



Issue #5 - February 2020

Environment is high on the European Union agenda

On 12 December Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen, the newly elected President of the European Commission (EC), presented the **European Green Deal** – the new EU growth strategy and the first comprehensive plan to achieve sustainable development in any major world region. The ultimate goal of the Green Deal is to improve the well-being of people by tackling climate and environmental-related challenges. It is at the heart of the Commission's efforts to implement the UN's 2030 Agenda and SDGs, and all EU actions and policies will have to contribute to the Green Deal's objectives.

Key aspects of the European Green Deal are as follows:

1. Climate neutrality

The EU will become climate-neutral by 2050. This goal will be stipulated in the first ever European "Climate Law" to be presented in March 2020, in addition various legislative measures will be revised. This means that the EU's greenhouse gas emission reductions target for 2030 will be increased to at least 50% and towards 55%.

2. Clean, affordable and secure energy

The EU will accelerate the decarbonisation of the energy system and the integration of the European energy market through increased cross-border and regional cooperation. The development of the energy sector will be largely based on renewable sources. At the same time, the EU will guarantee the affordability of energy for citizens and businesses, and provide financing schemes to tackle energy poverty.

3. Circular economy

A Circular Economy Action Plan as part of a broader EU industrial strategy will be presented in March 2020. It will include a sustainable products policy to support the circular design of products in line with common methodology and principles. Focus will be placed on reusing materials before recycling them; encouraging businesses to offer customers durable and repairable products; providing customers with adequate information to buy sustainable products. Actions will be also targeted at resource intense sectors such as textiles, construction, electronics and plastics. New legislative measures will be proposed to tackle waste generation and management.

4. Building renovation

A key priority of the EU will be the renovation of public and private buildings as buildings account for 40% of energy consumed. Currently the annual renovation rate varies between 0.4% and 1.2% in the Member States, and it should be at least doubled.

5. Sustainable mobility

As transport accounts for 25% of EU greenhouse gas emissions, the EU will continue to build on existing measures for providing sustainable and smart mobility. These will include further developing multimodal and automated transport, including the presentation of a revised proposal for a Directive on Combined Transport; increasing the capacity of railways and inland waterways to reduce the usage of road transport of freight; supporting the development of smart systems for traffic management, including financing schemes; boosting the production and supply of sustainable alternative fuels for the different transport modes; deployment of public recharging and refuelling stations to respond to the increasing number of zero- and low-emission vehicles, etc. In this framework, particular attention will be given to reduce transport pollution in cities with a combination of measures to address emissions, urban congestion and improved public transport.

6. Green agriculture

A new "Farm to Fork" strategy will be presented in spring 2020 to support the transition towards a healthier and more environmentally-friendly agriculture. It will aim to reduce the use of chemical pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics; reduce the environmental impact of the food processing and retail sectors; promote sustainable food consumption and affordable healthy food, including more transparent information for consumers.

7. Preserving and protecting biodiversity

A new EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 will be presented in March 2020 with the aim of addressing the main causes of biodiversity loss. The measures will include increasing the coverage of protected biodiversity-rich land and sea areas; green European cities and increasing biodiversity in urban areas; drafting a new EU forest strategy.

8. Toxic-free environment

To achieve a pollution-free environment the EU will adopt an action plan for water, air and soil. It will address air quality legislation with the aim of aligning it with the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations and pollution from large industrial installations.

9. Financing

A key aspect is meeting the investment needs that arise from the Green Deal objectives. For this purpose, the EC will propose a Sustainable Europe Investment Plan. Moreover, it has proposed a 25% target for climate mainstreaming across all EU programmes and new revenue sources ("Own Resources"). At least 30% of the InvestEU Fund will contribute to tackling climate change. A new Just Transition Mechanism, including a Just Transition Fund to leave no one behind that will draw funds from the EU budget and the European Investment Bank (EIB), is envisaged; it will support the regions that are most heavily dependent on fossil fuels. This underlines the need for a socially just transition which must also be reflected in policies at EU and national level. The Horizon Europe programme will also support the development of new technologies and solutions needed to achieve the objectives.

10. Global leadership

Addressing climate change requires the efforts of the global community. Therefore, the EU, while setting an example, will put into action a stronger "green deal diplomacy" to engage other countries and regions to play their role in promoting sustainable development. It will strive to work closely with international bodies such as the UN, G7, G20, WTO and others. To engage with these groups, the EC will propose a European Climate Pact that will encourage information sharing, and provide real and virtual spaces for people to express ideas as well as capacity building measures for implementation of grassroots initiatives.

The **PostEurop CSR Circle will closely follow initiatives put in place in the framework of the EU Green deal.** The EU actions related to Climate Neutrality, Energy, Circular Economy, Building Renovation, Sustainable Mobility as well as Green Financing may potentially impact the activities of the sector. One of the ambitions of the CSR Circle is to make full use of funding opportunities offered by the EU Green Deal as the postal sector is particularly ahead on several topics which could be funded by the European institutions.

Beyond the EU, "Sustainability" is high on the agenda of the UN and on people's minds. Postal operators play an important role in Society and therefore, **this topic is high on our agenda and chosen for PostEurop's Business Forum** this year which will take place in Dublin, Ireland on **8 October 2020**. Hosted by An Post, who has transitioned their fleet to make Dublin the first city with zero emissions postal delivery. CEOs, Postal Executives and Sustainability experts are expected to gather for this important day, so mark the date on your calendar. The CSR Activities Circle will contribute actively to the forum. If you have a compelling project or action to share with the community, please do not hesitate to contact Margaux Meidinger, Chair of the CSR Activities Circle (E: margaux.meidinger@laposte.fr).

Stay tuned for more developments on the above matters with our newsletter.

Further information on the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainability Goals can be found on the following links:

- A European Green Deal: https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en.
- Communication on the European Green Deal: https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/communication-european-green-deal_en.
- UN SDG: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

Read more about the zero emissions postal delivery program of An Post:

- <https://www.posteurop.org/showNews?selectedEventId=37152>



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