

# Climate-neutral EU before 2050

The European Commission has positioned the **Green Deal** at the center of its policy priorities. The goals have been set: climate-neutrality, zero greenhouse gas emissions, and the complete decarbonization of the energy sector by 2050. The stakes are high, writes SolarPower Europe CEO Walburga Hemetsberger, but thus far Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has made good on her promises.

JUNE 23, 2020 **WALBURGA HEMETSBERGER, CEO, SOLARPOWER EUROPE**

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- **What's happening?** Unilever's revised climate goals are the most ambitious of any consumer goods firms in relation to emissions reduction and include plans to put labels on each of its 70,000 products detailing how much greenhouse gas was emitted during their manufacture and shipping, Bloomberg has reported. The company aims to make its operations and those of its suppliers net zero by 2039, while investing \$1.1bn in climate initiatives over the next decade. In 2010, Unilever pledged to cut emissions from its products by 50% by 2030. The company's emissions have been falling since 2016.

**Why does this matter?** On the surface of it, Unilever's move seems to be a noble one, particularly considering it's part of a \$1.1bn effort to address climate risks and environmental issues. The firm also recently announced it would use blockchain to help eradicate deforestation from its supply chain.

Labelling products detailing their carbon footprint could, however, be seen as an attempt to pass some of the responsibility for overall emissions and environmental impact onto consumers.

Such an approach wouldn't be out-of-step among mass consumer companies. Earlier this year, for example, Coca-Cola backed persevering with single-use plastic, citing consumer demand. Rival PepsiCo made similar remarks, stating the use of such packaging was not in itself bad, but that consumers needed to understand how to dispose of, or re-use it, appropriately.

There have been examples of corporates being held accountable for their environmental impact by policymakers, even if it can be argued the fault ultimately lies with the customer. In India, for example, regulators have mandated that consumer goods companies take responsibility for ensuring certain types of

packaging are disposed of appropriately.

Some corporates have turned to technology to tackle the issue. In China, for example, Alipay is making use of [QR codes and waste-management apps](#) to help residents sort rubbish and deal with overbearing recycling regulations.

Unilever's labelling efforts, of course, don't just concern its packaging, but the overall environmental impact of its products. Its approach may alter consumers' behaviour, lessening demand for problematic products. It may also, however, allow the firm to show its customers are consciously consuming items despite knowing their harm, potentially allowing some of the blame to be shared.

With "carbon labelling" in its infancy, however, some commentators [have noted](#) there is not enough evidence to determine whether consumers' habits will be altered by this approach.

From [pv magazine Germany](#).

German federal network agency the Bundesnetzagentur has announced the results of a tender held on June 1 for photovoltaic projects with a generation capacity of 750 kW-10 MW.

With 101 bids lodged that added up to 447.2 MW of capacity, the authority approved 21 projects for 96.3 MW of new capacity. The final prices agreed for the solar power to be generated by the facilities ranged from €0.046-0.0548/kWh for an average €0.0527 that was slightly more expensive than the €0.0518/kWh settled in the [previous tender](#) of that type, which assigned 301 MW of capacity

From [pv magazine USA](#)

Montana's second-largest planned solar project, the 150 MW Cabin Creek solar farm, currently being developed by [Clenera](#) in Fallon County, is now the largest in the state to move forward with development, after signing a power purchase agreement (PPA) with Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

The PPA is for 15 years, at a reported cost of power under \$30/MWh for Basin Electric. Basin Electric is comprised of 141 smaller electric cooperatives, spread across nine states, for a total electric customer base of around 3 million people. More than half of Montana's 25 in-state electric cooperatives belong to Basin Electric and will receive power from it.

Over the 15-year lifespan of the contract, the Cabin Creek solar farm is expected to generate enough electricity to power 30,000 homes. Outside of the power contract, the project is expected to generate \$8 million in property taxes to Fallon County, plus an additional \$5 million to the state. It will create about 300 jobs when construction begins in 2022 or early 2023, after which another five will be created for maintaining the project. The installation is expected to come online by the end of 2023.