



October 2021

MEDIA BRIEFING

Science shows once again that the 1.5°C goal is still alive, but requires steep emission reductions by 2030

- To date, governments have put forward unambitious climate targets that are not sufficient to meet the Paris Agreement long term temperature goal, according to the latest available science. At the moment they put the world on a path to approximately [2.4 to 2.7°C of warming](#).
- With this [new report](#), “**1.5°C Pathways for Europe: Achieving the highest plausible climate ambition**”, the scientists at Climate Analytics show us once again that there are feasible decarbonisation pathways that can put the EU and its Member States on track for meeting the climate goal of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C by the end of this century.
- The latest science shows that the 1.5°C goal is still within reach and that there are several pathways that can bring us there. All of these pathways entail steep emission reductions by 2030, reflecting the fact that we have entered the critical decade, during which action to reduce emissions must be drastically scaled up. A quick multiplication of renewable energy capacities is a prerequisite for 1.5°C compatible pathways.
- In late 2020, the European Union’s leaders agreed to increase the EU’s 2030 climate target from at least 40% to at least 55% (net) emission cuts (both compared to 1990). This is a step in the right direction, yet it is still not enough for the EU to comply with its commitment and limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C.
- In July this year, the European Commission released a package of revisions of climate and energy laws and additional regulations, the so called ‘Fit for 55’, for the purpose of achieving this higher target. The legislative proposals in the ‘Fit for 55’ package must

still be reviewed and approved by the European Parliament and Council when it will be formally adopted as EU legislation.

- The ongoing legislative process is the window of opportunity for the EU to align its laws with the highest plausible climate ambition for Europe that is proven to be technically feasible.
- As a rich economy, as well as a major historical emitter, the EU should strive for emission reductions of at least 65% below 1990 levels by 2030. Only such a substantial cut will represent the EU's fair contribution to achieving the Paris Agreement goal, as illustrated by Climate Analytics [new report](#).

What are the key findings from the '1.5°C Pathways for Europe'?

Existing scenarios show that the EU and its Member States can choose from a broad range of available solutions and technologies to be on a 1.5°C compatible pathway.

The key ingredients are:

- Sharp emission reductions, which are not only urgently required but fully possible to get on track towards net zero emissions by 2040.
- A phase-out of fossil fuels across all sectors (industry, buildings, transport) and a switch to a 100% renewable energy supply by 2040. The electricity sector should be the forerunner, quickly decarbonising with 100% renewable power by 2030.
- A mobilisation of the EU's energy savings potential to halve our current energy demand by 2040.

What do the key findings mean for policy makers?

The time dimension is crucial. Regardless of the technology choice, there is one piece of evidence: if the EU strongly reduces its energy consumption while multiplying its renewable energy capacities *during this decade*, the EU can still contribute its fair share to limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. The 'Fit for 55' package needs to become a 'Fit for 1.5 package'.

In parallel, Member States urgently need to ramp up their national targets and policies. [CAN Europe's National Energy and Climate Plans \(NECP\) tracker](#) shows that some Member States are already doing better in sectoral emission reduction targets than their own NECP projections. In Portugal, emissions are reducing faster than the NECP is projecting for the buildings, the energy and waste sectors. The same goes for Spain for the buildings and energy sectors. In Estonia, the share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption is also highly underestimated. CAN Europe's NECP tracker therefore indicates that Member States can set much more ambitious sectoral emissions reduction and energy targets in future

updates of their NECPs. Striving towards a 100% renewable energy supply would allow all Member States to harvest the multiple benefits of Europe's energy transition.

Is the EU's current 2030 climate target enough to avoid dangerous climate change?

No. Even with the EU's enhanced target of at least 55% net emission reductions by 2030, as well as with the pledges from other major emitters, the world is still heading towards a global temperature rise of at least 2.4°C by the end of this century.

It has been estimated that such a dramatic temperature increase trajectory will cause 8.0% GDP loss in Europe already by 2050¹. In order to contribute its fair share under the Paris Agreement, the EU should therefore strive for emission reductions of [at least 65% by 2030](#). Only such a substantial cut and ramping up assistance to achieving emission reductions in developing countries will represent the EU's [fair share contribution](#) to achieving the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal

Is meeting a target of at least 65% emission reductions by 2030 feasible?

Yes. Multiple studies, including Climate Analytics' most [recent publication](#), indicate that a target of at least a 65% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the EU below 1990 levels by 2030 is achievable². Stronger EU legislation would give all market players and stakeholders the certainty and the direction they need in order to make the right, future-proof investments. This is a prerequisite for a just transformation of our societies and economies.

How costly will this profound transformation of our energy system be?

Investing in energy savings and renewable energy clearly brings about benefits for the people and the environment. The costs of the required transformation are far out shadowed by the costs of inaction or delayed action. A fully renewable energy system avoids costs of environmental damage in the EU, e.g. from weather extremes, amounting to €10,000 billion by 2050³. The continued use of fossil fuels would only increase the bill for our economies. One of the world's biggest insurance groups, Swiss RE⁴, estimates that a 2.5°C temperature increase will cause 8.0% GDP loss in Europe by 2050.

¹ [Swiss Re Institute: The economics of climate change, April 2021.](#)

² A selection of studies can be found in our factsheet '[Science shows 65% emission reductions by 2030 is feasible and pays off](#)', September 2020. . The studies include our [Paris Agreement Compatible \(PAC\) energy scenario, June 2020](#).

³ [German Institute for Economic Research \(DIW\): Make the European Green Deal real, June 2020.](#)

⁴[Swiss Re Institute: The economics of climate change, April 2021.](#)

Another example of this is given in the Hungarian national long term strategy. The [national strategy](#) includes a thorough overview of the costs and co-benefits of climate action and states that “considering avoided costs and added benefits, early climate action would be the most cost-effective scenario.”

The [sky-rocketing energy prices](#) all over Europe, mainly due to soaring fossil gas prices, add further to the arguments on why the EU needs to accelerate the energy transition. In order to cut energy costs in the long term, we need to massively reduce our demand and replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources. That is exactly what we also need to do to keep on track with the 1.5°C objective.

What needs to happen before/at COP26? to expect from the climate talks in Glasgow (COP26)?

The EU27 and its Member States now have an opportunity to light a path forward for the rest of the world to follow, but it will require political courage to embrace the highest plausible climate ambition.

In addition to setting stronger emission reduction targets and adopting more stringent policies to achieve them, wealthy countries like most in the EU have an obligation, under the fair share and equity considerations embedded in the Paris Agreement, to assist less wealthy countries to rapidly reduce their own emissions. Without such assistance, the global climate mitigation burden required to limit warming to 1.5°C will be distributed unfairly and will be unlikely to be met in time.

Ahead of the COP26, European governments need to significantly increase climate finance to contribute to the \$100 bn goal for developing countries.

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