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## Press Release

### New EASAC Commentary on Transformative Change **Leading Scientists Alarmed by Growing Chasm between Evidence and Political Action on Climate Change**

"Atmospheric concentrations of CO<sub>2</sub> are now passing those in the Pliocene warm period 3.3 million years ago, when temperatures were around 3 °C hotter and sea levels were 20 meters higher," says Prof. Michael Norton, lead author of EASAC's 2025 update of its 2020 Perspective on Transformative Change. "Atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations are continuing to rise and climate change accelerating, causing severe damage and loss of life. Despite substantial progress in green tech, we're still breaking the planet's boundaries, and a shift to an increasingly inhospitable planet may already be underway".

The latest EASAC report examines the evidence of worsening trends, the inadequate responses, and the urgent need for bold policy action globally where the EU is already in the lead.

#### Key Findings

- **Climate deterioration:** Greenhouse gas emissions and atmospheric concentrations continue to rise, pushing temperatures higher and leading to more extreme climate-related damages.
- **Economic loss:** The EU has faced climate-related economic losses of €162 billion over the past three years, with over 60,000 heat-related deaths in the 2022 summer alone.
- **Resources are being wasted:** Globally, only 7% of resources are recycled, in contrast to the EU where the rate is 50%.
- **Biodiversity at risk:** We're continuing to lose habitat and species despite the promise of stronger policies to protect biodiversity.

#### The Reality of Systemic Failure

Six out of nine planetary boundaries have already been breached. And the seventh is about to be breached, too. Despite global promises, crucial policies fall short. Carbon emissions are on the rise, natural feedback loops spiral downwards, and essential biodiversity targets remain elusive. Fossil fuel subsidies linger like unwanted houseguests, while GDP-driven models chase quick wins over sustainable gains.

#### Transformative Policies Needed

The report highlights a troubling disconnect: political will lags behind the crisis. Despite much international attention, legal hurdles, deep-rooted corporate agendas, and fleeting political priorities remain key obstacles. Misinformation and greenwashing efforts stoke the flames of resistance to genuine action.

## Who holds a match to the fire?

Scientific data reveal that the richest 0.1% of the world's population, who own most of the wealth, resist taxation needed to fund public services and investments. Yet, they emit 10 times more CO<sub>2</sub> than the rest of the richest 10% combined, with a carbon footprint of 200 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per head annually. Then again, the richest increasingly exert political power to further their own agendas.

## Five Policy Actions for a Sustainable Future

EASAC supports international calls from IPBES and others to recognize the severe risks of climate inaction and to implement transformative changes such as:

1. **Rethink economic growth:** Move beyond GDP-centric growth models toward sustainability-focused well-being indicators.
2. **End harmful subsidies:** Stop fossil fuel subsidies and ensure a just transition to clean energy.
3. **Protect biodiversity:** Enforce stricter regulations on habitat preservation and restoration.
4. **Promote circular economy:** Improve recycling and resource efficiency to increase circularity.
5. **Base policies on facts:** Prioritize scientific evidence over political expediency and special interests in decision-making.

“The EU Green Deal is a step in the right direction - by giving priority to the well-being of its citizens and the planet overgrowth for its own sake”, explains Anders Wijkman, a former MEP and member of EASAC's Environment Steering Panel. “Now, some political groups are suggesting that the pace of transformation should be slowed down. This would be a major mistake. A half-hearted transition will never work. The clock is ticking, and the decisions we take now will steer the course of our planet's future.”

## Notes

IPBES is the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (<https://www.ipbes.net/transformative-change/media-release>)

## EASAC Commentary: Increasing Urgency for Transformative Change (6 March 2025)

Link (active from 6 March): <https://easac.eu/publications/details/increasing-urgency-for-transformative-change>

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## About the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC)

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