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Between the ecological perspective and global confrontation: Current results of COP26

Abstract. The purpose of this study was to identify the impact of COP26 decisions on political processes, energy policy, and international cooperation. For this, the study employed the methods of historical analysis, comparison of political positions of the key participants of the conference, as well as analysis of the adopted resolutions and their consequences. The results of the study showed that COP26 was a prominent milestone in shaping global climate policy but reflected major political differences between countries. On the one hand, the decisions made helped to intensify work on renewable energy sources and implement emission reduction mechanisms. On the other hand, the conference revealed contradictions in the timing of carbon neutrality and the scale of commitments, which limited the scope for global coordination. An analysis of climate funding revealed that developed countries, albeit committed to increasing financial support for developing countries, have been unable to meet all their demands. This has led to political tensions that hinder the effective implementation of climate initiatives. Special attention is paid to the role of COP26 in strengthening and weakening international cooperation in the energy sector. The study found that the ambitious emission reduction targets of the EU and the US are markedly different from the cautious stance of fossil fuel dependent countries such as China and Russia. The study highlighted the need to find a compromise between countries to effectively address climate challenges. Particular attention should be paid to creating financing mechanisms that accommodate the interests of both developed and developing countries. Only by strengthening international cooperation and adopting an adaptive approach to climate commitments can sustainable outcomes in the fight against climate change be achieved

Keywords: negotiations; warming; energy transformation; carbon emissions; geopolitical interests; renewable sources

Introduction

The relevance of this study is driven by the need for a deeper analysis of the relationship between environmental obligations, economic interests, and political processes at the international level. The impact of climate negotiations on contemporary international politics is one of the most pressing issues in the context of global challenges related to climate change. Decisions taken at the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP) not only determine the climate policy of individual countries, but also substantially influence the global energy cooperation, economic stability, and political interaction between states. Of particular significance was the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26), held in November 2021 in Glasgow, which became a platform for complex political negotiations, critical decisions, and significant controversies between key states.

Researchers have repeatedly emphasised the ambivalence of climate conference decisions, which reflects

the conflicting interests of participating states and the difficulty of finding a compromise. According to R. Cléménçon (2023), a key problem in international climate negotiations is the deep gap between the economic priorities of developed and developing countries. Developed countries, historically responsible for most of global greenhouse gas emissions, insist on a rapid transition to low-carbon economies, while developing countries demand compensation for the impact of climate change, emphasising their limited financial and technological capacity. According to R. Hafezi *et al.* (2024), these opposites considerably complicate decision-making during conferences, as each party seeks to minimise its own costs, often to the detriment of global goals. Uncertainty about the mechanisms for implementing decisions becomes an additional barrier, as many countries question the transparency and effectiveness of the proposed approaches.

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The role of climate funding, which became one of the central topics of discussion at COP26, attracts particular attention. According to S. Bracking & B. Leffel (2021), financial support for developing countries is viewed not only as a means of adapting to the effects of climate change, but also as a powerful political tool used to balance interests between the global North and South. K. Perry & L. Sealey-Huggins (2023) emphasised that unequal access to financial resources not only exacerbates socio-economic inequality, but also complicates international negotiations, creating a trust gap between donor and recipient countries.

The role of developed countries in global climate negotiations, particularly in the context of initiatives such as COP26, has been criticised by developing countries for uneven financial commitments, the lack of specific mechanisms to support transformation processes, and the unwillingness of some countries to reduce emissions in the short term. According to D. Wang & Y. Fang (2024), the policies of these countries, including the United States, China, and Russia, are driven not only by international obligations but also by domestic economic and political priorities. While the influence of developed countries on global climate policy is decisive, not all of them demonstrate the same readiness for ambitious climate initiatives. N. Carter & M. Pearson (2024) analysed the ambiguous climate policy in the UK, showing its changes over the period from 2015 to 2022. The researchers noted that the UK Conservative governments combined progress on zero net emissions commitments and increased emissions reduction targets with inadequate policy implementation, indicating internal divisions within the party. These political divisions in the UK reflect a broader global trend where internal economic and political interests of developed countries largely determine their willingness to take part in climate initiatives.

According to C.S. Malley *et al.* (2023), one of the key achievements of the COP26 conference was the agreement to reduce methane emissions, which is of particular relevance considering its promising global warming potential in the short term. This invites discussion of the development of a global initiative that will make a valuable contribution to curbing the temperature rise to the limits set by the Paris Agreement. Particular focus was placed on creating mechanisms to monitor the implementation of climate commitments. As A. Alqaisi (2024) noted that the introduction of independent monitoring tools and transparent reporting systems aims to increase the level of accountability of countries, but the implementation of these initiatives continues to be an open question due to the extensive gap between the stated goals and actual actions of countries. Researchers emphasised the lack of funding, limited access to technology in developing countries, and political disagreements between key stakeholders.

No less controversial is the issue of achieving carbon neutrality, which became central to COP26. According to L. Chen *et al.* (2022), the goals declared by countries to achieve zero emissions by 2050 are ambitious, but their implementation requires extensive financial, technological, and political resources. Achieving carbon neutrality is critical to avoiding a climate catastrophe, and therefore the international community must step up its efforts in this area.

The purpose of the present study was to analyse the COP26 decisions in the context of their impact on energy policy, international cooperation, and political relations between countries. For this, the study performed a historical review of previous climate conferences, analysed the political context of COP26, including the positions of the key players and the reasons for the absence of China and Russia, assessed the impact of the conference decisions on the energy policies of key countries, investigated the controversies over climate funding and achieving carbon neutrality and the conflicts that arose during the discussion of these issues.

Literature Review

In the current scientific literature, COP26 is considered a valuable political stage in the transformation of global climate policy. One of the key issues identified in numerous studies is the gap between the rhetoric of participating countries and their factual commitments to reduce emissions and finance climate action. A. Kaya & L.S. Schofield (2020) examined the evolution of COP conferences, emphasising a gradual shift from declarative agreements in the 1990s to more concrete mechanisms for implementing climate commitments, including through the introduction of monitoring, reporting, and financial support instruments. However, COP26 again revealed structural limitations of international climate governance, particularly the unequal access of countries to mechanisms for influencing decisions and financing adaptation measures. W. Jiang *et al.* (2022) emphasised that COP26 reflects a new era of “climate capitalism”, where transnational economic interests, large corporations, and financial institutions are beginning to set environmental priorities, sometimes pushing social justice and the needs of vulnerable communities off the agenda.

S. Haug *et al.* (2021) detailed the political tensions between the Global North and South, highlighting that developed states tend to avoid legal responsibility for historical greenhouse gas emissions, which fuels distrust of the decision-making process at climate conferences. This strategy of avoiding concrete commitments is resented by less developed countries, which emphasise that it is the industrialised nations that have accumulated the bulk of historical emissions and, therefore, should bear most of the financial and technological burden of overcoming the consequences of climate change. K. Anderson *et al.* (2020) noted that the principle of “shared but differentiated responsibilities”, officially stipulated in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, is still incompletely implemented, specifically in the context of financing adaptation measures in developing countries. Many of the commitments made at the COP conferences are still unfulfilled or are formalised in ways that render making real funding available to vulnerable regions impossible. This only exacerbates the imbalance in the ability of countries to address the climate crisis and creates an atmosphere of political tension that prevents the development of joint, long-term solutions.

Y. Zhang *et al.* (2021) emphasised that the term “carbon neutrality” is increasingly used in political discourse as a tool to create an image of “environmental responsibility”, but without a proper methodological basis.

The absence of clear mechanisms for monitoring, control, and accountability for non-compliance with targets creates a risk that climate policy will become a formality. N.E. Paul (2024) drew analogous conclusions, who, after analysing the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of different countries, concluded that even if they are fully implemented, the world will be unable to keep warming within 1.5°C, as envisaged by the Paris Agreement. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that most NDCs do not account for adaptation measures and do not ensure a fair distribution of the climate burden.

Y. Wang *et al.* (2022) examined COP26 through the lens of geoeconomics, emphasising that the conference has become a battleground for controlling future markets for clean technologies, from battery systems to electric vehicle infrastructure. The environmental agenda is increasingly being integrated into economic influence strategies, while the transition to a green economy is viewed by countries as part of a new industrial revolution. In this context, D.G. Victor *et al.* (2022) highlighted the symbolic nature of many climate commitments, which are used by states to reinforce their national positions in the international arena. The COP increasingly serves as a diplomatic theatre where political pledging dominates practical steps towards achieving global climate goals, such as climate justice, export restrictions, or technology transfer.

H. Salimi Turkamani (2024) investigated the political controversy around the creation of a mechanism for compensation for loss and damage as one of the key points of conflict at COP26. The researcher noted that the lack of political will on the part of developed countries led to vague wording in the final documents. S. McDonnell (2023) emphasised that without adequate funding, the adaptation risks being still a declarative rather than an effective part of climate policy. The researcher emphasised that the integration of adaptation measures into national planning should be accompanied not only by political commitments but also by real access to financial and technical resources, especially for the least developed countries.

It is also relevant to review the study by K. Almutairi *et al.* (2023), which analysed new strategies for the development of renewable energy after COP26. Experts predicted a significant increase in global investment in solar, wind, and geothermal energy, particularly in regions with prominent natural potential. However, the researchers noted that without proper planning, such a transformation could lead to new forms of energy inequality. Decentralisation of RES, as highlighted by Y. Sun *et al.* (2023), should become a key element of the green transition, as it enables the involvement of local communities, creation of new jobs, and increased energy autonomy. In other words, it is only through democratising access to energy that it can be ensured that climate transformation is not only technologically sound but also socially just. COP26 was a critical step in rethinking global climate governance. The scientific discourse is dominated by scepticism regarding the conference's ability to deliver a just climate transformation without a radical change in approaches to financing, emissions control, and geopolitical cooperation.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a comprehensive approach to analyse the impact of the decisions of the 26th UN Climate Conference (COP26) on international policy, energy cooperation, and the achievement of climate goals. The study was conducted in three stages between March 2024 and December 2024. The first stage involved the collection and systematisation of data on previous COP conferences, their evolution and outcomes. Particular attention was paid to analysing the political context prior to COP26, including global political and economic factors that influenced the positions of key players (UNFCCC, 2021b; World Bank, 2024a; 2024b; 2024c; 2025). The second stage of the study included a detailed analysis of official COP26 documents, including the Copenhagen Accord (2009), the Paris Agreement (2015), and the COP26 report (UNFCCC, 2021a). The study compared the approaches of key global actors – the United States (The U.S. Department of Energy, 2022), China (IEA, 2022a) and Russia (IEA, 2022b), and India (The Union Cabinet, 2022) – to the distribution of financial commitments to combat climate change. The study analysed the political and economic reasons for China's and Russia's absence from COP26, including the internal and external factors that influenced their decisions. The third stage of the study included a comprehensive comparative analysis of the strategies adopted at COP26, focusing on their practical implementation in the key actors, the US, the EU, China, Russia, and India. To examine the specific features of approaches to achieving carbon neutrality, the study employed the method of content analysis of long-term low-emission development strategies. The analysis covered the timeframe within which countries declare the achievement of carbon neutrality and the estimated amount of greenhouse gas emission reductions in the short and medium term. The study also focused on financial commitments between developed and developing countries, given the divergent approaches to sharing responsibility for financing climate initiatives. The study analysed the implications of these conflicts for international climate cooperation, including the probable risks and prospects for further climate negotiations (World Bank, 2021; UNFCCC, 2021c; 2021d; 2021e; 2021f; 2021g; 2022a; 2022b).

The methodological framework of the study included several interrelated approaches that ensured a comprehensive analysis of the topic. Historical analysis was employed to examine the evolution of climate negotiations at previous COP conferences to trace the development of their key themes, key resolutions, and the dynamics of country participation. Political analysis was employed to provide an in-depth assessment of the positions of key players, such as the US, EU, G77 countries, China, and Russia, considering their national interests, economic priorities, and energy and climate strategies. The application of these methodological approaches was aimed at a comprehensive study of the transformation of climate policy of key international actors after COP26, with the purpose of identifying political, economic, and institutional factors that affect the implementation of climate commitments.

Results

Political context and key players at the 26th Climate Conference. The Conference of the Parties (COP), established under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), is the central platform for international climate change negotiations. Since COP1 in 1995, their purpose has been to create a comprehensive strategy to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate. At COP3, the first legally binding document was adopted – the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1997), which set concrete targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for developed countries. The Protocol aimed to reduce emissions to levels below 1990 levels, but not all countries have fulfilled these commitments. In 2009, at the COP15 in Copenhagen, a new global agreement was expected to be concluded to replace the Kyoto Protocol after 2012. The key issues discussed included countries' commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, financing mechanisms for developing countries, and the creation of a single legally binding document. However, the conference ended without a legally binding agreement. Instead, the Copenhagen Accord (2009) was adopted, a non-binding political declaration that did not contain clear quantitative emissions reduction targets. This necessitated a new agreement, which was reached at COP21 in Paris in 2015. The Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21) held in 2015 was aimed at reaching a new comprehensive climate agreement that would unite all countries in the world in their efforts to combat climate change. The key issues discussed at the conference included long-term targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to the effects of climate change, financial support for developing countries, and monitoring and reporting mechanisms. This resulted in the adoption of the Paris Agreement (2015), which set a goal of keeping the global average temperature rise to well below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial levels, with the intention of limiting it to 1.5 °C. The agreement also obliged all countries to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and update them every five years, demonstrating progress in reducing emissions. Each subsequent conference, including COP26, continued to build on the previous decisions, focusing on implementing the goals of the Paris Agreement, increasing climate funding, and developing innovative technologies to reduce emissions. The COPs have become not only a decision-making platform, but also a valuable tool for monitoring and reporting on the results achieved in the fight against climate change.

Before COP26, which took place in November 2021 in Glasgow, the global political situation was challenging. The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in late 2019, had a global economic impact, causing a 3.5% decline in global GDP in 2020, according to the World Bank (2024a). This significantly worsened the economic prospects of countries, particularly the development of infrastructure and innovative technologies, including renewable energy sources (Zhuravel, 2023). Growing government budget deficits caused by the effects of lockdowns and crisis economic measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic markedly weakened the ability of many governments to invest in climate initiatives. According to Statista, based on the International Monetary Fund A. O'Neill (2023),

in 2020, the budget deficit in emerging market countries increased to 9.3% of GDP on average, up from 4.8% in 2019. In South Africa, this figure reached 10.8%, in Brazil – 13.4%, and in India – 9.2%. At the same time, the level of global cooperation declined due to the prioritisation of national interests, the closure of borders, and the strengthening of protectionist approaches. This also complicated the implementation of the joint financial and technical mechanisms stipulated by the Paris Agreement.

The economic downturn has had a particularly devastating effect on low-income countries, where the pandemic has exacerbated structural inequalities. The World Bank (2024c) estimates that over 97 million people worldwide fell below the extreme poverty line in 2020, with the majority in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. For example, the poverty rate in Nigeria increased by more than 2% in the first year of the pandemic alone. In countries such as Bangladesh and Ethiopia, a significant decline was observed in employment in the informal sector, which accounted for over 70% of the total labour market. In this regard, increased pressure on governments has forced them to reorient their budget priorities from long-term climate goals to immediate socio-economic needs.

Global disagreements over the financing of climate initiatives continue to be a constant topic of discussion at COP conferences. According to the Copenhagen Accord (2009), reached at COP15, developed countries pledged to provide USD 100 bn annually to support climate action in developing countries. However, according to a United Nations report, only about USD 80 bn was mobilised by 2021, which is 80% of the pledged amount (United Nations, 2021). This chronic underfunding caused discontent among countries in the Global South, especially in Africa and Latin America. The source of resentment is not only inequity in the fulfilment of financial commitments, but also the disparity between the level of vulnerability to climate risks and access to resources to counter these risks. For instance, in Mozambique and Haiti, climate-related disasters, including cyclones and floods, caused large-scale social losses, but a lack of funding made it impossible to properly adapt infrastructure to extreme weather events (African Development Bank Group, 2025).

The governments of these countries were forced to cut social spending or turn to international financial institutions to raise loans to cover the costs of combating climate change, which led to an increased debt burden. Thus, the failure of developed countries to fulfil their commitments not only undermines confidence in climate processes, but also directly deepens inequality between global regions. According to the OECD report, only 27% of these funds were allocated to climate change adaptation, while the majority (60%) were used to mitigate the effects of climate change (OECD, 2023). Developing countries emphasised the need for greater investment in projects aimed at restoring ecosystems, protecting biodiversity, and developing clean technologies. This failure to meet financial commitments by developed countries called into question the effectiveness of global climate commitments and became a crucial aspect of the political discussions at COP26. Southern countries have been actively calling for an equitable distribution of climate funding, which became part of the Climate Justice Programme launched in 2021

(International Federation of Social Workers, 2021). The commitments signed during COP21 in 2015 are also still unfulfilled. One of the key points of the Paris Agreement was to reduce CO₂ emissions by 2030. As presented in Table 1, while the US and EU are showing positive dynamics in reducing CO₂ emissions, their efforts may not be enough

to meet global climate goals unless other major economies step up their commitments. Rising emissions in Russia and China severely complicate the meeting of the climate goals, as these countries are among the largest sources of greenhouse gases. India, despite its relatively low per capita emissions, is also demonstrating negative dynamics.

Table 1. Change in CO₂ emissions compared to commitments

Country	Pledged reduction by 2030	CO ₂ level as of 2015 (tonnes)	CO ₂ level as of 2021 (tonnes)	CO ₂ level as of 2023 (tonnes)
USA	40%	16.5	14.8	14.3
Russia	70%	11.3	11.7	12.5
China	60%	7.1	8	8.4
EU	55%	7.5	7.1	6.7
India	33%	1.7	1.9	2.1

Source: compiled by the author of this study based on Paris Agreement (2015) and OWD (2024)

At COP26, developing countries emphasised the need for greater flexibility in greenhouse gas emission requirements. They emphasised that they are at the stage of industrialisation and development, and therefore severe restrictions could significantly affect their economic development. According to the World Bank, developing countries account for about 60% of the world's population, and their economies' share of global output is still growing (World Bank, 2025). These countries often rely on energy-intensive industries, such as metallurgy, agriculture, and manufacturing, which require significant carbon dioxide emissions. Based on these factors, developing countries have insisted on flexibility in meeting their climate commitments, considering their socio-economic needs. For example, India, one of the largest developing countries, said it needed more time to implement its emissions reduction commitments, especially in the context of its growing population and need for energy to support development. This issue was also related to financial aid. Developing countries demanded more funding for the transition to renewable energy and climate change adaptation. Since many of them are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, they sought commitments from developed countries to fulfil financial pledges, such as the USD 100 bn per year set at previous conferences (Copenhagen Accord, 2009).

The political aspect, exacerbated by economic problems after the pandemic, substantially influenced the negotiation process at COP26, where developed countries emphasised the urgency of achieving climate goals, while developing countries demanded a fairer distribution of financial resources and more flexible deadlines for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. At COP26, major global players with differing national interests and climate ambitions played a key role in determining the outcome. The United States, under the leadership of President Joe Biden, focused on returning to global climate leadership after withdrawing from the Paris Agreement (2015) during the Donald Trump administration. The re-engagement in the agreement was accompanied by the announcement of ambitious targets: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. To achieve these goals, the Biden administration planned extensive investments in clean energy, including USD 369 bn for climate initiatives within the framework of the Social Infrastructure Bill (The U.S. Department of Energy, 2022).

Internal efforts in the United States focused on the development of renewable energy sources, decarbonisation of transport and electricity, and the introduction of new energy efficiency standards (The U.S. Department of Energy, 2022). This was to help create jobs and strengthen the emissions-reducing economy.

Despite numerous internal challenges, the European Union has maintained a leading role in global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Under the European Green Deal adopted in 2019, the EU aims to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. By 2030, it is planned to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% from 1990 levels. In line with this strategy, member states have pledged to increase the share of renewable energy in the energy mix to 40% by 2030 (EU Monitor, 2022). In the international arena, the EU has emphasised the need to strengthen its climate partnership with developing countries and has provided significant funding to support the global green transformation. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, stressed the importance of a fair transition to a green economy that includes social protection (European Commission, 2021). A EUR 17.5 bn fund was created under the Just Transition Mechanism to support regions dependent on fossil fuels, such as Silesia in Poland or Asturias in Spain (World Bank Group, 2021).

The key players at COP26 developed their strategies in the context of national economic realities and global climate challenges, creating a complex political dynamic that had a decisive impact on the consensus at the conference. However, some major actors were absent from COP26. Most notably, China and Russia were absent. The absence of China and Russia from COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021 considerably affected the course and outcome of the conference, which was considered key to the fight against climate change. Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin did not attend in person, which caused criticism and concern from the international community. The official reason for Xi Jinping's absence was to follow strict quarantine measures related to the zero-tolerance policy for COVID-19 (Shawn, 2022). This decision also had political overtones, as China was preparing for the 20th Communist Party Congress in 2022, and the country's leadership was focused on internal stability. The energy crisis of 2021 also played a crucial role: coal accounted

for 61% of the country's energy mix, with annual consumption of about 4.2 billion tonnes. A rapid coal phase-out could jeopardise China's economic growth, which continues to be a priority for the government (IEA, 2022a).

Russia also did not send its president to the conference, citing internal reasons and diplomatic differences. Russia is one of the largest oil and gas exporters, and its economy is heavily dependent on fossil fuel exports: in 2021, the fuel and energy sector accounted for more than 60% of the country's exports and about 45% of its budget (IEA, 2022b). Vladimir Putin's absence was perceived as a political signal that underscored Russia's unwillingness to make tough climate commitments. Russia's announced goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 was criticised as insufficiently ambitious considering the goal of keeping global warming to 1.5 °C (Climate Action Tracker, 2022).

The absence of the leaders of China and Russia substantially affected the outcome of COP26, as these countries are among the largest polluters and key players in global energy policy. Their absence at the summit signalled an unwillingness to make active commitments to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. The wording on the "phase-out" of coal in the final text of the Glasgow Climate Pact (UNFCCC, 2021a) was a compromise due to the resistance of China and Russia, which continue to rely heavily on fossil fuels to meet their energy needs and economic development.

This decision was criticised by environmental organisations, which argued that the use of the term "phase-out" instead of "phase-down" substantially weakens global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Stricter language could have encouraged a faster transition to renewable energy sources, contributing to the creation of a green economy and reducing the adverse environmental impact. The compromise enabled China and Russia to continue to use coal in large volumes, postponing the problem to the future. The weakness of the final COP26 text was a cause for concern among developing countries that are most affected by climate change. The need for stronger international pressure on large economies such as China and Russia to reduce their emissions was emphasised.

The political aspect of the run-up to COP26 showed that although the conference was supposed to be a prominent milestone in global efforts to combat climate change, the political situation stayed complex and ambiguous. Internal and external contradictions between developed and developing countries made it challenging to reach a consensus. Differences in approaches to financing climate initiatives, fulfilling commitments to mitigate and adapt to climate change, and adapting to its effects exacerbated tensions among negotiators. Additionally, global crises, including the economic and energy difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and political disagreements, have further complicated the ability of countries to act together. These factors indicate that the global fight against climate change requires deeper political will and international cooperation to overcome existing differences and ensure the effective implementation of climate goals.

Effects of COP26 decisions on energy policy and international cooperation. COP26 was a major milestone in global efforts to overcome the effects of climate change. The conference participants adopted a series of decisions

aimed at accelerating the transition to a low-carbon economy, which influenced the energy policies of the participating countries. One of the key achievements of COP26 was the adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact (UNFCCC, 2021a), which prescribes accelerating the phase-out of coal, reducing fossil fuel subsidies, and developing renewable energy sources. A significant aspect of the conference was the re-affirmation of the commitment of developed countries to mobilise USD 100 bn annually to support climate initiatives in developing countries. Participants also announced the creation of new financial mechanisms for climate change adaptation. Particular attention was paid to the Methane Emissions Reduction Initiative, in which more than 100 countries participated. The initiative aims to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030 compared to 2020 levels (UNFCCC, 2021a). Over 40 countries signed a declaration on the phase-out of coal as an energy source. However, this agreement caused controversy, as India and China insisted on softening the wording on coal phase-out, which was reflected in the final text of the agreement (UNFCCC, 2021c).

The decisions made substantially affected the energy policies of key countries. The European Union, which actively supported the Glasgow Pact, integrated its provisions into the European Green Deal (EU Monitor, 2022). This plan envisages a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, an increase in the share of renewable energy sources to 40% in the overall energy balance, and the acceleration of wind and solar energy development. The United States announced its intention to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50–52% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels and has joined the methane initiative (The U.S. Department of Energy, 2022). However, political confrontations in Congress slowed the implementation of these goals. China, which is still one of the largest coal consumers in the world, announced its intention to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 and reduce coal use after 2025 (UNFCCC, 2021d). However, the country refrained from making concrete commitments to reduce methane emissions. India, which is also dependent on coal, declared its intention to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070 and to meet 50% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2030 (UNFCCC, 2022a).

Ambitious goals aside, the implementation of COP26 decisions faces numerous challenges. Political resistance from some countries, such as India, China, and Russia, to the coal phase-out, financial challenges in developing countries, and the energy crisis of 2022–2023 are significantly slowing down the implementation of the commitments. Still, COP26 was a crucial step in shaping a new climate policy and updating the energy strategies of participating countries. Studies report that the introduction of renewable energy sources (RES) accelerated significantly since COP26. According to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), in 2022, the installed capacity of renewable energy sources increased by 9% compared to the previous year and amounted to more than 3,300 GW (International Renewable Energy Agency, 2022). COP26 was a turning point for global energy policy, stimulating the introduction of renewable energy innovations and reducing carbon emissions. The implementation of these strategies is already showing major progress, although achieving climate goals requires further efforts and strengthened international cooperation.

Not all the outcomes of COP26 can be assessed as unqualified progress in international cooperation. The gap in climate funding between developed and developing countries became a more prominent issue. Developed countries failed to reach the promised level of funding of USD 100 bn per year, which weakened trust between the parties. States in Africa, Asia, and Latin America expressed concern that this financing gap is hindering their ability to adapt energy policies to the current climate challenges.

COP26 was an incentive for many countries to update their climate plans and increase their ambitions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The UK, as one of the key organisers of COP26, announced a series of ambitious climate targets, including the phase-out of fossil fuels in the transport system by 2030 (UNFCCC, 2022b). According to the plan, the government intends to ban the sale of new cars with internal combustion engines by this date, while encouraging the transition to electric vehicles. To support this transformation, it is planned to allocate GBP 620 mn to expand the infrastructure for charging electric vehicles, as well as GBP 350 mn to stimulate the production of batteries and electric vehicles in the UK. These measures are part of the wider Net Zero Strategy (UNFCCC, 2021e), which aims to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

At the same time, India, which is the third largest greenhouse gas emitter, declared its intention to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070. This step, despite being less than the ambitions of developed countries, is a considerable progress for a country with a strong dependence on coal, which accounts for more than 60% of its energy mix (UNFCCC, 2022a). India also announced plans to increase the share of renewable energy sources to 50% of its total electricity generation by 2030, which will require investments of more than USD 1 tn. Additionally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launch of the Panchamrit initiative, which includes five key commitments, including reducing emissions by 1 billion tonnes by 2030 (The Union Cabinet, 2022).

COP26 also demonstrated the growing geopolitical divergence in the context of energy transformation, reflected in distinct approaches to climate commitments and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) member states, particularly Saudi Arabia, emphasised the serious economic risks associated with accelerated oil and gas phase-out. Saudi Arabia stated that rapid decarbonisation could undermine the stability of their economies, which are heavily dependent on oil export revenues, which account for more than 70% of their budget revenues (UNFCCC, 2021f). Saudi representatives also emphasised the significance of carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies as an alternative approach to combating climate change that would preserve the share of fossil fuels in the world's energy mix.

China and Russia, while supporting some climate initiatives, have been cautious in formulating concrete commitments due to internal economic and geopolitical factors. China, as the world's largest energy consumer, officially supported the Paris Agreement (2015) and confirmed its intention to peak CO₂ emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060. Within the framework of the Green Silk Road initiative, China also announced that it would stop financing new coal-fired power plants

abroad, which was perceived as a crucial signal in the global transition to clean energy. Nevertheless, the country, which still generates over 50% of its electricity from coal, insisted on the need to gradually reduce the use of fossil fuels, considering the specifics of its economic model. At COP26, Chinese representatives also stressed the significance of technological advancement in achieving climate goals, but refused to sign the Global Methane Reduction Initiative, which aims to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030. Russia, for its part, also supported the Paris Agreement and in 2021 approved the Low Carbon Development Strategy until 2050, which envisages achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. At COP26, the Russian delegation confirmed its readiness to develop forestry as the key emissions offsetting mechanism. At the same time, the country did not join a series of other initiatives, including those on coal and methane, which indicates a desire to maintain strategic flexibility in its energy policy.

Russia, one of the world's largest oil and natural gas exporters, focused its efforts on promoting natural gas as a "transitional" fuel in the global energy transition. Representatives of the country stated that an accelerated shift away from fossil fuels could destabilise energy markets, lead to higher prices, and threaten the energy security of a series of countries. Russia also gave limited support to the global initiative to reduce methane emissions by signing the declaration but refused to commit to significant emissions reductions in the coming years. These divergences between key players reflect their desire to protect their personal economic interests and maintain influence in the global energy balance. On the one hand, fossil fuel-dependent economies are advocating a more gradual transition and alternative technological solutions. On the other hand, developed countries and states with high decarbonisation ambitions, such as the European Union, are demanding a faster pace of energy transformation, which creates further tension in international negotiations.

One of the key issues discussed at the conference was climate funding. Its key objective is to mobilise sufficient resources for climate change mitigation and adaptation, especially in developing countries that are most affected by climate change. COP26 demonstrated the complex dynamics of negotiations between developed countries, which are the primary donors, and developing countries, which insist on performing their financial obligations. Developed countries, which bear the main historical responsibility for greenhouse gas emissions, pledged at COP15 in 2009 to mobilise USD 100 bn annually by 2020 to help developing countries. However, as of 2021, this target was not reached. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), total climate funding totalled around USD 79.6 bn in 2019 and around USD 83.3 bn in 2020, well below the stated target (OECD, 2023). Developed countries such as the US, UK, Japan, and the EU declared their willingness to increase financial support, but often preferred low-interest loans to grants. This drew criticism from developing countries, which viewed the loans as unjustified considering their limited debt-servicing capacity.

In response to the growing climate challenges, developing countries are increasingly developing national adaptation strategies, integrating climate resilience

measures into their socio-economic programmes. The key purpose of such strategies is to reduce the vulnerability of key sectors such as agriculture, water, energy, healthcare, and infrastructure to the effects of extreme weather events, sea level rise, and changes in precipitation patterns. In the agricultural sector, agroecological practices are being introduced, including the cultivation of drought-resistant crops, the introduction of drip irrigation, the restoration of degraded land, and the change in sowing calendars in line with climate forecasts. This is particularly relevant for African countries such as Kenya, Senegal, and Ethiopia, where agriculture is the primary source of income for most of the population.

Countries in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia, are implementing comprehensive coastal zone management programmes that include the construction of defences, mangrove restoration, and the development of threat maps and early warning systems. They are also investing in strengthening flood-, typhoon-, and tsunami-resilient infrastructure. In Latin America, adaptation policies include the development of rainwater harvesting systems, biodiversity conservation, and support for inclusive local planning based on indigenous knowledge. South Asia, particularly Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal, is focusing on developing social protection programmes for people displaced by climate disasters, as well as healthcare development to combat climate-related diseases.

Another key area is the development of renewable energy, which not only reduces dependence on fossil fuel imports but also creates new jobs in the context of the energy transition. In many countries, support for decentralised energy systems, such as solar micro-power plants in rural areas, is growing. Such solutions not only provide access to electricity but also increase the resilience of communities to supply disruptions. At the same time, limited access to finance continues to be a widespread challenge. Developing countries insist that funding commitments should not only be met, but also substantially increased as the climate crisis worsens. At COP26, representatives of the Least Developed Countries Group and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) called for an increase in financial aid to reach at least USD 500 bn by 2030. They pay special attention to grant funding and to directing most funds to adaptation measures, as these countries suffer the greatest losses due to sea level rise, extreme weather events, and ecosystem degradation. A considerable number of developing countries also insisted on creating a mechanism to compensate for losses and damages associated with climate disasters. This issue became one of the most controversial during COP26, as developed countries had long avoided discussing such a mechanism for fear of legal liability. Developing countries are building institutional capacity to respond to climate challenges by integrating adaptation into national planning, involving local communities in decision-making, developing technological capacity, and seeking new partnerships. However, the effectiveness of these strategies largely depends on the level of international financial and technical support, which continues to be critical for the implementation of long-term adaptation programmes.

Contrary to expectations, the agreements reached at COP26 only partially met the demands of developing countries. Developed countries reaffirmed their commitment to the USD 100 bn a year target but acknowledged that this would not be achieved by 2023. They also announced an increase in the share of funding for adaptation measures: by 2025, it should rise to 40% (UNFCCC, 2021a). Specifically, Germany and Canada took initiatives to improve transparency in financial flows and create a roadmap to achieve this goal. The key achievement was the agreement to create the Glasgow Finance Initiative, aimed at mobilising private capital for climate action. Under it, over 450 financial institutions from 45 countries, controlling more than USD 130 tn in assets, pledged to support projects aimed at achieving zero emissions (UNFCCC, 2021a).

Despite these efforts, the COP26 outcomes in the area of finance are still insufficient. The lack of clear legal mechanisms for fulfilling commitments and inconsistent positions between donors and recipients continue to complicate the global fight against climate change. The lack of consistent approaches to financial aid, such as the distinction between grants and loans, creates further challenges for recipient countries. For example, Japan counted loans for the construction of “more efficient” coal-fired power plants as climate financial support, leading to long-term dependence on fossil fuels in recipient countries. Lack of funding will mean a massive loss of lives and livelihoods in vulnerable countries. Critics also point out that even the existing promises of developed countries are not being fulfilled, which is a major issue, considering that the negative effects and large losses from climate change are already taking place.

The issues of achieving carbon neutrality and determining the timing and scale of greenhouse gas emission reductions became the primary topics of political debate during COP26. Carbon neutrality or achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions generated and the amount of gases absorbed by natural or technological methods, is a crucial element of international climate commitments. However, determining the timing, mechanisms, and scope of emissions reductions caused numerous political conflicts that divided negotiators into two camps – developing and developed countries.

One of the greatest conflicts at COP26 arose around the issue of the timeline for achieving carbon neutrality (Table 2). At COP21 in Paris, an agreement was reached to keep global warming within 1.5°C (Paris Agreement, 2015). However, achieving this target requires rapid and extensive reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which leads to disagreements over the timing of achieving carbon neutrality. Developed countries, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, Japan, and Canada, stated that they can achieve this goal by 2050, while the United States, China, and other large economies, including the Indian government, insisted on a later date, pointing to the need to maintain economic development and social stability in their countries. China, the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases, declared its readiness to achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, while India announced plans to achieve this goal by 2070.

Table 2. Political conflicts over the timing and scale of carbon neutrality

Country / region	Declared date of achieving carbon neutrality	Key positions and arguments	Conflicts with other countries	Compromises reached at COP26
EU	2050	Emphasis on strict regulation, reducing emissions through technology and a green deal	Conflicts with developing countries over demands for increased funding to achieve the goals	Reaffirming leadership in climate funding and calling for global cooperation
China	2060	Focus on gradual emissions reductions while maintaining economic growth	Conflicts with the EU and the US over insufficiently ambitious targets and continued use of coal	Participation in discussions, but refusal to accelerate the deadlines
India	2070	Position on the historical responsibility of developed countries for emissions and demand for more funding for the energy transition	Disputes with developed countries over the timing and scale of funding	Pledge to increase renewable energy use to 50% by 2030, subject to international support
USA	2050	Plan for ambitious emissions reductions based on technological development, but controversy over internal political disagreements	Conflicts with China over leadership in emissions reductions and rebuilding trust after withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017	Commitment to resume funding and support for international climate initiatives
Russia	2060	Emphasis on achieving targets by absorbing emissions from forests, while maintaining dependence on fossil fuels	Conflicts with the EU and the US over the lack of clear actions and transparency in achieving the goals	Partial acceptance of demands for increased transparency, but with limited commitments

Source: compiled by the author of this study based on International Federation of Social Workers (2021), UNFCCC (2021a), UNFCCC (2021b), EU Monitor (2022), OECD (2023), OWD (2024), World Bank (2025)

The greatest controversies also arose over the issue of reducing emissions in the poorest countries. Emerging economies such as India, Brazil, and South Africa called for a more flexible approach and a longer transition period as they faced multiple economic and social challenges. India, for instance, emphasised that its energy system is heavily dependent on coal for more than 60% of its electricity, and that rapid decarbonisation could have considerable consequences for the economy and the millions of citizens working in the coal industry (UNFCCC, 2022a). Representatives of India also noted that the country was making significant efforts to increase the share of renewable energy sources, but significant investments, including financial and technical support from developed countries, were needed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2070.

The delegation of South Africa, which is also heavily dependent on fossil fuels, especially coal power, highlighted the social and economic consequences of a rapid transition to a low-carbon economy. It was argued that a sharp reduction in coal use could lead to job losses and economic instability, especially in coal-dependent regions. South Africa also called for funding for “just transition” programmes (UNFCCC, 2021g) that would provide new jobs for workers who would be unemployed due to the closure of coal plants. Emerging economies emphasised the principle of “shared but differentiated responsibilities” embedded in the Paris Agreement, which recognised the historical responsibility of developed countries for climate change. They argued that strict deadlines for achieving carbon neutrality could not be imposed without accommodating the level of development of countries and their efforts to combat climate change.

These contradictions made it challenging to reach a coherent decision at COP26, as developed countries such as the US and EU insisted on accelerated emissions reductions and stricter deadlines for achieving climate neutrality. At the same time, they emphasised that climate

ambitions should be the same for all countries, regardless of their economic level. As a result, a compromise was reached that preserved the principle of equity but did not address many financial and social issues that were still key for the poorest countries.

Another prominent issue that caused conflicts at COP26 was the scale of emissions reductions. Developed countries with extensive emissions insisted that emissions reductions should be made in line with national commitments, particularly through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). The European Union reaffirmed its goal of reducing emissions by 55% below 1990 levels by 2030. One of the valuable outcomes of COP26 was the inclusion in the resolution of a call for all countries to update their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) by 2022, raising the ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This decision was an attempt to compensate for the lack of progress in fulfilling previous commitments, as well as to respond to the call from the scientific community for urgent and radical action to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. The resolution focuses on the G20 countries, which are responsible for more than 80% of global emissions, and demands that they take more decisive and effective measures to reduce emissions by 2030 (UNFCCC, 2021a).

One of the key innovations of COP26 was the creation of a financing mechanism to support countries in their transition to low-carbon economies. Specifically, this mechanism is aimed at developing clean energy technologies, such as solar, wind, and green hydrogen production, as well as supporting transformation in coal-dependent regions. To this end, it was agreed to attract private investment and channel public funds through international financial institutions, such as the Green Climate Fund. Of particular interest was the initiative to develop carbon capture and storage technologies, which could potentially play a key role in reducing industrial emissions and stabilising the climate.

However, despite considerable discussion and political statements, concrete legal commitments to reduce emissions stayed unclear. The text of the resolution stressed the need for global cooperation and support for ambitious climate goals but did not detail mechanisms or establish specific sanctions in case of non-compliance. This drew criticism from climate activists and experts, who stressed that without clear implementation tools, the resolution risks remaining a set of declarations.

Discussion

The conducted study of the decisions and impact of the 26th UN Climate Conference (COP26) is a valuable contribution to understanding the relationship between global environmental commitments and the political factors that determine international cooperation in the face of climate challenges. The analysis of the political context, key players, and outcomes of COP26 helped to assess both positive and controversial aspects of current climate policy. The findings of the present study confirmed that global climate initiatives are increasingly becoming an arena of geopolitical confrontation, which creates both opportunities and challenges for achieving sustainable development.

COP26 was a crucial milestone in shaping global climate policy, as it brought together states, international organisations, and non-state actors to address climate change. According to M. Hasan (2022) and J. Bloomfield & F. Steward (2022), the conference made considerable progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, financing climate action, and supporting renewable energy technologies. At the same time, the effectiveness of COP26 was limited by the lack of specification of the mechanisms for implementing the decisions and the lack of mechanisms to monitor their implementation. The conclusions of M. Jacobs (2022) and T. Stankovic *et al.* (2023) confirmed the findings of the present study and noted that one of the key limitations of COP26 was the lack of enforcement mechanisms for the implementation of decisions. The Paris Agreement prescribes the voluntary implementation of commitments, which complicates the achievement of global climate goals. The absence of sanctions for non-compliance reduces the effectiveness of international climate agreements.

The issue of climate funding is the subject of much debate between developed and developing countries. According to U.J. Frey & J. Burgess (2023) and O. Mizuno (2025), the lack of financial resources to support climate action in developing countries is a critical barrier to their participation in global efforts. The current study confirmed this thesis, emphasising the relevance of striking a balance between the financial commitments of developed countries and the needs of less developed countries. The study also found that COP26 contributed to increased attention to the integration of climate action into international cooperation. However, according to T. Cadman & R. Hales (2022) and M. Jacobs (2022), the lack of enforcement mechanisms under climate agreements limits their effectiveness. The present study highlighted the significance of developing clearer tools for monitoring the implementation of commitments, particularly in the context of the Paris Agreement.

The political conflicts that arose around the COP26 resolutions demonstrate the major influence of national interests on international climate initiatives. According to G. Huang *et al.* (2022) and L. Ziyu & Z. Chi (2023), the timing and scope of carbon neutrality commitments continue to be a subject of heated debate between developed and developing countries. The present study noted that resolving such conflicts requires building trust between countries and developing more inclusive decision-making mechanisms.

The findings of the study revealed that global climate policy is increasingly influencing the development of energy policies in the world's leading countries. J. Markard & D. Rosenbloom (2022) and O.O. Babayomi *et al.* (2022) reported that the transition to renewable energy sources became a priority for many governments, which is reflected in increased investment in solar, wind, and hydropower technologies. At the same time, national strategies increasingly include decarbonisation programmes aimed at reducing the consumption of fossil fuels, particularly coal and oil. The dependence of many countries on conventional energy sources continues to be a major challenge to meeting climate commitments. According to studies by P. Achakulwisut *et al.* (2023) and M. Qamruzzaman & S. Karim (2024), the technological and financial capacity of fossil fuel-dependent countries largely determines the speed of their transition to carbon neutrality.

The COP26 study demonstrated the significance of international cooperation as a key tool for addressing global climate change challenges. The conference brought together states, international organisations, the private sector, civil society, and the scientific community to discuss comprehensive approaches to climate policy implementation. According to S. Schaub *et al.* (2024) and K. Skagen & E.L. Boasson (2024), the integration of climate action into global policy, strengthened by the participation of various stakeholders, raised awareness of the value of combating climate change at all levels. The involvement of a wide range of actors also provided a better understanding of regional specificities and needs, which is essential for the development of inclusive strategies aimed at achieving common climate goals. However, as S.J. Rickard (2024) noted, reaching consensus among all parties still poses a major challenge. Differences in national interests, economic capacities, and levels of development markedly complicate the negotiation process. This creates tensions in international climate negotiations, specifically regarding the timing of achieving carbon neutrality. The absence of a unified position on key aspects of climate policy also creates a risk of fragmentation of global efforts.

According to K. Dooley *et al.* (2021) and J. Hickel *et al.* (2022), the uneven distribution of responsibilities between countries has become one of the key challenges that emerged during COP26. Developed countries insist on tough commitments for developing countries, citing the need to rapidly reduce global emissions, while the latter demand more financial assistance and access to green technologies to meet their climate goals. At the same time, the participation of some large, developed countries, such as Russia and China, was limited: both countries avoided the conference, signalling their reluctance to take leadership roles in addressing

climate issues. As P.D. Williams & M. McDonald (2023) and A. Thompson (2024), ignoring the global climate dialogue by influential states undermines the efforts of other countries and sets a precedent for shirking responsibility. China and the Putin regime are among the largest greenhouse gas emitters, and their unwillingness to take an active part in international efforts calls into question the achievability of the overall goals of the Paris Agreement. As the present study showed, the lack of constructive participation of such countries in global negotiations increases tensions between developed and developing countries, as the latter fairly point out the need for fairer sharing of responsibility. To address this problem, mechanisms are needed to ensure both financial support from developed countries and transparency of commitments by all parties, including states that stayed outside the global climate dialogue.

The study highlighted an extensive gap between climate ambitions and factual achievements, which casts doubt on the international community's ability to achieve the goals set out in the Paris Agreement. According to T. Sun *et al.* (2021), despite ambitious statements by many countries, real actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are still insufficient. The gap is caused by both a lack of political will and considerable economic and technological constraints that complicate the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. The present study highlighted the relevance of introducing more rigorous monitoring tools and independent assessment of each country's progress. Establishing a unified reporting system based on clear, quantifiable indicators would increase the transparency of the international climate process.

The study was hampered by the complexity of analysing the multilateral negotiations and compromises that accompanied COP26 due to their sophisticated structure and ambiguous political context. Another challenge was to factor in the diverse national priorities and positions of countries, which sometimes contradicted each other. Further research in this area should focus on analysing the long-term impact of COP26 decisions on regional and global policy, particularly in terms of building trust between countries and introducing innovations in climate funding.

Conclusions

The findings of the study of the political context and COP26 decisions demonstrated the complexity and multifaceted nature of the international climate cooperation process. The political situation before the conference was tense due to global crises, political conflicts, and the absence of key players such as China and Russia. Their decision not to take part in COP26 was driven by both internal economic factors and external political disagreements, which substantially affected the outcome of the conference. The absence of these countries limited the achievement of more ambitious agreements and highlighted the differences between the world's major economies.

An analysis of the effects of COP26 decisions on energy policy showed that the conference has become a catalyst for the implementation of new renewable energy strategies. The European Union continues to actively implement the Green Deal, which envisages achieving

climate neutrality by 2050 and a marked increase in the share of renewable energy sources. The United States, which resumed its participation in international climate cooperation, demonstrated its intention to substantially reduce emissions under the Clean Power Plan. However, China and Russia, two of the world's largest economies, are still heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Despite their declared intentions to gradually reduce emissions, their ambitions are much lower than those of other global leaders. This heterogeneity of approaches among countries underscores the challenge of forming a single global consensus.

The issue of climate funding, which became one of the most controversial at COP26, deserves special attention. Developed countries pledged to increase financial aid to support developing countries, including through a promise to mobilise USD 100 bn annually. However, the real figures are still below the promised amounts, which caused considerable disappointment on the part of developing countries. The inequality in the distribution of funding and the lack of clear mechanisms for its implementation led to new political conflicts that hamper the effectiveness of international cooperation. Developing countries emphasise the need for increased financial support and a more equitable approach to resource allocation.

Political conflicts over the timing and scale of carbon neutrality also revealed major divergences between developed and developing countries. Developed countries, such as the EU, are pushing for an ambitious timeline to achieve carbon neutrality by mid-century, which requires an accelerated transition to renewable energy sources and emissions reductions. At the same time, emerging economies are addressing the need to accommodate their socio-economic conditions, the complexities of the energy transition, and requests for greater funding. These countries argue that their contribution to global emissions has historically been much lower, and therefore the responsibility for reducing them should lie with developed countries.

COP26 showed progress in a series of areas, including support for renewable energy and enhanced climate funding, but also revealed serious challenges that prevent the effective implementation of the decisions taken. Political, economic, and social differences between countries require further work to strengthen international cooperation, develop adaptive financing mechanisms, and implement innovative emissions reduction strategies. Promising areas for further research could include studying the impact of political will on the implementation of climate strategies, analysing the economic impact of climate solutions for developed and developing countries, and investigating the effectiveness of financial mechanisms introduced under COP26.

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Conflict of Interest

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