

TEXTE

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Ukraine War and Sustainability Policy

Sustainability Policy - Key to Stability, Security and Resilience

Lessons for Sustainability Policy – Discussion Paper

by:

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German Environment Agency

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Abstract:

The following text elaborates on the necessities of a future sustainability and climate protection policy which goes beyond solution-finding due to the current crisis in Ukraine. In a first step, the interrelationships of the Ukraine crisis and global and national sustainability policies are analysed. Policy recommendations are developed on basis of the analysis in a second step. These recommendations call for ambitious sustainability policy as key for increased security, stability and resilience of all societies. In this context, in particular the responsibility of the industrialised states and especially of Germany and the EU are addressed.

Kurzbeschreibung:

Der nachfolgende Text will über die Lösung der konkreten Ukraine-Krise hinausdenken und die Notwendigkeiten einer künftigen Nachhaltigkeits- und Klimaschutzpolitik thematisieren. Zunächst wird eine Bestandsaufnahme in Bezug auf den Zusammenhang der Ukraine-Krise und der globalen und nationalen Nachhaltigkeitspolitiken unternommen. In einem zweiten Schritt werden basierend auf dieser Analyse einige Politikempfehlungen unterbreitet, die eine ambitionierte Nachhaltigkeitspolitik als Schlüssel für mehr Sicherheit, Stabilität und Resilienz aller Gesellschaften fordert. Hierbei wird besonders auf die Verantwortung der industrialisierten Staaten und insbesondere von Deutschland und der EU eingegangen.

Table of content

List of abbreviations	7
1 Introduction.....	8
2.1 Ukraine crisis in the sequence of many crises	9
2.2 Crisis of the sustainability policy and the intertwining of security and sustainability.....	9
2.3 Inadequate sustainability policy in the North - frustration and potential reorientation in the South.....	11
2.4 Potential geopolitical shifts.....	12
2.5 Further challenges for sustainability policy	13
2.5.1 Threat to the rule of law	13
2.5.2 Aggressive states.....	13
2.5.3 Digitalisation with regard to sustainability and stability/security	14
3.1 Sustainability policy is at the same time stability policy to avoid future crises and must be understood, conceptualised and implemented as such	15
3.2 Reorientation of sustainability policy required - more and faster	16
3.2.1 Adapting the narrative of sustainability policy - new framing in politics	17
3.2.2 The Global North must deliver.....	18
3.2.3 Efficiency, sufficiency and fair and equitable participation as further guiding principles required.....	18
3.2.4 Negotiations, cooperation and agreements with all states at eye level	19
3.2.5 Sustainability has to be achieved globally - cooperation with Russia is unavoidable	20
3.3 The crisis mode remains - Resilient systems are needed	20

List of abbreviations

BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
EU	European Union
G7	Group of Seven
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
USA	United States of America
UN	United Nations

1 Introduction

On 24 February 2022, Russia launched its war of aggression on Ukraine, leading to a change of the political landscape. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz described this form of aggression as a *turning point (Zeitenwende)*. Russia, with its war of aggression, has firstly unilaterally called the European security architecture into question and secondly declared central rule- and value-based agreements of international cooperation as invalid, in particular for itself.

There is no doubt that the crisis resulting from the war in Ukraine (hereinafter: Ukraine crisis¹) can have a significant impact on sustainability policy² and on the urgently needed socio-ecological transformation at national as well as at international level.

Essentially, three different scenarios may emerge with regard to future sustainability policy, which could, however, proceed differently for individual thematic fields:

- ▶ The Ukraine crisis will effect efforts in achieving the sustainability goals, in particular combating climate change are on hold and/or reduced permanently.
- ▶ The Ukraine crisis will not have any impact on the level of ambition of sustainability policy in terms of content and timing.
- ▶ The Ukraine crisis will create a momentum to implement and push forward measures for the socio-ecological transformation in a more ambitious and faster way.

The following text elaborates on the necessities of a future sustainability and climate protection policy which goes beyond solution-finding due to the current crisis in Ukraine. In a first step, the interrelationships of the Ukraine crisis and global and national sustainability policies are analysed. Policy recommendations are developed on basis of the analysis in a second step. These recommendations call for ambitious sustainability policy as key for increased security, stability and resilience of all societies. In this context, in particular the responsibility of the industrialised mostly western states (hereinafter: Global North) and especially of Germany and the EU are addressed.

The text concludes with a summary and an outlook.

¹ The term "Ukraine crisis" is intended to express that the crisis is related to the state of Ukraine. It is not meant to say that Ukraine is responsible for or has even caused the Russian war of aggression and the subsequent crisis.

² In order to avoid misunderstandings, it should be emphasised here that the term "sustainability policy" is to be understood in a broader sense. The term encompasses all climate and environmental policy measures, considering the social and economic dimensions.

2 Taking stock from a sustainability perspective

In the following, the Ukraine crisis is analysed historically and politically from a sustainability policy perspective.

2.1 Ukraine crisis in the sequence of many crises

The Ukraine crisis does not stand alone. If we look back to the past twenty years, we can see that one global crisis has followed another. In the chronological order - without claiming to be exhaustive, these have been the terrorist act of 11 September 2001 and the subsequent global war on terror by the USA, inter alia consisting of the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the war of the USA and allies against Iraq in 2003, the food crises of 2007/2008 and 2011 triggered by the sharp rise in global food prices (as a result of the deregulation of the financial markets in the trading of financial instruments for commodities), the financial crisis of 2008/09, the wars in Georgia in the years after 2008, the Arab Spring with the violent actions of individual state governments in response to the democracy movements, such as in Syria since 2011, the civil war in Yemen since 2013, the refugee movements in 2015 and the resulting EU crisis over the distribution of refugees, as well as the Corona pandemic since 2020.³ Furthermore, there are numerous conflicts on the African continent and other parts of the globe, which, however, have little or no presence in the daily political media of the Global North.

Furthermore, it is predictable that further crises with global impact will challenge us. As a result of the Ukraine crisis, there has already been a significant increase in prices for energy and many articles of daily use in numerous countries. This has corresponding consequences for parts of the population. In some countries, interest rates have risen sharply. Increasing prices and interest rates as well as a recession in the economy bear the risk of a crisis in the real estate market, including financial and banking crisis. Countries in the Global South struggle with dramatic supply shortages which triggers instabilities and contain the risk for large migration movements within and across borders. In addition, further epidemics or pandemics as a result of zoonoses may occur.⁴

These multiple and partly overlapping crises are all intertwined with two fundamental global crises: the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis.⁵ Both dynamics and the interaction with the numerous crisis have destabilizing effects. In addition, the currently ongoing and continuously deepening digitalisation has enormous effects on societies with its profound technological changes.

2.2 Crisis of the sustainability policy and the intertwining of security and sustainability

The *Sustainability Agenda 2030*,⁶ which was adopted by the international community at the session of the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015, with its 17 *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) and 169 concrete targets - together with the *Paris Agreement* to

3 Homer-Dixon, Thomas; Renn, Ortwin; Rockström, Johan; Donges, Jonathan F. und Janzwood, Scott, A Call for An International Research Program on the Risk of a Global Polycrisis. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4058592>.

4 See, for example, the WHO's response to the spread of monkeypox: <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/europa/who-affenpocken-107.html>.

5 UNEP now speaks of a "triple crisis": "climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution" - see for example: <https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>.

6 see <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

combat climate change, which was also adopted in 2015 - set the benchmark and the horizon of expectations for a successful international sustainability policy.

Was sustainability policy successful in the past years and decades? The overexploitation of the environment and nature as well as the ongoing CO₂-emissions have been scientifically proven. Elementary needs of the population are insufficiently fulfilled, poverty and hunger still exist. Although the number of hungry people significantly fell between 1990 and 2015, the number has sharply risen again since 2015 reaching the level of 1990. Furthermore, it should be mentioned, that the decrease of hunger has only been achieved in some parts of the world, such as China.⁷ And finally, the distribution gap of wealth between Northern and Southern countries in terms of income and assets, as well as the distribution of wealth within states, has widened again since 2015.⁸

Although almost all states have accepted sustainability as the necessary point of orientation for policy, appropriate and sufficient actions are still missing.

The higher the vulnerability of a society, the more people are exposed to the consequences of inadequate sustainability policies. Thus, people in the Global South are generally more affected by the impacts of the current multiple crises. However, even in Europe there is only little or no protection against certain impacts like heat, as shown by the approximately 2,000 heat-related deaths in Spain and Portugal at the end of July 2022.

How are sustainability and security connected?

Although most of the above-mentioned crises primarily have geopolitical, religious or power-political causes, the interrelationships of sustainability and security policy need to be considered and analysed. Political actions must be based on such an integrated approach. an integrated approach. Thus, insufficient sustainability policy may increase the risk of political and military conflicts. Other way round, a lack of security which leads to such conflicts can severely hamper or even nullify efforts of sustainability policy.

In this context it needs to be highlighted that the implementation of a successful sustainability policy is also under enormous time pressure due to advancing climate change.

Regional wars have occurred regularly over the last 20 years. However, four aspects make the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine and the resulting crisis a *turning point* as said by Chancellor Olaf Scholz:

- ▶ The war is an expression and result of a conflict of spheres of influence and geopolitical striving for power, especially by Russia. In the conflict over Ukraine, Russia and the Western states, including NATO, are in confrontation. The severe and far-reaching sanctions imposed by the West against Russia distinguish this war from most other regional wars of the last decades.
- ▶ The conflict has the potential for a nuclear escalation.
- ▶ As a result of the conflict, the entire geopolitical architecture could shift. However, this development has already been on the horizon for some time. It could lead to a kind of new bloc formation, which may also significantly challenge efforts towards sustainability and climate protection.

⁷ Today, about 10 % of the world's population (about 770 million people) are starving again, see <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Welthunger>

⁸ Thomas Piketty 'Das Kapital im 21. Jahrhundert' (2014).

- Ukraine crisis threatens to become a momentum to lower efforts in sustainability and climate protection.

The Ukraine crisis has shown clearly and in a time lapse that essential societal systems for social coexistence are of very limited resilience and robustness. In particular supply systems for energy and food are fragile. Within weeks or months, e.g. energy security, collapsed with immediate effects on peoples' basic existential needs (e.g. provision of heat). Comparable events have already occurred during the Corona pandemic in the health system.

It can also be stated: This experience is relatively new for the countries of the Global North. For many countries of the Global South, insecurities have been reality for a long time.

A more consistent sustainability policy could at least have mitigated the negative effects of the Ukraine crisis, and could have possibly even prevented the crisis from occurring. Through a more ambitious sustainability policy, the rate of renewable energies would have been much higher and the dependence on fossil fuels from Russia would have been less. If Europe had developed a cooperation with Russia and Ukraine on renewable energies, this could have reduced conflict potentials.

The Ukraine crisis emphasises multiple interrelation of sustainability policy (human and environmental security) and security policy (state territorial security).

2.3 Inadequate sustainability policy in the North - frustration and potential reorientation in the South

Countries of the Global South have particularly been affected by inadequate sustainability policy and its effects. These countries have been denied development potential or have been prevented from implementing development potential due to their internal constitution, Countries of the Global North are blamed to some extent for preventing development in the Global South by focusing on their own interests.

The positioning of numerous developing and emerging countries of the Global South in the conflict is striking. The votes during the resolution in the UN General Assembly condemning the Russian invasion of 02.03.2022 - *Agression against Ukraine* surprised the Global North. Although 141 UN states supported the resolution, 4 states (Eritrea, Syria, Belarus, North Korea) voted against it and 35 states abstained, including India, China, South Africa and numerous other states from Africa, Asia and South America. 12 states refused voting. In total 51 member states of the United Nations did not follow the idea of a '*complete isolation of Russia in the world community*'.

Objectively, countries of the Global South could raise the following five points of criticism on countries of the Global North for their sustainability policies. Some of these points have already been explicitly addressed, e.g. during the annual climate negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

- The countries of the Global North are largely responsible for climate change and the biodiversity crisis due to their historical emissions. They are not living up to their special responsibility.
- Even today, the countries of the Global North are not implementing the necessary actions to reduce emissions and the consumption of resources. In part, emissions that are attributable

to the increase in prosperity in the North are simply externalised through the globalisation of trade relations.⁹

- ▶ Support from the countries of the Global North for sustainability efforts in the Global South is too low.
- ▶ Rather, economic relations (e.g. trade, direct investment) are maintained or continued that primarily serve the economic interests of the states of the Global North, although there has been considerable accelerating development in some states of the Global South.
- ▶ The Global North's insufficient support in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the maintenance of patent protection for vaccines and their distribution.

2.4 Potential geopolitical shifts

It seems that countries of the Global South are rethinking their options for strategic cooperation since the conflict over Ukraine. As a result of some countries are now more open for previously not perceived or for new options.¹⁰ A clear orientation of developing and emerging countries towards western democracies such as the USA, NATO member states and further countries of the European Union is not self-evident anymore.¹¹ Close cooperation with the „West“ has often „...not served them very well“ - as the former Chilean ambassador has pointed out for developing countries.¹² Countries of the Global South were for instance disappointed about the Northern support during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³ Existing structures, cooperations and dependencies could therefore be questioned.

The transformation towards a more multipolar world order has been underway at the latest since the terrorist attack of 11th September 2001, and the rise of China, which has de facto been moving into the role of a world power and is also strategically striving for this.¹⁴

A new bloc formation might occur with the *West* on one side and another power centre around China, India, Russia, South Africa and Brazil. There are certainly developments in this direction. While a kind of community of interest consisting of Russia, India and China is emerging and seeking cooperation with other BRICS states, the high developed countries meet within their own circle, for example within the framework of the G7 - Germany, Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Canada and the USA - the EU has observer status - and agree on far-reaching political agendas. Other countries are not involved. Although these seven countries represent 50% of the world's gross national product, they only speak for about 770 million people, which accounts for 10% of the world's population.¹⁵

9 Hickel 2022: Imperialist appropriation in the world economy: Drain from the global South through unequal exchange, 1990–2015 - ScienceDirect.

Ferner: Brandt, Imperiale Lebensweise, 2017.

10 <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/asien/brics-china-101.html>.

11 Ukraine-Krieg - SZ.de.pdf

12 Ukraine-Krieg - SZ.de.pdf

13 Barbara Lippert/ Stefan Mair/Volker Perthes: Internationale Politik unter Pandemie-Bedingungen Tendenzen und Perspektiven für 2021, SWP-Studie 26/2020, 17.12.2020, <https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/handle/document/71444>; s.a. Harald Ginzky, Jan Kosmol, Kathrin Schwirn, Internationale Umwelt- und Nachhaltigkeitspolitik während und nach der Covid-19-Pandemie, <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/internationale-umwelt-nachhaltigkeitspolitik>

14 Global: Warum niemand die aktuelle Weltordnung will | IPG Journal (ipg-journal.de)

15 <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/G7>

Such a bloc formation with the consequence that developing countries basically turn away from countries of the Global North, at least in part, could cause severe difficulties for a cooperative, integrative international sustainability and climate policy.

2.5 Further challenges for sustainability policy

2.5.1 Threat to the rule of law

Another challenge is the weakening of and loss of confidence in the rule of law. Such a development could weaken the stability of state governance as a whole. There is a risk of isolation and national, possibly also aggressive "*special ways*". Usually, civil society engagement becomes more difficult or is even completely prevented as the rule of law fails.

Unfortunately, this phenomenon can nowadays be observed in many states. First of all, there are the autocratically ruled and very "*powerful*" states like Russia and China, which are at the same time permanent members of the UN Security Council with veto rights. Examples of a lack of rule of law can also be found in many developing and emerging countries.¹⁶ Such a development can however also be observed in developed countries. Hungary and Poland, for example, can be mentioned here, with consecutive negative consequences for the rule of law in the EU. Destabilising developments can also be observed in the USA. For example, then-President Donald Trump tried - unsuccessfully in the end, but with complete conviction - to use illegal means to annul his ouster. Large parts of the Republican Party still assume that there was electoral fraud.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Supreme Court has also made some irritating decisions that seem to be politically intended.

2.5.2 Aggressive states

International cooperation is based on agreed rules and values, in particular the Charter of the United Nations¹⁸ with its prohibition of the use of force. Increasingly, individual states are refusing to comply with these values and rules to some or to a large extent. Other international treaties and agreements, especially in the field of arms control and disarmament, are also eroding or have been unilaterally terminated. Although the overall network of the rule-based international order still exist, attacks on the international legal order are increasing, also by states of the Global North (in particular, the USA under President Trump have significantly contributed to the weakening of rule of law at the international level).

With the attack on Ukraine Russia has abandoned this consensus of values and rules, and continues doing so with the escalation of military and political actions and the pro-active policy of geopolitical zones of influence.

International politics must better adjust to *aggressive* and *unwilling-to-cooperate* states. At the same time, also cooperative international sustainability and climate policy is challenged and needs adjustment.

¹⁶ There are countless other examples. Hungary for example: <https://www.ipg-journal.de/regionen/europa/artikel/in-zeiten-abnehmender-rechtsstaatlichkeit-5851/>

¹⁷ The extent to which these developments can also be understood as "irrational" reactions in the face of multiple crises would have to be further investigated. Some reactions of individual politicians - such as the former US President Trump - e.g. during the Corona pandemic or in relation to the climate crisis can be interpreted as "irrational ignorance".

¹⁸ <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>

2.5.3 Digitalisation with regard to sustainability and stability/security

The socio-ecological transformation and the transformation of society through digitalisation are happening in parallel and interdependent. The digital transformation and the sustainability transformation are subject to different logics and drivers. While the digital transformation as a technical novelty is subject to its own dynamics and is driven in particular by economic interests, the sustainability transformation demands fundamental social and economic changes that often run counter to short-term economic interests of individual market participants.¹⁹

This means that digitalisation is constantly evolving and significantly influencing society in most areas of life, intentionally or unintentionally, directly or indirectly (e.g. worklife, health, communication, mobility, consumer behaviour, etc.), while the socio-ecological transformation is quite at its beginning and is moving forward slowly.

Also the governance of digitalisation and sustainability are quite different. Digitalisation requires above all a critical surveillance and “boundaries” through state guidance and control avoid an opposing trend to the aims of the socio-ecological transformation. The socio-ecological transformation, on the other hand, must be specifically promoted and enabled.

The Ukraine crisis first of all brings up questions regarding the interdependencies of digitalisation and sustainability as well as of security policy. In this context three issues arise:

- ▶ Identify the challenges of digitalisation in the context of ‘*sustainability as a mechanism for security policy*’.
- ▶ Use innovation potentials from additional digital tools to solving short-term effects of the crises and avoiding future ones for the various sectors such as food or energy supply.
- ▶ Understand the interdependencies between broadly understood security policy, sustainability and digitalisation and determine steering instruments and responsibilities on this basis.

¹⁹ WBGU, Unsere gemeinsame digitale Zukunft, 2019, <https://www.wbgu.de/de/publikationen/publikation/unsere-gemeinsame-digitale-zukunft>.

3 Lessons learned and general recommendations

So what can we derive from these findings? What are necessary measures in the short-term which at the same time take a medium and long-term approach?

The fundamental challenge seems to be, **firstly**, to manage and to overcome the current crisis and, **secondly**, at the same time, to take appropriate measures to initiate an effective socio-ecological transformation.

Political measures must align with **these two requirements** (i.e. current crisis management and implementation of the socio-ecological transformation). Measures that lead to a *lock-in* with regard to the necessary socio-ecological transformation must be avoided. A *lock-in* occurred if measures lost direction because the achievement of the long-term goal of a socio-ecological transformation would become significantly more difficult.

Efforts must therefore be directed to overcome the effects of the sum of and each of the multiple crises. Separate "*silo*" approaches to solve individual crises are no longer sufficient because, firstly, the various crises reinforce each other and, secondly, further crisis may come in future. Thus, systemic approaches, such as those pursued by sustainability policy, are required more than ever before.

The Global North (i.e. especially the EU and North America) has a special responsibility in this context. It must be credibly communicated to the global community and especially to the developing countries that the countries of the Global North are committed to the *SDGs* and the *Paris Agreement* despite the Ukraine crisis and the many other crises. Otherwise, other countries could question these goals. The Global North, and Germany in particular, must live up to its role model function.

Three requirements are to be considered in this respect:

- ▶ Implement the 17 SDGs and the requirements of the Paris Agreement at the required pace to achieve climate neutrality within planetary boundaries.
- ▶ Equitable burden sharing between the North and the South, including equitable burden sharing within the respective societies, as well as adequate promotion and support of the transformation efforts of countries in the Global South.
- ▶ Appropriate forms of international cooperation at eye level, being fair, respectful and aware of the mutual interests, oriented towards the ideas of the Charter of the United Nations.

3.1 Sustainability policy is at the same time stability policy to avoid future crises and must be understood, conceptualised and implemented as such

The Ukraine crisis once again underlines the multiple interrelationships of sustainability policy and security policy (i.e. state territorial security and protection of human life).

It is essentially the result of geopolitical action by states. At the same time, however, a holistic and successful sustainability policy is an important factor for stability and security by avoiding additional conflicts and effectively managing existing ones.

This was expressed by the community of states in the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 of 25 September 2015.

The preamble states:

“There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”

Comparable statements can be found in paragraph 35:

“Sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security; and peace and security will be at risk without sustainable development.”

Paragraph 42 identifies the challenge involved:

“We recognize the major challenge to the achievement of durable peace and sustainable development in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.”

Sustainability policy basically has an integrated concept of security for people and the environment. In this respect, a successful sustainability policy reduces the risk of major political and military conflicts. Societies that offer their citizens sufficient and equitably distributed prosperity, that are organised inclusively, according to the rules of law and democracy, and that function largely without overuse of natural resources, usually face less potential for conflict - both internally and externally.

This also shows that sustainability and security policy must take an integrated approach. A lack of sustainability policy increases the risk of political and military conflicts. The failure of security policy leading to such conflicts severely impedes the success of efforts in the field of sustainability policy.²⁰ The implementation of a successful sustainability policy is also under enormous time pressure due to advancing climate change.

Sustainability policy at international level as well as individual states level has to be conceptualized and implemented in terms of its conflict-reducing functionality in the context of security policy.

3.2 Reorientation of sustainability policy required - more and faster

The severity of the crises is at least partly caused by too weak national and international sustainability policies that do not include and/or implement the necessary changes to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. As explained above, the Global North has a special responsibility.²¹

In the context of the Corona crisis, the following concrete and partly complementary leitmotifs have been proposed. Their order is influenced by the impression of the Corona pandemic, but they are nevertheless generally valid:²²

► Strengthening the environment and health nexus

20 See also the new study by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: Environment of Peace: Security in a New Era of Risk, 2022, <https://sipri.org/publications/2022/other-publications/environment-peace-security-new-era-risk>

21 see: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/weltwirtschaft/g7-klimaziel-erderwaermung-101.html>;
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/06/us-europe-behind-vast-majority-global-ecological-damage-study>

22 Harald Ginzky, Christian Löwe, Carsten Neßhöver, Lessons from the Corona Crisis: New principles for the environmental and sustainability policy – a discussion paper: <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/publikationen/lessons-from-the-corona-crisis-new-guiding>

The link between environmental and health protection must be strongly considered in all sectoral policies. The "*One Health*" approach should be used to operationalise this leitmotif.

► Resilience of economic and social systems

By strengthening the *resilience of economic and social systems*, the fragility and vulnerability of the globalised economy to crises should be reduced. The Corona crisis has strongly underlined that systems should not be optimised for effectiveness only, but that buffers in the sense of better resilience are urgently needed. Resilience can only be achieved if the requirement from the Sustainable Development Goals "*to leave no one behind*" and planetary boundaries are respected.

► Structural justice

Structural justice means ensuring a good life based on a secure basic supply for all people worldwide. Structural justice could avoid unstable and thus not resilient systems.

► Solidarity of action as an expression of social resilience

This guiding principle requires that all state, social and private actors, insofar as they initiate or implement environmental and sustainability policy measures, take into account what effects these measures have on other actors, in particular on their resilience.

► Learning control due to a dynamically changing knowledge

Due to the necessity of making decisions in the face of constantly changing knowledge and the need to adapt them continuously, *learning control* has taken on a new significance.

► Maintaining and strengthening effective public institutions at all levels

States and international organisations with the capacity to efficiently take actions are needed for crisis management and to coordinate and implement appropriate measures for a transformation towards sustainability. The municipalities at the local level must also be empowered, as many challenges are best dealt with at the local level.

► Development of a digital culture

The potential of digitalisation must be systematically developed, as far as possible, with a view to environmental protection, but also with a view to the necessary socio-ecological transformation. In this respect, a new digital culture is needed, which also actively determines the framework conditions for digitalisation.

In addition to these more principled considerations, the following five points are crucial in order to initiate the necessary transformation towards climate neutrality and sustainability against the backdrop of the Ukraine crisis.

3.2.1 Adapting the narrative of sustainability policy - new framing in politics

Narratives in the sense of socially consensual basic understandings and attitudes are of great importance for daily reality. Thus, the basic messages of a narrative, which is carried into society by decision-makers, the scientific community and other political representatives, can also be indicative for the perceptions, attitudes and conventions of a society.

In this respect, the narrative of sustainability policy should be adapted so that the achievement of sustainability is seen as an overriding and imperative requirement, as relevant to security

and, in the end, as a socially desirable goal. Sustainability must be understood and narrated as peace-making and -keeping, equitable and healthy - with great welfare effects for all.

So far, sustainability achieved by prohibitions and renunciation of quality of life of a small eco-community has basically been perceived as sort of an "extra" to rational economic behaviour. This is exactly what needs to be changed and be told differently: Sustainability is the foundation of peace and security, welfare, justice and resilience for all.

3.2.2 The Global North must deliver

The industrialised states, i.e. the Global North, have to intensify - and not, as some pledge for, reduce - their efforts in terms of sustainability policy in order to weaken the crisis mode in the medium and long-term or to escape from it. In order to gain confidence, they should orient their policy towards the above mentioned newly configured leitmotifs.

The Global North must show that - despite the current Ukraine crisis - it is serious and responsible about sustainability policy.

The core task is to take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at home in such a way that, in accordance with scientific findings, measures are to be taken immediately(!) to achieve climate neutrality by mid-century.²³ Thereby the Global North should also act as a role model for less developed countries

The states of the Global North must additionally establish fair economic relations with the countries of the Global South, which are in the interest of all parties. This requires, among other things, a reorientation of international trade law and international financial policy. International trade must directly promote sustainability policies and not only be constrained by sustainability requirements, as has been the case so far.²⁴ Fighting a hunger crisis also requires action under the premise of global solidarity.²⁵ Furthermore, the states of the Global North must support the countries of the Global South in implementing sufficient sustainability policies in such a way that implementation can succeed and enable local development and prosperity. This will only be achieved with sufficient participation, capacity building and technology transfer.

3.2.3 Efficiency, sufficiency and fair and equitable participation as further guiding principles required

It is undisputed that the use of resources and energy must not continuously increase, otherwise the climate, biodiversity and sustainability crisis cannot be solved. First of all, the conversion to sustainable infrastructures in the areas of production, generation and distribution of electricity and heat, mobility, housing, food supply alone will require the use of energy and resources on a very large scale. Additional energy and resources will also be required for the operation and maintenance of sustainable systems, for example in the areas of mobility or heating, and for technical adaptation measures, e.g. to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, to name just a few areas.

²³Some sobering findings and developments in recent weeks: the industrialised countries are not meeting their obligations to reduce emissions: <https://www.tagesschau.de/wirtschaft/weltwirtschaft/g7-klimaziel-erderwaermung-101.html>; At the same time, they are not prepared to accept a benefit-sharing system in the economic appropriation of common goods: <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/amerika/hochseeabkommen-101.html>

²⁴ Oliver Ruppel, Soil protection and the right to food: Sustainability implications for global climate governance and world agricultural trade?, in: Oliver Ruppel, Harald Ginzky (Hrsg.), African Soil Protection Law, 2021, <https://www.nomos-elibrary.de/10.5771/9783748908043/african-soil-protection-law>.

²⁵ Der Weg aus der globalen Hungerkrise | Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (boell.de).

At the same time, the planetary availability of resources is limited. Thus, a discussion on the reduction of energy as a resource use and consumption in the sense of efficiency and sufficiency is needed.²⁶ Furthermore, an orientation only on economic growth indicators seems no longer feasible given the climate policy necessities. What is needed is a change in values and for a different measuring of prosperity and welfare.²⁷

Justice in burden sharing is another aspect that urgently needs to be considered here. The climate and environmental footprint of individuals in general increases linearly with income and wealth. People with low or very low incomes, such as in developing and emerging countries of the South, are thus less called upon to reduce energy and resource demand than people and societies in developed and wealthy nations, such as the industrialised countries of the Global North.

Thus, the societies of the Global North also have a special responsibility with regard to reducing the demand for energy and resources. To cope with this responsibility is about credibility and reliability from the perspective of the Global South.

3.2.4 Negotiations, cooperation and agreements with all states at eye level

Given the loss of trust that has already occurred requires developed countries to deal with countries of the Global South in a way that is characterised by respect, solidarity and integration of different perspectives.

Two approaches are important: First, only focusing on the Global North's own interests must be terminated and the concerns of other regions and other states must be adequately considered. Admittedly, this would make things more complex, as it would considerably increase the load of required analysis of the various interests of the all actors and countries and the complexity of their different perspectives. However, such an approach is necessary to reach a balance of interests.

Secondly, the negotiations, cooperations and agreements must take place at eye level and in mutual solidarity. If this is not the case, it can basically be assumed that the cooperation and agreements are not resilient, fair and sustainable.

Such a change of perspective also opens up opportunities for new cooperative ventures that enable integrated solutions in the interest of all parties involved. Cooperation with African countries, for example, in the field of renewable energies and sustainable digitalisation can create economic development prospects and thus also appropriate living conditions in the countries concerned and support security of supply for "the countries of the Global North".²⁸

²⁶ Eric Fee, Franziska Wehinger, Jens Schuberth, Manuel Hendzlik, Philipp Hölting, Aus der Energiekrise durch Effizienz und Suffizienz, 2022, <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/aus-der-energiekrise-durch-effizienz-suffizienz>.

Gregor Barth, Maja Bernicke, Christopher Blum, Knut Ehlers, Traute Fiedler, Fabian Jäger-Gildemeister, Kristina Juhrich, Andreas Kahr, Regina Kohlmeyer, Jan Kosmol, Franziska Krüger, Sandra Leuthold, Michael Marty, Matthias Menger, Lars Mönch, Sebastian Plickert, Christopher Proske, Bettina Rechenberg, Almut Reichart, Diana Thalheim, Julia Vogel, Kurs halten in der Krise - schneller auf den Pfad zur industriellen Dekarbonisierung!, <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/kurs-halten-in-der-krise-schneller-auf-den-pfad-zur>.

²⁷ Harald Ginzky, Christian Löwe, Carsten Neßhöver, Lessons from the Corona Crisis: New principles for the environmental and sustainability policy – a discussion paper: <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/en/publikationen/lessons-from-the-corona-crisis-new-guiding>

²⁸ <https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/migration-environment-climate-change-literature>

3.2.5 Sustainability has to be achieved globally - cooperation with Russia is unavoidable

Climate protection as one of the core challenges of sustainability will only be achieved by involving the relevant emitters and thus only globally. Therefore, the re-alignment of international climate and sustainability policy outlined above is necessary.

As the largest country on the globe, Russia's contribution to climate policy is very important. Three aspects are of particular importance in this respect. Firstly, with approximately 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions, Russia contributes significantly to climate change.²⁹ Secondly, methane emissions from the permafrost soils in eastern Russia could massively accelerate climate change. And thirdly, Russia, with its vast areas and abundant natural resources, could - also in cooperation with other countries - significantly support and promote the global energy transition.

Three strategies for the medium-term "re-engagement" of Russia seem worth considering: First, even during the Russian war of aggression, contacts should be maintained and continued at a lower level with Russian scientists and representatives from civil society who are committed to climate protection and sustainability.³⁰ Secondly, Germany, the EU and other countries of the Global North should attempt to promote the idea of sustainability by setting a good example and also implement it in cooperation with other countries. In this respect, partner countries of the EU and NATO could also exert indirect pressure on Russia in terms of sustainability and climate protection standards, insofar as they enter into economic cooperation with Russia. And thirdly, the area of climate protection, sustainability and environmental protection seems suitable for re-establishing the first cautious official contacts and cooperation after the end of the warlike actions.

This approach could also prove to be a generally suitable strategy in dealing with "aggressive" and/or "autocratic" states in order to re-integrate them into a cooperative international sustainability and climate policy.

3.3 The crisis mode remains - Resilient systems are needed

States and societies should prepare for further crises which may occur in future. The crucial mechanism is the creation of resilient - or more precisely - *more* resilient societal systems.

In order to meet this resilience requirement, systems must be designed in such a way that, firstly, the risk of crises occurring is reduced, secondly, as far as possible, the severity of unavoidable crises is reduced and, thirdly, the systems are fundamentally able to deal with external shocks through system-immanent strategies in the sense that the fundamental system services are maintained in any case. Resilience must be implemented for societies as a whole, but also for the various economic systems (e.g. such as business management, supply chains and financial markets) and for the several individual social systems (e.g. health, food supply, education, mobility).

Resilience will in some cases require less short-term efficiency. Private-sector actors are primarily guided by business criteria, which can, however, also include resilience requirements. However, these resilience requirements must be determined and enforced through state

²⁹ environment-in-times-of-war-climate-energy-challenges-post-soviet-region.pdf (ispionline.it)

³⁰ Wie denkt die russische Bevölkerung über den Krieg? – Demokratie und Gesellschaft | IPG Journal (ipg-journal.de)

intervention - for example, through legal requirements.³¹ In this respect, they would set a framework for the management of economic activities.

Diversification of supply sources can promote resilience, as well as certain degree of regionalisation. In this respect, local cooperation can promote more sustainable production methods through local resource use and decentralised renewable energy supply systems, and thus also lead to greater resilience.

The resilience of a "*system*" also depends on the type of international cooperation that may be necessary. In this respect, too, taking into account the interests of the Global South is of particular importance in order to be able to build resilient systems.

The requirements for resilient systems depend on the questioned system. Different requirements would have to be set and implemented with regard to energy supply than to the health system, for example. First basic conceptual approaches mention diversification of suppliers, a certain level of regionalisation, the development of alternatives as well as information transparency within a system.³² In this respect, there is a considerable need for research.

31 Langfristige wirtschaftspolitische Ziele in einer Zeit kurzfristiger Reaktionen | Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (boell.de)

32 IMPULS-Sicherheit-Resilienz-Nachhaltigkeit_web_final.pdf

4 Summary and outlook

The analysis has shown that we are not only experiencing a *turning point* in security policy. The last two decades have been a succession of many global crises. In fact, humanity is at a crossroad which could either lead to a fundamental weakening of global efforts in climate and sustainability policy or could trigger more sustainability in intensified and fairer international cooperation.

In particular the Global North has to show its will and ability to credibly advance sustainability policy domestically. A message to the world that Germany or Europe allow themselves to substantially reduce or even postpone efforts in climate and sustainability policy because of the Ukraine crisis would lead to a massive loss of credibility in climate and sustainability policy. Other countries would probably take this as an opportunity to follow the bad example.

Firstly, a more ambitious and faster sustainability policy of the Global North is needed, so that international partners can recognise that even in times of fundamental and demanding crisis, the Global North stands by its commitment, as it is ultimately the key to greater security, stability and resilience of all societies. Secondly, the states of the Global North must show that they are interested in an adapted international sustainability policy, seriously and fairly considering the needs and challenges of the developing countries, and in this respect being also prepared to make their contribution in the interest of the common goal. This could mean, if necessary, to abstain from short-term economic advantages for the benefit of long-term sustainability. Such an approach by the Global North would require, firstly, fair economic and trade relations geared to long-term development, secondly, the consideration of potential effects of sustainability and climate policies, e.g. of the EU, for partners in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, and thirdly, intensified international cooperation in matters of climate protection and sustainability.

In addition, the various crises of recent years have taught us that special attention must be paid to the fact that, in addition to efficiency and effectiveness, resilience, i.e. robustness, resistance and adaptability, are also decisive criteria for the design of societal systems.

Regardless of the developments in Ukraine, one thing is certain: the *turning point* that is needed is *more, faster and fairer international cooperation on sustainability and climate protection*. The Global North must lead the way and live up to its role model function, so that the seriousness and feasibility is also perceived as a worthwhile goal in other parts of the world, in the hope that the necessary efforts towards a social-ecological transformation will also be undertaken there.