

Background brief

3 November

Environment Council

4 November 2025, Brussels

PRESS

EN

Chair: Lars Aagaard, Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities of Denmark

Commission representative: Wopke Hoekstra, Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth

Starting time: 10:00

Media opportunities:

- Doorstep by Minister Aagaard: +/- 9:00
- Press conference: TTBC

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Main agenda topics:

The main points include a discussion with a view to reaching an agreement on the European Commission's proposal to amend the **European climate law**, which establishes an intermediate net emissions reduction target of 90% for 2040. Ministers will also discuss with a view to approving the **EU nationally determined contribution (NDC)** for 2035, to be submitted to the UNFCCC in view of COP30.

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[Meeting page on the Council website](#)

[Press conferences, doorsteps and other public events in video streaming](#)

[High quality photo and video material](#)

European Climate Law – 2040 climate target (in public session)

The Council is expected to reach an agreement ('general approach') on the proposal to amend the European Climate Law, which introduces an intermediate net greenhouse gas emissions reduction target of **90% for 2040** (compared to 1990).

The Commission proposal outlines the key elements that must be reflected in the future legislative proposals on the post-2030 policy framework to enable member states to achieve the 2040 target. These elements include **flexibilities** such as a possible use of high-quality **international credits** under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, the inclusion of **permanent removals** in the EU ETS to offset residual emissions and enhanced **flexibility between sectors** to support the achievement of targets in a cost-effective way. Additionally, the proposal lays out a series of elements that the Commission should take into account in its proposals for the post-2030 framework, including the need to ensure the **competitiveness of the EU's industry** and a **just and socially fair transition**.

Adopted in 2021, the European climate law set a binding economy-wide **climate neutrality target by 2050**. It also introduced a binding climate target for 2030 of reducing net emissions by at least 55%, while providing for the establishment of an EU-wide intermediate climate target for 2040.

Discussions on the future 2040 target have been ongoing since the publication of the Commission communication 'Europe's 2040 target' on 6 February 2024. More recently, on 23 October 2025 the European Council provided **strategic guidance** on the way forward for establishing a target for 2040. In particular, leaders emphasised the importance of considering:

- the realistic contribution of **carbon removals** to the overall emission reduction effort
- the importance of contributing to the global emission reduction effort **in an ambitious and cost-efficient way**, notably through an adequate level of high-quality **international credits**
- the need for a **revision clause**, in light of latest scientific evidence, technological advances, and evolving challenges to and opportunities for the EU's global competitiveness

The European Council further called on the Commission to further develop the enabling conditions to support European industry and citizens in achieving the 2040 target.

[Proposal to amend the European climate law](#) (European Commission)

[European Council conclusions](#) (23 October 2025)

[European climate law](#)

[Climate change: what the EU is doing](#) (background information)

The EU's NDC for 2035

Ministers will discuss with a view to approving the EU's **updated nationally determined contribution** (NDC) for 2035 to be submitted to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). On 18 September 2025, EU environment ministers approved a **statement of intent**, which confirmed the EU's commitment to the Paris Agreement and indicated that the EU is expected to submit an NDC ahead of COP30 in Belém, Brazil (10–21 November 2025).

NDCs are an integral part of the **Paris Agreement**, which requires each party to communicate its post-2020 climate actions with the aim of advancing towards the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. These documents set out the efforts each country will make to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Parties to the Paris Agreement are required to communicate their NDCs every five years. Based on these submissions, the UNFCCC Secretariat prepares an NDC synthesis report, which provides an overview of global emission reduction commitments and the ambition gap relative to the Paris Agreement goals. The EU submits a single NDC on behalf of member states.

[Paris Agreement: EU submits statement of intent to the UNFCCC on the post-2030 NDC \(press release, 18 September 2025\)](#)

[COP30: Council sets EU position for the climate conference in Belém \(press release, 21 October 2025\)](#)

[Paris Agreement on climate change](#) (background information)

[Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#) (UNFCCC website)

Other points

Austria will inform ministers in public session about the urgent need for the postponement and substantive simplification of the EU deforestation regulation (EUDR)

[Information note](#)

[Commission proposal to revise the EU deforestation regulation](#)