

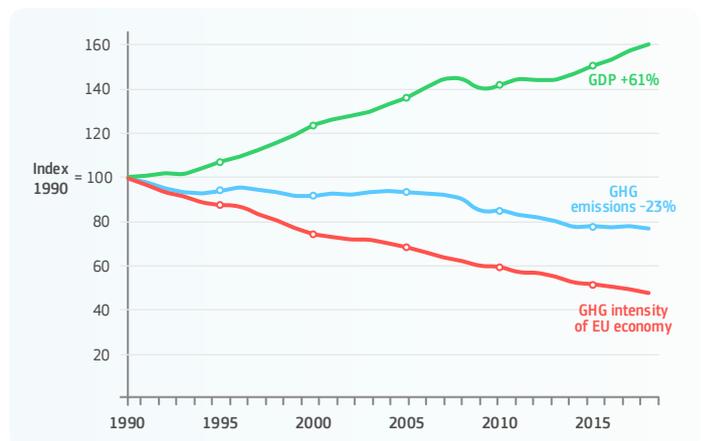
EU Action on Climate Change

Climate change - an urgent challenge

- Human activities, such as burning fossil fuels for energy or cutting down rainforests, increase the concentrations of greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide, CO₂) in the Earth's atmosphere, raising average global temperature and causing climate change.
- The effects are being felt on all continents and are predicted to become more and more intense. Scientists have warned that global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels will have serious and partly irreversible consequences for our environment and societies. Human-induced warming has already reached around 1°C.
- To stop climate change from getting worse, we must take action to cut greenhouse gas emissions significantly and adapt to the changes happening now and in the future to limit the damage.
- Climate action has many benefits. It helps save energy (e.g. through better insulation or more efficient appliances), improve air quality (e.g. through better transport systems), secure our energy supplies and create local jobs (e.g. locally produced renewable energy instead of imported fossil fuels).
- The Paris Agreement on climate change adopted in 2015 sets out a global action plan to put the world on track to avoid dangerous climate change. But more action is needed. Countries now need to put their national climate plans into practice, raise global ambition and accelerate action to strengthen the global response.
- The EU has put in place many climate policies and measures and is actively working with other countries to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

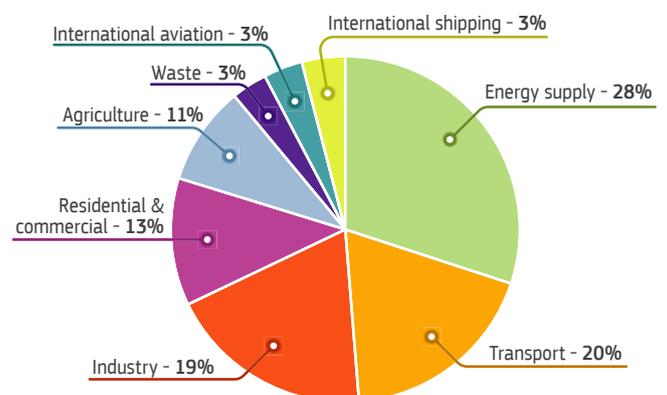
EU greenhouse gas emissions

- Greenhouse gas emissions in the EU decreased by 23% between 1990 and 2018, while the EU economy grew by 61% over the same period. The EU is currently the most greenhouse gas efficient major economy.
- The EU is on track to exceed its 2020 target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20% from 1990 levels and has finalised the EU-level legislation to deliver on its 2030 target to reduce emissions by at least 40% from 1990 levels.



EU greenhouse gas emissions and GDP

European Commission, EU climate action progress report, 31.10.2019, COMM(2019) 559



EU greenhouse gas emissions by sector

European Environment Agency, GHG emissions by sector in the EU-28, 1990-2016. Excludes carbon dioxide from biomass and LULUCF (land use, land-use change and forestry)

Key EU climate policies and legislation

- The **EU Emissions Trading System** (EU ETS) covers greenhouse gas emissions from around 11,000 heavy energy-using installations in power sector and industry, as well as flights within the EU – in total, more than 40% of EU greenhouse gas emissions. This ‘carbon market’ allows companies to trade emission allowances, which ensures emissions are cut where it costs least to do so and promotes investment in low-carbon, clean technologies.
- **National targets** for sectors outside emissions trading, such as transport, buildings and agriculture, which account for almost 60% of the EU’s total emissions. In contrast to sectors in the EU ETS, which are regulated at EU level, Member States are responsible for national policies and measures to limit emissions from the sectors covered by this ‘Effort Sharing’ legislation.
- Legislation to ensure our **forests and land** contribute to the fight against climate change. Forests naturally hold large stocks of carbon, preventing its escape into the atmosphere. The new EU Regulation on land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) creates an obligation to maintain and improve this ‘carbon sink’.
- Legislation to make **transport** cleaner, such as CO₂ emission reduction targets for cars, vans and lorries.
- Legislation on **energy efficiency** (e.g. requirements for buildings, energy labels on appliances), **renewable energy** and the **governance** of EU energy and climate policies (e.g. national 2030 energy and climate plans required from all Member States).
- Action to increase Europe’s **resilience to the impacts** of climate change. The EU Adaptation Strategy adopted in 2013 aims to support preparedness and capacity to respond to the impacts of climate change at national, regional and local levels.
- Climate issues are also being integrated into **other policies and funding programmes** (e.g. regional policy, research and innovation, etc.). Around 20% of the EU’s current long-term budget (2014-2020) goes to climate-related action, and the Commission has proposed to raise this share to 25% in the next budget.

Long-term strategy: towards a climate-neutral Europe

- In November 2018, the European Commission presented its strategic vision for a climate-neutral EU by 2050 – i.e. achieving an economy with net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. The vision underlines the opportunities that this transformation offers to European citizens and its economy, as well as identifies and anticipates challenges along the road.
- All parts of society and economic sectors will play a role in the transition – from the power sector to industry, mobility, buildings, agriculture and forestry. These wide-ranging changes will require significant investments, research and innovation, new ways of producing and consuming, and changes in the way we work, use transport and live together.
- A transformation on this scale requires an open and inclusive debate. The strategy will be discussed among EU institutions, Member States, businesses and civil society throughout 2019. Everyone can take part! The EU should agree on and submit its strategy to the United Nations climate convention (UNFCCC) by 2020.

More information



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