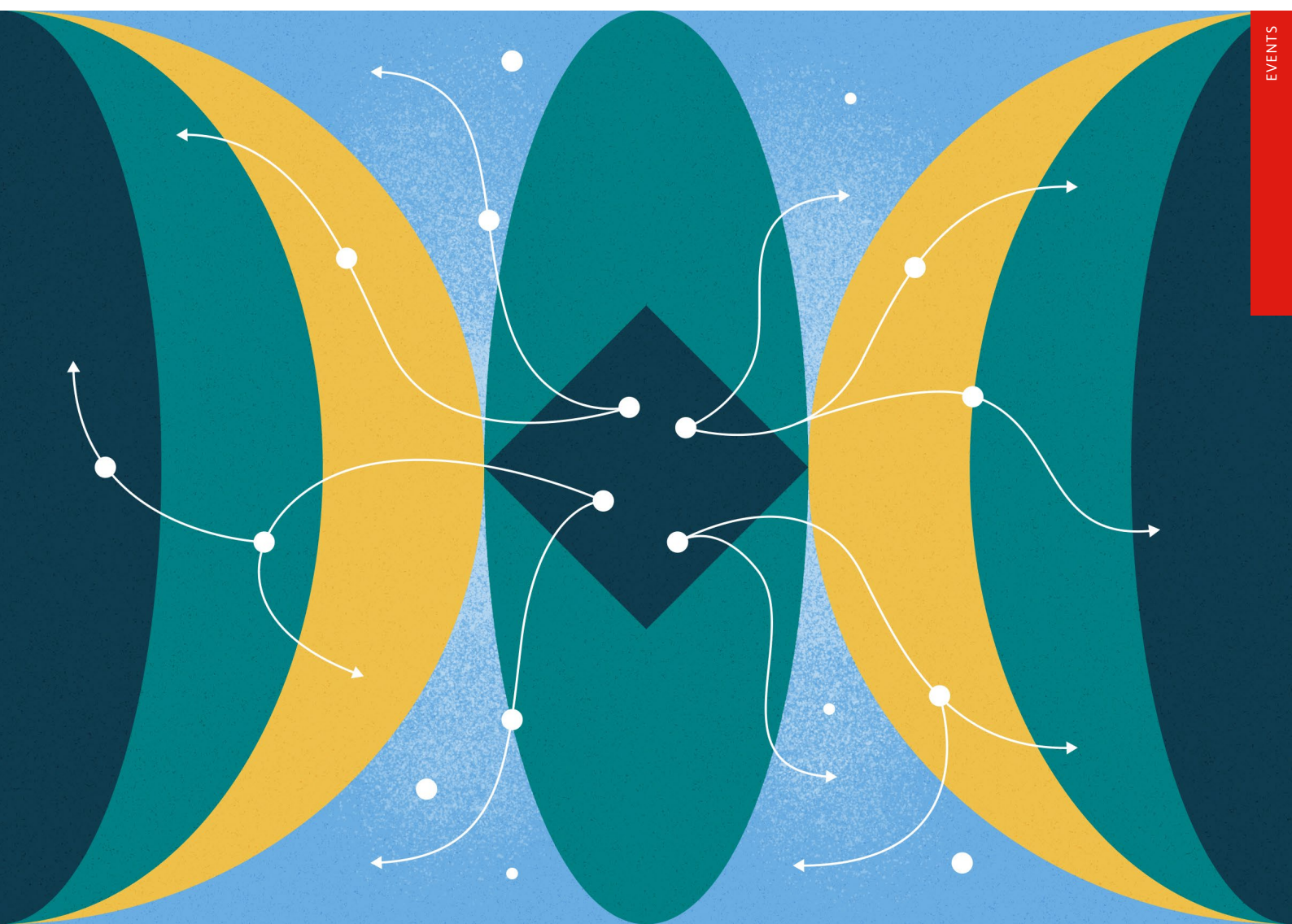


Lecture series on social-ecological transformation

2026 EDITION
13.05., 10.06. & 14.10.2026
Eurac Research



This year's lecture series, taking place on May 13th, June 10th, and October 14th, will explore key dimensions of socio-ecological transformation in the context of climate change.

Socio-ecological transformation requires continuous dialogue, meaningful participation, and strong institutional commitment across all levels of governance.

The first lecture examines climate citizens' assemblies as bottom-up initiatives within participatory democracy, highlighting their potential to foster more inclusive and democratic climate decision-making. In addition, it will investigate limitations in advancing environmental justice and challenges to ensuring that deliberative outcomes are effectively integrated into governance and institutional processes.

The second lecture investigates conflict as a driver of transformation, focusing on how tensions among actors can generate knowledge, perspectives, and more equitable solutions.

The third lecture broadens the perspective to public participation in climate governance, emphasizing both its promises and limitations across different institutional contexts.

Organization

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Lecture 1. Climate Citizens' Assemblies: Promising Innovation or Predictable Disappointment?

13.05.2026, 11.30-13.00

11.30

Welcome and introduction

- **Lydia Pedoth**, Center for Climate Change and Transformation, Eurac Research
- **Alexandra Tomaselli**, Institute for Minority Rights, Eurac Research

11:30-12:00

Doing Environmental Justice through Climate Assemblies? The case of South Tyrol

- **Francesca Rosignoli**, Senior Researcher at the Institute for Minority Rights and the Institute for Comparative Federalism, Eurac Research

This lecture examines the potential of climate assemblies to advance environmental justice, drawing on insights from the South Tyrol case study. It investigates whether the assembly's internal dimensions (deliberative design, participant selection, inclusiveness) and external dimensions (institutional responsiveness, policy uptake) align with principles of procedural environmental justice. Findings suggest that, although climate assemblies are widely celebrated as democratic innovations capable of strengthening participation in climate governance, they struggle to adequately include communities most affected by environmental burdens and to ensure that their recommendations translate into meaningful policy outcomes. Addressing self-selection in recruitment and developing stronger mechanisms for implementing assembly proposals could enhance their capacity to deliver on environmental justice.

12:00-12:30

Patterns for Unfolding the Emancipatory and Transformative Potential of Climate Citizens' Assemblies

- **Kris Krois**, Associate professor for Eco-Social Design at the Free University of Bozen–Bolzano

Climate Citizens' Assemblies (CCAs) are representative mini-publics of randomly selected people to learn, deliberate and jointly come up with proposals on climate change mitigation and adaptation. Beyond generating policy proposals and measures, CCAs prefigure radically democratic societies and are spaces for collaborative learning and potentially for collective empowerment. We are focusing on this transformative potential of CCAs by looking at them through the lens of eco-social design. We build on a two-year analytical, dialogical, and reflective process grounded on secondary research and our own empirical research on the Klimabürger-rat Südtirol and the Assemblea Ciutadana pel Clima de Catalunya. We identified both recurring problems and fruitful factors. Based on these, we designed a set of interconnected patterns. Each consisting of a description of a viable and proven solution for a recurring challenge. The patterns can be used by initiators, facilitators, and participants to enhance the transformative and emancipatory agency of CCAs.

12:30-13:00

Open discussion

Moderation: **Alexandra Tomaselli**, Institute for Minority Rights, Eurac Research

Language: English (no translation will be provided)

Type of event: Hybrid; Eurac Research, Conference Hall (click [here](#) to join)

SPEAKERS

Francesca Rosignoli (PhD 2016) is an expert in environmental justice and climate-induced migration. Her current research compares Citizens' Climate Assembly initiatives established in South Tyrol (Italy) and Vorarlberg (Austria). Her latest monograph, *Environmental Justice for Climate Refugees*, was published by Routledge in May 2022 and analyzes the legal impasse surrounding the recognition of climate refugees through the lens of environmental justice. She is also the author of *Environmental Justice* (Castelvecchi, 2020). This groundbreaking work introduces the topic of environmental justice in Italy by being the first comprehensive book written in Italian on the subject.

Kris Krois teaches and researches in the transdisciplinary and practice-based Eco-Social Design. With students, researchers and local partners he co-creates design practices, tools and structures that contribute to social-ecological transformations towards more solidary and sustainable modes of living and production. He curates the annual conference *By Design or by Disaster* and contributes to regional Climate Citizen Assembly, Climate Action, KAUZ, NEB of the Mountains, the research cluster *transform*, *Scientists for Future South Tyrol*, *Zukunftspakt Patto Futuro*, and *lab:bz*.

Lecture 2. **Conflicts: methods and practices within the context of climate change** **10.06.2026, 11.30-13.00**

11.30	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elisa Ravazzoli, Center for Climate Change and Transformation & Institute for Regional Development, Eurac Research• Federica Maino, Institute for Regional Development, Eurac Research
11:30-12:00	Conflict as a Driver of Socio-Ecological Transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chiara Braucher, University of Trento <p>This study discusses how socio-environmental conflicts are an integral part of the socio-ecological transformation process within the context of climate crisis. They represent generative spaces for knowledge of co-production and a mechanism for democratizing climate policies. In a global landscape characterized by a dramatic increase in territorial disputes linked to mitigation and adaptation processes, the lens of political ecology allows for an interpretation of conflict as an onto-epistemological laboratory. Within this space, the contestation of top-down “green” solutions fosters the emergence of situated knowledge and alternative visions of the future, challenging the ontologies underlying technological choices. Proposing conflict as a transformative space means recognizing that the response to climate change is not only a technical challenge but a political process of renegotiating relationships—essential for a transition that is not only ecological but also just.</p>
12:00-12:30	Preventing and Managing Environmental Conflict: The Experience of the Milan Chamber of Arbitration <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nicola Giudice, Milan Chamber of Arbitration <p>This lecture will present the experience developed within the Mediation Service of the Milan Chamber of Arbitration in using mediation as a tool for the negotiated management of environmental conflicts. Building on this operational practice, it will illustrate how the Chamber progressively developed a broader approach, leading to the creation of the “FacilitAmbiente” project, aimed at promoting facilitation in collective decision-making processes to prevent the emergence of environmental and social conflicts.</p> <p>These two complementary and still ongoing experiences highlight a key point: for sustainability to be effective and not merely declaratory, it requires continuous and structured dialogue among all stakeholders involved — businesses, institutions, communities, and citizens.</p>
12:30-13:00	Open discussion

Moderation: **Federica Maino**, Institute for Regional Development and **Jessica Balest** - Institute for Renewable Energie, Eurac Research
Language: English (no translation will be provided)
Type of event: Hybrid; Eurac Research, Conference Hall (click [here](#) to join)

SPEAKERS

Chiara Braucher: Graduated in Civil and Environmental Engineering, obtained a Ph.D. in Architecture and Urban Planning Engineering from the Department of Architecture at the University of Rome La Sapienza working on socio-ecological practices in post-disaster phases, with a focus on self-construction practices. She is currently pursuing her second Ph.D. at the Doctoral School in Social Sciences in Trento, studying environmental justice, extractivism, and energy transition from a geography perspective.

Nicola Giudice: Born in Alessandria in 1970 and graduated in Law from the University of Turin, he has been working in mediation since 1997, when he joined the Milan Chamber of Arbitration. There, he contributed to the establishment of the Mediation Service, which he now heads. He has developed extensive experience, managed over 18,000 mediation cases, and directly supervised more than 2,500. He is also an accredited trainer with the Ministry of Justice and collaborates with universities and institutions, including Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore. He regularly speaks at conferences and seminars in Italy and abroad. He is engaged in projects on environmental mediation and the facilitation of decision-making processes, including FacilitAmbiente. He is also the founder of Blogmediazione and the author of several publications on mediation.

Lecture 3. Bridging Levels and Voices: Public Participation in EU Climate Governance

14.10.2026, 11.30-13.00

11.30

Welcome and introduction

- **Lydia Pedoth**, Center for Climate Change and Transformation, Eurac Research
- **Mariachiara Alberton**, Institute for Comparative Federalism, Eurac Research

11:30-12:00

Public participation in EU climate governance: promise and limitations

- **Prof. Sebastian Oberthür**, Director of the Research Centre for Environment, Economy and Energy, and Professor for Environment and Sustainable Development at the Brussels School of Governance

Public participation in environmental decision-making is widely considered a core element of 'environmental democracy'. It has also been heralded as a major remedy for the EU's 'democratic deficit'. Yet, public participation can take many forms and can produce outcomes of varying quality. This talk will take stock of what we know about how public participation can contribute to addressing the societal challenge of climate change and which factors support or undermine meaningful participation. On this basis, it will review mechanisms of public participation available for EU climate governance and how to enhance their effectiveness.

12:00-12:30

Climate Pact Ambassadors: Bridging Europe's Governance Levels

- **Prof. Jale Tosun**, Professor of Political Science, University of Heidelberg

As an outcome of the European Green Deal, European Climate Pact Ambassadors (ECPAs) were established to promote climate action within their networks at both a local and an EU level. This lecture focuses on the volunteers who commit to the role of ECPA and unpacks who steps up, how they advocate for policy change and what they experience along the way. Bridging political sociology, policy analysis and multi-level governance, the lecture offers a rare insight into EU-level civic participation.

12:30-13:00

Open discussion

Moderation: **Mariachiara Alberton**, Institute for Comparative Federalism, Eurac Research

Language: English (no translation will be provided)

Type of event: online (click [here](#) to join)

SPEAKERS

Sebastian Oberthür is the Director of the Research Centre for Environment, Economy and Energy, and Professor for Environment and Sustainable Development at the Brussels School of Governance. He is also Professor of Environmental Policy and Law at the Centre for Climate Change, Energy and Environmental Law at the University of Eastern Finland. From 2005 to 2015, Sebastian Oberthür served as Academic Director of the Institute for European Studies (now part of the Brussels School of Governance). From 2006 to 2013, he was a member of the Compliance Committee of the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC. Before joining the Brussels School of Governance in 2005, Sebastian Oberthür served as a part-time assistant professor for international relations at the Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg and as senior research fellow with Ecologic, at the Institute for International and European Environmental Policy in Berlin. Sebastian Oberthür studied political science in Marburg and Berlin. He holds a PhD from the Free University Berlin.

Jale Tosun is a Professor of Political Science at the Institute of Political Science, Universität Heidelberg. After studying political and administrative sciences in Konstanz and Pavia, she earned her doctorate at the University of Konstanz on the transformation-driven change of environmental policy in Latin America and Eastern Europe. Her teaching and research focuses are on the comparative study of regulation across states in the areas of environment, energy, climate change, and sustainability, as well as distribution conflicts within the European Union and the influence of the European Union on regulation in third countries. Jale Tosun is co-editor of the journal Policy Sciences and the Journal for Environmental Policy & Environmental Law, as well as head of a working group in the COST Action INOGO.