

Press Release

Climate Goals under Pressure – European Employees call for Acceleration, not Hesitation, in Industrial Transformation

Essen, 11 December 2025

The outcomes of COP30 highlight a grim reality: global climate ambitions are losing momentum. This makes Europe's commitment to driving the transition to a climate-neutral industry more critical than ever. A new study by the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics (WCGE), in partnership with the E.ON Foundation, reveals that employees in Germany, France, and Poland strongly support the shift – and expect policymakers to deliver a reliable and socially fair transition.

Yesterday in Brussels, these findings took center stage at the event ['Trust or Bust: will Net-Zero Industries Thrive in Europe?'](#) in the frame of E.ON's "Energy Playhouse". Leading voices such as Kurt Vandenberghe (Director-General DG CLIMA, European Commission), Leonhard Birnbaum (CEO E.ON) as well as Judith Kirton-Darling (General Secretary, industriALL), together with other key representatives, discussed how to unlock investment, secure affordable energy, and scale up clean technologies – while ensuring fairness remains at the heart of the transition.

The study exposes a strikingly consistent picture across national borders: Despite differing economic conditions, there is broad public backing for the industrial energy transition. Support is strongest where change is seen as an opportunity. Those who feel secure in their jobs are more willing to engage. Those who feel left behind need targeted support.

Key findings from the representative survey of employees in Germany, France, and Poland include:

- **Strong support for transformation:**
A clear majority in all three countries reject slowing down the shift to climate-neutral industry – 80% in Germany, 86% in France, and 83% in Poland. In fact, many want to speed things up: 51% in France, 49% in Germany, and 43% in Poland.
- **Economic outlook matters:**
The more positively people view their job prospects during the transition, the more willing they are to actively participate. In Germany, 87% of those with very positive expectations are ready to engage – compared to just 5% with very negative expectations. Similar trends appear in France (85% vs. 16%) and Poland (77% vs. 8%).
- **Social divide poses a risk:**
In all three countries, people with higher social status are significantly more willing to support the transition. In Germany, 57% of those in higher social groups are engaged, compared to 38% in lower

Press Release

groups. In France, the figures are 62% vs. 44%, and in Poland, 60% vs. 40%. Those with lower status are more skeptical and need to be actively included.

- **Shared political expectations:**

Across all countries, people want governments to promote climate-friendly technologies and reduce energy costs. While Germans also emphasize cutting red tape (56%), people in France and Poland are more focused on job security (over 40% in both countries).

“The results of COP30 are sobering. This makes it all the more important for Europe to act now. The study shows that people are ready to contribute—if they are actively included in the process. Especially in times of economic uncertainty and social polarisation, the transformation must be not only ecologically necessary but also socially sustainable,” says **Stephan Muschick, Managing Director of the E.ON Foundation**.

Martin von Broock, Chairman of the WCGE, adds:

“Our data shows that despite ongoing crises, people in Europe want a climate-neutral industry—not a U-turn. At the same time, job security and economic stability are becoming increasingly important. What’s needed now are political decisions that align climate goals with competitiveness, rather than pitting them against each other.”

The detailed results of the study are available on the [E.ON Foundation website](#). Follow our social media ([LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#)) for more updates on the key takeaways from the [event](#).

About the Study

The Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics conducted the study with funding and support from the E.ON Foundation as part of the project “Driving progress forward – promoting trust in decarbonisation and digitalisation.” Over 4,300 current and future employees in Germany, France, and Poland were surveyed online between February and May 2025 in collaboration with infas quo.

About the E.ON Foundation

The E.ON Foundation is the corporate foundation of E.ON SE. Operating independently, it supports and runs projects at the intersection of energy and society. Its mission is to rethink the transition to a climate-neutral society—broadly, collaboratively, and across disciplines and sectors. Understanding public attitudes and preferences through data is central to its work. The foundation also partners with local alliances and hosts events that bring together diverse stakeholders to discuss the challenges and needs of the energy and sustainability transition. It works closely with the E.ON Fundacja in Poland and other E.ON foundations across Europe.

About the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics (WCGE)

The WCGE is a think tank focused on applied ethics in business, leadership, and economics. Since 1998, it has operated as a non-profit, independent, and non-partisan organization at the intersection of academia, business, and civil society. It addresses ethical conflicts and acts as a catalyst, mediator, advisor, and bridge-builder.

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