EU Climate Law: MEPs confirm deal on climate neutrality by 2050

- EU carbon sinks will de facto raise 2030 emissions reduction target to 57%
- Greenhouse gas budget must guide 2040-target
- New independent EU scientific body to monitor progress

The EU Climate Law gives businesses the legal certainty and predictability to plan for climate neutrality by 2050

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The new EU Climate Law increases the EU’s 2030 emissions reductions target from 40% to at least 55%. With the contribution from new carbon sinks it could raise to 57%.

Parliament endorsed the Climate Law, agreed informally with member states in April, with 442 votes to 203 and 51 abstentions. It transforms the European Green Deal’s political commitment to EU climate neutrality by 2050 into a binding obligation. It gives European citizens and businesses the legal certainty and predictability they need to plan for this transition. After 2050, the EU will aim for negative emissions.

Stepping up ambition in 2030

The new EU Climate Law increases the EU’s target for reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 from 40% to at least 55%, compared to 1990 levels. Additionally, an upcoming proposal from the Commission on the LULUCF Regulation to regulate GHG emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry, will increase EU carbon sinks and will hence de facto increase the 2030 EU’s target to 57%.

Greenhouse gas budget must guide upcoming 2040 target

The Commission will make a proposal for a 2040 target at the latest six months after the first global review in 2023 foreseen in the Paris Agreement. In line with Parliament’s proposal, the Commission will publish the maximum amount of GHG emissions estimated the EU can emit until 2050 without endangering the EU’s commitments under the Agreement. This so-called ‘GHG budget’ will be one of the criteria to define the EU’s revised 2040 target.

By 30 September 2023, and every five years thereafter, the Commission will assess the collective progress made by all EU countries, as well as the consistency of national measures, towards the EU’s goal of becoming climate neutral by 2050.

European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change

Given the importance of independent scientific advice, and on the basis of a proposal from Parliament, a European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change will be set-up to monitor progress and to assess whether European policy is consistent with these objectives.

Quote

Parliament rapporteur Jytte Guteland (S&D, Sweden) said: “I am proud that we finally have a climate law. We confirmed a net emissions reductions target of at least 55%, closer to 57% by 2030 according to our agreement with the Commission. I would have preferred to go even further, but this is a good deal based on science that will make a big difference. The EU must now reduce emissions more in the next decade than it has in the previous three decades combined, and we have new and more ambitious targets that can inspire more countries to step up.”
Next steps
The deal is expected to be approved by the Council shortly. The Regulation will then be published in the Official Journal and enter into force 20 days later. The Commission plans to present a series of proposals on 14 July 2021 in order for the EU to be able to reach the more ambitious 2030-target.

Background
Parliament has played an important role in pushing for more ambitious EU climate legislation and declared a climate emergency on 28 November 2019.

Further information
The adopted text will become available here (24.06.2021)
Steps of the procedure
Recording of Plenary debate (24.06.2021)
EP Research briefing: EU Climate Law (03.06.2021)
EP Research briefing: Climate change and climate action
Free photos, video and audio material
Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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