

Working paper of the RELAY Workshop on:

The Green Deal: What are its Implications for Animals and Nature?



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The Green Deal: What are its Implications for Animals and Nature?

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1. The Green Deal: What are its implications for animals and nature?

1.1 Introduction

In 2019, the European Commission presented a policy document entitled 'The European Green Deal'. At the core, the document is an economic growth strategy "that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use" (European Commission, 2019, p.2). The plan provides the basis for action plans for sustainable development in the policy areas of biodiversity, food systems, agriculture, energy, industry, building and renovating, mobility, eliminating pollution and climate action.

'The atmosphere is warming, and the climate is changing with each passing year. One million of the eight million species on the planet are at risk of being lost. Forests and oceans are being polluted and destroyed. The European Green Deal is a response to these challenges. It is a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. It also aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. At the same time, this transition must be just and inclusive. It must put people first, and pay attention to the regions, industries and workers who will face the greatest challenges.' (The Green Deal).

The European Green Deal is not a concrete law but the basis for numerous future legislative initiatives at European and national level. At its core is the European Climate Law, proposed by the European Commission. This law is intended to shape the legal framework for specific projects and will be finalized before the end of 2021. The legislative proposal itself does not contain any approaches to concrete climate protection measures. It consists largely of organizational elements, as well as sections concerning possible financing. The costs for the European Green Deal are only estimates so far. However, the European Commission assumes costs of at least 1 trillion euros, financed by the European Union budget, the national governments of the member states and the private sector (Harvey & Rankin, 2020). Additionally, the Just Transition Mechanism aims to provide financial support to particularly affected regions in the European Union and mobilizes at least 100 billion euros (European Commission, 2021b; Fleming & Mauger, 2021).

An action plan was also presented together with the European Climate Law. The plan contains investments and financial tools, necessary for a just and inclusive transition (European Commission, 2021a). It also acts as a roadmap, with certain key actions that must occur by a predefined date. For the elaboration of impacts on livestock, for example, the actions that affect the agricultural sector are of particular interest. In this case, this is the "Farm to Fork" Strategy, as well as the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (EUR-Lex, 2019). Both strategies were presented together by the European Commission in May 2020. The "Farm to Fork" Strategy relates specifically to the agricultural sector, with the aim of making the food system within the European Union more sustainable. Following targets have been set for the year 2030: The use

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of pesticides and nutrient loss is to be reduced by 50%, and the use of fertilizers by 20%. The sale of antimicrobials for livestock and aquaculture is also to be reduced by 50%. In addition, the goal is to use 25% of cultivated land only for organic farming (European Commission, 2021c).

While the “Farm to Fork” Strategy is sector-specific, the Biodiversity Strategy has a broader scope and addresses the main causes of biodiversity loss. These include the inefficient use of land and sea, exploitation of natural resources, and pollution. The Biodiversity Strategy is also part of the recovery plan in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (European Commission, 2020).

However, besides the above, ‘animals’, ‘nature’ and ‘sustainability’ are not often mentioned together in this European Green Deal. The reason is likely to be found in the fact that the sustainability debate has been hijacked in recent years by industry and governments. Their view regarding sustainable development significantly has been subordinate to the dogma of economic growth with little regard for animal welfare and concerns for nature (Martens, 2020).

In the tradition of United Nations reports such as *Our Common Future*, the European Green Deal puts human wellbeing at its center. The European Commission speaks about protecting Europe’s natural capital and resources. However, we also need to acknowledge the value of nature for its own sake, instead as a mere means for human flourishing. Although we as humans may be privileged in our capacity to respect autonomy and flourishing, the autonomy and flourishing that we must respect is not limited to humans. Moreover, protecting Europe’s nature and its animals for its own sake is perfectly compatible with, and even necessary for human flourishing. Perhaps it is even true that in the long term we will show incapable of protecting nature as a resource for human wellbeing, without at the same time recognizing nature’s intrinsic value. The European Green Deal needs to include a just transition for nature and the animals within as well.

To tackle this issue, in January 2021 a workshop *The Green Deal: what are its implications for animals and nature?* was organized by an Erasmus+ Jean Monnet project RELAY. The policies behind the European Green Deal in relation to the role of Nature and Animals in our society were central to the discussions, as well as the Green Deal’s shortcomings with regard to the “voiceless” members of the European society and of the regions beyond the EU that might be affected by Green Deal-related policies. By doing so, the central question of the webinar was formulated as follows: “What are the current issues with regard to the ‘true’ sustainability goals the Green Deal should pursue and what actions are required to give animals and nature a more prominent role in the Green Deal debates?”

In the following section, several key observations, statements and questions concerning the narrative and the discourse are addressed. In part two of this working paper, the workshop presentations and interactive debate have been summarized for further reference.

1.2 An anthropocentric deal in the Anthropocene

The Anthropocene is commonly defined as the period of time during which human activities have impacted the environment enough to constitute a distinct geological change (e.g. Steffen, et al, 2011). In the pursuit to curb the detrimental effects of a warming atmosphere and climate change by human activity, in the European Green Deal, people are the moral beneficiaries (“*it must put people first*” p. 2). The envisioned transition is necessitated to be just and inclusive, without leaving a person or region behind. The European Commission speaks about protecting Europe’s natural capital and resources. However, from the document the value of animals and nature are not recognized for their own sake, but rather as a means for human flourishing. The ‘deal’ is fundamentally one by humans and for humans.

The European Green Deal is furthermore an economic plan in which sustainable development is used as an anchor for economic growth. One that should further the social ideals of the European Union. The environmental aspect of sustainable development is entrenched in an anthropocentric perspective. However, even while the human interests and particularly the economic interests are heavily drawn into, Jorgo Riss poses the question in his presentation *European Green Deal or European Greenwash?* in how far it is a problem, as one could say in the end: it does not matter why people do the right thing (see section 2.6 for a short synopsis of his reflections).

1.3 A modernist project

How to discuss the implications of the European Green Deal on animals and nature if the terms are not or barely mentioned? It may therefore be worthwhile to discuss their absence instead. A brief content analysis of the document on the usage of words (n=times mentioned) indicated the following: animals (n=0), nature (n=3), natural¹ (n=12), ecosystems (n=12), and biodiversity (n=27). The concept of nature is hardly used as an analytical term in governance. Prof. Frank Biermann reflects on this issue in his presentation *The European Green Deal: Reflections on nature, animals and the planet* how the term lacks analytical value in political science (see section 2.2 for a short synopsis of his reflections).

The concepts of ecosystems and biodiversity, arguably, encompass the terms animals and nature. Nonetheless, however conceptually and analytically sound and useful biodiversity and ecosystem (services) may be, these words are academic and stand reasonably further away from the direct experience and understanding of (average) citizens. Through the use of our language, are we further detaching an important aspect of the sustainable development debate from our immediate experience, to something rather complex and abstract? While the term nature may allude to a romantic movement long gone, it is a relatable concept that may just more resonate in the minds (and dreams) of citizens.

¹ e.g. natural capital, resources, catastrophes, etc.

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As Dr. Monique Janssens delineated in her presentation *Animal Business, an ethical exploration of corporate responsibility towards animals*, animals are strangely missing in the often-used People, Planet, Profit paradigm. Dr. Janssens sees opportunities to include animal welfare in the 'Farm to Fork' and 'Biodiversity' theme (see section 2.5 for a short synopsis of her reflections). Also Dr. Burak Can notes in his presentation *Bidding for Green Deal topic: Towards climate neutral and socially innovative cities* that animals are evidently not considered in the wording of the Commission, while he considers it that the fate of industrially farmed animals is one of the most pressing ethical questions of our time (see section 2.3 for a short synopsis of his reflections). Prof. Biermann considers that there are many sustainability considerations underpinning the advantages of reducing the consumption of meat than the advantages of meat consumption (see section 2.2 for a short synopsis of his reflections). The absence of a critical note on livestock for meat consumption may be indicative that the topic is too politicized.

1.4 Representativeness and democracy

On the main, democracy is a political system in which power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of representation involving periodically held free elections. While nature and animals cannot cast a vote, the representation of nature and animals is marginal in the EU. Yet, the representation of these voiceless groups is growing, as can for instance be observed by the three seats for the international movement on Animal Politics in the European Parliament (Party for the Animals, 2019) and the seats won by Green and allied parties (Graham-Harrison, 2019). In relation to this, the European Green Deal also raises important questions about the influence of important (human) partners. What is the role for civil society groups for the shaping and implementation of the plans? Are there specific and transparent proposals for this?

Furthermore, sustainable development has a generational aspect, one that is extremely difficult to account for in a political environment which is firstly dealing with a transition towards a much older population structure, a development which is already apparent in several Member States. Secondly, party representation fragments the various generations across the political parties. In this system, the younger generations are disadvantaged whereas it concerns them critically. Prof. Biermann questions in how far the European Deal is in fact a deal for the future and of young people. He posits that reforms should be considered in the constitutional and democratic systems of the EU and its member states, that give a stronger role for young people and next generations (see section 2.2 for a short synopsis of his reflections).

1.5 Transition without systemic change?

In order for the European Green Deal to succeed, entire systems, sub-systems and sectors will need to be transformed. According to Prof. Phillipp Pattberg, there appear to be many elements in place to make the transition. However, there are various challenges ahead that need to be addressed, which relate mainly to accelerating, upscaling, and filling the implementation gap; agency and accountability; agenda-setting and collective visioning; and avoiding market failures, supporting disruptive innovation (see section 2.1 for a short synopsis of his reflections).

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Achieving a sustainable state, whether in terms of halting climate change or social injustices, requires systems change. There are serious doubts however in how far a system based on an economic growth paradigm within liberal markets, is capable of fixing the problems it once created. As Prof. Bram Büscher explains in his presentation *A Green New Deal needs a radically different conservation: Towards a convivial alternative*, that the European Green Deal fails to present a coherent systems redesign. He pleads for convivial conservation, a new approach that goes beyond protected areas and faith in markets to join other movements, individuals and organizations focused on holistic, transformative system change (see section 2.4 for a short synopsis of his reflections).

However, also the realist perspective has a prominent place in these discussions, as it is recognized that coupling sustainability to the economic growth paradigm appears to be the most feasible way to invest in sustainable change. Nonetheless, it is not envisioned that these will lead to the systemic changes needed in the short term.

2. The workshop – a summary

2.1 Presentation Prof. Phillipp Pattberg

Will the Green Deal accelerate the sustainability transition: A preliminary analysis

The state of nature's decline is serious and societies are generally not on track on many global goals. Socio-economic transitions will be needed to transition to a sustainable system. In that sense, the European Green Deal will need to transform entire (eco)systems, sectors and sub-systems. In transition theory, transitions follow an S-curve. Where are we on the curve for realizing the objectives of the European Green Deal? Prof. Pattberg uses the article *Social tipping dynamics for stabilizing Earth's climate by 2050* (Otto et al, 2020) in which six elements are identified that need to be changed and applies it to the European Green Deal. Through the use of examples, his analysis is that many of these elements are addressed, but that there are challenges ahead:

- 1) Removing fossil-fuel subsidies and incentivizing decentralized energy generation (energy production and storage systems). *Brief analysis:* The current economy is biased to some economies including fossil fuels. Nonetheless, 100 countries have pledged to net zero emissions by 2050 and there are discussions to end subsidies for fossil fuels.
- 2) Building carbon-neutral cities (human settlements). *Brief analysis:* Cities can make many changes in terms of transport and infrastructure. Various cities are working on it and quite a bit is happening in this regard.
- 3) Divesting from assets linked to fossil fuels (financial markets). *Brief analysis:* The European Green Deal is a huge investment programme concerned with where we should and shouldn't invest. Many universities have decided to divest, the position of the Dutch social fund is included in this debate. It is a lively social movement and a social tipping is happening.
- 4) Revealing the moral implications of fossil fuels (forms and value systems). *Brief analysis:* There needs to be a shift in our debates from what is effective, to what is morally, normative, equitable, and responsible. New societal movements are coming up, e.g. extinction for rebellion. In the end, the ending of slavery was a moral question.
- 5) Strengthening climate education and engagement (education system). *Brief analysis:* In the last two decades in Europe, there has been an increase from only 2 to 200-250 studies on sustainability related programmes.
- 6) Disclosing information on greenhouse gas emissions (information feedbacks). *Preliminary analysis:* Transparency on emissions is occurring more and incorporating environment, social and governance performance is commonplace in financial reports. From a policy analysis point of view, no emissions and no loss of jobs is a political compromise. How will this get accomplished and is this type of pressure the most effective route?

The main challenging areas in going forward are:

- Accelerating, upscaling, and filling the implementation gap
- Agency and accountability *Brief reflection:* While individuals cannot be held responsible for systemic problems, there are people who can be held accountable and that should happen.
- Agenda-setting and collective visioning *Brief reflection:* How does carbon neutral look like? Will there be less freedoms in a carbon restrained world? Will there be solidarity? How to bring multi-stakeholder initiatives and include more stakeholder involvement? Scholarship is also

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showing that the fossil fuel industry had a strong lobby in shaping the European Green Deal. So that brings into the fore vested interests and that there are different visions of the future.

- Avoiding market failures, supporting disruptive innovation *Brief reflection*: The EU puts a lot of money in research for driving the agenda, but is vested in the neo-liberal market to bring about change. How will we organize it: top-down (when people say it will fail) or on market forces (will take longer)?

2.2 Presentation by Prof. Frank Biermann

The European Green Deal: Reflections on nature, animals and the planet

The concept of nature is an analytical term Prof. Biermann does not use anymore because it lacks analytical value in political science. Much of the human environment do not correspond to romantic conceptions of nature as an independent entity, untouched and undisturbed of human influence or purpose. Terms that focus on integrated systems, including human and non-human agency, at a local, regional and global scale have his preference. What is then the target of our activities if it is no longer protection of nature or of the environment?

The concept of the Anthropocene opens up the discursive space, breaks and goes beyond old binaries of humans and nature or the environment. This conceptual move is also open to scrutiny, as it can hide certain political conflicts, injustices, and inequalities. For instance, the idea of one human kind paradigm that together and equally shape the planet is incorrect in face of tremendous inequalities. One critique Prof. Biermann has on own ideas raised in the past, is the dominance of science in defining the normative space. While scientific research should be part of it, it must be defined by the people where the boundaries are on what we want to fight for in activism and in academic research.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an example where governments have defined, together with stakeholder involvement, the operating space in the post-environment and post-nature world. Preliminary research on the SDGs indicate that non-legally binding goals do not necessarily contribute to policies, and we may need stronger steering mechanisms in place. The European Green Deal is an important policy programme to meet the SDGs. One meta conclusion of Prof. Biermann is that all governing for sustainability requires a strong European Union as it is also needed for strong global institutions.

Reflections and questions on insufficiently addressed issues in the European Green Deal:

#1 Global justice and planetary justice. It may seem as a bit of an unfair question as the focus is on Europe, but a key question is the extent trade will negatively affect developing countries and the poorest of the world. How will our reliance on emissions negatively affect them?

#2 Is it also a just deal for all Europeans? Europe became more unequal in the last 30 years also due to neoliberal policies. Support from the entire population is needed for the European Green Deal. The topic of a just transition is included, but is it enough? Stronger economic policies which decrease inequalities can determine the success of the ambitious plans.

#3 A deal for the future? Strategies need to consider deep time and propose solutions that are beyond the life time of our politicians. The announcements are all done by people who are 60+. Reforms should be considered in the constitutional and democratic systems of the EU and its member states, that give a stronger role for young people and next generations.

#4 Is it sufficient for global adaptation? Will the current policies keep global warming under 1.5 or 2 degrees? Adaptation strategies for even 1 degree are not included. Furthermore, how will we deal with the impact of climate change for the regions affected outside of Europe? Responses to risky geo-engineering methods should also be developed.

#5 Reducing meat consumption – one of the few silver bullets. There are many sustainability considerations underpinning the advantages of reducing the consumption of meat than advantages of its consumption, e.g. better health, more fertile land available for food production, reducing net emissions currently used for raising life stock and cattle, positive income effect due to lower costs, and animal welfare. The lack of a clearer language or policy proposals on the reducing the consumption of meat is surprising.

2.3 Presentation Dr. Burak Can

Bidding for Green Deal Topic: Towards Climate Neutral and Socially Innovative Cities

In the past six months, Dr. Burak Can has worked on building a consortium (20C Consortium) on the topic of towards climate neutral and socially innovative cities. This resulted in getting 56 partners on board. The tool that the consortium wants to offer is based on results of 140 cities that take systemic action towards climate change, encompassing the following data: 19 climate mitigation and adaptation measures per city; 22 climate actions per city; 19.5m euro investment per city; 2.6m euro saved per city (13% return of investment); 7255 ton per city.

What is striking from the data for Dr. Can is the high investment return. If knowledge and practices are disseminated across more cities, this can significantly contribute to the visions laid down in the European Green Deal. Dr. Can has come to several realisations about the European Green Deal throughout the process. The most important that relate to the symposium topic is that 1) animals are not explicitly considered in the wording of the Commission, and 2) not moral values but market values prevail.

Considering the first observation, Dr. Can considers that the fate of industrially farmed animals is one of the most pressing ethical questions of our time. Tens of billions of sentient beings, each with complex sensations and emotions, live and die on a production line. The reason humans eat meat is not because they have to anymore in this day and age, but because it is possible. In that sense sentient beings are used for human pleasure. It is an ethical question, and people like him who are not vegetarian or vegan have to live with this cognitive dissonance. Once acknowledged though, Dr. Can sees an opportunity to evolve and become a better species ourselves.

On the second observation that market values prevail, Dr. Can is optimistic that the European Green Deal has the ability to attract many allies who are not driven by an ethical agenda, but who are rather driven by prospects of profit. Furthermore, the fact that in the 20C Consortium the estimates are that cities are able to achieve a positive net investment in 10 years in becoming climate neutral and socially innovative, is considered to be an important quality what can make the cut for policy-makers. Taken together, Dr. Can considers that however imperfect as the allies or motives for change may be, the European Green Deal offers an opportunity to make progress and change the status quo. This can help the fate of animals, albeit indirectly.

2.4 Presentation Prof. Bram Büscher

A Green New Deal needs a radically different conservation: Towards a convivial alternative

Prof. Büscher indicates that the European Green Deal strategy aims to transform the European community and set it onto a sustainable development path. He also sees a lot of comparisons between debates on the Green Deal with the debates he has seen on conservation.

But the main choices it makes, particularly with respect to biodiversity, are not nearly foundational enough. While it is important to amongst other issues 'green European cities' and 'increase biodiversity in urban spaces', the EU still wants to its cake and eat it too. This is because the European Green Deal banks on 'efficiency' and 'decoupling', both of which are deeply problematic: the first makes the problem worse and the second does not work. To have a chance to better balance biodiversity and economy, a radically different conservation is needed, one that moves beyond nature-people dichotomies and that is grounded in degrowth.

Prof. Büscher illustrates that The Great Acceleration shows that conservation and 'growth' do not go hand in hand. A system redesign is needed in 'the Anthropocene'. The three currently dominant perspectives – mainstream conservation, new conservation and neoprotectionism, like the European Green New Deal, do not address the roots of the problem. They do not take the history of political economy serious enough, and so fail to present a coherent systems redesign.

Prof. Büscher makes a case for convivial conservation, a new approach that goes beyond protected areas and faith in markets to join other movements, individuals and organizations focused on holistic, transformative system change. In this transition to what he calls 'convivial conservation', prof. Büscher proposes:

1. Not setting nature apart or turning it into 'capital', we need to integrated nature into social, cultural and ecological contexts
2. Re-learning human natures in relation to the needs of non-human natures and animals
3. Moving away from touristic voyeurism to engaged visitation
4. Moving from seeing nature as 'spectacle outside' to everyday 'inside'
5. From privatized expert technocracy to common democratic engagement

In this structural transformation where we tackle biodiversity and political-economic crisis through system-redesign, we have to deal with power, time, various actors and the dialectic between them. We certainly do not want to let a change overcome us, but we need to plan and push for it deliberately. Prof Büscher challenges the audience to think about whether the European Green Deal a first step towards to systems change, or whether it rather prevents from happening?

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2.5 Presentation Monique Janssens

Animal Business, an ethical exploration of corporate responsibility towards animals

What is involved in corporate ethical responsibility towards animals? How do companies deal with this responsibility? Dr. Janssens demonstrates that animal welfare is a blind spot in both corporate practice and business ethics, despite the fact that companies undeniably bear responsibility for the lives and welfare of the animals on which they have an impact. Although companies practicing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) do concern themselves with their effects on humans and the environment, they are much less concerned about what they are doing to animals. She argues that animal ethics should be part of business ethics and CSR, and managers can contribute to the paradigm shift needed.

Dr. Janssens explains that in the very often used 'Triple P' (People, Planet, Profit), Animals are strangely enough missing. When 'Profit' was changed into 'Prosperity', a little more room for animals was given, but still not enough. Looking to 'animal ethics' and 'business ethics', she noticed that these are worlds miles apart. They do not talk to each other; they each have their own concepts, models and ideas. Dr. Janssens makes a strong case to integrate these two worlds. Her key argument for this is that animals do have a moral status. As companies are moral actors, they have a moral obligation to take the interest of those with a moral status into account. This should include animals as well.

What can companies do to ensure animal welfare is given more attention? Dr. Janssens proposes the following actions:

1. Make a manager responsible for animal welfare
2. Check the model and start communicating
3. Integrated animal welfare in CSR / communication
4. Add personal contact and storytelling to this communication
5. Add new channels, like apps and gaming

Dr. Janssens further gives a few examples where efforts are being made to include animal wellbeing in for instance food companies. She concludes by reflecting more specifically on the European Green Deal, where the two most relevant themes for animal welfare are the 'Farm to Fork' and 'Biodiversity' theme. She considers that animal welfare can converge with biodiversity and ecosystem protection, but can diverge with emission issues.

2.6 Presentation Jorgo Riss

European Green Deal or European Greenwash?

Mr. Riss thinks the European Green Deal is extremely important, despite all the shortcomings he sees. He explains that for a long time the European Union was primarily associated with the internal market, common market trade, etc., so the fact that the European Union has set itself the Green Deal as a political guideline is crucial.

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Mr. Riss observes that the European Green Deal is human centered, draws back to the human interest and even more so to economic interests. However, he also poses the question: is that a problem? Because one could say in the end, it does not matter why people do the right thing.

Human centeredness in a strategy like the European Green Deal is reflective of a much deeper problem of humans. However, it has resulted in an understanding that nature actually matters and that it can be managed in a way that is good for us as humans, and also good for other species.

Mr. Riss also talked about the common agricultural policy, as the already mentioned Farm to Fork strategy. He thinks actually the common agricultural policy is the biggest, most important piece of legislation. He states that almost 70% of agricultural land is dedicated to animal farming because a lot of the feed is produced in Europe. It not only has the potential to free up much land, but also the potential to liberate a lot of animals from terrible industry factory farms. Another issue that is being promoted at the moment is a new type of genetic modified organisms, including genetically-modified animals with cattle that does not grow horns anymore. If the European Commission were to give into the pressure from the chemical and biotech lobby, Mr. Riss considers there will be huge objections from across Europe. However, Mr. Riss also see that not only at the EU level, but also on national level there are too many policies that reflect organized interests, much more often business interests rather than more diffused and less well organized civic and citizen interests. For that reason, organizing, linking-up, and not leaving the playing field to the lobbyists is very important.

In conclusion, Mr. Riss states that among other issues, he defends the forest from being clear-cut and defends the river from being polluted. "We are not defending nature. We are nature defending ourselves."

2.7 Interactive debate

In the final part of the workshop, the participants engaged in a discussion together with the organizers and remaining panelist. Participants were able to speak on screen, but were also provided the opportunity to express their viewpoints or ask questions via the chat function. The debate was primarily structured around two main statements. In order to provide a brief overview of the various arguments mentioned, the main viewpoints expressed have been paraphrased and grouped together:

Statement 1: Coupling sustainability to the economic growth paradigm is a smart move: it is the most feasible way to invest in sustainable change.

- Coupling sustainability to an economic growth paradigm is impossible. It is a lock-in: why use a system that is the cause of the problem as a solution? Sustainable economic growth is an oxymoron.

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- If you attract businesses who need to attract shareholders as allies to the Green Deal, you will not attract good allies. Some sectors need de-growth. These so-called allies will stand in the way of systemic change.
- While not the best allies may be attracted, it may be an acceptable compromise to all of us. That is in the end an advantage to all European citizens. It may furthermore provide the opportunity to set higher goals and standards one day.
- While not the best way to achieve sustainable development, there is no achievable alternative. It is the most feasible way forward. Therefore, within this capitalist system, an economic growth paradigm is the most pragmatic way to further the sustainability agenda.
- When people say “it is unrealistic to achieve change in a different way than the economic growth model”, you should recognize that power is taking to you. The more people do this, the more acceptable this viewpoint becomes. This narrative must be contested and ways to think outside the box must be permitted.
- Everything may seem to be about money, but if our health rapidly deteriorates we realize that health and well-being are more important.

Statement 2: The Green Deal will accelerate the sustainability transition, but it will not lead to the systemic changes needed on the short term.

- At the moment, the European Green Deal is mostly a successful piece of communication. The question of how good or bad the transition and changes will be, depend on the actual legislation that comes out of it.
- For the economic recovery of Covid pandemic, the airline sectors have been receiving a lot of public funding. In terms of climate, they are one of the most polluting sectors. This is one example of how the European Green Deal is not the only agenda in town.
- Short term systemic changes are not the strength of the European Union. It lies within the nature of EU democracy: changes and decisions take a lot of time as all members need to agree and member states also like their sovereignty. In terms of achieving short term changes, this is a problem.
- If we need to convince everyone that some sectors or areas should be de-growing, you feel face immediate opposition. How should we relay policy ambitions to these communities?
- Promotion and branding is important if you want to get people on board.
- People, planet, profit (or prosperity). It is sold as a win-win-win. But some will lose.

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- There are many developments on a small scale that may not lead directly to systemic change, but could add to the transition. Greening urban spaces is such a development, where as an example in some places cycling is promoted by offering more space for cyclists in the city.

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