

REPORT

Prague Climate Talks: Climate change: Can It Unite a Divided Society?

Thursday 17th September, 17:00 – 18:30, online

- The third debate of this year's Prague Climate Talks series was held online on Thursday 17th September from 5pm. The project is organised by EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy in cooperation with Heirich-Böll-Stiftung Prague and under the auspices of the UN Information Centre in Prague.
- The discussion focused on the social dimensions of climate policies and was joined by Matěj Stropnický, journalist and ex-chairman of the Green Party, Michaela Trtíková Vojtková from STEM and Petr Doubravský, co-founder of Fridays for Future Czech Republic. The debate was moderated by Kateřina Davidová from EUROPEUM.
- The recording of the debate is available on the Facebook page of [EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy](#).



The debate focused on society's reaction to climate change and its possible solutions especially in the Czech context, which is rather specific in many ways.

Michaela Trtíková Vojtková began by confirming that opinion polls repeatedly show that the Czechs love nature and want to protect it, but they don't like when it brings them extra costs. Similarly, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions are perceived as troubling by the public, but it is expected that the government will take the main initiative in solving these problems. Czech politicians, however, don't listen to the public in this regard and they are not able or willing to communicate the necessary measures to tackle climate change well.

Matěj Stropnický then continued by highlighting the importance of the role that the voice of the president plays in the Czech public debate. This is one of the reasons why the country has had already four consecutive election periods of climate scepticism prevailing in the public discourse, whose similarly highly influential proponents are lacking in other European countries. He also believes that the mere phrase "climate change" has negative connotations in the Czech environment and is perceived as something imported from the outside.

According to **Petr Doubravský**, the topic of climate crisis has long been pushed back in the Czech public debate. One of the reasons is that the Czech media often don't know how to tackle the topic correctly and as a result, the Czech public for example doesn't make a connection between climate change and nature preservation. A big role is also played by the politicians, who are not showing enough interest in climate topics. It is the parliamentary parties that set the public agenda and these have long been reluctant to talk about this topic.

Viewers on Facebook asked questions regarding for example the right way of communicating the ambitious EU climate policies to the Czechs so that it would unite them, not divide them, or whether it makes sense to focus on the impact individuals have on the Earth's climate or rather on the underlying systemic questions.

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