

Climate change still perceived as the most pressing problem of our time

Despite the health crisis, climate change is still seen by the public in several European countries as the biggest issue that mankind faces. This is the finding of new research released today by Vattenfall.

The new survey complements a report by Vattenfall carried out in December 2019, which explored people's attitudes and emotional response to the conversation on climate change. This first round of research found that climate change was seen as the most serious problem in the world – ahead of any other global issue such as poverty, wars and conflict, or economic recession. The follow-up study, undertaken in June 2020, was designed to find out if and how views on climate change have evolved in the wake of the global health pandemic.

While there is a sharp increase in people's concern about epidemics and economic recession, nearly a third (28%) of people in Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, France and the United Kingdom indicate that they see climate change as the most pressing global issue in the world today. As many as 69% of people describe themselves as "quite" or "a great deal" worried about climate change. Both these results remain fairly stable when compared to December 2019. It therefore seems that climate change has established itself as a durable worry in the mind of European citizens.

Responses show a clear expectation that a long-term and meaningful commitment is needed by all actors who can affect climate change: governments, businesses and individuals alike. The results also found that most respondents (57%) believe that the highest priority should be given to continuing or increasing climate change commitments when it comes to ongoing financial recovery discussions across Europe.

Finally, the share of those who report feeling 'hopeful that we will be able to stop climate change' and 'inspired by what I see people doing to stop climate change' remains almost unchanged. This shows that it is more necessary than ever to highlight specific actions being taken to tackle climate change.

For the report, Vattenfall consulted American psychologist Renee Lertzman. She said:

"These results should provide comfort. They show that our concern and duty of care for the world can be awakened during times of immense crisis – when we feel part of something much bigger. They also indicate that the durable and consistent anxieties and worries about climate change amidst such global health challenges can be a good thing. Ultimately they will drive us to action."

CEO of Vattenfall Magnus Hall said:

"It is clear that our emotions towards climate change remain unchanged even in the wake of a global health crisis. As a company that produces and supplies energy, our ability to make an impact is considerable and this report highlights that. We are fully committed, throughout our entire 20,000-person business, to make fossil free living possible within one generation and to help partners and industries to electrify transports and processes and thereby replace fossil fuels."

The survey including an executive summary of the original report is attached.

For further information:

Vattenfall Press Office, +46 (0)8 739 5010, press@vattenfall.com