

PUBLICATIONS

Green Wedge Tracker – Monitoring climate conversations

As part of the Green Wedge Project, the Green Wedge Tracker gives you a monthly overview of the social media climate conversation in 8 European countries.

April 2021

- The discussion on the European Green Deal (EGD) continues to be led by European institutions but April also saw a series of more intense 'event related' conversations elsewhere compared to March 2021.
- In Italy and Spain climate discussions revolve around the Recovery Funds, and less around national climate politics; whilst other countries have mostly national discussions on climate but engage less on the EGD.
- National conversations reinforce our report conclusions: an ideological blurring of the concept of freedom, a clear divergence of groupings: with environmentalists claiming that policies do not go far enough and liberals believing technology can be a solution, and growing concerns over social justice.

DETAILS

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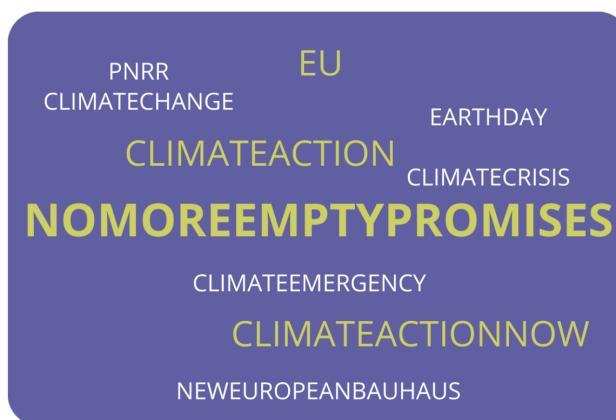
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Focus on European Green Deal Discussions

Most popular hashtags

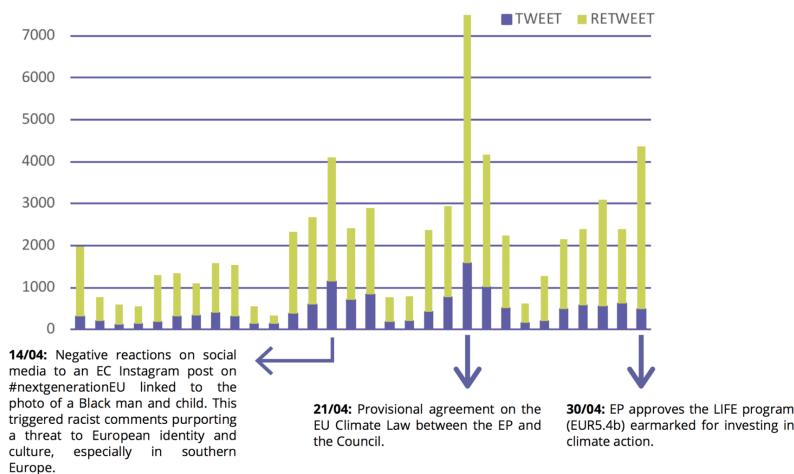


Disappointment with EU decision-making continues with #nomoreemptypromises trending – as usual – as the main reaction to the EU Climate Law discussions. This call mainly comes from environmentalists, who highlight inconsistent decisions from the Commission (eg in green classification of fossil gas investment, expansion of gas, or misalignment

between climate targets and 1.5C limit).

Key Twitter Events

European Green Deal discussions have generally intensified this month, especially around key events with peaks typically higher than March and the most extreme peak doubling that of previous month. Events driving the peaks are:



The Conversation in Numbers

- Despite having larger Twitter communities, France and Germany tweet **half as much** as Spain and Italy on the European Green Deal. We record **12-13%** of this conversation respectively being in Italian and Spanish, compared to **7%** in German and **4%** in French.
- 26%** of the Italian conversation on EGD is on the PNRR/Recovery Fund. We detect strong voices against *the use* of the funds—some implying that it will be wasted on climate change and others, accusing politicians of not taking the transition seriously.
- The conversation in Spain remains very institutional: the most popular tweets are from the EC President and the Spanish Prime Minister on the reception of the Recovery Plan for Spain. Negative reactions still see little engagement.

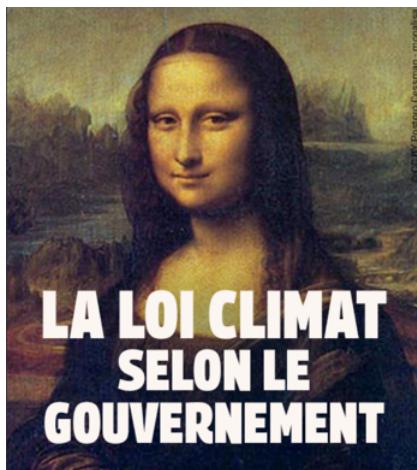
#ArgumentOfTheMonth

Intergenerational fairness and action for the next European generation has been misinterpreted by many for not aligning with their vision for Europe.



#MemeOfTheMonth

This French meme on the French climate law, sums up the criticism of the institutional *comms* around the laws the reality of what is agreed in the text of the law.



Focus on Key National Discussions

France

#biodiversity – people care a lot about biodiversity, but mainly at a local level

- Biodiversity is a very large part of the conversation but does not trend in the top tweets. This is because most tweets cover topics of regional relevance (harm to the local environment including the implementation of renewables, raising awareness, or gathering support for a petition).

#loiclimat gives rise to vibrant discussions (in fact we're awarding France the #MemeOfTheMonth):

- From environmentalists concerned with the law's lack of ambition and lack of respect for the work of the Climate Citizen Convention (eg ignoring the proposed ban on ads supporting over-consumption and GHG-intensive industries, or the minimalist action on insulation). This led to replacing the plaque on the Ministry of Environment, with one reading: 'Ministry of Small Gestures'.



- On the unfair burden placed on the poorest, while government asks too little of large polluting companies (in particular the petrochemical industry, banking, and Amazon).
- On the Greens' "irrational" sense of urgency.
- On the lack of consideration given by the government and the greens to the transition's impact on workers in energy-intensive sectors (such as aviation)

#Elections

- On 19/04, President Macron admitted that he underestimated the impact of the transition during the gilets jaunes protests. Although seen as a campaign move to convince people he cares about social justice, it clearly highlights the growing importance of social justice on the political agenda.

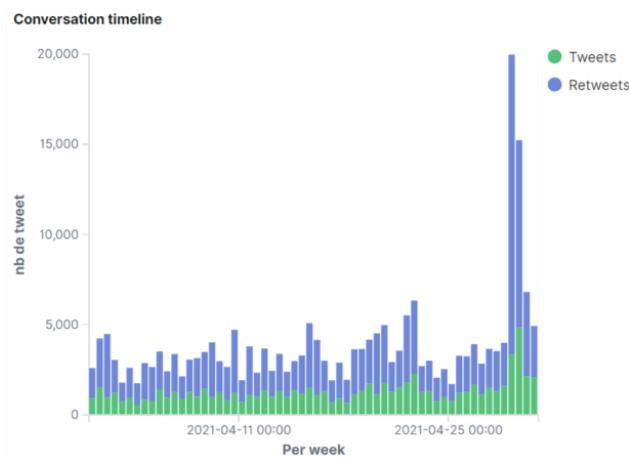
The sound of a Covid and climate conspiracy?

- Big social media reaction to the video of French policy intellectual Jacques Attali, in which he attempts to link Covid-19 to climate issues—while aggressively accusing governments and corporates of using these issues in a plot to control populations and curtail freedoms.

Germany

#Intergenerational fairness – a ruling on freedom

- After similar rulings in the Netherlands and France, it was the turn of the German courts on 29/04 to rule on the constitutionality of the Climate Protection Law for not doing enough. The German court in Karlsruhe took a new inter-generational approach by ruling in favour of the protection of future generations. This issue led to a quadrupling of Twitter's activity compared to monthly average.



- Interestingly, despite the fact that the German court decision set social media alight in Germany, it wasn't picked up much in the EGD discussion. A sign of just how national the discussions still are.

#ElectionsUpdates

- People clearly doubt the ability of the CDU/CSU to move environmental policies forward. The nomination of Armin Laschet cast further doubts on their capacities given his previous positions on wind power and his voiced preference 'for putting the economy first'.
- Although there is a generally positive sentiment towards the Greens, some are accusing the media for giving the impression of an inevitable Annalena Baerbock win, while others are questioning her competence on technical aspects of the green transition.
- Many Germans accuse the AfD of denialism, and lack of action on, both climate change and the Coronavirus.

Sweden

#Trains vs new tech planes

- On 21/04 the announcement of the closure of Bromma Airport was welcomed by the Greens. But it was criticized by the Liberals, given the role the airport played in connecting the capital to the rest of the country. Rather than go for trains – Liberals praise the development of technologies to "overcome" climate issues such as the use of green aviation fuels or electric planes.

#VotingIrony

- Disillusionment is rife: top tweets are about the uselessness of any vote to address the climate emergency.



Glossary

EGD: European Green Deal

EC: European Commission

EP: European Parliament

PNRR: National Plan for Resilience and Recovery (Italy)

See you next month !

Archives

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