

Delaying Action on Climate: The Use of Discursive Power by the Austrian Social Partners

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1 Introduction

The climate crisis demands urgent political action. In societies structured predominantly as nation states, the state can play an important role in facilitating such action. At the same time, wealthy countries in the Global North like Austria contribute disproportionately to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, both historically and currently. In addition, the wealth of rich nations in the Global North like Austria enables them to contribute relatively more to shared efforts than poorer nations. Therefore, these wealthier countries should contribute more toward reducing emissions and acting on the climate. For this reason, we are focusing on one of the main factors for which Austrian climate policies are lagging behind their potential.

Austrian climate governance of the last 20 years has been characterized by the government subscribing to ambitious targets but not implementing measures that would have allowed meeting these targets (Steurer et al., 2023, pp. 391–393). In 2011, Austria was lagging behind the targets set in the Kyoto protocol and had even increased its GHG emissions (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, p. 781). Three years later, Brand and Pawloff identified transport, industry, and energy production as sectors that were especially lagging in emissions reduction efforts. Steurer et al. maintain that when emissions targets were met at all, they were met only by reducing the targets or due to external effects like the COVID pandemic. They further note that while climate strategies (Klimastrategie) and a repeatedly amended Climate Action Act (Klimaschutzgesetz, referred to as Climate Protection Act by Brand and Pawloff) were the most important factors in the federal government's climate governance, the targets set in the Climate Action Act were limited to the year 2020. As the Climate Action Act has since not been amended, Austria to date has no effective Climate Action Act, and its climate governance is minimized even further (Steurer et al., 2023, pp. 391–393). Steurer et al. attribute the responsibility for the lacking Austrian climate governance to the federal government, the social partnership, the federalist structure, and civil society. Among these, the four social partners have “repeatedly weakened, delayed, or entirely prevented progress in climate policy” (p. 389, own translation). Indeed, Brand and Pawloff also attribute the lack of climate action to the corporatist setup of the Austrian state.

The Austrian system of government is described as a corporatist democracy characterized by bargaining (Tálos & Hinterseer, 2019, pp. 9–10). Tálos and Hinterseer state that decisions on many levels are thus not made based on majorities but on a trade-off of interests. They describe corporatism as more than a representation or mediation of interests, rather being characterized by mutual interconnection, and by the state and big interest organizations cooperating in designing policy. In the Austrian context, we follow Tálos and Hinterseer's definition of social partnership as “a tripartite pattern [of employers, employees, and the government] of interest mediation and interest politics in Austria that is not based in law but solely in the voluntary agreement of the actors” (p. 10, own translation). We furthermore follow Brand and Pawloff (2014, pp. 782–783) in seeing social partnership not as separable from the state but as a system set up and maintained by the state, fulfilling the integral function of mediating social conflicts.

The four social partners are the Trade Union Federation (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund, ÖGB), the Chamber of Labor (Arbeiterkammer, AK), the Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, WKÖ), and the Chamber of Agriculture

(Landwirtschaftskammer, LK). Due to mandatory membership, the Chambers represent all members of the respective societal group (Tálos & Hinterseer, 2019, pp. 35–38). According to Tálos and Hinterseer, the AK represents (almost) all workers in private employment contracts, the WKO (almost) all businesses (from one-person enterprises to multinational corporations), and the LK all agricultural businesses. Tálos and Hinterseer argue that mandatory membership is a considerable source of power for the Chambers, while the ÖGB's weight stems considerably from the centralization of the different unions. In addition, all four corporatist actors show signs of mutual interconnection with the former grand parties, the left-leaning Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, SPÖ) and the right-leaning and more neoliberal Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP; Brand & Pawloff, 2014, pp. 783–784; Grimm, 2018, p. 152). The individual social partners' influence thus depends on the composition of the federal government, with the AK and ÖGB having more influence when the SPÖ is part of the government and the WKO and LK having more influence on governments that include the ÖVP (Steurer et al., 2023, p. 390).

While some literature on the influence of the social partners on Austrian climate policy exists (see section 2), this research remains mostly abstract in describing the mechanisms of influence. Brand and Pawloff (2014, p. 790) describe three specific cases of the social partners' influence on climate policy. However, we could not find any literature analyzing the social partners' efforts to influence public discourse on the climate and public deliberation on climate policy within the last ten years. To contribute to filling this gap, we are investigating the following research question:

How do Austria's social partners reproduce discourses of climate delay?

Our understanding of discourse and the power it entails is based on Lukes' (2004) conceptualization of power in three different dimensions. Our analysis is more narrowly based on the categorization and description of discourses of climate delay by Lamb et al. (2020). We apply this theoretical framework toward investigating our research question by analyzing the press releases published by the four social partners in 2023.

This paper is structured as follows: In section 2, we explore how the social partners influence the making of (climate) policy by drawing on the literature. Section 3 establishes the theoretical framework we are using to analyze our empirical work. Section 4 details our methodological approach. In sections 5 and 6, we present and discuss our findings before concluding the paper in section 7.

2 The Social Partners' Influence on (Climate) Policy Making

2.1 General Influence

The social partners work as an “ex-ante filter ... for what is politically acceptable or possible and what is not” (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, p. 780). Through the selective mechanisms inscribed into the corporatist setup of the Austrian state, climate action is “kept off the political agenda” (p. 791) and thus, does not need to be challenged in party political processes, e.g., in parliament. This way, the social partners “have repeatedly weakened, delayed, or entirely prevented progress in climate policy” (Steurer et al., 2023, p. 389, own translation) and contributed to an overall lack of climate action in Austria.

While Tálos and Hinterseer (2019, pp. 139–141) argue that the social partnership's overall influence does not necessarily depend on both the SPÖ and the ÖVP being part of the federal government, its importance declined over the last decades, a development amplified by the governments that included the far-right Freedom Party of Austria (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) in the early 2000s and from 2017 to 2019. We could not find any literature on the impact of the current government of the ÖVP and the Green Party on the influence of

social partnership. That said, Steurer et al. (2023, p. 390) argue that the impact of the *individual* social partners does depend on which parties form the government.

2.2 Shared and Individual Interests of the Social Partners

The social partners share strategic goals, which include the pursuit of “economic growth, security of employment, stabilization of purchasing power and securing competitiveness” (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, p. 787), including of the “business location” (Wirtschaftsstandort; Tálos & Hinterseer, 2019, pp. 127–128). In 2014, Brand and Pawloff saw it as self-evident that climate measures in Austria at the time were bound to not affect the competitiveness of the national economy, or the mode of production or living, leaving only a narrow “corridor” of ecological modernization” (p. 783). These policy priorities lend more significance to the social partners over other actors like political parties, which establishes corporatism as more important than parliamentarism or the government (p. 791), thus creating a self-reinforcing increase in influence.

While the social partners’ interests diverge in other areas, they align in prioritizing “economic development” (Hermann et al., 2017, p. 174) over comprehensive climate action. According to Steurer et al. (2023, pp. 397–398), the social partners have spoken out against climate targets and measures that were not connected to immediate economic advantages until a couple of years ago. They cite an expansion of hydropower plants, ecological agriculture as a niche strategy, and keeping clean bodies of water as a quality factor for tourism as being examples of policies that the social partners *did* encourage. Steurer et al. see these encouraged strategies as based on a perception of sustainability as protecting natural resources as a means of production. The researchers suggest that the social partners do not recognize a stable climate as relevant in terms of this perception of sustainability, which, in turn, contributes to Austria’s climate policies remaining inadequate to meet the country’s climate targets.

Beyond shared strategic goals, the social partners often have similar interests in countering specific measures of climate action, as their members could bear short-term costs of the measures (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, pp. 785–788). Brand and Pawloff see these individual interests as steering the mechanism of conflict resolution that is social partnership to be unbalanced against climate action. They argue that the collaboration of social partners can place them on one side of an issue or debate, leaving no alternative perspectives and no one advocating for ecological positions.

Despite the shared interests of the social partners, the responsibility for the delay of climate policy is not shared equally. The WKO is cited as bearing the brunt of the responsibility (Steurer et al., 2023, p. 389), while at the same time having the most influence of all social partners, due to its close ties to the ÖVP. Steurer et al. detail that the WKO’s opposition to climate action is discussed in terms of the supposed harm to the economy or risk to jobs. On the other hand, the positions of the AK and the ÖGB have shifted over time toward climate action (p. 397), although divisions remain within parts of the unions, including over changes in the mobility sector (Wieser & Kaufmann, 2023, p. 425), and the focus on other social issues (Brand & Niedermoser, 2019, p. 177).

2.3 Mechanisms of Influence

While we investigate the way the social partners use their communications to delay climate policy, the social partners also inform and participate in decision-making directly and have a function in the implementation of these norms (Tálos & Hinterseer, 2019, p. 11). The way the social partners have utilized these avenues of influence has been identified in previous research.

2.3.1 Informing Decision-Making

The production of expertise and knowledge is an important factor through which the social partners are able to influence policy-making (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, p. 790). Indicators point to a receding role of the social partners' influence on policy-making (Hermann et al., 2015, p. 344). However, Herman et al. find that (neo-)corporatist advisory dominates over pluralist patterns of scientific advice on Austrian climate policy. They further point out that this domination is unique to climate policy, as the advice has been pluralized in other areas like social or economic policy (pp. 343, 352–353). The prevailing role of corporatist advice is supported by the description of epistemic selectivities by Brand and Pawloff (2014; see also section 3.1).

2.3.2 Participating in Decision-Making

We were able to find only a limited number of reports on *how* the social partners have influenced the process of decision-making on climate policies. However, Brand and Pawloff (2014, p. 790) describe a specific case of this dimension of influence: In 2011, the social partners successfully lobbied for a promotion of their influence from the advisory National Climate Protection Advisory Board to the National Climate Protection Committee, which makes decisions on the long-term direction of the state's climate policy. At the same time, environmental NGOs are said to have stayed in the advisory committee. This privileged position of the social partners reflects the strategic selectivity described by Brand and Pawloff, who relate this to the parliament's involvement in policy-making "at such a late stage in legislation that the main points of conflict have already been clarified (by ministries and corporatist actors)" (p. 791), aggravating the impact of the selective mechanism.

2.4 Effects on Policy

In the creation of the Climate Action Act (Klimaschutzgesetz, own translation), targets for after 2020 were specifically excluded upon request of the WKO (Steurer et al., 2023, p. 393). The WKO praises itself for having prevented the abolition of the preferential taxation of diesel (Dieselprivileg; p. 397). Brand and Pawloff (2014, p. 781) furthermore mention the commuter tax allowance (Pendlerpauschale) as an example of a harmful policy in the realm of the lagging transport sector. Ten years later, the commuter tax allowance still exists.

In conclusion, the corporatist setup of the Austrian state works through the inclusion of the social partners in policy-making in both advisory and decision-making roles. The selectivity of this setup at the exclusion of other political actors and the often-shared interests of the social partners are crucial factors that lead both to the general exclusion of climate policy from the political agenda and to the prevention of specific policies that would be needed to counter the climate crisis.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Discursive Power

Discourse cannot be examined without a consideration of power and the role that discourse plays in reflecting dominant power structures. For our theoretical framework, we apply Steven Lukes' (2004) concept of three-dimensional power toward analyzing the discourses of the four social partners, as this approach takes into account the less visible forms of power that influence social norms and practices. Lukes' concept of three-dimensional power emerged out of criticism of and expansion on what he terms one- and two-dimensional power.

3.1.1 One-Dimensional Power

According to Lukes (2004), one-dimensional power refers to Robert Dahl's definition of power as: "A has power over B to the extent that [A] can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (p. 16). This face of power narrowly focuses on behavior in decision-making when there is observable conflict and is thus not the focus of our analysis.

3.1.2 Two-Dimensional Power

Conversely, what Lukes (2004), refers to as two-dimensional power encompasses bias and exclusion by including non-issues and the mechanisms that render them as such. This approach to power is based on Bachrach and Baratz' definition of power as:

... also exercised when *A* devotes [its] energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to *A*. To the extent that *A* succeeds in doing this, *B* is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to *A*'s set of preferences. (p. 20)

This dimension of power is instrumentable in drawing attention to the strategic selection of what can and cannot be on the agenda. It bears similarities to Jessop's (2005) elaboration on the "strategic-relational approach" that examines, on the one hand, "how a given structure may privilege some actors, some identities, some strategies, some spatial and temporal horizons, some actions over others" (p. 48), and, on the other hand, to what extent, if at all, actors take account of this differential privileging. In the context of Austria's corporatist political structure, Brand and Pawloff (2014, p. 783) draw attention to this strategic selectivity and how it enables the social partners to have a privileged relation with the state. As our analysis is focused primarily on the social partners' discourses via their press releases and not on their structural set-up or relation with the state, two-dimensional power and strategic selectivity are not a main focus of this paper, but they remain important in understanding the privileged power relations between the social partners and the Austrian state.

3.1.3 Three-Dimensional Power

Lukes (2004) expands on what he calls one- and two-dimensional power with his definition of three-dimensional power: "*A* may exercise power over *B* by getting [*B*] to do what [*B*] does not want to do, but [*A*] also exercises power over [*B*] by influencing, shaping or determining [*B*]'s very wants" (p. 135). The figure in Appendix 1 illustrates how three-dimensional power (inducement, encouragement, persuasion, etc.) lies outside the realm of requiring a conflict of interest, unlike the other two dimensions of power captured in the observable (one-dimensional power) and the latent conflict of interest (two-dimensional power).

Lukes' (2004) three-dimensional power is significant in terms of what issues are not able to be discussed through the process of securing consent and compliance in order to prevent conflict from arising in the first place. It "allows for consideration of the many ways in which potential issues are kept out of politics, whether through the operation of social forces and institutional practices or through individuals' decisions" (p. 28). In the context of communications around climate action, this definition of power is notable for its inclusion of the ability for powerful interests to work toward preventing change or maintaining the status quo. As Lukes explains:

... is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial? (p. 28)

Lukes' (2004) three-dimensional power notably borrows from the insights of Gramsci, particularly his elaboration of the Marxist concept of ideology in the form of "hegemony" (p. 7). Gramsci articulates hegemony as the "ideological subordination of the working class by the bourgeoisie, which enables it to rule by consent" (cited in Anderson, 1976, p. 24). According to Lukes, Gramsci sought to understand how consent to capitalist exploitation is secured, and

in this endeavor, Gramsci “rerouted Marxist analysis to the long-neglected ... territory of ideas, values, and beliefs” (pp. 7-8) contributing to an understanding of the “process of internalization of bourgeois relations and the consequent diminution of revolutionary possibilities” (pp. 7-8). Thus, consent can be secured from a sense of obligation to dominant values or from the powerful impression that the status quo is the only viable form of society (p. 8).

Lukes’ third dimension of power, as well as Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, can be located in the legitimization of discourses that support the powerful and discourage actions against their interests, often to maintain hegemony. In addition to the aforementioned strategic selectivity associated with two-dimensional power, epistemic selectivity bears similarity to three-dimensional power in that it

goes beyond the selectivity within a specific context of decision-making and addresses the hegemonic account inherent in the production and re-production of knowledge, problem perceptions, and narratives regarding specific things to be governed in their socio-economic, political and cultural context. (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, p. 783)

With regard to policies on climate change, epistemic selectivity refers to, for example, the dominant political narrative that environmental policies must take place within the “‘corridor’ of ecological modernization,” meaning they must not conflict with economic growth or the imperial mode of living (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, p. 783).

In focusing on discursive three-dimensional power and the role of epistemic selectivity, the object of analysis moves from how an actor can directly manipulate using ideas to the ideas themselves and how they empower actors (Hathaway, 2016). To detect such power requires exploring the language and assumptions used by prominent figures and the repetition of arguments by various actors and the media. Critically, this includes instances where actors find that a dominant discourse empowers them without having contributed to its initial creation, such as the potential for a social partner to utilize existing climate delay strategies in their own discourse. This conceptualization of power as a capacity to produce and reproduce narratives to prevent counter-hegemonic change underlies our analysis of discourses of climate delay.

3.2 Discourses of Climate Delay

One important strategy to execute discursive power is the use of discourses of climate delay as described by Lamb et al. (2020). These discourses differ from climate change denial and skepticism and discursive attacks on scientists and the scientific community. Discourses of climate delay describe disadvantages of and obstacles to climate action, with the effect of downplaying the need for it. In their empirical research, Lamb et al. categorize the discourses in the following four types with twelve subdiscourses (pp. 1-2):

- Surrender
 - Change is Impossible
 - Doomism
- Redirecting Responsibility
 - Individualism
 - Whataboutism
 - The ‘Free-Rider’ Excuse
- Pushing Non-Transformative Solutions
 - Technological Optimism
 - Fossil Fuel Solutionism
 - All Talk, Little Action
 - No Sticks, Just Carrots
- Emphasizing the Downsides
 - Appeal to Social Justice
 - Appeal to Well-being
 - Policy Perfectionism

Surrender emphasizes the impossibility of mitigating climate change. *Change is Impossible* describes the necessary actions as incompatible with the economic or political system, or with human nature. *Doomism* claims it would be too late for action and predicts the unstoppable climate catastrophe (Lamb et al., 2020, pp. 4–5).

Redirect Responsibility shifts the focus of who has the (most) responsibility for climate action to liberate other actors from any duty. *Individualism* emphasizes the need for action on the individual level, especially by consumers, downplaying the role of structural power. *Whataboutism* compares one's responsibility with the responsibility of other actors or of the whole world, often done by downplaying their own amount of GHG emissions. This argumentation is taken a step further by *The 'Free-Rider' Excuse* which claims that if one were to increase their commitment to climate action, other actors would capitalize on that, thus canceling out the effect on the climate (Lamb et al., 2020, p. 3).

The discourse type *Push Non-Transformative Solutions* contains all discourses calling only for less disruptive measures. While *Technological Optimism* trusts in the development of new technologies that will stop the climate crisis, making stronger interventions obsolete, *Fossil Fuel Solutionism* more directly claims that future cleaner fossil fuels would contribute to climate change mitigation. The need for intervention is also downplayed by *All Talk, Little Action* which overemphasizes the importance of recent emissions reductions or of determined climate targets, creating the image of climate action leadership. Lastly, *No Sticks, Just Carrots* calls for the use of supportive measures such as subsidies (carrots), while restrictive measures such as regulation (sticks) are described as ineffective or harmful (Lamb et al., 2020, pp. 3–4).

The discourse type *Emphasize the Downsides* focuses only on possible or imagined costs of climate action, while the costs of inaction and the potential benefits of action are unmentioned. *Appeal to Social Justice* focuses on the social short-term impacts of climate policy. *Appeal to Well-being* is the extreme version of that, claiming that climate action would dramatically threaten living standards. *Policy Perfectionism* calls for carefully crafted, and hence unambitious, policies without addressing the option of generating public support for more ambitious policies (Lamb et al., 2020, p. 4).

These discourses may be used consciously or unconsciously. Many of them can be justified to a certain extent. For example, Lamb et al. argue that especially social justice issues *need* to be considered and that technology *will* play a role in climate change mitigation, but that neither of the two justifies downplaying the importance of regulation and other climate policies (Lamb et al., 2020, pp. 3–4).

4 Methodology

We execute a discourse analysis on the social partners' press releases from 2023, specifically searching for discourses of climate delay. We searched the Originaltext-Service portal by the Austrian Press Agency (<https://www.ots.at/>) for all press releases containing the German keyword "Klima*"¹ (in English "climate*"). This resulted in a total number of 254 press releases: 111 by the WKO, 54 by the ÖGB, 53 by the AK, and 36 by the LK.

For the analysis of the press releases, we chose to execute a mostly deductive framework analysis as described by Gale et al. (2013). The method is well suited for large amounts of similar data (pp. 2-3), and the discourses of climate delay by Lamb et al. (2020) provide a well-defined framework. Thus, we defined codes deductively, using the four types of discourses and the twelve subdiscourses of climate delay as categories and subcategories for the codes, and we indexed the sections belonging to each category. Additionally, we created a

¹ The truncated form "Klima*" (climate*) does not only include the word "Klima" but also compound words such as "Klimaschutz" (climate action) or "Klimakrise" (climate crisis).

subcategory “other within ...” in each of the original four categories and another overarching category “other” for collecting discourses which we inductively found. In order to correctly assign sections to a category, Mayring (2022) describes a three step “coding guideline” (Kodierleitfaden; p. 96) consisting of definitions, “anchor points” (Ankerpunkt) or reference points, and coding rules (p. 96). We coded the first five press releases together to gain a similar understanding of what qualifies as a discourse of climate delay in general, and how we categorize the specific discourses. Certain coded or not coded sections then served as anchor points. For some specific discourses we discussed general rules for when a section belongs to these discourses.

We used MAXQDA to code the press releases of each social partner in pairs of two to increase the accuracy of our coding assessment (Mayring, 2022, p. 103). In the process we refined our coding guideline when necessary. After finishing the coding, we compared the codes, refined the code-structure, and one person per social partner coded all press releases again.

Afterwards, we created a framework matrix with one column per social partner and one row per subcategory of discourse, including inductively created ones constructed from codes assigned to “others” in each category. Two people summarized the content of each cell, and the whole team revised every cell and evaluated again whether the content fits the category. Finally, the whole team interpreted the framework. First, we identified the main discourses used by each social partner. Then, we compared the data of all social partners within each of the four categories of discourse to evaluate and reflect on the differences and similarities among the social partners.

5 Empirical Results

5.1 Discourses Identified for Each Social Partner

The table in Appendix 2 shows which of the four types of delay discourses (Lamb et al., 2020) we identified in the press releases by each social partner. We did not identify any additional main categories of delay discourses, but we included additional subcategories under *Push Non-Transformative Solutions* and *Emphasize the Downsides* for discourses that did not fit the subcategories identified by Lamb et al. The full framework including references to all press releases is included in Appendix 3.

The number of press releases that include examples of each subcategory of climate delay discourses provide an indication for which discourses each social partner engages in relatively frequently. The AK’s main discourses of climate delay are *Whataboutism* and *Appeal to Social Justice*. Meanwhile, we identified relatively few press releases by the ÖGB engaging in discourses of climate delay, with only one example each of *Policy Perfectionism* and *Appeal to Social Justice*. The LK and WKO both engage in a greater variety of discourses of climate delay with a higher frequency. The LK especially employs *Individualism*, *All Talk*, *Little Action*, *Biomass/Biogas Solutionism*, and *Claim Ineffectiveness*. The WKO published comparatively many press releases using *Technological Optimism*, *Fossil Fuel Solutionism*, *Appeal to Maintaining Competitiveness*, and *No Sticks, Just Carrots*.

5.2 Additional Discourses of Climate Delay

For *Push Non-Transformative Solutions*, we added the following subcategories:

- i *Free-Market Optimism* is the claim that no policy is needed because an unregulated market will produce the desired effects on its own. This includes an assertion that consumers and/or producers make sustainable choices without intervention. We consider this a form of pushing a non-transformative solution because it is a way of arguing against any policy intervention that would have more significant effects.
- ii *Market-based Incentive Solutionism* similarly focuses on the development of markets and industries toward more sustainable behavior without regulation, but specifically

advocates for market-based incentives, like taxes and subsidies, as the solution. We consider it a push for non-transformative solutions because it is used to replace any policy that would directly regulate or ban environmentally harmful behaviors and practices.

- iii *Biomass/Biogas Solutionism* describes the claim that biomass and/or biogas are renewable or green energy sources, minimizing or ignoring their GHG emissions and resulting climate impacts (Jacobson, 2014; Paolini et al., 2018). It is therefore similar to *Fossil Fuel Solutionism* but goes further in claiming that these energy sources are fully “green.”
- iv *Animal-based Agriculture Solutionism* is the discourse describing animal farming and agriculture as positive for the climate. This discourse minimizes and ignores opportunities for alternative food production practices with reduced climate impacts and denies the disproportionate share of GHG emissions from livestock farming (Gerber et al., 2013).

Under *Emphasize the Downsides*, we added the following subcategories:

- i *Claim Ineffectiveness* describes discourse that claims that a proposed policy would have little to no effect on climate change. Although this could be a valid criticism in some cases, a statement falls under this category if there is no proposal to make the policy more effective. We consider it a form of emphasizing the downsides because it focuses on limitations of the policy without proposing solutions.
- ii *Appeal to Tradition* describes discourse that emphasizes the cultural and historical meanings of practices that would be reduced or changed by a climate policy. This includes emphasizing how old a certain practice is, or more directly linking a practice to cultural identity. We categorize this as a form of emphasizing the downsides because it emphasizes negative impacts on the positively framed status quo.
- iii *Appeal to Maintaining Competitiveness* describes discourse that criticizes climate policy for reducing competitiveness of Austria as a business and industry location. While this is close to *The “Free Rider” Excuse* and may imply *Appeal to Well-being* in some cases, the focus of this discourse is explicitly on the impacts on the competitiveness of national industries for its own sake. It does not require linking reductions in competitiveness to well-being explicitly, nor claiming that other countries would benefit or counterbalance Austria’s climate impact reductions. This narrative is a form of *Emphasizing the Downsides* because it considers the reduction of the attractiveness and competitiveness of Austria as a business location to be a downside in itself.

These additional subcategories allow us to assign each case of climate delay discourse to a subcategory of the four main types outlined by Lamb et al. (2020). They give more concrete insights into how the social partners each engage in these overarching strategies and contribute to a more complete framework of delay discourses.

6 Discussion

6.1 Surrender

Between the social partners, we only identified cases of discourses of climate *Surrender* in the press releases by the WKO. Overall this is the least popular type of climate delay discourse and complete surrender in the form of *Doomism* is not expressed by any of the social partners. The cases of *Change is Impossible* employed by the WKO also only relate to specific short- and medium-term changes, which means that it does not claim that nothing can be done about climate change at all. This could be a reflection of attitudes of the Austrian population, favoring at least some climate action, but also strongly aligns with the interests of the social partners. The social partners each represent people that may hope to benefit from climate-related subsidies. Seeing as the Austrian government planned to spend 863.5 million euros on green

transformation in 2023 (Bundesministerium für Finanzen, 2022, p. 19), negating the importance of climate action outright is not in the interest of the social partners whose members might be the beneficiaries of these funds.

One change the WKO describes as “impossible” is the phase-out of combustion engines by 2035 (WKO, 28.02.2023, 13:23)². It claims that there are no feasible alternatives, especially for transport, citing a prognosis that truck transport will increase by 54% by 2051 (WKO, 10.03.2023, 11:00). This is in line with the WKO’s role in delaying climate policy in the transport sector in the past, e.g., by preventing the abolition of the preferential taxation of diesel (Dieselprivileg; Steurer et al., 2023, p. 397). Also in relation to the transport sector, the WKO claims that trains cannot fully replace the air-travel connection of other regions in the country to Vienna. As businesses in the transport sector, including aviation and the car industry, are represented by the WKO, its interests explain its advocacy for minimal changes and regulations for these industries.

Similarly, the WKO also describes the “short- to medium-term” replacement of natural gas as impossible (WKO, 21.11.2023, 11:48), even advocating for an expansion of national gas infrastructure. This advocacy too might be related to the gas industry’s membership in the WKO.

The discourses found in the *Surrender* category demonstrate that absolute pessimism about climate action is not a narrative that suits the interests of the social partners. They also reflect a unique involvement of the WKO in discouraging climate policy on grounds of requiring “impossible” changes in the industries it represents.

6.2 Redirect Responsibility

We identified cases of all the social partners except the ÖGB using the delay discourse of *Redirecting Responsibility*, albeit in different directions related to their respective interest areas. The AK uses a form of *Whataboutism* that redirects responsibility toward the rich, which is a group that is rather minorly represented by the AK. Meanwhile, the LK, who uses this discourse the most, uses all three subcategories: *Individualism*, *Whataboutism*, and *The “Free Rider” Excuse*. Finally, the WKO only uses *Whataboutism* to redirect responsibility toward other countries.

The LK is the only social partner to redirect responsibility toward individuals. Here, the LK places the onus on individual consumers to purchase more locally and sustainably sourced food and to reduce food waste, thus redirecting responsibility away from the food producers themselves. This delay discourse contributes to the narrative that climate action is up to individual agency in terms of their decisions and practices, all while downplaying the role of structural power in limiting such individual agency. In contrast to the sectors represented by the WKO (e.g., energy, transport, and logistics), the LK’s agricultural sector can more easily redirect responsibility toward individuals as everyone consumes food products, and the dominant narrative is that people have agency in the food products they purchase and how much they waste. Further, it is our impression that the Austrian agricultural sector sees itself as a more sustainable alternative to imported agricultural products, meaning that the farmers represented by the LK would benefit from the change in consumption behavior for which it is advocating. At the same time, the LK is also able to deflect blame to the most widely-known contributor to climate change, the fossil fuel sector. While the responsibility of the fossil fuel sector is undeniable, this becomes a delay tactic when it avoids any responsibility within the agricultural sector.

² As the emitters of the press releases are just four organizations and all stem from the same year, citing the press releases according to the citation guidelines of the American Psychological Association (2020) would lead to citations in form of “(WKO, 2023a)”, “(WKO, 2023z)”, etc. Instead, we are referring to the press releases using the abbreviation of the emitter as well as the date and the time when they were published. All press releases can be accessed through the Austrian Press Agency’s Originaltext-Service portal (<https://www.ots.at/>).

Where the AK, LK, and WKO overlap is in their redirection of responsibility toward other countries, both within the EU and abroad. The AK less directly uses this delay discourse of *Whataboutism* in redirecting responsibility toward the rich, by also pointing to wealthy individuals outside of Austria. The LK and WKO, on the other hand, directly refer to the presence of stricter climate policies elsewhere, which they often reference in combination with the claim that this erodes competitiveness in Austria, both within the agricultural sector for the LK and within the energy, transport, and logistics sectors for the WKO. The LK takes this delay discourse a step further by using *The “Free Rider” Excuse* to claim that other countries would competitively benefit from agricultural regulations being imposed in Austria.

6.3 Push Non-Transformative Solutions

The WKO, LK, and AK participate in discourses that push a variety of non-transformative solutions to climate change in lieu of transformative policy. All three social partners push for non-transformative solutions strongly tied to the economic interests of the groups they each represent, which results in the narrow “corridor” of ecological modernization,” as described by Brand and Pawloff (Brand & Pawloff, 2014).

The WKO claims that the research and development of certain technologies should receive more support to reduce climate impacts, especially in the form of funding. It frequently criticizes the lack of “technological openness” (e.g., WKO, 28.02.2023, 13:23, own translation) of climate policies and often uses this narrative to advocate for synthetic and other alternative fuels, including biofuels and e-fuels, as the future of transport, instead of replacing combustion engines entirely. It also advocates for more recognition of efficiency improvements in the use of fossil fuels. These narratives protect the financial interests of these sectors, whom the WKO represents.

Similarly, the LK advocates for more support for the switch to and development of new technologies, particularly biomass and biogas. It pushes the narrative that biomass and biogas are the future of energy production and emphasizes the importance of categorizing these as renewable energies to qualify for subsidies. The beneficiaries of these subsidies would largely be the LK’s constituents, farmers and the forestry industry, who are the main producers of biomass and biogas.

A non-transformative solution uniquely pushed by the LK is supporting animal-based agriculture, reflecting the interests of the livestock farmers it represents. The LK criticizes the “demonization” (LK, 12.07.2023, 15:17, own translation) of livestock farming and claims that these farming practices have a positive impact on the climate. This narrative frames agriculture as a sector that should not be forced to change via restrictive climate policies because it is already contributing positively, even more positively than it would under restrictions outlined in such climate policies.

Among the non-transformative solutions endorsed by the AK, LK, and WKO, we observe different perspectives on how and to what extent policies should be involved in markets. The AK links increases in consumer prices that encourage more sustainable behavior to “economic coercion” (AK, 13.06.2023, 08:40). Meanwhile, the LK and WKO especially disapprove of regulation and bans. The LK is particularly concerned about regulations and limitations applied to fertilizers. Similarly, the WKO strongly dislikes regulation and prefers incentives for the transport sector. The WKO also speaks against market instruments causing price increases like increased tolls, but much of its dissatisfaction is directed toward regulatory measures. The AK’s greater focus on limiting consumer price increases, compared to the discourses of the LK and WKO to limit regulation and bans, can be linked to who it represents and also exemplifies the political alignments of these social partners. The AK is known to be more left-leaning and concerned more with equality, which means that it is not as opposed to regulation and bans as the more neoliberal LK and WKO.

The WKO and LK both advocate for the expansion of market incentives encouraging the energy transition by supporting the markets that have to implement them, such as reducing the cost of biomass improvements or compensating the transport sector for costs incurred for the switch to electric or hydrogen vehicles. The WKO additionally emphasizes the will of consumers and producers to improve the environmental sustainability of the economy without a need for much or any regulation. This again reflects both its industry interests and especially the strongly neoliberal position of the WKO.

Overall, the non-transformative solutions supported by the AK, WKO, and LK are directly linked to their constituents and political affiliations. Although the WKO pushes for more “technological openness” in climate policy, it especially uses this discourse to support existing technologies with negative climate impacts to allow its members, especially the transport sector, to minimize the changes they are forced to make. Similarly, the LK protects the interests of its constituents of the forestry and farming industry, arguing that they should not have to change because they are already contributing to a solution. The AK engages less in pushing non-transformative solutions, but also uses this to protect the financial interests of its members.

6.4 Emphasize the Downsides

We identified discourses of *Emphasizing the Downsides* for all social partners. The *Appeal to Social Justice* is used by the AK, ÖGB, and WKO, while the closely-linked *Appeal to Well-being* is used only by the LK and WKO. Furthermore, there are differences in the aspects to which the social partners appeal. The AK and ÖGB focus on social justice for workers and low-income groups. For instance, the ÖGB demands that “measures to combat the climate crisis must put employees at the center of attention” (ÖGB, 14.09.2023, 14:31, own translation). In contrast, the LK and WKO mostly appeal to competitiveness and security of supply. The topic of competitiveness is often connected to the topic of national identity. For example, the WKO complains about high electricity prices for “red-white-red industrial companies” (WKO, 06.04.2023, 11:54, own translation), referring to the colors of the Austrian national flag. Another observation is that the LK frames the renaturalization of cultivated landscape negatively, connecting it with the *Appeal to Well-being* and drawing the picture of beautiful alpine pastures that would be lost. Interpreting this, we observe that the social partners create different pictures and refer to different identities to evoke emotions in their respective target audience. By using visual narratives and appealing to national identity, the social partners employ Lukes' (2004, p. 28) third dimension of power to shape societal beliefs in order to prevent climate action that disrupts the status quo. The LK's description of alpine pastures also reveals its relation to nature, as it calls for human intervention to preserve nature. This is in line with the findings by Steurer et al. (2023, p. 398), who claim that the social partners only view nature as valuable and worth protecting when it is a means of production.

Another observation is how the social partners criticize policies and policy-makers. The discourse of *Policy Perfectionism*, due to a narrow definition by Lamb et al. (2020), is not very meaningful in this case. However, the LK and WKO frequently use our inductively-created discourse of *Claiming Ineffectiveness*. While using this discourse, both social partners criticize policy-makers, calling them, e.g., “dogmatic” (WKO, 3.11.2023, 12:09, own translation), “ideological” (e.g., LKÖ, 14.12.2023, 08:45; WKO, 30.11.2023, 12:41; own translation), or “pseudo-sustainable” (LKÖ, 10.11.2023, 10:58, own translation). The LK also evokes the image of policy-makers “in the downtown offices, who advocate environmental protection and engage in impractical theory, while our farmers protect nature and biodiversity in practice” (LK, 22.05.2023, 11:33, own translation). This behavior is an example of the social partners trying to act as a filter for what is politically accepted, as described by Brand and Pawloff (2014, p. 780), because the social partners claim authority in defining the public discourse.

In addition to the LK calling policies “pseudo-sustainable” (LKÖ, 10.11.2023, 10:58, own translation), the social partners' *Appeals to Social Justice* and *Well-being* make their

ontological understanding of sustainability apparent. The AK calls for an equal consideration of ecological and social issues (AK, 20.02.2023, 09:58), while the WKO and LK demand consideration of ecological, social, and economic issues on equal terms, arguing that only this would be “real sustainability” (LKÖ, 04.07.2023, 11:03; WKO, 18.01.2023, 13:36; own translation). Thus, these social partners do not acknowledge the ecological sphere as the foundation of society and the economy, rather remaining within a green growth paradigm. We assume that this focus reflects the interests of their respective target groups, which aligns with the literature on the social partners. Steurer et al. (2023, p. 398) emphasize that the social partners’ notion of sustainability is closely linked to production. Similarly, Brand and Pawloff (2014) describe how the social partners limit the space for climate action by referring to structural economic constraints, leaving only a narrow “corridor’ of ecological modernization” (p. 783).

6.5 Limitations

There are some limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn based on our approach. Our review of the communications of the social partners is not exhaustive, does not delve into individual positions within the social partners, nor does it provide a complete review of how the social partners employ their power to affect climate policy. Also, we recognize that a discourse that causes delay of climate action is not inherently unjustified or unimportant in policy discussion.

It should be noted that we do not cover all communications from the social partners in this analysis. The social partners have other avenues of communication, as well as press releases that do not mention the keyword “climate*” explicitly, in which they may engage in discourses of climate delay differently, which means that our analysis is not fully exhaustive. Given that press releases are short, they may often not communicate with the same level of nuance as may be used in other forms of communication. However, we focus on press releases because they represent the main avenue of the social partners to affect media discourse and are meant to represent the organizations’ collective perspective.

Our review also does not consider diverging positions within the social partners, where different members likely subscribe to and participate in different discourses, including those on climate delay. We also do not have insight into the discussions that occur behind closed doors. Our focus, however, is on the behavior of the social partners as whole entities, specifically their attempts to influence public opinion.

It is important to emphasize that we focus only on the social partners’ use of discourses of climate delay, which does not include discourses used to push for climate action, nor delay caused by keeping the topic out of political discourse. Our investigation of how the social partners use discourse to this end are complementary to the results by Steurer et al. (2023) and Brand and Pawloff (2014), who identify a role of the social partners in the delay of climate action, especially by keeping climate discussions out of the political discourse entirely.

However, the more recently published “Plan for the Social and Ecological Transition” by the AK Wien also suggests that there may be some change in how some of the social partners approach and communicate about climate action. We find some claims that we would classify as “Blaming the Rich” in this plan (pp. 1, 9, 16), but the little delay we find is strongly outweighed by their overall support for the transition. Though this may be affected by the medium, given that a 171-page report has more space for nuance, this may also indicate a shift in their communication. Thus, our results may be affected by the time frame considered and our focus on only discourses of climate delay.

Lastly, it is important to note that not all narratives that delay climate action are (un)justified to the same extent. In this investigation we do not differentiate between narratives that are based

on incomplete or false information and those based on legitimate concerns. We acknowledge that some of these concerns are relevant to ultimately foster a just transition.

7 Conclusion

Our results show that the social partners do engage in discourses of climate delay in their communications. Especially the WKO and LK, but also to a lesser extent the AK and the ÖGB pursue narratives that cause delays of transformative climate policy. Previous literature finds that the social partners are also responsible for delaying climate action by keeping this issue out of the political discourse. Our results show that even when climate policy does become a topic of political discussion, the social partners still participate in the delay of transformative climate policy through their communication.

Previous literature identifies the root of this issue in that the social partners are only structured to defend social and economic interests of the 19th and early 20th century, and not ecological interests (Steurer et al., 2023, p. 399). Various authors thus recommend a reform of social partnership, including the prevention of lobbying against climate action by legally redefining the purpose of the social partners and the establishment of an Environmental Chamber (Hochgerner et al., 2016, pp. 16–17; Steurer et al., 2023, p. 399), or at least a reshaping of “the interest structures” (Brand & Pawloff, 2014, p. 792) of the social partners and whom they represent. However, we consider the role the social partners have played in the delay of climate action to be a sign that the social partnership is not flexible enough to adjust to novel political issues to develop policy that addresses them promptly. While the developments in the position of the AK allow for some hope, we consider the overall past contribution of the social partnership as one of climate delay. We are therefore unsure whether a simple reform of the existing social partnership would suffice to tackle the climate crisis or whether completely new institutional forms are needed.

In the recent plan for a social and ecological transition, the AK Wien calls for an introduction of transformation councils (Transformationsräte) under participation of employers, employees, and the government to develop just transition strategies (2024, p. 24). Such transformation councils would have the explicit goal of developing strategies for climate neutrality and would include the workers into the development of these plans. But to us, these transformation councils appear like a simple extension of the existing social partnership. It remains to be seen whether transformation councils would be able to avoid the issues of a focus on the short-term and on individual interests that have so far led the social partnership to contribute to a delay of climate action, and whether they would even represent a new institutional form or just put a new name to an old concept.

Future research could expand on the results of this study by analyzing the complete extent to which each of the social partners not only delays, but possibly also advances, climate action in Austria. However, based on the evidence that the social partners are involved in delaying climate action and are structurally unsuited for addressing this issue, we recommend investigations into how this structure might be reformed to suit changing policy issues or to identify pathways toward more flexible and democratic alternatives to this governance structure.

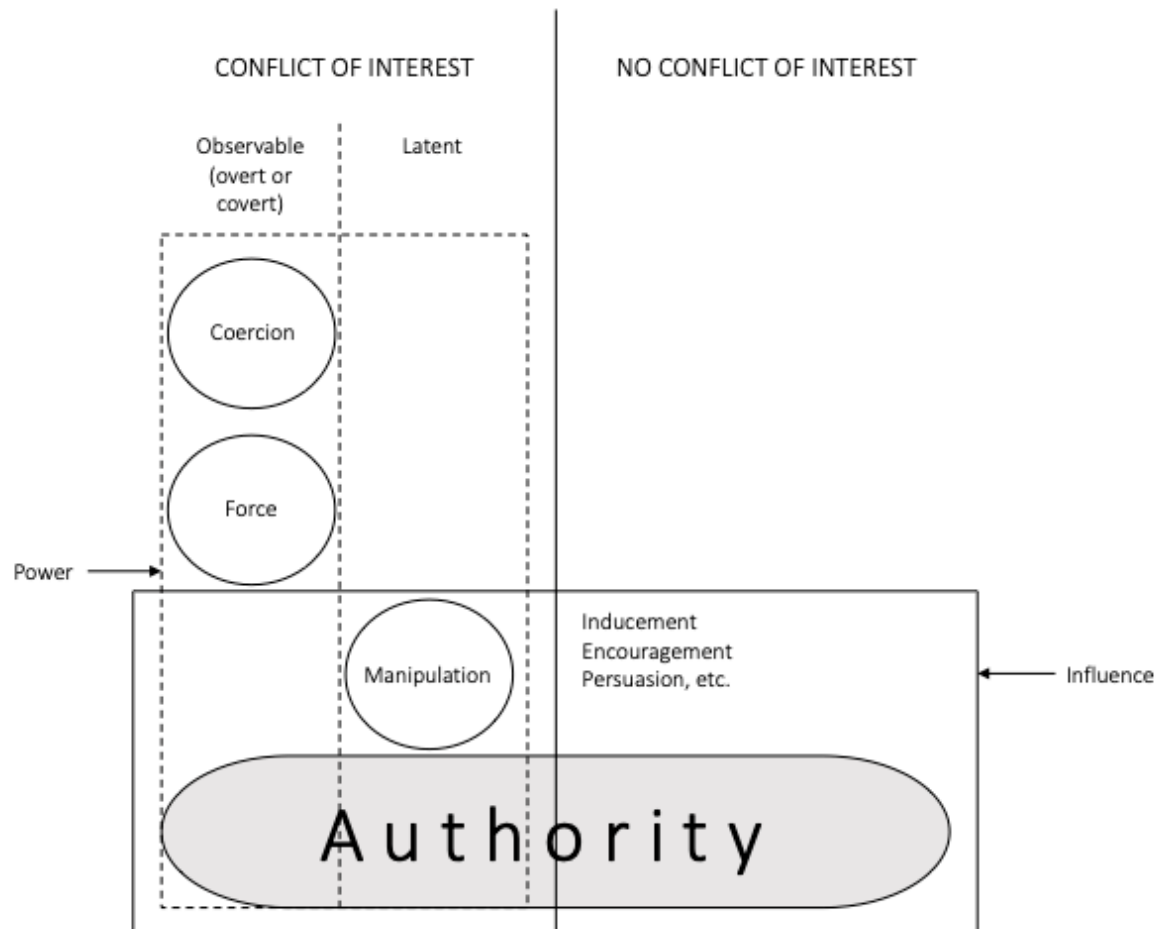
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Appendix

Appendix 1: Conceptual Map of Lukes' "Three-Dimensional Power"



Note. Reproduced from Lukes (2004, p. 36).

Appendix 2: Number of press releases in 2023 per social partner with discourses of climate delay of each type

Category	Subcategory	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Surrender	<i>Change is Impossible</i>				4
	<i>Doomism</i>				
Redirect Responsibility	<i>Individualism</i>			7	
	<i>Whataboutism</i>	5		2	5
	<i>The “Free Rider” Excuse</i>			4	
Push Non-Transformative Solutions	<i>Technological Optimism</i>			4	17
	<i>All Talk, Little Action</i>	1		8	
	<i>Fossil Fuel Solutionism</i>				11
	<i>No Sticks, Just Carrots</i>	1		5	11
	<i>Other: Free-Market Optimism</i>				4
	<i>Other: Market-based Incentive Solutionism</i>			3	2
	<i>Other: Biomass/Biogas Solutionism</i>			6	4
	<i>Other: Animal-based Agriculture Solutionism</i>			2	
Emphasize the Downsides	<i>Policy Perfectionism</i>	1	1	2	1
	<i>Appeal to Well-being</i>			3	6
	<i>Appeal to Social Justice</i>	5	1		2
	<i>Other: Claim Ineffectiveness</i>			6	5
	<i>Other: Appeal to Tradition</i>			1	1
	<i>Other: Appeal to Maintaining Competitiveness</i>			2	12

Note. The shade of green indicates the number of occurrences.

Appendix 3: Framework Matrix

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Surrender				
Change is Impossible				<p>Outlawing combustion engine cars by 2035 is neither realistic nor environmentally sensible and leads into a “climate dead end” (WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23). Combustion engines will likely remain necessary for heavy goods transport [trucks] for a while as there is no real alternative to it yet. Trucks will bear the brunt of heavy goods transport: According to a recently presented prediction presented by the German Minister for Transportation, for at least half of the 21st century trucks will transport the main share of goods and this share may even increase by 54% by 2051 (WKO, 10.03.2023, 11:00).</p> <p>Trains cannot replace</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
				<p>planes in connecting the regions to the airport in Vienna (WKO, 03.11.23, 12:09).</p> <p>Gas is not replaceable in the short- or medium-term, neither for the industry, nor for households (WKO, 21.11.23, 11:48).</p> <p>Not everybody can buy new vehicles. It must hence be possible to convert regular combustion engine cars to clean alternatives (e.g., alternative fuels, e-fuels) (WKO, 22.11.23, 12:22).</p>
Doomism				
Other within Surrender				
Redirect Responsibility				

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Individualism			<p>Buying regionally produced food, and better even, buying food from the local farmers, has a huge environmental effect and is more climate-friendly. Thus, consumers have a responsibility to buy local and regional food (LK, 05.12.2023, 10:55; LK, 14.06.2023, 10:32; LK, 22.05.2023, 11:33; LK, 16.03.2023, 08:47; LK, 22.02.2023, 11:33; LK, 17.01.2023, 09:32). That is also why more transparency about the origin of food is needed (LK, 22.05.2023, 11:33).</p> <p>Food waste is bad for the environment, and households are the biggest producers of food waste; they should reduce that (LK, 21.03.20, 10:05).</p> <p>"Environmental and biodiversity protection does not end at the field, but must extend to the shopping trolley." (Umwelt-</p>	

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Whataboutism			<p>und Biodiversitätsschutz endet nicht am Feld, sondern muss bis in den Einkaufswagen reichen, LK, 17.01.2023, 09:32, own translation).</p> <p>Climate change is mostly caused by the fossil fuel industry and global politics. Why do the farmers have to fulfill such high standards? Will the other sectors be confronted with similar standards? Probably not! Farmers have to increase biodiversity indices despite that climate change will cause these indices to tend to fall (LK, 10.11.2023, 10:58).</p> <p>Other countries don't have as high standards as the Austrians. That's why we need transparency about the origin of food, so that consumers can decide in favor of Austrian products and contribute to climate protection (LK, 16.03.2023, 08:47).</p>	<p>The EU cannot save the climate on its own. Other economic areas must implement binding targets too. This is not only good for the climate but also necessary to maintain the competitiveness of European businesses (WKO, 13.12.23, 11:38). The EU continues to be a forerunner in climate action. China and the US emit more CO2 than the EU, both per GDP and per citizen (WKO, 13.12.23, 11:38).</p> <p>No other region than the EU has effective climate action measures targeting net zero. The EU must focus on combatting carbon leakage. The Austrian and the European economies are contributing</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>significantly to coping with climate change (WKO, 13.12.23, 11:38).</p> <p>The Austrian government should introduce a compensation for the price of electricity, as more than half of all EU states have already implemented this (WKO, 06.04.23, 11:54).</p> <p>The state should not introduce new costs for the transportation sector. Austria already has the highest tolls in the EU (WKO, 09.05.23, 14:03; WKO, 02.09.23, 10:59). Austria has a proportionally high emissions reduction target, compared to other EU countries (WKO, 30.08.23, 12:30). [The abolition of domestic flights in Austria] has not had the intended effect of reducing CO2 emissions. Aviation is responsible for only 0.2% of all CO2 emissions in Austria, 0.5% in Europe</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Blaming the rich	<p>Worldwide, as well as in Austria, the richest 10% cause way more emissions than poorer parts of the population. At the same time, they evade paying taxes; this is unfair. For combating the climate crisis, it is crucial that the rich pay higher taxes (AK, 25.05.2023, 16:47; AK, 25.05.2023, 16:45). This money is essential to finance the transformation of energy, infrastructure, etc. (AK, 20.02.2023, 09:58; AK, 10.05.2023, 12:01).</p> <p>Poor people have fewer opportunities to change their behavior and reduce emissions (AK, 10.05.2023, 12:01).</p> <p>Climate policy must be socially just, and letting the rich pay an adequate share</p>			and 2.7% worldwide (WKO, 03.11.23, 12:09).

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
The "Free Rider" Excuse	<p>is in integral part of that (AK, 14.11.2023, 14:00). Letting the rich pay higher taxes also increases acceptance for climate policy (AK, 25.05.2023, 16:45)</p>		<p>The use of pesticides is more restricted in Austria than in many countries from which Austria imports food. The pesticide restriction leads to more imported food, and the unequal regulation is unfair for competition. This is also not helpful for the climate (LK, 24.11.2023, 12:32).</p> <p>Austria is confronted with higher standards than other EU countries. This is a huge disadvantage in the market [said one time in the context of the National Energy and Climate Plan and one time in general about Austrian environmental standards] (LK, 04.07.2023, 11:03; LK, 21.08.2023, 10:06).</p>	

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
<p>Other within Redirect Responsibility</p> <p>Push Non-Transformative Solutions</p> <p>Technological Optimism</p>			<p>The EU puts pressure on the price of food with increasingly high environmental standards, while food is increasingly imported from countries with lower standards (LK, 20.04.2023, 09:08).</p> <p>Technology that helps to steer the tractors more precisely would save resources (LK, 04.12.2023, 11:45).</p> <p>[With the context that using timber and wood is an effective measure to combat the climate crisis], the woods have to be actively managed. New technology can enable cutting trees in difficult mountainous areas (LK, 26.09.2023, 09:32).</p>	<p>The research for future technologies for mobility, energy provision, and production should not be confronted with any boundaries. Funding for this research is currently lacking (WKO, 06.04.23, 11:54). The promotion of application-oriented and technologically-open research is important. The first phase of the Ministry for Economic Affairs' climate and transformation offense is support in</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
		<p>The environment would benefit if farm management systems were able to analyze more data (LK, 10.07.2023, 11:42).</p> <p>"The expansion of production capacities for renewable gases with all the technologies available in Austria is a key issue for the future" (Der Ausbau der Produktionskapazitäten für erneuerbare Gase mit allen in Österreich verfügbaren Technologien ist eine zentrale Zukunftsfrage, LK, 15.02.2023, 13:52, own translation).</p>	<p>research and technological development. This support enables the transformation of domestic businesses and growth (WKO, 28.02.23, 10:15). Research funding by the ministry for climate affairs should be designed as technologically neutral (WKO, 09.05.23, 12:30).</p> <p>In a survey, most young entrepreneurs plead for climate policy that is entrepreneurial and open to different technologies (WKO, 26.06.23, 12:21).</p> <p>The WKO parliament accepted a motion for technological pluralism in a majority vote (WKO, 29.06.23, 14:17).</p> <p>In reference to transportation: The stock of combustion engine cars must be part of the solution. These can easily be made climate neutral by using synthetic</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>fuels/alternative fuels, especially with e-fuels (WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23). For individual mobility, the push for battery electric solutions leads to questions about resources and infrastructure.</p> <p>We are convinced that climate neutral or even CO2-free heavy goods transport will be possible in the future (WKO, 10.03.23, 11:00). The transformation of trucks must be technologically open too, and e-fuels as well as hydrogen vehicles are future-oriented alternatives (WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23; WKO, 16.10.23, 12:58; WKO, 23.03.23, 08:57; WKO, 22.11.23, 12:22). For heavy load traffic, alternatives like hydrogen, e-fuels, biofuels, or LNG should be pushed and developed further in an approach that remains open to different technologies (WKO,</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>19.04.23, 13:55). It is good that the EU remains open to different technologies for trucks and busses, as no practical applications for e-mobility exist in this area, and as the requirements for the charging infrastructure are much higher than for individual cars.</p> <p>To reach the climate targets, there's no getting around openness to different technologies (WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23; WKO, 23.03.23, 08:57; WKO, 20.09.23, 11:59). It hence makes sense that the ban of combustion engines is reconsidered (WKO, 23.03.23, 08:57).</p> <p>The rapid usage of CO2-neutral, alternative aviation fuels is important to achieve CO2 neutral aviation. Subsidies are required to accelerate this usage (WKO, 03.11.23, 12:09).</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>New CO2 taxes should be implemented only when the market for electric and hydrogen cars is up and running, and refueling and charging infrastructure is expanded (WKO, 01.12.23, 12:26).</p> <p>In reference to energy: In energy politics, targets should be set while staying open to different technologies. We call for a faster expansion of renewable energies and the building of energy storage, power lines, and backup capacities (WKO, 10.03.23, 11:25). To foster biogas, the climate ministry must ensure openness to different technologies and provide additional measures, including grants, exemptions from the CO2 tax, a creditability toward the emissions trading scheme, the import of climate-neutral hydrogen, and the</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>necessary gas infrastructure (WKO, 15.02.23, 12:03). The question where Austria can acquire cheap renewable energy and how to transport it into the country needs technological solutions and transport ways (WKO, 30.11.23, 12:41).</p> <p>Mining and steel production are an energy-intensive sector that counts on breakthrough technologies. The challenge is to research and realize new and innovative applications (WKO, 26.09.23, 16:52).</p> <p>[Discontinuing the compensation for electricity prices] disadvantages an energy carrier that is essential to the decarbonization (WKO, 22.11.23, 13:47).</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
All Talk, Little Action	<p>The supply chain act is a milestone. Labor unions and NGOs have fought for it for so long. The law is so important for climate change mitigation (AK, 01.06.2023, 09:10).</p>		<p>Many farmers are already part of the ÖPUL program, and they generally already do a lot for the environment. Austrian food fulfills high environmental standards (LK, 04.12.2023, 11:45; LK, 10.11.2023, 10:58; LK, 17.01.2023; 09:32; LK, 21.08.2023, 10:06).</p> <p>"Austria extends its pioneering role in the agri-environmental sector" (Österreich baut Vorreiterrolle im Agrarumweltbereich aus, LK, 17.01.2023, 09:32).</p> <p>Austrian sheep and goat farming is a great example of sustainable small-scale production and circular economy (LK, 03.04.2023, 08:58).</p> <p>It has been successful "to motivate farming families to participate in the environmental program and thus meet growing</p>	

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
		<p>challenges such as climate change and the threat to our natural resources — even more than before. Austria's pioneering role must be recognised“ ([Es ist gelungen,] die Bauernfamilien zur Teilnahme am Umweltprogramm zu motivieren und damit wachsenden Herausforderungen wie dem Klimawandel und der Bedrohung unserer natürlichen Ressourcen – noch mehr als bisher – gerecht zu werden. Diese Vorreiterrolle Österreichs gilt es anzuerkennen, LK, 22.05.2023, 11:33, own translation).</p> <p>The Austrian protein strategy sets standards in the EU. It is now important that consumers continue to buy Austrian products, which are climate-friendly. (LK, 03.02.2023, 10:54)</p> <p>Austrian forestry is not</p>	

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Fossil Fuel Solutionism			<p>comparable to South American rainforest clearing. Within Europe, there are also differences. In Austria, more timber grows than is harvested (LK, 26.09.2023, 09:32)</p>	<p>Meeting the climate targets will need not only e-mobility but also e-fuels, biogas, and hydrogen (WKO, 20.09.23, 11:59).</p> <p>In reference to transportation: The automotive sector contributes to sustainable mobility not only by fostering electric mobility but also through CO2-neutral fuels like e-fuels (WKO, 16.10.23, 12:58). Alternative fuels, especially e-fuels, can be used in the vehicle stock without retrofitting, making them easily climate-neutral. The car stock should be part of the solution (WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23; WKO, 22.11.23, 12:22). The EU circling</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>back on banning combustion engine cars is correct to find a solution that includes alternative fuels like e-fuels (WKO, 23.03.23, 08:57).</p> <p>As there are no real alternatives to combustion engine trucks yet, they will still be in use for a while. It is hence important to exhaust any potentials for CO2 reductions in these trucks (WKO, 10.03.23, 11:00). For heavy cargo traffic, in shipping and in aviation, alternatives to battery electric drives exist in form of hydrogen, e-fuels, biofuels, and LNG (WKO, 19.04.23, 13:55; WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23). Action to ensure safety of supply is needed for both hydrogen and e-fuels. Further research is needed too (WKO, 19.04.23, 13:55).</p> <p>The rapid usage of CO2-neutral, alternative aviation</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>fuels is crucial to reduce the CO2 emissions of the sector. This requires EU recommendations and grants (WKO, 03.11.23, 12:09).</p> <p>Not recognizing savings in fossil fuel consumption as an energy efficiency measure is viewed with criticism (WKO, 18.01.23, 11:54).</p> <p>In reference to energy: The industry wants a quick market launch of renewable gases. To achieve this, an expansion of the gas infrastructure is requested (WKO, 10.03.23, 11:25). The industry calls for a diversification of gas imports and an expansion of domestic production, the connection of Austria to LNG pipelines, and the rapid market launch of renewable/climate neutral gas (WKO, 06.04.23, 11:54). Networks are</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>needed to ensure the gas storage level. These can be used for Green gas and hydrogen too. Other demands include quicker approval procedures for location critical projects, finding alternatives to the gas transit through Ukraine, the support of renewable gases, hydrogen retrofitting of existing infrastructure, and political engagement for securing gas supply from the South (WKO, 21.11.23, 11:48). The National Energy and Climate Plan (Nationaler Energie- und Klimaplan, NEKP) does not include how the supply with natural gas will be possible (WKO, 30.08.23, 12:30).</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
No Sticks, Just Carrots	Consumption changes, such as buying items that are secondhand, is environmentally beneficial, but it should not be forced through economic coercion (AK, 13.06.2023, 08:40).		In the context of banning pesticides and other environmental measures, different obligations, requirements, and prohibitions are criticized. Many regulatory measures would not make sense (LK, 14.12.2023, 08:45), would place disproportionate pressure on farmers (LK, 10.11.2023, 10:58), or would not be on equal footing with regulation among other European countries (LK, 04.07.2023, 11:03). The consequences of this are lacking profitability and lower crop yields (LK, 29.06.2023, 11:48). Instead of this form of regulation, incentives are seen as more effective (LK, 10.11.2023, 10:58; LK, 22.05.2023, 11:33)	A majority of surveyed young entrepreneurs plead for climate policy that is entrepreneurial and open to different technologies rather than using penalties and prohibitions (WKO, 26.07.23, 12:21). In reference to energy: In the transition caused by climate change and digitalization, enterprises need business-friendly policies that don't restrict them. Because of the high energy costs that are self-induced through sanctions [supposedly those against Russia], focusing on the acquisition of cheap renewable energy is more important (WKO, 30.11.23, 12:41). [In the context of the energy efficiency law,] incentives instead of obligations for the suppliers reduce bureaucracy and save energy costs (WKO, 18.01.23, 11:54). Incentives and an

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>approach that remains open to different technologies would have been better than prohibiting gas heating in newly built buildings (WKO, 17.10.23, 18:38).</p> <p>Businesses need additional subsidies, especially for switching from fossil to renewable energy carriers. CO2 taxes are not needed (WKO, 01.12.23, 12:26). A long-term reduction of the electricity tax would be a long-term incentive for businesses and avoid bureaucratic management of grants (WKO, 22.11.23, 13:47).</p> <p>In reference to transportation: To invest in the modern, environmentally-friendly vehicles, the transportation sector doesn't need new hurdles but rather investments like measures against the shortage of</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>workers such as eco-social climate policies and market mechanisms (WKO, 22.03.23, 10:50). The transportation sector needs new incentives to make vehicles with battery electric or hydrogen drive trains more affordable. It does not need additional costs like a CO2 premium on tolls (WKO, 09.05.23, 14:03). Additional CO2 components in the toll system should be implemented only when the market for electric and hydrogen vehicles is up and running (WKO, 01.12.23, 12:26). Reducing CO2 emissions in aviation cannot be achieved by prohibiting domestic flights. Rather, grants are needed to accelerate the application of CO2-neutral, alternative aviation fuels (WKO, 03.11.23, 12:09).</p> <p>To achieve the transportation transition,</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			vehicles with alternative drive modes and fuels need to be available in sufficient quantities and at affordable prices, refueling and charging infrastructure needs to be expanded EU-wide, and the public administration needs to provide grants that cover the additional expenses of the businesses in the sector (WKO, 31.03.23, 15:15).

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
<p>Other within Push Non-Transformative Solutions</p> <p>(Neoliberalism) - Free Market Optimism</p>				<p>Business engagement for sustainability is welcome; consumers demand that too. Designing legislation in a "livable" way for businesses is legislative sustainability (WKO, 18.01.2023, 13:36). Minister Gewessler's reference to best practices in implementing measures [in the transport sector] show that businesses have already shown their own initiative. The transport sector is available to share its expertise (WKO, 31.03.2023, 15:15).</p> <p>The Austrians' high interest in securities should be engaged in direction of the climate transformation to enable the sustainable development of Austria as a financial location (WKO, 17.03.2023, 10:33).</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
(Ordoliberalism) - Advocating for Market-Based Solutions Including Incentives/Market Intervention			<p>Real steps toward climate and environmental protection would be better achieved through incentives fostering the replacement of old technology with new technology [in the context of ovens/stoves] (LK, 20.03.20, 09:11).</p> <p>Clear regulatory frameworks to create security of investment are demanded (LK, 15.02.2023, 13:52). The agricultural ministry has to set a secure framework in cooperation with the European Commission ... The future of agriculture must be secured on the</p>	<p>The climate transformation can only be achieved with a potent capital market. Hence, framework conditions will be needed that make investment in Austria more attractive (WKO, 17.03.23, 10:33; WKO, 16.06.23, 10:28).</p> <p>Austria should reduce the electricity tax to the EU minimum. This would be an economic incentive for the decarbonization of the industry (WKO, 22.11.23, 13:47).</p> <p>The public administration needs to provide grants that cover the additional expenses of the businesses in the sector or the businesses in the cargo transportation sector (WKO, 02.09.23, 10:59). [In the context of rising carbon prices, there is probably the intention to offset the carbon price costs with the subsidies.]</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Biomass/Biogas Solutionism			<p>market (LK, 17.01.2023, 09:32).</p> <p>Active management of the forests is necessary to replace fossil fuel materials with timber in the sectors of construction and fuels. Wood and timber have a huge climate protection potential, which should be used and fostered by favorable policies. The use of wood should be increased (LK, 14.12.2023, 08:45).</p> <p>Academics also emphasize the potential of wood for climate protection (LK, 26.09.2023, 09:32).</p> <p>"We must proactively invest in the forest and thus strengthen our natural air conditioning system" (Wir müssen proaktiv in den Wald investieren und so unsere natürliche Klimaanlage stärken, LK, 24.07.2023, 09:47, own</p>	<p>The climate and energy transition requires new experts in biogas, wind power, and solar power systems, but also in electronics and mechatronics. There is a new educational/vocational training program that includes modules on biomass, heat pumps, and solar power (WKO, 01.02.23, 16:18). The energy transition will not work without renewable gases like organic methane or hydrogen. Security of supply is important. There needs to be subsidies for organic methane, hydrogen, and synthetic gases. Also, green gases need to be exempt from the tax on natural gas and the CO2 tax and creditable toward the emissions trading</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
		<p>translation).</p> <p>56% of renewable energy production is produced through biomass, mostly timber. Forests are important for energy provision. As more timber regrows than is cut, there is potential to increase the use of timber for energy. Trees have to be cut to produce a predictable amount of biomass; otherwise, the biomass plants cannot run, which would have huge economic and social consequences. Biomass must remain recognized as renewable and eligible for subsidies (LK, 20.03.20, 09:11).</p> <p>Biomass and biogas have huge potential and should not be dismissed (LK, 13.06.2023, 11:05).</p> <p>Biogas is essential for the security of supply. Biomass and biogas have</p>	<p>scheme (WKO, 15.02.23, 12:03).</p> <p>For heavy cargo shipping, general shipping, and aviation, hydrogen, e-fuels, organic fuels, and LNG are alternatives to battery electric drive modes (WKO, 19.04.23, 13:55). Meeting the climate targets will require all technologies, including e-fuels, biogas, and hydrogen. Organic fuels and e-fuels need to be creditable towards fleet targets (WKO, 20.09.23, 11:59). We welcome adaptations in EU legislation to allow e-fuels and organic fuels for trucks and buses (WKO, 22.11.23, 12:22).</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
		to be expanded to reduce dependency and inflation (LK, 15.02.2023, 13:52).	

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Animal-Based Agriculture Solutionism			<p>Local egg production is sustainable and climate-friendly (LK, 11.10.2023, 10:45).</p> <p>The LK criticizes "the demonization of ruminants as climate sinners" (die Verteufelung der Wiederkäuer als Klimasünder, LK, 12.07.2023, 15:17, own translation). 61% of the biomass of plants growing in Austria are inedible for humans, but ruminants can eat them and through this produce food. This is why ruminants are not bad for climate protection, but are even good (LK, 12.07.2023, 15:17).</p>	

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Emphasize the Downsides				
Policy Perfectionism				
Non-Inclusive/Transparent Process			<p>In the case of the National Energy and Climate Plan, stakeholders such as the LK were only involved for the first time after the official submission deadline at the EU-level in June. This is far too late to react to 100 pages of documents. There needs to be genuine cooperation and not just mock involvement. Otherwise, no real sustainability can be achieved (LK, 04.07.2023, 11:03).</p>	<p>The draft for the National Energy and Climate Plan (Nationaler Energie- und Klimaplan, NEKP) is fragmentary and must be thoroughly revised to ensure transparency, professional exchange, and coordination. The studies underlying the NEKP must be published (WKO, 30.08.23, 12:30).</p>
Criticizing Nuclear Energy	<p>Expert reports show that nuclear energy can never be climate neutral, which is why it should never be defined as such. Neither the production of nuclear energy nor the nuclear waste disposal are</p>	<p>The Energy Charter Treaty hinders the transition to renewable energy as nuclear energy remains protected. (ÖGB, 07.07.2023, 10:14)</p>	<p>It would be a huge mistake to use a risky technology such as nuclear energy instead of wood (LK, 20.03.20, 09:11).</p> <p>Nuclear energy is not green, and it should not be</p>	

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Appeal to Well-Being	<p>sustainable. Austrian employees decline equating nuclear energy with renewable energies (AK, 16.03.2023, 15:31).</p>		<p>equated with good technologies such as biomass. Declaring nuclear energy as green would be treating our existence and a "genuflection/surrender to the nuclear and fossil lobby" (Kniefall vor der Atom- und Fossilobby, LK, 20.03.20, 09:11, own translation)</p> <p>Animal agriculture creates beautiful landscapes with high biodiversity, which also saves the surrounding settlements from extreme weather events. It would be so sad if our grandchildren could not enjoy the view of the beautiful, cultivated areas of alpine pastures (LK, 12.07.2023, 15:17).</p> <p>The current National Energy and Climate Plan threatens prosperity and basic provisioning (LK, 04.07.2023, 11:03).</p> <p>The high regulation of pesticides is a threat to the</p>	<p>"We need to meet the climate targets, but we also need to ensure security of supply of goods and services and the competitiveness of the business location" ("Denn wir müssen sicherstellen, dass die Klimaziele erreicht werden können, aber auch die Versorgungssicherheit der Bevölkerung mit Gütern und Dienstleistungen sowie die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit des Standorts weiter gewährleistet sind" , WKO, 28.02.2023, 13:23: 6 - 6 , own translation).</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
		<p>security of supply and to the economy, especially to small-scaled farmers (LK, 29.06.2023, 11:48; LK, 02.03.2023, 11:10).</p>	<p>The planned tightening of the EU nature protection law questions the security of supply of foodstuff and mineral and renewable raw materials (WKO, 10.03.23, 11:25). The protests by the “Last Generation” don’t hit those that they think should act but people like you and me and the whole commercial transport that is important for daily supply. The protests are bad and even life-threatening for some businesses (WKO, 22.11.23, 11:01).</p> <p>[In the context of security of supply,] renewable energies and green electricity don’t get us anywhere if the energy cannot be transported to people and businesses reliably, at competitive prices, and efficiently (WKO, 21.11.23, 11:48).</p> <p>There must be a balance</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Appeal to Social Justice	<p>The climate crisis can only be solved if social aspects are taken into deep consideration (AK, 10.05.2023, 12:04).</p> <p>Employees need their car (AK, 10.05.2023, 12:04). The commuters allowance should be changed so that people with middle and low incomes benefit more from it than they do now (AK, 14.12.2023, 13:54; AK, 25.05.2023, 16:47).</p> <p>Electricity price ceiling for gas and district heating ('+ Energiekostendeckel für</p>	<p>The workers should be centered in measures to combat the climate crisis. They should not be the ones bearing the cost of the climate crisis (ÖGB, 14.09.2023, 14:31).</p>		<p>between business/the economy, social issues, and ecology (WKO, 29.06.23, 13:50). Combatting the climate crisis can only work with business/the economy, not against it (WKO, 26.04.23, 11:13). We must not ruin our economy for per thousand changes in CO2 emissions (WKO, 30.11.23, 12:41).</p> <p>Fuel prices, CO2 prices, increasing wages, material costs, and toll increases affect not only the transport sector but [by extension] all people in Austria (WKO, 20.09.23, 11:02).</p> <p>Not everybody can buy new vehicles. It must hence be possible to convert regular combustion engine cars to clean alternatives (e.g., alternative fuels and e-fuels) (WKO, 22.11.23, 12:22).</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
<p>Other within Emphasize the Downsides</p> <p>(One Specific Climate Policy is) Ineffective</p>	<p>Gas und Fernwärme) AK > AK: 13.06.2023, 08:40: 10 - 10 (0)</p> <p>"In managing the climate crisis social and ecological aspects need to be integrated, justice has to take precedence here aswell"</p> <p>AK > AK: 20.02.2023, 09:58: 6 - 6 (0)</p>		<p>The EU laws on timber construction are contradictory and driven by ideology. We need a forward-looking policy that really works and favors more use of wood (LK, 14.12.2023, 08:45).</p> <p>The EU Green Deal is driven by ideology and is only pseudo-sustainable. It increases the pressure on forestry companies and makes self-sufficiency in food and the expansion of</p>	<p>Gluing oneself to the highway doesn't change the climate (WKO, 30.11.23, 12:41).</p> <p>In reference to energy: [In terms of climate targets not being coordinated and lacking strategy,] the goal to achieve 100% green electricity by 2030 makes up only 20% of the overall domestic energy consumption (WKO, 10.03.23, 11:25).</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
		<p>renewable energies more difficult. The EU is acting contradictorily. Thanks to the commitment of farmers' representatives in the European Parliament in favor of agriculture, forestry, and security of supply, worse laws from Brussels were able to be prevented (LK, 10.11.2023, 10:58).</p> <p>The regulation to restore nature would destroy domestic agriculture, lead to massive food imports, and thus protect neither people nor the climate (LK, 29.06.2023, 11:48).</p> <p>With regard to biomass and biogas, the EU's plans are absolutely counterproductive and impractical (LK, 13.06.2023, 11:05).</p> <p>"While others simply call for environmental protection from their city centre offices and pursue</p>	<p>In reference to transportation: Banning combustion engine cars from 2035 onwards is neither realistic nor environmentally sensible. The traffic minister should hence threaten the EU Commission with a veto (WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23). Businesses have no option to switch to zero emissions vehicles. The steering effect intended in the CO2 premium on tolls will hence have no benefit for the environment (WKO, 02.09.23, 10:59, 01.12.23, 12:26). The abolition of domestic flights has not had the intended climate effect and no relevant effect in the worldwide aviation industry's effort to be CO2 neutral by 2050. Instead of switching to trains, passengers are rather taking the car (to get to other airports). Also, people might fly from rural Austrian airports to foreign</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
		<p>theory that is far removed from practice, our farmers protect nature and biodiversity in practice - every day anew“ (Während andere lediglich aus den Innenstadtbüros heraus Umweltschutz fordern und praxisferne Theorie betreiben, leisten unsere Bäuerinnen und Bauern Natur- und Biodiversitätsschutz in der Praxis – und das jeden Tag aufs Neue, LK, 22.05.2023, 11:33, own translation)</p> <p>The proposed EU directive on the "sustainable use of plant protection products" is not sustainable, but rather fact-free. It would destroy European self-sufficiency and would be a major burden for small farms. The economic consequences of this regulation would be enormous (LK, 02.03.2023, 11:10).</p>	<p>aviation hubs, making them fly more/farther. The abolition of domestic flights is ecologically senseless and done not for climate reasons but out of dogmatism (WKO, 03.11.23, 12:09).</p>

	AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
Appeal to Tradition			<p>The reduction of livestock farming would reduce the areas of beautifully cultivated landscape. "If this development continues to accelerate, our grandchildren will only know flowering meadows and alpine pastures from picture books." (Wenn sich diese Entwicklung weiter beschleunigt, werden unsere Enkelkinder blühende Wiesen und Almweiden nur mehr aus Bilderbüchern kennen, LK, 12.07.2023, 15:17, own translation)</p>	<p>[In context of arguing against shutting down in-country flights] Flights from Salzburg to Vienna have 60 years of precedence (WKO, 03.11.2023, 12:09).</p>
Maintain Competitiveness ("Wettbewerbsfähigkeit")/Business Location ("Wirtschaftsstandort")			<p>The high regulation of pesticides leads to the situation that the cultivation of many crops in Austria is not competitive anymore (LK, 29.06.2023, 11:48).</p> <p>Ever-increasing standards are a pressure on the European economy (LK, 20.04.2023, 09:08).</p>	<p>Sustainability needs to be reconciled with competitiveness, a plea that is seconded by a survey among young entrepreneurs (WKO, 24.01.23, 11:47). The climate targets must be met, but security of supply and competitiveness must be ensured too (WKO, 28.02.23, 13:23).</p> <p>The trade unions should</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>form a “location partnership” [with the WKO] to work on the capacity and competitiveness of the business location (WKO, 30.11.23, 12:41).</p> <p>As the National Energy and Climate Plan (Nationaler Energie- und Klimaplan, NEKP) has implications for the business location and competitiveness, the climate ministry should release the studies that the NEKP is based upon. The NEKP is incomplete as security of supply and competitiveness are deprioritized (WKO, 30.08.23, 12:30).</p> <p>Competitiveness and/or the business/industry location are endangered or damaged by energy costs (WKO, 06.04.23, 11:54; WKO, 22.11.23, 13:47), CO2 costs (WKO, 06.04.23, 11:54; WKO,</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			<p>01.12.23, 12:26), excessive inflation (WKO, 06.04.23, 11:54), increases in wage costs (that also endanger investments into the transformation) (WKO, 26.09.23, 12:31), and the termination of domestic flights in Austria (WKO, 03.11.23, 12:09). On the other side, affordable energy is central for green competitiveness (of the European business and working location) (WKO, 23.03.23, 08:57).</p> <p>Austria having the highest tolls in the EU leads to business location costs for industry, businesses, and trade (WKO, 09.05.23, 14:03).</p> <p>Unrealistically high target quotas and exorbitant penalties for the gas sector would seal off Austria from the European gas market (WKO, 06.04.23, 11:54).</p>

AK	ÖGB	LK	WKO
			The mining and steel sector is energy-intensive and faced with the challenge of developing innovative applications while remaining competitive (WKO, 26.09.23, 16:52).