

Model EU 2023
Christchurch

Winds of Change

The EU, Climate Change and the Green Transition

A Model EU simulation event facilitated by the National Centre for Research on Europe and kindly supported by the University of Canterbury.

28–29 August 2023, University of Canterbury

For more information and to register for this event go to www.canterbury.ac.nz/ncre/



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NATIONAL CENTRE FOR
RESEARCH ON EUROPE

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To Whare Wananga o Waitaha
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Contents

Acknowledgements	4
What is the NCRE?	5
Speakers	6
HE Nina Obermaier	6
Sarah Pallett, MP	6
Dr Serena Kelly.....	7
Prof. Martin Holland.....	7
Conference Details	8
Where?	8
When?	8
Catering Provided	8
What to bring.....	9
What to wear	9
Sign-in / out	9
How to prepare.....	9
Questions.....	9
Student Code of Conduct	10
Timetable	11
Day One:	11
Day Two	12
Introduction to the European Union	13
A short history of the EU	14
Timeline of significant events	15
EU institutions in brief	16
Council of the European Union	16
Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)	17
Environment Council (ENV)	17
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE).....	17
Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH).....	18
Competitiveness Council (COMPET).....	18
How Decision-Taking in the Council of the European Union Works	19
Council Voting for the Model EU Event	19
Blocking Minority.....	20
The Importance of Building Support	20
Regional Groups for the Model EU Event.....	20

Introduction to the topic: Climate Change.....	20
What are Global Warming and Climate Change?.....	20
Causes of Climate Change	21
Climate Change Denial.....	22
The European Union and Climate Change.....	22
Main Greenhouse Gas Source Sectors in the EU	23
EU Climate Action	25
The European Green Deal and EU Climate Targets	25
The European Green Deal: Key Policy Areas	25
The European Green Deal and Energy.....	26
Draft Directive for the Council of the European Union	29
The Member States of the EU	34
Suggested Sources of Information	34
Austria.....	35
Belgium	36
Bulgaria	37
Croatia	38
Cyprus	39
Czechia.....	40
Denmark	41
Estonia	42
Finland	43
France	44
Germany	45
Greece.....	46
Hungary	47
Ireland.....	48
Italy	49
Latvia	50
Lithuania	51
Luxembourg.....	52
Malta.....	53
Netherlands	54
Poland.....	56
Portugal	58
Romania.....	59
Slovakia.....	60

Slovenia	61
Spain	62
Sweden	63
Appendix: Terms.....	65

Acknowledgements



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The European Commission Department for International Partnerships is responsible for formulating the EU's international partnership and development policy, with the ultimate goal of reducing poverty, ensure sustainable development, and promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law across the world.

Model EU Facilitators:

- Kat Lee (*Lead Facilitator*)
- Grace Aislabie
- James Blanchett
- Milla Campher
- Xavier Dickason
- Scarlett Greaves
- Grace Newnham
- Georgia Peterson
- Cassidy Russell
- Philip Sharpe
- Rhys Webster

UC Staff: Professor Martin Holland (Health and Safety 027 807 2861), Dr. Serena Kelly, Sabine Chartschenko, Jenny Wilson, Brenda Wills

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Photographer: Cashias Gumbo





What is the NCRE?

The **National Centre for Research on Europe/Te Puna Mātai Uropi (NCRE)** brings together students, teachers, graduates, and academics from around the world to research and study the EU and Europe related issues and topics. The centre belongs to, and runs, the *'European Union Studies Association of the Asia-Pacific'*, is a *'Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence'* and holds numerous EU grants for research and teaching.

The NCRE also performs a wider societal role and serves as a key element in the EU's outreach within New Zealand and the Pacific. Raising a critical awareness of the EU, informing government, the media and public opinion play an important part in the NCRE's core functions. Above all, the NCRE encourages and promotes a new generation of New Zealand graduates who have a high level of expertise and interest in the EU.

Visit our websites: www.canterbury.ac.nz/ncre

Follow us:



Speakers

HE Nina Obermaier



EU Ambassador to New Zealand

Nina Obermaier has been the Ambassador of the European Union to New Zealand since November 2019. Ambassador Obermaier has worked at the European Union since 2001. From October 2016 to November 2019, she served as the adviser to the Deputy Chief Negotiator for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union. She was the Lead Negotiator for issues related to Ireland/North Ireland at the European Commission in Brussels.

Between July 2013 and October 2016, she was the Deputy Head of Division in the European External Action Service responsible for EU relations and negotiation with Switzerland. Prior to that she was the Deputy Head of Unit in charge of protection and crisis management at the European Commission in Brussels. From March 2003 until August 2009, she was the Desk Officer for Israel and the West Bank/Gaza at the European Commission and from February 2001 to February 2003, she was a policy developer in the field of information society at the European Commission.

Prior to her positions at the European Union, she was a senior producer and journalist for ARD (German Television) between March 1999 and December 2000.

Ambassador Obermaier was awarded an M.A. in European Studies from the College of Europe Natolin, Poland. In addition, she has an M.A. in Political Science and History from the University of Hanover in Germany, and the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom.

Sarah Pallett, MP



Member of Parliament for Ilam

Sarah was honoured to be elected in 2020 to serve as the Member of Parliament for Ilam. Sarah moved to Christchurch in 2004 and before being elected as the MP for Ilam she worked as a midwifery lecturer at Ara Institute of Technology, having previously worked as a community midwife.

Sarah has a strong sense of social justice, and is dedicated to ensuring that everyone has the same opportunities irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, or background.

Before entering Parliament, Sarah was Chair of Labour Women's Council and was the co-founder of the Canterbury Women's branch of the Labour Party. Currently, Sarah sits on the Health Select Committee, the Petitions Committee, and is the Chair of Labour Wāhine Caucus. She is a member of the New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development, and the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians New Zealand Group. Sarah also belongs to the Health, Wellbeing, and Social Services Caucus Committee, the Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Trade Caucus Committee, and sits on the Parliamentary Service Commission Artworks Sub Committee.

Prof. Martin Holland Director, National Centre for Research on Europe, Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury



Prof. Martin Holland holds New Zealand’s only Jean Monnet Chair (ad personam), is Director of New Zealand’s National Centre for Research on Europe at the University of Canterbury.

He is internationally recognised for his work on EU Development policy, CFSP and Perceptions of the EU. He has held a number of notable awards, including: Jean Monnet Fellowship, European University Institute, Florence; Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship, Freiburg; Rockefeller Bellagio Fellowship; Jean Monnet Chair of European Integration and International Relations

Professor Holland has managed numerous large EU projects, the most recent being the EU Indo Pacific Research Network (€1m 2023-25); he is also the Secretary-General of the EU Studies Association of the Asia-Pacific. Over his 40-year career, he has authored or edited twenty-six books.

Dr Serena Kelly Senior Lecturer, Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury

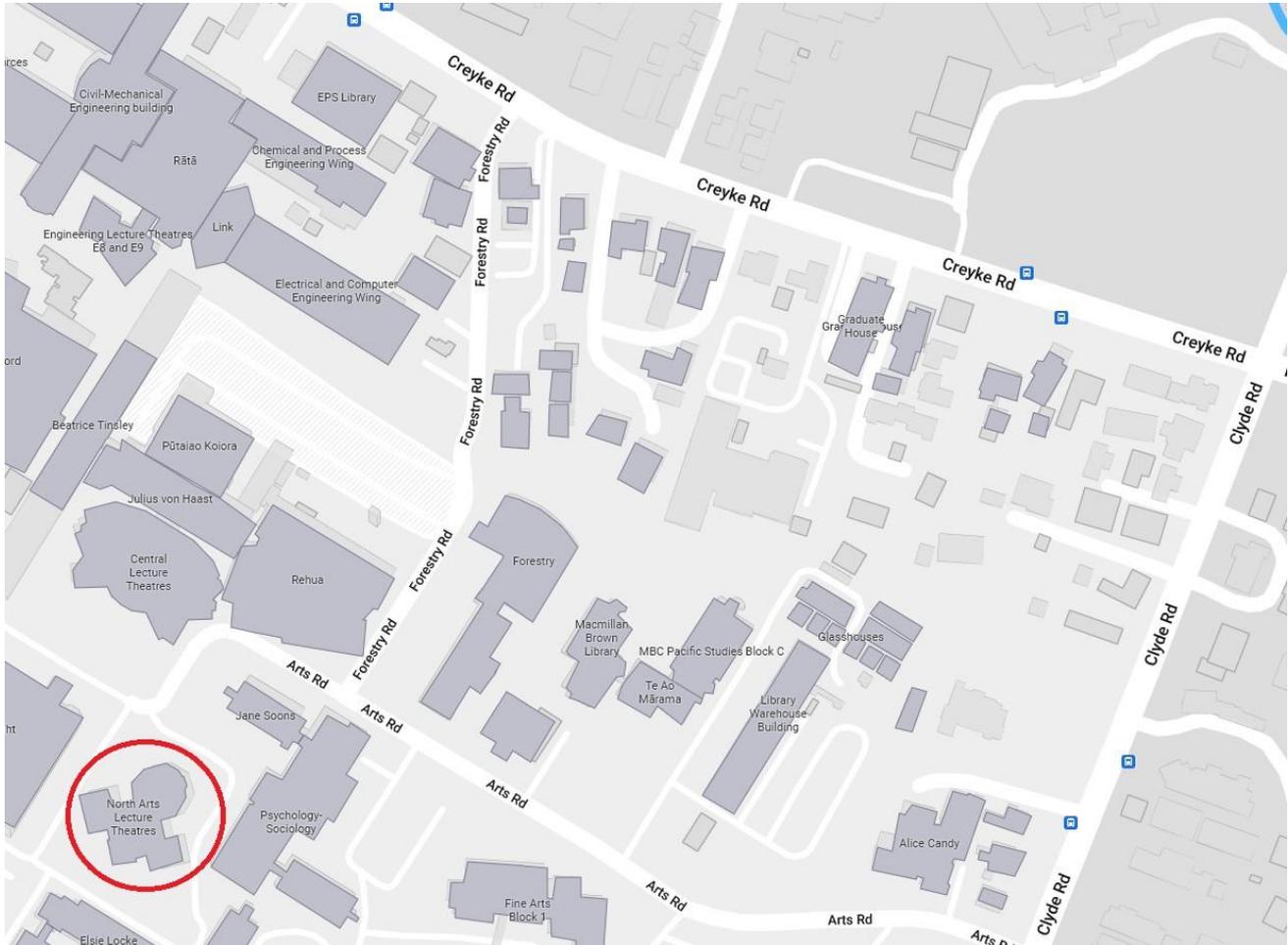


Dr Serena Kelly is a senior lecturer in the politics of the European Union, President of the European Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand, and chair of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Christchurch. Her current research examines the impact of BREXIT on New Zealand, the proposed EU NZ Free Trade Agreement as well as the visibility of the EU’s development policies in the Pacific.

Conference Details

Where?

University of Canterbury – registrations in lecture theatre A1 (North Arts Lecture Theatres).



When?

Monday, 28 August 2023:

- Formal registration: 8:30am (North Arts Lecture Theatre A1)
- Quiz night and pizza dinner: 4:30pm–6.30pm (students will be escorted to the Arts car park off Clyde Road for pick-up by guardians)

Tuesday, 29 August 2023:

- Registration: 08:30am (North Arts Lecture Theatre A1)
- Programme activities: 9.00am–3.00pm

Catering Provided

- Monday: morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, and optional pizza dinner
- Friday: morning tea and lunch
- If you have indicated any dietary requirements in the registration form, please see a staff member who will point out the location of your food.

What to bring

- Face mask
- Pens and notepads
- Water bottle
- Any required medication
- Any additional research you have done / proposed amendments to the directive
- Devices are permitted **only for research** at the event

What to wear

- Smart / business attire (ties not necessary) or school uniform

Sign-in / out

- For health and safety purposes, all students are required to sign in and out on the manual register each day at the North Arts Lecture Theatre A1 registration desk

How to prepare

To get the most out of the Model Council of the European Union you will need to do some preparation before arriving. In this Model Council of the EU event, you will be a ministerial representative of an EU Member State. Being informed about your Member State, its position, and the topics negotiated will make you more confident and at ease when presenting your viewpoints. If you are confused or uncertain at any point, please consult with the Model EU Assistants: they are there to help.

I. Country

Research your country's overall position on *Climate Change and the Green Transition*, and the political leaning of its government; this will enable you to present your country's position on the draft Directive.

You will find basic introductions to the Member States, as well as some suggested sources of further information, toward the end of this handbook.

II. Draft Directive

Read the draft Directive and try to understand what every word means. There is a Glossary at the end of this booklet that contains many useful explanations, and the Model EU Assistants can answer any queries on the day.

Remember: short and sharp speeches are more effective and leave more time for debate. They get your point across in the most direct fashion and are likely to have the greatest effect.

Questions

The event contact person is Dr Serena Kelly. You can get in touch with her via email serena.kelly@canterbury.ac.nz or phone (03) 3695355.

Student Code of Conduct

We expect this event to be an open, positive and engaging event for everyone involved. By attending the Model EU, you agree to accept and abide by the following:

1. Student safety is of paramount importance. Be very careful at all times and during all activities. Watch out for each other;
2. Remember you are representing your school. Your actions will affect everyone. Do good things. Encourage each other;
3. Follow all instructions and obey all rules. Do not put yourself or others in danger;
4. Look after your own possessions as well as the facilities you are using;
5. No theft, lies, physical or emotional violence or vandalism;
6. No smoking or alcohol or drugs;
7. No bad language or put-downs;
8. Obey the directions of the event organisers and facilitators at all times;
9. If students are causing serious problems the emergency contact will be notified and may be requested to remove the student immediately. The school will also be informed. If necessary, the student will be sent home at their parent's expense.

Timetable

Day One:

Time	Programme	Staff and Guest Presence
8:30	Registrations (A1 lecture theatre)	UC Staff + Model EU facilitators
9:05	Welcome to the University of Canterbury	Prof. Kevin Watson, <i>Amo Matua</i> <i>Executive Dean Arts</i>
9:10	Introduction to the European Union and topic	Dr Serena Kelly, Kathryn Lee
9:40	Rules of Procedure and Voting	Dr Serena Kelly, Xavier Dickason
10:00	Morning Tea	
10:30	Regional Group Session	Model EU facilitators
12:00	Lunch	
12:40	Keynotes	HE Nina Obermaier Sarah Pallett, MP
13:40	Council Session One	Model EU facilitators
15:00	Afternoon Tea	
15:20	Council Session Two	Model EU facilitators
16:00	Regional Group Day Debrief	Model EU facilitators
16:30	Home time, or optional social pizza night	UC Staff + Model EU facilitators
<i>Students leaving at this point need to sign out.</i>		
18:30	Pizza night concludes	

Day Two:

Time	Programme	Staff and Guest Presence
8:30	Registrations	All UC staff
9:00	Welcome Back	Dr Serena Kelly
9:10	Council Session Three	Model EU facilitators
10:40	Morning tea	
11:10	Regional Group Session	Model EU facilitators
12:00	Lunch	
12:40	Free Negotiations	
13:00	Plenary Session (QMV Vote)	Model EU facilitators
14:45	Wrap-up and Goodbye	Dr Serena Kelly
15:00	Depart	

Introduction to the European Union

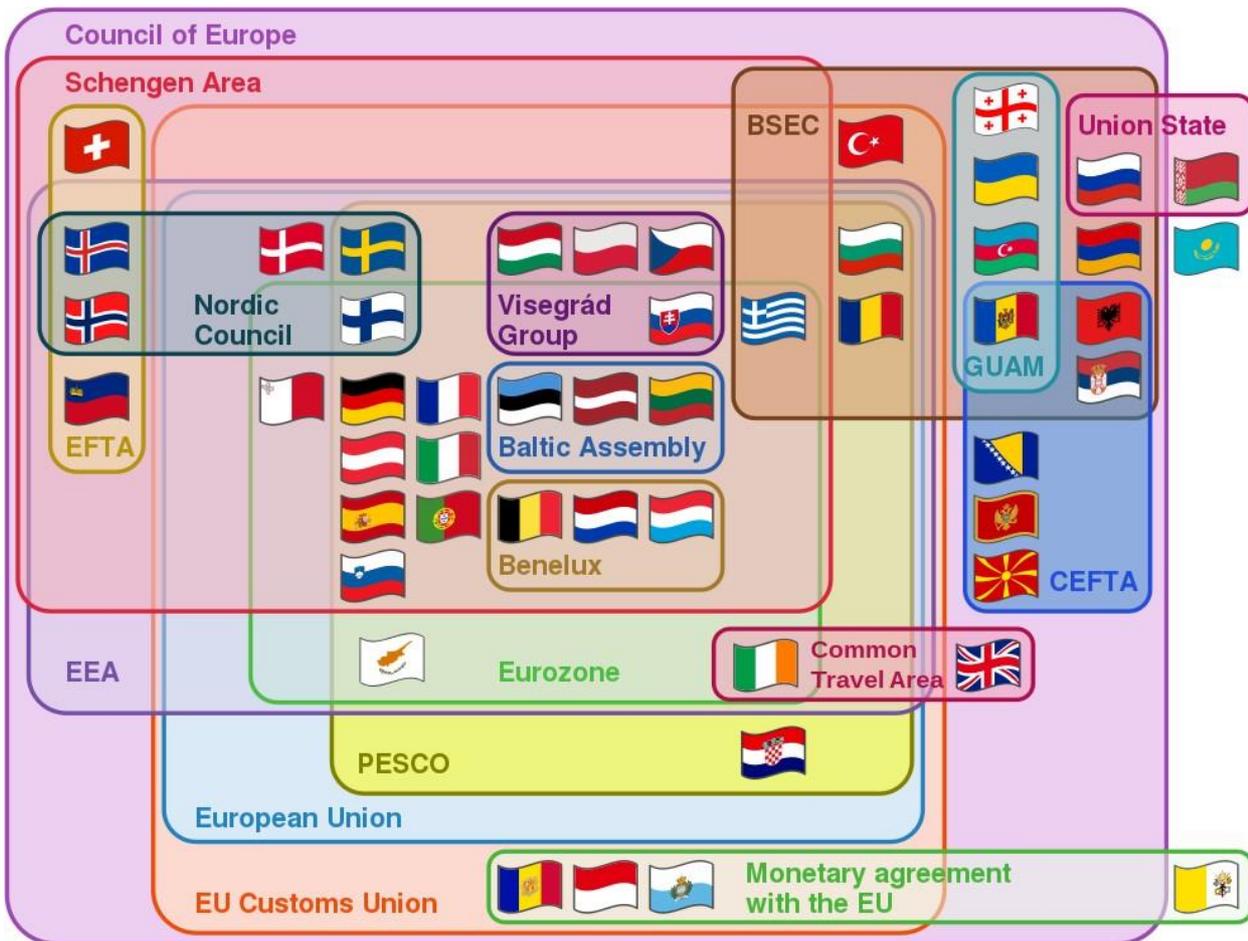
What is the difference between the EU, Eurozone and Europe?

The *European Union (EU)* is a politico-economic union of 27 Member States. Geographically, the continent of Europe consists of different countries, including those 27 and many others. Not all countries in Europe are members of the European Union, for example: Switzerland, Norway, Albania, and Armenia, amongst others.

The *eurozone* (preferred: euro area) is a group of EU Member States that share the euro as their common currency and the single monetary policy conducted by the European Central Bank. Today the euro area is made up of 20 countries out of 27 EU Member States. That is why, for example, Germany and France use the Euro and Sweden uses the Swedish Krona (SEK).

Relationships Between European Organisations and Agreements

(*n.b.*: on 16 March 2022, Russia was expelled from the Council of Europe. This Euler diagram was produced prior to that date)



A short history of the EU

After the Second World War, between 1945 and 1950, European state leaders including Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Alcide de Gasperi and Winston Churchill set about launching Europe into a new era. In order to avoid future war, it was argued that new structures would need to be created in Western Europe based on shared interests and founded upon the rule of law and equality for all countries.

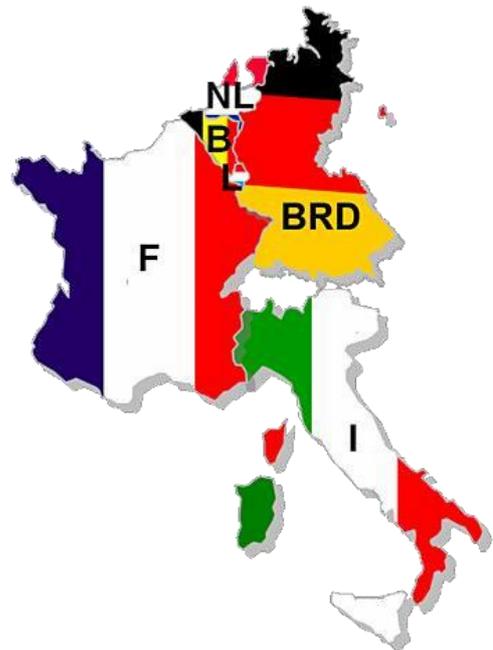
Robert Schuman (French Foreign Minister) took up an idea originally conceived by Jean Monnet and, on 9 May 1950, he proposed the Schuman Declaration to establish the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The ECSC combined Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands' coal and steel production under one authority, therefore making it difficult to go to war with one another. Under the *Treaty of Rome*, this arrangement later evolved into the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957.

In 1992, the EU's formation of the European Single Market was another big development for the regional grouping. The Single Market refers to the EU as one territory, without internal borders or other regulatory obstacles in order to enable the free movement of goods and services between the individual Member States (MS). It is argued that the European Single Market helps to stimulate competition and trade, improve efficiency, raise quality, and help cut prices for citizens.

In 1993, the *Maastricht Treaty* created the European Union (EU) opening the way to further political integration. The Maastricht Treaty is based on three pillars: the European Communities, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Justice and Home Affairs Council (JHA) which deals with judicial cooperation in criminal matters. Maastricht introduced the concept of European citizenship and the beginnings of the Schengen area, reinforced the powers of the European Parliament, and launched Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

The *Lisbon Treaty* came into force in 2009 and simplified and streamlined the institutions that govern the EU. For example, the Treaty introduced the European Council President and created the post of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Six Founding States of the ECSC



Timeline of significant events

1951	European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) is set up by the six founding members: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands
1957	Treaties of Rome: setting up the European Economic Community (EEC)
1973	Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom join
1979	First Direct Elections to the European Parliament
1981	Greece joins
1986	Spain and Portugal join, the Single European Act is signed
1993	Treaty of Maastricht which creates the European Union
1995	Austria, Finland, and Sweden join
1999	Treaty of Amsterdam
2002	The Euro comes into circulation
2004	Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia join
2007	Bulgaria and Romania join
2009	The Lisbon Treaty comes into force, providing the EU with its institutions as we know them today
2013	Croatia joins
2017	The United Kingdom triggers article 50 of the Lisbon treaty after its 2016 referendum on leaving the EU
2020	The United Kingdom officially leaves the EU at 23:00 on 31 January
2022	On 23 June, Ukraine and Moldova are officially recognised as candidates for membership

EU institutions in brief

The EU's unique institutional set-up includes (but is not limited to) the European Council, European Parliament, the European Commission, and the Council of the European Union, each of which have different areas of focus:

- The **European Council** brings together national and EU-level leaders. It sets the EU's broad priorities and political direction;
- Directly elected MEPs represent EU citizens in the **European Parliament**. The Parliament is a co-legislator (alongside the Council of the European Union) in most, but not all, policy areas;
- The interests of the EU are promoted by the **European Commission**, whose members are appointed by national governments;
- Governments represent their country's national interests in the **Council of the European Union** (often simply referred to as the Council). The Council is the primary legislative body, though shares this authority with the European Parliament in most, but not all, areas.

Council of the European Union

In the Council of the European Union, government ministers from each EU country meet to discuss, amend, and adopt laws, and coordinate policies. Ministers have the authority to commit their governments to the actions agreed on in the meetings. Ministers meeting in the Council have, in effect, two roles, which do not necessarily sit comfortably together:

1. They are responsible for presenting and defending their own national interest; and
2. They are expected to formulate common interests and a European perspective.

Council Configurations
Agriculture and Fisheries (AGRIFISH)
Competitiveness (COMPET)
Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN)
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport (EYCS)
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)
Environment (ENV)
Foreign Affairs (FAC)
General Affairs (GAC)
Justice and Home Affairs (JHA)
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy (TTE)

The Council is the key legislative decision-making body of the EU. It makes policy and legislative decisions, but shares legislative responsibility with the European Parliament in most (but not all) cases. The Council doesn't initiate legislation – it can only act on proposals made by the European Commission – though it often asks the Commission to make a proposal on a particular topic.

While the Council is a single institution, in practice it meets in 10 different configurations depending on the issue being discussed. The government ministers attending meetings also varies, depending on the configuration convened. If, for example, the Agriculture and Fisheries (AGRIFISH) configuration is meeting, then Member States will be represented by their ministers of agriculture, fisheries, rural affairs etc. If the Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN) Council is meeting, then finance ministers will attend.

The Council of the European Union comprises government ministers from the Member States. It is the key (but not the only) legislative decision-making body in the EU.

You will be meeting in one of five Council configurations, each of which will be negotiating a different section of the draft Directive

- ❖ Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)– *Sub-Directive 1*
 - ❖ Environment Council (ENV)– *Sub-Directive 2*
 - ❖ Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE)– *Sub-Directive 3*
 - ❖ Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH) – *Sub-Directive 4*
 - ❖ Competitiveness Council (COMPET) – *Sub-Directive 5*
-

FOREIGN AFFAIRS COUNCIL (FAC)

The Foreign Affairs Council comprises the foreign ministers of the EU member states. However, depending on the topics on the agenda, the Council also brings together:

- Defence ministers (when discussing common security and defence policy)
- Development ministers (when discussing development cooperation)
- Trade ministers (when discussing the common commercial policy)

The main role of the Foreign Affairs Council is to ensure the unity, consistency and effectiveness of the EU's external action, be these foreign and security policy related, or those focused on trade or development. It is, in other words, concerned with the external face of the European Union.

It is very important that you know the position and goals of your country with regards to the topics being negotiated. Decisions taken by the Council of the EU will have a direct effect on the laws and policies of your country.

In preparation for your role, we suggest that you have a look through the Foreign Affairs Council's website – it will help you to shape policy on the day.

FAC online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/fac/>

Sample FAC meeting: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2022/05/16/>

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL (ENV)

The ENVIRONMENT Council comprises the environment ministers of the EU Member States. It is responsible for EU environment policy, including environmental protection, the prudent use of resources and the protection of human health. It also deals with international environmental issues, especially in the area of climate change. In this role, it is responsible for decisions relating to the protection of natural habitats, keeping air and water clean, ensuring proper waste disposal, improving knowledge about toxic chemicals, and helping businesses move towards a sustainable economy. Internationally, it works to get EU environmental standards reflected in international environmental and climate change agreements.

It is very important that you know the position and goals of your country with regards to the topics being negotiated. Decisions taken by the Council of the EU will have a direct effect on the laws and policies of your country.

In preparation for your role, we suggest that you have a look through the General Affairs Council's website – it will help you to shape policy on the day.

ENV online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/env/>

Sample ENV meeting: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/env/2023/06/20/>

TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY COUNCIL (TTE)

Depending on the issues to be discussed, the Transport, Telecommunications and Competitiveness Council brings together the transport, energy or telecommunications ministers of the EU Member States. In relation to transport policy, TTE works toward common rules for international transport, conditions for transport operators, and measures to improve passenger rights and transport safety. One of the key aims is to put into place sustainable transport systems, where energy consumption is low, but where mobility for users is improved through better transport times and routes.

In the area of energy, TTE works on legislation on the functioning of energy markets, to ensure that energy supplies are secure, to promote energy efficiency, new and renewable energies, and to promote the interconnection of energy networks.

In the telecommunications space, TTE seeks to establish guidelines on telecommunications networks and their interoperability, to improve competition and cybersecurity, and to foster innovation in the telecommunications sector.

It is very important that you know the position and goals of your country with regards to the topics being negotiated. Decisions taken by the Council of the EU will have a direct effect on the laws and policies of your country.

In preparation for your role, we suggest that you have a look through the Foreign Affairs Council's website – it will help you to shape policy on the day.

TTE online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/tte/>

Sample TTE meeting: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/tte/2023/06/19/>

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES COUNCIL (AGRIFISH)

The Agriculture and Fisheries Council comprises the agriculture/fisheries ministers of the EU Member States. It addresses a number of policy areas relating to the production of food, rural development and the management of fisheries. This has included the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), rules on the internal market for agriculture, forestry, organic production, quality of production, and food and animal feed safety. Measures relating to CAP have aimed to increase agricultural productivity, ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, stabilise markets, assure the availability of supplies and ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

In terms of fisheries policy, the Council addresses the setting of annual Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas for each species, and on the allocation of fishing opportunities. A key challenge is to make fisheries more environmentally sustainable and more economically viable, while addressing issues such as over-fishing and fleet overcapacity.

It is very important that you know the position and goals of your country with regards to the topics being negotiated. Decisions taken by the Council of the EU will have a direct effect on the laws and policies of your country.

In preparation for your role, we suggest that you have a look through the General Affairs Council's website – it will help you to shape policy on the day.

AGRIFISH online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/agrifish/>

Sample AGRIFISH meeting: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/agrifish/2023/06/26-27/>

COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL (COMPET)

Depending on the issues to be discussed, the Competitiveness Council comprises the ministers of the EU Member States responsible for trade, economy, industry, research and innovation, or space. The focus of COMPET is on innovation and growth. In this respect it focuses on four key policy areas: internal market; industry; research and Innovation; and space. In the internal market area, COMPET works to remove barriers to trade within the EU. On industrial policy, it works to boost EU industrial productivity and growth. It also seeks to improve the business environment for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), that are the backbone of the EU economy. On research, innovation and space, the COMEPT works to strengthen the scientific and technological base of European industry, boosting its international competitiveness and driving growth and jobs. It also works with the European Space Agency to develop European space policy.

It is very important that you know the position and goals of your country with regards to the topics being negotiated. Decisions taken by the Council of the EU will have a direct effect on the laws and policies of your country.

In preparation for your role, we suggest that you have a look through the General Affairs Council's website – it will help you to shape policy on the day.

COMPET online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/compet/>

Sample COMPET meeting: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/compet/2023/05/22-23/>

How Decision-Taking in the Council of the European Union Works

Depending on the issue under discussion, the Council of the EU takes its decisions by:

- Simple majority (14 Member States vote in favour);
- Qualified majority (55% of Member States, representing at least 65% of the EU population, vote in favour);
- Unanimous vote (all votes are in favour).

The Council can vote only if a majority of its members are present. A member of the Council may only act on the behalf of one other member.

The Council can vote on a legislative act eight weeks after the draft act has been sent to national parliaments for examination. The national parliaments must decide whether the draft legislation complies with the principle of subsidiarity. Earlier voting is only possible in special urgent cases.

Voting is initiated by the President of the Council. A member of the Council or the Commission can also initiate the voting procedure, but a majority of the Council's members have to approve this initiative.

The results of Council votes are automatically made public when the Council acts in its capacity as legislator. If a member wants to add an explanatory note to the vote, this note will also be made public, if a legal act is adopted. In other cases, when explanations of votes are not automatically published, it can be made public on the request of the author.

COUNCIL VOTING FOR THE MODEL EU EVENT

Two voting procedures will be used for the Model EU event, with differing mechanisms for **Council Sessions** and for the final **Plenary Session**:

- **Council Sessions:** *Simple Majority* (14 Member States vote in favour);
- **Plenary Session:** *Qualified Majority* (55% of Member States [15 Member States], representing at least 65% of the EU population [see table below], vote in favour).

Important note: under Council voting rules, an 'abstention' counts as a 'no' vote.

Member State	Population Percentage	Member State	Population Percentage
 Austria	2.00	 Italy	13.32
 Belgium	2.60	 Latvia	0.42
 Bulgaria	1.53	 Lithuania	0.63
 Croatia	0.86	 Luxembourg	0.14
 Cyprus	0.20	 Malta	0.12
 Czechia	2.36	 Netherlands	3.96
 Denmark	1.31	 Poland	8.41
 Estonia	0.30	 Portugal	2.31
 Finland	1.24	 Romania	4.25
 France	15.16	 Slovakia	1.21
 Germany	18.59	 Slovenia	0.47
 Greece	2.37	 Spain	10.60
 Hungary	2.17	 Sweden	2.33
 Ireland	1.13		

BLOCKING MINORITY

Under the Qualified Majority voting procedure used in the plenary session, it is possible to build a **blocking minority** to prevent a vote being passed. Under QMV, a vote requires two thresholds to be crossed:

- 55% of Member States (15) must vote in favour; AND
- They must represent 65% of the EU's population.

You can prevent a vote passing by stopping one of these threshold conditions being met. However, **a blocking minority must always include at least four Member States**. This means that the big three Member States cannot form a blocking minority alone, even though they would prevent the population threshold being met.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING SUPPORT

The differing voting mechanisms in the Council Sessions and in the Plenary Session mean that **you must always think ahead**. While you may be able to cobble together a simple majority in the Council Session, this will not be enough for the final vote at Plenary. It will therefore be necessary to build the largest support base you can. This may mean trading support with other Member States. It may also likely mean watering down your proposals to get other Member States to agree. The questions to need to ask yourself are:

- What do I want to achieve?
- What am I willing to give up, or trade for it?
- At what point is my proposal been watered down too far for me to support it?
- Is it better to get something agreed, even if it is not precisely what I want, than to get nothing agreed?

REGIONAL GROUPS FOR THE MODEL EU EVENT

During 'Regional Group Sessions', representatives will be divided into regional subgroups of (broadly) like-minded Member States to attempt to coordinate common positions.

Regional Groups			
Group 1: Western Europe	Group 2: Southern Europe	Group 3: Scandinavia + Baltics	Group 4: Eastern Europe
Austria	Croatia	Denmark	Bulgaria
Belgium	Cyprus	Estonia	Czechia
France	Greece	Finland	Hungary
Germany	Italy	Latvia	Poland
Ireland	Malta	Lithuania	Romania
Luxembourg	Portugal	Sweden	Slovakia
Netherlands	Slovenia		
	Spain		
Voting Weight: 43.59%	Voting Weight: 30.25%	Voting Weight: 6.23%	Voting Weight: 19.93%

Introduction to the topic: Climate Change

What are Global Warming and Climate Change?

While the terms global warming and climate change are often used interchangeably, global warming is only one aspect of climate change. Global warming refers to the long-term rise of temperatures worldwide due to the effects of the burning of fossil fuels and the release of greenhouse ('heat trapping') gases into the atmosphere.

Global Warming refers to the long-term rise in global temperatures caused by fossil fuel and greenhouse gas use.

Climate Change refers to the significant changes to our planet caused by global warming.

Climate change refers to the broader changes that are happening to our planet as a consequence of anthropogenic ('caused by humans') global warming. These changes include severe weather events, accelerated melting of polar ice caps, shrinkage of glaciers, thawing permafrost, rising sea levels and so on, which have a significant impact on life (human, animal and plant) on this planet.

CAUSES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Humans are increasingly impacting the earth's temperature and therefore climate change. Through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil or gas) to generate power or to fuel transportation, the clearing of forests, the farming of livestock and the production of food, enormous amounts of greenhouse gases are added to those already naturally occurring in the atmosphere, increasing the greenhouse effect and global warming.

While many greenhouse gases occur naturally, human activities are increasing the concentration of key gases in the atmosphere.

While many greenhouse gases occur naturally, human activities are increasing the concentration of key gases in the atmosphere, including carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O) and fluorinated gases (F-gases). CO₂ produced by human activities is the largest contributor to global warming, with CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere now 50% higher than the pre-industrial level.¹

Human Activities Increasing Greenhouse Gas Emissions	
Action	Effect
Generating Electricity and Heat	Most electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels such as oil, gas or coal. In addition, just under half of heating systems sold run directly on oil, gas or coal. ² The burning of such fossil fuels releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide into the atmosphere. Together, electricity generation and heating account for 40% of global greenhouse gas emissions. ³
Transportation	Burning fossil fuels to power transportation is one of the main causes of greenhouse gas emissions. The transportation sector accounts for around 37% of global emissions. ⁴
Food Production	Food production causes emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gases, including through the clearing of land for grazing and pasture, the digestive processes of cattle and sheep, the production and use of fertilisers and manure for growing crops, and the use of energy to run farm equipment or fishing boats (usually with fossil fuels). Approximately 35% of global greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to food production. ⁵

¹ NOAA (2022) Carbon dioxide now more than 50% higher than pre-industrial levels. <https://www.noaa.gov/news-release/carbon-dioxide-now-more-than-50-higher-than-pre-industrial-levels> (accessed 6 July 2023).

² MIT Climate Portal (2022) Heating and Cooling. <https://climate.mit.edu/explainers/heating-and-cooling> (accessed 6 July 2023).

³ IEA (2021) Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Energy Data Explorer. <https://www.iea.org/data-and-statistics/data-tools/greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-energy-data-explorer> (accessed 6 July 2023).

⁴ IEA (2021) Transport: Improving the sustainability of passenger and freight transport. <https://www.iea.org/topics/transport> (accessed 6 July 2023).

⁵ Xiaoming Xu and Atul Jain (2021) Food production generates more than a third of manmade greenhouse gas emissions – a new framework tells us how much comes from crops, countries and regions. *The Conversation*, 14 September. <https://theconversation.com/food-production-generates-more-than-a-third-of-manmade-greenhouse-gas-emissions-a-new-framework-tells-us-how-much-comes-from-crops-countries-and-regions-167623> (accessed 6 July 2023).

Deforestation	Trees help to regulate the climate by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Cutting down forest to create farm or pastureland, or for other reasons, limits nature’s ability to keep emissions out of the atmosphere. Additionally, the burning of wood releases the carbon stored in trees. Approximately 12% of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions are attributed to deforestation and forest degradation. ⁶
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CLIMATE CHANGE DENIAL

While the science of climate change is settled, a strand of climate change scepticism or climate change denial exists. Climate sceptics give the appearance of scientific controversy around climate change, when in reality there is none. This has significant implications for addressing global warming and climate change, impacting the efficiency and speed with which the issue can be addressed, contributing to the generally low level of public concern in particular countries, and to government inaction.

Scepticism about the issue of climate change has been expressed, among others, in the following ways (all of which have been prominently refuted by the scientific community):

- That there is no consensus within the scientific community that climate change is real;
- That rises in temperatures and other climate crises have occurred previously in history, and prior to industrialisation. There is natural variability in the climate – as a consequence of sunspot activity etc. – and human factors have very little to do with this. This is a normal part of the cycle;
- That there is no settled science on climate change – scientists are drumming up fear about climate change in order to serve their own financial interests (generating research funding etc.).

Questions concerning responsibility for addressing climate change have also been expressed, among others, in the following ways:

- That climate change does not affect all countries evenly: some do not feel the climate impacts that other countries do, and therefore do not see that it is important enough to prioritise in policy;
- That countries with higher populations and larger contributions to emissions should take greater responsibility for addressing the issue;
- That some countries rely on agriculture, fishing, and forestry industries and cannot afford to decrease their industries without significantly diminishing their economy;
- That often green friendly alternatives cost more or are not easily available;
- That more pressing issues such as conflict, crime, or healthcare have priority above climate change.

The European Union and Climate Change

The EU in the last 5 years has significantly increased its focus on creating common climate change legislation and goals. There has been a proposal to collate climate change themed policies under the EU ‘Green Deal.’ The Green Deal was brought forward to the EU Council by the EU Commission and the target of making the EU climate-neutral by 2050.

Policies under this umbrella range from:

- Farming and food production
- Clean energy
- Green economy
- Waste and recycling
- Biodiversity and forests

For a more detailed overview of these policies please visit this website:

⁶World Bank (2023) *Forests and Landscapes*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/forests> (accessed 6 July 2023).

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/green-deal/>

Consultation on these policies within the EU institutions has only just begun to be fully enter institutions due to delays introduced by Covid-19 and the prioritization of the war in Ukraine which have dominated the Council of European Union's time. The main recent policy focus has been the European Climate Law which addresses reducing carbon emissions and renewable energy as a consequence of the energy crisis sparked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The conversation around renewable energy has been fast tracked as Russia supplied a vast amount of this gas and controls gas pipelines upon which the EU was reliant. Switching to renewable energy has since become a more promising option as part of rethinking of European energy supply.

While previously climate policy in the European Union did not possess the same emphasis as it does today, the environmental goals and actions nevertheless have a long history in the EU, dating back to the 1970s. The first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm in 1972, which established the UN Environment Programme, offered something of a kickstart to environmental governance initiatives. In Europe, this led to the first EU **Environment Action Programme** being initiated in 1973 – the first common environmental policy of the European Union. Since then, the framework has been revised and updated seven times, with the **8th Environment Action Programme** entering into force in May 2022, which will guide EU environmental policy through until 2030.⁷

Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) – one of the constitutive treaties of the EU – sets the goals of the Union policy on the environment and provides guidelines on how to prepare them. This is especially important in matters of climate change, as this topic requires the constant adjustment of policies on how to reach the goals of the Union Policy on environmental issues.

Article 191 (1) TFEU

“Union policy on the environment shall contribute to pursuit of the following objectives:

- preserving, protecting, and improving the quality of the environment,*
- protecting human health,*
- prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources,*
- promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change.”*

MAIN GREENHOUSE GAS SOURCE SECTORS IN THE EU

As you can see in Figure 1, the EU's greenhouse gas emissions result largely from the combustion of fuel for energy supply. The share of energy supply in total EU emissions has decreased over the years, but remains the dominant polluting sector, followed by domestic transport and industry.

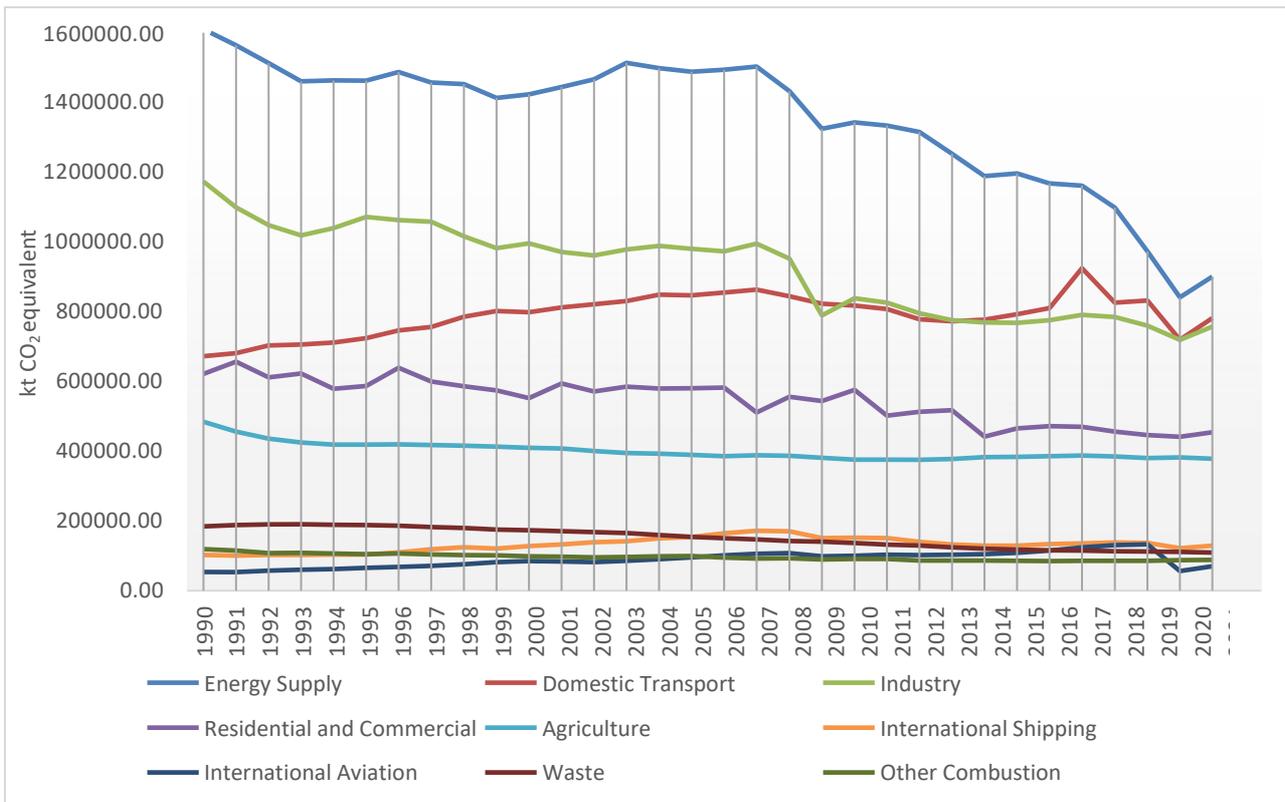
The combustion of fossil fuels for energy generation, including for domestic transport, international shipping and international aviation, remains the main source of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe and globally. Globally, fossil fuel combustion accounts for two-thirds of emissions⁸, with the European Union one of the top emitters (see Figure 2). As a result, energy generation from fossil fuels (including for transport) and climate policies are closely linked.

The energy sector is a key contributor to climate change, accounting for more than two-thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions.

⁷You can read more about the 8th EAP here: https://environment.ec.europa.eu/strategy/environment-action-programme-2030_en (accessed 7 July 2023).

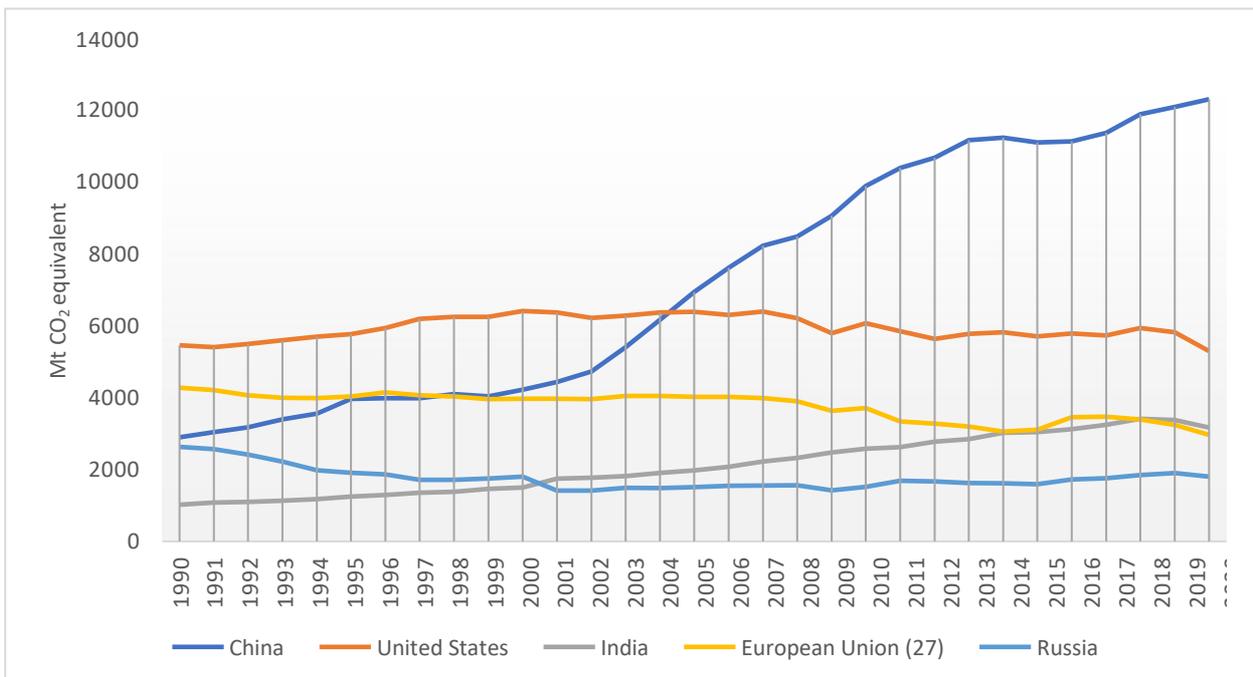
⁸Walton, Mary (2020) *If the energy sector is to tackle climate change, it must also think about water.* <https://www.iea.org/commentaries/if-the-energy-sector-is-to-tackle-climate-change-it-must-also-think-about-water> (accessed 7 July 2023).

Figure 1: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Volume in the European Union 1990–2021, by Sector
(in kilotonnes of CO₂ equivalent)



Data source: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/data/data-viewers/greenhouse-gases-viewer>

Figure 2: Top Five Global Greenhouse Gas Emitters, 1990–2020
(in megatonnes of CO₂ equivalent)



Data source: <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ghg-emissions>

EU Climate Action

Given the position of the European Union as one of the most significant global emitters of greenhouse gases, significant pressure bears upon it to address what is the root cause of climate change. In this respect, the European Union has set itself the goal of exercising leadership in the climate space, both in reducing emissions and in terms of mitigation and adaptation.

The European Union has played an active role in international climate negotiations, and in setting global targets for the reduction of greenhouse gases. It has also set ambitious targets of its own under the *European Green Deal*,⁹ through which it aims to become the first climate neutral continent by 2050.

We are determined to tackle climate change and turn it into an opportunity for the European Union.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen

THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL AND EU CLIMATE TARGETS

The *European Green Deal*, which was approved in 2020, is a policy framework that sets the aim of achieving **climate neutrality for the European Union by 2050**. Climate neutrality means emissions will yield no net impact on the climate, and includes warming effects that do not come from carbon. The intent of the climate neutrality target is that, by 2050, EU emissions will be at a level that is able to be effectively absorbed by nature. This accords with Article 4 of the 2015 Paris Agreement, under which signatories committed to reaching a balance between emissions and nature's ability to cope, as soon as was possible.

Climate neutrality is no longer a question of choice, it is beyond doubt a necessity.

European Council President Charles Michel

Under the umbrella of the European Green Deal, a number of other laws have been passed to set interim targets toward the final goal of climate neutrality.

European Climate Law (2021)

- At least 55% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (from 1990 levels).

Renewable Energy Directive (2018)

- At least 32% share for renewable energy in EU energy consumption by 2030.

Energy Efficiency Directive (2018)

- At least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.

Fit for 55 Initiative (currently under negotiation)

- At least 42.5% share for renewable energy in EU energy consumption by 2030, with possible further increase of 2.5%.

THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: KEY POLICY AREAS

Under the *European Green Deal*, work is being done in a number of policy areas toward the 2050 target of climate neutrality. Below is a selection of these.

Food Production

Working towards a shift to a sustainable food system, that is environmentally sustainable, and improves the health and social well-being of EU citizens. This includes working towards food security, and reducing the

⁹ For further information, see: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en (accessed 7 July 2023).

environmental footprint of food production. For more information, see the EU *Farm to Fork* strategy:

https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy_en

Environment and Oceans

Effort is being made to protect biodiversity, reduce pollution (air, water and soil), ensure that fisheries are managed sustainably, and improve waste management. Restoring and protecting biodiversity is seen as important to the absorption and storage of carbon which would otherwise be released into the atmosphere.

For more information, see: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/protecting-environment-and-oceans-green-deal_en

Transport

Transport accounts for around 25% of all EU greenhouse gas emissions. The EU has set a goal of a 90% reduction in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The EU aims to reduce the dependence of transport on fossil fuels by encouraging the uptake of zero-emissions cars and trucks, including through the building of the necessary infrastructure (e.g. charging stations), and provide efficient, safe and environmentally friendly alternative transport options (e.g. rail networks). For more information, see:

https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/transport-and-green-deal_en

Economic and Industrial Transformation

The EU will work toward building a ‘Circular Economy’, which focuses on modernising production, decarbonising the economy, and reducing and reusing waste (including no-longer exporting its waste products). The aim is to make the European Union a leader in low-emission technologies, sustainable products and services. Key to this is supporting research and innovation. For more information, see:

https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/green-deal-industrial-plan_en

Global Climate Leadership

Key to addressing global warming and climate change is cooperation with international partners, and in international fora (like the United Nations). Climate diplomacy and international cooperation to address climate change are central to the EU’s foreign policy agenda. Of particular significance is its work with developing countries, to provide financing for climate initiatives. In this respect, the EU has made commitments to sustainable development and climate action under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), both at home and abroad. In 2021, the EU and its Member States together committed more than €23 billion in climate finance to support developing countries.¹⁰ For more information, see:

https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/international-action-climate-change/international-climate-finance_en

THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL AND ENERGY

The production and use of energy accounts for more than 75% of the European Union’s greenhouse gas emissions. Decarbonisation of the energy system is therefore an essential for achieving climate neutrality. The *European Green Deal* focuses on a number of objectives to achieve a clean energy transition and enhance the quality of life of EU citizens:

- **Build interconnected energy systems** and better integrated grids to support renewable energy sources;
- Promote innovative technologies and **modern infrastructure**;
- Boost **energy efficiency** and **eco-design** of products;
- **Decarbonise the gas sector** and promote **smart integration** across sectors;

¹⁰ Council of the EU (2022) *Council approves 2021 climate finance figure*. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/10/28/council-approves-2021-climate-finance-figure/> (accessed 7 July 2023).

- **Empower consumers** and help EU countries to tackle energy poverty
- Promote **EU energy standards** and technologies at the global level;
- Develop the full potential of Europe’s **offshore wind** energy.

In 2021, just under 22% of energy consumed in the European Union came from renewable sources. While some Member States are well on track (see Figure 3) to achieve the 2030 target of 32.5% (soon to be revised up to 42.5%), overall the European Union will require a significant increase in renewables if it is to achieve its goals. Of the renewable energy produced in the EU, the majority came from wind and hydro sources (see Figure 4). Solar power is the fastest growing source of renewable energy.

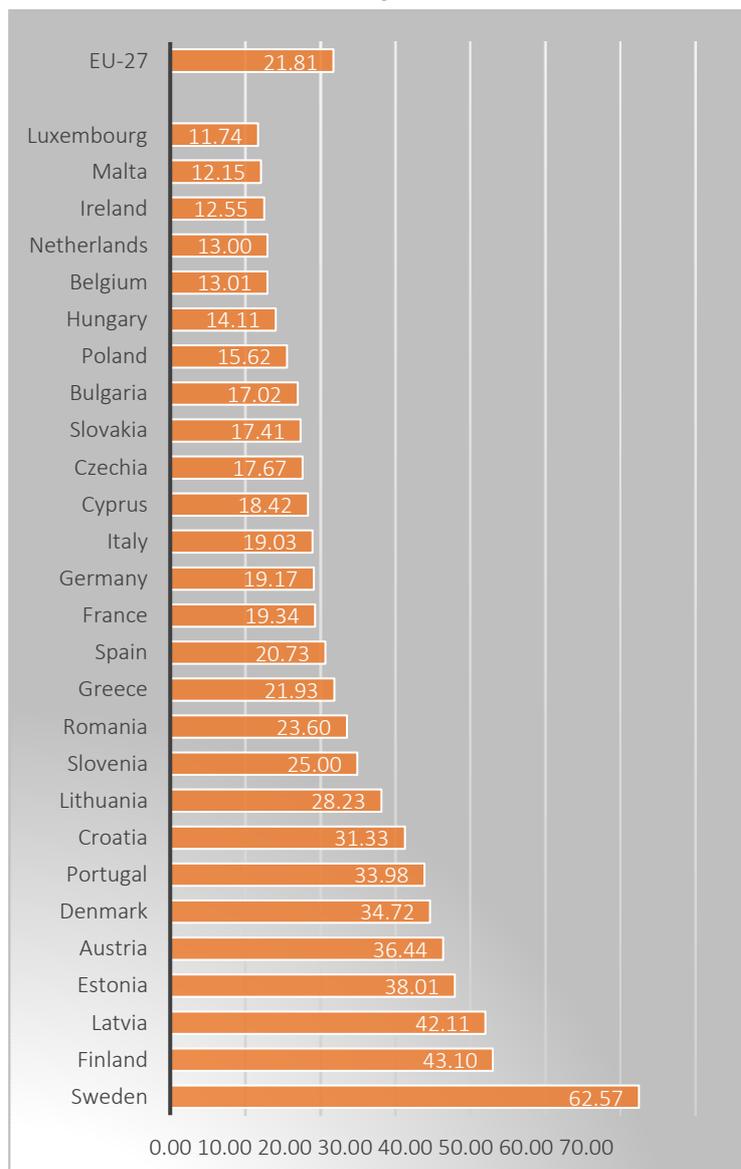
Renewable energy use within the EU is particularly significant in three important sectors:

- **Electricity generation:** 37.6% of all electricity generated in 2021 was from renewable sources;
- **Heating/cooling:** 22.9% of all heating and cooling in homes and businesses was powered by renewables in 2021. This includes the burning of biomass (e.g. wood pellets), ambient heat from heat pumps etc.;
- **Transport:** In the transport sector, 9.1% of energy used came from renewables, including liquid biofuels, hydrogen, green electricity etc.

REPowerEU

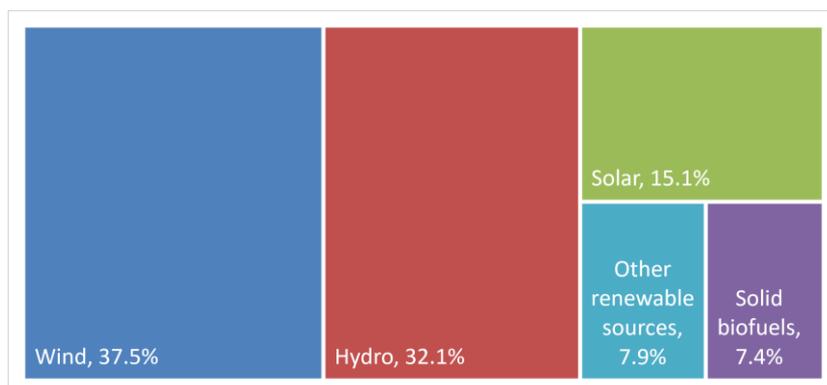
When Russia invaded Ukraine, the importance of the EU’s energy supply was raised. The dependence of the EU (some Member States more than others) on imported Russian gas exposed the Union’s economy to supply chain disruptions. The REPowerEU plan was launched in May 2022 to diversify supplies away from Russia, and to speed the transition to renewable forms of energy. For more information, see:

Figure 3: Share of Renewable Energy Source by Country, 2021



Data source: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/daviz/countries-breakdown-actual-res-progress-13>

Figure 4: Renewable Energy Sources in the EU



Data source: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/daviz/countries-breakdown-actual-res-progress-13>

Important questions for you to consider:

- ❖ *What is your Member State's position on climate change? How pressing does it see the issue as being? Are other priorities more urgent?*
 - ❖ *What is your Member State's view of the priority areas in addressing global warming and climate change?*
 - ❖ *What changes is your Member State willing/able to make to address global warming and climate change?*
 - ❖ *What is the income level of your citizens? How will they be affected by price increases (if any) to address global warming and climate change?*
 - ❖ *How dependant is your country on fossil fuels? How challenging will transition be? Does this impact your support for these measures? Will you need additional financial support from the EU?*
 - ❖ *What are the risks of failing to address climate change?*
 - ❖ *Who bears the greatest responsibility for addressing climate change?*
 - ❖ *Are solutions to global warming and climate change the responsibility of governments, or the private sector, or a combination of the two?*
 - ❖ *What are the consequences (intended and unintended) that you foresee from the proposed Directive?*
 - ❖ *Is the proposed Directive a solution to the problem, or does it just move the problem to another country?*
-

Draft Directive for the Council of the European Union

This draft Directive comprises the items you will be negotiating during the Model EU event. Representing your Member State's interests, you will seek to reach agreement (or not) on each item. **Remember, you are presenting the view of your Member State, not your own personal opinion** – these may (and often do) differ.

Directive 2023 of the European Council on Climate Change and Energy

Sub-Directive 1: Foreign Affairs Council

1. Oil and natural gas may only be imported into the EU from nations which have demonstrated a continual respect for human rights.
2. When allocating EU aid to third countries, projects focussing on adaptation to the effects of climate change shall be prioritised over projects focussing on mitigation.
3. In order to allow developing nations to implement independent climate adaptation and mitigation policies, the EU shall formally support efforts to forgive all international debt in Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs).
4. The EU recognises that the loss of land as a consequence of sea-level rise may cause island states to cease to exist in international law (which, among other things, requires them to have a permanent population and a defined territory). In order that such states may continue to provide a voice to their populations in the international system, the EU proposes that 'non-territorial states' be recognised in international law.
5. The EU shall contribute towards a Loss and Damage fund to assist nations affected by the ongoing impacts of climate change. Nations eligible to access this fund must either:
 - a) Have a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.600 or less; and
 - b) Have sustained damages equivalent to at least 20% of annual GDP due to climate change.
6. Multilateral and bilateral trade agreements negotiated between the EU and third countries are contingent on all parties meeting their Paris Agreement climate goals.
7. Aid given to Ukraine is conditional on Ukraine leaving their oil fields untapped until 2030.

Sub-Directive 2: Environment Council

1. All schools, restaurants and cafés must have one day a week where only vegetarian meals are provided.
 - a) Exemptions may be granted to restaurants where meat is included in over 80% of dishes.

2. All consumer product packaging must clearly indicate the amount of CO₂ created during the product's manufacturing process. Failure to do so may result in:
 - a) Fines of up to €40,000 per offence; and
 - b) Banning, within the EU, the sale of any products made by the manufacturer.

3. Individuals under the age of 25 who begin to work in the forestry sector shall receive a €20,000 lump-sum after one year of work.

4. Mining projects in EU Member States that may cause significant damage to the natural environment may only be approved if they will supply strategic raw materials.

5. Efforts to restore natural habitats in terrestrial, coastal, freshwater and marine ecosystems must prioritise:
 - a) Areas easiest to restore; and
 - b) Areas connected to existing habitats.

6. All cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants must have at least 35% tree cover by 2030.

7. All garments sold in the EU must be made with biodegradable fibres by the year 2030.

Sub-Directive 3: Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

1. All new and second-hand consumer vehicles sold within the EU by 2035 must be electric vehicles.
2. The EU will subsidise a two-year trial period of half-price public transport to increase the number of public transport users.
 - a) This subsidy will not extend to rail transport.
3. In order to economically support the aviation industry in the transition to synthetic fuels, fuel-efficient aircraft powered by conventional jet fuel are to be classified as a green investment.
4. All social media platforms operating in the EU must remove all content promoting climate misinformation or disinformation within 24 hours of it being posted.
5. To facilitate easy work-from-home, Member States must ensure that all citizens living in cities with a population of 500,000 or greater have access to affordable, high-speed internet.
6. Member States are not to shut down existing nuclear power plants until they have reached net-zero emissions.
7. Subsidies to extend the operation of coal-burning power-stations may only be offered if a timeline can be provided to shut down the power-station within 15 years.

Sub-Directive 4: Agriculture and Fisheries Council

1. By 2040, all nitrogen fertiliser production within the EU must be suspended.
 - a) In order to assist with the transition away from nitrogen-based fertilisers, a research and development fund into alternative production will be created.

2. Once a year, all EU agricultural producers must report their:
 - a) CO2 emissions;
 - b) Food production; and
 - c) Land usage.

3. The use of forever chemicals (PFAS) is banned within 5km of any land used for food production.

4. Local fisheries have the right to veto the construction of any offshore wind-farm likely to:
 - a) Interfere in their livelihood; or
 - b) Reduce fish resources in the EU as a whole.

5. Contracts to fish within EU maritime borders are to be awarded to companies who fish the most sustainably, as assessed by each Member State

6. Efforts to rebuild global fishing stocks must prioritise ensuring sustainable employment for communities dependent on fishing.

7. The EU recognises the importance of maintaining a sustainable fishery. To achieve this:
 - a) All fishing vessels operating within EU waters must have an independent EU observer on board to prevent overfishing;
 - b) In order to combat illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing in the Pacific, the EU will send military vessels to support island states in policing their waters.

Sub-Directive 5: Competitiveness Council

1. Due to current EU dependence on foreign imports of many crucial renewable technologies, the EU will increase production of photovoltaic cells, wind turbines and EV batteries by 25% by 2030.
 - a) The European Union will limit the import of materials (lithium, cobalt, rare earths etc.) from 'strategic competitors' required in the manufacture of energy generation and storage technologies. The mining of locally sourced alternatives to replace these imports will be encouraged.

2. Intellectual property and copyright laws do not apply to any technology likely to assist in the transition to net-zero emissions:
 - a) CO2 emissions;
 - b) Food production; and
 - c) Land usage.

3. Free tertiary level courses or vocational training shall be provided to all EU citizens aged 40 to 55 whose jobs are made obsolete due to the climate crisis.

4. If repairs to a laptop computer, phone or similar device are likely to take longer than two days, manufacturers must provide a temporary device for use in the interim

5. As of 2023, single-use packaging will be banned in the EU for:
 - a) Fruits and vegetables;
 - b) Food and beverages consumed within restaurants; and
 - c) All bottles containing processed beverages

6. Industry subsidies to support the green transition shall be preferentially given to high-emission companies over low-emission ones.

7. 85% of the budget for Horizon Europe shall be given to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), on the condition that 90% of this funding is spent within the EU.

The Member States of the EU

The following pages provide brief outlines of the Member States of the European Union to guide your preparation. You are nevertheless advised to read beyond the material provided here.

Sources for Key Indices	
<i>Note:</i> For explanations of these indices, see Appendix	
GDP per capita (PPP)	Eurostat (2023) <i>Purchasing power adjusted GDP per capita</i> . https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_10_10/default/table?lang=en (accessed 13 July 2023)
Democracy Index	Economist Intelligence Unit (2023) <i>Democracy Index 2022: Frontline democracy and the battle for Ukraine</i> . https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2022/ (accessed 13 July 2023)
Freedom in the World Index	Freedom House (2023) <i>Countries and Territories</i> . https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores (accessed 13 July 2023)
Environmental Performance Index (EPI)	Wolf, M. J., Emerson, J. W., Esty, D. C., de Sherbinin, A., Wendling, Z. A., et al. (2022) <i>2022 Environmental Performance Index</i> . New Haven: Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy. https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2022/component/cch (accessed 13 July 2023)
Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)	CCPI (2023) <i>CCPI 2023: Ranking and Results</i> . https://ccpi.org/ (accessed 13 July 2023)
Net Zero Tracker	Net Zero Tracker (2023) <i>Net zero target status</i> . https://zerotracker.net/#data-explorer (accessed 13 July 2023)

SUGGESTED SOURCES OF INFORMATION

European Commission's **2022 Climate Action Progress Report**. This site includes a short news article highlighting the main findings of the report, as well as a link to the full report: https://climate.ec.europa.eu/news-your-voice/news/climate-action-progress-report-2022-2022-10-26_en

European Commission's **Energy, Climate change, Environment** site, which includes a wealth of information, including on implementation in individual Member States: https://commission.europa.eu/energy-climate-change-environment_en

United Nation's **Climate Action** site. Pay attention to the section on *The Science*, which gives a good overview of causes and effects of climate change: <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange>

European Climate Foundation site: <https://europeanclimate.org/>

A number of shorter items are also worth looking at, including:

- Politico's **Droughts, fires and floods: How climate change will impact Europe**: <https://www.politico.eu/article/how-climate-change-will-widen-european-divide-road-to-cop26/>
- World Economic Forum's **Climate change has cost the EU €145 billion in a decade**: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/12/climate-europe-gdp-emissions/>
- BBC News' **Climate change: Europe and polar regions bear brunt of warming in 2022**: <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-64213575>
- The Guardian's **EU passes nature restoration law in knife-edge vote**: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/12/eu-passes-nature-restoration-law-vote-meps>

Austria

Population: 9,027,999

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1995
- Schengen Area: 1997
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1945)

Government: Coalition of the Christian democratic, liberal-conservative, pro-European *Austrian People's Party* (ÖVP) and centre-left, pro-European *Green party*

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €44,100

2022 Democracy Index: 8.20/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 50.3 (rank: 46th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 32nd

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2040 (in Law)



Austria has a democratic system, with protection of civil and political rights. Politics has been dominated by the centre-left *Social Democratic Party of Austria* (SPÖ) and the centre-right *Austrian People's Party* (ÖVP), which between them have been the major party in all governments since 1945. Since 1986, the *Freedom Party of Austria* (FPÖ) – an openly nationalist and xenophobic right-wing populist party – has been a significant political player, serving in coalition governments with the ÖVP (2000–2005, 2017–2019).¹¹

Climate Change: The current government coalition in Austria has a strong interest in climate change policy due to the influence of the *Grüne* (Greens) party. Since the formation of the coalition government in 2021, numerous aspects of climate policy have been addressed, including bringing the EU's planned carbon neutral by 2050 goal to 2040, raising targets for photovoltaic energy (a type of solar energy), and phasing out coal or oil as an energy source for heating in buildings by 2035. Another key indicator of this government's attitude towards climate change was the creation of a new federal ministry: *Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation, and Technology*.¹² Key areas of policy focus for the future include climate law, energy efficiency law and renewable heat law. These laws would help mitigate further damage from climate change.

Energy: In July 2021 Austria passed a Renewable Expansion Act in their Parliament that commits Austria to full usage of green energy by 2030. There has also been significant policy towards preventing new housing from using non-renewable energy sources, however, a lot of environmental planning resides at a regional rather than federal level, making it difficult for central government to pursue policy in this area.¹³ Due to the energy crisis in Europe following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Austria's reliance upon Russian gas imports, the government has seriously considered fracking as an alternative, a very water and chemical intensive method of extracting gas from shale rock.¹⁴ Currently, Austria draws 69% of its energy from renewable sources, with the remaining 31% being fossil fuels.

¹¹ Freedom House (2023) *Austria*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/austria/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 25 July 2023).

¹² Federal Ministry of Climate Action (2023) *Austrian Climate Change Act*. <https://www.bmk.gv.at/en/topics/climate-environment/climate-protection/austrian-climate-change-act.html> (accessed 15 July 2023).

¹³ European Parliament (2021) *Climate action in Austria: Latest state of play*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696186/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)696186_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696186/EPRS_BRI(2021)696186_EN.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2023).

¹⁴ Hammerl, Michael, Gaul, Bernhard, and Meyrath, Martin (2022) *Gas-Krise: Fracking bekommt eine neue Chance*. <https://kurier.at/politik/inland/fracking-in-oesterreich-oebag-soll-pruefen/402155676> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Belgium

Population: 11,584,008

Joining Dates:

- EU (former EEC): 1958 (founder)
- Schengen Area: 1995
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Monarchy (since 1830)

Government: Six-party coalition formed by the Flemish *Open Vld*, *Vooruit*, *CD&V* and *Groen*, and the Walloon *Mouvement Réformateur*, *Parti Socialiste* and *Ecolo*

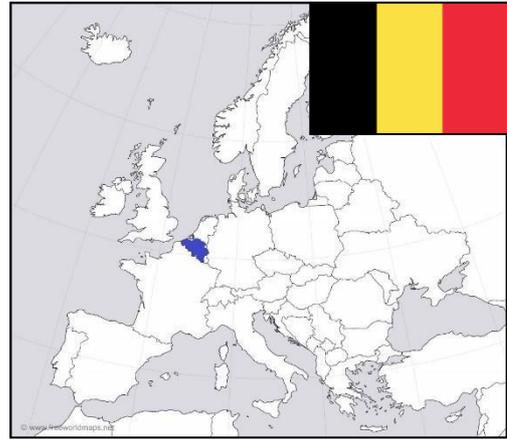
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €42,200

2022 Democracy Index: 7.64/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 48.1 (rank: 58th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 39th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



Belgium is a parliamentary democracy which guarantees civil and political rights. Challenges include the threat of terrorism, corruption scandals, and increasing right-wing nationalism and xenophobia.¹⁵

Climate Change: Due to the makeup of Belgium as a federal state, climate change policy in the areas of energy, transport, infrastructure, and urban planning are limited to regional authorities.¹⁶ All three regions of Belgium have committed to moving closer to the target of carbon neutrality by 2050 set by the EU. This leaves the federal government focusing on the economic and security aspects of climate change policy. Climate change policy is contested due to the coalitional make-up of the Federal Government, with a coalition of seven different parties currently in power, all of which have different approaches to climate change. The liberal parties – the *Open Flemish Liberals* and the *Democrats and Reformist Movement* – support climate action through incentivising businesses for greener options and encouraging a green economy. The socialist parties – *Vooruit* and the *Socialist Party* – focus on taxing large corporations and polluters while stressing the importance of green public transport. The green parties – *Groen* and *Ecolo* – more radically want to prioritise nature and climate policy and to reach green targets as soon as possible. The Christian democratic *CD&V* encourages climate action that is more cautious in making sure green technology is affordable for all.

Energy: The federal government made the decision to phase out nuclear power plants between 2022 and 2025, and also to phase out fossil fuels for electricity generation by 2050. Belgium currently utilises a mix of natural gases and wind farms as sources for energy. Regional governments have acknowledged that Belgium currently does not have enough renewable energy sources to meet demand as required by the carbon neutral 2050 plan.¹⁷ Currently Belgium uses 27% renewable energy, 27% fossil fuels, and 46% nuclear energy sources.

¹⁵ Freedom House (2023) *Belgium*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/belgium/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

¹⁶ UNFCCC (2023) *Belgium's long-term strategy*. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/LTS_BE_EN_summary.pdf (accessed 15 July 2023).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Bulgaria

Population: 6,520,314

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2007
- Schengen Area: in progress
- Eurozone: in progress

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1990)

Government: A compromise coalition government comprised of two opposing political alliances: the centrist *PP–DB* alliance of the social-liberal, anti-corruption, pro-European *We Continue the Change* and the liberal-Conservative, pro-European, green *Democratic Bulgaria*; and the centre-right *GERB–SDS* alliance of the conservative, populist, pro-European *GERB* and the national conservative, Christian democratic and pro-European *Union of Democratic Forces*.

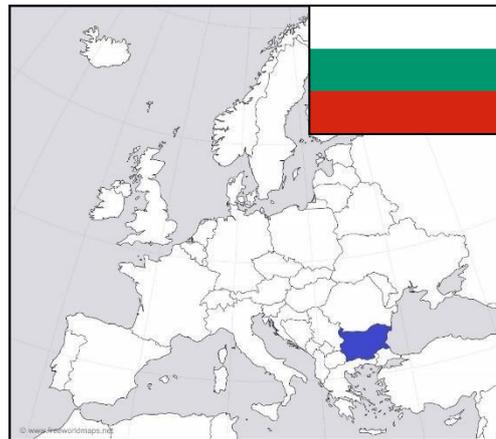
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €44,100

2022 Democracy Index: 6.53/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 49.8 (rank: 50th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 36th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (Proposed/In Discussion)



Bulgaria has been a parliamentary democracy with peaceful transfers of power since 1990. Issues such as corruption and organised crime remain a challenge, and there is ongoing discrimination against ethnic minorities (especially the Roma). Since 1990, civil society groups have been active, notwithstanding limited resources and other obstacles to their participation. However, since 2020, civil society organisations have become increasingly concerned with the shrinking of their space for action as the government has drafted laws to curb foreign funding.¹⁸

Bulgaria has consistently faced election crises since 2020, with 5 elections called in the last 5 years. The recent April 2023 election resulted in a compromise government involving two opposed party coalitions, the leaders of which will swap Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs roles after nine months.

Climate Change: *GERB* is not as focused on environmental policy, however, part of the *PP–DP* coalition was formerly an environmental party and therefore carries over some aspects of focus on energy policy and nature conservation. It is important to note that this government was only approved in Bulgarian parliament on the 6th of June 2023 and therefore has not been able to release any updated policy towards climate action. Bulgaria is still committed to EU green policy as a member state so goals like carbon neutrality by 2050 will likely be made into law after the transitional phase of the new government.

Energy: Bulgaria continues to rely heavily upon coal in the energy and transport sectors. Bulgaria has indicated interest in the future to move towards using natural gases and using renewable energy for heating and cooling. However, there is no plan currently to phase out coal within the energy sector. Bulgaria has remained well below EU targets in areas such as energy efficiency and carbon emissions.¹⁹ Currently Bulgaria uses 20% renewable, 46% fossil fuels, and 34% nuclear energy.

¹⁸ Freedom House (2023) *Bulgaria*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/bulgaria/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

¹⁹ European Parliament (2021) *Climate action in Bulgaria: Latest state of play*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689330/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)689330_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689330/EPRS_BRI(2021)689330_EN.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2023).

Croatia

Population: 3,871,833

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2013
- Schengen Area: 2023
- Eurozone: 2023

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 2000)

Government: Minority coalition of the conservative, centre-right, pro-European *Croatian Democratic Union* and the social-democratic, anti-nationalist and pro-European *Independent Democratic Serb Party*

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €25,700

2022 Democracy Index: 6.50/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 56.6 (rank: 26th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 30th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



Croatia is a parliamentary democracy, with peaceful transfer of power through free elections, though corruption in the public sector is an ongoing issue. Civil and political rights are broadly respected. There is ongoing discrimination against the Roma and Serb minorities, and against the LGBTQI+ community. Far right and xenophobic groups have been increasingly visible in public life, with the *Homeland Movement* winning almost 11% of the popular vote at the 2020 election, and subsequently entering parliament.²⁰

Climate Change: Croatia aims to reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030 and phase out coal by 2033.²¹ Its government has ambitious plans to decarbonise the transport sector (its main carbon emitting sector) through electrification of trains by 2032.²² Croatia is affected by climate change by droughts and rising sea levels.

Energy: Croatia aims to move towards more renewable sources of energy for heating and cooling. In 2022 the Croatian government announced an investment towards making Croatia a gas pipeline hub, aiming to expand Croatia's gas network and to increase its role as a regional gas hub.²³ Croatia aims to increase the percentage of renewables in the consumption of electricity from 47% in 2020 to 63.8% in 2030.²⁴ Due to its diverse environment, Croatia's forests absorb a lot of carbon dioxide. Currently, Croatia uses 65% renewable energy sources and 35% fossil fuels.

²⁰ Freedom House (2023) *Croatia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/croatia/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

²¹ Plenković, Andrej (2021) *Croatia will reduce CO2 emissions by 45% by 2030, our coal phase-out year is 2033*. <https://vlada.gov.hr/news/croatia-will-reduce-co2-emissions-by-45-by-2030-our-coal-phase-out-year-is-2033/33278> (accessed 25 July 2023).

²² Government of Croatia (2022) *We have to act together and prevent crisis of today becoming disasters of tomorrow*. <https://vlada.gov.hr/news/we-have-to-act-together-and-prevent-crisis-of-today-becoming-disasters-of-tomorrow/36321> (accessed 25 July 2023).

²³ Government of Croatia (2022) *€180m to be invested in Zlobin-Bosiljevo gas pipeline and upgrade of LNG terminal*. <https://vlada.gov.hr/news/180m-to-be-invested-in-zlobin-bosiljevo-gas-pipeline-and-upgrade-of-lng-terminal/35931> (accessed 25 July 2023).

²⁴ European Parliament (2021) *Climate action in Croatia: Latest state of play*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690662/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)690662_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/690662/EPRS_BRI(2021)690662_EN.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2023).

Cyprus

Population : 1,244,188

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: In progress
- Eurozone: 2008

Political system: Presidential Republic (since 1960)

Government: Independent president (as both Head of State and Government), supported by the Greek Cypriot centrist and nationalist *Democratic Party* (DIKA), the social-democratic *Movement for Social Democracy* (EDEK), the centrist *Democratic Alignment* (DIPA) and the Greek Cypriot nationalist *Solidarity Movement*

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €32,300

2022 Democracy Index: 7.38/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 53.8 (rank: 35th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 35th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



The Republic of Cyprus is a democratic presidential republic, which generally respects civil and political rights. Ongoing concerns remain, however, in relation to corruption, discrimination against minorities, and to the weaknesses in the asylum system. While the Republic has *de jure* sovereignty over the entire island of Cyprus, as a consequence of the Turkish invasion of 1974 the government controls only the southern, largely Greek-speaking part of the island, while the northern area is ruled by the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) (that is recognised only by Turkey).²⁵

Climate Change: Despite only accounting for 0.2% of the total EU population, Cyprus is the 11th most carbon intensive economy in the EU.²⁶ In 2012 and 2013 Cyprus went through a financial crisis that led to the collapse of several Cypriot banks, this in turn caused the rebuilding of the economy to be prioritised over reducing the carbon intensity of the economy. This has led Cyprus comparatively further behind compared to other EU Member States that have been able to afford making their economies less carbon intensive.

Energy: Cyprus is reliant on imports of oil and other fuels for the generation of electricity, however a move towards natural gases is intended. There is an expectation that renewable energy will grow through the use of solar power and the use of heat pumps. There is also a project to develop a large system for natural gas throughout the country, though drilling for natural gas around Cyprus is contested between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus.²⁷ Currently, Cyprus uses 17% renewable energy sources and 83% fossil fuels.

²⁵ Freedom House (2023) *Cyprus*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/cyprus/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

²⁶ European Parliament (2021) Climate action in Cyprus: Latest state of play. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696195/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)696195_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696195/EPRS_BRI(2021)696195_EN.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2023).

²⁷ Stamouli, Nektaria (2022) Cyprus has gas for Europe. A decades-old conflict is keeping it untouched. <https://www.politico.eu/article/cyprus-gas-europe-decade-old-conflict-untouched/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Czechia

Population: 10,533,399

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: In progress

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1993)

Government: Five-party coalition of the right-wing conservative and Eurosceptic *Civic Democratic Party* (ODS), the Christian democratic *KDU-ČSL*, the liberal conservative and pro-European *TOP 09*, the liberal and localist *Mayors and Independents* (STAN), and the liberal progressive and pro-European *Czech Pirate Party*

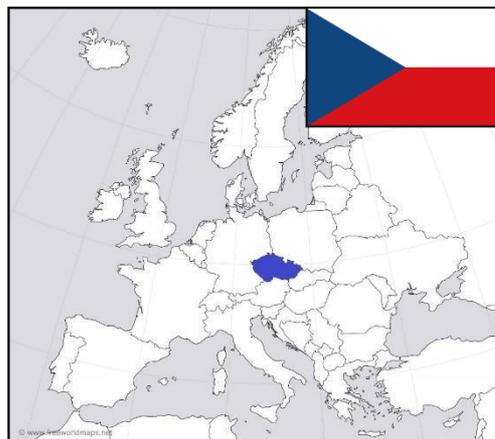
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €32,000

2022 Democracy Index: 7.97/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 52.8 (rank: 39th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 45th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (Proposed/In Discussion)



The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy. While civil and political rights are generally respected, in recent years several corruption scandals and political disputes have negatively impacted normal legislative activity. Increasingly evident in the political arena are illiberal rhetoric and the influence of powerful business interests.²⁸

Climate Change: As recorded in 2019, Czechia had the 3rd highest emissions in the EU despite only having 2.4% of the EU population. This is due to the reliance on coal as a power source, with coal contributing some of the highest emissions as an energy source. The current government coalition is limited with the *Civic Democratic Party* (ODS) holding a Eurosceptic view towards the EU and not having a strong focus on climate action, instead focusing more on energy efficiency and advocating the need for nuclear energy in Czechia. In March 2023, Czechia led a call for the 2035 ban for new carbon emitting cars to be scrapped, despite the law being agreed upon by Member States, the European Commission and European Parliament.²⁹ Czechia's biggest export industry is motor vehicles and parts.

Energy: Czechia has an economy that is reliant on industry, leading to high energy usage. The industrial part of the economy also relies heavily on coal, although the introduction of nuclear energy is hoped to grow and eventually replace coal. Czechia is also planning to reach a 22% renewable energy by 2030 through solar, biofuels, and wind power. The 2022/23 energy crisis significantly affected Czechia due to their reliance on imported gas for heating which contributed towards high inflation and increase in the cost of living.³⁰ Currently Czechia uses 14% renewable energy sources, 49% fossil fuels, and 37% nuclear energy.

²⁸ Freedom House (2023) *Czechia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/czech-republic/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

²⁹ Abnett, Kate (2023) *Czech Republic calls meeting of EU countries on car emissions laws*. <https://www.zawya.com/en/special-coverage/zawya-green/czech-republic-calls-meeting-of-eu-countries-on-car-emissions-laws-v7rccvum> (accessed 25 July 2023).

³⁰ Carter, Bryan (2022) *Czech voters turn to the far-right for answers to the energy crisis*. <https://www.euronews.com/2022/10/13/czech-voters-turn-to-the-far-right-for-answers-to-the-energy-crisis> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Denmark

Population: 5,935,619

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1973
- Schengen Area: 2001
- Eurozone: Opted out

Political system: Parliamentary Monarchy (since 1870)

Government: Coalition of centre-left pro-European *Social Democratic Party*, the conservative, economic liberal, pro-free market, *Venstre*, and the centrist *Moderates*

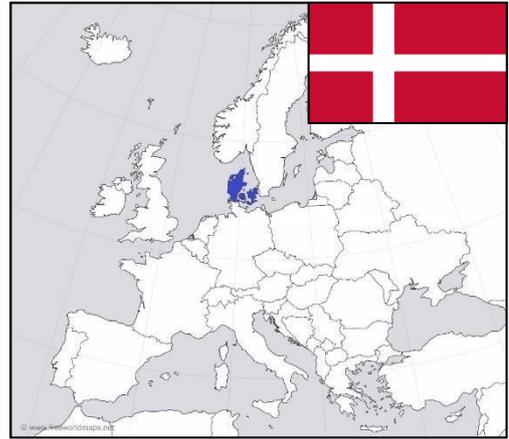
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €48,100

2022 Democracy Index: 9.28/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 92.4 (rank: 1st)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 4th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



Denmark is a parliamentary democracy in which civil and political rights are guaranteed. While these rights and freedoms are effectively upheld for citizens, the record in relation to immigrants has been patchier.³¹

Climate Change: The biggest impacts of climate change upon Denmark are seen by rising sea levels, flooding, and storm surges. Rising sea temperatures also significantly impact fishing and fish species in the seas surrounding Denmark.³² Denmark takes a leading role within the EU on green policy, in part due to the fact that they consistently achieve above and beyond EU goals and limits relating to emissions and carbon neutrality. Denmark has one of the least carbon intensive economies.³³

Energy: Denmark had already achieved the goal of 30% share of renewable energy by 2020 and have further set the goal of 55% by 2050. Denmark plans to phase out fossil fuels by 2050, to be achieved through an increase in the use of solar and wind production for energy. Additional plans to build offshore wind farms to increase the amount of renewable energy have been proposed. Denmark heavily incentivises the use of renewable energy and offers other green friendly subsidies. Denmark currently consumes 79% of its energy from renewable sources, with the remaining 21% from fossil fuels.

³¹ Freedom House (2023) *Denmark*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/denmark/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

³² Ministry of Environment (2023) *Climate change impact on nature*. <https://en.klimatilpasning.dk/sectors/nature/climate-change-impact-on-nature/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

³³ European Parliament (2021) *Climate action in Denmark: Latest state of play*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/679106/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)679106_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/679106/EPRS_BRI(2021)679106_EN.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2023).

Estonia

Population: 1,357,739

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: 2011

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1990)

Government: Grand coalition of centre-right *Reform Party*, the centre-left *Centre Party*, and the liberal *Estonia 200*

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €30,700

2022 Democracy Index: 7.96/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 52.0 (rank: 42nd)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 9th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (Declaration/Pledge)



Estonia is a democratic parliamentary republic. Civil and political rights are widely respected. However, as a consequence of its citizenship rules (which require linguistic fluency and a knowledge of Estonian history), more than 5 percent of the population remain stateless and therefore cannot participate in national elections. Corruption is an ongoing challenge, as is discrimination against ethnic Russians, Roma, LGBTQI+ people, and others. Eurosceptic and far-right groups (e.g. the right-wing populist EKRE party) have been increasingly prominent in recent years.³⁴

Climate Change: Estonia is affected by climate change due to sea level rise with the melting of glaciers and ice. Estonia is aiming for climate neutrality by 2050 and to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050, however this may be overly ambitious given the high carbon intensity of Estonia's economy. Oil shale has historically accounted for the majority of energy produced in Estonia, but since 2018 efforts to reduce this have been successful. However, after the 2021–2023 European energy crisis, Estonia has had to turn back to using oil shale as an alternative to buying gas from Russia.

Energy: Estonia previously has relied upon oil for energy in industry, but more promising efforts in heating and cooling with renewable sources such as wind energy and biofuels are a growing sector. To reach EU targets for the share of renewable energy for 2030, significant areas such as heat pumps, biomass and other technologies need to be invested in. After the 2022/23 energy crisis, Estonia has mentioned that a move away from oil is needed to improve Estonia's energy security in the future.³⁵ Estonia currently consumes 34% of its energy from renewable sources, with the remaining 66% from fossil fuels.

³⁴ Freedom House (2023) *Estonia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/estonia/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

³⁵ Government of Estonia (2021) *Economy and climate*. <https://www.valitsus.ee/en/estonia-2035-development-strategy/necessary-changes/economy-and-climate> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Finland

Population: 5,614,571

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1995
- Schengen Area: 2001
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 2000)

Government: Centre-left five-party coalition of *Social Democratic Party, Centre Party, Green League, Left Alliance, Swedish People's Party of Finland*

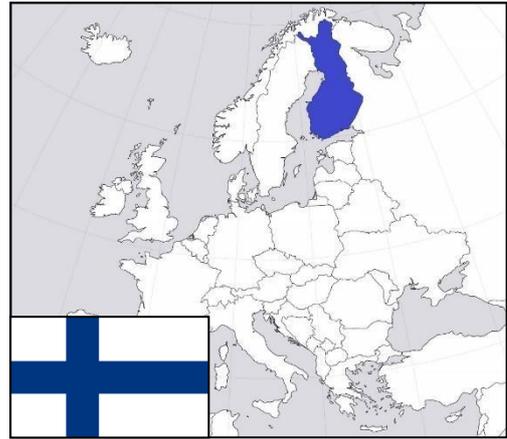
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €38,400

2022 Democracy Index: 9.29/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 83.6 (rank: 3rd)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 15th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2035 (in Law)



Finland is a parliamentary republic. Civil and political freedoms are guaranteed and respected, though harassment and hate speech aimed at minority groups does occasionally occur.³⁶

Climate Change: Finland is affected by climate change with rising sea levels, coastal erosion, and severe weather. Finland aims to be carbon-neutral by 2035 and the first fossil-free welfare society globally. Finland has been relatively successful in decoupling the growth of their economy from emissions. Emissions have consistently decreased throughout the Finnish economy. Biofuel is being incentivised as an alternative to petrol and oil in the transport sector.

Energy: By using excess from Finland's forestry industry as biomass for fuel for heating energy, Finland is hoping to tap into a new area of renewable energy. Finland has created legislation phasing out coal in the production of energy by 2029, and the addition of new nuclear power plants aims to decrease emissions further in the energy sector. Finland also uses wind and solar energy. Energy security is extremely important for Finland due to the weather extremities in the country. Finland currently uses 54% renewable energy sources, 11% fossil fuels, and 35% nuclear energy.

³⁶ Freedom House (2023) *Finland*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/finland/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

France

Population: 68,042,591

Joining Dates:

- EU (former EEC): 1958 (founder)
- Schengen Area: 1995
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Semi-Presidential Republic (since 1958)

Government: Minority coalition of five centrist parties (largest representation from Renaissance (formerly *La République En Marche!*) - liberal, pro-European, slightly right leaning)

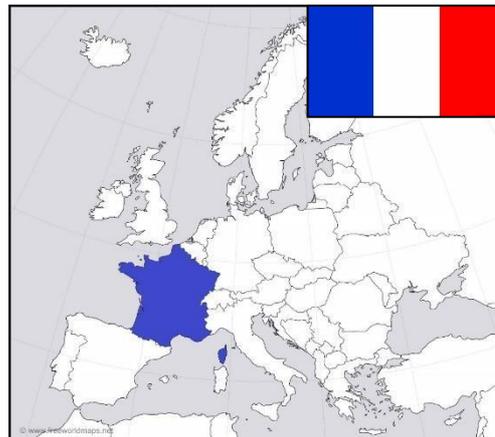
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €35,800

2022 Democracy Index: 8.07/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 49.5 (rank: 51st)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 28th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



France has a semi-presidential democratic system, with strong protections for civil and political rights. Certain constitutional protections have been dialled back in recent years in response to terror attacks, with law enforcement agencies empowered to act in ways that impinge on personal freedoms. Anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiment continues to be an issue.³⁷

Climate Change: France has one of the least carbon intensive economies within the EU. President Emmanuel Macron has pushed a more intensive look into increasing France's nuclear energy sector by building up to six new reactors and committing to building more offshore windfarms.³⁸ Internationally, France is an advocate for nuclear energy as a solution for achieving carbon neutrality. Currently France's most carbon intense sector is transport and improvement is needed to incentivise public transport. France is currently moving in line with their 2030 target towards Net Zero by 2050. France had planned to phase out coal energy production by 2023, however, the 2021–2023 energy crisis resulted in the resumption of the production of coal energy.³⁹

Energy: Energy Emissions are low due to the large amount of energy produced by France's nuclear plants. This has been an ongoing process for more than a decade to reduce the reliance on coal and to build the nuclear energy sector. France's renewable energy sector is made up of hydropower, solar photovoltaic, and wind power. By 2030 France estimates that 40% of electricity production will be made from renewable sources. France currently consumes 25% renewable energy, 14% fossil fuels and 62% nuclear energy.

³⁷ Freedom House (2023) *France*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/france/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

³⁸ Nussbaum, Anna (2023) *France Sees 'No Problem' Funding Macron's New Nuclear Reactors*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-03-01/france-sees-no-problem-funding-macron-s-new-nuclear-reactors#xj4y7vzkg> (accessed 25 July 2023).

³⁹ Badias, Jean-Francois (2022) *'Necessary evil': France refires coal plant amid energy woes*. <https://apnews.com/article/europe-business-france-climate-and-environment-government-politics-1d16e1c1cb53fef03a2a77a437f8410e> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Germany

Population: 84,270,625

Joining Dates:

- EU (former EEC): 1958 (founder)
- Schengen Area: 1995
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1990)

Government: Three-party coalition of centre-left *Social Democratic Party* (SDP), centre-left *Alliance 90/The Greens*, and the centre to centre-right, liberal *Free Democratic Party* (FDP)

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €41,200

2022 Democracy Index: 8.80/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 47.2 (rank: 60th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 16th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2045 (in Law)



Democracy in Germany is characterised by its vibrant political culture. Both political rights and civil liberties are secured in law and in practice. Due to the totalitarian past, constitutional protection mechanisms have been established. The influx of refugees into Germany, especially since 2015, has raised the profile of right-wing populist parties and led to political tensions.⁴⁰

Climate Change: The current German federal government is a coalition between the *Social Democratic Party* (SDP), *Alliance 90/The Greens* and the *Free Democratic Party* (FDP). The Greens hold significant cabinet positions such as Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Food and Agriculture. Germany has the biggest population within the EU, yet remains below the EU average in carbon intensity of the economy, mostly because of Germany's successful decoupling of economic growth and emissions. Germany plans to phase out coal for energy generation by 2038. Key areas of focus to improve climate policy are agricultural policy, however the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023–2027 has only entered into force since January 2023. It aims to contribute towards European Green Deal goals and improving European sustainable agriculture. For emissions, the least amount of progress has been achieved in transportation, with calls for phasing out fossil-fuelled vehicles and improving public transport systems.

Energy: Germany intended to phase out nuclear energy by 2022, but the 2021–2 energy crisis delayed this until April 2023. Germany has increased wind and solar energy production in recent years towards increasing their share of renewables and meeting their target of 30% renewable energy production by 2030. Wind energy is aimed to grow in both offshore and onshore wind turbines over the coming years. Within Europe, Germany has the largest onshore wind capacity and third largest in the world as of 2022.⁴¹ Before phasing out nuclear energy in 2023, Germany used 44% renewable energy, 50% fossil fuels, and 6% nuclear energy as of the start of 2023.

⁴⁰ Freedom House (2023) *Germany*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/germany/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁴¹ Wehrmann, Benjamin (2023) *German onshore wind power – output, business and perspectives*. <https://www.cleanenergywire.org/factsheets/german-onshore-wind-power-output-business-and-perspectives> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Greece

Population: 10,482,487

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1981
- Schengen Area: 2000
- Eurozone: 2001

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1975)

Government: Liberal-conservative, centre-right *New Democracy* party

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €23,900

2022 Democracy Index: 7.97/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 50.8 (rank: 45th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 24th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



Greece has a parliamentary democracy characterised by lively competition between political parties. However, not all civil liberties are respected: corruption, discrimination against immigrants and minorities, and poor living conditions for refugees remain problems.⁴²

Climate Change: Dealing with the 2021–2023 energy crisis is one of the key focuses of the newly elected Greek government, with energy prices and inflation strongly impacting upon Greek citizens. Elections were held both in May and June 2023, leaving climate policy mostly focused on energy. Greece made progress towards decoupling their economy from emissions from the mid-2010s onwards. Greece released its first climate action law in May 2022 to focus on aligning carbon emissions targets with the EU, with an 80% reduction by 2040, and Net Zero by 2050. Greece tends to be a leader in the Mediterranean for promoting and working internationally with smaller European countries towards research and training.⁴³

Energy: Before the 2021–2023 energy crisis, Greece aimed to phase-out most lignite plants for energy production by the end of 2023 and fully by 2028, however, this has now been delayed until 2025 for most plants. Currently lignite produces 10% of Greece’s energy, and this has been estimated to rise to 17–20% during the winter.⁴⁴ Because Greece has not committed to phasing out fossil fuels as an energy source, and as the main alternative to lignite plants for energy is the exploration of natural fossil gas and the provision of subsidies for it, critics are concerned that Greece will lock itself in to fossil fuels, making it much harder to change to renewable energy in the future.⁴⁵ Wind and solar photovoltaics are the main renewable energy sources in Greece and growth in these energy sources was used to offset the decline of the use of lignite. Greece currently uses 46% renewable energy and 54% fossil fuels.

⁴² Freedom House (2023) *Greece*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/greece/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁴³ OECD (2021) *Greece*. <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/c6cd76a1-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/c6cd76a1-en> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁴⁴ Aposporis, Harry (2022) *Greece delays closure of three coal plant units to 2025*. <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/greece-delays-closure-of-three-coal-plant-units-to-2025/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁴⁵ CCPI (2023) *Greece*. <https://ccpi.org/country/grc/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Hungary

Population: 9,678,000

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: In progress

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1989)

Government: Coalition of right-wing populist *Fidesz* party and right-wing Christian conservative *KPNP* party

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €27,300

2022 Democracy Index: 6.64/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 48.1 (rank: 58th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 53rd

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



The right-wing populist party *Alliance of Young Democrats – Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz)* took power in Hungary in 2010. Under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, it has pushed through constitutional and legislative changes that allow the government to exert control over independent institutions in the country. Recent measures have hindered the work of opposition groups, journalists, universities, and nongovernmental organizations whose perspectives Fidesz considers unfavourable.⁴⁶

Climate Change: Hungary has reduced its emissions slower than the EU average, though it has decreased the carbon intensity of its economy by 35% (between 2005–2019), faster than the EU average. There are plans to increase and protect forest areas to assist in creating carbon sink capacities. Hungary is the 8th most carbon intensive economy in the EU, mostly due to economic pressure in the late 2000s where reducing carbon intensity was not prioritised. Links have been drawn between fluctuations in carbon intensity of the economy alongside fluctuations in GDP, showing a clear relationship between the two. Hungary, as a newer EU Member State, has had less time to stabilise the economy and align with EU climate standards compared to original Member States. It currently has three plans at different time increments to address climate change mitigation, short term (2018–2020), mid-term (2021–2030), and long term (2031–2050). An area of concern is Hungary’s rapidly growing dairy industry, which release nitrates and contributes towards methane emissions that negatively impact climate change.

Energy: Prior to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2021, Hungary was strongly tied to Russia for energy, with plans for a further two nuclear plants to be built by Russia as the main source for clean energy. Hungary was also extremely reliant on Russia for natural gas as an energy source. Hungary has some small renewable energy sectors, including solar, wind, hydro, and biomass energy sources. While the invasion of Ukraine and following split from Russian gas might potentially have been a turning point to invest in renewable energy, the Hungarian government instead turned to reinvesting in domestic lignite and gas production, a reversal of EU driven green policy that had intended to ban coal by 2025.⁴⁷ This reversal is due to the severe debt and expenses Hungary was thrown into after Russia’s invasion, as they had just struck a deal with Russian gas suppliers and moving to importing gas from alternative sources suddenly became a huge expense. Currently Hungary has 21% renewable, 34% fossil fuels, and 45% nuclear energy sources.

⁴⁶ Freedom House (2023) *Hungary*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/hungary/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁴⁷ Botár, Alexa (2022) *Hungary risks billions in EU funds if it goes ahead with investments in coal*. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy/opinion/hungary-risks-billions-in-eu-funds-if-it-goes-ahead-with-investments-in-coal/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Ireland

Population: 7,026,636

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1973
- Schengen Area: Opted out
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1949)

Government: Three-party coalition of Christian democratic, centre-right *Fianna Fáil*, liberal-conservative, centre-right *Fine Gael*, and centre-left *Green party*

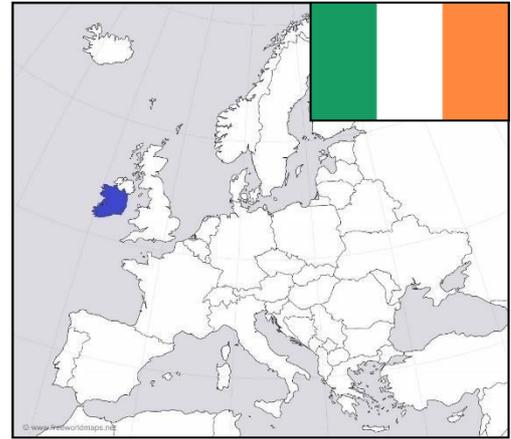
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €82,100

2022 Democracy Index: 9.13/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 48.2 (rank: 56th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 37th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



In Ireland's consolidated democracy, political rights and civil liberties are guaranteed. However, there are some persistent problems: Traditional nomadic Irish Travellers experience some discrimination in society. In addition, the police are repeatedly accused of being corrupt. Domestic violence is also a persistent problem.⁴⁸

Climate Change: Ireland overall has high emissions compared to other European countries, which is mainly attributable to its agricultural industry as well as the recovering economy following financial pressures in the early 2010s. Despite this, Ireland now has the third least carbon-intense economy within the EU, and decreased its intensity 52.4% from 2005. Ireland has set emissions reduction of 51% by 2030, however critics have noted that its emissions are on the rise following the pandemic rather than decreasing to match the 2030 target and its *Paris Agreement* pathway. In recent years there has been a significant focus on climate policy, with carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings as well as comprehensive climate actions plans both in 2021 and 2023.

Energy: Ireland is still reliant on fossil fuels (coal, gas, and oil) for energy supply. There is some solar photovoltaic and hydro power, however wind power dominates the renewable energy sector. There has been criticism from environmentalists as due to the 2021–2023 energy crisis, peat was used as an energy source which, when burned, emits carbon and undoes work to conserve peat bogs as carbon sinks for Ireland.⁴⁹ The energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine strongly affected the country as natural gas constitutes a large share of Ireland's energy sources. Ireland currently uses 39% renewable sources and 61% fossil fuel sources for energy production.

⁴⁸ Freedom House (2023) *Ireland*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/ireland/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁴⁹ Millard, Rachel (2023) *Ireland rues mistakes of the past as it struggles to keep the lights on*. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/02/28/irelands-energy-crisis-threatens-blackouts/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Italy

Population: 58,853,482

Joining Dates:

- EU (former EEC): 1958 (founder)
- Schengen Area: 1997
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1946)

Government: Coalition of the far-right, populist *Brothers of Italy*, the far-right, populist *Lega*, and the centre-right, liberal-conservative, populist *Forza Italia*

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €33,700

2022 Democracy Index: 7.69/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 48.2 (rank: 56th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 29th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



The Italian parliamentary system is characterised by competition among many parties. Civil liberties are guaranteed, but procedural delays undermine the judicial system. Organised crime and corruption remain problems. Due to populists in government, a threat to the rights of migrants and asylum seekers exists.⁵⁰

Climate Change: Italy is particularly affected by climate change, with its geography making the country prone to landslides, flooding, droughts and coastal erosion. Italy has been criticised for not having a sufficient climate action plan and policy to deal with climate mitigation. There is currently a long-term plan to reduce emissions and to achieve net zero by 2050 in line with EU standards. Italy has consistently reduced the carbon intensity of its economy less than the EU average, however the gap between the two is gradually narrowing. Like many other agricultural economies, Italy sees the least reduction in emissions in the agricultural industry, with larger sectors like transport, manufacturing and industry all managing to decrease emissions while agricultural emissions have risen.

Energy: Italy planned to phase out coal for the production of energy, however the energy crisis following Russia's invasion of Ukraine has delayed this until 2025. Italy has invested in solar photovoltaic and wind energy, and there is a significant pre-existing hydropower sector. Italy has successfully reduced reliance on Russian gas through the creation of their own gas pipe network and making deals with new suppliers.⁵¹ Italy has been strongly encouraged both by the EU and independent energy organisations to further increase the share of renewable energy as it diversifies its energy sources while making use of its own natural resources that suit many forms of renewable energy production. Italy currently consumes 37% renewable energy and 63% fossil fuels for energy production.

⁵⁰ Freedom House (2023) *Italy*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/italy/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁵¹ IEA (2023) *Italy 2023: Energy Policy Review*. <https://www.iea.org/reports/italy-2023> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Latvia

Population: 1,842,226

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: 2014

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1991)

Government: Coalition of three parties/party alliances of different political position: centre-right and liberal -conservative *New Unity* (JV), the right-wing, populist and national-conservative *National Alliance* (NA), and the centrist, green-conservative *United List* (AS)

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €25,900

2022 Democracy Index: 7.37/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 58.6 (rank: 25th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 25th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)

With its renewed independence from 1991, Latvia has developed into a democracy. Fundamental freedoms such as freedom of assembly are respected, and elections are considered fair and free. Problems remain with corruption, which affects politics, the judiciary, and the criminal justice system. In addition, ethnic Russians living in Latvia often experience discrimination.⁵²

Climate Change: Latvia has bucked the EU trend of lowering emissions, with growing per capita emissions since 2005. However, this number is still below EU average emissions. Latvia experienced significant economic strife with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, as a consequence of which there was a steep increase in carbon intensity of the economy. Since 2010, however, Latvia's carbon intensity has been on the decline, though still above the EU average. Transport, agriculture, and energy production are the biggest emitters by sector. Transport emissions are mostly the result of aging diesel and petrol vehicles that are higher emitting, and the increase in private over public transportation. Critics have praised Latvia's turn to renewable energy, but encourage a fossil fuel phase-out policy. Latvia officially launched their Ministry of Climate and Energy in January 2023.

Energy: Over the last 5 years, Latvia has managed to significantly increase their share of renewable energy through the use of hydroelectric power and the use of biomass heating. With the launch of the new Ministry for Climate and Energy, several recent developments have occurred. Firstly, grants for private wind farms to be constructed on state-owned land will be auctioned.⁵³ This is aimed to boost wind power production in Latvia and incentivise private companies. Secondly, authorisation has been given to use funds from the *EU Modernisation Fund* which will modernise and promote renewable energy source usage in in the country.⁵⁴ Latvia currently consumes 76% renewable energy and 24% fossil fuel sources for energy production.



⁵² Freedom House (2023) *Latvia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/latvia/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁵³ Ministry of Climate and Energy (2023) *The Cabinet of Ministers determines the procedure for the construction of onshore wind parks*. <https://www.kem.gov.lv/lv/jaunums/ministru-kabinets-nosaka-sauszemes-veju-parku-izbuves-kartibu> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Lithuania

Population: 2,862,380

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: 2015

Political system: Semi-Presidential Republic (since 1991)

Government: Right leaning coalition of *Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats (TS-LKD)*, *Liberal Movement (LRLS)*, and *Freedom Party (LP)*

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €31,500

2022 Democracy Index: 7.31/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 47.1 (rank: 61st)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 21st

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



Lithuania is democratic, with political rights and civil liberties guaranteed. However, the government is often denounced in public for corruption.⁵⁵

Climate Change: Transport and agriculture account for most of Lithuania's emissions. Lithuania has invested in techniques such as reforesting former farmland and quarry areas to build up carbon sinks to offset emissions. Lithuania remains above the EU average for carbon intensity of the economy, however this has begun to steeply decline and has been decoupled from GDP. Critics have suggested stronger action towards phasing out coal and gas as well as further developing public transport.⁵⁶

Energy: Historically, Lithuania utilised nuclear energy from Soviet nuclear plants until 2009, when it then became reliant on importing gas and other fossil fuels from neighbouring countries such as Russia. In more recent years, Lithuania has heavily invested in diversifying energy sources as well as building up a strong renewable energy sector. The 2021–2023 energy crisis had a smaller impact compared to other Russian gas reliant countries, due to the amount of diversification of energy sources and the growing share of renewables that Lithuania had invested in over the few years prior. The most predominant form of energy source is wind, followed by biomass, with some lingering reliance on imported gas, and some smaller inputs from other renewable energy sources.⁵⁷ Currently Lithuania uses 73% renewable energy and 27% fossil fuel produced energy.

⁵⁵ Freedom House (2023) *Lithuania*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/lithuania/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁵⁶ CCPI (2023) *Lithuania*. <https://ccpi.org/country/ltu/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁵⁷ Statista (2022) *Distribution of electricity generation in Lithuania in 2022, by source*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1236346/lithuania-distribution-of-electricity-production-by-source/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Luxembourg

Population : 660,809

Joining Dates:

- EU (former EEC): 1958 (founder)
- Schengen Area: 1995
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Monarchy (since 1946)

Government: Coalition between centre-right *Democratic Party* (DP), the centre-left *Luxembourg Socialist Workers' Party* (LSAP), and centre-left *The Greens*

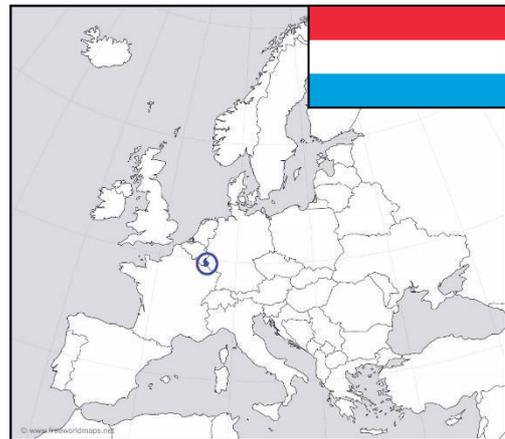
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €91,900

2022 Democracy Index: 8.81/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 67.4 (rank: 11th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 17th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



Luxembourg is a democracy and a constitutional monarchy. Political rights and civil liberties are guaranteed, though problems exist related to insufficient transparency of government work and inadequate safeguards against conflicts of interest.⁵⁸

Climate Change: Luxembourg's current ruling coalition has an environmental focus, with both the Environment and Energy portfolios being under the jurisdiction of *The Greens*. Internationally, Luxembourg has been a world leader in pushing for the phase out of fossil fuels and for fulfilment of the *Paris Agreement* and keeping within Paris compatible pathways for emissions.⁵⁹ As of 2019, Luxembourg has the highest per capita emissions within the EU. They have also had one of the steepest declines in emissions within the EU. Luxembourg's main export sectors are machinery, cars, and other steel products, while its main emissions sector is transport.

Energy: A notable reduction in emissions for the energy sector has been achieved in Luxembourg, as now it only accounts for 2% of total emissions. This decrease, however, is due to the outsourcing of Luxembourg's energy that makes it vulnerable to dependence on other EU Member States for energy. This is mostly due to Luxembourg's limited landscape for potential renewable energy sources within the country. Previously, Luxembourg relied on importing fossil fuels for energy production, though it now has deals with several neighbouring EU countries that secures energy security while allowing for more renewable sources of energy. Within Luxembourg, the largest renewable energy sector is biomass, followed by wind and solar energy. Currently Luxembourg produces 93% renewable energy and uses 7% fossil fuels for energy production.

⁵⁸ Freedom House (2023) *Luxembourg*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/luxembourg/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁵⁹ Ministry for Environment (2022) https://twitter.com/environment_lu/status/1595306610024501248?lang=en (accessed 25 July 2023).

Malta

Population: 519,562

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: 2008

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1974)

Government: Centre-left social-democratic *Labour Party*

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €36,000

2022 Democracy Index: 7.70/10 – Flawed democracy **2022**

EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 82.3 (rank: 4th) **2023**

Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 18th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



Malta has a parliamentary democracy characterised by competitive elections and periodic changes of power, though the dominance of the two largest parties (Labour Party and Nationalist Party) makes it difficult for smaller political parties to challenge them. Civil liberties are broadly guaranteed. Corruption is a serious problem in Malta.⁶⁰

Climate Change: Malta has the second lowest per-capita emissions within the EU. There has been significant decline in emissions since 2015, due to a reduction in the large share of emissions that resulted from fossil fuel power plants. Malta has significantly decreased the carbon intensity of the economy by 69% over the 2005–2019 period, while also growing the economy over the same period, indicating a decoupling of carbon from the economy. Malta, as an island nation with limited resources, has been significantly affected by climate change, and was one of the first countries to bring the issue of climate change to the UN General Assembly in 1988.⁶¹ Malta is predicted to face a shortage of groundwater supply due to the effects of decreasing annual rainfall and rising sea levels.⁶²

Energy: Malta is limited in its capacity to diversify energy sources to renewable energy, due to the restricted amount of space and resources that it has as a small island state. Despite these limiting factors, Malta has endeavoured to create more opportunities for renewable sources of energy such as solar and biofuels. Renewable energy sources in Malta still only make up 13% of total electricity production. Once again, due to geographical and resource limits, most forms of energy sources are imported. Historically this was oil, but since 2017 this has moved to gas. While Malta has high fossil fuel usage, experts understand the practicality and limits faced by Malta in achieving significant progress within the energy sector.⁶³ Currently Malta uses 13% renewable energy sources and 87% fossil fuels – the highest percentage within the EU27.

⁶⁰ Freedom House (2023) *Malta*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/malta/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 19 July 2023).

⁶¹ Climate Home News (2018) *Time capsule: 30 years ago, Malta put climate on the UN agenda*. <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2018/10/24/time-capsule-30-years-ago-malta-put-climate-un-agenda/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁶² Cutajar, Josef (2023) *Malta's drinking water supply is under threat. Climate change is to blame but not only*. <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/04/06/maltas-drinking-water-supply-is-under-threat-climate-change-is-to-blame-but-not-only> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁶³ CCPI (2023) *Malta*. <https://ccpi.org/country/mlt/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Netherlands

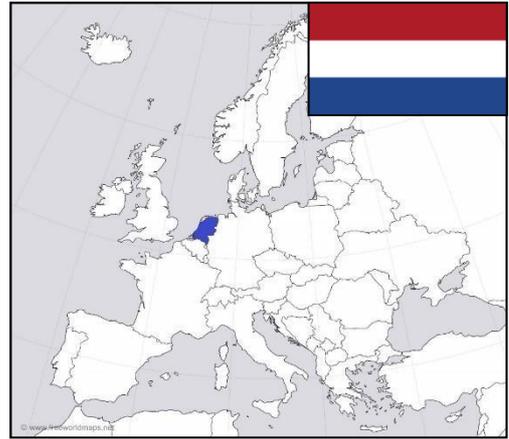
Population: 17,866,500

Joining Dates:

- EU (former EEC): 1958 (founder)
- Schengen Area: 1995
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Monarchy (since 1918)

Government: Four-party coalition of centre-right liberal conservative *People's Party for Freedom and Democracy* (VVD), centre to centre-right *Christian Democratic Appeal* (CDA), centre and social liberal *Democrats 66* (D66) and centre to centre-right *Christian Union* (CU). The coalition government collapsed on 7 July 2023, and is currently continuing in a caretaker capacity, with elections scheduled for 22 November 2023.



2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €45,300

2022 Democracy Index: 9.00/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 54.5 (rank: 32nd)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 13th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)

Parliamentary democracy in the Netherlands is characterised by a high level of protection of political rights and civil liberties. Concerns around irregular asylum seekers and Muslim minorities have increased in recent years, leading to harsh (and controversial) government policies on irregular migration and asylum.⁶⁴

Climate Change: The Netherlands has higher than the EU average carbon emissions per capita, though its rate of emissions reduction is also above the EU average. While the carbon intensity of its economy is below the EU average, its rate of reduction of carbon intensity is also lower than the EU average. In 2019, the largest emitting sector of the Netherlands was the energy sector. Critics propose further action needs to be taken to reduce the emissions of the agricultural sector, calling for the further reduction of livestock numbers.⁶⁵ Greenpeace and the Dutch Caribbean island of Bonaire are suing the Dutch government for failing to protect the island against the impacts of climate change, rising sea levels and the destruction of coral reefs.⁶⁶ The Netherlands is particularly susceptible to the effects of climate change as the country is mostly flat and below sea level. Recent climate change effects in the Netherlands have included flooding, droughts, rising sea levels, and heatwaves. Due to policy efforts to reduce nitrogen emissions, the Dutch government proposed to cut livestock numbers, this was heavily protested and has been strongly politicised in Dutch politics.⁶⁷

Energy: In 2020 the Netherlands introduced a carbon price for electricity generation, that will increase gradually. This was followed in 2021 by the introduction of a carbon tax for the electricity industry. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and 2021–2023 energy crisis, some exemptions and increases were delayed. Experts have criticised the Netherlands' continued use of offshore oil and gas production, and the move to import fossil

⁶⁴ Freedom House (2023) *Netherlands*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/netherlands/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁶⁵ CCPI (2023) *Netherlands*. <https://ccpi.org/country/nld/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁶⁶ Kaminski, Isabella (2023) *Dutch Caribbeans to sue Netherlands for climate crisis failure*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/5/25/dutch-caribbeans-to-sue-netherlands-for-climate-crisis-failure> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁶⁷ The Guardian (2023) *The Guardian view on Dutch farmer protests: a European test case*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/mar/05/the-guardian-view-on-dutch-farmer-protests-a-european-test-case> (accessed 25 July 2023).

fuels after continued natural gas extraction in the Netherlands was stopped.⁶⁸ Despite the ongoing use of fossil fuels, Dutch policy points in the direction of increasing the share of renewable energy especially through the implementation of offshore wind farms. The Netherlands intends to make the energy sector carbon neutral by 2035 through exploring hydrogen and its capabilities as a renewable energy source to replace gas. The Netherlands currently only has one nuclear reactor, although it imports energy from nuclear power plants in France and Germany (prior to their closure). Currently the Netherlands uses 40% renewable energy, 57% fossil fuel sources, and 3.3% nuclear energy sources for energy production.

⁶⁸ CCPI (2023) *Netherlands*. <https://ccpi.org/country/nld/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Poland

Population: 38,036,118

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: In progress

Political system: Semi-Presidential Republic (since 1989)

Government: Coalition government of the EU-sceptic right-wing populist *Law and Justice* (PiS), with national conservative *United Poland* (SP), national conservative *Republican Party* (R), the centre-right, conservative-liberal *Polish Affairs* (PS), and the centre-right, conservative, economic liberal *Agreement* (P)

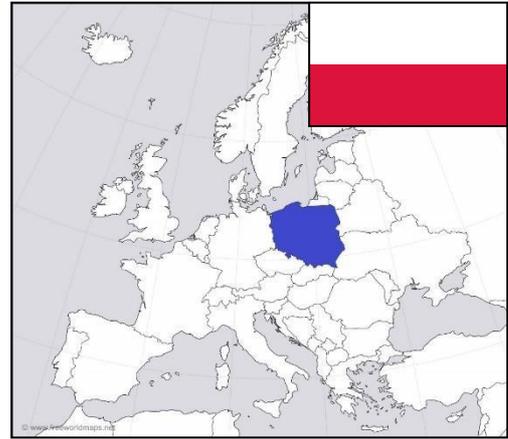
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €28,000

2022 Democracy Index: 7.04/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 38.8 (rank: 96th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 54th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: No Net Zero target set



Poland was a communist state until 1989. The socio-economic changes during the subsequent liberalisation process benefited some parts of the population more than others. This impacted the political landscape, creating a deep divide between liberal, pro-European parties and those purporting to defend national interests and ‘traditional’ Polish Catholic values. In 2015, the populist, socially conservative Law and Justice Party (PiS) took power, taking numerous measures to increase its influence over state institutions, negatively impacting the democratic system. In recent years, nationalist and homophobic rhetoric has increased.⁶⁹

Climate Change: Poland’s current ruling cabinet consists of right-wing, nationalist, and conservative political parties that put emphasis on the economy of Poland being able to withstand a ‘just transition’ towards climate goals. Experts have critiqued the lack of a Net Zero goal from Poland, saying of Poland’s climate change policy that “rather than being driven by Poland’s own proactive initiative, European Union policies drive Poland’s GHG reductions.”⁷⁰ It is the only EU Member State that does not have a carbon neutrality goal.

The carbon intensity of Poland’s economy has been a contentious issue between EU policy makers and the Polish government: while Poland does want to lower emissions and eventually reach reduction targets, it wishes to do so in a manner that will not impact significantly on the economy and those in industries tied to coal usage. Energy was the largest emitting sector as coal power plants are still in use, and coal is consumed in other industries such as industrial process and manufacturing. Poland plans to continue coal mining until 2049. Within the EU there has been criticism that Polish emission reductions and renewable energy targets are ‘unambitious’. An area of achievement within climate action policy is forestry and the use of forests as carbon sinks through the protection and reservation of forests and other biodiversity issues. Several Polish citizens have taken the Polish government to court over failure to act on cutting carbon emissions or mitigating the effects of climate change, with forest fires, droughts, and other climate change events impacting the country.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Freedom House (2023) Poland. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/poland/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁷⁰ CCPI (2023) Poland. <https://ccpi.org/country/pol/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁷¹ Kaminski, Isabella (2021) *Polish government faces court action over failure to tackle climate crisis*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/10/polish-government-faces-court-action-over-failure-to-tackle-climate-crisis> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Energy: Poland is reliant on coal and lignite coal for energy sources. Coal mining is a major industry within Poland, and the economy is extremely dependent on coal power plants as a source of electricity. Currently 70% of electricity generation is derived from coal. By comparison, wind energy (which is the largest renewable energy sector) only makes up 11% of total electricity produced. Poland has acknowledged the need to move away from coal in the future as an energy source: in 2020 the Polish government announced plans to build six nuclear power plants, the first of which is being built by 2033 with construction starting in 2026. Collaboration with French, American, and South Korean nuclear power technology companies bidding for the projects to build the nuclear power plants is already underway.⁷² Poland currently uses 22% renewable energy, and 78% fossil fuel sources for electricity generation.

⁷² Kość, Wojciech (2022) *Poland gives details on \$20B nuclear power bid*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-20-billion-nuclear-power-us-westinghouse/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Portugal

Population: 10,421,117

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1986
- Schengen Area: 1995
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Semi-Presidential Republic (since 1974)

Government: Majority government of the centre-left social democratic *Socialist Party* (PS)

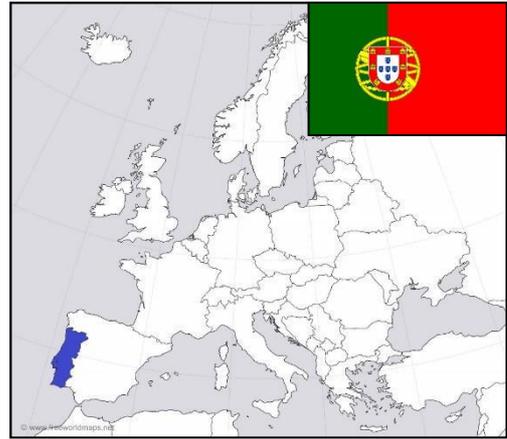
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €27,200

2022 Democracy Index: 7.95/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 37.6 (rank: 100th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 14th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



Portugal is a parliamentary democracy, with regular transfers of power. Civil liberties are guaranteed. Problems exist in terms of corruption, legal restrictions on journalism, abusive conditions for prisoners, racial discrimination and xenophobia. In recent years, corruption cases have been prosecuted against top officials.⁷³

Climate Change: In 2022 Portugal released their Basic Climate Law, setting further reductions for emission targets, as well as encouraging the potential for reaching carbon neutrality by 2045 rather than 2050 (the target previously set in law). The climate law sets out measures for investment to aid the energy sector and emissions reductions, though it is putting these plans into practice that will prove if Portugal can keep up with climate mitigation policy. The major emitting sectors are energy and transport. While agriculture is not among the top emitting sectors, some experts are concerned about agricultural expansion and its impact on reducing emissions.⁷⁴ Portugal has been susceptible to wildfires that have worsened in intensity over the last decade due to higher temperatures, droughts and extended hot seasons as a consequences of climate change.⁷⁵

Energy: Portugal aims to increase its renewable energy capacity: offshore wind power is currently the main renewable energy source, closely followed by hydro. Plans to increase solar generation have been criticised as too centralised, with a need for capacity building to decentralise solar energy.⁷⁶ In 2021, Portugal successfully phased out coal in the energy sector, decommissioning its final coal plant. Even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing energy crisis, Portugal was struggling with energy poverty due to energy inefficiency within buildings and comparatively high prices for electricity within the EU.⁷⁷ Portugal approved a hydrogen strategy in 2020, and at the start of 2023 also confirmed an initiative to add hydrogen to existing gas pipelines to meet demand for gas fuel, while a green hydrogen alternative is still in development.⁷⁸ Portugal currently uses 63% renewable energy sources and 37% fossil fuels sources for electricity production.

⁷³ Freedom House (2023) *Portugal*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/portugal/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁷⁴ CCPI (2023) *Portugal*. <https://ccpi.org/country/prt/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁷⁵ Marques, Francisco (2023) *How climate change is causing 'mega-fires' and forcing people to migrate in Portugal*. <https://www.euronews.com/2023/06/04/how-climate-change-is-causing-mega-fires-and-forcing-people-to-migrate-in-portugal> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁷⁶ CCPI (2023) *Portugal*. <https://ccpi.org/country/prt/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁷⁷ Hernández-Morales, Aitor (2021) *Freezing in paradise: Portugal's energy poverty problem*. <https://www.politico.eu/article/freezing-in-paradise-portugals-energy-poverty-problem/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁷⁸ Goncalves, Sergio and Devereux, Charlie (2023) *Portugal to launch Europe's first auction for piped hydrogen*. <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/portugal-launch-europes-first-auction-piped-hydrogen-2023-03-27/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Romania

Population: 19,053,815

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2007
- Schengen Area: In progress
- Eurozone: In progress

Political system: Semi-Presidential Republic (since 1989)

Government: Grand coalition of the soft Eurosceptic *Social Democratic Party* (PSD), the centre-right, liberal-conservative, pro-European *National Liberal Party* (PNL), and liberal-conservative *Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania* (RMDSZ)

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €27,100

2022 Democracy Index: 6.45/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 51.3 (rank: 44th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 43rd

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



Romania's multi-party democratic system produces regular transfers of power. Civil liberties are protected, though corruption remains a persistent problem, facilitated by entrenched political interests that resist efforts to fight corruption. Other problems include discrimination against minorities and control of the main media outlets by businesspeople with political interests.⁷⁹

Climate Change: Romania's economy was previously extremely carbon intensive, due to the nature of the transition to a market economy. Some of these industries remain reliant on coal, and Romania has the fifth most carbon intense economy within the EU. This has, however, decreased at a faster rate than the EU average. Romania, like Poland, has a large coal mining industry and incentives to move towards a just transition deal involving gas, which concerns climate experts as this is considered a step backwards for the European Green Deal. There are several carbon intense industries that require EU assistance to reduce emissions.⁸⁰

Energy: Romania intended to phase out coal by 2030, close lignite coal power plants by 2025, and coal thermal power plants by 2030, however energy insecurity has delayed these plans. Gas has been used as a transitional fuel to reduce the use of coal, though experts have critiqued the lack of exploration of renewable energy sources and have called for oil and gas phase out dates.⁸¹ To diversify energy supply, a decision was made to increase the nuclear energy sector through constructing two new reactors to join the two currently operational at Romania's nuclear power plant.⁸² The most developed renewable energy sector is hydro power, which takes advantage of Romania's landscape and environment, in 2022 making up 25% of electricity generation.⁸³ Currently Romania uses 45% renewable energy, 35% fossil fuel, and 20% nuclear for electricity production.

⁷⁹ Freedom House (2023) *Romania*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/romania/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁸⁰ European Parliament (2021) *Climate action in Romania: Latest state of play*. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696185/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)696185_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/696185/EPRS_BRI(2021)696185_EN.pdf) (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁸¹ CCPI (2023) *Romania*. <https://ccpi.org/country/rou/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁸² Euractiv (2022) *Romania secures \$3 billion US funding for two nuclear reactors*. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/energy-environment/news/romania-secures-3-billion-us-funding-for-two-nuclear-reactors/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁸³ Statista (2023) *Distribution of electricity generation in Romania in 2022, by source*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1236358/romania-distribution-of-electricity-production-by-source/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Slovakia

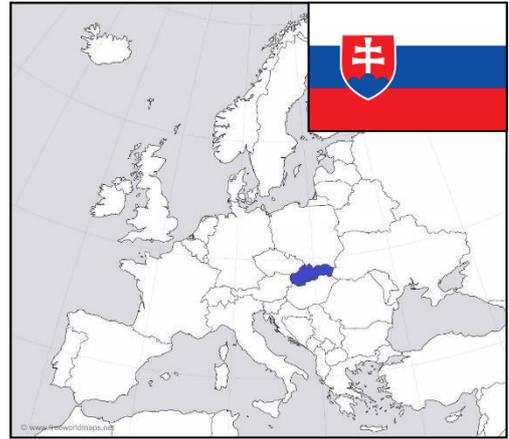
Population: 5,460,185

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: 2009

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1993)

Government: Following the collapse of the four party, centre right coalition government in May 2023, a technocratic caretaker government of experts has been appointed until elections can be held on 30 September 2023



2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €24,100

2022 Democracy Index: 7.07/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 53.5 (rank: 37th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 34th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)

The Slovak parliamentary system is characterised by regular multi-party elections and peaceful transfers of power. Civil liberties are protected, but certain problems hinder democracy: political corruption, entrenched discrimination against the Roma minority, and political hostility towards migrants and refugees.⁸⁴

Climate Change: The (now collapsed) coalition government passed Slovakia's first Climate Law at the start of 2023, which put in law the net zero by 2050 goal, introduced the ability to let Slovaks file lawsuits against the government if it is not meeting climate obligations, established a Climate Council that will oversee the implementation of climate goals on government ministries, and set emission targets in place. Slovakia has been susceptible to droughts, especially over the last 5 years, as temperatures have soared and normal wet seasons have become drier. Industry is the largest emitting sector as Slovakia has large steel production plants.

Energy: Slovakia was previously highly dependent on gas, oil, and some nuclear energy from Russia for electricity generation. Energy security and diversification is therefore a key priority for the Slovak energy sector. Slovakia currently utilises five nuclear reactors, with one under construction and three shut down as they did not meet modern nuclear safety standards. Nuclear energy provides 60% of Slovakia's energy generation, and the country intends to continue usage and further development of nuclear energy as an alternative to fossil fuels, and potentially to become a nuclear energy exporter. At present, Slovakia is second only to France for percentage of nuclear energy used for electricity generation. Slovakia is phasing out coal mining and coal energy production by 2023: the main lignite power plant will shut down in 2023 and the hard coal power plant in 2025. However this was planned before the 2021–2023 energy crisis, so some delays for these goals may occur. In terms of clean renewable energy, Slovakia mostly uses hydropower, which has significantly increased over recent years. Currently Slovakia uses 22% renewable energy sources, 18% fossil fuel sources, and 60% nuclear energy for electricity production.

⁸⁴ Freedom House (2023) *Slovakia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/slovakia/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

Slovenia

Population: 2,110,547

Joining Dates:

- EU: 2004
- Schengen Area: 2007
- Eurozone: 2007

Political system: Parliamentary Republic (since 1991)

Government: Coalition comprising green liberal and pro-European *Freedom Movement (GS)*, pro-European *Social Democrats (SD)*, and democratic socialist and soft Eurosceptic *The Left*.

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €32,500

2022 Democracy Index: 7.75/10 – Flawed democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 62.9 (rank: 19th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 41st

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Policy Document)



Slovenia is a parliamentary democracy with a freely elected government in which political rights and civil liberties are largely respected.⁸⁵ Corruption is a problem, although the media actively exposes such cases.

Climate Change: The current Slovenian coalition government has strong ecological/green principles that align with climate-focused policy. Slovenia intends to phase out coal by 2033 by closing coal power plants. While the carbon intensity of the economy is above the EU average, the reduction rate from 2005–2019 was higher than the EU average. Slovenia utilises its natural forestry as carbon sinks and is encouraging more measures to protect forests as it is prone to forest fires and flooding due to the effects of climate change. The transport and energy sectors are the main emitting sectors – for transport this is attributed to the large growth in private car usage over public transport. Experts have critiqued Slovenia’s continuing fossil fuel subsidies, lack of action on reducing transport emissions, and questioned the feasibility of reaching Paris Agreement goals.⁸⁶

Energy: Slovenia has historically relied on fossil fuels such as oil, coal and gas for energy supply. Nuclear energy from a plant shared with Croatia has remained a consistent staple, and hydropower plants have increased significantly to assist with the phasing out of coal. In 2022, nuclear energy accounted for 43% of electricity production with coal plants and hydropower each accounting for around 24%, a significant improvement compared to historic levels of fossil fuel usage. Solar investment is limited, with the government incentivising through subsidies. Slovenia is highly dependent on imported electricity, and the 2022–2023 energy crisis proved the importance of increasing energy security. While hydropower is significant and growing, climate change driven droughts threaten its consistency and reliability as a replacement for gas and coal.⁸⁷ Slovenia’s primary hydropower provider DEM (Dravske elektrarne Maribor) is planning to improve energy storage and branch out into wind farms, with a geothermal power plant also intended to begin construction in December 2023, and continued development of hydro and solar power plants also planned.⁸⁸ Slovenia uses 31% renewable energy, 26% fossil fuels and 43% nuclear energy for electricity generation.

⁸⁵ Freedom House (2023) *Slovenia*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/slovenia/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 May 2023).

⁸⁶ CCPI (2023) *Slovenia*. <https://ccpi.org/country/svn/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁸⁷ HSE (2023) *Slovenia must focus all its efforts on establishing a self-sufficient and low-carbon electricity system*. <https://www.hse.si/en/slovenia-must-focus-all-its-efforts-on-establishing-a-self-sufficient-and-low-carbon-electricity-system/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁸⁸ Todorović, Igor (2023) *Slovenia’s DEM to build 440 MW pumped storage hydropower plant*. <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/slovenias-dem-to-build-440-mw-pumped-storage-hydropower-plant/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Spain

Population: 47,325,360

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1986
- Schengen Area: 1995
- Eurozone: 1999

Political system: Parliamentary Monarchy (since 1978)

Government: Elections on 23 July 2023 resulted in a hung parliament. The existing government is continuing in a caretaker capacity: Coalition of the centre-left social democratic and pro-European *Spanish Socialist Workers' Party* (PSOE), the left-wing populist, socialist alliance *Unidas Podemos* (UP), the *In Common We Can* (ECP)

2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €29,800

2022 Democracy Index: 8.07/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 41.3 (rank: 83rd)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 23rd

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2050 (in Law)



Spain's parliamentary system involves competitive multiparty elections and peaceful transfers of power. The rule of law prevails, and civil liberties are guaranteed. While political corruption remains a problem, powerful figures have been successfully prosecuted. Freedom of expression and assembly are respected but are threatened by restrictive laws passed in recent years.⁸⁹

Climate Change: Spain has reduced emissions by 27%, well above the rate of the EU average of 19% over the period 2005–2019. Spain is very close to the EU average for carbon intensity of the economy, and has showed a strong decoupling of emissions from the economy. Spain's most recent climate law was the 2021 *Climate Change and Energy Law* which set carbon neutrality by 2050 in law, establishing goals for 100% renewable energy and decarbonisation of the economy by 2050 (and interim goals for 2030), that by 2040 all light vehicles will be emission free, and encouraging local government to focus on climate issues and mitigation.⁹⁰ Spain is susceptible to flooding, fires, and impacts to rising sea levels. Other long term climate change effects that have been predicted to worsen for Spain include severe droughts and warming of the Mediterranean Sea.

Energy: Spain plans to phase out coal and nuclear energy power plants by 2030 and 2035 respectively. There is some concern regarding energy storage, as Spain in recent years tended to import power and was previously reliant on oil and natural gas for electricity production. There has been growth in the use of wind farms, which now account for 22% of total electricity generation in Spain, with solar photovoltaic accounting for 10%. Currently Spain has 7 operational nuclear reactors that provide around a fifth of the country's electricity, and shuttered three reactors as of July 2023 in line with the phase-out policy. There is concern that there will be insufficient renewable energy capacity to meet the gap that the nuclear and coal phase out will leave, both in the amount needed to be produced as well as ensuring the reliability of renewable energy, with extreme weather events causing some forms of renewable energy to vary.⁹¹ Spain currently uses 44% renewable energy sources, 36% fossil fuels, and 20% nuclear energy for the generation of electricity.

⁸⁹ Freedom House (2023) *Spain*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/spain/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁹⁰ IEA (2022) *Climate change and energy transition law*. <https://www.iea.org/policies/13323-climate-change-and-energy-transition-law> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁹¹ Spasić, Vladimir (2021) *Spain on track to phase out nuclear power, coal by 2035*. <https://balkangreenenergynews.com/spain-on-track-to-phase-out-nuclear-power-coal-by-2035/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

Sweden

Population: 10,481,937

Joining Dates:

- EU: 1995
- Schengen Area: 2001
- Eurozone: In progress

Political system: Parliamentary Monarchy (since 1917)

Government: Coalition government of the centre-right, liberal-conservative *Moderate Party* (M), the centre-right, conservative *Christian Democrats* (KD), and the social-liberal *Liberals* (L)

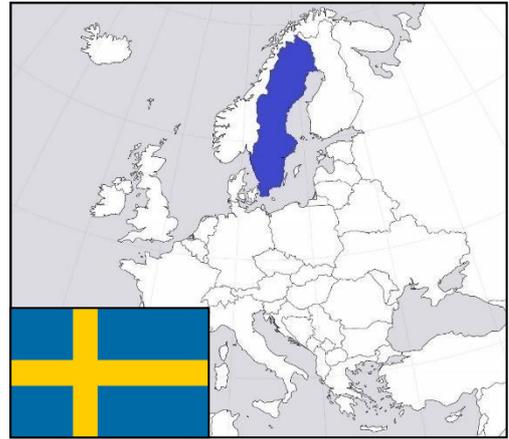
2022 GDP per capita (PPP): €42,300

2022 Democracy Index: 9.39/10 – Full democracy

2022 EPI Climate Change Mitigation Score: 75.4 (rank: 6th)

2023 Climate Change Performance Index Ranking: 5th

2023 Net Zero Tracker: Net Zero by 2045 (in Law)



Sweden is a parliamentary monarchy with free and fair elections and a strong multiparty system. Civil liberties and political rights are legally guaranteed and respected, and the rule of law prevails. The increased incidence of violent and hate crimes has been one of the biggest recent challenges in Sweden.⁹²

Climate Change: The election in 2022 of a coalition government of centre-right and right-wing parties signalled a significant change in attitude towards climate policy. The removal of a standalone Environment Ministry (merging it with climate change and energy), indicated a view that energy was the main priority in future environment policy.⁹³ Sweden has the lowest level of carbon emissions per capita within the EU. Its forests not only provide a carbon sink for Sweden, but also aid carbon removals for the EU as a whole. These forests are protected by law for environmental purposes. As of 2019, Sweden has the least carbon intensive economy in the EU. The main area for improvement for Sweden is reducing emissions within the transport sector, which it is pursuing through incentivising electric vehicles and taxing carbon emitting vehicles. Sweden has one of the first hydrogen fuelled steel production projects that will aid in decarbonising industry. It is well on track to reach their Paris compatible pathway, and already falls below the 2030 targets for emissions reduction.

Energy: Sweden shut down their last remaining coal power plant in 2020, and is considered a world leader in decarbonising the energy sector. It was the first country to use carbon pricing as a tool to target large emitting sectors. Sweden has a large range of energy sources which is ideal for energy security, however there is still some usage of natural gas and oil. Sweden has a significant nuclear energy sector that provides around 30% of its electricity generation. While in the 1980s Sweden decided to begin phasing out nuclear energy, this was repealed in 2010. Another phase-out was planned in 2015, but in June 2023 the right-wing government decided to build new nuclear power plants.⁹⁴ This is not only aimed to secure Sweden's energy sources, but also helps count towards Sweden's goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2045. Hydropower and, to a lesser extent, solar photovoltaics make up a large share of Sweden's electricity. Hydropower alone made up 43% of

⁹² Freedom House (2023) *Sweden*. <https://freedomhouse.org/country/sweden/freedom-world/2023> (accessed 20 July 2023).

⁹³ MacDougall, David (2022) 'Devastating consequences' as new Swedish government scraps environment ministry. <https://www.euronews.com/2022/10/18/devastating-consequences-as-new-swedish-government-scraps-environment-ministry> (accessed 25 July 2023).

⁹⁴ Reuters (2023) *Swedish parliament passes new energy target, easing way for new nuclear power*. <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/climate-energy/swedish-parliament-passes-new-energy-target-easing-way-new-nuclear-power-2023-06-20/> (accessed 25 July 2023).

electricity generation, with nuclear power coming in at second at 29%, leaving Sweden with currently the least amount of fossil fuels used in electricity generation in the EU at just 1.2%. Sweden uses 69% renewable energy sources, 1.2% fossil fuels and 29% nuclear energy for electricity generation.

Appendix: Terms

Climate Change Performance Index:

The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) assesses and compares the climate performances of 59 countries and the EU. These collectively account for over 90% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Comparisons are undertaken in four categories:

- *Greenhouse Gas Emissions* (40% of overall score): looks at GHG emissions, measured against the limit needed to keep global warming below 2°C;
- *Renewable Energy* (20% of overall score): measures the share of renewables in energy consumption;
- *Energy Use* (20% of overall score): measures energy use compared to the limit needed to keep global warming below 2°C;
- *Climate Policy* (20% of overall score): looks at the climate protection measures taken by governments.

Democracy Index:

The Democracy Index aims to measure the state of democracy in 167 countries. 60 indicators provide information on pluralism, civil liberties and political culture. Each country is categorised according to a score (from 0-10) and a ranking. The index also distinguishes between four types of regimes: Full democracies (score: 8.01–10), flawed democracies (6.01–8), hybrid regimes (4.01-6) and authoritarian regimes (0–4). The Democracy Index is compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), the research arm of The Economist Group, a UK-based private company that publishes The Economist weekly newspaper.

EPI (Environmental Performance Index) Climate Change Mitigation Score:

In the 2021 *Glasgow Climate Pact*, the global community established a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Climate Change Mitigation Score measures progress towards this goal. It is composed of nine indicators: adjusted emission growth rates for four greenhouse gases (CO₂, CH₄, F-gases, and N₂O) and one climate pollutant (black carbon); projected greenhouse gas emissions in 2050; growth rate in CO₂ emissions from land cover; greenhouse gas intensity growth rate; and greenhouse gas emissions per capita.

Eurozone:

The Euro area or also called Eurozone is a monetary union of 20 of the 27 European Member States: Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Finland. All these members have adopted the Euro (€) as their common currency. Additionally, Monaco, San Marino, Andorra, and the Vatican City have formally agreed with the EU to use the Euro as their currency.

Freedom in the World Index:

Freedom House, a non-governmental organisation based in Washington D.C., rates people's access to political rights and civil liberties in 210 countries and territories in its annual Freedom in the World report. The Freedom in the World report consists of numerical ratings and descriptive texts of each country. The analysis covers the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, government functioning, freedom of expression and belief, rights of association and organisation, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights. Through a weighted scale, the global freedom status is calculated. The combination of the total score for political rights and the total score for civil liberties determines the status "Free", "Partially Free" or "Not Free" after equal weighting.

GDP per capita (PPP):

GDP per capita is measure of the economic output (goods and services) within a country, divided by the population. Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) is used to make this measure comparable across countries by eliminating the problem of exchange rates. It does this by determining how much a particular basket of goods would cost in each country, and then recalculating the GDP per capita figure to even this out. GPP per capita (PPP) therefore offer a good basis of comparison of economic output across countries.

Member State(s):

A Member State is a European country that meets the accession criteria to join the European Union. The European started with the six founding states: Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined in 1973; Greece in 1981; Spain and Portugal in 1986; Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995; Malta, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004; Bulgaria and Romania in 2007; and Croatia in 2013. In 2020, the United Kingdom officially left the European Union.

Paris Agreement:

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change that was adopted on 12 December 2015 in Paris. It entered into force in 2016, but its regulations officially only applied from 2020 when the predecessor Kyoto Protocol expired. Parties worldwide agreed to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. It includes several uniform obligations for all Parties. It does not include specific emission reduction requirements, but each Party is to prepare, communicate and maintain successive so called 'Nationally Determined Contributions' (NDCs) that it intends to achieve. While the Agreement has been lauded as an historic turning point in the international climate change politics, it has been criticised by some environmentalists and analysts as insufficiently binding. For further information, see: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

Schengen Agreement:

1985 Agreement signed at Schengen, Luxembourg which abolished many internal borders between European signatory states, enabling passport-free movement between those states. There are currently 26 signatory states comprising the Schengen Area – 22 of which are EU states and four non-EU States.

