

ATHENS EU MODEL 2021 STUDY GUIDE:  
“CARBON NEUTRALITY AND THE  
EUROPEAN CLIMATE LAW, WITHIN THE  
EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL FRAMEWORK”



Institute of European Integration and Policy

UNESCO Chair on Climate Diplomacy

Europe Direct Information Centre hosted at the Hellenic Foundation for  
European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP)

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His journey in the “MUN world” started back in 2014 during his high school years. Since then, he has participated in numerous simulations of the United Nations, the European Union, and International Organizations both in Greece and abroad. Through MUNs he had the chance to enhance his communicational skills and expand his knowledge on diplomacy and negotiations.

Beyond the “world” of the simulations, he has completed his internship on the finance and accounting department of a large consulting company and cultivated his writing skills as a Finance and Political Columnist in online independent entity “Offline Post”. Currently he is serving as the Production Manager of the event of TEDxUniversityofMacedonia and as Radio Producer in Infinity Greece.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

COP: Conference of the Parties

EIB: European Investment Bank

EGD: European Green Deal

EGDIP: European Green Deal's Investment Plan

EU: European Union

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

JTM: Just Transition Mechanism

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

SEIP: Sustainable Europe Investment Plan

TFEU: Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

UN: United Nations

UNFCCC: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

## 1. GREETING OF THE BOARD

Distinguished participants,

We would like to express our most sincere honor and excitement to welcome you all to the 2021 edition of Athens EU Model and more specifically to the European Commission, the supranational institution of the European Union. As Board Members of the EC, we are more than excited to meet you in person, and we pledge our full devotion to working with you in order to provide you with an unforgettable experience.

Stimulus for this will be our particularly interesting and most-timely topic area: “*Carbon neutrality and the European Climate Law, under the European Green Deal Framework*”. This topic is of utmost importance, as it deals with how the EU further addresses the confrontation of climate change by adopting a new legislative proposal for a European Climate Law. Even more, Commission’s outline for emissions trajectory for the period between 2030 and 2050 as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on the headline goal of the European Green Deal, carbon neutrality.

Thus, taking into consideration the complexity, importance and the multiple dimensions of the topic, we have drafted the following Study Guide, which will serve as your tool and guidance, when preparing your ideas and recommendations. We believe that the present document with its bibliography and further reading, combined with your personal research will help you fully comprehend the topic under discussion and therefore you will be substantially prepared for our sessions. Of course, it is of high importance to study the Rules of Procedure as well, because you cannot play a game, if you don’t know the rules!

Fully acknowledging that the aforementioned is not the simplest task, we assure you that we are committed to assist you along the way by any means necessary in order for you to reach the finest potential results, therefore, you should not, in any step of the process, hesitate to contact us. With all of that being said, we cannot wait to e-meet you, yield you the floor and listen to your ideas.

The Board of the European Commission,

President, **Pantelakos Alexandros**

Vice-President, **Solinara Evrydiki**

## 2. INTRODUCTION TO THE INSTITUTION

The European Commission, established in 1958, is the executive branch of the European Union. This means that it is responsible for initiating laws, enforcing the laws of the EU and managing the EU's policies, while promoting the general interest of the EU, as the supranational institution of it<sup>1</sup>.

The European Commission is composed of 27 "Commissioners" (one from each member state), including the President and the vice-presidents, and is based in Brussels. Each member state nominates a commissioner, but the nominated candidates, as well as the President, must be approved by the European Parliament. The current President of the European Commission is Ursula von der Leyen<sup>2</sup>.

Commissioners do not represent their countries. Instead, they have a field of responsibility, a portfolio. It is upon the President to allocate each policy area/portfolio to the commissioners, and to change these responsibilities (if necessary) during the Commission's term of office. Commissioners act independently in the interests of the EU. They do not represent the interests of their own Member State<sup>3</sup>.

The Commission has the following functions<sup>4</sup>:

- **Legislative** – The Commission has the sole power of legislative initiative. It makes proposals for laws that are sent to the European Parliament and Council of the European Union for approval, following the ordinary legislative procedure, the main decision-making procedure.
- **Protecting EU law** – The European Commission, together with the Court of Justice, ensures that EU law is properly applied in all the member countries and can take action against businesses or states that are failing to comply with EU law.
- **Policies and funding** – The Commission is the executive of the EU. It sets EU spending priorities, together with the Council and Parliament; draws up annual budgets for approval by

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<sup>1</sup> "European Commission - Overview." European Commission, 7 May 2020, [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en)

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, The Commissioners, 2021: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2019-2024_en) [Accessed 21 January 2021]

<sup>3</sup> "European Commission - Overview." European Commission, 7 May 2020, [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en)

<sup>4</sup> "European Commission - Overview." European Commission, 7 May 2020, [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-commission_en)

the Parliament and Council; and, supervises how the money is spent, under scrutiny by the Court of Auditors.

- **Representation** – The Commission represents the EU in international bodies, in particular in areas of trade policy and humanitarian aid, while, it also, negotiates international agreements for the EU.

The Commission meets once a week to adopt proposals, finalize policy papers and make decisions. Decisions are taken by a simple majority vote.

The European Union uses a range of legal instruments to implement policy: Green Papers; White Papers; Regulations; Directives; Recommendations; Decisions; and Communications<sup>5</sup>, which is the document that we are supposed to produce during the sessions of Athens EU Model 2021. A Communication is addressed to all the institutions of the EU and its citizens and sets out an Action Plan (including, also, proposals for legislation) regarding a topic area that concerns the EU.

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<sup>5</sup> “Regulations, Directives and other acts.” European Union. 7 May 2020, [https://europa.eu/european-union/eu-law/legal-acts\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/eu-law/legal-acts_en)

### 3. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

In the light of the pivotal consequences and disasters emerged from climate change, the European Union decided to adopt a developmental strategy that will tackle the environmental degradation and its related challenges. As a response to these concerns, European Commission, on 11 December 2019, set out the ‘European Green Deal’, an initiative that aims at transforming the European Union into a climate neutral region by 2050, bringing fair and prosperous societies, resource-efficient, sustainable and competitive economies as well as the total reduction of net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050<sup>6</sup>. In order to make this Deal more productive and engaging for both EU institutions and EU Member States, the European Commission, in the context of the European Green Deal, decided to make a legislative proposal for a -legally binding- European Climate Law. The topic of our institution will pertain to the moderations that can be implemented towards the restoration of a climate-neutral Union through the adoption of the Law, the restrictions that can be conceived as a repressive factor in combating climate change - related risks, especially during the turbulent period of Covid-19 crisis as well as the ways by which the members of the Commission shall be committed to their obligations regarding the achievement of carbon neutrality.

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2021. A European Green Deal. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

## 4. DEFINITIONS OF KEY-TERMS

### 4.1 Carbon neutrality

Carbon neutrality according to the explanation given by the European Parliament is “...having a balance between emitting carbon and absorbing carbon from the atmosphere in carbon sinks. Removing carbon oxide from the atmosphere and then storing it is known as carbon sequestration. In order to achieve net zero emissions, all worldwide greenhouse gas emissions will have to be counterbalanced by carbon sequestration”<sup>7</sup>

### 4.2 Carbon Offset

According to the Merriam – Webster dictionary, carbon offset is “an action or activity (such as the planting of trees or carbon sequestration) that compensates for the emission of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases to the atmosphere”.<sup>8</sup>

### 4.3 Climate change

Climate change is conceived, according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.”<sup>9</sup>

### 4.4 Emission

It is defined as “the act of sending out gas, heat, lights etc.” provoking environmental pollution<sup>10</sup>.

### 4.5 Sustainability

Through the climate related perspective, sustainability refers to “the quality of causing little or no damage to the environment and therefore able to continue for a long time”.<sup>11</sup> It can, also,

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<sup>7</sup> What Is Carbon Neutrality and How Can It Be Achieved By 2050? | News | European Parliament. 2021. Europarl.Europa.Eu. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20190926STO62270/what-is-carbon-neutrality-and-how-can-it-be-achieved-by-2050> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>8</sup> Merriam-webster.com. 2021. Definition of CARBON OFFSET. [online] Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/carbon%20offset> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>9</sup> Unfccc.int. 1992. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. [online] Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>10</sup> Cambridge Dictionary. 2021. emission. [online] Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/emission> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>11</sup> Cambridge Dictionary. 2021. sustainability. [online] Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sustainability> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

be interpreted as process that assures the resilience of natural and human systems in a just manner<sup>12</sup>.

#### 4.6 Decarbonization

According to the Merriam – Webster dictionary, decarbonization is “the action of decarbonizing” which translates in to the removal if the carbon molecules.<sup>13</sup>

#### 4.7 Climate-neutral

When an initiative, an activity, a perception, a strategy or a decision is characterized as climate-neutral, it means that they do not put a strain on the climate. In order to achieve that we should proceed with “balancing of residual emissions with emission (carbon dioxide) removal as well as accounting for regional or local biogeophysical effects of human activities that, for example, affect surface albedo or local climate”.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4.8 Green transition

Green transition’ activities are initiatives that contribute to the protection of the environment and to a gradual transition into just, resilient and climate-friendly societies.<sup>15</sup>

#### 4.9 Just transition

Just transition is perceived as the mechanism aiming at promoting sustainable development that is socially just, environmentally friendly, and economically efficient, with an emphasis on governance and management changes<sup>16</sup>. This procedure guarantees that “people and regions

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<sup>12</sup> IPCC, 2018: Annex I: Glossary [Matthews, J.B.R. (ed.)]. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. In Press. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/x-7/> [Accessed 15 March 2020]

<sup>13</sup> Merriam Webster. 2021. Definition of DECARBONIZATION. [online] Available at: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/decarbonization> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>14</sup> IPCC, 2018: Annex I: Glossary [Matthews, J.B.R. (ed.)]. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. In Press. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/chapter/glossary/x-7/> [Accessed 15 March 2020]

<sup>15</sup> European Commission. 2020. Financing the green transition: The European Green Deal Investment Plan and Just Transition Mechanism. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/01/14-01-2020-financing-the-green-transition-the-european-green-deal-investment-plan-and-just-transition-mechanism](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/01/14-01-2020-financing-the-green-transition-the-european-green-deal-investment-plan-and-just-transition-mechanism) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>16</sup> Kenfack, C. E. (2018). *Changing environment, just transition and job creation: perspectives from the south*. Buenos Aires: CLACSO

that need to make bigger efforts in this transformation will be supported and no one is left behind in the green transition from fossil fuels like coal, lignite, peat and oil shale”.<sup>17</sup>

#### 4.10 Adaptation

This term is defined, in general, as “the process of changing to suit different conditions”, however, through a climate perspective it is conceived as a process of adjustment to actual or expected future climate conditions or shifts, in ecological, social, or economic systems.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.11 Mitigation

“The act of reducing how harmful, unpleasant, or bad something is”.<sup>19</sup> In the context of climate change, mitigation processes are measures that reduce the climate change –related risks such as emissions or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases (including carbon dioxide removal-CDR options).

## 5. LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

### 5.1 INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

#### 5.1.1 The UNFCCC

The Convention, being adopted on the 5th of June 1992, recognized that there was a serious problem in the earth’s climate, which was remarkable for its time, as there was far less scientific evidence in comparison to now regarding climate change. The UNFCCC establishes a framework with broad principles and general obligations, which aims, to an intergovernmental process that will “stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system”<sup>20</sup>. This is achieved through the Conference of the Parties (COP), the universal decision-making body of the Convention, which reviews the implementation of Convention and takes decisions to promote the effective implementation of it<sup>21</sup>. Recognizing that even with efficient mitigation efforts, climate change impacts will be unavoidable, the Convention focuses on adaptation to

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<sup>17</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2020. Launching the Just Transition Mechanism - for a green transition based on solidarity and fairness. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/launching-just-transition-mechanism-green-transition-based-solidarity-and-fairness-2020-jan-15\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/launching-just-transition-mechanism-green-transition-based-solidarity-and-fairness-2020-jan-15_en) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>18</sup> “What Do Adaptation to Climate Change and Climate Resilience Mean?,” unfccc.int (United Nations), accessed February 1, 2021, <https://unfccc.int/topics/adaptation-and-resilience/the-big-picture/what-do-adaptation-to-climate-change-and-climate-resilience-mean>.

<sup>19</sup> “Mitigation,” Cambridge Dictionary, accessed January 31, 2021, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/mitigation>.

<sup>20</sup> “United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change”. 1992. Unfccc.Int. [https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/background\\_publications\\_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> 10. “Conference Of The Parties (COP)”. 2021. Unfccc.Int. Accessed January 18. <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>.

climate change and provides overall guidance on its assessment, planning and implementation<sup>22</sup>. Moreover, the Convention requires Parties to develop a national inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and to report on their mitigation policies and measures<sup>23</sup>. The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994, and it has a near-universal membership with 197 ratifications; participating countries are called Parties to the Convention<sup>24</sup>.

### 5.1.2 The Kyoto Protocol

Adopted in December 1997 (entered into force in 2005), the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC focuses on the international community's attitude towards the phenomenon of climate change. Currently, there are 192 Parties to the Kyoto Protocol<sup>25</sup> and its main scope is to implement operationalize the UNFCCC by, inter alia, obligating only developed countries to reduce their emissions of 6 greenhouse gases<sup>26</sup>, since they are recognized responsible for the highest levels of current and historical GHG emissions in the atmosphere.

### 5.1.3 The Paris Agreement

On 12 December 2015, during the twenty-first session of the COP in Paris, Parties to the UNFCCC reached a landmark agreement for combatting climate change. The agreement was adopted in 2015 and entered into legal force in November 2016, having been ratified by 187 countries<sup>27</sup>. The Paris Agreement's main objective is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by limiting global temperature rise below 2 degrees Celsius, while also pursuing to limit the increase by 1.5 degrees Celsius (Art. 2)<sup>28</sup>. Additionally, it focuses on mitigation by establishing "Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)" (Art. 4). NDCs basically embody efforts by each country to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change, and to do so through international cooperation (Art. 7), while developing

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<sup>22</sup> 6. "Climate Get The Big Picture". 2021. Unfccc.Int. Accessed January 18. <https://unfccc.int/resource/bigpicture/>.

<sup>23</sup> "United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change". 1992. Unfccc.Int. [https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/background\\_publications\\_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf).

<sup>24</sup>"United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change". 1992. Unfccc.Int. [https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/background\\_publications\\_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> "UNTC - A Kyoto Protocol To The United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change". 2021. Treaties.Un.Org. Accessed January 18. [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=XXVII-7-a&chapter=27&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7-a&chapter=27&lang=en)

<sup>26</sup> "UNTC - A Kyoto Protocol To The United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change". 2021. Treaties.Un.Org. Accessed January 18. [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=XXVII-7-a&chapter=27&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7-a&chapter=27&lang=en)

<sup>27</sup> "Adoption Of The Paris Agreement - Paris Agreement Text English." United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (United Nations, 2015), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> "Adoption Of The Paris Agreement - Paris Agreement Text English." United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (United Nations, 2015), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf).

countries should receive enhanced support<sup>29</sup>. However, the important phrase for our topic, which appears in the preamble of the Paris Agreement, is that the Nationally Determined Contributions must “*take into account the imperative of the just transition of the workforce, and the creation of decent work and quality jobs*”<sup>30</sup>. Furthermore, the Paris Agreement, stresses the importance of climate change education, training, public awareness, and public participation (Art. 12)<sup>31</sup>. Despite the above-mentioned, the proper implementation of the Paris Agreement was at risk until recently, as the United States of America (USA), one of the top four emitters, had announced its withdrawal of it, under the Trump Presidency<sup>32</sup>. However, the Biden administration announced the return of the USA to the Paris Agreement<sup>33</sup>.

#### 5.1.4 The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the United Nations

In 2015, all UN member states adopted the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, having set a common plan for peace and prosperity in the entire world. Particularly, the 2030 Agenda aims at achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), provided that all -developed and developing- countries will take action immediately.

The objectives of SDGs have set as a priority the adoption of strategies that will improve different sectors such as health, education as well as practices that reduce inequality and promote economic growth, in combination with poverty reduction and other deprivations<sup>34</sup>.

#### 5.1.5 SDG No.13 “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”

Important for our topic area, is particularly Goal 13. “Sustainable Development Goal No.13 - Climate Action” has been introduced by the UN with a view to protect the environment, confront the dimensions of climate change through the regulations of emissions and renewable energy<sup>35</sup>. With this goal, UN endeavor to inform and inspire people and institutions to take actions against

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<sup>29</sup> “Adoption Of The Paris Agreement - Paris Agreement Text English.” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (United Nations, 2015), [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf).

<sup>30</sup> This was greatly reinforced at 2018’s COP24, in Katowice, Poland. COP24 was intended to finalize the rulebook to allow the Paris Agreement to be implemented. A declaration on Just Transition was adopted – a major achievement for the labor movement.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Henrik, Selin. 2019. "Can The Paris Agreement On Climate Change Succeed Without The US? 4 Questions Answered". The Conversation. <https://theconversation.com/can-the-paris-agreement-on-climate-change-succeed-without-the-us-4-questions-answered-126477>

<sup>33</sup> Oliver Milman, “Biden Returns US to Paris Climate Accord Hours after Becoming President,” The Guardian (Guardian News and Media, January 20, 2021), <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/jan/20/paris-climate-accord-joe-biden-returns-us>.

<sup>34</sup> "Goal 13 | Department Of Economic And Social Affairs". 2021. Sdgs.Un.Org. Accessed January 31. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>.

<sup>35</sup> "The Sustainable Development Agenda". 2021. United Nations Sustainable Development. Accessed January 31. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/>.

Climate Change, while trying to innovate and adopt technological solutions towards mitigation and adaptation to global climate change. Moreover, setting this goal, the UN aim to protect the most vulnerable against climate change as well as promote the improvement of education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning<sup>36</sup>.

## 5.2 EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK

### 5.2.1 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU)

In articles 11 and 191 to 193 of the TFEU the responsibilities of the EU in issues regarding the environment and energy are being presented. According to these articles, the EU is competent to act in all areas of environment policy, such as air and water pollution, waste management, protecting human health, use of natural resources and climate change, while “*the environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Union's policies and activities, in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development*”.<sup>37</sup>

### 5.2.2 Communication from The Commission “The European Green Deal”

In the light of climate change and environmental-related challenges, the European Commission, on 11 December 2019, introduced a Communication, to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee as well as the Committee of the Regions, that sets out a **European Green Deal** (EGD) EU and its citizens. More precisely, the Communication presents the environmental vision of the EU built on a roadmap of policy responses and measures towards economic growth, resilience, prosperity, and sustainability. After the European Parliament’s and Council’s approval of the *Resolution on the European Green Deal*, the EDG becomes one of the most important priorities of the European Union<sup>38</sup>.

### 5.2.3 European Council Conclusions

During the European Council’s meeting, that took place on 12 December 2019, EU leaders came to an agreement over the achievement of a climate-neutral EU by 2050, in line with the

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<sup>36</sup> "UNEP - UN Environment Programme". 2021. UNEP - UN Environment Programme. Accessed January 31. <https://www.unep.org/>.

<sup>37</sup> "Consolidated Version Of The Treaty On The Functioning Of The European Union". 2012. Eur-Lex.Europa.Eu. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012E%2FTXT>.

<sup>38</sup> "Communication From The Commission To The European Parliament, The European Council, The Council, The European Economic And Social Committee And The Committee Of The Regions The European Green Deal". 2019. Eur-Lex.Europa.Eu. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_1&format=PDF).

Paris Agreement. According to their arguments, this proposal constitutes a significant opportunity that will bring economic growth, new markets, jobs, technological development, preserve EU's competitiveness and confront carbon leakage. Furthermore, the European Council highlighted that all relevant EU policies need to be in line with the climate-neutrality objective and, thus, invited the Commission to examine whether the existing rules, including on state aid and public procurement, require adjustment. It also called the Commission to report regularly on the environmental and socio-economic impact of the transition to climate neutrality. Finally, among others, the European Council acknowledged and endorsed the Commission's intention to propose a carbon border adjustment mechanism concerning carbon-intensive sectors as well as the need to protect energy security with all due respect to member states' right to decide on their energy mix and to choose the most appropriate technologies<sup>39</sup>.

#### 5.2.4 2020 Climate & Energy Package (20-20-20 targets)

The climate and energy package constitutes a complementary legislation which ensures that EU meets its ambitious climate and energy targets for 2020. Particularly, the package stipulated three (3) key targets<sup>40</sup>:

1. 20% cut in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels)
2. 20% of EU energy from renewables
3. 20% improvement in energy efficiency

The targets were set by EU leaders in 2007 and enacted in legislation in 2009. They comprised, at the same time, the headline targets of the *Europe 2020 Strategy* for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. The EU takes action in several areas to meet the targets such as innovation and financing, non-ETS (Emissions Trading System)<sup>41</sup> industry, housing, agriculture, as well transport (excluding aviation).

#### 5.2.5 2030 Climate and Energy Framework

Under the 2030 climate and energy framework (2014) which also represents its commitment under the Paris Agreement, the EU has committed itself to the following goals, to be reached by 2030<sup>42</sup>: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% below 1990 levels, improving

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<sup>39</sup> "European Council Meeting (12 December 2019) - Conclusions". 2019. Consilium.Europa.Eu. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/41768/12-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> "2020 Climate & Energy Package - Climate Action - European Commission". 2021. Climate Action - European Commission. Accessed January 31. [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2020_en).

<sup>41</sup> Emissions Trading Systems

<sup>42</sup> "Communication from The Commission to The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of The Regions A Policy Framework for Climate and Energy in The

energy efficiency by 27%, and increasing the share of renewable energy sources to 27% of final consumption<sup>43</sup>. The 2030 framework comes as a follow-up to the ‘20-20-20 targets’ decided, in 2007, by EU leaders for 2020, all translated into binding legislative measures<sup>44</sup>. The EU roadmap for moving to a low-carbon economy by 2050 formulates a long-term GHG reduction target of 80%, while its most recent long-term strategy advocates a climate-neutral economy by 2050.

#### 5.2.6 2050 Long-term Strategy

In the context of the EGD and the EU’s compliance with the standards of the Paris Agreement, the Commission, on 28 November 2018, initiated its strategic long-term vision for a climate-neutral EU by 2050. This strategy aspires to develop economies with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions and actualize the transition to a climate-neutral society.<sup>45</sup> The 2050 long-term strategy was approved by both the European Parliament and the European Council and, therefore, the EU submitted its long-term strategy to the UNFCCC in March 2020. The European Climate Law is part of the 2050 Long-term Strategy.

#### 5.2.7 Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) COM/2020/80 final

On 3 March 2020, the European Commission proposed a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council with the view to write into law (the first-ever in history) the headline goal of the European Green Deal and that is climate-neutrality by 2050 as well as the framework that is needed to reach that goal. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that net zero emissions by 2050 are contributed by all sectors of the economy and society contribute and that the framework for the assessment of progress towards that goal is facilitated<sup>46</sup>.

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Period From 2020 To 2030 /\* COM/2014/015 Final \*/. 2014. Eur-Lex.Europa.Eu. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52014DC0015&from=EN>.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid

<sup>44</sup> "Combating Climate Change | Fact Sheets On The European Union | European Parliament". 2021. Europarl.Europa.Eu. Accessed January 18. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/72/combating-climate-change>.

<sup>45</sup> "2050 Long-Term Strategy - Climate Action - European Commission". 2021. Climate Action - European Commission. Accessed January 17. [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2050\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/strategies/2050_en).

<sup>46</sup> "Proposal For A Regulation Of The European Parliament And Of The Council Establishing The Framework For Achieving Climate Neutrality And Amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law)". 2020. Eur-Lex.Europa.Eu. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0080&from=EN>.

5.2.8 Amended proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law) COM/2020/563 final

On 17 September 2020, six months after the first introduction of the European Climate Law, the Commission decided to amend its initial proposal, that set into legislation carbon-neutrality by 2050, with a view to incorporate a revised EU emission reduction target of at least **55% by 2030**. In December 2020, the European Council endorsed the amendment and called for a swift adoption of the climate law<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> "Amended Proposal For A Regulation Of The European Parliament And Of The Council On Establishing The Framework For Achieving Climate Neutrality And Amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law)". 2020. Eur-Lex.Europa.Eu. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0563&from=EN>.

## 6. MAIN ANALYSIS OF THE TOPIC AREA

### 6.1 The EGD

The world is currently facing the biggest environmental challenges our species have ever seen. Climate change and global warming are having serious impacts on the ecosystems and forecasts show that the situation is only going to get worse, if no drastic and immediate measures are taken. Sea levels are rising 3.2 millimeters a year globally at a faster rate in this past decade and freshwater is likely to get more limited, as glaciers contain about three-quarters of the world's freshwater. Extreme weather events, such as hurricanes and heavy rainfalls are becoming more frequent.<sup>48</sup> More specifically, the central and southern/Mediterranean part of Europe are noticing constant heat waves and general drought that augment the chances for the break out of possible wildfires. In the other hand, the Northern part of Europe is clearly becoming wetter, which makes the region more vulnerable to floods and the decrease of water quality. Last but not least, climate change has serious consequences on both the economy and society, as it affects people's health and jobs, particularly the ones of those working in sectors, such as agriculture, energy and tourism<sup>49</sup>.

As a response to the aforementioned challenges the European Commission presented on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2019 the EGD. It is an innovative action plan that is focusing on reforming the already existing model of society into a more prosperous and fairer one, with a sustainable economy that will be competitive and yet free of greenhouse gases emissions by 2050. This growth strategy is providing the measures with the implementation of which, the EU will be able to transform the current climate and environmental changes into new opportunities existing throughout all policy areas, as well as to protect and enhance its natural habitat. At the same time, it is just and inclusive, as it ensures the well-being and the protection of rights of the workers, who are affected by this transition. It puts people first and it is making sure that "no one is left behind". In addition, the Deal refers to the important investments that have to be implemented, as well as the financing tools available in order to establish a coherent economic system that supports sustainable solutions, as it also reflects the objectives of the

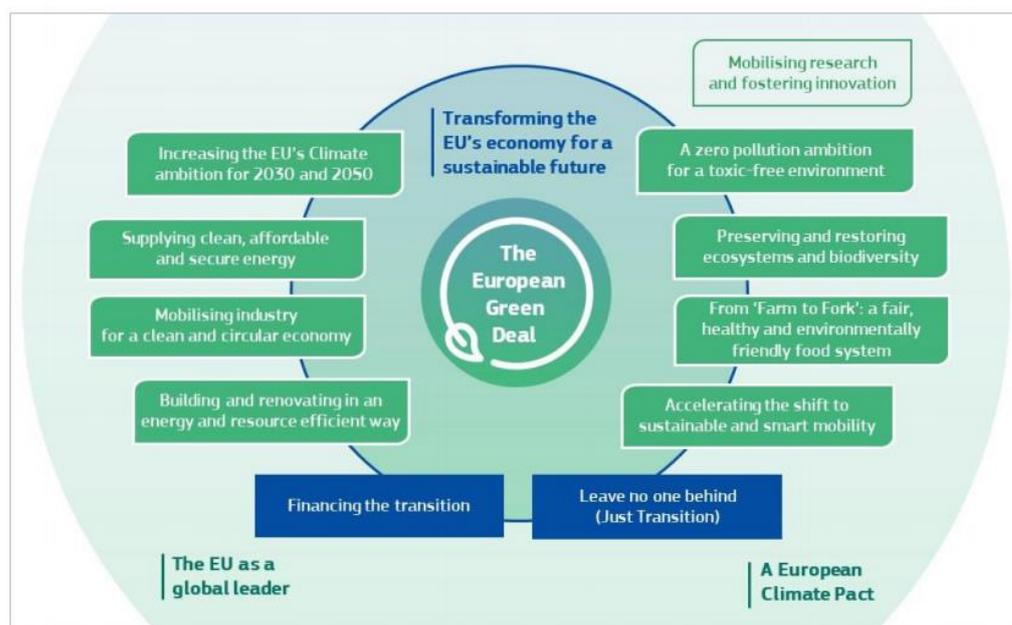
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<sup>48</sup> National Geographic. 2021. Global Warming Effects. [online] Available at: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/global-warming-effects/n> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>49</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2021. A European Green Deal. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals<sup>50</sup>. Moreover, the EGD is comprised by three main pillar-initiatives; the **European Climate Pact** “to engage citizens and all parts of society in climate action”, the **2030 Climate Target Plan** “to further reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030” as well as the **European Climate Law** “to enshrine the 2050 climate-neutrality objective into EU law”, which will be further analyzed in an upcoming section.

Following the presentation of the EGD, the European Commission announced on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 the launch of two projects that are parts of the green growth strategy, the European Green Deal Investment Plan and the Just Transition Mechanism. The first one is aiming to facilitate the mobilization of public investment and private funds through the financial EU organs. Consequently, as multiple regions will be transformed both socially and economically, the second project is focusing on providing financial and technical support to the workers affected by the transition<sup>51</sup>.



<sup>50</sup> European Commission, 2019. The European Green Deal. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>51</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. Financing The Green Transition: The European Green Deal Investment Plan And Just Transition Mechanism. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/01/14-01-2020-financing-the-green-transition-the-european-green-deal-investment-plan-and-just-transition-mechanism](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/01/14-01-2020-financing-the-green-transition-the-european-green-deal-investment-plan-and-just-transition-mechanism) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

## 6.2 Policy Areas of the European Green Deal

### 6.2.1 Clean energy and eliminating pollution

The EU, since its establishment, has taken a wide variety of measures in order to protect and support the protection of the environment against the dramatic effects of climate change and pollution. By the introduction of the EGD, the EU is aiming exactly at tackling the aforementioned pillars.

The elimination of pollution is a wide problem, which should be dealt with a wide variety of measures. More specifically, there are four main policy domains, where measures should be implemented in order to minimize the effects of pollution<sup>52</sup>:

### 6.2.2 Water

In order to secure clean water, the member states should work towards the preservation of the biodiversity of the lakes, rivers and wetlands, the reduction of pollution according to the Farm to Fork strategy and the reduction of the pollution caused by microplastics and pharmaceuticals<sup>53</sup>.

### 6.2.3 Air

In order to secure clean air, the member states should work towards the review of the air quality standards, according to the guidelines provided by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the provision of assistance to local authorities in order to support them in taking the necessary measures to ensure and provide better air quality for their citizens<sup>54</sup>.

### 6.2.4 Industry

In order to secure better industrial conditions, the member states should work towards the reduction of pollution from medium and large -heavy- industrial installations and structures and the improvement of the preventing protocols against industrial accidents.

### 6.2.5 Chemicals

In order to secure the environment against various chemicals, the member states should work towards the development of sustainable alternatives, the combination of improved health protection and global competitiveness, the improvement of the rules and protocols for the

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<sup>52</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2021. *Eliminating Pollution*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs\\_19\\_6729](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_19_6729) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>53</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2021. *Eliminating Pollution*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs\\_19\\_6729](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_19_6729) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>54</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2021. *Eliminating Pollution*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs\\_19\\_6729](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_19_6729) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

assessment of new substances and the implementation of a new chemical strategy for the sustainability of a toxic-free environment<sup>55</sup>.

As far as clean energy is considered, with the introduction of the EGD, various has been introduced for further implementation in order to achieve the ambitions of the EU for 2030. The Union has suggested the interconnection of the energy systems for a better connection of the energy sources to the grid. This can be achieved with the improvement of the promotion of the European energy standards and technologies on a global level and the promotion of innovative technologies and infrastructure. Furthermore, member states should take the appropriate measures to decarbonize the gas sector, to increase their regional cooperation, in order to share their clean energy sources and to assist the companies to improve the energy efficiency and the exo-design of their products<sup>56</sup>.

#### 6.2.6 Sustainable industry, food systems and smart mobility

The transition into a climate neutral economy is an opportunity for all member states to expand their sustainable and job intensive economic activities. The potential in the global markets concerning low emission technologies, products and services is increasing significantly and it will continue to rise exponentially, the next few decades, where the need for more eco-friendly solutions will be of outmost importance. The EGD will support this transition of the industries of the member states, to a growing sustainable model. In March, the European Commission will implement the EU industrial strategy in order to cope with both the green and the digital transformation. Accompanied, by the industrial strategy, a new action plan concerning the circular economy will assist the EU to be led into the modernization of its economy which will result into new opportunities both domestically and globally. Europe must take a multilevel action in order to have a smoother transition into the new age. All member states of the Union should adjust their activities in order to modernize and decarbonize the most energy consuming industries such as steel, chemicals and cement. At the same time, they should include a sustainable products policy, based on a common methodology and principles in order to prioritize the reduction and reuse of the materials leading into the minimization of the environmentally harmful products that are currently used<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>55</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2021. *Eliminating Pollution*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs\\_19\\_6729](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_19_6729) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>56</sup> European Commission - European Commission. 2021. *Eliminating Pollution*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs\\_19\\_6729](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_19_6729) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>57</sup> Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. *A Clean Planet for all*

One other main aspect that should be taken under consideration by the member states, is the food systems currently used and their improvement and modernization. The European food is well known for its safety and its quality. Nevertheless, the systems being used should be modernized and become the global standards for sustainability. Member states should continue to support by all means their farmers and fishermen, as they are the key factor for a smoother transition<sup>58</sup>.

Strategic plans for the modernization should aim at the reduction of the use of chemical pesticides, fertilizers and antibiotics and the construction of organic farms should become a priority for achieving food sustainability, safety and security<sup>59</sup>.

Last but not least, another measure, in order to enhance the climate neutral economy, is the upgrade of transport efficiency, 75% of the current road stream of inland freight, should be redistributed onto rail and inland waterways in order to be transported to its destination. Furthermore, member states should adopt a more automated and connected multimodal mobility, which, accompanied by a smart traffic management system will result in less congestion and pollution, especially in more urban areas. Lastly, member states should make significant efforts in order to promote alternative transport fuels. Fossil fuels cars should be reduced and replaced with more eco-friendly vehicles both for personal and professional use<sup>60</sup>.

### 6.2.7 Building and Renovating

As it can be understood, the planning, the construction and the renovation of buildings and structures, require a great amount of energy and other resources, such as sand, gravel and cement. As far as energy is considered, buildings hold accountable for the 40% of total energy

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*A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final.* [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>58</sup> Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final.* [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>59</sup> Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final.* [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>60</sup> Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final.* [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

consumed. However, the renovation of a building, can significantly lower the energy consumed, as more advanced materials are been used, which improves the energy efficiency and consumption of the whole building<sup>61</sup>.

The European Commission has enforced a new legislation concerning buildings' energy performance. This will lead, overtime, into the planning of the national long-term renovation strategies of governmental and other buildings in the member states. At the same time, the European Commission is reviewing the Construction Products Regulations in order to ensure that the renovated buildings are in line with the economic circle and leading to an increase of the digitalization and climate proofing of the buildings under construction or renovation<sup>62</sup>.

### 6.2.8 Ecosystems & Biodiversity

We are facing an ecological emergency. One million species are currently threatened with extinction, and the health of the ecosystems on which we all depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever<sup>63</sup>. Biodiversity loss is one of the most critical environmental threats alongside climate change and the two are inextricably linked<sup>64</sup>.

Transformative solutions are needed to halt and reverse current trends of biodiversity loss, and to achieve the SDGs. We need urgent action to address the drivers of nature deterioration, and it needs to happen at an unprecedented scale<sup>65</sup>.

The EGD is an opportunity to kick-start these actions and finally put our planet on the path to recovery. The transformational ambition expressed at the core of the Green Deal is important for biodiversity. Central to the challenge is our two-planet lifestyle that keeps undercutting our

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<sup>61</sup>Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021.Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final*. [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>62</sup>Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021.Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final*. [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>63</sup>“NGOs Tell EU Environment Chief, 'It's The Final Countdown' For Nature Posted On 13 February 2019”. 2019. WWF. 20 January 2021, [https://wwf.panda.org/wwf\\_news/?343033/NGOs-tell-EU-environment-chief-its-the-final-countdown-for-nature](https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?343033/NGOs-tell-EU-environment-chief-its-the-final-countdown-for-nature) .

<sup>64</sup>“NGOs Tell EU Environment Chief, 'It's The Final Countdown' For Nature Posted On 13 February 2019”. 2019. WWF. 20 January 2021, [https://wwf.panda.org/wwf\\_news/?343033/NGOs-tell-EU-environment-chief-its-the-final-countdown-for-nature](https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?343033/NGOs-tell-EU-environment-chief-its-the-final-countdown-for-nature) .

<sup>65</sup>“NGOs Tell EU Environment Chief, 'It's The Final Countdown' For Nature Posted On 13 February 2019”. 2019. WWF. 20 January 2021, [https://wwf.panda.org/wwf\\_news/?343033/NGOs-tell-EU-environment-chief-its-the-final-countdown-for-nature](https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?343033/NGOs-tell-EU-environment-chief-its-the-final-countdown-for-nature) .

life support systems, not least through an oversized food system<sup>66</sup>. This is about much more than just a discussion about the use of pesticides. We're talking about space for nature preservation and restoration at home and abroad<sup>67</sup>.

The EGD brings back some of the strategy developed under the Barroso Commission for a European economy within planetary boundaries. Preserving and restoring ecosystems is the safest bet to prevent us from breaching the ultimate planetary boundary – that of extinction. If done right, restoration can also significantly help mitigate and adapt to climate change<sup>68</sup>.

### 6.3 The Just Transition

#### 6.3.1 Origin and evolution of the term

At the end of World War II, it was widely feared that the end of wartime military spending would send the US economy back into the Great Depression. Economic planning for reconversion to a peacetime economy and the GI Bill of Rights, which provided veterans up to four years of tuition and a living wage, helped forestall mass unemployment and economic dislocation<sup>69</sup>.

During the Cold War every recession was met with an increase in military spending, usually justified by an international crisis but effectively serving to restore economic growth. In order to end the arms race, many in the peace movement, concluded that it would be necessary to ensure jobs and economic prosperity in some way other than such “military Keynesianism”<sup>70</sup>.

In the 1990s, North American unions began developing the concept of just transition. Early in the decade, following the confirmation of fossil fuel-caused global warming, Tony Mazzocchi, leader of Oil Chemical, and Atomic Workers, revived the idea of just transition, calling it a “Superfund for workers”. The “Superfund for workers” would provide financial support and an opportunity for higher education for workers displaced by environmental protection

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<sup>66</sup>1. "What The Green Deal Means For Europe'S Biodiversity". 2021. Ieep.Eu. 20 January 2021 <https://ieep.eu/news/what-the-green-deal-means-for-europe-s-biodiversity>.

<sup>67</sup>1. "What The Green Deal Means For Europe'S Biodiversity". 2021. Ieep.Eu. 20 January 2021 <https://ieep.eu/news/what-the-green-deal-means-for-europe-s-biodiversity>.

<sup>68</sup> 1. "What The Green Deal Means For Europe'S Biodiversity". 2021. Ieep.Eu. 20 January 2021 <https://ieep.eu/news/what-the-green-deal-means-for-europe-s-biodiversity>.

<sup>69</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica. 2021. G.I. Bill | Definition & Facts. [online] Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/GI-Bill-of-Rights> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>70</sup> Treddenick, J.M., 1985. The Arms Race and Military Keynesianism. Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de Politiques, [online] 11(1), p.77. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3550382?origin=crossref> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

policies<sup>71</sup>. As Mazzocchi put it in 1993, “there is a Superfund for dirt. There ought to be one for workers”. He argued that “paying people to make the transition from one kind of economy - from one kind of job - to another is not welfare. Those who work with toxic materials on a daily basis ... in order to provide the world with the energy and the materials it needs deserve a helping hand to make a new start in life”.<sup>72</sup>

According to Les Leopold, executive director of the Labor Institute and Mazzocchi’s close collaborator and later biographer, “later environmentalists complained that the word superfund had too many negative connotations, and the name of the plan was changed to Just Transition”<sup>73</sup>. Just transition was further established within the labor movement in 2000, by a report published by the Canadian Labor Congress. Its emergence to the international climate change arena, though, is owed to Argentinian official policy positions that date to 2006<sup>74</sup>.

Over time, however, just transition came to mean something much broader for unions and their partners: an effort to plan for and invest in a transition to environmentally and socially sustainable jobs, sectors and economies. As understanding of climate change grew, unions began to tie just transition specifically to action on climate change. They also began campaigning to insert just transition into international regimes, including UNFCCC negotiations<sup>75</sup>. Thus, gaining a momentum in recent years, eventually, its remit has widened, and, nowadays, from the initial focus on industrial transition and workers’ rights, it includes, inter alia, the adverse distributional impacts of climate change policies<sup>76</sup>.

In 2015, the UN agreed upon the Agenda 2030 for the SDGs that collectively represent the agenda of just transition, particularly the goals of decent work for all (Goal 8), clean energy for all (Goal 7), climate protection (Goal 13) and poverty eradication (Goal 1)<sup>77</sup>. Again, unions

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<sup>71</sup> Roessler, C., n.d. “Just Transition” – Just What Is It? An Analysis of Language, Strategies, and Projects. [online] Labor Network for Sustainability; Strategic Practice: Grassroots Policy Project. Available at: [https://www.labor4sustainability.org/files/Just\\_Transition\\_Just\\_What\\_Is\\_It.pdf](https://www.labor4sustainability.org/files/Just_Transition_Just_What_Is_It.pdf) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>72</sup> Dollarsandsense.org. 2021. A Superfund For Workers | Dollars & Sense. [online] Available at: <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/archives/2015/11/15brecher.html> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>73</sup> Les Leopold, “*The Man Who Hated Work and Loved Labor*” (White River Junction, VTP Chelsea Green, 2007) p. 415.

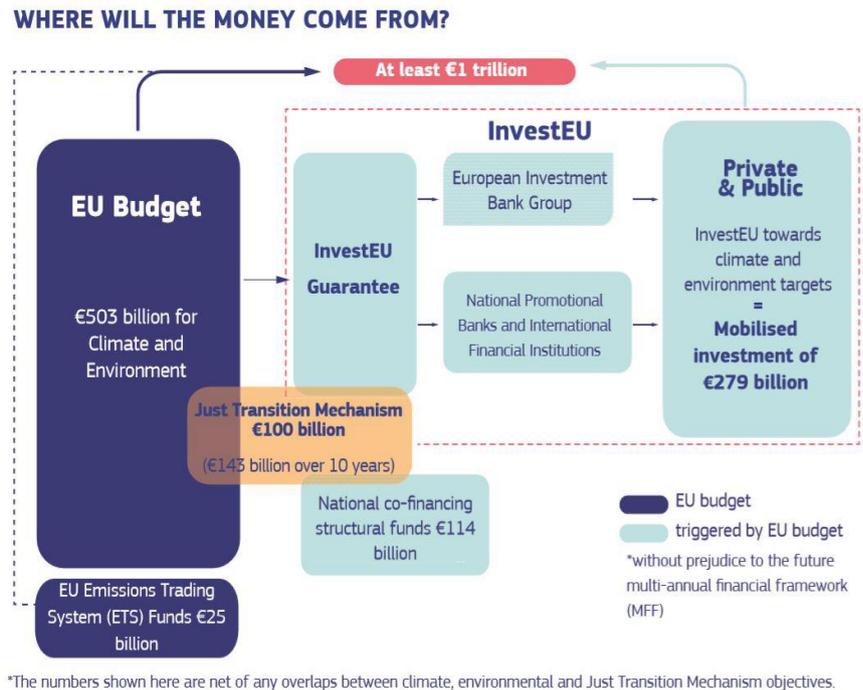
<sup>74</sup> Kenfack, C. E. (2018). Changing environment, just transition and job creation: perspectives from the south. Buenos Aires: CLACSO

<sup>75</sup> Just Transition Centre, 2017. Just Transition. [online] OECD. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>76</sup> Sanna Markkanen and Annela Anger-Kraavi, “Social Impacts of Climate Change Mitigation Policies and Their Implications for Inequality,” *Climate Policy* 19, no. 7 (April 2, 2019): pp. 827-844, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14693062.2019.1596873>.

<sup>77</sup> The Sustainable Development Goals, The Sustainable Development Agenda, 17 Goals for People, for Planet, 2021: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

had campaigned for these goals, in particular Goal 8<sup>78</sup>. Thereafter in the same year, the UN's International Labor Organization produced a definitive model for just transition: "Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all". The Guidelines are the result of a tripartite multilateral negotiation between unions, employers' organizations and governments<sup>79</sup>.



In the negotiations leading up to the Paris Agreement, the global climate deal negotiated in 2015, unions and their allies worked hard to get strong text on just transition in the Agreement<sup>80</sup>. In the end, the Parties agreed to include the text in the Agreement's preamble: "Taking into account the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs in accordance with nationally defined development priorities..."<sup>81</sup>.

In the same context, the EGD is an integral part of this Commission's strategy to implement the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and the other priorities announced in President

<sup>78</sup> Just Transition Centre, 2017. Just Transition. [online] OECD. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>79</sup> International Labour Organization, 2015. Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. [online] International Labour Organization. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_emp/---emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_432859.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_432859.pdf) [Accessed 21 January 2021].

<sup>80</sup> Just Transition Centre, 2017. Just Transition. [online] OECD. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/environment/cc/g20-climate/collapsecontents/Just-Transition-Centre-report-just-transition.pdf> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>81</sup> Paris Agreement. [online] United Nations Treaty Collection. Available at: [https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtsg\\_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=en](https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtsg_no=XXVII-7-d&chapter=27&clang=en) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

von der Leyen's political guidelines<sup>82</sup>. As part of the Green Deal, the Commission will focus to integrate the UN SDGs, to put sustainability and the well-being of citizens at the center of economic policy, and the sustainable development goals at the heart of the EU's policymaking and action, while aiming to have a "just transition" to a carbon neutral EU.

### 6.3.2 The funding of the just transition

In order for the EU to achieve the goals of the Green Deal, significant funds and investments from both the EU and the national public sector, as well as the private sector, are required, thus accompanying the Green Deal, the European Union has developed several funding and investment mechanisms, while, also, promoting private actions.

### 6.3.3 European Green Deal's Investment Plan (EGDIP)

The EGDIP, which is also called Sustainable Europe Investment Plan (SEIP), is the main strategy that the EU member-states will follow under the Green Deal. This package includes mobilization of other EU related funds and instruments, private investments, the creation of new mechanisms and even a separate fund for making the EU climate-neutral by 2050. This Plan includes three objectives<sup>83</sup>, the first being the funding of the transition by mobilizing €1 trillion through the EU budget and "Invest EU". Secondly the EGDIP will create the right framework for private and public investments and finally the third objective will be to support the funding, structure and founding of various projects for sustainable Europe.

### 6.3.4 EU budget

The European Commission suggests that 25% of the 2021-2027 EU budget shall be invested in environmental policies including climate change. Calculating the budget for stem year period the EU budget will provide €503 billion to the EGDIP. In fact, this will trigger additional national co-financing of around €114 billion<sup>84</sup>.

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<sup>82</sup> Von der Leyen, U., 2020. POLITICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2019-2024 - A Union that strives for more - My agenda for Europe. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>83</sup> European Commission, 2020. The European Green Deal Investment Plan and JTM explained. [Text] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_24](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_24) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>84</sup> European Commission, 2020. The European Green Deal Investment Plan and JTM explained. [Text] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_24](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_24) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

#### 6.3.4.1 InvestEU

Proposed in June 2018, InvestEU alone is capable of mobilizing around €279 billion of public and private investments on environmental projects in the period 2021-2030. In fact, this kind of financial mobility will allow the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group to invest further<sup>85</sup>.

#### 6.3.4.2 Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)

The JTM will in fact mobilize a total of €100 billion of investments and will be financed from various sources, meaning the EU budget, InvestEU, along with contribution of member-states, will focus on the social and economic costs of the transition in the most impacted regions and finance projects so that no-one is left behind<sup>86</sup>. This Mechanism consists of three main pillars of finance:

**The Just Transition Fund**, with added funds of €7.5 billion from the EU budget will have its own budget and legal framework presented along with the rest of the mechanism. This fund is closely linked to the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund Plus while national contributions are part of this financial instrument according to cohesion policy. As a result, there will be a total of about €30-€50 billion for the period 2021-2027. The Fund aims to assist workers in coal, lignite, oil shale and peat production by providing education, jobs. Moreover, another goal is to finance energy transition<sup>87</sup>.

The Second Pillar dedicated just transition scheme under **InvestEU** will mobilize €45 billion of investments to climate related projects for regions mostly effected by the transition. One of the main objectives is to assess the impact of the projects and promote them to investors through the InvestEU Advisory Hub<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> European Commission, 2020. The European Green Deal Investment Plan and JTM explained. [Text] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_24](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_24) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>86</sup> European Commission, 2019. The Just Transition Mechanism. [Text] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs\\_20\\_39](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_20_39) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>87</sup> Cameron, A., Claeys, G., Midões, C. and Tagliapietra, S., 2020. How good is the European Commission's Just Transition Fund proposal? [online] p.11. Available at: [https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PC-04\\_2020-V2.pdf](https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PC-04_2020-V2.pdf) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>88</sup> European Commission, 2020. The European Green Deal Investment Plan and JTM explained. [Text] European Commission. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_24](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_24) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

Public sector loan facility with the **EIB** backed by the EU budget. This kind of loan will provide €25-€30 billion investments. More specifically, apart from the main mission to back InvestEU the EIB will provide low interest loans to public actors for the development of infrastructure<sup>89</sup>.

It is worth mentioning that this just transition mechanism is more than just a financial strategy. It provides expertise, technical assistance and share of best practices among investors and member-states.

The JTM will be at the disposal of every member state of the EU, but it will be focused on the specific regions that are heavily impacted by carbon and on region, where there is a high concentration of people working on the mining and extraction of fossil fuels<sup>90</sup>.

All in all, the mechanism will protect the people and citizens, who are the most vulnerable by the transition by:

- a. Providing new employment opportunities in the new and transitional sectors,
- b. Offering the improvement of their skills, taking into consideration of the new technologies and data,
- c. Improving the energy efficiency of buildings and apartments,
- d. Investing in order to tackle the energy poverty,
- e. Facilitating the ability of people to access renewable, affordable and secure energy<sup>91</sup>

The companies and sectors, which are active in or part of carbon intensive industries by:

- a. Assisting in the transition in low carbon technologies and economic diversification,
- b. Providing incentives for public and private investors,
- c. Providing better conditions for loans and financial support,
- d. Assisting in the creation of startups and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs),
- e. Investing the necessary funds in order to conduct new research and innovation activities<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Cameron, A., Claeys, G., Midões, C. and Tagliapietra, S., 2020. How good is the European Commission's Just Transition Fund proposal? [online] p.11. Available at: [https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PC-04\\_2020-V2.pdf](https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PC-04_2020-V2.pdf) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>90</sup> Cameron, A., Claeys, G., Midões, C. and Tagliapietra, S., 2020. How good is the European Commission's Just Transition Fund proposal? [online] p.11. Available at: [https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PC-04\\_2020-V2.pdf](https://www.bruegel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PC-04_2020-V2.pdf) [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>91</sup> Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final. [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>92</sup> Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy

and the member states of the EU, which are highly dependent on fossil fuels and carbon intensive industries, by:

- a. Supporting all the activities for a smoother transition into the new eco-friendly age
- b. Supporting the creation of new jobs aligned with the green economy
- c. Investing in a public eco-friendly transport sector
- d. Supporting with technical assistance
- e. Investing in renewable energy sources and suppliers
- f. Improving the digital connectivity of the countries
- g. Providing better conditions for loans and financial support,
- h. Improving the necessary energy infrastructure<sup>93</sup>

#### 6.4 The EU long - term strategy

Climate change and global warming are transforming gradually the lives of every living being on the planet, including the lives of the European citizens. More specifically, the last two decades, they are faced with extreme weather conditions; extreme weather events that are plaguing the continent. One of the main visions of the EU is the development of a strategy towards a sustainable future of the climate, leading into the preservation or even the improvement of the current living conditions of the Europeans, as long as climate is concerned<sup>94</sup>. Climate change doesn't have a negative direct impact on the lives of the people. It also affects the economy of the countries and for this reason, the Union has developed a long-term strategy that is founded on four main pillars<sup>95</sup>:

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COM/2018/773 final. [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>93</sup>Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final. [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>94</sup>Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final. [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>95</sup>Eur-lex.europa.eu. 2021. Communication from the Commission to the European Union, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank. A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy COM/2018/773 final. [online] Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0773> [Accessed 1 February 2021].

#### 6.4.1 Emissions

After extensive research, the EU was led into the fact that, 93% of the European people believe that climate change is a result of human activities and 85% of Europeans agree that economic growth can be achieved through the fight against climate change. Furthermore, the EU has achieved the decoupling of gas emissions from economic growth. More specifically, during the chronicle period 1990-2017, the greenhouse gas emissions were decreased by 22% and the European GDP has increased by 58%. Although, that decoupling is beneficial, it is not sufficient for a sustainable future in order to achieve a climate neutral economy by 2050. In order to achieve such a climate neutrality, the EU has planned seven different steps to achieve such an undertaking:<sup>96</sup>

- a. **Fully decarbonizing energy supply**, by establishing the electrification of the energy system on a large scale, accompanied by the use of renewable energy sources, the energy supply will be decarbonized and it will reduce its dependency on supply by third countries<sup>97</sup>
- b. **Clean, safe and connected mobility**, by the decarbonization of the transport sector, which will be achieved by the use of alternative means of transport, such as automatic driving and electric vehicles, accompanied by the use of alternative fuels<sup>98</sup>
- c. **Industrial modernization**, by the modernization of the existing installations and by the investment in new carbon neutral circular economy-compatible technologies and systems<sup>99</sup>
- d. **Energy efficiency**, by the reduction of energy consumption by 50% between 2005-2050<sup>100</sup>
- e. **Smart network infrastructure and interconnections**, by ensuring the optimization of the sector and the regional cooperation<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>97</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>98</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>99</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>100</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>101</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

- f. **Bio-economy and creation of essential carbon skins**<sup>102</sup>
- g. **Carbon capture and storage**<sup>103</sup>

#### 6.4.2 Industry

The eco-friendly modernization of the industrial sector is an important step towards a climate neutral economy. In order to achieve that, the EU has already received 136 billion euros, from the European Structural and Investment Funds in order to shift all industrial sectors towards a low carbon economy which will be achieved by the protection of the environment, by the increase in the efficiency of the resources, by the climate change adaptation and the prevention of risks.<sup>104</sup>

One of the main industrial sectors that has to be modernized is transport. The transports, both on a personal and on a business level, should be characterized by their connectivity, their safety and their cleanness. Nowadays, arounds 20% of all the European greenhouse gas emissions are developed by the road transport. For this reason, the EU has already implemented stricter tests concerning the automobiles gas emissions, in order to minimize the defected or less eco-friendly cars that are placed on the EU market.<sup>105</sup>

Although the aforementioned implementation was a necessary move, the achievement of the reduction of gas, will require a more integrated system approach. More specifically, this can be achieved through the following<sup>106</sup>:

- h. Promotion of overall vehicle efficiency via low and zero emission automobiles and supporting infrastructure<sup>107</sup>
- i. Use of alternative -renewable- and climate neutral fuels<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>103</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_1\\_emissions\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_1_emissions_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>104</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Industrial Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_2\\_industrial\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_2_industrial_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>105</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Industrial Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_2\\_industrial\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_2_industrial_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>106</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Industrial Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_2\\_industrial\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_2_industrial_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>107</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Industrial Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_2\\_industrial\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_2_industrial_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>108</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Industrial Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_2\\_industrial\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_2_industrial_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

- j. Increase of the efficiency of the transports via the use of digital technologies and smart pricing<sup>109</sup>

### 6.4.3 Social Transition

The transition to a climate neutral economy does not have an impact only on the environment, the economy and the industry. It also has an impact on the society; on the people that, together, create the European community. For this reason, the modernization process should be managed and organized extensively, in order to achieve the most acceptable and fair social transition that will implicate and benefit both the EU and its member states. The European countries should organize their strategic planning in order to tackle the potential decrease of jobs and job offering in the mining and extraction sector, as it will be reduced moving towards an eco-friendly future. At the same time, efforts should be made, in order to distribute evenly the new jobs and job offering in the constructional, agricultural and renewable energy sector and to take into consideration all the necessary measures that should be taken in order to further assist the smoother transition<sup>110</sup>.

### 6.4.4 Economy

With or without the climate neutrality, the financial and economic sector, will not be the same in 2050, as today. However, one of the main strategies of the EU, is the adoption of certain reforms, in order to provide the necessary incentives for the financial sector, to move towards the green transition. As far as the financial markets are concerned, investments should be applied in favor of the renewable energy suppliers and providers, in order to avoid both a lock down in fossil fuels infrastructure and carbon intensive assets. Furthermore, although, there are already investments towards plastic projects (63 million euros) and end of life vehicles (28,5 million euros), the society should not be complacent and should continue its efforts towards such projects<sup>111</sup>.

Last but not least, the EU already supports the bio-economy with extensive research and innovation funding. More specifically, it has invested 3.85 billion euros under Horizon 2020

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<sup>109</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Industrial Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_2\\_industrial\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_2_industrial_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>110</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Social Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_3\\_social.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_3_social.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>111</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Economic Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_4\\_economic\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_4_economic_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

and has already proposed 10 billion euros towards food and natural resourced under Horizon Europe (2021-2027)<sup>112</sup>.

## 6.5 THE EGD IN THE POST-COVID-19 ERA

The EGD was launched by the European Commission, aiming to transform the entire Union into a society governed by fairness and sustainability, with an economy that was at the same time green and competitive. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has put the Deal into a position of danger and uncertainty. The member states of the EU do not fulfil their obligations, concerning the development and the establishment of various national energy and climate plans, and the current situation of the pandemic has not assisted them. For the last year, the European leaders have shifted their priorities and their efforts, and they have been focused on the protection of the public health and well-being of their countries. Although the current situation does not favor the EDG, the President of the European Commission reminded that “the European Green Deal should become our compass to turn the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity to rebuild our economies and make them more resilient; the European Green Deal should be the motor for the recovery”<sup>113</sup>.

Although the future of the EGD is clearly in danger, the EU member states should not jeopardize its fulfillment. During periods of crisis, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, where most of the policy makers are trying to take direct measures in the short-term horizon, and in this case against the public health, social and economic measures, there is a high possibility that the commitments for the EDG can be overlooked or even considered as barrier for the stimulation of the economy.

It is of great importance for the European governments to set medium- and long-term horizon goals and strategies for exiting the lockdown imposed as a measure of the Covid-19 pandemic. The EGD can be exactly what is needed in order to launch a new post Covid-19 era, as it can transform into a source of economic efficiency and flexibility. Although most of the European policy makers at a national level are focused on the pandemic, there are various voices calling for a green recovery at a European level. More specifically, in April 2020, the European Commission, proposed a package aiming at the recovery and the reconstruction of the EU. That

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<sup>112</sup> Ec.europa.eu. 2021. *Our vision for a clean planet for all: Economic Transition*. [online] Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision\\_4\\_economic\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/vision_4_economic_en.pdf) [Accessed 1 February 2021].

<sup>113</sup> Cañada, Gisela. 2021. "European Regions and The Green Transition in A COVID-19 Era | Assembly of European Regions". Assembly of European Regions. <https://aer.eu/european-regions-and-the-green-transition-in-a-covid-19-era/> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

specific package is focused on the relaunch of the economies of the EU member states and it has the EGD and the digital transformation of EU as its main tools<sup>114</sup>.

## 7. EUROPEAN CLIMATE LAW

### 7.1 The Concept of the European Climate Law

In the light of EU's commitment to becoming climate neutral by 2050 and to tackle environmental – related challenges (i.e., global warming, climate change), a flagship green initiative was introduced by the European Commission: the European Green Deal. As it has been indicated previously, the European Climate Law pertains to the framework of the EGD. What differentiates Climate Law from other climate-related ventures and strategies is the fact that it attempts to transform its objectives into a ***binding legal obligation for both EU institutions and national governments***. Particularly, it is prescribed in the regulation that the main target of the EGD, *carbon-neutrality and net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050*<sup>115</sup>, will be legally binding for every EU Member State.

The Climate Law encompasses a variety of objectives that enables the collective transformation in terms of sustainability, transparency, predictability, and accountability. Initially, the Law aims at the irreversible transition to ***climate-neutrality*** through all policies, in a socially fair and cost-efficient manner. However, with a view to keep track of the progress that has been made and, therefore, adjust our actions accordingly, a mechanism for calculating actors' consistency and compliance with the standards of the climate law is needed. Thus, the Commission set as one of Law's objective the creation of a system for monitoring progress that can take further action if needed. At the present time, climate law is based on existing systems such as the *governance process* for Member States' national energy and climate plans, *regular reports* by the *European Environment Agency*, and the latest scientific evidence on climate change and its impacts. Progress is prescribed to be reported every **five years**, in accordance with the global review exercise under the Paris Agreement.

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<sup>114</sup> "Is the Future of The European Green Deal Threatened by the COVID-19 Pandemic? Focus on The National Energy Sector | Lexology". 2021. Lexology.Com. <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=9215fb62-052e-4d46-82a5-cdefba5f149b> [Accessed 20 January 2021].

<sup>115</sup> "European Climate Law – Achieving Climate Neutrality By 2050". 2021. European Commission. Accessed January 31. <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12108-European-climate-law-achieving-climate-neutrality-by-2050>.

What also plays a major role in the context of climate law is to ensure that all EU policies contribute and that all sectors of the economy and society play their part, providing, at the same time, predictability for investors and other economic actors<sup>116</sup>.

In view of promoting EU's green vision as well as fairness and solidarity among Member States, the European Climate Law also addresses the necessary steps to reach 2050 target. Specifically, the Commission proposed the incorporation of the new EU 2030 target with the view to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% compared to levels in 1990. Furthermore, in terms of Member States' consistency with climate-neutrality objective, the Commission will be empowered to release recommendations to those Member States whose actions are inconsistent with the climate-neutrality target, and, thus, they will be obliged to take due account of these recommendations or to explain their reasoning if they fail to do so<sup>117</sup>. Finally, Member States will also be committed to develop and put in place adaptation strategies to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

Up to day, the legislative proposal for the EU Climate Law has already been submitted by the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions for further consideration under the ordinary legislative procedure<sup>118</sup>.

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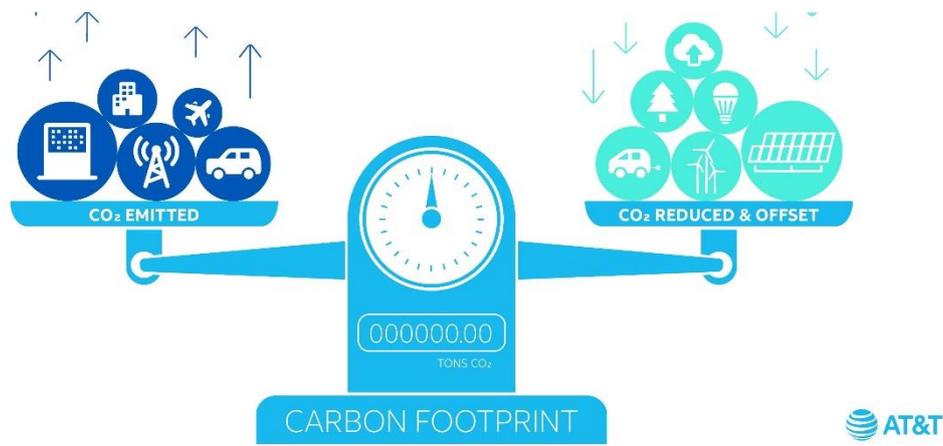
<sup>116</sup> "European Climate Law - Climate Action - European Commission". 2021. Climate Action - European Commission. Accessed January 31. [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/law\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/law_en).

<sup>117</sup> Johanna, Store. 2020. "European Climate Law: Council Reaches Agreement On Large Parts Of The Proposal". Consilium.Europa.Eu. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/10/23/european-climate-law-council-reaches-agreement-on-large-parts-of-the-proposal/>.

<sup>118</sup> "European Climate Law - Climate Action - European Commission". 2021. Climate Action - European Commission. Accessed January 31. [https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/law\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/law_en).

## 7.2 Carbon neutrality in practice

It is commonly acknowledged that the issue of climate change constitutes a delicate and provocative challenge for the 21st century. The entire world is affected by extreme weather conditions such as heavy rain, drought, heat waves, floods and landslides that increasingly emerge. In order to restrict global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius **carbon neutrality** is required. Carbon-neutrality and, consequently, net zero emission, in turn, can be accomplished if all worldwide greenhouse gas emissions are counterbalanced by carbon sequestration. In other words, balancing carbon dioxide emissions with carbon offsets.



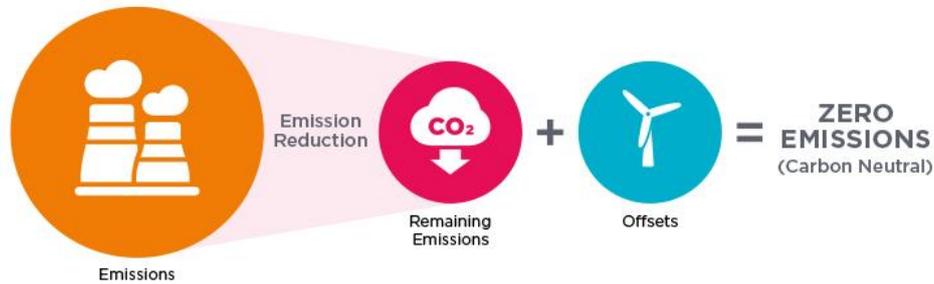
When carbon emissions are balanced out by an equivalent amount of carbon savings, that is renewable energy projects, energy efficiency initiatives or other clean, low- carbon technologies, greenhouse gases are reduced, and sustainability is achieved<sup>119</sup>. A characteristic example of carbon offsetting system is EU's ETS<sup>120</sup>. Up until today, no reported artificial carbon sinks<sup>121</sup> are capable of removing carbon from the atmosphere on the necessary scale to tackle global warming. Alarming phenomena such as forest fires or logging provoke the release of carbon into the atmosphere.

<sup>119</sup> 5. "Carbon Neutrality | Sustainability & Carbon Solutions". 2016. Sustainability.Berkeley. Edu. <https://sustainability.berkeley.edu/carbon-neutrality>.

<sup>120</sup> "What Is Carbon Neutrality And How Can It Be Achieved By 2050? | News | European Parliament". 2020. Europarl.Europa.Eu. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20190926STO62270/what-is-carbon-neutrality-and-how-can-it-be-achieved-by-2050>.

<sup>121</sup> Carbon sinks are systems that absorb more carbon than they emit. Some of the main natural carbon sinks are soil, forests, and oceans.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CARBON NEUTRAL



Despite a complex of problems in the carbon neutrality assumption, the balance between carbon offsets and carbon dioxide emissions is undoubtedly necessary for the achievement of climate neutrality and thus, the headline goal of the European Green Deal. However, a successful outcome for the ambitious green vision of the EU does not only depend on EU Institutions but also on national governments. Both must guarantee that climate-related policies and legislation are enforced and delivered effectively.

### 7.3 Current situation of Climate Laws in EU member states

In the recent years, there has been growing attention towards climate governance and its integration into European national agendas. The vision of decarbonization does not constitute a new challenge since it was attempted prior to the adoption of the Paris Agreement. Certainly, the aforementioned agreement has been proved both as a launch pad but also as a benchmark to the current success of the climate concept. Today, more than half of all EU Member States have adopted a climate protection law or introduced and put into force climate policies and environmental protection acts with a view to foster energy efficiency, sustainable development and share of renewable energy sources. Furthermore, there are some countries that are currently preparing the development of their (draft) law (such as Croatia, Slovenia, Luxembourg, Spain, and Portugal, which will deploy its six-month presidency of the EU to finalize the landmark climate law<sup>122</sup>) or considering/processing of initiating (Belgium), that will, in turn, outline the overall policy in order to mitigate climate change and its impacts but, also, to synchronize their national legislations with the European law.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>122</sup> “Landmark Climate Law to Be Finalised within Months,” The Portugal News (THE PORTUGAL NEWS , January 7, 2021), <https://www.theportugalnews.com/news/2021-01-07/landmark-climate-law-to-be-finalised-within-months/57576>.

<sup>123</sup> Vizzuality, “Climate Change Laws of the World,” Climate Change Laws of the World, accessed January 31, 2021, <https://www.climate-laws.org/>.

However, there are, also, cases where some climate - neutral actions have already been initiated except that they do not constitute a legislative act (Austria, Bulgaria,<sup>124</sup>). On the contrary, other EU Member States have initiated long-term strategies and enacted laws with a view to achieve the headline goals of the EGD, such as Denmark, Luxembourg, Germany, Finland, France, Ireland, Sweden, Hungary, and Malta. Further action by Member States has been reported in regards with environmental strategies, general adaptation to climate change and energy efficiency but not (yet) regarding a pure Climate Law (Greece, Italy, Slovakia, Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania, Poland<sup>125</sup>, Estonia, Belgium, Czech Republic)<sup>126</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup> Megan Darby and Isabelle Gerretsen, “Which Countries Have a Net Zero Carbon Goal?,” Climate Home News (Climate Home, June 14, 2019), <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2019/06/14/countries-net-zero-climate-goal/?fbclid=IwAR1eVT4zmpFvdjq5hgZYADSt111AhuFu5o4Cp3K7n7Q0e2Gng58-MLZLkag>.

<sup>125</sup> “Poland: 2050 Climate Neutrality Feasible and Beneficial - Report,” WWF, accessed January 31, 2021, <https://www.wwf.eu/?uNewsID=961391>.

<sup>126</sup> Vizzuality, “Climate Change Laws of the World,” Climate Change Laws of the World, accessed January 31, 2021, <https://www.climate-laws.org/>.

## 8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The EGD reflects the commitment of the European Commission to tackle climate and environmental-related challenges. Besides its salient objective which is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for 2030 to at least 50%, the Deal visions a just strategy that encompasses the development in different fields such as energy, sustainable industry and mobility, biodiversity and ecosystems, food, and agriculture as well as environmental pollution, living no one behind. In the framework of the Deal, the European Climate Law introduces a new initiative that aims at engaging EU member states and EU institutions to productively confront climate-related challenges. However, the efficiency of this target does not depend only on the Commission but also on national governments. Both of them must guarantee that related policies and legislation are enforced and delivered effectively. Since the issue of climate change constitutes a delicate and provocative challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a multidimensional approach should be implemented by each EU member considering its available natural resources, capacities and the restrictions that may derive from the consequences of the climate change both in socioeconomic and political sectors. Last but not least, the EGD and, by extension, the European Climate Law, has been threatened by the global pandemic of Covid-19 for the last year and, thus, the EU countries and the European policy makers should take various actions in order to relaunch the European economy and the European green future.

## 9. POINTS TO BE ADRESSED

1. In what ways can the EU member states be committed to the principles and the climate-neutral instructions introduced by the European Climate Law?
2. How can the growth potentials of the EGD be enhanced in the light of the increasing challenges arisen from climate change?
3. What are the restrictions towards carbon neutrality and, thus, the efficient implementation of the European Climate Law, in local, national, and European level?
4. What further actions can assure the consistency of EU institutions and member states in terms of carbon neutrality? Do existing rules, including on state aid and public procurement, require adjustment?
5. What measures can be taken in order to better implement the long-term strategy of the EU, both in national and European level?
6. How can societies and economies be better incorporated in the national climate agendas in the context of the European Climate Law?
7. What are the restrictions towards the efficient implementation of the European Green Deal, especially, during the Covid-19 crisis, in local, national, and European level? What more could the EU do for the green recovery from the pandemic?

## 10. Position Paper Guidelines

A Position Paper is a brief summary of a role's (such as, but not limited to EU Commissioners, Officials, MEPs, NGO Representatives etc) policy and interests concerning the agenda topic. It should contain a clear statement of the simulated role's position on the topic and clear reasoning, also suggesting an action plan concerning the issues under consideration. It is not a speech, neither a statement, so there is no need for a salutation at the beginning.

The Position Paper should be a product of the participants' own research and should be concise and substantial. After having conducted research on the topic and formed a precise idea about the policy of the Official you have been assigned, you are now called to make a small abstract on the situation linked to the topic, the position of your role, actions taken in a multilateral level and proposed actions for future consideration.

In the first part, one paragraph, of your Position Paper you should briefly address the issues on the Agenda, the relevancy and the scope of the problem. You could also mention the current developments concerning the issue under discussion and recent actions taken. This first paragraph it shall be between 6-8 lines, as it functions as a brief introduction, to ensure the board members that you have understood the topic and its importance.

In the second part, you should specify the official position of the role you are assigned in respect to the issues under consideration. As far as Commissioners are concerned, it should include brief statements about where the actual Commissioners stand on the issue in question, always keeping in mind the supranational role of the Commission and the European principles, and actions, laws, policies, strategies that the relevant Directorate General, Commissioner, or the EU in general, have already implemented or plan to. Representatives of Political Groups or organisations and lobbies should include the opinion of the entity they represent, along with actions, laws, policies and strategies that have already been taken from member-states or the EU, and actions that the specific group has supported or implemented.

In the third part, it is expected, bearing in mind your policy and agenda, that you state what you want to see in the final document, the outcome of the discussions. We expect to provide us with some of the suggestions that you as Commissioner or as a representative of a group will support in providing a solution for the issues in question, considering the "points to be addressed". These suggestions should be as comprehensive as possible, considering the one and a half page-limit, and, always, the mandate of the European Commission. You do not need

to go into detail about your negotiating positions, these can be presented during your speeches in our sessions.

Remember that you have to represent the position of your assigned role. Therefore, you should not speak in the first person (“I”), but with the voice of the entity you represent (“We”). You represent a group, be it the EU itself, the European peoples, civil society etc, so it is not recommended to write in the first person. Commissioners, have the right to choose between “I” or “We”, as on the one hand they talk for their selves, but, on the other hand, they represent European citizens and the actions taken by the Commission are always for the greater good of the Union. So, you may offer your own ideas on the solutions of the problem, but bear in mind that the ideas that you present the committee with, should not contradict the policies of the entity you represent.

Also, remember that, during your research, writing and our sessions, policy is not rigid but malleable and flexible, and some positions are to be negotiated. If that were not the case, diplomacy wouldn’t exist. Go into depth, stating best solutions and second-best options since you clearly have more than one solution. The more solutions/flexibility you have, the easier it will be for you to move amidst the problem areas and to reach an agreement with your fellow delegates.

“Athens EU Model 2021” requests that each participant submits a position paper within the deadline set, according to the aforementioned guidelines and in line with the following Position Paper template.

Please note that:

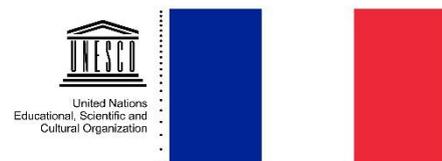
1. The Position paper should not exceed in length one and a half page.
2. There is no need for references and bibliography.

Example Position Paper:

**Committee:** Executive Board of UNESCO

**Role:** French Republic

**Topic Area:** “Promoting and safeguarding the underwater cultural heritage”



Our cultural heritage is a vital link to our historical, educational, inspirational, and economic legacies, and our oceans, seas and lakes are the “largest museums” on earth, but natural phenomena and some human activities consist a threat to our underwater cultural heritage (UCH), thus a concerted effort to preserve it is of utmost importance. Undoubtedly, of equal value is the promotion of UCH, as it can have a significant economic, recreational and educational impact on societies.

Acknowledging the importance of underwater cultural heritage and having the world’s second-largest maritime territory with estimated 150,000 to 200,000 underwater sites, the French Republic is one of the pioneers in the field of underwater archaeology. Thus, has ratified all the relevant conventions, including the crucial 2001 “Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage”, on February 2013. In addition, the French Department of Underwater and Marine Archaeological Research (DRASSM) is the world’s first and leading underwater archaeological research department and has carried out the professional evaluation, directed the study, or supervised the excavation of more than 1,500 underwater archaeological sites in mainland France, French overseas departments and territories as well as foreign countries. Also, in France is located an excellent example of a replica site, of 250 amphorae which were recovered in the 1950s and re-submerged in 2010 off the coast of Marseille. This initiative was supported by DRASSM, which provided another 150 amphorae to complete the artificial site in a shipwreck shape. Last, but not least, the Museum of Ancient Arles, in France, is one the most notable examples exhibiting recovered material from underwater sites.

As it is aforementioned, underwater cultural heritage has to be safeguarded from natural and man-made threats and, also, has to be promoted as it can have positive effects on societies. In this context, France as a leading actor, promotes the collaboration of museums and archaeological groups with technological companies, research centers and universities for the utilization of new and emerging technologies such as 3D printing and mapping and virtual reality. On the one hand, 3D printed replicas can be extremely accurate with regards to the shape of the original and they can also be touched, elevating the whole experience and making it more inclusive, as people with disabilities can have the opportunity to touch the artifacts. The digital nature 3D printed replicas make them to easily be stored, edited, studied and shared across the world. Also, 3D printing and mapping can be used for reconstruction and preservation of underwater sites. On the other hand, virtual reality can present sites to the public, which due to their fragility, depth or location are not accessible. An example of it is the virtual access of the French Lune wreck created by the DRASSM. Also, in order to raise

awareness and to promote UCH, France, encourages video-game and application developers to design video games and applications, respectively, which are relevant with underwater cultural heritage for purposes both recreational and educational. In addition, France is in favor with initiatives regarding showing underwater cultural heritage through diving and thus, encourages NGOs and public agencies to create workshops aimed to dive clubs and dive shops in order to provide them with the capacity to design and offer heritage focused dive courses which will not harm underwater sites.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate maritime exploitation and assist archaeologists, France advocates for the usage of predictive modelling, which is a method of collecting information from many different sources about an area in order to identify if it has an archaeological significance and thus, has to be further investigated, or if it is available for maritime development activities. Last, but not least, France, fully aware of pillaging and looting phenomena, supports the cooperation between UNESCO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant international organizations or NGOs, in order to raise awareness on the issue of trafficking in cultural property and related offences at regional and international levels, through workshops, seminars and similar events aimed to relevant stakeholders.

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