

EuComMeet
DELIBERATIVE SPACES FOR DEMOCRACY

Welcome to EuComMeet!

Here you will find all the information you need to get the most out of your deliberative experience.

*Feel free to explore the document and jump to the information you are interested in.
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Enjoy your reading!*



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Deliberation means ...



KNOWING | Acquiring the knowledge needed to **fully understand the complexity** of the topic of debate, and have a **deeply informed opinion**



DIALOGUING | **Expressing** one's own point of view and **listening** to that of others, **arguing and counter-arguing**, possibly **modifying one's own initial opinion** in the light of the exchange



BALANCING | **Assessing the strengths and weaknesses** of each argument and option

... before deciding.

The decision making process in representative democracies

Democracy is **Participation**.



In representative democracies, **citizens choose their political representatives** by majority vote through elections.



The political parties that obtain the majority of votes are represented in **legislative assemblies**.



Within legislative assemblies, **elected representatives vote to pass the national laws**.

Before voting for a legislative measure, representatives **discuss, represent different points of view, provide justifications or counter-arguments**. In other words, they **deliberate**.

Over the past twenty years, faced with an increasing complexity of decision-making, **institutions at all levels**, from the European Union to municipalities, have started **experimenting with forms of participatory and deliberative democracy**.

These processes consist of **bringing together groups of citizens to invite them to dialogue** and exchange views on specific issues. The debate is **based on an assessment** of different options. Participants have **access to accurate information**, and **review their own ideas** in the light of the discussion or information provided.

How can citizens participate in the decision making process?



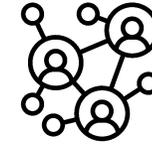
by voting in **elections**, to elect their representatives by majority vote



by voting in **referendums**, to decide directly by majority vote on an issue or a law's proposal



by **running for election** or **supporting** a political party or a candidate



by **deliberation**

How can deliberation improve the decision-making process?



Better decisions | The judgments that emerge from reasonable and informed citizen discussion help to deepen issues and enrich the discussion with different points of view. A deliberative process can thus provide decision-makers with useful recommendations for better decisions that take into account different points of view.



More legitimate decisions | When citizens have produced recommendations through deliberation, decision-makers will have to provide adequate justifications for their choice to follow them fully, partly, or not at all.



Civic sense and social cohesion | Inviting citizens to engage in dialogue, to inform themselves, to explore issues and the views of others, helps to strengthen civic sense, to feel part of the community, to make decision-making processes more open and inclusive, to counter misinformation.

What Is EuComMeet?

[EuComMeet](#) is an online, European deliberative project.

It has been designed by a group of European researchers with the aim of **disseminating, innovating, and making deliberative practices more effective** and inclusive.

Our project has been funded by the **European Union** through the [Horizon 2020 programme](#). The project started in November 2021 and will end in February 2024.

What are the EuComMeet *online Participatory Spaces*?

Our online participatory spaces, implemented on the eucommet.nextcloud.eu platform, are **virtual spaces designed for deliberation**.

- [1. Citizenship and Community: deliberation groups and levels](#)
- [2. Dialogue, reflection, dialogue: modes of deliberation](#)
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Making deliberative processes an integral part of decision-making processes, at all levels, in European democracies.

Improving deliberative processes and making them more effective to meet the challenges of liberal democracies.

Exploiting technology to make deliberative processes more efficient and help reduce organisational costs.





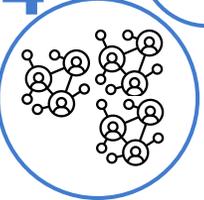
1. Citizenship and Community: *deliberation groups and levels*

Each deliberation group will consist of **no more than 10 participants**, so as to establish real connections between the citizens involved and allow everyone time to express their opinion. The last group you will join is a larger one, consisting of **35 to 40 participants**, which will attend the **European plenary conference** that will close the process. To sum up, you will join 4 groups:

- 1   • 1st group: **local group**, composed of 10 citizens from Dublin;

- 2   • 2nd group: **national group**, composed of 5 citizens from Dublin and 5 citizens from Cork;

- 3   • 3rd group: **European group**, composed of 10 citizens from Ireland and 2 other countries among those involved (France, Germany, Italy, Poland);

- 4  • 4th and last group: **European group - final event**, composed of 35 to 40 citizens from Ireland and 2 other countries among those involved. The group will attend the European plenary conference, when we will present and discuss the main results of the process.



The EuComMeet online Participatory Spaces

2. Dialogue, reflection, dialogue: *modes of deliberation*



In developing EuComMeet, we tried to *restore and enhance the conditions and functions of a deliberation in presence* and support the achievement of its objectives, using **live video conferencing** and **texting within a social chat-like space** as the main forms of communication.



Videoconferencing aims to bring citizens 'physically', though virtually, together, so that *they see and talk to each other* as if they were in presence.

The **text-forum** is designed to *allow everyone the time they want to think 'cold' about the issues addressed*, in the light of the information materials and the opinions or reactions of others, and to formulate and express an opinion or response.

3. Managing the debate: *the moderation*



As in face-to-face deliberations, *a moderator will coordinate and manage the debate*.

The **moderator** is the one whose function is to *present the agenda, launch questions and manage the timing* of the discussion. For this purpose, we have developed an **automatic moderation tool**, which allows moderators to schedule and manage a bot.



Some deliberative events will be moderated by a bot that sets the topics, questions and deliberation times under the supervision of a human moderator.

4. Understanding each other: *the machine translation system*



The Eucommeet Participatory Spaces are built to restore and enhance, thanks to technology, the **main forms of communication between human beings: speaking, writing, reading**.

To communicate with others, *one must understand their language*. To ensure that at European level also citizens without a common standard language can communicate with each other, the texting space is integrated with a **machine translation system in the 5 languages** of the countries involved.



5. The Right to Privacy: *relocating virtual events*



The nextcloud.eucommeet.eu platform is developed using **on-premises technology**.

On-premises software is software installed and running *on computers at the premises of the person or organisation using it*, rather than at a remote facility.

The EuComMeet Consortium is **in control of the data in the most literal and direct sense of the term**, as this data is on a server owned and operated by us, rather than floating in the web cloud.



As in the case of public in-presence events, **the EuComMeet events are online but localised events**, located on a host of which the exclusive guarantor is the owner. In this case the guarantor is the University of Siena on behalf of the EuComMeet project, in future cases the guarantor will be the city itself or the institution that will decide to deliberate through our platform.

Know more about our technologies [here](#).

6. Digital inclusiveness. *Access to information, knowledge, technologies*



In order to provide citizens with **all the information they need to form an informed opinion and critical thinking on the issues addressed**, EuComMeet provides **digital access** for participants to data, information and documents on the three debate topics.

These materials have been processed by the EuComMeet team on the basis of **local, national and European official sources**.

Our platform is **open source**. Any institution that would like to adopt EuComMeet in the future will be able to modify and adapt it to their own needs, delete or add functions, populate it with new content.

The EuComMeet deliberative event (May/June 2023)

Who will participate in the event?

You and +1000 European citizens

- +100 citizens from Paris / +100 citizens from Lyon
- +100 citizens from Dublin / +100 citizens from Cork
- +100 citizens from Berlin / +100 from Mannheim / Stuttgart
- +100 citizens from Rome / +100 citizens from Milan
- +100 citizens from Warsaw / +100 citizens from Wroclaw

Representatives of the 11 cities involved / The **European Committee of Regions (CoR)**

Scientists & experts on the topics of debate.



How does it work?

Multilevel

- 1. local level** Debate with people from the same city;
- 2. national level** Debate with people from the same country;
- 3. European level** Debate with people from other countries.

Multimodal

- 1. videoconferencing** Online live debate of 1.5 hours;
- 2. forum-based communities** For 3 days, participants will have access to an online community where posting ideas and commenting each other's opinions.

Multilingual

A **machine translation system** will help people from different countries or speaking different languages to communicate with each other.

The EuComMeet deliberative event

Your deliberative journey

PREPARATION

day1 | LOCAL LIVE DEBATE

day2, day3, day4 | NATIONAL
TEXT-FORUM

day5 | NATIONAL LIVE DEBATE

day6, day7, day8 | EUROPEAN
TEXT-FORUM

day9 | EUROPEAN LIVE PLENARY

Read the briefing materials on the topics of debate before the event starts, so to be ready to debate!

Join your local group and start the discussion!

Join your national group and discuss with citizens from your country!

Join your 1st European group and share insights and ideas with citizens from other countries!

Join your 2nd European group and enjoy the final event!

At the end of the deliberative process, **we will present the recommendations resulting from the debate to the institutions** of the [EuComMeet-supporting cities](#).

The **EuComMeet** *deliberative event*

Cities and Institutions involved in the project:

Paris / Lyon

Berlin / Mannheim / Stuttgart

Dublin / Cork

Rome / Milan

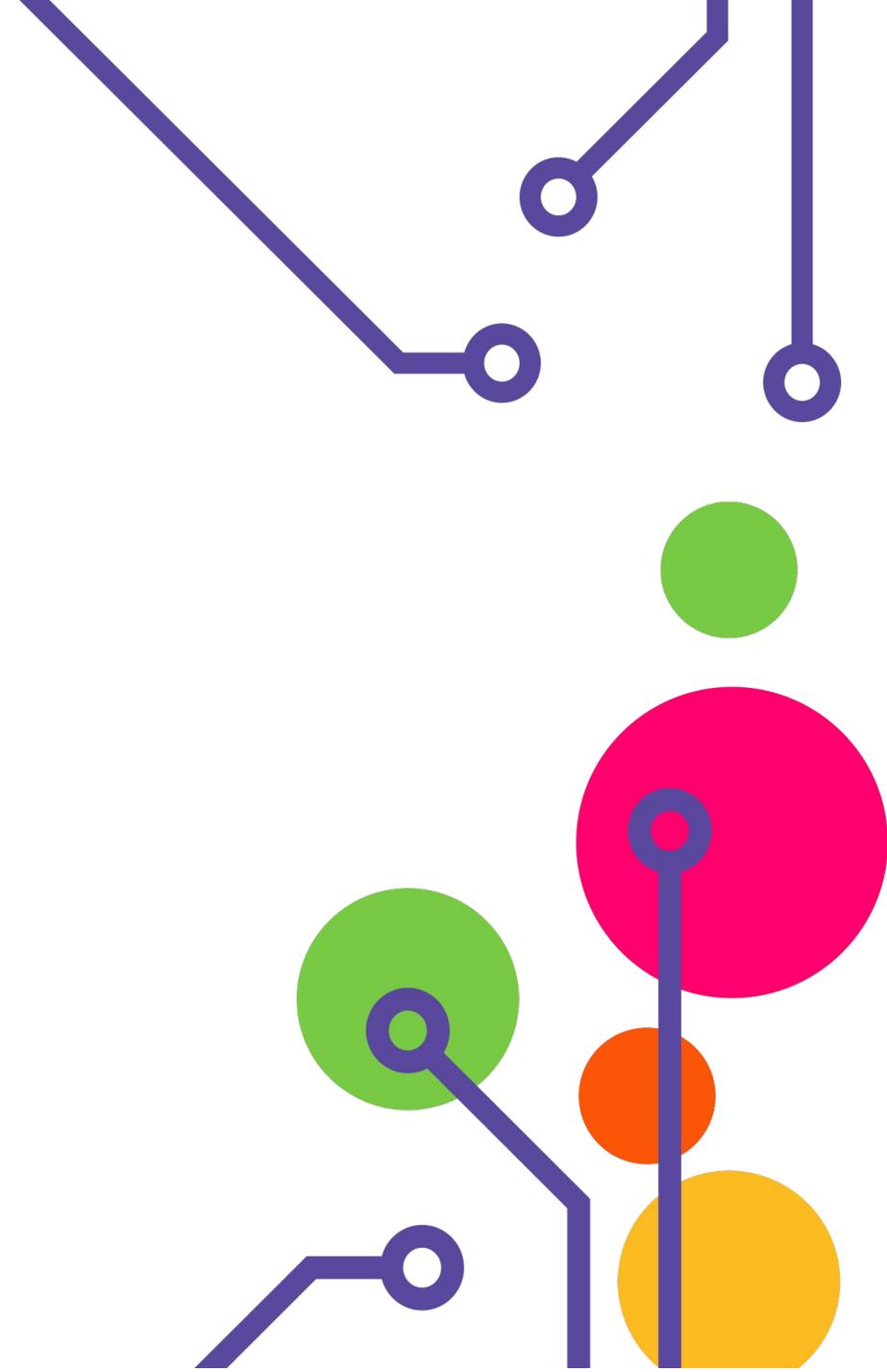
Warsaw / Wroclaw

The European Committee of Regions (CoR)

The European Commission

Ecodynamics Group Research Center

ENIL - User-led network of disabled people





The EuComMeet Consortium

[University of Siena](#), Italy

[Åbo Akademi](#), Finland

[Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas](#), Spain

[Dublin City University](#), Ireland

[NetHood](#), Switzerland

[Missions Publiques](#), France

[Tour4EU](#), Belgium

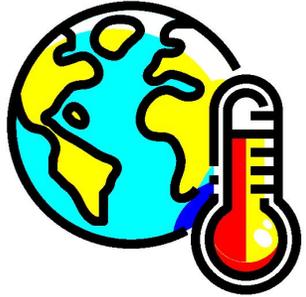
[Université Paris 8](#), France

[University of Stuttgart](#), Germany

[University of Warsaw](#), Poland



What is climate change?



The global average temperature increase

The [Paris Agreement](#) (2015) identifies a **limit of 1.5°C of global average temperature increase** compared to pre-industrial levels.



Exceeding this limit could have **significant impacts on natural balances**, with many risks for human beings and other forms of life on Earth: *more violent storms, droughts, warming and rising oceans, extinction of animal species, and health risks*. The areas of the planet most affected and most vulnerable to the impact of these changes risk worsening the **situation of poverty**, and **migratory flows** towards less affected or more resilient countries.



The **main cause of climate change** lies in the increase in **greenhouse gas emissions**.

Some gases in the earth's atmosphere (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, fluorinated gases), in fact, *act like greenhouse glass*, capturing the sun's heat.

This causes an increase in the global average temperature and, consequently, climate change.

Although some of **these gases** are naturally occurring, the **increase in concentrations of these gases in the atmosphere is mainly due to human activities**, especially carbon dioxide (CO₂).

[Greenhouse gases and human activities](#)
[Environment and economy](#)

Among the human activities that contribute most to the increase in greenhouse gas emissions are:



COMBUSTION OF COAL, OIL, AND GAS

Today, **most electricity is generated by burning fossil fuels**, while only a quarter comes from renewable sources such as wind and sun, which emit little or no greenhouse gases and pollutants. Furthermore, **most transport** (cars, trucks, planes, ships) is **powered by fossil fuels**.



FOOD PRODUCTION

The use of fertilisers in agriculture and emissions from livestock farming, especially cattle, are responsible for more than 10% of greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union. Added to this are the harmful consequences of deforestation and deforestation of land, as trees help to regulate the climate by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.



PRODUCTS AND EQUIPMENT THAT EMIT FLUORINATED GASES

F-gases are man-made chemicals used in many sectors and applications, for example as refrigerants in refrigeration and air conditioning systems and in heat pumps, or certain gases used in electronics and in the cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries.



WASTE DISPOSAL

Waste placed in landfills emits greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere.

Economic growth has long been associated with human activities involving high greenhouse gas emissions.

Is it possible to think of an **economic growth** that does not lead to an increase in greenhouse gases?

To reconcile economic development with the environmental challenge, economic growth should be ...

Green

Green growth (or ecological modernisation) is a strategy that aims at the **development of new and integrated technologies** that, on the one hand, **contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions** and, on the other hand, represent a **potential for economic growth**.

Sustainable

Development is sustainable if it reconciles **economic growth and the environment**.

To be sustainable, economic development must use resources in the following way:

renewable resources should not be harvested faster than they are able to replenish themselves (e.g. forests);

non-renewable resources (e.g. oil) should be exploited in tandem with the creation of resources that can replace them, such as biofuels.

Fair

The economic restructuring required to reduce greenhouse gas emissions inevitably entails economic and social costs:

- the loss of some jobs and the creation of new job profiles linked to the 'green' economy;
- the costs of re-converting companies;
- the costs for citizens to access sustainable energy sources and means of transport.

The energy transition could entail **higher costs for the weaker economic sectors of society**; likewise, **some territories with a high concentration of polluting economic activities could suffer more** from the economic consequences of the **costs of energy transition, diversification of production activities** and the related impact on the **employment**.

The main challenge of the contemporary world is to ensure that **economic development can meet the needs of the present** without jeopardising the **needs of future generations**. **Sustainable development** is a development in which there are economic opportunities of so-called **green growth**, but also the challenges of a **fair transition**.

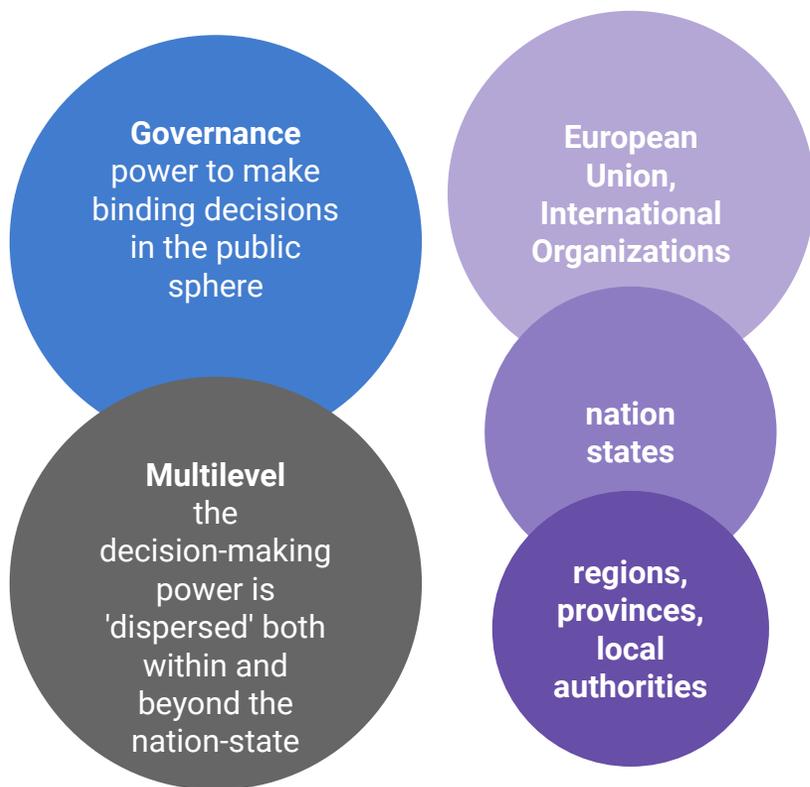
There are many areas in which **we need to work to achieve this green transition**. In our discussion, we will focus on three areas in particular, which are of interest to all of you, as they are issues that affect your daily lives:

- **transport**
- **food consumption**
- **plastic pollution**

Who decides on environmental matters in Europe?



The European decision-making system is called **Multi-level governance**. It can be compared to a matryoshka doll, in which local governments are inserted into national governments, and national governments are inserted into the European one.



The nation states have ceded competences to the EU because, in certain circumstances, acting on a larger territorial scale provides greater benefits (so-called economies of scale). For instance, the EU is a more competitive player on the global market than individual states. Moreover, some challenges such as the environment require **coordination on a larger scale**.

Sometimes, however, **taking decisions at a narrower territorial level makes it possible to better grasp the specific needs of an area** and thus to take more appropriate measures.

At the European level, moreover, the [principle of subsidiarity](#) applies whereby the EU does not intervene, except in areas within its exclusive jurisdiction, unless its action is considered more effective than that taken at national, regional or local level.

The Committee of the [Regions \(CoR\)](#) is an **EU advisory body composed of locally and regionally elected representatives from the 27 member states** and provides opinions on EU legislation that directly affects regions and cities.

In [environmental policy](#), too, the European decision-making system functions according to multilevel logic and is [governed by the principle of subsidiarity](#).

The EU has [concurrent \(or shared\) legislative competence with the member states](#).

The Union and its member states can legislate and adopt legally binding acts.

The member states exercise their competence **where the Union does not or has decided not to exercise it**. In case of conflict, EU law prevails.

[Article 191 TFEU](#) defines the fundamental principles of EU environmental policy:



The new European Green Deal 2019

package of strategic initiatives to kick-start the green transition in the European Union



Achieving climate neutrality by 2050 (zero greenhouse gas emissions).



Ensuring a sustainable use of resources (renewable and non-renewable)



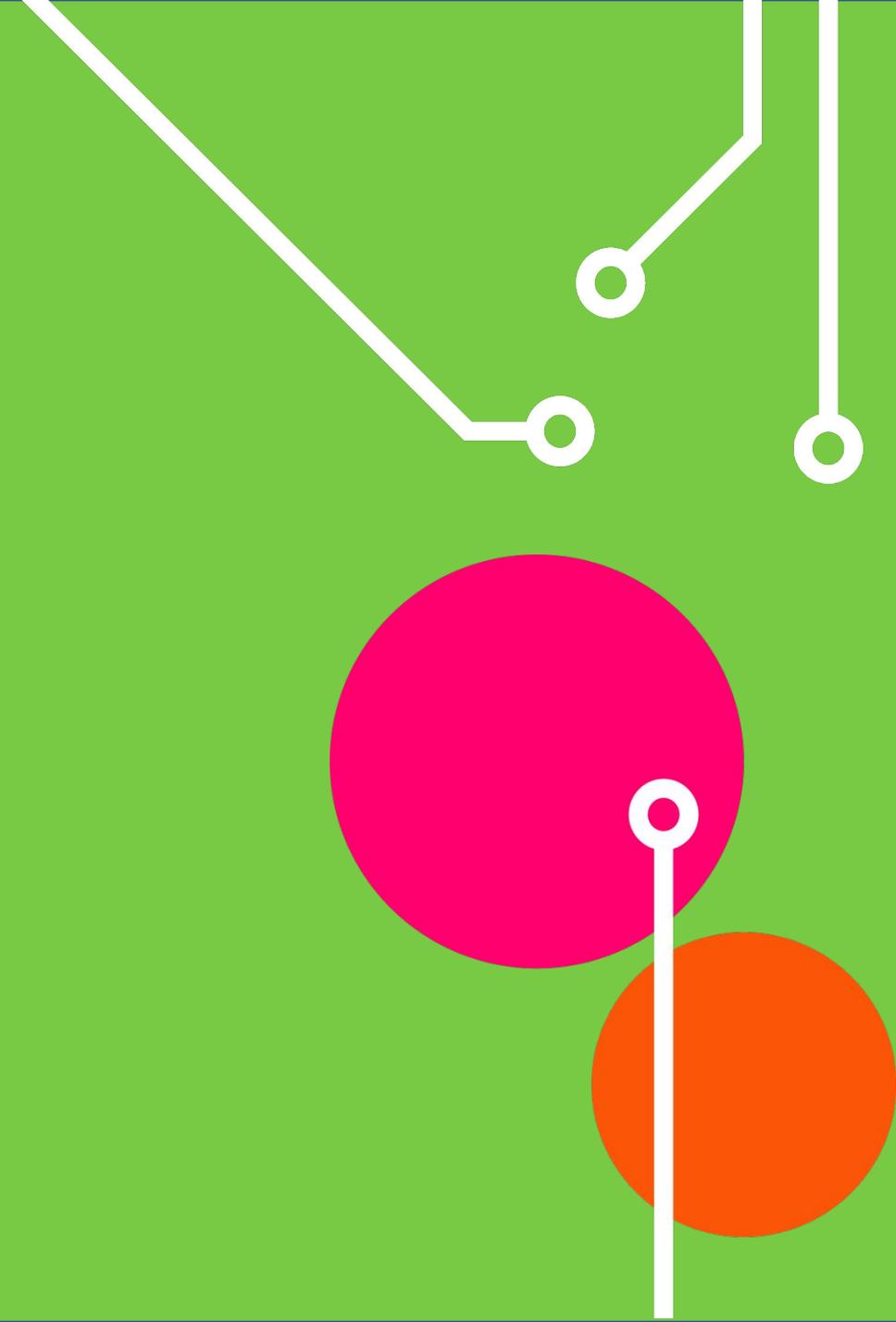
Transform the EU into a modern, competitive economy with a fair and prosperous society, in which no person and no territory is neglected and 'left behind'.

Read more about the European Green Deal [here](#) and [here](#)

The EU countries are also working on the [Fit for 55 package](#): a set of proposals to review and update EU regulations to achieve the goal of reducing EU emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

Sustainable mobility

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What is sustainable mobility?

The concept of **sustainable mobility** was first introduced in 1990 in the Bergen Declaration, which recognized 'the **need to reduce the harmful effects of the transport sector on the environment** by proposing **fast, safe and affordable** urban and regional **transport services**'.

Sustainable mobility means prioritizing means of passenger transport that are **integrated, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly**. E.g. use of bicycles, public transport, car-sharing, preferably electric cars.

Transport is responsible for about a quarter of the European Union's **greenhouse gas emissions**.

The **car is the most frequently used means of transport by citizens of EU Member States**. In 2020, there were on average more than 560 cars per 1,000 people (EUROSTAT).

There are significant differences in motorisation rates not only between EU countries, but also between different regions within Member States.

Which means of transport emit the most air pollutants?

ZERO EMISSION

Walking, Bicycle, Sailing boat, Electric

LOW EMISSION

Natural gas vehicles, Hybrid vehicles, Train

HIGH-EMISSION

Petrol-powered vehicles, Planes

Towards Sustainable Mobility: Europe's Goals 1/2

The EU is committed to promoting a **sustainable, smart** and **'fair'** mobility.

SUSTAINABLE mobility means...

... zero-emission mobility.

Key areas of action

- zero-emission vehicles, renewable and low-carbon fuels and related infrastructure
- zero-emission airports and ports

Milestones:

- At least **30 million zero-emission cars and 80 000 trucks by 2030**;
- Almost all new cars, vans, buses and heavy-duty vehicles will be **zero-emission by 2050**;
- Zero-emission **ocean vessels** and **large aircraft** ready for the market **by 2030** and **2035** respectively.

... that sustainable alternatives are widely available.

Key areas of action

- Make inter-urban and urban mobility **more sustainable and healthy**
- Making freight transport **more environmentally friendly**

Milestones:

- Trips of less than 500 km to be **carbon-neutral by 2030**;
- **High-speed rail traffic doubled by 2030** and **tripled by 2050**;
- At least **100 climate neutral cities** in Europe **by 2030**;
- **Rail freight traffic** increased **by 50% by 2030** and **doubled by 2050**;
- **Inland waterway transport** and **short sea shipping** will increase **by 25% by 2030** and **50% by 2050**.

... that the right incentives must be defined to drive the transition to zero-emission mobility.

Key areas of action

- **Fixing the price of coal** and **providing better incentives for users**
- Extending the **'polluter pays'** and **'user pays'** principle

Milestones:

- **By 2030 intermodal rail and inland waterway** transport will be able to compete on an equal footing with road-only transport in the EU;
- All **external costs of transport** within the EU will be **covered by transport users by 2050** at the latest.

Towards Sustainable Mobility: Europe's Goals 2/2

The EU is committed to promoting a **sustainable, smart** and **'fair'** mobility.

SMART mobility means...

... that policies of 'green' transformation towards zero-emission and 'smart' mobility can offer new **opportunities**, creating new **jobs**, developing **new products and services** and improving the **competitiveness of European industries**.

One example is investment in the construction of new sustainable infrastructure, which can help to sustain employment.

Key areas of action

- Making connected and automated **multimodal mobility** a reality
- **Innovation, data and artificial intelligence** for smart mobility

Milestones:

- **By 2030**, seamless multimodal passenger transport will be facilitated by **integrated electronic ticketing** and freight transport will be paperless;
- **By 2030**, **automated mobility** will be widespread.

FAIR mobility means...

... that the transition to sustainable mobility must **not 'leave anyone behind'**.

... that new means of transport **must be available and affordable** for all and in all areas.

Remote, rural, island areas must be guaranteed adequate connectivity.

... that **territorial inequalities** in infrastructure must be reduced.

... that the transport sector must be able to **guarantee good social conditions and job opportunities** for workers in the sector.

... that transport must be **safe**.

Key areas of action

- Strengthening the **single market**
- Making mobility **fair and equitable for all**
- strengthening **transport security**

Milestones:

- A **multimodal trans-European transport network, equipped for sustainable and intelligent transport with high-speed connectivity**, will be operational **by 2030** for the core network and **by 2050** for the comprehensive network;
- **By 2050** the **mortality rate** for all modes of transport in the EU will be **close to zero**.

Road transport



Revision of the rules on road charging (so-called 'Eurovignette' Directive)

In the EU, road charging is a national choice and Member States can decide whether to introduce it on their territory or not. However, if they decide to levy charges, they must comply with certain common rules laid down in the Eurovignette Directive.

The aim is to ensure that road charges do not discriminate against international traffic and do not distort competition between transport operators. [The revisions adopted in 2022 seek to incentivise the use of cleaner and more efficient vehicles.](#)

CO2 emissions regulation for new cars and vans

As part of the 'Fit for 55%' package, the EU Council adopted a [regulation](#) setting [stricter](#) CO2 emission [performance standards](#) for new cars and vans.

The new rules set the following targets:

- reduction of CO2 emissions by 55% for new cars and 50% for new vans from 2030 to 2034 compared to 2021 levels.
- 100% reduction in CO2 emissions for both new cars and vans from **2035**.

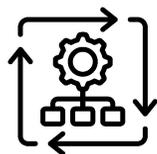
Rail transport



2021 was the [European Year of Railways](#) to promote trains as a safe and sustainable means of transport.

In 2021, the [EU Council Conclusions](#) emphasised the importance of investing in the railway sector, strengthening connectivity and the interoperability of national systems.

Financing and infrastructure



The [Council](#) adopted the [Connecting Europe](#) Facility (also known as the Connecting Europe Facility or CEF) programme, which aims to accelerate investment in networks and build a modern, high-performance, multimodal infrastructure to connect and integrate the Union and all its regions in the key areas of **transport (as well as energy and digital)**.

The budget allocated to the transport sector is EUR 25.81 billion.

The priority objectives are the development and modernisation of rail, road, inland waterway and maritime infrastructure, as well as ensuring safe and secure mobility, and the further development of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T)

Various measures and investments have been taken at national level to facilitate the transition to sustainable mobility. Here are some examples.

France

[Plans de déplacements urbains \(PDU\)](#)
[France restarts Paris-Nice night train](#) to encourage people to fly less

Germany

[Sustainable Urban Transport Project](#)
[Germany brings old railways back to life](#)

Ireland

[CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2023 National Sustainable Mobility Policy](#)
[Iarnród Éireann Strategy 2027 Active Travel Plan](#)

Italy

[Piano Strategico nazionale sulla mobilità sostenibile](#)
[Video su iniziative del Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Sostenibilità Energetica](#)
[Eco bonus. Incentivi per la mobilità sostenibile](#)
[Linee Ferroviarie Alta Velocità](#)

Poland

[EBI wspiera modernizację taboru PKP Intercity](#)
[kredytem w wysokości 2 mld PLN](#)

Some tax benefits and incentives to support the use of electric vehicles have already been implemented in European countries. These vary significantly from one country to another.

People's attitudes towards means of transport are important in predicting their behaviour in the future. Studies have shown that young people are more likely than older people to share or rent goods, including cars, than to buy them. Therefore, in the long run, the number of cars could be reduced.

The forms of passenger transport in cities, apart from car transport, can vary and depend on infrastructure, availability of public transport and local habits.

Actions taken in the last 5 years

[Dublin's Climate Change Action Plan \(1919-1924\)](#) features a range of actions across five key areas - Energy and Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature-Based Solutions and Resource Management - that collectively address the four targets of this plan. More specifically, these aims include a 33% improvement in the Council's energy efficiency by 2020 and 40% reduction in the Council's greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Furthermore, the impacts of future climate change-related events are to be reduced and Dublin citizens are supposed to be informed about climate change.

- [Smart Dublin Programme](#)
Founded in 2016, [Smart Dublin](#) is an initiative of the four Dublin Local Authorities (DLAs) that brings together industry, academia and citizens, to *transform public services and enhance quality of life for citizens*. Smart Dublin's goal is to help future-proof the Dublin region by *trailing and scaling innovative technology-based solutions* to a wide range of local challenges. [Smart Dublin Programme Highlights 2021](#).
- [Mobility as a Service \(MaaS\)](#)
MaaS is a new tool to encourage modal shift in transport. It improves the relative ease of accessing public transport plus new forms of shared mobility – making them collectively much more competitive with private car use.
- [The Smart Mobility Hub](#)
In an effort to reduce staff reliance on private cars, Dublin City Council, launched “The Smart Mobility Hub Challenge”, in partnership with Enterprise Ireland under the Small Business Innovation Research Programme. [Watch the video](#)
- [Active Travel Programme](#)
The programme addresses the Active Travel as '*travelling with a purpose, using your own energy*'. Examples of active travel include walking, wheeling, cycling and using a non-motorised scooter as part of a purposeful journey. Learn more on the programme [here](#)

Actions in the next 5 years

- Dublin is one of 100 cities to participate in EU Mission for climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030.
- The (national) “Sustainable Mobility Policy” is also an ongoing initiative that aims at delivering at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030.



More on [Smart Dublin Maas](#); A [Point of View on MaaS](#) by Smart Dublin (November 2019); [Recommendations to initiate a MaaS Programme in Dublin](#); [MaaS Gap Analysis](#) workshop (March 2020); More on [low emission zones and decarbonisation zones](#); [Ireland's first big e-scooter trial launches across DCU campuses](#); A study on the [parking behaviour of shared e-bike users in Dublin](#)

EU networks/projects/initiatives:

- The [MaaS Alliance](#) facilitates a single and open market for MaaS and full deployment of MaaS services through a shared work programme and by engaging transport operators, service providers, public authorities and users. [Watch the video](#).
- [Handshake H2020 Project](#) supports the transfer and uptake of cycling measures developed by three pioneering “Cycling Capitals” - Copenhagen (Denmark), Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Munich (Germany) - to ten further European cities. The ten “Future Cycling Capitals” are Bordeaux (France), Bruges (Belgium), Cadiz (Spain), [Dublin](#) (Ireland), Greater Manchester (UK), Helsinki (Finland), Krakow (Poland), Riga (Latvia), Rome (Italy) and Turin (Italy).
- [Flow H2020 Project](#) aims at putting *walking and cycling on an equal footing with motorised modes*. To achieve this, a methodology has been developed to assess the effectiveness of walking and cycling measures in addressing urban road congestion. [Watch the video](#)
- [Zero-Cities Network](#). Dublin and Cork have been chosen among 100 cities to participate in EU Mission for climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030

Actions taken in the last 5 years

- Implementation of “Climate Action Committee” that evaluates actions of the City Council with regards to climate change/the biodiversity crisis. The committee also evaluates the interactions with other local and national government bodies.
- Pedestrianization of 27 city center streets; extension of cycling network.
- Active Travel: the (national) “Sustainable Mobility Policy” developed and aims at implementing a strategic framework (until 2030) for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations.

Actions in the next 5 years

- Cork is one of 100 cities to participate in EU Mission for climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030.
- So far: very poor public transport network; high number of car journeys –here actions will be taken to improve the public transport network
- The (national) “Sustainable Mobility Policy” is also an ongoing initiative that aims at delivering at least 500,000 additional daily active travel and public transport journeys by 2030.

EU networks/projects/initiatives:

- [Zero-Cities Network](#). Dublin and Cork have been chosen among 100 cities to participate in EU Mission for climate-neutral and smart cities by 2030

Sustainable food consumption

What is sustainable food consumption?

The concept of **sustainable food consumption** includes raising public awareness and changing food lifestyles to **healthy, sustainable diets available at affordable prices for all**.

Healthy food means ...

- **promoting nutritious diets** to counteract phenomena such as malnutrition and obesity
- **promoting healthy ageing**
- **seeking plant-based alternatives** for protein in the diet
- **improve traceability** and **safety** and **authenticity** systems
- **promote** the **consumption of forgotten crops**
- **support** healthier diets

Sustainable food means ...

promoting food systems that ...

- can **adapt to climate change**
- help **reduce the emission of greenhouse gases** into the atmosphere
- are **capable of promoting biodiversity**, healthy ecosystems and environmentally friendly sustainable agriculture.

How (unsustainable) is food consumption in Europe?



In western industrialised societies, **overproduction of food, overconsumption of low-quality food** and **food wastage** are a cause for concern.

At the same time, **modern agricultural production uses large quantities of fresh water resources**, which are increasingly limited, leading to a loss of biodiversity, while animal husbandry depletes the soil and pollutes the air.

The **total amount of greenhouse gases** released from animal husbandry in the EU hugely **increased between 1990 and 2019**

Towards sustainable food consumption: Europe's goals

In 2020, the EU developed the [Farm to Fork \(F2F\) strategy](#) for a **fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system**. This strategy lies at the heart of the Green Deal. The objective of this strategy is to accelerate the transition to a **sustainable** and **'fair'** food system

Sustainable food system

- that has a neutral or positive environmental impact
- help mitigate climate change and adapt to its impacts
- reverse the loss of biodiversity

Fair food system

- able to guarantee food security, nutrition and public health, ensuring that everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious and sustainable food
- that preserves the affordability of food products while generating fairer economic returns
- promote the competitiveness of the EU supply sector
- promote fair trade
- able to create new opportunities for food operators

F2F STRATEGY GOALS

- **Improving the food supply chain:** to reduce environmental impact (greenhouse gas emissions and use of pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics);
- **Improving consumer information:** increasing food safety (e.g. by combating fraud and ensuring greater traceability of products), and reducing food losses and waste;
- **Promoting the transition to sustainable food consumption:** through research, innovation, technology and investment.

F2F STRATEGY KEY ACTIONS

- Proposal for **harmonised mandatory nutrition labelling on the packaging** front to enable consumers to make health-conscious food choices;
- Proposal to require the **indication of origin** for certain products;
- Determine how best to establish mandatory minimum criteria for sustainable food procurement in order to **promote healthy and sustainable diets**, including organic products, **in schools and public institutions**;
- Proposal for a sustainable **food labelling framework** to enable consumers to make sustainable food choices;
- Review of the **EU promotion programme for agricultural and food products** in order to increase their contribution to sustainable production and consumption;
- Review of the legal framework of the **EU Schools Programme** in order to refocus the programme on healthy and sustainable food.

Towards sustainable food consumption EU initiatives



Rules on information and labelling



[European Commission's Food Information Regulation.](#)

Individual EU member states impose additional obligations on producers to provide information on where food is grown, processed and packaged. Furthermore, producers can certify products. This translates into the right to place special marks on the packaging indicating compliance with particular requirements, e.g. for organic, local, vegan or gluten-free food.

This is useful because the purpose of certification information is to convince the buyer to purchase a certain product. However, obtaining a certificate entails a cost for the manufacturer due to the procedure of verifying the quality of the product.

As part of the F2F strategy, the European Commission has announced that it [will revise the regulation](#), strengthening the harmonisation of labelling, extending the obligation to indicate origin and provenance to more products and changing the rules on product expiry.

School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Programme



The programme supports the [distribution of milk, fruit and vegetables](#) to millions of children, from kindergarten to secondary school, in the EU. Applicable from 2017, it is being revised as part of the F2F strategy.

Towards sustainable food consumption NATIONAL initiatives

- At a national level, the Irish government developed a Climate Action Plan
- This plan includes measures to develop and promote "Sustainable Farming and Food Production"

Various measures and investments have been taken at national level to facilitate the transition to sustainable food consumption. Here are some examples.

France

Germany

Ireland

Italy

Poland

[PAN SCP - Piano d'Azione nazionale in materia di consumo e produzione sostenibili](#)
[L'adesione italiana a F2F \(2021-2027\)](#)

Actions taken in the last 5 years

- [Dublin City University has a sustainability programme](#). Dublin City University has a sustainability programme. This includes the carbon footprint on restaurant food.
- [Eat The Streets Festival](#). A Festival bringing together families, farmers, urban growers and neighbourhoods to celebrate Dublin's food.
- [Edible Dublin Food Strategy](#). A survey to involve citizenship in the strategy development.

Actions in the next 5 years:

- Firstly, one overarching strategy implemented in Dublin is "Smart Dublin": Since 2016, Dublin is an initiative of the four Dublin Local Authorities (DLAs) that brings together industry, academia and citizens, to transform public services and enhance quality of life for citizens. With the help of "innovative technology", this programme's goal is to future-proof the Dublin region.
- Secondly, the Irish government developed a Climate Action Plan (see above) that primarily focuses on the national level but is also supposed to be implemented at the local level. The measures for sustainable farming and food production have a longer time-frame (i.e. is also concerned with actions and policymaking for the upcoming years).
- Ongoing initiative by Edible Dublin: the aim is to develop a "food strategy", i.e. a method of identifying actions than can enhance "food systems" (food systems = full cycle of how food is grown, produced, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of). Currently, Edible Dublin invites the public to complete a survey to gain a greater understanding of how the public interacts with their food system. This, in turn, is meant to inform a food strategy for the city.

EU networks/projects/initiatives

- [Food Wave](#). An European project aimed at empowering Urban Youth for Climate Action. Explore [Food Wave media gallery](#) for more information and data, and know more about the [Food Wave Community](#).
- [CULTIVATE](#). National NGO and Civil Society Organisation focused on education, communication and citizen engagement.
- [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#). Launched in 2015, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is an international agreement among cities from all over the world, committed "to develop sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change".

Dublin is a member of the **European Covenant of Mayors** which was launched in 2008 in Europe with the ambition to gather local governments voluntarily committed to achieving and exceeding the EU climate and energy targets.

Actions taken in the last 5 years

The “Cork Food Policy Council” has been established but is largely made up of individuals who develop ideas for improving food quality and the way in which it has been produced.

Actions in the next 5 years

- **Further development of actions already taken by the “Cork Food Policy Council”**
- **Cork incentivizes people to have, for example,** rooftop gardens since growing food in cities will reduce transport costs and emissions, decrease food waste, utilise rainwater, support biodiversity and reduce food costs. Combined, these factors will result in healthier cities.

EU networks/projects/initiatives

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Plastic Pollution



What is Plastic Pollution?

Plastic as an environmental hazard

The term 'plastic' refers to the material from which building materials and parts of cars, household appliances and packaging are commonly made. **Plastics are synthetic polymers** (compounds not found in nature) or **modified natural polymers**.

The production cost of plastic, which has the advantage of being very durable, is considerably lower than that of other materials.

However, **its decomposition times range from 100 to potentially 1,000 years.**

Added to this is not only the fact that the **compounds released during this process are harmful to the environment and people**, but also that **recycling plastic is quite expensive**.

For these reasons, **much waste ends up in illegal landfills**, thus polluting the soil, lakes, rivers, seas and oceans.

Current use of plastics

Towards the end of the last century, **plastic production increased exponentially**, making waste management difficult.

The **annual turnover of plastic sales increases every year**, as does the demand for this material.

Packaging contributes substantially to plastic production and consumption.

Single-use plastics (e.g. cotton buds, cutlery, plates and straws, food and beverage containers, bags, cups, wrappers and packages, fishing gear) **account for 80% of global marine litter**, creating plastic islands or, disintegrated into micro-particles, ingested by fish and other marine creatures.

With the outbreak of the **Covid-19 pandemic**, there has been an **increase in single-use plastic items**: masks, gloves and other single-use plastic items around the world have become **new sources of plastic pollution** and, in the long term, may undermine the achievements of existing legislation.

Let us take the use of plastic bags as an example. A 2019 EUROSTAT study showed that, on average, **a European uses around 93 lightweight plastic shopping bags** per year. However, there are significant differences between countries in this practice.



Fight against plastic pollution: Europe's Goals

The EU has adopted a plastics strategy as part of the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#).

Circular Economy Action Plan Objectives

- *transform the way plastic products are designed, produced, used and recycled in the EU*
- *transition to a sustainable plastics economy*
- *support more sustainable and safer consumption and production patterns for plastics*
- *create new opportunities for innovation, competitiveness and employment*
- *stimulate change and set a global example*

The so-called 'circular economy' contributes significantly to reducing plastic pollution. It involves **planning the use of waste already at the production stage**. The various categories of plastic are labelled, collected and processed to obtain the pure material for reuse.

It is worth noting that **mechanical recycling can pollute the atmosphere less than chemical recycling** of waste. However, the **current increase in energy prices** puts the circular economy at risk. In addition, **plastic substitutes are recommended, such as biodegradable packaging** made from (for example) apple peels. To reduce environmental degradation, priority must be given to **preventing pollution rather than reducing or eliminating it once it has occurred**.

Achieving the EU target of **reducing microplastic emissions into the environment by 30%** requires a change in the **behaviour of citizens and economic operators** supported by clear regulations. The proposals include, among others, the introduction of:

- Universal fees for plastic packaging.
- A complete plastic recycling system, with deposits for plastic bottles.
- Prohibit or limit the use of plastic bags for packaging.
- Labelling waste to facilitate recycling, with useful information on the necessary treatment reinforcing the circular economy.
- Reorientation of companies towards the production of packaging in rPET (recycled polyethylene terephthalate) and biodegradable materials.

Fight against plastic pollution | EU policies

Policies on biodegradable and compostable plastics



Bio-based plastics, i.e. produced entirely from biological resources and not from fossil raw materials, **are not necessarily biodegradable or compostable**. **Biodegradable** means that they degrade at the end of their life. **Compostable** means that they decompose in industrial composting plants.

The EU adopted a non-binding Communication to establish an **EU policy framework on the use of biodegradable and compostable plastics**, seeking to reduce their environmental impact.

In addition, the EU has adopted a directive to reduce the [use of plastic bags](#). It is up to the Member States to take specific measures to achieve these EU targets. More information [here](#).

Packaging waste policies



The EU adopted [policies on packaging and packaging waste](#) as early as 1994, but has since revised and amended the laws with the aim of **harmonising national measures on packaging and packaging waste management**, ensuring a high level of environmental protection and ensuring the smooth functioning of the internal market.

By the end of 2024, all EU countries should ensure that producer responsibility schemes are in place for all packaging. In addition, specific recycling targets have been identified: e.g. **plastics: 50% by 2025 and 55% by 2030**.

Single-use plastic policies



The [EU Directive on single-use plastics](#) aims at a reduction of consumption, such as plastic bags, food containers, etc.

Where [sustainable alternatives are readily available and accessible](#), single-use plastic products may not be placed on the markets of EU Member States.

Fight against plastic pollution | NATIONAL initiatives

“**Irish Environmental Protection Agency**” aims at reducing plastic waste and has initiated several strategies to achieve this goal, e.g. BioPost which aims at developing sustainable environmentally friendly plastics to address the real-world problems of current plastics.

Actions taken in the last 5 years

- DCU has extensive deployment of water dispensers which report on water consumption (cut down on single use plastic). Reduction in cost if you supply your own cup in the restaurants. Loan of a reusable cup programme.
- Based on the European Commissions Regulations for hazardous waste (also see below), **Dublin City Council** has set up a tracking system using Waste Transfer Forms (WTFs) as part of the online Waste Regulation Management System (WRMS).
- **The initiative [“SoCircular – Econ Development”](#)** aims to help transform Dublin by: highlighting and celebrating the social and circular economy ecosystem and associated culture, encouraging businesses and organisations to buy from and support local social and circular enterprises, promoting supports to help enterprises adopt circular / sustainability approaches, and through providing a forum for conversation, insights and ideas.
- [Circular Economy Hotspot Dublin 2023](#) is a project by leading organisations in the fields of circular economy and waste management, chaired by The Rediscovery Centre. The committee comprises representatives from Dublin City Council, the Eastern & Midlands Regional Waste Management Planning Office, CIRCULÉIRE and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.

Actions in the next 5 years

- **SoCircular – Econ Development** is an ongoing initiative chaired by The Rediscovery Centre that aims at developing a comprehensive strategy for a circular/more sustainable economy in Dublin by involving diverse experts (committee comprises representatives of Dublin’s City Council, the Eastern & Midlands Regional Waste Management Planning Office, CIRCULÉIRE and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications).
- The **“Local Enterprise Office”** is helping support business in circular/sustainable economy. Numerous Initiatives instigated by **Dublin City Council** are still ongoing: one example is *MODOS*, a circular economy programme for micro, small and medium enterprises.

EU networks/projects/initiatives

- [The European Communities \(Shipments of Hazardous Waste exclusively within Ireland\) Regulations 2011](#) were introduced on 1st July 2011 to streamline the administration of legislation on the movement or shipments of hazardous waste exclusively within Ireland.

Actions taken in the last 5 years

- Cork is very much governed by EU/international initiatives with regards to pollution (air pollution, plastic pollution)
- Measuring effects of ongoing traffic gridlock, trying to raise awareness among the public.

Actions in the next 5 years

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EU networks/projects/initiatives

- Private cars will be removed from the city centre; the city will provide (improved) public transport, bicycles, scooters and areas for walking in the city centre.
- Cork is a member of a member of 100 EU cities which are part of a “carbon-neutral by 2030” programme.
- Against this backdrop, measures to reduce (plastic) pollution are part of the overall strategy among politicians who wish to meet this goal.