

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000247/26
to the Commission
Pascal Arimont (PPE)
(22 January 2026)**

Subject: Taking income inequality into account in European climate policies

A recent scientific study published in the Nature Climate Change journal ⁽¹⁾ in May 2025 highlights that the richest 10% of the world's population is responsible for around 65% of the global warming observed since 1990, and that their emissions have contributed disproportionately to the intensification of extreme heat waves, often in regions that are already particularly vulnerable. This study emphasises that wealth-related emissions (consumption and investments) play a decisive role in climate change, regardless of country of residence.

1. In this context, does the Commission plan to explicitly include income and wealth inequalities in the assessment of climate responsibilities within the European Union, particularly in the context of the Green Deal and emission-reduction targets?
2. Does it plan to adapt its modelling and emissions-monitoring tools in order to better distinguish between contributions of different socioeconomic groups, and not just rely on national averages?

Submitted: 22.1.2026

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(5 March 2026)**

Social fairness is addressed in EU climate policies and in their preparation. The objective of the Social Climate Fund ⁽¹⁾ is to address the social impacts of the new emission trading system for buildings and road transport (ETS2) on vulnerable groups in the EU, especially those affected by energy and transport poverty.

The ETS auction revenues can be used by Member States for these same purposes. Lower income Member States benefit from proportionally higher shares of these revenues, which aims to support them in their transition ⁽²⁾.

The Modernisation Fund ⁽³⁾ supports the modernisation of energy systems and the improvement of energy efficiency in 13 lower-income Member States.

The Effort Sharing Regulation ⁽⁴⁾ recognises the different capacities of Member States to take action by differentiating targets according to gross domestic product per capita.

The Just Transition Mechanism, funded by the EU budget, addresses the social and economic effects of the transition, focusing on the regions, industries and workers in the territories where economic diversification and reconversion is most needed ⁽⁵⁾.

The EU solidarity fund ⁽⁶⁾ and EU Civil Protection Mechanism support countries in Europe and beyond when struck by climate-related emergencies.

Internationally, the EU, its Member States and the European Investment Bank are together the world's biggest contributor of public climate finance to developing economies ⁽⁷⁾.

The EU monitors, estimates and reports on emissions at national level, as required under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-025-02325-x>.

⁽¹⁾ https://employment-social-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies-and-activities/funding/social-climate-fund_en.

⁽²⁾ 10% of ETS allowance is specifically distributed to the lower income Member States for the purposes of solidarity.

⁽³⁾ The Modernisation Fund is funded by ETS revenues, https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-funding-climate-action/modernisation-fund_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/effort-sharing-member-states-emission-targets/effort-sharing-2021-2030-targets-and-flexibilities_en.

⁽⁵⁾ The Just Transition Fund allocated nearly EUR 20 billion to invest in diversifying economies and reskilling workers in vulnerable regions. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism_en.

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/solidarity-fund_en.

⁽⁷⁾ In 2024, they contributed EUR 31.7 billion in climate finance from public sources and mobilised an additional amount of EUR 11.0 billion of private finance.

The impact assessments of climate policy initiatives include analyses of the social and distributional impacts, i.e. impacts on the various income groups and the most vulnerable groups, ⁽⁸⁾, ⁽⁹⁾, ⁽¹⁰⁾ through the use of economic modelling tools.

⁽⁸⁾ See the assessments for the 2030 Climate Target Plan and the Fit for 55 package:
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:749e04bb-f8c5-11ea-991b-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_2&format=PDF.

⁽⁹⁾ See SWD(2024) 63 final Part 3/5, Annex 8 and more specifically Section 2.4.1. Fuel expenses, energy and transport poverty, distributional impacts, Section 2.4.4. Changes in relative prices and distributional impacts' and Section 2.4.5 The equity dimension.
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:6c154426-c5a6-11ee-95d9-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_3&format=PDF.

⁽¹⁰⁾ SWD(2024) 63 final Part 3/5 Annex 8, Section 2.4.5 refers the UNEP Gap Report Figure 3.2 that shows household emissions groups (<https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2022>).