



POPULISM AND THE GREEN ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE BALTIC STATES

A Populist Encounters Research Group Stakeholder Workshop Report

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Date: 23 and 24 March

Location: Riga Stradiņš University, Social Sciences Research Centre, Kuldīgas street 9C

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the discussions and insights generated during the stakeholder workshop “Populism and the Green Energy Transition in the Baltic States.” The event brought together 28 participants - researchers, policymakers, civil society actors, business representatives and journalists – to explore the sources of resistance to climate and energy policies, the narratives and actors shaping public debate, and potential pathways to address these challenges in the Baltic states. The workshop was formed as a part of an emerging research initiative focused on understanding how populism interacts with climate and energy policy in Europe, with particular attention to the Baltic region. The interactive format encouraged participants to collectively map the actors, narratives, and institutional dynamics that contribute to resistance to green transition policies, while also identifying best practices and potential solutions.

Importantly, workshop discussions suggested that resistance to the green energy transition should not be understood simply as a product of populism or climate scepticism. Rather, participants consistently emphasised that concerns about fairness, economic security, local participation and trust often precede political mobilisation. Populist actors frequently amplify, reframe and exploit these existing grievances rather than creating them from scratch.

Resistance often reflects broader concerns about economic fairness, social distribution of costs, regional inequalities, and trust in political institutions. In many cases, opposition emerges from perceptions that the costs of transition fall disproportionately on certain communities, sectors, or social groups. At the same time, business representatives would emphasise “a lack of social licensing”, even following efforts of more engagement.

The discussions also emphasised the role of political actors and media in shaping narratives around energy transition. Participants observed that political actors, including populist parties and movements, frequently frame climate policies as elitist, externally imposed or economically damaging. However, these narratives tend to resonate most strongly where underlying concerns about inequality, exclusion or institutional trust already exist.

At the same time, the workshop highlighted a range of promising practices already in place that can help improve and strengthen dialogue between different stakeholders for more inclusive and thoughtful green energy transitions. Some of these include participatory governance approaches, transparent policy communication, targeted compensation mechanisms, and early community involvement in renewable energy projects.

The workshop concluded with a discussion of potential research directions and opportunities for collaboration. Participants expressed a strong interest in contributing to a developing research network focused on the intersection of populism and green energy transition in the Baltic region. Future activities may include collaborative research projects, policy engagement initiatives, and further stakeholder workshops.

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Across Europe and globally, the transition to renewable and low-carbon energy systems has become a central component of climate policy. Governments have introduced a range of measures to accelerate decarbonisation, including renewable energy investments, carbon pricing mechanisms, and regulatory frameworks aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Meadowcroft, 2009; Geels, 2014; Sovacool, 2016).

While these policies are widely recognised as necessary to address climate change, they are increasingly accompanied by political contestation and social resistance. In some contexts, populist political actors have become effective at articulating and amplifying these concerns by framing environmental policies as economically harmful, socially unfair or imposed by distant political elites. However, research increasingly suggests that such narratives are often successful because they connect with existing grievances relating to inequality, participation and trust rather than generating resistance independently. (Fraune and Knodt, 2018; Maltby et al., 2021; Lockwood and Lockwood, 2022).

These dynamics have become particularly visible in debates surrounding energy prices, infrastructure projects, and regional economic transitions. Public resistance often emerges around specific projects, such as wind farms or energy infrastructure, but can also be connected to broader grievances about economic inequality, regional marginalisation, or perceived lack of democratic accountability (Wolsink, 2007; Devine-Wright, 2009; Aitken, 2010).

The Baltic region offers an important context in which to examine these dynamics. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are simultaneously pursuing ambitious energy transition strategies while navigating complex political, economic, and geopolitical challenges. Issues such as energy security, economic restructuring, and European integration intersect with domestic political debates about climate policy (Bouzarovski and Herrero, 2017; Mišík, 2022; Szulecki, 2018).

Understanding the social and political dynamics surrounding green energy transitions is therefore essential for both effective policymaking and democratic legitimacy. The workshop was organised to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to explore these issues from different angles and contribute to the development of a new regional network focused on populism and the green energy transition that would contribute to emerging new, practical and evidence-based research projects closely tied to pressing issues identified by different stakeholders.

2. OBJECTIVES AND THE DESIGN OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop aimed to create a collaborative space where participants could share perspectives and collectively reflect on the political dynamics surrounding green energy transitions. The workshop had two main objectives: first, to integrate diverse stakeholders at the earliest stages of research development to strengthen evidence-

based research and policymaking; and second, to build a supportive regional network that enhances resilience to populist actors and improves the implementation of the green transition across the Baltic region.

To operationalise these objectives, participants were invited to collectively explore and unpack several interrelated dimensions of resistance to the green energy transition:

- identifying the key sources of resistance to climate and energy policies
- mapping the discourses, narratives, and framing strategies shaping public debate
- identifying the actors and institutions that drive or amplify resistance
- examining the sector-specific impacts of these dynamics
- exploring cross-sector challenges and constraints, including issues of trust, communication, and coordination
- identifying existing good practices and potential solutions, with particular attention to cooperation across sectors

These analytical dimensions guided the structure of the workshop sessions and provided the foundation for the insights presented in this report. The workshop was structured as an interactive stakeholder dialogue, designed to encourage collaborative analysis and exchange of experiences across sectors, professional backgrounds and national contexts.

In session 1, participants worked in national groups (Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) to identify key narratives, actors, and sources of resistance to green transition. Each national table was provided with a table to fill in as a result of their group discussions (See Appendix 1).

Session 2 was dedicated to sectoral challenges and cross-sectoral solutions. Participants worked in sectoral groups (journalists, businesses, NGOs, policymakers, researchers) to identify challenges, impacts, and missing solutions, filling in a shared table (See Appendix 2). The sector representatives then presented the data to rotating mixed visitors from other sectors, discussing cross-sectoral solutions.

Finally, Session 3 was focused on discussing best practices, potential improvements, and their observed or expected impacts to contribute to a more just and inclusive green transition (See Appendix 3).

The sessions included a series of structured activities that allowed participants to progressively deepen their analysis. This included 1) national table discussions that mapped sources of backlash and key narratives in different contexts; 2) plenary synthesis sessions where participants shared observations and identified recurring patterns; 3) rotating breakout discussions (World Café format) that allowed participants to test and refine emerging insights through cross-sector dialogue; and 4) collective reflection on best practices and policy responses, focusing on potential strategies for addressing resistance to green energy transition. This participatory approach aimed to ensure that the report reflects not only academic perspectives but

also the experiences and observations of practitioners working directly in policy, civil society, media and industry contexts.

Day Two of the workshop was dedicated to academic reflections on Day One and to planning collaborative research projects and funding applications.

3. KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE WORKSHOP

3.1. Narratives and Discourses in Public Debate

Workshop discussions highlighted several recurring narratives used to frame opposition to green energy transition policies. Across all three Baltic states, the discourses and narratives largely overlapped.

Participants repeatedly noted that these narratives should not be dismissed as simple misinformation. Rather, they often draw upon genuine local concerns regarding fairness, procedural justice and the distribution of costs associated with the transition.

One common narrative portrays climate policies as elitist, top-down, or EU-imposed. In this framing, environmental regulations are presented as the product of international organisations or technocratic policymakers failing to represent local needs, and instead contributing to economic well-being or agendas outside national contexts.

Another frequently identified narrative emphasises the economic burden of climate policy, portraying green transition measures as financially harmful to households or small businesses. This framing often focuses on energy prices and taxation.

Baltic states are often seen as “already green”, and due to the comparatively small populations and economies, the contributions to the climate crisis are seen as irrelevant.

Stakeholders from Estonia emphasised concerns around security and identity. In Lithuania, the challenges of the green transition were also seen as linked to a wider erosion of trust in science after COVID. Meanwhile, stakeholders from Latvia noted that the climate crisis is often perceived as “not a real problem.”

3.2. Key Actors in the Backlash

Participants identified a range of actors who contribute to shaping public resistance towards green energy transition.

These actors include:

- political parties and political movements, including populist parties and political opportunists
- multi-sectoral advocacy groups and interest organisations, including farmers, forestry and gas lobby

- industry representatives and economic stakeholders, such as fuel companies, forest owners
- foreign influence, including Russian propaganda and the USA
- local community organisations, which one hand protect vulnerable public interests, but also sometimes create umbrella organisations with populist tendencies
- media outlets and online communication networks

Participants stressed that these actors rarely operate independently. Rather, resistance often develops through interactions between political parties, organised interests, media ecosystems, local campaign groups and social media networks, allowing local concerns to become politically amplified and embedded within wider public debates.

At the same time, the actors vary across national contexts, highlighting differences embedded in national or local policy frameworks or the different timelines of implementing policy changes. For example, Lithuanian stakeholders mentioned municipalities as important actors, who can resist local green energy infrastructure development. In Latvia, workshop participants emphasised the overlap of political and business actors, which is often difficult to distinguish, therefore contributing to political embeddedness that delays political action. While Estonian participants pointed out coalition/opposition political dynamics that contribute to the emergence of anti-green transition actors and academic actors, who work with business interests.

3.3. Sources of Resistance to Green Energy Transition

Participants identified a broad range of factors contributing to resistance to green energy transition policies. Some stem from tangible impacts, such as rising energy costs or difficult decisions that require trade-offs across sectors. Others are more emotional in nature, reflecting uncertainty and concern about implementing new systems that affect multiple aspects of everyday life.

A recurring theme was the perception that the costs and benefits of the transition are unevenly distributed across society. Concerns about rising energy prices, increased taxation, or economic restructuring can generate anxieties among communities that feel economically vulnerable. In some cases, resistance emerges from fears that green policies may threaten local industries, employment opportunities, or regional economic stability. These concerns are particularly pronounced among traditional energy sector representatives or members of energy-intensive industries, for example, farming, forestry and transport that play a significant economic role.

Another important factor identified by participants was institutional distrust. Where trust in political institutions or policy processes is low, climate policies may be interpreted as externally imposed or insufficiently accountable to local communities. Latvian participants highlighted a lack of communication from politicians that increases misunderstanding. In Estonia, low civic participation and a lack of focus on social issues were mentioned as important factors contributing to cultivating resistance.

Lithuanian and Estonian participants also recognised NGO-sector-related issues, including conflicts of interest among non-governmental participants and NGO-business relations that create ambiguous interest representation. Similarly, in Lithuania, business-funded research was seen as shaping data in ways that reflect commercial priorities rather than broader social and societal interests.

At the same time, participants emphasised that resistance does not necessarily originate from organised political campaigns. In many cases, it reflects genuine concerns among citizens and communities about economic insecurity or lack of involvement in policy-making or business development processes. However, as communities near green energy infrastructure development projects are often mobilised, Nimby-ism is noted as an important trigger for resistance.

Participants therefore cautioned against reducing resistance to a simple rejection of climate action. Many argued that opposition often reflects disagreements over how the transition is implemented rather than whether environmental goals are desirable. This distinction was seen as important for designing more effective policy responses.

4. SECTORAL CHALLENGES AND CROSS-SECTORAL SOLUTIONS

Journalists, as their main challenges, mentioned the complexity of the topic, contributing to a lack of public interest in the topic. Green energy and climate topics are often technical and lacking human-centred angles, as a result, being seen as boring. Furthermore, the media are often seen as lobbying for business or political interests. As a result, journalists are discouraged from covering the topic, and experts avoid public comments. Strengthening collaboration with experts and improving the accessibility of scientific knowledge were identified as key needs. Politicians should avoid using media for PR, while businesses should consider and contribute to environmental, not only economic aspects of green transition.

Business actors emphasised the challenge of securing a social licence to operate, particularly in relation to renewable energy projects such as wind farms. Despite efforts to engage communities, public participation remains low, and there is widespread scepticism toward business-led initiatives and research. The lack of trust in business-funded data and expectations for companies to go beyond regulatory requirements further complicate engagement. Participants highlighted the need for closer collaboration with academia and more credible, independent research frameworks.

NGOs' major issues include limited funding and capacity for advocacy, strong influence from industry lobby groups, misinformation spread by politically aligned actors and media, and weak political support for environmental policies. These factors contribute to reputational damage, public confusion, and underrepresentation of environmental interests in policymaking. Additional concerns include divisions within NGOs themselves, dominance of "old economy" perspectives, and tensions between NGOs and municipalities that can lead to policy paralysis, particularly in Lithuania.

Policymakers identified low public trust, strong lobbying pressures, and the spread of misinformation as key challenges. These are compounded by issues such as poor data quality, contradictory policy frameworks, and inconsistent leadership. The diversion of funding toward consultancies rather than long-term policy development was also noted as a concern. These challenges contribute to policy delays, weakened implementation, increasing political polarisation, and slowing investment. Participants emphasised the need for cross-sectoral cooperation and dialogue, equality-focused policies, keeping up with recent data and asking the right questions that help identify and improve pressing concerns.

Researchers highlighted structural challenges within the research system, including fragmented and short-term funding, limited support for long-term research, and declining interest among younger scholars. These constraints lead to inconsistent or contradictory findings and reduced policy impact. Strengthening communication of research results and improving collaboration with other sectors were identified as key priorities.

Although the specific challenges differed across sectors, a common thread emerged throughout the discussions. Journalists, businesses, NGOs, policymakers and researchers all identified declining trust, in institutions, expertise, political leadership or other stakeholder, as a fundamental obstacle to implementing effective and socially accepted green transition policies.

5. BEST PRACTICES AND EMERGING SOLUTIONS

A key focus of the workshop was identifying practical strategies that have helped effectively navigate the green energy transition and the resistance to it. Participants highlighted several promising practices.

Early stakeholder engagement, particularly at the local level, was identified as critical. However, participants emphasised that engagement must be meaningful and continuous in order to combat mistrust. The engagement should be oriented towards asking questions and listening to stakeholders to relieve tensions among different stakeholders, while at the same time recognising the challenges related to “participation fatigue”.

Participatory governance mechanisms are cited as helpful for broadening engagement and creating inclusive spaces for dialogue. As an example, the Climate Assembly in Latvia, or the Estonian Ministry of Climate’s “Dialogue series”, where “the ministry listens”. Also, creating larger events to achieve greater resonance and reach is considered a good practice. Participatory budgeting initiatives, but they have to be followed through.

Participants also stressed that participation should not be treated as a one-off consultation exercise. Instead, engagement should continue throughout the lifecycle of projects, with visible feedback demonstrating how community concerns have

influenced decisions. Without this feedback loop, consultation risks reinforcing rather than reducing distrust.

Fact-checking and environmental education were identified as important to cultivate knowledge and skills. In particular, the involvement of experts in explaining climate change, for example, meteorologists, can increase the visibility of the topic. Another solution was to consider an expert database for media across Europe, to validate climate-related information.

Particularly in the Baltic context, efforts to strengthen civil society were recognised as key to improving engagement practices. The local history of passive engagement and a lack of engagement infrastructure affects the quality of involvement.

And finally, building new narratives and considering the choice of words may generate different outcomes. Changing how policies are framed (e.g. using “clean” instead of “green”) can reduce resistance as the use of language talking about green transition and climate neutrality might attract disinformation and resistance.

6. MAIN OBSERVATIONS

The workshop demonstrated that many of the challenges surrounding the green energy transition are governance challenges rather than purely environmental ones. Across all sectors and national contexts, discussions consistently returned to questions of trust, participation, fairness and communication as the conditions under which climate policies either gain or lose public legitimacy. Participants also highlighted barriers such as limited platforms for sustained dialogue and unclear roles and responsibilities. Recognising the benefits of cross-sectoral engagement, the need for structured cooperation mechanisms was recognised, providing examples of Climate Assembly in Latvia or Dialogue Circles in Estonia.

Fragmentation and lack of engagement across sectors further disturb coherent policy and infrastructure development. This fragmentation is a result of structural conflicts of interest, not only across sectors, but often within, as highlighted by the NGO sector example in Estonia. At the same time, researchers would emphasise that project-based funding contributes to fragmented and temporal engagement with climate- and green transition-related topics. The distance leads to isolated communication circles and inconsistency.

Across all sessions, a fundamental issue cutting across sectors is a lack of trust, whether it is citizens' distrust in political institutions and policy processes, scepticism toward business-funded research and industry motives, declining trust in media and scientific expertise or tensions within and between NGOs and other actors. These trust issues create a self-reinforcing cycle in which a lack of or weak communication leads to misunderstandings, which in turn fuel resistance and deepen distrust. This suggests that resistance is not simply a communication problem, but a systemic governance challenge requiring coordinated responses across sectors.

While climate scepticism exists, the information shared during the workshop highlights that resistance is more often driven by material and perceived economic impacts. Rising costs and inequality concerns, fear of losing jobs or economic stability and a lack of visible local benefits from transition policies were among some concerns raised by participants. These concerns are amplified when policies are perceived as externally imposed (e.g. EU-driven), benefits are unclear or delayed, and certain sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, transport) feel disproportionately affected. This highlights the need to consider the distributional effects of the green transition as a core policy issue, whether related to economic or less tangible, cultural and social burdens.

Participatory approaches are widely recognised as essential, and the workshop revealed an important tension: while engagement processes are often implemented, outcomes are not always visible or meaningful. To avoid the resulting participation fatigue, increased scepticism, and distrust, effective participation requires early and sustained communication and visible outcomes from the engagement.

All sectors identified challenges related to knowledge production, communication, and accessibility; for example, research is often too complex or poorly communicated, media struggles to translate technical information, public understanding remains limited, and distrust arises when knowledge is perceived as biased. At the same time, experts are often reluctant to engage publicly, and journalists lack access to reliable, accessible expertise. This creates a gap between knowledge production and public understanding, which is then often exploited by simplified or misleading narratives.

Resistance is often shaped by local, place-based dynamics that are shaped by proximity to infrastructure projects (e.g. wind farms), as well as local economic dependencies, which often lead to NIMBY-ism. However, green transition processes at the local level are often overlooked in research and at the EU level, with metrics and goals for climate neutrality focusing on national legislative frameworks and policy-making. Considering local resistance as rooted in NIMBY-ism can oversimplify the issues and dismiss local challenges and calls for the consideration of context-specific solutions and early engagement strategies for municipal-level involvement.

However, Session 3 demonstrated that many effective practices already exist or can be developed based on cross-sectoral experiences and knowledge exchange, including examples of early stakeholder engagement, participatory governance mechanisms, and reframing of climate narratives. The good practices highlighted that the solutions are not only institutional and structural, but can also be symbolic and linguistic. Creating the space for cross-sectoral and cross-national deep and professional deliberation helps identify the issues and potential solutions, beginning to think about more systematic and sustainable approaches to increase equality and inclusivity to green transition processes.

7. EMERGING RESEARCH AVENUES

The workshop discussions generated several important insights that can inform future research on populism and the green energy transition in the Baltic states. These insights highlight the need to move beyond simplified, one-sided explanations of resistance and look for ways to consider the social, political, emotional, symbolic, and linguistic dimensions, among others, of transition processes.

One key takeaway is the need to avoid treating populism as the primary explanation for resistance to the green transition. While populist actors play a role in shaping narratives, the workshop demonstrated that resistance is often rooted in legitimate concerns related to economic security, fairness, and trust. Framing resistance as populist risks delegitimising genuine concerns and creating distance between different actors. Future research should focus on how populist narratives interact with underlying grievances, rather than assuming they are the origin of resistance. The examples from the Baltic states show how well established and sedimented the populist rhetoric and tactics have become, being adopted also by democratic actors to mobilise support. It contributes to new complexities in distinguishing between populist and non-populist actors, and new hybrid forms of populism that create new challenges for other sectors, for example, civil society.

Despite broad similarities across the Baltic states, participants identified differences in how resistance manifests. For example, Lithuania has around three times as many wind parks as Latvia, raising the question of what explains the variation across otherwise similar contexts. Rather than treating the region as homogeneous, future research should adopt a comparative approach that captures both convergence and divergence. For instance, while the Baltic states share many common narratives, historical context and structural challenges, they exhibit distinct political dynamics and responses. To explain and understand this variation requires attention to national political cultures, institutional arrangements, actor configurations, and historical trajectories of trust and participation.

A central theme across discussions was the importance of democratic voice and perceived legitimacy. Resistance often emerges not from opposition to climate goals themselves, but from feeling excluded from decision-making processes, lack of meaningful consultation, and perceptions that outcomes are predetermined. This suggests that legitimacy is not only about policy outcomes, but also about processes of participation and inclusion. At the same time, misinformation complicates this dynamic, as well as populist strategies employed by civic organisations and actors to mobilise support. Research should provide timely explanations and understanding of changing populist strategies and their impact on democratic engagement.

A critical insight from the workshop is that resistance to the green transition operates strongly at the human and emotional level. Participants emphasised that, people respond to perceived risks, not only objective facts, uncertainty and fear about change shape attitudes, complex policy debates are often filtered through everyday experiences. This suggests that effective analysis must “strip away the noise” and focus on a human scale to understand how policies are experienced by individuals and communities, incorporating qualitative and interpretive approaches that capture lived experiences.

Concerns about fairness and justice emerged as central to understanding the resistance to the green transition processes. Workshop participants highlighted the unequal distribution of costs and benefits, regional and sectoral disparities, and perceptions that some groups bear disproportionate burdens. These dynamics point to the importance of social justice to the question of the green transition, especially regarding energy and environmental (eco-)justice frameworks. Future research should examine how different groups experience the transition, how policies can address inequalities and how justice considerations influence public acceptance.

8. NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

The workshop concluded with a discussion of potential next steps for the emerging research network.

Participants expressed interest in continuing collaboration through a variety of activities, including:

- joint research projects
- collaborative publications
- policy engagement initiatives
- future stakeholder workshops and conferences
- joint funding applications

The development of a collaborative research network was identified as an important step toward advancing understanding of the relationship between populism and the green energy transition. Such a network would help facilitate knowledge exchange between researchers and practitioners while contributing to evidence-based policy development.

More broadly, the workshop suggests that future research should move beyond asking why citizens resist climate policy and instead investigate how existing social and economic grievances become politically mobilised, by whom, and under what institutional conditions. Such an approach would provide a stronger evidence base for policy interventions aimed at improving democratic legitimacy while sustaining ambitious climate action.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The stakeholder workshop provided a valuable opportunity to explore the complex relationship between populism and the green energy transition.

The discussions demonstrated that resistance to climate policies often reflects broader social, economic, and political dynamics rather than simple rejection of environmental goals. Addressing these challenges, therefore, requires an interdisciplinary attention to questions of inclusive governance, fairness, and democratic legitimacy.

By bringing together participants from diverse sectors and professional backgrounds, the workshop helped generate new insights into these issues and laid the foundation for future research collaboration. Continued dialogue between stakeholders will be essential for ensuring that the transition to sustainable energy systems is both effective and socially legitimate, generating evidence-based, up-to-date research that can contribute to practical and effective solutions.

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Appendix 1: Working table summary, Session 1

Discourses and anti-green transition/climate narratives	Actors who fuel resistance	Sources of resistance, main issues
LT Similar to EE and LV Expensivity and economic impacts Cultural wars Radical framings Distrust in science – too complex (following COVID)	LT Russian propaganda NGO representing business interests Lobby Populist parties / political opportunists Farmers Fuel companies Municipalities Vulnerable public interest groups Forest owners	LT Emotional arguments/fact manipulation Social inequality Internal conflicts of interests among NGO's Costs and increased inequality Complexity of the topic Distrust culture Biased science – business funded Nature /technological solutions Long-term/short-term Subsidies
LV Similar to EE Not a real problem Already green EU – elite issues Fear of outside influences Economic pressures locally	LV Political/business Latvia First/Stability Kirsšteins Political embeddedness – delaying political action Conventional agricultural lobby Gas lobby Latvijas valsts meži Drosme darīt – civic NGO Science – data, data quality, independence Social media Identity – social groups Urban/rural	LV Energy, wind parks Lack of communication from politicians/KEM Not clear benefits (community benefits) Lack of information Transport Forestry (Nuclear energy)
EE EU-top down Benefits outside of the country Already green Small country – little impact Threats to security - Identity Too abstract, lack of grounded understanding	EE Established industries – associations (oil/forestry/agriculture/peat) Political parties, mostly right-wing Coalition/opposition Media Academic actors Environmental NGO's Thought-leaders – individuals Russia/USA	EE Climate policy that is harmful to nature NGO / business relations Not enough focus on social issues Nimby-ism Complexity of the green transition debate Low civic participation

Appendix 2: Working table summary, Session 2

Sector	Key challenges with green transition/climate resistance	Impact on your sector	What is missing /cross-sector solutions
JOURNALISTS	Hard to get peoples interest in green topics Complexity of the topic Too technical/lack of human-centred angles Often associated with lobbying Topics seen as boring	Journalists discouraged to cover the topic Boring/sensational Green propagandists/risks of being seen as lobbyists Difficulty to get expert comments	Expert willingness to comment topics publicly NGO's – more collaboration with journalists Politicians – avoid using media as PR Business – include environmental topics and aspects, not just economic
BUSINESS REPRESENTATIVES	Lack of social license. The local residents often feel disengaged and complain about the lack of information on wind farms. There is an expectation from developers to do more/extra (on top of what's stated in the law) to lessen the resistance. However, when attempts are made (e.g. in a form of additional public meetings), very few people show up. People tend to grasp simple information with simple explanations a lot easier than data based research. From scientists – business needs to work closely with academia. There not enough good examples to show. However, a model needs to be found how to promote neutral studies. Scientists do		

	not want to be part of scientific research financed by business. This also relates to the first point – people do not trust data or studies financed by businesses. The Baltic governments though are not “rich enough” to invest money in science in specific fields. From NGO’s – there is a general mistrust of governments, businesses, local authorities. It’s historic and cannot be changed.		
NGO’S	Lack of funding for advocacy Industry lobby Hidden industry lobby – as NGO’s and think tanks Academia aligned with business interests Media bias and misinterpretation Lack of political support, politician spreading misinformation	Underrepresentation in green transition debates Reputation damage Confusing public and disengagement as a result Mainstream and fringe media against environmental advocates No green policies	
POLICY MAKERS	Lack of public support /trust Powerful lobbying Misinformation Quality data Use of existing data Mistrust in science Lack of leadership Funding diverted to consultancies Contradictory legal and social norms	Slowing investment Polarisation Slow or non-existent long-term changes	Cooperation and dialogue Planning and execution Education – quality and content Policy that consider equality more Science communication Diminished impacts Keeping up with recent data Asking right questions

RESEARCHERS	Lack of funds/Fragmented funding Lack of ideas that can be implemented Demand for short-term research, lack of funding for long-term research Lack of interest from younger researchers	Sustainability of research results Mixed, contradictory results	Cooperation with government, local government, NGO's researchers Communication of results
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Appendix 3: Working table summary, Session 3

Evidence of good practices in place or suggestions for improvements	Expected or observed results
Early engagement -> Involvement is not enough + cooperation with municipalities > Citizen, climate assemblies Dialogue series (EE ministry incentive) > Early listening and asking , including all the stakeholders > Large events > Strengthening civic society > Climate misinformation fact-checking, expert data-base > Participatory budgeting. > Environmental education. > Expert knowlage shared. > Replacing politically loaded concepts GREEN > CLEAN (UK example)	To combat mistrust between communities and businesses Less resistance Content for people, “ministry listens” Release the pressure and stress, at the same time participation fatigue Meet large audiences Better engagement Available for media to combat misinformation Raising trust, but have to be followed though Knowledge, skills More visibility Softens resistance