



Council of the European Union

PRESS
EN

BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 19 September 2019

**Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council
(Transport issues)
Brussels, 20 September 2019**

Chair: **Sanna Marin**, Minister for Transport and Communications of Finland

European Commission representative: Commissioner **Violeta Bulc**

The **meeting** will **start** at 10.00

The Council will hold an extensive **policy debate** on **transport** aspects of the EU's long-term strategic vision for **reducing greenhouse gas emissions** and meeting its **climate** commitments under the Paris Agreement. The discussion will be organised in three rounds: **land transport** (road, rail and inland navigation), **aviation** and **shipping**. The first two rounds will take place in the morning, the third one in the afternoon. The discussion will be broadcast live on the Council website.

Over lunch, ministers will discuss financial instruments for sustainable transport, with the participation of Vice-President of the European Investment Bank Andrew McDowell.

Press conference: at the end of the meeting, +/- 17.00.

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*Press conferences and public events by video streaming: <http://video.consilium.europa.eu>
Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on: <http://nwsr.eu/p/209610>*

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the Press Office.

A Clean Planet for all – transport aspects

The Council will hold a policy debate on the crucial issue of **transport and climate change**. The discussion will focus on how to **decarbonise transport**, with a view to ensuring that the EU will meet its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The debate will build on the [Commission communication](#) 'A Clean Planet for all. A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy', published in November 2018.

The debate follows the [European Council meeting in June 2019](#), where the Council and the Commission were invited to "advance work on the conditions, the incentives and the enabling framework to be put in place so as to ensure a transition to a climate-neutral EU in line with the Paris Agreement [...]". At the same meeting, leaders agreed on a new [strategic agenda for 2019 to 2024](#). The agenda sets out four main priorities for the EU, including "building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe".

Transport plays a key role in this transition to climate neutrality, as it accounts for about a quarter of the EU's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is currently the only sector where emissions have been increasing.

According to the latest [special Eurobarometer on climate change](#), published on 11 September, 93% of Europeans believe that climate change is a serious problem. It is perceived as the second most serious problem facing the world today, after 'poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water'.

Previous 'Clean Planet' discussions

The Clean Planet communication has already been discussed by several other Council configurations this year.

Transport ministers held informal discussions on the topic at the informal Council meeting in Bucharest on 27 March 2019.

At the Transport Council meeting on 3 June 2019, the [presidency briefed ministers](#) on the initial discussions held by different Council bodies on the transport-related challenges relating to this long-term vision.

Commission communication

The Clean Planet communication sets out the Commission's vision of the economic and societal reforms required to achieve the transition to net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. This vision is consistent with the Paris Agreement objective of limiting the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

The communication does not set any concrete targets for the EU (for example for 2040 or 2050). Instead, it presents different scenarios for pursuing long-term climate neutrality in line with the Paris Agreement. In these scenarios, the level of net reduction in GHG emissions ranges from 80% to 100% by 2050.

The communication also identifies the main areas where further measures need to be taken, including transport.

Council debate

Ministers will discuss the overarching topic in three separate rounds: land transport, aviation and shipping.

The presidency has prepared a detailed [background paper](#) with questions to structure the discussion.

Two sets of questions prepared by the presidency relate to **all three sessions**:

- *Is the current transport policy compatible with the long-term vision of achieving climate neutrality? Which measures would allow the transport sector to decisively contribute to climate neutrality by 2050?*
- *Do you agree that a long-term decarbonisation strategy for transport would allow the EU to take a holistic approach to achieving climate neutrality? Should the strategy include all modes of transport or should sector-specific strategies be created?*

In addition, there are specific questions for each broad category of transport.

Questions for **land transport**:

- *In your view, what are the most efficient and realistic measures that are needed to reduce GHG emissions in land transport? What should be addressed at an EU-level during the next five years?*
- *How can emissions from road transport be reduced in a way that takes account of the social dimension and the need for a just transition? What new policy measures will be needed to facilitate a socially fair transition to a climate neutral economy?*

Questions for **aviation**:

- *The final preparations for the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) are ongoing in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). In your view, what impact will CORSIA have in reducing aviation emissions and how should it be integrated with EU's existing the Emissions Trading System (ETS)?*
- *In your view, which measures would be most efficient for reducing aviation emissions, while maintaining socially accessible connectivity and competitiveness for the aviation sector and other economic sectors that depend on it? What additional measures could the EU take to reduce GHG emissions in aviation within the next five years (e.g. taxation, blending obligation for sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), air navigation charges)?*

Questions for **shipping**:

- *In your view, which measures would be most efficient for reducing emissions from international shipping?*
- *The relatively slow progress in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) could make additional actions necessary at EU level. What additional measures could the EU take within the next five years to reduce GHG emissions from shipping (e.g. alternative fuel, making plug-in shore-side electricity mandatory in EU ports, energy efficiency improvements, ETS)?*

The ministers' debate will provide input for the European Council, which is expected to finalise its guidance before the end of the year so that the EU can adopt its **long-term climate strategy** and present it to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) **by 2020**, as required by the Paris Agreement.

The Council discussion – as well as the instruction from the European Council – will also guide the Commission in the preparation of **new legislative proposals** and other initiatives in this area.

[Paris Agreement on climate change](#) (background information)

[Tackling climate change in the EU](#) (background information)
