



**RESHAPING EUROPEAN ADVANCES TOWARDS GREEN LEADERSHIP
THROUGH DELIBERATIVE APPROACHES AND LEARNING**

D2.2 Report on the creation of the European Civil Society Forum for the Green and Just Transition and its activities, including number of meetings, gaps assessment, annual monitoring reports and the policy briefs

[WP2 – Creating and mobilising pan-European stakeholder networks and a European Civil Society Forum for the Green and Just Transition]

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Project Summary

REAL DEAL will stimulate a pan-European debate to reshape citizens' and stakeholders' active participation through deliberative processes around the European Green Deal (EGD). It brings together researchers and practitioners of deliberative democracy from a wide range of disciplines including environmental rights and the law of public participation, ethics and responsible innovation, gender studies and ecofeminism, psychology, geography, urban planning, and sustainability studies. It includes the EU's largest civil society networks advocating on the environment, climate, sustainable development, local democracy, and the European movement. It teams up with youth climate, social justice and women's organisations, SMEs, universities and research institutes, mobilising networks with thousands of CSOs, uniting millions of citizens and activating contacts to thousands of policymakers. In a large co-creation exercise, REAL DEAL will develop, test, and validate innovative tools and formats to propel deliberative democracy to the next level. It will test its innovations at citizens assemblies for the transition in at least 13 countries. We will scrutinise pan-European formats ranging from digital deliberation through our online platform www.realdeal.eu to in-person processes such as an Assembly for a Gender-Just Green Deal and a pan-European Youth Climate Assembly. REAL DEAL will co-create a comprehensive protocol for meaningful citizens' participation and deliberation to work towards the objectives of the EGD. It will validate recommendations on how to design such processes and how they can be applied by European institutions, Member States, and civil society alike. Gender equality will be embedded into the project's DNA. It pays specific attention to the leave-no-one-behind principle, fostering the engagement of disenfranchised groups that are disproportionately burdened by environmental damage. REAL DEAL will develop a new model of environmental citizenship across Europe.

Project Information

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Consortium partners

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	EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU	EEB	Belgium
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	ASSOCIATION DES AGENCES DE LA DEMOCRATIE LOCALE	AADL/ALDA	France
	CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY	CEU	Hungary
	CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK EUROPE	CAN EUROPE	Belgium
	DIALOGIK	DIA	Germany
	EUROPEAN MOVEMENT INTERNATIONAL	EMI	Belgium
	GLOBAL CLIMATE FORUM	GCF	Germany
	FORENINGEN NYT EUROPA	NYT EUROPA	Denmark
	SOLIDAR	SOLIDAR	Belgium
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Executive summary

This Civil Society Report provides information and an overview of D2.2 Creating the European Civil Society Forum for the Green and Just Transition, including activities conducted by highlighting the achievements, challenges, and weaknesses throughout the first year of the project implementation period. More specifically, this report focuses on the following activities that have taken place over the first year:

- Three Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal meetings.
- The Gap Assessment of the European Green Deal
- First Annual Monitoring Report on Civic Participation and The European Green Deal
- Promotion of the Civil Society Forum

Along with the abovementioned activities, the following activity was identified as the main milestone during the first year of the project implementation period,

- Creation of the Civil Society Forum for the Green and Just Transition

The creation of the Civil Society Forum results from the need to involve different stakeholders and other societal actors to reshape citizens' and stakeholders' active and meaningful participation in the green and just transition. To this end, the Civil Society Forum aims to serve as a permanent structure and space for citizens, CSOs and other stakeholders to take collective action and deliberate on the EGD's participatory dimension.

In order to establish sustainable participatory and citizens-centred mechanisms, the WP2 together with REAL DEAL partners will continue to strengthen its collaboration with citizens and representatives of progressive civil society by carrying out activities and advocating for a just transition.

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List of acronyms/abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
CA	Citizens Assemblies
CoFoE	Conference on the Future of Europe
CSO(s)	Civil Society Organisation(s)
DG(s)	Directorate General(s)
ECP	European Climate Pact
EU VR	European Voluntary Review
EGD	European Green Deal
HLPF	High Level Political Forum
JTP	Just Transition Platform
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
UN	United Nations
VNR	Voluntary National Review

Table 1 List of acronyms/abbreviations

1 Initiation and coordination of the European Civil Society Forum for the Green and Just Transition

The European Green Deal is one of the most broad and ambitious policy frameworks of the European Union, aiming to transform the EU into the first climate-neutral region of the world by 2050 and to achieve the objectives set in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is crucial that these bold transformations benefit all of society, and the costs of climate action do not fall on the least privileged.

Ensuring such profound change requires active engagement and meaningful participation of citizens to shape and take part in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and strategies surrounding the EGD. In this context the Civil Society Forum designed to serve as a space for informal meetings to discuss democratic participation in relation to the topics, policies and processes of the European Green Deal (EGD),

The main objective of the Civil Society Forum is to provide a space to discuss, build synergies and deliberate on how organisations with different interests and concerns can collectively contribute to achieving the goals of the EGD at member state as well as EU level through processes of civil dialogue and in a way that benefits all citizens and different societal actors. While contributing to this ambitious transformation of the EGD, the forum aims to become an ongoing structure for the citizens, community of civil society organisations and stakeholders to continue discussing and advocating for green and just transition as well as sustainable development during the project implementation period.

To ensure diversity and equal representation, the forum involves a variety of actors and civil society organisations working in the different areas of the EGD such as researchers, gender experts, local democracy, young and senior citizens across Europe. In addition, the forum also includes members of SDG Watch Europe, members of the European Alliance for a Just Transition, Trade Unions, CSOs, Organisations, supportive policymakers and members working in areas such as sustainable development, just transition participatory democracy etc.

The Civil Society Forum meets three times a year over the project implementation period between 2022-2025. Two of these meetings will be held online and last one day, and one meeting will be face-to-face and last two days.

Throughout the first year of the project, The Real Deal project partners have been actively involved in the brainstorming, design, and outreach activities to set up and promote the Forum. Moreover, they have contributed to the facilitation of participatory sessions, and drafting their outcomes for the first and second forums. After a collective consultation with project partners, the Forum name was adjusted to Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal.

1.1 1st Civil Society Forum

The first Civil Society Forum meeting (Task 2.2.2) took place in person on the 9th and 10th of June in Brussels, and it counted with more than 50 organisations that provided a comprehensive representation of diversity within Europe and a fair balance of values and interests in sustainability and equality. The representation of civil society was gender-balanced and ensured the representation of marginalised groups via networks of civil society organisations such as European Disability Forum, European Network Against Racism, European Anti-Poverty Network. The Forum members brought a balanced expertise on the environmental, social, economic and governance dimensions of sustainable development at European and national level.

This first meeting aimed to discuss the gaps and shortcomings of the European Green Deal (objectives 2 and 4). As a preparation for the meeting of the Forum, the task leader (SOL) organised a participatory brainstorming session with all members of the consortium in the in-person kick off meeting of the Real Deal project, which served to identify some of the main areas of focus for discussion in the Forum. The first meeting of the Forum counted with several parallel sessions that formed participatory working groups to exchange and identify some of the gaps and shortcomings of the EGD, as well as formulating proposals to bridge such gaps and highlight the role of civil society in doing so. A final session was moderated by Ms. Patrizia Heidegger, Director of Global Policies and Sustainability, European Environmental Bureau and the session involved policymakers namely, Ms. Maria Nikolopoulou, Vice President of the NAT Section, European Economic and Social Committee, Ms. Christine Mayer, Team Leader Sustainable Development Indicators, Eurostat and Mr. Frank Siebern-Thomas, Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission. The policymakers presented some of the outcomes of the discussions and engaged in a conversation with participants (as part of Task 2.3).

The results of the discussions of the first meeting of the Forum fed into a report on the gaps and shortcomings of the EGD (Task 2.2.3). This report, providing recommendations with inputs from more than 60 CSOs, will be shared amongst key European and local policymakers and civil society stakeholders once published and will also be available on Real Deal's website.

1.1.1 *The Gap Assessment of the European Green Deal Report*

This 'Gap Assessment of European Green Deal' report was drafted in collaboration with Real Deal project partners, namely Can Europe, Nyt Europa, YEE, WECF and ALDA, as well as with contributions from the participants of the first Civil Society Forum. Its purpose is to address the missing links with other relevant EU policy frameworks and produce a half-way assessment of the EGD, reflecting on the milestones achieved and the gaps to overcome. In order to achieve this in a participatory way, the first Civil Society Forum was held to analyse the gaps and shortcomings of the EGD towards achieving the SDGs and the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Therefore, this report builds on the results of that meeting to present the main gaps and recommendations under six different areas for a transformative European Green Deal, including the current state of play of the European Union's democratic and participatory policy making mechanisms, particularly on those topics linked to the EGD. The covered areas presented in this report include namely economic models for a just Transition, International dimensions of the EGD, Complementarity with policy processes and frameworks, monitoring

and accountability, a Green and Social Deal, Equality and anti-discrimination in the EGD, bringing the EGD closer to the citizens. In addition, recommendations towards civil society organisations are identified, providing a pathway to ensure that civil society organisations strengthen their involvement in environmental and social policy making, and act together for a transformative green deal.

For the full report please see Annex 1 under the Annexes section in this report.

1.2 2nd Civil Society Forum

The second meeting of the Forum took place online on the 21st and 22nd of September. The second edition of the forum focused on the topic of civic participation and aimed to discuss the merits and shortcomings of notable participatory processes that have addressed EGD topics, such as the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE), the Just Transition Platform (JTP), the European Climate Pact (ECP), and Citizens Assemblies at National level (CA), and to build on some of the findings of other WPs (mainly the criteria for the evaluation of meaningful engagement of WP1) (objective 3). This Forum meeting gathered more than 40 CSOs representatives and policy makers from the stakeholder mapping (Objective 1). The outcome of the second forum contributed to the first Annual Report (Task 2.2.4), submitted as part of Deliverable 2.2 (D2.2). Both of these reports (Task 2.2.3 and 2.2.4) will be disseminated amongst key stakeholders and national and European policy makers.

1.2.1 *First Annual monitoring report on Civic Participation and the EGD Report*

The annual monitoring reports on the EGD will reflect civil society's assessment of the progress made towards the objectives laid out by the EGD and the SDGs (including those aspects of sustainable development missing in the EGD, such as participatory methods) with concrete recommendations. This First Annual Monitoring Report on Civic Participation and EGD was drafted in collaboration with Real Deal project partners, namely Can Europe, Nyt Europa, YEE, and ALDA and with contributions from the participants of the second Civil Society Forum. The objective of the second forum was to discuss some of the currently available mechanisms for citizens and civil society's participation in decision-making on the EGD at EU level and to share good practices and difficulties, utilising participatory formats at every step. In addition, participants of the forum stressed the need to assess the progress of the EGD, as well as to institutionalize active citizen's participation and environmental democracy in Europe's green transition. Therefore, the first four parts of the report presents the main positive elements, challenges, and key recommendations under the participatory instruments of the EGD namely, the Conference on the Future of Europe, the Just Transition Platform, the European Climate Pact, and Citizens Assemblies at National level. In addition, the fifth section of the report provides key recommendations on citizens and civil society meaningful engagement and participation in these processes around EGD.

For the full report please see Annex 2 under the Annexes section in this report.

1.3 3rd Civil Society Forum

The third meeting of the Civil Society Forum will take place online on the 25th and 26th of January 2023. This forum meeting aims to bring citizens, CSO representatives and policy makers together to deliberate on progress towards the full implementation of the SDGs and look specifically at the European Voluntary Review (EU VR). Serving as a Europe-wide Voluntary National Review, the EU VR is an opportunity for the EU to monitor its global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals by producing a detailed review report, foreseen for April 2023 and lead by the European Commission, ahead of the 2023 HLPF and the SDG Summit. The main objective of the third edition will be to discuss the role that CSOs can play in monitoring and shadow reporting on the SDGs, to share good practices and to strengthen CSO capacities in monitoring and evaluation of SDG implementation. To this end, the third forum will bring three prominent speakers together, namely Mogens Lykketoft, former President of the United Nations General Assembly, Guillaume Lafortune, Vice President and Head of the Paris Office at the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and Lucija Karmelutti, EU Youth Delegate to UN. The speakers will share their experiences on working with SDGs and EU VR with an aim to empower participants by highlighting the importance of how citizens, CSOs and different societal actors' active and meaningful involvement is crucial in monitoring and producing SDG "spotlight report". Furthermore, the Forum can ensure such reports can be an important advocacy tool for highlighting progress towards the SDGs through the perspectives of civil society and citizens themselves. The forum will follow interactive discussions in five different working groups namely, **Prosperity, Peace, People, Partnerships, Planet** (5Ps of SDGs) with an aim to identify positive developments, challenges, and recommendations for SDG implementation processes.

1.4 The Policy Briefs

The policy briefs will be developed in the next phase as they depend on the focus of the deliberative processes which are under planning at the time of writing.

2 List of Meetings

During the first year of the project implementation period, several meetings were held with Real Deal Project partners to ensure smooth planning and implementation of the Civil Society Forum. The meetings were to discuss the concept and structure of the civil society forum including, logistical planning and preparation as well as de-briefing of the Forum.

3 Promotion of the Civil Society Forum

Regarding the promotion of the Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the EGD (task 2.2), several articles have been published about the launch of the Civil Society Forum for Sustainability (see [Real Deal website](#), [Solidar website](#), [EEB website](#), [EMI website](#), [SDG Watch Europe website](#), [CAN Europe website](#)). These articles aimed to increase the outreach of the

Civil Society Forum for Sustainability amongst key civil society stakeholders, especially those in the networks of the partners of the consortium. Moreover, EMI produced a [video](#) about the first meeting of the Civil Society Forum for Sustainability that has been disseminated through social media.

The first meeting of the Forum was held on the 9th and 10th of June in Brussels, and it gathered around 50 civil society representatives from all over Europe to discuss the gaps and shortcomings of the EGD. The meeting also gathered policymakers from the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee and Eurostat, to discuss with the representatives of civil society about the outcomes of the Forum. The outcomes of the discussion are compiled in a report (Task 2.2.3) that will be published and made available for citizens, CSOs and other societal actors. In addition, the report will be shared among key stakeholders and policymakers, including the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EESC, Permanent Representations to the EU and more (forthcoming).

The second meeting of the Forum was held online on the 21st and 22nd of September 2022 and it gathered around 40 civil society representatives from all over Europe to discuss on the topic of civic participation, by discussing the merits and shortcomings of notable participatory processes that have addressed the EGD. The outcomes of the discussions are compiled in a report (Task 2.2.4) that will be published and made available for citizens, CSOs and other societal actors. In addition, the report will be shared among key stakeholders and policymakers, including the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EESC, Permanent Representations to the EU and more (forthcoming). Following the forum, [an article](#) was drafted and published on Real Deal project's website as well as [Solidar](#), and [SDG Watch Europe](#) websites. The article was also shared with all Real Deal Project Partners.

Regarding the third meeting of the forum that will take place online on the 25th and 26th of January 2023, a brief information note was drafted together with registration form and visuals in advance and made publicly available on Real Deal [website](#) on the 15th of November. In order to increase the visibility and to ensure wider reach out, the forum is being promoted via Solidar's social media accounts namely, [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) on a weekly basis since November 2022. The forum was also shared with SOLIDAR's network through monthly newsletter. In addition, the forum was also shared and made publicly accessible through [EEB](#) and [SDG Watch Europe's](#) websites. In collaboration with WP5, the dedicated email was also sent to Real Deal's list of stakeholders and the community (411 in total) as a part of the action plan to promote the third civil society forum.

After the forum, an article will be drafted and made publicly available with a view to increase the outreach of the Civil Society Forum for Sustainability amongst prominent stakeholders, especially those in the networks of the partners of the consortium.

4 Next Steps

WP2 is currently in the process of organising the third civil society forum. The forum will take place online on the 25th and 26th of January 2023. As mentioned above, the third meeting of the Forum aims to bring many CSOs together to deliberate on the SDGs and specifically the European Voluntary Review. The main objective of the third edition will be to discuss the role that CSOs can play in monitoring and shadow reporting on the SDGs, to share good practices and to strengthen CSO capacities in monitoring and evaluation of SDG implementation. The results of the discussions of the forum will be collectively compiled into second Annual Monitoring Report (Task 2.2.4) during the second year of the Real Deal Project. The report will serve as a civil society spotlight report for the European Voluntary Review. Furthermore, it will be used as an advocacy tool and shared with relevant policymakers, such as at the 2023 HLPF, the relevant DGs in the European Commission, MEPs and EP Committees, Permanent Representations to the EU, among others with a view to ensure citizens and civil society's involvement and valuable input reflected in European sustainability policies.

5 Annexes

The next section of this report includes the two main outcomes (reports) from the two Civil Society Forums organised during the first year of the project. The brief information about these reports mentioned under the sections 1.1.1 and 1.2.1 in this report.

Annex 1 is the full report on Gap assessment of the European Green Deal (EGD)

Annex 2 is the full report on First Annual monitoring report on Civic Participation and the EGD Report

5.1 Annex 1: Gap Assessment of the European Green Deal Report

The European Green Deal (EGD) is currently the broadest and most ambitious policy framework of the European Union, aiming to transform the EU into the first climate-neutral region of the world by 2050 and to achieve the objectives set in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In times of multiple economic, political, and social crises, it is crucial that these bold transformations benefit all of society, and that the costs do not fall upon the least privileged in society.

Ensuring such profound change requires active engagement and meaningful participation of citizens and stakeholders to shape and take part in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and strategies surrounding the EGD.

Civil society organisations have been fostering civil and social dialogue throughout the political life of the EGD, as crucial means to guarantee both the appropriateness and the acceptance of transformative and impactful environmental and social policy.

In this context, and against the backdrop of current developments of shrinking civic space, it is urgent to provide a space for collective action where civil society organisations can gather to assess the participatory dimension of the EGD, to be able to build on their synergies to influence policies and share good practices and concerns.

Only then will it be possible to reshape and rethink civil dialogue to strengthen citizens' and stakeholders' active participation and deliberation in the green and just transition for all.

About the REAL DEAL project

The REALDEAL is a Horizon2020 funded project that sets out to stimulate a pan-European debate involving different stakeholder groups, with the aim of reshaping citizens' and stakeholders' active participation and deliberation in the green and just transition. It brings together excellent research with experienced practitioners of deliberative democracy from a wide range of disciplines including environmental rights and the law of public participation, ethics and responsible innovation, gender studies and ecofeminism, geography, urban

planning and applied sustainability studies. In a massive co-creating exercise, it is currently researching, testing, and validating innovative tools, formats, and processes for deliberative democracy in the context of the European Green Deal.

The Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal

More than 50 civil society organisations, including some of Europe's largest civil society networks, have joined the Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal, which was launched in June 2022.

Organised by SOLIDAR and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) with the support of SDG Watch Europe and the European Alliance for a Just Transition, 'The Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal' serves as an informal agora for discussing democratic participation in relation to the topics, policies, and processes of the European Green Deal (EGD). It gathers civil society organisations and other key stakeholders from all over Europe working in the areas of the EGD and participatory democracy.

The main objective of the Civil Society Forum is to provide a space to discuss, build synergies and deliberate on how organized stakeholders' OR civil society organisations with different interests and concerns can collectively contribute to achieving the goals of the EGD at member state as well as EU level through processes of civil dialogue and in a way that benefits all of society. It meets three times a year.

Topics discussed by the Forum include the gaps and recommendations for a transformative European Green Deal, presented in this gap assessment, but also the current state of play of the European Union's democratic and participatory policy making mechanisms, particularly on those topics linked to the EGD. The Forum, therefore, aims to contribute to overcoming silos and bringing together relevant civil society stakeholders working on citizens' participation and deliberation on the one hand, and sustainable development on the other.

Methodology of the Gap Analysis

The objective of this first Forum was to:

- ✓ **Analyse the gaps of the EGD** towards achieving the SDGs and the United Nations 2030 Agenda
- ✓ **Identify the EGD's shortcomings** and disconnections from other relevant processes and exchange views on how to address these issues and strengthen the Green Deal.

Six different working groups were formed in order to analyse the gaps:

- ✓ **Complementarity with policy processes and frameworks, monitoring and accountability**, which focused on the missing links with other governance and policy frameworks, such as sustainability, the human rights framework, and the SDGs.
- ✓ **Bringing the EGD closer to the citizens:** civic education and citizen participation, which delved into the limitations of involving citizens in the EGD, as well as its top-down approach.
- ✓ **International dimensions of the EGD**, which touched upon topics such as trade, spillover effects and the impact of green growth in the Global South, as well as on

geopolitical issues and the lack of involvement of candidate countries and non-EU member states.

- ✓ **Economic models for a just transition**, which focused on the economic model of “green growth” behind the EGD, and explored alternative concepts and systems such as degrowth, care or sustainable lifestyles.
- ✓ **A social Green Deal**, which explored the social dimension of the EGD, and how to ensure that it is considered further in the design, implementation, and monitoring of EGD policies to support groups most impacted by such policies.
- ✓ **Equality and anti-discrimination in the EGD**, with a special focus on gender equality and intersectionality. It discussed the way in which equality and antidiscrimination can be put at the centre of the EGD.

Each section provides an analysis of the main gaps and recommendations for the area covered. In addition, recommendations towards civil society organisations are identified, providing a pathway to ensure that civil society organisations strengthen their involvement in environmental and social policy making, and act together for a transformative green deal.

Complementarity with policy processes and frameworks, monitoring and accountability

What are the missing links with other governance and policy frameworks, such as sustainability policies, human rights frameworks, the SDGs, or the gender equality strategy? How do we ensure that these complex policy processes are made accessible for citizens, allowing their involvement in the monitoring and ensuring the accountability of our policymakers?

Many of the above gaps seem to be caused, or compounded, by a poor flow of information within the EU and between its institutions, a lack of engagement of citizens and priority given to consultation with corporate interest groups. There is a lack of effort to build common understanding and joint commitment to solving problems, often using language that is not easily understandable for people, when everyone should be taking into account when making these policies.

Main gaps

- There is **no overarching strategy at the EU level to promote the SDGs**. Although the Von der Leyen Commission has acknowledged the relevance of the Goals, it has not authored a comprehensive framework that could create a narrative and provide a reference for the implementation of policies and adequate monitoring systems. Therefore, there is a lack of policy coherence even in programmes that notionally go in the direction of accomplishing the SDGs – for example, the Green Deal and the Porto Social Commitment.
- Like sustainability in general, **SDGs implementation is carried out with a silo approach** by various institutional actors, with a lack of evaluation of the interlinkages and points of contact. Thus, there have been limited efforts to build a mutual understanding of the key challenges, nor a coordinated EU response to addressing them. Europe continues to give with one hand and take with the other.

- **There is no ex-ante evaluation of policies regarding the effects on the SDGs**, but only ex-post, which makes it difficult to assess policies while they are being debated. Similarly, there is no general “checklist” allowing us to evaluate what remains to be done, and in what fields, making it difficult to monitor the policies.
- There is **no coherent way to deal with interrelated policies that affect member states** in very different ways, therefore exacerbating differences and inequalities among states – although different outcomes are to be expected in various policy fields within the Union.
- **There are significant data gaps at the EU level when it comes to monitoring progress in the SDGs**, as there are specific areas that Eurostat cannot evaluate (particularly SDG 6, or SDG 14 and 15) for all states. This leads to difficulties in providing accurate EU-wide assessments.

Main recommendations

- **The SDGs must become an overarching strategy to deliver on a just, fair, and green transition** to supplement the EGD. The EGD will not function sufficiently as the overarching strategy to reach the SDG’s – a political reset and adequate sustainable development strategy is needed, alongside meaningful civil society involvement. The EU should therefore introduce an overarching strategy and a costed action plan to achieve the SDGs by 2030.
- **The EU should take the complementarity between the EGD’s other policy processes seriously**, as well as the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. The EGD must be part of a wider strategy of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD).
- A more **horizontal approach to sustainability** must be adopted, by looking at interlinkages and connections between SDGs, as well as at existing silos.
- **Reduce the multiplicative growth of new tools, policies and mechanisms**. A review of existing ones would reduce the growth of burdens and complexity. This would include improving regulations for key actors, institutional and non-institutional, to align their roles and responsibilities with their capacities when it comes to implementing the SDGs.
- **Evaluations and assessments need to become a routine ex-ante activity** when it comes to public policies, allowing a more complete assessment of their expected impacts. To this end, data availability, in time series and for all of the EU is invaluable. This will require a great effort, especially by Eurostat, but could be a cornerstone of a more open and transparent system when it comes to sustainable development.
- **A lack of participation by non-institutional actors** worsens the ability of institutions to act and react effectively. To further enhance the participation of the private sector, CSOs and civil society, incentives should be devised, either economic or in kind (visibility, data access etc.). This should be accompanied by a commitment to the systemic involvement of CSOs in processes.
- **Communication by institutions among themselves and towards the public should be improved**, both to encourage participation and to guarantee transparency.

Civil Society Organisations

- CSOs can help **with targeted awareness raising** and in finding the more important connections.
- CSOs have the tools to **bridge existing gaps by sharing good practices**, know-how and experience. Furthermore, they can work with citizens and the private sector to find solutions to challenges, providing mutual benefits.
- **CSOs must improve coordination on different policy agendas** with the European Parliament and with other key partners, work closer on shared policy interest areas, and coordinate strategic campaigns.

Bringing the EGD closer to the citizens: civic education and citizen participation

Introduction

Citizen engagement is crucial at all stages of the EGD. This section will explore some limitations regarding the involvement of citizens in the EGD, as well as its top-down approach. This will include the lack of multilevel engagement, the lack of focus on civic education and cultural differences.

In the context of shrinking civic space in Europe, erosion of rule of law and diminishing trust of citizens towards its governments, there is a need to engage citizens and rethink democratic participation in Europe. Bringing the EGD closer to citizens is a crucial task to ensure that policies are successful and inclusive of all citizens' needs. For this, processes of citizen engagement have proved to be crucial to allow citizens to have their say at different stages of the policymaking process.

Main gaps

- **There is no agreed comprehensive definition of meaningful participation and the way that this should be implemented.** The lack of standardised guidelines for institutions to follow when they engage with citizens to ensure the quality of the process and no systematised approach towards it.
- This often results in **processes that lack accountability and opportunities for citizens to meaningfully engage in policy processes**, reducing citizen engagement to a tick-boxing exercise or a mere consultation without real agency to shape policy agendas. The risk of tokenisation becomes even higher when it comes to engage marginalised communities.
- **Processes of citizen engagement have sometimes failed to ensure representativeness, inclusiveness and equality of opportunities.** This is due to the process design and methodology of the selection of participants, which sometimes fails to integrate disaggregated data (for example, by gender or other criteria) and ensure diversity of citizens.
- There is tension between **highly complex and technical processes, and the lack of information, awareness or educational opportunities that make them accessible to citizens.** Other barriers include highly bureaucratised processes, lack of transparency and lack of access to information and justice, language barriers, methods of participation that privilege citizens with higher levels of education and literacy, lack of conciliation measures and lack of accessibility for people with disabilities. This also undermines the legitimacy of the process.

- **The lack of cohesion** between different EU policies, institutions and DGs in the European Commission in relation to the implementation of different files of the EGD further hinders the engagement of citizens who struggle to understand the policies, processes and competences of each institution.
- On the local level, there is a **lack of capacity of the local authorities** to implement such activities to feed into the policy cycle and engage local communities directly. This lack of systemic approach also diminishes the effectiveness of the implementation of the EGD policies.
- **The lack of follow-up mechanisms in many processes** and accountability, reduces the engagement of people for next participatory processes.

Main recommendations

- **Developing guidelines for meaningful participation**, that are focused on mainstreaming citizen engagement at all stages of the policy cycle. Such definition and guidelines for citizen engagement should consider principles of equality and intersectionality. Moreover, guidelines should put a strong emphasis on researching citizens' attitudes towards participation in certain topics before setting frameworks for consultation.
- **Ensuring the inclusion and outreach towards marginalised and underrepresented groups**, as well as youth, considering their needs and preferences at all stages of process design, and engaging in citizen engagement processes that are less bureaucratic and more flexible. This includes using diverse methods and creative tools for participation and always ensuring accessibility and transparency.
- **Implementing follow-up and accountability mechanisms with specific timelines.** Such follow-up mechanisms should be set up since the beginning of the process and be transparent. A good example can be the Youth Climate and Sustainable Roundtable initiative, where it should be ensured that all youth engagement mechanisms contain a follow-up mechanism whereby EU policymakers or decision-makers involved in the processes respond to youth demands within a given period, for example 8 weeks with a clear yes or no answer and rationale behind them.
- **Strengthening the capacity of citizens to engage in these processes** when the files are highly technical. This includes organising awareness- raising campaigns or workshops, investing in life-long learning programmes around the EGD and the just transition, building competencies of environmental citizenship through both formal and informal education, and promoting bottom-up forms of civic participation, to increase citizens' empowerment through their involvement in policy making. Similarly, **strengthening the capacity of policymakers who are involved in organising, overseeing, and reporting back from these processes of citizen engagement.** This should include trainings on communication to avoid highly jargonised processes.
- **Ensuring that these processes allow for spaces and processes of co-learning and co-creation involving all actors.** This means consulting and taking into consideration citizens' needs and preferences when designing a process for citizen engagement, as well as building space for evaluation, critical reflection and reimagining of the processes after they are held. This is crucial to avoid a top-down approach to citizen participation.

Civil Society Organisations

- **Strengthening the role of CSOs in providing assistance to citizens**, especially in knowing their rights and understanding policies and opportunities to engage.

- **CSOs should also be leaders in connecting the discussion to communities and local action**, and they should be supported and funded by institutions to do so.

Environmental and climate action: the good, the bad, and the ugly

Introduction

The European Green Deal (EGD) commits the EU to carbon neutrality, zero pollution and the protection and restoration of the environment. It was launched as the as a “man on the moon” to deliver a set of deeply transformative policies that would “reconcile the economy with our planet, to reconcile the way we produce, the way we consume, with our planet and to make it work for our people”. Covid-19 risked derailing the EGD and its environmental and climate ambition, but instead the EGD became a guiding principle for the economic recovery efforts – even if the practice often does not live up to the principle. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has been instrumentalised by some powerful interest groups to weaken and postpone stronger environmental and climate action, with attacks on the Farm to Fork Strategy, delays in bringing out crucial new legislation, such as on chemicals and pesticides, and a weakening of environmental safeguards. The invasion of Ukraine and resulting supply chain shock and energy crisis should give reason to double down on its ambition level if we are to become less dependent on fossil fuels and imported resources. The EGD to date includes a range of clearly good commitments that support a transformative agenda towards its environmental and climate objectives, many still progressive but weaker initiatives, and some missed opportunities. At the same time, there are some bad and even harmful developments that fly in the face of its environmental and climate ambitions and show that its principles have not been fully mainstreamed.

Main Gaps

The EGD has been good on vision, strategies, transformative narrative and long-term commitments and set in motion important legislative reforms that need to be continued. It has been considerably weaker on the pace of actual change and where it concerns actual measures that translate into money and real constraining measures – reflecting considerable efforts by industry and political groupings and other vested interests who want to maintain the status quo to hollow out the measures. The weak Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the political imposition of biomass, gas and nuclear in the taxonomy undermine the confidence that carbon neutrality, zero pollution and nature restoration are truly the number one priority.

Strategic Vision

- A **reduction target for GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions of 55%** (or 57%) by 2030 is not aligned with what science requires. The EU needs to achieve a 65% reduction by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.
- **Gas and nuclear in the Taxonomy** delegated act and biomass in the climate delegated act have demonstrated that political interests can trump science-based approaches and undermine the confidence in both the taxonomy (despite some positive features in other chapters more reflective of the original positive ambition) and the EGD.
- **Mandatory due diligence obligations** under the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (April 2022) are weak when it comes to assessing adverse environmental and climate impacts.
- The **Raw Materials Strategy** comes with a focus on short-term economic gains of mining for virgin raw materials without fully considering long-term environmental and

social impacts. Demand-side solutions to reduce the need for raw materials are not at all considered within the strategy.

- Better Regulation's core commitment to the **one-in-one-out approach** is both in itself bad regulatory practice (laws should be decided on their merits and not on their number) and creates a political signal to slow legislative progress.

Climate

- The **Climate Neutrality target** is only binding at EU level and it contains **no phase out date for fossil fuels use**, is weak on governance, lacks binding targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency at national level, is weak on the polluter pays principle (ETS review), and missed opportunities on animal numbers, nutrient management and meat consumption.
- The **Fit for 55 package** is a comprehensive package with many good elements, but it is **insufficient to push the EU onto a pathway to a 1.5°C limit** and has a range of weaker elements, including the limited scope of the aviation Emission Trade Scheme proposal, insufficiently stringent 2030 cars and vans CO2 targets, and lack of access to justice provisions.
- The reviewed **Industrial Emissions Directive (IED)** proposal is not yet fit for climate protection, performance indicators for making the instrument forward looking are missing and key aspects are left to be resolved later.
- The revision of the **Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)** is still too focused on energy in use stage and neglecting the potential emissions saving linked to sufficiency and circularity.
- The **Methane Strategy missed the opportunity** to effectively address the EU's biggest source of this GHG and air pollution precursor, the agricultural sector. The Methane Strategy also failed to promote decisive action to cut emissions from the second biggest source in the EU, the waste sector.
- The **Adaptation Strategy** recognised the need to speed up adaptation efforts across the EU, including through the faster uptake of nature-based solutions and achieving climate-resilient water management, but failed to set targets and proper governance mechanisms to ensure that the EU becomes climate-resilient by 2050.

Pollution

- The **reform of the EU's chemical policy REACH** was nearly taken off the EC's Work Programme for 2023 due to industry pressure. While civil society outrage resulted in a commitment to step up REACH with a proposal in 2023, the phase out of hazardous chemicals, in particular from consumer products, is too slow and more oriented at industry interests rather than human and environmental health.
- **Air pollution** remains the most serious environmental health concern in the EU. The EU needs to align with the World Health Organisation's standards for ambient air quality. Moreover, many member states are unwilling to fully implement EU air quality legislation.
- There was no update on the Environmental and Outdoor Noise Directives. Both **noise and light pollution are not sufficiently tackled**.
- The proposal for an **Industrial Emissions Portal Regulation** does not make best use of available information for e.g. benchmarking and compliance promotion, the list of pollutants remains unchanged, and arbitrary and counter-productive reporting thresholds are kept.

Nature and sustainable agriculture

- Instead of tackling the real barriers to the upscaling of renewables, through the REPowerEU package, the Commission proposed a **roll-back of nature protection**

legislation, failing to propose synergistic solutions to the intertwined climate and biodiversity crises for nature-positive renewables.

- The **Forest Strategy was watered down** following industry pressure.
- **Sustainable Use of Pesticides:** The excessive use of pesticides is a main driver of biodiversity loss, but also soil degradation and water pollution in the EU. However, the chemicals lobby is fighting back against strong reduction targets of pesticides use. What is needed are legally binding reduction targets of the use and risk of chemical pesticides at EU and member state level.
- The **Recovery and Resilience Fund (RRF)** and the new budget missed the opportunity to change practices in agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors that drive biodiversity loss.
- The **Farm to Fork Strategy** is a welcome first step towards a Common Food Policy and a sustainable farming sector; however, it **falls short on promoting a shift towards healthy and sustainable diets**.
- The **Common Agricultural Policy** will continue funding **harmful intensive farming practices** and will not deliver on the European Green Deal, despite some positive elements such as eco-schemes.

Main recommendations

- The EU needs to **agree on binding targets at EU and member state level** wherever they are missing or not aligned with science. This includes the commitment to a 65% reduction of GHG by 2030.
- While many progressive new laws have been adopted, we need an **urgent review of regulation that runs against the objectives of the EGD** such as the Common Agricultural Policy.
- **Environmental issues that have not yet been tackled sufficiently** such as noise or light pollution, hazardous chemicals in consumer goods etc. Need to be addressed with progressive legislation.
- We need to **step up the enforcement capacity**, funding and action to ensure that old and new legislative initiatives are properly implemented on the ground and the European Commission performs its Guardian of the Treaty role around its environmental and climate ambition.
- The EU needs to **step up institutional capacity:** the EC services (especially DG ENV) have been overstretched with the scale of the EGD and staffing levels have not been aligned with the needs of the EGD.

Civil Society Organisations

- CSO's should work together to **maintain the political pressure to stick to the EDG environmental and climate ambitions**. It needs to defend attacks from powerful industry lobby groups who use crises such as the pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine to halt progress on environmental regulation.
- CSO's **should begin preparing for the "next" Green Deal** with even higher environmental and climate ambition to achieve carbon neutrality, zero pollution and nature restoration.
- CSO's must hold European member states accountable when it comes to the **implementation of environmental and climate legislation** and the use of EU funds such as through the Recovery and Resilience Fund.

International Dimensions of the European Green Deal – the external dimension

Introduction

The European Green Deal (EGD) does not sufficiently consider and address how the European economy affects the rest of the world through spillover effects of Europe's policies and practices. Also, the greening of the European economy can have negative effects on other countries, for instance, where the EU needs more raw materials. The EGD should also set new standards for international trade and cooperation and work to ensure that we expect the same level of dedication to a green transition from European companies inside and outside the European Union.

Main Gaps

An overarching gap is the **weak external dimension** of the EGD. A core problem with the EGD is that it mostly focuses on how to green the economy within the EU, without considering the impact on the planet and on other countries, notably countries in the global South. The discussion on the EGD must be widened to take account of the negative externalities outside Europe's borders, for example, by adequately measuring the spill over effects of Europe's policies, such as the relocation of resource intensive production and the increased need for raw materials.

Strategic Vision

- The EGD is a growth strategy that is focused primarily on economics and **lacks an overarching global socially just strategy**, or a global green deal, that facilitates a green transition not just within the European Union, but also globally. The link between the EGD and the SDGs, which provides a multilateral framework at the global level, must be strengthened.
- **A global climate justice framework is lacking within the EGD.** Rather, the EGD keeps a focus on Europe's climate neutrality at the expense of other countries. This is evident for example in Europe's efforts to 'secure access' to raw materials for the green transition and for its low carbon infrastructure, which it continues to roll out through a market-based system, rather than to reduce material extraction, throughput, and consumption.
- **Without a significant reduction in energy demand and an emphasis on energy sufficiency, renewable energies are an add on to existing fossil fuel infrastructure and the total energy used increases**, rather than truly replacing energy from fossil fuel sources or nuclear energy with renewables.
- The EGD sets targets for emissions but there are **currently no binding targets for resource use**, therefore it relies on a strategy of decoupling which has been disproved by the empirical scientific literature on degrowth.
- **The EGD doesn't take indigenous people's human rights into account in its implementation.** Further it also has serious shortcomings when it comes to fighting discrimination and promoting women's rights. A rights-based approach to environmental justice is therefore lacking in the EGD.

Trade

- The EGD perpetuates **unequal global patterns of trade.** European consumption patterns have huge consequences upon the rest of the world by destroying ecosystems, biodiversity loss, human rights violations (for example labour rights in supply chains) and at present Europe is failing to ensure a sustainable global model for consumption, production, and waste management.

- Regarding trade, **there is a clear sustainability gap in trade agreements**. Europe depends very heavily on agricultural imports. Trade deals dictating terms for Europe's imports should contain enforceable sustainability chapters. The EGD should work as a framework that ensures that the resources required for products on the European market do not contribute to ecological degradation. Harmonised standards and monitoring need to be strengthened.
- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which aims to avoid carbon leakage and establish carbon pricing, **remains inadequate to address negative externalities** as it applies only to a selected range of industries, does not count indirect emissions in production, nor does it fully acknowledge that social, economic, or ecological externalities differs from country to country. Many developing countries have criticised the CBAM for non-compliance with the Paris Agreement and that they will need to pay more despite Europe's historical responsibility for emissions.

Finance

- Regarding financial flows, the EGD does nothing to avert **a net flow of materials and wealth from the global South to the global North**, despite the historical responsibility of Europe and the global North for emissions due to industrialisation and globalisation. The EGD therefore perpetuates a framework of outsourcing and fails to address the root causes of hegemonic oppression and injustice.
- A significant gap in the EGD is that it doesn't identify a suitable framework to ensure that European investments beyond the EU comply with the same social and environmental standards as inside the European market. **The capital mobilised for the EGD relies heavily on private sector investment** and the monitoring and accountability of the spending, spearheaded by the EIB, is not transparent.
- **The EGD does not yet include a framework for European companies' activities outside of the EU**. For example, in relation to waste management in the Balkans, where Europe continues to fund and support the continued use of fossil fuels and extractivist activities such as mining, which are foreseen to be used to support Europe's growth, whilst the impact of this activity is not counted in Europe's sustainability monitoring.

Main recommendations

- The EU should reduce its material consumption **by introducing a target for reduced material use of 70% across the whole of the EU by 2050**. This will allow Europe to live well and prosper within planetary boundaries, meet climate objectives while reducing energy demand, and improve the EU's strategic autonomy, all while improving the wellbeing of workers worldwide and the wellbeing of EU citizens.
- **Improved due diligence, improved supply chain controls** (for all sizes of companies and all sectors) beyond voluntary commitments and **geo-localisation of imports** are tools that may minimise the negative externalities that impact on the rest of the world because of imports and trade.
- **The EU must invest in the green transition outside the EU's member states**. Revenues from CBAM and other climate policies, as well as redistributive mechanisms, could be used to achieve this goal.
- **We need to make sure that green standards within the European Union inherent to EGD and other regulation, e.g., waste management standards, also apply outside the**

EU. By using EGD standards and other EU standards as frameworks for new trade agreements, such standards can be implemented into existing trade agreements, where it is beneficial to local populations. Regarding the type of regulation required, hard law regulation stands out as it is arguably more accountable than other mechanisms.

Civil Society Organisations

- CSO's should work together to **put real regulation of global finance onto the political agenda**. Global debt amnesty, elimination of fossil fuel subsidies, and wealth taxes can raise the necessary funds required to implement the SDGs.
- More work should be conducted on a global **circular economy**, a global **wellbeing economy**, (such as new indicators) **degrowth** and **postgrowth policies to make global trade sustainable**.
- CSO's **should begin preparing for the "next" Green Deal** by accumulating good practices from around the world and start bringing them in to the discussions with stakeholders.
- CSO's must hold European member states and the European Commission accountable when it comes to **climate reparations and climate debt**. CSOs could engage in joint actions with CSO's from the global south on climate debt.

New economic models for a just transition and Governance: A Climate-Just European Green Deal

Introduction

Despite the European Green Deal being proclaimed as Europe's 'man on the moon' moment, the economic model of 'green growth' continues to underpin the European Green Deal (EGD). What alternative concepts and systems could counter this, such as degrowth, a care economy, new measures of wellbeing, sustainable business models, or new ways of living? The way that progress in our society is measured has been called into question, changing the way we think about wellbeing and a good life, including the suitability of GDP as an indicator, or the necessity of economic growth. The economic model can be considered from other, more holistic perspectives, integrating topics such as historical responsibility, colonialism, and a critique of capitalism. Reforms of the labor market and working conditions are also a key route to facilitate the green and just transition. This section discusses the main gaps and recommendations from civil society organisations on the topic of new economic models.

Main Gaps

- There is **no recognition of the colonial past** in the economic model nor the institutions of the European Union. The EGD is blind to colonialism and colonial exploitation of resources from a historical standpoint, which is fundamental to understanding the current economic model. This background analysis to comprehending the reality of many non-European countries that continue to suffer the consequences of colonialism today in social, economic and environmental terms.
- The financial model behind the EGD continues to reflect a **market and technological logic** that evaluates a country's growth only in economic terms, the economic model generates overproduction, prioritises consumption over waste and does not take into account planetary boundaries.

- The EGD **does not take into account social rights**, and social and security systems are generally approached from the market system. The EGD also proposes market based solutions to climate change and the championing of economics over social rights is evident. If cost-benefit models take only the financial side into account, over social and environmental concerns, the risk of damage to local communities is higher.
- The EGD **does not include an energy sufficiency analysis**. The current model encourages the overproduction of energy, as existing renewable energy capacity will not replace fossil fuel or nuclear, but will be in addition due to growth of total energy output by 2030 or 2050. The EGD should focus more on what we need to live well in a wellbeing economy, rather than consuming more and more energy. Moreover, individual responsibility and incentives towards leading sustainable lifestyles is not included and promoted with the EGD as one possible solution towards sustainable production and consumption patterns.

Employment and the labour market

- The model and **structure of many businesses generate high inequalities**, due to differences in pay ratios and shareholder capitalism. The structure of the firm and firm ownership is a crucial component to create a more equal society, for example through the cooperative and the social and solidarity economy.
- There is **no clear definition of what a green job means**, or what will qualify for a green and 'sustainable' job and industry under the green and just transition. Moreover, there is no reskilling programs that would enable adaptive readiness and response to the societal and economy needs in relation to effects of climate change.
- The Stability and Growth Pact relies heavily on private investments and capital.
- The success of a country is only measured by **gross domestic product (GDP), a woefully inadequate measure of wellbeing**. Such measurements fail to capture rising inequalities and a net flow of wealth from poor to rich due to rentier capitalism, which increases the gap between wealthy and the poor to unseen levels, especially during and after the pandemic occurred.
- Access to funding **does not take into account realities for smaller and local small entrepreneurs**, the EGD works better for big companies who can more easily obtain funding.

Main recommendations

- As a society, we should aim for **sustainable and decent jobs** which include a labor hour reduction (less working hours, more time for convivial activities, care and sustainability work) and an adequate remuneration for unseen and unpaid labour care work, particularly in the household.
- We have to **reframe what it means to have green jobs**, move beyond the concept of value beyond the simply fiscal value, and implement a universal basic income and global social welfare policies.
- Regarding energy, there should **be more locally owned renewable energy for local use**. More local energy communities (e.g. energy cooperatives) and the possibility to become independent of the large energy companies should be prioritised. Local communities are best placed to manage how much energy is needed for their use and to reduce their consumption towards a self sufficiency and renewable model.

- We need **more funds for local governments** to provide good governance and universal services. This is particularly important for sustainability because many local services can facilitate the shift towards a green and just transition. Regional and local government need further powers to tailor responses to their local needs.
- **Investment positions foreseen by the EGD need to be policy coherent.** For example, the decision on the taxonomy to include gas and nuclear as green is a step in the wrong direction. Investment sources must be channeled to energy sources that are more sustainable.
- **A recognition of the colonial past** within EU institutions and **economic justice** is fundamental. Along with this recognition, it is important to work on reparations of past abuse in the countries affected by colonialism, particularly on economic reparations.
- **Develop new indicators for wellbeing** – it's important to use other ways to understand and monitor how well a state is doing in terms of social rights rather than simply economic gains, not only providing the bare minimum for subsistence but also going beyond it. Many alternative indicators already exist.
- **Implement limits on wealth**, such as taxes on wealth, multinationals, internet companies, and properties among others. Wealth taxes can alleviate pressure on the world's poorest and fund the SDGs.
- Instead of financing multinationals, the EGD should **value more local small entrepreneurs and aim for local empowerment.** Focus on the development of the cooperative and social solidarity economy over capitalist shareholder businesses.

Civil Society Organisations

- **Increasing capacity building for civil society organizations**, who should be able to understand the economic model and fully engage in discussions related to it.
- **Citizens must also be educated on economic matters** to guarantee active participation in the legislative process. CSOs should participate in an advisory role that can support the European institutions in developing policies for new economic models.
- **National governments and the EU must invest heavily in social protection and in reducing inequalities**, by supporting the most vulnerable populations. Civil society organizations should not have to take the place of governments on social issues.
- CSOs should report and monitor EGD funding and collect, analyse and aggregate **new data comparing investments** by the EU on projects linked to the EGD projects as well as Europe's actions beyond its borders
- **CSOs should continue to report and monitor on the EU's progress on the EGD** through the lens of the SDGs. This can develop a vision of a new economic model that puts people before profit.

A Green and Social Deal

The successful implementation of the EGD inside and outside the EU relies on a recognition of the interconnections between environmental, social and economic policies.

A social Green Deal must recognise and tackle the socioeconomic inequalities that pervade our societies and that contribute to both causing and worsening the climate and environmental emergency. Priority should be given to adequately supporting those individuals and groups that are more impacted by climate policies.

What is the social dimension of the EGD? And how do we ensure that it is further taken into account in the design, implementation and monitoring of EGD policies, this way advancing both climate action and social justice?

Main Gaps

- The **definition of social dimension under the EGD only focuses on the economy** missing other aspects of social rights, such as quality education or good health and wellbeing. The focus is put mainly on industries with the main goal of ensuring their prosperity, through providing tools and towards citizens who are primarily perceived as employees. Health, education, access to essential services, living standards and households are crucial aspects of social rights and directly relevant for EGD.
- In its current form, the EGD is arguably a weak instrument as an overarching strategy to implement the SDGs, because **the EGD does not adequately take the social dimension into account**. Growth and market mechanisms, for example energy market liberalisation, remain unquestioned as main tools for the green transition, alongside technological optimism.
- **Policies relating to the EGD are not effective in addressing the main challenges of the just transition**. It has a reductionist approach towards inequalities and the concept of social justice, focused primarily on the economic effects of inequality, rather than on its root causes and the intersection of different types of discrimination, as well as the lack of appropriate policy mechanisms to address such inequalities.
- **The EGD is missing an implementing commitment from the European Commission**. It is up to the Member States (MS) to implement aspects relevant for their countries. The lack of commitment leads to a lack of ensured accountability or follow-up mechanisms. This means that the social measures that should accompany policy processes of the EGD are being left up to Member states and might spark strong levels of inequality within and between Member States.

Main recommendations

- The EGD must be **redefined from a human rights-based approach, intersectional and participatory**. The EGD should place people and society in the center considering a human's life and therefore just transition as an eco-system of our social life, including health, education, access to essential services, living standards and households, culture, career, and employment.
- **Strengthen the links between the social and environmental dimensions of the EGD**. The social dimension of the environmental crisis cannot be treated as a second priority or because of the impact of the EGD. Instead, the environmental and social crises should be seen as going hand in hand and require a holistic approach that understands them as deeply interrelated. The European Pillar of Social Rights should play a real role as "guide" of all policies under the EGD.
- **The EGD requires a strong scientific evidence base to support policies**. So far, environmental policies are heavily based on technical innovation. While new technologies are crucial, just transition required both social and technical innovations. Therefore, it is crucial that knowledge and experience from scientists in social sciences and humanities (SSH), including human rights, is also considered when strategies, action plans and policies are being developed.

- **A transdisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach** with transparency towards the society, where policy makers and scientists ensure proper science communication and exchange with stakeholders.
- Deliberative democracy involves bringing 'big science' closer to the people. Therefore, one key aspect is a need for **better education on aspects of the EGD aspects**, so that citizens can discuss relevant topics with sufficient knowledge.
- For the long-term solutions **a real commitment from the EC as well as MS is required**. To this end, a revision of treaties and a commitment to ensuring a real link between the EGD and SDGs.
- **There is a need to change the origin of funding for the EGD**, instead of cutting the social dimension. These changes should be based on science, including SSH sciences.

Civil Society Organisations

- **CSOs must have a structural participation in EGD policies**. They play a crucial role in linking, engaging citizens and translating and monitoring policies. There needs to be an agreement for active role of CSOs and their co-ownership. Having a structural permanent board of CSOs with variety of CSOs & NGOs with different backgrounds including social, not only environmental CSOs and NGOs, for civic dialogue with policy makers could be one solution.
- **Better consultation practices with civil society are crucial**. The current practice of no consultation or the current practice of consultation with civil society giving 5-10 days to provide comments. Some of the policies are complex and require extensive research.
- **CSOs must have a meaningful and systematic participation process, with sufficient time to provide input**. There should be a sufficient time to provide comments and prepare for providing such comments. The timeline of consultation should be clearly communicated, which policy and which steps will be coming. In this way CSOs and NGOs can plan their engagement and allocate time and resources.
- **The engagement of CSOs, through the active approach, can contribute to successful implementation of the EGD through improving the solutions**. Local contexts are very important. The national level is not always the most favorable level for civil society participation, because civic space may be limited. Policy makers must also consider local and regional levels of governance. Engagement must occur at all levels of governance, be it local regional, national, European, or international.

Equality and anti-discrimination in the EGD

Introduction

Despite the push of Von der Leyen's Commission for the equality agenda through their equality strategies, the European Green Deal, its most ambitious policy package, remains gender blind in its majority. In this context, it is crucial that the EGD adopts an intersectional gender transformative approach at all stages of policy design, implementation, and evaluation, including engaging with underrepresented citizens and communities that are in marginalised or vulnerable situations. Only then will it be possible to deliver on both climate and equality objectives.

Main Gaps

- **There is a very narrow definition of equality and diversity in the EGD.** Both concepts are integrated in some policies from a very limited standpoint (usually reduced to economic inequalities), that does not account for many dimensions of discrimination (namely its systemic or historical dimensions), nor the intersection between different structures of discrimination. Therefore, this reductionist approach only addresses some of the effects of inequalities, rather than looking into the root systemic causes behind them and is unable to offer a real transformative approach that truly contributes towards equality. Moreover, such definitions often lack a policy translation and follow-up, and become a game of “diversity bingo”.
- **There is a lack of meaningful engagement with those marginalised and underrepresented communities who are vastly affected by the policies of the EGD.** This lack of consideration of their needs and lack of inclusion in policies, is partly due to the narrow definition of (in)equalities. This becomes evident in the lack of consideration of gender in the Social Climate Fund.
- **Marginalised communities are systemically excluded from decision making.** When organising processes of citizen engagement, such groups of people and communities are often left out of the cocreation processes given the inadequate process and outreach design (methods, accessibility, etc.), and the overly complex or bureaucratic processes that systematically leave out certain groups of people (such as refugees, travellers, Roma, etc.).
- This results in a **lack of meaningful engagement and lack of agency to shape and co-lead policy processes and processes of citizen engagement**, and a missed opportunity to change the access of marginalised communities to decision making, which ultimately end in their tokenisation.
- **The lack of equality data disaggregated by country hinders policy responses and understanding.** On the one hand, this causes a limited understanding of the needs of marginalised and underrepresented communities and, on the other, hinders the ability to develop adequate policy responses to them. CSOs are usually tasked with acting as intermediates and having to gather the data for institutions to realise the multiple and intersecting dimensions of inequality behind it. These data, coming from the grassroots CSOs and marginalised communities, is sometimes not quantitative but qualitative instead. The lack of consideration for this data makes more difficult the possibility to advocate for more transformative and equal climate response for all.

Main recommendations

- **Equality and non-discrimination are a cornerstone of EU law and policymaking, the EGD must also include them.** There should be a redefinition of the concepts of equality and discrimination to include the multiple and intersecting categories, as well as the historical, systemic, and institutional dimensions of oppression and discrimination.
- Considering justice and equity is also crucial for a real equal and anti-discriminatory EGD. **This redefinition of such principles must translate into policy and be mainstreamed throughout the EGD and all its policy packages.**
- **Research is key.** There should be systematic equality data collection, disaggregated by countries and regions, followed by accountability and follow-up impact assessments that allow having a real understanding of the impact of EGD policies on marginalised and underrepresented communities on the ground.

- **Engage pro-actively and systematically with underrepresented and marginalised groups.** These groups are often left out of processes of decision-making and lack the resources to actively approach institutions with their concerns. It is crucial that institutions organise processes of citizen engagement actively reaching out to such communities and transforming decision-making processes to make sure that EGD policies are more equitable for all.

Civil Society Organisations

- **Ensure long-term and sustainable funding for CSOs at European, but also national and grassroots level.** CSOs have knowledge, expertise and outreach capabilities, but require the funding to do so, and to be able to act as co-leaders, together with institutions, in delivering policy that is accessible and equitable.
- Many grassroots organisations are filling the gap of EU institutions to soften the effects that some of the EGD policies have in marginalised and underrepresented groups. **Institutions should ensure that these organisations are supported and have access to reliable long-term funding.**

Conclusions

In the six areas of analysis, several key recommendations are highlighted by civil society to address the gaps identified in the EGD. This conclusion briefly summarises some of the main recommendations in each category.

To ensure complementarity with policy processes and frameworks and adequate monitoring and accountability of the EGD, we see a clear need for a long term and horizontal strategy to implement the SDGs, providing the overarching framework for the EGD policies. Participation by citizens and non-institutional actors must be encouraged, alongside the principle of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.

In ensuring that the EGD is citizen led, it is important to prioritise meaningful participation, as well as inclusion and outreach towards marginalised and underrepresented groups. Further, strengthening the capacity of CSOs and citizens to truly participate in policy making processes in a meaningful manner supports and guarantees co-learning, as well as the co-creation of the EU policies.

Beyond the EU's borders, there is a huge need to address the unsustainable external impacts of production and consumption. An overarching recommendation is that the EU should reduce its material consumption by introducing a target for reduced material use of 70% across the whole of the EU by 2050. This will allow us to prosper within planetary boundaries, meet climate objectives and reduce energy demand, as well as improve the EU's strategic autonomy.

To ensure that the EGD is climate just, new economic models should be prioritised above extractive, accumulative and highly inefficient economic systems which do not meet human needs. Green jobs are the jobs of the future, and new approaches to the world of work will be needed, including improved social welfare, and working time reduction. Investment decisions must be coherent with environment and sustainability policies, twinned with more local

investment in sustainable activities, as well as supporting the development of the cooperative and social and solidarity economy, including renewable energy communities.

On the social dimension, the EGD must be redefined with a human rights-based approach at the forefront, making it intersectional and participatory, with a strengthening of its social and environmental interlinkages. A transdisciplinary and multi-sectoral approach, alongside a strong scientific evidence base for policies, can improve public trust in EU policymaking and foster broad support for the ongoing societal transition.

To ensure more equality and prevent discrimination within the EGD, there is a need to redefine the concepts of equality and discrimination to include the multiple and intersecting categories, as well as the historical, systemic, and institutional dimensions of oppression and discrimination. It is also crucial to engage pro-actively and systematically with underrepresented and marginalised groups who are often locked out of processes of decision-making and lack the resources to participate. The European institutions must therefore actively reach out to such communities and transform their decision-making processes to make sure that EGD policies are more equitable and inclusive for all.

The gap analysis also included several recommendations for civil society organisations, which can be summarised into three broad categories.

Firstly, there is the issue of how to strengthen existing capacity of civil society networks for various activities, such as providing support and assistance to citizens, and the capability of CSOs to meaningfully contribute to different processes. A healthy civil society contributes to the health of civic participation in a democratic society and a diversity of opinions. To do that successfully, independent CSOs need the support of governments to protect and defend civic space.

Secondly, there is the role of monitoring and reporting on the EGD and holding the European Union to account on its commitments. Often there are grand promises made, but rarely does Europe truly walk the talk on environmental social and sustainability commitments. Civil society organisations will be crucial actors in holding the EU to account, though they cannot do it alone.

Thirdly, there are recommendations to strengthen civil society participation in decision-making. Participation should be meaningful and conducted in a systemic and structural manner. Clear transparent communication and sufficient time to participate is paramount to ensuring that civil society participation goes beyond a box ticking exercise, moving instead towards an institutionalisation of deliberative and democratic participation in European politics.

In times of permacrisis, governments respond reactively with quick, short-term fixes. Europe must boldly embark on policy making that is guided by the long-term vision and objectives of the European Green Deal, facilitating a just transition that truly leaves no one behind. In the face of adversity, civil society organisations will continue to support and strengthen their involvement in environmental and social policy making, and act together for a transformative Green Deal.

5.2 Annex 2: First Annual monitoring report on Civic Participation and the EGD Report

Introduction:

A key element of legitimate policy making is enabling meaningful participation and deliberations of citizens, amplifying their voices, and ensuring they are heard and reflected in the process. For policies at all levels to be able to tackle real issues and propose effective solutions, citizens and their representatives must be involved through all steps of the policy-making cycle, from agenda-setting to monitoring and reformulation.

A deep transformation of our economies and societies towards climate-neutrality and sustainability requires meaningful and effective processes to be set set-up for participatory and deliberative policymaking. The European Green Deal (EGD), the EU's strategy to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, foresees some instruments for the participation of citizens and civil society organisations, which includes stakeholder consultations, as well as more structured tools such as the Just Transition Platform and the European Climate Pact. How are these performing? How democratic are they? And what other recent instruments, both at the European Union (EU) and national level, have been used to shape the green transition? This brief publication aims to provide an overview of some of these instruments and formulates recommendations on how to improve them.

Our assessment of civic participation in the European Green Deal comes at a crucial time. Today, our societies are severely impacted by continuous and interconnected crises: the Covid-19 health crisis, the climate and environmental emergency, the rising inflation and energy prices, and the cost-of-living crisis. With the pretext of the need for swift responses in face of such emergencies, decision-makers are often taking decisions without consulting the citizens. Nevertheless, in a modern democracy this should be deemed as a rare exception as cutting back on consultation is cutting back on democracy.

We must strengthen civil and social dialogue, so that when swift and bold action is necessary civil society, trade unions and other affected stakeholders can promptly take part in decision-making. Through forms of participatory and deliberative democracy, the European Green Deal can gather wider support and it can be implemented more effectively.

Real Deal Project

The REAL DEAL is a Horizon 2020 project that sets out to stimulate a pan-European debate to reshape citizens' and stakeholders' active participation through deliberative processes around the European Green Deal (EGD). It brings together exceptional researchers and practitioners of deliberative democracy from a wide range of disciplines including environmental rights and the law of public participation, ethics and responsible innovation, gender studies and ecofeminism, psychology, geography, urban planning, and sustainability studies. It includes the EU's largest civil society networks advocating on the environment, climate, sustainable development, local democracy, and the European movement. It teams up with youth climate, social justice and women's organisations, SMEs, universities and research institutes, mobilising networks with thousands of CSOs, uniting millions of citizens

and activating contacts to thousands of policymakers. In a large co-creation exercise, REAL DEAL is currently developing, testing, and validating innovative tools and formats to propel deliberative democracy in the context of European Green Deal. The project will continue testing its innovations at citizens assemblies for a fair and just transition in at least 13 countries. It will scrutinise pan-European formats ranging from digital deliberation through our online platform www.realdeal.eu to in-person processes such as an Assembly for a Gender-Just Green Deal and a pan-European Youth Climate Assembly.

Lastly, REAL DEAL pays specific attention to the leave-no-one-behind principle, fostering the engagement of disenfranchised groups that are disproportionately affected by environmental damage.

The Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal

The European Green Deal is one of the broadest and ambitious policy frameworks of the European Union, aiming to transform the EU into the first climate-neutral region of the world by 2050 and to achieve the objectives set in the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is crucial that these bold transformations benefit all of society, and the costs of climate action do not fall on the least privileged. Ensuring such profound change requires active engagement and meaningful participation of citizens to shape and take part in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and strategies surrounding the EGD.

In the framework of the Real Deal Project, SOLIDAR in collaboration with the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), and the support of SDG Watch Europe and the European Alliance for a Just Transition organises ‘**The Civil Society Forum (CSF) for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal.**’ In order for the CSF to reach its purpose, it aims to bring together and provide spaces for collaborations of a large spectrum of stakeholders, such as CSOs, researchers and policymakers from all across Europe. The REAL DEAL project partners, namely Trilateral Research (TRI), Alleanza Italiana per lo Sviluppo Sostenibile (ASviS), Climate Action Network (Europe) (CAN) Association des Agences de Démocratie Locale (ALDA), European Movement International (EMI), Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), Nyt Europa (NE), Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) and Youth Environment Europe (YEE) are also involved in the organisation of the CSF. The forum serves as an informal agora for discussing democratic participation in relation to the themes, topics, policies, and processes of the European Green Deal (EGD).

The main objective of the CSF is to provide a space to discuss, build synergies and deliberate on how organisations with different interests and concerns can collectively contribute to achieving the goals of the EGD in the member states as well as at the EU level through civil dialogue processes and in a way that benefits all of society. For this, the Civil Society Forum meets three times a year over the project implementation period between 2022-2025.

More than 40 civil society organisations from across Europe were gathered online for the second edition of the “Civil Society Forum for Sustainability: Shaping the European Green Deal” on the 21st and 22nd of September, for two half-days of lively debate and discussion. Topics discussed by the Forum included citizens and civil society participation, elaborating on the positive elements and challenges based on the Real Deal project’s criteria (fairness, transparency, competence, efficiency, and legitimacy). The forum generated key recommendations of notable participatory processes addressing EGD topics, such as **the**

Conference on the Future of Europe, the Just Transition Platform, the European Climate Pact, and Citizens Assemblies at National level in this first annual monitoring report.

Methodology of the First Annual Monitoring Report

Following the first Civil Society Forum where the participants discussed the gaps and shortcomings of the EGD towards achieving the SDGs, resulted in addressing these issues and strengthening the Green Deal. One of the significant highlights of the first Forum was the limitations of involving citizens in the EGD. This helped us to organise the second edition of the Forum around the topics of citizens and civil society participation in the EGD with the following objectives:

- Discuss the different mechanisms for participation in the context of the EGD to share good practices and to strengthen capacities, utilising participatory formats at every step.
- Assessing the progress of the EGD, assessing the current state of play in citizens deliberation for the EGD and its shortcomings, as well as how to institutionalize active citizen's participation and environmental democracy in Europe's green transition.

Four different working groups were established to deliberate on the participatory instruments of the EGD namely, **the Conference on the Future of Europe, the Just Transition Platform, the European Climate Pact, and Citizens Assemblies at National level**. The forum provided an online space for participants to discuss the positive elements, challenges and key recommendations of these notable participatory processes in the working groups during a period of two half-days.

The challenges were identified under the Real Deal Project's five criteria for innovative processes, participatory and deliberative democracy. The criteria used to identify challenges of participatory processes is described briefly in the following lines:

- **Fairness** can be divided into procedural (internal) fairness and structural (external) fairness. Procedural fairness means that participants are offered fair conditions during the process. This includes information provision on the rules and process beforehand or being treated equally. The rules applied in a participatory process should not only be decided before the process starts, but also consensually by the participants (Webler 1995: 62f). Structural (external) fairness means that all relevant and affected stakeholders have an equal opportunity to take part in the process and that all voices can be heard equally throughout the process.
- **Competence** refers to the fact that participatory processes without issue-related and communicative competence will be hollow. Issue-related competence is necessary for participants in order to assess the consequences of their decisions within a process. Communicative competence is necessary to exchange norms, values, emotional expressions and being able to communicate with each other.
- **Transparency** means that all rules, procedures and methods are transparent to all persons involved in the process. Important to note is that 'all persons involved' refers not only to citizens participating, but also facilitators, organisers and stakeholders. The

product or result(s) of the process should be transparent to all stakeholders, including the public.

- **Efficiency** refers to the most economical use of all resources in the process for the outcome achieved. The efficient use of the time of participants is crucial for their subjective satisfaction with the process.
- **Legitimacy** refers to the potential effect of the results for informing policymaking. Participatory processes cannot bind legal decision-makers, but the process should have an impact on political decisions. The design should incorporate commitments from policymakers to consider all recommendations and to provide a justification if recommendations are not taken onboard (Atlee et al. 2009). Other aspects of legitimacy include the recognition of the participatory process as a major design element of the general public discourse and the acknowledgment of its legitimising power for policymaking within democratic institutions and norms.

This report is divided into five distinct sections that include an analysis and summaries of the main positive elements, challenges and recommendations for EGD's participatory processes. In addition, this fifth section of the report provides key recommendations on citizens and civil society meaningful engagement and participation in these processes around EGD.

EUROPEAN CLIMATE PACT

Introduction

The evidence of the climate crisis is no longer in doubt. We are witnessing a critical problem that showcases that we have progressively degraded the majority of the Earth's ecosystems and influenced the earth's climate. In this scenario, numerous initiatives show that not all is lost, and that collaborative work is a great ally in the fight against the climate crisis. In this sense, in line with the European Green Deal, the European Commission has launched a European Climate Pact, a major effort that calls for action in defence of the earth and the fight against climate change.

In this sense, the following lines developed the most important aspects discussed in the framework of the 2nd Civil Society Forum for Sustainability, where thanks to the participation of various representatives of civil society organisations, it was possible to deliberate on the European Climate Pact as a mechanism for participation proposed in the framework of the Green Deal project, while sharing good practices and challenges that are presented in the Pact.

What is the European Climate Pact?

The European Climate Pact is a Commission initiative to engage with different stakeholders and civil society actors to ensure their commitment to climate action and encourage sustainable behaviour, offering ways for people and organizations to learn and engage in the

fight against climate change, demanding -at the same time- stronger action coming from citizens.

An important goal for the European Climate Pact is to be climate neutral by 2050. To achieve this goal the need to drastically reduce our emissions is fundamental, people need to be part of this, people can contribute, propose their best ideas, learn from others, and exchange their best practices.

Main positive key findings

Climate Pact Ambassadors: The Pact invites people and organisations to learn and commit to specific actions by becoming Climate Pact Ambassadors. The European Climate Pact Ambassadors inform, inspire and support climate policy and action in their communities and networks. They also connect their networks with others in the European Climate Pact.

The Peer Parliaments: from November 2021 to March 2022, EU citizens across Europe were invited to run bottom-up deliberative debates in small groups called Peer Parliaments. In these debates, important and relevant insights into the preferences and demands of EU citizens regarding climate action and future EU climate policies were provided. It also became clear that citizens need guidance and funding from governmental institutions on different levels to tackle climate change effectively and fairly.

Multi-level participatory policymaking: The Climate Pact works alongside numerous existing initiatives, networks, and movements. It aims to bring together regions, local communities, civil society, industry, and schools. Initially, the Climate Pact has prioritised actions focused on green areas, green mobility, efficient buildings, and training for green jobs, within existing and relevant Commission support mechanisms. These four areas offer immediate benefits not only for the climate but also for the health and well-being of citizens.

Bottom-up approach: The European Climate Pact calls citizens into action to propose solutions for changing our ways, to start living differently, and recreating a balance with our natural environment, for us to survive as a human species. Therefore, Civil society Organisations (CSOs) are important actors in raising awareness on climate change and environmental sustainability and approaching the green transformation actions by pushing for a participatory process where Local Authorities, Institutional Actors, and citizens cooperate in designing our future.

Youth-focused: the Pact invites young people to continue bringing climate and environmental issues to the top of the global agenda. Young people have started to demonstrate a strong commitment to the fight against climate change, as they are aware that the decisions that are being taken today will shape the world they will live in as adults and leave behind for their children. To foster their increased involvement in climate policy and to support youth action on climate, the Commission is engaged in regular dialogue with young people and offers them a prominent space in the Pact.

Main challenges

1. Inclusion

Regarding the criterion of fairness, although the Pact helps participants to be at the centre of debates, the 2nd Civil Society Forum proved to be crucial in identifying that there is still work to do regarding **inclusion**, since structural barriers such as gender, age and disabilities continue to be a challenge regarding involvement in democratic and participatory mechanisms.

2. Gender inequality

It is a well-known fact that women and girls are particularly vulnerable and at risk of being heavily impacted by global warming and environmental damage. The European Climate Pact, as any other EU climate policy will only succeed if it fully **integrates gender equality** in all its solutions. To this end, genuine growth will be possible only if we tackle gender inequalities. Another challenge the European Climate Pact is dealing with is **the support of local green deals**. The alignment between local government, towns, and regions appears to be fundamental. Providing this support also involves creating and strengthening alliances between cities and rural areas so that both can enhance the fight against climate change.

3. Transparency

Concerning the criterion of transparency, as the European Climate Pact is all about citizen engagement, a fundamental aspect is the ability of citizens to track progress. Hence, it is important to **share relevant information on the actions, methodologies, and results between participants and the public**. This way it is easier to understand how to be part of the Pact's actions and to learn from or join each other's initiatives.

4. Efficiency

On the criterion of efficiency, according to the participants, an important challenge for the European Climate Pact is to **evidence more tangible impacts, monitor the process, and improve local coordination** to accomplish the objectives of the Pact. At the same time, it is important to keep the ambassadors motivated, since they are one of the key actors in the process.

5. Legitimacy

About the criterion of Legitimacy, **guaranteeing the policymakers follow up on the European Climate Pact** processes is essential for their legitimacy and ensuring a bottom-up approach. It is important to keep track of each stage of the process, thus maintaining the Pact's credibility and reinforcing the call to action of all citizens.

Main Recommendations:

The recommendations suggested in the second forum emphasise the **importance of communication**. The participation of public figures such as young influencers and YouTubers in the socialisation of the Pact is recommended, as well as the use of virtual reality technologies for the elaboration of tutorials or guides informing about the process of becoming climate ambassadors. At the same time, to be more inclusive the use of intergenerational

language, based on a gender approach, and accessible to persons with disabilities is also recommended.

Another recommendation involves **improving funding to support local proposals of governments and citizens** for environmentally responsible actions in both urban and rural areas. These funds should also be widely disseminated to diverse segments of the society as good practices and more information should be provided to encourage more people to be Climate Pact Ambassadors.

To conclude, given that environmental issues such as climate change and global warming have a major impact on the lives of people all over the world, especially those who are already vulnerable, all citizens must be **encouraged and motivated to act and participate in initiatives that promote and implement environmentally friendly and sustainable development policies**. In this logic, the European Climate Pact appears as a paramount initiative that has the potential to lead to people's active engagement. This can be achieved through communication tools that reach out to more citizens, incorporating an intersectional approach for the inclusion of all diversities and creating an environment that allows the real participation of citizens in the decision-making processes.

JUST TRANSITION PLATFORM

Introduction

Within the context of the European Green Deal (EGD), aiming to transform the EU into the first climate-neutral region of the world by 2050 and to achieve the objectives set in the 2030 Agenda, the European Commission (EC) launched the **Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)**¹. The JTM addresses the social and economic effects of the transition and aims to ensure that this is a fair, 'just' transition for all in line with its core value leaving no person or region behind. As part of the JTM, **the Just Transition Platform (JTP)**² was established in 2020 as a key tool supporting regions' access to support made available by the JTM. It is expected to act as a forum where views and experiences are shared about the process with different stakeholders, including local, regional, and national authorities, and representatives of civil society.

For this reason, the JTP builds on the Initiative for Coal Regions in Transition, which is also aimed at facilitating dialogue and exchanges between fossil fuel producing regions in the EU. This is done through providing support through technical assistance and capacity-building that is tailored to their needs when transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

Similarly, the JTP also aims to provide a place to increasing the capacities of such stakeholders. Capacity building is a crucial aspect of the just transition, to ensure that all stakeholders have access to guidance and support needed to transition to a sustainable climate-neutral economy in a way that is just for all, especially for those regions that are more affected by the transition.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism_en#just-transition-platform

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform_en

The way toward 'just transition'

To contribute to the aforementioned objectives, the JTP organises events regularly gathering relevant stakeholders, including financial actors, civil society partners, and experts on the just transition, to discuss the challenges, needs and opportunities that they are confronted with.

Moreover, the JTP has put together **four working groups**³ for carbon-intensive regions that focus on cement, chemicals, steel, and a horizontal stakeholder strategy. These working groups were established in November 2021. They aim to ensure comprehensive stakeholder engagement in the JTP. They provide a thematically focused space for exchanging and developing practice-oriented solutions that address decarbonisation in a just way. This is achieved through the engagement of key stakeholders that are involved in the implementation of the **Just Transition Fund (JTF)**⁴ via problem solving, advocacy and meaningful engagement. The four working groups adopt a cross-cutting approach that focuses on further engaging all stakeholder groups, through the identification of good practices and mechanisms that allow reaching out to and actively engaging all those who are disproportionately affected by the just transition. To access funding, Member States must prepare dedicated planning documents called Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs) for their regions. The TJTPs must justify the need for investments in the proposed regions and design a clear roadmap on phasing out of fossil fuels and the launch of new green and sustainable economic activities. In addition to the working groups and their meetings, the JTP organises bi-annual meetings that gather stakeholders from EU coal, peat, shale oil and carbon-intensive regions to discuss the challenges and opportunities that arise around the just transition. These events include networking sessions, capacity building activities, and several exchanges with authorities and public administrations at the local, regional, national, and European level, involving civil society organisations, business, and other social partners. These meetings also include sessions with updates and lessons learnt from the preparation of the TJTPs, as well as sessions with further information on ways to access the JTM, and cross-cutting priorities such as reskilling or future-proofing jobs.

The following chapter of this report focuses on civic participation and the EGD from JTP perspective and development, outlining positive elements, challenges and key recommendations discussed to further improve the quality of just transition processes.

Main Positive key findings

During the two-day discussions, the following points were identified by the participants of the forum as the main positive findings and factors that should be used to ensure economic and social just transition processes are in line with JTP's core value on without leaving anyone behind.

Based on the discussions made in the breakout rooms, participants identified the focus on **stakeholders' involvement in just transition processes** as a positive development. This process openly brought together a diverse set of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), organisations from local and national contexts, and representatives from the EU leadership (President, EVP, VPs, etc.). This reveals that the JTP evidently recognises the need for a just

³ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/just-transition-fund/just-transition-platform/groups_en

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism/just-transition-funding-sources_en

transition including financial support by bringing all stakeholders together to discuss the needs and challenges of the just transition. Furthermore, participants also identified that the **EU Commission is open to engage more with CSOs** which was seen as an opportunity to establish constructive dialogue, a stronger link between the EU, national and local levels.

In addition, **enabling regional and local contributions** including industries toward just transition processes brings an added value and a unique perception because of their specific context and unique experience. Engaging different stakeholders in the process ensures inclusion and gives equal status for each stakeholder to provide input at all stages of the transition process. In this context, the regions which began meaningful transition show that this is a promising process in terms of ensuring local development, and innovation by building the capacity of local expertise to participate effectively in the just transition process.

The **engagement of young people in just transition processes** is necessary considering they will be tomorrow's adults, carrying out the work to ensure the objectives of the JTM are accomplished. In this regard, the participants outlined that the EU has made considerable efforts to have youth included in the process at early stages by supporting their participation in the development of just transition. Similarly, the specific focus on gender within the JTP's framework, policies, and actions in terms of tackling and **reducing gender inequalities and integrating a gender perspective**, at every part of the transition, was indicated as a success. It was also indicated that **the role of the coal industry/climate polluters** was also highlighted to be important.

Main Challenges

Throughout the forum, the participants also discussed the challenges. The challenges were elaborated under the Real Deal's five criteria for innovative processes, participatory and deliberative democracy.

1. Lack of access to participatory process

Under this criteria, **lack of fairness with regards to participation in just transition processes** from different coal back-groups was identified as a major concern. In participants' view, the lack of a real discussion about the objectives of the just transition and the lack of genuine involvement of diverse and citizen-led groups will solely lead to a few advantageous groups benefitting from the transition. To overcome this, it was recommended that the process must make local voices count through active engagement and meaningful participation in shaping the future of Europe and taking part in the design, implementation, and deliberation of the green and just transition for all.

2. Limited capacity and lack of representation

As defined under the Real Deal project, the actual work of the Just Transition within the participatory processes requires two major competencies. Issue-related and communicative competencies are needed to assess the consequences of the participants' decisions and ensure effective communication. That is why the just transition requires vision, expertise, and skills to have an impact on the ability to implement an inclusive and successful transition. In this regard, the **limited capacity of local authorities, entities and empowering them** identified as a challenge in achieving inclusive public participation in the just transition processes. Similarly, **the representation of civil society** in the design of the just transition

process was raised as one of the major challenges. According to the participants, the JTP does not address the extensiveness of diversity (economic and social) and inclusivity of all vulnerable groups when it comes to participation in the just transition process.

3. Lack of transparency, capacity, and knowledge

Although the just transition platform aims to be a process of transparency and accessibility, the participants raised some concerns about access to information, inclusivity, the decision-making processes often being opaque. Regarding access to information, the main remark from the participants was that the JTP does not ensure **the transparency of the information** collected. This means that the gathered inputs in just transition processes such as how much money was generated, spent, the number of people impacted etc. were not shared publicly with citizens. This reveals that the JTP is not transparent and that access to relevant information has not been ensured. Another remark from the participants was that the JTP does not ensure **the early inclusion of citizens** in just transition processes. This mainly refers to citizens' meaningful participation in dialogues, meetings, and decision-making structures. Not including them in the process at early stages, may create challenges in involving them in the later stages of the JTP. One of the significant reasons for citizens' lack of engagement in just transition process at the early stages was identified as **a lack of capacity and knowledge** about the JTP. This shows that the JTP targets only stakeholders and partners with the technical, financial, and human capacity and diminishes the role of citizens out of transition processes. The JTP should provide tailor-made support and trainings to increase citizens capacity to enable them to understand and take part in the process.

4. Inefficient monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

One of the objectives of the JTP is to provide a place to strengthen the capacities of stakeholders and citizens in participatory transition. In this context, monitoring mechanisms play a crucial role in ensuring and assessing a sustainable and inclusive transition. However, in participants' view, the JTP fails to provide a place for citizens and stakeholders. Moreover, the current **monitoring mechanisms are found to be inefficient** in providing data on citizens' involvement in the processes. In addition, it was also perceived that **lengthy decision-making processes and complicated administrative procedures** at national and EU level deter meaningful and sustainable engagement of citizens in the JTP.

5. Lack of opportunity and equal representation

Outcomes of the participatory processes are not binding on legal decision-makers. Nevertheless, they are useful in ensuring a solid presence within democratic institutions when making relevant and required changes. This in turn can have an impact on the ability to implement a successful transition. One way to achieve this change comes from the recognition and legitimisation of the process and the involvement of citizens in the decision-making processes. During the discussions, several concerns were raised regarding the legitimacy of the process. Firstly, the main remark from the participants was the **lack of opportunities for citizens and local stakeholders to participate in the transition processes**. This poses a challenge regarding the legitimacy of the process. Taking into JTP's aim to ensure that this is fair, 'just' transition for all, it is a major problem that the JTP does not ensure access for the citizens and local stakeholders to actively take part and share their views, flag challenges, and ensure local input is included in the transition processes that will give shape to the future of

Europe. This challenge also refers to the institutionalisation of the role of minorities in the process of just transition and therefore challenging the legitimacy of the platform.

Furthermore, the **lack of civil society organisations representation and presence** in these processes was also identified as a significant challenge. This raised concerns about the balanced and equal representation within the process. It is important to highlight that civil society organisations play a vital role in healthy and participatory democracies as they are an important source of information for both citizens and governments. They provide a space for people to come together to share interests and identify common goals to engage in advocacy to challenge and influence the systems for a better and inclusive society for everyone.

Main Recommendations:

The following recommendations were outlined by the participants to ensure meaningful and sustainable 'just transition.'

The JTP should redesign its policy and objectives by putting people with diverse backgrounds, CSOs, stakeholders and the society at the centre of its approach. To this end, the JTP should ensure **expanding civic space by meaningful community engagement, citizen-led dialogue and participatory approaches** that are built on existing groups and civil society organisations. In addition, citizens, CSOs and local stakeholders should have more structural participation in the implementation processes considering their lived experience and knowledge of the local context.

In order to improve efficiency in terms of participation and timelines, **the monitoring mechanisms should be improved.** It should be a mechanism that ensures deliberative processes by considering the involvement of citizens and stakeholders at the local level with solid presence of civil society participation. The monitoring process should not be rushed.

The JTP must consider **strengthening the role of citizens** in the design of its plans and projects, starting from transforming the existing participation processes by increasing the capacity of civil society actors and ensuring ongoing and sustainable financial support. This should also include awareness raising and promotion of local and grassroots level CSOs' work.

The JTP should ensure **transparent process** by ensuring there is an enabling environment and providing access to public information in various European languages, clear timeline for plans, reviews and assessment for the use of citizen's and other stakeholders.

CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Introduction

Described as an unprecedented example of transnational deliberative democracy, **the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE)** constituted a unique and novel approach in enabling a broad and meaningful dialogue between citizens and governing European institutions.

Envisioned as a bottom-up exercise, the CoFoE was structured around a series of citizen-led debates and discussions. The process ran over the course of one year, from April 2021 to May 2022. It featured:

- a) four European Citizens' Panels with randomly selected citizens from the entire EU,
- b) six National Citizens' Panels,
- c) a Multilingual Digital Platform allowing European citizens to contribute in 24 EU languages,
- d) seven Conference Plenaries,
- e) thousands of national and local events.

The whole process was guided by Rules of Procedure, and it is estimated that more than 700.000 people joined the events, while visits to the Multilingual Digital Platform were more than 5 million, making it a major democratic exercise. Its outcomes included 49 proposals to the EU institutions, and they reflected the views of EU citizens on nine topics, inter alia, climate change and the environment. As an ambitious, multilingual, complex and first of its kind method for board deliberation, the CoFoE is to be regarded for both its successes and challenges, setting a good example to build on for future citizen deliberations in Europe and beyond.

Main Positive key findings

The innovative approach of the CoFoE has brought about positive outcomes in terms of reinforcing the democratic values of the EU. The process has contributed to:

Increase sense of ownership and trust in the EU institutions: As reflected by the citizens who actively participated in the CoFoE, in their words, the process made them [quote]: "...feel European, feel engaged and listened to in the process of democratisation...". Being given the opportunity to share their views and perspectives on vital topics for the future of the EU gave citizens a sense of ownership as well as trust in the EU institutions and stakeholders that they worked with for the implementation of the citizens' proposals.

Strengthen common European identity, by embracing the multicultural aspect: With citizens coming from 27 countries, each with a variety of cultural backgrounds, socio-economic contexts, and experiences, as well as deliberations held in 24 different languages, the CoFoE enabled for this multicultural diversity of the EU to come to the forefront. Participants shared that working with fellow Europeans from other countries, helped them broaden their horizons, made them able to better understand each other and pass-through differences, language barriers, and work together for a common view of their future. This multiculturalism enriched the deliberations, the co-creation of learning from each other and the sense of belonging and awareness of the wider community of Europeans. It therefore enabled a new momentum for public participation in Europe. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the perseverance of the CoFoE was valued by participants and reinforced the sense of community between Europeans.

Closing the gap between citizens and their representatives: Working closely and being able to enter in dialogues and directly share their opinions with the policy makers from the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission as well as national actors is perceived as another positive of the CoFoE process. In a state where citizens were losing trust in the

institutions, this process was regarded to be beneficial for underpinning their democratic legitimacy. It also allowed decision-makers to get a first-hand knowledge about what different people think about climate and energy policies and their implementation on the ground.

Providing broad accessibility and involving the voices of the youth: In connection to the previous two points, what participants found valuable was that due to the structure of the CoFoE and the three levels combined: digital space, citizen panel, plenary with citizens + elected politicians, a large scale of people could be reached. This, for example, enabled more broader reach for the youth, with the European Youth Event gathering around 10 000 young people online and allowing them to be part of the discussions and have their voice heard in a more institutionalised manner, which in a way brought them closer to the EU Institutions.

Building deliberation capacities and knowledge co-creation: The CoFoE offered a unique opportunity for people from all walks of life to learn the decision-making processes of the EU. For example, the participation in the Plenary for the Citizens Ambassadors (and learning the rules of the EP, compromises etc.) and being able to build an argument defend it in front of the unique composition of the Plenary, was found to be highly beneficial for developing the deliberation skills of citizens and their confidence to discuss and make their points in face of high-level politicians. Moreover, it created a space where co-creation of knowledge is possible between various stakeholders.

Main Challenges:

As an ambitious format, in terms of its broad reach and complexity, the CoFoE faced some challenges, from which to learn and improve for future deliberative methods. These can be split into five categories:

1. Lack of access to participatory processes

The concerns identified here were mostly on **representation and the (non)enabling environment of the process for participation and visibility** of minorities, LGBTQI+, citizens from non-EU European countries. Moreover, the framing was not sensitive to the LGBTQI+ community as the gender equality rule was problematic for representatives of the LGBTQI+ community. The process was also not mindfully created for access of people with disabilities, for e.g., blind people. In terms of multilingualism, although in principle it is a good approach towards inclusivity, in practice the multilingual platforms were hardly accessible.

2. Lack of capacity of citizens and CSOs' representation in the processes

Broad processes entail diversity of actors and a multitude of different backgrounds and contexts as well as experiences and educational levels of the participants. In such an environment, it is important to enable the voices of participants who are not as vocal or have not usually participated in policy consultations. Moreover, the level of technicalities and language used should be levelled to the capacity of an average citizen to be able to contribute, which was something that the CoFoE did not fully succeed to do. Namely, the main remark from participants was that **the high presence of experts** in some cases created limitations for the general public to follow and fully understand the discussions. Moreover, there was **not a strong enough presence of civil society organisations**, which was seen as a missed opportunity for the quality of the process and the outcomes.

3. Few networking opportunities

Although aiming to be a process that would increase openness and transparency, nevertheless, here there were also some limitations. The main remark from participants was that the CoFoE **did not offer good networking opportunities**. Namely, the CoFoE did not manage to find the balance between protecting people's privacy and providing enough information on the profiles of participants, their occupation, education, and country of residence. Therefore, there were few networking opportunities. In many sessions there was also no introduction of the participants, so people felt reserved without knowing the agendas of others, and therefore were reluctant to discuss openly to the fullest. Moreover, the lack of clarity with the rules of procedure which tend to vary from one working group to the other added to the ambiguity of the process.

4. Rushed process and lengthy sessions

Considering that thematically the CoFoE involved discussion on some of the most vital topics for the EU's future. In some cases, however, this resulted in participants perceiving **the process as rushed**, especially in the period of March-April, which, in their view, negatively affected the final outcome and the quality of the policy proposal. On the other hand, since many of the activities of the CoFoE were held on weekends, it was perceived as difficult to have **very lengthy sessions**, due to private obligations of participants. Therefore, finding the right balance between the topics and the time needed to discuss in detail would be valuable for future similar processes.

5. Lack of institutional follow up and citizens' unequal representation in the process

Several concerns were raised regarding the legitimacy of the process.

Firstly, one of the main aims of the CoFoE is to increase the credibility and trust of citizens towards the governing institutions. Nevertheless, the **lack of proper follow-up mechanisms from the institutions** undermines the possible effect and impact of the process as well as the trust in it. Namely, there need to be formal channels through which citizens' ideas raised in CoFoE can be translated into policymaking. It is with utmost importance to ensure that they are followed by tangible proposals. Without the implementation of their policy proposals, people might feel discouraged to take part in a similar process again in the future.

Second, there was an **imbalanced presence of the representatives of the EU institutions versus the citizens**. Namely, this was especially visible in some of the speeches of the Plenary where politicians dominated. This over-presence of the institutions poses the question of how legitimate the process is when it should be mainly for and led by citizens. Moreover, there was the impression that the citizens were forgotten after 9th of May and the last official communication was on the 16th of June.

Third, **the lack of opportunity for citizens from non-EU European countries**, especially candidate and partnership countries, was also identified by participants as a lack on the legitimacy part. Considering that both geographically and culturally the EU neighbouring countries (like the Western Balkan countries), are part of Europe, and taking into account EU's values of solidarity, unity, and democracy, it is a major omission of the CoFoE to not provide access for the citizens of these countries to be able to actively share their views, interests and challenges into shaping the future of Europe. This is even more important in the face of challenges, inter alia, such as the energy crisis, migration, climate change, whose solution requires a joint European approach beyond the EU.

Main Recommendations

Narrow the scope of the conference for better, more efficient recommendations and outcomes.

In the planning process of future CoFoEs, **have regular discussions and consultations with people with disabilities constituencies** - have them give input on the conference design so that the event is accessible. In the planning of the next CoFoE, set an adequate budget for sign-language interpreters, interpreters, and online accessibility support coordinators.

Citizens from non-EU countries should be allowed to participate. Set a quota for non-EU citizens who:

- a) Live in Europe - people with residence permits, migrants, please note that not all non-EU people pay taxes),
- b) Live in neighbouring countries,
- c) Live in countries in the global south, quasi colonies, or old colonies - to whom Europe has historical responsibilities due to colonialism. This becomes particularly important with regards to discussion topics that have a direct impact on Europe's externalities, such as climate action.
- d) Live in the EU candidate countries
- e) depending on the topic, also involve people from quasi colonies and post colonies

Overcome the language barriers by ensuring interpretations in various languages, and speakers in various languages. Also, host pre-meetings and roundtables in local languages which can be done online.

Reformulate the gender speaker rule and broaden its scope to allow for people from the LGBTIQ+ community to also lead the sessions. E.g., there should be two-lead speakers, but they cannot be of the same gender.

NATIONAL CITIZEN'S ASSEMBLY ON EGD TOPICS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

Introduction

National Citizen's Assembly (NCA) is a new form of democracy which allows making decisions at a city, national or even at an international level. A Citizen's Assembly is a randomly selected group of residents according to demographic criteria such as gender and age. Citizen's Assemblies have been formally established to supplement representative institutions in a variety of contexts, dealing with issues ranging from electoral reform in Canada and the Netherlands⁵ to same-sex marriage and abortion law in the Republic of Ireland⁶.

⁵ Fournier, P et al. (2011) *When Citizens Decide: Lessons from Citizen Assemblies on Electoral Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁶ Farrell, DM, Suiter, J and Harris, C (2019) 'Systematizing' Constitutional Deliberation: The 2016–18 Citizens' Assembly in Ireland. *Irish Political Studies* 34(1), 113–123.

National Citizen's Assemblies empower citizens to develop an in-depth understanding of an issue and to submit their recommendations free of partisan interference and considerations. The role of a Citizens' Assembly is an in-depth analysis of a given issue, a deliberation over different solutions, hearing of the pros and cons, and then, making informed decisions.

In recent years, the climate crisis has been one of the main points on political agendas both nationally and globally. Deliberative processes on this complex issue have begun to emerge and some countries have launched their National Citizen Assemblies on how to deal with the climate emergency, including Austria, France, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Scotland.

The benefits of an assembly for the climate are the contribution to the generation of learning and reflection, which result in a collective knowledge oriented towards the search for solutions to the great transformations that need to be undertaken, and a better understanding of which they are the policies and measures that society is willing to support when it has adequate and plural information on the problem to which it must respond.

Main positive key findings

During the Forum, the main positive aspects regarding National Citizen's Assemblies was discussed with a **specific focus on the case of Ireland**. The participants considered Ireland case as a successful development due to the strong link between Assembly and the Parliament. Regarding environmental protection, in the case of Ireland, the coal industry climate polluters were highlighted as important to progress a just transition.

Another positive point identified as **the participation in the National Citizen's Assembly** was done randomly. This refers to truly unbiased selection of people from the whole country, and different people from different backgrounds represented their interests.

The last positive point discussed by the participants **was the role of CSOs as experts** in deliberation. They found it quite productive that it was developed within the secretariats, boards, etc... of the National Citizen's Assembly.

Main challenges

1. Lack of access to participatory processes

In this line, practical issues regarding **the main language used for communication, and possible translation to other languages**, even if they mean added cost and effort to consultation processes, they are really important and worth it, as they mean including more people in the decision-making process. Having all voices represented is always difficult, to have a true representation of society and a large number of stakeholders must be engaged. Because of this, participants consider that a successful National Citizen's Assembly needs to be perceived as legitimate by the population to be effective.

The main challenges identified in the Forum regarding National Citizens' Assemblies are related to communication. Communicating complex issues to the public can be complicated if the main message related to a very technical issue. Connected to this, the identification of subject matter experts who debate the topics is extremely important, as they can influence the whole process.

2. Lack of inclusion

Participants also found limitations on the effectiveness of National Citizen's Assemblies. The positive effects are especially pronounced among the very small number of participants. They must be integrated into better-prepared public campaigns or broader civic dialogue. Transparency also plays a really important role in this, especially when it comes to knowing which organisations are involved in the Just Transition progress.

Regarding the duration, in some cases, NCAs can last only a few days, which makes discussions difficult and compressed.

Main recommendations

About the main recommendations participants addressed during the Forum, widespread representation and institutional involvement are fundamental. In the context of a divided society, its political elites, rather than ordinary citizens, we should consider who is in the best position to reach decisions on contested issues that can be accepted as legitimate. Connected to this, increasing the randomness of the practice to be society-encompassing was also recommended as a good practice to ensure everyone's voice is heard, so we don't only have elites in decision-making, but also citizens from the society. It should connect the people to the topics very close to their local communities; the topics of relevance for their everyday lives and taking into account minorities' interests.

Participants consider as well that it should not be expected that local groups do the bulk of consultation work without equipping them with skills and resources to enable their work to continue in the long term.

One last recommendation would be to formally outline the role of the Citizens' Assembly in a particular situation where a coalition power-sharing government encounters a precarious deadlock on a particular policy issue. Another option, more applicable to existing associations, is to allow citizens' assemblies to consider whether and how to modify institutional arrangements.

Good practice - Ireland⁷

In the case of Ireland, Citizens' Assembly brings citizens together to discuss and consider important legal and policy issues in Ireland.

The Dublin Citizens' Assembly shall be convened to consider the type of directly elected mayor and local government structures best suited for Dublin, and to bring forward proposals in that regard. The Assembly will have a total of 80 members, including an independent Chairperson, 67 randomly selected members of the public living in Dublin City and County, and 12 Councillors. Each Assembly agrees to its own rules and procedures for how it will carry out its business. Its meetings must follow 6 key principles to ensure fairness. The Assembly may invite and accept submissions from people who are interested in any of the issues being discussed, such as expert advisory groups.

Recent political developments in Northern Ireland have increased the likelihood that a Citizens' Assembly, established by the official government, will actually be established. A crisis in the executive branch of the power-sharing coalition in January 2017 led to the collapse of the

⁷ <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/>

devolved government and triggered snap elections. The result has done little to resolve differences between the main parties, and several rounds of inter-party talks hosted by the British government have failed to revive the executive branch. However, in January 2020, another round of talks was successful, and the final agreed solution included provisions for the establishment of a group that would be “invited to propose the most appropriate Participatory models. Public support is less than holding a referendum, arguably the most important participatory. Ideologically uncompromising citizens are less willing to support town hall rallies than political moderates.

In the same line and running in parallel with the Dublin Citizens' Assembly, we find the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss as well⁸, which counts with 100 members, to examine how the State can improve its response to the issue of biodiversity loss, and to bring forward proposals in that matter.

Good practice - Austria⁹

The Climate Assembly was born out of a preferred initiative on climate action in June 2020, which was supported by around 400,000 people. One of the core demands is to let the Austrian population have an energetic say in climate protection measures. In March 2021, the National Council asked the nation to implement the strain of the climate initiative, creating the Climate Assembly.

After the climate assembly, participants supported the "Association of the Austrian Climate Assembly of Citizens" to still work along on climate protection. The ninety-three proposals of the Climate Assembly bestowed on four July 2022 embody the enshrinement of a basic right to climate protection, a land protection ban, the abolishment of fossil energy subsidies, the creation of a non-partisan climate commission, gas tariffs for food from third countries and better taxes for climate-damaging vehicles.

Overall Recommendation

The following key recommendations around citizens' and CSOs' participation are generated from the preceding chapters. These recommendations can be applied to every segment of notable participatory processes addressing EGD topics.

- **Promote inclusive participation among citizens and stakeholders:** To ensure meaningful and inclusive participation in policy-making at all aspects of the EGD related local, national, regional and global policies, a sustainable mechanism shall be created. This mechanism shall include and encourage citizens, CSOs, affected groups and other stakeholders at every stage of dialogue, reporting and decision-making processes. Additionally, authorities at the EU, national and local levels shall create opportunities and strengthen the enabling environment for CSO representatives working at local and grassroot levels to ensure their active engagement in the participatory processes.
- **Transparency and public access to information:** necessary steps must be taken to ensure that transparent, accurate, timely and relevant information is in place and accessible by everyone. The information shall also be provided and available in citizen's

⁸ <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/assembly-on-biodiversity-loss/about/about.html>

⁹ <https://participedia.net/case/8365>

language in order to ensure citizens' understanding about the participatory processes. Making the information accessible and available for citizens play a crucial role in ensuring their active and effective participation in dialogues, meetings, and decision-making structures.

- **Equality:** For equal representation in all aspects of the EGD and its' participatory processes, a broad range of CSOs including those who focus on women, youth, LGBTQI+ and other marginalised groups must be put at the centre of the EGD's policies and implementation strategies. To ensure equal representation and to tackle gender inequalities, increased inclusion of these groups must be prioritised and ongoing support must be provided to ensure their active and effective participation.