

Disappointment reigns after EU summit fails to deliver on carbon neutrality goal

Written by Martin Banks on 24 June 2019 in News
News

Experts have expressed disappointment with the outcome of a summit of EU leaders last week which failed to reach agreement on a “carbon-neutral” energy mix by 2050.



Photo Credit: Greenpeace

Central and Eastern European countries blocked a planned EU pledge to cut carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 at the summit in Brussels.

Four Member States - Poland, Hungary, Estonia and the Czech Republic - refused to support summit conclusions that would have sent a signal of intent from the EU to meet the Paris climate agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees.

However, the failure to agree does not prevent individual EU countries from setting their own targets.

RELATED CONTENT

- [EU elections can send strong climate change message, says EREF](#) [1]
 - [EU elections 'great opportunity' to ensure next legislature follows 'green agenda'](#) [2]
 - [Greta Thunberg urges EU to 'take action now' in speech to European Parliament](#) [3]
 - [Parliament political groups under fire for 'blocking' Greta Thunberg invitation](#) [4]
 - [Greta Thunberg slams 'wasted decades' of climate change denial](#) [5]
 - [COP24 outcome receives mixed response](#) [6]
-

Speaking at a conference in Brussels on Friday, James Watson, Secretary General of Eurogas, said, "We were watching the outcome of this issue at the summit very closely and, ultimately, I think it is just a matter of time. For now, the can has been kicked down the road with some Member States still holding out."

"However, the issue [of carbon neutrality] has not gone away and some big Member States like Germany, France and Italy, are still in favour. Generally, they usually get their way in the end."

He added, "They did not get their way this time but, maybe, insufficient preparation was done ahead of the summit. The reality is that, whether it is at EU or national level, this [carbon neutrality] is going to happen."

He was speaking at an event on "decarbonising Europe's energy system with hydrogen", organised by Zukunft ERDGAS, a gas industry lobby initiative.

"The reality is that, whether it is at EU or national level, this [carbon neutrality] is going to happen" **James Watson, Secretary General of Eurogas**

The meeting was told that a European energy system that relies not only on renewable energies but also on "green gases" such as decarbonised natural gas and renewable gas, is "more resilient and thus better suited to reach the EU's climate targets."

This was the key message to emerge from a report presented to the conference called "Hydrogen from natural gas - The key to deep decarbonisation" and authored by the consultancy firm Pöyry.

The report was commissioned by ERDGAS, the German initiative.

The event heard that the European Commission has a "clear" vision: by 2050 the European community wants to achieve climate neutrality.

The long-term strategy adopted at the end of 2018, entitled "A Clean Planet for All", seeks to ensure that this transition is "socially fair."

At the same time, the Commission wants to enhance the competitiveness of EU economy and industry.

Another speaker, Timm Kehler, chairman of Zukunft ERDGAS, said, "The climate challenge cannot be solved at a national level. What we need is a climate-friendly, resilient European energy system. The

course for it must be set in Brussels now.”

“Green gas must be part of the solution because it can use existing infrastructures and applications and significantly reduce the costs and risks of the energy system’s transformation.”

“[EU] leaders have failed to agree on how soon to phase-out fossil fuels and bring emissions down to zero. We are calling on them to show leadership and act urgently on climate and ecosystem collapse in the next five years to transition towards a sustainable and just Europe” **Jagoda Munic, Director of Friends of the Earth Europe**

He added, “In order to establish a market for it, we need a clear target for green gas that includes hydrogen from natural gas and renewable gas from electrolysis as well as biogas. The industry needs to start developing these promising green gas technologies today. To do this, they need a reliable framework.”

Further reaction to the EU summit came from Jagoda Munic, director of Friends of the Earth Europe, who said: “The EU’s strategic agenda for the next five years recognises that building a climate-neutral, green and social Europe must be a priority, as demanded by millions in the streets.”

“However, leaders have failed to agree how soon to phase-out fossil fuels and bring emissions down to zero. We are calling on them to show leadership and act urgently on climate and ecosystem collapse in the next five years to transition towards a sustainable and just Europe,” she added.

Elsewhere, UK MEP Anthea McIntyre has welcomed the unveiling of a hydrogen-powered railway train which has been developed in her region.

McIntyre, Conservative spokesman on employment in Parliament, hailed the launch as “a key pointer to our greener future”.

She spoke as the train, called the Hydrogen Hero, the UK’s first fully operating hydrogen train, was unveiled by Birmingham University’s Birmingham Centre for Rail Research and Education (BCRRE).

McIntyre said, “Hydrogen fuel cell technology means that potentially carbon-free trains can replace diesel on our lines without electrification. It creates electricity from oxygen in the air and the only by-product is water.”

“The train on show was a scaled-down version, but I understand the design is ready right now to develop for full-size, full-scale production.”

She added, “This is a key pointer to how our transport can be cleaner and greener ... and I am so proud that it has been developed and showcased right here in the West Midlands. This is a place where cutting edge science works alongside manufacturing know-how and that is a powerful combination.”

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

Tags

[Energy](#) [7]

[Environment](#) [8]

Categories

[Energy](#) [9]

[Environment](#) [10]

[Science, technology and research](#) [11]



THE PARLIAMENT
POLITICS, POLICY AND PEOPLE **MAGAZINE**

The

Parliament Magazine is a Dods Group plc title

Site Sections

- [Home](#)
- [Content](#)
- [Policy](#)
- [Magazines](#)
- [PM+](#)
- [Thought Leader](#)
- [EU Elections 2019](#)
- [Editorial Calendar](#)
- [Policy Events](#)
- [Event Coverage](#)
- [MEP Awards 2019](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

Services

[Dods PeopleDods](#)

[MonitoringDods](#)

[ResearchDods](#)

[EventsDods](#)

[Training](#)

Media & publishing titles

[Politics HomeThe](#)

[HouseThe](#)

[Parliament](#)

[MagazineHolyrood](#)

[Total PoliticsPublic](#)

[Affairs NewsCivil](#)

[Service](#)

[World](#)

[PublicTechnology](#)

[Training](#)

[JournalDods](#)

[Parliamentary](#)

[CompanionVacher's
Quarterly The
European Union and
Public Affairs
Directory](#)

Dods events

[Westminster
BriefingDigital
Health & Care
ScotlandMEP
AwardsThe Skills
SummitScottish
Public Service
AwardsPublic Sector
Procurement
SummitPublic
Sector ICT
SummitCyber
Security
SummitCyber
Security
2017Training
Journal Awards](#)

**Partnership
events**

[The Health and
Care Innovation
ExpoCivil Service
LiveCivil Service
AwardsChief
Nursing Officer for
England's
SummitWomen into
LeadershipThe
Youth Justice
ConventionSocitm
Spring
ConferenceNHSCC
Annual Members'
EventDods at Party
Conference](#)

Source URL: <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/disappointment-reigns-after-eu-summit--ails-deliver-carbon-neutrality-goal>

Links

- [1] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-elections-can-send-strong-climate-change-message-says-eref>
- [2] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-elections-%E2%80%98great-opportunity%E2%80%99-ensure-next-legislature-follows-%E2%80%98green-agenda%E2%80%99>
- [3] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/greta-thunberg-urges-eu-%E2%80%98take-action-now%E2%80%99-speech-european-parliament>
- [4] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/parliament-political-groups-under-ire-%E2%80%98blocking%E2%80%99-greta-thunberg-invitation>
- [5] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/greta-thunberg-slams-%E2%80%98washed-decades%E2%80%99-climate-change-denial>
- [6] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/cop24-outcome-receives-mixed-response>
- [7] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/energy>
- [8] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/tags/environment>
- [9] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/energy>
- [10] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/environment>
- [11] <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/categories/science-technology-and-research>