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Climate action

Climate Action Plan 2050: Cabinet adopts guide to climate neutral Germany

Minister Hendricks: Climate targets set for individual sectors for first time ever

Today the German cabinet adopted Federal Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks' Climate Action Plan 2050 by circular letter. It is the first government document which maps out the way towards extensive greenhouse gas neutrality in Germany by 2050. The plan sets out climate targets for individual branches of industry and provides guidance for strategic decisions over the coming years.

Minister Hendricks explained: "This Climate Action Plan shows what implementing the Paris Agreement means for Germany. We are consciously thinking ahead to 2030 and 2050 now to ensure that all stakeholders have enough time to respond to the new challenges. It is important to me that by taking action early we avoid structural breaks. By laying the right foundations now, we can make climate action the driver behind the modernisation of our economy. This will create jobs and strengthen our role on the global market. This Climate Action Plan is something we can be proud of at international level. We will be following the guiding principle of extensive greenhouse gas neutrality by the middle of the century. For the first time, we have defined target ranges for individual sectors. As of today, no-one can fool themselves into thinking that climate action only affects others. I firmly believe that this plan is a historic turning point for climate policy in Germany. Several ministries have been constructively involved in the drafting of the plan and will be making important contributions. I would like express my gratitude to them for their cooperation."

The Climate Action Plan is based on the guiding principle of extensive greenhouse gas neutrality by the middle of the century. The plan reinforces the overall target for 2030, namely a greenhouse gas reduction of at least 55 percent compared to 1990. For the first time, this overall target has been broken down for individual sectors. In this way, the plan provides clear guidance for all sectors.

The restructuring of the energy sector is key in this context. Important foundations are already being laid in this sector through the energy transition. With renewable electricity generation, other sectors such as transport will be in a position to phase out climate-damaging fossil fuels. The plan envisages the further expansion of renewable energy sources and a corresponding decline in the use of electricity generation from coal. A new commission for growth, structural change and regional development will develop a mix of instruments. These instruments will help regions and branches of industry particularly affected by the structural change brought about by the energy transition.

A roadmap towards an almost climate-neutral building stock has been drawn up for the buildings sector. As buildings have a very long lifetime, the foundations for 2050 need to be laid early. A reduction of 66 to 67 percent is to be achieved in this sector by 2030. This will be done through ambitious standards for new buildings, long-term renovation strategies and the gradual phase-out of heating systems based on fossil fuels.

A 40 to 42 percent reduction is to be achieved in the transport sector by 2030. A series of climate strategies will include measures for achieving this target, for example a climate strategy for road transport. Alternative drive technologies, public transport, rail transport, cycling, walking and a digitalisation strategy will play an important role here.

A reduction target of 49 to 51 percent has been set for industry. To achieve this, the German government will launch a research, development and market introduction programme aimed at reducing climate-damaging emissions from industrial processes, which are currently considered unavoidable.

In agriculture, nitrous oxide emissions from over-fertilisation are to be significantly reduced. Furthermore, in Brussels, Germany will advocate that EU agricultural subsidies take EU climate policy decisions into account. Mitigation potential is generally limited in the agricultural sector. Therefore a reduction of 31 to 34 percent by 2030 is expected compared to 1990, which is the base year for all sectors.

For land use and forestry, which are not included in the assessment of climate target achievement, focus is on the preservation and improvement of carbon sequestration through carbon sinks in forests. Additional measures include sustainable forest management and use of wood, the preservation of permanent grassland, the protection of moorland and the use of the climate potential of natural forest development.

Minister Hendricks commented: "The Climate Action Plan provides individual branches of industry with a concrete framework for strategic decisions in the coming years. I am confident that these prospects will inspire great creativity and innovative energy. The Climate Action Plan provides guidance that businesses, trade unions, the scientific community, the creative industry and also politicians can and will use to make Germany more climate-friendly by the middle of the century."

The Climate Action Plan (German only) and summary of the most important points can be found here www.bmub.bund.de/N53483

FAQs about the Climate Action Plan can be found here www.bmub.bund.de/faq-klimaschutzplan (German only)