

## May-June 2021 UN Climate Change Conference

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A compilation of questions to - and answers by - Belgium  
exported on 01-06-2021  
by the UNFCCC secretariat

Question by Japan

at Monday, 05 April 2021

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: Estimation of mitigation impacts of PaMs

Page 25 of BR4 of Belgium states that there is a significant uncertainty on the impacts of policies and measures and that the impacts of many policies and measures have not been assessed yet. Could Belgium inform us of any initiatives currently being implemented or planned to be implemented in order to quantify the impacts or improve the accuracy of impacts of policies and measures, if any?

Answer by Belgium

Continuous improvement will be made, among others, within the framework of the biennial progress reporting as foreseen in the European Governance Regulation. The first progress report to the European Union with improved impact estimates will be completed in 2021. (This is available on Reportnet 3.0 <https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/112>). These improved results will be included in the next reporting to the UNFCCC.

The impact of federal policies and measures has been assessed over the years through successive studies (<http://www.climat.be/evaluation-PAMs>). Socio-economic impact of some federal policies and measures has also been evaluated (see section 4 of the impact assessment realized in 2017: [https://www.climat.be/files/3315/0537/7367/Evaluation\\_federal\\_PAMs\\_July\\_2017\\_corr.pdf](https://www.climat.be/files/3315/0537/7367/Evaluation_federal_PAMs_July_2017_corr.pdf)). The latest study, conducted in 2021, will allow for a complete update of the impact assessment of federal policies and measures (ex-post and ex-ante). The results of this study will be used for preparing the next biennial report of Belgium.

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Question by Japan

at Monday, 05 April 2021

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: Table to track the progress of PaMs for internal use

Page 23 of the BR4 of Belgium describes that "A more extensive table of the PAMs is used internally to track progress of policies and measures" compared to CTF Table 3 regarding the reporting of progress of policies and measures. What specific information is included in this internally used table?

Could Belgium give us potential issues or future improvement plans for the current progress assessment framework of policies and measures, if any?

#### Answer by Belgium

The extensive table in question refers to the MMR and Governance reporting (2019 : [http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/be/eu/mmr/art04-13-14\\_lcds\\_pams\\_projections/pams/pams/envxxilpg](http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/be/eu/mmr/art04-13-14_lcds_pams_projections/pams/pams/envxxilpg) ; 2021 : <https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/112>).

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#### Question by Canada

at Monday, 05 April 2021

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: Impact of COVID-19 and mitigation policy

Looking back at the last year and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, what have you learned or experienced that may impact the design of mitigation policies going forward? What lessons could other countries learn from your experience?

#### Answer by Belgium

The Belgian ETS emissions were 7,7% lower in 2020 compared to 2019. Mainly in the steel and refinery sector an important reduction took place. This is partly because of the COVID-19 crisis (lower oil demand and lower production), but also because of a the temporary shutdown of an important blast furnace (refection), causing an emission cut of 1,5 Mton CO<sub>2</sub>-eq. The latter also explains the reduction of emissions from electricity production (lower use of siderurgical gases).

Based on the preliminary statistics for 2020 and 2021, it can be seen that the COVID-19 pandemic had a relatively large impact on passenger road transport. After a drastic drop in activity during the lockdown in the first half of 2020, passenger transport rebounded, but activity and energy consumption and associated emissions in the first half of 2021 are still below the levels of previous years. For freight traffic, a limited decline in activity was observed in the first half of 2020 that returned to the level of previous years relatively soon after the lockdown. There is also a noticeable effect on kerosene consumption in the aviation sector that continues in early 2021. The monitoring of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Belgian fuel consumption can be found online at <https://economie.fgov.be/fr/themes/energie/lenergie-en-chiffres/consommation-mensuelle-des>. In addition, for illustration purposes, reference can be made to the monitoring of Flemish traffic data

via

[https://www.verkeerscentrum.be/sites/default/files/2021-05/studierapport\\_2021\\_18\\_COVID\\_verkeersprestatie\\_Vlaamse%20snelwegen\\_0.pdf](https://www.verkeerscentrum.be/sites/default/files/2021-05/studierapport_2021_18_COVID_verkeersprestatie_Vlaamse%20snelwegen_0.pdf). It remains to be seen to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic will generate a lasting effect in passenger traffic volumes, for example because of telecommuting that will continue on a more structural basis in the future.

The approximate inventory for 2020 shall be available in the end of July (under the governance regulation).

The decline in emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other air pollutants due to the economic downturn in 2020 is a purely circumstantial phenomenon which, in itself, has not advanced Belgium's ecological transition. On the other hand, the initiatives taken at the European and national levels in relation to recovery are of a much more structural nature, and can contribute to this transition. The European Recovery and Resilience Facility, for example, states that national plans should focus on the digital and green transition and should address structural socio-economic challenges. Belgium sees its national recovery plan as an excellent way to accelerate the transition while stimulating recovery. In this respect, Belgium goes beyond the minimum 37% of the European recovery fund expenditure that must be devoted to the climate and strives to spend at least 50% for it. Furthermore, the entire plan respects the so-called "Do no harm" principle, which stipulates that the recovery plan must not undermine environmental objectives.

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Question by United States of America  
at Monday, 05 April 2021

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: National Energy and Climate Plan lessons

Could you share some of the lessons learned from developing and implementing your National Energy and Climate Plan, including as related to the three regions where governmental decision-making is shared?

Answer by Belgium

As the National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) covers the period 2021-2030, its implementation has just started and it is too soon to speak of lessons learned. Many of the measures in the NECP fall under the responsibility of one specific entity (one of the regions or the federal state), making them solely responsible for the implementation. A Steering Committee, with representatives of each

entity, was however established to prepare the NECP and to continuously monitor the progress of its implementation. For this purpose, the Steering Committee regularly meets to discuss the state of affairs. The implementation of the inter-federal measures will be coordinated politically via the existing structures for political dialogue, such as the National Climate Commission and the Energy Dialogue ENOVER/CONCERE. During the development of the NECP, the dialogue through these coordination structures has proven to be very important.

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Question by United States of America

at Monday, 05 April 2021

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: EU-ETS and National Energy and Climate Plan

Could you discuss the role your regions play in participating in the EU Emissions Trading System, and how this complements your National Energy and Climate Plan?

Answer by Belgium

Our regions are fully responsible for the implementation of the EU Emission Trading System. The EU ETS creates a level playing field within Europe, with its own reduction targets. So, it is only for those sectors outside of the EU ETS- buildings, transport, agriculture, waste and a small part of industry - that member states must meet national goals. The NECP contains policies and measures aimed at reaching these goals. It also contains projections of GHG emissions (ETS and non ETS) taking into account Regional PAMS and the Federal nuclear phase out.

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Question by United States of America

at Monday, 05 April 2021

Category: Progress towards the achievement of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: National Climate Change Commission

How did you set up the National Climate Change Commission to effectively harmonize and establish synergies between the varying climate change policies and measures across the country?

## Answer by Belgium

The National Climate Commission (NCC) was established through a cooperation agreement between the Federal state and the three Regions ([https://www.etaamb.be/fr/loi-du-11-avril-2003\\_n2003011319.html](https://www.etaamb.be/fr/loi-du-11-avril-2003_n2003011319.html)). It is composed of representatives of each party to the Cooperation agreement, at political level (government representatives). The NCC is assisted by a permanent secretariat and several thematic working groups (WG) which are mandated to address different issues. A specific thematic working group had been set up in relation to “policies and measures”. This working group is a permanent forum for information exchange in relation to policies and measures and their monitoring. For more information, see <https://reportnet.europa.eu/public/dataflow/111>.

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Question by United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland  
at Thursday, 01 April 2021

Category: Assumptions, conditions and methodologies related to the attainment of its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: Belgium burden sharing cooperation agreement

Belgium’s fourth biennial review references the cooperation agreement on internal burden sharing of Belgium’s climate and energy objectives. Can you tell us more about how effort between regions is distributed and reported against?

## Answer by Belgium

The Burden Sharing cooperation agreement is the main mechanism to ensure that the national targets are met and specifies rules to be followed in case of contracting parties’ non-compliance. It focuses on greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for non-ETS sectors, the share of renewable energies in final energy consumption, and the contribution to international climate finance.

During the final round of political negotiations on the 2013-2020 Burden sharing agreement, percentages of “feasible” targets (ESR, RES, Climate Finance) were put forward by the regions and the Federal State respectively. Some of those percentages were based on studies identifying their potential and costs and carried out by each of the parties separately. This cooperation agreement contains not only the commitments of the political agreement, but also identifies implementation modalities and responsibilities.

This cooperation agreement explicitly provides for the establishment of an annual report on the implementation of this cooperation agreement and the achievement of the objectives, as from 2017.

The first progress report on the implementation of the burden sharing agreement has been recently published and gives an overview of the commitments and achievements of the regions and the federal state.

It is available here

[https://www.cnc-nkc.be/sites/default/files/report/file/rapport\\_execution\\_ac\\_bs\\_13-20\\_cnc\\_concere\\_approuve.pdf](https://www.cnc-nkc.be/sites/default/files/report/file/rapport_execution_ac_bs_13-20_cnc_concere_approuve.pdf)

[https://www.cnc-nkc.be/sites/default/files/report/file/rapport\\_uitvoering\\_swa\\_bs\\_13-20\\_nkc-enover\\_goedgekeurd.pdf](https://www.cnc-nkc.be/sites/default/files/report/file/rapport_uitvoering_swa_bs_13-20_nkc-enover_goedgekeurd.pdf)

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Question by New Zealand

at Thursday, 01 April 2021

Category: All emissions and removals related to its quantified economy-wide emission reduction target

Type: Before 05 April

Title: Initiative to incentivise modal shifts from road to rail transport

According to page 23 of Belgium's BR4, an initiative has been undertaken by Federal and Regional Governments to incentivise modal shifts from road to rail transport as a mitigation measure for transport emissions. How effective has this been at reducing emissions? Have there been any governance challenges to implementing change, or other barriers that have meant this system has not been effective at reducing emissions?

Answer by Belgium

Statistics from recent years show that modal shift has been difficult. For example, over the period 2010-2019, the share of rail freight transport of total tonne-kilometres freight transported on the national territory fluctuated between 11 and 12 % [1][2]. The largest share of inland rail freight transport occurs towards and from the ports (71 % in 2014 [3]).

The regional and federal plans focus on a wide range of measures to achieve modal shift. These include the following measures:

- Spatial policy aimed at modal shift and less travel (location policy, function reconciliation...)
- Strengthening public transport and expanding the network of mobility points
- Increase investments in bicycle route network and bicycle highways
- Stimulate modal shift to waterways and rail among others by more investments in infrastructure and fiscal measures

There are infrastructural, regulatory, and fiscal barriers to further increase this modal shift from road to rail. The NECP foresees that an intergovernmental cooperation agreement on sustainable mobility will be concluded to implement the joint measures. In the coming years we will continue to monitor the extent to which the additional policy measures are producing results and where additional efforts may be required.

[1] Troch, Frank, Thierry Vanellander, Christa Sys, Florent Laroche, Angel Merchan, Martine Mostert, Vidar Stevens, et al. "A Road Map for Explorative Scenario Creation on Belgian Rail Freight Transport Development." *Competition and Regulation in Network Industries* 18, no. 1–2 (March 1, 2017): 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1783591717734792>.

[2] Eurostat. "Modal Split of Freight Transport (Tran\_hv\_frmod)," March 25, 2021. [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=tran\\_hv\\_frmod&lang=en](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=tran_hv_frmod&lang=en).

[3] Merckx, Jean-Pierre, and Dirk Neyts. "De Vlaamse Havens: Feiten, Statistieken En Indicatoren Voor 2014." Jaaroverzicht. Vlaamse Havencommissie, <https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/25508>.

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