

Latvia's experience in overcoming energy crises and transforming its energy sector

Maksis Rūdolfs Apinis, NGO "Green Liberty"

"Green and Just Transition 2024"

Narva, 29.11.2024.

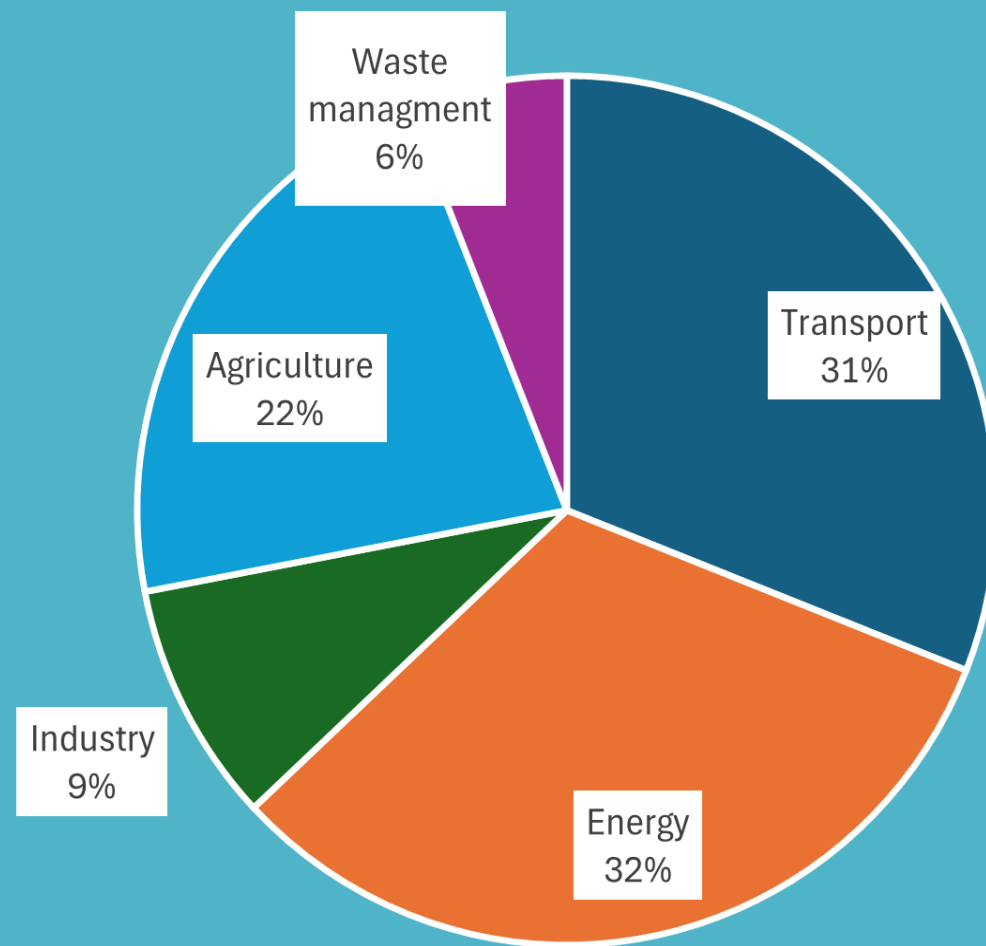


Funded by

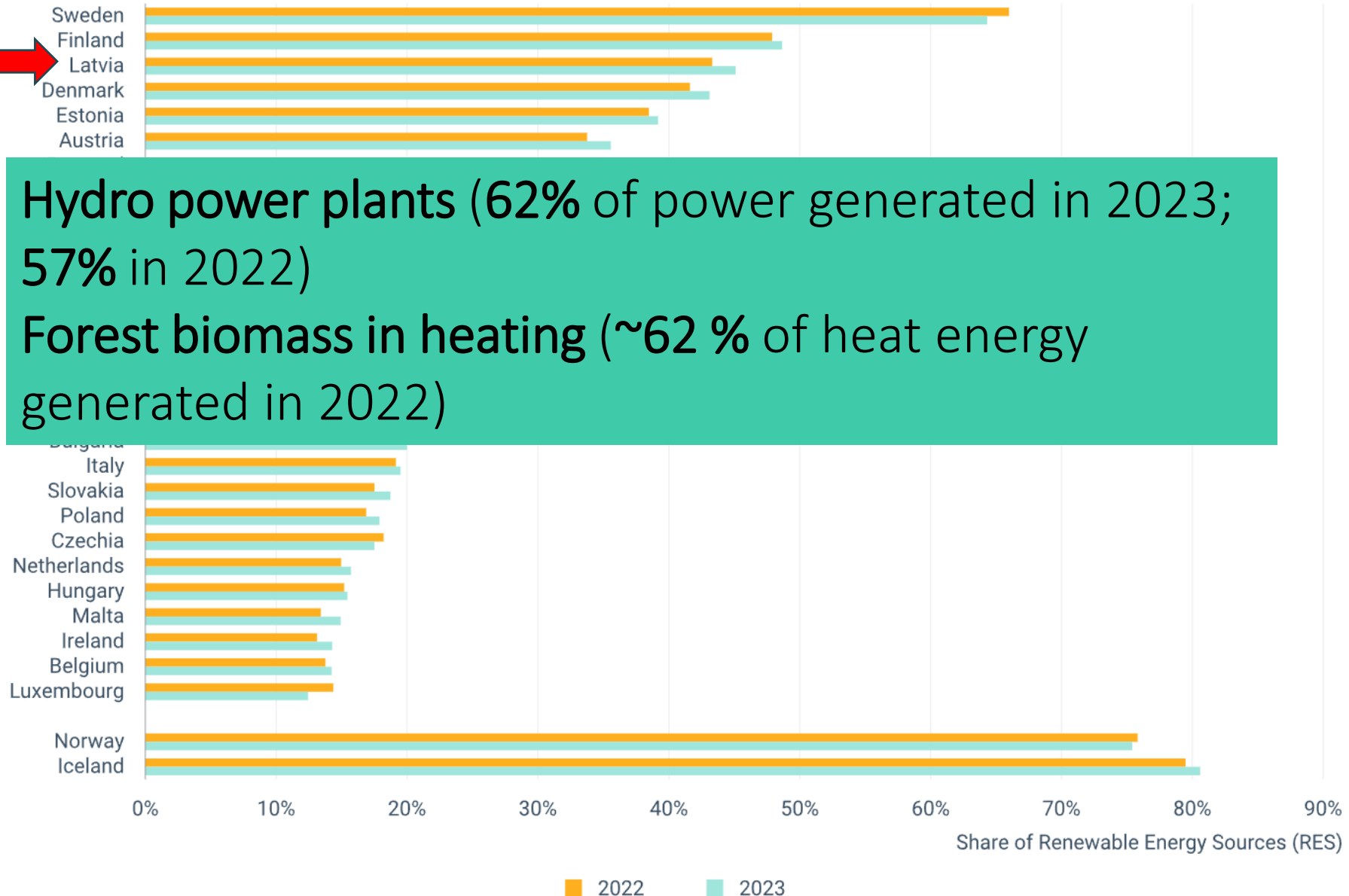


The RePower the Regions project
has received funding from the LIFE
Programme of the European Union

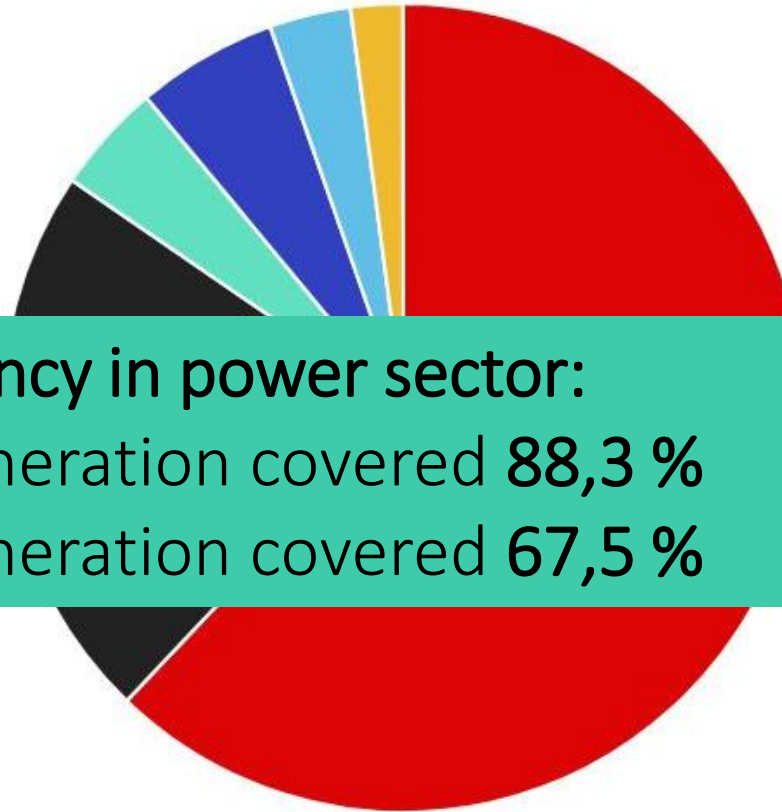
GHG EMISSION SOURCES IN LATVIA, 2022



ENERGY PROFILE OF LATVIA



POWER SOURCES IN LATVIA, 2023



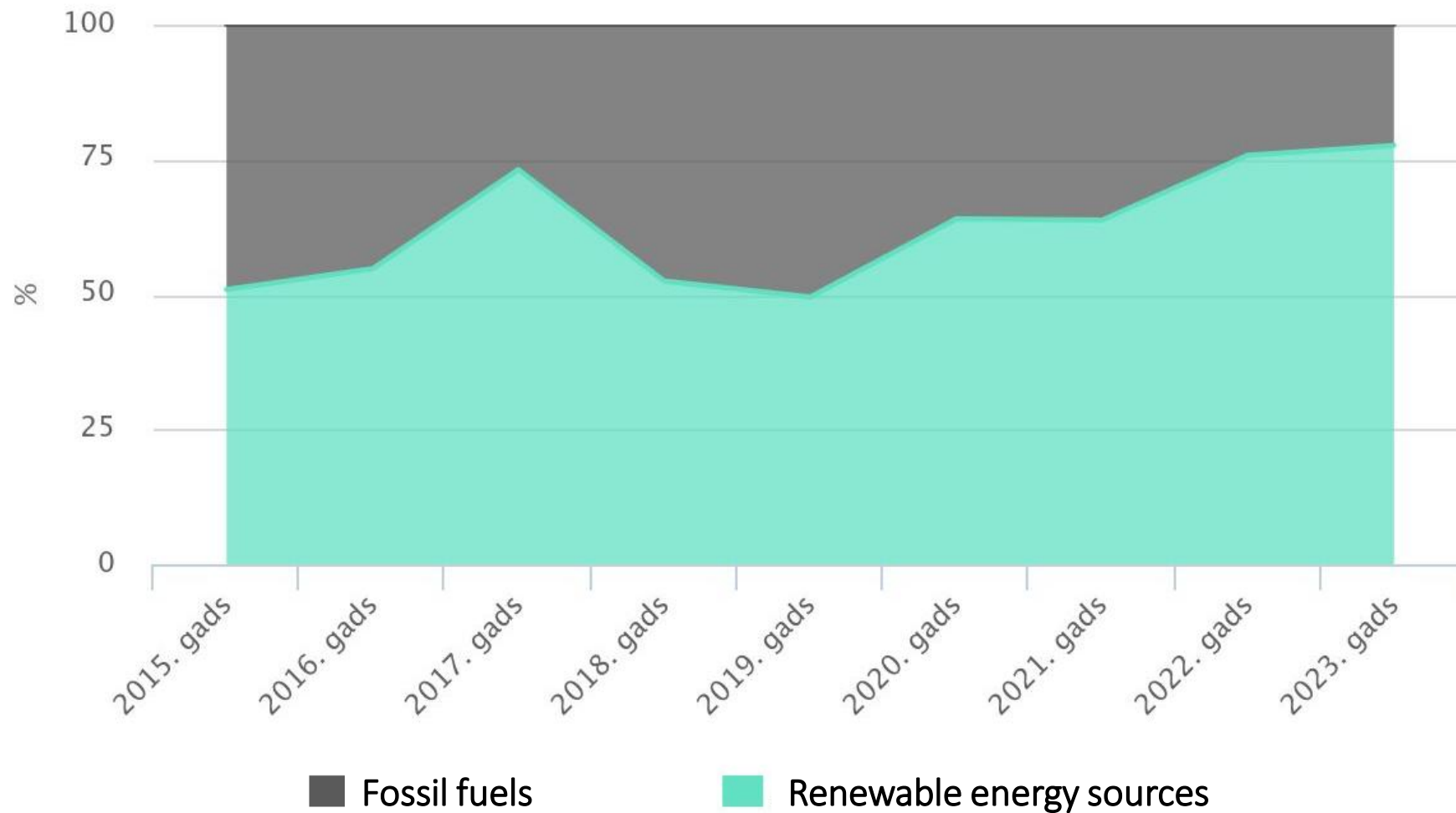
Energy dependency in power sector:

In 2023 local generation covered 88,3 %

In 2022 local generation covered 67,5 %



GENERATED RENEWABLE POWER PROPORTION IN LATVIA, %



ENERGY CRISES RESPONSE IN 2022-23

In 2022 Latvia stopped importing **Russian gas**, switching fully to LNG

In 2022 Latvia seriously considered LNG terminal development – **decided not to**

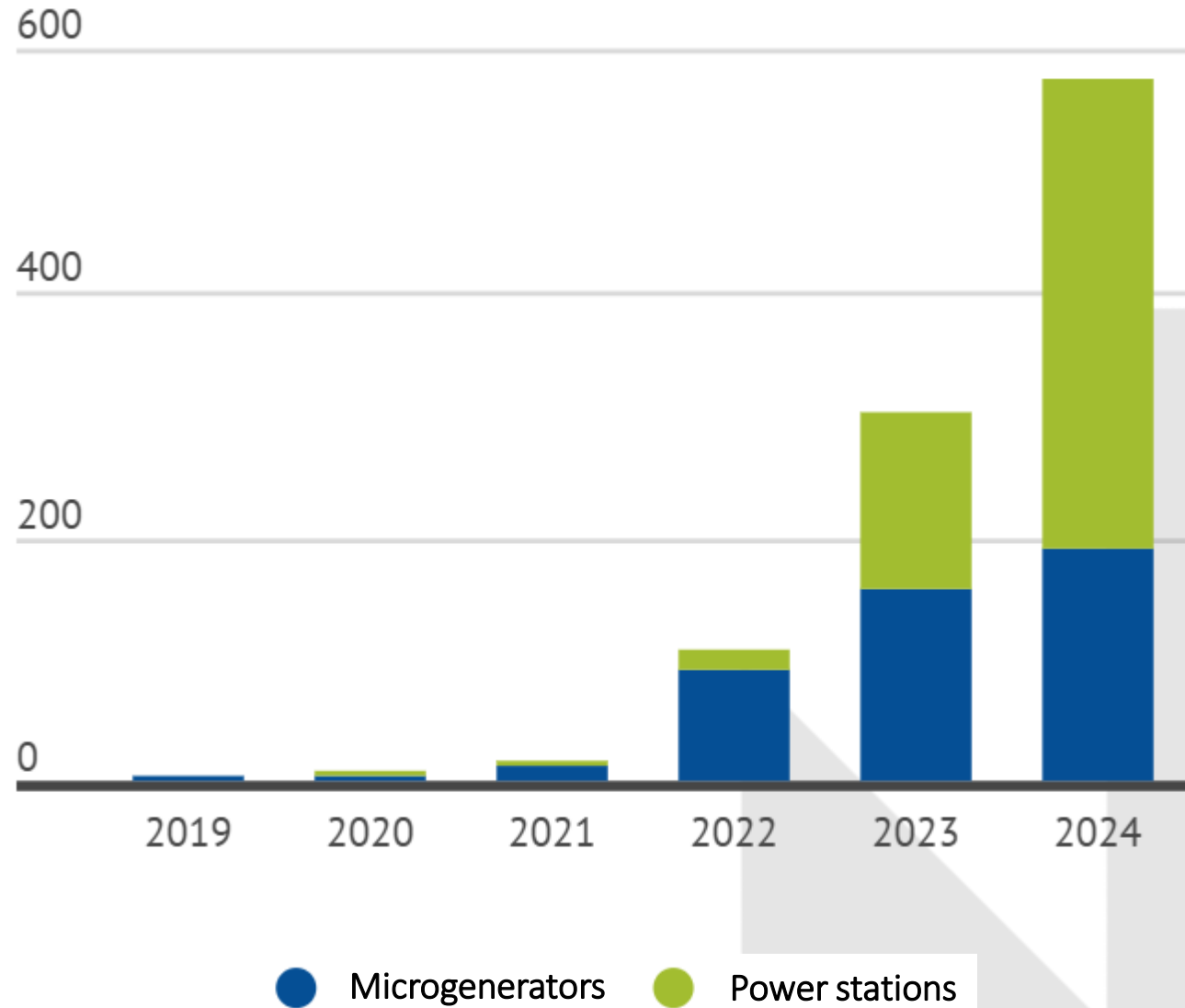
Exponential growth in **solar generating capacities**

Currently more than **50 wind projects** under environmental impact assessment procedure

Previously **for almost 10 years, no new wind park** was developed

Just like Estonia and Lithuania, Latvia has set a **target of 100% renewable electricity** produced by 2030

Cumulative connected solar power in Latvia, MW



ENERGY EFFICIENCY & SUFFICIENCY

Dilemma in LV politics:

- When economy good - not enough stimuli for energy efficiency
- When economy bad, energy prices high - focus on alleviating energy costs, NOT energy efficiency
- When costs compensated, consumers **again don't prioritise energy efficiency**

New automated high energy cost compensation scheme:

- Overall good for reducing energy poverty
- However, still some elements, which disincentivize saving energy

CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE

Dissonance due to differing perspectives:

- **Economic advantages** VS. **Climate mitigation**
- This results in:
 - Energy transformation benefits seen when things are good, but..
 - When economy isn't good, long-term climate and social challenges lose priority.

"Latvia is so small, we can't impact things anyway.."

Anti-wind movement, myths still going around strongly

CHALLENGES IN POLITICAL VIEWS

- LV politicians believe (**hope**) that other EU countries will not achieve climate targets as well and Green Deal will be overlooked
- Climate adaptation receive positive attitude and interest, mitigation – a lot of scepticism
- Reality of climate crises not grasped. Reminding of actual dangers seen as radicalism and sensationalism
- Allergic reaction to term "Green Deal". Mainstream reaction: "**We cannot afford this**"
- Pessimism regarding climate targets (esp. transport and LULUCF)

CURRENT MAIN OBSTACLES TO SWIFT ENERGY TRANSFORMATION

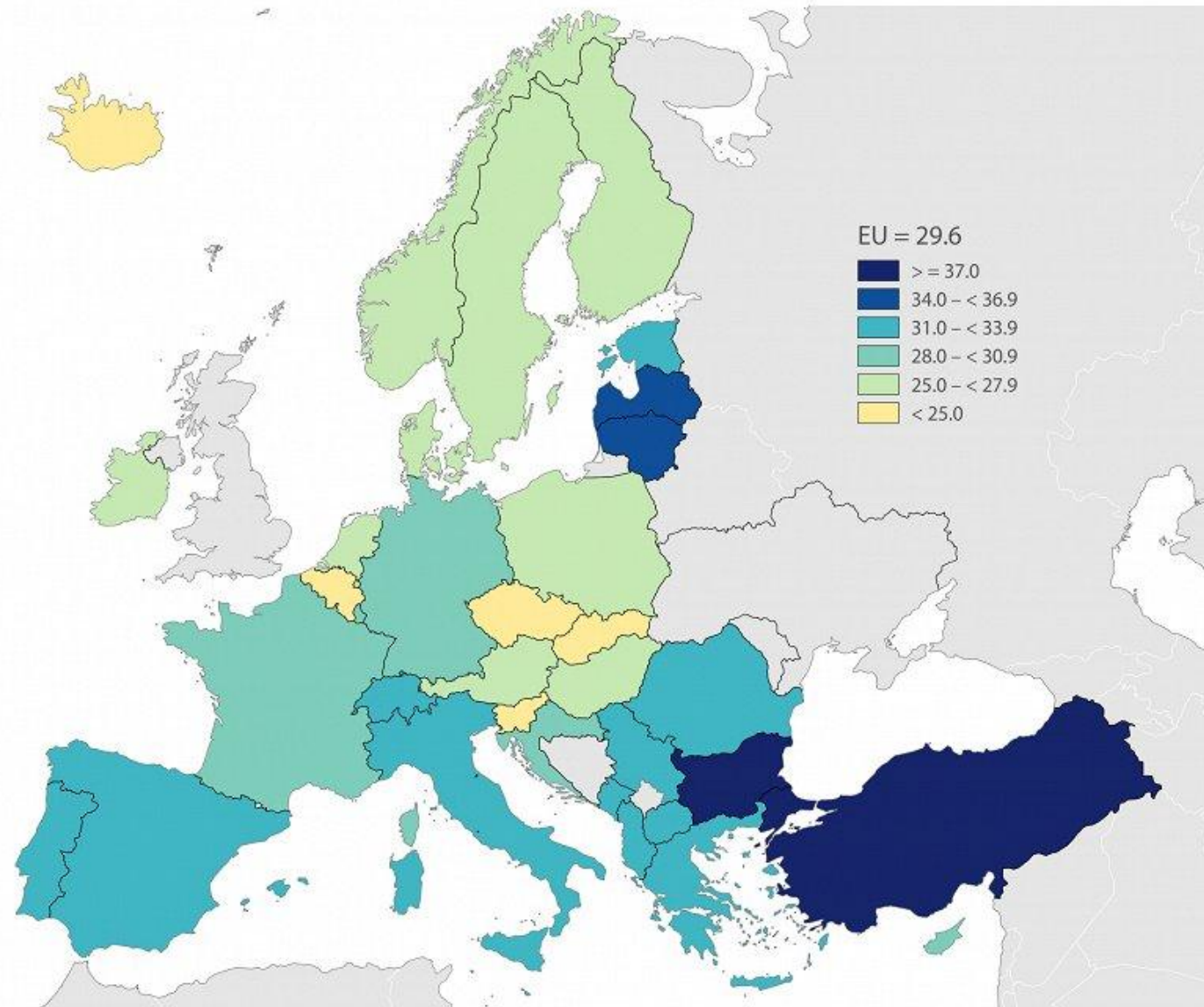
- Serious lack of **public administration capacity** (national and local)
- Complexity of issue causes **oversimplification**, sympathies towards falsely "simple" solutions (i.e. nuclear)
- Current **focus on security**
- Reliance on **gaseous infrastructure**:
 - Biomethane's role overemphasized
 - Inability to clearly define end date for fossil gas (discrepancy with 2050 climate neutrality goal)
- **Storage & balancing of energy** (but things are starting to move)

CURRENT MAIN OBSTACLES TO SWIFT ENERGY TRANSFORMATION

- Too heavily reliance on **forest biomass** (sustainability issues due to current forestry practices)
- Too low ambition in transitioning to **zero-emission district heating** (heat pumps, etc.)
- All focus on generation, **sufficiency not adressed**
- Lack of **political courage**
- *Wild wild west* in renewable energy project development

Gini coefficient for equivalised disposable income per inhabitant, 2022

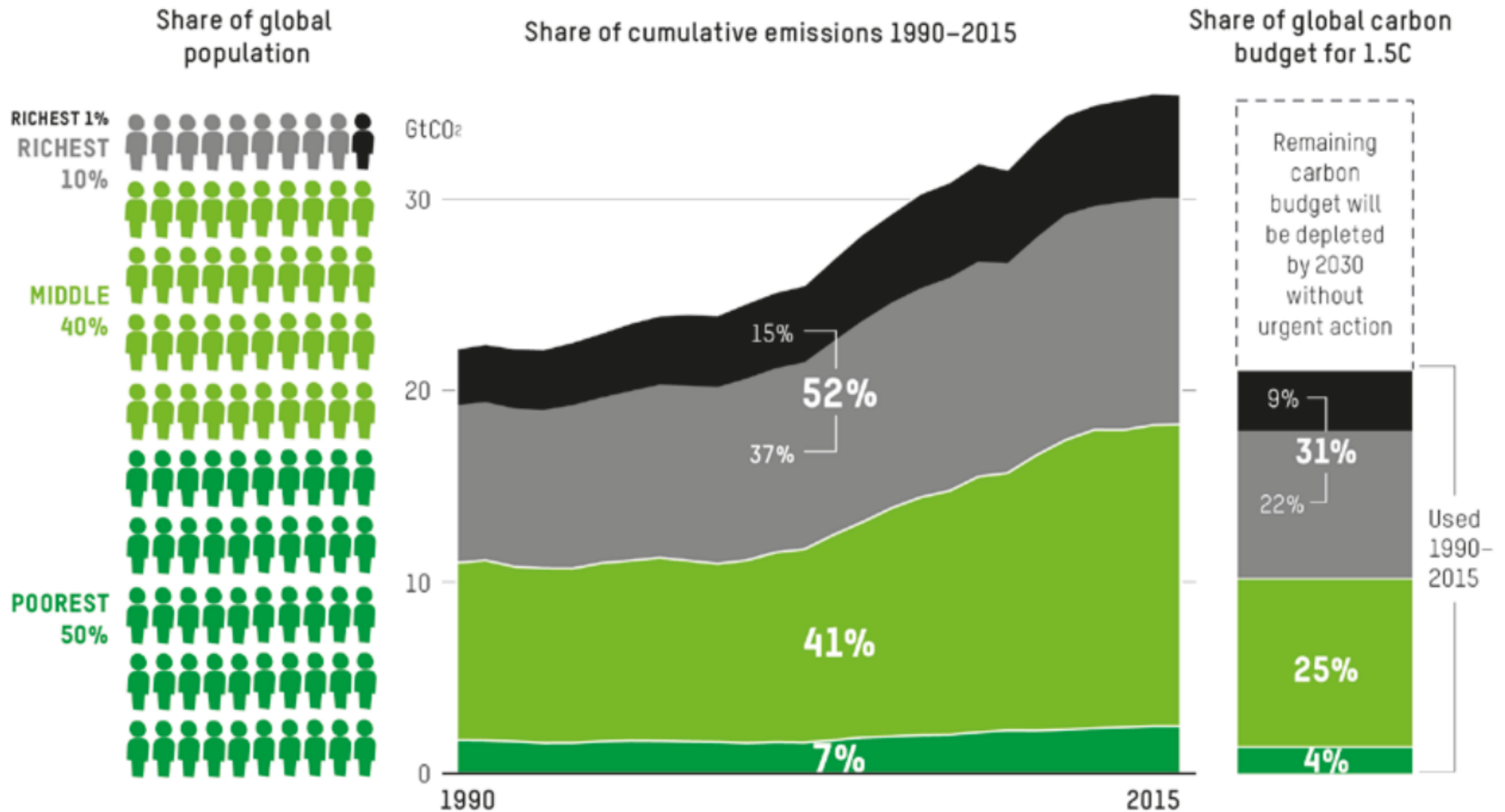
(Scale from 0 to 100)



Switzerland, Montenegro, Serbia and Türkiye: 2021 data. Norway, North Macedonia and Albania: 2020 data. Iceland: 2018 data. Eurostat (dataset code: ilc_di12)

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © UN-FAO © Turkstat
Cartography: Eurostat - IMAGE, 10/2023

Figure 1: Share of cumulative emissions from 1990 to 2015 and use of the global carbon budget for 1.5C linked to consumption by different global income groups



GHG EMISSION INEQUALITY IN WORLD, 2019

50 %
poorest

1 % richest

WHAT'S NEEDED FOR ACCELERATION

Crises require crises communication - more communication from gov. would improve public acceptance, allow for more stringent policies

Properly addressing inequalities - specifically designed support measures to low and lower middle class (Social Climate Fund, but more will be needed).

Adequate administrative capacities – different, more complex funding approaches needed



Green Liberty

Lapu 17, Rīga, LV 1002 • www.zalabriviba.lv • info@zalabriviba.lv