

ENVI Fact Sheet

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Committee presidents

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Committee on Environment (ENVI)

The question of Climate Change and its implications

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Opening remarks from the Committee Presidents

Dear delegates, this fact sheet will share the most interesting facts and information about the committee issue, including both theoretical concepts and visual data. The goal is to help you understand the main problem and the efforts made to solve it. We hope all delegates will use this fact sheet to prepare, leading to a more informed and engaging discussion on all resolutions during the General Assembly. Do keep in mind that these links are from different sources and bias might occur.

Climate change has been a popular topic to discuss and debate over the years, but there have been few concrete solutions to make a difference. In response to this, many urge the European Union (EU) to take action and combat this issue. The EU has taken some measures to achieve a sustainable future by 2050 by aiming towards the goal of net zero carbon emission. There have been many individual attempts to deal with climate change but presenting a unified, organized effort is one of the few ways to effectively deal with this issue. A well-thought-out plan is essential to ensure a favourable return on investments and solve this problem while we still can. It is the task of this committee to tackle the problem of a rapidly changing climate and how to slow it. This fact file will enable you to get an overview of the extent of the damage caused by a rapidly changing ecosystem and the possibilities of reversing this change.

M. Michelet & A. Glöckner



Overview

A lot of countries have set objectives to create a sustainable future, but there must be a lot of changes in our structure of society and habits, in order to achieve these objectives. About 36.8 trillion tons are emitted globally every year. And emissions still remain on an unsustainable growth trajectory, calling for stronger actions to accelerate the clean energy transition and move the world onto a path towards meeting its energy and climate goals. Such as the Paris Agreement or newly implemented 2030 climate targets*. Climate change has an impact on the world's future by rising temperatures and a greater quantity of natural disasters. As well as the quality of life, as it becomes a health concern, by such as air pollution and the decrease in good nutrition in some areas. What should the EU countries do to reduce levels and thereby ensure a safer future?

*[2030 Climate targets](#) - [2050 long-term strategy](#)

Key terms:

Carbon sinks

- a forest, ocean, or other natural environment viewed in terms of its ability to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- [What is a carbon sink?](#)

Alternative fuels

- Non-petroleum sources used for power, which can contribute to the decarbonization and environmental performance of the sector. Examples include electricity, hydrogen, biofuels, synthetic and paraffinic fuels, natural gas, and liquefied petroleum gas.

Carbon cycle

- Part of the biogeochemical cycle by which carbon is exchanged among the biosphere, pedosphere, geosphere, hydrosphere, and atmosphere of Earth. Other major biogeochemical cycles include the nitrogen cycle and the water cycle.
- Nature's way of reusing carbon atoms, which travel from the atmosphere into organisms on the Earth and then back into the atmosphere over and over again.

CO2 g/km

- CO2 in grams per kilometer.
- Used for cars or other types of transport

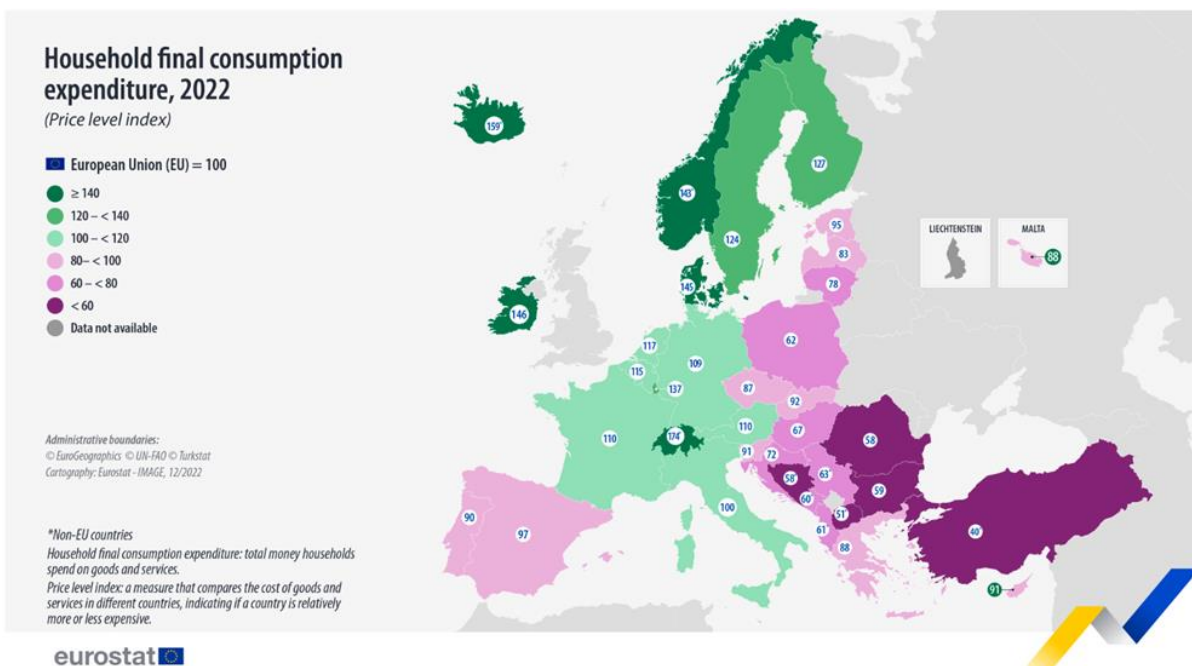
CO2 -Equivalent

- A unit of measurement comparing the amount of metric tons of carbon needed to equal one metric ton of another greenhouse gas. Measured in (GWP), the global warming potential.
- *For example, the GWP for methane is 25 and for nitrous oxide 298. This means that emissions of 1 million metric tonnes of methane and nitrous oxide respectively is equivalent to emissions of 25 and 298 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide.*
- [Carbon dioxide equivalent](#)

The main causes to focus on (Sub topics)

Overconsumption

Our society lives on the market mechanism and the market works to keep the money in circulation at all times. Therefore, we also overconsume, which is bad for the climate. It is a question of how much power we use at home, what you eat and how much of it is thrown away. In addition, how much clothing, plastic or electronics you buy also plays a role. All of this emits greenhouse gases. A large part of our emissions are from the private sector. As well as buying too much our recycling system is not working accordingly. This results in masses of non-biodegradable plastics ending up in the oceans. The European Parliament wants the member states to switch to a circular economy. This would enable production to use raw materials more efficiently and reducing waste. As its main aim is to create further value of used materials.



<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20230621-1>



<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20151201STO05603/circular-economy-definition-importance-and-benefits>

Deforestation

Deforestation is bad for the environment in multiple ways. By cutting down trees, they emit the carbon that has been stored in them. While at the same time, we erase the natural way of disposing of carbon emissions. Our forests act as a natural carbon sink which is essential to maintain a balanced carbon cycle. Approximately 12 million hectares of forest are destroyed each year, which results in plenty of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. As well as the removal of our trees will take away our possibility for them to absorb the carbon dioxide.

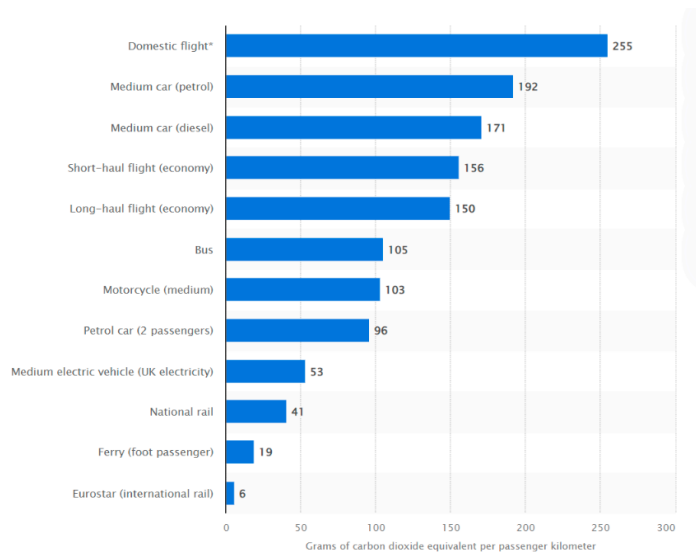
Transport

Through globalisation and our urbanisation, the world demands a high quality and at all time available travel. While this is part of the private household emissions, there is also a great number of quantities in the transportation of goods, which closely relates to the market mechanism.

There also stems a great part of emission through the choice of transportation. Of course, walking and cycling would be best for our environment, considering the minimal emission of carbon dioxide as well as the minimal use of fossil fuels. With the exception of those, the most sustainable sort of transport is rail travel which an assessment by the European

environment agency (EEA) concluded. According to the French government, trains emit 90% less CO₂ than airplanes per passenger-kilometre. For example, a train journey from Paris to Amsterdam emits around 10 times less CO₂ per passenger-kilometre than a flight on the same route. While there is a dense network in Europe, our train system is not in perfectly good health. Projects like the *Rail Baltica*, are in the works. As well as the *Brenner Base Tunnel*, the *Lyon-Turin rail link* and some national projects. But these have been facing frequent delays. At the same time the quality of some of the already existing train rails are lacking which results in many people choosing less sustainable forms of transportation.

Some resort to the newer implemented electric cars, and while this seems more sustainable than the transport of fossil fuels. The electric cars are often powered by electricity that stems from fossil fuels as well. But powered by renewable energy sources should electric-vehicles be the solution?



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1185559/carbon-footprint-of-travel-per-kilometer-by-mode-of-transport/>

Generating power

For years burning fossil fuels has been our way to generate electricity which causes a significant amount of emission. Our electricity still mainly stems from burning coal, oil or gas, which produces some powerful greenhouse gases. Renewable energy forms have been implemented, such as wind or solar energy. But these only cover a bit more than a quarter of our electricity globally. Those are sustainable alternatives which are able to generate power. However, should these be our main source of energy and if so, how should the EU accomplish this?

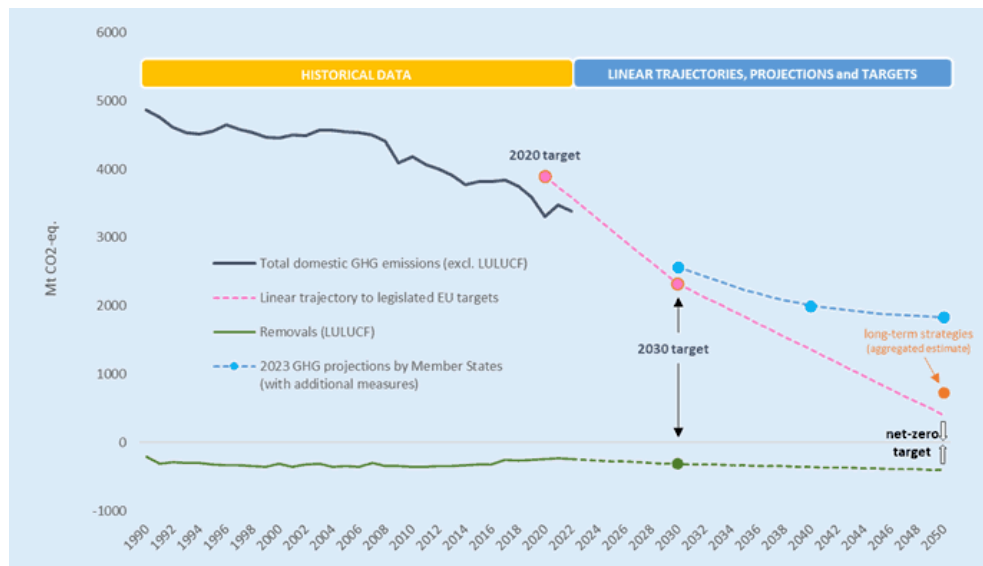
Existing Strategies

- European Climate Law
 - Sets into law the objectives of the Green Deal of becoming the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050 and reducing net carbon emissions by 55%.
 - Legally binding with check-ins every five years.
 - [Link](#)
- European Climate Pact
 - Movement started by the EU focused on encouraging/inspiring individuals, communities, and organizations to find solutions to and combat climate change.
 - [Link to Website](#)
 - [Link to PDF](#)
- Paris Agreement
 - Legally binding treaty focused on combating climate change and its effects.
 - Established in 2015
 - Aims to ...
 - substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to hold global temperature increase to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change
 - periodically assess the collective progress towards achieving the purpose of this agreement and its long-term goals
 - provide financing to developing countries to mitigate climate change, strengthen resilience, and enhance abilities to adapt to climate impacts.
 - 194 countries + EU
 - [Link](#)
- External Policy
 - The EU has made climate change a central element of its external policy. EU countries work together with global partners to strengthen international engagement on climate and advance international efforts and initiatives.
- *To find out more about any and all European laws about climate change and more, we strongly recommend that you visit <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html?locale=en>.*

EMISSIONS

- The EU has steadily decreased its greenhouse gas emissions since 1990, reaching a total –32.5% in 2022. COVID lockdown measures in 2020 caused an unprecedented fall in emissions, followed by a strong rebound in 2021. 2022 emissions, however, continue to fall below the 2019 level.

- Another positive development this year is that the volume of carbon removed from the atmosphere in the EU increased in 2022 compared to the previous year, based on approximate data. However, based on Member States' projections, the EU is currently not on track to reach its 2030 objective of removing 310 million tonnes of CO₂ from the atmosphere per year.



- [Climate Action Progress Report](#)
- Reducing carbon emissions: EU targets and policies
 - [Facts](#)
 - [EU Emissions Trading Scheme](#)
 - [Greener Aviation Fuel](#)
 - [Planes and Ships](#)
 - Cars
 - [CO₂ targets for cars](#)
 - [EU ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars](#)
 - [How the EU wants to increase the use of sustainable fuels](#)

Why is the green transition necessary?

The latest scientific reports show unprecedented changes in the world's climate. Global warming is causing increased – and in some cases irreversible – changes in ocean currents and rainfall and wind patterns in all regions of the world.

Higher temperatures and more extreme weather events result in huge costs for the EU's economy and impact countries' ability to produce food.

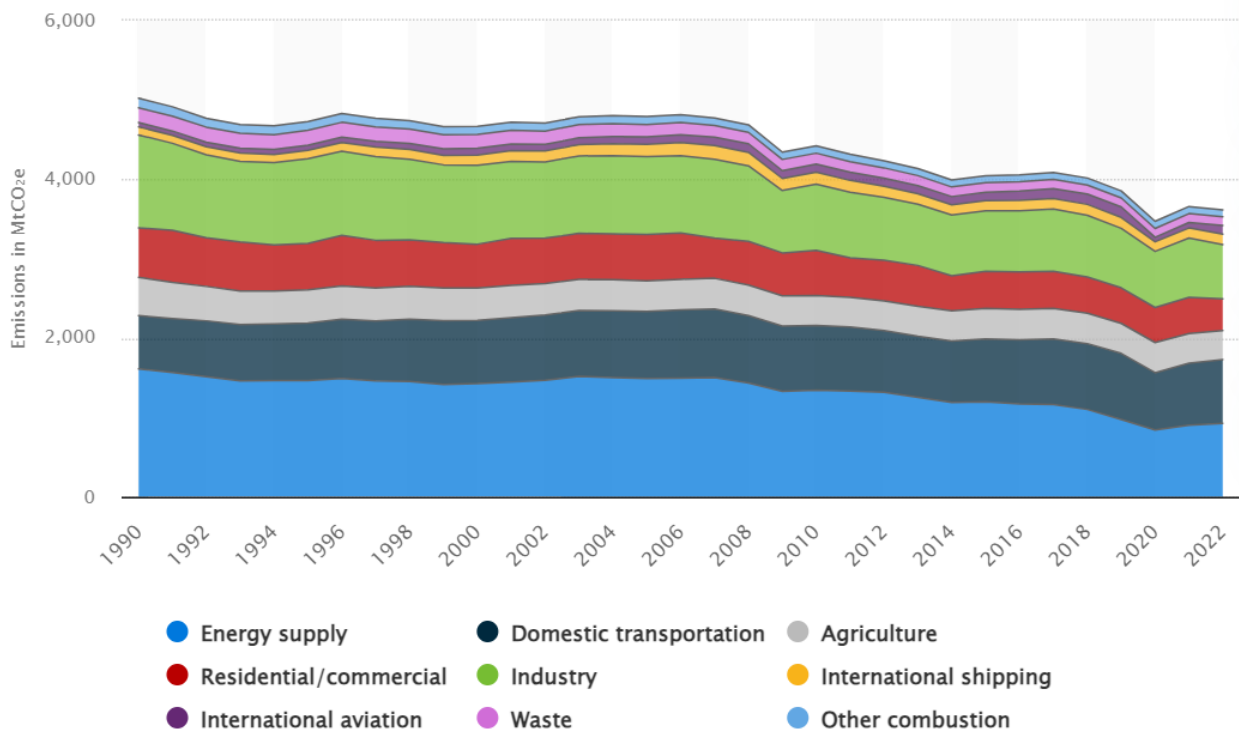
Statistics and facts :

- Over the last 40 years, extreme weather and climate-related events have caused more than €487 billion in financial losses in the EU
- Between 1980 and 2020, over 138 000 people in the EU lost their lives due to extreme weather and climate-related events
- The economic cost of river flooding in Europe exceeds €5 billion a year on average
- Forest fires cause about €2 billion of economic damage every year in the EU

[Climate change costs lives and money \(graphic\)](#)

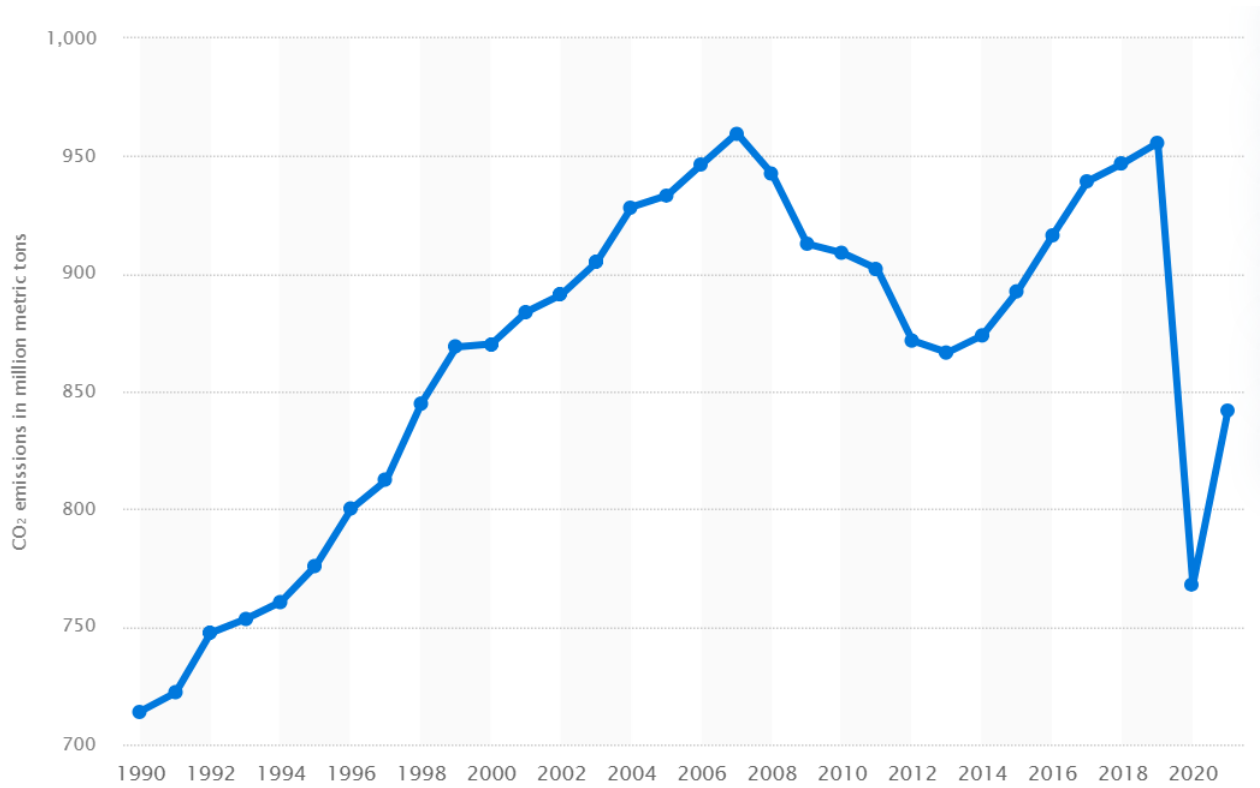
Statistics and graphical information

General greenhouse gas emissions in the EU



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1171183/ghg-emissions-sector-european-union-eu/>

Transport emissions in the EU



<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1200660/carbon-dioxide-emissions-transport-sector-european-union/>