

EUROPEAN CLIMATE LAW

Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality

WHAT'S IN IT?

OBJECTIVE	GOOD PROSPECTS IN VIEW OF THE OBJECTIVE	MIXED PROSPECTS	A STEP BACKWARDS, UNDERMINING THE OBJECTIVE
Climate ambition in view of respecting the limit of 1.5°C global warming under the Paris Agreement			
100% renewables accelerating the phase-out of fossils and nuclear			
Fair participation of citizens in the benefits of the European Green Deal			

WHAT'S NEXT?

STATUS	MILESTONES
Entered into force	● ————— ● Since June 2024 European Commission report on amendments and new legislative proposal delayed
	By November 2025 EU Council compromise for 2035 and 2040 climate targets

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR?

RISKS	LIMITED RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK
Speed. Slowing down the EU law's progress or implementation.			
Money. Conflict on distributional effects or lack of finance for making this EU law impactful.			
Fossil fuels. Open door to supporting the use of fossil fuels.			
Nuclear power. Open door to supporting the use of nuclear power.			

NO RISK N/A NOT APPLICABLE



Learn more
eu.boell.org/green-deal-risk-radar

WHAT'S IN IT?

 **Climate ambition**

Confirms the EU targets to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. Also establishes a process to ensure all relevant EU legislation and policies are consistent with or contribute to the fulfilment of the climate neutrality objective. While the above is ambitious, these targets will not be sufficient to ensure the EU's fair contribution to limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C (see [Climate Action Tracker](#)).

 **100% renewables**

In its preamble, calls for a transition to a safe, sustainable, affordable and secure energy system relying on the deployment of renewables, a well-functioning internal energy market, and the improvement of energy efficiency (with no references to nuclear or other false solutions).

 **Fair participation**

Includes a full article (Article 9) on public participation calling on the European Commission to engage with all parts of society to enable and empower them to take action towards a just and socially fair transition. Unfortunately, the European Commission's instruments to do this are rather limited.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR? RISKS

 **Speed**  **Money**  **Fossil fuels**  **Nuclear power**

The key issue to look out for is the discussion and adoption of new EU climate targets for 2035 (in the form of a new Nationally Determined Contribution to the UNFCCC) and 2040. Previously, all such targets were first adopted by the European Council. The Council may be pressured (similarly to, for example, the ratification of the Paris Agreement) to find a compromise either before the soft UNFCCC deadline of March 2025 or the harder deadline of COP30 in November 2025. This international process carries both risks and opportunities as the international pressure could push progressive governments to accept a weak compromise.

'That's barely scratching the surface of what science tells us we need. To turbocharge our economy, the EU must slash CO₂ emissions by a whopping 95% by 2040.' – MICHAEL BLOSS, MEP GREENS, ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON A 90% REDUCTION TARGET BY 2040, FEBRUARY 2024

WHAT'S NEXT?



STATUS

Entered into force on 29 July 2021**Transposition by EU Member States**

Not directly applicable. The Regulation builds upon a range of other pieces of EU legislation that ensure the implementation of its key features. Furthermore, it clearly states that the 2050 climate neutrality target is an EU-wide collective target, not binding individual Member State to the same objective.

Revision clauses and reporting duties

Every five years, starting from September 2023, the European Commission (EC) shall assess the consistency of EU measures with the climate-neutrality objective as well as the collective progress made by all Member States through the annual Climate Action Progress Reports. Also, within six months of each United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) global stocktake (happening every five years from 2023 onwards), the EC shall submit a report possibly including proposed amendments to the Regulation on its operation, in light of international developments in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and UNFCCC. As of 1 September 2024, this report has not been published yet although the first global stocktake ended 13 December 2023.

Delegated acts and other related legislative action

The EC shall, within six months of the first global stocktake, make a legislative proposal to amend this Regulation to include the Union 2040 climate target. As of 1 August 2024, this has not happened yet, though the EC did issue a Communication in February 2024 proposing a 90% reduction of net greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. It is assumed that the EC will only present a legislative proposal once the European Council has endorsed the 90% reduction by 2040 proposal.

HOW TO IMPROVE IT? OPPORTUNITIES

Similar to above, positive international dynamics, including the outcome of the US elections, the Brazilian G20 and COP30 presidencies and policy and real economy developments in China, may influence the outcomes of the debate on the 2035/2040 targets.

FURTHER READING

- [Climate Analytics/New Climate Institute: Climate Action Tracker](#)
- [Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung EU & Wendel Trio: Getting back on track with new EU climate and energy targets for 2035 and 2040, February 2024](#)