Household Environmentally Sustainable Behaviour and Communication in Latvia

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Budapest, 2008-10-07

Structure of presentation

- Research background
- Household concerns and behavior
- Conclusions

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Ecological footprint and consumption

Background

- Historical factors
- People in general assess Latvia's environment as very clean
- Limited research and lack of policies
- Riga vs rest of the country

Studies analyzed

1. Latvia's National sustainable development strategy (NSDS) survey - consists of 62 questions and was based on responses from 809 randomly chosen respondents throughout Latvia.
2. The second (Eurobarometer 295, 2005, 1009 respondents) and third (Eurobarometer 295, 2008, 1011 respondents) surveys were commissioned by EuroStat and looking at household environmental attitudes in general, but also consumption patterns and environmental behaviour.

- attitudes, concerns, behaviour & information

HOUSEHOLD CONCERNS, BEHAVIOR & INFORMATION

Concerns

Individual actions

Which individual actions are you ready to do first? (Eurobarometer 2005):

- Sort waste – 54% (54-87)
- Purchase ecologically friendly products - 28% (22-54)
- Reduce waste – 19% (19-43)
- Reduce energy consumption – 16% (16-54)
- Use public transport – 13% (13-50)
- Consider environmental aspects when buying car or house – 6% (6-37)
- Not have a car – 5% (3-16)
- Pay more in taxes – 3% (2-15)

Things you **have done in the last months** to protect environment (Eurobarometer 2007):

- choosing local products (49%, highest in EU27),
- choosing an environmentally friendly way of travelling (37%)
- separating waste for recycling (25%, EU27 average – 59%).
- buying eco-labelled products (16%)
- using less car (only 10%)

Latvian over the last month have done 2,1 action to protect environment (EU average 2,6).

Pro-environmental activities

Effort

Sustainable lifestyle

- People may not always be aware of the environmental consequences of their behaviour and therefore unknowingly perform actions that increase or decrease their environmental pressures.
- Most of the people in Latvia don't know about sustainable lifestyle - ¾ of respondent's (63.2%) have never heard about it, but only 1/5 know about it.

Green consumer profile

• **older** respondents (50% of those buying environmentally friendly products are aged over 45 years)
• with **secondary education** (31%)
• **female** than male (59 and 41% respectively) - 54% of the population in Latvia are women;
• **from Riga** (39%) then rest of the country – 33% of the population in Latvia live in Riga. Riga is followed by Riga region and Kurzeme.
• **Latvian** rather then other nationality (64%) - 59% of the population in Latvia are Latvians.
• more **religious** and **altruistic**
• more frequently feel **interested**, **inspired** and **active**

Would you be ready to buy environmentally friendly products even if they are more expensive: Age structure

Main sources of environmental information

Conclusions

Conclusions for sustainability communication

- People are **concerned** about environmental problems
- Yet people may **not always be aware of the environmental impacts** of behaviour related to their consumption patterns and the environmental benefits of changes in these behaviour.
- **Not ready to do much** for environmental protection (mostly in future)
- **Recycling and resource saving** dominate household choices
- Consumers don't know about **sustainable lifestyles**
- **Mass media** is a dominant source of information

Conclusions (2)

• **Need for additional research** - life cycle analyses, input-output analyses and benchmarking of household environmental impacts are needed, analises of lifestyles.

• **Several initiatives** by different target groups, which are not systematic and coordinated.

• Focus should be on **food, transport and housing**

• Multi-stakeholder **cooperation**, **system** to support promotion of sustainable consumption should be built and developed. This is very important because there is:
  • **luck of examples** in Latvia,
  • **little awareness of links** between consumption patterns and environmental quality and
  • **value-action gap** in society.

• Important to address **symbolic** and **social dimension** of consumption.

• Important to build **infrastructure** and **policy framework** to facilitate change.

Thank you!