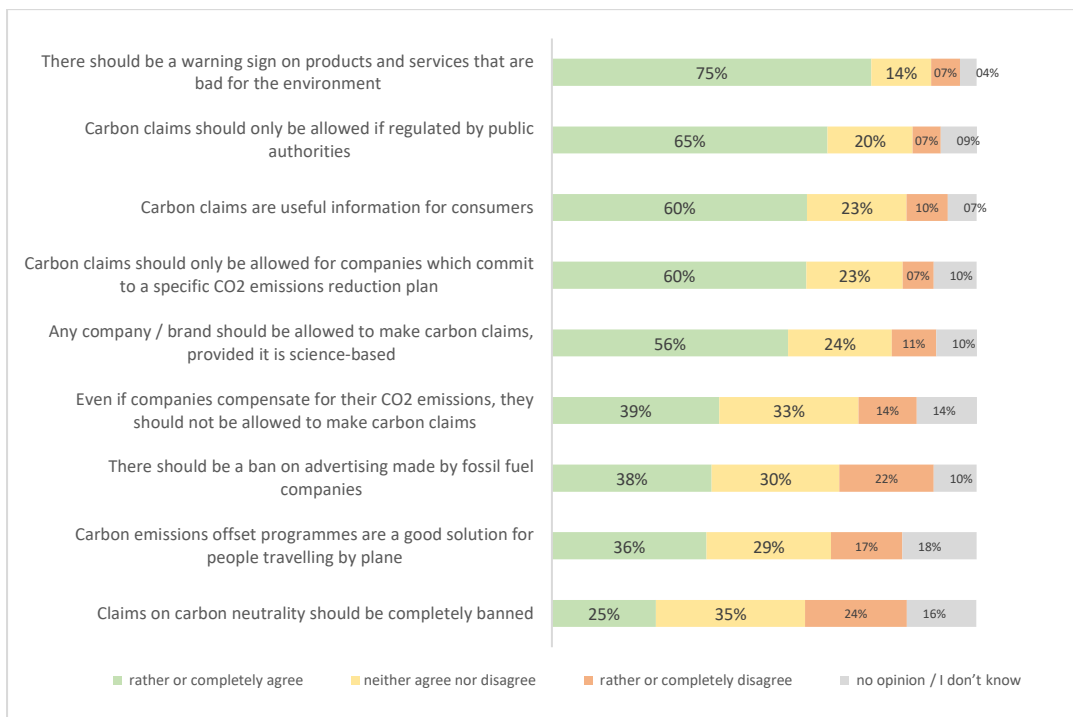


Opinions on green claims

Three in four respondents in the European sample support a **stricter regulatory framework for green labels and claims** (G.173).



Concerning **carbon claims** in particular (G.178): a complete ban of claims on carbon neutrality is leaving the respondents puzzled: 25% rather or completely agree vs. 24% who rather or completely disagree. A majority is without an opinion of a firm position on this question. At the same time, 60% find carbon claims useful.



This survey has been conducted by Euroconsumers from 22d May till 14th June 2023 in 16 countries: Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. In every country around 1000 valid answers (12.185 in total for the 12 European countries surveyed) have been collected online, addressing a sample of the population aged 18-74, a-priori stratified using interlocked quotas by age, gender and geographical area, and representative regarding gender, age, and region of each of the national populations. An a posteriori weighting procedure has been applied to make the samples also representative regarding educational level.

BEUC funded and produced the survey, developing the questionnaire with Euroconsumers, which carried out the data collection and statistical analysis that serves as the basis of the report.