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Together, yet Separate—Identifying the Internal Preconditions of Creating EU Climate Diplomacy

Stefania Kolarz, Zuzanna Nowak

For years, the European Union has been trying to create tools to conduct external climate policy, but only with the development of the European Green Deal have these activities intensified. Despite significant progress in building the EU's image as a leader in the field of combating climate change, as demonstrated by the recent COP27 summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, the creation of EU climate diplomacy is not yet complete. Its effectiveness is undermined by, among others, internal factors such as the complex institutional structure and conflicts of interest between Member States stemming from the challenges posed by the energy crisis. EU climate diplomacy could be internally strengthened with the appointment by the Council of an EU Special Representative for Climate.

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Although currently the EU's share in the annual production of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions is about 8%, countries that today are EU members are responsible for as much as 18% of emissions

generated since the beginning of the industrial revolution.¹ At the same time, as a result of the intensifying climate crisis each year, the EU economic losses resulting from the related natural disasters are estimated at nearly €12 billion,² and the European Environment Agency (EEA) expects extreme weather events to occur even more frequently in the future.³ Climate change also affects the EU indirectly, exacerbating disturbances

in world trade in food and other commodities, human migration movements, conflicts, and instability in financial markets.

The Member States, to some extent both a cause and a victim of the increasingly tangible effects of climate change visible in droughts and floods, have been trying for years to make a significant contribution to solving this problem. On the one hand, this is justified by the transnational nature of the climate crisis, which requires a coordinated response from global economies. On the other hand, climate awareness among Europeans is growing, with as much as 93% of them now considering climate change to be a serious problem, and 75% viewing the actions of national governments as insufficient.⁴ However, the complexity of the EU institutional architecture, as well as the internal diversity of the energy mixes and climate ambitions of individual Member States mean that the EU's global climate leadership lacks a solid internal foundation, and the proactivity of EU policy may be temporarily replaced by improvised countermeasures.

A Leaderless Leader

In terms of climate, the Union is often described as a "leaderless leader", an entity leading the global fight against climate change through external action but lacking a clear planning centre in this domain internally.⁵ One of the reasons for this is the late development of climate policy compared to other policy fields; only recently has the EU started to treat climate issues separately from environmental protection.

Environment and Climate as Side Topics of Integration

Counteracting climate change has long been treated by the European Communities as part of environmental protection. The gradual involvement of the Communities in these areas was related to the

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¹ Statista, "Emissions in the EU - Statistics & Facts," 15 August 2022, www.statista.com.

² European Environment Agency, "Economic losses from climate-related extremes in Europe," 3 February 2022, www.eea.europa.eu.

³ European Environment Agency, "Climate hazards are increasing in frequency and severity across Europe; new regional overview published," 17 November 2021, www.eea.europa.eu.

⁴ European Commission, "Citizen support for climate action," 2021, ec.europa.eu.

⁵ S. Oberthür, C. Dupont, "The European Union's international climate leadership: towards a grand climate strategy?", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 28, no 7, 2021, pp. 1095-1114.

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need to ensure the proper functioning of the internal market, and was driven by the Member States, supported mainly by financial institutions. The nature of the problem facilitated integration because it is common to all countries and impossible to be solved by one of them alone.

The formalisation of environmental and climate action in policy and Community law has progressed slowly. Common environmental protection policy was adopted in the early 1970s, while the climate one came only in the early 1990s. At the treaty level, it was not until the '90s that the objectives of environmental protection policy were set in the Maastricht Treaty. Later, the Amsterdam Treaty introduced the principle of integrating environmental policy in other areas of the Union's activities, including agriculture, development, energy, trade, and transport. The secondary law that supplemented such policy developed even later, after the 1997 Kyoto climate summit, then in 2008-2009 in connection with the adoption of the energy and climate package, and more in the last decade. For example, in 2018 the Union adopted the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, and in 2019 it revised its law under the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework.

The most important turning point, however, was the entry into force in 2021 of the European Climate Law, a regulation that fits into the legal framework of the objectives of the European Green

To transform the declarations of the EGD into action, the European Commission (EC) has developed, apart from the above-mentioned climate law, about 130 legislative initiatives.

Deal (EGD)⁶ The EGD assumes, among others, that the European economy will cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. To transform the declarations of the EGD into action, the European Commission (EC) has developed, apart from the above-mentioned climate law, about 130 legislative initiatives⁷ for the entire spectrum of EU activity, including industry, agriculture, transport, energy, and the environment. This highlights the need for a holistic approach to the European

transformation by 2050, and at the same time poses a coordination and administrative challenge for EU institutions and members. The implementation of the "Fit for 55" package is particularly important for climate policy.⁸ Within the package framework, the EC provided for the revision of, among others, directives on raw materials and energy carriers, the Emission Trading System (EU ETS), and Effort Sharing Regulation. It has also planned new initiatives, including the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), ReFuelEU in aviation, and FuelEU Maritime. It has allocated nearly a third of the entire EU budget for 2021-2027 to the implementation of climate policy, including to the Modernisation Fund, the Just Transition Fund, and the Social Climate Fund.

Currently, EU environmental legislation, including on climate, comprises more than 200 acts, mainly directives.⁹ This is only part of the EU *acquis* in this field, which is also made up of other documents, such as the European Climate Change Program (ECCP) of 2000. The process of creating EU climate law and policy is not yet complete. EU institutions systematically expand their catalogue to include new acts

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⁶ Z. Nowak, "The European Green Deal: On the Way to EU Climate Neutrality," *PISM Bulletin*, no 66 (1762), March 2021, www.pism.pl.

⁷ European Parliament, "Legislative Train Schedule," www.europarl.europa.eu.

⁸ Z. Nowak, "Waiting for the 'Fit for 55' Package," *PISM Bulletin*, no 128, July 2021, www.pism.pl; A. Furlong, "A wonk's guide to the Czech EU presidency policy agenda," *Politico*, 23 June 2022, www.politico.eu.

⁹ R. Youngs, "COP26 and the Foreign Policy Blind Spot in Europe's Climate Action," *Carnegie Europe*, 26 October 2021, carnegieeurope.eu.

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(e.g., on 24 June this year, the EC and the High Representative presented a new EU programme for international ocean governance¹⁰).

Environmental Protection as EU Policy, a Shared Competence, and the Standard

As noted above, in the original Communities approach, climate policy was not separately regulated in the treaties and was generally perceived as an element of environmental protection. The EU aims to promote measures at the international level to combat climate change,¹¹ which can be considered as the basis of its climate diplomacy. References to climate issues can also be found in other policies, such as in the context of energy efficiency, the development of renewable energy sources (RES),¹² and supporting sustainable development.¹³

Environmental protection is a shared competence between the EU and its Member States. The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) directly allows the Union to conclude

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agreements and cooperate with third countries and international organisations, but Article 191(4) TFEU emphasises that its powers do not infringe the prerogatives of the Member States in this respect. Although the EU's competences to conclude international agreements directly into the TFEU is not a practice

applied in every field (e.g., the lack of similar regulations in the energy sector) and could indicate special treatment of environmental policy, in fact the EU does not take full advantage of this possibility. For example, until now this competence has not been an independent basis for the conclusion of an international agreement (as a rule, climate cooperation is covered by trade agreements and therefore other legal bases are used), and its use has become the subject of a dispute between the Commission (EC) and the Council in the case of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines.¹⁴

At the same time, environmental protection is more than a policy or competence—it is a standard. The TFEU and the Charter of Fundamental Rights emphasise that a high level of environmental protection must be taken into account in the definition and implementation of EU policies and activities.¹⁵ This ensures the so-called mainstreaming of climate

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issues in other areas of EU activity and counteracts the equation to the lowest common denominator of protection by EU institutions.¹⁶ For their part, EU members can justify maintaining their own regulations despite the adoption of EU acts on a given issue precisely because of more advanced

environmental protection.¹⁷ This provides EU members with a mechanism that is unforeseen for other policy areas in order to maintain and promote the highest ecological standards, although their activity in this field varies. Sometimes, instead of protecting the high standards of environmental protection, states tend to lower common ambitions and thus weaken the EU's external influence.

¹⁰ European Commission, "Setting the course for a sustainable blue planet - Joint Communication on the EU's International Ocean Governance agenda," 24 June 2022, oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu.

¹¹ Article 191(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

¹² Article 194(1)(c) TFEU.

¹³ Article 21(2)(f) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), in which the word "climate" is not used even once.

¹⁴ Case C-377/12 *Commission v Council*

¹⁵ Article 11 TFEU, Article 37 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

¹⁶ Article 144(3) TFEU.

¹⁷ Article 114(4-5) TFEU.

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Environmental Protection as a Shared Responsibility

Although the role of the Commission is most visible in climate policy (stemming from, among others, the scope of its tasks such as legislative initiative, negotiating agreements, and representing the EU), the EC is only one of the Union's actors dealing with this issue. Actions in this area are undertaken in a polycentric manner¹⁸ by the Council, the European Parliament (EP), as well as the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Member States, to mention but a few.

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The way the EC is organised, and thus the level of its involvement in environmental and climate protection, changes with each of its compositions. In 1973, a Commissioner for Environment and Transport was appointed for the first time.

Then, the issue of the environment was combined with enlargement and neighbourhood policy, fisheries, energy, and others, or periodically not included in the composition of the EC at all. Since 2010 (Second Barroso Commission), the roles have been divided between the commissioners for Environment and Climate. In the current composition, for the first time the commissioner dealing with climate issues (Frans Timmermans, responsible for the EGD) is also the vice-president of the EC. In addition to him, six other commissioners are involved in the implementation of the environmental portfolio, including those for transport, energy, and agriculture.¹⁹ This is the most numerous thematic group in the EC, which emphasises the importance of the problem for the EU, as well as its cross-cutting nature. The way in which the EC has been organised over the years indicates a gradual increase in the EU's interest in climate policy, and it can be assumed that this tendency will continue with subsequent formations.

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The supporting structures for the EC are the Directorate General (DG) for Environment (DG ENV, since 1981) and for Climate (DG Climate Action, formerly DG CLIMA, since 2010), currently under two different commissioners,²⁰ and the European Climate Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). Other DGs, such as those responsible for international cooperation and development, may also be involved in climate matters.

The role of the EP in EU climate policy is manifested mainly in the function of co-legislator. Within the EP is the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI). Currently, ENVI consists of 88 members and is therefore the most numerous committee, which emphasises the importance of climate issues for the parliament.²¹ The EP orders the preparation of reports on climate change and adopts resolutions on this matter,²² and its representation participates in, among others, UN Ocean Conferences. While the EP generally supports the fight against climate change, its decisions may be influenced by election results.²³ Traditionally, the Greens, Social Democrats, and centrist parties have greater climate ambitions, while right-wing and Eurosceptic parties have less.²⁴

¹⁸ M. Jänicke, R. K.W. Wurzel, "Leadership and lesson-drawing in the European Union's multilevel climate governance system," *Environmental Politics*, vol. 28, no 1, 2019, pp. 22-42.

¹⁹ European Commission, "Commissioners. Political leadership," ec.europa.eu.

²⁰ European Commission, "European Commission 2019-2024. Allocation of portfolios and supporting services," ec.europa.eu.

²¹ European Parliament, "Committees," www.europarl.europa.eu.

²² For example, the EP resolution before COP25 in Madrid in 2019 on the alarming climate and environmental situation, in which it called on the EC and the Member States to take specific actions to counteract climate change.

²³ F. Petri, K. Biedenkopf, "Weathering growing polarization? The European Parliament and EU foreign climate policy ambitions," *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 28, no. 7, 2021, pp. 1057-1075; R. A. Huber et al., "Is populism a challenge

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The Council aims to play a greater role in EU climate policy. For example, it has adopted an action plan and conclusions on climate diplomacy since 2015. However, individual countries, especially the

In the early 2000s, states also established the so-called Green Diplomacy Network, enabling the coordination of activities and strategic planning within the framework of climate diplomacy by national and EU external policy bodies (EC and, from 2010, EEAS).

so-called leading negotiators who are appointed to represent the Union through their expertise, seem to be more visible than the Council as such.²⁵ Traditionally, these have been Sweden, Germany, Denmark, and, until recently, the UK.²⁶ In the early 2000s, states also established the so-called Green Diplomacy Network, enabling the coordination of activities and strategic planning within the framework of climate diplomacy by national and EU external policy bodies (EC and, from 2010, EEAS).

Nevertheless, with successive EU enlargements, the role of states slightly weakened, as many new members showed less commitment and experience in the field of climate policy. NGOs and civil society have taken their place in driving change. They guarantee political accountability of EU institutions and states for the undertaken commitments.

The European Environment Agency also plays a less visible yet important role in shaping European climate policy and diplomacy, providing access to reliable information, data, and analyses. It is developed in partnership with EIONET (European Environment Information and Observation Network) associating 32 countries (EU27, EEA, Switzerland, and Türkiye) and six states cooperating with the Western Balkans. The European Investment Bank, currently transformed into a European climate bank, plays an important role in financing the implementation of the EU's climate and environmental priorities.

Image Fragmentation

The ability to conduct EU climate diplomacy is also influenced by the multiplicity of representatives associated with the Union's leaderless leadership. In practice, EU representation is extremely diverse, which is also due to the multiplicity of formats in which the EU is directly or indirectly involved and how they operate (e.g., UN, G7, WTO, OECD, and even ICAO). The Union may be represented by the president of the European Council, the president of the EC, the High Representative, the so-called climate troika (the current and next presidencies and the Environment/Climate commissioner), or the lead negotiators. Nevertheless, these rules are fluid and adapted to the circumstances on an ongoing basis (e.g., the EP delegation also participates in COP summits).

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A special climate advisor with the rank of EU ambassador, Marc Vanheukelen, functions within the EEAS. His task is to initiate and coordinate the service's activities in this field. However, EU delegations in third countries and at

to European energy and climate policy? Empirical evidence across varieties of populism," *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 28, no. 7, 2021, pp. 998-1017.

²⁴ F. Petri, K. Biedenkopf, "Weathering growing polarization? The European Parliament and EU foreign climate policy ambitions," *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 28, no. 7, 2021, pp. 1057-1075.

²⁵ S. Oberthür, C. Dupont, "The European Union's international climate leadership: towards a grand climate strategy?," *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 28, no. 7, 2021, pp. 1095-1114.

²⁶ M. Jänicke, R. K.W. Wurzel, "Leadership and lesson-drawing in the European Union's multilevel climate governance system," *Environmental Politics*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2019, pp. 22-42.

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international organisations are a much more visible element of EU climate diplomacy. Their tasks include sharing the EU's experience and expertise, motivating third countries to act on the climate, and organising local events (e.g., the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC, in Latin America). Nevertheless, their initiatives do not always translate into standardising the EU's climate diplomacy. The EC can only issue instructions to them within the scope of its competences, and the offices themselves are made up of officials from the Commission, the EEAS, and the Member States, so in practice each has a slightly different operation style and priorities. Moreover, assigning just one climate official is rare; usually several people with different portfolios deal with this subject simultaneously (e.g., political, economic cooperation, etc.), and one of them acts as a contact and coordinator in climate matters.²⁷

Political Order and Disorder

The EU as such is perceived as the normative power²⁸ and it seeks to establish its authority also in the field of climate protection. One of the stated pillars of European climate policy is to “Strengthen the EU's Green Deal Diplomacy in cooperation with Member States”.²⁹ According to the aims of the EGD, this diplomacy is to focus on persuading and supporting others to promote more sustainable development.³⁰ The basis for these external actions is to be a “credible example” and demonstrate “the EU's own increased ambition”.³¹ However, the constantly growing EU climate ambitions in the international arena do not always go hand in hand with the realities of a Europe of different speeds, as well as the vulnerability of European energy systems to external influences, and inevitably must sometimes be associated with actions protecting other EU interests at the expense of the climate.

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to promote more sustainable development.³⁰ The basis for these external actions is to be a “credible example” and demonstrate “the EU's own increased ambition”.³¹ However, the constantly growing EU climate ambitions in the international arena do not always go hand in hand with the realities of a Europe of different speeds, as well as the vulnerability of European energy systems to external

A Good Example of Growing Ambition

The growth of the EU's climate ambitions is closely related to global negotiations. The Union is a party, in parallel with its Member States, to the UNFCCC³² of 1992, the Kyoto Protocol of 1997,³³ and the Paris Agreement of 2015. Already in Kyoto the EU played an important role in coordinating the position of the Member States. As part of the Protocol, the so-called “EU bubble”, or collective responsibility for emissions, was created. Thanks to this, the EU managed to agree before the summit a common, ambitious target of reducing emissions by 15% by 2010 (compared to 1990). Ultimately, as a bloc in the

As a bloc in the negotiations with other economies, the EU had to make considerable concessions, including lowering the EU reduction target to 8% and with a different calculation method.

²⁷ F. Petri, K. Biedenkopf, “Weathering growing polarization? The European Parliament and EU foreign climate policy ambitions,” *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 28, no. 7, 2021, pp. 1057-1075.

²⁸ According to Ian Manners, who introduced this term, the EU influences international politics primarily through the ability to define what is a “norm” in international relations, i.e., by using soft tools such as values, rules, and patterns of conduct; for more, see, e.g.: I. Manners, “The Concept of Normative Power,” *DIIS Brief*, May 2009.

²⁹ European Commission, “Annex to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘The European Green Deal’”.

³⁰ European Commission, “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘The European Green Deal’”.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² United Nations, “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,” New York, 9 May 1992.

³³ European Commission, “Kyoto Protocol: signing and follow-up,” 30 April 1998, cordis.europa.eu.

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negotiations with other economies, the EU had to make considerable concessions, including lowering the EU reduction target to 8% and with a different calculation method. In the following years, its constructive approach in the global fight against climate change contributed to, among others, the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by China, India, and Russia. In 2007, after another increase in climate ambitions within the EU³⁴ (in preparation for the Copenhagen climate summit), the Council in the conclusions of the meeting stressed “the leading role of the EU in international climate protection”³⁵. Shortly thereafter, in 2009, European leadership collapsed, as COP15 in Copenhagen turned out to be a failure. The EU showed weakness towards the U.S. and China, and demonstrated its internal inconsistency (e.g., a lack of coordination between the EU delegation and the Danish government hosting the event). The ambitious image and negotiation goals of the EU were not achieved. From then on, the Union began to put an even greater emphasis on active multilateralism and on keeping a negotiating margin, i.e., presenting even more ambitious goals (e.g., emissions reduction) than it actually expected to achieve at the global level. This approach proved successful in subsequent key negotiations, such as during COP21 when the Paris Agreement was adopted to keep the global average temperature increase well below 2 degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial era. At the Glasgow summit in 2021, the EU delegation presented another internally agreed and even more stringent target to reduce emissions by 55% by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by 2050. It is possible to conclude that the European Green Deal and resulting contribution of the EU to the implementation of the Paris Agreement (Nationally Determined Contribution, or NDC) set a global standard and inspired other world economies to adopt specific dates for achieving climate neutrality. During COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, the EU declared the possibility of increasing the reduction target to 57% by 2030. It also played a key role in the adoption of conclusions announcing the creation of a compensation mechanism for loss and damage for countries most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

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Seeking Agreement across Divisions

The position of the EU presented during global climate negotiations is based on agreements drawn up each time that take into account the often divergent interests of EU actors.

The position of the EU presented during global climate negotiations is based on agreements drawn up each time that take into account the often divergent interests of EU actors. Each European Union proposal, due to the decision-making procedures, is subject to in-depth evaluation not only by the national governments but also by political parties, lobbyists, business, non-governmental organisations, and activists. While some of them try to demonstrate the expected difficulties in implementing the ideas, others accuse them of not having sufficient climate ambitions. While consensus is usually achieved, the difficulties in reaching an agreement within the EU reflect the problems in global climate negotiations and affect the EU’s credibility on the international stage. Although the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050 based on scientific evidence, including that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), has

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³⁴ The new target was to reduce emissions by at least 20% by 2020, or by 30% if other developed economies make a similar commitment, was created under the so-called “Package 20-20-20”.

³⁵ Council, “Presidency Conclusions,” Brussels, 2007, www.consilium.europa.eu.

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been included in EU legislation, the practical implementation of the aspirations to be the first climate-neutral continent and the EGD postulate of “setting a credible example”³⁶ are hampered by the “diversity” of EU members, as captured in the EU’s motto³⁷. It is reflected in the differences in the energy mixes of the Member States, their so-called different starting points, and related political interests.

The problem of differences in the EU’s production structure is illustrated, for example, by the discussion on the principles of the EU “taxonomy” (establishing the framework for the financing of environmentally sustainable investments) proposed by the EC³⁸

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in which the supporters of nuclear energy (including France and the Visegrad states) and its opponents (including Austria and Luxembourg), as well as countries basing their energy transformation on the use of gas (e.g., Germany and Poland) and countries that warn against excessive use and long-term support of gas (including Denmark and Spain) clashed. Pursuant

to Article 194 TFEU, Member States are reluctant to the EU’s interference in their sovereign decisions about the structure of their energy mixes (for example, by imposing preferential conditions on selected “green” technologies). At the same time, willing to gain economic (e.g., profits from technological expansion), political (e.g., election victory), or ideological (e.g., elimination of a technology considered undesirable) benefits, they do not hesitate to lobby at the EU level for solutions that actually interfere with the energy policy of the other Member States.

Geographical location, access to natural resources, historical energy conditions, and other factors differentiate the EU countries and make universal solutions unacceptable for them. The funds and mechanisms compensating for these inequalities are often more discussed at the EU level than the climate goals themselves. For example, meeting the “Fit for 55” targets will have an uneven impact on the Member States and their economic sectors, regions, and communities. For example, the decarbonisation of Poland, where coal contributes to the production of about 70% of its electricity and RES just 17%, will be much more expensive and complex than the decarbonisation of Denmark, where coal contributes to 11% of its electricity and RES as much as 80%.

From February 2022, the issue of energy crisis-management in the EU in the face of political challenges has also gained importance.

From February 2022, the issue of energy crisis-management in the EU in the face of political challenges has also gained importance. Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which shook energy markets around the world and destabilised the

supply of raw materials to the EU, energy security took precedence for a while over climate considerations, especially at the beginning of the Russian military operations. This was exacerbated by sanctions, developed after long negotiations, limiting the import of Russian energy resources to the EU, as well as the yet unattained post-pandemic reconstruction of the European economy and social problems (including the growing problem of energy poverty). As a result, the Member States began to implement individual remedial measures: for example, the German strategy to base the energy transition on Russian gas gave way to increased use of coal and the debate on a return to nuclear energy, as well as accelerated the construction of LNG terminals. The EC played an important role as an architect and coordinator of the Union’s crisis response. To remedy the chaos and maintain political

The EC played an important role as an architect and coordinator of the Union’s crisis response.

³⁶ European Commission, “Communication from the Commission ...,” *op. cit.*

³⁷ “United in Diversity”.

³⁸ European Commission, *Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/1214 of 9 March 2022 amending Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2139 as regards economic activities in certain energy sectors and Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2178 as regards specific public disclosures for those economic activities*, eur-lex.europa.eu.

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coherence with the objectives of the EGD, it proposed, among others, the REPowerEU plan and the package “Save Gas for a Safe Winter”. In addition to presenting the strategies of diversifying away from Russian raw materials and replacing them with alternative resources (especially renewable energy, but allowing the possibility of using fossil fuels), as well as calls for energy solidarity, the EC strongly emphasised that the climate goals for 2030 and 2050 are valid and remain unchanged. Undoubtedly, in these special circumstances caused by the war and aggravated by the upcoming winter, difficulties in the implementation of climate demands can be expected. However, the EC hopes that in the longer term, the emissions balance will prove favourable for the climate.

On the Right Track

The implementation of progressive EU climate policy was dictated by the desire to give new meaning to the deepening of European integration, the acceptance of the historical and moral responsibility

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of the Global North for the climate crisis, as well as the pursuit of political and economic benefits. While the EU still has a long way to go to achieve climate neutrality, as its share of global GHG emissions decreases, the external dimension of its actions grows in importance.

EU climate diplomacy has undergone significant changes over the years, justifying the Union’s growing authority in this area. First of all, the EU has systematised the goals and methods of implementing its climate policy, which may improve the effectiveness of its climate diplomacy. The initial relatively chaotic manifestations of the externalisation of internal sectoral environmental, energy, and climate policies have over time been redefined into a broader political and economic strategy—the EGD. EU climate diplomacy also already has an appropriate legal basis to act, but differences in the energy policies of the Member States, where commitment is essential for the EU to lead by example, undermine the impact of the Union’s external climate action.

EU climate diplomacy also already has an appropriate legal basis to act, but differences in the energy policies of the Member States, where commitment is essential for the EU to lead by example, undermine the impact of the Union’s external climate action.

A significant problem for EU climate diplomacy is the lack of one strong and clearly visible decision-making centre on climate matters, which would coordinate the initiatives taken by its institutions, bodies, and Member States. A step to strengthen EU climate diplomacy could be the appointment by the Council of an EU Special Representative for Climate, with the task of further coordinating the EU’s internal and external climate action and ensuring unified representation of the EU.

At the same time, despite the problems inside the EU, the size of its market, the attractiveness of the European socio-economic model, and the active promotion of increasing global climate and environmental ambitions meant that European standards gradually began to globalise. In preparation for the next negotiations, the EU began to put much greater emphasis on a two-pronged action: achieving an internal consensus on climate ambitions to legitimise its actions and image building, and leaving a negotiating margin, i.e., presenting even more ambitious goals (e.g., emission reduction levels) than in fact it expects to get on a global level. Inspiring change by setting an example has become the EU’s flagship of global negotiations, which was also confirmed at last year’s climate summit in Glasgow and which became an element of the EU negotiation strategy for COP27 in Egypt. Thanks to this approach and the EU’s concessions to the needs of developing countries (which was conditioned by finding allies among developed countries), the conference in

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Sharm el-Sheikh ended with a breakthrough achievement—the creation of a mechanism for financing loss and damage.

In its external climate action, the EU must also use other tools of influence, including providing development aid and conditionality of cooperation.

The mere normative *soft power* of the EU and the promotion of the EGD model will not, however, be enough to convince other countries to adopt ambitious climate goals and implement often costly green economic development strategies. Therefore, in its external climate action, the EU must also use other tools of influence, including providing development aid and conditionality of cooperation.