

REPORT

Assessment of EU's climate policies: are they up to the challenge?

Tuesday 3rd of October 2017, 16:00-18:00
European House, Jungmannova 24, Prague

- **The second debate of the Prague Climate Talks series took place on Tuesday 3rd October at the European House. The project is co-organized by EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy and Glopolis, in cooperation with Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung Prague and under the auspices of the UN Information Centre Prague.**
- **The topic of the second debate was "Assessment of EU's climate policies – are they up to the challenge?" and our distinguished speakers were Gabriela Fischerová (Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic), Adéla Denková (EurActiv.cz) and Zanna Vanrenterghem (Climate Action Network Europe). The debate was moderated by Christian Kvorning Lassen from EUROPEUM.**

Ms. Fischerová started off the discussion by reminding the audience that the EU is composed of three core institutions and (still) 28 member states and there are therefore various drives and pressures shaping the climate policy. Due these political constraints, she argued that **EU policies are currently not ambitious enough to save the climate.** However, there are two particular areas where the EU should and could do more to support positive development: technology and consumer behaviour.

Technology is moving even faster than expected but **the producers need a clear government incentive in order to move in the right direction.** Policies such as the Emissions Trading Scheme, despite having their

shortcomings, serve as important signs for the businesses that investing into low-carbon technologies is going to be worthwhile. The second area is more problematic, since only **government policies are not enough to alter consumer behaviour, however, that does not mean the EU should not put efforts into this.** Without technological advances and changes in people's behaviour, the current trend of our emission production will not be reversed, said Ms. Fischerová.

Ms. Denková then followed up with a detailed analysis of the consumers' role in the transition towards greener economy, acknowledging that **the EU has realised the potential of consumers in making the change happen** and is already actively trying

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to support that. The Winter Package for example proposed the use of digital technologies in order to make the consumers more informed about what their choices mean for the climate and offer them comparisons of energy suppliers. **The support of “prosumers”,** i.e. those who not only consume energy but also to some extent create their own, **should be a vital part of EU’s energy transition.** However, the damaged reputation of renewable energy sources in the Czech Republic is making a more widespread transition problematic so far.

Last but not least, **Ms. Vanreenterghem** offered the view of an international climate NGO, highlighting the importance of having informed citizens in order to engage in the policy-making process, both at national and EU level. Furthermore, she provided an overview of the key data pertaining to the rising temperatures

and the amount of emissions that needs to be cut in order to prevent catastrophic changes. In her rather chilling account, **the world’s governments have about 20 years to ensure that the Earth is not going to warm up more than 2 °C** as it was pledged in the Paris Agreement. To this end, she stressed that the EU needs to better align its emissions reduction targets with those of the Paris Agreement in order to help reach this goal.

A lively discussion with the audience ensued, covering questions raging from the impact of agriculture on the emissions of greenhouse gases, through the most efficient ways of changing consumer behaviour, to the support of rail transport as opposed to flying within the EU. Overall, it was an enhancing debate and we thank all of our distinguished guests, the moderator and the participants for taking part!

Prague Climate Talks is a new project aimed at establishing a platform for continued high-level discussion on the complex issue of climate change. Throughout a series of debates it will bring together experts and professionals from varying relevant fields as well as members of the general public.

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