

Welcome and introduction by Kai Stührenberg

Secretary of State for Employment and European Affairs; Senator for Economic Affairs, Employment and European Affairs of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen

Dear Prof. Christiane Trüe, dear Prof. Lydia Scholz,
dear speakers and participants in this conference,
dear students,

My name is Kai Stührenberg and I am secretary of state for Employment and European Affairs at the Ministry for Economic Affairs, Employment and European Affairs of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen.

It is a pleasure to welcome you at least virtually in Bremen and to address a few words to you at the beginning of this two-day conference.

First of all, I would like to thank the Hochschule Bremen as well as the main organisers, Prof. Lydia Scholz and Prof. Christiane Trüe for putting the European Green Deal on the agenda at this appropriate time.

You have managed to bring together an impressive number of experts from very different backgrounds to look at the Green Deal from all sides. Just as the Green Deal covers many policy areas, such as investment rules, energy supply, transportation, trade, and agriculture, our agenda for the next two days is also very diverse.

And this diversity of your conference programme brings me to my first remark on the European Green Deal.

The overall aim of the European Green Deal is to achieve the European Union's climate neutrality by 2050. When the European Commission presented its concept for the European Green Deal in December 2019, the Green Deal was described as the EU's new growth strategy. I think this is very important:

The Green Deal is not at all only an environmental or climate strategy.

The Commission underlines very clearly: To deliver the Green Deal, there is a need to rethink policies for clean energy supply across the economy, industry, production and consumption, transport, food and agriculture or taxation.

The Commission's proposal on the Green Deal was just the start of a long project that will be implemented during the upcoming years. The Commission was really transparent and added a very long action plan with concrete measures to its Green Deal proposal. The action plan with an indicative timetable illustrates really well how extensive the Green Deal is

and that almost every policy area is covered. A lot of measures have been already adopted by the Commission, many more will follow.

I want to underline that the European Green Deal also covers policy areas that one does not immediately think of, for example:

Education and Training -> It is important to involve schools and universities in the green transition. A European competence framework should help to develop and assess knowledge and skills on climate change and sustainable development.

The European Bauhaus as a new initiative that connects the Green Deal with the living spaces including the policy areas of sustainable urban development, innovation and culture.

With its “Farm to Fork”-strategy the Commission aims at improving the EU’s food system. That includes among other things reducing food waste across the EU or better nutrition labelling that covers also the climate, environmental and social aspects of food products.

So a lot of these measures address citizens and consumers right away.

I think these examples underline the diversity of the EU Green Deal. We in Bremen fully support this very broad approach.

It is of course very important that we have the European Green Deal and that Council, Commission and European Parliament agreed on the target of climate neutrality by 2050 and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

But the next important step is implementation. You have put the implementation of the Green Deal at the core of your conference. I think this is the right decision.

On 14 July the Commission proposed its “Fit for 55”-package to make the EU’s policies fit for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 – compared to 1990 levels.

This package includes 13 concrete measures - both new and revised proposals - to implement the Green Deal. The measures can be divided into the following areas:

Five initiatives focusing on emissions -> for example on the reduction of emissions like a revised, more ambitious Emissions Trading System as well as a new Emissions Trading System for buildings and transport.

Three initiatives focusing on energy -> with concrete measures to increase the target to produce more energy from renewable sources and a new binding target to increase energy efficiency.

Four initiatives focusing on transport -> with stronger CO₂ emissions standards for cars and vans with the aim that as of 2035 all new cars will be zero-emission.

The proposals are on the table. Now it is vital that Council and Parliament negotiate these proposals quickly so we have the binding framework and can start acting.

I already mentioned the cross sectoral approach of the Green Deal. But it is important to me to mention a specific proposal of the “Fit for 55”-package.

Although overall, the economic and employment impacts of the green transition are expected to be positive, according to the Commission the green transition could create around 1 million jobs in the EU by 2030, it is important that the transition will also be socially fair.

We all know that the planned measures might put extra pressure on vulnerable households and transport users in the short run. That’s why the Commission is suggesting a new Social Climate Fund.

This fund should provide funding to Member States to help citizens finance investments in new heating systems, energy efficiency or cleaner mobility. The Commission suggests providing around 72 billion € of funding to Member States for the period 2025-2032. So the Commission is already aiming at the next financial framework starting in 2028. Member States should add the same amount of funding so ideally the new Social Climate Fund could mobilise about 144 billion €.

Of course, we are at the beginning of the discussions and the negotiations in Parliament and Council have only just started, but I guess it is an important signal that the Commission emphasizes the importance of a socially balanced green transition.

During the second day of the conference you will also tackle the social aspects of the Green Deal and I am curious to hear the results of your views on the social dimension on the Green Deal.

For a Bundesland (region) such as Bremen, the Green Deal, the “Fit for 55”-package as well as the funding opportunities linked to the Green Deal are of course highly relevant. To give you a few examples:

- The Green Deal with its target of climate neutrality by 2050
- and the European climate law that is setting a goal of 55 % emissions reductions by 2030

are important points of reference for our regional climate ambitions. Currently a so-called Enquete Commission in our Regional Parliament is being asked to make recommendations for a regional climate action plan (Klimaschutzstrategie) as well as for a concrete emissions reduction target for Bremen until 2030. The developments and targets on the European level provide the framework for our regional efforts.

As I noted, the “Fit for 55”-package includes 13 concrete initiatives to implement the emissions reduction target for 2030. Some of these measures affect us directly.

First of all there is the proposal for a new Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). Its aim is to put a carbon price on imports of a targeted selection of products to ensure that carbon-intensive production is not simply relocated outside the EU. This mechanism should also encourage industry outside the EU to make ambitious emissions reductions.

For us in Bremen with our important steel production this proposal is very important. But there is of course the discussion on how to implement this mechanism and how the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism is compatible with WTO rules and multilateral agreements. In Bremen we will follow the discussions around this mechanism intensively and I see that this question will be also discussed today during your conference.

Another example -> To achieve climate neutrality, a 90% reduction in transport emissions is needed by 2050. All transport modes, including maritime transport, will have to contribute to the reduction efforts. With the FuelEU Maritime Initiative the Commission wants to stimulate the uptake of sustainable maritime fuels and zero-emission technologies. The aim is setting a maximum limit on the greenhouse gas content of energy used by ships calling at European ports.

The Commission also proposes a revision of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). One suggestion is to include shipping emissions in the EU Emissions Trading System for the first time. For a region with important European ports in Bremerhaven and Bremen, these proposals are of course highly relevant.

For a region like Bremen with its universities, institutes and enterprises the Green Deal offers of course a lot of opportunities, especially if you look at the funding programmes. There is the Sustainable European Investment Plan, but also the so-called climate mainstreaming. That means 25% of the money across all EU programmes should be focused on climate related projects. So the Green Deal will play an important role in EU programmes like Horizon Europe, INTERREG and LIFE, but also in the structural funds ERDF and ESF during the upcoming years.

At the end of my speech, I would like to underline that my Ministry and especially the Department of European Affairs are available to support you in your initiatives and projects around the Green Deal in the upcoming years.

Please contact

- the colleagues from the Europe Direct Information Centre “EuropaPunkt-Bremen” – located in our regional Parliament – as well as
- the Bremen Representation to the European Union in Brussels.

They are your partners if you for example have a project idea or if you want to bring in your expertise to the European level.

There is also the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) in Bremen which offers support for SMEs. The work of the EEN and its link to the Green Deal will be explained later on in detail.

The Green Deal offers plenty of opportunities for all of us. Let’s make the most of it.

I wish all speakers and all participants a successful conference and I would like to thank everyone for their contributions.

Thank you very much for your attention.

