



Investing in 1.5° societies

CAMPAIGNers policy brief

Opportunities to rebalance societies, to make them more equitable and sustainable have never been more present or — relevant. Recent shocks at global, regional and local levels have rendered more evident and illustrated again how societies are organised for another time, not the 21st century. Shocks like extreme weather events, health pandemics, geo-political change and rolling strikes reflect and amplify uncertainty and volatility in natural systems, economies and societies.

Solutions need to address sources of these shocks: unsustainable modes of production and consumption within an unlimited growth paradigm. Academic research has largely demonstrated that citizen involvement and public policies designed to address behavioural change (corporate, public sector and individual) should be a key element of environmental, industrial and economic policies.

The CAMPAIGNers project aims to increase citizen-driven change in a way that is fully immersed in behavioural research and integrated with local, national and EU level policy goals. Five priorities have been identified to drive lifestyle changes in efforts to combat climate change, and to concentrate efforts on 5 priority sectors. These are sectors in areas in which public authorities' interventions are most needed, to help citizens live more sustainable lives more easily:

Recommendations:



Reduce the use of private cars

70% of Europeans live in urban areas, so these need prioritising. This requires offering attractive alternatives, such as fast, reliable and even free public transport, promoting active mobility (walking, cycling), and reducing people's reasons for travel (e.g. through the promotion of teleworking or through more compact city designs). Rethinking cities for public transport and active mobility infrastructure also helps to resolve urban congestion, reduce energy poverty, improve air quality, and strengthen European energy sovereignty.



Support home insulation

Households consume about 30% of total final energy in Europe, and more than 60% of this is for comfort heating and cooling. Public authorities need to prioritise poorer households to provide considerable and immediate incentives, through subsidies or other financing options. This will improve people's comfort and reduce energy bills while costing less than investing in gas supply infrastructures (LNG terminals, etc.), which also threatens to maintain a lock-in situation. Long-term impacts will be significant, from strongly reducing household carbon footprints and combating energy poverty, to lowering Europe's dependence on hydrocarbon suppliers and creating many new jobs in a just transition that cannot be delocalised.



Encourage more sustainable diets

Encouraging more plant-based diets of local and seasonal organic products while significantly reducing consumption of animal products (meat, dairy). Through

food and agriculture policies and support mechanisms, such as local and organic food circuits, school and other publicly-supported lunches or meals, and access to agricultural land for small, organic farmers. Public investments making organic and locally produced foods available and affordable.



Reduce air travel

Providing affordable alternatives to air travel is key to making modal shifts easier. Prioritising investment in rail transport (high-speed and inter-city trains, night trains, etc.) to replace short-haul flights, and avoiding long-haul flights by promoting closer holiday destinations. Financing R&D into future aircraft and fuels (sail-based cargo ships, hydrogen-based fuels, electric planes, etc.).



Increase climate and biodiversity actions together through circularity

The climate and biodiversity crises are two sides of the same coin, requiring a reduction in energy and resource consumption. Circular economy strategies aim to keep products and materials within the economy in extended lifetimes, and making the materials of products currently in use the resources for the next generation of products. EU legislation on ecodesign of products and production processes¹ are well placed to support this, as part of making sustainable products the norm.

Rethinking our economic paradigm today and enabling citizens to adopt sustainable lifestyles is an essential condition for passing on a liveable planet to future generations.

