

Political Roadmap No. 1: Energy and Climate Change Mitigation

CORE-question:	How to convince citizens of the urgent need for tangible actions to reduce CO ₂ emissions?
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HOW YOUTHCORE SEES THE CHALLENGE

The majority of European citizens might not be aware of or does not feel responsible for the climate change. A lack of motivation seems to be a further problem. As the sustainable behaviour is not always an integral part of daily life, environmental issues need more presence in media and society.

Beyond this, the inclusion of renewable energies as major part of European energy production is a big challenge. To reach the goal of 100% renewable energy consumption, more research and education in environmental problems and RES (Renewable Energy Sources) techniques is needed. As the result of this we will be able to implement RES in daily life (like waste separation in Germany 20 years ago).

YouthCORE is aware, that solutions for some of the following demands already exist. Our aim is to improve them and unify them for whole Europe.

DEMANDS OF YOUTHCORE AND BEST PRACTICE IDEAS FROM THE YOUTHCORE REGIONS

Use of Renewable Energy Sources (RES)

We want you to create new rules concerning law and financial support around renewable energy, so that more private people and companies are able to use it.

Environment damage fee: We want companies to pay a fee in order to compensate their emissions. The money should go to investment in RES (Renewable Energy Sources) or the companies own environmental programs. For example install solar panels to produce energy for their own use.

Solar panels on public institutes: In order to get private people interested in solar panel investment, we think that it should be a rule to put solar panels on the roofs of all public institutes. For example: Hospitals, town centres, bus stops, etc.

0% interest rate when you loan money for an investment in renewable energy equipment, solar panels etc. We think that it's important to give everyone a chance to invest in renewable energy even though you can't afford a loan. Therefore it is important to create a law that's support this aim.

Best Practice for Renewable Energy Sources (RES)

Denmark: The production of renewable energy is around 30% of the total consumption (above the European Union 20% aim for 2020). Denmark is a long time leader in wind energy.

(Denmark (2013) gets around 33% of its power from wind power plants). To encourage investment in wind power families were offered a tax exception for generating their own electricity within their own households or an adjoined commune.

Poland: Is using biomass and hyper power. Taking into account the natural landscape, also wind energy is developed.

Sweden: Sweden is producing 45% of their total energy consumption with hydro power.

Education and Research

In order to convince citizens of changing their habits towards more environmentally friendly behaviour, general knowledge about sustainability and renewable energies has to be increased.

Therefore a certain Europe-wide subject which focuses on ecological issues and is influenced by environmental sciences has to be introduced. Special parts of this subject are projects that include visits to certain areas, like national parks or protected areas and ecological projects. Through the subject young people will be informed about the urgent need for reducing the CO₂ emissions.

To raise the awareness of ecological problems, further research on renewable energy sources has to be done. The financial support for research and science should be independent from the economical interests. For this purpose the European Union should raise a renewable energy sources fund, which has the task to do international independent research for the benefit of whole Europe and has to be obligatory financed by European government. To present the results, an international RES research network has to be created.

Best Practice for (inter)national research networks

Germany: Pearl – a Potsdam research network is a foundation of civil rights with the goal to support science, research and traineeship. Results are going to be the North Eastern European Biomass Agenda 2020.

Role models raising awareness and motivation

Public transport

A method to replace as many combustion engines as possible with electrical or hybrid engines is to convince citizens that ecological vehicles are the future.

First step is to replace all stately owned vehicles, company cars, post cars and public transport to electric or hybrid. People are unconsciously being influenced by their surroundings. If they go by electric bus every morning, they will have the opportunity see the advantages (rising air quality, reducing noise level in cities) of sustainable vehicles and hopefully replace their own cars with an electrically driven.

This is an expensive investment, but it should be able to reduce the amount of released carbon dioxide. If the state is willing to help the environment and create a better future, the best is to offer more substitutions into developing of cheaper, easier and more effective electrical

engines. Taking the step to replace the public transport with vehicles, which are more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Public institutions

Public institutions and state owned buildings have to only use green energy sources. The water use should be more strictly monitored. It's easy to say that all new households should have solar panels installed on their rooftops, but it's a long-term vision. It can be achieved by starting with installing solar panels on public institutions as an example. When people see it, they get affected in a positive way and hopefully place solar panels on their own roofs. Subsidies could even be offered here, in order to help more people rely on Renewable Energy Sources.

Governmental Institutions

Ministers and politicians working for the government should show the society that they are also dealing with environmental issues. For example: they can drive ecological cars, ride a bike or use public transport. The government buildings as well as their own, private offices should be supplied with power from renewable energy sources and fulfill high standards of energy efficiency.

Regional Organic Food

One way to reduce the CO₂-emission from conventional food production is to produce most of the food in the own country. Regional food production is cheaper and involves less means of transport, one of the main causes for the emission of carbon dioxide. It's a chance to raise profits of local farmers, which sell those products.

Consumers have to get the chance to find local products in supermarkets. Therefore the difference between regional food and exported products has to be made visible. Purchases of local food may be increased by creating more transparency considering the products' origin.

This can be achieved through introducing readable labels, presenting the different countries, in which the goods have gone through certain production steps or restructuring shops to create special areas for offering regional food.

Media

Television

The participants of YouthCORE request the introduction of certain advertisements in the public media. These advertisements should present what an individual can do to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and show the impact of the actions. This can be done by giving young people the opportunity to act as role models for peers through starring in those advertisements.

Press

The participants of YouthCORE suggest that the government should organise more conferences and open door events, where they will share all current reports about the environment.

Platform

Furthermore, a platform for as well communication between consumers and companies as information about the companies' policy has to be created in order to provide transparency. This means, consumers must be enabled to gain insight into production conditions and the environmental policy.

Best Practice for raising awareness and motivation

Denmark: Samsø is Denmark's renewable energy island, where electric power is produced only from renewable energy sources. This is the example that changes on the field of using renewable energy are possible. The awareness and motivation of the citizens of Samsø were the precondition to make a change. The process of convincing and including the citizens for a responsible environmental acting should be an example for the politics which are focused on implementing renewable energy systems.

Poland: In special areas, called Forest Promotion Complexes, youth and forestry employees are being taught how to provide the optimal circumstances for the growth of the forest. Also scientists visit them in order to conduct researches.

Political Roadmap No. 2: Climate Change Adaptation

CORE-question:

How to prepare for the increasing risk of floods, sea level rise, erosion and landslides?

HOW YOUTHCORE SEES THE CHALLENGE

We are worried about climate change and the consequences that come by it for humans and ecosystems. We at YouthCORE share the vision of a world in balance between mankind and nature. And we are also really aware of the challenge of the next decades.

We need you and the experts their knowledge for ENCORE to find adequate solutions for the detailed problems in whole Europe. Also it is important to get everybody involved and to give every citizen the chance to be heard.

DEMANDS OF YOUTHCORE

Protection and adaptation

Protect the people from the risks and consequences of climate change. We should adapt to the problems in that way that neither humans nor nature is going to be harmed.

Rebuilding Baltic Sea Coast lines in Lithuania

The regional government of Klaipedia country started a project to stop the erosion process. The protection structures were build ecologically without using cement or the like. The goal of the project was to protect the animals and the local nature. Additionally the people of the region can now enjoy the beautiful landscape and get to know the regional plants and animals.

Information and participation

Give information to people why actions are necessary and discuss freely all possibilities.

Making decisions has to be transparent and it is important that people get the chance to take part in the process. There are always negative consequences of policies for some people and thereby it is also important to find the right balance.

We find it important that there is a lot of interdisciplinary cooperation in search for new solutions. We may not be afraid of new ideas of other regions, because it is only the results or ideas that count.

Awareness for water in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands there is a big awareness for the risks of the rising sea level. Thereby there is a open discussion about water management (for example the rising sea level and the quality of natural and drinking water). People are for example aware because of the king Willem Alexander. He studied water management he is now for example head of the commission for water in the Netherlands. One example from the South of Netherlands is Neltje Jans, a theme park where you can learn a lot about the deltaworks.



Long term solutions

Thinking on the long term is the most important task. We have to be aware of the risks that result from our actions. Because every action has consequences, and it would really be a problem if we create new problems with new solutions.

Do not hand over the problems to us and our children. Do not hesitate to take all actions necessary. Act as soon as possible. Because it is your responsibility.

The Drijvede Stad (Netherland)

Floating city - a way to live sustainable

In the Netherlands they have an inventive way to combine the problems of the rising sea and the growing population. They started a project to live on the water in balance with the nature. So they clean their own toilet water, they produce almost all their energy in a sustainable way and they also used recycled materials to build it.



It is not enough to adapt to climate change. We have to stop it now.

Political Roadmap No. 3: Nature Protection and Ecosystem Services

CORE-question:

How to protect natural life support systems like soil, water, air and habitats and biodiversity?

HOW YOUTHCORE SEES THE CHALLENGE

Key challenges concerning our environment are nature protection and the loss of biodiversity, as well as the exploitation of natural resources. The human way of living – growing cities, building infrastructure, intensive industry and agriculture and consumption of its products – affects habitats of plants and animals and also our basic needs – like water, air and soil – badly. Therefore, you need to urgently promote political actions to find a way how we can live without destroying ecosystems.

DEMANDS OF YOUTHCORE AND BEST PRACTICE IDEAS FROM THE YOUTHCORE REGIONS

Ensuring a high water quality and enabling long-term water supply

- Facing the threat of water pollution (by chemicals, micro pollutants etc.), we ask you to renew sewage treatment plants and provide widespread infrastructure which is able to filter smaller particles and substances out of polluted water.
- Furthermore, the use of fertilizers (especially in regions near the sea and rivers) needs to be radically decreased. The maximal allowed soil doses have to be restricted by law.
- To decrease the total amount of fresh water used, more people must know about the possible ways to use rain water (e.g. to flush toilets, to wash clothes/cars). Therefore in every new and renovated building the use of rain water needs to be implemented mandatorily from now on.

Clean air for a healthy living

- As everyone knows, industry and traffic cause high air pollution, so the emissions from industry need to be restricted in a bigger scale. This policy has to be the same for the entire European Union. Moreover, to reduce emissions by private persons we ask you to ban private car use from the city centers and to promote of public transport.

“Vision2050”, Switzerland

Until 2050, Switzerland aims to reduce its CO₂ emission to 1 ton per capita and year. To reach this goal, the efficiency of machines needs to be improved and non-fossil energies will get substituted by biomass, solar and geothermal energy and waste incineration power plants.

- Within the next year, each European country has to set a goal for the maximal CO₂ emission by 2050. The annual per capita emission must be reduced to 30% or less of its current amount.
 - Research on air cleaning techniques must be increased. As air pollution is not just affecting certain regions, such a project should be done in a European partnership.
- Keep quantity of connected protected nature areas

→ Ecosystems must stay in their original shape without being divided by streets. We demand that entire ecosystems and not just parts of them need to become protected areas.

→ The “Natura 2000” network needs to be extended so that it covers 30% of the territory of the EU – each member state of the European Union must turn at least 25% of its territory into protected areas.



Green rooftop Zürich

→ New infrastructure needs to stay close to already existing services, so that the nature does not get fragmented in a bigger extent. Ecosystem issues have to be intensified in construction planning processes (animal bridges or tunnels, innovative traffic management).

Promoting small scale organic permacultural food production

→ The regions must support farmers using permaculture technique instead of monoculture methods. A subsidy for small organic farms financed by higher taxes on products of monoculture has to be realized.

→ Educational offers for farmers concerning the advantages of permaculture in terms of food production and the preservation of resources need to be increased.

→ As projects have shown, we are not yet able to build natural, self-sufficient biospheres. The research must be continued to increase our knowledge about this very important issue in order to get to know more how mixed culture of plants can be improved. We expect a new big scale program in this field, designed by specialists of various European countries. The project needs to be funded by the EU.

Make cities greener

→ The governments must give support to city-gardening projects. Area, material and seeds have to be supplied for free. This will motivate people to participate in the projects which lead to greener cities. The harvest is distributed to the participants of the projects, which leads to a reduction of transport of fruits and vegetables, less traffic and emissions.

→ Public buildings must be an example for how nature can be included into cities. Flat roofs can be covered with grass or vegetable plantations. The same is possible for the walls of buildings. Through their evaporating effect, plants have a cooling function as well.

Green City e.V., Munich

Green City e.V. is an NGO mainly concentrating in nature conservation and making the living in the city as enjoyable as possible. In this matter creating awareness about climate change issues also affecting biodiversity in environmental education projects is as important as promoting a sustainable mobility concept. Especially the efforts to make houses greener by planting facades or roofs as well as increasing social community gardening are main topics.

→ Organise local events which promote all kinds of gardening in the cities. The inhabitants must be invited in order to show them how they can put on a garden with local plants (no neophytes). This will also lead to awareness for environmental issues.

Sustainable construction planning

→ We must compensate the pollution we cause. For any change in traffic infrastructure the government must ensure a compensating action. Our idea is that new roads must be accompanied by green areas, which are able to compensate the CO₂ emissions. Furthermore, it will increase the living quality of people living next to it (reduced noise and nicer impression).

Renaturalization of the Isar river, Munich

As we spent the YouthCORE Conference at Burg Schwaneck, we could easily visit the Isar river, which has been renaturalised. The natural form of the river supports the original ecosystem within the city borders and also helps to preserve the biodiversity in the riparian zones. Furthermore the renaturalization helps to prevent floods and more people are enjoying themselves on the riverside.



→ Unused, old building sites and canalised rivers need to be renaturalized. All building materials need to be taken away, so that just pure nature remains. The materials from the old buildings have to be recycled. On riversides a path can be added so people can enjoy the landscape and get reminded of the relaxing effects of nature.

Support for nature protecting NGOs

→ Funding for non-governmental organisations must be further increased. Specialized NGOs are a big source of knowledge and their actions raise awareness for important issues and promote governmental action.

→ The government has to invest in certain (research) projects of NGOs.

HOW TO RAISE ATTENTION IN PUBLIC TO FULFIL THOSE DEMANDS?

To raise the awareness among the people, the government has to publish its actions helping the environment. Renaturalised areas, for example, offer a great opportunity to get people involved into environmental issues. By constructing museums and offering guided tours through natural protected areas, the state can even better inform its citizens about the actual issues we need to deal with.

Political Roadmap No. 4: Sustainable Use of Resources

CORE-question:	How to break the link between economic growth and increasing waste and sewage generation?
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HOW YOUTHCORE SEES THE CHALLENGE

As we are obviously running out of resources, we have to do something against it. We now live at the cost of other countries, nature and the next generations. Sustainable energy sources are currently seen as an expense by most companies, instead of an investment. It is our intention to show companies the economic advantages of renewable energies.

We think that a balance between nature and economy is possible and should exist, but that means economic growth without the exploitation of raw materials is needed. Because of this, we don't feel like the GDP is a sufficient indicator of economic growth, and we would like to propose a different measurement, that also takes social and environmental factors into account.

DEMANDS OF YOUTHCORE AND BEST PRACTICE IDEAS FROM THE YOUTHCORE REGIONS

More sustainable, green companies

We are running out of non-renewable resources, but the main goal of large companies still is to generate as much profit as possible, and this isn't compatible with investments in green, renewable resources. We believe that we have to use the fact that companies want to make a lot of profit, in order to help the environment. However, we also understand that if we are going to punish the companies that use non-renewable energy, they will go to places where they don't have the risks of such punishments. We want to make using renewable energy attractive by subsidies which can partly compensate the extra costs that might come with renewable energy.

Utrecht: Because of the technological development and decreasing costs of renewable energy systems, it has become a lot more interesting for private companies to invest in sustainable energy. The province tries to make companies aware of this possibilities and tries to offer support in order to support investments in green energy.

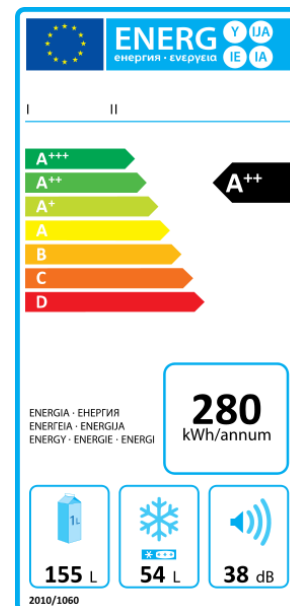
Label for environmental friendliness

The fact that these companies produce environmentally friendly will bring them more profit in combination with a new label for environmental friendliness. We need one clear, well-known label, with the same standards in the whole European Union. There will be three variations of this label; a green label for products that are really fair and environmentally friendly, a red one for products that are very harmful to the environment and not produced in a fair way, and a yellow one for products of which the standards are in between the other two labels. Products that have a better label will be taxed less than those with a worse label. It is very important that this one big label becomes very popular (people only want to buy goods with this label, which results in the fact that the companies want to earn this label for their products). If we include this label in the TTIP agreement (if there has to be a TTIP-agreement) this can be a

start to introduce this label in the whole world; because the USA wants to sell their goods in Europe, they will also need this label.

European Union energy label

A Europe wide label is not a completely new idea; an energy label for Europe already exists. It is mostly used for large machines like cars and washing machines, but also for buildings. It is the most important guideline for European consumers to see the amount of energy a product uses. The label is divided in different levels: from A to D. Products with an A label are the most energy efficient ones, products with a D waste a lot of energy. This label is not optional, every product which fits in the categories of the label must display it. We think this energy label makes consumers think about the influence of their products on the environment. Because this label only measures energy usage, we advise to invest in a new, broader label, that also includes important issues such as emission and sustainable production methods. That way, people can see what the influence of their consumption is on the environment in comparison to other products. The European energy label has already proven that a label like this could work.



Stimulation/Strengthening of the regional economy

The stimulation of the regional economy brings a lot of advantages. Not only will it make the region more independent of the international stock market, but also encourage the creation of new jobs. Local consumption results in less transportation, which benefits the environment as it causes a decrease in emission and the usage of resources.

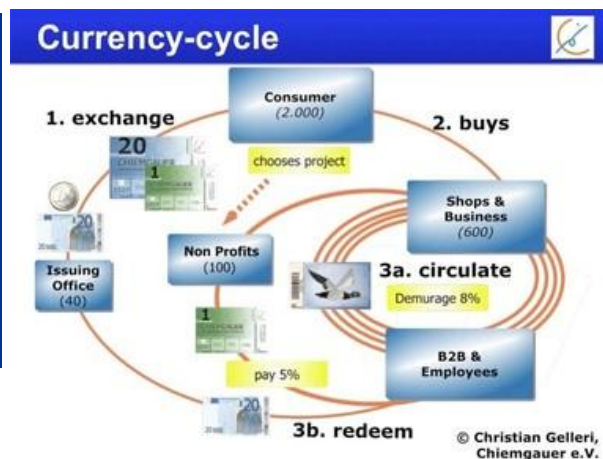
We anticipate several measures to strengthen the regional economy:

→ Introducing regional currencies into more areas.

Workers will receive part of their salaries in their local currency that can only be used in their specific region, which stimulates them to spend the money in this region, boosting the performance of the local economy.

Regional local currency: Chiemgauer (from the German region Bavaria)

The Chiemgauer has been established in 2003 with the intention of stimulating local commerce and promoting non-profits. It operates with a fixed exchange rate (1 Chiemgauer = €1) and is often quoted as a role model with regard to tools of fiscal localism.



→ Promoting cooperatives

Those small businesses are owned by the people who later on consume the goods they provide, e.g. foodstuffs or energy. Their concept is often aimed to a lower extent towards profit, but more to the public interest, because they are owned by citizens themselves. People are also more likely to buy products from a company they have a stake in, hence the regional economy will be stimulated.

Food cooperative near Munich, Bavaria: “Kartoffelkombinat”: they grow their own food

Share economy

We would appreciate a higher emphasis on the sharing of goods and products in the European economy. Citizens should be encouraged to share certain things, like gardening tools or cars, between one another. This way we will need fewer products, leading to less waste generation. This could be accomplished through advertising (e.g. television spots), emphasising not only the good it will do for the environment, but also the economic benefits that come with it. After all, it's cheaper to divide the price of a product between different people, than to buy it on your own. Regions could also implement other advantages, like free parking for people who share a car.

Carsharing: Autolib' in Paris

Autolib' is an electric car sharing service which was inaugurated in Paris, France, in December 2011. It complements the city's bike sharing scheme, Velib', which was set up in 2007. The Autolib' scheme intends to deploy 3,000 all-electric Bolloré Bluecars for public use on a paid subscription basis, based around a citywide network of parking and charging stations.



Free & ecological rental cars: Werfenweg Grasshoppers

In the Austrian city „Werfenweg“ tourists can rent an environmental friendly car that run electricity or locally produced biofuel for free.

Finding an alternative prosperity indicator

As concerning the conventional idea of economic growth, the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), is the only measure of well-being officially recognized by the European Union, but it ignores social and environmental costs of growth. This focus on an economical number leads to an overestimation of the importance of the economy. In order to take full account of the health of a nations economy and its sustainability, we call on the EU to officially establish all-encompassing, alternative metrics as, for example, the GPI (Genuine Progress Indicator), or the HDI (Human Development Index). The establishment of an alternative index will motivate countries to give societal and ecological topics a higher priority.

Water saving systems

Water should always be a basic human right to all humans and so it is important that the future of the water is covered. Water should always be a non-profit resource, hence owned by the public.

Water should be treated as a scarce resource, thus needing special attention and well-planned usage. Research should be conducted to find out about economizing measures with regard to water usage in industrial mechanisms as well as house construction.

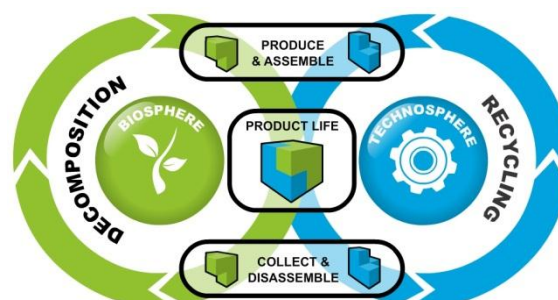
Climate change will affect the rain fall in Europe so there must be guarantees that the rainwater will be well controlled in the future to avoid flooding and personal and property damage. Ground water should be well monitored and used sustainable way.

Smart design: The “Cradle-to-cradle” certificate must be promoted

The modern industry is draining the resources of the planet every day that passes by. On a daily basis vulnerable resources are wasted; either because they are mixed up with non-recyclable materials, or because they can not be taken apart from the rest of the materials in the product they are a part of. The demand for more intelligent product engineering and design is only getting bigger. The demand of being able to recycle the products – so that when they can no longer serve their purpose, they can easily be given a new one – is more relevant than ever before. This is a problem that can be solved with smart design. It is not a question of expensive investments. It is not a question of building up the infrastructure we need to save the world. It is a question of making optimal use of the infrastructure that already exists; the infrastructure of the recycling stations. If only the industry will slowly work towards producing products that are easier to take apart, and whose parts will be consisting of more pure materials, in other words, if the industry starts designing and engineering smarter, the recycling stations can be their perfect source of cheap raw materials, located right where the industry needs them – in the cities.

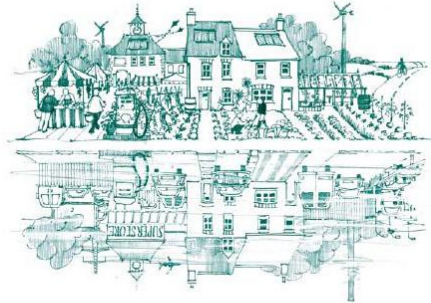
Cradle to cradle

The idea of cradle to cradle was developed by the German process engineer and chemist Michael Braungart and the American designer William McDonough. It is the idea of integrating industrial products into the cycle of nature. This balance is obtained through a recycling and production process, in which nothing is lost. For the production process of a product this requires that all electricity used in the production is coming from renewable sources, and that all the materials used are a 100 % recyclable – and not mixed with non-recyclable or poisonous materials like PVC and Chrome – also the size of the water consumption within the production process is taken into account. Depending on to what degree the production line of a product follows these criteria, the product will be given either a “Basic”, “Bronze”, “Silver”, “Gold” or “Platinum” certificate. The awareness of this certificate is unfortunately still far too little, and it therefore does not get the role in our decision making as consumers, that it deserves.



OTHER BEST PRACTICE IDEAS FROM THE YOUTHCORE REGIONS

Postfossil and relocalized economy: Transition Town Totnes



IN TRANSITION

From oil dependence to local resilience

Conclusion

A decisive point in breaking the link between economic growth and increasing waste and sewage generation is the responsible and sensitive handling of resources. First of all we have to encourage companies to be more energy and resource efficient through subsidies and tax advantages, and by establishing a special label for environmentally friendly produced goods. This will trigger competition between companies to reach higher environmental standards. We also want to stimulate regional economies by promoting cooperatives and introducing regional currencies, because we believe that this will improve the efficiency when it comes to emission, pollution and waste generation. Additionally, we think recycling (the cradle-to-cradle concept and upcycling) and sharing goods will result in less waste production, without compromising economic growth. More careful planning of water usage, both in an industrial and residential setting, will result in less sewage generation, but this won't go at the cost of economic growth either.

Vision

Our economic system should be based on people, values and our real needs instead of the money and the interests of the big companies and banks. Only then we will be able to get the real balance between the economic interests and the environment that we are working for. Products should show the real price that includes the damage on the environment and future generations. This results in the fact that sustainable products are more attractive to the consumers. The wealth of the people is then independent of the use of resources. In our vision people are more sufficient and share their things with each other in order to save resources and decrease their ecological footprint.