

## Press Release

Hamburg, 5 November 2025

### **Survey shows: Germans feel the effects of climate change, but other issues rank higher**

**A recent short survey commissioned by the Otto Group shows that while one in two people have already encountered climate change at a personal level, the issue is seen as less important than other social challenges. There is also growing scepticism surrounding efforts to protect the global climate with more than half of those surveyed doubting that these will show success. The upcoming World Climate Conference in Brazil will therefore play a key role in providing new impetus for climate protection.**

### **Climate change is impacting our own lives – but is not a top priority**

A representative survey of 1,001 respondents provides revealing insights. Although half of those surveyed (50.7 percent) acknowledge that they are already beginning to feel the impact of climate change in their own lives, the issue is ranked as less urgent compared to other social challenges. Only 33 percent of respondents see climate change as one of the most important issues – sufficient for fifth spot in the ranking, with social justice (48.3 percent), international conflicts (41.5 percent), economic development (40.5 percent) and immigration/migration (39.1 percent) currently being viewed as much more relevant.

### **How Germans are experiencing climate change today**

The survey reveals the specific effects attributed to climate change:

- increasing extreme weather events (55.8 percent) such as storms, flooding and drought;
- more frequent or more severe heatwaves (45.5 percent);
- changes in nature (43.6 percent), such as an earlier start to flowering or changes in biodiversity;
- impact on livelihoods (20.1 percent), such as crop failures and water shortages;
- health complaints (15.3 percent), such as allergies and respiratory diseases.

Just over a quarter of respondents (26.6 percent) state that they have not been affected.

### **A look ahead: Germans' biggest concerns**

Regardless of whether they are already perceiving the effects of climate change, a majority of people in Germany (54 percent) expect noticeable or even drastic changes in the future.

People are particularly concerned about changes to the environment and living space (56.5 percent) as well as the adverse effects on food, supply and infrastructure (41.4 percent). In addition, 36.6 percent of respondents are worried about the negative effects on their economic situation, such as rising energy costs or job losses. Health and psychosocial consequences (27.9 percent) as well as the restriction in terms of mobility and travel (14.2 percent) are generally of less concern.

### **Scepticism overrides confidence in global climate protection efforts**

The majority of respondents were sceptical about global efforts to curb climate change. Only 5.5 percent believe in the effectiveness of international measures. Just over a quarter (28.5 percent) see potential behind such measures but emphasize the need for more work to be done.

However, the majority is pessimistic with 36.6 percent considering measures undertaken to be insufficient, while 17.1 percent believe that climate change is already unstoppable. Just over one in ten (12.4 percent) have no clear opinion on this topic.

### **COP30: A turning point or another lost year?**

The widespread scepticism towards global climate protection efforts underscores the importance of the upcoming COP30 in Belém, Brazil. Prof. Dr. Tobias Wollermann, Vice President Corporate Responsibility at the Otto Group, emphasizes the point: "The question is whether COP30 will represent a turning point or another lost year? The answer depends on whether we are courageous enough to act decisively now in the face of global resistance to climate protection measures. COP30 must demonstrate that climate protection is a priority."

Wollermann acknowledges that the USA's absence is a setback for global climate policy, but argues that it opens up the opportunity for other countries to take the lead and to regain the trust of people worldwide. "It is crucial that the participating countries set more ambitious targets,

agree on concrete measures to combat the climate crisis and make every effort to bring those players back to the negotiating table who have recently turned their backs – withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement is not an acceptable solution,” warns Wollermann.

Research findings from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) show that measures to combat climate change also play an important role beyond environmental protection. Climate change is making resources such as drinking water and fertile land even scarcer, with violence and displacement possible consequences. International security and migration, two issues that are more important to Germans than climate change, are direct consequences of global warming.

#### **“Fewer dramatic messages, more specifics”**

According to Prof. Dr. Markus Barth, social psychologist at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences North Rhine-Westphalia, the results of the survey are in line with other studies conducted in recent years, which have also shown that climate change falls behind other issues in terms of perceived importance. “The data is not really indicative of an overarching sense of resignation,” says Prof. Dr. Barth, “because many of those surveyed are obviously aware of the effects of climate change which are certainly impacting their lives. However, other issues are currently dominating social discourse and political action. Media coverage is focusing on Germany as a business location, the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East and other current crises to such an extent that the ongoing issue of climate change is receiving comparatively little attention.”

He blames public doubts about the global community's ability to act on inconsistent communication at national and international level: “Whereas unity in position and determination in action can inspire confidence and encourage participation, contradictory statements, hesitation in the consistent implementation of necessary decisions and constant corrections and retractions of already agreed climate targets can have the opposite effect. This is the sort of thing that would reduce most people’s motivation to get involved. I would like to see fewer messages about the dramatic consequences of climate change and more specific information about how we as a community – the general public, politicians, businesses and all other social institutions – can take responsibility and initiate both small and large changes to tackle the climate crisis.”

## About the survey

The representative survey was conducted in the NIQ eBUS – powered by GfK intelligence on behalf of the Otto Group. 1,001 people aged 18-74 years were surveyed in Germany between 25 and 29 September 2025.

## Otto Group

With a strong heritage as a family business and firmly rooted values, the Otto Group is looking to the future with confidence. Over the past 75 years, the company has developed from a catalog-based mail order company into an international digital retail and services group with 36,300 employees and a large number of key companies, brands and holdings in over thirty countries, primarily in Germany, the rest of Europe and North America. Its business activities extend to the Platforms, Brand Concepts, Retailers, Services and Financial Services segments. In the 2024/25 financial year (ending February 28), the Otto Group generated revenues of 15 billion euros. As the largest online retailer of European origin, it is shaping the digital retail and digital services of the future by drawing on its strength, market significance and values. Driven by a passionate and entrepreneurial performance culture, the Group is exploiting its vast market expertise and technological competence to inspire its many millions of customers with high-quality products, unique choice of goods and an array of services. The Otto Group is proof that a value-oriented approach and business success can go hand in hand. Environmental protection has been another corporate objective since 1986. It takes its ecological, social and digital responsibility seriously – and will continue to do so.

Find out more at [www.ottogroup.com](https://www.ottogroup.com).

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