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PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

European Climate Pact

1. Introduction

The European Union is determined to lead the way to accelerate climate and environmental action on all fronts. In December 2019, the European Commission presented the European Green Deal¹ – our plan for transforming the EU into a fair, healthy, sustainable and prosperous society. A resilient economy that works for people and for nature. Net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. Economic growth decoupled from resource use and pollution.

Five years after the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,² we have not moved fast enough to prevent irreversible and catastrophic climate change. Science tells us we have to act urgently to stand a chance of achieving the Paris climate goals, notably to limit global warming to well below 2°C and to pursue efforts to limit such warming to 1.5°C. For this, we have to speed up our efforts to **repair the way we interact with nature**, protect people’s health and well-being from climate and environment-related risks, and guarantee **a healthy and thriving planet** for us and those who come after us.

The European Green Deal is a response not only to science, but also to **demands for stronger action coming from citizens**. Public opinion surveys show that nine out of ten Europeans see climate change as a serious problem³ and feel that protecting the environment is personally important for them.⁴ The many solutions outlined in the Green Deal can only succeed if designed in a socially just and fair way and if citizens, communities, companies and organisations play their part, alongside government policies and regulation.

This is why the European Commission is launching a European Climate Pact, to make sure that everyone can help build a greener Europe and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Proposed in the Political Guidelines of the President of the European Commission, the Climate Pact will bring together “*regions, local communities, civil society, industry and schools. Together they will design and commit to a set of pledges to bring about a change in behaviour, from the individual to the largest multinational.*”⁵

The Climate Pact will provide a space for working together to tackle climate change and environmental degradation **and to grasp the opportunities** that come with decisive action and sustainable lifestyles. The Pact will connect people from all walks of life to improve their understanding of the challenges, to invite all Europeans to participate and benefit, to develop solutions big and small and to trigger and scale up positive change. **The European Climate Pact will keep on growing and evolving over time**, spurred by the engagement and creativity of all the citizens and stakeholders that will become part of it.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

² <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

³ Special Eurobarometer 490: Climate Change (2019): https://ec.europa.eu/clima/citizens/support_en

⁴ Special Eurobarometer 501: Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment (2020):

https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2257_92_4_501_ENG

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/political-guidelines-next-commission_en.pdf

The Pact will empower the many in Europe who share these aspirations and are ready to contribute and reach out to those who have been less involved so far. During the public consultation held to help shape the Pact, the Commission received more than 3,500 contributions, many from citizens in all 27 EU Member States and beyond.⁶ The Commission will continue to listen to citizens, communities, civil society, companies and other stakeholders.

1.1. Why a European Climate Pact?

The climate crisis is not a future problem – we, humans, have already changed the Earth’s climate and degraded the majority of its ecosystems. The past five years have been the warmest on record. The impacts of climate change are now beyond dispute: droughts, forest fires, storms, floods and other extreme weather events are on the rise globally. It has had a major impact on demographic trends. The change will be more radical, with unpredictable consequences if we fail to reduce urgently our ecological footprint and emissions. Its effects will fundamentally transform our world, hitting the most vulnerable groups in the world and in our societies first.⁷

The EU institutions have an important role to play in shaping policy and legislation to implement the European Green Deal. The Commission also recently proposed a higher ambition for emissions reduction for the next decade,⁸ and presented its approach to sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals.⁹

We are not starting from scratch. **The Climate Pact will work alongside numerous existing initiatives, networks and movements.** Young climate activists have captured the world’s attention and shaped the discussion on climate change. Under the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy,¹⁰ local governments are leading the way at municipal level, often showing more ambition and tangible action than their national governments in engaging citizens and stakeholders in their territories. The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform¹¹ and Multi-stakeholder platform on Sustainable Development Goals¹² brought stakeholders together to inspire change in the way we produce and consume. Industrial alliances and other business-related initiatives have also helped define the needs and appropriate solutions for industry when engaging in the green transition.

⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12219-European-Climate-Pact/public-consultation>

⁷ “Overview of natural and man-made disaster risks the EU may face”, on how Member States and the EU assess and address the risks, including on climate change. Union Civil Protection Mechanism helps coordination of Member States assistance in emergencies: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/european-disaster-risk-management_en

⁸ Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition: Investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people, COM/2020/562 https://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/eu-climate-action/2030_ctp_en

⁹ Delivering on the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals – A comprehensive approach, 17 November 2020, SWD(2020)400 final

¹⁰ <https://www.covenantofmayors.eu>

¹¹ <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform>

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/international-strategies/sustainable-development-goals/multi-stakeholder-platform-sdgs_en

In the spirit of the European Green Deal, the Commission as an institution is also committed to leading by example and becoming climate neutral by 2030. **A detailed plan for greening the European Commission, our own institutional pledge**, is planned for early 2021.¹³

Research and innovation play an essential role in developing and promoting the use of the solutions needed to reach the EU's climate ambition.¹⁴ Companies, big corporations and small businesses alike, are adopting new business models and deploying innovative technologies to operate more sustainably. Community energy projects throughout the EU contribute to the deployment of renewables, foster participation and engage citizens.¹⁵ Social partners are developing joint solutions to ensure a just transition to climate neutrality.

Reducing emissions and adapting to a changed climate will require us all to change our habits. Many of these changes will improve the way we live, move around, cool or heat our houses, produce, and consume. Much of the knowledge needed and many proven solutions already exist. These solutions can come from organisations or individuals, both directly (our behaviour and activity in our communities) and indirectly (encouraging peers, businesses or political leaders to take climate action). The Climate Pact will give such solutions prominence and visibility to help inspire others.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how fragile our society and economy are in the face of systemic shocks. Climate change and environmental degradation are other major shocks unfolding globally, equally pressing and compromising our health and welfare. Over the next two years, governments around **the world are expected to spend around EUR 10 trillion¹⁶ borrowed from future generations to respond to the COVID-19 crisis**. This is the moment to protect our climate and nature and to channel this spending into rebuilding a society as envisioned in the European Green Deal. It may seem that many of the solutions needed to recover from COVID-19 and to fight climate change depend mainly on government action but much also depends on our daily decisions. The Climate Pact will seize this moment and the potential of individual and community action to help Europe recover.

1.2. What is the Climate Pact?

The European Climate Pact is a Commission initiative to engage with different stakeholders and civil society with the aim to commit them to climate action and more sustainable behaviour. It will **offer ways for people and organisations to learn about climate change, to develop and implement solutions, and to connect with others to multiply the impact of those solutions**. The Pact will create a lively **space** to share information, debate and act on the climate crisis. It will **offer support** for a European climate movement to grow and consolidate.

¹³ It will build on work undertaken by the Commission in implementing the Eco Management and Audit System (EMAS) since 2005 https://ec.europa.eu/environment/emas/index_en.htm.

¹⁴ Horizon 2020: <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en>

¹⁵ "Energy communities: an overview of energy and social innovation"

https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC119433/energy_communities_report_final.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/FM/Issues/2020/09/30/october-2020-fiscal-monitor>

The European Climate Pact will focus on **spreading awareness and supporting action**.

At its launch, the Pact will invite people and organisations to learn and to commit to specific actions by becoming Climate Pact Ambassadors. During the first year, the Pact will expand its activities to provide also the opportunity to launch and join climate action pledges, exchange experiences, and explore the aggregated impact of joint actions. As the Climate Pact will be an open initiative, it will offer varied opportunities for engagement, tailored to the needs of its supporters.

Under the lead of the European Commission, a dedicated Secretariat will support the implementation of the Pact. Lead by principles of multilingualism, inclusiveness and participation, starting in 2021, the Secretariat will help the Commission in:

- **informing and communicating** with those already active in climate action as well as those ‘indifferent’ or ‘hard to reach’, identifying and displaying good practices that can help accelerate the necessary changes, and managing the Pact’s online platform, which will evolve as the Pact grows;
- **engaging** with citizens and stakeholders and facilitating meaningful participation, networking and co-creation of actions, e.g. by capturing local climate narratives, stories and ‘can do’ attitudes and (co-)organising various types of participatory events. A Pact’s Knowledge Hub will support climate initiatives with expert knowledge and peer-to-peer support;
- **supporting** the setting up of Pact’s governance and implementation, ensuring links with relevant initiatives, groups and institutions,¹⁷ appraising and invigorating the initiative.

The success of the Pact could be measured with number of pledges or ambassadors. More importantly, its success will be reflected through the level of acceptance or demands for climate and environmental initiatives across the society.

2. Awareness

Climate change is happening here and now. The droughts, forest fires, sea level rise, land degradation, and massive floods are already reaching us in one way or another. The impact can be direct e.g. through health effects, damaged property, destruction of cultural heritage, lost crops, or indirect e.g. through climate-induced migration, threats to food security, or disrupted trade and investment flows. While everybody is at risk, these impacts hit the poor and the vulnerable harder. This raises important issues of justice, democracy, equity, equality and solidarity.

Despite the scope and the gravity of climate change, there are still **climate deniers, doubters and action delayers**. It is important to engage in a constructive and open dialogue based on scientific evidence. Getting the facts right is a key first step to combat disinformation and

¹⁷ Such as European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions

dispel myths. Talking clearly about nature and climate change is a powerful invitation for action: at home, at school, in the news, and in the workplace.

The Pact will help **spread knowledge about climate action** that is scientifically sound, and provides a practical basis for everyday life choices. Along with the organisations wishing to join, the Commission will develop and make available a variety of communication materials accessible to all and tools to bring the Pact to life. The Pact will build on the wealth and diversity of initiatives already in place in Europe, showcase existing solutions for inspiration and learning, and help networks of climate supporters and communities realise their own climate ambition or join forces with others.

The Commission will further facilitate and raise awareness through:

- Welcoming Climate **Pact Ambassadors** of diverse backgrounds and occupations. Ambassadors, will commit to climate action and engage in debates with people in their communities and networks about the options for action. Why this is urgent. Why everyone matters. The Commission will provide Ambassadors with recognition, communication materials and networking opportunities for exchanges and will help them expand their outreach in and beyond Europe.
- Translating **scientifically sound information into options for action** that bring immediate, multiple benefits to people and communities, for example by piloting an initiative inviting climate scientists to visit the schools or higher education institutions they attended. The Commission will look for ways to make research results more accessible to the wider public, by adopting guidelines for EU-financed research projects to follow in their dissemination and communication activities.
- **Promoting climate literacy and integrating climate science and solutions into educational programmes** in schools, vocational education and training, higher education and life-long learning.
 - The EU's new Education for Climate Coalition¹⁸ will mobilise expertise, provide resources for networking and support creative approaches with teachers, pupils and students.¹⁹
 - The Commission is mobilising its eTwinning and the School Education Gateway communities, bringing together several thousand teachers and schools, and the nascent Blue Schools network to promote green education, skills and behaviour change.
 - The Commission's Learning Corner²⁰ will contribute by providing learning materials for children, teenagers and teachers developed by the EU

¹⁸ Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0625>

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/document-library-docs/eea-communication-sept2020_en.pdf

²⁰ https://europa.eu/learning-corner/home_en

institutions, and the European Youth Portal²¹ will help raise young people's awareness on the Climate Pact and call to action.

- The Commission will also propose a European Competence Framework to help develop and assess knowledge, skills and attitudes on climate change and sustainable development.
- **Debunking climate myths and countering climate denial and misinformation**, following lessons learned from the example of COVID-19. For this, the Commission will use its Action Plan against Disinformation²² and the relevant actions outlined in the European Democracy Action Plan.²³
- Animating **online and offline get-togethers and events** in different EU languages and targeting a diverse audience, to instil a sense of community of purpose in climate. Each corner of Europe has brilliant climate stories to share: the Pact will support and encourage local and regional exchanges and dialogues to gather this wealth of experience as a basis to inspire action. The Pact will also build on the increased use of online events as low-cost, low-emission and more inclusive alternatives to raise awareness of the climate crisis and the opportunities, it brings. The Commission will hold an **annual event** to take stock of progress and promote ideas, actions and solutions.
- Encouraging actions that consider social sustainability, social wellbeing, inclusion, equality, diversity, accessibility and affordability for all and that aim to reach the most vulnerable individuals and areas.

Using **existing multi-stakeholder initiatives** to raise awareness. Several existing platforms²⁴ can help spread information for example about the impact of energy consumption and production, buildings and climate change, and facilitate exchange of experiences, solutions and good practices.

European Climate Pact Ambassadors

Mission

Pact Ambassadors will lead by example in climate and environmental protection action, and become a proactive bridge between civil society, stakeholders and the European Commission.

²¹ https://europa.eu/youth/EU_en

²² <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/tackling-online-disinformation>:

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/edap_communication.pdf

²⁴ E.g. Coal Regions in Transition, Clean Energy for EU Islands, Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, EU Energy Poverty Observatory and the Renovation Wave's Open Platform. More information on these platforms on the Pact website.

Who can become an Ambassador?

Anyone can apply to become an Ambassador.²⁵ Organisations can also suggest a representative who would become an Ambassador on their behalf. Striving for gender balance amongst Ambassadors will be important for offering role-models in climate action.

How to become an Ambassador?

Applications will be possible through the Pact website. Candidates will be asked to briefly describe the scope of their (planned) activities and experience. The Ambassador function is suited to people who are committed to climate and environmental action and adhere to the Pact's values. Ambassadors will be endorsed through an objective, transparent process based on applicants' merits and motivation for one year with the possibility of prolongation.

Why become an Ambassador?

Ambassadors will be featured on the Pact website and in the Commission's social media channels, and will be able to use the Pact's platforms and communication materials. They will be part of the Ambassadors' network, which will offer opportunities for peer-to-peer exchanges, discussions and trainings.

3. Action

The Climate Pact will encourage **democratic, science-based, hands-on, transparent, locally grounded, inclusive and long-lasting** action on climate change by individuals and organisations.

3.1. Encouraging participation

Many people feel they have too little influence over crucial decisions such as how to fight climate change. Processes such as citizen dialogues and assemblies²⁶ show that **involving people directly** in important and complex discussions **creates co-ownership, unlocks technological and social innovation, and optimises decision-making**. As the EU raises its climate targets, the Pact will link with all levels of government as well as civil society and Europe's citizens directly, by launching democratic debates that include the perspectives of people in all their diversity.

Participation in the Pact will contribute to **a climate movement across** Europe's communities and regions and emphasise the **social bonds** inspired by common, peer-to-peer, community-led action on climate to improve our health and local environment.

²⁵ While the initial scope of the Pact starts with the EU territory, there are already good EU-driven initiatives involving outreach outside the EU, such as the EU Climate Diplomacy Weeks, beach clean-ups and other activities organised by EU Delegations around the world, e.g. https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/eu-beach-cleanup-2020_en

²⁶ <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/european-climate-pact-exploratory-opinion>

Pact participants, either individuals or organisations, will get involved in different ways. For instance, they will be able to **register their climate initiatives and pledges** on the Climate Pact’s online platform or to join initiatives of others. Pact participants will be able to express interest in the work of others and connect with them to generate additional action and momentum in a spirit of community. There is a clear interest: more than 80% of respondents to the public consultation on the Climate Pact expressed interest in making a climate action commitment.

The Pact will look into possible cooperation with the **‘Count Us In’ global campaign and platform**²⁷ that aims to get 1 billion people to take action, and similar or complementary initiatives, aimed at encouraging people to take climate action in their everyday life and demonstrate the collective impact of individual actions.

In particular, **the Pact will invite young people** to continue bringing climate and environment issues to the top of the global agenda. They arguably have the biggest stake in climate action, as the decisions we make today shape the world they will live in as adults and leave behind for their children. To foster involvement in climate policy even more and support youth action on climate, the Commission will engage in regular dialogues with young people and offer them a prominent space in the Pact. For this purpose, it will co-create, together with young people, a structured engagement programme as part of the Pact.

For the Pact to remain an open, inclusive and ambitious initiative, people and organisations wishing to take part by registering a pledge have to respect the Pact’s values.

The Pact’s values

1. **Science, responsibility and commitment.** Participating in the Pact will entail positive climate action, inspiring or encouraging others to join. Participants will contribute with concrete, science-based, trustworthy actions with clear and, ideally, measurable outcomes to show impact.
2. **Transparency.** Pact participants will commit to sharing relevant information on their actions, methodologies and results with other Pact participants and with the public. This will help participants and others to track progress, make improvements, learn from or join each other’s initiatives, and understand the overall impact of the action taken.
3. **No greenwashing.** Pledges will be registered in such a way as to demonstrate that participants’ commitments are concrete, public, and transparent. The Commission will develop an appropriate way to monitor progress, with different levels of scrutiny depending on the participant’s capacity.²⁸

²⁷ <https://www.count-us-in.org>

²⁸ The approach will take into account other relevant frameworks and initiatives, such as the life cycle perspective or the initiative on substantiating green claims launched as part of the European Green Deal: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eussd/smgp/initiative_on_green_claims.htm

4. Ambition and urgency. To achieve the climate and environmental aims we need to challenge long-standing behaviours and assumptions, quickly and decisively. While every little step counts, Pact participants will also aspire to transformative solutions, including visionary projects, experimentation, innovative ways to cooperate, and healthy competition for results.
5. Action tailored to local contexts. Discussions and action will be adapted to local contexts and target groups. The closer to people's day-to-day reality, the better.
6. Diversity and inclusiveness. Anyone, from any background or profession, will be able to take part.²⁹ The Pact will aim to pull down barriers to climate action. This includes the barriers resulting from personal characteristics, such as gender, age and disabilities. It will help Pact participants to be at the centre of debates such as those on the future of Europe. In developing the Pact, the Commission will rely on the creativity and variety of views arising from democratic and participatory mechanisms.

3.2. Making the best use of digital tools

To boost participation, the Pact will use information technology to provide **innovative ways to attract people, and implement actions**, taking account of the need to ensure universal accessibility for all.³⁰ For instance:

- The Pact will promote the use of the latest available digital technologies and services (such as sensors, Artificial Intelligence, data) to deliver the best results and accelerate the green transition.
- The Pact will use its online platform and other digital tools to enable people to **innovate and explore solutions for sustainable changes** in behaviour at individual and collective level. For instance, the Pact will explore initiatives such as the use of integrated IT systems developed by EU-financed research. These systems may enable local communities to use mobile phones to capture data³¹ on air quality, soil health, wildlife or climate, and pair it automatically with observations from Copernicus,³² in order to correlate citizen data with wider European trends, help climate change adaptation decisions or effective emission and pollution reduction actions. Copernicus shows how our planet and the local environment are changing due to climate change

²⁹ Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 outlines actions relevant also to the Pact: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

³⁰ The European disability strategy 2010-2020 aims at increasing the accessibility to goods and services to people with disabilities. A new Strategy on the Rights of Persons with disabilities 2021-2030 is under preparation, to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy their rights and participate fully in society

³¹ The European Data Portal harvests the metadata of Public Sector Information available across European countries and will also be relevant for the Pact. <https://data.europa.eu/europeandataportal/>

³² <https://www.copernicus.eu/en>

and can provide objective and reliable data to inform decisions, raise awareness and direct actions.

- **Online, interactive citizen dialogues**, aligned for example with the Conference on the Future of Europe dialogues, will invite attendees to contribute their views, ideas and expectations as to what a zero emissions and zero pollution³³ Europe means for their community and everyday lives.
- The Commission will encourage and support spaces enabling **individual and team competitions, target setting and sharing of progress**, such as applications enabling individuals and organisations to submit pledges. The Commission has already piloted similar mechanisms for the Social Biking Challenge³⁴ and the European Cycling Challenge.³⁵

3.3. Building on and supporting existing initiatives

The European Climate Pact will **build on and support the multitude of initiatives** that are emerging or already exist. To this end, the Commission will set up a **knowledge hub**, which will pull together relevant information and expertise and make it available both through the Pact's online platform and through specific support services. The knowledge hub will support existing and emerging initiatives by helping them scale up, replicate what already works, build capacity by offering knowledge and know-how, and move from learning to doing.

The knowledge hub of the Pact will act together with the “competence centres for **social innovation**”³⁶ which will support the scaling-up and replication of innovative projects financed under the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation. It aims at raising awareness about the potential of social economy in tackling environmental challenges through grass root projects. The upcoming Action Plan on Social Economy due by the end of 2021 will also seek to enhance social innovation.

The Pact will provide an **overview of available finance or finance needed**³⁷ for climate-related initiatives, including for smaller grassroots projects from various sources (e.g. EU, Member States, philanthropies, private sector). The purpose will be to help mobilising support for grassroots climate initiatives that require only a small amount of resources but have the potential to spread throughout the communities involved and produce major and positive impacts.

Horizon Europe missions,³⁸ partnerships and projects co-created with stakeholders and citizens will provide arenas for collective deliberation and goal setting, and for making climate-related pledges. The missions on ‘Adaptation to Climate Change Including Societal

³³ The Zero Pollution Action Plan for air, water and soil will contribute to the Pact's objectives, e.g. through dedicated stakeholder initiatives https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/zero-pollution-action-plan_en

³⁴ <https://mobilityweek.eu/eu-initiatives/social-biking-challenge/>

³⁵ <https://civitas.eu/event/european-cycling-challenge>

³⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=629&langId=en&callId=604&furtherCalls=yes>

³⁷ The renewed sustainable finance strategy to be adopted by the Commission early 2021 will provide the appropriate framework to support this initiative

³⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en>

Transformation'³⁹ and 'Climate Neutral and Smart Cities'⁴⁰ will provide space for all relevant actors, in particular citizens, to participate in the co-design, co-implementation, and co-evaluation of the solutions needed, informed by the best available science.

Initially the Climate Pact will prioritise actions focused on **green areas, green mobility, efficient buildings and training for green jobs**, within existing and relevant Commission support mechanisms. These four areas offer immediate benefits not only for the climate, but also for the health and wellbeing of citizens. **The Pact will expand over time to other areas**, such as sustainable consumption and production, the quality of soils, healthy food and sustainable diets,⁴¹ oceans, rural and coastal areas and others. The Climate Pact website⁴² will keep up to date an overview of EU initiatives, actions and awards supporting climate action, starting with the four priority areas.

3.3.1. Green areas

Europe needs more green areas to build resilience in the face of climate and health threats. The Commission has already announced its support for planting **three billion extra trees in Europe by 2030** in its new Biodiversity Strategy.⁴³ We need trees and other green spaces in cities because green urban areas both absorb emissions and reduce excessive temperatures, while in rural areas they provide multiple benefits for biodiversity, agriculture and ecotourism. However, trees need long-term care and management after planting. The Pact will support **local communities, organisations and individuals committed to new tree-planting and caring** initiatives, for instance through increased visibility and information. It will link up with EU-supported agricultural plans in Member States and a range of EU funds (cohesion funds, LIFE programme, etc.) and platforms (the new European Urban Greening Platform announced as part of the Biodiversity Strategy).

Local governments, in particular, can design urban landscapes that make space for urban forests, parks and gardens to grow. Due to restrictions imposed under COVID-19, an increasing number of mayors have recognised the importance of expanding local green urban areas for citizens' wellbeing – in addition to the well-known benefits in terms of emission reductions and adaptation to climate change.

The Pact will pay attention to the particular role of rural areas⁴⁴ in ensuring a balanced territorial distribution of the population and as stewards of resilient landscapes with healthy ecosystems, avoiding overpopulation of cities.

The Pact will:

³⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/adaptation-climate-change-including-societal-transformation_en

⁴⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en

⁴¹ The Commission will develop with stakeholders, by Q2 2021, an EU code and monitoring framework for responsible business and marketing conduct in the food supply chain

⁴² <https://europa.eu/climate-pact>

⁴³ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/strategy/index_en.htm

⁴⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12525-Long-term-vision-for-rural-areas>

1. Provide information to mayors and local and regional authorities drawing from existing resources, networks and platforms such as the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy,⁴⁵ the European Green Capital,⁴⁶ the Green Leaf Networks, the Green City Tool and the Green City Accord;
2. Offer local authorities solutions to restore, protect and enlarge green urban areas. Solutions will build on existing policies and initiatives, draw on findings from Horizon Europe research projects, such as nature-based solutions that maximise quality job creation ,business opportunities and climate resilience;
3. Provide a forum for dialogue and cooperation between communities, businesses, landowners and local governments, to ensure that enough land area is returned to vegetation so that everyone can reap the many benefits it offers in terms of climate, health and ecosystems.

3.3.2. Green mobility

We all need to move around efficiently – and we can do so while improving our health and our environment. A substantial proportion of emissions linked to our personal actions is determined by the transport options we have and the mobility choices we make. Bolstered by digital solutions and greater accessibility, public transport, cycling, walking and other forms of clean mobility have the potential to make our cities and towns cleaner and create new opportunities for jobs and innovation.

This massive movement towards green mobility is already underway. Many European **cities and their residents are looking into safer, healthier and cheaper mobility options** such as improving cycling infrastructure, developing vehicle-sharing schemes, or procuring green buses, vessels and trains. In rural areas, distances are generally more significant than in urban areas, while public transport tends to be less frequent and confined to more densely populated areas. Against this background, the Pact will promote innovative solutions that **leave no place behind**, including practices like electric carpooling or car-sharing, urban and long-distance cycling infrastructure, and transport on demand. This concerns also the specific transport needs of women,⁴⁷ the accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities and older persons but also avoiding residential segregation by making public transport services available to all.

The European Climate Pact will display and support the many options we have for getting around efficiently and in healthier, less polluting ways and encourage local and regional authorities to use cohesion funding to move to greener mobility. It can link up with other initiatives such as the Clean Bus Platform,⁴⁸ which supports cities to purchase clean buses

⁴⁵ Progressively, links with global counterparts could be promoted in the context of the Global Covenant of Mayors.

⁴⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/>

⁴⁷ https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC117687/kjna29833enn_1.pdf

⁴⁸ <https://cleanbusplatform.eu>

together, the CIVITAS network of ‘cities for cities’ dedicated to cleaner urban mobility⁴⁹ and the European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans,⁵⁰ which helps cities decarbonise their transport. The impact of Pact pledges on green transport can be amplified through European Mobility Week,⁵¹ the Urban Mobility Awards, the Urban Mobility Days and the European Year of Rail (2021).

In the context of these initiatives, the Pact can be **the meeting point for stakeholders, city or regional pledges** to:

1. Collectively purchase zero-emission means of transport, such as electric buses or hydrogen buses;
2. Collectively increase the length and quality of safe cycling infrastructure while also reducing road fatalities in cities;
3. Embrace innovative mobility and logistics solutions and design participatory and sustainable urban mobility plans with tailor-made combinations of solutions to reduce emissions and air pollution;
4. Encourage a combination of transport options that offer travellers carbon neutral choices for travel within the EU especially over shorter distances.

3.3.3. Green buildings

At home, at work or during our spare time we spend a great deal of our time indoors: in buildings, heated and cooled using fossil fuels or which may not be well insulated; in places which may be ill-suited to withstand major heat or cold waves. If we consider the whole life-cycle of design, construction, use, renovation and demolition, the **building sector is the single largest energy consumer in the EU** (40%), the largest raw materials user (50% of extracted materials)⁵² and thus one of the largest greenhouse gas emitters (36% of energy-related direct and indirect emissions). Rising temperatures, causing more frequent heatwaves, are set to increase the energy need for cooling our buildings during the warm season – and it takes three times more energy to cool an office building than to heat it.

To make our buildings more climate-friendly, we need to use low-carbon materials, construct new buildings better, and renovate existing buildings, as most of them will still be in place for decades to come.

The Pact will support the **renovation of buildings**⁵³ in line with the European Commission’s Renovation Wave to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and enable them to withstand the impact of climate-related hazards such as heatwaves or floods better. For example:

⁴⁹ <https://civitas.eu/> a network of ‘cities for cities’ dedicated to cleaner, better transport in Europe, with over 800 innovative urban transport measures and solutions in over 80 Living Lab cities across Europe.

⁵⁰ <https://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/european-platform>

⁵¹ <https://mobilityweek.eu>

⁵² A new Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe, 11 March 2020 (COM(2020) 98 final) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0098>

⁵³ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/renovation-wave_en

1. The Pact will provide information on the multiple benefits of improving the energy and materials performance of homes, hospitals, schools, social housing and municipal services.
2. The Pact will encourage pledges, measure progress and facilitate discussions between the various actors involved in the supply chain leading to renovation.⁵⁴ It will co-create solutions with citizens through Horizon Europe, and distil ideas for the European Bauhaus, a new co-creation space where architects, artists, students, engineers and designers work together to make buildings less wasteful and more sustainable.
3. In the context of the EU Renovation Wave,⁵⁵ the Pact will share guidance and technical assistance for mayors and citizens wishing to tackle energy production and use in buildings and to improve their resilience, with special consideration of affordability and energy poverty.
4. The Pact will signpost to available funds e.g. under the LIFE programme and the European Fund for Regional Development to help build renovation efforts driven by citizens, communities and regions, with specific help for vulnerable communities.

3.3.4. Green skills

Climate action is already providing the jobs and opportunities of the future. The employment in the renewable energy industry in the EU has reached over 1.5 million jobs.⁵⁶ The circular economy employs more than 4 million people today.⁵⁷ The Commission estimates 1.2 million additional green jobs to be created between now and 2030 to comply with Europe’s Paris Agreement commitments alone.⁵⁸

The Climate Pact will help those seeking employment in the green economy by promoting and supporting the development of **green skills**⁵⁹ among people, educational and training institutions, as well as public authorities, and by encouraging businesses to take advantage of the transition to and the opportunities of the green economy. Green skills development programmes and initiatives should be equally available to everyone and made accessible to persons with disabilities.

The Pact will:

1. Encourage the involvement of organisations and sectors important for the transition to a climate-friendly economy in the “Pact for Skills”,⁶⁰ which aims to mobilise private and

⁵⁴ Together with the BUILD UP portal (www.buildup.eu).

⁵⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/energy/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/renovation-wave_en

⁵⁶ https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC120302/employment_energy_status_report_2020.pdf

⁵⁷ COM(2020) 98 final, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0098>

⁵⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8219>

⁵⁹ Development of core green skills set for the labour market to guide training across the economy – ESCO taxonomy <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/home> . ESF+ will support the upskilling and re-skilling of 5 million people for green jobs and the green economy <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/main.jsp?catId=62&langId=en>

⁶⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1517&langId=en>

public stakeholders to take concrete action for the upskilling and reskilling of people of working age, and create partnerships;

2. Spread **good practices and success stories** gathered across the numerous European initiatives, notably the European Vocational Skills Week,⁶¹ Skills for Life, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and Erasmus+ funded projects.⁶² Good practices from Member States include using the Youth Guarantee to offer opportunities in the green sectors to unemployed or inactive young people;
3. Help in **navigating the new European Social Fund Plus** for 2021-2027 and the Recovery and Resilience Facility, which will enable millions of people to be trained for green jobs, the green recovery, and a new platform to support innovation, to be launched in 2021. The Erasmus+ Programme 2021-2027 will provide opportunities to develop forward-looking skills as well as partnership projects for organisations in the fields of education and youth to cooperate on skills and competences for environment and climate;
4. Encourage stakeholders, local authorities and communities to make **full use of the Just Transition Fund and Just Transition Mechanism**⁶³ in order to promote re-skilling, active inclusion of workers and jobseekers and creation of new local employment opportunities in the targeted regions;
5. Signpost to available support for higher education institutions to develop and teach programmes on life-cycle environmental and climate impacts and footprints as well as to flexible formats of education, including short courses on environmental sustainability.⁶⁴

4. Join us

The European Climate Pact will acknowledge and amplify the efforts of those already fighting against the climate and ecological crisis, and encourage others to join. It will help Europe master its emissions and align its economy with nature, and for this endeavour, we need everybody on board.

We invite **local, regional and national authorities** to organise regular ‘town hall’ type meetings on climate and environment, to develop strategies for just transition, to increase investments in their communities’ protection from climate impacts and to consider the many benefits that reducing emissions brings to their constituencies in terms of air quality, clean mobility and affordable energy.

⁶¹ European Vocational Skills Week https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/european-vocational-skills-week-2017_en

European Alliance for Apprenticeships <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147>;

⁶² Erasmus+ Project Platform <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/>; European Universities Initiative https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area/european-universities-initiative_en

⁶³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/just-transition-mechanism_en

⁶⁴ Eg. <https://microcredentials.eu>

We invite the **private sector, businesses and finance** to do well, by doing good. This means putting sustainability at the heart of their strategy and operations, focusing on long-term benefits for all, instead of short-term dividends for a few, helping governments ensure that markets provide economic incentives to reduce the harm to the environment and the climate; and harnessing their innovative power to develop solutions to global challenges.

We invite **civil society**, including grassroots organisations, to continue using their convening power to fight climate denial and delay through energetic, participatory and positive action, and to leverage social innovation to foster a continental shift towards a climate-neutral, sustainable Europe.

We invite **social partners** to develop joint strategies for just transition to climate neutrality, and to maintain and create jobs in sectors and regions under transformation, in particular by promoting re- and up-skilling opportunities for the new green, high-quality and long-lasting jobs of the future.

We invite **schools, academia, education and training institutions** to boost climate and environmental literacy and bring the science and the urgency of the climate crisis to bear on our daily lives, policymaking and the economy.

We invite **young people** to use the Pact to drive systemic and inter-generational change for society as a whole.

We invite **citizens** to seek and embrace the many improvements that climate-friendly choices and habits can bring to their lives, to their communities and to the climate, all at once.

The Pact is now open to ideas, Ambassadors and expressions of interest for making pledges. If you would like to learn more about the Climate Pact or get active in it, you are welcome to visit the Climate Pact website,⁶⁵ reach out on Social Media, inquire via the Commission Representations in Member States or approach any of our Climate Pact Ambassadors.

The Commission welcomes everyone to join the journey towards a better and greener Europe. We will build a path as we walk it together, with a common purpose. Anyone can take action. Everyone can contribute. **No action is too small to make a difference.**

⁶⁵ <https://europa.eu/climate-pact>