

Methane: MEPs want binding target to bring double win for climate and health

- Cutting methane emissions is the most cost-effective way to slow down climate change
- Global agreement on methane needed at COP26
- Most methane emissions come from the agricultural, waste and the energy sectors

MEPs push for binding reduction targets on methane emissions to reach EU climate goals and improve air quality.

In a resolution on the EU strategy to reduce methane emissions, adopted on Thursday with 563 votes to 122 and 11 abstentions, MEPs call on the Commission to propose binding measures and methane reduction targets for all sectors. The objective is to significantly reduce methane emissions in the EU by 2030 in line with the [Paris Agreement](#). They also want a binding global agreement on methane at [COP26](#) in Glasgow.

MEPs underline that reducing human-caused methane emissions is one of the most cost-effective strategies to slow down climate change. As methane also contributes to ozone formation, a potent cause of local air pollution that causes serious health problems, it will also improve air quality and protect citizens' health.

MEPs call for mandatory monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) for all methane-emitting sectors as well as mandatory leak detection and repair (LDAR) programmes for the energy and petrochemical sectors to repair leaks and hence minimise emissions.

Agriculture

Agriculture has the largest share of anthropogenic methane emission sources in the EU, primarily driven by livestock, particularly ruminants, and offers the second-highest overall methane-emission reduction potential.

MEPs want new measures in member states to minimise those emissions, while ensuring that food production is not just moved outside the EU by insisting that imports from non-EU countries meet the same high standards as products made in the EU.

Waste sector

Using landfills for waste disposal is the most polluting way to manage waste both in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and other pollutants to air, soil and water. MEPs call on the Commission to set binding EU targets for commercial and industrial waste and propose targets to cap the generation of residual waste in the review of the [Waste Directive](#) and [Landfill Directive](#).

Energy sector

MEPs want to phase out all fossil fuels in the EU as soon as possible. As imports make up over 80% of the oil and gas consumed in the EU, fossil fuels should only be imported if they comply with EU regulations, MEPs demand. Leak detection efforts should be boosted with strict reporting and a requirement to repair potential leaks within a clearly defined period.

Quote

After the vote Parliament's rapporteur, [Maria Spyraki](#) (EPP, Greece) said: "With the catastrophic effects of this summer's unprecedented floods, and wildfires still being assessed, we need to intensify our efforts to tackle the challenges posed by extreme weather conditions. We need a quick win to tackle climate change! We must act immediately and achieve concrete results on reducing GHG emissions to protect people and the planet today and in the future. By setting binding methane reduction targets, the EU can play a key role in getting the rest of the world to do the same."

Background

The Commission published the [EU strategy to reduce methane emissions](#) on 14 October 2020. Methane is the second biggest contributor to climate change after carbon dioxide, accounting for 10% of total EU GHG emissions. The agricultural, waste and energy sectors are responsible respectively for 53%, 26% and 19% of methane emissions in the EU according to the European Environment Agency.

Further information

[Adopted text will be available here \(21.10.2021\)](#)

[Steps of the procedure](#)

[Plenary debate \(20.10.2021\)](#)

[EP press release: "EU Climate Law: MEPs confirm deal on climate neutrality by 2050" \(24.06.2021\)](#)

[EP Research: "Reducing methane emissions: A new EU strategy to address global warming" \(8.12.2020\)](#)

[EP Research: "EU climate action policy: Responding to the global emergency"](#)

[European Parliament: Fit for 55 package under the European Green Deal](#)

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