

# THINK 2030

Policy paper

## Targets and indicators for a meaningful implementation of the European Green Deal



Institute for  
European  
Environmental  
Policy

# THINK 2030

Launched by IEEP and its partners in 2018, Think2030 is an evidence-based, non-partisan platform of leading policy experts from European think tanks, civil society, the private sector, and local authorities.

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An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest with lush green trees. In the background, a city skyline is visible under a warm, orange-hued sky at sunset or sunrise. A semi-transparent teal rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

At the time of the publication of this paper, new details have emerged regarding the proposed process and content of the indicator framework for the 8th Environment Action Programme (EAP), which are not fully captured in this paper.

## SUMMARY

While the ambition to reach climate neutrality by 2050 is highly welcomed, further efforts are needed to layout concrete quantitative targets and indicators to track and enforce the enacted policies. Moreover, a coherent set of indicators should be integrated into all policies, thus harmonizing the European Green Deal, an SDGs strategy, the European Semester and the Recovery and Resilience Facility. This enhanced monitoring framework could be introduced by the end of 2021.

## BACKGROUND

Scientists demonstrate that, in order to limit global warming to 1.5°C, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be cut by at least 55% by 2030 while carbon neutrality should be reached by 2050. With the approval and gradual deployment of the European Green Deal, the EU has committed to take ambitious action in order to reach climate neutrality by 2050 envisioning a new model of growth based on sustainability, wellbeing, and equity. But such ambition might be redundant if not complemented with fit-for-purpose targets, indicators and governance frameworks.

Despite some monitoring framework exist, significant efforts in support the implementation of existing and future climate and environment policies are needed for the EU to make effective progress towards its commitments. A significant implementation gap has been undermining EU environmental ambitions.

COVID19 crisis led to a historically unprecedented economic crisis. This pandemic has shown how citizens' health and well-being drives economic prosperity, stability and resilience, and vice-versa. While the European Commission singles out the need for indicators to monitor the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility, it recognizes that indicators will need to be further defined.

The Commission should also tackle the complexity derived from different timelines for targets, the lack of binding targets within the current Green Deal or the lack of targets and indicators for spill-over effects on third countries.

## KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Headline targets and indicators for the green deal and the 8<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme (EAP) must be developed and implemented as part of one coherent set on the six priorities of the European Commission:** In line with the principle of the indivisibility of the sustainability agenda, a harmonized set of headline indicators would allow operationalising the European Green Deal framework in



the context of other 5 policy objectives of the current European Commission, enabling heads of states and governments and EU leaders to be informed about the progress made in its implementation, and thus guiding decision-making. This enhanced, SDG-aligned monitoring framework could be introduced by the end of 2021 and must be coherent with other monitoring processes (e.g. 8<sup>th</sup> EAP and the Semester). The green indicator framework should include two types of indicators: (a) indicators measuring the distance to targets and (b) indicators monitoring means of implementation.

- 2. Support coherence and accountability through an annual report to the European Council by an independent scientific advisory council on progress against the six headline ambitions of the European Commission in line with SDGs:** Well-renowned scientists from different disciplines should form an independent scientific advisory council, which would produce an annual report on the progress against headline indicators for the European Council. This initiative for an annual report could be complemented by a special summit at the level of heads of State and Government. Such a report, if the principle of publicity is applied, must be leveraged as a mechanism for democratic transparency and accountability.
- 3. Promote structural reform by introducing a new sustainability scoreboard within the European Semester and SDG-related targets within the Recovery and Resilience Plans.** The inclusion of a sustainability scoreboard would enable to align the European Semester, the European Green Deal policy targets and Member States policy-making, as well as guide investment decisions in the context of the recovery. Synergies should be created with scoreboard by introducing the concept of a sustainable wellbeing economy for all, ensuring that there are no trade-offs between social, environmental and economic aspects. Lastly, targets assessing Member States' progress towards the SDGs should be introduced to align the recovery with sustainability (e.g. cancelling environmentally harmful subsidies),
- 4. Turn relevant green deal and 8<sup>th</sup> EAP objectives into legal obligations:** To ensure the delivery of the European Green Deal, objectives must be turned into obligations both on a Member States and European-wide level. For instance, targets that are included in Communications rather than Regulations and Directives might be taken less seriously. Triggers must exist in case of lack of compliance, and institutions should ensure the effectiveness of enforcement mechanisms, as well as enhanced public access to environmental justice. Lastly, quantitative targets should be promoted over qualitative ones, since the latter might lead to differences in interpretation and lack of evidence to demonstrate gaps.

5. **Integrate indicators about *means of implementation*<sup>1</sup> within the monitoring framework of the green deal and the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP**, alongside indicators measuring the distance to the target to inform the mid-term review of the green deal proposed by Member States as well as the design of a “green deal II” in 2023.

**Integrate into the monitoring framework new targets and indicators regarding cross-border social and environmental spill-over effects:** In line with the principle of universality of the SDG agenda, such spill-over indicators should be integrated into SDG monitoring frameworks. Current information on spill-over effects on third countries is sparse and inconsistent, and given the universality of the environmental emergency, this is problematic, since the European Union might simply export environmental degradation to other countries. Hence, European targets and indicators must be complimented with targets and indicators on spill-over effects.

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<sup>1</sup> Taking inspiration from approach within the Adis Ababa action plan for the SDGs,  
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=2051&menu=35>





# 1 CONTEXT

Considering planetary boundaries, the ways that we consume today in Europe are not sustainable. In the simplest of terms, we would need almost three Earths to support the global economy if European consumption patterns were replicated throughout the planet.

With the approval and gradual deployment of the European Green Deal, the EU has committed to take ambitious action to reach climate neutrality by 2050, envisioning a new model of growth based on sustainability, wellbeing, and equity. This initiative responds to the urgency triggered by ever-increasing environmental degradation and the growing threat that climate change poses to Europe and the whole of humanity. The 2020 State of the European Environment and Outlook<sup>2</sup>, released by the EEA, reiterated this urgency by stating that “Europe’s environment is at a tipping point. We have a narrow window of opportunity in the next decade to scale up measures to protect nature, lessen the impacts of climate change and radically reduce our consumption of natural resources. Our assessment shows that incremental changes (...) are not nearly enough to meet our long-term goals. Our future wellbeing and prosperity depend on it.” Scientists<sup>3</sup> demonstrate that to limit global warming below 1.5°C, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be cut by at least 45% by 2030<sup>4</sup> while carbon neutrality should be reached by 2050.

## *A five-year EU agenda and beyond*

<b>2019</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European Green Deal Publication</li> </ul>	<b>2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New Commission</li> <li>- Installation of 6GW of renewable hydrogen electrolyzers</li> <li>- 4<sup>th</sup> EIR package</li> <li>- New consideration for targets for waste reduction</li> </ul>	<b>2030</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SDGs deadline</li> <li>- Reduce 55% GHG emissions</li> <li>- Ensure that around 40% of energy comes from renewables. 40GW of renewable hydrogen electrolyzers</li> <li>- 14% of fuel for transport to come from renewable sources. Advanced</li> </ul>
<b>2020</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From Farm to Fork</li> <li>- Circular Economy action plan</li> <li>- Biodiversity Strategy</li> <li>- proposal for a European Climate Law</li> </ul>	<b>2025</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 7<sup>th</sup> State and Outlook Environment Report</li> </ul>	

<sup>2</sup> European Environmental Agency (2020), [The European environment — state and outlook 2020 Knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe](#).

<sup>3</sup> IPCC, 2018: [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](#).

<sup>4</sup> However, the IPCC report states that the interquartile range is 40-60%. Hence, EU’s initiative to fix a 55% emissions reduction target by 2030 is highly welcomed.



## Targets and indicators for a meaningful implementation of the European Green Deal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- European Industrial Strategy</li> <li>- Chemicals Strategy for sustainability</li> <li>- Methane Strategy</li> <li>- Renovation Wave</li> <li>- Offshore renewable energy</li> <li>- Energy System Integration Strategy</li> </ul> <p><b>2021</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Action Plan toward a Zero Pollution Ambition</li> <li>- Adoption of the 8th Environment Action Programme</li> <li>- Mandatory Green Public Procurement criteria and targets</li> <li>- Sustainable product policy legislative initiative</li> <li>- "Fit for 55 Package"</li> <li>- Single-Use plastics ban</li> <li>- "Strategy for sustainable and smart mobility" publication</li> </ul> <p><b>2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IPCC's 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report</li> <li>- 3<sup>rd</sup> EIR package</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 4<sup>th</sup> EIR package</li> <li>- Plastic bottles to contain at least 25% of recycled content</li> <li>- Build one million public electric charging points</li> <li>- Recycle or preparing for re-use 60% of municipal waste. Achieve 77% collection for plastic bottles. Plastic bottles to contain at least 25% of recycled content.</li> </ul> <p><b>2027</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5<sup>th</sup> EIR package</li> </ul> <p><b>2028</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Priority hazardous substances under Directive 2008/105/EC are eliminated from surface waters</li> </ul>	<p>biofuels and biogas at least 3,5% of consumption of road and rail transport. Reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport by 20% compared to 2008.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU Farm to Fork Strategy targets (pesticides, excess of nutrients, antimicrobial resistance, organic farming)</li> <li>- Recycling of 65% of municipal waste, recycling 55% of packaging waste, and reduce landfill to maximum of 10% of municipal waste.</li> <li>- 8<sup>th</sup> State of the Environment Report</li> <li>- Renovation Wave: renovate 35 million inefficient buildings by 2030.</li> <li>- Reduce EU urban population exposed to concentration above the WHO guideline values to 10% for PM<sub>2.5</sub>, PM<sub>10</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> and to 0% for N<sub>2</sub>.</li> <li>- Halving per capita food waste at retail and consumer levels.</li> <li>- EU 2030 Biodiversity Strategy's restoration targets and 30% of protected land and sea in Europe</li> <li>- 6<sup>th</sup> EIR package</li> </ul>
<b>2050: Climate Neutrality</b>		

By setting out a new vision to address environmental, social and economic challenges coherently through the European Green Deal, European leaders are taking steps to a new model of growth, based on sustainability, wellbeing and equity. While the European Green Deal sets a monitoring system with new objectives, further efforts are needed to lay out concrete quantitative targets and governance systems to properly track and enforce the enacted policies. A watered-down European Green Deal, which

would fail to monitor progress towards the environmental and social objectives and the success of EU policies, would not be able to be assessed on its ambitious goals.

In order to envision and coordinate, this article calls for an enhanced implementation and harmonization of targets and indicators, thus streamlining different policy frameworks that aim to tackle environmental degradation and climate change, and further enhancing public access to information and democratic accountability. Given the long-term approach of this contribution, we deemed it necessary to include the following depicting a summarised list of forthcoming deadlines regarding environmental policy-making, to showcase the current expected timeline for the next five-year agenda and further.

### 1.1 LACK OF FULL IMPLEMENTATION IS A GREAT CONCERN TO MEET THE ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Despite some monitoring framework exist, significant efforts in support the implementation of existing and future climate and environment policies are needed for the EU to make effective progress towards its commitments. A significant implementation gap has been undermining EU environmental ambitions. In 2018,<sup>5</sup> the European Environment Agency (EEA) concluded that the EU was not on track to achieve some of its 2020 objectives regarding the 7<sup>th</sup> EAP.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the second Environmental Implementation Review adopted in 2019 singled out severe deficiencies in the field of the circular and low-carbon economy.<sup>7</sup> Some Member States must also better implement measures concerning water and energy savings, waste prevention<sup>8</sup>, recycling<sup>9</sup> and promotion of reuse and repair. Improving eco-innovation performance is also an important challenge.

Gaps are also identified in natural capital protection and enhancement. While the European Commission recognizes some progress, Member States should make efforts to improve the designation of Natura 2000, thus completing networks of nature protection areas, in particular in the marine environment. Beyond the development of such

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<sup>5</sup> European Environmental Agency (2018), Environmental indicator report 2018. In support to the monitoring of the Seventh Environment Action Programme. EEA Report No 19/2018

<sup>6</sup> See Montéville, M. & Richer C. (2019), Closing the Gap: Implementing European Environmental Policies.

<sup>7</sup> European Commission. (2019). Environmental Implementation Review 2019: A Europe that protects its citizens and enhances their quality of life.

<sup>8</sup> According to the 2019 Communication, some Member States produce at least twice as much municipal waste per inhabitant than the Member State reporting the lowest value, and just nine Member States reduced their generation per capita in the period 2014-2016. It will be critically important to reduce such gaps among the Member States while improving the general performance.

<sup>9</sup> Several countries were actually at risk of missing the target of 50% waste recycling by 2020. The number of landfills was not in line with the Landfill Directive either.



networks, compliance with rules governing existing protected areas remains a major challenge, which needs to be tackled through more effective use of Member State and European enforcement mechanisms and a more systematically facilitated public access to environmental justice.

Lack of high-quality data gathering and analysis by some Member States is also an issue for concern for proper delivery of the European Green Deal. The European Union must bolster the capacity of Member States to provide state-of-the-art indicators, which will be necessary to implement and monitor European and national policies. Weak official data collection systems are also a reason of concern in regards to SDG monitoring. In order to create robust SDGs monitoring systems, official SDG indicators need to be complemented by unofficial indicators to cover gaps, and absolute performance standards and thresholds should be defined to track progress.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2 AN INCOMPLETE FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR THE SDGS

In light of the limited influence that the previous sustainable development strategy<sup>11</sup> of the EU had on policymaking, the European Commission decided not to design an EU overall SDGs strategy and instead opted for setting six headline ambitions<sup>12</sup> on environmental, social, economic and governance objectives, mainstreaming SDGs into sectoral policies, governance processes and instruments (e.g. European Semester, better regulation). Commissioner Gentiloni, in his remarks at the press conference on the European Semester Winter Package, stated that «we are greening the European Semester and having the Sustainable Development Goals as a new pillar»<sup>13</sup>, thus including information on SDGs progress in the country reports. While it is true that, at least for 2021, there won't be country-specific reports in the European Semester, and the specific link to the SDGs is unclear yet, this is very welcome news.

It remains to be seen whether the mainstreaming of SDGs will be sufficient for the European Commission to create an over-arching coherent long-term strategy for the EU in line with the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals and long-term goals to 2050. Siloes between Directorate Generals risk undermining progress and there is no

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<sup>10</sup> Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Schmidt-Traub, G., & Kroll, C. (2020). How Is Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Measured? Comparing Four Approaches for the EU. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 7675.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission (2009), Mainstreaming sustainable development into EU policies: 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development; European Commission. (2009). 2009 Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy - Presidency Report

<sup>12</sup> Von der Leyden, U. (2019), A Union that strives for more: My agenda for Europe. Political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024.

<sup>13</sup> European Commission (2020), Remarks by Commissioner Gentiloni at the press conference on the European Semester Winter Package. 9

evidence-based and analytical framework for arbitrating —perceived or real— trade-offs between economic, social, environmental and security policies and investment decisions.

While the idea of developing an SDG expenditure tracking methodology for the EU budget<sup>14</sup>, thus tracking the interlinked nature of the SDGs, is a step in the good direction, further steps to integrate the SDGs in policy-making are needed. The role of Voluntary National Reviews and Voluntary Local Reviews in the European Union and Member States should also be explored. For instance, given the urban-specific nature of some sustainability challenges, urban areas of a certain minimum population could be legally obliged to release a Voluntary Local Review on progress towards SDG<sup>15</sup>, and networks of peer-to-peer learning and best practices could be deployed on an EU-wide level. This would be coherent with the Commission's whole-of-government and "from global to local" approach to the SDGs<sup>16</sup>.

SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) has been singled out as lacking fit-for-purpose indicators in Europe, especially regarding the quality of public administration, which links to targets 16.5, 16.6., and 16.7. To address such a gap, the Commission should take note and build up monitoring systems following UNDP's proposed indicators<sup>17</sup> and the brand-new Handbook on Governance Statistics by the Praia City Group on Governance Statistics<sup>18</sup>. However, following SDG's philosophy, envisioning supplementary indicators to round up measurement of targets might also be necessary to adapt universal goals to local and regional contexts. In Europe, for instance, "revolving doors" have been identified as a disturbing factor in regards to European institutions' transparency and citizens trust<sup>19</sup>, so it would be appropriate to take it into account in monitoring frameworks, linking it to Target 16.6.: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

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<sup>14</sup> See European Commission (2020) Delivering on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – A comprehensive approach, p. 9. Staff Working Document.

<sup>15</sup> A recent example of a European city releasing a Voluntary Local Review can be found in Bonn, Germany. See United Nations (2020) Agenda 2030 on the local level: implementation of the UN sustainable development goals in Bonn.

<sup>16</sup> See European Commission (2020) Delivering on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – A comprehensive approach, p. 11. Staff Working Document.

<sup>17</sup> UNDP & Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2016). Goal 16 – The indicators we want: Virtual Network Sourcebook on Measuring Peace, Justice and Effective Institutions.

<sup>18</sup> Governance Statistics Praia City Group (2020) Handbook on governance statistics.

<sup>19</sup> Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (2020) On strengthening transparency and integrity in the EU institutions by setting up an independent EU ethics body (2020/2133(INI)) Rapporteur for opinion: Derk Jan Eppink. European Parliament.

Finally, SDG monitoring systems must be harmonized across sectors and administrations in order to avoid confusions and enable evidence-based policymaking. Two different issues must be addressed: one the one hand, data sources and indicator selection; and on the other hand, methodologies to aggregate results by goal and country. According to recent research, three main drivers are accounting for differences in SDGs' performance results: the use of pre-defined targets for calculating countries trajectories, the inclusion of indicators to track spillover effects, and the use of non-official data in order to cover data gaps in official indicators<sup>20</sup>. This is incredibly important for European institutions, since different approaches bring about different results and therefore, different input for decision-making.

### 1.3 TOWARDS A NEW MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL?

The 7<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme (EAP), which set the framework for EU environmental policy between 2014 and 2020, is coming to an end. While its evaluation concluded that its core long-term objective of "living-well within the planet's ecological limits." was still relevant, there is much less evidence of the influence of that framework regarding the make-up of Member States policies<sup>21</sup>. A key issue that has been highlighted to explain such lack of influence was the plethora of objectives and indicators within the 7<sup>th</sup> EAP.

In October 2020 the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Decision establishing the 8<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme (EAP), which aims at guiding the implementation of the environmental policy until 2030 and be the monitoring arm of the European Green Deal's environmental objectives. The monitoring framework of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP "will include, to the largest extent possible, existing monitoring tools and indicators mainly based on European statistics and data from the EEA and ECHA, thus avoiding duplication and limiting administrative burden for Member States"<sup>22</sup>. A key challenge will be to design a shortlist of key headline indicators which can guide decision-making at the government level to meet the objectives of the European Green Deal and reach EU carbon neutrality by 2050.

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<sup>20</sup> Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Schmidt-Traub, G., & Kroll, C. (2020). How Is Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals Measured? Comparing Four Approaches for the EU. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 7675.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2019), On the evaluation of the 7th Environment Action Programme.

<sup>22</sup> European Commission (2020), Proposal for a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030.

## 1.4 POST-COVID REALITIES: RECOVERY PLANS AND BEYOND

COVID19 crisis led to a historically unprecedented economic crisis, plummeting the global economy into the deepest recession since the Second World War. As the European economies continue to be heavily impacted by the sanitary crisis, the European Commission has tabled different actions to boost the recovery.

On 27 May 2020, the European Commission proposed a reinforced long-term EU budget for 2021-2027 and the temporary recovery instrument NextGenerationEU with the ultimate goal of rebuilding a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe. Later on, on 21 July 2020, EU heads of state or government reached an agreement on the package and since then, European institutions have held different trilateral political trilogues in order to fine-tune and operationalize the details of the deal. The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the centrepiece of NextGenerationEU, and it is meant to mitigate and repair the impact of the coronavirus pandemic while fostering green investments and reforms, thus improving resilience and sustainability. Indeed, 37% of the allocated €672.5 billion must include expenditure related to climate. Such an instrument will make available up to €312,5 billion in grants and €360 billion in loans<sup>23</sup>.

To access funding, Member States must prepare recovery and resilience plans which must be submitted latest by 30 April 2021. This plan shall set out a coherent set of reforms with particular attention to challenges identified during the European Semester in the country-specific recommendations.

While the European Commission singles out the need for key performance indicators to monitor the implementation of the RRF and the achievement of the objectives, it recognizes that «[a] set of indicators will need to be further defined, in agreement with the Member State concerned»<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, the European Commission requires Member States to report quarterly on the progress made regarding their recovery and resilience plans.

COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown how citizens' health and well-being drives economic prosperity, stability and resilience, and vice-versa. Moreover, the role of environmental degradation in the propagation of zoonic diseases must not be belittled:

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<sup>23</sup> For more information on this point, see [European Commission's related page](#).

<sup>24</sup> European Commission (2020), [Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), p. 6.



there is clear evidence that deforestation, by destabilizing natural ecosystems, can lead to such viral phenomenon<sup>25</sup>.

More than ever, the concept of a sustainable well-being economy for all should be put at the core of our policies and strategies and measuring progress towards a sustainable well-being economy will be critical. A willingness to redefine quality growth by going beyond currently used indicators was expressed by European Council, in October 2019, when adopting conclusions regarding the Economy of Wellbeing<sup>26</sup>.

COVID-19 also poses new challenges to the European Green Deal: In times of economic malaise, environmental policy ambition wanes and some policies are rolled back or dismantled, given its long-term and difficult to quantify nature<sup>27</sup>. Hence, in times of COVID-19, it is essential to remain ambitious and turn down any attempts to roll back policy, as the European Commission has done regarding the calls by industry to lift the ban on single-use plastics because of the pandemic<sup>28</sup>. Indeed, the President of the Commission has underlined that the European Green Deal remains a top priority in the European agenda despite the pandemic, calling for “building back a better Europe”, in which sustainability and resilience remain at the core.

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<sup>25</sup> For instance, burning forests in order to extend agricultural land forces resident bats to fly elsewhere in search of food, potentially leading to increased contact with human activities. See Smith, K. F., Goldberg, M., Rosenthal, S., Carlson, L., Chen, J., Chen, C., & Ramachandran, S. (2014). Global rise in human infectious disease outbreaks. *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*, 11(101), 20140950

<sup>26</sup> Council of the European Union (2019), The Economy of Wellbeing – Draft Council Conclusions.

<sup>27</sup> See Burns, C., Eckersley, P., & Tobin, P. (2020). EU environmental policy in times of crisis. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(1), 1-19; Skovgaard, J. (2014). EU climate policy after the crisis. *Environmental Politics*, 23(1), 1-17; Lekakis, J. N., & Kousis, M. (2013). Economic crisis, Troika and the environment in Greece. *South European Society and Politics*, 18(3), 305-331

<sup>28</sup> Simon, F. (2020), EU dismisses industry calls to lift ban on single-use plastics. Euractive.







## 2 COMPLETING THE SET OF EUROPE'S TARGETS

According to IEEP's compilation of environment-related targets (see in annex), the EU has at least 100 quantitative policy targets that are relevant to climate and the environment, of which 7 must be met between 2021 and 2025. In addition, there are 12 quantitative policy targets related to other dimensions of sustainability, according to Eurostat<sup>29</sup>. At least 16 are translated into Member State-level targets.

Based on our own analysis of the 2018 progress report for the 7<sup>th</sup> EAP<sup>30</sup>, we see that in areas that have no quantitative target but only qualitative ones, there is a great risk for difference in interpretation at the implementation stage. It is also more arduous for the Commission to demonstrate that a member state might be in breach. Similarly, targets that are included in Communications rather than Regulations and Directives might be taken less seriously by Member States and therefore lack corresponding action plans and investments.

While the negotiation of quantitative targets directly applicable to each Member State through regulations and directives are the most difficult to achieve, they have the merit of supporting greater accountability. As the European Green Deal constitutes a flagship communication of the current Commission, there is the risk that commitment stops with the Commission led by the Presidency of Ursula Von Der Leyen. The EU must enshrine the objectives of the European Green Deal into legal obligations that would go beyond 2022 – while the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP is expected to accomplish such function, it is essential to underline the importance of targets and indicators. Of course, targets are not a panacea: political considerations and the lowest common denominator might actually lead to lock-in effects by setting too low targets and by discouraging frontrunners to go beyond them.

There is a striking lack of targets within the current set up of the Green Deal which are centred around health, well-being and equity. For instance, it will be hard to operationalize the leaving no one behind principle without overall targets on poverty and inequality in the EU, following the lapsing of the 2020 targets. Another striking issue relates to the lack of targets around health and well-being (beyond targets on air pollution). One target that could be explored for instance and which is inspired by the SDG

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<sup>29</sup> Eurostat (2019), Sustainable development in the European Union. Overview of progress towards the SDGs in an EU context. 2019 edition.

<sup>30</sup> European Environmental Agency (2018), Environmental indicator report 2018. In support to the monitoring of the Seventh Environment Action Programme. EAA Report No 19/2018

framework would be regarding the state of preparedness of health systems to pandemics and other covariant shocks.

Another key factor that creates complexity is the different timelines for targets, which should ideally be avoided, especially in the case of areas that might have strong inter-dependencies. With these caveats in mind, following the framework of the Green Deal, we identify several gaps and weaknesses in the current set up of targets and make a number of recommendations (see annex) on how to complete the set of targets.







### 3 DESIGNING FIT-FOR-PURPOSE PROGRESS INDICATORS

To assess the European Green Deal, it is critically important to lay out a comprehensive, salient and coherent set of indicators, which in turn must be applied to the different policies and policy frameworks<sup>31</sup>. Indicators can be key to democratic accountability – actually, several authors have advocated for a “politics of policy indicators” and for an evidence-based approach as the only way to ensure policy delivery<sup>32</sup>.

A list of indicators is currently being built as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP to help monitor the progress towards the climate and environmental objectives of the European Green Deal. Alignment with key principles and concepts, which are used for monitoring sustainable development, will be essential including:

- The *do no harm* principle;
- *Leaving no one behind* principle, and within this, the challenges posed by intra- and intergenerational equity in Europe
- The *indivisibility* of the sustainability agenda, which means promoting a sustainable well-being economy, which moves beyond the classical trade-offs between people, planet, prosperity and security)
- The *universality* of the SDG agenda, which requires addressing spill-over effects of Europe’s consumption on third countries.

The COVID crisis is showing that it is critical to add to this list the need to strengthen economic, social, ecological, and democratic resilience so that individuals, communities, countries and Europe’s capacity to face a continuum of shocks is structurally enhanced. This resilience should not be understood as the capacity to keep things the way they are, but rather as *transformative resilience*, which enables systemic change.<sup>33</sup> While resilience has become a key notion to envision a new, innovative approach to policy-making, there is a lack of common understanding regarding its operationalization, which could be addressed by defining a coherent set of indicators.

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<sup>31</sup> Dahl, A. L. (2012). Achievements and gaps in indicators for sustainability. *Ecological indicators*, 17, 14-19, p. 15.

<sup>32</sup> Bauler, T. (2012). An analytical framework to discuss the usability of (environmental) indicators for policy. *Ecological Indicators*, 17, 38-45. See also Pawson, R., 2006. Evidence-based Policy: A Realist Perspective. Sage, London, UK and Cairney, P. (2016). *The politics of evidence-based policy making*. Springer.

<sup>33</sup> Giovannini, E., Benczur, P., Campolongo, F., Cariboni, J., Manca, A.R. (2020). Time for transformative resilience: the COVID-19 emergency. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

**To operationalise such a framework, the European Green Deal needs headline indicators as part of one coherent set of indicators on the six priorities of the EC.** This will allow heads of states and governments and EU leaders to be informed about the progress made in the European Green Deal implementation. **This enhanced, SDG-aligned monitoring framework could be introduced by the end of 2021**, with indicators relevant for the achievement of the European Green Deal and coherent with other monitoring processes (e.g. 8<sup>th</sup> EAP and the Semester).

In terms of the European Green Deal pillar, the green indicator framework should include *three types of indicators*:

- *Measuring the distance to targets (based on the proposed enhanced list of targets above):* Measuring the **distance to targets** is key to make sure that change is at the scale and the speed required by science and to support accountability.
- *Measuring **systemic transformation**:* Building on lessons of the failure of incremental approaches to date, greater attention should also be given to indicators that could measure the transformation of key systems such as nutrition, housing, mobility, leisure and energy, in line with the recommendations of SOER2020.<sup>34</sup> Systemic transformation could also be approached through indicators regarding the emergence of a **sustainable well-being economy**.
- *Monitoring **means of implementation*** is key as many indicators in terms of final environmental outcomes are unlikely to be affected by legislative measures taken in the green deal before the end of the current commission due to the time lag linked with implementation in Member States. To avoid wasting precious time in a context in which the window of opportunity to avert irreversible damage is closing, it is therefore key to focus indicators on means of implementation. Here are preliminary ideas below about the set of indicators that could be explored.

*Example of means of implementation indicators for the European Green Deal*

EU leadership
Number of legislative proposals approved (vis-à-vis the original planning of the Green Deal)
Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming
Green funding as a share of total EU recovery funding

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/soer/2020>

Environmental tax revenues (including from ETS) as a share of own resources
Greening of EU's development policy assistance and trade policies
<b>Implementation of the Green Deal framework by Member States</b>
References to the European Green Deal in Member States legislation and/or existence of Green Deal coordination mechanisms at the member state level
Implementation scoreboard of Green Deal initiatives by MS
Climate and biodiversity mainstreaming within MS budgets
Environmental tax revenues as a percentage of total tax revenues
Fossil fuel and other environmentally harmful subsidies
Public funding for just transition
R&D expenditure for sustainability
Green Public Procurement as a percentage of total procurement
<b>Take-up of the Green Deal framework by society</b>
% of the EU population that knows about the European Green Deal
Purchase of sustainable products from EU citizens
Level of take-up in corporate sustainability schemes (such as EMAS or the Climate Pact)
Private employment in the green economy
Percentage of institutional investors portfolio investments in green finance

Too few of Europe's domestic indicators take into account potential negative or positive spillover effects on third countries, which is problematic as environmental integrity most often require targets to become universal. Social impacts assessments must be conducted as well, researching the impact of European environmental policy on child labour, work-related accidents or forced labour. Such information should be made available both for specific supply chains and on a global level.

Environmental and social transnational impacts must also be monitored and integrated within SDG monitoring frameworks. In this sense, the Commission's recent announcement that Eurostat intends to address spill-over effects in more detail in its 2021 SDG



monitoring report<sup>35</sup> is highly welcomed —however, it is yet to be seen the depth of such monitoring and its future relation to binding policy-making and external action. Foreign policy and broader external assistance can help deliver SDG implementation in third countries<sup>36</sup>.

In conclusion, to address such challenges, the EU should adopt supply chain tailor-made strategies to address negative spill-over effects, deploy a stronger leadership globally, and finally, bolster data systems to monitor social and environmental spillovers on multiple levels<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> European Commission (2020) Delivering on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – A comprehensive approach, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> See Kettunen, M., Bowyer, C., Vaculova, L. and Charveriat, C. (2018) Sustainable Development Goals and the EU: uncovering the nexus between external and internal policies, Think2030 discussion paper, IEEP Brussels.

<sup>37</sup> Malik, A., Lafortune, G., Carter, S., Li, M. & Lenzen, M. (2020) Social spillover effects in the EU's textile supply chains. The University of Sydney & Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).





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## 4 TOWARDS A STRONGER ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 CLEARER ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISMS FOR EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

In its 2017 Environmental Implementation Review, the European Commission concluded that the implementation gap was partly due to a lack of integration and policy coherence within Member States. Ineffective governance in implementation, marked by a lack of capacity and/or coordination amongst competent authorities at the national level, was another factor.

The European Green Deal and the 8<sup>th</sup> EAP, together with the Environmental Implementation Review (EIR) and its specific recommendations to Member States, should act as mutually supporting commitments complementing each other and creating positive synergies between them. However, they pose challenges in terms of implementation as they create further complexities by having different timelines, targets, and indicators.

European policies' design and effectiveness can be improved by aligning Better regulation to SDGs and with stricter infringement procedures in case of non-compliance with sustainability measures. The European Commission pledged to improve its Better Regulation guidelines<sup>38</sup> and supporting tools that address sustainability. To this end, the Better regulation review must consider integrating the Sustainable Development Goals making the better regulation a salient impact assessment framework for the SDGs in the EU.

To further strengthen accountability, an **annual report on progress against the six headline ambitions of the European Commission should be created**. Similar to the process followed by the UNSG on the global SDG report, well-renowned scientists from different disciplines, possibly under the aegis of IDEA, should form a scientific advisory council, which would produce an annual report on the progress against headline indicators for the European Council<sup>39</sup>. This could be complemented by a special summit at the level of heads of State and Government. Such a report and the related special summit, shall the principle of publicity be applied, must be leveraged as a mechanism for democratic transparency and accountability.

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<sup>38</sup> See European Commission's [Better regulation: guidelines and toolbox](#) page for more information.

<sup>39</sup> See Charveriat, C. & Demailly, D. (2017) [Harnessing the SDGs for charting Europe's future course](#). Institute for European Environmental Policy.

Moreover, linkages between the proposed Environmental Implementation Portal<sup>40</sup> and headline indicators must be explored. To enhance transparency and accountability, an open, trustworthy and user-friendly portal in which progress towards headline is monitored must be implemented. Eurostat's slightly enhanced SDG monitoring report in 2020<sup>41</sup>, or the social scoreboard linked to the European Pillar of Social Rights<sup>42</sup> could be taken as an example.

Finally, building on lessons from youth councils and citizen's assemblies<sup>43</sup>, it is essential to support greater youth involvement in elections and other democratic processes, starting from the local level, and to extend voting rights to 16-year-olds. The EU could create an EU Future Generation's Ombudsman that would advocate for further youth involvement and participation.

## 4.2 PROMOTING STRUCTURAL REFORMS IN MEMBER STATES

To make the European Green Deal a cornerstone to implement SDGs in the EU, the Commission must promote structural reforms within Member States.

While such initiative of mainstreaming the SDGs in the European Semester is highly welcomed, further coordination of goals and targets in all European policies is needed. For instance, while the link between the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the European Semester has been largely addressed and highlighted, no strategy to integrate the SDGs in the RRF can be identified. Sustainability must be integrated into all EU policy frameworks, thus enhancing policy coherence<sup>44</sup>. Moreover, concerns have been raised in regards to indicators cherry-picking, as well as in regards to slow progress and lack of monitoring of externalities (the overall supply chains must be considered)<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> See European Commission (2020) [Feasibility study on the development and maintenance of an EU Environmental Implementation Portal](#). Bilbomática, Collingwood Environmental Planning (CEP), Wood and Milieu.

<sup>41</sup> Eurostat (2020) [Sustainable development in the European Union Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context](#). 2020 Edition.

<sup>42</sup> See European Commission (2020) [Social Scoreboard webpage](#).

<sup>43</sup> The [Youth Parliament of Wales](#) could serve as a reference of best practices.

<sup>44</sup> To know more about the SDGs and strategies for policy coherence, see European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) (2016), [Implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the European Union: Constructing an EU approach to Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#). Discussion Papers.

<sup>45</sup> SDG Watch Europe. (2020). [Progress at a snail's pace](#). Statement by the SDG Watch Europe Steering Group.



The recent Staff Working Document on the SDGs announced that President von der Leyen would take on responsibility for coordinating efforts in regards to SDGs integration and monitoring, and highlighted the need for a “whole-of-government” approach: this is good news, but further steps and specific details and commitments were missing.

Most green measures failed to achieve a systemic and lasting change, as most countries left in place environmentally harmful subsidies and inadequate regulatory regimes. Building on these lessons, forthcoming economic and social recovery plans should be designed to support systemic change aligned with SDGs. Considering the current crisis, policy frameworks and funding programmes should be reoriented to strengthen societal resilience, not just through economic or financial systems, but also for health, social, societal and ecological systems.

The 2020 Strategic Foresight Report, and its strong focus on resilience building, is a step in the good direction, but further development on the integration of socio-economic, environmental, digital and geopolitical indicators of resilience is needed. Moreover, the idea of developing a “synthetic resilience index” interwoven within a broader wellbeing economy approach, is highly welcomed, but to do so, as reported in this paper, the Commission will have to work in-depth on indicators and targets coherence – thus enhancing monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

As new indicators for monitoring purposes in the RFF will be introduced, **the EU should align, its different policy processes linked to sustainability with a common set of targets and indicators.** Plans that Member States have to produce to demonstrate how they will use recovery funds, achieve national and EGD targets, such as the NECPs, the LTS plans, as well as the CAP strategic plans, Member State reports and independent reviews of progress (e.g. National Emissions Ceiling Directive reporting) should be aligned.

*The **European Semester process** is key to monitor and push for the implementation of the European Green Deal as the funds of the RRF are directly linked to the country-specific recommendations. To better mainstream SDGs within the process and further drive the concept of a **sustainable economy** in the Member States, we recommend the following:*

**The process of the European Semester should be used to assess progress towards the achievement of Green Deal policy targets by each Member State** and to guide investment decisions as part of the recovery. This is why it is necessary to include **a new sustainability scoreboard**<sup>46</sup> **within the Semester.** The Semester should also be

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<sup>46</sup> Charveriat, C. and Bodin, E. (2020), Delivering the Green Deal: the role of a reformed Semester within a new sustainable growth strategy for the EU, the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP).

harnessed to tailor recommendations according to the distance to target and to back-casting methodologies.

Synergies should be created with the social scoreboard by introducing the concept of a **sustainable wellbeing**<sup>47</sup> **economy for all**. Measuring progress towards a sustainable well-being economy is critical to avoid unnecessary trade-offs between social, environmental and economic aspects. The Council of the EU and the EESC have already endorsed the paradigm shift towards a well-being economy and beyond narrowly defined indicators such as the GDP<sup>48</sup>.

**The EU should align funding, incentives, and compliance mechanisms.** Two of the key reasons for the failure in implementing the European environmental acquis and achieving policy objectives of the EU are the lack of adequate funding and the lack of effective compliance-assurance mechanisms. More adequate EU funding for structural reform in Member States will partly depend on the recovery funds. But it will also be important to ensure the full alignment of programming exercises with each Member State. These should be based on an assessment of needs from Member States based on the distance to targets. To deliver the Green Deal, it would also be essential to foster climate and biodiversity mainstreaming in Member State budgets. The Communication on the Green Deal rightly calls for a process to support the greening of national budgets of the Member States.

**Policymakers should be supporting greater policy coherence for sustainable development at the Member State level.** This means a whole-of-Commission approach towards policy recommendations for Member States from the European Commission to Member States. Such a change can only be achieved through reforms in the structures of the European Commission to break away from siloes, as well as the strengthening of the DG in charge of current structural reform support. This DG should have equal expertise in, and competence over, the three key dimensions of sustainability. Greater coherence should also be ensured through approval by the College of Commissioners of country recommendations in the Semester, in contrast with the current situation in which only DG ECFIN leads on approving the recommendations.

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<sup>47</sup> For an operational definition of wellbeing (on an individual, community-wide and society-wide levels) see Wellbeing Economy Alliance (2020) [Understanding Wellbeing](#). Briefing Papers.

<sup>48</sup> In this sense, stakeholders such as WWF have called for an overarching and SDG-aligned Wellbeing Economy strategy to coordinate and deploy such approach on a European-wide level. See WWF (2020) [Towards an EU Wellbeing Economy: A fairer, more sustainable Europe after COVID-19](#).

## 4.3 SUPPORT TO TRICKLE UP GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Efforts must be stepped up in terms of promoting the take-up of the Green Deal and climate neutrality by civil society, the private sector and local authorities. This requires a simplification of EU and MS funding mechanisms linked with the Green Deal, ensuring that the climate pact enables greater ambition from different stakeholders as well as exploring other forms of participative governance (see the Think2030 paper on future generations).

**The support of the greater public will be key to close the implementation gap as well as accountability at all level** (EU, MS, but also subnational). Structural reform fatigue is prevalent in most Member States. This is partly due to a lack of understanding of reforms by citizens. The different EU policy processes (including the European Green Deal) are not well-known by EU citizens; hence its content is not discussed in the public sphere. This can allow policymakers and opinion shapers to misrepresent recommendations from the EU institutions or to dilute responsibilities for the lack of progress. Making the process more visible and accessible would increase the likelihood of greater public support and would enhance the accountability of the Commission and Member States to citizens. At a minimum, citizens, parliamentarians and relevant governmental authorities, as well as mainstream media, should have the capacity to see how their country is performing across sustainability dimensions; to be aware of upcoming review processes for key policy areas; to get access to the Commission recommendations, the Country Reports and the submissions to the European Commission, in addition to independent evaluations of progress towards the implementation or achievement of policy objectives. One of the ways to achieve higher transparency would be to create one-stop-shop websites for each Member State. This transparency process should be also ideally accompanied by opportunities for inputs by national parliaments and civil society in each Member States into the country recommendation process.

**The EU needs more independent accountability mechanisms.** An independent Science advisory council would shorten the feedback loop and give an independent assessment of the European Green Deal and the EU economic recovery<sup>49</sup>. This body, which should work in close collaboration with similar independent institutions in Member States, would be tasked with assessing the adequacy of both EU and Member States' green recovery plans and could also feed into the European Semester process.

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<sup>49</sup> Charveriat, C., Bausch, C., Treyer, S., Nilsson, M. & Müller, A. (2020), Europe's recovery plans must pass five sustainability tests. Think Sustainable Europe network.



To support democratic processes and influence decision-making, its recommendations should be made public and in close to real-time.





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## Annex: Inventory of key policy targets with proposed next steps<sup>50</sup>

This inventory is intended to be a living tool. If you would like to propose any additions, please contact [ebodin@ieep.eu](mailto:ebodin@ieep.eu).

	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
Increasing the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The <u>proposed target of at least 55%</u> fewer emissions compared to 1990 levels by 2030 will be replacing the previous targets of 40% pending agreement by the European Council in the European Climate Law</li><li><u>Net-zero GHG by 2050</u> will replace the previous long-term target of 80-95% cut.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Annual reduction targets in Fossil Fuel subsidies</li><li>Revision of EU climate policy and legislation in line with a revised target<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Targets binding on individual MS</li><li>Set sector-specific targets</li><li>A separate target for carbon sinks</li><li>A specific target for the land-use sector</li></ul></li></ul>
Supplying clean affordable and secure energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Share of renewable energy in final energy consumption <u>to 32 % by 2030</u></li><li>At least a <u>32.5% increase in energy efficiency by 2030</u>.</li><li>14% of fuel for transport purposes <u>to come from renewable sources</u> by 2030.</li><li>First-generation biofuel, based on food crops, <u>must be capped at 2020 levels</u> (with an extra 1%) and in no case exceed 7% of final consumption of road and rail transport;</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Revision of targets in line with revised GHG target.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Renewable energy target of at least 50% by 2030 in order to be in line with Paris Agreement objectives.</li><li>In order to deploy successfully reach 14% of green hydrogen in the grid by 2030, renewable energy production must increase substantially. Hence the Renewable Energy Directive target for 2030 must be raised accordingly.</li></ul></li></ul>

<sup>50</sup> In red, binding targets; in green, non-binding targets. To be reviewed based on outcomes of the thematic policy papers of Think2030. A column based on achievements to date (EEA SOER 2020) will also be added after the conference.

	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
	<p>the share of advanced biofuels and biogas <u>must be at least 1% in 2025 and at least 3,5% in 2030.</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the Renewable Energy Directive in June 2021 will consider strengthening the renewable heating and cooling target</li> </ul>
Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-use and recycling of waste materials (paper, metal, plastic and glass from households) increased to a minimum of overall <u>50% by weight by 2020.</u></li> <li>Recycling or preparing for re-use <u>60% and 65% of municipal waste</u> by 2025 and 2030, respectively.</li> <li>Recycling or preparing for re-use <u>55% of packaging waste</u> by 2030.</li> <li>Reduce landfill <u>to a maximum of 10% of municipal waste</u> by 2030.</li> <li>MS to achieve a 77% and 90% <u>collection target for plastic bottles</u> by 2025 and 2029, respectively.</li> <li>Plastic bottles to contain <u>at least 25% of recycled content by 2025 and 30% by 2030.</u></li> <li>Single-use plastic plates, cutlery, straws, balloon sticks and cotton buds <u>banned by 2021.</u></li> <li><u>By 2030</u>, all plastics packaging should be recyclable.</li> <li><u>By 2020</u>, waste generation to decline absolutely and per capita, and reduction and sound management of hazardous waste.</li> <li>Targets for waste reduction (revised Waste FD only requires EC to consider such targets by 2024)</li> <li>Specific targets for collection, recycling and/or recovery of packaging waste, construction and demolition waste, WEEE,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A target reduction on the consumption of virgin materials in the EU as proposed by the parliament</li> <li>Targets targeting overconsumption, such as per capita material footprint.</li> <li>Set separate specific quantitative targets for re-use and preparation for re-use (in line with the EU waste hierarchy)</li> <li>Use 5% of EPR schemes fees to finance re-use and preparing for re-use activities by social enterprises.</li> <li>Re-use target of 7 kg of material per capita by 2025, and 9 kg by 2030.</li> </ul>

	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
	<p>end-of-life vehicles, batteries, single-use plastics (sources: I, II, III, IV, V). 2008-2035.</p>	
Building and renovating in energy and resource-efficient way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recovery of 70% of non-hazardous construction and demolition waste, <u>lapsing in 2020</u>.</li> <li>Target for all buildings to <u>be nearly zero emissions buildings</u> by 2021.</li> <li><u>Renovation wave strategy</u> proposes to double renovation rates by 2030.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To get carbon emissions down in line with our 2050 targets, the building renovation rate must increase to at least 3%.</li> </ul>
A zero-pollution ambition for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Emission Reduction Commitments (targets for 2020-2029, and after 2030) for SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, NMVOC, NH<sub>3</sub>, and PM<sub>2.5</sub> under the <u>National Emission Ceilings Directive</u>, reducing the percentage of EU population exposed to concentrations above the WHO guideline values.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air limit values should reflect emerging consensus from the WHO. MS must take action to meet existing limit values. Too many are failing.</li> <li>Water: emerging substances need to be tackled, such as endocrine disruptors.</li> </ul>



	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
a toxic-free environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority hazardous substances under <a href="#">Directive 2008/105/EC</a> are eliminated from surface waters in accordance with the WFD by 2028</li> <li>Targets for 2020 to increase the number of bathing waters classified as 'excellent' or 'good' <a href="#">under the Bathing Water Directive</a>.</li> <li>Sustainable use of pesticides: There is <a href="#">a target for MS to submit action plans</a> with quantitative targets on the sustainable use of pesticides.</li> <li>Ensure that <a href="#">emissions do not exceed</a> removals in the LULUCF sector (no-debit rule). 2021-2025 and 2026-2030.</li> <li><a href="#">By 2030</a>, cut the health impacts of air pollution (in terms of premature mortality due to PM and O<sub>3</sub>) by 52 % compared with 2005</li> <li>Reduce the ecosystem area exceeding eutrophication limits to 35 % <a href="#">by 2030</a></li> <li><a href="#">By 2020</a>, achieve a 47% reduction in loss of life expectancy as a result of exposure to particulate matter.</li> <li><a href="#">By 2020</a>, achieve a 10% reduction in acute mortalities from exposure to ozone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soil: Targets for the number of sites or km<sup>2</sup> to be decontaminated (currently 2.8 million sites)</li> <li>Additional quantitative targets for reducing environmental stressors to health and well-being (such as noise pollution) as well as targets to improve access to nature.</li> </ul>
Preserving and restoring ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevention and reduction of marine pollution: <a href="#">national targets under MFSD</a>.</li> <li><a href="#">Marine Strategy Framework Directive</a>: Achievement of Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020 (regulatory objective that "biodiversity is maintained by 2020" as a cornerstone of achieving GES). Achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield for fisheries (also addressing IUU fishing).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative restoration targets for specific ecosystems and other biodiversity priorities (e.g. in km<sup>2</sup> or % of degraded ecosystem)</li> <li>Water use remaining below a certain level of available renewable freshwater resources at sub/basin level (e.g. 20 % annually) and reduction of nitrate and phosphate in rivers (e.g. by 20-30 % by</li> </ul>

	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
and biodiversity	<p>Populations of all commercially exploited fish and shellfish are within safe biological limits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority hazardous substances under <a href="#">Directive 2008/105/EC</a> are eliminated from surface waters in accordance with the WFD by 2028.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Conserving 10%</a> of Europe's coastal and marine areas through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, by 2020.</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2020</a>, water abstraction should stay below 20% of available renewable water resources.</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2020</a>, the loss of biodiversity in the EU and degradation of ecosystem services will be halted and, as far as feasible, biodiversity will be restored.</li> <li>• By <a href="#">2020</a>, reduction in excess acid deposition of 74% and 39% in forest areas and surface freshwater areas respectively 43% reduction in areas or ecosystems exposed to eutrophication.</li> <li>• No net land take <a href="#">by 2050</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2030</a>, three billion new trees to be planted; 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers to be restored; a 50% reduction in the number of Red List species threatened by invasive alien species, and the decline in pollinators is reversed.</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2030</a>, significant areas of degraded and carbon-rich ecosystems are restored; habitats and species show no deterioration in conservation trends and status; and at least 30% reach favourable conservation status or at least show a positive trend (be confirmed in 2021)</li> </ul>	<p>2030). Water use and nutrient discharges should be consistent with Good Ecological Status of water bodies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong targets for key marine pollution, such as litter. Current targets are not sufficient to address marine problems.</li> <li>• Targets for the overall quality of marine ecosystems (not adequately captured by Good Environmental Status under the MSFD).</li> <li>• Fisheries activity to be fully consistent with MSY, ensure protection of ecosystems.</li> <li>• Annual reduction of land take compatible with a net-zero land take by 2050 (for the 2000-2020 period the annual land take milestone not to be exceeded was 800-km2)</li> <li>• Target for biodiversity finance (% EU budget mainstreaming)</li> <li>• Scheme-specific biodiversity targets and reporting for Rural Development measures</li> <li>• Minimum 15 billion EUR spending target</li> <li>• Track N2000 spending</li> <li>• Set a target on Nitrogen deposition, especially regarding sensitive habitats.</li> </ul>

	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good ecological status of water bodies from the WFD by latest 2027</li> <li>• Key obligations under the nature directives (e.g. favourable conservation status). MS must report on Article 12 and 17 of the <a href="#">birds</a> and <a href="#">habitats</a> directives for this.</li> <li>• Commitments under the <a href="#">Invasive Alien Species Regulation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2020</a>, (1) protect species and habitats under the nature directives (by 2020, 100% more habitat assessments and 50% more species assessments under the Habitats Directive show an improved conservation status; by 2020, 50% more species assessments under the Birds Directive show a secure or improved status); (2) maintain and restore ecosystems and their services, establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems; (3) make fishing more sustainable and seas healthier (Achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield by 2015).</li> </ul>	
From Farm to Fork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are targets regarding a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 30% by 2030 (<a href="#">Effort Sharing</a>).</li> <li>• <a href="#">Halving per capita food waste</a> at retail and consumer levels, and reduce food losses along production land supply chains, including poor-harvest losses, by 2030.</li> <li>• Reduction targets for ammonia and nitrates (<a href="#">National Emissions Ceilings Directive</a>; <a href="#">The Nitrates directive</a> ).</li> <li>• MS action plans with quantitative targets under <a href="#">Directive 2009/128/EC</a> on the sustainable use of pesticides.</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2030</a>, a reduction by 50% of the sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture (indicative)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Net-zero AFOLU by 2050 with comparable contribution from Agriculture and Forestry.</li> <li>• Improvement of gross nitrogen balance the EU</li> <li>• Reduction in average consumption of animal protein meat and meat-based products consumption (e.g., 2 % annually) towards the <a href="#">WHO guidelines</a></li> <li>• 65% reduction of use of antibiotics in livestock production by 2030</li> <li>• 80% of EU citizens consume 400 grams of fruit and vegetables daily by 2030</li> </ul>



	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">By 2030</a>, reduce losses of nutrients from fertilisers by 50%, resulting in the reduction of the use of fertilisers by at least 20% (indicative)</li> <li>• <a href="#">At least 25%</a> of agricultural land is under organic farming management, and the uptake of agro-ecological practices is significantly increased (indicative)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Reduce by 50%</a> the overall use of – and risk from – chemical pesticides (indicative)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2022, implement an improved monitoring system of food consumption and nutrient intake as recommended by WHO</li> <li>• By 2030, 70% of EU citizens consume a healthy diet, according to WHO guidelines.</li> <li>• 60-70% of CAP subsidies used to reward and incentivise sustainable land management outcomes</li> <li>• Increase in the production and consumption of minimally processed foods</li> <li>• Decrease in the incidence of diet-related illnesses</li> <li>• Increase in the number of SMEs contributing to local and regional low carbon-economy</li> <li>• Increase green procurement in public and private canteens</li> <li>• Increase in consumption of organic food</li> <li>• Decrease in the number of people requiring emergency food aid</li> </ul>
Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Phase out environmentally harmful subsidies by 2020</a>, including those for fossil fuels (with due regard to the impact on people in need).</li> <li>• There are targets for a) reducing by 14% the use of RE in total energy consumption for transport, b) average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from new passenger cars c) the halving of the use of conventional cars in cities d) freight.</li> <li>• Build one million public electric charging points <a href="#">by 2025</a>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2035 Target date for EU wide phase-out of all Internal Combustion Engine vehicles.</li> <li>• Zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) mandates for large corporate and public vehicle fleets.</li> <li>• Revise Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (AFID) to mandate targets for public vehicle charging infrastructure by Member State.</li> <li>• Coordinate bans of non-LEVs or ZEVs from all large cities (100,000+) by 2030.</li> </ul>

	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2030, <a href="#">reduce CO2 emissions from the transport sector</a> by 20% compared to 2008 levels;</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2050</a>, shift to rail the majority of long and medium distance passenger road transport; airlines increase their use of low carbon fuels by 40%; reduce EU carbon emissions from shipping by 40% compared to 2005 levels; phase out petrol cars in cities.</li> <li>• <a href="#">90% reduction</a> in the transport sector's emissions by 2050</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2025</a>, build half of the 1.000 hydrogen stations and one million out of 3 million public recharging points needed by 2030.</li> <li>• 30 million zero-emission vehicles, including 80.000 lorries, in operation on European roads <a href="#">by 2030</a>.</li> <li>• By 2030, <a href="#">100 European cities will be climate neutral</a>. All large and medium-sized cities <a href="#">adopt sustainable urban mobility plans</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2030</a>, high-speed rail traffic will double and scheduled collective travel of under 500 km should be carbon neutral. Rail freight traffic to be increased by 50% by 2030.</li> <li>• Zero-emission vessels will become ready for market <a href="#">by 2030</a>; zero-emission large aircraft to become <a href="#">ready for market by 2035</a>.</li> <li>• <a href="#">By 2050</a>, a) nearly all cars, vans, buses and new heavy-duty vehicles will be zero-emission, b) rail freight traffic will double, c) high-speed rail traffic will triple, d) the multimodal Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) will be operational with high-speed connectivity for the comprehensive network.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabilize and then reduce VKT (vehicle kilometres travelled) by 5% by 2030.</li> <li>• Double total bike path length in the EU by 2030</li> <li>• Increase public transport ridership by 25% by 2030</li> <li>• Provide free public transport access to all under 25s and over 65s in Europe by 2030</li> <li>• Double inter-city train and bus ridership by 2030</li> </ul>

	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Towards 5.000 km in safe bike lanes</a> in the EU by 2030.</li> </ul>	
Financing the transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The climate mainstreaming target of 20% was not achieved in the past programming period<sup>51</sup> and <a href="#">is being replaced with a higher proposed target of 30%</a>, although the methodology employed to track this figure has several problems.</li> <li>• <a href="#">37% of each recovery and resilience plan</a> must be used for green investment and reforms (however, a methodology to track this figure is needed).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target for environmental taxation as a share of total taxation</li> <li>• Share of green assets as part of total assets of institutional investors</li> <li>• Increasing the environmental integrity of the climate mainstreaming target of the MFF</li> <li>• Including a target for biodiversity financing within the MFF</li> <li>• Exploring targets for greening member states budgets and recovery plans based on a common methodology.</li> </ul>

<sup>51</sup> For more information, see European Commission's [Supporting climate action through the EU budget](#) page.



	CURRENT STATUS OF TARGETS	NEXT STEPS
Leave no one behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">2020 poverty target</a> lapsing (and not achieved).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-2020 overall poverty and inequality targets</li> <li>• Targets regarding budgets for just transition as a percentage of total budgets in the EU and Member States</li> <li>• Number of territorial just transition plans with clear quantitative targets in terms of net job creation or retraining as a percentage of affected population</li> <li>• Targets aiming at specific equity issues, for instance, the reduction of energy poverty in the EU. The EU should continue developing and implementing uniform energy poverty indicators across the EU and act on them as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Targets regarding the percentage of population in low coastal areas covered through adaptation plans</li> </ul>
Mobilising research and innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">H2020 has a 35% mainstreaming target</a> in the last programming period.</li> </ul>	

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Paris, taken from a high vantage point. The image shows a dense collection of buildings with various rooflines, including many mansard roofs. The sky is a mix of light blue and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. A large, semi-transparent teal rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "THINK 2030" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The text is centered within the teal box. The city below is bathed in the warm light of the low sun, with long shadows and a golden glow on the buildings and trees.

**THINK  
2030**