



RESEARCH TOUR

# Research Tour – Green Deal under pressure? Climate and energy plans by the European Commission and Parliament

A research tour for journalists

from 24 to 26 March 2024  
Brussels, Belgium



# Overview

**The new EU Commission has started its second term led by Ursula von der Leyen amidst a politically challenging landscape. After the "Green wave" resulting from the 2019 vote, the last elections in June resulted in unprecedented gains for populist and right-wing parties, endangering the pro-European majority in the Parliament. In 2025, the EU's climate policy is at a critical stage: will the bloc's pioneering Green Deal continue to keep climate action on top of its policy priorities – or will it get driven out by security concerns and an inflation-driven cost of living crisis?**

During the tour, we will have a closer look at topics like the European Commission's work programme, its vision for agriculture and food and the Clean Industrial Deal. We will discuss efforts to weaken key Green Deal policies like the 2035 combustion engine ban or car fleet emissions limits, and get insights into on what the expected 2040 greenhouse gas reduction target or the new ETS II will be.

We will have meetings with commissioners and senior staff members and talk to major representatives of the parliamentary committees ITRE (Committee on Industry, Research and Energy), ENVI (Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety) and AGRI (Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development). Journalists and policy experts will take us on a deep dive through the decision-making procedures of the EU, with support from our partners at the European Policy Centre.

For all those eager to keep track of the actual events in European climate and energy policy, we recommend to take a look at our [EU Agenda](#).

## Important addresses during the tour

<b>Hotel</b>	Hotel NH Brussels EU Berlaymont, Boulevard Charlemagne, Karel de Grotelaan 11-19, 1000, Brussels
<b>European Commission</b>	Charlemagne, Vistors' Centre European Commission, entrance: corner Rue de la Loi/Rue Taciturne
<b>European Parliament</b>	Berlaymont. Rue de la Loi 200, 1000 Bruxelles, Visitors' Entrance (on the left, when facing the building)
<b>Room European Parliament</b>	Bâtiment Altiero-Spinelli, Rue Wiertz 60, room 8F388
<b>Contacts CLEW</b>	Clemens Schöll: +49 160 9034 9303 Boris Schneider: +49 176 2488 9702

# Programme

## Monday, March 24

- Until 13:00  **Arrival of the participants in Brussels**  
Hotel Location: Hotel NH Brussels EU Berlaymont, Boulevard Charlemagne, Karel de Grotelaan 11-19, 1000, Brussels
- 13:00 **Meeting at:** Lobby of Hotel NH Brussels EU Berlaymont
- 13:15 **Meeting at:** Berlaymont. Rue de la Loi 200, 1000 Bruxelles, Visitors' Entrance (on the left, when facing the building)
- 13.30  **Welcome & Introduction: "The EU": Who is who in Brussels? How are decisions taken in the EU?**
- 
  - *Claudia **Guske***,  
Press Team, European Commission Representation Berlin Journalism
  - *Clemens **Schöll***,  
Journalism Programme Manager at Clean Energy Wire
- 14.30  **Background Discussion with the Climate and Energy Team of the European Commission's Spokespersons' Service**
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  - *Anna-Kaisa **Itkonen***, Spokesperson
  - *Ana **Crespo** & Giulia **Bedini***, Press Officers
- 15.00  **Background Discussion on EU Climate Policy**
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  - *Kurt **Vandenbergh***,  
Director-General, Directorate-General Climate Action
- 16.30  **Background discussion on Environmental Sustainability and the Common Agricultural Policy**
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  - *Tsjerk **Terpstra***,  
Policy officer for Environmental Sustainability, Directorate General Agriculture and Rural Development
- 18.30 End
- 19.00  Dinner (tbc)

## Tuesday, March 25

08.45 Meeting at Press accreditation center

09.15 Welcome by the Parliament's Media Unit

09.30  How to cover the Parliament's work

**E**

- NN,  
Press Officer following the ENVI committee

Location: Bâtiment Altiero-Spinelli, Rue Wiertz 60, room 8F388

10.30  Discussion with MEPs


**F**

- *Peter Liese*,  
Member of the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety (ENVI) for the EPP

11.30  Discussion with MEPs

**G**

- *Stine Bosse*  
Member of the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety (ENVI) for Renew

13.00  break – Lunch  
*Please take your personal belongings out of the room during lunchtime.*

14.00 **Tour of the audio-visual services to journalists**  
Tour of the media facilities and exchanges with audio-visual team  
Silvia Cagnazzo, Audiovisual Unit

15:00  Discussion with MEPs


**H**

- *Michael Bloss*  
Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) for the Greens/EFA

16:15  Discussion with MEPs

**I**

- *N.N.*  
Member of the European Parliament for ECR

17:15  **How is the EU fighting disinformation?**  
Presentation and workshop by the Spokesperson's service

19:30  Dinner & Get-together at Kamilou, 36 rue Joseph II.

## Wednesday, March 26

- 09.00 **Meeting in the hotel lobby.**  
*Please make sure to check out before leaving*
- 09.15 **Meeting at Charlemagne**, Vistors' Centre European Commission, entrance: corner Rue de la Loi/Rue Taciturne
- 09.30  **Background Discussion on EU Energy Policy**
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  - *Mechthild Wörsdörfer*,  
Deputy Director General, Directorate-General Energy Policy
- Location: Charlemagne, Vistors' Centre European Commission, entrance: corner Rue de la Loi/Rue Taciturne
- 10.30  **Reporting from Brussels with an eye on the national contexts**
- 
  - N.N., correspondent based in Brussels
- 12.00  **Attendance of European Commission's Midday Briefing**
- likely on the agenda: A Roadmap towards ending Russian energy imports “A roadmap towards ending Russian energy imports”
- 13:45  Light lunch at the premises of European Policy Centre  
Rue du Trône 14-16, B-1000 Brussels
- 14.30  **Europe under pressure: Can climate ambitions weather the political storm?**  
This session examines the challenges and outlook for EU climate policies in the face of rising far-right populism and geopolitical rivalries.
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  - *Heather Grabbe*, Senior Fellow, Bruegel
  - *Stefan Šipka*, Head of Sustainable Prosperity for Europe Programme, EPC
  - *Manon Dufour*, Executive Director, E3G Brussels
- 16.00  **The goals of the Polish Council Presidency**
- 
  - *Krzysztof Bolesta*,  
Secretary of State at the Ministry of Climate and Environment (tbc)
- 17.00  End of the programme

# From A to M:

## Background info on the programme

A

- **Anna-Kaisa Itkonen** is the European Commission Spokesperson for Climate Action and Energy since November 2014. Prior to her current job she was the Head of Communications at the Finnish Prime Minister's Office. She started working with EU-communications in 2002 in the Commission Representation in Helsinki and then at the Parliament of Finland, where she oversaw the communications during the Finnish EU-presidency in 2006. Itkonen is one of the founding members of WECAN-network in Brussels, advises the network on communications and outreach and writes about gender equality.

B

- **Ana Crespo** is press officer for climate.
- **Giulia Bedini** is press officer responsible for energy and housing.

C

- **Kurt Vandenberghe** is Director General of the Directorate General on Climate Action. Until then, he was the Green Deal and Health advisor to President Ursula von der Leyen since 1 December 2019. He had joined the cabinet of the President coming from DG Research and Innovation where he was Director for Policy & Programming since 1 February 2016 and Acting Director for Research & Innovation Outreach since 1 June 2019.

D

- **Tsjerk Terpstra** is the Policy officer for Environmental Sustainability in the Directorate General Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI). Before, he had been assistant to an MEP in the European Parliament's Agricultural Committee. He also worked for the Dutch national farmers' association, and with agricultural cooperatives in Nepal. Before joining the European Commission in 2023, he worked on EU energy and climate policy at the Dutch industry association. He holds a degree in agricultural policy from Wageningen University.

E

- *tbc*

F

- **Peter Liese** has been an MEP for the EPP from the German CDU since 1994. Currently, he is part of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

G

- **Stine Bosse** is MEP for the Renew Europe Group from the Danish Moderates Party since the last European elections, and Vice-President of the Health Committee in the EU Parliament. Previously, she held the Chair of the Board of BankNordik, was a member of the Board of Allianz, President of the Royal Danish Theatre and serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Copenhagen.

## H

- **Michael Bloss** is part of the European Parliament for the Greens/EFA since 2019. Before, he had been the spokesperson of the Federation of Young European Greens, and political advisor to Ska Keller, Chair of the European Parliamentary Group.

## I

- *tbc*

## J

**Mechthild Wörsdörfer** took up the position of deputy Director general for Energy of the European commission (DG ENER) in 2021. She has 30 years of experience in the European Commission. Before serving for the DG ENER, she had been director of sustainability, technology and outlooks at the International Energy Agency. Previously, she had held multiple positions in the DG ENER, as director responsible for energy policy, international relations, legal aspects and economic analysis, where she managed the development of the Energy union Framework Strategy. Before, she had been head of policy unit on the 2030 Energy and Climate Framework.

## K

- *tbc*

## L

- **Heather Grabbe** is a Senior fellow at Bruegel, as well as visiting professor at University College London and KU Leuven. The focus of her research is the political economy of the European Green Deal and how the climate transition will change the EU's international relationships and external policies. She has served as director of the Open Society European Policy Institute in Brussels, and earlier as deputy director of the Centre for European Reform in London.
- **Stefan Šipka** is a Senior Policy Analyst and Head of the Sustainable Prosperity for Europe programme working on environmental policies and smarter use of resources. His immediate focus revolves, in particular, around the circular economy, EU common agricultural policy, and interlinkages between these and other relevant policies at the EU and global level. Before, he worked in the Belgrade think tank Centar za evropske politike (CEP), the EU Delegation to Serbia and the Hungarian National Waste Management Agency.
- **Manon Dufour** is Executive Director of E3G's Brussels office. She is an expert in European climate policy and politics and manages E3G's reputation, reach and impact in Brussels. She works with European policy-makers, civil society and businesses to establish the necessary policies and alliances to reach climate neutrality. She has shaped energy, competition and industry policy to drive decarbonisation. Her current work focuses particularly on the European Green Deal. Prior to joining E3G, she worked for Bloomberg New Energy Finance in London and New York, where she helped conceive the company's service offering on global carbon and European power markets, and participated in their ongoing analysis.
- **The European Policy Centre (EPC)** is an independent, not-for-profit think tank dedicated to fostering European integration through analysis and debate, supporting and challenging decision-makers at all levels to make informed decisions based on evidence and analysis, and providing a platform for engaging partners, stakeholders and citizens in EU policy-making and in the debate about the future of Europe.

## M

- **Krzysztof Bolesła** is Secretary of State at the Ministry of Climate and Environment of the Republic of Poland. He is an appointed official of the European Commission, where he worked from 2004 to 2012 and from 2020 to 2024. From 2000 to 2004, he supported the accession negotiations and Poland's adaptation to EU requirements in the areas of 'energy' and 'research and development'. Between 2012 and 2015, he was a member of the political cabinet of two Polish Ministers of the Environment and a member of the supervisory board of the provincial branch of the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Lublin. He was involved in the negotiation regarding the second European energy and climate change package. In addition, he served as an advisor to the President COP19 (United Nations Climate Change Conference).

## Reading List

- [CLEW Guide](#) – How the European Union is trying to legislate a path to net-zero (14 Feb 25)
- [Factsheet: Q&A](#) – EU aims to bolster competitiveness through Clean Industrial Deal (4 Mar 25)
- [Factsheet: Q&A: What is on the menu of the EU's new Vision for Agriculture and Food?](#) (21 Feb 25)
- [Factsheet: Understanding the European Union's Emissions Trading Systems \(EU ETS\)](#) (23 May 24)
- [Dossier: Climate and energy high on the agenda in 2024 EU parliament elections](#) (10 Jun 24)
- [Dossier: Nuclear, gas, renewables: What powers the EU's 'Franco-German engine' in the future?](#) (28 Jul 23)
- [Factsheet: What's next in Europe? – Agenda of European climate and energy policy](#) (6 Mar 25)



# Organisational details

## **What languages will be spoken?**

Presentations during the tour will be in English.

## **What about travel arrangements?**

Local transport *during the tour* will be organised by the Clean Energy Wire. Participants are kindly asked to organise their own travel to Brussels. Travel expenses will be reimbursed by the European Parliament according to the rules handed out to every participant.

The official programme will start on Monday, 24 March, at 13.00/1 p.m. The official programme will end on Wednesday around 17.00/5 p.m. CET at the European Climate Foundation in Brussels.

## **Is there a possibility for individual research?**

If you are interested in extending the study tour for individual research, please contact the Clean Energy Wire. We will support you in finding the most relevant experts, stakeholders, and locations for your questions.

## **What about quotes and interviews?**

We work on the basis that statements made by participants can be quoted by the journalists present in their media reports. As a rule, conversations are “on the record”.

If speakers do not want to be quoted, we ask them to inform the participating journalists where this is the case. Remarks may then be made “off the record” and will not be quoted.

In Germany, it is common practice for journalists to seek authorisation for quotes before using them. Speakers are asked to advise participating journalists if they would like to check quotes before publication.

## **What about photos, videos and audio recordings?**

Photos of speakers and participants of the event might be published on the blog, the CLEW website and in social networks. Please support CLEW’s press and public relations work by allowing yourself to be photographed or filmed. If you do not wish to be photographed, please inform us in your application or on the spot. You can also object to the use of your image at a later date at [event@cleanenergywire.org](mailto:event@cleanenergywire.org)

If the speakers or other participants would like to take photos or record audio or video of the academy, they can approach a staff member from Clean Energy Wire so that we can agree on workable solutions.

For all photos of speakers or photos taken at locations and during on-site visits, please respect the specific requirements made.

**For all other questions on organisational issues please check the [FAQ section here](#) or get in touch with us at:**

event@cleanenergywire.org

[www.cleanenergywire.org](http://www.cleanenergywire.org)

■ [#CLEWontour](#)

## About the organisers

### Clean Energy Wire

The consequences of climate change and climate action have become a reality in Europe and across the globe. In a world characterised by polarisation and information overload, independent, focussed and constructive journalism in service of the public is vital for a faster, fairer move to climate neutrality and necessary adaptation.

**What we do:** Clean Energy Wire (CLEW) is an international hub for climate and energy journalism. CLEW reports independently on the stories that matter for the move to climate neutrality in Europe with well-contextualised news, factsheets and in-depth analyses. We collaborate with journalists across the globe who cover the world's biggest story. We empower journalists with training and research support. The [CLEW Journalism Network](#) with currently nearly 500 members from more than 80 countries offers a platform for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, and for collaboration.

**Why we do it:** A global energy transition is the key to getting the climate crisis under control. Good journalism is central to drawing the right conclusions from Europe's efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, what this means for citizens, businesses and society as a whole, and to inform the public debate across the globe. Germany's transformation of its energy system from fossil fuels and nuclear power to one based on renewables and efficiency is one of the country's defining stories.

**Who pays for it:** As a non-profit organisation under the roof of the 2050 Media Projekt gGmbH, we want to keep our journalism free for the public. Our philanthropic core funders – Stiftung Mercator and the European Climate Foundation – guarantee our independence from individual business or political interest. We aim for a mix of project funding and donations, and for collaboration on a larger scale if it fits our mandate and values of democracy, inclusiveness and fairness.

[www.cleanenergywire.org](http://www.cleanenergywire.org)