



EU Insights Review

October 2021

Executive Summary

In September 2020 and February 2021, we surveyed and spoke with over 500 policymakers in the European Union to understand how the government and private sector responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and what policymakers want to see from advocates during this time. This summary examines what policymakers view as the most pressing issues in the EU, followed by an in-depth look at one of the highest-priority issues to arise in our conversations - the European Green Deal.



Main Insights:

- The European Green Deal is a top priority for policymakers across the political spectrum, and they have indicated an urgent need from the private sector to act and support this legislation.
- Policymakers urge the private sector to transition towards green energy sources. In addition to being socially responsible, policymakers believe that green energy is a profitable investment for the future.
- Companies should retool and develop the necessary infrastructure to fulfill goals set forth by the European Green Deal.
- The collaboration between the private and public sectors is appreciated to solve a number of issues, including the transition to green energy.

About Ballast Research

Who Are We?

Ballast Research is a research organisation headquartered in Washington, D.C. that provides feedback from senior policymakers to government relations professionals, helping advocates make better use of policymakers' time.

Our Research

During the spring of 2020, Ballast spoke with policymakers in the EU about their policy priorities and the impact of COVID-19 on EU advocacy.

Our Promise

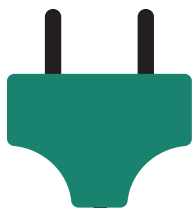
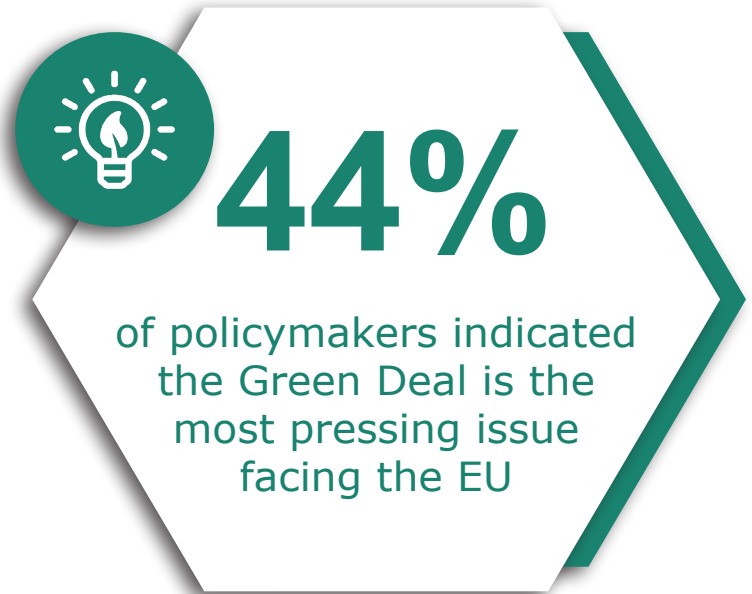
Confidentiality: Participation in our research is strictly confidential and not for attribution. All quotes below are from conversations with policymakers who consented.

Take Note: The Role of the Private Sector in the Age of the Green Revolution

In our latest 2021 research, policymakers across the political spectrum overwhelmingly indicated a need for the private sector to adapt their businesses to meet the global efforts in cutting emissions and align their corporate objectives to the European Green Deal. In particular, 44% of policymakers have indicated that the EU Green Deal is the most pressing issue facing the EU (followed by EU Unity, the economy and digital policy).

While there are some differences over how policymakers want the private sector to engage on the environmental issue, the consensus is that companies need to adapt to a “green future”, and any new renewable energy efforts should be in addition to existing environmental and labour commitments.

Furthermore, policymakers want companies to demonstrate a genuine attempt to move towards renewable energy sources and eventually hope to see a complete transition to green energy.



The Transition To Green Energy Requires Involvement From The Private And Public Sectors.

Therefore, Policymakers Would Like To See Clear Communication And Collaboration From The Private Sector.



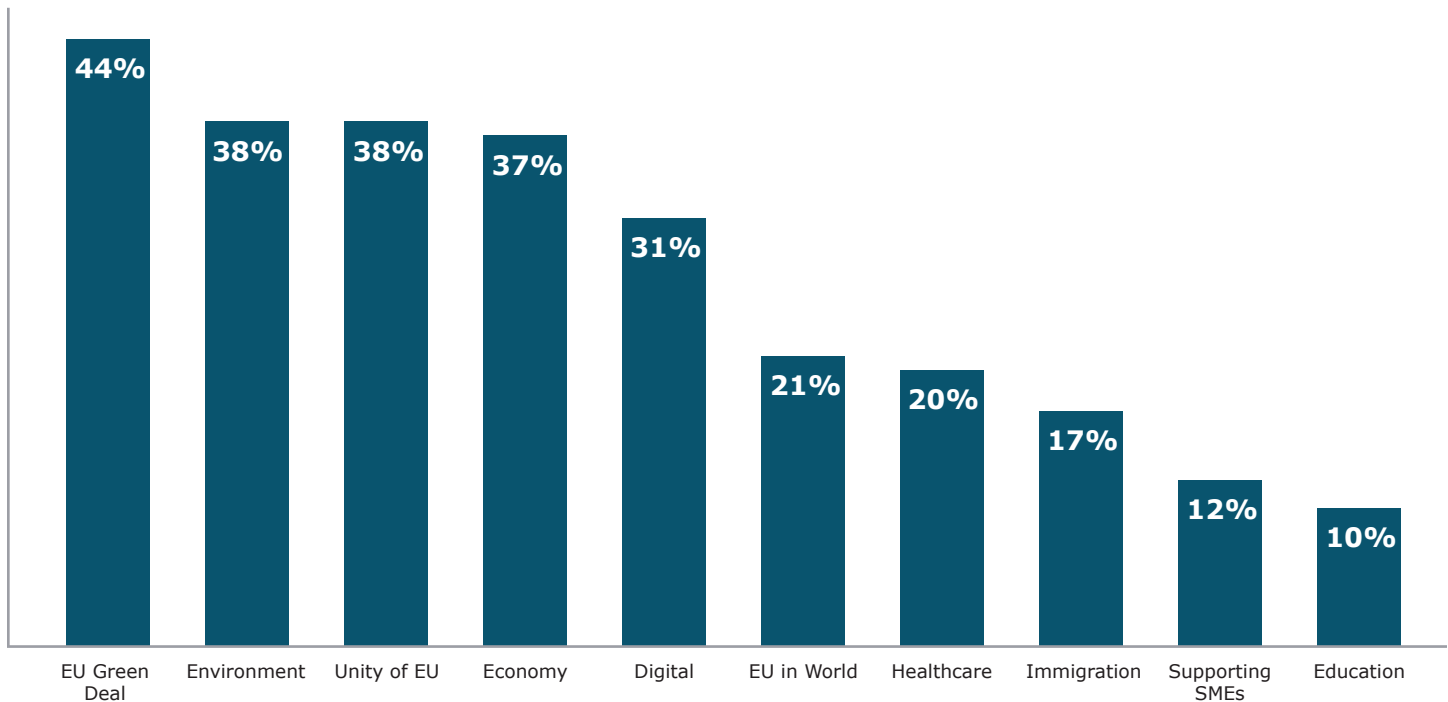
The Priorities of the EU

The Priorities of the EU

The European Green Deal and environment are the top priorities for policymakers in the EU. They are followed by the unity of the EU, economy and digitalization. We will focus on the EU Green Deal and environment in depth in this report.

Most Pressing Issues Facing the EU

Policymakers were asked to pick their top 3 most pressing issues facing the EU.



n=490

The Environment is a Top Priority for Policymakers

*“At the end of the day, companies have to worry about their bottom lines. **The environment is going to be tied to their fundamentals in the future.** Doing environmental impact works is for their own good.”*

-Head of Unit, EU Commission #1

*“I want to see companies **investing in innovation, sustainability, and digitalisation.** These are valuable indicators to see the direction of the business.”*

-MEP #1

The Environment Remains a Top Priority

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Policymakers are Treating Environmental Issues as Their Most Important Policy Objective

*"The commission is on a decade-long objective to safeguard the welfare of the future generations. We must **take advantage of the recovery instruments** to create a better future for our children."*

-EU Council, Head of Unit #1



The Environmental Situation is Dire and Requires an Immediate Solution

*"Green is the central question to the future of the planet. There are no alternate ways. **Society will collapse if we follow the same route.**"*

-Parliamentary Assistant #1



In Particular, the COVID-19 Pandemic Accelerated the Focus on the EU Green Deal

*"EU Green Deal is the biggest thing happening now. We are entering a new Europe, greener and more digital. COVID accelerated the change, but the attitude now is very different, and **we need companies to get onboard.** The new deal is the key element of the commission strategy and the union."*

-Senior Parliamentary Adviser #1



Policymakers are Adamant About Finding Meaningful Solutions to the Environmental Crisis

*"We need a solution for the environmental issues; **it's more important now to be targeted and substantive,** otherwise we won't achieve our goals, which are set very high."*

-MEP #2



**How the Private Sector
Should Contribute**

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The Golden Rule: Commit to High Standards and Sound Industry Practices

The private sector can start by demonstrating how their investments align with the targets set by the EU institutions.

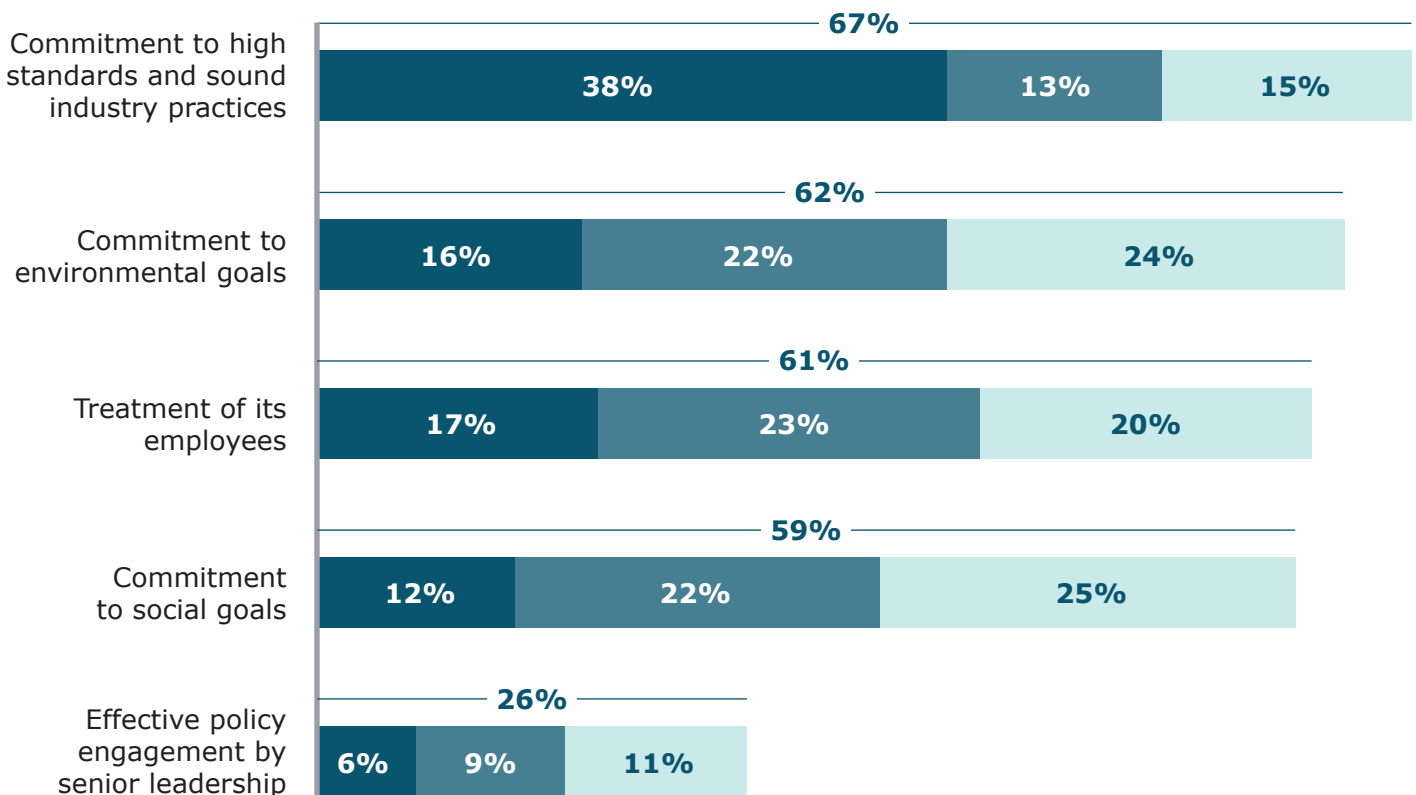
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“There is no such thing as a bad company, only companies with the wrong incentives and policies. I assess a company based on their investments, their concrete changes, and I can tell if they are greenwashing or not.”

-MEP #3

”

Which of the Following Most Impacts Your Perception of a Company?



n=465

■ 1st Priority ■ 2nd Priority ■ 3rd Priority

How the Private Sector Should Contribute

Policymakers pay close attention to how companies adapt to the transition. Specifically, how one's company investments align with the European Green Deal.



Policymakers are Encouraging Businesses to Transition into a Green Economy

"We are trying our best, across all institutions, to engage businesses to transition into the green economy. It is not easy."

-EU Council, Adviser to the UK #1



Commitment to Environmental Goals Should be Genuine and Implemented Immediately

"Companies often fight regulations rather than dealing with the issue. We see them pretending to have a solution, but they must show policymakers how they intend to get there and how we can help them get there. We should see how sincere they are."

-Parliamentary Assistant #2



Businesses Should use Resources Responsibly and Understand the Environmental Impact of Their Processes

"Companies that are making huge quantities of resources need to make a real effort to change to a more environmentally friendly and socially beneficial model. They need to realise the consequences of their actions."

-MEP #1



Switching to Environmentally Friendly Production can be Profitable and Businesses Should Make the Change

"Environment can be a profit maker. You can make money protecting the planet. Certain companies are more concerned about the immediate profit and not enough about losing future profits. But if they don't adapt to the needs of society, then society has no need for them."

-Parliamentary Assistant #3

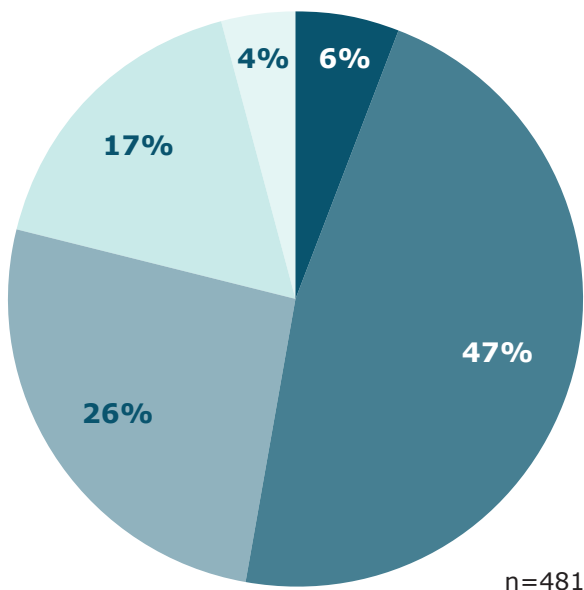
**How Private and Public can Collaborate:
The Role of the Policymaker**

How Private and Public can Collaborate: The Role of the Policymaker

The pandemic has accelerated the need for public and private partnerships. Policymakers commend companies who are willing to make the jump.

The Effectiveness of Private Businesses in Tackling COVID-19 Challenges

"How effective has the response of the business sector been in tackling COVID-19 challenges?"



- Very effective
- Somewhat effective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective

"During COVID, the public sector didn't have a lot of experience with the digital way of producing critical goods. We need companies to help the public sector organize and deliver some of the reskilling that helps rejuvenate the economy."

-Head of Unit, EU Commission #3



Utilize Public Resources

Companies should realize that there are resources in the public sector to help them achieve these ambitious goals. There are specific commissions designated to help businesses move towards green energy.

"Companies can work with the commission on getting a broad consensus on the recovery and resilience funds."

-EU Council, Head of Unit #1

"The commission can provide the grants and loans to finance the ambitious goals needed to bridge the gap."

-MEP #4



Form Collaborations

One effective way to communicate with policymakers is through collaborations with other companies/associations.

"I don't want to see inputs individually. Associations make sense because when you work together, you must come to a consensus. From a law-making perspective, I want to see a group."

-Head of Unit, EU Commission #2



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