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Flygskam

Eco-conscious travelers regularly come face-to-face with what for some has become an insurmountable dilemma: how to justify the climate change–contributing emissions of air travel. That question has led to a growing movement that kicked off in Sweden known as *flygskam* (pronounced “fleeg–skaam”) or “flight shame,” whereby travelers are documenting the ways in which they are forgoing air travel for less environmentally harmful forms of travel such as rail.

The movement took off last year (2018) after the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg announced her decision to eschew air travel due to her concerns about the environment. Indeed, the aviation industry accounts for about 2 percent of global carbon emissions, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. And if global aviation was a country, it would rank in the top 10 emitters, according to a European Union report.

*Source:* [*https://www.afar.com/magazine/how-flygskam-or-flight-shame-could-change-the-way-we-all-travel*](https://www.afar.com/magazine/how-flygskam-or-flight-shame-could-change-the-way-we-all-travel)

Carbon neutralization

EU targets

With transport contributing around 5% to EU GDP and employing more than 10 million people in Europe, the transport system is critical to European businesses and global supply chains. At the same time, transport is not without costs to our society: greenhouse gas and pollutant emissions, noise, road crashes and congestion. Today, transport emissions represent around one quarter of the EU’s total GHG emissions.

This push to transform transport comes at a time when the entire sector is still reeling from the impacts of the coronavirus. With increased public and private investment in the modernisation and greening of our fleets and infrastructure, and by reinforcing the single market, we now have a historic opportunity to make European transport not only more sustainable but more competitive globally and more resistant to any future shocks.

However, this evolution should leave nobody behind: it is crucial that mobility is available and affordable for all, that rural and remote regions remain connected, and that the sector offers good social conditions and provides attractive jobs.

The European Commission presented its ‘Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy’ together with an Action Plan of 82 initiatives that will guide our work for the next four years. This strategy lays the foundation for how the EU transport system can achieve its green and digital transformation and become more resilient to future crises. As outlined in the European Green Deal, the result will be a 90% cut in emissions by 2050, delivered by a smart, competitive, safe, accessible and affordable transport system.

**Milestones for a smart and sustainable future**

All transport modes need to become more sustainable, with green alternatives widely available and the right incentives put in place to drive the transition. Concrete milestones will keep the European transport system’s journey towards a smart and sustainable future on track:

**By 2030**

* at least 30 million zero-emission cars will be in operation on European roads
* 100 European cities will be climate neutral.
* high-speed rail traffic will double across Europe
* scheduled collective travel for journeys under 500 km should be carbon neutral
* automated mobility will be deployed at large scale
* zero-emission marine vessels will be market-ready

**By 2035**

* zero-emission large aircraft will be market-ready

**By 2050**

* nearly all cars, vans, buses as well as new heavy-duty vehicles will be zero-emission.
* rail freight traffic will double.
* a fully operational, multimodal Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) for sustainable and smart transport with high speed connectivity.

To make our goals a reality, the strategy identifies a total of 82 initiatives in 10 key areas for action (“flagships”), each with concrete measures.

For transport to become sustainable, in practice this means:

1. Boosting the uptake of zero-emission vehicles, vessels and aeroplanes, renewable & low-carbon fuels and related infrastructure - for instance by installing 3 million public charging points by 2030.
2. Creating zero-emission airports and ports – for instance through new initiatives to promote sustainable aviation and maritime fuels.
3. Making interurban and urban mobility healthy and sustainable - for instance by doubling high-speed rail traffic and developing extra cycling infrastructure over the next 10 years.
4. Greening freight transport – for instance by doubling rail freight traffic by 2050.
5. Pricing carbon and providing better incentives for users – for instance by pursuing a comprehensive set of measures to deliver fair and efficient pricing across all transport.

*Source: https://transport.ec.europa.eu/transport-themes/mobility-strategy\_en*

The European Green Deal

Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world. To overcome these challenges, the European Green Deal will transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring:

* no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050
* economic growth decoupled from resource use
* no person and no place left behind

The European Green Deal is also our lifeline out of the COVID-19 pandemic. One third of the €1.8 trillion investments from the NextGenerationEU Recovery Plan, and the EU’s seven-year budget will finance the European Green Deal.

The European Commission has adopted a set of proposals to make the EU's climate, energy, transport and taxation policies fit for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

*Source:* [*https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal\_en*](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en)

EU Action

The European Green Deal aims to achieve a 90% reduction in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Reaching this milestone will involve significant changes in how we power and operate our cars, planes, and ships.

Under the umbrella of the European Green Deal, the EU has adopted and put in place a series of policy packages to achieve a more sustainable mobility system. Some of these initiatives aim at accelerating the transition to cleaner fuels, such as those used in passenger cars and vans, and heavy duty vehicles, or those used in shipping and aviation. The EU has also set concrete targets to ensure that a growing share of the energy used in the transport sector comes from renewable sources.

Other initiatives are aimed at reducing the impacts of transport on human health and the environment. These include action on noise pollution or tackling habitat fragmentation through wildlife crossings.

Overall, the EU must move toward a sustainable mobility system that rethinks how people and goods are transported. This requires a system prioritising public transport, such as rail, and active mobility, such as walking and cycling, into urban design. It also calls for rethinking the need for mobility and, where possible, reducing it, for example through work-from-home schemes.

*Source:* “Transport and mobility”. The European Environmental agency. 10 feb 2025. https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/topics/in-depth/transport-and-mobility?activeTab=e3e6b879-fef4-4a88-9436-5f0064698270



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