

The Case for a European Parliament Intergroup on the Just Transition



Context

The European Parliament has set the tone for ambitious climate and social policies. In setting up and delivering the European Green Deal the Parliament has consistently supported bold climate targets and policies to decarbonise our economy. Regarding social policies, the European Parliament is a key ally in the delivery of the European Pillar of Social Rights, and has fought for ambitious policies and legislation on social protection systems, quality employment and social investments. As we look to the start of a new mandate it's important to position and frame the Just Transition as a priority to go beyond leaving no one behind, but empower people to thrive as Europe undergoes the green transition.

The Problem

A common critique of the existing European Green Deal has been the lack of a meaningful Just Transition. While today's inequalities are not due to climate change, climate change impacts may further exacerbate them. Conversely, well designed climate change mitigation and adaptation can help improve the living circumstances and health of the most vulnerable, thus actively reducing existing inequality. However, too often social remains an afterthought to climate policies. Despite the best efforts made by the European Parliament, the frameworks for mitigating the negative impacts of climate come too late and are insufficient in ambition. An intergroup on just transition would help avoiding work in silos between the different committees in the European Parliament, (EMPL, ENVI, REGIO, BUDG and ECON committees).

Eurobarometer consistently shows that the number one concern of voters is the fight against poverty and social exclusion and the cost-of-living crisis. There is an opportunity ahead to achieve a meaningful Just Transition.

There are legitimate concerns around the social implications of how climate policies impact i) vulnerable and marginalised communities, ii) workers and iii) provision of services, including social services. Ignoring these realities is a recipe for poor policy making and will prevent Europe from achieving our social targets, and undermines public support for climate policies in the future. At the same time insufficient action on climate and environment is hurting the elderly, children and low income groups, in addition to regional disparities making already vulnerable groups more exposed to extreme weather events which are becoming more common.

In recent months we have seen the further politicisation of climate and social policies. This has led to political conflicts on files including the nature restoration law and the European Semester Report. Such tensions do not lead to better evidence-based policy making. While political groups can have disagreements on the direction of policies there needs to be a forum to allow decision makers to discuss concerns, build political consensus and propose policies grounded in evidence, research, facts and data.



Suggested Activities

A Just Transition Intergroup will be a cross-party political space that organises events and raises awareness of important factors that contribute to achieving a Just Transition. Important topics which the Intergroup can address include:

1. Revision of the **Action Plan for the European Pillar of Social Rights**, proposing new policy initiatives within the EPSR Action Plan that contribute to the Just Transition.
2. Following the **European Semester process**, to ensure it adequately monitors the implementation of measures contributing to a Just Transition, putting economic, social and climate priorities on an equal footing, and making relevant reform and investment recommendations to Member States to fill existing gaps.
3. During the implementation of both ETS2 and the Social Climate Plans, the intergroup can promote awareness, evidence and means to **mitigate harmful impacts** on vulnerable groups, including via the Social Climate Fund.
4. Building resilient Europe requires largescale green and social investments in the coming years. The intergroup can promote awareness, evidence and means to **strengthen the Just Transition** through the formation of the next MFF, development of a successor instrument to the RRF post-2026 and support defining methodologies on measuring the impact of social investments and upscaling of social and green investments and redirect harmful investments.
5. The next few years will include major reforms to the Single Market with proposed changes to Public Procurement and State Aid rules, in addition to an Action Plan for Services of General Interest. These revisions must set rules for **socially responsible public procurement and social and green conditionalities** for state aid and quality criteria for public subsidies to companies so that they can all contribute to a stronger Just Transition. The intergroup can trigger the reflection about these issues.



Why an Intergroup?

A Just Transition Intergroup will act as a cross-group political space that fosters debate and discussion on climate, economic and social policies that will put Europe back on path to achieve a Just Transition. While individual votes on policies will be driven by the work of EMPL, ENVI and ECON and other relevant committees, the Intergroup will help raise awareness about the Just Transition to support the alignment of policies across committees, and the wider work of MEPs. It will also create space for involving stakeholders, such as civil society organisations, social partners, researchers and other relevant actors, to provide evidence-based expertise on policy priorities and proposals, along the line of the very successful experience with the child rights and LGBTI rights intergroups.

The next European Parliament mandate will pursue legislation related to the next stages of the European Green Deal, the revision of the European Pillar of Social Right's Action Plan, the next MFF, a potential RRF successor instrument post-2026, an EU Industrial Strategy and potential reforms to the Single Market. All these areas have enormous impact on our capacity to deliver a Just Transition.

The Intergroup will share evidence and research that builds a stronger just transition, while taking into account the particular needs of low-income groups, workers and social services, empowering the work of MEPs.

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