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Brits are LEAST likely to follow sustainable lifestyle as cost-of-living bites

Just 14% of Brits believe a sustainable lifestyle has become ‘very much more important to them’ over the last two years, behind Spain (21.6%), France (20.2%), Germany (20.2%) and Italy (19.8%), according to new research.

The findings are likely explained, by the cost-of-living squeeze, which 84% of Brits cited as one of the ‘biggest issues facing us today’, a markedly higher proportion than the second highest in Italy (71%). Meanwhile, 80% of Brits believe the crisis has affected the way they search for sustainable products, behind only Spain (83%).

The study, commissioned on behalf of Pro Carton, the European Association of Carton and Cartonboard manufacturers, questioned over 5,000 European consumers across Europe in Germany, France, Italy, Spain and the UK about their attitudes towards the environment and packaging perceptions – exploring everything from deforestation to transportation, against other global concerns such as the war in Ukraine, Covid-19, and the economic crisis.

Brits also displayed the least concern about climate change, with just over half (53%) claiming to have grown more concerned, significantly behind the likes of France (74%) and Italy (73%). What’s more, only 50% of Brits cited climate change as one of the ‘biggest issues facing us today’, far behind Italy (68%), Spain (67%), France (65%) and Germany (63%).



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When it comes to packaging, the research yielded some eye-opening findings. 40% of Brits do not believe that brands and retailers are doing enough to introduce more environmentally friendly packaging, behind only France (40%), while over half of Brits (51%) were also second most likely to switch brands or products due to the packaging being non-recyclable, again behind only France (54%).

Brits' increasing importance on the recyclability of packaging was corroborated by the discovery that 60% are recycling more than two years ago, and 79% would choose cartonboard, widely considered to be the most sustainable packaging medium, over plastic. Brits (85%) were also most confident in paper and cartonboard when it comes to whether it can be recycled or not, ahead of corrugated cardboard (81%), glass (78%) and flexible plastics (39%).

Winfried Muehling, Marketing and Communication Director, Pro Carton says: "The findings reveal that Britain continues to battle a perfect storm of the pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and rising inflation. With that in mind, it's extremely encouraging to see so many British citizens wanting to make selfless decisions in favour of the environment.

It is also pleasing to see that the majority of Brits have got their priorities straight when it comes to packaging and recycling, with increased importance on the recyclability of packaging and cartonboard. This mirrors the Europe-wide trend in the growing preference for cartonboard, up from 85% in 2019 to 86% in 2022. As the leading packaging material when it comes to circularity, it is something brands and retailers increasingly acknowledge."

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