

Competing Urgencies: Translating Climate Neutrality Policy in the European Union (EU-URGE)

Climate change has become not only what politicians say, but also what each of us experiences in daily life. With extreme heat, hurricanes and unpredictability of the seasons, more and more people realize that it is time to re-think our ways of living and act on climate change. And that it is an **urgent** need worldwide.

The rich countries with a lot of industry, transportation and high consumption, like the European states, have highest impact on climate. The new Mission 100 of the EU aims to mitigate climate change. It supports 100 European cities in the goal to become climate neutral by 2030. **Warsaw, Klagenfurt and Ljubljana** are among these 100 cities. They are expected to act as laboratories for climate action and role models for all European cities. But will they treat climate mitigation as an urgent matter?

In this project we want to learn how the **urgency** of climate neutrality competes with other urgencies in these cities, such as the need to react on refugee crisis, political scandal, or bankruptcy of municipality. **Warsaw, Klagenfurt and Ljubljana** are very different in size, number of residents, budget and current climate impact, two are national capitals, one is not. How will they interpret the EU policy? What will be a priority for each of them? Local interpretations of what is urgent will help us better understand social hierarchies and asymmetries inside and between these cities. And most of all, we would like to learn what is the impact of these cities' actions on how climate change issues are treated.

The project's **scientific goal** is to explore and interpret **what is urgency in the context of climate change**. We want to see how it **competes** with other urgencies. We want to know how a feeling that something is **urgent is being born, communicated, and put into practice** politically and culturally. We are interested in the **socio-cultural and political life of climate urgency**.

The projects' specific objectives are:

- to conduct a cultural analysis of **urgency**,
- to **develop the anthropology of climate change** by using **urgency** as a prism,
- to see how **cities' transition to climate neutrality** unfold, and what happens when the EU climate neutrality policy "travels" to national and local levels.

The project will demonstrate the specifics of Central European context that has not been well studied so far.

Anthropology is recognized as a discipline that is best in studying what is local and everyday. We will use its flagship method – **fieldwork**. It is the method of going out there, being there, collaborating with people out there and carefully listening to what they have to say. The method of immersion in a social practice that treats the observed reality as unfamiliar and sensible at the same time. We will do participant observation, e.g. in municipalities and at street protests, and conduct in-depth interviews. We will speak with bureaucrats and city activists, policy-makers and non-profit organizations' staff. We will also treat **texts** as a part of cultural, social and political reality. We will collect and study policy documents and media debates about climate neutrality to see how the concepts of urgency, future, and transition are understood in this context. Importantly, we will work as an international research team. For us, this does not mean simply collaboration, but a process of producing new quality of knowledge. We will conduct joint fieldworks in order to benefit from the fresh perspective that the "outsider view" brings, and do cross-country comparative analyses of our data. We will share our knowledge and experience with each other.

At the end of our study we hope to have an in-depth understanding of how urgencies compete in three Central European cities that decided to join the EU Mission 100 action. We will see what kind of future images the urgency of climate neutrality has brought about. We will know which elements of climate change are placed at the forefront, and which – ignored, in the competition of urgencies.

The project will bring to light the **cultural mechanisms that promote mobilization in climate change issues, and the ones that prevent it**. It will shape the anthropological studies of urgency and advance the anthropology of policy.