



CONCITO

DANMARKS GRØNNE TÆNKETANK

CLIMATE BAROMETER 2022

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Summary

The Climate Barometer 2022 underlines the continued strong climate commitment of Danes. It reminds politicians and other decision-makers in society and business of their obligation to keep driving forward the green transformation of Danish society.

The survey shows that Danes are increasingly concerned about the state of the climate. The barometer also shows that Danes have clear expectations for action from decision-makers. Thus, the capacity of politicians to act on climate change will influence where voters will cast their ballots in the upcoming general elections.

It is more nuanced how fast the green transition should go and how it should be done. There is support for national ambitions and targets and, as a new development, also for national and local targets for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from our personal consumption. On the other hand, respondents are more doubtful when climate action moves closer to our daily lives. Many respondents are skeptical about taxes on meat and other animal products, while the majority is in favor of taxes on airline tickets. However, most people have no doubt that lifestyle changes will eventually be necessary on a personal level. In this context, this edition of the Climate Barometer shows that to some extent respondents associate quality of life with the purchase and use of material goods, but intangible goods such as family togetherness and pursuing one's interests provide the greatest quality of life.

The answers to these questions indicate that, in addition, to continue focusing on energy measures and reduction targets for, e.g., industry, agriculture and transport, decision-makers should also prioritize a more explicit dialogue with Danes on what creates the good life and how our everyday lives and consumption can also contribute to the green transition and the pathways to it.

The Climate Barometer is CONCITO's ongoing measurement of the Danish population's knowledge of and attitudes towards the climate challenge and concrete actions in relation to it. The first edition of the Climate Barometer was published in 2010.

The Climate Barometer 2022 is based on a survey conducted by Analyse Danmark among 1,009 representative Danes aged 18+, while this report and analysis have been prepared by a behavioral analyst in CONCITO, Mikael Bellers Madsen, and student assistant in CONCITO, Regitze Skou Fertin.

Widespread climate concern and expectation of political action

Overall, the 2022 Climate Barometer shows that the climate and the climate challenge remain high on the minds of Danes. Despite the war in Ukraine and the related price increases for energy and food, Danes consider climate to be the second most important issue in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Respondents in this survey were able to identify several policy themes as important to them (see Figure 2.6). Here, climate scores 45 % as the second highest percentage, surpassed only by health (58 %). Economic policy as a theme, even with rising inflation and prices, is relegated to third place (42 %). Energy policy, which dominates the media during the preparation of this year's barometer survey, is considered by only 31 % of Danes as an important election issue. 34 % consider an otherwise traditionally important political field such as refugees and integration as a key election issue in the next general election.

Global climate change is seen as a key issue for political action that fits well with the fact that a very great majority of Danes are concerned about the climate (see Figure 1.9). When asked: "How serious a problem do you think global climate change is?", 88 % of respondents answer, "very serious" and "somewhat serious" (43 % and 45 % respectively). This is similar to the share of concerned respondents in 2020, when 86 % answered "very serious" and "somewhat serious" (38 % and 48 % respectively).

Young people and women are the most concerned. Here, 50 % and 45 % respectively (compared to 43 % on average) say they consider climate change as a very serious problem. Only 2 % of the whole response group do not see climate change as a problem.

However, fewer people believe that climate change will affect them personally in their lifetime (see Figure 1.2). Here, 46 % respond "to a very large extent", "to a great extent" or "to some extent" overall, compared to 54 % who answer, "to a lesser extent", "not at all" or "don't know". Not surprisingly, young people are more worried about a personal negative impact in their lifetime, with the proportion answering, "to a very large extent", "to a great extent" or "to some extent" reaching 71 %, just as the age group immediately after (30-39 years) is also higher than the average for all respondents. Only 27 % of respondents aged 60+ are "somewhat, very large or to a great extent" concerned that climate change will harm them in their lifetime. This latter age group makes up about a third of respondents, roughly equivalent to their statistical share of the population over 18.

Danes want political action on climate, and they are not satisfied with the current political action on the climate crisis, which is the second most important issue for respondents in the upcoming elections. The survey asks: "In your opinion, to what extent do the different parties show action to tackle climate change?" (See figure 2.1).

If you take the category "to a large extent", all parties score low. Among the government and its supporting parties, the Greens score highest with 30 % among all respondents and the Social Democrats lowest with only 13 % who believe that the party "to a great extent" shows action in this area. Among the blue parties, the Conservatives and the Left are highest with 8 and 7 per cent respectively, while the Danish People's Party and the New Civic Party are lowest with 2 and 3 per cent respectively.

On the question: "To what extent the politician's/party's efforts to address climate change will influence for whom you vote for in the next general election?" a total of 66 % responded "to a very high", "high" or "some extent" (10, 20 and 36 per cent respectively, see Figure 2.5). Here again, younger respondents stand out. As many as 76 % of young people aged between

18 and 29 say that climate policy influences their vote in the general election, for 16 % "to a very large extent", 11 % say "to a great extent", and 30 % answer "to some extent".

Different assessment of general and concrete climate action

In general, Danes have high climate ambitions. When it comes to personal responsibility and individual attitudes and actions, the picture is somewhat more nuanced. In terms of the distribution of responsibility for climate action, respondents point to the state as the most central actor in the climate field in Denmark compared to regions, municipalities, companies, and citizens (see Figure 1.7).

On the question: "In your opinion, to what extent is the state/regions/municipalities/businesses/citizens responsible for helping to tackle the climate challenge?", 72 % of the respondents say that the state is "to a great extent" or "to a very large extent" responsible for tackling the climate challenge. This is followed by companies with 68 %, citizens with 60 % and municipalities and regions with 58 % and 56% respectively.

Although the state is at the top, there seems to be a widespread understanding that we all have a responsibility, including as a nation in relation to the global community. The latter is reflected in the answers to the question: "To what extent does it matter to you whether Denmark's climate action is among the most ambitious in the world?" (See Figure 1.5). Here, 42 % answer "to a great extent" or "to a very large extent". If you add "to some extent", the proportion rises to 71 %.

The Danes want us to be ambitious. And that our current ambitions affect our opportunities in the future is clear from the question: "How much do you agree or disagree that a green transformation of Denmark's production and consumption patterns is essential to create prosperity and well-being in the future?" (See Figure 1.4). Here 64 % of respondents "strongly agree" or "agree" with the statement.

The survey shows a difference in the Danes' attitudes when we talk about the general, perhaps somewhat abstract statements and when we talk about individual climate measures in everyday life. Overall, for example, the majority of Danes believe that a tax should be placed on particularly climate-damaging goods (54 % "agree" or "partly agree"), and a massive majority also believe that lifestyle changes will be necessary (63 % over 10 % who say that technology alone will solve the challenge, see also Figure 3.13).

Furthermore, the Climate Barometer asked for the first time whether a reduction target for the climate burden from citizens' personal consumption should be adopted, at a municipal or national level. Around 50 % of respondents are in favor of reduction targets for consumption-based emissions (see Figures 2.10 and 2.11).

However, when the climate measures are formulated more concretely or move closer, respondents are more skeptical. This is the case, for example, in the question of taxes on beef and dairy products (see Figure 2.4).

On the question: "Do you think a tax should be introduced on the consumption of particularly climate-damaging products: beef?", 53 % of respondents answer "no", compared to 36 %

"yes" (the rest "don't know"). The majority in favor of "no" is smaller among women (49 % "no" against 38 % "yes"). Among young people, the situation is the reverse – here, the majority is in favor of a tax, which can be seen in both the 18 to 29 and 30 to 39 age groups, while the majority who is against such a tax is greater in the older age groups. On the same question, only regarding dairy products, an even larger majority answers "no"; around 66 % and only 21 % think that a tax should be put on dairy products. There is also in the majority a "no" answer among the two youngest voter groups (18–39 years), but here it is less significant.

Danes also seem to be skeptical about more plant-based food in public kitchens, despite clear recommendations for this in the official dietary guidelines. On the question: "How important do you think it is that your municipality introduces the following measures – Plant-based food in public kitchens?", 62 % of respondents answer that it is "less important" or "not at all important" for them, while only 31 % think it is "very important" or "important" (Figure 2.9). When asked whether all public kitchens nationwide should serve mainly plant-based food with little meat and dairy, 44 % "strongly disagree" or "partly disagree", while only 30 % "agree" or "partly agree". Again, young people stand out as being more supportive of a predominantly plant-based diet in all public kitchens (see Figure 2.12).

The picture is different when it comes to people's attitudes towards air ticket taxes (Figure 2.4). Here, 62 % say "yes" to a tax, while 27 % say "no".

Danish attitudes to technical energy solutions and barriers to choosing electric cars and planes

Danes are generally positive about energy solutions such as wind turbines and solar cells, even close to their homes. We ask the question: "To what extent are you willing to accept the following installations near your home: onshore wind turbines, large offshore wind farms, solar PV, underground CO₂ storage?" (See Figures 2.15, 2.16, 2.17 and 2.18).

For all energy solutions, "not at all" response is less than 10%. If we look specifically at the onshore wind turbines, almost 35 % answer either "to a great extent" or "to a very large extent". Including the response category "to some extent", there is a significant majority in favor of accepting wind turbines, even near one's home, and respondents are positive about it across the country.

In this version of the Climate Barometer, we ask what it would take for people to switch from air travel to electric cars (see Figures 3.20 and 3.21). Here we list a number of actions that could make the switch more attractive, and respondents are allowed to answer several actions at once. Two actions stand out. On the question: "What would it take for you to fly abroad less than you do nowadays?", the most popular response is to make train travel abroad more attractive (39 %). The price (higher fares) of air travel is also an important factor in why people would fly less abroad. 24 % of respondents would choose not to fly if the price was higher. How much higher is not clear. On car purchase, we ask about existing barriers to choosing an electric car: "What are the main barriers for you to purchasing and driving an

electric car?”. Again, respondents can give multiple answers, and here 56 % answer that the biggest barrier is the price.

What do the Danes do, quality of life, and how we talk about the climate

What Danes themselves do to reduce their emissions and which actions they believe have the greatest impact on their personal emissions are recurrences from previous versions of the Climate Barometer. Therefore, we have been able to measure what Danes do in their everyday lives to benefit the climate and which actions people believe have the most significant impact. This year, we have also asked which consumer goods provide people with an experience of quality of life. The responses in this last area show that Danes associate certain material goods with quality of life to a certain extent. But the Barometer also indicates that enjoying our hobbies and spending time with family and friends matter more. Moreover, there is a difference between the sexes in terms of quality of life, depending on the consumer goods we are talking about, as well as a difference in attitudes between generations.

To find out what Danes do and think about the impact of various measures on the climate, we asked: “Which of the following things have you done in the past three years to reduce your “contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions?” (See Figure 3.2).

Here are the top three answers:

1. Sorted waste (86 %)
2. Reduced food waste (71 %)
3. Flew less (51 %)

The top two actions belong to everyday life and are within the framework of what one can immediately do oneself, or perhaps even has been instructed (waste sorting). In relation to the perceived impact of different actions, the Climate Barometer 2022 asks: “Which of the following climate actions do you think will have the greatest impact on Danes’ personal greenhouse gas emissions?” (See Figure 3.3).

Here the top three answers are:

1. Replace oil/gas heating with climate-friendly heating (42 %)
2. Take the bike and public transport (36 %)
3. Energy renovation of the dwelling (replacing insulation, new windows, etc.) (35 %)

These three categories are all related to energy.

The Climate Barometer asks about the quality-of-life people associate with eating meat, driving a car, buying clothes, having a large home, but also more intangible things like working full-time, part-time, working at home, pursuing hobbies and spending time with family. As stated, there is of course a certain quality of life associated with what we do and buy; why else would we do it. In this summary, we will only touch on some of the areas, and otherwise much is illustrated below (see Figure 3.7–3.12).

On the question: ““To what extent do you associate – eating meat – with your quality of life?”, a total of 35 % said “to a very high degree” or “to a high degree”. Among men, 42 % and

among women 27 % say they associate meat with quality of life “to a great extent” or “to a very large extent” “. Among young people (18-29 years), the figure is only 27 %, while 42 % of 40-49-year-olds associate meat with a high quality of life.

On the question: “To what extent do you associate - having a car - with your quality of life?”, 54 % of all respondents associate it with a high quality of life (“to a great extent” or “to a very large extent”). Women are more likely to associate having a car with quality of life than men. Young people again stand out. Only 37 % of 18-29-year-olds see a high quality of life in having a car. In North Jutland, the car is seen as a greater quality of life benefit than in the capital.

Thought-provokingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, we see a significantly higher quality of life associated with pursuing a hobby or spending time with family and friends.

We asked about the quality of life this year, but also to what extent and how we talk about the climate with friends and family, at work and at home around the dinner table. Many people discuss the issue in their immediate circle, sometimes causing conflict, but often talking to others about the climate gives rise to collective inspiration. However, there is also a large group of 35 % who never talk about it. Of these, 26 % do not talk about it because they are not interested in the subject, and the remaining 9 % do not talk about it because it causes conflict. See Figure 3.14.