

# Towards Climate Justice

Rethinking the European Green Deal from a racial justice perspective



The Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice is a people of colour-led advocacy project with solidarity and empowerment at its heart. Equinox is a coalition of racial and social justice leaders, activists and organisers from across Europe working in solidarity to influence European Union law and policy.

<https://www.equinox-eu.com/>



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# Concepts

**Racialisation:** The political process that creates, maintains and gives meaning to concepts of race. It is a process of categorising, othering, and marginalising through several systems, tools and social practices.

**Racialised people:** Individuals and groups who have been subject to a process of racialisation and been ascribed a particular racial category. In European societies, all people are racialised. However, we use the term to refer to those negatively racialised or racialised as 'other'.

**Racial justice:** The process of collectively uncovering, challenging and actively un-doing the systems, tools and practices that maintain racism and racialisation.

**Structural racism:** The structures that create and maintain vulnerability, harms and precarity aligned to racial difference. Structural racism is the intertwined relationship between historical injustices, epistemic (knowledge) erasure, laws, institutions, policies, practices, and social, political and economic disparities. The effect of these factors is to further marginalise and impose violence on racialised people.

**Climate Justice:** The concerns about the inequitable outcomes for different people and places associated with vulnerability to climate impacts and the fairness of policy and practice responses to address climate change and its consequences. Putting global justice firmly into the frame. It is about framing climate change through the prism of colonialism and empire, acknowledging that those who are most affected are the least responsible, recognising how climate change multiplies existing oppressions, and advocating solutions that redistribute power and centre the most affected communities. It is about making the debate broader than an overly narrow focus on topics such as emissions targets or green technologies.<sup>1</sup>

**Racial Capitalism:** The acknowledgement that 'the development of race is not parallel, or extraneous to, but somehow internal to the development of capitalism, and in ways that cannot simply be reduced to class. Racial capitalism is the process of capital retrenching racial hierarchies through the exploitation and extraction of surplus value from racialised labour, locally and globally, by the capitalist ruling class to profit.<sup>2</sup> The concept of racial capitalism assists in appreciating the connections between the neglect of lives of people of colour globally and the social relations of climate breakdown.<sup>3</sup>

**Colonialism:** The combination of territorial, juridical, cultural, linguistic, political, mental/epistemic, and/or economic invasion and subsequent domination of a group of people or groups of people by another group. European colonialism (circa late 1400) is particularised

1 Research Briefing, Framing Climate Justice, 2020 <https://framingclimatejustice.org/resources/>

2 Cedric J. Robinson: On Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism, and Cultures of Resistance, 2019 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvr0qs8p>

3 'Deal or no deal?' Exploring the potential, limits and potential limits of Green New Deals, Leon Sealey-Huggins, 2021 <https://www.common-wealth.co.uk/reports/deal-or-no-deal-exploring-the-potential-limits-and-potential-limits-of-green-new-deals>

by changing political-economic-social-religious systems of European political, economic, social, and educational domination that generated and benefited from Eurocentric racialised and racist logics. European colonialisms are distinct from other colonialisms because of their immense geographical reach, Eurocentric logics, ideologies and observances of racial hierarchies and segregation, the centring of appropriation by dispossession, and structural and cultural persistence within postcolonial epochs.<sup>4</sup> Our understanding of European colonialism includes these dynamics as applied worldwide and within Europe, including Nordic colonialism, British colonial rule over Ireland, etc. Whilst not all European countries were active colonisers, many supported or benefited from colonial systems. Whilst nation-states have evolved, this does not erase the impact of colonial legacies and dynamics within international relations, systems and social structures today.

**Climate Colonialism:** A structural practice where countries in the Global North exploit and overpower countries in the Global South to increase their power and control of less powerful countries, under the guise of reducing global carbon emissions and building green technology (e.g. public and private acquisition of land, unequal distribution of extracted resources and the continuance of pillaging, harm, violence and exertion of power over communities with less resource power).

**Greenwashing:** a marketing and communication tactic that portrays the organisation and/or institution as environmentally friendly, when in reality, its practice does not align with that portrayal. For organisations, this tactic is used to deceive consumers that the product or service they are purchasing is good for the environment and is ethical and sustainable. For institutions, this tactic is used to deceive the public that their service and institutional solutions are beneficial for the environment.

**Environmental racism:** acknowledges the reality that minoritised populations around the world – intentionally or unintentionally – often face the worst effects of environmental hazards, such as air pollution and dumping of waste – including toxic waste. Studies show that people of colour have higher chances of living near industrial areas, major roads, mines, power plants and dumps. Both in the North and South, people of colour have higher rates of illnesses due to air, water and soil pollution. It also acknowledges that these communities are often denied the right to a healthy and good quality living space and amenities such as parks and have the least access to resources and power to challenge this injustice.<sup>5</sup>

**Intersectionality:** examines the intersections of global systems of domination: racism/ colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy; and their by-products: classism, homo- and transphobia, cis- and heterosexism, and various forms of racism. Intersectionality looks at how various social categories such as gender, class, race, sexuality, disability, religion and other identity axes are interwoven on multiple and simultaneous levels.<sup>6</sup>

4 Murrey, A., 2020. Colonialism. In: Kobayashi, A. (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 2nd edition. vol. 2, Elsevier, pp. 315–326. <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/B9780081022955108042>

5 Definition by the Young Friends of the Earth Europe Manifesto: [http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/young\\_foee/yfoee\\_manifesto\\_final.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/young_foee/yfoee_manifesto_final.pdf)

6 Definition by the Center for Intersectional Justice, citing Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw for coining the term Intersectionality, as well as the many other black women before her who developed the underlying principles. For more Equinox's conception of intersectionality in a European context of gender justice, please see 'Towards Gender Justice: Rethinking EU Gender Equality Policy from an Intersectional Perspective': available at: <https://www.equinox-eu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Towards-Gender-Justice.pdf>

# Equinox's approach

At Equinox, we look beyond fixed or objective notions of race or ethnicity and focus on power, the process of racialisation, and the factors that created these power dynamics.

Equinox uses “**racialised people**” expansively to include all those who have been subjected to different processes of racialisation. We include, but do not limit this to: People of African, Arabic, Asian, and Latin American descent, Roma and Sinti people, Sámi people, and those that are racialised as a result of their perceived membership to Muslim, Jewish and other religious communities. We also include in scope those who self-define using terms such as ‘Black’ and ‘people of colour’.

Racialisation is highly contextual. We note that the specificities and complexities of processes of racialisation challenge clear cut definitions.

# Introduction

'A high level of environmental protection and the improvement of the quality of the environment must be integrated into the policies of the Union and ensured in accordance with the principle of sustainable development.'

- Article 37 - Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union

In the past few years, we have witnessed an increased awareness of the climate crisis due to global youth climate strikes where community organisers, activists from the Global South<sup>7</sup> and youth activists formed coalitions to pressure global leaders to take action in protecting the future of the planet and global communities. These strikes brought up discussions that brought to the fore the historical meaning and practice of climate justice and international solidarity. These discussions increased the awareness of the climate crisis and connected the global movement. Increasingly, these movements recognise that there can be no climate justice without racial, gender, economic, intra-generational, and disability justice. However, there remains much to be done to ensure that the entire movement strives to achieve justice in all forms.

Aided by the power of social media, activists around the world platformed their narratives and perspectives of the climate crisis and how it devastates their communities, and they illustrated the root causes across impacts. We witnessed climate action and efforts happen in countries of the Global South that Western media have consistently overlooked. Vanessa Nakate, a Ugandan climate justice activist, campaigns to protect Uganda's natural resources and limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C degrees above pre-industrial levels<sup>8</sup> to avoid further catastrophic climate consequences. Nakate has called out Ugandan leaders to cease the subsidisation of fossil fuel and started the Green Schools Project,<sup>9</sup> where she raises awareness of the benefits of renewable energy to schoolchildren. Activists like herself are calling for global leaders to commit to real change with more ambitious policies and legislation to shape better, equitable and sustainable futures for all, particularly for those from marginalised communities. Moreover, international grassroots social movements such as La Via Campesina<sup>10</sup> and Third World Network<sup>11</sup> have been demanding system change for decades, contributing with policy, frameworks and civil society demands.

7 Sometimes referred to as Most Affected People and Areas (MAPAs): <https://fridaysforfuture.org/newsletter/edition-no-1-what-is-mapas-and-why-should-we-pay-attention-to-it/>

8 UNFCCC. Paris Agreement, [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf)

9 <https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/uganda-vanessa-nakate-climate-activist-b1845570.html>

10 La Via Campesina, <https://viacampesina.org/en/>

11 Third World Network, <https://twm.my/>



The call for better protection from the climate crisis for marginalised communities stems from the reality that this crisis will exacerbate existing social inequalities. The climate crisis threatens water systems, food sovereignty, energy access and other necessities fundamental to a dignified life.

In Europe, racialised communities are overly exposed to and situated in polluted environments that significantly impact their health and wellbeing. For instance, in the UK, research shows that Black communities in London are more likely to be situated in areas of high pollution due to hindering socio-economic systems that encourage the high proportion of Black residents situated in toxic environments,<sup>12</sup> so-called hotspots. Marginalised communities carry an additional financial burden due to the associated health costs. In Hungary, the National Public Health and Medical Officer's Service reported that 15% of 767 Roma colonies are situated 1000 m away from untreated waste disposals, and 11% are situated near animal carcass deposits, which exposes these communities to health issues.<sup>13</sup> This is environmental racism, but also one example of spatial injustice that marginalised communities in Europe face.<sup>14</sup> Whilst EU policy somewhat recognises that such factors exacerbate existing 'vulnerability',<sup>15</sup> this paper outlines a need for specific attention to the impact on racialised communities. When formulating policies and legislation to tackle the impacts of the climate crisis, it is imperative to address the social injustices experienced by racialised communities to avoid widening the inequities we see today.

The climate and environmental urgency, global inequalities, COVID-19 responses (including vaccine apartheid) and sustained structural racisms are interconnected. We are seeing the growth of people of colour, youth and Global South-led movements that are responding to these nuanced and intersecting perspectives to explain how racism, inequality and climate are interconnected. Impacts of the climate crisis exacerbate the existing social and related racial inequities we see today; and so can their policies, approaches and solutions. In this context, it is imperative for the EU to follow the lead of these groups to by making conscious effort to acknowledge the interconnectedness of racial and climate injustice, and explicit efforts to address this.

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12 London's black communities disproportionately exposed to air pollution, The Guardian, 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/10/londons-black-communities-disproportionately-exposed-to-air-pollution-study>

13 Roma Colonies in Hungary –Medical Care of Children and Hygienic Conditions. 2005. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15895793/>

14 Socioeconomic Disparities and Air Pollution Exposure: A Global Review, 2016, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4626327/>

15 EU Action Plan, "Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil", available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/pdf/zero-pollution-action-plan/communication\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/pdf/zero-pollution-action-plan/communication_en.pdf)

Displays the areas where racialised communities are impacted/face disproportionate negative consequences:

1. Site of causes (e.g. extraction - fossil fuel, minerals)
2. Effects of climate change
3. Policy
4. Implementation and delivery

The ambition of the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan (ARAP) is to integrate anti-racism within all Commissioners' Group strategies such as the European Green Deal (EGD) through the representation of racialised peoples perspectives into all EU policies. As highlighted in the ARAP, 'racist behaviours can be embedded in social, financial and political institutions, impacting on the levers of power and policy-making.' Institutional racism pinpoints a key institutional barrier to collaborating with racialised communities and civil society in any attempts to mitigate and adapt to the sequential impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss around the world.

The EGD is underpinned by an apolitical narrative of 'we, humans, have already changed the Earth's climate and degraded the majority of its ecosystems.'<sup>16</sup> **Climate justice requires a necessary shift to an understanding of 'which humans, and which systems'. It's about shifting gears from 'humans need to act' to 'who needs to do what, and why.'**<sup>17</sup> This apolitical narrative endangers the next steps of formulating climate action policies and legislation, which can lead to false, non-impactful and unsustainable and even damaging solutions. The systems that breed the climate crisis need to be addressed in order for solutions to have a strong, real impact.

The European Green Deal must guarantee racial, social and climate justice. It must seek to uplift people of the Global South and racialised and low-income communities across Europe, all of whom are at the frontlines of climate impacts whilst receiving the least support for prevention, mitigation adaptation, building resilience, or reparations for ongoing losses and damages<sup>18</sup>. It must recognise that climate change is not a localised phenomenon.

The actions of communities and industries in Europe that generate excessive emissions are resulting in severe losses and damages experienced by communities in the Global South.<sup>19</sup> As such, the European Green Deal must also work to uplift the voices, perspectives and

<sup>16</sup> 2030 Climate Target Plan, 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0562>

<sup>17</sup> Research Briefing, Framing Climate Justice, 2020 <https://framingclimatejustice.org/resources/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://actalliance.eu/resources-post/cop25-expectations-paper-how-can-the-eu-ensure-that-cop25-results-in-climate-just-outcomes/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://fridaysforfuture.org/newsletter/edition-no-1-what-is-map-a-and-why-should-we-pay-attention-to-it/>

contributions of these communities. Failing to design and develop an EGD through the lens of racial and social justice indicates the neglect of historical responsibility and a complete disregard for those who experience the legacies of racialised inequalities across institutions today.

Just as intended, the ARAP, when deferring to racialised civil society, ripples a significant shift of responsibility in EU policy strategies and their design to address the European context of deep, embedded patterns of structural and institutional racism. The European Green Deal must also reflect the needs and realities of racialised and marginalised communities (including disabled, Queer, low-income and rural) an understanding of how structural racism impacts negatively on their ability and agency to participate or collaborate. This understanding is key, as global relationships are shaped by centuries of white supremacy, patriarchal colonialism and decades of neo-colonialism and imperialism.

The aim of this report is to outline a racial justice perspective on core climate policy in the EU. The sequence of the paper will provide a racial justice analysis of the current EU climate policy and provide policy recommendations for EU policymakers to ensure lasting change for racialised communities in the EU, people of the Global South and our planet. It is vital that the policies formulated by the European Union avoid further marginalising people who are on the frontlines to the severe and devastating impacts of the climate crisis.

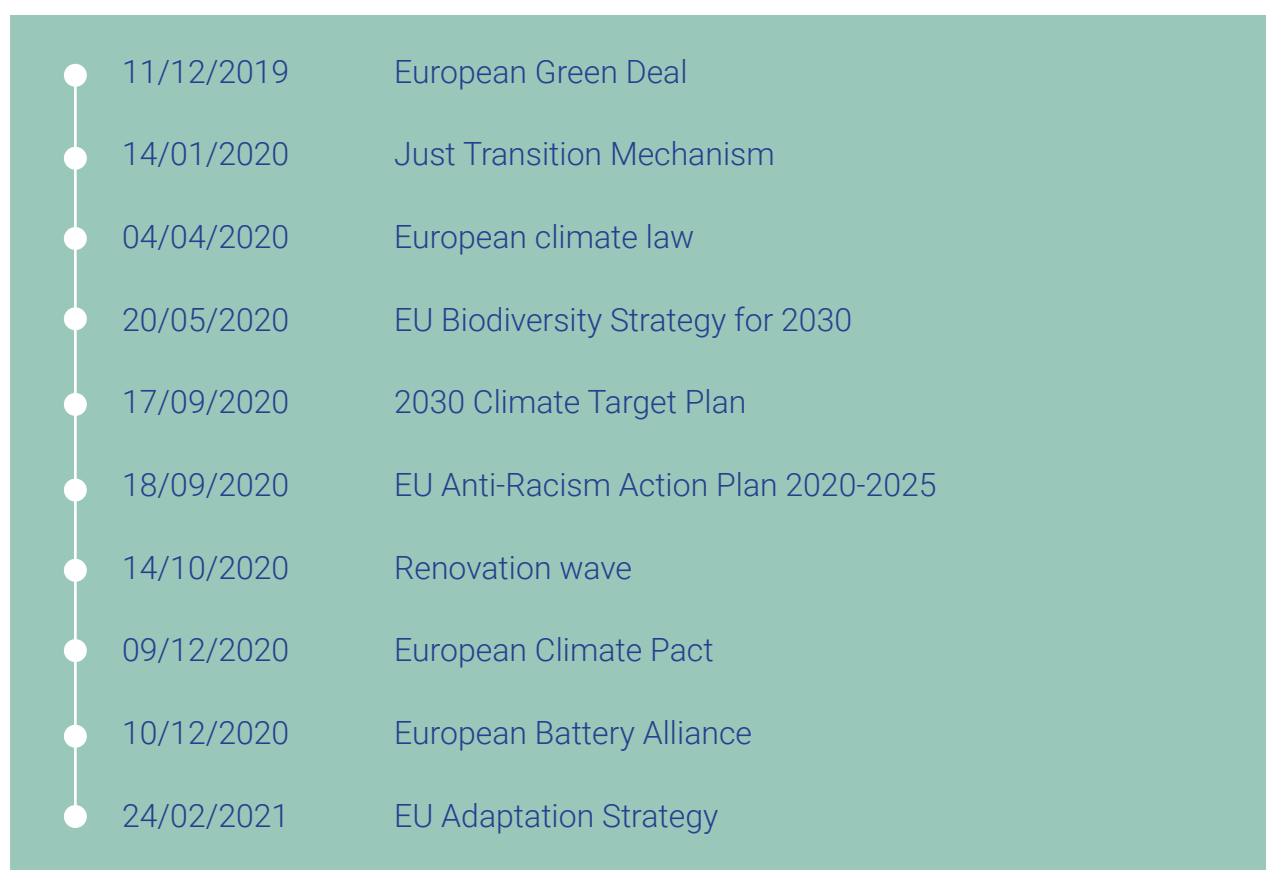
This paper does not detail a holistic analysis of EU climate policy in relation to structural racism, coloniality and climate justice. Instead, it seeks to develop a point of departure for those working on racial justice and climate policy, highlight gaps and propose initial solutions. Therefore, the content is a non-exhaustive contribution to a necessary deeper understanding of how climate policies and racial justice intersect. We build upon the long-standing work and knowledge of communities across the globe to contest the harms highlighted in this paper.

Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice within the European Green Deal proposed change in four key areas:

- 1. Political commitment to racial justice**
- 2. Institutional change**
- 3. Cohesive legislation and policy on structural racism**
- 4. A new relationship with civil society**

# Institutional barriers and gaps in the European Green Deal

As highlighted in Equinox's paper Towards Racial Justice: How the EU can create lasting change for racialised people,<sup>20</sup> this paper focuses on climate and environmental justice as racial justice. Whilst climate change has emerged strongly into political and institutional agendas, climate justice as racial justice is a neglected area for policy to be understood and implemented within the design of European Green Deal policy.



Equinox recognises the high intensity, complexity and instability of a more urgent, due to delay, transition period and in conjunction to the cruciality of doing this well by addressing the fundamental root causes, patterns and systems that have organised our societies into this position today.

<sup>20</sup> 'Towards Racial Justice', Equinox, 2021 <https://www.equinox-eu.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/WEB-EQUINOX-Towards-racial-justice-EU-institutions.pdf>

There is a body of research and recommendations on the root causes of climate change and the existing adequate solutions that the EU should look at when devising climate policy.

In 2007, the UNDP released the Human Development Report 'Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a divided world', stating, 'The world lacks neither the financial resources nor the technological capabilities to act. What is missing is a sense of urgency, human solidarity and collective interest.' Echoed in the paper, it wanted to challenge us to reflect on social justice and human rights across countries and generations. **The UNDP wanted to challenge political leaders and people in rich nations to acknowledge their historic responsibility for the problem and initiate deep and early cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.**<sup>21</sup>

Even earlier, **27 Climate Justice principles and climate change narratives of disproportionate impact were recognised in 2002 within the Bali Principles of Climate Justice**<sup>22</sup>; an adaptation of the 'Environmental Justice Principles' developed in 1991 at the People of Colour Environmental Justice Leadership Summit in Washington, DC; providing understanding on the scale and organisation of solutions needed by those at the time living its reality on the frontline.

Two high-level reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)<sup>23</sup> and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)<sup>24</sup> underline the need for more profound transformation. This is echoed by a growing movement of grassroots campaigns (Fridays for Future, Extinction Rebellion, certain formulations of the Green New Deal) and initiatives that are highly critical of the lack of progress by governments and, in many cases, calling for and declaring a climate emergency.

The concept of **climate justice** considers the social injustices that a warming climate creates and the historical and social responsibility of corporations and countries who have and still benefit, from polluting and exploiting ecosystems. The Climate crisis has a compounding effect on the meeting of human rights for individuals and communities across the planet and exacerbates the impact of socio-economic inequalities and imbalanced power dynamics. Taking an intersectional approach helps us understand and provide more integrated solutions to these compounding impacts.

Making progress beyond a patchwork racial equality framework, as highlighted by Equinox, presents additional gaps and barriers that prevent institutions from progressing towards racial and social justice in relation to climate and ecological breakdown.

Such gaps and barriers are highlighted in this paper, offering proposals as to how a racial justice perspective may recalibrate and reposition the European Green Deal to become fair and equitable. It suggests how EU climate policy can truly work for the benefit of all and towards a sustainable society that does not jeopardise nature and communities thriving. We

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21 Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a divided world; UNDP Report 2007/8 <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-report-20078>

22 Bali Climate Justice Principles, 2002 <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/bali.pdf>

23 <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

24 <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>

argue that amendments and rethinking of climate policy are necessary and must be carried out with the support of frontline EU and Global South civil society for correct design and delivery of policy and implementation.

During our policy analysis, we identified that these gaps and barriers include: (a) **no baseline of historical responsibility and global dependency**, (b) **failure to acknowledge specific harms and impact experiences by racialised communities** and (c) **the lack of meaningful participatory processes to engage civil society** representing racialised people in Europe and globally.



## No baseline of historical responsibility and global dependency

The climate crisis exists in neither a vacuum nor a silo. The climate crisis is caused by a culmination of historical, exploitative, anthropogenic<sup>25</sup> events that accelerated the emission of greenhouse gases, which in return accelerated the warming of our planet, destabilising environmental regulations. These factors combine to place and keep marginalised communities at risk. Environmental decay threatens water, food stability, energy access, hindering the health and opportunities of the impacted populations. **In this section, we show how the European Green Deal obscures and overlooks the role of colonial extraction in contributing to the climate crisis, the harm green solutions inflict onto countries in the Global South, and the risks of extending these extractive processes in future policy responses.**

Firstly, the EGD systematically fails to address the EU's historical responsibility in causing the fragility and vulnerability of Global South countries through the violent act of colonialism. Colonisation was a process of extraction and exploitation of people, communities, resources and the land that relied on countries rich in natural resources on the continents of Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Middle East, Oceania and Indigenous islands.

<sup>25</sup> A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None, Kathryn Youseff, 2019

In Europe, corporate monopolies deliberately expanded overseas in competition to increase profits through racist exploitation of forced or indentured labour. The natural world was destroyed through hyper-extraction of resources and systems that normalised, expanded and strengthened hyper-extraction by overproduction and overconsumption.

These resources were all funnelled to Europe, this contributed to the deprivation and underdevelopment of the Global South of access and management of natural resources to invest into education, health, home, infrastructure or political participation.<sup>26</sup> These colonial ventures were protected by private security, state-subsidised military or direct state rule, preventing oppressed people from revolting or self-determining. This system of profits, over-extraction and exploitation created the climate crisis and underdevelopment of the Global South.

The extraction of precious metals, minerals and natural resources devastated and polluted the land of the colonised. In Latin America's history and present, the destructive impacts of land exploitation and its unsustainable extraction-for-profit have been perpetrated by transnational corporations enabled by corporations and government incentives provided by the Global North. Over the past few decades, an increase in monocultures being incentivised to countries in the Global South. The governments of these countries are enticed by loans, grants, subsidies and human resource development (such as training, job opportunities, etc.) provided by international bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, International Monetary Fund, World Bank. In Brazil, the expansion of monoculture forests has decreased the availability of land for growing food crops that sustain communities that rely on the provisions of the land. In Espirito Santo, transnational corporations prioritised the growing of eucalyptus, which resulted in 50,000 families being displaced and impacting their access to sustenance and financial stability.<sup>27</sup> Communities in Nigeria, Uganda, and many other oil-rich nations still suffer the consequences of the devastating activities of the oil industry.<sup>28</sup> Mozambique was the latest victim of fossil-fuel giant Total who created havoc in Cabo Delgado over gas explorations.<sup>29</sup>

The disregard of impacted communities in the Global South is a repeated pattern inflicted by the Global North with no active efforts to acknowledge or address the consequences of their extractive economic and business models. The green initiatives encouraged by the North are an extension of racial capitalism newly characterised as green growth. Green solutions entrap less powerful countries in contracts that grow their debt and reliance on Global North countries to provide continuous aid. The suppliers of the loans take advantage of the financial instability of these underprivileged countries and exacerbate their debts and reinforce the subordination, which reinforces the asymmetrical power dynamic between the Global North and the Global South. There is a disconnection and lack of accountability on where and with whom the responsibility lies. That is a problem that needs to be actively and introspectively resolved.

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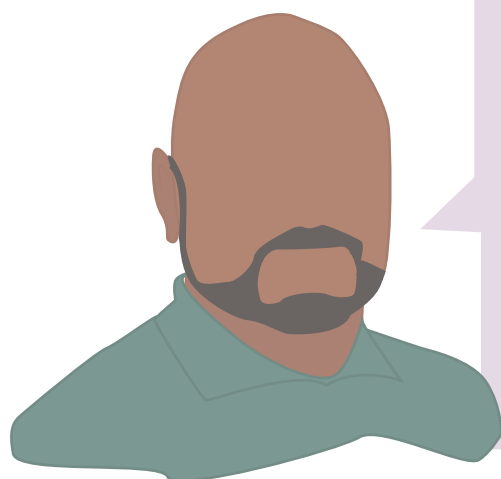
26 How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Walter Rodney, 1972.

27 'Green desert' monoculture forests spreading in Africa and South America, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2011/sep/26/monoculture-forests-africa-south-america>

28 [https://friendsoftheearth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FoEE\\_Human\\_Rights\\_report\\_v15-pages-1.pdf](https://friendsoftheearth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FoEE_Human_Rights_report_v15-pages-1.pdf)

29 <https://ja4change.org/2021/04/29/total-runs-from-its-responsibilities-with-its-force-majeure-announcement-on-mozambique-gas/>

Polluted, destroyed and exhausted land restricts and limits the available natural sources needed for human sustenance, pushing marginalised populations to a lower quality of life and poor physical and mental health. Colonialism's extractive model is still felt today in former and current colonies, particularly as still used 'export-driven approaches can lead to disastrous impacts on the local environment, impact livelihoods and have high financial risks for the public purse/taxpayers.'<sup>30 31</sup>



**“ We cannot talk about a green new deal without looking at the footprints of the global North, and the pattern of exploitation of the global South that underpin it. The EU green new deal is a starting point but not the end of conversation, if we want to ensure that black and brown people in the global South are not sacrificed in the name of a just transition in rich countries. ”**

- Asad Rehman – Racial and climate justice activist

Secondly, communities in the Global South are highly aware of the environmental impacts of colonialism, and they possess thoughtful, appropriate and resilient solutions. However, this expertise and knowledge is not considered in the EGD. Instead, Europe imposes itself as a leader of global environmental solutions and innovations and leaving no space for international voices to be active participants and valued critics.<sup>32</sup> For the EU to appropriately and adequately address the realities of the climate crisis, there needs to be a democratisation of knowledge, recognition of the context, narratives and lived experiences of those on the margins of the climate crisis. The EU must set parameters to ensure consultations and decision-making processes are holistic, intersectional, intercultural and inclusive of voices that have traditionally been overlooked.

Thirdly, extractivism still occurs and it is one of the major causes of the climate crisis. In the EGD, the EU maintains a eurocentric tone of leadership in driving the world towards a green and sustainable future. Not only does the positioning of 'leadership' perpetuate the idea that the Global North 'knows best', it also neglects to recognise Europe's role in contributing to and maintaining the historical and ongoing extractivism at the root of the climate crisis, and it fails to put forward the necessary structural solutions to address this. Instead, in the EGD, a 'green'

30 Eurodad, How lessons from development finance can strengthen climate finance, 2021, available at: [https://www.eurodad.org/lessons\\_climate\\_finance](https://www.eurodad.org/lessons_climate_finance)

31 Extensive review of 130 oil contracts exposes inferiority of Guyana & Exxon Mobil's PSA, 2019, <https://www.kaieteurnews.com/2019/07/21/extensive-review-of-130-oil-contracts-exposes-inferiority-of-guyana-exxonmobil-psa/>

32 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/48057/st05263-en21.pdf>



future consists of electric vehicles, solar panels, wind turbines and other exciting renewable innovations. For instance, the EGD states that having ‘access to resources is also a strategic security question for Europe’s ambition to deliver the Green Deal. Ensuring the supply of sustainable raw materials, in particular of critical raw materials necessary for clean technologies, digital, space and defence applications, by diversifying supply from both primary and secondary sources, is, therefore, one of the prerequisites to make this transition happen’. This attitude toward ‘access’ to other countries’ resources shows that the EU has not reckoned with, or is ignoring, its colonial past and is exhibiting neo-colonial behaviours.

This tells us that the EU hopes to expand and diversify its sources of raw materials, which brings a concern about whether the EU will assess the impacts of extracting the raw materials to build new technologies and address and evaluate the pre-existing conditions and consequences of its extractive practices. If the clean technologies transition aims to be sustainable and ethical, the EU needs to reflect and evaluate the existing systems where they perpetuate and cause harm and destruction to communities and ecosystems. The EU is not in a position to see itself as a ‘leader’ in building and curating green solutions. The fact that the EU fails to recognise the toxic and destructive systems they enable but still manage to boast about its vision to lead the globe to a sustainable, green world is illogical and hypocritical. Whilst the EU states that electric vehicle batteries are to be produced in full respect of human rights as well as social and environmental standards<sup>33</sup>, this fails to demonstrate knowledge of how such operations within systems can also constrain communities that are connected to the site of extraction to have agency in shaping solutions that centre their realities, approaches and knowledge. Additionally, the EU aims for electric vehicle batteries to become part of the circular economy without naming what processes enact this, what infrastructure or technology is required or the strategies to reduce mineral demand that will later circulate.



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**Decades of low levels of investment in marginalised communities in Europe, and historic disinvestment in some countries, has created a large precariat. The European Green Deal is meant to be the game changer that elevates Europe’s climate action. Now is the time to rethink systems and to depart from the legacy of exploiting labour, natural resources used to achieve exponential growth.**

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- Leia Achampong – Climate policy expert

<sup>33</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_2312](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2312)

Overwhelmingly, the EU's proposed policy responses fail to counteract processes of extraction, and in some ways, exacerbate them within their proposed solutions. For instance, the EGD fails to account for the billions of euros poured into the fossil fuel industry in public subsidies,<sup>34</sup> the powerful conflicts of interest<sup>35</sup> in decision-making<sup>36</sup> or the sourcing of supplies needed to build renewable technology and its social and environmental implications. Sustainable for which community? Who gets access to this technology? Who benefits from this supply chain the most? The communities that reside in areas of mineral extraction face human rights violations where conditions of extractive mines put communities, often Indigenous communities and human and environmental rights defenders, at risk. These harmful impacts pushed communities in the Global South affected by the mining industry to form coalitions and campaigns against extractive companies from the Global North. One example is the Yes to Life No to Mining network, which aims to support the rights of communities impacted by mining practices and provide alternatives to mining and extractivism.<sup>37</sup> In the climate justice movement, where environmental justice meets social justice, there is a fear that the next steps of the 'ambitious' EU will replicate extractive, oppressive systems whilst simply co-opting the language and aesthetics of environmentalism. For those invested in climate justice, this approach is commonly referred to as 'greenwashing'.

The EGD states that 'it will propose legislation in 2020 to ensure a safe, circular and sustainable battery value chain for all batteries, including to supply the growing market of electric vehicles.' but does not mention how it will manage to sustain energy consumption for the production of clean technologies that are unproven and tested. There is a lack of caution as minerals mined for batteries produce billions of tonnes of waste, and there is no acknowledgement in the EGD of how effective recycling and waste reduction will be for the scale needed to have a circular chain for batteries needed for clean technology. There have been documented case studies on the impacts of the mining industry's waste disposal system in Global South countries. For instance, the mining company, UK-owned Rio Tinto (UK-owned) is responsible for 28,000 tonnes of copper mine waste that has polluted water systems in countries such as Mongolia.<sup>38</sup> What will the EU do to ensure the communities are impacted by ineffective waste disposal systems that pollute their environment and harm their health? There does not seem to be any conscious effort made by the EU to address this issue, or to be proactive in preventing or mitigating the social impacts of waste. This is fortified by the lack of evidence of how clean technologies innovated by the EU will deal with the issue of making waste minimal in its vision of a circular economy

Consequently, the product of the destructive and exploitative extractivist business models is the compromised health and wellbeing of racialised communities. Car manufacturers based in Europe have stated that they will evolve their engines to be fully electric. However, electric vehicles require cobalt, lithium, and other rare minerals for their battery production,

34 <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/about-us/annual-report-2020-time-climate-revolution/ending-eu-support-fossil-gas-expansion/>

35 <https://www.foodandwatereurope.org/pressreleases/fossil-fuel-lobbyists-set-to-keep-firm-grip-on-eu-energy-development/>

36 <https://friendsoftheearth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/The-EUs-Industrial-Alliances.pdf>

37 Yes to Life No to Mining, <http://www.yestolifenotomining.org/what-we-do/#campaigns>

38 A Material Transition report War on Want, 2021 [https://waronwant.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/A%20Material%20Transition\\_report\\_War%20on%20Want.pdf](https://waronwant.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/A%20Material%20Transition_report_War%20on%20Want.pdf)

the extraction of these minerals are currently fuelling present-day human rights violations. Cobalt mines in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are often mined by young Congolese children, and the poor, dangerous, life-threatening working conditions put their health and lives at risk.<sup>39</sup> It is common for mine workers in this supply chain to have no access to industrial tools and equipment to protect themselves from injuries and accidents—or access to sustained healthcare—yet the product of their exploitation boosts the European economy and drives the transition to ‘sustainable’ European futures.

A further example of how mineral extraction in the DRC endangers lives is the violent actions taken by mining companies against Global South communities. The Belgian-owned mining company, Groupe Forrest International, bulldozed 387 structures that included homes and businesses that belonged to the local communities; which some small-scale miners also resided in.<sup>40</sup> Alongside the bulldozing, armed police officers evicted families from their homes, stripping them away from their stability and livelihood. It was alleged that the miners were stealing from the copper and cobalt mines. Groupe Forrest International denied all involvement in the bulldozing; however, satellite images proved that their bulldozers were used to demolish the 387 structures. The militarisation of space and the displacement of communities as a punishment for alleged wrongdoings of the miners mirrors the colonial systems where European colonists exert their power over subordinate ‘populations’ as a form of discipline. European corporations frequently use their power and wealth to take advantage of political and financial instability in countries like the DRC, without accountability or reparation to the communities affected.<sup>41</sup>

The World Bank estimates that the production of minerals needed for a clean energy transition could increase by 500% by 2050.<sup>42</sup> These materials include cobalt, lithium, copper, graphite and can be found in abundance on the African continent and in Latin America. These minerals are needed to build clean energy technologies, and the demand for these technologies is on the rise. As we have seen in the previous examples, clean technologies do not equate to ethical and equitable systems. The EU has demonstrated a techno-solutionist mentality, advocating that complex issues of climate change can be solved with technology, as long as the technology is sourced by renewable energy and is clean. This is far from the truth and reality. Creating solutions that build pathways to sustainable and ethical futures must not entirely rely on narrow science-based disciplines divorced from social realities. This limits the potential of building holistic solutions that address multiple aspects and impacts of clean technology.

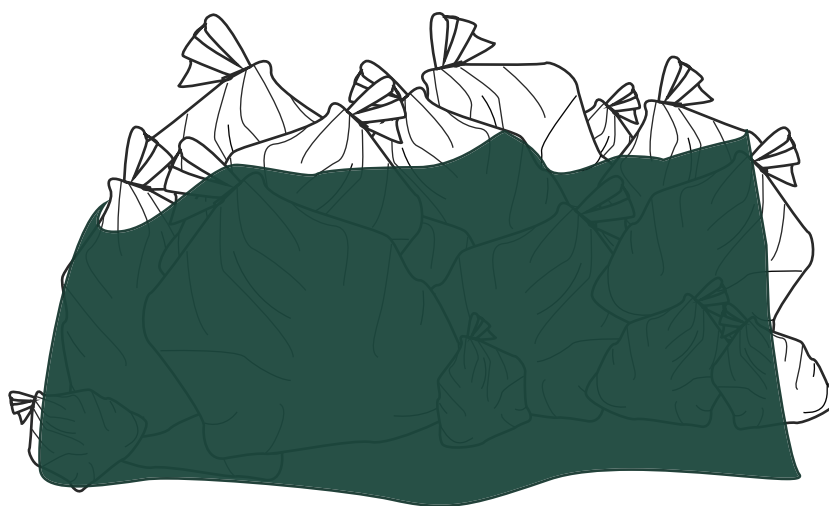
39 The Cobalt Pipeline, The Washington Post, 2016 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/batteries/congo-cobalt-mining-for-lithium-ion-battery/?tid=a\\_inl](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/business/batteries/congo-cobalt-mining-for-lithium-ion-battery/?tid=a_inl)

40 DRC: Belgian mining giant lied over bulldozing homes, 2014, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/11/drc-belgian-mining-giant-lied-over-bulldozing-homes/>

41 <https://www.foei.org/news/system-change-human-rights-corporations-un-treaty>

42 Mineral Production to Soar as Demand for Clean Energy Increases, The World bank, 2020 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/05/11/mineral-production-to-soar-as-demand-for-clean-energy-increases>

These examples demonstrate the environmental and human rights costs of so-called renewable or sustainable efforts, particularly for communities in the Global South. Yet, these factors, especially those that largely impact non-European actors or resources, are gravely overlooked in the EGD. The document provides no analysis of the ethical concerns and environmental harms also present in the renewable industry's supply chains, nor a clear action plan to eradicate these harmful extractive models or provide accountability for the damage the EU causes in the Global South. As such, the EGD's attention to renewable and sustainable solutions fall short of the intersectional and structural ones required to meet its green ambition.



- Illustration of a blanket covering trash  
This is to indicate Green cover ups

Subsequently, the EGD fails to acknowledge existing power imbalances in the global environmental sphere. One such omission is of the human rights abuses experienced by those engaging in climate activism on a global scale, particularly by environmental and human rights defenders (EHRDs), challenging the role of multinational companies in climate destruction<sup>43</sup>. Every year, EHRD, often from Indigenous communities, are being threatened, persecuted and killed in the Global South—many of them while resisting exploitation projects led by multinational companies based in the Global North. The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre has a Transition Minerals Tracker which provides a global analysis of human rights violations of companies mining minerals for the clean energy transition. They have tracked a total of 276 allegations made against these extractive companies.<sup>44</sup> These allegations include companies silencing the voices of local communities affected by their mining operations through violent methods such as intimidation, murder and persecution. One in eight of the recorded abuses were community protests being stifled by the companies they protested against. Other studies have observed similar patterns; according to the Front Line Defenders advocacy group, 331 human rights defenders were killed in 2020; 69% of those murdered were fighting against land and environmental injustices happening in their country.<sup>45</sup> Censoring the voices of communities who are on the frontlines of the

43 Who are environmental defenders? <https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/advancing-environmental-rights/who>

44 Transition Minerals Tracker, Global Analysis Of Human Rights Policies & Practices, The Business and Human Rights Resource centre, 2021. [https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/2021\\_Transition\\_Minerals\\_Tracker\\_Monday\\_w\\_numbers\\_updated.pdf](https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/2021_Transition_Minerals_Tracker_Monday_w_numbers_updated.pdf)

45 Front Line Defenders Global Analysis, 2020, [https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/fl\\_d\\_global\\_analysis\\_2020.pdf](https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/sites/default/files/fl_d_global_analysis_2020.pdf)

climate crisis is one of the many ways corporation networks in the Global North exert their power and take advantage of systems that are convoluted with bureaucracy and impose barriers to seeking justice and reparations. Despite the decades of intimidation and persecution, it was only in April 2021 that the landmark Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>46</sup> came into force. This Agreement intends to help protect EHRDs<sup>47</sup> because too many have fallen foul to oppression and murder.

Lastly, international climate conferences and media coverage on the climate discourse reveal global power structures yearly, as historical polluters from the Global North oppose countries of the Global South, deeming discussions on historical but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities outdated. Countries that have historically caused the climate crisis do less, and indeed have been found to intimidate countries from the Global South to take more responsibility and enforce the financialisation of nature through market solutions. Thus, green projects are imposed on communities in the South, counting for reductions of emissions in the North. This is a prime example of green capitalism where the imperialistic nature of the Global North is not eradicated but disguised as green solutions.

'Net-zero' targets open up more channels for greenwashing. Carbon markets risk being a crucial vehicle for 'net-zero' Global North targets through the use of market-based offsets in the Global South, which can consolidate colonial power relations through practices and impacts under the name of Corporate Social Responsibility and International Development. These projects are undertaken in the Global South because they are cheaper to implement there. This not only takes advantage of the lands and livelihoods of people in the Global South - already stifled by the history of colonialism - to mitigate climate change.<sup>48</sup> Carbon trading schemes and corresponding market-based offsetting schemes mean that countries can claim to be on track for 'net-zero' emissions of 'carbon neutrality' even as they use up the remaining planet's carbon budget and put the burden for action onto poorer countries and communities in the Global South. In addition, this implies that developing countries will have to carry out more emissions reductions over and above the carbon credits that they will sell to the Global North in achieving their own Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs). This leads to in-equity, where countries in the Global North, such as those across the EU countries, are not doing their fair share of emission reductions.<sup>49</sup>

The EGD fails to outline how it will reconcile and repair the destruction it has caused to ecosystems and racialised communities outside of Europe.<sup>50</sup> In order to be on the right course for tackling the climate crisis, there needs to be an admission of the damaging global consequences Europe has caused and an action plan to deal with those consequences as a form of reparations.<sup>51</sup>

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46 [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43583/1/S1800428\\_en.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43583/1/S1800428_en.pdf)

47 <https://www.universal-rights.org/contemporary-and-emerging-human-rights-issues/the-escazu-agreement-a-landmark-regional-treaty-for-environmental-defenders/>

48 Carbon Colonialism: A postcolonial assessment of carbon offsetting, Eberle et al., 2019,

49 Rising to the Challenges of this Most Critical Decade for Climate Justice' at Asia Europe People's Forum 13

50 <http://www.climatefairshares.org/>

51 <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/10/10/case-for-climate-reparations-crisis-migration-refugees-inequality/>

## Failure to acknowledge impacts experienced by racialised communities in Europe

At a wider glance, the European Green Deal fails to recognise how marginalised groups are impacted by the implications, which in turn discounts the harms of and impacts encountered by racialised communities. It is important to reinstate that racialised groups are vulnerable and exposed to greater risks and face greater impacts, due to the dominant function of systemic racism that affects many aspects of life, excludes them from participating or being recognised to inform the context of strategies, policy and implementation.

At surface best, the EU describes the EGD as a plan that 'explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition', and within the communication, 'The most vulnerable are the most exposed to the harmful effects of climate change and environmental degradation.' Also, the Climate Pact highlights, 'While everybody is at risk, these impacts hit the poor and the vulnerable harder. This raises important issues of justice, democracy, equity, equality and solidarity'. Yet again failing to name what or why vulnerabilities exist nor who is defined as vulnerable and the EU's active procedures to support their participation.

The Just Transition Mechanism communicates intentions to 'leave no one behind', but its narrow definition solely focuses on regions and sectors most affected by the transition because they depend on fossil fuels or carbon-intensive processes. This approach fails to engage meaningfully with the concept of 'just'. Taking an industry-based approach overlooks climate justice which expands the aspects of a 'Just Transition' to consider people affected beyond industry transition, within Europe and internationally.

Within its transformative policy processes, the EU does not meaningfully outline how it will address those that have been most marginalised by climate destruction, particularly racialised communities. Examples include low-income and racialised communities who experience energy poverty; those who experience health inequalities and corresponding inaccessibility; migrant workers that are tied into forms of exploitation labour within agricultural practices<sup>52</sup> and internationally, indigenous and local communities that resist land grabs in offsetting market-based mechanisms, or who were unlawfully and forcibly evicted and facing low resettlement standards, before being compensated for these unlawful actions.<sup>53</sup> These people are overlooked and further marginalised, left out of central scope.

Secondly, the EU fails to acknowledge potential impacts of its climate policy on racialised and poor communities. Gentrification is a reality that is not considered in sustainability regeneration projects and correspondingly improving urban nature programmes;<sup>54</sup> marginalised poor and racialised communities should have equal access to nature for health and wellbeing.

<sup>52</sup> We pick your food': migrant workers speak out from Spain's 'Plastic Sea', The Guardian, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/sep/20/we-pick-your-food-migrant-workers-speak-out-from-spains-plastic-sea>

<sup>53</sup> <https://bankwatch.org/project/mombasa-mariakani-road-project-kenya>

<sup>54</sup> 2.28 Greening urban and peri-urban areas, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1590574123338&uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0380>

In cities where political parties do not favour social welfare and have housing policies on rent control and affordable housing, racialised and poor communities are further at risk of displacement.<sup>55</sup> Europe's move to renovate and build public and private buildings to be energy efficient runs the risk of excluding communities that cannot afford or access buildings that are planned to be renovated. In theory, renovated buildings benefit those who were experiencing unaffordable high energy costs because the renovation aims to keep building temperatures regulated and maintained, resulting in cheaper energy bills<sup>56</sup>.

However, in practice, when home improvements are made, landlords can take advantage of home improvements and increase rent for their residents. There are no regulations that control or guide people with influential roles in the renting market not to exploit the needs of those that seek shelter. There is a gap in the strategy that does not address the mechanisms needed to ensure energy-smart buildings are made accessible to socio-economically deprived communities. With the redevelopment of green amenities and regeneration projects, low-income residents and racialised communities can be displaced. With ambitions for sustainable cities that, in return, can improve quality of life results in displacement to an area of lower quality of life as living costs, rent prices and property taxes increase.

Thirdly, the European Green Deal overlooks how racialised communities experience procedural and distributional harm in an environmental and climate context. A report showed how the Roma communities are often living on polluted wastelands, lacking water or sanitation in their homes due to environmental racism.<sup>57</sup> According to the authors of Environmental Justice and Roma Communities in Central and Eastern Europe, in the case of Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, spaces inhabited by low-income Roma have come to be increasingly racialised, intensifying patterns of environmental exclusion amongst their community. The report highlights how World War II socially displaced Roma communities, which resulted in the communities being disconnected by water and sanitation, heating and health facilities.

Another example is in Ostrava, Czech Republic; Romani communities live in homes situated on an abandoned mine with methane gas exposure. The report shows that these inequalities also exist in Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and several others. So far, literature exploring environmental racism in Central and Eastern Europe predominantly focuses on the racialised experiences of the Romani communities residing in this region. There have been active efforts by researchers to assess environmental hazards and whom it impacts in different regions of Europe. However, data gaps persist, resulting in racialised communities being overlooked when addressing and implementing policies that concern providing access to communities who need reparative justice for the environmental hazards they are exposed to.

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55 Policy and Planning Tools for Urban Green Justice,, BCNUEJ, 2021 <http://www.bcnuej.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Toolkit-Urban-Green-Justice.pdf>

56 A Renovation Wave for Europe - greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives, European Commission, 2020 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1603122220757&uri=CELEX:52020DC0662>

57 Pushed to the Wastelands: Environmental racism against Roma communities in Central and Eastern Europe', EEB, 2020, <https://eeb.org/library/pushed-to-the-wastelands-environmental-racism-against-roma-communities-in-central-and-eastern-europe/>

## Saami communities and climate action

The Saami community have taken strides to cancel projects, such as solar geoengineering project SCoPex in Kiruna, Sweden, on the risk it entails of 'catastrophic consequences, including the impact of uncontrolled termination, and irreversible sociopolitical effects that could compromise the world's necessary efforts to achieve zero-carbon societies<sup>58</sup>' which by procedure had no dialogue with the Saami people or Swedish Civil Society extending for Stratospheric Aerosol Injection research and technology development to not advance in the absence of full, global consensus on its acceptability due to its implications on the whole world. Such procedures, as highlighted in the Open Letter, highlight the overrepresentation of Advisory Committees with no inclusion of affected groups and engagement processes that take a loophole approach to ethics, responsibility and decision-making.

Within Europe, Arctic Saamis are on the front lines of climate change, faced with the degradation of their environment and livelihoods, the endangerment of their ancestral languages and the exploitation of traditional lands, often rich in resources.<sup>59</sup> The Saami community have played a key role in pushing the EU to take sufficient action, given legal action against the European Union for its inadequate targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2018.<sup>60</sup>

Within the Nordic climate movement, The Saami are routinely demonised for practising their livelihood and traditions in their lands, meaning that environmentalists tend to place some blame on the Saami for 'being a burden' to the fragile nature in the Arctic. The Saami experience an environmental double standard leading them to experience racism and pressure from intrusive land grabs and the environmental movement.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP)<sup>61</sup> and the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples<sup>62</sup> states that indigenous peoples have the right to not only be included in discussions surrounding them, but also have a right to be proactive and take ownership and leadership over different initiatives that affect indigenous peoples as active participants with tangible rights.

As highlighted in the Global Assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, under 'Approaches to Sustainability', it is vital 'to promote inclusive governance approaches through stakeholder engagement and the inclusion of indigenous peoples and local communities to ensure equity and participation.' From the perspective and experiences of racialised civil society, such examples demonstrate how power is created, sustained and used to bypass sufficient ethical and participatory procedures in decision making; a process of structural racism.

58 Letter to Scopex Advisory Committee, Saami Council, 2021 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5dfb35a66f00d54ab0729b75/t/603e2167a9c0b96ffb027c8d/1614684519754/Letter+to+Scopex+Advisory+Committee+24+February.pdf>

59 Who are Europe's indigenous peoples and what are their struggles?, Euronews, 2019 <https://www.euronews.com/2019/08/09/who-are-europe-s-indigenous-peoples-and-what-are-their-struggles-euronews-answers>

60 "It's really scary": indigenous Europeans on why they are taking the EU to court over climate change, Euronews, 2018 <https://www.euronews.com/2018/12/06/it-s-really-scary-indigenous-europeans-on-why-they-are-taking-the-eu-to-court-over-climat>

61 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html>

62 [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C169](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169)



Further, communities at the site of environmental-based activities are not involved in defining 'harm', nor are recognised within the European Green Deal as crucial stakeholders in the section of legislative proposals and delegated acts to explain how the principle of 'do no harm' is upheld. Even if a company complied with box-ticking due diligence obligations, there are still loopholes in avoiding liability and accountability. Communities become occupied with holding big companies accountable in the courts to prevent and remediate harms that affect their livelihood. This is problematic as group dynamics significantly impact project development and implementation, and the difference of power within a group plays a subsequent role in determining which priorities and agendas are taken forward and used to frame projects.<sup>63 64</sup> If the frame doesn't reflect the needs of the local communities that are exposed to 'harm', then how can it be said that the principle of 'do no harm' is being upheld? Internationally, Friends of the Earth Europe highlighted a call for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence in the EU<sup>65</sup> to prevent the harms that European companies are causing to communities and the environment around the world.

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**When people are displaced due to conflicts the Global North usually wash their hands off and say it's their own fault - but climate refugees are inevitable & direct consequences of exploitation.**

- Nnimmo Bassey – Environmental justice advocate

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Finally, The EU does not take the initiative to meaningfully address the interdependent relationship between the climate crisis and global migration. The climate crisis fuels social, political and environmental instability, driving communities to relocate and cross borders to locations where their basic needs are met (potable water, permanent shelter, regular access to nutritious food, health care and public transport, etc.). The UN estimates the climate crisis will produce around 25 million to a billion climate migrants by 2050.<sup>66</sup> The crisis will increase habitat loss, compromised food sources, endanger potable water sources and extreme weather events that will take a toll on the recovery rate of ecosystems. The climate crisis is currently causing mass climate-induced displacement (CID)<sup>67</sup> of communities in the Global

63 [https://www.eurodad.org/lessons\\_climate\\_finance](https://www.eurodad.org/lessons_climate_finance)

64 <https://www.sei.org/publications/increasing-policy-coherence-between-ndcs-and-sdgs/>

65 Do no Harm: The Case for an EU Law to Hold Business Liable for Human Rights Violations and Environmental Harm, Friends of the Earth Europe, 2020, available at: [https://friendsoftheearth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FoEE\\_Human\\_Rights\\_report\\_v15-pages-1.pdf](https://friendsoftheearth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FoEE_Human_Rights_report_v15-pages-1.pdf)

66 Environmental Migrants: Up to 1 Billion by 2050, <https://www.climateforesight.eu/migrations-inequalities/environmental-migrants-up-to-1-billion-by-2050/>

67 <https://actionaid.org/publications/2020/climate-migrants-pushed-brink>

South and is set to treble by 2050 in South-East Asia.<sup>68</sup> This is a consequence of the rapid, unsustainable development of the Global North and a lack of action from these countries to tackle climate change. In addition to Europe's inhumane migration policies building up Fortress Europe,<sup>69</sup> this state of affairs makes for a bleak future for people trying to survive climate catastrophe and find opportunities.

Providing financial support in the form of loans, blended finance, public-private partnerships (PPP) etc., will only serve to further exacerbate the debt burden that many climate-vulnerable countries have<sup>70</sup>. The debt incurred from repayments, market to high-interest rates, and associated fees, actually reduces climate-vulnerable countries' and communities' ability to adequately invest in climate adaptation and mitigation and to address losses and damages.<sup>71 72</sup> Despite these communities having contributed the least to climate change.<sup>73</sup> Research carried out by Imperial College London showed that developing countries are paying extra interest due to their climate vulnerabilities – equivalent to an extra \$1 for every \$10 of interest paid.<sup>74</sup> 2016 projections estimated that an additional US\$ 146 billion to US\$ 168 billion could be paid in interest by developing countries over the next decade.<sup>75</sup> In 2014, hurricane Ivan caused damage to Grenada that caused losses in excess of 200% of the country's GDP. No amount of 'financial aid' can keep the economy above water.<sup>76</sup>

## What is Loss and Damage?

'Loss and damage refers to the impacts of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to. Extreme weather events such as floods, storms, droughts, and wildfires are becoming more frequent and severe every year, leading people to lose their lives and livelihoods. Often those who did the least to cause climate change are the ones who suffer most from loss and damage. The cost of damage to homes and communities, and the incalculable toll on life, culture, and connection to land, are borne by some of the most impoverished and most oppressed people in the world.

Article 8 of the Paris Agreement outlines the responsibilities of countries to take action on loss and damage. Addressing loss and damage stands alongside mitigation and adaptation as a fundamental pillar of climate action. But despite signing on to the Agreement, the wealthy countries who contributed the most to causing loss and damage are still unwilling

68 [https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/publications/ActionAid%20CANSAs%20-%20South%20Asia%20Climate%20Migration%20report%20-%20Dec%202020\\_3.pdf](https://actionaid.org/sites/default/files/publications/ActionAid%20CANSAs%20-%20South%20Asia%20Climate%20Migration%20report%20-%20Dec%202020_3.pdf)

69 <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/expanding-the-fortress>

70 [https://www.eurodad.org/lessons\\_climate\\_finance](https://www.eurodad.org/lessons_climate_finance)

71 Ibid 36 [[https://www.eurodad.org/lessons\\_climate\\_finance](https://www.eurodad.org/lessons_climate_finance)]

72 [https://www.eurodad.org/a\\_tale\\_of\\_two\\_emergencies\\_the\\_interplay\\_of\\_sovereign\\_debt\\_and\\_climate\\_crises\\_in\\_the\\_global\\_south](https://www.eurodad.org/a_tale_of_two_emergencies_the_interplay_of_sovereign_debt_and_climate_crises_in_the_global_south)

73 <https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ghg-emissions>

74 <https://imperialcollegelondon.app.box.com/s/e8x6t16y9bajb85inazbk5mdrqtvxzfd>

75 <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/business-school/ib-knowledge/finance/developing-countries-are-paying-twice-climate-change>

76 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/09/11/los-huracanes-pueden-retrasar-reloj-del-desarrollo>

to provide the finance and support needed to address it. We believe that is an injustice, and we are fighting back.’<sup>77</sup>

- Loss and Damage Youth Collective

Developing countries have been asking for L&D finance for decades, and rich countries use their position to block their requests. The majority of people affected by this decision are people of colour.

## Lack of meaningful participatory processes to engage civil society representing racialised people in Europe

The EU’s planned actions to be taken for civil society participation and public consultation present numerous barriers for racialised groups to having a significant voice to shape policy, process to solutions and in decision-making.

Firstly, the position of its siloed participation mechanisms can contribute to the band-aiding of individual issues that can reinforce structural racism rather than take a responsive and preventative approach. As the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes, ‘People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalised are especially vulnerable to climate change and also to some adaptation and mitigation responses.’ Without a strong participatory mechanism for a critical assessment of policy, alongside integrated and coordinated policy, any climate strategies and implementation measures will inherit deep and embedded patterns of structural and institutional racism.

The EU has positioned participation in a siloed initiative, placed in the Climate Pact rather than having a participatory mechanism within the design of all aspects of the European Green Deal and interconnected commission strategies<sup>78</sup> that prioritise those with lived experience at the site of cause and those facing disproportionate impacts.

Secondly, the EU does not recognise racialised communities as active participants in the European Green Deal. The ARAP clearly states that it will give a voice to grassroots actors who have first-hand expertise and experience for defining the right way forward as part of a minimum bi-annual dialogue. The EU is yet to acknowledge the role of grassroots groups and anti-racist civil society in scoping the necessary agenda items and participation plans in early design as a step towards long-lasting change with participant-defined climate justice on the agenda and in practice.

<sup>77</sup> <https://ldyouth.org/what-is-loss-and-damage/>

<sup>78</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2021\\_commission\\_work\\_programme\\_new\\_policy\\_objectives\\_factsheet\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/system/files/2021_commission_work_programme_new_policy_objectives_factsheet_en.pdf)



“

Indigenous peoples safeguard the remaining biodiversity on earth. Including us in the climate debate and decision making processes is not only the right thing to do, it is absolutely necessary.

”

- Petra Laiti – Saami rights advocate

The EU risks creating an ‘unusable space’ for activity whilst tick-boxing participation of lived experience grassroots community; reinforced with the high possibility of false public relations and greenwashing. Additionally, participation roles of grassroots actors who have first-hand expertise and experience of injustices are not included within the European Green Deal as an additional activity ‘to ensure a just and inclusive transition’ due to its narrow narrative and definition of just. The EU must avoid the practice of repetitive first steps in the wrong direction.

One of the EU Climate Pact’s values is ‘Diversity and Inclusiveness’ and aims to ‘pull down barriers to climate action’ by disclosing that anyone from any background or profession can take part, focusing on personal characteristics such as gender, age, and disability. Failing to explicitly consider race can also lead to a consistent EU practice of not enabling and supporting racialised representation, hence not proceeding with building participatory mechanisms to recognise the expertise and realities of racialised communities. This is a compounding practice of epistemic erasure, that fails to value the knowledge produced by these communities and grassroots groups.

This is exhibited in the Climate Pact that states ‘many solutions outlined in the Green Deal can only be designed in a socially just and fair way if the public, communities, companies and organisations play their part, alongside government policies and regulation’. Whilst this recognises the important role to be played by communities in climate policy, it overlooks the significant power imbalances and inequalities in access to policymaking institutions, and fails to specify how EU institutions can conduct outreach to communities... Indeed, powerful companies and their lobby groups hold more power in EU decision making than communities, even more than racialised communities.

## The challenges of 'participation': Advocating for structural change

Participating in advocacy spaces can be a repetitive and difficult challenge for anti-racist civil society, as their energy is often occupied with constantly identifying how solutions in discussion and agenda items are exclusionary. Often, the solutions proposed have negative implications on racialised European and Global South communities; or the solution is contained in the same system where fundamental root causes are unaddressed. In such cases, increased 'participation' means engaging marginalised communities in internationally disconnected and harmful solutions—harmful due to operations and foreseen 'indirect' effects in its value chain, dependent on power systems of extraction and unequal distribution. Continuing to fight to have the full context of their demands for meaningful change heard and addressed, anti-racist civil society tend to be labelled as 'uncooperative', placing a burden on civil society to compromise their structural demands to conform to accepted norms in wider policy circles. At other times, racialised organisations or activists might be sought and included as a mere token, completing a tick-boxing exercise for an 'inclusive' process rather than meaningful participation and consideration of relevant issues.

Thirdly, the EU states that it wants climate action to be inclusive but provides vague participatory structures without acknowledging how unequal power dynamics prohibit and restrict the participation of racialised communities. The European Climate Law proposal outlines that 'citizens and communities have a powerful role to play in driving the transformation towards climate neutrality forward, strong public and social engagement on climate action should be facilitated.'<sup>79</sup> It is optimistic and hopeful that the Union acknowledges the importance of civic participation and the principles of multilingualism, inclusiveness and participation. However, it does not specify the steps it will take to ensure meaningful engagement, why some communities may be 'hard to reach', or what good practice can be drawn upon to ensure all parts of European society are given an opportunity to participate in decision-making processes.



<sup>79</sup> Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law), available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1588581905912&uri=CELEX:52020PC0080>

Participation extends beyond the physical representation of racialised communities at events and conferences. It also includes the context, experiences and expertise of racialised communities. Evidencing exclusive scopes in EU policy is the EU's Climate Target Action Plan 2030,<sup>80</sup> which upon the contracted 'in-depth report on the results of the 2030 Climate Target Plan open public consultation'<sup>81</sup> list of papers analysed did not include the full scope of social vulnerabilities, in particular, marginalised groups such as racialised, poor, disabled and gendered people.

Lastly, a major remaining barrier to meaningful participation of civil society representing racialised communities in EU climate processes is accessibility. There are severe concerns as to the accessibility of the EU's civil participation mechanisms in climate policy. For example, the Climate Pact's 'Mission Pact Ambassadors' scheme provides an opportunity for people and organisations to engage in climate and environmental protection activities. The Climate Pact lists the following expert NGOs are part of the pact:

- Coal Regions in Transition
- Clean Energy for EU Islands
- Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy
- EU Energy Poverty Observatory
- Renovation Wave's Open Platform.<sup>82</sup>

These groups are made of established experts and academics work in Brussels on a national scale. Some of them are/have been funded by the EU. Having a space dominated by people with traditional, formal qualifications leaves no room for inclusivity and diversifying vital contributions to climate action, especially when it impacts underrepresented communities, including racialised communities. There seems to be no designated role for civil society representing racialised or other marginalised groups to engage in this process.

80 2030 Climate Target Plan, 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0562>

81 In-depth report on the results of the 2030 Climate Target Plan open public consultation, 2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/default/files/eu-climate-action/docs/2030\\_ctp\\_opc\\_report\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/default/files/eu-climate-action/docs/2030_ctp_opc_report_en.pdf)

82 <https://europa.eu/climate-pact/system/files/2020-12/20201209%20European%20Climate%20Pact%20Communication.pdf>

Further, the application process of joining the Climate Pact is digitally exclusive and excludes people who do not have formal qualifications, skills and campaigning experience. The applications take place on the Climate Pact website, and applicants must formally submit a significant amount of their scoped and planned activities to join.<sup>83</sup> This process runs the risk of excluding grassroots groups from engaging in practice.

In its ambitions to 'encourage actions that consider social sustainability, social wellbeing, inclusion, equality, diversity, accessibility and affordability for all and that aim to reach the most vulnerable individuals and areas with positions'.<sup>84</sup> The EU risks co-opting language of participatory action and inclusive policy-making in a context of sustained exclusion and the denial of structural solutions presented by marginalised communities. Instead, true participation would require designing and acting with and from the lens of the most impacted and marginalised in.

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83 European Climate Pact, 2020 [https://europa.eu/climate-pact/ambassadors/become-ambassador\\_en](https://europa.eu/climate-pact/ambassadors/become-ambassador_en)

84 European Climate Pact <https://europa.eu/climate-pact/system/files/2020-12/20201209%20European%20Climate%20Pact%20Communication.pdf>

# Climate Justice is Racial Justice: Recommendations to EU Institutions

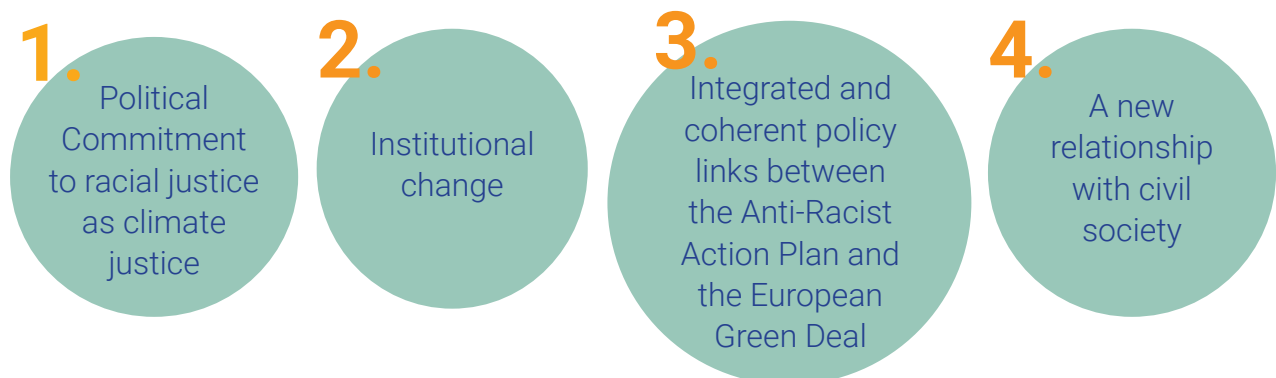
'D.6.1 Social justice and equity are core aspects of climate-resilient development pathways that aim to limit global warming to 1.5°C as they address challenges and inevitable trade-offs, widen opportunities, and ensure that options, visions, and values are deliberated, between and within countries and communities, without making the poor and disadvantaged worse off (high confidence).'

- IPCC Global Warming 1.5 Degrees Report

Working within the remit of the EU's ARAP to tackle institutional and structural racism within the EU's legislative and policy framework, the Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice offers 22 recommendations for the EU to deliver the ARAP within the European Green Deal.

With a fuller understanding of the links between structural racism, climate change and environmental inequalities, EU legislation, policy and practice will be better equipped to promote an inclusive, just and sustainable future for all.

The recommendations come in four sections. They are considered to make progressive steps to ensure no person and no place is left behind:





# Political commitment to racial justice as climate justice

Working within the same system that causes injustice will only reproduce injustice. By centring on the root causes of climate change, we will be able to progress towards a just, inclusive and sustainable future. The historical legacy of European expansion/colonialism is a root cause of the current geopolitical inequalities, in which the global North is consuming the global South.<sup>85</sup>

The EU must adopt a broader and more inclusive approach of a 'just transition' that should center the perspectives of those with lived experience of discrimination, inequality and injustice. Without active integration of racial justice within climate policy, institutions and corporations will continue to use the language of equity whilst furthering environmental destruction, the consequences of such are more likely to impact upon marginalised people across society.

**Recommendation 1:** The President of the European Commission and Vice President for the European Green Deal to **champion** the addressing of structural racism within the EU climate policy, within International Climate Agreements and at Climate Negotiations such as COP26. This must include disengaging from the heavy lobbying of fossil fuel industry experts and instead actively engaging with international and domestic civil society expressions of a Global Green Deal, to learn from racialised communities and civil society.

**Recommendation 2:** EU political leaders to **acknowledge the voices of international civil society** that calls attention to past injustices relating to colonisation, enslavement, and crimes against humanity that have shaped climate change and the compromisation of biodiversity, progressing towards reparation and restitution by Member States.

The makeup of the Commissioners Group<sup>86</sup> for a 'European Green Deal' demonstrates a lack of consideration for equalities or justice by featuring commissioners whose responsibilities are primarily industry-based. This contradicts the EU's communicated accountability to 'put people first'.<sup>87</sup>

**Recommendation 3:** The European Parliament President to work with the newly appointed ARAP coordinator to ensure links between the ARAP and EGD, detailing in a European Commission Communication as to how this process will be ensured.

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<sup>85</sup> 'What does climate justice mean in Europe? Climate Justice Alliance, 2010 <https://ejcj.orfaleacenter.ucsb.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Climate-Justice-Action-What-does-climate-justice-mean-in-Europ-2010.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024\\_en#bootstrap-fieldgroup-nav-item--commissioners-group--2](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024_en#bootstrap-fieldgroup-nav-item--commissioners-group--2)

<sup>87</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1576150542719&uri=COM%3A2019%3A640%3AFIN>

## Institutional change

As featured in Equinox's first report, to practically implement racial justice, the EU must take significant steps to secure the requisite level of expertise and the necessary development of infrastructure coherence. **Being specific to climate justice, the following recommendations will support the EU to progress towards a prerequisite level of climate justice as racial justice.**

**Recommendation 4:** The European Commission to set up an **Independent Audit of the European Green Deal through a racial justice lens** to scrutinise, monitor and hold to account the policies, spending, practices, and administration of the European Green Deal; where Climate Justice is inclusive to all marginalised groups with significant representation of racialised communities, civil society groups and both domestic and international communities proceed to develop equity-based frameworks through participatory measures. This commission must seek to address Loss & Damage, Climate Colonialism, implement meaningful corporate accountability<sup>88 89</sup> for mineral extraction and supply chains in 'Green, Renewable and Clean Tech', apply Debt Cancellation, uphold Human and Indigenous Rights, and implement a Fair Shares approach.

In March 2021, the UK International Development Committee - which was established to scrutinise the spending, administration and policies of the Department for International Development (DFID) and monitors the expenditure of Official Development Assistance (ODA) by other UK government departments- launched the first sub-inquiry under The philosophy and culture of aid umbrella inquiry, exploring racism in the aid sector. It invited actors across civil society, domestic and international NGOs and the private sector to submit oral physical evidence under the 'Structure of the aid sector'; 'Racism in the aid sector' and 'Diversity and Inclusion'.<sup>90</sup>

### Example Questions:

'What are the historical processes that have led to countries and organisations from the Global North dominating the international aid sector?'

'Why do we need to have a discussion about racism in the aid sector?'

'How diverse is staffing within international aid organisations? Does this change at different levels of seniority?'

The current international development and aid sector is also being called upon to assess its colonial patterns and practices that maintain power imbalances between Global North and Global South societies.<sup>91</sup>

88 <https://www.foei.org/un-treaty-tncs-human-rights>

89 <https://corporatejustice.org/>

90 <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1005/the-philosophy-and-culture-of-aid/news/153139/idc-to-explore-the-impact-of-racism-in-the-aid-sector/>

91 Time to Decolonise Aid, Peace Direct, 2021, <https://www.peacedirect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PD-Decolonising-Aid-Report.pdf>

Such a sub-inquiry could develop an evidence base to take preventative measures against exacerbating racial and social inequalities by climate change and the European Green Deal. By scoping defined space to invite feedback specific to structures, actions and experiences, a cohesive set of views can be engaged with. Under this umbrella, in April 2021, they have also launched an inquiry into putting climate change at the centre of aid policy; into climate justice, climate finance, Overseas Development Aid spending on fossil fuels and policy gaps.<sup>92</sup>

Each inquiry can inform a larger contextualised picture of the interconnected thematic areas of structural racism, climate action and policy failings in hindering those. Despite the attention to build evidence, it is unclear on how much power the committee has to uproot harmful practices considering the strong long-standing and supported counterpower of lobbyists to uphold harm through profiting self-interest.

Although this committee and following process have their pitfalls, it could be a good starting point of inspiration for the EU to produce a similar analysis, making sure independence from industry lobbyists is guaranteed and sufficient authority is given.

**Recommendation 5:** With the support of impacted communities and human rights groups, the European Commission to conduct an independent review of **power analysis on the environmental injustices and climate transition externalities and 'shifting of burdens'** on the Global South by public and private entities; with scope to identify their systemic connection to colonialism.

**Recommendation 6:** The European Commission **to amend and make visible its global dependencies and implications for its current proposition of a European Green Deal**, including the voices of international civil society. Shifting towards recognising its economic and geopolitical power, to reimagining itself part of a just, inclusive and equitable frontline community-led Global Green Deal.

**Recommendation 7:** The European Commission to implement a condition for all legislative proposals, major policy plans and outsourced/contracted work in association with the European Green Deal **to be audited** according to equality considerations with specific reference to racial equality and racial justice representation.

**Recommendation 8:** Ensure intermediary agencies, including civil society organisations, government departments, research institutions, and private sector practitioners **understand, respect, and appreciate different needs and priorities** of racialised groups within climate mitigation and adaptation.

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<sup>92</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/98/international-development-committee/news/153930/idc-launch-es-climate-change-inquiry-ahead-of-cop26/>

**Recommendation 9:** An institutional assessment of the EC and other EU institutions working on climate, energy and environmental policy of how their internal structures, policies, practises and decision-making bodies stand regarding diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability.

Policy coalition, DiEM25, suggests establishing an Environmental Justice Commission (EJC) to not repeat the mistakes of the past and confront European colonial legacy. The EJC recognises the history of resource extraction across the Global South. In championing internal accountability, it wants to resolve and prevent any unforeseen externalities through the dimensions of international, intersectional and intergenerational justice. It wants to ensure that the EJC is guided by principles of equal distribution, recognition, and participation of communities across Europe.

Taking an international approach with a focus on trade, migration, and finance will address the relations between EU policy and environmental destruction through the monitoring of both private and public EU entities. DiEM25 restates the need to confront the crimes of colonial plunder and resource extraction whilst ensuring future generations inherit a habitable world. They also recognise the need for frontline communities to advise EU authorities on how to best respond to focus areas such as health, employment, education and mobility as key aspects of a dignified life interdependent to climate.<sup>93</sup>

## Integrated and coherent Anti-Racist Action Plan and European Green Deal

**Recommendation 10:** To establish an independent review, preceded by proper public consultation, with racialised civil society and grassroots movements on the European Green Deal **to assess the extent to which policies exacerbate structural racism** and exclusion as part of a larger consultation on existing EU initiatives in key 'racial justice focus points'.

**Recommendation 11:** To commission a **peer-led engagement review of existing evidence of environmental injustice** experienced by minoritised and racialised communities in the EU. Proceeding with a risk and vulnerability assessment on the disproportionate impact of racialised communities to forecast any future consequences across health and wellbeing, jobs, mobility, education and migration.

<sup>93</sup> <https://gnde.diem25.org/>

Community-led grassroots efforts are crucial to democracy and government accountability. The Climate Justice Alliance is a translocal coalition of frontline communities and organisations, formed in 2013. They aim to build a Just Transition away from extractive systems of production, consumption and political oppression and towards resilient, regenerative and equitable economies. The transition process must place race, gender and class at the centre of the solutions equation in order to make it a truly Just Transition.<sup>94</sup>

In January 2021, they supported Rep. Cori Bush (MO) and Sen. Ed Markey (MA) to enact an Environmental Justice Mapping and Data Collection Act (H.R. 516/S.101) – An interagency environmental justice mapping committee, led by the Environmental Protection Agency, will be formed to identify criteria, find data gaps, create a data repository, and work with communities to create an interactive mapping tool based on cumulative impacts to locate environmental justice communities. The bill has support from over 70 grassroots and environmental organisations.

This legislation, written through collaboration with grassroots environmental justice leaders, aims to create and authorise funding for a system to comprehensively identify the demographic factors, environmental burdens, socio-economic conditions, and public health concerns that are related to environmental justice and collect high-quality data through community engagement and a government-wide interagency process. These data would be used to build layered maps depicting which communities experience environmental injustices and would assist the Biden administration in directing at least 40% of the investment in a clean and climate-safe future into communities that have been harmed by racist and unjust environmental practices. The bill has support from over 70 grassroots and environmental organisations.<sup>95</sup>

**Recommendation 12:** The European Commission to investigate the experiences of **Indigenous Communities** in the EU and their fulfilment of full participation Indigenous Rights; with binding legislation.

In line with the advice of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Assessment**, the EU must incorporate environmental and socio-economic impacts, including externalities, into public and private decision-making. Also, recognise and enable the expression of 'different value systems and diverse interests' while formulating and implementing policies and actions. As well as promote inclusive governance approaches through stakeholder engagement and the inclusion of Indigenous peoples and local communities to ensure equity and participation.

**Recommendation 13:** To **develop an equity framework** through the participation of vulnerable, marginalised and disproportionately affected groups to apply at all stages of policy; design, strategy, programme design, delivery, implementation, monitoring and evaluation - at local, national, regional and global levels. Continued by the full development

<sup>94</sup> <https://climatejusticealliance.org/>

<sup>95</sup> <https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senators-markey-and-duckworth-rep-bush-introduce-legislation-to-help-identify-environmental-justice-communities>

of the framework to be implemented with complete ownership by civil society. This can be approached by engaging with existing models.

Many racialised civil society groups draw on holistic frameworks of equity and justice, such as the Just Transition Framework<sup>96</sup> designed by Climate Justice Alliance that places 'racial justice and social equity' as a values filter; and other Environmental Justice frameworks that consider four dimensions such as distribution, recognitional, procedural (e.g. participation and decision-making) and capabilities approach. Bali Climate Justice principles<sup>97</sup> take into account and lead from the perspectives and desires of frontline groups that discusses and advocates for power and values trade-offs to move toward a more sustainable and just society.<sup>98</sup>

**Recommendation 14:** Reassess the concept of 'do no harm' under the review of communities who have been subjected to harm, with the sequential steps and influential systemic factors in scope to re-define 'do no harm'.

## A new relationship with civil society

Whilst the EGD progresses with its urgency, the investment into having sufficient structures to serve those who are disproportionately affected must be equitably given the required attention and action; otherwise, it risks over-burdening civil society and racial justice groups in challenging a continuous solidification of EGD policy as opposed to participating in inclusive design of policy, implementing measures and driving community-led solutions.

Unless the EU reconsiders its obligations towards a 'just' and 'inclusive' transition, it will lack legitimacy in its responses to climate breakdown, ecological loss and people's right to a dignified life. It can achieve this through decentralised decision-making and policy/project development processes to support community-based policy development and implementation.

**Recommendation 15:** In line with the recommendations made by Civil Society Europe,<sup>99</sup> the European Commission must take active steps to ensure the meaningful participation of civil society, particularly representing marginalised groups. **It must provide funded spaces on the Climate Pact for marginalised groups** to inquire on their physical participation and content, reality and approach representation. This must also address barriers to committed participation such as time, finance and accessibility and challenges to participation such as the shrinking space for civil society<sup>100</sup> and the dangers of environmental and anti-racist activism.<sup>101</sup> Further assessing the entry points for affected people to be involved in

96 <https://climatejusticealliance.org/just-transition/>

97 <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/bali.pdf>

98 Environmental justice and the SDGs: from synergies to gaps and contradictions, 2020, Menton et al. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11625-020-00789-8>

99 <https://civilsocietyeurope.eu/the-civil-society-convention-on-the-future-of-europe-is-ready-to-work/>

100 <https://www.shrinking.space/>

101 <https://civilsocietyeurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Joint-Declaration-v23032021.pdf>

policy-making and decision making. Ensuring that racialised groups have equal access to negotiating, developing and implementing.

**Recommendation 16:** The European Commission **to review major funds in partnership with racial justice organisations**, such as the Climate Pact and Just Transition Mechanism, to ensure funding criteria and access are not exclusive of racialised communities realities, needs and priorities within the European Green Deal. This must involve a shift from project funding to core and structural funds for marginalised groups working to address the impact of climate change.

**Recommendation 17:** The European Union to collaborate on the design of mechanisms for **active involvement of racialised groups** and all disproportionately affected groups **at all stages of decision-making** processes (agenda setting, issue identification, drafting, decision and implementation).

**Recommendation 18:** For racialised groups to be championed and **allowed to represent their views in International Climate Negotiations**, as a form of global cooperation across borders and between country alliances.

**Recommendation 19:** With the assistance of presently active participating racial justice organisations, the European Union must create accessible guidance and operations criteria to specifically target marginalised groups in funding opportunities, including specific criteria on racial equality and the relaying of information on funding mechanisms. Consequently, monitor how racialised groups are targeted by, acquired by, and benefit from, European Green Deal funds such as the Community-led Local Development funds and the Just Transition Mechanism.

**Recommendation 20:** Provide non-digital avenues for people to access decision-making spaces and discussions centred around climate action in Europe. Reach out to community and grassroots groups on the ground that already engage in climate action and explore ways to collaborate that does not make the process inaccessible.

**Recommendation 21:** When engaging with civil society, institutions must not censor community dissent and stifle the voices that express injustice and discomfort in the climate action movement. Further, when championing the underrepresented voices, it is vital to protect them from harassment and endangerment, especially in digital spaces. Authentic collaborations and relationships with civil society means using the privilege of the institution to protect these voices.

**Recommendation 22:** The European Commission **to review the content and interpretations of climate education**, including climate education for EU officials, to include critical perspectives and worldviews from frontline communities on causes, approaches and proposed solutions. Progressing towards internationalism, diversity and transparency. This should receive assistance from frontline community representatives to review their representation.

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