

NGOs publish best practice principles on LULUCF in 2030 climate and energy package

Today the EU's Heads of State agreed on the main elements of EU's 2030 climate and energy package and decided that policies for the land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector will be established before 2020. At the same time, nine NGOs publish best practice principles for how best to deal with LULUCF in the EU's climate framework. Tackling the climate impact of the LULUCF sector should enhance the ambition of the overall climate framework while ensuring the full environmental value of EU land, wetlands and forests, according to the nine NGOs.

Tackling the climate impact of the LULUCF sector must be additional to the mitigation efforts in other sectors and can thereby enhance the ambition of the overall EU climate framework. This is best done in a separate pillar, as the LULUCF sector has certain characteristics (such as large annual fluctuations, long-time horizons, and uncertainties relating to data reliabilities) that make the sector unfit for inclusion in the annual binding compliance cycle of the Effort Sharing Decision.ⁱ In addition, LULUCF is the only sector that registers both emissions and removals. If it were to be included in the Effort Sharing Decision, the net sink function of the LULUCF sector could be used to displace the mitigation efforts in our housing, transport and agricultural sectors, leading to continued carbon dependency in these sectors.

Any action on LULUCF must also give equal attention to reducing emissions by restoring degraded ecosystems and to maintaining the EU's carbon sink. At this moment, significant emissions are being released from degraded peatlands and other important ecosystems. The signatory NGOs believe the LULUCF sector should be recognised both for its climate mitigation value and for its other environmental values, and that any measures regarding LULUCF should consider both elements.

To address LULUCF in the EU, the NGO document makes the following recommendations:

1. Deal with LULUCF as part of a separate land use pillar to avoid the EU's LULUCF sink being used to reduce mitigation effort in other sectors.
2. Rules governing the accounting of LULUCF removals must be transparent, complete, consistent, and be calculated against a historical baseline instead of a projected baseline.
3. LULUCF action should prioritise activities that reduce emissions, such as rewetting peatlands.
4. LULUCF action should prioritise activities that have environmental co-benefits such as increasing agro-ecological farming practices and rewetting peatlands.
5. Policies should prioritise addressing the drivers of forest loss and degradation, peatland drainage and land-use changes.

The paper also makes recommendations for the EU to effectively tackle global LULUCF emissions. The NGOs recommend that the EU look at its significant impact on forests and land in third countries through trade, finance and consumption patterns. In doing so, it can play a major role in mitigating climate change by reducing pressure on land and ecosystems globally.

Notes to editors:

- For a copy of the principles, visit: www.fern.org/LULUCFPrinciples
- Signatory organisations: Ara, Carbon Market Watch, Change Partnership, Client Earth, European Environmental Bureau, FERN, IFOAM, Quercus, Wetlands International
- For more information contact: FERN: Hannah Mowat, hannah@fern.org +32 (0)485025432
Wetlands International: Marcel Silvius, Marcel.Silvius@wetlands.org +31 (0) 318 660 910

ⁱ Sectors currently are capped by two different instruments that make up EU climate legislation, the EU ETS and the ESD. Under the EU ETS, over 11,000 energy-using installations in the power generation and manufacturing industry are capped as well as flights to and from the EU and the three EEA-EFTA states. Under the ESD, emissions related to transport, buildings, waste and non-co2 emissions from agriculture, which mostly come from cattle (methane) and synthetic fertilizer (nitrous oxide).