

BASICS OF THE EU ENVIRONMENTAL LAW/CLIMATE LAW

EU Climate Policy

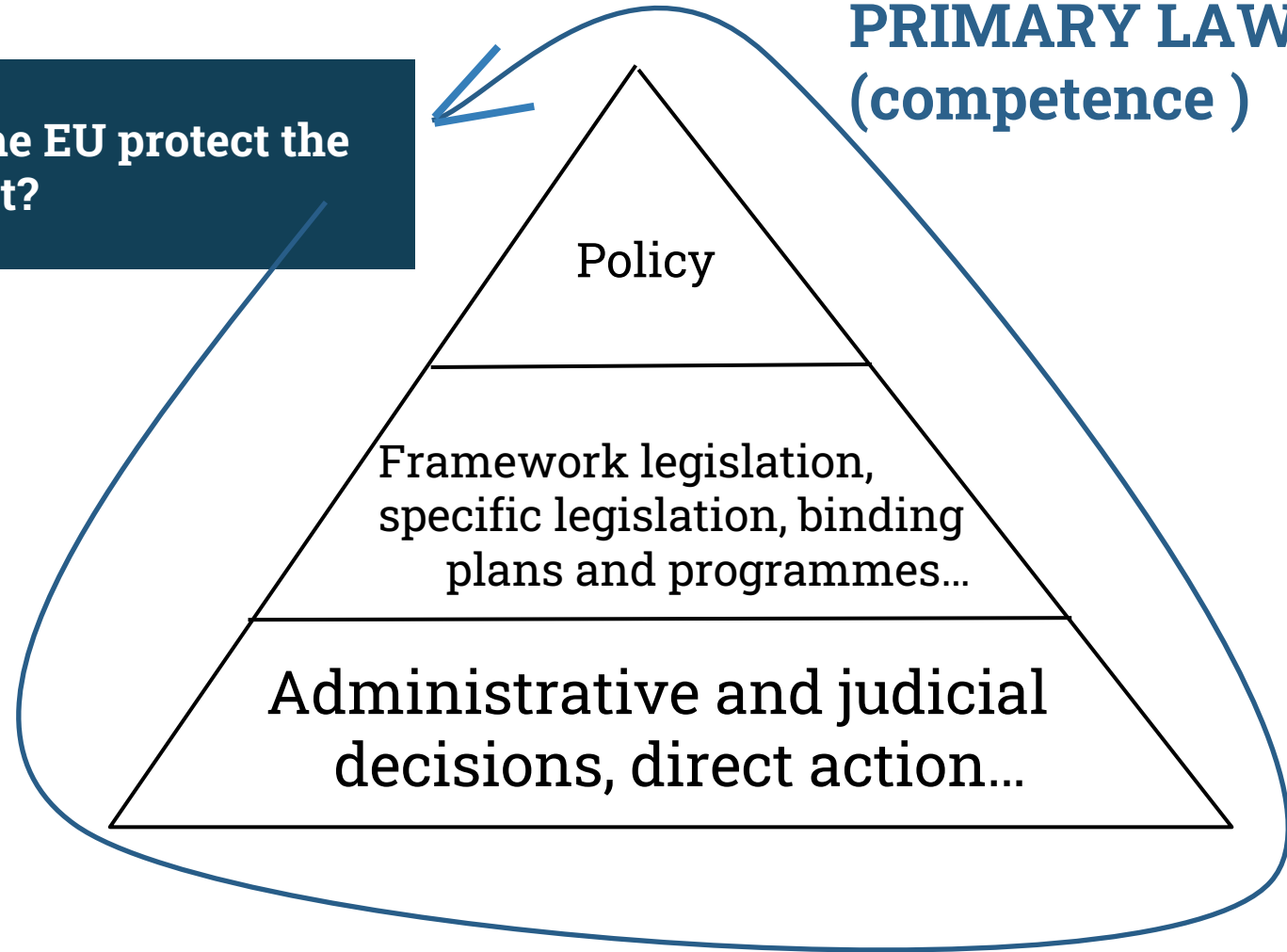


Spring 2024

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Why does the EU protect the environment?

**PRIMARY LAW
(competence)**



- **European Union environmental legislation has developed over the last 50 years.**
- **Environmental policy was not regulated at the Community level in the beginning, the Treaty of Rome does not contain regulations regarding this. Economic integration was the focus.**
- **Awareness about environmental pollution began to develop because of:**
 - **Intensive economic growth**
 - **The fast growth of industrialization**
 - **Increasing energy consumption**
 - **on the international level + national level**

Phase 1: 1958 - 1972

1958 EEC Treaty

No specific attention to development of environmental policy

Minor measures (common market based – dangerous chemicals, motor vehicles, detergents)

Phase 2: 1972 - 1987

European Council Summit in 1972: Heads of States and Governments decided that a Community environmental policy was necessary

The basis of the environmental policy was established in the **First Environmental Action Programme (1973)**. Basic goals, principles of environmental law, and activities regarding certain fields of the environment.

The main goal was the efficient operation of the Community and the Common Market – but **extensive interpretation of economic expansion**.

Phase 3: 1987 - 2008

1987 Single European Act

Independent **title** of environment was accepted

1993 Treaty on the European Union (Maastricht)

Protection of the environment became **part of the internal common policy**. The scope of environmental policy was enlarged and supplemented it with new objectives.

1997 Treaty of Amsterdam

*„Environmental protection requirements **must be integrated** into the definition and implementation of the Community policies and activities referred to in Article 3, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.“*

Phase 4: Lisbon and further

2009: Treaty of Lisbon

the 3 pillars structure disappears

TUE + TFUE (former TEC) + Nice into a single Treaty

Strengthened role of the EU Parliament

Broader Union's competences

Birth of the European External Action Service (EEAS)

EU Charter

DG Environment

DG Energy

DG Climate Action

TITLE XX
ENVIRONMENT

Article 191
(ex Article 174 TEC)

1. Union policy on the environment shall contribute to pursuit of the following objectives:
 - preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment,
 - protecting human health,
 - prudent and rational utilisation of natural resources,
 - promoting measures at international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change.
2. Union policy on the environment shall aim at a high level of protection taking into account the diversity of situations in the various regions of the Union. It shall be based on the precautionary principle and on the principles that preventive action should be taken, that environmental damage should as a priority be rectified at source and that the polluter should pay.

1970 The **US Environmental Protection Agency** is established.

1971 The international environmental organisation **Greenpeace** is founded in Vancouver, Canada.

1972 **The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment is held in Stockholm**. This leads to the creation of government environment agencies and the UN Environment Programme.

1972 The Club of Rome publishes **The Limits to Growth**. It stresses, for the first time, the importance of the environment, and the essential links with population and energy.

1973 In January, **Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom** join the European Community, bringing membership up to nine.

1973 A small **Environment and Consumer Protection Service** is set up and attached to the European Commission department for industrial policy and a Standing Committee on the Environment is created in the European Parliament.

1973 The **Arab-Israeli war** of October leads to an oil price shock and economic problems in Europe, sparking action on energy efficiency. Car-free Sundays are organised throughout Europe.

1974 Scientists suggest for the first time that chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) may be causing a **thinning of the ozone layer**.

1975 The Community starts building its **body of environmental legislation** with the adoption of – among others – the Waste Framework Directive (1975), the Bathing Water Directive (1976) and the Birds Directive (1979).

1976 An explosion occurs on 10 July at a **chemical plant near Seveso**, north of Milan in Italy. A toxic cloud containing dioxin contaminates a densely populated area. In 1982, the Seveso Directive is issued to prevent major accidents with dangerous substances.

1978 Oil tanker **Amoco Cadiz** spills 68 million gallons off the coast of France.

1979 A partial meltdown of the **Three Mile Island nuclear plant in USA** puts the future of nuclear energy in question.

1979 **The first World Climate Conference** takes place in February in Geneva, Switzerland. A panel on climate change set up by the National Academy of Sciences in USA advises that 'A wait-and-see policy may mean waiting until it is too late' to avoid significant climate changes.

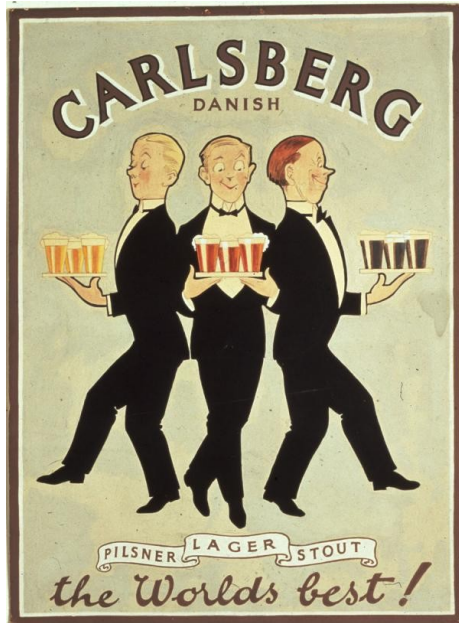
1981 The European Commission creates its **Environment Directorate-General**.

1985 First observation of an **ozone hole over Antarctica**.

1986 On 25 April, an uncontrolled chain reaction in a reactor in the **Chernobyl nuclear power plant**, 80 miles north of Kiev, blows off the reactor's lid. More than 31 workers die instantly and around 135 000 people are evacuated from the surrounding area. A plume of radioactive fall-out drifts over western Soviet Union, eastern and western Europe, and eastern North America.

1987 The **Brundtland Commission's report**, Our Common Future, defines sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

Major role of the Court of Justice



For example **Case C-302/86** (*Dannish bottles*)

The protection of the environment is "one of the Community's essential objectives" which may as such justify certain limitations of the principle of the free movement of goods.

Article 35:

Quantitative restrictions on exports, and all measures having equivalent effect, shall be prohibited between Member States.

Article 36: The provisions of Articles 34 and 35 shall not preclude prohibitions or restrictions on imports, exports or goods in transit justified on grounds of public morality, public policy or public security; the **protection of health and life of humans, animals or plants**; the protection of **national treasures** possessing artistic, historic or archaeological value; or the protection of industrial and commercial property. Such prohibitions or restrictions **shall not, however, constitute a means of arbitrary discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade between Member States.**

Before 1986 (Treaty of Rome)	Single European Act (1986)	Maastricht Treaty (Treaty of the Union - 1992)	Amsterdam Treaty (1999)	Lisbon Treaty (2009)
Art. 100 Harmonization (internal market)	➔ Art 100a Harmonization + safeguard clause	➔ Art 100a Harmonization + safeguard clause	➔ Art 95 Harmonization + safeguard clause	➔ Art 114 Harmonization + safeguard clause
Art. 235 Objectives of the Community	Art. 235 (not in use any longer!)	Art. 235 (not in use any longer!)	Art. 308 (not in use any longer!)	Art.352 (not in use any longer!)
-	Art. 130r - Objectives - Principles - Grounds - Int. coop.	➔ Art. 130r - Objectives - Principles - Grounds - Int. coop.	➔ Art. 174 - Objectives - Principles - Grounds - Int. coop.	➔ Art. 191 - Objectives - Principles - Grounds - Int. coop.
-	Art. 130s Legal basis and procedure	➔ Art. 130s Legal basis and procedure	➔ Art. 175 Legal basis and procedure	➔ Art. 192 Legal basis and procedure
-	Art. 130t Minimum stringency	➔ Art. 130t Minimum stringency	➔ Art. 176 Minimum stringency	➔ Art. 193 Minimum stringency

System and structure:

Sectoral legislation

Air pollution, Water pollution and quality, Waste, Chemicals, Nature and Biodiversity, Land and soil protection, Marine and Coast, Noise

Horizontal legislation - general environmental management issues rather than legislation regarding specific sectors, products or types of emissions.

Environmental impact assessment,

Public access to environmental information, participation in proceedings, access to justice,

Environmental liability,

Integrated pollution prevention and control,

Reports on the implementation.

Environmental Action Programmes

= political declarations

EAPs define the framework of the EU environmental policy. They set up the challenges and priorities for a given period and create a frame for EU measures on the environment

The First Action Programme (1973 - 1977)

- **need for a comprehensive assessment of the impacts of other policies**
- **ideas behind sustainable development**

The Second Action Programme (1977 - 1981)

- **priority of the protection of water, air and noise**
- **rational use of land, environment and natural resources**

Limited success, critical evaluation, economic recession (75 - 78, 81 - 83)

Principles introduced, number of framework directives adopted (water and waste)

The Third Action Programme (1982 - 1986)

- **Change in emphasis from pollution control to pollution prevention**
- **Land use planning (a tradition of strategic environmental planning from the Netherlands)**
- **Integration of environment into other EC policies**
- **Emissions control policy (Germany)**

The Fourth Action Programme (1987 - 1992)

- **Emphasizes the analysis of benefits and cost, the *polluter pays principle*, responsibility in the environmental field**

The Fifth Action Programme (1993 - 2000)

- **Sustainable development, sectoral approach**
- **Public participation**
- **Medium and long-term objectives**

The Sixth Action Programme (2001 - 2010):

- **Climate change as an outstanding challenge**
- **Protecting, conserving, restoring and developing the functioning of natural systems, natural habitats, wild flora and fauna**
- **Contributing to a high level of quality of life and social well being for citizens**
- **Better resource efficiency and resource and waste management**
- **More stringent objectives**

Critical review in 2007

Financial crisis

And then?

The Seventh Action Programme (2013 - 2020):

- "Living well, within the limits of our planet,,
- No specific objectives (levels of pollution)
- Towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon economy

- 2020 timeframe, 2050 vision, 9 priority objectives

3 Thematic priority objectives:

- Protecting nature and strengthening ecological resilience
- Boosting sustainable, resource-efficient, low-carbon growth, and
- Effectively addressing environment-related threats to health.



The Seventh Action Programme (2013 - 2020):

- EU Environmental policy is linked to the EU budget:
- Green funding, 5 % - 20 % GC
- Private investors
- Europe 2020 - the EU's growth strategy
- 2015 Action Plan on circular economy



to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU to deliver high levels of employment, productivity

Too vague? Example – air quality

The 5th EAP: “WHO values [on air quality] become mandatory at EU level” by the year 2000.

The 6th EAP declared that WHO standards, guidelines and programmes “will be taken into consideration”

The 7th EAP declared that by 2020, “outdoor air pollution is significantly improved”, without mentioning that the binding limit values had to be respected by 2010 already (by 2015 for PM2.5).

Question of **nuclear safety** and radiation protection, discussed in the 5th EAP, were altogether omitted in the 6th and 7th EAP, in the same way as specific measures aiming at **industrial, agricultural, transport, energy and touristic activities** which had been discussed in some detail in the 5th EAP. The 7th EAP vaguely referred to integration and coherence in general.



Content

Process and meetings

What is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change?

The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994. Today, it has near-universal membership. The 198 countries that have ratified the Convention are called Parties to the Convention. Preventing "dangerous" human interference with the climate system is the ultimate aim of the UNFCCC.

Related content



First steps to a safer future: the Convention in summary

The Convention:

Recognized that there was a problem.

This was remarkable for its time. Remember, in 1994, when the UNFCCC took effect, there was less scientific evidence than there is now. The UNFCCC borrowed a very important line from one of the most successful multilateral environmental treaties in history (the Montreal Protocol, in 1987): it bound member states to act in the interests of human safety even in the face of scientific uncertainty.

Related reading: [Science](#)

Sets a lofty but specific goal.

The ultimate objective of the Convention is to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations "at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic

TABLE 1 Overview of historical EU GHG emissions reduction targets.

Target year	Goal (compared with 1990 levels)	Status
2000	Stabilization of CO ₂ emissions	Achieved
2008–2012	8% reduction of GHG emissions	Achieved
2020	20% reduction of GHG emissions	Achieved
2030	40% reduction of GHG emissions	Achievement expected with new measures
2030	55% reduction of GHG emissions (updated target, including carbon removal possibilities)	Additional measures required
2040	Target yet to be proposed	Measures yet to be proposed
2050	Climate neutrality	Additional measures required

Source: EEA, 2022; Oberthür & Dupont, 2021.

History:

Directive on Soil Protection? Failed

Directive on carbon tax? Failed

European Climate Law sets out a legally binding target for net-zero emissions by 2050.

9.7.2021

EN

Official Journal of the European Union

L 243/1

REGULATION (EU) 2021/1119 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 30 June 2021

establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law')

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 192(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinions of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions ⁽²⁾,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure ⁽³⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) The existential threat posed by climate change requires enhanced ambition and increased climate action by the Union and the Member States. The Union is committed to stepping up efforts to tackle climate change and to delivering on the implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (the

European Climate Law sets out a legally binding target for net-zero emissions by 2050.

History of opposition by countries [\[edit \]](#)

Although all EU leaders signed off on the European green deal in December 2019, disagreements in regards to the goals and their timeline to achieve each factor arose. [Poland](#) has stated that climate neutrality by 2050 will not be a possibility for their country due to their reliance on coal as their main power source. Their climate minister, [Michał Kurtyka](#), declared that commitments and funds need to be more fairly allocated.^[80] The initiative to increase the goal of lowering carbon emissions split the EU, with the [coal](#) reliant countries such as [Poland](#) complaining it will affect "jobs and competitiveness."^[80] Up to 41,000 jobs could be lost within Poland, with the [Czech Republic](#), [Bulgaria](#) and [Romania](#) also having a possible loss of 10,000 jobs each.^[81] Czech Prime Minister, [Andrej Babiš](#), stated that their nation will not reach the 2050 goal "without nuclear" association.^[82] Countries are also arguing over the Just Transition Fund (JTF) that aims to help countries who are reliant on coal to become more environmentally friendly.^[83] These countries that changed their impacts prior to the Policy, such as [Spain](#), believe that the JTF is unfair as it only benefits the countries that didn't "go green earlier."^[80] The head of Brussels' office of the Open Europe think tank, Pieter Cleppe, further dismissed the plan with sarcastic comment, "What could possibly go wrong."^[82]

[Poland's](#) Prime Minister [Mateusz Morawiecki](#) said that the EU's [carbon pricing](#) system unfairly disadvantages poorer countries in Southern and Eastern Europe.^[84] Speaking at the [COP26 climate summit](#) in Glasgow, Czech Prime Minister Babiš denounced the European Green Deal,^[85] saying that the European Union "can achieve nothing without the participation of the largest polluters such as China or the USA that are responsible for 27 and 15 percent, respectively, of global CO₂ emissions."^[86]

- In February 2024, the European Commission published its long-awaited **recommendations for climate targets for 2040**. The commission, which is the executive arm of the European Union, is recommending that EU member states cut greenhouse-gas emissions by 90% by 2040, compared with 1990 levels.
- The EU's existing policies could reduce emissions by 88% by 2040, according to its own projections. This would be achieved mainly through phasing out coal, converting most fossil-fuel power to renewable sources such as solar, wind and tidal energy, and electrifying transport. There will still be emissions from some vehicles on the road, from shipping and from aviation. Some oil and gas power will also be in use.
- The Commission is, therefore, proposing to accelerate technologies, such as carbon capture and storage (CCS), that can take up some of those remaining emissions and store the gases, possibly underground.

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EDITORIAL | 13 February 2024

EU climate policy is dangerously reliant on untested carbon-capture technology

Europe's ambition for emissions reductions is to be welcomed – but look at the detail, and significant hazards emerge.



Download PDF



Clean energy for all Europeans package - state of play (1 January 2019)

	European Commission Proposal	EU Inter-institutional Negotiations	European Parliament Adoption	Council Adoption	Official Journal Publication
Energy Performance in Buildings	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	17/04/2018	14/05/2018	19/06/2018 - Directive (EU) 2018/844
Renewable Energy	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	13/11/2018	04/12/2008	21/12/2018 - Directive (EU) 2018/2001
Energy Efficiency	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	13/11/2018	04/12/2018	21/12/2018 - Directive (EU) 2018/2002
Governance	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	13/11/2018	04/12/2018	21/12/2018 - Regulation (EU) 2018/1999
Electricity Regulation	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	Pending	Pending	-
Electricity Directive	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	Pending	Pending	-
Risk Preparedness	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	Pending	Pending	-
ACER	30/11/2016	Political Agreement	Pending	Pending	-



FIGURE 1 Overview of key policy measures to achieve targets. Source: EU official websites; Oberthür & von Homeyer, 2023.

What will we do?

CLIMATE

The EU will be **climate neutral in 2050**

The Commission will propose a European Climate Law turning the political commitment into a legal obligation and a trigger for investment.

Reaching this target will require action by all sectors of our economy:

ENERGY



Decarbonise the energy sector



The production and use of energy account for more than **75%** of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions

BUILDINGS



Renovate buildings, to help people cut their energy bills and energy use



40% of our energy consumption is by buildings

INDUSTRY



Support industry to innovate and to become global leaders in the green economy



European industry only uses **12%** recycled materials

MOBILITY



Roll out cleaner, cheaper and healthier forms of private and public transport

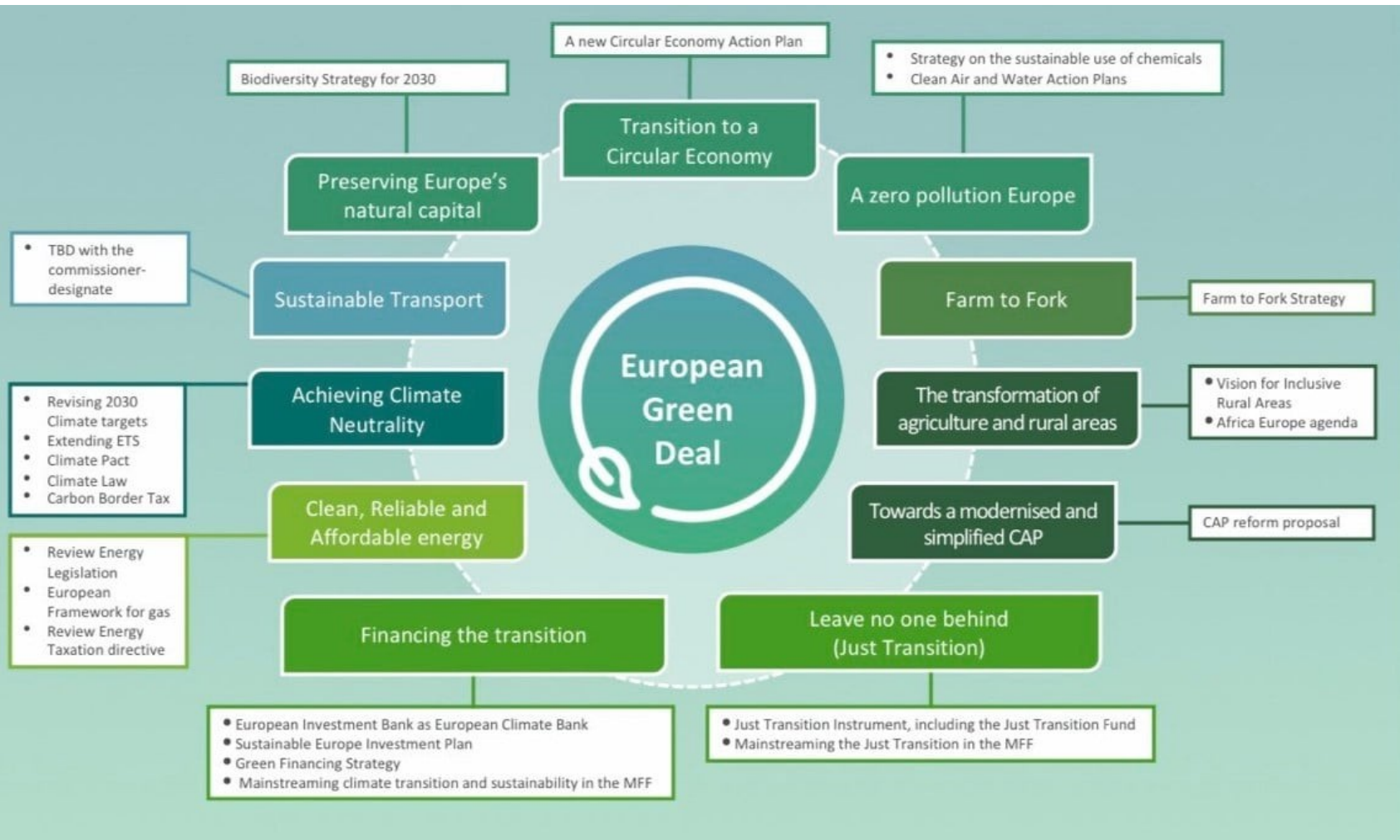


Transport represents **25%** of our emissions



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2020 Taxonomy Regulation

2021 European Climate Law

2021 Just Transition Fund Regulation

Fit for 55 package:

2023 Emissions Trading Directive, creating a new Emissions Trading System for transport and buildings

2023 Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

2023 Effort Sharing Regulation

2023 Regulation on CO₂ Emission Standards for Cars and Vans

2023 LULUCF Regulation

2023 Social Climate Fund Regulation

2023 Regulation on Sustainable Maritime Fuels

2023 Energy Efficiency Directive

Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

Renewable Energy Directive

Energy Taxation Directive

Reducing methane emissions in the energy sector

Sustainable Aviation Fuels

Effort Sharing Regulation:

sets emissions reductions targets for the EU and individual Member States in a wide range of sectors. It covers domestic transport (excluding aviation), buildings, agriculture, small industry and waste.

LULUCF Regulation:

sets out how the land use sector contributes to the EU's climate goals. The LULUCF Regulation was revised in 2023 for the period up to 2030.

To help reach climate neutrality, for the first time, the revised LULUCF regulation has a separate land-based net carbon removals target of 310 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent by 2030.

This EU-wide target is to be implemented through ambitious, fair and binding net removal national targets for the LULUCF sector.

Carbon Boundary Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM):

sets the price of (some) products entering the EU market to take account of the emissions associated with their production, a new emissions trading scheme covering buildings and transport, and a social climate fund set up to offset the negative impacts of this new, expanded emissions trading scheme.

What else? Green public procurement, ESG, etc.

2020

FIT FOR 55

- aims to translate the climate ambitions of the Green Deal into law.
- a set of proposals to revise climate-, energy- and transport-related legislation and put in place new legislative initiatives to align EU laws with the EU's climate goals.

EU STRATEGY ON ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

In June 2021, EU environment ministers approved conclusions endorsing the new EU strategy on adaptation to climate change. The strategy outlines a long-term vision for the EU to become a climate-resilient society that is fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change by 2050.

The measures set out in the strategy include:

- better gathering and sharing of data to improve access to and exchange of knowledge on climate impacts
- nature-based solutions to help build climate resilience and protect ecosystems
- integration of adaptation in macro-fiscal policies
- The conclusions give political guidance to the Commission on the implementation of the strategy.

In March 2022, the Council adopted conclusions calling for the adaptation of civil protection to extreme weather events resulting from climate change.

Ministers called for the adaptation of civil protection systems with a focus on:

- prevention
- preparedness
- response
- recovery

FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

- aims to help the EU achieve climate neutrality by 2050, by shifting the current EU food system towards a sustainable model.

In addition to food security and safety, the strategy's main goals are to:

- ensure sufficient, affordable and nutritious food within planetary limits
- support sustainable food production
- promote more sustainable food consumption and healthy diets

In October 2020, the Council adopted a set of conclusions on the strategy, endorsing the goal of developing a European sustainable food system, from production to consumption.

EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

The EU relies on Europe's industry to lead the transitions towards climate neutrality.

The aim of the EU's industrial strategy is to support the industry in its role as an accelerator and enabler of change, innovation and growth.

An update to the industrial strategy, published by the Commission in May 2021, is aimed at strengthening resilience and advancing Europe's competitiveness. It strives to enable Europe's industry to lead the green and digital transformation and become the global driving force in the shift towards climate neutrality and digitalisation.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY ACTION PLAN

Decoupling economic growth from resource use and shifting to circular systems in production and consumption is key to achieving EU climate neutrality by 2050.

The action plan envisages over 30 action points on designing of sustainable products, circularity in production processes and empowering consumers and public buyers. It targets sectors such as electronics and ICT, batteries, packaging, plastics, textiles, construction and buildings, and food.

Environment

[Home](#) > [Strategy](#) > [Biodiversity strategy for 2030](#)

Biodiversity strategy for 2030

The EU's biodiversity strategy for 2030 is a comprehensive, ambitious and long-term plan to protect nature and reverse [the degradation of ecosystems](#). The strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030, and contains specific actions and commitments.

It is the proposal for the EU's contribution to the upcoming international negotiations on the global post-2020 biodiversity framework. [A core part of the European Green Deal](#), it will also support a green recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic.



The 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy

Nature restoration law

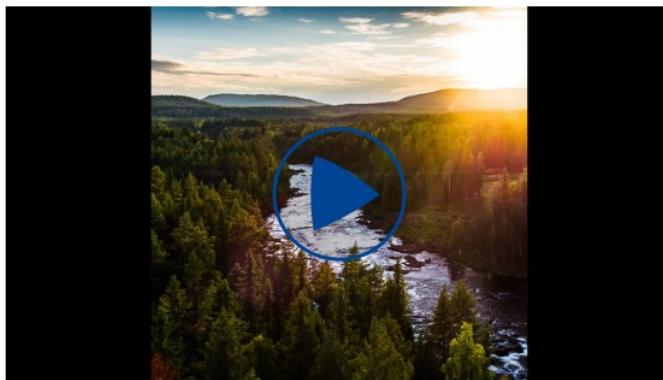
The Commission has proposed a new law to restore ecosystems for people, the climate and the planet.

The European Commission's proposal for a Nature Restoration Law is the first continent-wide, comprehensive law of its kind. It is a key element of the [EU Biodiversity Strategy](#), which calls for binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters.

Europe's nature is in alarming decline, with more than 80% of habitats in poor condition. Restoring wetlands, rivers, forests, grasslands, marine ecosystems, and the species they host will help

- increase biodiversity
- secure the things nature does for free, like cleaning our water and air, pollinating crops, and protecting us from floods
- limit global warming to 1.5°C
- build up Europe's resilience and strategic autonomy, preventing natural disasters and reducing risks to food security

[Find out more about biodiversity loss >](#)



Nature Restoration Law

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[Objectives](#)

[In the EU](#)

Objectives

The proposal aims to restore ecosystems, habitats and species across the EU's land and sea areas in order to

The proposal contains the following specific targets:

- **targets based on existing legislation (for wetlands, forests, grasslands, river and lakes, heath & scrub, rocky habitats and dunes)** - improving and re-establishing biodiverse habitats on a large scale, and bringing back species populations by improving and enlarging their habitats
- **pollinating insects** – reversing the decline of pollinator populations by 2030, and achieving an increasing trend for pollinator populations, with a methodology for regular monitoring of pollinators
- **forest ecosystems** – achieving an increasing trend for standing and lying deadwood, uneven aged forests, forest connectivity, abundance of common forest birds and stock of organic carbon
- **urban ecosystems** – no net loss of green urban space by 2030, and an increase in the total area covered by green urban space by 2040 and 2050
- **agricultural ecosystems** – increasing grassland butterflies and farmland birds, the stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils, and the share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features; restoring drained peatlands under agricultural use
- **marine ecosystems** – restoring marine habitats such as seagrass beds or sediment bottoms that deliver significant benefits, including for climate change mitigation, and restoring the habitats of iconic marine species such as dolphins and porpoises, sharks and seabirds.
- **river connectivity** – identifying and removing barriers that prevent the connectivity of surface waters, so that at least 25 000 km of rivers are restored to a free-flowing state by 2030

Implementation

EU countries are expected to submit National Restoration Plans to the Commission within two years of the Regulation coming into force, showing how they will deliver on the targets. They will also be required to monitor and report on their progress. The European Environment Agency will draw up regular technical reports on progress towards the targets. The Commission, in turn, will report to the European Parliament and to the Council on the implementation of the Nature Restoration Law.



[Press room](#) / Nature restoration: Parliament adopts law to restore 20% of EU's land and sea

Nature restoration: Parliament adopts law to restore 20% of EU's land and sea

Press Releases [PLENARY SESSION](#) [ENV1](#) 27-02-2024 - 12:32



- EU countries must restore at least 30% of habitats in poor condition by 2030, 60% by 2040, and 90% by 2050
- Provisions for agricultural ecosystems can be temporarily suspended under exceptional circumstances
- Over 80% of European habitats are in poor shape



'Symbol of polarisation': EU scraps plans to halve use of pesticides

Move is among bloc's latest environmental concessions to farmers as protests continue across Europe

Jon Henley, Sam Jones and Lorenzo Tondo

Tue 6 Feb 2024 17:18 CET

Share



As farmers' protests gather impetus, the EU makes further concessions after weeks of protests block economic lifelines. Photograph: Jean-François Badias/AP

The **European Commission** is shelving plans to cut pesticide use and is taking the pressure off agriculture in its latest emissions recommendations, as farmers around Europe continue protests demanding higher prices for their products and an easing of EU environment rules.

The original proposal to halve chemical pesticide use in the EU by the end of the decade - part of the EU's green transition - "has become a symbol of polarisation", said the commission president, **Ursula von der Leyen**. She added that she would ask the commission to withdraw the proposal.

	Climate-related?
law rules	Biodiversity/conservation
tural Policy ms	Biodiversity/conservation
il leading to	Biodiversity/conservation
for farmers	No
for farmers	No
iel subsidies (govt)	Climate/emissions
	Biodiversity/conservation
il leading to	Biodiversity/conservation
(since ned)	Biodiversity/conservation
al fuel	Climate/emissions
r losses id disease	Climate/emissions
protect weather	Climate/emissions
ng	Climate/emissions
rainian	No
tax break / conceded)	No
from Russia	No
d VAT rate for ables	No
bove-cost	No
les on ies	Climate/emissions



European energy autonomy „RePower EU“

Energy
savings



Diversification of
energy supply



Acceleration of energy
transition

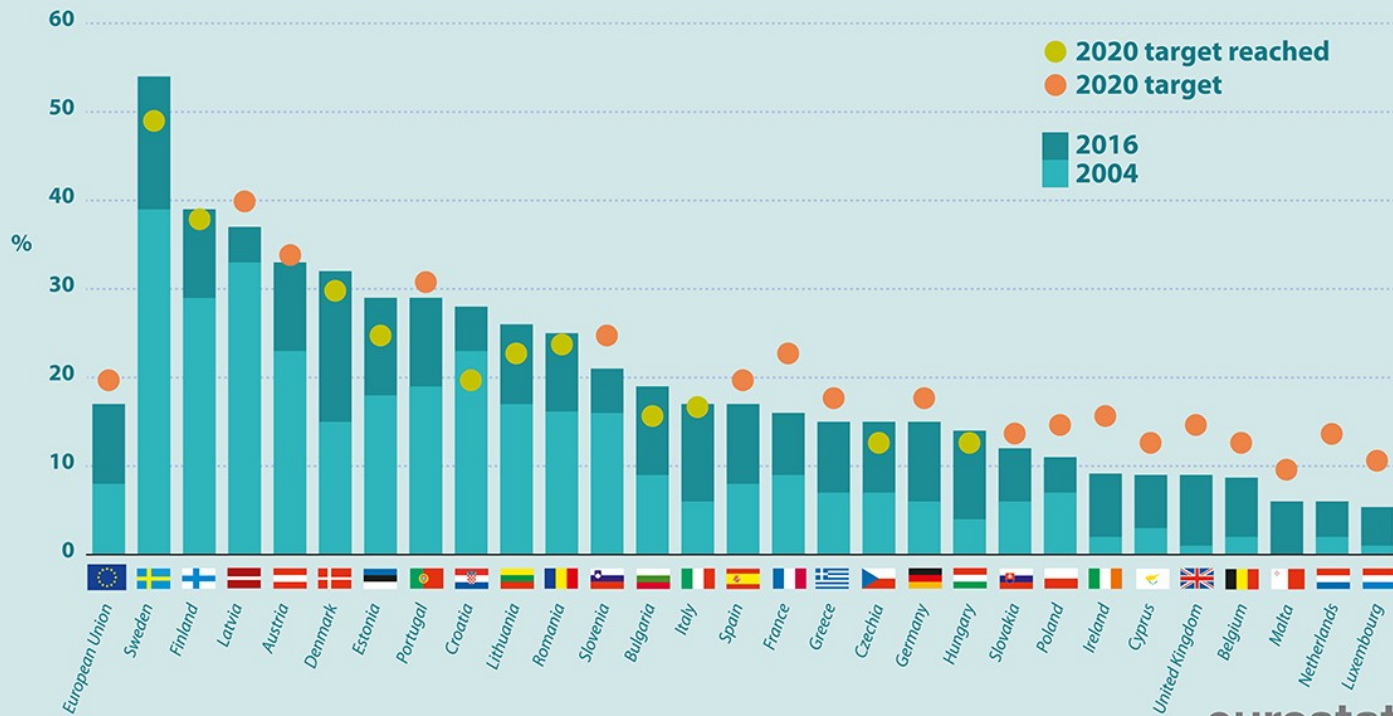


Smart investments and
reforms

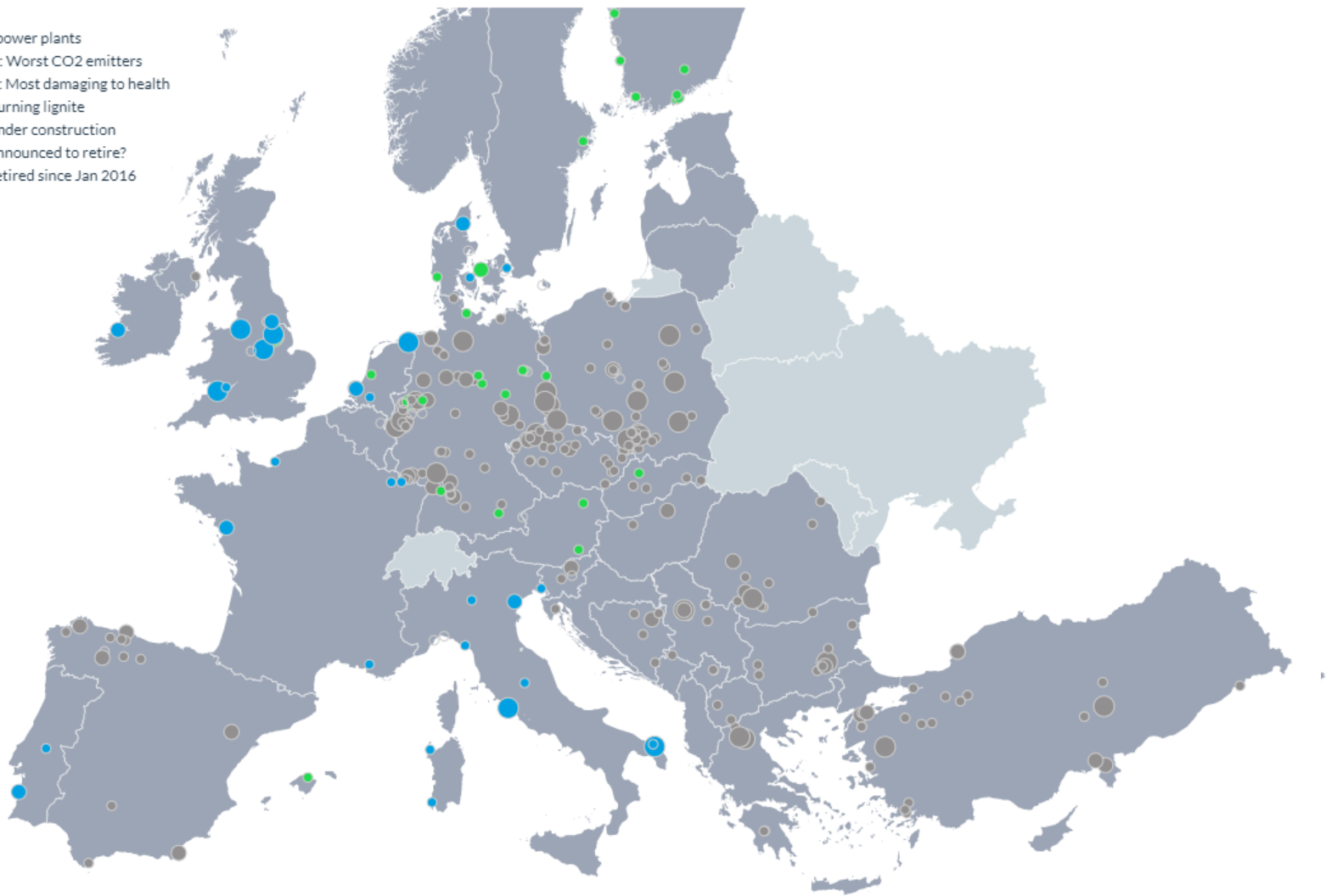


Share of energy from renewable sources in the EU Member States

(in % of gross final energy consumption)



- All coal power plants
- Dirty 30: Worst CO2 emitters
- Toxic 30: Most damaging to health
- Plants burning lignite
- Plants under construction
- Plants announced to retire?
- Plants retired since Jan 2016



Environment action programme to 2030

The 8th Environment Action Programme will guide European environmental policy until 2030

On 2 May 2022 the [8th Environment Action Programme](#) entered into force, as the EU's legally agreed common agenda for environment policy until 2030.

The action programme reiterates the EU's long-term vision to 2050 of living well, within planetary boundaries. It sets out priority objectives for 2030 and the conditions needed to achieve these. Building on the [European Green Deal](#), the action programme aims to speed up the transition to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient economy, recognising that human wellbeing and prosperity depend on healthy ecosystems.

The 8th EAP calls for active engagement of all stakeholders at all levels of governance, to ensure that EU climate and environment laws are effectively implemented. It forms the EU's basis for achieving the United Nation's **2030 Agenda** and its **Sustainable Development Goals**.



© Getty Images / bluejayphoto

Objectives

The **long-term priority objective** is that, by 2050 at the latest, Europeans live well, within planetary boundaries, in a well-being economy where nothing is wasted. Growth will be regenerative, climate neutrality will be a reality, and inequalities will have been significantly reduced.

There are six priority objectives to 2030

- achieving the [2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target](#) and [climate neutrality by 2050](#)
- enhancing [adaptive capacity](#), strengthening **resilience** and **reducing vulnerability to climate change**
- advancing towards a **regenerative growth model**, decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, and accelerating the transition to a [circular economy](#)
- pursuing a [zero-pollution ambition](#), including for air, water and soil and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans
- protecting, preserving and restoring [biodiversity](#), and **enhancing natural capital**
- **reducing environmental and climate pressures** related to production and consumption (particularly in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system)

Enabling framework

In line with the European Green Deal's oath to 'do no harm,' the 8th EAP supports an integrated approach to policy development and implementation. [Article 3 of the action programme](#) sets out the enabling conditions needed to achieve the priority objectives. Among others, it highlights the need for

- a full **implementation** of existing legislation
- significantly **decreasing** the Union's **material and consumption footprints**
- achieving **environmental fairness**
- boosting **sustainable finance**
- making use of **economic and tax incentives** to facilitate the sustainability transition
- **phasing out fossil fuel subsidies**
- developing a summary '**beyond GDP**' dashboard
- uptake by and **cooperation** at all levels of policy-making between different levels of actors
- harnessing the potential of **digitalisation**
- ensuring that policy action is firmly anchored in **latest science and knowledge**

Policy areas

- [Air](#): EU action to improve air quality and reduce air pollution.
- [Chemicals](#): EU action to ensure chemicals are safe, for health and the environment.
- [Circular economy](#): The EU's transition to a circular economy with a focus on green growth.
- [Industry](#): EU action to make industry more sustainable and reduce industrial emissions.
- [Marine and coastal environment](#): EU action to protect Europe's coasts, seas and oceans.
- [Nature and biodiversity](#): EU action on environmental conservation and protection.
- [Noise](#): EU action to reduce environmental noise pollution.
- [Plastics](#): EU action on plastic production and pollution to contribute to a circular economy.
- [Soil and land](#): EU action for the sustainable use of soil and land.
- [Sustainable development](#): EU commitment to sustainable development in Europe and worldwide.
- [Urban environment](#): EU action to promote the sustainability of European cities.
- [Waste and recycling](#): EU action on waste management, treatment and recycling.
- [Water](#): EU action on water issues, to protect water resources.

Chart – Energy consumption of electrical appliances

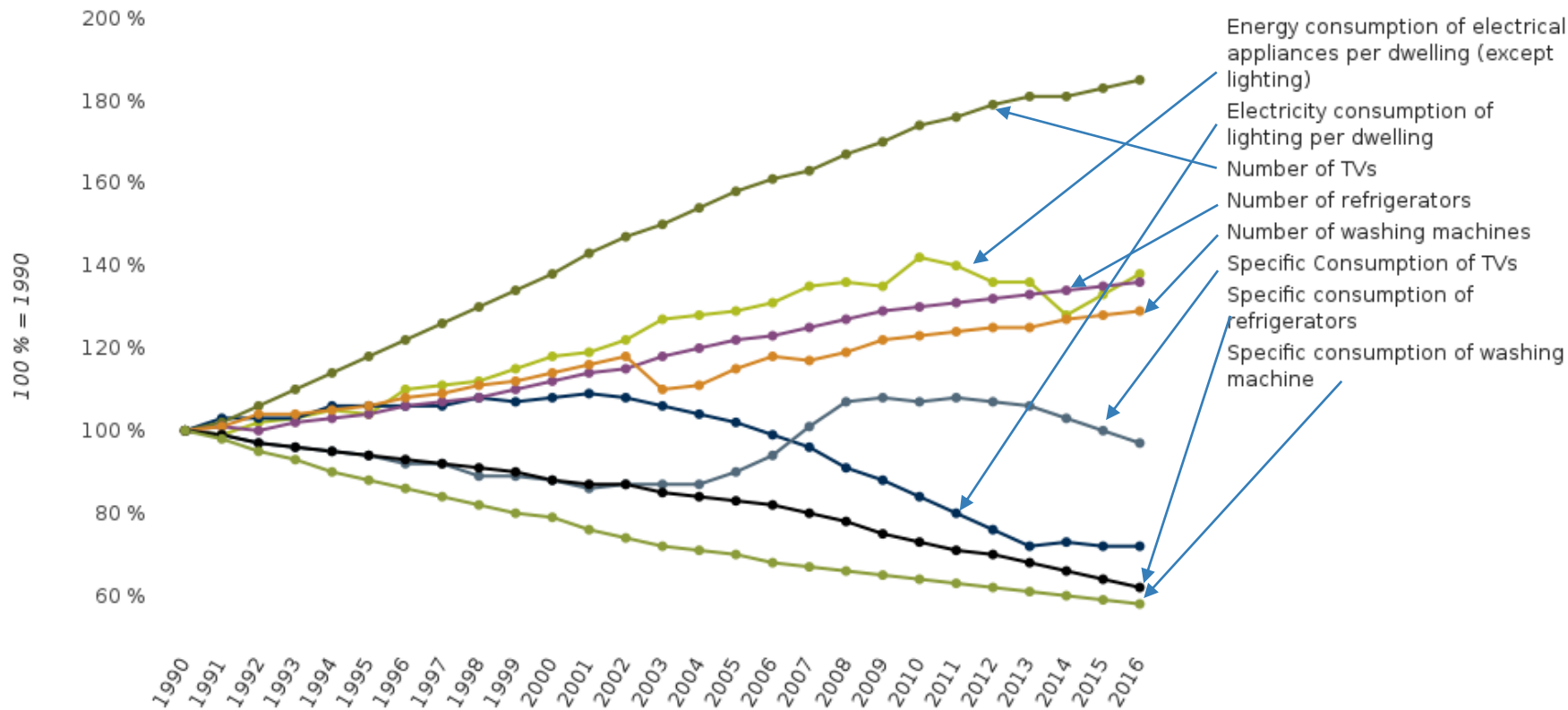
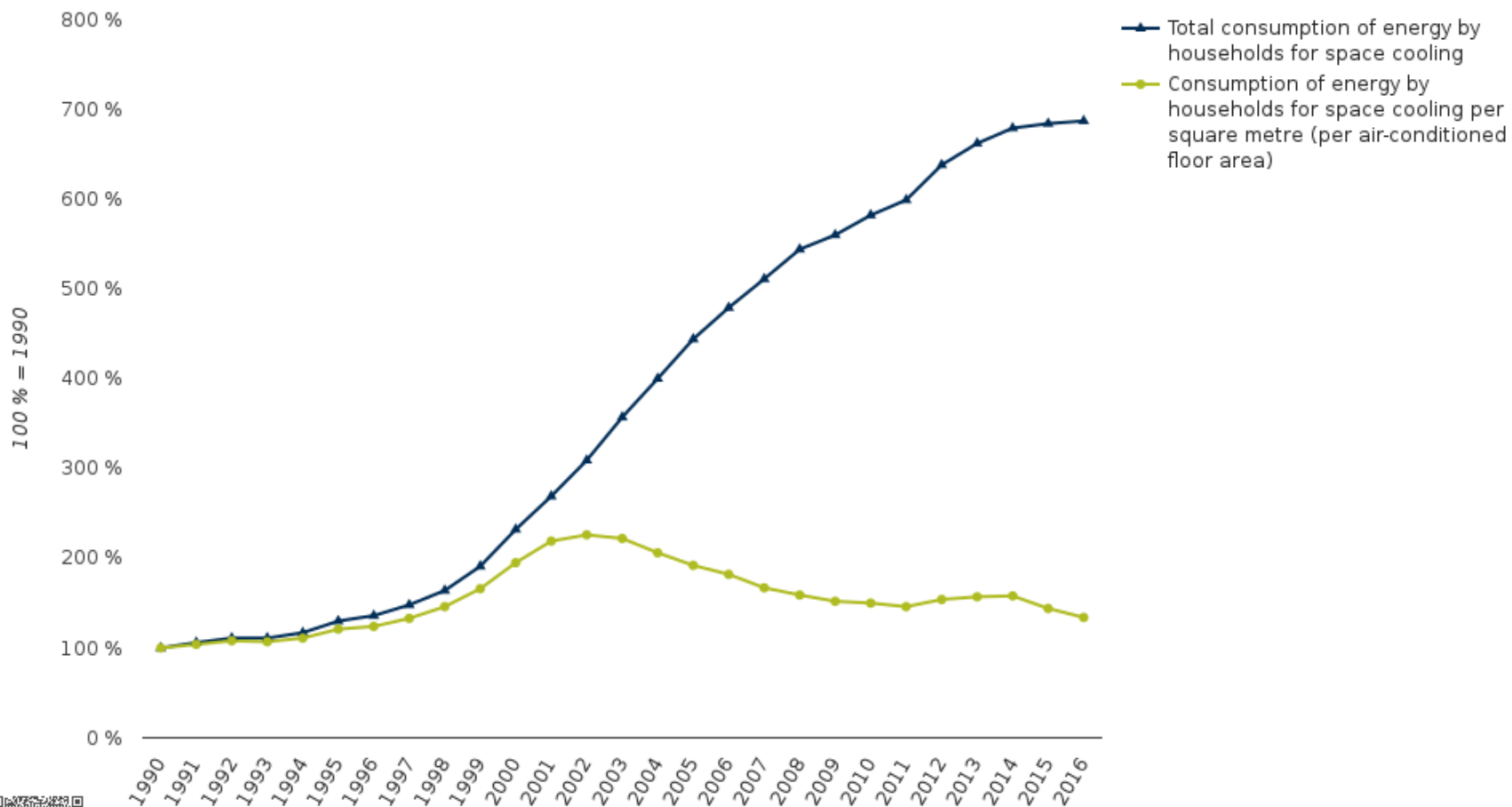
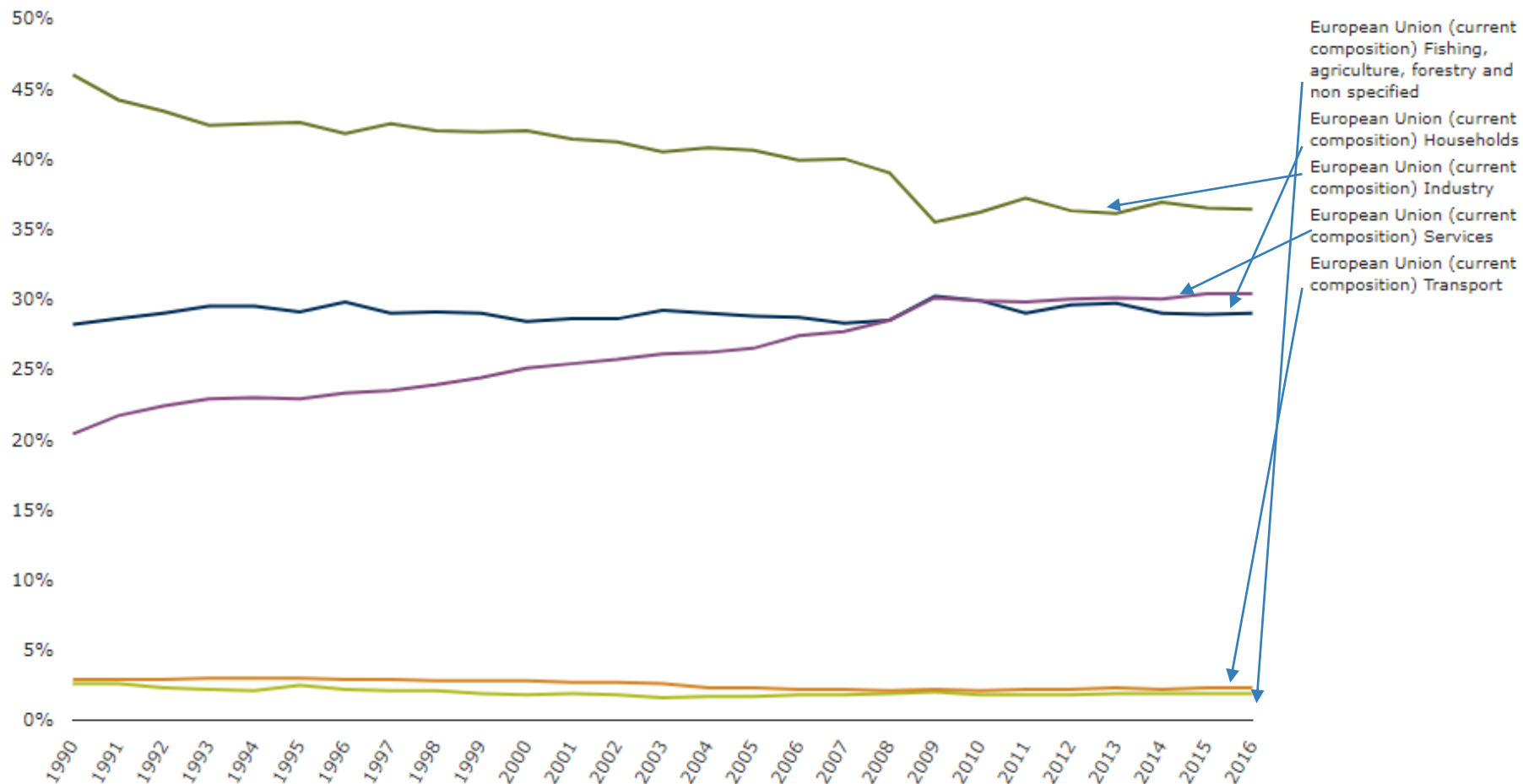


Chart — Cooling energy consumption



Shares — Final energy consumption of electricity by sector



INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

EU engagement on climate action with non-EU countries

Cooperation on climate action with non-EU countries

Through bilateral engagement, the EU the EU aims to advance global climate action and support partner countries in their efforts to tackle climate change.

EU climate cooperation with the Americas

Priorities for bilateral engagement with the countries of North America, Latin America and the Caribbean

EU climate cooperation with neighbouring countries

Priorities for bilateral climate engagement with the EU's neighbouring countries

EU climate cooperation with Africa

Priorities for bilateral climate engagement with Africa

EU climate cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region

Priorities for bilateral climate engagement with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region

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● Council of the EU Press release 16 October 2023 22:10

COP28: Council sets out EU position for UN climate summit in Dubai

This press release has been updated on 17 October 2023 to include the Council conclusions.

The Council today approved conclusions that will serve as the EU's general negotiating position for the 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 30 November to 12 December 2023.

In its conclusions, the Council highlights the opportunities that ambitious climate action brings for the planet, the global economy and the people, and the importance of ensuring a just transition towards sustainable climate-resilient and climate-neutral economies and societies that leaves no one behind.



Today we send a strong message to our partners: the EU is the global leader on climate action. In Dubai, we will be at the forefront of the negotiations to show the EU's strongest commitment to the green transition and encourage our partners to follow our lead. The EU is a driving force for change and we have to speak with a single voice in the world. We can simply not use difficulties as an excuse to turn back to a pre-Paris agreement situation.

— Teresa Ribera Rodríguez, acting Spanish third vice-president and minister for the ecological transition and the demographic challenge

Increasing global ambition towards climate neutrality

Member states highlight the importance of substantially scaling up global climate ambition to keep the 1.5°C objective within reach, in line with the Paris Agreement. They stress that collectively, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and their updates are currently not sufficient to reach the objective, and point out that all Parties should have revisited and strengthened their NDCs or updated their long-term low GHG emission development strategies (LTS) ahead of COP28. In particular, major economies should have enhanced the ambition of their NDCs and updated their LTS to include a net-zero emissions target to be reached by 2050 at the latest.



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● Council of the EU Press release 16 October 2023 21:35

Paris Agreement: Council submits updated NDC on behalf of EU and member states

This press release has been updated on 17 October 2023 to include the document with the text of the submission.

The Council today approved the submission of an updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) of the EU and its member states to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This document replaces the previous submission, dated 17 December 2020, and will be considered the current NDC of the EU and its member states.

The EU's updated NDC submission was prepared in light of the adoption of all the essential elements of the 'Fit for 55' legislative package, which will result in the EU cutting its net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 55% by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels). Through the updated NDC, the EU and its member states reiterate their commitment to this legally binding target.



'With our updated NDC submission, we are sending a strong signal for our partners to follow us in the path towards a climate-neutral future. The EU and its member states are committed to their climate ambitions. We are ready to do our part to address the global climate crisis.'

— Teresa Ribera Rodríguez, acting Spanish third vice-president and minister for the ecological transition and the demographic challenge

In the updated NDC, the EU recalls the steps leading up to it, from the ratification of the Paris Agreement in October 2016, when the then NDC contained a GHG reduction target of at least 40% by 2030 (compared to 1990 levels). Following the guidance of the European Council given on 11 December 2020, the EU submitted an updated NDC containing an enhanced reduction target of at least 55%. This target was then established as legally binding through the European Climate Law, adopted on 30 June 2021.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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department
of environmental law
and land law