



**Quaker
Council for
European
Affairs**

Climate, peace, and human rights

Are European policies
coherent?



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Climate, peace, and human rights

Are European policies coherent?

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Executive summary

This report provides an overview of the links between climate, peace, and human rights; it explores the interconnections between them, while identifying how relevant EU policies lack coherence and can even be contradictory. The report makes a series of recommendations to deal with these issues beyond deploying technologies for renewable energy generation, but by making a major shift in the way security is perceived, and what it means for people and the planet. Recommendations also include straightforward actions, such as an end to arms exports to governments with a poor record on human rights and environmental protection.

About QCEA

The Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) is a non-governmental organisation, which works to bring a vision based on the Quaker commitment to peace, justice and equality to Europe and its institutions. It has been based in Brussels since its foundation in 1979. QCEA advocates for nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution, the intrinsic equality of all people everywhere, and a sustainable way of life for everyone so that the earth we share can support us all. QCEA seeks to build support for humane, non-military policies at the EU level, both inside and outside its borders. We do so in the spirit of peaceful cooperation, which forms the foundation of European politics.

Acronyms

CAP	Common Agricultural Policy	ERMES	European Resources for Mediation Support	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
CAR	Central African Republic			PADR	Preparatory Action on Defence Research
COP	Conference of the Parties	ESG Standards	Environmental, Social and Governance standards	PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation
DG CLIMA	Directorate General for Climate Action	EUGD	EU Green Deal	QCEA	Quaker Council for European Affairs
DG ECHO	Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	FCNL	Friends Committee on National Legislation	QUNO	Quaker United Nations Office
DG ENVI	Directorate General for Environment	FPI	Service for Policy Instruments	R2P	Responsibility to Protect
DG INTPA	Directorate General for International Partnerships	GAP	Gender Action Plan	R&I	Research & Innovation
DG NEAR	Directorate General for European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations	GHG	Greenhouse Gases	SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
EC	European Commission	IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change
EDF	European Defence Fund	IPCC	International Panel on Climate Change		
EEAS	European External Action Service	MERCOSUR	Southern Common Market		
ENAA	European Network Against Arms Trade	MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework		
EPF	European Peace Facility	NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation		
EPLO	European Peacebuilding Liaison Office	NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument		

QUAKER APPROACHES TO CLIMATE AND SECURITY

“We seek to nurture a global human society that prioritises the well-being of people over profit, and lives in right relationship with our Earth; a peaceful world with fulfilling employment, clean air and water, renewable energy, and healthy thriving communities and ecosystems”¹



Woodbrooke, *The Quaker Testimonies* ²

Quaker writings remind us that *“We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world.”*³ Acting as stewards of nature, protecting its ability to generate and support life, including dignified human living, is central to the Quaker approach to the climate crisis.

The **Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)** has highlighted climate emergency as the most challenging international environmental threat to human rights,⁴ showing how a rights-based approach to climate policy can *“improve lives, realize policy coherence with legitimate and sustainable outcomes, and thus increase mitigation success.”*⁵ Thus, the Quaker vision for peace, dignity of people and climate justice are all interrelated and complementary.^a

Quakers emphasise the concept of ‘right relationship’,⁶ and how climate and environmental challenges are intimately connected to issues of peace, equality and justice. The earth is the living system that supports all life, including dignified human life. Caring for this system at all levels (from the local to the global) is imperative to achieve peace and human security.

The **Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA)** operates programmes of peace and human rights, and worry for the environment has long been a deep concern for Quakers globally and in Europe. Quakers see peace, human security and ecological healing as inextricably interlinked in the movement to build sustainable, peaceful and healthy societies. This is displayed in **Building Peace Together**, our publication that explores how to build sustainable peace through a holistic approach.

While recognising nature, environment and climate as public goods that are essential

^a For more information about Quakers please visit: Quakers in Britain. “About Quakers” Available at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers> Accessed 13 January 2021.

to lead a decent human life, it is crucial to move away from the extractive, instrumental relationship with nature that has, until now, dominated humanity. According to this view, nature’s only value is measured by what it can provide to humanity, ignoring the intrinsic worth of both the natural environment, and non-human species. This obsession comes at the expense of ecological functioning and human health. Quakers believe, instead, that humans need to change their mindset towards nature, learning to live in a balanced way with it, reaching socio-economic equilibriums that allow nature to regenerate continuously so as to sustain all life, rather than looking just for short term economic gains.

For Quakers, the climate crisis is fundamentally a social justice issue. While all human communities are faced by the same figurative storm of climate emergency, it is the most vulnerable amongst us who are the least equipped to weather and adapt to the tempest. Nation-states and regional institutions with greater resources and therefore resilience—like the EU – have a responsibility to ensure a just redistribution of resources to ensure dignified and safe human living standards for all, and not just for their own citizens. It is essential that responses to the climate crisis also safeguard the safety, resilience, and dignity of all beings across the world. In the Quaker view, none of us are truly safe – whether from climate crisis or violent conflict - until we all are.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call. If we continue to abuse our earth, our oceans, our air, our wildlife, then we endanger human health. Insufficient regulations on global wildlife trade, along with weak sanitary measures were central in this pandemic. Wildlife consumption and habitat degradation are some of the main drivers for biodiversity loss. These provide favourable conditions for the increase of zoonotic diseases.⁷

This pandemic and the past outbreaks, including Ebola, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), and Bird Flu, demonstrate that regulating wildlife trade is not just conservation and animal welfare issue but an issue that impacts us all together. **Scientists** have warned that if we continue to disrupt the natural world and not rein in environmental destruction, future pandemics will likely increase, spread more rapidly and kill more people. Meanwhile, **Amazon wildfires** are raging for the second year running, even more dramatically than in 2019. Temperatures are continuing to break previous records. **Parts of Siberia** has caught fire, actively melting the permafrost and raising the risk of a massive tipping point, as still further greenhouse gases (GHG) are released.

The pandemic has also made us realize that when one of us is sick, we are all at risk. Yet, we are at risk in different ways. Initially hailed as the 'great equalizer,' the pandemic in fact exposed the depth of **institutional, structural, and systemic discrimination and inequality in our societies**. The ecological collapse we are experiencing is the direct result of an unequal social contract, unsustainable economic and political systems which are affecting families and communities throughout the globe, but which has had a worse impact on some more than others. For example, while the overseas

departments and territories account for a small proportion of France's greenhouse gas emissions, the consequences of climate emergency are greatly felt in the islands – which remain politically and economically marginalised - with higher sea level rises, coral bleaching, more intense hurricanes, putting more stress on the economically vulnerable region.⁸ These majority-black populated areas were plantation colonies that overnight were incorporated as part of the Republic without any basic reforms such as land/wealth redistribution.

Any green transition plan must address sustainability and justice issues. This must begin with a reframing of the issue by placing people, not profits, at the centre. Needs such as cleaner air, water, energy are security needs; therefore, climate justice must be approached from perspectives that prioritise tackling power dynamics. Only by implementing this policy, combined with reducing the deployment and use of armed force can climate justice be achieved. The issue of climate justice is therefore vital in highlighting the linkages between climate, power, insecurity, and abuse of human rights.

Perspective matters

Communities across the world have been standing up to carbon-intensive industries and exposing unsustainable business practices on ecosystems and our climate. For hundreds of years, environmental defenders have been the first advocates against climate breakdown. They have developed a range of innovative nonviolent direct-action tactics and strategies to block pipelines and another fossil fuel infrastructure. These climate justice movements have continued to spread, despite persecution of activists and attacks on

environmental defenders.

While environment destruction and social oppression have always gone hand in hand, a purely technocratic response dominates the climate conversation. This is mirrored in the absence of the roles power structures and nature play during public policy debates on climate and human relationships. Even more pronounced is absence of analyses on the climate emergency and the impact on indigenous sovereignty, anti-black racism, gender, water and land, and the histories of colonialism.

Nevertheless, enrolment sizes in university courses on climate justice are doubling. This is a hopeful sign that reflects the importance young people accord to climate justice issues. In addition, interdisciplinary decolonial frameworks have gained new interest in Europe. This is reflected in the number of conferences and initiatives such as the **Postdependent Geographies in Central and Eastern Europe** (PostCEE), and the **Decolonizing Research** at SOAS, University of London. These conversations **highlight** the need to link climate with racialised and gendered labour exploitation, including trade and fossil fuel investments that reproduce inequalities.

“Any green transition plan must address sustainability and justice issues.”



EU CLIMATE POLICIES

Today, the climate crisis and ecological collapse are higher on the European Union (EU) agenda than ever before. Within the European Commission (EC), two Directorates-General (DG) are dedicated to climate and environment actions. The first is the **Directorate-General for Climate Action** (DG CLIMA), which was established in 2010 to meet the targets of climate action. Prior to that, it was handled by the **Directorate-General for Environment** (DG ENVI), which is no longer in charge of climate but focuses on environmental protection and ensures the implementation of environmental law in all EU countries.

The **Paris Agreement**, adopted in 2015 is the first legally binding climate agreement at the global level and the agreement was formally ratified by the EU and Member States in 2016.⁹ The text “sets out a global framework to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C.”¹⁰

On 16 October 2020 the Council of the European Union adopted **conclusions** on biodiversity, which includes its commitment for human rights: “STRESSES that in all of its work, also with regard to the global outreach, the EU should strengthen the links between biodiversity protection and human rights, democracy, gender equality, health, education, conflict sensitivity, the rights-based approach, land tenure and the role of indigenous peoples and local communities.”

The European Green Deal (EUGD)

On 28 November 2019, The European Parliament approved a resolution declaring climate emergency in Europe and globally.¹¹ In December 2019, the new EC¹² announced its goal to become both more “geopolitical” and “green”, in the European Green Deal

(EUGD) whose aims are to galvanise a regional transformation to meet the climate challenge.¹³

The EUGD has two main **priorities**:

- 1) Investing in new technologies and digitalization of the economy;
- 2) Shifting to low-carbon energy.

Its aims are to reconcile “the economy with the planet” whilst “leaving no one behind.”¹⁴ The strategy pursues a partial redesign of European political economies and provide an impetus for a fair, inclusive transition that preserves democracies and liberties in Europe, as well as regional integration. Commission President Von der Leyen described the EUGD as “Europe’s man on the moon on the moment,”¹⁵ implying that Europe will lead by example in tackling the climate crisis; in addition, Europe would undergo a profound reduction in its environmental footprint.

First climate action initiatives under the Green Deal include:

● **European Climate Law** to enshrine the 2050 climate-neutrality objective into EU law and aims to make a transition over the next few decades towards energy mixes including renewables and hydrogen. At the latest by 2050, the whole EU zone will be legally obliged to be entirely carbon neutral.

● **European Climate Pact** to engage citizens and all parts of society in climate action

● **2030 Climate Target Plan** to further reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

By switching towards cleaner sources of energy, the EU hopes to maintain a growth-oriented approach to its economy. However, this is problematic because of the increased consumption generally associated with

economic growth. The EUGD expects to partially offset the environmental impact of waste through bolstering the circular economy and the optimisation of recycling strategies, although it is currently unknown how effective recycling strategies would look like for the scale needed. Additional sustainable economic systems, such as **doughnut economics** could be considered, with economic transformations grounded in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Funding

In December 2020, the EU agreed on the terms of the long-term EU budget (Multi-annual Financial Framework, MFF) for 2021-2027, and the coordinated response to and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding agreed under the MFF, and the Covid-19 recovery package, will determine the next seven years of programming priorities and modalities, and will channel large amounts of EU resources to climate action.

The EU has committed to spending 30% of the MFF for the period 2021-2027 on climate action.¹⁶ Believing that no country can fight the climate emergency alone, the EU is investing in climate diplomacy. In January 2021, The European Council adopted **conclusions** on ‘Climate and Energy Diplomacy - Delivering on the external dimension of the European Green Deal.’

In July 2019, the EC launched the European **Research and Innovation** (R&I) programme as part of **Horizon Europe**. At least 35% of its budget will be allocated to climate solutions for the EUGD.¹⁷ Horizon Europe’s cluster 5 is entitled “Climate, Energy and Mobility” and has the following objective: “to accelerate climate action (both mitigation and adaptation) uptake globally in line with the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, by improving knowledge of the climate-earth system and by proposing and evaluating solutions for short-to-medium and long-term systemic impact.”¹⁸

In October 2020, the EC launched a new **Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity**. Moreover, through the **Life Programme**, the EU’s funding instrument for the environment and climate action, the EC had a budget of €3.4 billion for 2014-2020 and has proposed €5.7 billion for 2021-2027,¹⁹ finally in December 2020 the MFF was agreed, with €4.8 billion dedicated to the Life Programme.²⁰

The specific financing of the climate transition has yet to be approved, but it envisages raising money through both the public and private sector. Moreover, the Just Transition Mechanism (€100 billion over the 2021-2027 period) is designed to ensure that Europe develops safety net mechanisms for those countries most affected by the transition (e.g.: coal-dependent countries in Eastern Europe.). A ‘just transition’ is a ‘rights-based approach’, reflecting concerns about the human impact of climate policies; people are more likely to support a climate policy, which benefits them, thus enhancing the potential success of mitigation and adaptation policies.

With a budget of €70.8 billion,²¹ a new instrument in the new MFF called the **Neighbourhood, Development, International Cooperation Instrument** (NDICI) replaced and/or included several instruments from the previous MFF, including the **Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace** (IcSP), which is the instrument currently supporting the funding of the environment and climate-related indicators. It treats the environment as a crosscutting theme, much like gender issues.

The new NDICI is based on three ‘pillars’: (1) geographic, (2) thematic and (3) rapid response.²² The specific budget allocations between the three ‘pillars’ are still being negotiated. Twenty percent of NDICI resources are earmarked for environmental and climate related projects. It is unclear which specific indicators this allocation will be based on in order to support effective climate action outside the EU.

Various EC units and **European External Action Service (EEAS)** divisions will be responsible for managing different NDICI programmes with different roles. For example, the EEAS leads on the strategic programming (i.e. the Multiannual Indicative Programmes) and the EC leads on the Multi-annual Action Programmes, with their various units in **International Partnerships (DG INTPA)**, **European Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR)**, **European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)**, and the **Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)** all playing a role. The EEAS which has framework contracts such as the **European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES)** to conduct conflict analyses (amongst others), and has just created a pool of mediators ready for deployment.²³

Political actors and mediators have a key role in facilitating integrated strategies in conflict resolutions that also include the concept of 'nature' at the negotiating table. Such an approach is needed to avert protracted security risks at local and global levels. A pilot training in environmental peacemaking by EEAS's Conflict prevention and mediation support in October 2020 included a limited number of expert mediators and policy officers from both the EEAS and Member States.

They also examined how the EU can better support political conflict resolutions alongside natural resource governance, ecosystems-based approaches and complex regeneration. They introduced specific mediation tools to support environmental peacemaking. A laudable initiative which should be extended beyond the training participants, to encompass all climate, food and water security strategies within the EEAS and the European Council.

The EU can ensure that the NDICI contributes to its global climate strategy by supporting comparative learning strategies in all EU institutions. In this way, the results could identify context-specific ways to support effective climate and environmental targets while addressing conflict. At the heart of these

analyses, the EU should ask the following two questions:

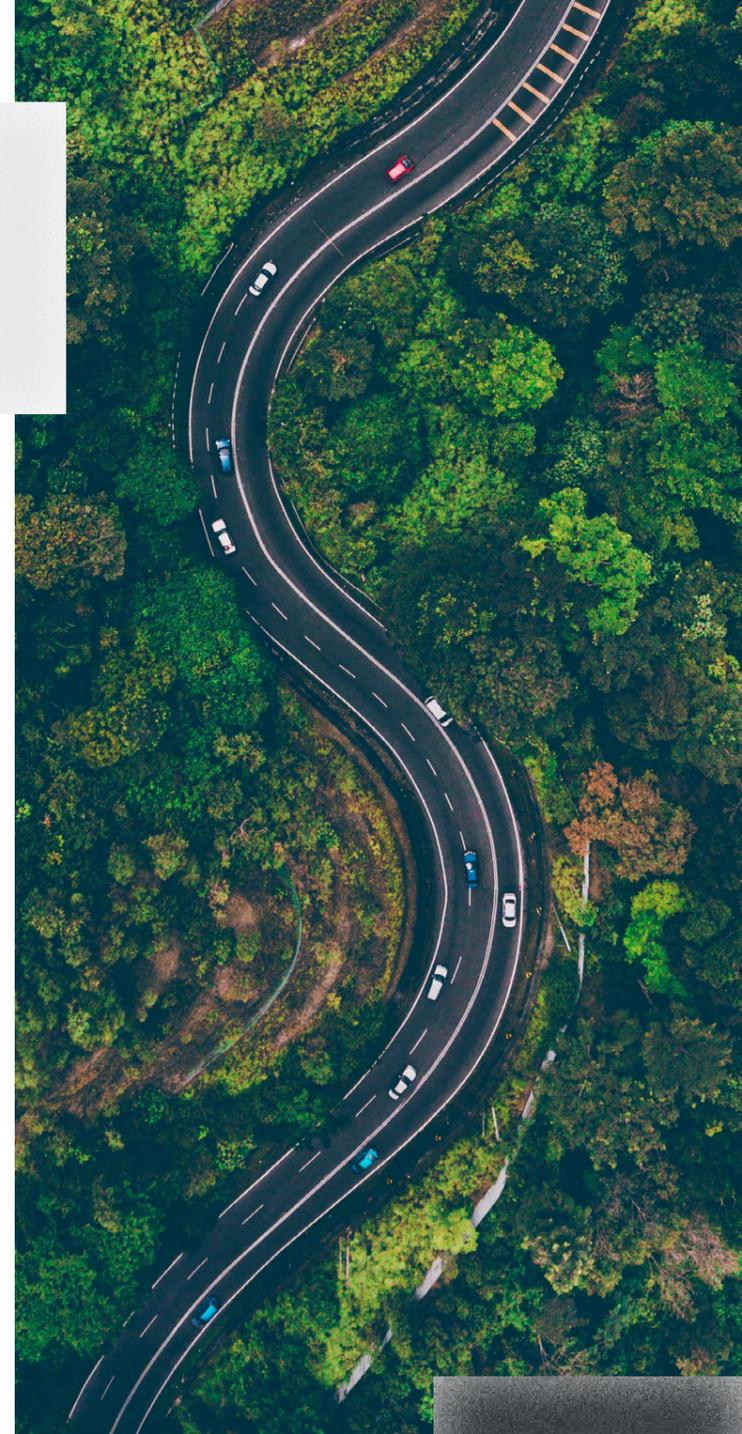
- How can the EU support the preservation and regeneration of the health of local, national and regional ecosystems?
- How can the EU enhance human security and human agency to act as stewards of community and the earth?

In addition, it is crucial that NDICI funding streams be allocated to supporting:

- Relevant experts deployed to EU Special Representative and mediation support teams.
- Research on how best to combine ecosystems regeneration, protection of environmental defenders, with the full participation of indigenous and racialized communities in conflict resolution strategies and how to implement the results.

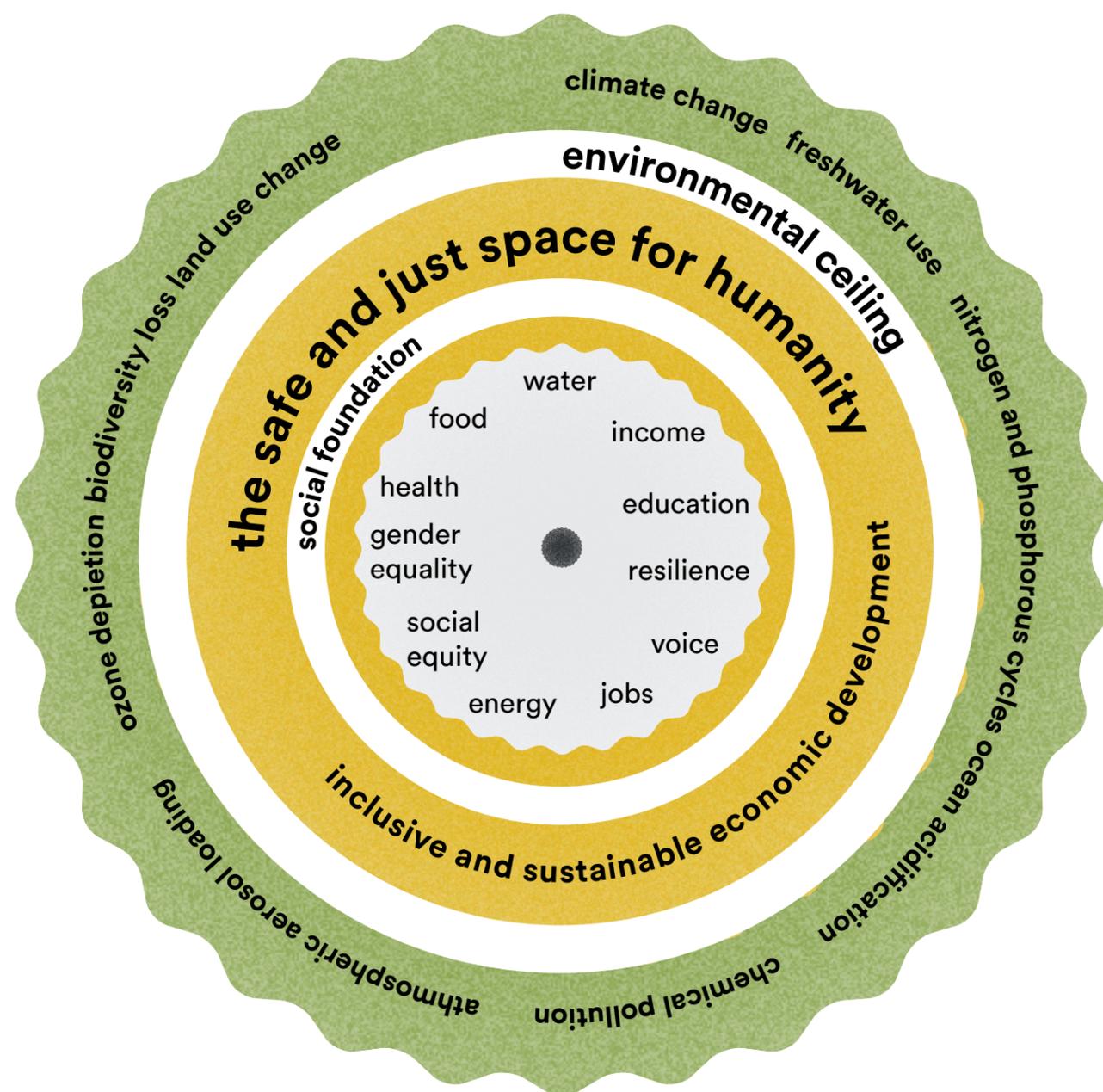
Moreover, given the recent internal changes within the DG INTPA, it remains uncertain who will deal with the NDICI. The directorate is currently exploring how to manage their capacity with regard to increasing conflict analysis, which should examine the socio-political economy²⁴ and the socio-political ecology²⁵ of conflicts. The EEAS, DG INTPA and DG ECHO should share more internal and external resources to create a multi-competency and pan-European professional roster of experts while coordinating and consulting with local analysts, as well as environmental activists and groups.

“Political actors and mediators have a key role in facilitating integrated strategies in conflict resolutions that also include the concept of 'nature' at the negotiating table.”



ARE EUROPEAN POLICIES COHERENT?

“Ambition in climate action is not only about reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it is also about addressing the implications of climate change on peace and security” - Council of the EU, 2019.²⁶



Source: Oxfam,²⁷ re-designed by QCEA

EU policy responses to the climate crisis and the related EUGD cover broad-ranging issues that cut across many policy areas, including agriculture, trade, energy, digitalisation; they also have implications for EU action on peace and security, as well as human rights. For instance, the EU Green Deal covers a set of policy portfolios in different sectors designed to complement one another in order to produce systemic and transformational climate action within Europe. This is the reason why the EUGD is supported by various strategies, including, for example, the farm-to-fork strategy, the energy system integration and hydrogen strategies, the circular economy action plan, and the industrial strategy, along with others.

The Adoption of the Paris Agreement states that “Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous people, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.” It therefore should be acknowledged that climate change affects everyone.

Actions to build sustainable peace and tackle the climate crisis must be mutually complementary; both should be underpinned by strong action in favour of protecting and strengthening human rights. The European Parliament resolution of 22 October 2020 on deforestation dedicated a section on human rights which calls on the Union and Member States to support, at the next UN General Assembly, the global recognition of the right to a healthy environment; it also calls on the EC and Member States to set up a rapid response mechanism at Union level to support environmental and forest defenders in the Union and worldwide. The resolution also states the need to address more decisively the

implementation of human rights, environmental responsibility and the rule of law as horizontal issues with the countries concerned and with other main importing countries.

Building on the 2013 Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, on 24 February 2021 the EC adopted a new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change. The aim of this new strategy is to shift the focus from understanding the problem to developing solutions, and to move from planning to implementation. For example, “to maximise results, the EU and its Member States should work in a coherent and coordinated way.”

However, as will be explained below, EU climate policy is not always coherent with EU stances on peace, human rights protection and other priorities that represent the heart of the European project. If the EU does not take a holistic approach, it risks generating negative impacts on peace and human rights activities, which incorporate these perspectives. When EU policies contradict each other, the EU’s achievements in all these areas will be negatively impacted.

Gender

Despite three decades of academic discourse applying a gendered perspective on climate, as well as international commitments and debates, (such as the United Nations Framework Conference on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which have led to a series of subsequent agreements, and the creation of the Conference of the Parties (COP)), the link between gender, peace and climate has yet to be formally established at the international level; and the environmental degradation dimension is still omitted from the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.²⁸

While climate degradation affects everyone, women and men, boys and girls experience the impact differently, with women often disproportionately affected. Yet, EU climate policy remains gender blind despite the

fact that gender mainstreaming is a treaty obligation and that a framework for EU gender equality policy and gender mainstreaming is set out in the [Gender Equality Strategy](#), the [Gender Action Plan \(GAP III\)](#); the UNFCCC's [Gender Action Plan](#), and the SDGs that the EU has committed to.

While public debates across the Global South attempt to deconstruct structures that legitimise power and impact climate, including recognition of intersecting forms of discrimination based on gender, race, education level, nationality and ethnicity;²⁹ the link between gender, peace and climate has yet to find its way into European climate policies. The European Green Deal, the [2030 climate and energy framework, A Clean Planet for All](#), and the [Environmental Action Programme](#), all make no mention of gender/women/men (although the latter mentions pregnant women as a vulnerable group).³⁰

Within the [Joint Staff Working document](#) accompanying the newly adopted GAP III, there is a section dedicated to “climate change and environment” which contains the goal of ensuring “women in all their diversity influence decision-making processes on environmental conservation and climate change policies and actions”, with the enumeration of a number of indicators as criteria to achieve this objective. While this is an improvement on previous stances, this section remains practically totally ‘conflict-blind’ and misses the opportunity to offer a fully coherent and comprehensive climate and conflict sensitive gender policy.

The [European Peacebuilding Liaison Office \(EPLO\)](#), [Adelphi](#) and the [Climate Diplomacy initiative](#) recommend in their [policy brief](#), the necessity of analyses and risk assessments that integrate climate change, peace/conflict and gender in order to provide adequate understandings of contexts and to help identify and design appropriate engagements.

Development

While the EU is committed to SDGs, which are designed to combine human, climate and environmental targets for development, [studies](#) show that the environment continues to pay the [price](#) for some development practices, where an increasing population remains dependent on models of unsustainable growth, material and natural resource consumption, and the expansion of human habitat and infrastructure.

EU development policies are in contradiction with EU climate goals; current approaches are based on growth, consumption and the expansion of human habitat and infrastructure, which sideline the natural environment, thereby undermining important local social and economic development.

In addition, infrastructure development in key ecosystems such as rainforests, peatlands and their habitats, often plunder biodiversity, intensifying GHG emissions, while also driving up rates of conflict.³¹ If development strategies emphasise decentralised access to energy via renewables, these can act as lifelines, which render all other necessities, including clean water, light, warmth, and agriculture, as well as basic and emergency services, possible.

According to Isobel Edwards,³² “A decentralized approach to renewable energy projects, where projects are part or fully owned by local communities for the benefit of local communities, could combine energy provision with a peacebuilding approach.” Choosing renewables and clean technologies in reconstruction efforts strengthens resilience; help restart livelihoods and local economic development and puts countries on sustainable pathways to recovery. Therefore, there is a need to re-envision climate action in conflict-affected and fragile states as part of an integrated prevention, peacebuilding and development strategy, to which the EU can contribute.³³



Military and the environment

Global military expenditures amounted to \$1917 billion in 2019, the highest level since 1988 and 3.6% higher in real terms than in 2018.³⁴ Militarisation has also permeated Europe. All nuclear-armed states have already implemented or are planning major modernisation of, their arsenals and delivery means including, \$255 billion by the UK until the 2040s; and \$41 billion by France between 2019 and 2025 (a 60% increase compared to the previous five-year period).³⁵

The upwards trend in militarisation suggests that the climate and environmental footprint of military forces will [increase](#), running counter to the EU's climate ambitions. Quaker witness for peace calls for war to be renounced.³⁶ European Quakers see the EU as fundamentally a peace project, and therefore consider that it should strive to remain coherent with its original values rather than stray towards militarism, as it ushers in a profound climate transition. “Meeting the real security needs of humanity necessitates the progressive redistribution of military budgets toward (...) achieving sustainable development”³⁷ which is at the basis of peace and climate justice.

The US Quaker organisation, [Friends Committee on National Legislation \(FCNL\)](#) has emphasised that to tackle the climate

crisis effectively, solutions must be rooted in humanitarianism and diplomacy, not a larger military.³⁸ The EU's increasingly militarised approaches to foreign policy directly impedes the EU's declared climate aims.

It is crucial to note the negative impacts that war and conflict have on the climate and environment, as well as on humanity. Wars serve the interests of corporations. Not only does the climate crisis exacerbate conflict and instability, but also the world's largest militaries are the biggest users of petrol. Militaries consume huge resources including fossil fuels, which emit vast quantities of GHG into the atmosphere. War and the preparation for war pollute land, water, and air. Maintaining military bases and deploying troops are generally energy-intensive activities.

Weapons usage – in addition to causing human deaths and injuries – also inflict considerable damage on the natural environment; conflicts leave negative environmental legacies such as land mines and cluster munitions, which pollute soils and water resources with metals and toxic materials.³⁹ Military conflict destroys ecosystems, damages water sources, and harms human health. Military bases leach chemicals and toxins that [pollute water supplies](#) and cause severe health issues, such as those, which followed the invasion of Iraq

Summary of reported military GHG emissions and carbon footprint estimated by this study

EU nation	Military GHG emissions (reported) ^a MtCO ₂ e	Carbon footprint (estimated) ^b MtCO ₂ e
France	Not reported	8.38
Germany	0.75	4.53
Italy	0.34	2.13
Netherlands	0.15	1.25
Poland	Not reported	Insufficient data
Spain	0.45	2.79
EU total (27 nations)	4.52	24.83

^a 2018 figures as reported to UNFCCC

^b 2019 figures as estimated by study of Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Conflict and Environment Observatory

Source: Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Conflict and Environment Observatory⁴³

in 2003. There, **environmental toxins** from **depleted uranium** left children living near US bases with an increased risk of ailments such as congenital heart disease, spinal deformities, and cancer.⁴⁰ Unexploded bombs, explosive residues, radiation, and attacks on industrial sites where hazardous substances are stored and processed can pose risks to communities long after the conflicts themselves have finished.

A recent **report** by peacebuilding, human rights and environment NGOs, think tanks and universities presents several case studies of the environmental impacts of war, both during and in the aftermath – from deforestation to toxic industries, agricultural stress and pollution of soil, water and air by oil. Conflict can also result in the physical destruction of renewable energy, irrigation, and other water-related infrastructure, as well as other productive capacities.⁴¹

A **report** authored by the **Conflict and Environment Observatory** and **Scientists for Global Responsibility**, finds that the EUGD

“completely and purposely” ignored everything to do with the climate impact of militarisation, arguing, “demilitarisation needs to be part of any credible Green Deal.” They argue that Europe’s military sectors operate under a state of exemption, highlighting wide gaps in military emissions’ reporting by EU member states. Mitigation measures – when they exist – lack oversight.

The report also found that Europe’s military sectors have an annual carbon footprint equivalent to emissions from at least 14 million cars.⁴² Identifying that France’s army contributes to a third of the total carbon footprint of the EU’s militaries; and estimates that Poland’s military technology industry has the highest greenhouse gas emissions.

Scientists for Global Responsibility, in another **report** estimate that the UK footprint is 30% higher than France. UK military and arms companies produce more carbon emissions than 60 individual countries. Germany’s military alone emitted 1.45 million tonnes in 2019.⁴⁴ It is clear, therefore, that the EU military also has

a significant climate impact, and this will only increase if militarised approaches continue to be favoured. Increased investments in militarised-based approaches within the EU’s external policy will only have a detrimental impact on climate and environmental sustainability. The military-industrial complex – including the armed forces, arms production, and their subsequent deployment – is a large source of GHG emissions.

Large-scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.⁴⁵ The arms trade directly counters efforts to protect and strengthen health systems to improve the quality of life. Not only does military expenditure steal resources from health funding, climate solutions, social development, and essential infrastructures, but also the arms trade itself enables, fuels, and escalates human rights violations, violent conflict, and poverty.

Environmental degradation is both a cause and consequence of armed conflict. Territorial control has been one of the root causes of violent conflict, with varying degrees of impact on the lives of each group affected due to differing gender roles, stereotypes, and social expectations.

Military actors hold considerable sway in the development of foreign policy in Europe. This influence is visible in the budget allocation in the new MFF, and more generally in discussions about the **Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)**, which increased military cooperation among several EU Member States. The trend comes as no surprise in a context where the transatlantic alliance is under greater stress. The very survival of the European project is now more than ever considered to be under threat, with legitimate justification, leading governments to turn to military approaches.

Despite widespread poverty and hunger, and the climate disasters, global military expenditure has increased to Cold War levels. This is evident in the budget allocation that

unit price:

89 \$ million

combat aircraft F-35



or... **3,244**

ICU beds

price annual maintenance: \$ 27,500

or...

unit price: **11 \$ million**

leopard battle tank



or...

440

ventilators

unit price \$25,000



Source: **SCRAP Weapons**⁴⁷, re-designed by QCEA

take resources away from civilian responses, which actually constitute the bedrock of the EU.

In fact, when military spending increases by 1%, spending on health decreases by 0.62%. This trade-off is more intense in many countries of the Global South, where a 1% increase in military spending results in a 0.962% drop in health spending.⁴⁶

The agreement reached in December 2020⁴⁸ allocated €7.014 billion to the **European Defence Fund (EDF)**. Also, in December 2020, The Council reached a political agreement on the **European Peace Facility (EPF)**, the new global off-budget instrument that will finance external action having military implications.

The EDF is the first EU programme to finance common military-related Research and



Development projects. It builds on the 2017 Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) programme launched with a budget of €90 million for two years, followed by the European Defence Industrial Programme with a budget of €500 million for 2019 and 2020.⁴⁹

These steps signify a fundamental change of the European project. The establishment of an EU military research programme points towards an unprecedented acceleration in the militarisation of the EU.

Proposed funding for EU military initiatives in the 2021-2027 MFF:

Proposal	EDF	EPF	Military Mobility	Space Programme
Original ⁵⁰	€13bn	€10.5bn	€6.5bn	€16bn
Finnish negotiation box ⁵¹	€6.014bn	€4.5bn	€2.5bn	€12.7bn
Charles Michel negotiation box ⁵²	€7.014bn	€8bn	€1.5bn	€13.2bn
EC technical proposal	N/A	€4.5bn	€0	€12.3bn
EC 27 May 2020 proposal ⁵³	€8bn	N/A	€1.5bn	€13.196bn
Final agreement December 2020 ⁵⁴	7.014€	€5bn	€1.5bn	€13.443bn

The European Network Against Arms Trade (ENAAT) calculates that €1.5 to 2.8 billion will be diverted from civilian investments every year.⁵⁵ These military figures in the latest MFF reflect a more militarised European project, a trend that has been rising for a number of years. Instead of addressing the fundamental inequalities and deeply embedded global hierarchies that render migration a survival strategy rather than a positive choice, European policies contribute to additional marginalisation and persecution in current migration politics. This is ensured by focussing on extending border controls and militarised responses and increasing the numbers of detention centres and prisons that are disproportionately used against racialised, migrant, and refugee communities.

Furthermore, military spending increases are often linked with growing human rights abuses and less peaceful international relations.⁵⁶ In many places around the world, (including in Europe), environmental defenders are attacked and persecuted; often branded as ‘extremists’ and they are targeted by legislation and policy, smear campaigns,⁵⁷ and even murder.

In 2019 alone, over 300 environmental and rights defenders around the world were killed for their work. As Dunja Mijatović, the Council of Europe’s Commissioner for Human Rights, wrote, “I am concerned that, across Europe, peaceful environmental activists have been blocked from attending environmental summits, subjected to house arrest and surveillance measures, violent physical attacks and legislation that effectively impedes their ability to carry out their work.”

Instead of focussing on safeguarding rights while addressing the environmental crisis, there is a continued sense that these issues do not matter; instead, only strategies which strengthen the military and contribute to the securitisation of climate responses⁵⁸ provide the correct answers. The culmination of this thinking is embodied in the recent military doctrine called the Responsibility to Prepare – originally a US endeavour that was presented

at the last Planetary Security Conference in 2018. The language echoes the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine, which was developed in the early 2000s as a new framework to challenge flawed and violent governance systems. R2P stemmed from a belief in human solidarity and an imperative to respect human rights and human life.

Responsibility to Prepare, in contrast, stems from a ‘hard security’ framework that accepts certain possibilities as given probabilities, (even before they become remote risks), an attitude that provides little incentive to reflect on prevention efforts.

Taking the military path ensures that the climate crisis will not trigger a global reflection on global resources, but instead enables a new wave of militarisation, protectionism, and geographical competition. The last is more pronounced in some zones than in others.

A focus on climate as a “stressor” for conflict can lead to accepting such extreme scenarios as inevitable and justify increasingly militarised responses to migration, all the while abdicating the chance to mitigate climate crisis and build resilience. The EU’s projected spending increase not only diverts funds that could be spent on tackling the climate crisis, but also directly accelerates the process of degradation. This pre-emptive disaster forecast approach should thus be rejected, as it is dangerous for the viability of the climate transition. Instead, the EU should seek to minimise climate disruptions and adapt to them, rather than exacerbating them by protecting the EU at the expense of partner countries.

It is critical to engage European military forces, together with NATO, in reflecting about their potential roles in enabling European adaptation and transformation responses to the climate crisis. However, these must embody more than just an eco-friendly marketing approach. It is not enough for arms companies to ride the eco-friendly wave by making zero-waste ‘eco-friendly arms’, from solar submarines to

low carbon lasers, and reusing “ammunition packages”. These are short-term responses to current threats. There is a need for long-term preventative action, both for climate and conflict issues.

This superficial short-term sticking plaster approach is likely to render threats a reality, resulting in a Europe inadvertently moving towards a self-fulfilling prophecy, rather than aiming to transform the threats. Funding currently allocated to military actors should therefore be redirected to support stronger political, diplomatic, and developmental action to drive climate transitions and climate justice across the globe.

Resource extraction

Air pollution, caused by the burning of fossil fuels such as coal and oil, was responsible for 8.7 million deaths globally in 2018.⁵⁹ If we wish to prevent more intense climate destruction,

we cannot dig up more coal, drill for more oil and gas and further exploit the earth.

The amount of extraction conducted to meet Europe’s historic high resource demand and today’s rampant unsustainable culture of over consumption on the backs of ‘cheap labour’ and land and water exploitation, has a heavy toll on the planet. Fossil fuel consumption is a key driver of anthropogenic climate disruption, releasing GHG into the atmosphere, thereby contributing heavily to global warming. For decades now, research⁶⁰ has demonstrated that the switch to renewable sources of energy (solar panels, wind turbines, geo-thermal, hydrogen produced through renewable energy, and potentially hydro-electric dams) would provide cleaner energy and avoid the continuous release of GHG into the atmosphere.

To advance the EU’s agenda regarding climate and digital transitions, a number of specific

minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten, gold, lithium and rare earth metals are required. These resources are distributed across the globe but many of the known deposits are located in fragile and conflict-affected zones.⁶¹ At least twenty-three minerals and metals have been identified as critical to the development and use of renewable technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines.⁶²

The [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\)](#) has developed a [map](#) that combines countries’ rankings on fragility and corruption indexes with the location of the various types of materials needed for the renewable energy and digitalization agendas. The map displays known resources so far. The map clearly demonstrates that Europe is the geographical bloc with the least of these resources.

The EU will therefore increasingly rely on new types of economic and resource relations that may constrain or conflict with its declared ambition to be a values-based actor in its foreign policy,⁶³ including the need to prioritise human rights. However, the EU’s demand for such materials could also be used as leverage to improve the human rights and peace situations in partner countries, but only if a coherent approach to human rights and peace becomes a cornerstone of all EU policies, including those on energy and digitalisation.

The risks underlying resource extraction in countries suffering conflict are well known. A report produced by the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), showed that energy extraction and the management of energy supplies can be the primary cause, as well as the objective, of a destructive conflict, an instrument used as a means to an end, perhaps a secondary cause – or a mix of all three.⁶⁴

Profits gained by the extractive industries often accrue to a minority – those holding power – who govern at the expense of the majority, and who prey on human vulnerability.⁶⁵ This is how conflict and extraction come to be

closely related within the global economic system. The absence of global regulations and monitoring, together with non-existing labour or environment protection make them easy targets to plunder.⁶⁶ The ensuing gross inequalities, in turn, destabilise political economies as well undermining the international multilateral governance system.

In some cases, environmental defenders and racialized communities find themselves at the forefront of growing tensions around energy transition. The materials key to this transition are often found in places that are rich in biodiversity and under [indigenous peoples’ stewardship](#). One of the key risks in the process is to bring indigenous populations to the brink of extinction. As well as being a grave injustice, this will entail a further loss of insights into ecological stewardship.

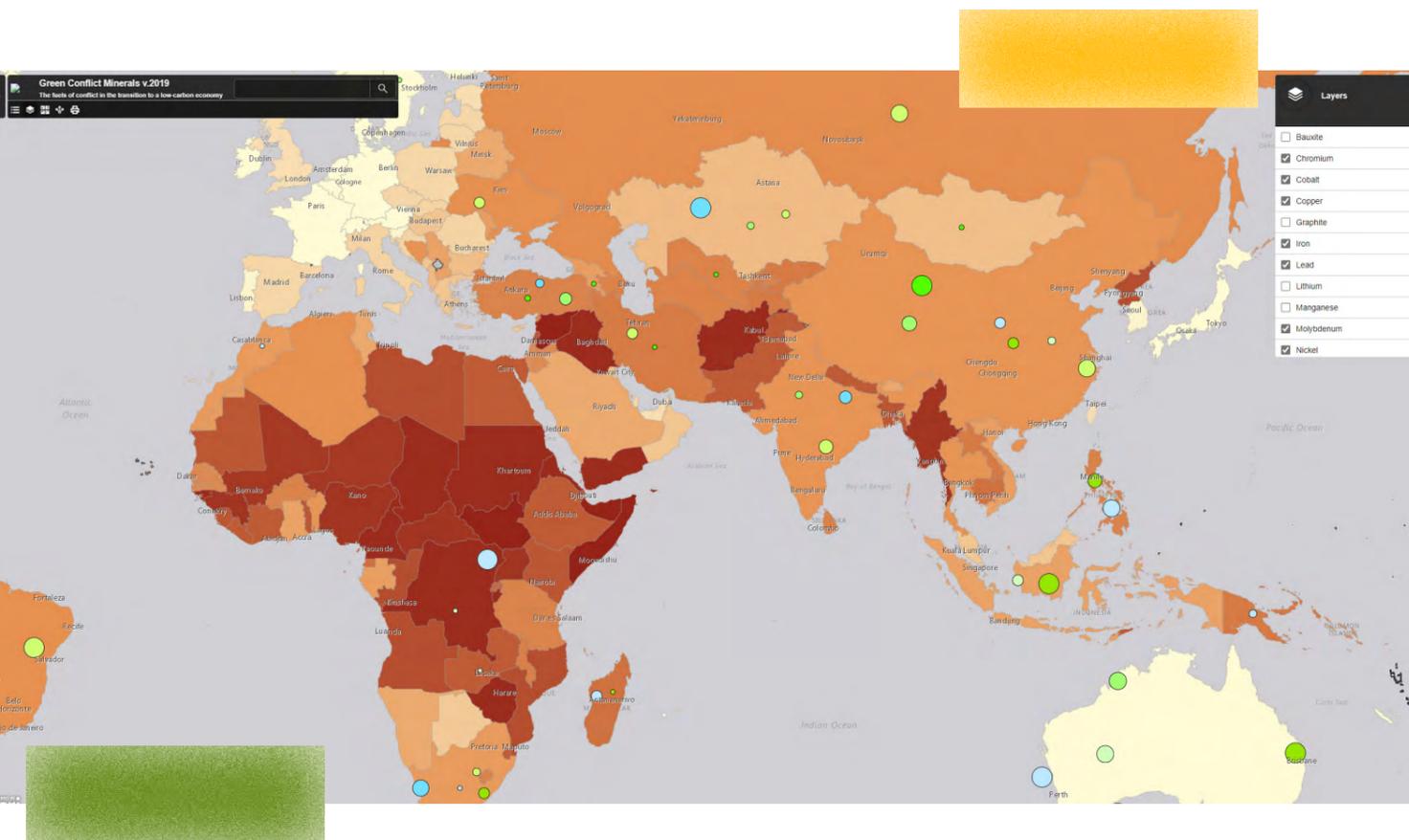
The EU has introduced a series of regulations that could help limit the negative externalities of the energy transition. For example, in June 2020, the EU introduced a [taxonomy](#) system for environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards whose aim is to encourage a greater observance of standards among the private sector. Three years earlier in May 2017, the EU had passed the [EU Conflict Minerals Regulation](#), inspired by the [US Dodd-Frank Act](#), covering tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, which became law on 1 January 2021.⁶⁷

This suggests that the EU is thinking more systemically about the impacts of its resource extraction and is using its regulatory power to direct private sector activity and affect how competition for these materials plays out.

The same approach could be used by the EC to introduce similar regulations for other materials such as rare earths and lithium to ensure that the energy transition is not accompanied by greater violence in the source countries.

Food sovereignty and agriculture

Food and agriculture involve environmental, social, and economic issues, so they are also



Source: [International Institute for Sustainable Development \(IISD\)](#)

highly relevant for conflict and human rights. For example, the climate crisis can undermine food and water security – both highly gendered issues - exacerbating the uneven global social impact of environmental degradation.⁶⁸

In Europe, the **Common Agricultural Policy** (CAP) is the number one driver of biodiversity collapse,⁶⁹ promoting practices that impoverish soils and creating trophic cascades. The CAP is a long-standing subsidy system in Europe designed to support European agricultural competitiveness. In the current budget, the CAP represents around a third of all EU spending. In the new MFF, the CAP was a controversial point of negotiation, because some aspects of it do not align with the EUGD's objectives.⁷⁰

Despite a commitment to have a “CAP for a sustainable agriculture,”⁷¹ it appears the EU is not yet doing enough to promote and implement “sustainable land management”, defined by the IPCC as “the use of land resources, including soils, water, animals and plants, to meet changing human needs, while simultaneously ensuring the long-term productive potential of these resources and the maintenance of their environmental functions.”⁷² The CAP system has so far failed to promote environmentally friendly agricultural practices⁷³ such as agroforestry, agro-ecology and diversified production, which are climate and biodiversity-compatible.

The implications of the CAP for human rights are significant because it is designed for a European context, with the sole aim of supporting European farmers, sometimes to the detriment of those abroad. The CAP is linked to **unfair trade practices** that particularly badly affect some Global South countries, which are economically dependent on agriculture and cattle herding. This policy is inconsistent with sustainable development and respect for human rights.⁷⁴

If EU agricultural policies continue to contribute to domestic environmental and climate degradation, they will also have detrimental effects on the food sovereignty of other countries, particularly those in the Global South.⁷⁵ The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) has long focussed on food and sustainability, emphasising that different agricultural systems are suited to individual circumstances and needs; hence, communities should be empowered to work towards resilient, equitable and sustainable food systems.⁷⁶

The CAP is currently a key barrier to the EU's goal to be the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050, all the while causing harm in partner countries that are economically weaker. The EU agricultural policy must therefore be made coherent with the EU's climate and environmental goals, and the EC must take the global implications of the policy into account.

Trade and economic partnerships

The EUGD puts a strong emphasis on the protection and restoration of forests and of biodiverse areas across Europe⁷⁷. Its aim is also to promote imported products that do not contribute to forest degradation and deforestation. The latter is among the top drivers of anthropogenic climate breakdown, contributing to nearly 10% due to tree cover loss, particularly from tropical forests.⁷⁸

In practice however, EU trade policy is not coherent with those goals as it unfortunately incentivises global deforestation by pushing for agricultural expansion outside its frontiers through **rising demand for soy, beef and palm oil** as well as vegetable oils. To match this demand, the EU's use of biomass as a renewable resource/fuel requires cutting down forests and burning wood, which has drastic environmental consequences.⁷⁹ In the light of its large attractive and demand-driven market, the EU is an influential actor in commodity markets.

An **analysis** issued by the European Parliament identified EU trade agreements as having detrimental effects on biodiversity and human security, and called for a revision of policy packages (including on sanctions) to ensure that the EU's external policies are coherent with its ambitions and goals at home and abroad.

Global Witness⁸⁰, Oxfam⁸¹ and Greenpeace⁸² also report that trade practices by European companies in countries suffering conflict tend to promote deforestation, biodiversity plundering and violence. A **timber-focused investigation** in the Central African Republic (CAR) undertaken by Global Witness in 2015 demonstrated that EU regulations were not enough to prevent extraction in countries where no regulations exist, and where corruption is rampant.

A **more recent investigation** in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) highlights a similar problem in which Portuguese, French and Norwegian companies extracting timber on large-scale land plots, directly contravene their own national climate legislations, and European regulations. This is a glaring example of externalising emissions outside European borders and European States taking advantage of the instability of countries in the Global South. This must be avoided at all costs if the EUGD is to retain coherence and credibility.

The extraction of resources in the Global South promotes deforestation and biodiversity loss. For example, in Brazil, agricultural expansion into the Amazon rainforest is being driven by aggressive policies aimed at expanding national revenues through the export of agro-commodities (such as soy, beef and others), at the expense of the natural environment and the human rights of the racialized communities.

The EU has been negotiating a free trade agreement (**MERCOSUR**) with a number of Latin American countries including Brazil, which will likely result in increased exports of soy and beef to the EU, further contributing

to and encouraging the conversion of the Amazon to agricultural land. The possibility of using sanctions, embargoes and conditionality clauses in trade and economic relationships in order to encourage just and peaceful structures have previously been highlighted by QCEA.⁸³

The same approach can be applied to achieve climate and human rights goals. For example, these could include requiring adherence to the Paris Agreement as a condition for signing a trade agreement, and applying sanctions such as reintroducing a tariff if social and environmental standards are not met; all these conditions are vital to the success of this process.

Where the EU contributes to deforestation, it also often endangers **environmental defenders** and increases threats to their territories. Therefore, integrating peace and human rights in climate policy means specifically adopting a rights-based approach that addresses peoples' fundamental freedoms, as well as the role of civil society, which can ensure inclusive and locally owned policies and projects.

Over and above merely protecting eco-defenders, the EU should promote and advocate for an overall improvement in citizen participation in the management of resources; that is only possible through an enabling and protective environment for civil society.

“Where the EU contributes to deforestation, it also often endangers environmental defenders and increases threats to their territories.”

CONCLUSION: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

European Commissioner for the environment [Virginijus Sinkevičius](#) has said that “healthy ecosystems lead to a healthy society and therefore it is not too high a price to pay to fix them.” We must not delay in finding sustainable solutions. European policies can either promote peace and human rights, leading to more ambitious, effective and fairer climate action, or they could aggravate peace and human rights through careless, or exploitative resource extraction for the targeted energy or digital transitions, or via the EU’s agricultural policy accelerating climate deterioration. Only by addressing all of them together can we truly care for the earth and all interdependent communities inhabiting it.

Key recommendations

Acknowledge historic and current social responsibilities of corporations and countries that benefit from polluting and exploiting ecosystems and communities.

Climate justice must include reparations and redistribution. Today’s ecological crisis began many centuries ago with the belief that some are entitled to exploit the earth for the benefit of a few. Climate justice should be seen as emancipation from colonial legacy, structural racism, and promotion of equality and social justice.

Ensure that the work of EU institutions on the environment is intersectional in their design, implementation and evaluation as it would offer a deeper analysis of how different individuals and groups relate differently to climate breakdown and the various social injustices that climate emergency creates.

Recognise, respect and promote voices of racialized communities, including natives of

a land, and local ethnic groups. The sharing of lived experience in conversations around environment is important especially from communities bearing the brunt of environmental injustices. It is as important to also share the historical knowledge and diversity of peoples’ collective and individual experiences. The traditional solutions to environmental management by many indigenous people may offer important lessons of organizing actions, and begin a healing process. This may also help replace the narrative of fear and helplessness with one of hope and greater empathy and understanding.

Consider the concept of climate justice in domestic EU climate policy areas, such as employment policies, agriculture and food. Funding allocated to military actors should therefore be redirected to support stronger political, diplomatic and developmental action to drive climate transitions and climate justice internally and across the globe.

Pass a Global Green Deal to ensure finance and technology for the Global South through international cooperation. Globally, the countries least responsible for emissions and most impacted by systematic oppression are those now being hit the hardest by climate breakdown. It is therefore necessary to expand the Eurocentric view of the globe and re-imagine a new world order. A greener Europe will achieve little if the EU continues to hinder countries in the Global South from doing the same through debt, unfair trade deals, and lack of regulations and accountability for transnational corporations. This Green New Deal should also include an end to the arms trade and the elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

“We must not delay in finding sustainable solutions.”

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ANNEX

QUAKER BODIES WORKING ON CLIMATE ISSUES

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

Canadian Friends Service Committee – Climate Change

Earth Quaker Action Team

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) - Sustainability

Living Witness – Quakers for Sustainability

Quaker Earthcare Witness

Roots of Resistance

QPSW - Climate and Economic Justice

QUNO - Human Impacts of Climate Change

QUNO - Sustainable & Just Economic Systems

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p. 21 Nhor Phai via Flaticon (jet)

p.21 Freepik via Flaticon (hospital bed, tank, oxygen mask)

p. 22 Blue ox studio via Pexels

p. 22 James Wainscoat

p. 24 Screenshot from <https://iisd.maps.arcgis.com/>

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