



# Social and environmental aspects of national recovery plans

Workshop

9 December 2021, 13.00 - 15.00h (CET)



European  
Climate  
Foundation

**etui.**



## The Socio-Ecological Dimension of the EU Recovery

From the European Green Deal  
to the Recovery and Resilience Facility

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**SOCIAL COHESION**  
learning  
Series

EUROSOCIAL COLLECTION No 24

# The Study

## Main research questions

- Does the EU strategy for recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic have a socio-ecological dimension?
- What are the functions that EU welfare states are expected to perform in the context of the 'green transition'?

Methodology: content-analysis of key documents linked to the Recovery and Resilience Facility

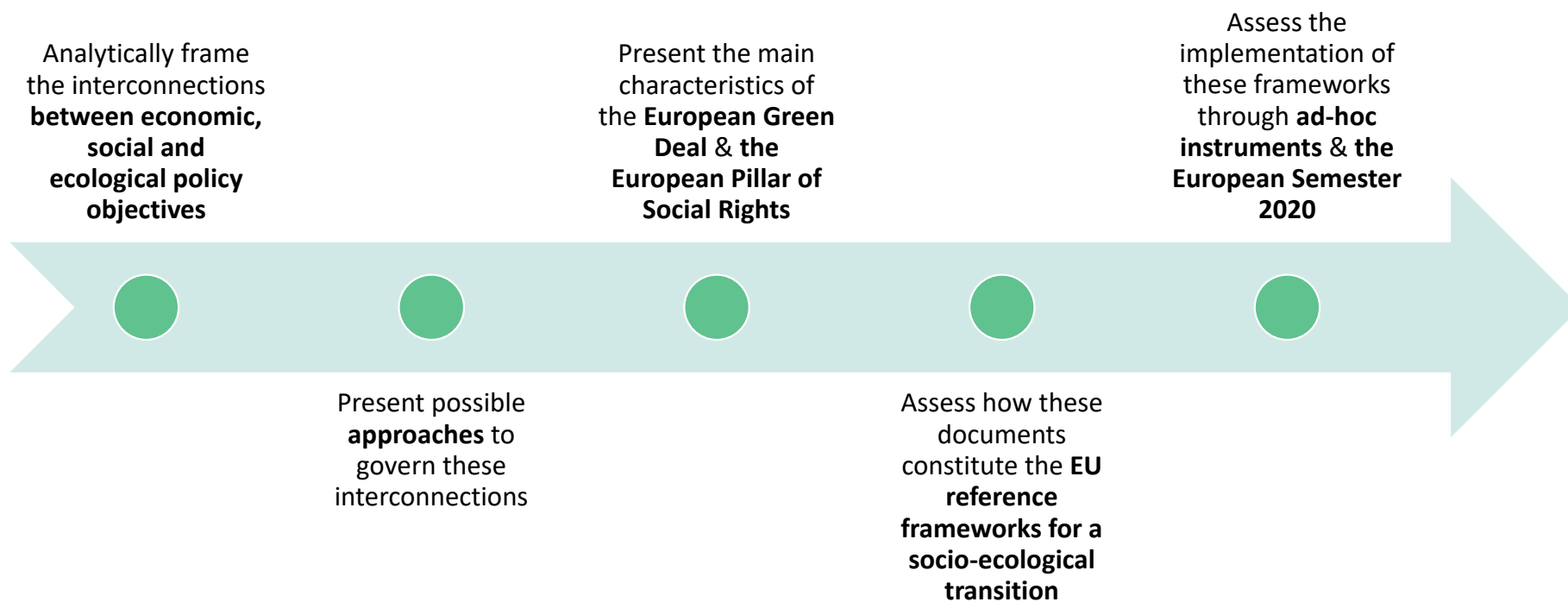
# The Socio-Ecological Dimension of the EU Recovery (PART 1)

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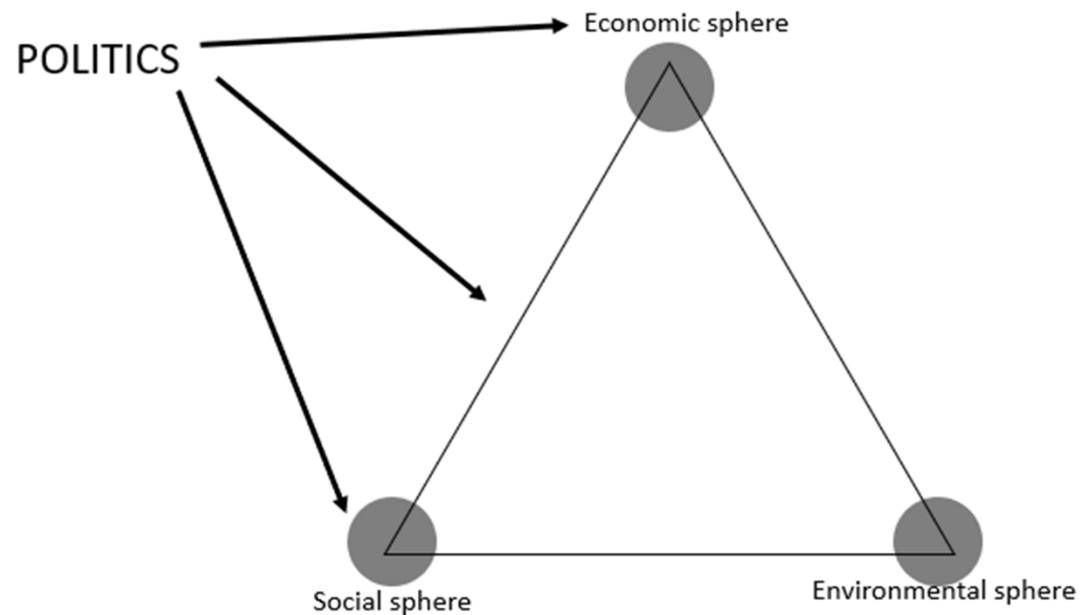
*Social and environmental aspects of national recovery plans*

**Brusselles - 09/12/2021**

# This presentation in a nutshell



# The eco-social-growth trilemma

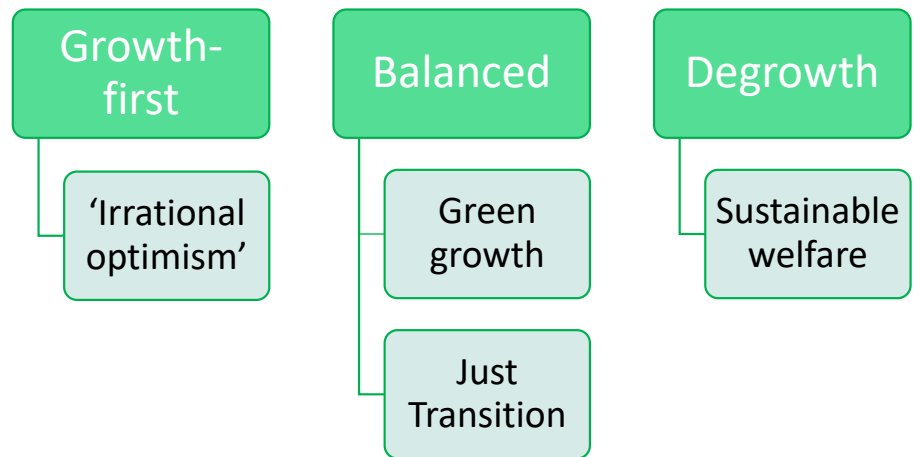


- 3 policy goals in 3 separate spheres: economic growth, social protection, environmental protection
- The “trilemma” refers to the governance of the interconnections between the 3 spheres

# Different approaches to address the trilemma

2 criteria to differentiate among approaches:

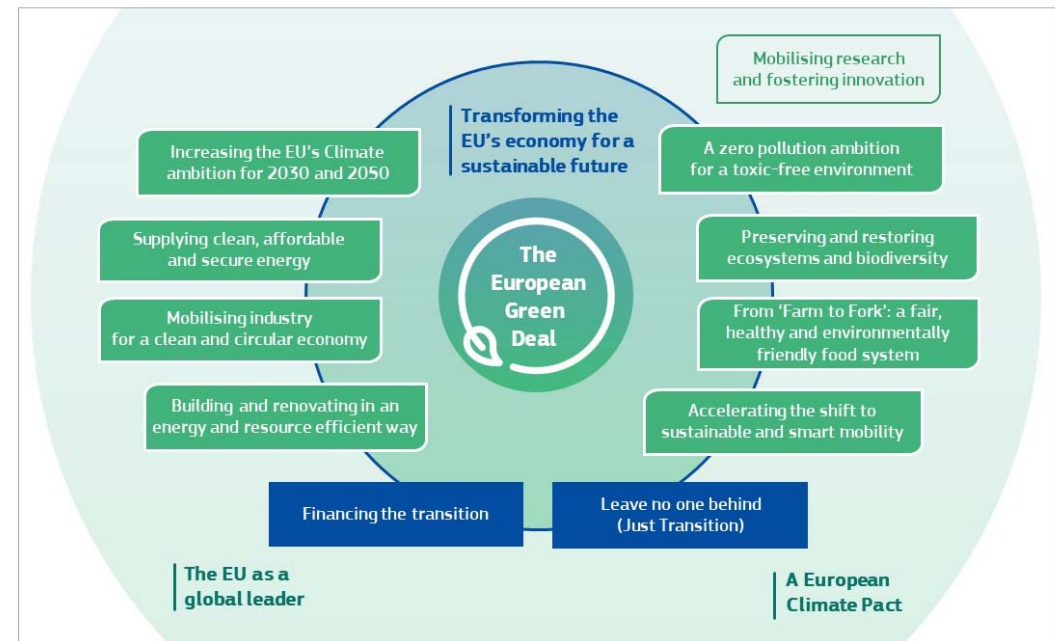
- **Integrative ambition:**
  - Integration does not occur
  - Integration between at least 2 goals
- **Importance attributed to the three goals**
  - Hierarchical ordering between the goals
  - Equal importance to the goals



# The EU reference frameworks for a socio-ecological transition (I)

## THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL (EGD)

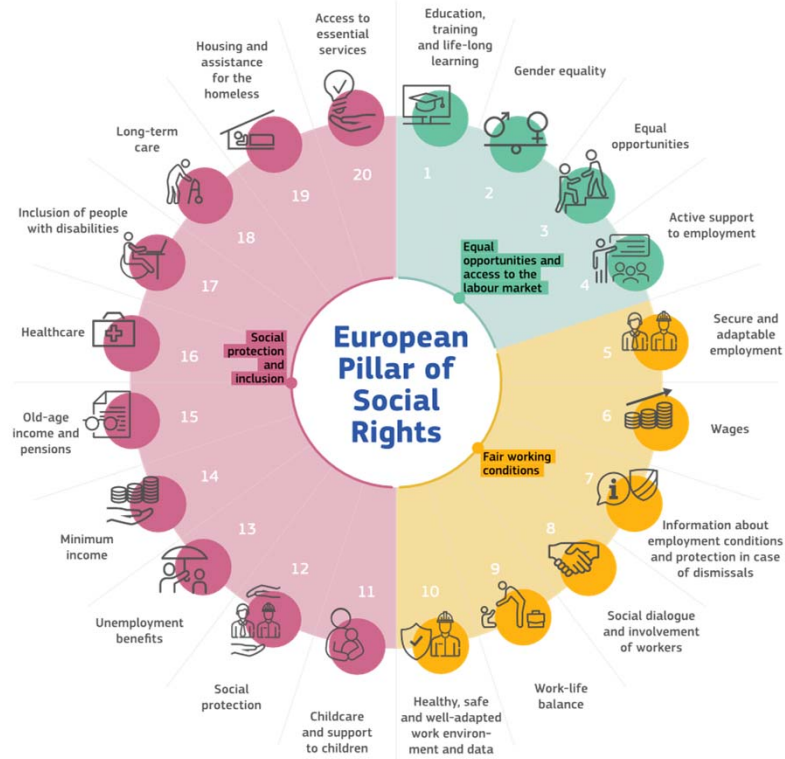
- Current EU **Grand Strategy** launched in 2019 & **centered on the promotion of economic growth** (like *Europe 2020*)
- Main novelty: key priority to ecological challenges and substantial **reinforcement of the green transition objective**: climate neutrality by 2050 & decoupling growth from resource use
- **8 areas of action** & dedicated sectoral strategies to deliver on them + 4 cross-sectoral priorities





# The EU reference frameworks for a socio-ecological transition (II)

## THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS (EPSR)



- Non-binding document proclaimed in 2017 with a **set of 20 Principles and Rights**
- Implemented through several legislative initiatives + a *Social Scoreboard*
- **2021 European Commission Action Plan** for the implementation of the EPSR with 3 headline targets by 2030: a) at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 to be in employment by 2030; b) at least 60% of all adults participating in training every year; and c) reducing the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by at least 15 million



## The socio-ecological dimension of the EGD

- Recognition of **synergies & some trade-offs** between its various objectives
- Mainly relying on a **Green growth approach**
- Parallel promotion of a **Just transition approach** → narrow (sectoral-territorial & focused mostly on **enabling** social investment) BUT also broader...

## The socio-ecological dimension of the EPSR

- Initially missing, besides a few references, now mentioned through the new *EPSR Action Plan*
- *EPSR as the social benchmark of the EGD* → promotion of a broader **just transition approach** that 'leaves no-one behind'

# Key EU socio- ecological policy instruments

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## **Vulnerable energy consumers & people at risk of energy poverty:**

Financial instruments: proposed *European Social Climate Fund* (2021) for € 72 bn.

Soft-law instruments: Initiatives in the *Clean Energy for All Europeans package* (2016) & 9 Recommendations within *A Renovation Wave for Europe* (2020)

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## **Redundant workers in emission-intensive sectors & their communities:**

Financial instruments: The *Just Transition Mechanism* & the related *Fund* (2020) for € 17.5 bn.

Soft-law instruments: The *Just Transition Platform* (2020) building on the *Coal Regions in Transition Initiative* (2016)

# Implementing the EU socio-ecological framework through the 2020 European Semester

**‘Competitive sustainability’** → a more **Balanced** approach to the link between ecological, social and economic goals

- Stable growth priority & focus on social-employment policies BUT substantial reinforcement of the environmental dimension in 2020
- Some trade-offs recognized alongside synergies, especially economic-ecological (Green growth) & socio-ecological (Just transition)

***Has this more Balanced approach continued to characterize EU economic governance in the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis?***

***Has the Recovery and Resilience Facility a ‘socio-ecological dimension’?***

Thank you for your attention!

**...Now back to Sebastiano for PART 2...**