

How to Make Green Transition Happen

Ideas and Experiences from Members of Diem25

The survey received 42 responses from Diem25 members in Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the USA. Below is the summary for them and further suggestions directly based on the answers and opinions of the Diem25 Members.

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I. Environment and Health

Members reported pollution in the places they live, both cities and villages. Examples are: the cities of Athens and Paris, the Thessaloniki port, the Chalkidiki peninsula villages (high level of arsenic in drinking water), Germany; France and the UK, Germany (low quality drinking water, pesticides spray in living areas, atmospheric degradation), increased amount of solid waste, including hazardous waste, increased wastewaters, destruction of natural habitats for native species, loss of ground waters and its salination, poor forestry and agricultural management. Forest fires are a significant hazard and are named as 'the biggest ecological crime'. Most problems relate to 'territory management, such as planning and development, and are part of market speculations. As the DSC

Lisbon pointed out, 'our survival is at risk'. Respondents also refer to the Marmot review which points out social determinants of health inequalities and use example of high cancer rates and hormonal imbalances in children in rural areas, caused most possibly by heavy use of pesticides.

Diemers have recognised the right to clean environment as one of the most basic human rights. Thus, suggested immediate measures to solve the identified problems include: regular checks of CO₂ emissions, tests for hazardous elements in water and land, control of waste released into the sea, development of green liveable spaces in urban and rural areas; reduction in use of pesticides by such measures as stricter rules on herbicides and pesticides, prohibition of endocrine disruptors; green transport. There are suggestions to consider renationalization of all energy resources in order to completely move to the use of renewable energy sources, and to quit providing free allowances under Art. 28a of the European ETS. Tighter conflict of interest disclosure policies are recommended as such policies adopted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. To address the problem of land speculation, it is suggested to limit or ban single family homes, adopt and maintain noise reduction building codes and welcome children in condominiums.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Adopt and Work towards the target 'Clean air, water, and land for everyone'.
- B. Move from all forms of energy production, that comes from combustion of carbon dioxide producing materials, to energy production from renewable sources like water, the sun, and the wind.
- C. Move to Immediate cessation of fossil fuel extraction in Europe.
- D. Protect the seas and oceans from pollution (e.g. from industrial waste).
- E. Secure that water supply should be managed by government agencies in order to ensure all citizens have access to affordable clean drinking water.
- F. Invest in Clean (green) Transport.
- G. Illegalise the use of endocrine disruptors.
- H. Reconsider the European legal frameworks that currently allows industries, such as civil aviation, to continue and even increase release of pollutants and be exempt from obligation to comply with emission limits (Reconsider Directive 2010/75/EU, Directive 2010/75/EC [Art 14(3), Art 15 (4.5), Art. 30 (5), Art 33, Art 34, Art 35, Art 37 (2), Art. 59 (2)]).
- I. Commit to no-growth model of economy.
- J. Prioritise Physical and Emotional Well-being of Citizens.
- K. Tighten conflict of interest disclosure policies in the EU agencies, such as EFSA, ECHA.

II. Food and Water for Everyone

Identified issues are inequality of access to food and water, both in Europe and globally. Vulnerable groups are homeless people, those with poor income, in rural areas, and in countries with challenges to development. However, without proper address, these threats might be faced by many European citizens in the near future, if big users (industry, hotel) are still given priority over residents and water provision is privatised. Suggested counteractions include renewal and audit of water distribution networks, addressing the inequality between big users and residential users who suffer from water shortage and cut-offs.

Globally, Europe is an actor in the international politics that contributes to inequalities in access to food and water. For example, Diemers mention that 'Europe is partly responsible for the lack of adequate access to water and food in some regions of Africa and the Middle East'. Suggested

measures include: ‘immediately stop any military operations in these regions, provide humanitarian aid, and stop [European] import of meat from countries where raising cattle destroy forests’.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Implement a Basic Income or Universal Basic Dividend so that all citizens can meet their basic needs in food and water access.
- B. Provide free water and food to all refugees.
- C. Provide humanitarian aid to the countries and regions in need.
- D. Create more food banks.
- E. De-commercialise the provision and distribution of water (provide public funding to treat potable water).
- F. Control Industries that create threats to water provision (filter licences)
- G. Stop hydroelectric plants in regions under water shortage threats,
- H. Change legislation to de-qualify rivers from being used as sewage sludge.

III. Protection of Nature

Europe is home to numerous flora and fauna, which is unique and requires protection. Members report successful environmental projects, such as the protection of the river Tagus (Portugal), but it seems that overall Europe still faces inadequate or insufficient measures, resulting in the destruction of forests and fauna, ocean acidification, and biodiversity loss. Members report the lack of institutions in place (‘no protection bodies to safeguard protected areas’) and regulations for investments in environment’s protection, and understaffing for environmental projects.

Members point out the necessity to protect biodiversity globally and in Europe firstly, by raising awareness and educating the Europeans of all ages about the value of nature and the need to recycle. Secondly, concrete measures should include banning the use of harmful pesticides, finding more environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic, implementing safeguard systems to protect forests, update mapping protected species in Europe, banning industrial development on greenfields and industrial farming, prohibiting industrial units in protected areas. Thirdly, immediate measures should include developing new public institutions, such as Parc Naturel Regional, special unit of environmental police, and environmental prosecutors.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Introduce a new model (s) calculating ecological ceiling and acknowledging social foundation in the economic development (‘Doughnut Economy concept as an example) and accounting for externalities (Geniune Progress Indicator).
- B. Significantly reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- C. Limit the use of harmful materials for energy production.
- D. Enforce more regulations on investments with respect to human health and environmental protection.
- E. Introduce Environmental Crime Claimants to access the EU Court and Environmental Courts free of charge (Sweden already has such measure).
- F. Prohibit industrial activities in protected areas in Europe.

- G. Revise moral and legal systems which protect animals and ecosystems and set their value beyond economic use.

IV. Climate Change

Diemers recognise climate change and have experienced themselves its outcomes, such as extreme and unpredictable weather, more frequent storms, reduced snow cover, rising sea level, warming of the oceans, heat waves, water scarcity, fires, and African dust. Diemers are concerned with possible long term destructions it may cause, such as destruction of seaside settlements and urban areas (Greece, Portugal).

They advocate for 'a clear compromise on tackling climate change with some punitive measures for those that ultimately do not pay any effort'. They list measures that could reduce CO2 emissions, such as wider use of hydrogen technology, complete cessation of fossil fuels for energy and change in land use (reduce land for agricultural production, particularly for meat production), protect forests (from fires), introduce more measures to protect civilians, develop and implement 'multiple atmospheric pollutant master plans', create and manage water reserves, and control impact of tourism, naval transport and aviation.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Promote renewable energy sources.
- B. Develop a European plan for water and energy (water banking, drought resistance plan) provision in affected areas.
- C. Construct only energy efficient buildings.
- D. Protect forests and Reforest mountainous areas.
- E. Promote cycling as a mode of transportation in the cities.
- F. Pressurise maritime transporters to reduce their consumption of low grade fuel and move towards clean energy.
- G. Introduce the climate justice and free transfer of climate saving technologies to the countries which have little influence on climate change but are affected by it.
- H. Create climate friendly jobs.
- I. Stop taking emissions as assets and trade them in stock market.
- J. Give up the commoditisation of essential resources (water, air, soil).
- K. Review existing ETS frameworks and its exceptions.
- L. Collaborate with other countries worldwide (e.g. through coal coupon system).

V. Reducing Impact of Built Environment on Human Health and Nature

Diemers reported inefficient land use, lack of urban green spaces, environment built around cars, low energy efficiency of buildings (no insulation), illegal structures, sometimes on seaside and protected reserves, increase in smog and industrial pollution, high stress factors (traffic congestion, long travelling hours) and lack of public transport. Other matters include use of grass in private and public properties instead of eatable plants and trees, which could have provided food for those who are hungry and covering soil with cement, which creates floods.

To address those issues, several points were identified to review existing legislation (cancel fast track legislation, withdraw abolition of legislation (licenses, safety rules, town planning regulations and amnesty for law violations); to change land management and transport (construct more urban green spaces, including setting minimum rules for uncovered soil and planting trees, to develop public transport and to consider possible banning of large vehicles, restore buildings in more energy efficient units), and introduce new approaches to land and population management (promote

decentralisation of population and central services to address service 'deserts', and reconsider exchange value of land to achieve the optimum use and democratic control of land.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Increase energy efficiency of buildings (green buildings, use of solar panels).
- B. Discourage factories and plants from setting up close to the city.
- C. Implement economic and social incentives for decentralisation (retain population in medium size towns for example).
- D. Ensure adequate network of services to every local community in Europe.
- E. Improve of infrastructure for green transport.
- F. Update land use planning (insert a ratio between urban and rural [units] use according to the carrying capacity and the needs of flora and fauna).
- G. Stop subsidizing works and units where no urban plan is provided.
- H. Map multiple pollutants and nuisances within cities.
- I. Do not allow the American model of huge supermarkets with huge parking lots at city edges.

VI. Agriculture and Rural Communities

While some members recognise that all modes of agricultural production (conventional, organic, transgenic) might exist at the period of transition, the majority have expressed a clear preference for organic agriculture in immediate future. Denmark is praised for its work in achieving organic agriculture implementation. Everyone insists in transparent regulation on crops production in Europe. Their vision is based on 'a vibrant rural economy living at peace with its natural surroundings'.

Members suggest calculation of real cost of food production, stopping subsidies for conventional agriculture and increasing subsidies to farmers who reduce the amount of pesticide used in their farms, downsizing large industrial installations into small and bio-ecological units, and reviewing Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) towards matching with national needs and capabilities.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Support organic agriculture with a target of 100% organic.
- B. Implement strict rules and possible banning of transgenic crops and animals.
- C. Ban the Import of meat and fruit and vegetables that are not produced sustainably.
- D. Transform the current European industrial agriculture towards more environmentally oriented models.
- E. Reform CAP policies.
- F. Reduce the influence of MNCs on European agriculture.
- G. Implement measures on soil preservation.
- H. Reduce input of complex and high cost food.
- I. Encourage local production and consumption of food.
- J. Acknowledge agricultural land as a public utility.
- K. Recognise food production top priority over production of biomass for energy transformation.
- L. Introduce a European policy on healthy varied diet and less meat consumption
- M. Review the Nagoya Protocol to prevent 'genetic bankruptcy' in poor states.
- N. Restore and implement more seed banks in Europe.
- O. List and exclude public goods (seeds) from market assets and abolish seed patents

- P. Introduce protective measures against transatlantic partnerships (CETA, TTIP).
- Q. Implement a new moral framework that promotes 'a respectful behaviour towards a living creature' in agriculture and food production.
- R. Diversify crops and prohibit monocultures by the markets.

VII. Green Energy

Diemers have experienced first-hand high cost of fuel, and fuel price volatility, disruption of supply of fuel, inefficiency of natural gas energy supply network and power cuts (Greece); concerns about nuclear industry and nuclear waste (France and Germany); high costs of green energy (Spain); lack of standardisation in measurement system and as a result risky investment environment, lack of knowledge on the subject and awareness among the general public, preference to focus on technical side and less attention on public and individual behaviour in saving energy, and lack of support to SMEs. Estonia is praised as an example of investing in public electrical transport. Portugal has an interesting example of renewable energy cooperatives (Coopernico). Diemers' vision for the new European policy on energy is based on complete withdrawal from fossil fuels (gradually) and nuclear energy (immediately).

They suggest developing a European renewable energy supply network to address those issues, which will contain information hubs that could support both domestic and international projects, run an international database of energy efficiency projects which allow users to get aggregated statistics about each technology, wider use of hydrogen. Another point is about helping to upgrade energy efficiency of already existing building by introducing new requirements (Smart Meter) and grant schemes to support homeowners and SMEs, if they are not able to self-finance appropriate renovation.

Final suggestion is addressing a provider-consumer link. It can be enhanced by creating online interface where companies and start-ups can access energy consumption data, with consent of the user; by introducing more tariffs according to income/use; by obliging the energy suppliers to provide information and guidance to their clients on how to reduce energy consumption through both technical solutions and behavioural change (it can address energy storage, co-generation and sharing).

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Construct green energy production sites (wind turbines, photovoltaic panels and hydraulic energy, and solar parks).
- B. Banning 'dirty' off-shore drilling, fracking, coal mining and other related fossil fuel activities.
- C. Create a European network of new infrastructure to support clean energy transfer (hydrogen service stations).
- D. Create financial instruments to support domestic and international projects of green energy (subsidies).
- E. Implement educational policy to influence the change in citizens' behaviour in regards to energy consumption.
- F. Adopt a transparent system evaluating all energy related projects first in Europe and then abroad.
- G. Support research in hydrogen energy technology
- H. Immediately reduce production and consumption of nuclear energy and move to the target of zero nuclear energy in Europe.

- I. Create one European grid.
- J. Stabilize prices in oil by implementing oil price targeting system based on monetary and fiscal policy.
- K. Prohibit windmills and similar renewable energy in natural reserves.
- L. Stop opening new petrol wells and coal mines in order to make petrol very expensive.
- M. Let local communities self-manage their green energy, such strategies should be comprehensive and include lowering down the costs and environmental impact and engage people in healthier lifestyles.

VIII. Green Transport

Diemers use cars, gasoline and diesel, some already have hybrid cars, motorbikes, bikes and public transport, and they recognise that only public transport and cycling are sustainable. Thus, it is advisable to promote bicycle, electrical and hydrogen cars and the use of renewable energy as a fuel for transport, discourage short-haul transport, use of individual transport, and improve and upgrade rail transport across Europe (cheaper prices, longer routes), upgrade public transport at regional level (underground, buses) in sustainable manner and focus on e-mobility for public transport. Addressing sustainable transport, an important point was made about employment: 'With labour rights assured, teleworking should be promoted'.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Create E-mobility for Europe
- B. Develop clean, affordable, and fast public transport in Europe.
- C. Invest in renewable energy sources for transport and infrastructure to support green transport (clean fuel stations such as hydrogen fuel stations).
- D. Introduce heavy taxation on hydrocarbon driven vehicles.
- E. Tackle ship haulage.
- F. Discourage of individual transport in urban areas
- G. Create state owned facilities to support green transport.
- H. Improve transport service in rural areas.
- I. Introduce changes in aviation (quit allowances in air transport and reintroduce fines, measure contribution and intentional discharges of kerosene in transatlantic flights).

IX. Sustainable management of materials

While Diemers recognise the efforts of their municipal authorities, they report smaller places, especially villages being left behind (France), ineffective waste collection and recycling and even absence of common places for compost (Italy).

The members suggest focusing on educating the Europeans about consumerism, its effects, promoting recycling, improving waste collection and calculations for payments for waste collection, improving local points of collection and waste processing in order to create a common European waste management network.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Promote the use of recycled materials.
- B. Invest in waste-to-energy plants.
- C. Create infrastructure and incentives for citizens and business to repair consumer goods.
- D. Fair compensation to workers to promote ecological production and address workers rather than international companies.

- E. Improve efficiency of the European waste and composting systems and its benefits (e.g. pay waste management per waste weight).
- F. Establishing the link between composting and urban gardening.
- G. Ban single use of plastic and extend producer's responsibility to implement deposit schemes (e.g. deposit refund for beverage).
- H. Introduce regulations to require recycled package (e.g. promote use of only biodegradable packaging).
- I. Provide financial motives for producers and supermarkets to not use packaging materials.
- J. Enforce Landfill Directives.
- K. Establish a colour code to make waste collection more efficient.
- L. Recognise collecting waste as a public function.

X. Food and Environment as Cultural Heritage

Diemers are proud of their cultural heritage, which come from local craftsmen and local businesses. For example, they name cheese and dairy as food heritage in France, Spain and the UK, chestnut flour in Corsica, oil and wines (Italy, Portugal, and Spain). They are concerned with the import of unlabelled cheap goods from overseas which threatens future existence of local businesses.

Thus, they argue for protection of the European cultural heritage by preserving historic architecture and establishing exchange of know-how between countries. They urge to protect the European branding system based on name and origin protection.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Protect European crafts and food from unlabelled cheap import and stop transatlantic agreements and BITs.
- B. Set the framework of bilateral exchange system of goods and win-win opportunities for partnering states.
- C. Reinvent import taxes to states with no ecological consciousness.
- D. Allow sales of unpasteurised products within Europe.
- E. Support of small non-industrial producers.
- F. Promote the European culinary capital.
- G. Build resilience against climate change.
- H. Launch 'Real food revolution' in Europe (healthier diets based on local foods).

XI. Sustainable Business

Diemers gave examples of organic farmers, aquaculture, marines for yachting and cultural tourism as sustainable businesses; and supermarkets, windmills, mining, hydrocarbon drilling, golf courts as unsustainable business es. Thus, they suggest introducing more financial incentives to local producers, focusing on EIA and capacity building with the state support.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Introduce High Taxation of Unsustainable Businesses.
- B. Encourage sustainable value chains.
- C. Create zoning of economic activities.
- D. Adopt a strategic plan in land management (60% man – 40% nature).

- E. Create strict protected areas.
- F. Dismantle supermarket chains and promote participation of local producers in local markets.

XII. Science and Green Development

Diemers report inadequate amount of funding available to research in the area of green development, the outstanding fact that intellectual property of green projects is often given to companies rather than the public who financed their development, and animal testing. Circular economy and similar ideas are named as the best practice of European science, while import of good from countries without ecological consciousness is given as an example of a nightmare scenario. To develop and finance green research, they suggest establishing a common fund which could support green projects, such as storage solution of green energy and provide the freedom of science. Enhancement of ethical framework of the European research by introducing tools to transparency and ethics committees, and democratization of science are among immediate targets. Introducing embargo on states that contribute to environmental degradation and promoting the ideology of frugality (produce within limits) are other identified possible immediate actions.

Measures for European Policy

- A. Promote establishment of renewable energy research and relevant departments in universities.
- B. Support educational curriculum which cover topics of ecology in primary and secondary schools in Europe.
- C. Assistance to nuclear states to transit to safer technologies.
- D. Develop subvention research and development of hydrogen technology.
- E. Support small and decentralised projects.
- F. Give Priority of quality over quantity in the European science policy.
- G. Create a European independent network of ethics committee and independent institution to manage alternative methods.
- H. Enhance scientific exchange with other continents.
- I. Acknowledge different sources of scientific knowledge, i.e. grassroots incentives.
- J. Reconsider the role of science (stop seeing science as only a tool to ensure industrial competitiveness and accept limitedness of scientific research to solve long term goals).
- K. Encourage discussion and development of de-growth models.

XIII. Environmental Justice

Diemers reported cases of eco-crimes, such as ivory trade, endangered species used as pets in Europe, illegal logging, logging from primary forests and pollution of air, water and land, use of pesticides and GMOs, burning forests and not planting fruit trees.

In response, they suggest effective fining the violators and other legal actions, through State EIA, environmental police, environmental courts and prosecutors, and supporting environmental NGOs to advocate against eco-crimes. The argument is made in favour of making polluters to pay the cost of cleaning the planet and not the states.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Implement strict control mechanisms from the state.

- B. Stopping import of timber, animals, food products from countries that do not comply with environmental charts.
- C. Strict application of legal frameworks.
- D. Strict control of lobbies to avoid reduction in fines after condemnation.
- E. Acknowledgement food security as a tool for achieving peace.
- F. Criminalise unsafe producers and users of pollutants and confiscate their private assets.
- G. Addressing the risk of corruption.

XIV. Green International Policy

Demers referred to cases of use of GMOs, pesticides, cruelty against animals as negative examples. European policies which were classified as unfair include Kyoto Protocol, ETS, fracking, hydrocarbon dependency. Organic farming, small farms respectful to animals' welfare, environmental projects as Natura 2000 are referred as the best cases.

They suggest to increase fines for penetrators and educate citizens and to condemn the sale of arable lands in Africa and Asia and elsewhere which aims at producing food for export, leaving malnourishment of local population unaddressed.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Stop import from countries which violate fair standards and have cases of reported violations.
- B. Support production of food for local population which are prone to hunger and malnourishment.
- C. Stop fracking
- D. Quit trade in emissions
- E. Stop trade with the polluter states

XV. Green Democracy

Diemers define Green Democracy as a society which respects nature and promotes legal framework for green development as a model based on local communities who decide on environmental issues. Examples of existing participatory models of community engagement include AMAP (France).

Policy examples of best practice include public support of NGOs, land use referendum. Policy examples of nightmare scenario include 'sending to jail whistle blowers'.

Diemers suggest a separate discussion how to develop a funding chart for the ecological transition.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. Fund the ecological transition measures.
- B. Empower regional governments.
- C. Support NGOs.

XVI. Measuring and Communicating Environmental Sustainability from Institutions

Diemers report their interest to educate all generations, particularly youth about sustainability. They also admit that measuring by indicators can be easily manipulated. They recommend to

start with communicating the need to de-growth, and then set targets, both short term and long term, and track their implementation.

Measures for the European Policy

- A. New school programs with extended environmental curriculum.
- B. More TV programs on the subject.
- C. Set up small baby step targeting (small percentage each year to quit carbon driven economy) to assess progress.
- D. Establish timetable and its milestones (such as enabling alternative solutions).
- E. Adopt strict state control which has strict but democratic enforcement.
- F. Promote eradication of fossil fuel use and Europe's energetic dependency on other countries.
- G. Reconvert transportation links and business cycles and promote local products (e.g. organic agriculture).

Additional Points made by the contributors

Green Finance

The original survey did not contain questions on green finance, but the respondents made valid points and suggestions:

1. Stabilise oil prices
2. Establish a supranational hybrid finance systems.

The reference papers are attached as attachment 1 and 2.

Suggestions for Methodology

The survey provoked a methodological discussion. Two important suggestions were made: to follow established methodological and policy frameworks, such as 17 sustainable development goals, and reframe the survey accordingly; and give up 'some buzzwords like green, ecology, health, sustainability, etc. And address the issue of other policy strategic papers, such as 'use[s of] many modern terms and initiatives whose interconnectedness and connection to the life and future of Europe are not clear for partocratic dealers'.

Suggestions are based on two reference papers, which were kindly shared by their authors and are included as Annex 3, and 4.

1. Follow the model of sustainable development goals.
2. Refer to the Circular economy concept and adjust the terminology from green transition to 'smart transition'.

Green Education

While this point has been addressed in many responses, a separate paper on promoting education on environmental issues has been received and is attached as Annex 5.

Lessons Learnt

Methodological limits are unavoidable and include difficulty in communicating the call for contributions. Despite the publication on the website, the call was not widely communicated and 25% responses arrived after recommended deadline. A possible solution could have been found in communicating and delegating National Collectives to communicate survey and collect responses.

However, even this limited number of responses demonstrates the great concern among Diem 25 members about environmental issues and necessary adjustments at policy level. It is outstanding that almost everyone reported experiencing negative impacts on human health and climate change.

The survey has offered a structure, which would have allowed to process results statistically, if targeted number of survey responses was achieved, and created space for respondents to bring forward their ideas and suggestions. The participation is voluntary and allowed as much participation as the respondent felt comfortable with. For that many respondents chose to respond only to selected questions of the survey. Topics which raised the most responses include Agriculture, Energy and Development.

The important question is how this survey can be useful for Diem25 in general and what concrete measures it can be followed up. To name a few, the survey shares the experiences of members and can be used for inspiration of running further campaigns. For example, in some areas increased amount of waste is reported. Then, a campaign on cleaning up can be organised. Through the process of receiving responses, the committee received contacts of experts who responded to the call, while other experts were recommended outside the collection of responses. So it is possible to create and publish, if agreed, the database of experts among Diem 25 members. It can foster future collaborations.

The survey results confirmed the interest among Diem 25 members to work on environmental issues within the framework of European New Deal. It might be advisable to start a forum where discussion and exchange of experiences can be continued.

From the current survey, it is already possible to develop a policy statement and follow exact suggestions made by the members. For example, answers to the questions on the European policy measures are already there.

Once again, the coordinators of the survey thank all Diemers who responded to the call and hope to continue this collaborative work!

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