
AT A GLANCE: EU AND UK AGREE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION STANDARDS AFTER BREXIT - EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTES TO STRENGTHEN PROPOSED TRUCK CO2 TARGETS – MEPS APPROVE CLEAN ENERGY AGREEMENTS – ON-GOING NEGOTIATIONS OF THE EU ELECTRICITY REFORM – EUROPEAN COMMISSION SUPPORTS GERMANY'S ELECTRIC BATTERIES PLAN

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GLOSSARY

TRILOGUES: Informal negotiations between the European Parliament, Commission and Council of the EU to reach an agreement on a specific legislative proposal. Agreement then needs to be formally adopted by the Parliament and Council.

MEP: Member of the European Parliament, a co-legislator within the EU that is made up of representatives from political parties throughout member states.

COUNCIL OF THE EU: Co-legislator, made up of representatives from Member State Governments. Has a six-month rotating presidency, currently held by Austria until the end of the year.

DIRECTIVE: EU legislative act that sets out a goal that all EU Member States must achieve. However, it is up to the EU Member States to adopt their own laws on how to achieve the EU goals enshrined in the Directive.

REGULATION: EU legislative act that is binding in its entirety and is to be applied in its entirety across the EU by all EU Member States.

RAPPORTEUR: A rapporteur is a member of the European Parliament made responsible for handling a legislative proposal drawn up by the European Commission, both procedurally as well as with regard to the substance of the proposal. The rapporteur leads negotiations with the other institutions on the dossier and handles the discussions in the responsible committee of the European Parliament as well as in plenary

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BREXIT

EU and UK agree on environmental protection standards after Brexit

The UK and EU negotiators earlier this month agreed that Brexit should not allow UK to revert on environmental standards, according to the text of the draft withdrawal agreement approved by the U.K. cabinet early in November.



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The UK and the EU pledged to “ensure that the level of environmental protection provided by law, regulations and practices is not reduced below the level provided by the common standards applicable at the end of the transition period.” The areas covered include everything from access to environmental information, industrial emissions, waste management, air emissions and air quality targets and ceilings, as well as climate change.

After the UK leaves the EU, it will no longer be subject to the jurisdiction of EU courts. To ensure enforcement of environmental laws, the UK will set up an “independent and adequately resourced body or bodies,” able to launch inquiries against UK authorities, and impose sanctions and interim restrictions. The two parties also committed to retaining a number of principles of EU environmental law.

(Sources: Politico Pro)

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CO2 EMISSIONS FROM TRANSPORT

European Parliament votes to strengthen proposed truck CO2 targets



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This month the European Parliament vote in favor of more stringent targets in the proposal for the EU's first ever CO2 emission reductions for heavy duty vehicles. MEPs voted in a plenary session in Strasbourg on 14 November for average emissions of new trucks to be cut by 35% over the decade to 2030, with an interim 2025 target of 20%. Both targets are five percentage points higher than the European Commission's proposal.

MEPs adopted the amended report, drafted by Environment Committee Rapporteur, MEP Bas Eickhout (Greens/EFA, NL), by 373 votes to 285 against. The Parliament, said Eickhout, sent a strong signal that manufacturers "have a duty to drive down emissions from their vehicles and join the race for a cleaner future." With regards to Member States, MEP Eickhout said that those not already in favor of tougher targets should answer whether they will "side with the polluters" or with the majority of the Parliament.

Erik Jonnaert, Secretary General of the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), said the Parliament's "excessively aggressive" targets would negatively affect production processes. The trade body criticized MEPs' decision to replace the Commission's 'super-credit' system to incentivize zero and low emissions truck production with benchmarking with a 5% sales target by 2025 and 30% by 2030.

Stef Cornelis, Campaign Group Transport and Environment's Cleaner Trucks Officer, said the sale target was "essential to ensure we develop the market in Europe and start moving beyond diesel." "MEPs have played a key part in moving towards the EU's climate and transport policy goals," Cornelis said.

The Parliament called for the Commission, which plans to review the legislation in 2022, to consider assessing CO2 emissions produced by heavy-duty vehicles during their full life-cycle in the future evaluation of the legislation, and propose, if necessary, reporting obligations for manufacturers.

(Source: ENDS Europe)

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CLEAN ENERGY PACKAGE

MEPs approve clean energy agreements



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The European Parliament backed an agreement with Member States on key elements of the Commission's clean energy package. A plenary session of the Parliament voted in Strasbourg in November 2018 in favor of deals reached by negotiators from the three EU institutions in June 2019 on a new **Energy Efficiency Directive**, **Renewable Energy Directive (RED II)**, and **new Energy Governance Regulation**.

Once approved by Member States in the Council in the coming weeks, the regulations will set a new binding renewable energy target of at least 32% for 2030, with a review in 2023 for an upward revision at the EU level. The Parliament's negotiator on RED II, MEP José Blanco López (S&D ES), said the "vital" agreements "take us towards greater decarbonization of our economy."

The Directive includes a sub-target of 14% for transport, introduces a phase-out for the use of palm oil and soybean fuels from 2023, and removes targets for food-based biofuels after 2020. Environment Committee Rapporteur on the renewables file, MEP Bas Eickhout (Greens/EFA, NL), said the measures signaled the market to "move away from food based crops towards advanced biofuels."

MEP Eickhout said the Directive would limit the use of biomass for co-firing and introduce an efficiency demand on biomass power plants. A new Energy Efficiency Directive sets a non-binding EU target of at least 32.5% for 2030 with an upwards revision clause by 2023. Campaigners have said the target does not reflect the urgency of climate change.

Krišjanis Karinš, European People's Party spokesperson in the Industry Committee, said he expected that "realism in our targets and flexibility in its implementation will prevail". Energy markets should "move away from heavy-handed state intervention towards more competition and market-based principles," he said, welcoming the "flexibility" in the agreements.

Separately, the Commission announced amended energy consumption figures for the revised energy efficiency directive to take account of the UK leaving the EU. The energy governance rules require Member States to prepare a national energy and climate plan for 2021-2030

(Source: ENDS Europe)

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ELECTRICITY MARKET DESIGN

On-going negotiations of the EU electricity reform



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Discussions on the electricity market reform continued this month, but the negotiators left the most contentious issues for a fifth and final round of talks between representatives of the European Parliament, the EU Council, and the European Commission on 5 December.

A Council official said there is a “confidence to reach an agreement before the end of the Austrian Presidency,” though the official added that the prevailing sentiment is there will be “no agreement on points of detail until there is an overall agreement.”

The trilogue negotiations focused on issues such as price regulation, energy poverty, energy communities, smart meters and transmission and distribution system operators, according to Council documents. The Commission proposed, as part of its ‘clean energy package’, to phase out regulated energy prices within seven years. The Parliament proposed a 10-year period, while the Council has opted for no end-date. Thirteen countries – Spain, Portugal, Belgium, France, Poland, Cyprus, Malta, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania – still regulate household prices, subject to “static markets”, intelligence suggests.

Additional requirements for price regulation, favored by both the Parliament and the Council, specify that prices should not be set below costs. They include the right for consumers to obtain smart meters at no extra cost to control their consumption. “These measures can limit the distortive effect of price regulation while incentivizing customers to become active on the energy market.”

An EU Council document containing draft language for an agreement states that “regulatory authorities shall monitor the market developments and assess the risks that the new products and services may entail and deal with abusive practices” and, specifically, “the level of price volatility.”

Campaigners expressed concern **once again** over the EU’s inability to agree on an end to subsidies for coal-fired power generators through so-called capacity mechanisms, subsidizing generators on standby.

Joanna Flisowska, coal policy coordinator at Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, said that coal subsidies “distort the market to the detriment of the deployment of renewables, and provide a lifeline to unprofitable and harmful coal utilities.” “The EU needs to support a fair and clean energy transition instead,” she added, commenting on the situation ahead of the upcoming COP24 meeting in Katowice.

(Source: ENDS Europe)

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European Commission supports Germany's electric batteries plan



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Peter Altmaier, Germany's Minister for Economy, announced this month a €1bn investment to support battery cell production facilities in Germany and Europe until 2030. France, Austria and Poland are willing to join the initiative, Altmaier said, speaking at a conference on Electromobility in Berlin last month.

Maroš Šefcovic, Commission Vice-President in charge of the EU Energy Union, backed the announcement. "The battery market in Europe could be worth €250bn per year from 2025 onwards," he told the conference, citing internal forecast figures. Clean transport being the only option, the question is whether Europe would "produce the solution" or have to buy it from others, Šefcovic said.

A European Battery Alliance was set up a year ago by the Commission to support battery innovation and manufacturing through the entire value chain. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the global number of electric vehicles should triple in two years. Sales are expected to increase annually by 24% on average up to 2030.

In line with his recent call to apply **innovative clean air technology solutions** to the most polluting sectors in Europe, Šefcovic called for renewable energy and a "flexible energy market" to be put to use to face up to the sector's challenges. The Greens have recently called for **more investments in new technology** to deliver on zero-emissions vehicles, a contentious issue in ongoing negotiations to set up CO2 reduction targets for both cars and lorries.

Regarding cars, the Commission, European Parliament and EU Council will continue working on how manufacturers should be incentivized to reduce vehicle CO2 emissions after 2020. The focus will be on secondary issues, pending a further round of negotiations in December on headline reduction targets and a clean vehicles sales quota.

(Source: ENDS Europe)

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