

## A Just Transition from Coal: Exploring UK experiences with Central and Eastern Europe

*Tuesday 5th October, 09:00 – 17:00 BST, online*

This 1-day virtual conference is an opportunity for stakeholders from Central and Eastern Europe to meet UK experts to explore and discuss how coal-phase out can be managed in a just, sustainable and equitable way. Delegates will hear from a range of experts on the UK's energy transition, drawing relevant lessons for Central and Eastern Europe from topics such as alternative growth models, communication, engaging local communities, and transitional employment. The conference will offer practical knowledge to policymakers, asset owners and local governments in how to address this politically sensitive issue and will feature open discussions to steer the conversation to some of the most challenging aspects of transitioning out of coal. These discussions will lead to a policy brief on the subject matter that will be disseminated shortly after the event.

The 1-day conference is broken down into four sessions exploring the different scales of decision-making: local, national, and international contexts, and a consolidation session. By the end of the conference, delegates will have a greater appreciation of the different scales and overlapping processes involved in a Just Transition.

### **Session One –Just Transition from Coal: Local Legacies**

*09:00 – 10:30 BST, online*

Coal mining played an important role in driving economic development in the UK. At its height during the 1930s, the coal industry employed as many as one million people in the UK and shaped much of the geographical landscape and the communities associated with mining. Today, the coal industry in the UK employs less than 700 people. This transition was a grim affair for many communities as the coal industry provided the backbone of their local economy and social services. The lessons learned from the UK's experience is the need for 'a managed transition' – and, at the heart of this process, engaging workers in the coal industry and their local communities.

This session invites policymakers and stakeholders to listen to the UK experience of coal-phase out at the local-level and discuss the lessons to be learned for meaningfully engaging workers and local communities to ensure a just transition in the coal regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

The session is chaired by Professor Tahseen Jafry, Director of the Centre for Climate Justice at Glasgow Caledonian University. Attendees will hear a few short presentations from experts showcasing the UK experience of coal phase-out and efforts to achieve a just transition within local communities. An open discussion will follow on the lessons to be learned from the UK experience, what actions can be taken to avoid unfair burdens on local communities, and policies and practices that can be adopted to empower coal industry workers to be part of a just transition.

### Event Outline

09:00 – 09:10: Introduction by Chair

09:10 – 09:50: UK expert presentations

09:50 – 10:20: Open discussion

10:20 – 10:30: Consolidation & Conclusion

## **Session Two – Just Transition from Coal: National Drivers of Change**

*11:00 – 12:30 BST, online*

Since the Industrial Revolution, coal has been a prominent source of energy in the UK, both for heating homes and electricity generation. However, the late 1970s and 1980s saw a significant shift away from coal with the closure of coal mines in UK. Through the years, demand for coal power has fallen in part due to government initiatives for renewable and nuclear power and carbon pricing favouring gas over coal power. The UK Climate Change Act 2008 (CCA) set the world's first legally binding and long-term emission reduction targets and marked the beginning of the end for coal power. Today, coal contributes less than 5% of the UK's electricity generation. However, there is resentment for decarbonisation agendas that lack social protection for workers in the fossil fuel industries and their communities. The need to connect macroeconomic policy, the decarbonisation agenda, and social protection for workers and communities facing the dismantling of their livelihood, or an unequal burden to overhaul household energy systems, has manifested in the concept of a Just Transition.

This session invites policymakers and stakeholders to listen to the UK experience of decarbonisation policies and initiatives and discuss the lessons to be learned for national policies aimed at ensuring a just transition in the coal regions of Central and Eastern Europe.

The session is chaired by Professor Tahseen Jafry, Director of the Centre for Climate Justice at Glasgow Caledonian University. Attendees will hear a few short presentations from experts showcasing UK policies and initiatives to decarbonise and phase-out coal, as well as the implications for a just transition. An open discussion will follow on the lessons to be learned from the UK experience, how to embed social protection within the decarbonisation agenda, and practical steps to adopting just transition principles in national policies, initiatives and frameworks.

### Event Outline

11:00 – 11:10: Introduction by Chair

11:10 – 11:50: UK expert presentations

11:50 – 12:20: Open discussion

12:20 – 12:30: Consolidation & Conclusion

## **Session Three – Just Transition from Coal: European Policy Considerations and Priorities**

*13:30 – 15:00 BST, online*

The world has set out ambitious targets to limit greenhouse gas emissions and prevent the worst impacts of climate change as set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement. Over 100 countries, representing 53% of global GDP, have set or are in the process of setting a target of net zero emissions by 2050, including the UK. However, there has also been an increasingly strong policy focus on ensuring this transition to net-zero is just. The call for a just transition began as a trade union movement in the 1970's as a challenge to the growing narrative that environmental regulations threatened jobs in the heavy industries. In recent years, Just Transition gained significant traction in international climate policy debates following COP24 in 2018. The Solidarity and Just Transition Silesia Declaration signed by 50 countries as a call to alleviate the impact of decarbonisation policies on coal workers and their communities. There is an increasing number of international and national initiatives, from the EU's Just Transition Mechanism' to the UK's Financing a Just Transition Alliance (FJTA), that are setting a standard at international levels for just transition to be used as a framework for decarbonisation.

This session invites policymakers and stakeholders to listen to the UK experience of international negotiations and initiatives for decarbonisation, and an opportunity to discuss and examine further the lessons learned for governments and stakeholders from Central and Eastern Europe to ensure a just transition is pursued as a standard at the international level.

The session is chaired by Professor Tahseen Jafry, Director of the Centre for Climate Justice at Glasgow Caledonian University. Attendees will hear a few short presentations from experts showcasing UK experiences and initiatives to encourage international cooperation on decarbonisation, and the pursuit of a just transition. An open discussion will follow on the lessons to be learned from the UK experience, and the ways governments and relevant stakeholders can influence negotiations and decarbonisation initiatives to embed just transition principles.

### Event Outline

13:30 – 13:40: Introduction by Chair

13:40 – 14:20: UK expert presentations

14:20 – 14:50: Open discussion

14:50 – 15:00: Consolidation & Conclusion

## **Session Four – Just Transition from Coal: Lessons for the future**

*15:30 – 17:00 BST, online*

In the final session in this conference on *Just Transitions from Coal*, this session will involve a panel discussion from key conference speakers. A speaker from each of the previous events, which focused on local coal legacies, national drivers of change and European policy perspectives, will come together to discuss the challenges and opportunities across different scales that are associated with a just transition within the context of coal.

Chaired by Professor Tahseen Jafry, Director of the Centre for Climate Justice at Glasgow Caledonian University, this session invites policymakers and stakeholders to engage in an open discussion with the speakers of these events, put questions to the panel and contribute towards further dialogue on meaningful and just transitions from coal in Central and Eastern Europe.

By the end of the conference, delegates will have a greater appreciation of the different scales and overlapping processes involved in a Just Transition and their place in this process.

### Event Outline

15:30 – 15:40: Introduction by Chair

15:40 – 16:20: Panel Discussion with Set Questions

16:20 – 16:40: Open discussion with Questions from Audience

16:40 – 17:00: Consolidation & Conclusion of Panel and all Conference Events