

Attitude of Warsaw inhabitants and Polish public authorities towards climate change and adaptation

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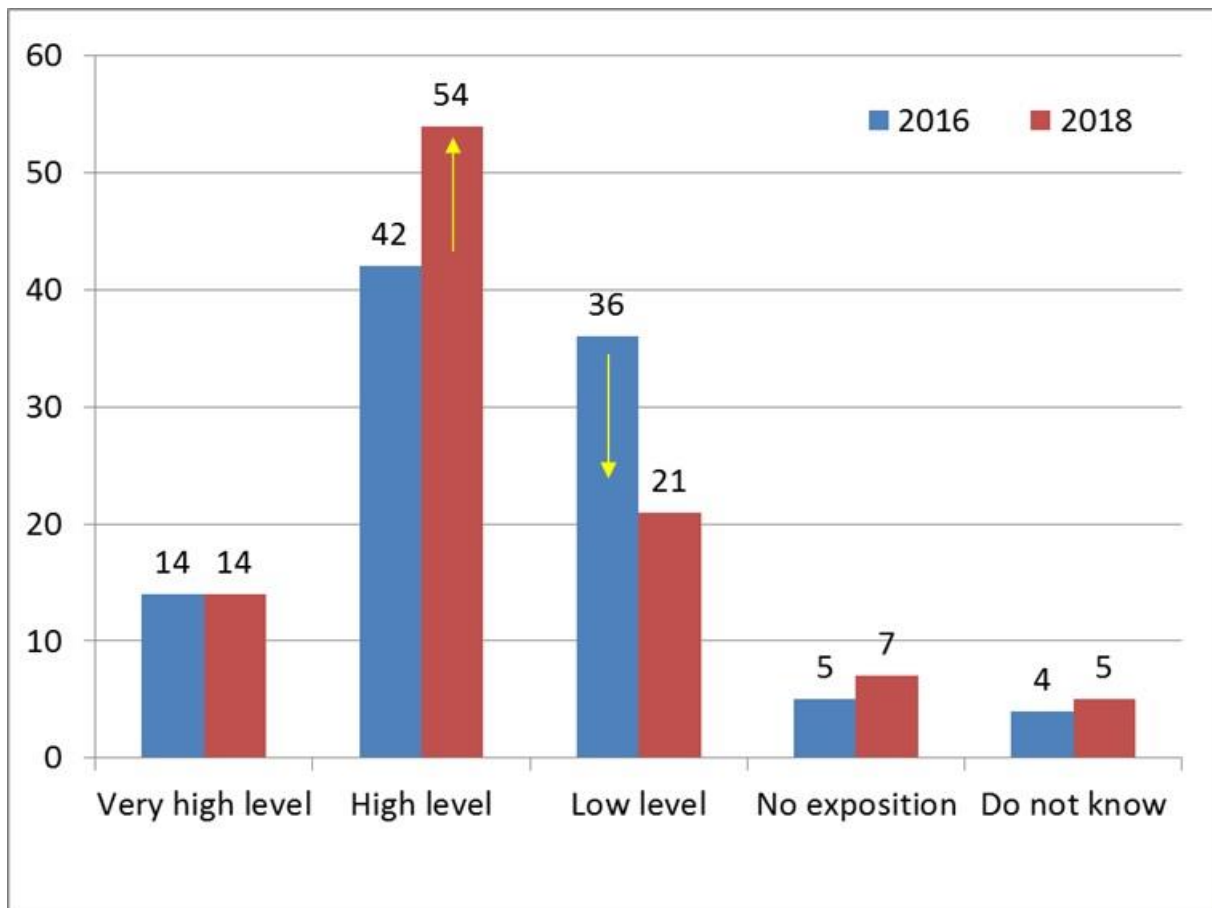
Warsaw City has prepared an Adaptation Strategy through the years 2015-2018. During the process an attitude of Warsaw citizens towards climate change and adaptation have been measured in two different type of research. Two opinion polls on the representative sample of Warsaw population were realized in years 2016 and 2018. It gave an overview of quantitative results. Two sets of focus groups research was also conducted to give a deeper view into the qualitative results. Moreover in years 2014 and 2018 an extensive opinion pool was held among at least 250 public leaders in 50 biggest Polish cities. Separate opinion polls about attitude to climate change and adaptation to climate change were carried by external agencies among population of Poland, what can be used as a background to the results of project researches. This gives a possibility to characterise different attitudes and observe changes that occurred between those years.

According to the standard Eurobarometer research from 2017, Polish people were one of the least climate sensitive populations in Europe. In many characteristics measured with Eurobarometer Polish population was less sensitive than the average European. About 16% less Poles than European average, which was 74%, thought in 2017 that climate change is a very serious problem. Only 30% Poles declared, that they did something to save climate in last 6 months, whereas almost half Europeans, which was 49%, did it (TNS, 2017). Is this background situation changing according to the project research and is it different in local population of Warsaw and sectorial target group, such as local authorities? – that is the article main research question.

It seems that at least on the local level the situation may start to change. Comparison of results from qualitative and quantitative research held in 2016 and 2018 show, that Warsaw population attitude toward climate change is moving into more conscious positions. In 2016 about 56% of Warsaw citizens assessed that they were exposed to climate change impacts in high or very high level. In 2018 number of respondents assessing this impact in the same way has risen considerably to 68%. At the same time number of those assessing this impact on low level diminished from 36% do 21%. People in Warsaw also decided to be more active on climate change. Respondents were asked to choose who should actively propose actions against climate change. In 2016 a lot of people, which was 50%, were pointing out only on the public sphere, namely city authorities. In 2018 it was only 31%, who chose this answer, but many moved to the position, that it should be equally authorities and citizens. Group choosing this answer rose from 42% to 56% (Realizacja, 2016; Danae, 2018).

Figure 1. Warsaw citizens opinion about exposition to climate change in 2016 and 2018.

(Source: Realizacja, 2016; Danae 2018)



Qualitative research also showed a change in the attitude. In 8 focus groups asked for an opinion in 2018 no-one appeared to openly negate climate change as a serious problem or named it a fake. Whereas in 2016 there were clear voices telling the moderators, that climate change is not a fact, or is a untrue story told by the corporations to misguide people. Two years were also needed for the people to realise much more visible signs of climate change in their neighbourhoods. Weather extremes or changes in yearly seasons were deemed as anomalies before, whereas now, they are clearly linked by people with climate change (ARC, 2016; ARC, 2018).

In the group of local authorities climate change was deemed in 2014 as more important than other local problems by only 14% respondents. Most of respondents - 67% said they were as important as other local problems. This attitude has not changed between years 2010 and 2014 and it is also equal in Polish big cities and in more rural authorities (Ryłko 2016; Ryłko, 2018). Such view was shared by the population of Warsaw citizens in 2016 when 14% of them said climate change was a very serious problem (Realizacja, 2016). However, in 2018 number of Warsaw citizens ranking climate this high rose to 21% (Danae, 2018). Maybe importance of climate change will rise also among Polish local authorities? Third opinion poll among this target group is now being held and results of it are going to be reported in the full article.

Authors are going to show more outcomes of the described opinion polls in the full article.

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