



**Think  
2030**

Science-policy  
solutions for a more  
sustainable Europe

**sweden  
2023.eu**

20.04.2023 Session Brief

# European Green Deal until 2024 and beyond: which vision and priorities?



20.04.2023 Session Brief

# European Green Deal until 2024 and beyond: which vision and priorities?

The Think2030 Dialogue Sweden, held on 20 April 2023, gathered decision-makers and analysts from policy, business and research communities across Europe to debate the key sustainability issues at stake for EU policy. The Think2030 Dialogue Sweden is one of several activities within the Think2030 platform, created by the Institute for European Environmental Policy in 2018 to provide science-policy solutions for a more sustainable Europe.

As part of the Think2030 dialogue, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) and Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies (SIEPS) organized the session “European Green Deal 2024 and beyond: Vision and priorities for the EGD 2.0?” and this session brief summarizes the key take-aways from this session.

**Co-leads:** IEEP & SIEPS

**Moderator:** Martijn Pakker, Head of Strategic Relations IEEP

**Rapporteur:** Ioli Christopoulou, Co-founder and Policy Director, The Green Tank

**Speakers:**

- Luc Bas, Regional Vice-Chair IUCN CEESP (Commission for Environmental, Economic and Social Policy), Europe
- Camilla Bausch, Scientific & Executive Director, Ecologic Institute
- Mats Engström, Senior Adviser, SIEPS
- Anja Gassner, Senior Scientist Advisor World Agroforestry, Global Landscape Forum
- Lasse Miettinen, Director, Sustainability solutions, Sitra
- Katie Carson, Director Corporate Affairs Food & Climate Policy of Tetra Pak Group

## Key messages

- The European Green Deal was needed, and its relevance surprised many, not only because of its ambition and transformative impact, especially in the energy and climate sector, but also because of its resilience in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the ensuing energy and global food crisis.
- A focus on implementation will be key to deliver the current European Green Deal (and maybe even new ambitions within it). Due to uneven progress on the Green Deal agenda, a dual approach is needed: implementation without delays in the policy areas where greater progress was made (esp. climate and energy policy), and development of new files in the policy areas where progress was weaker (2040 climate targets, nature protection, chemicals, etc.).
- An enhanced and improved communication of the benefits of the Green Deal will be paramount to raise awareness, understanding and shared ownership of the European Green Deal. All stakeholders interested in a strong Green Deal should get better at communicating its benefits, especially in view of the 2024 European elections.
- The post-2024 European Green Deal will have to engage much more with stakeholders, and it might necessitate a new governance model, as well as taking into account how to build more capacity at the EU member state level for its implementation.

Launched in 2019 by a communication from the European Commission, the European Green Deal, the EU's central growth strategy, aims at several environmental objectives, with the overall goal being to make the EU climate neutral by 2050. As the current European Commission has started the last full year of its mandate, and the European elections are approaching (June 2024), the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union are trying to reach agreement on a multitude of proposals, translating the Green Deal into a concrete set of laws – beyond the already binding Climate Law and its accompanying "Fit for 55" package, and the eighth Environment Action Programme – while trying to possibly improve the uneven progress between states in areas covered by the Green Deal.

**The Science & Policy session of the Think2030 Dialogue Sweden focused on the vision and priorities for the European Green Deal until 2024 and beyond.** The discussion painted a picture of the Green Deal as it currently stands, pointing out a general high appreciation for its establishment, while also highlighting the need to keep high the ambition on the implementation of the measures (approved and to be approved) at the member state level. In order to realize this objective, some key priorities have been identified and proposed, as discussed by session participants.

First and foremost, all speakers emphasized how the **European Green Deal was extremely necessary** as a framework for more coherent EU action on sustainability, and it managed to surprise many, not only because of its ambition and transformative impact, especially in the energy and climate sector, but also because of its **resilience despite the coronavirus pandemic**, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the ensuing energy crisis. Most of the panellists agreed that the European Green Deal is likely to remain a high-level policy priority for the EU, even representing an overarching development strategy for the EU post-2024. However, new policy areas and approaches (competitiveness, food resilience and security, nature-based solutions, etc.) will most likely define the direction and impact of the proposals included in the next European Green Deal. There remains a risk for backlash, evident at the beginning from agriculture and forestry sectors, and since last year more generally as organizations and member states called for "regulatory breathing space".

The Think2030 session covered the numerous **ongoing negotiations on Green Deal** policy areas in the legislative procedure, as well as the impact of the war in Ukraine and subsequent increases in energy prices. The panel considered some of those areas that are most likely to remain a priority for the next European Commission and it dug into the key trends that will influence the implementation of the Green Deal at national and European levels beyond 2024. The discussion was underpinned by some of the preliminary results of the [2023 edition of the European Green Deal Barometer](#), an opinion-based survey addressed to sustainability experts and focusing on the key barriers and opportunities for the European Green Deal.

According to panellists, the European Green Deal implementation process will need to be depoliticized, shifting the burden of many expectations from one person (the current Commission President, who has strongly supported and pushed forward action on the Green Deal) to all actors in society. The reasons behind the need to share the burden of implementation are multifaceted and complex: climate change is a global issue; transformation has economic and social impacts around the world because of new sourcing (e.g. “green hydrogen” supply chains); the energy crisis and supply chain disruptions in recent years have revealed gaps; rising geopolitical tensions require a European stance. Proper monitoring and evaluation will remain essential.

In terms of the role of the rotating **Presidency of the Council of the EU**, the general assessment of the panel was that, with the Swedish presidency, several dossiers have moved forward in dialogues and the Council (such as the Industry Emissions Directive or the EcoDesign), but the long-term strategy on competitiveness risks slowing new legislation down. The Spanish Presidency will be important to keep the momentum for the “green agenda”, and it is reassuring that the planning so far seems ambitious (e.g. a renewable energy meeting is already scheduled to take place this coming October).

**The discussion highlighted some of the key priorities that have been missing or are unlikely to be agreed on in the current Green Deal by the time of the next European Commission elections**, such as the circular economy, chemical regulations and the “[blue agenda](#)”. The EU has focused so far extensively on climate and energy policies (e.g. Fit for 55 and REPowerEU) but not as much on food and biodiversity – the latter of which has, however, gained momentum after the Convention on Biological Diversity’s COP15 and thanks to the negotiations for a proposed EU Nature Restoration Law.

While progress has been made in these key policy areas, three aspects have been repeatedly mentioned as not taken enough into account for an effective implementation of the European Green Deal. First is **nature-based solutions**: working with nature will become even more important to reach 2040 climate goals, including current or new proposals on nature-based solutions and nature restoration. **Integrated responses** should remain at the heart of the Green Deal: for instance, the need is urgent to integrate climate and biodiversity policies (under the European Green Deal) into a holistic approach, to safeguard the EU’s natural capital and get nature back on track to recovery; or again, the transition to circular economy provides tools to tackle the root causes of unsustainable consumption and production, using data and ICT for products.

Second, and directly linked to biodiversity but not exclusively, a strong proposal on **sustainable food systems** remains lacking. Food and farming systems have a critical role to play in addressing the key environmental challenges of our time. European food systems are currently unsustainable and transforming them will be key to limiting climate change, reversing biodiversity loss, limiting water and air pollution, and preserving resources such as water and soil.

Last, with regard to **its external dimension**, the approval of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) as part of the Fit for 55 package was a landmark – but only a first step to avoid risks of so-called “carbon leakage”, as well as to have a coherent and fair approach internally and externally, thinking about the impact of the European Green Deal on third-country partners. External partners will also be impacted by the EU “farm-to-fork” strategy, as agriculture is one of the key sectors for the EU to shift into a climate neutral economy by 2050. With the enormous footprint of the EU on value chains and agricultural landscapes in the Global South, it is essential that conservation and business tools that follow from the European Green Deal are evaluated and monitored if they indeed are useful tools to help producers to transition into sustainable production.

The same could be said about the EU [Deforestation Regulation](#) on deforestation-free supply chains and the EU's weight behind the Agroecology Coalition. While welcomed, the emphasis must be on more than just compliance only, but on outcomes on the ground. This can only happen through integrated approaches. Zero deforestation can only be achieved if enforcement goes hand in hand with rural development.

**In view of the 2024 European elections**, party programmes should be committed to the vision of the European Green Deal and its ambitious implementation. Moreover, Think2030 panellists' consensus is that the **next European Commission** will need to be an energy, economic and geopolitical Commission, to ensure resilience, economic stability and start a “race to the top” with respect to climate.

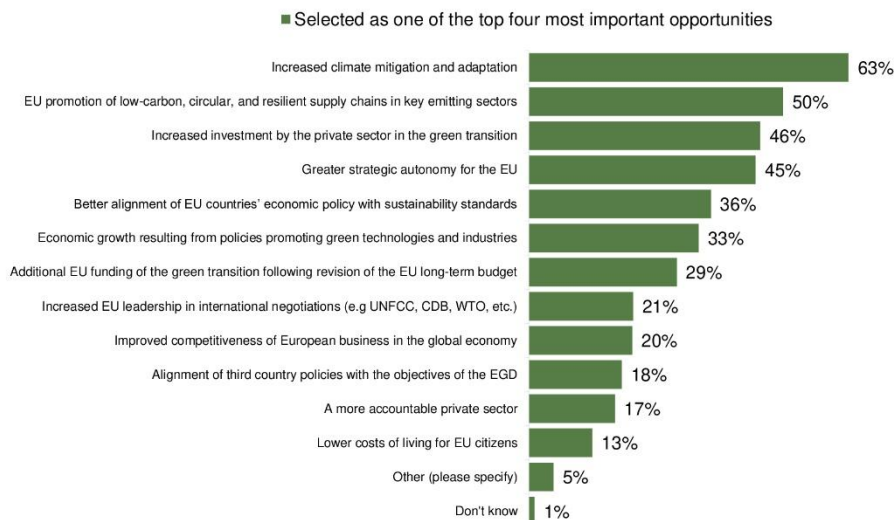
**Looking forward**, the shared understanding during the Think2030 session was that more engagement by civil society and other stakeholders in the public debate will be needed to highlight the benefits and impacts of the European Green Deal. **Think tanks, civil society and other stakeholders** should also be interested in continuing to provide inputs to policymakers where the relevant discussions happen. For instance, in the case of the Swedish Presidency, the debate about competitiveness needs good analytical work, for instance, on how well-designed regulations could contribute to more innovation and more jobs.

**In conclusion, the next mandate will see the definition of overarching policies:** the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF, post-2027), the next Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform, and the Common Fisheries Policies (CFP) reform. Clearly, one of the key challenges for the next European Commission will be the effective translation of previously agreed Green Deal policies into national legislation.

In their final remarks, the panellists called for the creation and full implementation of a Green Deal for food policies; better communication of the European Green Deal benefits; stronger involvement of stakeholders going beyond politics and providing to such actors the needed tools and agency to deliver the Green Deal; and greater engagement of civil society organizations, think tanks and science organizations to consistently underpin evidence-based policy proposals and narratives opposed to rising populism.

**IMAGES AND TABLE CAPTIONS:** From the [2023 EGD Barometer](#)

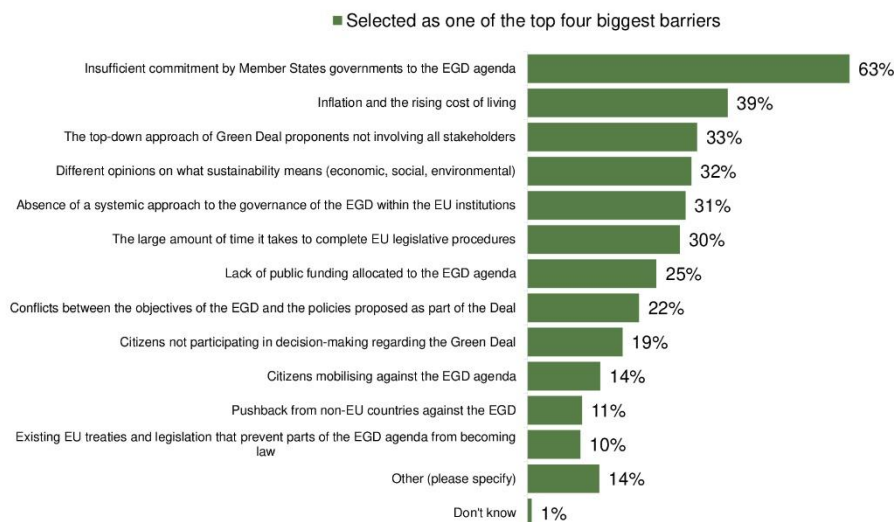
**Chart 1: Opportunities arising as a result of turning the EGD into approved legislation**



Q15. Which four of the following are the most important opportunities that would arise as a result of turning the European Green Deal into approved legislation?

Base: EU experts (n=535)

**Chart 2: Barriers to turning the EGD into approved legislation**



Q13. Which four of the following are the biggest barriers to turning the European Green Deal into approved legislation?

Base: EU experts (n=535)

## About Think2030

Launched by IEEP and its partners in 2018, Think2030 is an evidence-based, non-partisan platform of leading policy experts from European think tanks, civil society, the private sector and local authorities.

By focusing on producing relevant, timely and concrete policy recommendations, Think2030's key objective is to identify science-policy solutions for a more sustainable Europe.

**think2030.eu**

**#Think2030**



# Think 2030

Science-policy  
solutions for a more  
sustainable Europe

**sweden  
2023.eu**

For more information on this paper please contact:

### AUTHORS AND AFFILIATIONS

**Mattia Bonfanti**, IEEP

[mbonfanti@ieep.eu](mailto:mbonfanti@ieep.eu)

**Ioli Christopoulou**, The Green Tank

[christopoulou.ioli@thegreentank.gr](mailto:christopoulou.ioli@thegreentank.gr)

**Mats Engstrom**, SIEPS

[mats.engstrom@sieps.se](mailto:mats.engstrom@sieps.se)

### MEDIA CONTACT

**Carla Coppola**, IEEP

[ccoppola@ieep.eu](mailto:ccoppola@ieep.eu)