

## **Report V4 Climate policies vis-à-vis updated climate targets**

On October 6<sup>th</sup> 2020, Think Visegrad Platform organized a closed roundtable “V4 Climate policies vis-à-vis updated climate targets”. The meeting was conducted online due to the current situation over Covid-19 pandemic and it was held under the Chatham House rules. It was organised in cooperation with the Centre for Transport and Energy, Czech Republic. The debate focused on the most recent updates of the EU’s 2030 climate targets and how they are being perceived by the four members of the Visegrad group. The meeting was hosted and moderated by Ziga Faktor (Head of Brussels office, EUROPEUM) and Katerina Davidova (Research Fellow, EUROPEUM). The composition of the round table was selected to gather state representatives of the Visegrad countries, representatives of EU institutions as well as researchers and experts from the civil society.

In the introductory remarks, participants briefly commented on the updated 2030 Climate Target Plan of the European Commission and the positions, specifics and challenges for Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic were discussed. All of the actors agreed on the importance of the updated climate policies and expressed a serious commitment to fulfill the goals set by the European Union, namely the climate-neutrality goal by 2050. Nevertheless, divergence between the panelists emerged regarding the architecture and implementation of the updated 2030 target. Some of the shortcomings of the Impact Assessment such as lack of country-specific approach or sector-based analysis were brought up on multiple occasions in order to emphasize the difficulties faced on the ground. Different starting position within the energy sectors of various EU countries were pinpointed as one of the main problems for the countries that are more coal-dependent. Such a dependence then also brought up the question of Just Transition Mechanism and other funds to help cover the costs of transformation without plunging people into energy poverty.

While all of the parties agreed that the updated 2030 targets will affect countries that heavily rely on fossil fuel energy more than others, some participants saw the accompanying investments as opportunities to modernise the whole economies. Everyone agreed that the impact the low-carbon transition will have on low-income households needs to be taken into consideration. There was a tense discussion over the usage of nuclear energy as a replacement of fossil fuels, with participants not agreeing whether nuclear energy should be considered a green source of energy or not. Everyone agreed, however, that the principle of technological neutrality must be upheld.

Another issue that was discussed was the global nature of climate change. While all the parties were proud of Europe’s reaction to climate crisis, some emphasized that without a concerted global action there will be no light at the end of the tunnel. Commitment of China to become carbon neutral by 2060 was seen as highly questionable by some speakers at the table.

In conclusion, the discussion covered a wide range of issues related to the design and implementation of the updated 2030 climate target. Some of the challenges faced are country-specific and some are shared by all four Visegrad Countries. It is important to point out that besides the differences, the panelists were open to exchanging points of views and valuable strategies that could be implemented on the ground.

**List of participants:**

Monika Figaj - Counselor to the Minister, Ministry of Climate, Poland

Balasz Toth - Permanent Representation of Hungary to the EU, Climate attaché

Ewelina Daniel - Department A, DG Energy, European Commission

Nolan Theisen - Research Fellow, GLOBSEC

Katerina Davidova - Research Fellow, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Tomas Jungwirth - Research Fellow, AMO

Andras Deak - Research Fellow, CEID

Lukasz Ogrodnik - Research Fellow, PISM

Tomas Profant - Research Fellow, IIR Prague

Julian Toth – Chief Operating Officer, International Sustainable Finance Center (ISFC)

Juraj Melichar - Bankwatch Slovakia

Valentina Vivirito - European Climate Foundation

Daniel Thompson - CEE Bankwatch Network

Magda Sikorska - European Climate Foundation

Wojciech Makowski - European Climate Foundation

Ziga Faktor – Head of Brussels Office, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy