

The Future of the EU's Energy Project

Climate dimension



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This Political Brief considers the climate and sustainability dimension of the EU's energy project. It identifies a number of proposals to close the current policy gaps.

Key areas of focus are monitoring and long-term strategic planning of both targets and infrastructure, renewed European solidarity and the need to look outside of the EU borders.

It is the third of four briefs exploring the various dimensions of the EU's energy project, all based on expert input and discussions among the GEF Knowledge Communities. The other three deal with energy security, social aspects and democracy.

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Introduction

European climate action is intrinsically linked to the questions surrounding its energy project, underscoring a critical intersection of environmental sustainability and energy in all its dimensions. As Europe intensifies its efforts to combat climate change, driven by commitments to the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal, the focus on transforming energy systems has become paramount. This transformation involves a comprehensive shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources, the integration of smart grid technologies, and the enhancement of energy efficiency across sectors. These changes not only aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also address pressing issues of energy security, economic resilience, technological innovation, democracy, and so on. Consequently, the dialogue surrounding European climate action and energy systems delves into complex questions about the feasibility of rapid transitions, the socio-economic impacts of energy policies, and the geopolitical ramifications of shifting energy landscapes. Understanding these dynamics is essential for forging a sustainable and secure energy future for Europe.

A slow awakening

By the late 1980s, the enormous environmental damage caused by the western-led model of industrial development started to become increasingly clear. In that context, the concept of "sustainable development" made its first appearance in 1987, with the UN-commissioned Brundtland Report entitled *Our Common Future*. It was proposed as an attempt to address the concerns that scientists had been voicing, for example through the *Limits to Growth* report published by the Club of Rome in 1972.

"Sustainability" meant that growth and material wealth should no longer be pursued at the expense of the future but should take a range of factors into account: the environment, the planet's ecological balances and capacity to regenerate the depleted resources, and human health and well-being. The reign of fossil fuels had to be brought to a close, otherwise the planet would become unsuitable for life in the near future. Humanity had to change its ways, starting with the energy system powering the world's economy, and it had to become sustainable. In other words, it was time to re-evaluate our sense of history and stop sacrificing future generations for our present comfort.

Early in the decade that followed, and eleven years before Greta Thunberg was even born, another young person stood in front of an audience of world leaders, officials, diplomats and politicians to reclaim her generation's future. Severn Suzuki, from Canada, was just 12 years old when she spoke on behalf of the Environmental Children's Organization at the 1992 Rio Climate Summit.

This Summit took place in a specific moment in time. The Cold War was history and so, in theory at least, was world division. But just as globalisation was about to take off, the world was also waking up to the fact that the immense wealth accumulated by some of its nations was coming at the expense of the future – both for humanity and the planet itself.

The identified issues were not limited to the toxic chemicals, dwindling wildlife habitats or ozone layer depletion lamented by Suzuki and her friends. There was also a less tangible, but even more deadly phenomenon to confront: the terrible impacts that the emissions created by the industrial revolution were having on the entire atmospheric system. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), set up in 1988, had by then made clear that, whether we were calling it “climate change”, “global warming” or “the greenhouse effect”, it went far beyond mere weather or pollution. And according to the Panel, it was systemic, multidimensional, complex, lethal – and almost certainly man-made. The very first IPCC *Assessment Report* (1990) moreover emphasised that the challenges posed by climate change demanded strong international cooperation and explicit commitment from the so-called “developed world” whose material prosperity and world dominance were actually the root cause of the looming catastrophe.

State of play

The EU as an early mover

The EU was among the first political entities to accept the challenge. The United States had declined to assume any historical responsibility, declaring at the Rio Summit that “The American lifestyle is non-negotiable”. It later refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, the purpose of which was to gain international commitment to take action against climate change, along the lines of the Montreal Protocol that had successfully addressed the depletion of the ozone layer (Barrett, 1999).

Europe, by contrast, assumed moral and political leadership on the issue (Gaudot & Tocci, 2023), defining concern for climate and the environment as one of its aims and policy drivers, and thereby in effect setting the timeline for the rest of the world. In 1992, the year of the Rio Summit, the Maastricht Treaty made the environment an official EU policy area. In 1997, the year of the Kyoto Protocol, the Treaty of Amsterdam established the duty to integrate environmental protection into all EU sectoral policies “with a view to promoting sustainable development”. And in the wake of the failed Copenhagen Conference of the Parties (COP) in 2009 and the successful Paris one in 2015, the Lisbon Treaty set combating climate change and ensuring sustainable development in its relations with third countries as a specific aim. In 2019 this culminated in the Green Deal, which sought to accelerate the pace of the energy transition within an ambitious, overarching framework for the green transition as a whole.

Europe's unique commitment to fighting climate change is not coincidental of course. Not only is it in the EU's material interest to wean its energy system off costly imported fossil fuels, but both its form of governance and the social and cultural background to its creation make it an obvious path to take. The essence of the European project is cooperation and compromise for the purpose of addressing issues of a transnational nature – pollution and the environment being obvious examples. Moreover, transitioning to an alternative economic model is not wholly unthinkable in Europe. As early as the 1970s, environmental, anti-nuclear and anti-consumerist activism had already become a political force with its radical criticism of the path being taken by Western societies and its aspirations for a better world, both socially and environmentally. A few years later this activism began to acquire an organised political form. Europe's Green parties started out in the 1980s as whistleblowers, but by the dawn of the 21st century they had become seasoned political players with government credentials.

High noon for climate action

At first sight it would seem that EU climate policies have achieved significant results (Delbeke & Vis, 2016). According to the Commission's own calculations, *"Since 2005, the EU ETS has helped bring down emissions from power and industry plants by 37%"*. The European Environment Agency estimates that greenhouse gas emissions in the EU27 *"have declined rapidly in recent years, falling to 32% below 1990 levels by 2020"* (2022, p.16). The 20-20-20 targets set by the Horizon 2020 programme have all been met (Prahl, 2014), though these successes could be partly due to the modesty of the ambitions (Simon, 2022), as well as the economic contractions caused by the 2008 financial crisis and the 2020 pandemic.

From extreme temperatures to violent weather events, the evidence for rapid climate deterioration has been accumulating. The incremental steps of the last few decades are no longer enough. To some extent, this urgency has found its way into EU policy. The Climate Law, the Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package all demonstrate increased ambition, including through the establishment of a legally binding target of carbon-neutrality by 2050, as well as through the aim to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Whether or not this is achieved will now be down to how well Member States deliver on their obligations. So far, however, actions have not lived up to the words. In June 2023 a scathing report from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) found *"little indication so far that the ambitious 2030 EU targets will be translated into sufficient action"* (p. 43), and that the EU and its Member States *"collectively lack ambition in pursuit of the 2030 energy efficiency targets"* (Simon, 2023).

According to the ECA, the persistent funding deficit is an important factor in the lack of climate action (Abnett, 2023). Numerous scientists, economists and civil society organisations, too, have identified this funding deficit as a stumbling block. The European Climate Neutrality Observatory (2023), for example, found that the pace of the transition is too slow and that it would take an additional 360 billion euros a year to close the gaps – both to shift quickly to a renewable energy system, and to conduct energy-efficient renovations and other energy saving measures. This figure pales into insignificance beside the numerous “carbon bombs” still being funded by oil majors and global and European financial institutions (Carrington & Taylor, 2022; Niranjana, 2023). Despite the 2015 Paris Agreement, new large-scale fossil fuel projects are still being launched, and more are being planned. Banks play a huge role here: the world's 60 largest banks have lent 1.8 trillion dollars to 425 large-scale fossil fuel projects since 2015 (Niranjana, 2023).

Meanwhile, the EU seems to have been seized by a kind of Green Deal fatigue in the run-up to the 2024 elections (Sánchez Nicolás, 2023). The climate crisis is becoming more apparent but so, too, are the less discussed social side-effects of green policies and, as their impact on European households starts to bite, public resistance is growing¹. Riding the wave of this rebellion, a coalition of vested interests, populist movements and climate change deniers is putting pressure on more centrist political forces; alongside calls for “regulatory pauses” from the French president, European right and centre-right parties are increasingly giving off worrying mixed signals (Di Sario & Leali, 2023; Henriques, 2023). At the same time, criticism is voiced around the lack of a clear and attractive progressive and green vision surrounding the desirable future that the climate policies will make possible (Charbonnier, 2023).

Reflections on the state of play

Time to act

The main question in relation to climate policies is rapidly shifting away from the “What?” to the “How?”. Targets set the destination but do not impose a method for reaching it. It is time for the EU and its Member States to focus on fully implementing the climate policies and meeting the targets they have already collectively agreed. This is not an invitation for the EU legislator to stop raising the bar for the EU's climate ambitions; rather, it is a call to lawmakers at both the EU and national levels to be as creative as possible in finding ways to make the transition happen in practice.

It is now down to the Member States to do their job and implement the directives in accordance with their own energy mixes and national preferences, as guaranteed by the Treaties. From the EU perspective, this means the return of the eternal question as to whether national governments will actually deliver the energy transition, or whether they will instead wriggle out of their legal and moral obligations. Past experience is not encouraging here²: the example of France's reluctance to invest in renewables is a textbook case of what can go wrong when governments resist their EU obligations³.

The impact of Russia's war on Ukraine on oil and gas imports has created an incentive to accelerate the pace of investment in alternative, renewable sources of energy, and there has indeed been a shift since the invasion, RePowerEU's upscaling of the renewable energy target being an example. To follow through with this shift and double down on the climate commitments is the only reasonable option for Europe.

New needs, new concerns

The availability of the necessary critical raw materials will of course be crucial for the implementation of the transition⁴. The EU has added the need to secure the resources required for its green technologies, industrial processes and sustainable energy production to its energy transition strategy. However, despite commendable efforts (Noyan, 2022), it is highly likely that a combination of domestic and external factors will make it impossible for the sector to meet the projected huge increases in demand for some of these materials. At the same time, the EU's approach to critical materials does not pay enough attention to social and environmental conditionalities.

The external aspect of the EU's energy transition goes well beyond the question of resources, of course. Climate neutrality efforts within the EU are intrinsically linked with those taken beyond its borders. There are a number of layers to this. Firstly, when talking about the EU's emissions, we are usually talking about those resulting from its own production processes. These numbers are flawed, since they do not include the emissions generated outside the EU in order to meet EU demand for consumer goods and services (Axelsson et al., 2023). Secondly, even if the EU delivers a fast and highly ambitious transition within its borders, this will obviously not of itself solve the global climate crisis, nor will it mean that European countries do not feel its effects. And thirdly, the EU has an important historic responsibility with regard to its emissions and ability to deliver the transition (ESABCC, 2023).

Europe's electricity grids are another area of concern, since they do not currently meet the demands of the energy transition, such as the ability to switch to renewable energy sources and handle the variability in power supply that they entail. *"Efficient electricity grids are key for any Net-Zero Industry plan and for managing the demand for Critical Raw Materials"* (Sawyer, 2023), in other words: grids are the backbone of the transition to a clean economy.

Moreover, and as discussed in more detail in our Political Brief on the social dimension, far more attention should be paid as well at the EU level to demand-side mitigation measures. Sufficiency and efficiency are low-cost, no-regret measures that should be given a much more prominent spot in future European climate action.

Finally, the clean energy transition requires massive investment: in renewables, in energy efficiency measures such as home retrofits, and in training and skilling of workers. At the same time, fossil fuel subsidies and investment need to be eliminated at a much faster pace. This will require a clean-up across all policy domains and sectors. Both state and private sector investment must be directed towards the energy transition instead, while also tackling the enormous disparities between countries in terms of fiscal and investment space. The issue of financing has already been addressed in detail in a previous brief on the social dimension of the energy project, but is so important that it will inevitably feature in our political proposals on the climate dimension as well.

Diverging priorities

Member States' policy priorities and choices are often not fully compatible with the achievement of the European targets. The national energy and climate plans show a significant discrepancy between the agreed targets and national climate action (European Commission, 2023). Member States are not fully fulfilling their duties, and are thereby harming the EU's potential to commit to the Paris Agreement. Both the lack of climate action and actually climate-damaging policy choices result from a combination of poor strategic thinking, ballot-driven short-termism, and the inadequate European financial framework.

Fragmented approaches and the lack of systemic thinking also shows in the under and overrepresentation of different aspects of and sectors in the transition. The battery sector, for example, seems to be experiencing a modern version of gold fever. While Member States compete with each other to attract investment from China, the US or Taiwan to build battery gigafactories, they easily lose sight of the overall strategic picture (Guillaume & Pineau, 2023; Mukherjee & Waldersee, 2023). There is a real risk of overcapacity in battery manufacturing, for example. But risks are maybe even more prominent at the level of social rights and environmental protection, as the concerns surrounding the building of a new battery plant in Hungary by the Chinese company CATL clearly shows (Buchenau et al., 2021; Higgins, 2023). And while governments seem to scramble to acquire these battery plants, crucial investment in other sectors such as rail freight, whose decades-long decline is certainly not aiding the climate cause, is simply overlooked (Rudolph et al., 2023).

No discussion of conflicting priorities can ignore the nuclear elephant in the room. Nuclear energy is still – for some Member States - perceived as one of the options for decarbonisation within the EU, despite the Greens' longstanding opposition to it and the fact that it – in reality - clearly does not meet the Taxonomy's criterion of “no significant harm” (Pistner et al., 2021). For countries without nuclear in their existing energy mix there is obviously less incentive to deploy an energy source whose start-up costs and timeframes make it irrelevant for meeting the 2030 targets⁵. In an integrated European grid, however, the reality is that electrons cross borders regardless of how they were generated, making the issue in essence European.

Nuclear energy is once again central in the European conversation about the energy transition. Part of this momentum is strengthened through aspects coming from outside Europe's borders, with China, Russia, the USA and South Korea all building nuclear power plants for export to countries including India and Bangladesh, as well as several in Africa. Nuclear security is thereby increasingly becoming a global issue. The prospect of Bangladeshi nuclear power plants being flooded by the now inevitable rising seas should concern us all.

There are also other factors at play. At the instigation of a hyperactive French Energy Minister and a national nuclear industry trying to regain its former economic strength with the backing of its government, 16 European countries have formed an “alliance for nuclear” with a view to gaining support for nuclear power and developing a “roadmap to develop an integrated European nuclear industry reaching 150 GW of nuclear power capacity in the EU's electricity mix by 2050” (Messad, 2023).

This may be a lost cause, however. Most of Europe's industrial players in the nuclear field are struggling, sometimes to the advantage of another major player: the Russian corporation Rosatom, which runs both nuclear plants near the Hungarian town of Paks, and also supplies a significant amount of the raw data and technology on which the French nuclear industry depends (Messad, 2023). In addition, the hydrographic consequences of climate change may severely hamper nuclear energy production, as has been the case in France in recent summers (Beaupuy & Gillespie, 2023).

A recent paper from the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) argued that the EU should spend less time infighting about nuclear and instead focus its resources on building renewables (Kardaś, 2023). As the cost of renewable energy solutions continue to come down over time, the remaining interest in nuclear energy will, most probably, eventually peter out.

Unforeseen consequences

The sustainability of the energy transition does not end with decarbonisation. Energy production also has a substantial impact on the environment, both in terms of the space it takes up and some of the chemical components used by green technologies. Whether we are talking about agrivoltaics, gigantic solar projects in the Sahara (a pipe-dream eventually abandoned), massive hydrogen infrastructures or offshore wind farms, all renewable energy production involves environmental costs that need to be taken into account.

Extractivism is an important issue, as can be seen in the rising demand for lithium and nickel, which is threatening entire ecosystems in the Atacama Desert and the Nauru seabed. Most of the potential mining sites in Europe are in Natura 2000 areas (Zimmermann, 2023). There have already been worrying calls for more flexibility and the disregarding of the environmental protection framework in the wake of the European Council's 2022 decision to “accelerate permitting rules” for green energy production.

Additionally, without going into detail here, the Knowledge Community also exposed the issue of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). These highly polluting substances, theoretically regulated by REACH, are called “forever chemicals” because they do not break down in either the environment or the human metabolism. While the EU has committed to phasing these pollutants out because of their dire impact on nature and health, it must not forget that they are currently also used in the industrial processes for clean technologies, and thus also in decarbonisation.

The above are two aspects to make a general point: the climate emergency must not be used as a pretext to override environmental regulations and nature protection. This would make climate action self-contradictory and work against the much-needed systemic approach. It, again, brings us back to the necessity of a more holistic, systemic approach to the transition.

Political proposals

Strategic planning for the climate dimension

“Wicked problems”, as the climate emergency is being referred to by the European Environment Agency (2016) and others, do not come with simple solutions. In our Political Brief on the social dimension, we already pleaded for more strategic planning instead of leaving everything to the invisible and volatile hand of the market. This must happen if the bottlenecks in the EU's energy project are to be unblocked, and it is no less essential to our political proposals on the climate dimension.

This strategic planning will need to focus on systemic monitoring and implementation of targets. If we are to work with all EU Member States, institutions and stakeholders to agree a course of action, work on it collaboratively and take all necessary steps to achieve the EU climate targets, we must have a better understanding of the situation and its dynamics, i.e. the needs, resources and obstacles.

1. Ensure better monitoring and accessible data

The energy transition needs more and better transparent, accessible data, and this applies equally to the climate dimension. Not just for research purposes, but for practical management purposes too. Member States are being asked to renovate and retrofit their entire building stocks, develop renewables, expand their grids and invest in education, training and upskilling – an enormous and complex endeavour. If they are to be able to navigate this complexity under the pressure of the emergency and avoid structural mistakes that could delay the beneficial effects of the transition, it is essential that they have properly managed data.

Monitoring of Member States' progress towards decarbonisation needs to go beyond reductions in emissions: it also needs to measure the impacts on the economy, jobs, infrastructure, grids, digitalisation, transport systems and households, etc. Harmonising National Climate and Energy Plan data with other governance systems such as the European Semester would be a useful step forward, making it easier to identify gaps and the financial resources required to fill them.

This task could be assigned to a “Just Transition Observatory”. This Observatory, which is gaining momentum as a policy idea⁶, should monitor the social impacts of decarbonisation in far more detail than is done at present, taking a whole of Europe, and whole of policy approach instead of the current geographical and sector focus on the coal regions. It should collect evidence and document a whole range of indicators: the number of jobs created, their quality and sustainability, the number of job losses, energy poverty, inclusion of vulnerable households in the green transition, the gender dimension of climate policies, etc. The Observatory could thereby function as a much-needed glue for European and Member States' energy and social governance, while also feeding data into the respective reporting mechanisms. It would thereby be a lever for the better usage of European funds for a just energy transition, and would also enable policy makers to identify needs for new funding and/or funding mechanisms.

2. Planning the deployment of the necessary infrastructure

○ **Grids**

Decarbonisation requires us to have at our disposal all the elements needed for the swift electrification of our societies and industrial models. Too many industrial activities are still dependent on fossil fuel energy, glass-melting furnaces being just one example. Achieving the complete electrification of industry will require the urgent upscaling of high-voltage grids. The EU must create a strategic plan to increase grid capacities. This is of paramount importance for the implementation of the transition.

○ **Decentralised projects**

One potentially effective way to achieve a more comprehensive implementation of our climate targets is to facilitate more decentralised projects, rather than waiting for the national authorities and their gigafactories, enormous power plants, giant photovoltaic fields and windfarms. There are many projects that could and should be implemented at the local level, with funding support from the EU or other European financial institutions. Local communities and authorities should be systematically allowed and incentivised to pursue their own climate projects.

○ **Skills and jobs**

As discussed in our Political Brief on the social dimension, delivery of the climate transition will create enormous needs in terms of skills and jobs. This must be reflected in the EU's strategic planning, both through the creation of a European Just Transition Observatory and through education and employment policies that enable individuals, educational institutions and businesses to create the skilled workforce required. At the same time, it is essential that the new or adapted jobs are of high quality.

○ **Financial framework**

Creating this infrastructure will of course require a great deal of money. The EU is currently at serious risk of gradual fragmentation; addressing this will require its cohesion policy to be rethought in order to compensate for the imbalances created or exacerbated by the energy transition. New funding will be critical here. There must be a new instrument to follow on from the Next Generation EU Recovery and Resilience Fund, which ends in 2026; and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) must also be fit for purpose. Political discussions on the next MFF need to begin now with a view to agreeing the financial tools required. The magnitude of the challenges demands more funding than is currently available. New income-generating measures such as a wealth tax and a financial transactions tax need to be explored.

Renewed solidarity for a common European vision

All of this will require a radical change in our European narrative and, ultimately, probably also a Treaty change. It is therefore time to recognise what is staring us in the face: sustainability is not just a policy – it is a state of mind. It is the very essence of ecology: the marriage of science and conscience. Our energy transition policies are just one cobblestone on the road towards a better, peaceful, prosperous world. A sustainable world.

Indeed, imagining a better future begins with climate action. But it also begins with a new attitude to the European project. The green transformation of our societies could become a new covenant binding the people and regions of Europe together. To achieve this, however, we must all make sustainability the cornerstone of our attitudes towards ourselves, others, our economy and the planet. A serious rethink of our values and connections is called for.

A new and stronger narrative also needs to reach the wealthier parts of the EU. In the so-called “frugal states”, for example, the conversation is dominated by the image of an industrious, virtuous, greener North being held back by a profligate, unreliable and fossil-fuel-addicted South. We have not moved on much since the infamous acronym PIIGS was coined to refer to Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain during the sovereign debt crisis. This inaccurate and damaging, but seemingly persistent narrative must be addressed and make place for solidarity and common solutions.

Looking beyond the EU's borders

The other dominant European narrative that must be addressed is that of the “European way of life”, which seems to have become our own version of the infamous Bush doctrine. Instead of trying to meet all our current energy needs at the expense of the environment, social rights and solidarity with Majority World countries, we must rethink those needs and refine our energy use through a focus on demand reduction and sufficiency, as discussed above⁷.

Europeans no longer rule the world. We must collectively come to terms with the post-Western, post-European world order, in which the needs of other continents are acknowledged as being just as legitimate as our own. This shift in attitude must be reflected in new energy relationships with our partners and neighbours. Climate diplomacy, investment in the Global Gateway, and mutual learning as well as openness to bespoke forms of climate action around the world are key.

On the African continent, for instance, the vast majority of clean energy investment still needs to happen. The EU must offer its African partners a combination of debt renegotiation and energy transition funding to cover everything from clean mining to green energy production.

A similar shift in European trade policies will be necessary to deal with the impact of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) on emerging economies. As the EU continues its trade negotiations with Mercosur, Australia and other key partners, it should rethink the kind of relationship it wants with the rest of the world.

The fact that countries outside Europe are at different stages and travelling at different speeds on the road to the transition must not engender a new European arrogance. There is a great deal of leadership and innovation happening across the world. The EU's role here is therefore multifaceted. It can learn from some countries, advise on best practice to others, provide support where needed and requested, build mutually beneficial partnerships, provide spaces for dialogue and multilateral collaboration, and apply the highest environmental and social standards both at home and abroad when delivering emission cuts. All while continuing to deliver on its commitments. Only in this way will the EU be able to retain its climate credibility and therefore also its relevance in dealing with the single most pressing issue facing Europe.

Conclusion

The transition to climate neutrality and sustainability more broadly is the great endeavour of our times. It will change the structure of our economies. It will force us to rethink our priorities and solidarities. It will affect our political allegiances and the social and environmental fabric of the EU. And it will change our relations with other countries. The success of this transition, or rather transformation, journey will depend on our collective capacity for change: on reassessing our needs and the building blocks of the European way of life, on renewing our vows to build a community based on shared peace and prosperity, and on reaching out to the rest of the world.

Endnotes

¹ For more details, see the GEF Knowledge Community's Political Brief on the social dimension.

² Reviews of the famous Grenelle Environment Forum set up by Nicolas Sarkozy in 2008 are almost unanimously critical: the French State never provided the financial and administrative resources required to fulfill its promises.

³ Speaking at a French Senate hearing on 13 October 2022, Thomas Pellerin-Carlin from I4CE said, "There has been a real choice to underinvest in energy efficiency and renewables. If France had implemented the building renovation plan adopted at the Grenelle Environment Forum in 2008 and approved by Nicolas Sarkozy, the country would now be independent of Russian gas. This was not done. If we had installed more wind and solar power, we would now have lower prices and be consuming less gas." <https://www.publicsenat.fr/actualites/politique/crise-de-l-energie-l-explosion-des-prix-est-partie-pour-durer-selon-des-experts>

⁴ For more details, see the GEF Knowledge Community's policy brief on the social dimension.

⁵ Even so, the lingering debate about a potential nuclear power plant in Poland shows that this is not a decision that is made lightly (Sieniawski, 2022; Oxford Analytica, 2015).

⁶ See for example by Industriall; <https://news.industrial-europe.eu/Article/1006>, <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/advancing-eus-just-transition-policy-framework-what-measures-are-necessary> , Or by the European Parliament: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0342_EN.html

⁷ For more details, see the GEF Knowledge Community's policy brief on the social dimension.

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About Knowledge Communities

GEF's Knowledge Communities are aimed at advancing political and public debates towards a green, socially just Europe, through establishing lasting networks of knowledge production, exchange and dissemination. They are structured around and with a GEF core expert, who delivers a political stock-take as well as new proposals and ideas for discussion with a wider group of actors (i.e. the Knowledge Community). This Political Brief results out of one of these Knowledge Communities.

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The Green European Foundation (GEF) is a European-level political foundation whose mission is to contribute to a lively European sphere of debate and to foster greater citizen involvement in European politics. GEF strives to mainstream discussions on European policies and politics both within and beyond the Green political family. The foundation acts as a laboratory for new ideas and offers cross-border political education and a platform for cooperation and exchange at the European level.

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