



European Committee  
of the Regions



# Regions and cities shaping the European Green Deal 2.0





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Green Deal 2.0**





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# 1

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From the beginning of its current term of office (2019-2024), the European Commission has been fully committed to transforming the EU into a clean, resource-efficient and competitive economy, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. This ambition has been translated into the European Green Deal, launched in 2019, and into a variety of EU climate and environmental policies.

The European Green Deal's ultimate objective is to make the EU climate neutral by 2050. It represents an unprecedented effort to integrate systemic sustainability challenges into EU policies. It is forging a path for the EU to successfully implement the transition to a more resilient, more prosperous, strategically independent, environmentally conscious and competitive European economy for the current generations and those to come. However, while the European Green Deal has defined a robust framework with a number of ambitious objectives to guide the EU's sustainability transition, various international crises occurring since its introduction have demonstrated the need for the European Green Deal to be more flexible and more ready to respond to challenges in an evolving context.

Local and regional authorities emerge as pivotal players in this transformative journey, reaping numerous benefits from implementation of the European Green Deal and playing a key role in engaging the public and promoting behavioural changes, all the while increasingly facing climate, environmental and geopolitical risks. With Europe being the fastest-warming continent in the world, climate and environmental crises risk deepening existing inequalities in terms of casualties among populations, damage to critical infrastructure and disruption to agricultural production, industrial clusters, local tourism economies and natural ecosystems.

The report on *Regions and Cities shaping the Green Deal 2.0* has been developed under the leadership of the Green Deal Going Local Working Group, with the active contribution and cooperation of all the CoR commissions. Since 2019, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) – the voice of regions and cities in the EU policymaking process – has issued over 78 opinions/resolutions covering the different subject areas of the European Green Deal. The Green Deal Going Local Working Group has provided a permanent forum for political debate, including a cross-cutting approach to the CoR's work on the green transition. In 2023, the working group and

the ENVE commission of the CoR started a forward-looking debate based on an in-depth analysis of the CoR's Green Deal-related opinions and resolutions and a Regional Hubs Network (RegHub) consultation on the Green Deal 2.0. In addition, the working group has adopted a proactive stance on major global trends and shifts by incorporating strategic foresight into its policy development, with a special strategic foresight session on the Green Deal 2.0, in line with the aims of the EU Better Regulation agenda.

The report presents 29 recommendations, grouped into 5 macro-topics which should be key pillars of the Green Deal 2.0 agenda. A renewed Green Deal 2.0 agenda needs to foster sustainable competitiveness and strategic autonomy, eradicate social inequalities and further exploit the potential of green innovation within planetary boundaries. This new agenda should place regions and cities, and their specific contexts and needs, at its centre. It should ensure that regions and cities have the necessary tools and resources to meet ambitious objectives and are empowered to design and govern their own transition pathways.

## The report calls for a Green Deal 2.0 that:

**1 PROVIDES A STABLE, AMBITIOUS AND INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORK**

**2 GOES BEYOND SILOS**

**3 INCLUDES A THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL APPROACH**

**4 ADDRESSES ALL CRISES TOGETHER**

**5 FOSTERS THE ALIGNMENT OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PRIORITIES.**

# 2

## INTRODUCTION





The European Union (EU) is a global leader in the transition to climate neutrality, putting sustainability at the heart of its future development. This ambition has been translated into a variety of EU climate and environmental policies adopted in recent decades as well as in the European Green Deal launched in 2019. The European Green Deal's ultimate objective is to make the EU climate-neutral by 2050. In line with this objective, it sets a framework for existing and new EU policies on climate action, the green transition and environmental protection.

While the European Green Deal has established a robust framework with a number of ambitious objectives to guide the EU's sustainability transition, various international crises that have occurred since its introduction have shown the need for the European Green Deal to be more flexible and more ready to respond to challenges in an evolving context. At the same time, many regions and cities are taking a leading role in accelerating the green transition (1): several of them across Europe have already been developing and implementing ambitious policies for a few years.

As we approach the next EU term of office (2024-2029), it is time to start reflecting on a European Green Deal 2.0 as a means of further developing and strengthening the EU's sustainability ambitions. Climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are high on the agenda of many EU citizens, as confirmed by the Conference on the Future of Europe. Local and regional authorities (LRAs) are especially important in addressing these concerns as they are the most trusted level of governance by EU citizens (2) and the authorities closest to communities, with the best understanding of their issues, capable of translating headline EU objectives into tangible solutions at a local level.

## THE PROCESS

Regions and cities, though increasingly facing climate, environmental and geopolitical risks, are the primary drivers of change (1). In this spirit, since 2019, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) – the voice of regions and cities in the EU policymaking process – has issued over 78 opinions/resolutions (see section 6) covering the various thematic areas of the European Green Deal. The Green Deal Going Local working group has provided a permanent space for the political debate, including a cross-cutting approach to the CoR's work on the green transition.

Since 2023, the Green Deal Going Local working group and the CoR's ENVE Commission have undertaken a forward-looking reflection based on an in-depth analysis of the CoR's Green Deal-related opinions and resolutions and a Regional Hubs Network (RegHub) consultation on the Green Deal 2.0 (3). In addition, the Green Deal Going Local working group has proactively taken a stance towards major global trends and shifts by incorporating strategic foresight into its policy development, with a dedicated strategic foresight session on the Green Deal 2.0, in line with the ambition of the EU better regulation agenda. This complex work constitutes a solid basis that has given rise to the political indications presented in this report on the future of the European Green Deal.





3

EUROPEAN  
GREEN DEAL:  
A MUCH-NEEDED  
PRIORITY

## 3.1 THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL AT A GLANCE

From the beginning of the current EU term of office (2019-2024), the European Commission has been fully committed to transforming the EU into a clean, resource-efficient and competitive economy, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The European Green Deal was designed as the EU's compass to achieve those goals. It aims to ensure net-zero emissions by 2050, making Europe the first climate-neutral continent in the world.

Since its launch, the European Green Deal has set numerous targets and has been providing tools and measures to establish the right enabling environment, first and foremost aiming to put people at the core of the transition (4). The EU Climate Law is one of the key achievements of the European Green Deal legislative process. It sets binding commitments to reduce emissions by at least 55% by 2030, providing clarity for businesses and investors. With the 'Fit for 55' package the EU has adopted legally binding climate targets covering all key sectors of the economy. The package includes emissions reduction targets, a target to boost natural carbon sinks, and an updated Emissions Trading System (ETS) to cap emissions, put a price on pollution and generate investments in the green transition, and social support for citizens and small businesses. The Green Deal Industrial Plan promotes net-zero technologies and resilience in EU industries through regulatory support and investment. Efforts to restore biodiversity, reduce pollution and promote sustainable practices are underway, including the New European Bauhaus initiative and the Zero Pollution Action Plan.

The European Green Deal has also mobilised a variety of funds and resources. The Just Transition Fund (JTF) allocates EUR 19.7 billion to regions impacted by the clean transition, supporting economic diversification and the reskilling of workers. The Social Climate Fund (SCF) provides dedicated funding to Member States, supporting vulnerable micro-enterprises and aiding households in energy or transport poverty through investments in energy efficiency and clean heating. The EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) assists Member States affected by climate disasters, offering financial support and coordination during emergencies. The Cohesion Policy earmarks EUR 118 billion for climate action, improving infrastructure and water management. The NextGenerationEU and its

Recovery and Resilient Facility, with a total estimated climate expenditure of about 40%, have mobilised resources for reforms and investments aimed at making EU economies greener, digital and more resilient, e.g. State aid rules and Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs) facilitate investments in renewable energy and sustainable technologies. The EU ETS generates revenue that is reinvested in climate action. The Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) ensures fair competition by pricing carbon-intensive imports.

The European Green Deal has set the basis for a systemic transition at regional and local level, generating many initiatives that have helped regions and cities across Europe to start radical transformation processes towards more sustainable, beautiful and liveable places. The Clean Transition Dialogues encourage key sectors to overcome challenges and share insights, ensuring a collaborative approach to achieving climate goals. However, many challenges still remain to ensure clean, secure and affordable energy for Europeans, to adapt to the increasing negative impacts of climate change and to maintain global climate policy leadership.

The European Green Deal regulatory framework has not always sufficiently considered the territorial impacts of its policies<sup>1</sup>. In recent years it has become more and more evident that the green and digital transitions are having asymmetric territorial impacts (5). Moreover, these transitions are taking place alongside major challenges such as Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and changing value chains, which have resulted in additional pressure on regions and cities. In order to make progress in achieving climate neutrality by 2050, the EU needs to significantly increase the pace of change (6). As underlined by the European Parliament (7), there is a need to reduce energy consumption and keep energy affordable as well as to prevent the green transformation from unequally impacting vulnerable people and regions. At the same time, the European Green Deal could potentially add to social and gender inequalities (8) if not addressed properly.

According to the European Green Deal Barometer (9), one of the four major barriers to turning the

1 I.e. the EU Climate Law makes no reference to territorial impact assessments.

European Green Deal into approved legislation, as stated by 73% of respondents, is the 'insufficient commitment by Member State governments'. Effective implementation of the European Green Deal requires multilevel governance and, in particular, the involvement of LRAs, which are responsible for implementing 70% of climate mitigation measures and 90% of climate adaptation policies (10).

The implementation of the European Green Deal also requires a huge amount of investment. Around EUR 520 billion per year is needed from 2021 to 2030; investments to boost the EU's capacity to manufacture net-zero technologies will be worth around EUR 92 billion from 2023 until 2030 (11). Annual average investment in the energy system, including transport, needs to increase in the period 2021-2030 compared to the period 2011-2020, with EUR 312 billion required to achieve 50% GHG emission reductions and around EUR 350 billion to achieve 55% GHG emission reductions (12). Additional

investments will also be needed to deliver on the environmental objectives of the European Green Deal, amounting to EUR 130 billion annually (13).

**LOCAL AND REGIONAL  
AUTHORITIES ARE RESPONSIBLE  
FOR IMPLEMENTING**

**70%**

**OF CLIMATE MITIGATION MEASURES**

**90%**

**OF CLIMATE ADAPTATION POLICIES**

## 3.2 THE ADDED VALUE OF THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

The European Green Deal represents an unprecedented effort to integrate systemic sustainability challenges into EU policies. It is forging a path for the EU to successfully implement the transition towards a more resilient, more prosperous, strategically independent, environmentally conscious and competitive European economy for the current generations and those to come.

**EU ACTION TO ACCELERATE  
THE GREEN TRANSFORMATION  
COULD INCREASE EU GDP**

**€ 440  
billion**

**PER YEAR**

The European Green Deal is designed as a growth strategy aiming to decouple economic expansion from resource exploitation and to provide a framework for achieving climate neutrality by 2050. It represents a significant and necessary shift in policy and has triggered several policy developments with direct benefits not only in terms of mitigating future climate change, but also in terms of cleaner air, green job creation, public health benefits from active travel, and biodiversity enhancement and restoration through the expansion of green areas, among others. EU action to accelerate the green transformation could increase EU GDP by EUR 440 billion per year (equivalent to EUR 980 per citizen per year) and generate other substantial benefits for the EU economy, individuals and the environment (14).

LRAs are emerging as pivotal players in this transformative journey, reaping numerous benefits from implementing the European Green Deal. By embracing the principles of sustainability, innovation and inclusivity, LRAs can harness the full potential of the European Green Deal to create thriving, resilient communities that prioritise both people and the planet. By prioritising investments in renewable

energy, energy efficiency, nature-based solutions and sustainable infrastructure, sustainability policies can foster job creation and stimulate local and regional economies. This influx of green investments represents not only an opportunity to enhance regions' competitiveness but also to ensure long-term prosperity for their residents and accelerate the transition to a new economic model in line with the planetary boundaries.

The essential role of LRAs has been increasingly recognised in the European Green Deal. In the energy sector, cities are called upon to enhance energy efficiency and integrate renewable energy sources, as highlighted by directives like the Energy Efficiency Directive, the Renewable Energy Directive and the European Performance of Buildings Directive among others. These include obligations for public buildings to reduce energy consumption and opportunities to develop infrastructure that is powered, heated and cooled by renewable energy (15). In addition to issuing strategic guidance and legislation, the European Commission and other EU institutions provide considerable funding to support and facilitate the implementation of the EU's green priorities. The European Green Deal offers LRAs a unique opportunity to lead the transition towards a greener, more prosperous future, including making use of various EU-funded initiatives including cooperation platforms, supporting services and organisations which strengthen political representation and assist LRAs in their transition

### 3.3 THE COST OF NO ACTION

The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation have become increasingly evident, with rising sea levels, soaring temperatures and a surge in extreme weather events like floods, droughts, heatwaves, wildfires and storms. These changes are reshaping the socio-economic structures of local and regional communities, resulting in significant, costly and asymmetric impacts on regions and cities which risk getting worse, even under optimistic global warming scenarios, and are affecting living conditions throughout Europe (17).

Significantly, Europe is the fastest-warming continent in the world (17). Climate and environmental crises risk deepening existing inequalities in terms of casualties among populations, damage to critical

journeys (16). These include established initiatives like the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the European Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards, but also more recent initiatives like the Mission on Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities, the Mission on Climate Adaptation, and the Circular Cities and Regions Initiative. These initiatives are complemented by others more oriented towards providing ad hoc support in specific fields such as the Energy Poverty Advisory Hub and the European City Facility, or engaging local communities like the European Climate Pact. By taking part in these initiatives, LRAs share local good practices such as urban greening projects, waste management schemes and sustainable transportation systems, promoting learning and knowledge-sharing to support their efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change while improving people's quality of life.

The European Green Deal has also offered a chance for LRAs to bolster environmental stewardship within their communities. The European Green Deal is meant to empower LRAs to address pressing environmental challenges head-on. By adhering to environmental standards and promoting eco-friendly practices, LRAs can reduce pollution, preserve biodiversity and safeguard natural resources. This proactive approach not only protects the environment for future generations but also takes advantage of ecosystem services and enhances regions' overall resilience to environmental shocks and crises.

infrastructure and the disruption of agricultural production, industrial clusters, local tourism economies and natural ecosystems. Climate change is compromising feed and food security and impacting the spread of infectious diseases (18). From 1980 to 2022, weather- and climate-related extreme events led to economic losses in EU Member States estimated at approximately EUR 650 billion (19). If decisive action is not taken, most climate risks could reach critical levels by the end of this century. Hundreds of thousands of people would die from heatwaves, and economic losses from coastal floods alone could exceed EUR 1 trillion per year (17). Adhering to the World Health Organization's air pollution standards could have potentially prevented

approximately 327 000 deaths annually in the EU<sup>2</sup> (20). To protect its regions from the harmful impacts of climate change, the EU already needs to invest about EUR 40 billion in climate adaptation every year, if the global temperature stays within a 1.5°C increase. This amount would rise to EUR 120 billion or EUR 200 billion per year in order to adapt to a 2°C or 3-4°C temperature increase respectively (21).

## EUROPE IS THE FASTEST-WARMING CONTINENT IN THE WORLD

While significant progress has been made, Europe's policies and adaptation actions are not keeping pace with the rapidly growing risks (17). With the

### 3.4 WHAT LIES AHEAD

By embedding strategic foresight in policy development, the long-term and systemic nature of the Green Deal ambitions are becoming even clearer. *Earth4All* (22), published in 2022, built on the legacies of the Limits to Growth<sup>5</sup> and the Planetary Boundaries<sup>6</sup> frameworks concluded that 'it is possible to be optimistic about our future on Earth. It is possible to transform to wellbeing economies – and improve wellbeing for all on a finite planet'. However, to achieve this transformation, systemic policies with a long-term perspective and urgent actions aimed at reducing future risks are needed.

In the coming years, climate change will be one of the biggest global risks, and it is considered to be the greatest challenge facing Europe (23). The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) calculated that, to limit global warming to 1.5°C,

most vulnerable areas and social groups at risk of being the hardest hit, these alarming trends underscore the urgent need for increased EU action. Such action is essential to ensure a fast and just sustainability transition for the benefit of all, and to prepare our regions, societies and economies for more frequent and severe climate hazards.

Regions and cities are not standing still: more and more, LRAs are championing the green transition, showcasing on the ground its value and benefits. The EU's local and regional governments account for around 58% of climate-significant public expenditure, surpassing their national governments<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, 80% of local governments committed to the Global Covenant of Mayors around the world have set more ambitious targets than their national governments<sup>4</sup>. Following the energy crisis linked to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, regions and cities have been taking brave and immediate steps to reduce their own energy consumption, support people affected by the energy crisis and implement measures to save energy and ensure energy business continuity (1).

global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions need to drop by 43% by 2030 and by 69% by 2040, compared to 2019 levels (24). These reductions seem unrealistic in view of current trends and national climate targets. Worldwide, the production of energy from fossil fuels is expected to be double the amount that would be consistent with limiting global warming to 1.5°C (25). Social backlash against green policies will increasingly represent a challenge for public authorities (26). With the global energy sector strongly influenced by geopolitical aspects, the energy transition could impact the EU's economic competitiveness. Cheaper and more sustainable energy sources could represent a viable solution enabling Europe to achieve its climate goals and preserve its economic competitiveness (26).

2 A total of 253 000 from exposure to PM2.5, 52 000 from exposure to NO<sub>2</sub> and 22 000 from short-term exposure to O<sub>3</sub>.

3 [Subnational Climate-Expenditure Tracking – OECD](#).

4 [Global Covenant of Mayors](#).

5 [The Limits to Growth – Club of Rome](#).

6 [Planetary boundaries – Stockholm Resilience Centre](#).

In order to become sustainable, the coming years and decades require both collective action and profound changes to improve the social and economic aspects influencing people's lives. These range from redefining wellbeing and strengthening democracy and governance to promoting new business models from a sustainability and climate neutrality perspective (27).

According to the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System's (ESPAS) *Global Trends to 2040: Choosing Europe's Future*, the green agenda is at a crossroads, and the new EU leaders will need to

### 3.5 TOWARDS A NEW AGENDA

Human-induced climate change is affecting the planet; globally, 2023 was the warmest year on record, and the average global temperature in the 12-month period between February 2023 and January 2024 exceeded pre-industrial levels by 1.5°C (17). The UNFCCC COP28 has made commendable progress by setting objectives to transition away from fossil fuels and to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030. The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at CBD COP15 has set out an ambitious pathway to guide global action on nature through 2030 and reach the global vision of a world living in harmony with nature by 2050. Regardless of these key achievements, a more comprehensive global transformative agenda is urgently required. In his message<sup>7</sup> for International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2024, UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasised this urgency. 'Humanity is acting like Mother Earth's delinquent child', he said. 'We must act – and act now – to create a better future for us all', he concluded.

**A MORE PROFOUND  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
AGENDA IS  
URGENTLY REQUIRED**

choose the right direction – a decision that will shape the long-term direction of the EU. The majority of sustainability experts (61%) are optimistic that, after the 2024 European elections, the new EU agenda will 'at least be moderately resilient' (9). At the same time, according to the World Economic Forum Global Risks Report 2024 (28), there is a dissonance in perceptions between key decision-makers from the public and private sectors on the timing of when environmental risks will materialise, and this could mean the time to act may soon pass, without sufficient progress being made.

This agenda should build on the lessons learnt from the current Green Deal framework and further respond to the public's concerns, tackling the intertwined challenges of the green, digital, industrial, societal and demographic transitions. It is crucial to enhance support for regions and cities that are at the forefront of protecting their inhabitants and adapting their economies to these challenges. Pioneering examples need to be further upscaled and replicated to become real catalysts for change.

The European Green Deal sets a solid basis for a sustainable, inclusive and prosperous future for Europe. Significant progress has been made with the Fit for 55 package, which has put in place a strong framework for meeting the EU's 2030 climate targets. Yet, the full potential of the European Green Deal remains to be achieved: rapid integration and implementation across all EU Member States is imperative. At the same time, there is growing concern about a funding gap (29) for implementing the European Green Deal in the years to come. The implementation of the European Green Deal requires a significant amount of investment, especially at the local and regional level. Many LRAs in the EU are already struggling to provide the investment needed for the green and digital transitions (30), while at the same time being proactive in accessing innovative financing instruments<sup>8</sup> provided under the umbrella of the European Green Deal.

A renewed Green Deal 2.0 agenda needs to foster sustainable competitiveness and strategic autonomy,

<sup>7</sup> [Secretary-General's message on International Mother Earth Day \[scroll down for French version\] | United Nations Secretary-General.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [EUCF – Details \(eucityfacility.eu\).](#)

eradicate social inequalities and further exploit the potential of green innovation within the planetary boundaries. This new agenda should place regions and cities, and their specific contexts and needs, at its centre. It should ensure that regions and cities have the necessary tools and resources to meet ambitious objectives and are empowered to design and govern their own transition pathways. There should also be a special focus on implementing the Fit for 55 package at regional and local level, while in parallel starting a debate on the 2040 target and policy framework at EU and Member State level.

the transformations taking place at global level (27). This is why getting individuals, businesses and local communities on board with the Green Deal is increasingly important. It is fundamental that the EU better regulation system incorporate multilevel governance into the EU by reviewing interinstitutional agreements, guidelines and toolboxes.

## **IN EUROPE CLIMATE CHANGE IS THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR THE COMING YEARS**

It is vital that the policy base and implementation of the European Green Deal be rooted in evidence of its results and impacts in terms of various benefits for health, quality of life and economic opportunities. At EU level the transition should be built on successful examples and should be driven by what regions and cities are already doing on the ground to further create the enabling conditions for them to step up their efforts and meet the ambitious targets. This would make it possible on the one hand to transform global challenges and agreements into regional and local solutions, as a viable implementation plan, and, on the other hand, to tie regional and local action back into global processes, providing regular on-the-ground feedback loops, thus accelerating the green transition and ensuring its firm grounding in real-world applications, with a strong social dimension leaving no one and no place behind.

The ecological and socio-economic transitions will increasingly need to be addressed together, with technological innovations and behavioural changes more closely tied together. This challenge is difficult to meet because it is systemic in nature and related in complex ways to the prevailing economic, technological and social systems and





# 4

## EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: LOCAL AND REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

## 4.1 EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL FRAMEWORK

The European Green Deal is a comprehensive set of policies aimed at reducing emissions to net zero in the EU by 2050. As a growth strategy with an ambitious goal, it entails solid multilevel governance as well as alignment with budget priorities and a set of cross-cutting aspects.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- The EU has made **progress** towards achieving its **climate neutrality goal** by adopting several policies under the European Green Deal. Nevertheless, the EU needs to significantly **increase the pace of change** in order to make progress in achieving climate neutrality by 2050 (6).
- The **majority of sustainability experts** (61%) are **optimistic** that the new agenda will **'at least be moderately resilient'** after the 2024 European elections (9).
- One of the four **major barriers** to turning the European Green Deal into approved legislation, as stated by **73% of respondents**, is the **'insufficient commitment by Member State governments'** (9).
- The implementation of the European Green Deal requires a huge amount of investment: around **EUR 520 billion per year from 2021 to 2030** (11).
- Effective implementation of the European Green Deal requires **multilevel governance** and, in particular, the involvement of **LRAs**, which are responsible for implementing 70% of climate mitigation measures and 90% of climate adaptation policies (10).
- The European Green Deal could potentially add to **social and gender inequalities** (8).





# 13

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released 13 opinions/resolutions in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on the overall structure and approach of the European Green Deal framework, including its global dimension and its impact on cities and regions, the role of cities and regions in its implementation, and the monitoring aspects.



### LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- **A mismatch between targets and availability of resources** for implementation, with many cities and regions struggling to access EU funds and initiatives.
- **Difficulties in making use of private financial resources** due to regulatory barriers, lack of skills and uncertain regulatory frameworks.
- **A misalignment between subnational and national reporting frameworks**, starting with a mismatch between the national energy and climate plan requirements and the reporting framework of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.
- **A lack of appropriate skills** in cities and regions and the need for support structures such as one-stop shops or similar establishments to ensure that adequate resources are available to local and regional communities.
- **Insufficient mechanisms for multilevel governance** under the European Green Deal and excessive burdens for cities and regions regarding implementation, starting with the current approach to multilevel climate and energy dialogues under the Governance Regulation.
- **The difficulty in understanding specific social or sectoral impacts**, partly due to a **lack of adequate data** and more granular impact assessments.
- **Insufficient links with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and a lack of local and regional data on SDG monitoring to provide Member States with informed recommendations as part of the European Semester.
- **Weak** implementation mechanisms for the **do-no-significant-harm** principle and **insufficient** interconnections between the different areas of the European Green Deal.
- **The lack of a gender perspective** in the European Green Deal.

## 4.2 CLIMATE AMBITION

At the heart of the European Green Deal is the objective to become climate-neutral by 2050. This means that by 2050 the EU will significantly reduce its GHG emissions, while remaining emissions will be captured by technology or in natural carbon sinks, such as forests. The EU Climate Law, one of the first key elements of the European Green Deal, entered into force in July 2021 and made the climate neutrality commitment binding.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- The **climate crisis is unfolding rapidly**, with 2023 being 1.48°C warmer than pre-industrial levels (31). If efforts are not stepped up, **current policies** are likely to lead to **global warming of 2.8°C** over the course of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, causing devastating effects on people, nature and the economy (31) (32).
- The **cost of inaction** towards climate change, i.e. the resulting global damages, are estimated to reach **10-12% of gross domestic product (GDP)** by the end of the century (31).
- The **socio-economic costs of climate inaction vary between regions**, with the highest impacts in southern Europe (31).
- Leveraging synergies between tackling climate change and achieving the SDGs creates valuable **co-benefits**, e.g. related to health and agricultural productivity, which make it possible to **bridge investment gaps worth trillions of dollars** (33).
- Additional investments of **EUR 520 billion per year** are needed to close the **green investment gap** in order to achieve the European Green Deal's climate and environmental targets (34).
- Barriers to climate change investment include a **lack of skills** in environmental and climate assessment (35).
- While the EU claimed to have spent 20% of the 2014-2020 budget on climate mainstreaming, **only 13% was actually spent on climate action** due to improperly recorded expenditure (36).
- The EU's achievement of its 2020 climate and energy targets was partly due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which contributed to the reduction of GHG emissions (37).
- There is a need for a standard on policy coherence for sustainable development to help progress towards a balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and to leave no one behind (38).



# 16

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **16 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on carbon emission accounting and reduction in different fields, climate adaptation and the global framework for climate action.



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- **The co-benefits** between environmental, climate and health protection need to be further recognised and enhanced to promote people's wellbeing. Health impacts should be included in evaluations of climate and environmental policies. At global level, the framework for climate ambition is not properly connected with environmental priorities and the SDGs; **synergies** should be strengthened.
- Challenges and **vulnerabilities across the EU are place-specific**: there is a need for more granular impact assessments. For this, the EU lacks data at an appropriate scale. There are no structures or mechanisms for monitoring the climate transition at subnational scale.
- Climate action has relevant **social impacts** and redistributive effects that need to be mapped out and managed, paying special attention to rural areas and vulnerable groups, including women and young people.
- LRAs need the necessary **skills**, capacities and financial resources to implement climate action: existing tools are not sufficiently accessible and are undersized.
- **Implementation** of climate action needs to be simplified by reducing red tape and making it easier to access dedicated support tools: supporting tools enabling LRAs to overcome specific barriers should be designed. Strategic alliances with institutions, initiatives and platforms working to support local climate action should be further explored.
- LRAs are not included in the planning phase of climate action at national, EU and global level, so **multilevel governance mechanisms should be strengthened**. Stronger representation of LRAs at international climate conferences, e.g. at UNFCCC COPs, is needed.
- **Financing mechanisms** for climate action are undersized and difficult to access. Climate mainstreaming is still weak and the implementation of the do-no-significant-harm principle is inconsistent.



## 4.3 CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

The European Green Deal focuses on three key principles for the clean energy transition to reduce GHG emissions and enhance quality of life: 1) ensuring a secure and affordable EU energy supply, 2) developing a fully integrated, interconnected and digitalised EU energy market, 3) prioritising energy efficiency and improving the energy performance of buildings. In view of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the REPowerEU plan was proposed to end Europe's imports of Russian fossil fuels as quickly as possible, including by drastically accelerating permitting procedures for renewable energy projects.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- The **production and use of energy** accounts for **more than 80%** of the EU's GHG emissions (39).
- The **built environment** is responsible for **5-12% of total national GHG emissions**, resulting from material extraction, manufacturing of construction products, and the construction and renovation of buildings (40).
- Annual investments will need to increase by around **EUR 390 billion** in the coming decade (2021-2030) in order to fulfil the European Green Deal's objectives of **decarbonising the economy** and, in particular, the **energy sector**, including energy-related investments in the **building and transport sectors** (13).
- Although the **national energy and climate plans (NECPs)** submitted by Member States in 2019 show that the **share of renewable energy** could surpass the target of **at least 32% in 2030** (41), **progress** towards meeting the EU's 2030 55% GHG reduction target **remains slow** (42) and implementation efforts need to be stepped up to close the ambition gap identified in the draft updated NECPs (43).
- The number of people affected by **energy poverty** across the EU increased by **10.7 million people** from 2021 to 2022, to a total of 40 million (9.3% of the EU population) (42).
- **Public procurement** makes up approximately 14-15% of the EU's GDP, contributing to about **15% of global GHG emissions**. So far, the EU's public procurement policies – and in particular green public procurement – have been an underutilised tool in the green transition (44).
- The decarbonisation of energy systems in European regions is progressing to varying degrees, requiring different scales of transformation. Accelerating the energy transition can boost **economic cohesion** across European regions (39).
- Many survey respondents indicated that they considered the **quality of multilevel climate and energy dialogues (MCEDs)** in their countries to be **unsatisfactory** (45).





# 12

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **12 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on new strategies for a cleaner and more integrated energy system, including new renewable sources, the revision of existing directives with a view to adapting them to the goal of climate neutrality, and the regulatory revision to oversee the energy market and mitigate the energy crisis.



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- The lack of **recognition of the local dimension of the transition to renewable energy** and the need to better monitor the asymmetric impacts of energy crises, paying specific attention to outermost regions, islands and rural areas.
- **An unstable legislative framework** in the field of renewable energy, hindering local energy-sharing initiatives and long-term investment.
- Insufficient **decentralisation and digitalisation**.
- A lack of systematic application of the **do-no-significant-harm principle** in the deployment of renewable energies, with possible negative impacts on other domains of the European Green Deal and the need to further connect energy-related policies with climate adaptation.
- **Insufficient application of MCEDs** in many Member States, resulting in a top-down approach in NECPs.
- The lack of a systematic approach and a regulatory framework **to transform the energy market in order to better tackle the needs of EU citizens** in line with SDG 7 (access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy for all).
- The need to further promote and encourage **behavioural changes**, which are a key component of the energy transition.
- Insufficient recognition of the relevance of **cross-border cooperation** for a successful energy transition.
- An insufficient framework for combating **energy poverty and promoting energy prosumers**; 30 million people in the EU live in energy poverty.
- Insufficient support for innovation in the energy transition, starting with hydrogen.
- Insufficient links with spatial planning.
- Insufficient use of **green and circular public procurement** to promote the energy transition.
- The need for a thorough assessment of the **impact of introducing carbon pricing** in the building sector.

## 4.4 CIRCULAR AND GREEN ECONOMY

The European Green Deal includes a clear ambition to transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy to reduce pressure on natural resources and create sustainable growth. This ambition requires a radical transformation of the EU and new employment opportunities. The circular economy presents an opportunity to achieve the EU's 2050 climate neutrality target and to halt biodiversity loss. The European Green Deal, and in particular the Circular Economy Action Plan, has put measures in place to enable the shift to a circular economy, which means shifting from current 'linear' production models and consumption patterns.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- In 2021, the domestic material consumption of the EU economy was **14.1 tonnes per capita**, which is **40-70% above** the estimated **sustainable level** required to stay within planetary boundaries (46).
- With a **circularity rate of 11.5% in 2022**, Europe consumes a higher proportion of recycled materials than other world regions, although improvement has been limited in recent years (47).
- Annual investment will need to increase by around **EUR 35 billion** in the coming decade (2021-2030) in order to fulfil the European Green Deal objectives on the **circular economy** and **resource efficiency** (13).
- The construction sector has a large environmental impact, accounting for about 50% of all extracted material, 35% of the EU's total waste generation, and **5-12% of total national GHG emissions** resulting from material extraction, manufacturing of construction products, and the construction and renovation of buildings (40).
- **Public procurement**, contributing to about **15% of global GHG emissions**, has so far been an underutilised tool and a key element in transforming Europe's production and consumption model into one based on a circular economy approach (44).
- In **cities, consumption is often higher** than the production of goods. Setting up **local loops** and increasing **self-sufficiency** is therefore key to ensuring sustainable and resilient economies (48).
- **LRAs** play a crucial role in **fostering innovation** and experimenting with innovative production and consumption approaches. They also have the potential to operate faster than national governments, especially if they are connected through **city networks** (48).



# 8

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **8 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on the role of cities and regions in implementing the circular economy and on the local and regional perspective in the implementation of the circular economy in specific economic sectors.



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- **A lack of investment** in new infrastructure and in technical tools to ensure long-term economic, social and environmental progress while reducing resource use.
- The need to **improve multilevel governance and cooperation** between all levels of governance and society, reinforcing the place-based dimension of industrial ecosystems and creating clusters.
- The need for a clear **system for monitoring and evaluating industry strategies**, based on a **clear set of criteria** for using recycled material in new products and proposing targets for waste generation and prevention.
- A lack of **support for SMEs** in helping them devise strategies or action plans for achieving circularity, carbon neutrality and digitalisation and increasing competitiveness.
- The need to **align repair and reuse practices** with climate goals, ensuring that repair and refurbishment are supported and contribute to reducing GHG emissions and mitigating the environmental impact of discarded products. The need for further support for regional and local governments in encouraging the development of the not-for-profit and voluntary sectors as important service providers for implementing the right to repair.
- The need for **harmonised rules for providing information to consumers**, including repair scores and information on estimated lifespans, spare parts, repair services and on when software updates are available (for goods with digital components). **Measures and guidance are needed** to make it easier for SMEs to be able to substantiate their green claims.
- A lack of **alternative EU supply chains** to ensure the resilience of society and the economy.
- Insufficient use of **circular public procurement** and insufficient reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> along product life cycles.
- The need for **better links between advanced-technology industries using semi-conductors and critical materials with sustainability and the Green Deal**, with these industries being key to implementing the Green Deal. The necessary conversion needs to be more circular for these industries, with existing regional ecosystems having a key role to play, with their SMEs, universities and large companies.



## 4.5 SUSTAINABLE AND SMART MOBILITY

Transport emissions represent a significant share of the EU's total GHG emissions, and urban mobility has been singled out as a key focus area for the European Green Deal in its goal to make Europe climate-neutral by 2050. For that purpose, the European Commission published the European Urban Mobility Framework in 2021, proposing measures and initiatives for cities to meet the challenge of making their mobility systems more sustainable.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- **Transport** is responsible for almost **a quarter** of Europe's **GHG emissions** and has many negative impacts on the environment and human health, causing air pollution, noise pollution and habitat fragmentation (49).
- GHG emissions from **road transportation** steadily increased from 1990 to 2019, representing the largest share of emissions from transport, with **72%** in 2019 (49).
- **Current policy measures are not sufficient** to reach the EU's 2050 climate neutrality target. Carbon dioxide emissions are projected to **decrease by 35% by 2050** (compared with 1990), mainly due to vehicle efficiency gains and a shift to electric vehicles (49).
- 'The **pace of GHG emission reductions** in the EU transport sector needs to **at least double** to align with the EU's climate objectives.' (50).
- Previous reductions in GHG emissions from transportation are mainly attributed to **vehicle efficiency gains**, but these have been **offset by increased overall demand for transport** as well as the shift towards a heavier passenger fleet (50).
- The significant decrease in GHG emissions in 2020 (down 20%) can be attributed to measures taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic, and emissions have largely rebounded since then (down 4% in 2022 compared to 2019) (50).
- **Reducing the demand** for emission-intensive transport, a low-emission and **efficient transport fleet** and suitable **transport infrastructure** are key to achieving a 90% reduction in transport-related GHG emissions by 2050 (50).
- **LRAs** play a key role in the transition to a sustainable and smart mobility system, as they are responsible for allocating and redesigning public space in cities, allowing for **more sustainable distribution of transportation modes** as well as building and managing the **grid infrastructure** (49) (51).





# 5

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **5 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on the decarbonisation of transport, especially road transport, sustainable urban mobility and public transport and on sustainable transport infrastructure and networks.



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- The need for stronger support for the transport decarbonisation process, especially individual motorised road transport, **through just transition measures**, targeting mobility industrial ecosystems in the regions, workers and their jobs, and the overall cost of mobility in order to **avoid and combat mobility poverty**. This also means defining mobility poverty and addressing it as a key element for territorial cohesion.
- The need to **improve the transport network**, connecting people across borders and thereby improving territorial and social cohesion. This requires additional financial allocation to TEN-T through the Connecting Europe Facility; special attention should be paid to rural areas, remote mountainous areas, sparsely populated areas, peripheral regions, islands and outermost regions.
- The need to **support the regional transition of the automotive industry** to avoid disruptive impacts on the regions, especially the supply sector and the aftersales sector, which are the backbone of regional economies. This requires a territorial impact assessment and mapping exercise to identify the challenges, devise a strategy and monitor the transition of the automotive industry at regional level. There is a need for a **European mechanism for a just transition of the automotive regions** setting out policy but above all budgetary measures to help regional automotive ecosystems to manage this fundamental transformation, mainly targeting regional SMEs.
- The need to **further consult and involve LRAs in the discussion on the future of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs)** while using these plans to promote public and active mobility, including through revised SUMP guidance documents.
- The need to **support cities and regions in developing sustainable urban mobility, with public mobility** and active forms of mobility as their backbone. This requires **systematic data collection** on mobility in urban areas to design more tailored measures, and a more flexible approach to SUMPs, in order to facilitate their integration into other, existing local plans.
- The need to systematically **roll out a network of charging and refuelling infrastructure** to enable alternative fuel systems to be accessible to everyone, even in rural and sparsely populated areas.
- The need to further **exploit the potential for public transport to promote sustainable mobility** while, at the same time, contributing to reducing pollution. There is a need to further promote and replicate best practices on the attractiveness, quality and affordability of public transport.

## 4.6 SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

The link between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet puts sustainable food systems at the heart of the European Green Deal. The Farm to Fork Strategy is a central part of the European Green Deal, aiming to make food supply systems fair and healthy, and safeguard EU food security and affordability, while rewarding farmers for providing environmental and climate-friendly services. Despite being provided for in the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Sustainable Food System Law, which was intended to facilitate the transition towards sustainable food systems, while contributing to EU environmental, health and climate goals, was not passed.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- The **intensification of agriculture** has resulted in **unsustainable food systems** in the EU, putting pressure on healthy and productive soils – the resource by which it is sustained (52).
- Emissions from agriculture in the EU have remained largely unchanged since 2005, currently accounting for around **11% of total GHG emissions** (50).
- Agriculture also **drives biodiversity loss, pollutes land and water, harms health** and fails to ensure economic returns and livelihoods in all sectors (53).
- Further action is **needed to reduce GHG emissions** in the agricultural sector, since current projections predict a decline of 8% in non-CO2 GHG emissions by 2030 compared to 2005 levels if currently planned additional measures are implemented (54).
- There is an urgent need to **rethink our agricultural and food systems** to make them sustainable and resilient for future crises (52).
- The **lack of suitable financial incentives** for farmers is one of the main obstacles to a faster transition to sustainability in agriculture (50).
- The **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** should be **better aligned with EU climate goals** and provide **stronger incentives for climate action**. For instance, by shifting support for emission-intensive agricultural practices towards lower-emitting products and activities, or by introducing a price on emissions (50).



# 5

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **5 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on the Farm to Fork initiative, organic farming and sustainable food systems.



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- **LRAs are not properly involved in the implementation and evaluation of food-related policies**, action plans and strategies.
- Not enough attention being paid to **short supply chains**, a lack of recognition of the diversity of production systems across Europe and a **lack of support in promoting the consumption and production of organic products** with a view to driving food system change.
- **Constraints in public procurement** rules to applying sustainability criteria and a **lack of concrete targets for the procurement of healthy, nutritionally balanced, seasonal, local and organic food** in public catering, as part of sustainable public procurement strategies supporting the implementation of the SDGs.
- The lack of a **comprehensive framework for sustainable food systems** in the EU to make sustainability central to all food-related policies while ensuring better policy coherence and horizontal coordination. This also requires clarifying responsibilities for all food-system actors by setting up multilevel cooperation.
- The need for a **systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the implementation of organic farming action plans**, as well as a multi-stakeholder platform on sustainable food systems.
- The need for a **long-term strategy to ensure basic food security** at regional level, as well as food security contingency plans with funding projects.
- The need to **adapt CAP plans to the European Green Deal objectives**, with 15% of the CAP expenditure dedicated to organic farming and a bonus-malus introduced as part of the eco-schemes.
- A lack of adequate **recognition of regional and local diversity of food production** as a key element for enhancing the EU's food sovereignty and increasing autonomy.
- **Insufficient budgetary support** from the EU for reducing the impact of food systems on the climate, the environment and biodiversity and the need to **ban the import of foodstuffs treated with pesticides not authorised in Europe**, the export of unauthorised pesticides and the sale and use of chemical plant protection products by non-commercial customers.



## 4.7 BIODIVERSITY

The European Green Deal includes a strong focus on restoring biodiversity, addressing pollution and making good use of resources as key components of the EU's transition to climate neutrality. The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 provides a comprehensive, ambitious, long-term plan for protecting nature and reversing the degradation of ecosystems.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- Nature – including biodiversity and ecosystems – and nature's contribution to people are fundamental for ensuring human existence and wellbeing (55).
- In the period 2013 to 2018, **81% of EU habitats** had a **poor or bad conservation status**, and only a quarter of species had a good conservation status (56).
- The **decline in biodiversity** across the EU is mainly due to **changes in land and sea use**, overexploitation and unsustainable management practices, as well as pollution, invasive alien species and climate change (56).
- Greater **implementation** is needed to achieve the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, including improved monitoring capacities in the Member States, the development of new indicators, and sufficient human and financial capacities (56).
- Annual investment will need to increase by around **EUR 7 billion** in the coming decade (2021-2030) in order to fulfil the European Green Deal objectives regarding the **protection of biodiversity and ecosystems** (13).
- **Action to achieve synergies** between climate and sustainable development goals needs to be accelerated in national commitments, reporting and financing in order to achieve a cost-effective, just and equitable transition that bridges investment gaps (33).





# 7

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **7 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on protection of biodiversity, nature conservation and restoration, including pollinators, sustainable forest management, protection of the marine environment and the UN framework on biodiversity: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- **A lack of policy coherence and coordination in EU legislation and strategies**, including the EU's trade relations and international commitments (especially the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction).
- The need to set **ambitious, clear and binding targets**, as well as science-based policies, and to take urgent action on the drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, fostering a long-term approach to biodiversity mainstreaming.
- **The lack of proper recognition of the role of LRAs** at each and every level of the biodiversity governance process for all ecosystems, at both EU and global level.
- **Not enough guidance or knowledge-sharing**, or technical, scientific or financial support, especially for implementing nature conservation and restoration projects and nature-based solutions, protecting pollinators and increasing urban green areas.
- **The need for guidance and sufficient logistical, scientific and financial support** for implementing climate mitigation and adaptation activities, as well as conservation measures, especially for managing Natura 2000 sites and developing urban greening plans.
- **Insufficient monitoring and oversight provided** under the current EU Marine Protected Areas, which is alarming and was already criticised in the Court of Auditors report in 2020.
- **A lack of documented quality data for** improving fisheries management and strengthening the ecosystem approach to fisheries management.
- Insufficient **dialogue with forest stakeholders**, LRAs, Member States and the Commission.
- Insufficient **funding instruments to support sustainable forest management**.

## 4.8 ZERO POLLUTION

Pollution harms our health and our environment. It is the biggest environmental cause of multiple mental and physical diseases and of premature deaths, especially among children, people with certain medical conditions and older people. With the Zero Pollution Action Plan, the European Green Deal has also been helping reduce pollution. The plan resulted in proposals for modernised standards on water quality, air quality, industrial emissions and chemicals, which also include more transparency and clearer financing, so pollution costs fall less on the taxpayer.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- **Air pollution** is the largest **environmental health risk** in Europe. Each year around **300 000 people** in Europe **die prematurely** due to air pollution (57).
- In 2021, **97% of the EU's urban population** was exposed to concentrations of **fine particulate matter (PM2.5) above the latest guidelines** of the World Health Organization. Exposure to other pollutants is also above recommended levels (58).
- Air pollution also has negative impacts on the planet's **ecosystems and vegetation**, and thus on our **economy**. In 2019, EUR 1 billion wheat yields were lost due to ground-level ozone, and in 2020, 75% of the EU's ecosystems were exposed to levels of nitrogen that can lead to eutrophication (58).
- While air pollution has significantly reduced in recent decades, air quality varies a lot across European cities (58).
- **Energy consumption** and **agriculture** are the biggest sources of air pollution in Europe (58).
- To significantly reduce PM2.5 in our air, measures must be taken to tackle a number of different air pollutants across a range of sectors and activities, including **domestic heating and agriculture**, but also **transport, power generation** and **industry** (58).
- To reach the Zero Pollution Action Plan target for 2030 and reduce the number of premature deaths due to fine particulate matter by 55%, the current rate of decline (down 45% in 2020 compared to 2005) has to be maintained (57).
- Nevertheless, further efforts will be needed to achieve the 2050 zero pollution vision of reducing air pollution to levels no longer considered harmful to health (57).
- Annual investments will need to increase by around **EUR 46 billion** in the coming decade (2021-2030) in order to fulfil the European Green Deal objectives regarding **pollution prevention and control** (13).



# 8

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **8 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on air, water and soil pollution and on the safe and sustainable use of chemicals.



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- **A lack of effective multilevel governance** and of a cross-border approach in tackling pollution, respecting the role of each stakeholder.
- The **unacceptable impact of air pollution** in terms of premature deaths, illnesses, economic impacts and contribution to climate change.
- A general **lack of specifically targeted EU funding for air quality**.
- **One-size-fits-all approaches** to addressing pollution, which could lead to **disproportionate costs** in relation to the environmental benefits achieved, particularly in urban wastewater.
- **Legal, financial and technical barriers** faced by LRAs in the handling of chemicals and microplastics.
- Insufficient recognition of the **importance of the environmental aspects of fisheries and aquaculture**.
- **Insufficient consistency in EU legislation addressing pollution**, especially in the field of water.
- **Insufficient understanding and recognition of the importance of soils** for preserving healthy environments and biodiversity, reversing climate change and ensuring resilient, high-quality and affordable food supply chains.
- The need to further **empower LRAs in regard to land use planning** and development when addressing soil degradation.



## 4.9 JUST GREEN DEAL

It is a core ambition of the European Green Deal to not leave anybody behind in the clean transition. To support the regions that are most affected by the socio-economic impact of the clean transition, the European Green Deal includes the Just Transition Fund to direct investment into these regions, diversify economic activities towards cleaner industries and reskill workers for new sources of employment. The Social Climate Fund will provide Member States with dedicated funding, including via our carbon pricing mechanism, to support vulnerable groups such as households in energy or transport poverty.

### KEY FACTS & FIGURES

- While the **gender pay gap** in the EU decreased only minimally over the last decade to **12.7% in 2021**, the **gender overall earnings gap** increased to **36.2% in 2018** (59).
- There are **considerable differences** in the gender pay gap between EU countries (60).
- The **gender employment gap** was **10.7% in 2022**, with 69.3% of women across the EU being employed compared to 80% of men (60).
- As a result of the gender pay and pension gaps, **women** in the EU in 2021 were at a **higher risk of poverty and exclusion** than men (59).
- **Gender-based violence** is still pervasive across the EU and is deeply rooted in **social inequalities** and **unequal power relations** between men and women (59).
- **Climate change affects women and men differently**. Moreover, women and men contribute differently to its causes and have different opportunities to deal with its consequences (8).
- The **richest 10%** of the EU's population are responsible for **as many emissions as the poorest half of the population**, who have the lowest carbon footprint (8).
- Women and men **do not experience and benefit equally and fairly** from the EU transport system due to diverse travel patterns and modes of transportation (8).
- **EU energy policies** largely **do not include a gender perspective**, and NECPs address gender inequalities only partially and superficially (8).
- The **inclusion of women through infrastructure** should aim to **strengthen coordination across sectors and levels of government** to ensure a whole-of-government approach to gender-sensitive investments (61).
- Due to a **significant lack of data and gender statistics**, the assessment and monitoring of gender-related impacts of the green transition is constrained (8).
- **Additional policy instruments** are needed to tackle **social justice** issues and support vulnerable households and communities in the transition to sustainable consumption patterns, while ensuring transparency and democratic accountability (62).





# 9

## OPINIONS/ RESOLUTIONS

The CoR released **9 opinions/resolutions** in this field between December 2019 and December 2023, mainly focusing on: new skills for the green transition, including existing and new value chains, links between the green and digital transitions, social impacts and mitigating measures, gender equality and the Green Deal, the diversification of existing and the creation of new economic activities, and the sustainability of the green transition in specific regions (coal regions, automotive regions, etc.).



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES' BARRIERS TO TRANSITION

- The need for place-based transformation strategies to manage the digital and green transitions, respecting **regional differences** and avoiding a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.
- The need to **support capacity-building in individuals, businesses and the public sector.**
- A lack of **coherence and convergence in policies** at all levels that would allow mutual recognition (capacity to operate across borders) and make the social economy model visible.
- The need for **modern and effective social economy policies** and legal frameworks, including adequate public and private funding, tailored to the needs of the social economy, especially with a view to developing cross-border cooperation and internationalisation.
- The need for **adequate, targeted financing to increase the prosperity associated with social entrepreneurship.**
- The need to **simplify procedures** to reduce the burden on the already stretched administrative capacity of LRAs.
- **A lack of awareness of the links between gender, climate change and environmental challenges** and a lack of recognition of the capacities and contribution of women and girls to the environment, society and the economy.
- The need to **further explore digital solutions and digital cohesion**, especially to ensure the convergence of social, economic and green policies.
- A lack of **territorial impact assessments on the legal proposal to phase out fossil fuel-powered passenger cars** and light commercial vehicles as of 2035 and its impact on regional automotive ecosystems.
- **The need for strong governmental support at all levels through a multilevel approach**, including dedicated funding streams, ensuring communities and workers are fully on board.





# 5

## EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: GREEN DEAL 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

## A STABLE, AMBITIOUS AND INCLUSIVE FRAMEWORK

- 1 Regions and cities need a Green Deal 2.0 as a **long-term framework** going beyond one single term, to create a stable European strategy for **ensuring thriving economies and well-being within the planetary boundaries** in line with the objective of climate neutrality and zero pollution by 2050.
- 2 The Green Deal 2.0 must maintain the **level of ambition required by science**<sup>9</sup>, with the climate neutrality target by 2050 as a compass and citizens wellbeing at its heart. It should support the green and digital transitions and the EU's sustainable competitiveness, contribute to job creation and provide resource-efficient solutions to the triple planetary crisis<sup>10</sup>, leveraging on innovation and fostering social and economic cohesion.
- 3 The Green Deal 2.0 must strengthen the current European Green Deal with territorial impact assessments, at least at regional level, to guarantee a **just green and digital transition in all the EU's economies, leaving no one and no place behind**. Effective monitoring of the progress made would provide evidence of progress in implementation and of the obstacles faced by areas lagging behind: monitoring should include a focus on asymmetric territorial impacts, seeking synergies with existing monitoring systems and reducing reporting burdens on local and regional authorities: this requires strong support to local and regional authorities for a systematic collection of relevant data at subnational level.
- 4 The Green Deal 2.0 needs to ensure inclusive social cohesion across the EU by providing targeted support to local and regional authorities with a view to boosting their energy security and resilience and in order to ensure workforce upskilling and reskilling, access to **clean energy, healthy and sustainable food, and affordable housing for all societal groups** based on a social scoreboard associated with its environmental counterpart within the European Semester and an improved European Pillar of Social Rights.
- 5 The Green Deal 2.0 framework should allow flexibility to ensure a wider uptake across Europe's diverse regions. At the same time, it must **harness the creative potential of regions and cities**, including rural areas, without which there can be no long-term sustainable development in the EU. It must also engage citizens, provide training-on-the-job placements into local green projects and empower youth, also leveraging on education and programmes such as the Erasmus+, in order to create locally rooted, sustainable and long-term solutions as well as inspire positive behavioural changes in terms of consumption and mobility patterns that will make the Green Deal a success.
- 6 The Green Deal 2.0 needs to better embed a gender-sensitive approach to respond to the needs and capacities of all citizens and systematically **include gender mainstreaming** into all Green Deal-related policies for a real inclusive transition at all levels of economy and society.
- 7 The Green Deal 2.0 needs to create a new narrative oriented towards the active and structural inclusion and representation of the **voices of young people into conversations on the green transition**. It should ensure that European youth are equipped with the skills and knowledge to actively contribute and shape the changing socio-economic systems in their own cities and regions.

9 [IPCC, 2023: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \[Core Writing Team, H. Lee and J. Romero \(eds.\)\]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, pp. 1-34, doi: 10.59327/IPCC/AR6-9789291691647.001](#)

10 [What is the Triple Planetary Crisis? | UNFCCC](#)

## BEYOND SILOS

- 8 The Green Deal 2.0 needs to be better connected to **all dimensions of sustainability** to fully contribute to and be aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), harnessing the co-benefits of achieving environmental, economic and social goals, building on the existing best practices on SDGs localisation<sup>11</sup> and minimizing possible trade-offs.

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- 9 The Green Deal 2.0 must include concrete policies and **supporting instruments to enable the development and transition of local and regional economies**, reduce disparities across EU cities and regions and promote the creation of regional innovation ecosystems<sup>12</sup> supported in synergy by public-private partnerships and diverse EU funding streams in order to stimulate green innovation, social inclusion and thriving economies.

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- 10 The Green Deal 2.0 should champion better **coordination of EU funds and instruments for the green and digital transitions**. It should address the administrative complexity of its implementation by reinforcing efforts for better regulation and simplification, promoting a place-based approach and facilitating access for the regions and cities that need these funds the most, not only individually, but also – and especially – with a combination of different funds and instruments.

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- 11 The Green Deal 2.0 must be equipped with a **scoreboard including socio-ecological and wellbeing indicators** in existing monitoring systems and reflecting a more holistic approach beyond the GDP as the sole indicator for assessing the divide across EU regions and cities.

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- 12 The Green Deal 2.0 should adopt a pragmatic approach to **guiding industrial transformations** that covers the whole supply and value chain, while respecting the principle of technological neutrality. Such an approach should be translated into concrete support and financial mechanisms for large companies and SMEs alike, leveraging the EU's innovation capacities, and ensuring a just transition as well as economic diversification in the spirit of regional specialisation to provide business solutions for the green and digital transitions and help regions to maintain their attractiveness.

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- 13 The Green Deal 2.0 should promote the use of **spatial planning** instruments and processes at all scales in order to **ensure sustainable land use, promote a wise use of resources, enhance territorial resilience, improve networks and infrastructures**, systematically taking into account the possible co-benefits and externalities in terms of social acceptance, environmental impacts and economic consequence. At urban level, planning will be crucial to promote sustainable urban mobility and resource-efficient built environment.

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## THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

- 14 The Green Deal 2.0 must help strengthen the **leading role that the European Union is playing in the global transition**. It must act as an engine for a “**Global Green Deal**”, built around the commitment and participation of all levels of governance, with greater recognition of the importance of local and regional authorities in the UN climate, SDG and biodiversity commitments.

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- 15 The Green Deal 2.0 must **strengthen multi-level governance mechanisms**, facilitating co-planning processes with subnational authorities, making use of place-based solutions and boosting the roll-out of integrated sustainability policies via the creation of **Green Deal one-stop shops** at the regional and local level with a cross-silo approach.

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11 [OECD Toolkit for A Territorial Approach to the SDGs](#)

12 <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pri>

- 16 The Green Deal 2.0 must more strongly support local and regional authorities in **anticipating, preparing for and responding immediately to environmental risks and the negative and asymmetric impacts of climate change**, filling the current climate adaptation financing gap, providing with quantitative targets for adapting urban environments and monitoring progress, and setting bold and crisis-proof mechanisms to foster the resilience and preparedness of their local areas.
- 
- 17 The Green Deal 2.0 must act as an acceleration strategy for regions and cities beyond the EU, with strengthened ad-hoc support instruments<sup>13</sup> for **advancing climate, energy and environmental actions at the local and regional level in candidate and potential candidates countries** in view of any future EU enlargement.
- 
- 20 The Green Deal 2.0 must promote more ambitious policy efforts to support regions and cities in **sustainable food system transformations**, strengthening the urban-rural nexus, including via local and regional food belts, urban high-tech agricultural production, and leveraging innovative procurement schemes that promote sustainable and healthy diets for all in line with agroecology, food sovereignty and security principles that respect the rights and well-being of both producers and consumers.
- 
- 21 The Green Deal 2.0 must support **the transition to sustainable agriculture, with adequate investment in sustainable farming practices** also leveraging on innovation to eliminate negative effects on natural environments and climate change, while at the same time protecting biodiversity and boosting a sustainable EU-based production that ensures the sustainable competitiveness of farmers and agribusinesses and revitalises rural communities.
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## ADDRESSING ALL CRISES TOGETHER

- 18 The Green Deal 2.0 must reiterate the centrality of nature restoration and the need to achieve zero pollution including a comprehensive political response to enable regions and cities to urgently **tackle biodiversity loss, restore degraded ecosystems and achieve zero pollution** while building public ownership and raising public awareness.
- 
- 19 The Green Deal 2.0 must further empower local and regional authorities to **produce, consume and store their own renewable energy**, including via local energy communities, and removing legislative, administrative and infrastructural barriers heavily hampering the mainstreaming of them, with the goal of eradicating energy and transport poverty and promoting the concept of energy efficiency first, energy sufficiency and increased energy resilience.
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- 22 The Green Deal 2.0 must **embed a One Health<sup>14</sup> approach** acknowledging the interconnectedness between human, environmental and animal health and ensuring regions and cities can develop holistic solutions to confront evolving climate conditions, foster resilience and champion sustainable initiatives that address citizens and environment health challenges arising from climate change<sup>15</sup>, environmental degradation and unsustainable practices.
- 
- 23 The Green Deal 2.0 must support regions and cities in moving from an extractive and linear production system to a **regenerative and circular model**, paving the way for alternative supply chains to reduce emissions along product life cycles and ensure a resilient European society and competitive economy.
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13 Among others, building on the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy East Home - [Covenant of Mayors East information portal \(com-east.eu\)](https://com-east.eu) and similar existing initiatives

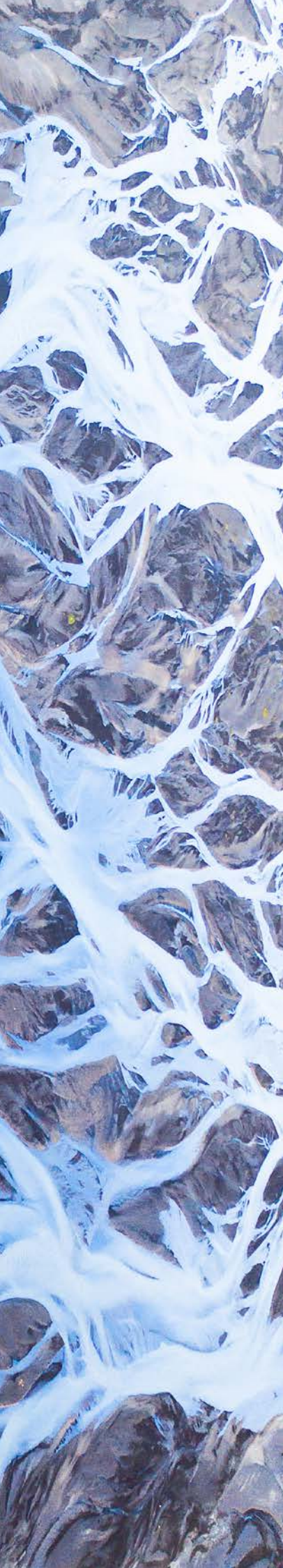
14 [One Health \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/one-health)

15 <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/en/observatory>

## ALIGN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL PRIORITIES

- 24 The Green Deal 2.0 must be accompanied by a **strong financial package of grants and loans** as part of the next multiannual financial framework whereby the place-based approach through shared management is strengthened and more direct financial opportunities are provided for cities and regions.
- 
- 25 The EU budget must take into account the foreseen investment gap for the green transition once the Recovery and Resilience Facility ends and align the priorities and allocations of the next **multiannual financial framework with the Green Deal 2.0** ambitions, objectives and targets. This alignment must be coupled with a significant increase in funding, capacity building and technical assistance as well as a simplification of procedures, enabling local and regional authorities to boost their implementation capacity, taking into account the principles underpinning a just and sustainable transition, starting from sound implementation of the “do no significant harm” principle and through effective climate-proofing mechanisms. The use of public funds should also be accompanied by effective mechanisms for further mobilising private capitals.
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- 26 The Green Deal 2.0 must address the existing European Green Deal investment gap. A reformed Cohesion Policy including a strong Just Transition focus is needed, as well as an end to the ongoing fragmentation of funding instruments. **EU Cohesion Policy must continue support climate-related spending with increased and accelerated investments** in climate adaptation, biodiversity and resilience, while ensuring that the Treaty objective of economic, social and territorial cohesion is pursued.
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- 27 In line with its place-based approach, a **Green Deal 2.0-proof Cohesion Policy** must also take into account the **different vulnerabilities and needs across EU regions and cities emerging from climate, geopolitical and environmental risks**, as well as the contexts conditions to accelerate investments in clear energy solutions and fully benefit from economic opportunities linked to the clean energy transition. In parallel, the Green Deal 2.0 must include a “do no harm to cohesion” principle to ensure nowhere and no one is left behind.
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- 28 The benefits of Cohesion Policy must be measured by combining both qualitative and quantitative indicators and going beyond GDP, in line with the Green Deal 2.0, taking into account regions and cities in development traps. The design and the implementation of **Cohesion Policy-related funds must include resilience and vulnerability criteria.**
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- 29 The Green Deal 2.0 needs to be further supported by a mission-oriented approach, which should be focused on **creating clear investments pipelines for implementing projects**, helping address societal and economic challenges through specific and time-bound targets, streamlining investment priorities and strengthening the involvement of local and regional communities.
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# 6

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# 7

## ANNEX: COR OPINIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ON THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL FRAMEWORK

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
European Green Deal communication	Communication	2019	<a href="#">Resolution “The Green Deal in partnership with local and regional authorities”</a>
NA		2020	<a href="#">The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal</a>
NA		2020	<a href="#">Resolution on The European Committee of the Regions’ priorities for 2020-2025 - Europe closer to the people through its villages, cities and regions</a>
<a href="#">on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030</a>	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council	2020	<a href="#">8<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme</a>
NA		2021	<a href="#">Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030</a>
<a href="#">Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. A new Agenda for the Mediterranean</a>	Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood A new Agenda for the Mediterranean</a>
NA		2022	<a href="#">The implementation of green budgets at local and regional levels</a>
NA		2022	<a href="#">Ecological transition - What balance between social acceptability and environmental imperatives from the point of view of cities and regions</a>
Communication on European Missions	Communication	2022	<a href="#">European Missions</a>
NA		2023	<a href="#">Progress in the implementation of SDGs</a>

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
NA		2023	<a href="#">Fostering the potential and synergies of EU Green Deal initiatives for regions and cities</a>
NA		2023	<a href="#">Resolution on SDGs in EU regions and cities following the EU Voluntary Review and 2023 UN discussions</a>
NA		2023	<a href="#">Towards a multilevel Green Deal governance: the revision of the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action regulation</a>

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# CLIMATE AMBITION

Key Policy documents from EU institutions	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy</a> <sup>16</sup>
<a href="#">Establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 (“European Climate Law”)</a>	Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council	2020	<a href="#">European Climate Law: establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality</a>
<a href="#">European Climate Pact</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">The European Climate Pact</a>
NA		2020	<a href="#">Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities: which framework conditions are required for this?</a>
Preparations for the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meetings (Glasgow, 31 October - 12 November 2021)	Council Conclusions	2021	<a href="#">Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition towards COP26</a>
<a href="#">Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change</a>

<sup>16</sup> Also covering the topic Sustainable and Smart Mobility

Key Policy documents from EU institutions	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">Restructuring the Union framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (recast)</a>	Proposal for a Council Directive	2021	<a href="#">Towards a socially fair implementation of the Green Deal<sup>17</sup></a>
<a href="#">Establishing a carbon border adjustment mechanism</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">Making ETS and CBAM work for EU cities and regions</a>
<a href="#">Amending Directive 2003/87/EC establishing a system for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Union, Decision (EU) 2015/1814 concerning the establishment and operation of a market stability reserve for the Union greenhouse gas emission trad</a>	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	
<a href="#">Amending Regulation (EU) 2018/842 on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	
<a href="#">Amending Regulations (EU) 2018/841 as regards the scope, simplifying the compliance rules, setting out the targets of the Member States for 2030 and committing to the collective achievement of climate neutrality by 2035 in the land use, forestry and agriculture sector, and (EU) 2018/1999 as regards improvement in monitoring, reporting, tracking of progress and review</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">Revision of LULUCF and Effort Sharing regulations</a>
NA		2021	<a href="#">The future of regional airports – challenges and opportunities</a>
Preparations for the United Nations Framework on Climate Change (UNFCCC) meetings (Glasgow, 31 October - 12 November 2021)	Council Conclusions	2021	<a href="#">Resolution on the COP26 and global and local alliances for climate action</a>

<sup>17</sup> Merged with energy taxation directive. Also covering the topic Just Green Deal

Key Policy documents from EU institutions	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
Preparations for the 27 <sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt, 6-18 November 2022)	Council conclusions	2022	<a href="#">Towards a structural inclusion of Cities and Regions in UNFCCC COP27</a>
<a href="#">Climate and Energy Diplomacy</a>	Council conclusions	2022	<a href="#">The CoR's role in boosting subnational climate diplomacy ahead of COP27 and COP28</a>
<a href="#">Amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1242 as regards strengthening the CO<sub>2</sub> emission performance standards for new heavy-duty vehicles and integrating reporting obligations, and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/956</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	<a href="#">Towards zero emission road transport: Deploying alternative fuels infrastructure and strengthening CO<sub>2</sub> emission performance standards<sup>18</sup></a>
<a href="#">Amending Regulation (EU) 2019/631 as regards strengthening the CO<sub>2</sub> emission performance standards for new passenger cars and new light commercial vehicles in line with the Union's increased climate ambition</a>	Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	
<a href="#">On the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2023	<a href="#">The Common Fisheries Policy on the ground: towards sustainable and resilient coastal communities in the EU<sup>19</sup></a>
<a href="#">Climate and Energy Diplomacy;</a> Preparations for the 28 <sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties (COP 27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 30 Nov-12 December 2023)	Council Conclusions	2023	<a href="#">UNFCCC COP28: the role of subnational authorities in keeping climate ambition on track</a>

18 Also covering the topic Sustainable and Smart Mobility

19 Also covering the topic Biodiversity

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# CLEAN AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">A hydrogen strategy for a climate-neutral Europe</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">Towards a Roadmap for Clean Hydrogen - the contribution of local and regional authorities to a climate-neutral Europe</a>
<a href="#">On an EU Strategy to reduce methane emissions</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">Powering a climate-neutral economy: An EU Strategy for Energy System Integration</a>
<a href="#">Powering a Climate neutrality economy: An EU Strategy for Energy System Integration</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2020	
<a href="#">An EU Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2020	
<a href="#">A Renovation Wave for Europe - greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">A Renovation Wave for Europe – greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives</a>
<a href="#">Guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure, amending Regulations (EC) No 715/2009, (EU) 2019/942 and (EU) 2019/943 and Directives 2009/73/EC and (EU) 2019/944, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 347/2013</a>	Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">Revised Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation fit for the Green and Digital Transition</a>

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">Amending Directive (EU) 2018/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive 98/70/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the promotion of energy from renewable sources, and repealing Council Directive (EU) 2015/652</a>	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">Amending the Renewable Energy Directive to meet the new 2030 climate targets</a>
<a href="#">On energy efficiency (recast)</a>	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">Amending the Energy Efficiency Directive to meet the new 2030 climate targets</a>
REPowerEU Plan	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2022	<a href="#">Resolution on REPowerEU: cities and regions accelerating the energy transition</a>
<a href="#">On the Energy Performance of Buildings (recast)</a>	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council	2022	<a href="#">Revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)</a>
Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on common rules for the internal markets in renewable and natural gases and in hydrogen COM(2021) 803 final (hereafter: the new Gas Directive)	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council	2022	<a href="#">Energy package on gas, hydrogen and methane emissions</a>
Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the internal markets for renewable and natural gases and for hydrogen COM(2021) 804 final (hereafter: the new Gas Regulation)	Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council		
Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on methane emissions reduction in the energy sector and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/942 COM(2021) 805 final (hereafter: the Methane Regulation)	Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council		

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
NA		2023	<a href="#">RESOLUTION on the Cities and Regions responding to the energy crisis: towards a real European Energy Union</a>
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulations (EU) 2019/943 and (EU) 2019/942 as well as Directives (EU) 2018/2001 and (EU) 2019/944 to improve the Union's electricity market design – COM (2023) 148 final	Regulation (EU) of the European Parliament and of the Council  And  Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	<a href="#">Electricity Market Design (EMD)</a>
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions on the European Hydrogen Bank	Communication	2023	<a href="#">EU Hydrogen Bank</a>

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# CIRCULAR AND GREEN ECONOMY

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">A new Circular Economy Action Plan. For a cleaner and more competitive Europe</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">New Circular Economy Action Plan</a>
<a href="#">A New Industrial Strategy for Europe</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">A New Industrial Strategy for Europe</a>
<a href="#">Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe's recovery</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">Updating the new Industrial Strategy for Europe</a>
A Chips Act for Europe	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's semiconductor ecosystem (Chips Act)	2022	<a href="#">European Chips Act for strengthening the European semiconductor ecosystem</a>
EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions – EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles	2022	<a href="#">EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles</a>
<a href="#">On establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's net-zero technology products manufacturing ecosystem (Net Zero Industry Act)</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	<a href="#">Net Zero Industry Act</a>

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">Establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amending Regulations (EU) 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, 2018/1724 and (EU) 2019/1020</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	<a href="#">Critical raw materials package</a>
<a href="#">Common rules promoting the repair of goods and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/2394, Directives (EU) 2019/771 and (EU) 2020/1828</a> <a href="#">COM(2023) 155 final</a>	Proposal for a Directive	2023	<a href="#">Consumers' protection package</a>
<a href="#">Substantiation and communication of explicit environmental claims (Green Claims Directive)</a> <a href="#">COM(2023) 166 final</a>	Proposal for a Directive		

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# SUSTAINABLE AND SMART MOBILITY

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy</a> <sup>20</sup>
<a href="#">The new EU Urban Mobility Framework</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">The new Urban Mobility Framework</a>
Amending Regulation (EU) 2019/631 as regards strengthening the CO2 emission performance standards for new passenger cars and new light commercial vehicles in line with the Union's increased climate ambition	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">Towards zero emission road transport: Deploying alternative fuels infrastructure and strengthening CO2 emission performance standards</a> <sup>21</sup>
<a href="#">On the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, and repealing Directive 2014/94/ EU of the European Parliament and of the Council</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">A just and sustainable transition for Automotive Regions</a> <sup>22</sup>
<a href="#">On Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) 1315/2013</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2021	<a href="#">Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T)</a>

20 Also covering the topic Sustainable and Smart Mobility

21 Also covering the topic Climate Ambition

22 Also covering the topic Just Green Deal

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">A Farm to Fork Strategy</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">From farm to fork – the local and regional dimension</a>
<a href="#">Action plan for the development of the organic sector</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">EU action plan for organic farming</a>
<a href="#">Sustainable Use of Pesticide Directive</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the sustainable use of plant protection products and amending Regulation (EU) 2021/2115	2022	<a href="#">Sustainable use of pesticides</a>
<a href="#">Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food systems</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2022	<a href="#">Safeguarding food security and reinforcing the resilience of food system</a>
NA		2023	<a href="#">Legislative framework for Sustainable food systems</a>

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# BIODIVERSITY

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World's Forests</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2019	<a href="#">Stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests</a>
<a href="#">EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030</a>
<a href="#">Progress in the implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative</a>	Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">Local and regional authorities accelerating the implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative</a>
NA		2021	<a href="#">Local and regional authorities protecting the marine environment</a>
<a href="#">New EU Forest Strategy for 2030</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">EU Forest Strategy for 2030</a>
<a href="#">EU nature restoration</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	<a href="#">EU Nature Restoration Law</a>

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2023	<a href="#">The Common Fisheries Policy on the ground: towards sustainable and resilient coastal communities in the EU<sup>23</sup></a>
<a href="#">The common fisheries policy today and tomorrow: a Fisheries and Oceans Pact towards sustainable, science-based, innovative and inclusive fisheries management</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	

23 Also covering the topic Climate Ambition

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# ZERO POLLUTION

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<a href="#">Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability Towards a Toxic-Free Environment</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">Safe and sustainable chemicals for a toxic-free environment in Europe's cities and regions</a>
NA (the CoR was requested an Outlook opinion)		2020	<a href="#">The Future of EU Clean Air policy in the framework of the zero-pollution ambition</a>
<a href="#">On a new approach for a sustainable blue economy in the EU. Transforming the EU's Blue Economy for a Sustainable Future</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">Sustainable blue economy and aquaculture</a>
<a href="#">Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil'</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">EU Action Plan: 'Towards zero pollution for air, water and soil'</a>
<a href="#">On reporting of environmental data from industrial installations and establishing an Industrial Emissions Portal</a>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2022	<a href="#">Industrial Emissions Directive</a>
<a href="#">Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) and Council Directive 1999/31/EC of 26 April 1999 on the landfill of waste</a>	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council	2022	
Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning urban wastewater treatment (recast)  COM(2022) 541 final	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council	2023	<a href="#">Revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD)</a>

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe (recast)</p> <p>COM(2022) 542 final</p>	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p><a href="#">Revision of the EU Ambient Air Quality Legislation</a></p>
<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on Soil Monitoring and Resilience_COM_2023_41_final</p>	<p>Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council</p>	<p>2023</p>	<p><a href="#">EU Soil Monitoring and Resilience</a></p>

## OPINIONS/RESOLUTIONS ON

# JUST GREEN DEAL

Key Policy documents from EC	Type of Document	Year	Relevant CoR Opinions/ Resolutions
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Just Transition Fund	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council	2020	<a href="#">Just Transition Fund</a>
<a href="#">European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience</a>
<a href="#">Shaping Europe's digital future</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2020	<a href="#">A strategy for Europe's Digital future and A Strategy for Data</a>
<a href="#">Building an economy that works for people: an action plan for the social economy</a>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions	2021	<a href="#">Creating an enabling environment for the social economy</a>
NA		2021	<a href="#">Gender equality and Climate change: towards mainstreaming the gender perspective in the European Green Deal</a>
<a href="#">Restructuring the Union framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (recast)</a>	Proposal for a Council Directive	2021	<a href="#">Towards a socially fair implementation of the Green Deal<sup>24</sup></a>
		2022	<a href="#">Digital Cohesion</a>
NA		2022	<a href="#">Just and Sustainable Transition in the context of the coal and energy intensive regions</a>
NA		2023	<a href="#">A Just and Sustainable Transition for Automotive Regions<sup>25</sup></a>

<sup>24</sup> Merged with energy taxation directive. Also covering the topic Climate Ambition

<sup>25</sup> Also covering the topic Sustainable and Smart Mobility





**European Committee  
of the Regions**

Created in 1994, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's political assembly of 329 regional and local representatives such as regional presidents or city-mayors from all 27 Member States, representing over 446 million Europeans.

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