

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE POLICIES



The cases of Hungary and Poland





Content

- 01** Introduction
- 02** European Environmental Policies
- 03** Hungary's approach to EU policies
- 04** Poland's approach to EU policies
- 05** Compararison
- 06** Conclusion



INTRODUCTION





**AN ECONOMY
OF WELLBEING
FOR HEALTH
EQUITY**

**FOSTERING A
TRANSITION
TOWARDS
HEALTHIER, MORE
INCLUSIVE, AND
SUSTAINABLE
SOCIETIES**

EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES



European Green Deal

The European Green Deal is the EU's strategy to face the issues of climate change and environmental degradation. The Green Deal also ensures that no one is left behind in the shift to a sustainable economy.

According to the European Commission, the European Green Deal **“transforms the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use, while no person or place being left behind.”**

Most important items on the agenda:

- Carbon pricing
- Green Transport
- Energy Efficiency
- Nature (land-use and forestry)

European tools for its climate policy:

- EU ETS
- ESR
- LULUCF

European Climate Law



The European Climate Law **writes into law** the goal set out in the European Green Deal for Europe's economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050. The law also sets the intermediate target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

Climate neutrality by 2050 means achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions for EU countries, mainly by cutting emissions, investing in green technologies and protecting the natural environment.

HUNGARY'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES



Hungary before EU

Before 20th century, the environmental management was limited to agricultural and water management practices

Industrialization caused significant environmental degradation: the state-controlled industries were focused on production, at the expense of sustainability.

After the fall of communism, in 1989, Hungary's economy shifted to market economy, bringing new challenges

Hungary joined European Union in **2004**, and its membership brought stricter environmental standards



Hungary as a member-state of EU



Hungary has actively participated in various international agreements and conferences related to environmental and climate policies

Hungary is committed to the EU's goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050, under the European Climate Law of 2021

The country has received substantial EU funding to achieve its environmental and climate objectives:



Cohesion Funds and LIFE Program: These funds support projects for renewable energy, pollution control, nature conservation, and sustainable urban development

Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF): Hungary's RRF plan includes significant investments in green and digital transition



ORBAN'S GOVERNMENT



His soft Euroscepticism, populism and national conservatism affected deeply the policies of Hungary.

In 2019, Viktor Urban vetoed the EU's plans to reduce carbon emissions by 2050, as he prioritized economic growth over environmental sustainability **WHY ?**

Policy focused on Job Creation - Cost of Green Policies - Working-Class Voters

As Hungarians realize the importance of green transition, it seems like Orbán reversed this step and now he speaks in favor of renewables and climate action, but without implementing environmental policies.

Orbán still expresses skepticism for adopting efficient environmental policies and the government is accused of weakening the environmental institutions, starting industrial projects

Hungary is heavily reliant on Russian energy, particularly natural gas: what happens and what will happen ?



MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES


The goal of climate neutrality by 2050 has been set

Hungary has made progress in waste recycling and recovery **BUT** half of the country's waste is deposited in landfill

Steps towards renewable energy have been made
ex. Matra Power Plant's project: converting the coal-based plant into a green industry, by installing solar PV and co-firing biomass

Due to low energy prices, Hungary uses more energy than the EU average for a unit of GDP

Energy consumption: **RESIDENTIAL** (29,2%) **TRANSPORT** (26,5%), **INDUSTRY** (21,8%)
BUT largest sources of energy in the residential is NATURAL GAS (49%)
BUT largest source of energy in the transport is OIL PRODUCTS (92%) $\text{CH}_4 + \text{CO}_2$ (a)
BUT largest source of energy in industry is ELECTRICITY (36%)

(a) =  GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS



POLAND'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES



Poland before EU



During its communist era, pollution levels were high and air quality in industrial regions was among the worst in Europe.

By the 1980s, environmental degradation became a public concern, contributing to opposition movements.

After the fall of communism, Poland began addressing environmental issues, often with international aid and guidance.

The country began aligning its environmental legislation with EU standards in anticipation of membership.

Laws regulating waste management, air quality, and water protection were introduced.



Poland as a member-state of EU



Poland adopted stringent environmental directives.

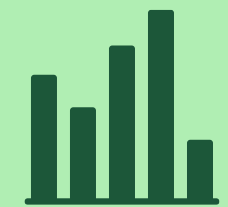
It put efforts to reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions, to improve air quality and to decrease the river and lake pollution

Also, Poland expanded its use of renewable energy, though **coal remains dominant.**

BUT Poland has been slow to transition away from coal, citing economic dependence and energy security concerns.



remains one of the EU's most coal-dependent countries



It opposed the European Commission's Green Deal and blocked a declaration to achieve environmental neutrality by 2050.

Poland must learn to balance between economic growth, energy security, and environmental commitments.

MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

One of its biggest problems is air pollution

BECAUSE Poland's energy system is based on hard coal and lignite largest domestic energy source in Poland, as it produces 66% of the total energy & the largest one for electricity, as well

Out of total CO2 emissions, 58% is from coal - roughly 150 million tons each year



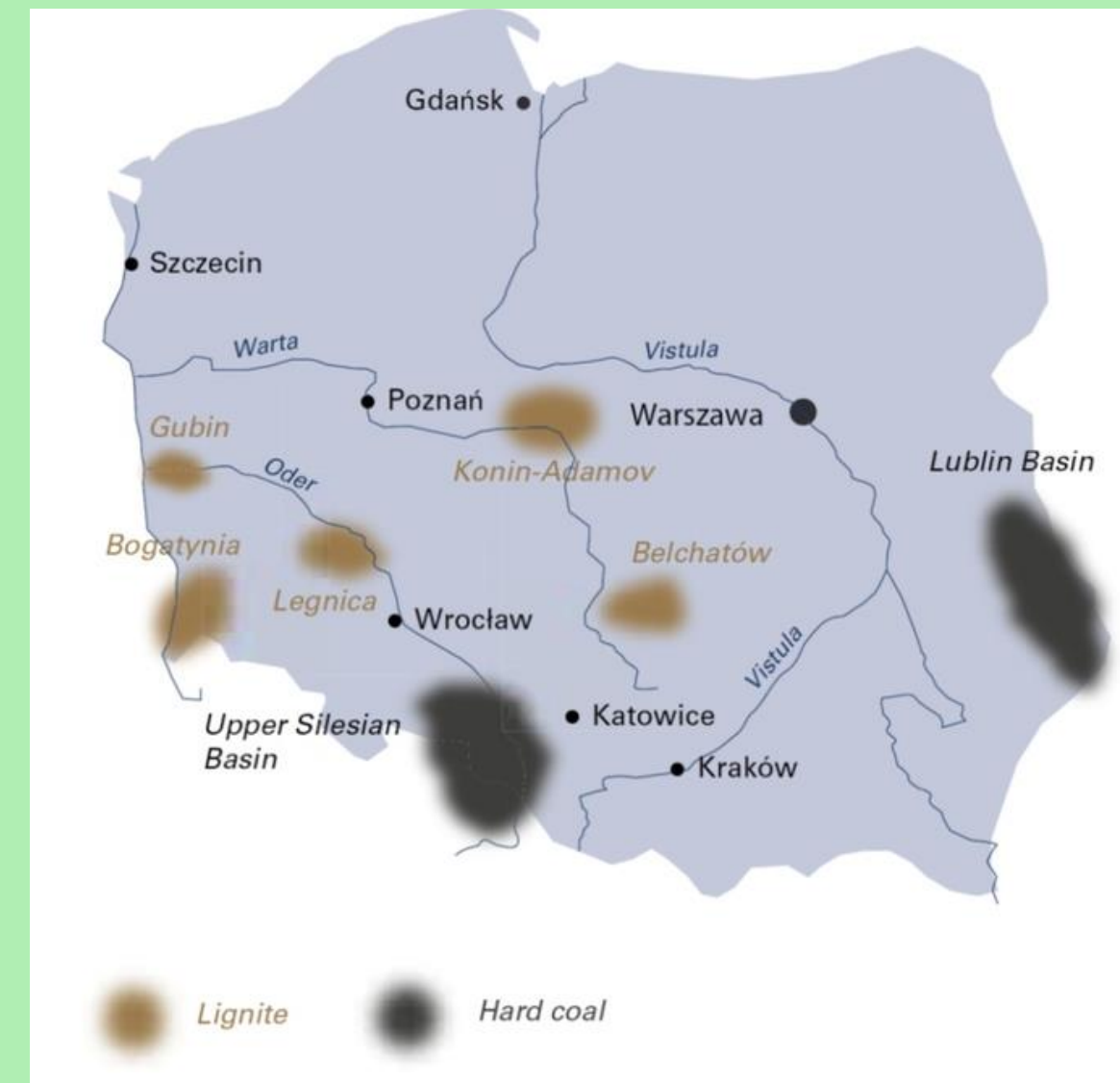
Fossil fuels, and more specific, coal is VERY important for Polish economy (IMPORTS & EXPORTS)

Exploitable hard coal reserves are in Upper Silesia (78,9% of the total) and in the Lublin basin in the east of Poland

*example of Silesia : economic development **BUT** very polluted*

Poland exploits its lignite deposits exclusively at surface mines

Low potential of replacing coal → seems like it will retain its major role in the Polish energy mix for next years



MOST IMPORTANT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

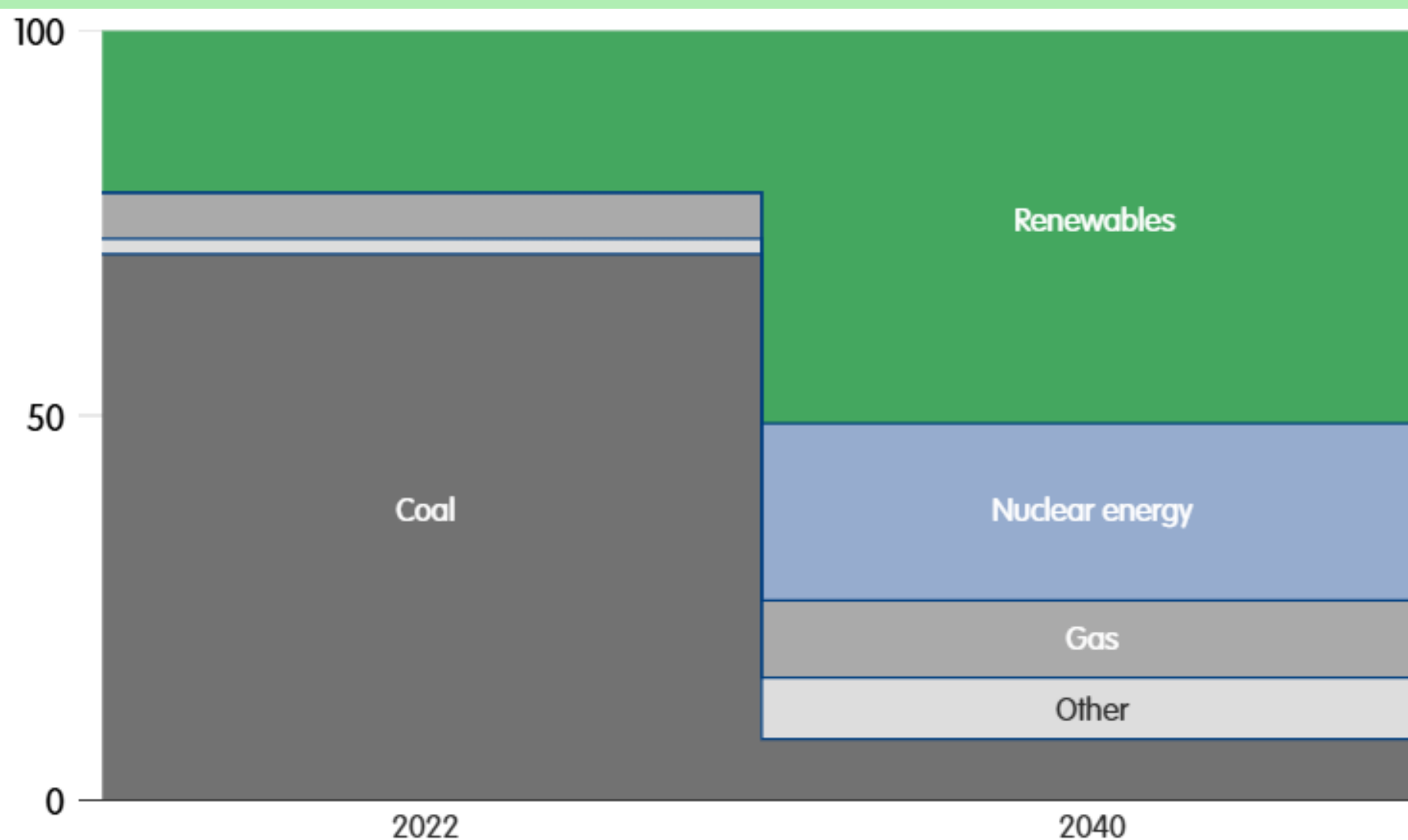
Poland should pursue a clear decarbonization strategy, if it wants
a) to secure a sustainable future b) to increase its influence within EU

BUT that is a big challenge

Energy policies in Poland often fall victim to instrumentalization for proximate political objectives

Poland is heavily dependent on imports: should minimize the costs of importing & pursue dependence

Planned changes in the energy mix (in %)



ANOTHER PROBLEMS:

Landfill remains the dominant form of waste management

Biodiversity is threatened by rapid infrastructure development

Bad water quality

Heatwaves, droughts and floods

SOME IMPROVEMENTS:

Installed renewable energy capacity has been expanded, particularly in solar

Poland's share of renewables in energy consumption in 2020 was 16,1% (EU target: 15%)

Leader in the production of lithium-ion batteries

COMPARISON

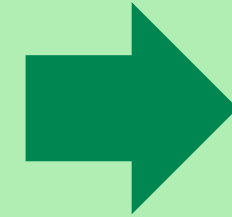


HUNGARY



POLAND

Communist Era



Industrialization

Both economies have traditionally relied on coal, making the transition to cleaner energy sources challenging

AND they continue to subsidize coal, citing energy security and economic stability

Both countries show slow progress in transitioning to renewable energy sources.

Nationalist governments in both countries frequently clash with the EU over sovereignty issues, including environmental policy

Focuses more on water resource protection

Focuses on coal and the socioeconomic impacts of transitioning away from it

Is more oriented towards nuclear energy

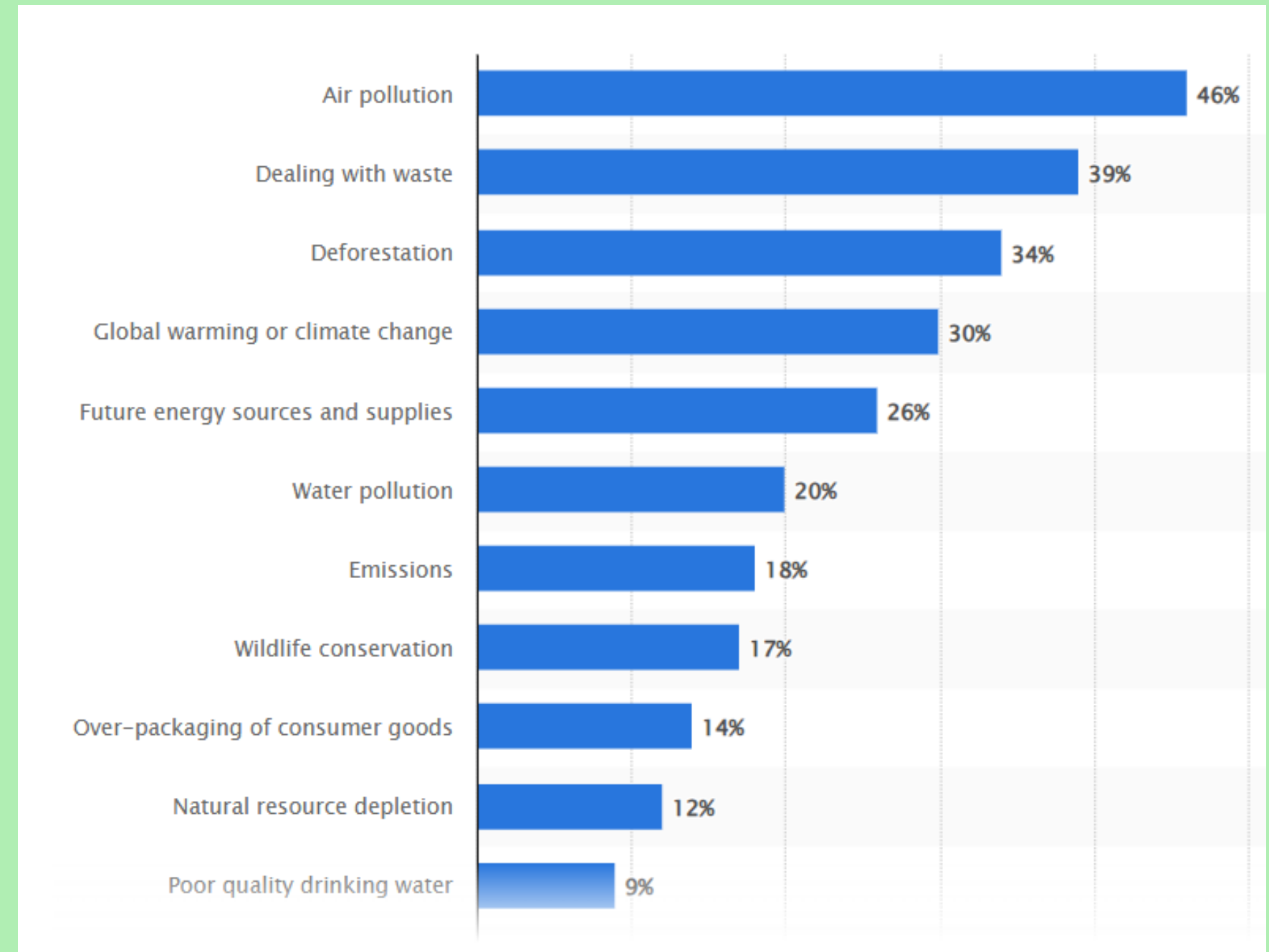
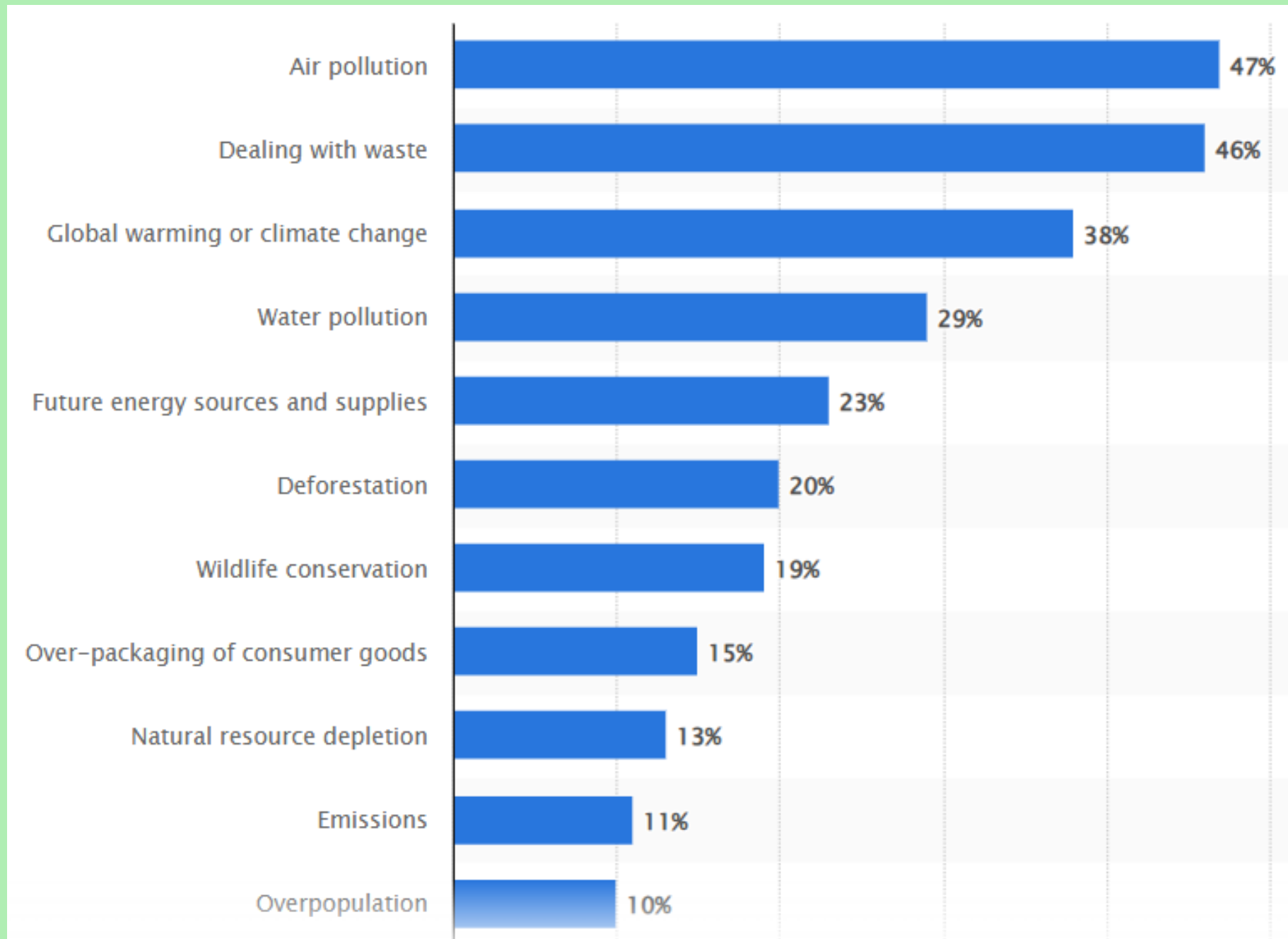
Has invested more in wind energy

Shows less visible public engagement with environmental issues

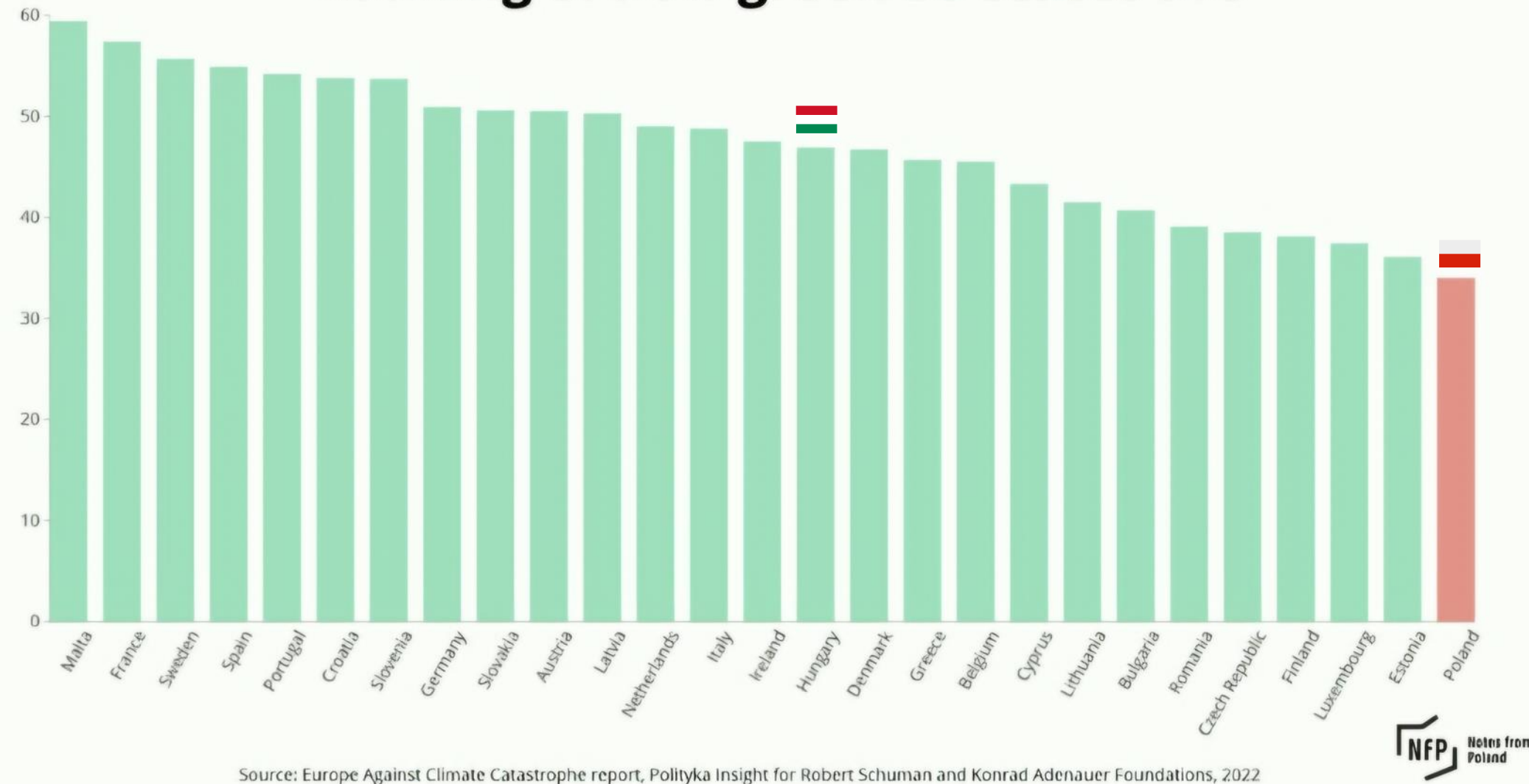
Has stronger grassroots and youth-led movements advocating for climate action

Delays implementing environmental measures but tends to comply more quickly than Poland

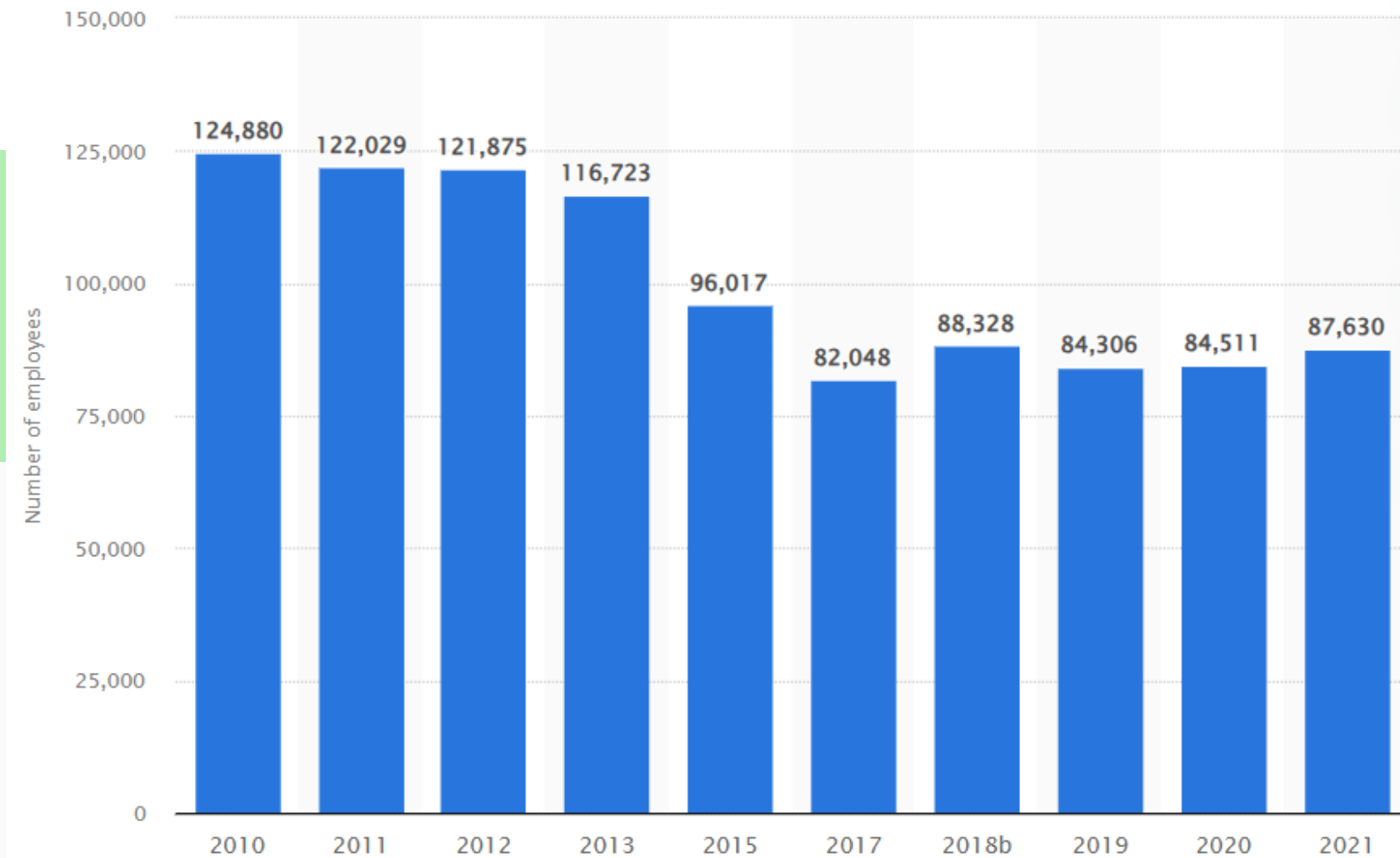
In your view, what are the three most important environmental issues ?



Ranking of how green EU states are



Total number of employees in the mining of coal and lignite industry in Poland from 2010 to 2021



in  

Employment		2022
Direct in hard coal mining	number	51
Direct in lignite mining	number	1 300
Other lignite-related*	number	700

CONCLUSION





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION !**



REFERENCES



- Hey, C. (2007) EU Environmental Policies: A short history of the policy strategies, Available [here](#)
- WECOOP, *EU Policies & Regulations*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 20/11/2024)
- European Parliament, *Environment policy: general principles and basic framework*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 10/11/2024)
- European Union, *Environmental and green economy*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 11/11/2024)
- SGI (2016), Hungary | Environmental Policies, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 20/11/2024)
- CCPI, Hungary - Climate Performance, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 21/11/2024)
- Nagy N., (2024), *Orbán's opportunistic record belies Hungary's new pro-climate rethoric*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 21/11/2024)
- IEA, *Energy system of Hungary*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 07/12/2024)
- SGI (2022), Poland | Environmental Policies, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 25/11/2024)
- European Committee of the Regions, [Poland](#) - *Environment & the Fight against Climate Change*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 25/11/2024)
- NFP (2022), *Poland ranks last in EU green index*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 27/11/2024)
- IEA, *Energy system of Poland*, Available [here](#) (Accessed: 07/12/2024)