



# European Commission's draft EU Long Term Strategy and the Paris Agreement

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November 2018

## 1. Three scenarios

The Commission is expected to present three scenarios in its draft Long term Climate Strategy:

- **A very low ambition scenario**, aiming at greenhouse gas emission reductions of 80% by 2050, compared to 1990; this scenario equals the ambition level of the current low carbon roadmap adopted in 2011;
- **A low ambition scenario** aiming at achieving greenhouse gas emission reductions of between 85% and 90% by 2050 and reaching net zero after 2050; and,
- **A medium ambition scenario** aiming at achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

## 2. Net zero by 2050 equals -95%

Net zero entails a combination of: efforts to reduce emissions (the traditional EU targets) and efforts to remove emissions from the atmosphere, typically brought about by forest and land management. Such removals have been at the level of at least 5% (of 1990 levels) since 2005<sup>1</sup>, and are projected to increase in the run up to 2050. This means that to achieve net zero, no more than 95% emission reductions would be needed.

## 3. Net zero by 2050 is the upper end of 2°C compatible pathways

The net zero (or 95% reduction) scenario is a clear improvement compared to the 2011 roadmap. Opting for this scenario would bring the EU closer to its obligations under the goal to keep temperature rise below 2°C<sup>2</sup>.

## 4. All three scenarios reflect the 2°C range, but not the full range of 1.5°C compatible pathway

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1. EEA. Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990–2016 and inventory report 2018. Submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat (May 2018)

2. Environment Council Conclusions (October 2010): "UNDERLINES that, according to the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its Fourth Assessment Report, to stay below 2°C requires that global greenhouse gas emissions peak by 2020 at the latest, are reduced by at least 50% compared with 1990 by 2050 and continue to decline thereafter; developed countries as a group should reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 80% to 95% by 2050 below 1990 levels."



As recognised by EU Heads of State and Government already in 2009 and several times thereafter<sup>3</sup>, the global effort to keep temperature rise below 2°C would require the EU to reduce emissions by between 80% and 95% (based on the 2007 4th Assessment Report of the IPCC). The currently proposed scenarios for 80% and 95% emission reductions should thus have featured in the 2011 roadmap<sup>4</sup>, and come seven years late.

### 5. Paris Agreement and IPCC Special report require 1.5°C- compatible action

A lot has happened since 2011. In particular, the world has adopted and ratified the Paris Agreement, in which all EU Member States agreed to pursue efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C<sup>5</sup>; and countries have adopted the IPCC's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, which indicated new pathways compatible with 1.5°C.

### 6. The Long Term Strategy is the tool to identify how to pursue efforts towards 1.5°C

The draft Long Term Strategy is the ideal opportunity for the EU to identify how it could pursue efforts to limit temperature to 1.5°C. At the moment, the adoption of the Long Term Strategy is the only political process through which the EU can show it is pursuing efforts towards 1.5°C. If not in this strategy, where else will the EU do this?

### 7. IPCC 1.5°C compatible scenarios go beyond net zero by 2050

The IPCC SR1.5 assessed available scenarios that would allow the world to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C by the end of the century, with the lowest possible risk of overshooting this threshold between now and 2100. By doing so, it identified that the safest pathway and thus the lowest end of the range would need global emissions to reach net zero already by 2044. This pathway would avoid an excessive overshoot of the 1.5°C threshold and would reduce reliance on unproven carbon removal technologies.

### 8. IPCC 1.5°C compatible scenarios need EU to look at going to net zero by 2040

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3. European Council Conclusions (February 2011): "The European Council looked forward to the elaboration of a low carbon 2050 strategy providing the framework for the longer term action in the energy and other related sectors. Reaching the EU objective, in the context of necessary reductions according to the IPCC by developed countries as a group, of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 as agreed in October 2009 will require a revolution in energy systems, which must start now."

4. European Commission: A Roadmap for moving to a competitive low-carbon economy in 2050 (March 2011): "It presents a Roadmap for possible action up to 2050 which could enable the EU to deliver greenhouse gas reductions in line with the 80 to 95% target agreed. It outlines milestones which would show whether the EU is on course for reaching its target, policy challenges, investment needs and opportunities in different sectors, bearing in mind that the 80 to 95% reduction objective in the EU will largely need to be met internally."

5. Paris Agreement (December 2015): "This Agreement, in enhancing the implementation of the Convention, including its objective, aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change."



As the EU is expected to move faster than the global average, a true effort to look at the full range of 1.5°C compatible scenarios would need the EU to examine how it can achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040. Such a scenario is clearly missing from the draft Long Term Strategy.

### **9. IPCC 1.5°C compatible scenarios need substantial increase of the EU's 2030 target**

The IPCC also clearly indicates that whatever the level of ambition in the longer term, if countries do not substantially increase their 2030 targets, the 1.5°C threshold will be out of reach<sup>6</sup>. The draft Long Term Strategy will likely not include a proposal to substantially increase the 2030 target and thus, in order to ensure the EU contributes to the effort to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C, the Commission would need to initiate a process to develop the necessary targets, policies and measures that would allow full implementation of the net zero target.

### **10. Net zero by 2050 is likely not enough for full implementation of the Paris Agreement**

While a net zero by 2050 scenario would be a clear improvement as compared to the current roadmap and the current 2030 target that has been derived from it, this scenario would likely not be sufficient to meet the EU's fair share of efforts to keep temperature rise below 1.5°C.

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**Climate Action Network Europe** is Europe's leading NGO coalition fighting dangerous climate change. With over 150 member organisations from 35 European countries, representing over 1.700 NGOs and more than 40 million citizens, CAN Europe promotes sustainable climate, energy and development policies throughout Europe.

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6. IPCC: Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C. SPM: "Pathways reflecting current nationally stated mitigation ambitions would not limit global warming to 1.5°C, even if supplemented by very challenging increases in the scale and ambition of emissions reductions after 2030."