

Press release – Increasing the EU’s 2030 emissions reduction target is necessary and feasible



On Monday, the Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety held a debate with Mr Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President of the Commission, on stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition.

Mr Timmermans presented the Commission’s plan to reduce EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 % by 2030 compared to 1990 levels, as [announced on 17 September](#) in the State of the Union speech by the President of the Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

Currently, emissions are not going down fast enough, Mr Timmermans said, but he underlined that becoming carbon neutral is both feasible and beneficial for the EU. He invited Parliament to confirm the proposed 55 % 2030-target as the EU’s new Nationally Determined Contribution under the Paris Agreement, and to submit this to the UNFCCC by the end of this year.

The Chair [Pascal Canfin](#) (Renew, FR) reminded MEPs that next week [Plenary](#) will vote on a [report](#) by the Environment Committee on the EU Climate Law, which calls for 60 % emission reductions in 2030.

Several MEPs expressed concern that the new 2030-target proposed by the Commission is a net-target, making it less ambitious since actual reductions would be smaller because emissions removed through carbon sinks would also count towards reaching the target. Mr Timmermans defended a net 2030-target, saying carbon sinks are needed to achieve carbon neutrality and are fully in line with international commitments.

MEPs also questioned Mr Timmermans on the likelihood of getting other non-EU countries to follow the EU’s example and increase their climate ambition. Mr

Timmermans replied that we need to make climate action a “race to the top”, informing MEPs that there are interesting initiatives to increase ambition being put forward or in the pipeline in many countries.

Mr Timmermans finally informed MEPs that the Commission would come up with proposals by June 2021 to revise key EU legislation such as the EU Emissions Trading System, energy efficiency and renewable energy policies and strengthening CO2 standards for road vehicles to enable the EU to reach a more ambitious target.

You can see a recorded video of the debate [here](#).

Background

In March 2020, the Commission proposed an [EU climate law](#) that would make it a legal requirement for the EU to become climate-neutral by 2050 as part of the European Green Deal. This follows the December 2019 European Council decision to endorse the 2050 climate-neutrality objective. On 17 September, the Commission [amended its proposal](#) to incorporate a new 2030 emissions reduction target.

Parliament has played an important role in pushing for more ambitious EU climate legislation and declared a [climate emergency](#) on 29 November 2019.