

3.1 - Personal and collective responsibilities

Actions from individuals

- Are single individuals responsible for saving the planet? More and more reports argue that our personal daily actions cause harm to the planet: storing photos on our devices, not deleting old emails, food consumption, transportation, etc.
- We need to be aware of our impact. But how? Using the Internet and social apps emits CO₂. Yet it only represents 0.2% of emissions.
- Our lifestyle habits matter but it is small in the face of the major sources of GGEs, such as the industrial sector, agriculture or road transport.
- Some politicians and big business owners try to blame climate change on people and make them feel guilty, while many people argue in favour of systemic change.

“This externalization of responsibility allows fossil fuel companies to downplay their role in the climate crisis and undermine climate litigation, regulation, and activism. Individualizing the responsibility is an insidious weapon within the fossil fuel industry’s arsenal, which includes greenwashing and woke-washing. By obfuscating the reality of the climate crisis, it has exacerbated climate consequences and caused long-term damage to climate justice efforts.” (“Individuals Are Not to Blame for the Climate Crisis” - Cassandra Roxburgh - Yes! Magazine - 31 January 2022)

GLOBAL WARMING BY THE NUMBERS

SINCE 1854 **12.5%** OF ALL INDUSTRIAL
CARBON POLLUTION
HAS BEEN PRODUCED BY JUST 5 COMPANIES.



ConocoPhillips



ExxonMobil



Despite the controversies, which individual behavior shifts would make the biggest difference?

#1 - A shift to sustainable ground travel: using public transit, or even going car-free

#2 - A shift to air travel alternatives: 89% of the world's population has never flown

#3 - Home energy efficiency: solar panels on the rooftop, better insulation, heat pumps, moving to a smaller house. It is often supported by governments through tax incentives

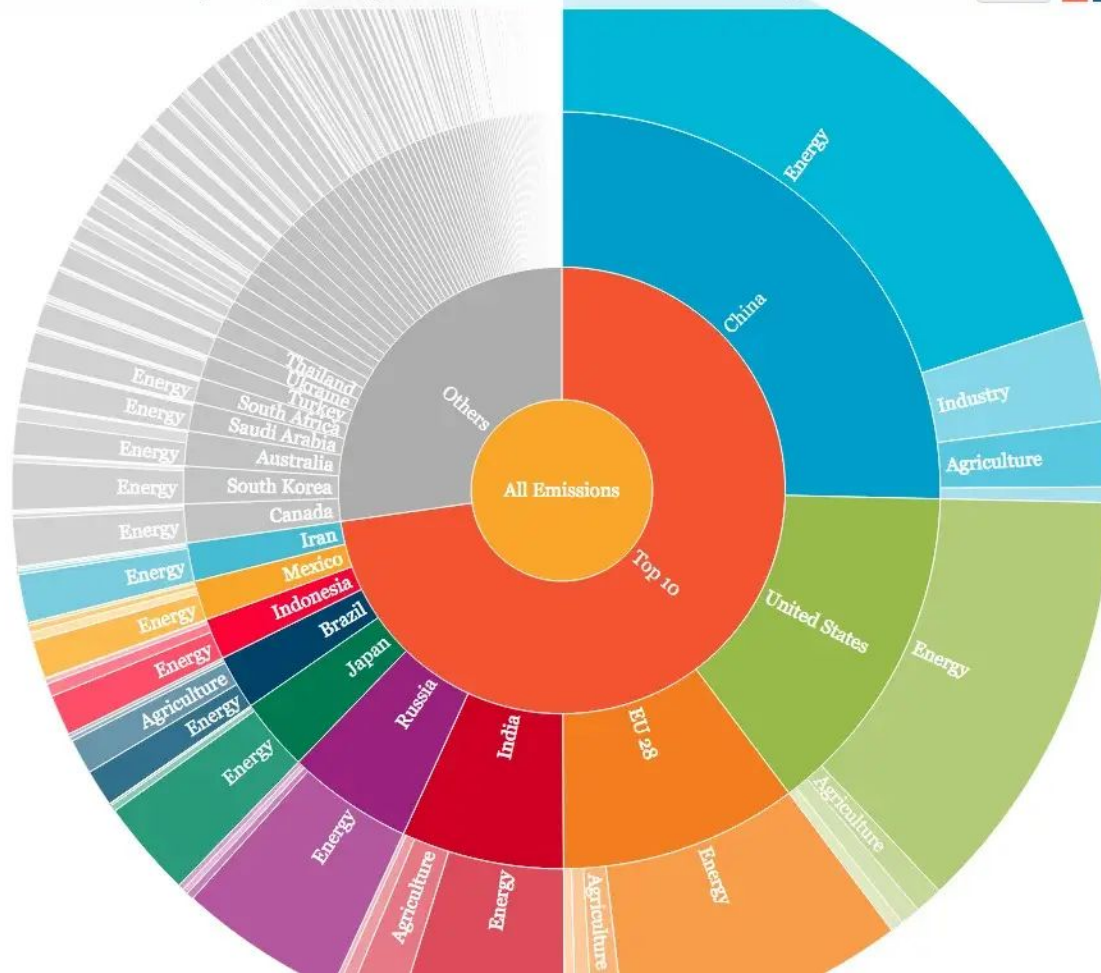
#4 - Cutting back on meat (especially beef & lamb) and dairy, if not going vegetarian or vegan

2.1: Actions from the governments

- After the 2015 Paris Agreement, in order to tackle the issue of GGEs and to mitigate climate change, national governments committed to hold the global average temperature increase below 2C, below 1.5C if possible.
- In order to do so, GGE need to be cut in half by 2030 and CO2 emissions must reach net zero by 2050. How to meet this objective?
- The countries decided on binding obligations called NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions), which are ambitious road maps to morph them into green and sustainable economies and societies. They need to be updated every 5 years.
- Some politicians who came to power after 2015 decided to opt out of the accord. They refuse to be obligated by international treaties and choose to defend their national sovereignty (ex.: D. Trump).

Global Top 10 Greenhouse Gas Emitters

In 2012, the top 10 GHG emitters accounted for more than two thirds of the global emissions total. Find the newest data on global greenhouse gas emissions on the [CAIT Climate Data Explorer](#).



2.3: Actions from organised groups

- Individuals are creating and leading organised groups into actions, driven by eco-anxiety and anger at government inaction.
- Youth activists list several different reasons for their decision to act: health issues caused by the poor quality of the air in Los Angeles, the recurrence of highly destructive hurricanes and wildfires and the need for a radical and immediate action.
- They organise demonstrations and school strikes. They also produce online communication, youth-targeting environment-focused press, political campaigns and education resources.
- They feel their action as a way to channel their frustration and to grow as citizens and individuals.

2.3: Actions from organised groups

- Some groups are more popular than others. It all depends on the popularity of the movement but especially on the methods used. Some groups like **Just Stop Oil** or **Insulate Britain** are labeled as “extreme”, and even “terrorist”, by the government.
- Recent actions have included throwing soup on art masterpieces, spraying paint on or glueing themselves to official buildings, occupying public places or blocking traffic. This is non-violent disruption.
- Their methods are not always understood: they believe that all other ways of getting attention have failed (petitioning the gov., writing to an MP, running for political office, peacefully marching in the streets) and then turn to radical, illegal strategies.
- The general public understands their point but disapprove of the methods, judging them infuriating, deterrent and counter-productive. The British government responds by introducing more policing methods against activists.