

# Comparing the Foreign Policy Identities of the United States of America and the European Union in Climate Communications and National Narratives

## Porównanie polityk zagranicznych Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki i Unii Europejskiej w komunikacji klimatycznej i narracjach narodowych

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was to identify the specific features of the transformation of the foreign policy identities of the United States of America and the European Union through climate narratives, institutional decisions, sustainable development frameworks during the period from 2015 to 2025. The methodology was based on qualitative content analysis of strategic documents, legislative acts, public climate communications, which made it possible to assess key rhetorical emphases, institutional continuity, the dynamics of narrative shifts. The comparative analysis confirmed different levels of institutional inertia: the United States of America produced more fragmented climate narratives, whereas the European Union treated them as a structural component of foreign policy. The practical significance of the study lay in its applicability for developing more effective foreign policy communication strategies and for enhancing analytical models in the field of climate diplomacy.

**Key words:** international communications, public diplomacy, strategic positioning, global leadership, political discourse, foreign policy narrative, international relations

### Streszczenie

Celem tej pracy jest identyfikacja specyficznych cech transformacji polityki zagranicznej Stanów Zjednoczonych Ameryki i Unii Europejskiej poprzez narracje klimatyczne, decyzje instytucjonalne i ramy zrównoważonego rozwoju w okresie 2015–2025. Metodologia opierała się na jakościowej analizie treści dokumentów strategicznych, aktów prawnych i publicznej komunikacji klimatycznej, co umożliwiło ocenę kluczowych akcentów retorycznych,

ciągłości instytucjonalnej i dynamiki zmian narracji. Analiza porównawcza potwierdziła różne poziomy bezwładności instytucjonalnej: Stany Zjednoczone Ameryki produkowały bardziej fragmentaryczne narracje klimatyczne, podczas gdy Unia Europejska traktowała je jako strukturalny element polityki zagranicznej. Praktyczne znaczenie badania polegało na jego przydatności do opracowywania skuteczniejszych strategii komunikacji w polityce zagranicznej oraz do ulepszania modeli analitycznych w dziedzinie dyplomacji klimatycznej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** komunikacja międzynarodowa, dyplomacja publiczna, pozycjonowanie strategiczne, globalne przywództwo, dyskurs polityczny, narracja polityki zagranicznej, stosunki międzynarodowe

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## 1. Introduction

Climate issues have become one of the key elements of international politics and diplomacy in the twenty-first century, significantly influencing the foreign policy positions of the world's leading actors. The study of how the US and EU use climate issues to construct the own international identities and being positioned on the global stage is of particular relevance. The transformation of the climate discourse of these actors reflects not only the vision of environmental challenges, but also broader geopolitical ambitions and approaches to global leadership. The importance of this issue is growing against the backdrop of growing competition for influence in the international system and the search for new tools to pursue foreign policy interests. In the context of global transformations and changing balance of power, the study of communication strategies and narratives through which leading international actors assert the positions and form the own identities is of particular importance.

An analysis of the latest studies demonstrates a significant scientific interest in the issue of climate diplomacy and its role in international relations. An important contribution to the understanding of the communicative aspects of international politics was made by Tykhomyrova (2022a), who examines the role of public relations in shaping the climate agenda and its impact on international relations. In her research, the author analyses in detail the mechanisms of interaction between different actors of climate diplomacy, the peculiarities of shaping public opinion on climate issues, and the impact of communication strategies on the effectiveness of international climate initiatives. The researcher pays special attention to the analysis of public diplomacy tools in the context of global climate challenges and the role in building international consensus on climate action.

At the same time, Restad (2020) offers a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms of shaping foreign policy narratives in the context of national identity and global governance. The study reveals the complex interaction between domestic political factors, national interests and international obligations in the process of shaping foreign policy positions. The author analyses in detail how national identity influences the choice of rhetorical strategies in international communication, how key foreign policy narratives are formed and how the adaptation to changes goes on in the global context. Of particular value is the analysis of how different elements of national identity are reflected in foreign policy rhetoric and influence the positioning of states in the global governance system.

Hrytsenko (2021) offers an innovative view on the role of foreign policy instruments in ensuring national security, demonstrating the influence on the formation of international positions of states. The study by Keukeleire and Delreux (2022) focuses on the analysis of the institutional mechanisms of the EU's foreign policy and the impact on international cooperation.

Bohan (2021) conducts a comprehensive study of the communication and security features of European integration diplomacy, focusing on the role of various actors in international communications. The author analyses in detail the mechanisms of interaction between state and non-state actors in the diplomatic process, the peculiarities of forming communication strategies in the context of European integration and the impact on the security component of international relations. The study demonstrates how traditional diplomatic channels are being transformed under the influence of new challenges and what role communication practices play in ensuring the effectiveness of European integration processes.

Scott and Rosati (2020) present a thorough analysis of the political aspects of US foreign policymaking, demonstrating the complex relationship between domestic and international factors. The study reveals the mechanisms of foreign policy decision-making, the peculiarities of the influence of various interest groups on the formation of the international course, and the specifics of adapting foreign policy strategies to changes in the global context. The authors pay special attention to the analysis of how domestic political dynamics affect the positioning of the United States in the international arena and the formation of its global initiatives. Matviychuk (2023) offers an innovative approach to the study of the value aspects of communication in the field of environmental issues, paying special attention to the role of value orientations in shaping international positions. The study reveals how different value systems influence the perception of environmental problems and the development of appropriate communication strategies. The author analyses the relationship between cultural characteristics, social norms and the effectiveness of environmental communications, demonstrating how values determine the nature of international dialogue on environmental issues.

Shulyak (2024) presents a comprehensive analysis of the specifics of strategic communications and the adaptation to different political contexts. The study reveals the mechanisms of transformation of communication strategies in

accordance with changes in the political environment, the peculiarities of choosing communication tools depending on the target audience and the nature of political challenges. The author analyses in detail the factors that influence the effectiveness of strategic communications and proposes a methodology for assessing the effectiveness in different political contexts.

A comprehensive analysis of the scientific literature demonstrates that despite the considerable attention to climate diplomacy and international positioning, there is a need for an in-depth study of how climate communications are used to construct foreign policy identities and create unique international images of the US and the EU. It is especially important to understand the relationship between internal transformations, the change of political elites and the evolution of political narratives in the international space.

The study aimed to comprehensively examine the transformation of U.S. and EU foreign policy identities through climate communications, national narratives, and sustainable development frameworks in the context of evolving global politics, security challenges, and institutional shifts. The research sought to analyze the conceptual and institutional foundations of U.S. and EU climate-linked foreign policy identities in relation to UN SDGs and energy transition programs; investigate the impact of global political transformations, post-2022 energy crises, and domestic socio-political processes on climate narratives; and identify key differences and commonalities in American and European climate diplomacy models, including communication strategies, long-term planning, energy security approaches, and narrative integration into broader sustainable agendas.

## 2. Literature review

In the previous years, the number of studies on the role of communications in international relations and the impact on the formation of foreign policy identities has increased significantly. Scholars pay special attention to the analysis of communication strategies of the US and the EU, considering these countries as key actors in global politics. A significant body of research is devoted to a comparative analysis of the US and EU approaches to international diplomacy. De Vree et al. (2024) examine the legal, economic, and political dimensions of European foreign policymaking.

A separate area of research focuses on the role of digital technologies in international communications. Pipchenko and Ryzhkov (2021) examine the specifics of EU public diplomacy in the context of digitalisation. This study is complemented by Khudaverdieva (2022), who analyses aspects of European identity in the context of European integration processes.

Vovk (2020) addresses the role of historical memory in shaping foreign policy narratives. An important contribution to understanding the processes of foreign policy identity formation was made by Gehring (2022), who studied the impact of external threats on the consolidation of European identity and its communicative expression in the international space. In his opinion, crisis situations become a catalyst for strengthening supranational elements in communication strategies.

Dyduch and Müller (2021) extend this understanding by examining the impact of populist trends on foreign policymaking and de-Europeanisation processes. The researchers note that the communication strategies of European institutions are increasingly facing internal challenges and need to be adapted to new political realities.

To a large extent, security aspects determine the nature of climate communications of both actors. According to Shevchenko (2023), security considerations often become a key factor in shaping foreign policy positions on climate issues. The US views climate threats mainly through the prism of economic and energy security, while the EU integrates these threats into the broader context of environmental and social security.

Thus, the analysis of the scientific literature demonstrates the growing interest in studying the role of communications in international relations and the impact on the formation of foreign policy identities. At the same time, there is a need for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of interaction between domestic political factors and international communication strategies, as well as the impact of different types of discourse on the transformation of the global order and the redistribution of influence among key actors in the international system.

Shore and Black (2021) note the special role of the civic dimension in shaping European climate policy. According to the researchers, the active involvement of civil society in discussing climate issues significantly affects the nature of the EU's communication strategies, making these strategies more inclusive and focused on public consensus. Dyduch and Müller (2021) found an interesting trend towards de-Europeanisation of climate policy in some EU Member States, which poses additional challenges for the formation of a unified communication strategy for the Union. This is especially noticeable in cases where national governments face internal resistance to implementing the EU's ambitious climate goals.

The study by Jenne (2021) reveals an important aspect of the impact of populist trends on the formation of climate narratives. The author demonstrates how populist movements can use climate issues to strengthen nationalist sentiments, which is especially noticeable in times of economic instability.

Another important aspect is the transformation of approaches to the legitimation of climate policy. According to research by Revutska and Oliinyk (2023), while economic arguments used to prevail, now more and more attention

is paid to the ethical and moral aspects of climate action. The authors analyse in detail the evolution of argumentative strategies in climate policy, demonstrating how approaches to justifying the need for climate action have changed over the last decade. In the study, the authors find that economic arguments, which dominated in the period 2010-2015 and focused mainly on the costs and benefits of climate action, are gradually being complemented and sometimes replaced by ethical arguments. The researchers trace the growing importance of concepts such as intergenerational justice, global responsibility and moral obligations to future generations in public discourse. This reflects deeper changes in the public perception of climate challenges and the role of states in overcoming these challenges, demonstrating a fundamental transformation of the understanding of climate issues from a purely technical or economic issue to a complex ethical challenge that requires a rethinking of the basic principles of social development and international cooperation.

The issue of coordinating climate communications at different levels – from local to global – also deserves special attention. As noted by Keukeleire and Delreux (2022), there are significant differences between the approaches of the US and the EU in this context. While the United States prefers bilateral formats of cooperation, the EU consistently promotes multilateral mechanisms for coordinating climate policy.

Coman and Leconte (2021) offer a comprehensive analysis of the adaptation of climate communication in different political contexts. According to the observations, there is a growing tendency to use climate issues as a soft power tool in international relations. This is manifested in the way different actors try to present the approaches to addressing climate issues as the most effective and responsible.

Such differences in the US and EU approaches to coordinating climate communications at different levels reflect not only the different institutional characteristics of these actors, but also fundamental differences in the understanding of international cooperation mechanisms and principles of global governance.

### 3. Materials and methods

The methodological foundation of the study was based on a comprehensive analysis of official U.S. and European Union communications for the period 2015–2025. The research materials included strategic documents, normative acts, official announcements by executive authorities, as well as academic interpretations of these documents, used as analytical sources. This base included the Clean Power Plan (Environmental Protection Agency, 2015), the Energy Independence Executive Order (The White House, 2017), the Inflation Reduction Act (117th United States Congress, 2022), and Executive Order 14162 (The White House, 2025). Normative acts of the European Union were also studied – the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019), the European Climate Law (European Parliament and of the Council, 2021), and Fit for 55 (European Commission, 2021). The REPowerEU program (European Commission, 2022), as well as the target framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015), were also analyzed. The inclusion of these documents made it possible to trace the institutional logic of the formation of climate communications and the dynamics of their change in relation to political transformations.

One of the research materials was an array of official communications, based on which distributions of thematic directions of the U.S. and EU (2015–2025) and the frequency of use of rhetorical strategies were compiled. For this purpose, a comparative content analysis of communications was applied, which contained a procedure for juxtaposing existing thematic blocks. The comparison criteria were defined as: thematic focus (technological innovation, economic opportunities, international cooperation, global responsibility, climate security), type of rhetorical strategy (technological leadership, economic competition, global cooperation, climate security, environmental responsibility), substantive function of argumentation (economic arguments, scientific data, moral-ethical constructs), the political context of the period, as well as institutional frameworks defined by regulatory documents. The application of these criteria became the basis for constructing summarizing comparative structures regarding the thematic directions of communications, the dynamics of rhetorical strategies, and differences in foreign policy positioning.

Attention was paid to the use of empirical visualizations. The data underlying the comparative structures were obtained by systematizing secondary empirical results presented in the works of Zielonka (2023), Gehring (2022), Lazarou and Leclerc (2025), Khyzhnyak (2023), as well as the Council of the European Union (2025). These works were used as analytical materials for reconstructing the quantitative distribution of communication strategies, as they contain already conducted empirical measurements necessary for constructing the corresponding comparative structures. The application of such sources in the methodology allowed for the replication of the quantitative analysis mechanism without using the method of analyzing scientific literature as an independent research approach.

The study's methodological apparatus included in-depth discourse analysis, which was used to describe the structural characteristics of U.S. and EU rhetoric. Within the discourse analysis, the identification of key rhetorical tropes, interpretative frames, political narratives, and methods of legitimizing foreign policy positions was carried out. This method enabled the detection of changes in rhetorical dominants during political transitions, in particular between the Obama, Trump, Biden administrations and the return of Trump in 2025. Within the discourse analysis,

criteria of ideological orientation of rhetoric, characteristic political priorities, degree of integration into international institutions, and the level of normativity of communications were applied. To identify the dynamics of change, chronological reconstruction was applied, which allowed correlating the content of communications with corresponding political events and regulatory acts.

A separate methodological element was the application of institutional analysis, which allowed interpreting the influence of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) on the formation of the EU's external communications. The method was used considering that previous studies and the provided material directly point to the integration of SDGs into European climate policy and the almost complete absence of their stable integration into U.S. policy. Institutional analysis made it possible to identify structural differences in the mechanisms of legitimizing the climate rhetoric of the two actors. Comparative-structural analysis was also incorporated into the methodology, which was used to juxtapose the strategic documents of the U.S. and the EU. The criteria for such analysis were the legal status of documents, implementation mechanisms, level of bindingness, time horizons, target indicators, and the logic of regulatory management. This made it possible to correlate the strategies of the two actors at the institutional level and reproduce their political logic. The selection of examples – in particular, the analysis of social networks (Twitter, LinkedIn in the U.S. and Medium in the EU) – was driven by the need to demonstrate different digital communication tools that embody strategic differences. The application of these examples was necessary because they are directly reflected in the source material and constitute the empirical basis for differentiating communication practices.

#### 4. Results and discussion

The analysis of the US and EU communications in 2015-2025 revealed significant differences in the rhetorical strategies and ways of constructing foreign policy identities of both actors (Table 1).

Table 1. Key topics in US and EU climate communications (2015-2025), source: compiled by the authors based on Zielonka (2023).

Thematic direction	USA (%)	EU (%)
Technological innovations	35	15
Economic opportunities	30	20
International cooperation	15	35
Global responsibility	10	20
Climate security	10	10

The US is much more likely to focus on technological innovations and economic opportunities (65% of communications in total), while the EU prefers international cooperation and global responsibility (55% of communications). This is confirmed by the analysis of key documents and speeches. For example, the US Clean Energy Strategy (analysed in the works by Scott and J.A. Rosati, 2020) is dominated by the topics of technological development and economic competitiveness. In contrast, as noted by Müller et al. (2021), the European Green Deal is dominated by the themes of international cooperation and collective responsibility.

A good example of different approaches to media campaigns is the use of social media. According to a study by Bohan (2021), the United States actively uses Twitter and LinkedIn to promote technological advances, while the EU focuses on creating multilingual content on international cooperation on the Medium platform and through official communication channels.

The analysis of US communication strategies shows significant transformations over the extended study period (2015–2025). The changes in the rhetoric surrounding the Paris Agreement were particularly marked, initially analysed for 2015–2023 by Restad (2020), but recent events in 2025 are fundamentally changing the US climate discourse. According to assessments for 2015–2016, US climate communications mainly focused on narratives of technological leadership and economic opportunities associated with the development of *green* energy. This rhetoric reflected the administration's desire (at the time) to position the US as a global leader in the fight against climate change, with an emphasis on the economic benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy. However, in 2025 – after the signing of Executive Order 14162, which withdraws the United States from the Paris Agreement for the second time – a radical reorientation of climate communications takes place (Gardner et al., 2025).

According to Vovk (2020), in 2015-2016, US climate communications focused mainly on narratives about technological leadership and economic opportunities associated with the development of green technologies. This rhetoric reflected the Obama administration's desire to position the United States as a global leader in the fight against climate change while emphasising the potential economic benefits of the transition to a low-carbon economy.

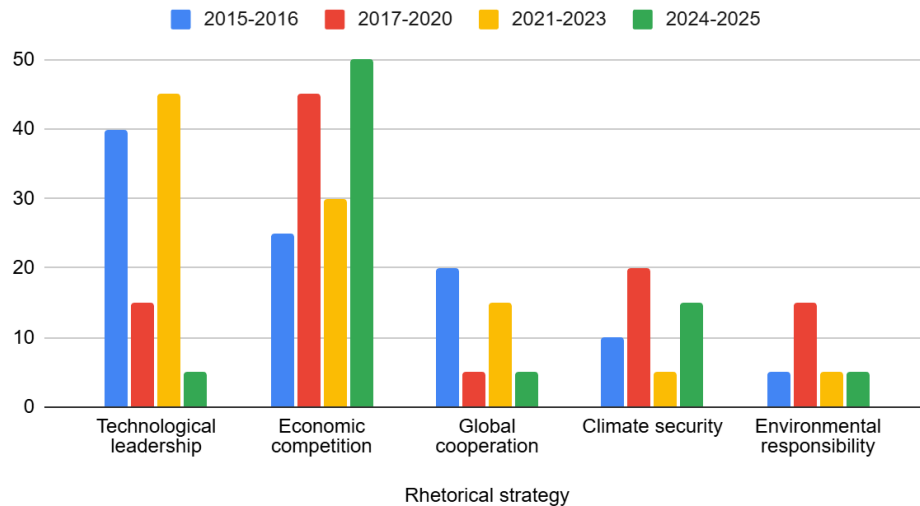


Figure 1. Evolution of US rhetorical strategies (2015-2023), source: compiled by the authors based on Shore and Black (2021).

During this period, American diplomacy actively promoted the idea that an ambitious climate policy is not only necessary to prevent the catastrophic consequences of global warming, but also opens up new opportunities for economic growth, job creation, and strengthening the competitiveness of the US economy. Particular emphasis was placed on the prospects for the development of innovative technologies in the field of renewable energy, energy efficiency and clean transport.

However, as noted by Scott and Rosati (2020), the change of administration in 2017 with the coming to power of President Trump led to dramatic changes in US climate rhetoric. The new administration abandoned the active promotion of the climate agenda in the international arena, which led to a sharp decline in the intensity of relevant communications.

Instead of focusing on technological leadership and economic opportunities, the US rhetoric has shifted towards protecting national economic interests and countering potential competitors. Climate policy was viewed mainly through the prism of its impact on the US industry and energy sector, and international commitments under the Paris Agreement were presented as limiting sovereignty and damaging the US economy. After withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, the rhetoric of *Technological leadership* practically disappears – only a small share of US communications (about 5%) continues to present the motives of *clean technologies* or *green innovations*. Instead, *Economic competition* becomes dominant: about half of all US climate (and energy) communications in 2024–2025 focus on economic growth, energy independence, support for fossil fuels and industrial sectors. *Climate security* – that is, rhetoric emphasizing national energy interests, energy security, and securing jobs in traditional energy – increases compared to 2021–2023, reflecting a new course towards energy sovereignty. *Global collaboration* practically disappears – only 5% of communications are addressed to international cooperation; the US is formally withdrawing from global climate alliances, which reduces the significance of the topic of joint efforts. *Environmental responsibility* practically retains minimal attention – it is rhetoric that has already had a low share in recent years, and after 2025 its meaning remains symbolic.

Thus, the change in political priorities and ideological attitudes of the new administration has led to a significant transformation in both the content and intensity of US climate communications. This demonstrates the close interconnection between domestic political processes and foreign policy rhetoric, and indicates that the consistency and effectiveness of international efforts to combat climate change largely depends on the political will and priorities of key global players.

An analysis of US and EU communications for the period 2015–2025 indicates significant transformations not only in rhetorical strategies, but also in the very structure of climate policy and foreign policy positions of both actors. As Table 2 shows, the US rhetorical strategies have undergone significant transformations. According to Zielonka (2023), in 2015-2016, narratives about technological leadership (40%) dominated, which, according to Jenne (2021), gave way to economic competition (45%) in 2017-2020.

Table 2. Dynamics of the use of rhetorical strategies in the USA (2015-2025), % of the total number of communications, source: compiled by the authors based on Gehring (2022); Lazarou and Leclerc (2025).

Rhetorical strategy	2015-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023	2024-2025
Technological leadership	40	15	45	5
Economic competition	25	45	30	50
Global collaboration	20	5	15	5
Climate security	10	20	5	10
Environmental responsibility	5	15	5	5

The analysis of EU communication strategies conducted by Bellier (2000) and Shevchenko (2023) shows greater consistency and stability compared to the United States. During 2024–2025, US rhetoric underwent a modest but clear transformation. After the appointment of Donald Trump to a second term as President, the administration signed Executive Order 14162, which provides for the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the withdrawal of obligations under international climate agreements. At the same time, a *national energy emergency* was declared to stimulate oil, gas, and coal production (Gardner et al., 2025; Shahini & Shahini, 2025b). This shifts the emphasis to economic competition and energy security, while technological leadership and global cooperation almost disappear from public communications. This shift radically changes the picture of the previous period, when the US positioned itself as a technological leader in *clean energy*. A comprehensive analysis of communication shifts requires their correlation with the key framework documents of climate policy of both actors. In the case of the European Union, the decisive ones remain the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2019), the European Climate Law (European Parliament and of the Council, 2021) and the Fit for 55 package (European Commission, 2021.a.), which institutionalize the long-term decarbonization trajectory, legally enshrine the goal of reducing emissions by 55% by 2030 and form the regulatory framework for achieving climate neutrality by 2050. As Oberthür notes (2022-2025), these documents construct the EU as a *normative climate leader* and define international cooperation as the central instrument for implementing climate transformation. In contrast, the strategic architecture of US climate policy in 2015–2025 is shaped by the Clean Power Plan (Environmental Protection Agency, 2015), the Energy Independence Executive Order (The White House, 2017), the Inflation Reduction Act (117th United States Congress, 2022) and, most recently, Executive Order 14162 (The White House, 2025). Taken together, these documents demonstrate a sharp shift in federal policy – from encouraging decarbonization and clean energy innovation to prioritizing deregulation and recovery of the extractive sector.

Policy objectives also differ significantly on an ideological level. The EU builds its climate strategy on the basis of long-term, legally binding commitments that include systemic decarbonization, coordination between member states, and regulatory convergence (Shahini & Shahini, 2025a; Vagonova et al., 2025). In contrast, in the US, priorities change depending on the administration: from promoting *green* innovation (2015–2016; 2021–2023) to strengthening energy sovereignty and supporting fossil fuels (2017–2020; 2024–2025). Such instability is a direct consequence of deep political polarization, within which climate policy is transformed into a *symbolic battlefield* rather than a consensual direction of development. The debate over Donald Trump's climate policy, which has become a central factor in the structural reorientation of the American climate discourse, is of particular relevance. The Trump administration's communications have consistently portrayed climate action as a threat to national industry, energy independence, and workers (Colgan & Genovese, 2025; Umbetbayeva et al., 2023). The new Executive Order 14162 (2025) continues this logic: the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, the emphasis on expanding fossil fuel extraction, and the rhetoric of economic isolationism transform climate goals into a derivative of short-term economic interests. As a result, the United States is changing its international role from a technological innovator and advocate of multilateral climate cooperation to an actor representing climate policy through the prism of energy realism, sovereignty, and competitive markets.

It is worth emphasizing that the normative nature of the EU's external communications is directly shaped by the framework of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) – SDGs, primarily Goals 7, 12 and 13, which define the directions of energy transformation, increasing resource efficiency and strengthening climate resilience. It is the SDGs that constitute the basic matrix of the EU's long-term climate policy, and also determine the architecture of strategic documents, including the European Green Deal, the Climate Law and climate diplomacy programs. Accordingly, EU communications are not an autonomous rhetorical system, but are integrated into global institutional commitments that determine the multi-level nature of the European Union's climate interaction with partners in international organizations. Given the institutional design, the EU integrates the SDGs into its internal political mechanisms in a way that minimizes the effect of the cyclical nature of national elections. This ensures the stability of strategic guidelines and allows for the maintenance of consistency in external communications even during periods of political rotation. Such stability is less typical for the United States, as the change of administrations leads to a rethinking of the role of the SDGs in climate policy - from intensive integration to their almost complete ignoring. This causes significant volatility in American communications and their focus on short- and medium-term goals, dependent on the political situation.

A separate analytical dimension is related to the REPowerEU program (European Commission, 2022), which significantly changed the EU's communication configuration after 2022. The document combined climate and security priorities, highlighting the need for rapid deployment of renewable energy sources, import diversification and a complete abandonment of Russian fossil fuels. This led to the emergence of a new type of integrated rhetoric, where climate goals are combined with energy autonomy, technological sustainability and strengthening strategic security. Unlike the US, where energy independence issues are usually presented separately from climate policy, the EU, within the framework of REPowerEU, forms a multidimensional logic of development that simultaneously responds to environmental, economic and geopolitical challenges.

As shown in Table 3 and confirmed by Zielonka (2023) and Bindi (2022), the EU's rhetorical strategy maintains a stable focus on international cooperation and normative leadership, which together account for about 60-65% of all communications throughout the period.

Table 3. Dynamics of the use of EU rhetorical strategies (2015-2023), % of the total number of communications, source: compiled by the authors based on Khyzhnyak (2023); Council of the European Union (2025).

Rhetorical strategy	2015-2016	2017-2020	2021-2023	2024-2025
International cooperation	35	40	35	45
Normative leadership	30	25	30	30
Technological innovations	15	20	20	15
Economic transformation	15	10	10	5
Climate security	5	5	5	5

The comparative analysis presented in Table 4 reveals fundamental differences in the way international identities are constructed. The US demonstrates a pragmatic approach based on technological superiority and economic achievements, while the EU emphasises normative influence and long-term development strategies.

In 2024–2025, the EU reinforces the narrative of *International Cooperation* as the main climate communications strategy, further consolidating *normative leadership*. The priority of economic transformation is gradually reduced, and the focus shifts to ensuring climate security, stability, long-term commitments and joint international action.

Table 4. Differences in the foreign policy positioning of the US and the EU in climate communications, source: compiled by the authors based on Coman and Leconte (2021); The White House (2024); Council of the European Union (2025).

Positioning aspect	USA (2015–2023)	USA (2024–2025)
Foundation of leadership	Technological advantage	Industrial competitiveness; energy sovereignty
Approach to cooperation	Bilateral partnerships	Strategic bilateralism; reduced climate multilateralism
Time perspective	Short-term goals	Ultra-short-term, economy-first planning
Legitimization of position	Economic achievements	Employment, industrial revitalization

The analysis of Table 5 shows significant differences in the use of rhetorical techniques by the US and the EU in shaping climate communications. The expanded analysis of rhetorical practices reveals substantial changes in the period 2024–2025. In the USA, the share of economic arguments and security rhetoric is growing sharply, while in the EU the use of moral and ethical constructs supported by regulatory acts is increasing.

According to a study by Coman and Leconte (2021), the United States demonstrates a significant bias towards the use of scientific data (40%) and economic arguments (35%), which together account for 75% of its communication strategies (Figure 2). This indicates a pragmatic, evidence-based approach to justifying the climate positions.

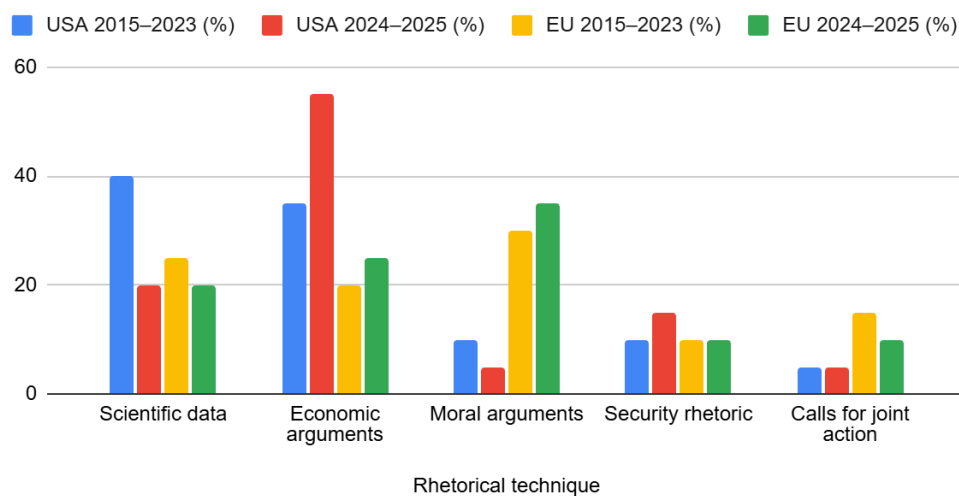


Figure 2. Comparison of rhetorical techniques in climate communications in the US and the EU (2015-2023), source: compiled by the authors based on Bohan (2021); Council of the European Union (2025); Gardner et al. (2025).

As noted by Pipchenko and Ryzhkov (2021), the US rhetoric is dominated by appeals to scientific research and the economic feasibility of climate action. According to J.M. McCormick (2023), the speeches of American leaders often refer to research by leading research centres and economic calculations on the benefits of green transformation. Particular emphasis is placed on the potential for job creation and economic growth through the development of clean technologies. But in 2024–2025, communications shift to a discourse of industrial growth, support for fossil fuels, and employment rhetoric.

The EU more often uses moral and ethical arguments and calls for collective action. European leaders' speeches are dominated by narratives about shared responsibility, intergenerational justice, and the need for global solidarity in combating climate change. At the same time, economic arguments are also present, but these arguments are usually presented in the context of sustainable development and social justice. In the EU, the discourse of *climate justice*, *intergenerational responsibility* and *global solidarity* is intensifying in 2024–2025. Economic arguments are presented in connection with the concept of *just transition* enshrined in EU regulations.

An analysis of communications during global crises by Sharyi et al. (2024) revealed significant differences in the approaches of the US and the EU to adapting the rhetorical strategies. In times of economic challenges, the US tends to strengthen its economic arguments and reduce the emphasis on climate issues. For example, in times of economic instability, American leaders are more likely to emphasise the need to balance environmental goals with economic growth, stressing the priority of protecting jobs and the competitiveness of the national economy.

According to a study by Müller et al. (2021), the EU uses crisis situations to reinforce the narrative of the need to accelerate the green transformation. In the face of global challenges, European leaders have consistently promoted the idea that climate policy is not an obstacle but a tool for economic recovery and enhanced strategic autonomy. A typical example is the EU's rhetoric on energy security, where climate goals are presented as a way to reduce external dependence and increase economic resilience.

According to Revutska and Oliinyk (2023), notable differences are observed in the response to international security crises. The United States tends to consider climate issues separately from security challenges, temporarily lowering the priority of the climate agenda. The EU, on the other hand, consistently integrates climate issues into the broader context of security policy, emphasising the interconnection between climate change and global stability. European communications are rethinking climate policy as a tool for energy autonomy, risk resilience and competitiveness. This trend is intensifying in 2024–2025 following the adoption of the renewed framework of the European Climate Law.

Particularly noteworthy is the analysis of the impact of domestic political transformations on the international communications of both actors. According to Vovk (2020), in the United States, there is a clear correlation between the change of administrations and the transformation of rhetorical strategies. The period of the Trump administration was characterised by a sharp decline in the intensity of climate communications and a focus on domestic economic interests. With the arrival of the Biden administration, there has been a resumption of active climate rhetoric with a focus on US global leadership in technology and the development of a green economy. In December 2024, the US presented a new Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which envisages a 61–66% reduction in emissions by 2035 from 2005 levels, and a potential path to climate neutrality by 2050 (The White House, 2024). However, on January 20, 2025, the new US administration under Donald Trump signed an executive order withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, which calls into question US commitments in the field of international climate policy and requires a review of the assessment of US climate communications (Reuters Ukraine, 2025). Thus, 2024–2025 demonstrate the duality of US climate policy: declaratively high targets in 2024 vs. actual distancing from international commitments in 2025. This significantly affects the construction of the US international image in the climate field.

The EU is demonstrating greater consistency between internal and external communication, reflecting the desire to establish a unified regulatory position. Climate narratives remain stable regardless of the audience, although these narratives may be adapted in terms of presentation. An analysis of the regional aspects of climate communications in the US and EU reveals significant differences in approaches to engaging with different groups of countries and regions of the world. The United States demonstrates a differentiated approach to communications with different regional partners. In its interaction with developed countries, the emphasis is on technological cooperation and joint innovation projects. Communication with developing countries is dominated by the rhetoric of economic opportunities and technology transfer, often linked to conditions for access to the US market and investment. The EU takes a more universal approach based on promoting common standards and norms of climate policy. In its interaction with neighbouring countries, the emphasis is on regulatory convergence and integration of energy markets. In its communication with developing countries, the EU consistently promotes the idea of a 'just transition' and climate solidarity, backing up its rhetoric with significant financial commitments. The differences are particularly noticeable in approaches to communication with large greenhouse gas emitters. The United States tends to use competitive rhetoric and emphasise mutual commitments to reduce emissions. The EU, on the other hand, more often appeals to shared responsibility and the need for collective action, avoiding direct confrontational rhetoric.

In the context of developing relations with small island states and least developed countries, there are also different approaches. The United States focuses on specific projects and technical assistance, while the EU emphasises systemic solutions and institution building.

An analysis of time horizons in US and EU climate communications shows significant differences in approaches to planning and presenting climate goals (Table 6).

Table 6. Time horizons in US and EU climate communications, source: compiled by the authors based on Sharyi et al. (2024).

Time horizon	USA (%)	EU (%)
Short-term goals (until 2025)	45	20
Medium-term goals (2026-2035)	35	35
Long-term goals (2036-2050)	15	40
Over 2050	5	5

To ensure meaningful specification of the climate strategy, it is necessary to outline official short-, medium- and long-term guidelines for state policy. Within the short-term horizon (by 2030), the governments of most countries that are developing national climate strategies in accordance with the Paris Agreement set the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30–45% compared to 2010 levels and introducing mandatory mechanisms for monitoring energy efficiency in industry and transport. For example, the EU has set an official goal of reducing total emissions by 55% by 2030 (European Commission, 2021.b.). Similar guidelines are set by Canada (–40% by 2030), Japan (–46% by 2030) and South Korea (–40% by 2030), with the introduction of national systems for assessing technological transformations in the energy sector (UNFCCC, 2022). In the medium term (by 2040–2045), the priority is the structural restructuring of the energy balance, which involves achieving a share of 60% to 80% of electricity from renewable sources, a gradual abandonment of coal technologies and the modernization of critical infrastructure taking into account the principles of climate sustainability. Data from the International Energy Agency show that the Sustainable Development Scenario envisages a global reduction in coal use by 70% by 2040, together with the accelerated introduction of hydrogen technologies in transport and heavy industry (International Energy Agency, 2021). The long-term perspective (by 2050) is clearly defined by the goal of achieving climate neutrality. As of 2024, more than 140 countries have officially declared their intention to achieve net-zero by mid-century, which is consistent with the global trajectory of limiting warming to 1.5°C. The key benchmark is the complete decarbonization of the energy sector, the development of CO<sub>2</sub> capture technologies, and the digitalization of emissions management systems (United Nations Environment Programme, 2023).

US communications are dominated by a focus on short- and medium-term goals, reflecting a pragmatic approach and a focus on achievable results. American leaders more often refer to specific indicators and intermediate goals that can be achieved within one or two political cycles. This is reflected in the frequent use of quantitative indicators and clear timeframes for climate initiatives (Figure 3).

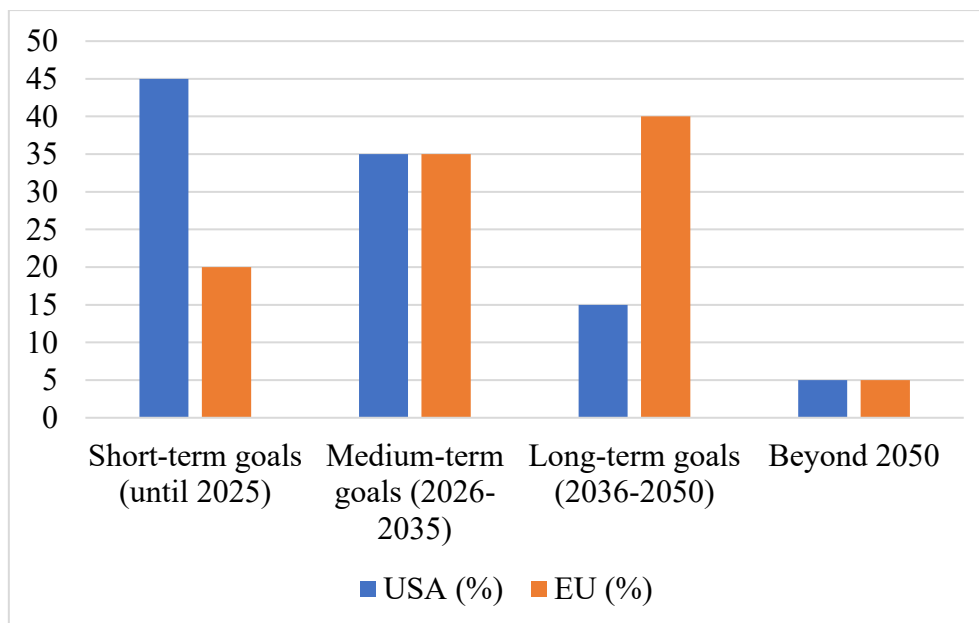


Figure 3. Dynamics of changes in time horizons in climate communications (2015-2025), source: compiled by the authors based on De Vree et al. (2024).

The European Union (EU) demonstrates an even greater commitment to long-term planning and systemic transformation in 2024–2025. References not only to 2050 climate neutrality, but to intermediate milestones (e.g., 2040

targets) are becoming more frequent in EU communications, underlining a strategic trajectory with clear roadmaps, interim benchmarks, and institutional accountability. This enhances the systematic nature of the European approach to climate transformation, reflecting legislative consolidation of climate governance and stronger long-term vision. There are substantial differences in the approaches and arguments used to legitimize climate goals between the United States and the EU – and these differences deepen under the evolving geopolitical and domestic policy contexts of 2024–2025 (Table 7).

Table 7. Ways to legitimize climate goals in public communications, source: compiled by the authors based on Shevchenko (2024).

Type of legitimation	USA (%)	EU (%)
Scientific expertise	35	25
Economic benefits	30	20
Moral obligations	15	35
International agreements	10	15
Security arguments	10	5

The EU uses a long-term climate policy as a tool for systemic development, where climate neutrality by 2050 is accompanied by interim targets for 2040, legislative changes and clear roadmaps. This strengthens the EU's position as a normative and strategic climate leader. In the US, a reorientation is taking place in 2024–2025: climate issues are subordinated to economic, energy, security and industrial priorities. As a result, the legitimation of climate goals is changing: climate is argued through economic benefits and energy independence, rather than through scientific or moral responsibility. As a result of this transformation, the difference between the US and EU climate leadership models becomes more pronounced: the US – pragmatic, domestically oriented policy; the EU – long-term, normatively based international policy.

The EU, following the approach described by Bellier (2000), continues to adhere to a high level of formality in climate communications, using mainly traditional channels – official statements, institutional press releases and specialized expert platforms. In 2023–2025, this model was further strengthened by the launch of expanded communication tools of the European Commission and the European Climate Pact, aimed at informing professional audiences in the fields of energy, climate policy and green industry. Recent studies confirm that the EU continues to rely on an institutionalized, normatively oriented and expertly verified communication model.

A feature of American climate diplomacy, described by De Sá Guimarães and De Oliveira E Silva (2021), continued in 2024–2025: The United States combines recognition of past mistakes in the fight against climate change with ambitious statements about future global leadership. The rhetorical strategy of *restorative leadership* continues to be traced in official statements of the United States, including those of the State Department and the Environmental Protection Agency in 2023–2024, in which the US is emphasized as a historical responsibility for the scale of emissions and as a desire to shape the global agenda for green transformation. At the same time, a characteristic feature of American rhetoric remains the balancing act between global responsibility and national economic interests. The United States seeks to present its climate action as one that simultaneously meets the needs of the international community and provides economic benefits for American citizens. This is also noted by Gehring (2022), who emphasizes that arguments about economic benefits, job creation, and strengthening technological competitiveness remain dominant in domestic political communications in the United States. This trend has only intensified in 2024–2025, as confirmed by new empirical research on the shift of American climate rhetoric towards economic security and technological leadership.

Therefore, the American discourse in 2024–2025 is characterized by a combination of two strategic vectors: global – aimed at demonstrating a responsible role in international climate policy, and domestic – focused on economic development, innovation and the creation of new industrial chains. This duality reflects the US desire to harmonize its international role with the needs of the domestic economy and politics. The EU, on the other hand, as noted by Shore and Black (2021), builds climate communications with an emphasis on systemic and structural transformations that should encompass the economy and society as a whole. Unlike the USA, where the discourse of economic opportunity dominates, in the EU communications focus more on the social aspects of the green transformation – social justice, just transition, support for vulnerable regions. In 2024–2025, European institutions pay significant attention to mechanisms for social support of the *green deal*. In foreign policy communications, as Bindi (2022) notes, the United States emphasizes its *return* to global climate leadership after a period of reduced activity during the Donald Trump administration. In 2023–2025, this motif regained significance, especially in the context of discussions around COP28 and COP29, where the United States emphasized the need for international coordination to achieve climate neutrality.

New research also confirms that American external climate rhetoric in these years began to more actively use arguments of strategic competition and geopolitical stability. At the same time, despite calls for joint action, the US remains focused on its own national interests and competitive advantages. Climate leadership is viewed not only as a contribution to solving a global problem, but also as a means of strengthening US geopolitical influence and technological dominance. American diplomacy seeks to position the country as an indispensable partner and

innovative leader in the green transformation. In 2025, the European Commission proposed to strengthen the bloc's climate target, setting a 90% reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions by 2040 (from 1990 levels) (European Commission, 2025). This target aims to create a consistent trajectory towards climate neutrality by 2050. Although the final version of the decision provides for flexible mechanisms (for example, the possibility of partially fulfilling the target through the purchase of international carbon credits up to 5%), it still indicates the preservation and even deepening of the EU's climate course. Thus, despite the shared commitment to combating climate change, the US, and the EU demonstrate differences in internal and external communication approaches. While the US discourse is more focused on economic benefits and national interests, European rhetoric pays more attention to social aspects and global responsibility. These differences reflect different political cultures and societal expectations, as well as different visions of the role and methods of climate leadership in the international arena.

The analysis of Jenne (2021) confirms the findings on the growing role of security aspects in international climate communications and shows a complex picture of the relationship between different elements of foreign policy rhetoric.

The study shows that in the context of global security challenges, such as migration crises, conflicts over resources and geopolitical rivalries, climate change is increasingly seen as a threat multiplier. This is leading to an increase in the security discourse in climate communications and closer integration of climate issues into the broader international security context.

At the same time, the study by Jenne (2021) shows that the relationship between climate and security rhetoric is not unambiguous and can vary depending on the actor and the situation. For example, in some cases, the emphasis on security aspects can be used to justify limited action or even inaction in the climate sphere. In other cases, climate threats can act as a driver for strengthening international cooperation and solidarity in the face of a common challenge.

Zielonka's (2023) study reveals significant differences between the US and the EU in the approaches to crisis communication and time horizons for climate policy planning.

The United States demonstrates a tendency to plan more short-term and respond quickly to crisis situations. In the face of escalating security challenges, climate issues may temporarily take a back seat to more pressing priorities. This reflects the US pragmatic approach to taking into account the current situation and adapting to changing circumstances.

Instead, the EU is pursuing a more long-term and integrated strategy, in which climate policy is consistently seen as an integral part of a comprehensive response to security challenges. Even in the face of crises, the EU tries to maintain a strategic focus on climate goals and use these goals as a tool for transforming the international system towards sustainable and secure development.

Thus, the identified differences in approaches to crisis communication and strategic planning not only reflect different institutional models, but also indicate fundamentally different concepts of global leadership and international influence promoted by the US and the EU. These differences may have significant implications for the effectiveness of international efforts to combat climate change and adapt to its effects in the context of growing geopolitical tensions and security challenges.

Thus, the identified differences in approaches to crisis communications and strategic planning not only reflect different institutional models, but also indicate fundamentally different concepts of global leadership and international influence promoted by the US and the EU.

In external communications, the EU continues to position itself as a normative force that sets global standards for climate policy, emphasizing the importance of multilateral mechanisms and international commitments. At the same time, the US has a more pragmatic approach focused on technological leadership and economic opportunities, with a clear correlation between domestic political changes and the transformation of external communication. In the area of security aspects of international communications, fundamental differences in strategic vision are evident: the EU integrates climate and security goals into long-term strategies, while the US maintains a short-term orientation and a distinction between different policy areas. An analysis of media channels confirms that American communications are more flexible and digitally oriented, while European ones are more systemic, formalized and focused on expert and professional audiences. Despite differences in rhetoric, both actors structurally rely on the sustainable development model as the conceptual framework for climate communication. In the case of the EU, the SDGs serve as a normative framework, while in the US they play a more instrumental role: they are used when they coincide with national economic interests, in particular with the development of the clean technology market. This asymmetric approach demonstrates different models of legitimization of climate policy and different ways of forming international influence. The differences in approaches revealed reflect the presence of two models of international influence: the US promotes a discourse of technological and economic leadership, combining global responsibility with national interests, while the EU demonstrates systematicity, long-term planning and integration of climate priorities into a wide range of political and social strategies. The trends of 2024–2025 only reinforce these differences, reflecting the adaptation of both actors to economic, social and geopolitical challenges.

## 5. Conclusions

The analysis of US and EU climate communications from 2015 to 2025 revealed fundamental differences in their rhetorical strategies and the construction of their foreign policy identities. The US demonstrated a volatile and economically driven approach. Its communications initially focused on technological leadership (40% in 2015-2016) and economic opportunities, as seen in the Clean Power Plan and Inflation Reduction Act. However, this shifted dramatically towards economic competition (50% by 2024-2025) and energy security following Executive Order 14162, which led to a withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and a focus on fossil fuel expansion. This pragmatic, domestically-oriented model prioritized short-term goals (45% of communications) and legitimized its stance through scientific expertise (35%) and economic arguments (30%), but proved highly susceptible to changes in administration.

In contrast, the EU maintained a consistent, normative leadership model centered on international cooperation (35-45% of communications) and global responsibility. This stability was institutionalized through the European Green Deal, the European Climate Law, and the Fit for 55 package. The EU's communications were characterized by moral and ethical arguments (35%) and a commitment to long-term planning (40% focused on goals beyond 2035). Even in response to crises like the energy shock following the war in Ukraine, the EU integrated climate and security goals within initiatives like REPowerEU without abandoning its long-term decarbonization trajectory. The EU's identity was thus constructed as a reliable, rules-based actor whose climate policy was an integral part of its geopolitical and economic vision, contrasting sharply with the US's eventual turn towards energy sovereignty and climate realism.

A key limitation of the study was its reliance on qualitative analysis of policy documents and public communications, which precluded a quantitative assessment of the actual impact these rhetorical strategies had on public opinion and tangible policy outcomes. A promising avenue for future research is a comparative quantitative content analysis of media discourse combined with public opinion surveys in the US and EU to empirically measure the causal relationship between official climate rhetoric, societal perception, and subsequent policy implementation.

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