

V4+GERMANY
CONFERENCE

IMPLEMENTING THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL - OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

June 22-24 2022



ANDRÁSSY
UNIVERSITÄT
BUDAPEST

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We thank
all our partners
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us organising
the V4+Germany
Conference:
Implementing
the European
Green Deal –
Opportunities
and Challenges

ANDRÁSSY UNIVERSITY

Andrássy University Budapest (AUB) was founded in 2001 and is the only completely German-language university outside the German-speaking countries. AUB puts the focus on European integration with a main topic of Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Danube region. Goals of the university are the development and advancement of experts on Europe as well as interdisciplinarity in instruction and research.¹



KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) is a German political party foundation which is active nationwide in Germany and around the world. KAS offers current analyses and practical guidance for the challenges of our time; it researches historical and political backgrounds. As a think tank, it draws up scientific foundations and up-to-date analyses that provide foresight for political action. One of the key competences is the imparting of political education to a broad public. Furthermore, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung supports talented young people and is committed to literature, art and culture.²



¹ <https://www.andrassyuni.eu/en/university/about-the-university.html>

² <https://www.kas.de/en/about-us>

GERMAN-HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION, MATHIAS CORVINUS COLLEGIUM

The German-Hungarian Institute for European Cooperation was founded in 2020 under the aegis of the Mathias Corvinus Collegium. Its main mission is to deliver research-based analysis and present these to the wider public in order to promote understanding for German-Hungarian relations. The Institute focuses primarily on public policy issues and seeks to strengthen dialogue between the two countries through extensive research with a European focus. Besides the research, the German-Hungarian Institute also carries out its mission through three main areas: organizing events, supporting students and graduates of exceptional academic achievement, as well as inviting and hosting German experts.³



INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) is a leading Polish think tank and an independent centre for policy research and analysis, established in 1995. Its mission is to contribute to informed public debate on key Polish, European and global policy issues. The main areas of study include European policy, social policy, civil society, migration and development policy as well as law and democratic institutions. Every year the IPA hosts dozens of conferences, seminars, round tables, workshops and other events with the participation of key policy and opinion makers. Its experts regularly comment on current policy issues in printed and electronic media.⁴



³ <https://mcc.hu/en/german-hungarian-institute-for-european-cooperation>

⁴ <https://www.isp.org.pl/en/about-us>

METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY PRAGUE

Metropolitan University Prague (MUP) ranks among the oldest and largest private universities in the Czech Republic. MUP offers study programmes in the area of the humanities, international territorial studies, legal specialisations, media and communication studies, and international economic relations in both full-time and part-time forms of study in Czech as well as English.⁵



PAN-EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY

The Pan-European University (PEU) is a private higher education institution, offering university education at all 3 cycles of studies in 20 accredited programs of studies at its 5 faculties. Since its founding in 2004 more than 12.000 students have graduated from the studies at PEU. PEU consists of 5 faculties which were established gradually in reaction to the needs of the higher education market, in the chronological order: Faculty of Law (2004), Faculty of Economic and Entrepreneurship (2005), Faculty of Media (2007), Faculty of Informatics (2009) and Faculty of Psychology (2011).⁶



WISEGRAD FUND

The International Visegrad Fund is a donor organization established in 2000 by the governments of the Visegrad Group countries – Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. The Fund follows the vision of President Vaclav Havel, President Lech Wałęsa and Prime Minister József Antall and supports regional cooperation of civil society organizations. That is possible thanks to Grants, Scholarships and Artists Residencies. It seeks original approaches that help the region progress in seven main areas of Culture, Education, Innovation, Democratic Values, Public Policy, Environment and Tourism, and Social Development.⁷



⁵ <https://www.mup.cz/en/about-mup/>

⁶ <https://www.paneuuni.com/en/about-us/about-us/information/>

⁷ <https://www.visegradfund.org/about-us/the-fund/>

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FOREWORD

On 22-24 June 2022, the conference “V4+Germany: Implementing the European Green Deal – Opportunities and Challenges” was held at Andrassy University Budapest (AUB) with the support of the Visegrad Fund.

During the Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group, AUB and its partners, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the German-Hungarian Institute for European Cooperation at Mathias Corvinus Collegium, the Institute of Public Affairs, the Pan-European University, the Metropolitan University Prague and the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, organised a conference for the second time. The first conference took place in 2018 during the previous Hungarian Visegrad-Presidency. Again, this conference aimed to connect people from the Visegrad countries and Germany, promote dialogue and thus strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between the countries. Around 50 young participants and experts, mainly from Hungary, Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, came together to discuss the opportunities and challenges of implementing the European Green Deal.

As a prelude to the event, the participants met on 22 June 2022 in sunny summer weather for a get-together at the Várkert Bazár, which housed the seat of the Presidency. After a short welcome by András Lázár, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Dr Heinrich Kreft, a Budapest rally began, where the young participants had to solve various tasks in small groups to get to know each other and the city of Budapest. In parallel, the speakers were invited to a dinner at the invitation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. On the main day, the event began with welcome speeches by Pro-Rector Prof. Dr Stefan Okruch, AUB, Krisztina Varju, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Michael Winzer, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and Dr Bence Bauer, German-Hungarian Institute for European Cooperation. They emphasised the importance of the European Green Deal, which has become even more urgent due to the Russian attack on Ukraine in recent months. This attack represents a turning point for Europe and has shaken Europe’s existing security and energy supply architecture. The question of achieving energy security and ambitious climate protection in a socially acceptable way has become even more critical.

The welcoming speeches were followed by two keynote presentations by Rafal Fabianowicz, PhD candidate at AUB, and Kevin Oswald, Konrad

Adenauer Foundation. In his presentation, Mr Fabianowicz addressed the extent to which the European Green Deal could herald the turn of the times and whether the EU could implement the European Green Deal as planned even under the new framework conditions. Mr Oswald focused on the climate and energy policy of the EU and Germany in principle and all its shades and challenges, as well as in the light of the Ukraine war.

During the subsequent panel discussion moderated by Dr Kreft, which high-ranking state secretaries attended from Hungary and Slovakia as well as from the business and scientific communities, the topic was further discussed in a lively manner from a political, economic, and scientific perspective. In addition to different assessments, for example, on the relevance of nuclear power in the future energy mix, many commonalities were also revealed: Above all, cohesion in the EU was affirmed by all panellists in view of the significant challenges.

Afterwards, the participants discussed in five internationally mixed working groups different aspects of the European Green Deal – such as the implementation at global, EU and national levels, especially in the V4 countries, as well as the economic basis for the European Green Deal and citizen participation. The results were then presented in a panel discussion. In the intensive discussions, it became clear how crucial the topic is to the young participants and how much they advocate for quick action by those with political responsibility.

The participants pointed out that it would be essential for the EU to reduce its energy dependence on other countries gradually. It would also be necessary for each EU member state to formulate its own goals. These goals could be easier achieved, and the EU could act as a role model. Otherwise, there is a danger that the EU will lose its credibility regarding this topic.

Another point raised was sustainable mobility. Among other things, it was emphasised that it would be important to set up high-capacity charging stations, to make public transport more effective and attractive, and to establish environmental zones in large cities. Furthermore, the policy recommendation was formulated that the EU should attach stricter conditions to the use of nuclear energy.

Regarding climate policy, different aspects should be taken into consideration. For example, small towns would need other solutions than large cities. Furthermore, it would be necessary to involve the population in the various processes so that they perceive climate protection as their responsibility. It

was also noted that the population could be motivated by sharing the positive results that have already been achieved.

Moreover, the role of education in achieving the goals was emphasised. Educational institutions could make a massive contribution to ensuring that a generation grows up in which environmental protection, climate policy, and sustainability are self-evident topics. All in all, the young participants were very engaged and brought multiple perspectives to the conference.

On the last day, an upcycling workshop took place at Mathias Corvinus Collegium, where the young participants were instructed to make a card holder out of old paper milk containers. This workshop illustrated that sustainability starts in small ways and that we can all contribute to everyday life.

This booklet summarizes the results of the event. Moreover, you will find photos, images and special material created during and after the conference. We thank all the contributors to this booklet for taking the extra time and effort! Last but not least, this booklet sends a message: We are only at the beginning of an ongoing and challenging process. For a successful implementation of the European Green Deal, cooperation between Germany and the V4+ remains crucial. Thanks for taking part in this process!

DR HEINRICH KREFT AND DR KRISTINA KURZE
(CO-ORGANISERS, AUB)

CONTRIBUTIONS BY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS AND CO-ORGANIZERS

KRISZTINA VARJU

DEPUTY STATE SECRETARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT
OF EUROPEAN RELATIONS AT THE MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF HUNGARY

I would like to thank Andrassy University and its partners for organising the conference “V4+Germany, Implementing the European Green Deal (EGD) – Opportunities and Challenges”. This conference is about the three crucial topics that influence the future of our region.

The first topic covers German-Hungarian relations, and the second is about the cooperation of the Visegrad states and their partnership with the Federal Republic of Germany. The third topic concerns the path to a sustainable future, the green transition, including the European Green Deal.

These topics are of outstanding importance for the Hungarian Presidency of the V4 Group, so it is a particular pleasure for me that we can discuss these issues – with the support of our Presidency and the Visegrad Fund – in the circle of renowned lecturers, experts and first and foremost with young people. Protecting our environment and adapting to climate change is a priority in Hungary. In anticipation of the joint European commitment, our country has already become the seventh country in the global community to set the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 in its legislation. We stand for swift action: Our country was the first among EU member states to ratify the Paris Climate Agreement. With a comprehensive strategic plan, we are gradually moving toward a low-carbon economy and achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

We support the implementation of the European Green Deal and have a constructive stance on the European legislative package “Fit for 55” to achieve as EU by 2030 the target of a 55% net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and in order to keep us on the right path to reach the target of climate neutrality by 2050. In doing so, it is essential that we take into account the different circumstances in the Member States and refrain from transferring the costs of climate protection to the citizens.

Besides Hungary, only 21 countries worldwide were able to report increasing economic performance with simultaneous reductions in greenhouse gases. We must keep this trend for the coming decades. According to our strategy, Hungary can achieve climate neutrality without jeopardising economic growth. Hungary remains committed to the clean energy transition despite the global geopolitical and energy crisis that the war between Russia and Ukraine has caused in Europe. The crisis has shown us that increasing energy sovereignty does not only include the priority of short-term measures to secure energy supply in case of an emergency but can also be linked to the goal of reducing emissions – e.g., by expanding renewable and nuclear energy capacities in domestic production. In addition to the phase-out of coal by 2030, we expect the energy transition to include natural gas in the medium term and hydrogen in the long term.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the success of Germany and the V4, as a cooperative economic entity, is indispensable for the success of Europe. Our countries are close economic partners, and we have a mutual interest in each other's development.

As in previous years, total trade between Germany and the V4 countries in 2021 was significantly higher than between Germany-France or Germany-China. The V4 region is Germany's most important trade partner. Despite the war, German foreign trade with our broader area increased significantly in the first quarter of this year.

We welcome the fact that German politics and diplomacy have also strengthened their relations with the V4 countries in the last decade. We have hosted successful summits that have provided opportunities for open and substantive dialogue on migration, the issue of EU reform, then Brexit, and the future of the EU.

In line with our shared goals – within the framework of the Visegrad Fund – we launched civil society projects in the Western Balkans, as well as a joint development project to address the root causes of migration in Morocco.

I believe there are issues such as the Russian aggression in Ukraine, the future of Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, and maintaining European competitiveness (including responsible climate policy and digitalization) in which the V4 can find common denominators with Germany and cooperate on numerous topics.

Like Germany, the V4 is interested in restoring European security and peace. We stand united behind Ukraine and condemn Russian aggression, as

demonstrated by the March 2022 statement by the V4 and UK leaders and the jointly agreed EU documents.

Solidarity with Ukrainian refugees is also a common point. Millions of refugees had come to the V4 countries, whom we have helped together at a national level and through the Visegrad Fund.

Hungary supports the continuation of cooperation between the V4 countries and Germany. As this event also illustrates, an honest, pragmatic dialogue is essential in the current difficult geopolitical situation – both on a political and social level.

With this in mind, I wish all participants substantive, thought-provoking discussions.

DR. BENCE BAUER

DIRECTOR, GERMAN-HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE
FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION
AT THE MATHIAS CORVINUS COLLEGIUM

Europe is facing challenges on a scale not seen in decades. The war in Ukraine, a severe economic crisis with high inflation rates and increasing supply shortages, and the impact of the climate crisis, all of these are putting the capabilities of governments to the test. We experience massive uncertainties concerning our future energy supply. The question is whether we can maintain our economic competitiveness despite rising electricity prices and whether we can build a sustainable and liveable future for our children without the costs of climate and environmental protection becoming too great of a burden on social cohesion.

The Visegrád states of Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and Hungary have a special role to play in these times of crisis. In recent years, they have been characterized by steady above-average economic growth and sound government financial policies. The Central European beacons of hope currently experience immense geopolitical challenges. The consequences of the war in their immediate neighbourhood are demanding most out of them in European comparison. The extensive humanitarian and material aid – partly including military equipment – are particularly hard to manage for the Visegrád countries, also because of the high energy dependency from Russia.

These current socio-political issues that are crucial for the future in Central Europe also shape the educational activities of the Mathias Corvinus Collegium (MCC). As Hungary's largest institution for the promotion of talent development, our work begins where traditional education ends. We aim to create opportunities for young Hungarian students to further their understanding of global developments and engage with them. In addition, the extensive mobility and scholarship programs for young people make MCC the most significant institution of talent promotion in the Carpathian Basin.

Our mission is to provide students in Hungary with the same opportunities for qualified education and knowledge transfer, that they would receive in London, Paris, or Berlin. It is important to us that our students gain experience abroad and can later apply the knowledge they have acquired to help Hungary stay on its path to success – also in the future. Our goal is to promote talented young people who understand current global developments, who are internationally networking, and who are prepared to actively work for their country.

In the context of the most pressing energy, environmental, and climate questions, the MCC's Climate Policy Institute, founded in 2020, has a central role to play. The Institute's mission is to promote environmentally friendly practices in the spirit of sustainable green conservatism, with an equal emphasis on conservation and innovation.

I am particularly pleased that the MCC's German-Hungarian Institute for European Cooperation, founded in December 2020, was able to contribute to the publication of this conference volume as a co-organizer of the conference. In its function, the Institute is the only single-issue think tank in the country – and this points to the central importance of German-Hungarian relations at the MCC.

The Institute is intended to serve as a bridge and platform for the dialogue and good relations of various networks between Germany and Hungary, while also forming a European network, and anchoring not only Germany in Hungary, but also Hungary in Germany, in a sustainable way. It is important to us that the growing and wide-ranging network of bilateral contacts is maintained and filled with content and joint initiatives. Weekly panel discussions and lectures are held at the Institute, and numerous analyses and background reports are published both in print and online ("Faktenwissen Ungarn") by the Institute's staff. Our Visiting Fellows provide through teaching and dialogue MCC students with knowledge and insight in such quality they would hardly find elsewhere.

"Treaties are paper and only before history they are a reality, and they become realistic only when we fill them up with life." Helmut Kohl's statement is especially true for the German-Hungarian Friendship Treaty, signed more than 30 years ago by the German chancellor and Hungarian Prime Minister József Antall. The German-Hungarian Institute has made the will of the German Chancellor its main mission. In the short time of its existence, our institute has actively contributed to the deepening of the scientific and political dialogue

between our countries, while also linking bilateral relations, and building mutual trust and cooperation.

I would certainly welcome if interested readers of the booklet and especially young people would like to participate in bilateral projects – also, for example, in those of the German-Hungarian Institute. Our doors are always open. Finally, I would like to thank our numerous partners for their cooperation and support, because without them it would be difficult to fulfil our mission.

My special thanks go to Andrassy University Budapest for organizing the joint conference on the “V4 + Germany” and for publishing the conference reports.

MICHAEL WINZER

DIRECTOR BUDAPEST OFFICE,
KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION

I congratulate Andrassy University Budapest for hosting the “Visegrad 4 plus Germany” conference. It is an excellent opportunity to bring together young people and experts from Central Europe and Germany in Budapest to discuss the challenges and opportunities of implementing the European Green Deal. Furthermore, I would like to thank the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for initiating this conference on the occasion of the Hungarian presidency of the Visegrad 4 Group.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and the Russian attempt to use energy as a weapon have once again clearly shown the importance of the expansion of renewable energy in Europe. The European Green Deal is not only important for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and slowing down climate change. It is also an opportunity to make the European economy competitive in the future. Achieving this objective also means an economic and societal transformation process. The young generation will bear the most consequences if the world fails to stop climate change. Those young people will also need to shape and implement future stages of the European Green Deal. Therefore, this conference is a perfect opportunity to discuss the European Green Deal with young students, which might contribute to the succession or failure of our endeavour to become the first climate-neutral continent.

I am glad that Hungary used its presidency of the Visegrad 4 Group to reach out to other countries and extend this format with a “plus.” Inviting students and scholars from the Visegrad Group and Germany to a conference like this is essential for building bridges between Central Europe and other EU member states. Implementing the European Green Deal is never only a national task, and it can only be achieved if all EU members work together, share their experiences and act as partners and friends. I am sure that beyond the

discussion about the European Green Deal, this conference will contribute to making friendships and building up networks between the participants of the Visegrad 4 countries and Germany. These personal friendships are the basis for achieving a European spirit that makes it possible to deal with all future challenges.

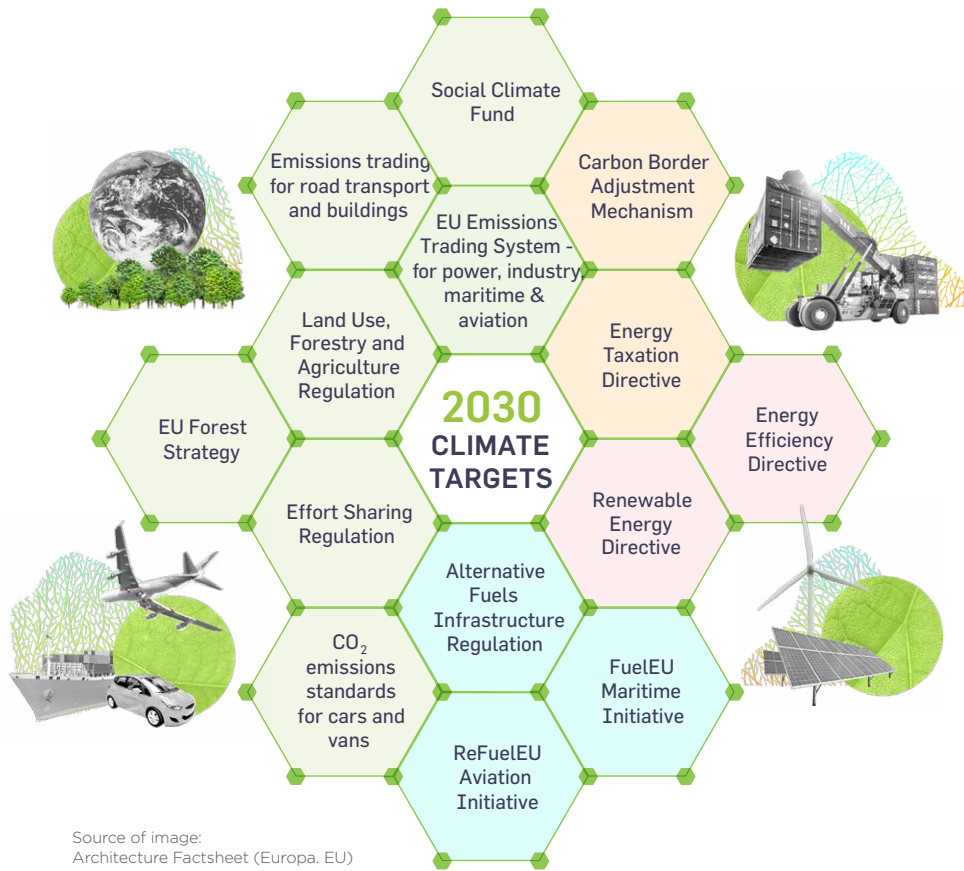
KEY-NOTE PANELLIST:

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The Russian invasion of Ukraine represents a watershed moment for European security and defence policy and clearly illustrates the EU's and Germany's dependence on fossil energy imports from Russia. Seemingly overnight, the geopolitical and geoeconomic aspects of the energy transition considerably gained importance and overcoming the reliance on fossil energy sources from Russia has become a core issue. Given the urgency of this challenge, in addition to the individual patterns of dependence resulting from past decisions that each member state has made are so diverse that the EU is facing an enormous task. Even more so since, at the same time, efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions must be intensified. The European Green Deal must be further implemented to reach the ambitious goal of carbon neutrality.

With the adoption of the European Green Deal in December 2019, the EU took over the leading role in international efforts to combat climate change and set the ambitious target to reduce CO₂ emissions by 55% as compared to 1990 levels by the year 2030 as well as to become the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The concrete initiatives and measures that are part of the European Green Deal and the Fit-for-55 package are multifaceted. They include investments in green technologies, support for the industry's innovation projects, the introduction of clean, low-cost, and healthier means of private and public transport, the decarbonization of the energy sector by increasing the share of renewable energies, the assurance of energy-efficient building use and cooperation with international partners to diversify the energy supplies.



Source of image:
Architecture Factsheet (Europa. EU)

In 2020, more than half (57.5%) of the EU-wide energy demand was covered by imports. The import share was 97% for crude oil and petroleum products, 83.6% for natural gas, and 35.8% for solid fuels. Since 2013, all EU member states have been net energy importers, with significant gradual differences. Russia was the most important exporter of fossil fuels – gas, oil, and coal – to the EU. According to the Gas Market Report of the European Commission, Russian pipeline gas accounted for 41% of the total volume of natural gas imported into the EU in Q3 2021. This development is in line with Eurostat figures from 2019, according to which Russia (41.1%) held an undisputed status as the leading gas supplier to the EU, ahead of Norway (16.2%) and Algeria (7.6%). Russia was also clearly in first place regarding crude oil, accounting for more than a quarter of total imports in 2019 (26.9%), ahead of several other countries (Iraq, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, etc.), all of which are below 10% each. Nearly half of all solid fuel imports to the EU in 2019 came from Russia (46.7%), followed by the US (17.7%) and Australia (13.7%).

EU imports of natural gas

by partners 2019 (%)



Shares based on million cubic metres
Imports from not specified countries excluded
Source: Eurostat

EU imports of crude oil

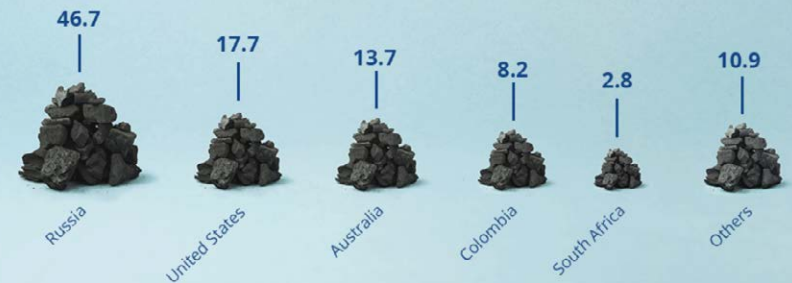
by partners 2019 (%)



Shares based on thousand tonnes
Imports from not specified countries excluded
Source: Eurostat

EU imports of solid fuel

by partners 2019 (%)



Shares based on thousand tonnes
Imports from not specified countries excluded
Source: Eurostat

Source of image: Eurostat

A crucial aspect of the diversification of imports of these fossil fuels is the transport-specific characteristics of natural gas. In contrast to coal and oil, natural gas can only be transported by pipeline or in liquefied form as liquefied natural gas (LNG). Russian natural gas reaches the EU via the Nord-Stream (2011/12) and TurkishStream (2020) pipelines and various pipelines dating back to the Soviet era via Belarus and Ukraine. The share of gas from Russia purchased by the EU and UK via Ukraine as a transit country decreased from 60% (2009) to 25% (2021).

Germany – the EU’s most populous and economically robust of the member states – is mainly affected by the consequences of the war in Ukraine. More than half of all German natural gas imports in 2021 came from Russia and Germany, thus obtaining around one-third of all Russian gas imports to the EU. Several reasons can explain the extraordinarily high gas demand in Germany: To fill the electricity gap caused by the combination of the nuclear phase-out announced after the 2011 Fukushima catastrophe and an accelerated coal phase-out to be completed by 2038 at the latest, at least for the transition period of ten to fifteen years, the German government considered gas as a crucial bridging technology for the transition to a climate-neutral era from 2045 onwards. In addition, the high demand for gas to supply heat to private households (natural gas share: 44%) is particularly problematic, as it is much more difficult to quickly switch to other energy sources for heat generation than in the electricity sector (natural gas share: 15%). Gas also plays a vital role as a feedstock in the German chemical industry, where it is unlikely to be replaced in the short term. The same holds for energy-intensive glass, steel, and paper industries, where gas generates high temperatures.

What is the way forward for Germany and the EU amid this unprecedented crisis? The energy supply of the future has to be sustainable and secure; therefore, expanding renewables is vital but will only be enough with additional measures. With an ever-increasing share of volatile forms of energy, such as solar and wind power, energy storage is gaining importance. Due to the suboptimal weather conditions for renewables and the limited land in densely populated Europe, energy partnerships for the purchase of green hydrogen or other climate-neutral energy sources must also be concluded at an early stage, the corresponding infrastructure must be built, and the conversion of energy-intensive industries in particular (chemicals, steel, cement, etc.) must be driven forward. Moreover, the EU will only be able to overcome its dependence on fossil energy imports from Russia sustainably

and cost-effectively if it seeks European solutions and potentials, including further reforms of its energy policy and the member states’ national policies. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has mercilessly shown the EU its vulnerability, which is why the concept of energy sovereignty (≠ energy self-sufficiency!) is crucial. Doubtlessly, the EU will have to consistently pursue the path of the European Green Deal toward carbon neutrality in 2050 for security and geopolitical reasons, even though it is still rather unclear which concrete goals are associated with it and at what cost energy sovereignty can actually be achieved.

KEY-NOTE PANELLIST:

RAFAL FABIANOWICZ

PHD CANDIDATE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE WITH A FOCUS ON DEMOCRACY AND SUSTAINABILITY AT ANDRÁSSY UNIVERSITY BUDAPEST AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR IN EU AND SUSTAINABILITY AT MCDANIEL COLLEGE BUDAPEST

Public officials often state that climate change is a long-term challenge, and they claim that citizens rather focus on short and middle-term problems; one might even say everyday worries like paying for groceries and rent. According to this argumentation, climate change does not seem to be at our European doorstep, and it appears to be a problem somewhere far away. Therefore, public mobilization and politics necessarily remain slow in acting against climate change because supposed immediate challenges like inflation and insecurities in the energy supply are demanding faster action and our full attention.

However, this argumentation cannot hold against evidence that climate change happens in the middle of the EU with enormous strength in the present time. For example, we must remind ourselves of the massive flooding in Western and Central Europe in the summer of 2021. People lost their lives and homes – this cannot be only perceived as a long-term problem. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report of 2022 clearly states that climate catastrophes such as the flooding of 2021 will occur more frequently than in the past. We are now experiencing a global climate emergency in the EU and need to face both a long-term challenge and the short- and middle-term. If citizens are unaware of the problem, we cannot expect them to act upon it. Therefore, we need to communicate the emergency to the public to speed up public mobilization and politics.

While the public is misled by disinformation, our world leaders have taken the wrong direction. According to the Paris Agreement slowing global warming down to 1,5 and 2 degrees compared to preindustrial time might stop the

worst appearances of climate change. However, scientific evidence shows that we are far from the needed emissions cut – only the pandemic, with all its limitations on society and the economy, led to a global cut of emissions. Yet, the impact of the pandemic on emissions is comparable to a water drop in the ocean. Also, the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 27) in Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt proved once again that nations are pushing responsibilities away to other nations without making clear commitments. For example, during COP27, the nations agreed on a Loss and Damage fund to help those in need, but the big countries were still unwilling to make payments into the fund – the fund is comparable to an empty piggy bank.

Many countries believe the concept of the prisoner's dilemma⁸ plays a major role in international climate policy, and subsequently, those countries will not risk investments for a supposed failed outcome of the international community. Consequently, the EU has taken up the role of a climate protection pioneer and seeks to inspire other nations to follow in its footsteps. With its idealism to become the first climate-neutral continent in the world, the EU tries to break out of the prisoner's dilemma and deliver a transformation of society and economy, which could turn into a positive domino effect affecting other nations. Therefore, the EU developed a toolkit called European Green Deal (EGD) to achieve this transformation. The EU's unique domestic market helps to set joint rules and targets to overcome various economic, political and cultural challenges. The main goal is to achieve a green economy in Europe, which should help to contribute to the Goals of the Paris Agreement. While global engagement does not seem promising yet, the EU still considerably progresses with internal negotiations regarding the EGD. The EU's step-by-step approach dismantles steady hurdles along the way.

A suitable example would be the improvement of relations between the EU and V4 – Visegrad Four⁹. This region has a communist legacy, infamously known for pollution and environmental damage. After the democratic transformation of 1989/1990, those countries, compared to their Western neighbours, had to adapt to the EU domestic market and its regulations in only a decade, which resulted in a smaller share of renewable energy production

⁸ The prisoner's dilemma is a game analyzed in game theory. It is a thought experiment that challenges two completely rational agents to a dilemma: cooperate with their partner for mutual reward or betray their partner ("defect") for individual reward.

⁹ A group of EU member states consisting of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, who closely cooperate in a Central European format.

in the respective energy mixes. As of 2022, the region still heavily depends on fossil fuels and nuclear power¹⁰. The V4 and some other Member States in Western Europe, such as France, strongly advocate for nuclear energy to achieve the EU's long-term strategy. However, the Commission of the EU, in its 2050 long-term strategy¹¹, expects Member States to accomplish an energy transition to renewable energy as soon as possible. This development illustrates that positions and actions between the V4, and the EU commission are often contrasting. And yet, through negotiations and conditionality¹², there is considerable progress by the V4 to lay down the image as a climate laggard¹³. For example, the countries dropped their vetoes from 2019, which blocked the proposed EU 2050 strategy by the Commission of the EU. Another example would be Hungary, which unexpectedly adopted the EGD into national legislation as the first EU country. Analysing these developments proves that cooperation in bi- and multilateral relations contributes to the successful milestones in policy fields.

The EU's disagreements and agreements must be a lighthouse for other nations and continents as lessons learned. The EU is known for its constructive approach to turning problems into solutions. For example, every country in global comparison is affected to a different extent by President Putin's war of aggression in Ukraine. However, the EU handled the inflation and the spike in energy prices like a role model, although the global crisis has hit Europe in the most powerful way possible precisely because Germany and the V4 were highly dependent on Russian energy. Instead of breaking apart and leaving the EGD behind, the EU used the crisis to supercharge the EGD with additional investment out of the REPowerEU program, a program to cut dependencies on Russian energy and increase investment into renewable energy. The EU's approach of feeding two birds with one stone is a progressive experiment and may be a step toward luring other nations into the EU's footsteps.

¹⁰ Nuclear energy production contributes positively to the EU 2050 targets with its low-emission nature but still contains emission production in the overall production cycle, e.g., Uranium mining is emission heavy. Nuclear energy remains a high-risk technology and has a negative long-term impact on the environment.

¹¹ The advocacy increased with the energy crisis, caused by President Putin's war on Ukraine.

¹² The EU uses conditionality, hard and soft power to influence behaviour of its Member States

¹³ The V4 infamously enjoy the reputation of lagging in their climate agenda

STUDENT REPORT I: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL ON EU-LEVEL

STUDENTS:

MACIEJ PACAK
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ANDREAS MARTIN
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GROUP EXPERTS:

KEVIN OSWALD
DR ROBERT RYBSK
RAFAL FABIANOWICZ

While many of us agree that the European Green Deal requires significant rethinking of the relationship between economic, political, and sustainability goals, only a few consider its implications on the economic collaboration at the EU level. Therefore, our working group focused on the question, "How can the European Green Deal be implemented on the EU level?". For this, we focused on the level of mobility and energy. Our goal was to identify opportunities and risks and develop suitable EU-level policy recommendations based on these results.

Our team consisted of six students from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Germany, each with a different academic and professional background. Some of us were political science students with experience in local and national pol-

itics; some studied business-related subjects and worked for pan-European companies. This variety resulted in an exciting mix of different points of view. We were excellently supported by three experts who also helped us to structure and formulate our policy recommendations: Kevin Oswald, Advisor for energy and resources at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Dr Robert Rybski, lecturer at the Law and Administrative Sciences Faculty at the University of Warsaw, and Rafal Fabianowicz, a PhD Candidate at the Andrassy Universität Budapest and Adjunct Professor at McDaniel College Budapest.

As a first step, we started with a short brainstorming session on current mobility and energy sector developments and how the European Green Deal or vice versa might impact these areas. Recently, the most striking changes stemmed from the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the resulting global tensions. This aggression did not only lead to the current energy crisis and increased inflation but also intensified the massive supply chain issues on products crucial for the “green” movement, such as semiconductors and solar panels.

In mobility, we discussed the measures that EU governments took to mitigate the negative consequences of increasing energy costs. One was the introduction of the 9-Euro-per-month public transportation ticket in Germany during the summer months of 2022. The 9-Euro ticket, at least for a short time, lowered the burden of high individual mobility costs and made public transportation more accessible by simplifying the price system. Additionally, it boosted tourism.

We also discussed other notable and recent developments in mobility and energy, such as the ban on short-distance flights in France and the controversy surrounding cruise ship tourism.

In the area of energy, our discussion focused on whether nuclear power should be classified as a green energy source in the new taxonomy. Our discussion reflected the ongoing debate in the EU. Here we noted strong disagreements among the EU countries that might be rooted culturally. For instance, the Green party has campaigned against nuclear power for many years in Germany. Mainstream parties adopted this stance soon after the events of Fukushima.

Meanwhile, other EU governments, e.g., France, and Belgium, are extending their nuclear power network by building new nuclear plants, and Poland aims to build its very first one yet. We attempted to compare energy secu-

urity costs and long-term sustainability, but unfortunately, like politicians and numerous experts before us, we have yet to find a solution. Additionally, as our expert guests have explained, by law, there is only little leeway on the EU level to influence national energy policies.

In the second step, we identified opportunities and risks for the green transition in mobility and energy. For mobility, we identified the supply chain issues as a risk because they delay the e-mobility transformation in the EU. Despite enormous scale efforts by both governments and mobility providers, the supply chain issues not only cause production stops but also make the e-transformation more costly. Secondly, apart from e-mobility, public transportation in the EU is difficult to access. While the rail network is well-developed, the different ticketing systems and prices could be more consumer-friendly. For instance, tickets for the same train connection from Munich to Budapest are much more expensive if purchased by a German Railway company than by the Hungarian one.

As opportunities, we again highlighted the existing and well-developed European railway network and numerous technological advancements in connectivity and digitalization.

In the area of energy, we found the political tensions and disagreements on both the global level and on EU level highly problematic. As previously indicated, they lead to various developments, such as threatened energy supplies, increased energy prices, and supply chain issues, and fuel new debates on the importance of the European Green Deal goals compared to other objectives, such as energy security.

Meanwhile, we also view the European Green Deal as an opportunity for the energy sector in the EU. Specifically, the green taxonomy can pose a powerful tool to support and standardize sustainable energy production in the EU without directly breaching the individual countries’ sovereignty.

Based on this risk and opportunities assessment, we formulated two policy recommendations. The first one is a fiscal policy measure in the area of mobility. We recommend that the EU launch a free public transportation tryout campaign. One way to implement this measure is to issue a specific number of public transportation coupons for each EU citizen. These coupons can then be redeemed everywhere in the EU for public transportation tickets, e.g., by loading the coupons into public transportation apps. By this, we aim to mitigate the negative consequences of the energy crisis and motivate people to try out and use public transportation.

Our second recommendation is to set high standards for the green taxonomy and, thus, encourage governments and the private sector to strive for challenging but committed sustainability targets. From our point of view, this entails excluding nuclear power as a green energy source. As a group consisting of young Europeans, we agreed on prioritizing long-term sustainability, which can be reached more effectively through the cooperation of national governments, especially within the EU. At the same time, we acknowledge the current challenges and the importance of national sovereignty. The green taxonomy can be a powerful compromise as it helps to redirect investment towards sustainable projects without directly influencing national politics. But to ensure this, the taxonomy should exclude controversial projects that cannot be fully classified as green, at least not long-term, such as nuclear power.

The conference brought us closer to understanding the implications of the European Green Deal and how it can further reinforce sustainable measures in the EU - at the same time, being exposed to various viewpoints from different EU countries and sectors helped us find our own opinion and formulate our stances. We thank our three experts for sharing their knowledge and guiding us during policy development. Lastly, we would also like to thank the organization team at Andrassy Universität Budapest for their tremendous support before, during, and after the conference.



STUDENT REPORT II: GLOBAL DIMENSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: ENERGY SECURITY VS FREEDOM

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PROF. ING. ZUZANA STERNOVÁ, PHD
DR HEINRICH KREFT

Not only in national election campaigns of party-political character but also in the interaction of global actors and states, it becomes evident that neuralgic resources (energy security) and the independence of actors from energy suppliers (freedom) are mutually dependent. To address the issue of the global dimension of the European Green Deal, one needs to define the terms energy security and freedom in this context. The concept of freedom is about the freedom of choosing how to achieve the 1.5-degree target, but the target itself is non-negotiable. Thus, the freedom to select an individual path is left to each country itself. In the past, the countries' societies lived in liberty but did not follow rational consumption standards. However, reasonable consumption through, for example, energy savings and innovations are needed to cope with the effects of the climate crisis. On the other hand, energy security combines price and supply security with low prices.

Not only in national election campaigns of party-political character but also in the interaction of global actors and states, it becomes evident that neuralgic resources (energy security) and the independence of actors from energy suppliers (freedom) are mutually dependent. To address the issue of the global dimension of the European Green Deal, one needs to define the terms energy security and freedom in this context. The concept of freedom is about the freedom of choosing how to achieve the 1.5-degree target, but the target itself is non-negotiable. Thus, the freedom to select an individual path is left to each country itself. In the past, the countries' societies lived in liberty but did not follow rational consumption standards. However, reasonable consumption through, for example, energy savings and innovations are needed to cope with the effects of the climate crisis. On the other hand, energy security combines price and supply security with low prices. Three core topics and issues were identified in the working group: the reduction of dependencies, the role model function of the EU, and technological innovations.

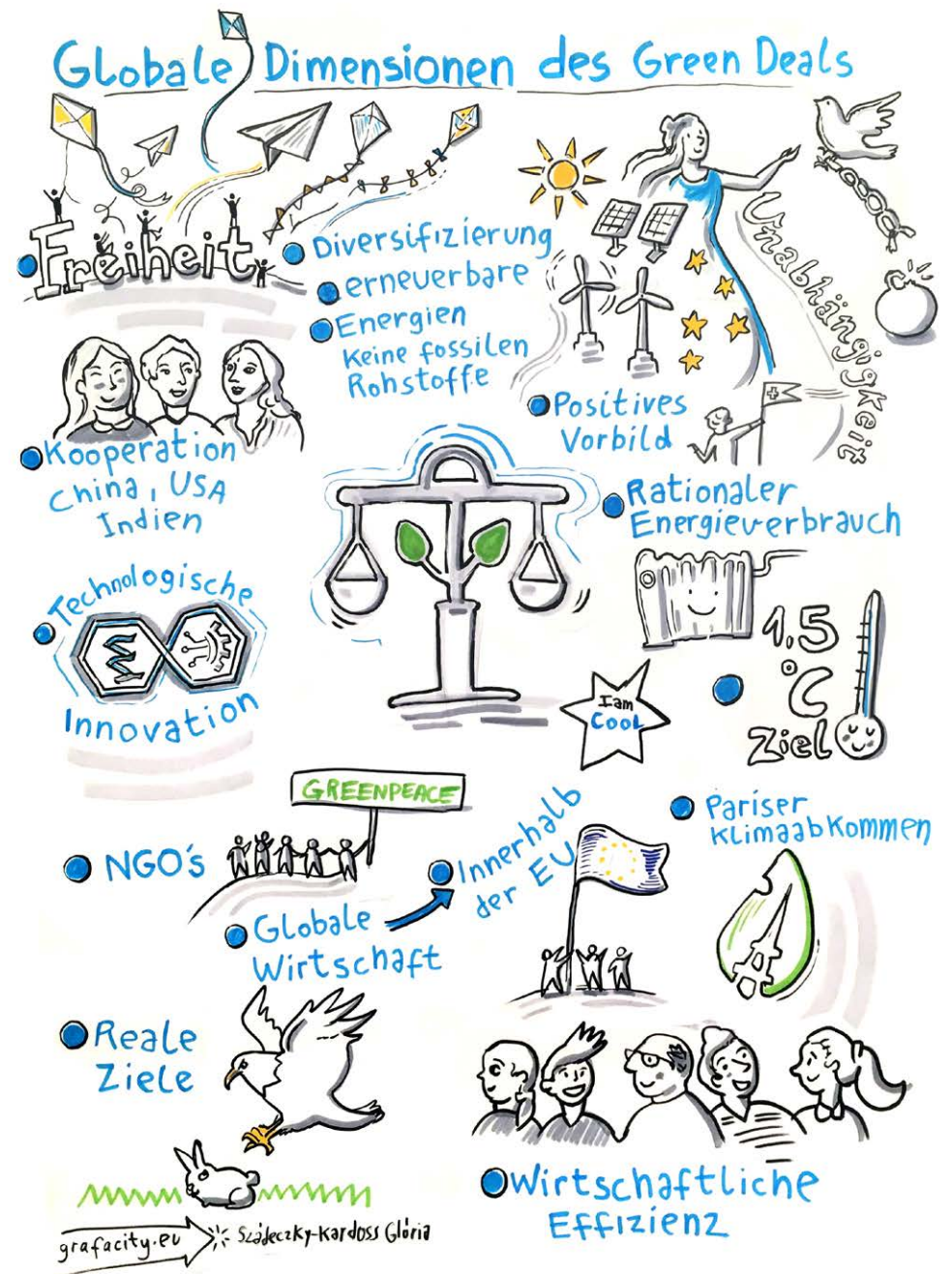
Reducing dependencies also means reducing political dependencies. It should be noted that dependencies are always associated with costs, so the goal must be diversification - diversification of energy sources and partners. Considering this dimension in the context of the EU, all member states must be involved, and the risk of blackmail must be avoided. The current example of the Russian Federation as an energy supplier illustrates that Germany, for example, has placed itself not in a symmetrical but in an asymmetrical dependency; this must be prevented in the future. In addition, global economic efficiency must continue to be ensured under the premise of reducing dependencies. In this regard, the goal should be to produce as much energy as possible in the EU and to obtain it from a multitude of sustainable sources. The European Green Deal must aim to reduce dependencies on fossil resources and further reduce political dependencies. Secondly, the EU's goal of assuming a pioneering role in climate and environmental policy should be pursued with consistency. To this end, the European model must be established as a role model, and other essential actors in the international system must be convinced of the idea of the EGD. It will be necessary for the EU to establish an economic model that combines CO₂-neutrality with economic competitiveness and, in this way, convince the other main emitters (such as the USA, China, and India) of the feasibility of this economic-physical balancing act. The fact that the EU can play a pioneering role in this process and possibly set global standards are already

shown by India's signal that it will also introduce more radical measures to combat climate change if this structural change proves to be successful. A compelling argument in favour of this approach is that all other nations – irrespective of their form of government – will also feel the effects of climate change directly. This is especially true for the densely populated coastal regions of the world, such as the Northeast China Plain, the east and west coast of the United States, as well as the coast of the Indonesian capital Jakarta – which has already prompted the local government to establish a new capital called Nusantara. Ultimately, the credibility and, thus, the influence of the EU as an actor in world politics directly depends on the success of the EGD. The failure of the EU to achieve its ambitious goals could lead to countries presenting less ambitious strategies for combating the climate crisis, making the achievement of the 1.5-degree target unattainable.

Third, innovations are needed to achieve the EGD. The interplay of freedom and energy security involves, on the one hand, an increasing share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix of the EU and its member states and, on the other hand, for example, cost-efficient technological innovations. In research and development, partnerships not only with the industrial sector but also with other countries are of great importance. However, in technological alliances with China, for example, one must ensure that the EU or individual member states do not become asymmetrically dependent on their cooperation, as has been the case with Russia as an energy supplier. Thus, achieving the EGD's ambitious goals is in the interest of the EU – the largest single market in the world – and its member states for multiple reasons. Russia's current war in Ukraine has added the relationship of energy security with freedom to the list of current political challenges and demonstrated that Russian energy imports have geopolitical and geostrategic significance. Freedom and energy security must not be traded off against each other but must be considered together because the optimal interaction of both factors results in the greatest possible form of energy sovereignty for the EU. However, the imperative is that the paramount goal of climate neutrality must not conflict with the security of supply. In the last instance, this must be compatible with optimal energy affordability for all actors (citizens, companies, states) and in every form (monetary, normative-legitimate, physical).

In summary, the work results of our working group again demonstrate that combating climate change requires a multi-vector approach. The three key areas that emerged: The reduction of dependencies, the role model function

of the EU and technological innovations are of high importance. All paths and strategies must be pursued in parallel because only their linkage can lead to success. Energy security enables the citizens of the EU to live in freedom.



STUDENT REPORT III: REALIZATION OF CLIMATE GOALS BY THE V4 AND GERMANY

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GROUP EXPERTS:

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DOC. IZR. PROF. PHDR. LADISLAV CABADA, PHD

Our working group was moderated by Dr Kristina Kurze from Andrassy University and Prof. Ladislav Cabada from the Metropolitan University Prague. The discussion focused on the issue of how the experience of the post-1989 transformations in the V4 impacted the realization of an ambitious climate policy.

In the European Green Deal framework, achieving a climate-neutral economy is a tremendous task for the EU. The existing motto of the EU, “United in Diversity,” applies especially to this challenge because European economies developed very differently, depending on whether or not they had been part of the communist Eastern bloc. In the Western part of the continent, a combination of factors, including technological development, public awareness, and pressure, led to a far earlier rise in environmental and climate policies. At the same time, those developments were minor concerns inside the Soviet sphere of influence. For the latter, 1989 marks

the critical date and starting point of several political, economic, social, and cultural transformations.

Today the term green transformation is used to describe changes needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions, so our discussion focused on transformation and what it means. According to the Oxford dictionary, a transformation “is a complete change in the appearance or character of something or someone, especially so that that thing or person is improved.” For the societies of Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and Eastern Germany, this significant change has been constant since 1989. What started with great hopes ended in some disappointment. Many people felt pain and did not benefit from wealth, with big cities having more success than small ones and rural areas. Unsurprisingly, the word transformation sounds different in post-communist societies than in Western Europe, an expression often loaded with bad connotations. A relevant lesson from the Central and Eastern European transformations is the institutions’ capability to manage the change with transparency and trust. In the former eastern bloc, the countries’ shift from authoritarian to democratic governance did not happen overnight but over many years. Citizens and bureaucrats had to adapt to new conditions. Not surprisingly, there was often clinging to the old ways, which led to symptoms such as corruption, nepotism, and breaches of the rule of law. The main consequence was a severe decrease in trust in public institutions. It also caused a significant social change, and people became tired of change and desired stability to better plan their lives.

After discussing this specific Central and Eastern European experience, we turned to the lessons learned from the discussion about green transformation and the European economy. Trust of societies in their leadership and political institutions is very significant. In a democracy, good faith is never a granted good, but politicians must work for it daily. As European societies, we must reflect on what abilities and resources our institutions will need to achieve net zero. Also, our leaders must constantly and offensively explain this goal. Disinformation driven by domestic and foreign actors will aim to stop the proper implementation of the European Green Deal for several reasons. The European Green Deal is so complex that it needs explanation as a whole as well as in its elements. This complexity also brings in another important aspect, the collection and processing of feedback. A solution worked upon in Brussels only sometimes works in Berlin or Karvina. Climate change poses different challenges in cities, urban, local and rural regions.

Last but not least, climate policy will bring results not in electoral terms but in decades. The time dimension raises the question of how we can keep the mid-and long-term focus in societies that will get older every year. How do we convince political leaders to pursue long-term goals that many of their voters might not profit from or are unaware of its immediate benefits?

Germany, the V4, and the EU need to discuss a new social contract. At its core, this contract has to ask what we expect from our state institutions. This question should be asked, especially in today's climate change. It should address how we can make our societies more resilient to the global threats we face today and in the future.

Finally, the contract also needs to address the price we as a society are ready to pay for defined goals. It might sound banal, but one can only eat or have a cookie. Some characterize the European Green Deal as another industrial revolution. Each industrial revolution has changed our economies, societies, and, ultimately, our political system. It is time to discuss the European Green Deal openly and tackle the reforms needed. We are optimistic that we can prevail when European societies agree on those primary goals and mobilize the resources to achieve them. The methods we will apply will vary. We will passionately, at times, disagree on the details, but we can focus on achieving our goals. A new social contract for Europe can help us regain the trust in public institutions needed for the green transformation of our economies, societies, and each of us individually.



DOC. IZR. PROF. PHDR. LADISLAV CABADA, PHD – EXPERT COMMENT ON WORKING GROUP III

VICE-RECTOR
AT METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY PRAGUE

Several important actors in Central European societies, and primarily many visible politicians, over a long period, present predominantly the negative aspects of the European Green Deal and the decision of the European leaders to transform the EU and the broader continent into a role model regarding the environmental policy, including the environment-energy nexus. While the Central European nations overall point to potential deficits of the European Green Deal and some critical development, the national-populist leaders within the Visegrad Group misuse the European Green Deal as one of the flagship issues within their hostile rhetoric against “Brussels.” As Lars Rensmann stressed, the national-populist streams in Central Europe, including Germany and visible actors from the so-called new federal states, developed anti-globalist positions presenting themselves as the promoters of “normality” and preferring nativist positions. Nevertheless, global climate change presents a challenge that exceeds the national frame and borders. In this sense, the criticism against the EU’s role-model position shown by some analysts cannot be entirely denied. In other words, the only chance for a sustainable and global reversal regarding climate change is to continually transfer the main goals of the European Green Deal into other pan-regions.

Many observers detect different groups of states within the EU/Europe with other priorities and positions regarding the European Green Deal. As the var-

ious analyses showed, we can observe pioneers such as Nordic nations such as Sweden, Denmark, and Norway are joined by followers such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. On the opposite, the East-Central European countries – and among them primarily the V4-nations – are often presented as the most visible laggards regarding the green transformation. Here I feel the necessity to falsify this one-sided and unfounded label of those laggards. Let us stress that nations such as Estonia and Slovenia belong to the visible promoters of environmental policies; in the last parliamentary elections in Slovenia in April 2022, the ecological and liberal Freedom Movement reached 34,45% and created a left-centrist and environmentally oriented government. Also, Lithuania belongs to the group of 7 EU nations requesting the EU energy rely solely on renewable resources by 2050. Nevertheless, the development of the Visegrad Group as a populist and leader-driven format in the last decade developed a negative image of the group. Another joint characteristic between the V4 and the West is nuclear energy use. The Commission recognizes nuclear energy in its energy taxonomy. The V4 and France belong to the member states that present nuclear power plants as the necessary part of the energy mix and the renewable energy source. The decision on the energy taxonomy weakens the argument that the V4 nations are laggards. However, our discussion within the working group demonstrated that nuclear energy presents an important and, in many ways, the most rigorous chasm between the Austria-Germany duo and the Visegrad Group. The German-Austrian and French relations to the V4 differ significantly in energy acceptance. The energy relations also depend on which V4 country is addressed; whereas Poland and the Czech Republic have a coal-heavy energy mix, Hungary and Slovakia instead lean towards nuclear energy.

We cannot overlook the recent polarisation and the cleavages regarding energy security in Europe. E.g., Germany pushes the energy transition from coal, oil, and nuclear sources, especially from (Russian) gas, towards solely renewable sources. At the same time, in Germany, we can also recognize strong voices promoting at least a temporary continuation of the nuclear power plants and even the continued dependency on Russian gas supplies (the most visible example seems to be the Prime Minister of Saxony Michael Kretschmer). At the same time, we can find visible promoters of the European Green Deal in so-called laggard countries like Czechia and other somewhat restrained countries. In this situation, any one-sided criticism against

the V4 (and more generally against the “new EU-member states from the “East”) have to be reflected above all as hypocrisy.

Considering the set of crises, beginning with 2008, we must remember the financial cost of the European Green Deal. The estimated costs in Czechia reach 10 trillion CZK, approximately 7 Czech annual budgets. The European Commission has promised to establish a Just Transition Fund. Still, we cannot deny that practical experience, for instance, with agricultural subsidies, has revealed significant regional disparities. Naturally, if the transition is linked to innovation rooted in a knowledge economy with high value-added, these costs could quickly transform into future revenues. The European Green Deal can also help overcome significant regional differences in the quality of life often found in those countries which extract and burn fossil fuels and have a large share of heavy industry. The so-called coal regions in Poland, Czechia, and also (Eastern) Germany can use funds to move away from coal and for the correlated structural changes.

To sum up, the European Green Deal has to be presented and implemented as a tailor-made policy reflecting other vital principles of the EU, in the first-place diversity and subsidiarity. The post-Communist societies are prone to support the transformation pragmatically. Still, it must not be presented primarily as the eschatological concept, the new “utopia” that will replace the former.

STUDENT REPORT IV: HOW TO MANAGE SUSTAINABLY?

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KLAUDIA WACKERMAN
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CHRISTIAN PRINZ
SZABOLCS SÁNDOR BALOGH

GROUP EXPERTS:

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MURIEL JÓZÓ
PROF. DR DIETMAR MEYER

Our group was led by three experts, one from Slovakia, one from Germany, and one expert from Hungary. The students were composed of the V4 countries. We discussed the following question: “Can we implement the European Green Deal and grow economically? Is there a way of conducting sustainable business?” For the challenging undertaking of reconciling the EGD and a sustainable economy, we focused on various problems in implementing the EGD. We hoped that the understanding of the necessity of economic actions would appeal.

In the beginning, we first dealt with the basic concept of sustainability. We started there because there is disagreement about the meaning of “sustainability” and how institutions and individuals can implement it socially, economically, and ecologically. In the following, we have agreed on three levels where we need to perform a systematic change: voter-oriented politics, the

level of the economy, and the level of consumer society. We came to several conclusions. In political circles, especially in governments and political parties, a rethinking of current priorities and tighter controls of lobbies and cartels by citizen-oriented institutions such as the “Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat” (CCC) are desirable. New regulations and specific guidelines could help. One might think of starting points such as the Supply Chain Act, the EU directive on chargeable returns, the service life of appliances or proposed solutions, targeted subsidies for development and research, and educational measures with concrete content. In this regard, appropriate communication of actions and the creation of conditionality, whether positive rewards or sanctioning, appear essential. Recent studies suggest that the threat of financial penalties is more efficient than the promise of gains.¹⁴ Such sanctions may sound harsh, but they significantly enhance the status quo of economic thinking. The problems of the current dominating economy theory should be investigated, and new reasonings like the “Doughnut economics model” need to be further developed and implemented.

Consequently, a significant shift in thinking is inevitable at the economic level; likewise, significant economic changes must be considered and realized in all sectors. We must develop legal requirements affecting production and consumption to implement such structural change. This includes sharp cuts in traditional operations. In this context, of enormous importance are government subsidies. Therefore, EU funding of €1.8 trillion could be further expanded if required. There is still a need for greater cooperation with research institutions, including the participation of independent institutions on boards (e.g., CCC). A change of mindset among staff, employees, and decision-makers will create awareness for the new generation of citizens.

At the societal level, awareness about climate change and sustainable development are essential. A shift in thinking is possible through political communication, new markets, and incentives for participation and engagement. Certain restrictions need to be introduced, and consumer markets need rethinking. There is a necessity to put the spotlight on global supply chains and the origin of products. The impact on traditional markets must be considered to keep products affordable. Furthermore, an understanding of seasonal and regional economies must be developed.

¹⁴ PNR Énergie – Programmes nationaux de recherche 70 et 71. “L’incitation est impopulaire, mais efficace”. Last access: 28.08.2022: <https://nfp-energie.ch/fr>.

These aspects need to be promoted through education and training so that research on climate change and sustainability receives a more significant role and value. In their educational career, somebody must teach future CEOs about ethics and possible forms of a potential “green” economy, which the EU currently develops within the framework of the EGD. The implementation of the EGD should be the new standard applied by every member state consciously. This development goes hand in hand with the development of a sustainable economy and the restructuring of governance. Furthermore, we touched upon education regarding the environment and sustainability. Educational systems must ensure that new subjects in school receive implementation into reformed curricula covering topics such as sustainable finance, rethinking consumption, and circular economy. Moreover, at the university level, more environmental-based degrees are required.

With an outlook into the future, we identify several trends. For example, the recently decided measure of not building combustion engines from 2035 is the right step to reduce emissions within the EU. Yet, such actions need to occur much faster than in 2035 since we are running out of time and climate change moves fast upon us. The involvement of the global community is essential since no country on its own can defeat climate change. Although the EU can play an indispensable role as a role model continent, global action is desirable and must always be attempted.

Wie nachhaltig wirtschaften?



MURIEL JÓZÓ – EXPERT COMMENT ON WORKING GROUP IV

ENGINEER AT THE RESEARCH CENTRE
FOR NATURAL SCIENCES
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During the event of the Visegrad 4 and Germany conference at the Andrassy University Budapest, our working group focused on the economic background of the European Green Deal, specifically on the question of how to ensure its economic basis. The European Green Deal is mainly a political package with regulations, suggestions, visions, and goals. Still, the roadmap on how to get there with a concrete action plan constantly forms, touching on pressing issues where the consequences cannot be seen directly.

Many questions are still debated, and each Member State has its way of approaching them. While the discussion about the European Green Deal focuses primarily on climate change and its effects on food security, biodiversity, transportation, energy, etc., the economic impacts and methods are hiding behind the shadows. The importance of the European Green Deal has been emphasized with the Russian-Ukrainian war at our borders. The war has triggered an energy crisis and a lack of access to essential resources. This development results in immense political pressure which negatively affects society and its citizens. In this context, the EU uses the European Green Deal. The crisis is addressed on the EU, macroregional, and national levels.

The background of the European Green Deal also covers a wide range of issues among which a priority can hardly be set up. The moral question remains of whether the companies are to be blamed for creating the current overconsuming society or the public for the desire for a hedonistic and com-

fortable lifestyle. Have the current economic systems or a false policy led to where we are today? If we understand the causes, we can set out targeted actions to shift our path toward a more sustainable future.

However, the actions that need to be taken must be clarified too. Many scientists, politicians, and even everyday people strongly believe in what is “right” to do and what “simple” solutions and measurements must be taken to achieve a sustainable economy and society. However, these “simple” solutions can be easily questioned by the “other side,” and we can soon realize that there is no black and white, only grey. The circular economy is a great concept yet to be further discovered. However, the current economic set-up, namely, to always seek economic growth, can soon contradict circularity. The new types of financial models, such as the “Doughnut-theory”¹⁵ which puts ecological sustainability and social justice into its focus, are promising alternatives; however, the implementation of such a concept is still questionable. How can we measure the performance of the economy or even a company, what kind of indicators can we use locally and globally, and how do these indicators relate to each other? Although there are attempts to address these questions, a clear answer has yet to be presented.

The European Green Deal disrupts the current industrial norms in extraordinary ways. Plastic is a simple yet effective example. Plastics are usually made of crude oil, and the by-products of the oil refinery are used to create the most common polymeric materials. These polymeric materials can stay with us in the value chain for a long time, and they expose environmental threats, especially if we think about single-use plastic products. The current regulations mainly address the producers’ responsibility of collecting their products and designing them to make recycling easier. There is also pressure to switch from fossil-based resources to bio-based resources. However, the producer did not throw the plastic bottle on the car window. If it changes the raw material, it will be much more expensive in the current landscape, creating a disadvantage compared to the cheaper (usually non-EU) products. What will guarantee that it can stay on the market? Will the import outside of the EU be restricted? Can we define our domestic market as free in such a case? The bio-based resources are not an unlimited pool. How can we ensure that the producers will always

get the needed raw material, especially considering that it is a seasonal product, which ideally does not compete with the food sector? How can we ensure that it won’t compete with the food sector? We haven’t even touched on the question regarding waste management and the role of the producer in that, and yet we are already facing problems policymakers are struggling to solve.

Let’s look at the consumers’ side. Understandably, regulating the producer is more effective in reducing plastic pollution than raising mass awareness in society. Citizens only sometimes have plastic pollution high on their priority list; therefore, policy regulations are necessary for changes because the consumers will not initiate that decisively. However, that can sound like an “autocratic” measure because it can quickly happen that most voters would stand against such regulations, especially if they thought it would also drive up the prices. The question comes whether controlled and centralized decision-making is necessary for the “greater good” or whether we should let the consumers decide and change the market and, with that, the economy through their actions. The boundaries are unclear, generational interests and habits collide, and politicians struggle to decide what kind of political voter to please.

The more discussion we participate in, the more questions arise, and the situation seems hopeless. It seems like everyone holds a “simple solution”; however, it is essential to acknowledge that one problem has a thousand faces, and a “simple” economical solution may not be industrially or technologically workable or desired by the citizens (not to mention the collision of different scientific schools). We tried to find clear answers to these questions as well. However, young and determined EU citizens saw the complexity of the issues. The role of science is higher than we currently consider, and an active science-policy discussion is needed to reach a middle ground in economic, technological, and societal terms. Along with that, a significant effort in societal awareness raising is necessary. There is no black and white, but there is always a “good enough” compromise, which we need to elaborate.

¹⁵ Kate Raworth: A Safe and Just Space For Humanity – can we live within the doughnut? Oxfam Discussion Paper, February 2012.

PROF. DR DIETMAR MEYER – EXPERT COMMENT ON WORKING GROUP IV

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, CHAIR OF ECONOMIC THEORY,
FORMER RECTOR OF ANDRÁSSY UNIVERSITY BUDAPEST

Economics is changing. Of course, these stereotypical statements are generally accurate. However, the last decades have demonstrated that the traditional approaches of economics have been proven to be more and more inefficient in understanding and solving significant problems of the present day. To take a simple but, at the same time, appealing example, let us consider the question of economic development. For the ancestors of modern scientific and economic thought (Adam Smith and his contemporaries), it was evident that the more a country can produce, the higher developed it is. Some decades later, it became clear that production alone is not enough for economic success; somebody must also sell produced goods. This well-known Keynesian revolution implied a new understanding of the over centuries almost continuously mentioned institution, the market. It will never be the statically given place where demand and supply meet each other, but it has to be influenced by producers. Indeed, for the next 50–60 years, economists intensively discussed this view in detail, but mainly it was accepted by the majority. However, the traditional and Keynesian approaches left out the question of resource sufficiency. Do we have enough natural resources to continue economic and social development? Does the present generation leave enough natural resources for the next generation to live at least on the same level as we do? These and similar questions led to the often-discussed problem of sustainability.

Thus, at the end of the 18th century, development was synonymous with higher production; later, it meant producing more and ruling the market. What is the purpose now? The answer to this question is critical, and we must

expand our understanding of economics. Therefore, we need to develop a form of social economics. In this context, research, teaching, and policy must focus more and more on the interaction between different fields of social life. Scientists and representatives from all fields face a qualitatively new situation requiring new ways of looking at a problem, including innovative approaches and appropriate methods. Nowadays, it is yet unaccustomed to integrating economics with ideas and results from philosophy, political science, sociology, etc., and with natural sciences (e.g., biology or chemistry), but there is no other way to reach acceptable and sustainable solutions to the problems mentioned above. The timeless discussion of “efficiency or equality” or “success or justice” has been reformulated. Up to the point of time when such an answer can be given, if a general solution can be given at all, social actors must learn by doing.

Suppose, for a moment, that society finds an answer. How constructively will society implement the solution at hand? Will the solution be introduced into social practice by all actors, such as international and national organizations, governments, firms, households, and individuals from all over the world? Will the solution comply with the diverse requirements of those actors? What if the solution contradicts the current interests of those actors?

From history, one could learn that humans have made inconvenient decisions only if their pure existence would treat them. With this in mind, it seems hopeless to expect that 8 billion social actors will fundamentally change their behaviour in the following decades or centuries. As a consequence, the responsibility of governments and international and civil organizations increases. Developing their strategies, they have to consider all new and relevant information about the future of the Earth earned by scientists and practitioners, and they have to establish rules for the behaviour of all social actors. However, success requires a new interaction and intensive cooperation between economists and politicians.

STUDENT REPORT V: CIVIL SOCIETY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

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GROUP EXPERTS:

JUDR. SLAVOMIR RUDENKO, PHD
MALGORZATA KOPKA-PIĄTEK

Topic and problem definition

The issue we are concerned with in our working group is how global warming changes European civic participation. The first brainstorming session focused on how these changes might manifest. Firstly, civil societies face generational cleavages amidst climate change. Discussions about these evoke different emotions, opinions, and solutions depending on the respective generation. Whereas younger generations often worry more about the effects of climate change in the long term because it affects their future and the of the next generations, older generations might be more concerned with their economic and financial position and maintaining of their standard of living. The organization, “Fridays for Future”, illustrates the involvement of the young generation in particular, with the youth taking action and trying to find solu-

tions for the current crisis. However, this activism is not reflected in the attitude of the older generations.

This societal fragmentation is not only restricted to generational division. By analysing societies, we identify different lines of division, which are accelerated and underlined by the effects of climate change. The results of climate change predominantly impact more vulnerable groups of society. While climate damages are caused primarily by those with resources, people without resources must endure the environmental consequences, such as floods, droughts, or famine, in their purest form. Furthermore, there is an apparent disparity between urban and rural areas regarding the responses and sympathies to climate action.

Despite these societal discrepancies, we also focused on the strength of civil societies to cause change and mitigate the disastrous effects of human behaviour. NGOs can be active stakeholders to incentivise a modification of policies and behaviour, both publicly and privately. Another aspect is the strength of the masses. A significant impact may be visible if most people commit to sustainable practices, such as a deposit system (in German: “Pfand”) or to separate and recycle waste. Such concentrated action could prevent disastrous consequences if most people commit to protecting the environment.

These positive developments, however, might be impeded by conspiracy theories that make rational argumentation and the implementation of reasonable schemes to target the crisis rather difficult. A considerable minority of the population believes climate change is part of a naturally occurring cycle or a capitalist tool to accumulate wealth by manipulating and impoverishing ordinary people. These views were further spread by famous and influential people like former US President Donald J. Trump and reached high publicity. This publicity thwarts the collective actions required to save our planet. Nevertheless, the widespread contribution to support the transformation to a greener lifestyle is trending. Not only are organizations like ‘Fridays for Future’ increasing in size, but also localized efforts to tackle the crisis are accelerating all around the globe. This growth demonstrates civil society’s commitment that was created in recent years.

Solutions and policy recommendations

Awareness has to be created that every single person is or will be impacted by the results of climate change. By considering the asymmetric effects of climate change on societies worldwide, more people should be aware of the

likelihood of experiencing such catastrophes in the near future. All participating actors need to trigger this awareness through positive communication. A communication process focusing on positivity and opportunities can trigger positive movements and self-reflection in civil society. This awareness raising could include education with videos and social media that give everyday life tips on minimizing waste, pollution, and CO2 emissions and present best practice examples.

In this context, avoiding anxiety-triggering terminologies like 'crisis' or 'catastrophe' in public discourses is essential. These words have a negative connotation and thus infer a hopeless situation that is beyond repair and therefore has the potential to stifle people rather than motivate them to contribute by adopting a more environmentally-friendly lifestyle. As such, the discourse around climate action should be amended positively to keep civil society engaged while simultaneously preventing people from getting frustrated. It should centre around rewarding positive and environmentally-friendly behaviour instead.

The potential for change on the mass level is undoubtedly there – but a mobilization has to occur. One possibility to engage civil societies on a larger scale is civic dialogues. In these citizens' dialogues, opinions, problems, and ideas can be named and distilled into policy recommendations. These recommendations could be promoted via social media or by going into schools and lecturing students about the public impact on the climate. These should also focus on plausible and appropriate solutions on a personal level, stimulating individual participation to ensure climate action. Hence, young people may be actively included in communal efforts to reduce the environmental damage caused by humans. These efforts could then trigger a domino effect and, as such, also reach older people through their children or grandchildren. Generally, it is crucial to mobilize on a larger scale. Nevertheless, country and region-specific perspectives should be considered for a strong movement for climate action. Regional-tailored approaches must be adopted to ensure the maximum contribution of society to tackle environmental disruptions.

Bürgergesellschaft und Bürgerbeteiligung und soziale Aspekte



JUDR. SLAVOMIR RUDENKO, PHD – EXPERT COMMENT ON WORKING GROUP V

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The participants of the Work Group 5 have been dealing with the critical question of civil society participation and the role of the participating individuals. This question was dealt with less in a political sense and more from an individual's perspective on their engagement and activity in public processes in everyday life. A lively discussion of participating students from Germany, Hungary, and the Czech Republic with the academic supervisors of the group from Slovakia and Poland led to exciting points and shared experiences. The introduction of the discussion touched upon current challenges and crises affecting civil society, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the armed conflict in Ukraine and energy security concerns. The students dived into each topic separately and compared the political consequences between the countries from which the students originated. The participants from the V4 countries partially concluded that a pre-Covid tendency of rising populism on the political scene in their respective countries has accelerated in light of the public health crisis. The crisis increased the image of a security threat situation, and in some cases, politicians overused their power and extraordinary competencies, which were initially thought to combat the crisis.

Consequently, this has led, inter alia, to a stronger position of the state (government) as an institution and a particular marginalisation of civil society's voice and the position of the individuals actively involved in it. In everyday life and the daily facing of challenging crises, the active role of civil society has, however, proven its role. Humanitarian organisations, civil society associations, foundations, and similar formalised groupings, alongside activists as private persons, have demonstrated to have fulfilled incredibly independent

roles, activities, and flexibility to an extent to distinguish them from the state and its rather stiff governmental structures.

The above-mentioned has also become a best practice scenario in the first days and weeks following the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the consequent stream of Ukrainian refugees to most European countries. Thus, the workgroup has reached a unanimous conclusion that the swiftly involved, less formalized structures and forms of conduct applied by civil society make a clear difference.

A separate question that our workgroup dealt with was connected to energy security and energy sufficiency in Europe, following Russia's pressure on the energy prices on the global energy stock market. From this perspective, the students raised one dominating question. They were curious whether or not the ambitious European Green Deal policies and environmental goals set by the EU may still survive in the light of changing circumstances, facing completely new challenges. Again, the students reached a joint position; although they agreed that the energy crisis brings challenges, also common understanding grew, which led to further support of renewable energy resources and the pursuit of energy sufficiency.

Furthermore, the participants have emphasised political plans and one-sided, economically motivated decisions (such as the Nord-Stream 2 project) should be dealt with more flexibility. The EU should prioritize a joint European security vision rather than pure economic growth, which was the mantra of the western, consumer-oriented style of life. This overhaul may result from a crisis, which still a few months before would not have seemed possible in 21st-century Europe.

During the conference of a lively exchange of thoughts, values, and experiences, the discussion emphasised that precisely the participation of the individual and the role and the position of the civil society in the participating European countries will lead to overcoming the currently challenging and pressing issues in Europe. The flow of ideas and an exchange of good practices during the V4+Germany Dialogue initiative shall undoubtedly contribute to the unifying goal of bringing the civil societies in countries of the EU ever closer.

MALGORZATA KOPKA-PIĄTEK – EXPERT COMMENT ON WORKING GROUP V

SENIOR POLICY ANALYST / HEAD OF THE EUROPEAN
PROGRAMME INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Announced by the European Commission in 2019, the EGD is the cornerstone of EU climate policy and heralds a transformation in industries, farming, agriculture, and services. The EGD seeks an answer to the questions of how cities will be organised, the countryside will grow, we will travel in the future, and we will heat our homes. The plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions envisaged in the EU programme and other acts related to its implementation are no longer a matter of whim of the rich. The plans are a necessity arising from the threats to the planet and the living conditions of the eight billion people on Earth, brought by the expansive development of many industries and the irresponsible exploitation of the planet's resources. The long-term ignoring of human activity's effects on the planet's condition has brought us to catastrophe. And the response to it must be swift, decisive and multi-pronged if we want it to be effective.

The changes envisaged in the EGD will affect many sectors of the economy, the way we think about shared resources and how we organise life in our local communities. The challenge for politicians and experts is to prepare scenarios on how to do this. But even the best scenarios cannot be realised by citizens' readiness and willingness to change.

These aspects were discussed among students at Andrassy University during the "V4 and Germany: The Implementation of the European Green Deal – opportunities and challenges Conference". The working group: "Civil society and civic participation and social aspects" dealt with the question of how climate change is changing civic participation in Europe.

Raising awareness of climate change, its consequences and the need for urgent action

Although much has already been done in this area, the topic of climate change and the climate catastrophe that threatens us has made its way into public debate, media coverage or even private conversations. At the same time, not everyone is still convinced of the anthropogenic impact on the climate. There is also no shortage of leading politicians in the V4 region who publicly doubt the validity of the research of thousands of scientists. We need to raise this topic in the public debate for multiple reasons. Children need to receive sound knowledge from an early age. The public needs to be trained in resistance against disinformation and propaganda from those who favour staying with fossil fuels. We need public acceptance of how much we have damaged the Earth, how quickly we need to act and how each of us can contribute.

In climate education and climate change sensitivity campaigns, it is crucial to combine personal, local and global aspects to show people the big picture of the situation. It is about showing how climate change is already affecting our lives and what further consequences there will be if we do not take action to curb CO₂ emissions. It is also important to show by example how our current way of life affects other, sometimes very distant places and people in the world.

Participants in the working group emphasised the importance of positive messages. The constant threat of catastrophe, the apocalyptic vision of a world consumed alternately by fires and floods, with dying species and forced mass migrations due to water or food shortages, is demotivating. For some, it can lead to so-called climate depression; for others, it deprives them of the sense of agency and purpose of doing something about it, and for the vast majority, it leaves them feeling anxious but with no concrete guidance as to what can be done. This is why it is worth investing in campaigns that showcase reasonable solutions that have already been tested, technological innovations that support the transition or other actions that allow us to regain a sense of hope and empowerment.

A sensitive, informed, educated public can more effectively pressure those in power and the economy. Next to the Fit for 55 package's legal regulations, consumer attitudes influence the decisions of large corporations. We all know that without fundamental changes in industry, transport or food production, our everyday choices, and the abandonment of plastic bags, al-

beit the right thing to do, will make little difference on a global scale. In each successive election in democratic countries, we have a say in choosing political parties supporting energy transition, moving away from fossil fuels, and transforming our agriculture.

Involving citizens in the transformation

And while the responsibility for driving public policies rests every time with those in power, many examples have shown that profound reforms are easier for government to carry out by including citizens in the decision-making process. The sense of being listened to, confronting fellow citizens with opinions that are sometimes quite different from one's own, and learning about the motivations and concerns of one's neighbours allows one to better understand the need for change, to work out common (with the emphasis on common) solutions and to ensure long-term results. This is what the experience of citizen panels, which are already being conducted in different places around the world and on different topics, shows. Participants recommended this format of social dialogue as a method of involving citizens in decision-making processes and building community around an issue as important as climate transformation.

Social inequalities

The pursuit of profit, blind adherence to continuous economic growth, and the plundering of natural resources have led not only to environmental damage but also to social inequalities. The Visegrad countries did not escape this phenomenon, moving from a centrally controlled economy to the capitalism of the 1990s. Climate change, like other phenomena, is felt more acutely by groups at risk of social, economic or transport exclusion. We are already dealing with the concept of fuel poverty. The financial crisis of 2008, the coronavirus pandemic, and current Russia's aggression against Ukraine have only deepened these divisions and threats. A just transition cannot be blind to these inequalities. Moving away from fossil fuels, energy transition, agriculture or transport should be accompanied by protective programmes to support groups who, for various reasons, are less able to cope with the profound reforms ahead.

DR HEINRICH KREFT – SPECIAL REPORT

DR HEINRICH KREFT HOLDS THE CHAIR OF DIPLOMACY AND IS DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR DIPLOMACY AT ANDRÁSSY UNIVERSITY IN BUDAPEST. PREVIOUSLY, HE WAS GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO THE GRAN DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG.

THE “ECOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE” AND THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

1. UNDERSTANDING THE “ECOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE”

Philosopher Hans Jonas extended Jean-Paul Sartre's claim of the global responsibility of the individual to the entire biosphere and demanded that we also consider the consequences of our actions for future generations: “Act in such a way that the effects of your actions are compatible with the permanence of human life on earth”. With his “ecological imperative,” he expanded Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative.

Despite huge forest fires in Brazil, California, Australia and Siberia, despite melting of the glaciers in the high mountains and the polar caps, floods and heat waves on all continents, the realization grows only slowly with still too many that this is a fatal fallacy.

Despite early warnings of the “limits to growth” such as those of the Club of Rome and others, there has been little shaking of the belief in technological progress and unlimited economic growth, particularly in the two largest economies – the U.S. and China – and in most emerging economies.

Also, the willingness to take responsibility for the consequences of one's own actions, or inactions, varies widely around the world. Although it has been undisputed in science for some time that mankind must radically change its interaction with nature to sustainability in order not to destroy our own livelihoods in the long term.

However, we are still very far from an international consensus that every country, every organization, indeed every human being is responsible for this. In 1983, the United Nations established a World Commission on Environment and Development, which, under the leadership of Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland, presented its report "Our Common Future" in 1987. In it, it developed the concept of sustainability, a "long-term environmentally sound use of resources." The concept of sustainability, which has since become internationally accepted as a guiding principle, means: "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and choose their standard of living."

1.1. FROM LOCAL TO INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Sustainability in climate, energy and environmental policy must start at home for each and everyone, but nonetheless, sustainability must not be thought of only locally, regionally or nationally. Ultimately, the international dimension is crucial – especially in climate policy.

If only individuals – if only Germany – or if only Europe behaves "correctly" in terms of sustainability and, for example, reduce its greenhouse gases, this will not stop global warming with its catastrophic consequences. Not without reason, people in the countries of the global South point to the historic burdens on the world's climate left behind by the development of European (and other industrialized) nations. In my view, this implies that we also have a responsibility to shoulder greater burdens for international environmental policy, especially in combating climate change.

The environmental catastrophe that most scientists believe we are heading toward can only be prevented if we reach a global consensus that encourages each individual to act responsibly to preserve the environment.

1.2. CLIMATE CHANGE MOVES TO THE CENTRE OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Soon after the end of the Cold War, it was recognized that climate change posed a major challenge to the future of humankind. Climate policy encompasses many areas of politics and life. From the general environmental protection issue that was the focus of national and international attention in the 1980s and 1990s, along with biodiversity protection, combating ozone holes and forest dieback, and the dangers posed

by the chemical and nuclear industries, climate policy has emerged as THE leading global issue.

Climate protection requires collective action and is a prime example of the provision of a global public good. No one can be excluded from the benefits of climate protection; nor is there any rivalry in terms of use between different actors. This situation automatically creates a free-rider problem. The distribution of the high costs of climate protection is a political and economic challenge since its benefits cannot be allocated either directly or in a timely manner. Every state and every non-state actor that invests in climate protection must assume that the benefits will accrue to everyone or that they will no longer enjoy them themselves due to the inertia of the climate system. This makes international climate policy an enormous diplomatic feat and the achievement of global agreements that offer all partners more advantages than disadvantages a difficult task.

1.3. FROM KYOTO TO PARIS

In 1988, the "Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change" (IPCC) was founded, which summarized the scientific findings on climate change known to date in the first status report.

At the so-called "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was adopted, creating the basis for international climate policy under international law. The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994 and included 196 states and the EU.

The objective of the UNFCCC is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous interference with the climate system. It also lays down the basic principles for necessary climate policy measures as well as the distribution of burdens according to the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities." The financial burdens for global climate policy were imposed on the "Western" industrialized countries, which are members of the OECD, while the developing countries were not required to make any efforts of their own. This was soon to ignite a fierce dispute.

The continuation of negotiations eventually led to the Kyoto Protocol, which was signed in 1997 and had to be ratified as a binding treaty under international law, leading to controversial domestic debates in many countries. It did not enter into force until 2005 after it had been ratified by the Russian parliament.

However, the Kyoto Protocol struggled with its birth defects from the outset, particularly because the agreement did not commit the major emerging economies – above all, China and India – to climate protection. The non-inclusion of China prompted the USA to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol as early as 2001. Moreover, the scientific community considered the Protocol's ambitions to be too low and criticized the lack of sanctions. It, therefore, did not provide a sustainable basis for a balance of interests and, thus, for global cooperation.

Therefore, as soon as the Protocol entered into force, the Parties to the UNFCCC sought a comprehensive new basis that would not only require all states to contribute to climate policy but would also broaden the focus of climate policy in line with the progress of scientific knowledge. A first step in this direction was taken in 2007 with the Bali Action Plan, which adopted an expanded negotiating mandate. The UNFCCC's basic principles for a new climate order remained the same: The OECD countries were to continue to bear the main financial burden in order to achieve the common climate policy goals, but the developing countries, first and foremost the large emerging economies China and India, were also to be obligated to contribute – but they were by no means willing to do so at this point. On the contrary, they organized the resistance of the developing countries united in the Group of 77 against these efforts. It was, therefore, not surprising that the first attempt to reach a new agreement in Copenhagen in 2009 failed, primarily due to resistance from China, India and other emerging economies.

It was not until the subsequent annual Conferences of the Parties (COPs) that positions converged, and key points were drawn up for a new regime to be adopted. This paved the way to Paris.

1.4. THE PARIS CLIMATE PROTECTION AGREEMENT

The Paris Climate Agreement is the new reference agreement for international climate, energy and environmental policy. The agreement is characterized by universality because it commits all signatory states to contribute to climate policy.

Thus, after many years of negotiations, it has been possible to place the climate regime on a new footing based on the experience gained with the Kyoto Protocol. The most significant innovation is the abandonment of top-down targets that have to be met. Instead, all states are called upon to set national targets and undergo an international review process (“pledge and review”). The goals are to

be achieved through international negotiation and national implementation processes. The signatory states undertake under international law to meet their declared targets and commitments (the NDCs), to make them successively more ambitious and to provide the information needed for review.

The Paris Agreement achieved the highest possible level of legitimacy when it was adopted in 2015, with all 197 UNFCCC Parties agreeing to it.

The Paris Agreement not only agreed to limit climate change to “below two degrees Celsius” from pre-industrialization levels but also set a broader goal of curbing warming to an average of 1.5 degrees Celsius. This goal seems a long way off, as greenhouse gas emissions accumulated in the atmosphere to date already led to 1.0 degrees Celsius of warming in 2015, and an evaluation of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to date shows that the necessary trend reversal has not materialized.

1.5. THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY

The 2015 Paris Agreement will remain the linchpin of international climate policy and its dimensions of climate change mitigation, adaptation, and international burden sharing in the coming years. In this context, the cooperation of those who have mainly caused climate change and those who are exacerbating it is particularly important. That is, above all, that the goals cannot be achieved without the constructive behaviour of the United States and China. Because of the uncertainties and risks inherent in climate policy and the unequal distribution of costs and benefits, many smaller countries look to their larger “peers” – Europe, the U.S. and China – to join them.

1.6. THE URGENCY OF CLIMATE PROTECTION IS GROWING

Meanwhile, the changes and anomalies in the climate system predicted by scientists are occurring. Extreme events such as heat waves, forest fires and floods are accumulating on all continents, highlighting the consequences of global and ocean warming. Climate change is also leading to increasing pressure on essential resources such as drinking water and arable land, especially in Africa. Many fragile states, in particular, see their precarious stability and security additionally threatened as a result. New insights into the risks of climate change are, therefore, already leading to a more in-depth discussion of prevention and response options.

Although governments in Moscow, Canberra, Brasilia and some other capitals have been little or not at all impressed by climate-related natural dis-

asters in their countries, civil society movements have recently emerged or strengthened there, demanding more environmental protection from their governments. The “Fridays For Future” movement initiated and supported by European students has also reached these countries. Cities and business enterprises are also among the most active non-governmental supporters of the Paris Agreement. For example, at the 2017 Bonn Climate Conference, in addition to the U.S. government delegation, a civil society alliance called “America’s Pledge” was represented, consisting of 20 U.S. states led by California, 450 municipalities, and more than 1,700 companies, entrepreneurs, investors, universities and churches from the United States.

1.7. THE RETURN OF THE U.S. TO THE PARIS AGREEMENT IS CRUCIAL

In June 2017, U.S. President Donald Trump, known as a denier of man-made climate change, announced the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement. Despite great efforts, the EU and individual member states such as Germany were unable to stop him from taking this step, which led to the feared paralysis of international climate policy. The lack of U.S. leadership made itself immediately felt as other key countries from the G-20 circle distanced themselves from the agreement. In 2014, it had been the U.S., with personal input from President Obama, that ultimately persuaded China and India to join the Paris Agreement. Now it became apparent that despite all its ambitions, the EU does not have the leadership power to replace the USA. For the processes of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the departure of the U.S. meant that important implementation points could not be further negotiated, and the internationally agreed processes to increase climate protection and financing targets could not be met.

As a result, much depended for international climate policy on the outcome of the presidential election on November 3, 2020. On inauguration day, President Joe Biden returned the US back into the Paris climate protection agreement, which already is producing the hoped-for positive effects on international climate policy.

1.8. CLIMATE FOREIGN POLICY – GERMAN AMBITIONS

Germany is a driving force in European and international climate policy. The German government is convinced that implementation of the Paris Agreement, which is the linchpin of international climate policy, can only

be successful if development, economic, financial, energy and transport policies are also aligned with climate protection goals. Germany’s national climate policy is also correspondingly broadly based, involving all levels – federal, state and local – and all actors – state, private sector and civil society.

Three goals are at the heart of the German government’s foreign climate policy under the leadership of the Federal Foreign Office and with the cooperation of other specialized ministries:

- Supporting international climate policy with the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Addressing the foreign and security policy consequences of climate change under the heading of climate and security.
- The dialogue with other countries for more climate protection.

In the context of the climate protection dialogue with foreign countries, two messages are central from the perspective of the Federal Foreign Office: climate change is a security risk, and climate protection must also be understood as an opportunity.

On the one hand, it is said security risk, in combination with other factors, can endanger the stability of states and societies and trigger or intensify geopolitical tensions. Climate diplomacy aims to mitigate tensions by balancing interests, identifying conflicts at an early stage, and working toward their resolution. Growing awareness of the security significance of climate change can also – it is hoped – help states to become more involved in UN climate negotiations than in the past, pursue an ambitious climate protection policy domestically and implement the national pledges they made in the Paris Climate Agreement.

The German government has used Germany’s two-year membership of the United Nations Security Council (2019/20) to put the security implications of climate change on the UN Security Council’s agenda and raise awareness of the security implications of climate change in the United Nations. Man-made climate change is not only an environmental phenomenon but also one of the key security threats of the 21st century. Rising sea levels, more frequent weather extremes and the growing risk of environmental disasters are increasingly depriving people in affected regions of their livelihoods. As a result, climate change is increasingly acting as a “risk multiplier” that threatens the stability of states and societies worldwide. In island states or in the Sahel region, the effects of man-made climate change on stability and security are already clearly noticeable.

In addition, climate protection offers the opportunity to combine sustainable development and economic growth. Investments in climate and environmentally-friendly technologies offer job and growth prospects. At the same time, they reduce environmental pollution and its costs. Climate diplomacy, therefore, aims to promote sustainable development through international technology and knowledge transfer.

2. THE EUROPEAN UNION IN INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE POLICY – “GREEN DEAL” AND “GREEN RECOVERY”

The EU is a driving force in global climate policy. The emission reductions of 22 per cent already achieved in 2017 and the agreed target of 40 per cent for 2030 (both compared to 1990) secure the Europeans a top position in the group of industrialized countries. However, significant conflicts repeatedly arise over the issue of differentiation within the EU, especially between the ambitious member states of north-western Europe and the less ambitious governments of central-eastern Europe. This is also evident in the negotiations on a greenhouse gas neutrality target by 2050 as well as on a significant tightening of the target for emissions. The European Green Deal is the most ambitious agenda the EU has ever set itself. The Commission wants the deal to make Europe a technological and economic leader and to catch up geopolitically with the USA and China.

With the European Green Deal, the economic development of the EU is to be aligned in such a way that Europe becomes the first continent to become climate neutral. This is to be achieved with a wide range of measures in all policy areas. The European Green Deal aims to future-proof the EU by interweaving economic, social and environmental goals. Its starting thesis is that without protecting the natural foundations of life, it will not be possible for the EU to make economic progress and that without economic success, it will not be possible to secure the livelihoods of European citizens in the long term.

The EU Commission under Ursula von der Leyen has made the European Green Deal its most important project. After von der Leyen took office, the Commission published the communication “The European Green Deal” with a comprehensive list of priorities and legislative projects. It shows that the European Green Deal projects are derived from threats to the natural environment, climate and biodiversity but are also linked to an economic growth agenda that aims to make the EU resource-efficient, prosperous, fair and

competitive for the future. The implementation of the United Nations “Agenda 2030” with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals will be integrated.

The climate policy goals of the European Green Deal include sustainable fiscal policy (taxonomy), a circular economy (resources), sustainable agriculture (farm to fork), clean industry and nature conservation (biodiversity). With corresponding sustainably oriented investments, growth will be stimulated, and employment will be secured in the future.

To this end, the Commission has drawn up a detailed roadmap. In addition to legislative projects on climate protection, a new EU industrial strategy, an action plan for the circular economy, and a strategy for sustainable products with a focus on the textile, construction, electronics and plastics sectors will be presented. These projects aim to decarbonise and modernise energy-intensive industries and access (strategic) resources and value chains, an effective circular economy, energy- and resource-efficient construction and renovation, and a turnaround in transport and mobility toward more significant environmental and health protection. The reform of agricultural policy with the farm-to-fork strategy is intended to create a fair, healthy, environmentally friendly and low-emission food system. In the area of nature conservation, ecosystems are to be better taken into account, a new biodiversity strategy is to be drawn up, and the protection of forests, oceans and water bodies is to be strengthened. With the help of financing instruments, i.e., favourable loans, subsidies and the certification of financial investment products as “green”, investments in these projects are to be stimulated. The member states are to restructure their budgetary policies and tax systems, and education programs should also be geared toward the European Green Deal. The restructuring is to keep European citizens in mind and avoid social hardship.

This agenda is more comprehensive than any other the Commission has had before. In its five years in office, it can put the European Green Deal on a solid footing as a European project – primarily through appropriate legislation and a financing plan that will make member states’ investments “greener.” However, its success depends above all on uniting the 27 member states, the European Parliament’s ability to help shape it, and on maintaining it in crises and in the face of global trends.

The targets enshrined in the EU’s climate law are ambitious. In order to emit 55 per cent fewer greenhouse gases in 2030 compared with 1990, the efforts of all stakeholders will have to increase sharply. To this end, the Commission

has launched the Fit for 55 legislative package, a first step that primarily sharpens and supplements existing climate policy instruments.

This is an update of the EU's climate policy, which is intended to encourage companies and households to move away from the prevailing CO₂-intensive economy by means of emissions trading, setting emissions standards, promoting innovations and a climate-friendly industrial policy. However, this continuation of the climate and energy policies of recent years is now embedded in the European Green Deal, which seeks to involve all economic and social interest groups.

The discussion on how to deal with the social consequences of a rising CO₂ price is exemplary. The resulting financial burdens for poorer households and EU regions are to be mitigated by a Social Climate Fund. This fund is to be fed by the revenues of the planned expanded emissions trading system for the buildings and transport sectors. The Just Transition Fund is to provide targeted support for coal regions that want to end coal-fired power generation. Other funds will continue to provide funding for the modernization of energy systems in the ten poorest EU member states (Modernization Fund) and new demonstration projects in industries that develop low- or zero-emission technologies (Innovation Fund).

In 2020, the implementation of the European Green Deal was supposed to gain momentum. Still, the Corona pandemic reached Europe in March, with profound consequences for the European and international economies. The EU responded to the health and related economic crisis in the summer of 2020 with the comprehensive "Next Generation EU" stimulus package worth 750 billion euros. In addition, in negotiations with the member states, the Commission succeeded in earmarking one-third of the planned investments from the Next Generation EU package and the new seven-year financial framework (total amount: EUR 1.21 trillion) for the European Green Deal and, above all, for the fight against climate change. The Just Transition Fund and the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) program are centrepieces of European Green Deal funding and are budgeted at around €14.5 billion in the multi-year financial plan.

This earmarking agreement is remarkable in that several member states called for the ambitious agenda to be put on hold in light of the economic consequences of the pandemic. The reflex to postpone the challenges of restructuring toward climate neutrality in the face of acute crises is one of the major political obstacles to implementing the European Green Deal. The

dimensions of government and private transformation investments do not meet with approval in all member states.

2.1. STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

Beyond the Fit for 55 legislative initiative that has been launched, fundamental structural issues of economic activity need to be addressed in Europe. The long-term goal of climate neutrality by 2050 is not just a matter of making consumption more climate-friendly with the help of rising CO₂ prices. Instead, EU citizens must also be enabled to live a low-CO₂ or even CO₂-free life in the first place. This requires modern infrastructures in the energy and transport sectors, a reduction in fossil energy consumption subsidies, agricultural policy and nature conservation reform, and reduced land use and redirection in the construction and housing sectors. The widespread availability of affordable climate-friendly products and access to a functioning circular economy with increasing recycling rates are as important for changing course as societal approval for this transformation. However, both of these conditions have yet to be created or developed.

An essential foundation for these structural changes is an investment in capital stock. Again, these cannot be stimulated by policy instruments such as carbon prices and standards alone but must be accompanied by public spending. It is estimated that annual investment flows would need to total €255 billion per year between 2021 and 2030 (equivalent to about 2 per cent of annual EU-wide economic output) if the European Green Deal is to kick-start climate neutrality. The largest share of emissions-reducing investments should go toward retrofitting buildings (27 per cent), followed by investments in technological innovation, research, and development of digital solutions for energy savings (12 per cent each), the electricity grid for renewables (10 per cent), and the transformation of auto transport, the European internal market, and other sectors (8 per cent or less). The social components of a green investment offensive are essential – i.e., employment, health and equalization of living conditions within the EU and its member states.

The integration of the EU into the international economy also plays a vital role in successful restructuring because the share of imports sold in the EU in the supply of goods is very high, and the European economy is just as dependent on exports and thus also on international cooperation in changing the way the economy works.

2.2. THE GREEN DEAL AS A MODEL FOR OTHER COUNTRIES?

The Green Deal has a history, of course. As part of the sustainability debate, green economic concepts go back to the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. To flesh them out, the Brundtland Report of 1987 developed the concept of the three pillars of sustainable development: social, environmental and economic. In this report, the idea of a sustainable world economy is formulated as a common concern of humanity. A common future for all nations should be designed to secure food supplies, protect natural resources and the environment, and enable peace and security. The Brundtland Report reads as relevant today as it did 35 years ago. As a result, the first UN Conference on Sustainable Development was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The “Earth Summit” produced various environmental agreements, including the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the “Rio Declaration” with principles for concretizing sustainable development.

2.3. GLOBAL TRENDS MAKE GREEN DEALS MORE IMPORTANT

In relation to its international partners, the EU was already searching for a new geopolitical positioning in 2016. Reinforced by the U.S. withdrawal from international responsibilities in 2017, the discussion of a “Global Strategy” turned into one about Europe’s “strategic autonomy.”

The European Green Deal, therefore, also serves the European Commission as a building block for the geopolitical reorientation of the EU-27. Ambitious climate policy is an integral part of this strategy, although the EU alone cannot save the climate because its share of global emissions is too small for that. Nevertheless, positioning itself as a pioneer by linking climate policy with an innovative economic agenda can help maintain economic strength. The EU is losing ground in the competition with China and the U.S. for geo-economic dominance. With the European Green Deal, the EU wants to push for progress-driven, resource-efficient and socially responsible economic development in Europe to keep up on the world markets and make itself less dependent on countries like Russia and China. Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, which led to the severe curtailment of Russian energy exports to the EU, has underscored the urgency of this policy.

The acid test is yet to come for the European Green Deal. That’s because the goals of the deal – for example, a better circular economy and climate

neutrality – also mean that the EU will consume less of the world’s available consumer goods and raw materials, making it more resilient to the tactical manoeuvres of other governments. If the EU succeeded in using the European Green Deal as a model for social consensus on how to deal with the global environmental crisis and for economic success, this could influence other governments as well. Thus, the hope would be that the European Green Deal would become a drawing card for other industrialized and emerging countries because it has an answer to the distributional struggles over resources, the challenges of climate change, and rising social dislocations.

The recent COP in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, showed that this path is steep and rocky.

2.4. “GREEN RECOVERY”

The EU’s stimulus measures to combat the Corona-induced recession are to be linked to this programmatic approach (“green recovery”), mainly by financing structural reforms toward a sustainable economy. Leading economists, including Nicholas Stern and Joseph E. Stiglitz, scientifically support the effectiveness of long-term, a climate-friendly stimulus to overcome the economic crisis. Frans Timmermans, EU Commissioner for Climate Action, also justified the need for a climate-friendly recovery program on the grounds of intergenerational justice: the loans to be taken out now would ultimately have to be repaid by future generations, who, for that reason alone, have an interest in ensuring that ecologically sound projects are also financed with them. Therefore, the EU Commission’s “Next Generation EU” economic stimulus package contains proposals to strengthen the European Green Deal.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

The tensions and contradictions that still exist worldwide between economic policy interests and environmental policy requirements were visible at the COP27 last November 2022. The COP27 in Egypt was supposed to set the course for a speedy implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement. The result is meagre.

The goals were ambitious: better support for dealing with damage and losses caused by climate change in developing countries, a work program for mitigating greenhouse gases and reducing global emissions by 2030 and talks on adapting to the consequences of climate change, especially in building resilience.

A significant result is the agreement of the participating countries on a fund for damages and losses, which is to come into force as early as 2023. This will provide money for developing countries, particularly at risk from climate change and will also provide additional financial resources from various sources, such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. It will be the task of the transition committee, which has also been decided, to examine whether and how the group of contributors will be expanded – particularly because of China’s role as one of the world’s largest emitters and its previous status as a developing country.

In terms of global warming targets, there has been little progress compared to last year’s climate conference in Glasgow, with the greenhouse gas reduction work program maintaining the 1.5-degree mark. It also calls for a sector-by-sector approach to greenhouse gas reductions and annual reporting on progress. The program runs until 2026 with an option to extend.

More far-reaching targets demanded by the EU, such as setting an emissions peak in 2025 in the final text, could not be pushed through. Instead, the last shell decision repeatedly confirmed the phase-out of coal and the elimination of “inefficient” fossil fuel subsidies, as already agreed in Glasgow. At least 43 per cent of global emissions are to be reduced by 2030 compared with 2019, and low-emission (gas and nuclear) and renewable energies are to be expanded. It was impossible to reach an agreement on a phase-out of fossil fuels, as demanded by an alliance of 80 countries, including the USA, India and the EU. It was also possible to agree on further financial support. For example, potential savings in connection with green hydrogen played a crucial role in discussions on renewable energies. For example, German Development Minister Svenja Schulze announced plans to provide an additional 550 million euros for developing a green hydrogen economy.

While the COP does not have the authority to adopt legally binding regulations, it does provide a platform for trend-setting global exchange and collaborations. The targeted investments also create the basis for new industrial processes, innovative products and services worldwide.

The balancing act between traditional growth targets and innovative alternative economic models that mitigate the external damage of economic activity is already tricky today. So far, no country has succeeded in applying the guiding principle of a new economic model geared to climate and environmental protection in its national economic policy. Much remains to be done, both nationally and internationally.

International climate policy is also likely subject to enormous tensions in the coming years, which have built up in the relationship between the major powers, the USA and China and by Russia’s war on Ukraine. Since criticism of China extends far into the Democratic Party spectrum, U.S. policy toward China has not changed fundamentally under President Biden, and the US remains committed to supporting Ukraine against Russia even after the mid-term elections.

If disruption were to come from the development and spread of climate-friendly technologies, the geopolitical tide would also turn. These include using hydrogen and technologies that slow the accumulation of greenhouse gases by removing CO₂ from the atmosphere. The latter, on which research is being conducted primarily in the USA and China, could initiate a climate policy turnaround.

The global climate protection agenda remains, indeed must remain, ambitious. The Corona pandemic has reminded us that, despite all the technological advances, man has not and will not conquer nature. The only sustainable development, therefore, can only be a green one, one that is in harmony with nature.















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