

**February 2021****European climate law***Briefing by Gregor Erbach, December 2020*

On 4 March 2020, the European Commission adopted a legislative proposal for a European climate law, setting the objective for the EU to become climate-neutral by 2050 and establishing a framework for achieving that objective. The Commission would be empowered to set out an emissions trajectory for the period between 2030 and 2050. The proposed regulation would also require EU institutions and Member States to build on their climate change measures. The Commission would have to carry out five-yearly assessments – aligned with the review cycle of the Paris Agreement – of progress made towards the objectives and of the consistency of national and EU measures with the objectives. It would be required to take corrective action and could issue recommendations to Member States whose measures were inconsistent with the emissions trajectory. Moreover, the Commission would have to ensure broad public participation. On 17 September 2020, following an impact assessment presented in the 2030 climate target plan, the Commission amended the proposal to introduce the updated 2030 climate target of a net reduction of at least 55 % of the EU's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to 1990 levels. In the European Parliament, the proposal has been referred to the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. The Parliament adopted its position on 6 October 2020, calling for a 60 % emissions reduction by 2030.

EU climate target plan: Raising the level of ambition for 2030*Briefing by Liselotte Jensen, December 2020*

The EU's current greenhouse gas emissions reduction target for 2030, of 40 % compared with 1990 levels, was agreed by the European Council in 2014, along with targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Since 2017, the European Parliament has been urging the European Commission to develop a zero-emission long-term 2050 vision for the European Union. Following Parliament's reiteration of this demand and a similar call from the European Council, in November 2018 the Commission adopted a strategic long-term vision, aiming for climate neutrality by 2050. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has committed to this goal with the European Green Deal, proposing to set the EU 2050 climate-neutrality target in legislation by means of a European climate law. As part of the climate-neutrality commitment, the Commission is proposing to review and revise the 2030 greenhouse gas emissions target, to ensure a realistic and feasible trajectory towards 2050. On 17 September 2020, on the basis of a public consultation and an in-depth impact assessment, the Commission adopted a communication on the climate target plan. The climate target plan proposes to increase the 2030 target from a 40 % emissions reduction to a 55 % net emissions reduction, compared with 1990 levels. The communication outlines sectoral targets and approaches, as well as the regulatory revisions and new initiatives needed in the climate and energy policy framework. In the 2021 Commission work programme, the numerous revisions required are presented under the package 'Fit for 55'. The 2030 target, embedded in the future climate law, will be subject to interinstitutional negotiations, with Parliament having adopted its position of a higher 60 % emissions reduction target at its October 2020 plenary session. The European Council discussed the climate target plan at its October 2020 meeting, and will revisit it in December with a view to agreeing the 2030 target.

FOLLOW EPRS<http://epthinktank.eu>

@EP_thinktank



european parliamentary research service



EPINFOGRAPHICS/EPRS



european parliamentary research service

Carbon dioxide removal: Nature-based and technological solutions

Briefing by Gregor Erbach, February 2021

As a party to the Paris Agreement, the European Union has committed to implementing climate mitigation policies to keep the average temperature rise to well below 2°C, while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. Meeting the more ambitious goal of 1.5°C requires bringing the level of global net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by around 2050, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Following this scientific consensus, the European Commission presented in 2019 the European Green Deal as the strategy towards a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, and proposed a European climate law in 2020 to make this target legally binding. The IPCC scenarios consistent with limiting the temperature rise to 1.5°C show that removing CO₂ from the atmosphere is essential and complements the implementation of emissions reduction policies. In line with this, the European science academies recommend prioritising deep emissions cuts, but also to start developing a portfolio of carbon dioxide removal (CDR) options immediately. Various options are being discussed in light of the growing consensus that meeting the established targets is dependent on CDR. These range from nature-based practices – such as forestation, soil carbon sequestration and wetland restoration – to technological alternatives such as enhanced weathering, bioenergy with carbon capture and storage, and direct air capture and storage. Nature-based solutions stand out as more cost-effective and viable in the short run, while some technological alternatives have potential to become more relevant later this century. The European Commission recognises the crucial role of CDR, and intends to focus on nature-based options. An extensive revision of the EU climate mitigation legislation, planned for 2021, will provide an opportunity to set a regulatory framework for CDR. The European Parliament has repeatedly called for prioritising emissions reductions over CDR, and stressed the importance of conserving biodiversity and enhancing natural sinks and reservoirs. Its position on the proposed European climate law involves removing GHGs that exceed manmade emissions in the EU and each Member State from 2051.

Climate change and climate action

EPRS Ideas Paper by Gregor Erbach, July 2020

The coronavirus crisis presents challenges as well as opportunities for policies to address the issue of climate change. Measures taken in reaction to the pandemic have led to a dramatic fall in economic and social activity, and to a corresponding temporary drop in greenhouse gas emissions. Certain behaviour changes adopted during the crisis, such as teleworking and video-conferences, may persist and lead to permanently reduced emissions related to commuting and business travel. On the other hand, use of private cars may increase if public transport is considered as unsafe. The economic crisis has had a negative impact on household or corporate finances, which may lead to reduction or delay to investment in low-carbon technologies. Recovery packages for restarting the economy offer an opportunity for promoting low-carbon investment, but also bring the risk of financing the continuation of emission-intensive products and activities. The postponement of the COP26 climate change conference by one year slows down international climate action, but also offers the opportunity for the Parties to develop ambitious long-term strategies in the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis.

eprs@europarl.europa.eu | www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank (Internet) | www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu (Intranet)

You can access this Topical Digest online at the websites below,

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/TD_Entry_residence_rights_students_researchers.pdf

or by scanning the QR code:



FOLLOW EPRS



<http://epthinktank.eu>



@EP_thinktank



european parliamentary research service



EPINFOGRAPHICS/EPRS



european parliamentary research service