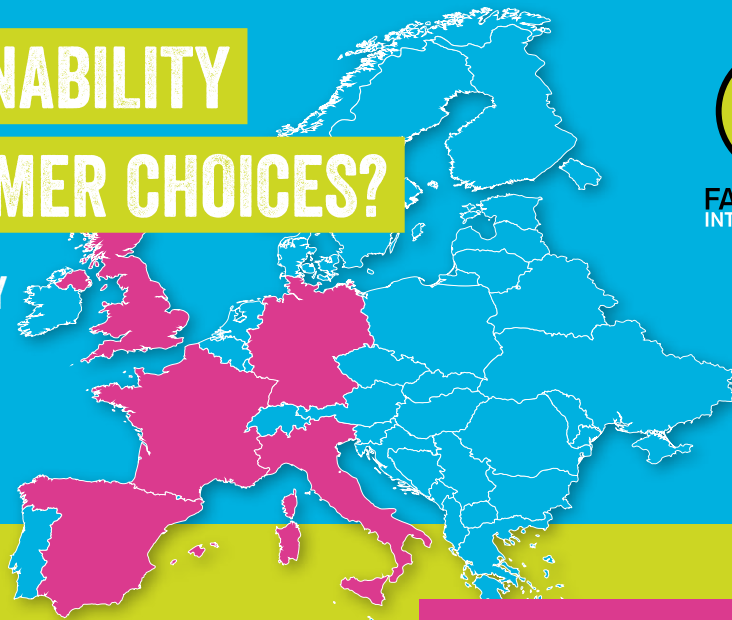


HOW DOES SUSTAINABILITY INFLUENCE CONSUMER CHOICES?



RESULTS FROM A CONSUMER SURVEY IN FIVE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



A consortium of fair trade and ethical fashion organizations, including Fairtrade International, commissioned a study in five of the largest European Union markets – France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom – to gauge the attitudes and values of shoppers when it comes to the sustainability of the products they buy.*

The findings highlight the drivers behind consumers' purchases of everyday items – focusing specifically on the global supply chains that provide European consumers with the food, drink, cosmetics and toiletries they enjoy on a daily basis.

Consumers were asked what information they thought food companies should provide about their products. The study also revealed what consumers expect from their

favourite brands to address sustainability issues and how governments should better regulate the sales of sustainably produced food and drink.

These findings are relevant to anyone looking to increase awareness and action on sustainable consumption and production, in line with the global Sustainable Development Goal 12. Fairtrade International and its consortium partners will make use of the research findings to encourage governments and companies to take bold actions to offer consumers and their households more choices for sustainable and ethical goods, especially for products that generate greater benefits to the farmers and workers who produced them.

WHILE CONSUMERS ARE INCREASINGLY DOING THEIR PART TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING CHOICES, THEY ALSO EXPECT MORE TRANSPARENCY FROM FOOD BRANDS ABOUT HOW THEIR PRODUCTS ARE GROWN AND MADE.

THE MAJORITY OF CONSUMERS WANT BRANDS TO HELP ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES SUCH AS POVERTY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Regardless of age, income or gender, consumers consistently think it's important for food brands to take action on key sustainability issues, including tackling global poverty, climate change and environmental protection. Shoppers in Spain and Italy almost universally rate these as important: for example, 91% of Spanish consumers said it's important for brands to help address global poverty, while Italians most often said brands should take action on climate change (90% of respondents) and to protect the environment (92%).

MOST CONSUMERS SAY THEY WANT BRANDS TO TAKE ACTION ON:



* The consortium of 21 organizations is part of a three-year project called *Trade Fair, Live Fair*, funded by the European Union, to increase awareness of and action to contribute to sustainable consumption and production.



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CONSUMERS MOST VALUE PRODUCTS WHICH ARE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AND MADE BY WORKERS RECEIVING FAIR WAGES

Surveyed consumers said that products being produced in a way that does not harm the environment and products grown by workers paid a fair, living wage were two of the important sustainability attributes they consider when buying food and drink, mentioned by 38% and 32% of consumers respectively. For cosmetics and toiletries, these attributes were mentioned by 44% and 26% of consumers respectively.

Almost a third (32%) of shoppers rated animal friendly production as an important factor in their food and drink purchases, while 43% prioritize it for cosmetics and toiletries.

Priorities varied between countries as well as by age groups: for food and drink, consumers in the 45- to 54-year-old age bracket ranked environment and living wage higher than any other age group (40% and 33% respectively), but were closely followed by the youngest age bracket of 16- to 24-year-olds (38% and 32% respectively).

Food produced in safe working conditions was prioritized by 23% of consumers, while 15% gave preference to organic production. Interestingly, for cosmetics and toiletries, organic production was rated higher than for food (mentioned by 24% of consumers), while safe working conditions was rated slightly lower than for food (20%).

TOP 2 CONSUMERS' SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES WHEN PURCHASING FOOD AND DRINK ARE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY PRODUCTION AND A FAIR LIVING WAGE FOR WORKERS



CONSUMERS WANT TRANSPARENCY: THEY ARE MOST INTERESTED IN WHERE PRODUCT INGREDIENTS COME FROM AND HOW THEIR FOOD WAS PRODUCED

The majority of surveyed consumers value companies that are transparent on sustainability issues. The highest percentage of shoppers said they want food companies to tell them where the ingredients in their products come from (75%).

73% OF CONSUMERS WANT TO KNOW HOW THEIR FOOD WAS PRODUCED

Who are the most demanding consumers? While age differences overall were minimal, in some countries the youngest age bracket showed the highest interest in social and environmental aspects. In Germany, for example, 66% of people aged 16 to 24 expressed interest in learning about what food companies do to protect workers' human rights, compared to 53-57% of people aged 25 to 54. Germans in the highest age bracket (age 55 to 64) neared the high expectations of the youngest group on this issue (64%).

61% OF CONSUMERS WANT TO KNOW HOW FOOD COMPANIES PROTECT WORKERS' HUMAN RIGHTS



71% OF CONSUMERS THINK GOVERNMENTS SHOULD PLAY A ROLE IN SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

CONSUMERS WANT GOVERNMENTS TO MAKE IT EASIER TO SHOP SUSTAINABLY

More than seven out of 10 consumers agreed that governments should make it easier to purchase food produced in a sustainable way. As with other questions in the survey, women tend to feel slightly more strongly about this than men, with 75% of women agreeing with the statement compared to 68% of men.

RESEARCH METHODS

- The survey of 5,000 consumers, aged 16 to 75, in five European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom) was conducted by Fashion Revolution and Ipsos MORI in 2018 as part of establishing a baseline for the EU-funded *Trade Fair, Live Fair* project. The findings related to fashion products were published by Fashion Revolution (available at: <https://www.fashionrevolution.org/resources/consumer-survey>).

- The findings related to food and cosmetics, as summarized here, were analysed by Global CAD for Fairtrade International. The complete report, which also includes a literature review on public attitudes about ethical consumption and EU policy makers' perspectives on key issues and barriers to achieving SDG12, is available at www.fairtrade.net.

