A climate neutral Europe by 2050
Today the European Commission adopted a strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy by 2050 - A Clean Planet for all.

The strategy shows how Europe can lead the way to climate neutrality by investing into realistic technological solutions, empowering citizens, and aligning action in key areas such as industrial policy, finance, or research - while ensuring social fairness for a just transition.

The Vice-President responsible for the Energy Union, Maroš Šefčovič said: "We cannot safely live on a planet with the climate that is out of control. But that does not mean that to reduce emissions, we should sacrifice the livelihoods of Europeans. Over the last years, we have shown how to reduce emissions, while creating prosperity, high-quality local jobs, and improving people's quality of life. Europe will inevitably continue to transform. Our strategy now shows that by 2050, it is realistic to make Europe both climate neutral and prosperous, while leaving no European and no region behind."

Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Miguel Arias Cañete said: “The EU has already started the modernisation and transformation towards a climate neutral economy. And today, we are stepping up our efforts as we propose a strategy for Europe to become the world's first major economy to go climate neutral by 2050. Going climate neutral is necessary, possible and in Europe's interest. It is necessary to meet the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement. It is possible with current technologies and those close to deployment. And it is in Europe's interest to stop spending on fossil fuel imports and invest in meaningful improvements to the daily lives of all Europeans. No European, no region should be left behind. The EU will support those more impacted by this transition so that everyone's ready to adapt to the new requirements of a climate neutral economy.”

Commissioner for Transport, Violeta Bulc said: “All transport modes should contribute to the decarbonisation of our mobility system. The goal is to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. This requires a system approach with low and zero emission vehicles, strong increase in rail network capacity, and a much more efficient organisation of the transport system, based on digitalisation; incentives for behavioural changes; alternative fuels and smart infrastructure; and global commitments. All this driven by innovation and investments."

Following the invitation by the European Council in March 2018, the Commission's vision for a climate-neutral future covers nearly all EU policies and is in line with the Paris Agreement objective to keep temperature increase to well below 2°C, and pursue efforts to keep it to 1.5°C. For the EU to lead the world towards climate neutrality means achieving it by 2050.

The purpose of this long-term strategy is not to set targets, but to create a vision and sense of direction, plan for it, and inspire as well as enable stakeholders, researchers, entrepreneurs and citizens alike to develop new and innovative industries, businesses and associated jobs. We have a strong mandate from our citizens: according to the latest special Eurobarometer (November 2018) 93% of Europeans believe climate change to be caused by human activity and 85% agree that fighting climate change and using energy more efficiently can create economic growth and jobs in Europe. With the vision we are presenting today, the EU can inform others how we can deliver collectively a clean planet and show that transforming our economy is possible and beneficial.

The long-term strategy looks into the portfolio of options available for Member States, business and citizens, and how these can contribute to the modernisation of our economy and improve the quality of life of Europeans. It seeks to ensure that this transition is socially fair and enhances the competitiveness of EU economy and industry on global markets, securing high quality jobs and sustainable growth in Europe, while also helping address other environmental challenges, such as air
quality or biodiversity loss.

The road to a climate neutral economy would require joint action in seven strategic areas: energy efficiency; deployment of renewables; clean, safe and connected mobility; competitive industry and circular economy; infrastructure and interconnections; bio-economy and natural carbon sinks; carbon capture and storage to address remaining emissions. Pursuing all these strategic priorities would contribute to making our vision a reality.

The next steps:

The European Commission invites the European Council, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee to consider the EU vision for a climate neutral Europe by 2050. In order to prepare EU Heads of State and Government for shaping the Future of Europe at the European Council on 9 May 2019 in Sibiu, ministers in all relevant Council formations should hold extensive policy debates on the contribution of their respective policy areas to the overall vision.

The long-term strategy is an invitation to all EU institutions, the national parliaments, business sector, non-governmental organisations, cities and communities, as well as citizens - and especially the youth, to participate in ensuring the EU can continue to show leadership and hold other international partners to do the same. This EU-wide informed debate should allow the EU to adopt and submit an ambitious strategy by early 2020 to the UNFCCC as requested under the Paris Agreement.

Member States will submit to the European Commission, by the end of 2018, their draft National Climate and Energy Plans, which are central for the achievement of the 2030 climate and energy targets and which should be forward-looking and take into account in the EU long term strategy. In addition, an increasing number of regions, municipalities and business associations are drawing up their own vision for 2050 which will enrich the debate and contribute to defining Europe's answer to the global challenge of climate change.

Internationally, over the coming year the EU should expand its cooperation closely with its international partners, so that all parties to the Paris Agreement develop and submit a long-term national mid-century strategy by 2020 in the light of the recent IPCC Special report on 1.5°Celsius.

Today the high level panel of independent experts on decarbonisation pathways - an advisory body to Commissioner Moedas - has published a report on the role of research and innovation in achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement while putting the EU at a competitive advantage in the decarbonisation race. The report underpins the vision as presented in today's communication.

More information

Questions and Answers: Long term strategy for Clean Planet for All
Factsheet on the Long Term Strategy Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction
Factsheet on the Economic Transition
Factsheet on the Industrial Transition
Factsheet on the Social Transition
Clean Planet for All: long-term strategy on the Europa website, including the text of the Commission's Communication

Special Eurobarometer 479 Future of Europe

Report by the High-Level Panel of the European Decarbonisation Pathways Initiative

www.eeas.europa.eu

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