

The EU Green Deal.

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**Keywords: reduce carbon emission, climate change, decarbonization,
dematerialize and decarbonize economy, EU policy, EU external policy**

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Everyone knows that 2020s will be critical for climate action. The intergovernmental panel on Climate Change calls for a 45% cut of global carbon emissions by 2030 to limit global warming so as to achieve the 2015 Paris Agreement targets for 1.5°C - 2°C above pre-industrial levels by the end of this century. Difficult but not impossible. Scientists warn that beyond a 2°C increase, the planet's ice sheets could collapse, resulting in the flooding of hundreds of coastal cities. Around 400 million people could suffer from water scarcity leading to crop failures and food shortages while parts of the equatorial band would become uninhabitable, with summer heat waves killing thousands even in Northern latitudes.

The international community seems that is not doing enough to prevent this scenario. Based on current policies, global warming is set to reach 3°C by 2100. In 2015, as leaders gathered in Paris, carbon concentration in the atmosphere hit the historic record of 400 parts per million (ppm), considered to be a “dangerous red line”. The last 4 years of Trump's administration was a step back to the goals that we want to achieve. Since 1980, an area as large as India has already melted from the Arctic ice cap, sea levels have risen by over ten centimetres and we have witnessed ever more frequent extreme weather events.

This presentation will first present a)why, faced with the threat of climate change, ‘business as usual’ is no longer an option, b)It will then turn to the question of how and under what conditions the European Union (EU), through its December 2019 European Green Deal (EGD), could establish a new narrative and successfully tackle the challenge ahead. We will finally look at the international implications of the European Green Deal.

Technology, digital innovation and creative financing certainly play a role in the internal and external dimensions of the European Green Deal, but they are not central to solving our predicament. Only once the technocratic veil of ignorance has been put away, the depth of climate change politics become fully visible. The first step for EU policy-makers is therefore to understand the power structures behind climate change, uncover who gains from the status quo, who suffers, and whether the latter have the leverage, capacity, influence and critical mass to achieve the necessary change.