

It's our Europe!

Forum for Young People on Participation in Europe



Your results phase 1+2+3 for the topic:

Climate change and energy supply

Klimawandel und Energieversorgung

Changement climatique et approvisionnement énergétique

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Global Climate Change Crisis

Mendelova stredni skola, Novy Jicin

Climate change and energy supply

In this project, we will try to enlighten you about a topic, that is discussed a lot lately – climatic changes on this planet. This includes history of the climatic changes, their current state and future expectations. Objective of our work is to tell you some facts and refute some of the most common myths regarding climatic changes. Last, but not least, we would like to show you some of our ideas for using alternate energy sources.

Report phase 1

Who is affected by the problem?

All people are affected by this issue, because it is a global problem.

Why is the topic selected a European matter of concern?

Because it is a global problem and not just the United States of America or China

Which other aspects must be taken into consideration? (e.g. is e-mobility a purely ecological topic or do other economic aspects play a role? Will an ageing society have only social or also economic consequences?)

Other aspects as too much toxic waste from factories, a lot of smoke from factory chimneys, discharge of CFCs (from old fridges, spray cans etc..) and the exhaust gases from cars. All that destroys the ozone layer.

Which strategies for solutions are available today? Are they developed by region, state or by the European Union?

EU struggles this problem by trying to reduce vehicle emissions, limits the amount of CFCs in fridges and sprays. It seeks to discover new fuel possibilities for vehicles that are less harmful to our environment.

Can the challenges be met by individual states?

We think that the tasks can be partially met by EU supervision. Czech Republic is trying to reduce emissions and produce ecological cars, such as "hybrids". Hybrids use electric power for driving.

Report phase 2

Who should solve the problem?

All the people should consider all their actions and should meet environmental standards. People should learn to use bicycles as it was before, when cars were not so widespread.

How can a democratically legitimate European solution be found?

This problem can not be addressed democratically....

Report phase 3

How can, in particular young people, participate?

How can the participation of mostly young people be achieved?

Young people should purchase non-ecologic old appliances from people and they should get money for it state?. Our opinion is that this will motivate people, as it is for financial reward. For more radical group of people is here the possibility of demonstrations etc. Greenpeace. ????

How can each individual play a role and take on responsibility?

We think it isn't responsibility and the role of individual people, but larger units that can change things, we humans have no such right.

European Youth Parliament

Renewable Energy: ideas, research, efficiency

In the past year, there has been a lot of discussion concerning the exit from nuclear energy and fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas. But what exactly are the alternatives for these conventional energy resources and how could they be integrated into our everyday lives? Moreover, how far are we from being able to rely completely on renewable energy? What possibilities do wind, water and the sun even give us? Our group will do research on these questions, furthermore we want to analyse the potential costs and further implications on the European citizen.

Report Phase 1

Sustainable energy, renewable power sources, green energy. Environmentally friendly is something everybody associates with good, and with good reason, they are believed to be the key to putting global warming to a halt. So why are we still using these fossil fuels then? The transition is tough, many obstacles have to be overcome and challenges to be faced. In this report you will read about the problems making this transition so tough, and why the European Union must work together to solve this problem.

The problem of changing the energy sources from nuclear energy and fossil fuels to renewable energy concerns the government, the energy companies, as well as any regular European citizen.

In the European Union, the governments carry the responsibility of meeting agreements drawn up by the EU. These agreements often incorporate measures to ensure enterprises are becoming gradually more environmentally friendly, and as a result of this, companies are forced to look for cleaner methods to continue their activities. Energy companies are frantically trying to become cleaner, developing more renewable technologies for a sufficient efficient power supply to meet the EU's demands. In the current period the citizen has to decide on alternative sources for electricity, heating and also to run his car, as the market for electric cars has been booming. At the present situation, these dilemmas are mostly connected with supplementary costs.

The topic renewable energy sources is a European issue because it requires international cooperation to stimulate the use of sustainable energy sources to a level that is actually useful. Pan-European collaboration in the field of power production could save money and increase efficiency. As of 2008, the EU member states have adopted an integrated energy and climate change policy called the 20-20-20 agreement, aiming to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by 20%, reducing energy consumption by 20% through increased energy efficiency and up scaling the use of sustainable energy sources so 20% of our power consumption is generated by environmentally friendly production methods. The joint responsibility to achieve this goal, makes it useful for the member states to cooperate in terms of research and dialogue. Furthermore, the polluting activities of neighboring member states can lead to air pollution coming from one state, being moved by the wind to the next one, causing health problems, agricultural problems, and all sorts of problems alike.

Switching to renewable energy sources is a very costly process nowadays and a not-so attractive concept, because the alternatives to fossil fuel powered energy plants aren't cost-efficient enough yet. It's exactly this that causes states and companies to prefer conventional, polluting sources. Especially in the current economic climate in Europe that is notably deteriorating due

to the Euro-zone crisis and the aftermath of the global credit crunch, companies and states are cleaning up their messy balance sheets and do not have the liquidities to turn to clean energy. The EU therefore has to be careful in making decisions concerning the climate change policy, if they are too lenient on the companies and states the 20-20-20 agreement's goals will not be met in time, worsening the chances of irreparably (atleast in the coming time periods) polluting and damaging the earth's environment. When the EU decides to act quickly by harshly enforcing climate regulations, the already existing pattern of the Global Shift (= outsourcing of factories to low-wage countries e.g. China) might be stimulated, leaving the European labour force unemployed as companies search for cheaper locations where they can use 'cheap' fossil fuel sources. The issue as it is is very delicate, as has been visible during the last 3 climate summits in Copenhagen (2009), Cancún (2010) and Durban (2011) states aren't willing enough to sacrifice that bit of their sovereignty to stop the on marching process of global warming. This political impasse meant for 3 years no clear climate compromises were formed as a follow up of the since 2005 active Kyoto protocol. Further aspects that have to be taken into consideration are the large difference in actively stimulating clean energy, for example, Denmark's electricity demand is met for 20% by wind energy alone, while in the Netherlands, only 3,9% is met by this source. These discrepancies are hard to incorporate in forming policies and have to be considered.

Report phase 2

The implementation of renewable energies - an inevitable plan of action if you want to continue sight-seeing in Amsterdam by foot - is a delicate matter. As reported in our latest phase report, the thing we don't want to do is to scare our companies away and demolishing our economies, because frankly (or perhaps sadly) money makes the world go round. Therefore, the approach has to be gradual and universal. It's no longer an issue to deal with on national scale, nor European, for that matter. What has been happening the last couple of decades, is that big companies like Philips and PSA Peugeot Citroën are outsourcing their practises and activities to developing countries. We won't be elaborating on this, as that would be a repetition of the last report, but the fact is, that if policies aren't integrated worldwide, companies are just going to go somewhere else, dragging their polluting chimneys with them and largely nullifying the aimed effect of the political measure itself. It even means that smaller companies, the major provider of jobs within countries, suffer because they do not have the means to just move their facilities around, leading to another economic malaise and massive loss of jobs. On the other hand, it has to be said that many African companies and farms nowadays use renewable energy for their production, because many development programmes invested in them under this condition. Industrial countries could learn a lot from these poorer regions.

Who should solve the problem? The UN. This organisation is the most powerful and most wide-spread supranational body that can achieve these targets. However, many important ideas and proposals concerning the battle against climate change are often refused by the Security Council, since the USA, Russia and China rely on fossil fuels and non-environmental-friendly production ways. For instance, the international summit Rio+20 is now heavily criticized because of this - the blockade by the powerful states such as the USA prevented the formulation of clearly defined aims at the summit. Clearly, some changes have to be made there.

What is Europe's role in this and how can we reach one clear standpoint on this matter? This brings us back to the line: "Europe, united in diversity". Within Europe situations, political, economical, geographical, demographical, etc, change wherever you go, and perhaps we can use this diversity to our advantage, instead of always being a barrier which is hard to overcome when taking decisions. We're thinking of a pan-European super grid which will incorporate sustainable energy sources varying on the geographical features within Europe, but we'll elaborate on this later. The main goal that has to be achieved is to get all our noses in the same direction. Within Europe, there are large differences in advancements in sustainable technology. These discrepancies between nations make it difficult to form one policy which can represent the entire Union, the first goal therefore would be to have the lesser advanced countries to improve their situation and then forming a common European goal. The reason why these

differences should be solved is that when, for example, a measure would be to decrease CO2 output by another 15% while some country had just cut its emissions by 30%, it would require a lot more effort than to have a member state that didn't do anything yet cut its emissions, these inequalities would then lead to conflicts in the policy making process, having a detrimental effect on the effectiveness of the resolutions. Furthermore, the differences in use of nuclear energy are also relevant. For example, France receives 78,8% of its annual power demand from nuclear power plants, which is an even higher percentage than the tsunami-stricken Japan. While nuclear energy is not a renewable energy source but does not emit greenhouse gases in the process of generating power, it still emits carbon dioxide during the enriching of the required nuclear fuel rods. The Netherlands, for example, only receive approximately 5% of their annual energy demand from nuclear sources, meaning they receive the rest from mainly coal-fired plants and other polluting means. This difference should also be incorporated in cutting emissions, as it will be much easier for, in this case, the Dutch to cut their emission rates by adapting their coal-fired plants or changing to another source, than the French, whose energy production itself is clean.

As said before, this problem requires more than just EU cooperation to solve, namely states worldwide should join hands in this struggle. Even though this is what we should aim for, and the only real solution to this issue, we can't expect all the members of the UN to suddenly agree on one matter overnight. That would be too ideological and rather unrealistic. This is why first we should get our own problems solved, set the example for the rest of the world and improve our domestic situation. Who should agree to this problem? All states of Europe. We do not see why there should be any left out, even the ones that are trying to overcome pending bankruptcy like Greece and Spain, as the green energy sector offers plenty of job opportunities and potential economical growth to be worthy to stimulate. It's necessary for everyone to agree in the end, to send out a strong signal, and to become a leader in renewable energy sources who can take the lead in getting the world to think green. In the end, it's all about cooperation.

As far as the participation of citizens in decision-making concerning this topic is concerned, we are sceptical. We find not necessary to hold referenda about this topic, unlike topics like a European Constitution. Moreover, we think it would unnecessarily slow down policy making and perhaps limiting the eventual effectiveness of decisions.

Report phase 3

We are aware of the fact that the installation of renewable energy Europe- or even worldwide will take a long time. Hence, plans of short duration will not serve to develop sustainable strategies concerning renewable energy resources. Each step has to be planned carefully, and it has to be secured that it can endure over decades.

One essential idea is the enforcement of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which coordinates the environmental activities of the UN. Today, it is mostly focused on development countries, which tend to be more open when it comes to implementing environmentally sound policies and practices. However, we think that it should also be encouraged to assist European states in order to implement renewable energy as a reliable source for electricity. Often, the member states of the EU deal with these tasks on their own, which can result in hesitancy and the abortion of ambitious but sometimes risky and expensive projects. If the UN would grant its UNEP more funds and authority, the programme could support more projects in Europe, which then could be carried out efficiently.

Another important step would be the restriction of the power of highly industrialized countries within the UN. The governments of these countries are often afraid of losing their status by implementing renewable energy and environmental friendly production.

Within Europe different initiatives can be found supporting sustainable solutions, governments that massively subsidise solar panels for example. This development led to Germany being one of the leading countries in terms of produced solar energy. Other initiatives are for example the European Climate Foundation, which collaborates with NGOs, governments and business

partners to drive the transformation of Europe to a low carbon economy, aiming to cut emissions of greenhouse gases by 30% in 2020 and 80% by 2050. Apart from giving out grants to NGOs, consultants and research institutes with the goal of de-carbonising the European economy, reducing energy consumption in member states, the ECF strives towards making the EU leader in global climate negotiations.

In our previous reports we have mentioned the pan-European supergrid with the motto 'Europe: United in diversity', organisations like the ECF could be key in supporting developments to install and maximise potential of ideas like these.

Institutes like the ECF are great on European scale and are very effective if they are supported well enough, but to solve the bigger problem –sorry for the repetition of part of the last report– we have to upscale matters. Climate problems are not solved on regional (European scale is relatively regional compared to global) scale. As aforementioned, global organisations like the UNEP should be given the power and means to achieve the goals set so ambitiously by many, though are unlikely to be reached by almost as many.

How can young people participate? Young people have fresh, largely uncorrupted perspectives on the world they see, and are granted with a creative mind. We're not steering towards hoping for that one Einstein to step out of the dark and solve this problem, no. The young people recognise that the way things are going right now, this planet is going to be not so pleasant to inhabit in a couple of centuries according to the predictions by plenty of research institutes. It makes us angry that economical interests are constantly prioritised over the climate issues we're facing. The cliché 'the youth is the future' is one that applies, we hope that environmentally weary people will start becoming more widespread throughout corporations.

The main reason the young people are the key group, is that it's their future that's being jeopardised right now. Raising awareness of this fact will draw the attention of most young individuals thereby creating a climate-weary generation. What we start thinking is that no individual can do anything on its own to solve this problem. Of course, it's not going to be one single person that will get everyone to live more sustainable, it will be a new mindset for people that achieves just that. So what can an individual do? Raising awareness is as aforementioned a key part in our approach to solving this problem. It's not the thing that will solve the crisis eventually, but it's a fundamental move towards a greener mindset.

Mesto, Novy Jicin

Climate change and energy supply: Energy, power stations and fuel

Our group wants to discover the mystery of the energy, power stations and fuel and their influence on our planet and our lives.

Our existence depends on them and we think that we should know all the facts about the problems, advantages and disadvantages to predict possible danger.

We are curious and that is why we want to know what could happen.

We think that we can learn from the past and make our future better.

Report Phase 1

Everything in our world is interconnected. We think that the problems with power stations and energy affect the climate, people and commerce. The climate changes and commerce affect people. People and climate affect commerce. And people and commerce affect climate. You see, interconnection is more than obvious. As a result, everything will be affected by problems with energy, e.g. unlimited reserves, harmful effects and impact on people.

The issues with energy, fuel and power stations are too serious and our governments perceive the importance of solving these things. Because of that the topic became a European matter of concern. It is essential to know every possible problem which could appear and every possible solution too. In each situation has to be somebody who will begin and when Europe begins it is good start.

Even if Europe will want to and try to make a better knowledge for people, it won't be still enough. Although people's willingness to cooperate is important, money will be still the principal thing. The economic aspects aren't negligible. The need of money is apparent around the world and the projects need to be financed. Also the economic aspect of consequences of the results obtained from scientific researches should be taken into account. And the changes that need to be done after them won't be for free either.

Some of these projects have been launched by EU. However, the results aren't yet evident at first sight. There are projects about saving energy, eco protection and the support for green-minded individuals or companies and they are put into practice in many countries. In Czech Republic we have projects supported by European Economic Recovery Plan, they are regional as same as nationwide. We think that this is similar in other states of EU. And the challenge could be individual or not.

All of the states should be aware of their situation in the field of energy and they should be able to find the solution of its territory. It is obvious that this is a challenge for each state but it isn't impossible. The help from other countries in EU is desired many times financial help, but the main role should have the state and its inhabitants. We suppose that states want to prosper and the energetic field is uppermost component of their dreams.

Report Phase 2

Energy supplies are a problem with deep roots. And its solution should be our priority. And it means all of us all over the world. Mostly people use these supplies and nowadays we are dependent on them. Every country could find out its own solution convenient for their environment, then we could discuss our results all together and the final opinion will be the best.

For a democratic way-out from this problem we can use a survey of public meaning and the ideas should be consulted in European standards. Every state should involve their people in this topic and then it would be democratic enough. It is not a proper idea to let the biggest decide about the future of all of us.

We should make the values from this problem for the citizens and show what is important. Then we could organise the groups of citizens and get their ideas to the best way-out. However, the interest is the most important component of this action, we can't force anyone to do anything.

Report phase 3

We have found out that the democratic structure does not have to be any organisation or European authority. The final solution depends on the people and their efforts. People are not informed enough and the roots of the negligence and the ignorance are very deep. The awareness should begin in the early childhood and to create the relationship between children and the environment and to teach them how to take care of our planet. Then everybody would be involved in the drive of the taking care and being careful. The information should be widespread and then it will be the best possible situation. When everybody is informed and has the right relationship it is easier to change things because it is not just a random object to talk and some strange topic. The real meaning of the democracy is "rule by the people" (from Greek) so the democratic solution should be found out by the people, but it has to be a bigger number because even the information is the same, everybody has his own opinion how to solve problems or how to find the basic problem. How many heads, so many opinions.

How it was said before, when the children will be taught about the environment, the pollution and the protection the young will be able to cooperate with adults and create projects about the issue. When we will make this situation, we could achieve the participation of the young, because they will be willing and able to be equal partners and they will care about the challenge.

Everyone could play a role, but he has to have the exact target. The protection of the nature is a big thing and people could attend in it. The responsibility is hard to accept, because of the many reasons against, but the reasons are not reasonable e.g. I am the only one who is caring, it does not worth it. If the awareness will be better, it could change people's minds and make them more willing to be the change they wish to see in the world (Mahatma Gandhi). The ignorance of the world problems is the killing thing. Where ignorance is our master, there is no possibility of real peace (Dalai Lama). We have to have open eyes and it could be achieved just by other people. We could change the attitude of the people but it has to be our exact target. And stirring words, examples of drag, we must show the examples of our own actions. To be informed is the first brick to solve the problem.

Atomkraft – gefährliche und unberechenbare Technik oder doch eine emissionsarme Alternative

Im Juni 2011 hat der deutsche Bundestag aufgrund der vorhergegangenen Katastrophe seine bisherige Einstellung zur Laufzeit von Atomkraftwerken verändert. Deutschland hat sich klar positioniert: bis 2022 werden alle deutschen AKWs abgeschaltet.

Wie sieht es aber mit der Energieversorgung in der Zukunft aus?

Kommen Engpässe auf die Deutschen zu oder muss Deutschland nach dem Ausstieg auf Atomstrom aus europäischen Ländern zurückgreifen?

Sollten weitere europäische Länder Deutschlands Entscheidung folgen, kann dann noch genug Strom zur Verfügung gestellt werden?

Welchen Sinn hat es überhaupt in Deutschland AKWs abzuschalten, wenn französische und schweizerische AKWs sehr nah sind?

Was passiert mit dem Vorschlag Großbritanniens, Frankreichs, Polens und Tschechiens den Bau von AKWs und Atomstrom ähnlich wie andere erneuerbare Energien subventionieren zu lassen?

Wie schwer ist es tatsächlich eine gesamteuropäische Einigung zu finden? Wer sollte dabei befragt werden?

Das sind einige Fragen, mit denen wir uns hier beschäftigen wollen. Fragen, die uns seit den Vorkommnissen in Fukushima nicht aus dem Kopf gehen, viele Gemüter erregen und die für unsere Zukunft wichtig sind.

Ergebnisse der Phase 1

Atomkraft ist im Vergleich zu vielen anderen herkömmlichen Varianten emissionsarm und liefert konstante Energie. Viele Länder, inner- und auch außerhalb der EU setzen auf Atomenergie, obwohl diese langfristig gesehen kein zukunftsfähiges Modell ist. Das liegt einerseits am entstehenden Strahlenmüll, für dessen Lagerung und Abbau noch keine endgültige Lösung gefunden ist, andererseits auch an der Endlichkeit der Uranressourcen.

Das Problem Stromversorgung durch Atomkraftwerke betrifft die Bevölkerung in zahlreichen europäischen Ländern, da AKWs einen nicht unerheblichen Teil des benötigten Stroms in jenen Ländern erzeugen.

Ein Ausstieg aus der Atomkraft ist nur dann sinnvoll, wenn tatsächlich alle europäischen Länder mitmachen und auf Atomenergie verzichten. Aufgrund der Nähe der einzelnen Nationalstaaten und der bestehenden Risiken bei Nuklearkatastrophen scheint es wenig sinnvoll, wenn sich einzelne Länder von der Atomenergie abwenden. Deshalb muss eine europaweite Lösung gefunden werden.

Als Folge des Ausstiegs könnte es zu einem Preisanstieg des Stroms kommen, um damit die erneuerbaren Energien zu subventionieren und die Forschung auf diesem Gebiet voranzubringen. Andererseits würde sich durch die „neuen“ Energiequellen die wirtschaftliche Lage vieler Länder verbessern, da innerhalb ganz unterschiedlicher Berufsfelder neue Arbeitsplätze geschaffen werden könnten.

Heute gibt es schon viele unterschiedliche Formen der erneuerbaren Energie, die erste Lösungsansätze darstellen. Dennoch kann auf die konstante und zuverlässige Erzeugung von Energie durch AKWs oder andere emissionsreiche Herstellungsmethoden noch nicht verzichtet werden.

Eine zukünftige Lösungsstrategie wären die Verwendung Wasserstoffbrennzellen, die mit der heutigen Technik aber leider noch nicht möglich sind. Hier wäre ein europäisches Forschungsprojekt vielleicht zielführend.

Um mithilfe erneuerbarer Energien eine konstante gesamteuropäische Stromversorgung zu sichern, wäre es denkbar auch ein gesamteuropäisches Stromnetz aufzubauen, vom Nord nach Süd und von Ost nach West, um so die Stromzufuhr zu verteilen und zu sichern. Dazu wäre ein zentrales europäisches Kontrollorgan notwendig und die Nationalstaaten müssten ein wenig ihres Einflusses abgeben. Eine weitere Hürde würden auch die privaten Stromanbieter darstellen, die in eine gemeinsame, weniger konkurrenzbeladene Kooperation eintreten müssten.

Ergebnisse der Phase 2

Wie in der ersten Phase bereits festgestellt, kann das Problem nachhaltig nur auf der gesamteuropäischen Ebene gelöst werden. Alle müssen gemeinsam die Verantwortung übernehmen, nicht nur einzelne Regierungen, sondern die Europäische Union. Wünschenswert wäre eine Entscheidung, die vom EU-Parlament mit der doppelten Mehrheit getroffen, aber auch von allen anderen Organen, wie dem Rat und der Kommission getragen wird.

Um wirklich zukunftsfähig planen zu können, sollten Experten auf unterschiedlichen Fachgebieten wie z. B. zum Umgang mit Atommüll, Sicherheitsmaßnahmen in AKWs, aber auch Experten, die sich mit erneuerbaren Energien beschäftigen, befragt werden, um eine realistische Einschätzung zu bekommen.

Eine Möglichkeit die zu treffenden Entscheidungen demokratisch zu legitimieren, wäre das demokratisch gewählte Parlament entscheiden zu lassen(s.o.). Weiterhin wäre ein Art opinion poll innerhalb der EU-Bevölkerung möglich, in der diese ihre Meinung zum Thema Atomenergie artikuliert. Diese Art von opinion poll wäre dann Ausgangspunkt für jeweilige Entscheidungsprozesse und sollten unbedingt Berücksichtigung finden. Vorher müsste sicherlich dafür gesorgt werden, dass die Bürger entsprechend informiert sind, was von der EU passieren sollte, damit die Bürger nicht von nationalstaatlichen Interessen beeinflusst werden.

Ergebnisse der Phase 3

Phasenbericht 3 einstellen!

Für oder gegen einen Atomausstieg in Europa ?

Die Nuklearkatastrophe in Fukushima im März 2011 hat die Nuklearindustrie wieder in Frage gestellt. In Deutschland wurde der Atomausstieg letztes Jahr beschlossen, im Gegensatz zu Frankreich, wo fast alle Politiker gegen den Atomausstieg sind.

Wir haben uns als Thema die aktuelle Diskussion um den Atomausstieg ausgewählt, weil wir uns mit dem Thema erneuerbare Energien auseinandersetzen möchten.

Ergebnisse der Phase 1

Phasenbericht 1 fehlt noch!

Ergebnisse der Phase 2

Phasenbericht 2 fehlt noch!

Ergebnisse der Phase 3

Phasenbericht 3 fehlt noch!

Caerphilly Youth Forum

Global Climate Change Crisis

The topic we will explore is climate change. The Caerphilly Youth Forum cabinet voted this as the issue to discuss at the 'It's Our Europe' conference. We agree that this issue is a worldwide crisis worth discussing at European level, as consequences of climate change can already be seen in Europe and worldwide, and these impacts are predicted to intensify in the coming decades. We have seen some of the impacts not only at a local level with floods in Wales in the past few months, but also at a worldwide level with recent natural disasters in the news. We will discuss who is responsible for addressing the climate change crisis and how the world can make a positive impact, to change the future.

Report phase 1

The topic we will explore is climate change and energy supply. The Caerphilly Youth Forum cabinet voted this as the issue to discuss at the 'It's Our Europe' conference. We agree that this issue is a worldwide crisis worth discussing at European level, as consequences of climate change can already be seen in Europe and worldwide, and these impacts are predicted to intensify in the coming decades. We have seen some of the impacts not only at a local level with floods in Wales in the past few months, but also at a worldwide level with recent natural disasters in the news.

Are people aware of climate change? Are there positives and negatives?

Part of this discussion is to explore whether people are aware of climate change and its immense impact it can have upon them including the positive changes and the negative.

We argue that EU citizens are aware of global warming as EU citizens class global warming as the second most serious problem facing the world today. One in five surveyed said climate change was the single most serious problem. The only issue perceived to be more serious is poverty (Climate Change Report, European Commission, 2011). However, even though EU emissions are decreasing, worldwide emissions are continuing to grow and so the EU should connect with countries such as china, America and India to pressure and support them to decrease their ever-increasing contribution to global warming. The EU have been committed to the Kyoto agreement however there is evidence to suggest that some developing countries have not been as dedicated as the EU to this agreement.

There has been debate over the positive and negative aspects associated with global warming and even whether it will happen. Evidence suggests that the negatives are outweighed by the positives, and proves climate change is happening, and it is happening now. When the last special climate survey was conducted there was a positive view of the economic benefits of tackling climate change and 78% believed that it would boost the economy. Some of the positives that will be a result of climate change are: improved agriculture in some areas of the world, a new shipping lane that would be created by melting ice and an improved cod yield. However obviously there are a greater number of negatives that would be a result of global warming such as: rising sea levels, increased chance of war, increased number of natural disasters, expanded deserts, increase in mosquito spread diseases and methane leaking from Siberia. The most damaging factor is the increasing average surface temperature of the earth in the last hundred years occurring at a rate unseen before rising by 0.6-0.7C, this may not sound like much but slight temperature changes have detrimental effects on the world caused by humans.

Who is affected by climate change?

Scientists are warning of the grave effects of global warming and its impact on people all over the world. We have discovered that global warming has a knock on effect on all life on earth. The effects to people on the ground, such as decline in agriculture – climate changes affecting the land internationally, tourism – lack of snow in the alps, people losing land/houses - through natural disasters and rising sea levels, less resources – oil, gas and food, unstable seasonal patterns, are just a small number of many problems we will face in the future if we do not combat climate change. The poorest people will be the worst hit communities in the world resulting in greater amounts of poverty due to their vulnerability to natural disasters affecting their housing, wellbeing, food supply and the lack of support for the poorest communities.

Why is Climate Change and Energy Supply a European matter of concern?

We believe that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the modern world and is a key concern for the European public. We feel it is our duty to conserve our planet for future generations, and as the next generation, climate change will have a greater effect on our lives more than the effect on the lives of the current adult generation. It is seen as the second most serious issue facing the world after hunger, poverty and lack of drinking water, and can also be seen as a more serious problem than the current economic situation. In a recent climate change report from the European commission (published 2011) citizens were asked who they thought was responsible for tackling climate change within the EU. Voted as the most responsible was the National Governments, followed very closely by the European Union, then the business/industry category. The report stated that more than four in ten citizens accept some form of individual responsibility, but these same people still see a clear shift of responsibility towards the Government and the EU.

The fight against climate change, focused on the EU's target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 20% below 1990 levels by 2020, is at the heart of the Europe 2020 strategy for sustainable growth. This is seen as climate action that the developed world needs to take as a whole, and is also seen to have a positive view on the economy as there are many benefits of tackling climate change. The EU has the power to make a significant impact in the fight against climate change, which is why it needs to be discussed and addressed at European level. Success in the EU could prompt countries throughout the world to realise that they can also have a positive impact, as we can only be successful if the world works to address this issue, and acts now.

Which other aspects must be taken into consideration?

We think that the other aspects that must be taken into consideration are:

- Current attitudes and ideas in and around consumerism.
e.g. Flying is seen to be one of the main contributing factors to greenhouse emissions, and one way in which the world is tackling this, is by introducing air taxes, but, when considering people's attitudes towards this, these concepts may not be having a huge influence in changing people's views, as many are just accepting this as the cost of the lifestyle they want to live.
- Whether climate change is a purely ecological topic or whether economic aspects play a role.
e.g. Climate change is seen to have a direct effect on major weather disasters worldwide, and a major part of these disasters is the aftermath that comes with them. There is huge economic strain that goes alongside clean up operations around the world.
- Will an aging society have only social or also economic consequences.

Report phase 2

Is it an overall problem for which there is no "simple" answer?

The issue of climate change is complex and we believe not all countries in the world can agree on a solution. We believe there will be a long period of time over which solutions can be found and

incorporated into individual states and become sustainable worldwide. But do we have this much time? Short term decision-making will not do justice to the problem. We believe the longer it takes to challenge climate change, the longer lasting effects we will have on the problems already created. There is no simple answer for the problem, as there are lots of factors with no simple solutions. Considering the current economic crisis, there has been a dramatic effect on combating climate change as it will be costly to each country, and many countries can't afford to contribute. All world leaders would need to work on solutions (discussed in phase 3) to make an impact.

Who should solve/ agree to the problem?

We believe the E.U needs to be involved in solving the problem, and to set an example to the rest of the world, because climate change is a multi-national problem. The United Nations need to be tackling the problem, world leaders need to be working together on sustainable solutions to have a greater impact. A leading European commissioner Connie Hedegaard states "International collaboration is absolutely indispensable to control climate change. The EU cannot solve climate change alone since we are responsible for a relatively small proportion of global emissions – just 10 or 11%. But by leading by example, as we are doing, we encourage our partners to take action too. And let's be clear – many have done so, even if the collective effort is not yet sufficient" (2011). The soon to expire Kyoto protocol in which only 37 countries are involved, needs to be replaced with a more inclusive agreement with greater targets. The European region, encompassing 52 countries, bears a significant responsibility for its historical contributions to global warming pollution. This region is home to six of the top 20 annual global CO2 emitters, including Russia, which ranks third globally (using 2008 data.) Every country needs to be aware of the global issues and take responsibility of their emissions. We feel this is a reason to include the rest of the world. Unfortunately those who will be hit hardest and first by the impacts of a changing climate are likely to be the poor and vulnerable, especially those in the least developed countries. Developed countries must take a leadership role in providing financial and technical help for adaptation. Business and industries contributions to climate change have a very dramatic effect and also need to be considered, such as the oil and aviation industries.

How can democratically legitimate European solutions be found?

In our opinion there must be a more inclusive contract, which all EU members must sign and agree to. This would then replace any existing or previous EU treaties, which have not shown enough progress. We feel that before moving on to countries outside of the EU we must establish a working system to challenge climate change within the EU. We recognise that worldwide countries have already started working on solutions, but we feel this has had no major impact. This could be due to a lack of support, and countries not pulling their weight. A possible democratic solution would be to introduce new laws such as the very successful 5p per bag charge in Wales. This has resulted in a 90% decrease in plastic bag use. We also feel this type of treaty could stimulate European economies, through opening a market for renewable energy sources, tackling two birds with one stone.

How could direct participation be organised?

We feel Participation of other countries could be very valuable in achieving progress on tackling climate change. In the treaties we have discussed during this phase, we would propose numerous targets which would need to be met by any countries involved. We feel a possible solution to encouraging this direct participation is to involve incentives/ rewards for countries that meet their targets, e.g. money, resources, entry into the EU. We believe this would encourage less developed countries to work towards set targets, improving the current situation.

Report phase 3

The UN and EU need to start solving the problem, to set an example to the rest of the world's countries.

Because the Kyoto protocol is due to expire which only included 37 countries, it needs to be a further agreement with further targets, and more countries included. This would then replace and existing treaties that have not shown sufficient progress.

In our opinion developed countries need to lead the way in combating climate change, through providing financial and technical support, which would allow other countries to advance in tackling climate change.

We feel a possible solution is to develop incentives and rewards, for countries that meet their targets; this would encourage more undeveloped countries to participate if they had financial or material gain. Some solutions, which already exist, are fuel-efficient vehicles, renewable energy, and protecting threatened forests from deforestation. We need to insist that business and government take necessary steps to make them available and affordable, to ensure these solutions will be used throughout the world to make an impact.

With which demographic structures could the problems be solved?

As a group we feel to solve the problem it needs to be as inclusive as possible, not only including the EU or UN but the whole world. Using working structures from these would help solve the global climate crisis.

One structure we feel could contribute to solving the problem is an international corporation called the G20, which is a premier forum for international cooperation of the most important aspects of international economic and financial agenda. It brings together the worlds major advanced and emerging economies. The G20 includes 19 country members and the European Union, which together represents around 80% of global trade and two-thirds of the world's population. We believe this could make an impact on climate change, as it is already inclusive, and would have the authority and resources, to make decisions about offering incentives for countries tackling climate change, which we have already discussed as a group.

How can, in particular young people, Participate?

We believe a great way for young people to participate in issues that may affect them, is through online Polls at a large scale for e.g. EU, UN or globally. The young people could vote on prioritised issues relating to climate change that the government feel are most important. The result of the votes, could then be taken further, and brought up in global meetings. This would ensure the participation of young people allowing them to have a say and input into future decisions on subjects of importance to them, as we are the generation which are mostly likely to see the impact of climate change, not the adults making decisions today. We believe for this to be achieved, parties/ countries would need to fully promote the inclusion of young people and their views. This would ensure no discrimination, including all young people on a global scale, not only through online polls, but the participation of all youth provisions, schools, and local governments. This would fall under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and article 12 the right to a voice. Also in Wales we have 'Participation standards which ensure children and young people have a voice. There are seven standards in all these are; Information, Choice, No discrimination, you, Get something out of it, Respect, Feedback, Improve how we work. If other countries used similar standards to involve children and young people in decision making about climate change and issues affecting young people, it would be more meaningful and probably more successful.

How can the participation of most young people be achieved?

To achieve the Participation of most young people we feel, participating countries would need official structures developed, to ensure young people are being included in decision making. For example in Wales we have 'Funky Dragon' which is the young peoples assembly for Wales. This mirrors and influences the Welsh Governments in decision making within the country. If all

countries in the EU used a similar structure to discuss to discuss climate change with young people, it would be a good way for them to be involved. Also young people should receive feedback, about how their decisions and voices have been considered or used. This will give people an incentive to get involved and maybe encourage more people to get involved.

How can each individual play a role and take on responsibility?

In our opinion every individual can play a part in tackling climate change. We believe the general public can achieve this through recycling at home, growing their own food, switching off unused electrical equipment, and reducing their carbon footprint when commuting to places (walking or riding to work), reducing the water consumption, insulating homes more sufficiently, requiring less gas and even planting trees. Overall we believe people need to be educated on climate change to understand the consequences of their lifestyles. They would then hopefully change the way they live, to have a sufficient impact on climate change.

However we feel this expectation could be enhanced through the support of government schemes such as the Cycle to work scheme in Britain (which allows you to purchase a bike for less cost and use when commuting to work). In Wales we also have a charge of 5p per carrier bag, which has been successful as we have already seen a 90% reduction in plastic bag use. Surely if more countries throughout the world, had incentives like this we could all make a great impact, for the future of our planet.