

## "Why don't politicians take the climate crisis more seriously?"

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**There are both legal and economic tools to implement the transition, writes representatives of the non-partisan organization Klimatriksdagen.**

A turning point for the climate crisis in 2026 is necessary. Conflicts and unreliable world leaders are worrying, but the climate crisis threatens all life on earth and could lead to a very difficult future. Why don't politicians take the climate crisis more seriously and listen to the scientific expertise? It is as if they are paralyzed and just look at the horizon, where a large tsunami wave is getting closer.

**The climate crisis is here**, with extreme weather, forest fires, hurricanes and torrential rain. A 2024 study, based on Gallup World Poll data from over 130,000 citizens in 125 countries (including Sweden), showed that 89 percent of the world's population believes that their country's government should do more to combat global warming.

The science is clear. Global emissions must be halved by 2030, before living conditions on Earth change even further. But isn't that impossible to do? No, researchers and non-profit organizations have suggestions for what can be done. The Swedish non-governmental organization (NGO) 'People's Climate Parliament' has a national plan for transition based on scientific facts and future scenarios. The plan focuses on three areas: energy supply, reducing emissions from transport, increasing carbon dioxide storage. The plan is based on Sweden's remaining carbon dioxide budget, and follows the goals of the Paris Agreement, where the world's countries have agreed to limit warming to well below 2 degrees, with the goal of staying at 1.5 degrees.

**Examples of energy supply** include rapidly investing in more renewable electricity, for example with offshore wind turbines, municipalities and those living nearby should be compensated. With pumped storage at hydroelectric power plants, keeping existing nuclear power plants in operation longer and the state taking a clearer responsibility for planning and developing electricity production, electricity grids and electricity prices in the long term. Subsidies for fossil fuels will be removed. Buildings will become more energy efficient with tax deductions for measures that save energy. Larger, smaller-scale solar and wind power plants will be exempt from tax. Some examples of measures for transport are introducing road charges that have already been investigated and using the money to expand public transport. The state can also contribute with support for such initiatives. A travel deduction based on distance, regardless of mode of travel, will be reintroduced. Private car driving can be limited in cities. If more people choose public transport, carpooling, cycling or walking, the urban environment will be better. Investment in the maintenance, and expansion of, railways will reduce passenger and freight traffic by road and air. Increased aviation tax towards reducing flying.

**Increased carbon dioxide storage** in forests and soil is necessary to meet the climate goals in Swedish and EU legislation. A new forest management legislation is suggested, that makes it profitable for forest owners to preserve and store more carbon dioxide. This can be done by reducing logging, introducing financial compensation for those who store carbon dioxide and gradually moving to more natural forestry with longer periods between logging. At the same time, clear-cutting should be phased out. Increased protection of forests to recreate natural environments are also important.

There are both legal and economic tools to implement the transition. For example, a new climate law could be introduced that is regularly evaluated and updated. The Riksbank will be able to buy so-

called green bonds, i.e. securities that finance investments in fossil-free energy. The expansion of the railway will be financed by the state borrowing money and through various taxes, such as a special climate tax, wealth tax and property tax. Those with the greatest financial resources and emitting the most carbon dioxide will pay the most. A special climate investment bank will be created to support climate-smart investments. Support for fossil fuels will be phased out step by step. A new authority will be given the main responsibility for leading Sweden's climate work, in close collaboration with companies, researchers and trade unions.

**The world is facing previously unseen challenges:** climate change, water shortages, pollution, loss of nature and biodiversity. Oceans are warming up faster, losing ability to absorb more carbon dioxide, and carbon sinks on land fail. As permafrost thaws, methane emissions increase, an even worse greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. The increasing difficulty of obtaining clean water threatens agriculture and food supplies. Sea level rise can make saltwater penetrate and destroy farmland.

The costs of extreme weather are increasing, countries are losing heavily financially. The influential British climate economist Nicholas Stern has released a new report that compares the societal cost of combating climate change with the far greater cost of the damage caused by climate change.

**At the end of April**, the First International Conference on the Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels will be held in Colombia in cooperation with the Netherlands. The goal is to agree on a concrete global roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels – an initiative that brings together over 80 countries, including Sweden, to drive the transition that has stalled in the UN negotiations. The goal is to create a practical work plan for a fossil-free world, which is now being prepared by climate scientists to ensure that what is proposed is based on science.

This fall, Sweden will hold elections. Now we need politicians who take the climate crisis seriously and want to work to solve it. If a small organization like the Climate Parliament can produce a realistic plan for climate transition, politicians should be able to do it too.

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