

Mr. Frans Timmermans

Executive Vice-President for a European Green Deal
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

10 April 2020

Dear Executive Vice-President,

I would like to address this letter in the framework of the extraordinary circumstances that we face due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

BusinessEurope recently made a call on European leaders to concentrate all efforts on actions to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, putting on hold non-essential EU initiatives [\[link\]](#). The present statement builds on that, and focuses on climate and environment policy.

The COVID-19 pandemic does not change our commitment to make the European Green Deal a true success. European businesses remain fully on board with the EU ambition of reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions (climate neutrality) to reach the objectives of the Paris Agreement and shifting Europe to a fully functioning circular economy. That is why the European Green Deal ambition will have to be deeply anchored into the future European recovery plan, making sure that it secures investments in financing the energy, environment and climate programmes.

However, for now Europe is facing an unprecedented human and economic crisis that does not allow to continue with a “business as usual” scenario. The European business community is fully focusing on managing the situation internally in order to minimize job losses and disruptions to the supply chains. Unfortunately, the social and economic impacts are already widely apparent, with costs running into the billions without a clear end in sight. Regardless of the efforts made by the companies, the current state of affairs has had a direct impact in their day-to-day operations.

BusinessEurope is therefore calling on the European Commission to extend all non-essential environment and climate-related consultations for stakeholder engagement such as inception impact assessments and public consultations that are currently active or planned for the next two months, as well as to extend certain deadlines to implement EU legislation (some examples are presented in the Annex). Similar national procedures have been put in place in various member states, and will be re-established whenever the normal state of affairs is reinstated. This flexibility is rightly being introduced at EU level in policy fields such as fiscal or state aid rules. It is important to go beyond in order to give companies more space to first survive and then recover from the crisis.



Facing certain deadlines as if nothing has happened does not seem to acknowledge the changing times and realities, and risks making the stakeholders inputs for consultations and existing EU regulations far from perfect. Many companies are implementing short time work or asking employees who do not perform essential services to take annual leave in order to mitigate future shocks, thereby significantly impacting their capacity to engage with policymakers. A very far-reaching initiative like the European Green Deal should not be built on such foundations. We must ensure that conditions surrounding the consultation and implementation processes allow for all stakeholders to deliver what is expected from them. This would be sensible and in line with other delays and postponements that are being announced across the continent, such as COP26, and delayed work by the European Parliament and Council of the European Union.

I would like to end by stressing that BusinessEurope's commitment to the Green Deal remains. We stand ready to work together with the Commission and member states to provide viable solutions to manage the COVID-19 crisis. I thank you for your attention and would be happy to discuss further with you.



Cc: Executive Vice-president Dombrovskis, Commissioner Sinkevičius, Commissioner Breton, Commissioner Simson, and Commissioner Vălean

ANNEX

Please note that the following examples are part of an illustrative list, not exhaustive.

Consultation	Comments	Current deadline
Inception impact assessment and public consultation of the 2030 Climate Target Plan	It is clear that there are two phases of impact assessments for stakeholders to comment on. Phase 1 is the general 2030 IA originally planned for September 2030, phase 2 comprises the IAs for specific legislation (e.g. the revision of the EU ETS). However, it is absolutely critical that stakeholders can fully engage with the Phase 1 IA to set the stage for the 2 nd stage. This cannot be replaced by more ad-hoc consultations later on. Therefore, more time is needed to get things right.	15 April 2020 and 23 June 2020
Inception Impact Assessment Industrial Emissions Directive	Companies are already experiencing trouble to implement the existing directive (see table below). Opening a parallel process in these difficult times, puts their involvement in the process at risk. The consultation could be delayed, giving time for the SWD/consultant report to accompany the consultation.	21 April 2020
ReFuelEU Aviation roadmap	As stated, the current crisis is significantly impairing the ability of companies to focus on responding to these and other public consultations.	21 April 2020
Commission proposal on the European Climate Law		1 May 2020
Development of post-Euro 6/VI emission standards for cars, vans, lorries and buses		29 April 2020
Waste Shipment Regulation		8 April 2020

EU regulation	Details	Current deadline
Industrial Emissions Directive (IED)	<p>National authorities are suffering understandable delays in their own administrative processes, impacting directly the IED permitting procedure. These delays are then passed on to companies, who have then less time to implement the changes needed.</p> <p>When possible, contractors are onsite working to try to meet the deadline for BAT conclusions implementation. Difficulties to get key technical specialists to come onsite to complete the work, if their own companies have halted all onsite work. Their presence onsite increases their own risk, and all society's public health.</p> <p>Furthermore, necessary equipment coming both from EU member states and outside the EU cannot reach their destinations on time due to restrictions related to EU and member state boundaries.</p> <p>Data collection to be sent to the IPPC Bureau for BREF process is proving difficult, due to the work restrictions and overall limitations.</p>	Different based on sector e.g. BATs Waste Water in 30 May 2020 and BATs non-ferrous metals in 13 June 2020 ¹
EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS) surrendering of allowances matching total emissions in 2019	Flexibility may be necessary if obligations cannot be fulfilled in time due to circumstances linked to the COVID-19 disruption. Furthermore, as soon as data on the full impact of the COVID-19 outbreak becomes available, the Commission should make sure that production and emissions reductions related to the COVID-19 outbreak will not unduly reduce the amount of post-2020 free allocation.	30 April 2020

¹ Please note this is a non-exhaustive list