

'Fit for 55 package': local leaders ready to take the helm as Council adopts a €17.5 billion Just Transition Fund



The Commission for the Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE) of the European Committee of the Regions debated on the Conference on the Future of Europe, the 2022 European Commission's Work Programme and the 'Fit for 55 package' whose purpose is to update the EU's 2030 climate and energy laws to reflect the 55% net emissions reduction target that the EU set for 2030. Other topics included the development of a trans-European energy infrastructure, the new EU strategy on climate adaptation and the mainstreaming of gender equality under the European Green Deal. □

The ENVE meeting was chaired by [Rastislav Trnka](#) (SK/EPP), Chairman of Košice Self – Governing Region and First Vice-chair of the ENVE commission, who said: *“We must work together to achieve the objectives of the ‘Fit for 55 package’, starting with the sectors that have the highest energy efficiency potential such as buildings, transport and industry. The revision of the Emissions Trading System (ETS) and that of the Directives on Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and the Energy Performance of Buildings is a unique opportunity to further support Local and Regional Authorities implement these policies on the ground. We are ready to take the helm.”*

Members debated on the 'Fit for 55 package' with **Cristina Lobillo Borrero**, Director for Energy Policy, Strategy and Coordination at the European Commission's DG ENER, who reiterated that local and regional authorities are 'strategic to deliver the energy transition' and pointed out the important role that the new [National Ambassadors of the Covenant of Mayors](#) can play in motivating local and regional authorities to join the Covenant and receive its support to deliver sustainable energy and climate plans that take Europe closer to climate-neutrality.

The European Commission plans to propose a “Fit for 55” legislative package in the summer of 2021. Today's debate took place while the Council of the EU [adopted a regulation](#) establishing a €17.5 billion Just Transition Fund (JTF) to alleviate the socio-economic costs for communities across the EU that are heavily dependent on fossil fuels or GHG-intensive industries and need to diversify their local economy.

Intervening on the “Fit for 55” debate, **Barbara Mariani**, Policy Manager for Climate at the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) also emphasized the need to set a clear date to end subsidies on fossil-fuels in the EU, called for a phase-out of the free allocation of emission allowances and stressed that the decarbonisation of the agriculture sector is 'lagging behind'.

All CoR members and participants of the Young Elected Politicians programme ([YEPs](#)) are invited to complete the [survey](#) to provide information on their climate commitments and participation in climate-related international networks.

On the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE), **Rebeca Harms**, member of the [CoR's High Level Group on European Democracy](#), stressed the fundamental link between the CoFoE and the European Green Deal, 'the major long term project in the EU', and pointed out the transformation of our economy, industry, agriculture and lifestyle requires a close cooperation between the local, regional, national and European levels.'

Two drafts opinions were discussed and adopted:

On the opinion ['Revised Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation fit for the Green and Digital Transition'](#), rapporteur [Robert Sorin Negoită](#) (RO/PES), Mayor of Bucharest District 3, stressed that: *" Investing in trans-European energy infrastructure is key to achieve the new climate targets and the 2050 climate-neutrality objective and to provide clean affordable energy, leaving no one behind. We are pleased that the future framework will preserve the key role of regional groups in the identification and selection process of Projects of Common Interest (PCI) and Projects of Mutual Interest (PMI). If properly involved, cities and regions can ensure projects' optimal impact, strengthening the presence of 'citizens-prosumers' and local energy communities."* The draft opinion was adopted unanimously.

On the opinion ['Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change'](#), rapporteur [Markku Markkula](#) (FI/EPP), Chair of the Espoo City Board and President of the Helsinki Region, declared: *"Regional and local roadmaps and Green Deal Going Local action plans based on political leadership are the way forward. We nevertheless need EU support instruments and financing to mobilise public-private investments, which remain key. Cities and regions are the ones demonstrating how we can reach climate neutrality through smart and systemic approaches."*

Members had an exchange of views on the opinion ['Gender equality and climate change: towards gender mainstreaming in the European Green Deal'](#). Rapporteur [Kata TÜTTŐ](#) (HU/PES), Deputy Mayor of Budapest, said: *"Women and girls are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. This is why it is important that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are present in the action at all levels within the European Green Deal. For a fairer and just recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, cities and regions must prevent a gender-blind implementation of the green transition."* The Deputy-Director General of the European Commission's DG CLIMA, **Clara de la Torre**, underlined the need to leverage the full potential of the transition while leaving no one behind. [Click here](#) to access our ongoing survey on gender and climate.

Members of the ENVE commission appointed [Marieke Schouten](#) (NL/Greens) as the rapporteur of the opinion 'EU Action Plan: Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil' and [Frida Nilsson](#) (SE/Renew Europe) as the rapporteur of the opinion 'Local and regional authorities accelerating the implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative'.

[Click here](#) to access the agenda and working documents of the ENVE commission meeting of 7 June 2021.

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