

How to paint a greyish 'Green Deal' blue

The '[European Green Deal](#)' communication addresses environmental, financial, sustainable development-related, international organisations-related, and climatic issues. The style is the traditional within the European administration - a mix between legal, factual and buzzword references, the latter one being the dominant element.

The text uses **green** for the title, but it actually refers more often to the non-spectral black and white shades of **grey** of the climate monomania debate than to the preservation of the **blue** planet at the core of environmentalist concerns.

The 'urgent challenge' announced in the first subtitle sets the tone: 'The [communication] resets the Commission's commitment to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges that is this generation's defining task. The atmosphere is warming, and the climate is changing with each passing year. One million of the eight million species on the planet are at risk of being lost. Forests and oceans are being polluted and destroyed'.

As too often is the case in most literature that focuses on 'climate', the text is drafted so as to convey the impression that we are facing a one-dimensional, straightforward relation between a warming atmosphere and the destruction of biodiversity, forests and oceans. However, one has only to glance at [literature](#) quoted in this paragraph of the very paper to see this is not the case.

Human activity may have a direct, clear, and undisputable impact on environment – when one devastates a wild forest, for instance. An indirect, or secondary impact includes instances wherein insects are eliminated for the needs of intensive farming and birds disappear as a result - and we can witness even more complex set of events for instance when intensive farming provokes a change in the concentrated amount of substances such as Nitrogen and Phosphorous in rivers, lakes and seas. This leads to deoxygenation and emissions of substances such as N₂O or CH₄ with extensive loss of biodiversity and change of the composition of the atmosphere. This change of composition of atmosphere may then lead to a green-house impact – which in turn may lead to its warming, accelerating negative trends on biodiversity and elsewhere.

Climate is the complex result of numerous natural and human interactions. Human impacts on climate are normally preceded or accompanied by a variety of other impacts.

As we know, these impacts are not always convergent or one-dimensional. For instance, emissions producing acid rain, or No_x, in the first days, might have negative green-house gas impacts alone, but on the whole, pollution tends to have cumulative negative impacts in a very broad range of environmental objectives.



This is why I have been opposing the institutional and conceptual dissociation created in [Rio](#) between environmental and climatic issues and insisted on the need of an [integrated environmental](#) approach.

This artificial separation allowed for the most anti-environmental vested interests to jump in the wagon, as was the case of the nuclear industry back in the nineties - and is now the case with oil companies championing 'carbon capture' schemes that simply side-line all other environmental impacts by fossil-fuels use as if excess carbon dioxide could be seen as our only environmental problem.

Whereas we are faced with a complex set of environmental and social challenges asking for a spectral discussion on green solutions, we are made to believe to be confronted with a black-and-white scenario wherein budgets made of carbon dioxide tones directly transform into degrees of temperature.

The environmental logic is to assess, control and reduce – eliminate in some cases –emissions or waste in all the globe according to our assessments of their environmental impacts. This includes the impact on temperatures but goes way beyond. The grey climatic logic attempts to reverse this rationale by postponing environmental action in the name of a climate urgency.

A 'climate law' would be proposed within three months, but 'Measures to address the main drivers of biodiversity loss' would see the day sometime 'From 2021'. Funds for climate transition would be proposed next month, but CAP revision would be postponed to the beginning of 2022.

We think a law on waste that encompasses potential *climate impacts* but regards the whole *environmental agenda* to be the appropriate than a narrowly defined 'climate law'.

There exist several other points in your document where a reshuffle of existing priorities would be welcome:

1. A reference to Research, Demonstration, Development (Dissemination is not mentioned) without global spending figures appears only after the reference to Investment needs equal to 1.5% of annual GDP.

The contrary should be the case! A first reference to RDDD with concrete figures should precede any reference to investments that should not have spending figures.

Smart environmental solutions are proving in several cases to be cheaper than conventional polluting ones – a fact that contradicts existing official predictions. There is no objective reason to believe that this will not continue to be the case if sufficient investment is made in RDDD, and this may preclude all or at least part of the present calculations on environmental investment needs.

Scaring the public with high costs supposedly involved in environmental solutions unnecessarily darkens the green deal away from its blue possibilities.

2. Economic, social and regional Cohesion are not sufficiently and robustly addressed. 'Energy poverty' is addressed as if the main problem was not the existing anti-poverty tax discrimination, but rather as an issue in itself.

The 'green deal' seems to favour the present status-quo wherein sectoral UN organisations are responsible for the control of emissions of air and maritime vessels, national states are responsible for taxing road traffic. We should be reminded that the Yellow Jacket movement in France was born exactly from the misuse of the 'climate objectives' rhetoric to impose a socially discriminatory tax burden - through which the non-urban working class is heavily taxed on the diesel essential for working and daily life while non-essential travel by plane, cruise or yacht are not taxed.

Whereas tax and/or subvention measures are often referred in the 'green deal', it remains unclear how could these tools be used so as to bring the social justice that is now lacking in relation to waste and emissions.

3. The 'green deal' commits to 'technological neutrality' in a way that does not seem reasonable. Some technologies can clearly be seen, for a given cost, as more environmentally friendly than others. Public authorities should obviously not be neutral in this respect. Even when this is not the case, that is, when doubts on the long-run comparative economic and environmental advantages of technologies exist, there might be a need to take positions.

For instance, there is intense competition between existing lithium and other electricity storing solutions on one side and hydrogen storing on the other - and, yet, there is no certainty on what will prove to be the best solution. Notwithstanding, public authorities will have to make decisions on taxes as well as electrical and other infra-structures that will affect the comparative advantages of both technologies. One should call for maximum transparency, precautionary principles and technical expertise on these decisions – yet in no case is 'energy neutrality' called for.

Otherwise, there is a call for an integrated and interconnected energy market without referring to the need to sustain autonomous solutions that might prove to be more ecologically sustainable.

4. The building industry is addressed with lack of ambition. As the European Parliament's new buildings reveal, we are now confronted with a situation where the aim of the building industry is not only to reduce energy and water consumption but eventually to become self-sufficient in both areas.

To refer only to energy conservation without mentioning the possibilities opened by the mix of intelligent energy with new technologies on imbedded solar panels, using geothermal sources, mini-wind generators, water recovery and recycling does not seem to make sense.



5. The 'green deal' wants to extend the 'Emissions Trading System' without making an assessment of its current results. An objective assessment should precede any extension.

It is quite doubtful the existing mechanism was an efficient mean to achieve whatever emission purpose. It will be even more doubtful it will do so in the future in light of the intention to introduce an environmental tax system.