

# Eco-social Synergies: Legal Challenges at the Intersection of the Environmental and Employment Realms

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## PANEL 3. The Future Challenges in Labour Environmental Protection

### ABSTRACT

#### **Just Transition for vulnerable workers: how climate and energy goals can facilitate regulation of social protection in the EU.**

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In the context of its climate change strategy, the EU has committed to an ambitious set of policies with tight deadlines and targets (including the EU climate neutrality target by 2050 and an intermediary target of 55 per cent reduction of GHG by 2030 from 1990 levels). Because of their breadth and depth, these commitments represent a reconceptualisation of key structures with broad social implications. One of these is their impact on social protection, which is defined for the purpose of this paper as the protection provided against lack or loss of income from work.

In this regard, the EU action on climate change, although considering a just transition, may represent some risks in the field of social protection, including the potential deepening the exclusion of some groups of vulnerable workers (such as those in non-standard forms of work, a group already suffering from imperfect social protection, as noted in, inter alia, the Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed). However, the EU action may also present synergetic opportunities by, among other things, facilitating the establishment of minimum social protection standards (something that has been proven to be quite difficult in previous occasions due to both a limited legal basis and, especially, a lack of political consensus). This paper analyzes these challenges and opportunities, and provides some suggestions on how EU action may address them. In order to do so, the contribution relies on an analysis of EU and national legislative instruments on climate change, just transition and social protection, as well as on a review of the literature.