



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 19.08.2021
C(2021) 6207 final*

*Mr Peter RAGGL
President of the Bundesrat
Dr Karl Renner-Ring 3
A – 1017 WIEN*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A European Climate Pact {COM(2020) 788 final}.

The European Climate Pact is a Commission initiative to bring together everyone who wants to take action for our planet. With the Pact, we want to help everyone in the European Union to take action in their everyday lives, inspire each other and give everyone the opportunity to get involved in the green transition. Launched by the Commission on 16 December 2020, the Climate Pact is part of the European Green Deal to help the EU meet its goal of becoming the first climate-neutral continent in the world by 2050.

The Commission has already seen more than 1 000 applications from citizens to become Climate Pact Ambassadors. By the end of the second quarter of 2021, we had 500 screened and ‘on-boarded’ (fully active) ambassadors. Amongst the on-boarded ambassadors, 45% are female, 54% are male¹. Once the initial applications are processed, we will assess possible gaps in the representativeness of the group and take relevant steps to raise awareness amongst underrepresented groups (in the second half of 2021). The Commission is fully aware of the importance to involve women and girls in the need to take climate action, as often they count amongst the groups that need particular attention to ensure their equal opportunities in a changing society. Furthermore, there are strong synergies between achieving greater equality in decision-making and achieving the goals of the European Green Deal. Studies show that women are generally more likely than men to support more drastic environmental policies, both at national² and European level³. The Pact considers the different

¹ 1% registered as ‘other’.

² Gender and climate change: Do female parliamentarians make difference?:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0176268017304500>

perception of and behaviour toward environmental problems of men and women in the design of solutions proposed and formulation of messages to citizens. As concerns Austria in particular, we can note that, to this day, we received 24 applications from Austria, out of which only five have been from women. However, these five women will be amongst the next to be on-boarded in the following weeks. The order in which ambassadors are on-boarded depends on the date of their application.

A comprehensive screening process of applications has been established. After receiving the ambassador's application, the Climate Pact Secretariat (contractor assisting the Commission in the implementation of the Pact) assesses whether the application is in line with the Pact's values⁴ and demonstrates merits, such as general commitment, and motivation relevant for the ambassador role⁵. In a second step, the Climate Pact Secretariat presents the results of its assessment to the Directorate-General for Climate Action, who upon consultation with other relevant services verifies and confirms the selection. The Climate Pact Secretariat informs the applicants of the result and requests the successful applicant to sign a declaration of honour (see Annex). Applicants who submit a signed declaration are confirmed as ambassadors for a period of one year.

The Commission will continue its efforts to communicate about the European Climate Pact, especially to currently underrepresented groups. In each Member State, national coordinators have been put in place since June 2021 and they will reach out to relevant stakeholder groups.

Support by public authorities for these efforts – both on awareness raising and engagement of citizens into the green transition through the European Climate Pact – is very welcome. In order to better engage with individuals and organisations, the European Climate Pact has also just put in place a pledging system. Cities and regions are a very important source of initiatives, which the Pact wants to help amplify – for example, signatories of the new Covenant of Mayors can automatically become Climate Pact supporters. The Committee of the Regions, as the EU body representing cities and regions in Brussels, also works closely with the Commission services on European Green Deal priorities such as building renovations, clean urban mobility and nature-based solutions and the broader greening of cities and regions. This will allow the Pact to help interlink relevant actors (e.g. cities, businesses, universities) into making joint pledges to accelerate the necessary transitions. The Committee of the Regions is also an important platform in Europe to discuss with the Commission the implementation of EU rules in cities and regions, including in the areas of public procurement and State aid. In the area of State aid, work is underway to finalise a new General Block Exemption Regulation, which will help interlocutors to identify the circumstances in which they can grant public support without having to notify that support as State Aid to the Commission. The new General Block Exemption Regulation will help authorities in

³ Do women make a difference? Analysing environmental attitudes and actions of Members of the European Parliament: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09644016.2019.1609156>

⁴ See COM(2020) 788 final, page 8 in the EN version.

⁵ The role of a Climate Pact Ambassador: https://europa.eu/climate-pact/ambassadors/become-ambassador_en

⁶ See COM(2020) 788 final, page 6 in the EN version.

supporting many European Green Deal priorities, for example charging infrastructure for zero-emission transport. The Commission welcomes continued feedback on these and other initiatives to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal.

We hope that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Bundesrat and look forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Janusz Wojciechowski
Member of the Commission*

Annex

Declaration of honour

(to be signed by the applicant and sent back to ambassadors@euclimatepact.eu)

For applicants applying in their personal capacity:

I, [FIRST NAME AND LAST NAME], commit, in my personal capacity, to observe the following principles in my activities as a European Climate Pact Ambassador:

For applicants applying in their professional capacity:

I, [FIRST NAME AND LAST NAME] of [ORGANISATION], commit, in my professional capacity representing my organisation, to observe the following principles in my activities as a European Climate Pact Ambassador:

- European Climate Pact Ambassadors are individuals committed to informing, inspiring and supporting climate action in their communities and networks in contribution to the European Climate Pact.
- Ambassadors are volunteers who act in their personal capacity or in their professional capacity representing their organisation. They do not represent the European Commission and shall not imply to do so.
- Being an Ambassador does not involve organisational or financial support from the European Commission.
- The information given or opinions expressed by Pact Ambassadors do not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission. Ambassadors are nominated for a period of one year, with a possibility of renewal.
- Ambassadors commit to observing highest standards of ethical conduct. This in particular applies when carrying out activities which may commercially benefit the organisations they are employed by or represent. Ambassadors shall refrain from using their role as a European Climate Pact Ambassador to seek undue personal or commercial advantage or to seek to benefit from their role in contexts not related to advancing the Pact and its objectives.

I understand that in case the above points are not observed, the European Commission reserves the right to withdraw the European Climate Pact Ambassador title and may use this information in public if necessary to protect its interests.

Date:

Signature: