



Sustainability: Commission presents a reflection paper on a more sustainable Europe by 2030

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As part of the debate on the future of Europe, launched with the Commission's White Paper of 1 March 2017, the Commission is today publishing a Reflection Paper on a Sustainable Europe by 2030.

Announced as a follow-up to President Juncker's 2017 [State of the Union Address](#), today's Paper forms part of the EU's firm commitment to deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. By reviewing the breadth of challenges for Europe and presenting illustrative scenarios for the future, the Paper seeks to steer the discussion on how these goals can be best achieved and how the European Union can best contribute by 2030. Building on what has been achieved in recent years, these scenarios highlight that further action is needed if the EU and the world are to secure a sustainable future in the interest of citizens' well-being.

Frans **Timmermans**, First Vice-President of the Commission, said: *"Sustainable development starts and ends with people, it is about making our economy and society sustainable and prosperous at the same time. We do this so we can uphold our way of life and upgrade the well-being of our children and grandchildren when it comes to equality, a healthy natural environment, and a thriving, green and inclusive economy. Our task is nothing less than to secure our planet for all people. Europe can and should lead the way."*

Jyrki **Katainen**, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, said: *"Sustainability is part of Europe's DNA. It is about making sure that future generations will have the same or better opportunities than us, whilst respecting the limited resources of our planet. The Investment Plan for Europe helps by bringing the private sector on board and the Action Plan for Sustainable Finance facilitates creating a new market for sustainable investments. By modernising our societies in an inclusive manner, fully embracing circular economy and reaping the benefits of new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, we can strive for climate neutrality and ensure our planet is in a better shape for our children."*

Over the years, the EU has become a frontrunner in sustainability, with the highest social and environmental standards, and championing the Paris Climate Agreement and innovative concepts like the circular economy. The Juncker Commission has mainstreamed sustainable development priorities across its policies since the start of its mandate.

However, like the rest of the world, the EU faces complex, changing and pressing challenges, in particular related to its ecological debt and climate change, demographic change, migration, inequality, economic and social convergence, and pressure on public finances. Moreover, rising temptations of isolationism and nationalism are a sign that too many Europeans do not feel protected enough in this changing world. The undeniable facts should not instil us with fear, but inspire us to act instead.

Today's Reflection Paper focuses on the **key policy foundations** for the sustainability transition, which include moving from linear to circular economy, correcting the imbalances in our food system, future-proofing our energy, buildings and mobility, and making sure that this transition is fair, leaving no one and no place behind. The Paper also concentrates on the **horizontal enablers**, which need to underpin the sustainability transition, including education, science, technology, research, innovation and digitisation; finance, pricing, taxation and competition; responsible business conduct, corporate social responsibility and new business models; open and rules-based trade; governance and policy coherence at all levels. The Paper ends by emphasising the importance of blazing the trail for the sustainability transition globally as our policies will only have a limited impact on the planet if others pursue opposing policies.

The Paper puts forward **three scenarios** to stimulate the discussion on how to follow up on the Sustainable Development Goals within the EU. These scenarios are illustrative: they aim to offer different ideas and spur debate and thinking. The eventual outcome would likely be a combination of certain elements from each. The three scenarios are:

1. An overarching EU SDGs strategy guiding the actions of the EU and its Member States;

2. A continued mainstreaming of the SDGs in all relevant EU policies by the Commission, but not enforcing Member States' action;
3. An enhanced focus on external action while consolidating current sustainability ambition at EU level.

Background

On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda, the "2030 Agenda". Each of the 17 goals has specific targets (169 targets in total) to be achieved by 2030. The EU was a leading force behind the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

On 22 November 2016, the Commission adopted a Communication on '[Next steps for a sustainable European future](#)' in response to the 2030 Agenda. The Communication presented a picture of what the EU is doing to contribute to the 2030 Agenda by highlighting key EU policies for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It also explained how the 10 priorities of this Commission for the period 2014-2019 contribute to the 2030 global agenda. The Communication also announced the launch of a high-level multi-stakeholder platform, chaired by First Vice-President Timmermans, with a role in the follow-up and exchange of best practices on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

On 13 September 2017, the President, in the letter of intent accompanying his [State of the Union Address](#), announced a Reflection Paper entitled 'Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030' on the follow-up to the Sustainable Development Goals, including on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Today's Reflection Paper is accompanied by a detailed set of annexes reviewing the performances and recent measures taken by the EU in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. The contribution of the EU's high-level multi-stakeholder platform is also attached.

For more information

Factsheet: [Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030](#)

Reflection paper: [Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030](#)

Annexes to today's reflection paper:

- [The Juncker Commission's Contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [The EU's performance on the Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [Contribution of the SDG Multi-Stakeholder Platform to the Reflection Paper](#)

[Commission Staff Working Document: 2019 EU report on Policy Coherence for Development](#)

[White Paper on the Future of Europe \(1 March 2017\) and previous reflection papers](#)

[Eurostat Sustainable Development Goals monitoring report](#)

[A clean planet for all: a strategy for a climate neutral Europe by 2050](#)

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