EU- level transition towards closed-loop circular economy – citizen perspective
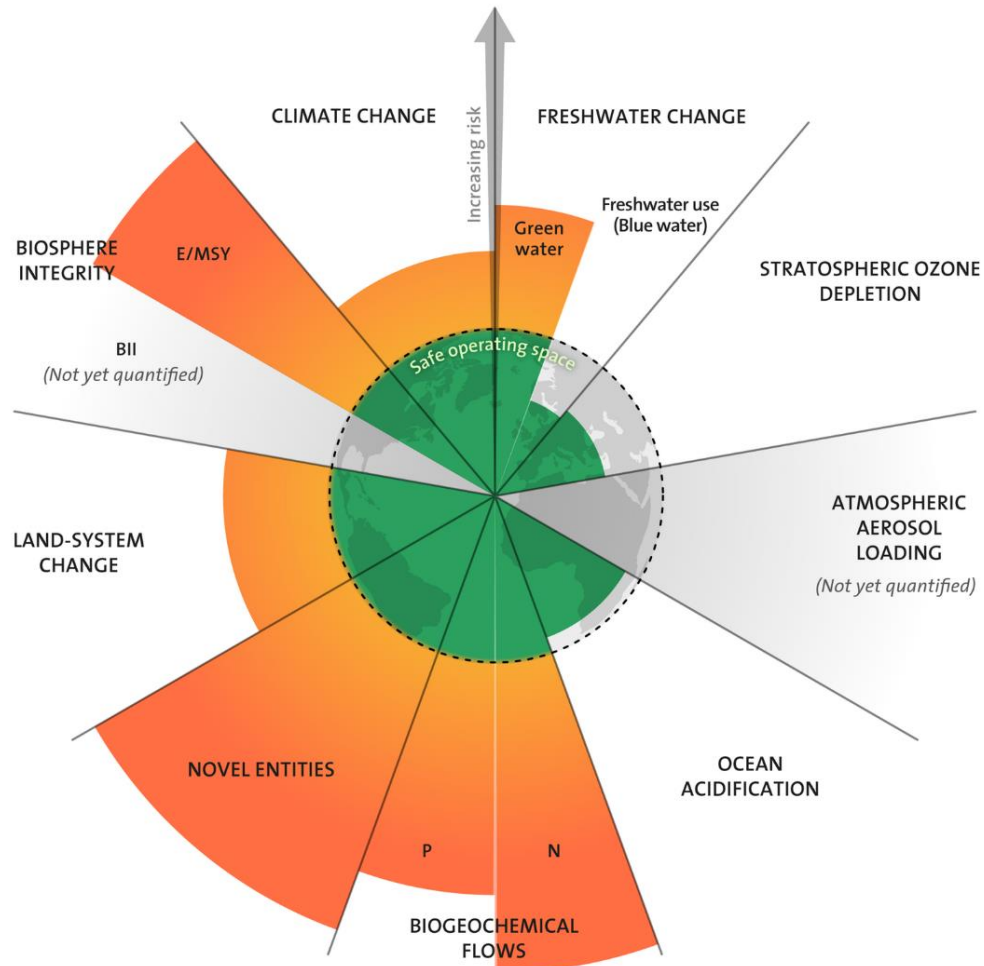

KESKUSTELEVA
YHTEISTYÖ
SOSIAALINEN
YMMÄRRYS
AJATTELE.
RATKAISUKESKEINEN
YRITÄ EDES.
SUVAITSEVAINEN
MONIARVOINEN
EETTINEN
INHIMILLINEN
EMPAATTINEN
EUROOPPAA
RAKENTAMASSA.
EKOLOGINEN

We only have one planet

2050

Safe environment?

Credit: Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, based on analysis in Wang-Erlandsson et al 2022
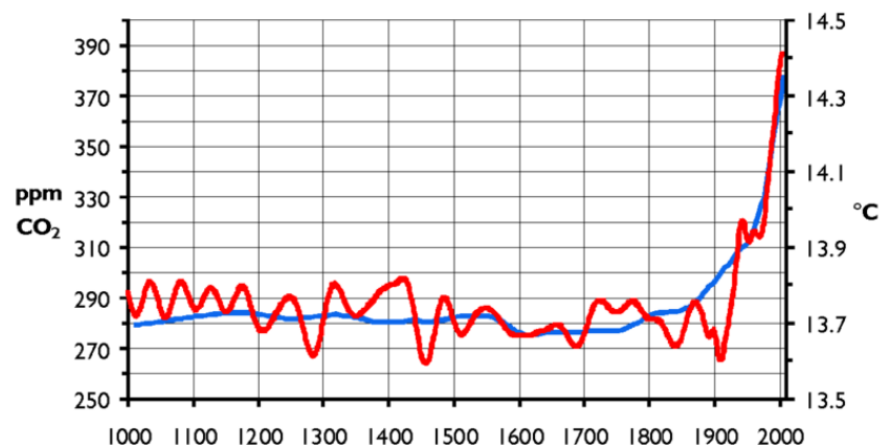
The demand for resources keeps increasing and the climate change accelerates
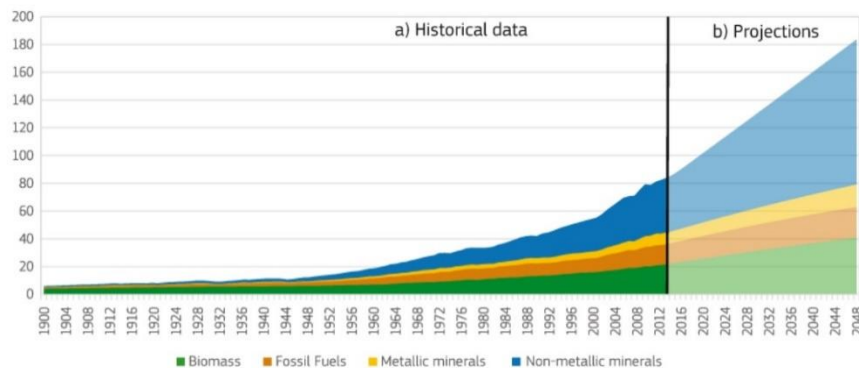
Global materials extraction by resource type
Source: EC
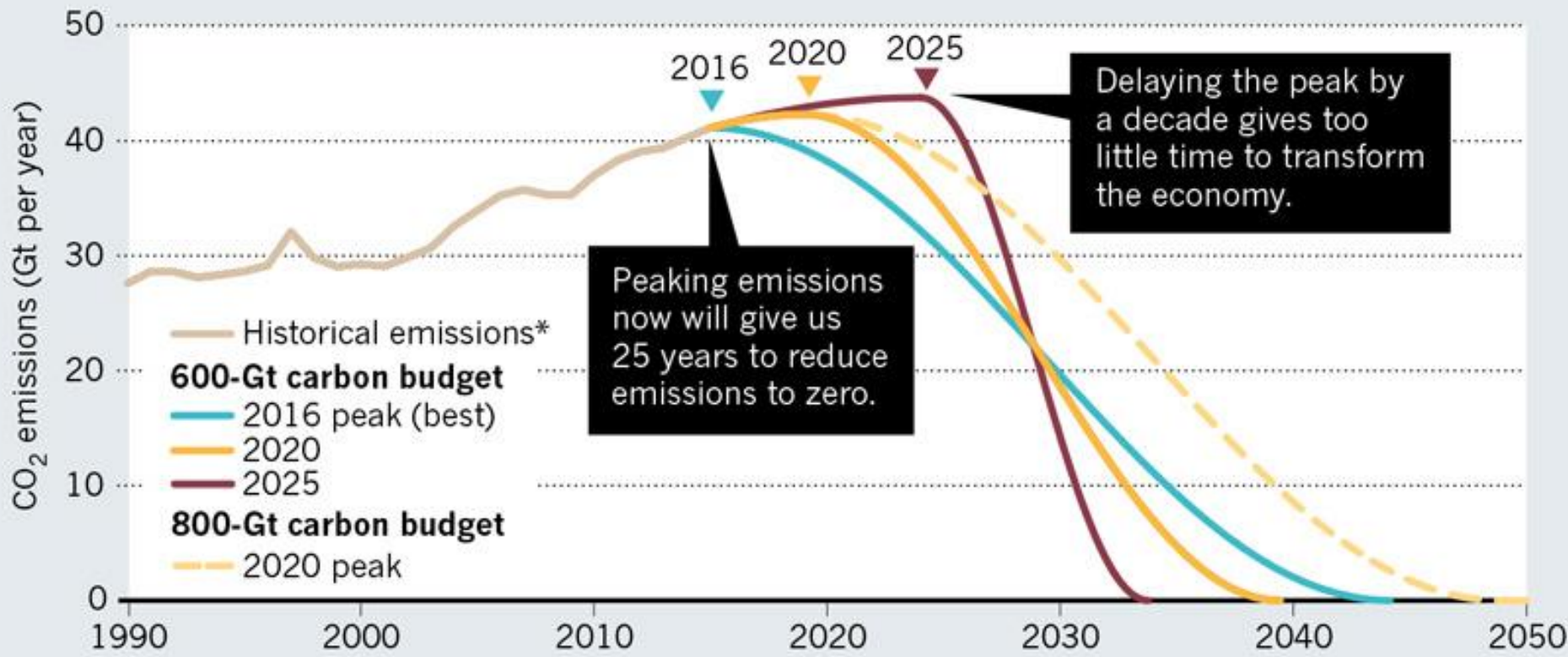https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/node/33918_fr

Climate change
Source: Climateaudit.org

CARBON CRUNCH

There is a mean budget of around 600 gigatonnes (Gt) of carbon dioxide left to emit before the planet warms dangerously, by more than 1.5–2°C. Stretching the budget to 800 Gt buys another 10 years, but at a greater risk of exceeding the temperature limit.
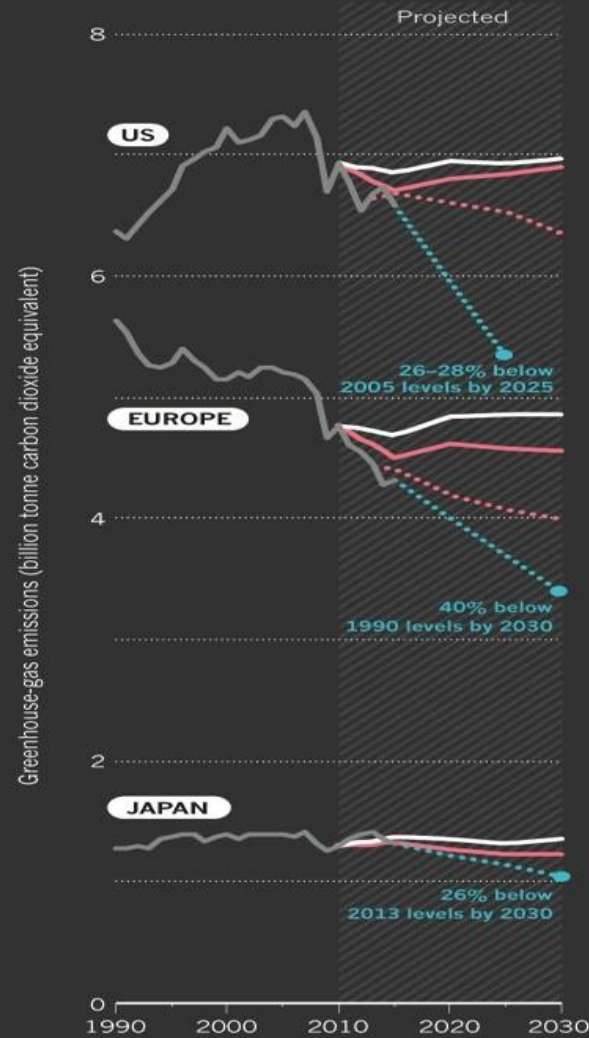
Legend:
- Historical emissions*
- **600-Gt carbon budget**
  - 2016 peak (best)
  - 2020
  - 2025
- **800-Gt carbon budget**
  - 2020 peak

2016 2020 2025

Peaking emissions now will give us 25 years to reduce emissions to zero.

Delaying the peak by a decade gives too little time to transform the economy.

Data from The Global Carbon Project.

CO₂ emissions (Gt per year) — y-axis: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50
x-axis: 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, 2050

CLIMATE SHORTFALL

Emissions trajectories for three advanced industrialized regions show that enacted and pledged policies will be unable to deliver the ambitious cuts to emissions agreed under the 2015 Paris framework.

Legend:
- Historical emissions
- Enacted policies*
- Target emissions (nationally determined contributions)
- Business as usual*
- Pledged policies (reported)

Projected

US
26–28% below 2005 levels by 2025

EUROPE
40% below 1990 levels by 2030

JAPAN
26% below 2013 levels by 2030

Greenhouse-gas emissions (billion tonne carbon dioxide equivalent) — y-axis: 0, 2, 4, 6, 8
x-axis: 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020, 2030

*Estimated using the global-warming mitigation assessment model DNE21+ (Ref. 1).

©nature

The current actions are not enough!

Limiting warming to **1.5°C** and **2°C** involves rapid, deep and in most cases immediate greenhouse gas emission reductions

Net zero CO_2 and net zero GHG emissions can be achieved through strong reductions across all sectors
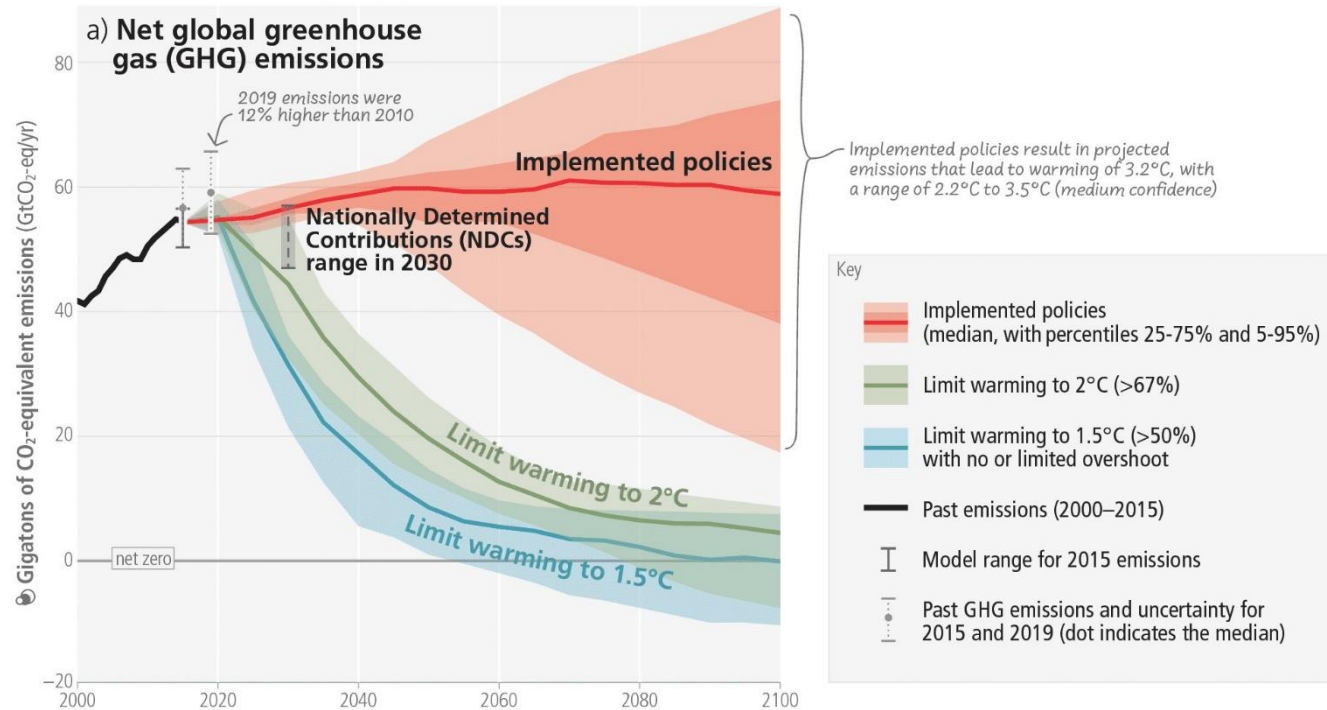
Source: IPCC AR6 Synthesis Report

Current actions are not enough!

"factor 10"

same production and welfare

by one tenth of current resources,

one tenth of current emissions

By 2050, human life, production and consumption must be within our planet's carrying capacity.

1. Circulation of completely non-renewable resources in closed systems

2. Sustainable use of renewable resources

3. Biodiversity will not be harmed, or if harm cannot be avoided, the damage should be compensated elsewhere

4. Operating without harmful emissions

European Green Deal

- Fit for 55 and RePower EU
- Just transiton mechanism
- European Climate Law
- Circular Economy action plan
- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- Farm to Fork
- Renovation wave
- Chemicals strategy for sustainablilty
- European Bauhaus
- EU Industrial strategy for net-zero industry
- Strategy for sustainable and smart mobility
- EU Forest Strategy
- Zero pollution action plan for water, air and soil
- Sustainable finance strategy
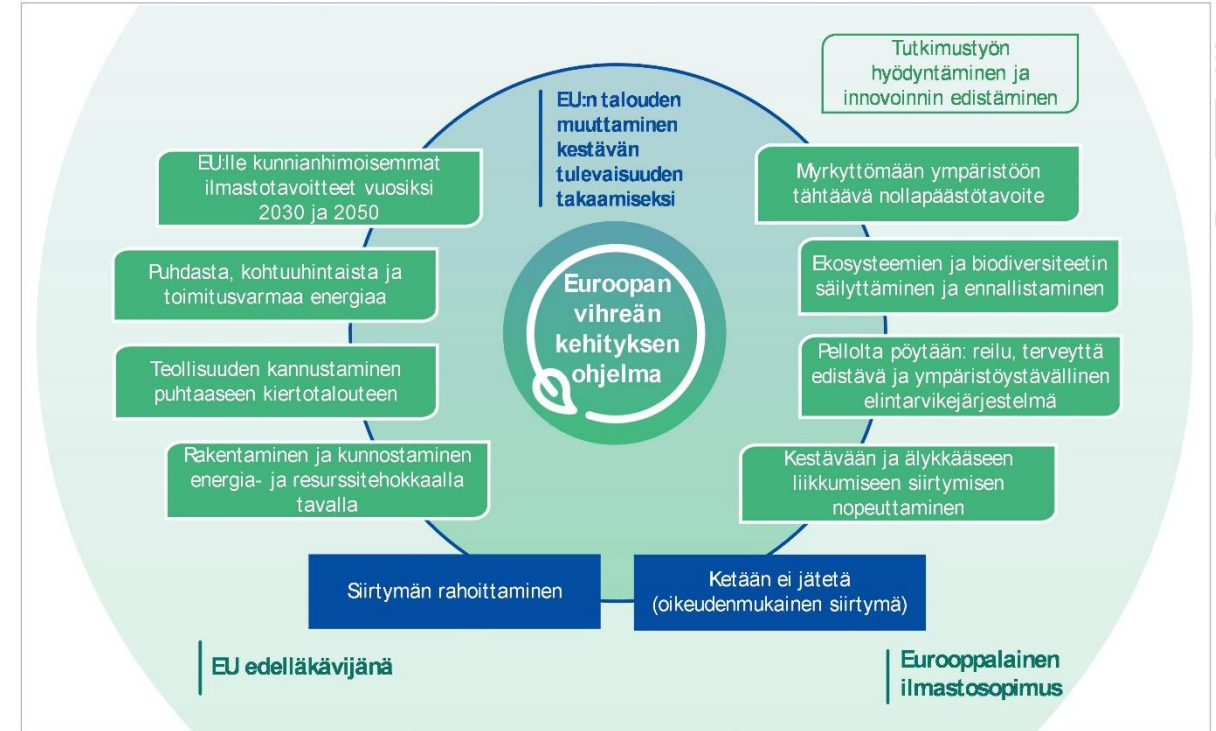
European Green Deal – What is needed?

- **Circular Economy**
  - Designing out waste
  - Ten-fold resource efficiency
  - Sustainable products
  - Product passports
- Climate neutrality
  - Climate law
  - LULUCF, RED…
  - Current actions not enough!! → Increasing the ambition and level of actions.
- Biodiversity
  - Biodiversity strategy → Nature restoration!!
  - Regenerative agriculture and forestry
    - Forest degradation law

Circular Economy Action Plan

- ▶ Reducing household waste 50%

- ▶ Extension of Ecodesign directive
  - ▶ incl. potential digital product passports

- ▶ Strategy for sustainable built environment

- ▶ "right to repair" for electronics

- ▶ GPP

- ▶ Textile strategy & EPR

- ▶ + electronics, batteries, food, water, nutrients, ELV, microplastics, global actions

European Parliament position (February 2021):

- Science based binding targets within the planetary boundaries: **material and consumption footprints**
- Product policy
  - *designing out waste*
  - extension of the Ecodesing directive
  - early/planned obsolescence
- digitalisation: opportunities and challenges
  - product passports
  - service economy
- buildings, packaging, plastics, textiles, electronics, cars and batteries

A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age

- ▶ A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age
  - ▶ Competitiveness of the European carbon neutral industry and carbon neutral technology
  - ▶ Accellerating fast transition to climate neutrality
  - ▶ Product capacity
  - ▶ Circular Economy
    - ▶ Is not focused enough!!!
- ▶ Includes:
  - ▶ Net-Zero Industry Act
  - ▶ Critical Raw Materials Act
  - ▶ Electricity Market Design

Self-sufficiency

Strategic indepency

Net-zero industry and technology

Ensuring critical raw materials needed for energy renovation and digitalization

Circular Economy Initiatives 2022-2023

Ecodesign Regulation	2022
EU Sustainable and Circular Textile Strategy	2022
Sustainable Built Environment Strategy	(late)
Construction Products Regulation	2022
Packaging and Packaging waste Regulation	2022
Policy Framework for biobased, biodegradable and compostable plastics	2022
Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition	2022
Green Claims Directive	2023
Microplastics Pollution – measures to reduce its impcat on the environment	Upcoming Q2 2023
Critical Raw Materials Act	2023
Net-Zero Industry Act	2023
Circular Economy Monitoring Framework	2023
Common Rules Promoting the Repair of Goods	2023
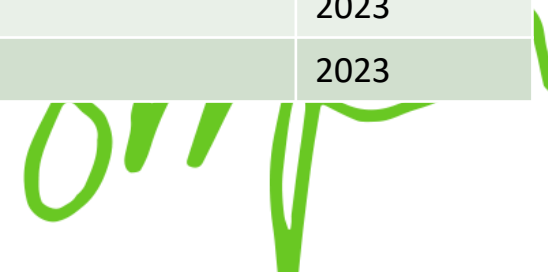
Main Sectors Covered

▶ Textiles

▶ Electronics and information/communication technology

▶ Food products, water, fertilizers and nutrients

▶ Packaging

▶ Batteries and vehicles

▶ Construction and buildings

▶ Waste Management and Shipments

Citizen/consumer involvemet and protection?

- Main proposals
  - Empowering consumers for the green transition
  - Green Claims
  - Common rules promoting the repair of goods
  - Corporate Sustainability Reporting
  - Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence
- Information availability and possibility to compare products and companies
  - Protection from false claims
- Citizen voluntary action, active engagement
- Demanding sustainable products and/or supporting new innovations
  - Products that last longer
  - Products that are sustainably and ethically produced
- Products as services
  - Renting, Sharing, Repairing, Upgrading, Re-selling...
- Right to repair
- Supporting circularity by recylcing and supporting products as services thinking

Proposal for a Regulation on Ecodesign for Sustainable Products

Objective: **make sustainable products the norm** on the EU market and reduce their overall environmental and climate impacts

▶ 'Ecodesign approach'

    ▶ product-specific legislation

        ▶ durable, reliable, reusable, upgradable, reparable, easier to maintain and refurbish, and energy and resource efficient.

        ▶ substances that inhibit circularity

        ▶ amount of recycled content products contain

        ▶ ways to make them easier to remanufacture and recycle.

    ▶ information requirements and **digital product passport**

        ▶ « classes of performance », labels etc. (see. EU Energy Label)

        ▶ reparability score?

    ▶ mandatory green public procurement criteria

    ▶ measures to prevent the destruction of unsold consumer goods

        ▶ far-reaching transparency requirements for those choosing to discard unsold goods,

        ▶ possibility to ban their destruction for relevant product groups

▶ In the meanwhile: Ecodesign and Energy Labelling Working Plan 2022-2024

New opportunities
remanufacturing, recycling and repair

maintenance, reuse, recycling, refurbishment, repair and second-hand sales

Proposal for Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition

► Commission proposal out in March 2022, EP plenary in May 2023, Currently in Trilogues

► The directive would amend the **Unfair Commercial Practices Directive** (UCPD) and the Consumer Rights Directive (CRD). It would include the following elements:

  ► **Consumers would have to be informed** which products are more **durable and reparable**. Environmental and social impact, durability and repairability would be added to the list of product characteristics about which traders are **forbidden to mislead consumers** (Article 6 UCPD);

  ► Traders providing a service that compares sustainability of products would be required to **disclose information** on the method of comparison, the products that are being compared and suppliers of the products or risk being found to be **misleading consumers** by means of omission of material information (Article 7 UCPD);

  ► Ten new commercial practices would be added to the list of commercial practices that banned in all circumstances (Annex I UCPD), including displaying a **sustainability label** that is not based on a **certification scheme** or not established by public authorities; making generic environmental claims; presenting requirements imposed by law on all products as a distinctive feature of a trader's offer; omitting to inform the consumer about a feature of a product that limits its durability**; false claims** about durability of a product; false claims about repairability of a product; **persuading the consumer** to replace a product earlier than necessary for technical reasons;

  ► When buying products, consumers would have to **be informed** that the producer offers a commercial **guarantee** of durability longer than the current two-year legal guarantee, if that is the case. Consumers would also have to be provided with a repairability score, if a repairability score is already established for that product under EU law, or information about the availability of spare parts and user and repair manual, if the producer has made such information available (Articles 6 and 7 CRD).

Proposal for a Directive on Green Claims

▶ Commission proposal out in March 2023

▶ New criteria to **stop companies from making misleading claims** about environmental merits of their products and services.

▶ Ensuring that environmental labels and claims are credible and trustworthy will allow consumers to make better informed purchasing decisions. It will also boost the competitiveness of businesses who are striving to increase the environmental sustainability of their products and activities.

Proposal on Common Rules Promoting the Right to Repair

▶ Commission proposal out in March 2023

▶ The proposal will make it easier and more cost-effective for consumers to repair as opposed to replace goods. Additionally, more demand will translate into a boost to the repair sector while incentivising producers and sellers to develop more sustainable business models.

▶ The proposal will ensure that more products are repaired within the legal guarantee, and that consumers have **easier and cheaper options to repair** products that are technically repairable (such as vacuum cleaners, or soon, tablets and smartphones) when the legal guarantee has expired or when the good is not functional anymore as a result of wear and tear.

Corporate Responsibility Initiatives

► **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive**

  ► Entered into force in January 2023

  ► The new rules will ensure that investors and other stakeholders have access to the information they need to assess investment risks arising from climate change and other sustainability issues. They will also create a culture of transparency about the impact of companies on people and the environment.

► **Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence**

  ► Parliament voted in June 2023 → trilogues.

  ► The proposal aims to foster sustainable and responsible corporate behaviour throughout global value chains. Corporations will be required to identify and, where necessary, prevent, end or mitigate adverse impacts of their activities on human rights, such as child labour and exploitation of workers, and on the environment, for example pollution and biodiversity loss.

► **Reporting obligations for corporations**

  ► **→ Increase the access for transparent information**

  ► **→ Better consumer choices?**

Thank you for participating!

You can read more about this topic and other topics from:

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