

Climate Emergency Declarations: UK insights for the Serbian context

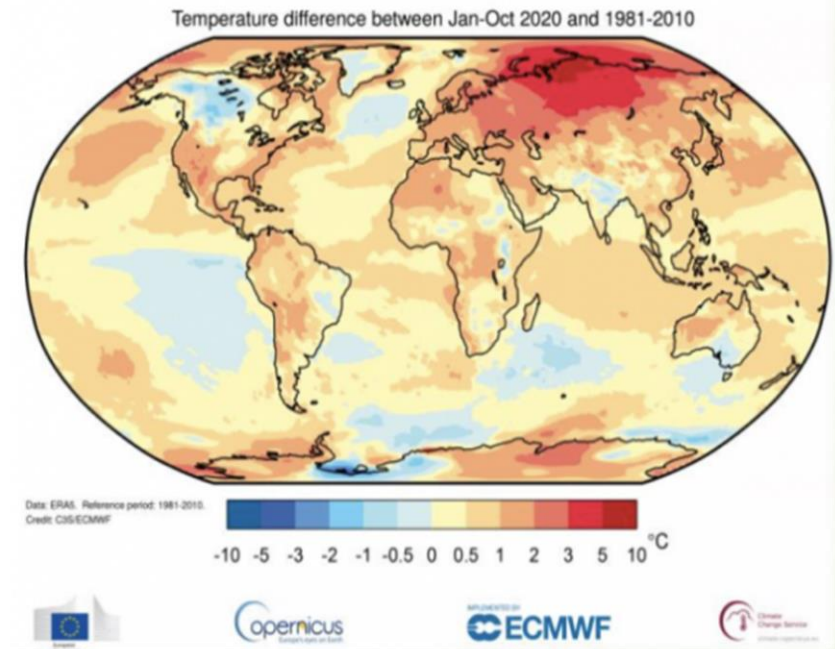


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Climate emergency

- ▶ **“Recognizing the need for an effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change on the basis of the best available scientific knowledge”** (*Preamble of the 2015 Paris Agreement*)
- ▶ **Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in CO₂ and other GHGs occur in the coming decades** (*IPCC, Climate Change 2021 The Physical Science Basis, p. 41*)
- ▶ **The 2020 UNEP report stressed that despite a short decline in CO₂ emissions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is still heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century, which is far beyond the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming to well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C** (*UNEP, Emissions Gap Report 2020*)
- ▶ **According to the World Meteorological Organization: the year 2020 was one of the three warmest on record; and, in 2020, ocean heat was at record levels** (*WMO Provisional Report on the State of the Global Climate 2020*)
- ▶ **“We commit to work towards the 2050 target of a carbon-neutral continent together with the EU through mainstreaming a strict climate policy and reforming energy and transport sectors”** (*Sofia Declaration on the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, November 2020*)

Note: climate change and air pollution are not the same thing! However, taking action to combat climate change reduces air pollution, because the extraction and burning of fossil fuels is also a source of air pollutants.



WMO, State of the Global Climate 2020 - Provisional report

International legal background to Climate Emergency Declarations – a brief overview

- ▶ **UN Framework Convention on climate change (UNFCCC)** - the parent treaty/ 197 parties to the agreement / Serbia accessed to the Convention in 2001
- ▶ **Paris Agreement** - second major subsidiary agreement /adopted on 12 December 2015, entered into force on 4 November 2016 / 191 Parties to the agreement /Serbia ratified the Paris Agreement in 2017
 - all Parties must submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) containing pledges to mitigate GHG emissions
 - Parties are to update or submit new NDCs by 2020 and every five years thereafter
- ▶ **Sofia Declaration of November 2020** - The Western Balkans region committed to working towards making Europe carbon-neutral by 2050 through mainstreaming a strict climate policy and reforming energy and transport sectors

Serbian legal and policy background to Climate Emergency Declarations - a brief overview

- ▶ **Serbian Law on Climate Change** (entered into force in March 2021)
 - The Low carbon development strategy and the Program of adaptation to climate change have to be adopted within the period of two years since the entrance into force of the Law on Climate Change (article 79)
- ▶ **Serbian Draft Integrated national energy and climate plan** (under preparation) - definition of goals for increasing energy efficiency and the share of RES in energy consumption and reducing GHG emissions by 2030
- ▶ Serbia adopted its **first NDC** in 2015 for the period 1 January 2021 - 31 December 2030 that prescribes a GHG emission reduction of 9.8 percent until 2030 compared to the base-year (1990) emissions
- ▶ Serbia has not yet submitted its **second NDC**

Climate emergency declaration (CED)

- ▶ NDCs are national climate plans that highlight climate actions, including climate related targets, policies and measures
- ▶ NDCs are the key element of the Paris Agreement
- ▶ CEDs could supplement NDCs and thus further facilitate the achievement of NDCs targets
- ▶ As there is no official definition, it could be said that the aim of CEDs is to promote an integrated national and local authority response to the climate emergency, resulting in a participatory instead of a top-down approach, which is one way to obtain community buy-in and share responsibility for climate breakdown mitigation
- ▶ CEDs are voluntary declarations!

Examples of CEDs

- ▶ CED first declared in Australia by the Darebin City Council in December 2016
- ▶ A number of authorities, in over 30 countries, have declared a climate emergency since 2017
- ▶ EU - the European Parliament adopted a resolution in November 2019 when it declared a climate and environment emergency and stressed its commitment to urgently take a concrete action to limit global warming to 1.5° C and avoid mass biodiversity loss
- ▶ In May 2019, UK Parliament approved a **non-binding motion** to declare an environment and climate emergency at the national level. Many local authorities, at varying political levels, have also declared climate emergencies
- ▶ Other countries have approved a **binding motion**, such as Malta and Argentina

Climate emergency declarations case study: North East England



Population (2019): 2.4 million

Extracts from Gateshead Council's and Northumberland County Council's CED action plans

Action	Timescale for implementing	Contributes to (themes)
Where feasible, share evidence and coordinate activities that optimise benefits to the health and well-being of residents.	Short	Community
Consider, and seek to optimise the environmental contribution of the Council's land assets through their design and management.	Medium	Nature and the Environment
Improve the council's understanding of the carbon footprint associated with its own operations, and improve reporting procedures	Short	Energy and heat, Transport
Reduce household waste and increase household recycling.	Medium	Waste
Actively promote food options with a lower carbon footprint – such as meat-free meals and locally sourced foods - through the Council's catering operations.	Short	Transport, Nature and the Environment

Climate Emergency Action Plan - GATESHEAD COUNCIL'S ROADMAP FOR CHANGE, appendix

Transport					
Project	Timescale	Budget	Funding Source	CO ₂ Impact	Other benefits
Big Northumberland Gear Change	2021	N/A	Internal Revenue	Low	Encouraging cycling use, improved air quality, public health benefits
Northumberland Line	2021-2025	Phase 1 - £124,983,989 Phase 2 - £161,917,576	Department for Transport	Low	Increased employment, education and leisure opportunities for SE Northumberland residents. GHG, air quality and traffic congestion benefits.
On-street charger pilot	2021	£133,333	OZEV	Medium	Improved understanding of delivery model for on-street charging
Car park EV charging	2020-2021	£500,000	Internal capital budget	Medium	Encourage uptake of EVs, improve air quality, reduce GHG emissions.

Gateshead Council

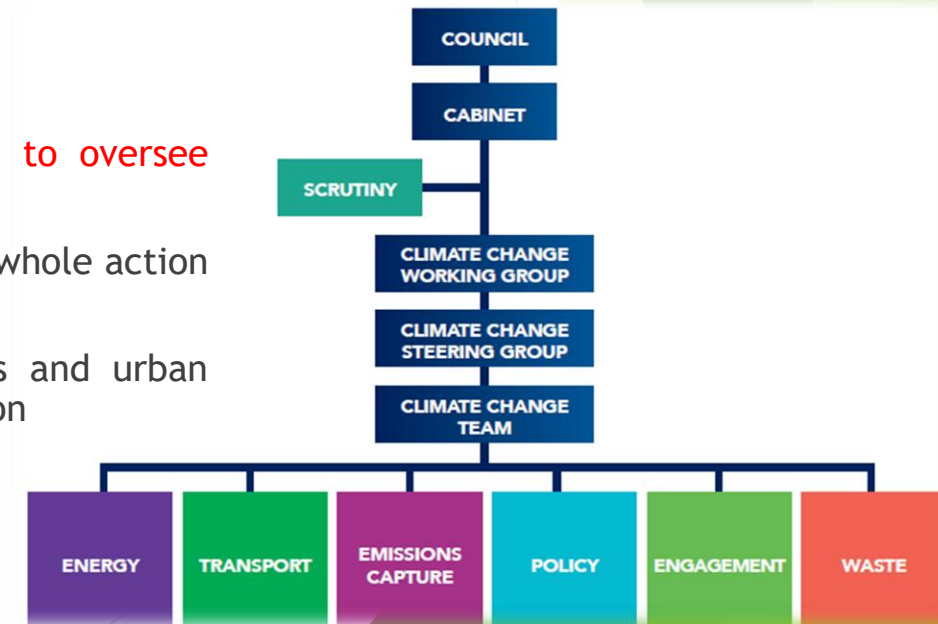


- ▶ Committed to making the Council's activities carbon neutral by 2030 / Adopted an action plan almost 2 years after declaring a CED
- ▶ There is no detailed information on how the council is reducing its emissions post 2019 / Action plan does not provide such information
- ▶ The Council is only partially going through decarbonization steps - a timescale for implementing (Short, Medium and Long term) actions is provided, but no information about the budget
- ▶ Targets are not rooted in data but rather represent a “hopeful vision”, which is problematic
- ▶ Action plan does not contain information about stakeholder roles and the governance structure required to oversee implementation of the action plan
- ▶ There are no monitoring systems defined to assess the action plan progress / Most measures are defined as “to be agreed” - hence the lack of scientific basis when it comes to target setting and attainment
- ▶ Action plan includes aspects relating to biodiversity and carbon offsetting, buildings and urban infrastructure i.e. energy efficiency, energy generation, transport and public participation)
- ▶ E.g. Transport Sector:
- ▶ The Council committed to develop the local transport plan to improve bus routes and services, park and ride facilities and cycling and walking routes to reduce car use
- ▶ Since declaring CE, the Council implemented: *the bike donation scheme; launched a Love to Ride app; a programme of Dr Bike sessions*

Northumberland County Council



- ▶ Goal to make Northumberland carbon neutral by 2030
- ▶ Both action plans **contain detailed information on CO2 emissions**, e.g. Action plan 2021-23 contained info about both Northumberland's positive and negative CO2 emissions in 2018; also showing a significant reduction of positive CO2 emissions since 2005
- ▶ By publishing two action plans covering different periods and detailed info on projects, the Council **went through decarbonization steps** allowing them to understand the most appropriate options for adoption to reach their goal
- ▶ **The targets are founded in the scientific data, are verifiable and attainable.**
- ▶ **Both action plans contain stakeholder roles and the governance structure required to oversee implementation of the action plan**
- ▶ There's a monitoring and evaluation system in place for each project as well as for the whole action plan
- ▶ Action plans included those related to biodiversity and carbon offsetting, buildings and urban infrastructure i.e. energy efficiency, energy generation, transport and public participation



Northumberland County Council – particular actions

► Energy efficiency:

- The Council accepted a government grant for up to £3.4m and approved the installation of carbon reducing technologies into 200 private and 140 council owned properties

► Renewable energy generation:

- As of declaring CED, the Council obtained permission to install a solar farm that will be suspended above the council car parking spaces, and provide around 40 percent of County Hall's electricity

► Biodiversity and carbon offsetting:

- Since adopting its first action plan, the Council launched an initiative to help residents, schools and community groups plant more trees by offering 15,000 free tree saplings to everyone based in Northumberland - *This activity triggered a positive reaction from the community*

► Public participation

- the Community Climate Champion scheme that will give residents and community groups the opportunity to educate their communities and empower them with their own community climate action plans at a local level
- the Carbon Literacy Training aims to educate staff and councillors about the scientific causes and impacts of climate change, who will later develop a climate-positive action plan for their service area

Summary: What is a good action plan?

A good CED action plan:

- is rooted in variable scientific data
- contains information on historic emissions so that targets and progress towards them can be checked
- covers all relevant areas: biodiversity and carbon offsetting, buildings and urban infrastructure i.e. energy efficiency, energy generation, transport and public participation
- provides a governance structure required to oversee the implementation of the action plan
- provides a monitoring and evaluation system for each project and the whole action plan
- is transparent
- is publicly accessible
- is easy to understand

Are Serbian local authorities ready to declare a CED?

What needs to be done?

What challenges might we face?



Are Serbian local authorities ready to declare a CED?

► **Legal framework to support this development:**

e.g. new Law on Energy Efficiency adopted in April 2021 - a good legal basis for taking climate change actions:

- local government units should adopt three-year energy efficiency programmes which could be adopted as an integral part of another planning document of a local self-government unit
- this planning document could be a CED action plan?

► **Public engagement:**

- e.g. an international TeRRIFICA project is being carried out in Serbia with the aim of recognizing and collecting citizens' knowledge and conclusions about the challenges posed by climate change (<http://belgrade.terrifica.eu/>)

► **Relevant previous actions undertaken on a local level:**

- e.g. in 2015, the City of Belgrade developed a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan and Vulnerability Assessment

Could this become part of a CED action plan?

Table 9. List of climate change adaptation measures

No.	Type of measure	Comments/explanation regarding implementation in Belgrade	Relevant locations	Implementing agencies	Priority	Time frame
Urban green structures						
1	Green infrastructure	<p>Green infrastructure refers to the network of nature friendly spaces (parks, gardens, forests, green corridors, waterways, alleys, open rural areas, systems formed with the natural processes of infiltration of rain water, waste water treatment, etc.) that protects and facilitates the maintenance of ecosystem services, or provides environmental, economic, cultural and other benefits to the quality of life of people, plants and animals, as well as their development in natural conditions. The measure includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment of existing green infrastructure features/elements and its functionality in order to identify how it needs to be improved and where there is a need to enhance connectivity; • improvement of the health of or converting an area/ecosystem back to its natural state; • creation of connectivity features, new green (urban) areas, sustainable use areas, habitats (forest area, etc.); 	City-wide, in accordance with the concept of green areas developed in the framework of the Green Regulation of Belgrade and the Plan of General Regulation of the System of Green Areas of Belgrade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Belgrade –Secretariat for housing and communal utilities; • Secretariat for the Environment; • Secretariat for Urban Planning and Construction; • Public Utility Belgrade Greenery; • Institute for urban planning of Belgrade; • Serbian Forest Company; • Other institutions; 	Very High	Medium term

What needs to be done?

► Easily accessible data:

- a need for a comprehensive database concerning CO2 emissions at the national and local level (if possible broken down according to activity/sector)
- local tree report
- local RES report

► Competent staff

- High scientific literacy so they can interpret the data and the reality on the ground, check progress in line with the policy and be able to advise when the target needs to be adjusted or what needs to be done in order to achieve it. It is NOT enough to have solely legal or policy expertise.

► Cooperation between local authorities

- Enables best practices and heightens accountability (and healthy competition)

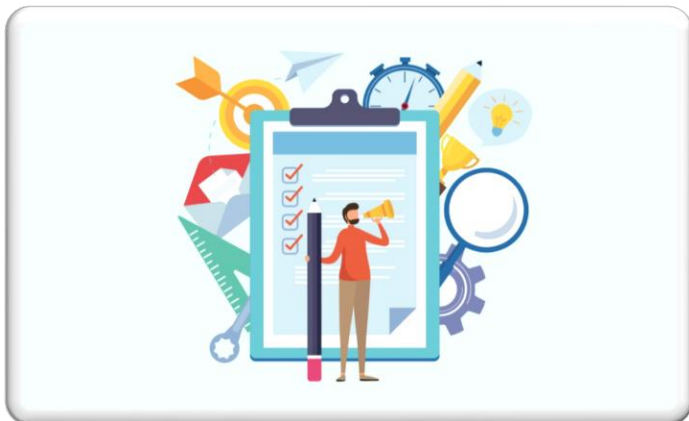
What challenges might we face?

❖ **Setting appropriate targets on a local level:**

- **Reduction of 80 percent of emissions by 2030?**
- **Carbon neutrality by 2030?**

❖ **Governance and monitoring**

❖ **Transparency**



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Thank you for your attention!

Together we can make municipalities and cities in Serbia a better place to live in 😊

