Please provide the data, reference the sources (books, press and or research articles) and describe the real-life examples to document your answer. Please limit your answer to a maximum of 1,200 words (sources included).

**How can the government of your country of birth or any other country you know well (please specify the country) reconcile a sustainability agenda in the age of populism and rising inequalities?**

My tips to include for Easy answer:

Choose Russia as country because I know it well and it is an interesting case. In the introduction say that for this essay you chose your Home country as an example Russia. For the purpose of keeping things in line with the topic, you assume the situation in Russia before the invasion of Ukraine. Say that Russia is interesting because it is a fossil resources/energy-rich country, social justice is not a priority topic here, and neither is the environment: so there is a LOT to do in our country and that’s why ….

1. Raising education/ awareness in sustainability issues: like in many countries, in russia the level of knowledge in environmental (and social) issues is quite low, information is mostly controlled by government which has been pro-fossil fuels for decades. There is a general belief that fossil fuels = economic growth and comfort. This needs to be debunked to ensure sustainability takes on a more important place in the political agenda. As a very veryyyy good example, cite the concept of “Hot Air” (look it up), it’s when the Soviet Union collapsed, suddenly in the 1990s Russia became the best performing country in terms of sustainability: the government was smart to tweak information and make people think they were good performers, however it was only because Russia ‘lost’ a lot of industrial production complexes to ex-Union countries with the soviet collapse, and economic downturn, which led to a reduction of absolute carbon emissions for the country.

2. Direct democracy (use some elements of your previous essay) to ensure laws respect a wider opinion than the specialists drafting them. It is definitely NOT the case in Russia for now. A non-direct democracy rises inequalities between regions/ oblasts, and within them. Strict environmental regulations would increase them even more. But of course this requires than general level of information on sustainability is much higher and less corruptedd than today.

3. Create a body of independent “social justice” observers who can, after after a few months, veto a law that had been ratified, on the grounds that it does creates more inequalities, even if it improves environmental performance of the country. This of course, pre-requisites that there is no longer corruption among government officials (otherwise Oil&Gas companies will simply pay them to veto any law that does not work for them). You can use the Gilets Jaunes example: protests started in France when the government rose taxes on diesel fuel (cheaper oil) which mainly penalised poorer segments of society in the name of environmental protection…