



ENVIRONMENT Council **Brussels, 20 December 2018**

Chair: **Elisabeth Köstinger**, Minister for Sustainability and Tourism of the Republic of Austria

European Commission representatives: Commissioners **Karmenu Vella** and **Miguel Ángel Arias Cañete**.

Starting time: 09:30

Environment ministers will discuss the proposal on **CO2 emission standards for heavy-duty vehicles** with the aim of reaching a general approach. This discussion will be live streamed.

The Council is expected to reach a partial general approach (live streamed) on the **LIFE programme** to continue the EU's flagship programme for environmental and climate action beyond 2020.

The European Commission will have the opportunity to present to ministers its proposal for an **EU climate strategy for 2050**. Environment ministers will have a first exchange of views on this ambitious strategy which includes eight scenarios for sustained greenhouse gas emissions reductions, of which two spell out how the EU could reach net zero emissions by 2050.

The Austrian Presidency will inform ministers on recent progress on several legislative proposals: the directive on **single-use plastics**, the regulation on **CO2 standards for cars and vans**, the directive on **drinking water**, the regulation on **taxonomy**, the regulation on **persistent organic pollutants**, and the regulation on the **alignment of environmental reporting obligations**. This point on the agenda will be broadcast live.

Further AOB items will be reports on recent international meetings: **COP24** in Katowice and the **Convention on Biological Diversity** conference in Sharm El-Sheikh. In addition, the Commission will inform ministers about the report on the implementation of the EU strategy on **adaptation to climate change**.

The Austrian Presidency will debrief ministers on the follow-up to the informal meeting of environment and transport ministers in Graz: The future of European environment policy - towards an **8th environment action programme**; and the **Graz declaration** - starting a new era for clean, safe and affordable mobility for Europe.

¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the press office.

There will be an information point from the Belgian delegation on the adoption of measures at EU level to create the conditions for discontinuing the use of environmentally problematic substances contained in plant protection products. The Lithuanian delegation will inform ministers on upcoming intermediary sessions of the meetings of the parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Geneva.

Finally, the Romanian delegation will present the work programme of the incoming Presidency.

Press conference: tbc

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CO2 STANDARDS FOR HEAVY-DUTY VEHICLES

Environment ministers will discuss the proposed regulation on CO2 standards for heavy-duty vehicles with the aim of reaching a general approach, i. e. the Council position on this text.

Policy debate at the Council

The Environment Council held a policy debate on the proposal on 10 October. Since the proposal was tabled by the Commission, it has been analysed thoroughly by delegates of the member states at several Council Environment Working Party meetings. The Presidency will ask ministers to agree on a position on the proposal.

Background

On 31 May 2017, the Commission adopted a proposal for a regulation to set up a system for monitoring and reporting CO2 emissions and fuel consumption of heavy-duty vehicles, as part of the first 'Europe on the Move' mobility package. The regulation will, for the first time, make heavy-duty vehicles subject to greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. Member States would have to monitor and report data about all new heavy-duty vehicles registered in a calendar year, while manufacturers would monitor and report information related to CO2 emissions and fuel consumption of vehicles. As of January 2019, EU rules require manufacturers to calculate this information on the basis of a standardised simulation tool. The Commission would make the reported data publicly available, in a register managed by the European Environment Agency, with exceptions for sensitive data. A similar monitoring and reporting system is already in place for light-duty vehicles.

The proposal sets an overall CO2 emission reduction target for the EU's fleet of new heavy-duty vehicles of 15% from 2025 onwards compared to 2019 emission levels. The overall target is translated into manufacturer-specific CO2 emission targets on the basis of fleet composition and characteristics. The proposal also includes an aspirational reduction target of at least 30% from 2030 onwards. The final target from 2030 onwards will be confirmed pursuant to a review to be carried out in 2022. It is suggested furthermore that, as part of the review, the scope of the standards should be extended to smaller trucks, buses, coaches and trailers. Vocational vehicles, such as construction lorries, garbage lorries, and concrete mixers are exempted from the CO2 targets.

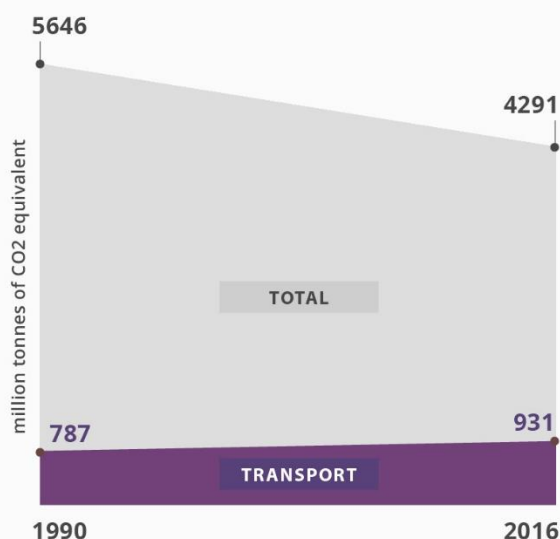
The regulation has the following objectives:

- Reduce CO2 emissions from the heavy-duty vehicle sector in line with the requirements of EU climate policy and the Paris Agreement, while reducing air pollution notably in cities.
- Reduce the operating costs for transport operators, most of which are SMEs, and more broadly the transportation costs for consumers via fuel savings.
- Maintain the technological and innovative leadership position of EU heavy-duty vehicle manufacturers and component suppliers.

[Commission proposal](#)

Cutting CO2 road transport emissions

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IN THE EU



94%

of the **transport** greenhouse gas emissions are caused by **road transport**

ROAD TRANSPORT GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS



Source: European Environment Agency



Council of the European Union
General Secretariat

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LIFE PROGRAMME

The Council is expected to reach a partial general approach, i. e. the Council position, on the regulation on LIFE which will replace the current regulation which is valid until 2020. The proposed regulation will ensure that the EU's flagship programme for environmental protection, climate action and the conservation of European wildlife species and habitats continues beyond 2020. During its first 25 years of existence, the LIFE programme has co-financed more than 4.500 projects.

Since the proposed regulation is linked to the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027, all provisions with budgetary implications or of horizontal nature have been set aside - and thus excluded from a partial general approach - pending an agreement on the MFF.

Policy debate at the Council

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Background

The Commission adopted its proposal on the programme for the environment and climate action (LIFE programme) on 1 June 2018. The general objective of LIFE is to contribute to the implementation, updating and development of EU environmental and climate policy and legislation by co-financing projects with European added value. A major new element of the proposal is the addition of a dedicated clean energy transition sub-programme into the LIFE programme.

The new programme would thus have two main fields of action covering four sub-programmes.

The Environment field would include

- 1) the Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme; and
- 2) the Circular Economy and Quality of Life sub-programme.

The Climate Action field would include

- 3) the Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation sub-programme; and
- 4) the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme.

[Commission proposal](#)

EU 2050 CLIMATE STRATEGY

The Council will hold an exchange of views on the new long-term climate action strategy which the Commission published on 28 November. Two of the eight scenarios proposed by the Commission spell out how the EU could reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Following the invitation by the European Council in March 2018, the Commission's vision for a climate neutral future covers nearly all EU policies and is in line with the Paris Agreement objective to keep temperature increase to well below 2°C, and pursue efforts to keep it to 1.5°C. The strategy aims to show how Europe can lead the way to climate neutrality by investing into realistic technological solutions, empowering citizens, and aligning action in key areas such as industrial policy, finance, or research, while ensuring social fairness for a just transition.

The road to a climate neutral economy would require joint action in seven strategic areas:

- energy efficiency
- deployment of renewables
- clean, safe and connected mobility
- competitive industry and circular economy
- infrastructure and interconnections
- bio-economy and natural carbon sinks
- carbon capture and storage to address remaining emissions

[Communication from the Commission: A Clean Planet for all. A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy](#)

[In-depth analysis accompanying the Communication from the Commission](#)

[Questions and Answers: Long term strategy for Clean Planet for All](#)

[European Council conclusions of 22 March 2018](#)

Long Term Strategy Options

	Electrification (ELEC)	Hydrogen (H2)	Power-to-X (P2X)	Energy Efficiency (EE)	Circular Economy (CIRC)	Combination (COMBO)	1.5°C Technical (1.5TECH)	1.5°C Sustainable Lifestyles (1.5LIFE)
Main Drivers	Electrification in all sectors	Hydrogen in industry, transport and buildings	E-fuels in industry, transport and buildings	Pursuing deep energy efficiency in all sectors	Increased resource and material efficiency	Cost-efficient combination of options from 2°C scenarios	Based on COMBO with more BECCS, CCS	Based on COMBO and CIRC with lifestyle changes
GHG target in 2050	-80% GHG (excluding sinks) ["well below 2°C" ambition]					-90% GHG (incl. sinks)	-100% GHG (incl. sinks) ["1.5°C" ambition]	
Major Common Assumptions	- Higher energy efficiency post 2030 - Deployment of sustainable, advanced biofuels - Moderate circular economy measures - Digitilisation				- Market coordination for infrastructure deployment - BECCS present only post-2050 in 2°C scenarios - Significant learning by doing for low carbon technologies - Significant improvements in the efficiency of the transport system.			
Power sector	Power is nearly decarbonised by 2050. Strong penetration of RES facilitated by system optimization (demand-side response, storage, interconnections, role of prosumers). Nuclear still plays a role in the power sector and CCS deployment faces limitations.							
Industry	Electrification of processes	Use of H2 in targeted applications	Use of e-gas in targeted applications	Reducing energy demand via Energy Efficiency	Higher recycling rates, material substitution, circular measures	Combination of most Cost-efficient options from "well below 2°C" scenarios with targeted application (excluding CIRC)	COMBO but stronger	CIRC+COMBO but stronger
Buildings	Increased deployment of heat pumps	Deployment of H2 for heating	Deployment of e-gas for heating	Increased renovation rates and depth	Sustainable buildings			CIRC+COMBO but stronger
Transport sector	Faster electrification for all transport modes	H2 deployment for HDVs and some for LDVs	E-fuels deployment for all modes	Increased modal shift	Mobility as a service			- CIRC+COMBO but stronger - Alternatives to air travel

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Regulation on taxonomy
 - Information from the Presidency. Commission proposal ([9355/18](#))
 - Directive on single-use plastics
 - Information from the Presidency. Commission proposal ([9465/18 + COR 1 + ADD 1 to ADD 7](#))
 - Regulation on persistent organic pollutants
 - Information from the Presidency. Commission proposal ([7470/18 + ADD1](#))
 - Regulation on the alignment of environmental reporting obligations
 - Information from the Presidency. Commission proposal ([9617/18](#))
 - Directive on drinking water
 - Information from the Presidency. Commission proposal ([5846/18 + ADD1](#))
 - Regulation on CO2 standards for cars and vans
 - Information from the Presidency ([14217/1/17](#) + [ADD1 REV 1](#))
 - Reports on recent international meetings: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, 17-29 November 2018)
 - COP 14 to the CBD
 - COP-MOP 9 serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety
 - COP-MOP 3 serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing
 - Information from the Presidency and the Commission
 - Report on COP24 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Katowice, Poland, 2-14 December 2018)
 - Information from the Presidency, the Commission and the Polish delegation
 - Report on the implementation of the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change
 - Information from the Commission ([14328/18](#))
 - The future of European environment policy - towards an 8th environment action programme. Outcome of the informal meeting of environment and transport ministers (Graz, Austria, 29-30 October 2018)
 - Information from the Presidency
 - Graz declaration - starting a new era: clean, safe and affordable mobility for Europe. Outcome of the informal meeting of environment and transport ministers (Graz, Austria, 29-30 October 2018)
 - Information from the Presidency
 - Intermediary sessions of the meetings of the parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in Geneva, 5-7 February 2019
 - Information from the Lithuanian delegation
 - Work programme of the incoming Presidency
 - Information from the Romanian delegation
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