

## **Sharp World Wide Drop in Support for Nuclear Energy as 26% of New Opponents Say Fukushima Drove Their Decision**

*24 Country Survey in Wake of Japan's Power Plant Disaster Shows  
Nuclear Energy Now Less Supported than Coal*

**Paris, France** — In the wake of new nuclear power plant build rebukes in both Germany and Italy, a new poll conducted by international research company Ipsos for Reuters News finds that global support for Nuclear Energy has dropped quickly to 38% (down 16 points from 54%) to now become lower than support for coal (48%) — fuelled by a 26% jump in new opponents to nuclear power (above 50% in India, China, Japan and South Korea) who indicate that the recent crisis in Japan caused their decision.

And perhaps it's no surprise that Germany's government and Italian citizens (by way of voting against nuclear power in a referendum) have rejected electricity producing nuclear power for the future: out of the 24 countries surveyed, support for nuclear power is lowest in Germany (21%), Italy (19%) and Mexico (18%).

Of the 62% overall who now oppose nuclear power, four in 10 (38%) *of those* appear to offer a possible reprieve indicating that modernization of electricity with existing or new power plants should be undertaken, while the remaining group stand hard in their opposition. Only one third (34%) of global citizens say the Fukushima disaster was an 'unforeseeable and isolated event and that the nuclear industry should continue to build nuclear power plants'.

But, in what may be a surprise to many, of those living in Japan where the off-shore earthquake and resulting tsunami devastated the Fukushima region and its nuclear facility, just under half (45%) still regard nuclear production of electricity as viable option in the scarce energy production island – and 71 % support its modernisation.

*The survey was conducted in the aftermath of the accident and during crisis management in mid-April 2011. The findings are from a survey conducted in 24 countries among 18,787 adults (see methodology below).*

### ***Is Fukushima Seen as Cause to Halt Nuclear Energy Production?***

**An astonishing 95% of global citizens say they have seen, read or heard of the damage to the Fukushima nuclear power plant after the tsunami.**

*Focusing specifically on those aware of the crisis, seven in ten (69%) of those citizens agree that ‘what happened at the nuclear plant in Japan demonstrates that all nuclear facilities are vulnerable to unforeseen events that could have a deadly impact on those who live in and around them. As a result we should stop all plans to build nuclear plants anywhere’. The remaining group (31%) believe ‘what happened in Japan was an unforeseeable and isolated event so that there really is nothing that should stop the nuclear industry from continuing to build and operate nuclear plants to produce electricity in other parts of the world.’*

### ***Global Citizens Support for Nuclear Energy Drops...***

When global citizens are asked to rate their support or opposition for six methods of producing electricity they rate nuclear energy last (38%) behind solar power (97%), wind power (93%), hydroelectric power (91%), natural gas (80%) and coal (48%).

Of those who oppose nuclear energy (62%), one quarter (26%) say they decided to hold this view as a direct result of the nuclear crisis in Japan while 64% say they held this view previously. This would have put global support for nuclear energy at 54% before the Fukushima disaster indicating an overall drop in support of 16%.

Not surprisingly, nuclear energy opponents most likely to say they took this position recently because of what happened in Fukushima are residents of South Korea (66%), Japan (52%) and China (52%).

However, of the 62% who now oppose nuclear power, four in 10 (38%) *of those* appear to offer a possible reprieve indicating that modernization of electricity with existing or new power plants should be undertaken, while the remaining group stand hard in their opposition.

Further, three quarters (73%) of global citizens surveyed believe nuclear energy is ‘only a limited and soon obsolete form of producing energy for the future’ compared to the remaining one quarter (27%) who believe it’s ‘a viable long-term option for countries who need to produce it that way’. But perhaps that best explains why of those living in Japan where the off-shore earthquake and resulting tsunami devastated the Fukushima region and its nuclear facility, just under half (45%) still regard nuclear production of electricity as viable option in the scarce energy production island – and 71 % support its modernisation.

### ***Communication Efforts of Japanese Institutions Viewed Differently Across Countries...***

While overall global citizen assessment of communications by Japanese officials and institutions is viewed as honest (54 %) and timely (56%), results vary very strongly across countries.

Japanese citizens are among the harshest critics: only 28% agree that communications were done honestly and even less so (23%) agree it was conducted on a timely basis. South Korea (17% honestly/17% timely) and Germany (25% honestly/36% timely) also rate the Japanese institutions poorly on these measures.

On the other end of the scale, India (90% honestly/87% timely), Indonesia (89% honestly/89% timely) and Saudi Arabia (86% honestly/80% timely) are most likely to assess that the Japanese officials and institutions performed well.

### ***Potential Concern for Japanese Food Product Exports...***

Eight in ten (80%) global citizens are currently avoiding at least one of the following products exported from or associated with Japan: fish (45%), seaweed (44%), sushi restaurants (41%), fruits (40%), rice (38%) and noodles (37%). *Of those who are currently avoiding at least one of these products, just over half (56%) say it is because of recent events involving nuclear energy in Japan.* Those living in South Korea (89%), China (87%), followed at some distance by India (69%), Turkey (69%) and Italy (68%) are most likely to indicate they are avoiding at least one of these products because of what occurred in Fukushima. Citizens of South Africa (27%), Russia (31%) and Poland (35%) are least likely to be avoiding products due to the nuclear disaster.

What this suggests is that upwards of 45% of the total citizens in the 24 country survey are avoiding at least one product exported from or associated with Japan because of the recent nuclear fallout in Fukushima.

## **Methodology**

*The survey instrument was conducted among 24 countries including Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United States of America. An international sample of 18,787 adults aged 18-64 in the US and Canada, and age 16-64 in all other countries, were interviewed between April 6 and April 21, 2011 via the Ipsos Online Panel system. Approximately 1000+ individuals participated on a country by country basis with the exception of Argentina, Indonesia, Mexico, Poland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Russia and Turkey, where each have a sample 500+. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflected that of the adult population according to the most recent country Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points for a sample of 1,000 and an estimated margin of error of +/- 4.5 percentage points for a sample of 500 19 times out of 20 per country of what the results would have been had the entire population of the specifically aged adults in that country been polled.*

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