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Frameworks for Future Tourism

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EU Green Policy: Paving the Way to a Sustainable Future

Unit 2

Framework and the Scope of the Unit

- Insights into EU Green Policy objectives.
- Emphasis on human environmental impact.
- Highlights key sustainable practices.
- Explores emissions reduction, renewable energy, and biodiversity.
- Reviews EU legal frameworks and directives.
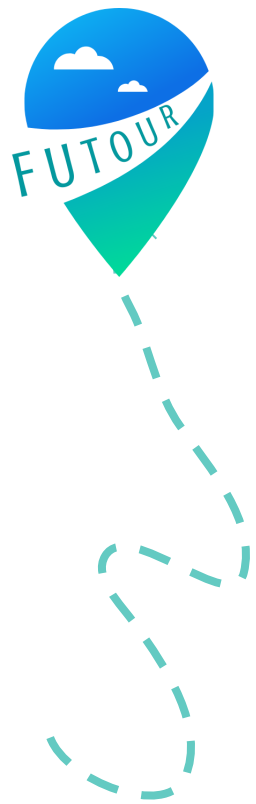- Incorporates case studies and interactive exercises.

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Introduction

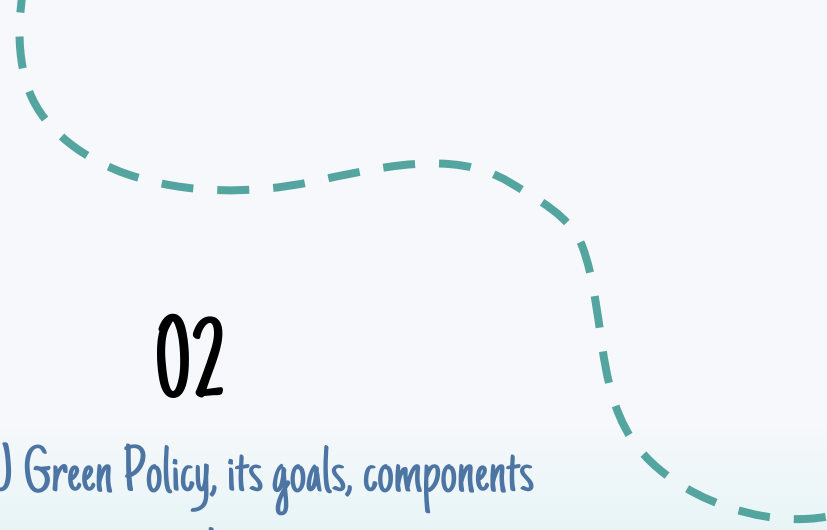Environmental challenges
Need for EU Action

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EU Green Policy, its goals, components and impact

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Summary and activities

Global Environmental Challenges

Climate Change

- Temperature rise from greenhouse gases.

- More frequent extreme weather events.

- Effects on ecosystems, water, agriculture, and health

Biodiversity Loss

- Increased species extinction rates.

- Habitat destruction and land degradation.

- Disrupted ecosystems and services.

Pollution

- Air: Emissions from industries, transport, and fossil fuels.

- Water: Contamination from industrial waste and agricultural runoff.

- Soil: Chemical contamination impacting agriculture and ecosystems
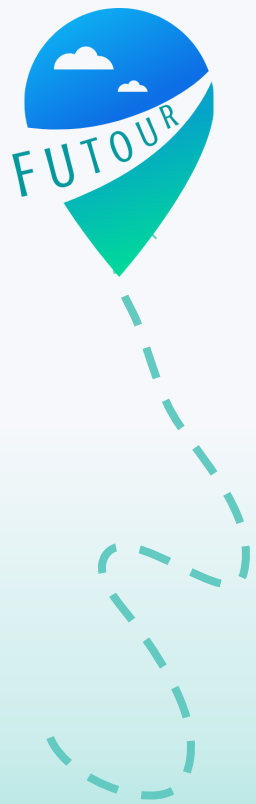
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Consequences of environmental challenges

- Threat to human well-being, livelihoods, and future generations

- Interconnectedness: Environmental issues are intertwined, exacerbating their impacts

- Irreversible Consequences: Delayed action can lead to irreversible damage to ecosystems and loss of biodiversity

The Need for EU Green Policy

- Climate Change Challenge and Environmental Degradation
- Energy Security and Independence
- Health and Public Well-being
- Economic Opportunities
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- International Leadership

"

"A sustainable Europe requires decisive action on climate change, protecting our environment, and preserving our natural resources. It is not a choice but a necessity for our future generations."

—Ursula von der Leyen,

President of the European Commission

What is the EU Green Policy?

EU Green Policy: Set of EU sustainability initiatives.
Covers sectors: Energy, transportation, agriculture, waste management.
Goal: Transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy.

Source : European Commission

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Key Goals of the EU Green Policy

I. Achieving climate neutrality by 2050

EU aims to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, aligning with Paris Agreement goals.

Key Strategies:
- Decarbonizing energy sector by increasing renewable energy sources, phasing out fossil fuels, and improving energy efficiency.

- Promoting sustainable and smart mobility by electrifying transportation, investing in public transport, and encouraging cycling and walking.

- Advancing sustainable agriculture and forestry practices that reduce emissions, protect biodiversity.

- Implementing circular economy principles to minimize waste, promote recycling, and reduce resource consumption.

- Enhancing resilience of ecosystems & natural habitats to mitigate climate impacts and protect biodiversity.

2. Renewable energy transition

- **Sources**: Focus on solar, wind, hydro, biomass, and geothermal energy.

- **Strategies**: Invest in infrastructure, R&D, offer financial incentives, and modernize grids.

- **Legislation**: Key policies include the EU Renewable Energy Directive and the Clean Energy Package.

- **Examples**: Germany's 80% renewable goal by 2050; Portugal's 107-hour renewable run in 2016; Denmark's wind energy leadership.
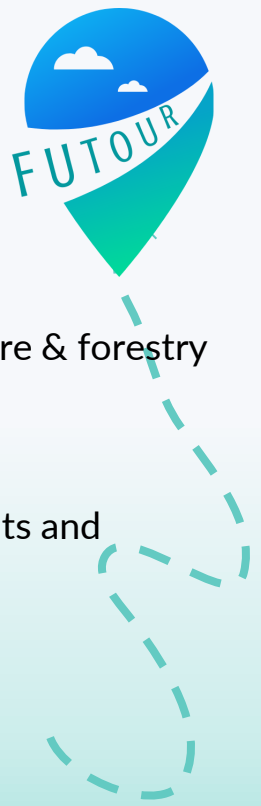
3.Circular economy

- **Concept**: Shift from "take-make-dispose" to sustainable, regenerative processes.

- **EU Goals**: Resource sustainability, innovation, and economic growth through waste reduction.

- **Action Plan**: Prioritizes eco-design, resource efficiency, and sustainable business models.

- **Key Tools**: Extended Producer Responsibility and Green Public Procurement.

- **Examples**: Netherlands' 2050 initiative and France's product waste management law.

- **Impact**: Aims for a sustainable future, reshaping Europe's environmental and economic landscape.
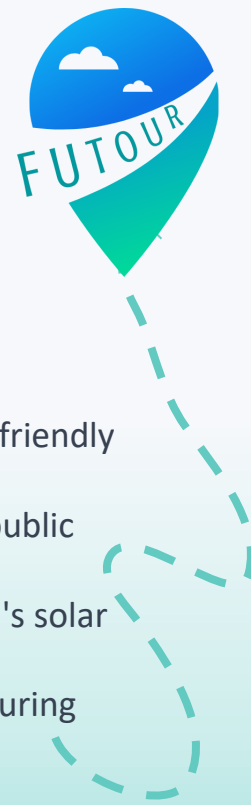
4. Biodiversity and nature conservation

EU seeks to protect 6 restore ecosystems, halt biodiversity loss, promote sustainable agriculture & forestry

- EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – to reduce biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems

- Natura 2000 Network of protected areas in the world and conservation of valuable habitats and species across Europe

- Habitat and Species Protection (Habitats Directive, Birds Directive)

- Ecosystem Restoration

- Marine Conservation

- EU funding programs to support biodiversity conservation projects (LIFE program), financial incentives for farmers and landowners to adopt biodiversity-friendly practices
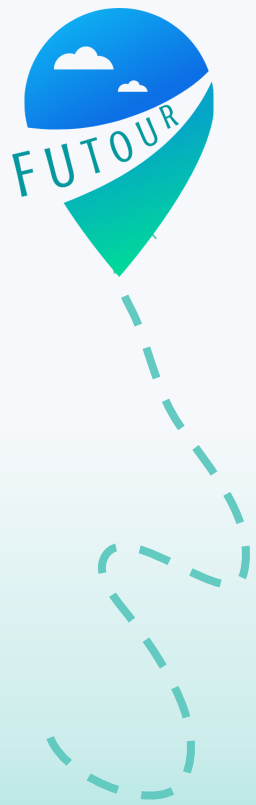
EU Green Deal and Its Impact

EU Green Deal

- **Purpose**: EU's plan, started in 2019, for a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050, promoting green economic growth.
- **Focus Areas**: Targets climate, renewable energy, sustainable farming, green transport, eco-friendly buildings, and waste reduction.
- **Tools**: Sets strong regulations, uses financial aids, invests in green tech research, and runs public education campaigns.
- **Examples**: Germany's renewable energy shift, Netherlands' bike-friendly policies, and Spain's solar projects.
- **Challenges**: Balancing economic differences in EU, transitioning traditional sectors, and ensuring public support.

Source: European Commission, European Parliament

Key Components of the EU Green Deal

- **European Climate Law**: Targets 55% emission reduction by 2030; supported by carbon pricing.

- **Farm to Fork Strategy**: Eco-labeling and incentives to boost sustainable farming.

- **Renovation Wave Initiative**: Funds for enhancing building energy efficiency.

- **Sustainable Mobility Strategy**: Emphasis on clean transport tech and infrastructure.

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Impact on Energy Sector

- **Renewable Energy Directive**: Targets 32% renewable energy by 2030, using tax incentives and R&D support.

- **Clean Energy Package**: Expedites renewables, boosts efficiency, and empowers energy consumers.

- **Just Transition Mechanism**: Supports fossil-fuel-reliant regions in transitioning to cleaner energy.

- **Features**: Decarbonization, expanded renewables, energy efficiency, grid modernization, fossil fuel phase-out, EV adoption, green finance.

- **Challenges**: Economic shifts, grid stability, EV infrastructure.
- **Solutions**: Just Transition funds, grid tech advancements, government EV incentives.
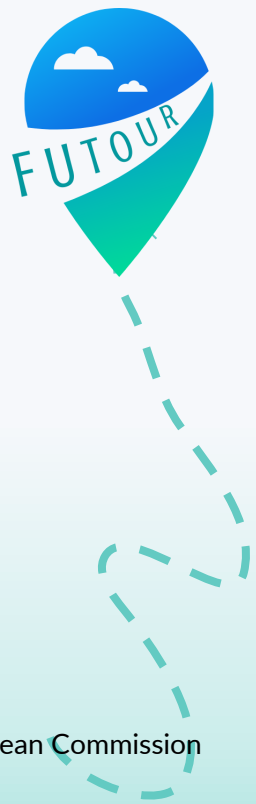
Source: European Commission

Impact on Transportation Sector

- **Sustainable Mobility Shift**: EV adoption, green infrastructure, alternative fuels. *Example*: Norway's EV success.

- **Infrastructure Directive**: Mandates charging and refueling points. *Example*: Germany's charging network.

- **Smart Mobility Strategy**: Cleaner fuels, public transport, digitization. *Example*: Paris' Velib program.

- **Charging Expansion**: More EV charging for transition. *Example*: The Netherlands' network.

- **Emission Cuts**: Cleaner air, better health. *Example*: London's congestion charge.

- **Benefits**: Environment, economy, health.

- **Challenges**: Charging, adoption, industry. *Solutions*: Funding, campaigns, reskilling.
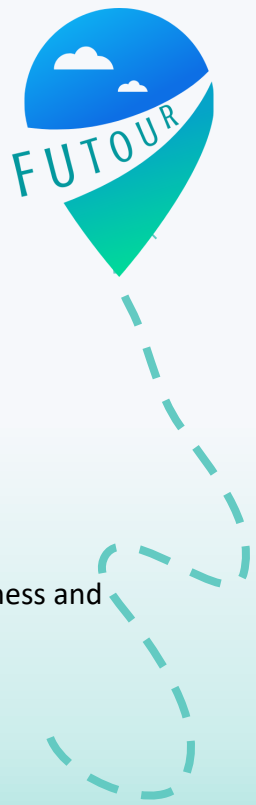
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Impact on Agriculture and Food Sector

- **Farm to Fork Strategy**: Reducing chemical use, boosting organic farming, and sustainable food consumption.

- **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**: Financial aid promoting eco-schemes and innovative farming.

- **Reduced Food Waste**: Streamlined labeling, unsold food donation initiatives, and recycling efforts.

- **Support for Sustainable Production**: Incentives for eco-friendly farming, local food production, and short supply chains.

- **Biodiversity Emphasis**: Focus on preserving native species through agroecology.
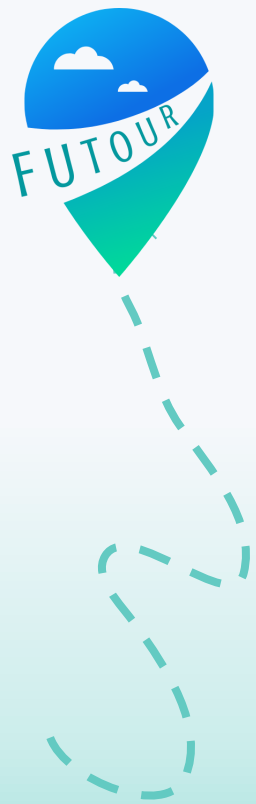
European Commission

Impact on Waste Management

- **Circular Economy Action Plan** - transforms waste into resources, targets sectors like plastics.

- **Waste Hierarchy** - Prioritizes practices from prevention to disposal

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** - Holds producers accountable for product end-of-life.

- **Regulatory Push** - Directives promote recycling and waste reduction.

- **Challenges & Solutions** - Balancing standardization with changing production models; addressed through awareness and incentives.

Socioeconomic Impact

- Job Creation: EU's green shift drives employment in renewable sectors.

- Just Transition Fund: Aids fossil fuel-heavy regions in transitioning to cleaner industries.

- Health Benefits: Initiatives reduce pollution-related health issues.

- Sustainable Communities: Urban models prioritize green planning and transport.

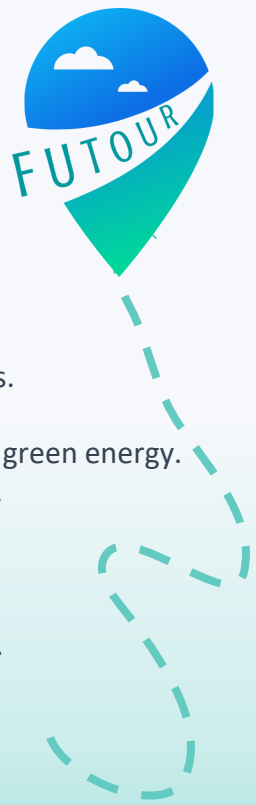- Innovation: EU leads in sustainable tech research and development.

Case Study I: Successful EU Green Policy Initiative

Renewable Energy Directive (RED)

Launched in 2009, RED was the EU's proactive response to climate change, aiming to shift from fossil fuels to renewables.

- **Binding Targets:** Each EU member state received specific renewable energy goals, ensuring collective progress.
- **Support Mechanisms:** Feed-in tariffs and renewable energy certificates were introduced, enhancing the market for green energy.
- **Financial Backing:** Through incentives and funding, the EU catalyzed significant investment in the renewable sector.
- **Biofuels & Certification:** A rigorous framework ensured sustainable and efficient biofuel usage.

- **Key Outcomes:** By 2020, renewables constituted 19.7% of EU's energy, reducing emissions and creating green jobs.
- **Energy Security Boost:** The EU reduced reliance on external fossil fuels, promoting a more stable energy landscape.

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Case Study 2: Challenging EU Green Policy Issue

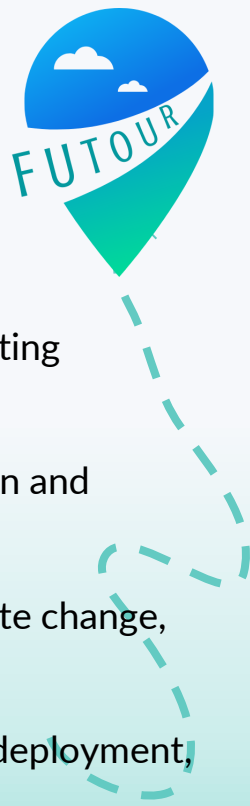**Reduction of single-use plastics**

Obstacles Faced
- **Plastic Pollution:** Oceans and lands are increasingly littered, affecting ecosystems.
- **Consumer Behavior:** The convenience of disposable plastics results in deeply ingrained habits.
- **Complex Supply Chains:** Industries, especially food and retail, heavily depend on single-use plastics.
- **Economic Impacts:** Transitioning away strains businesses due to the costs of alternatives.

Potential solutions
- Plastic Reduction Targets and Bans
- Promotion of Circular Economy
- Education and Awareness Campaigns
- Industry Collaboration and Innovation

The work in progress is continued collaboration, research, and policy refinement to achieve a sustainable and circular economy that minimizes the use of single-use plastics and preserves the environment.

Summary

- EU Green Policy plays a vital role in addressing global environmental challenges and promoting sustainable development.

- It demonstrates the EU's commitment to climate action, fostering international collaboration and influencing global environmental governance.

- EU Green Policy has made significant progress in promoting sustainability, combating climate change, and protecting the environment.

- It has contributed to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, increased renewable energy deployment, improved resource efficiency, and conservation of biodiversity.

- The policy has also generated economic opportunities, job creation, and improved public health outcomes.

Activities for Learners

Activity 1: Preparing a policy on environmental Challenge

Students are divided into 2 groups with the assignment of a a specific environmental challenge
- 1. promoting renewable energy,
- 2. improving air quality

Students research and analyze the current EU Green Policy initiatives and their impact on the assigned challenges. Based on their research, they should develop a policy proposal that addresses the assigned environmental challenge. The proposal should include:
- The problem
- Clear objectives
- Policy measures and strategies
- Expected outcomes and impact
- Consideration of social, economic, and environmental factors

Each group will prepare a presentation to share their policy proposal with the class. The presentation should be informative, persuasive, and engaging.

Activity 2: Action Plan for a fictional city

The students are to prepare a Plan for a fictional city ,which faces such problems as
1. air pollution,
2. waste management, and
3. preservation of green spaces.

Hint: explore EU policies related to renewable energy, circular economy, sustainable transport, and biodiversity conservation.

Students should consider the specific needs, resources, and characteristics of their city

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Activity 3: Exploring the Failures in EU Green Policy

Students are divided into 2 groups with a specific field of EU Green Policy where shortcomings have been identified:
a. Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems
b. Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Protection

Students should gather information about the specific field assigned to them, Identify the failures or shortcomings that have been observed within the context of EU Green Policy, noting factors contributing to the failures, such as political resistance, technical barriers, economic constraints, etc.
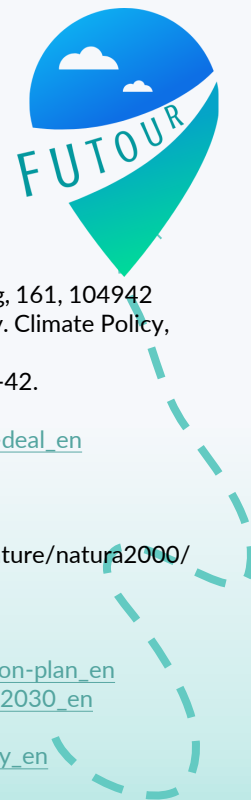
Once the groups have completed their analysis, they present their findings to the rest of the class. the Activity seeks to promote critical thinking

Activity 4: Example of A Successful Project in EU Green Policy

Based on the circular economy of EU Green Policy, students present successful projects or initiatives on circular economy (e.g. The Waste-Free Oceans Initiative, EU Ecolabel, Circular Cities Initiative, Circular Economics Initiative, Textile Circularity Initiative, etc). These projects should showcase innovative approaches and have a positive impact on sustainability.

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THANKS!

Do you have any questions?