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High satisfaction with environmental quality in Austria

Climate change is rated as the biggest environmental problem by 24.3%

Vienna, 2024-12-19 – The quality of the environment in Austria is predominantly viewed favourably by the population, as a survey by Statistics Austria shows. Almost a quarter see climate change as the biggest environmental problem. The majority of those surveyed consider a personal contribution to be important and pay a lot of attention to climate protection in their everyday lives.

“For almost three quarters of the population in Austria, the state of the environment has a strong influence on their own quality of life and satisfaction with the local environment is high. Drinking water quality, the quality of lakes and rivers and the quality of food and air are rated as very good or fairly good by over 90% of people,” says Statistics Austria Director General Tobias Thomas.

In contrast, the availability of green spaces was rated as very good or fairly good by 78.0% and the noise situation by only 68.5%. Climate change (24.3%) and destruction of nature (20.2%) were most frequently selected as the major environmental problem in the survey. Soil sealing was included as a further environmental problem for the first time in the 2023 survey and was the major environmental problem for 17.7%.

70% try to pay attention to climate protection

The effects of climate change on personal life are already noticeable for almost half of the population (6.6% very strongly and 37.5% somewhat) and were predominantly rated as negative. During a hot period, 77.6% felt physical stress from heat to at least a moderate extent.

The majority believe that they can personally make an important contribution to climate protection (48.2% consider it as rather important and 36.0% as very important to contribute). In the areas of living and heating (78.6%), mobility and transport in everyday life (75.0%) as well as food (74.7%), over 70% of those surveyed stated that they were already trying to pay attention to climate protection.

According to their own assessment, 59.4% have very good or fairly good knowledge about how they can protect themselves from environmental events such as heat waves or floods.

Circular economy is practiced in daily life

Usage duration, repair and reuse are topics related to circular economy that received particular attention in the 2023 survey. The majority of respondents indicated that they usually use washing machines (64.2%) and televisions (57.3%) for more than ten years. 30.3% use a smartphone for more than six years, 38.1% between four and five years and 23.2% between one and three years.

The willingness of those surveyed to have electrical appliances repaired under certain conditions is generally relatively high. It is highest for washing machines (78.4% of all respondents), smartphones (75.0%) and televisions (69.2%). The most important requirement for willingness to have these products repaired is that the repair costs a maximum of 50% of the new price. 11.4% of those surveyed said that they had used the repair bonus to repair an electrical device in the twelve months prior to the survey.

Online platforms are used more often to pass on used products than traditional formats such as flea markets. 29.2% of those surveyed had resold or given away used products via online platforms and 15.7% via flea markets in the twelve months prior to the survey. Clothing or shoes are most often resold or given away via these channels.

The willingness to buy drinks in reusable bottles is high. 79.9% had bought drinks in reusable bottles for their household several times in the past twelve months, most commonly beer, mineral water and milk. Only 19.4% said they do not normally buy reusable bottles. The main reasons given for this were the lack of offer (32.2%) and the weight being too heavy (26.5%).

Regional differences in the use of public transport

Public transport such as trains, buses, trams and subways are used at least occasionally for daily journeys by 57.6%. While 33.2% of residents in densely populated areas use public transport every day, in low-populated areas the figure is only 4.6%. Vienna clearly stands out: 40.1% of residents take public transport every day, but car use in the federal capital is well below average.

Assessment of environmental quality in Austria – in percent

Environmental issue	Very good	Rather good	Rather poor	Very poor	n/a ¹
Environmental quality in general	38.5	48.5	11.4	1.2	0.4
Air quality	30.3	61.4	7.2	0.9	0.2
Water quality of lakes and rivers	48.5	46.7	3.7	0.4	0.7
Availability of green areas	25.4	52.6	19.7	1.9	0.5
Level of noise	13.7	54.8	27.7	3.3	0.6
Quality of drinking water	70.4	26.2	2.8	0.5	0.2
Availability of high-quality food	52.2	41.2	5.7	0.6	0.3
Availability of environmentally friendly products	28.8	56.5	13.2	0.8	0.7

S: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, Microcensus third quarter 2023. – On behalf of the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK). – Question asked: “In your opinion, how good or bad is ... the air quality in Austria? ... the water quality of lakes and rivers? ... the availability of green spaces? ... the level of noise? ... the drinking water quality? ... the availability of high-quality food? ... the availability of environmentally friendly products?”

1) “No answer” or “not known”.

For detailed results and further information please refer to our [website](#).

Information on methodology, definitions: In three- to five-year cycles, the Austrian population, as part of a voluntary special program of the microcensus survey, is questioned about their attitude to environmental conditions, environmental quality in general as well as to important parameters of environmental behaviour, such as purchasing or mobility. Socio-demographic factors like gender, age, schooling and regional breakdowns are compared with the environmentally relevant characteristics.

The current special program on environmental conditions and environmental behaviour was carried out in the third quarter of 2023. The respondents were asked, after completion of the mandatory part of the microcensus labour Force and housing survey, to answer some questions on a voluntary basis on the environmental conditions and their environmental behaviour. The special program 2023 on environmental conditions and environmental behaviour was addressed to all persons aged 15 and over; grossed up by approx. 7.6 million persons (without persons in institutional care).

Both the questions and the answer categories available for selection were slightly revised for the 2023 survey in order to increase the quality of the answers and to make it easier to answer the questions in the online mode. This might partially have led to changes in response behavior, which means that the most recent results are only partially comparable with previous results.

Statistics Austria is the central organisation for official data and statistics on society, the economy, the state and the environment. As a national statistical institute, it is committed to the statutory principles of independence, impartiality and objectivity. Statistics Austria is headed by Tobias Thomas, Director General Statistics, and Franz Haslauer, Director General Finance.

Further enquiries:

For information on results and methodology, please contact:

Milla Neubauer, phone: +43 1 711 28-7230, e-mail: milla.neubauer@statistik.gv.at

For interview requests, please contact the press office: presse@statistik.gv.at

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STATISTICS AUSTRIA | Federal Institution under Public Law | Guglgasse 13 | 1110 Vienna | www.statistik.at

Press: phone: +43 1 711 28-7777 | e-mail: presse@statistik.gv.at

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