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# Policy paper

## Climate Emergency

### as tool to achieve climate justice

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#### Executive summary

*Declaring Climate Emergency is to admit that global warming exists and that there is a need for additional measures that try and stop human-caused climate change. In less than 4 years 1,400 local governments in 28 countries have made climate emergency declarations. A new study of the declaration of Barcelona and Catalonia analyzes the processes of both cases and whether the proposed measures seek Climate Justice or not. The analysis aims to understand the development processes of the documents and how different actors of society were considered along the way.*

#### 1. Introduction

Climate change does not understand about equality or equity, it affects the least responsible and does not have enough resources to take action. Climate Emergency Declaration (CED) measures must consider climate justice as a principle as far as climate change is a rights issue. The lack of citizen's representation in Barcelona and Catalonia declarations is what makes an urgent response to consider Climate Justice for its citizens.

The research minded to analyze the framework and process of both declarations and evaluate how the measures proposed from both institutions comply with climate justice. The interviews with different actors that were present actively in the processes of declaring the emergency and deepen in the measures of the declaration has been crucial to finally conclude that the participation of diverse actors is necessary to consider the climate justice for all the ecosystem. The comprehensive case by case study of the documents mainly focuses on three points, that are economy, education and energy. On the other hand, the definition of "climate justice" has been another challenge to further measure its considerations in the measures. The analysis has allowed to construct common understanding of climate justice and evaluate the grade of its consideration in the plans of the institutions. The extent of climate justice has made big differences between this two cases as well as the diversification of actors intervention in the development.

The Barcelona CED process considered participation, what have made clear differences with the Generalitat declaration that did not. However, both cases must go beyond on the path of climate justice by participatory processes mechanisms. Through the measures of the declarations, institutions ought to build alliances worldwide to ensure the care of the whole ecosystem to achieve a sustainable model that pursues not to further endanger future generations.

## **2. RESULTS:**

### **2.1. Analysis of the CEDs of Catalonia and Barcelona**

#### **2.1.1. Analysis of the process**

##### Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya)

The process followed to prepare the Climate Emergency Declaration from the Government of Catalonia has a clear TOP-DOWN structure. It has not been a participatory process as far as only the administration and private companies have been involved. It has been such a hermetic process that during the interviews it has been possible to confirm that the climate movements did not even know of the existence of this declaration of climate emergency until the day before it came to light.

##### Barcelona city hall (Ajuntament de Barcelona)

The Barcelona City Hall has made efforts to create a participatory process that has also included the different climate movements. One can interpret that this Climate emergency Declaration has certainly been more similar in spirit to a BOTTOM - UP approach. However, there has been a lack of civil society presence throughout this process and it has not been possible to measure the real influence that the contributions of the different participants have had, since it seems that the city council has been acting as a filter when it came to applying the proposals in the CED.

#### **2.1.2. Economic aspects of the CED**

##### Economic aspects of CED regarding Catalan government

In the economic part of the CED of the Catalan Government, there is a commitment to the circular economy. Although it is a model applicable to all sectors, it does not consider society. In economic aspects, the Government is loyal to an European line, focused on industries based on the extraction of raw materials. This model is a clear evidence of the presence of the private sector during the development of the declaration and the absence of other stakeholders.

Within the confusion that the sudden CED of the Catalan Government caused, some questions arose that were answered by the government putting in evidence the little effort that existed behind its proposal. Whether it is due to a lack of political will, a search for a green washing, or because the government is not aware of what a CED entails, it seems that the Generalitat does not establish a relationship between the enlargement of Barcelona's airport or the construction of the C32 motorway and the environmental impacts and consequences that this generates on a local and global scale.

##### Economic aspects of CED regarding Barcelona city hall

It is clear that social movements have participated in the BCN declaration because it considers the relations between economy, climate and society. The economic measures proposed are based on 3 lines: the green economy, the social and solidarity economy and the climate taxation.

Although the Barcelona declaration does present more specific objectives and measures than those of the Generalitat, the paths to be followed are still not clear: concepts such as green economy, blue economy, circular economy or social economy appear. These are different paradigms that may differ between them, for example, considering a constant growth of the GDP or a degrowth point of view.

The Barcelona CED also focuses on the tourism part by insisting on sustainable tourism and tourism taxes to achieve the reduction of mass tourism. However, taking into account that the emissions of this sector are not counted separately, how will the impact of these measures on emissions be measured?

Finally, the Declaration does consider the time frame of 2030 to reduce emissions by 45% in reference to 2005 and it also marks 2050 as the year to achieve emission neutrality. However, the measures proposed do not contemplate this horizon and do not show when they should be applied.

### **2.1.3. Educational aspects of the CED**

#### Educational aspects of CED regarding Catalan government

The Generalitat document was only participatory for the private sector and some universities. The attendance of University representation made to propose voluntary arrangement for universities to ensure that students acquire basic knowledge about the climate emergency. However, the document does not define how to do so.

The educational and cultural subject in Catalan government plan is not even named. The Catalan Climate Change law mentioned in its 51,2 article *“m) from the Climate Change Law states that there is going to be a Climate Fund to promote some actions, one of them being the “Awareness, information and education on climate change”*. Unfortunately this is the only clear information about shifts in the educational field.

#### Educational aspects of CED regarding Barcelona city hall

Analyzing the Climate Emergency Declaration from Barcelona, one can miss specialists in education such as professors, psychologists, sociologists and also students. As a result, one can observe how education receives only 1.07% of the total budget, when in fact, this amount of money is expected to cover an intrinsic need in sustainability, such as awareness and learning.

### **2.1.4. Energetic aspects of the CED**

#### Energetic aspects of CED regarding Catalan government

In the CED of the Catalan government, there is exclusive mention of the development of photovoltaic energy. The declaration is very non-committal and simply states that the department of land-use and sustainability need to be contacted to form a strategy for the development of an installation program for photovoltaic energy.

Disappointingly, there is neither a mention of other forms of renewable energy production nor a mention of where the photovoltaic technology should come from, whether it will be built locally or be imported from often questionable environmental standard production processes.

### Energetic aspects of CED regarding Barcelona city hall

The Barcelona City Hall lays forth a very specific plan for photovoltaic capacity targets that should be met by 2024. Although these goals are extremely specific, they lack the same amount of consideration for other forms of clean energy and for the origin of the technology that should be used.

Additionally, the CED focuses on energetic building renovations that aim to reduce the amount of energy being consumed in the first place, which should positively effect the energy balance of Barcelona in favor of renewables if less energy is being consumed and more renewable energy is being produced. On top of that, more heating and cooling grids are proposed which further energy efficiency and create an environment of increased local energy production.

### **2.1.5. The effects of COVID-19 regarding the CED**

COVID-19's impact has reached every corner of the world. There are different ways in which this virus has already affected the CEDs and many questions have been raised.

-The health crisis has caused different meetings and demonstrations related to the CEDs to cease their activity, stopping a process that is urgent.

-There is a certain sense of uncertainty regarding how the economic crisis will affect us and how we will recover from it. Is there a possibility of investing in the creation of employment through the search of a more sustainable model of society? Or is this crisis going to be solved by rescuing (again) an economic model based on fossil resources (i.e. the rescue of the airlines in France)?

-Will the association of fear and death with the reduction of emissions become a common message? Or will politicians appeal to a feeling of responsibility with the aim of confronting climate change?

### **2.2. Climate justice definitions**

#### Definition based on quantitative research

The definition has been our first approach, based in a quantitative procedure that consisted in analyzing the number of times that key concepts appeared during the phase of interviewing the climate movements and during the documentation research phase.

*“Climate justice is the recognition of humans’ contribution to climate change and the unequal distribution of negative events that occur consequently based on socio-economic and spatial circumstances.*

*To practice climate justice is to actively take steps to mitigate one’s contribution towards climate change while implementing measures to aid those who are disproportionately impacted with respect to their contribution to the crisis, seeking not to further endanger the welfare of humanity, including future generations.”*

### Definition for *Observatori del Deute Global*, based on quantitative and qualitative research

This is our second approach, based on the quantitative and qualitative knowledge acquired through the interviews, documentation research, teachers feedback and the point of view of the ODG.

*“Climate justice is admitting that climate change affects the rights of all living beings, recognizing the common but differentiated contribution of humans to the climate alteration and actively taking steps to make every thought, decision and action seek the most conceivable compensation for the most vulnerable.*

*It involves analyzing, relating and pointing out the local and global consequences that result from a patriarchal system that prioritizes an economic growth based on the exploitation of fossil resources over social justice, the right to a dignified life, the right to exist, class justice, gender equity and natural balance.*

*Climate Justice is aimed to build alliances worldwide to ensure the care of the whole ecosystem to achieve a sustainable model that pursues not to further endanger future generations.”*

### **3. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES**

The emergency climate declarations from both the Barcelona City Hall and the Generalitat are lacking in concrete actions. Although some actions are present, it is unclear whether these were completely thought through with all necessary actors interests in mind. The CED is the result of an exclusive top-down approach used by the Catalan government where governmental officials and economic powerhouses were able to influence the laws that were to be enacted on the citizens. As a fix to this problem, a citizens’ assembly consisting of groups from throughout the entire population such as for-profit companies, NGOs, politicians, and private citizens.

There is a dilemma in the creation of the emergency declarations between enough specificity to achieve the goals being strived for, in this case climate justice by 2030, and enough vagueness to allow for organic growth into new technologies and societal crisis points. Overall, the emergency declarations analyzed aired on the side of too vague, and the research done suggests that neither in economic, energetic, or educational aspects will the goal of climate justice by 2030 be met. That being said, the CED of the city of Barcelona is much closer to achieving the goal with some necessary but minor tweaks.

For future research, concrete actions that could be incorporated into the CEDs of both the Generalitat and the city hall of Barcelona could be thoroughly analyzed and suggested for appending into the documents. Additionally, a model for participation could be drafted for future declarations and actions to be taken by these government agencies. An interesting contrast to this work would be an analysis of non-governmental agencies and their efforts towards climate justice and a comparison to the presented work. This would offer the necessary diverse viewpoints of the many actors effected by a world without climate justice.