
A Climate Neutral Europe by 2050

EU impulse and national action

Event

[Digital Event](#)

Date

26 March 2021

Location

online

[Event recording](#)

On 26 March 2021 the Climate Recon 2050 Platform hosted an online debate with the European Commission and national government experts, discussing the impact of the climate neutrality target on EU climate policy and national planning processes.

The virtual discussion, moderated by **Erica Hope**, Director for Climate Planning and Laws, European Climate Foundation, featured voices from both EU level perspective and the national implementation perspective with participation of:

- **Stefanie Hiesinger**, Cabinet of Commissioner Timmermans, European Commission
- **Pavel Zamyslicky**, Director, Energy and Climate Protection Department, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic
- **Andrea Meyer**, Head of unit, national climate plan, Environment Ministry of Germany
- **Gertraud Wollansky**, Senior expert, Climate Ministry of Austria

Fifteen months ago, EU heads of state and government agreed on a new long-term climate policy goal for the EU: to become climate neutral by 2050. This is also the central objective giving guidance to the European Green Deal, and it is about to become legally binding through the EU climate law. It makes the EU the first regional bloc to have committed to going to 'net zero' emissions. Arguably, the move to a higher 2030 emissions reduction goal of 55%, adopted a few weeks ago, is owed to this strengthened climate ambition.

In this context, the invited experts debated a variety of topics. Presenting European Commission's perspective Stefanie Hiesinger highlighted the steps being taken at the EU level to translate the European Green Deal from a political commitment into concrete action and outlined the key processes on the path ahead. Focusing on national-level implementation, Andrea Meyer underlined the importance of mainstreaming greenhouse gas emissions reductions across sectors and the climate action across all policy areas, including social policy. Ms Meyer highlighted the opportunities presented by transition to climate neutrality to transform social and economic policy and underlined

the importance of fostering a wide societal dialogue to bring various actors on board. Pavel Zamyslicky pointed out the important role the creation of national long-term climate strategy had in opening the debate with key policy makers and sector representatives in the Czech Republic and improving inter-sectoral cooperation. Gertraud Wollansky explained how bringing forward the climate neutrality target to 2040 affects climate planning processes in Austria. Ms Wollansky shed light on the various steps Austria is taking to engage the public in this process, including running a climate referendum and a planned Climate Assembly.

Asked about the key elements that can strengthen the implementation of national long-term climate strategies, the experts mentioned the importance of climate legislation at EU and national levels, the need to apply a "whole government approach" as is now used in case of economic policy and underlined the importance of fostering wide public participation.

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[Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety](#) (BMU), Germany
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