



Laga Newsflash

A Clean Planet for All: the EU Commission calls for a climate neutral Europe by 2050

Climate change and sustainability

On 28 November 2018, the European Commission launched **A Clean Planet for all**, a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy by 2050.

The Juncker Commission was encouraged by the recent International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on the impacts of global warming, confirming that the world must limit temperature increase to 1.5°C to reduce the likelihood of extreme weather events. The Commission is convinced that the opportunity is there for the EU to show leadership and take a major step forward, reap the benefits of first mover advantage and achieve greenhouse gas emissions neutrality by 2050.

The Commission provides vision and inspiration

The purpose of this long-term strategy is not to set targets, but to create a vision and sense of direction, plan for it, and inspire as well as enable stakeholders, researchers, entrepreneurs and citizens alike to develop new and innovative industries, businesses and associated jobs.

Seven strategic building blocks

The road to a climate neutral economy would require joint action in seven strategic areas:

- 1) Maximise the benefits from **energy efficiency** including zero emission buildings;

- 2) Maximise the deployment of **renewables** and the use of electricity to fully decarbonise Europe's energy supply;
- 3) Embrace clean, safe and connected **mobility**;
- 4) Achieve a competitive EU industry and the **circular economy** as a key enabler to reduce greenhouse emissions;
- 5) Develop an adequate **smart network infrastructure** and inter-connections;
- 6) Reap the full benefits of **bio-economy** and create essential carbon sinks; and
- 7) **Carbon capture and storage** for tackling remaining CO2 emissions with.

A European enabling framework for the long term transition

The transition's management will require a scaled-up policy effort. Therefore, an enabling framework is needed to spur research and innovation, to scale up private investments, to provide the right signals to markets and ensure social cohesion, so that no region and citizen is left behind. Since private business and households will be responsible for the vast majority of these investments, it is crucial for Member States to offer clear, long-term signals to guide investors.

Always a compromise

Of course, compromises were made. First and foremost, green activists are concerned that climate neutrality by 2050 is too little too late, since the IPCC report also concluded that the world is currently on a path towards 3°C of warming.

Furthermore, in a draft document which was leaked a few months ago, it seemed that the Commission originally wanted to make suggestions about eating less meat, walking more and using public transportation. It could be argued that the Commission should be more prudent and refrain from such a paternalist approach.

Next steps?

By the end of 2018, Member States will submit their draft National Climate and Energy Plans, which are central for the achievement of the 2030 climate and energy targets, and which should be forward-looking and taken into account in the EU's long term-strategy. An increasing number of regions, municipalities and business associations will also draw up their own 2050-vision.

The Commission also invites the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the Committee of the Regions, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank to consider this strategic long-term EU vision. Meanwhile, all relevant Council formations should hold policy debates on the contribution of their respective policy areas towards the overall vision, in order to prepare EU Heads of State or Government for shaping the Future of Europe at the Special Summit in Sibiu on 9 May 2019.

In parallel and in the first half of 2019, the Commission will take the debate on the necessary deep economic

transformation and profound societal change. The Commission wants National Parliaments, business, NGO's, cities and communities, as well as citizens, including youth, to participate in Citizens Dialogues.

This EU-wide informed debate should allow the EU to adopt an ambitious strategy by early 2020, as requested under the Paris Agreement.

The below contacts are readily available to provide more information on this topic.

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