Basic information

2022/2053(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Sustainable Carbon Cycles **Subject** 3.70 Environmental policy 3.70.01 Protection of natural resources: fauna, flora, nature, wildlife, countryside; biodiversity 3.70.06 Soil pollution, deterioration	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	BERNHUBER Alexander (EPP)	25/04/2022
	Shadow rapporteur JERKOVIĆ Romana (S&D) CANFIN Pascal (Renew) HÄUSLING Martin (Greens/EFA) PROCACCINI Nicola (ECR) WALLACE Mick (The Left)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy (Associated committee)	KELLY Seán (EPP)	06/06/2022
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development (Associated committee)	HLAVÁČEK Martin (Renew)	08/06/2022

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
07/07/2022	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
07/07/2022	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
01/03/2023	Vote in committee		
21/03/2023	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0066/2023	Summary

17/04/2023	Debate in Parliament		
18/04/2023	Decision by Parliament	T9-0104/2023	Summary
18/04/2023	Results of vote in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2022/2053(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55 Rules of Procedure EP 57_o
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ENVI/9/08831

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE732.708	15/06/2022	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE735.539	30/08/2022	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE735.540	30/08/2022	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE732.867	27/10/2022	
Committee opinion	ITRE	PE734.179	27/10/2022	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0066/2023	21/03/2023	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0104/2023	18/04/2023	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2023)328	29/08/2023	

Meetings with interest representatives published in line with the Rules of Procedure

Rapporteurs, Shadow Rapporteurs and Committee Chairs

Transparency

Name	Role	Committee	Date	Interest representatives

BERNHUBER Alexander	Rapporteur	ENVI	25/01/2023	ORSTRED
BERNHUBER Alexander	Rapporteur	ENVI	25/01/2023	EURAF - European Agriforestry Foundation
KELLY Seán	Rapporteur for opinion	ITRE	06/09/2022	Clariter
KELLY Seán	Rapporteur for opinion	ITRE	07/07/2022	Copa-Cogeca
BERNHUBER Alexander	Rapporteur	ENVI	30/05/2022	Landwirtschaftskammer Österreich Raiffeisen Bank International AG Technische Universität Wien European Innovation Council Bundesministerium für Landwirtschaft, Regionen und Toursismus Technische Universtität Graz Arbeiterkammer Wien Verband der öffentlichen Wasserwirtschaft und Umwelt Klima- und Energiefond Fachverband Holzindustrie Österreich
KELLY Seán	Rapporteur for opinion	ITRE	25/01/2021	Fortum Oyj

Other Members

Transparency		
Name	Date	Interest representatives
BRGLEZ Milan	29/06/2022	European Environmental Bureau
VANDENKENDELAERE Tom	01/12/2021	Claire CO2

Sustainable Carbon Cycles

2022/2053(INI) - 21/03/2023 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted an own-initiative report by Alexander BERNHUBER (EPP, AT) on sustainable carbon cycles.

General considerations

In its communication on sustainable carbon cycles, published on 14 December 2021, the Commission proposes sustainable solutions for increasing carbon removals from the atmosphere. If the EU is to offset the effects of its CO2 emissions, it will have to significantly reduce its dependence on fossil carbon, upscale carbon farming to store more carbon in nature and promote industrial solutions to sustainably and verifiably remove and recycle carbon. Removing and storing more carbon, from the atmosphere, oceans and coastal wetlands, is essential to achieve the EU's legally binding commitment to become climate neutral by 2050, as outlined in the European Green Deal.

The report stressed that the EU should aim to achieve **negative emissions as well as emission reductions**. While welcoming the Commission's plan on how carbon offsets can help achieve net negative emissions, Members called on the Commission to define a list of practices with the highest absorption potential, which is important for farmers, and to invest more in developing accessible and affordable carbon-removal technologies. Members stressed that removals should be counted towards a separate removal target to ensure that they do not slow down economy-wide decarbonisation efforts.

The report stressed that agriculture and forestry should play a significant role in achieving the EU's carbon removal target for the land-use sector and, like all economic sectors, should contribute to the EU's climate neutrality objective. Healthy natural ecosystems can be an important source of long-term removals.

Carbon farming

The report stressed that the growing interest in carbon farming should be an opportunity for farmers to transform their business model and should allow for better rewards for farmers who engage in a transition to sustainable agroecological agroforestry practices. Carbon farming can be a voluntary activity. Therefore, financial rewards for carbon farming should compensate farmers and foresters for additional efforts beyond their obligations under EU and Member State legislation.

Members considered that carbon farming should be developed on the basis of a **credible and effective policy framework**, taking into account the need for a clear set of rules for farmers and foresters who decide to implement carbon farming practices.

The report stressed the need to keep in mind the different starting points of Member States and farmers, and insisted on the need to ensure **equitable opportunities** for farmers and foresters in carbon farming across the EU. It calls for the integration of carbon farming into the forthcoming CAP national strategy plans, in line with Member States' assessments and needs.

Blue carbon

Stressing that the blue carbon economy has great potential to contribute to CO2 storage in coastal regions, the report encouraged the Commission to collect more data on blue carbon sequestration and storage.

Members recalled the need to map marine and freshwater ecosystems. They reaffirmed Parliament's position on extending the scope of the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation to include greenhouse gas emissions and removals from marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems, and to apply specific targets to these emissions and removals.

CCS and CCU

Members believe that more needs to be done to significantly reduce the environmental footprint of current carbon capture technologies, particularly with regard to energy and water use.

The report highlighted that solutions based on CO2 capture and storage (CCS) and CO2 capture and utilisation (CCU) technologies can play a role in decarbonisation, especially for the mitigation of process emissions in industry, for those Member States that opt for these technologies. The Commission is urged to put in place an **efficient and reliable system of traceability of captured CO2**, distinguishing between carbon capture on site and from the atmosphere to avoid double counting and to safeguard the integrity of removals.

Members noted that carbon storage is not allowed in all Member States and that Member States are free to decide whether or not to authorise the geological storage of CO2 on their territory. They called on the Commission and Member States to **sufficiently document the long-term effects of carbon storage** in areas with geological storage capacity and to support research to obtain more data on the overall environmental impact, energy efficiency, social acceptability, economic costs and risk of leakage and geological perturbations, before its large-scale deployment.

Funding carbon cycling

Members recalled that public funding under CAP, revenues generated by the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and funds from other EU programmes such as LIFE, the Cohesion Fund, Horizon Europe, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Just Transition Fund, can already support carbon sequestering and biodiversity-positive approaches in forests and agricultural lands and should be further targeted for that purpose.

The report called on the Commission to **review current funding options** to reward practices with scientifically proven climate and environmental benefits that lead to long-term and sustainable increase in carbon sequestration in soils and other biogenic carbon pools while ensuring societal co-benefits. Research and innovation concerning sustainable carbon cycles should be encouraged and financed, using different EU financial instruments, such as the LIFE and Horizon Europe programmes or the Innovation Fund.

Knowledge sharing and cooperation

The report highlighted the need for increased cooperation, exchange of information and sharing of best practices between stakeholders to promote better knowledge and understanding of opportunities and risks in the implementation of carbon cycling initiatives. The Commission and Member States should **promote knowledge transfer** through targeted training and education programmes, along with access to advisory services to increase the uptake of carbon farming by land managers, farmers and foresters. International cooperation with third countries and international institutions should be encouraged to promote sustainable carbon removals at the global level.

Sustainable Carbon Cycles

2022/2053(INI) - 18/04/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 323 votes to 257, with 59 abstentions, a resolution on sustainable carbon cycles.

General considerations

The resolution stressed that the impact of natural and industrial carbon removal solutions on balancing GHG emissions is limited and should not come at the expense of ambitious climate mitigation goals, which require a substantial reduction in emissions. It underlined the EU’s objective to prioritise swift and predictable emission reductions and, at the same time, enhance removal by natural sinks.

Members recognised that the Sustainable Carbon Cycle Initiative can contribute to the EU's goal of net carbon removals. They are also aware of the need to avoid double counting and safeguard the integrity of removals.

Parliament cautions against many IPCC scenarios that rely heavily on future CO2 removals. It considered that, given the many uncertainties related to those technologies and the risks that most of them entail for land use, water resources, biodiversity protection and food security, priority should be given to scenarios that minimise the use of CO2 removals, such as low energy demand scenarios. It called on the EU Independent Advisory Board on Climate Change to prioritise those scenarios when assessing what could be a 1.5°C compatible GHG emissions budget for the EU, and to carefully consider the use of CO2 removal options and technologies in a socially, environmentally and economically conscious manner.

The resolution stressed that the EU should aim to **achieve negative emissions** as well as emission reductions. While welcoming the Commission's plan on how carbon offsets can help achieve net negative emissions, Members called on the Commission to define a **list of practices with the highest**

absorption potential, which is important for farmers, and to invest more in developing accessible and affordable carbon-removal technologies. Members stressed that removals should be counted towards a **separate removal target** to ensure that they do not slow down economy-wide decarbonisation efforts.

Parliament stressed that **agriculture and forestry** should play a significant role in achieving the EU carbon removal target for the land-use sector and, like all economic sectors, should contribute to the EU's climate neutrality goal; underlines that healthy natural ecosystems can constitute an important source of long-term removals;

Carbon farming

According to the resolution, the growing interest in carbon farming should be an opportunity for farmers to transform their business model and should allow for better rewards for farmers who engage in a transition to sustainable agroecological agroforestry practices. Members considered that carbon farming should be developed on the basis of a **credible and effective policy framework**, taking into account the need for a clear set of rules for farmers and foresters who decide to implement carbon farming practices.

The resolution stressed the need to keep in mind the different starting points of Member States and farmers and insisted on the need to ensure equitable opportunities for farmers and foresters in carbon farming across the EU.

Parliament asked the Commission to make available to land managers **verified emission and removal data**, based on a farm level and a result-based approach, well before 2026, in order to be used in the expected legislative proposal for sustainable food systems as well as in the upcoming revision of the common agricultural policy.

Blue carbon

Stressing that the blue carbon economy has great potential to contribute to CO2 storage in coastal regions, the resolution encouraged the Commission to collect more data on blue carbon sequestration and storage.

Members recalled the need to map marine and freshwater ecosystems. They reaffirmed Parliament's position on extending the scope of the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) regulation to include greenhouse gas emissions and removals from marine, coastal and freshwater ecosystems, and to apply specific targets to these emissions and removals.

CCS and CCU

Members considered that technologies such as direct air capture that are combined with permanent storage and are scientifically proven and environmentally safe can play a role in helping achieve climate neutrality in the EU by no later than 2050. Emissions reduction at source must always remain the priority.

The resolution highlighted that solutions based on CO2 capture and storage (CCS) and CO2 capture and utilisation (CCU) technologies can play a role in decarbonisation, especially for the mitigation of process emissions in industry, for those Member States that opt for these technologies. The Commission is urged to put in place an **efficient and reliable system of traceability of captured CO2**, distinguishing between carbon capture on site and from the atmosphere to avoid double counting and to safeguard the integrity of removals.

Members noted that carbon storage is not allowed in all Member States and that Member States are free to decide whether or not to authorise the geological storage of CO2 on their territory. They called on the Commission and Member States to sufficiently document the **long-term effects of carbon storage** in areas with geological storage capacity and to support research to obtain more data on the overall environmental impact, energy efficiency, social acceptability, economic costs and risk of leakage and geological perturbations, before its large-scale deployment.

New regulatory framework for certification of carbon removals

Parliament took note of the Commission proposal for a regulation on establishing an EU certification framework for carbon removals and the Commission's intention to put in place a framework for the identification of activities that unambiguously remove carbon from the atmosphere. It stressed that this **new monitoring, reporting and verification** (MRV) framework should be the basis of further measures to incentivise those new types of carbon removal activities.

Funding carbon cycling

Parliament called on the Commission to **review current funding options** to reward practices with scientifically proven climate and environmental benefits that lead to long-term and sustainable increase in carbon sequestration in soils and other biogenic carbon pools while ensuring societal co-benefits. Research and innovation concerning sustainable carbon cycles should be encouraged and financed, using different EU financial instruments, such as the LIFE and Horizon Europe programmes or the Innovation Fund.

Knowledge sharing and cooperation

The resolution highlighted the need for increased cooperation, exchange of information and sharing of best practices between stakeholders to promote better knowledge and understanding of opportunities and risks in the implementation of carbon cycling initiatives. International cooperation with third countries and international institutions should be encouraged to promote sustainable carbon removals at the global level.