

Climate protection and the mitigation of negative climate change are among the most globally significant social, political, and legal challenges. The UN notes that climate change has glaring consequences for human life on earth, with rising temperatures, environmental depletion and degradation, natural disasters, extreme weather conditions, lack of stable access to water, and the outbreak of migratory, economic, and armed conflicts. In view of this, the negative effects of climate change reduce the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development. Thus, it is necessary to take measures related to the prevention of threats posed by environmental degradation and climate change. Failure to ensure an adequate standard of protection in legal terms may lead to irreversible consequences. Therefore, both the European Union and its Member States recognise the need for coherent criminal law provisions to sanction the most serious environmental offences.

The aim of the project is to analyse whether it is possible to develop an integrated approach to the criminal law regulation of climate protection in Polish and EU law. The main research question of the project is to assess what the role of criminal law is in combating the climate crisis. Unlike other publications, the research will focus on an *ecocentric* approach to criminal law-making in climate protection. In other words, the project's paradigm will be that climate and the environment have an intrinsic value, regardless of what role they play in human life.

The research will be conducted from three perspectives. First, to identify and present the essence of the legal good that is constituted by climate, hence the standards arising from EU law in terms of climate protection and the need to use criminal law instruments in this regard. Secondly, the standards of climate protection through criminal law in the Polish legal order will be reconstructed, considering their assumptions and the implementation of the objectives of EU policy in this area, in relation to the implementation of Directive 2008/99/EU on the protection of the environment through criminal law. Thirdly, from a comparative perspective, the analysis will be extended to the criminal law of climate protection in Germany and Belgium. The aim here is to illustrate the main problems of criminal liability in climate protection and to outline an approach to punishing behaviour that most seriously contributes to the impoverishment of this legal good.

The research project will include: 1) the specificity and complexity of the behaviours that lead to negative climate change and their transboundary nature; 2) the systemic and structural assumptions related to the establishment and imposition of criminal responsibility; 3) the competences and objectives of the EU legislator in the harmonisation of substantive criminal law; 4) the concept of the graduated punishment approach to climate protection from an *ecocentric* perspective.

By proposing an integrated approach and comparative analysis, the project directly addresses an issue that has yet not been discussed in the literature from a climate crisis prevention perspective. The project is exploratory in that it seeks to identify climate as an autonomous legal good subject to protection also through criminal law. Moreover, the practical aspect of the research should be emphasised, as it aims at such a reconstruction of a minimum standard of criminal law in environmental protection which could be considered holistically in the legislation of Member States. Concurrently, the project aims to provide an extended analysis of the main problems related to the attribution of criminal liability for behaviour that most significantly contributes to negative climate change.

The results of the project are intended to provide a comprehensive solution for ensuring effective environmental and climate protection through criminal law. The project will result in publications in Polish and English, in the form of scientific articles. Moreover, the conclusions from the research will be presented during international and national scientific conferences in the field of criminal law and legal protection of the environment.