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Europe's new climate proposal lacks ambition and delivers less than business-as-usual emission cuts

Today, the European Commission has released a new proposal for cutting emissions in transport, agriculture and buildings sectors by 2030, and how this effort should be shared between Member States.

This proposal lacks ambition, has more loopholes than anyone expected and will not deliver Europe's contribution to the Paris Agreement. Europe must commit to much more, otherwise its long term 2050 target is not credible.

The draft proposal only targets a 30% reduction in emissions by 2030 against 2005 levels. Sandbag [analysis](#) shows that 50% cuts are achievable and can be delivered cost-effectively. The 30% target implies just a 4% cut in emissions beyond BAU between 2021-2030. But it's even worse than that; Sandbag calculates **the Commission has thrown in so many loopholes through new flexibilities, that the new policy wouldn't require any emission cuts beyond BAU at all.**

The proposal would allow a flood of emission credits from elsewhere to dilute the EU's climate ambition. In particular, credits from forestry and the Emissions Trading System (ETS) would mean that some Member States would do nothing to reduce their emissions at all against BAU. The proposal also increases the 2021 allocations for certain Member States that were already allowed to increase their emissions in the period to 2020, and despite the fact that the Commission already establishes their national reduction targets based on the relative GDP/capita for solidarity reasons. This is hugely unfair; it is not creating a level playing field and is storing up trouble because, much greater and costlier emission reductions will be needed between 2030 and 2050.

Collectively, **these flexibilities would add 420Mt CO₂e to the total budget** and would mean that there is no need for Europe to reduce its emissions as a whole.

Sandbag welcomes that the proposal will not allow the vast surplus of annual allocations from the first phase of the effort sharing policy to be carried over. This is vital for the integrity of EU climate policy. The Commission also plans to recalculate the starting point against actual emissions as they stand between 2016-2018, rather than what they were forecast to be. This is a positive step, but must not reward those Member States who fail to meet their 2020 targets.

Debbie Stockwell, Managing Director of Sandbag, commented:

“The Commission’s proposal simply does not go far enough. In the light of the Paris Agreement, Europe must be more ambitious in cutting emissions, delivering up to 50% by 2030, and make it easier for Member States to meet targets by including flexibilities that drive cost-effective emission reductions.

The flexibilities proposed don’t do that - they provide loopholes which mean that Europe doesn’t have to make any additional effort to reduce emissions and will mean that emission reductions will need to happen more quickly, at greater cost after 2030.”

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Notes to editors

1. **What is the new proposal?** The proposal is for a new Regulation for annual greenhouse gas emission reductions for Member States for the sectors not included in the EU Emissions Trading System, for the period 2021-30. This Regulation covers approximately 60% of EU emissions, in transport, buildings, agriculture, and waste.
2. The proposal builds on the Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) which was introduced in the EU 2020 Climate and Energy Package in 2009. The ESD between 2013 and 2020 has a target of reducing emissions by 10% compared to 2005 levels. The target is made up of individual targets for each Member State. These are based on historic emissions weighted by GDP/capita, with Member States with lower GDP having less stringent targets. Targets are expressed in tonnes in the form of Annual Emissions Allocations (AEAs).
3. **What is the European Project-Based Mechanism (EPM)?** A domestic offsetting mechanism, in which a project in a host Member State would generate credits which other Member States would buy. This way Member States with higher than the EU average targets and limited cost-efficient emission reduction potential would be able to meet their targets, while the host countries would benefit from the increased investment flows in their economies.
4. Sandbag’s recent ESD reports: [The Effort Sharing Dinosaur](#) (May 2016) and [Bend it, Don’t break it](#) (July 2016).

About Sandbag

Sandbag is a London and Brussels-based not-for-profit think tank conducting research and campaigning for environmentally effective climate policies. Our research focus includes reforming the EU Emissions Trading System and the Effort Sharing Decision; accelerating the phase-out of old coal in Europe; deep decarbonisation of industry through technologies including Carbon Capture and Storage. For more information, visit our website at sandbag.org.uk or email us at info@sandbag.org.uk