



CLIMATE MAINSTREAMING: CLIMATE AND GENDER POLICY

SUMMARY

Gender equality and climate change are two of the EU's political priorities and are recognized as crosscutting issues mainstreamed in the multiannual financial framework (MFF), along with the digital transition, biodiversity and sustainable development goals (SDGs). However, gender equality is the least well mainstreamed priority, has no specific spending targets, and is not integrated into climate policy or climate mainstreaming. This constitutes a problem because gender inequality and climate change are interconnected. Gender intersects with other structural inequalities, including class, ethnicity, age and (dis)ability, to amplify or reduce these differences. Gender inequality is the result of deeply embedded social norms, practices and processes, and has proven remarkably persistent.

All policy is gendered. In a society structured around hierarchical gender relations, policies will always have an unequal gendered impact. Ignoring this reinforces existing inequalities. For example, failure to conduct a gender analysis of just transition proposals reinforces the gendered division of labour in carbon-intensive regions, prioritizing alternative employment for men, without addressing the paid and unpaid care work conducted by women in the same community.

This policy brief argues that gender equality and climate change should both be mainstreamed throughout all EU internal and external activities. The synergies between them should be fully explored in order to achieve the greatest co-benefits. Achieving gender equality will have benefits for climate action and addressing climate change will contribute to gender equality. Together, they will contribute to the systemic transformative change which is essential to both gender and climate justice. Integrating gender and climate mainstreaming into all policy sectors and at all levels of policymaking will contribute to the achievement of the EU's SDG targets, the implementation of the UNFCCC commitments and its Gender Action Plan, and the EU's own European Green Deal and Gender Equality Strategy.



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Introduction

Mainstreaming climate is essential. Climate change is a crosscutting issue which cannot be addressed in a policy silo. This has been recognised in the inclusion of climate change in the EU budget as a horizontal political priority that must be mainstreamed in all EU activities. The term ‘climate mainstreaming’ is beginning to overtake its precursors – Environmental Policy Integration (EPI) and Climate Policy Integration (CPI) – and is increasingly associated in European Commission documents with spending targets.¹

But seeing climate mainstreaming in its ascendancy prompts the question what has happened to gender mainstreaming? And, more specifically, has the EU’s Treaty obligation to mainstream gender throughout all of its internal and external activities² been carried out in relation to climate policy and climate mainstreaming?

Gender equality and climate change are two of the EU’s top priorities, as announced by Ursula von der Leyen in her political guidelines³ and further developed in the Gender Equality Strategy⁴ and the European Green Deal⁵. Both are recognised as crosscutting issues which need to be integrated into all policy sectors and at all stages of policymaking. This is the principle of mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming was introduced at the Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and adopted by the EU the following year. Since then, gender mainstreaming, combined with specific actions targeted at women, has been central to the EU’s approach to achieving gender equality, which is a treaty obligation, a core value of the EU, a fundamental right and a key principle of the European Pillar of Social Rights. However, EU climate policy and related sectors, such as energy, transport and agriculture remain gender blind, as does climate mainstreaming itself.⁶

This is a problem because gender-blind policy can reproduce or exacerbate existing inequalities, and can create new ones. Climate change affects people differently as a result of structural inequalities and the impact of climate change can then go on to accentuate these inequalities. Disadvantaged groups are more exposed to climate hazards, more susceptible to them and less able to cope with and recover from the damage they suffer.⁷ Those who are more likely to be harshly affected include poor, marginalised, racialised, and elderly people. Since gender is one of the most pervasive inequalities globally, it plays a role in the experience of climate change.⁸



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Gender affects exposure to climate change; vulnerability to its impact; access to knowledge and resources for adaptation and resilience; decision making and leadership; attitudes and behaviour; contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; creation, preservation and restoration of carbon sinks; waste, recycling and consumption; energy use and energy-saving.⁹ Gender intersects with other structural inequalities to amplify or reduce these differences.¹⁰

Despite repeated commitments at the international, regional and national level, the world is still far from achieving gender equality, and the EU has seen a regression. UN Women reported in September 2022 that at the current rate of progress, it may take close to 300 years to achieve full gender equality.¹¹ The 2022 Gender Equality Index produced by the European Institute for Gender Equality finds that in the EU: ‘for the first time in a decade, gender inequalities in employment [...],

education [...], health status and access to health services have grown.¹² Gender gaps in the risk of poverty and the distribution of income between women and men have remained constant.¹³

At the same time, internationally, regionally and nationally agreed targets to contain global warming are not being met. According to UNEP's analysis of the gap between emissions and targets, 'wide-ranging, large-scale, rapid and systemic transformation is now necessary to achieve the temperature goal of the Paris Agreement.'¹⁴

Inequality and climate change are interconnected, and action taken to address them can have co-benefits. However, these co-benefits have to be identified and sought explicitly, in order to avoid the risk of negative adverse effects. Gender equality and climate change need to be addressed holistically, and one way of doing this is ensuring that gender equality is fully integrated – or mainstreamed – into all climate action and explicitly integrated into climate mainstreaming.

This policy brief highlights the importance of joined-up policymaking in maximising the synergies between gender equality and climate action. Climate policy can have positive or negative effects on social equality, including gender equality. Mainstreaming gender throughout all climate related policy and at all stages of policymaking can avoid adverse effects and maximise co-benefits. However, joined up policy is not enough on its own. Gender and climate justice can only be achieved through systemic transformative change, which eradicates underlying structural inequalities, including gender, alongside class, ethnicity, (dis)ability and others.

The following section introduces the concept of gender and the advantages of taking a gender lens to climate change and climate policy. It then introduces the concept of mainstreaming and the importance of mainstreaming crosscut-

ting issues such as gender equality and climate change. The next sections show the adverse effects of gender-blind climate policy and the limited implementation of gender mainstreaming in EU climate-related sectors. Finally, there is a discussion of the barriers to gender-responsive climate action and recommendations for overcoming them.

Gender

Gender refers to the social and cultural expectations associated with masculinity and femininity that structure societies, social relations and institutions, privileging certain groups and individuals, and disadvantaging others. Gender is a social relation; it is not a synonym for women. Gender intersects with other structural inequalities, including race, class, disability, religion, sexuality, to produce specific forms of privilege and disadvantage. So, while women everywhere have been disadvantaged in relation to men, particular groups of women are disadvantaged in relation to others. Gender analysis exposes relations of inequality according to gender, examining the structures, processes and power relations between and within groups of women and men. Intersectional analyses look at the way that other inequalities intersect with gender to produce multiple vectors of inequality in relation to climate change.

Gendered vulnerability to climate change is not an essential or intrinsic property of women. Instead, it results from historically and culturally specific patterns of practices, processes and power relations that render some groups or persons disadvantaged.¹⁵ People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically or institutionally marginalised are particularly vulnerable to climate change and to measures taken to address it.¹⁶ The capacity to adapt to, and recover from, the effects of climate change is also unequally distributed and varies with gender. It is structural, relational and context-specific.¹⁷ Moving beyond

discourses of gendered vulnerability expands our understanding of the climate-gender nexus, its relevance within Europe, as well as beyond, and the synergies that would produce better climate and gender equality outcomes.

Gender research brings to climate policy analysis a focus on structural inequalities, power imbalances and intersecting axes of privilege and disadvantage. Addressing gender inequality requires a systemic approach. Short-term, technical interventions fail to dismantle unequal power structures or exert a structural impact on closing gender gaps. The gender pay gap, the under-representation of women in sites of decision-making, and gender-based violence against women are symptoms of underlying structural gender relations which privilege men and disadvantage women. The solution lies not in treating the symptoms, but in fundamental transformative change. Gendered power relations need to be exposed and eradicated. This requires deep social and organisational transformation.

Research on gender and climate change

Knowledge about gender and climate change has its origins in research and practice in the fields of gender and development, and gender and environment.¹⁸ It has evolved from a focus on women as especially vulnerable to climate change to analyses of the structural inequalities that affect the relation between climate change and different social categories.

The global South is more exposed to climate change impacts than the global North. However, it has become increasingly evident that Europe is not immune to climate change. The main threats are droughts, floods, wildfires and heatwaves, and the European heatwave of 2019 was the world's deadliest disaster that year, killing 2500 people.¹⁹ The adverse effects of these events are unequally distributed, as a result of existing

inequalities. For example, a UK study of the 2022 heatwave showed that people of colour are four times more likely to live in the neighbourhoods most exposed to heat,²⁰ and the prevalence and severity of gender-based violence – particularly sexual and domestic violence – escalate in times of crisis, such as natural disasters and pandemics.²¹

Other studies have drawn attention to women's environmental activism and leadership, and to institutional barriers to their full involvement in climate decision-making at local, national and international level. There has been a shift from focusing on gender and climate in developing countries (vulnerability, adaptation, disasters) to recognising the relevance of the gender-climate nexus in the global north – in adaptation, but also mitigation, attitudes, behaviour and policies. The SDGs have been part of this shift, making sustainable development an issue for every country in the world, not just the global South. However, the OECD finds that "While there is a large body of evidence on the gender-environment nexus in developing countries from case studies and project reports by UN bodies, other international organisations and NGOs, systematic data collection is in short supply. With few exceptions, the [gender-environment] nexus is largely absent from domestic policy debates on gender equality and environmental sustainability in OECD countries, and data collection initiatives are scant."²² The literature on gender and climate change in Europe is still emerging, with notable recent contributions.²³

What do we mean by mainstreaming?

The underlying principle of mainstreaming is that some problems cannot be solved by addressing them in isolation. Instead, they are crosscutting and need to be integrated into all policy sectors and at all stages of policymaking. Gender mainstreaming has been widely embraced by

international, national and local organisations and institutions as a means of achieving gender equality. The same principle can be found in concepts such as Environmental Policy Integration (EPI), Climate Policy Integration (CPI), a whole-of-government approach, and policy coherence (including Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development – PCSD). Recently, the term climate mainstreaming has become more common in EU policy documents, and was introduced in the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2014-2020 and retained in the MFF 2021-2027. The EGD refers to the Commission’s 25 per cent target for climate mainstreaming across all EU programmes. In contrast to gender mainstreaming, climate mainstreaming is used in relation to expenditure. There is an overall target of 30 per cent climate spending in the EU budget for the 2021-2027 period, but no overall target for spending related to gender.²⁴ In addition, the Court of Auditors found that gender is the crosscutting priority least well integrated into the EU’s spending programmes and least well incorporated into impact assessments.²⁵



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Since the introduction of gender mainstreaming in the late 1990s, research has highlighted the gap between widespread rhetorical commitments to the principle of mainstreaming at international, regional and national levels, and the paucity of discernible outcomes. Institutional stickiness, organisational culture, resistance, backlash and other structural barriers have all been identified as obstacles²⁶, as has the tendency to treat main-

streaming as a box-ticking exercise.²⁷ Studies find that the shift from rhetorical commitment to effective implementation requires a full commitment to the objectives of gender justice and climate justice, along with strong political will and institutional cultural shift. There has also been a growing interest in interlinkages and synergies that characterises recent international collaborative research programmes, such as the World Social Report and the IPCC reports, and that suggests that policy integration is essential for achieving the SDGs.

Adverse effects of gender-blind climate policies

All policy is gendered. In a society structured around hierarchical gender relations, policies will always have unequal gendered impact. Policy which ignores gender relations is likely to reinforce existing inequalities, and may also create new ones. Gender-blind climate policy ignores the ways that climate change interacts with structural inequalities. For example, flood prone areas and housing where the temperature cannot be adequately regulated are more likely to be inhabited by poor, marginalised and racialised people.²⁸ Heatwaves kill more women than men,²⁹ and cases of gender-based violence increase in the aftermath of climate disasters.³⁰ Addressing the underlying inequalities that cause these differentiated effects not only breaks the cycle of exposure, vulnerability and further inequality, but it also increases the climate resilience of society as a whole. The adverse effects of climate change on health – whether through heat, drought, disease, stress, or food insecurity – have consequences not just for gender-differentiated morbidity and mortality, but also for care needs and availability, and this could, in turn, lead to more GHG emissions.³¹ Gender-blind adaptation ignores the way in which climate health hazards make additional demands on women as paid and unpaid carers.

Unless explicit efforts are made to transform gender power dynamics, climate policy can aggravate gender and intersecting inequalities. Failure to conduct a gender analysis of just transition proposals, for example, reinforces the gendered division of labour in carbon-intensive regions, prioritising alternative employment for men, without addressing the paid and unpaid care work conducted by women in the same community. Structural gender inequalities in the labour market aggravate women's greater exposure to poverty in work and in retirement and women's reduced access to sick benefits and paid leave. It also fails to address the under-representation of men in health and social care and in education, which contributes to the under-valuation of these sectors and reinforces social norms and stereotypes.

Energy is a key sector for mitigation, as it is responsible for 75 per cent of total GHG emissions in the EU.³² However, ex ante impact assessments are essential in order to reveal the potential unequal impact of some mitigation measures, such as carbon taxes, which can accentuate economic inequalities and further impoverish the poor and the rural. Women are more likely to experience energy poverty due to their lower average income³³, and are disproportionately present in elderly populations with additional energy needs. According to the EIGE report on women and poverty, almost half of lone parents across the EU are at risk of poverty or social exclusion, and almost 9 out of 10 lone parents are women.³⁴ The 2021 Gender Equality Index finds that 'single women, particularly in old age, are at the highest risk of poverty.'³⁵ The steep energy price increase since the end of 2021, exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, is amplifying these problems and having a particularly harsh impact on some groups of women, including ethnic minority women, disabled women, single mothers and older women.³⁶

Gender-blind policy approaches which focus on reducing consumption at the level of the individual or the household, can increase pressure on domestic consumers to make green choices. Given the unequal distribution of household labour, this falls most frequently on the shoulders of women. Class and wealth intersect with gender in that green products and services are often more expensive to the consumer. Similarly, a focus on technological fixes can increase inequality. For example, solar panels and energy-efficient housing are more accessible to the wealthy, enabling them to reduce their energy costs and therefore further increasing the wealth gap.

Continued subsidies for fossil fuel companies contribute to climate change and air pollution, which have greater effects on the poor and marginalised, reduce health and well-being, and increase the need for care. Removing these subsidies would provide revenue which could be invested in measures that reduce inequality, such as social protection, accessible and affordable public transport, and green energy.

Transport is another key sector for climate change mitigation, accounting for 29 per cent of the EU's GHG emissions. It is the only sector whose emissions are not decreasing and a major source of health hazards, including noise and pollution. Transport is also one of the most unequal consumption categories, with the top 10 per cent income group using 45 per cent of the energy for land transport and 75 per cent of the energy for air transport.³⁷ Frequent-flying 'super emitters' who represent just 1 per cent of the world's population caused half of aviation's carbon emissions in 2018.³⁸ The disproportionate contribution to GHG emissions of a small number of wealthy travellers is itself gendered, with men making up 89.1 per cent of billionaires worldwide.³⁹

Women and men use different modes of transport and make different types of journey at dif-

ferent times of day.⁴⁰ They take different factors into account when planning their travel, with women paying more attention to considerations of personal safety. Efforts to decarbonise transport need to take these gendered factors into account. The gendered differences in travel behaviour are mostly due to the gendered division of productive and reproductive labour, with women often combining paid employment with household and caring responsibilities.⁴¹ The International Transport Forum finds that “gender has been shown to be a more robust determinant of transport mode choice than age or income in many cities regardless of their level of development”.⁴² Women are more likely than men to use public transport, and the gender gap increases with age. Under-investment in public transport can isolate poor and rural communities and has safety problems for women, transgender and racialised people. Ignoring gendered transport usage and needs produces transport that does not meet the needs of some groups, including women, and misses the opportunity for synergies with health. For example, active transport and reduction in air pollution has a positive impact on (child) obesity and well-being/mental health from exercise, green spaces and noise reduction. Transport policy which meets the needs of all users has to take these differences into account. Efforts to decarbonise transport can use the findings of gender analyses to identify initiatives which have the most positive outcomes.



Ignoring the gender-climate nexus can have an adverse effect on climate mitigation



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ple, men have been shown to have a larger carbon footprint as a result of their greater use of air travel, car ownership and car use.⁴³ Ignoring the relation between constructions of masculinity and carbon-intensive modes of consumption is a missed opportunity for changing behaviour as part of a broader climate change strategy. The over-representation of men in climate decision-making may reflect some of these masculine behaviours and attitudes towards consumption and further exclude the gender-climate nexus from policymaking.

Gender and climate policy

The UNFCCC, as the primary venue of global climate negotiations and diplomacy, has only recently begun to recognise the climate-gender nexus. The Lima Work Programme on Gender and Climate Change, adopted in 2014 and renewed in 2016, invites Parties “to advance gender balance, promote gender sensitivity in developing and implementing climate policy, and achieve gender-responsive climate policy in all relevant activities under the Convention”. The Preamble of the Paris Agreement (2015) urges Parties to “respect, promote and consider their obligations on gender equality” when taking action to address climate change. The UNFCCC Gender Action Plan (2017) aims to translate these rhetorical commitments into concrete action in five priority areas that seek to advance knowledge and understanding of gender-responsive climate action and its coherent mainstreaming, as well as women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in the UNFCCC process. These initiatives have the potential to bring about change by integrating a gender perspective into efforts to address climate change at all levels of governance. However, as Huyer et al. argue, this must be done in such a way that it transforms gendered power relations, rather than simply targeting the different needs of women and men.⁴⁴

Gender in EU climate governance

Governments prepare and update UNFCCC nationally determined contributions (NDCs) every five years, setting out their commitments for mitigation and adaptation. The EU submitted an official EU NDC in 2015 and an updated version in 2020. In common with the other NDCs from the global North, the EU's submission focuses almost exclusively on mitigation, rather than adaptation. International comparative analyses of the revised NDCs show that gender is better integrated in the updated submissions than in the original ones. The proportion of NDCs containing references to gender or women increased from 46 to 96 per cent; gender responsive targets, policies and measures from 13 to 55 per cent. However, only 24 per cent of 120 countries identified national gender equality institutions as part of climate change governance and 27 per cent noted the importance of women's participation in decision-making on climate action.⁴⁵ A comparative analysis conducted by CARE found that only Cambodia, Honduras, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Nepal, Panama, and Papua New Guinea achieve the highest ranking as a 'role model group' in their integration of gender equality into their NDCs. Of the ten countries in the second-best group, only Norway is in the global North. Gender equality is not integrated in mitigation strategies in the global North and, with the exception of the countries in the 'role model' group, gender-responsive budgeting is almost completely absent.⁴⁶ The EU makes a single reference to gender in its revised 2020 NDC, and remains outside the CARE report's top groups ('role model' and 'progressive'). It states: "The EU NDC is prepared in the context of the EU's commitment to gender equality and crosscutting priorities, as articulated in its commitments such as: the European Pact on Gender Equality; the commitment to create and maximise synergies between the social, environmental, and economic dimensions of sustainable development; the EU's support for adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of

Indigenous Peoples; integrating the dimensions of human rights and gender equality by member states into their national plans, strategies under the EU Energy Union Governance Regulation."⁴⁷ Although this statement could be read as a commitment to the fundamental mainstreaming of gender equality throughout all EU climate policy, there is no evidence to suggest that the engagement extends beyond this statement, especially in relation to mitigation.

The EU's submission for the mid-term review of the progress of implementation of the activities contained in the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan is based on reports by the member states. It cites some examples of good practice, such as the Just Transition Agreements which are being developed in Spain, but gives little detail on each of them. It reports that 15 member states have appointed a National Gender and Climate Change Focal Point (NGCCFP) as part of the implementation of the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan. However, most member states reported challenges including: "lack of resources – be it financial, organisational or technical; lack of understanding of the role amongst colleagues and different government ministries; and lack of training at national level in advance of appointment".

The EU's submission claims that gender analysis and a gender-responsive approach tends to be more systematic in strategy on adaptation to climate change than on mitigation.⁴⁸ However, the EU's Adaptation Strategy, introduced in 2021 to update the original 2013 version, mentions gender only once in the whole document – in a footnote on p. 18.⁴⁹ The Strategy, despite being introduced after von der Leyen's declaration of a Union of Equality and the adoption of the Gender Equality Strategy, shows no sign of gender analysis or of gender mainstreaming.

Gender is mentioned in the Adaptation Communication of the EU submitted to the UNFCCC in

accordance with Article 7 of the Paris Agreement and the new EU Adaptation Strategy.⁵⁰ However, this document is not gender mainstreamed either. Gender appears in the last three pages, in a section entitled “Gender-responsive adaptation action and traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems related to adaptation”. This section focuses more on indigenous peoples and local communities and does not address gender-responsive adaptation directly. Its one example of good practice describes Sweden’s work to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples and local communities such as the Sami.⁵¹

In sum, EU climate policy remains gender blind.⁵² This includes the European Green Deal, Fit for 55, and the 2021 Climate Law.⁵³ Impact Assessments are either not carried out at all (eg, the 2021 Climate Law) or ignore gender (eg, the Impact Assessment accompanying the Communication ‘Stepping up the EU’s Climate Action’). A study of the construction sector found that “In none of the[...] policy documents on energy, the European Performance of Buildings Directive, or the National Energy and Climate Plans is there any reference to women or gender.”⁵⁴ Energy policy is gender blind, despite the growing body of evidence which demonstrates the relation between gender and energy consumption, access, attitudes and behaviour.⁵⁵ The Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy (SSMS), which provides the framework for EU transport policies, claims that EU transport policies will be compatible with the Gender Equality Strategy and other EU Equality Strategies.⁵⁶ However, the explicit actions and measures on gender equality are limited to increasing the number of women working in the transport sector. The rest of the strategy focuses largely on greening the existing traffic infrastructure, rather than shifting to more sustainable modes of transport. Its focus on electric vehicles and private cars disproportionately serves the needs and interests of better-off men.⁵⁷

Barriers to the integration of climate change and gender equality

Institutional barriers to gender-responsive climate governance

Historical institutional arrangements, which locate gender equality policy in employment or social affairs, with poor integration into areas such as economic policy, trade, industry and energy act as a barrier to gender mainstreaming. In order to succeed, gender mainstreaming needs to be embraced by policy actors outside departments and agencies specifically engaged with gender equality.⁵⁸ The actions of gender equality units, the equalities commissioner, and the European Parliament committee for women’s rights and gender equality, are crucial for keeping gender equality on the agenda; for harnessing evidence and formulating strategies; and for holding other actors to account. They cannot, however, bring about gender mainstreaming without buy-in from policymakers across the institutions. This needs to be driven by political will and accompanied by institutional transformation throughout the entire organisational culture.⁵⁹ Underlying gendered assumptions are deeply embedded in organisational culture and institutional norms or ‘the way things are done around here’. They shape the way in which problems are defined and the solutions proposed to address them, as well as ways of working. Male dominance, male privilege, and masculinity are so embedded in our institutional cultures that they can be invisible.⁶⁰ Gender analysis exposes these cultures and norms and opens up space for institutional cultural shift. The number of women present is not enough to bring this about, although efforts to increase their presence can contribute to broader challenges to masculine institutional cultures.

Assumptions about the norm mean that women are often ignored – for example, in medical

research, in studies of heating needs in offices, or in the design of safety equipment.⁶¹ Assumptions that climate change is a problem that can be solved with scientific and technological solutions, and assumptions that climate change governance is rational and will lead to decisions and action which are best for the planet, ignore the power relations, and the political and economic interests involved. Challenges from research and from civil society organisations can disrupt these assumptions and expose the power dynamics at play.



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Resistance to mainstreaming can be found in organisations, which are sticky and path dependent. Some areas of government, including energy and transport, have traditionally been particularly resistant to gendered thinking and challenge. Gender equality, at best, is tacked on to already-formulated policies or, at worst, is simply ignored. Gender mainstreaming is often treated as a box-ticking exercise that has no effect on policy processes or outputs.

A lack of inclusiveness in decision-making also acts as a barrier. This goes beyond counting the number of women. The NAP Global Network analysed the gender composition of the negotiations on gender and climate change at COP26. A new addition to the report was data on speaking times in plenaries and selected meetings during the subsidiary body meetings which were held virtually. It found that “Despite the fact that the numbers of women and men on party delega-

tions are almost equal (49 per cent women and 51 per cent men), men accounted for 60 per cent of the speakers and 74 per cent of the speaking time in plenaries, emphasising the need to look beyond the numbers when considering gender balance in participation”.⁶² This reveals the ongoing challenges in achieving the full, equal and meaningful participation of women.

Research has not unequivocally demonstrated that an increase in the number of women decision makers would produce more environmentally-friendly outcomes, although this claim is frequently made, and is supported by some studies.⁶³ The IPCC states “the mere inclusion of women and men in planning does not necessarily translate to substantial gender-transformative action, for example in National Adaptation Programmes of Action across sub-Saharan Africa and national and sub-national climate action plans in India”.⁶⁴ A Swedish study on the transport sector concludes that more research is needed to confirm the link between women decision makers and environmentally-friendly outcomes. The authors invite us, in the meantime, to consider “how to move research from the counting of bodies and the representation of women in sustainable transport policymaking to looking at how gender norms inform policymaking [...] There is a need for further analysis of institutional factors and values embodied in organisations that somehow make transport a masculine coded sector”.⁶⁵ The focus needs to shift from the number of women in transport (although there is no justification for their underrepresentation in this, or any other, sector) to challenging the underlying gendered assumptions which inform policy and policymaking institutions. Carrying out rigorous gender analyses to expose, then address, these assumptions and modes of decision-making is important.

Barriers to the integration of gender equality and climate action include current governance struc-

ture and institutional capacity, along with the lack of capacity within relevant institutional structures. Awareness and understanding of the connections between gender and climate change can produce integrated policy with benefits for both sets of objectives. Integrating gender analysis into climate policies will increase the potential for synergies. In transport, for example, it will help identify “existing gender gaps, systematic or unconscious gender biases, and allow a better understanding of how different policies affect women and men due to the discrepancies in social roles, travel patterns, transport preferences and behaviour. In addition, gender analysis identifies constraints, opportunities, and entry points by first identifying, then narrowing, gender gaps and creating effective and equitable policies and interventions that will result in social and economic benefits for women and men.”⁶⁶ Gender analysis at the problem definition stage is essential. Departments and units in all sectors must adequately consider gender. Crosscutting issues require coordinated action across policy areas, and the sharing of information, knowledge and data.

Approaches that support the capture of synergies between policy goals, such as those relevant to gender equality and climate change, encourage decision-making to shift away from one-way sectoral discussions towards a more systemic approach. Systematic thinking that brings together policy goals can ensure the integration of gender into climate action⁶⁷ and overcome the conceptual challenges of mainstreaming crosscutting issues into one another, ensuring that climate mainstreaming is gender mainstreamed.

Failure to address the root causes of gender inequality

Gender inequality is the result of deeply embedded social norms, practices and processes, and has proven remarkably persistent.⁶⁸ Despite the EU’s commitment to gender equality and to gen-

der mainstreaming as a way of achieving it, the gender pay gap in the EU (the difference between average gross hourly earnings of male and female employees as a percentage of male gross earnings) is still 13 per cent.⁶⁹ Some of this gap can be explained by differences in the sectors in which men and women work, in their education or working time, but according to Eurostat, 80 per cent of this gap remains unexplained, even after correcting for the different average characteristics of working women and men.⁷⁰ The gender pension gap is even higher, at 29.5 per cent, making older women more exposed to poverty than older men,⁷¹ with knock-on effects for energy poverty and health in the context of a changing climate.

Gender equality efforts in the EU are still focused on enabling women to catch up with men, for example, closing the gender pay and pensions gaps, and increasing women’s political participation, but without challenging the structures and institutions that have brought about these inequalities. They tend to be limited to finding ways for some women to enter unchanged institutions. The celebration of women’s access to leadership positions on company boards is one example of this. Gender mainstreaming is still confined to gender equality actors and advocates and has not been embraced by those it was intended to bring on board. Institutionally, gender equality is still treated as a separate issue, despite routine declarations that gender equality will be mainstreamed throughout (as in the Adaptation Communication of the EU, for example, and the EU’s revised NDC). Climate policy struggles to recognise the links between gender and climate change, beyond the standard representation of vulnerable victims of climate change in developing countries, facing adaptation challenges caused by drought and crop failure.

Key sectors for climate mitigation, including energy, transport, construction and agriculture, have shown few signs of integrating gender equality

into their climate strategies. At best, it is tacked on to unchanged policy approaches, either as a separate and specific issue, such as increasing the number of women in the sector, or in a bland assertion that gender equality will be taken into account. Without addressing the underlying inequalities, many of which are caused by the gendered division of unpaid care work, they will not attain the goal of gender equality.

Rhetorical commitments to gender equality and climate change as crosscutting issues are often not followed through in practice, as can be seen in the many examples of gender-blind policy discussed above. This can be due to a lack of political will or a lack of understanding of the relation between gender equality and climate change. A failure to understand gender as a power relation means that policy which attempts to incorporate gender equality in climate change may simply treat the symptoms, failing to dismantle unequal power structures.⁷² Challenges to gender equality as a political objective and desirable social value, combined with a rise of right-wing parties and ideologies in parts of the EU have increased the barriers to gender equality measures and demands.⁷³



Rhetorical commitments to gender equality and climate change as crosscutting issues are often not followed through in practice, as can be seen in the many examples of gender-blind policy discussed above



The concentration of wealth and growing inequality in the EU has increased the influence of a very small minority who own the resources and produce a disproportionate share of emissions. The fossil fuel, aviation and automotive industries, trade and agriculture have substantial interest in influencing climate policy.⁷⁴ Not only does this

impede climate justice but it also marginalises social justice, including gender equality. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) found that globally US\$423 billion is spent annually on fossil fuel subsidies. They argue that these subsidies deepen inequality and impede action on climate change.⁷⁵

The next section suggests some principles for addressing the problems outlined above.

Principles and policy recommendations

Principles for a just gendered climate governance

Gender-responsive climate governance – the need for institutional cultural shift and inclusion

Gender-responsive climate governance aims to transform the structures and power relations that reinforce social and gendered inequalities. It aims to transform discriminatory social, political and economic practices and patriarchal norms. It is informed by rigorous gender analysis and is committed to institutional change and the equal and meaningful participation of women and men in decision-making and policy processes. It takes a holistic, multi-dimensional approach.⁷⁶ An all-of-government approach, which brings together gender and climate change actors and institutions, with adequate capacity and financing is crucial for gender-responsive climate governance.⁷⁷ Political commitment at the highest level, horizontal policy coordination at all levels, and gender-responsive budgeting are essential components. Decision makers need an increased ability to map “the complexities of interconnected problems, multi-level governance, multi-organisational settings, cross-cutting issues, policy networks, inter-dependencies, and linkages” and to form coherent policy frameworks.⁷⁸

Justice and equality need to be at the centre of climate decision-making processes and outcomes. The full and meaningful inclusion of those who are currently excluded moves beyond the participation in unchanged institutions of a small group of women. Efforts are needed to change unequal power dynamics and foster inclusive decision making.⁷⁹ As the IPCC argues, “Rather than merely emphasising the inclusion of women in patriarchal systems, transforming systems that perpetuate inequality can help to address broader structural inequalities not only in relation to gender but also other dimensions such as race and ethnicity.”⁸⁰

Addressing the root causes of gender inequality

Moving from political discourse to effective action on the ground requires a repoliticisation of gender. This encompasses a recognition that gender is a power relation and not a synonym for women; that the relation between gender and climate change is not reduced to the impact on women of climate hazards; and that short-term policy that addresses immediate needs or focuses on equal opportunities needs to be replaced with a long-term commitment to dismantling gendered hierarchies. Policy which emphasises women’s vulnerability to climate change can obscure the structural inequalities causing the vulnerability and suggest policy solutions that provide short-term treatment to the symptoms, rather than addressing the cause.⁸¹ “Intentional long-term policy and programme measures and investments to support shifts in social rules, norms and behaviours are essential to address structural inequalities and support an enabling environment for marginalised groups to effectively adapt to climate change”.⁸²

Gender and climate justice is predicated on the eradication of inequalities based on gender, which intersect with ethnicity, age, and disabil-

ity amongst others. Placing the elimination of inequalities and poverty above the imperative of economic growth paves the way for the reduction of consumption and environmental degradation, leading to the co-benefits of gender equality and social and environmental sustainability. Addressing poverty, energy poverty, health and inequality, including gender inequality, improves resilience to climate impacts for groups that are disproportionately affected, including women.⁸³



Moving from political discourse to effective action on the ground requires a repoliticisation of gender



Gender equality and care are central to gender-just climate governance. Care work is disproportionately done by women, yet excluded from measures of economic growth. Shifting perspectives of an economy that works for all people and the planet will place care at the centre.⁸⁴ This is increasingly important, as the effects of a changing climate are already increasing demand for care, for example, as a result of detrimental impacts on health of heatwaves. The creation of decent jobs in the health and care sectors is an essential part of a just transition.⁸⁵

Examples of concrete policies and practices integrating climate and gender at different levels of governance

Examples of good practice are cited in reports to the UNFCCC and in some NGO reports. These include examples of gender mainstreaming at policy, institutional and programme/project level in sub-Saharan Africa, which are presented by the Research Programme on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS)⁸⁶ and “promising examples from countries that are

taking concrete steps to integrate gender considerations into their NAP processes”: the Central African Republic, Chad, Ghana, Kenya, Cote d’Ivoire, the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Marshall Islands and Suriname.⁸⁷ However, so far, it has been difficult to find examples resulting from rigorous scientific analysis. The IPCC finds that “There are very few examples of successful integration of gender and other social inequities in climate policies to address climate change vulnerabilities and questions of social justice (very high confidence).”⁸⁸ It states: “To date, empirical evidence on such transformational change is sparse, although there is some evidence of incremental change (eg, increasing women’s participation in specific adaptation projects, mainstreaming gender in national climate policies).”⁸⁹ Case studies from Uganda, Tanzania and Nepal, for example, have shown that “Sharing research-based evidence with parliamentarians can help bring more attention to gender and climate concerns, and encourage the development of appropriate policy and regulatory frameworks.”⁹⁰

Examples of good practice from the global North are very limited, although research programmes are underway to begin to fill this gap.⁹¹ In particular, studies will explore examples of best practice at the local level, including the introduction by feminist mayors in cities such as Paris and Barcelona of radical social and environmental policies.

Policy recommendations:

- Mainstream gender throughout all policy, even in areas that appear to be gender neutral. This includes climate change, but also energy, transport, trade and agriculture.
- Mainstream gender at all stages of the policy process, from issue definition through policy formulation, to implementation and

evaluation. Gender impact assessments are a crucial part of this process and must identify who is affected by the impact of climate change and by measures taken to address it.

- Mainstream gender in an intersectional way. This means recognising that gender inequality intersects with other structural inequalities, including region, age, ethnicity and disability.
- Collect, analyse and use gender-disaggregated data with an intersectional perspective. Data should be disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability, geographical location and other structural inequalities.
- Raise awareness across all levels of governance of the interconnections between gender and climate change.
- Appoint Gender Focal Points across all departments and agencies with adequate authority to ensure that gender mainstreaming is fully implemented.
- Fully integrate gender budgeting into climate policies and the Just Transition and monitor and evaluate its progress and outcomes.
- Use the transition to a carbon-neutral economy as an opportunity to achieve gender equality in employment, skills and pay.
- Reduce the unpaid care and domestic work of women by investing in gender-responsive public services, universal social protection, health and care systems.
- Repurpose subsidies to roads and aviation to invest in public transport.

- Prioritise public and active transport over private and carbon-intensive transport.
- Tackle energy poverty through a combination of renewables, energy efficiency, and poverty eradication.

Conclusions and way forward

The climate crisis requires urgent coordinated action, and doing this in a gender-responsive fashion will help to redefine the notion of a just transition from one which focuses on finding alternative jobs for men in carbon intensive industries to one which achieves transformative change that is both gender just and climate just. Gender inequality and climate change need to be addressed holistically, in order to maximise the synergies between them. Achieving gender equality will have benefits for climate action and addressing climate change will contribute to gender equality. Integrating gender and climate mainstreaming into all policy will contribute to the achievement of the EU's SDG targets, the implementation of the UNFCCC commitments and its Gender Action Plan, and the EU's own European Green Deal and Gender Equality Strategy.

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About Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

The EU Office of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), with its headquarters in Brussels and activities in Brussels and Strasbourg, was opened in 1973. The EU Office participates in the European integration process, backs and accompanies the interests of the Federal Republic of Germany in Europe and contributes to shaping the external relations of the European Union.

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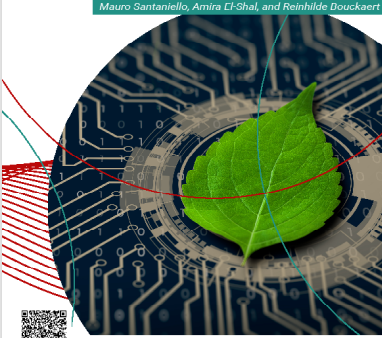
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THE EU'S TRANSITION TO CLIMATE JUSTICE & GENDER EQUALITY

HOW JUST AND HOW EQUAL?



ABSTRACT

The EU's top priorities include 'a just transition to a climate-resilient economy' and 'strengthening the EU's commitment to inclusion and equality in all of its senses', including gender equality. However, the two priorities exist in parallel and rarely intersect. This is a problem because climate change is gendered. There are gendered differences in exposure to the impact of climate change. In the ability to adapt to climate change, in attitudes towards climate change, in the production of climate change, and in climate leadership, participation and activism. These gendered differences are cut through by other structural inequalities, including class, ethnicity, age, location and ability. An approach which attends to the intersections between these structural inequalities is therefore essential in order to achieve a gender- and climate-just future. While awareness has been raised of connections between gender and climate change, the main EU climate policy documents are still gender blind. Unless gender equality is explicitly included in policies, programmes and projects, gender inequalities, which are deeply embedded in social norms, practices and institutions, will persist.

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POLICY BRIEF
JUNE 2022

TALKING GREEN IN EUROPE

LESSONS ON RE-FRAMING THE PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS FROM THREE SURVEYS



SUMMARY

This policy brief asks how progressive actors can communicate about the climate crisis in a way that resonates with people from different backgrounds. The brief argues that policy proposals for a just transition do not automatically garner public support, but instead must be accompanied by a re-framing of the public discourse. Drawing on the results of three surveys carried out by FEPS and its partner organisations in the UK, Ireland and Hungary in 2021 as part of the Talking Green project, this policy brief argues that an effective and inclusive framing of climate actions needs to fulfil two conditions. The first condition is that a progressive narrative should emphasise the links between climate change and climate policies, and the lived experiences of people. Linking climate change and climate policies to more immediate concerns like healthcare, housing or energy, and improvements in quality of life more generally, emerges as a promising communication strategy. The second condition is that a progressive narrative must dispel fears that the costs of climate action will be imposed on vulnerable groups. Messages about the 'just transition' or 'green jobs' are already addressing these concerns. Progressives, however, need to ensure that those messages remain concrete and reliable.

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POLICY BRIEF
JUNE 2022

JUST TRANSITION & REVITALISATION

A NEW EU STRATEGY FOR RURAL AREAS



ABSTRACT

How can EU actions support the revitalisation of rural areas? How can EU institutions put rural and remote areas at the centre stage of the just transition?

This policy brief contributes to the reflection launched by the Commission's work towards a 'Long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas' and aims at supporting and enriching the EU agenda by promoting the revitalisation of rural and remote areas.

After reviewing some of the potential risks facing the EU's strategy for rural areas as it stands, the authors put forward concrete policy and governance recommendations to make rural development in the EU both environmentally and socially sustainable.

The recommendations build on exchanges with experts and identify 'best practices' that can be scaled up and replicated in order to:

- bolster sustainable agriculture and champion the energy transition;
- attract investment;
- nurture innovation systems;
- promote community ownership; and
- boost social vitality.

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POLICY BRIEF
April 2022

HOW TO ADDRESS EUROPE'S GREEN INVESTMENT GAP



SUMMARY

This policy brief discusses the European Union's investment needs to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels as well as two funding options to raise the revenues for the direct provision of green infrastructure. The policy brief finds that the European Commission's modelling of required investment needs is overly optimistic as the EU faces an investment gap of €11.670 to €16.250 billion between 2020 and 2050.

A progressive European wealth tax and the issuing of government bonds for a public investment initiative are two policy options to close this gap. A progressive European wealth tax has the potential to raise revenues of between €164 billion and €327 billion annually, while not increasing inflationary and Covid-related pressures on low- and middle-income households. A wealth tax can also reduce extreme levels of wealth inequality and build administrative capacities to fight corruption and organised crime. The second policy option of issuing bonds can raise revenues instantly and will generate a significant economic impulse. This policy brief estimates a long-run investment multiplier of 4 for a non-ordinated fiscal expansion at the EU level. The magnitude of the multiplier also ensures that public finances will improve in the long term.

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