



ClimAccount

Human Rights Accountability of the EU and Austria for Climate Policies in Third Countries and Their Possible Effects on Migration

Background

Climate change is not only an acknowledged and unequivocal fact; it also raises important political and legal questions such as accountability, financial responsibility, global effort sharing and not least the necessity of political and legal frameworks responding to this multi-faceted phenomenon. The premise of the current research project is the increased acknowledgment that not only climate change but also climate policies can impact negatively upon human rights. Climate response measures by states, in particular mitigation and adaptation activities, can result in human rights violations where the rights of affected populations are not taken into account.

The focus of the proposed project is on the human rights accountability of EU and Austrian climate policies in third countries. While this can affect a number of different human rights, emphasis in this project is laid human rights associated with 'migration effects'. 'Migration effects' *inter alia* comprise preventive relocation (government-planned movement of settlements from high risk zones to safer zones; either temporary or permanent, either voluntary or forced), development-based evictions and resettlement (involuntary resettlement of persons and communities by large-scale infrastructure and other projects); and forced displacement (forced development-based eviction without designation of a new settlement). As a consequence to climate change policies, the category can also be termed 'climate-policy induced migration'.

In this context also (extraterritorial) human rights obligations of the EU and Austria are to be identified and – if necessary – recommendations are addressed to policy makers on how to adequately integrate human rights considerations into climate policies – mitigation policies and (development) policies promoting adaptation measures – in order to avoid unintended resettlement.

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Method

The project aims at shedding light on this complex relationship between climate policies, migration and human rights by focusing on the effects of climate policies for the enjoyment of human rights of persons in third countries and migration, displacement and resettlement considering the national, regional, EU- and Austrian level using a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA). In doing so, three in-depth case studies will be conducted.

The case studies selected (**Barro Blanco dam** in Panama, **Olkaria geothermal project** in Kenya and the **Bujagali dam** in Uganda) concentrate on countries which are affected by climate change and where climate policies are carried out either in cooperation with, financed and supported by or related in any other way to the EU and Austria (e.g. by membership in financing institutions). Research missions to three case study countries have been carried out/are planned.

The results of the case studies will be brought together in a comparative analysis, serving as the basis for further interviews with EU and Austrian policy-makers.



Objectives

The project aims at identifying the human rights obligations of the EU and its Member States, especially Austria, concerning climate change policies (mitigation and adaptation measures) towards individuals and communities in third countries, especially those having an effect on migratory movements. Hence, one aspect will be to analyze how the EU and Austria currently address adverse effects of climate policies (adaptation and mitigation measures) in general and human rights infringements in the context of resettlement, re-location and displacement as a result of climate policies in particular.

On this basis, gaps in the international legal and institutional framework to adequately protect people adversely affected by climate change policies (mitigation and adaptation measures) are to be localized in order to draft recommendations accordingly. This also aims at establishing how EU and Austrian climate policies can be improved to incorporate human rights principles.

Finally, by conducting case studies, the consequences of climate change policies on migratory movements are to be determined from a human rights perspective.