

Green Deal Facebook Narratives in Poland

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Key takeaways

- 56% of all interactions during the monitoring period were generated by 3 posts from Polish political parties and politicians.
- Most of the monitored posts were neutral (35) or supportive (31) about the Green Deal topic. However, 34 posts were negatively related to the issue.
- Green Deal in the Facebook dimension of the Polish information space was discussed directly in the context of EU or national policy and legal regulations, not in the context of climate change.
- The negative narratives about the Green Deal have emerged so far: Poland should move away from the EU energy policy and focus on the extraction of its own coal; Polish farmers will lose on the introduction of the Green Deal in Poland.

Center for Propaganda and Disinformation Analysis (CAPD), in partnership with the International Republican Institute's Beacon Project, tracked Polish language Facebook regarding the European Green Deal (Polish: Europejski Zielony Ład) using CrowdTangle.

The top 100 most interacted with Facebook posts between 20 April and 20 May 2022 were examined to identify malign narratives and sources as well as better understanding the general debate about the Green Deal legislation in the Polish information space. This monitoring is a part of a [larger IRI initiative](#) being implemented simultaneously in five EU countries, including Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Summary

Monitored Facebook posts were published by 83 unique accounts, with 13,986 interactions in total. However, the 3 posts with the highest number of interactions generated 56% of all interactions during this time period – 7,796 interactions. 3 posts had more than 1,000 interactions, 16 posts – more than 100 interactions, 71 posts – between 10 and 100 interactions and 10 posts – less than 10 interactions.

The first two posts contain a fragment of the speech of Joachim Brudziński, MEP of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS - Law and Justice) during the debate on Poland in the European Parliament. The first was published by the official PiS account, the second directly by Joachim Brudziński. He accuses the European Union of supporting Russia in order to gain benefits from the purchase of Russian gas and business cooperation with that country. He states that “your Green Deal is to be powered by Russian gas”. These words were quoted in 3 other monitored posts.

The third post was published by Robert Winnicki - a Polish politician and one of the leaders of Konfederacja (Confederation) - a right-wing and eurosceptic political party, registered before the 2019 European Parliament elections under the name Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość (Confederation Liberty and Independence). The post describes Konfederacja's proposal for energy independence, presents the “Cheap Coal” bill (Polish: “Tani węgiel”) and introduced the hashtag #TaniWęgiel. Konfederacja's proposals for energy sovereignty include: abandoning the EU climate policy, including the Climate and Energy Package, the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package; focusing mainly on the extraction of own coal; diversification of oil supplies and commencement of the process of negotiating supplies mainly from Iran, Norway, the USA, Canada and Kazakhstan. Posts with the same content were published a total of 7 times by local Konfederacja accounts associated with Ruch Narodowy (National Movement) - nationalist, conservative, national-Catholic and eurosceptic political party - and politicians associated with both Konfederacja and Ruch Narodowy. It looks like a coordinated campaign to promote the “Cheap Coal” bill.

All Facebook posts were manually coded based on the overall context of the post, using one of a predefined structure of eight categories. Six of eight predetermined context tags (politics, military, economy, infrastructure, social, information, health and environment) with the following results: “politics” – 29 posts, “economy” – 20, “infrastructure” – 7, “social” – 1, “information” – 33, “environment” – 10. None of the posts referred to “military” or “health” categories.

Most of the monitored posts were neutral (35) or supportive (31) about the Green Deal topic. However, 34 posts were negatively related to the issue. At the same time, only 8 posts in this period referred more broadly to the topic of climate change. This means that in the Facebook dimension of the Polish information space, Green Deal is discussed directly in the context of EU or national policy and legal regulations, not in the context of climate change.

During the monitoring, narratives focused on the following topics were identified: local initiatives, both urban and rural, related to the Green Deal (35 posts), challenges Polish farmers and agriculture face in the context of the Green Deal (24), war in Ukraine and its impact on the Green Deal (21 posts) and Polish coal industry (11). Among the monitored posts, there were 2 in which the term “energy poverty” was used. Both published by accounts associated with Ruch Narodowy. In connection with the promotion of the draft of the “Cheap Coal” bill, this is a slogan that in the coming months may be used to push through ideas of Konfederacja in the area of energy independence of Poland and Poles. Konfederacja blames the Polish government's energy policy for the increase in energy prices in Poland and its impact on energy bills.

Monitored posts were also reviewed and manually coded depending on the attitude towards the EU, Russia, USA, China (supportive, neutral or opposing attitude). In total 80 posts mentioned the EU, 33 in a neutral manner and 13 in a supportive manner. In total 21 out of 34 posts mentioning Russia had an opposing attitude towards Russia. The following correlation was found. Every time a post included a message negative towards the Green Deal (34), the post also expressed antipathy towards the EU (34). It is worth emphasizing that there were only 9 posts related to the US and no posts related to China in the monitored period.

Going forward, we will continue to monitor the Polish language Facebook conversations regarding the European Green Deal for malign narratives and to better understand the broader disinformation challenge that we face.