

Five Green proposals for a European energy policy

An extract from the Green contract for Europe 2004-2009

1. A climate stability pact for Europe: 30% fewer greenhouse gases by 2020

The Greens want Europe to remain at the forefront of the fight against climate change. While working towards a carbon-free, nuclear-free economy, Europe needs to drastically reduce its burden on the atmosphere to halt dangerous climate change. We propose a climate stability pact aimed at achieving a 30% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. To achieve this, the Greens will work during the next legislative period towards:

- The inclusion of more greenhouse gases and the transport sector into the emissions trading scheme
- A harmonised and auction-based allocation of emission allowances to installations for the period starting 2008
- Requiring fully equipped passenger cars sold in Europe to consume less than three litres of fuel per 100 km by 2010
- Achieving a 25% share of the energy market for renewables by 2020.

2. Introduce a kerosene tax in the EU by 2006 and promote it worldwide

The external costs to the environment and society from air transport need to be reflected in prices, and therefore an EU kerosene tax needs to be introduced as soon as possible. One of the most scandalous distortions of competition in the transport sector is the exemption of kerosene (fuel for large aeroplanes) from energy taxation. This exemption privileges this particular un-sustainable mode of transport against all other forms which, to a large extent, have to internalise their costs through taxes. The new European Directive on the taxation of energy products will, on the basis of bilateral agreements between Member States, allow for taxation on kerosene for intra-EU flights. We will continue to push for the swift introduction of such taxes and for negotiating, on a world level, a multilateral agreement on kerosene taxation.

3. Reduce heavy traffic by one third by 2010

The unacceptable increase of road freight transport causes a number of social and environmental external costs for our society. The Greens want to get the trucks off Europe's highways and reduce heavy traffic by a third by 2010. Instruments to achieve this goal are: better spatial and regional planning, restructuring of production systems, improving transport management and consumption patterns, internalisation of external costs (through the 'euro vignette' directive and 'heavy vehicle fee', for example), efficient application of social, environmental and safety legislation by consequent controlling and modal shift measures in favour of rail and sustainable waterways.

4. Promote rail transport: 100% more goods transported by rail by 2010

Incentives are needed if we are to move goods transports from the roads to the railways. The Greens propose to double the amount of goods transported by rail by 2010 by focussing on investments to upgrade the existing railway infrastructure, provide more support for European integration of rail freight systems (inter-operability measures), improving noise reduction of freight wagons and boosting combined transport in Europe.

5. Install 10 million solar roofs

Renewable energies (sun, water, wind, biomass), along with both energy efficiency and conservation measures are the only way in which we can develop a truly sustainable energy economy. Notably, electricity and heat production can directly come from the transformation of the energy contained in solar radiance. For the public as well as decision-makers, solar roofs are a strong and visual means of promoting renewable energies. The Greens will campaign for a scheme to promote the installation 10 million solar roofs in Europe.

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