



## EU Green Deal

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### Why in News

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In the background of the failure of the global community to reach any agreement in the recently concluded **COP 25**, the **European Union** (EU) has come up with a climate action plan known as the **European Green Deal**.

The European Union is the **third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases** in the world after **China** and the **United States**.

### Major Decisions under Green Deal

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#### Achieving Climate Neutrality

- To become **“climate neutral” by 2050** and to achieve this, a law will be brought which will be binding on all member countries. A law will turn the political commitment into a legal obligation and will trigger the investments as well.
- The **EU is now the first major emitter** to agree to the 2050 climate neutrality target laid down in the **Paris Agreement**.
  - **Climate neutrality** is achieved when a **country’s emissions are balanced by absorptions and removal of greenhouse gases** from the atmosphere. It is also expressed as a state of net-zero emissions.
  - **Absorption** can be increased by creating more carbon sinks like forests, while **removal** involves technologies like carbon capture and storage.

**Note:** Bhutan and Suriname are the only carbon neutral countries in the world.

- **Increasing 2030 Emission Reduction Targets**

**Increase the reduction in its emissions to at least 50%** and work towards 55% in the near future.

- Earlier, the EU had committed to reduce its emissions by 40% by 2030 from 1990 levels under the Paris Agreement. This was already the most ambitious emission reduction targets among developed countries.
  - For example, USA had agreed to cut emissions by 26-28% by 2030 from 2005 levels but after withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, it is under no obligations now.
  - The EU is one of the major emitters to retain the 1990 baseline for emission cuts which were originally mandated under the **Kyoto Protocol** for all developed countries. Most other countries have shifted their baselines to 2005 or even later under the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- **Sectoral Plans:** It **includes sectoral plans** to achieve these targets which include making the steel industry carbon-free by 2030, new strategies for transport and energy sectors, a revision of management of railway and shipping to make them more efficient and more stringent air pollution emission standards for vehicles.

## Achievements

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- The EU has been **doing better than other developed countries on reducing emissions.**
- In terms of emission reductions, it probably is on track to meet the **target of 20% by 2020**, unlike any developed country outside the EU.  
Canada reported a 4% reduction from 2005 levels. Japan reported an 8% reduction from the 2013 baseline.

## Concerns

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- The **EU has not been fulfilling all its climate obligations** because Kyoto Protocol requires rich and developed countries to provide finance and technology to developing countries to help them fight climate change. EU is **helping very less, especially for adaptation needs of developing countries.**  
This is the main reason why developing countries like India and China, have been repeatedly raising the issue of unfulfilled obligations of developed countries.
- The Green Deal is **inadequate** for achieving the emission reductions because big emitters and large developing countries like China and India are not immediately scaling up their climate actions. Withdrawal of the USA has also negatively impacted the step towards climate change mitigation.

## Way Forward

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- Other countries need to raise their ambitions and the reduction targets and their policies should be in line with the global environmental agreements.
  - EU should be more helpful towards developing nations so that its efforts do not get wasted and every nation is equally contributing towards conservation of the planet.

**Source: IE**