

Confrontation or cooperation: What's the climate for future policies around the Baltic Sea?

**A project on environmental, energy, and climate policy for
journalists from
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany**



Photo: [Flickr/unukorno](#)

October – December 2017

The idea

Amid the unfolding Brexit, the war in Ukraine, and an unclear future for EU-Russian relations, the European Union finds itself in troubled waters, also along the shorelines of the Baltic Sea. Illustrated by the controversies around the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, energy and climate are among the issues at the centre of recent frictions, overtly cooling e.g. German-Polish relations and driving a wedge between European Union member states.

- However, despite these political tensions, are environment, energy, and climate issues bound to be dividing?
- Alternatively, can they function instead as a catalyst for greater cooperation and exchange between the Baltic neighbours?

The Baltic states, Poland, and Germany share an array of common challenges. Today, they are significantly dependent on fossil fuels, much of them imported. In light of their common commitment to the Paris Climate Agreement, these states need to find an economically viable and socially acceptable way to manage the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies. They must find ways to awaken the “sleeping giant” of energy efficiency, and give a boost to transport and mobility transition. And they must also address energy and climate-related health issues; obtain their citizens’ support for energy transition; and possibly prepare for the consequences of more extreme weather events.

The European Union must assume and act on joint responsibility: “It goes without saying that the targets that we set to ourselves are not only a European matter. They are part of our global commitments to our international partners, as part of the Paris Agreement. Europe is becoming a global leader in fighting climate change and developing smart solutions. We must therefore also show that we are delivering on our own promises”.

Maroš Šefčovič, European Commission vice-president for Energy Union, at the EESC plenary session on 27 April 2017

Against this background, the International Journalists’ Programmes (IJP) and Clean Energy Wire invite journalists from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany to participate in a cross-border exchange programme on issues related to energy, environment, and climate change.

The programme

1. Participants will have the possibility to **spend two months working at a host media organisation in one of the project countries** (from mid-October to mid-December 2017).
2. In order to encourage and support your research along the way, we invite participants to work on **collaborative research projects on an environment, energy, or climate story of their choice**, in tandem with fellow participants.
3. **Participants will be able to attend a series of workshops introducing them to key issues of the EU's and Germany's energy and climate policies. These will include, inter alia:**
 - A kick-off workshop on 17-18 2017: During a two-day visit to Berlin and Mecklenburg Western-Pomerania, participants will be briefed on the energy, climate, and transport policies of the EU and Germany. On-site visits to geothermal and energy storage plants, as well as to a hearing dedicated to the citizens' perspective and involvement in energy and climate-related efforts, are also planned.
 - A closing workshop on 12-14 December: At the end of the research programme, participants will present, discuss, and evaluate their stories with their peers. They will also develop, plan, and finalise the schedule of a joint field trip to one or more countries/sites relevant to their projects.
4. Each participant will receive a **fellowship grant of 3,800 euros** to help cover travel costs, accommodation, and personal expenses. All additional costs must be covered by the participants.

Clean Energy Wire and IJP are also planning to complement the programme with a **joint three-day research-related field trip** to one or two of the participating countries in February or March 2018. Clean Energy Wire and IJP will develop the programme in close cooperation with the participants.

The process

Applications are open to print, online, TV, and radio journalists (employed or freelancer). They must be citizens of Germany, Poland, or the Baltic countries aged **between 18 and 40**. (Fluency in German, Polish, or one of the Baltic languages is not a prerequisite. However, a very good command of English is essential.

The deadline for applications is 15 **September 2017**. Applications must include:

- CV (including a photo)
- A letter of recommendation from an editor
- Four written samples of journalistic work (broadcast journalists are asked to submit a list of links to their samples)
- An indication of the preferred host media outlets and host regions (i.e. Munich, Warsaw, Riga) in programme countries Germany, Poland, or the Baltics.

The selection committee will inform applicants of their approval status by 20 September 2017.

Applications should be sent to

IJP e.V.

Postfach 31 07 46

10637 Berlin, Germany

or

theo@ijp.org (for applicants from Germany or the Baltic states)

or

taube@ijp.org (for applicants from Germany or Poland)

Online applications in a single PDF document are preferred.

If you have any queries regarding the programme or your application, please contact your programme coordinator.

More information:

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The issues

Below is a list of suggested research subjects:

- ➔ Can Germany, Poland, and Estonia learn from and support each other in transitioning from domestic coal/peat/oil-shale production to renewable energy?
- ➔ What role can and should the increasing interconnections and shared infrastructure (electricity, gas network, energy storage, etc.) play in the region?
- ➔ What are the citizens' views on the EU's proposed Energy Union, and on the related renewable energy and climate protection efforts? How involved are they?
- ➔ How can cities, local communities, and rural areas profit from tackling environmental issues and from developing low-carbon infrastructure?
What is the future role of gas in the region? How can a joint strategy for achieving energy independence and security of supply be developed?
- ➔ What environmental issues and threats citizens across borders face now or in the future?
Can cross-border cooperation go beyond political narrative and bring about real change?

Europe's gas supply – flammable fuel for the political environment: “The construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline between Russia and Germany has become one of the most controversial topics in European energy policy. For a majority of European policymakers and analysts, it seems hard to understand how Angela Merkel’s government can back the creation of a more secure Energy Union and a seemingly contradictory German-Russian pipeline project at the same time”.

Severin Fischer, Center for Security Studies (ETH Zurich), in *Europe's World*, on 19 July 2016

The organisers

Clean Energy Wire

Germany's Energiewende –energy transition – is a project of global relevance. It is a reference point in a world that has embarked on a path to end the use of fossil fuels, as laid out in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. As the share of renewables in the power sector is growing rapidly, there is an increasing focus on how Germany, the world's second largest export nation and Europe's leading importer of oil and gas, is tackling decarbonisation.

Clean Energy Wire provides well-researched, fact-based, and unbiased information and support to international journalists reporting on decarbonisation and the energy transition process in Germany. We believe that quality journalism plays a key role in informing productive domestic and international debates, which are essential for a successful transition to a low-carbon economy.

Clean Energy Wire is committed to the highest standards in journalism. Our [charter](#) sets out the guiding principles of our work, which include independence from commercial, political, or other special interests.

As an independent non-profit and non-partisan organisation, Clean Energy Wire offers its services free of charge thanks to its funders, Stiftung Mercator (stiftung-mercator.de) and the European Climate Foundation (europeanclimate.org). It has a staff of nine and is located in Berlin.

www.cleanenergywire.org

International Journalists' Programmes (IJP)

The IJP is a non-profit and economically as well as politically independent organisation dedicated to the development of young journalists. It was established in 1981.

IJP's programmes are organised decentrally and have no administration. All programmes are organised by the members and board members of IJP, who themselves work as journalists or for media enterprises. Responsibility for the individual programmes lies with the respective coordinators, who are members of IJP's Executive Committee. Board members are appointed on a voluntary basis.

IJP receives support from the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety in organising this programme.

www.ijp.org