

## Pressemitteilung

adelphi research

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26.02.2019

<http://idw-online.de/de/news711138>

Forschungsergebnisse, Presstetermine  
Gesellschaft, Medien- und Kommunikationswissenschaften, Politik, Umwelt / Ökologie  
überregional



## Swing to the right in Europe threatens climate targets

**The influence of right-wing populists in the European Union and their ability to torpedo climate and energy policy has severely increased. Against this backdrop, Stella Schaller and Alexander Carius from the Berlin based thinktank adelphi analyse the 21 strongest right-wing populist parties in Europe, their election programmes and statements as well as their voting behaviour. The results of the recent study display a variety of right-wing populist parties and attitudes towards climate and energy policy, from climate change denialists to conservative environmentalists to constitutional enemies on the extreme right.**

Berlin, 26. Februar 2019. According to the Eurobarometer, right-wing and Eurosceptic parties will win more than 150 seats in the European Parliament in the 2019 European elections (around 22 percent). Right-wing populists already hold seats in seven national governments of EU member states. This increases the influence of right-wing populists in the European Union and their ability to torpedo climate and energy policy. In a recent study by the Berlin-based think tank adelphi, Stella Schaller and Alexander Carius analyse the 21 strongest right-wing populist parties in Europe, their election programmes and statements as well as their voting behaviour. The results display a variety of right-wing populist parties and attitudes towards climate and energy policy, from climate change denialists to conservative environmentalists to constitutional enemies on the extreme right.

Two out of three right-wing populist Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) regularly vote against climate and energy policy measures. In Europe's only directly elected body, the European Parliament, half of all votes against resolutions on climate and energy come from the right-wing populist party spectrum. In particular, the German AfD, French National Rally, Italian Lega, British UKIP and Dutch PVV consistently vote against climate policy bills. Seven out of 21 right-wing populist parties deny climate change, its anthropogenic causes, and negative consequences. With growing approval ratings, right-wing populist parliamentary groups are gaining more influence through parliamentary participation rights. They gain longer speaking times and financial resources, file motions and chair committees.

"With the expansion of right-wing populists in the European Parliament, mistrust of democratic institutions, multilateralism, critical civil bodies, climate science, free press and independent judiciary is growing," says Alexander Carius, co-founder and CEO of adelphi. "The danger lies in the fact that these democratic parties use populist rhetoric and right-wing argumentation to gain voting share and could establish a decisive shift to the right in Europe. We have already observed this in the migration debate. The future of European climate and energy policy will be decided upon in the democratic domain, not the right-wing periphery."

The narrative of right-wing populist parties casts climate policy as an attempt to protect the interests of the economic elite: Climate policy leads to higher energy prices and burdens low-income households and companies. The effects of climate change in Europe due to climate-related extreme weather events, on the other hand, are ignored by right-wing populists.

"The social and economic effects of climate policy measures must be addressed and communicated much more intentionally. Unilateral climate policy is ammunition for right-wing populist agitation," says Stella Schaller, project manager at adelphi. "We need to tell a European success story of climate policy that guarantees a healthy environment and clean air, networked and affordable mobility, energy security and sustainable jobs, and puts social cohesion and development at the forefront."

The study "Convenient Truths - Mapping climate agendas of right-wing populist parties in Europe" will be presented on the 26th of February in Berlin and on the 27th of February in Brussels.

The study was initiated and financed by adelphi, as climate policy and transformative change can only take place under the conditions of a liberal democracy.

The study can be downloaded from the adelphi website.

#### ABOUT ADELPHI

adelphi is an independent think tank and the world's leading policy consultancy for climate, environment and development. Our 200 bright minds are new thinkers, designers, strategists and agenda-setters. Through scientifically sound policy analysis, interdisciplinary research and dialogue with political and social actors and decision-makers, we shape options for action for a sustainable future.

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#### Originalpublikation:

Schaller, Stella and Alexander Carius 2019: Convenient Truths. Mapping climate agendas of right-wing populist parties in Europe. Berlin: adelphi.

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FIG 3

## Where right-wing populists stand on climate change science

Denialist   Skeptical		<b>Austria</b>	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs / Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) <sup>25</sup>
		<b>Denmark</b>	Dansk Folkeparti / Danish People's Party (DF) <sup>26</sup>
		<b>Estonia</b>	Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond / Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE)
		<b>Germany</b>	Alternative für Deutschland / Alternative for Germany (AfD)
		<b>Great Britain</b>	United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP)
		<b>Netherlands</b>	Partij voor de Vrijheid / Party for Freedom (PVV)
		<b>Sweden</b>	Sverigedemokraterna / Sweden Democrats (SD)
Disengaged   Cautious		<b>Czech Republic</b>	Svoboda a přímá demokracie – Tomio Okamura / Freedom and Direct Democracy (SPD)
		<b>France</b>	National Rally (former National Front) (RN)
		<b>Greece</b>	Chrysi Avgi / Golden Dawn (XA)
		<b>Italy</b>	Lega Nord (Lega)
		<b>Lithuania</b>	Tvarka ir teisingumas / Order and Justice (TT)
		<b>Norway</b>	Progress Party (PP)
		<b>Belgium</b>	Vlaams Belang / Flemish Interest (VB)
		<b>Bulgaria</b>	Bulgarsko Natsionalno Dvizhenie / Bulgarian National Movement (VMRO)
		<b>Poland</b>	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość / Law and Justice (PiS)
		<b>Slovakia</b>	Slovenská národná strana / Slovak National Party (SNS)
		<b>Switzerland</b>	Schweizerische Volkspartei / Swiss People's Party (SVP)
Affirmative		<b>Finland</b>	Perussuomalaiset / Finns Party (PS)
		<b>Hungary</b>	Fidesz
		<b>Latvia</b>	Nacionālā Apvienība / National Alliance (NA)

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