

Statement by the Committee on Environment and Agriculture 2019/20:MJU17

The Commission's communication on the European Green Deal

Summary

In this statement, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture considers the Commission's communication on the European Green Deal, Europe's new growth strategy which aims to transform the EU into a just and prosperous society with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050 and economic growth is decoupled from resource use. The communication is an initial roadmap for the central political strategies and actions that are required in a number of policy areas to ensure that the European Green Deal will become reality. A range of legislative proposals and other initiatives will follow in the next few years. The Committee proposes that the Riksdag file the statement.

The Committee on Industry and Trade, the Committee on Transport and Communications, the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Taxation and the Committee on Education have all expressed their views in the matter. Generally speaking, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes the Commission's communication on a European Green Deal for the European Union and that environmental and climate issues are being given high priority during the new Commission's term of office. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture has elaborated its views on several of the issues included in the Commission's communication, for example the EU's climate objectives, energy supply, the contribution of industry to a circular economy, the transition to a sustainable and smart mobile network, sustainable food systems, a zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment, research and education and the EU's role as a global leader.

The statement contains two explanatory reservations (from the Moderates, the Christian Democrats and the Sweden Democrats), and two special statements of opinion (from the Left Party and the Liberal Party).

The examined document

The Commission's communication The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640).

The position of the Committee

General points

Generally speaking, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes the Commission's communication on a European Green Deal for the European Union and that environmental and climate issues are being given high priority during the new Commission's term of office. It is nonetheless important that these high ambitions are translated into concrete policy and legislation. In the opinion of the Committee, the proposals need to be followed by thorough impact assessments for the EU. The Committee particularly welcomes proposals that have clear added value for Europe and where the European platform can be used to solve transnational environmental and energy problems. When regulation is necessary at the EU level, it is important to take into consideration the fact that cost-effectiveness for specific measures can differ between member states and depending on when they are implemented. The transition to a climate-neutral and sustainable Europe must, in the opinion of the Committee, be accelerated, cover all sectors and be implemented in a socio-economically efficient and inclusive fashion within the framework of public finances that are sustainable in the long term. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Green Deal will contribute to a competitive economy which also protects, preserves and improves the EU's natural capital and biodiversity as well as public health and well-being. The Committee supports the intention that the EU budget should contribute to climate adaptation in the whole of the EU. Measures driving expenditure, such as the Just Transition Fund, need to be financed by means of reprioritisations in the multiannual financial framework.

The Committee supports the Commission's ambition to integrate sustainability into all EU policy in order to achieve the climate and environmental targets. As a consequence of tougher targets for the environment and climate, the EU's sectoral and implementation legislation, and its processes and regulatory frameworks need to be reviewed as soon as possible so that these help the environmental and climate targets to be reached, rather than having the opposite effect. In order to ensure an effective implementation of proposals related to the Green Deal, initiatives should, wherever appropriate, be integrated into existing EU tools and EU processes. At the same time, in the opinion of the Committee, it is important that every policy area is dealt with within the most appropriate framework of EU cooperation, based on the treaty-based distribution of competences and with due regard to the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity.

As far as the European Semester is concerned, the Committee considers that it should also continue to focus on its core issues, which concern ensuring sound public finances, preventing and rectifying macro-economic imbalances, and promoting sustainable economic growth, smoothly functioning labour markets and social inclusion. The environmental impact of women differs from that of men, and the way they are affected by climate change also differs. Therefore, the Committee considers that the EU's Green Deal must be permeated by a gender-equality perspective not only in the analysis phase but also in the implementation and follow-up phase.

The current outbreak of Covid-19 has not only affected people's health, but it has also created an economic crisis both in the whole of the EU and globally. The Committee considers that the Green Deal needs to be the starting point of the EU's recovery efforts. In addition to the current pandemic, climate change has also a great impact on the ability of our food system to take care of production and distribution. In the opinion of the Committee, it is therefore very important to ensure that recovery efforts are directed towards reducing the vulnerability of agricultural and food provision systems.

According to the comments of the Committee on Finance (appendix A), the Committee supports the work being carried out as part of the European Semester, which constitutes a joint monitoring cycle for budget and structural policy in the EU. The Committee on Finance stresses how important it is that EU member states pursue an economic policy with national ownership for implementation of structural reforms, and the European Semester strengthens incentives for member states to pursue responsible finance policies. The Committee on Finance further states that the Council and the Commission should fully respect the role of the national parliaments when applying the regulatory framework for reinforcing economic policy coordination. Like the Government, the Committee on Finance considers that the European Semester should continue to focus on its treaty-based tasks. The Committee on Finance states that it can support the Commission's ambition to integrate sustainability into the Semester.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Finance.

In addition to what is stated above, the Committee on Environment and Agriculture will now further develop its opinion in some of the issues considered in the Commission's communication.

A more strict approach to the EU's climate objectives for 2030 and 2050

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes the proposed European Climate Act that the Commission – as announced in the communication about the Green Deal – presented in March 2020. The purpose of the proposed climate act is to create a long-term overall framework for the transition to a climate-neutral EU by 2050 at the latest and to strengthen its ability to adapt to climate change. The Committee considers that the European Climate Act should establish the long-term emission target for net zero emissions for 2050 at the latest as well as establishing guiding principles to help reach this target. The EU's targets for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions for 2030 should be made more strict to amount to at least minus 55 per cent compared with 1990 and should be in line with the Paris Agreement's 1.5-degree target. This stricter target should, in the opinion of the Committee, be written into the European Climate Act and should make it possible for the EU to raise its commitment under the Paris Agreement during 2020. By summer 2020 at the latest, the Commission intends to present a plan to raise the EU's targets for reduced greenhouse gas emissions for 2030 to at least minus 50 per cent, aiming for minus 55 per cent. The Commission should also include an emission reduction target for 2040 as well as the establishment of regular reviews to examine whether existing policy instruments are sufficiently effective to reduce emissions in the EU.

The Committee further considers that the target for net zero emissions for 2050 should apply both for the EU as a whole and for every individual member state at the national level. The responsibility of member states for ensuring that the targets are reached demand, in addition to joint efforts, that national measures are taken in all member states. Member states who go beyond the objectives should, in the opinion of the Committee, not be forced to compensate for member states who do not live up to the set targets.

The legislation in the climate framework for 2030 needs to be reviewed as early as possible and be tightened up, particularly in the EU's emission trading system and the effort-sharing regulation for emissions and greenhouse gases. The Committee therefore welcomes the fact that according to the proposal the Commission will carry out such a review and propose necessary legislative amendments. The review will, in the view of the Committee, only make it possible for climate ambitions to be made more stringent, but at the same time the Committee wishes to emphasise that the regulatory framework should not hinder in the long term an increased sustainable production of bioenergy, food and fossil-free material from agriculture and forestry.

The Committee welcomes a thorough analysis from the Commission of how a border adjustment mechanism for carbon dioxide could be designed so that it could function practically as a climate measure and an effective tool to counteract carbon dioxide leakage. At the same time, however, the Committee wishes to emphasise how important it is that a border adjustment mechanism with the purpose of ensuring that import prices reflect the carbon content of products does not develop into a type of conventional import duty. In the opinion of the Committee, it is therefore important that the effects on trade and competitiveness, including compatibility with WTO rules and principles, are analysed thoroughly during the work involved in designing this mechanism.

The Committee welcomes the fact that a strategy for adaptation to climate change is drawn up in order to provide European added value and coordination benefits. More intensive work at EU level will also contribute positively to the Swedish Government's targets for adaptation to climate change, which are to develop a sustainable and robust society in the long term which can actively meet the challenges caused by climate change by reducing vulnerabilities and making use of opportunities. At the same time, according to the Committee, it is important to take into account the

national character and needs of work on adaptation to climate change, as the consequences of climate change vary depending on national, regional and local conditions.

The Committee does not support the proposal for a transition of decision-making with a qualified majority in the area of taxation. It is important to respect the authority of member states in the area of taxation, as is the case for the role of the role of national parliaments in decisions regarding matters of taxation. Unanimity in this question ensures both the Government's and the Riksdag's influence and authority regarding taxation matters.

In its comments, the Committee on Taxation (appendix 5) states that the Committee shares the Commission's assessment that it is necessary to adjust policy and that it is therefore important that taxation is also compatible with the environmental and climate targets. Economic instruments should, in the opinion of the Committee, be used to reach the climate targets. The Committee on Taxation is positive to the Commission's review of the Energy Tax Directive and other relevant parts of the EU's regulatory framework which can, for example, enable cost-effective management towards reduced emissions of greenhouse gases. However, the Committee on Taxation does not support the Commission's proposal for a transition of decision-making with a qualified majority according to the ordinary legislative procedure in the area of taxation. The Committee considers that the proposal on changes to decision-making in tax policy will lead to an erosion of members states' tax sovereignty. In the opinion of the Committee on Taxation, the possibility for member states to introduce and maintain national tax regulations is a highly important principle that must be safeguarded. According to the Committee on Taxation, it is important to respect the authority of member states in the area of taxation, as is the case for the role of national parliaments in decisions regarding matters of taxation. The Committee on Taxation would also like to stress that the unanimity rule ensures both the Government's and the Riksdag's influence on matters of tax policy.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Taxation.

Clean and safe energy supply at a reasonable price

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes a review of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency directives with regard to a higher level of ambition, as well as initiatives aimed at getting to grips with long-term challenges in the area of energy.

The Committee on Industry and Trade notes in its comments (appendix 2) that the European Commission has a higher level of ambition to find solutions to long-term challenges in the fields of the environment and energy. The communication states that in the next few years there might be a review of some of the legal instruments that form the basis for EU energy policy, which the Committee on Industry and Trade welcomes. However, the Committee on Industry and Trade stresses in this context how important it is that individual member states also continue to be in a position to determine the conditions for using their energy sources, to make their own choices between different sources of energy and to exercise control over the general structure of their own energy supply. In the opinion of the Committee on Industry and Trade, the EU needs an energy policy that drives development towards a more climate-smart society. A component of this policy should, in the opinion of the Committee, be that the cost of emissions from fossil fuels should increase and constitute an incentive for energy efficiency and an adaptation of the heating sector, for example. The European Commission should, in the opinion of the Committee, also develop solutions to enable the EU in the long term to completely phase out fossil fuels, which should include the withdrawal of subsidies to all types of fossil-based energy. A phasing out of fossil-based gas and oil would help to achieve an improved security of supplies by means of diversification of energy supply. During the coming legislative cycle, in the opinion of the Committee it will also be necessary to consider proposals with higher binding targets for renewable energy which would mean all member states taking responsibility for reducing their climate impact. The Committee on Industry and Trade also stresses the fact that the members states' collective responsibility for reaching the targets means that all member states should formulate national policies to reach the targets. Individual member states should be able to go beyond the ambitions of today, which however should not make it possible to compensate for the fact that other member states do not take any – or not enough – measures. Long-term efforts with targeted measures for integration and development of the electricity market, for example, should, in the opinion of the Committee, also continue and be further developed. A secure supply system is something that is necessary to promote such things as electric vehicles in the transport sector and to facilitate the transfer of transportation to the railways. The Committee on Industry and Trade also stresses how important it is that the forthcoming proposals in the framework of the Green Deal are cost-effective, and recalls that cost-effectiveness for specific measures can differ between member states and depending on when they are implemented.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Industry and Trade.

Industry should work to achieve a clean and circular economy

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture considers that the EU's industrial policy must contribute to the transition to a climate-neutral society and take advantage of the possibilities that a transition to a circular and bio-based economy, structural change, digitisation and the growing importance of a shift towards services and regional value chains will entail. In the light of this, the Committee welcomes the communication on a new action plan for the circular economy that the Commission, in accordance with what is stated in the communication on the Green Deal, presented in March 2020. The Committee takes a positive view of the holistic approach the Commission has taken to this issue and that the transition to a circular economy is regarded as part of securing the EU's long-term competitiveness. In the opinion of the Committee, it is also pleasing that the revision of the industry emissions

directive is raised as a consecutive part of enabling increased circularity in industry and that circular economy is to be integrated into the documents applying to the best available technology. In the opinion of the Committee, it is also important that the industrial emissions directive will contribute to toxic-free ecocycles. In this context, the Committee also requests that the demands for ecodesign are extended to more product groups and that these requirements do not only take account of energy use in the user phase. The lifecycle of the whole product should be taken into consideration and demands should be made to a greater extent on technical life expectation, recycling, reparability, water use, emissions into the environment, requirements to provide information on dangerous substances, etc. Appropriate requirements for recycled material in products serve to boost market demand and this can, in the opinion of the Committee, constitute an incentive to increase collection, sorting and recycling of rubbish. The Committee therefore takes a positive view that the Commission wishes to increase the proportion of recycled material in products. However, the Committee would particularly like to emphasise that it is important to have knowledge about the content of the recycled material and that it is of high quality and can contribute to toxic-free ecocycles. It is also important in the opinion of the Committee that robust methods are developed – technical or administrative – in order to make it possible for the content of recycled material in products to be verified in a legally certain manner. As far as the drawing up of legal requirements for use of recycled material in products is concerned, the Committee would like to stress how important it is to endeavour to achieve equal conditions for manufacturing in the EU and the import of products.

The Committee also takes a positive view that the Commission, both in this and other contexts, wishes to boost efforts to produce product information to consumers and welcomes the fact that the Commission wants to mobilise the potential for digitisation of product information.

As regards the identified value chains for packaging, plastic and textiles, the Committee considers it positive that the action plan contains measures to update essential requirements for packaging and that measures to prevent excessive packaging have been announced. The Committee further considers it positive that there are requirements regarding the content of recycled plastic, as they can help create a well-functioning market with a demand for toxic-free recycled plastic goods. The Committee also takes a very positive view that the Commission intends to decide on restrictions of micro plastics, and the Committee also welcomes the fact that an EU strategy for textiles is to be announced. The Committee takes a positive view of the announced review of EU measures to combat pollution from large industrial facilities. The Committee wishes in this connection to emphasise that there must be consensus between the action plan for circular economy, the industrial strategy and the industrial emissions directive. As regards the industrial strategy, the Committee considers that it should aim to create safety and a long-term approach in order to mobilise investments and it should also promote innovations. The industrial strategy should also create incentives to adjust forms or operations and activities to reduce emissions and reward those who have already carried out structural changes.

As far as EU industrial policy is concerned, the Committee on Industry and Trade states in its comments (appendix 2) that it is the view of the Committee that policy should be designed in such a way that it improves the competitiveness of industry while at the same time contributing to the transition to a climate-neutral society. Such a policy must, in the opinion of the Committee, take advantage of the opportunities that a transition to a circular and bio-based economy, structural change, digitisation and the growing importance of a shift towards services and regional value chains will bring about. One clear example according to the Committee on Industry and Trade of how basic industries can adjust is the Swedish cooperation project Hybrit, which aims to drastically reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide from the steel industry.

As far as digitisation is concerned, the Committee on Transport and Communications notes in its comments (appendix 3) that the Commission is considering measures to ensure that digital technology can speed up and maximise the impacts of the policy when it comes to handling climate change and protecting the environment. The Committee on Transport and Communications welcomes this and considers it important that the EU measures that are taken as part of the Information Society Policy should contribute to favourable conditions for a well-functioning internal market, as well as an effective, robust and secure infrastructure and a large range of communication services. In addition to this, the Committee shares the Commission's view that it is important that the digital sector in the EU also prioritises sustainability issues. The Committee would also like to recall that in order to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that digital technology such as 5G has to offer, it is important to continue to work towards strengthened cooperation and a common approach in the EU to questions surrounding security and cyber security of 5G networks. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Industry and Trade and the Committee on Transport and Communications.

Building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture is positive to a revision of the Construction Products Regulation and therefore welcomes that such a revision is included in the proposed action plan for circular economy that the Commission presented in March 2020. As regards building and buildings, it is good that there is an increased focus on circular economy, but according to the view of the Committee, the perspective of toxic-free ecocycles is lacking in the Commission's proposed action plan for a circular economy. It is important that horizontal requirements for a toxic-free environment are taken into consideration in this context. In order to achieve a circular economy in the construction sector, it will be important in the opinion of the Committee to improve and extend information on the content of building products. It is also important to facilitate the traceability of substances or materials in building products that

may be problematic when it comes to waste management and recycling of materials. In this context, the Committee also wishes to stress that increased building using wood may help achieve such things as the climate targets. Increased building in wood would create a potential to increase carbon capture and by combining biofuels with carbon capture and storage (CCS) in the materials industry, negative emissions can also be created.

Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture takes a positive view of the Commission's initiative to produce a strategy for sustainable and smart mobility. A combination of different policy instruments is needed, such as regulations, price-setting, financing and information to reduce emissions from the transport sector. The EU particularly needs to encourage more vehicles with zero emissions or very low emissions, rapid electrification and a transition to sustainable renewable fuels and increased transport efficiency.

The Committee on Transport and Communications notes in its comments (appendix 3) that the shift to a long-term sustainable transport system is one of the greatest challenges facing transport policy. According to its comments, the Committee has previously stressed that a transport system that functions well and is sustainable in the long term is an important precondition for meeting the challenge of climate change and for strengthening the EU's economy and competitiveness and this is why it is of great importance that Sweden and the other member states fulfil their commitments to bring about a fully functional internal market for transport, for example as regards the fourth Railway Package, the shipping market and the development of common airspace (statement 2017/18:TU6y). The Committee would like to recall in this connection the importance of having ambitious climate targets. Moreover, it is also stated that the Committee on Transport and Communications shares the Commission's view that all modes of transport must contribute to the transport sector's reduction in emissions. In previous contexts, most recently in committee report 2018/19:TU16, the Committee has emphasised that the climate impact of transportation can be reduced for example by means of more efficient transport and a transition to renewable fuels including electricity, as well as by taking advantage of the opportunities of new technology. One way of promoting efficient, high-capacity and sustainable transport is to use heavier and longer goods vehicles and trains, which will make it possible for the capacity of goods transport to be increased while at the same time reducing emission levels. The Committee considers that a combination of different policy instruments is needed to reduce emissions from the transport sector and that EU can encourage more vehicles with zero emissions or very low emissions, rapid electrification and a transition to sustainable renewable fuels and increased transport efficiency. The Committee therefore considers it positive that the Commission has the intention of adopting a strategy for a sustainable and smart mobility set on this overall challenge for the transport sector and which will include measures for each of the different sources of emissions. However, in the opinion of the Committee, it is important that rural areas are also included in the work to bring about a shift to sustainably and smart mobility and that sustainable mobility solutions are encouraged that can improve the conditions for living and working in all parts of the country, which is underlined in the Committee's recently produced report on mobility in rural areas (2019/20:RFR10). In its comments the Committee stresses that goods transports in Sweden are carried out on all modes of transport, i.e. by rail, road, sea (including inland lakes) and air, and that goods transports have a great significance when it comes to ensuring that the whole of Sweden should function, even in times of strain. In the opinion of the Committee, it is therefore important to work for effective use of the transport system whereby all transport is carried out in an effective way, which may concern such things as creating the conditions for more goods transport by rail and by ship and intensifying efforts to promote intermodal transport solutions. The Committee on Transport and Communications would also like to recall that the Committee in a previous connection emphasised that a Single European Sky would make it possible for airspace capacity to increase and fuel consumption to be reduced (committee report 2018/19:TU15). The Committee on Transport and Communications further states that the Committee has previously drawn attention to and welcomed the rapid increase of electric cars and plug-in hybrids (committee report 2018/19:TU16). The Committee also recalls in this connection that a crucial precondition for consumers' choosing alternative fuels is that there is a sufficiently well-constructed infrastructure to enable vehicles to be fuelled and charged en route and that this is experienced as simple and convenient. It is therefore positive in the opinion of the Committee that the Commission has the intention of reviewing the current legislation in order to support infrastructure for fossil-free refuelling and recharging and in this way speed up the introduction of emission-free and low-emission vehicles and ships. The Committee also highlights the importance of good infrastructure for all modes of transport and of taking into account existing needs when it comes to providing infrastructure with sustainable solutions in the area of aviation. The Committee further states in its comments that the Committee shares the Commission's view of the importance of coordinating measures in the EU with measures at global level. The Committee on Transport and Communications recalls that the Committee had previously noted that the great climate challenges for shipping and aviation are transnational and that international decisions are crucial when it comes to reducing emissions and that it is important that we continue to have a high level of ambition (committee report 2018/19:TU14 and committee report 2018/19:TU15). In the opinion of the Committee, it is therefore important to be proactive in the ICAO and other international fora to ensure that climate policy instruments at an international level should be optimal and as effective as possible in order to achieve a real shift in the fossil dependency and climate impact of international aviation.

As regards technological developments, the Committee states in its comments that the Committee shares the Commission's view on the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities of new technologies, and the Committee has in several different contexts emphasised the need for new know-how and innovative solutions. The

Committee on Transport and Communications points out that the Committee has previously stated that technological developments, for example, concerning automated vehicles are a way of meeting social challenges such as climate and health, as well as an opportunity to strengthen competitiveness, the export industry and job opportunities, both in Sweden and at the EU level (committee report 2018/19:TU3). Furthermore, the Committee on Transport and Communications has emphasised how important it is that key technologies for automated vehicles are developed in Europe and that there is a modern legal framework. Since new technology does not by definition promote benefits for society, such as reduced emissions of greenhouse gases, it is in the opinion of the Committee important to work actively to support technological developments that can work as a means of achieving important social goals in the form of simple, cleaner and more accessible means of transport.

In its comments the Committee further states that it believes that in general the Commission highlights many important transport-related aspects on the Green Deal. However, the Committee lacks a discussion on the part of the Commission on the importance of promoting and facilitating cross-border train travel, and in this way a transfer of passenger travel to trains, and recalls how complicated it often is nowadays to book and travel by train from Sweden down to the rest of Europe. However, the Committee notes in this connection that the Commission recently adopted a communication on a European Year of Rail 2021 (COM(2020) 78), where the Commission underlines the European, transnational dimension of rail travel, and states that rail travel needs an extra push to become more attractive for private and business travel both for daily travel and for longer routes. In addition to this, the Committee on Transport and Communications would have liked the Commission to highlight the question of the transport patterns of increased eCommerce, which is a relatively unresearched area, but with important cross-border dimensions. The Committee notes in this connection that eCommerce has the potential according to Transport Analysis (the Swedish Agency for Transport Policy Analysis) to lead to reduced energy use if shopping trips by car can be replaced with more effective types of goods transport, but if this does happen, eCommerce might rather lead to increased traffic volumes. There is therefore, in the Committee's opinion, a need to continue to follow developments here. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Transport and Communications.

From 'Farm to Fork' – designing a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes the fact that the Commission has initiated the 'Farm to Fork' strategy. In the Committee's view, sustainable food systems should, in addition to focusing on sustainable food production, also contain tools that facilitate sustainable and healthy choices for consumers. The Committee welcomes the Commission's ambitions in the environmental and climate field linked to the food system, and in the opinion of the Committee it is important that these, like the issues concerning competitiveness and equal competition conditions for farmers in the EU, have an impact in the coming period for common agricultural policy. The Committee supports ambitions for sustainable livestock production with more stringent requirements concerning animal welfare, preventive animal health efforts resulting in healthy animals and restraint in the use of antibiotics. The Committee wishes to particularly point out how important it is that measures are taken to ensure that these ambitions are translated into action throughout the EU. In this connection, the Committee wishes to point out that the verification of compliance with animal protection legislation and the regulations for the use of antibiotics must be improved throughout the EU. The Committee also wishes to emphasise that requirements concerning animal welfare and restraint in the use of antibiotics can be compatible with profitability, since this would mean obvious added value for consumers. In addition to ambitions concerning sustainable livestock production, the Committee also supports the Commission's ambitions to develop new climate-smart vegetarian foods and an increase in the cultivation of protein crops.

The Committee welcomes the Commission's intention to formulate an action plan to reduce the use of harmful pesticides. In the opinion of the Committee, it is very important that pesticides are used responsibly and that the action plan should take account of the fact that pesticides have a great importance for food production. The action plan should therefore, in the opinion of the Committee, also contain proposals and measures that stimulate innovation when it comes to sustainable pesticides and alternative methods. The Committee also welcomes the Commission's ambitions to reduce the use of and risks associated with antibiotics. In order to reach the targets regarding reduced use of antibiotics, good animal husbandry is an important tool to prevent disease. The new Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy will of course assume central importance when it comes to achieving the objectives in the announced strategy, but the Committee would at the same time like to emphasise that research, innovations and their implementation will have a great importance in achieving the ambitions of the Green Deal.

The Committee welcomes the strategy as a supplement to the current legislation in these areas. The Committee would like to see initiatives to attract more young people to agriculture through, for example, the promotion of education and the dissemination of knowledge. When a harmonised calculation method and definition of food waste is in place, the strategy should, in the view of the Committee, include a target to reduce food waste in the EU.

Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture supports the Commission's intention to present a proposal early in the term of office for a strategy with targets for biodiversity after 2020. In the opinion of the Committee, the strategy should include measures that address the most important influential factors causing loss of biodiversity and their ecosystem services. In this connection, the Committee also considers that the EU should continue pushing for an ambitious agreement for the protection of biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The Committee welcomes the fact that the Commission is developing a new forestry strategy for the EU during 2020 in order to replace the current strategy which is due to expire after 2020. The Committee considers that the strategy should also continue to emphasise the diversity of the forest and should be based on sustainable forestry and therefore include both use and protection of the forest as equal objectives. The forestry strategy should, in line with this, be formulated in such a way that it promotes a growing forestry industry and sustainable forestry. The Committee stresses that the EU's forestry strategy after 2020 should be equal with and have the same relevance as other EU strategies, particularly the EU's strategies for biodiversity, the bio-economy and adaptation to climate change. At the same time, national self-determination in forestry issues should also continue to be safeguarded. As far as the strategy for the bio-economy is concerned, this should, in the opinion of the Committee, continue to aim to make it possible to replace fossil-intensive material and fuel with renewable, bio-based alternatives.

In the opinion of the Committee, the EU's efforts should promote conditions favouring sustainable forestry and build upon existing definitions of sustainable forestry. The EU forestry strategy must safeguard the climate benefits of the forest and it is therefore of crucial importance that the forestry industry is not made subordinate to the strategy for biological diversity. In the strategy for biological diversity, it is important, in the same way as what applies in other areas, to take into account aspects of economic and social sustainability. The implementation of the Nature Directives must, in the opinion of the Committee, take account of the different national conditions of the member states.

A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes the Commission's zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment and notes that continued and more stringent measures are needed to reduce the risk to health and the environment connected to chemicals. The Committee requests stricter rules for endocrine disruptors in all relevant legislation, and all relevant legislation should also take account of the combination effects and that these substances are processed to a greater extent in groups to avoid what is known as false substitution. The Committee also considers that the Commission, in line with what Sweden has proposed together with a number of other member states, should both present an action plan for perfluorinated substances (PFAS), and continue to work with further limitations in accordance with REACH for PFAS. The Commission should also take measures to reduce these emissions of pharmaceuticals into the environment. The Committee also welcomes an increased ambition to promote responsible use of chemical pesticides in the EU.

In this connection, the Committee wishes to emphasise that toxic-free ecocycles are a precondition for promoting a circular economy. If a market for recycled materials is to work, it is required that one can be certain that these materials meet the same requirements regarding safety and quality as new materials. Phasing out especially dangerous substances enables increased recycling. It is positive that chemicals have been highlighted in the action plan for circular economy that the Commission has recently presented, but in the opinion of the Committee, it is important that matters relating to chemicals are integrated into the development of policies in relevant areas and are not only considered as a separate matter. The Committee looks forward to the forthcoming chemicals strategy for sustainability and considers that the ambitions for the EU's seventh environment action plan concerning a new strategy for a toxic-free environment must be retained in the work on the chemicals strategy.

Pursuing green finance and investment and ensuring a just transition

The transition to a climate-neutral and sustainable Europe must, in the opinion of the Committee on Environment and Agriculture, be accelerated, cover all sectors and be implemented in a socio-economically efficient and inclusive fashion within the framework of public finances that are sustainable in the long term. Measures driving expenditure, such as the Just Transition Fund, in the opinion of the Committee need to be financed by means of reprioritisations in the multiannual financial framework.

In the comments of the Committee on Industry and Trade (appendix 2), the Committee states that the transition to a climate-neutral and sustainable Europe must be accelerated while at the same time it is implemented in a socio-economically efficient fashion within the framework of public finances that are sustainable in the long term. New measures, such as the establishment of the Just Transition Fund, need, in the view of the Committee, therefore to be financed by means of reprioritisations in the multiannual financial framework.

In the comments of the Committee on Finance (appendix 4), it is stated that the Committee has previously emphasised that the activities of the EIB constitute a valuable contribution to strengthening and developing the EU's internal market and improving the conditions for strong sustainable growth in the EU. The Committee on Finance considers that the EIB should continue to focus on projects with high added value and increase the share of green investments in a financially sustainable fashion. The Committee on Finance considers that a large part of the financing needed for a green transformation will have to come from the private sector. The Committee on Finance therefore welcomes the fact that the investment plan takes a broad grip with the ambition to enable green investments from both the private and public sectors. The Committee on Finance is looking forward in this connection to becoming acquainted with the renewed strategy for sustainable financing announced by the Commission. In its comments, the Committee states that the restrictive fundamental Swedish position to the EU's budget is deeply rooted in the Riksdag. Sweden will work towards an effective and restrictive budget policy in the EU and a cost-effective use of EU funds. The Committee on Finance considers that measures driving expenditure as presented by the Commission should be financed by means of reprioritisation in the coming multiannual financial framework. As regards initiatives from the EU budget, InvestEU and the EIB, it is important in the opinion of the Committee that these have high added value, do not overlap other

initiatives and are followed up rigorously and transparently. The Committee on Finance further considers that the Just Transition mechanism should include clear transitional requirements and conditionality. Contributions from the EU budget to the various parts of the mechanism, including the Just Transition Fund, should, in the opinion of the Committee, be financed by means of reprioritisation in the multiannual financial framework. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Industry and Trade and the Committee on Finance.

Mobilising research and fostering innovation

As the Committee on Environment and Agriculture has already pointed out in the section on a sustainable food chain, research, innovations and their implementation will have a great significance when it comes to achieving the ambitions of the Green Deal.

The Committee on Education has in its comments (appendix 6) pointed out that European research cooperation, with the forthcoming framework programme Horizon Europe at the forefront, is of great importance when it comes to managing the green transition. It is the view of the Committee on Education that it is through research that new, sustainable methods can be developed. In the light of this, the Committee on Education welcomes the fact that Horizon Europe will be able to contribute to climate solutions that are relevant for the implementation of the Green Deal. The Committee sees that there are many instruments as part of Horizon Europe that can contribute to the vision of the Green Deal. The Committee particularly points out the potential in the “assignments”, for example climate-smart cities, which are to be bold, point out clear targets and mobilise resources. The Committee on Education also notes that work is in progress to design a future European AI strategy, particularly by means of the Commission’s White Paper on Artificial Intelligence (COM(2020) 65). Data-based innovation is a growing and important area which, in the opinion of the Committee on Education, will play an increasingly large role in the development of both research and society in future, with a great potential for green areas of application. The Committee wishes in this connection also to highlight space activities and the importance of the EU’s coming space programme for the success of the green social transformation. This applies in particular to the earth observation programme Copernicus, which provides important data on such things as climate change.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Education.

Activating education and training

In its comments (appendix 6), the Committee on Education notes that the Commission intends to prepare a competence framework to help develop and assess knowledge, skills and attitudes on climate change and sustainable development. The Committee on Education states in its comments that the Commission also notes that skills-enhancing initiatives are important to enable the Green Deal to be fully used. As part of these efforts, the skills agenda will be updated in order to increase the employability of the workforce within the green economy. The Committee on Education has previously examined the Commission’s communication A New Skills Agenda for Europe (statement 2016/17:UbU7). The Committee on Education takes a positive view, as it did in its previous examination, of strengthening the skills base in Europe, but also sees the importance of the priorities of the skills agenda being in line with the EU’s other priorities and that different EU instruments are well thought-through and complement each other. The Committee on Education considers, given the important role of educational matters and with regard to what is stated above, that it is to be welcomed that the skills agenda is to be updated and adapted to the Green Deal.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Education.

The EU as a global leader

Environmental ambitions cannot be achieved by the EU on its own, as climate change is not restricted to national borders. By means of international cooperation and commerce, global environmental impact can be reduced, sustainable consumption can be strengthened and the circular economy can be developed. The Committee on Environment and Agriculture considers that the use and development of international standards should be promoted to avoid fragmentation in global commerce. The Committee therefore intends to work towards promoting a development of European standards which as far as possible correspond to international standards. The Committee further considers that the EU should push to ensure that international European regulatory frameworks for such things as export credits and other public trade financing contribute to sustainability and the achievement of the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, the Committee wishes to highlight the importance of the EU’s continued work to facilitate trade in environmental goods and environmental services. The importance of trade for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement is becoming more and more obvious and the sustainability dimension is an important starting point for new free trade negotiations. In the opinion of the Committee, the EU must therefore work towards more in-depth and broad free trade agreements between the EU and third parties and ensuring that these agreements take into consideration the environment, sustainability and the climate. The Committee considers that the Commission should analyse the possibility of incorporating the Paris Agreement as an essential clause in cooperation agreements, including free trade agreements, with third parties, without giving rise to protectionism. The EU’s environmental and climate policy during this term of office should in the opinion of the Committee contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the UN’s global sustainable development targets. The EU should be a leader in the global transition to climate-smart societies and the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and in this leading role, in the Committee’s opinion, also urge other countries to raise their level of ambition.

In the comments of the Committee on Industry and Trade (appendix 2), the Committee notes that the European Commission regards trade policy as an important tool for ensuring that environmental and climate issues have a broad impact. The Committee on Industry and Trade shares this view and emphasises in the light of what is stated in the communication that the importance of trade for the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement are becoming more and more obvious. The sustainability dimension is an important starting point for new free trade negotiations and it is important in the view of the Committee that more in-depth and broad free trade agreements between the EU and third parties are concluded and that these take the environment and sustainability into consideration. The Committee on Industry and Trade further emphasises the use and development of international standards and corresponding European standards to avoid a fragmentation of global trade. International and European regulatory frameworks for such things as export credits and other public trade financing should also be developed to be able to contribute to sustainability and the achievement of the Paris Agreement. The Committee on Industry and Trade also points out the importance of the fact that the EU in future also continues to work to facilitate trade in environmental goods and environmental services.

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture shares the assessments of the Committee on Industry and Trade.

Time to act - together: A European climate pact

The Committee on Environment and Agriculture welcomes the Commission's intention to establish a climate pact with the purpose of increasing public participation in climate policy and encouraging changes in lifestyle. The Committee also takes a positive view that the Commission intends to work to ensure that regions, cities, civil society and the business sector should be involved more in climate adaptation. The Committee also welcomes such initiatives within the framework of the climate pact that encourage changed habits as regards the choice of modes of transport and that promote the use of renewable fuels

The Aarhus Convention is based on the assumption that we all have obligations to future generations to protect and preserve the environment. The Committee considers it important that EU citizens have right of access to information on the environment, have the right to participate in decision-making processes and have access to justice in accordance with the Aarhus Convention. The Committee shares the European Commission's opinion that the Aarhus Convention is important and that all member states implement it in a legally secure fashion.

The Committee's summary of assessment and proposals

In view of what the Committee on Environment and Agriculture has stated above in its position, the Committee proposes that the Riksdag file the statement.