

Making climate policy more just through democratic means

Global warming must be limited to well below 2°C, and the 1.5°C limit should be pursued. This is according to reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. A total of 195 countries have committed to this target through the Paris Agreement on Climate and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

In order to meet climate goals, both in the Global South and the North, a range of actions will be taken to promote sustainability transitions. Sustainability transitions are long-term developments in which social and technological systems undergo

fundamental changes as they adapt to more sustainable patterns of production and consumption.¹ In these transitions, every actor in society has a role to play, be it the state, local government, citizens or businesses.

This policy brief examines how democracy and new democratic ways of decision-making can facilitate more just or more ambitious climate policies, and how climate policy affects the stability and crisis resilience of societies.

The complex relationship between democracy and climate policy

Climate change is a difficult issue that tests people's trust in democracy. It is a global and complex phenomenon that cannot be tackled by individual countries and requires long-term action. The positive effects of these measures will only become visible after years or decades, and therefore democratic and electoral decision-making can make it difficult to plan a long-term climate policy.²

Climate policy is also hampered by a number of other tendencies common in politics. For example, pressing domestic political issues often take precedence over climate policy, and interest groups may complicate climate policy-making in order to protect their own interests.³

The relationship between democracy and climate policy is to some extent burdened by historical baggage. Since the 1970s, some activists and academics have proposed solving the climate crisis through non-democratic methods – top-down regulation. It has been argued that tackling climate change is so complex that politicians, for example, lack the capacity to do so, or that the climate crisis is a war-like situation in which democracy must be temporarily set aside.⁴

The credibility of democracy is also being tested by the fact that, in most countries, a majority of citizens support emission reduction measures, but doubt the ability of states to implement them. For example, a European poll in 2023 shows that 88% of respondents (at least 70% of citizens in all Member States) think that greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced as much as possible, and the remaining emissions should be offset, to make the EU economy climate neutral by 2050. At the same time, 67% of respondents think governments are not doing enough to tackle climate change.⁵

In most countries, a majority of citizens support emission reduction measures, but doubt the ability of states to implement them.

Similar sentiments exist in Africa, where 72% of respondents to the 2021–2023 Afrobarometer survey felt that climate change would make life worse in their country. In addition, 77% believed that citizens can help mitigate climate change and 74% thought that their governments should act to limit climate change, even if it is costly or harmful to the economy. As many as 71% of respondents also agreed that developed high-income countries should do more to tackle climate change. More than

53,000 people from 39 African countries took part in the survey.⁶

As young people are more serious about climate change than older generations, the mismatch between their aspirations and the actions of policymakers is particularly striking. This is why many young people feel that democracy is too slow to respond to the challenges of climate change.⁷

However, mitigating climate change is one of the key interests of democracies, as many of its effects pose a challenge to the democratic system.

Extreme weather events, natural disasters and rising sea levels can lead to escalating conflicts and institutional collapse, and crises arising from climate change can be exploited to reduce citizens' rights and freedoms.⁸

Systemic differences between democracies also have an impact on climate policy. For example, multi-party systems, where decision-making requires coalitions and consensus, have proven to be more effective in implementing environmental policy than two-party systems such as the US and the UK⁹.

Multi-party systems, where decision-making requires coalitions and consensus, have proven to be more effective in implementing environmental policy than two-party systems.

However, the research literature on climate action by democracies has not found a direct causal relationship between democracy and ambitious climate policies. Instead, there is conflicting information on the issue. There are studies that show that democracy did not have a significant impact on reducing CO2 emissions between 1992 and 2013.¹⁰

On the other hand, studies show that democracies are better at reducing emissions because they have stronger public oversight, citizens and organisations are involved in climate policy-making, and accountability for environmental policy is clearer.¹¹ There are also studies that highlight that democracy and new forms of decision-making that promote democracy and inclusiveness, i.e. equal participation, can produce both just and climate-effective policy recommendations for implementing sustainability transitions.

For example, for the report published by the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation in 2025, researchers reviewed 56 peer-reviewed, quantitative studies from 1992 to 2022. The studies looked at the link between democracy and the factors that influence environmental crises. In 29 of these studies, more democratic countries were found to act more environmentally sustainable than less democratic countries.¹²

Democracies are at their best when they tackle local environmental damage that directly affects their members. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that studies show that democracies are successful in producing high-quality legislation and regulation on environmental protection and biodiversity. Democracy therefore creates the perfect conditions for ambitious climate policy, but does not in itself guarantee results.

The importance of justice and inclusiveness

In 2018, yellow vests took over the streets of French cities to protest against the increase in fuel taxes. In Germany, there have been demonstrations both for and against coal power in recent years. Finland has been preparing to phase out peat burning and Kenya fought a fierce political battle between 2018 and 2023 to ban logging.

Since 2018, the Fridays for Future school strikes have been highlighting young people's discontent with the way current adults and especially politicians are delaying climate action, leaving young people, future generations and the Global South to suffer the resulting harm. These youth protests gave a major impetus to the European Commission's European Green Deal, under which the EU embarked on a just sustainability transition.¹³

These events have a lot in common. These are sustainability transitions, where old technologies or practices are gradually being abandoned in favour of new ones. In the short term, promoting these policies can cause conflict and discontent. This is why climate policy and the sustainability transitions that promote it have raised new questions of justice.

Climate policy and the sustainability transitions that promote it have raised new questions of justice.

Not everyone is on an equal footing in transitions. Most transitions have early adopters who view them positively

and who potentially benefit from them. There are, however, also those who are more dependent on old technologies or ways of doing things for their livelihoods and lifestyles. They feel threatened by transitions because adapting to the new means more change or uncertainty for them.

The transitions and their associated sequence of events are illustrated in the sustainability changes by the X-curve, popularised by the Derk Loorbach research group.¹⁴ The central phase of the transitions is located at the midpoint of the X-curve. It describes a turning point, where we are moving away from the old and introducing the new. The tipping point is particularly prone to conflict, as it concentrates uncertainty and social tensions. The potential for conflict is further increased if the transition has a fundamental impact on the daily lives of a large number of people.

In reality, transitions are rarely straightforward developments. Adopting the new and abandoning the old can take many twists and turns, happen quickly and unnoticed, or because of an external threat. For example, the switch from incandescent and halogen to more environmentally friendly LED lights caused little tension, as there were no affected parties who felt the switch was unjust. Similarly, the use of air-source heat pumps to heat and cool households and buildings has grown significantly.

As the turning point of sustainability transitions is a conflictual one, it is important to ensure that transitions are perceived as just and legitimate as possible by all. Several dimensions of justice have been identified in the research literature, including procedural, recognitional and distributive justice.

Procedural justice refers to the fairness, transparency, consistency, clarity and inclusiveness of processes. The recognitional dimension of justice refers to the respectful treatment of different individuals and groups, where their identity, experience and status are recognised and not ignored in decision-making. Distributive justice, on the other hand, emphasises the just distribution of resources, benefits and disadvantages.

Underlining diversity and inclusion, recognitional justice can be seen as a central pillar of both procedural justice and democracy in general.¹⁵

To achieve this, different groups, including the disadvantaged, need to have a say in decision-making.¹⁶ However, this is not only achieved by giving them the opportunity to participate, but also by giving them a real say in the outcome and content of the decision. This can be done, for example, by dismantling structures that perpetuate inequalities and promoting equal participation.

Inclusiveness and equity – for example in terms of gender equality – are not incompatible with an ambitious climate policy and can support each other. For example, there are studies suggesting that parliaments with more women and thus a more even gender balance promote more ambitious climate policies than those with a more unequal gender representation.¹⁷ There are also indications that involving young people in decision-making can make climate policy more sustainable¹⁸.

Involving young people in decision-making can make climate policy more sustainable.

Benefits and disadvantages are not evenly distributed

One group that will bear a particularly heavy burden of responsibility for climate change is young people, who will live longer with its consequences and have to deal with problems they did not cause.¹⁹ Therefore, their participation in climate policy-making contributes to both recognitional justice and intergenerational justice.

To support youth participation in climate policy-making and other policy sectors, in Uganda, for example, five seats have been reserved for parliamentarians under 30. In Kenya, the constitution requires parties to nominate 12 members of the National Assembly to represent specific groups, such as young people and persons with disabilities. In Rwanda, the National Youth Council elects two members of parliament.²⁰

In addition to young people, there are other groups that will be significantly affected by climate change. This includes, for example, the Sámi people²¹, as the impacts of climate change will directly affect their traditional livelihood, reindeer herding. Therefore, the Sámi Climate Council is one example of an initiative that can promote a more recognitionally and procedurally just climate policy in Finland. Canada has also made efforts to better integrate indigenous peoples into its climate policy and, for

example, during the preparation of the 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, the Canadian federal government established an Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE), which brought together indigenous representatives to develop climate policy recommendations.²²

The Sámi Climate Council will bring new information to support decision-making and improve the Sámi' people's recognitional rights

The Sámi Climate Council was established in 2023 under the Finnish Climate Act as an independent expert body with the aim of producing climate change research by combining Sámi traditional knowledge and academic research.²³ The Council will communicate its research to both the authorities and the Sámi community in order to support decision-making and promote understanding of the impact of climate change on Sámi culture.

Since its establishment, the Council has developed new ways of measuring climate change, using both existing data and interviews with Sámi traditional knowledge holders.

For example, in 2025, the Council adopted an opinion on the Lapland Solar and Wind Energy Study (2023–2024). In its opinion, the Council stressed that mitigating climate change is essential and that green energy has a key role to play. However, the Council stressed that the study does not provide a basis for the development of wind and solar power in the Sámi homeland area, as more information is needed on the possible impacts on the rights of the Sámi.

Distributive justice of sustainability transitions can be promoted by addressing the unequal distribution of benefits, responsibilities and disadvantages. In Tunisia, for example, parliamentarians and NGOs have stressed that the country's transition to renewable energy must take place in a way that benefits Tunisians broadly - not in a way that mainly trickles down to global renewable energy giants.²⁴ In Germany, on the other hand, some citizens have felt that the coal phase-out linked to the sustainability transition

has disproportionately penalised coal miners.²⁵ The government has created a €40 billion package to fund retraining and support job creation in regions that have relied on coal-fired power for their livelihoods.²⁶

The mismatch of benefits or harms is not only about sustainability transitions, but also about how climate change affects different countries and people. Women, especially in low-income countries, are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events and the resulting resource constraints. During climate disasters, their risk of gender-based violence increases.²⁷

In addition, industrialised countries, which account for about a fifth of the world's population, are responsible for about 92% of greenhouse gas emissions.²⁸ However, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that at least 3.3 billion people – mostly in low-income countries – are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.²⁹

If distributive justice for all is not achieved in sustainability transitions, there will have to be a stronger reliance on just decision-making. In this way, those who are dissatisfied with the outcome can at least be confident that they have the opportunity, through a just procedure, to promote issues important to them in future decision-making processes. Procedural justice also offers the possibility to openly express either support for or opposition to a decision while maintaining one's dignity.³⁰

New ways of decision-making to strengthen justice, legitimacy and democracy

To promote the experience of justice at different levels and to mitigate the conflict-proneness of sustainability transitions, democratic innovations and deliberative methods have been increasingly used in recent years to support climate policy. These have included citizens' panels, opinion polls, village meetings and participatory budgeting.

The broad and deliberative involvement of citizens in the preparation of climate policy decisions has shown that they may support more ambitious climate action than previously assumed by politicians.³¹ By engaging in deliberative decision-making methods, people can also learn new things about, for example, climate change, which can diversify the debate on it, both in public and in parliaments.³² Indeed, climate issues have been among the most popular topics of citizens' panels and smaller-scale deliberative

debates in recent years, both in OECD countries and in the Global South.³³

Climate issues have been among the most popular topics of citizens' panels and smaller-scale deliberative debates in recent years.

In the case of citizens' panels, participants are often randomly selected to be as representative as possible of the population as a whole – therefore, the attempt is to attract people of different ages, backgrounds and regions. When participants are forced to argue their views with each other in a diverse group, they tend to adjust their positions and come to a broader perspective that emphasises the common good.³⁴

The Citizens' Panel on climate policy in the UK in 2020 concluded that higher aviation taxes, redefining energy standards for buildings and measures to encourage more sustainable food production and consumption are among the recommendations. The panel also recommended reducing private car use by developing local services and public transport.³⁵

Implementing recommendations, even if they enjoy widespread support, can also prove challenging. In the UK, for example, there has been no success in redefining energy efficiency standards for buildings, despite calls from both homeowners and tenants.³⁶ There is also no aviation tax, but the climate impact of flying has been mitigated by requiring airlines to use more sustainable aviation fuel.³⁷

As in the UK, a randomly selected climate panel also met in France in 2019–2021 to develop recommendations on how France could reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 in a just way. The work resulted in 149 recommendations, of which 78, or 53%, have been fully or partially implemented, according to a report in the French newspaper *Le Monde*.³⁸ However, the implementation of the recommendations developed by the panel has been criticised by the French scientific community for the fact that the final legislative changes and reforms have been watered-down versions of the original proposals.³⁹

In Finland, too, citizens' panels have been used to support climate policy at both local and national level. For example, in 2021, the Finnish Ministry of the Environment asked a randomly selected panel of citizens to comment on the fairness of the climate measures proposed by the Ministry.⁴⁰ In 2024, the City of Helsinki convened a panel of

64 residents to assess the impact of transport emission reductions. The panel's work resulted in a statement that was presented to the Urban Environment Committee.

From participation to deliberative democracy – the European Green Deal marked a new era of citizen participation in EU climate policy

In 1998, the EU signed the Aarhus Convention, which aims to strengthen justice and democratic participation in environmental matters. The treaty guarantees citizens the right to be informed about environmental issues, to participate in decision-making and to seek redress if their rights related to environment are violated.

Even before the European Green Deal, the EU consulted its citizens on environmental legislation. This has been done through surveys or consultations, mainly involving well-organised NGOs.

In preparing the European Green Deal, the EU invited people to get involved in many different ways on a larger scale than before. For example, the EU organised citizen panels and discussion forums to which Europeans were invited at random. The EU also organised a future conference on climate issues.

Citizens were also encouraged to contribute to national energy and climate plans, which the European Green Deal obliged Member States to update. The areas most affected by the green transition have been supported by a just transition fund.

In addition, the EU used a variety of digital channels throughout the process to make it easy to participate in the debate in different languages across Europe.

While the EU is increasingly seeking to involve its citizens, it has also been criticised for being mainly concerned with listening to them but not allowing for deep and effective participation. Many forms of participation used by the EU still exclude the voices

of marginalised groups. Furthermore, the European Green Deal has been criticised for focusing on the economic side of transitions and distributive justice while ignoring broader environmental and climate justice issues – such as intergenerational justice, global justice and systemic power relations.⁴¹

Deliberative decision-making is not just about outcomes. Instead, citizens' panels can offer new forms of debate in times of crisis and instability. In Lebanon, for example, a citizens' panel in 2020 addressed the issue of access to electricity. In the panel, participants outlined alternative solutions, highlighted citizens' realities and challenged experts in a situation where the state and political actors had failed and withdrawn. The work of the panel brought people together in a new, dialogical way.⁴²

As climate policy requires not only technical measures but also value-based prioritisation, especially in situations where funding is limited, citizens' panels can provide valuable support to policy-making. A good example of this is an initiative in Tanzania, where a representative sample of Tanzanians discussed in small groups how the revenues from natural gas sales should be spent. The discussions led participants to recommend using gas revenues for health and education rather than construction projects.

As climate policy requires not only technical measures but also value-based prioritisation, especially in situations where funding is limited, citizens' panels can provide valuable support to policy-making.

In addition to citizens' panels, village councils have been used to support decision-making, particularly in the Global South, including Bolivia, Colombia, India, Nepal and Tanzania.⁴³ For example, in India, village assemblies, or *gram sabhas* have acted as forums for residents to discuss proposals made by village councils, i.e. *gram panchayats*. While village council members are elected representatives, village assemblies are places of participation and collective decision-making open to all. For example, the forest programme in India is implemented at the local level, in partnership with village meetings and by listening to its participants. By providing an opportunity for open and critical debate in the *gram sabhas*, conflicts between the state and local communities have been resolved. For example, there have been discussions about why trees cannot be cut down from the state forest programme land and used to build wooden houses in the same areas.⁴⁴ In

this way, village assemblies have become a way for citizens to debate and make their voices heard that complements other democratic channels of influence.⁴⁵

Democratic climate policy promotes stability

The challenges posed by climate change will increase security risks both within societies and between countries.⁴⁶ These can be divided into three categories: direct, cascading and transitional effects.⁴⁷ The direct impacts of climate change threaten the physical living environment and thus people's well-being, livelihoods and critical infrastructure. In Finland, for example, the risk of forest fires is increasing as a result of climate change.⁴⁸ When combined with socio-economic or geopolitical factors, the effects of climate change are cumulative. In the future, climate refugees will become more common, for example as a result of desertification, rising sea levels and changing water systems. This will put further pressure on public services that are already in crisis in many countries.⁴⁹

The shift away from fossil fuels is also changing geopolitical power relations and triggering new conflicts as countries that have relied on oil and gas resources lose their power over energy.⁵⁰ At the same time, the importance of critical minerals essential for the sustainability transition and their management is highlighted.⁵¹

Measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change can also have unforeseen transitional effects, especially if they are poorly designed.⁵² For example, forms of renewable energy production can have devastating environmental impacts where the materials are produced for its use, and the increasing demand for critical minerals can bring new geopolitical risks to international supply chains⁵³.

The security implications of climate change can trigger new and exacerbate existing conflicts, and climate work and sustainability transitions can become more difficult to implement when war and disorder divert resources, such as financial resources and political will, mainly to crisis management, often leaving climate change mitigation and sustainable development as merely secondary concerns. Thus, both conflicts and climate change create mutually exacerbating cycles that prevent action to mitigate the climate crisis.⁵⁴

Conflicts and climate change create mutually exacerbating cycles that prevent action to mitigate the climate crisis.

Democratic and inclusive climate policies are key to meeting this challenge, as they can prevent and mitigate the growing discontent and social instability that climate change will bring.⁵⁵ International co-operation between democracies is also an opportunity to promote just climate policies and international stability. In the Nordic countries, for example, work has been done to integrate the climate perspective into the promotion of peace and security in international arenas.⁵⁶ The UN has also recognised the link between climate change and conflict, which is why the UNDP supports democratic and institutional development within countries to strengthen societies' resilience to crises related to climate, peace and security.⁵⁷

Conclusions

The Paris Agreement commits the world's countries to promote different levels of sustainable shifts to prevent the average global temperature from rising above 1.5°C. Both the EU and Finland have enacted their own climate laws, which set binding targets for achieving carbon and climate neutrality. Implementing these commitments will not be easy, as climate policies and sustainability transitions may be subject to friction and their positive effects will not be immediately visible.

The research literature and good practices analysed for this policy brief show that decision-making practices that support and complement justice, inclusiveness and democracy can produce effective and actionable policy recommendations to accelerate sustainability transitions in both the Global South and North.

Decision-making practices that support and complement justice, inclusiveness and democracy can produce effective and actionable policy recommendations to accelerate sustainability transitions in both the Global South and North.

The success of these new ways of decision-making often requires that the policy recommendations they produce are given due consideration, for example by national or local decision-making bodies. New deliberative and democratic innovations in climate policy are complementary to representative democracy and should work in coordination with representative institutions.

Despite good practice and experience, climate policy is increasingly becoming a test case for democracy. Failure to respond to climate change in ways that promote a sense of justice is likely to undermine the trust of citizens, especially young people, in democracy and its key institutions.

Failure to respond to climate change in ways that promote a sense of justice is likely to undermine the trust of citizens, especially young people, in democracy and its key institutions

Climate change can exacerbate or trigger conflicts. Similarly, sustainability transitions aimed at mitigating climate change can both prevent and cause conflict. That is why democratic and just climate policies promote stability both within and between countries. Democratic climate policy is therefore also a means to promote peace.

Policy recommendations

1) Young people must be consulted in climate policy-making and their views must be given particular weight.

Climate change can either strengthen or weaken young people's trust in democracy. Democratic and inclusive climate policies strengthen young people's belief that democracy can also solve far-reaching challenges and ensure a better life for future generations.

2) Sustainability transitions to mitigate climate change must be implemented in a just manner.

In long-lasting, multidimensional and comprehensive processes of social change, not everyone is on an equal footing. Therefore, processes must be open, consistent and just, taking equal account of people's different backgrounds. Sustainability transitions must be promoted in a way that strengthens democracy and people's sense of justice.

3) Democratic innovations in climate policy must be linked to decision-making processes.

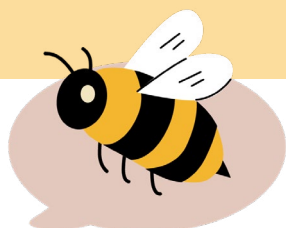
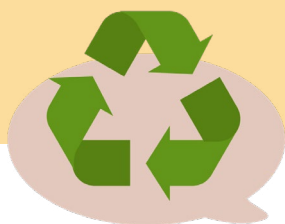
For democratic innovations such as citizens' panels, transition funds and village assemblies to succeed in supporting climate policy-making, it must be ensured that their recommendations are properly addressed, for example by national or local decision-making bodies. The participatory process must feed into the action of representative institutions.

4) Political parties must continuously develop new solutions and policies for a just sustainability transition and increase parliamentary co-operation.

Climate change and mitigation measures may increase citizens' distrust in democracy and create and accelerate conflicts. That is why well-planned climate action that promotes justice can prevent conflict and promote peace both within and between countries.

5) In its foreign and development policy, Finland should strengthen its support for democracy, which promotes just climate policies.

Support for democracy can increase cross-party co-operation on difficult social issues, strengthen effective governance and increase the participation of underrepresented groups in decision-making.



Endnotes

- 1 Markard, J., Raven, R., & Truffer, B. (2012). Sustainability transitions: An emerging field of research and its prospects. *Research Policy*, 41(6), 955–967.
- 2 Lindvall, D. (2021). *Democracy and the Challenge of Climate Change* (Discussion Paper 3/2021). International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Hammond, M., & Smith, G. (2017). *Sustainable Prosperity and Democracy: A Research Agenda* (CUSP Working Paper No. 8). Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity.
- 5 European Commission. (2023, July). *Special Eurobarometer 538: Climate Change*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Climate Action.
- 6 Afrobarometer. (2023). *With climate change making life worse, Africans expect governments and other stakeholders to step up*.
- 7 Gorman, J., T., Pasic, L., & Vallado, E. (Eds.). (2023). *Youth and democracy in the climate crisis* (Youth Knowledge Book 31). EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership.
- 8 Lindvall, D. (2021). *Democracy and the challenge of climate change* (International IDEA Discussion Paper 3/2021). International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).
- 9 Sorsa Foundation. (2023). *A welfare state of just transition*.
- 10 Selseng, T., Linnerud, K., & Holden, E. (2022). Unpacking democracy: The effects of different democratic qualities on climate change performance over time. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 128, 326–335.
- 11 Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C. H., Lindberg, S. I., Teorell, J., Marquardt, K. L., Medzihorsky, J., Pemstein, D., Fox, L., Gastaldi, L., Tzelgov, E., Wang, Y., & Wilson, S. (2025). *V-Dem Policy Brief No. 31. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project*.
- 12 Sorsa Foundation. (2023). *A welfare state of just transition*
- 13 Eckert, Sandra. (2021). The European Green Deal and the EU's regulatory power in times of crisis. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59 (Annual Review Issue), 81-91.
- 14 Loorbach, D., Frantzeskaki, N., & Avelino, F. (2017). Sustainability transitions research: Transforming science and practice for societal change. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 42(1), 599–626.
- 15 Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford University Press.
- 16 Fraser, N. (2001) Recognition without ethics?. *Theory, Culture and Society* 18:2–3, pp.
- 17 Mavisakalyan, A., & Tarverdi, Y. (2019). Gender and climate change: Do female parliamentarians make difference? *European Journal of Political Economy*, 56, 151–164.
- 18 Lindvall, D. (2021). *Democracy and the challenge of climate change* (International IDEA Discussion Paper 3/2021). International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).
- 19 Tafon, R. V., & Saunders, F. (2025). Toward transformative youth climate justice: Why youth agency is important and six critical areas for transformative youth activism, policy, and research. *PLOS Climate*, 4(4), e0000472.
- 20 Hickey, S. P., & Maria-Sube, E. (2022). *Myanmar's environment and climate change challenges* (International IDEA Policy Paper No. 27). International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).
- 21 An indigenous people living primarily in the northern parts of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia.
- 22 Indigenous Circle of Experts. (2018). *We rise together: Achieving Pathway to Canada Target 1 through the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in the spirit and practice of reconciliation*. Conservation 2020.
- 23 Finnish Government. (2023, August 24). Government appointed Sámi Climate Council.
- 24 Hivos. (2025, April 15). *Breakthrough for energy democracy in Tunisia*. Hivos.
- 25 Gengnagel, V., & Zimmermann, K. (2022). Green deservingness, green distinction, green democracy? Towards a political sociology of a contested eco-social consensus. *Culture, Practice & Europeanization*, 7(2), 292–303.
- 26 Bundesgesetzblatt. (2020). *Strukturstärkungsgesetz Kohleregionen* [Structural Strengthening Act for Coal Regions]. Bundesgesetzblatt Teil I, Nr. 37, 1795–1817.
- 27 Verner, M., Marlon, J. R., Carman, J., Rosenthal, S., Ballew, M., Leiserowitz, A., Wood, E., Thulin, E., Ordaz Reynoso, N., & Buttermore, N. (2024, August 13). *International public opinion on climate change: Differences by gender and income/emission levels*. Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.
- 28 Hickel, J. (2020). Quantifying national responsibility for climate breakdown: An equality-based attribution approach for carbon dioxide emissions in excess of the planetary boundary. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 4(9), e399–e404.
- 29 IPCC. (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [H.-O. Pörtner et al. (Eds.)]. Cambridge University Press.
- 30 Schlosberg, D. (1999). *Environmental justice and the new pluralism: The challenge of difference for environmentalism*. Oxford University Press.
- 31 Lage J, Thema J, Zell-Ziegler C, Best B, Cordroch L, Wiese F. (2023). Citizens call for sufficiency and regulation – A comparison of European citizen assemblies and National Energy and Climate Plans. *Energy Res Soc Sci* 104:103254.
- 32 Curato, N., Smith, G., Willis, R., & Rosén, D. (2024). *Deliberative democracy and climate change: Exploring the potential of climate assemblies in the Global South*. International IDEA.
- 33 OECD. (2020). *Innovative citizen participation and new democratic institutions: Catching the deliberative wave*. OECD Publishing.
- 34 Curato, N., Smith, G., Willis, R., & Rosén, D. (2024). *Deliberative democracy and climate change: Exploring the potential of climate assemblies in the Global South*. International IDEA.
- 35 Climate Assembly UK. (2020). *The path to net zero: Climate Assembly UK final report*.
- 36 O Regan, N. (2023, November 24). *Insulating Britain: Examining the barriers and motivations to decarbonising our homes*. Social Market Foundation.
- 37 Department for Transport & Kane, M. (2025, January 1). *Greener flights ahead for UK aviation*. GOV.UK.
- 38 Le Monde. (2021, February 10). *Climat : Les propositions de la convention citoyenne ont-elles été reprises par le gouvernement?* Le Monde.
- 39 Le Monde. (2024, April 18). *Climat : « Une défiance grandissante s'installe dans notre communauté scientifique vis-à-vis du pouvoir politique »*. Le Monde.
- 40 Ministry of the Environment. (2021, April 27). *Citizens' Jury publishes a statement on the fairness of climate actions*.
- 41 Buzogány, A., Parks, L., & Torney, D. (2025). Democracy and the European Green Deal. *Journal of European Integration*, 47(2), 135–154
- 42 Curato, N., Smith, G., Willis, R., & Rosén, D. (2024). *Deliberative democracy and climate change: Exploring the potential of climate assemblies in the Global South*. International IDEA.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 European External Action Service. (2023). *Addressing the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on peace, security and defence*. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/climate-and-security-nexus_en.
- 47 Hakala, E. (2023). *Climate change and security: Preparing for different impacts* (FIIA Briefing Paper 369). Finnish Institute of International Affairs.
- 48 Aalto, J., & Venäläinen, A. (2021). *Climate change and forest management affect forest fire risk in Fennoscandia* (Research report). Finnish Meteorological Institute.
- 49 *Climate Change-induced Sea-Level Rise Direct Threat to Millions around World, Secretary-General Tells Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*. (2023, February 14).
- 50 Tynkkynen, V-P. (2022). Russia, an energy power - Oil culture meets climate change. Gaudeamus.
- 51 Hira, A. (2025). The geopolitics of the green transition and critical strategic minerals. *International Journal, Advance online publication*.
- 52 Hakala, E. (2023). *Climate change and security: Preparing for different impacts* (FIIA Briefing Paper 369). Finnish Institute of International Affairs.

53 Ibid.

54 *Climate, peace and security*. (2023, September 1). UNDP Climate Promise.

55 Kim, K., de Coning, C., Hakala, E., Etzold, T., & Koefoed, M. (2024). *The peace and security implications of climate change for the Nordic region*. *Nordic Review of International Studies*, 3, 109–116.

56 Ibid.

57 *Climate, peace and security*. (2023, September 1). UNDP Climate Promise.

References

Aalto, J., & Venäläinen, A. (2021). *Climate change and forest management affect forest fire risk in Fennoscandia* (Research report). Finnish Meteorological Institute.

Afrobarometer. (2023). *With climate change making life worse, Africans expect governments and other stakeholders to step up*.

Bundesgesetzblatt. (2020). *Strukturstärkungsgesetz Kohleregionen* [Structural Strengthening Act for Coal Regions]. Bundesgesetzblatt Teil I, Nr. 37, 1795–1817.

Buzogány, A., Parks, L., & Torney, D. (2025). Democracy and the European Green Deal. *Journal of European Integration*, 47(2), 135–154.

Climate Assembly UK. (2020). *The path to net zero: Climate Assembly UK final report*.

Climate Change-induced Sea-Level Rise Direct Threat to Millions around World. Secretary-General Tells Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. (2023, February 14).

Climate, peace and security. (2023, September 1). UNDP Climate Promise.

Coppedge, M., Gerring, J., Knutsen, C. H., Lindberg, S. I., Teorell, J., Marquardt, K. L., Medzihorsky, J., Pemstein, D., Fox, L., Gastaldi, L., Tzelgov, E., Wang, Y., & Wilson, S. (2025). *V-Dem Policy Brief No. 31*. Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project.

Curato, N., Smith, G., Willis, R., & Rosén, D. (2024). *Deliberative democracy and climate change: Exploring the potential of climate assemblies in the Global South*. International IDEA.

Department for Transport & Kane, M. (2025, January 1). *Greener flights ahead for UK aviation*. GOV.UK.

Eckert, Sandra. (2021). The European Green Deal and the EU's regulatory power in times of crisis. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(Annual Review Issue), 81–91.

European Commission. (2023, July). *Special Eurobarometer 538: Climate Change*. Brussels: Directorate-General for Climate Action.

European External Action Service. (2023). *Addressing the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on peace, security and defence*.

Finnish Government. (2023, August 24). *Government appointed Sámi Climate Council*.

Fraser, N. (2001). Recognition without ethics? *Theory, Culture and Society*, 18(2–3).

Gengnagel, V., & Zimmermann, K. (2022). Green deservingness, green distinction, green democracy? Towards a political sociology of a contested eco-social consensus. *Culture, Practice & Europeanization*, 7(2), 292–303.

Gorman, J., Kiilakoski, T., Pasic, L., & Vallado, E. (Eds.). (2023). *Youth and democracy in the climate crisis* (Youth Knowledge Book 31). EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership.

Hakala, E. (2023). *Climate change and security: Preparing for different impacts* (FIIA Briefing Paper 369). Finnish Institute of International Affairs.

Hammond, M., & Smith, G. (2017). Sustainable prosperity and democracy: A research agenda (CUSP Working Paper No. 8). *Centre for the Understanding of Sustainable Prosperity*.

Hickel, J. (2020). Quantifying national responsibility for climate breakdown: An equality-based attribution approach for carbon dioxide emissions in excess of the planetary boundary. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 4(9), e399–e404.

Hickey, S. P., & Maria-Sube, E. (2022). *Myanmar's environment and climate change challenges* (International IDEA Policy Paper No. 27). International IDEA.

Hira, A. (2025). The geopolitics of the green transition and critical strategic minerals. *International Journal*. Advance online publication.

Hivos. (2025, April 15). *Breakthrough for energy democracy in Tunisia*. Hivos.

Indigenous Circle of Experts. (2018). *We rise together: Achieving Pathway to Canada Target 1 through the creation of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas in the spirit and practice of reconciliation*. Conservation 2020.

IPCC. (2022). *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press.

Kim, K., de Coning, C., Hakala, E., Etzold, T., & Koefoed, M. (2024). *The peace and security implications of climate change for the Nordic region*. *Nordic Review of International Studies*, 3, 109–116.

Lage, J., Thema, J., Zell-Ziegler, C., Best, B., Cordroch, L., & Wiese, F. (2023). Citizens call for sufficiency and regulation – A comparison of European citizen assemblies and National Energy and Climate Plans. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 104, 103254.

Le Monde. (2021, February 10). *Climat : Les propositions de la convention citoyenne ont-elles été reprises par le gouvernement?* Le Monde.

Le Monde. (2024, April 18). *Climat : « Une défiance grandissante s'installe dans notre communauté scientifique vis-à-vis du pouvoir politique »*. Le Monde.

Lindvall, D. (2021). *Democracy and the challenge of climate change* (International IDEA Discussion Paper 3/2021). International IDEA. <https://doi.org/10.31752/idea.2021.88>.

- Loorbach, D., Frantzeskaki, N., & Avelino, F. (2017). Sustainability transitions research: Transforming science and practice for societal change. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 42(1), 599–626.
- Markard, J., Raven, R., & Truffer, B. (2012). Sustainability transitions: An emerging field of research and its prospects. *Research Policy*, 41(6), 955–967.
- Mavisakalyan, A., & Tarverdi, Y. (2019). Gender and climate change: Do female parliamentarians make difference? *European Journal of Political Economy*, 56, 151–164.
- Ministry of the Environment. (2021, April 27). *Citizens' Jury publishes a statement on the fairness of climate actions*.
- OECD. (2020). *Innovative citizen participation and new democratic institutions: Catching the deliberative wave*. OECD Publishing.
- O Regan, N. (2023, November 24). *Insulating Britain: Examining the barriers and motivations to decarbonising our homes*. Social Market Foundation.
- Schlosberg, D. (1999). *Environmental justice and the new pluralism: The challenge of difference for environmentalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Selseng, T., Linnerud, K., & Holden, E. (2022). Unpacking democracy: The effects of different democratic qualities on climate change performance over time. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 128, 326–335.
- Sorsa Foundation. (2023). *Oikeudenmukaisen siirtymän hyvinvointivaltio*.
- Tafon, R. V., & Saunders, F. (2025). Toward transformative youth climate justice: Why youth agency is important and six critical areas for transformative youth activism, policy, and research. *PLOS Climate*, 4(4), e0000472.
- Tynkkynen, V-P. (2022). *Venäjä, energiavalta -Öljykulttuuri kohtaa ilmastonmuutoksen*. Gaudeamus.
- Verner, M., Marlon, J. R., Carman, J., Rosenthal, S., Ballew, M., Leiserowitz, A., Wood, E., Thulin, E., Ordaz Reynoso, N., & Buttermore, N. (2024, August 13). *International public opinion on climate change: Differences by gender and income/emission levels*. Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.
- Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Authors: Demos Helsinki / Johannes Jauhiainen, Lara Best-Dunkley, Nuutti Mäkinen and Aleksi Neuvonen.
Demos Helsinki is a globally operating, non-profit think tank that focuses on social change.

Design, layout and illustration: Marja Hautala / Muuks Creative

© Political Parties of Finland for Democracy – Demo Finland 2025

Produced with support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

ISBN: 978-952-65812-3-1 (softcover)

ISBN: 978-952-65812-4-8 (PDF)

Political Parties of Finland for Democracy – Demo Finland is a co-operative organisation of all Finnish parliamentary parties. It enhances democracy by strengthening the political participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in particular and by supporting dialogue between political parties.

www.demofinland.org