

EU Leaders Agree to Cut Greenhouse Gas Emissions By 40% by 2030

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European Union (EU) leaders recently reached agreement to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40 percent by 2030 as compared with 1990 levels. The leaders also agreed a binding, at the EU level, target to obtain at least 27 percent of the EU's energy from renewable sources by 2030 and a voluntary target to cut energy use by at least 27 percent as against baseline levels. The agreement expanded the number of EU member states with emissions targets beyond 2020 from five to 28 – the entire EU bloc.

To achieve the agreement's overall binding 40 percent reduction target, power companies and other industries covered by the EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS) will be required to reduce their emissions by 43 percent compared with 2005 levels. Emissions from sectors outside the ETS, such as buildings and infrastructure, will be required to be reduced by 30 percent compared with 2005 levels. These headline EU level figures are to be translated into individual member state targets by 2021.

The United Kingdom government had a stated aim shared by a number of other member states, to ensure flexibility in the U.K. energy mix. The government appears to have achieved that goal. Under the agreement, member states will be able to de-carbonise in a manner of their choosing, for example by favouring, nuclear power over renewable energy.

In terms of the UK government's response, Ed Davey, the UK's Energy Secretary, described the agreement as being "good for consumers" as it would allow the UK to "decarbonise at the lowest possible cost using a diverse mix of technologies." Mr Davey added that, for businesses, the agreement "provides the certainty they have been calling for to unlock billions in low carbon investment".

The European Council's outline of the agreement is available [here](#).

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