



EPPC

2020-VILNIUS

Final Report

European Public Policy Conference 2020

“Our climate, our future – Exploring policy responses to
climate change.”

About EPPC

The European Public Policy Conference (EPPC) is a unique initiative that empowers public policy students to take a leading role in shaping the debates on critical European policy issues. This fully student-run event is sponsored by the IPLI Foundation and organized by the students at the Hertie School in Berlin.

Thanks to a highly interactive format, EPPC provides an unparalleled opportunity for future policy makers to engage with prominent political leaders and experts to address the pressing challenges that Europe faces in the twenty-first century. Students are responsible for all aspects of the organization of this unique initiative. With each subsequent iteration of EPPC, student organizers are responsible for selecting the conference theme, choosing the speakers and selecting the country where EPPC is held.

Content

	Foreword.....	4
	The Conference (as planned).....	6
	The Agenda.....	9
	The Launch.....	11
	and Corona.....	12
	The Team.....	13

Foreword

The European Public Policy Conference (EPPC), an initiative founded in 2009, is a project which the IPLI Foundation has had the privilege to sponsor now for over a decade. Throughout its many years, thanks to the creativity, intelligence and hard work of enterprising student organizers from the Hertie School, the EPPC has expanded notably both in terms of scope and ambition.

While the EPPC has evolved significantly over the course of its existence, a major tenet remains unchanged: At its core, **EPPC is specifically designed to enable students to take charge and direct their own educational experience with regard to the public policy issues that they consider to be most important for them to study.**

The IPLI Foundation's respect for this core principle is the reason why the IPLI Foundation has sponsored the EPPC initiative since its inception. The EPPC is a truly unique endeavor. With every annual iteration, IPLI Foundation places the funding for EPPC in the hands of student organizers and entrusts to them all aspects of the project, from conceptualization to implementation. IPLI Foundation's objective is to create an environment of complete independence, wherein students are empowered to take charge and to collectively share the responsibility for the execution of EPPC. Within this context, students gain invaluable applied project management experience and confidence in their capabilities, which they can carry onward into their future professional lives.

It would be an understatement to say that 2020 has been an exceptional year. The challenges that we face in Europe (and globally) due to COVID-19 are historic. Our societies have been fundamentally altered in permanent ways, although where this will ultimately lead is not yet clear. In light of these ongoing transformations, the conference theme for EPPC 2020 - **Our Climate, our future** - appears extraordinarily prescient. In the position paper for EPPC 2020 (authored in 2019), a simple phrase highlights this fact: **"The way our society eats, moves and produces is not sustainable."** As the COVID-19 crisis continues, revealing the fragility of our global systems, these words ring especially true. Never before has the implication and vision of future policy-makers been so urgent. The in-person conference may have been cancelled this year, but the need for engagement via student-led initiatives like EPPC is more vital than ever.

On behalf of the IPLI Foundation, it is my honor to salute the organizers of EPPC 2020 and all those who will carry the EPPC tradition into the future.

Respectfully,

Timothy Reno



Timothy Reno

Timothy Reno is the director of the IPLI Foundation, an organization based in Brussels which is dedicated to the support of academic and applied policy research within the fields of human security and development. Within IPLI, he is responsible for the strategic development of IPLI's activities internationally. Timothy is a founder of the European Public Policy Conference (EPPC).

Dear all,

We are proud to present you with what is perhaps the most tangible product of the work we did over the course of half a year. In September 2019, we came together with an enthusiastic group of students to partake in an exciting opportunity: fully running an international conference on a policy topic of our choice.

The European Public Policy Conference is unique in the freedom it gave us, a group of Master students at the Hertie School in Berlin, to bring together experts from academia, politics and other fields to discuss and shape current and future policies. The topic, the location, the agenda, even the structure and size of the team, were all open questions when we embarked on this adventure.

Over the months following, we saw our conference take shape. We decided on the topic of climate policy, the city of Vilnius, and we deviated from previous conferences by making the journey to the conference location part of our concept. Our outstanding team scouted speakers, formed a partnership and arranged a location, designed a communication strategy and website, and even had fun doing all of this and more.

The Covid-19 pandemic unfortunately prevented us from seeing our ideas and efforts materialize but we are very proud, nevertheless. The European Public Policy Conference 2020 might not have taken place but, for our team, EPPC2020 somehow did. In this report, we would like to showcase the hard work that our team has put in and the conference we envisioned.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Timothy Reno for his complete confidence in us, IPLI for giving us this opportunity in the first place, and Patrick and Jenni from the Hertie School for their support throughout the process. We want to acknowledge the wonderful cooperation with Vilnius University who generously offered to host the EPPC this year. Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who booked a bus ticket or registered to attend.

We look back on a wonderful and educational experience and forward to seeing EPPC teams in the upcoming years take on this challenge. Hopefully they will be more fortunate than we were, and we can attend the conferences they organize.

On behalf of the EPPC2020 Team,
Jan(a)

Jan Panhuysen & Jana Elbrecht

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Panhuysen' written in a cursive, flowing style. The signature on the right is 'JMA' written in a more stylized, blocky cursive.



The conference (as planned...)

As we started building this conference from scratch, we had to make substantive decisions on topic, location, program, and more. We took all of these decisions together as a team, usually through individual members pitching ideas, followed by a majority vote. The following will outline the decisions that shaped the conference as it was ultimately meant to take place.

CHOOSING A TOPIC

The European Public Policy Conference has a history of creating a platform for discussion between leaders, policy makers, experts and students on innovative solutions on the future of policymaking in the field of pressing issues. Given its omnipresence in 2019, we decided to focus on a topic beyond our borders, our cultural distinctions and our economies. A topic of truly global concern and relevance to everyone – Climate Change.

And while the climate crisis is one of the most complex and all-embracing challenges humankind will have to face in the 21st century, we perceive 2019 to have marked a turning point. As our society wakes up to the challenges of a changing climate, movements and protests are arising all around the world and sustainability has become a fundamental part of the public debate. According to a 2019 study from the European Commission, 93% of

Europeans think that climate change is a serious problem. And indeed, according to recent studies, we only have 12 years left to prevent the climate catastrophe. To our

“Climate change was clearly the most obvious topic for the conference considering the current world we live in. The discourse around climate is one of the most controversial and pressing; a topic on which there is still much to do and much to fight for.” - Eleonora Volpe

understanding, in this scenario, the role of policy makers is ever more crucial. Immediate, effective, and coordinated solutions are required to mitigate side effects and adapt to future conditions. In order to ensure future governance and collaboration among private and public actors, policy

makers must consider different stakeholders' perspectives in their approach towards sustainable transitions to create comprehensive recommendations for future policy-making.

Understanding these topics to be both so pressing and so intricate, we officially decided on climate policy as the theme for our conference. While the tagline "Staying cool while the earth is heating - Taking action on climate change" was on the table, we ultimately decided to go with the more academically sound version, "Our Climate, our future – Exploring policy responses to climate change" In order to allow for this topic to be covered as broadly and extensively as needed, we decided to guide our conference by three main subtopics. Each of which would allow us to invite dedicated speakers and offer precise workshops.

The way our society eats, moves and produces is not sustainable, but such a comprehensive issue makes potential solutions complex. Questions like "How can we produce

"To organize our conference on a topic so emblematic of our generation for us meant wanting to further stimulate and promote the extremely important debate revolving around climate change." - Jana Elbrecht

the energy we need without burning fossil fuels?" or "How can we feed a growing population without destroying the environment?" arise. Aiming to examine how we must transform our production and consumption model in order to make it environmentally sustainable, our first topic was therefore "Energy, Goods and Food".

We also felt it was vital to acknowledge that warmer temperatures and extreme weather conditions will have the biggest impact on the most vulnerable parts of the population. In the next few years, minorities, women and low-income households are likely to experience a big increase in social inequality. Hence, it is important to elaborate on how to mitigate the effects of climate change on social justice. Our second topic therefore was "Inequalities".

Lastly, the extraordinary nature of the climate change issue is particularly derived from its global scale. Effective solutions can only come from international cooperative actions, but conflicting interests make them difficult to reach. At the same time, climate change is posing more security challenges, thereby affecting international relations. In a scenario of increased instability, the question arises how states can cooperate to achieve common environmental goals. This led us to the choice of our final subtopic "International Politics".

AND A LOCATION

Each year, the European Public Policy Conference is held in a new European city. With the conference having built quite a history by now, the number of choices is reduced each year. This challenged us to look beyond the obvious and find a location that suited our topic and team. After having decided on a topic, choosing a suitable location was next. By again making use of our decision making process, we ended up with a few but impressive choices of location-pitches that would suit our conference.

"Vilnius was the perfect location for this year's conference because it offers a vibrant and young environment and matched with its focus on sustainability this year's topic."

For the record, those included Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Lisbon and Vilnius.

Our decision was based on four main criteria: (1) The city's positioning towards climate change and sustainability, (2) potential local cooperation partners, (3) overall expenses to be expected, as well as (4) logistics including the means of transport and its carbon footprint.

Together with the restriction that the location could not have been the site of an EPPC before, this posed quite the challenge. A city like Lisbon, while notably undertaking impressive efforts to become greener, would require all Berlin-based attendants to fly across Europe to discuss climate policy. In the end we found the perfect, accessible and environmentally progressive host city: Vilnius.

With a total population of 554,000, Lithuania was the first Baltic state to part from the Soviet Union, becoming independent in 1991. Its capital, Vilnius, currently has one

"When looking for local partnerships, universities should be the number one starting point. Given their usually available spaces for larger events, their local reach and the potential of forming long term partnerships on an academic level are simply ideal for a student-run conference like EPPC"
- Jan Panhuysen

of the highest quality-of-life ratings among new EU member states and boasts the fastest internet connection in the world. Besides that, with its 22 universities and 23 colleges, Vilnius has one of the most multilingual populations in the EU and is internationally recognized as one of the most

knowledge-intensive and innovative cities. In this regard, Vilnius was named by The New York Times as one of the Top 10 smart and well-managed cities of the world.

Suggesting a perfect fit with our chosen topic, Vilnius focuses on sustainable tourism and offers extremely cheap public transport, which we could have offered to all participants and speakers for only 8€ for 72h.

As per local cooperation partners, Vilnius offers a wide range of academic institutions as well as local tourism companies. Among many, those include the Vilnius University, the City Hall and Vilnius Convention.

When looking for local cooperation, we mainly focussed on their ability of hosting our conference, connecting us with other locals or simply taking part in the conference themselves. In this regard, Vilnius University turned out to be a tremendous partner. After getting in touch with the director of the Political Science Division, they offered to host our conference, connect us with local caterers and promote the conference among its own student body and faculty.

THE BUS

The innovation of this year's conference that we are perhaps proudest of is expanding our understanding of what a conference is and when it begins. Given that the European Public Policy Conference has a very strong connection to the Hertie School, many of its participants each year travel from Berlin to whichever European city the team has selected, usually individually.

“I became a part of the EPPC team, as I believe that the conference is a unique opportunity - free of any constraints you get to choose a topic you're passionate about and connect to students from another European city. Discussing solutions to the climate crisis within the framework of the EPPC is important as the conference offers a platform for students to share and discuss their ideas with today's policymakers and academics.” - Clara Mewes

This year, we decided to charter a bus that would bring up to 60 of our team, speakers, and attendees from Berlin to Vilnius.

Originally, the idea was grounded in the theme Our Climate, Our Future. We realized that if we were going to talk about the urgency of making structural changes in the face of

the climate crisis, we would have to walk the walk, not just let our speakers talk the talk. We deliberately chose a city that is relatively easy to reach by bus or train in order to reduce the number of people traveling with emission-heavy airplanes. Travelling by bus reduces carbon emissions per passenger-kilometer by about eight times when compared to travelling by airplane. ([Umweltbundesamt](#))

Rather than encouraging people to individually take a more climate friendly type of transport, we realized that we could normalize the idea of travelling to the conference by bus, by making the journey part of the conference. Travelling by bus was an especially attractive option for students since we decided to subsidize the tickets. Participants could travel return with us for only 40 euros, less than any other mode of transport.

Although it started as an environmental concern, the bus journey also served as an inherent part of the conference. We envisioned the European Public Policy Conference 2020 as a forum for people to meet and exchange ideas. Now, that exchange could already start in Berlin.

We sold tickets at the Hertie School and within 1.5 weeks, all tickets were sold out. We had reserved spots for the team and for three speakers/workshop leaders who had indicated they would like to travel with us.



✕

You are from Berlin and want to travel with style and economically friendly? Awesome - join our bus-ride!

The bus will leave Berlin on Thursday, 26. March at approximately 6pm. We will then arrive to Vilnius on Friday and enjoy two days of Vilnius and Conference. On Sunday, somewhat after breakfast, we will get back on our bus and return to Berlin.

Sounds like a plan? Cool! You only need to do two things:

1. Get a **ticket for 40€**
2. Sign our Code of Conduct

Tickets will be **sold daily @Hertie's Cafeteria between 12:00 and 14:00 o'clock from Monday, 17. February 2020 - Friday, 28. February 2020.**

Be quick: Only a limited amount of seats available.

PS: If you can't manage to physically pick up your ticket, just feel free to get in touch with us. We'll find a way.

The Agenda

FRIDAY Bustrip, Culture and Opening

~ 10:00 am	Arrival in Vilnius
12:00 - 02:30 pm	Free Walking Tour
04:00 - 05:00 pm	Doors open
05:00 - 05:30 pm	Opening of the Conference
05:30 - 06:30 pm	Opening Keynote
06:30 - 10:00 pm	Dinner, Drinks and Get together

SATURDAY The Conference

09:00 - 10:00 am	Coffee and Opening of the Day
10:00 - 11:15 am	Panel I Energy Transition
11:15 - 11:40 am	Open discussion and Coffee break
11:45 - 01:00 pm	Panel II Climate Change, Security and Migration
01:00 - 02:00 pm	Lunch Break
02:00 - 02:30 pm	Afternoon Keynote
02:30 - 03:15 pm	Workshop Session I & Thesis Café
03:15 - 03:30 pm	Coffee break
03:30 - 04:15 pm	Workshop Session II & Thesis Café
04:15 - 04:45 pm	Coffee break
04:45 - 06:00 pm	Panel III Climate Change & Inequalities in Health
06:00 - 06:30 pm	Key take-aways of the day and further proceedings

When looking at the width and depth of the chosen topics, it immediately became apparent to us that solely focusing on keynote speeches and frontal lecture-style talks would not suffice. We ultimately wanted this conference to be as interactive, thoughtprovoking and engaging as possible and to engage with our host city of Vilnius. Hence, we decided to kick off the event with a voluntary and free walking tour to serve as an ice breaker in getting to know each other as well as the city.

To substantively elaborate on our 1.5 day conference, the following serves as a summary of the intended keynotes, workshops and Agenda as such.

The **Opening Keynote** was to be given by Lucas Simons, founder of Utz Certified (currently the largest certification program for sustainable coffee, cocoa and other agricultural commodities) and author of the book *Changing the Food Game – Market Transformation strategies for sustainable agriculture*. Through his work he has been active for almost 20 years in over 16 different sectors and markets and he is the trusted advisor of many of the top Trade and Industry in Food and Agriculture, Governments, NGOs and leading International Organizations like World Bank, IFC, FAO.

Because of his diverse professional background and work within the first theme of our conference (Energy, Goods, and Food), Mr Simons' talk would have been a thought provoking opening to our conversation, starting from his own motto, "If you want a different outcome, you have to change the rules of the Game".

Saturday, our full conference day, would have presented the participants with a panel discussion on each of our subtopics. The **First Panel**, on energy transition, would have consisted of energy transition experts Felix Matthes from the Öko Institut and Alexander Reitzenstein from E3G. The panel was to be moderated by another renewable energy expert from IKEM. These three experts would have discussed the biggest challenges of the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies and how policy can be leveraged to make this transition happen swiftly.

The EU 2050 strategy and advocacy would have marked the topic of the **Afternoon Keynote**. This talk was to be given by Cillian Totterdell, Senior Account Manager at FleishmanHillard, a public affairs consultancy in Brussels working on EU regulation. He specialises in climate, energy and transport policy, with a special focus on renewable energy. Cillian works with clients from a range of sectors,

including renewable energy producers and major energy consumers, coordinating advocacy campaigns across the spectrum of the EU's sustainability framework and would have given an interesting insight into the shaping of climate policy at the level of the European Union.

The **Second Panel** on Climate Change and International Politics would have been moderated by Kilian Raiser, a PhD candidate at the Hertie School working on climate-induced migration. The expected panelists were Dr. Louise van Schaik and Dr. Babak Rezaeedyakenari.

Dr. Van Schaik is part of the Clingendael Institute, where she coordinates research in the field of climate change and sustainable development. In her research she has extensively analysed the EU's performance in multilateral bodies, including in the fields of climate change, health, and food standards.

Dr. Rezaeedyakenari is an assistant professor of International Relations at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University in The Netherlands, where he focuses on political violence and conflict resolution. As part of his research, he has studied the environmental causes of violent conflict.

The **Last Panel** would have been on the topic of Climate Security and Migration. Members of the panel were to include Dr. Ilona Otto, Dr. Elise Remling, Tobias von Lossow and our Launch Event speaker Juan Auz.

Dr. Ilona Otto works with Potsdam Institute on Climate Impact Research, where she focuses on environmental inequalities and human agency, social tipping and non-linear changes in socio-economic systems, and cascading climate risks.

Dr. Elise Remling is a Researcher in the Climate Change and Risk Programme of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Her work focuses on how climate and environmental change impact human security, and on how international organizations are thinking about and responding to climate-related security risks. Her research has centred particularly on the process of adaptation to climate change at different levels of governance.

Tobias von Lossow is a research fellow at the Clingendael Institute. His areas of expertise include water conflicts and hydro-politics in transboundary river basins, as for example the Euphrates and Tigris, the Nile or the Congo. He is also working on the role of water in domestic and foreign policy making and on the links between water resource management and socio-economic development. Droughts and floods will become an important cause for migration with the ongoing climate crisis.

To challenge participants of the conference to engage

more actively with the topics at hand, the keynotes and panel were to be complemented with rounds of **Workshops**. Topics of the workshops were: Climate, business and lobbying, led by Cillian Totterdell; Founding a sustainable business by the founders of Supercoop; Changing the Food Game by Lucas Simons; and Climate & SDGs by Dr. Serdar Türkeli of United Nations University.

In addition to these expert-led workshops, participants could choose to participate in the **Thesis Café** during one of the two workshop rounds. Here, Master or PhD students from either the Hertie School or Vilnius University who were writing their thesis on a topic relevant to our theme, could take the opportunity to present their initial findings and argument and to workshop it with other students and experts. The idea was very much for these pieces of research to be unfinished, to give participants the opportunity to learn from each other and provide constructive feedback.

Thesis Café



Are you a PhD or Master student working on a paper closely related to the topics of our conference? That's great - Join this year's "Thesis Café"!

Besides Workshops and Panels, we will offer a so-called Thesis Café, which will give you the chance to introduce, share and discuss the PhD or Master Thesis you're currently working on in a 45min session. The session will be similar to a paper presentation where you can engage with a small group of students and experts to receive constructive feedback, engage in discussions and spark interest for your topic.

If you would like to participate, a few criteria need to be fulfilled :

- You need to be enrolled at the Hertie-School or Vilnius University
- Your paper needs to be an unfinished & unpublished thesis
- The topic should be related to: Energy, goods and consumption; Inequality or International Politics

This sounds like you? Great! Simply send us an Email with

- A short motivation (150 words) explaining why your topic is relevant for the conference.
- An abstract of your working paper/master thesis (250 words).

to academic@epgc.hertie-school.org.



The Launch...

On Friday 14 February, we officially launched our conference with an event.

We held a presentation in the Forum of the Hertie School to get students interested to join us for the event in March, to share the practical details, and to officially open registrations.

To spark some interest in and discussion around our theme, we invited a speaker to give a short keynote before the presentation. Juan Auz Ecuadorian attorney and PhD candidate at the Hertie School spoke about the intersection of environmental law and human rights, which is also the topic of his doctorate. In his talk, he touched on some alarming consequences of the climate crisis as well as approaches to addressing these issues in ways that protect or even promote human

rights. It was a perfect illustration of the importance of talking about climate policy across policy sectors. From his talk and the questions that followed, it was an easy bridge to build to why we chose 'inequalities' and 'international relations' as two of our subthemes.

We presented our concept for the 2020 Conference: the themes, the speakers, the location, and the bus journey. After both of these presentations and all of the pizza were finished, there was an excited atmosphere in the room. We officially opened registrations to the conference that evening and they immediately started flowing in. When we started selling bus tickets on the following Monday, we saw many of the same faces.

Although we of course expected this Launch Event to be only a small taste

of what our Conference would be, we are happy to have seen at least this small event and the enthusiasm it created.



and Corona.

When reflecting on the year 2020, it might be appropriate to speak of the Covid-19 crises. Everyone was faced with a disruption of plans, whether big or small. Although admittedly piling in comparison to the global health and economic consequences of the pandemic, this year's EPPC Team, too, was faced with a Covid-crisis of its own. A mere three weeks before the conference was supposed to take place, we were informed by the school that it would be impossible to hold our event in Vilnius.

In the following week, we held a meeting at least once a day. In this time of incredible uncertainty, each back-up plan turned into wishful thinking within the span of 24 hours. Every meeting brought a new discussion on what our realistic options were and how we should proceed. As it happened, our team had many Italian members who, hearing the messages from home, tampered our optimism. Still we tried to design a conference within the limits that we suddenly found ourselves in.

We initially aimed to move the conference to the Hertie School in Berlin, hoping to still invite speakers from across Europe. Not long after, we decided to limit our speakers and audience to those who were already in Berlin, scrambling to put together a one-day program to replace the weekend we had all been working on for months.

On 10 March, after speaking to President of the Hertie School Henrik Enderlein, we officially decided to cancel the event, which was planned for 27 to 29 March. On 11 March, the Hertie School closed its facilities and stayed fully online until the Summer.

We are well aware that many events that were planned to take place this year, have been moved online. We decided against doing so. Much of what we had planned was about bringing people together to exchange ideas. We believed that holding the conference online – especially when transitioning on such short notice – would not do justice to the topic, the speakers, and the participants. We were also hopeful that by the Summer or Fall the crisis would have subsided and we would be able to go along with our original plan.

As many citizens and even governments have, we turned out to have underestimated the persistence of this pandemic and the longevity of restrictions needed to restrain it. We were unfortunately not able to hold the European Public Policy Conference 2020 at a later date.

If nothing else, the process of organizing this conference and grappling with the immediacy of the Covid-19 crisis has been a unique learning experience for us as a team. It is not often that, as a policy student, you are confronted with a real-life crisis situation, in which you have to grapple with alternative future scenarios, design contingency plans, and take decisions in a constantly shifting playing field. We are grateful to have had this experience, although hopeful that for next year's team it will be a different one.

“The thing I was looking forward to the most about the EPPC was the unique opportunity to bring together and meet high level professionals and experts from different sectors and countries, creating incredibly enriching discussions!” - Giulia Varaschin



The Team

Co-Chairs

Jana Elbrecht

Jan Panhuysen

General Secretary

Natasha Kular

Treasury

Eleonora Volpe

Siddharth Nandan

Academics

Giulia Varaschin

Zack Nhan

Louise Mollenhauer

Ayuska Anjiv

Francesco Bono

Franz Ferdinand Willeit

Logistics & Communications

Clara Mewes

Abhipsha Mahapatro

Eleanor Batilliet

Laetitia Stuijt

Vittoria Beatrice Giovina



Past conferenes

EPPC 2019 - European Public Policy Conference in Madrid
Syncing Societies: Exploring the Intersections of Tech & Policy

EPPC 2018 - European Public Policy Conference in Sofia
Borders in Transition: Creating, Removing, Reimagining

EPPC 2017 - European Public Policy Conference in Prague
Democracy in the Digital Age

EPPC 2016 - European Public Policy Conference in Ljubljana
Take the Next Exit? EU Policy Directions Between Integration and Fragmentation

EPPC 2015 - European Public Policy Conference in Warsaw
From Russia with Love? Eastern Europe Between Integration, Cooperation & Confrontation

EPPC 2014 - European Public Policy Conference in Rome
Left Behind? New Realities for European Youth.

EPPC 2013 - European Public Policy Conference in Paris
Breaking the Cycle - Rethinking Poverty in the Developed World

EPPC 2011 - European Public Policy Conference in Budapest
Migration in Europe - Challenges and Opportunities

