

Annual work programme 2025

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1 The European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change

1.1 Role of the Advisory Board

The European Climate Law ⁽¹⁾, adopted in June 2021, enshrines into law the objective of the European Union (EU) to become climate neutral and climate-resilient at the latest by 2050. The law also establishes a European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (the 'Advisory Board') to underpin the EU's climate action and efforts with independent scientific expertise and the best available, up-to-date and transparent evidence on possible pathways, targets and policy measures. It is formally established through an amendment of the founding regulation of the European Environment Agency (EEA) ⁽²⁾, introduced in Article 12 of the European Climate Law.

Article 3(1) of the European Climate Law defines the role of the Advisory Board as follows:

The European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change (the 'Advisory Board') shall serve as a point of reference for the Union on scientific knowledge relating to climate change by virtue of its independence and scientific and technical expertise.

The Advisory Board is an independent body providing the EU with scientific knowledge, expertise and advice relating to climate change. The Advisory Board evaluates policies and identifies actions and opportunities to successfully achieve the EU's climate targets. It was established in 2021 by the European Climate Law and consists of 15 independent senior scientific experts covering a broad range of relevant disciplines.

The members of the Advisory Board give their positions independently of the Member States and the EU institutions.

1.2 Work and tasks of the Advisory Board

The tasks of the Advisory Board are broadly defined in Article 3(2) of the European Climate Law. They include:

- (a) considering the latest scientific findings of the IPCC reports and scientific climate data, in particular with regard to information relevant to the European Union (EU);
- (b) providing scientific advice and issuing reports on existing and proposed EU measures, climate targets and indicative greenhouse gas budgets, and their coherence with the objectives of this Regulation and the EU's international commitments under the Paris Agreement;
- (c) contributing to the exchange of independent scientific knowledge in the field of modelling, monitoring, promising research and innovation which contribute to reducing emissions or increasing removals;
- (d) identifying actions and opportunities needed to successfully achieve the EU climate targets;
- (e) raising awareness on climate change and its impacts, as well as stimulating dialogue and cooperation between scientific bodies within the EU, complementing existing work and efforts.

To provide robust and sound evaluation and advice and to explore pathways to achieve climate neutrality and climate resilience in a just, socially balanced, fair and cost-effective manner, the Advisory Board is guided in its work by the best available and most recent scientific evidence, including the latest

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999.

² Regulation (EC) No 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the European Environment Agency and the European Environment Information and Observation Network.

reports of the IPCC, IPBES and other international bodies. It also builds on data and knowledge available from European research, technology and innovation networks. The Advisory Board seeks to avoid any overlap in its mission with that of the IPCC at international level ⁽³⁾, and to complement the work of the EEA. It also considers, where available, the work of national climate advisory bodies. The Advisory Board follows a fully transparent process and make its reports publicly available.

1.3 Composition of the Advisory Board

The 15 members of the Advisory Board were designated on 24 March 2022 by the Management Board of the EEA. They were appointed in a personal capacity for a term of four years, renewable once. As required by the European Climate Law, there are no more than two members of the Advisory Board holding the nationality of the same Member State. The members have elected a chairperson and two vice-chairpersons among themselves. The 15 independent senior scientific experts composing the Advisory Board are:

- Ottmar Edenhofer, chair (German)
- Laura Díaz Anadón, vice-chair (Spanish, American)
- Jette Bredahl Jacobsen, vice-chair (Danish)
- Maarten van Aalst (Dutch)
- Constantinos Cartalis (Greek)
- Suraje Rauto Dessai (Portuguese, British)
- Vera Eory (Hungarian, British)
- Edgar Hertwich (Austrian)
- Lena Kitzing (Danish, German)
- Elena López-Gunn (Spanish, British)
- Lars J. Nilsson (Swedish)
- Keywan Riahi (Austrian)
- Joeri Rogelj (Belgian)
- Nicolaas Schrijver (Dutch)
- Jean-Francois Soussana (French)

[Short biographies of the members](#) of the Advisory Board are presented on the Advisory Board's website.

1.4 Resources of the Advisory Board

The Advisory Board's expenditure is included in the EEA budget, and the Advisory Board acts independently in discharging its tasks. This expenditure supports the functioning of a Secretariat, hosted by the EEA, of 14 full-time staff. It also includes an annual functioning budget of EUR 500 000 to support a wide range of tasks, including communication, website maintenance, publishing reports, dissemination and outreach, Advisory Board members' travel and accommodation expenses, as well as honorarium for Advisory Board members in relation to e.g., participation to meetings.

³ See recital 24 of the European Climate Law

2 Implementation of the 2024 work programme

2.1 Short overview of the 2024 work programme

In its 2024 work programme, the Advisory Board identified the following topics for its 2024 work:

1. EU 2040 target – follow up on the Advisory Board’s contribution of June 2023 and the European Commission’s communication
2. Towards EU climate neutrality: progress, policy gaps and opportunities
3. Carbon dioxide removals in the EU
4. Strengthening climate mitigation and resilience of EU agriculture
5. Climate adaptation and resilience
6. Scenarios for the planning and development of EU’s energy-system wide infrastructure
7. Expert and stakeholder engagement

2.2 Execution of the 2024 work programme

The following sections describe how the Advisory Board delivered on each of the work priorities from its 2024 work programme.

2.2.1 Follow up on the Advisory Board’s 2023 advice on an EU 2040 target

2024 work programme: *“Following up on the publication of its advice report on 2040 emission reduction target published in June 2023 (see section 2.2.1), the Advisory Board will continue monitoring the relevant policy developments at the EU level. It will actively follow discussions expected in the context of the upcoming European Commission’s communication on 2040 target, which will be a first step towards the legislative changes under the European Climate Law.*

The Advisory Board will maintain focus on this matter, and if necessary, reiterate its scientific insight in support of the EU policymaking, so that the EU is bestowed with a science-led 2040 target in time to further enable its net-zero transition by 2050.”

Actions in 2024: In February 2024, the European Commission presented its assessment for a 2040 climate target for the EU. The Commission recommended reducing the EU’s net greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2040 relative to 1990, in line with the June 2023 recommendations of the Advisory Board of a 90-95% EU 2040 target. Throughout 2024, the Advisory Board participated in various meetings, conferences, workshops and webinars to inform discussions and debates on the EU 2040 target. Among other activities, the Chair presented the Advisory Board’s advice on the EU 2040 target to the European Commission, the European Parliament’s ENVI Committee and the European Economic and Social Committee.

2.2.2 Towards EU climate neutrality: progress, policy gaps and opportunities

2024 work programme: *“Based on the work delivered in 2023 the Advisory Board will publish and disseminate its report on EU progress towards climate neutrality including policy consistency assessment with a view of EU’s achievement of the 2030 and 2050 climate goals.*

The Advisory Board aims to publish the report early 2024. It will be disseminated among the key target audience, namely the European Commission, the European Parliament, EU Member States, as well as civil society organisations, academia, and business communities.”

Actions in 2024: In January 2024, the Advisory Board published its assessment report ‘[Towards EU climate neutrality: progress, policy gaps and opportunities](#)’. Building on exercises such as the EEA’s assessment of progress towards EU climate targets, the report provides concrete recommendations to

EU policy makers on how to achieve EU's climate targets in various sectors, taking into account cross-cutting enabling conditions.

The Chair of the Advisory Board had the opportunity to present and discuss the Advisory Board's advice with key stakeholders. These included European Commission Vice-President Sefcovic, Commissioner Hoekstra, EU climate ministers, the European Parliament's ENVI committee, the Council's Working Party on the Environment, as well as national advisory councils in the EU.

Shortly after the European elections in June, the Advisory Board emphasised [the crucial need for the EU to maintain momentum towards achieving its climate objectives](#) amidst shifting priorities.

2.2.3 Carbon dioxide removals in the EU

2024 work programme: *"According to the latest scientific evidence, carbon dioxide removals are necessary to counterbalance residual emissions within the EU and to manage global temperature overshoots. Based on the work commenced in 2023, the Advisory Board will explore options for carbon dioxide removals enhancement and map the related costs, risks and opportunities. This assessment involves analyses of the status and potential of carbon removals in the EU, as well as policy needs and recommendations for EU governance of carbon removals. The assessment will focus on two main pathways for enhanced carbon dioxide removals: enhancing carbon sinks in the LULUCF sector and deploying technological solutions such as carbon capture and storage.*

While feeding into the preparation of the post-2030 EU climate policy architecture, in which both technological and LULUCF removals are expected to play a pivotal role, this Advisory Board's contribution reflects art. 17 of the LULUCF Regulation that invites the Advisory Board to provide scientific advice supporting EU's climate ambition and measures linked to land-use and forestry sectors. In this context, the Advisory Board's work on carbon dioxide removals is synergistic with its work on agriculture and adaptation."

Actions in 2024: Preparations continued for an upcoming report on carbon dioxide removals. The Advisory Board carried out extensive analytical work and thoroughly assessed the findings that will underpin its advice on carbon dioxide removals. Part of this analysis involved reviewing the latest scientific literature and gathering external expertise through events and meetings. A workshop on the topic was also organised with other national climate councils across Europe. The Advisory Board also closely monitored the rapidly evolving EU policy landscape relative to carbon dioxide removals.

Originally scheduled for publication after the summer, the report has been slightly delayed and will now be released in early 2025.

2.2.4 Strengthening climate mitigation and resilience of EU agriculture

2024 work programme: *"The Advisory Board will advance its work on mitigation solutions and greenhouse gas emission pathways in the agriculture sector. This process will be complemented by findings from the adaptation and resilience workstream.*

The assessment will cover potential mitigation pathways in agriculture, with their potential contributions to greenhouse gas emission reductions and their links with adaptation and resilience to climate change. The Advisory Board will adopt a systemic approach covering relevant socio-economic aspects, such as the demand side within the food systems. It will also consider the interaction between agricultural and forestry practices, as well as wetlands and peatlands potentials to mitigate emissions and enhance carbon sinks. In this way, the Advisory Board's contribution on agriculture will connect to the ongoing work on carbon dioxide removals.

Actions in 2024: The Advisory Board evaluated options to enhance resilience and mitigation action in agriculture. This analysis incorporated a systemic approach, considering the broader agri-food system and the socio-economic and broader environmental dimensions. In addition to greenhouse gas reductions, the Advisory Board explored options to enhance the agri-food system's contributions to removals, including by rewetting wetlands and peatlands, enhancing soil carbon sequestration on crop- and grasslands, and freeing up land for nature restoration and afforestation. Work was still ongoing at the end of the year. This work aligns closely with the Advisory Board's broader focus on carbon dioxide removals, offering a holistic view of how agriculture can contribute to EU climate objectives.

2.2.5 Climate adaptation and resilience

2024 work programme: *"The Advisory Board will assess adaptation and resilience aspects of the EU agriculture and food systems, building on the scoping work conducted in 2023. This contribution will be integrated with the output of the assessment of the mitigation and adaptation pathways in the agriculture sector.*

Then, building on the learning from this first contribution on agriculture, the Advisory Board will further explore potential EU policy gaps in the context of the obligation of the EU and its Member States to enhance their adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience, and reduce vulnerability to climate change in accordance with Article 5 of the European Climate Law and Article 7 of the Paris Agreement."

Actions in 2024: The Advisory Board's work on adaptation and resilience primarily focused on identifying pressing challenges related to climate impacts and adaptation in the agri-food sector. The scope of the work on climate adaptation in general remained relatively limited, due to the high resource intensity of the work on carbon dioxide removals (see Section 2.2.3). The Advisory Board will further develop this work in 2025.

Additionally, the Advisory Board started scoping work related to the role of adaptation in the European Climate Law, in the context of its upcoming revision planned for 2025.

2.2.6 Scenarios for the planning and development of EU's energy infrastructure

2023 work programme: *"Regulation (EU) 2022/869 (TEN-E Regulation) requires that ENTSO-G and ENTSO-E jointly develop scenarios projecting the long-term energy demand and supply including infrastructure use in the European energy system in the context of their respective Ten-Year Network Development Plans (TYNDPs). Scenarios are a prerequisite for any study analysing the future of the European energy system.*

Building on its two reports published in 2022 and 2023, the Advisory Board will provide its contribution to the draft scenarios submitted by ENTSO-E and ENTSO-G to ACER and the Member States under the art. 12 of the revised TEN-E regulation. They will focus on alignment of the scenario input data and the underlying assumptions with the EU's net-zero and intermediate climate targets, including the relevant sectoral targets and consideration of climate and weather impacts on the energy systems.

The Advisory Board aims to publish and disseminate its output in the first half of 2024, so that it contributes in time to other institutional assessments as set out in the TEN-E regulation."

Actions in 2024:

The Advisory Board published on 27 June an advice report "[Towards climate-neutral and resilient energy networks across Europe - advice on draft scenarios under the EU regulation on trans-European energy networks](#)". The Advisory Board assessment highlighted several issues with the draft scenarios, such as errors in carbon budget calculations, outdated and unjustified modelling inputs, inadequate reflection

of climate change impacts, and insufficient transparency and timeliness of the TYNDP process. It concluded that the draft scenarios are incompatible with the EU's 2030 climate targets and 2050 climate neutrality objective, calling ENTSO-E and ENTSG to improve substantially the draft joint scenarios. The Advisory Board's advice was reflected in ACER's formal [opinion on the draft joint scenarios](#) published in September 2024.

2.2.7 Continued engagement with experts and stakeholders

2024 work programme: *"The Advisory Board will continue its dialogue with a wide range of experts and stakeholders across the EU and beyond. The dialogue will help to scope the new activities and disseminate the findings from accomplished tasks.*

The Advisory Board will keep up the engagement with the national scientific climate councils, with a view of taking stock of national progress and challenges and nurturing the network of climate advisory bodies across the EU. It will continue its dialogue with Central and Eastern European scientific and climate stakeholder community."

Actions in 2024: The Advisory Board continued to engage actively with experts and stakeholders through online and in-person meetings. Members actively disseminated the Advisory Board's outputs in conferences and meetings with key EU institutions, notably the European Parliament, the Council, and the European Commission. The Advisory Board also interacted with business and civil society organisations, mainly think tanks and non-governmental organisations. Through its Secretariat, the Advisory Board strengthened links with the national scientific climate councils in Europe and the International Climate Councils Network (ICCN). The Advisory Board also pursued its engagement with the European scientific community, for example by organising expert workshops, participating in scientific conferences, and exchanging with organisations such as the European Academies' Science Advisory Council (EASAC).

3 2025 work programme

3.1 EU climate policy agenda for 2025

Through the delivery of its 2025 work programme, the Advisory Board aims to provide timely, relevant, and scientifically robust information to policymakers, supporting the development, implementation, and monitoring of EU climate policies. Anticipated policy milestones and developments at the EU level in 2025 will play a key role in shaping this programme, along with resource considerations (see Section 1.4).

In 2025, the EU's climate policy agenda will focus on advancing key legislative initiatives and policy updates to drive progress toward its climate mitigation and resilience goals. Building on existing frameworks, particularly the Fit for 55 package, this agenda will also reflect the priorities of the new Commission, the European Parliament elected in 2024, and national governments.

The new strategic priorities of the European Commission place a strong emphasis on focus on advancing EU's sustainability, competitiveness and inclusiveness. They build in particular on the recommendations from key 2024 reports, such as the [Letta's report on the Future of the Single Market](#), the [Draghi's report on the future of European competitiveness](#), the report of the [Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture](#), handed over by Professor Strohschneider, as well as the [Niinistö report on strengthening Europe's civilian and military preparedness and readiness](#). These reports collectively emphasise the need for deeper economic integration, enhanced global competitiveness, sustainable agricultural practices, and strengthened crisis preparedness to ensure the EU's long-term resilience and prosperity.

In 2025, the European Commission will propose a **revision of the European Climate Law**, primarily focusing on the inclusion of an **EU 2040 climate target**. The proposal could include further provisions on adaptation, in line with the EU's broader goal of improving resilience to climate impacts and management of climate risks.

The European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has committed to launching a **Competitiveness Compass** at the beginning of 2025 and a **Clean Industrial Deal** within the first 100 days of the new Commission's mandate. A major component of the EU's industrial strategy, the Clean Industrial Deal is expected to advance the transition for energy-intensive sectors such as steel, chemicals, and cement. This could entail financial and regulatory support for industries to adopt low-carbon technologies. The European Commission has previously highlighted these sectors as critical for achieving the 2050 climate-neutrality target while maintaining global competitiveness.

In response to the environmental pressures and climate change impacts on agriculture, the EU is developing a **Strategic Vision for Agriculture** to support sustainable farming practices. This vision, expected within the first 100 days of the new Commission's mandate, is expected to incorporate considerations on the revision of the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** to encourage climate-smart agricultural practices and biodiversity protection, with the aim to balance agricultural productivity with the EU's climate and biodiversity objectives.

Preparations for the next **Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** – the EU budget for the period 2028-2034 – are expected to include provisions about funding for climate adaptation and mitigation across sectors, as well as support under the CAP for sustainable practices. This will support the green transition across EU member states, with a focus on just transition mechanisms and financial support for regions most impacted by climate policies.

In 2024, the EU adopted a Union-wide framework for **Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming (CRCF)** to support the transformation of the land sector through carbon farming, as well as fostering industrial carbon removals and long-term carbon storage in products. The EU is expected to adopt delegated and implementation acts in 2025 to ensure that carbon removals and storage align with the adopted quality criteria, based on the methodologies developed by an EU expert group.

To continue progress on the **EU energy transition**, further work on **energy infrastructure**, particularly grid modernisation and energy storage solutions, is anticipated under the updated regulatory frameworks. This includes completing the **EU electricity market reform** to facilitate renewable energy integration and improve price stability. New regulations for cross-border electricity exchanges and initiatives will continue to boost the EU's energy resilience.

Regarding **international climate cooperation**, with the Paris Agreement's Global Stocktake informing climate strategies worldwide, the EU will continue to work for ambitious climate action on global platforms. As part of this, the EU will work towards updating to its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in alignment with global goals, aiming to reinforce renewable energy partnerships, energy efficiency efforts, and advocating for a more cohesive global approach to carbon markets.

Throughout 2025, the European Commission will undertake **preparations for policy initiatives to be proposed in 2026**. Once an EU emissions target for 2040 is adopted, the European Commission will be expected to propose a post-2030 climate framework to achieve this target. This framework will consist in the revision of existing legislation, as well as initiatives to boost clean technologies, carbon removal solutions, and energy efficiency across sectors like transport, agriculture, and industry.

The EU is also set to introduce a **European Climate Adaptation Plan** that enhances climate resilience planning across a number of key sectors. This will involve revisiting adaptation priorities to strengthen

resilience at both national and local levels, particularly in agriculture, urban planning, and public health. The plan will likely incorporate findings from the first European Climate Risk Assessment, which offers detailed insights into vulnerabilities across regions.

3.2 Short overview of the 2025 work programme

In 2025 the Advisory Board will continue providing scientific advice to EU climate policy, with a focus on the following issues:

- Scaling up carbon dioxide removals in the EU
- Strengthening climate mitigation and resilience of EU agriculture
- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Expert and stakeholder engagement

The expected outputs will inform the short-term policy developments and implementation, as well as discussions on the EU's 2040 climate target, the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and the post-2030 climate policy architecture related to mitigation and adaptation.

The Advisory Board will strive to avoid parallel workstreams, i.e. time overlaps in the work leading up to the findings' publication, so that sufficient time and other resources can be allocated to each of them. At the discretion of the Advisory Board and subject to available resources, additional activities may be undertaken by the Advisory Board in the course of 2025. These may stem from new scientific evidence and/or policy relevant questions that require timely consideration by the Advisory Board.

3.3 Scaling up carbon dioxide removals in the EU

According to the latest scientific evidence, carbon dioxide removals are necessary to achieve the EU's climate objectives of net zero emissions by 2050 and net negative emissions thereafter. Although removals cannot substitute for the immediate need to deeply reduce emissions, they can contribute to global temperature stabilisation efforts. While the EU's policy framework for removals has evolved significantly over the past years, it remains so far insufficient to support the scale and speed of deployment necessary to meet the EU's climate targets.

Based on the work carried out in 2023 and 2024, the Advisory Board will publish, in early 2025, a report exploring options for scaling up carbon dioxide removals in the EU, considering respective costs, risks and opportunities. This assessment, covering both carbon sinks in the LULUCF sector and technological solutions such as carbon capture and storage, involves analyses of the status and potential of carbon removals in the EU, key policy needs and gaps, as well as policy recommendations for a robust EU governance of carbon removals.

This Advisory Board contribution aims to feed into the preparation of the post-2030 EU climate policy architecture, in which both technological and LULUCF removals are expected to play a pivotal role. It also complements the Advisory Board's work on agriculture (see section 3.4) and adaptation (see section 3.5).

3.4 Strengthening climate mitigation and resilience of EU agriculture

The EU's agri-food system plays a vital role in achieving the climate mitigation and adaptation goals established by the European Climate Law. The agriculture sector, strongly impacted by climate change, has significant potential to enhance resilience through adaptation measures, while also contributing to greenhouse gas emission reductions and removals. Recognising the need for a balanced approach that considers various perspectives such as climate objectives, food security, economic competitiveness, and farmers' welfare, the Advisory Board aims to provide science-based advice to EU policymakers to

support the upcoming revision of the CAP and the anticipated post-2030 climate policy package, expected in 2026.

The Advisory Board will advance its work on solutions and policy options to enhance resilience and mitigation action in the EU agri-food system. The assessment will cover potential mitigation pathways in agriculture, with their potential contributions to greenhouse gas emission reductions and removals and their links with adaptation and resilience to climate change. In this way, the Advisory Board's contribution on agriculture will connect to the ongoing work on carbon dioxide removals (see section 3.3). The Advisory Board will adopt a systemic approach covering relevant socio-economic aspects. It will also consider the interaction with other environmental dimensions such as biodiversity and soil health. The Advisory Board expects to deliver an output on climate change mitigation and climate resilience in agriculture in the second half of 2025.

3.5 Climate adaptation and resilience

The European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA), published in March 2024, reported that 2023 was the warmest year on record globally, with average temperatures from February 2023 to January 2024 exceeding pre-industrial levels by 1.5°C. Europe, the fastest-warming continent, is facing more frequent extreme heat and shifting precipitation patterns. Catastrophic floods have occurred in several regions, while southern Europe is experiencing declines in rainfall and more intense droughts. Together, these events threaten food and water security, energy supplies, financial stability, and public health, posing challenges to social cohesion and stability across Europe.

To support EU's efforts in enhancing its adaptive capacity, the Advisory Board will deliver several sets of recommendations on this issue. As discussed in section 3.4, the Advisory Board will assess adaptation and resilience in the EU's agriculture and food systems, building on work from 2023 and 2024. This analysis will contribute to the Advisory Board's broader report on mitigation and adaptation pathways within the EU's agri-food sector.

The upcoming revision of the European Climate Law also offers an opportunity to emphasise the importance of climate resilience and preparedness in EU climate policy. To support this, the Advisory Board will, in the first half of 2025, deliver a science-based analysis on strengthening climate adaptation and resilience in the European Climate Law. As part of this output, the Advisory Board will also reiterate its recommendations on an EU 2040 climate target.

Additionally, in the second half of 2025, the Advisory Board will evaluate the current policy framework and provide recommendations aimed at bolstering the EU's adaptive capacity, resilience, and reducing vulnerability to climate change. This output will aim to inform the preparation of a European Climate Adaptation Plan.

3.6 Continued engagement with experts and stakeholders

The Advisory Board will continue its dialogue with a wide range of experts and stakeholders. The dialogue will help to scope and inform the work of the Advisory Board, and disseminate the findings from accomplished tasks.

The Advisory Board will keep up the engagement with the national scientific climate councils, with a view of taking stock of national progress and challenges and nurturing the network of climate advisory bodies across the EU. It will continue its dialogue with Central and Eastern European scientific and climate stakeholder community.