



Conference on the **Future** of **Europe**

DRAFT SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on Climate Change and Environment, Chaired by Ms Pasková, Council / Czechia
Friday 1 April 2022, 17:00-19:00

The working group met in virtual format to finish the discussions on the draft proposals to the Conference plenary; on cluster II climate change, energy and transport, on cluster III sustainable consumption, packaging and production, and on cluster IV information, awareness, dialogue and life-style.

1. Opening by the Chair and the Spokesperson

Both the Chair and the Spokesperson thanked Members for the work so far. The Chair explained that the work will focus on the remaining elements.

2. Exchange

Commissioner Wojciechowski attended the meeting and outlined how the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) can contribute to meeting the recommendations from citizens, including by promoting sustainability from an environmental, social and economic point of view, and supporting efforts to tackle climate change, preserving natural resources and restore biodiversity, thereby constituting an important pillar of the European Green Deal. The Commissioner highlighted a number of measures under the CAP aimed at transitioning to greener and more sustainable farming, such as eco-schemes and support for farmers in order to support livelihoods and ensure thriving rural areas. The Commissioner also emphasised that the war in Ukraine and the pandemic had underlined the critical importance of food security, and recalled the recent communication from the Commission (adopted on 23 March), which set out a series of actions to safeguard food security.

Objective 3: Tackle climate change and enhance European energy security, taking into account geopolitical implications, and providing Europeans with sufficient, affordable and sustainable energy, while keeping a role of global leader and respecting global climate protection goals

In the discussion, starting at measure 9 of objective 3, the following issues and suggestions were addressed:

- Among others, these suggestions for textual additions were mentioned: *financial support for CO2 filters, anti-tax fraud measures, after a transition period, support for loss and damages, island regions.*
- Discussions focused on measures related to investments in energy storage and climate-friendly technologies and innovations.
- The need to no longer subsidise fossil fuels and not provide funding for traditional gas infrastructure was discussed. While there was overall agreement on the need to move towards more sustainable energy sources, Members also emphasised that the current geopolitical situation highlights the need for energy security and that the phasing out is the long term goal, but there needs to be a transition period.

Objective 4: Providing high quality, modern and safe infrastructure, ensuring connectivity, including of rural areas, in particular through public transport

In the discussion, the following issues and suggestions were addressed:

- Among others, these suggestions for textual additions were mentioned: *green infrastructure, island regions, especially rural areas, safety, all cycling infrastructure, where credible alternatives exist, linked to income.*
- There was overall agreement on the formulation of the objective and discussions focused in particular on the need for the infrastructure to be green, and on the special circumstances faced by island states and/or remote areas.
- During a discussion on limiting the short distance flights, the practical difficulties for specific regions and other complications were raised, leading to a possible compromise linking the limiting of short distance flights to credible alternatives and the recommendation on improving the train network.
- The need to take into account social and just considerations, i.e. with respect to subsidies and incentives for transition to zero-emission mobility was also raised.

Objective 5: Better use and management of materials within the EU in order to become more autonomous, circular, and less vulnerable. Better, sustainable EU products and production and promoting circular economy: products to meet common EU environmental standards (to last longer, are easier to re-use, repair and recycle)

In the discussion, the following issues and suggestions were addressed:

- Among others, these suggestions for textual additions were mentioned: *green hydrogen, QR code, stricter standards, less dependent, products placed on the EU market, Digital Product Passport, avoid food waste, EU Sustainable Textile Strategy.*
- Suggestions were made to make the measure on standards more specific and stricter in relation to production standards and also specifically include imported products.
- A Member raised that the measure on reviewing global supply chains should mention agriculture, should however not be limited to it.

- On the measure pertaining to waste, it was suggested to add clearer language on how to avoid waste in the first place, by setting better prevention and re-use/recycling targets. The proposal to merge measures pertaining to waste was well received.
- On deposit return schemes, it was suggested to have advanced standards for containers.
- The right to repair to tackle obsolescence was raised and the importance of spare parts being accessible for a longer period of time was stressed.
- The wording on secondary raw materials on the market was re-formulated to create a real market and provide provisions on the quantity of secondary materials in products.
- On the measure pertaining to fashion products it was suggested to refer to the EU strategy for sustainable textiles.

Objective 6: Foster knowledge, awareness, and dialogues on environment, climate change, energy use, and sustainability

In the discussion, the following issues and suggestions were addressed:

- Among others, these suggestions for textual additions were mentioned: *education, interactive, lifelong learning, sustainability literacy*.
- It was raised that the original recommendation by the European Citizens Panel was speaking of an ‘interactive fact-checking platform and Members agreed this should be added.
- Some members underlined that measures pertaining to education and teaching materials should include the aspect of life-long learning and the need for retraining and scientific research.
- On the measure pertaining to strengthening the EU’s role and action in the area of environment and education, one member reminded about national competence in these areas.
- In connection with plant-based diets, citizens suggested striking a good balance a seeking synergies with similar measures of the working group on health.
- Others underlined the importance of shifting agricultural land use from feeding animals to more EU sovereignty in food production.

3. Closing by the Chair

The Chair and Spokesperson closed the meeting by stating that the second draft of proposals would be circulated on Monday and reminded Members that the last working group meeting will take place on 7 April.