



# EU national climate plans well below par, study reveals



*Miguel Arias Canete, EU Commissioner for Energy and Climate Action, checks a USB memory stick received from organisers prior to the start of an informal meeting of EU energy ministers in Bucharest, Romania, 02 April 2019. [EPA-EFE/ROBERT GHEMENT]*

Of the 28 draft national energy and climate plans submitted by EU member states, not a single one is on a pathway to reach net-zero emission by 2050, according to a fresh analysis published on Thursday (16 May).

Spain is the only EU country holding its head above water, scoring 52% across a range of indicators comprising the overall carbon reduction goal, the level of detail of proposed policy measures and the inclusiveness of the drafting process.

All the other plans score below 50%, according to the study commissioned by the European Climate Foundation and conducted by the Ecologic Institute in Germany and Climact, a Belgium-based engineering consultancy.

After Spain, France comes second, with 47%, followed by Greece (44%) and Sweden (43%). The Slovenian climate plan comes in last with a score of 3%, while Slovakia (12%) and Germany (12%) hardly fare better. The average score for the EU as a whole is 29%.

While the analysis shows that countries are taking steps towards climate action by 2030, “they do not yet live up to the ambitions set by EU legislators and the Paris Agreement,” the study says.

“Our work shows that the EU member states are clearly not in line with a net-zero 2050 trajectory or any of the scientific findings of the IPCC 1.5C Report,” said Julien Pestiaux of Climact, one of the authors of the study.

“With a few notable exceptions, they also show low ambition when it comes to concretely reaching their renewables and energy efficiency targets and fall short of properly supporting the climate and energy transition required in Europe,” Pestiaux said.

Frequent issues include overly timid steps to phase out coal and fossil fuel subsidies, insufficient indications on investments in clean technologies, over-reliance on unsustainable biomass, and inadequate public consultation.

There was also a general lack of explicit effort to back-cast plans from the EU’s 2050 carbon neutrality goal, the analysis found.

“Europe has a clear target: 32% renewable energy by 2030,” said Viktoriya Kerelska, head of advocacy at WindEurope, a trade association. But while the draft national energy and climate plans are supposed to translate this ambition into reality, “none of them give enough detail on the policy measures” that will be implemented to achieve those goals, she warned.

“Without the details, the plans just aren’t meaningful,” Kerelska said, calling on national governments to tell the industry when renewable energy auctions are happening, how permitting will be made easier, or how heating and transport will be decarbonised.

“This gives investors certainty to plan ahead and further reduce costs. It means jobs: building on the 300,000 people working in wind energy in Europe,” Kerelska said.

The European Commission is expected to publish an assessment of the plans in the first half of June. Brussels can suggest amendments to the draft plans, leaving EU countries time to submit a final version before the end of the year.

It is the first time that European countries go through the national planning process since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015.

*[Edited by Zoran Radosavljevic]*

## Further Reading

- **European Climate Foundation:** Planning for net zero: Assessing the draft national energy and climate plans (16 May 2019)
- **European Commission:** National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)

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