

European Climate Law

2020/0036(COD) - 22/09/2020 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Jytte GUTELAND (S&D, SE) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 (European Climate Law).

The European Climate Law is the cornerstone of the European Green Deal as it enshrines into legislation the Union's objective to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest.

The EU is currently responsible for 10 % of the world's emission of greenhouse gases. The climate-neutrality objective is limited to emissions from Union production.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament adopt its position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure by amending the Commission proposal.

It introduced amendments concerning, *inter alia*:

Subject matter and scope

The proposed Regulation seeks to establish a framework for the irreversible, predictable and swift reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and enhancement of removals by natural or other sinks in the Union in line with the Union's climate and environmental objectives.

National binding objectives

In order to ensure that Member States uphold their commitments under the Paris Agreement, the proposed Regulation sets out a binding objective of climate neutrality in the Union by 2050 at the latest.

Climate-neutrality objective - negative emissions post-2050

The report stated that Union-wide anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases regulated in Union law shall be balanced in the Union at the latest by 2050, thus achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by that date. Each Member State shall endeavour to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest.

The relevant Union institutions and the Member States shall take the necessary measures based on the best available, up-to-date science and provide support at Union and at national, regional and local level respectively, to enable the achievement of the climate-neutrality objective, taking into account the importance of promoting fairness and solidarity and a just transition among Member States, social and economic cohesion, the protection of vulnerable Union citizens and the importance of managing, restoring, protecting and enhancing marine and terrestrial biodiversity, ecosystems and carbon sinks.

As from 1 January 2051, removals of greenhouse gases by sinks shall exceed anthropogenic emissions in the Union and all Member States.

Intermediate targets

Members proposed that in order to ensure that the Union reaches climate neutrality by 2050 at the latest and to assess the measures and progress achieved, the Union should have clear and adequate climate reduction targets for the years 2030 and 2040. They suggested that the Union's 2030 proposed target for climate shall be an emissions reduction of 60 % compared to 1990.

To ensure that the Union and all Member States remain on track to reach the climate-neutrality objective, and to ensure the predictability and confidence for all economic actors, including businesses, workers and trade unions, investors and consumers, the Commission shall explore options for setting a Union 2040 climate target and make legislative proposals to the European Parliament and the Council where appropriate.

In order for the Union to reach the climate-neutrality objective by 2050 at the latest and the intermediate climate targets for 2030 and 2040, the Union institutions and all Member States shall, as early as possible and by 2025 at the latest, have phased out all direct and indirect fossil subsidies. The phasing out of those subsidies shall not impact on efforts to combat energy poverty.

EU strategy on adaptation to climate change

Moreover, by 31 January 2021 and every 5 years thereafter, the Commission shall adopt an updated EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change. The updated EU Strategy shall aim to ensure that adaptation policies are prioritised, integrated and implemented in a consistent way across Union policies, international commitments, trade agreements and international partnerships.

EU greenhouse gas budget

The committee suggested that the Commission establish an EU-27 net greenhouse gas budget, expressed in CO₂ equivalent based on the latest scientific calculations, which represents the Union's fair share of the remaining global emissions, in line with the Paris Agreement objectives. The Union's greenhouse gas budget shall guide the establishment of the Union trajectory towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in particular its future 2030 and 2040 greenhouse gas targets.

When making legislative proposals for setting a trajectory, the Commission shall take into account the Union greenhouse gas budget setting out the total remaining quantity of greenhouse gas emissions as CO₂ equivalent that could be emitted until 2050 at the latest without putting at risk the Union's commitments under the Paris Agreement. The Commission shall set out the Union greenhouse gas budget in a report and shall submit this report to the Parliament and the Council by 31 December 2021. The Commission shall make that report and its underpinning methodology publicly available.

Sectoral contributions

Achieving climate neutrality requires all economic sectors, including aviation and maritime transport, energy, agriculture, etc to swiftly reduce their emissions to close to zero. The polluter pays principle shall be a key factor in that regard.

The Commission shall in particular evaluate the options for aligning emissions from all sectors, including aviation and maritime transport, with the 2030 target for climate and the 2050 climate-neutrality objective in order to reduce these emissions to net zero by 2050 at the latest and shall present legislative proposals, where appropriate, to the European Parliament and to the Council.

European climate pact

Members proposed that the Commission establish a European climate pact with the purpose of engaging citizens, social partners and stakeholders in the elaboration of Union-level climate policies and fostering dialogue and the diffusion of science-based information about climate change and its social and gender equality aspects, as well as sharing best practices for climate initiatives. Member States shall ensure, when taking measures to achieve the climate-neutrality objective, that citizens, civil society and social partners are informed and consulted throughout the legislative process.

Review

The Commission shall, six months after each global stock-take of the Paris Agreement in 2028, conduct a review of all elements of this Regulation and submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council, accompanied, if appropriate, by legislative proposals.