

RGI position on increased EU greenhouse gas emissions target

The European Parliament has voted in favor of an increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction target to at least 60% by 2030. This position has raised the bar further in relation to the European Commission's recent proposal of a target increase to at least 55%, and only partially met the request of some environmental and climate NGOs, who advocate for a 65% reduction¹ and youth movements, who demand an 80 % cut².

The Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI) strongly supports an increase of the GHG emission reduction target as an important stepping stone towards a 2050 climate neutrality goal. We encourage all parties involved in the next steps of the negotiations to adopt a collaborative and constructive approach. No matter what the final outcome may be, it is important that the present target of a 40% reduction by 2030 is strengthened significantly in order to stand an economically and socially effective chance of becoming the "first net-zero continent" by 2050, as announced by both the European Commission and Parliament.

In order to reach climate neutrality, it is not sufficient to only increase the 2030 GHG reduction target. Today, fossil fuel energy is still responsible for about 75% of all EU GHG emissions. Therefore, the EU power sector has to reduce drastically its carbon pollution by 2030 through adequate support to the needed development and deployment of variable renewable energy and efficiency measures. **RGI calls on the EU and governments to a) develop a series of comprehensive legal packages, such as specific sectoral policies, standards, finance support and market mechanisms, and regulations, b) remove the corresponding existing barriers, c) apply the 'do no harm' principle.**

RGI believes that a net-zero Europe by mid-century requires strong growth of the electricity sector, starting as soon as possible, to potentially cover major parts of the present non-electrified sectors like industry, housing and transport. **The exponential growth of the electricity sector additionally requires a strong boost for renewable energy sources, for the deployment of the enabling infrastructure as well as a variety of system services.** In particular, the development of electricity grids with maximum consideration for nature protection is necessary to support and enable the integration of rapidly growing renewable energy sources and an efficient way to reach a climate neutral economy.

RGI knows from experience that achieving such high targets is possible if all actors contribute actively. Therefore, it is necessary that governments stimulate both industries and citizens to contribute to the achievement of higher targets, be it through large scale renewable deployment, new flexibility services, decentralised community projects and/or individually owned rooftop installations. The active participation of civil society and citizens, along with the respect of rigorous principles of environmental protection, are essential to enable a sustainable and just transition.

¹ <https://www.caneurope.org/docman/climate-energy-targets/3645-can-europe-65percent-is-feasible-sep20/file>

² <https://eci.fridaysforfuture.org/en/>