EU24
Engage for the planet

Comparative **R**esearch **N**etwork**:**

Debate positions,
Policy recommendations
and Gender mainstreaming

Disclaimer

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Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive summary of the various debate positions and European Union policies regarding climate and sustainability, focusing on both local and European issues. It aims to offer a thorough understanding of the current discourse on climate action and sustainability initiatives within the EU.

A significant aspect of this report is the emphasis on gender mainstreaming during all events and activities.

To ensure gender-related objectives are met, we have incorporated specific tools and metrics in our evaluation plan.

These include:
- Monitoring gender mainstreaming throughout all activities.
- Evaluating contributions to gender equality through comprehensive feedback mechanisms.
- Providing space in evaluation forms for participants to address unmentioned issues.
- Collecting gender-disaggregated data to assess if the needs and expectations of men, women, and non-binary participants are met.

Our evaluation will identify areas for improvement in gender sensitivity and aim to make a sustainable impact on gender mainstreaming within participating organisations.

Debate positions and
Policy recommendations

I. Pilot event: *Climate Crisis-Youth-European Elections 2024*

The pilot event "Climate Crisis-Youth-European Elections 2024" took place on 19th of May 2023 in Kraków, Poland and was organised by the Open Plan Foundation (Otwarty Plan).
The main goal of the event was to find a quality format of debate in which topics such as climate crisis and sustainability can be suitably discussed.

In order to achieve such findings, we started with giving inputs to the participants by:
- sharing the results of our research on EU political parties programs,
- sharing the results of our polls on youth opinions and participation practices in the EU.

The participants were divided in groups where the political parties' positions were presented on topics relevant to each discussion.

The following methods were tested in groups:
1. In the Mobility theme - facilitated participatory exercise – Articulating a vision
2. In Food production theme - Classic Mindfulness Lead Debate
3. In the Energy theme - Fish Bowl
4. In the Climate Justice theme - 1-2-4-All

Debate positions and Policy recommendations

1. Youth involvement:

From the debates, the issue of youth involvement in the European Union was perceived as highly important, especially in the context of the climate change debate. Participants noticed a lack of involvement from the younger generations on the topic. The first recommendation was to organise debates with the youth to address the gap of youth involvement.

The second recommendation was that such debates should be interactive but therefore was to come up with new forms of debate, as a way of democratising a movement which aims to empower young people.

Indeed, such ways of debate are:
- Interactive, "playful" in a sense that they catch the attention of participants more easily.
- Participants can get input on the spot
- They don't need to have specific prior knowledge, which makes it accessible for a rather large amount of people.

2. Access to information:

The recommendations on youth participation triggered some more recommendations: indeed, we noticed that giving access to information/knowledge in such an urgent matter was a strategic point to mobilise and involve people on political issues around climate change. While access to the Internet provides information, it also poses a risk of encountering fake news and security concerns. Hence, it is vital to include those aspects into the debates on the climate movement and youth engagement.

3. Intergenerational cooperation:

While the focus was largely on young generations, another gap needs to be addressed: the cooperation between generations. As an example, in Hungary, the 'older generation' hopes that young people will act as change-makers against the authoritarian regime. There is danger however that the youth may face great risks by being at the forefront of the political movement. Given this, it is crucial to approach these issues with nuance such as taking into account various factors such as social class and access to education, which can contribute to differences among individuals or generations.

As a policy recommendation, this example highlighted that intergenerational cooperation in political movements is essential for success and true solidarity between older and younger generations. This integration approach could also be beneficial for youth climate change activism, as well as climate activism in general.

4. Pro and anti-climate change narratives:

One way of mapping various pro and anti-climate change narratives can rely on political science concepts of 'the dichotomy between pro-change and anti-change ideologies'. The latter types of ideologies often align with the right-wing/conservative stances. Specifically, such perspectives usually lack concrete ideas for creating a better world that requires social change. Their resistance to change often stems from the lack of a vision for a better world. On the other hand,

the narrative of change within the climate movement could be instrumental in mobilising young people because it stresses the urgent need for future-oriented action.

5. The global South:

As the climate crisis is a global issue, it has been recommended during the debate to make connections between citizens from the EU and from the global South as it is essential for fostering a dialogue on climate issues from a global perspective.

6. Debate methods:

The four tested methods were approved depending on the settings in which they would be used. The Participatory Exercise fostered inclusivity and consensus among diverse participants, while the Classic Mindfulness Lead Debate encouraged deeper reflection and focused engagement through mindfulness practices. The Fishbowl method facilitated dynamic participation and reflective observation, proving highly effective for in-depth discussions. Finally, the 1-2-4-All method promoted engagement and inclusivity by enabling individual reflection and collaborative discussions. All tested methods can be implemented into future debates in "EU24 engage for the planet" project.

II. Mobility: CLIMATE DEBATE: *Empowering underrepresented people's voices and boosting their commitment to green mobility*

The "CLIMATE DEBATE: Empowering underrepresented people's voices and boosting their commitment to green mobility" took place in Strasbourg on the 28th of September 2023 and was a step towards integrating diverse perspectives into the climate conversation, especially through the group work of participants.

The event was divided in two parts:
- Interactive presentation of local climate-related works by institutions, associations, enterprises, climate activists.
- Group-work on the evolution of mobility.

The groups worked as followed:
- Establishing a current state of play of mobility in their regions of origins
- Highlighting good and bad practices in current settings
- Projecting a future for mobility with recommendations

The event showed the importance of inclusive and diverse participation in the climate debate. The findings and recommendations provided valuable guidance on how to achieve sustainable mobility and highlighted the role of the EU in supporting these initiatives through policy, funding and regulation. The positive feedback from participants and the comprehensive policy recommendations demonstrate a clear path forward for integrating diverse voices into the fight against climate change.

Debate positions and Policy recommendations

1. Inclusivity in participation and decision-making

The diversity of participants highlighted the importance of including underrepresented groups, such as young people, women and migrants, in climate policy discussions. Their unique perspectives enriched the debate and contributed to more comprehensive and creative solutions, as well as to underline the possible challenges that the different groups are currently facing.

They promoted participation in climate issues discussions both informal and formal, highlighting the relevance of events such as the climate debate in green mobility in Strasbourg. This brings together a diversity of citizens to discuss common issues, engaging actively in finding solutions as a collective.

It was therefore recommended to:
- Organise more debates with various perspectives from different underrepresented groups to raise their voice and foster collaboration
- Advocate for such voices to be part of the decision processes and policy-making in the climate change frame.

2. Current challenges in mobility

Participants reflected deeply on the current challenges they are facing, offering personal examples to illustrate the multifaceted nature of these issues. Present challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited pedestrian-friendly areas, and lack of bike infrastructure which does not provide options to citizens but only refer to the traditional polluting ways of transportation. Other participants exposed challenges such as the high usage of old vehicles and the chemicals they use that damage the environment, but also the insufficient amount of available buses. Few participants brought to the table the discussion on regional disparities and the lack of rural areas' accessibility.

Participants saw opportunities for innovation and improvement despite these challenges. They believed that through targeted investments and policy interventions, these issues could be transformed into catalysts for growth. However, this initial exercise provided a clear understanding of the current status of participants regarding sustainable mobility.

3. Policy recommendations for a greener mobility

There was a strong consensus on the urgent need to promote green mobility solutions to address environmental concerns.

This multifaceted approach includes several key initiatives:

First, increasing the availability and affordability of public transport is essential to reduce the dependency on private vehicles. This can be achieved by expanding bus and rail networks, lowering fare prices, and ensuring frequent and reliable service.

Second, enhancing cycling infrastructure by constructing more bike lanes, offering bike-sharing programs, and providing secure parking for bicycles will encourage more people to consider cycling as a viable and healthy commuting option.

Lastly, encouraging the use of electric and hybrid vehicles through incentives such as subsidies, and the development of widespread charging infrastructure will further reduce carbon emissions and promote cleaner transportation alternatives.

4. Public engagement

Engaging the public through educational initiatives was emphasised as crucial for fostering a culture of sustainability.

Participants recognised that behavioural change takes time but is essential: raising awareness and providing civic education on mobility can drive a gradual shift, making people more receptive to adopting these practices. Communities can better understand the long-term advantages by highlighting the environmental, economic, and health benefits of green mobility options through workshops, campaigns, and school programs.

Greater importance was given to the link with the community, emphasising ongoing public engagement and feedback mechanisms which will ensure policies are effectively tailored to community needs, gradually increasing support for sustainable transport solutions.

5. Financial and regulatory support

Financial and regulatory support emerged as critical components in facilitating the transition to sustainable mobility.

Participants emphasised the necessity of robust financial incentives and the implementation of stricter regulations to drive this transformation effectively.
- They suggested that **subsidies for green transportation** options could significantly lower the barrier to adoption for individuals.
- Participants recommended **financial aid for mobility solutions** to spur technological advancements and infrastructure development.
- Participants called for **stringent regulations on car emissions**, advocating for policies that would not only limit pollution but also encourage the automotive industry to prioritise the development of cleaner, more efficient vehicles.
- Participants called for consistent and transparent enforcement of these regulations.

These financial measures, combined with regulatory frameworks mandating lower emissions and higher efficiency standards, were seen as pivotal in creating a market environment conducive to sustainable mobility.

6. Vision for the future

The vision for the future presented by the groups was ambitious and transformative, foreseeing a world where public transport is universally accessible, affordable, and environmentally friendly. By 2043, they envisioned free public transportation and a significant reduction in emissions, underscoring a robust commitment to sustainability. This forward-thinking outlook was paired with a recognition of the critical role of financial and regulatory support in driving the transition to sustainable mobility.

Collaborative efforts at the event demonstrated the power of collective action in addressing climate challenges, as participants co-designed policy recommendations that showcased how shared goals and teamwork can lead to innovative and effective solutions. The debate further underscored that sustainability extends beyond environmental concerns to include creating equitable and accessible mobility systems that benefit all citizens. By adopting a holistic approach that integrates financial, regulatory, and collaborative strategies, the groups aimed to ensure long-term success in building a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient future.

The event highlighted that achieving sustainability requires not just technological advancements and policy changes, but also a fundamental shift towards prioritising the well-being of both people and the planet, emphasising the interconnectedness of environmental health and social equity.

III. Energy: International Debate: *Navigating the Path to Sustainable Energy*

On the 14th of March 2024, the blended international Event on Energy - International Debate: Navigating the Path to Sustainable Energy - took place in Drouwen (Drenthe) in the Netherlands.

The event aimed to highlight the importance of diverse voices in addressing the global climate crisis. It encouraged people from different backgrounds, including young people, and mobile citizens of the European Union to come together and share their opinions and innovative ideas to combat climate change in the framework of energy.

The event included keynote speeches and group debates as well as a plenary summary session with the opportunity to exchange and ask questions to the different groups. The groups were balanced in terms of gender and based on the interest of participants in the energy sector.

Based on the EU24 - Engage for the Planet project's main aim to tackle democratic participation shortcomings and promote inclusivity, the debate highlighted the central influence of sustainable energy in developing a robust European political union.

Participants examined local policies in the Netherlands with a focus on sustainable energy, such as the Framework Law on Energy and showcased examples of good practices, including environmental zones, zero emission zones and the lowered speed limit on the highways. These examples demonstrate the Netherlands' dedication to creating modern and ecological energy solutions. Current challenges and future visions were developed by participants in groups for both 2030 and 2045 to formulate policy recommendations necessary to stimulate progress needed to achieve the envisaged future. The main policy recommendations included achieving a European energy market, where member states cooperate with each other and have energy networks functioning harmoniously on the European level. Efforts to increase energy production from renewable sources should be enforced and supported from the European level. Another recommendation involved building a system where local communities (municipalities or regions) are empowered to implement the most efficient solutions based on the local specificities and circumstances. Another important recommendation was to include citizens to allow them to participate in policy creation and to encourage them to participate financially.

Debate positions and Policy recommendations

1. Challenges in the energy sector:

Participants underlined the slow progression of renewable energy sources like wind, solar, hydro, and geothermal power due to insufficient government subsidies and clear regulations. They noticed the inefficiencies in imported energy, transportation, storage, and distribution contribute to high consumption levels and price fluctuations, leading to insecurity and social inequality. They have observed local protests against energy projects, which highlights the need for social acceptance and public knowledge. Such protests are underlining the controversy around nuclear energy and the safety and environmental impacts it poses.

Other issues underlined are the current energy system dependency on Russia's imports, they took the example of Ukraine's dependence on imported natural gas but also its outdated energy infrastructure which keeps the country from evolving on the energy sector. More generally, the phaseout of coal and the influence of the fossil fuel lobby remains significant challenges for the energy sector in the EU.

2. Visions for the future and policy recommendations:

The working groups worked on policy recommendations based on the challenges for 2030.

They recommended **increased funding for renewable energy sources** and decentralised sustainable energy infrastructure as well as **tax adjustments to favour green energy** and **cutting funding for non-green projects.**
The participants suggested the **elimination of administrative and bureaucratic hurdles** to facilitate renewable energy utilisation.
A policy recommendation that comes back in most of the debate was the need for **enhanced public awareness and education** on renewable energies.
They also advocated for **research and development** in storage technologies for sustainable energies and a **stronger cooperation among EU member states** to minimise conflicts and align energy needs.
As examples, they underlined the complexity of nuclear power, but also wind and solar energy, the need to address safety concerns to the general public while optimising its potential in fusion energy.

In the longer term, they also developed a vision for 2045.

By then, participants wish to:
- **Achieve net-zero emissions** and striving for 100% renewable energy usage in all EU member states.
- **Have a central coordination** by the EU for a united energy grid, while maximising local potential.

- **Develop a strategic collaboration among European countries**, streamlining bureaucracy, and prioritising green policies free from lobbying influence.
- **Finance innovations** in new and existing sustainable energy sources, **stopping unsustainable practices**, and **achieving energy independence from imports**.
- **Shift towards fossil fuel-free mobility by integrating rural regions into public transportation networks**.

By sharing their visions, they were able to come up with new ideas for policy recommendations to go further by **offering better support to transitioning economies to cleaner energy sources** by exploring hydrogen as a long-term replacement for natural gas and investing in infrastructure to mitigate price fluctuations and dependence.

This brought up the discussion of energy markets and the debate of regionalised pricing and the establishment of a common energy market that would be balanced between local resilience and greater interconnections to optimise resource utilisation. The participants also noticed the rise in energy consumption due to digitalisation and electrification and thought about managing such increased consumption through strategic investments and general energy innovations.

To conclude, after further discussion, participants came up with the most important policy recommendations according to them:
- The harmonisation of energy networks through Europe
- A unified European railway system
- The acceleration of the switch to renewable energies
- For the access to renewable energy to be established as a human right
- A stronger processual and financial involvement of citizens in energy endeavours: to encourage citizen participation and investment in energy projects through financial incentives and inclusive decision-making processes.

IV. Food Production: *How Do We Strengthen Local Actors When Trade Becomes Global?*

The event took place on the 18th of April 2024 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The debate "How Do We Strengthen Local Actors When Trade Becomes Global?" was realised in collaboration with a local network composed of local entrepreneurs, producers and policy makers. Other European organisations active in the circular economy, and sustainability were actively involved in the debate, giving their valuable point of view. The event started with keynote speeches and then the participants divided into groups worked on formulating policy recommendations related to food production. This resulted in wide regulations recommendations but also practical solutions for the food production sector in Sweden to create a closer, more interactive relationship between producers and consumers.

Debate positions and Policy recommendations

1. Challenges of food sustainability in Sweden:

Sweden has taken significant steps to promote urban agriculture and ensure sustainable land use. However, several challenges remain that need to be addressed to fully realise these goals.
- **Seed selection:** There is a relatively small activity in selecting seeds and plants that can be produced in Sweden, considering climate and soil characteristics.
- **Soil fertility:** In Sweden, low efforts have been made to preserve the soil fertility to grow more nourishing vegetables.
- **Limited research results:** even though it is possible to grow a wide diversity of plants in Sweden, the topic has not been studied enough, therefore creating a situation of both risk and opportunity for producers.
- **Lack of self-sufficiency:** Only 60% of the food consumed in Sweden, is produced in Sweden.
- **Centralisation of procurement practices:** Current procurement systems are often centralised and favour large-scale suppliers, making it difficult for local producers to compete. This limits their ability to secure stable income streams and discourages investment in local agricultural ventures.
- **Infrastructure investment:** There is a visible lack of investment in the necessary infrastructure to support modern local marketplaces and distribution centres. This includes facilities like farmer's markets, refrigerated shelving, and delivery boxes, which are crucial for maintaining the quality and accessibility of locally produced food.
- **Regulatory barriers:** Complex regulations and bureaucratic steps make it challenging for municipalities to source food locally.

- The complexity of procurement laws and the need for competitive bidding processes can limit opportunities for small local farmers to participate in public procurement contracts.
- **Logistical complexity:** Scaling up municipal distribution systems to support local producers involves overcoming significant logistical challenges, including coordinating transport, storage, and delivery in a way that is efficient and sustainable, which requires substantial planning and investment
- **Consumer awareness and access:** Consumers lack education to consume more seasonal food and local food, rather than imported food. Many consumers are not aware or do not have easy access to local food markets. This limits the reach and impact of local producers, who need strong community engagement and consistent customer bases to thrive.
- **Dominance of large distributors:** The food distribution system is dominated by a few large players who control the market, creating barriers for small and local producers to enter and compete. It reduces market access for local food products.

Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated effort from policymakers, local governments, and community stakeholders to create an enabling environment for sustainable food systems in Sweden.

2. Reorganise the infrastructure

Producers and distributors noted that it would be interesting to create together their own infrastructure to gain autonomy from global markets. They agreed that it would require significant investment, which in turn necessitates collective action and the ability to scale demand.

3. Dependences & private consumers

One of the main underlying problems that they discussed was the dependence on city funding to produce and distribute as well as the difficulty of reaching the private consumer market and the necessity to find effective ways to reach such customers.

4. Reaching the customers:

Visibility and engagement with customers are seen as a struggle across stakeholder groups and require significant investments to identify the best places to intervene.
All groups also raised interest in creating new experiences for customers ranging from auction houses to showrooms, to kitchens, to appeal to a wider audience of customers and reduce their dependence on existing touchpoints.

5. New procurement methods

Participants agreed that there is a need to adapt the procurement system for food so that it becomes more democratic and gives greater opportunity for municipalities and regions to buy

locally. It would provide secure sources of income for local producers who could then invest more, which would favour locally produced products on the broader private market as well. Participants also recommended the creation of a distribution cooperative where the growers themselves could control the distribution. This goes with the idea of investing through co-financing by growers into shared procurement and machine park.

6. Regulations

Participants suggested regulations to help local producers to be more competitive:
- Set requirements for efficient land use around and in cities with a focus on food production. As a consequence, it would allow more producers to operate in the city, providing a greater interface with the market.
- Half of the agricultural land should be used organically by 2030, as well as climate-smart, local and organic food in schools, health care and social services should become a standard.
- Municipalities and regions should set clearer requirements for purchasing food that meets Swedish requirements for animal welfare and environmental considerations.
- Provide structurally more support to agriculture for conversion to organic farming, recreation of natural pastures and other environmental initiatives.
- Combine strengthened animal welfare requirements and reduced use of antibiotics with policy instruments for reduced and more conscious consumption of meat, and promote plant-based alternatives.
- Regulate and strengthen the efforts to prevent food waste at all stages and unecological practices: from farm to fork, accelerate the transition to fossil-free agriculture, increase resilience and phase out fossil fuel subsidies.
- Strengthen Swedish agriculture for increased self-sufficiency in basic foodstuffs, and support the transition to organic and sustainable agriculture with fossil-free machinery.
- improve food labelling and increase information regarding the origin of food, including in restaurant settings, to empower consumers and promote transparency.
- Increasing research funding for environmental technology and the bioeconomy in the green and blue industries.
- Expand training programs linked to food production to ensure future skills and nurture the younger generation's interest in these sectors.
- Implement measures to increase output in a sustainable way.
- Establish a comprehensive program for organic food production.

7. City-based producers & local marketplaces

The participants suggested opening auction houses for fresh products and encouraging the development of crowd-farming and co-cultivation to help the hobby farmers' community mature.

All groups spoke of the importance of finding key partners like school systems by strengthening the ecosystem's connection to the private consumer market and finding effective ways to reach those

They also support the development of modern local marketplaces and distribution centres for local producers, farmers markets, modern shelving with coolers, and delivery boxes in residential areas.

8. Help Scale Distribution

Participants in groups suggested to:
- Encourage municipal distribution of goods to level the playing field and break oligopolies and non-transparent distribution systems.
- Find new business models with larger players such as hotel chains (Lilla Jordbruket / Radisson), a group of restaurants or grow your own food for your restaurant (Hagabion)
- Create a user-friendly centralised online map and catalogue of local producers and distributors
- Find clever ways to raise awareness where customers already go: grocery stores.

V. Social Climate Justice

Kick-off debate: *More diversity in the climate debate*

The EU24 - Engage for the Planet project kick-off debate took place on the 17th of November 2022 in Berlin. It was the beginning of an almost two-year initiative aimed at increasing migrant participation in climate discussions. Featuring five panellists from various organisations, the event highlighted the need for inclusivity in environmental and climate change debates. Attendees engaged actively, contributing to a dynamic conversation on how to better include migrant voices in these crucial discussions.

Debate Positions and Policy Recommendations

1. Inclusivity

Participants and panellists underlined that current events were too Western/European/German centred and they suggested exploring alternative formats to engage migrant communities. They also suggested increasing the visibility of underrepresented groups in the main discussions by developing strategies for effective inclusion. They went deeper than this by highlighting that affected groups are less represented in the traditional debates on the climate crisis, such as women, girls, illegal immigrants, and marginalised communities. Such groups should be able to express themselves on the topics and also should be ensured that they will benefit from policies as much as the ruling classes.
As women and girls are less represented, it was suggested to centralise gender equality in climate change solutions for effective program implementation.

2. Migrant Voices:

Participants were keen on acknowledging and recognising the role of climate change in driving migration and wanted to make sure that migrant voices are heard and considered in policy creation.

3. Perspective on climate change

It was vital for participants and panellists to acknowledge the privileged position of Europe. European countries are less affected by the climate crisis than some others and they could listen but also learn from countries already experiencing severe climate impacts.

Finally, they highlighted the fact that different organisations from different backgrounds could go further in reflection by cooperating and encouraging various forms of involvement in environmental activism.

Online Debate: *Urgency, Voices, Visions: Impact and Strength of Women in the face of Climate Crisis*

The event "Urgency, Voices, Visions: Impact and Strength of Women in the face of Climate Crisis" took place on the 29th of November 2023. It was an online debate on the topic of social climate justice through how women are especially affected by the climate crisis. Seven women from diverse backgrounds discussed these issues, representing various fields intersecting with climate change, including activism, academia, and community work. The debate aimed to highlight the unique challenges women face due to the climate crisis and to promote greater inclusivity in climate-related political participation.

Debate Positions

1. Representation of Women

Women, especially those with disabilities and from the global south, face significant barriers due to climate change.
Women's voices, particularly in western societies, are underrepresented in governmental and scientific institutions.

2. Impact of Climate Crisis:

Panellists noticed that the climate crisis affects women disproportionately, creating unique challenges for different communities and that religion and historical contexts influence the current situation of women and their capacity for activism.

3. Barriers to Participation

Panellists highlighted the various obstacles hindering women's active participation in climate action and governance. Indeed, access to information and representation in political processes are critical areas needing improvement.

Policy Recommendations & Gender Mainstreaming

1. Increase Inclusivity

Panellists insisted on the need to develop and implement policies that ensure greater inclusion of women in climate-related discussions and decision-making processes as well as providing accessible and understandable information on European Parliament, election processes, and political party programs to increase women's participation in elections.

2. Support marginalised groups

There is a clear need to focus on measures that support women with disabilities, women from the global south, and marginalised communities in combating climate change by ensuring that these groups are actively involved in designing and implementing climate response actions.

3. Promote Gender Equality

It is necessary to place gender equality at the centre of climate change solutions to ensure equitable benefits and effective program implementation and to recognise and address the unique impacts of climate change on women to create more responsive and inclusive policies.

4. Foster collaboration

Organisations and institutions should encourage cooperation among women activists, scientists, and community leaders to share diverse approaches and strategies in addressing the climate crisis. This would strengthen and create new connections between women active in climate issues to enhance collective efforts and develop joint projects.

5. Enhance Technical Support:

The recent points were linked to practices, but one should not forget about the technological aspects of blended debates.
There is a clear need to improve technical setups for blended events to ensure equal participation and inclusion of online attendees by continuously testing and refining the technical aspects to facilitate smooth and inclusive online debates.

VI. European Climate Action Day: Shaping Policies for a Fair Transition

The event took place on the 24th of May 2024 at the Europäisches Haus Berlin. It was an in situ debate on the topic of social climate justice titled "Shaping Policies for a Fair Transition".
The debate was a culminating element of the whole-day event "European Climate Action Day" organised by CRN.

It started with 2 morning panel discussions with policymakers, scientists and activists. In the early afternoon, the participants could engage in creative expression through circular art activities. They could also watch video webinars about the measures taken by governments regarding the effects of human activities on the climate & environment and discuss how to improve the inclusion of young people in decision-making processes related to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

As an introduction to the EU24 debate several prominent guests including a representation of the Europäisches Haus Berlin, a member of the German parliament and former mayor of Berlin gave short speeches.

The debate "Shaping policies for a fair transition" focused on developing inclusive climate crisis policies and ensuring that this process is democratic and representative at local, national, and within and beyond EU borders, ahead of the European Parliament elections. The speakers included 3 candidates for the European Parliament representing 3 different German parties (The Greens, the Left and the Social Democratic Party of Germany), a scientist from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, a member of Youth and Environment Europe - young activists organisation, and an NGO worker from Documentation Center on Environmental

Conflicts and a member of an African migrant organisation: Network African Rural and Urban Development.

Debate Positions and Policy Recommendations

Many topics were covered during this debate as social climate justice is such a wide subject.

1. Importance of Social Climate Justice

The speakers emphasised the significance of social climate justice and shared their professional involvement in this field, stressing the necessity to engage diverse groups in addressing the climate crisis.
They underlined that including diverse groups, including youth, marginalised communities, migrants, and mobile union citizens in policy-making helps to ensure inclusive and effective solutions to climate and social justice issues.

2. Engagement and education

Methods to engage different groups, especially those directly affected by climate inequality, were discussed. This included listening to impacted communities, empowering youth to participate in political life, and raising public awareness through education and training.
The relevance of education for both children and adults was underscored, aiming to raise awareness about the climate crisis and social climate justice to encourage active participation in climate action.
Enhancing educational initiatives to inform the public about climate crisis impacts and social justice, fostering a culture of understanding and active participation in climate action.

3. Role of Cities

Cities were highlighted as both contributors to and potential hubs for solutions to the climate crisis, with a focus on their increasing population and the associated challenges and opportunities.

4. Sacrifices and Adjustments

The concept of necessary "sacrifices" or adjustments was debated, with an emphasis on balancing changes to gain public support and offering alternatives to ease transitions and reduce opposition.

5. Policy recommendations

Panellists highlighted the need to decentralise energy production to enhance resilience and facilitate a green transition, breaking monopolies in the energy sector.

They also suggested prioritising investments in sustainable practices to mitigate the effects of the climate crisis and promote social justice.

But going further than this, they advocated for systemic changes such as reforming economic measurements beyond GDP to focus on citizen happiness and well-being.

Some speakers advocated enforcing taxes on the wealthy to fund sustainable practices and address climate and social justice issues.

Overall, ensuring that climate policies are fair and consider all the needs of European Union members while linking migration policies with climate crisis policies to promote shared resources and responsibilities.

6. Positive vision for the future

They finished the conversation by bringing up the importance of youth involvement by building a positive vision of the future to motivate younger generations. Incorporating diverse voices in decision-making was identified as crucial for effective climate action.

VII. Seminar: *Climate migration as a matter of justice*

On June 13-14, 2024, the seminar of the Open Plan Foundation (Fundacja Otwarty Plan), "Climate Migration as a Matter of Justice" took place in Krakow, focusing on climate-induced migration and its connections to social justice. The seminar aimed to explore various aspects of climate migration, including its causes, consequences, and challenges related to the protection of climate migrants as a marginalised group.
The goal of the event was to seek solutions that contribute to building a more sustainable and just future.

Debate Positions and Policy Recommendations

1. Law status for climate migrants

The panellists advocated for the inclusion of climate migrants within **international** legal frameworks as the current definitions of refugees and displaced persons often exclude those fleeing environmental disasters.
They recommended: **establishing a clear legal status for climate migrants** to ensure they receive adequate protection and support.
Indeed, climate migration should be addressed internationally as it will impact all countries.
It is necessary to foster global partnerships through:
-   Funding

For example by investing in comprehensive data collection and research on climate mitigation patterns. Better data can inform more effective policy-making and help predict future migration trends, enabling proactive rather than reactive responses:
-   Technology transfer
-   Capacity-building initiatives
-   Multilateral agreements

They also encouraged nations to **incorporate climate migration into their national law framework, adaptation plans and disaster response strategies**. This involves preparing for internal displacement, managing relocation processes, and providing support to affected communities.

2. Equity and decision-making

According to the speakers, governments and subnational entities must prioritise vulnerable populations who are disproportionately affected by climate change. This includes indigenous peoples, low-income communities, and those living in climate-vulnerable regions.
For this, they advocated for equity-focused approaches to ensure that those most impacted receive the necessary resources and support.

It is also important to involve communities directly impacted by climate change in the decision-making process. Participatory approaches ensure that policies are culturally sensitive, locally relevant, and more likely to succeed.

VIII. Final event: *Democracy and Inclusion in Times of Climate Crisis*

The event, held on June 21, 2024, at the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, centred on exploring the intersection of democracy, inclusivity, and climate action. Targeting underrepresented groups such as women, youth, migrants, LGBTQI+ individuals, and people with disabilities, the event featured a roundtable discussion to address such topics. The session encouraged dialogue, collaboration, and actionable solutions among diverse speakers and participants. Additionally, the EU24-Engage for the Planet presentation showcased project results, best practices, and challenges to policymakers. The event concluded with an international poster competition award ceremony, highlighting creative contributions on themes like mobility, energy, food production, and social climate justice. Overall, the event aimed to foster a more inclusive approach to environmental decision-making and democratic participation.

Debate Positions and Policy Recommendations

1. Inclusive decision-making processes:

The panellists insisted on the need to promote inclusive and participatory decision-making processes at all levels of governance, ensuring that marginalised and vulnerable communities, including women, youth, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities, have a meaningful voice in climate policy formulation and implementation.
Therefore, they underlined the need to **develop and implement gender-responsive climate policies that recognize and address the specific vulnerabilities** and contributions of women, non-binaries and girls in climate resilience efforts.
This includes promoting women's leadership in environmental stewardship and ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities.

2. Civic engagement and education

But rather than only involving the more at-risk population, they also discussed the need to strengthen civic education and engagement initiatives that empower all citizens to participate actively in climate action and democratic processes by fostering public awareness campaigns that emphasise the connection between climate change, social justice, and democratic values. Moreover, it was suggested to integrate climate change education into formal and informal curricula at all educational levels, because informed citizenry and active participation are shaping sustainable and inclusive societies.

3. International cooperation and solidarity

Participants discussed the need for more international cooperation and solidarity to address global climate challenges, ensuring that developed countries provide financial and technological support to developing countries for climate adaptation and mitigation efforts. Creating partnerships among countries was viewed as a solution.

Moreover, they underlined the importance of the protection of human rights in all countries, including the rights of indigenous peoples, migrants, and refugees, in the context of climate-induced displacement and adaptation measures.

Indeed, participants analysed the necessity of e**nsuring that climate policies respect, protect, and fulfil human rights obligations.**

4. Promotion of green economy and communities

It is necessary to **promote policies that support the transition to a green economy**, **creating sustainable jobs and economic opportunities while prioritising social equity and inclusion** according to the panellists. It is a must to invest in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and resilient infrastructure projects that benefit local communities and in the long term global communities.

5. Monitoring and accountability

It was discussed that monitoring such changes was necessary for accountability purposes by:
- Establishing robust monitoring: deciding on clear objectives
- Reporting
- Accountability mechanisms to track progress on climate and inclusion goals: sanctions, consequences...
- Ensuring transparency in decision-making processes
- Hold governments and stakeholders accountable for their commitments to democratic governance and climate resilience.

Conclusions

Throughout the project and the different climate topics covered, several policy recommendations consistently emerged as crucial. They included the importance of education in the field in the different shapes education can take (debates, courses, initiatives, research), fostering strong communities, and raising the voices of the unheard. Supporting marginalised groups and enhancing cooperation among actors: organisations, regions, countries, and the international community were also emphasised. Such cooperation included sharing research, knowledge, laws, and good practices, along with promoting solidarity and a global worldwide vision of problems, not solely EU-centred.

The project brought an overall approach to the climate crisis, created bonds between the participants and gathered ideas for effective policy-making.

It made us hopeful to see the diversity of people contributing all together towards a common goal and the plethora of ideas concerning methods and solutions. It did not only contribute to formulating goals for our future but it also made us creative and more resilient.

Gender mainstreaming in the project

Introduction

One of the project's goals was to make sure our events were gender-inclusive. In drafting our evaluation plan, we made sure to include tools and items that monitor how the gender-related objectives have been met throughout our activities.

Our participants were provided multiple spaces where they could communicate with us gender-related or any other issues. These spaces included chat options during blended debates, comment sections on social media, online debating tools like Kialo and the forum section on our platform and the email contacts of the project managers available for direct contact. Finally, in every event's evaluation form, a "free space" was designed to address any gender-related issues that have come up in the event. The evaluations also contained gender-disaggregated information to analyse if men, women, and non-binaries' needs and expectations were met. Each of the events as well as the results of the evaluations were then discussed within the project consortium in search of further improvements. Moreover, we made sure to discuss policy recommendations linked to gender mainstreaming in each of our events, or at least, to be open to listening to suggestions for even more inclusive events.

This chapter contains a list of:
- Gender mainstreaming recommendations for debate practices gathered from our research and testing
- General gender mainstreaming policy recommendations formulated during the debates

Through the production of this chapter, we hope to create a sustainable impact on gender mainstreaming in events and organisations.

I. Debate practices: Gender mainstreaming recommendations

It seemed important to have a list of recommendations from what we have researched before our events (existing practices, EU law on gender mainstreaming), as well as what we observed early on. This non-exhaustive chapter gathers recommendations for practices on gender mainstreaming during events, especially in the debate format.

An overall practical checklist can be found at the end of this chapter. (Fig. 2)

1. Diverse Representation of attendees and speakers

The events ensured a diverse representation of speakers and panellists across genders, including women, men, and non-binary individuals (Fig. 1). This diversity enriched discussions and provided a more comprehensive understanding of how climate crisis and political engagement intersect with gender.

The events were meticulously **designed to ensure the active participation of attendees and speakers from diverse backgrounds, and genders, including young people, individuals from various cultural backgrounds, and mobile citizens of the European Union**.
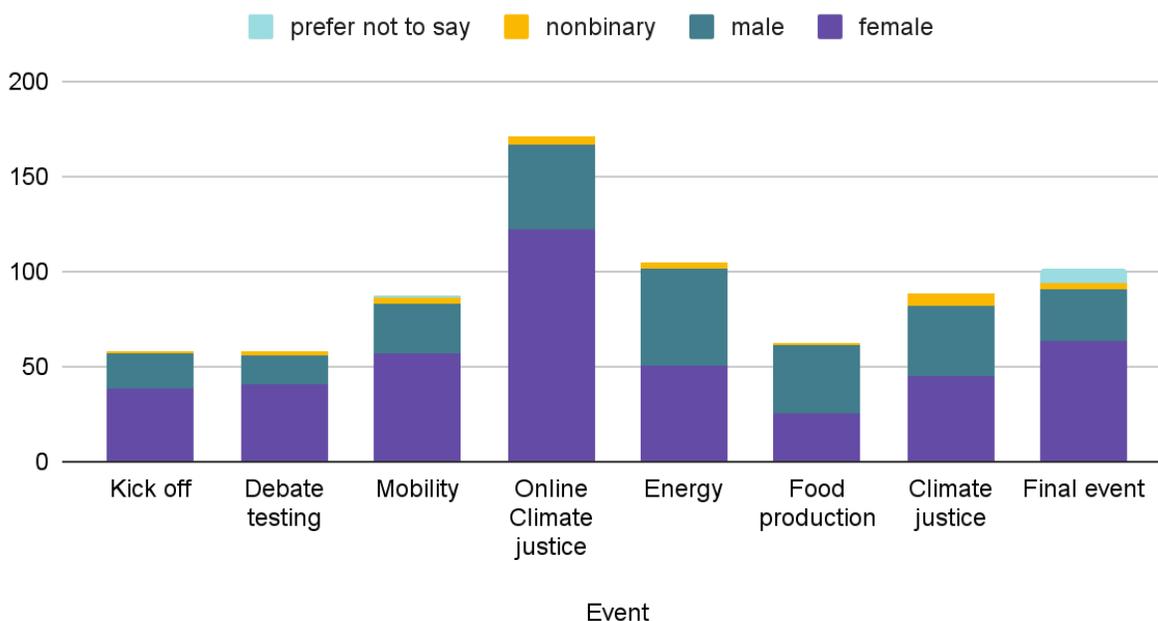
Monitoring of gender mainstreaming

Figure 1. Results of the gender mainstreaming monitoring.

2. Data and Research

Panellists were encouraged to give presentations and discussions that highlight gender-specific data and research findings related to the different debates on the climate crisis. This helped identify gender-specific challenges and opportunities, as well as inform evidence-based policies and actions to the participants.

Example

For example, in the first event in Strasbourg on mobility, keynote speeches addressed sustainable mobility, a critical issue in the climate debate, and emphasised the role of underrepresented voices in driving change, the discussions and questions raised by the audience highlighted that not everyone is affected by policies and actions in the same way. In that sense, specific policies need to be added to fit the specifics of the population. This debate was able to include the gender perspective of the "hidden" inequalities that are present when discussing sustainable mobility, women and non-binaries are not affected by mobilities the same way that men are. (e.g. women can face challenges and feelings of insecurity when using public transport, as well as when they are employed in the sector).

3. Inclusive Language and Communication

Using inclusive language and communication practices throughout the conference, including materials and all interactions, was a must. This consisted of respecting gender identities and avoiding gender stereotypes in all aspects of conference organisation. Such practice was put forward thanks to an agreed set of rules at the beginning of the conference and debates.

Example

In the last event in Brussels, a set of rules was read to the participants and agreed upon them before the debate and discussion started.
The list goes as such:
1. Self-respect and respect for other people is used, which encompasses respecting the pronouns used.
2. Only one person can speak at a time
3. Participants including panellists should be critical in a constructive manner
4. Participants including panellists are asked to refrain from judging others in any discriminatory way
5. Everyone has a voice and is allowed to be heard during the

4. Engaging Format

One of the first goals of the project was to find the most suitable debating methods. These methods were tested during the event in Krakow where the most engaging options were chosen. One of the key aspects was that all participants are able to share their viewpoints and ask questions.

Example

The mobility event in Strasbourg included keynote speeches, a Q&A session, and group debates. Every participant, independent of their gender could participate in the Q&A, however, women who may not feel comfortable with public speaking could still contribute to the small group debates. The team ensured that moderators and facilitators in small groups were women who could guide the debate in a gender-balanced way. This format allowed for in-depth discussions and ensured that all voices, including women's, were heard and valued, enhancing the quality of the participation.

The debate on food production in Sweden was designed to be as inclusive as possible, using two different methodologies: mindfulness debate and creative thinking. The scope of a mindfulness debate is to be focused on the goal of the discussion, reflect before talking, let the other participants express their point of view before replying, and try to visualise what you are talking about. The creative thinking methodology allows participants, who are less used to

speaking in public or being represented in public, to express their thoughts using creative processes.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

At the end of the event, **participants were asked to assess the conference's impact on promoting gender equality and inclusivity**. Throughout the events, feedback was collected on gender-related outcomes to continuously improve future events.

6. Enhance technical support

There is a clear need to improve technical setups for blended events to ensure equal participation and inclusion of online attendees. Continuous testing and refining the technical aspects can facilitate smooth and inclusive online debates.
The consortium produced:
- An online inclusive platform with resources on online democracy tools
- Technical guide for inclusive online/blended debates

Example
Online debate on the impact of the climate crisis on women was scheduled for the later afternoon to allow broader participation. Before the event, clear instructions on how to join the event and use the online platform were sent to all the participants. Several streaming options and communication channels, including anonymity, were available. Finally, the debate is still available online.

II. General recommendations for gender mainstreaming

Most of the policy recommendations for gender mainstreaming emerged from the debates concerning Climate Social Justice because they were the ones with more space to address such issues.

Most of the following recommendations came from:
- The kick-off debate in Berlin: *More diversity in the climate debate*
- Online debate: *Urgency, Voices, Visions: Impact and Strength of Women in the face of climate crisis*
- European Climate Action Day: *Shaping Policies for a fair transition*

Gender equality & inclusivity

1. Centrality of Gender Equality

The events highlighted the importance of placing gender equality at the core of climate change solutions. One solution discussed was to highlight **educational initiatives** that focus on raising awareness of the impact of climate change on women. Another solution discussed was to **promote the inclusion of gender analysis in the development of policies,** that is to say, to encourage speakers and participants to consider how policies can address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women/non-binaries.

Example

We **included educational content** in our events: during our Online Event on *Urgency, Voices, Visions*, the speakers presented how the climate crisis has a specific impact on women, and how they are more impacted by the crisis. Women from marginalised groups experience specific health and security concerns such as increased risks during natural disasters, access to healthcare, and protection from gender-based violence. It was also an **input discussion** because the speakers shared their own difficulties as workers in the climate-related field.

2. Inclusivity

Panellists insisted on the need to develop and implement policies that ensure greater inclusion of women in climate-related discussions and decision-making processes, as well **as providing accessible and understandable information:**
- on European institutions and their functioning
- election processes

- political party programs

Example

The European institutions already have lots of available information free of charge on the web, even with infographics. Links were shared with the interested participants on the matter. During the project, one of the goals was to make understandable the political party programs for the European elections. The consortium produced a report before the election on all EU parties' positions on climate change and sustainability on the different topics covered during the project: food production, energy, social climate justice and mobility in the five working project countries: France, Germany, The Netherlands, Sweden, Poland. This report is freely available on our website, as well as the second report specifically on German political parties in which social justice and gender issues are highlighted.

3. Support marginalised groups

The panellists and participants underlined the clear need to focus on measures to support women from marginalised groups, for example, women with disabilities and women from the Global South. Women and non-binaries from marginalised communities need to be actively involved in **designing and implementing climate response actions**. Indeed, they must be **involved in decision-making processes** as their first-hand experiences and insights are vital for creating responsive and effective climate policies.

Example

During the online debate in Berlin, we made sure to invite women representatives from different socio-cultural backgrounds: migrants, disabled women, women outside the EU, scientists, and doctors.
The same was done for the topic of Diversity and Inclusion during our last event in Brussels where we found representatives of the EU institutions but also associations for migrant people, refugees, disabled people, and gender minorities.

Shifts & communities

4. Addressing privileged perspectives:

The discussions revealed a need to move beyond the privileged European perspective that often views climate change as a future threat. By learning from countries where women and marginalised groups already face severe climate impacts, more comprehensive and effective solutions can be developed.
Policy recommendations were formulated as such:
- Need to develop closer cooperation between countries from the Global North and Global South with binding legality

- Shifting the perspective outside of Europe in the discussions, both by topics and speakers

Such shifts need to be developed by giving knowledge on the impacts of the climate crisis outside the EU, but also how the EU contributes to the climate crisis outside its borders.

Example

During the Social Climate Action Day in view of the elections, panellists reminded the participants to keep in mind that the results of the voting and decisions that will be made will have consequences far beyond Europe.
To showcase it, an exhibition took place during the whole Action Day showing the climate impact crisis in Africa and its population.

5. Empowerment through participation:

Encouraging active participation of women and marginalised communities in climate debates was seen as crucial. This involvement not only **amplifies their voices** but also **empowers them to influence policy and action**, ensuring that their needs and perspectives are adequately addressed.
In every event, not only the representation of different groups within the speakers was ensured, but we also made sure to reach out to a wide diversity of participants by identifying and sending invitations to specific organisations, activists and groups.

6. Foster collaboration

One recommendation to organisations and institutions was to encourage cooperation among women activists, scientists, and community leaders to **share diverse approaches** and strategies in addressing the climate crisis. This would strengthen and create new connections between women active in climate issues to enhance collective efforts and develop joint projects. This could happen through:
- Facilitating **networking** opportunities to create and strengthen support networks for women involved in climate activism.
- Provide spaces and fund projects for women to share their experiences and collaborate on climate action projects.

Example

Open and safe atmosphere during the events allowed meaningful discussions and strong understanding between speakers, participants and organisers. Rather than having one single encounter with the speakers, it resulted in a strong bond with many of our speakers and guests but also between them, resulting in long-term collaboration: exchanges, discussions, partnerships, and ideas.

7. Community engagement

To go deeper into the fostering of collaboration, the community creation and engagement was underlined as crucial.

Example

In the debate on Mobility in Strasbourg, the EuroMetropole Climate Agency showcased community engagement programs that actively involve citizens, especially women, in the transition to low-carbon mobility. Through this example, participants noted the importance of community engagement by including citizens of diverse backgrounds in such initiatives.

Initiatives

Recommendations of initiatives came back in the debates many times through:
- **Creating campaigns** to promote awareness and highlight the critical role of women in combating climate change.

Such campaigns are platforms to challenge stereotypes and raise the profile of women climate leaders through media and public engagement.

- **Discuss and support economic initiatives** that empower women, such as funding for women-led sustainable projects and businesses. Highlight examples of successful women-led climate initiatives during the event.

Conclusions

The implementation of gender mainstreaming in our events has shown not only the importance but also the benefits of inclusive and diverse participation. By incorporating spaces for communication, both in debates and via email and feedback, we ensured that participants had multiple ways to express their gender-related concerns and feedback. Gathered data during the events and in evaluation forms enabled us to assess if the needs and expectations of the panellists and participants were met, fostering an environment of continuous improvement.

Our recommendations for debate practices emphasise the need for a diverse representation of attendees and speakers, inclusive language, and engaging formats. The use of gender-specific data and research in presentations highlighted the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different genders, informing evidence-based policies and actions. Additionally, we addressed the importance of technical support to facilitate smooth and inclusive online debates, ensuring equal participation for all attendees. Also, our online inclusive platform and technical guide for blended debates are valuable resources for future events.

The recommendations for gender mainstreaming from our debates highlight the importance of gender equality in climate change solutions. By focusing on educational initiatives, policy development, and the inclusion of marginalised groups, we can create effective climate policies. Encouraging active participation and collaboration among women activists, scientists, and community leaders empowers women and communities by amplifying their voices and impact.

In conclusion, our project has laid a standard for sustainable gender mainstreaming in events and organisations. By continuously implementing and refining these practices, we can ensure that our events are inclusive and representative of all voices.

Comparative Research Network:

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GENDER MAINSTREAMING DEBATE PRACTICES CHECKLIST

☐ Inclusive language is used, both in communicating the event and during the event

☐ The event ensures to be communicated to various groups so that the attendees are from various genders and horizons

☐ The event ensures diverse representation of speakers and panellists across genders, including women, men, and non-binary individuals

☐ Panellists are encouraged to give presentations and discussions that highlight gender-specific data

☐ The event is engaging through its methods (Q&A, discussions, mindful debate, creative thinking)

☐ Good functioning of the online streaming of the event is ensured for equal participation and inclusion of online attendees.

☐ Monitoring and evaluation foresees questions to assess the gender mainstreaming.