

**Perceptions of climate change and environmental law in the UK and France: A comparison**  
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**Differences in environmental laws**

**UK (after Brexit)**

- Less stringent as a tendency
- UK Environment Act 2021: Plans without accountability mechanism
- Citizens' complaints to Office for Environmental Protection possible but notices by OEP not binding
- UK rewards donations of food that can no longer be sold

**France (as part of EU)**

- Enforcement mechanisms in place
- Highly specified plans with requirement to be effective
- Citizens can appeal to European courts whose judgements are binding
- France imposes fines for failures to adhere to standards around food waste

**Survey on perceptions of climate change and environmental law**

Participants were asked about their views on the threat of climate change, media coverage, impact on their lives, readiness to support their country to become a global leader in the fight against climate change – and about their views on the legal issues where the countries differ

- Of the 26 English-language respondents, 15 were UK residents (11 with UK nationality) and the others residing elsewhere.
- The 23 French-language respondents were all residents of France and of French nationality.

**Results**

**Respondents agreed:**

- that climate change poses an extreme threat to the planet
- that it does not receive sufficient attention
- that they want their country to become a global leader in the fight against climate change **even if it meant some sacrifices** on their part
- that their governments should be held accountable for their failures in environmental matters

Environmental law was seen as an efficient tool to combat climate change, and respondents agreed that **citizens should be able to issue legal proceedings because of their government's failure to act against climate change.**

Although France (in line with the EU generally) has more stringent laws than the UK, there is on the French side considerable consensus that **such laws are necessary.** Responses from the UK reflect more distrust in the government and a **tendency to deem existing laws insufficient.**

**Stringent environmental laws may not be viewed as a threat to freedom if people recognise their value and necessity for the planet's future**

