

Now more than ever, nuclear energy is an asset for the country according to the French public (BVA survey for Orano)

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While the debates around nuclear energy have been impacted by numerous current events in recent years (war in Ukraine, energy crisis, inflation, announced investments in the sector), Orano once again set out to survey the French public and assess the changes in their perceptions of this energy.

The results of the survey conducted from April 25 to May 2, 2023, by the institute BVA supplement the findings of the first two editions conducted in 2019 and 2021 and elucidate recent changes in the opinions and knowledge of the French public regarding nuclear energy.

For Nicolas Maes, CEO of Orano: *“The steady growth in the number of French people who support nuclear energy shows that awareness has increased among our fellow citizens, who better understand the advantages of this energy, especially with what is happening around the world. Their support has come full circle at a time when France is reaffirming its choice regarding nuclear energy. This support also gives the Group a new outlook.”*

Among the key results:

- **For 57% of the French public (+7 points compared to 2021), nuclear energy is an asset for the country.**
- **France’s energy independence is considered the main asset of nuclear energy for 59% of people surveyed (+6 points compared to 2021).**
- **51% of the French public (-7 points compared to 2021) still consider nuclear energy to contribute to climate change and the production of CO₂.**
- **For 56% of the French public (+15 points compared to 2021), the nuclear sector creates jobs.**
- **66% of the French public (+2 points compared to 2021) anticipate a “nuclear and renewable energies” mix in France’s future.**

About Orano

Orano is an international operator recognized in the field of nuclear materials. It provides solutions to current and future challenges in energy and medicine. Its expertise and cutting-edge technologies enable it to offer its customers high added value products and services at all stages of the fuel cycle. Through their skills, their high nuclear and conventional safety standards, and their constant efforts to achieve innovation, all Orano’s 17,000 employees are committed to developing expertise in transforming and controlling nuclear materials for the climate, medicine, and a world that manages resources responsibly, today and tomorrow.

Orano, giving nuclear energy its full value.

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Nuclear sector, an ever-increasing asset for France

For 57% of the French public, nuclear energy is an asset for their country. This figure, representing a 7-point increase compared to 2021, is backed by assets that remain a constant in their opinion: France's energy independence (59%), uninterrupted electricity generation (35%), and the low cost of electricity (32%). Similarly, the main objections of the French public to the nuclear sector remain the same compared to 2021: production of non-recyclable waste (53%), aging nuclear facilities (49%), and the risk of accidents (46%)

In parallel, there was also a significant decrease in the number of French people who identify nuclear energy as a disadvantage: the corresponding figure went from 15% in 2021 to 9%, confirming the erosion of the opposition to this energy.

France's energy independence, an increasingly significant driver in support of nuclear energy

Probably related to the impacts of international events, France's energy independence is more than ever the number one argument of the French public in favor of nuclear energy: 59% of those surveyed, an increase by 6 points compared to 2021.

In response to the specific link between nuclear energy and France's independence, 46% of French people mention the generation of this energy in the country, whereas 38% consider the sector be sensitive and that France should maintain control over it within its borders.

At the same time, progression in terms of locating uranium mining outside France as an argument against nuclear energy (mentioned by 21% of the French public versus 16% in 2021) illustrates the increase among our fellow citizens of concerns related to controlling energy production. However, this argument needs to be considered relative to what is apparently a lack of knowledge of the French public on this subject (42% indicated they were unaware of the ownership policy in the mines).

A sector recognized for its positive impact on jobs... but uncertainties remain as to its capacities to lower the price of energy

For 56% of the French public, the nuclear sector generates jobs in France, representing an increase of 15 points compared to 2021. This is a clear increase related to investments and recruitment advertising carried out by the sector's actors during this period. Those surveyed are proud of French industrial know-how, with more than 1 out of 5 French people considering it a key asset in support of nuclear energy.

At the same time, the French public remained divided when asked about the link between nuclear energy and the cost of energy; while nearly 50% consider nuclear energy to have a positive impact on the prices of electricity, only 26% consider electricity to be less expensive in France than in other countries. This duality illustrates how the electricity market and its impact on prices are hard to understand, even more so due to inflation.

An energy source decreasingly viewed as harmful to the environment

While it has dropped by another 7 points compared to 2021, the proportion of French people who think that nuclear energy contributes to producing greenhouse gases retains a slight majority (51%), a proportion as high as 66% for those under 35. Likewise, a majority of French people think that nuclear energy contributes more to producing greenhouse gases than solar or wind energy (67% and 58%).

In addition, there are fewer and fewer French people who consider that disposing of nuclear waste will be one of the main challenges for future generations (22%, or a decrease by 8 points since 2021); they identify as a priority the problems related to climate change (57%), preserving natural resources (41%), and disposing of plastic waste (27%).

Nuclear energy is an energy of the future for most French people

Finally, the French public seems more and more aware of the role nuclear energy will play in the energy policies of the future. 66% of the French public know that there is a plan to develop a “nuclear and renewable energies” mix in the country, representing an increase of 2 points compared to 2021. However, while more than two thirds of French people understand that this mix will involve prolonging existing nuclear reactors (68%), just over one out of two seems to know that new nuclear reactors are going to be built (54%).

As a sign of the changing perception of the French public regarding nuclear energy in the world, the proportion of our fellow citizens looking ahead toward increased use of nuclear energy is increasing rapidly, whether in France (57%, +37 points in 2021), Europe (38% +17 points), and the world (45% +22 points).

Methodology:

The BVA survey for Orano was conducted on the Internet between April 25 and May 2, 2023, using a sample of 1,500 people, representative of the French population aged 18 and higher. The sample's representativity was ensured based on the quota method applied to the following variables: gender, age, head-of-household profession and that of the surveyed person, region, and category of agglomeration. The various comparative data mentioned in this press release and in the survey refer to the results of a previous survey conducted by BVA for Orano in May 2021, using a representative sample of 1,500 French people surveyed via the Internet.

All the results of this survey can now be found at <https://www.orano.group>. (French only)