



As Europe looks to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, what lessons for sustainability can we learn from previous crises and what should the path forward look like?

COVID-19: Five sustainability tests for Europe's recovery plans

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While the real magnitude of the COVID-19 crisis and the effectiveness of responses to date are not yet fully known, European leaders know that they do not have the luxury to wait for certainty.

Across the EU, there is a great temptation for recovery plans to prop up yesterday's economy instead of "building back better". But listening to voices that ignore the fundamental environmental challenges and run the risk of burdening future generations with carbon lock-ins would be a mistake.

That is why, together with my colleagues from four leading European sustainability think tanks, I am proposing the creation of an independent, green recovery scrutiny board that would assess the adequacy of any EU and member states' recovery plans. In an [op-ed published online](#) on the morning of last week's European Council summit, we have outlined five sustainability criteria that must be passed by any recovery plans or economic stimulus.

On this note, it is also my great pleasure to introduce [Think Sustainable Europe](#), our network of sustainability think tanks dedicated to providing policymakers across the continent with sound, science-based analysis and recommendations. Join our [upcoming webinar](#) on the Green Deal in the post-COVID era and stay tuned for our events, in-depth policy analysis and more.

Céline Charveriat, Executive Director



From our blog



Up-scaling of nature-based solutions for climate change

There is unprecedented political momentum and window of opportunity for scaling up nature-based solutions for climate and well-being, with the existing experience base providing a solid foundation for this. Earlier this year, IEEP helped organise a European Commission workshop on how to scale up nature-based solutions.



Life under COVID-19: Role of nature for mental and physical well-being

Aiming to stop the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, governments across Europe are advising people to stay indoors unless absolutely necessary – but just how important is access to the outdoors for one's mental and physical well-being?



Greening the Industrial Strategy

Ursula von der Leyen and her Commission have taken important steps to green the European economy and simultaneously promote competitiveness as part of the European Green Deal. The communication on a new industrial strategy is one more significant policy initiative, writes IEEP associate Mats Engström.

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Latest publications



Green Deal for All: How to achieve sustainability and equity between people, countries and generations of Europe after COVID-19

This policy report shows that to ensure fair and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, the European Green Deal needs to address the intra-EU, intra-country and intergenerational equity challenges that lie at the heart of the multiple environmental crises.



An analysis of the new EU Circular Economy Action Plan

The following analysis assesses to what extent actions included in the new EU Circular Economy Action Plan that relate to demand may help reduce environmental pressures and contribute to a more circular European economy within the boundaries of the planet.



Sustainability criteria for deforestation-free and human rights-compliant agricultural commodities

To inform future European Commission's legislative efforts, IEEP has designed sustainability criteria for addressing deforestation and land degradation linked to EU supply chains.



Role of a reformed European Semester within a new sustainable economy strategy

This paper identifies priorities and modalities for the reform of the European Semester so that it becomes a key instrument for operationalising the SDGs and implementing the European Green Deal at member state level.

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Think Sustainable Europe



Formed at the end of 2019, [Think Sustainable Europe](#) is a coalition of sustainability think tanks, including IEEP, Ecologic Institute, IDDRI, SEI and TMG. The group's aim is to provide policymakers across the continent with sound, science-based analysis and recommendations.

Think2030 conference



Think Sustainable Europe serves as the idea generator for Think2030, a platform of 100 leading sustainability experts from European think tanks, civil society, the private sector and local authorities. Think2030 meets every two years for a high-level conference to discuss and present the outcomes of the collaborative work. Hosted by Ecologic Institute, the 2020 conference will take place in Berlin on 16-17 November.

Events



Webinar: How to ensure a Green Deal for all after COVID-19

4 May | With the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, political priorities are likely to shift while those furthest behind risk being even more exposed to inequalities. This webinar organised by IEEP and SEI will share findings of two recent reports on equitable recovery and just transition.

In the news



Europe's recovery plans must pass five sustainability tests

EURACTIV | Faced with the urgency of the COVID-19 crisis, there is a great temptation for recovery plans to prop up yesterday's economy instead of "building back better". Instead, recovery plans and any economic stimulus must pass five tests, argue European sustainability think tanks.



Central and Eastern Europe must not lose sight of climate goals

CEEENERGYNEWS | It is time for Europe to address several issues at the same time. In fact, it seems impossible to focus on the coronavirus' outbreak and forget about climate change. Or concentrating on renewables while ignoring people's health.



Will coronavirus torpedo the Green Deal?

EU Observer | This year was supposed to make a difference in the international fight against climate change. But the spreading of the coronavirus and the related economic slowdown might overshadow climate change as a priority - for both decision-makers and citizens.



Sustainability think tanks pick apart EU's Farm to Fork strategy

IEG Policy | COVID-19 has delayed the publication of the European Commission's new sustainable food policy. A group of sustainability think tanks analysed the Commission's proposal for its Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy and identified different areas where it could be improved.



Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)
Brussels Office
Rue Joseph II, 36-38
1000 Brussels, Belgium
T: +32(0)2 738 7482

The Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) is an independent sustainability think tank with offices in Brussels and London. As a not-for-profit organisation with over 40-years of experience, we are committed to advancing impact-driven sustainability policy across the EU and the world.

For more information, visit www.ieep.eu.

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