

Ursula von der Leyen

President of the European Commission

Frans Timmermans

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

Janusz Wojciechowski

European Commissioner for Agriculture

Virginijus Sinkevičius

European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

16 December 2021

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear Executive Vice-President Timmermans,
Dear Commissioner Wojciechowski,
Dear Commissioner Sinkevičius,

We are writing to you regarding the European Commission's future implementation of the 2020 EU Methane Strategy. Following the adoption of the **Global Methane Pledge at COP26 in Glasgow, we are calling on you to increase overall methane reduction ambitions and adopt bold livestock methane reduction targets.**

On 2 November 2021, President von der Leyen stressed in her speech launching the Global Methane Pledge that cutting methane emissions is the fastest way to slow global heating. **Although the pledge is a step in the right direction, we need to increase the ambition of methane cuts across all sectors. According to the 2021 UNEP Global Methane Assessment, at least 45% of global methane reductions by 2030 are necessary if we are to stay on track to achieving the 1.5°C target of the Paris Climate Agreement, and economically feasible. Upcoming EU legislative proposals on methane must be strengthened to reflect these most recent scientific findings.**

Methane reduction through the energy sector, accounting for 19% of methane emissions in the EU, offers a lot of opportunities and must be maximised. The recent proposal on reducing methane emissions from the energy sector is a first step, although it needs to be strengthened by extending its framework to the whole energy supply chain. However, the EU should not overlook agriculture: 53% of anthropogenic methane emissions in the EU come from agriculture, with 98% of that coming from enteric fermentation and manure management. Transformation of food systems is of critical importance for the EU to meet global heating reduction targets¹, with agriculture bridging the gap left open by actions to reduce methane emissions focusing strictly on the energy sector.

Largely aligning with the European Parliament's 2021/2006 own-initiative report on an EU strategy to reduce methane emissions, we are calling on the European Commission to **set EU-wide and national targets for cutting methane emissions specifically in the agriculture sector**, leading to a significant reduction of methane emissions in the EU by 2030, in line with the Paris Agreement. This is especially relevant as the COP26 in Glasgow requested all signatories to revisit and strengthen their 2030 targets.

¹ Clark et al, 2020. Global food system emissions could preclude achieving the 1.5° and 2°C climate change targets. Science 370, 705–708.

One of the priorities of the EU Methane Strategy is *'to ensure that companies apply considerably more accurate measurement and reporting methodologies for methane emissions, across sectors'*. **We therefore call on the European Commission to propose binding measures relating to methane for corporations with headquarters or with imports to the EU which have a stake in the livestock sector, including monitoring, reporting and reduction targets.** Both the Changing Markets Foundation's [investigation](#) and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's (IATP) [report released this week](#) show that currently none of the 20 largest meat and dairy corporations headquartered in the EU report their methane emissions and that many fail to report on any of their emissions. Binding measures should require these major emitters to report on all their emissions, as well as report their methane emissions separately, as stated in the EU Methane strategy. In addition, they should establish climate targets that are based on the latest science aligning with a 1.5°C scenario by 2030 and include specific targets for reducing their methane emissions. They should include in their reporting emissions from their suppliers ('scope 3 emissions'), and present concrete action plans to meet their reduction targets. These action plans should comprise specific methane emission mitigation measures, including a significant reduction in livestock production. The European Commission should also consider specific measures for large farms with more than 50 livestock units (which account for about 70% of agricultural methane emissions in the EU, and about 40% of all methane emissions²) and those that have poor agricultural practices.

To fulfil the European Green Deal, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Global Methane Pledge, the European Commission cannot overlook livestock methane emissions. Under the leadership of the European Commission, Member States will have to monitor, report and reduce methane emissions from their livestock sector and their food supply chains. On the other hand, methane emissions from companies headquartered in their jurisdictions or that import to the EU should be required to do separate reporting, monitoring and reduction targets for livestock methane.

We remain at your disposal for any questions and would like to arrange a meeting to discuss further how the European Commission plans to cut methane emissions in the livestock sector.

Yours sincerely,

Changing Markets Foundation, Nusa Urbancic, Campaigns Director
Compassion in World Farming, Olga Kikou, Head of EU office
Deutsche Umwelthilfe, Jürgen Resch, Director
Feedback, Jessica Sinclair Taylor, Head of Policy and Media
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Shefali Sharma, Director of European office
Mighty Earth, Nico Muzi, Europe Director

² IIASA, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA)