

**Jean Monnet Module “Participatory Legal Instruments for Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities”,
Project 101176263 — ECO-PoLeIS**

COURSE PROGRAMME

Topic: “Urban Dimensions of Climate Democracy”

Duration: 40 hours of teaching within Comparative Public Law and Transnational Law (9 ECTS); European Union Law (9 ECTS); International and European Environmental and Food law (6 ECTS), available in both bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes at the Law Department and the Department of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences

Language: English/Italian

Prerequisite:

Teaching method: The prevailing teaching method involves classroom lectures with the use of slides. Immersive lectures, as simulation of assembly’s debates, will be planned to provide an in-depth experience of participation.

Lecturers: Jacopo Paffarini, Maria Chiara Locchi, Simone Vezzani, Enrico Buono and other invited professors.

Course Description and Rationale: ECO-PoLeIS lectures and seminars will explore the role of cities and urban governance in advancing legal, institutional and participatory frameworks for climate democracy. Students will engage with democratic tools shaped by the interplay between local citizen activism and transnational efforts to protect the environment. The course emphasizes comparative analysis, drawing on case studies from the EU and beyond to understand how different legal systems empower or constrain urban climate action, as well as the influence of the EU model of climate democracy and climate justice in a global perspective.

Learning objectives: By the end of the year, students will have achieved the following objectives:

- To understand the concept of climate democracy and its relevance to urban governance;
- To examine the differences between participatory and deliberative democratic tools;
- To analyse the legal frameworks that enable or limit urban climate democracy in comparative perspective;
- To observe the best practices to evaluate the margins for local self-governance in the multilevel perspective;
- To analyse the case law regarding local government competences on climate change

Course Outline and Contents:

Module 1: Environmental Crisis and Legal Innovation. New patterns for citizen participation

- Climate change and the intergenerational dimension of democratic processes (Cristiana Angelini, 3 hours) **1st October 2025**
- The cycles of environmental constitutionalism (Jacopo Paffarini and Maria Chiara Locchi, 3 hours), **13th October 2025**
- The EU soft law on climate neutral and smart cities and its constitutional implications (Jacopo Paffarini, Enrico Andreoli, 3 hours) **21st November 2025**

- Climate democracy and the Anthropocene: lessons from European experiences (Enrico Buono, 3 hours) **24th November 2025**

Module 2: The Legal foundations of EU climate action and the emerging environmental democracy

- The Green Deal and its agricultural dimension (Simone Vezzani, 3 hours) **6th November**
- The democratic backlash and the cities (M.L. Locchi, Jacopo Paffarini, Francesco Clementi, 3 hours) **14th November**
- Development sustainability and climate change: the deforestation regulation and carbon border adjustment mechanisms (Leonardo Pastorino, 2 hours) **to be determined**

Module 3: Local government, urban policies and climate change: regulatory framework

- Food as a “commons”: participatory aspects (Maurizio Di Masi, 2 hours) **8th October**
- Smart cities as “human rights cities” (Giorgia Pavani, 2 hours) **17th October 2025**
- Energy communities: legal foundations and impacts on democracy (Francesco Caponeri, 2 hours) **30th October**
- Rule of Law and participatory democracy (Jacopo Paffarini, Alessandra Valastro 3 hours) **7th November 2025**

Module 4: Participatory and Deliberative Mechanisms in Urban Climate Governance

- Climate citizens assemblies from a comparative perspective (Giorgia Pavani and Enrico Buono, 3 hours) - **17th October 2025**
- The Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive and its impact on the global environmental governance (Simone Vezzani, 1 hour) **19th November**
- Sustainable governance of water resources: between urban and agricultural uses (Simone Vezzani, 2 hours) **20th November**
- The rights of nature and their “guardians”: a comparative perspective (Jacopo Paffarini, 3 hours) – **28th November 2025**

Materials and Access.