FROM EUROPEAN POLITICAL PARTY MANIFESTOS TO EUROPEAN POLICYMAKING — A SYSTEMS LENS

Written by The Systems Transformation Hub leadership, including: Sandrine Dixson-Declève (Club of Rome), Kirsten Dunlop (EIT Climate-KIC), Eva Gladek (Metabolic), Janez Potočnik (Systemiq), and Stientje van Veldhoven (World Resources Institute), supported by Zadekia Krondorfer and Milan Petit.

Design by: Anna Oliveri

Published on June 5 by the Systems Transformation Hub, Place du Congrès 1, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

The Systems Transformation Hub is a non-profit consortium of five organisations, including The Club of Rome, EIT Climate KIC, Metabolic, Systemiq, and The World Resources Institute. The Hub aims to provide strategic and systematic guidance, supporting the European institutions and Member States in policy analysis, development, policy learning, and agile decision support. The Hub will focus on European policy, yet also on Europe's relationship with the rest of the world. Specifically, we aim to: (1) Stimulate general awareness about and build capacity amongst EU policymakers in system change thinking. (2) Empower systemic approaches in EU policymaking, by fostering reflection, learning, and skill development amongst EU policymakers. (3) Implement an EU systemic transformation strategy, by changing existing governance and decision-making structures. (4) Mobilise collaborative forms in policymaking, by aiming to inform and engage local and global actors in systemic change. (5) Promote experimentation and innovation in policymaking.

The partners of the Hub are:

The Club of Rome: A platform of diverse thought leaders who identify holistic solutions to complex global issues and promote policy initiatives and action to enable humanity to emerge from multiple planetary emergencies.

EIT Climate-KIC: A climate innovation agency and community working to catalyze decarbonization and resilience transformations through systems innovation

Metabolic: A systems change agency striving to transition the global economy to a fundamentally sustainable state where people and nature thrive. We guide decision-makers and implement real-world projects that bring ambitious ideas to life.

Systemiq: A collaborative system designer, developer and disruptor working with and for business, finance, government and civil society. We also bring the connection to the transformative science-policy work of the International Resource Panel.

World Resources Institute: A global research organisation, focussing on system change to build more resilient communities and meeting people's basic needs, while protecting climate and restoring nature.

The content of this policy brief does not necessarily reflect the views of the partner organisations.

Key messages

Contrary to public perception, the four biggest European political groups are not advocating moving backwards on the EGD, but they are disagreeing on the way forward. The European Green Deal is viewed by all as essential for Europe's prosperity.

A common narrative around improving competitiveness, enhancing security, decreasing the cost of living, and improving citizen wellbeing would address the key priorities of all main European groups, and form the basis for a strong and durable EGD coalition.

For this to be a success, a systems approach is needed that addresses the blind spots of siloed policymaking, contradicting market incentives, and a lack of demand reduction measures. This approach is missing from all analysed party manifestos.

A renewed vision for Europe which addresses the polycrisis and ensures resilience to future shocks and stresses is needed. This vision should be anchored in the European Green Deal and focus on maximising the economy's ability to satisfy human and planetary needs.

This visionary programme should include a broader systemic notion of security and economic stability, taking into consideration both social and environmental tipping points. The EGD offers Europe the opportunity to build a more systemic policy programme, which is focused on enhancing the lives and livelihoods of the majority of European citizens and ensures a thriving economy within planetary boundaries. This is the moment for a linked up policy programme that addresses the key blind-spots identified: siloed policymaking, insufficient attention to the root causes of our triple "planetary crisis" (pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss) and lastly the lack of focus on demand side issues.

With this visionary programme anchored in the EGD, Europe would enhance its competitiveness, improve its security, decrease cost-of-living by making essential goods and services more affordable, while empowering citizens to be part of the transformation. A unified approach, while accommodating diverse methods and perspectives, is essential for the next EU Commission to build a prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive future for Europe through a systemic lens.

1. **The urgent need for systems transformation**

In 1972, the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* report first warned about unsustainable human activity on our planet and the risks of straying beyond our planetary boundaries. Back then, its authors made the case that unlimited population growth, combined with continuing extraction of material goods and resources on a finite planet would eventually lead to the collapse of Earth's environmental and economic systems.

Today, 50 years later, we – as a global community – are experiencing the real impact of humanity's encroachment on these planetary limits. We live in an increasingly turbulent world with rising pressures on people and planet triggering extreme shocks, like disease outbreaks, droughts, floods, and heatwaves.[1] As a result, global awareness of the limits to growth as we know it, is building. Political agreements like the Paris Climate Agreement and policy frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) seek to provide answers to the question of how to reshape our societies and economies to ensure wellbeing and prosperity within the planetary boundaries.

The most recent analysis carried out by Ipsos across G20 countries shows several key revelations regarding public opinion in the EU around environmental and social tipping points and the role of government. First, more than 60% of respondents across the EU believe there is too much economic inequality in their countries. Second, those who believe themselves to be most exposed to climate risks are most critical of the current economic system. Third, trust in government tends to be lowest in European countries, among older people and those dissatisfied with their household financial situation.[2]

And yet, political resistance to climate action is increasing, with political narratives attempting to polarise public opinion by presenting simplistic trade-offs between environmental, social, and economic issues.[3]

Amid this backdrop, the System Transformation Hub (STH) was established to combine science based systems thinking with systems acting; learning from experience "on the ground" across different policymaking spheres and communities at all geographic levels to offer a new policymaking approach that is both holistic and impactful, for a thriving European society within planetary boundaries.

In this first policy brief, the STH intends to provide a snapshot of the current political landscape in the run-up to the European elections vis-à-vis support for the European Green Deal (EGD). As the EGD is the closest attempt to date to put in place a package of solutions which addresses systemic challenges on the continent and globally, we analyse how a broader systemic approach to the EGD could help achieve the key political priorities for the next term. We have assessed the party manifestos of the four biggest European political groups, survey data, and social media, complemented by reviewing research by other institutes such as *E3G*, the *European Council on Foreign Relations* (ECFR), the *Global Strategic Communications Council* (GSCC), *Narratives Observatory Combatting Disinformation in Europe Systemically* (NODES), and *WWF*.

As a second step and ongoing programme of work, the STH — in collaboration with a range of associated partners — will publish a series of systemic policy orientations and systems optimisation pathways for the new European Institutions and for Member States. These will be translated on an ongoing basis through interactive policy workshops, seminars and training sessions to anchor European Union (EU) and Member State policymaking in systems thinking to build resilience to future shocks and stresses and meet EU environmental, social, and economic goals.

2. Enhancing the European Green Deal for systems success

On current pathways, neither the 1.5 $^{\circ}$C Paris goal, the regeneration of nature, nor the necessary reduction of pollutants will be reached.[4] Not reaching 1.5°C equates to a reduction of global GDP of at least 15% and a worldwide income reduction of 19% within the next 26 years, independent of future emission choices. This cost of inaction is six times higher than what is needed to limit global warming to 2 $^{\circ}$C in the same time frame.[5]

We need a radical departure from business as usual – a systemic transformation. Although the EGD supports building a new model for a more prosperous and fair economy, current implementation policies are just "cleaning up" old systems and are not taking into consideration the human dimension. For example, electrifying the EU's private vehicle fleet or encouraging recycling and circularity without addressing consumption patterns and increasing economic difficulties experienced by many Europeans.[6] As a result, even incremental changes related to the EGD are perceived by some as creating even greater economic hardship, driving European industry out of Europe and halting economic development.[7]

To achieve the EGD goals, systems thinking is required. This provides a way to address challenges by considering institutions and practices as integrated systems within an evolving broader set of global socio-economic and geopolitical system changes. This method looks at how the various parts, their relationships, the rules that govern these relationships, and the underlying norms and values work together to form a cohesive system. Understanding how these systems work is key to uncovering why they tend to produce such super wicked problems that are stubbornly resistant to improvement, especially when having to deal with a continuum of short term shocks and stresses .

Such a systems approach would focus on maximising wellbeing and reducing Europe's material footprint by redesigning its value chain and re-defining its foreign partnerships. This can be done by shifting from policy built around increasing the size of specific sectors to one that is structured around provisioning systems for human and planetary needs. Policies would emphasise shared goals and aim to maximise the economy's potential to deliver essential human needs, including healthy food, energy, mobility, and housing.[8] For example, by enhancing the mobility system to become transmodal, increasing quality and comfort while reducing emissions and its material footprint. In this way, Europe's economy can deliver both on increasing the wellbeing of European citizens and on respecting planetary boundaries.[9]

However, adopting a more systemic approach in Europe is currently hampered by three interrelated challenges or "blind spots":

1. **First, the siloed structure of the European institutions hampers a systemic approach to policymaking.** Such silos coupled with insufficient capacity and knowledge to translate system change visions into concrete policies and investments are a bottleneck for transformation on the ground.
2. **Second, the root causes, drivers and pressures of the triple planetary crisis[10] are insufficiently addressed.** While the EU tries to inhibit destructive behaviour both by citizens and business through regulation, market incentives continue to reward such behaviour.
3. **Third, policy efforts pay insufficient attention to the importance of demand side reduction**. A focus on supply vs demand side solutions fosters a continuation of today's extractive economy and extractive behaviour. It is, therefore, uncertain whether the EGD vision and objectives can be realised without deeper attention to consumption patterns and the necessary economic and financial shifts needed.[11]
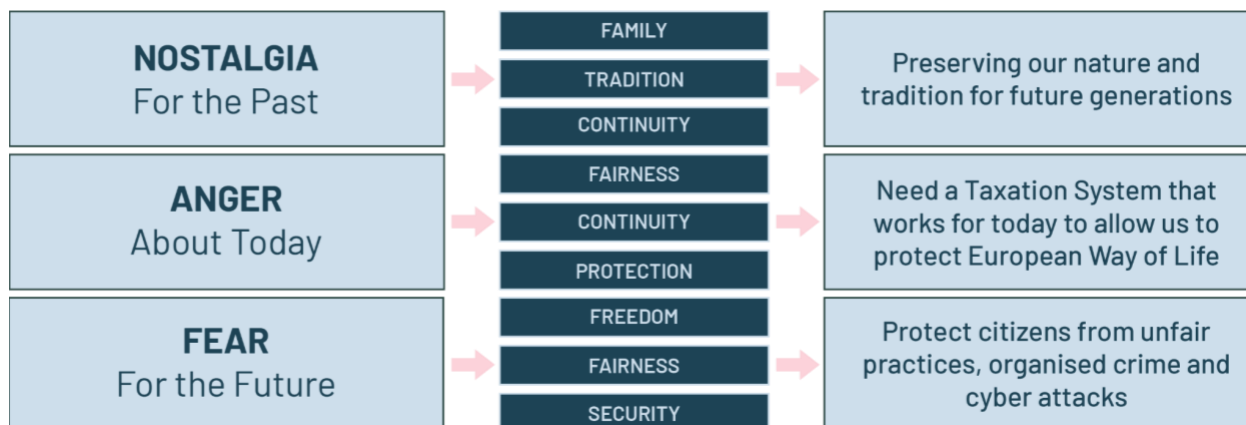
Any European political project will punch below its weight if it does not have strong political backing. While the EU single market is the best example of how a strong union of European Member States can improve collective wellbeing and increase global influence, it is still a work in progress as it continues to grow. Strengthening the EU market under a more harmonised umbrella approach in key areas could support the EU's ability to confront current and future geopolitical, economic, and climate challenges.[12]

To do that, the EU must address structural challenges that will enable it to implement the EGD and enhance its own security and global leadership status. This includes greater harmonisation of its fiscal, defence and energy policy, all of which are currently mostly a national competence. Greater EU sovereignty, or at least enhanced cross-border collaboration, is a prerequisite for the single market to properly service people and planet in lock step with broader security and defence needs.[13]

For transformation to be achieved, people across Europe from all walks of life also need to become familiar with the need for systemic approaches. Europeans must understand what is at stake, what kinds of responses and policies are needed to create a transition that is timely, effective, and beneficial to all; and how to play a role. Systemic approaches must be illustrated in local contexts and implemented through awareness raising and widespread capability building.[14] Although education and multi-level governance structures are not within the competence of EU policymaking, it will be important for the European Commission to design more targeted awareness raising communication programmes that ensure more Europeans are brought on this journey of change, and that all levels of government are involved. Convincing new narratives are also needed that depict what living sustainably would mean, and that catalyse solidarity and unity rather than animosity and division.

This is supported by research undertaken by NODES, which emphasises the importance of bridge-building narratives that promote unity and shared values to combat polarisation. By focusing on what unites rather than divides, these narratives can enhance the effectiveness of climate policies and promote broader societal engagement.

Ideas for changing the conversation

NOSTALGIA For the Past	FAMILY TRADITION CONTINUITY	Preserving our nature and tradition for future generations
ANGER About Today	FAIRNESS CONTINUITY PROTECTION	Need a Taxation System that works for today to allow us to protect European Way of Life
FEAR For the Future	FREEDOM FAIRNESS SECURITY	Protect citizens from unfair practices, organised crime and cyber attacks

NODES. "Climate Change Narratives: Steps Forward." March 2024)

So what matters most at this juncture are constructive narratives that build an understanding of, and confidence in, the possibility of a prosperous, affordable, green, and just future. The feasibility of such futures rest on the implementation of the EGD with a systems approach that links up industrial, financial, and economic policies. Forward facing narratives, underpinned by clear systemic policy and economic tools for success, exist, but they are not included in the current EGD programme. There is also a dire need for greater public awareness programmes that focus on the benefits of the EGD for individual European citizens. The current politics around the EGD and push back by some parties have largely focused on seeding doubt regarding the benefits of the EGD for citizens and all sectors of the economy, in particular agriculture.

That is why the following analysis examines the convergence and divergence of the biggest European political groups regarding EGD policies in terms of position and narratives employed. These groups include the European People's Party Group (EPP), the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Renew Europe and the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA). The analysis aims to identify potential solutions to overcome political differences and look for areas where building a strong and durable coalition to strengthen and accelerate EGD implementation with an optimised systems approach and unifying narratives is possible.

3. Are party politics putting the European Green Deal at risk?

With the European elections upon us, party politics are heating up across Europe. With media and the parties themselves amplifying the divisions between Europe's political groups.
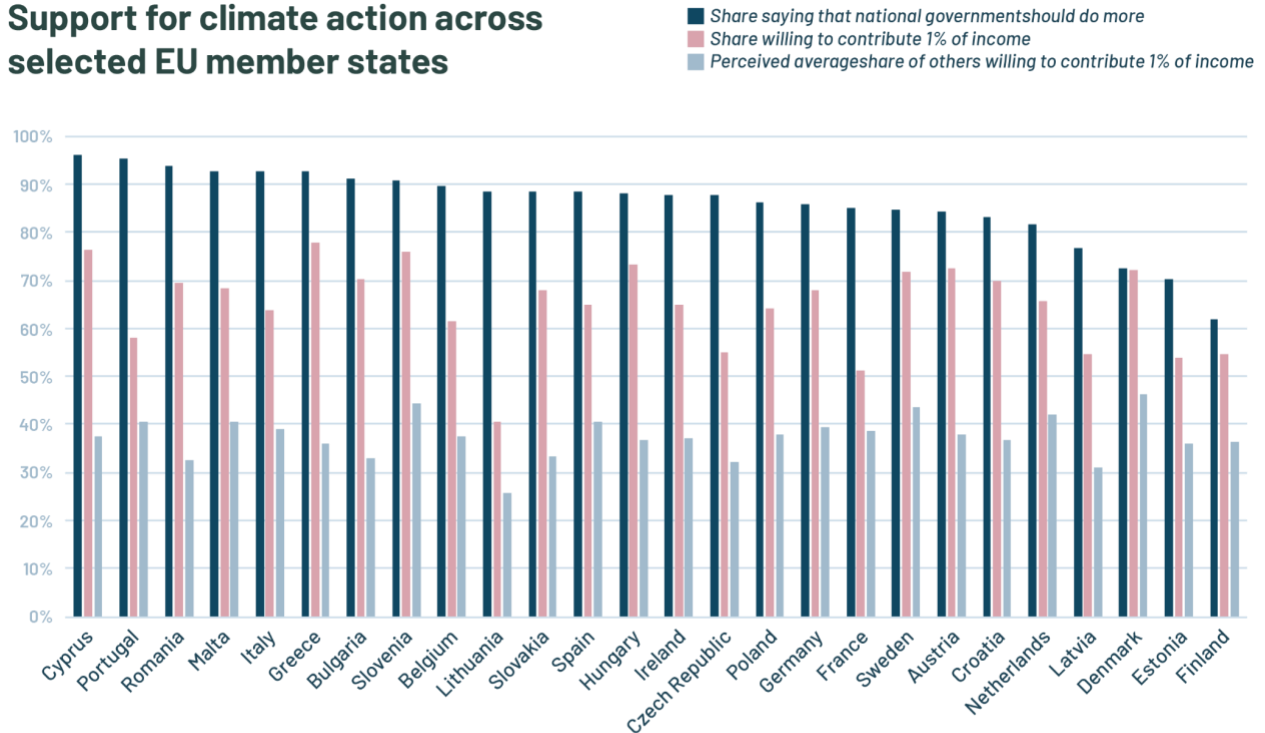
Europe is at a political tipping point, with increasing voter support for ideological extremes, and radical parties are positioned to disrupt the traditional majority coalition in the upcoming European election[15]. A cost-of-living crisis, multiple wars in the European neighbourhood, increased geopolitical tension, and the spread of disinformation are fuelling narratives of distrust and fear, pulling the political centre apart.[16] In particular, narratives try to leverage the frustrations expressed by citizens, farmers, and businesses regarding direct economic impacts from the polycrisis.[17] The common thread through these narratives is a call for change and a Europe that does not deliver for them.

Solidarity across diverse constituencies and parties seems far off, yet a recent survey results and party manifestos show broad consensus around key issues such as anxiety for the future, continued concern about climate change, security, and economic hardship.

On the one hand, our sentiment analysis shows that amongst key political actors in Europe, negative language regarding EGD policies has increased in the past 2 years.[18] This shift is echoed by NODES' findings, highlighting how far-right groups increasingly use similar antagonistic migration language and fuel climate scepticism. This trend risks not only enhancing climate denial but creating a politically polarised debate that hampers productive discussions on climate action.[19] Polling undertaken by the GSCC for the Meliore Foundation furthermore finds that populistic messages focusing on "don't let the other side win" are effective political mobilising campaigns across member states, further compounding polarisation and anger.[20]

On the other hand, a closer examination of these polls reveals a more nuanced and even optimistic perspective, where the differences in political stances are much subtler than they initially appear. A recent survey published in Nature Climate Change shown below finds that at least 60% of the population in each surveyed member state thought that national governments ought to do more to combat climate change, with over 90% of respondents in Bulgaria, Greece, Cyprus, Slovenia, Romania, Malta, Portugal, and Italy in favour of this statement.[21] Not only did they agree that others should do more, the majority in almost all EU countries indicated their willingness to contribute 1% of their own income to combat climate change as well. However, only a minority in each member state thought that their fellow citizens would be willing to contribute to climate action. This perception gap could explain the narratives that support is lacking for the EGD, while surveys such as undertaken by the Eurobarometer find 84% in favour for statements such as "EU environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment in my country".[22]

Support for climate action across selected EU member states

Legend:
- Share saying that national governments should do more
- Share willing to contribute 1% of income
- Perceived average share of others willing to contribute 1% of income

Source: André P., et al., (2024) Globally Representative Evidence on the Actual and Perceived Support for Climate Action. Nature Climate Change.

There is, therefore, no evidence of a climate backlash or explicit rejection of the EGD. Also, our analysis, building on the assessments from *E3G*[23], the *ECFR*[24], and *WWF*[25] finds that the biggest European political groups demonstrate a robust commitment to further EU-level climate action, with unanimous endorsement for prioritising the EGD in the next term.

Despite this endorsement, the shift in tone over the last year, in particular, shows that it will be crucial to see how groups will act on their electoral promises in practice. Major disagreements exist between and within groups on how to translate targets into practice, compounded by shifts in public opinion. Vested interests, in turn, leverage these disagreements to stall, water down, or avoid necessary legislation and action.[26] This was, for example, clearly visible during the debates around the Nature Restoration Law, despite all European groups officially being committed to its support.[27]

4. Understanding the language and political narratives in European Parliament manifestos

In order to understand the political narratives shaping 2024 and whether they support the EGD and are systemic in nature, we first need to understand how the language and chosen political focus areas have shifted since the last elections. By looking at the European party manifestos associated with the four biggest groups from 2019 and 2024, we explore the overarching narrative trends and policy changes over these 5 years. Our analysis reveals significant shifts in language and priorities among the four biggest European groups from 2019 to 2024, highlighting a broader approach to policymaking in 2024 through a more granular description of proposed policies.

We find most parties have adjusted their priorities considerably, reflecting the multiple crises of the past years and the flagship projects designed to overcome them, specifically the EGD. Furthermore, we find that all manifestos have increased in their length, specificity, and areas covered, indicating increased ambition and reflecting the expanding mandate of the European Parliament.

The manifestos clearly show that each party underwent its own particular shift. While the European People's Party (EPP) has adopted more EGD-friendly language, its detailed policy proposals on, for example, the Common Agricultural Policy show that no substantial change is desired for the regulatory environment, focussing instead on technological change. On the other hand, the Greens emphasise the importance of security and stability, placing climate action within a broader context of social justice and economic stability. The Party of European Socialists (PES) also moved to a more integrated approach, complementing its focus on social issues with delivering sustainable wellbeing through a Green Social Deal. The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) finally calls for more ambitious climate action, but without any major new regulatory initiatives. Instead, they propose to implement existing frameworks and prioritise technological innovation and market-driven solutions.

The convergence of language and priorities across these parties, compared to 2019, suggests an emerging consensus on the need for broader solutions to Europe's challenges and an alignment around a security-competitiveness-EGD nexus. The EPP's adoption of EGD-friendly language and the Greens' incorporation of security themes are prime examples of this convergence. These shifts indicate a growing recognition that addressing climate change requires a comprehensive strategy that aligns environmental goals with security, economic, and social priorities. At the same time, the divergence in approaches amongst some parties—such as ALDE's market-driven focus versus PES's social-inclusive strategies—highlights a diversity of strategies on how to reach these same outcomes.

When considering the blind spots that need to be addressed—such as the need for a cross-siloed approach, tackling market incentives, and focusing on demand reduction—a clear ambition gap becomes evident. Despite using more holistic language across all parties, detailed commitments and targets are often lacking. It seems that some parties wrongly think that a decarbonised energy system and a net-carbon-zero Europe are the same, while interventions that address the root causes of the triple planetary crises are not (sufficiently) addressed.

To bridge this gap, it would be important for the EU institutions to address the blind spots and prioritise harmonising Europe's responses to global challenges using a systems approach. Yet the manifestos lack clear, integrated, system-level implementation and governance strategies, robust funding choices, and greater stakeholder and citizen engagement strategies.

Analysing the shift in party manifestos from 2019 to 2024 reveals that all analysed parties acknowledge the complexity of the polycrisis and its effects on Europe's economy and borders. However, more specificity, ambition, detail, and interlinkages in strategic programs will be needed to achieve the transformative changes required for a secure, sustainable, and equitable future.

5. Building a Strong and Durable EGD Coalition: using unifying narratives to achieve systemic policies in the next political cycle

To ensure a durable political basis for the continued implementation and elaboration of the EGD to meet its stated targets, a new and different narrative is needed. One that is based around a systems approach, and reflects the shift on climate action, security, economic, and social priorities that appeals to the majority of Europeans.

Our analysis corroborates the key findings of others that competitiveness, security, cost of living, and supporting citizens are central to all the published manifestos in 2024. These four core themes reflect the current polycrisis, including a worsening economic outlook for many countries and their citizens, from pensioners to youth.

Looking at the manifestos from this angle, we see the outlines of a narrative that could appeal to a majority of the political groups, potentially underpinning the further implementation and elaboration of the European Green Deal. Below, we describe how the parties associated with four biggest European groups view each of these four themes to identify the commonalities and differences to inform a common narrative.

Competitiveness

There is broad agreement across all political parties that a prosperous Europe needs a thriving economy. European industry and businesses are seen as essential in delivering quality jobs, driving the green transition, and providing high-quality goods and services at affordable prices for all citizens.

However, the difference between manifestos lies in how this can be achieved, especially in the opposition created between market forces versus regulation. Some parties prioritise growth in profits and revenues as the surest way to achieve these targets, while others advocate for changing business behaviour through rules and regulations. Views differ on the extent to which the Union should support, guide, or regulate businesses to achieve societally beneficial outcomes as well as the extent to which this can be achieved through, for example, technological change or taxation.

Security

It is clear that the wars in Ukraine, Gaza, and elsewhere, as well as threats to democracy and a rules-based world order, are reflected by all parties. Most parties seem to agree that the best defence against external threats is internal unity and cohesion, and improving the resilience of Europe's supply chains.

The identification of threats and necessary responses cover a broad spectrum, reflecting the turbulent times we live in. They vary by group, with some identifying the threats as internal (i.e., extreme and radical right-wing parties), and others pointing to economic threats (from China and the US) and global threats of climate change, military conflicts, migration, and human rights abuses worldwide. While this shows that there is a broad consensus that security should not be viewed in narrow military terms, there is as much diversity between the parties on which security risks have the highest priority. While some parties

focus on the importance of internal solutions and alignment to counter these risks, others emphasise the need for multilateral and international partnerships to enhance security.

Cost-of-Living Crisis

Each analysed group prioritises the cost-of-living crisis, acknowledging it as a top concern for most citizens and essential for Europe's legitimacy. All parties agree that no European citizen should have to choose between food, heating, and transport bills.

Again, the views on the scope and the causes of this crisis, as well as desirable interventions, vary widely. While some parties prefer tackling the issue directly through measures on controlling prices and subsidising essential products, others take a broader approach with interventions such as a wealth tax. The conditionalities of support, as to who should receive it, are also contested. This tends to reflect group positions on underlying causes, for example, if it is caused by inflation or through an inbuilt unfairness of the socio-economic system. Finally, disagreement exists on the degree to which the EU should be involved.

Supporting Citizens

All parties agree that citizens should be listened to and put at the centre of the policymaking process. Improving citizen wellbeing, enhancing citizen consultation, and increasing citizen involvement in the political process are top priorities.

The differences lie in how this should be achieved: where some parties argue that the best way to listen to citizens is to increase their wealth; others take it literally and propose using citizens assemblies. Other approaches mentioned include strengthening the rule of law, ensuring fairness and equality of opportunity, or enhancing educational systems.

6. Final reflections and pathway forward

Based on our analysis, we conclude that all four of the biggest European groups through their associated manifestos and messaging identify the need for change across Europe, but do not give the detail nor vision necessary to get there. Contrary to some perceptions, these groups are not advocating **moving backwards on the EGD, but they are disagreeing on the way forward**. This is a crucial difference.

Despite ideological differences, the main groups seem in reality more united than divided over the core themes of importance. This should be emphasised. All groups analysed, including the EPP, see tackling climate change as essential to improving competitiveness, enhancing security, decreasing the cost of living, and improving citizen wellbeing.

That said, the devil is in the details. **Differences between groups become clear when looking at their implementation proposals and their voting behaviour over the past parliamentary period.**

The **political manifestos are also similar in their failure to address the root causes of the triple planetary crisis**. Except for the Greens, to a certain extent, all analysed groups propose siloed approaches that do not address the interconnectedness of the polycrisis with social and environmental tipping points or optimised pathways forward for a truly systemic shift.

While all the largest groups address the multifaceted causes of the cost-of-living crisis, the presented solutions fail to tackle the broader systems failures leading to it. For example, explicitly targeting the drivers behind a growth-driven extractive economy or recognising the fact that decarbonising the energy system or adopting new technological solutions is not sufficient to reach net-zero-carbon by 2050. We know that **without a major shift in Europe's material and fossil energy footprint, net-zero will not be achieved**.[28] Similarly, a climate policy that does not include broad social improvements with a goal to move towards net-zero-poverty is bound to fail. Instead, a **sustainable economic transformation needs to focus on maximising the economy's ability to satisfy human needs.**[29]

Implementing more transformative solutions in **holistic and systemic ways would address the root causes of the triple planetary crisis, and help achieve the targets for the four core themes of competitiveness, security, cost-of-living, and catering to people's real needs**.

What is needed is to break through sectoral silos to focus on a unified approach to truly deliver on human needs with the right taxation policies and programmes that guarantee affordable, healthy food grown under a resilient agricultural system with farmers that make a decent living; sufficient clean and affordable energy for comfortable homes, as well as accessible means of clean transportation for Europeans to get to their schools and work. With this, Europe would achieve the double benefits of decreasing cost-of-living by making essential goods and services more affordable, while empowering citizens to be part of the transformation.[30] When applied individually, these are not necessarily novel solutions, but when applied together through a systems approach, citizens will feel a more comprehensive positive change in their daily lives as a reflection of a successful whole of government programme.

The EGD when proposed in 2019 brought a sense of unity and long term vision across most groups. Today that sense of unity is needed more than ever: Europeans need **a renewed vision for Europe that makes them feel secure, that reduces their daily anxiety by addressing the polycrisis and guaranteeing**

resilience to future shocks and stresses. This vision must continue to be anchored in the next iteration of the EGD with renewed commitment to the European project and a broadened perspective around polycrisis challenges and our notion of security. This is our new normal and requires much deeper systemic solutions around shared narratives of competitiveness, security, cost of living, and citizen support, to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing the continent.

A unified European approach, while accommodating diverse methods and perspectives, provides a robust foundation for the next EU Commission to build a prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive future for Europe through a more optimised systemic lens. We cannot be misled by perceptions of a growing backlash against the EGD or the European project. The EGD continues to be Europe's North Star and should be the policy anchor for the next term of the European Commission and Parliament.

The STH — in collaboration with associated partners — will continue to put forward a series of systemic policy approaches, solutions and systems optimization pathways for the new European Institutions and Member States. These recommendations will be translated into interactive policy workshops, seminars and training sessions to anchor EU and Member State policymaking in systems thinking to build resilience to future shocks and stresses, and meet current EU environmental, social, and economic goals.

The intent of the STH is to support the European institutions to deliver on this. We believe that a Europe which continues to lead by example through science, innovation and value-driven systems-based policies, can foster a prosperous, healthy, and thriving society within planetary boundaries.

Endnotes

[1] Club of Rome. (2020). *Planetary Emergency Plan* (p. 3). Retrieved from https://clubofrome.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Planetary_Emergency_Plan_2.0-.pdf

[2] Ipsos Mori, Earth4All, the Global Commons Alliance. (2024). *G20+ Global Report: attitudes to political and economic transformation.* Ipsos Mori.

[3] Mau, S., Lux, T., & Westheuser, L. (2023). *Triggerpunkte: Konsens und Konflikt in der Gegenwartsgesellschaft, Warum Gendersternchen und Lastenfahrräder so viele Menschen triggern.* Suhrkamp Verlag; Herold, M., et al. (2023). *Polarization in Europe: An Analysis of Ten European Countries*. Mercator Forum Migration and Democracy, Dresden; Yale Environment 360. (2023). *Shifting political winds threaten progress on Europe's green goals*. Retrieved from: https://e360.yale.edu/features/europe-environment-backlash

[4] Club of Rome. (2020). *Planetary Emergency Plan*. (p. 3). Retrieved from https://clubofrome.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Planetary_Emergency_Plan_2.0-.pdf.

[5] Kotz, M., Levermann, A., & Wenz, L. (2024). The economic commitment of climate change. *Nature*, 628(8008), 551–557. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-024-07219-0K

[6] The Club of Rome & SYSTEMIQ. (2020). *A System Change Compass: Implementing the European Green Deal in a time of recovery*. Retrieved from https://www.systemiq.earth/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/System-Change-Compass-full-report_final.pdf

[7] Own analysis

[8] Systemiq & Club of Rome. (2020). *A System Change Compass*. Retrieved from https://www.systemiq.earth/resource-category/system-change-compass-full-report-2/; Division, I. a. E., Bruyninckx, H., Hatfield-Dodds, S., Hellweg, S., Schandl, H., Vidal, B., Silva, D. a. L. (2024). *Global Resources Outlook 2024 - Bend the trend: Pathways to a Liveable Planet as Resource Use Spikes*. Retrieved from https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44901

[9] Idem

[10] United Nations Environment Programme. (2021). *Making Peace with Nature: A Scientific Blueprint to Tackle the Climate, Biodiversity and Pollution Emergencies*. UNEP: Nairobi. Retrieved from: https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature

[11] Systemiq & Club of Rome. (2020). *A System Change Compass*. Retrieved from https://www.systemiq.earth/resource-category/system-change-compass-full-report-2/

[12] Letta, E. (2024). *Much More Than a Market.* Council of the European Union. Retrieved from https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/ny3j24sm/much-more-than-a-market-report-by-enrico-letta.pdf

[13] Dennison, S., Engström, M., Hobbs, C., & European Council on Foreign Relations. (2024). *Winds of Change: the EU's Green Agenda after the European Parliament Election*. Retrieved from: https://ecfr.eu/publication/winds-of-change-the-eus-green-agenda-after-the-european-parliament-election/

[14] OECD. (2017). *Systems Approaches to Public Sector Challenges: Working with Change*. OECD eBooks, Paris. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264279865-en.

[15] EU ELECTIONS 2024. (2024). Retrieved from https://www.euractiv.com/european-elections-2024; European Council on Foreign Relations (2024)

[16] EU DisinfoLab. (2023). *The disinformation landscape across Europe*. Retrieved from https://www.disinfo.eu/publications/disinformation-landscapes-in-european-countries/

[17] European Council on Foreign Relations (2024)

[18] Own analysis, based on twitter posts of key European political actors in the period 2019-2024

[19] Narratives Observatory Combatting Disinformation in Europe Systemically. (2024). *Climate Change Narratives: Steps Forward.*

[20] Global Strategic Communications Council. (2024). *Message Testing with Target Voters in the European Parliament 2024 Elections*. (polling commissioned by the Meliore Foundation)

[21] André, P., Boneva, T., Chopra, F., et al. *(2024). Globally Representative Evidence on the Actual and Perceived Support for Climate Action.* Nature Climate Change 14: 253-259. *https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-024-01925-3.*

[22] Eurobarometer (2024). Attitudes of Europeans towards the Environment. Retrieved from https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/3173

[23] Pepe Escrig. (2024). *2024 EU Election Manifestos and Climate Action: An Analysis of European Parties' Priorities*. E3G. Retrieved from https://www.e3g.org/news/2024-eu-election-manifestos-and-climate-action-an-analysis-of-european-parties-priorities/.

[24] European Council on Foreign Relations (2024)

[25] WWF. (2024). *The Green Deal is here to stay - EU party survey*. Retrieved from https://www.wwf.eu/wwf_news/media_centre/?13224941/The-Green-Deal-is-here-to-stay---EU-party-survey.

[26] De Bruycker, I., & Colli, F. (2023). *Affluence, congruence, and lobbying success in EU climate policy*. Journal of Public Policy, 43(3), 512-532; Dyrhauge, H., & Rayner, T. (2023). Transport: Evolving EU policy towards a 'hard-to-abate' sector. In T. Rayner, K. Szulecki, A. J. Jordan, & S. Oberthür (Eds.), *Handbook on European Union Climate Change Policy and Politics* (1 ed., pp. 305-320). Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789906981.00035

[27] Guillot, L. (2024). *Third time's the charm? Right-wing takes another stab at killing EU nature law*. POLITICO. https://www.politico.eu/article/third-times-charm-right-wing-takes-another-stab-killing-eu-nature-law; Bale, T. (2024.). *Europe's far-right is divided but growing*. UK in a Changing Europe. Retrieved from https://ukandeu.ac.uk/europes-far-right-is-divided-but-growing

[28] *Global Resources Outlook 2024 - Bend the trend: Pathways to a Liveable Planet as Resource Use Spikes*. Retrieved from https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44901

[29] Dixson-Declève, S., Gaffney, O., Ghosh, J., Randers, J., Rockstrom, J., & Stoknes, P. E. (2022). *Earth for All: A survival guide for humanity*. New Society Publishers.

[30] *Global Resources Outlook 2024 - Bend the trend: Pathways to a Liveable Planet as Resource Use Spikes*. Retrieved from https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/44901; Systemiq & Club of Rome. (2020). *A System Change Compass*. Retrieved from https://www.systemiq.earth/resource-category/system-change-compass-full-report-2