



→ POLICY BRIEF ON THE EU'S POST-2030 CLIMATE FRAMEWORK

The Road to Net Zero: For an Independent, Free and Liveable Europe

Introduction

The geopolitical situation demands a clear EU climate plan. In recent years, energy price shocks caused by wars have laid painfully bare the EU's dependence on fossil energy imports. By taking resolute strides towards net zero, the EU can become more independent, resilient and competitive. But above all, achieving net zero by 2050 will improve quality of life and secure a liveable future for the EU's more than 450 million citizens.

The Fit for 55 package has set the course up until 2030. It is crucial that this package be implemented swiftly and in full to put us on the right path towards net zero, independence and economic prosperity in the 2030s. We are now coming to the next stage: the EU must provide the legal basis for us to reliably achieve the 2040 target and steadily drive down emissions. European legislators now have the opportunity to learn from the current crises and pass forward-looking climate legislation that sets the course for an independent, liveable and economically strong Europe. The EU must resolutely embrace renewable energy as a guarantor of security and freedom, ramp up energy efficiency and reduce energy and resource consumption. It can achieve that by strengthening the key pillars of its climate architecture and gearing them towards a 90 percent reduction in emissions by 2040, supplemented by well-designed measures. It is imperative that successful existing instruments, including the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR), EU Emissions Trading System (ETS) and sectoral directives such as the Renewable Energy Directive (RED) and Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) be extended, building on the following cornerstone principles:

- ➔ **A clear, binding and socially just phase-out of fossil energy.** *The EU must comprehensively implement the energy transition, without any loopholes or pseudo-solutions. Renewables combined with energy efficiency, increased electrification efforts, economical use of resources and a reduction in absolute energy consumption will provide the foundation for energy sovereignty and a sustainable economy.*
- ➔ **Stability and continuity in carbon pricing.** *A predictable, reliably rising price signal from emissions trading (ETS I and II) will facilitate planning, encourage future-proof investments and reward innovation. Decarbonisation of buildings and transport must be accompanied by socially staggered compensation measures.*
- ➔ **A binding emission reduction target by 2040.** *National reduction targets must be clearly defined, geared towards a 90 percent reduction of emissions within the EU and implemented without loopholes. The key elements of the Fit for 55 package must be strengthened, and supplemented with a coherent policy package.*

The success of EU climate policy depends crucially on the necessary investment. See [here](#) for a detailed position paper by environmental organisations on the EU budget (in German).

Ten core measures to build a strong EU climate framework post-2030

- 1. Fossil phase-out:** The EU should agree a clear, binding and socially just pathway to phase out fossil gas, crude oil and coal by no later than 2040 in line with its global responsibility to remain within the 1.5-degree limit.
- 2. 90 percent emission reduction in the EU by 2040:** The EU should design the post-2030 package and all accompanying measures to achieve a 90 percent reduction in emissions within the EU by 2040. Article 6 credits should serve merely as a safety net.
- 3. Emissions Trading System I (ETS I):** The EU should adhere to the cap on annual emissions and end free allowances in all sectors covered by the ETS I by introducing a reliable carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) by no later than 2034.
- 4. Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR):** The EU should extend the ESR, maintaining its current scope, and set binding national emissions targets. Improved enforcement measures should ensure remedies are quickly and automatically put in place if targets are missed.
- 5. Renewable energy deployment:** The EU should set clear, binding renewable targets and electricity production pathways for the deployment of renewable energy, so as to create the basis for 100 percent renewable energy across the entire European energy sector by 2040. This deployment must be carried out in a way that minimises impact on land and nature. The EU should not provide incentives for low-carbon fossil fuels or non-renewable energy sources such as nuclear.
- 6. Electrification:** The EU should develop an electrification strategy based on renewable energy, with a target of 60 percent electrification by 2040 and 70 percent by 2050, in order to phase out fossil energy in buildings, transport and industry.
- 7. Energy efficiency:** The EU should set binding energy efficiency targets for 2040 at EU and national level. It should reduce primary and final energy consumption and embed the energy-efficiency-first principle across all policy domains.
- 8. Natural sinks:** The EU should ambitiously implement environmental laws and conservation standards and where necessary strengthen them to achieve existing targets in the land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector. It should set binding, science-based LULUCF targets for post-2030 and put sanction mechanisms in place for missed targets. No offsetting between sectors must be allowed.
- 9. Emissions Trading System II for buildings and transport (ETS II):** The ETS II must be launched without further delay or watering-down. The EU should ensure prices remain at reasonable levels over the longer term through a policy mix that includes maintaining current CO₂ emission standards for cars and vans and strengthening the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD). It should strategically deploy revenues to reduce inequalities.
- 10. Electrifying transport:** The EU should drive forward electrification of vehicles and transport infrastructure. Transport infrastructure investment should be prioritised according to energy efficiency and conservation needs

A more comprehensive version of this position paper, providing detailed recommendations for each policy area, is available [here](#).

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