



Council of the European Union

PRESS
EN

BACKGROUND¹
Brussels, 19 September 2019

**Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council
(Energy)
Brussels, 24 September 2019**

Chair: **Katri Kulmuni**, Minister for Economic Affairs of Finland

Starting time: 9:30

The Council will focus on the contribution of the energy sector to climate action until 2030 and beyond. In this regard, ministers will hold two exchanges of views, which will both be in public session.

In the **exchange of views on the Commission Communication on the draft national energy and climate plans**, ministers will be invited to discuss their progress in addressing ambition gaps in the targets set for 2030 in the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energy that have been identified by the Commission, and to reflect on the Council's role in the governance process of the Energy Union.

The second debate will address "**The energy sector beyond 2030: towards climate neutrality**". It is expected to be an open dialogue on necessary changes in the energy sector, including enablers and incentives, and an opportunity to share best practices.

The debates will be followed by an informal lunch with a discussion on innovative energy technologies promoting climate neutrality (see the [Presidency background note](#)).

The Any other business points will be taken in the afternoon.

Press conference: at 13.30, Justus Lipsius building

* * *

[Press conferences and public events by video streaming](#)

[Video coverage in broadcast quality \(MPEG4\) and photo gallery](#)

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

DRAFT NATIONAL ENERGY AND CLIMATE PLANS

The Council will hold an **exchange of views** on the Commission Communication on the draft national energy and climate plans "United in delivering the Energy Union and climate action". The debate will be guided by a [background paper prepared by the Presidency](#). Specifically, ministers will be invited to answer two questions:

- 1) *What is Member States' progress in addressing ambition gaps that have been identified in their draft national plans in the areas of*
 - a. *energy efficiency, and*
 - b. *renewable energy?*
- 2) *As the governance mechanism provided by the Governance Regulation is a novel process, what should be the modalities of the Council's role in this important process to achieve collectively the EU's energy and climate targets for 2030*
 - a. *before the delivery of the final NECP's, and*
 - b. *after the delivery of the final NECP's?*

The **national energy and climate plans (NECPs)** are a new instrument put in place by the Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action, which entered into force on 24 December 2018. The plans play a key role to **ensure that the EU fulfils its energy and climate targets** and that member states jointly work towards the objectives of the Energy Union.

Member states had to submit their draft NECPs by 31 December 2018. On 18 June 2019, the Commission presented its [Communication "United in delivering the Energy Union and climate action"](#) assessing the draft NECPs as a whole, accompanied by country-specific recommendations. The communication identified a **gap between the national ambition levels and the EU's 2030 targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy**. According to the Commission's assessment, under the current draft plans, the share of renewable energy would reach between 30.4% and 31.9% in 2030 at EU level, while the target is 32%. For energy efficiency, the gap is larger, ranging from 6.2 to 2.3 percentage points difference below the target of 32.5%.

Member states now have until the end of the year to submit their final NECPs. The exchange of views at Council level is part of an ongoing dialogue that aims at finalising the plans and enabling the EU to collectively meet the 2030 targets.

[National Energy and Climate Plans \(European Commission\)](#)

[Regulation on the governance of the energy union and climate action \(EUR-Lex\)](#)

THE ENERGY SECTOR BEYOND 2030: TOWARDS CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

The Presidency intends to hold a **debate on the topic "The energy sector beyond 2030: towards climate neutrality"**. Ministers are invited to discuss how their respective member states are striving towards climate neutrality, especially in the energy sector. They are invited both to engage in a **dialogue on the necessary changes needed, including enablers and incentives, and to share their national best practices**. In order to guide the debate, the Presidency has prepared a [background note](#).

The discussion will be part of the ongoing work on the future of the energy sector in a Europe which moves towards climate neutrality. On 28 November 2018, the Commission published a communication "[A clean planet for all: A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate-neutral economy](#)", which kicked off extensive discussions on the EU's long-term climate vision. The European Council in its [conclusions of 13-14 December 2018](#) invited the Council to work on the elements outlined in the communication. Energy ministers held a policy debate on the communication at the Council meeting on 4 March 2019.

At its meeting on 20 June 2019, the European Council again addressed the topic of climate change, stating in its [conclusions](#) that *"Following the sectoral discussions held over recent months, the European Council invites the Council and the Commission to advance work on the conditions, the incentives and the enabling framework to be put in place so as to ensure a transition to a climate-neutral EU in line with the Paris Agreement that will preserve European competitiveness, be just and socially balanced, take account of Member States' national circumstances and respect their right to decide on their own energy mix, while building on the measures already agreed to achieve the 2030 reduction target."* A footnote clarified that *"for a large majority of Member States, climate neutrality must be achieved by 2050"*.

The Energy Council on 25 June 2019 adopted [conclusions on the future of energy systems in the Energy Union](#), providing a vision for energy policy to 2030 and beyond.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Hydrogen Initiative

The Austrian delegation will provide information on the hydrogen initiative. The hydrogen initiative was proposed by the Austrian Presidency during an informal meeting of energy ministers in Linz, Austria, in September 2018. The current state of play is summarised in an [information note](#) from the Austrian delegation.

[Text of the hydrogen initiative and list of signatories \(pdf\)](#)

Energy Charter Treaty modernisation and review

The delegation of Luxembourg will inform ministers about current developments in the modernisation and review of the Energy Charter Treaty (see the [information note](#)). The Council [adopted negotiating directives](#) for the modernisation of the Energy Charter Treaty on 15 July 2019.

EU security of gas supply ahead of winter 2019-2020

The European Commission will inform ministers about the state of play on the trilateral talks with Russia and Ukraine and their respective gas undertakings regarding a gas transit agreement for the coming winter. The Commission has provided an [information note](#).

The current, 10-year gas transit contract between Gazprom and Naftogaz expires on 1 January 2020. The Commission is facilitating an agreement on the new framework by means of the trilateral talks.

Implementation of nuclear safety recommendations outlined in the EU peer review report of the Belarus NPP 'stress tests'

The Lithuanian delegation will inform about the Belarusian national action plan, which was prepared following a nuclear power plant 'stress test' peer review. The Lithuanian delegation has provided an [information note](#).
