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Policy Challenge EN25: Clean Industrial Deal

This methodological appendix outlines **the chronological development of our work process**, the **key decisions**, and the **collaborative practices** adopted by our team from the moment of group allocation to the finalization of our policy paper and brief. It demonstrates how we organized our work, solved problems collectively, handled cross-cultural collaboration across time zones, and ensured a coherent analytical and theoretical foundation throughout the project.

1. Group allocation and first coordination steps (17 October)

On 17 October, we received the email from CIVICA with our topic (EN25) and our group composition. To coordinate easily from the start, we immediately created a WhatsApp group. Since we were spread across different universities and in two time zones (CET for three members and GMT for two), this helped us avoid confusion and stay connected.

Later that day, during the policy paper workshop, we were given time for a breakout session, which we used as our **first internal group meeting**. We started with an introduction round to get to know each other better. Because we come from different academic backgrounds and study diverse fields (public policy, economic development, environmental studies, and finance), we also discussed which strengths and perspectives each member could bring into the process, why we had chosen the Clean Industrial Deal (CID) as topic, and what we expected from the group work. This exchange created a positive team spirit from the beginning.

At the end of this first meeting, we scheduled our first call with the project supervisor for the following week. During this step, we also learned our first organizational lesson: when discussing times, we had to be mindful of CET vs. GMT. After some initial confusion, we quickly smoothed this out and agreed on clear communication going forward.

2. First meeting with the supervisor (21 October)

In our first call with our supervisor, Dirck De Kleer, we had another short introduction round. Dirck then walked us through the task again and shared several helpful resources with us, especially on the **green backlash**, which is a key part of our assigned policy challenge.

After the meeting, we agreed that since none of us had specifically studied the green backlash before, we would take time individually to familiarize ourselves with the recommended readings and to deepen our understanding of the broader topic. This way, we would all have a solid knowledge base before moving to more specific policy questions.

3. Second internal group meeting: sharing insights and identifying knowledge gaps (10 November)

After spending several days reading, we met again to discuss what we had learned. Some group members prepared short summaries of the readings, which gave everyone a helpful recap before the discussion.

The meeting was productive, but we quickly realized that although we now had a better grasp of the green backlash, we were still missing concrete ideas for **specific policy issues** to focus on. We therefore decided to move beyond the course materials and look more directly into the **Clean Industrial Deal** itself. This included searching for Commission documents, think tank publications, position papers, and other relevant materials.

To keep our work organized, we agreed on a date for the next internal meeting and also scheduled a second call with our supervisor. We started using the WhallerSphere more actively as well, sharing useful sources and collecting our summaries and ideas in the “Working Documents” folder.

4. Third internal group meeting: structuring the research base (17 November)

Before this meeting, we divided our research output on WhallerSphere into two categories:

Primary sources:

- official Commission documents (full CID text from February 2025),
- the CID communication from July 2025,
- the European Parliament resolution on the CID from June 2025.

Secondary sources:

- policy papers from think tanks such as Jaques Delor Centre and European University Institute,
- a CID policy tracker showing milestones and pending actions.

After analyzing the CID and its many subtopics, we realized that focusing on **one specific action item** would be the best fit for a strong, actionable policy paper. This was in line with what we had learned in the policy paper training camp: the more concrete the issue, the more specific and feasible our recommendations could be.

At this point, we already favored the **Commission’s initiative on “greening corporate fleets”** as a potential focus. However, when revisiting the assignment wording, we noticed a key ambiguity: the prompt refers to a “policy feature,” and we were unsure whether this meant:

- **Option A:** choosing a specific element or proposal within the CID, or
- **Option B:** focusing on a general mechanism or feature that applies across different CID areas.

Even though the two options sounded similar at first, the implications for our paper were quite different. We agreed to ask our supervisor for clarification and made this the priority point for our upcoming meeting.

5. Second meeting with the supervisor: clarifying the assignment (18 November)

During the meeting with Dirck, we explained our question regarding “policy features.” He confirmed that both interpretations could be correct, but emphasized that focusing on a **specific CID element** would allow us to go deeper and develop more concrete, grounded recommendations. This matched our own preference, so we felt reassured that our approach was appropriate.

6. Decision on the final topic and further research (19-21 November)

After the guidance from Dirck, we wanted to ensure that the whole group was fully comfortable with choosing “greening corporate fleets” as the focus. We therefore collected more concrete materials, including:

- the Commission’s communication on the corporate fleets initiative from March 2025,
- the legislative train schedule,
- documents from the public consultation and call for evidence,
- major stakeholder position papers.

To support our final decision, we prepared a **pro-and-con list** (Figure 1) summarizing key arguments:

Pros	Cons
• The topic is politically relevant and very timely: the Commission plans to publish a proposal by the end of 2025. • It links closely to the central CID question: how can the EU decarbonize while staying economically competitive? • It illustrates core backlash dynamics, especially regarding SMEs and transport operators.	• The initiative involves several governance levels, making it important to clearly separate what the EU can do from what falls to Member States. • There is already a large number of stakeholder papers, so we must add something original. • The upcoming Commission proposal was not yet available, which limits legislative detail

(Figure 1: Pro & Con list for topic choice)

After weighing these aspects, we concluded that the advantages outweighed the challenges, and we formally chose this topic.

7. Structuring the policy paper and dividing tasks (21-27 November)

While continuing to collect sources on the greening corporate fleets initiative, we worked on a detailed structure for the policy paper (Figure 2), based on the Capstone guidelines and the recommendations from our supervisor. The outline included the three major sections:

1. **Introduction to the problem**
2. **What the EU is doing (“AS IS”)**
3. **What the EU should do**
 - policy options
 - recommendations and implementation

We also added guiding questions for each section. Responsibilities were then distributed among group members, with the introduction written jointly because it involved synthesizing many different strands of information.

Section		Content Focus	Guiding Questions	Responsible
1. Introduction to the problem		define the issue, context, and relevance	⇒ Why are corporate fleets key to EU decarbonization and competitiveness? ⇒ What structural issues explain the slow uptake of ZEVs in fleets? ⇒ Why does the current fragmented national approach hinder the internal market and second-hand ZEV market? ⇒ Why is EU-level intervention urgent now (2025-2030)?	Lisa, Malika
2. What the EU is doing (AS IS)		describe current measures and assess advantages / disadvantages	⇒ What are the main EU and national measures currently shaping corporate fleet decarbonization? ⇒ How do these policies interact (CO ₂ standards, infrastructure, national tax schemes)? ⇒ What advantages and limitations arise from this patchwork approach? ⇒ Which gaps justify additional EU-level action?	AJ
3. What the EU should do	a) Policy Options	outline possible EU-level policy options	⇒ What EU-level policy instruments are under consideration (targets, fiscal harmonization, reporting)? ⇒ How can these options balance effectiveness, flexibility, and SME concerns? ⇒ Which segments (leasing, rental, logistics) offer the most leverage?	Sara
	b) Recommendations & Implementation	translate the best policy mix into concrete recommendations	⇒ What form should EU action take (binding regulation, coordinated fiscal approach)? ⇒ How can implementation ensure fairness across Member States and sectors? ⇒ What mechanisms (monitoring, stakeholder dialogue, incentives) will secure compliance and impact? ⇒ What trade-offs exist between speed, cost, and competitiveness?	Lukas

(Figure 2: Structure and Task Division of Policy Paper)

We agreed to draft our sections individually until 3 December. Assuming a 2,000-word limit, we aimed for approximately 500 words per section so the paper would remain balanced.

8. Fourth internal group meeting: merging drafts and improving the overall flow (3 December)

By this meeting, each group member had already gained a clearer idea of what their section should include. We used the meeting to discuss open questions and to make sure the structure still worked for everyone.

After reviewing the contributions, we merged them into **one shared Google Doc**, which we linked through WhallerSphere to make access easier. We reminded ourselves to keep the language clear and consistent, to use reliable sources, and to avoid logical gaps between sections.

We also discussed including graphs in the introduction and created some initial versions.

During the following days, we **commented on each other's sections** to improve clarity and coherence and **prepared for the final meeting with our supervisor** by collecting remaining questions.

9. Final meeting with the supervisor (9 December)

In our final meeting with Dirck, we **updated him on the progress** of the paper and asked questions on:

- the preferred citation style,
- the scope and expectations of the one-page policy brief,
- and how to handle the expected publication of the Commission's proposal on greening corporate fleets (scheduled for 10 December).

Dirck encouraged us to look at the proposal once published but stressed that, given the timing, it was not mandatory to integrate it.

After the meeting, we felt confident about the remaining steps. We moved the draft **from Google Docs to a shared Word document** because it made editing footnotes, layout, and bibliography easier.

10. Final editing phase and submission (10-15 December)

During the final editing phase, we incorporated the last updates and ensured the overall coherence and quality of the paper. On 10 December, we learned that the publication of the **Commission's proposal had been postponed** by one week, to 16 December. This meant that our final steps weren't affected by new information, allowing us to proceed with the consolidation of our analysis without interruption.

We used the remaining days to refine all sections of the paper, clarify outstanding questions within the group, and verify that all citations consistently followed the **Chicago Manual of Style**. We also formatted the document into a professional layout. In parallel, we distilled the central insights of the paper into a concise **one-page policy brief**, ensuring that it accurately reflected the most important findings and recommendations.

Once these tasks were completed, we reserved an additional day for a **final, comprehensive review** of the entire document. We then **submitted the policy paper, the accompanying policy brief, and this methodological appendix in the WhallerSphere** before the deadline.

Materials used during the project

Here is the complete list of academic literature, official EU documents, stakeholder papers, and additional policy sources that we used during the project:

Abou-Chadi, Tarik, Jannik Jansen, Markus Kollberg, and Nils Redeker. *Debunking the Backlash: Uncovering European Voters' Climate Preferences*. Berlin: Jacques Delors Centre, Hertie School, March 7, 2024.

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- IRU (International Road Transport Union).** "Incentives, Not Obligations, Key to Success: IRU at EU Fleets Dialogue." *IRU Newsroom*, July 17, 2025. <https://www.iru.org/news-resources/newsroom/incentives-not-obligations-key-success-iru-eu-fleets-dialogue>.
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- . *How Corporate Fleets Can Boost Demand for Made-in-EU EVs: The European Commission Clean Corporate Vehicles Initiative*. Brussels: Transport & Environment, November 2025. <https://www.transportenvironment.org/uploads/files/How-corporate-fleets-can-boost-demand-for-Made-in-EU-EVs.pdf>.
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