

ECO ANXIETY REPORT

GREECE

2023

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Note from Iris Sustainable Development

Anxiety relating to a multitude of ecological crises, or eco-anxiety, is a subject of growing research significance. The main idea of the first report series is to establish an international overview of eco-anxiety rates in 20 countries utilizing the HEAS scale and correlate these rates with variables of geographical location (urban, rural), education as well as the type of experiencing climate crisis (indirectly via the media or public discourse).

More precisely, the main objectives of this report series is to:

- create an international overview of eco-anxiety rates in 20 countries
- contribute to the growing body of knowledge around to what extent the climate crisis affects mental health identifying possible differentiation on eco-anxiety determinants
- raise awareness on the impact of climate crisis on mental health

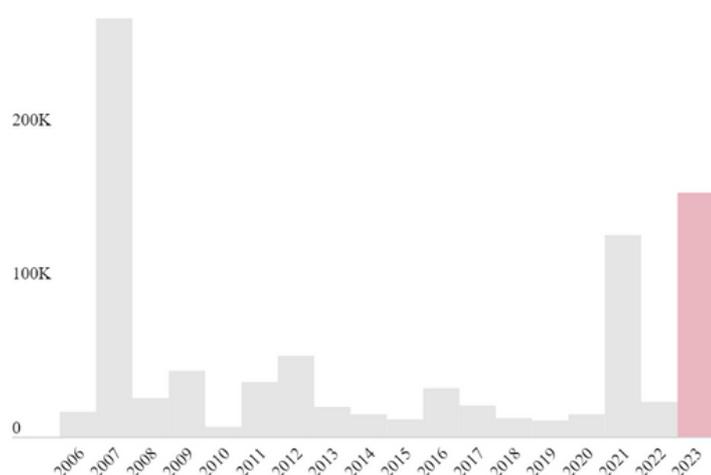
The target group of the Greek national report are citizens of Greece and/or people (ages 18-50) that are/have been experiencing climate change in the country.

Climate change impacts in Greece

Greece has a Mediterranean climate, with mild and wet winters in the southern lowland and island regions as well as cold winters with strong snowfalls in the mountains of the central and northern regions as well as hot, dry summers. The mean temperature during summer (April to September) is approximately 24°C in Athens and southern Greece, while lower in the north. In general, temperatures are higher in the southern part of the country as well as rainfall is rare from June to August, where sunny and dry days are mainly observed -except for a few thunderstorms. The average annual temperature for the period 2001 – 2015, as measured at chosen meteorological stations of the country, is higher in most of the stations compared to the average annual temperature of the period 1991 – 2000 while the average annual temperature for the period 1991 – 2000 is higher compared to these of the period 1961 – 1990 (World Bank, 2023).

Greenhouse gas emissions

In 2021, Greece contributed 59.73 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Ritchie et al, 2020). Greece experienced a significant decline in its per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions between 2005 and 2021 as well as Greece's GHG emissions reached a record high of 132.57 tons in 2005. Since then, the GHG emissions per capita more than halved (Ritchie et al, 2020). Greece's emissions per capita decreased at a faster rate than the overall EU per capita emissions from 2005 to 2015. It has also been found that Greece's CO2 emissions are coupled with economic growth, so when Greece's CO2 emissions drop, so does the GDP (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2021).



SOURCE: EFFIS

Climate change impacts in Greece

Extreme weather events

Greece has been witness to a profound transformation in its climate narrative over the past decade. From wildfires scorching the landscapes to heatwaves gripping its historic cities, the nation grapples with the symphony of extreme weather. The country's long coastline is vulnerable to rising sea levels, leading to coastal erosion and flood risks. More precisely, according to a projection based on 0.5 m sea level rise by 2100, 15% of the current total area of coastal wetlands in Greece is expected to be flooded. The estimated economic losses from erosion (for land uses: urban, tourist, wetland, forest and agricultural) for the entire Greek territory for 2100 amounts approximately €356 million and €649 million for 0.5 m and 1 m sea level rise, respectively (Climate Change Post, 2023).

Wildfires have become more frequent and intense, posing threats to ecosystems and communities. 2023 is on track to become the second most damaging wildfire season on record in Greece, with nearly 160,000 hectares of land burned as of late August.

Furthermore, climate change is disrupting agriculture, affecting crop yields and planting/harvesting timings, and has health consequences, including heat-related illnesses and changing disease vectors. Finally, energy demand for cooling during heatwaves has risen.

Survey results

LOCATION



Urban Area



85%



Rural Area



15%

EDUCATION

Elementary School Degree  0%

High School's Degree  6%

Bachelor's Degree  35%

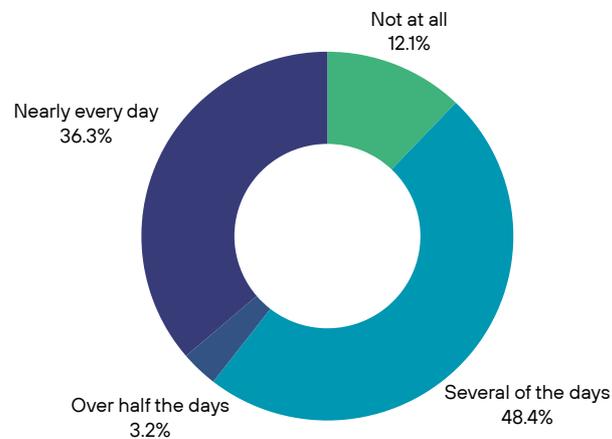
Master's Degree or higher  59%

Survey results: The Hogg Scale

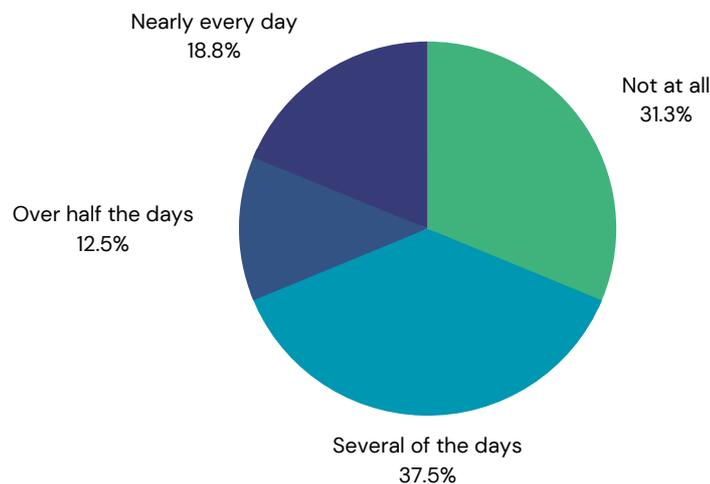
“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Response scale: 0 = not at all, 1 = several of the days, 2 = over half the days, 3 = nearly every day.

Feeling nervous, anxious or on edge



Not being able to stop or control worrying

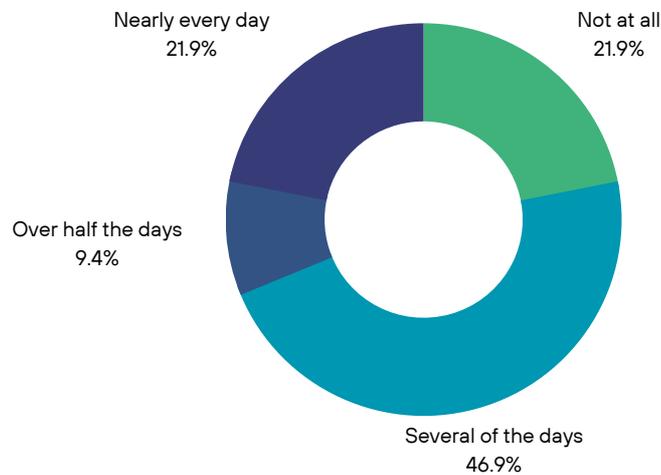


Survey results: The Hogg Scale

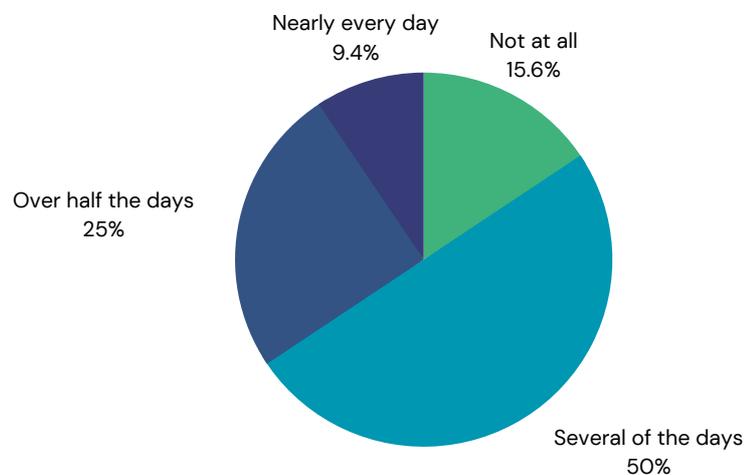
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Worrying too much



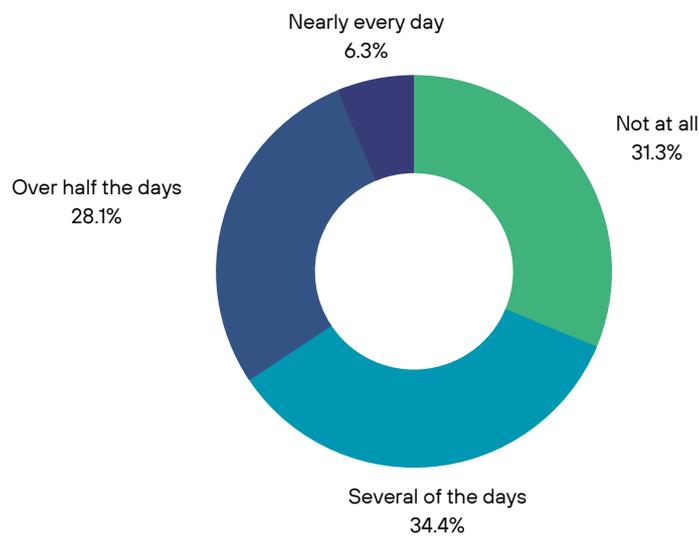
Feeling afraid



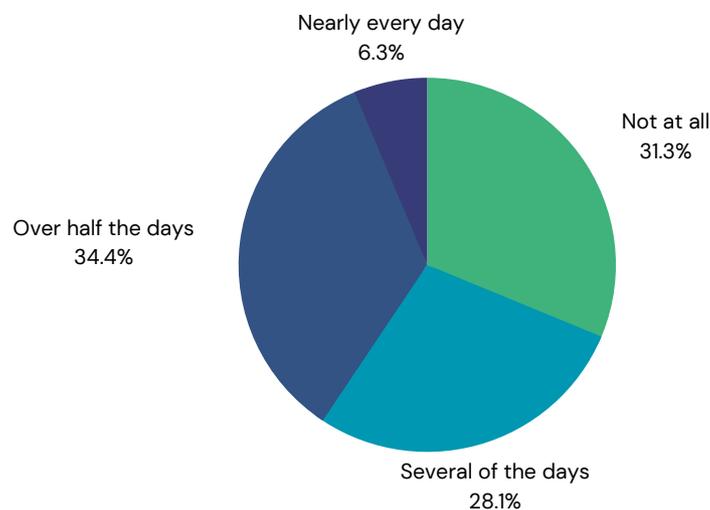
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Unable to stop thinking about future climate change and other global environmental problems



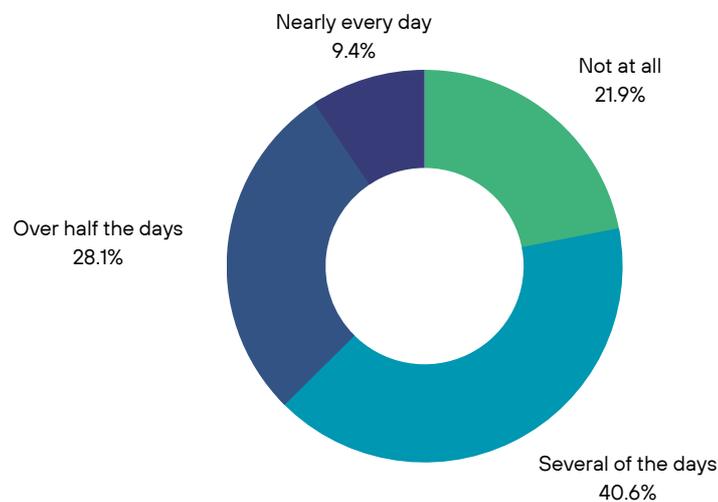
Unable to stop thinking about past events related to climate change



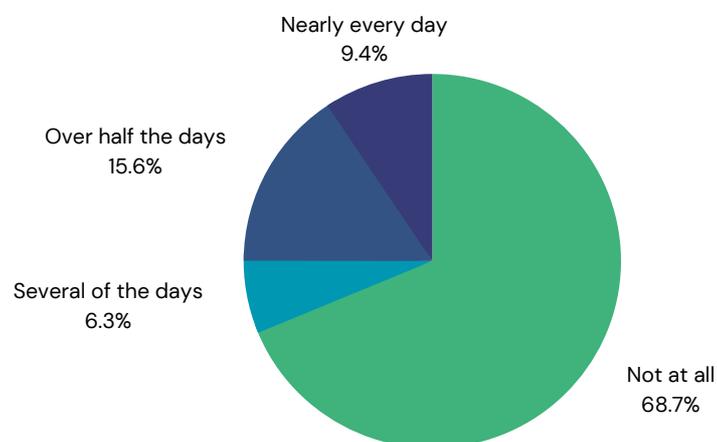
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Unable to stop thinking about losses to the environment



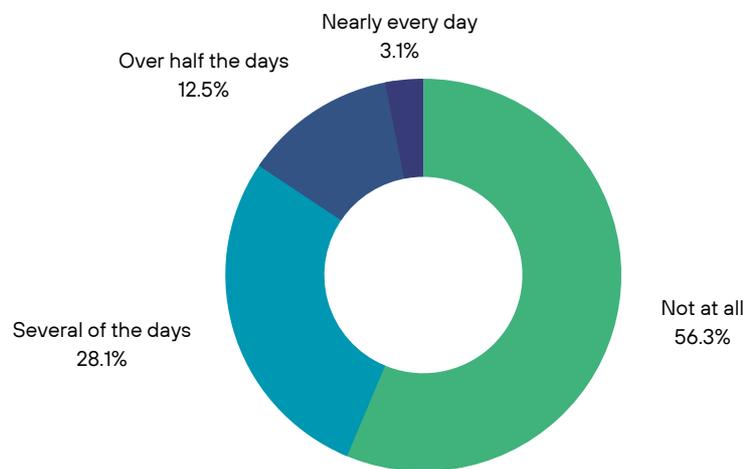
Difficulty sleeping



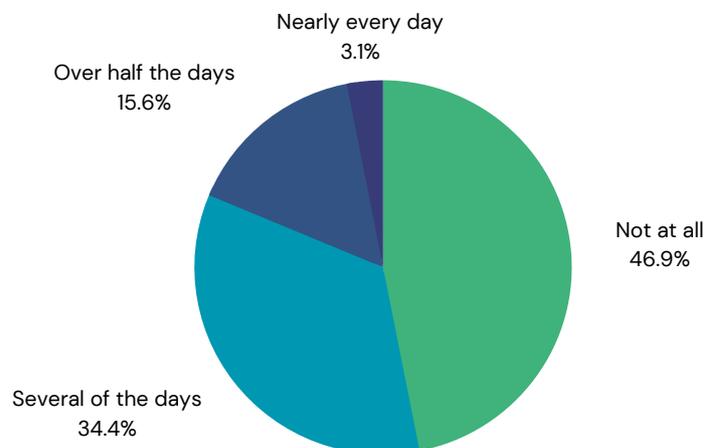
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?”

Difficulty enjoying social situations with family and friends



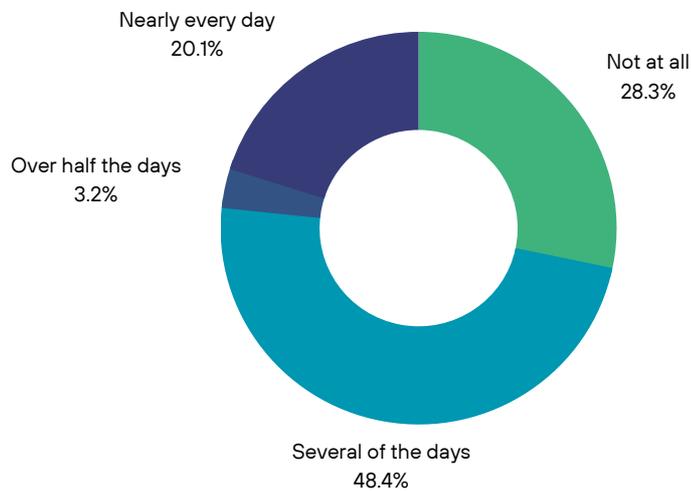
Difficulty working and/or studying



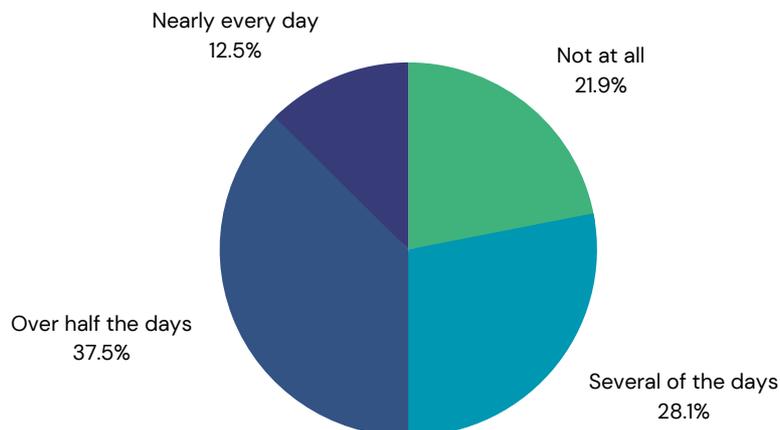
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

Feeling anxious about the impact of your personal behaviours on the earth



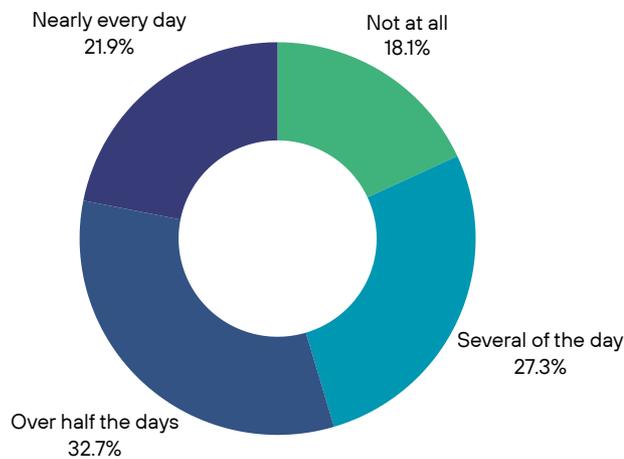
Feeling anxious about your personal responsibility to help address environmental problems



Survey results: The Hogg Scale and Beliefs about climate change

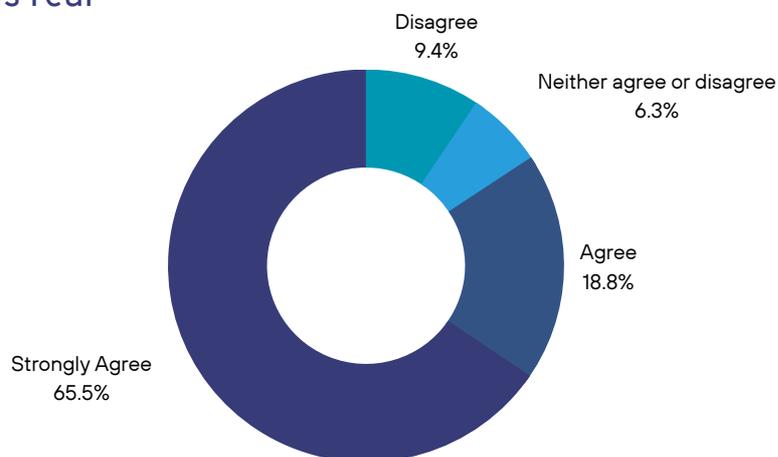
“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?”

Feeling anxious that your personal behaviours will do little to help fix the problem



Beliefs about Climate Change

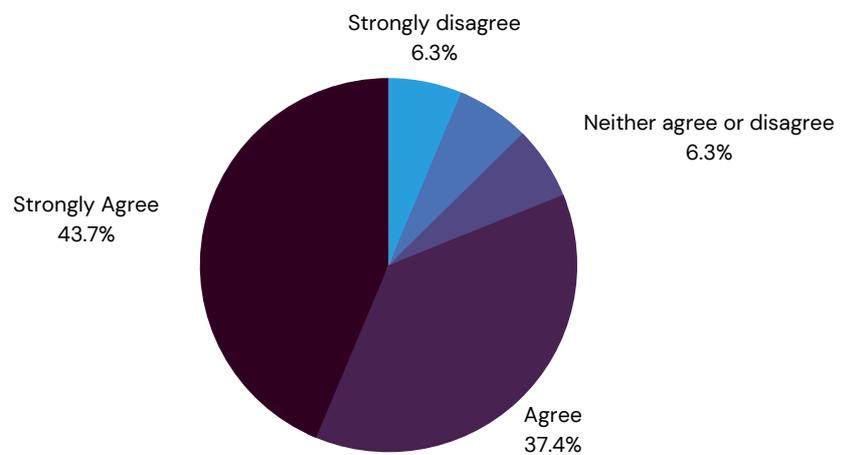
Climate change is real



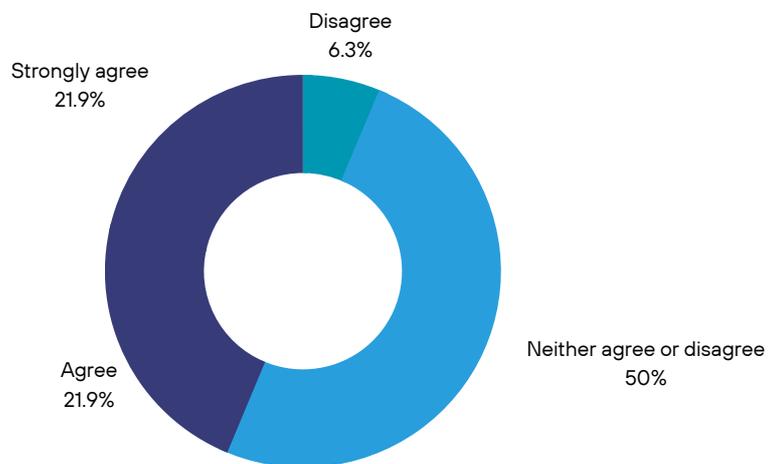
Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

Beliefs about Climate Change

Climate change is caused by humans

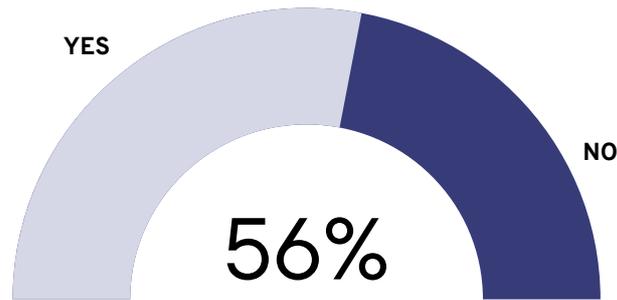


Climate change is reversible



Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

Do you have direct experience of environmental crisis?



I am experiencing climate crisis indirectly via the media or public discourse



Which climate disaster made you feel nervous (in your country or globally), if any



Key Conclusions

Our research reveals a notable prevalence of eco-anxiety among the Greek population, reporting varying degrees of eco-anxiety. This underscores the significance of the issue and the need for further investigation and intervention.

In terms of the interplay between eco-anxiety and specific variables significant differences in eco-anxiety rates were observed across various demographics. Notably, the geographical location of participants was strongly connected with eco-anxiety. It is important that the 85% of the respondents are urban residents and they are exhibited higher levels of eco-anxiety compared to their rural counterparts. Additionally, while a slight interrelation with education was observed, we address that eco-anxiety can be experienced indirectly via media and public discourse, since the 78% has expressed that is experienci eco-anxiety can be experienced indirectly via media and public discourse, since the 78% has expressed that is experiencing eco-anxiety indirclty.ng eco-anxiety indirclty. The research indicates that the media and information consumption play a substantial role in shaping eco-anxiety levels. Participants who reported frequent exposure to alarming environmental news or content experienced higher levels of eco-anxiety. Simultaneously, the study found a strong interplay between eco-anxiety and heightened concerns about environmental issues. Respondents who expressed high levels of eco-anxiety consistently cited factors and events such as wildfires, floodings, and biodiversity loss as major sources of distress.

The findings of this research underscore the urgency for policymakers to address eco-anxiety as a public health concern. Developing sustainable environmental policies, educational campaigns, and psychological support services can help mitigate eco-anxiety and its associated mental health issues. This study provides a foundation for future research on eco-anxiety. However, further investigations into the long-term consequences of eco-anxiety, the effectiveness of interventions, and potential policy changes are essential for a comprehensive understanding of this emerging issue.

In conclusion, our research highlights the significant eco-anxiety rates in Greece and the need for multidisciplinary efforts to address this concern. Addressing eco-anxiety is not only crucial for the mental well-being of individuals but also for the sustainable future.

Disclaimer:

This report provides an intention of the eco-anxiety rates in the country and cannot be generalised since the survey is not responded by a representative sample comparing to the country's population.

References

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