

Adopting the European Climate Law

On 21 April 2021, negotiators from the European Parliament and the Council of the EU reached a provisional agreement on the legislative proposal for a European Climate Law, a cornerstone of the European Green Deal. The new regulation establishes a framework for achieving climate-neutrality in the EU by 2050. It sets a 2030 target of reducing the EU's net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 55 %, compared to 1990 levels, envisages the use of a GHG budget for setting the 2040 target and establishes an independent European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change. The European Parliament is expected to vote on the text agreed in interinstitutional negotiations during its June II plenary session.

Background

Under current policies, the world is headed for a temperature rise above 3 °C by 2100, according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) [emissions gap report 2020](#). Pursuing a green recovery from the pandemic could help cut global 2030 emissions by 25 % below current projections, and so reach the Paris Agreement's 2 °C target. The EU raised its [commitment](#) under the Paris Agreement from a 40 % to 55 % cut in net GHG emissions by 2030 and pledged [climate neutrality](#) by 2050. It supports a green recovery by dedicating 30 % of expenditure of the EU budget and the Next Generation EU instrument to climate objectives.

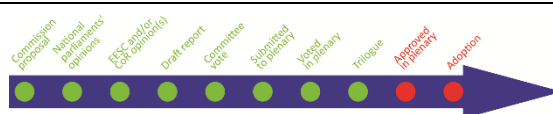
European Commission proposal

The [proposed regulation](#) sets a legally binding EU-wide common target of net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. Net-zero means that GHG emissions must not exceed removals of GHGs. The proposed Climate Law would require EU institutions and Member States to take the measures necessary to achieve the collective climate-neutrality objective. In September 2020, the Commission [amended](#) the proposal with a target of reducing the EU's net GHG emissions by 55 % by 2030, in line with the Commission's [climate target plan](#). The plan outlines legislative revisions and initiatives needed to reach this target, based on an [impact assessment](#).

European Parliament position

Parliament adopted its [position](#) in plenary vote on 8 October 2020. It called for a Union-wide 60 % emissions reduction target by 2030, for net-zero emissions by 2050 at the latest in the EU and in each Member State, and for negative emissions after 2050. The Commission would have to draw up an EU GHG budget by 31 December 2021, and consider introducing a target for 2040. On 21 April 2021, Parliament and Council reached a [provisional agreement](#) on the proposal. The agreement sets a 55 % net GHG emission reduction target for 2030, an EU-wide climate neutrality (net-zero emissions) target for 2050, and the aim to achieve negative emissions thereafter. It envisages the use of a GHG budget for setting the 2040 target, and establishes an independent European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change. While the Climate Law limits the amount of removals that count towards the 2030 target, in order to ensure sufficient mitigation effort, the agreed text states that the EU must aim to achieve a higher volume of removals in 2030, which may raise the *de facto* net emission reduction target towards 57 %. Coreper, for the Council, endorsed the provisional agreement on 5 May 2021, and the ENVI committee approved it on 10 May 2021. The text now needs to be formally adopted by Parliament and is scheduled to be voted during the June II plenary session. To put the climate law in practice, the Commission [plans](#) to adopt the 'Fit for 55' package – a set of legislative proposals to revise the EU climate and energy policy framework – in July 2021.

First-reading report: [2020/0036\(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: ENVI; Rapporteur: Jytte Guteland (S&D, Sweden). For further information see our 'EU Legislation in progress' [briefing](#).



EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

Author: Gregor Erbach, Members' Research Service
PE 690.672 – June 2021



This document is prepared for, and addressed to, the Members and staff of the European Parliament as background material to assist them in their parliamentary work. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of its author(s) and any opinions expressed herein should not be taken to represent an official position of the Parliament. Reproduction and translation for non-commercial purposes are authorised, provided the source is acknowledged and the European Parliament is given prior notice and sent a copy. © European Union, 2021.

ep@ep.europa.eu (contact) <http://www.ep@ep.europa.eu> (intranet) <http://www.europa.eu/thinktank> (internet) <http://epthinktank.eu> (blog)