

Poland's Governmental Response to the European Green Deal: Discursive Strategies prior to the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in February 2022¹

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Abstract: *Although Poland's energy mix is becoming 'greener' each year, the country's energy production is still dominated by coal. This affects several important spheres: financial, socioeconomic and political. Therefore, the aim of the article is to explain Poland's response to adaptational pressure stemming from the European Green Deal (EGD) by reconstructing discursive strategies related to the topics of decarbonisation and green transformation. We perceive the EGD as a regulatory initiative, whose purpose is to incorporate formal rules and European norms in the domestic discourse and public policies. In order to induce such a change, the European Commission influences the 'utility calculations' used by member states. However, at the same time, some member states need to deal with problems caused by misfits between their energy sector's capabilities and expectations of the EGD. In Poland's case, the significant fields of misfits refer to national emission targets, obligations resulting from the EU Emission Trading System and the Fit for 55 reform package. Using discourse analysis, we have reconstructed a governmental narrative on the transformation based on election manifestos, selected ministerial documents and social media posts from the years 2019–2021. As the government aims to present itself as defenders of Polish national interests, climate-related policies are seen as a threat. There is a clear focus on energy*

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sovereignty and security issues, while challenges related to global warming are absent from the political communication. As the situation at the Belarussian border developed and the danger connected with Russian politics became clearer, the concept of being a defender acquired more meanings.

Keywords: *European Green Deal, Poland, discourse analysis, logic of consequence, decarbonisation, green transformation*

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to present and explain the Polish government's response to the European Green Deal (EGD) from 2019 to the beginning of 2022. We will draw from Europeanisation theory in order to recognise the EU logic of inducing the change and member states' strategies for dealing with the pressure of adaptations. Following this we will provide empirical data on the Polish energy mix, but also analyse the main threads of the governmental narrative related to the topics of decarbonisation and green transformation.

The article is divided into the following sections. First is the theoretical framework analysing the European Green Deal and EU conditionality as important factors influencing the transformation of the Polish economy, followed by the methodology section explaining the selection of the data. Next, the analysis is done in two dimensions – we present the areas of misfits connected with the implementation of the EGD in Poland, and we reconstruct the governmental narrative related to this theme. The purpose of reconstructing government communication is to identify the values and symbols used by government in its discursive strategies. We do not see the governmental narrative as a barrier to transformation. Instead, we recognise it as a discursive strategy allowing us to mitigate socio-political constraints and challenges involved in implementing the EGD in Poland.

The year 2020 was the deadline for the first EU climate-energy package. The EU as a whole achieved the main '20–20–20' objectives; however, this outcome varies when we take a closer look at national targets. Poland performed well on two out of the three targets. The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency which allowed Poland to reduce final energy consumption were the areas where Poland achieved its 2020 aims. Only in the renewable energy target did Poland fail to achieve expected progress (European Environment Agency 2021: 31). In this light, Poland is an interesting case. Poland started its energy transformation from a point where its entire industry sector was based on coal-based technologies inherited from the communist era. Poland put

significant effort into meeting the 2020 climate and energy objectives. Those undertakings have had an impact on Polish society, which now needs to share the financial burden of the transformation decreed by the EU.

More ambitious targets set in the climate and energy framework for 2030 and later added in the Fit for 55 package put even more pressure on member states to meet the objective of climate-neutral economy in 2050. The Polish government was seen as slowing down decarbonisation processes by vetoing certain decisions within the European Union or contesting the ETS system. The purpose of the article is then to reconstruct the rationale of the government within the context of significant socio-political constraints in the suggested period. As the situation changed dramatically in the beginning of 2022 and the transformation processes have been overshadowed by high inflation and the war unleashed by Russia at the gate of the EU, we have chosen the beginning of 2022 for the end of the analysis.

Theoretical framework

The European Green Deal can be perceived as any regulatory proposal of the EU which refers to the market correcting rules, i.e. regulations counteracting the negative influence of the market. As with every EU policy, the EGD also consists of 'processes of construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, "ways of doing things" and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then should be incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies' (Bulmer – Radaelli 2004: 4). The political importance of the EGD shows that the EGD is a Europeanisation instrument that can have a significant impact on the member states' economies including the Polish one. According to the Europeanisation theory, two factors play a key role in this process.

The first is the scope of the misfits between the expectations of the European Commission and the capabilities of the member state's energy sector. The second is the behaviour of political actors at the domestic level, which provides an answer to the adaptational pressure (Börzel – Risse 2000).

Europeanisation inherently entails some degree of incompatibility between European-level policies and domestic political processes. Therefore, the success of the European Commission in achieving the EGD objectives depends on how the member states' governments cope with the policy misfits regarding the reduction of GHG emissions. Policy misfits occur between EU regulations and legal principles and national policies. Eventually, the 'regulatory competition' emerges, and, as a result, there is pressure on states to adapt their policies to the EU requirements (Börzel – Risse 2000). The larger the scope of the misfits, the higher the adaptational pressure. However, it is a logic of organisational behavior which influences both variables.

The methods of governance in EU climate and energy policy have changed over time. The first measures of the 2020 climate and energy package launched in 2007 were based mainly on 'soft governance'. The path to achieve the main objectives – 20% less greenhouse gas emissions, 20% more energy from renewable resources, and 20% increase in energy efficiency – was paved by directives and nonbinding practices such as setting timetables, benchmarks or policy monitoring. However, often the member states did not translate policy coordination into effective actions at the national level. Thus, the process of 'hardening the soft governance' has started and the climate policy has been coupled with stricter conditionalities. Following this approach, member states have to fulfill certain administrative, economic, legal and political conditions. For example, in 2013 the 'greening of the European Semester' began, which has since ensured that macroeconomic policies are also more environmentally friendly. Instead of directives, the EU started regulating the climate and energy policies through regulations which must be entirely applied across the EU. An example of this is the European Climate Law which inscribes in hard law the objective of a 55% reduction in greenhouse gases emissions by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050 (Bongardt – Torres 2022).

The shift in the way the EU climate and energy policy is governed can be explained by referring to the logic of appropriateness and logic of consequence. At the beginning of formulating this policy, the EU followed the logic of appropriateness. It assumed that political actors are driven by the rules relevant to the situation in which they are found and appropriate to the roles they assign to themselves in this situation. In the communication from 2007 titled 'An Energy Policy for Europe', which later became the basis for the European Council's decision to adopt three key targets called 3x20, the European Commission described the locus in such a way:

Energy is essential for Europe to function. But the days of cheap energy for Europe seem to be over. The challenges of climate change, increasing import dependence and higher energy prices are faced by all EU members. Moreover the interdependence of EU Member States in energy, as in many other areas, is increasing – a power failure in one country has immediate effects in others. Europe needs to act now, together, to deliver sustainable, secure and competitive energy (European Commission 2007: 3).

A year later, the European Commission defined the role of the EU as follows:

2007 marked a turning point for the European Union's climate and energy policy. Europe showed itself ready to give global leadership: to tackle climate change, to face up to the challenge of secure, sustainable and competitive en-

ergy, and to make the European economy a model for sustainable development in the 21st century (European Commission 2008: 2).

The context defined in this way creates a framework of rules and norms, in which the changes stipulated by the given policies should happen. Following this, member states through the process of socialisation and persuasion are expected to change their beliefs, norms and identities towards the energy transformation and climate change adaptational measures. However, tools of the logic of appropriateness like ‘soft governance’ in climate and energy policy have not been fully effective. Even the bottom-up socialisation processes led by social movements and organisations could not sufficiently persuade the main political parties and governments in Central and Eastern Europe to redefine their interests and identities (Grabbe – Lehne 2019; Hess – Renner 2019).

‘Hardening the soft governance’ in climate and energy policies, especially in the process of EGD implementation, indicates that the EU behaves now in accordance with the logic of consequences – it manages change by influencing the ‘utility calculations’ used by member states. The actions planned by the EC in the EGD strategy anticipate preferred outcomes that are better quality of environment and climate neutrality in the whole EU. In the opinion of the EU decision makers, these actions produce the best consequences measured against the prior preferences of member states (Goldmann 2005; March – Olsen 1998). Thus, the adaptation to climate change and energy transformation is seen as more likely to happen. It is because member states see in the change induced by the EGD the obligation created through negotiation and mutual consent, which were grounded ‘in a calculated consequential advantage’, and not because the EGD appeals to the normative rationality of member states (March – Olsen 1998: 949–952).

The EC’s actions are aimed at persuading political and societal actors in member states that a ‘greener’ and ‘emissions neutral’ European economy meets their expected utility regarding energy. In order to induce such a transformative change, the EU in the first place rather offers either positive incentives like additional funds (e.g. Just Transition Fund and Social Climate Fund) or negative ones like reducing emission allowances from the ETS.

However, even such logic of inducing the change in member states has limits. Those limitations arise from the instrumental rationality which governments follow in their policies. Member states agree on the transfer of new rules to the national level as long as incentives are credible (Ugur 2013). Moreover, the margin utility of European policies for member states is determined by the domestic costs they have to bear. Excessive costs may lead not only to the reluctance of the imposed policies, but, as several studies showed, they limit the effectiveness of EU conditionality (Schimmelfennig – Sedelmeier 2004).

Europeanisation theory explains what may be the response mechanism of the member states when facing the growing adaptational pressure resulting from the EU level. This strategy may also affect the EU governance mechanism. According to Europeanisation theory, the existence of *veto points* within the institutional structure of the state allows political actors with various interests to minimise the negative effects resulting from the adaptation process. The case becomes even more interesting when such a veto point is established by a government whose responsibility is the implementation of the EU rules. Due to the membership obligation, a member state at the national level has a limited set of political tools for how to respond to the compulsion stemming from the EU conditionality. One of them is shaping the public debate in a country. On the one hand, it may hinder the pressure put upon the policy makers by the society which incur excessive costs of the EU conditionality, and on the other hand, shaping public debate may help to gain some concessions during the renegotiation of the EU law at the European level (Putnam 1988).

Analysis of the government narrative on the EGD will allow us to show how the Polish government used public discourse to present itself as a veto point towards the stringency of the EU environmental policies.

Methodology

The analysis of the misfits between the Polish energy sector and the EU requirements defined in the EGD was based on two main sources. The first is the official government documents and think-tank reports on the energy mix. The second source is the EU legislative documents that implement the EGD.

The governmental narrative was reconstructed using election manifestos, selected ministerial documents and posts on social networks. The leading methodology and perspective for reconstructing the governmental narrative was discourse analysis, yet limited to the governmental actors as they are the main focus of the article.

The governments are primarily responsible for the implementation of EU regulations including the EGD. In the Europeanisation theory they are the main recipients of the expectations stemming from two directions or two levels – the supranational policies proposed by the European Commission and national actors (e.g. civil society organisations, political opposition parties, etc.). Thus the analysis of the government communication aimed at identifying the ways in which the Polish government managed pressure arising from these two levels.

Building on the previous literature on that subject (Biedenkopf 2021), it can be argued that the analysis of the dominant narratives might indeed help to understand policy processes and the strategies adopted by the main actors. Although a detailed discussion of understanding the discourse goes beyond the aims of this article, some methodological notes are deemed necessary. In

this light, the discourse is understood to be constituted by public speeches, campaign materials and official documents published by government officials. The analysis focuses on public images and perceptions (see Lisowska-Magdziarz 2006, cf. Wodak – Krzyżanowski 2008).

The leading analytical questions are as follows.

- How was the transformation presented?
- What was the purpose of government communication?
- What important players were identified?

The governmental narrative has been reconstructed on the basis of the following documents and sources.

- Visions presented in the election manifestos for 2019 and 2020
- Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (PEP2040)
- The posts of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on Facebook, from November 2021 to February 2022

The starting point is 2019 as this is the year that the European Green Deal was introduced.

Election manifestos can be seen as official programme documents of the party, building the relationship between the voter – the governed-to-be – and the leader (the leader-to-be). Election manifestos can also be a proper source to reconstruct worldviews and value sets promoted or adopted by a given party.

Polish politics since 2015 has been marked by the dominance of one party, Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS), leading consecutive governments. However, it should be noted that in the Polish political system, it is considerably difficult to form a one-party government, which is also the case of PiS, as they needed coalition partners. Yet, the analysis will be mostly limited to Law and Justice's narratives as they are definitely the leading voice in the government and their representatives govern the most relevant offices (from the point of view of this paper). Therefore, the Law and Justice election manifesto from the 2019 parliamentary elections has been analysed.

In 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Flis – Ciszewski 2020), presidential elections were held in Poland. The candidate officially supported by Law and Justice was the incumbent president Andrzej Duda (TM 2020), so only his programme is included in the reconstruction of the governmental narrative. Furthermore, we included the official policy related to the energy sector (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021).

The final source for analysing the governmental narrative in this article is public posts that Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki shared via his Facebook profile (Morawiecki 2022c). This source was chosen for several reasons. Morawiecki is reasonably active in social media, with a significant number of

followers on both Facebook (271 thousand followers) and Twitter (562 thousand followers) (Morawiecki 2022f), yet the number of posts shared daily in November 2021, when the analysis started, was higher than the number of tweets. To avoid repetition of the same messages and due to the high volume of posts shared, the analysis has been restricted to Facebook. The chosen time frame was from 1 November, coinciding with the first post on COP 26 in Glasgow, to 23 February, the eve of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, since the war has dramatically changed the political parameters of the security and energy policies. In all, 259 posts from this period have been initially selected for the analysis, given they included reference to EU climate policies, environmental issues and the risks connected with Russian politics. While initially the scope was meant to be mostly limited to the European Green Deal and decarbonisation strategies, given the Russian invasion, more attention has been paid to conflicts next to the eastern borders of Poland prior to the invasion. After the primary analysis, the selection was limited to 151 text documents, which were then processed and coded using the MAX QDA software. In the end, audio and audiovisual materials were not included.

The suggested analysis is undoubtedly limited in terms of scope and choice of sources. We have focused on public communication directed mostly to the main party supporters, such as campaign materials and social media (i.e. Facebook) posts. Previous works in this growing field of research did analyse parliamentary speeches (Biedenkopf 2021), journals (Rancew-Sikora 2002) and press discourse (Wagner 2015). We wanted to reconstruct the main ideas and values present solely in governmental narratives, as these might be then analysed as discursive tools.

Analysis

Misfits of the EGD in Poland

Due to the coal-based energy system, which is an artefact of communist-era energy policy, all kinds of EU decarbonisation initiatives have been perceived in Poland as economically and socially demanding. Poland's energy mix explains this well; however, there are also signs of gradual adaptation to the stringency of EU environmental policies.

In the report on the Polish power system published in 2018 (RAP 2018), it was suggested that 'Poland stands at the crossroads of important decisions on its energy system' (2018: 3), with a power mix dominated by hard coal and lignite, power plants reaching their expiration date and widely heard concerns about 'energy supply security, clean air, climate change, rapidly declining costs for renewable energy and the expected growth of electricity demand' (2018: 3). COVID 19 did not change these concerns, but rather only side-tracked them temporarily.

The Ministry of Climate report on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions published in 2021, the so-called Poland National Inventory Report 2021 (Olecka et al. 2021), presents the data from 2019. In that year, carbon dioxide was the main greenhouse gas in Poland (more than an 80% share). The highest emissions were related to the energy sector, with a lower contribution from industry processes, agriculture and waste. In 2019, Poland was the fourth largest GHG emitter in the EU-27, which is partially explained by the scale of the national economies. The first three places were occupied by other big member states – Germany, France and Italy. The real picture of the misfits in this field shows the effort put in by countries to mitigate the problem of climate change internally. Among the four largest GHG emitters in the EU, only in Poland did the total net emissions increase between 2015 and 2019 by 4%. In the other mentioned countries, emissions decreased in this period of time, in Germany by 10%, and in France and Italy by 4% (European Energy Agency 2022b).

The crucial expectation arising from the EGD states that ‘Further decarbonising the energy system is critical to reach climate objectives in 2030 and 2050. [And] the production and use of energy across economic sectors account for more than 75% of the EU’s greenhouse gas emissions’ (European Commission 2019).

The first field of misfits between Poland and the expectations of the EGD is the national emission targets. In the Effort Sharing Decision from 2009, Poland, as a less wealthy member state, was allowed to increase GHG emissions by up to 14% compared to 2005 levels (Decision No 406/2009/EC 2009). Finally, in 2020 the GHG emissions in Poland increased by 12% – 2 percentage points below the national emission target. Meanwhile, in May 2018, the European Commission raised the reduction levels in the Effort Sharing Regulation. The assumption was that Poland by 2030 should decrease GHG emissions by 7% compared to data from 2005 levels (Regulation (EU) 2018/842 of the European Parliament and of the Council 2018). According to the data from the European Energy Agency, only six EU member states were on track toward their national targets. In July 2021, the EC issued a proposal for a new national emission target, which would meet the expectations of an ambitious 55% reduction in the GHG in the EU by 2030. Poland’s target has been raised once again – now Poland is expected to reduce its emissions by 17.7% compared to the 2005 level (European Commission 2021b).

The national emission targets will exert huge adaptational pressure on Poland’s industry and economy because they refer to the sectors not included in the Emission Trading System. In 2020 in Poland, emissions from these sectors (agriculture, transport, waste, buildings and small industry) produced 51% of all GHG emissions (European Energy Agency 2022a).

The second field of misfits stems from changes in the EU Emission Trading System under the Fit for 55 reform package. The main objective of the reform

is to reduce emissions from EU ETS sectors by 61% by 2030, compared to 2005 (European Commission 2021a). It is an 18 pp. increase from the level established in 2014. In order to reach this target, the EC proposed three main changes to the current ETS system. The first is to speed up the reduction of the emission allowances from the system each year. It immediately generated a visible cost for society. Right after the EC presented its proposal, experts predicted that the price of a tonne of CO₂ in the ETS would reach around 90 euros by 2030 (Simon 2021). On 7 February 2022, the price reached 96 euros per tonne (Chestney – Abnett – Twidale 2022), which makes a 180% increase since the announcement of the ‘Fit for 55’ proposal on 14 July 2021.

The second change which the EC proposes to introduce to the current ETS applies to the market stability reserve (MSR). Since 2019, this mechanism has allowed the tackling of imbalances in the emission market caused by oversupply by withdrawing and putting back allowances to the market. The reform assumes that from 2023 onwards the allowances withdrawn from the market will be invalidated, which means that they would be permanently removed from the system (European Commission 2021a). This will impact the overall volume of the allowances in the market, and ultimately large emitters might pass the growing cost of their production on to final consumers.

The third change proposed by the EC in July 2021 intends to include sectors such as transport and buildings into the EU ETS. The share of domestic transport sector in Poland in total net emissions² increased from 10.1% in 2005 to 17.4% in 2019. The same indicator for the building emissions in Poland in total net emissions decreased from 12.6% in 2005 to 10.5% in 2019. This reduction does not seem permanent, however. One of the causes is that as much as 87% of the coal used for heating in the EU is consumed by households in Poland. Therefore, the experts predict that by 2030 emissions from these sectors will be almost 81% higher than in 1990 (Maćkowiak-Pandera – Buchholtz – Adamczewski 2021).

Eventually, all these processes influence the society and the public policies. First, the Fit for 55 package already has an impact on energy prices followed by consumer prices.

A severe increase in electricity prices for non-household consumers was observed in the EU between the first half of 2019 – 12 eurocents/kWh, and the first half of 2022 – 18 eurocents/kWh. Electricity became about 50% more expensive (Eurostat 2022a). In Poland electricity consumers like companies or public institutions paid about 36% more between 2019 and 2022 (Eurostat 2022c). In the case of households, the growth was much lower in this period and was only 9% (Eurostat 2022b). Nonetheless, it is non-household prices that have an impact on inflation.

2 Including international transport.

Coal continues to dominate energy production in Poland, with ongoing discussions and debates on the future of the sector. The most important factors are financial – varying competitiveness; socioeconomic – restructuring of the mining industries and regions; and political – issues of energy security and sovereignty. In 2020 the downward trend in hard coal production was visible, while ‘the quality and price advantage of imported fuel’ led to the policy of storing ‘unsold domestic coal’, with reserves reaching about 15 million tonnes (Jędra 2021: 30). That has definitely changed in 2022, with talks on the possibility of increasing domestic production due to the war-induced circumstances. In previous years, Poland imported a significant number of fossil fuels from Russia; in 2020 it was 15% of hard coal, 47% of natural gas and 64% of the oil (Gawlikowska-Fyk – Maćkowiak-Pandera 2022). These numbers illustrate the pressure on the energy system enacted by the war and the decisions of de-russification.

The second field of social cost of implementing the EGD refers to the labour market, especially in these regions, which will have to adapt to the ‘green’ transition. According to the Mining Regions Sensitivity Index, 0.823 million people live in the poviats (counties) most vulnerable to the energetic transition in Poland (Juszczak – Szpor 2020). In order to provide for not only the economically but also the socially comprehensive transition of the most vulnerable regions, the government will need to find additional money to those from the Just Transition Fund or supplement the Social Climate Fund country allocation with national financing (European Commission 2021c).

Analysis of the Government Narrative

The analysis begins by reconstructing the most significant threads present in the 2019 elections campaign. Protection of the environment was mentioned in the campaign materials prepared by the Law and Justice Committee (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość 2019), although it was not the most prominent theme. Furthermore, climate issues were not highlighted as the main concern: broadly understood environmental protection was to include the themes of natural heritage, climate-related concerns, air pollution issue, animal rights and waste management. The Polish government of the previous years (also led by PiS) was portrayed as successfully reconciling proecological ambitions with socioeconomic interests. Narrowing the analysis to climate change and decarbonisation issues, the campaign materials included plans to improve heating, invest in photovoltaics, to increase green surfaces in cities, afforestation, and offshore wind farms and – what is significant – to launch a nuclear energy programme (Kułakowska 2021).

However, what seems more important is the analysis of the Law and Justice programme in the context of the energy sector and foreign affairs. Here, we find

not only the promise of the nuclear plant or the support for the Polish mining industry, but also the concept of energy sovereignty. Climate-related policies were seen as a threat, recklessly accepted by the main political opponent of PiS, Civic Platform (PO), a threat to the Polish economy, mining sector and the energy market (leading to an increase in energy prices) (Kuśakowska 2021).

As mentioned before, in 2020 there were presidential elections held in Poland. The programme of the incumbent president Andrzej Duda presented on a dedicated website did not pay too much attention to ecology; there was one section jointly devoted to health and ecology, illustrated by the picture of Mr Duda planting trees (Komitet Wyborczy Kandydata na Prezydenta RP Andrzeja Dudy 2020), and where he briefly mentioned investment in household heating, proper waste management and afforestation.

In February 2021, the Polish Ministry of Climate and Environment published the document *Polityka Energetyczna Polski do 2040r – the Energy Policy of Poland until 2040 (PEP2040)*. The authors underlined the relationship between national plans and EU concentrated efforts and policies. They mentioned the new updated goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 55% (with reference to the year 1990). In this context, they stated that ‘following dynamically accelerating climate-energy EU trends will constitute a significant transformational challenge for Poland’ (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021b: 3). The Polish obligations established in 2009 were reviewed: increase energy efficiency, increase the share of energy from renewable sources, and contribute to the reduction of GHG by 20% (compared to 1990).

The authors of the policy emphasised the particular situation of the Polish economy (more) dependent on carbon fuels and the need for a just transition. In this light, they stressed that the transformation should ensure ‘socially acceptable energy prices’ and should not ‘intensify energy poverty’ (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021a: 3). They suggested that the analysed strategy will provide for ‘the low-emission energy transformation’ which, in turn, ‘will initiate broader modernization changes for the entire economy, guaranteeing energy security, ensuring a fair distribution of costs, and protecting the most vulnerable social groups’ (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2021a: 5). The statutory goal of the energy policy was also mentioned, which is energy security. As a result of the policy, GHG emissions should be reduced by 30% by 2030. In the same year, no more than 56% of electricity production should be coal-driven. Nuclear energy should be implemented from 2033 onward.

When analysing public communications shared by Mateusz Morawiecki through his Facebook profile (Morawiecki 2021d), several key elements have been identified.

In reference to demands of EU energy policies, Morawiecki underscored the necessity of just transformation (Morawiecki 2021a). He remarked that various

countries have different points of departure in terms of energy transition and that the disadvantaged position of Poland calls for additional funds and support. Furthermore, he outlined the conditions of the transformation, saying, 'in order to participate in the transformation in fair terms, Poland needs to have adequate funds secured, and the EU needs to be based on good rules.... We need to carry out a responsible climate policy, protecting the most vulnerable social groups, so that Polish citizens are not affected by rising electricity prices, and the Polish economy does not lose its competitiveness' (Morawiecki 2021a). The analogy with the 2019 election manifesto is clearly noticeable.

The second theme was the acknowledgment of mutual interdependence within the European Union and in the wider global perspective. The support of the EU and the need for pan-European solidarity were mentioned in the context of the conflict on the Polish-Belarussian border (and simultaneously Eastern EU border), and the growing threat from Russian politics. However, we could also notice elements of contestation of EU politics, mostly the ETS system and some signs of tensions connected to the EU jurisdiction.³ The energy crisis and inflation were seen to be caused not only by Russian (imperial) politics but also by 'irresponsible' EU climate policies. As shared in December, 'on climate policies there lies a shadow linked to the prices of CO² emission allowances. ETS is a European energy tax.... It should have a more constant nature, not prone to abrupt changes. In a situation of great variability, the profits are acquired by financial institutions, not by common citizens' (Morawiecki 2021e). On several occasions, Morawiecki commented on speculations leading to the increase in ETS prices. This interesting paradox visualises the political and structural constraints the Polish government aimed to navigate. On the one hand, they wished to present themselves as a 'loyal and conscientious member of both European and transatlantic community' (Morawiecki 2021j), on the other, they challenged EU policies and the EU Tribunal.

The third theme was related to the Gazprom policy and, more broadly, the threats connected to Russian politics. It was particularly visible in the context of the border crisis mentioned above, which was described as a form of hybrid war, 'a political crisis created... to destabilise... Europe' (Morawiecki 2021k). In that light, Poland was portrayed as the defender of Europe. Many posts that followed were devoted to praising the Polish soldiers protecting the border. The threat posed by Russia and Belarus should be minimised by joint European initiatives, including common energy policies, as stated in the post from November 2021, the 'EU is the object of Russian energy blackmail because we

3 The analysis of the conflicts with the EU Commission blocking the transfer of the National Recovery funds, or with the Czech Republic over the Turów mine are outside the scope of this paper.

still fight each other, in the energy domain, instead of playing together. Till that changes, we can be sure that Putin will use our differing interests to his advantage' (Morawiecki 2021b). In this context, the Polish opposition to Nord Stream 2 should be mentioned. Nord Stream 2 was opposed as 'a tool for blackmail' of the Russian Federation.

Although posts related solely to Polish infrastructure or investment were excluded by default from the analysis, it should be noted that many posts at the turn of 2022 addressed the Polish government's development plan, called the Polish Order (Polski Ład). It is certainly not focused on environmental issues but rather investments and changes in taxation and budget allocation, but it does include a section devoted to ecology, such as plans for new wind farms, hydrogen technology, low-emission transport, solar energy, nuclear plant and similar plans (Morawiecki 2021f).

The posts did mention another important topic for Polish green transformation: the region most closely connected to the mining industry – Silesia⁴. There, at the end of November 2021, Morawiecki commented on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) (Morawiecki 2021g). He said: 'For us, the dilemma of CBAM depends largely on its final shape and on where the funds thus collected go – so that they can be included in our budget, so that we could invest them in the energy-intensive industries and green transformation of the Polish economy' (Morawiecki 2021g). And he added, 'Silesia is the heart of Polish economy and energy system, and is also the key to the success or failure of the European green deal... as a prime minister and a politician, I need to ask – will we be able to cover the social costs of such a big transformation? The answer to this question will determine our support for this project' (Morawiecki 2021g). Miners were also mentioned on 4 December on the traditional Miner's Day – praised for their hard and significant work and for providing energy security (Morawiecki 2021m). At the end of December, the PM visited the Silesia region again. While commenting on this trip, he said: 'another issue that I talked about with the residents of the Silesian towns is the EU energy policy, which causes their – understandable – anxiety. This policy creates various challenges and problems that my government needs to deal with. We will defend the Silesian industry and workplaces against changes that do not take into account the needs of local residents. Energy transformation is needed, but it must be fair and based on solidarity!' (Morawiecki 2021i).

The main actors mentioned in the government communication were certainly the Polish government and the Law and Justice party, often referred to as 'we' or sometimes as 'my government'. The European Union was mostly seen as a unitary actor, sometimes troubled by internal conflicts. The EU goals were not

4 Cf. (Głuszek-Szafranec – Szostok-Nowacka 2021)

seen as closely aligned with Polish national interests. Supporting EU policies which are not favourable and/or beneficial to Polish interests was then seen as a mistake. Russia and Vladimir Putin were mentioned in the context of imperial politics, posing a threat not only to the neighbouring countries, but to all of Europe. The main opposition party and its leader, Donald Tusk, were often referred to and presented in a negative light, in order to provide contrast to current governmental policies. They were also sometimes blamed for accepting climate-EU policies. Donald Tusk was criticised for the actions of the Civic Platform in Poland⁵ but also for the actions of the European People's Party. There was no true normative alignment in terms of values connected with opposing climate change. Rising sea levels or global warming were absent from government communications. Even the European Green Deal was hardly mentioned; within the material coded, there was only one direct mention to the programme in the context of Silesia.

The important analytical context is the broader perspective of EU-Poland relations during the analysed period (November 2021 to February 2022). Although a detailed analysis of these relations goes beyond the scope of this article, there were obvious tensions related to the Polish judiciary system and the freezing of the funds for the National Recovery Fund. In addition, internal battles were being played out simultaneously: Mateusz Morawiecki frequently referred to Donald Tusk, the leader of the main opposition party and the Civic Platform, but also to the leader of the European People's Party and former president of the European Council. The interesting example of 'killing more than one bird with one stone' is in a post from 17 December 2021. The post focused on the issue of inflation, depicted as a global post-pandemic problem. The Polish government was portrayed as an active player, fighting the crisis. It was also directly suggested that the increase in prices is the effect of trade and speculation of the ETS, which was accepted by the opposition party and (then Prime Minister) Donald Tusk. Furthermore, the current PM stated that 'we need to be vigilant because the European Union is planning two new, big taxes, the ETS tax on housing, heating, fuel, and transport. I hope we will reject them together' (Morawiecki 2021).

The Impact of the War

The end of the analysis coincided with one of the most dramatic events in this part of the world in the last 70 years – the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is too early to predict for certain how this war will change climate policies in a longer perspective. However, some preliminary trends can already be noticed.

5 Tusk was the prime minister of Poland from 2007 to 2014, and the Civic Platform in the coalition with the Polish People's Party ruled the government from 2007 to 2015.

In terms of the discourse analysis, we have seen some form of continuation of the prewar rhetoric. In posts from November 2021, there were already mentions of threats connected with Russian politics and the possibility of military attacks on the territory of Ukraine (see (Morawiecki 2021c), not to mention the conflict called the ‘hybrid war’ on the Polish-Belarussian border. The postulates of sanctions also appeared in November 2021, in a letter directed to the members of the European Parliament (Morawiecki 2021h). From the end of January 2022, the Russian threat against Ukraine has been mentioned more frequently, the examples of posts related to the possibility of war could be the following: ‘we have to do everything to oppose bad and unjust intentions of Russia towards our Eastern neighbour’ (Morawiecki 2022d), or ‘Europe standing on the verge of war’ accompanied by the renewed calls for blocking the Nord Stream 2 project (Morawiecki 2022b). On 25 February Mateusz Morawiecki published a letter to the European Union leaders, Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel, calling for several sanctions against Russia and a departure from purchasing Russian hydrocarbons, oil, gas and coal (Morawiecki 2022e).

As we have mentioned before, there are some significant structural and sociopolitical determinants of Polish energy policies. The Polish economy had been dependent on Russian resources, despite efforts toward diversification of energy resources. Prime Minister Morawiecki declared at the end of March that Poland would stop importing Russian coal by May and Russian oil and gas by the end of 2022 (Morawiecki 2022a). Russia stopped gas import even earlier (Zaniewicz 2022). There have been suggestions directed towards the European Commission to introduce a special tax on importing Russian resources (Morawiecki 2022g).

Official policies have also been updated – on 29 March 2022 the government accepted the amendments to the energy policy till 2040 (Ministerstwo Klimatu i Środowiska 2022). These amendments underlined the value of energy sovereignty, the necessity of becoming independent of imported fossil fuels, and increased energy security. They included as well development of renewable energy sources, using domestic coal deposits, implementing nuclear energy plants and – what is significant in the context of this article – plans to renegotiate EU climate policies, so that they allow more conventional energy sources to be used on a temporary basis without inducing expenses that are too costly. There have also been some domestic adjustments protecting individual customers from the increase in electricity, gas and coal prices (e.g. Ustawa z Dnia 23 Czerwca 2022 r. 2022).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to the reorientation of the energy policies of other EU member states. On 27 February 2022, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz declared a need for radical diversification of energy supplies by building two LNG terminals (Scholz 2022). The German authorities have also considered expanding the operation of coal power plants beyond 2030. Despite

the adjustments undertaken at the level of individual states, there is also a broad consensus at the European level that the EU urgently needs to decrease dependence on Russian gas and oil (European Council 2022).

It is far too early to predict the impact of the war on the implementation of the EGD. On the one hand, we see calls for clean energy transition, strengthened by de-russification strategies (European Commission 2022). On the other, we witness pan-European anxieties connected to the availability of energy resources. In July 2022 the European Parliament agreed to include nuclear energy and gas within the taxonomy of green energy sources. This was a Polish postulate already mentioned by Morawiecki in December 2021 (Morawiecki 2021e). It is quite likely then that the challenges connected with the Russian invasion and the dependence of some European economies on Russian hydrocarbons will delay the EGD implementation.

Conclusions

The process of 'hardening' soft governance in climate and energy policy constituted a more rational approach to the implementation of EGD rules. The EU governance mechanism follows the logic of consequences, which entails manipulating the utility calculations of member states through incentives. The EGD uses positive incentives, such as additional funds for green transformation of the national economies, but also negative incentives, such as reducing emission allowances from the ETS. Especially the latter category of EU conditions exerts growing pressure on Poland whose energy sector is a coal-based artefact of communist era policy. These incompatibilities between European-level policies and domestic political processes reveal several misfits which determine the response of the member states to stricter rules imposed by the EGD. The first field of misfits between Poland and the expectations of the EGD is the national emission targets. Although Poland achieved its national target till 2020, new higher levels of reduction in GHG emissions create a more difficult challenge for Poland. The second field of misfits is linked to changes in the EU Emission Trading System under the Fit for 55 reform package. Eventually, all these processes generate additional higher costs for society either by growing energy prices or altering the labour market in regions vulnerable to the energy transition. Therefore, the government that also follows instrumental rationality uses different mechanisms to avoid the negative effects resulting from the adaptation process. One such mechanism is the strategy of shaping the public perceptions on the EGD. On the one hand, it allows government to mitigate the pressure put on society incurring the excessive costs of the EU climate and energy policy, and on the other creates the opportunity to use social attitudes to strengthen the negotiation position at the EU level.

Reconstructing the Polish governmental narrative allows one to see it as a discursive tool to mitigate the social pressure and navigate expectations connected to the EGD implementation.

The governmental narrative presented the green transformation of the Polish economy and the subsequent EU climate policies as a challenge. In this context, the Polish government was to be cautious and protect the interests of vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the government needs to actively seek EU funds to facilitate the transformation. Polish citizens should not be affected by rising energy prices, and the Polish economy should not lose its competitiveness. Climate EU policies were also sometimes portrayed as a threat, especially in the context of the ETS system. The latter was called ‘a climate tax’, the price of which has been influenced by speculations. Russian imperial politics and Nord Stream 2 were definitely seen as a threat, destabilising the region and undermining its security.

The purpose of government communication appears to be to build trust in the government’s ability to defend Polish interests. Polish national interests are mostly related to securing funds for the transformation so that Polish citizens are protected from high energy prices and other related costs. As the situation on the Belarussian border developed and the threat from Russia became clearer, the concept of being a defender acquired more meanings. But even prior to these events, the ideas of energy sovereignty and energy security were visible in governmental communications.

It can be said that we are thus observing the reaction to the logic of consequences. The Polish government responds according to modified utility calculations (using instrumental rationality). There have been attempts to challenge the EU system of rewards and sanctions. The normative response aligned with EU normative goals was hardly visible, and the risk and threats connected strictly to climate change issues, heat waves or rising sea levels were hardly discussed. On the contrary, values and norms present in governmental narratives were centred on national interests, sovereignty and security.

This proves that the European policy of the Polish government is subordinated to the internal policies. At the European level, such strategies result in the so-called European Blame Game. As shown, this strategy applied in Poland will likely lead to persistent tensions in Poland’s relations with the European Union. The tightening energy and climate policy of the EU will require faster, and thus more socially costly, reforms. This, in turn, will increase social discontent and the level of pressure, prompting mitigation strategies from the government. The further research in this field will be able to show how much the future Polish governments will be able to change this path.

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