

# CLIMATE CRISIS NEWSLETTER

A fortnightly newsletter brought to you by XR Gairloch

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## Editorial

### High Seas Treaty agreed by UN.....

A historic UN Ocean Treaty has finally been agreed at the United Nations after almost two decades of negotiations. The text will now go through technical editing and translation, before officially being adopted at another session. This Treaty is a monumental win for ocean protection, and an important sign that multilateralism still works in an increasingly divided world.

High Seas Treaty: UN agrees historic deal to protect 30% of international waters by 2030. [Read article.](#)



The agreement of this Treaty keeps the 30x30 target - protecting 30% of the world's oceans by 2030 - alive. It provides a pathway to creating fully or highly protected areas across the world's oceans. There are still flaws in the text, and governments must ensure that the Treaty is put into practice in an effective and equitable way for it to be considered a truly ambitious Treaty. So it's good news, but, as always, the devil in the detail.

UN high seas treaty is a triumph, but it will need teeth to be effective. [Read article.](#)

### Fix the grid and increase the energy storage.....

The National Audit Office (NAO) has warned that the UK Government risks not meeting its ambition to decarbonise power by 2035 because it lacks a delivery plan.

The group said that the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) has made little progress on a long-term delivery plan for all electricity to be generated through clean energy sources.

Research from DNV has warned that energy security concerns currently outweigh clean and affordable energy on the list of priorities for energy companies globally.

Absence of long-term plan could deter investors or lead them to increase prices, says National Audit Office.



Emissions related to UK power generation have fallen by 73% since 1990 with increases in wind and solar power and the phasing out of coal power stations reducing the impact on the environment.

However, about 40% of the UK's electricity is still generated from gas and the owners of gas-fired power plants are still picking up huge subsidies to keep the lights on when wind and solar power drop out owing to weather conditions.

UK Government is planning for a 60% increase in electricity demand by 2035 , so upgrade the grid, including battery and large-scale energy storage. We need an Energy Transition Plan to ensure we meet the 2035 target, **The current energy system is flawed and we first need electrical storage and an upgraded grid.**

Wind Power: Why some wind farms are being paid to stop producing energy. [Read article.](#)

UK's 2035 clean power goal at risk without better grid planning, Ministers warned. [Read article.](#)

### **The way forward for future energy....**

The UK government is aiming to "fully decarbonise" the UK's electricity system by 2035.

This target was recommended by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) in 2020. It was then adopted by the government in its 2021 net-zero strategy and reiterated in its 2022 energy security strategy.

In the CCC's recent report it stressed how important it will be to meet the 2035 target. It said this will be "the central requirement for achieving net-zero by 2050". Moreover, it stated that "reliable, resilient and plentiful decarbonised electricity - at an affordable price to consumers...is within sight".

Yet "the UK government has not yet provided a coherent strategy to achieve its goal", the CCC said. The report adds that "our increasingly electrified society...must have resilience embedded throughout".

CCC: Here's how the UK can get reliable zero-carbon electricity by 2035. [Read article.](#)

Unfortunately the CCC's plan still relies on nuclear, biomass and natural gas energy which isn't sustainable. We therefore need an energy system that gives us clean, green and constant energy with no need for expensive energy storage facilities and the only nature energy source that gives us that is wave power. We therefore need to be investing more in wave energy technology.

Scotland energy: Firm generates 'world first' 50GWH from tidal power. [Read article.](#)

Eni installs wave energy device offshore Italy. [Read article.](#)



## Flawed UK government policies.....

After all these years and numerous low up-takes on environmental funding by the public the government has still not learned its lesson. People always struggle to pay the up front initial capital costs for funding major works to their homes and therefore tend not to get involved in long term payback schemes that the government put out again and again.

One-third of UK funding for insulation and heat pumps remains unspent. [Read article.](#)



Government slammed over Boiler Scheme with call for EPC change. [Read article.](#)

Global fuel subsidies hit highest level of \$1 trillion in one year. [Read article.](#)

Energy bills set to rise by 20% despite expected fall in price cap. [Read article.](#)

## And the policies they need to be putting in place.....

The UK won nature's lottery with oil and gas in North Sea, and huge potential for wind and hydropower around the coastline. But we're squandering it, allowing BP, Shell and co to take the profit.

Around 50% of UK offshore wind is publicly owned right now, but only 0.07% of it is publicly owned by the UK. Instead, publicly owned companies from Denmark and Norway take the opportunities and make the profit.

State-owned electricity generation firm 'could save Britons nearly £21bn a year'. [Read article.](#)

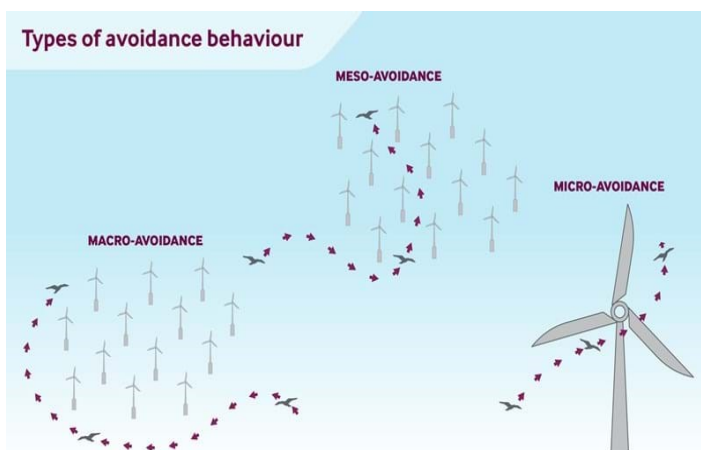
Bring energy into public ownership. [Read article.](#)

## Wind Energy

The risk of birds colliding with wind turbine blades is sometimes used as an argument against the use of wind power but an Aberdeen offshore wind farm killed zero seabirds in 'remarkable' study

There were zero seabird collisions with turbines during two years of monitoring Aberdeen Offshore Wind Farm, a £2.6 million research project has found.

A new study about seabirds and offshore wind turbines may surprise you. [Read article.](#)

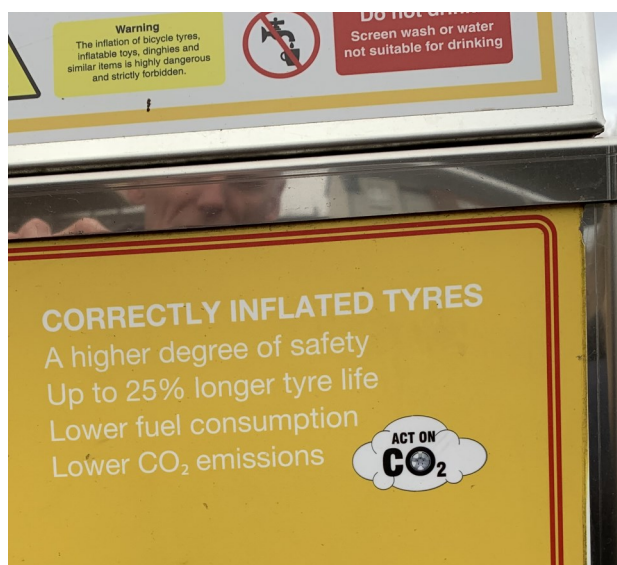




## Greenwash is embroidered into the fabric of our society.....

Ever since the 1970's when BP invented the concept of personal carbon footprints to take the emphasis off fossil fuel companies (the ones causing the carbon emissions) and redirect it onto individuals, carbon footprint greenwash is now everywhere. You can see it just about in every aspect of our daily lives. It suggests that if we make some small life style changes this will go a long way to saving the planet,. So as we try to save a few tonnes here and there in our every day lives at the same time fossil fuel companies are producing billions of tonnes of carbon emissions every year and have applied for over a 100 new oil and gas licences in the North Sea as their plans are to continue extracting fossil fuels for decades to come on the premise of further greenwash i.e. that the use of carbon capture and carbon offset will make fossil fuels carbon neutral. Some recent examples of everyday greenwashing.

At a Shell petrol station on the tyre inflation compressor, it tells us we can lower our emissions by inflating our tyres to the correct pressure. Meanwhile the petrol station is selling 100's of thousands of litres of carbon emitting petrol and diesel.



Advertisement on the internet suggesting carbon capture is going to protect the Earth from climate change when in fact it is a ploy by fossil fuel companies to extend the life of their polluting and profit making.

Support decarbonization. Carbon capture & storage tech protects the earth from the worst impacts of cl...

Sponsored

 Clean Air Task Force



## Good, Better, Best: Cutting Carbon From Your Workout



Do you work out in a gym? It's great to prioritize your health but often our fitness routines contribute to carbon emissions. Gyms in particular can use a lot of energy, and that footprint is compounded if we drive there. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to reduce the carbon footprint of your workout.

[more...](#)

More internet advertising suggesting you can really help the planet by reducing your carbon footprint when working out in the gym.



Unlock the potential of renewable energy. Waste incinerator plants - Efficient way to dispose of non-re...

Sponsored

Winno Energy



Yet another internet advert suggesting waste incinerators produce renewable energy. At least the Scottish and Welsh governments have put a stop to any future waste incinerators by banning them.

**Do oil companies really think we buy into this nonsense?.....**

BP CEO says more oil and gas investment is good for the climate fight. This is the same as a cigarette producer saying it has to increase its sales in cigarettes so as to fund research into lung cancer.

At London's International Energy Week Chief Executive Officer Bernard Looney made the case that investment in more oil and gas is crucial for the transition away from those very fuels.

BP, in a Reversal, Says It Will Produce More Oil and Gas. [Read article.](#)

**Green greenwashing.....**

A project, off the coast of Denmark, to store carbon dioxide beneath the North Sea. It is the first project in the world to bury CO<sub>2</sub> imported from abroad. Unlike other projects that store CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from nearby industrial sites.

But why would such a project exist when carbon capture and storage (CCS) is much more efficient when it is captured and stored at the site it is being emitted. You just need to look at who is leading the project—led by British chemical giant Ineos and German oil company Wintershall Dea. These are two large polluters of CO<sub>2</sub> and to offset their emissions so they can continue to pollute they obviously need carbon capture facilities.

Undersea graveyard for imported CO<sub>2</sub> opens in Denmark. [Read article.](#)

## Who do the Oil companies think they are kidding.....

When an oil and gas company says it's reducing its carbon emissions it normally means its scope 1 and 2 emissions and not it's scope 3 which is the critical one.

**Scope 1: emissions a company produces directly through its activities. These are usually controlled by the company through its own operations (unless it is reporting emissions on an equity basis).**

These are often subdivided into four categories:

1. Stationary combustion: includes fuels used in buildings (e.g. heating).

2. Mobile combustion: accounts for fuels burned by company vehicles.

3. Fugitive emissions: those that occur from leaks e.g. from refrigeration units.

4. Process emissions: greenhouse gases produced through on-site manufacturing and industrial processes.

**Scope 2: emissions produced in the generation of imported energy, usually electricity that the company has purchased through a utilities provider e.g. to run pumps or charge electric vehicles.**

The important differentiator between Scope 1 (direct) and Scope 2 (indirect) is who is controlling the process. For example, if a company produces its own electricity on site this would be Scope 1.

**Scope 3: indirect emissions not accounted for in Scope 2.**

These are emissions that occur along the reporting companies value chain. They cover emissions starting with the procurement of the raw materials, through manufacturing, distribution and finally the customer use of the end product. They include emissions associated with employee business travel and any outsourced activities that are not controlled by the company.

Scope 3 is where the largest percentage of emissions for a company lie and typically are the hardest for a company to accurately quantify and track and therefore many companies do not count there scope 3 emissions, especially oil companies.

The North Sea Transition Deal which the government negotiated with the Oil and Gas companies included the sector setting early targets to reduce emissions by 10% by 2025 and 25% by 2027 and committed them to cut emissions by 50% by 2030. This was only scope 1 and 2 emissions. Pledges to becoming net zero businesses before 2050. This is all about the detail. Yes they are proposing to be net zero for only scope 1 and 2 elements but that only accounts for about 5 to 10 percent of their total footprint. It's scope 3 emissions where the bulk of their emission come from i.e. the burning of the fossil fuel they are extracting. That's like a tobacco factory implementing a no smoking policy on it's premises.

On a mission to curb rig emissions, Diamond Offshore joins forces with Norwegian firm.  
**Read article.**

### Scope 1

Direct



From owned /  
controlled  
sources

### Scope 2

Indirect



From generation  
of purchased  
energy

### Scope 3

Products



From supply chain  
and customer use  
of products



# Greenwash, misinformation, hypocrisy and deceit

Big Oil's Been Secretly Validating Critics' Concerns about Carbon Capture. [Read article.](#)

Industry Knew About Gas Stoves' Air Pollution Problems in Early 1970s. [Read article.](#)

Europe's Gas Lobby Exploits Energy Security Fears in Year Since Ukraine War. [Read article.](#)

Corporations push "insetting" as new offsetting but report claims it is even worse. [Read article.](#)

Lufthansa advert banned over misleading environmental claims. [Read article.](#)

Tesco accused of greenwashing over 'biodegradable' teabags. [Read article.](#)

Fossil Fuel Linked Donors Gift Half a Million to Conservative Party. [Read article.](#)

Harbour Energy moans windfall tax 'wiped out profits' but still pays US\$1bn in shareholder returns.

BSI launches new standard to combat financial greenwashing. [Read article.](#)

## Corrupt Politicians and Climate Criminals.....

Every person on our planet is living in a climate crime scene, but who are the climate criminals perpetrating these crimes? Every fortnight we try and highlight and expose these criminals. Do you know of any Climate Criminals who should be named?

One definition of a climate criminal is: if there is a concrete causal link between a specific source of emissions and a harmful consequence - such as serious injury to body or physical health or the destruction of property - this may constitute a crime. All these offences can be collectively referred to as climate crimes.

But it's more than that, it's also about the destruction of nature and our ecosystem, which is Ecocide. Also included in climate crimes should be people or companies that actively promote climate change denial, greenwashing and intentional misleading and misinforming people.

13 climate criminals who should be in jail. [Read article](#)

The climate crisis is a crime that should be prosecuted. [Read article.](#)



## Events/Actions/Education and Information

### EVENTS

#### Earth Hour

Saturday 25th March 2023 at 8.30 pm in your local areas. See website for the nearest Earth Hour to you or organise your own Earth Hour with the help of WWF. [See website.](#)

#### The Big One

21st to 24th April 2023 in London.

100,000 people will protest in Parliament Square and surrounding areas in London from various groups/organisations with one big objective. END THE FOSSIL FUEL ERA.

For more information on how to get involved. [See link.](#)



**21/04/23**

**...AND BEYOND...**

**THE BIG ONE**

**100,000 + PEOPLE**

**HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

#### The Great Big Green Week

Get involved in the Great Big Green Week 2023:  
10th -18th June.

The Great Big Green Week is the UK's biggest ever celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. [See website.](#)

**THE GREAT  
BIG GREEN  
WEEK** 

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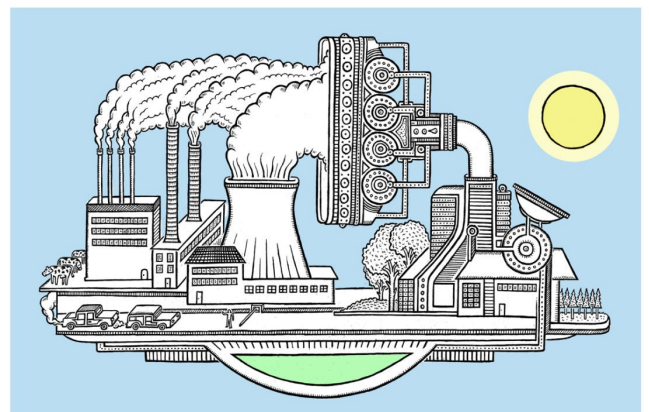
## Technological Advances

What Are Sodium-Ion Batteries, and Could They Replace Lithium? [Read article.](#)

Electric vehicle batteries could get big boost with new polymer coating. [Read article.](#)

Turn the tide: is it time for tidal stream energy? [Read article.](#)

Solar panels. The SmartFlower folds out automatically every morning and tracks the sun during the day with its 2-axis controller. [See website.](#)





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## Sustainable Farming/Food

Is it possible for countries to produce all their food nationally? [Read article.](#)

What is Regenerative Agriculture? A Comprehensive Guide. [Read article.](#)

Global food system emissions imperil Paris climate goals. [Read article.](#)



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## The Scales of Justice

Revealed: cabinet ministers warned of legal action over UK's failure to tackle climate crisis. [Read article.](#)

French NGOs Sue BNP Paribas, Europe's Largest Financier of Fossil Fuel Expansion. [Read article.](#)

EU countries delay vote on landmark law to end sales of CO2-emitting cars. [Read article.](#)



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## Eco'nomiC Recovery—Building Back Better

MPs hail floating offshore wind as 'Wales' biggest investment opportunity'. [Read article.](#)

Scottish renewables students 'rise by 70%'. [Read article.](#)

UK Government unveils funding for low-carbon heat training. [Read article.](#)



## The Fight Against Fossil Fuels

Renewables help offset rise in coal emissions but emissions still go up, IEA says. [Read article.](#)

China ramps up coal plant approvals despite emissions pledge: report. [Read article.](#)

Eight coal projects to be considered by NSW forecast to add 1.5bn tonnes to global emissions. [Read article.](#)

Shell makes another oil discovery offshore Namibia. [Read article.](#)



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## The Amazon Rainforest Is Still Burning

Worst-ever February rainforest data for Brazilian Amazon. [Read article](#)

Brazil's Amazon must be protected to reach global climate goal, U.S. envoy says. [Read article.](#)

Amazon deforestation linked to reduced Tibetan snows, Antarctic ice loss: Study. [Read article.](#)

Global craze for collagen linked to Brazilian deforestation. [Read article.](#)



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## The Circular Economy

Report: UK's construction sector won't reach net-zero without circular economy focus. [Read article.](#)



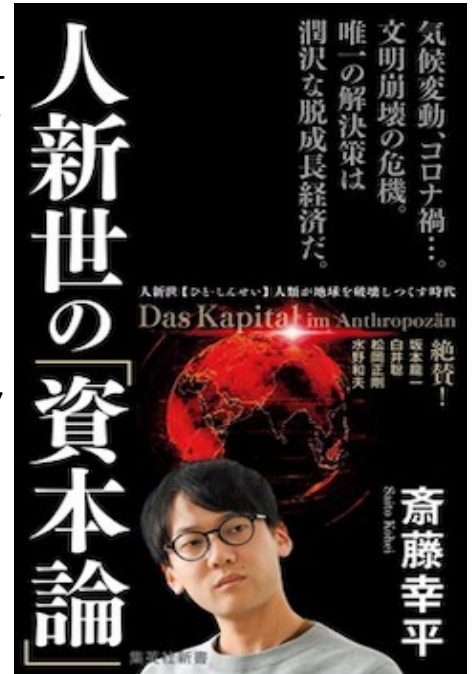
# Economic growth is fuelling climate change – a new book proposes 'degrowth communism' as the solution

By Timothée Parrique

I'm often told that degrowth, the planned downscaling of production and consumption to reduce the pressure on Earth's ecosystems, is a tough sell. But a 36-year-old associate professor at Tokyo University has made a name for himself arguing that "degrowth communism" could halt the escalating climate emergency.

Kohei Saito, the bestselling author of *Capital in the Anthropocene*, is back with a new book: *Marx in the Anthropocene: Towards the Idea of Degrowth Communism*. The book is dense, especially for those not fluent in Marxist jargon who, I suspect, care little about whether or not Karl Marx started worrying about nature in his later years.

And yet, the way Saito mobilises Marxist theory to make a plea for "the abundance of wealth in degrowth communism" (the title of the last chapter of his book) is as precise as it is gripping. This is what attracted my attention as an economist working on degrowth: Saito's attempts to reconcile Marxism with newer ideas around alternatives to economic growth might bring critiques of capitalism to an unprecedented level of popularity.



The first edition cover of *Capital in the Anthropocene*, published in 2020. Kohei Saito

## Economic growth creates scarcity

Saito turns the concept of economic growth on its head. Many people assume that growth makes us richer but what if it did the precise opposite?

Gross domestic product (GDP), a monetary measure of production, can rise because someone privatises a common good – what British geographer David Harvey calls "accumulation by dispossession". Fence a resource that people could previously access for free and start selling it to them.

This rent extraction might inflate GDP but it doesn't create anything useful. In fact, by preventing people from accessing the means of subsistence it creates an artificial scarcity.

The more money accumulates, the more these snatch-and-sell tricks become possible, whether it's for natural resources, knowledge or labour. In a world where everything becomes a potential commodity (in other words, something which can be bought and sold), the ruling rationality favours lucrative activities over others.

Why would you lend your apartment to someone for free if you can rent it on Airbnb? And that's the catch: once you need money to satisfy your needs, you are forced to play like a capitalist.



## An emergency brake

This self-perpetuating striving for money-making pushes us to turn more and more of nature into a commodity. The money companies can make is infinite while the quantities of nature at disposition are getting scarcer.

There may be no clearer illustration than the record profits of fossil fuel companies amid worsening climate conditions.

Degrowth could act as an emergency brake on this vicious cycle, Saito argues, by "terminat[ing] the ceaseless exploitation of humanity and the robbery of nature".



Oil and gas companies are reaping the rewards of high wholesale prices

Academics define degrowth as a democratically planned effort to downscale levels of production and consumption in order to lighten environmental pressures. The democratic part is important: the idea is to do this in a way that reduces inequality and improves wellbeing for everyone.

It's difficult to imagine this happening within capitalism, a system which must continually expand and generate more. And that's Saito's point: communism is much more likely to achieve these objectives.

He reasons that an economy concerned with meeting human need is more likely to avoid producing junk. Without the get-rich-or-perish imperative, many nature-intensive goods and services would cease to be necessary or desirable.

Saito calls this "a conscious downscaling of the current 'realm of necessity'". This Marxist term describes what we consider our essential needs. Under degrowth communism, this realm would shrink to exclude things and activities which don't benefit human wellbeing or contribute to sustainability.

Suddenly, it's possible to organise work differently. Gone is the industrial model of producing something as cheaply as possible while sacrificing safety and the pleasantness inherent in a shared effort.

Instead of competing for market share, companies could cooperate to achieve common goals like restoring biodiversity. Reducing the importance given to moneymaking would free societies to improve all these things we today trivialise because they aren't profitable.

Such an economy might be slower and smaller money-wise but it would be more sustainable and more effective in delivering wellbeing, which is all we should be asking from an economy anyway.

## Towards a post-scarcity society

Saito's book is refreshing because it helps end an old feud between socialists who trust that new technologies and the automation of work can deliver an expanding economy with greater leisure time and those who argue for a socialism without growth.

Instead of perpetually growing the economy by making more things private property and saleable, Saito proposes sharing the wealth we've already created. This could usher in a new way of living, where people can afford to spend less time and effort producing commodities and turn their attention towards things that really matter to them, what Marxists call the realm of freedom. This should start, Saito argues, with restoring the health of Earth's ecosystems, on which everything else relies.

No longer forced to obsess over money, people could enjoy the abundance of social and natural wealth outside of consumerism. Imagine trading the new smartphones which arrive yearly for luxuriant ecosystems, thriving communal spaces and vibrant democracies we finally have time to explore and participate in.

Saito breathes new life into Marxist ideas with his book by presenting evidence of life beyond endless extraction, production and consumption. As the author himself argues, this could not have come at a better time:

Although it was never recognised during the 20th century, Marx's idea of degrowth communism is more important than ever today because it increases the chance of human survival in the Anthropocene.



A lot of necessary work, such as restoring habitats, may not be profitable

# The century of climate migration: why we need to plan for the great upheaval

By Gaia Vince

People driven from their homes by climate disaster need protection. And ageing nations need them

A great upheaval is coming. Climate-driven movement of people is adding to a massive migration already under way to the world's cities. The number of migrants has doubled globally over the past decade, and the issue of what to do about rapidly increasing populations of displaced people will only become greater and more urgent. To survive climate breakdown will require a planned and deliberate migration of a kind humanity has never before undertaken.



The world already sees twice as many days where temperatures exceed 50C than 30 years ago - this level of heat is deadly for humans, and also hugely problematic for buildings, roads and power stations. It makes an area unliveable. This explosive planetary drama demands a dynamic human response. We need to help people to move from danger and poverty to safety and comfort - to build a more resilient global society for everyone's benefit.

Large populations will need to migrate, and not simply to the nearest city, but also across continents. Those living in regions with more tolerable conditions, especially nations in northern latitudes, will need to accommodate millions of migrants while themselves adapting to the demands of the climate crisis. We will need to create entirely new cities near the planet's cooler poles, in land that is rapidly becoming ice-free. Parts of Siberia, for example, are already experiencing temperatures of 30C for months at a time .

Arctic areas are burning, with mega-blazes devouring Siberia, Greenland and Alaska. Even in January, peat fires were burning in the Siberian cryosphere, despite temperatures below -50C. These zombie fires smoulder year round in the peat below ground, in and around the Arctic Circle, only to burst into huge blazes that rage across the boreal forests of Siberia, Alaska and Canada.

In 2019, colossal fires destroyed more than 4m hectares of Siberian taiga forest, blazing for more than three months, and producing a cloud of soot and ash as large as the countries that make up the entire European Union. Models predict that fires in the boreal forests and Arctic tundra will increase by up to four times by 2100.

Wherever you live now, migration will affect you and the lives of your children. It is predictable that Bangladesh, a country where one-third of the population lives along a sinking, low-lying coast, is becoming uninhabitable. (More than 13 million Bangladeshis - nearly 10% of the population - are expected to have left the country by 2050.) But in the coming decades wealthy nations will be severely affected, too.



This upheaval occurs not only at a time of unprecedented climate change but also of human demographic change. Global population will continue to rise in the coming decades, peaking at perhaps 10 billion in the 2060s. Most of this increase will be in the tropical regions that are worst hit by climate catastrophe, causing people there to flee northwards. The global north faces the opposite problem - a "top-heavy" demographic crisis, in which a large elderly population is supported by a too-small workforce. North America and Europe have 300 million people above the traditional retirement age (65+), and by 2050, the economic old-age dependency ratio there is projected to be at 43 elderly persons per 100 working persons aged 20-64. Cities from Munich to Buffalo will begin competing with each other to attract migrants.

The coming migration will involve the world's poorest fleeing deadly heatwaves and failed crops. It will also include the educated, the middle class, people who can no longer live where they planned because it's impossible to get a mortgage or property insurance; because employment has moved elsewhere. The climate crisis has already uprooted millions in the US - in 2018, 1.2 million were displaced by extreme conditions, fire, storms and flooding; by 2020, the annual toll had risen to 1.7 million people. The US now averages a \$1bn disaster every 18 days.

More than half of the western US is facing extreme drought conditions, and farmers in Oregon's Klamath Basin talk about illegally using force to open dam gates for irrigation. At the other extreme, fatal floods have stranded thousands of people from Death Valley to Kentucky. By 2050, half a million existing US homes will be on land that floods at least once a year, according to data from Climate Central, a partnership of scientists and journalists. Louisiana's Isle de Jean Charles has already been allocated \$48m of federal tax dollars to move the entire community due to coastal erosion and rising sea levels; in Britain, the Welsh villagers of Fairbourne have been told their homes should be abandoned to the encroaching sea as the entire village is to be "decommissioned" in 2045. Larger coastal cities are at risk, too. Consider that the Welsh capital, Cardiff, is projected to be two-thirds underwater by 2050.

The UN International Organization for Migration has cited estimates of as many as 1 billion environmental migrants in the next 30 years, while more recent projections point to 1.2 billion by 2050, and 1.4 billion by 2060. After 2050, that figure is expected to soar as the world heats further and the global population rises to its predicted peak in the mid 2060s.

The question for humanity becomes: what does a sustainable world look like? We will need to develop an entirely new way of feeding, fuelling and maintaining our lifestyles, while also reducing atmospheric carbon levels. We will need to live in denser concentrations in fewer cities, while reducing the associated risks of crowded populations, including power outages, sanitation problems, overheating, pollution and infectious disease.

At least as challenging, though, will be the task of overcoming the idea that we belong to a particular land and that it belongs to us. We will need to assimilate into globally diverse societies, living in new, polar cities. We will need to be ready to move again when necessary. With every degree of temperature increase, roughly 1 billion people will be pushed outside the zone in which humans have lived for thousands of years. We are running out of time to manage the coming upheaval before it becomes overwhelming and deadly.

Migration is not the problem; it is the solution.

How we manage this global crisis, and how humanely we treat each other as we migrate, will be key to whether this century of upheaval proceeds smoothly or with violent conflict and unnecessary deaths. Managed right, this upheaval could lead to a new global commonwealth of humanity. Migration is our way out of this crisis.

Migration, whether from disaster to safety, or for a new land of opportunity, is deeply interwoven with cooperation - it is only through our extensive collaborations that we are able to migrate, and it's our migrations that forged today's global society. Migration made us. It is our national identities and borders that are the anomaly.

The idea of keeping foreign people out using borders is relatively recent. States used to be far more concerned about stopping people from leaving than preventing their arrival. They needed their labour and taxes.

Some may think that it's flags, anthems and an army to guard your territory that's needed to develop a sense of nationhood. But in fact, the credit should go to a successful bureaucracy. Greater government intervention in people's lives and the creation of a broad systemic bureaucracy were needed to run a complex industrial society and these also forged national identity in its citizens. For instance, Prussia began paying unemployment benefit in the 1880s, which was issued initially in a worker's home village, where people and their circumstances were known. But it was also paid to people where they migrated for work, which meant a new layer of bureaucracy to establish who was Prussian and therefore entitled to benefits. This resulted in citizenship papers and controlled borders. As governments exerted greater control, people got more state benefits from their taxes, and more rights, such as voting, which engendered a feeling of ownership over the state. It became their nation.

Nation states are an artificial social structure predicated on the mythology that the world is made of distinct, homogenous groups that occupy separate portions of the globe, and claim most people's primary allegiance. The reality is far messier. Most people speak the languages of multiple groups, and ethnic and cultural pluralism is the norm. The idea that a person's identity and wellbeing is primarily tied to that of one invented national group is far-fetched, even if this is presupposed by many governments. The political scientist Benedict Anderson famously described nation states as "imagined communities".

It is hardly surprising that the nation-state model so often fails - there have been about 200 civil wars since 1960. However, there are plenty of examples of nation states that work well despite being made up of different groups, such as Singapore, Malaysia and Tanzania, or nations created from global migrants like Australia, Canada and the US. To some degree, all nation states have been formed from a mixture of groups. When nation states falter or fail, the problem is not diversity itself, but not enough official inclusiveness - equity in the eyes of the state, regardless of which other groups a person belongs to. An insecure government allied to a specific group, which it favours over others, breeds discontent and pitches one group against others - this results in people falling back on trusted alliances based on kinship, rather.



An Afghan family relocating from a drought-stricken area the country's Badghis province in 2021

A democracy with a mandate of official inclusiveness from its people is generally more stable – but it needs underpinning by a complex bureaucracy. Nations have navigated this in various ways, for example, devolving power to local communities, giving them voice and agency over their own affairs within the nation state (as is the case in Canada, or Switzerland's cantons). By embracing multiple groups, languages and cultures as equally legitimate, a country like Tanzania can function as a national mosaic of at least 100 different ethnic groups and languages. In Singapore, which has consciously pursued an integrated multi-ethnic population, at least one-fifth of marriages are interracial. Unjust hierarchies between groups make this harder, particularly when imposed on a majority by a minority.

In April 2021, Governor Kristi Noem tweeted: "South Dakota won't be taking any illegal immigrants that the Biden administration wants to relocate. My message to illegal immigrants ... call me when you're an American."

Consider that South Dakota only exists because thousands of undocumented immigrants from Europe used the Homestead Act from 1860 to 1920 to steal land from Native Americans without compensation or reparations. This kind of exclusive attitude from a leader weakens the sense of shared citizenship among all, creating divisions between residents who are deemed to belong and those who are not.

Official inclusion by the national bureaucracy is a starting point for building national identity in all citizens, particularly with a large influx of migrants, but the legacy of decades or centuries of injustice persists socially, economically and politically.

The frontline in Europe's war against migrants is the Mediterranean Sea, patrolled by Italian warships tasked with intercepting small EU-bound vessels and forcing them instead to ports in Libya on the north African coast. One such warship, the *Caprera*, was singled out for praise by Italy's anti-migrant interior minister for "defending our security", after it intercepted more than 80 migrant boats, carrying more than 7,000 people. "Honour!" he tweeted, posting a photo of himself with the crew in 2018.

However, during an inspection of the *Caprera* that same year, police discovered more than 700,000 contraband cigarettes and large numbers of other smuggled goods imported by the crew from Libya to be sold for profit in Italy. On further investigation, the smuggling enterprise turned out to involve several other military ships. "I felt like Dante descending into the inferno," said Lt Col Gabriele Gargano, the police officer who led the investigation.

The case highlights a central absurdity around today's attitude to migration. Immigration controls are regarded as essential – but for people, not stuff. Huge effort goes into enabling the cross-border migration of goods, services and money. Every year more than 11bn tonnes of stuff is shipped around the world – the equivalent of 1.5 tonnes per person a year – whereas humans, who are key to all this economic activity, are unable to move freely. Industrialised nations with big demographic challenges and important labour shortages are blocked from employing migrants who are desperate for jobs.

Currently, there is no global body or organisation overseeing the movement of people worldwide. Governments belong to the International Organization for Migration, but this is an independent, "related organisation" of the UN, rather than an actual UN agency: it is not subject to the direct oversight of the general assembly and cannot set common policy that would enable countries to capitalise on the opportunities immigrants offer. Migrants are usually managed by each individual nation's foreign ministry, rather than the labour



ministry, so decisions are made without the information or coordinated policies to match people with job markets. We need a new mechanism to manage global labour mobility far more effectively and efficiently - it is our biggest economic resource, after all.

The conversation about migration has become stuck on what ought to be allowed, rather than planning for what will occur. Nations need to move on from the idea of controlling to managing migration. At the very least, we need new mechanisms for lawful economic labour migration and mobility, and far better protection for those fleeing danger.



The aftermath of wildfires that burned more than 1m hectares of forests in Siberia's Krasnoyarsk territory in 2019

Within days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, EU leaders enacted an open-border policy for refugees fleeing the conflict, giving them the right to live and work across the bloc for three years, and helping with housing, education, transport and other needs. The policy undoubtedly saved lives but additionally, by not requiring millions of people to go through protracted asylum processes, the refugees were able to disperse to places where they could better help themselves and be helped by local communities. Across the EU, people came together in their communities, on social media, and through institutions to organise ways of hosting refugees.

They offered rooms in their homes, collected donations of clothes and toys, set up language camps and mental health support - all of which was legal because of the open-border policy. This reduced the burden for central government, host towns and refugees alike.

Migration requires funds, contacts and courage. It usually involves a degree of hardship, at least initially, as people are wrenched from their families, familiar surroundings and language. Some countries make it almost impossible to move for work, and in others, parents are forced to leave behind children who they may never see grow up. An entire generation of Chinese children has reached adulthood seeing their parents only for a week or so once a year, during spring festival.

In China, hundreds of millions of people are caught in limbo between the village and cities, unable to fully transition due to archaic land laws and the lack of social housing, childcare, schools or other public facilities in the cities. The villages are sustained through remittances from absent workers, who cannot sell their farms for fear of losing their land, which is their only social security. Left-behind, isolated children then become primary caregivers for their ageing relatives. Migrant workers cannot afford to buy homes in the city and so return to the village on retirement, restarting the cycle.

In other cases, migrants pay huge fees to people traffickers for urban or foreign work, only to find themselves in indentured positions that are little better than slavery, working out their "contracts" until they can get their passports back and return home. What little money they do earn will be sent home. These include Asian construction workers and domestic workers in the Middle East and Europe, who have little protection and may end up in forced labour in the sex industry or in inhumane conditions in food processing or

garment factories. Most migrants are trying to improve their lives, as we all do, by moving. Some are migrating to save their lives.

I've visited people in refugee camps in different countries across four continents, where millions of people live in limbo, sometimes for generations. Around the world, whether the refugee camps were filled with Sudanese, Tibetans, Palestinians, Syrians, Salvadorans or Iraqis, the issue was the same: people want dignity. And that means being able to provide for their families - being allowed to work, to move around, and to make a life for themselves in safety. Currently, too many nations make this wish - though it is very simple and mutually beneficial - impossible for those most in need of it. As our environment changes, millions more risk ending up in these nowhere places. Globally, this system of sealed borders and hostile migration policy is dysfunctional. It doesn't work for anyone's benefit.

We are witnessing the highest levels of human displacement on record, and it will only increase. In 2020, refugees around the world exceeded 100 million, tripling since 2010, and half were children. This means one in every 78 people on earth has been forced to flee. Registered refugees represent only a fraction of those forced to leave their homes due to war or disaster.

In addition to these, 350 million people are undocumented worldwide, an astonishing 22 million in the US alone, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees estimates. These include informal workers and those who move along ancient routes crossing national borders - these are the people who increasingly find themselves without legal recognition, living on the margins, unable to benefit from social support systems.

As long as 4.2 billion people live in poverty and the income gap between the global north and south continues to grow, people will have to move - and those living in climate-impacted regions will be disproportionately affected. Nations have an obligation to offer asylum to refugees, but under the legal definition of the refugee, written in the 1951 Refugee Convention, this does not include those who have to leave their home because of climate crisis.

Things are beginning to shift, though. In a landmark judgment, in 2020, the UN Human Rights Committee ruled that climate refugees cannot be sent home, meaning that a state would be in breach of its human rights obligations if it returns someone to a country where - due to the climate crisis - their life is in danger. However, the rulings of the committee are not internationally binding.

Today, the 50 million climate-displaced people already outnumber those fleeing political persecution. The distinction between refugees and economic migrants is rarely a straightforward one, and further complicated by the climate crisis. While the dramatic devastation of a hurricane erasing whole villages can make refugees of people overnight, more often the impacts of climate breakdown on people's lives are gradual - another poor harvest or another season of unbearable heat, which becomes the catalyst/crisis that pushes people to seek better locations.

This should give the world time to adapt to the mass migrations to come - that ultimate climate adaptation. But instead, as environments grow ever more deadly, the world's wealthiest countries spend more on militarising their borders - creating a climate "wall" - than they do on the climate emergency. The growth in offshore detention and "processing" centres for asylum seekers not only adds to the death toll, but is among the

most repugnant features of the rich world's failure to ease the impact of the climate crisis on the poorest regions. We must be alert to "climate nationalists" who want to reinforce the unequal allocation of our planet's safer lands.

The planetary scale crisis demands a global climate migration pact, but in the meantime, regional free movement agreements - of the kind EU member states enjoy - would help. Such agreements have helped residents of disaster-hit Caribbean islands find refuge in safer ones.

Climate change is in most cases survivable; it is our border policies that will kill people. Human movement on a scale never before seen will dominate this century. It could be a catastrophe or, managed well, it could be our salvation.

### **Other articles.....**

The American climate migration has already begun. [Read article.](#)

Short-distance migration is critical for climate change adaptation, according to new study. [Read article.](#)

# Energy crisis: Europe's spend to shield consumers nears €800 billion. Where is the money going?

By Charlotte Elton

European countries' bill to shield households and companies from soaring energy costs has climbed to nearly 800 billion euros, researchers said on Monday.

The eye-watering sum has mostly gone towards measures like VAT cuts on petrol and retail power price caps.

These act as "de-facto fossil fuel subsidies," according to the analysis by think-tank Bruegel, which urged governments to target their supports more effectively.



How much money have European countries spent on the energy crisis?

European Union countries have now earmarked or allocated 681 billion euros in energy crisis spending, while Britain allocated 103 billion euros and Norway 8.1 billion euros since September 2021, according to Bruegel analysis.

The 792-billion-euro total compares with 706 billion euros in Bruegel's last assessment in November, as countries continue through winter to face the fallout from Russia cutting off most of its gas deliveries to Europe in 2022.

Germany topped the spending chart, allocating nearly 270 billion euros - a sum that eclipsed all other countries.

Britain, Italy and France were the next highest, although each spent less than 150 billion euros. Most EU states spent a fraction of that.

On a per capita basis, Luxembourg, Denmark and Germany were the biggest spenders.

The spending earmarked by the countries on the energy crisis is now in the same league as the EU's 750-billion-euro COVID-19 recovery fund. Agreed in 2020, that saw Brussels take on joint debt and pass it onto the bloc's 27 member states to cope with the pandemic.

How are European countries targeting their energy spend?

The energy spending update comes as countries debate EU proposals to loosen state aid rules further for green technology projects, as Europe seeks to compete with subsidies in the United States and China.



Those plans have raised concerns in some EU capitals that encouraging more state aid would unsettle the bloc's internal market. Germany has faced criticism over its mammoth energy aid package, which far outstrips what other EU nations can afford.

Bruegel said governments had focussed most of the support on non-targeted measures to curb the retail price consumers pay for energy, such as VAT cuts on petrol or retail power price caps.

The think-tank said that dynamic needed to change, as states are running out of fiscal space to maintain such broad funding.

"Instead of price-suppressing measures that are de facto fossil fuels subsidies, governments should now foster more income-support policies targeted towards the lowest two quintiles of the income distribution and towards strategic sectors of the economy," research analyst Giovanni Sgaravatti said.



## Other regular stories in this newsletter



Good and Bad News



Reports and Research

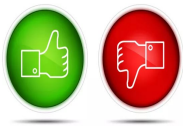


Plastic and Pollution



Land, Sea and Ecology

## Good and Bad News



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### Bad News

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