



**GREEN-PATHS: European Knowledge Hub on Just Transition Pathways**

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## Introduction

### Executive Summary

This policy paper discusses the policy coherence of EU and national policy frameworks on the just transition in light of their social impacts and international agreements. Based on the analysis of green transition policies done in the case studies in WP3, this paper analyses the coherence of EU and national policy along three key dimensions: policy quality, policy impacts and stakeholder participation. Taking these three dimensions, the paper shows that EU and national policy frameworks are not coherent in bringing about the green and just transition. First, in light of the quality of policy frameworks, there is too little integration of the diverse objectives of the green transition to allow for consistent policymaking. Moreover, international climate agreements and goals are not sufficiently embedded in EU and national policy frameworks, which often prioritise economic and extractive objectives over climate justice. Whereas the temporal scope of climate policies reflects the urgency of climate change – this urgency also poses a risk for the proper implementation of plans. Moreover, there is an asymmetry in the detail of planning, where extractive projects get more attention than socially or environmentally beneficial transition projects. In terms of coordination, enforcement and monitoring, we see that there is often not enough resources nor attention spent on ensuring the green and just transition. This is exacerbated by a lack of international cooperation on climate and social issues.

This lack of policy quality is reflected in the social impacts of the green and just transition inside and outside of Europe. In Europe transition policies like the Critical Raw Materials Act can have tremendous negative impacts on the environment and social sustainability, by creating ‘sacrifice zones’, this is but one way in which the case studies have shed a light on social and environmental impacts in Europe. There is insufficient understanding of dimensions of social and ecological justice perspectives in impact assessments and insufficient efforts to mitigate these impacts of EU and national policy frameworks. Meanwhile the impacts on extra-EU countries are often far graver, with many of the ecological and social burdens of the transition being outsourced and extractive logics being a central dynamic. Such extractive and exclusionary logics lead to resource and land conflicts and exploitation in the global south.

The lack of stakeholder participation in nearly all facets of the green transition further exacerbate the negative impacts of the transition. Many key stakeholders do not have a voice in policymaking for the green transition at the EU nor at the domestic level. Whereas corporate interests often have a seat at the table, vulnerable communities, NGO’s and worker associations have little recourse. Moreover, where consultation is organised, this often does not concern higher level policies or decision making. A green and just transition requires people to have voice in determining their role in the transition, otherwise public support will be lagging.

### Keywords

Policy Coherence; EU and national policy frameworks; coherence mechanisms; policy quality; policy impacts; stakeholder participation; SDGs

### Intended audience

Apart from the GREENPATHS consortium, this paper is intended for policymakers, researchers, and members of civil society interested in the policy coherence of EU and national policy frameworks and potential mechanisms for improving coherence.

### Reading recommendations

The first section of this paper gives a small introduction into the concept of ‘policy coherence’ that is employed in this paper as well as the framework used to analyse policy coherence. Next the policy coherence of EU and national policy frameworks in Europe are discussed. The following section 3 discusses the coherence of these policy frameworks in light of global

agreements and climate commitments. Section 4 discusses potential mechanisms to enhance policy coherence. The paper ends with a discussion of the results and a conclusion.

## Scope

The scope of Deliverable 4.2 (D4.2) is to provide an analysis of the policy coherence of EU and national policy frameworks based on the case studies conducted between July 2024 and July 2025 and the questionnaires that were set up based on these case studies as part of Work Package 4 (WP4) of the GreenPaths project between August and October 2025. This deliverable produces a policy paper based on these findings. The policy paper is not a comprehensive analysis of all the case studies, rather it sought to look at common incoherencies among policy frameworks and identify mechanisms that could be used to further enhance the policy coherence of EU and national policy frameworks. Moreover, a shorter paper helps with the readability and potential circulation of the document to interested stakeholders.

The policy paper serves as a critical resource for understanding the coherence of EU and national policies in view of their environmental and socio-economic impacts and in respect of global agreements on environmental and climate challenges, providing valuable information for policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders. It also provides some important starting points for policymakers to enhance policy coherence.

## Organization of the work

The partners worked together on preparing this paper, we distributed the analysis of the case studies, where partners were asked to fill in templates (Annex 2) that could be used by other partners to work on their sections. For the final paper the organisation of the work was as follows: UvA was responsible for the introduction, Section 1, 2.1, 3.1, 4 and the discussions and conclusion. IPE was responsible for sections 2.2 and 2.3 and FoEE was responsible for sections 3.2 and 3.3.

## Approach

In order to analyse the policy coherence of EU and national policy frameworks in light of their environmental and social impacts and international agreements and global effects, the first important step was to understand what policy coherence entails. Based on a short literature study and in combination with the work done under WP 4.1 we established a framework for understanding policy coherence in line with the UN and OECD concept of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development and the questionnaires that we have sent partners as part of T4.1. This framework was then used to gather information from the case studies and the questionnaires on the three dimensions of policy coherence we established: policy quality, policy effects and stakeholder participation. We split these results into the coherence of EU and national policy frameworks in Europe and in light of international agreements. Based on this analysis we identified some mechanisms that may increase policy coherence in the EU.

# 1 Policy coherence

Giving a definition of policy coherence is a difficult task, not in a small part because many definitions make the rounds and the concept has a very specific history in international relations, EU law and policy in the field of development. Starting first with proposed definitions of ‘policy coherence’ more generally, we can take as an example two proposed definitions, one from the ‘policy coherence handbook’ made by the Horizon Europe project CrossGov and one by the OECD:

CrossGov:<sup>1</sup> Policy coherence refers to how well different policies work together. Coherence can be defined as the extent to which policies strengthen each other by promoting synergies or reducing conflicts between objectives and measures both in design and during implementation (Platjouw et al., 2025, p.1).

OECD: Policy coherence means different policy communities working together in ways that result in more powerful tools and products for all concerned. It means looking for synergies and complementarities and filling gaps among different policy areas so as to meet common and shared objectives (OECD, 2002).

These general definitions share important elements, and we can see that ‘policy coherence’ at the very least is concerned with:

1. The interactions between and working together of policies (and policy actors/communities).
2. Orientation toward shared objectives and.
3. Promotion of synergies and complementarities and.
4. Reduction of conflicts, gaps and inconsistencies among policies.

Policy coherence, then, is a measure of how well policies are working together to achieve synergies and reduce conflicts and inconsistencies to achieve shared objectives. Seen in this way, the concept of coherence is relative to the shared objectives that are being served. This also points to the largest source of criticism that ‘policy coherence’ has received - the term is open to interpretation:

‘Importantly, the meaning of what counts as policy coherence is in itself politically contingent and can be dictated by whose interests or ideologies are served through coherence [...] Hence, a political understanding of policy coherence needs to acknowledge that political factors will shape the selection of goals, how they are prioritized, and how tradeoffs among them are managed.’ (Shawoo et al., 2023, p. 340)

Importantly, a focus on coherence may not actually ensure more effective policy or reduce inequality in itself and may be counterproductive (Browne et al. 2023). Browne et al argue ‘policy coherence is not a panacea’ and while policy coherence ‘may help policymakers to minimize trade-offs and the negative consequences thereof, but it cannot help them “manage away” or eliminate all trade-offs’ (Browne et al. 2023, p. 3171). It is important then to realize that policy coherence is not merely a technical concept, but itself part of the political process of governance and policymaking. As such policy coherence should be considered within the political context it operates. Closely related with this concern are the procedures and process through which policy is set up, democratic legitimacy and stakeholder participation are central to policy coherence by promoting synergies, reducing conflicts and providing public support. This means that a fifth and sixth element can be added to the concept of policy coherence:

5. Policy coherence is not neutral or purely technical, it reflects power relations, prioritisation of objectives, and political choices.
6. Policy coherence requires stakeholder participation and democratic legitimation.

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<sup>1</sup> Horizon Europe programme Coherent and cross-compliant ocean governance for delivering the Green Deal for European seas (CrossGov)

Having established some elements that are central to policy coherence, it is good to consider how the concept is employed in practice. The increasing relevance of ‘policy coherence for sustainable development’ in European and international legal and policy frameworks show how the promotion of synergies and reduction of conflicts and inconsistencies have become a priority in policy frameworks.

### Section 1.1 Policy coherence for development

Policy coherence for development is a principle that emerged in policy debates surrounding development in the early 1990’s (Carbone, 2009, p. 2; Ioannides et al., 2024, p. 1). The principle became part of EU law in the 1992 treaty of Maastricht and was reinforced in the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) through the current article 208 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2007) which states:

*“1. Union policy in the field of development cooperation shall be conducted within the framework of the principles and objectives of the Union's external action. The Union's development cooperation policy and that of the Member States complement and reinforce each other.*

*Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty. The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.*

*2. The Union and the Member States shall comply with the commitments and take account of the objectives they have approved in the context of the United Nations and other competent international organisations.”*

This principle of policy coherence was introduced because Union policies that sought to promote development cooperation were often undercut by other internal or external Union policies seeking to further other objectives (Akdogan & Cazzini, 2025). In other words: ‘PCD refers to the need for multiple policies from different sectors to work in unison rather than in opposition to each other, if international development is to be achieved’ (Mackie, 2020 p.6). The OECD defined PCD as ‘taking into account the needs and interests of developing countries in the evolution of the global economy’ (OECD, 2003). The concept thus was limited to the overall goal of ‘development’ and was particularly aimed at the external dimension of Union policies for developing countries (Ioannides et al., 2024, p. 2). The arrival of the Millenium Development Goals further crystallised the development goals for developing countries by committing leaders to ‘combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women’ (Ioannides et al., 2024, p. 1).

The evolution of the Millenium Development Goals into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 2015 Agenda 2030 saw a change in the scope of these goals and the concept policy coherence. A list of 17 SDGs (figure 1) was set up as a call to action to “recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests” (UN, n.d.). The SDGs would not only apply to developing countries but would become ‘universal’ meaning they apply to all UN Member states, including all EU states.

 **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**



Figure 1: UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN, n.d.)

## Section 1.2 Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

Goal 17 of the SDGs contains a specific target on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD). The methodology for attaining this target states the following:

‘[P]olicy coherence for sustainable development’ has been interpreted as the coherence between policies in general that cover the dimensions of sustainable development. This indicator is a composite indicator which covers mechanisms related to:

1. Institutionalization of Political Commitment
2. Long-term considerations in decision-making
3. Inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination
4. Participatory processes
5. Policy linkages
6. Alignment across government
7. Monitoring and reporting for policy coherence
8. Financing for policy coherence’ (UNEP, n.d.)

This principle of PCSD has been considered to be broader than PCD since it is aimed at all countries and seeks to manage both external and internal impacts in order to achieve the SDGs (Ioannides et al., 2024). Whether the PCSD is to be seen as a successor to PCD or as a wider goal within which PCD plays a role is subject to debate (European Commission, 2019).

Table 1: PCD and PCSD in the EU context (Ioannides et al., 2024, p.2)

Table 1 – PCD and PCSD in the EU context

EU context	PCD	PCSD
Policy commitments	Article 208 TFEU – binding European Consensus on Development – EU and Member States	2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015), and specifically SDG 17, target 17.14.1
Target	Developing countries	All countries, including the EU Member States
Focus	Manage the external impacts of EU policies in order to contribute to SDG progress in developing countries.	Manage the external and internal impacts of all policies in order to achieve the SDGs across the board in the EU and abroad.

Source: Adapted from E. Pichon, [Understanding policy coherence for development](#), EPRS, European Parliament, 20 November 2023.

The OECD has defined PCSD as ‘an approach and policy tool to integrate the economic, social, environmental, and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making’ (OECD, 2014). This definition is confirmed in the EU’s approach to ‘delivering on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals’ where they understand PCSD as ‘taking into account the impact of all policies on sustainable development at all levels – nationally, within the EU, in other countries and at a global level’ (European Commission, 2020c, p. 11). To do so the Commission advocates a ‘whole of government approach’ to implementing the SDGs and taking into account their interlinkages. According to the Commission it is ‘essential to integrate the economic, social, environmental, and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policymaking’ (European Commission, 2020c, p. 12). This makes the concept of PCSD an interesting starting point for understanding policy coherence in this discussion paper, considering how central the economic, social and environmental impacts are to the GreenPaths project.

### Section 1.3 Operationalising policy coherence

By taking PCSD as our starting point we can give a clear perspective of the objectives that the transition is aimed at (the SDGs) and the dimension of international agreements is also represented. Moreover, using PCSD as our point of departure allows us to draw upon a commonly accepted definition of policy coherence and the methodologies and guidelines that have been proposed for its measurement and enhancement. In order to further delineate our discussion, we adapt the ‘Eight building blocks of PCSD – Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development’ (Figure 1) set up by the OECD to the GreenPaths case studies and their focus on social and environmental impacts of EU policies.

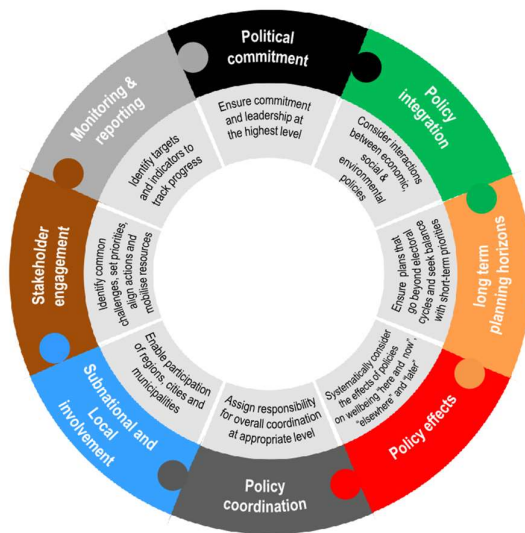


Figure 2: Eight building blocks of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (OECD 2017)

The analysis in this paper is based on the case study research done in GreenPaths. These 15 case studies (Table 2) sought to understand the linkages between policy interventions, environmental sustainability and social wellbeing. To give methodological and conceptual guidance and assistance to these case studies, a questionnaire was set up to give an appraisal of the significance of institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks in green transitions. This questionnaire (annex 1) sought to obtain information on the integration of policy within national and European frameworks, institutional capacity, embedment and enforcement, conflicts and social impacts and the rule of law conditions in the case studies.

Table 2: *List of GreenPaths Case Studies* (Abbas et al., 2025)

GreenPaths Case Studies
Case study 1: Lithium Mining and the 'Green Sacrificial Logics' of the Energy Transition in Barroso, Portugal.
Case study 2: Europe's Yellowstone? An analysis of the social impacts of forest conservation in Romania
Case study 3: Just Transition Agreements – Coal mine and thermal power plant closures in the region of El Bierzo-Laciana (Spain)
Case study 4: Assessing the Impacts of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in Land Use in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia
Case study 5: Green Industrial Policy and Ecological Transformation in Latin America: A Transformative Perspective
Case study 6: Green Industrial Policy in Southeast Asia: Developmental States, Export-Oriented Manufacturing, and the Paradox of 'Green' Transitions
Case study 7: The Paradoxes of Green Industrial Policy in Southern Africa
Case study 8: Green Industrial Policy in North Africa: Between Energy Sovereignty, Authoritarian Governance and Neocolonial Extraction

Case study 9: Climate finance and its distribution in the EU
Case study 10: Effects of green transition policy interventions on environmental sustainability and social wellbeing in EU countries and in 24 selected countries in the Global South
Case study 11: The European Hydrogen Economy: A Carrier for the Green and Just Transition?
Case study 12: Mining Lithium in Serbia
Case study 13: Green transformation of tourism industry – Case of Croatian urban tourist destinations
Case study 14: Energy poverty in Central and South-Eastern Europe
Case study 15: Public food procurement as a lever to foster the just and green transition – Dordogne case study

Combining the 8 building blocks with the dimensions that have been identified in the questionnaire we have integrated these frameworks in the following three dimensions: Policy quality, Policy effects and Stakeholder participation (see table 3). By selecting these three overarching dimensions and selecting relevant subdimensions, we were able to bring together the pre-existing analytical framework with the work done in the GreenPaths case studies.

*Table 3: Dimensions of Policy Coherence*

Dimension	Subdimension	Main questions
Policy quality	Policy integration and consistency	Are policies integrated in pre-existing legal and policy frameworks and are they consistent with these policies? Do the policies cut across sectors and include shared priorities and objectives? Are sustainability concerns (like the SDG's) integrated into policies?
	Long term planning	Do the policies include a long-term planning? What is the timeframe within they operate?
	Policy coordination, enforcement, monitoring and reporting	Are the responsibilities clearly set up? Is there an adequate mechanism of enforcement/ are the rules being enforced? Is there a system set up to measure the progress of policies in indicators and is there reporting being done?
Policy effects	Social, economic and environmental impacts	What are the social, economic and environmental effects of these policies and how are they received by people?
	Conflicts	Have these policies led to specific debates or legal or societal conflicts?
Stakeholder participation	National, local, regional	Are national, local and regional governments and stakeholders adequately involved and engaged in policymaking and execution?

	governments involved	
	Stakeholders involved	What procedures are in place to ensure people are adequately participating in law and policymaking in this field.
	Transparency and due process	Are there (effective) policies in place that require transparency and due process?

## 2. Coherence of EU and national policy frameworks in Europe

In this section we consider the coherence of EU and national policy frameworks in Europe along the three dimensions of policy quality, policy effects and stakeholder participation.

### Section 2.1 Policy quality

Policy quality concerns the extent to which policies are designed with long-term goals and synergies in mind while fitting within pre-existing institutional, regulatory, and legal frameworks. This assessment employs three parameters: policy integration and consistency (alignment with existing legal frameworks, cross-sectoral priorities, sustainability concerns including SDGs); long-term planning (clear temporal horizons and operational timeframes); and policy coordination, enforcement, monitoring and reporting (clear responsibilities, adequate enforcement mechanisms, progress measurement systems). Examining several case studies, from lithium mining (case study 1: Portugal, case study 12: Serbia), forest conservation (case study 2: Romania), hydrogen production (case study 11: Netherlands, Morocco and the Western Sahara), carbon border adjustment mechanisms, and agricultural land use, reveals that policy quality degradation stems not from technical deficits but from some structural contradictions (e.g. conflicting legal hierarchies, growth vs sustainability mandates and market vs rights logics) embedded in legal frameworks and institutional architectures. Where strategic economic priorities intersect with environmental and social objectives, we often identify mechanisms that systematically subordinate environmental protection and democratic accountability to extraction imperatives.

#### Section 2.1.1 Policy Integration and Consistency

The fundamental challenge to policy integration emerges from legal mechanisms that explicitly subordinate environmental protections to strategic objectives. The granting of "strategic project" status to mining projects under the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) (Regulation (EU) 2024/1252) exemplifies this architecture, where environmental assessments proceed yet cannot prevent approvals predetermined by strategic designation. Portugal's Barroso (case study 1) lithium mining demonstrates subordination in practice. Despite designation under FAO's Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) in 2018, authorities approved mining operations. The CRMA's strategic project framework transforms environmental assessment from decision-making tool into a (legitimation) ritual—documentation proceeds, impacts are recorded, yet projects advance regardless.

Integration failures extend beyond mining to climate policy itself. While Section 3 will explore these dynamics in relation to international commitments, already at the EU-internal level we observe that the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) (Regulation (EU) 2023/956) reveals contradictions within Europe's own climate frameworks. As our case studies make clear, the mechanism places adjustment costs on developing countries with limited low-carbon

technology resources, potentially reducing CBAM-covered exports from these nations by 1.4 to 2.4 percent without equivalent support for their transitions. In response to some of the identified drawbacks, Poland has taken legal action at the Court of Justice of the European Union against EU ETS (Directive 2003/87/EC) and CBAM provisions, contesting both procedural issues (arguing unanimous rather than qualified majority vote should apply) and substantive concerns about burden distribution.

Perhaps most paradoxically, the case of Romania's forest conservation (case study 2) reveals policies directly undermining the things that they aim to protect. Strict protection regimes are excluding centuries-long forest management practices that enabled high-level biodiversity preservation and even criminalizing sustainable traditional use while enabling new forms of commodification. Conservation Carpathia Foundation generates income from carbon credits while communities face logging bans, transforming forests into carbon offset instruments for European climate accounting. The EU Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming Certification (CRCF) Regulation (EU/2024/3012) adopted in 2024 formalizes this framework, establishing certification for carbon removal activities that monetize ecosystem services.

Overall, this pattern reveals that integration "success" is measured against European climate targets while producing local resource alienation. Policies often cohere around carbon quantification and offsetting markets, but contradict principles of sustainable use, traditional livelihoods, and community resource rights, revealing a deep-seated preference for market ordering.

### Section 2.1.2 Long-Term Planning

A central finding of the case studies is that long-term planning is structurally asymmetric: sophisticated temporal frameworks for resource extraction coexist with an absence of planning for affected communities. This asymmetry undermines policy coherence, giving prominence to some policy goals over others. Planning thus seems to operate in service of extraction timelines rather than sustainable development trajectories. Romania's trajectory toward 30% protected areas by 2030 (case study 2) is a prime example, proceeding through large acquisitions of land without clear compensation or viable alternatives for the communities. The temporal horizon extends six years for conservation implementation but offers no timeline for a livelihood transition. Similarly, Morocco's hydrogen strategy (case study 11) demonstrates asymmetry at international scale, emphasizing export to the EU and aligning with EU 2030 renewable energy targets. While export infrastructure receives detailed temporal frameworks extending decades, projects themselves cause problems with freshwater access and land use, without alternative development planning.

Beyond individual projects, structural contradictions in policy frameworks undermine long-term planning coherence. The Common Agricultural Policy case (case study 4) illustrates this problem. State aid and competition rules systematically undermine CAP sustainability objectives, creating land commodification despite protection policies. Direct payments reward large landholders, perpetuating intensive models, while environmental impact monitoring remains understaffed and data-poor. When planning exists through formal mechanisms like CAP Strategic Plans 2023-2027, implementation contradicts stated sustainability objectives through various market liberalization mandates embedded in different policy domains.

What emerges is that "long-term" in green transition planning is fundamentally contested: extraction infrastructures receive multi-decade planning horizons and urgency while community livelihoods are treated as requiring no temporal framework at all. Planning thus operates asymmetrically — sophisticated for resource transformation, absent for social transformation — committing the EU to socially damaging transition pathways.

### Section 2.1.3 Policy Coordination, Enforcement, Monitoring

The case studies indicate that coordination, enforcement and monitoring suffer from both lack of attention and under-resourcing. What appears as a coordination deficit is often intentional architecture: public authorities are denied capacity while private actors gain policy roles. Romania's governance demonstrates this comprehensively (case study 2). The Ministry of Environment suffers reduced budgetary resources, high staff turnover, and lack of specialization. The Forest Guard operates with small numbers of inspectors and limited logistical resources. Local authorities possess limited formal power. Simultaneously, Conservation Carpathia Foundation—a private NGO—gained governmental recognition in 2016 through a government memorandum as partner in shaping conservation policies, positioning itself as key stakeholder in protected area development and management. This represents structural design: public institutions are systematically under-resourced while private actors acquire policy-making legitimacy. Even where such organisations are not-for-profit civil society actors, they are not best positioned to consider public interest more broadly.

Coordination fails in yet another respect: through information asymmetry. In Romania, local people lack environmental knowledge, creating an information asymmetry with international NGOs, while consultations are announced "on the sly." Even in the Netherlands (Rule of Law index: 0.82), participation restrictions exist (case study 11): Groningen cannot adopt specific hydrogen legislation despite wishing to be a frontrunner, as regulation lies with national authorities. Morocco's Western Sahara hydrogen projects exhibit extreme opacity: data is hard to acquire, government provides data robbed of context, with no water statistics despite documented access problems for local communities.

Beyond information access and control, also enforcement sometimes work against EU's envisaged objectives. Rather than enforcing EU Court of Justice rulings requiring Saharawi consent for Western Sahara resource projects, there are mechanisms in place that in fact suppress opposition. Human rights organizations and activists report that projects disregard local community needs, causing water and electricity shortages, while promises about well-paying jobs for local populations are not delivered. Morocco uses EU's need for green hydrogen to soften Member States' observance of international law regarding Western Sahara's status as non-self-governing territory whose resources cannot be exploited without consent of the Saharawi people. EU authorities however seem to simply tolerate the violation of CJEU ruling for political reasons. The CAP case (case study 4) exemplifies coordination failure at the level of policy architecture. CAP compliance and cross-compliance standards are often formal rather than substantive. Environmental impact monitoring on soil and biodiversity remains understaffed and data-poor. Spatial planning conflicts frequently convert fertile farmland into industrial or residential land, undermining national soil and biodiversity goals. These coordination problems are, however, not errors but design features of policy architecture attempting to integrate partially incompatible objectives.

Policy quality failures stem from structural contradictions in laws and institutions, not technical shortcomings. Integration fails because laws explicitly prioritize strategic projects over environmental protection, competition rules contradict sustainability goals, and carbon markets enable Northern pollution while constraining Southern land use. Planning provides detailed timelines for extraction infrastructure but none for displaced communities. Coordination excludes affected populations through information control, under-resourced authorities, and enforcement that protects investment over rights. Achieving genuine policy coherence requires addressing these power imbalances and hierarchies embedded in policy design, not merely improving coordination within frameworks that legally subordinate environmental protection and democratic accountability to strategic economic objectives."

## Section 2.2 Policy effects

Our case studies show that policy effects are overwhelmingly measured and reported mainly through economic and financial matrix (pricing, investments, monetary and fiscal measures) while social and environmental impacts remain (almost) invisible. This outcome is not accidental if we recognize the limits of policy quality. Policy quality is still often rooted in 'silos thinking' and in surface level re-direction of financial flows that do not resolve the systemic roots of inequalities. Many of the cases show that this contradiction is almost inherent to most of the green transition policy making processes which did not resolve this fundamental conflict. However, this conflict is being replicated and reproduced across the variety of sectors and areas where green policies aim to intervene, thus turning them in disruptive measures that often magnify already existing injustices.

### Section 2.2.1 Social, economic and environmental impacts

Very often, like in the case on study on CAP impact on land use in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia (case study 4), limited ecological gains co-exist with detrimental economic or extractive practices creating major justice gaps. Research on this case study has shown that CAP implementation primarily through funding and selection criteria produces only partial environmental improvements, while simultaneously deepening land concentration, relying on capital-intensive farming, advancing rural social inequality and socio-ecological disruption primarily as it gives priority of large landowners and multinational companies to the detriment of smallholders and local eco-systems. These patterns, reflect broader European trends but are, in this case, intensified in post-socialist agrarian systems shaped by restitution, privatisation and hybrid property regimes. Consequently, policies like CAP reproduce and deepen social inequalities, just contrary to the targeted objectives of just green transition, irreversibly destroying environmental foundation and labour conditions for small holders who hardly survive in such market. Privileging high-input carbon intensive farming, they magnify the tension with smallholders and eco-systems thus contributing to distributional inequality related to land-use (and consequently agriculture, forestry, biodiversity). Research findings have shown how land becomes a place where green transition policies collide with market forces awarding those who are already privileged, enabling accumulation and consolidation of land and marginalising or excluding smallholders thus undermining ecological goals, protection of local communities and rich bio-diverse eco-systems. And while ecological rhetoric emphasises soil protection, biodiversity, and climate mitigation, research shows how material benefits of CAP and related policies accrue disproportionately to those already integrated into global value chains. Interestingly, local context of implementation matters too; in the case of European semi-periphery, it becomes striking how green transition policies can play a disruptive role, when layered onto liberalised land markets, fragmented institutions and captured states, thus reproducing patterns of dispossession, depeasantisation, and ecological degradation. More precisely it shows how implementation of EU policies such as CAP can in the case of post-Yugoslav context led to undesirable and unwanted consequences when applied in countries with weak rule of law, corruption and speculative investments.

Likewise, the case study on climate finance and its redistribution in the EU (case study 9) has clearly shown that cities and urban areas, with their superior capacities around innovation and policy implementation, are significantly better placed to benefit from transition policies in general, including, obtaining climate finance, compared to vulnerable or most affected regions. This presents a challenge for the equity of the transition and raises questions about the effectiveness of current policy tools. As they declaratively aim to create conditions for just green transition, their effect is just the opposite – underdeveloped, deprived, depopulated and pauperised regions hardly get any substantial funding in comparison to rich metropolitan areas. The ways in which climate change affects regions can differ significantly. While EU policymakers acknowledge that transition policies may concentrate the burdens upon specific

regions—regions which might already be lagging, it is sometimes insufficiently acknowledged that the same policies should attempt to rectify these potential injustices.

Many of other case studies confirm this pattern. Case of green transformation of tourism industry in Croatia (case study 13) shows strong alignment between national tourism policy and the European Commission growth orientation, yet quite contrary to the objectives of the green transition. Extractive character of tourism industry and growth metrics related to measurement of performance through increase of employment, annual profit and contribution to GDP rates is systematically ignoring environmental footprint of tourism (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, inefficient resource use), detrimental impacts on labour market and erosion of quality of public services due to multiplied pressure on infrastructure. This striking contradiction shows how continuing adherence to economic growth in tourism development, relies on extractive practices, environmental degradation and reinforces growth dependency. Number of Croatian tourist hubs have recognised that water scarcity, sea pollution, accumulation of waste, instability of electricity grids in the peak season are directly related to tourism activity, let alone millions of flights and intense road traffic directly contribution to carbon footprint. Therefore, green transition in the tourism sector remains extremely limited, without proper reinforcing mechanisms at the EU level for implementation or developed monitoring categories for environmental and social impacts. Absence of strong enforcing mechanisms at the EU level only contributes to continuation of extraction through tourism induced activities, marginalising local communities' needs and protection of eco-systems. Similarly, the case study on energy poverty in CEE and SEE (case study 14) also shows a significant gap between national strategies and policies on reducing energy poverty and the effectiveness of the measures put in place. Existing measures for tackling energy poverty, research shows, do not explicitly integrate the dynamics of housing prices, even though rising housing costs significantly influence affordability and thus vulnerability. That often reflects in funding schemes that overlook or deny the housing crisis impacts not allowing recognition of needs of most vulnerable and affected social groups. Furthermore, findings show that while policies aim to improve access to renovation funding across municipalities, they do not systematically consider whether large-scale investments might raise housing valuations and rents. This absence of anti-displacement or affordability safeguards points to a critical "policy-to-practice" gap in linking energy-transition measures with housing-market regulation.

However, there are some examples of best practices. In study of public food procurement in the case of Dordogne (case study 15), experience shows how procurement can serve as a driver of local economic development growth without severe environmental or social damage. The study explored a successful public procurement program focused on small and medium-sized suppliers which created new market opportunities, diversified income streams for producers, and strengthened local value chains. Public funds, instead of flowing into global agribusiness, were reinvested within the region, resulting in significant carbon footprint and food waste reduction. Furthermore, this case shows how case of Dordogne reversed the trend of favouring large suppliers and excluding small farmers, using mechanisms like lot division, direct sourcing, and carbon criteria to make tenders accessible to local producers, complying with French and EU laws. Dordogne provides empirical evidence that decentralized, publicly managed catering can achieve financial balance while delivering superior environmental and social outcomes, redefining the economic logic of sustainable procurement.

### Section 2.2.2 Conflicts

The main source of conflict wherever it's recognised across the EU is rooted in lack of coherence, if not antagonism, between proclaimed goals of green transition interventions and the instruments implemented to achieve them, systematically rooted in reproduction of inequalities. This tension creates numerous conflicts in the phase of implementation. While sometimes lack of coherence between EU and the national level is due to quality of transposition and capacity for

implementation, much more important conflict originates from the lack of alignment between the original instruments and measures and the goals of social well-being and environmental justice. This tension creates numerous and new conflicts across various social groups and sectors across Europe.

The case study on CAP's implementation in some of the countries at EU semi-periphery (case study 4) clearly shows that needs, rights and interests of many smallholders and rural residents in Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia are undermined by policies and market dynamics that privilege large-scale, capital-intensive actors in farming. Gendered and intergenerational inequalities, research warns, seem to be central to this picture, for example CAP implementation leads to loss of sustainable jobs for senior farmers or women whose very existence if not survival depends on small farming aligned with local eco-systems as large land-owners or multi-national companies grabbing or appropriating land which was governed for decades or centuries in sustainable way. Even more, when combined with post-socialist legacies of restitution, privatisation and weak governance, they often reinforce land concentration and open new frontiers for commodification and green grabbing. New social conflicts emerge from implementation of these policies, not only undermining desirable effects, but reproducing new injustices.

The case study on climate finance (case study 9) shows another example how EU climate funds deepen urban-rural divides and create new conflicts. It shows how in contrast to large, rich and developed cities, other regions, including lesser urbanized, rural and potentially left behind, may struggle to reap the benefits offered by transition policies and finance. Contrary to EU and EIB policy discourse, then, this suggests regions most vulnerable to the transition tend to obtain less—not more—of climate finance from EIB projects than other, less vulnerable, regions. This study revealed not only a paradox, but concern for climate justice: EU regions with the largest urban areas (largest metropolitan areas) attract more climate finance per inhabitant from the EIB than their counterparts. The findings therefore emphasise the importance of policy coherence, ensuring that environmental ambition is matched by social protection at home and by fair, cooperative mechanisms in global governance.

Similarly, in the case study on green transformation of tourism in Croatia (case study 13), research has shown how policy makers neglect and ignore emerging conflicts between big industry players and local communities which irreversibly loose social and bio-physical foundation for sustainable life. For example, numerous examples from Croatian coast (including cities like Split, Dubrovnik, Zadar) show that multinational hotel chains make speculative investment agreements with local governments (very often examples of state capture) which provides them almost for free key infrastructure and resources, leading to water or electricity shortages, dispossession of public spaces (public beaches), turning fishermen and farmer into rentiers dependant on tourism monoculture. Key national stakeholders in the tourism industry use the coordination gap to continue with monetary extraction and environmental degradation, while not being forced into systemic decarbonisation of the sector or alignment with local community needs. Accordingly, integration of climate policies in the tourism sector moves rather slowly and without sufficient enforcing power, even though the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019b) and National Recovery and Resilience Plan have given stronger impetus to this change. In the case study on energy poverty in CEE and SEE (case study 14), research shows that despite formal alignment with the EU's climate and energy objectives, policies aimed at reducing energy poverty in the region often fail to confront its structural drivers. The existing frameworks tend to privilege property owners with the financial and legal capacity to access subsidies, as well as construction and energy service providers who profit from EU-backed schemes. Conversely, those most affected by energy poverty—low-income households, elderly residents, single parents, tenants, rural communities, and inhabitants of informal or unregistered dwellings—remain marginalised, silenced or excluded.

On the other hand, case of Dordogne (case study 15) shows us that bridging the gap between national policy ambitions and local implementation, can bear positive results Dordogne offers a living example of how public procurement can catalyze socio-ecological transformation through strong local leadership and collective values of justice and resilience.

## Section 2.3 Stakeholder participation

### Section 2.3.1 Local regional governments involved

Findings from many case studies show very diverse role of local governments in the implementation of green transition. Very often local governments are attracted by the availability of funds but still constrained by national and EU regulation. While the quality of governance and local capacities seem to play a decisive role in the implementation phase, local and regional governments often lack autonomy or incentive to perform better than the State in achieving just green transition. That relates to constraints originating from national legislation which is aligned with false character of the green transition prescribed by many EU policies. For examples, cities don't have power to work against energy poverty regulation at national level or have limited manoeuvre space to limit detrimental impacts of tourism (for example airports are not owned by the cities but by international operators or State).

Yet positive shifts are possible. The case of Dordogne's (case study 15) reform provides an example of successfully integrated governance and policymaking. The case study findings have shown how nine departmental divisions were mobilized, linking agriculture, education, health, environment, and social services. Coordination tools such as specialised software, procurement templates, and ergonomic kitchen guidelines have helped standardize sustainable practices across schools, ensuring policy consistency. This organizational structure transformed sustainability from an isolated effort into shared institutional culture. However, this case highlights that public procurement alone cannot produce these results; instead, political will, territorial coordination, and proper institutional design are essential for success. Another example, related to energy poverty in the CEE and SEE (case study 14), has identified a huge potential for local governments initiative, where cities, in coordination with the State, can contribute to simplification of procedures, sharpening regional targeting, funding diversification, improved monitoring and community engagement, to ensure that measures actually reach the most vulnerable - with special attention to tenants in multi-apartment buildings and low-income elderly owners in energy-inefficient homes. Similarly, in case study on the green transformation of tourism in Croatia (case study 13), research has shown growing and emerging interest of local governments to regulate and limit detrimental activities induced by tourism in the field of transport, housing, construction, public services etc.

### Section 2.3.2 Stakeholders involved

Dordogne's experience highlights the importance of territorial governance and inter-institutional cooperation (case study 15). The concerned transition reconfigured relationships between producers, caterers, schools, and authorities, building a food system grounded in trust, transparency, and shared accountability. Political commitment, participatory management, and continuous staff training proved essential to embedding sustainability into everyday practice. The department's procurement officers utilized several mechanisms allowed under French and EU law to align contracts with sustainability and equity goals. These included dividing tenders into smaller lots, incorporating environmental and social criteria, and using pre-market consultations to help small producers bid competitively. By directly connecting schools with local producers, the strategy made transactions easier, promoted transparency, and significantly reduced administrative workload.

In other cases, like with the CAP's implementation in land use in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia (case study 4), stakeholder participation takes more antagonistic shape, through resistance.

Research shows that resistance takes multiple forms: as opposition to scandalous privatisations and land deals; campaigns against soil sealing and highway projects; community-supported agriculture initiatives; local seed-exchange networks; and attempts to reclaim or re-common public land. Although these initiatives remain fragmented and often marginal in policy terms, they can represent formative phase of another institutional conjunction. Yet, states very often find themselves in sub-ordinated position to be obliged to implement certain EU policy and therefore not inclined to create mechanisms for institutional participation. This relates to the rather unfriendly if not hostile approach toward participation which is perceived by the State as some sort of disruption that will mess up the accounts already agreed by the State and other parties (investors). Very often when it comes to participation it actively plays false role by minimising possibilities for participation through public consultations (for example publishing very short noticed od short calls – or during holidays). Similarly, in the case of Croatia (case study 13), with green transformation of tourism, various stakeholders that oppose mass tourism (such as apartment renters, local food producers, NGO's, local communities) are usually not part of the scheme unless they accept immediate economic gain as priority and ignore irreversible environmental and social impacts. However, growing power and agency of local authorities shows that cities could soon emerge as relevant changemakers and play an important role in limiting detrimental social and environmental impacts. This is a great illustration which shows how absence of EU or national enforcing mechanisms in the sphere of tourism, coupled with the voluntary nature of stakeholders' commitments to transform the tourism industry, actually creates new policy makers through necessity, if not disaster. One of the clear examples is case of City of Dubrovnik which recently started to introduce limitations to cruise ships traffic or number of visitors to the Old city calculating that damage produced by sometimes even 20 000 tourists per day is much larger than economic benefit.

The case of energy poverty in CEE and SEE (case study 14) indicatively reveals another important role of civil society. Findings in that case have shown how civil society plays a crucial role as an intermediary between policy frameworks and end-users, as their advocacy and research highly influence policy making regarding energy poverty (particularly in relation to definition of eligibility criteria, accessibility of information and creation of tenant-sensitive policies). At the same time, they maintain the contact with the most vulnerable groups, mapping their needs. Whilst their progress is evident within project-based collaborations (most often through EU-funded initiatives) the volatility of financial support and stable backing by the state remain striking, particularly given the essential functions CSOs perform. This case shows the importance of adequate governance structures needed for proper implementation of green transition measures. Many cases though confirm need for more robust, differentiated and tailored public participation which is necessary for creating efficient policy measures.

### Section 2.3.3 Transparency and due process

The Dordogne case (case study 15) demonstrates that the “price” of the green transition is not only measured in euros but also in human effort and organizational resilience. Recognizing both aspects are crucial for creating policies that are sustainable in practice, not just on paper. Contrary to the common belief that public procurement law, at both European and national levels, acts as a barrier to sustainability, the Dordogne case shows that existing legal frameworks can be used creatively. Tools such as lot division, pre-market consultations, simplified e-procurement platforms, and environmental criteria were employed proactively, transforming legal rigidity into a catalyst for change. Research on CAP's impact on land use in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia (case study 4) calls for transparency improvements through public registers of land ownership, leases, and subsidy beneficiaries. It also calls for participatory governance, giving rural communities influence over land-use decisions and creating new alliances that would support food sovereignty,

commons-based farming, protection of smallholders and land justice networks. New practices and new agents potentially can create demand for higher transparency and accountability.

### 3 Coherence of EU and national policy frameworks in consideration of international commitments and global effects

In this section we consider the policy coherence of EU and national policy frameworks in light of global and international agreements and commitments, specifically looking at the external effects of these policies. Policy frameworks have important influences outside of Europe that are at times left unconsidered in discussions of policy quality, its impacts and who are the relevant stakeholders. In this section, SDGs function as a normative benchmark against which the coherence of EU external policy effects is assessed to connect with the PCSD framework.

#### Section 3.1 Policy quality

##### Section 3.1.1 Policy integration and consistency

At the formal level, the integration of SDGs into the strategic documents in EU seems poor. For example, the Green Deal, the Hydrogen Strategy (2020b), or the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 (European Commission, 2020a) refer to SDGs *en gros*. There are no clear references to the concrete SDGs regarding the specific measures or aims proposed in these documents. Formal integration can thus be improved by explicitly referring to the SDGs in policy. However, the more serious problem is that these policies produce effects that are inconsistent with various sustainable development goals. Section 2.1 already discussed how in many relevant transition policies there is a subordination of environmental and social interests, as well as democratic accountability, to extractive interests within the EU. The case studies show that this subordination of environmental protection, other social interests, and democratic accountability to economic and extractive interests because of EU policies is even more present beyond the EU borders. Whether it is the production of green hydrogen (case study 11), biodiversity preservation together with carbon trading mechanisms (case study 4), or industrial policies and decarbonization (case studies 5, 6, 7 & 8) all of these have shown some adverse effects in different parts of the world. For example, the analysis shows that the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism places a disproportionate burden of historical emissions on economies least responsible for the latter (case studies 5, 6, 7). This does not go well with SDG 10: reduced inequalities, aiming at reducing inequalities among countries. Another example is a disregard of international law regarding the non-self-governing territories (case studies 8 and 11), and the right of the people of such territories to decide what shall be done with their natural resources. This became obvious in the case of Western Sahara, where the Commission and certain EU Member States deal with the Kingdom of Morocco as if the Western Sahara were Morocco's territory, and without any assurance that the people of Western Sahara will receive any benefits from the exploitation of their natural resources. All this runs against the attainment of SDGs 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, 10: Reduced Inequalities, and 16: peace, justice and strong institutions. Finally, on 4 June 2025 the European Commission decided that the Jadar project in Serbia (case study 12) is a strategic project under the CRMA. This is done against the mass protest by citizens of Serbia and against the warnings of the scientific community in Serbia that the project would destroy a vast amount of agricultural land and endanger large freshwater reserves underneath the Jadar Valley. This hardly helps achieve or improve SDGs 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, 15: Life on Land, and 16: Peace Justice and Strong Institutions. These few examples illustrate how EU green policies produce negative effects across the globe, making these policies inconsistent with other sustainable development goals.

##### Section 3.1.2 Long term planning

As already shown in Section 2.1, long-term planning is formally strong but substantively one-sided; at the global level this asymmetry becomes even more pronounced. Key policy documents mentioned in the case studies, like the EU Hydrogen Strategy, the REPower EU plan (European Commission, 2022), the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030, and the resulting EU legislation like the EU Regulation 2023/956 establishing Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, or the Battery Regulation EU 2023/1542 to name a few, lean on the Green Deal, which has two benchmarks: the year 2030 and the year 2050. Given that the Green Deal was launched in 2019, and that the rest of the policies stem from it or are connected to it, it is fair to say that the EU has been making long-term plans. Impact assessments and fitness checks are periodically consulted for all the legislative documents, such as Regulations and Directives, therefore encompassing any such regulatory instruments from the domain of the policies under scrutiny. This also fits within the meaning of long-term planning. However, these are formal elements of long-term planning. As was shown in Section 2.1 this planning is biased towards the extractive aspects of policies, while other aspects are disregarded. This means that there are clear timeframes and targets when it comes to the extraction and/or attainment of economic goals, but such detailed planning is lacking regarding the social goals. For instance, both Hydrogen Strategy and REPowerEU (case study 11), predominantly address how much money will need to be invested in infrastructure and production, in technology etc. The social impacts are rarely addressed. When they are it is in general terms and always in the context of the EU. While it is acknowledged that the production targets will not be reached without the imports from third countries, and whereas there is a plan to invest in projects in these countries, the possible societal impacts of these projects in these countries are not considered even vaguely. The previous paragraph shows that inconsistencies in EU policies have spilled over globally, so the shortcomings of the one-sided long-term planning will too. The best illustration for this is the situation in Morocco (case studies 8 and 11), where EU-based companies invested in projects that were associated with land conflicts, endangering water supply to local populations, and were realised on occupied territory which has contributed to reinforcing Morocco's territorial claims.

### Section 3.1.3 Policy coordination and enforcement Monitoring and reporting

In the cases studied international climate frameworks have become instruments for legitimising territorial appropriation and consolidating occupation. The EU failure to distinguish between renewable energy sourced from occupied versus Moroccan territory, coupled with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change's acceptance of Morocco's reporting of Western Sahara projects as national commitments, grants international legal recognition to projects that violate international law (case study 8). Also, in the case of lithium in Serbia (case study 12), a controversial Jadar project was legitimised by the Commission's decision previously mentioned, and by the statements of leaders of certain Member States, despite the fact that Serbian authorities show disregard for the rule of law, a fact captured by the annual reports made by that same European Commission, and a fact that indicates that environmental and safety rules will not be observed and applied adequately. Finally, it is submitted that mechanisms aimed at reducing carbon emissions, coupled with the lack of international coordination, led to carbon leakage (case study 10), therefore not reducing the absolute amount of carbon emissions. It was shown that the wealthy nations can internalize the social cost of green transition, but there is no such support scheme that would buffer these costs globally and provide support for developing countries. These examples are paradigmatic of a lack of coordination between the green policies and other international commitments, and of a lack of enforcement of the rules of international law due to political considerations.

## Section 3.2 Policy effects

### Section 3.2.1 Social, economic and environmental impacts

International agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals or the European Green Deal aspire not only to ecological sustainability but at the same time to economic viability and social fairness in letter and in spirit. Yet evidence increasingly suggests that the transition may reproduce or even intensify social inequalities. Just transitions often fail to materialise in practice or are bound to political structures causing uneven distributions of costs and benefits. The text will first look at how the European Union's policy effects differ within and outside of its borders; next, three cases with shortcomings in its social, economic and environmental effects are discussed; and finally, this is contrasted with the more positive outcomes of policies in Viet Nam, Malaysia and Thailand.

The European Union's Just Transition Mechanism (2021-2027) allocates €55 billion to mitigate socio-economic impacts in its regions most affected by decarbonisation. Overall, decarbonisation policies increase inequality before redistribution, but strong welfare institutions, through targeted cash transfers and social spending, can effectively neutralise much of this impact. Beyond the European Union borders, the story is very different. The EU puts pressure on external partners to engage in extractivist trade (such as with Morocco, Serbia or Chile) and leaves the brunt to secure a more just transition to these other States. Between these States then emerges a contrast between those who support the local population to benefit (or suffer less) from trade processes and organise a just transition domestically, and those states who prioritise working with and accommodating to transnational corporations and national elites. So, while inequalities produced by decarbonisation within the EU can be partially corrected through welfare systems, the external effects of EU policies shift social and environmental costs to countries that lack comparable redistributive capacity.

EU policy documents promoting cooperation with Morocco on the production of green hydrogen (case study 11) proclaim that this cooperation must be to the mutual benefit and that it should be implemented with local social and economic needs in mind. However, human rights organisations report the exploitation of natural resources without the consent of the Sahrawi people: a breach of international agreements. Human rights organisations report systematic repression of protest and restrictions on freedom of expression. Environmental costs are socialised by imposing water scarcity on vulnerable populations in Morocco and Western Sahara, while profits are privatised through revenue capture by foreign corporations and Northern governments – a clear breach of SDG 6: access to clean water and sanitation and SDG 9: inclusive and sustainable industrialisation.

The Jadar valley mining project in Serbia (case study 12) is presented by Serbian and European leaders as a key effort in the shift towards renewable energy and electric transportation in a proclaimed effort of green mining, while the environmental protections for this region under national and international law such as the Convention on Biological Diversity or Bern Convention of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats are sidelined, and therefore also backtrack on progress made towards SDG 15: protecting life on land. Mass protests erupted in response to changes in laws on expropriation, on referendums and on the boron and arsenic pollution limits, which were widely interpreted as mechanisms designed to enable these mining projects without public consent. The protests led to the fall of the government and revocation of the mining license; but two years later that decision was overruled by the Constitutional Court. Such cases would strongly benefit from finding solutions that do not disregard previous national and international commitments that contribute towards shared social and environmental prosperity.

In Tunisia (case study 8), the World Bank supports a solar and wind expansion project with \$430 million, expected to generate over 30,000 jobs, primarily during construction. Job creation figures emphasise temporary construction employment rather than stable operational positions, reflecting the temporary and precarious nature of benefits to local populations from energy infrastructure development controlled by external actors. This highlights the need to distinguish between

temporary job creation and sustainable employment, when assessing the coherence of energy transition projects with SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. Local recruitment combined with adequate training can ensure that the benefits of such projects are more fairly distributed among stakeholders, including the affected communities.

In contrast to the previous cases, deliberate state coordination of foreign direct investment, local content requirements, targeted skills development, and deliberate export promotion has proved successful in Viet Nam, Thailand and Malaysia (case study 6). These cases demonstrate that coherence between climate policy and development objectives depends on strong state capacity and deliberate industrial policy. Viet Nam reduced poverty from, 58% in 1993 to under 5% by 2020 while maintaining world-leading growth rates. Thailand's coordinated development eliminated absolute poverty through sustained manufacturing employment and rural development programmes. Malaysia achieved upper-middle-income status through deliberate sectoral upgrading. All three significantly contribute to SDG 1: no poverty. In these cases, state enterprises and sovereign wealth funds maintained strategic control over critical sectors despite liberalisation pressures, preserving national autonomy in determining development trajectories. Public education and training systems-built workforce capabilities and coordinated wage growth policies in manufacturing sectors significantly improved living standards. However, these advances remain unequal across regions and sectors, between urban and rural areas, and between core and peripheral workers.

In conclusion, the above examples demonstrate a trend in which social, environmental and economic benefits in the framework of the best transition are best attained where there are concrete mechanisms for coherence across government levels and across time. They also demonstrate that liberalisation does not contribute to these policy effects. Instead, we observe the importance of state capacity and the shortcomings of market-led transitions. EU green transition policies often externalise social and environmental costs, thereby undermining their coherence with international justice commitments.

### 3.2.2 Conflicts

This subsection examines conflicts that arise when EU green transition policies interact with global industrial competition, trade regimes, and labour markets. The text first talks about the areas of unequal industrial dynamics, the carbon border adjustment mechanism, trade deals, and irregularities in the supply chain; subsequently compares the just transition sector to incumbent sectors, to then conclude with concrete solutions to the described issues.

The Brussels Effect, whereby EU regulations spread far beyond its borders, does not necessarily have positive outcomes for livelihoods in other countries. The European Chips Act and Net-Zero Industry Act for instance prioritise domestic semiconductor and battery manufacturing and may inadvertently marginalise Southeast Asian producers from critical technology supply chains (case study 6). These risks reproducing patterns familiar from earlier industrial transitions: peripheral economies develop manufacturing capacity for sectors subsequently relocated to core countries as technological sophistication increases. Changing the conditions set out in trade agreements between the EU and its partners can foster an exchange on more equal footing.

As a second area of tension, we consider how part of Europe's climate mitigation is achieved through carbon leakage (case study 10): environmental regulation in affluent countries leading to pollution migration to other, less affluent, countries, together with displaced economic activities. This points to the absence of a global policy on shared regulatory standards and redistribute mechanism. This undermines policy coherence because climate mitigation is pursued in ways that contradict principles of global equity and differentiated responsibility. The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (2023) intends to address carbon leakage. Research shows however that the effectiveness in doing so can be expected to be limited (Sun et al, 2024). CBAM will

disproportionately affect exporting Global South manufacturers reliant on fossil fuels. This policy contradicts just transition principles and climate justice frameworks prioritising differentiated responsibilities reflecting historical emissions and development needs. In its strategy to combat climate change, the EU also increasingly frames North Africa as a supply zone for its own targets rather than as a region that requires energy sovereignty to serve North African populations (case study 8).

Thirdly, the transition in the European Union relies on the import of lithium, copper, nickel, green hydrogen and biofuels from Latin America (case study 5). An important conflict arises here as this happens without accompanying support for technology transfer or industrial upgrading, running against SDG 9: inclusive and sustainable industrialisation. Trade agreements lock in this subordinate relationship, continuing colonial-era extraction. International mining companies backed by the EU and development finance institutions structure extraction to maximise capital returns. Genuine just transitions must include mining communities in these agreements and establish equitable benefit-sharing arrangements with transparent revenue allocation and community consent rights. Without technology transfer, industrial upgrading, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, EU resource dependency reproduces extractive development models rather than enabling just transitions.

A fourth identified area of conflict appears through the case of electronics manufacturing and solar panel production in Southeast Asia (case study 6). These display exploitative working conditions structurally identical to those in traditional sectors, which have been condemned for decades. Worker wages are insufficient to meet basic needs, while working hours regularly exceed fifty per week. Occupational health hazards remain inadequately addressed. Women workers and migrant workers are at a particular disadvantage. These conditions persist despite international scrutiny of supply chains and certification systems that claim to verify ethical labour practices. The gap between certified compliance and actual labour conditions reveals fundamental limitations of market-based accountability mechanisms. This situation reflects global value chain structures in which the lowest-wage locations focus on labour-intensive assembly operations, while core-country corporations control capital-intensive, technology-rich stages. There is a clear tension and incoherence here with respect to the values that the European Union sets out to diligently respect in the markets its sources products and services from, and which are carried forward on the international level.

The above conflicts clarify that green sector designation does not assure labour justice or worker wellbeing. The structural vulnerability of workers remains determined by their position in the global value chain rather than by sectoral environmental credentials. The result is the replication of colonial-era patterns of resource extraction, updating mechanisms of accumulation to align with contemporary climate imperatives whilst maintaining fundamental relationships of subordination between resource-rich peripheries and wealthy centres of capital accumulation. Meanwhile, pollution and resource depletion concentrate in the Global South. International complicity enables green colonialism extensively. There is an urgent need for fairer trade conditions and a stronger supply chain law because a transition can only be just if it is just both within and outside of the EU's borders.

Lastly, a clear way forward for the countries at the other end of the conflict seems to emerge from the cases where countries with strong state capacity and deliberate industrial policy achieved faster transitions than those relying on market-driven alternatives. This finding carries profound implications for global climate policy: achieving the requisite carbon reductions within the remaining timeframe likely requires strengthening state capacities for coordinated industrial policy, contradicting privatisation and market liberalisation strategies. Local content requirements, performance conditions imposed on foreign investment, support for domestic research institutes, and incentives for domestic firm development have fostered indigenous

technological capabilities despite neoliberal predictions that such policies would fail (Doner et al., 2021). These findings suggest that improving policy coherence requires moving beyond market-led approaches and strengthening state capacity, industrial policy, and democratic control over investment decisions.

## Section 3.3 Stakeholder participation

### 3.3.1 Local regional governments involved

This subsection examines how limits to state capacity and multilevel governance undermine coherent and participatory transitions. The previous sections pointed out that an assertive position of the national or regional state can make a massive difference in securing a just transition that has more success in decarbonising the economy and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. National, regional and local governments do however not always have the capacity, funding or power required to realise this and stand up against external pressures. This shows that policy coherence depends not only on institutional alignment but also on the capacity of public authorities to act on that alignment.

Investigated countries where a strong coherence across governance levels has proven beneficial are Spain, Viet Nam and Malaysia (case study 6). In the Bierzo-Lacania region in Spain (case study 3), European, national, regional and municipal level worked together, and involved the relevant worker unions, to smoothen the transition from a coal basin to a more diversified and sustainable economy. In Malaysia, the state actively promoted indigenous firm development through targeted support and managed to advance the domestic competences and supply chain coverage in the electronics sector. Viet Nam also stands out for its integration in the global value chains through the promotion of domestic electric vehicle manufacturers and solar panel production capabilities. These cases demonstrate that coherence across governance levels can produce socially just and economically viable transitions when public authority is strong.

Where Vietnamese and Malaysian state actors used the international demand for these carbon-lean technologies as development opportunities, the Philippines lack the institutional capacity for a comparable coordinated response. This reveals that democratic transitions imposed by international financial institutions, often involving an explicit rejection of state-directed development, subsequently limit policy options. Once dismantled, they prove extremely difficult to rebuild.

Not only the capacity of the national and local governments can prove a barrier, but also its funding. One of the most significant findings was that governance frameworks and policy instruments for green industrial policy can be creative and well-designed, but that a gap exists with its implementation, because the resources to do this are too scarce. On the national level in Viet Nam and Thailand, policy approaches that combined public (and therefore strategic) control of the electricity grid with private developers and finance have resulted in some of the world's fastest rollouts of renewable energy, in ways that market mechanisms alone cannot achieve.

Besides a question of capacity or funding, a lack in power to act can also be a limiting factor. Local governments have the best view on the local impacts of green transition policies, but they do not always have the power to act against it. The 2015 UNFCCC Paris Agreement and the European Union's commitment to reach carbon neutrality by 2050 inspired the Critical Raw Materials Act and trickled down to the municipality of Boticas, where the lithium mining project of Barroso is located (case study 1), and to Krupanj and Loznica, the communities affected by the Jadar valley lithium mining project. The council of Boticas approved a motion against lithium mining in its area, but they are not legally binding. Local authorities in Serbia have the mandate to implement land repurposing and issue some permits, but the adaptation of the spatial planning to accommodate the mining project happened at the national level.

Sometimes, it's not only the local or regional authorities being sidelined, but it may also be national governments that can do little against policies dictated elsewhere. In all the investigated Global South countries, the European Union has emerged as a significant actor shaping green industrial policy development via climate governance, trade regimes, supply chain regulation and sectoral standards. A concrete example is how the Battery Regulation and CBAM govern the battery composition, carbon content and supply chain transparency in Southeast Asia. This disproportionately affects smaller, less-capitalised manufacturers.

### 3.3.2 Stakeholders involved

The following cases illustrate how stakeholder participation is displaced by corporate and financial decision-making. Though strong cases in Southeast Asia (case study 6) and within the European Union (case study 15) were identified where the just transition is organised in cooperation with the local communities in the spirit of public participation, reaping combined positive social, economic and environmental outcomes; the overwhelmingly dominant pattern is one in which local communities, scientists and even international treaties are disregarded, and where transnational corporations, multilateral development banks and political elites aligned with corporate and financial interests take the decisions. When it comes to projects in the realm of transition minerals (case studies 1 & 12), renewable energy generation (case study 8) or other technological projects associated with climate change mitigation (case study 5, 7, 8 & 11), the projects are nevertheless justified as a necessary deed. The result is that corporations, often foreign, reap profits while international financial institutions and climate frameworks provide legitimacy. This undermines the procedural dimension of policy coherence, which requires meaningful participation of affected communities.

In Serbia (case study 12), the scientific community was vocal in their assessment that the Jadar valley lithium mining project serves a green growth strategy that ultimately cannot deliver the projected emission reduction objectives - failing to address SDG 13: urgent action to combat climate change. Local communities quipped that the project merely serves the manufacturing of German electric vehicles, products they would not be able to afford. While then-prime minister Brnabić cancelled the project under strong public pressure in 2022, the Constitutional Court deemed the license revocation invalid in 2024. On the other hand, laws are explicitly adapted to accommodate investors and companies, dramatically contrasting how different stakeholders are treated. Similarly, the Portuguese government backed the development of the Barroso lithium mine with €110 million in 2026, despite ongoing court cases against its environmental impact assessment and lack of consultation; and despite strong civic, political and scientific opposition. Its mining law was updated in 2021 to add the concept of “green mining” and further reinforce the fact that mining projects can be developed for reasons of “public utility”. These cases show that incoherence is produced when legal frameworks are adapted to facilitate investment while participation rights and environmental safeguards are weakened.

North Africa's green transitions (case study 8) proceed within authoritarian governance contexts, excluding democratic participation and systematically prioritising foreign investment over public interest. In Egypt's Benban Solar Park, even the jobs for local implementation went to workers from outside the region or foreign technicians, leading to both a lack of community participation in consulting and in employment opportunities.

As mentioned before, banks are a major force in deciding which projects become viable or not. Our research finds that the capacity of African development banks to finance green industrialisation remains underdeveloped. The World Bank and other multilateral development banks do deploy substantial resources, but they typically come with conditionalities constraining political autonomy and hinder the prioritisation of regional interests. This shows that even when

national policies aim at inclusive transitions, financial conditionalities can undermine policy coherence by restricting political autonomy and development choices.

### 3.3.3 Transparency and due process

This subsection examines whether the processes to create and uphold laws are clear to the public, and if governments are held accountable with respect to existing just transition laws. There's a wide range of transparency and due process observed between legislations, but all of them follow the same truth: governance deficits fundamentally undermine the potential for just transitions. Without reforming governance to serve public rather than private interests and orienting policies to ensure sustainable local employment, investments generate temporary foreign labour rather than long-term community benefits. This is central to achieving SDG 16: promoting peace, justice and strong institutions. Renewable energy investments theoretically generate two to five times more jobs per unit than fossil fuels, yet this potential fails to be realised without democratic decision-making structures centred on justice.

Across the case studies, similar patterns emerge: restricted access to information, weak public participation, and disregard for consent rights. Timely accessibility to governmental data was problematic in among others Morocco and Serbia. Public participation was shortcoming in Serbia (case study 12), Romania (case study 2), Portugal (case study 1), Morocco (case study 8 & 11), Egypt (case study 8). The land of the Saharawi was being offered to investors without their consent, ignoring the internationally recognised status of Western Sahara.

The UNECE Aarhus convention, an international agreement ratified by 48 mostly European countries, has the objective to secure citizen access to environmental information and public participation. The Aarhus Committee can rule against governments that fail to uphold the convention, as they did against the Portuguese government in the case of the Barroso lithium mine in 2025 (case study 1). The UN FAO has also intervened to denounce that the mining project is in breach of the area's status as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. The Environmental Impact Assessment executed for the lithium mining project in Barroso concluded that the project causes "very significant and irreversible negative impacts on the landscape, hydrology and ecosystems", yet the Portuguese Directorate General for Energy and Geology still granted a permission for exploration and extraction of lithium. The binding commitments at national level (EIAs), at regional level (Aarhus convention) and at international level (UN FAO) should be upheld through their respective courts, and as such protect the citizens and ecosystems that the laws were designed for. True policy coherence will only exist where different levels of governance are held accountable.

Zimbabwe's case of a lithium export ban that is circumvented and barely enforced demonstrates how policy quality alone does not suffice to yield tangible outcomes. The case reflects the reality that when powerful political interests (in this case both domestic elites and transnational capital) benefit from the export of lithium, i.e. benefit from circumventing the law, a strong rule of law and governmental and corporate accountability are required. This illustrates how weaker enforcement capacity and unequal power relations can make some countries in the global south more vulnerable to environmental degradation and regulatory circumvention, particularly when external demand and capital flows create strong incentives to bypass safeguards. Issues in this domain are firstly a stark reminder for governments to monitor the conditions under which trade is done and whether the imported products and services by businesses meet the claimed standards; as well as a reminder for governments to support these countries with strong supply chain due diligence legislation. Secondly, it illustrates how strong market and investor pressures can sideline existing protections and as such undermine a just transition.

In conclusion, even the best designed policies can fail to crystallise in case of government failure to uphold them. It is also vital that courts and governments at different levels engage with each other in due process. Additionally, where authorities are not accountable or inclusive and access to justice is missing, there is a clear shortcoming towards SDG 16. As a cornerstone of the policy coherence framework, without transparency, access to justice, and meaningful participation, policy coherence becomes purely formal, as implementation is captured by powerful interests.

## 4. Mechanisms for ensuring greater policy coherence for green transitions in Europe

Having analysed the coherence of green transition policies in Europe, along the three dimensions of ‘quality’, ‘policy effects’ and ‘stakeholder participation’, in this section we identify mechanisms for greater policy coherence. These mechanisms are grouped according to the three analytical dimensions, and they operate across different governance levels. It is important to note here that the goal of this section is not to give concrete suggestions on improving policy coherence. Another report (D4.4) by the GreenPaths team will focus on giving concrete suggestions on improving policy coherence in Europe. This section is aimed at identifying mechanisms for improving policy coherence. Before getting into some more direct mechanisms for improving the coherence of the current legal and policy frameworks, it is important to address that there is a systemic and structural root to the issues with coherency. There is a growing reliance on urgency and strategic prioritisation of certain (often extractive) projects. Such prioritisation is a serious risk for a just transition, where social and environmental concerns cannot simply be cast aside. This narrative is itself part of a deeply seated growth- and competitiveness-driven logic in EU policymaking. When economic concerns and growth objectives trump social and environmental well-being, the transition will neither be green nor just. Moreover, such considerations severely limit the possibilities for the European Union to act. It reinforces the EU’s reliance on market-based instruments as the predominant means of policymaking over other – more just and effective – instruments for sustainable development such as strengthening binding redistribution, technology transfer, reparations, and rights-based constraints.

### Section 4.1 Policy quality

The case studies show that policy coherence requires redefining the just transition as a comprehensive socio-ecological transformation, rather than a sectoral energy policy. As the case studies show, the social impacts of transition policies extend far beyond the energy sector – ranging from agriculture to conservation and tourism. This requires a radical expansion of the ways in which we approach just transition policies, integrating the social requirements of leaving no-one behind with the biodiversity, soil, and climate objectives across the different sectors. More holistic approaches link the transition to employment creation, skills development and welfare enhancement whilst recognising the importance of ecological wellbeing and rejecting sacrificial logics. What the case studies have shown is that the just transition is not only an energy transition, but a comprehensive social transition that requires a comprehensive approach to nearly all of our economic, social and environmental policymaking. For instance, in the case of the Carbon Border Adjustment Measure, a broader scope would include developmental cooperation, capacity building and technology transfer measures.

The second key mechanism to be considered is a stronger emphasis on environmental and social objectives and considerations in policymaking. Strategic or economic objectives more often than not outweigh environmental and social concerns leading to severe environmental and social impacts. Extractive and growth-based approaches need to be supplanted by sufficiency, circularity and material demand reduction as clear goals for the transition. Such an emphasis also requires clear political commitment by policymakers to initiating and sustaining the green transition. Moreover, these targets should be integrated throughout all policy fields to prevent

inconsistencies. One example of how this can be achieved is given in the case of public procurement in the Dordogne (case study 15) where procurement is used as a strategic lever by implementing environmental and social criteria in tenders and holding pre-bid consultations to build capacity.

In terms of long-term planning, the lack of time to start the transition has led to a narrative of urgency surrounding certain decisions. Whereas we can credibly speak of a climate emergency, this urgency has led to inconsistent and harmful consequences such as the so called 'sacrifice zones' that are the result of extensive mining. An important mechanism then becomes to observe "realistic and acceptable timeframes that guarantee planning and strategies that are proactive and representative, not conditioned by emergencies and competencies that entail unnecessary damage" (case study 1). This also means that enough time is spent on working out the temporal frameworks for reducing and mitigating the environmental and social impacts of policies.

Such a comprehensive approach not only needs to take place at the level of member states and the European Union but also at the international level. An important mechanism to ensure that the green transition is also just is stronger international cooperation, in many cases over the current framework of competitiveness. International coordination and cooperations reduces the inconsistencies between national and international policy frameworks. To achieve the UN SDGs cooperation is essential. This requires global north countries to invest in developing countries without stringent requirements on borrowing and privatisation. International cooperation on improving labour standards reduces risks of capital flight and human rights abuses over the supply chain. International cooperation on technology increase innovation and speed up the green transition, allowing for development opportunities for the global south. Technology transfer too is essential for allowing developing nations to develop green industrial capacities.

A key mechanism for ensuring a green and just transition is the availability of state funding and capacity for the green transition. EU and national policy frameworks will require institutional knowledge and fiscal capacity to mobilise resources for the green transition. Doing so will require institutional development, strategic planning and an improvement of democratic governance frameworks. A green and just transition requires large scale investments, employing public ownership can help target these investments where they are most needed and make sure that these resources serve a public purpose. Public ownership of strategic industries allows democratic control to be exercised over key industries for the green transition.

Amongst all of the case studies, the necessity for better analysis and reporting was mentioned in a multitude of ways. A need for investment in monitoring and evaluation mechanisms was identified for many of the discussed cases such as in the fields of tourism, food procurement, agriculture and energy poverty. Better use of data collection, analysis and monitoring will help to make policies more effective and transparent, improving enforcement but also allowing for the recognition of vulnerable communities and regions, allowing policy to consider those most burdened by the transition. This will particularly require more inclusive and extensive social impact analyses, which will be discussed in the next section.

## Section 4.2 Policy effects

The effects of green transition policies need to be assessed comprehensively. Currently too many of the impact assessment indicators are focussed on financial impacts. There is a lack of alternative metrics based on agroecological, justice-based and post-growth understandings. This means that key impacts on for instance soil-health, distributional fairness, procedural justice, local provisioning and inequality are left out of impact assessments. The coherence of policy frameworks with social and environmental goals would greatly benefit from further integration of these approaches in the impact assessment framework of the EU. Moreover, non-economic loss and damage require further integration in strategic and impact assessments, ideally co-

designed with affected communities. Impacts such as the erosion of trust, cultural displacements, community fragmentation and uncertainty can be minimised and mitigated that way. Examples of indicators that should be part of more comprehensive impact assessments are soil health indicators, land access and tenure security, income distribution metrics, procedural justice metrics.

Such comprehensive assessment would also further another important mechanism for a green and just transition: recognition. The case studies show there is inadequate recognition of the negative effects that current environmental policymaking and historic responsibility have had on affected communities, in particular in the global south. The detrimental social and environmental impacts that tourism, extensive mining, conservation, green hydrogen production and agriculture can have, need to be recognised and effectively mitigated through adequate compensation and support for affected regions and countries. The case studies have recommended a wide range of progressive policy mechanisms that may account for harms, such as a payment cap to curb subsidy capture by large agricultural land holders, reparations for land dispossessions, and adequate education and re-training schemes in the case of mine closures. Next to accounting for harms, it is equally important to focus on creating community well-being and value, through among other things establishing public land banks and trusts that prioritise agroecology and small farms, fostering and accounting for worker-lead and community owned enterprises, and investing in public research institutions and technology transfer in the global south.

Land governance emerges as a central site of policy incoherence in the green transition. In terms of conflicts arguably the most pronounced type of conflict that has arisen out of the case studies are the different types of land conflict that the green transition has brought. From so-called 'sacrifice zones' that are the result of lithium mining (case studies 1 and 12) to green-grabbing in the case of conservation and green electricity production (case studies 2, 8 and 11) and green colonialism in the case of the western Sahara (case studies 8 and 11), it is important to address land based conflicts. Any large-scale project that requires land should be preceded by adequate stakeholder consultation, prior and informed consent, compensation and where possible benefit sharing agreements. For example, it is crucial to introduce legal no-go zones for mining in ecologically sensitive, agriculturally productive and culturally relevant areas. In the case of conservation efforts require adequate conflict mitigation measures such as predator proof fences for local farms.

### Section 4.3 Stakeholder participation

The case studies showed that European policy frameworks require a strengthening of processes of consultation, co-design, co-decision and implementing co-ownership. In many of the case studies regional administrations could benefit from increased coordination and an increase in resources and competences. Regional and inter-municipal projects should be prioritised, fostering cooperation as opposed to competition. This allows for more effective use of scarce resources. Moreover, the lack of available resources for local and regional governments needs to be addressed to allow for effective and efficient implementation of climate policies at all levels of government.

One of the key challenges identified throughout all of the case studies has been the lack of effective stakeholder involvement, in particular by labour organisations, affected communities and vulnerable citizens. Full implementation of the Aarhus Convention should be treated as a baseline condition for policy coherence. Oftentimes there is no stakeholder involvement in setting targets at a macro level. Requiring mandatory community participation from a diverse range of stakeholders is crucial to achieving effective community participation. This points to a flaw in the current participation framework that has too much of a focus on equal participation and too little recognition for vulnerable, marginalised and affected communities and citizens. Participation

measures should seek out these groups and target their participation to allow for more inclusive processes. Not only should citizens be addressed, but also labour organisations and NGOs should have a much more prevalent role in EU and national policy frameworks which currently favour participation by business interests.

There is however also a clear call coming from the case studies for alternative forms of participation that go beyond consultation. Participatory governance models either through meaningful representation in policymaking bodies or through commons-based governance models including cooperatives and eco-communities are important alternative governance structures that can enhance participation and support for the green transition whilst also increasing well-being and citizenship.

Finally, transparency and due process must be enhanced throughout the EU and national policy frameworks. A greater public availability of data and information enhances public participation and control. Such greater transparency can be achieved among others by publishing data on the distribution of climate finance, introducing tracking tools and requiring public land registries throughout the EU. Moreover, the EU needs to establish better compliance mechanisms to ensure international law is adhered to. Cases like the Western Sahara, where transition policies are used to legitimise occupation require a firm response from the international community. No international recognition should be given to renewable energy projects on occupied territory.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The EU has, for a long time, been at the forefront of climate policy in the world. The European Green deal was meant to bring the EU in line with its own ambitious climate objectives and our international agreements and commitments. While such commitments are certainly commendable, European and national policy frameworks have not been able to live up to them. The GreenPaths case studies show that current EU and national policy frameworks are not coherent in bringing about the green and just transition. Whereas many of these frameworks seek to strike a balance between environmental, social and economic interests, a striking primacy of economic interests can be unearthed from all of the frameworks that deal with transition policy. To arrive at truly coherent frameworks, which serve all the objectives set out by the European Green Deal, the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals, an important rebalancing effort is required. This will necessitate a better integration of non-economic objectives and considerations in policy frameworks, moving towards more holistic understandings of not only policy but also the transition itself. Setting out reasonable, realistic and well considered timelines that involve stakeholders to cast a desirable horizon, where no one gets left behind. Furthermore, national and international policymakers need to work together to improve frameworks of enforcement, monitoring and reporting. Such monitoring and reporting of social and environmental effects should be expanded with more indicators that track the fairness and justice of green transitions. Recognising the manifold impacts transition policies have, while effectively addressing the conflicts that arise from these impacts will be key to sustaining public support for the transition. However, public support is not enough, people need to be able to participate in the transition for it to truly become a just transition.

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## Annex

### Annex 1: Mandatory Questionnaire on Institutional, Regulatory and Legal Frameworks

The template questionnaire is intended to capture consistent data on all case studies for WP4. It may be supported by a digital survey and UvA, as part of D4.1, are able to offer support and legal advice to help partners identify answers.

#### General

1. Identify all **policy field(s)**, which apply to your case study
2. **List the most important documents** (policy documents, strategies, laws and administrative decisions) linked to your case, including information about their content if not in EN
  - Of European origin
  - Of National origin
  - Other origin (municipal, international etc.)

#### National legal framework:

1. What are the **competent bodies** (ministries, administrative bodies, independent agencies, regional or municipal bodies) responsible for your case / the policies relevant for your case?
  - What are their competences and powers?
  - What is their institutional capacity ('size of workforce, knowledge/ specialisation and budget)?
  - Do other layers of governance (EU, international) intervene in your case, and if so, how?
2. Are there any (future) **policy or legislative changes considered** in relation to your case study, and if so which ones? Which actors are the most important drivers of these changes?

#### Conflicts and obstacles:

1. Are there any **legal disputes** before national courts, tribunals, or administrative bodies regarding the projects from your case study?
  - What is the dispute about?
  - Who are the parties?
  - Have any decisions been made, and how were they perceived by the public?
2. Is there an ongoing **political conflict** regarding the project from your case study? You can consider questions such as:
  - Who are the most vocal proponents and opponents of the project? What are their arguments?
  - Is there debate in the relevant scientific community regarding the case study project?
  - Were there any mass gatherings (eg demonstrations) associated with the project, and if so by whom and to what purpose?
3. Are there any remarkable **gaps or inconsistencies** areas between different policies or laws, coming from either European or national level, that may make the transition particularly difficult in your case?
4. Are there **domestic legal or institutional obstacles** to implementing or acting on EU policy in your case, related for instance to political, administrative, legal or other reasons?

## **Rule of Law**

1. What is the case study **country's rule of law situation**, and what is its impact on your case study? (Perhaps a reflection on the content of index <https://worldjusticeproject.org/rule-of-law-index/global/2023> may be helpful).

## Annex 2: Template policy coherence case studies

Case study name:	
Partner institution:	
Reviewer:	
Key words:	
Policy field(s):	

### 1. Shared objectives

Do policies have shared objectives? Do policies refer to these shared objectives? What is the relationship between EU policy and national and local rules?

Answer these questions in max 300 words.

### 2. Synergies

Do policies work together and refer to each other? Are they mutually beneficial? What is the relationship between EU policy and national and local rules?

Answer these questions in max 300 words.

### 3. Conflicts and inconsistencies

Are there inconsistencies between the policies concerned? Have these inconsistencies led to conflicts between policies or conflicts in society? What is the relationship between EU policy and national and local rules?

Answer these questions in max 300 words.

### 4. Transparency

Is it clear what the rules are and how they are applied? Are there government data that were hard to access?

Answer these questions in max 300 words.

5. Enforcement

Are rules being enforced? Do enforcement authorities have enough capacity to enforce these rules? What is the Rule of Law score?

Answer these questions in max 300 words.

6. International commitments

How do the policies relate to and affect international commitments and the UN Sustainable Development Goals?

Answer these questions in max 300 words.

7. Social impacts

What social impacts have been found in the case? Are these the desired impacts?

Answer these questions in max 300 words.

8. Examples

Did you find any striking examples of the questions above in a positive or negative sense?

Give example in max 300 words.