

Green Deal Watch

Issue no.13

Green Deal 2.0:
In search of a new
consensus

About the Green Deal Watch

The “Green Deal Watch” was launched in 2020 by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) with the support of Edison. The aim of the project is to follow the evolution of the ambitious and cross-cutting “European Green Deal” (EGD) strategy towards climate neutrality launched by the Von der Leyen Commission in December 2019. The “Green Deal Watch” follows the “Energy Union Watch” which IAI published from 2015 to 2019 to monitor the evolution of energy and climate policies under the previous legislature. IAI covers the debate among national and European stakeholders and reports the key dynamics in order to help the reader better navigate the challenges and opportunities of implementation of the EGD. The Watch is produced on a quarterly basis, collecting official documents, public information and open source data, which are processed and analysed by the IAI team.

About IAI

The Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) is a private, independent non-profit think tank, founded in 1965 on the initiative of Altiero Spinelli. IAI seeks to promote awareness of international politics and to contribute to the advancement of European integration and multilateral cooperation, focusing on topics such as European integration, security and defence, energy and climate policies, as well as key regions such as the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Asia, Eurasia, Africa and the Americas. The IAI publishes an English-language quarterly (The International Spectator), an online webzine (AffarInternazionali), two book series (Quaderni IAI and IAI Research Studies) and other paper series related to IAI research projects.

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This is the 13th issue of the Green Deal Watch, a quarterly report produced by the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) with the support of Edison. This publication aims at monitoring and analysing the initiatives launched by the European Commission and discussed by EU institutions and member states under the umbrella of the Green Deal. Starting from Issue 12, the Green Deal Watch IAI no longer follows the former division into four dimensions: "Driving the Green Deal", "Greening Industry", "Supporting the Transformation" and "Strengthening Security and Diplomacy". Instead, each issue is now structured as an analytical assessment of the main Green Deal developments in the three months that it covers.

In each issue, the analysis is followed by an interview. This time we look at the opinion of Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries.

A timeline of initiatives envisaged under the European Green Deal concludes this report.

1. FIVE YEARS ON: IT IS NOT THE TIME FOR GREEN DEAL FATIGUE

It's the European election year, and Europe and its future project are the focus of unprecedented attention and politicisation. The European Green Deal launched in 2019 by the von der Leyen Commission had at the time been elevated to the EU's *raison d'être*, its vision for the future and the relaunch of its integration. It was the EU's way to regain appeal among its citizens and to strengthen its global influence. Five years ago, this climate-driven agenda developed in the context of a growing awareness around the climate emergency, a massive mobilisation of young Europeans asking for sounder climate action, and votes in favour of ecologist parties. In contrast to past initiatives regarding decarbonisation – such as the 2008 climate-energy package or the 2015 Energy Union – the European Green Deal finally abandoned a sectoral approach to climate policy in favour of a holistic one, substantiated by the ambition to bring all EU policies in line with the goal of climate neutrality. This unprecedented project to transform the continent implied an impressive set of regulations, new tools and policies; yet it remains little understood. Furthermore, there is still a lot of work to do as we are heading towards the implementation phase of these new set of policies instrumental to reach the ambitious climate targets. In the context of the end of the 2019–2024 European legislature, this Green Deal Watch assesses the latest developments of the public debate and the prospects for the EU's climate prominence.

The von der Leyen Commission presented the "Fit for 55" legislative package in July 2021, which included new policy initiatives as well as the revision of existing legislation. The latter included the reform of the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS); regulatory interventions, such as reform of the Renewables (REDIII), Energy Efficiency (EED) and Energy Performance of Buildings (EPBD) directives; and regulations on emission standards for cars and vans, non-ETS sectors (ESR), and land and forest use change (LULUCF). Among the new measures, a mention goes to the extension of the emission trading scheme to the transportation and building sectors and the regulation of methane emissions in the energy sector. Particularly relevant from an international perspective was the introduction of the carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), a tax on the carbon content of imports of steel, aluminium, fertiliser, cement, electricity, and hydrogen. Politically, the process has encountered several fault lines, with both internal and external resistance articulated around structural interests of member states that have contested or slowed down the adoption of certain decisions – e.g., the taxonomy. The Green Deal legislative path has also faced the two major crises that have affected the European Union in recent years. But, contrarily to previous experiences, the Green Deal has been strengthened during the pandemic and the Russian aggression in Ukraine, as evidenced by

the resources that have been invested in the decarbonisation process and the upward revision of climate targets at the European level through Fit for 55 and through REPowerEU.

Even though the health crisis, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and their harsh socio-economic consequences have proven the strengths of a united Europe, politicisation of the debate on the ecological transition is increasingly evident. Farmers [have taken to the streets](#) in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Romania, Portugal, Poland and Greece – and several parties are now taking note ahead of the June elections. On the one side, a certain level of opposition is physiological and demonstrates how change is taking place and how awareness of policy decisions – and their impacts – is growing. On the other side, in the run-up to elections, leaders from different political families either smooth their pro-climate narrative or capitalise on the fears of citizens and industry ahead of the elections.

As Ursula von der Leyen closes [her first term](#), her Commission has put forward several initiatives to address the concerns of European industry. Industrial competitiveness came into sharp focus in 2023, with several new proposals to better connect it to the European Green Deal (e.g., the Critical Raw Materials Act, the Net-Zero Industry Act). The Commission, along with the Belgian presidency of the Council of the EU, recently convened an industry summit which presented the [Antwerp Declaration for a European Industrial Deal](#) calling on the EU to “put the Industrial Deal at the core of the new European Strategic Agenda for 2024-2029”. [Alexander De Croo](#) has been the driving force behind the declaration, [signed](#) – at the moment of writing – by 764 companies and 294 industry associations and unions. The initiative contains a ten-point plan including calling for an “Omnibus proposal to

take corrective measures on all relevant existing EU regulation” that should on top of the next Commissioner’s agenda. Vice President Šef ovi remarked that a revaluation of the Green Deal does not mean in any way watering it down, but rather adjusting it taking into account Europe’s industrial competitiveness – particularly now that the Fit for 55 package must be transposed into national law across the bloc.

In another effort to gain stronger support from sensitive sectors, President von der Leyen has also [launched](#) the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture, a new forum mandated to shape a shared vision for the future of the EU’s farming and food system – aiming to cover all policies around agriculture and food production to strengthen the understanding of the sectors’ challenges. The EU’s softer stance on greening the agri-food sector was also evident when Ursula von der Leyen announced the [scrapping](#) of a contentious bill that aimed to slash the use of chemical pesticides in agriculture. The European Commission also loosened some of the environmental conditionality under the Common Agricultural Policy; and very slow processes and worrying “greenlash” behaviours have been seen again recently with the nature restoration law. With a provisional deal reached in November 2023 by the two co-legislators, [so far](#) the Council has been unable to reach the qualified majority needed for validating the agreement. Parking the law would send a negative message to the rest of the world given the commitments made at the global biodiversity summit in Montreal at the end of 2022. Finally, the Commission’s renewed attention to nuclear energy may be read as a sign of opening towards those European leaders wanting the technology’s role to be fully recognised in the path towards net-zero, an ongoing hot and divisive topic in Brussels. The [Nuclear Energy Summit](#) held in Brussels in

March provided the European leaders participating the possibility to share their vision and support for the revamp of this source of energy. Furthermore, the [launch](#) of the EU Industrial Alliance on Small Modular Reactors is a step forward in bringing together the technology side and energy companies to make the most of safe and versatile new nuclear technologies. These developments followed the [mention](#) of nuclear in the Global Stocktake agreed at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in late 2023, which called for accelerating its deployment. Also, the European Investment Bank's new president, Nadia Calviño, [has voiced](#) openness to fund nuclear projects.

There are still many unknowns for the next EU term, such as the political composition of the 2024–2029 Parliament and whether President von der Leyen will be appointed for a second term or there will be a change at the helm of EU executive. Interesting names have circulated in these months, including current Spanish Vice-President and Minister

for the Ecological Transition [Teresa Ribera](#). Under the *Spitzenkandidaten* process, however, the choice of president of the Commission is linked to the results of the Parliament elections, where the radical right is [on course](#) to win the majority of the votes in many countries, including Austria, France and Poland. Besides [potential future scenarios](#), the key pieces of legislation put forward at the end of von der Leyen's first term signal that a focus on industrial competitiveness is coming. Who occupies the top energy and climate jobs in the new EU executive – and their nationalities – will have an impact on the Green Deal process as well. The run up to the elections will moreover take place against rising concerns over Vladimir Putin's Russia, a potential return to the White House for Donald Trump, and internal divisions in Europe over how to respond to both. With the window for effective action on the climate crisis narrowing, this is not the moment for Green Deal fatigue: it is instead time to understand how to continue the process in an orderly and strategic manner.

2. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND DEBATES

The Fit for 55 package is essentially closed and many Green Deal-related dossiers have advanced in the past three months, with several provisional agreements reached by the two co-legislators. First, the Council and Parliament provisionally **agreed** on new CO₂ limits on heavy-duty vehicles, for which manufacturers should reduce carbon emissions of new vehicles by 45 per cent as of 2030, rising to 65 per cent from 2035 and 90 per cent from 2040. Second, member states and Parliament **reached** a provisional deal on the Net-Zero Industry Act, broadening the original scope of technologies to be supported, including all renewable technologies, nuclear, industrial decarbonisation, grid, energy storage technologies and biotech. The law will simplify the permitting process of projects by introducing specific time limits for issuing construction or expansion permits. The agreement also provides for the creation of **“Net-Zero Acceleration Valley” initiatives**, meaning specific areas to accelerate industrial activities for the implementation of net-zero technology manufacturing projects. Third, the Council and Parliament provisionally agreed on rules to make packaging more sustainable and to reduce packaging waste in the European Union. Steps forward were also made as part of the overall reform of the electricity market in Europe, with the Council formally adopting the revision of the REMIT Regulation, a **law** to protect energy consumers from wholesale market manipulation, and

aiming to strengthen surveillance of wholesale markets and guarantee open and fair electricity competition in the EU. The text amends the 2011 regulation on the integrity and transparency of wholesale energy markets. Under the **new regulation** ACER is given the right to investigate cross-border cases, carry out on-site inspections, ask for information and collect statements; but it will not have the power to impose fines for infringements, breaches of prohibitions or substantial obligations, which remains a prerogative of domestic authorities. Additional **important progress** was made on the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive as the Parliament formally adopted the provisional agreement reached with the Council in December 2023.

What appeared to be the two most interesting debates in Brussels, however, were those around the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive – EU rules requiring companies to check supply chains for environmental and social issues – and the so-called “neutrality charge”, a transit tariff that Germany introduced (and that Italy had initially planned to introduce) to cover the cost of refilling gas storage during the energy crisis. On the first matter, the Belgian Presidency in February **postponed** a decision on a proposed law requiring large companies to develop strategies and measures to assess whether their value chains use forced labour or cause environmental damage, after Germany and Italy

indicated they would abstain. Within the German coalition in particular, the industry-friendly Free Democratic Party argued the law would burden business with bureaucracy, while the Social Democrats and the Greens backed it. Other countries, including Bulgaria, also abstained, which meant there was no favour given that member states including Sweden, Austria and Finland already opposed. Eventually, the Belgian presidency **managed** to find a compromise, which came at a price – with the rule now only targeting companies employing upward of 1,000 people with annual sales of 450 million euros. The new text also **suggests** deleting any reference to high-risk sectors, which in previous versions would have been subject to more rigid due diligence obligations.

The so-called “neutrality charge” on gas flows – and the divergent position of Germany on the one side and the European Commission on the other – was the other hot topic. With Germany’s 2022 imposition of a transit tariff to cover the costs of refilling its gas storages, an alliance of countries – including Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary – have **warned** they could

be consequently forced to increase Russian gas imports, undermining efforts to diversify their energy sources at a time when the EU is trying to cut all imports of Russian gas. The extra fee has more than tripled since it was introduced in October 2022, and some governments claim it contravenes EU single market rules, which forbid any tariffs on trade between EU countries. Germany’s behaviour is indeed **not seen** with favour in Brussels: EU energy regulator, ACER, said such charges result in higher gas prices in some countries; Commissioner Kadri Simson last month said the levy put the bloc’s solidarity at risk. In Italy similar initiatives were under assessment but following widespread criticism from energy companies and the EU, Rome decided **not** to press ahead. The European Commission’s energy department, which asked ACER to investigate the German tariff, has been also in touch with the Italian regulator ARERA to get a better understanding of the design of the planned measure, but clearly a potential coordinated approach seems for the moment a less risky approach (yet very unlikely) to avoid the fragmentation of the internal market.

3. FROM PLAN TO ACTION: GOVERNING THE TRANSITION

While a major part of Green Deal framework has now been finalised – and won't likely be reopened – the time has come to implement what has been established so far. In the next five years a lot of secondary legislation, implementing acts, delegate acts, domestic transposition of laws should be defined. Among these is, for example, the delegated act defining low-carbon fuels, including low-carbon hydrogen. Secondly, it is to be seen whether the ambitious but still embryonic strategies presented in the recent past from the current Commission – from the [EU Action Plan for Grids](#) to the [European Wind Power Action Plan](#) – will find any consensus to advance in the next months. Indeed, these are plans that must be thoughtfully and rapidly discussed to achieve the proposed aims. The handover from the current Commission to the next one comes at a delicate moment, when the former is defining working groups to collect feedback and proposals from civil society organisations, associations, industries, stakeholders and citizens.

Among many others, the recently [presented](#) EU Industrial Carbon Management Strategy – a comprehensive approach for the EU to scale up carbon management – will be the object of many discussions. The strategy identifies a set of actions to be taken, at both the EU and Member State level, to establish a single market for CO₂ in Europe and to create an attractive business environment for investments

in industrial carbon management technologies. This technology will be particularly important in hard-to-abate sectors, such as cement and waste-to-energy, but also in traditional power generation. Indeed, according to the Commission, to [reach](#) a 90 per cent net emissions reduction by 2040 and climate neutrality by 2050, the EU will need to be ready to capture at least 50 million tonnes of CO₂ per year by 2030, coherently with the target set in the Net-Zero Industry Act, approximately 280 million tonnes by 2040 and around 450 million tonnes by 2050. This will also require removing CO₂ from the air through direct air carbon capture technologies. The strong attention to carbon capture, utilisation and storage aims to emphasise a stronger attention from the current Commission to a wider set of solutions to stick to the net-zero path. A couple of weeks later, the two co-legislators provisionally agreed on the first EU-wide voluntary framework for the certification of high-quality carbon removal, applying to carbon farming, industrial carbon removal and binding carbon in long-lasting products and materials. The agreed [criteria](#) should ensure that carbon removal is correctly quantified, stores carbon for an agreed long-term period, goes beyond existing practices, and contributes to broader sustainability goals, e.g., providing positive impacts on biodiversity. An EU registry will be established to create a high level of transparency about certified carbon removal.

Alongside the Industrial Carbon Management Strategy, in February the Commission [presented](#) its 2040 climate target for the European Union. The Commission recommended reducing the EU's net greenhouse gas emissions by 90 per cent by 2040 relative to 1990. The recommended target is based on a detailed [impact assessment](#) and the advice of the [European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change](#). This target is the Commission's legacy to the next one that will have the responsibility to find an agreement among the member states and inscribe the target in the European Climate Law. In the meantime, the Commission has been providing ad-hoc [suggestions](#) to the member states that were late in submitting their draft national energy and climate plan (NECPs), whose updated definitive version is to be submitted in June 2024. Given the many governance layers touching the energy transition, it is key that the next Commission creates an adequate ecosystem to coherently mainstream climate action in all its policies, institutions and external outreach. A step forward was represented by the March Council [conclusions](#) on green diplomacy, recognising the nexus between climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and peace and

security concerns and the need to respond through enhanced, renewed and transformative multilateralism.

Governing the transition would also mean having better communication on the benefits and urgency of the EU green project – as this will impact the speed of the transition. The Green Deal is still little understood, just as how the European institutions work which remains obscure to many citizens across the bloc. As emphasised before, while ideally people support policies to address climate change, resistance becomes stronger when policies kick in. To ensure a smooth transition to net zero, policymakers must begin to develop strategies to address resistance to green policy, asserting Green Deal arguments with greater conviction. Moreover, the next Commission should foster a stronger communication around its climate strategy, focusing on tangible benefits, further explaining to its citizens that climate resilience is a vital pillar of EU's security. Likewise, costs should be carefully managed. Ursula von der Leyen described the Green Deal five years ago as “Europe's man on the moon” moment: a positive demand-led transition would clearly have a better chance of being accepted and supported by the public.

4. REFORMS AND NEEDS

The election period is a good time for debates on the future of Europe. In the past months many conversations around the next cycle's priorities, reforms and necessities also revolved around the anticipated reports that Enrico Letta and Mario Draghi have been preparing, the first on the Single Market and the latter on competitiveness, both intending to substantially impact the EU's strategic agenda for 2024–2029. Enrico Letta's timely report on the Single Market – tasked by the European Council – was **published** in April, and it **includes** interesting comments and proposals in the energy sphere, among which the idea to create a “clean energy delivery agency” by 2027 and a “clean energy deployment fund” in order to foster cooperation between EU countries on efficient joint investments in the energy system and to subsidise projects that transcend borders.

Mario Draghi's report – tasked by the European Commission – concerns the future of European competitiveness and is due in June, but many closed-door debates have already taken place. Draghi in a speech **has called** for “radical change” in Europe, emphasising that the bloc lacks a strategy on how to compete in an aggressive race for leadership in new technologies, and a strategy to shield European traditional industries from an unfair global competition caused by asymmetries in regulations, subsidies and trade policies. Draghi considers that in many fields the EU's response has been constrained because

its organisation, decision-making and financing are designed for “the world of yesterday (...) pre return of great power rivalry”. Regarding our climate targets, the former ECB chief considers we need a comprehensive strategy covering all stages of the critical mineral supply chains as Europe cannot depend on unreliable countries.

Indeed, conversations around Europe's vulnerability in green technologies supply chains are timely and the bloc is slowly trying to diversify its partners and decrease its dependencies on critical mineral needs. In Europe, the many important decisions taken in the context of the Green Deal will result in increased demand for many minerals (cobalt, lithium, rare earths, nickel and others) needed for the development of various green technologies, such as solar panels, wind turbines, batteries and hydrogen. For example, the Joint Research Centre JRC **predicts** that the demand for lithium-ion batteries to power our electric cars and for energy storage will increase 21-fold by 2050 under a high-demand scenario. Similarly, for wind turbines, demand for rare earth metals in the EU will increase by 4.5 times by 2030 and 5.5 times by 2050. The EU appears to be lacking in sites for the production and processing of these minerals, ending up heavily dependent on countries such as China. As part of the Action Plan on Critical Raw Materials, the Commission has already started working to build partnerships with resource-rich countries, making

use of all external policy instruments, with the Global Gateway Initiative at its core, while respecting its international obligations. The **recent** signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rwanda – a major player on the world’s tantalum extraction – goes in this direction. It also produces tin, tungsten, gold, and niobium, and has potential for lithium and rare earth elements. This MoU with Rwanda follows other similar agreements with African countries, e.g., the signing of MoUs with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Zambia and Namibia. In the next months, the EU must engage efficiently with the emerging assertiveness of several African countries in scaling green value chains and not positioning themselves as mere exporters of raw materials. Outside of Africa, the EU’s MoUs on sustainable raw materials value chains have been signed with Argentina, Canada, Chile, Greenland, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

As usual, besides complex decision making, money and time are two

challenging dimensions of the transition. As we approach 2030 and begin implementing energy projects, Europe has huge investment needs. Commissioner Simson has recently **clarified** that in this decade alone the bloc will need to invest more than 1.2 trillion euros annually for decarbonising the energy and transport sectors – nearly 75 per cent more than the previous decade. Using public resources smartly and mobilising more private sector investments will be key, as well as designing future support instruments for the different and more strategic segments of the energy value chain. To implement projects on the ground member states have different fiscal capacities, that may slow down national trajectories and constrain opportunities for industrial (re)location in strategic sectors. Moreover, Next Generation EU is about to end in 2026, and the EU should reflect on the inadequacy of the financial instruments available for the transition at European level, especially considering its ambitious industrial capacity repatriation goals.

5. CHASING SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

In the March Energy Council meeting, an extension of certain emergency measures was **agreed**: member states are encouraged to continue reducing their gas consumption until March 2025, by at least 15 per cent compared to their average gas consumption in the period from April 2017 to March 2022. This recommendation will help member states to take adequate supply security measures until the transposition of the directives on energy efficiency and renewables in 2025, achieving structural demand reduction in the short term while simultaneously achieving the EU's decarbonisation goals. The strong accent on security of supply is also dictated by current circumstances: at the end of 2024 a five-year agreement governing one of the oldest commercial links between Moscow and Europe **expires**: the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine, with the latter confirming it has no plans to enter into any additional agreements or extend the current one. In 2023, Russia's pipeline gas sales to Europe were **estimated** at 25 bcm (billion cubic meters), of which 14.56 bcm transited through Ukraine. Approximately 12 bcm was dispatched to the EU countries Slovakia, Austria and Italy. Russian LNG **continues to flow** into the continent, mostly through ports in **Spain**, Belgium and France: last year Russia **sent** ships carrying more than 35 million cubic meters of LNG into EU ports – a 1.3 per cent annual rise, and a 37.7 per cent jump compared to 2021. Meanwhile, Biden **announced** a significant intervention

in US LNG, temporarily pausing new licenses for export terminals while his administration reassesses how best to determine whether additional infrastructure is in the “public interest”, with particular attention on how to account for the environmental impacts of new projects. The pause, if prolonged after the US elections, would however be felt in 10–15 years, as there is a solid pipeline of approved projects that needs to be built and come online. In any case, member states' efforts to restrict Russian energy revenues should continue throughout next winter, also in line with what the G7 **has decided** in its energy, climate and environment ministerial at the end of April, and with what the EU-US Energy Council **has declared** in its last meeting. The European Commission has followed up by presenting a proposal in May for new sanctions on Russia where LNG-related measures are included for the first time. The measures under discussion would not introduce an explicit ban on LNG imports into the EU. Rather, ‘trans-shipments’ of Russian LNG in European ports, including notably reloading operations, would be sanctioned. To be adopted, the sanctions package must however be approved unanimously, and some countries, such as Hungary, have already expressed opposition.

Adaptation is part of the “building resilience and strengthening security” agenda, too. In March the Europe Environment Agency **published** the European Climate Risk Assessment,

building on and complementing the existing knowledge base on climate impacts and risks for Europe. The report warns that Europe is the fastest-warming continent in the world:

“Extreme heat, once relatively rare, is becoming more frequent while precipitation patterns are changing. Downpours and other precipitation extremes are increasing in severity, and recent years have seen catastrophic floods in various regions. At the same time, southern Europe can expect considerable declines in overall rainfall and more severe droughts (...) affecting social cohesion and stability. (...) If decisive action is not taken now, most climate risks identified could reach critical or catastrophic levels by the end of this century.”

The report recommends coordinated and urgent additional action at all governance levels. Furthermore, despite current EU concessions to the agriculture sector driven by several electoral dynamics, the EU agency itself emphasises that “reduction of pollution from agricultural and industrial activities should be a priority for protecting

Europe’s ecosystems under climate change”. It remains to be seen how the current polarisation around the necessary climate measures will affect elections and therefore action in these sensitive sectors in the next five years.

Europe is constantly learning about the many dimensions of resilience and how many areas it needs to work on. “Resilience” has indeed become a buzzword – at the cost of its strategic value. We need to remember that resilience is energy security, and it is climate adaptation. It is guiding the many changes related to the energy transition and not passively enduring them. With multidimensional resilience being the necessity, political leaders must adjust to this new reality – something Europe still struggles to recognise. If there was one lesson learnt from the past five years, it could be that Europe’s “resilience” can be pursued only if Europe agrees on what this entails. This does not mean resilience is impossible to reach, but rather that policies and solutions are not cost-free, and that Europeans must be prepared to pay the bill while effectively addressing complaints from the losers in the transition.

IN DEPTH

INTERVIEW VIRGINIJUS SINKEVIČIUS

EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
OCEANS AND FISHERIES

The food-climate nexus: *While we hear a lot about energy strategies, we hear less about another core element of climate action: food systems, whose role in global warming has been undervalued in the past. The arrival of food systems on the COP28 stage was long overdue, but there is a lot of work to do to transition to more sustainable and equitable food systems. Countries have now to revise their national climate plans for COP30 and they need to address both mitigation and adaptation together. How can the EU lead the way by integrating the food-climate nexus into their actions?*

While emission reduction in agriculture is challenging, with effective policies that reward good practices and technologies, there is still room to decrease emissions further. Targeted incentives and stable financing for helping farmers to transition towards more sustainable production will be key.

More resource-efficient and biodiversity-friendly management of the land sector will also increase its resilience to the impacts of climate change, improve soil fertility and protect and restore nature, bringing win-win solutions for food security and the productivity of land.

The food industry plays an important role in driving producers' and consumers' decisions. It should receive the right incentives to procure more sustainable food ingredients and contribute to a food environment that makes healthier diets an accessible and affordable choice for consumers. The Common Agricultural Policy provides important tools to support the transition of the farming sector towards new sustainable practices and business models. Diverse and family-owned farms and those who combine crop and animal production are the backbone of EU farming and should be accompanied in the transition to a climate-neutral land sector, considering its social, environmental, and economic dimension.

In addition, it is crucial to create further business opportunities for a sustainable agrifood value chain and leverage private funds in synergy with public funding. This could be done with new market-based mechanisms

to boost sustainable food, as this could result both in a better food price to reflect sustainability as well as a fair reward for farmers and new source of funding for investments. Only firm coordination with all industrial actors in the entire food value chain and focus on fair trading practices across that chain can unlock the right incentives for sustainable farming practices, ensure a decent and sustainable income for farmers and generate revenues to support the transition.

Thanks to advancements in digital monitoring technologies and advisory services, farmers and foresters will be able to quantify their GHG balance using reliable and harmonised certification methodologies. Approaches such as carbon farming and soil health certification enable certified climate and environment-friendly action to be appropriately rewarded through result-based contracts with other actors in the value chain. Precision farming is one of the important tools to build on these achievements, allowing farmers to make better use of their soil and other natural assets, to the benefit of climate and environment.

Circular economy: Circular economy is a central feature of the EU's drive to achieve a zero-carbon economy and is key to halting biodiversity loss. Cooperation at the international level and in particular with those countries that often produce the goods the EU consumes is fundamental. Considering the first EU-China High-Level Policy Dialogue on Circular Economy you co-chaired, what are the key outcomes you anticipate from the cooperation with China, and how do you see this partnership influencing global circular economy efforts?

Indeed, moving to a circular economy is central to our efforts to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The way we make and use everyday products is a crucial part of the problem, as shown in the last Global Resources Outlook published last month by the International Resource Panel. The global use of materials has increased three times in the last 50 years, causing 60% of the total climate impacts, 90% of water stress and land-related biodiversity loss and 40% of pollution relation health impacts.

The EU takes these challenges seriously, but our work and commitment are only one part of the story. Without a global effort, the transformation that is needed cannot be achieved. This is where cooperation with partners comes in and why it is critically important. China has worked on circular economy for a long time, since the 1990s, and has developed specific legislation supporting its transition. In 2018, the EU and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding that allowed us to establish and develop cooperation in this field. In September 2023, this commitment was renewed at the EU-China High-Level Policy Dialogue on Circular Economy, where we agreed to prioritise cooperation on plastics, including within the ongoing international negotiations for a binding agreement to end plastic pollution,

batteries and remanufacturing. A joint Roadmap for cooperation is currently being developed/ has been agreed. We look forward to strengthening this bilateral cooperation with China and to cooperate also at the international level in support of a global uptake of circular economy principles.

Deforestation-free supply chains: *The EUDR is the most ambitious piece of legislation concerning the prevention of deforestation, and likely the first doing so through the regulation of trade. However, the Regulation also triggered extensive protests from partner countries, such as Brazil and Indonesia, over the alleged imposition of EU rules. How will its implementation smoothen this conflict without undermining the efficacy of the regulation?*

The EU anti-deforestation law, EUDR, is indeed the most ambitious legislation of its kind in the world and we hope that other countries and regions will follow suit. The law is intended to help fight climate change and biodiversity loss linked to global deforestation by addressing the role of EU consumption, as we do not want to contribute to deforestation worldwide with our consumption. There has been a strong call from our citizens for this.

The law is designed to apply in an even-handed and non-discriminatory manner, i.e. to the most relevant commodities which drive global deforestation and forest degradation, and to products produced inside as well as outside the EU. It applies equally to any country in the world, including EU member states. There is no discrimination.

The EUDR is an environmental measure developed in compliance with EU's international commitments. We have carefully designed the measure to ensure that it meets both WTO rules and policy considerations. It builds on and complements multilateral commitments and agreements such as the Paris Agreement, the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Glasgow Declaration on Forests and Land Use.

It is not enough to tackle illegal deforestation when much of the agricultural expansion that causes deforestation is legal according to the laws of the countries of origin. The anti-deforestation law is an opportunity to enhance trade in deforestation-free products and boost opportunities for sustainable actors and new business models around the globe. We already see a lot of that happening on the ground. It is a law that protects forests and people at the same time. Producer countries' local populations are those who suffer the most from deforestation, climate change, biodiversity loss and disrupted weather patterns. They are also the ones who would therefore reap many benefits of a successful implementation of the EUDR.

At the same time, we are aware of companies and producer countries' legitimate concerns. The Commission is committed to step up its engagement with partner countries, consumer and producer countries

alike, to assist with the implementation of the EUDR and jointly address deforestation and forest degradation.

The triple planetary crisis that we are facing will affect everybody on the planet. If we continue losing our forests, the climate, biodiversity, and pollution crisis will only deteriorate further. It is also clear that the global climate and environmental crisis costs the global economy many billions of euros each year. There is simply no alternative to action, and no time for delays.

2024, risks and opportunities: *There is still a lot of work to do to push forward further the EU Green Deal and to implement targets agreed on so far in the past years. Considering the potential shifts post-elections and with the growing politicization of climate targets around Europe, what risks do you foresee - and what steps are being taken to mitigate them – to push forward the strategy beyond the more advanced energy pillar? The protests carried out by farmers recently across the EU is emblematic in this sense.*

The Green Deal is about turning the necessary decarbonisation of our industries into a growth opportunity. We have shown that it is possible to decouple economic growth from emissions: since 1990, greenhouse gas emissions have dropped by 32,5%, and our economy has grown by close to 70%.

We also laid the groundwork to build a clean, more circular and resource-efficient economy. In line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework that we signed, we have worked to restore biodiversity, address pollution, and make efficient use of resources. Preserving the stability of our climate and of the environment is essential for the EU to thrive in a globalised world. Moreover, it benefits directly the health and wellbeing of our citizens, and creates business and innovation opportunities.

We need now to finalise the EU legal framework, and to bring to adoption the laws that we have proposed under the European Green Deal, in primis the Nature Restoration Law. And then, we need to focus on the implementation those laws, as their objectives would otherwise only remain on paper. Clearly, funding will be a crucial element of future discussions, as both public and private funds will be key to support European businesses to deliver the green transition while maintaining their competitive edge. Let me recall that we are already fostering the development of innovative technologies. For example, almost €400 billion of EU funds from NextGenerationEU and cohesion policy have been dedicated for funding climate-related projects.

Recently, we adopted a Communication that takes stock of a series of Clean Transition Dialogues that President von der Leyen has led, on transforming Europe into a clean, resource-efficient, fair and competitive economy. We discussed with European industry and social partners how to strengthen

and support the implementation of the European Green Deal, contributing to a reinforced industrial approach. Industry and social partners confirmed during these dialogues their strong commitment to shape and implement the European Green Deal.

Based on their insights, Europe will continue to support industry in building a business model fit for a green economy. We have no time to waste as we are already overshooting the planetary boundaries, and the triple crisis of climate change, nature loss and pollution has very visible effects in our everyday lives and on the economy.

Nature Restoration Law: *The political battle for the approval of the Regulation has been fierce, but its ultimate approval has also been one of the major successes for the Green Deal. However, farmers protests and the looming European elections led many Member States, and finally the Commission itself, to backpedal and slow down the implementation of the law, casting a shadow on its actual effectiveness at least in the short term. How to reconcile the need for political support in such a crucial time for the Green Deal, and maintaining the Law's original strength?*

The Green Deal charts the EU's path to a sustainable future for all of us and remains as relevant as ever. Despite the challenges, we must stay on course to meet our climate and environmental objectives to boost EU competitiveness, resilience and strategic autonomy, while achieving wellbeing within planetary boundaries. It is not easy, but we know that it is the future and of course, this also requires a significant change.

Without the Nature Restoration Law, we would be missing a crucial tool to meet the binding targets we have jointly agreed on in the EU Climate Law and in the framework of the Global Biodiversity Framework. We would discard an indispensable instrument that can help us become more resilient to the devastating effects of climate change. And we would weaken our business case.

The World Economic Forum estimates that over half of the world's GDP – some EUR 40 trillion – is linked to nature, and addressing the nature crisis could generate 395 million jobs by 2030. Biodiversity loss is weakening our economies and undermining our well-being.

I understand the farmers' concerns, as they are under multiple pressures. They have a vital role in our society, for food security and rural economic viability. They are however also among the groups most affected by climate change and environmental degradation. Our objective is to ensure that EU policies enable farmers to make a decent living providing the food that we need, while respecting the nature that farming depends on. We need to prepare for the future and go beyond the polarisation taking place in the public discourse between the agricultural sector and environmental protection.

We can protect both at the same time, these are not contradictory goals.

And let me recall that the Nature Restoration Law is not an agricultural piece of legislation: it is a framework law, to bring nature back into our lives, and to ensure that we live and produce together and not against nature. I am therefore positive and optimistic. The talks on the Nature Restoration Law between ministers continue, and hopefully responsibility will prevail.

Environmental crimes: *The new Environmental Crime Directive has significantly raised the level of ambition of the legislation, compared not only to the original Directive, but also to the original proposal. Enforcement is indeed becoming a key element of the EU environmental vision, as proved by the synergies between the EUDR and the Environmental Crime Directive. However, the path is still long – coordination should be improved across countries, agencies should be empowered and so EU coordination. How do you expect the fight against environmental crimes in Europe to evolve in the next future?*

Indeed, the new Environmental Crime Directive is an ambitious game-changing instrument. It will ensure long-lasting effects on the ground and improve the effectiveness of criminal law enforcement against the most serious environmental offences. It includes a comprehensive list of conducts to be established as criminal offences in the national legal order of the Member States which will help avoid “safe havens” for criminals in the EU. The concrete provisions on types and levels of penalties for natural and legal persons are also a huge step forward. The new Directive includes also unique provisions on strengthening the enforcement chain and on supporting environmental defenders. These will lead to much more effective work of practitioners in tackling on the ground serious environmental breaches.

Our work will not stop there. We already have a framework in place for cooperation with national inspectors, police, prosecutors and judges. They have established EU level networks which play a crucial role in sharing good practices, developing practical tools for inspections and detection and investigation of environmental crime, and training. The Commission will further strengthen its cooperation with these networks and other relevant stakeholders to ensure proper implementation of the ambitious new legal framework.

The new Directive provides ways to deepen cooperation within the EU by using Eurojust, Europol, the European Public Prosecutor’s Office and OLAF, within their respective competences. It sends strong signals also beyond the EU. The Council of Europe is inspired by it and is now working on a new Council of Europe Convention on combating environmental crime. The UN (e.g. UNODC – UN Office on Drugs and Crime) and INTERPOL have praised the new Directive as being of exemplary importance. We will further enhance cooperation with international actors to address also the global

dimension on combating environmental crime.

Water management: *Climate change is impacting various sectors of society, prompting the EU to proactively anticipate potential future deficiencies in its regulatory framework (acquis). Many anticipate that the forthcoming major crisis will revolve around water availability. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), supported by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), has advocated for an EU Blue Deal. Additionally, during her 2023 State of the Union Address, President Von der Leyen announced the EU Water Resilience Initiative, which has since been postponed. Against this backdrop, what are the Commission's preliminary considerations regarding this matter? What potential measures have been assessed to mitigate the looming water crisis? Will the response be limited to resilience-focused initiatives, or will there be a comprehensive approach akin to the Green Deal, encompassing a reevaluation of the EU's regulatory framework to ensure the inclusion of water-related aspects? Specifically, if feasible, could you provide insights into how the new strategy intends to address the water-energy nexus?*

Water is under pressure due to structural mismanagement, unsustainable land use, hydro-morphological changes, and pollution. Climate change is exacerbating these pressures, increasing water-related risks such as frequent droughts and extreme precipitation. As noted in the Commission's Communication on managing climate risks in Europe, protecting and restoring the water cycle, promoting a water-smart EU economy and safeguarding good quality, affordable and accessible freshwater supplies to all is crucial to ensure a water-resilient Europe. Achieving water resilience means fostering our collective ability to manage and use water in a way that is more agile given the rapidly changing and partially unpredictable geo-political, economic, societal and environmental developments. Water needs to be managed, and human demand needs to be adjusted to the new and scarce supply.

I cannot prejudge what the next Commission will do, but I am firmly convinced that this is a strategic priority for the future of the EU and its Member States. The Commission is taking stock of water issues comprehensively, building upon the findings of the ongoing assessments of River Basin and Flood Risk Management Plans, as well as of the marine Programmes of Measures put in place by the Member States. On that basis, the Commission will consider future actions. The Commission is continuing to pay close attention to the input provided by other EU institutions, EU Member States and stakeholders in the development of future EU policy in this area.

AP- PEN- DIX

TIME LINE

This timeline highlights the main elements proposed by the Commission under the umbrella of the Green Deal since its first presentation in December 2019. The list is not exhaustive, but aims to provide an overview of the Commission's work during these years. The list is an expanded version of the Commission's own timeline, available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

24 April 2024

Parliament approves a review of the [Common Agriculture Policy \(CAP\) Strategic Plans Regulation](#) and the [CAP Horizontal Regulation](#).

12 April 2024

The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive [is formally adopted](#).

11 April 2024

Parliament [adopts reform](#) of the EU electricity market.

12 March 2024

The Commission publishes the [Communication on managing climate risks in Europe](#) as a response to the first ever European Climate Risk Assessment.

4 March 2024

The Council reaches [political agreement](#) on a recommendation to continue coordinated demand-reduction to secure sufficient gas storage for next winter

20 February 2024

Political [agreement](#) on EU-wide certification scheme for carbon removals.

Political [agreement](#) on new air quality standards in the EU

19 February 2024

European Hydrogen Bank pilot [auction](#): 132 bids received from 17 European countries.

8 February 2024

Political [agreement](#) to ban all remaining intentional uses of toxic mercury in the EU.

6 February 2024

Political [agreement](#) on the Net-Zero Industry Act.
The Commission adopts an EU Industrial Carbon Management [Strategy](#), setting out how to sustainably capture, store and use CO₂.
Commission [presents recommendation](#) for 2040 emissions reduction target to set the path to climate neutrality in 2050.

31 January 2024

Commission [proposes](#) to allow EU farmers to derogate for one year from certain agricultural rules.

25 January 2024

The Commission launches [Strategic dialogue](#) on the future of EU agriculture

18 January 2024

Political [agreement](#) on EU targets to reduce CO₂ emissions from new trucks and urban buses.

19 December 2023

Council approves Commission's proposals to [prolong energy emergency measures](#).

18 December 2023

Commission publishes the [assessments](#) of the 21 member states which submitted updated draft National Energy and Climate Plans.

8 December 2023

Council and the Parliament reach a provisional political agreement on the [Hydrogen and Decarbonised Gas Market Package](#), establishing common internal market rules for renewable and natural gases and hydrogen. The agreement also proposes the creation of the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (ENNOH).

7 December 2023

Council and Parliament reach provisional political agreement on the [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive \(EPBD\)](#).
Council adopts negotiating positions on [Net-Zero Industry Act](#) and proposes an expanded list of ten strategic net-zero technologies.

28 November 2023

Commission proposes to [prolong energy emergency measures](#) by 12 months.

Commission proposes the [Electricity Grid Action Plan](#) and publishes the [sixth list of key infrastructural energy projects](#).

23 November 2023

Commission presents the first pilot auction [under the European Hydrogen Bank](#) for a total of €800 million of subsidies for renewable hydrogen production.

22 November 2023

Commission proposes a new [forest monitoring law](#) to improve resilience of European forests.

16 November 2023

Council adopts [EU position for COP28](#) and stresses that it will call for a “phase-out of unabated fossil fuels”.

Council and European Parliament reach provisional agreement on a [proposed EU law](#) that would improve the investigation and prosecution of environmental crimes.

15 November 2023

Council and Parliament reach a provisional political agreement on the [Regulation on Methane Emissions Reduction in the Energy Sector](#), agreeing on deadlines for monitoring, reporting and inspection of sources of methane emissions.

13 November 2023

Council and Parliament reach provisional agreement on the [Critical Raw Materials Act](#).

9 November 2023

Parliament and Council reach agreement on [Nature Restoration Law](#). Member states will put in place restoration measures in at least 20 per cent of the EU’s land areas and 20 per cent of its seas by 2030.

24 October

Commission presents the [European Wind Power Action Plan](#).
Commission publishes the [2023 State of the Energy Union Report](#).

17 October 2023

Council adopts negotiating positions on [electricity market reform](#). The Council agrees that two-way contracts for difference will be the mandatory model used when public funding is involved in long-term contracts.

5 October 2023

European Parliament [approves](#) Wopke Hoekstra as Commissioner for Climate Action and Maroš Šefčovič as Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal.

14 September 2023

European Parliament adopts negotiating positions on [electricity market](#)

[reform](#) and Critical Raw Materials ([CRM](#)) Act.

13 September 2023

Ursula von der Leyen delivers State of the European Union [speech](#); European Parliament adopts negotiating position on recast of the Clean Air Directive.

12 September 2023

European Parliament [adopts](#) amendments to Renewable Energy Directive (RED III).

29 August 2023

Ursula von der Leyen [proposes](#) Wopke Hoekstra as Commissioner for Climate Action.

22 August 2023

Frans Timmermans [resigns](#) as Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal; Maroš Šefčovič is appointed as new Executive Vice-President and Acting Commissioner for Climate Action.

19 July 2023

Beginning of trilogues on nature restoration law; ITRE Committee [adopts](#) report on electricity market reform.

12 July 2023

European Parliament [adopts](#) negotiating position on nature restoration law.

11 July 2023

Commission presents Greening Freight Transport [Package](#); Parliament adopts agreement on recast of Energy Efficiency Directive; European Parliament [adopts](#) negotiating position on Industrial Emissions Directive.

7 July 2023

Commission [presents](#) a proposal for coordinated withdrawal from Energy Charter Treaty.

EU Energy Platform: Commission launches second [tender](#) for joint gas purchases.

27 June 2023

Amended version of the Nature Restoration Law does not reach the [majority](#) in the Environment Committee; final vote sent to plenary.

26 June 2023

EU Energy Platform: Commission launches second [round](#) of demand pooling for joint gas purchases by EU companies.

20 June 2023

The Commission publishes the two delegated [acts](#) defining the rules for the production of renewable hydrogen.

16 June 2023

EU ambassadors reach political deal to [approve](#) the Renewable Energy Directive (REDIII).

8 June 2023

European Parliament reaches political [agreement](#) to approve the Nature Restoration Law after facing opposition from MEPs of the European People's Party (EPP).

16 May 2023

25 gas supplying companies [respond](#) to EU's joint gas demand, providing more than 13.4 bcm of gas.

After being approved by the European Parliament, the CBAM enters into [force](#).

The EU Deforestation-free Regulation ([EUDR](#)) is adopted by the Council after its adoption by the Parliament and thus enter into force.

15 May 2023

EU Member States [agree](#) to raise renewable target from 32% to 42.5% by 2030.

4 May 2023

First joint gas [purchase](#) attracts demand from more than 65 EU companies.

26 April 2023

The European Parliament and the Council reach a political [agreement](#) on the ReFuelEU Aviation proposal

25 April 2023

EU Energy Platform: Commission launches first [call](#) for companies to jointly buy gas

Council [adopts](#) key pieces of legislation delivering on 2030 climate targets: Revision of the ETS Directive; Amendment of the MRV shipping Regulation; Revision of the ETS Aviation Directive; Regulation establishing a Social Climate Fund; Regulation establishing a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

21 April 2023

The Commission proposes a [revision](#) to the existing marketing standards of agri-food products

18 April 2023

The European Parliament [approves](#) the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

30 March 2023

European Green Deal: EU agrees [stronger legislation](#) to accelerate the rollout of renewable energy.

28 March 2023

Member states [agree](#) to extend voluntary 15% gas demand reduction target.

28 March 2023

EU ministers sign off on [legislation](#) phasing out sales of new polluting cars and vans by 2035.

16 March 2023

Proposal for a [European Hydrogen Bank](#).

16 March 2023

EU proposes the [Critical Raw Materials Act](#), a comprehensive set of actions to ensure the EU's access to a secure, diversified, affordable and sustainable supply of critical raw materials.

16 March 2023

EU releases [Net Zero Industry Act](#) establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's net-zero technology products manufacturing ecosystem.

14 February 2023

The Commission proposed [new CO₂ emissions targets](#) for new heavy-duty vehicles from 2030 onwards. These targets will help to reduce CO₂ emissions in the transport sector.

13 February 2023

The Commission proposed [rules](#) to define what constitutes renewable hydrogen in the EU, with the adoption of two Delegated Acts required under the Renewable Energy Directive.

1 February 2023

The Commission presented a [Green Deal Industrial Plan](#) to enhance the competitiveness of Europe's net-zero industry and support the fast transition to climate neutrality.

24 January 2023

The European Commission introduces the revision of the [EU Pollinators Initiative](#).

18 December 2022

The European Commission welcomed the [provisional agreement](#) reached with the European Parliament and Council to strengthen the EU Emissions Trading System, apply emissions trading to new sectors for effective economy-wide climate action, and establish a Social Climate Fund.

9 December 2022

The Commission welcomed the deal reached between the European Parliament and the Council to help make the aviation sector 'Fit for 55', setting in law its contribution to our target of reducing net greenhouse

gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

6 December 2022

EU agrees [law](#) to fight global deforestation and forest degradation driven by EU production and consumption and the a political agreement is reached on the revision of the EU Emission Trading System rules on aviation.

30 November 2022

The Commission proposed new EU-wide [rules](#) on packaging, to tackle this constantly growing source of waste and of consumer frustration.

24 November 2022

During the extraordinary Council for Energy, EU energy ministers agreed on a Council [Regulation](#) “enhancing solidarity through better coordination of gas purchases, exchanges of gas across borders and reliable price benchmarks”, as well as on a Regulation speeding up permits to deploy renewable energies.

27 October 2022

The Council and the European Parliament reach a provisional political agreement on stricter CO₂ emission performance standards for new cars and vans.

26 October 2022

Commission proposes stronger [rules](#) for cleaner air and water, including PFAs, several pesticides, bisphenol A and some pharmaceuticals.

15 September 2022

Commission proposes for an [emergency market intervention](#) to reduce energy bills for Europeans, through reduced demand and a revenue cap on some producers (among other measures).

20 July 2022

Commission proposes a “[Save gas for a safe winter](#)” plan to reduce gas consumption until the following spring.

22 June 2022

Commission launches a [Nature protection package](#), focusing on restoring ecosystems and halving pesticide use by 2030.

18 May 2022

Commission launches the [REPowerEU plan](#), a set of measures triggered by the invasion of Ukraine and focusing on energy saving, supply diversification and the promotion of renewables.

5 April 2022

Commission proposes two [Regulations](#) to phase down fluorinated greenhouse gases and ozone depleting substances.

5 April 2022

Commission proposes an [update](#) to the Industrial Emissions Directive, to modernise EU industrial emissions rules to steer large industry in long-term green transition.

30 March 2022

Commission launches [Proposals](#) to make sustainable products the norm in the EU, boost circular business models and empower consumers for the green transition, as part of the Circular Economy Action Plan.

23 March 2022

Following the REPowerEU Communication, Commission publishes [options](#) to mitigate high energy prices through common gas purchases and minimum gas storage obligations.

8 March 2022

As a direct response to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the Commission publishes the [REPowerEU Communication](#), focused on energy prices, storage and diversification.

15 December 2021

Commission publishes a set of [proposals](#) for a new EU framework to decarbonise gas markets, promote hydrogen and reduce methane emissions, namely a Directive and a Regulation.

Commission publishes a [Communication](#) on Sustainable Carbon Cycles, to remove, recycle and sustainably store carbon, which will be followed by a proposal for a regulatory framework by the end of 2022.

14 December 2021

Commission launches a new transport [proposal](#) targeting greater efficiency and more sustainable travel, focusing also on the TEN-T network.

17 November 2021

Commission [proposes](#) two Regulations and a Strategy to stop deforestation, innovate sustainable waste management and make soils healthy.

15 September 2021

Commission publishes a Communication launching the project [New European Bauhaus](#), focusing on initiatives and funding dedicated to energy efficiency in buildings.

14 July 2021

Commission adopts a large [package](#) of proposals to achieve a 55 per cent emissions reduction by 2030. The comprehensive package deals with revision of the EU Emission Trading System (ETS), the Effort Sharing Regulation, the Renewable Energy Directive, the Energy Efficiency Directive, a ReFuelEU Aviation Initiative (on air transport), a Regulation on Land Use, Forestry and Agriculture, a proposal for a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and a revision of the Energy Taxation

Directive.

17 May 2021

Commission proposes a [Communication](#) on a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU.

12 May 2021

Commission adopts a [Zero Pollution Action Plan](#) for Air, Water and Soil, to improve quality standards for all three, and reduce the impact on health, among other goals.

25 March 2021

Commission publishes an [Organic Action Plan](#) as part of its Farm-to-Fork strategy.

24 February 2021

Commission adopts a new [EU strategy on adaptation](#) to climate change.

18 January 2021

Commission first launches the design of the [New European Bauhaus initiative](#), dedicated to energy efficiency in building.

10 December 2020

Commission proposes an upgrade on the legislation on batteries, also trying to boost the [European Battery Alliance](#), launched in 2017.

9 December 2020

Commission launches a [European Climate Pact](#), to spread awareness and increase the involvement of citizens.

19 November 2020

Commission presents an [Offshore Renewable Energy strategy](#), aimed at increasing the current 12 GW capacity to a minimum of 60 GW by 2030 and 300 GW by 2050.

14 October 2020

Commission publishes three significant elements for the Green Deal: a [Renovation Wave](#) initiative on energy efficiency for building, a [Methane Strategy](#) focused on decarbonised gases, and a [Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability](#) to strengthen legislation on hazardous chemicals.

17 September 2020

Commission presents its [2030 Climate Target Plan](#), raising its ambition to reach a 55 per cent emissions reduction by 2030.

8 July 2020

Commission adopts [EU strategies](#) for energy system integration and hydrogen to pave the way towards a fully decarbonised, more efficient and interconnected energy sector.

20 May 2020

Commission presents two key strategies: its [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#), and its [Farm-to-Fork Strategy](#) to make food systems more sustainable.

11 March 2020

Commission proposes a [Circular Economy Action Plan](#), to expand and integrate previous work on circularity into the Green Deal.

4 March 2020

Commission proposes a [European climate law](#), aimed at reaching climate neutrality by 2050.

14 January 2020

Commission presents two founding elements of the Green Deal: the [European Green Deal Investment Plan](#) and the [Just Transition Mechanism](#).

11 December 2019

Commission presents the [European Green Deal](#).

FIT FOR 55 PROPOSALS

Proposal	Status
EU Emission Trading System reform	Adopted
New EU emission Trading System for building and road transport fuels	Adopted
Social Climate Fund	Adopted
Effort Sharing Regulation	Adopted
Regulation on Land Use, Forestry and Agriculture (LULUCF)	Adopted
CO2 Emissions Standards for cars and vans	Adopted
Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)	Adopted
Renewable Energy Directive	Adopted
Energy Efficiency Directive	Adopted
Alternative Fuels Infrastructure (AFIR)	Adopted
ReFuel EU Aviation Regulation	Adopted
FuelEU Maritime Regulation	Adopted
Energy Performance of Buildings Directive	Adopted
EU Methane Regulation for the energy sector	Provisional agreement by the co-legislators
Updated EU rules to decarbonise gas markets and promote hydrogen	Provisional agreement by the co-legislators
Energy taxation directive reform	Debate still ongoing

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