

Carbon Neutrality by 2024

“We at EUR take our responsibility for climate change and sustainable development. In this document we introduce and explain our ambition to become CO2 neutral in 2024 and to create positive ecological impact in 2030.”

This quote comes from the “Roadmap to a sustainable campus” published by EUR. As one of the important pillars, EUR has indicated that sustainability is high on its priority list. As university, we should set the example for the rest of society. In 2020, EUR has made pledges to make the campus carbon neutral by 2024. At time being, this ambition was only applauded. However, one year after making this promise, we should check at what stage we are in the process to carbon neutrality.

It seems hard to believe that we as university are well on track. Exemplary for the current situation: the number of solar panels barely exceeds that of a normal Dutch household. Also, there are still plenty of buildings on campus without LED lights. Finally, mobility at EUR (i.e., travelling of students and staff) is still largely based on fossil-fuelled types of transportation such as flights and cars. Given this status quo, how can the campus be energy neutral by 2024? And how is EUR going to achieve its goal to be CO2 negative by 2030?

These are fair questions to ask. It is our main task as University Council to check and encourage the follow-through of the Executive Board’s commitments through actions. Let us state unequivocally: by *no means* do we suggest that EUR should change or delay its commitments. Instead, we emphasize the need for immediate and sustained effective action on climate change, resilience, and sustainability, that is in line with our commitments. We must put our priorities (and money) where our PR is. Failure on this issue will undo the good public awareness our strong commitments to sustainability have achieved and tarnish the reputation of our university – something none of us want.

Consequently, the Sustainability Taskforce would like to put the carbon neutrality by 2024 initiative on 2nd policy cycle of this academic year. By doing so, we invite various policymakers to acquaint ourselves with the current position on our road to carbon neutrality by 2024. Before the end of the cycle, the Taskforce will prepare an advice to the rest of the council. After this advice, we can decide upon our following actions.