



The European Green Deal

Opportunities and Challenges

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The European Green Deal



The European Commission set out a **European Green Deal** for the European Union and its citizens, which resets the Commission's strategy to tackling climate and related environmental challenges.

It is a new **growth strategy** that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy,

- **No net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050**
- **Economic growth is decoupled from resource use**

The Commission presents an **initial roadmap** of the key policies and measures needed to achieve the European Green Deal (it will be updated as needs evolve and the policy responses are formulated).

The Green Deal is an integral part of this Commission's strategy to implement **the United Nation's 2030 Agenda** and the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.

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The following figure illustrates the various elements of the Green Deal:



Figure 1: The European Green Deal

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The key elements of the Green Deal, relevant for the European Construction Chemicals industry include:

- **Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy**
- **Building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way**
- **A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment**

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Next steps:

- The Commission will submit **a long term strategy** to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change early 2020
- The Commission will propose the first European '**Climate Law**' in March 2020
- Also in March 2020, the Commission will adopt an **EU Industrial Strategy** to address the twin challenge of the **green- and the digital transformation**
- Together with the Industrial Strategy, **a new circular economy action plan** will help modernise the EU's economy and draw benefit from the opportunities of the circular economy domestically and globally.

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Building and Renovating in an energy and resource efficient way (chapter 2.1.4):

- The Commission will rigorously enforce the legislation related to the **energy performance of buildings**
- The Commission will launch work on the possibility of **including emissions from buildings** in European emissions trading
- The Commission will **review the Construction Products Regulation (CPR)**. It should ensure that the design of new and renovated buildings at all stages is in line with **the needs of the circular economy**
- The Commission proposes to work with stakeholders on a new initiative on **renovation** in 2020
- The Commission will also work to lift **national regulatory barriers** that inhibit energy efficiency investments

The Commission sees the CPR as a one of the main enablers for the achievement of the Goals of the European Green Deal

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A zero pollution ambition for a toxic-free environment (chapter 2.1.8):

Creating a toxic-free environment requires more action to prevent pollution from being generated as well as measures to clean and remedy it.

- To address these interlinked challenges, the Commission will adopt in 2021 a **zero pollution action plan for air, water and soil**
- To ensure a toxic-free environment, the Commission will present **a Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability**
- The Commission will review how to better use the EU's agencies and scientific bodies to move towards a process of '**one substance – one assessment**' and to provide greater transparency when prioritising action to deal with chemicals.
- In parallel, the regulatory framework will need to rapidly reflect scientific evidence on the risk posed by **endocrine disruptors, hazardous chemicals in products including imports, combination effects of different chemicals and very persistent chemicals**.

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New Circular Economy Action Plan:

- The plan will foster **New Business Models**
- The plan will set **minimum requirements** to prevent environmentally harmful products from being placed on the EU Market
- **Extended Producer Responsibility** will be strengthened
- **Digitalisation** can help improve the availability of information on the characteristics of products sold in the EU. For instance, an electronic product passport (e.g. **Smart CE marking**) could provide information on a product's origin, composition, repair and dismantling possibilities, and end-of-life handling

Action will **focus** in particular on resource-intensive sectors, such as **construction** and plastics.

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New Circular Economy Action Plan:

- The Circular Economy Action Plan will include a '**Sustainable Products Policy**' to support the design of all products based on a common methodology and common principles
- The Commission will consider **legal requirements** to boost the market of secondary raw materials with mandatory recycled content (for instance for **construction materials**)

The Commission sees the CPR as a key regulation to achieve circularity in the sector in support of the Green Deal.

The Circular Economy Action Plan



New Circular Economy Action Plan:

- The action plan looks at **the whole lifecycle of products** and adopts a systemic approach that promotes partnerships along **the entire value chain** and across different sectors.
- The Commission also identifies five priority sectors: **plastics**, food waste, biomass and bio-based products, critical raw materials and **construction and demolition**.
- In volume terms, construction and demolition are **the largest sources of waste** in Europe
- The recycling of construction and demolition waste will be encouraged by an **EU-wide mandatory target**
- In total **54 actions** of the Circular Economy Action Plan have been completed or are being implemented, which are captured in a **Commission Report (COM(2019) 90 final)**.

The Circular Economy Action Plan



Commission Report:

- Various EU policies already address resource efficiency: beyond **the EcoDesign Directive**, the **Energy-labelling Regulation**, these policies also include **voluntary tools**, such as the **EU Ecolabel** or **Green Public Procurement** criteria.
- The Staff Working Document (**SWD(2019) 91**) on product-related policies, published together with the Report, examines options to better articulate the various existing product policy tools at EU level and their contribution to the circular economy.
- Boosting **the use of secondary raw materials** (SRMs) is one of the objectives of the circular economy action plan. The EU Communication (**COM(2018) 32**) on **the interface between chemicals, product and waste legislation** launched a wide debate on the way to tackle four main obstacles impeding the safe uptake of SRMs.
- Circularity also means **adapting industrial processes**. For example, specific **Best Available Techniques Reference Documents** (BREFs) under the Industrial Emissions directive and the **Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)** confirmed its potential to improve organisations' environmental performance.