

FOCUS 7 – INTERVIEWS

Do you think Germans take action to protect the environment? What else can be done?

Nora (28): Not enough at all. I think I'm one of those people who is pretty conscious, but I mean, look in my waste bin, and you find a lot of plastic and stuff that would not be necessary, and I do pay attention, so no. And I'm frustrated by this in daily life. People just take plastic bags, even for a little something. ... I think it should be forbidden for any supermarket to give out plastic bags for free. ... I think flights should be three, four times more expensive, and I say that as a person who is very dependent on low-cost flights, but this is something that I want. I want trains to be way less expensive than flights, I want recycling paper in all the stores; I want environmental lessons in school. But I'm pretty radical I guess.

Xin (56): I think not all are doing enough. We should still do more for the environment. There are still too many people driving big cars, and the Germans should also not sell those cars to other countries like China or Russia.... More environmentally friendly products should be produced. I think the big corporations first of all think of their profit and not of the environment. The industry should especially produce fewer packages. I think that's awful. When I work in our shop, there are always so many packages; many things are wrapped two or three times, especially those from France or England. That's sad, that's not necessary. All in all, the Germans are a little better in this field, but we still have to do more ...

Daniel S (44): I would love more Germans to drive smaller cars or drive less. I would like to see our government force the German railroad company to lower their prices and to give up the attempt to go on the stock exchange market. I would like to see public transportation be more subsidized. I would like to see more money go into the development of renewable energies. I would like to see higher fines for environmental damages. ... For me there is not enough. Of course, I have to criticize myself here too; I could do more myself, of course.

Stefan (44): Well, I think there can hardly ever be enough action, so it's just that compared with many other parts in the world, people in Germany are probably more active when it comes to protecting the environment. This

also includes a large diversity of intentions and activities within the German population. There are some very active people, maybe even some overly active people and some phlegmatic people. ... In my point of view, you could save a lot of energy, stop wasting resources, and be more decentralized, but I'm not an expert in this field. I could just imagine that in many cases it is short term profit for private companies, institutions, and individuals that actually in the end will cause a greater harm to the general public by harming the environment. And there should be more done against this. But I think that's actually an international problem, privatization of profits and nationalization of any damages, losses, expenditures etc.

Juliane (39): They start quite a lot of things, but they definitely don't do enough. In Berlin the energy supply should become public again; this would be a possibility to be able to direct the energy policy a little better. Further reduce carbon dioxide more consequently and finally make sure that the nuclear power plants get shut down. ... Public transportation should be developed further ... so there are still a lot of things to do.



Gerald (42): They could do more, of course. We all could do more. I only say compared to others, we are quite good in the protection of the environment and nature, but we could do many more things. I would suggest some car free days in the year, for example. And the pollution of nature



is not the only pollution; I would suggest a TV free day, too. People should go out on this day in the parks, in the woods, go hiking and ride bicycles. Additionally they ... should spend their holidays in the country, so nobody needs to fly around the earth. Stay more regionally, live more

seasonally. That would protect nature. Big things are not always necessary.

Anna (42): I often see that people try in their private life to do their best, but in places where many, many people are together this is often neglected. Maybe because there's no control then, or it's more difficult in bigger places to have trash management or similar things. So, for instance, at my workplace all the trash is just put together in one big bin and that's something I cannot change. I mean sometimes I even take papers with me to put them into the correct bin at home, but this is actually not allowed. I think, on an institutional level, there could be more activity and more awareness, but, on a private level, I think Germans are doing a lot more than other countries.

Tobias (45): We could do much more. I'm a notorious cyclist and if I only look at driving habits, I think drastic changes need to be done. In regards to separation of trash, it's totally incomprehensible to me that it is still neglected so often in Germany and Europe in the 21st century. And it really happens in the apartment block where I live. Half of my neighbors enjoy the non-separation of trash. And it's, in fact, not possible anymore to do it in any other way. These are things you cannot leave to the voluntariness of the people. This should somehow be arranged financially, so the people would feel it in their pocket if they didn't separate the trash...