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JUST TRANSITION MONITOR

Mapping the state
of Just Transition
in the European
Union



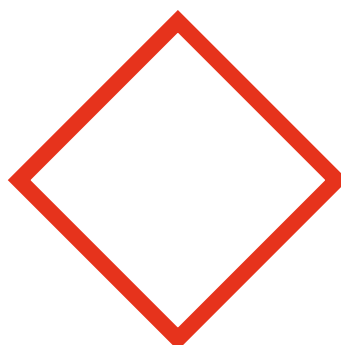
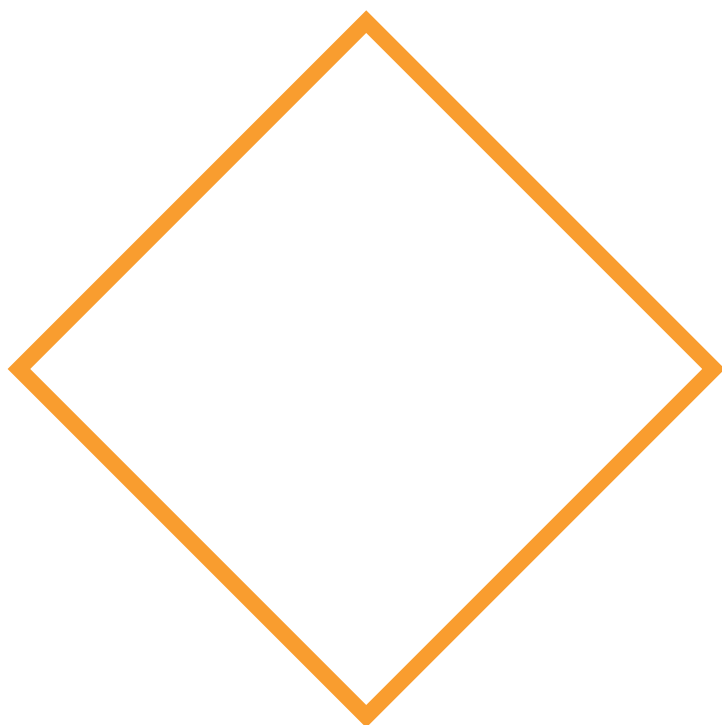
THERE'S
NO
PLANET B

A photograph of a person's hands holding a rectangular piece of brown cardboard against a clear blue sky. The cardboard has a hand-drawn illustration of the Earth in the center, with green continents and blue oceans. The words "THERE'S NO PLANET B" are written in black and blue marker around the globe. The person holding the sign is wearing a light blue denim shirt. The background is a bright blue sky with some faint clouds. The image is overlaid with several geometric shapes: a large green triangle in the top left, a large blue triangle in the bottom right, and several smaller orange and red triangles scattered across the bottom left and bottom center.



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INTRODUCTION

In June 2021, SOLIDAR adopted a 5-year organisational strategy that set a new strategic objective for the network: to influence “*the recovery processes at the EU as well as the national level for a socially just and sustainable Europe through a **just transition**, mirrored also in the EU’s external relations.*”¹ More than ever before in the history of SOLIDAR, its members recognised the importance of ensuring a transition towards a sustainable future and guaranteeing that the economic and societal changes that are necessary to achieve it are planned and enforced in a way that is **just and fair for all** people everywhere. As a result, they expressed the need for SOLIDAR to allocate time and energy to working on this key area.

It is in the framework of SOLIDAR’s new strategy that we have developed this study – our first ever Just Transition Monitor. The main objective of this publication is to **map and assess** the strategies, policies, measures and practices that a handful of national governments have put (or are putting)

in place to advance the ecological transition in a socially just way in their country. By doing so, it aims to provide a snapshot of **the state of Just Transition** in the European Union (EU). What are the approaches to Just Transition of certain EU countries? Do they have national Just Transition strategies? Did Just Transition only reach their national agenda recently? In particular, this report focuses on the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) that EU member states have (or should have) submitted to the EU and that describe the reforms and public investment projects they plan to implement with the support of the EU’s Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). Is Just Transition present in the countries’ NRRPs?

In light of SOLIDAR’s conviction that a Just Transition can only be realised if all sectors of society are involved and have a voice in the policy making and implementation of Just Transition interventions, this report will highlight instances of involvement of **civil society actors** in Just Transition policy formulation and implementation processes, and will include policy recommendations to national governments and EU institutions. While contributions by civil society actors were not possible in a timely way for all parts of this study, it is undoubted that **social movements and trade unions** participate strongly in ensuring a Just Transition and should therefore play a primary role in the development, implementation and monitoring of policies and measures for the ecological transition. For further information on this, see also our study ‘Promoting a Just Transition in Europe and Worldwide’² and the recently launched ‘Social Rights Monitor 2021’³ developed by SOLIDAR and FEPS – Foundation for European Progressive Studies.



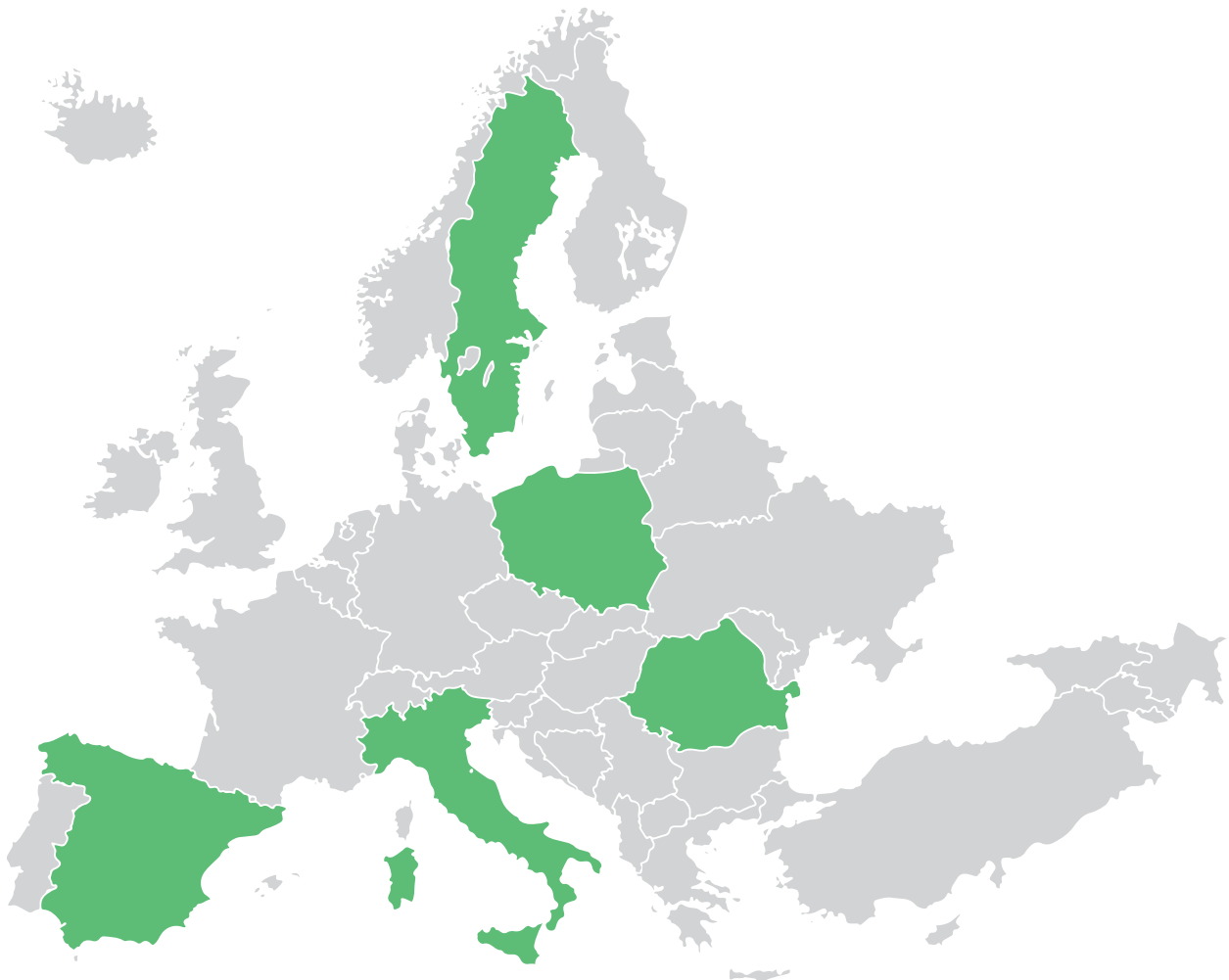
¹ SOLIDAR, 2021. *Social Justice Through a Just Transition. Organisational strategy for SOLIDAR 2021 – 2025. A summary.* https://www.solidar.org/system/downloads/attachments/000/001/362/original/organisational_strategy_FINAL.pdf?1637229641

² SOLIDAR, 2021. *Promoting a Just Transition in Europe and Worldwide: How Civil Society and Trade Unions are Driving the Change.* <https://www.solidar.org/en/publications/promoting-a-just-transition-in-europe-and-worldwide-how-civil-society-and-trade-unions-are-driving-the-change>

³ SOLIDAR, 2021. *Social Rights Monitor* https://www.solidar.org/system/downloads/attachments/000/001/408/original/Social_Rights_Monitor_2021.pdf?1638292164

This publication serves mainly as a tool to **build the knowledge and capacity** of members and partners of SOLIDAR to engage with policies and measures for a Just Transition. Nevertheless, the content of this report could also be of interest for decision-makers who wish to better understand how Just Transition is advancing across Europe. Lastly, this is a useful tool to identify best practices, **possible issues and gaps** in the policies and plans that EU member states are developing in the framework of EU processes such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the European Green Deal, the Just Transition Fund and more. We believe that, by analysing and assessing how Just Transition is being conceived, addressed and implemented in member states of the EU, **we can better define how EU policies and funding should support and promote a Just Transition across the European continent.**

This study focuses on five EU countries: **Italy, Spain, Sweden, Poland and Romania.** By analysing strategies and policies in Southern, Northern and Eastern European countries, we aimed to ensure that we do not look at one geographical area only, and rather get an overview of the whole continent. While it is not possible to draw definite conclusions for each region of Europe, this geographical distribution allows us to provide a general idea of the differences between Just Transition strategies and policies in different regions of the continent. In terms of methodology, the content of this study was developed using mainly public documentation by national governments, as well as available research and studies on the topic. Interviews and exchanges with civil society representatives were the source of relevant information for the analyses carried out in this report, and were fundamental to be able to present the perspectives of CSOs operating in those countries.



WHAT DOES A 'JUST TRANSITION' MEAN?

As the fight against climate change and environmental degradation becomes every day more urgent, **Progressive national and European leaders** have increasingly acknowledged that a transition towards climate neutral and more environmentally sustainable societies can only take place while ensuring social justice and fairness for all. **Iratxe García Pérez**, President of the Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, recently said:

“We Socialists and Democrats want to make sure that the world remains a livable and humane place for all as we make this historic transition. If we don’t put the social policies in place to accompany this transformation, we will end up in the self-fulfilling

neoliberal prophecy of the survival of the fittest: a sort of eco-Darwinism where only the rich will be able to pay for ecological houses, for clean transport and clean energy or for healthy food. Meanwhile the vast majority of citizens will suffer the consequences. It doesn’t have to be that way. This would only lead to disaster and division, to incomplete, inefficient and unfair green measures and, ultimately, to social unrest.”⁴

While the concept of Just Transition was first introduced by the international **trade union movement** in the 1990s and revolved mainly around the need for **support for workers who lost their jobs** due to climate and environmental protection policies, its understanding and reach has evolved over the decades as the climate and environmental crises worsened, and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and other civil society actors successfully campaigned for commitments to a ‘Just Transition’ to be included not only in the ILO standards to guide government and employer action,⁵ but also in the UN Sustainable Development Goals⁶ and the Paris 2015 Climate Agreement.⁷⁸

Today, the ILO understanding of Just Transition as “the need to secure the livelihoods of those who might be negatively affected by the green transition and also stress the need for societies to be inclusive, provide opportunities for decent work for all, reduce inequalities and effectively eliminate poverty”⁹ is generally accepted.



4 Iratxe García Pérez, 2021, ‘The Great Shift’ toward protecting people and the planet.

<https://www.politico.eu/sponsored-content/the-great-shift-toward-protecting-people-and-the-planet/>

5 ILO, 2015. Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.

https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/publications/WCMS_432859/lang-en/index.htm

6 The Just Transition concept links especially to Decent work and economic growth (Goal 8), Clean energy for all (Goal 7), Climate protection (Goal 13) and Climate action (Goal 12), Reduced inequalities (Goal 10), Affordable and clean energy (Goal 7) and Poverty eradication (Goal 1)

7 UN, 2015. Paris Agreement. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

8 Just Transition Center, 2017. Just Transition, A Report for the OECD.

<https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf>

9 ILO, 2018. Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies And Societies for All.

<https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/research/just-transition-towards-environmentally-sustainable-economies-and-societies-all>

In line with this conceptualisation, and in the words of our Secretary General, **Mikael Leyi**, for SOLIDAR and its members

*“acting for a **Just Transition means intertwining and advancing both the social and the climate and environmental agendas.** We define a ‘socially just transition’ as the guarantee that the transformation processes and drastic structural adjustments that are needed to meet the climate and environmental emergency are developed and implemented taking the rights and needs of affected communities into consideration.*

*To be just, **the green transition must have a strong social dimension,** and social and environmental goals must be recognised as equal and mutually reinforcing. Measures for a just*

transition must be seen as integral to the success of climate policy and implemented through a broad range of initiatives by multiple actors, across different sectors and mainstreamed into all policy areas.”¹⁰

Based on this ‘definition’, the transition to climate neutrality and environmental sustainability becomes an opportunity to address and resolve the **structural inequalities and injustices** that pervade our societies and that contribute to causing and worsening the climate and environmental emergency, such as inequalities based on wealth, gender and ethnicity. As a result, SOLIDAR sees the concept of ‘Just Transition’ as referring to a **multitude of policy areas**: the economy, the world of work, food and agriculture, transport, education, social security, housing, energy, culture and more.



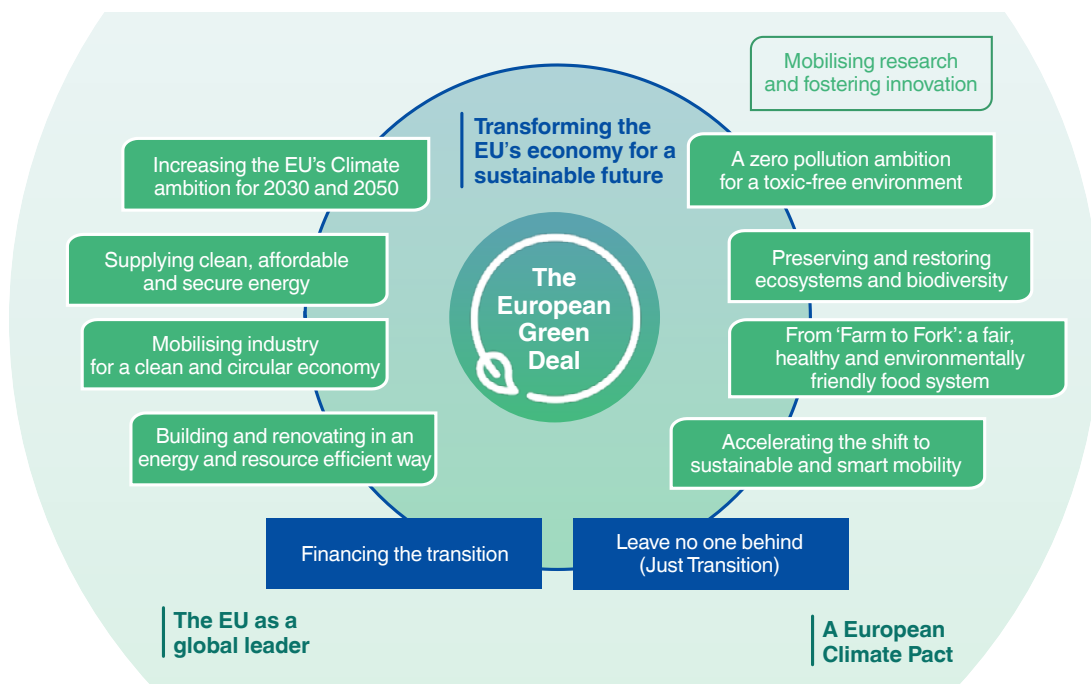
¹⁰ SOLIDAR; 2021. Promoting a Just Transition in Europe and Worldwide: How Civil Society and Trade Unions are Driving the Change. <https://www.solidar.org/en/publications/promoting-a-just-transition-in-europe-and-worldwide-how-civil-society-and-trade-unions-are-driving-the-change>

THE EU AND JUST TRANSITION

Over the last several years, the EU and its member states have become some of the most forward looking countries when it comes to drafting and implementing policies in favour of a Just Transition. Based on an assessment by the ITUC, states in the EU are amongst the few with the most ‘credible’ Just Transition plans between those (79 out of 136) who have submitted enhanced National Determined Contributions (NDCs), as required under the Paris Agreement.¹¹

To date, one of the most significant steps taken by the EU to ensure a Just Transition has been the introduction, in 2019, of the **European Green Deal** (EGD),¹² a strategy aiming to set Europe on the path to become a climate-neutral continent by 2050. Guided by the principles of the **European Pillar of Social Rights** – the European social agenda – the EGD recognises that the ecological transition “can only succeed if it is conducted in a

fair and inclusive way” and that “careful attention will have to be paid when there are potential trade-offs between economic, environmental and social objectives.” As part of the EGD, the European Commission thus introduced the **Just Transition Mechanism** (JTM), an instrument aiming to ensure that “no one is left behind” in the green revolution by focusing on the regions and sectors that depend on fossil fuels or carbon-intensive processes and that are, therefore, most affected by the transition. A **Just Transition Fund** (JTF) of €17.5 billion will provide grants to these regions, primarily to support workers in gaining skills and competences for the job market of the future, SMEs, as well as the creation of new economic opportunities and jobs, and investments in clean energy transitions. To access the funding available, EU member states are required to produce **Territorial Just Transition Plans**, which provide an outline of their transition process until 2030, including development,



11 ITUC, 2021. Governments' failure to live up to Paris Agreement promises puts planet stability at risk. https://www.ituc-csi.org/governments-fail-paris-agreement?msdyntrid=35YVFYkNr2bY-ZKNXwAnqng6MLs8sBIGi_IL9&lang=en
 12 EC, 2019. Communication on The European Green Deal. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/communication-european-green-deal_en

reskilling and environmental rehabilitation needs.¹³ In addition, the Commission has created a Just Transition Platform, a single access point for authorities and beneficiaries to find support and knowledge related to Just Transition.¹⁴

In early 2020, furthermore, the European Commission announced a process of **review of the EU economic governance framework** – the set of rules and coordination mechanisms designed to ensure economic stability in the EU and in the Eurozone, such as the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) and the European Semester. Overly complex and unfit for the challenges of our time, the current economic governance framework presents clear tensions between meeting important social and environmental goals that require public spending and investment and meeting strict debt rules. Suspended after the outbreak of Covid-19, the review process was re-launched in October 2021¹⁵ and is particularly **relevant as it opens the door to reforms of the EU fiscal rules and wider economic governance**. For this reason, it represents a key opportunity to avoid austerity again, move away from GDP growth, put in place an economic governance framework that serves societal goals, and ensure that public spending in Europe better incentivises a Just Transition of our economies and societies.

In the framework of the EGD, in July 2021, the European Commission also proposed the **Fit for 55**¹⁶ package ‘Delivering on the European Green Deal’ to deliver on the binding 2030 climate target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55%, compared to 1990 levels. As part of the package, the Commission put forward **legislative proposals and policy initiatives** that contain specific elements addressing social fairness aspects. For instance, the proposed recast of the Energy Taxation Directive would offer possibilities

for exempting vulnerable households from higher energy taxes. The proposal for an Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive would ensure that charging and refuelling infrastructure for zero emission vehicles reaches all parts of Europe and is accessible to all.

Moreover, as part of the Fit for 55 package, the European Commission proposed to establish a **Social Climate Fund**,¹⁷ which would help mitigate the costs for those most exposed to price increases due to the introduction of emissions trading to new sectors during the initial phase of the transition. The Fund would provide €72.2 billion in current prices for the 2025-2032 EU budget period, corresponding in principle to 25% of the additional revenues from emissions trading for buildings and road transport, and is supposed to enable Member States to **support vulnerable groups** (households, transport users, and micro-enterprises) through direct income support and green investments to increase energy efficiency and renovations of buildings, clean heating and cooling, renewable energy use, and access to zero – and low – emission mobility. The new Fund would also promote fairness and solidarity between and within Member States, while mitigating the risk of energy and mobility poverty.

Lastly, as part of the proposal for establishing a new Social Climate Fund, the Commission announced a proposal for a **Council Recommendation** that lays down **further guidance to Member States on how to best address the social and labour aspects of the green transition**. Scheduled for adoption in December 2021, the forthcoming Council Recommendation will focus on how to ensure that the transition towards climate neutrality is just and inclusive, in order to address its risks and maximise its potential to implement the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. This is seen as

13 EC, n.d. Just Transition Platform. Accompanying Member States and regions to achieve a just transition. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism/just-transition-platform_en

14 For further information on the Just Transition Fund and the Just Transition Mechanism, check our previous publication: “Promoting a Just Transition in Europe and Worldwide: How Civil Society and Trade Unions are Driving the Change”. <https://www.solidar.org/en/publications/promoting-a-just-transition-in-europe-and-worldwide-how-civil-society-and-trade-unions-are-driving-the-change>

15 EC, 2021 Commission relaunches the review of EU economic governance https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_5321

16 EC, n.d. Delivering the European Green Deal. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal_en

17 EC, n.d. Social Climate Fund. https://ec.europa.eu/clima/eu-action/european-green-deal/delivering-european-green-deal/social-climate-fund_it

a pre-condition for realising the expected positive employment outcomes and social co-benefits of the green transition, as well as for garnering public support for the transition and achieving the EU's ambitious climate and energy targets.

Policies and funds in favour of a Just Transition are also set to play an important role in the EU post-pandemic recovery plan, the **Next Generation EU**,¹⁸ which was approved in 2020. A temporary recovery instrument of more than €800 billion, its aim is to help repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the COVID-19 crisis, as well as to build resilience to face future challenges. On the one hand, the Just Transition Fund has been included in the Next Generation EU funding package, representing 10.9 billion of its total budget;¹⁹ on the other hand, an even more explicit emphasis on the green, digital and just transition can be found in the Recovery and Resilience facility, which constitutes the main financial instrument of Next Generation EU – for a total of €672.5 billion accessible through loans and grants. EU countries gain access to the funding of this facility upon submission of a **National Recovery and**

Resilience Plan (NRRP) proposal, which has to include a minimum of 37% expenditure for climate investments and reforms, and a minimum of 20% of expenditures to foster the digital transition, in order to be approved by the European Commission.²⁰

All in all, **SOLIDAR welcomes these recent developments, as they indicate a growing understanding of 'Just Transition' as a 'whole of society' approach impacting all aspects of our lives and societies, and show a timid yet present vision for the ecological transition to act not just towards the achievement of the climate and environmental objectives, but also as an instrument to advance social justice across Europe.**

These developments offer several possibilities for increased commitments and actions, which are necessary to meet the reconfirmed target of keeping global warming below 1,5°C, and they represent a starting point for a structural transformation process that must define the coming decade, or else we will not be able to meet the monumental challenges ahead.



Frans Timmermans, European Commission Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal

¹⁸ EC, n.d. Recovery plan for Europe. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en

¹⁹ EC, n.d. Recovery Plan for Europe. https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en

²⁰ EC, n.d. Recovery and Resilience Facility. https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

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ITALY

“The correlation between a healthy planet, healthy people and a just society is the true objective of the transition.”²¹

Roberto Cingolani, Minister
for Ecological Transition of Italy



²¹ Ministero della Transizione Ecologica, 2021. Ambiente, Cingolani: “L’obiettivo dell’eco transizione è avere il Paese sano e una giusta società”.
<https://www.mite.gov.it/comunicati/ambiente-cingolani-l-obiettivo-dell-ecotransizione-e-avere-il-paese-sano-e-una-giusta>

The Italian Climate and Green Transition Policy Landscape

Italy is the **fourth biggest producer of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the EU**, with the energy sector being the main responsible of the total emissions, accounting for 56% of these in 2017. The main sources of GHG in the country are the coal-fired power plants and iron/steel production, which are particularly concentrated in the areas of Taranto and of Sulcis Iglesiente, in the south east part of Sardinia.²²

As a signatory of the Paris Climate Agreement, Italy is committed to reducing its national GHG emissions with the objective of contributing to limit global warming to well below 2 and preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial level, while *“taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work.”*²³

On 15 October 2019, the first ever law decree entirely dedicated to environmental issues – the Climate Decree (111/2019)²⁴ – came into force in the country, establishing a permanent inter-ministerial group dealing with the climate emergency and introducing provisions aimed primarily at defining a national strategic policy to combat climate change and improve air quality. The Decree also ruled that said policy, which, at the time of writing, is yet to be approved, would be defined taking into account, among others, the objectives and methods indicated in the **Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC)**.

The PNIEC²⁵ is one of the two main instruments developed by Italy to plan and guide its decarbonisation efforts, and it falls within the framework of EU Regulation 2018/1999,²⁶ which established a system of Governance of the Energy Union requiring Member States to submit National Plans detailing their strategy and policies to achieve established 2030 targets on areas including energy efficiency, renewable sources and the reduction of CO₂ emissions, as well as energy security.

Following the publication of the Communication ‘A Clean Planet for all’²⁷ by the European Commission in November 2018, Italy launched a public consultation to define a second important strategy document, namely its Long Term Strategy on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions,²⁸ which details the country’s plans for decarbonisation with a 2050 horizon and that was finally adopted and transmitted to the EU in early 2021.

Both the PNIEC and the Long Term Decarbonisation Strategy are to be updated following the EU’s approval and launch of the ‘Fit for 55’ legislative package, which was proposed by the European Commission in July 2021,²⁹ as well as following Italy’s submission of its National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)³⁰ – necessary to access the Next Generation EU recovery instrument – in May of the same year.

22 EC, 2020. Commission Staff Working Document Country Report Italy 2020, Annex D. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0511>

23 UN, 2015. Paris Agreement. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

24 Decreto Legge 14 ottobre 2019, n. 111. <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/14/19G00125/sg>

25 MiSE, 2020. Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan. <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/14/19G00125/sg>

26 EUR-Lex, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ:L:2018:328:TOC&uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.328.01.0001.01.ENG

27 EC, 2018. Communication from the Commission. A Clean Planet for all. A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773>

28 MiTE, 2021. Strategia Italiana di Lungo Termine sulla Riduzione delle Emissioni dei Gas a Effetto Serra. https://www.mite.gov.it/sites/default/files/lts_gennaio_2021.pdf

29 EC, 2021. European Green Deal: Commission proposes transformation of EU economy and society to meet climate ambitions. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_3541

30 MEF, 2021. National Recovery and Resilience Plan. <https://www.mef.gov.it/en/focus/The-National-Recovery-and-Resilience-Plan-NRRP/>

Finally, also worthy of notice is that, in 2021, the Italian government renamed, through Law Decree 22/2021,³¹ the Ministry of the Environment and Protection of Land and Sea as the **Ministry of the Ecological Transition**, and it created an inter-ministerial committee for the Ecological Transition (CITE) with the objective to approve the Plan for the Ecological Transition. The proposal for the Plan, whose guiding principle is the achievement of climate neutrality by 2050 and the 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, was presented to and approved by the CITE at the end of July 2021, and in October of the same year it was presented to the joint environment commissions of the Italian Senate and House of Deputies.³² At the time of writing, it is awaiting final approval.

What role for the Just Transition in the existing framework?

On the occasion of the preparatory conference for the National Sustainable Development Strategy held in March 2021, the Italian Minister for the Ecological Transition highlighted that **“the correlation between a healthy planet, healthy people and a just society is the true objective of the transition.”** He also added, however, that *“no one has a recipe to achieve this”* and that Italy is still *“trying to understand the direction to take.”*³³ Indeed, when it comes to the concept and provisions for a Just Transition, the salience of Just Transition in Italian national policy and debate has only recently started to increase.

In fact, no mention of the term can be found in the Climate Decree, and **the first major policy document in which Just Transition is touched upon is the 2019 PNIEC,**³⁴ where the focus is mainly put on **the consequences of the phase-out of coal foreseen by the Plan and its possible impacts on occupation and skills.** In particular, it is estimated that some jobs, such

as the 3,800+ direct and indirect working units (full-time equivalent) employed as of 2017 for electricity generation from coal-fired power plants, may be at risk. In this regard, and *“with a view to ensuring a fair energy transition”* the PNIEC **promises to accompany the coal phase-out with employee-protection measures ensuring their employment development and retraining, as well as measures to combat poverty and inequality and to safeguard their local areas.** Several actions are foreseen on different fronts, including the regulatory (through laws to protect workers affected by the coal phase-out), the institutional (by strengthening dialogue between national and local institutions and between institutions and workers’ representatives) and the business-related (through the involvement of employers and workers in retraining projects including those supported by public policies). Moreover, the PNIEC also identifies – based on a study carried out with the help of a specially formed expert group including the Ministry of Economic Development (MiSE), companies and trade associations in the sector, as well as trade unions – a series of work skills and ‘jobs of the future’ that will be in high demand during the energy and green transition, promising the establishment of a Fund for vocational retraining in areas in which coal-fired power plants are located.

As pointed out by the European Commission in its “Assessment of the final national energy and climate plan of Italy”, while the PNIEC provides *“a detailed description of the possible impact of the transition on employment”*, concrete measures proposed to deal with this impact *“do not emerge”*; moreover, the section dedicated to the social impact (e.g. distributional effects) of the phase-out of coal is considered *“rather limited”*. Overall, the Commission thus judged the Just Transition and Energy Poverty aspects of the plan to be only partially addressed by the PNIEC.³⁵

31 Decreto Legge 1 marzo 2021, n. 22. <https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legge:2021;22>

32 MiTE, 2021. Cingolani: “Sviluppare strategia integrata che porti alla decarbonizzazione”. <https://www.mite.gov.it/comunicati/cingolani-sviluppare-strategia-integrata-che-porti-alla-decarbonizzazione>

33 Ministero della Transizione Ecologica, 2021. Ambiente, Cingolani: “L’obiettivo dell’eco transizione è avere il Paese sano e una giusta società”. <https://www.mite.gov.it/comunicati/ambiente-cingolani-l-obiettivo-dell-ecotransizione-e-avere-il-paese-sano-e-una-giusta>

34 MiSE, 2020. Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan. <https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/10/14/19G00125/sg>

35 EC, 2020. Commission Staff Working Document – Assessment of the final national energy and climate plan of Italy. https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/staff_working_document_assessment_necp_italy.pdf

Just Transition in Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the JT Fund

A more prevalent role for the concept of **Just Transition**, although not necessarily of the term itself, starts to emerge only in the recently approved Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)³⁶ that, with a cumulative budget of €235,12 billion,³⁷ is aimed at setting Italy's recovery strategy and investment plan in the post-pandemic era, dedicating special attention to the digital and green transformations. The NRRP, that is divided in six main 'Missions', presents in fact three transversal priority areas of intervention highlighting the social aspect of the recovery and new transitions, namely Gender Equality, Youth and Territorial Rebalancing. Moreover, of the **6 Missions**, the **fifth one** – with a budget of €27,6 billion, equal to 12% of the total budget of the plan – is entirely dedicated to 'Inclusion and Cohesion'. This Mission in fact recognises that *"to accompany the modernisation of the economic system and the transition towards a sustainable and digital economy, policies to support employment, education and reskilling of the workers, as well as paying attention to the quality of the job posts created and guaranteeing an income during occupational transitions, are crucial."*

Italian National Resilience and Recovery Plan – 6 Missions

- 1 Digitalisation, Innovation, Competitiveness, Culture and Tourism
- 2 Green revolution and Ecological transition
- 3 Infrastructure for Sustainable Mobility
- 4 Education and Research
- 5 Inclusion and Cohesion
- 6 Health

In this regard, the **5th NRRP Mission** details a series of actions that will be pursued by the government in the realm of 'Labour policies', in order to **facilitate workers' participation in the job market**, including the creation of a national program to ensure the employability of workers – 'Programma Nazionale per la Garanzia Occupabilità dei Lavoratori (GOL)' – which will allow to establish personalised reskilling and requalification pathways for workers as well as better assist job seekers in their search. This will be complemented by the reinforcement of the 'dual system' and of the 'Universal Civil Service' initiative, aimed at encouraging the acquisition of new skills by the youth which match the needs of enterprises, hence helping young people to access the job market. In addition, some attention is also dedicated to the **intersection between employment and gender equality** in the fifth Mission, with the NRRP pledging to encourage female entrepreneurship by establishing a dedicated fund – 'Fondo Impresa Donna' – to finance women-led initiatives, alongside which mentoring schemes, technical-managerial support and work-life balance advice will also be offered. Also, the NRRP promises the establishment of a National system for the certification of gender equality in order to assist and incentivise enterprises to adopt suitable policies to reduce the gender gap in all 'critical' areas, including job growth opportunities, equal pay for equal jobs, policies on the management of gender differences and on maternity protection.

Finally, the NRRP's 5th Mission also includes provisions related to social infrastructures, families, community and the third sector – with the bulk of investments under this pillar being dedicated to urban regeneration and social housing, with the aim of reducing emargination and improving vulnerable people's social and environmental landscape – as well as special interventions for territorial cohesion.

In general, while the term 'Just Transition' continues to be almost entirely absent from the Italian policy

³⁶ MEF, 2021. National Recovery and Resilience Plan. <https://www.mef.gov.it/en/focus/The-National-Recovery-and-Resilience-Plan-NRRP/>

³⁷ This sum includes 191,5 billion from the Next Generation EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), € 13 billion from REACT EU and € 30.6 billion from the Complementary Fund established by Italian Decree-Law No. 59 of 6 May 2021.



ArcelorMittal (ex Ilva) - Long cover structure required for the environmental containment of the Mineral Park and the Tamburi district of Taranto, Puglia

language, it is clear that the ‘social dimension’ of the green and digital transformations are nonetheless tackled, at least to some degree, in the NRRP.

It must also be noted that the Just Transition agenda is set to gain a more important role in Italian policy and strategy as a consequence of Italy’s intention to access the resources of the **Just Transition Fund**, established under the EU Green Deal and also part of the Next Generation EU funding package. Italy has in fact been assigned 1.030 billion out of the total 17.5 billion of the JT Fund – to which a national co-financing sum of about 1.2 billion is to be added – ³⁸ which the country will be able to exploit following the approval of its Territorial Just Transition Plans by the EU. In line with the advice provided by the European Commission,³⁹ **Italy has indicated the Sulcis Iglesiente area and the Taranto area as recipients of its share of the Fund, in light of the two areas’ high dependence on mining and carbon-intensive industries**, and their consequent special need for support through integrated financial resources to mitigate the significant socio-economic impacts

induced by the transition path towards a climate neutral economy.⁴⁰

At the time of writing, the Minister for the South and Territorial Cohesion, also through its technical structures (Department for Territorial Cohesion and Agency for Territorial Cohesion) and with the support of the European Commission, is engaged in the preparation of the Territorial Plans for a Just Transition, and a public consultation was opened to gather proposals from citizens, enterprises and NGOs to be included in the plans ahead of their presentation to the EC.⁴¹ In August 2021, there were three options being discussed for the allocation of the funds, especially in regard to the Taranto area, namely (1) intervening on the productive process to reduce dependency on coal; (2) develop in the target area the production of clean energy, with a focus on hydrogen, which should also allow for the reabsorption of workers who lost their previous occupation as a consequence of the transition; and (3) develop compensatory interventions for the environmental and social requalification of the territory.⁴²

38 Chiellino, G. and Fotina, C., 2021. In *Autunno i Piani per Taranto e il Sulcis*. <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/in-autunno-piani-taranto-e-sulcis-AEfE9zT>

39 EC, 2020. *Commission Staff Working Document Country Report Italy 2020, Annex D*. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1584543810241&uri=CELEX%3A52020SC0511>

40 Chiellino G. and Fotina C., 2021. In *Autunno i Piani per Taranto e il Sulcis*. <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/in-autunno-piani-taranto-e-sulcis-AEfE9zT>

41 *Ministro per il Sud e la Coesione Territoriale. Just Transition Fund. Il Piano Italiano*. <http://www.ministropersud.gov.it/it/approfondimenti/just-transition-fund/il-piano-italiano/>

42 Chiellino G. and Fotina C., 2021. In *Autunno i Piani per Taranto e il Sulcis*. <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/in-autunno-piani-taranto-e-sulcis-AEfE9zT>

Just Transition in Italy – the view of national civil society and trade unions

While the Italian Just Transition Agenda has so far been rather limited and only recently started to gain ground, Italian civil society and trade union actors have long been calling for greater efforts to be made to pursue it.

In a joint document⁴³ produced by the Italian Confederation of Labour (CGIL) – a member of the SOLIDAR Network – together with the Italian Confederation of Workers' Trade Unions (CISL) and the Italian Labour Union (UIL), in May 2019, for instance, the trade unions denounced the scarce attention paid by the government to the theme of Just Transition in the context of the PNIEC, highlighting that this should instead be treated as a priority, and asking for a revision of the document in this direction.

In an **interview conducted by SOLIDAR** in the framework of this study, the **CGIL** added that the newly presented **Plan for Ecological Transition** is also **lacking** on many aspects, for instance not envisaging bargaining with trade unions for the definition of Just Transition measures, nor real paths for democratic participation.

When it comes to the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan**, the **CGIL** moreover **pointed out that no Just Transition measures have been included in the Plan** for the creation of new jobs, of universal social safety nets or of permanent training necessary to protect all workers throughout the national territory and in the various economic sectors that will be involved in processes of closure, resizing or reconversion as

a result of the green transition. In addition, there is also little or partial mention of the impact of pollution generated by industrial reconversion on individual territories and communities.⁴⁴



Based on this background, **CGIL, CISL and UIL jointly argued** that not only **more resources should be allocated for the realisation of the 6th PNRR Mission (Health) and the 5th (Inclusion and Cohesion)**,⁴⁵ but also that all interventions foreseen by the Plan, including the ones in support of enterprises, should come with a series of crucial conditionalities, such as:

- the realisation of employment increases, in particular for young people and women;
- the rebalancing of social and territorial inequalities starting from the South;
- the application of collective agreements signed by the most representative trade unions at the national level;
- the guarantees of transparency and legality and of contrasting undeclared work and the logic of the maximum discount in tenders; and
- making investments in health and safety issues.⁴⁶

Similar points about the PNRR were also echoed in the **eco-social forum** held in Milan from 28 to 30 September 2021 – at the same time as the pre-COP preparation works were being carried out – that was **organised by the Climate Open Platform Coalition**, promoted by the Fridays for Future movement and joined by the CGIL and various other NGOs and environmental associations. In its final “Declaration for the Future”,⁴⁷ the eco-forum in fact highlighted that

43 CGIL, CISL and UIL, 2019. Documento CGIL, CISL, UIL. Considerazioni e proposte sul PNIEC (Piano Nazionale Integrato per l'Energia e il Clima). https://www.filctemcgil.it/images/documenti_aree/ricerca_innovazione/Energia-PNIEC_documento_Unitario_Cgil_Cisl_Uil._06052019.pdf

44 CGIL, 2021. Prime Valutazioni sul Piano Nazionale di Ripresa e Resilienza. http://www.cgil.it/admin_nv47t8g34/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/notaCgilPnrr29gennaio2021final.pdf

45 CISL, 2021. Piano Nazionale Ripresa e Resilienza. Cgil Cisl e Uil incontrano Speranza. “Importanti le proposte e gli obiettivi illustrati dal Ministro. Chiediamo più risorse a sanità e sociale” <https://www.cisl.it/notizie/in-evidenza/piano-nazionale-ripresa-e-resilienza-cgil-cisl-e-uil-incontrano-speranza-importanti-le-proposte-e-gli-obiettivi-illustrati-dal-ministro-chiediamo-piu-risorse-a-sanita-e-sociale/>

46 CGIL, CISL and UIL, 2021. Nota sul Piano Nazionale Ripresa e Resilienza https://www.cisl.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/20210426-Nota_CGIL_CISL_UIL_su_PNRR.pdf

47 Climate Open Platform Coalition. Dichiarazione per il Futuro. http://climateopenplatform.org/dichiarazione_futuro/#services-section

“the resources of the post-pandemic recovery and resilience plans, including the PNRR, deployed globally are a unique opportunity to accelerate the just transition by eliminating the employment and social impacts (higher bill prices, fight energy poverty, right to mobility, etc.) and ensuring the well-being of people. However, their main aim must be concrete, effective and targeted investments, they must foresee social and environmental conditionalities, they must not be dispersed for the financing of false “green” solutions, for the greenwashing of companies or even as an alibi for corporate restructuring that guarantee profits to companies and dividends to shareholders by sacrificing labor rights and must be accompanied by adequate ordinary resources and a tax reform in an environmental and social sense, which is redistributive and progressive and aimed at equity and social justice.”

The Italian trade union groups have also called on the Italian government to respect the pledges made under the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration,⁴⁸ and guarantee a participative process, with a large involvement of all social partners, both in the phase of the definition of the priorities and projects linked to the Just Transition, and in their monitoring and evaluation phase. Furthermore, they also called for multilevel dialogue to take place with the aim of adopting a national Just Transition plan.⁴⁹

So far, as reported to SOLIDAR by the CGIL, the Italian Government seems **not to have activated any participatory process** with organized civil society on these issues, **nor bargaining with the social partners** to assess and counter the social and employment impacts of the ecological transition, or to determine the actions and interventions necessary to seize the positive development opportunities of new sustainable

supply chains and the creation of new quality and sustainable jobs. CGIL reported only having been sporadically involved on these issues, and only by some ministries and without an overall and systematic consultation plan, despite having filed repeated requests, jointly with CISL and UIL, in this sense.

Despite the existent difficulties, **CGIL highlighted that they were nonetheless successful in having an amendment introduced in the legislation on the Governance of the NRRP to ensure that more systematic consultation processes will take place in the future.** The new norm in fact states that **trade unions must be involved in the permanent table for economic, social and territorial partnership** with consultative functions on matters and issues related to the implementation of the NRRP; moreover, through a national memorandum of understanding between the Government and the most representative social partners, each administration in charge of interventions envisaged in the NRRP will have to carry out periodic sectoral and territorial talks on investment projects and on their economic and social effects on the production and industrial chains, as well as on their direct and indirect impact also in the individual territorial areas and on sectoral reforms.

SOLIDAR stands behind CGIL’s call and efforts to improve Italian civil society participation in the NRRP and in the formulation of policies and plans for a Just and fair Transition, and will continue to monitor and report on advancements and gaps in this regard through the support of its Italian members and partners.

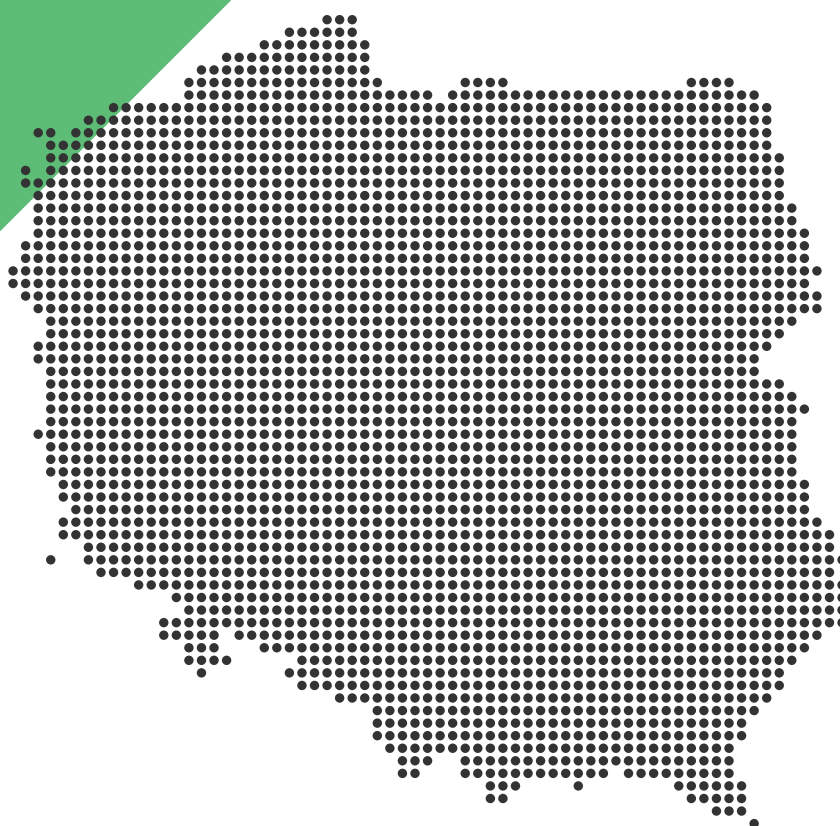
⁴⁸ 2019, Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration. <https://cop24.gov.pl/presidency/initiatives/just-transition-declaration/>

⁴⁹ CGIL, CISL and UIL, 2020. Una Giusta Transizione. Il Benessere della Persona, la Giustizia Sociale, la Salvaguardia del Pianeta per una Transizione Verde dell’Economia. <https://www.uil.it/documents/Piattaforma%20CGIL%20CISL%20UIL%20per%20la%20Giusta%20Transizione%20ultima.pdf>

POLAND

“In order for the [green] transformation to be effective, it also needs to be just and acceptable for all.”⁵⁰

Artur Soboń, Secretary of State at the Ministry of State Assets of Poland, and Government Plenipotentiary for the Transformation of Energy Companies and Coal Mining



⁵⁰ The World Bank, 2021. World Bank and the European Commission to Support Poland to Transition Out of Coal. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/01/27/world-bank-and-european-commission-to-support-poland-to-transition-out-of-coal>

The Polish Climate and Green Transition Policy Landscape

Owing to the intensity of its industrial development in recent decades, Poland has been and remains one of the **main European emitters of greenhouse gases** and particles into the atmosphere. It was only as a result of the socio-economic transformation initiated in 1989 that policy makers turned their eyes towards tackling these environmental issues. After actively participating in the negotiations on international climate change agreements, Poland adopted its first National Environmental Policy in 1990 as well as it ratified the Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol in 1994 and 2002 respectively, undertaking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the 2008-2012 period by 6% compared to the base year.⁵¹

Accession to the EU in 2004 had a major impact and further shaped Poland's strategic and policy approach to addressing environmental and climate change matters, as since then the country has stepped up its green commitments and has been engaged in contributing to the achievement of EU's climate and energy objectives, as well as it has participated in UN climate negotiations in coordination with other Members of the block – including adopting new joint emission targets for the 2013-2020 period following the Doha Amendment.⁵²

One of the most important policy documents that is currently guiding climate adaptation actions in Poland is the Polish National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change by 2020 with the perspective by 2030 (NAS 2020).⁵³ This was adopted in 2013 and constitutes “*the first step towards defining a long-term vision of adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change*” in the country.⁵⁴ In addition, in 2017 the government approved the medium-term development strategy – the Strategy for Responsible Development (SOR) for the period up to 2020 (including the perspective up to 2030)⁵⁵ – which falls within the framework of Poland's National Development Management System adopted in 2009.⁵⁶ The SOR, whose main objective is to create conditions for the growth of income of Polish inhabitants, while ensuring the growth of cohesion in the social, economic, environmental and territorial dimensions,⁵⁷ in turn, foresees the elaboration of nine strategies to achieve its objectives, the most recent of which is the Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (PEP2040),⁵⁸ which was approved by the Polish government in early 2021.

PEP2040 is set to answer to “*the most important challenges that Poland has to face to cover the energy demand in the coming decades*” and it is strongly connected to the National Environmental Policy 2030⁵⁹ – the most important strategic document in the area of the environment and water management, which operationalises the provisions of the SOR in these fields – and to the Strategy for Sustainable Transport Development 2030, with respect to reducing CO2 and pollutant

51 Karski, L., 2012. *Climate law in Poland: Towards an overall regulation*. DOI:10.4337/9781781002780.

52 Institute of Environmental Protection, National Research Institute, 2019. *Actions and challenges for climate protection in Poland – brief overview*. https://cop24.gov.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/files/2...Brief_overview.pdf

53 Ministry of Environment, Republic of Poland, 2013. *Polish National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change (NAS 2020) with the perspective by 2030*. https://klimada.mos.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ENG_SPA2020_final.pdf

54 *Ibidem*.

55 2017, *Strategy for Responsible Development for the period up to 2020 (including the perspective up to 2030)*. https://www.gov.pl/documents/33377/436740/SOR_2017_streszczenie_en.pdf

56 Slugocki, W., 2018. *Institutionalization of the development management system in Poland*. *Management*, Vol.22 (Issue 1), pp. 55-73. <https://doi.org/10.2478/manment-2018-0005>

57 2017, *Strategy for Responsible Development for the period up to 2020 (including the perspective up to 2030)*. https://www.gov.pl/documents/33377/436740/SOR_2017_streszczenie_en.pdf

58 *The adoption of PEP2040 repealed the Energy Policy of Poland until 2030 of 2009 and the Strategy for Energy Security and Environment – Perspective until 2020 of 2014*. Source: Ministry of Climate and the Environment, 2021. *Energy Policy of Poland until 2040*. <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/62a054de-0a3d-444d-a969-90a89502df94>

59 2019, *National Environmental Policy 2030*. <https://www.iea.org/policies/12220-2030-national-environmental-policy>

emissions and the so-called low-stack emissions.⁶⁰ In addition, PEP2040 is also directly linked to the Human Capital Development Strategy, the Social Capital Development Strategy and the “Efficient and Modern State” Strategy, which form the background for PEP2040.⁶¹

The Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 is consistent with the 2019 National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) of the country for the 2021-2030 period,⁶² and its provisions are set to be reinforced by the investments and policy actions foreseen by **Poland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)**.⁶³ This – which has been submitted by the country to the European Commission in order to access the Next Generation EU instrument, through which Poland may receive €35,970 billion between grants and loans – plans interventions and investment in **five priority areas**, including **resilience and competitiveness of the economy, green energy and the reduction of energy consumption, digital transformation, health care and mobility** – with the green pillar set to receive the greatest share (almost 40%) of investments. At the time of writing, the EU Commission was however still negotiating the approval of the Polish NRRP, over concerns regarding the rule of law in the country.⁶⁴

What role for the Just Transition in the existing framework?

Despite Poland having made great progress in decoupling energy growth from economic growth, increasing its GDP seven-fold since the 1990s while decreasing its energy-intensity by 56%, the country still remains **one of the most energy-intensive and coal-dependent countries in**

Europe with almost 90,000 people relying directly on the coal sector for their livelihood.⁶⁵

In this regard, Artur Soboń, Secretary of State at the Ministry of State Assets in Poland, and Government Plenipotentiary for the Transformation of Energy Companies and Coal Mining, stressed that *“In order for the [green] transformation to be effective, it also needs to be just and acceptable for all. Therefore, its impacts, especially social ones, need to be taken into consideration from the very beginning, and all possible instruments need to be deployed to mitigate them.”*⁶⁶

Already in 2018, the country committed to pursuing a Just Transition and to working together with international partners on the same, as exemplified in the Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration⁶⁷ presented in Katowice in the same year. The latter in fact encourages countries to consider social aspects of climate change action as key for the successful transformation of the energy sector. Poland’s commitments in Katowice have nonetheless more than once been criticised by activists as being ‘just posturing’, since at the time the country had no plan or timeline to close down coal mines.⁶⁸

One of the first and most important national strategy documents in which the topic of Just Transition started to be tackled is Poland’s **2019 National Energy and Climate Plan for the 2021-2030 period**. This in fact presents an integrated approach to the implementation of the five dimensions of the Energy Union – namely Decarbonisation, Energy Efficiency, Energy Security, Internal Energy Market, Research, Innovation and Competitiveness – and

60 Ministry of Climate and the Environment, 2021. Energy Policy of Poland until 2040. <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/62a054de-0a3d-444d-a969-90a89502df94>

61 Ibidem.

62 2019, Poland’s National Energy and Climate Plan for 2021-2030. <https://climate-laws.org/geographies/poland/policies/poland-s-national-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2021-2030>

63 Ministerstwo Funduszy i Polityki Regionalnej, 2021. Krajowy Plan Odbudowy i Zwiększania Odporności. <https://www.gov.pl/web/planodbudowy/krajowy-plan-odbudowy--programujemy-fundusze-unijne-dla-polski>

64 EU Observer, 2021. Rule-of-law issues still hold up Hungary-Poland recovery plans. 3 September. <https://euobserver.com/democracy/152803>

65 The World Bank, 2021. World Bank and the European Commission to Support Poland to Transition Out of Coal. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/01/27/world-bank-and-european-commission-to-support-poland-to-transition-out-of-coal>

66 Ibidem

67 COP24, 2018. Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration. <https://cop24.gov.pl/presidency/initiatives/just-transition-declaration/>

68 Szalai, 2018. Activist: Poland’s ‘just transition’ declaration is just posturing. Euractiv. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/interview/activist-polands-just-transition-initiative-is-just-posturing/>

mentions measures to ensure a ‘**Just Energy Transition**’ under the Decarbonisation component. In particular, the Plan highlights the **importance of tackling the social dimensions of the green transformation especially in the coal mining regions of Poland** that are going to be most affected by the transition: in the area of employment policy, that is the most central under the Just Transition chapter, the NECP foresees that actions will be taken, supported by dedicated EU funds, to create high-quality jobs and ensure the upskilling of workers as well as promote new employment initiatives and start-ups, while maintaining dialogue with social partners.⁶⁹

A more operationalised approach to the Just Transition can also be found in the Polish government’s latest **Energy Policy until 2040 (PEP2040)**.⁷⁰ This document, in fact, includes the ‘**Just Transition**’ as the first of the three main pillars around which the strategy is built – alongside ‘Zero emission energy system’ (Pillar II) and ‘Good air quality’ (Pillar III) – and conceptualises Just Transition as “*providing new development opportunities for the regions and communities most negatively affected by the low-emission energy transition, while creating new jobs and building new branches of industry that participate in the energy sector transition.*” In this regard, PEP2040 recognises that it is necessary to implement special development programs for these regions and protect the employees who are the most affected by the decarbonisation of the economy, and for this purpose it foresees the drawing up, with the collaboration of local communities, companies and civil society, of a **Mining Restructuring Plan for Poland** and of a **National Plan for Just Transition**, followed by relevant territorial plans in the next stage.

Just Transition in Poland’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the JT Fund

The **Recovery and Resilience Plan of Poland** is built on the back of the PEP2040 and NECP 2021-2030 plans and mentions Just Transition mainly in relation to these strategies and Poland’s access to the EU Just Transition Fund, reiterating that **Just Transition will be one of the funding pillars of Poland’s green transformation of the economy**, which will be accomplished mainly through the support of the EU JT Mechanism.⁷¹

Polish National Resilience and Recovery Plan – Components

Green energy and reduction of energy consumption

Green and Smart Mobility

Digital Transformation

Resilient and Competitive Economy

Efficient, Available And Quality Health Protection System

As the **largest recipient of the JTF** among all EU countries, **Poland is set to benefit from €3.5 billion** of the JTF budget. This amount is to be directed to some of the coal regions of Poland most affected by the transition, initially identified by the European Commission (EC) as Upper Silesia, Wielkopolska Wschodnia, and Wałbrzych subregion – **an important condition for receiving support from the Fund being, however, for the government to provide a schedule for closing the mines by 2030 or to declare a significant reduction in coal production in these regions.** The Polish government has attempted to negotiate for funding allocation to also include other four areas of the country, however in the case of the

⁶⁹ 2019, Poland’s National Energy and Climate Plan for 2021-2030. <https://climate-laws.org/geographies/poland/policies/poland-s-national-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2021-2030>

⁷⁰ Ministry of Climate and the Environment, 2021. Energy Policy of Poland until 2040. <https://www.gov.pl/attachment/62a054de-0a3d-444d-a969-90a89502df94>

⁷¹ Ministerstwo Funduszy i Polityki Regionalnej, 2021. Krajowy Plan Odbudowy i Zwiększenia Odporności. <https://www.gov.pl/web/planodbudowy/krajowy-plan-odbudowy--programujemy-fundusze-unijne-dla-polski>

Turów region – where the government in April 2021 extended the license for lignite mining until 2044 – the EC has refused to grant support, while negotiations over the regions of Łódź, Lublin and Western Małopolska are still underway. In the case of Silesia, moreover, the Commission agreed to provide support, despite the fact that the process of extinguishing hard coal mines would be spread over almost 30 years, due to the fact that this is currently the largest coal region in Europe. It cannot be ruled out, however, that the Commission will require acceleration of decarbonisation in this area. Moreover, the allocation of the Fund is also at risk in the region as the construction of new mines is still planned in Silesia, which – according to the applicable rules – should exclude the region from support from the JTF. In this regard, public organizations concerned about this issue appealed, in June 2021, to the Marshal of the Śląskie Voivodeship to act on securing EU funds.⁷²

When it comes to the contents of the **Territorial Just Transition Plans**, based on the assessment published in October 2021 and carried out by the Bankwatch Network in collaboration with the Polish Green Network, **most plans include some interventions dedicated to promoting**

professional development, vocational training and re-skilling of workers affected by the transition, as well as investments in large enterprises and SMEs for the retention and creation of new employment opportunities.

At the same time, some elements related to the consequences of the green transition on employment still appear to be missing from some plans, like in the case of Eastern Wielkopolska and Upper Silesia: the latter, for instance, does not mention the age structure of those employed in the mining sector and thus does not foresee age-informed interventions to mitigate the effects of the green transition; also, the TJTP of the Łódzkie region seems to lack a specific vision for what will constitute the competitive advantage of the region after the mining and power plant complex ceases to operate and *“pays little attention to detailed solutions for creating new jobs, stimulating entrepreneurship, attracting investors, and supporting local employers and employees.”* Finally, the Lubelskie region’s JT territorial plan *“pays little attention to the issue of supporting miners leaving coal mining,”* failing to describe the direction of future development of the region and the industries and to present ideas for retraining programmes for miners and employees of mining-related companies.⁷³



Brown coal opencast mine and Turow power plant

⁷² Bankwatch Network, 2021. *Just transition in Poland – an overview of territorial just transition plans from six coal regions.* <https://bankwatch.org/publication/just-transition-in-poland-an-overview-of-territorial-just-transition-plans-from-six-coal-regions>

⁷³ *Ibidem.*

Just Transition in Poland – the view of national civil society and trade unions

Based on the report⁷⁴ by Bankwatch Network and the Polish Green Network, **social dialogue in the context of the Just Transition Territorial Plans' preparation has differed markedly among regions.** The plans were subjected to open public consultation in five regions, in a variety of forms – including meetings, workshops and written submissions, and a **“truly participatory and transparent process” was observed in Eastern Wielkopolska – which is “the leader of just transition in Poland”** – where “submitted comments were taken into account and had a real impact on the shape of the Plan.” In other areas, however, such as in the Łódzkie and Lubelskie regions, **“there was a noticeable lack of participation of environmental organisations and many other social organisations in the process of the TJTP creation”**.

In the case of the Silesia region, as revealed by an academic research carried out by Nowakowska, Rzeńca and Sobol (2021), *“the scale of initiatives undertaken within the process of socialization of the JT process [...] was rich, diverse and dedicated to many groups of recipients”*, however its approach did not *“guarantee the quality of the process.”*

Moreover, the scholars pointed out that *“apart from the participants invited by the Marshal's Office, approximately 300 people representing various circles attempted to become involved in the process of socialization of the Silesian JT”, but “the research identified insufficient participation, especially of representatives of municipalities, future employers, trade unions, employment services, regional civic organizations and economic self-government.”* *“What was surprising”, they highlighted, “was the lack of activity, particularly on the part of the miners' trade unions, which joined the talks at a later date,”* while instead large players from the energy and automotive sectors were able to join the consultation process. Similarly, the Just Transition process also lacked a broad social dialogue in the Belchatów region (part of the Łódzkie region) where the consultation initiatives undertaken were ‘incidental’ and did not provide *“sufficient impulse to launch comprehensive public debate”*.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Ibidem.

⁷⁵ Nowakowska A.; Rzeńca A.; Sobol A., 2021. Place-Based Policy in the “Just Transition” Process: The Case of Polish Coal Regions. *Land* 2021, 10, 1072. <https://doi.org/10.3390/land10101072>

solidar

ROMANIA



The Romanian Climate and Green Transition Policy Landscape

Following the fall of Communist rule, Romania, like Poland, went through a period of major transformation in its economy during the 1990s, and it joined international commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the ratification of the UNFCCC in 1994 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2001.⁷⁶ EU accession in 2007 provided a further impetus for new political and economic reforms and today the EU remains the key driver of environmental and climate legislation in Romania, although the country has taken a passive stance on climate and energy policy discussions at the EU level.⁷⁷

During the accession phase to the EU, Romania only had a short-term National Strategy for Climate Change and a National Action Plan for the period of 2005-2007, whose objectives were establishing compliance to international commitments and some voluntary measures to reduce carbon intensity in the economy, adaptation to impacts of climate change and participation in flexible mechanisms without affecting the competitiveness of the economy.⁷⁸

This strategy was updated to the National Climate Change Strategy for 2013-2020 to integrate various sectoral approaches, and later to the most recent 2016-2030 National Climate Change and

Low Carbon Green Growth Strategy. The latter is divided in two sections – GHG emissions mitigation and climate change adaptation – and it sets the objective of creating a series of policies to meet the 2030 targets of a 40% reduction in GHG emissions from 1990 levels and of a 27% improvement in energy efficiency, as well as, in terms of adaptation, prepare to address the climate change impacts it is already experiencing, such as river and coastal flooding and increased incidence of drought.⁷⁹

Romania's commitment to a sustainable development of its economy and society is moreover highlighted in its National Strategy for Sustainable Development 2013-2020-2030, which aims to ensure the sustainability of sectors by integrating their economic development with emissions commitments.⁸⁰ The Strategy was later updated by a new document – Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 –⁸¹ to meet the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda.

A third relevant policy instrument in the environmental and climate change policy field in Romania is, furthermore, the country's Energy Strategy, that, for the 2007-2020 period, proposed the modernisation of the energy sector, increased innovation and the use of renewable sources.⁸² The newest Strategy – for the 2019-2030 period and with a perspective for 2050 – is instead concentrated on improving energy efficiency in the country, and lays the foundations for Romania's Integrated National

76 Nachmany, M., Fankhauser, S., Davidová J., Kingsmill N., Landesman T., Roppongi H., Schleifer P., Setzer J., Sharman A., Singleton S., Sundaresan J. and Townshend, T., 2015. *Climate Change Legislation in Romania. An Excerpt From The 2015 Global Climate Legislation Study – A Review of Climate Change Legislation in 99 Countries.* Graham Research Institute of Climate Change and Environment. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ROMANIA.pdf>

77 Heilmann, F., Reitzenstein, A., Popp, R. and Ámon, A., 2019. *Pem Country Report 2019. The Political Economy of the Low Carbon Transition Climate & Energy Snapshot: Romania.* E3G. <https://www.euki.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Romania-PEMM-Snapshot-Publication.pdf>

78 Nachmany, M., Fankhauser, S., Davidová J., Kingsmill N., Landesman T., Roppongi H., Schleifer P., Setzer J., Sharman A., Singleton S., Sundaresan J. and Townshend, T., 2015. *Climate Change Legislation in Romania. An Excerpt From The 2015 Global Climate Legislation Study – A Review of Climate Change Legislation in 99 Countries.* Graham Research Institute of Climate Change and Environment. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ROMANIA.pdf>

79 The World Bank, 2015. *National climate change and low carbon green growth strategy : summary report.* <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/739151468184789529/national-climate-change-and-low-carbon-green-growth-strategy-summary-report>

80 Nachmany, M., Fankhauser, S., Davidová J., Kingsmill N., Landesman T., Roppongi H., Schleifer P., Setzer J., Sharman A., Singleton S., Sundaresan J. and Townshend, T., 2015. *Climate Change Legislation in Romania. An Excerpt From The 2015 Global Climate Legislation Study – A Review of Climate Change Legislation in 99 Countries.* Graham Research Institute of Climate Change and Environment. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ROMANIA.pdf>

81 *Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy 2030.* https://www.esdn.eu/country-profiles/detail?tx_countryprofile_countryprofile%5Baction%5D=show&tx_countryprofile_countryprofile%5Bcontrol%5D=Country&tx_countryprofile_countryprofile%5Bcountry%5D=23&cHash=16646567f4a0bcb4238f9b312843a36b

82 Nachmany, M., Fankhauser, S., Davidová J., Kingsmill N., Landesman T., Roppongi H., Schleifer P., Setzer J., Sharman A., Singleton S., Sundaresan J. and Townshend, T., 2015. *Climate Change Legislation in Romania. An Excerpt From The 2015 Global Climate Legislation Study – A Review of Climate Change Legislation in 99 Countries.* Graham Research Institute of Climate Change and Environment. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/GranthamInstitute/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ROMANIA.pdf>

Plan for Energy and Climate (PNESC) 2021-2030,⁸³ whose objectives are structured along the EU's Energy Union dimensions.

The most recent and relevant document produced by the Romanian government in relation to climate and the environment is, finally, the 2021 **National Recovery and Resilience Plan**, which was approved by the EU in September 2021. The Plan, which will be financed by €14.2 billion in grants and €14.9 billion in loans, is built around **6 pillars – (1) Green Transition, (2) Digital Transformation, (3) Smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, (4) Social and territorial cohesion, (5) Health and economic and social resilience, and (6) Next Generation** – and dedicates 41% of its budget to climate objectives, foreseeing reforms and investments focused on railway modernisation, urban mobility, clean energy production, energy efficiency of buildings and biodiversity and environmental protection.⁸⁴

What role for the Just Transition in the existing framework?

As pointed out by Heilmann et al. (2019), **Just Transition does not generally play a role in debates about structural changes in the industry sector in Romania, and the country does not have a long-term Just Transition strategy**, nor did it have, until 2021, a coal phaseout plan.⁸⁵

Romania keeps having some of the highest rates of carbon intensity and energy poverty in the EU, with coal accounting for roughly a third of the electricity mix and enjoying strong political support.⁸⁶ According to a recent academic study, phasing out

coal would lead to a *“loss of approximately 25% of the country's current production facilities and up to 40% if hydrocarbons are targeted under the Green Deal”*.⁸⁷ This is expected to create significant economic and social pressures in the affected regions due to narrow specialization and high reliance on the extraction of coal and, according to Eurostat estimates, cumulative job losses in the sector by 2030 may be between 3000 and 6000 jobs in the Vest and between 6000 and 15,000 jobs in the Sud-Vest regions,⁸⁸ impacting especially the Hunedoara and Gorj counties, which employ 90% of the entire country's labour in the mining sector.⁸⁹

The severe social consequences that the phase out is expected to produce might explain the Romanian government's long lived reluctance to commit to a **coal phase out deadline** for the country. The latter was in fact **announced only in 2021, as part of the country's National Recovery and Resilience Plan**, which pledges that **coal-fired electricity generation will be terminated by 2032**. However, in an interview on June 9, 2021, Romanian Energy Minister watered down those commitments by declaring that **the country does not actually plan to give up all coal, but only hard coal, which represents only 2% of Romania's energy mix.**⁹⁰

It has been pointed out that *“the Romanian government's ambivalence about the coal phaseout date is very problematic as it really hinders solid planning locally”*: the Romanian coal regions have in fact already submitted their **Territorial Just Transition Plans** to the Ministry of European Investment and Projects at the end of May 2021, plans that **should allow them to tap into the Just Transition Fund provided by the EU, but only**

83 The 2021-2030 Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan. https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/default/files/documents/ro_final_necp_main_en.pdf

84 2021, Planul Național de Redresare și Reziliență. <https://mfe.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ffdbdf26d6fc01f009a8059cfd94b0dd.pdf>

85 Heilmann, F., Reitzenstein, A., Popp, R. and Ámon, A., 2019. Pemm Country Report 2019. The Political Economy of the Low Carbon Transition Climate & Energy Snapshot: Romania. E3G. <https://www.euki.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Romania-PEMM-Snapshot-Publication.pdf>

86 Ibidem.

87 Voicu-Dorobant u. R., Volintiru C., Popescu, M. F.; Nerău V.; Ștefan G. Tackling Complexity of the Just Transition in the EU: Evidence from Romania. *Energies* 2021, 14, 1509. <https://doi.org/10.3390/en14051509>

88 Ibidem.

89 The 2021-2030 Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan. https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/default/files/documents/ro_final_necp_main_en.pdf

90 Dobre D. and Petcu R., 2021. Romanian government's coal phaseout blabber. *Just Transition*. <https://www.just-transition.info/romanian-governments-coal-phaseout-blabber/>



Open pit coal mine in Gorj county

if a transformation away from coal is indeed implemented.⁹¹

Just Transition in Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the JT Fund

Just like other national climate and environment-related policy documents, Romania's National Recovery and Resilience Plan does not explicitly mention the concept of Just Transition, nor it includes measures to ensure its implementation in the country, although general provisions for promoting social inclusions and fighting inequalities which might derive from the actions of the NRRP are included in the last three pillars of the Plan.

It can be said that the single most important aspect

of the Plan that is linked to the Just Transition is the already-mentioned coal phase-out commitment – a key element to define the transition process towards a climate-neutral economy and a step necessary to program further resources under the Just Transition Mechanism.⁹² **Romania is in fact the EU's third largest recipient of the EU Just Transition Fund resources, being set to receive €1.95 billion out of the total JTF budget.**⁹³

The Romanian Ministry for EU Projects has been established by the Romanian Government as the lead authority in implementing and coordinating the development of the TJTPs in Romania, ensuring transparency and involvement of all involved stakeholders. In addition, the **Ministry for EU Projects has set up the Just Transition**

⁹¹ *Ibidem.*

⁹² *European Commission, 2021. Commission Staff Working Document. Analysis of the recovery and resilience plan of Romania.* https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/commission-staff-working-document-analysis-recovery-and-resilience-plan-romania_en

⁹³ *Chirileasa A., 2021. Romania gets EUR 1.95 bln under EU's Just Transition Fund. Romania-Insider.com.* <https://www.romania-insider.com/romania-eu-just-transition-fund>

Operational Programme for the next EU budget financing period in order to streamline the money that will come to the country from the Just Transition Fund.⁹⁴

With the support of the European Commission, **two areas have been identified as the main beneficiaries of the JTF investments, namely the sub-regions of Jiu Valley and Rovinari/Turceni**, which are situated in the counties of Hunedoara and Gorj, **due to their heavy dependence on coal extraction and coal fired energy production and the likely severe consequences the regions will face as a result of the green transformation.** At the same time, the counties of Dolj, Galați, Prahova and Mures are also eligible to benefit from the JTF as a significant number of the workforce in these areas is employed in fossil fuel power and heat generation or energy intensive manufacturing and heavy industry (chemicals, metal processing cement, fertilisers, etc.), which are all sectors expected to undergo significant changes related to the necessary energy transition.⁹⁵

In summer 2021, public consultations were carried out for the definition of the TJTPs. A first draft of the plan for Hunedoara county, for instance, estimated that the hard coal phaseout will lead to the dismissal of 4,000 employees in thermal power plants and mining areas, hence social protection measures have been proposed in the TJTPs such as compensatory wages and reducing the retirement age, although these are not a viable solution for younger staff who can reintegrate more easily into the labour market.⁹⁶

The uncertainty about the Romanian government's commitment to the final phase out of all kinds of coal, however, currently leaves these regions under severe uncertainty on how to plan for their future development as an economy and society.

⁹⁴ Tanase L., 2021. *Will We Enable a Just and Socially Inclusive Energy Transition in Romania?* Energy Industry Review. <https://energyindustryreview.com/opinion/will-we-enable-a-just-and-socially-inclusive-energy-transition-in-romania/>

⁹⁵ European Commission, 2020. *Commission Staff Working Document. Country Report Romania 2020.* <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8b39ae9a-5945-11ea-8b81-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF>

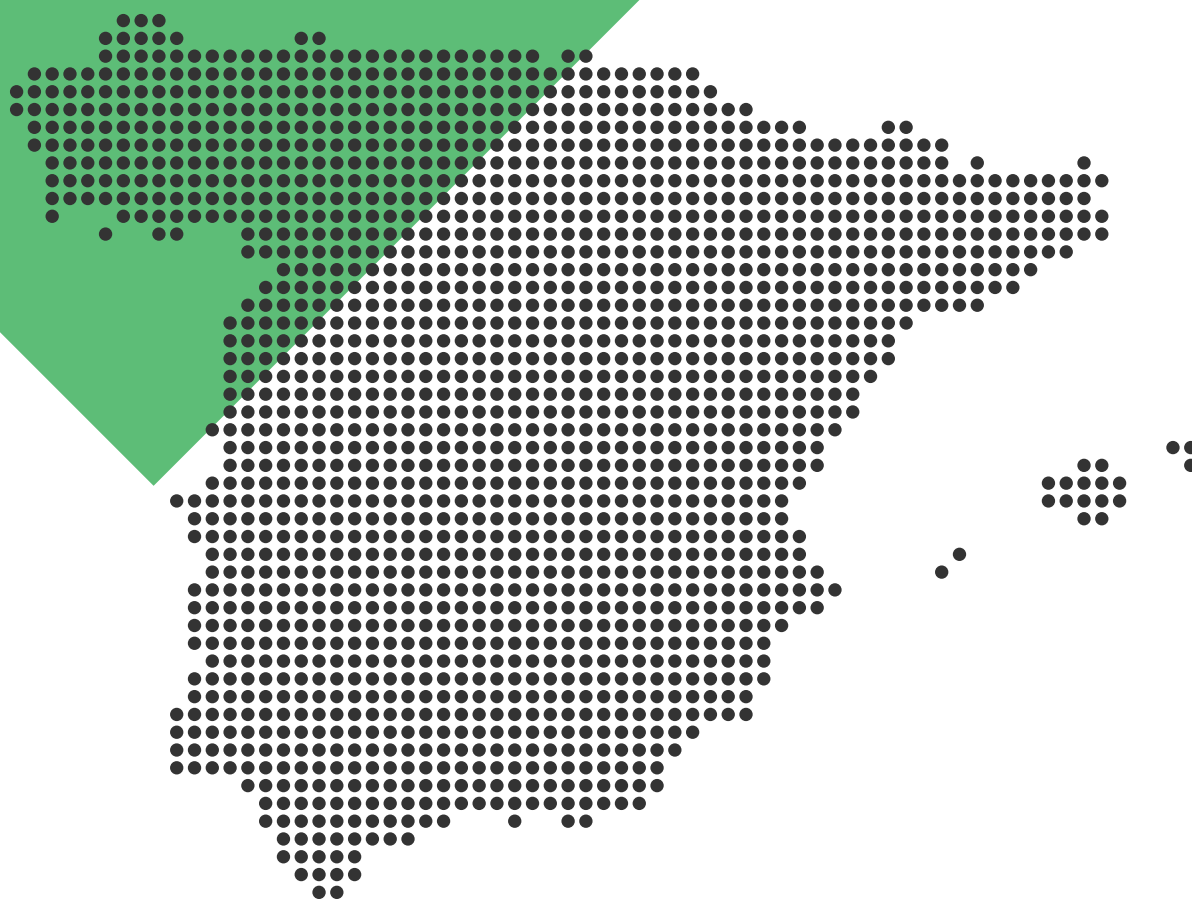
⁹⁶ Dobre D. and Petcu R., 2021. *Romanian government's coal phaseout blabber.* Just Transition. <https://www.just-transition.info/romanian-governments-coal-phaseout-blabber/>

solidar

SPAIN

“To be successful, the ecological transition must also be just, protect citizens”⁹⁷

Pedro Sánchez,
Prime Minister of Spain



⁹⁷ *Breaking Latest News, 2021. Sánchez: “Our green transition to be successful must be fair”.*
<https://www.breakinglatest.news/world/sanchez-our-green-transition-to-be-successful-must-be-fair/>

The Spanish Climate and Green Transition Policy Landscape

Spain accounts for 9% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, the transport sector being the largest emitter in the country, generating 27% of GHG, followed by the energy industry with a share of 16% of emissions. The energy sector cut emissions by 57% during the 2005-2019 period, strongly contributing to the country's total emission reduction of 25%, which makes Spain one of the best performing countries compared to the EU average.⁹⁸

The achievement of such progress in Spain was possible thanks to **a climate agenda that has become increasingly ambitious over the years** and has grown into a very crucial issue in the public and policy debate. In particular, with the arrival of Cristina Narbona in 2004 as Minister for Environment in the Social Democratic Party (PSOE) government, came the **first attempt to incorporate climate and Just Transition issues in governmental policies**. With the support of the environmental movement and trade unions, Narbona modernised environmental and climate policies, applying the Kyoto Protocol by institutionalising the tripartite social dialogue for reducing emissions in the industrial sectors.⁹⁹ Moreover, she also led the development of the country's first National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change for the 2006-2020 period, constituting the general framework of reference for the coordination between Public Administrations in relation to the assessment activities of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.¹⁰⁰

Due to resistance from the traditional political and industrial forces and the 2008 crisis, however, the focus on climate and environmental policies did not effectively take hold until a decade later, with the establishment of the Ministry for Ecological Transition¹⁰¹ in 2018 and the approval of the Strategic Framework for Energy and Climate in 2019.¹⁰² The latter was presented by the government as *"an opportunity for the modernization of the Spanish economy, the creation of employment, the establishment of a leadership position of Spain in renewable energies and technologies that will dominate the next decade, the development of rural areas, the improvement of people's health and the environment, and social justice."* The Strategic Framework is set to mobilize more than 200 million euros of private and public investment and is composed of three main policy instruments: the Climate Change and Energy Transition Law,¹⁰³ adopted in May 2021, which makes the objective of reducing GHG emissions by 23% in 2030 compared to 1990 levels and of achieving climate neutrality in the country by 2050 legally binding; the Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (PNIEC) 2021-2030,¹⁰⁴ submitted to the EU in January 2020, which acts as the national strategic planning tool to achieve the aforementioned objectives and that, together with the Long Term Decarbonisation Strategy, also allows Spain to comply with the policy requirements of EU Regulation 2018/1999 on the governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action; and **the Just Transition Strategy**,¹⁰⁵ adopted in November 2020, which aims to address the social aspects of the ecological transition.

98 EPRS, 2021. *Climate action in Spain: Latest state of play*.

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI%282021%29690579

99 Nieto, J. and Baratech, L., 2021. *Coronavirus Recovery and Just Transition in Spain: A Unique Opportunity*. *European Green Journal*. <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/coronavirus-recovery-and-just-transition-in-spain-a-unique-opportunity/>

100 *El Mundo*, 2006. *Narbona presenta al Consejo de Ministros el Plan Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático*. <https://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2006/10/06/ciencia/1160143253.html>

101 Nieto, J. and Baratech, L., 2021. *Coronavirus Recovery and Just Transition in Spain: A Unique Opportunity*. *European Green Journal*. <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/coronavirus-recovery-and-just-transition-in-spain-a-unique-opportunity/>

102 *Ministerio para la Transición Ecológica y el Reto Demográfico*, n.d. *Marco Estratégico de Energía y Clima: Una oportunidad para la modernización de la economía española y la creación de empleo*. <https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/cambio-climatico/participacion-publica/marco-estrategico-energia-y-clima.aspx>

103 *Climate Change and Energy Transition Law (7/2021)*. <https://www.boe.es/eli/es/l/2021/05/20/7>

104 *Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan for 2021-2030*.

<https://climate-laws.org/geographies/spain/policies/spain-s-integrated-national-energy-and-climate-plan-for-2021-2030>

105 *Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Democratic Challenge*, 2020. *Just Transition Strategy*. https://www.transicionjusta.gob.es/common/ETJ_ENG.pdf

These policies are also complemented by a number of other strategies and plans developed by Spain to guide its ecological and climate ambitions, such as the 2021-2030 National Plan for Adaptation to Climate Change,¹⁰⁶ and the 2030 Circular Economy Strategy, which “lays the foundations to promote a new production and consumption model in which the value of products, materials and resources are maintained in the economy for the longest possible time.”¹⁰⁷ Moreover, the country also developed an Energy Poverty Strategy¹⁰⁸ for the 2019-2024 period, and it launched in 2021 a National Green Infrastructure Strategy,¹⁰⁹ which addresses one of the main problems for nature conservation in Spain, namely the deterioration and fragmentation of ecosystems and their services.

Finally, the green transformation also takes a prevalent role in Spain’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP),¹¹⁰ which intends to further accelerate the ecological transition in the country. In fact, over 40% of the Plan’s €69.5 billion will be invested in a variety of projects related to sustainability and the fight against climate change, going above the 37% spending objective established in the Regulation of the European Resilience and Recovery Mechanism.

What role for the Just Transition in the existing framework?

Spain is one of the most advanced countries in Europe when it comes to addressing issues of Just Transition in national policy and debate.

In 2018, when a large majority of coal mines (coal having always been one of the main sources of electricity generation in Spain) were shut down under a Coal Mining Closure Plan developed by the government, the latter managed to reach a historic agreement¹¹¹ with the coal mining unions and companies, where “early retirements, terminations, and other social measures were pledged for workers as well as €250 million to support business and development initiatives in the regions until 2023.”¹¹² More recently, in 2020, another “Agreement for a Just Transition for Coal Power Plants”¹¹³ was also signed, establishing that the remaining coal plants, before being able to close, must receive authorisation from the government, and they must accompany the request for closure with just transition plans to support the workers and affected territories.¹¹⁴

Nonetheless, the greatest advancement in terms of Just Transition efforts to date has been the approval of Spain’s own **Just Transition Strategy**¹¹⁵ in 2020, an integral part of its Strategic Framework for Energy and Climate, which was developed soon after the creation of the Ministry for Just Transition, whose head established an alliance with the Director-General of the ILO and made a commitment to apply the ILO Guidelines on Just Transition in the country.¹¹⁶

Spain’s Just Transition Strategy

Spain’s Just Transition Strategy, which underwent a process of public consultation before being

¹⁰⁶ Plan Nacional de Adaptación al Cambio Climático 2021-2030.

https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/temas/fondos-recuperacion/Documents/30042021-Plan_Recuperacion_%20Transformacion_%20Resiliencia.pdf

¹⁰⁷ 2030 Circular Economy Strategy.

<https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/strategies/espana-circular-2030-new-circular-economy-strategy-futurosostenible-spain>

¹⁰⁸ National Strategy Against Energy Poverty 2019-2024. <https://www.energypoverty.eu/publication/national-strategy-against-energy-poverty-2019-2024>

¹⁰⁹ Estrategia Nacional de Infraestructura Verde y de la Conectividad y Restauración Ecológicas.

https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/biodiversidad/temas/ecosistemas-y-conectividad/infraestructura-verde/Infr_verde.aspx

¹¹⁰ 2021, Plan Nacional de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia.

https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/temas/fondos-recuperacion/Documents/30042021-Plan_Recuperacion_%20Transformacion_%20Resiliencia.pdf

¹¹¹ Acuerdo Marco para una Transición Justa de la Minería del Carbón y Desarrollo. Sostenible de las Comarcas Mineras para el periodo 2019-2027.

https://www.transicionjusta.gob.es/common/Acuerdo_Marco_para_una_transicion_justa_de_la_mineria_del_carbon_2019-2027.pdf

¹¹² Europe Beyond Coal, 2020. Saying Adios to Coal. Lessons on Just Transition From Spain. <https://beyond-coal.eu/2020/12/10/saying-adios-to-coal/>

¹¹³ Agreement for a Just Transition for Coal Power Plants: Jobs, Industry and Territories.

https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/transicion-justa/acuerdoporunatransicionenergeticajustaparacentralestermicasencierreen_tcm30-509583.pdf

¹¹⁴ Europe Beyond Coal, 2020. Saying Adios to Coal. Lessons on Just Transition From Spain. <https://beyond-coal.eu/2020/12/10/saying-adios-to-coal/>

¹¹⁵ Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Democratic Challenge, 2020. Just Transition Strategy. https://www.transicionjusta.gob.es/common/ETJ_ENG.pdf

¹¹⁶ Green European Journal, 2021. Coronavirus Recovery and Just Transition in Spain: A Unique Opportunity.

<https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/coronavirus-recovery-and-just-transition-in-spain-a-unique-opportunity/>

approved, has as its focus that of **“supporting the transformation of the economic sectors and generating and protecting employment”**¹¹⁷ and presents a series of objectives, including **ensuring “that people and territories make the most of the opportunities of the ecological transition without leaving anyone behind”** and **guaranteeing the harnessing of equal opportunities for women, vulnerable groups, and rural areas.**¹¹⁸

The main implementing mechanism of the Just Transition Strategy consists in **Just Transition Agreements**, which are comprehensive territorial action plans to be stipulated in those regions where the energy and ecological transition may cause difficulties for businesses and economic activity. These, which will be negotiated and signed by the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, other local public administrations as well as business, civil society and trade union actors in the interested region, will have as a priority objective **“the maintenance and creation of activity and employment in the area through the support of sectors and groups at risk, the establishment of population in rural territories and the promotion of diversification and specialization consistent with the socio-economic context.”**¹¹⁹ The formulation of these Agreements, moreover, will be supported by a **Just Transition Institute**, especially established as part of the Just Transition Strategy to provide technical assistance in these processes.

In addition, for areas or sectors with urgent vulnerabilities, the Just Transition Strategy foresees the possibility of creating **Urgent Action Plans** to complement the Just Transition Agreements. One such Action Plan, whose elaboration is already foreseen in the Strategy, is the **Urgent Action Plan for Coal-mining Regions and Power Plant Closures**, which will especially target the territories interested by the plants’ closures.

Just Transition in Spain’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the JT Fund

While the **Just Transition Strategy** is meant to complement the measures foreseen in the 2021-2030 Spanish PNIEC, the Strategy is also an integral and fundamental part of the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan**¹²⁰ (NRRP) of the country. The Plan, which has a budget of €69.5 billion, is composed of 4 main axes, which are aligned to the priorities established by the Recovery and Resilience Facility – Ecological Transition, Digital Transformation, Social and Territorial Cohesion and Gender Equality – and are reflected in 10 political objectives, the third one being especially dedicated to promoting a ‘Just and Inclusive Energy transition’.



Spain’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Pillars and Political Objectives

Component 10 of the 3rd political objective is fully dedicated to the **Just Transition Strategy**, and it recognises that **“the transformation of coal mining in recent decades has had very important impacts on employment in the affected regions”**, and that **“the effect of the mining closure has been aggravated by the closure of the thermal power plants”** which employ directly 3,300 people, as well as affect another 10,000 indirect jobs in the areas where they are located. **“The objective of**

117 Ministry for Ecological Transition and the Democratic Challenge, 2020. Just Transition Strategy. https://www.transicionjusta.gob.es/common/ETJ_ENG.pdf

118 Ministry for Ecological Transition. The Just Transition Strategy within the Strategic Energy and Climate Framework. https://www.miteco.gob.es/es/transicion-justa/etj-english_tcm30-508314.pdf

119 Ibidem.

120 2021, Plan Nacional de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia.

https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/temas/fondos-recuperacion/Documents/30042021-Plan_Recuperacion_%20Transformacion_%20Resiliencia.pdf

this component", the NRRP thus affirms, **"is to minimize the economic and social impact of the transition to a green and low-carbon economy"** through reforms – including the Implementation of Just Transition Agreements in energy transition areas – and through investments in Just Transition, which consist of a set of actions aimed at reducing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and vulnerability to contingencies, as well as at contributing to the social and territorial cohesion of the areas marked by the energy transition. Finally, the Just Transition Strategy component of the NRRP, which has an overall budget of €300 million, also pledges to **give particular attention to the impact of the transition on women and to guaranteeing equal opportunities in the energy field**. For this purpose, it foresees the implementation of a pilot training program for women in areas of energy, water security and environment, the installation and maintenance of renewable energies (wind and photovoltaic), restoration, environmental management and comprehensive and energy rehabilitation of homes, so as to give

them the chance to obtain recognised certifications to facilitate their labor insertion in sectors that have traditionally been highly masculinized.

It is also worth mentioning that the NRRP's Just Transition Strategy, with its aim to implement Just Transition Agreements, is also being actualised in parallel to the definition of the **Spanish Territorial Plan to access the EU Just Transition Fund**, for whose elaboration Spain will be able to benefit from the experience and the work methodology of the previously negotiated Just Transition Agreements.¹²¹ Spain has in fact been assigned €791 million in funding under the Just Transition Mechanism, which, following the European Commission's advice, it is set to **allocate to the regions of Andalucía, Aragón, Asturias, Castilla y León y Galicia** – the most affected by the decommissioning of the coal-fired power plants.¹²² In Asturia, for instance, the definition of a 'Strategy for a just energy transition' is already underway, the draft document¹²³ having been published and been under public consultation until the end of May 2021.



Factory production of electricity using coal, Teruel, Aragon, Spain

¹²¹ Plan Nacional de Recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia, Componente 10, Estrategia de Transición Justa. <https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/temas/fondos-recuperacion/Documents/05052021-Componente10.pdf>

¹²² El Mundo, 2021. Los países de la UE aprueban el Fondo de Transición Justa de 17.500 millones. <https://www.elmundo.es/ciencia-y-salud/medio-ambiente/2021/06/07/60be410a21efa0f7458b45dd.html>

¹²³ Estrategia de Transición Energética Justa de Asturias – Borrador. <https://www.faan.es/tpi/estrategia-de-transicion-energetica-justa-de-asturias/>

Just Transition in Spain – the view of national civil society and trade unions

Spain is often cited as a model for other countries to follow when it comes to social dialogue between civil society and the government in the context of the Just Transition. In particular, the landmark deal for a Just Transition for coal workers achieved in 2018 between the Socialist government and the unions – Federación de Industria de Comisiones Obreras (FI-CCOO), Federación de Industria, Construcción y Agro de la Unión General de Trabajadores (FICA-UGT) and Federación de Industria de la Unión Sindical Obrera (FI-USO) – is considered to be **an exemplary case of successful social dialogue to ensure a Just Transition for affected workers** in Spain's coal regions. As Carlos del Barrio Quesada, Sectoral Policy and Sustainability Officer for the CCOO highlighted, collective discussion and coordination between different trade union groups were key to reach the agreement.¹²⁴

When it comes to the formulation of the Just Transition Strategy and the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, however, based on the feedback gathered by SOLIDAR from **ECODES – a Spanish organisation working to accelerate the transition towards a green, inclusive and responsible economy**, and a member of the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), a partner organisation of SOLIDAR – social dialogue seems to not have been as well structured and effective. In fact, ECODES reported that they were only able to participate in the formation of the Just Transition Strategy in a very ad hoc manner and with very rigid participation formats, and always in virtual settings.

Even taking into account the limitations associated with the pandemic situation, **ECODES argued that the public participation process should have been longer and better**

structured. Moreover, they also reported on their impression that



even when the government consulted with civil society, it listened little to CSOs, hardly taking into account the proposals made to improve the Just Transition strategy.

In relation to the NRRP, moreover, ECODES highlighted that, like other NGOs, they **assessed and made proposals for improvement of the Plan in the public debate** – for instance suggesting to add concrete targets and time milestones for the 30 key projects listed in the NRRP, as well as to give more importance, alongside the technological and regulatory transition, to the cultural transition that is essential to guarantee the achievement of a more sustainable lifestyle based on co-responsibility in the face of climate change.¹²⁵ **However, no formal or structured participatory process was organised by the government to involve civil society in decision making on the Plan.**

It is drawing from these experiences that ECODES stressed that, for the future, **better-structured participatory processes should be established by the Spanish government, with sufficient time dedicated to them, and with dynamics and methodologies based on collective co-creation.**

SOLIDAR agrees that the involvement of civil society in Just Transition policy formulation and implementation remains crucial for the success of green and social reforms. This is why **we stand in solidarity with ECODES and other Spanish CSOs and trade unions and support their call for better participatory processes to be established by the Spanish government in relation to decision making on the Just Transition Agenda and Recovery Plan for the country.**

¹²⁴ Just Transition Center, n.d. *Just Transition in action – Union experiences and lessons from Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Nigeria and Spain.* <https://www.ituc-csi.org/unions-experiences-and-lessons>

¹²⁵ ECODES. *El Plan de recuperación, Transformación y Resiliencia: primer análisis de ECODES.* <https://ecodes.org/hacemos/el-plan-de-recuperacion-transformacion-y-resiliencia-primer-analisis-de-ecodes>

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“The climate transition is not only possible, it also brings enormous opportunities with it. Opportunities to build better societies. But only so if we ensure that the creation of a sustainable world is a just process, benefiting everyone.”¹²⁶

Stefan Lofven,
former Prime Minister
of Sweden



¹²⁶ Government Offices of Sweden, 2021. Speech by Prime Minister Stefan Löfven at UN Climate Change Conference COP26.
<https://www.government.se/speeches/2021/11/speech-by-prime-minister-stefan-lofven-at-un-climate-change-conference-cop26/>

The Swedish Climate and Green Transition Policy Landscape

Sweden ranks as the highest performing country in the 2021 Climate Change Performance Index,¹²⁷ which evaluates and compares the climate protection performance of 57 countries and of the European Union (EU), that are together responsible for more than 90% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The country also has the second-lowest carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions per gross domestic product (GDP) among the International Energy Agency (IEA) member countries (after Switzerland) and the second-lowest CO₂ emissions per capita (after Mexico), due in part to having the lowest share of fossil fuels in its primary energy supply among IEA members and in part to the fact that its energy use is generally efficient, largely owing to the wide use of electricity and district heating (DH).¹²⁸

The country's success in significantly reducing its carbon footprint is the result of its **ambitious energy and climate policies**. In its 2016 Framework Agreement on Energy Policy,¹²⁹ Sweden set the target of achieving a net zero-carbon economy by 2045 and of reaching a 100% share of renewables in electricity generation by 2040. The Framework also established a goal of 50% decrease in energy intensity (TPES per GDP) from 2005 to 2030, and of a 70% reduction in GHG emissions in the transport sector from 2010 to 2030.¹³⁰

In 2017 the Swedish Parliament also adopted the most important climate reform in the country's history, namely a climate policy framework¹³¹ outlining Sweden's approach for complying with the Paris Agreement. This is composed of three

main pillars: a set of new climate objectives, a Climate Act, and a Climate Policy Council. The new climate goals go further than the EU's 2050 climate neutrality objective and its current energy and climate objectives for 2030, committing Sweden not only to carbon neutrality by 2045 and to using 100% renewable energy in 2040, but also to reducing GHG emissions in the sectors¹³² not in the European Union Emissions Trading System (EU-ETS) by at least 63% by 2030 and at least 75% by 2040, compared with 1990 levels. At the same time, the Climate Act intends to regulate the government's climate policy work, including its overall aims and how they should be implemented, and establishes that, every four years, the Government must draw up a climate policy action plan to describe how the climate goals are to be achieved; also, the Act requires the government to present a climate report every year in its Budget Bill. Finally, the Climate Policy Council was established as an authority in the form of an independent interdisciplinary expert body that is tasked with evaluating how the government's overall policy is compatible with the climate objectives decided by the parliament and government.¹³³

Based on the targets and goals developed as a result of the Energy Commission's work and the work on the Climate Policy Framework, as well as public consultations, in 2019 Sweden also drafted its Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (INECP) – to comply with EU Regulation 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action – and it presented, in 2020, its Circular Economy Strategy,¹³⁴ with the aim to accelerate the country's transition to sustainability, its core vision being to build a “*society in which*

127 2021, Climate Change Performance Index. <https://ccpi.org/download/the-climate-change-performance-index-2021/>

128 IEA, 2019. Energy Policies of IEA Countries: Sweden 2019 Review. <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-policies-of-iea-countries-sweden-2019-review>

129 2016, Agreement on Sweden Energy Policy. <https://www.government.se/articles/2016/06/agreement-on-swedish-energy-policy/>

130 IEA, 2019. Energy Policies of IEA Countries: Sweden 2019 Review. <https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-policies-of-iea-countries-sweden-2019-review>

131 Ministry of the Environment and Energy. The Swedish climate policy framework. <https://www.government.se/information-material/2018/03/the-swedish-climate-policy-framework/>

132 “Transport, machinery, small industrial and energy plants, housing and agriculture. These emissions are not included in the European Union Emissions Trading System, which covers most of the emissions from industry, electricity and district heating output, as well as flights departing from and arriving in the European Economic Area (EEA).” Source: Ministry of the Environment and Energy. The Swedish climate policy framework. <https://www.government.se/information-material/2018/03/the-swedish-climate-policy-framework/>

133 Moodie, J.; Tapia, C.; Löfving, L.; Gassen, N.S.; Cedergren, E. Towards a Territorially Just Climate Transition—Assessing the Swedish EU Territorial Just Transition Plan Development Process. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 7505. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137505>

134 2020, Circular Economy – Strategy for the Transition in Sweden. <https://www.government.se/press-releases/2020/11/swedish-strategy-for-circular-economy-accelerates-the-transition-to-sustainability/>

resources are used efficiently in toxic-free circular flows, replacing new materials.”

Most recently, in May 2020, Sweden presented its **National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)**,¹³⁵ applying to receive SEK 34 billion (€ 3.2 billion) in grants from the Next Generation EU instrument. The Plan **foresees 30 reforms and investments within five different areas – including (1) Green, (2) Education, (3) Digital, (4) the demographic challenge and the integrity of the financial system, and (5) growth and housing construction** – with the Green Recovery pillar set to receive 40% of the total investment budget.¹³⁶

What role for the Just Transition in the existing framework?

As highlighted in a 2021 academic study on Just Transition in Sweden, *“the term ‘just transition’ is rarely used within Swedish national and regional climate and energy strategies, except for documents connected to the European Just Transition Mechanism.”* In fact, *“there are very few public policies and policy documents exploring the socio-economic impacts of the green transition in the country.”*¹³⁷

The Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO) effectively criticised the Swedish government for only focusing on technological questions related to the Just Transition, without addressing the real needs of both industry and workers affected by climate policies.¹³⁸ The European Commission also

highlighted that Just Transition was not addressed in Sweden’s 2019 INCEP: while the document gives an overview of the macroeconomic impacts of the green transition, in fact, it does not go into Just Transition aspects and **does not include any social, employment, or skills impacts** of the planned policies, measures or objectives, instead only mentioning that, while some sectors will benefit, others will decline as a result of the transition.¹³⁹

In response to criticism from the LO, the **Minister for Climate and Environment in Sweden reiterated in 2020 his support for the idea that “the ambitious Swedish climate policies need to develop in parallel with social justice, social security, equity, and gender equality.”**¹⁴⁰ In June 2020, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs also published a report that operationalized the “leave no one behind” principle from the UNs Agenda 2030 in Sweden, stressing the country’s commitment, among others, to advance the transition towards resource-efficient, resilient, and climate-neutral economies, while paying special attention to the social and gender dimension of the transition in order to ensure that no one, particularly people living in poverty, is left behind when society implements measures to become climate-neutral.¹⁴¹

135 Sweden’s Recovery and Resilience Plan, 2020.

<https://www.regeringen.se/49bfc1/contentassets/dad10f1743b64c78a1c5b2d71f81a6eb/sveriges-aterhamtningsplan.pdf>

136 Government Offices of Sweden, 2020. Sweden’s recovery plan within the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility.

<https://www.government.se/articles/2020/12/eu-recovery-and-resilience-facility-rrf/>

137 Moodie, J.; Tapia, C.; Löfving, L.; Gassen, N.S.; Cedergren, E. Towards a Territorially Just Climate Transition—Assessing the Swedish EU Territorial Just Transition Plan Development Process. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 7505. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137505>

138 Ibidem.

139 EC, 2020. Commission Staff Working Document – Assessment of the final national energy and climate plan of Sweden.

https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/default/files/documents/staff_working_document_assessment_necp_sweden_en.pdf

140 Swedish Society for Nature Conservation & Nature and Youth Sweden. Webinar How Do We Ensure a Just Climate Transition (Webbminarium: Hur Säkrar vi en Rättvis Klimatomställning?), 2 September 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYrcEJd3DKU&ab_channel=Naturskydds%C3%B6reningen. Cited in: Moodie, J.; Tapia, C.; Löfving, L.; Gassen, N.S.; Cedergren, E. Towards a Territorially Just Climate Transition—Assessing the Swedish EU Territorial Just Transition Plan Development Process. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 7505. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137505>

141 Government Offices of Sweden. Sweden and the Leaving No One behind Principle—Nationally and Globally. 2020.

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26672Sweden_and_LNOB_2020.pdf

Just Transition in Sweden's National Recovery and Resilience Plan and the JT Fund

Despite the above-mentioned reassurances from the government, the concept of Just Transition is still mostly absent even in the context of the country's 2020 National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP).¹⁴² In fact, despite the latter including a set of policies dedicated to improving 'Education and transition into work', component to which will be dedicated the second highest amount of investments after the Green Transition one,¹⁴³ the idea of **Just or 'Fair' Transition is only mentioned in relation to the Just Transition Fund (JTF)**.

In this regard, it is highlighted that the **JTF resources** that will be assigned to Sweden **will focus on the regions whose industries are most dependent on fossil fuels**, namely Norrbotten's steel industry, Västerbotten's metal industry, the mineral industry on Gotland and the refinery and chemical industry in Västra Götaland – which together are accountable for a third (34.7 percent) of total fossil-based greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Sweden.¹⁴⁴

As pointed out by Moodie et al.¹⁴⁵ in their 2021 study, the **Territorial Just Transition Plans (TJTPs)** for each of the mentioned regions – which were developed between October 2020 and January 2021 and that, as of May 2021, were in the process of being reviewed and validated by the Swedish government and the EU – have the same structure and core elements, including an assessment of the potential economic, social, and environmental impacts of the transition on the selected regions; an analysis of the development needs required in each region to meet climate targets; an outline of the main type of actions planned to deliver the regional transition; performance-related output and results' indicators; and the governance structure and key stakeholders needed to develop and

implement the plans. Among the type of actions foreseen, **investments in the use of clean energy technologies and infrastructure, research and innovation, the circular economy as well as**

skills upgrading and retaining of employees can be found – although activities in relation to the latter seem to be missing from the TJTPs of Gotland and Västra Götaland, and to be present only in the Norrbotten JTJP. In this last region, the plan details the implementation of a series of skill – and employment-related activities, such as the mapping of the steel industry's skills needs; support for networks and clusters for skills-enhancing initiatives in the steel industry and its value chain; retraining and skills development of existing and new workforce; skills' validation measures, and strengthening of the companies' strategic work on skills' issues.

Overall, Moodie et al. (2021)¹⁴⁶ assess that, although the Swedish TJTPs outline **specific actions for skills development**, these **remain vague**, and **in general the Just Transition Territorial Plans do not analyse nor address enough the social aspect of the green transformation**. For instance, they highlight that aspects such as regional labour shortages linked to the local ageing population are not sufficiently dealt with in the Plans, and that measures to attract skilled immigrants to overcome this shortfall are also not satisfying. Similarly, **the gender aspect of the transition, namely the fact that labour markets within core transition industries in Gotland, Norrbotten, and Västra Götaland are gender-segregated to a relatively large degree, is also mostly missing from the TJTPs, and so seems to be the involvement of social groups** such as the Norrbotten region's Sámi people **in environmental policy decision making**, especially in regard to land management, which would be necessary to ensure the preservation of their culture and traditional livelihood.

¹⁴² Sweden's Recovery and Resilience Plan, 2020.

<https://www.regeringen.se/49bfc1/contentassets/dad10f1743b64c78a1c5b2d71f81a6eb/sveriges-aterhamtningsplan.pdf>

¹⁴³ Bird & Bird LLP, 2021. Sweden's recovery and resilience plan. Lexicology. <https://www.lexicology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=d786ebde-d0e7-44e6-9f14-7215db921197>

¹⁴⁴ Moodie, J.; Tapia, C.; Löfving, L.; Gassen, N.S.; Cedergren, E. Towards a Territorially Just Climate Transition—Assessing the Swedish EU Territorial Just Transition Plan Development Process. *Sustainability* 2021, 13, 7505. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13137505>

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.



Author: Jonas Jacobsson

Power plant in central Gothenburg, capital of the Västra Götaland County

Just Transition in Sweden – the view of national civil society and trade unions

Moodie et al. (2021)¹⁴⁷ report in their study that Swedish **trade unions and civil society groups have voiced concern that the Swedish Just Transition is too focused on the economic and technical dimensions of climate policies, and that it neglects the potential regional social impacts of the transition.** Although, following TJTPs' development discussions, the government accepted the introduction of more social-oriented actions into the plans, most of the actions remain focused on the technological enablers of the transition. This, argue the scholars, *“confirms the thesis that, also in Sweden, the national government tends to dominate multi-level discussions related to EU Cohesion Policy funding, with sub-national regional and local actors being constrained by political asymmetries of power.”* In addition, they highlight that *“there is little information within the TJTPs regarding public consultation on the transition proposals”* and that

“there is, therefore, a need for further analysis on how best to include the public in the transition process from both a policy input and policy dissemination perspective.”

Concerns about the current state of the Just Transition agenda in Sweden were also voiced by **SOLIDAR's member Olof Palme International Center (OPC)** – the Swedish labour movement's umbrella organisation for international solidarity. Similarly to the trade unions and NGOs interviewed by Moodie et al. (2021), OPC highlighted that **existing national policies and strategies are not sufficient to guarantee a green transition that is socially just and inclusive**, and that currently not enough is being done to meet the climate and environmental goals that Sweden internationally committed to achieve. They pointed out that the government's own independent expert committee on climate also confirmed that national climate action is at the moment insufficient, and that **Sweden is missing the majority of its own national environmental goals** – such as objectives to guarantee healthy ecosystems

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem.

and protection of species. In this regard, OPC stressed that **step one for the development of any plan for Just Transition in Sweden is to set the right pace**, which needs to be based on science and the promises the country has made to the global community.

In addition, **a sufficient national plan for Just Transition would also need to coordinate all parts of the economy**. OPC reported that a Swedish independent initiative, called the Climate Agenda, is working closely with unions in this regard, one of the main reasons why they started their work being that they realised that, **while there are official plans to make individual sectors fossil-free, there is not enough synching and overview to make sure that the sum of all of these plans adds up to meet the Swedish climate goals**. The Climate Agenda thus began working on filling this gap and creating that full picture. **To make the transition just, OPC highlighted, having such an overview is essential**, as it will help to ensure that, as jobs in polluting or environmentally destructive sectors disappear, new, green and decent jobs are created in other parts of the economy. In this regard, **in order for Sweden to get a national plan for Just Transition that is up to the task, the state needs to take on a more active, investing, and coordinating role** in the economy.

A sufficient national strategy for Just Transition would moreover need to increase access to education and training for workers, explained OPC. Since all jobs need to become green jobs, most workers will need to acquire new skills to be able to take part in the greening of existing workplaces and sectors. There must thus be opportunities to re-train, in order to get into new types of work. At the moment, these opportunities are not sufficiently foreseen in Sweden.

Finally, to live up to the “just” part of the transition, OPC stressed that there is also a need for a broad invitation to people in Sweden to take part in the discussion. What should the transition of their communities look



like? What are their local needs? How can they be part of it? **A good Just Transition plan would need to make a democratic, nation-wide effort to create those forums**, so that people would both be informed and able to influence the plans that affect them, and **civil society could certainly help facilitate this discussion**.

The work that the Palme Center has been carrying out in Sweden is already a demonstration of the role that civil society can play in stimulating discussion and education on the theme of Just Transition in the country. They have in fact already held several trainings for their member organisations in the Swedish workers’ movement about Just Transition, and spread the word about it in several communication activities to the public. They are also planning to start a **national alliance for Just Transition in Sweden**, as part of SOLIDAR’s initiative to get such national forums going, involving Swedish workers’ movement and NGOs – like the national organisation for workers’ education and Olof Palme union members, who are very knowledgeable and centrally placed in the green transition, as well as organisations working with environmental issues, and for equality and justice. This alliance will aim to have an impact on the national policy and debate around Just Transition, as well as start to implement it hands-on in the involved organisations’ respective areas of work.

SOLIDAR stands in full solidarity with OPC’s work and with Swedish civil society’s continued effort to improve the stance and inclusiveness of the Just Transition agenda in the country, as well as it supports and will continue to report on the work of Swedish civil society to improve CSOs’, trade unions’ and citizens’ involvement in decision making in relation to green transition.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Today’s crisis is a lesson of resilience to us all: when facing challenges, we need to be prepared, to get ahead of issues, and to act decisively to ensure that we protect our citizens and our economy. Just transition is no different.”¹⁴⁸

Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

“Just transition to us is a governance process, one that includes investment for the creation of alternative job opportunities; one that fully involves the social partners and local communities in policies and action that make sure that nobody is left behind.”¹⁴⁹

Luca Visentini, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

Just Transition has only appeared on the EU and national policy agendas in recent years, and **the road to a truly just and fair transition to climate neutrality in Europe is long and uncertain**. From the analysis of the handful of EU member states that was carried out throughout this report, we can draw **four main conclusions**:

Firstly, in Europe, there is **not one unified vision** of what a Just Transition is, what it should look like and how it can be achieved. Strategies, policies and measures vary strongly from one country to the other. While it is evident that the transition to climate neutrality impacts people in EU countries differently – for instance, countries heavily relying on fossil fuels vs those with high shares of renewable energy, coastal areas vs landlocked countries, job losses in weaker welfare states vs in countries with strong social protection systems, etc. – it is fundamental to

develop a **common European vision for a Just Transition**. Only by doing so will all EU member states meet high standards of advancement of the social, the climate and the environmental agendas, and can be held accountable for succeeding or failing in relation to them.

Secondly, this report shows that there is an **increasing interest**, at all levels, in **‘Just Transition’** and what it entails for workers, communities and people everywhere. Nevertheless, **the concept of Just Transition is still too timidly present** in EU and national strategies and policies, although some countries are performing better than others in our assessment. While Spain is one of the most advanced countries in Europe when it comes to addressing issues of Just Transition in national policy and debate, Romania belongs to the ‘bottom of the class’. Moreover, while, in some EU member states, Just Transition only started to receive decision makers’ attention as a result of the decisions made at EU level, mainly the adoption of the Just Transition Fund and the access to funding that it provides, in others the concept was well-established well before the development of the European Green Deal and Next Generation EU,

possibly contributing to bringing the issue on the EU’s agenda.

Thirdly, national policies and measures still very much refer to **Just Transition as mainly linked to the loss of jobs for workers in the fossil fuel industries and regions**. While this is, obviously, an issue of major relevance, **the transition to climate neutrality and environmental sustainability has and will have a strong impact on virtually all**

¹⁴⁸ EC, 2020. Speeches by EVP Timmermans, Commissioner Ferreira and Commissioner Simson at the Just Transition Platform Launch Event. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1220

¹⁴⁹ ETUC, 2019. Luca Visentini speech to EU Social Summit. <https://www.etuc.org/en/document/luca-visentini-speech-eu-social-summit>

aspects of our lives and societies: the economy, the world of work, housing, transport, food, production and consumption of goods, ensuring access to services, education, health, culture and much more. Therefore, it is fundamental that countries start to adopt a perspective on a just and fair transition as a ‘whole of society’ approach that can lead to the **systemic change needed** to build a sustainable and safe future for all. The Council Recommendation on addressing social and labour aspects of the just transition towards climate neutrality¹⁵⁰ that will be published by the European Commission in December 2021 is proof that, at EU level, Just Transition is increasingly viewed as the path towards both climate neutrality and increased social justice in Europe.

Lastly, it is clear that, without the support from civil society, trade unions, and local communities, the transition is doomed to fail. This report shows that **only in a few cases were trade unions and social movements involved in decisions on Just Transition policies and measures, and often to a limited extent. Civil and social dialogue and innovative forms of decision making and citizenship participation must become an integral part of realising a Just Transition in all countries and regions across Europe.** This could take the form of commissions or councils used in the formulation and design of necessary local and national transition plans with clear targets. They should precede legislative processes rather than the opposite. Only then will the necessary understanding, acceptance and support for the transition be achieved.

Based on these considerations, **SOLIDAR proposes a set of recommendations** related to a Just Transition to the EU and its member states:

1. Make Just Transition a priority on the political agenda. Ensuring that the transition to climate neutrality is just and fair can act as a solution to the multiple crises that we currently face: the ongoing climate and environmental emergency,

the social, health, and economic crises, the rising inequality and poverty, the persisting forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, disability, age and other grounds, and the increasing precariousness of work and inadequate working conditions in Europe.

2. Adopt a broad understanding of ‘Just Transition’ as an opportunity to converge the climate and social agendas and as an instrument to reduce social injustice, generate opportunities for the most disadvantaged and improve people’s wellbeing, quality of life, gender equality and access to rights across sectors and regions. Building a sustainable and safe future for all through a Just Transition requires transformative systemic change, starting with re-shaping our economies to be more equal and sustainable, creating a world of work that offers decent, decarbonised jobs for all, recognising the role of education in the transition and more.

3. The ecological transition has a disproportionate impact on **women and the most disadvantaged groups in our society:** rural and racialised communities, LGBTIQ+ people, people with disabilities, the homeless, young people, the elderly, and people experiencing poverty. They **must**, therefore, **be at the center of a Just Transition**, and all Just Transition strategies and plans must be inclusive and collaborative, embracing diverse thinking and opinions and not overlooking marginalised communities’ experiences and realities.

4. The transition can only be just and fair if it is thoroughly planned. **Just Transition strategies, plans, policies and programmes must be adopted at all levels, in all countries and within all sectors.** They must be designed and implemented in a meaningful and actionable way and be underpinned by clear timelines and milestones, such as clear phase out dates for fossil fuels and or other harmful industries.

¹⁵⁰ EC, n.d. Council Recommendation on addressing social and labour aspects of the just transition towards climate neutrality. https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13247-Council-Recommendation-on-addressing-social-and-labour-aspects-of-the-just-transition-towards-climate-neutrality_en

5. A Just Transition can only be possible through civil and social dialogue, as well as innovative forms of decision making and meaningful citizenship participation. All relevant stakeholders at all levels must be engaged in setting Just Transition goals and drafting, monitoring and implementing plans. This includes trade unions, civil society organisations, and public and private sectors, with dedicated efforts to enhance the participation of women, racialised people and other marginalised communities on an equal footing and in an open, inclusive, and transparent process.

6. The transition must be based on the realisation that our societies, our economies and the environment and climate are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, globally. We need to guarantee that what we plan *here*, does not have a negative impact *elsewhere*.

SOLIDAR commits to continuing its work for a Just Transition in Europe and worldwide, and encourages all stakeholders to get involved in the fight for fairer and more sustainable societies.



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