

7. Implement three measures immediately

1. Stop CO₂ emissions



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No upcoming catastrophe has ever been studied as thoroughly as global warming. And none has been so thoroughly ignored.

» Climate change should be of concern to all, who care about health, who care about economic stability and investment value and who care about intergenerational justice - which should be *every one of us*.

Christiana Figueres and Tom Rivett-Carnac. 2020. The Future We Choose - Surviving the Climate Crisis.

Limiting global warming to a level clearly below 2 °C requires a rapid decarbonisation of the global economy. If this project fails, it will have serious consequences for future generations.

It's time to finally listen to the young generation *and* the science and to act.

The past years have been the warmest since weather records began, while global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise.

Measures must be implemented in all emitting sectors of our society. In the EU, the percentage share of greenhouse gas emissions is: 30 % in power sector, 27 % in transport sector, 19 % in industrial sector, 12 % in building sector, 12 % in agricultural sector.

2. Cut back over-consumption



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We have to rethink our way of life and cut back on over-consumption.

The wearing out of nature through our consumption-oriented lifestyle is too great and endangers our basis of existence.

Very often we do not consume what we really need. Four out of five people are spending *less* on their own needs, but *rather* on what their friends, relatives, neighbours or work colleagues are buying.

Three powerful status symbols still determine our consumption behaviour.



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- **Big car**

A big vehicle has always been considered a powerful status symbol. In the past, it was the pompous coaches of a few, then the Rolls-Royce of some, the American Chevrolet of many, and today the ever-bigger car of almost all people. Since 1980, the average weight of a car has doubled.

- **Large consumption of meat and fish**

Since time immemorial, the consumption of meat has been a powerful status symbol. First, it was the feasting in the palaces of a few (over 200 years ago, in Europe, over 90% of all people generally had no meat to eat), then frequent food in expensive restaurants for the many, and, today, almost all people eat meat daily.

In addition, we now almost only eat the better pieces of slaughtered animals, the other parts end up as waste.

For 1 kg of beef about 33 square meters of agricultural land is required, for 1 kg of potatoes, however, only 0.3 square meters.

Per capita fish consumption has doubled worldwide since 1960.

[Meat Atlas - Facts and figures about the animals we eat](#). Heinrich Böll Foundation Germany and Friends of the Earth Europe Belgium. 2014.

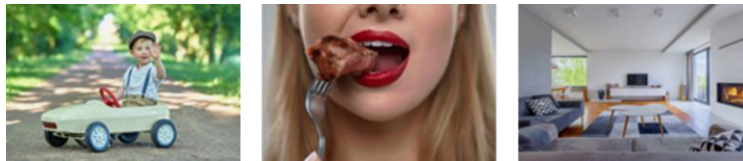
- **Large living space**

Large living space has always been considered a powerful status symbol. It used to be the pompous castles of a few, then the spacious villas of some, the homes of many, and today the large apartments of almost all people.

In Switzerland, for example, each inhabitant occupies an average of 42 square metres of living space - twice as much as in 1965.

The construction of these residential buildings means a large consumption of resources and entails a large increase in energy consumption in heating and a large subsequent consumption, such as the purchase of furniture and many additional home furnishings. After all, people in Europe own on average around 10,000 items.

All three status symbols have a big impact on our environment.



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3. Use clean and efficient technologies



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The impact of our steadily growing consumption and world population growth can only be partially offset by technological solutions.

We now need *both* the rapid implementation of clean technology and a sustainable way of life in rich countries. Only then can we correct the imbalance on our planet.



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Our decision

We humans in the rich countries can and must decide:

- do we want to continue as before or
- do we want to throttle our excessive consumption?

Now is the time for responsible and committed people to voluntarily start to live sustainably. They can show us others how a sustainable life - without sacrificing quality of life - is also possible in modern society.

However, we can not just wait until we change voluntarily our *behaviour overall*. This will take *too long* in view of our threatened human basis of existence.



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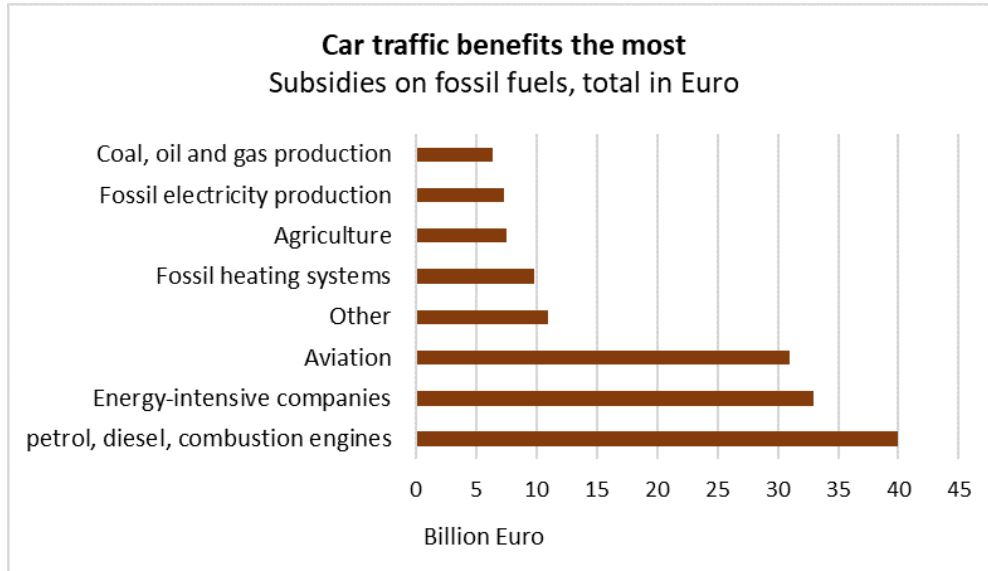
Policymakers must now quickly establish effective framework conditions so that our economic system can move away from a pure *growth strategy* and give priority to a *sustainability strategy*, thus making sustainable living practical and comfortable for all of us in our daily lives.

They have to take action, such as:

- **Enact laws that are easy to grasp so that CO₂ emissions are reduced.**
- **Apply the «polluter pays» principle in general.**
Whoever causes damage to the environment must pay for it.

- **Stop state subsidies for resource consumption.**

In Europe, for example, subsidies range from tax-privileged diesel to support for the coal industry, from tax exemption for aviation to free emission licences for the steel and chemical industries.



Source: Investigate Europe, OECD, European Commission, Various national authorities

Source: *Wie sich Europa beim Klimaschutz betrügt.*
Von Harald Schumann, Simon Schmid und J. Henry Fair.
Online-Magazin REPUBLIK 06.07.2020

- **In addition, environmentally harmful activities linked to our economy should no longer be kept alive with the *argument of keeping jobs*.**



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The question is not *how*?

The question is, *when* do we start to live sustainably?