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# Commission renews push for 2030 renewables target

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The European Commission has put its full weight behind a new target to raise the share of renewables in the continent's energy mix by 2030.

## Background

The EU has set itself a legally binding goal for 2020 of reducing its CO2 emissions by 20% and increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix by the same amount, both measured against 1990 levels.

A target of a 20% increase in energy efficiency has also been set but it is not legally enforceable. The low carbon roadmap in March this year stated that if it were met, emissions cuts would automatically rise to 25%, five percentage points above the target.

In October 2009, EU leaders endorsed a long-term target of reducing collective developed country emissions by 80-95% by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. This is in line with the recommendations of the UN's scientific arm - the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - for preventing catastrophic changes to the Earth's climate.

The security that this would provide to potential investors was "more important than ever", EU Climate Action Commissioner Connie Hedegaard told a launch for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)'s renewable energies report in Brussels.

Hedegaard spoke favourably about a recent call by the renewables industry for a legally-binding target of 45% renewables by 2030, but stopped short of endorsing it.

"Where exactly the figure will be, we should discuss and analyse," she said. "But I will say that I will do whatever I can to get this discussion reflected in the energy roadmap that will come out later this year for 2050."

In March, Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger told EurActiv that in this document, the Commission would propose "a long-term target for 2030 and 2040 and 2050 and there will be a higher target for renewable energy".

Speaking in a videotaped address to the conference, he said that Brussels had to consider renewables targets for 2030 if clean energy growth was to be continued.

"The renewable energy industry has already called for 45%," he said. "Our current work will review all the literature and explore different possible pathways for the European Union."

The European Commission's president, José Manuel Barroso, added his voice to the fray, telling the meeting that "2020 is already around the corner and we need to think of intermediate steps up to 2050".

"We need not only to think but to act," he added.

### **Binding targets**

The EU's Low Carbon Roadmap for 2050 already has a non-binding target for 40% CO2 emissions cuts by 2030 and Hedegaard called on EU ministers to approve this "absolutely crucial" milestone at the EU Environment Council next week.

There was even a hint that she would push for it to be made binding.

"I don't think it is a coincidence," she said, "that we are on track when it comes to the binding [2020] renewables target but [not] the non-binding energy efficiency target. That indicates how important binding targets are."

Renewable energy associations have long called for targets to be firmed up for 2030, so as to ring-fence investment and lock Europe into a strategy for containing global warming to 2°C, above which its effects could be catastrophic.

Their efforts may have been indirectly aided by a recent study indicating that CO2 cuts in the developed world have been illusions bought at the expense of outsourced pollution elsewhere.

***Arthur Neslen***

### **Next Steps**

- **21 June 2011:** EU environment ministers discuss 2030 targets.
- **Autumn 2011:** European Commission releases its Energy Roadmap for 2050.

### **Links**

European Union

- European Commission: [A roadmap for moving to a low carbon economy in 2050](#)  
[European Commission](#)

Business & Industry

- [European Renewable Energy Council \(EREC\)](#)

International Organisations

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): [SRREN: Full Report](#)
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): [Summary for Policy Makers](#)