

European climate law: Council and Parliament reach provisional agreement

The Council's and the European Parliament's negotiators reached a provisional political agreement setting into law the objective of a climate-neutral EU by 2050, and a collective, net greenhouse gas emissions reduction target (emissions after deduction of removals) of at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990.

We are very happy with the provisional deal reached today. The European climate law is "the law of laws" that sets the frame for the EU's climate-related legislation for the 30 years to come. The EU is strongly committed to becoming climate neutral by 2050 and today we can be proud to have set in stone an ambitious climate goal that can get everyone's support. With this agreement we send a strong signal to the world - right ahead of the Leader's Climate Summit on 22 April - and pave the way for the Commission to propose its "fit-for-55" climate package in June.

João Pedro Matos Fernandes, Minister of Environment and Climate Action

Regarding the 2030 target, negotiators agreed on the need to give priority to emissions reductions over removals. In order to ensure that sufficient efforts to reduce and prevent emissions are deployed until 2030, they introduced a limit of 225 Mt of CO₂ equivalent to the contribution of removals to the net target. They also agreed the Union shall aim to achieve a higher volume of carbon net sink by 2030.

Other elements of the provisional agreement include the establishment of a European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change, composed of 15 senior scientific experts of different nationalities with no more than 2 members holding the nationality of the same member state for a mandate of four years. This independent board will be tasked, among other things, with providing scientific advice and reporting on EU measures, climate targets and indicative greenhouse gas budgets and their coherence with the European climate law and the EU's international commitments under the Paris Agreement.

The negotiators agreed that the Commission would propose an intermediate climate target for 2040, if appropriate, at the latest within six months after the first global stocktake carried out under the Paris Agreement. It will at the same time publish a projected indicative Union's greenhouse gas budget for the period 2030-2050, together with its underlying methodology. The budget is defined as the indicative total volume of net greenhouse gas emissions (expressed as CO₂ equivalent and providing separate information on emissions and removals) that are expected to be emitted in that period without putting at risk the Union's commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Negotiators also agreed that the Commission would engage with sectors of the economy that choose to prepare indicative voluntary roadmaps towards achieving the Union's climate neutrality objective by 2050. The Commission would monitor the development of such roadmaps, facilitate the dialogue at EU-level, and share best practices among relevant stakeholders.

The provisional agreement also sets an aspirational goal for the EU to strive to achieve negative emissions after 2050.

The provisional political agreement is subject to approval by the Council and Parliament, before going through the formal steps of the adoption procedure. The provisional agreement was reached by the Council's Portuguese Presidency and the European Parliament's representatives, based on mandates from their respective institutions.

The text of the agreement will follow.

Background

The European Council, in its conclusions of 12 December 2019, agreed on the objective of achieving a climate-neutral EU by 2050, in line with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, while also recognising that it is necessary to put in place an enabling

framework that benefits all member states and encompasses adequate instruments, incentives, support and investments to ensure a cost-efficient, just, as well as socially balanced and fair transition, taking into account different national circumstances in terms of starting points.

On 4 March 2020, the European Commission adopted its proposal for a European climate law, as an important part of the European Green Deal. On 17 September 2020, the Commission adopted a proposal amending its initial proposal to include a revised EU emissions reduction target of at least 55% by 2030. The Commission also published a communication on the 2030 climate target plan, accompanied by a comprehensive impact assessment.

On 10-11 December the European Council in its conclusions, endorsed a binding EU target of a net domestic reduction of at least 55% in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 compared to 1990.

The Council adopted a general approach on 17 December 2020, after which the Council and the Parliament launched a series of trilogue meetings with the aim of securing an agreement on the final text.

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