

# The European Union continues to lead the global fight against climate change

The European Commission today adopted a Communication reaffirming the EU's commitment to accelerated climate ambition. Preparing for the Climate Action Summit by the United Nations Secretary General in New York on 23 September, the Commission recalls that the European Union has been at the forefront of global climate action, negotiating an inclusive international framework to respond to this challenge, while acting domestically with unity, speed and decisiveness. The EU has put concrete actions behind its Paris Agreement commitments, in line with the **Juncker** Commission priority of establishing an Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy.

Commission Vice-president for the Energy Union Maroš **Šefčovič** said: *"With the Paris Agreement, for the first time all parties committed to reduce emissions. Now we must make sure these reductions are timely enough to avoid the worst of the climate crisis. The European Union will bring to New York the fruit of our work on the Energy Union: a realistic perspective of a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, backed by ambitious policies set in binding legislation. The EU has ensured that all sectors contribute to the transition. At the Climate Action Summit, we hope our plans will inspire other countries, and we hope to be inspired. Our message is simple: Europe delivers."*

Commissioner for Climate Action and energy, Miguel **Arias Cañete** said: *"The European Union has a powerful story to tell at the UN Climate Summit later this month. We are a global climate leader and our climate action is an outstanding example of delivery, including in the context of our Long Term Strategy process. The EU's approach is to ensure that climate ambition is not only about headline targets, but about actual delivery on our promises, about making sure that objectives will be fulfilled and emissions reductions will happen. As shown by the EU-wide survey published today, our approach has a very strong mandate from our citizens. I am proud to share these messages also in New York."*

The European Union is the first major economy to put in place a legally binding framework to deliver on its pledges under the Paris Agreement and it is successfully transitioning towards a low emissions economy, with a view to reach climate neutrality by 2050. Ambitious climate action enjoys strong democratic support. According to the latest special Eurobarometer on climate change as published today, 93% of Europeans believe that climate change is a serious problem.

Moreover, the EU and its member states, true to their commitment to multilateral action rooted in science, are actively preparing to communicate by early 2020 a long-term strategy with the objective of achieving climate neutrality by 2050, as proposed by the Commission. The Commission presented

its [vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy](#) in November 2018 and a large majority of member states [endorsed](#) this vision in June 2019. According to the Eurobarometer, 92% of Europeans supported making the EU climate-neutral by 2050. Under the Paris Agreement, all parties have to present a long-term strategy by 2020.

## **Background**

The EU continues to deliver on its commitments:

The EU has the most comprehensive and ambitious legislative framework on climate action in place and it is successfully transitioning towards a low emissions economy, aiming at climate neutrality by 2050 – between 1990 and 2017 its greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 23% while the economy grew by 58%.

The EU has already over-achieved its 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target and has completed its unique binding legislative framework that will allow us to over-deliver on our climate targets for 2030. At the same time, the EU Adaptation Strategy has encouraged national, regional and local adaptation action since 2013.

Conscious that our emissions make up only around 9% of the global total, the EU is continuing its outreach and cooperation, financial and technical, to all partner countries. The EU remains the world's leading donor of development assistance and the world's biggest climate finance donor. Providing over 40% of the world's public climate finance, the EU and its Member States' contributions have more than doubled since 2013, exceeding EUR 20 billion annually.

## **Strong support from citizens**

Ahead of the United Nations Climate Action Summit, the Commission carried out a special Eurobarometer on climate action and energy, which shows that in all EU Member States, citizens overwhelmingly support action taken to fight climate change, and want the EU and national leaders to increase their ambitions in this regard and strengthen Europe's energy security.

The Eurobarometer shows that 93% of Europeans believe that climate change is a 'serious problem', and 79% see it as a 'very serious problem'. Compared with the last Eurobarometer in 2017, climate change has overtaken international terrorism in being perceived as the second most serious problem facing the world today, after poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water.

The proportion of European citizens who have taken personal action to fight climate change has increased in all EU Member States to an EU wide average of more than nine in ten citizens (93%). The Eurobarometer results also show a demand for national governments to step up their own targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy (92%), and to give more public funding to renewable energy (84%). A strong majority of Europeans (72%) feel that reducing energy imports will have a positive impact on the economy and energy security, and 92% believe that EU must secure access to energy for all EU

citizens.

**For More Information**

[Communication on the 2019 Climate Action Summit hosted by the United Nations Secretary General in New York](#)

[Special Eurobarometer on Climate Change with Member State specific factsheets](#)

[Special Eurobarometer on Energy with Member State specific factsheets](#)

[Clean planet for all communication](#)

[The Energy Union: from vision to reality](#)

[Factsheet on the new legislative framework for energy and climate action](#)