

# **Green economy or grey status quo – the Polish clash over climate and energy policy**

**Dr. Karolina Jankowska**

*Still Taking a Lead?*

*The European Union in International Climate Change Politics*

Workshop in Hull on 24-25 September 2015

# Research gap

- analyses of climate change and energy policy and politics in Poland and its role in the EU and international climate governance (for example: Jankowska 2011; Jankowska 2012; Karaczun 2012)
- and renewable energy (for example: Ancygier 2013; Jankowska, 2013; Ancygier and Jankowska)
- no assessment of the most recent domestic climate change and energy policy developments since 2011 and the role of Poland in the European and international climate change negotiations (in the run-up to Paris in 2015)
- aims: fill this gap, complete and extend the existing analyses

# Research questions

- Does Poland perceive climate change merely as a threat or also as an opportunity for developing a 'green economy' or a 'low carbon economy'?
- To what degree, if any, the link between climate change and energy policies has become more important for Poland?
- What role in Poland do new (compared to traditional) environmental policy instruments play in the fight against climate change?
- What role does Poland play in multilevel and polycentric climate governance?
- What are the main obstacles to climate leadership for Poland?

# Main arguments

- With regard to its attitude to and implementation of climate change policy measures Poland has played a role of either policy taker, policy shaper or veto player or laggard.
- In most of the cases Poland has not provided any alternative policy proposals to those opposed, and criticized even those solutions that could potentially help the country to avoid economic losses in the middle and long term, such as development of renewable energy.
- Mains obstacles to Poland's climate leadership are:
  - the dominance of the energy sector over the emissions profile
  - the dominance of coal in energy mix
  - its centralized, coal-based and state-owned energy industry structure, which has led to a regulatory or corporate capture in the Polish climate change politics

## Section 2: National attitudes to climate change

- considerable change during the last couple of years – but only within population and at the level of municipalities:
  - TNS Polska survey 2014: 74 per cent – Poland should reduce greenhouse gas emissions
  - TNS Polska survey 2008: 48 per cent – intensive development of Poland's economy justifies the increase of Poland's CO<sub>2</sub> limits
  - 92 per cent of representatives of municipalities: central authorities should take action; 82 per cent – adaptation
  - amongst political parties represented in *Sejm* climate change seems to be unimportant and hardly treated as a serious political matter unless it appears in the discussion as a threat for the economy and society

# Section 3: Climate change as a threat or opportunity

- discrepancy between the national/ central government and the society/ local governments of how climate change policy is being perceived
  - more and more citizens/ local governments recognizes the advantages and the need of implementing different measures of green or low carbon economy
  - Poland's official representatives criticize European strategies and plans for low carbon economy fearing too high economic costs
- discrepancy also between different political parties and even within the government coalition (the case of "prosumer amendment")
- very strong resistance in the politics and energy industry against any changes to the status quo

## Section 4: Phases of domestic climate change policy

- **first phase:** climate change policy regarded merely as an environmental issue
- **second (current) phase:** climate change policy regarded merely as an economic issue/ link between climate change and energy policies has become more important; reasons:
  - high costs of the EU environmental law transposition
  - after Polish EU-accession the EU has started to formulate more ambitious climate policies (= more economic efforts)

## Section 5: Institutional responses, policy instruments and programmes

- Poland is in favour of 'new' environmental policy instruments (NEPIs) to tackle climate change (especially: green certificates, white certificates)
- within NEPIs Poland prefers by far market-based to other types of instrument as incurring the lowest costs of achieving the policy goals, but:
  - feed-in tariff for renewables is not perceived as a market-based instrument, in contrary to tradable green certificates
  - emissions trading (typical market-based instrument!) is still being criticized as too artificial, bureaucratic and redistributive



## Section 6: Multi-level and polycentric climate governance

- three types of Polish performance :
  - Policy taker: Poland implemented policies adopted at the EU or international level (directives on energy efficiency: Directive 2006/32/EC and the new Directive 2012/27/EU)
  - Policy shaper: Poland tried to reshape the EU or international policy in order to make it possible for Poland and other countries to attain the ambitious targets (EU 2020 energy and climate package)
  - Veto player or laggard: Poland blocked or weakened the EU or international policy/ negotiations (EU roadmaps on energy and climate in 2011 and 2012, in consequence the EU emission reduction commitment during the COP 18 in Doha in 2012, the negotiation during the COP 19 in Warsaw in 2013, the EU 2030 energy and climate package adopted in 2014)

# Section 7: The domestic implementation of EU and international commitments

## Section 8: Conclusions and outlook: Political leadership in Poland

- Poland: policy taker, policy shaper, veto player/ laggard
- protects *status quo* in energy sector or enables only slight improvements that would not be too costly (?):
  - high-efficiency low-emissions coal combustion technologies (“clean coal”)
  - nuclear power
- new understanding in the society( local governments: climate protection not only a sacrifice but also an advantage by developing green economy and creating jobs
- link between climate change and energy policies – more important especially after the EU-accession

Thank you for your attention!

Contact:

[kj@karolina-jankowska.eu](mailto:kj@karolina-jankowska.eu)