

ECO ANXIETY REPORT ROMANIA

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 Romanian national report are citizens of Romania and/or people (ages 18-50) that are/have been experiencing climate change in the country.

Climate change impacts in Romania

Romania experiences rainfall throughout the year, with peak temperatures and precipitation occurring in the summer months (May to August). Climate variability is linked with its geological sub-state, which includes coastal, plain areas and mountains. Romania has a relatively mild climate, with average temperatures of 2-3°C in the mountains and 11-12°C in the plains. Climate variability is linked with its geological sub-state, which includes coastal, plain areas and mountains. Romania has a heavy reliance upon its aquatic facilities: rivers and streams, lakes, groundwaters, and marine waters. Its hydrographical and hydrological variabilities are determined mainly by its geographic position within the temperate continental climate and the presence of the Carpathian Arch. (World Bank, 2023)

Greenhouse gas emissions

Romania was responsible for emissions of 113 MtCO₂e in 2019. The country's emissions account for 3 % of the EU total and fell by almost 26 % between 2005 and 2019. This was above the EU-wide emissions reduction of 19 % in the same period. According to latest available data, in 2018, Romania's land use, land-use change and forestry sectors (LULUCF) ensured removals of 24 MtCO₂e (see Figure 2). Romania's GHG removals through LULUCF have remained relatively stable. However, owing to emissions decreases, the removals constituted 24 % of total emissions in 2017 compared with only 8 % in 1990 as the NECP points out.



Source: <https://www.romania-insider.com/climate-change-pollution-financial-costs-diseases-romania>

Climate change impacts in Romania

Extreme weather events

Over the past decade, Romania, with its diverse landscapes ranging from the Carpathian Mountains to the Black Sea coast, has witnessed a profound transformation in its climate dynamics. Extreme weather events, exacerbated by climate change, have woven a complex tapestry of challenges, impacting communities and ecosystems across the country.

One emblematic event that marked Romania's climate narrative occurred in 2014 when the country faced severe flooding, particularly along the major rivers, including the Danube and the Siret. Intense rainfall and the melting of snowpacks led to swollen rivers, breaching levees, and inundating vast areas. Towns and villages, unaccustomed to such deluges, grappled with the aftermath, highlighting the vulnerability of Romania's riverine landscapes to the amplified impacts of climate change.

Conversely, the southern and eastern regions of Romania have experienced an increasing frequency of heatwaves, with temperatures soaring to record levels. The summer of 2012, for instance, brought scorching temperatures that surpassed 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). Agricultural regions, dependent on predictable growing seasons, faced challenges as crops withered under the relentless sun, signaling a paradigm shift in the traditional agricultural calendar.

Winter has not remained untouched by climate change in Romania. Unpredictable and fluctuating temperatures have led to a series of freeze-thaw cycles, affecting both urban and rural areas. The vulnerability of infrastructure to these cycles became evident in 2017 when freezing rain coated power lines and trees, causing widespread power outages and disruptions, particularly in the central and southern parts of the country.

Mountainous regions, a defining feature of Romania's landscape, have witnessed shifts in precipitation patterns and snow cover. Ski resorts in the Carpathians, accustomed to reliable snowfall, have faced the challenges of shorter winter seasons and variable snow conditions, impacting both tourism and local economies.

Survey results

LOCATION



Urban Area



Rural Area



EDUCATION

Elementary School Degree  0%

High School's Degree  4%

Bachelor's Degree  59%

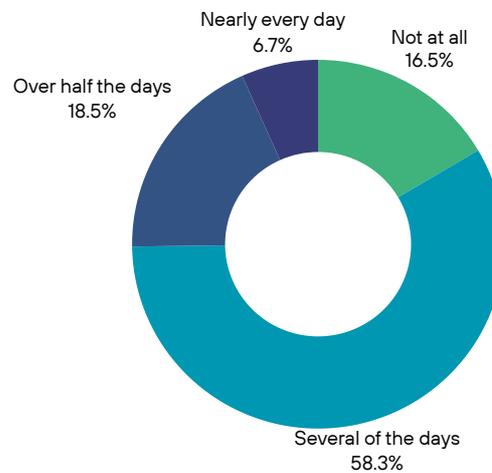
Master's Degree or higher  37%

Survey results: The Hogg Scale

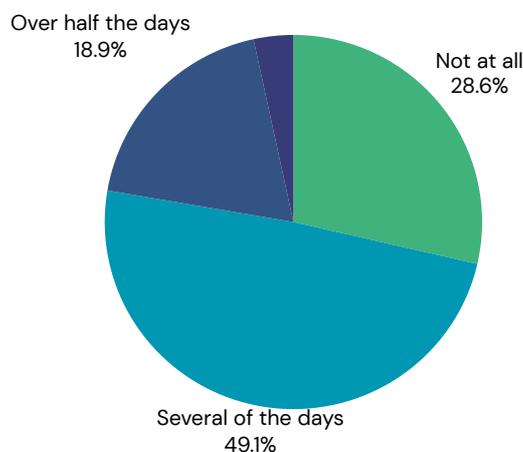
“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

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

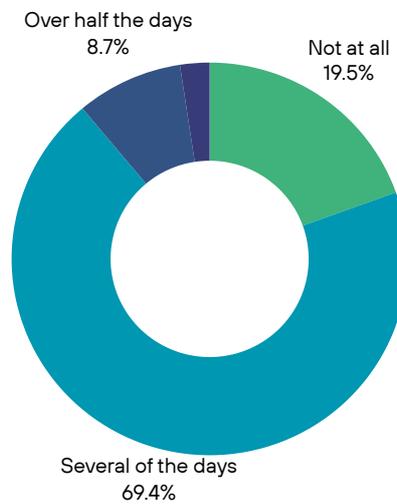


Survey results: The Hogg Scale

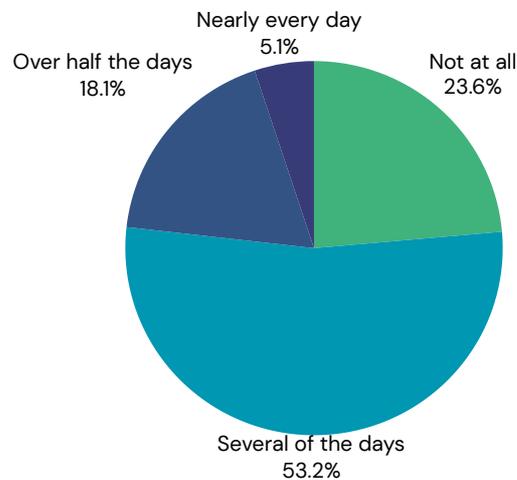
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Response scale: 0 = not at all, 1 = several of the days, 2 = over half the days, 3 = nearly every day.

Worrying too much



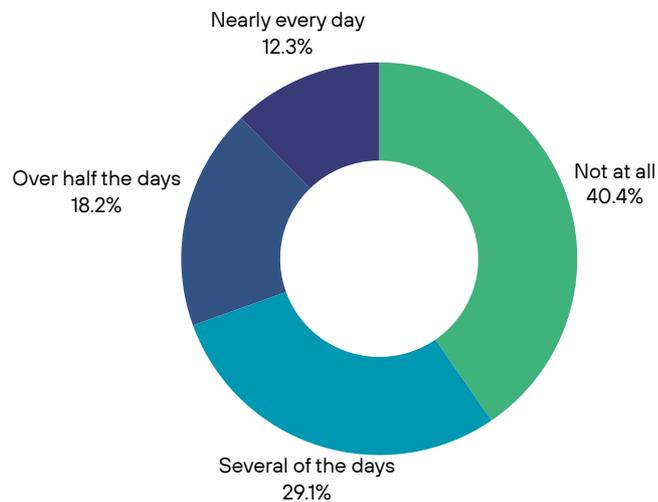
Feeling afraid



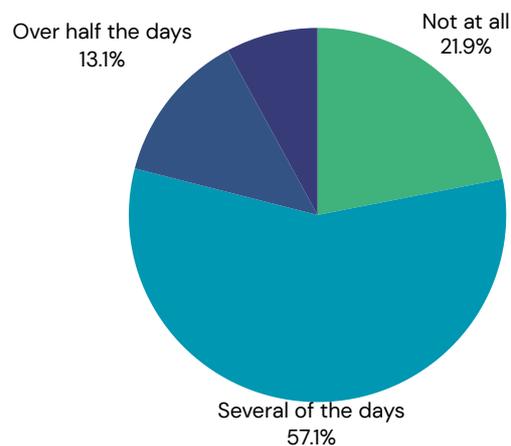
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“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



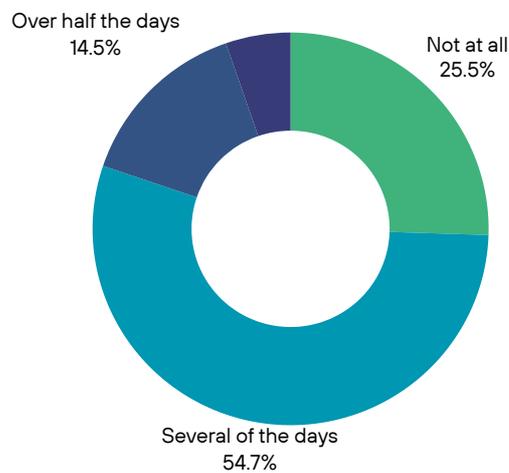
Unable to stop thinking about past events related to climate change



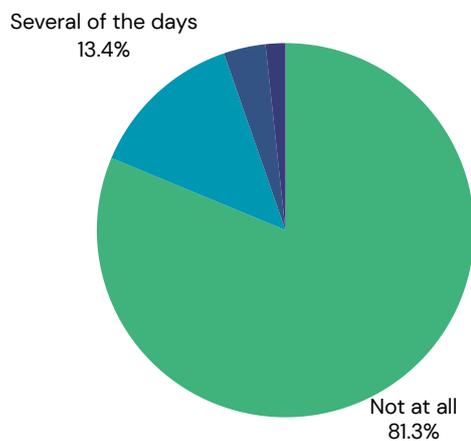
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“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



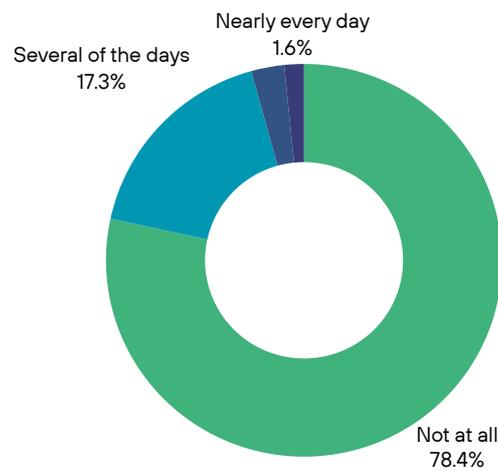
Difficulty sleeping



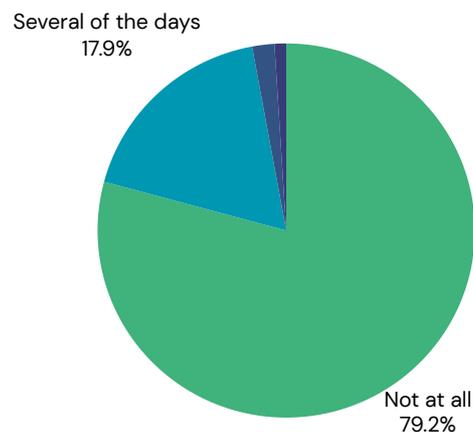
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“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



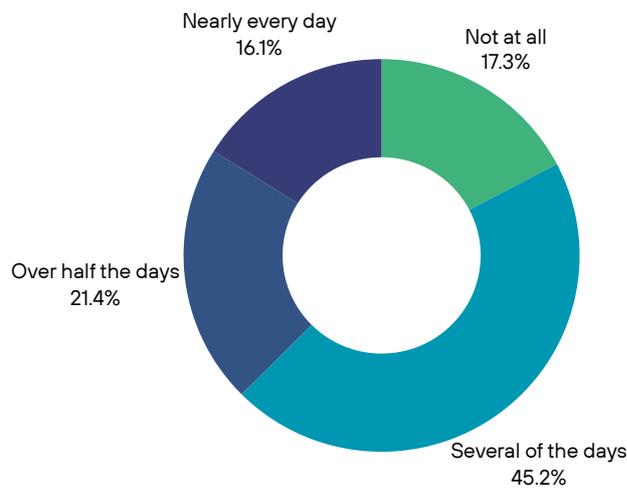
Difficulty working and/or studying



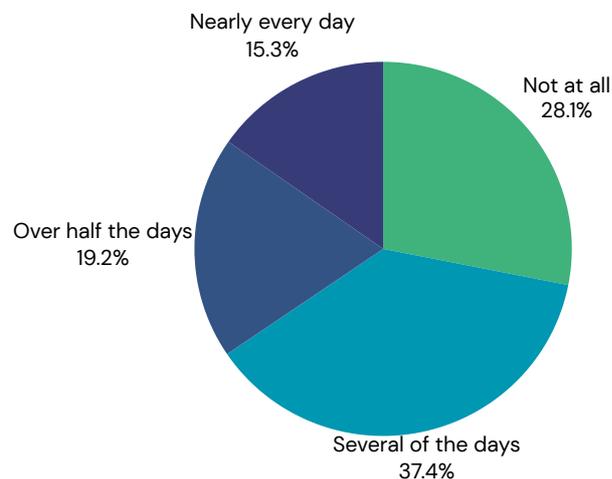
Survey results: The Hogg Scale

“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



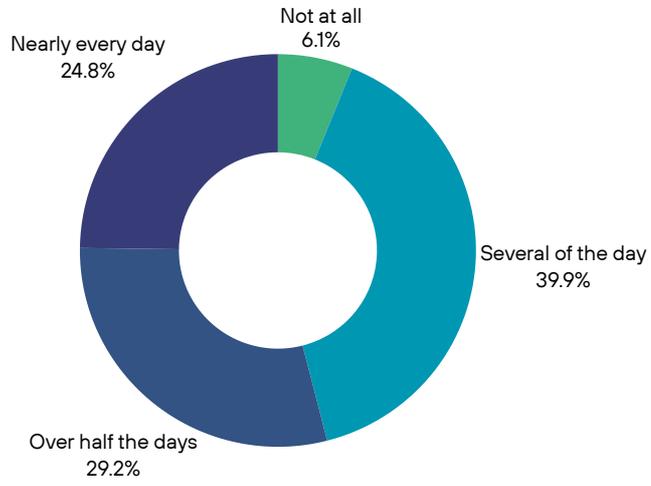
Feeling anxious about your personal responsibility to help address environmental problems



Survey results: The Hogg Scale and Beliefs about climate change

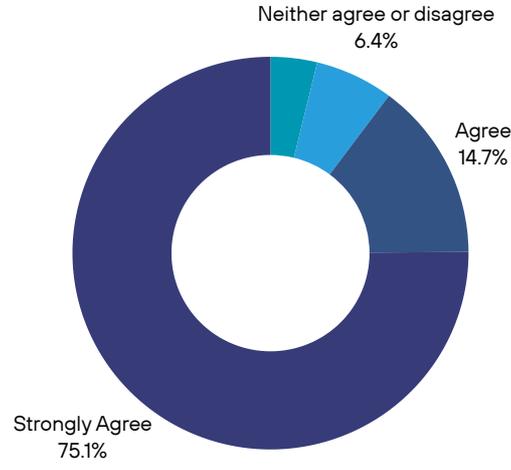
“Over the last 2 weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems, when thinking about climate change and other global environmental conditions (e.g., global warming, ecological degradation, resource depletion, species extinction, ozone hole, pollution of the oceans, deforestation)?

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



Beliefs about Climate Change

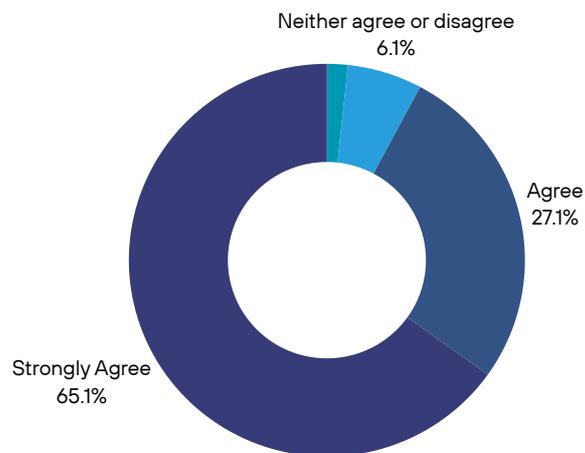
Climate change is real



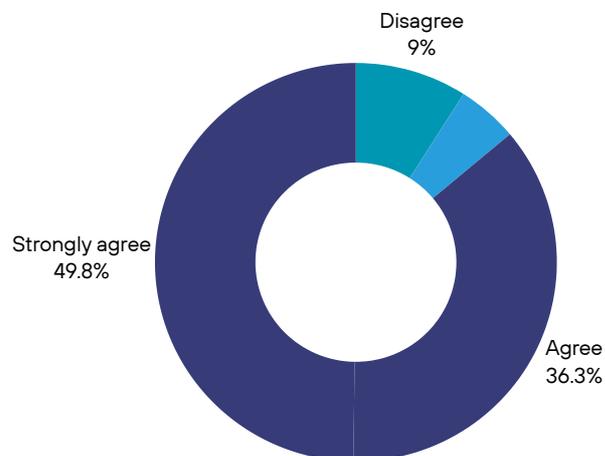
Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

Beliefs about Climate Change

Climate change is caused by humans

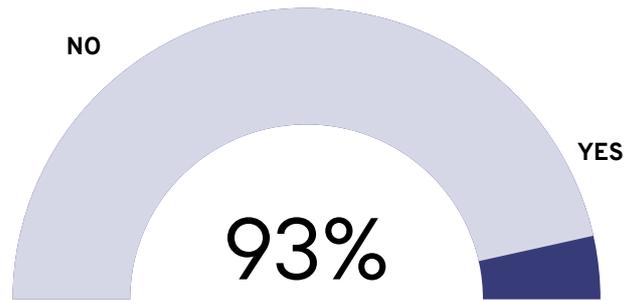


Climate change is reversible



Survey results: Beliefs about climate change

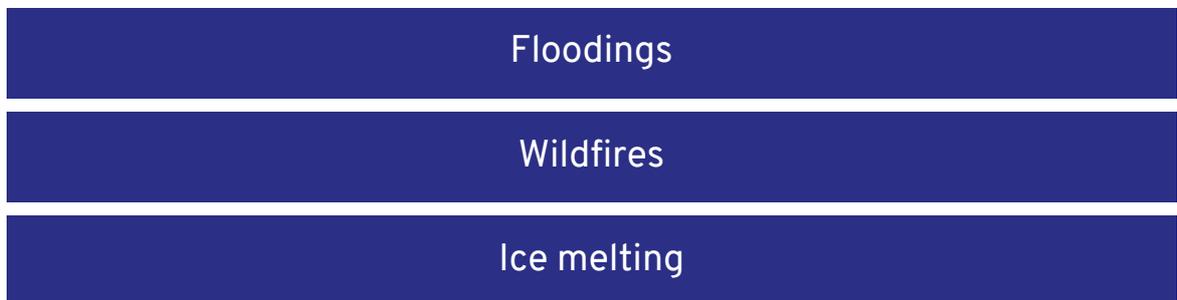
Do you have direct experience of environmental crisis?



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 no significant prevalence of eco-anxiety among the Romanian population, reporting varying degrees of eco-anxiety.

In terms of the interconnection 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 64% of the respondents are urban residents and they are exhibited higher levels of eco-anxiety compared to their rural counterparts. Additionally, while a slight interplay with education was observed, we address that eco-anxiety can be experienced via media and public discourse, since the 76% has expressed that is experiencing eco-anxiety indirectly. This indicates that the media and information consumption play a substantial role in shaping eco-anxiety levels since participants who reported frequent exposure to alarming environmental news or content experienced higher levels of eco-anxiety. Simultaneously, the study found a strong link 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, ice melting, and floodings 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 Romania 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

European Parliament. (2021). Climate change impacts on extreme weather events. Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696185/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)696185_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696185/EPRS_BRI(2021)696185_EN.pdf)

World Bank. (2023). Climate Data Historical - Romania Climate Knowledge Portal.

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