

The Best Nordic - Baltic Mitigation Measures to Combat Climate Change

Policy Brief

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A working group with members from environmental organisations from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine has analysed climate mitigation policies and measures and has identified the best mitigation measures from their countries. Hereby is an overview with a focus on national policies and measures.



Climate Laws

Climate Laws are important legal frameworks for climate action. They should include climate targets, a process for regular evaluating progress in achieving climate targets with an annual review process, and establishment of an independent climate council to oversee the progress.

Climate targets are important for guidance of climate action. They should be ambitious, in line with a fair share of reductions to meet at least the global 1.5°C target share. They should be divided into separate targets for LULUCF and other emissions, not include credits from reductions in other countries to meet domestic targets, and be both short and long term, aiming at climate neutrality by 2040.

Carbon taxes and tax/VAT reductions

Carbon taxes and tax/VAT reductions are important policy instruments to “make the polluter pay” and to drive climate action. They are widely used in the Nordic-Baltic countries, including:

- Carbon/GHG tax for sectors outside EU-ETS sectors,
- Carbon/GHG tax for sectors in sectors covered by EU-ETS are being introduced
- Taxes on HFCs & other strong greenhouse gases
- Aviation passenger taxes
- Tax reduction/exemption for public transport
- Tax deduction for commuting, which is too often counterproductive for the climate
- Road pricing and payment for driving in cities

The taxes should be sufficiently high to drive action to reduce emissions without long-term subsidies to alternatives. For taxes on households, compensation of low-income households can be necessary, preferably in the form of direct support, or as a minimum threshold for taxation specifically for low-income households.

Energy Efficiency First

Energy efficiency is the first fuel and policies and measures are important to drive fast reduction of emissions in sustainable ways. In all countries, EU legislation is driving energy efficiency, while national initiatives are strengthening the push for energy efficiency, e.g. with subsidies. One forward-looking national policy is a limit of lifecycle emissions from new buildings, a measure that combines energy efficiency in the use phase with energy efficiency and low emissions in the construction phase.

Renewable Energy Policies and Measures

Renewable energy policies and measures are key to meet climate targets. They are widely used in the Nordic-Baltic countries but can come in conflict with equally important biodiversity concerns. Policies should include:

- Renewable energy targets that are important and need to be ambitious, e.g. following the UNFCCC COP28 agreement on tripling of renewable energy until 2030 globally.
- Siting of wind and solar parks should not compromise biodiversity and nature conservation, and it is important to define no-go zones. It is equally important to involve local people and actors.
- Support for local energy communities, including an enabling environment which is missing in many countries.
- Subsidy for solar energy should only be given for installations on roofs and where it can be combined with existing land use, most of the analysed countries have support for solar in households and/or all smaller installations.

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Download the full report from:
www.inforse.org/europe/Better_GreenDeal_Baltic_project.htm

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Fuel Shift Away from Fossil Fuels

Fuel shift away from fossil fuels is another important type of policies and measures. This, of course, requires that the shift is to renewable alternatives, in particular renewable electricity.

We identified the following:

- Support for hydrogen, which must be only for *green hydrogen* and only for use in hard-to-abate sectors as hydrogen production have losses and is in many applications less efficient than direct electricity use (it is for instance less efficient in transport).
- Biomass diversification, in particular to reduce/avoid local air pollution.
- Phase out fossil fuel - based heating, replacing it with heat pumps, district heating.
- Emission free construction sites, as is now required in some Norwegian towns.
- Support for electric cars, preferably with same support for all cars in a socially just way.
- Stop the sale of new fossil fuel driven cars, as Norway is planning from 2025.
- Subsidy for electric shipping, both ferries, fishing boats and smaller cargo ships.



Transport Policies

- Transport policies are important to break the trend of ever-increasing transport that makes it very hard to make real phase-out of all GHG emissions in transport. Some of the main parts of policies to meet that objective are:
- Bicycle infrastructure support, which is supported in most countries, but in some countries, the support level is not high enough.
- Support for public transport, which is done in most countries, but in countries with too small levels to make it a success.
- Support for international trains, night trains. Good example is that Sweden has started new night train lines to Germany.



Other Good Mitigation Policies:

The above policies and measures are analysed by the project partners, but there are also other **good mitigation measures**, including:

- Reduction of food waste.
- Policies for more plant-based food.
- Agricultural policies to reduce emission from agriculture and agricultural inputs, such as fertiliser.
- Increasing carbon stocks through ecosystem restoration, soil protection measures, preventing forest degradation, restoring degraded lands, reducing the area of ploughed land etc.
- Sufficiency policies for more sustainable lifestyles, reducing transport demands, housing size, consumption and others.
- Circular economy policies to reduce the climate footprint of consumption.

What not to do:

Not all mitigation measures are good, and the environmental organisations involved in this publication have also identified some mitigation measures that we find are problematic as they **do NOT lead to good climate solutions**:

- *Nuclear power*, as it is a risky and very expensive technology.
- *Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)*. Given the costs and technological risks, CCS has the potential to slowdown climate action and should not replace other, more reliable solutions.
- Liquid biofuels with high life-cycle GHG emissions.
- Development of hydrogen production from fossil fuels and from nuclear power as well as hydrogen production at sites, where there is insufficient water or green electricity available.