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TEPSA _____
Trans European Policy Studies Association

EU @ WORK SEMINAR ON CLIMATE ACTION

REPORT

ONLINE, 27-30 OCTOBER 2020





INTRODUCTION



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Funded by the **Europe for Citizens Programme** of the **European Commission**, the 4-day **EU@Work Seminar on Climate Action** offered fourteen excellent Master and PhD students the opportunity to gain first-hand insights from researchers, EU practitioners, policymakers and officials on the current state of play and future prospects of the European climate and environmental policy.

The Seminar took place **online** due to Coronavirus restrictions, from the **27th until the 30th of October 2020** and was organised under the academic lead of **Prof. Katja Biedenkopf** (KU Leuven).

The EU@Work Seminar on Climate Action combined **lectures, guest sessions and networking sessions** with representatives of key EU institutions, NGOs, and civil society organisations. Namely:

The **European Commission**
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
Climate Action Network Europe (CAN Europe)
The **European Council**
The **European Parliament**
The **European Environmental Bureau**



DAY 1



1

• **Opening session**

2

• **Introductory lecture with Prof. Katja Biedenkopf**

3

• **Info session with European Solidarity Corps**

The **first day** of the seminar kicked off with a general presentation of TEP SA and an overview of the four-day programme. The TEP SA team welcomed the **fourteen participants** and introduced **Prof. Katja Biedenkopf**, the Academic Coordinator of the Seminar and Associate Professor of Sustainability Politics at Leuven International and European Studies (LINES, KU Leuven). The students introduced themselves and explained their special interest **in climate and environmental policy**. Overall, they represented **nine different European countries and one EFTA member**.

The second session of the day dived right into the topic, with an introductory lecture by **Prof. Biedenkopf**. The students were provided with an overview of the rationale behind climate policy, the main actors taking part in shaping European climate policy, and the main features of European climate policy.

To conclude day, the participants took part in an informal online get-together with

representative of the **European Solidarity Corps (ESC)**. **Violeta Birzniece**, Programme Officer in Directorate General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport in the European Commission, presented the ESC and two of their volunteering programs related to climate change and the environment. This was followed by testimonies from two former volunteers, **Manon Levrey** and **Alessandra Cardaci**. They presented their experiences with ESC and encouraged the participants to take part in ESC programs in the future.

KU LEUVEN

EU Climate Policy:
Why is it important?
Who are the main actors?
What are its main features?

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DAY 2



- 1 • **Lecture by Prof. Katja Biedenkopf**
- 2 • **Guest session with the Cabinet of Frans Timmermans**
- 3 • **Guest session with the European Commission**
- 4 • **Discussion and analysis session**
- 5 • **Networking session with WWF and CAN Europe**

The **second day** of the seminar started with a lecture by **Prof. Biedenkopf** on the European Green Deal, where the students analysed the Commission Communication on the Green Deal and discussed the meaning of sustainability and the different ways it is pursued.



The lecture was followed by two guest sessions. First, **Stephanie Hiesinger**, member of the **Cabinet of Frans Timmermans** (Executive Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the European Green Deal), presented the work of the cabinet and the Commissioner's responsibilities. The day proceeded with a meeting with **Mette Quinn**, Head of Unit for EU ETS Implementation in the **Directorate General for Climate Action of the European**

Commission, where the students could deepen their knowledge of the European Emission Trading System, its rationale, scope and practical implementation.

Later in the day, Prof. Biedenkopf led a discussion and analysis session among the students, where they exchanged impressions on the lectures and guest sessions of the day and elaborated on their opinions about the European Climate policy framework.

The day concluded with a networking and career session with two young professionals working on EU climate policies in Brussels: **Romain Laugier**, Climate and Energy Policy Officer at **WWF** and **Harriet Mackaill-Hill**, EU Climate and Energy Policy Coordinator at **CAN Europe**. They presented to the students their work on environmental policy and climate change and talked about their career progression and their daily life as professional in Brussels.



DAY 3



- 1 • **Lecture by Prof. Katja Biedenkopf**
- 2 • **Guest session with European Council**
- 3 • **Guest session with the European Parliament**
- 4 • **Discussion and analysis session**

At the beginning of the **third day**, the participants attended the final lecture of the seminar by Prof. Biedenkopf, which explored the role of the EU in International Climate Negotiations. The session shed light on the external policy tools used by the EU in this area and analysed in detail the Paris Climate Agreement.

The day continued with two guest sessions. During the first one, students met with **Rudy Volders**, Chief Adviser for Integrated Europe in the Cabinet of the President, and **Oana Valceanu**, Adviser on Green Deal and Environmental matters in the **European Council**. They introduced the participants to the work of the European Council and its role and responsibilities within the Green Deal framework and in reaching the Union emission



reduction goals for 2030 and 2050. This was followed by a session with **Bas Eickhout**, Green MEP and Vice-Chair of the Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety in the **European Parliament**. The students engaged in a fruitful discussion on the position of the Parliament on climate matters and explored the role of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences in shaping international environmental efforts.

The day concluded with another discussion and analysis session led by Prof. Biedenkopf, where students exchanged impressions on the lectures and guest sessions of the day and elaborated on their opinions about the role of the European Union in the international environmental arena.



DAY 4



1

• **Guest session with European Environmental Bureau**

2

• **Closing session**

During the **last day** of the EU@Work Seminar, the students had the opportunity to take part in a final guest session with **Khaled Diab**, Communications Manager at the **European Environmental Bureau (EEB)**. Khaled Diab provided the participants with an outlook on the role of NGOs and civil society organizations in shaping European climate policy and their means for influencing policymaking in Brussels, as well as their broader efforts to promote a climate neutral society.

In the closing session, Prof. Biedenkopf and the students took stock of the different dimensions of climate policy discussed during the seminar, sharing a few concluding remarks and considerations on the future of European Climate Action. Participants also had the chance to give their feedback on the seminar to TEPSA Staff and were invited to complete an online survey.

TEPSA would like to thank the participants for their contribution to the success of the seminar and for bringing their knowledge, ideas and enthusiasm. We are particularly grateful to all the practitioners for the time devoted to our group and for sharing with us insights from their daily work. Finally, TEPSA would like to thank the Academic Coordinator, Katja Biedenkopf, for enriching the seminar with her expertise.





EU@Work Seminar on Climate Action 27-30 October 2020, online

Agenda



Tuesday 27 October

online via Zoom

- 13:45 - 14:45 Opening and introduction to the seminar, *by Prof Katja Biedenkopf (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar, KU Leuven) and the TEP SA Team*
- 15:00 – 16:30 Introductory lecture: ‘Why is climate action important and who are the key eu-level actors?’, *by Prof Katja Biedenkopf (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar, KU Leuven)*
- 17:00 Online get together and info session about the European Solidarity Corps, *with Violeta Birzniece (Programme Officer in the Directorate General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport in the European Commission), Alessandra Cardaci and Manon Levrey (former European Solidarity Corps participants)*

Wednesday 28 October

online via Zoom

- 09:00 – 10.30 Lecture: ‘The European Green Deal’ *by Prof Katja Biedenkopf (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar, KU Leuven)*
- 11:30 – 12:30 Guest session: Meeting the Cabinet of Frans Timmermans *with Stefanie Hiesinger (member of the Cabinet of Frans Timmermans, the Executive Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of the European Green Deal)*
- 14:00 – 15:00 Guest session: Meeting the European Commission DG Clima *with Mette Quinn (Head of Unit for EU ETS Implementation, DG Clima, European Commission)*
- 15:30 – 16:30 Discussion and analysis session *by Prof Katja Biedenkopf (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar, KU Leuven)*
- 16:30 – 18:00 Networking session: Meeting with young professionals from **WWF** and **CAN Europe** *Romain Laugier (Climate and energy policy officer, WWF) and Harriet Mackaill-Hill (Eu climate and energy policy coordinator, CAN europe)*



Thursday 29 October

online via Zoom

- 09:30 – 11:00 Lecture: 'EU in International Climate Negotiations' by *Prof Katja Biedenkopf (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar, KU Leuven)*
- 14:00 – 15:00 Guest session: Meeting the European Council with *Rudy Volders (Chief adviser Integrated Europe in the Cabinet of the President) and Oana Valceleanu (Adviser Green deal-Environmental matters)*
- 15:30 – 16:30 Guest session: Meeting the European Parliament – Discussion on the UN Climate Conference COP 26 with *Bas Eickhout (MEP, Group of the Greens)*
- 17:00 – 18:00 Discussion and analysis session by *Prof Katja Biedenkopf (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar, KU Leuven)*

Friday 30 October

online via Zoom

- 09:30 – 10:30 Guest session: Meeting the European Environmental Bureau with *Khaled Diab (Communications Manager, EEB)*
- 11:30 – 12:30 Closing remarks and feedback from participants with *Prof Katja Biedenkopf (Academic Coordinator of the Seminar, KU Leuven) and the TEPSA Team*