

ZEP comment on a “European Climate Law – achieving climate neutrality by 2050”

The Zero Emissions Platform (ZEP) is a European Technology and Innovation Platform (ETIP) under the Commission’s Strategic Energy Technologies Plan (SET-Plan), and acts as the EU’s technical adviser on the deployment of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), and Carbon Capture and Utilisation (CCU).

A European Climate Law to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 – It is important to act now

ZEP supports the European Commission’s objective of net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 and welcomes the plan to present a European Climate Law to achieve climate-neutrality by 2050, as announced in the Communication on a European Green Deal¹.

As a legally binding piece of legislation, the Climate Law should provide a legal framework for joint European climate action to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. It will be crucial to harmonise existing legislations such as the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), the EU ETS Directive and the Effort Sharing Regulation, in compliance with the new EU climate targets. This would include resetting intermediate targets of said regulations and directives, if needed. There should be consistency and harmonisation between the European and national legislative frameworks in the goal of net-zero GHG emissions by 2050.

Achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 requires significant investments in research², development and deployment of ready-to-use low-carbon technologies, as well as urgent actions on all emissions, including the hard to mitigate sectors such as heating of buildings and energy intensive industries, heavy-duty and maritime transport. Alongside these priorities, there is also a need to support carbon removal technologies. More funding mechanisms and resources will need to be mobilised to support the transition towards net-zero.

The timeframe to 2050 means that it is essential to address the emissions we generate with available solutions as fast as possible, and CCS and CCU technologies play a crucial role in all the reference scenarios of the European Commission that achieve a below 2-degree target³.

European Climate Law – The urgent deployment of CCS technologies and the deployment of a CO₂ storage and transport infrastructure are crucial

The European Commission has set out its vision for a climate-neutral 2050, including CCS and CCU in several of its modelled scenarios. In particular, the only climate modelling scenarios which achieve the 1.5° target, include large-scale deployment of CCS and CCU technologies in Europe.

¹ European Commission’s communication on European Green Deal. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf

² European Commission’s communication on “United in delivering the Energy Union and Climate Action - Setting the foundations for a successful clean energy transition”. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1565713062913&uri=CELEX:52019DC0285>

³ European Commission, 2018. A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/clima/sites/clima/files/docs/pages/com_2018_733_en.pdf

For Europe to achieve net-zero by 2050, urgent deployment of CCS technologies including CO₂ storage and transport infrastructure is crucial⁴. Large-scale deployment of CCS will be needed to ensure a competitive, industrial decarbonisation path and to safeguard EU's economic competitiveness. The urgent roll-out of CO₂ transport and storage infrastructure will ultimately unlock the benefits of CCS and CCU for the industrial sectors.

CCS technologies will support the transition to low-carbon industrial, transport and heating sectors by enabling the production of early, large-scale low-carbon hydrogen from natural gas. Additionally, CCS technologies can be implemented to enable climate positive solutions (negative emissions).

Intermediate targets, implementation and monitoring progress should be consistent with net-zero GHG emissions by 2050

The European Parliament's resolution on European Green Deal⁵ calls on the European Commission to "include of intermediate EU targets for 2030 and 2040 by the time of the adoption by the co-legislators, based on impact assessments as well as a strong governance framework".

ZEP believes that the European Commission should adopt intermediate targets which should be subject to impact assessment and, when needed, revisions to ensure consistency with the goal of net-zero GHG emissions by 2050.

Given the European Commission's ambition to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050, the new European Climate Law should strive to set the foundations for decarbonisation at scale. Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden increased their national 2030 greenhouse gas targets to be consistent with their long-term targets. France and the United Kingdom have established legally binding 2050 targets in their domestic legislation. Denmark, Spain, France, Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden aim for climate neutrality at the latest by 2050. Other Member States with 2050 decarbonisation objectives include Czechia, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, and Finland⁶.

This reinforces the role of the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) as a mechanism to implement and monitor the progress of the new Climate Law. There is already an existing structure for the NECPs, surrounded by a robust and transparent reporting legislative mechanism, where both Member States and the European Commission are involved.

⁴ ZEP report on "The Role of CCUS in a below 2-degrees Scenario", available at: <https://zeroemissionsplatform.eu/role-of-ccus-in-a-below-2-degrees-scenario/>; European Parliament Environment Committee's Report on "European Policies on Climate and Energy towards 2030, 2040 and 2050", available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/631047/IPOL_BRI\(2019\)631047_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/631047/IPOL_BRI(2019)631047_EN.pdf)

⁵ European Parliament resolution on European Green Deal. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0005_EN.html

⁶ European Commission's communication on "United in delivering the Energy Union and Climate Action - Setting the foundations for a successful clean energy transition". Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1565713062913&uri=CELEX:52019DC0285>