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Is Europe ready for Paludiculture? Implications of the EU Agricultural and Climate Policies

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J.Peters



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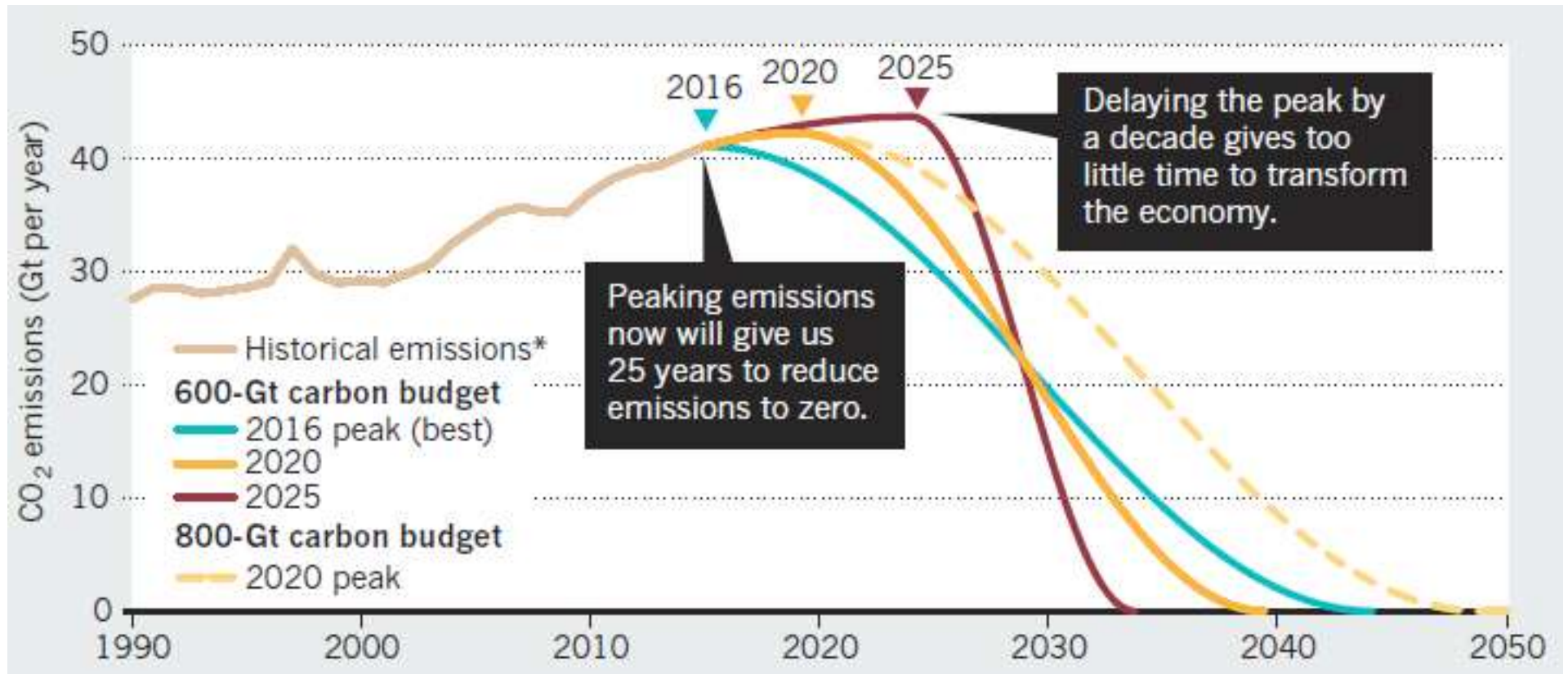
Paris has made the world simple: we have one common goal!



greifswaldmoor.de

Poland

< 2° → 0 emissions by 2050: me, you, we all: no more excuses
The longer we wait, the faster we must reduce



Figueres et al. 2017

[HTTP://GO.NATURE.COM/2RCPCRU](http://go.nature.com/2RCPCRU)

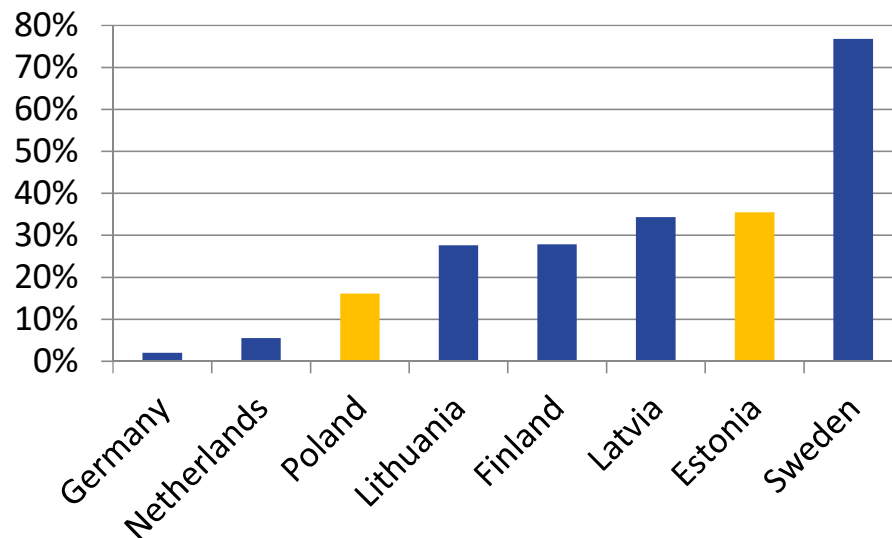
→ breaking radically with routines from the past, also with respect to peatlands



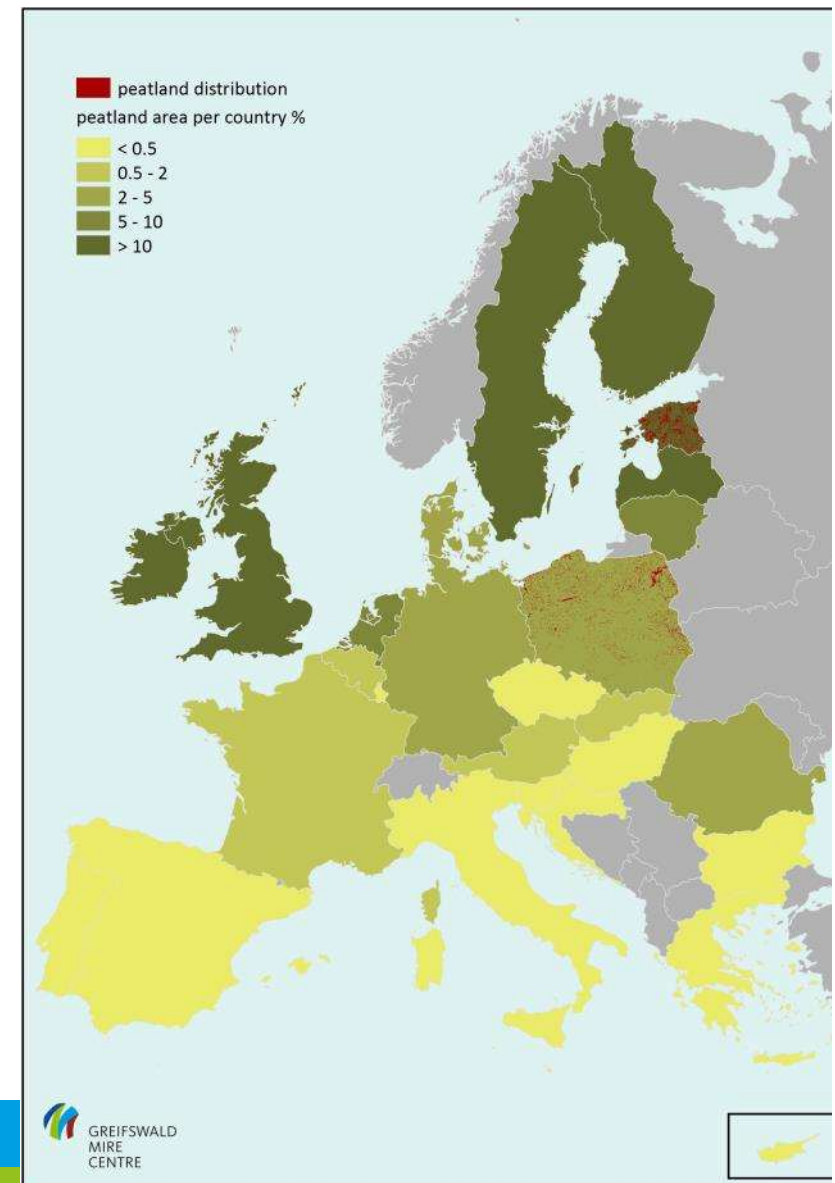
Belarus

Peatlands in Europe

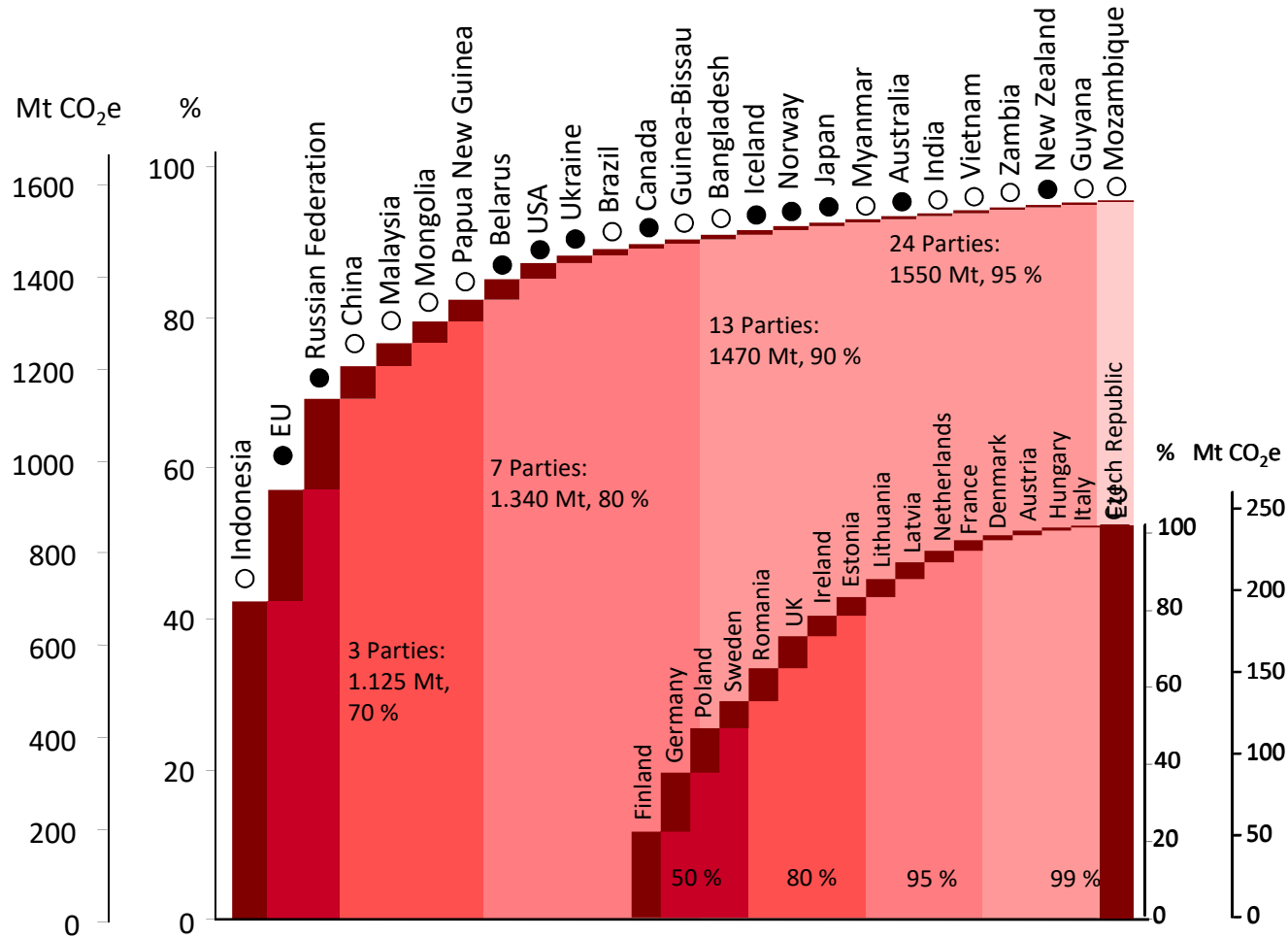
- Intact peatlands are rare!
- In Germany ~1%, in the Netherlands max. 5%
- In northern and eastern Europe
(Fennoscandia, Baltics) considerably better
→ Strategies for drained peatlands needed!
→ Paludiculture has to be considered!

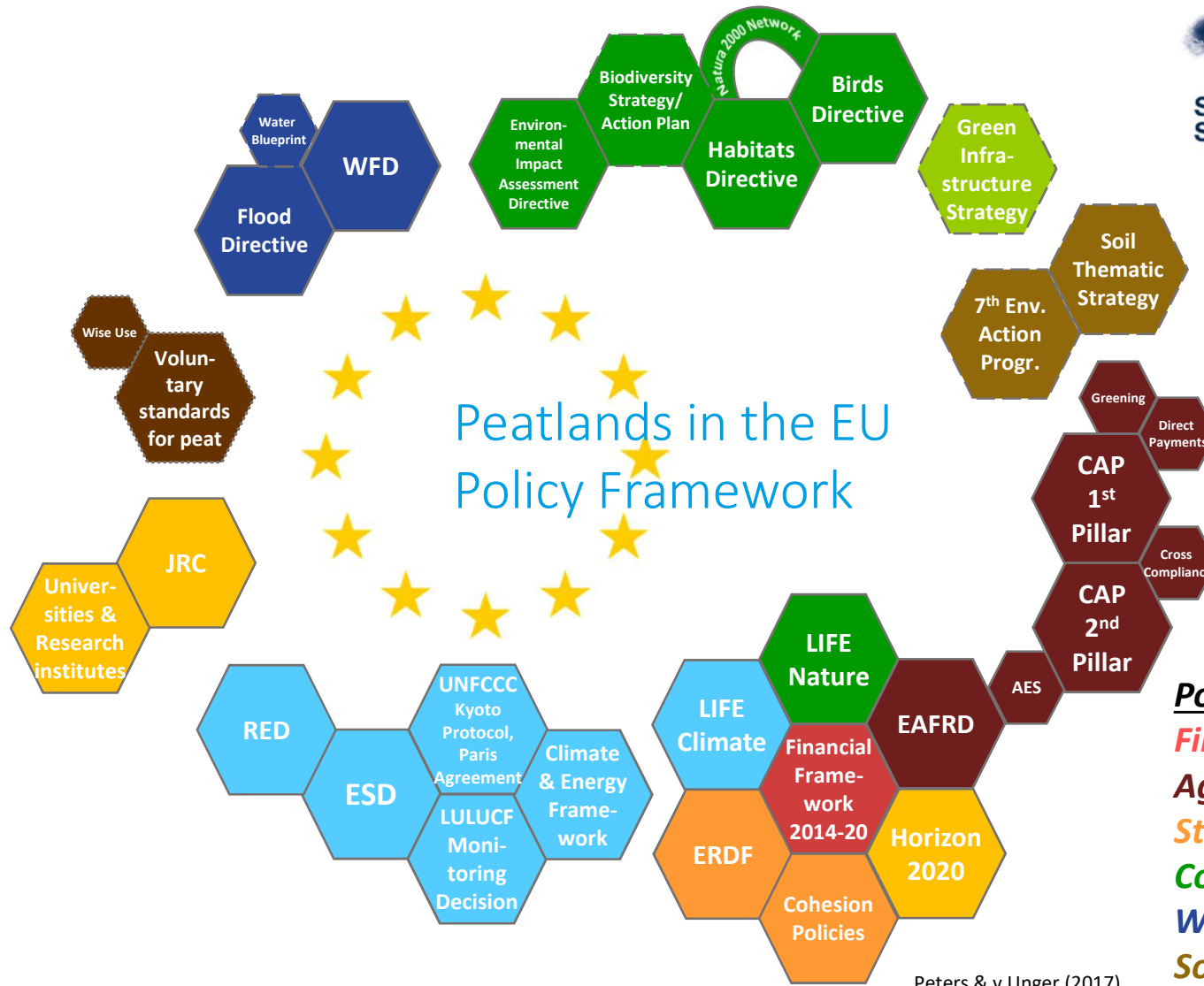


from Joosten, H., Tanneberger, F. & Moen, A. (eds.) (2017) Mires and peatlands of Europe: Status, distribution, and nature conservation



Peatland Emissions





Peters & v Unger (2017)

Policy Fields:

Financial

Agriculture

Structural & Cohesion policies

Conservation & Biodiversity

Water

Soils

Climate & Energy

Research

Horticulture

Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

- Remains main driver of peatland degradation due to payments for drainage-based agriculture
- Missing incentives for rewetting and paludiculture
- Sectoral policy approach hinders broader compliance with climate and biodiversity targets



Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – 1st pillar



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- Loss of direct payments when land use changes
 - Certain „crops“ are not regarded as „agricultural crops“
 - Problems with GAEC standards
- Obligation to maintain permanent grassland hampers conversion of grassland to wet uses
- Competing subsidies (promoting dry use of organic soils)

Pillar 1 direct payments: eligibility



phalaris



sedges



rush



reed,
cattail



Heterogeneous vegetation
with shrubs, reed



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Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – 2nd pillar

- Voluntary measures dominate
 - low acceptance if obligations are ambitious → few examples of rewetting
 - support limited to 5 (7) years normally, reconversion possible
- EST make use of agri-environmental climate schemes (AES) of CAP's 2nd pillar to extensify the use of fen grasslands, but not to raise water levels
→ Focus on biodiversity, low benefit for climate change mitigation
- Rewetting often requires land ownership; public acquisition of land frequently limited by EU budget regulation
- Negative incentives: Investment aid or aid for low input agriculture stabilise existing (dry) land use
- Admin. burden and budget limitations (esp. national co-financing)

Climate & Energy

„GHG source and sink categories “

- Categories defined for GHG reporting according to UNFCCC and IPCC guidelines (CRF = Common Reporting Format)
- Emissions from peatlands represented in CRF4 and 5:
 - **CRF 4 Agriculture:** N_2O
 - **CRF 5 LULUCF:** CO_2 , CH_4

Reporting and accounting

- GHG reporting on the basis of statistics and emission factors / models for National Inventory Reports
- Accounting in this context means making mitigation efforts accountable towards reduction targets



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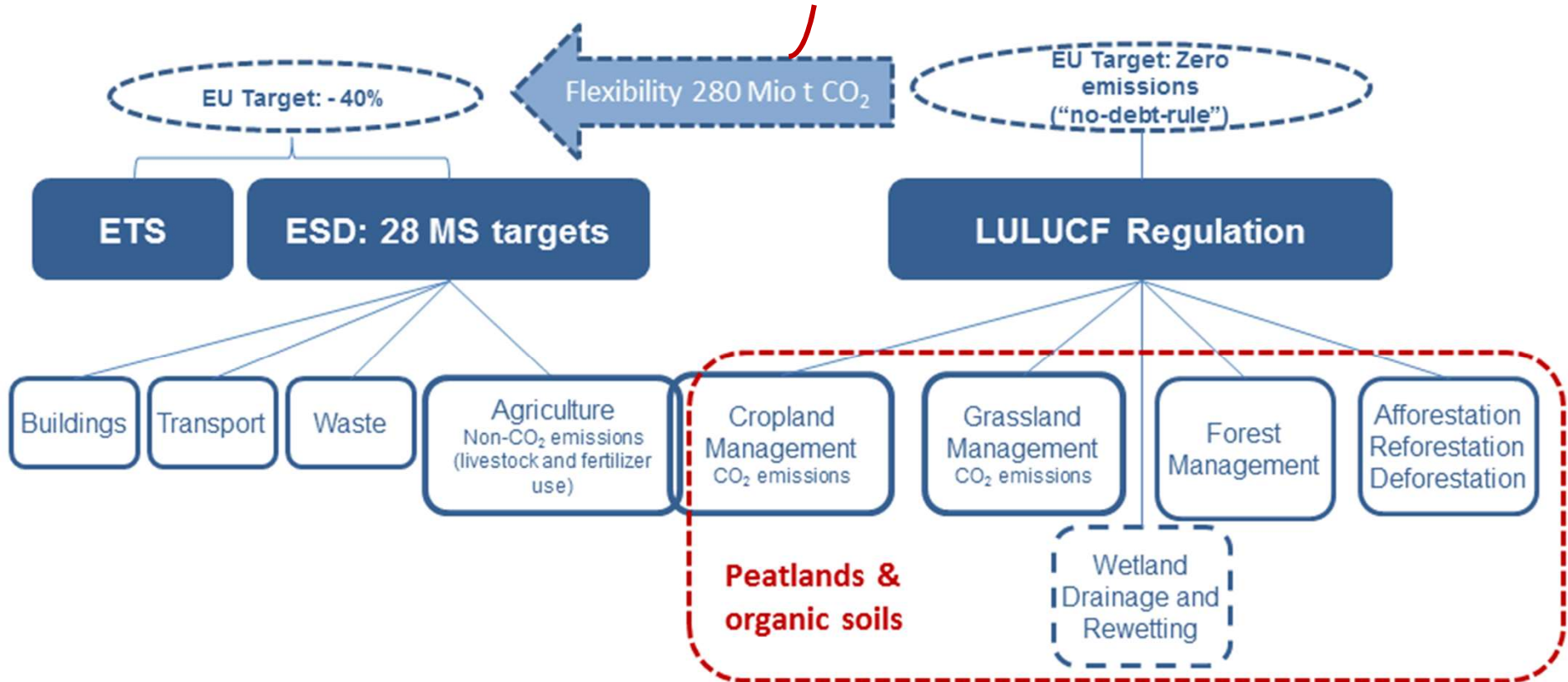
- So far, LULUCF sector not counted towards the EU's 20 % GHG reduction targets for 2020
 - 2013 EU parliament decision gradually oblige GHG accounting of LULUCF
 - Accounting on Wetland Drainage and Rewetting (WDR) remains voluntary
 - Accounting for cropland and grassland management mandatory for member states till 2022
- Incl. most of peatlands in agricultural use

Climate and Energy

- Preparation of EU 2030 climate and energy framework (-40%):
 - To comply with EU NDC to Paris Agreement
 - LULUCF should be integrated for the first time!
 - Decision of EU Parliament on Commission's proposal (Sept. 2017):
 - “forests, agricultural land and wetland, including peatland, will play a central role”*
 - “The bioeconomy, including material substitution such as in construction, and including bioenergy, plays an important role in the transition to a fossil-free economy.”*
- But: focus on forest sub-sector (with high emission reductions due to different accounting rules!) mask reductions from other land uses incl. peatlands
- In general good signs, but in practice, incentives for paludiculture will be minimal

2030 Climate & Energy Framework

Total for EU, allocated to MS according to relevance of agric. Emissions in ESR



Renewable Energy Directive (2009)

- No specific reference to paludiculture biomass
→ No incentives for paludiculture
- In contrast, biomass used from drained peat soils to fulfill obligations





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Europe is not ready for paludiculture yet...
but it can get there if...



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Conclusions I

EU can get ready if...

- **...Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** serves as the key corrective to mitigate ongoing degradation by strictly **penalising drainage-based agriculture** and **incentivising rise of water levels** e.g. with agri-environmental climate schemes (AES);
- **...Paludiculture** is regarded as a valuable alternative agricultural practice which should receive **preferential treatment** under CAP;
- **...Sufficient funding** for peatland rewetting and management in EU's budget to the Member States via Structural and Cohesion Funds, Agricultural or LIFE funds is provided;
- **...Status of peatlands within the Water Framework Directive** is strengthened through defining clear guidelines for implementing agencies how to integrate peatlands into River Basin Management Plans;



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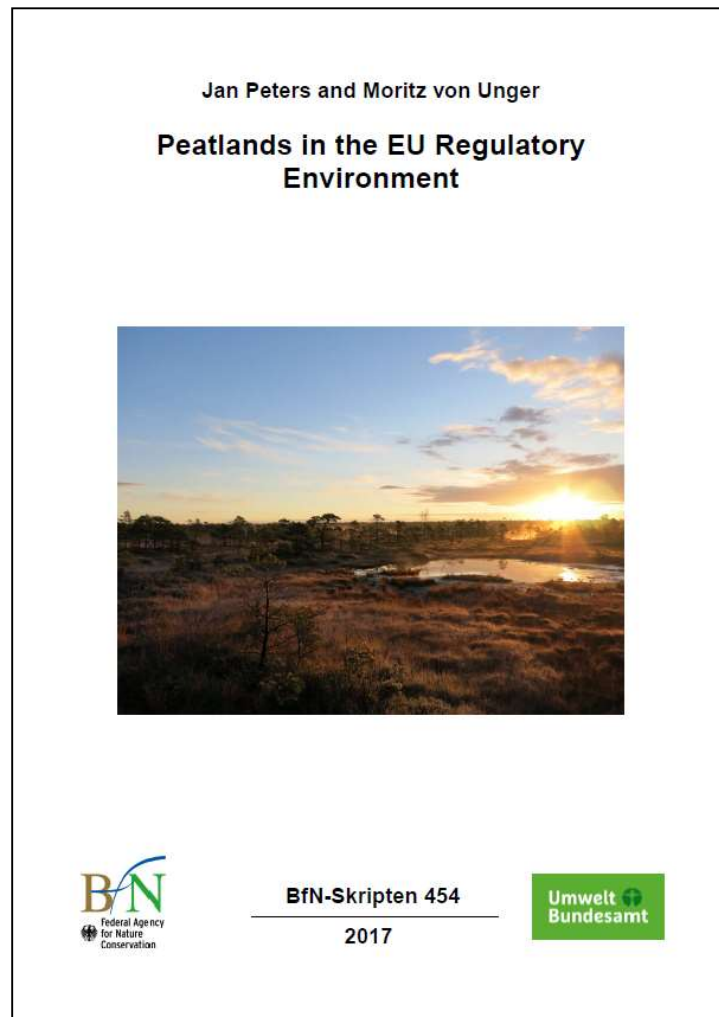
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Conclusions II

EU can get ready if...

- **...Climate action** is reinforced in the legislative process towards EU's 2030 targets, including robust mechanisms to incentivise climate-oriented rewetting and paludiculture;
- ...Member States are supported to perform **accurate inventories of peatland GHG emissions** according to recent accounting guidelines (IPCC 2013) to emphasise paludiculture as a cost-effective mitigation measure;
- **...Preferential benefits for biomass grown in paludiculture** are created in the renewable energy framework to stop production of biofuels from drained organic soils;

Further reading



Comprehensive results published in:

Peters, J. & von Unger, M. (2017):
Peatlands in the EU Regulatory
Environment. BfN Skripten 454.

www.bfn.de/fileadmin/BfN/service/Dokumente/skripten/skript454.pdf



Thanks for your attention!

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