



E3G

# CITIZENS' VIEW ON CLIMATE CHANGE IN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA

E3G  
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# CONTEXT

- > Over the past two years, the discussions around China in the EU and the UK have changed markedly. Policymakers across the EU have begun to describe China as simultaneously a cooperation and negotiating partner, economic competitor, and systemic rival. The UK has also adopted a more assertive China policy, describing the rise of China as by far the most significant geopolitical factor that poses a complex, systemic challenge.
- > The political space for cooperation on climate change with China is shrinking. Public opinion towards China in Europe and the UK has taken a negative turn coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by concerns over human rights conditions and the assertive turn in China's diplomatic strategies.
- > At the same time, engagement with China on climate change is essential. With a share of 27% in global emissions, China is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases and thus significantly impacts European climate safety.
- > The EU and the UK have continued to engage with China on climate change. The EU has set up a high-level dialogue on climate and the environment, while the UK, as the COP26 president, needs to bring China into the conversation.

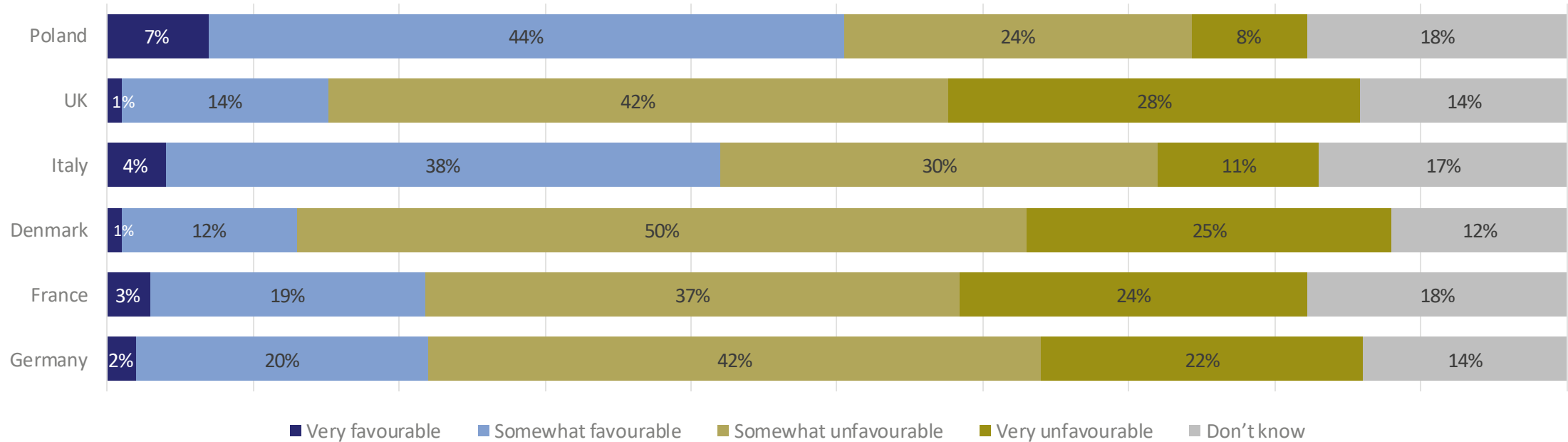
# SUMMARY

- Climate change should be prioritised over trade in government policy towards China, a survey of six European countries has found.
- The public placed climate change an important foreign policy priority towards China, alongside promoting human rights and working on a global response to COVID-19. This held true even in countries with predominantly negative views on China.
- The public from six countries think it's important that China takes additional actions to meet its carbon emissions target.
- Think tank E3G worked with pollsters YouGov to survey the public of Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, and the United Kingdom in April 2021.



# 1. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL VIEW OF CHINA?

Q: How would you describe your overall view of China?

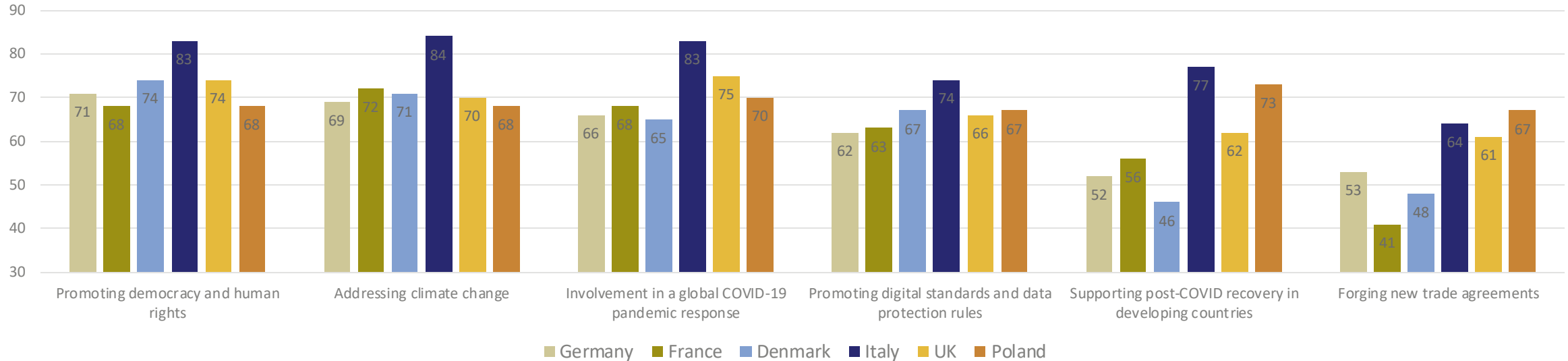


- The public in the majority of countries described their overall view of China as either rather unfavourable or very unfavourable.
- Among the six countries surveyed, Denmark has the highest proportion of respondents describing their overall view of China as unfavourable (75%), followed by the UK (70%), Germany (64%) and France (61%).
- In Italy and Poland, more respondents described their overall view of China as favourable than those who described their view as unfavourable.



## 2. PRIORITIES IN FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA

Q: How much of a priority, if at all, do you think the following issues should be for your country's foreign policy towards China?  
% of respondents rating “very high priority” or “fairly high priority”



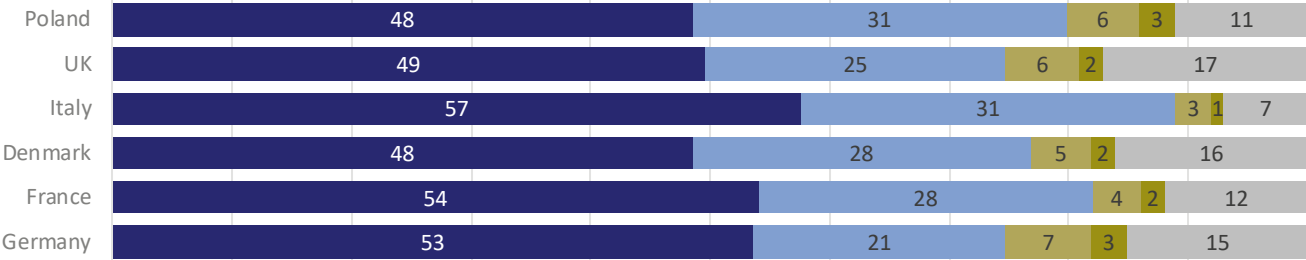
- Climate change received the highest positive responses of all foreign policy issues polled in France and Italy – 72% of adults in France and 84% of adults in Italy thought addressing climate change should be a very or fairly high priority. Climate change was second highest in Denmark (71%) and Germany (69%).
- The public has a strong preference for prioritising human rights and democracy as well as climate change in the country’s foreign policy towards China. In contrast, forging new trade agreements with China is the issue that respondents felt should be of lower priority, receiving the least positive responses in four of the six countries (41% said it should be a very high or fairly high priority in France, 64% in Italy, 61% in the UK and 67% in Poland)

# 3. EXPECTATIONS ON CHINA'S CLIMATE POLICY

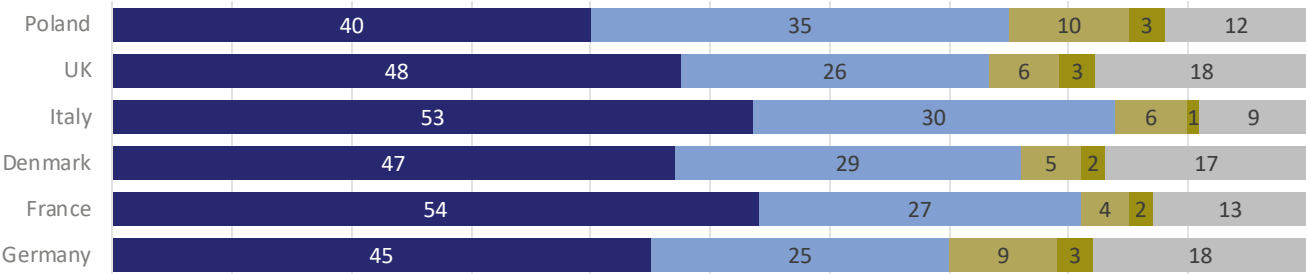
- > The public expressed their reservations at China's net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target. With the exception of Italy, a majority (at least 53%) are not confident that the Chinese government will be able to meet its target.
- > To achieve its targets, a large majority of the public believe that it is important for China to stop building new coal power plants at home (74% to 88% of responses) and stop financing coal power plants overseas (70% to 83% of responses).
- > The public also think that for China to fulfil its climate goal, it is important it stop deforestation in its supply chain overseas (69% to 88% of responses).
- >

**Q: How important, if at all, do you think it is that China takes the following action in order to meet its net-zero emissions target?**

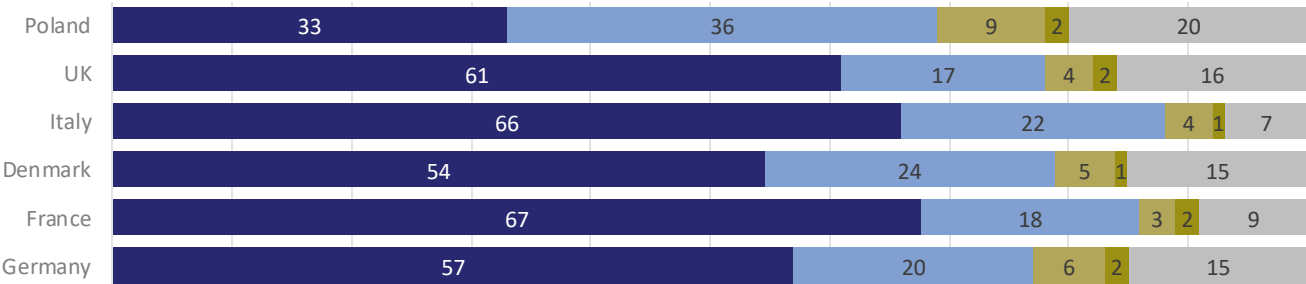
**Stop building new coal power plants at home (% of respondents)**



**Stop financing new coal power plants overseas (% of respondents)**



**Stop deforestation in its supply chain overseas (% of respondents)**



■ Very important  
 ■ Fairly important  
 ■ Not very important  
 ■ Not at all important  
 ■ Don't know

## YOUNG GOV POLLING METHODOLOGY AND DETAILS

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size across six countries was 8,955 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31 March - 9 April 2021. The surveys were carried out online. The figures for each country (Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Italy, and the United Kingdom) have been weighted and are representative of all adults in the respective country (aged 18+).

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

- ❓ In **Denmark**, total sample size was 1,012 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31st March - 7th April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Danish adults (aged 18+).
- ❓ In **France**, total sample size was 2116 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31 March - 2 April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all French adults (aged 18+).
- ❓ In **Germany**, total sample size was 2026 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31 March - 5 April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all German adults (aged 18+).
- ❓ In **Italy**, total sample size was 1,004 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 1st - 8th April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Italian adults (aged 18+).
- ❓ In **Poland**, total sample size was 1,007 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31st March - 9th April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Poland (aged 18+).
- ❓ In the **UK**, total sample size was 1,790 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 31st March - 1st April 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

# ANNEX – DATA TABLES

Q: How would you describe your overall view of China?	Germany	France	Denmark	Italy	UK	Poland
Very favourable	2	3	1	4	1	7
Somewhat favourable	20	19	12	38	14	44
<b>TOTAL FAVOURABLE</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>51</b>
Somewhat unfavourable	42	37	50	30	42	24
Very unfavourable	22	24	25	11	28	8
<b>TOTAL UNFAVOURABLE</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>32</b>
Don't know	14	18	12	17	14	18

Q: In the following question, by "net-zero" we mean balancing carbon emissions produced and taken out of the atmosphere. China has recently announced its intention to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2060. How confident are you, if at all, in the Chinese Government's ability to meet its target?	Germany	France	Denmark	Italy	UK	Poland
Very confident	7	4	2	14	3	6
Fairly confident	24	21	14	39	17	29
<b>TOTAL CONFIDENT</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35</b>
Not very confident	33	36	42	27	36	40
Not at all confident	20	27	31	14	30	16
<b>TOTAL NOT CONFIDENT</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>56</b>
Don't know	16	12	11	6	15	8



# ANNEX – DATA TABLES

Q: How much of a priority, if at all, do you think the following issues should be for your country's foreign policy towards China?

	Germany	France	Denmark	Italy	UK	Poland
<b>Promoting democracy and human rights</b>						
A very high priority	46	37	39	50	44	42
A fairly high priority	25	31	35	33	30	26
Not much of a priority	12	12	10	9	10	14
Not a priority at all	6	6	3	3	2	8
Don't know	12	14	12	6	13	10
<b>Addressing climate change</b>						
A very high priority	44	40	34	52	36	38
A fairly high priority	25	32	37	32	34	30
Not much of a priority	12	10	10	9	11	18
Not a priority at all	7	6	4	3	5	7
Don't know	12	12	13	5	13	8
<b>Involvement in a global COVID-19 pandemic response</b>						
A very high priority	34	34	26	45	33	38
A fairly high priority	32	34	39	38	42	32
Not much of a priority	15	12	15	8	9	14
Not a priority at all	7	4	4	3	4	6
Don't know	13	15	16	5	13	9
<b>Promoting digital standards and data protection rules</b>						
A very high priority	26	27	28	32	25	29
A fairly high priority	36	36	39	42	41	38
Not much of a priority	17	16	11	17	15	16
Not a priority at all	6	6	3	2	2	5
Don't know	15	16	19	7	16	11
<b>Supporting post-COVID recovery in developing countries</b>						
A very high priority	19	22	14	33	17	39
A fairly high priority	33	34	32	44	45	34
Not much of a priority	21	19	24	13	16	13
Not a priority at all	10	9	10	4	7	6
Don't know	16	17	20	6	14	9
<b>Forging new trade agreements</b>						
A very high priority	15	13	20	20	21	21
A fairly high priority	38	28	28	44	40	46
Not much of a priority	22	28	13	24	19	18
Not a priority at all	7	13	4	6	5	6
Don't know	17	18	35	7	15	9

# ANNEX – DATA TABLES

Q: How important, if at all, do you think it is that China takes the following action in order to meet its net-zero emissions target?						
<b>Stop the building of new coal power plants at home</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Poland</b>
Very important	53	54	48	57	49	48
Fairly important	21	28	28	31	25	31
Not very important	7	4	5	3	6	6
Not at all important	3	2	2	1	2	3
Don't know	15	12	16	7	17	11
<b>Stop financing new coal power plants overseas</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Poland</b>
Very important	45	54	47	53	48	40
Fairly important	25	27	29	30	26	35
Not very important	9	4	5	6	6	10
Not at all important	3	2	2	1	3	3
Don't know	18	13	17	9	18	12
<b>Stop deforestation in its supply chain overseas</b>	<b>Germany</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Poland</b>
Very important	57	67	54	66	61	33
Fairly important	20	18	24	22	17	36
Not very important	6	3	5	4	4	9
Not at all important	2	2	1	1	2	2
Don't know	15	9	15	7	16	20