

## The European Green Deal within the Scope of European Union Project Funds: The Role of Green Marketing and Green Advertising

Ali Gülbaşı<sup>1</sup>

İlker Manav<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The deepening of climate change and environmental sustainability challenges at the global level has necessitated a rethinking of economic growth models and the development of policy frameworks aligned with environmental objectives. In this context, environmental sustainability has evolved into a multidimensional field that requires not only environmental policies but also the comprehensive transformation of production, consumption, and market dynamics. One of the most comprehensive institutional responses to this transformation is the European Green Deal, announced by the European Union in 2019. The European Green Deal presents an integrated transformation vision that encompasses multiple policy areas most notably energy, industry, transport, and finance with the objective of achieving a climate-neutral economy by 2050. To support this process, European Union funding instruments such as Horizon Europe, the LIFE Programme, and the Innovation Fund aim to promote the development of low-carbon technologies and the dissemination of sustainable production models. The extent to which these policy and financing instruments developed under the Green Deal can generate tangible outcomes at the market and societal levels largely depends on the effectiveness of green marketing and green advertising practices. In this regard, green advertising plays a critical role by enabling the transparent and verifiable communication of environmental performance, thereby increasing consumer awareness and contributing to the societal acceptance and internalization of sustainability-oriented policy objectives.

- 1 PhD, Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Department of Information Technology, ali.gulbasi@dpu.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1102-414X
- 2 PhD, Agriculture and Rural Development Support Institution, ilker.manav@hotmail.com, ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9227-2606

## 1. Introduction

Climate change, the rapid depletion of natural resources, and environmental degradation have positioned sustainable development at the core of the global economic and policy agenda. The sustainable development approach is based on the principle of achieving economic growth within environmental limits, conserving natural resources, and safeguarding the needs of future generations (Sargıncı & Beyazyüz, 2022). Accordingly, policies developed within this framework influence not only production and consumption processes but also marketing and advertising activities that communicate these processes to society. The growing level of environmental awareness has increased the necessity for firms to convey their sustainability-oriented production practices to consumers in a transparent and credible manner, thereby elevating green marketing and green advertising to the status of strategic instruments (Karakuş et al., 2022).

The European Union (EU) has emerged as a globally influential actor in this transformation process through its policies and financial assistance mechanisms that place environmental sustainability at the center. Financial assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries was implemented through programs such as PHARE, ISPA, and SAPARD during the 2000–2006 period; these instruments were consolidated under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) in the 2007–2013 budgetary period (Çeliktaş, 2006; Efe, 2017). The IPA was designed to support alignment with the EU *acquis*, strengthen institutional capacity, and promote socio-economic development in candidate countries (Yılmaz, 2015).

Over time, the structure of the IPA has evolved. During the IPA II period (2014–2020), a sector-based and performance-oriented approach was adopted, with areas such as environment, energy, and competitiveness identified as priority sectors. In this period, environmental sustainability was addressed not as a policy area limited to environmental regulation, but as a goal integrated with economic and institutional transformation (Demirhan & Ölmez, 2022). In the IPA III period (2021–2027), environmental protection, climate action, and the green agenda were elevated to core priorities, and a performance-based financing model was introduced (Onocak, 2025; Kırış, 2025).

The most concrete manifestation of this approach was the European Green Deal, announced in 2019. The European Green Deal represents a comprehensive policy framework that envisages profound transformations across key sectors such as energy, industry, agriculture, transport, and trade, in line with the EU's objective of becoming climate-neutral by 2050 (European Commission, 2019). Within this context, IPA funds function as a complementary financial

instrument supporting the institutionalization and implementation of green transition policies in candidate countries. Projects financed under the IPA contribute not only to the diffusion of environmentally friendly production technologies but also to enhancing the visibility and societal acceptance of these investments through green marketing and green advertising practices (Mete, 2025).

This study aims to provide an overview of European Union financial assistance instruments and to examine the relationship between the European Green Deal and green marketing and green advertising practices.

## 2. European Union Project Funds

Within the framework of its enlargement policy, the European Union (EU) has, over time, developed a multi-layered system of pre-accession financial assistance to support candidate and potential candidate countries in their alignment with the EU *acquis*. Although these resources are grant-based, they are not transferred as direct cash; rather, they are disbursed through the financing of projects and programmes determined by mutual agreement between the Commission and the beneficiary country (Ubay, 2024). This financial architecture is grounded in a holistic policy approach that extends beyond the promotion of economic development to encompass the strengthening of institutional capacity, the enhancement of governance quality, the reduction of regional disparities, and the dissemination of sustainable development objectives (Ultan, 2023; Demirhan & Ölmez, 2022). Indeed, the EU's dual objective of reducing development gaps among Member States while reinforcing internal cohesion constitutes an important backdrop to its financial support mechanisms directed at third countries (Yılmaz, 2015).

In the early phase of pre-accession financial assistance, the PHARE, ISPA, and SAPARD programmes emerged as the principal instruments of the EU's support architecture for candidate countries. These programmes targeted multidimensional areas such as the development of administrative capacity, the strengthening of regional cooperation, the improvement of human resources, and the promotion of rural development. The PHARE Programme served as a key instrument for enhancing public administration capacity and supporting alignment with the EU *acquis* (Ultan, 2023). ISPA concentrated on financing large-scale projects aimed at bringing environmental and transport infrastructure into compliance with EU standards (Yılmaz & Tolunay, 2007). SAPARD, in turn, sought to prepare candidate countries for the Common Agricultural Policy in the fields of agriculture and rural development and attracted attention due to its decentralized implementation

design (Telli, 2023). In this context, it is emphasized that the budgets of these financial instruments were determined within the EU's annual financial framework, whereas the allocation of assistance to individual countries was decided by the European Commission (Efe, 2017).

Nevertheless, because these dispersed mechanisms implemented under different headings generated complexity, coordination difficulties, and efficiency problems in practice, the EU moved, from the 2007–2013 budgetary period onward, toward consolidating pre-accession financial assistance under a more strategic and integrated umbrella. Accordingly, the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) was introduced; with Regulation No. 1085/2006, IPA was recognized as an official financial assistance instrument and replaced PHARE, ISPA, and SAPARD (Efe, 2017). This transformation also enabled the EU's financial assistance to candidate and potential candidate countries to be positioned across a broad policy domain, including structural reforms, employment, education, environment, energy, transport, human rights, and the rule of law (Yılmaz, 2015). The fact that the IPA Regulation sets out a systematic framework extending from general provisions to component-specific rules and from management and implementation processes to monitoring and reporting is considered one of the institutional foundations of this integrated approach (Yaylı & Gönültaş, 2017).

The ultimate objective of IPA is to assist candidate and potential candidate countries in aligning with the EU *acquis* and to support the implementation of the political and economic reforms required prior to full membership. In addition, in line with the principles of free movement defined by the Treaty of Rome, the enhancement of these countries' capacities to adapt to competitive conditions within the Union is also pursued (Ubay & Tiyar, 2020). Hence, IPA's objective is not confined to legal and institutional alignment; it also incorporates a transformation perspective aimed at raising living standards in beneficiary countries to levels comparable with those of EU Member States (Çetin, 2023).

Covering the 2007–2013 period, IPA I was designed in a component-based structure and implemented through five main components: Transition Assistance and Institution Building, Cross-Border Cooperation, Regional Development, Human Resources Development, and Rural Development (Aytuğ, 2016; Onocak, 2025). During this period, the goals of strengthening institutional capacity and accelerating alignment with the EU *acquis* became more pronounced, and the total budget was recorded at approximately €11.5 billion (Kıraç, 2025). In the IPA II period (2014–2020), the component-based approach was abandoned in favor of a sector-based model; democracy and

governance, rule of law, environment, energy, competitiveness, employment, education, agriculture, and regional cooperation were defined as priority sectors (Onocak, 2025). It is noted that, in this period, IPA acquired a more integrated character as a policy instrument addressing socio-economic development and political reforms simultaneously (Kıraç, 2025). Moreover, IPARD the rural development component of IPA was structured in line with the modernization of the agricultural sector and sustainable development objectives in rural areas; the scope and effectiveness of support increased during the IPARD II period (2014–2020) (Demirhan & Ölmez, 2022).

IPA III, covering the 2021–2027 period, represents a new phase in EU enlargement policy characterized by stronger policy prioritization and a performance-oriented approach. In this period, a “window approach” was adopted, and five priority areas were defined: rule of law and democracy; good governance and acquis alignment; green agenda and sustainable connectivity; competitiveness and inclusive growth; and regional and cross-border cooperation (Onocak, 2025). Under IPA III, the shift from a country-based allocation model to a performance-based pooling system was accompanied by project assessments conducted by the European Commission on the basis of “relevance” and “maturity” criteria. Relevance refers to the direct linkage of a project proposal to the EU accession process and its contribution to addressing deficiencies in acquis alignment, whereas maturity points to the capacity to launch tenders rapidly and commence implementation within a short time frame (ipa.gov.tr). The total budget allocated for IPA III was set at €14.162 billion (Kıraç, 2025).

A defining characteristic of IPA III is its strong integration with the European Green Deal. Published in 2019, the European Green Deal articulated the EU’s objective of becoming a climate-neutral economy by 2050 and envisaged a comprehensive transformation across sectors such as energy, industry, agriculture, transport, and the circular economy (European Commission, 2019). Accordingly, the EU budget and financial instruments have been aligned with green transition and sustainability priorities, and pre-accession funds have increasingly been linked more directly to sustainability and green transition objectives. Indeed, within IPA III, the green agenda and sustainable connectivity have been framed through objectives such as strengthening environmental protection, combating climate change, facilitating the transition to a low-carbon and circular economy, and supporting digital and green transitions in tandem (stgm.org.tr). In this respect, IPA III is positioned as a strategic instrument accelerating candidate countries’ alignment with the objectives of the European Green Deal.

Overall, EU funds and particularly IPA III stand out as strategic policy instruments that support structural transformation in candidate and potential candidate countries, strengthen institutional capacity, and promote sustainable development and green transition objectives. However, the effectiveness of these funds is not limited to the mere provision of financial resources; rather, it is closely associated with the quality of governance achieved throughout project design, implementation capacity, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and the dissemination of results (Demirhan & Ölmez, 2022; ipa.gov.tr). In this sense, IPA may be considered a comprehensive financial mechanism that reinforces not only the technical alignment dimension of enlargement policy but also the environmental and institutional transformation dimension underpinning a sustainable future perspective.

### 3. Environmental Sustainability

The concept of sustainability emerged in response to the increasing severity of environmental problems and the need to develop long-term solutions to these challenges, and over time it has evolved into a multidimensional approach. In general terms, sustainability refers to the pursuit of economic growth and social development processes without exceeding the carrying capacity of natural ecosystems and with due consideration for environmental limits. While this approach seeks to establish a balance between economic activities and environmental protection, it emphasizes long-term ecological integrity rather than short-term gains as the foundation of development (Bayraktutan & Uçak, 2011).

Environmental sustainability constitutes the environmental dimension of sustainability and is based on the fundamental principle of conserving natural resources and transferring them to future generations. In this context, environmental sustainability encompasses the balanced use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, the preservation of ecosystems' capacity for self-regeneration, the prevention of environmental pollution, and the implementation of effective waste management practices. In addition, the conservation of biodiversity, the prevention of the destruction of natural habitats, and the fight against climate change are among the core components of environmental sustainability (Menteşe, 2017).

The environmental sustainability approach is not limited solely to technical measures aimed at protecting the environment; it also requires the restructuring of production and consumption patterns. In this regard, sustainable production models, energy efficiency, the use of clean technologies, and the promotion of environmentally friendly consumption behaviors are of critical importance

(Yoşumaz & Uzun, 2024) . Ensuring the healthy functioning of ecosystems and reducing environmental risks constitute the long-term objectives of environmental sustainability (Savaş, 2022).

#### 4. Green Marketing

Green marketing refers to a strategic marketing approach developed by firms to position their products and services by placing environmental sustainability at the core of their activities. This approach encompasses multidimensional practices such as improvements in product design aimed at environmentally conscious consumers, environmentally compatible production methods, and sustainable packaging applications. With the growing public awareness of environmental issues, green marketing driven by increasing consumer demand for sustainable products has evolved from a limited field of application into a fundamental competitive factor and a necessary marketing strategy across many sectors (Zamanı & Tekeoğlu, 2025).

Green marketing constitutes a holistic marketing approach that involves the development of product, service, and brand strategies centered on environmental sustainability and the ethical, transparent, and reliable communication of these strategies to consumers. This perspective extends beyond the promotion of environmentally friendly products and requires the restructuring of all marketing activities from production processes and supply chains to pricing and distribution in line with sustainability principles. Particularly within the framework of the European Green Deal, green marketing has become a strategic necessity for firms, while European Union funds have enabled the development of environmentally friendly products and services and provided financial support for related marketing activities (Boran, 2023).

With the intensification of environmental problems and the strengthening of the sustainability paradigm, green marketing has become a prominent concept in the marketing literature. The concept was first introduced in 1975 at a seminar on ecological marketing organized by the American Marketing Association and was defined as the development and marketing of products that do not harm the environment, the reduction of environmental impacts in production and distribution processes, and the adoption of environmentally responsible practices by firms (Çelik et al., 2016). This definition demonstrates that green marketing is not merely a product-oriented approach, but rather a comprehensive process encompassing all stages from production to consumption.

In the literature, green marketing is addressed as a marketing approach aimed at minimizing the environmental and social negative impacts of existing

products and production systems, while encouraging the development and adoption of less harmful and environmentally friendly products and services. Accordingly, green marketing requires the reconfiguration of all elements of the marketing mix from an environmental sustainability perspective. Product design, packaging, pricing, distribution, and promotional activities are shaped by considering their environmental impacts. The green marketing approach represents a multidimensional understanding that not only encourages firms to develop environmentally responsible strategies but also aims to foster conscious consumer choices that take environmental impacts into account (Gökbaş, 2025).

Recent studies emphasize that green marketing should not be viewed solely as an approach that generates environmental benefits, but also as a strategic tool that enhances brand value, consumer trust, and firms' competitive advantage. It is highlighted that green marketing practices have positive effects on consumers' purchase intentions and brand loyalty, and that an environmentally responsible brand image supports overall business performance (Ara et al., 2020; Özcan & Özgül, 2019).

## 5. Green Advertising

Green advertising refers to marketing communication activities through which firms convey their products, services, or corporate practices to consumers by emphasizing environmental responsibility, ecological sustainability, and the conservation of natural resources. This type of advertising aims to increase consumer awareness by highlighting environmentally friendly attributes, encourage environmental sensitivity, and shape purchasing behaviors toward more sustainable choices. The effectiveness of green advertising is closely related to the credibility, accuracy, clarity, and perceived quality of the information conveyed in advertising messages (Zamanı & Tekeoğlu, 2025).

Green advertising is used in the marketing of products and services claimed to have relatively low environmental impact and focuses on emphasizing environmentally friendly characteristics. Through various messages, associations, and symbolic cues, this type of advertising seeks to communicate environmental claims such as a low carbon footprint, environmentally responsible production processes, or sustainability-related attributes. The core objective of green advertising is to shape consumer perceptions by foregrounding the environmental dimensions of products and, in doing so, to gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Santa & Drews, 2023).

In the literature, green advertising is regarded as a communication strategy that aims to influence purchasing behavior by leveraging consumers'



environmental sensitivities. Advertisements containing environmental claims enable firms to differentiate their products as lower-carbon or environmentally friendly, while also contributing to consumers' perceptions that their consumption choices reduce environmental impacts (Pinkse & Bohnsack, 2021; Sun et al., 2021). In this respect, green advertising is positioned as a tool that simultaneously increases demand-side environmental awareness and strengthens firms' market share.

However, green advertising may also lead to perceptual biases, as consumers often process information through limited attention and cognitive heuristics. Research indicates that products labeled as environmentally friendly may be perceived as having lower environmental impacts than they actually do, or that erroneous inferences may be made regarding their superior performance compared to similar alternatives (Gorissen & Weijters, 2016).

## 6. The Emergence of the Green Deal and Its Relationship with Green Marketing and Green Advertising

The Green Deal approach, developed with the aim of combating climate change and establishing a sustainable societal order, was conceptually introduced for the first time by Thomas Friedman in 2007. In the following years, its scope expanded under the influence of global financial, energy, and food crises, evolving into a multidimensional policy framework. This process necessitated addressing environmental problems not only from an ecological perspective but also in terms of their economic, social, and political dimensions. Ultimately, the approach gained an institutional character through the development of a comprehensive transformation strategy by the European Union (EU), placing environmental sustainability at its core. With the European Green Deal announced on 11 December 2019, the European Union put into effect an extensive policy and action plan aimed at making the Union climate-neutral by 2050. This strategy identifies the redefinition of the relationship between economic growth and environmental protection, the acceleration of the transition to renewable energy, and the promotion of sustainable development as its primary objectives (European Commission, 2019).

The European Green Deal goes beyond conventional environmental policies by offering an integrated transformation vision that encompasses a wide range of sectors, including energy, industry, agriculture, transport, and finance. Within this framework, decarbonization has been placed at the center of the economic system, and the concept of "green growth" has become one of the European Union's strategic priorities (Barbier, 2019). Rather than constituting a legally binding regulatory framework, the Green Deal represents a strong

political commitment, envisaging the transformation of existing regulations and the development of new policy instruments. Key objectives include achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, decoupling economic growth from resource use, and preventing the deepening of regional and social inequalities during the green transition process. In order to attain these goals, increasing energy efficiency, expanding the use of renewable energy sources, and reducing dependence on fossil fuels are considered critical (Yolcu, 2023).



*Figure 1. The European Green Deal*

*References: [Euinasean.eu/eu-green-deal](https://euinasean.eu/eu-green-deal)*

In order to strengthen the feasibility and societal acceptance of the Green Deal, the European Union has also established a comprehensive financing and support mechanism. The Social Climate Fund aims to mitigate the potential adverse effects of the green transition on low-income households and small-scale enterprises by focusing on the fight against energy poverty and social inequalities, mobilizing more than €65 billion for this purpose (Qnbc.com.tr). Similarly, the Just Transition approach seeks to ensure that the transformation in regions dependent on carbon-intensive sectors is carried out without undermining social welfare. In this regard, the Just Transition Fund is highlighted as a key policy instrument for safeguarding employment, fostering new economic activities, and supporting regional development (Portakal et al., 2024).

In addition, the Horizon Europe Programme, which supports the knowledge and technology dimension of the European Green Deal, covers the 2021–2027 period and, with a budget of €95.5 billion, represents the European Union’s most comprehensive research and innovation programme. Through its priority area on “Climate, Energy and Mobility,” the programme places environmental sustainability at the center of the EU’s innovation agenda, aiming to promote the development of green technologies, transform production systems, and disseminate science-based solutions in the fight against climate change. By encouraging international research and innovation cooperation, Horizon Europe also contributes to reducing regional disparities by expanding access to knowledge networks in the field of environmental innovation (Peñalosa & Castaldi, 2024).

The Horizon Europe Programme is the European Union’s principal research and development framework, designed to strengthen scientific and technological capacity, enhance innovation and competitiveness, promote employment generation, and sustainably support Europe’s socio-economic values. For the 2025–2027 period, the programme’s priorities are structured around three main pillars. First, under the green transition, climate-neutral objectives, biodiversity protection, and the fight against pollution are strongly supported. In this context, at least 35% of the programme’s budget is allocated to climate action, while 10% is dedicated to biodiversity-related activities. Second, within the framework of digital transformation, a minimum investment of EUR 13 billion is envisaged for the 2021–2027 period to support human-centred digital technologies that enhance Europe’s competitiveness and strategic autonomy. Finally, in line with the objective of building a more resilient, inclusive, competitive, and democratic Europe, research activities are supported in areas such as social rights, health, security, a fair and environmentally friendly economy, and democratic participation (ipa.gov.tr).

European Union funds such as Horizon Europe, the LIFE Programme, and the Innovation Fund have been established to support the development of low-carbon technologies, promote circular economy practices, and encourage sustainable production models. However, the success of projects implemented under these funding schemes is not limited to technical outputs alone; marketing activities play a decisive role in the communication, adoption, and commercialization of project outcomes among target audiences. At this point, green marketing emerges as a key strategic instrument that enables the positioning of environmentally friendly products and services developed through EU project funding in the eyes of market actors and consumers (Peattie & Crane, 2005).

The impact of the European Green Deal on global trade and the competitive environment has elevated green marketing to a strategic position for exporting firms. Within this policy framework centered on environmental sustainability, production processes with a low carbon footprint, environmentally friendly packaging, transparent carbon reporting, and sustainable logistics practices have become decisive factors in firms' access to international markets. Green marketing thus goes beyond the promotion of environmentally sensitive products, encompassing the management of firms' environmental responsibilities across the entire value chain and the integration of this approach into marketing strategies. In this context, green marketing practices aligned with the European Green Deal provide firms with opportunities to reduce regulatory risks while gaining competitive advantages in environmentally conscious markets, thereby strengthening export performance on a sustainable basis (Bilici & Sönmezay, 2025).

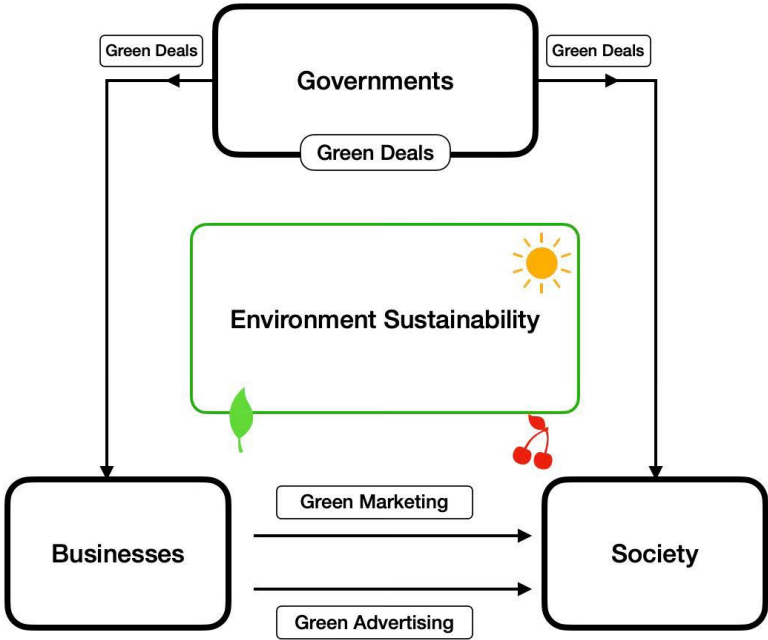
The "Guideline on Advertisements Containing Environmental Claims," published by the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye in 2022, offers a regulatory framework that clearly defines the legal and ethical boundaries of green advertising practices. The guideline emphasizes that the use of terms such as "green," "sustainable," "eco," "environmentally friendly," "carbon neutral," and "renewable," as well as similar expressions implying environmental attributes, is prohibited when used without adequate explanation or in a manner that results in ambiguity for consumers. Accordingly, environmental claims must clearly and verifiably specify which aspects of the product or service have environmental impacts, which stages of the life cycle they cover, and which measurement or assessment methods are used to determine these impacts. Furthermore, if the medium in which the advertisement is published does not allow sufficient space to provide such information, consumers must be directed to additional channels where detailed information can be accessed. In this respect, the guideline is regarded as an important regulatory instrument that moves green advertising beyond a mere marketing discourse by structuring it around the principles of transparency, verifiability, and consumer protection.

The complementary relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal, combined with the process of digitalization, has given rise to a new domain of transformation in marketing and advertising. The positioning of digital technologies as a key element in achieving environmental sustainability objectives has strengthened the role of advertising beyond that of a purely commercial communication tool, enhancing its function in raising environmental awareness and encouraging behavioral change. In this context, green advertising has emerged as a strategic communication practice that enables the transparent, responsible,

and environmentally conscious dissemination of products and services developed in line with sustainable development and Green Deal objectives to stakeholders through digital channels. The growing importance of alignment between marketing strategies and environmental actions has positioned green advertising as a complementary tool that both contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals and supports the societal adoption of the European Green Deal (Çayırbaşı & Sakıcı, 2021).

Within the framework of the European Green Deal, policy areas such as the transition to clean energy, sustainable transport, green industry, pollution prevention, the circular economy, a just transition, and green finance necessitate a structural transformation for businesses not only in production, supply, and logistics processes, but also in marketing and corporate communication strategies. In this context, green marketing aims to develop products and services aligned with environmental objectives, integrate sustainable practices into brand strategies, and transform environmental value propositions into sources of competitive advantage. Green advertising, in turn, emerges as a key communication tool that enables firms to convey information about their environmental performance to stakeholders in accordance with the principles of transparency, verifiability, and regulatory compliance. From this perspective, green marketing and green advertising represent not merely symbolic expressions of environmental sensitivity, but strategic instruments that enhance firms' competitiveness in international markets, strengthen corporate reputation, and reduce regulatory risks. The European Green Deal's multi-layered policy, regulatory, and financing architecture directs market actors toward sustainable production and consumption models, while simultaneously necessitating effective communication practices to ensure the societal acceptance of this transformation. Accordingly, green advertising functions as a strategic communication mechanism that increases the visibility of environmentally friendly products and services, disseminates information on sustainable production practices to the public, and supports the social legitimacy of the Green Deal's objectives. However, the effective and credible fulfillment of this role requires that green advertising practices be conducted in accordance with ethical principles and be based on measurable and verifiable environmental indicators. Otherwise, misleading environmental claims, commonly referred to as greenwashing, may undermine consumer trust and conflict with the regulatory and policy objectives of the European Green Deal. In conclusion, the European Green Deal provides a comprehensive framework that transforms green advertising from a mere marketing activity into a responsible and strategic corporate communication practice aligned with broader policy objectives.

In conclusion, the European Green Deal provides a comprehensive framework that transforms green advertising from a mere marketing activity into a responsible and strategic corporate communication practice aligned with broader policy objectives, as illustrated in Figure 2.



*Figure 2. The Relationship Between the Green Deal and Green Marketing and Green Advertising (Authors Elaboration)*

### Conclusion

This study examines the global policy and economic agenda shaped around climate change and environmental sustainability within the framework of the European Union Green Deal, adopting a holistic perspective on the relationship between the financing of the green transition and green marketing particularly green advertising. The main findings indicate that sustainability-oriented policy objectives must be supported not only by technical regulations and financial support mechanisms, but also by effective marketing and communication strategies.

The findings demonstrate that European Union project funds are not merely instruments for financing the development of environmentally friendly technologies in the green transition process; rather, they also play a guiding and transformative role in promoting sustainable production and consumption

models. Funding mechanisms such as Horizon Europe, the LIFE Programme, the Innovation Fund, and similar initiatives encourage low-carbon production processes and circular economy practices. However, the ability of these processes to gain traction at both societal and market levels largely depends on the effectiveness of marketing and advertising activities. In this context, green marketing renders the environmental benefits of environmentally friendly products and services developed through funded projects tangible in consumer perception and supports demand for sustainable products.

The study further reveals that green advertising constitutes a fundamental communication mechanism facilitating the societal adoption of Green Deal objectives. Green advertising practices play a critical role in increasing environmental awareness, shaping consumer behavior toward sustainable choices, and strengthening norms of sustainable consumption. At the same time, the regulatory dimension of green advertising has become increasingly prominent, as illustrated by the “Guideline on Advertisements Containing Environmental Claims” issued by the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye. Such regulations emphasize the necessity for green advertising to be conducted in accordance with ethical, transparent, and verifiable principles, aiming to prevent misleading image-oriented practices, protect consumers, and reduce the risk of greenwashing.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that project funds developed within the framework of the European Union Green Deal contribute not only to establishing the financial infrastructure of the green transition, but also to strengthening its societal acceptance, market diffusion, and firms’ competitive positioning through green marketing and green advertising. In particular, green advertising emerges as a strategic communication tool that enhances firms’ access to international markets, supports sustainable export performance, and enables the transformation of environmental compliance into a source of competitive advantage in environmentally sensitive markets. By allowing Green Deal objectives to move beyond policy documents and find concrete expression across the entire value chain from production to consumption, green advertising plays a critical role in aligning corporate strategies with sustainability-driven trade dynamics. This holistic structure underscores the importance of addressing sustainability goals in their economic, social, and behavioral dimensions, while making the strategic role of marketing and advertising in the green transition process more visible and integral to long-term competitiveness.

## Policy Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of the green transition process carried out within the framework of the European Green Deal, stronger and more integrated alignment between European Union project funding mechanisms and marketing and advertising policies is required. In this regard, green marketing and green advertising activities should be considered integral components of project design in initiatives supported by EU funds. Placing greater emphasis in project calls on communication and dissemination plans that clearly specify how sustainability outcomes will be conveyed to target audiences would increase the societal impact capacity of these funding mechanisms.

Moreover, ensuring credibility in green advertising practices requires that environmental claims be grounded in measurable, verifiable, and transparent indicators. The development of communication standards aligned with regulatory instruments such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and similar tools would contribute to reducing the risk of greenwashing. In addition, strengthening the institutional capacities of project implementers and firms in the areas of green marketing and sustainability communication would support the more effective and durable implementation of the green transition process at both economic and societal levels.

Furthermore, the integration of green marketing and green advertising into policy design should be approached in a way that facilitates firms' access to international markets, particularly the European Union, where environmental standards are becoming increasingly stringent. It is essential that funding provided under the European Green Deal supports communication strategies that enhance the environmental compliance capacities and sustainable competitiveness of firms operating in export-oriented sectors. In this context, green advertising should be recognized as a policy instrument that strengthens export performance, enhances brand credibility, and transforms compliance with environmental regulations into a source of competitive advantage, thereby contributing to making the economic benefits of the green transition more visible.



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