

Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)

2021/0201(COD) - 24/05/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted the report by Ville NIINISTÖ (Greens/EFA, FI) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Amending Regulations (EU) 2018/841 as regards the scope, simplifying the compliance rules, setting out the targets of the Member States for 2030 and committing to the collective achievement of climate neutrality by 2035 in the land use, forestry and agriculture sector, and (EU) 2018/1999 as regards improvement in monitoring, reporting, tracking of progress and review.

The proposed regulation is part of the 'Fit for 55 in 2030 package', which is the EU's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 % by 2030 compared to 1990 levels in line with the European Climate Law.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Support for strengthening the CO₂ emission reduction target for land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF)

Members supports the Commission's proposal that the EU target for net CO₂ removals in the LULUCF sector by 2030 should be increased to **at least 310 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent** and be based on the average of greenhouse gas inventory data for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

This target should be further amplified by additional measures and initiatives at Union and Member State level to support **carbon farming**, delivering at least 50 million additional tonnes CO₂ equivalent of net removals by 2030 at Union level.

In addition, measures should be taken at Union and national level to further increase net greenhouse gas removals in LULUCF from 2031 onwards in order to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and to ensure a long-term sustainable and predictable contribution of natural sinks to the Union's climate neutrality objective by 2050 at the latest and to the objective of achieving negative emissions thereafter.

By 1 January 2025, the Commission should submit a proposal to amend the Regulation in order to set targets for the Union and the Member States for net greenhouse gas removals from land use, land-use change and forestry at least for 2035, 2040, 2045 and 2050.

When taking measures to meet their national targets, Member States should take into account the principle of 'no significant harm' as well as the principles enshrined in the European Charter of Social Rights.

Financial support and just transition for increased climate change mitigation and adaptation action in LULUCF

No later than four months after the entry into force of the Regulation, the Commission should present a report on the availability and consistency of all existing EU financing instruments aimed at enhancing climate change mitigation and adaptation in the LULUCF sector.

Farmers and forest managers could benefit from incentives to store more carbon on their land and in their forests while ensuring the protection of biodiversity and other societal co-benefits.

Public funding under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and other EU programmes should be further mobilised to support ecosystem-based approaches in forests and on agricultural land.

By 31 December 2022, the Commission should present, where appropriate, a legislative proposal to establish a **regulatory framework for the certification of scientifically sound, sustainable, reliable and permanent carbon removals**, including through carbon farming practices, which ensure environmental integrity and respect ecological principles for biodiversity.

No later than two years after the entry into force of the Regulation and every two years thereafter, Member States should assess the **social and labour impacts** of the obligations set out in the Regulation across all land categories and sectors covered.

Flexibilities

In order to ensure continued progress towards the Regulation's objectives, Member States that have failed to meet their annual targets for two consecutive years should review their **national energy and climate plans** and long-term strategies to take additional measures to improve all sinks and reservoirs and reduce the vulnerability of land to natural disturbances.

Natural disturbance mechanism

Parliament proposed the establishment of a natural disturbance mechanism, for a period from **2026 to 2030**, available to Member States that have not met their annual targets due to 'natural disturbances', such as forest fires.

Agricultural emissions

Members pointed out that greenhouse gas removals by natural carbon sinks are fragile and potentially reversible, which increases the uncertainty in measuring emissions and removals in the land sector compared to other sectors. The objective of enhancing removals by natural carbon sinks should therefore be **pursued separately** from the objective of rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from other sectors, including agricultural emissions other than CO₂.

Access to justice

Member States should ensure access to justice for citizens and non-governmental organisations. In order to ensure the uniform exercise of this right in all Member States, it is proposed to add an article on access to justice to the Regulation.