



**Joint letter from the the Visegrad Group /V4/, Republic of Bulgaria and Romania
Environment and Climate Ministers to Mr. Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President
of the European Commission on Impact Assessment (IA) for the European Union's
2030 climate ambition and the action plan**

Mr. Frans Timmermans
Executive Vice-President
European Commission

13 July 2020

Dear Executive Vice-President,

We would like to thank you and your team for all the hard work with regard to bringing climate issues to the forefront of the debate on Covid recovery in Brussels. These are difficult times for all Member States, yet we must not lose sight of our long-term goals and now, more than ever, enhance synergies of our actions.

Nonetheless, we would like to take this opportunity to share our sincere hope that the upcoming Impact Assessment (IA) for the EU's 2030 climate ambition and the action plan will provide a solid base for a decision to be taken by our leaders at the European Council. These documents should allow us to have a common understanding of the measures we will have to take in the EU by 2030 if we are to achieve the proposed targets enabling a just transition for all towards a climate neutral EU by 2050.

We consider the IA to be the principal document for decision-making with regard to a potentially increased target. Therefore, the IA should constitute a thorough, detailed document which will inform us of the consequences, on all levels, of our potential decisions. This concerns the EU level, the Member States' level and the sectoral level for Member States. All Member States and all sectors will have to contribute. We will all have to undertake many actions in different areas and we need to know for each one to what extent it will be impacted and where.

We would like to avoid a situation where we are left wondering what are the real social, environmental and economic costs for us all. What actions will be required to reduce emissions in different sectors at EU and Member States' levels? How much financing will be needed for an increased target? What kind of support instruments will be linked to the implementation? Which innovations are critical to reduce emissions in different sectors and regions in the EU? What are the most cost-effective options for reductions in the different Member States? Which social groups will be the most affected? How can we avoid increasing energy poverty? How can the undertaken historical reductions in accordance with UNFCCC obligations be taken into account? These are not minor issues as they form an integral part of our development. These are important questions that deserve answers.

Above all, the IA should be realistic. We are experiencing a global pandemic that will not end soon and there might be others to come. This is no longer business as usual, so neither the IA should be. In our opinion, it is important for the IA to have a credible baseline, based on the collective efforts of Member States as expressed in the NECPs, and to take into account the current pandemic as well as Brexit. We will all need a realistic document that is helpful in understanding what are the consequences of our future decisions, based on the current circumstances. This also implies presenting credible forecasted figures of reported emissions and removals for 2030.

The IA should present some options that we may follow but should not prejudge our choices. Financial capacities and specific national circumstances should play an important role in assessing the options. It should not exclude any technologies that might be used to reach the target.

Our appeal for a thorough and detailed IA does not originate from the lack of knowledge and information on the country level. On the contrary, we find that the IA for 2030 is a necessary supplement to the analysis at national level. Some of us have already modelled pathways towards achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and achieving the 2030 targets. Some of the results are reflected in the long-term decarbonisation strategies and National Energy and Climate Plans. Yet, this work undertaken does not represent the full scope of possibilities and does not incorporate the recent changes and additional measures. The action plan should include concrete steps to be taken in different sectors in view of achieving the proposed targets. The proposed legislative and non-legislative measures should combine a bottom-up assessment of the tools needed for the transformation of each sector of the EU economy in line with the long term objective of climate neutrality. They should also include appropriate mechanisms to address the risks identified in the IA, in particular to avoid creating additional burden for the most vulnerable and poorest Europeans and the threat for the industries in the risk of carbon leakage.

These are difficult times for all, but we should not use this as an excuse for inaction. On the contrary, now, more than ever, we need reliable and solid information not only at EU but at Member States' level as well. Only a well-informed decision is a good one and a thorough analysis is an indispensable element if we don't want to leave anyone behind in our transformation. Having everyone on board is crucial for the successful outcome of our endeavours.

Yours sincerely,

Michał Kurtyka

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