

Concern Varies on Environmental Issues in the U.S., Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, and Germany Since the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill

New York, N.Y. — August 12, 2010 — A new **Financial Times/Harris Poll** finds that the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has caused adults in the five largest European countries and the United States to be more concerned about certain environmental issues as well as oil dependency. Two-thirds of Americans (66%), just over three in five Spaniards (63%), three in five Italians (59%) and Germans (58%) and just under half of French (48%) and British (45%) adults who are aware of the oil spill say they are more concerned with the issue of oil dependency. Only between 2% and 10% of those aware of the spill in these countries are less concerned about this issue, with the rest saying they are no more or less concerned since the oil spill.

These are some of the findings of a **Financial Times/Harris Poll** conducted online by [Harris Interactive](#) among 6,180 adults aged 16-64 within France (1,065), Germany (1,002), Great Britain (1,107), Spain (1,005), U.S. (1,001) and adults aged 18-64 in Italy (1,000) between July 20 and 29, 2010.

Looking at some environmental issues:

- Strong majorities of those aware of the oil spill in Germany (79%), Spain (75%), Italy (74%), the U.S. (72%) and France (63%) are more concerned about water pollution since the spill while just under half of Britons (48%) say the same. Just under half of British adults aware of the spill say they are no more or less concerned;
- Over three in five Germans (76%), Spaniards (72%), Italians (71%), Americans (69%) and French who are aware of the oil spill (62%) are more concerned about wildlife and environmental conservation since the spill in the Gulf;
- Air pollution is not causing as much concern. While three in five Spaniards (63%) and Italians (61%), as well as half (49%) of French adults are more concerned, while half of Americans (50%) and Germans (49%) and almost two-thirds of British adults aware of the oil spill (64%) are no more or less concerned about air pollution since the spill occurred;
- Like air pollution, climate change is not causing more concern because of the oil spill. Three in five Spaniards (61%) and half of Italians who are aware of the oil spill (51%) are more concerned, while half of Americans (52%) and French (51%) are no more or less concerned. Two-thirds of British adults aware of the spill (66%) are no more or less concerned while Germans are divided with 46% being more concerned and the same being no more or less concerned; and,
- There is more concern over the issue of oil exploration since the spill. Three in five Americans (62%), Italians (62%), Germans (60%) and Spaniards (60%) as well as just under half of French adults aware of the oil spill (46%) are more concerned about this issue since the spill. British adults are again slightly different. While two in five who are aware of the spill (40%) are more concerned, over half (52%) are no more or less concerned.

The role of government

One thing there is agreement on in these six countries is that oil companies should be more regulated. Over seven in ten French (91%), Italians (90%), Spaniards (90%), Germans (82%), Americans (77%) and Britons (73%) who are aware of the oil spill agree oil companies should be more regulated. Where there is less consensus is the actual role the governments should play with regard to these types of problems. Just under half of Spaniards (49%) and Italians (46%) as well as two in five Americans (43%) and Britons (43%) agree that governments should clean up and repair environmental damages caused by private businesses. However, half of French adults (51%) and over two in five Germans (44%) disagree with this idea.

So What?

There is a sense of patriotism among Britons on these matters, as Britons are consistently less likely to be more concerned about the various environmental issues since the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. But one question remains regarding those more concerned in the other countries: Will this sense of concern be something that continues after the camera crews leave the Gulf or will it dissipate as news teams move on to the next crisis?

TABLE 1
CONCERN ABOUT OIL DEPENDENCY

“Since the Gulf of Mexico spill, have you become more or less concerned about the following issues?”
Oil dependency

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More concerned (NET)	66	45	48	59	63	58
Much more concerned	35	18	25	36	38	33
Somewhat more concerned	31	27	24	23	25	26
No more or less concerned	28	48	44	28	30	34
Less concerned (NET)	3	2	4	10	5	3
Somewhat less concerned	1	1	2	3	2	1
Much less concerned	1	2	2	6	2	2
Not sure	3	5	3	3	2	5

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 2
CONCERN ABOUT WATER POLLUTION

“Since the Gulf of Mexico spill, have you become more or less concerned about the following issues?”
Water Pollution

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More concerned (NET)	72	48	63	74	75	79
Much more concerned	44	22	37	58	52	60
Somewhat more concerned	28	26	26	15	23	19
No more or less concerned	24	45	33	16	22	16
Less concerned (NET)	3	2	2	8	3	2
Somewhat less concerned	1	1	1	1	1	*
Much less concerned	2	1	1	7	2	2
Not sure	2	5	2	2	1	3

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 3
CONCERN ABOUT AIR POLLUTION

“Since the Gulf of Mexico spill, have you become more or less concerned about the following issues?”
Air Pollution

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More concerned (NET)	44	28	49	61	63	45
Much more concerned	22	13	25	40	39	22
Somewhat more concerned	22	15	24	20	23	23
No more or less concerned	50	64	46	29	33	49
Less concerned (NET)	4	3	2	8	3	3
Somewhat less concerned	2	2	1	3	1	2
Much less concerned	2	1	1	5	2	2
Not sure	3	5	2	2	1	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 4
CONCERN ABOUT WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

“Since the Gulf of Mexico spill, have you become more or less concerned about the following issues?”
Wildlife and environmental conservation

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More concerned (NET)	69	48	62	71	72	76
Much more concerned	40	23	35	54	49	55
Somewhat more concerned	29	25	27	18	24	21
No more or less concerned	25	45	34	20	24	19
Less concerned (NET)	3	2	2	7	3	2
Somewhat less concerned	1	1	1	1	1	1
Much less concerned	1	1	2	6	2	1
Not sure	3	5	2	2	1	3

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 5
CONCERN ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

“Since the Gulf of Mexico spill, have you become more or less concerned about the following issues?”
Climate Change

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More concerned (NET)	39	25	43	51	61	46
Much more concerned	19	12	23	32	38	24
Somewhat more concerned	20	13	20	19	23	22
No more or less concerned	52	66	51	37	35	46
Less concerned (NET)	5	4	3	10	3	4
Somewhat less concerned	2	2	2	3	1	1
Much less concerned	4	2	1	6	2	3
Not sure	3	5	3	3	1	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 6
CONCERN ABOUT OIL EXPLORATION

“Since the Gulf of Mexico spill, have you become more or less concerned about the following issues?”
Oil exploration

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
More concerned (NET)	62	40	46	62	60	60
Much more concerned	33	16	21	38	32	30
Somewhat more concerned	29	24	25	24	28	30
No more or less concerned	30	52	44	25	31	33
Less concerned (NET)	4	3	7	10	5	4
Somewhat less concerned	2	2	3	3	2	2
Much less concerned	2	2	4	7	3	2
Not sure	3	5	3	3	3	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 7
MORE REGULATION OF OIL COMPANIES

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”
Oil companies should be more regulated

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree (NET)	77	73	91	90	90	82
Strongly agree	51	34	67	72	75	50
Somewhat agree	26	39	24	18	15	32
Neither agree nor disagree	10	21	6	7	7	13
Disagree (NET)	13	6	3	3	3	5
Somewhat disagree	7	4	2	1	1	3
Strongly disagree	6	2	1	2	2	3

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 8
GOVERNMENT TO HELP REPAIR DAMAGES CAUSED BY PRIVATE SECTOR

“How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

Governments should clean up and repair environmental damages caused by private businesses

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults aware of the oil spill

	U.S.	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree (NET)	43	43	34	46	49	38
Strongly agree	17	13	17	25	24	13
Somewhat agree	26	30	17	21	26	25
Neither agree nor disagree	15	21	15	19	15	18
Disagree (NET)	41	36	51	35	36	44
Somewhat disagree	19	22	21	17	13	23
Strongly disagree	23	15	30	18	23	21

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

This **FT/Harris Poll** was conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 6,180 adults aged 16-64 within France (1,065), Germany (1,002), Great Britain (1,107), Spain (1,005), U.S. (1,001) and adults aged 18-64 in Italy (1,000) between July 20 and 29, 2010. Figures for age, sex, education, region and Internet usage were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult populations of the respective countries. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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