

Press release for the report:

***‘Scientific advice for amending the European Climate Law -
Setting climate goals to strengthen EU strategic priorities’***

Staying the course on climate action essential to EU security and competitiveness

The European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change calls on the European Union to maintain high climate ambition as it revises the European Climate Law to include a 2040 target. In a report published today, the Advisory Board recommends a 90-95% net domestic greenhouse gas emissions reduction by 2040 to support Europe’s long-term interests and reach climate neutrality by 2050.

Rising greenhouse gas emissions have already driven global temperatures up by 1.3–1.4 °C, fuelling extreme climate events and putting Earth systems on the brink of irreversible damage. As the EU prepares to set its 2040 climate target in law, the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change urges policymakers to act on scientific evidence and maintain momentum. Amid mounting geopolitical and economic pressures, sustained climate action is essential to underpin the structural transformations needed for Europe’s long-term prosperity, security, and resilience.

The report *‘Scientific advice for amending the European Climate Law - Setting climate goals to strengthen EU strategic priorities’* revisits the Advisory Board’s 2023 recommendation in light of today’s evolving context, including overlapping crises and the strategic priorities of the 2024–2029 European policy cycle. It reaffirms that a net domestic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, by 2040, in the range of 90–95% below 1990 levels remains scientifically robust and aligned with the EU’s broader strategic objectives, offering a credible pathway to the legally binding climate neutrality goal by 2050.

Prof. Ottmar Edenhofer, Chair of the Advisory Board, commented: *“Climate change is not an isolated crisis – it amplifies others. In reassessing the our 2023 advice, we find that a 90–95% reduction target by 2040 remains both scientifically robust and keeps the EU on a credible course to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. Responding to this challenge head-on is fully compatible with tackling Europe’s other urgent priorities, in particular on security and competitiveness.”*

A 90-95% domestic reduction by 2040 is feasible and aligned with Europe’s strategic interests

The Advisory Board recommends a 90–95% emissions reduction target for 2040, to be achieved through domestic action. This level of ambition is feasible and increases the fairness of the EU’s contribution to global mitigation. Recent progress in cutting greenhouse gas emissions – including through the rapid deployment of wind and solar energy – shows that the EU is broadly aligned with scenarios supporting the recommended target range. However, uneven progress across sectors and Member States calls for renewed political commitment.

A clear and credible 2040 target would provide policy certainty beyond 2030, supporting clean technology deployment – such as electrification, while strengthening energy security by reducing fossil fuel imports, and accelerating innovation and investment across the EU economy. The Advisory Board advises against using international carbon credits to meet the 2040 target, as they risk diverting resources from domestic investments and could undermine environmental integrity.

Prof. Jette Bredahl Jacobsen, vice-Chair of the Advisory Board, commented: *“A 90–95% domestic reduction target for 2040 is both achievable and in Europe’s own strategic interest. We need to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, and the necessary technologies are largely available. Delaying action or relying on international carbon credits would risk missing vital opportunities to modernise the EU’s economy, create quality jobs, and reinforce Europe’s position in clean tech leadership.”*

Stronger adaptation policies are essential to building climate resilience in Europe

Alongside mitigation, the Advisory Board calls for a stronger EU climate adaptation framework to protect citizens from rising climate risks and safeguard infrastructure, economies, and livelihoods.

As the fastest-warming continent, Europe is already facing severe climate impacts. Rising temperatures are threatening public health and causing avoidable loss of life and economic damage across the continent. Yet the EU’s current adaptation policy lacks measurable goals and a robust legal foundation.

The report urges the EU to align its legislation with global adaptation efforts and reflect key milestones expected at COP30 later this year.

Prof. Laura Diaz Anadon, vice-Chair of the Advisory Board, commented: *“The risks from climate change are growing, and so is the gap between what’s needed and what’s in place. The EU should clarify its vision for climate resilience, and back it with governance, legal tools, and measurable targets. Without a stronger adaptation policy framework, Europe risks falling behind the pace of impacts from climate change.”*

About the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change

The European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change is an independent body established under the European Climate Law to provide 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. [More information about the Advisory Board can be found here.](#)

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