

EUKI Academy Report

EUKI Community Conference 2022 in the Czech Republic

Panel discussion: New Challenges in the Implementation of the EU Climate Goals

9 November 2022, Prague & online

How can the European Climate Initiative (EUKI) advance climate action and support implementing organizations in the Czech Republic to contribute effectively to the EU's Green Deal? These and more questions regarding current challenges guided through the Czech EUKI Community Conference. The [Czech EUKI Community Conference](#) was organized by [EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy](#) in cooperation with the [European Climate Initiative \(EUKI\)](#) and provided a great opportunity for Czech EUKI projects to come together in the exciting times of the Czech presidency of the Council of the European Union. German and Czech state and civil society representatives discussed “New Challenges in the Implementation of the EU Climate Goals”. The exchange shed light on progress that have been achieved under the Czech Presidency and pressing issues the Czech Republic is dealing with regard to the 'Fit for 55' package.

The conference was opened by Ulrike Leis, Deputy Director of the European Climate Initiative, EUKI, and Anne Glumm, Head of Economic Department at the [German Embassy in Prague](#). The following panel was facilitated by Réka Sulyok from EUROPEUM:

- Audrey Mathieu, Policy Officer at the [Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany \(BMWK\)](#)
- Lukáš Rečka, Researcher at [Charles University Environment Centre](#)
- Martin Šauer, Policy Officer at the [Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic](#)
- Tomáš Petříček, Director of Progressive Analytical Centre, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

The Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union in times of crisis

The overall circumstances of the Czech Presidency were challenging as the EU is facing an unprecedented crisis. Given the geopolitical turbulences caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the energy consequences that are being felt all over Europe, it is now more important than ever to accelerate the European Green Deal and to further push forward the 'Fit for 55' package.

“The preliminary agreement on ESR shows colleagues currently negotiating at COP27 that the EU is moving forward with an ambitious implementation of its climate targets and that climate mitigation has not gone off the radar despite short-term measures we had to take for the security of supply. We are in the decade of implementation.” - Audrey Mathieu, Policy Officer at the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK)

As the Czech Presidency is coming to an end, it can look back on important accomplishments, such as:

- **Revision of the effort sharing regulation (ESR):** In order to operationalize the 'Fit for 55' package, the ESR addresses the national emissions reduction targets for 2030 in the sectors of agriculture, transport, buildings, waste and small industries. Pending formal adoption, this could mean a greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 40% compared to 2005 for these sectors that were not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (EU-ETS) but are responsible for 60% of greenhouse gas emissions. This was an important signal just in time for the COP27 to underline the commitment of the EU for ambitious climate action.
- **Stricter targets for car emissions:** In order to further move into the direction of zero-emission mobility, stricter targets for CO₂ emissions for new cars and vans were decided. Pending formal adoption, the Council and the European Parliament agreed to a 55% CO₂ emission reduction target for new cars and 50% for new vans by 2030 compared to 2021 levels as well as to a 100% CO₂ emission reduction target for both new cars and vans by 2035.

The achievements underline the overall willingness and ambition to finalize the 'Fit for 55' package by the end of 2022. Often, the increased complexity of negotiations requires accepting certain short-term trade-offs – however, despite the circumstances, the Czech Presidency managed to change certain aspects of the legislation in favor of climate policies. In fact, the crisis may even contribute to speeding up the Green Transition, channeling more green investments.

Current challenges in the Green Transition in the Czech Republic

While the Czech system still depends on fossil fuels, accelerating the Green Transition in the meantime is essential, as well as improving energy efficiency, energy storage and saving energy. The best energy is the one that is not consumed. The current Czech priorities include helping people to improve the energy efficiency of their houses and making it easy to invest in renewables and new technologies. Until now, the Czech government was rather late with community energy projects.

“What we can do, and what we’re trying to do is to use the money that we have efficiently and fast.” – Martin Šauer, Policy Officer at the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic

The role of civil society organizations and EUKI in advancing climate action in the Czech Republic

In order to reach climate goals, there is still much to be done – transformative action is required. The European Climate Initiative (EUKI) is proud to support a variety of projects in the Czech Republic – so far, 31 Czech projects received funding from EUKI.

“EUKI can contribute to joint climate protection and help us think outside the box and to learn from our neighbors and other countries.” – Anne Glumm, Head of Economic Department at the German Embassy in Prague

Civil society can play a big role in accelerating the Green Transition – for example as a watch dog for progressive climate action and as an early warning system. In addition to that, the expertise and analysis of civil society organizations is crucial as they are the ones on the ground.

“It’s also about providing expertise from institutions, we have a lot of NGOs that are sometimes far ahead of public administrations in modelling and looking at projections can pave the ways for countries to endorse faster certain technologies and to look for cooperation.” – Tomáš Petříček, Director of Progressive Analytical Centre, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Municipalities, local authorities and actors are the practitioners of climate mitigation and their experiences and best practices provide valuable insights for policy makers in their policy formulation processes. EUKI is one of the right addresses for this on a European level.

“I’ve seen cases in which civil society really did have a major impact on the legislation. It is really worth it.” – Martin Šauer, Policy Officer at the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic

The importance of partnerships in advancing climate action on a European level

In order to achieve the climate goals, the EU needs international partnerships. In general, European cooperation is needed above all to accelerate the green transition. At the international level, too, there is no way around a common European approach and speaking with one European voice.

At times, there is a lack of coordination among member states and more foresight is needed. What kind of partnerships is needed in the future, also to secure the supply of green energy? This is especially important, as there is an increase in demand for electricity expected. Europe has no control over certain supply chains and is dependent on countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia for raw materials like metals and minerals. It is thus crucial to find beneficial ways to meet the needs of both the EU and its partner countries.