



## “ENGAGE TOWARDS A GREENER FUTURE”

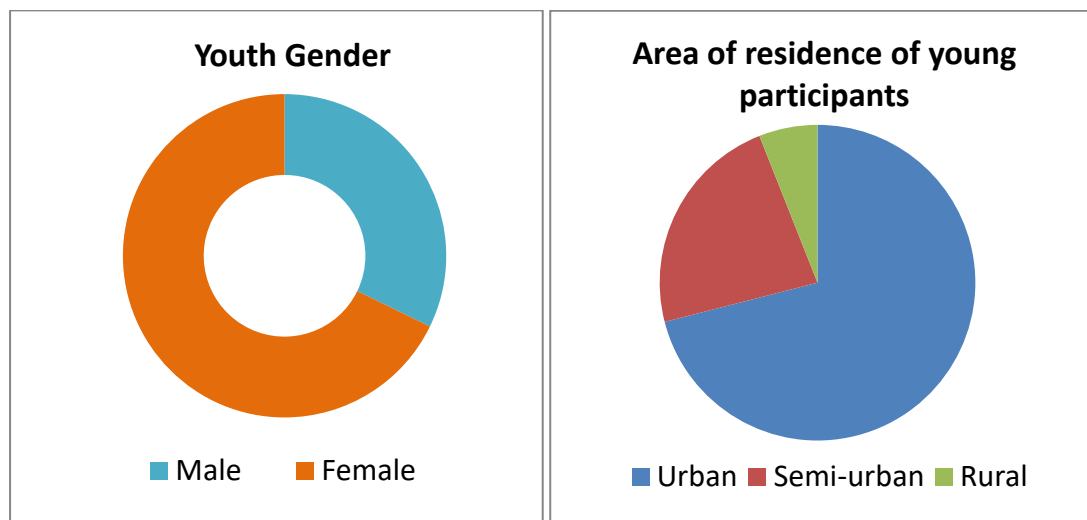
### SURVEY REPORT ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

*May 2020*

 **Greece**

#### Section 1: Demographics

“Engage towards a greener future” was an online questionnaire, open to the local youth community, conducted by EKO Greece, a local NGO based in Athens, under the guidelines of the Danish partner, Crossing Borders. In this survey **230 young Greek people** participated, from whom the biggest majority live in the territory of Greece. The **90%** of the participants are between **18-25** years old and the rest 10% from 26-30 years old. Regarding the gender balance, **2/3** who responded were **female** (156 - 67,8%) and the rest **male** (74 - 32,2%). The 71% of the youth live in **urban** areas, the 23% in semi-urban areas and the rest 6% in rural areas. Again most of them (85%) are university **students**, the 10% work and a 5% is unemployed.



Their **daily habits** due to climate change are very interesting and it looks like young generations are more sensitive on environmental problems and try to maintain an eco-friendly mentality. The 90,5% of the youngsters said that they use 0-3 disposable plastic items per day, the 8,5% 4-6 items and only a 1% uses 7-10 items. Hence, almost the **90%** confirmed that they **recycle** their used items very often. What's more a lot of young people use the public means of transport or their bicycles instead of using cars and use less plastic and non-recyclable items. In general, all of them stated that recycling is a way of life which consider as an important part in



their lives and always try to think what's better for the environment so that their actions are less harmful for nature and ecosystem.

*The effects of stress on human lives are impossible to ignore.*

Humanity is facing increasingly complex environmental and sustainability challenges which lead in constant distraction of human's mind. Climate change is considered to be a serious or very serious problem for the **95%** of all respondents who also believe that it has a big impact on their lives. Many young people suffer from stress and a sense of disorientation in their lives caused by the climate change and the environmental crises occurring around them. Stress affects every element of human living, from physical to mental health and this was a conclusion that youngsters wanted to be heard.

### **Section 2: National level**

Young participants think that Greece is being affected by climate change in a big scale and their thoughts about the most crucial environmental problems and challenges in their country are the following. Greece's rich natural environment is a major economic asset and provides many ecosystem services such as drinking water and water for irrigation and industry, food, habitat for biodiversity, tourism and recreational activities, etc. Although is under increasing pressures from rapid urbanization, industrial and agricultural intensification, inefficient energy generation and tourism expansion. **Economic and social development** in Greece in its efforts to achieve convergence with the other European Union countries and to create material prosperity for its citizens resulted in the neglect of the environment.

Air, soil, rivers, lakes, closed gulfs, lowland coasts, protected areas and sensitive ecosystems are experiencing serious environmental problems due to unplanned and careless development over the last **50 years**. Transport, electricity power stations, overexploitation of water resources, degradation of coastal zones, loss of biodiversity in terrestrial and marine ecosystems and increasing contamination from municipal and industrial waste all exert strong pressures on the state of the environment.

The environmental problems were caused by rapid and unplanned growth with little attention to their effects on the environment. This was exacerbated by a **lack of environmental policies and deficiencies** in legal and institutional frameworks.



**Who do they think is the main responsible for causing these environmental problems?**

- a) Industries/Businesses 28%
- b) Governments 27%
- c) Personal choices of individuals 22%
- d) All the above **25%**

**Who do they think is the main responsible for the solution of these environmental problems?**

- a) Each person separately **40%**
- b) The national governments 29%
- c) European Union 9%
- d) NGO's 5%
- e) Industries/Businesses 2,5%
- f) All the above 11,5%

Concluding the main issues and challenges facing **Greece** are air, marine and soil pollution, wild forest fires, waste management, lack of recycling programs and climate change.

And if we look behind all that, it is understood that:

- very high percentages of exhaust gases are emitted uncontrollably into the atmosphere (transportation, industry)
- lack of legal framework for businesses/industries and waste management
- indifference and semi-learning of citizens on environmental issues

The most important of all that all of them stated and insisted in is that there is a **significant lack of environmental education** which has led to this entire situation and of course the lack of laws and in some cases the non-implementation of them.

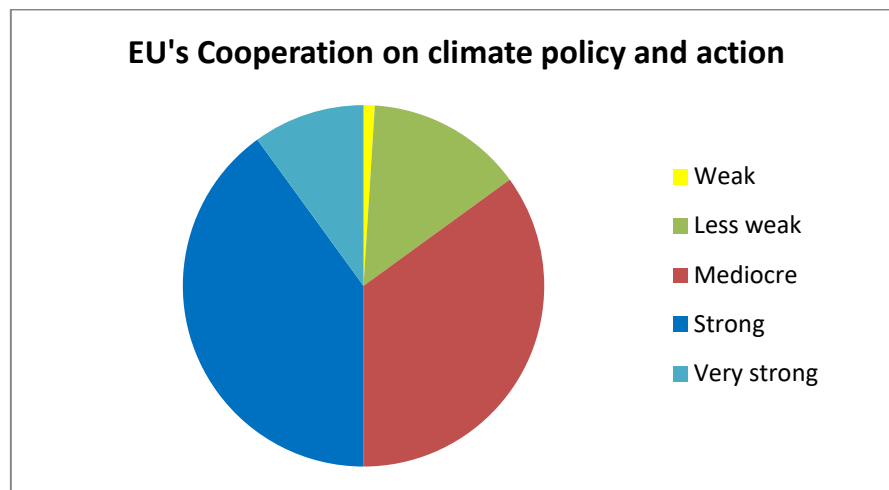
So what they suggest is to focus more on this tremendous issues and problems we are all facing and to educate students from very early age about nature and the importance of environment in our lives.



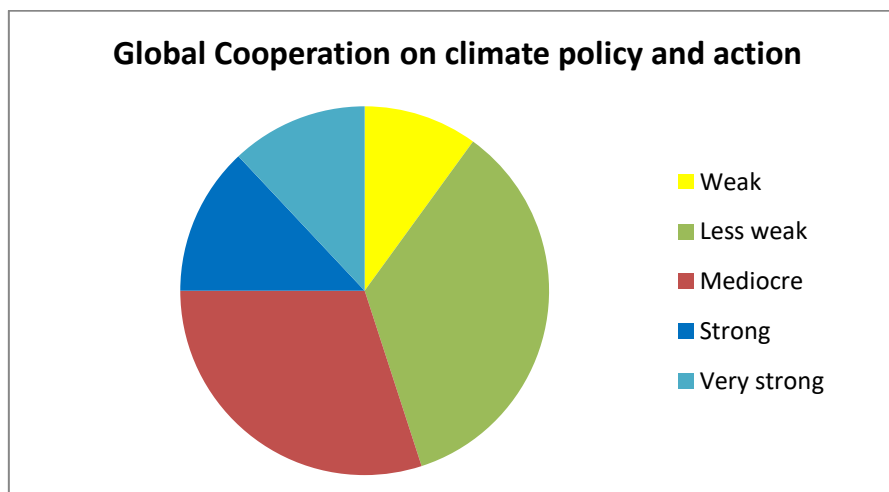
Last but not least, regarding governments, they should imply new effective laws that will prevent all this unprecedented situations and to invest on environmental education of the whole population.

### **Section 3: EU and Global level**

The young participants of the survey were asked to value EU's **cooperation** on climate policy and action and also in a global scale. A low percentage of 15% believe that cooperation between EU countries is weak/less weak, 35% values it mediocre while a 50% declares it as strong/very strong.



On the other side, regarding **global cooperation** on climate policies, the 45% of the youngsters think that is weak/less weak, the 30% says mediocre and only a 25% values it as strong/very strong.





So it is totally understood that **young people trust** more **EU policies** and **actions** concerning climate change.

**Which of the following EU climate initiatives have they heard of?**

- a) EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) - **54%**
- b) EU Effort Sharing Regulations - 16,1%
- c) The Innovation Fund - 38,7%
- d) National Climate Change Adaptation Strategies - **56,5%**
- e) Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) - 44,3%

**Which of the following global climate initiatives have they heard of?**

- a) The Paris Agreement - **67,8%**
- b) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - 37,8%
- c) UN Framework Convention on Climate Change - **64,8%**

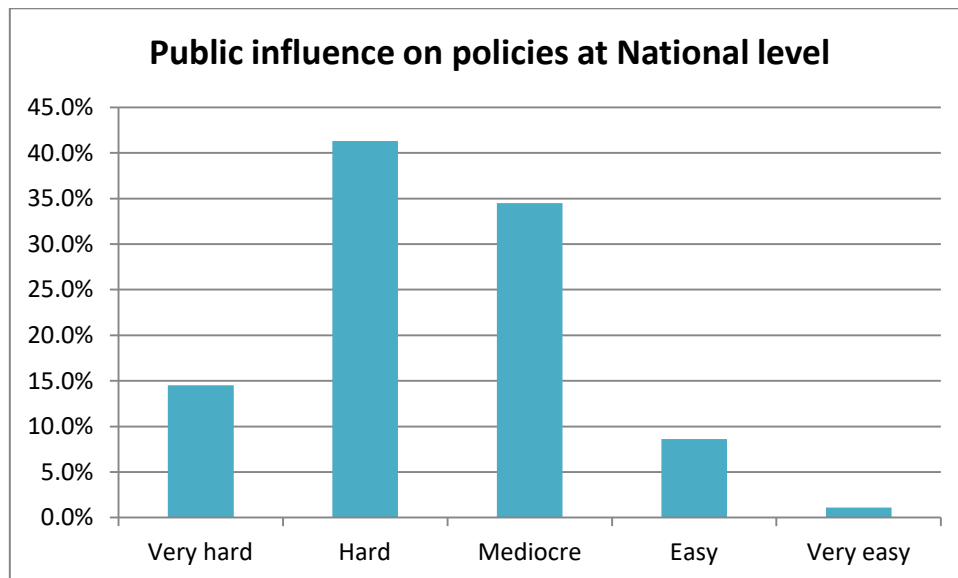
It is believed that most countries in **Northern** and **Central Europe** are setting a bright example for the global community for protection of the environment. Although all countries need to take the necessary measures, the driving forces of this planet, such as **China**, **Russia** and the **United States** can work as the best models to combat climate change, as well as other developed countries.

Most of the youngsters stated that the countries that can help fight this negative phenomenon are the ones that have the most power, such as **Germany**, **France**, **Spain**, etc. Countries such as Sweden and Denmark, which have great environmental sensitivity, can serve as a model.

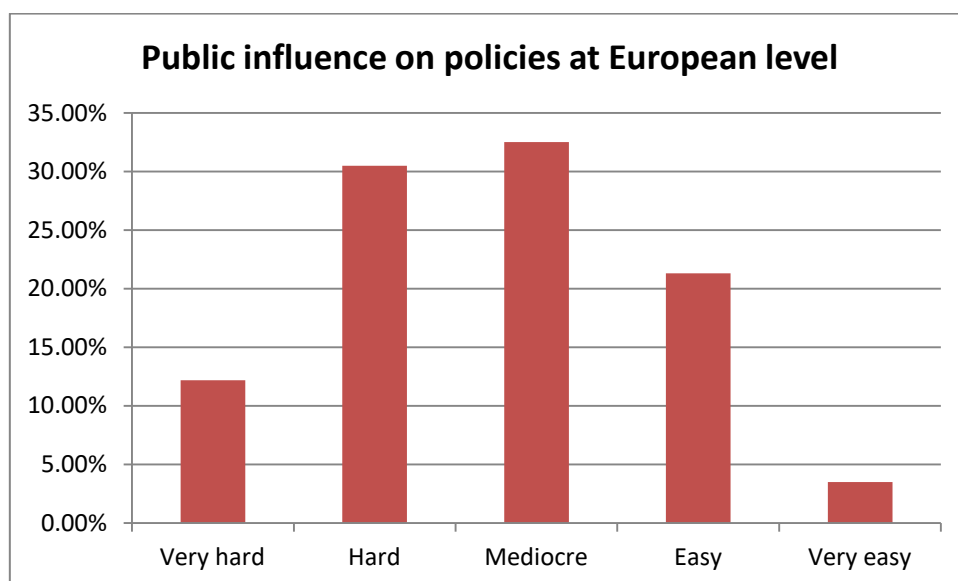
It has become common sense that protecting the environment and dealing with the effects of the climate crisis is a daily struggle. **Sweden** and **Denmark** are currently the two countries as environmental standards, both at European and international level. In those two countries, governments, citizens and several businesses and industries are taking initiatives to reduce their environmental footprint with such amazing results.

**Section 4: Political efficacy**

In terms of public influence at national and European level young people don't feel so capable of, but the rates show a difference in their thoughts about political efficacy between Greece and EU. More specifically youth feel that they find hard/very hard to influence policies at national level at a high percentage of 55,8% and only a small percentage of 9,7% find it easy/very easy. And a medium rate of 34,5% doesn't find it either easy or hard.



At a European level 42,7% of Greek youth find it hard/very hard to influence policies, a 32,5% finds it neither easy, neither hard and an impressive 24,8% finds it easy/very easy.



Thus, it is obvious that **young people in Greece** feel that can influence European policies more easily than the national ones and maybe that's an **accomplishment** of the European Union and how much people **trust** in its set of values.



Which is the main reason for the climate change in global range?

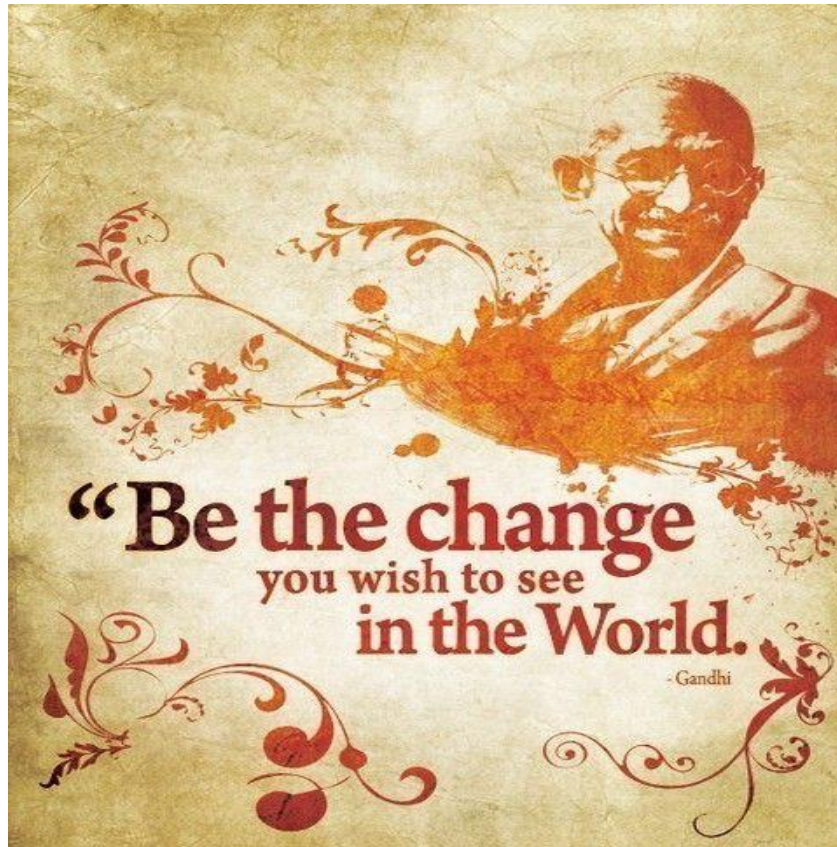
- a) The model of production and consumption of material goods **50%**
- b) Pollution 17,7%
- c) Individual lifestyle choices 10,1%
- d) Political decisions 7,5%
- e) Deforestation 5%
- f) The industrialization of agriculture 2,3%
- g) Transportation 1,2%
- h) All the above **6,2%**

Young people stated that it is becoming clear that increasingly complex global challenges cannot simply be solved by new technology or governments alone. So they feel the need to develop new social practices and encourage a broader cultural shift towards environmental education and awareness. More specifically, they concluded that we have to completely rethink how we do things, and this is where an eco-friendly mentality comes in.

Acting through an eco-friendly behavior enhances the awareness of understanding of our interdependence with the natural environment, and how our actions have a direct impact/effect on the environment and ecosystem. **Many young people have prioritized the need to upgrade human-nature relationship.** Their ultimate goal is to initiate a social dialogue in order to disseminate the effectiveness of eco-friendly ways of life in our society.

***“Isn't it irony that we want to find life on a new planet, while not paying attention to our own for a while?”***

All youngsters believe that we have two homes, Earth and our Body, and that we should take care of both of them. Everything starts from an individual level if we want to make a difference. In addition, through our contribution we will become multipliers of the ideas and values we embody and we will believe in our potential to claim and change our society as we dream.



EKO Greece Team